



NEWSBRIEFS

Working moms

With Mother’s Day just ahead and 73% of women with children under age 18 having been in the labor force during 2022, the personal-finance website WalletHub has released its report on 2023’s *Best & Worst States for Working Moms*, as well as expert commentary. In order to help ease the burden on mothers in the workforce, WalletHub compared the attractiveness of each of the 50 states and the District of Columbia for a working mother based on 17 key metrics. The data set ranges from the median women’s salary to the female unemployment rate to day-care quality. Texas was rated 31st in the report, ranking (1-Best, 25 Avg.):

- 3rd – Day-Care Quality;
 - 45th – Child-Care Costs (Adjusted for Median Women’s Salary);
 - 22nd – Pediatricians per Capita;
 - 14th – Gender Pay Gap (Women’s Earnings as % of Men’s);
 - 47th – Ratio of Female Executives to Male Executives;
 - 12th – Median Women’s Salary (Adjusted for Cost of Living);
 - 32nd – Female Unemployment Rate;
 - 27th – Parental-Leave Policy Score;
 - 50th – Avg. Length of Woman’s Work Week (in Hours); and
 - 37th – % of Single-Mom Families in Poverty.
- Visit <https://wallethub.com/edu/best-states-for-working-moms/3565> for the full report.

– Diana Polk

Drug problems

With National Prevention Week in full swing and the number of annual drug overdose deaths in the U.S. reaching more than 103,500, the personal-finance website WalletHub has released its report on the *States with the Biggest Drug Problems*, as well as expert commentary, to highlight the areas that stand to be most affected. This study compares the 50 states and the District in terms of 20 key metrics, ranging from arrest and overdose rates to opioid prescriptions and employee drug testing laws. You can find some highlights below. Texas was

See BRIEFS, Page 2

The real measure of a man’s wealth is how much he would be worth if he lost all of his money.
– Quips & Quotes



– Photo by Alfredo Vasquez

BUILD IT AND VETS WILL COME – Construction of a new 492,995 square-foot, multi-floor medical center for the El Paso Veterans Affairs Health Care System is planned to be built on land next to the recently opened William Beaumont Army Medical Center (background) in East El Paso County. VA officials estimate that construction of the new VA center, which will be overseen by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, will take about four years to complete.

El Paso County veterans to get new VA medical center

By Alfredo Vasquez
Special to the Courier

EL PASO COUNTY – Construction plans are in the works for a new VA Medical Center to serve El Paso/Las Cruces area veterans and their families. According to El Paso Veterans Affairs Health Care System officials, the new facility would be completed by early 2030.

After years of local VA officials lobbying for federal funding, the US Congress finally heard them as it recently allocated \$759.2 million for construction of the new medical complex. The facility is slated for construction on 36 acres on the campus of the recently opened William Beaumont Army Medical Center on Fort Bliss land in East El Paso.

Froy Garza, who became director of the El Paso VA Health Care System last June, recently announced that a design and construction contract is projected to be awarded by early 2024 and that construction is scheduled to begin by the fall of 2025.

Garza noted that the El Paso VA system’s patient load is projected to increase by ten percent over the next five to 10 years. So, he asserted that it is important to work on the expansion now. He said that the current El Paso VA Medical Center in North Central El Paso is over 28 years old and overcrowded.

The 344,147-square-foot main clinic, which is located on North Piedras Street, is next to the now-closed Beaumont hospital building on Fort Bliss land. Garza commented that it would be good to again have the main clinic next to William Beaumont, where VA patients are sent for hospital care.

The El Paso VA healthcare system, which includes five other smaller clinics in various parts of the city and one in Las Cruces, serves more than 42,000 military veterans. It had 367,953 outpatient visits in fiscal year 2022, with 253,854 of those visits, or 69 percent, at the main clinic, Garza reported. Also, more than 80 percent of the El Paso VA system’s 1,400 employees work at the main clinic, he said.

The new facility is planned to have 492,995 square feet on multiple floors, according to Garza. He estimates that

construction of the new VA center, which will be overseen by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, will take about four years to complete.

Incidentally, VA officials acknowledged that it took more than six years to complete the problems-plagued construction of the William Beaumont medical complex’s six buildings, including the 135-bed hospital. And it took an additional 18 months after construction was completed to resolve several issues, including fixing hundreds of fire and safety deficiencies, before the hospital finally opened in July 2021.

Meanwhile, the El Paso VA system is in the process of expanding two of its satellite clinics, Garza said. The East Side clinic, at 2400 Trawood Dr., is expanding from one to two floors, including adding its first urgent care center.

In Las Cruces, the current clinic is located at 3401 Del Rey Blvd. Plans are to build a second 10,000 square-foot clinic, but the location has not yet been determined, Garza stated. Expansion plans for both VA community clinics are expected to be finalized by October, he added.



