

NEWSBRIEFS

Sporting cities

With the North American sports industry expected to reach a value of \$83.1 billion in 2023, the personal-finance website WalletHub has released its report on 2022's *Best Sports Cities*, as well as accompanying videos and expert commentary. To determine the cities where the game is always on regardless of season, WalletHub compared 392 small to large cities across the five largest sports in the U.S.: football, basketball, baseball, hockey and soccer. El Paso was rated 186th in the report. Other stats:

- Jacksonville, Florida, has the lowest average ticket price for an NFL game, \$81.97, which is 1.9 times less expensive than in Las Vegas, the city with the highest at \$153.47.
 - Atlanta has the highest attendance rate for MLS games, 103.45 percent, which is 6.1 times higher than in Chicago, the city with the lowest at 16.98 percent.
 - Charlotte, North Carolina, has the lowest average ticket price for an NBA game, \$63.11, which is 3.2 times lower than in San Francisco, the city with the highest at \$203.30.
 - NHL fans in Pittsburgh are 27.9 times friendlier and more engaged than their New York counterparts.
 - Phoenix has the lowest average MLB ticket price, \$22.12, which is 2.8 times lower than in Boston, the city with the highest at \$61.71.
- Visit <https://wallethub.com/edu/best-sports-cities/15179> for the full report.

– Diana Polk

Date night

With nearly 50% of all U.S. adults being single and the average date costing over \$90, the personal-finance website WalletHub has released its report on 2022's *Best & Worst Cities for Singles*, as well as accompanying videos and expert commentary. Some singles are closer to a happily ever after than they think, but it depends on where they live. To determine where singles have the highest chance of finding love, WalletHub compared more than 180 U.S. cities across 36 key indicators of dating-friendliness. The data set ranges from the share of the population that is single to the number of online dating opportunities to the average price for a two-person meal. El Paso was rated 65th in the report. Other stats:

- Burlington, VT has the highest

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There is way too much talk about enforcing the laws and not enough about obeying them.

– Quips & Quotes

El Paso County creates playground that is enjoyable, accessible to all

By Alfredo Vasquez
Special to the Courier

EL PASO COUNTY – El Paso County Parks and Recreation Department, in partnership with Moms on Board, recently held a ribbon-cutting ceremony to showcase its first state of the art playground that offers all children, regardless of their abilities or disabilities, a place to join in and enjoy the same activities.

The latest park addition, known as an all-abilities playground, is located at Gallegos Park, 7361 Bosque Road, in Canutillo. Its emphasis is on an inclusive play area where everyone can have fun together in a safe and welcoming environment, county officials noted.

These types of playgrounds are important because they help promote social inclusion, officials pointed out. They stated that when all children play together, they have the opportunity to interact with one another, make friends and learn to appreciate differences, which is a critical part of child development as it helps children to become more tolerant and understanding of others.

Moms On Board (MOB) supporters added that inclusive play also provides opportunities for all children to develop physically, cognitively, and emotionally.



– Photos by Alfredo Vasquez

ALL ABOARD – The concept of an all abilities playground, also referred to as a universally accessible play environment, is one that not only offers an environment that is designed for all children of all abilities but also meets ADA family requirements.

MOB's mission, according to its website, is to work with local leaders to bring more family-friendly amenities to El Paso, enhance existing facilities, and to bring awareness of community projects to its social networking group of approximately 7,000 online members.

The MOB group is comprised of families helping families and works to

address any and all community concerns raised by its members. "Taking your little ones to the local park to enjoy quality time outdoors is a favorite activity for many families. Playgrounds provide safe spaces where kids can play, explore, make new friends and burn off extra

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USER FRIENDLY – Canutillo's Gallegos Park is home to El Paso County's newest type of playground that features a wide range of equipment and facilities that cater to all children. It has ramps, wheelchair-accessible play equipment, sensory-rich play structures, quiet spaces for children who need a break from the action, and specialized swings for children with limited mobility.

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Homesteader
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View from here By John Grimaldi

Men posing as women have the edge in women’s sports

“In terms of absolute strength – that is, without regard for body size, weight or composition – the average man tends to be considerably stronger than the average woman. Specifically, the absolute total-body strength of women has been reported as being roughly 67% that of men,” according to the experts at Princeton University. It’s a fact. And it begs the question, who has the advantage in an athletic competition in which a real woman is pitted against a man impersonating a woman? “Such a situation was unthinkable throughout history but it has emerged as an issue in a 21st century, anything goes, transgender world,” says Rebecca Weber, CEO of the Association of Mature American Citizens.

