



– Photo by Alfredo Vasquez

DIVERSITY – This borderland community is uniquely positioned to become an international center for conservation education and environmental leadership because Downtown El Paso, above, is situated at the crossroads of two nations and multiple cultures. It is one of North America’s most biologically diverse desert regions, according to the founder of the El Paso Wildlife Conservation Society.

LoBello proposes new conservation project

By Alfredo Vasquez
Special to the Courier

EL PASO COUNTY – Longtime conservation educator Rick LoBello is proposing the creation of an El Paso Wildlife Conservation Exploratorium, an iconic new destination that could redefine how people learn about conservation, climate change, biodiversity, and the relationship between people and nature.

LoBello – who has dedicated more than fifty years to wildlife conservation, environmental education, and public service – envisions the Exploratorium as a centerpiece of the proposed El Paso Downtown Deck Plaza project and a landmark attraction that would draw visitors, students, educators, scientists, and conservation leaders from across the United States and Mexico.

According to the local conservationist, the project is built

around a simple message: Helping People, Saving Wildlife. “Throughout my career, I have learned that conservation succeeds when people succeed. Wildlife conservation is not just about protecting animals. It is about creating a future where both people and nature can thrive together, and the El Paso Wildlife Conservation Exploratorium would become a place where that message comes to life

every day,” stated LoBello, who is founder of the El Paso Wildlife Conservation Society.

The Exploratorium would be unlike any museum in the Southwest, LoBello explained. However, “Rather than simply displaying exhibits, it would immerse visitors in living conservation stories from around the world,” he remarked.

LoBello imagines a facility that would house a groundbreaking 360-degree immersive wildlife theater, where students and families could step into the forests of Central Africa, for example, and experience a life-sized mountain gorilla family in their natural habitat. “Visitors would not merely watch a film, they would become part of the experience, surrounded by the sights and sounds of one of the world’s most endangered ecosystems,” he related.

Elaborating on his idea, LoBello stated that he foresees the theater as

Conservation project

The El Paso Wildlife Conservation Exploratorium would highlight conservation success stories from around the world, including the Chihuahuan Desert and the U.S.-Mexico border region, featuring:

- A 360-degree immersive wildlife theater;
- Interactive exhibits exploring biodiversity, climate change, and conservation solutions;
- Conservation laboratories and citizen science programs;
- Classrooms and educational spaces

for students and teachers;

- Wildlife art, photography, and cultural exhibits;
- Rotating exhibitions focused on global conservation challenges and solutions;
- Community gathering spaces and public forums;
- Research partnerships with schools, universities, zoos, museums, and conservation organizations;
- Sustainable architecture using green building practices; and
- Opportunities for visitors to take direct conservation action.

See PROJECT, Page 5

Pasieczny, Cervantes, named new Canutillo ISD principals

By Gustavo Reveles
Special to the Courier

CANUTILLO–Dr. Erika Pasieczny is now principal of Alderete Middle School and Veronica Cervantes is the new principal at Davenport Elementary School for the 2026-27 school year. The Canutillo Independent School District Board of Trustees approved Superintendent Dr. Josue Borrego’s selections this month. Both administrators bring extensive experience in instructional leadership, student achievement and campus improvement.

“We are excited to welcome both Veronica Cervantes and Dr. Erika Pasieczny to their new leadership roles in Canutillo ISD,” Superintendent Dr. Josue Borrego said. “Both leaders bring a proven record of improving student outcomes, supporting teachers and building strong school cultures.”

Cervantes is veteran educator with more than 25 years of experience.



Veronica Cervantes



Dr. Erika Pasieczny

She has served as a classroom teacher, instructional specialist and special education leader. She holds a master’s degree in Educational Administration from Grand Canyon University and principal certification in Texas.

Pasieczny brings more than two decades of educational experience to Alderete Middle School, including service as

a principal, assistant principal and classroom teacher across multiple school districts.

Most recently, she served as principal of Wiggs Middle School in El Paso ISD where she focused on developing teacher and administrative leadership.

Pasieczny was previously the principal of Ascher Silberstein Elementary School in Dallas ISD. She holds a Doctor of Education in Educational Leadership from Liberty University, a master’s degree in education from Lamar University and a bachelor’s degree in biology from the University of North Texas.