– Photo courtesy of Veterans Affairs

RESPONSIBILITIES – Froy Garza, director of the El Paso VA Health Care System, currently oversees the main clinic in North Central El Paso that is located next to the old, now closed, Beaumont hospital building on Fort Bliss land, and five other smaller clinics in various parts of the city, as well as one in Las Cruces.

Republicans can’t run and hide on abortion

Politicians are motivated by many things, among them power, fame, idealism, greed – and fear. The last of these is not to be underestimated. It is a powerful, gut-level force that can strike the most loquacious politicians dumb and make the most attention-hungry suddenly shy. It can cause officeholders or candidates to reverse field on a long-held position almost instantaneously and abase themselves however seems necessary to get to safety. Republicans at the national level, right now, are scared. You can hear it in their silence on the issue of abortion after a district judge in Texas struck down the Food and Drug Administration approval of the abortion pill mifepristone. That decision also came immediately after Republicans lost a key race for a

Supreme Court seat in Wisconsin to a progressive jurist who ran, to a large extent, on abortion. Much of what has happened since Dobbs is what you’d expect after a longstanding national legal regime on abortion is lifted and the states are given the freedom to decide their own policies. There has been a sorting out toward a new political and policy equilibrium, with red and blue states occupying different poles of the spectrum, and purple states up for grabs. The good news for Republicans is that there are more restrictions on abortion in place than at any time in the last 50 years, and they still took a majority in the House in last year’s midterms, if smaller than expected. In Indiana and in much of the South, Republicans

have passed sweeping abortion bans and paid no discernible political price for it. But especially in Michigan and Wisconsin, the issue has been a debacle for the party, and it has suffered notable losses elsewhere. One lesson should be that Republicans can’t just run and hide on an issue that has been of defining importance to their base and that Democrats are going to hammer them on regardless of how they try to minimize it. Another is that outside of the Deep South, See LOWRY, Page 7



Food for thought By Dr. Glenn Mollette

Love cares enough to try


Honesty is not always the easiest path but it’s usually the most loving path. Let’s say you have a loved one or friend who is diabetic but they eat crazy stuff every day from pizza to cookies to soda pop without regard for personal health. Is it best for you to treat them to treats containing white flour and sugar every chance you can or to have a talk with them? Of course, you run the risk of hurting feelings or making the person angry but chances are they are going to die sooner than they should. It’s best to try to save the person’s life by being honest. You don’t have to cut the person’s head off with a verbal assault or face slapping rhetoric. Love doesn’t attack people. You shouldn’t get preachy because this runs most people away. Simply preface your remarks by saying, “I’m your friend. I care about you and your life. I want you to live a long time. However, if you don’t stop eating what you eat all the time you are probably going to shorten your life.” This could pertain to any negative activity or addiction. Having serious conversations with people is not easy. We are all busy. We aren’t close enough to most people to be this direct. Plus, we really have to care a lot

about someone to be lovingly honest. We run the risk of the friendship becoming strained or even totally severed. The bottom line is do you care enough to be honest? Plus, don’t ever start making life recommendations to someone unless you truly love the person and are willing to help the individual work through the issues. It’s easier to let people continue on their negative path to self destruction. Fast food and unhealthy food items are unfortunately much more affordable. It’s not cheap to eat healthy. It’s not cheap to be sick either. Medical bills can pile up quickly. Trips to the doctor are expensive. Diabetic medications are expensive. Kidney issues result in death for many Americans every year. Funerals are expensive. Giving up a good friend or family member is life changing. Disease happens to us all in some way. These bodies are very vulnerable to cancer, diabetes and so on. Chances are you may have tried. Most likely you have talked your head off to someone you love but they continue in their negative behavior. It seems many people under 50 can’t fathom sickness or death. The consequences of their behavior seem remote or even impossible. Thus they continue on their way. Of course we all have to look in the mirror. We all wrestle with our private and public demons. Most of us know we aren’t perfect and if we take a serious inventory of our lives and habits we realize we all come away short of perfection, this is especially true of me. I have lots of personal work to do and it’s all I can do to try

to do my own daily diagnosis and repair work. This is why we don’t take the time to try to help others; we have enough problems of our own. Therefore, this is why you have to really care a lot about someone to take the time to try to help the person. If you had the gift of premonition and could keep someone from being killed in an accident you wouldn’t hesitate to speak with them about it. So, why, if you can help someone address personal issues/addictions that might be deadly, wouldn’t you try? Unfortunately, addictions and mental illnesses are issues that people seem to be afraid to address. If someone you love was inside a burning building, most of us would risk our own lives to rush in and save them. Why is it so hard to risk hurt feelings to save a life?



