



NEWSBRIEFS

Tornillo ISD student registration

Tornillo Elementary is now accepting new and returning students from PK4-2nd grade for school registration for 2022-2023. The District partners with Region 19 Tornillo Head Start. Registration opens April 1, 2022 for all students. Visit www.tisd.us or call (915) 765-3150 to register or for more information. In person registration will be held at Tornillo Elementary, 19200 Gaby Rd. on:

- April 2 from 9:00 a.m. to noon;
- April 13 from 8:00 a.m. to 9:00 a.m.; and
- April 27 from 8:00 a.m. to 9:00 a.m.

– Cassandra Soto

Classroom grants

Full-time educators in the El Paso and Las Cruces areas are eligible for resource grants for the 2022-2023 school year from the El Paso Community Foundation's The Classroom Fund. Grants for \$1,000 or less will be available. Applications are due by May 8, 2022. The application dates have been moved up to accommodate the 2022-2023 school year schedule. Grants are available to all full-time, pre-K through 12th grade educators, including teachers, librarians, guidance counselors, school nurses, and coaches who are also teachers. Eligible candidates must spend at least 75% of their time working directly with students. Requests must be for materials students will use or experience directly. Grant recipients are required to follow up with a report on the use of materials through photographs, video, or a written letter. Grant requests are reviewed by The Classroom Fund Review Committee and are approved based on merit and available funds. All grantees will be notified by early June. Visit theclassroomfund.org to apply.

– Doug Pullen

A school to watch

Bill Sybert School in the Socorro Independent School District has been recognized as a Texas School to Watch by the National Forum to Accelerate Middle-Grades Reform and the Texas Association of Secondary School Principals. Bill Sybert School earned the national recognition for its academic excellence, developmental responsiveness, social equity and organizational structure and processes. "I am extremely proud of

See BRIEFS, Page 3

The fact that people can do as they please often accounts for their lack of success.

– Quips & Quotes

El Pasoan Marcelino Serna receives Texas Medal of Honor posthumously

By Alfredo Vasquez
Special to the Courier

EL PASO COUNTY – Born April 26, 1896, Marcelino Serna was a poor Mexican lad from the City of Chihuahua, who, when he was 20 years old, crossed the Rio Grande and settled in the El Paso County area with dreams of a better life.

After the United States declared war on Germany in April of 1917, however, Serna decided to enlist in the U.S. Army. Little did he know at the time that he would become one of the most decorated soldiers from Texas in World War I.

To honor Serna posthumously, Texas Governor Greg Abbott recently awarded U.S. Army Private Marcelino Serna the Texas Legislative Medal of Honor. Descendants of Pvt. Serna, including his great-grandchildren and granddaughter, were present to accept the recognition on his behalf.

During Texas' 2021 regular legislative session, El Paso state senator César Blanco, successfully nominated Private Serna for the Texas Legislative Medal of Honor. As a result of his nomination, Senator Blanco co-authored and passed Senate Concurrent Resolution 50, directing the Governor to award the Texas Legislative Medal of Honor to U.S. Army Private Marcelino Serna.

"For the remarkable valor and selfless service, it is my distinct honor to present the Texas Legislative Medal of Honor to Pvt. Marcelino Serna... America is the brightest beacon of freedom the world has ever known because of all who have honorably worn the uniform of the mightiest military in the history of the world," Gov. Abbott stated during the award ceremony.

"As great-grandchildren and the granddaughter of Marcelino Serna, we are so proud and grateful to celebrate and accept the Texas Legislative Medal of Honor on behalf of U.S. Army Private Marcelino Serna. We appreciate the countless organizations, such as the American G.I. Forum and many veterans who spent decades fighting to get him the recognition he deserves for his bravery and heroism in World War I. We especially extend our heartfelt gratitude to Senator César Blanco for successfully nominating our grandfather for the Texas Legislative Medal of Honor," the Serna family acknowledged in a public statement.

"We are in awe that our great-grandfather's heroic acts are not only remembered but still being honored over 100 years later. We never knew our Tata for his bravery, only his plentiful garden, abundant love, and patriotism. We are grateful that his legacy will now be remembered not just by our family but by the entire State of Texas. We wish our grandmother, his daughter Gloria Serna, would've lived to see this," the Serna family stated.

American GI Forum National Commander Lawrence Guzman Romo said, "Private Marcelino Serna, World War I hero and



– Photo courtesy Hispanic Medal of Honor Society

HIGHLY HONORED – Marcelino Serna, born to a poor family in the Mexican state of Chihuahua, was the first Hispanic to be awarded the Distinguished Service Cross, the country's second highest military award.

Private Marcelino Serna

In 1916, when he was 20 years old, Marcelino Serna entered the United States by crossing the Rio Grande into El Paso County with dreams of a better way of life. In search of a job, he made his way to Colorado working as a farmer laborer.

Serna was with a group of men in Denver when he was picked up by federal officials. He faced the possibility of being deported, but before that could happen, he volunteered to serve in the U.S. Army. The United States had declared war on Germany in April of 1917.

After basic training, Serna was sent overseas and assigned to Company B, 355th Infantry Regiment, 89th Division. Serna's unit was sent to France. When his unit arrived at Saint-Mihiel, they encountered a German machine gun nest. Serna crawled up to the machine gunner's left flank and was able to get close enough to throw four grenades into the nest. Eight Germans surrendered and the rest were dead.

On September 12, 1918, Serna's unit was engaged in combat when he spotted a German sniper and wounded him. Serna then followed the wounded soldier to a trench into which he threw three grenades resulting in the death of 26 enemy soldiers and the capture of 24 others.

Four days before the end of the war, Serna was wounded in both legs by sniper fire. During his recovery, General John J. Pershing, Commander-in-Chief of the American Expeditionary Forces, presented Serna with the Distinguished Service Cross, the second highest military decoration of the United States Army to the Medal of Honor.

Serna returned to home in May 1919 as the most decorated soldier from Texas. In 1924, Serna became a U.S. citizen and soon after married and settled down in El Paso County. In 1960, he retired as a plumber from William Beaumont Hospital, Fort Bliss. On February 29, 1992, Serna died at the age of 95. He was buried with full military honors at Fort Bliss National Cemetery.

See SERNA, Page 5

Nationalism's finest hour

If anyone had any doubt that Ukraine has its own national identity, the early days of the Russian invasion should have eliminated it.

There's been the stiff resistance of Ukraine's fighters, the former president giving interviews in the streets of Kyiv in battle gear, the ordinary men and women insulting and defying Russian soldiers, and above all, the comedian-turned-president, the now legendary

Volodymyr Zelenskyy, refusing to leave his capital as Russian forces bear down on the city seeking to capture or kill him.

