



## NEWSBRIEFS

### Cost of smoking

With the economic and societal costs of smoking totaling more than \$300 billion a year and rising, the personal-finance website WalletHub has released its report on *The Real Cost of Smoking by State* as well as accompanying videos. To encourage the estimated 34.2 million tobacco users in the U.S. to kick the dangerous habit, WalletHub calculated the potential monetary losses – including the lifetime and annual costs of a cigarette pack per day, health care expenditures, income losses and other costs – brought on by smoking and exposure to secondhand smoke. Texas was ranked 27th in this report. Other stats:

- The estimated financial cost of smoking over a lifetime is just above \$1.6 million per smoker.
- The out-of-pocket cost per smoker is \$124,023 over a lifetime. Smokers in New York will pay the highest cost, \$194,899, which is 2.3 times higher than in Missouri, where smokers will pay the lowest cost at \$86,001.
- Each smoker will incur an average of \$253,013 in income loss over a lifetime. Smokers in the District of Columbia will lose the highest amount, \$347,628, which is 1.9 times higher than in West Virginia, where smokers will lose the lowest amount at \$179,916.
- Each smoker will incur an average of \$170,991 in smoking-related health-care costs over a lifetime. Smokers in Connecticut will pay the highest amount, \$290,896, which is 2.6 times higher than in Arkansas, where smokers will pay the lowest amount at \$113,392.

The financial cost of smoking in Texas (1-Lowest, 25-Average):

- Out-of-Pocket Cost per Smoker – \$115,413 (27th);
- Financial-Opportunity Cost per Smoker – \$1,011,802 (27th);
- Health-Care Cost per Smoker – \$148,446 (22nd);
- Income Loss per Smoker – \$247,366 (27th);
- Other Costs per Smoker – \$18,175 (51st);
- Total Cost Over Lifetime per Smoker: \$1,541,203; and
- Total Cost per Year per Smoker: \$30,220.

Visit <https://wallethub.com/edu/the-financial-cost-of-smoking-by-state/9520/> for the full report.

– Diana Polk



– Photo by Alfredo Vasquez

**DUE DILIGENCE** – El Paso County residents must be registered to vote to participate in the Tuesday, March 3rd primary election. The deadline to register is Monday, February 3rd. Individuals can find out if they are registered to vote in Texas by visiting the Secretary of State website, at [www.sos.state.tx.us](http://www.sos.state.tx.us).

## Elections are voters' chance to express views

By Alfredo Vasquez  
Special to the Courier

EL PASO COUNTY – Civic engagement, politics, and government play an integral role in a person's everyday life in this country. Decisions made regarding a multitude of issues- from working conditions and public health to education, highways, and military service- by elected government officials have a huge impact on all individuals. And, the fundamental way for the average citizen to be part of the decision-making process is to vote in the local, state, and federal elections.

There are various types of elections that serve different purposes in the American electoral process. For example, there is a general election, like the presidential

election that occurs on the first Tuesday of November, every four years. Also, seats in Congress and state legislatures are elected in general elections.

However, before a candidate running for office can be on a general election ballot, he or she must first win in the primary election, in which voters are allowed to choose the candidate they want to run in the general election for a specific political party.

There are two types of primaries, closed or open. The most common primary style is closed, which means a voter can only vote for a candidate of their declared political party.

In an open primary election, a voter can choose candidates from any one party,

See ELECTION, Page 4

### Important 2020 Election Dates

#### March 3 – Primary Election

- Feb. 3: Last day to register to vote.
- Feb. 18: First day of early voting.
- Feb. 21: Last day to apply for ballot by mail (received, not postmarked).
- Feb. 28: Last day of early voting.

#### May 26 – Primary Runoff Election

- April 27: Last day to register to vote.
- May 18: First day of early voting.
- May 15: Last day to apply for ballot by mail (received, not postmarked).
- May 22: Last day of early voting.

#### Nov. 3 – General Election

- Oct. 3: Last day to register to vote.
- Oct. 19: First day of early voting.
- Oct. 23: Last day to apply for ballot by mail (received, not postmarked).
- Oct. 30: Last day of early voting.

## PSB approves FY 2020-2021 proposed budget, rates and fees

*Budgets prioritize water supplies, system expansion, customer services and infrastructure improvements*

By Carlos A. Briano  
Special to the Courier

EL PASO COUNTY – The Public Service Board (PSB) approved the Fiscal Year 2020-21 Stormwater and Water/Wastewater budgets during January's monthly meeting. The budget includes no increase in stormwater fees, a 5% increase in water fees, and a 5% increase in wastewater fees. The combined \$493 million budget will result in an average increase of \$2.81 per month for the typical homeowner.

Four key priorities are driving the increase to budget and rates: securing

future water supplies, system expansion for city growth, improvements in customer services and rehabilitation of aging infrastructure. Investments in these areas will support long-term sustainability and reliability for EPWater customers.

"The Public Service Board is constantly searching for a balance between our responsibility to provide our customers with a quality product at a reasonable price on the one hand, and necessary maintenance and improvements to water infrastructure as well as the development of future water supplies on the other hand, particularly given the fact that we live in such an arid region," said PSB Chairman Chris Antcliff. "Today, the PSB adopted

a budget that minimizes the impact on our customers as much as possible while keeping our community on a path of long-term water resiliency."

Major capital projects for the new fiscal year include launching an expansion of the Bustamante Wastewater Treatment Plant, upgrading our treatment system at the Canal plant in Chihuahuita, and beginning expansion of the Kay Bailey Hutchison Desalination Plant. Work will continue to complete stormwater flood control projects already underway.

"El Paso, like other cities, sets their rates on how much it costs to provide the

See PSB, Page 6

*The trouble with many people is that they have Cadillac tastes and compact budgets.*

– Quips & Quotes

# Different presidents, same distractions

The president is smack-dab in the middle of impeachment politics. Suddenly, he orders a bold but perilous military action. His defenders vehemently argue that petty politics is getting in the way of his exercising his hugely important duties as commander in chief.