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15344 Werling Ct.
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E-mail: wtxcc@wtxcc.com
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Publisher
Rick Shrum

Contributors
Alfredo Vasquez
Steve Escajeda

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Briefs

From Page 1

rated 40th in the report, ranking (1-Biggest Problem, 25 Avg.):

- 51st – Share of Teenagers Who Used Illicit Drugs in the Past Month;
- 51st – Share of Adults Who Used Illicit Drugs in the Past Month;
- 36th – Opioid Pain Reliever Prescriptions per 100 People;
- 48th – Drug Overdose Deaths per Capita;
- 31st – Drug Arrests per Capita;
- 50th – Share of Adults Who Couldn’t Get Treatment for Illicit Drug Use in the Past Year; and
- 5th – Substance Abuse Treatment Facilities per 100,000 People (Age 12+) Using Illicit Drugs.

Visit <https://wallethub.com/edu/drug-use-by-state/35150> for the full report.

– Diana Polk

Nurses

National Nurses Week began May 6. With nurses having a mean annual wage of more than \$89,000, the personal-finance website WalletHub has released its report on 2023’s *Best & Worst States for Nurses*, as well as expert commentary. In order to help new nursing graduates find the best markets for their profession, WalletHub compared the relative attractiveness of the 50 states across 20 key metrics. The data set ranges

from monthly average starting salary for nurses to health-care facilities per capita to nursing-job openings per capita. Texas was rated 9th in the report, ranking (1=Best; 25=Avg.):

- 1st – Monthly Avg. Starting Salary for Nurses (Adjusted for Cost of Living);
- 13th – Nurses per Capita;
- 10th – Average Annual Salary for Nurses (Adjusted for Cost of Living);
- 11th – Projected Competition by 2030; and
- 16th – Avg. Number of Work Hours.

Visit <https://wallethub.com/edu/best-states-for-nurses/4041> for the full report

– Diana Polk

In the doghouse

The question is what compelled the VIP Products company to make a dog toy resembling the iconic bottle of Jack Daniel’s Tennessee sour mash. Whatever the connection is between a pooch and a bottle of booze, it riled the folks at Jack Daniels who took their case to the highest court in the land where U.S. Supreme Court Justice Samuel Alito posed the question, “Could any reasonable person think that Jack Daniel’s had approved this use of the mark?” On the other hand, Justice Elena Kagan seemed to be leaning in favor of the plaintiff and against the toy maker when she commented, “Maybe I just have no sense of humor.”

– John Grimaldi

EPCC students to conduct research in Texas, Honduras

By Jim Heiney
Special to the Courier

EL PASO COUNTY – El Paso Community College (EPCC) students will be involved in hands on training programs this summer.

Luis Compean-Gallegos will be conducting scientific research at UT-Austin. Armando Baca, Jose Alberto Barraza, Genesis Ramirez, and Destiny Winters will be conducting research at UTEP. And maybe in the most adventurous program, Kimberly Dugdale and Mia Navarrete will be traveling to Roatan, Honduras. They will assist in research with the LSAMP Scuba Diving Program.

Dugdale and Navarrete will have the opportunity to collect data while scuba diving above coral reefs to explore marine environments and research coral health, coral disease, water quality, and nutrient concentrations in the water, and the development of new sensors to make these measurements.