This is all so compelling because there is something inherently stirring about a people defending their homeland from a would-be imperial overlord.

The fight to save Ukraine represents a righteous nationalism. The Ukrainians aren't defending democracy per se or freedom in the sense of abstract rights – although Vladimir Putin's Russia is a threat to both – but their land and birthright. They are struggling for national self-determination, and even national survival.

Even in a globalized world, even when patriotism is not nearly as strong a force as it once was, even among Eurocrats who want to subsume Europe's nations in an EU superstate, Ukraine's struggle still strikes a profound chord.

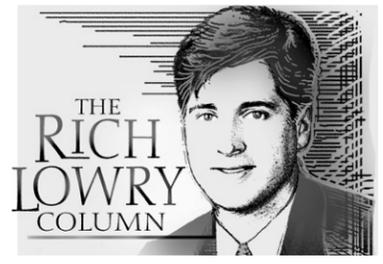
In his speech prior to the war, making a direct appeal to the Russian

people, President Zelenskyy spoke of his memories of Ukraine. "No one in Russia knows the meaning of these places, these streets, these names, these events," he said. "These are all alien to you, unfamiliar. This is our land, and this is our history."

"We are not part of one whole," he explained. "You cannot swallow us up. We are different. But this difference is not a reason for enmity. We want to determine our own course and build our own history – peacefully, calmly and honestly."

Zelenskyy was speaking a nationalist's language of love for his people's history, land and traditions. As G. K. Chesterton once wrote, "Cosmopolitanism gives us one country, and it is good; nationalism gives us a hundred countries, and every one of them is the best."

Of course, Ukraine's status as a nation is contested by Vladimir Putin, who claims that it rightfully belongs to Russia. His revanchist vision is often described as an aggressive nationalism, but it is really a drive for empire. In his own lurid speech before starting the war, Putin laid out a spurious version of history wherein Ukrainian nationhood was an invention of the Soviet Union. He attacked "the virus of nationalist ambitions," and claimed after the invasion began that Russian troops



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Food for thought By Dr. Glenn Mollette

How much is freedom worth?

In America we pursue the occupation of our choice. That doesn't mean we always like our jobs but we can choose to pursue another career or several different careers. We can choose our state, community and house. That doesn't mean we can easily afford to live where we choose but we are free to pursue life in another neighborhood if we want to work toward such a move.

We change our lives if we have the desire and the will power. People make choices every day regarding health, habits and lifestyles. Some choose to develop themselves further and strive to be better

while others may choose to do nothing.

You choose your house, your car, your clothes, and your hairstyle (if you have any). You choose what you will do on your days off from work or during your retirement years. You choose if you retire or if you just keep on working until the end.

Often, we may feel as if we don't have choices and that we are stuck in a rut. Chances are we made choices that put us there. We have to make tough choices to climb out of the rut. We can easily become disabled physically, financially and domestically which will significantly limit our choices.

Because of health, money, and maybe even age, our choices are often very limited. Most of the time,

even when we have limitations, we can find freedom of choice.

The bottom line is we live in America and we cherish our freedom. We should remember our history and the great sacrifices made by so many. We should never take for granted the unimaginable hardships endured by the early settlers and every generation that has fought wars and lost tens of thousands of men and women in wars to keep our sacred and blessed freedom.

In his 1961 State of the Union address, President John F. Kennedy reminded us that every generation of Americans has had to win its freedom. We will never stay free unless we are willing to fight and sacrifice to keep our freedom.

How much is freedom worth? The brave people of Ukraine and President Volodymyr Zelenskyy are showing the world what freedom is worth. Their lives. While many of the young and aged are exiting Ukraine, President Zelenskyy and thousands are risking their lives to keep Ukraine free from the aggression

of Russia and the evil of Vladimir Putin. Putin is not our friend or a friend to the free world. His path to conquer Ukraine is an Adolph Hitler move. Destroying a city and attempting to conquer a nation while killing thousands in order to increase his domain is barbaric.

In the midst of all this, we are surely reminded that we must once again become energy independent. Russia is a supplier of 40% of the natural gas used by Germany and most of Europe. They and America must stop buying energy and anything else from Russia. We have made them a rich nation while sacrificing our own independence.

Watching as Ukraine's government hands out AK-47s and other guns surely reminds us of the importance of being able to protect ourselves. Keep your guns, stock up on your ammunition, and never vote for anyone who wants to edit our Second Amendment.

We must pray for Zelenskyy and the

See FREEDOM, Page 4

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SERVING ANTHONY, VINTON, CANUTILLO, EAST MONTANA, HORIZON, SOCORRO, CLIVE, FARENS, SAN ELIZABO AND TORNEILLO

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MAIL: 15344 Werling Ct. Horizon City, TX 79928

Phone: 852-3235

E-mail: wtcc@wtcc.com
Website: wtcc.com

Publisher
Rick Shrum

Contributors
Alfredo Vasquez
Steve Escajeda

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Senior use of smart phones, computers and iPads is on the rise

By John Grimaldi
Special to the Courier

It turns out that you can teach an old dog new tricks. Just look at how America's seniors have adopted cellphones, computers and laptops. Middle age children of today's seniors may soon start complaining that their moms and dads are spending too much time online and on their iPhones, says Rebecca Weber, CEO of the Association of Mature American Citizens (AMAC).

She notes that the 50-plus set has been adopting technology at a steady rate for years now, but the covid pandemic has speeded things up. A Pew Research study, she points out, shows that 73% of the 50 to 64 set and 45% of Americans 65 and older are familiar with and use social media sites.

Meanwhile, the Infocomm Media Development Authority (IMDA) tells us that a 2016 survey of seniors 75 years of age and older showed that just 11% of them were using smart phones and the same survey conducted in 2020 showed that senior smart phone usage had skyrocketed to 60%. The same survey showed that only eight percent of 75-plus seniors were familiar with and

used the Internet in 2016 and by 2020 46% of super seniors were regularly online.

A lot of research has been conducted regarding the "hows" and "whys" of technology adoption among the elderly, according the Journal of Geriatric Mental Health. They show that, "once their initial resistance of learning new technology was overcome- 'enjoying the experience' of using the mobile phone motivated them to use the device. Other contributory factors were 'heightened self-esteem' when they could perform certain chores by themselves such as paying bills or buying groceries or navigating around, and 'feeling secure' (because of various safety measures available on the cellphone), as well as more realistic, goal-directed outcomes such as information retrieval and communication. In addition, social influence or subjective norm in the theory of reasoned action research also influenced the use of mobile phones. Other studies too have identified different possible motivators for senior mobile phone use, including social influence, safety, security, autonomy, relatedness, and usefulness."