In her AMAC *Better For America* podcast interview with All-American University of Kentucky Swimmer Riley Gaines, the top female swimmer in America, Weber dug deep into this subject. Gaines lost out to a fellow who calls himself Lia Thomas who, presenting himself as a woman, became the first transgender swimmer to take the NCAA National Trophy away from a biological woman.

In her words, “it’s been a lifelong journey for myself and every other athlete at that elite level. It’s not something you can just jump into. This is something we’ve been doing for 20 years. And so to be there and have the NCAA choose a male over a woman... it’s a slap in the face”

Gaines warned that it has opened the door for future mischief. As she put it, “men who aren’t the best in the men’s category [can] come in and win national titles on the women’s side. And so I think this is a slippery slope for sure. And I think that’s something we’ve seen over the past couple of months. This is rampant. It’s happening daily across all ages.” And as an example, she went on to cite the case of a transgender athlete who placed first and stole prize money away from a female competitor.

Gaines said she never thought of herself as a feminist, pointing out that she is happily married and devoted to her husband, but she added that perhaps it is time to redefine modern-day feminism. Her focus is now on becoming an activist. “We’re endorsing candidates who are willing to acknowledge that biological women deserve fair competition and spaces of privacy for changing [their clothes] where they don’t have to worry about being exposed to men. We’ve been doing a lot of really, really awesome things and we’ve made changes, which is ultimately the goal. So I’m thrilled with the direction that it’s going and I’m excited for the future.”

Gaines explained that she was all set to enroll in dental school but it has been put on the back burner for now. “I realized that dental school will always be there. But the relevancy and importance of this issue and having this platform and not

being afraid to use it and speak my voice, that’s not always going to be there. And so, speaking out has thrown a wrench in my life’s plans. But I’ve realized that if we, as women, are not willing to speak up for ourselves, how can we expect other people to do so? That would be wrong to do. So I’m willing to take a stand because I have seen the implications.”

Gaines pointed out that women fought hard to achieve Title IX 50 years ago, the federal civil rights law that prohibits sex-based discrimination. She noted that while those who are as transgender see themselves as oppressed, women were and still are an oppressed group.

“I think initially before I spoke out, I was so worried about the backlash, and I was so worried that people would think I’m hateful or transphobic or whatever other term they would call me. But since speaking out, I have had so much support across the globe, not even just locally. This is something that people all across the world are thanking me for. And it’s crazy to even say that it requires courage to use your voice, but I’m acknowledging that it does.”

Her message to women, whomever they are and wherever they are is to “Be brave. Use your voice. This is something that needs to be handled with volume and quantity. And the more female athletes that are willing to use that voice, that’s how this issue is going to stop [and make]

a change that needs to be made to ensure fairness and privacy to female athletes who deserve it.”

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.