Donald Trump, the 45th president, ordered a fiery drone attack that assassinated Gen. Qassem Soleimani, the leader of Iran's Quds Force. For decades Soleimani was the coordinator for Tehran's proxies and had been responsible for the deaths of hundreds of Americans. While he was a hero in Iran, he was a terrorist in American eyes. Trump and the top officials of his administration have vague answers to the question "Why now?"

Also by now, you are aware of

the eerie similarities to 22 years ago, when Bill Clinton, the 42th president, ordered an airstrike against Saddam Hussein's Iraq. The questions about motivation were the same, the answers also unsatisfactory, leaving suspicions then and now that they were really nothing more than cynical misuses. Skeptics say they were efforts to conjure up massively dangerous distraction by chief executives with a survival instinct that borders on narcissism.

President Clinton beat the impeachment rap. President Trump almost certainly will, but will still have to deal with a hostile response from the Iranian government that certainly will be brutal, if for no other reason than their need to save face. We just don't know what form it will take, but it would appear that the

Soleimani attack was a major escalation in the confrontation between Iran and "Great Satan" America, one that has the scary potential to escalate further into all-out war.

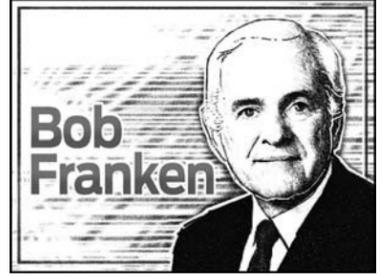
Both presidents had and have in common one important factor: their ability to take advantage of a weak opposition. In Clinton's day, he had Newt Gingrich and his motley band. Gingrich, in particular, mainly succeeded in antagonizing millions of voters with his arrogance and overblown sense that he was really, really smart. Bill Clinton was really, really much smarter. But both have prospered in their political afterlife. They do know how to play the game.

So does Donald Trump. Intellect is not his strong suit, but he is awesomely street smart, managing to avoid

financial disaster throughout his business life by relying on an incredible knack for self-promotion. That same amazing ability catapulted him to the presidency, although he did benefit from an ill-suited opponent, Hillary Clinton.

Both Mr. Clinton and Mr. Trump share one other characteristic that sets them aside from Hillary. Where she, as a candidate, was feckless, both of them have been reckless.

In President Clinton's case, he had done it before. A few months back, he had also ordered a questionable military attack. As Monica Lewinsky, principal figure in his impeachment, appeared a second day before a grand jury investigating him and accusations growing out of their White House escapades, he launched missile strikes on



Afghanistan and Sudan, taking attention away from Lewinsky.

Many skeptics had their suspicions about his explanations, as many do with this president, and we can only wonder whether the inevitable Iranian retaliation for the Soleimani assassination will continue to provide Donald Trump with an impeachment distraction -- just like it did for Bill Clinton back in the day. Who says Trump doesn't learn from history?

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## Campestre Elementary takes top honor at ROBOCOM 6.0

By Christy Flores-Jones  
Special to the Courier

EL PASO COUNTY – Socorro Independent School District elementary and middle school robotics teams used the latest in technology and computer science to go head to head at ROBOCOM 6.0, district's sixth annual robotics competition, January 10 and 11 at Pebble Hills High School.

Campestre Elementary School won the ROBOCOM 6.0 Inspire Award, the top award of the competition.

Campestre, along with twenty-three other teams who competed in the event,

have advanced to the regional competition. They will compete at the West Texas El Paso First Lego League Championship, organized by UTEP, will be Jan. 25.

This year's ROBOCOM theme was "City Shaper," which challenged students to provide a solution on how to improve city infrastructure in their community, and in which students choose how they defined community, whether it be their school, neighborhood or state.

"This has given students the opportunity to practice what they've been learning in the classroom and then apply it in the program itself," said Stephanie Carrasco, SISD advanced academics coordinator. "We are happy to see the kids pumped

and the parents so excited to finally see what their kids have been working on throughout



– Photos courtesy Socorro ISD

**TEAMWORK** – James P. Butler Elementary School students work intently on their robot challenges during SISD ROBOCOM 6.0, which took place January 10 and 11 at Pebble Hills High School.

the school year."

Participants presented their work to judges on the first day of ROBOCOM 6.0 and then they competed in an interactive robotics competition on the second day.

"I was nervous to present in front of the judges, but it went great," said Fabian Trejo, an eighth-grade student from Hernando Middle School. "ROBOCOM was a great experience for me."



**PUBLISHED:**  
Published each Thursday (minimum 50 issues) by Homesteader News, Inc. Office open Monday through Thursday.

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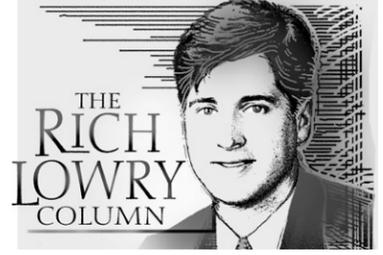


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**HOISTING THE HARDWARE** – The Campestre Elementary School robotics team won the Inspire Award at the SISD ROBOCOM 6.0, an annual robotics competition that challenges students to use the latest technology and critical thinking skills.

# Colin Kaepernick's ridiculous lie about America



In the torrent of idiotic commentary unleashed by the killing of Qassem Soleimani, Colin Kaepernick's deserves a place of honor.

The former NFL player and Nike persona who makes sure the company doesn't produce any overly patriotic sneakers tweeted, "There is nothing new about American terrorist attacks against Black and Brown people for the expansion of American imperialism."

For Kaepernick, Soleimani is just another dark-skinned man brutalized by the United States. The Iranian terror master was, in effect, driving while nonwhite and paid the ultimate price. For all we know, the operator of the MQ-9 Reaper drone that took him out was making a white-supremacy hand signal while unleashing this racist attack.

This interpretation of events takes identity politics to a whole new level, defining the blood-drenched hit man for a terroristic, profoundly anti-Semitic, deeply intolerant theocracy as a victim, based on his skin color alone.