Tornillo Independent School District Public Notice

2026-2027 NSLP Policy Community Eligibility Provision (CEP)

The Tornillo Independent School District announced today it will continue its policy to operate the Community Eligibility Program (CEP) under the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program for the 2027-2026 school year. Schools qualifying to operate CEP serve breakfast and lunch to all children at no charge and eliminate the collection of meal applications for free, reduced-price, and paid student meals. This new approach reduces burdens for both families and school administrators and helps ensure that students receive nutritious meals.

For additional information please contact:
Tornillo ISD Food Service Manager
Norma Aguirre
9200 Cobb Ave., Tornillo, TX 79853
Email: aguirren@tisd.us

In accordance with Federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, the USDA, its Agencies, offices, and employees, and institutions participating in or administering USDA programs are prohibited from discriminating based on race, color, national origin, sex, disability, age, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity in any program or activity conducted or funded by USDA.

Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g. Braille, large print, audiotape, American Sign Language, etc.), should contact the Agency (State or local) where they applied for benefits. Individuals who are deaf, hard of hearing or have speech disabilities may contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339. Additionally, program information may be made available in languages other than English.

To file a program complaint of discrimination, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, (AD-3027) found online at: <https://www.usda.gov/oascr/how-to-file-a-program-discrimination-complaint>, and at any USDA office, or write a letter addressed to USDA and provide in the letter all of the information requested in the form. To request a copy of the complaint form, call (866) 632-9992. Submit your completed form or letter to USDA by: (1) mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, D.C. 20250-9410; (2) fax: (202) 690-7442; or (3) email: program.intake@usda.gov.

The Tornillo Independent School District is an equal opportunity provider.

Notificación Pública

Poliza de Comidas Escolares de NSLP del Año 2027-2026 Disposición de Elegibilidad Comunitaria (CEP)

El Distrito Escolar de Tornillo anunció el día de hoy que continuará su política de operar la Disposición de Elegibilidad Comunitaria (CEP) bajo el Programa Nacional de Almuerzos Escolares y el Programa de Desayunos Escolares para el año escolar 2026-2027. Las escuelas que califican para operar la Disposición de Elegibilidad Comunitaria (CEP) sirven desayuno y almuerzo a todos los niños sin cargo y eliminan la recolección de solicitudes de comidas para obtener comidas para estudiantes gratuitas, a precio reducido y pagadas. Este nuevo enfoque reduce las cargas tanto para las familias como para los administradores escolares y ayuda a garantizar que los estudiantes reciban comidas nutritivas.

Tornillo ISD Food Service Manager
Norma Aguirre
19200 Cobb Ave., Tornillo, TX 79853
Email: aguirren@tisd.us

De conformidad con la Ley Federal de Derechos Civiles y los reglamentos y políticas de derechos civiles del Departamento de Agricultura de los EE. UU. (USDA, por sus siglas en inglés), se prohíbe que el USDA, sus agencias, oficinas, empleados e instituciones que participan o administran programas del USDA discriminen sobre la base de raza, color, nacionalidad, sexo, discapacidad, edad, o en represalia o venganza por actividades previas de derechos civiles en algún programa o actividad realizados o financiados por el USDA.

Las personas con discapacidades que necesiten medios alternativos para la comunicación de la información del programa (por ejemplo, sistema Braille, letras grandes, cintas de audio, lenguaje de señas americano, etc.), deben ponerse en contacto con la agencia (estatal o local) en la que solicitaron los beneficios. Las personas sordas, con dificultades de audición o discapacidades del habla pueden comunicarse con el USDA por medio del Federal Relay Service (Servicio Federal de Retransmisión) al (800) 877-8339. Además, la información del programa se puede proporcionar en otros idiomas.

Para presentar una denuncia de discriminación, complete el Formulario de Denuncia de Discriminación del Programa del USDA, (AD-3027) que está disponible en línea en: <https://www.usda.gov/oascr/how-to-file-a-program-discrimination-complaint> y en cualquier oficina del USDA, o bien escriba una carta dirigida al USDA e incluya en la carta toda la información solicitada en el formulario. Para solicitar una copia del formulario de denuncia, llame al (866) 632-9992. Haga llegar su formulario lleno o carta al USDA por: (1) correo: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, D.C. 20250-9410; (2)fax: (202) 690-7442; o (3) correo electrónico: program.intake@usda.gov. Esta institución es un proveedor que ofrece igualdad de oportunidades.