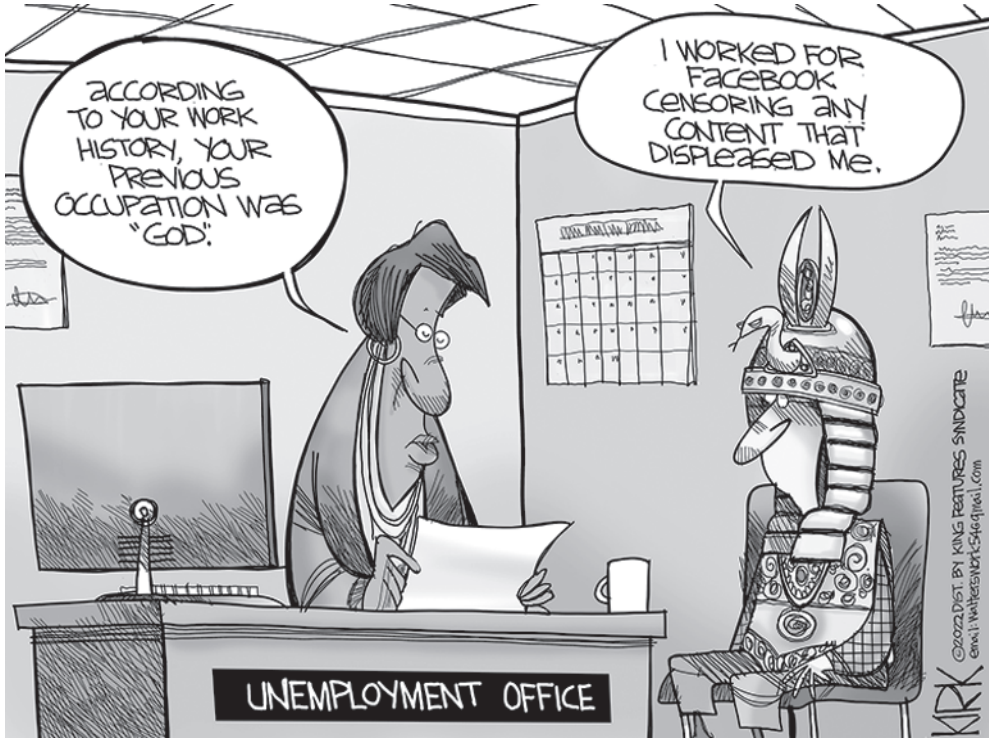
Today

From Page 2

time if they are worthwhile.

Finally, just in case you do live a bunch more years, live today in such a way, that you can look back to today and remember it as a good day.

Glenn Mollette is a graduate of numerous schools including Georgetown College, Southern and Lexington Seminaries in Kentucky. He is the author of “Uncommon Sense” and 12 other books. His column is published weekly in over 600 publications in all 50 states. Learn more at www.glenmmollette.com or www.facebook.com/glenmmollette.



Senior moment By Matilda Charles

Scammers: More dangerous than ever

To those of us who wander the internet: beware. The scammers, thieves and troublemakers have kicked things up a notch or two, and frankly it's getting a bit dangerous.

By dangerous, I mean when it comes to the safety of our personal information and money. These scammers will do nearly anything to get it.

You might come home to a voicemail message that asks you to call back. The scammers might pretend to be your bank or another company you know. They'll ask you to verify your account number to identify yourself. Don't do it. If the message comes to you in a text message, don't click that link.

If you've applied for a job, a scammer will ask for upfront fees or personal information. You might get a call from a scammer pretending to be your insurance company or Medicare. They'll claim they need to verify your card number.

A scammer will pretend to be from your local town office and say that you haven't paid your property taxes and that you could be arrested if you don't send them money.

If you've tried to get rental assistance, a scammer might call to ask for your personal information as well as an upfront fee.

If there is a life event or occurrence, there is sure to be a scam involved somehow. The Federal Trade Commission scam alert webpage lists several right now: fake hurricane relief, fake Geek Squad invoices,

fake student load aid, fake winter prep assistance, fake internet and cable offers... and so much more.

If you're in the market for a new or additional cellphone, it could be the first step in foiling some of those scammers. How? By not giving the new number out to anyone but trusted family and friends.

Remember: Your name, number and email address are for sale out there. There are websites around the world that do nothing but collect this information... and sell it to scammers. Do everything you can to stay off those lists.

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- On Dec. 5, 1955, the Georgia board of regents rejected Gov. Marvin Griffin's request that the Georgia Tech football team be barred from playing in the following month's Sugar Bowl simply because the school's opponent, the University of Pittsburgh, included a Black athlete.
- On Dec. 6, 1933, Federal Judge John M. Woolsey announced that James Joyce's novel "Ulysses" was not obscene in a legal sense but a work of merit. The ruling was hailed as a landmark and would open the door for greater freedoms in future literary works.
- On Dec. 7, 2020, American aviator Chuck Yeager, who in 1947 became the first person to exceed the speed of sound in flight, which was approximately 662 miles per hour at his altitude of 40,000 feet, died at the age of 97.
- On Dec. 8, 1854, Pope Pius IX proclaimed the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception, in which he asserted that Mary, the mother of Jesus, was from the moment of her conception free from the effects of "original sin."
- On Dec. 9, 1868, the world's first traffic light was erected near Westminster Bridge in London. It didn't have much of a chance to prove its worth, however, as it had to be removed just a month later following a gas leak that caused one of its lights to explode.
- On Dec. 10, 1768, the first part of the first edition of the Encyclopedia Britannica, the oldest continuously published and revised work in the English language, was published and advertised for sale in Edinburgh, Scotland.
- On Dec. 11, 1981, after an extraordinary 21-year career in the ring and despite pleas that it was time for him to definitively retire, American boxer Muhammad Ali fought his last professional bout, losing to Trevor Berbick in a match that would be nicknamed "Drama in the Bahamas."