Obviously, no one will mistake Colin Kaepernick for an original thinker; he's only repeating things he's read or been told, in a slightly more lurid form. His worldview is disproportionately represented in academia and on the left, which objects to calling Soleimani a monster (hence, Elizabeth Warren's pathetic backtracking after forthrightly condemning Soleimani in her initial statement).

It is certainly true that racism has had a large hand in U.S. foreign policy through much of our history. We drove Native Americans from their lands, in part based on racial animus. Thomas Jefferson refused to recognize an independent Haiti after a successful slave revolt, for fear it would fuel insurrections here. The American South coveted lands in Latin America prior to the Civil War, seeking more territory for slavery. After World War I, Woodrow Wilson opposed a racial equality proposal made by Japan at the Paris Peace Conference.

All of this, and more, are stains on our nation's history, but to consider racism the chief principle of a rapacious

U.S. foreign policy is reductive, malicious, dishonest and incredibly stupid.

The U.S. engaged in titanic struggles in the 20th century against Imperial Germany, Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union, none of which were brown or black. Enormous resources of blood and treasure were poured into stopping these truly imperialist powers from subjecting foreign peoples to their rule.

The United States opposed European colonialism, and its biggest wars since World War II were fought shoulder to shoulder with Asian people in Korea and Vietnam who didn't want to be overrun by rival Asians allied with totalitarian powers.

In the more immediate, post-9/11 period, we toppled the Taliban and Saddam Hussein. These were interventions motivated by national interest, but also optimistic and idealistic to a fault. Viewing these conflicts through a racial prism requires ignoring that the

Taliban and Saddam overwhelmingly killed, tortured and repressed other nonwhite people.

The same is obviously true of Qassem Soleimani. He has prodigious amounts of American blood on his hands (of Americans of all races and creeds), but he mainly killed other people in the Middle East – Syrians opposed to Bashar Assad, Iraqis protesting Iranian influence, anyone who got in the way of the Iranian imperial project.

His end is a boon to humanity, which should be obvious to anyone who's not drunk on ideology or racial obsessions.

*Rich Lowry is editor of the National Review.  
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## Fabens ISD chosen as a 2020 H-E-B grant finalist

**By Alex Navarro**  
*Special to the Courier*

FABENS – On Friday, Jan. 10, 2020, The Fabens Independent School District was named as one of three finalists in the state of Texas for the H-E-B Excellence in Education District Award grant. Fabens ISD is the only school district in west Texas to be named a

finalist.

"The Fabens Independent School District is extremely honored to receive this recognition. It is a true testament to the great community we have and to the commitment made by all of our staff and students," said Dr. Veronica Vijil, the superintendent of schools for Fabens ISD. "We have a learning organization

that is student-centered, focused on student outcomes, and embraces the growth mindset philosophy."

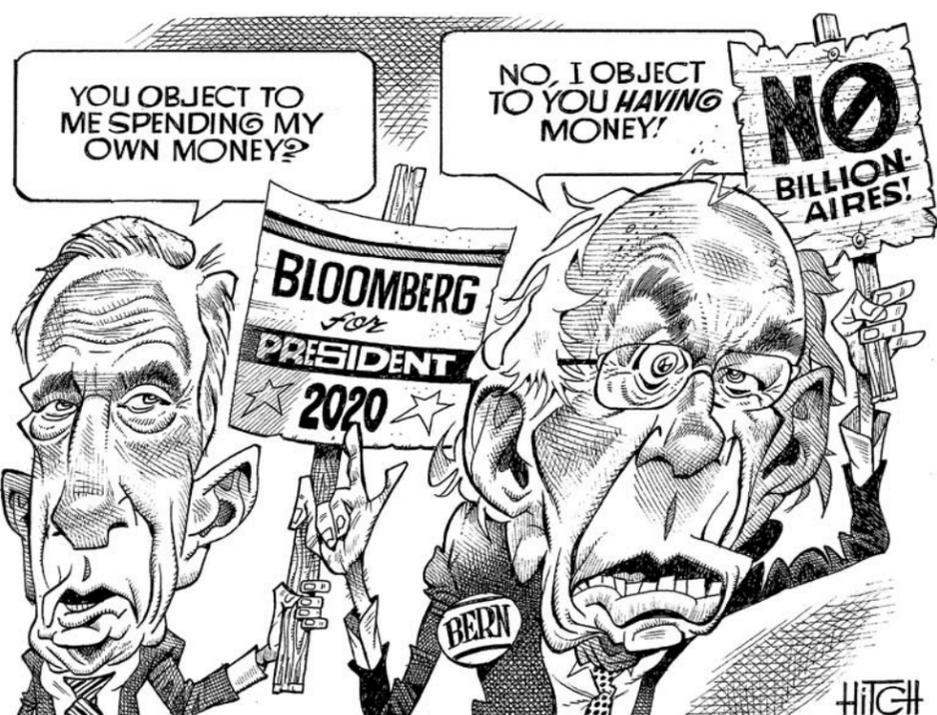
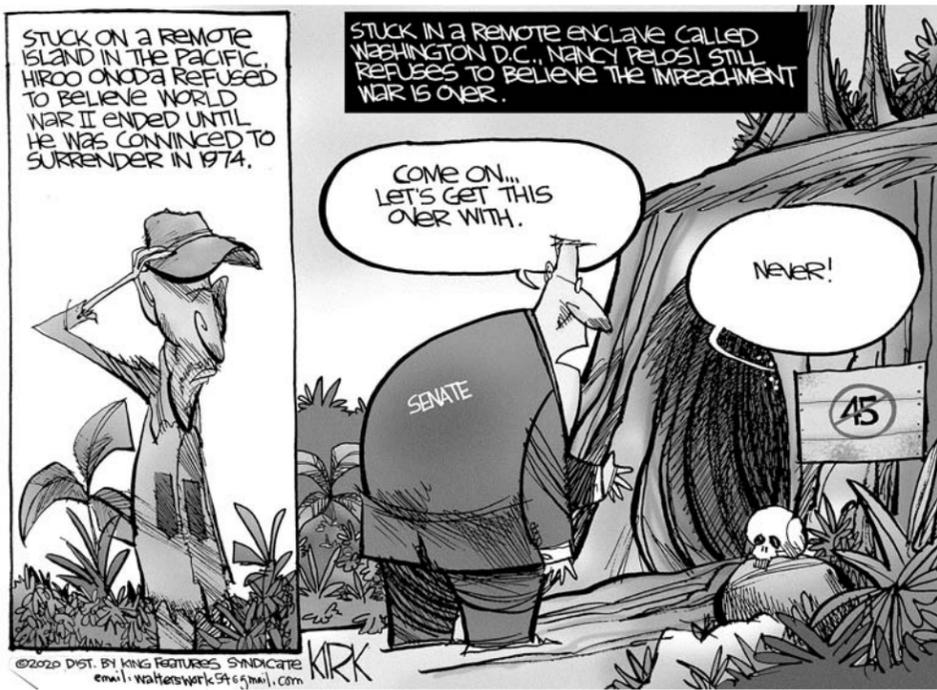
According to the H-E-B Excellence in Education Awards website, this honor is designed to recognize school districts and is based on the following criteria:

- Commitment to student achievement through innovative

programs;

- Parent/Community involvement; and
- Professional development opportunities for teachers and administrators.

A panel of Excellence in Education judges is planning to visit two secondary campuses in the school district on Tuesday, Feb. 4, 2020. Grant winners will be announced in May 2020.



# Election

From Page 1

regardless whether or not he or she has a declared political affiliation. This means that in an open primary, a registered Republican can request a ballot for the Democratic party but that also means he or she can only choose candidates for the Democratic party. This system makes it impossible to vote for a Democratic presidential candidate and a Republican gubernatorial candidate, for instance.

In Texas, the Democratic and Republican local, state, congressional, and presidential primaries are open. Voters do not have to declare affiliation with a party in order to vote in the primary elections, but they must choose one party's ballot. Voters are only tied to party affiliation

within the election cycle if there is a runoff, which is when no candidate receives more than 50 percent of the votes. The top two candidates, then, participate in the run-off election to determine the winner.

The upcoming Texas primary election, which is slated for Tuesday, March 3, will determine whom voters have selected to run for local, state, and federal offices in the November general election. However, to participate in the primary election one must be registered to vote, and the deadline to register is Monday, February 3.

Individuals may find out if they are registered to vote in Texas by visiting the Secretary of State (SOS) website, at [www.sos.state.tx.us](http://www.sos.state.tx.us).

If not registered, an El Paso County resident can get an application to register to vote at the SOS website. Or, one can

register in person at the El Paso County Elections Department, 500 E. San Antonio Ave., Suite No. 314. Another option is to register by mail by obtaining an application from the El Paso County Elections Department or pick up an application at any U.S. Post Office, the Department of Public Safety, El Paso Public Libraries, Texas Health and Human Services Commission offices and any local high school.

Additionally, a person may fill out a voter registration application online at [votetexas.gov](http://votetexas.gov), print it, sign it, and mail it to the voter registrar in his or her county of residence. After one applies, a voter registration certificate will be mailed to him or her within 30 days.

According to the [VoteTexas.gov](http://VoteTexas.gov), individuals are eligible to register to vote if: they are U.S. citizens; they are residents of

the county where they submitted their applications; they are at least 17 years and 10 months old, and will be 18 years old on election day; they are not convicted felons (they might be eligible to vote if they have completed their sentences, probation and parole); and they have not been declared by a court exercising probate jurisdiction to be either totally mentally incapacitated or partially mentally incapacitated without the right to vote.

So many important issues in this country are decided by elections. The president, judges, mayors, governors, representatives, and more are all voted upon by the general population; and if not, they are decided by elected officials. El Paso County voters may review information on registering, voting, and candidates on the ballot by going to the county's website, at [epcountyvotes.com](http://epcountyvotes.com).

# Strange BUT TRUE

By Samantha Weaver

- Kangaroos can reach speeds of up to 44 mph, but they can't take a single step backward.

- As the holiday shopping season gets well under way, here's an interesting tidbit to keep in mind: According to the annual Coinstar Holiday Survey, 31% of Americans don't remember what gifts they received last year. Perhaps unsurprisingly, more women remember those details than men do.

- No less a notable than William Shakespeare described Limburger cheese as "the rankest compound of villainous smell that ever offended nostril."

- In the Shetland Islands you can find a breed of small, hardy cows that eat fish.

- Did you ever wonder why the Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks – better known as the Elks Lodge – chose that particular animal as its symbol? Other animals were considered and rejected for a variety of reasons: Foxes were thought to be too cunning, beavers too destructive and bears and too coarse and brutal.

- Before World War II, suspenders were more popular than belts, but the trend reversed after the war.

- You might be surprised to learn that in 1766, students at Harvard University protested against their living conditions; evidently, the butter they were served in the refectory left something to be desired. In what became known as the Great Butter Rebellion, students shouted, "Our butter stinketh!"

- Those who study such things say that if your dog has fleas, they don't actually live on your pet; they spend 90% of their time elsewhere.

Thought for the Day: "Bankruptcy is a legal proceeding in which you put your money in your pants pocket and give your coat to the creditors."  
– Joey Adams

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## San Elizario Independent School District Public Notice of Meeting

San Elizario Independent School District will hold a public hearing to discuss the District's 2018-2019 Texas Academic Performance Report (TAPR). The meeting will be held at 4:00 P.M. on Wednesday, February 12, 2020 in the San Elizario ISD Central Office Board Room, 1050 Chicken Ranch Rd., San Elizario, Texas, 79849.

The public is invited to attend. For more information, call (915) 872-3900.

### Junta Pública

*Distrito escolar independiente de San Elizario celebrará una audiencia pública para discutir el informe de rendimiento académico 2018-2019 Texas del distrito (TAPR). La reunión se celebrará a las 4:00 p.m. el miércoles, 12 de febrero de 2020 en la sala de juntas de San Elizario ISD, 1050 Chicken Ranch Rd., San Elizario, Texas, 79849.*

*El público está invitado a asistir. Para obtener más información, llame al (915) 872-3900.*

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## Moments in time

THE HISTORY CHANNEL

• On Jan. 20, 1980, bleachers at a bullring in Sincelejo, Colombia, collapse, resulting in the deaths of 222 people. The deadliest tragedy at a sporting event in Colombia's history was the result of overcrowding and poor construction.