El Distrito Escolar De Tornillo ofrece igualdad de oportunidades.

Another sham deal with Iran comes undone

An early period of World War II was known as “the phony war.” What we may be witnessing now in the U.S.-Iran war is the end of a “phony peace.”

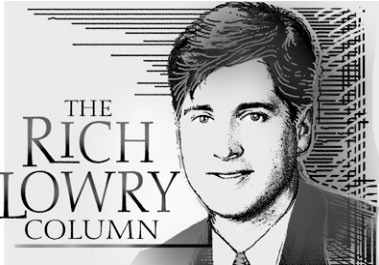
The nearly five-month-long conflict has featured a couple of sham ceasefires, each marked by supposed Iranian pledges to reopen the Strait of Hormuz that came to nothing.

With the Iranians firing on shipping in the Strait again, Trump has declared the so-called memorandum of understanding signed about a month ago to be a dead letter. After lifting sanctions on Iranian oil and ending the U.S. blockade of Iranian ports, Trump has reinstituted both. He maintains that the U.S. will control the strait and, at some point, charge a 20% fee on all shipping for our trouble (a bad idea that Trump appears already to have abandoned).

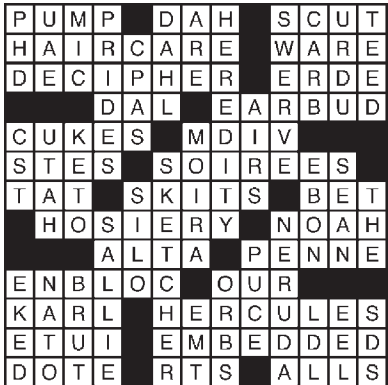
It was clear a couple of days into the war that the Strait of Hormuz had become the key strategic variable and that President Trump wouldn’t easily be able to walk away from the conflict without reopening the strait again.

The MOU was an illusory means of achieving this goal via diplomacy. The problem is that we thought – or wanted to believe – that the agreement said the Iranians would allow unobstructed passage again, while the Iranians thought – or wanted to believe – that it said they would control the strait. That the MOU was subject to these starkly divergent understandings made it a memorandum of obfuscation.

The Iranians, of course, aren’t operating in good faith, but it is a point in their favor that the MOU didn’t simply say, “There shall be freedom of navigation in the strait.” Instead, it talked of how the Iranians would “make arrangements” for ensuring



See LOWRY, Page 7



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San Elizario Independent School District Public Notification of Nondiscrimination in Career and Technical Programs

1) The San Elizario Independent School District offers Career and Technical Education programs in Audio Video Production, Automotive Technology, Business Administration, Cosmetology, Culinary Arts, Graphic Design and Illustration, Law Enforcement, Biomedical Technology, Science, Technology Engineering and Mathematics (STEM): Engineering and Robotics, Health Science in collaboration with El Paso Community College-Emergency Medical Technician, Certified Nursing Assistant, EKG Technician, Phlebotomy Technician and Patient Care Technician Programs. Admission to these programs is based on course prerequisites and grade level classifications. For program information call Sandra Sanchez at (915) 872-3900, extension 3844.

2) It is the policy of the San Elizario Independent School District not to discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex or disability in its vocational programs, services, or activities as required by Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972; and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended.

3) It is the policy of the San Elizario Independent School District not to discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, handicap or age in its employment practices as required by title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended; Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, the Age Discrimination Act of 1975, as amended; and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended.

4) The San Elizario Independent School District will take steps to assure that lack of English skills will not be a barrier to admission and participation in all education and vocational programs.

5) For information about your rights or grievance procedures, contact Superintendent Dr. Jeannie Meza-Chavez 1050 Chicken Ranch Rd., Administration Building, San Elizario, Texas 79849, (915) 872-3900. Mail: PO Box 920, San Elizario, TX 79849.

Notificación Pública de No Discriminación en los Programas de Carrera y Técnica

1) El Distrito Escolar Independiente de San Elizario ofrece programas de Carrera y Educación Técnica en Producción de Video Audio, Tecnología Automotriz, Administración de Empresas, Cosmetología, Artes Culinarias, Diseño Gráfico y Ilustración, Aplicación de la Ley, Tecnología Biomédica, Ingeniería de Tecnología Científica y Matemáticas (STEM): Robótica Ingeniería, y Ciencias de la Salud en colaboración con Colegio Comunitario de El Paso – Programas de Técnico en Emergencias Medicas, Certificación de Asistente en Enfermería, Técnico de EKG, Técnico(a) en flebotomía y Técnico de Atención a Pacientes. Admisión a estos programas se basa en prerequisites del curso y clasificación del nivel del grado. Para más información sobre el programa, por favor comuníquense con Sandra Sanchez al (915) 872-3900, extensión 3844.

