



## NEWSBRIEFS

### Toy drive for local hospital

The Interact Club of Northwest Early College High School, a service club of Rotary International, is hosting a toy drive for patients at El Paso Children's Hospital during the Christmas season. Northwest students say that they organized the effort to bless the children in loving memory of former local Canutillo resident and relative Juan Ramos. "Juan was a loving father, grandfather, husband and a Canutillo community member," Jesus Salgado-Ramos, Interact Club president and toy drive student organizer, said. "He lost his life to cancer on January 21 this year." All toy donations can be dropped off at Northwest Early College High School front office, 6701 South Desert Blvd., until December 20, 2019. Call (915) 877-1707 for more information.

— Liza Rodriguez

### Nice surprise

What began as a disappointing discovery after a long drive from west El Paso to Fabens evolved into an exciting trip to Arlington's AT&T Stadium for Jorge Cardona and his family. Cardona was the winner of the Fabens Cotton Valley Lions Club raffle of Dallas Cowboys game tickets and \$500 travel money for the Thanksgiving game. He and his son had driven to Fabens for a car show but were disappointed to learn they had the wrong date. The show had already happened. The two stopped at the San Eli Market in Fabens for a rest stop and snacks and were greeted by Fabens Lions selling raffle tickets. The tickets were only \$5, and Cardona believed it was for a worthy cause, so he bought one. He was more than a little surprised when called by Lions Secretary/Treasurer Sam Ponzio to come pick up his check and download the three tickets to his phone. Cardona said then that his wife, son, and young daughter were all planning on the holiday trip. The Fabens Lions plan to use proceeds from the raffle for improvements to their softball fields as well as for community support such as their upcoming Christmas basket distribution. Cardona reported afterwards that he the family had a great trip despite the Dallas Cowboys losing to the Buffalo Bills, 26-15.

— Sally Ponzio

*If the Christmas sale season begins to start any earlier, Santa Claus will be wearing Bermuda shorts.*

— Quips & Quotes

# El Paso Water breaks ground on Montana Vista wastewater project

*Phase I plans call for installation of more than 39 miles of pipe and 400 manholes*



— Photo courtesy El Paso Water

**During the Montana Vista wastewater project groundbreaking ceremony that was held recently, El Paso Water President and CEO John Balliew, above, stated that having a centralized wastewater supply system will improve the community, make it safer, and make property more valuable. "Projects like this take a lot of time and effort, but we couldn't have done it without the support of the community," he said.**

By Alfredo Vasquez  
Special to the Courier

EL PASO COUNTY – Hundreds of households that are scattered throughout El Paso County's far eastside neighborhoods will finally have access to fresh drinking water, as the first phase of the Montana Vista wastewater project gets underway.

After several years of working to secure funds for the project, with the passage of Proposition 2 in this past November 8th general election, Montana Vista community residents immediately benefited because the new law allocated additional funding for the Texas Water Development Board's (TWDB) Economically Distressed Areas program.

As a result, TWDB announced that it was providing \$11.4 million in grant funding for the initial construction work of the wastewater project, which will include installing over 39 miles of pipe and placing about 400 manholes.

The project is expected to provide first-time wastewater services to about 800 households in the Montana Vista area, according to El Paso Water officials. However, a completion date for all of the construction work is yet to be confirmed.

To acknowledge the beginning of this

long-awaited water services project, an official groundbreaking ceremony for Phase I was held November 20, at the Ruben Estrella Park (14590 Greg Drive) in the far east neighborhood. El Paso Water President & CEO John Balliew, State Representative Dr. Mary E. Gonzalez, Texas Water Development Board Regional Manager Lee Huntoon, and El Paso County Commissioner Vince Perez were among the dignitaries who participated in the groundbreaking event.

El Paso Water officials stated that they have been working with residents, local and state representatives, and government agencies, including the City of El Paso, to identify fund sources for the project since 2015.

In her address to the groundbreaking ceremony audience, State Rep. González recalled overcoming earlier funding obstacles. González asserted that beginning this project took a lot of teamwork. "It is a story of perseverance; it is a story of unity; it is a story that when community and elected officials and our leaders come together, we can transform our local spaces. That's what we need to do for this space and for the other areas that still don't have water and or wastewater infrastructure," she stated.

"Everybody needs access to water and

See WATER, Page 6

## Christmas, New Years are the top days for home candle fires

*Ten tips for safety*

By Jim Gilloon  
Special to the Courier

EL PASO COUNTY – The 2019 holiday season is here, and the Greater Phoenix Red Cross, wants everyone to stay safe as they decorate their homes. Decorations like trees, lights and candles increase the risk of home fires during the holidays – with Christmas, New Year's Eve and New Year's Day being the top three days for home candle fires in the U.S. The following ten decorating tips for this time of year will help increase fire-safety.

- Use battery-operated candles. If you must use candles, never leave them unattended, keep them away from anything that could burn, and place them out of reach from children and pets.

- Check all holiday light cords to make sure they aren't frayed or broken. Don't string too many strands of lights together

– no more than three per extension cord.

- When decorating outside, make sure decorations are for outdoor use and fasten lights securely to your home or trees. If using hooks or nails outside, make sure they are insulated to avoid an electrocution or fire hazard.

- If buying an artificial tree, look for the fire-resistant label. When putting it up, keep it away from fireplaces, radiators and other sources of heat.

- If getting a live tree, make sure it's fresh and water it to keep it fresh. Bend the needles up and down to make sure no needles fall off.

- Don't use electric lights on metallic trees.

- If hanging stockings on the fireplace mantel, don't light the fireplace.

- Turn off all holiday lights when going to bed or leaving the house.

- If using older decorations, check their labels. Some older tinsel is lead-based. If using angel hair, wear gloves to avoid irritation. Avoid breathing in

artificial snow.

- If using a ladder, be extra careful. Make sure to have good, stable placement and wear shoes that allow for good traction.

The Red Cross also advises people to test their smoke alarms and practice their home fire escape plan until everyone in their household can get out in two minutes or less. Visit [redcross.org/homefires](http://redcross.org/homefires) for more information and free resources, or download the free Red Cross Emergency App (search "American Red Cross" in app stores).

Home fires are the most frequent disaster. Every eight minutes, the Red Cross responds to a disaster in the U.S. – most often, home fires. In addition, the Red Cross is working with partners to prevent fire-related deaths and injuries by installing free smoke alarms in high-risk communities and helping families create escape plans through its Home Fire Campaign – that has saved at least over 658 lives across the country since launching in October 2014. Volunteers from the Arizona-New Mexico and El Paso region and local partners have installed more than 9,920 free smoke alarms and made more than 4,600 households safer from the threat of home fires.