Tiffany Eshaki, who writes for C&G Newspapers, reports

that older folk have been slowly but surely embracing the fruits of technology and the pandemic helped speed things up for savvy seniors. Tiffany cites Molly McElroy, a 70-year-old resident of Auburn Hills, MI. According to McElroy, "If you, like me, are a senior, which makes you a high risk for COVID-19, (social media) is how you carry on. You're already limited at some level by age, driving less at night, and now you're isolated. Or are you? Thanks to my hobbies - indolence and the Internet - I hardly feel impacted at all."

Ageists will tell you that the elderly are not capable of

navigating the intricate pathways of computer and smart phone communication. It's not true. In a scholarly paper by Morgan Van Vleck, a Masters Research Fellow in Aging at Harvey A. Friedman Center for Aging at Washington University, St. Louis, MO, argues that the use of social media and technology by seniors is a welcoming development.

"The growing intergenerational nature of social media has been beneficial in allowing a place for people to build relationships based on common interests rather than age. The future of social media is an intergenerational one, with the aging population

only set to increase. Instead of viewing a growing social media use among older adults as the "death" of these sites, it should be viewed as an avenue for possibility that arises when everyone is given a platform," he says.

The Association of Mature American Citizens (http://www.amac.us) is a senior advocacy organization that takes its marching orders from its members. We act and speak on their behalf, protecting their interests and offering a practical insight on how to best solve the problems they face today.

Briefs

From Page 1

Scorpion Country for their accountability in ensuring that every child's needs are met," said Gabriela Elliott, principal of Bill Sybert School. "Our teachers, staff, and parents work together to eliminate excuses, reach every child and bring their best every day that creates a culture of continuous growth for all of our scholars exemplifying our motto #WeBeforeMe." The

school joined some 50 other campuses across Texas with the distinction and were recognized at the Making Middle School Matter Symposium hosted by TASSP from Feb. 27 to March 1, 2022. They will be recognized nationally with other recognized STW schools across the country at the National Forum Schools to Watch Conference in Washington D.C. June 23 to 25, 2022. Texas Schools to Watch are recognized for a three-year period, and at the end of three years, they must demonstrate

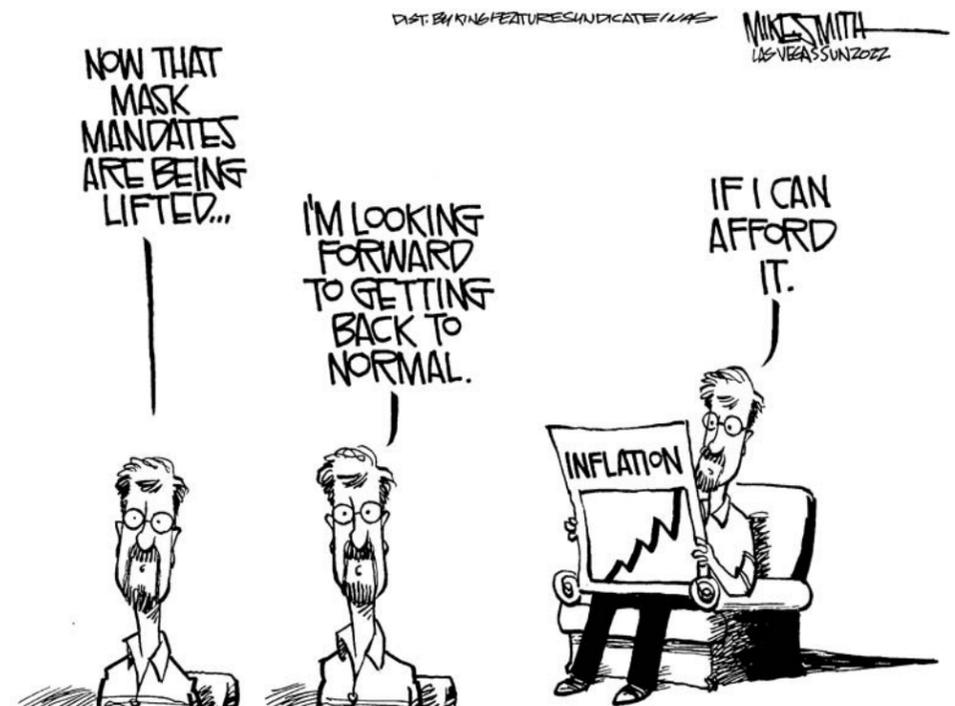
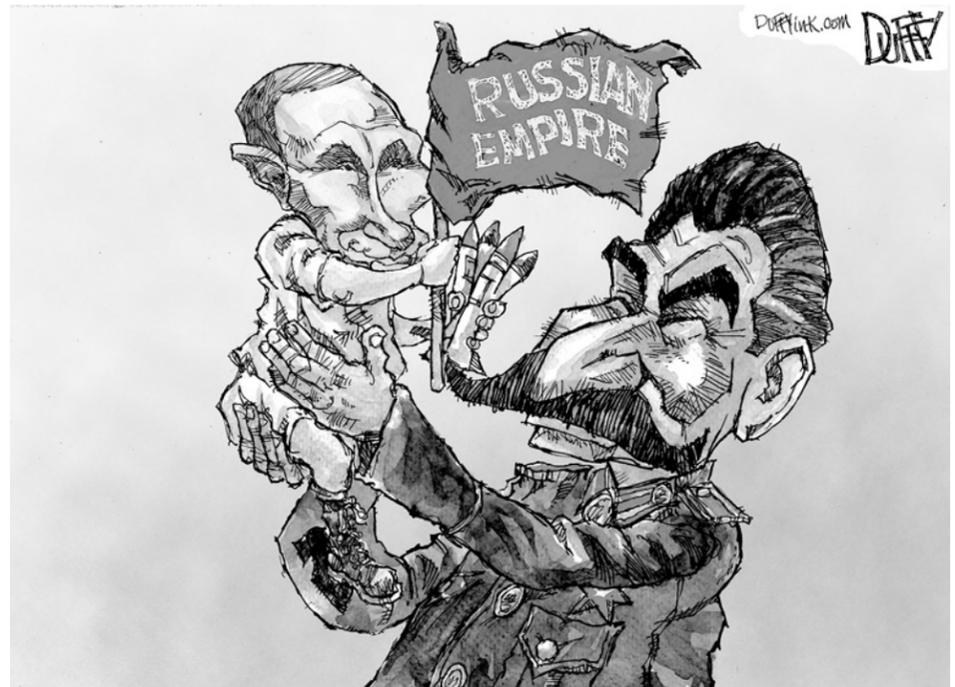
progress on specific goals to be re-designated. Unlike the Blue-Ribbon recognition program, "Schools to Watch" requires schools to not just identify strengths, but to also focus on areas of continuous improvement; thus, the three-year re-designation.