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PUBLIC NOTICE TO ALL INTERESTED PERSONS AND PARTIES:

The *West Texas County Courier* will not publish the last two weeks of December. The first issue of 2023 will be January 5.

The *West Texas County Courier* office will close beginning Wednesday, December 15, 2022. The office will open again on Monday, January 2, 2023.

Briefs

From Page 1

share of single people, 74.83 percent, which is two times higher than in Fremont, CA, the city with the lowest at 37.68 percent.

- Glendale, AZ has the lowest average restaurant-meal cost, \$30.00, which is 3.3 times lower than in New York, NY; Irvine, CA, Pearl City, HI; and Santa Rosa, CA, the cities with the highest at \$100.00.
- Indianapolis, IN has the lowest average price for a bottle of wine, \$3.68, which is four times lower than in Detroit, MI, the city with the highest at \$14.74.
- Port St. Lucie, FL has the lowest average price for a movie ticket, \$6.43, which is 2.7 times lower than in Los Angeles and Long Beach, CA, the cities with the highest at \$17.40.

To view and your city's rank, please Visit<https://wallethub.com/edu/best-worst-cities-for-singles/9015> for the full report.

– Diana Polk

Living life fully

Cyril Derreumaux of Marin County, CA woke up one

See BRIEFS, Page 5

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Strange BUT TRUE

By Lucie Winborne

- If you've ever worried about damaging your cellphone by accidentally sitting on it, you'll be glad to know that Samsung built a robotic posterior to test the durability of its smartphones. It can repeatedly exert up to 220 pounds of pressure to simulate the act of a human sitting on their device.
- More than 200 artificial languages have been created for use in books, TV and movies.
- Our 50-star U.S. flag was designed by Robert Heft, a 17-year-old student in Lancaster, Ohio. He made it for a high school history project and received a B- from his teacher for lack of originality.
- NASA astronaut Leland Melvin sneaked his two rescue dogs, Jake and Scout, into Houston's Johnson Space Center for his official – and unique – photoshoot.
- In 2013, developers of

a skyscraper in London, nicknamed the “Walkie-Talkie” due to its shape, realized that some design changes were seriously and immediately in order. The building reflected the sun onto the street below for two hours a day, with a beam so hot it melted parts of a Jaguar XJ parked nearby.

- Some beaches on the Japanese islands of Taketomi, Hatoma and Iriomote have star-shaped sand.
- Since the summer of 2020, so many orca whales have launched attacks on boats off the coast of Spain and Portugal that sailors have been advised to stay in port at night.
- Actor Mike Meyers originally gave the character of Shrek a thick Canadian accent but decided, after animation had begun, that a Scottish one would better suit the character. The film had to be re-animated and cost over \$4 million, or around 10% of its overall budget.

Thought for the Day: “Never allow a person to tell you no who doesn't have the power to say yes.”
– Eleanor Roosevelt

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Playground

From Page 1

energy. Unfortunately, most playgrounds are not all-inclusive or accessible to children with special needs. It means most of them miss out on the learning and development opportunities that playgrounds offer,” one MOB member said.

“That is why it is important to advocate for the creation of more all-abilities playgrounds in our communities. An all-abilities playground is a special kind of playground that has been designed to be inclusive and accessible for children of all ages and abilities. These playgrounds typically feature a variety of elements that cater to different needs, such as ramps, sensory-rich play structures, and wheelchair-accessible swing sets. Most of them are designed with input from therapists, educators, and parents to ensure that they meet the needs of as many children as possible,” said an all-abilities playground advocate.

Advocates explained that there are various important skills that children learn on a playground including spatial awareness, balance, muscle strength, postural control, dexterity, empathy, problem-solving, and coordination. So, all that running, walking, and skipping isn't done in vain.

The Gallegos Park All-Abilities playground is the first of three of these types of playgrounds to be completed in El Paso County. The other two are set to be completed in 2023 at Ascarate Park, 6900 Delta Drive in El Paso, and at Risinger Park, 301 Grace Street in Fabens.