## View from here By Robert Charles

# No one is above the law – including Congress

House Speaker Nancy Pelosi and House Impeachment leader Adam Schiff (D-VA) spent November repeating a time-tested line: “No one is above the law.” This weekend, Michigan Congresswoman Debbie Dingell trumpeted it. Next week, Judiciary Committee Chairman Jerrold Nadler (D-NY) will. The line raises problems, little discussed.

First, the American people are not stupid. They know laws apply equally to all Americans. They did not need Mr. Schiff – in self-righteous, nauseating, hardly impartial hearings – repeating the mantra. Repeating it did little good, since polls show more Americans now disfavor impeachment than before his hearings.

The bigger point: Hypocrisy is thicker in DC than snow in the Rockies. If any part of the US Government places itself “above the law,” it is Congress [both parties]. Let’s be specific.

Despite “due process” guarantees in our Constitution, House Democrats cheerfully ran roughshod over the rules of civil procedure, legal precedents, House rules and “Robert’s Rules” during Intelligence and Judiciary Committee hearings. To be clear: These were lawyers; they knew what they were doing.

Points of order, clarifications, and honest questions from Republicans were hammered down; witnesses answering questions posed by Republicans were cut off. Material witnesses asked by Republicans, which could have ended impeachment, were disallowed.

“Fair and impartial”

requirements for grand jurors – as Mr. Schiff styled himself – were tossed out. Instead, dark Star Chamber justice returned. Guilt was found in private, witnesses selected that might support the finding, and a crass political case pressed. Truly, these members feel one thing: They are above the law.

Only, it gets worse. The line – “no one is above the law” – is worth a closer look. Here are facts Congress does *not* want you to know. Congress regularly puts itself “above the law.” Examples make a compelling case.

Recently, Americans learned their tax dollars were secretly used by Congress to settle sexual harassment claims against offending members. What? Yes, big settlements, all private. Is that what Americans get to do – use someone else’s money to settle claims for their bad acts? Did Ms. Pelosi and Mr. Schiff not know about that? Does that not qualify as “above the law?”

Then American tax dollars finance dozens of international junkets by members, luxury trips around the world – all conveniently returning at night, so no one sees the members’ largess on return. Full cost is never revealed, but trips use high-cost military aircraft, decked out with tailored seating, food, drinks and communications. “Congressional Delegation” or “CODEL” trips hopscotch fancy hotels, enjoying well-stocked “control rooms,” adult beverages, a healthy “per diem” for each member – your tax dollars at work. Some trips run

north of \$100,000. Did someone not tell you about those? Without public accounting, is that not “above the law?”

How about health care? Congress not only has private medical care – from travel inoculations to flu shots – in the Capitol’s basement. They get special deals. As described in the *Washington Examiner*, September 2017, Congress enjoys “several types of special treatment unavailable to the public” on health care. They are eligible for a small-business exchange, despite federal and DC laws *prohibiting* it.

More, they are “the only large employer in the country that can make tax-free contributions toward its employees’ exchange-plan premiums,” in conflict with federal laws. And Congress is “the only group of federal workers who receive Federal Employee Health Benefit (FEHB) premium contributions for non-FEHB coverage.” Wouldn’t you say that’s placing oneself “above the law?”

Congress is “above the law” in even bigger ways. Here are some. Despite all the hoopla about that “whistleblower” – who apparently consulted with House Democrats – Congress exempts themselves from that same “Whistleblower Protection Act in 1989.” The act aims to reduce “waste, mismanagement or lawbreaking” for taxpayers – only it does not apply to Congress. Isn’t that “above the law?”

Or consider the Occupational Health and Safety Act (OSHA), which empowers the US Labor Department to investigate health and safety violations – except

in Congress. OSHA can even subpoena records from anyone, except Congress. Good luck in health and safety there.

Congress exempted itself from record keeping on workplace discrimination. Accordingly, the Age Discrimination in Employment Act, Americans with Disabilities Act and other laws force private employers and executive branch to “retain personnel records,” but not Congress.

Or how about this one – if a private-sector employer “retaliates” against an employee for reporting “health or safety hazards,” Laborer can sue the employer, no cost to the employee. Meantime, Congress forces an employee who wants to sue Congress – to foot the bill. That discourages suits, don’t you think? Clever – and above the law. Congress also exempts itself from posting “notices on worker rights,” federally required for the private sector. And Congress need not comply with the No Fear Act, which trains executive branch employees on rights; Congress exempted itself.

In one offensive exemption, Congress escapes compliance with the Freedom of Information Act or FOIA. FOIA requests might be very helpful right now, but no. Congress is not compelled to be transparent under FOIA; they put themselves outside FOIA’s reach. The same is true for the Privacy Act; it bars release of private material by federal agencies, but not Congress. That helps Congress leak with greater impunity.

The list is long – and deserves bright light, especially now. The House is hardly being transparent. The point is simple. The next time Speaker Pelosi, Chairman Schiff, Chairman

See LAW, Page 4

## The write stuff

### Editor:

I am writing on behalf of the San Elizario Genealogy & Historical Society. Our annual Luminaria Festival will be held on Saturday 21 December 2019 from 5:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. There will be a Posada celebration and a Christmas bazaar at the Veterans Memorial Plaza located in front of the San Elizario Chapel. Over 5,000 luminarias will be lit in the historic district after sundown. There will be a piñata for the children and live entertainment. Mr. and Mrs. Santa Claus will also be present. The evening will culminate with the annual bicycle and toy giveaway; our goal is 40 bikes.

This giveaway is only made possible through the generous funding we have received from businesses and members of our community. We are primarily seeking bicycles for all ages, from toddlers to teenagers, boys and girls. In addition, we are also seeking bike safety equipment (helmets, reflectors, lights, water

bottles, etc) and toys, if possible. Although we prefer actual bikes and toys, you can send a check made out of SEGHS; please note in the memo line that your donation is for the festival. We will forward a receipt to you thereafter.

We hope people and businesses will be able to donate. Any support will be highly appreciated by our community, especially the kids. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me or Director Pilar Muñoz. SEGHS is a 501 c(3) non-profit organization and is housed in the historic Los Portales Museum, right next to the San Elizario Chapel.

We welcome you to join us during our celebration to see your donations in action. You can view information and photos of last year’s celebration in our online newsletter on pages 10-12 (<http://www.SanElizarioGenealogy.com/Winter2019ONLINE.pdf>).