- Christy Flores-Jones

Taxes

With Tax Day looming and 44 million Americans expecting to pay this year's taxes late due

See BRIEFS, Page 4





– Photo courtesy Anthony ISD

NUMBER ONE – The first place Anthony High School cheerleaders are, front row from left, Adriana Ortega, Jocelyn Prado, Vanna Terrazas and Coach Soraya Yanar. Members in the second row, from left, are Itzel Sanchez, Jasmine Flores, Kayleen Calzada, Alessia Castillo, Johanna Millan and Jasmine Hernandez. In the third row, from left, are Christian Trevizo, Esteban Ramirez, David Gallardo and Ashton Gonzalez.

Anthony ISD Cheerleaders take 1st place in Chihuahuas Cheer & Dance Classic

By Adriana Candelaria
Special to the Courier

ANTHONY, TX – Hours of

hard work are paying off Anthony High School cheerleaders who won first place in the Junior Varsity & Freshman Build category in the Chihuahuas

Cheer and Dance Classic held Saturday, Feb. 28.

It was the first year since the start of COVID-19 that the team returned to the competition, but for more than half of the squad, it was their first time experiencing an event like this.

“Most of the girls competing this year have no prior cheerleading experience; it’s their first year. They really showed out and gave it their all, and you could see that on the mat. I’m very proud of them,” said Soraya Yanar, AHS JV and varsity coach.

The squad performed a competitive cheerleading routine that began with a hip-hop and R&B dance and ended with a one-minute-long cheer. Their performance also included basic stunts and a basket toss.

“It was really nerve-racking for me and my teammates since it was our first time competing, but we’re really excited about the outcome,” said Adriana Ortega, AHS sophomore.

AISD competes in Class 3A, Division 2. The cheerleading team consists of nine girls and four boys in various grade levels. The squad practiced at least 10 hours each week in the mornings and after school to prepare for the competition.

The Chihuahuas Cheer & Dance Classic is an annual competition that includes different categories in dance and cheer groups and solos. Participants’ ages range from youth to all-star seniors. Awards are given to each category/division.

Freedom

From Page 2

Ukraine people but we must also help them with whatever aid necessary to push Russia out.

Porsche: 1983, 944 Turbo. Clear title, 43,000 original miles. Runs good. \$15,000. **11 acres:** Horizon Blvd. at Fabens cut-off. \$35,000, owner finance. 915-309-7588.

Keep in mind that Russia is only 55 miles from Alaska’s closest port. Putin just might decide that Russia should have Alaska back.

We bought Alaska fair and square in 1867 for \$7.2 million and we won’t be handing it back.

How much is freedom worth? Volodymyr Zelenskyy and the people of Ukraine are demonstrating how much freedom is worth.

Strange BUT TRUE

By Lucie Winborne

- When added together, the numbers on a roulette wheel add up to 666.
- Chocolate milk was originally sold as medicine.
- The Vatican has its own telescope staffed by priests, and has even received awards for the pursuit of scientific research.
- Rapper Snoop Dogg tried to rent the country of Lichtenstein for a music video, but was rejected.
- Until they are large enough to sleep upright, baby owls sleep on their stomachs because their heads are too heavy.
- Actual corpses were on the set and going to be used during the filming of “Apocalypse Now.” However, the man who supplied them turned out to be a grave robber and was arrested.

• Oceans around the world contain about 20 million tons of gold in the water itself, worth hundreds of trillions of dollars at current prices.

• Walt Disney accidentally “kidnapped” Richard Nixon by dispatching his monorail train before the Secret Service could get on.

• If your arm or hand falls asleep, try rocking your head from side to side. This will release the pressure on the nerves in your neck and wake up the limb.

• In 2003, PepsiCo offered Estonia \$25 million dollars to change the spelling of one of its lakes, Lake Peipsi, to Lake Pepsi, but was turned down.

• A man legally named Santa Claus was elected to the city council in North Pole, Alaska.

Thought for the Day: “I cannot believe the path to victory lies in staining our souls so black we become indistinguishable from those we fight.”

– Anthony Ryan

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Briefs

From Page 3

to the COVID-19 pandemic, WalletHub has released its 2022 Taxpayer Survey, as well as its yearly report on the *States with the Highest & Lowest Tax Rates* (accompanying videos included) in order to help people better understand this confusing time of year. You can find highlights from both below, followed by the full list of WalletHub’s 2022 taxpayer resources. Texas was rated 41st in the report, ranking (1-Lowest; 25-Avg.):

- 41st – Overall Effective State & Local Tax Rate;
- 1st – Income Tax;
- 45th – Real-Estate Tax;
- 1st – Vehicle Property Tax; and
- 48th – Sales and Excise Taxes.

2022 Survey

• 72% of Americans think the government should have

provided more tax relief due to COVID-19.

- 81% of people say the government does not spend their tax dollars wisely.
- Half of people would move to a different state to avoid taxes.
- 48% of Americans think that their neighbors cheat on their taxes.
- 66% of people think their current tax rate is too high.

2022 Resources

- What to Do if You Can’t Pay;
- Pros & Cons of Paying with Credit;
- Tax Scams & Tips for Avoiding Them;
- Last-Minute Tax Tips; and
- Property Taxes by State.

Q&A with WalletHub analyst Jill Gonzalez

Will the COVID-19 pandemic affect whether Americans are

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CryptoQuip Answer

Group of children proficient in a certain computer programming language: The Little Pascals.

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Moments in time
THE HISTORY CHANNEL

• On March 7, 1988, representatives of the Writers Guild of America called a strike for all the union's members. The five-month walkout was estimated to cost Hollywood some \$500 million, as many viewers began watching cable channels.

• On March 8, 1917, the February Revolution begins when riots and strikes over the scarcity of food erupt in Petrograd. A week later, centuries of czarist rule in Russia ended with the abdication of Nicholas II. Vladimir Lenin returned home and took control of the Russian Revolution.

• On March 9, 1979, Major League Baseball teams are ordered by the MLB commissioner to allow equal access to all reporters. The order came after Sports Illustrated reporter Melissa Ludtke's successful lawsuit for refusing her access to clubhouses at Yankee Stadium during the 1977 World Series.

