



## NEWSBRIEFS

### SNAP updated

On June 12, 2023 Governor Greg Abbott signed House Bill (H.B.) 1287, sponsored by Senator César J. Blanco, during the 88th Regular Session. H.B. 1287 will modernize the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) by making a necessary and long overdue update to the Vehicle Asset Test to ensure hungry Texas families do not lose their food assistance benefits due to inflation and increased used car values. Nearly 13% of Texas households – 4 million Texans – face food insecurity. In El Paso, approximately 35% of El Pasoans are food insecure. Current Texas rules cap the maximum value of a vehicle at \$15,000 for the first vehicle and \$4,650 for the second or additional vehicles to qualify for SNAP benefits. However, these outdated valuation limits, set 20 years ago, do not align with rising living costs and inflation in the used car market. House Bill 1287 would update the maximum value of a vehicle to \$22,500 for the first vehicle and \$8,700 for any subsequent vehicle to qualify for SNAP benefits.

– Cassandra Urrutia

### She stands alone

Talk about the oddities of life. Thirty-two year old Kelsey Grubb of Albuquerque, NM can stand proud with one foot turned forward and her other foot turned backward to an angle of 171.4 degrees. In fact, Kelsey’s “feat” got her into the Guinness Book of World Records. As she put it, “most people are grossed out and fascinated at the same time. The most common phrase I’ve heard about it is not that the movement itself is gross, just the ease at which I turn it.”

– John Grimaldi

### What they left behind

It’s not unusual for taxi drivers to find a phone, a purse, or a bag left behind by passengers. The 2023 Uber Lost & Found Index was recently made public and it contains a long list of not-so-common items that forgetful riders left behind in their cabs. Over the past year drivers turned in a variety

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*It is extremely difficult for people that lose their temper to hold on to their friends.*

– Quips & Quotes



– Photo courtesy Viva! El Paso

## Viva! El Paso returns

**A NIGHT OUT** – Viva! El Paso opens its 45th Season on Friday, June 23, 2023 at 8:00 p.m. in the beautiful McKelligon Canyon Amphitheatre. This year, under the direction of Jaime Carrasco, the show will highlight new dances, new sets, new lighting, and fan favorites such as the *Deer Dance*. Viva! El Paso also features a book by award-winning playwright Marty Martin and songs from El Paso rock icon Jim Ward and Cody Ritchey. Viva! El Paso, along with partners EPIC Arts, El Paso Live, El Paso Museums & Cultural Affairs, El Paso Community Foundation, El Paso Hotel Paso Del Norte, and Home Depot will present performances on Fridays and Saturdays from June 23 through August 5, 2023. Tickets can be purchased at the Plaza Theatre box office downtown (125 W Mills), or on the day of the show at the McKelligon Canyon box office. Above, from left, are Veronica Boehmer, Selina Nevarez and Desiray Correa performing in a previous season’s show.

– Eric Pearson



– Photo courtesy Rotary Club of El Paso

**CELEBRATING INDEPENDENCE** – The Rotary Club of West El Paso was established in 1962 and its members have been actively involved in the El Paso community ever since. Since 2000, the club has donated over \$150,000 to various community projects and has been actively involved in promoting quality of life and youth initiatives throughout El Paso for more than 50 years. Every year, El Pasoans decorate floats, like the one above, for the Fourth of July Parade in West El Paso.

## Public invited to 25th annual Fourth of July parade

**By Alfredo Vasquez**  
*Special to the Courier*

EL PASO COUNTY – For over two decades, West El Paso’s biggest parade

of the year has been the Independence Day Parade sponsored by the Rotary Club of West El Paso. And this year is no exception, as organizers prepare for the upcoming parade, they themed “United We Stand”.

With the financial support of community parade sponsors like Citizens Bank, City Bank El Paso, the Rotary Club of West El Paso, City of

See PARADE, Page 3



# Old Glory should be the flag for all citizens

It's June, when one can be forgiven for thinking we live in the United States of LGBTQIA2S+.

Old Glory is, at best, supplemented with, and sometimes supplanted by, the pride flag in all its varieties.

The flag, which has become more and more unsightly, is ubiquitous. Its increasingly elaborate jumble of clashing stripes – whether seen shopping, at a ballgame or on U.S. government buildings – is a reminder to get with the program, and that the program is always changing.

Team Biden draped what is known as the Progress Pride flag, with no fewer than 11 different colors, on the White House in between two American flags, giving it – no pun intended – pride of place.