Diana Taylor  
Los Portales Museum  
(915) 851-1682



**Moments  
in time**  
THE HISTORY CHANNEL

- On Dec. 9, 1979, a commission of scientists declares that smallpox has been eradicated. The disease, which carries a 30% chance of death for those who contract it, is the only infectious disease that has officially been eradicated.

- On Dec. 10, 1901, the first Nobel Prizes are awarded in Stockholm, Sweden, on the fifth anniversary of the death of Alfred Nobel, the inventor of dynamite and other explosives. It is believed that Nobel created the prizes out of moral regret over the increasingly lethal uses of his inventions in war.

- On Dec. 11, 1961, the ferry carrier USNS Core arrives in Saigon with the first U.S. helicopter unit, including 33 helicopters and 400 air and ground crewmen. Their assignment was to airlift South Vietnamese Army troops into combat.

- On Dec. 12, 1980, American oil tycoon Armand Hammer pays over \$5 million at auction for an almost 500-year-old notebook containing writings and detailed drawings by artist Leonardo da Vinci, all relating to water and how it moved.

- On Dec. 13, 1577, English seaman Francis Drake sets out from Plymouth, England, with five ships and 164 men on a mission to raid Spanish holdings on the Pacific coast of the New World. Three years later, Drake’s return to Plymouth marked the first circumnavigation of the earth by a British explorer.

- On Dec. 14, 1911, Norwegian Roald Amundsen becomes the first explorer to reach the South Pole, beating his British rival, Robert Falcon Scott, by more than a month. Amundsen used sleigh dogs, while Scott employed motor sledges, ponies and dogs.

- On Dec. 15, 1945, Gen. Douglas MacArthur, as Supreme Commander of Allied Powers in the Pacific, brings an end to Shintoism as Japan’s established religion. The Shinto system included the belief that the emperor, in this case Hirohito, was divine.

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## WEST TEXAS COUNTY COURIER

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# The check-the-box impeachment

Nancy Pelosi said she undertook impeachment "prayerfully," and apparently what she was praying was that she could get it over with as soon as possible.

The House [proposes to send (at time of publication)] a flagrantly incomplete factual record to the Senate as the basis of an effort to remove a sitting president for the first time in our history.

Pelosi has affected a posture of heavy-heartedness since the outset of the process, saying that "there's no joy in this" and urging a somber spirit as Democrats pursue the facts wherever they may take them – so long as that's not too far into an election year.

In substantive terms, the Democrats had a good set of public hearings before Adam Schiff's intelligence committee in recent weeks – with one gaping hole. They didn't have anyone with first-hand knowledge of Trump's directives on Ukraine or his state of mind. The closest was EU ambassador Gordon Sondland, who, still, could only "presume" a quid pro quo over the defense aid.

There are people who probably don't have to presume, and Sondland named some of them: Trump's personal counsel Rudy Giuliani, acting White House chief of staff Mick Mulvaney, Vice President Mike Pence and

Secretary of State Mike Pompeo. They all were closer to this than Sondland, yet Democrats are happy to make the guy from the outer bounds of the inner circle their "star witness" and forgo the inner circle. To get the more central witnesses requires litigation since they all have at least colorable claims of privilege. The Democrats don't want to wait for the courts.

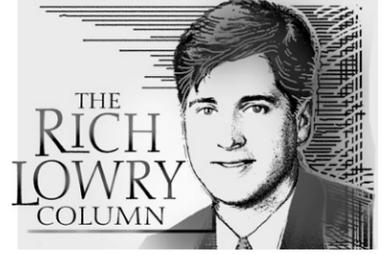
The minimum requirement of a

historic impeachment case, only the fourth in our history, would seem to be a complete account of the facts. Schiff used to say as much: "We have to flesh out all of the facts for the American people. The seriousness of the matter and the danger to our country demands nothing less." Now, the seriousness and the danger are demanding that Democrats rush things along so the president can be impeached

by the end of the year.

No matter how often Democrats say, "Let's honor the Constitution," their actions say, "Let's check the box."

Democrats have had the difficulty from the beginning of trying to build an edifice of impeachment and removal atop the narrow foundation of the Ukraine episode, and now they aren't even going to finish the edifice, content with what they could complete in