• On Jan. 21, 1977, U.S. President Jimmy Carter grants an unconditional pardon to hundreds of thousands of men who evaded the draft during the Vietnam War. Some 100,000 young Americans went abroad in the late 1960s and early '70s to avoid military service.

• On Jan. 22, 2003, the U.S. Census Bureau releases detailed statistics on race and ethnicity showing that the Hispanic population was the country's largest minority group. Some 29% of immigrants in the U.S. had come from Mexico alone.

• On Jan. 23, 1968, the USS Pueblo, a Navy intelligence ship, is engaged in a routine surveillance of the North Korean coast when it is captured by North Korean patrol boats. Eleven months later, negotiators reached a settlement to resolve the crisis and free the surviving 82 crewmen.

• On Jan. 24, 1943, German Gen. Friedrich von Paulus, commander in chief of the German 6th Army at Stalingrad, urgently requests permission from Adolf Hitler to surrender. Hitler refused. Of more than 280,000 men under Paulus' command, half were already dead or dying. Paulus held out until Jan. 31, when he finally surrendered.

• On Jan. 25, 1924, the first Winter Olympics begins at Chamonix in the French Alps. Spectators were thrilled by the ski jump and bobsled, two of 12 events involving six sports.

• On Jan. 26, 1918, soon after the Bolsheviks seized control in Russia, the former Russian state of Ukraine declares its total independence. In 1922, Ukraine became part of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics; it would not regain its independence until the USSR's collapse in 1991.

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– Photo courtesy San Elizario ISD

**HIGH FLYING** – The Lady Eagles are, from left, Arlene Saucedo, Iliana Vigil, Natalia Perez, Catarina Contreras, Camila Contreras, Victoria Perez, Desiree Morales and Audrey Hernandez.

## Lady Eagles aim to take District title and more

By Jeannie Meza-Chavez  
Special to the Courier

SAN ELIZARIO – The *El Paso Times* has ranked SEHS Girls Basketball Team 1st in the city and Texas Association of Basketball Coaches has the team ranked 9th in Texas. This has been a steady and consistent climb for the San Eli Girls Team as they were previously ranked 12th and 14th. The Lady Eagles were District champions last year and are ahead in District standings this year.

Josie Contreras is the Head Coach for the San Elizario High School Girls Basketball Team. Success for the team is a direct result of the seriousness they commit to practice hard. Head Coach Contreras states, “This team is composed of hard-working girls that respect and understand each other’s talent.” The entire team understands the commitment they collectively contribute and what their success means to the Community of San Elizario. With 132 wins in her 9-year coaching career in San Elizario, Contreras

added, “Hopefully we will finish with 140 this year.”

Assistant Coach Eric Reza said, “Each player is a puzzle piece. Without one, the vision is not complete.” Everyone is contributing in key ways to the success of the season. Freshman Audrey Hernandez is credited with 8 points per game

Natalia Perez, a senior, states, “This year we have come together; we have all been working extremely hard to be where we are at.” Perez is credited with 6 assists and 7 points per game and most recently named one of the top best players in El Paso by the *El Paso Times*.

Coaches and team members all agree on the importance of everyone’s commitment, which is a contributing factor to the success they are experiencing. For instance, sophomore player Iliana Vigil said, “When people look at us, they just see a team, but they do not understand the hard work and hours that are put in; we are more than just a team; we are a family.”

Senior player Camila Contreras adds,

“I think that our team this year is well put together and has an amazing work ethic; we work hard all year long and it shows on the court.” In the fall of 2019, Contreras committed to play women’s basketball at Virginia Commonwealth University. Contreras is credited with 14 points per game and 10 rebounds per game. Also, Contreras was nominated to the McDonald’s All American this year by the McDonald’s All-American committee and was also recognized as one of the top best players in El Paso by the *El Paso Times*.

Sophomore Victoria Perez is credited with scoring 19 points per game and is 41 points from reaching 1000 points. Also, Perez has been named one of the top best players in El Paso by the *El Paso Times*. Perez states, “Never letting good be good enough.” And for sophomore Catarina Contreras, it is about the “support from our community and San Elizario family.” Junior Arlene Saucedo agrees, “We are supported by our parents, community, student body and our coaches; we are family and family sticks together.”

## Luminaria festival highlights San Eli traditions

By Rhiana Perez  
Special to the Courier

SAN ELIZARIO – On December 21, 2019, the San Elizario Genealogy and Historical Society (SEGHS) held the Annual Luminaria Festival and Las Posadas Celebration. Our event was kicked off by the beautiful dancing of the Ysleta del Sur Pueblo Social Dancers. Although the Tigua social dancers visit San Elizario often to dance during our cultural events, this is the first time in history that the group has performed at the Annual Luminaria Festival. Dance continued into a folklorico performance by Ballet Folkloriko Mitzli, and a mass was held at 6:00 p.m. at the San Elcario Chapel.

As the community gathered around the plaza to enjoy this cultural and festive night, the heart of San Elizario’s Historic District radiated with the light of 2,500 luminarias. Being one of our most symbolic pieces during Christmas time, luminarias link us to early Spanish settlers who would light small bonfires along roads and churchyards to commemorate the birth of Christ, creating a beautifully illuminating path. Our display of luminarias was created with



– Photo by Samantha Dominguez

**'T WAS THE SEASON** – Luminarias lined the sidewalks and festive lights adorned the iconic gazebo as people mingle around the historic San Elizario Plaza in December 2019.

See SAN ELI, Page 7

Send Your  
Newsbrief To:  
wtxcc@wtxcc.com

# If nothing else, cheating in sports is getting more creative

By Steve Escajeda  
Special to the Courier

Since the time we were itty-bitty uncoordinated mini-athletes, we were told that it didn't matter who won or lost – it was how you played the game.

Youngsters were taught that there was nothing lower on the sports food chain than cheating. After all, those guys never prosper.