2) Es la póliza del Distrito Escolar Independiente de San Elizario de no discriminar por causa de raza, color, origen nacional, sexo, o discapacidad en estos programas vocacionales, servicios, o actividades requeridos por el Título IV del Acta de Derechos Civiles de 1964, como enmendada Título IX de las Enmiendas Educativas de 1972, y la Sección 504 de la Acta de Rehabilitación de 1973, como enmendada.

3) Es la póliza del distrito de San Elizario de no discriminar por causa de raza, color, origen nacional, sexo, discapacidad, o la edad en sus metodos de empleo exidido por el Titulo VI del Acta de Derechos Civiles de 1964, enmendada por las Enmienda Educativas de 1972, del Acta de la Discriminación por Edad de 1975, como enmendada, y la Sección 504 de la Acta de Rehabilitación de 1973, como enmendada.

4) El distrito escolar de San Elizario tomará pasos para asegurar que la falta de ingles no sea obstáculo para la admisión y participación en todos los programas vocacionales y educativos.

5) Para más información de sus derechos y procedimiento de agravios, puede ponerse en contacto con el Superintendente Dr. Jeannie Meza-Chavez, 1050 Chicken Ranch Rd., Administration Building, San Elizario, Texas 79849, (915) 872-3900. Mail: PO Box 920, San Elizario, TX 79849.

PUBLIC NOTICE / AVISO AL PUBLICO

Canutillo Independent School District

2026-2027 Meal Policy

National School Lunch Program / School Breakfast Program

The Canutillo Independent School District announced today it will continue its policy to operate under the Community Eligibility Program (CEP) for the National School Lunch program and School Breakfast Program for the 2026-2027 school year. Schools qualifying to operate CEP serve breakfast and lunch to all children at no charge and eliminate the collection of meal applications for free, reduced-price, and paid student meals. This new approach reduces burdens for both families and school administrators and helps ensure that students receive nutritious meals regardless of income through the 2026-2027 academic year.

For additional information, please contact:
Canutillo Independent School District
Attention: Marco Macias, Director, Child Nutrition Department
7965 Artcraft Rd., El Paso, TX 79932
Email: mamacias@canutillo-isd.org

In accordance with Federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, the USDA, its Agencies, offices, and employees, and institutions participating in or administering USDA programs are prohibited from discriminating based on race, color, national origin (including English proficiency), disability, religion, sex, age, marital status, family/parental status, income derived from a public assistance program, political beliefs, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity in any program or activity conducted or funded by USDA, and there will be no discrimination in the course of the meal service.

Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g. Braille, large print, audiotape, American Sign Language, etc.), should contact the Agency (State or local) where they applied for benefits. Individuals who are deaf, hard of hearing or have speech disabilities may contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339. Additionally, program information may be made available in languages other than English.

To file a program complaint of discrimination, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, (AD-3027) found online at: http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint_filing_cust.html, and at any USDA office, or write a letter addressed to USDA and provide in the letter all of the information requested in the form. To request a copy of the complaint form, call (866) 632-9992. Submit your completed form or letter to USDA by: (1) mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights 1400 Independence Avenue, SW Washington, D.C. 20250-9410; (2) fax: (202) 690-7442; or (3) email: program.intake@usda.gov.

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Política sobre Alimentos para 2026-2027 del

Distrito Escolar Independiente de Canutillo

Programa Nacional de Comidas en las Escuelas

El Distrito Escolar Independiente de Canutillo ha anunciado hoy que continuará con su póliza de operar bajo el Community Eligibility Program (CEP) los programas de almuerzo y desayuno escolar en el año escolar 2026-2027. Las escuelas que califican para operar CEP ofrecen desayuno y comida a todos los niños sin costo alguno y elimina la colección de solicitudes para comida gratis, precio reducido, y pagado. Este nuevo enfoque reduce la carga para las familias y los administradores escolares y asegura que los estudiantes reciban comidas nutritivas sin importar el ingreso familiar durante el año escolar 2026-2027.