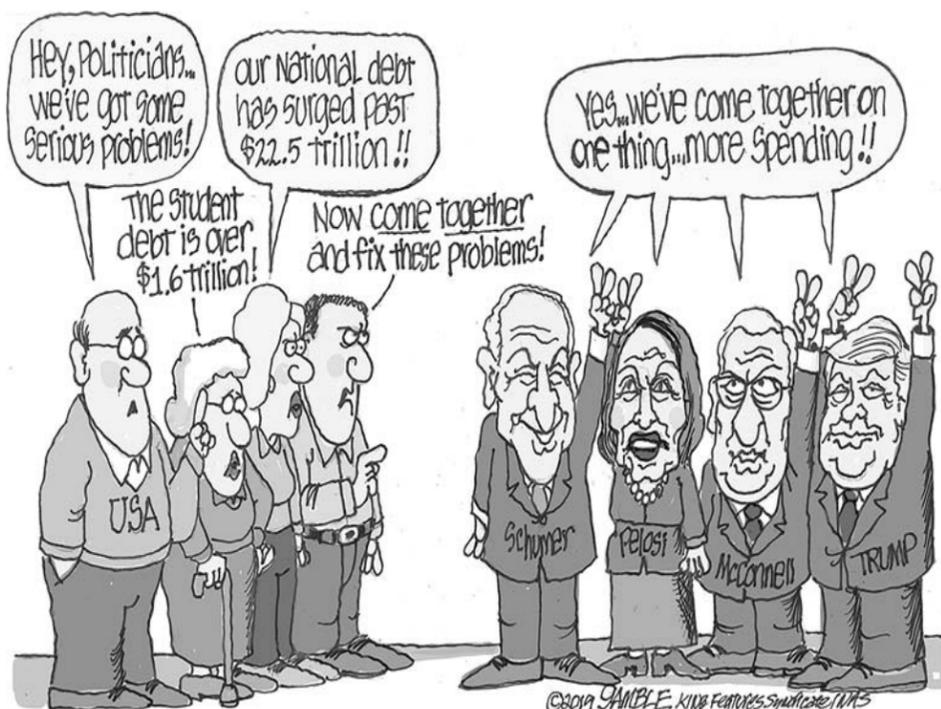
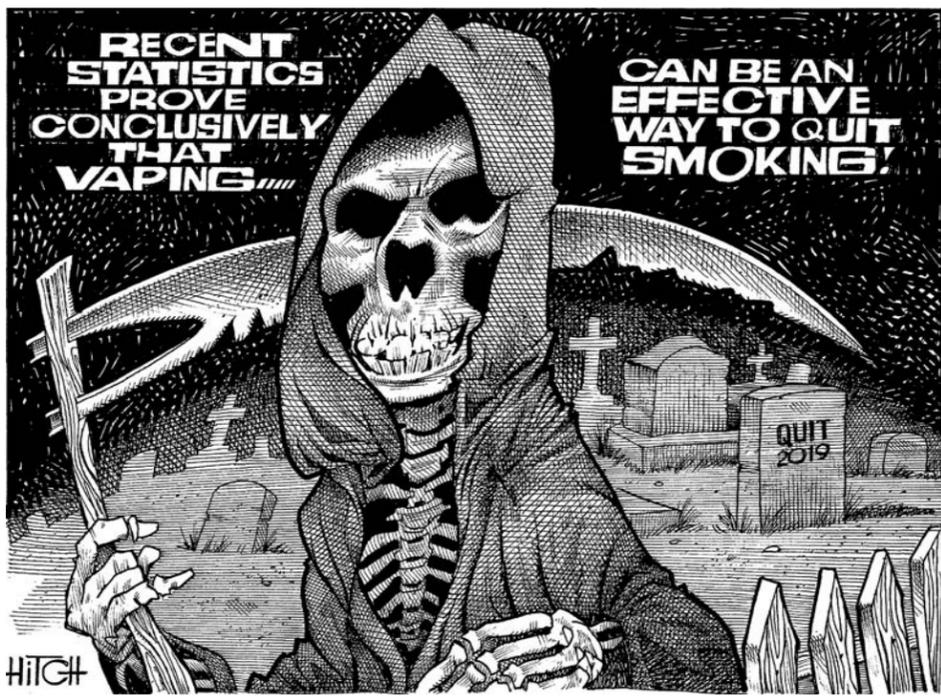
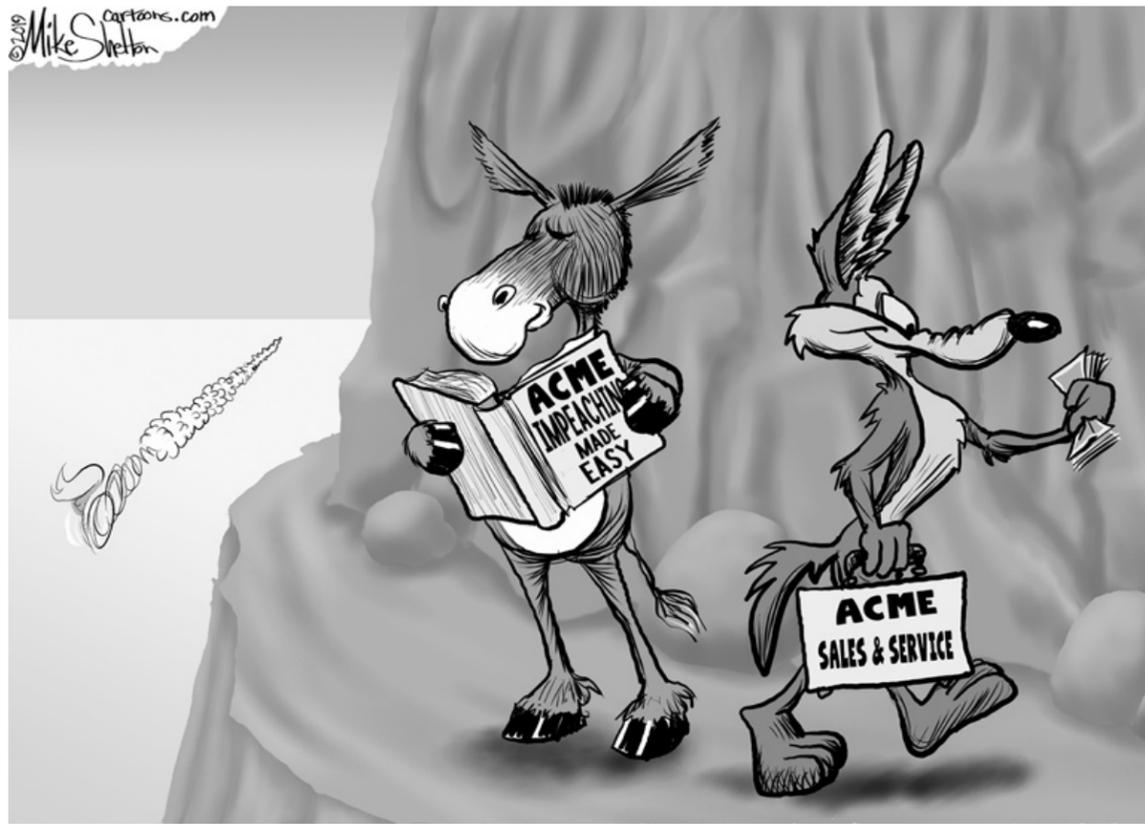


a two-month investigation largely reliant on the testimony of people who weren't around for the main events (former U.S. ambassador to Ukraine Marie Yovanovitch) or were out of the loop (former Trump Russia adviser Fiona Hill).

With every day that passes it becomes a little more absurd to say Trump should be impeached and removed when the public can make its own verdict in the election. Besides, Democrats know that impeachment is going nowhere in the Senate, so why bother locking down the case to make it worthy of the gravity of the process?

They might as well go with what they have, a partisan impeachment pursued on a political timetable. During Bill Clinton's impeachment, it was his defenders who were saying, "Let's move on." Now, it's Trump's pursuers, who prayerfully and sorrowfully want to get impeachment over with.

Rich Lowry is editor of the National Review. (c) 2019 by King Features Synd., Inc.



# Moe selected for US seminar

By Jim Heiney  
Special to the Courier

EL PASO COUNTY – Keri Moe, Associate Vice President of External Relations, Communication and Development at El Paso Community College (EPCC), was competitively selected to participate in an Alumni Thematic International Exchange Seminar (Alumni TIES).

Moe was formerly a Fulbright-Hays Scholar in Morocco and is the only community college educator selected to participate in the “Art, Culture, and Transforming Conflict” seminar being held in Santa Fe, New Mexico. The seminar

will convene approximately 40 alumni of U.S. government-sponsored exchange programs who will bring unique skills and expertise in leveraging the arts for social change, community reconciliation and conflict transformation to bridge differences and build peaceful communities.