Construction on the Gallegos All-Abilities Playground began in early spring and was completed in less than a year, according to county officials. Funding for the playgrounds is part of a Texas Parks and Wildlife Department Local Parks Urban Outdoor Recreation Grant, which was awarded to the El Paso County Parks and Recreation Department in early 2019.

Briefs

From Page 4

morning back in June, got into his kayak and paddled his way to Hawaii. He made the trip in a mere 91 days. Derreumaux told ABC News it was a personal, spiritual journey, “I wanted to do this to enjoy life,” he said. He had modified his 22-foot kayak for the trip

by adding “pedals and a small sleeping cabin but no motor or sail.” Derreumaux paddled a total of 10 hours a day, four hours in the morning, two in the afternoon and four more in the evening. He said he hoped that “People outside of the kayaking world, outside of the ultra-endurance adventure, connected with the message of living life to the fullest.”
– John Grimaldi

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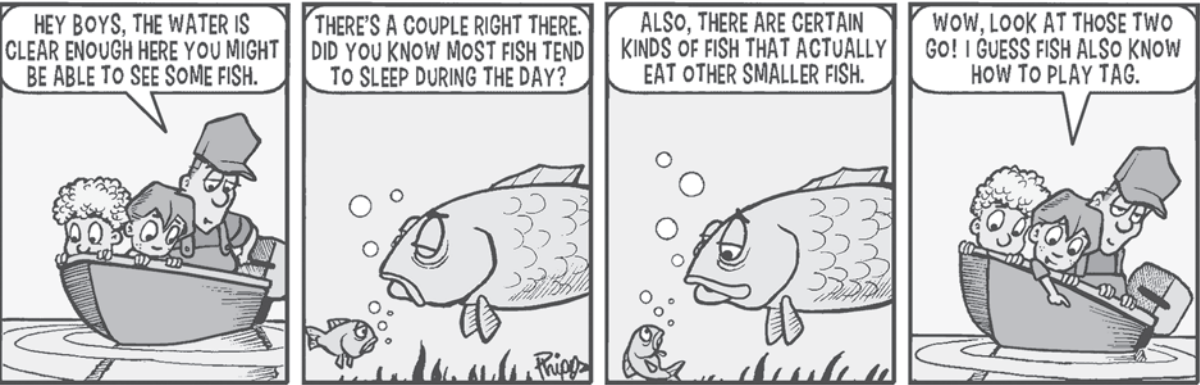
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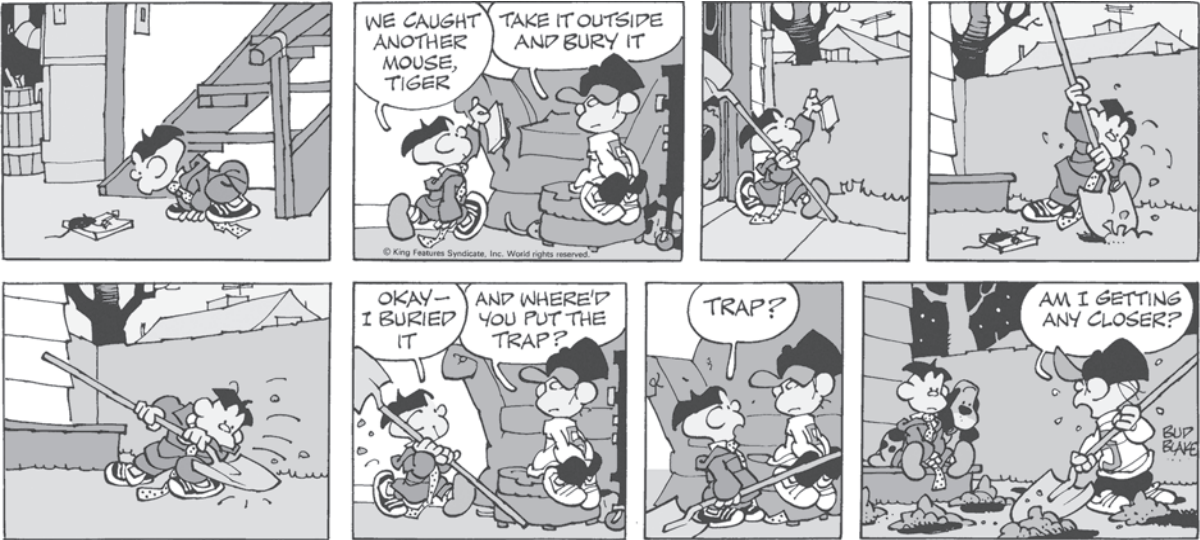
R.F.D.