Para información adicional por favor comunicarse a:
El Distrito Escolar Independiente de Canutillo
con: Marco Macias, Director, Child Nutrition Department
7965 Artcraft Rd., El Paso, TX 79932
Email: mamacias@canutillo-isd.org

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La información sobre el programa puede estar disponible en otros idiomas que no sean el inglés. Las personas con discapacidades que requieren medios alternos de comunicación para obtener la información del programa (por ejemplo, Braille, letra grande, cinta de audio, lenguaje de señas americano (ASL), etc.) deben comunicarse con la agencia local o estatal responsable de administrar el programa o con el Centro TARGET del USDA al (202) 720-2600 (voz y TTY) o comuníquese con el USDA a través del Servicio Federal de Retransmisión al (800) 877-8339.

Para presentar una queja por discriminación en el programa, el reclamante debe llenar un formulario AD-3027, formulario de queja por discriminación en el programa del USDA, el cual puede obtenerse en línea en: <https://www.usda.gov/sites/default/files/documents/ad-3027s.pdf>, de cualquier oficina de USDA, llamando al (866) 632-9992, o escribiendo una carta dirigida a USDA. La carta debe contener el nombre del demandante, la dirección, el número de teléfono y una descripción escrita de la acción discriminatoria alegada con suficiente detalle para informar al Subsecretario de Derechos Civiles (ASCR) sobre la naturaleza y fecha de una presunta violación de derechos civiles. El formulario AD-3027 completado o la carta debe presentarse a USDA por: (1) Correo: U.S. Department of Agriculture Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights 1400 Independence Avenue, SW Washington, D.C. 20250-9410; o (2) fax: (833) 256-1665 o (202) 690-7442; o (3) correo electronico: program.intake@usda.gov.

El Distrito Escolar Independiente de Canutillo es un proveedor que ofrece igualdad de oportunidades.



Moments

in time

THE HISTORY CHANNEL

- On July 20, 1963, Jan and Dean's song "Surf City" made it to the coveted top of the American pop charts. While its memorable opening line "Two girls for every boy!" was more wishful thinking than fact, it helped create an image of California as a paradise that featured plenty of sun, sand, endless waves and equally endless summers.
- On July 21, 365, an earthquake off the coast of Greece, estimated by modern scientists to actually have been two tremors in succession, caused a tsunami that devastated the city of Alexandria, Egypt. Approximately 5,000 people were killed and 50,000 homes destroyed.
- On July 22, 1894, the world's first automobile race took place, with 17 of 21 entrants completing the route from Paris to Rouen, France, covering a distance of 78.3 miles. The Paris-Rouen Trial paved the way for future such races and signaled the dawn of the motor age by showcasing the reliability of the automobile.
- On July 23, 1923, John Dillinger signed on with the

- Navy in an attempt to avoid auto theft charges. His military career was short-lived, however, as within months he had gone AWOL several times.
 - On July 24, 1998, Steven Spielberg's World War II epic "Saving Private Ryan" was released in theaters. Starring Tom Hanks and Matt Damon, the film was lauded for its realism and nominated for 11 Academy Awards, earning five.
 - On July 25, 1941, automaker Henry Ford penned a letter from his desk in Dearborn, Michigan, to Indian nationalist leader Mahatma Gandhi, praising him and his civil disobedience campaign that aimed to force the British colonial government out of India.
 - On July 26, 1797, future American president John Quincy Adams, the son of second president John Adams, married Louisa Johnson in London, England. For more than two centuries, Louisa would be the only foreign-born first lady of the United States. In 1828, their son John would wed Louisa's niece, Mary Catherine, in the first White House wedding for a president's child.
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Archives: www.wtxcc.com



By Lucie Winborne

- Though cannibalism is, thankfully, no longer practiced, Fijians today have embraced this aspect of their history: You can buy cannibalism forks and humorous cannibal dolls in many Fijian gift shops.
- NASA defines an astronaut as someone who has flown 50 miles above sea level.
- People are more likely to die in house fires while sleeping because the sleeping brain responds poorly to smoke odors.
- The U.S. maintains a Strategic Petroleum Reserve, the largest emergency oil stockpile in the world.
- When "Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban" made its debut in Great Britain, the publisher asked stores not to sell the book until schools were closed for the day, to prevent eager reader truancy.
- The first submarine used in warfare was the "American Turtle," a small submersible invented by David Bushnell, during the American Revolution, in 1776.