Alumni will join subject-matter experts and U.S. government officials to discuss current challenges, share best practices, engage in dialogue to learn from one another, and develop solutions for peacebuilding, social change, community reconciliation, and conflict transformation through the arts.

The program is being implemented by World Learning



– Photo courtesy EPCC

**Keri Moe**

on behalf of the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs at the U.S. Department of State.

## Law

From Page 2

Nadler and House Democrats [or any Republicans] wax on about transparency, using that “no one is above the law” line, someone should ask: Does that include Congress?

Bottom line on the law: No institution in the US Government more unapologetically tramples “equality before the law” – than rule-busting, law-exempting, globetrotting congressional leaders. Not all subscribe to this dodge, but those in control for years – like Speaker Nancy Pelosi – know the secrets. It is time the American people did. As this Speaker is fond of saying, “no one is above the law.” That should include Congress.

## Strange BUT TRUE

By Samantha Weaver

- It was Lebanese poet Kahlil Gibran who made the following sage observation: “I have learnt silence from the talkative, toleration from the intolerant, and kindness from the unkind; yet strange, I am ungrateful to these teachers.”

- Those who study such things have determined that one out of every four alcoholic drinks consumed in the world has vodka in it.

- Famed actor Clark Gable, dubbed the King of Hollywood, was once a hobo.

- At some point you’ve almost certainly heard a coward described as “lily-livered,” but did you ever wonder where that expression came from? It was once believed that the seat of courage in the human body was the liver; therefore, someone who was timid presumably lacked blood in the liver, causing that organ to become white.

- Every day more money is printed for Monopoly than for the U.S. Treasury.

- There once was a law in Marshalltown, Iowa, stating that it was illegal for a horse to eat a fire hydrant. And in Oregon, it was at one time illegal for a dead person to serve on a jury.

- Would the history of medicine be different if Sigmund Freud had gone into law instead of psychoanalysis? That was his original aspiration in life – to be a lawyer.

- Karaoke and karate: Other than the fact that they are both from Japan, you wouldn’t think they have much in common. However, they both have the same root word, “kara,” which means empty. “Oke” means “voice” and “te” means “hand;” hence, “karaoke” is “empty voice,” and “karate” is “empty hand.”

- Half of all Americans live within 50 miles of their birthplace.

Thought for the Day: “He who buys what he does not need steals from himself.”  
– Swedish proverb

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## START YOUR NEW YEARS RESOLUTIONS FOR A GOOD CAUSE



Saturday, Jan. 11, 2020  
8 a.m., Horizon High School, 14651 Horizon Blvd

Register in person or by mail at Up and Running 1475 Geroge Dieter, Suite O, or online at [www.raceadventuresunlimited.com](http://www.raceadventuresunlimited.com)

Download registration form at [www.clintweb.net](http://www.clintweb.net)

Race day registration and packet pick-up 7:15 - 7:45 a.m., rain or shine.

Fee: \$25 by Jan. 10, \$30 after.  
Students and teams of ten, \$10 per person.

- Trophies and medals to top finishers
- First 300 registrants receive a t-shirt

The following screenings and health information will be available:

- Blood Pressure
- Iron Deficiency
- The Hospitals of Providence Café
- Height & Weight (BMI)
- Desert Imaging - Mammogram Screenings
- Superior Vision - Vision Screenings
- Children’s Health Insurance Program (CHIP)
- EP Fitness - Fitness Tips
- Flu Shots
- Sam’s Club
- Giveaways
- Planet Fitness – Wellness Tips

For more information, please contact Public Relations at 915-926-4058

Proceeds from this race go towards the Superintendent’s Scholarship Fund for Clint ISD graduating seniors

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### CryptoQuip Answer

In a certain Arab country, I wonder if some naval officers would have to be the Yemen yeomen.

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# Cowboys' tightrope of a season now in complete freefall

By Steve Escajeda  
Special to the Courier

When I was a little boy I always loved going to the circus.

There were always three rings set up on the arena floor, and one-by-one, different acts would do their thing in their respective ring.

It was quite exciting to watch the elephants in one ring, the lions and their tamers in another, and in still another, clowns were stumbling over each other getting out of a car no bigger than the doghouse we had in our backyard.

But after a while, it was very difficult to know what to watch with everything going on at the same time. It became almost impossible to focus. It was total chaos... it was a complete circus!

And though I haven't been to the circus in years, I've kind of get the same sensation watching the Dallas Cowboys.

I mean the Cowboys may not be the Greatest Show on Earth, but they still are America's Team.

That makes them the most followed (loved or hated) team in the NFL.

The Cowboys started the season 3-0 with wins over inferior opponents. But everyone knows you don't start your show with a bang, you slowly build up to it.

They looked so good back then that both lovers and haters were saying that this was a legitimate Super Bowl contender.

The only problem is, ever since that fast start, the 'Boys are just 3-7 and are

actually starring a possible losing season in the face.

Of course the biggest question is, "what in the name of Ringling Brothers happened?"

Everyone was celebrating all the circus stars; Dak Prescott, Zeke Elliott, Demarcus Lawrence, Amari Cooper, Jason Garrett and even Jerry Jones.

And what an arena to perform on, stars everywhere, stars on their helmets and uniforms.

But apparently, there are also things called falling stars.

It's no secret that the Cowboys haven't won a single game this season against a team with a winning record. They've beaten up on the lowly Giants twice, the Redskins, Dolphins, Lions and the Eagles.

And though they've lost four games by just four points or less, it just proves that they haven't learned how to win the close ones.

When that trend starts, it can usually be traced back to coaching.

Let's face it, Jason Garrett has never been accused of being a good play-caller, or a good manager of the clock late in games, or a master of knowing when to go for it on fourth down and when not to, or a master motivator who will get in a guy's face when he needs to.

But there is no doubt that he leads the NFL in hand-clapping and butt-slapping.

And then there is the circus owner.

Jerry Jones, who has stayed with Garrett through the good and the bad (mostly bad), has to make a couple of decisions in

the off-season.

I believe one decision has been made. Garrett's contract, which ends after this season, will not be renewed. The other decision will be who to replace him with?

Any coach in Americas would love to take over this team, which is filled with talented players.

But then he would have to deal with that flamboyant circus owner, who loves the bright lights more than most of his performers.

And no matter what the new coach wants to do, Jones will always remind him who is paying for this Big Top.

Anyway, back to this season. What happened? The Cowboys suddenly can't

score, they can't run at will, they can't tackle, they can't kick, they can't catch a football and they can't block.