• On March 10, 1902, the U.S. Court of Appeals rules that despite his claims, Thomas Edison did not invent the movie camera. It did admit that Edison invented the sprocket system that moved perforated film through the camera.

• On March 11, 1942, U.S. Gen. Douglas MacArthur abandons the island of Corregidor under orders from President Franklin Roosevelt. Left behind were 90,000 American and Filipino troops, who would soon succumb to the Japanese offensive. Only one-third of those left behind survived to see MacArthur's return in January 1945.

• On March 12, 1969, the London drug squad appears at house of Beatle George Harrison and his wife Pattie Boyd with a warrant and drug-sniffing canines. Sgt. Pilcher, the man behind the raid, was convicted of planting drugs in other cases and went to jail in 1972.

• On March 13, 1836, Texan Gen. Sam Houston begins a series of strategic retreats to buy time to train his ill-prepared army, which consisted of 374 poorly equipped men. A month later, his newly trained army won a stunning victory against Mexico's Santa Anna.

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– Photo courtesy Office of State Senator César Blanco

LEGACY – Private Marcelino Serna's great-grandchildren and granddaughter pose with the Texas Legislative Medal of Honor and Senate Resolution authored by state senator Cesar Blanco.



César Blanco

Serna

From Page 1

the most decorated US Army soldier from Texas, whole-heartedly deserves the Texas Legislative Medal of Honor posthumously. We salute our fellow veteran, state senator César Blanco, for leading the effort to get Marcelino this prestigious honor to allow his descendants and fellow Texans to recognize his heroic deeds.”

El Paso Veterans Rey Rivera and Greg Vera stated that they formed the organization that spent years fighting for Private Marcelino Serna – a son of Mexico and a hero of the United States – to receive the recognition that he rightfully deserves for his military service during World War I. The two local veterans also led the campaign that successfully got the Tornillo Port of Entry to be named after Serna.

“We’re thankful for the approval of his nomination to receive the Texas Legislative Medal of Honor. We appreciate all of the work Senator Blanco did to make this a reality,” Rivera and Vera concurred.

“As a fellow El Pasoan and veteran, it was my honor and privilege to successfully nominate Pvt. Serna for the Texas Legislative Medal of Honor. As Texas’ most decorated soldier from World War I, this recognition is long overdue for Pvt. Serna,” state senator César Blanco said.

“I am proud of Texas for taking the lead on righting an injustice and honoring Pvt. Serna for his conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity at the risk of his life above and beyond the call of duty. I appreciate Governor Abbott, Lt. Governor Patrick, the Legislative Medal of Honor Committee, fellow veterans, and most of all the Serna family, for uplifting and honoring the legacy of U.S. Army Private Serna. I urge Congress to follow Texas’ lead and award Pvt. Serna the Congressional Medal of Honor,” Blanco added.

Briefs

From Page 4

able to pay their taxes on time this year?

The COVID-19 pandemic will contribute to some Americans not paying their taxes on time this year. According to a new WalletHub survey, 44 million Americans expect that they will pay their taxes late due to

the pandemic. People who are unable to pay their taxes should still file a return by the April 18 deadline no matter what. Then, they have a few options to consider, such as waiting for a bill and paying a small late fee or applying for an extension. It may also be possible to set up an installment agreement with the IRS to pay the tax bill off over up to 72 months.

Why do so many Americans

feel the government does not spend their taxes wisely?

There are many reasons why around 208 million Americans believe the government does not spend their tax dollars wisely, according to WalletHub’s latest survey, but some of the biggest factors are a disconnect between how much we pay and the benefits we get in return, a general lack of trust

in politicians, and the truthful perception that the private sector invests more efficiently than the government. Americans don’t like to part with their hard-earned money, especially when they often hear about billions of dollars in waste, fraud and abuse. When that’s the message that dominates the airwaves, it’s easy for people to come to the

See BRIEFS, Page 6

NBA's top two cities, NY and LA, may watch the playoffs on TV

By Steve Escajeda
Special to the Courier

The NBA is about a month away from the start of its playoff season, and many of the teams who were expected to make the postseason are right where they should be.

Last year the Phoenix Suns and the Milwaukee Bucks played in the finals with the Bucks winning their first championship in 50 years.

This season, both the Suns and the Bucks are in the thick of the playoff race. The Suns (in the West) have the best record in the league while the Bucks are just a few games out of first place in the Eastern Conference.

Then there are teams like the Philadelphia 76ers, the Golden State

Warriors, the Utah Jazz and the Denver Nuggets, who will contend for the title again this season.

And don't forget the surprise teams that have suddenly moved up the rankings, like the Memphis Grizzlies and the Chicago Bulls, the Cleveland Cavaliers and the Dallas Mavericks.

It's always interesting to see how far these new teams can go in the playoffs; to see whether or not they can knock off the more seasoned teams.

The mix of strong veteran teams and the young up-and-comers will make this NBA playoff season a lot of fun for the fans.

But more interesting sometimes is to take a look at the teams who were considered the favorites to win the championship, and find themselves on the verge of barely, or not making the playoffs at all.

It was predicted by all the experts that four teams from two cities, (New York) the New York Knicks and the Brooklyn Nets, and (Los Angeles) the Los Angeles Clippers and especially, the Los Angeles Lakers were guaranteed to battle for a title.

Surprisingly, all four teams will have to rally over their final 15 games just to assure themselves a playoff spot.

With the top 10 teams advancing to the postseason, the Knicks (25-38), who were supposed to finish in the top three in the Eastern Conference, are currently six games out of tenth place and will likely miss the postseason altogether.

With players like Julius Randle, Kemba Walker, Derrick Rose and RJ Barrett, the Knicks were thought to be a power this season, but Rose has been injured, Walker never played like we're used to seeing,

and even Randle isn't the force he was a year ago.

The Nets (32-32) are in eighth place right now but are just a couple games from being out of tenth, so there's no guarantee they'll make the playoffs.

This was the team that was supposed to meet the Lakers (we'll talk about them in a bit) for the championship. And why not? This Nets team had Kevin Durant, Kyrie Irving and James Harden.

But then Durant was injured and missed a ton of games, Irving was banned from playing in New York because he chose not to get vaccinated, and Harden just never looked comfortable with this lineup.

So, the Nets traded Harden away, Durant is back from his injury and it's expected that New York is about to lift its vaccination mandate so Irving might start playing every game.

The Nets also received Ben Simmons from the 76ers. If he gets over his problems, the Nets could be a challenger again after all.