EPCC, in collaboration with the University of Texas at El



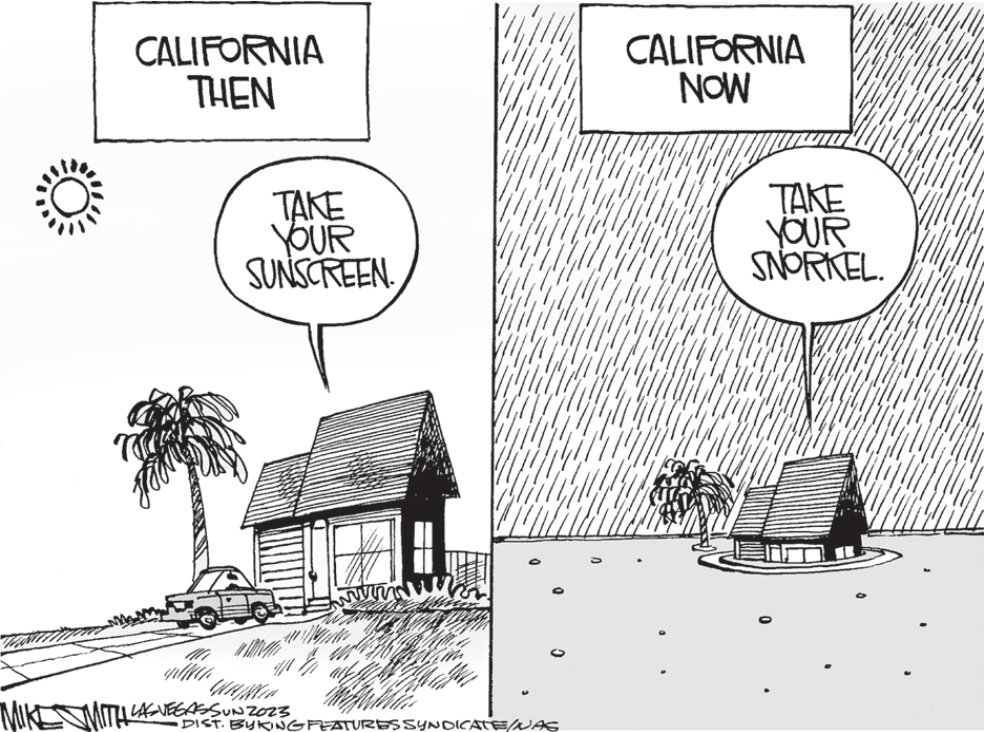
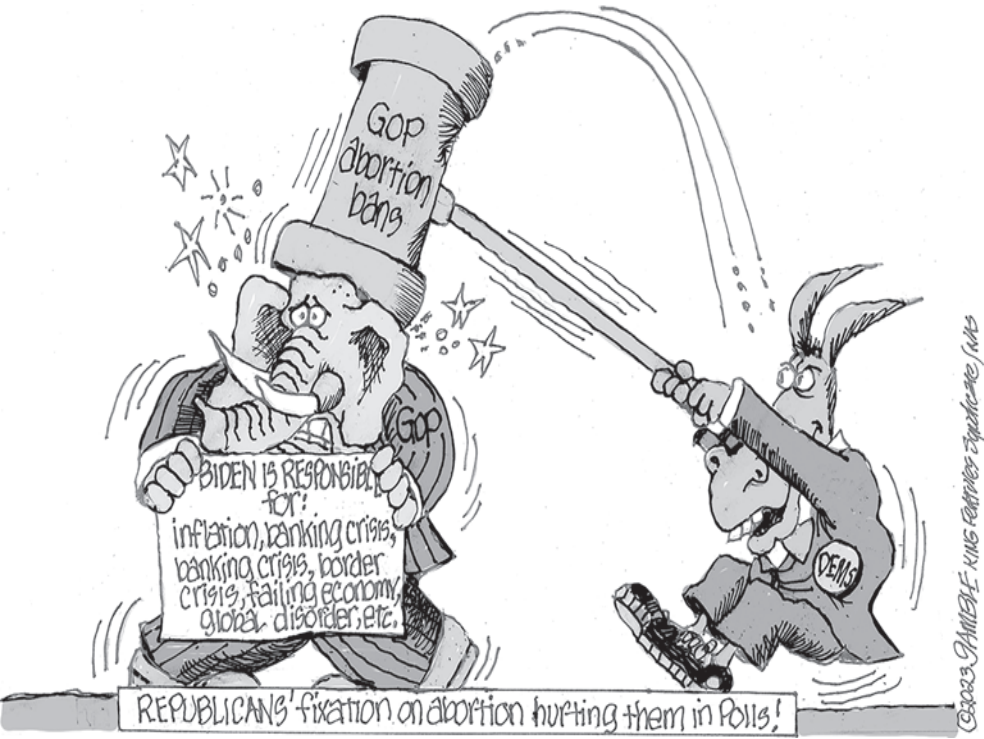
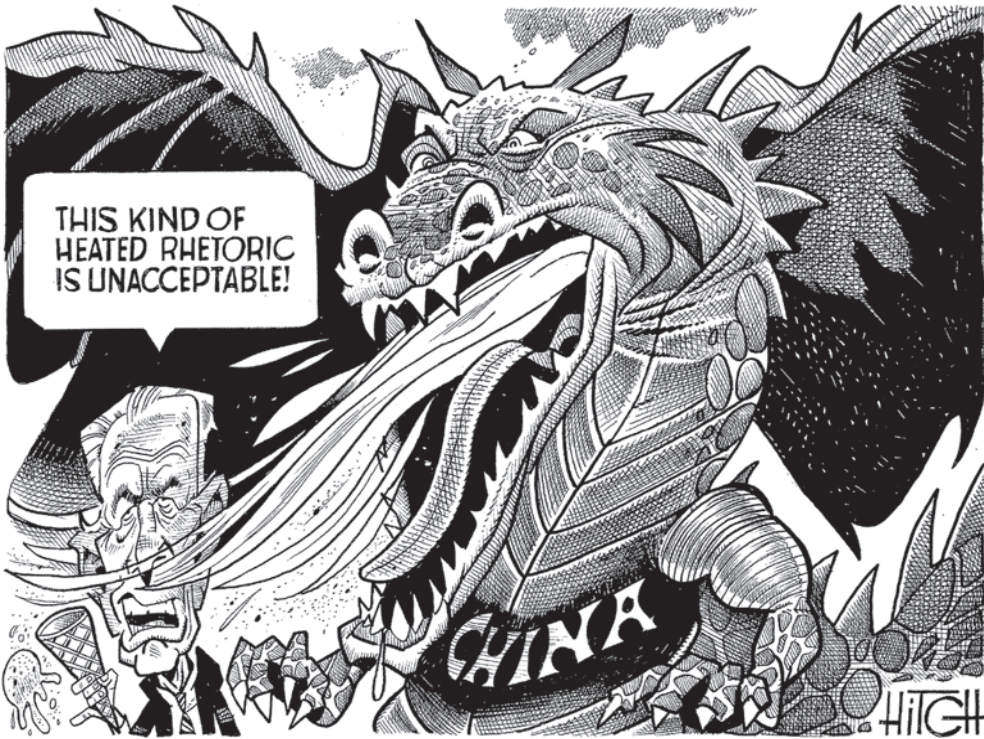
– Photo courtesy El Paso Community College