All this made sense in youth leagues when every player gets a participation trophy and at times, scores aren't even kept.

But as players get older and advance to junior high, high school, college and the pros, the stakes get higher, the winners are rewarded, and millions gets distributed.

And thus, the whole idea about not mattering who won or lost goes right out the window.

And the words of recent Sun Bowl game coach Herman Edwards ring louder and clearer than ever, "you play to win the game."

Let's be honest, at the high school level players are thinking about earning college scholarships, college coaches are thinking about recruiting high school athletes to win and avoid being fired, professional teams are competing to land the best athletes to win games, put fans in the seats and avoid being fired.

In other words, winning is everything.

And players look for every advantage. Is it competing or cheating?

When a player with the basketball makes contact with a defensive player, and the defender flops backward and flails his arms to draw a charging call. Is that cheating?

Or when a soccer player pretends he's just been picked off by a sniper in the 50th row and continues to roll around in agony to draw a foul call. Is that cheating?

When a team needs two yards for a first down and quarterback bobs his head and barks out his signals in a different

have in place doesn't continue to get older and older."

Compared to Houston, Dallas, Fort Worth, Austin and San Antonio, EPWater's monthly charges are the second-lowest of large Texas cities; only Laredo's water rates are lower. EPWater's rate structure will continue to provide relief for low-water users while charging more for high-water users. Customers using less than 4 cdfs\* (2,992 gallons) of water in any given month will receive a waiver of the \$11.04 Water

cadence to draw a defender offside. Is that cheating?

For some reason, except maybe for the New England Patriots, Major League Baseball has turned into the poster child for cheating in professional sports.

The latest, of course, is the Houston Astros' sign-stealing scandal.

The controversy has cost the Houston Astros' manager and general manager their jobs. It also cost the manager of the Boston Red Sox and New York Mets their jobs – both Alex Cora and Carlos Beltran were on the Astros in 2017, when all this

took place.

Unfortunately, it looks like this is just the beginning. It seems like every day more news comes out from players about witnessing sign stealing.

Are these tattletales true whistleblowers, or just guys taking advantage of the opportunity to damage their opponents?

Anyway, trying to steal signs has always been a part of baseball. Heck, we would do it in little league at the age of 10.

You try to pick up tendencies from the other coach like every time he touches his chin his player tries to steal a base, or every time he claps his hands twice his player attempts a bunt.

Every MLB team tries to steal signs. They've been trying for over 100 years.

But as with everything else, modern technology has made this form of espionage even easier.

It seems the Astros were aiming a camera from centerfield into the opposing catcher's hand as he flashed finger signs to his pitcher.

That's the big difference. Houston batters knew what kind of pitch was coming.

That is an advantage, but the players still have to hit the ball.

The strangest thing of all is that baseball media members are now asking if this scandal rivals the Pete Rose gambling scandal, or the steroids scandal, or the 1919 Chicago Black Sox "throwing the world series" scandal.

To be totally honest, this scandal will fade away soon after the season starts.

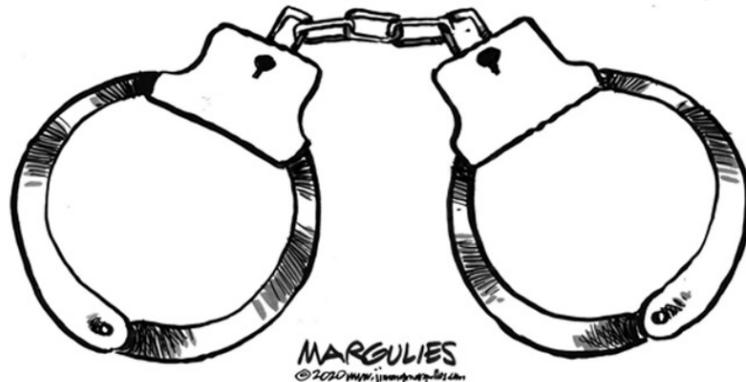
It's baseball, and except for the ESPN guys trying to generate interest and sell advertising, the vast majority of Americans didn't care about baseball before the latest scandal.

As we've learned, in all walks of life, business, politics, religion or social status – it isn't whether you win or lose anymore. The goal is winning at any cost, regardless of the truth, regardless of who gets hurt, regardless of the consequences.

Really? Stealing baseball signs... snore.



## ASTROS World Series Rings



### PSB

From Page 1

service," said EPWater President and CEO John Balliew. "As we've needed to diversify our water supply to keep up with growth demands, that cost to provide the service has increased. But we have to seek alternative water supplies to continue as a viable community. Additionally, our budget makes sure that the infrastructure we

have in place doesn't continue to get older and older."

Compared to Houston, Dallas, Fort Worth, Austin and San Antonio, EPWater's monthly charges are the second-lowest of large Texas cities; only Laredo's water rates are lower. EPWater's rate structure will continue to provide relief for low-water users while charging more for high-water users. Customers using less than 4 cdfs\* (2,992 gallons) of water in any given month will receive a waiver of the \$11.04 Water

Supply Replacement Charge. Last year, the charge was waived on about 33,000 monthly customer bills. EPWater will also continue its partnership with Amistad to help low-income senior customers with bill payment assistance, conservation, and money management counseling. Customers interested in these services through Amistad can call at (915) 532-3790.

The budgets, rates and fees will go into effect at the start of the fiscal year, which begins March 1, 2020.