The Clippers have been a championship contender for a few years now. With Kawhi Leonard, Paul George, Nicolas Batum, Reggie Jackson and Terrance Mann, this year was no exception.

But with Leonard missing the whole year with injuries and George missing half the season, we can see why the Clippers are in eighth place at 34-31.

Everyone's favorite to win it all was the Lakers.

With LeBron James, Anthony Davis and Russell Westbrook, why wouldn't they be favored?

But this is an older team with backups like Carmelo Anthony (37 years old), Trevor Ariza (36) and Dwight Howard (36).

Plus LeBron (37) and Davis have missed a ton of games due to injury and Westbrook looks lost at times still trying to figure out his role.

The Lakers (28-35) are sitting in ninth place in the West and could end up taking an early exit from the playoffs... if they even make it to the playoffs.

Briefs

From Page 5

conclusion that that the government isn't handling their taxes wisely.

What should taxpayers be worried about on Tax Day?

The biggest things that Americans fear on Tax Day are getting audited and not having enough money, each of which gets around 27% of the vote. In third place is a fear of making math errors. People's biggest concern should be having enough money to pay what they owe, as trying to come up with additional funds on short notice could be hard for a lot of people during the COVID-19 pandemic. Avoiding math errors is easier if you start completing your tax return early and give yourself enough time to review it thoroughly for mistakes. There are plenty of free tax-prep resources that can help you ensure that the math is correct, too.

Visit <https://wallethub.com/edu/best-worst-states-to-be-a-taxpayer/2416>

for the full report.

— Diana Polk

Book returned three centuries overdue

It's not unusual these days to see reports of library books being returned years and even decades late, but a church library in Sheffield, England boasts the return of a book that has been overdue for some 300 years. The book was returned recently with a note of apology. Rev. Canon Keith Farrow, vice dean at Sheffield Cathedral, confirms that the book in question is a 1704 edition of *The Faith and Practice of a Church of England Man*. It turns out that it was found among the possessions of a deceased woman residing in Wales who left a note that the book should be returned to the church library upon her death. Farrow explains that back in the day when the Cathedral was just a church, it was well known for its lending library. He jokingly told reporters that "I'm trying to work out what the librarian's fine would be — you never know, we might get a new roof or something with the fine! But I did

promise the family I wouldn't charge them the fine — they've returned the book and that's wonderful."

— John Grimaldi

A fish story

So, what do you do with a cute little goldfish that's overstayed its welcome? What you don't do is put it out to pasture in the nearest pond or lake. Sure, they are cute and manageable in a bowl but in a large body of water they tend to grow bigger and bigger and reproduce rapidly, often creating quite a mess. Keller Lake in Burnsville, MN was recently overtaken by "giant" goldfish causing the local authorities to warn townfolk they are breaking the law. It's considered "illegal fish stocking" and, if you're caught, you can be fined. Given the space, goldfish can grow to a foot or more. They are speedy reproducers, as wildlife authorities across the country will tell you. Not long ago a wildlife team removed some half a million of the critters from Big Woods Lake near Minneapolis.

— John Grimaldi

Super Crossword

- MUNICIPAL APPLICATION ACROSS**
- 1 "Cabaret" performer Sally
- 7 Allowable
- 15 Egg-beating utensil
- 20 Carey of pop
- 21 Red wine, in Rouen
- 22 Sonja on ice skates
- 23 Start of a riddle
- 25 Western flick, in old slang
- 26 Like arias and anthems
- 27 "Go back to zero" button
- 28 Halloween's mo.
- 29 Titan orbits it
- 30 Other, to Juanita
- 32 Bible book before Jeremiah
- 34 Kingly title
- 35 Perp pursuer
- 38 Riddle, part 2
- 43 Giraffe's kin
- 45 Writer _ Hubbard
- 46 1998 Disney musical set in China
- 47 Riddle, part 3
- 52 Rubber-stamping item
- 56 No, to Nabokov
- 57 Worn-down pencils, e.g.
- 58 Raise, as a building
- 61 Pie _ mode
- 62 Maestro Kurt
- 64 Actress Debra
- 66 Second-rate flick
- 68 Riddle, part 4
- 73 Within easy reach
- 74 Sports facilities
- 75 Rudely brief
- 76 Chomp on
- 77 Begin
- 78 "Der _" (Konrad Adenauer's nickname)
- 80 General _ chicken
- 83 Canonized Italian theologian
- 86 Riddle, part 5
- 90 Composer John Philip _
- 93 John Candy's old skit show
- 94 Bath sponge
- 95 End of the riddle
- 102 _Ops (CIA tactics)
- 103 QED part
- 104 Nobel-winning "Mother"
- 105 Sleep furniture
- 107 Paid a visit
- 109 Feline cry
- 110 Credit card draw
- 113 Beef quality grader: Abbr.
- 117 Old arcade company
- 118 Riddle's answer
- 121 Like a well-pitched game
- 122 Audits, as a course
- 123 Actress Fawcett
- 124 Vestige
- 125 Mini-dictionary
- 126 Having soft, loose flesh
- DOWN**
- 1 Sporty German cars
- 2 Honolulu's island
- 3 Dark brown songbird
- 4 Insider talk
- 5 Unit of corn
- 6 Shepherd formerly of "The View"
- 7 Giant in car rental
- 8 Funny _ (racehorse)
- 9 Tech news website
- 10 Suffix with west
- 11 San Luis _, Mexico
- 12 Florence native, e.g.
- 13 Self-obsession
- 14 Rock's _ Leppard
- 15 Horse halter?
- 16 Circuit-cooling device
- 17 Get a gut feeling about
- 18 With 39-Down, John Muir was its first president
- 19 Unit of corn
- 24 Briny bodies
- 29 Movie critic Gene
- 31 Taunt in good humor
- 32 "Money _ object" material
- 33 Lead-in to puncture
- 35 McCarthy lawyer Roy
- 36 Allowable
- 37 Sidewalk materials
- 39 See 18-Down
- 40 Meal scraps
- 41 Phone book listings: Abbr.
- 42 Skillet or wok
- 44 Wall-breaching bomb
- 48 "Movin' _" ("The Jeffersons" theme)
- 49 Most chaste
- 50 Group of brainiacs
- 51 Therefore
- 53 Store selling latex
- 54 "That is _ ask"
- 55 " _ Yankees"
- 59 Conger, e.g.
- 60 Like pizza
- 63 Articulate
- 64 Girth
- 65 Here, in Arles
- 66 Life story, in brief
- 67 Table _ (pair's seating)
- 68 " _-Team" (2010 movie)
- 69 Cole _ (footwear brand)
- 70 Tony winner Hagen
- 71 Citrusy
- 72 Amish "you"
- 77 Like prurient
- 78 Joking Johnson
- 79 Tax
- 81 Clumsy sorts
- 82 Hotel visit
- 84 Mysterious
- 85 Hulk player Ferrigno
- 87 This, to Juan
- 88 I, to Merkel
- 89 Inuit vehicle
- 91 Cow or hen
- 92 Letters sent by plane
- 95 Pour, as wine from a bottle
- 96 Speechifier
- 97 Steinway rival
- 98 Really must
- 99 Sneaker brand
- 100 Lyft rival
- 101 Accompany to the airport, perhaps
- 106 Old Toyota
- 108 Chomp on
- 110 Penta- plus four
- 111 _ about (roughly)
- 112 Big Apple blaze-control org.
- 114 Balkan native
- 115 Lacking color
- 116 Lacking color
- 118 Chinese menu abbr.
- 119 Family gal
- 120 Comrade