SUMMER PLANS – In the back row, from left, are Luis Compean-Gallegos, Armando Baca and Jose Alberto Barraza. In the front row, from left, are Destiny Winters, Mia Navarrete and Kimberly Dugdale. The students will participate in different research programs this summer.

Paso(UTEP), provides funding to students to participate in undergraduate research every summer at any University of Texas institution through the Louis Stokes Alliance for Minority Participation (LSAMP) Program. LSAMP allows students to perform research and then present their results during the LSAMP Conference. Once the students participate in the program, they are eligible to apply the following year to do research internationally.

EPCC’s Dr. Karina Castillo has been the EPCC Director since 2014. “Every summer EPCC students are selected to participate in different undergraduate research projects. This program offers the opportunity to network with other scientists, to perform hands-on research and to develop oral, leadership and critical thinking skills.”

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School districts name outstanding teachers, employee

Socorro ISD



Arleen Parada



Phillip Chase

By **Christie Flores-Jones**
Special to the Courier

Teacher of the Year Gala on May 5 at the El Paso Convention Center.

Arleen Parada, a kindergarten teacher at Lujan-Chavez Middle School, was named the 2023 SISD Elementary Teacher of the year, and Phillip Chase, an eighth-grade science teacher at SSG Manuel R. Puentes Middle School, was named the 2023 SISD Secondary Teacher of the Year.

More than 1,200 SISD teachers, family members and special guests attended the Cinco de Mayo-themed celebration, which recognized the top two district winners along with all 49 campus teachers of the year, including the Elite 8 finalists.

Parada and Chase were selected as Teachers of the Year for their outstanding work inspiring their students to seize the many opportunities SISD offers for lifelong success.

Parada has taught at Lujan-Chavez for six years and is a UTEP Teacher Residency mentor. She dedicated her award to her 22 kinder stars. She said she was also honored to share the spotlight with the other Elite 8 nominees and all the other campus Teachers of the Year.

“I’m honored and humbled,” Parada said. “Team SISD is amazing, and I can’t wait to showcase the wonderful things that we do.”

For more than 20 years, Chase has encouraged his students to make good decisions in life. During the awards ceremony, he said he ran into a former student who is now a teacher at Eastlake High School. He also recalled how his fellow Elite 8 nominee Eric J. Williams Jr. was also one of his students.

“The best thing about teaching is definitely the relationship that I get with my students,” Chase said. “Being able to see them succeed and seeing their lives change so much in one year is the biggest reward that I can ever get as a teacher.”

Outside the classroom, Chase coaches softball, track and baseball and helps with AVID and NHS.

Both winners received a glass sculpture in the shape of a flame, which represents the energy and fire of curiosity that every student possesses. This beautiful award commemorates SISD’s teachers’ unwavering commitment as keepers of the flame.

The Teacher of the Year award is among the highest honors that an educator can receive. Winners proceed to the regional level, and they have the opportunity to advance to state. Parada and Chase will represent Team SISD at the Region 19 Teacher of the Year program in the summer.

Canutillo ISD



Myla Dayrit



Bruce Hoang

By **Gustavo Reveles**
Special to the Courier

CANUTILLO – Two teachers and a custodian were named the top employees of the Canutillo Independent School District last Friday during a first-of-its-kind ceremony at Canutillo High School that brought together 250 people to celebrate the work of teachers and auxiliary employees.

The District named Gerardo Amaya, assistant lead custodian at Davenport Elementary School, as the 2023-24 CISD Auxiliary Employee of the Year; Myla Dayrit, fourth-grade teacher at Damian Elementary School, as 2023-24 CISD Elementary Teacher of the Year; and Bruce Hoang, French teacher at Canutillo High School, as the 2023-24 CISD Secondary Teacher of the Year.