- Congress gave Native Americans the right to vote in presidential elections in 1924.
- During the Great Depression, many people tried selling apples to avoid the stigma of panhandling. In New York City alone, there were as many as 6,000 such vendors.
- Beatle George Harrison's song "Blue Jay Way" has led to the repeated theft of that street sign in Los Angeles.
- The science of kissing is called philematology.
- Flower girls traditionally threw flower petals in a bride's path to lead her to a sweet, plentiful future.
- After pirates kidnapped the entire male population of the Tongan island of 'Atu in the 18th century, the king of Tonga had the remaining women and children moved, and declared the island taboo.
- The mimic octopus can impersonate more than 15 different marine animals, including lionfish and flatfish, to fool predators.

Thought for the Day: "To change the world we must be good to those who cannot repay us."
— Pope Francis
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Comix

OUT ON A LIMB By Gary Kopervas



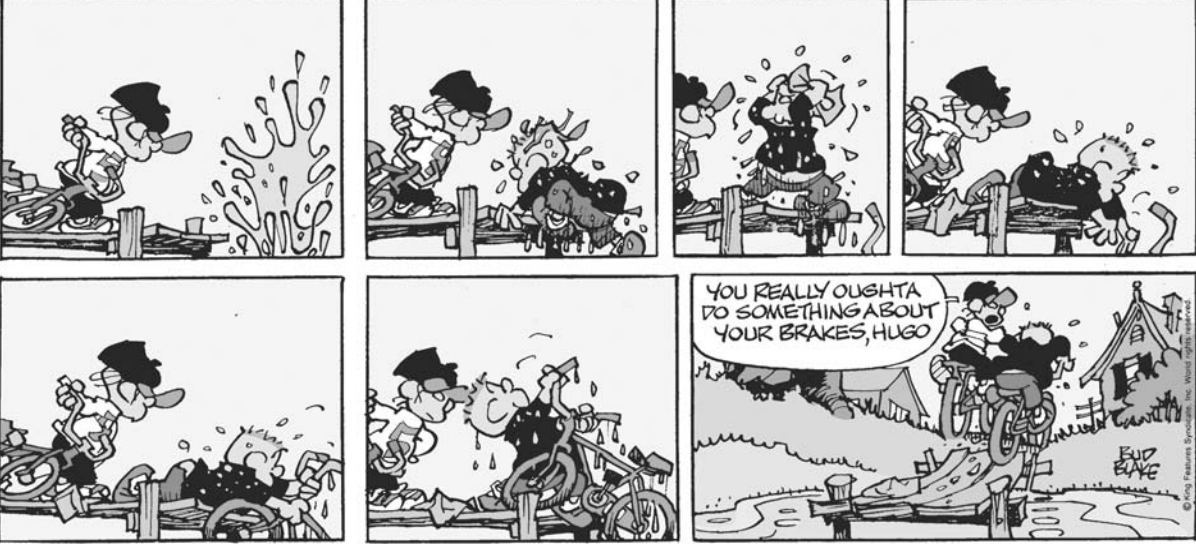
AMBER WAVES By Dave T. Phipps



THE SPATS By Jeff Pickering



TIGER By Bud Blake



Lowry

From Page 2

“the safe passage of commercial vessels, with no charge for 60 days only.” In other words, the Iranians held the whip hand in the strait and could charge a fee for transit after a two-month interval. Furthermore, Iran would conduct dialogue with Oman “to define the future administration and maritime services in the Strait of Hormuz.”

Amazingly enough, then, a war that had started with optimistic talk of toppling the Iranian regime was ending with an agreement allowing the Iranians to figure out how to run a waterway vital to the international economy that they hadn’t controlled at the outset of the conflict.

Is it any wonder that the Iranians, who must have been stunned at the success of their gambit in the strait, have been pressing their luck? It must have emboldened them even more to hear Trump say that he was so eager for the MOU because the economic costs of Iranian disruption of the strait threatened to make him a new Herbert Hoover.

Effectively turning over the control of

the strait to the Iranians – coupled with the inconclusive U.S. war against the Houthis to try to eliminate their threat to shipping in the Red Sea – would have been a black mark on the Trump administration’s record regarding a long-standing tenet of American grand strategy.