Answer Page 4

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					

Comix

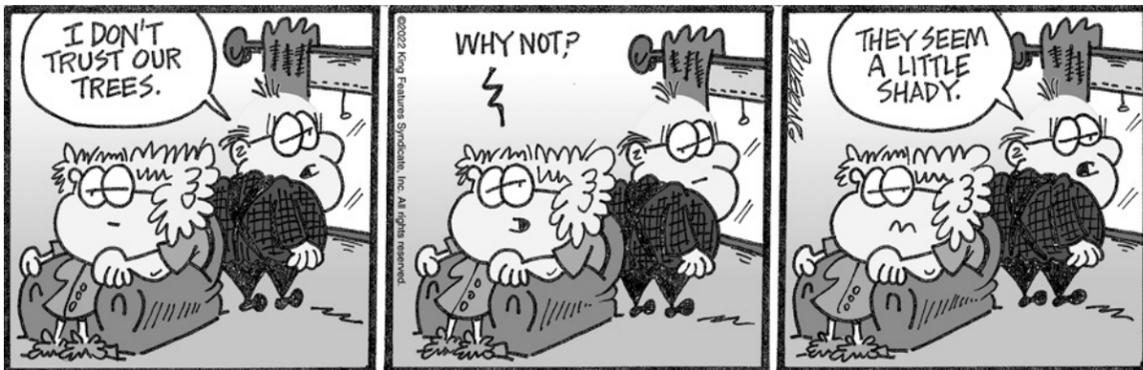
OUT ON A LIMB By Gary Kopervas



AMBER WAVES By Dave T. Phipps



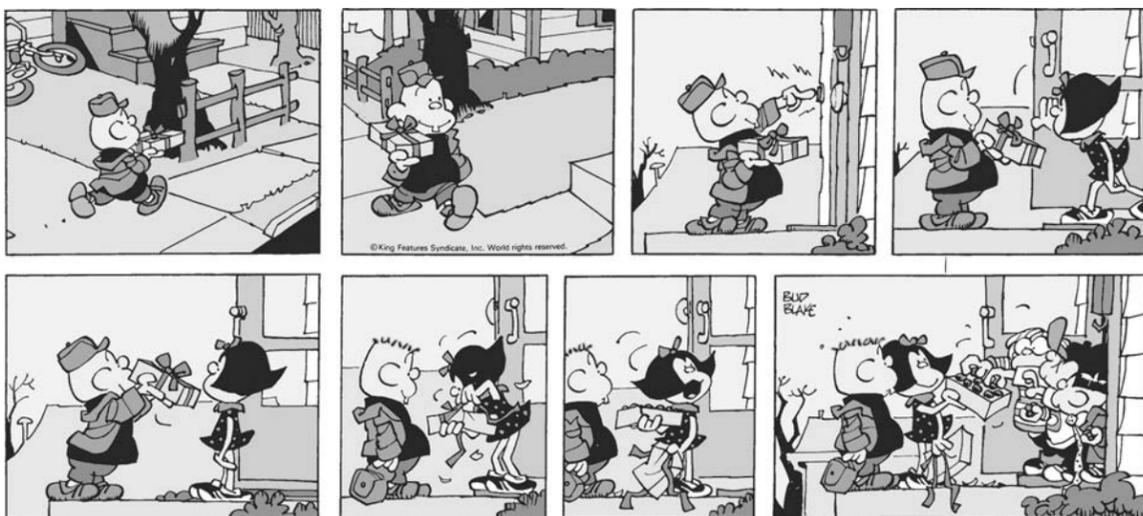
THE SPATS By Jeff Pickering



R.F.D. By Mike Marland



TIGER By Bud Blake



Lowry

From Page 2

were only fighting against "nationalist groups" in Ukraine.

Putin is armed with newer weapons, but he's acting every bit the traditional Russian imperialist. Already in the 15th century, a crude Russian state ruled an enormous swath of territory. By the end of the 19th

century, it had become one of the largest empires ever in terms of sheer landmass. This empire was lost with Russia's defeat in World I, reconstituted by the Soviets, and lost again at the end of the Cold War. Putin seeks to revive a version of this project and notably referred in his pre-war speech to "the collapse of the historical Russia known as the USSR."

Zelenskyy and the Ukrainians are fighting for independence against this

behemoth and, in so doing, giving Ukraine new national heroes and national lore that will sustain it even if the worst comes.

The philosopher Jean-Jacques Rousseau once wrote of Poland, another country constantly under threat from imperial Russia: "The virtue of her citizens, their patriotic zeal, the particular form that national institutions can give to their spirit, that is the only rampart always ready to defend it, and which no army

could breach. If you arrange things such that a Pole could never become a Russian, then I can assure you that Russia will never subjugate Poland."

The Russian tanks may roll into Kyiv, but Russia won't ultimately triumph over Ukrainian nationalism.

Rich Lowry is editor of the National Review. (c) 2022 by King Features Synd., Inc.

How much popcorn is too much popcorn?

DEAR DR. ROACH: I love popcorn, but when you look close there are so many hard hulls! Are they hard on the stomach? Can you eat too much? – G.P.P.



Popcorn has a lot of fiber, include the nondigestible bran of the kernel (also called the hull). Fiber is generally healthy for you, aiding in digestion and making you feel fuller, and foods high in fiber may reduce risk of some chronic diseases.

However, too much fiber, especially if your system is not used to it, is absolutely a potential problem. It can cause bloating and gas, and in rare instances can cause an obstruction in the bowel. This is not likely with any reasonable amount of popcorn.

Doctors used to think that in people with diverticulosis, which is little outpouchings in the wall of the colon, popcorn could cause diverticulitis (inflammation and infection). However, recent studies have shown this is unlikely.