“Mr. Amaya, Ms. Dayrit and Mr. Hoang represent the best of the best among our nearly 1,000 employees here in Canutillo ISD,” said Superintendent Dr. Pedro Galaviz. “They represent the holistic commitment to education each and every employee of the District has made. From our classroom teachers to our hourly employees, we all play a key role in educating the children of our community.”

Anaya is a 14-year veteran of the District and plays a critical role in keeping Davenport clean and ready for instruction. His peers selected him as the top employee of the year because of his willingness to help beyond his outlined job duties.

Dayrit is a native of the Philippines who has 33 years of experience as a teacher both in her home country and here in Texas. She finds effective lesson creation in the form of rigorous, purposeful and innovative engagement with students.

Hoang is a native of Vietnam who has taught for 18 years. As a foreign language teacher, he understands the importance of opening up lines of communication and better understanding of cultures to young students.

The winners were announced at a ceremony that honored 10 other hourly employees as finalists for the Auxiliary Employee of the Year. Additionally, nine other teachers were named finalists for their corresponding Teacher of the Year category.


Winners were selected by a panel of judges based on one-on-one interviews and letters of recommendation. As the newly crowned district teachers of the year, Dayrit and Hoang will represent Canutillo ISD at the Region 19 Teacher of the Year contest for a chance to represent El Paso at the Texas State Teacher of the Year contest.



Gerardo Amaya

Strange BUT TRUE

- By **Lucie Winborne**
- Pixar required its entire staff to take a graduate-level ichthyology (the branch of zoology that studies fish) class to help improve the authenticity of “Finding Nemo.”
 - Television inventor Philo Farnsworth got the idea for how the medium would work when he was just 14 -- and while plowing potatoes. He built the first working prototype seven years later, but died at 64 in relative obscurity due to a series of legal battles.
 - A 20-year-old gallon of McDonald’s McJordan BBQ Sauce sold for \$10,000 simply because it had Michael Jordan’s name on it.
 - A lobster’s brain is located in its throat, its nervous system in its abdomen, its teeth in its stomach, and its kidneys in its head! It also hears using its legs, tastes with its feet, and tends to favor one front limb, meaning it can be right-clawed or left-clawed.
 - After the Comstock Laws banned birth control in 1873, the makers of Trojan condoms found a way around that restriction by selling the prophylactics as a protection against STDs.
 - Queen is the only band in which each member individually wrote more than one No. 1 hit.
 - In North Korea, anyone who cuts down trees or starts a forest fire in protected areas could face the death penalty.
 - When Joseph Stalin’s first wife died, he said: “This creature softened my heart of stone. She died, and with her died my last warm feelings for humanity.” He would go on to execute her brother, her sister and her cousin.
 - No one actually “won” the war of 1812.
 - A snake’s heart can move around its body to protect it from harm when the snake has eaten a large prey.
 - Chicago was raised over 4 feet with screw jacks in the 19th century in order to install the U.S.’s first sewer system.
- Thought for the Day: “It is better to fail in originality than to succeed in imitation.”
-- Herman Melville
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HOUSING AUTHORITY

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The El Paso County Housing Authority will be accepting applications for the Housing Choice Voucher Program (Section 8) Rental Assistance Wait List on Tuesday, May 30, 2023 ONLY from 8:00 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. All applicants must apply in person at 650 NE G. Ave., Fabens, TX 79838. NO EXCEPTIONS.

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Lowry

From Page 2

complete bans can’t be defended politically, and the traditional exceptions for rape, incest and life of the mother are essential.

The Michigan and Wisconsin disasters stemmed from sweeping prohibitions that no one would have written in the post-Dobbs environment. Michigan had a 1931 law still on the books, and Wisconsin’s dated from 1849.

Republicans should be pushing for restrictions that go as far as a state’s voters are willing to accept, and no further. This will require keen political judgment and shrewd tactics, both of which are hard to muster in the midst of a panic.

The other obvious imperative for the GOP is to try to focus attention on the extremism of the Democratic maximalist position on abortion, which is out of step with public opinion (Gallup finds that only 35% of people say abortion should be legal with no restrictions).

While the Republican record fighting ballot measures to guarantee access to abortion is dreadful in the post-Dobbs era – they’ve

lost everywhere – they are going to have to do more of it. Emboldened Democrats are getting referenda on the ballot in a number of red states over the next two years. A signature battle will be a vote to write abortion rights into the state constitution in Ohio later this year. If opponents defeat the measure, it will be on the strength of arguments that the amendment will make parental consent laws impossible and go further than the pre-Dobbs abortion regime.

Make no mistake: In many places, Republicans are simply seeking to neutralize the Democratic political advantage on the issue and fight to a draw. If this is unsatisfying and discomfiting, it’s still better than the pre-Dobbs context when the politics were easier, but it was impossible to get any meaningful restrictions in place.

If there’s one thing that should be clear, it’s that fear – no matter how natural or visceral – is no substitute for careful thought and considered action.