By Mike Marland



TIGER

By Bud Blake



Lowry

From Page 2

his duties; the bad news is that there are a lot of days between now and 2024 when he'll be less fit, whether by a tiny increment or by a lot.

The public is already unsettled. According to the exit polls, 58%

of voters said Biden does not have the acuity to serve effectively as president.

If Democrats get their way, this is just the beginning. They propose to reelect a man who will be 82 on Inauguration Day, and 86 by the end of his second term.

The actuarial tables and the realities of aging being what they are, this creates considerable risk

of putting the country through the trauma of having a president who is incapable of carrying out his entire term. If you think our politics are deranged now, just wait until we face a genuine, inevitably wrenching 25th Amendment crisis, or we have to deal with the legitimacy issues around an unelected president.

Why even consider going

Lowering BMI before surgery can provide better outcomes

DEAR DR. ROACH: I'm 72, and I have had arthritis for three years: two years in both knees, and one year in my right hip and the base of my spine. I am 5'3" and weigh 221 pounds, with a body mass index (BMI) of 39. I lost 23 pounds from January to June. What is the BMI needed for an orthopedic surgeon to do a hip replacement for someone with osteoarthritis – without a broken hip? I recently had an assessment of my hip X-rays. I was told I'm at the outer cutoff of a BMI of 39, so I'm eligible



for a hip replacement operation. Then, a few weeks later, I saw the surgeon, who ended up rejecting me – claiming that 39 isn't the outer limit, 35 is. After a long talk, the surgeon said he'd do it for me, but I'd get a better result if I lose 20 more pounds and get my BMI down to 35. I felt jerked around, but said I'd wait and lose weight. I'm also trying to find a surgeon I like more than him. So, what is the BMI needed for knee surgery: 35 or 39? – L.C.

There is no standard cutoff BMI for joint replacement surgery. It is true that people with a BMI over 40 are at higher risk for medical complications; however, it is also true that people with severe arthritis and a high BMI still get improvement in their quality of life with surgery. Denying a person a cost-effective surgery that can greatly improve their quality of life simply because of a BMI number (which, in itself, is a flawed metric) is inappropriate.

I can understand why you would want to see a different surgeon, as it sounds like you were not treated well. However, the surgeon was right that surgical outcomes are better if a person can lose at least 20 pounds, according to a 2019 study. This included shorter lengths of stay in the hospital and a lesser chance of needing surgical revision. I wonder, though, if part of the benefit seen in the study was due to increased exercise prior to surgery, which is known to be beneficial in surgical outcomes.

DEAR DR. ROACH: My 45-year-old son has hemochromatosis. The treatment is phlebotomy of a pint of blood, sometimes every two weeks, until the iron level is normalized. My understanding is that the blood is discarded. Is there anything wrong with the blood? If not, I would think blood banks would welcome the donation. What are your thoughts on this subject? – E.B.

Hereditary hemochromatosis is caused by the body absorbing too much iron due to a genetic defect. With no way to get rid of iron, it builds up and damages many organs, especially the heart, bone marrow, joints and adrenal gland. As you say, the best treatment is to remove iron in the form of red blood cells. This is effective at preventing most of the organ damage if started quickly enough.

There has never been anything wrong with the blood of people with hereditary hemochromatosis, and the FDA here in the U.S. has always allowed the blood to be donated. However, until recently, the American Red Cross has not accepted blood donations from people with hereditary hemochromatosis. I am pleased to say that they have just changed their policy and will now be using this precious resource to help others, so long as the person meets all the criteria for being a blood donor. The blood will undergo all the standard and rigorous testing prior to being pronounced safe for use.

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.

down this route? In part, because Biden made an identity politics choice for vice president, and not a good one. It is understandable that the prospect of Vice President Kamala Harris makes Democrats want to cling to their nurse for fear of something worse. But the country deserves a better idea.

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



Moore Texas by Roger Moore
December 10, 1836: President Sam Houston approved the design of the first national flag of Texas.