Finally, enjoy popcorn air-popped, without oil or butter or too much salt, for the healthiest option.

DEAR DR. ROACH: I was recently worked up for an autoimmune disease that now seems to be osteoarthritis. I was placed on 10 mg of prednisone for 14 days with amazing relief from my painful shoulder and arms. I am severely allergic to aspirin and do not want to take opioids. The physician has ordered prednisone 2.5-5 mg daily to control symptoms. Is it safe to take this low dose of prednisone daily for pain control? – M.O.

It sounds to me that the physician may not have communicated as effectively as I might have hoped. Osteoarthritis, although a widespread cause of joint pain, is not an autoimmune disease, and it is not treated with prednisone. Instead, it sounds very much like you may have polymyalgia rheumatica.

PMR is found in women more often than in men and rarely in people under 50, most commonly in a person's 70s. Hallmark symptoms are joint pain, especially of the shoulders and upper arms, that is much worse in the morning. PMR also is very sensitive to prednisone 10-20 mg: If it doesn't respond dramatically to those kinds of doses, it probably isn't PMR. A laboratory finding, the erythrocyte sedimentation rate, is almost always very elevated (92%-94%) in PMR. A different blood test for inflammation, C-reactive protein, is abnormal in 99% of people with the condition.

Treatment is low-dose prednisone, usually given at 10-20 mg per day to start, as long as it is controlling symptoms. About half of people will be able to come off of medication after a year or two, but some people continue on treatment for six years or more. Unfortunately, even at these low doses, roughly half of people can develop a side effect due to the steroids, especially cataracts. People on long-term steroids should have careful monitoring of blood pressure, sugar and cholesterol levels, as well as bone density. Alternate treatments that don't rely on steroids are in development.

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) 2022 North America Synd., Inc. All Rights Reserved.



Moore Texas by Roger Moore
 March 17, 1836: David Burnet and Lorenzo de Zavala are sworn in as Texas' Chief Executive officers with Santa Anna and a huge army trying to crush their plans of a Republic.

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: L equals C

XYMHC MD LGTZEYQJ CYMDTLTQJB
 TJ P LQYBPTJ LMUCHBQY
 CYMXYP UUTJX ZPJXHPXQ:
 BGQ ZTBBZQ CPWLPZW.

Answer Page 4

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Weekly SUDOKU

by Linda Thistle

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

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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TeleHealth visits avoid COVID delays at VA



by Freddy Groves

The deployment of the new electronic health record at one of the Department Veterans Affairs health systems has been delayed. As of now, so many employees are sick with COVID-19 and unable to work that the rollout has been moved from March 5 to April 30.

That particular system, with multiple VA locations in 15 counties, currently has a COVID positivity rate of over 30% with one county seeing an increase of 150% in the past two weeks.

Think about that, and ask yourself: Can your next appointment at the VA be accomplished via TeleHealth? While the VA was one of the first agencies to mandate that all their employees be vaccinated against COVID, facts and figures show that it's not complete protection.

TeleHealth uses computers,

phones and tablets to connect you with your medical team in real-time video or a phone call. Accessing care this way means you don't have physically go in. This can be especially helpful if you are in a rural area far from a VA facility or are disabled, older or very ill. You can even talk to specialists via TeleHealth.

If you're not signed up, start here: telehealth.va.gov. Scroll down to See How It Works. On that same page, click on My HealtheVet. From there you can track appointments, get messages from your care team, view or print your medical records or refill your prescriptions.

Don't miss the VA Mobile Apps link. That's where you can get your Video Connect app for iOS, web or Android. Note that AT&T, SafeLink by TracFone, T-Mobile and Verizon will help you avoid data charges when using the VA Video Connect app. You'll also find the 24/7 help desk to get your app going (866) 651-3180 and a test site to try a

practice session.

The VA has gone all out in battling COVID-19. Consider doing your part and ask if your next appointment can be accomplished from home via TeleHealth.

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- Store plastic wrap in the refrigerator, or even the freezer, to keep it from sticking to itself.

- "Take your medication tablets on a spoonful of your favorite yogurt! Place the pills on top of yogurt and they slide down. Follow with a second spoonful and smile." – A Reader in Pennsylvania

- Do you have a screw loose... in your eyeglasses? This is an easy fix. Paint the screw with a dab of clear nail polish and quickly re-screw. It works like glue. Dab the top of the screw for a little extra insurance.

- "I purchased a roll of reflective tape to mark our basement stairs. It reflects the light from the open doorway at the top of the stairs, and I can turn the downstairs lights off before heading up. I had some left over, so I put a strip on my dog's collar. When I let him out at night, I can shine a flashlight and spot him instantly, since the tape is more visible in the night." – V.R. in Pennsylvania

- I installed rivet rings in the corner of my bathroom towels. Now, when I hang a towel up, it stays hung up. – Anonymous

- If you're leaving your home for a few days, make sure you don't turn off the heater altogether. Set it at a low 55 degrees F and open up the cabinets that have pipes exposed. This way, air will circulate, and it won't get too cold to allow the pipes to burst. Have a neighbor turn your faucets to a trickle if below-freezing weather is expected.

- Wrap the metal collar of your paintbrush with masking tape before painting. Then you can peel it off and there's no stuck-on paint.

Send your tips to Now Here's a Tip, 628 Virginia Drive, Orlando, FL 32803. (c) 2022 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.

DIFFICULTY: ★★★

★ Moderate ★★ Difficult

★★★ GO FIGURE!

Answer Page 4

	x		+				15
+			÷		-		
	+			x			15
x			+		x		
	x			-			19
16		10				20	

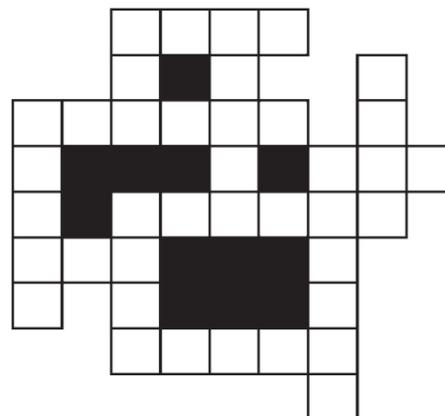
1 2 3 3 4 5 6 7 8

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By: rj johnson

- W O V
- T U S R Y L
- W O L T E
- ♥ E A V N
- W E B A L Y
- ♥ E A Y
- ♥ L W S O
- ♥ E S V R E
- I L N
- L I V Y A N
- ♥ Y A R S T
- T A B I



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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