Freedom of navigation has always been considered essential to U.S. national security and a linchpin of global commerce. Trump is right to want to take back the Strait. The question, though, is whether he will be willing to apply enough force and have the staying power to bring a battle for the strait to a successful conclusion. The domestic politics are difficult, given that the American public is not supportive of the war and has now been repeatedly told that it is about to end with a brilliant diplomatic deal.

While we have an enormous firepower advantage, the Iranians have proven that they can disrupt the Strait with threats and a few projectiles. They aren’t going to give up their strategic windfall easily, as two bogus but highly touted peace deals now demonstrate.

Rich Lowry is editor of the National Review.
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Glp-1 agonists might help weight and alcohol

DEAR DR. ROACH: My brother-in-law is a lovely man, but for years, he’s suffered from obesity. He also gambles and drinks alcohol too much. I hesitate to get too involved, but I recently read that the new weight-loss drugs based on GLP-1 agonists are also helpful in reducing alcohol and gambling addictions. This sounds too good to be true. Is it? – D.N.A.



The evidence is very strong that GLP-1 agonists like tirzepatide (Zepbound) and semaglutide (Wegovy) help people lose weight. GLP-1 agonists mimic natural GLP-1 hormones. About 80% to 90% of people will experience a weight loss of more than 5% of their initial body weight. For people who are severely obese, people with obesity and metabolic complications (diabetes, prediabetes or metabolic syndrome), and people with other weight-related complications (sleep apnea and arthritis), the benefits of these medicines probably outweigh the risks just for the weight loss.

The evidence for GLP-1 agonists helping with alcohol use disorder is now quite strong, with studies showing significant reductions in alcohol-related hospitalizations and a reduction in problem drinking. The evidence for gambling disorders is preliminary based on the understanding of how these drugs work in the brain. There aren’t any strong clinical data at this time supporting the use of GLP-1 agonists for a gambling disorder.

Still, given the clear benefits in weight reduction and problem drinking, these drugs might be a good choice for your brother-in-law – if both he and his physician agree. It might also help with his gambling problem, which I’ve seen take a terrible toll on a person’s social and financial life.

Finally, I was supervising a medical resident yesterday when we discussed the effect of these drugs on heart health. The evidence is also strong that these medications decrease the risk of heart disease – both in people with and without diabetes. Multiple mechanisms have been proposed for this heart protection, but it isn’t exactly clear which ones are the most important.

For those of us who lived through the approval of previous weight-loss drugs, which were later found to cause heart damage, the news about heart protection is welcome. Still, we’ve been using these drugs for less than 10 years, and it’s wise to use them only when there’s a clear benefit in doing so.

DEAR DR. ROACH: What are the long-term health risks of being exposed to fumes, such as in hair or nail salons or automobile repair shops? Can these fumes affect your internal organs? – C.R.C.

Lungs are the primary organ affected by fumes during occupational exposure. Chest tightness, wheezing and allergic symptoms are common after an exposure to benzene, formaldehyde, toluene, and other substances that are commonly used in hair and nail salons – often at levels that exceed the safe thresholds. Half of technicians in one study were affected.

Auto body and paint workers are also exposed to the same (or very similar) chemicals, and they can develop asthma at a rate that is 80 times higher than the general population. In addition to effects on the lungs, occupational exposure to these chemicals increases the risk of some cancers, especially leukemia (benzene), sinus and nasal cancer (formaldehyde), and nervous system cancers (benzene).

Although personal protection equipment can reduce these exposures, many workers don’t use them regularly. Improved ventilation and less-toxic chemicals are needed to protect workers.

Dr. Roach regrets that he is unable to answer individual questions, but will incorporate them in the column whenever possible. Readers may email questions to ToYourGoodHealth@med.cornell.edu. ©2026 North America Synd., Inc. All Rights Reserved.



Moore Texas by Roger Moore
Clute, TX hosts The Great Misquito Festival every year in July honoring the real “State Bird of Texas”.

CryptoQuip

This is a simple substitution cipher in which each letter used stands for another. If you think that X equals O, it will equal O throughout the puzzle. Solution is accomplished by trial and error.

Clue: K equals L

S F D O Q X M C F D F K K Q X O B I
X Q F I R B M D C X M N G F K A B D O
F N M D O R M M N F D L S F B T L K B A Q
C K M G Q X T : F D F T R Q X - X B T A .