What's worse is that they don't look like they're having any fun out on the field. Earlier in the season, the players had a swagger on both offense and defense.

Now, they look disinterested, no heart, no urgency, no purpose.

Is that a reflection of the coach? Let's put it this way, how many times have you seen that out of a Bill Belichick coached team?

For the Cowboys to be known as the Greatest Show on Earth, changes will have to be made.

Until then, they're just have to settle on being the NFL's greatest disappointment.

## PUBLIC NOTICE TO ALL INTERESTED PERSONS AND PARTIES:

The *West Texas County Courier* will not publish the last two weeks of December. The first issue of 2020 will be January 2.

The *West Texas County Courier* office will close beginning Wednesday, December 11, 2019. The office will open again on Monday, December 30, 2019.

Archives: [www.wtxcc.com](http://www.wtxcc.com)

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**TRUE TEXAS FACTS** by Roger Moore

In 1977, a patron at Amarillo's Big Texan Cafe ate a 4 1/2 lb. steak in 11 1/2 minutes.



**Water**

From Page 1

also access to health. So, it was important that we collaborated, in which we were able to provide these persons in the community with the access that is much needed," City of El Paso Department of Public Health Project Coordinator Modinat Lawal told reporters.

Residents of the rapidly growing Montana Vista community have been forced to rely on septic systems ever since developers bought up the vacant desert land in the 1950s and 1960s and turned it into unincorporated subdivisions—areas outside city limits where no one had authority to enforce building standards. And, if these septic tank systems are not properly maintained, they may seep wastewater, which poses a health hazard.

County reports indicate that there are hundreds of septic tanks that are used in the far east communities. Often, residents complain that these septic tanks frequently overflow, which create rivers of sewage in backyards and that in the summer the smell can be horrific.

All this time, because it was perfectly legal in Texas, neither the state nor the county stepped in when developers bought the cheap land and

turned around and sold parcels, with empty promises to later add running water and sewer systems, to mostly low-income immigrants who wanted to have a home of their own. Consequently, the new landowners in these unincorporated border subdivisions, called colonias, started building homes from scratch without building plans or codes.

It was not until 1989 that the Texas legislature asked state agencies to come up with rules that would ensure that new residential developments had access to water and sewer services. Now, cities can regulate development in Texas, but in unincorporated areas, counties still have little regulatory power.

Nonetheless, the Montana Vista project "is essentially going to complete the community and open up opportunities for economic development to come this way, once you have both water and wastewater services," stated Lee Huntoon, a regional manager for TWDB.

During the groundbreaking ceremony, EP Water officials also expressed their gratitude to Montana Vista resident Martina Silva for her longtime advocacy in leading the efforts to get wastewater service to her community. "Generations to come are not going to live the way we live, and for me it's something very big," Silva said. "I am very proud."

**Socorro Independent School District  
Statement of Revenues, Expenditures and Changes in Fund Balance  
Governmental Funds  
For the Year Ended June 30, 2019**

Data Control Codes	10 General Fund	Child Nutrition Program	Debt Service Fund	Capital Projects 2018-2019	Other Funds	Total Governmental Funds
<b>REVENUES:</b>						
5700 Total Local and Intermediate Sources	\$ 103,184,329	\$ 3,420,481	\$ 41,723,648	\$ 4,042,082	\$ 345,207	\$ 152,715,747
5800 State Program Revenues	274,906,617	131,802	20,253,644	—	3,404,268	298,696,331
5900 Federal Program Revenues	7,125,246	26,336,215	—	—	24,825,220	58,286,681
5020 Total Revenues	385,216,192	29,888,498	61,977,292	4,042,082	28,574,695	509,698,759
<b>EXPENDITURES:</b>						
<b>Current:</b>						
0011 Instruction	230,082,406	—	—	28,886	18,889,315	249,000,607
0012 Instructional Resources and Media Services	5,777,157	—	—	—	320,893	6,098,050
0013 Curriculum and Instructional Staff Development	2,741,621	—	—	—	3,261,818	6,003,439
0021 Instructional Leadership	5,120,479	—	—	—	1,130,284	6,250,763
0023 School Leadership	26,479,471	—	—	548	81,536	26,561,555
0031 Guidance, Counseling and Evaluation Services	11,462,046	—	—	815	3,148,754	14,611,615
0032 Social Work Services	1,086,072	—	—	—	624,226	1,710,298
0033 Health Services	5,172,406	—	—	6,774	195,762	5,374,942
0034 Student (Pupil) Transportation	15,050,589	—	—	—	—	15,050,589
0035 Food Services	—	28,363,350	—	—	—	28,363,350
0036 Extracurricular Activities	11,210,780	—	—	—	158,591	11,369,371
0041 General Administration	9,526,267	—	—	—	168,064	9,694,331
0051 Facilities Maintenance and Operations	44,074,493	—	—	—	106,722	44,181,215
0052 Security and Monitoring Services	8,310,189	—	—	—	57,223	8,367,412
0053 Data Processing Services	5,756,197	—	—	—	135,960	5,892,157
0061 Community Services	748,695	—	—	—	1,309,482	2,058,177
<b>Debt Service:</b>						
0071 Principal on Long Term Debt	1,735,060	—	12,993,517	—	—	14,728,577
0072 Interest on Long Term Debt	27,052	—	39,994,998	—	—	40,022,050
0073 Bond Issuance Cost and Fees	—	—	26,626	1,161,902	—	1,188,528
<b>Capital Outlay:</b>						
0081 Facilities Aquisition and Construction	1,021,902	—	—	35,916,771	7,110,509	44,049,182
<b>Intergovernmental:</b>						
0099 Other Intergovernmental Charges	1,898,718	—	—	—	—	1,898,718
6030 Total Expenditures	387,281,600	28,363,350	53,015,141	37,115,696	36,699,139	542,474,926
1100 Excess (Deficiency) of Revenues Over (Under) Expenditures	(2,065,408)	1,525,148	8,962,151	(33,073,614)	(8,124,444)	(32,776,167)
<b>OTHER FINANCING SOURCES (USES):</b>						
7911 Capital Related Debt Issued (Regular Bonds)	—	—	—	135,385,000	—	135,385,000
7913 Capital Leases	957,960	—	—	—	—	957,960
7916 Premium or Discount on Issuance of Bonds	—	—	1,240,406	15,776,902	—	17,017,308
7080 Total Other Financing Sources (Uses)	957,960	—	1,240,406	151,161,902	—	153,360,268
1200 Net Change in Fund Balances	(1,107,448)	1,525,148	10,202,557	118,088,288	(8,124,444)	120,584,101
0100 Fund Balance – July 1 (Beginning)	119,434,690	5,954,806	45,866,386	195,474,070	1,850,604	368,580,556
3000 Fund Balance – June 30 (Ending)	\$ 118,327,242	\$ 7,479,954	\$ 56,068,943	\$ 313,562,358	\$ (6,273,840)	\$ 489,164,657

# Comix

## OUT ON A LIMB By Gary Kopervas



## AMBER WAVES By Dave T. Phipps



## THE SPATS By Jeff Pickering



## R.F.D. By Mike Marland



# Does Afib diagnosis mean no more steak?

DEAR DR. ROACH: I was diagnosed with atrial fibrillation a year ago. A week after that, I had an MRI that showed I'd had a ministroke and probably several others in the past. I love ribeye steak, and eat it maybe two or three times a year. Is this safe? – R.A.