Rich Lowry is editor of the National Review. (c) 2023 by King Features Synd., Inc.

Does breast cancer risk demand yearly MRI?

DEAR DR. ROACH: Due to a slight genetic risk of breast cancer (my Tyrer-Cuzick Model score was 20.6%), my doctor wants me to get breast MRIs with contrast annually. I am concerned about long-term exposure to the gadolinium-based contrast dye. I’ve learned that this heavy metal is considered safe, but traces of it can be stored in the brain and other body tissues. I am 49 and in very good health. I also get mammograms annually. I consulted my doctor about spacing out my MRIs every two to three years, but he said I should have an MRI every year. So I could be getting these MRIs for the next 35 or so years. Do the benefits of contrast dye outweigh the harm in a person with my health profile? – S.A.



I’m afraid I don’t have a good answer for you. It is true that most authorities recommend an intensive breast cancer surveillance program for women at a high risk of breast cancer, in the range of a 20% to 25% lifetime risk. (The average risk for developing breast cancer for a woman born today is estimated to be about 13%.)

The Tyrer-Cuzick model of estimating breast cancer risk tends to give higher estimates than the other commonly used models, such as the BRCAPRO. Other models may not put you over the threshold for intensive screening with MRIs, which is usually combined with mammograms.

The question about gadolinium (the chemical element used in the contrast dye for MRIs) is important because some people do store gadolinium in various tissues, including the brain, but the clinical significance of this is unknown. (People with kidney disease can develop a skin disease due to gadolinium, so they aren’t recommended to have MRIs with gadolinium.)

Although gadolinium can stay in the body for months or years, there has been no evidence of harm from gadolinium in brain tissue, despite these agents having been used for many years. Some agents have less retention than others. The U.S. FDA has mandated patient guides for these contrast agents, which relay the information above.

Given that there is a probable benefit to intensive screening for breast cancer in your case due to your high genetic risk, and no more than a theoretical risk from gadolinium, I believe that the benefits outweigh the risks, but I can’t say that with complete certainty.

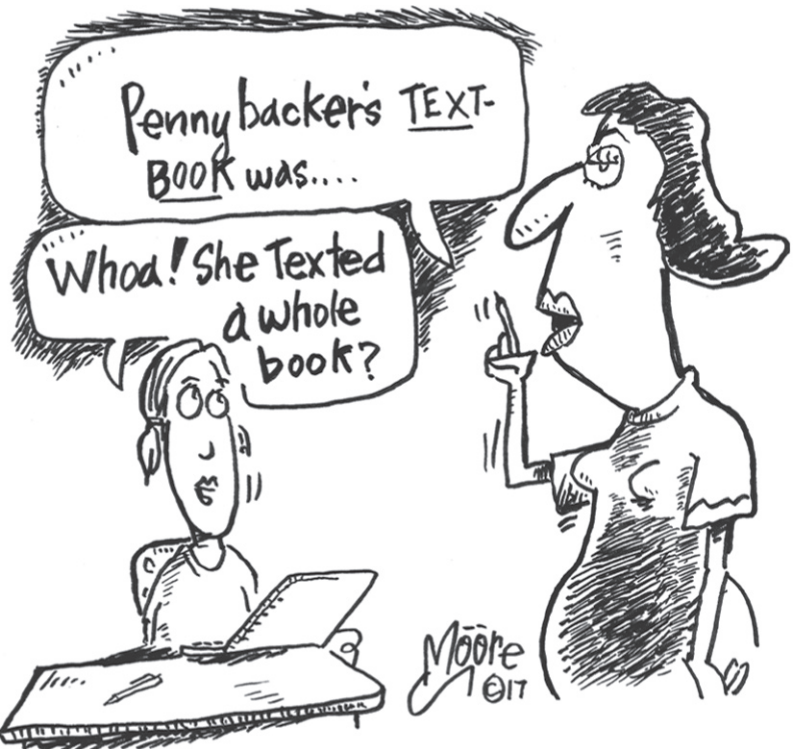
DEAR DR. ROACH: A friend gave me a hemp product to try on the quite painful arthritis in my fingers, which affects my ability to enjoy golf. I was reluctant to try it, but for the last two weeks, I’ve used it topically on my fingers and have been pleasantly surprised by a significant reduction in pain and an improvement in flexibility. One of your recent columns mentions Voltaren, which I have also used, but without as much relief. Can you comment on CBD as an alternative treatment for arthritis? – P.H.A.

There are animal studies suggesting benefit from oral cannabidiol, a component of cannabis (hemp) that has no psychoactive component (it’s the THC in cannabis that gets people “high”). I found some small studies showing pain relief from topical CBD in people with neuropathy, but not for arthritis. Several people, like you, have written to me with reports of pain relief.

Topical CBD is probably very safe. Even oral CBD should be safe, but studies have found that many products labeled CBD have trace, or more than trace, amounts of THC, enough to make a urine test positive for cannabis.