## Super Crossword

### COUNTING DOWN ACROSS

- 1 Nothin' at all
- 4 Got on board
- 12 Hill (Theodore Roosevelt's home)
- 20 Altar promise
- 21 Quiche
- 22 Zealous campaigner
- 23 With 39-Down, business for attorneys
- 24 Dreams up
- 25 Enrobing
- 26 Thorax
- 28 Cloister resident
- 29 Native Americans of Oklahoma
- 31 See 69-Across
- 32 Lena of "The Wiz"
- 33 Gal at a ball
- 34 Big fashion inits.
- 35 Blue shade
- 37 Haul to court
- 38 "Time the essence!"
- 40 Wagged part
- 42 Closest to nil
- 46 Verizon competitor
- 49 Artificial hair
- 51 Skier Tommy
- 52 Ali or Frazier
- 53 Klutzy type
- 54 Radon, e.g.
- 55 Indian "Mr."
- 56 Dangerous way to skate
- 58 Haglike

- 60 Darkened
- 62 Uprightness
- 63 Like radon
- 64 Actress Courteney
- 65 Alluring West
- 66 Kanga's son
- 67 Pitched shelter
- 68 "knew?!"
- 69 With 31-Across, start to enjoy
- 70 Snooze site
- 71 Like sexist jokes and such, for short
- 75 Mai
- 76 Ring official
- 77 "Piggy"
- 78 River of Grenoble
- 79 Like much hemp fashion
- 83 Actress Cuthbert
- 85 Was deeply agitated
- 86 Air impurity
- 88 Battle (for)
- 89 Favorite
- 90 "haw!" ("Whee!")
- 91 Bicolor snacks
- 92 Slender fish
- 93 Polar laborer
- 94 Hit into from behind
- 96 1988 Olympics city
- 97 Is in a hole
- 99 Film scorer
- Schifrin
- 101 Sportage or Soul maker
- 102 Clairol products

- 104 Gibbon, e.g.
- 106 relief
- 107 White wader
- 110 Enthusiasm
- 113 Soup legume
- 115 Dandy fellow
- 116 Full of cheek
- 117 Rift-causing
- 119 Least near
- 122 Sci-fi gift
- 123 Hand-thrown weapons
- 124 Scottish beef animal
- 125 Scrabble 4-pointer
- 126 Right to use another's land
- 127 Opera text
- 128 Scrabble 1-pointers

- 13 Part of the Constitution establishing the judiciary
- 14 Very nerdy
- 15 "... so far know"
- 16 Helicopter of the U.S. president
- 17 Major Norse god
- 18 Sublet, say
- 19 Therefore
- 27 Ignore rudely
- 30 Trendy
- 36 Typical lab rat, e.g.
- 39 See 23-Across
- 41 It has a charge
- 43 Pivotal line
- 44 Split-off group
- 45 Deuce follower
- 46 Specifically
- 47 Neighbor of Quebec
- 48 Place (down)
- 50 Request for a hand slap
- 57 Engine cover
- 59 LCD alternative
- 60 Ski
- 61 Consume
- 64 Group of defendants that included Abbie Hoffman
- 68 "Hold on!"
- 69 Styling stuff
- 70 Furry scarf
- 71 Consume
- 72 Occasion to shout out the ends of

- the answers to this puzzle's starred clues (from left to right)
- 73 Dress fussily
- 74 Handed over
- 75 In this way, informally
- 76 Withdrawal
- 77 "She Loves You" band's nickname
- 78 Tangoing truism
- 79 Lofty poetry
- 80 Heart
- 81 Toast topper
- 82 A state of bliss
- 84 Window area
- 85 View
- 87 Rustic denial
- 89 View
- 95 Capital of Latvia
- 98 Helical form
- 100 Taoism founder
- 103 Omit in speech
- 105 Nicholas Gage memoir
- 108 City in Germany
- 109 Styles
- 110 Knife feature
- 111 Old Italian currency
- 112 Bird class
- 114 Bird hangout
- 118 Snead of golf
- 120 Classic British sports car
- 121 Hard drinker

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				
117					118					119		120			121			122
123										124								125
126										127								128

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



**TIGER** By Bud Blake



**San Eli**

From Page 5

the help of San Elizario High School's JROTC.

As the night grew cold, SEGHS warmed up with some delicious hot chocolate. It wasn't long before Los Portales museum filled with the sweet, delicious aroma. The audience followed and watched another key event of the night: Las Posadas Presentation at the Plaza, by the church confirmation class. Las Posadas Presentation is an

important part of the Mexican Christmas celebration. The word posada means "inn" or "shelter" in Spanish. This celebration recreates Mary and Joseph's search for a place to stay in Bethlehem as all prepare for the birth of Jesus. The nativity scene was beautifully recreated alongside the San Elcario Chapel.

At around 7:30 p.m., SEGHS received word that there were some special visitors in town. Surely enough, Mr. and Mrs. Claus made an entrance and provided some extra attention to the children present at this celebration. The kids then gathered

around to break the traditional Christmas star piñata, another traditional element that is included in this annual event. The traditional piñata is star-shaped and has 7 points, symbolizing the seven deadly sins that are broken by the stick, representing the strength and faith in God. Once the piñata is broken, the filling, consisting of traditional candy, fruits and peanuts, is released for everyone to enjoy.

To bring this festive night to an end, we concluded with our annual bike and toy giveaway. Fifty-six bikes were given, and every boy and girl left with a

Christmas present. Although it is a joy to see smiling faces with gifts in hand at the end of the night, the biggest joy for us, is in providing the most meaningful gift of all: the preservation of culture. Through art, history and communal events, it is our goal to provide a deeper understanding of historical and cultural significance. Between the spirit of Christmas, and the rich culture that embodies San Elizario, the annual Luminaria Festival and Las Posadas Celebration is the perfect opportunity to deliver just that. Thank you to all who attended!

**Turmeric can be helpful for some arthritis pain**

*DEAR DR. ROACH: I am 88 and have had osteoarthritis in my hands and knees since I was in my 50s. I began taking Tylenol and Advil for pain. But on a recommendation from a health food store clerk, I started taking turmeric. Since that first dose, I have never had to take any pain medication again. I also have not had a knee replacement. My specialist is very pleased with my condition, and encourages my use of turmeric. I plan to up the dose from 150 mg daily because of research that shows its benefits in avoiding Alzheimer's disease. – D.D.L.*



Turmeric has been shown to be helpful in some people with osteoarthritis, and is unlikely to have serious side effects; however, stomach upset is possible, and turmeric should be used with caution in people on warfarin or other anticoagulants.

However, there is no good evidence showing that turmeric prevents or treats dementia.