Atrial fibrillation is a rhythm problem of the heart. The natural rhythm is lost, so the heartbeat becomes irregular. Because of the lack of normal movement in the heart, the blood can pool and form clots in the left atrium; these clots can travel downstream to lodge in a blood vessel. Clots can cut off the blood supply to the area where they lodge. It's most critical when it happens in the brain, since if brain cells die, function is lost.

A stroke is just a focal area of cell death in the brain. The size and location of the area in the brain where cell death occurs determines how significant the stroke is. Strokes can range from unnoticeable to devastating to fatal. Most people with atrial fibrillation take medication to reduce the risk of stroke.

Eating poorly can increase the risk of heart disease and stroke as well, but most commonly this happens via a different mechanism. High amounts of saturated fat – such as in ribeye steak, which is fattier than many cuts of beef – increase the risk of damage to blood vessels through buildup of cholesterol plaques. These plaques cut off blood supply, and this causes a heart attack if the plaques are lodged in the arteries of the heart, a stroke if in the brain and various problems if in other parts of the body.

In people who have a history of stroke, it's particularly important to take steps to reduce further risk. That means a discussion with your doctor about whether you are on the best treatment for atrial fibrillation and whether you have evidence of cholesterol plaques.

Even if you don't have any evidence of plaques, a healthy diet of mostly plants, with whole grains, nuts and seeds, some fatty fish if you enjoy that and sparse amounts of meats reduces many health risks. However, two or three steaks a year is not going to cause harm. The best data available shows that people who have 100 grams (just over 3 ounces) of red meat a week are at the lowest risk of developing blood vessel problems. It's not clear

See HEALTH, Page 8

# Super Crossword

- WOMEN WITH A CONNECTION ACROSS**
- 1 Emanates (from)
  - 6 Get \_ on (ace)
  - 9 Diner fave
  - 12 False show
  - 15 Girl coming out in society
  - 18 Plain to see
  - 19 Its capital is Minsk
  - 21 Lion-headed monster
  - 23 ANNE
  - 25 Department in eastern France
  - 26 Munic. statute
  - 27 Juan's emphatic assent
  - 28 1,501, to Caesar
  - 29 Grad's "with honor"
  - 30 Begin a PC session
  - 32 DIANA
  - 34 Monastery garments
  - 35 French fauvist Dufy
  - 37 Favorable vote
  - 38 Vegas stake
  - 39 "Ooh" or "tra" follower
  - 40 Actor MacLeod
  - 41 \_Z (completely)
  - 42 Actress Henner
  - 45 AMY
  - 49 Recycling holder
  - 50 Stimp's cartoon pal
  - 51 Exclude

- 52 \_ Aviv
- 53 Small songbird
- 54 Cordon \_ (veal dish)
- 55 Stuck in
- 57 Ill-bred fellow
- 59 "Rambo" site, in brief
- 61 Tiny biting midge
- 63 EMMA
- 67 Sun block?
- 70 Mel whose "4" was retired
- 71 Make a face
- 72 Sternward
- 76 De-wrinkle
- 77 Suffix with Motor
- 79 Huge bird of legend
- 81 One + two, in German
- 83 No, in Ayr
- 84 Amer. soldiers
- 85 JANE
- 89 Walk showily
- 91 Feast on
- 92 It may be stainless
- 93 Soothe
- 94 Tiny charged bit
- 95 Oktoberfest "Oh!"
- 96 Driver's 180
- 97 Gillis in an old sitcom
- 98 KATE
- 102 Amaze the audience
- 103 NATO, e.g.
- 104 Sleep acronym
- 105 Bric-a-\_\_

- 107 Ignited, as a match
  - 109 Would have, given the chance
  - 110 GRACE
  - 113 Stable troughs
  - 114 Sidestepped
  - 115 Information tech mag
  - 116 What "+" may mean
  - 117 Grain staple
  - 118 Rainy
  - 119 Mag workers
  - 120 Pee Wee whose "1" was retired
- DOWN**
- 1 Vocalist Perry
  - 2 Burdened excessively
  - 3 Lea
  - 4 Make a goof
  - 5 Balanced condition
  - 6 Simple skills
  - 7 Old brand of grape soda
  - 8 Stein filler
  - 9 Wedding-related
  - 10 Clearheaded
  - 11 Chinese philosopher Lao-\_\_
  - 12 Charge with an offense
  - 13 Munch (on)
  - 14 Area at the top of a PC window
  - 15 Amount the insured must first pay
  - 16 Abrade

- 17 Less adorned
- 20 Military division
- 22 More spiteful
- 24 \_ Tin Tin (TV dog)
- 29 Shout
- 31 Queen's onetime rock genre
- 32 Crime film genre
- 33 Inauguration Day highlight
- 34 Actress Bow
- 35 How an extremist acts
- 36 Online user's self-image
- 40 Emerald, e.g.
- 41 Happy as \_
- 42 "So am I"
- 43 In \_ of (rather than)
- 44 "One" on a U.S. penny
- 46 Ice cream drinks
- 47 One with a six-year term
- 48 Color related to emerald or pistachio
- 54 Telly network, with "the"
- 56 Oomph
- 58 Indigo Girls, e.g.
- 60 "So tasty!"
- 62 Sluggish type
- 64 Actress Deschanel
- 65 Parade walk
- 66 Soap opera, informally
- 67 Boars, e.g.
- 68 Opera highlight
- 69 Locale of Mount