Answer Page 5

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Fraud task force has been busy



by Freddy Groves

You have to love it when criminals get caught after they think they’ve gotten away with their crimes. As part of the executive order (signed in March) calling for an interagency Task Force to Eliminate Fraud, the VA’s Office of Inspector General (VAOIG) worked with numerous other government agencies to nail over 450 criminals. The total fraud for all the schemes was over \$6.5 billion.

Scammers on the newly created Most Wanted Fraudsters List included 90 doctors across 45 states, with authorities going as far as Cyprus, Estonia and the Philippines to bring back the thieves. In the case of the VA, the task force dismantled fraud schemes that were stealing education, health care and benefits from veterans.

Agencies that didn’t talk to each other (and certainly didn’t seem to cooperate

with each other in the past) are now required to work together to rout out fraud and save money.

It’s about time.

And ideally more agencies will take a look at the VAOIG and follow their lead, or at least learn from them.

I’ve been a big fan of the VAOIG, and over the years I’ve said more than once, “Whatever their agency budget is, double it!” While other agencies appeared (at least from a user’s point of view when trying to get services) to struggle to do their jobs, the VAOIG just kept moving along, going after thieves, inspecting VA facilities and uncovering the deficiencies and making recommendations. In the past 12 months alone they’ve made 158 reports, 741 recommendations and saved \$3.9 billion.

If you want to report fraud, waste, abuse or illegal activity related to the VA, you can submit a complaint on the VAOIG website. See www.vaogig.gov/hotline/online-forms. Click on “Frequently Asked Questions” to be sure

the issue you want to report is covered by the VAOIG. If it is, click on “Submit a Complaint.” If you need whistleblower protection, there is a link for that as well.

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- Honey has amazing properties, and one of them is its antiseptic powers. You can even use it on pimples. Just a tiny dab will help keep the bacteria responsible for breakouts from taking over.
- Here’s a workout tip: Rotate among a few pairs of running shoes to get the best life out of them. Rotating gives them a chance to dry out between runs, and runners who practice this have a 39% lower chance of injury, according to a Luxembourg research firm.

GO FIGURE!

The idea of Go Figure is to arrive at the figures given at the bottom and right-hand columns of the diagram by following the arithmetic signs in the order they are given (that is, from left to right and top to bottom). Use only the numbers below the diagram to complete its blank squares and use each of the nine numbers only once.

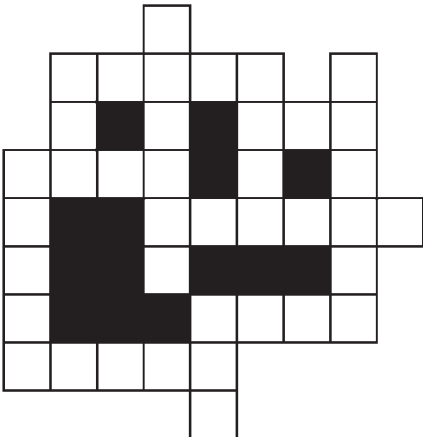
Answer Page 5

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	+		-		= 2			
+		-		+				
	+		+		= 15			
÷		+		÷				
	+		×		= 77			
=		=		=				
1		10		2				
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9



- U M D
- M E A D U S
- L I E N T
- ♥ U H M C
- L A M E G A
- E I R
- ♥ C E D I
- M U T R O
- M H A
- S M A T L O
- ♥ A C I M G
- ♥ E L D I



Unscramble these twelve letter strings to form each into an ordinary word (ex. **HAGNEC** becomes **CHANGE**). Prepare to use only ONE word from any marked (♥) letter string as each unscrambles into more than one word (ex. ♥**RATHE** becomes **HATER** or **EARTH** or **HEART**). Fit each string’s word either across or down to knot all twelve strings together.

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Answer Page 5

Weekly SUDOKU

5	2		3	4	8		7	9
		3		6	9			
9	4		2			6		8
	1		5	2		8	6	
6			1		3		4	
						5	9	1
			9				8	
	6		8	7			5	4
		2	4	5		3		

Place a number in the empty boxes in such a way that each row across, each column down and each small 9-box square contains all of the numbers from one to nine.

DIFFICULTY THIS WEEK: ♦

- ♦ Moderate
- ♦♦ Challenging
- ♦♦♦ HOO BOY!

Answer Page 5

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