CryptoQuip

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

Clue: E equals W

ETSI EZLQN KZL YSQQ
SYIXHUU IZRQPW PJ THX TZRH
EHXH ZW S WSXXZE UPNH
XZSN? QPQK ZJ ITH SQQHK.

Answer Page 4

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Weekly SUDOKU

by Linda Thistle

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

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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Health record system delayed... yet again



by Freddy Groves

The Department of Veterans Affairs’ electronic health record system will be delayed. Instead of putting out a shoddy product, the VA has elected to halt deploying the system until June 2023.

This comes after a previous delay that was announced last summer, which said that the deployment would be pushed back until January 2023.

It’s apparently been one software glitch after the other at the locations they’re using as testing – problems with scheduling, referrals, medication, test results and medical orders. And more. Months ago the VA’s Office of Inspector General uncovered many instances of patient harm resulting from the new program. Specifically, over 200 doctor orders went astray, sent to nobody knows where, resulting

in 149 instances of patient harm – at just one testing site.

They’re calling this the “assess & address” period, and it’s good that they’re halting the expansion. Patient safety has to be at the top of the list, especially the issuing of prescription drugs.

Meanwhile, on the off chance that your local facility is a testing site, take charge of your care.

If you think you should have gotten an appointment or referral (maybe the doctor said so?), follow up. If you’re awaiting a test result, call them. When a medical provider says you’ll be given a prescription for a drug, write down the name of that drug and the dose. (Ask how it’s spelled.) When you receive your drug, check it carefully. Go online to a drug checking website (www.drugs.com/pill_identification.html) and be sure the photo of the pill online matches what you received. Use a magnifying glass to look at the tiny numbers on your pills.

At this writing, my best guess about the sites where the program is being tested are:

Mann-Grandstaff VA Medical Center, Wainwright Memorial VA Medical Center, Central Ohio Healthcare System and Roseberg and White City, Oregon.

A handful of senators, meanwhile, are saying that the program needs to be dumped, not only because of the patient safety concerns, but because the price tag has increased by billions of dollars.

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• Fold and snip a coffee filter into a paper snowflake. Lay over an iced cookie or cake to sift a sugar design on top.

• “When planning to visit my hometown for the holidays, I set aside a few hours to take the kids to the park or a nice playground. I message all my old friends and classmates with kids (Facebook is great for this) a few weeks ahead of time and let them know when I’ll be there. It’s great to catch up while the kids play, and even if no one shows up, we still have a fun break.” – F.L. in California

• “When there are big family jobs to be done (like getting ready for the holidays), we write all the tasks down on slips of paper and put them in a hat. We take turns choosing tasks until all the paper is divvied out. Sometimes we trade, but we all get a fair chore list.” – V.O. in Oregon

• Make a holiday cheese ball simply: Combine a package of cream cheese with a cup of finely shredded cheese (your choice) and 1/3 cup sour cream or plain Greek yogurt. Form into a ball, roll in coating of your choice (dried fruit pieces, chopped nuts, spices, etc.) and chill. Wrap in a pretty cellophane bag and bring with pita chips, crackers or pretzels as a hostess gift.

• After-Christmas sales are a great time to buy not only gift wrap (look for solid colors that you can use all year long), holiday cards and decorations, but also next season’s winter wear. Things like scarves and gloves can be great bargains. And even coats can go on sale. Take advantage – especially if you have kids – and buy up. – A.K. in Tennessee

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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

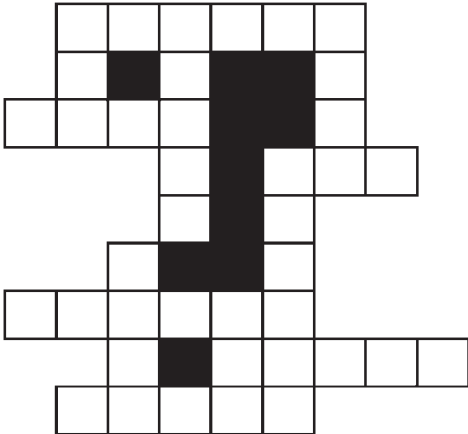
	+		÷		6
×		−		×	
	×		−		8
−		×		−	
	−		÷		1
3		9		8	

2 3 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

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MGY
TYIJEN
MEYSA
♥ATPR
HEPMGL
AYJ
ELGE
ERNYA
♥ERP
♥ANGMIL
♥ELSPA
♥YAMN



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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