- Erebus
- 73 Title girl of a Poe poem
- 74 Exact copies
- 75 Little laugh
- 78 Comic actor Don
- 80 Client
- 82 Pipe fitter's elbow
- 85 City in west California
- 86 Locale of Waikiki
- 87 Flabbergast
- 88 "That hurts!"
- 90 Swindling, slangily
- 95 For neither profit nor loss
- 96 System of online newsgroups
- 97 Stevedore
- 98 "\_ mia!"
- 99 Brand of fat substitute
- 100 Prefix with cellular
- 101 Was behind the wheel
- 102 Female WWII server
- 105 Needed suturing, say
- 106 Frees oneself (of)
- 108 Little fella
- 110 Mandible or maxilla
- 111 Honored Fr. woman
- 112 Female with a fleece

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17		
18					19			20				21		22				
23				24							25							
26				27				28			29							
	30		31					32			33							
34					35	36				37			38					
39					40					41			42		43	44		
45					46					47			48			49		
50				51				52			53			54				
55				56			57	58	59	60		61	62					
			63	64				65			66							
67	68	69					70			71			72		73	74	75	
76						77		78	79	80		81	82			83		
84				85				86		87					88			
89				90				91			92				93			
			94					95			96			97				
98	99							100			101			102				
103										104				105	106		107	108
109										110			111			112		
113										114							115	
116																	120	

**Health**

From Page 7

that zero is better than that small amount.

In any event, I am a firm believer that enjoying life is the goal. If having a steak a few times a year is truly enjoyable, the risk is small, and you should enjoy those meals without guilt.

and intracellular calcium, vitamin D levels, presence of phosphates in food and other factors. The short answer is that it's usually exactly what it needs to be when things work properly. If the body is deficient in calcium, then absorption is maximal, but still most calcium in food is not absorbed.

*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](mailto:ToYourGoodHealth@med.cornell.edu). (c) 2019 North America Synd., Inc. All Rights Reserved.*

The textbook answer is 20% to 40%, but in reality, the answer is very complicated, as it depends on total body

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**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: Q equals T

KW C NADQCKW CDCI NGFWQDX,  
K VGWLAD KM UGSA WCHCB  
GMMKNADU VGFBL TCHA QG  
IA QTA XASAW XAGSAW.

Answer Page 4

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**Weekly SUDOKU**

by Linda Thistle

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

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

Answer Page 4

◆◆◆ HOO BOY!

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**The VBA is giving out Social Security numbers**



by Freddy Groves

The Department of Veterans Affairs Office of the Inspector General was asked to investigate whether the Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA) had disclosed third-party information – such as Social Security numbers, names, dates and places of birth – when it responded to Privacy Act requests. The answer, unfortunately, was a big yes.

Veterans who request copies of their own claim files can have them under the Privacy Act. But that means that all information in the file also is given to them. Sometimes that means a third party, such as the doctor who treated them, or other service members... including the name and Social Security number of those people.

Before 2016, the VBA was required to redact – draw a thick black line through – any info that concerned a third party before sending the file out to the requester. But, they whined, it took time to do that and caused backlogs in getting the files out. Info from the files was copied onto CD and mailed to the requester, putting everything out where it could be stolen or go missing or be viewed later by anyone.

The VBA attorney decided it was just fine to release all that private third-party information if the VBA did it “on purpose” as part of releasing the requester’s own information. Between May 2016 and May 2019, 379,000 files went out this way.

Here’s an example from the OIG report: In 18 sample files it inspected, there were 1,027 third-party names and Social Security numbers. Doing the math, how many extra names were likely in those 379,000 files? I come up with 21 million.

Two factoids: 1) Last year there were 14 million cases of identity fraud. 2) The big coup for thieves is getting a Social Security number. It unlocks all doors.

To read the OIG report, go to [www.va.gov/oig/pubs/VAOIG-19-05960-244.pdf](http://www.va.gov/oig/pubs/VAOIG-19-05960-244.pdf).

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• A potato peeler plus a bar of chocolate makes for a very fancy garnish for cake tops or even for hot drinks.

• Holidays got you stressed? Take a breathing break. Deep belly breaths, sometimes called “focus breaths,” can lower blood pressure, calm stress-induced heart rate and induce a relaxation response. Simply sit or lie down somewhere safe and close your eyes. Breathe in deeply, and let your belly rise with the inhalation. Breathe out slowly and evenly.

• “If a gingerbread house is just too complicated for the kiddos, try this: They can make a holiday forest of trees! Give the kids several ice-cream cones to frost and set them upside down on a tray. Decorate with small candies, etc. You can chip out a ‘door’ and make one of them an elf house if you feel like it.” – W.L. in North Carolina

• Candy canes can be pulverized in a food processor to dust cookies and cakes. Add a bit of confectioner’s sugar to stretch it if needed.

• “Use a slotted spoon to separate eggs. The whites go through; the yolk does not.” – Y.E. in Utah

• “Our family of carol singers is happy when they return home from a singing sleigh ride: We serve everyone a big mug of hot chocolate. Our secret for keeping it hot for a crowd? We use our slow cooker and ladle it straight out of the pot!” – R.E. in Minnesota

• Potatoes can be boiled whole, then plunged into icy water briefly when cooked. The skins should slip right off. No need to spend all that time peeling potatoes!

Send your tips to *Now Here's a Tip*, 628 Virginia Drive, Orlando, FL 32803. (c) 2019 King Features Synd., Inc.

**GO FIGURE!** by Linda Thistle

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.

	÷		+		8
-		×		÷	
	×		-		4
×		+		+	
	÷		+		12
9		9		10	

**DIFFICULTY: ★★★**

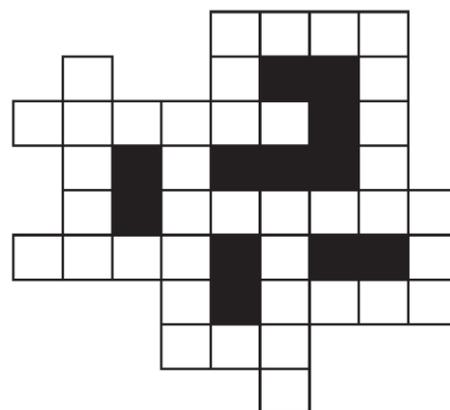
★ Moderate ★★ Difficult  
★★★ GO FIGURE!

1 2 3 4 5 6 6 8 9

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- ♥ IDM
- OLMARN
- ♥ EDIMA
- ♥ MPUL
- LRNDID
- ♥ DSA
- ♥ AMSE
- EPGRU
- ♥ ALG
- SPIDRA
- BELLI
- ♥ ARDE



Answer Page 4

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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