*DEAR DR. ROACH: I have been hearing a lot about making yogurt at home. Is homemade yogurt a recipe for food poisoning? – H.C.*

Homemade yogurt is easy to make, can be more healthy than store-bought as it has very little sugar, and can be made very safely with minimal precautions. The key is to make sure the milk is fresh and sterile, then to carefully add in healthy bacteria. All you need to do is boil fresh milk to a bare simmer (to kill any unhealthy bacteria); cool it down to 100-110 F (37-42 C), which is an optimal temperature for growth of the healthy bacteria that help prevent the growth of unhealthy bacteria or yeast; stir in a few tablespoons of plain yogurt with active healthy bacterial cultures; and keep it in a warm place for six to 12 hours or so. You can use the yogurt you just made as the starter for the next batch. Add in some pureed fresh fruit, and you have a healthier, tastier and cheaper yogurt than you can buy at the store.

*DEAR DR. ROACH: I take 40 mg of lisinopril for high blood pressure. One doctor told me to take a 40-mg tablet in the morning, while another said to take 20 mg in the morning and 20 mg in the evening. Will separating the dosage better control my blood pressure? On average, mine is 130/75. – M.A.P.*

For lisinopril in particular, taking the medication twice daily showed a better reduction in blood pressure than once daily, according to a study performed last year. People who took lisinopril twice daily had about a 10-point systolic (4 point diastolic) improvement in BP control, so your blood pressure might be more like 120/71 if you started taking it in two doses, if you are similar to the subjects in the study (that sounds like a big drop to me, despite the study results).

People who are doing just fine on once-daily lisinopril don't need to change. Don't make any changes in your medication without discussing it with your own doctor.

*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. (c) 2019 North America Synd., Inc. All Rights Reserved.*

Lighten up, girls... wait'll you see Britney Spears!



**Moore Texas** by Roger T. Moore

Jan. 26, 1833: Birth date of Elizabeth Ney. The rebellious "sculptor laureate" of Texas often worked in a knee length skirt that shook up the stodgy Austinites of the day.

## 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: O equals Y

QP OKL'UW QB EKLGXCWEG  
 NQRXQAJB JBZ RUJIO JSKLG  
 CQFZ SWJEGE, ZWPQBQGWFO  
 RXWRM KLG MJFJNJ-IKK.

Answer Page 4

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## Weekly SUDOKU

by Linda Thistle

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

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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# Appeal hearings going virtual



by Freddy Groves

Here's another reason to hook up with the Department of Veterans Affairs via Telehealth: Starting this year you'll be able to attend a virtual appeals hearing without leaving your home. Telehealth is a way to get your health care on any iOS, Android mobile or web device such as a tablet or computer, and now its use has been expanded.

The VA has been testing this for a year now, using it with over 150 virtual hearings. Some of those were with veterans who would not have been able to attend their hearings without having the ability to use the video connection.

Over 99,000 veterans used the Telehealth last year. You can use the video connect for a primary-care medical visit,

mental health visit or any type of visit that doesn't require hands-on from medical staff.

Go to [mobile.va.gov](http://mobile.va.gov) and click on VA Video Connect. Scroll down and view the how-to videos. Click to get the app at either the App Store or on Google Play. You'll see training materials linked on that page, including quick guides about your device, as well as a FAQ page.

Be sure to look at the yellow box and run the connection test to make sure your mobile device is compatible with the video connect. If you have bad internet access at home, remember that other locations are being opened up one at a time: American Legions, VFW posts and even some Walmarts will have connection spots with ATLAS (Accessing Telehealth through Local Areas Stations). Check into this and test out your options before your virtual hearing appointment to be sure you have the best possible connection. You'll

likely need 3G or 4G and at least two connection bars, but it's set up to take advantage of low-bandwidth connections.

To learn more about what to expect at the hearings, go to [va.gov](http://va.gov) and search for appeals hearings.

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- According to waste management company Republic Services, approximately 30% of what Americans place in their curbside recycling bins does not belong there, including greasy pizza boxes, wet cardboard, plastic bags, food-tainted materials, and even bowling balls and garden hoses. Meanwhile, only one in four plastic bottles is recycled.

- Paper lunch bags make excellent receptacle for cat litter waste. They are much more environmentally friendly than plastic bags, and can be folded down and placed directly into an outside trashcan. The bags are easily stored near the litter box, because they lay flat.

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

- Do you need to go to a fancy liquor store for simple syrup? No way! Simply mix equal parts sugar and water, bring to a simmer and store in the fridge in a covered jar. Use in drink recipes and to sweeten iced tea.

- "Wrap lint from your dryer in 6 inches of wax paper. Roll it up 1 inch on both ends and you have the perfect fire starter." – M.K. in Michigan

- Scoop up this trick when cooking scallops: Refrigerate uncovered for about 30 minutes before they will hit the pan or grill. This will help to dry out the surface, giving you a good sear instead of a steam. Make sure your pan is hot, and don't leave the stove or grill, because scallops don't take more than 1 1/2 minutes per side.

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.

	x		+		19
+		-		÷	
	-		x		18
x		x		+	
	x		+		16
18		16		11	

**DIFFICULTY: ★★**

★ Moderate ★★ Difficult

★★★ GO FIGURE!

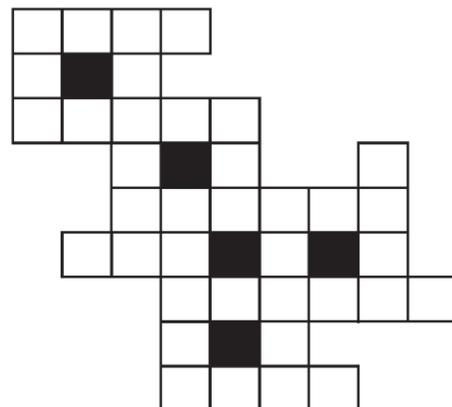
Answer Page 4

1 2 2 3 4 5 7 8 9

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- ♥ OTN
- TEKEON
- ♥ ADNIV
- CPKE
- ♥ TODERT
- ♥ TAE
- ♥ ENNO
- ♥ ATTNI
- OPD
- ♥ OCTREV
- KANEO
- ♥ ENDE



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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