Until there is some evidence of effectiveness, I can’t recommend it, but people can try it based on safety and anecdotal reports.

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) 2023 North America Synd., Inc. All Rights Reserved.



Moore Texas by Roger MOORE
May 7, 1861: Anna Pennybacker is born. She would write the textbook used for decades – *The New History of Texas*.

CryptoQuip

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

Clue: K equals L

PIJZMB KBSDRBL DRSD RSW
PBBM WIXBERSD XZABO EZDR
XBDSK DI FZJB ZD XILB
WDLBMFDR: ZLIM IARZOB.

Answer Page 5

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Weekly SUDOKU

by Linda Thistle

8			3				9	
		7			6			4
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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 5

♦♦♦ HOO BOY!

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Copay exemption for Native American veterans



by Freddy Groves

The Department of Veterans Affairs is moving forward toward its goal of ensuring that Native American veterans receive the benefits they should be getting. Two weeks ago it was reduced mortgage interest rates for Native Americans, native Hawaiians, Alaska Natives and Pacific Islanders. Now, per the Indian Health Care Improvement Act, it's a waiver on having to pay a copay for VA health care services and urgent medical care.

Besides taking affect now, it's retroactive: Starting last year, on Jan. 5, 2022, any eligible American Indian and Alaska Native Veteran who's received care and paid a copay can go back and be reimbursed.

There are details, of course. To be eligible for

exemption you need to be an American Indian or Alaska Native Veteran, provide a copy of an official tribal document showing that you meet the eligibility requirements of the Indian Health Care Improvement Act and submit a Tribal Documentation Form (VAForm 10-334). That form is also known as Documentation of Indian or Urban Indian Status for Veteran Copayment Exemption.

Pay special attention to the government's definition of "Indian." It involves being a first- or second-degree descendant of certain groups, and you must live in an urban center, which includes the department of Health and Human Services' definition of an Indian population with unmet health needs.

If you're not yet signed up for VA health care, this might be the time to do it and have that, plus the question of your copays, out of the way. In a medical emergency, you don't want to have to think about what you're going to

do or where you're going to go. And if you've paid out several copays since Jan. 5 of last year, you stand to be reimbursed if you're eligible for the American Indian exemption.

Confused yet? There's help at 800-698-2411, the MyVA number that's answered 24/7 with assistance on a dozen different topics, from benefits to cemeteries to a crisis line.

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• Make children's pills easier to swallow by crushing them and putting them in a bit of jelly or applesauce. Make sure, especially if it's a prescription medicine, that it can be crushed. – U.L. in Minnesota

• To keep kids from running into a closed sliding-glass door, cut out a small picture of something that's brightly colored, "lamine" it by taping it across both sides, then tape it to the door at children's eye level. – E.R. in New York

• Painting season is in full swing at my house, and here are my two favorite painting tips: One is to lightly soap the windows (glass only) and let it dry. Any paint splatters will land on the soap, which can be easily wiped away when the paint is all dry. The other is to give locks, hinges and doorknobs a light coat of petroleum jelly. It works the same way, and when polished away, it leaves a nice shine to hardware.

• Here's a great spring facial: Split an avocado, mash half of it and use it as a mask. Let sit for up to five minutes, then rinse away with warm water.

• Cleaning windows? Use a nylon net scrubbie from the kitchen to get rid of bugs from screens. It also works really well to scrub bugs off the car grille or car window.

• Here's a great tip you can use when parallel parking in front of a storefront. Check the reflection to see if it looks like there's room when backing in or pulling forward. – O.W. in California

Send your tips to Now Here's a Tip, 628 Virginia Drive, Orlando, FL 32803. (c) 2023 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 5

	-		x		8
x		+		÷	
	-		÷		1
÷		x		+	
	-		x		14
6		6		9	

1 1 2 3 4 5 7 8 9

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LEF

♥ RULOVE

♥ RABEC

OUFT

MACOTT

♥ ARW

♥ AFEL

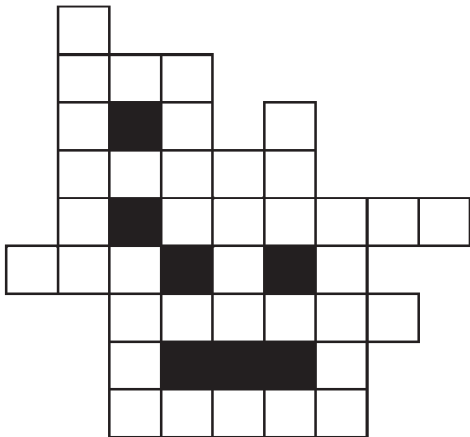
AVTIS

♥ TMA

EWLVIS

♥ BACOR

♥ STRU



Answer Page 5

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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