Flags aren't trifling matters. People rally to them

and live and die for them. The firing on the flag at Fort Sumter at the outset of the Civil War, for instance, had a galvanizing effect on the North. “On forts and ships, from church-spires and flag-staffs, from colleges, hotels, storefronts and private balconies, from public edifices, everywhere the old flag was flung out,” historian George Preble writes in a passage that could almost as accurately describe the unavoidable June displays of the pride flag.


Whereas the power of the Star-Spangled Banner is its extraordinary history, its relatively simple design, its easily understood symbolism, and its call to unify all Americans – not to mention the sacrifices made to defend it – the pride flag is the opposite.

It's always being refashioned (the version

displayed on the White House dates all the way back to 2018), it's an aesthetic disaster, it's inscrutable, and it's a banner concerned with the recognition of splinter groups.

If you wanted to create a visual representation of “intersectionality,” the latest iterations of the flag would be it.

The old, quaint rainbow flag had the virtue of being simpler than its subsequent renditions and of representing broad categories of things (life, sunlight, etc.), rather than specific groups of people. The flag started as eight stripes and got dropped to



THE RICH LOWRY COLUMN

See LOWRY, Page 7

## Food for thought By Dr. Glenn Mollette

### Are presidential candidates sinners?

Are the presidential candidates all sinners? This could be a potential question for an upcoming town hall meeting or debate.

Answers by the candidates would be interesting. Would any candidate admit to being a sinner? Would some of them deny ever having sinned? Would they say something like, “I sinned a long time ago.” Or, I might have sinned some as a young adult.”

If any would admit to having sin in their lives, would they be comfortable explaining which sins they have committed? Probably not because any admission would become fodder for the other candidates to beat on them throughout the campaign. Of course the media would freeze the admission into print to be replayed multiple times.

What would they admit to?

Do political candidates ever admit to being wrong? Doing wrong things and saying wrong words sometimes are accidental but which of them would be willing to admit to even an accidental moral or ethical slip?

The truth is that all the presidential candidates are sinners. If they say they have never sinned then they are liars. The Bible says “If we say we have not sinned we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us,” 1 John 1:9. Another verse says “All have sinned and come short of the glory of God,” Romans 3:23. Jesus Christ is God's measuring stick. He's the only human the Bible says who ever lived without sin. According to the verse of scripture we have come short of Jesus Christ.

The bottom line is that we

are all sinners. Thus, so are all the presidential candidates.

Politicians like most all humans are more comfortable pointing out the failures and sins of the opposing candidate. We all do this to some extent. We point out the wrong things that others are doing. This makes us feel a little more righteous. However, when we point our finger at someone else, we always have three more pointing back at us.

How could there ever be a town hall meeting or political debate without blasting the opposition and condemning

every movement the opponent ever made? In our world it would be a difficult achievement. Most of the Republican candidates have already been criticized for not condemning former President Donald Trump enough.

Hopefully in the myriad upcoming television political speeches and discussions we will hear more about what each candidate has done and what he or she will do if elected.

Unfortunately, I am not really interested in spending endless hours listening to political rhetoric. Summer is here in its full glory. Daylight in my area starts about 5 a.m.

and lasts until almost 9 p.m. I want to be outside walking, biking and enjoying life. I'll review all the candidates and have my voting decision made by election day.

Between now and then they can hash out and beat out their failures and sins among themselves.

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.glennmollette.com](http://www.glennmollette.com) or [www.facebook.com/glennmollette](http://www.facebook.com/glennmollette).



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# Parade

From Page 1

El Paso, Marathon Oil and others, this year’s parade promises to be another fun family event, stated Rick LoBello, a parade contributor.

LuAnn Wieland, parade committee chair, stated that the parade will once again start at 9 a.m., Tuesday, July 4, at the Western Hills Methodist Church, which is located off Shadow Mountain Road, at 530 Thunderbird. She said that the parade participants will turn left onto Thunderbird, then left at Shadow Mountain, right on Mesa, and then proceed to Coronado High School.

Wieland said that this year the parade will have cash prizes for the float winners: first place winner will receive \$1000; second place will get \$500, and the third place finisher will earn \$250. The judging criteria will include patriotic music, display, and visual impact, she added.

Visit [July4parade.com](http://July4parade.com) to sign up for the parade. Interested individuals or organizations can fill out an application online at the “entry” tab. Businesses or groups interested in helping to sponsor the parade, can contact parade organizers by pressing the “sponsorship” tab.

Parade entry fees this year are \$40 for businesses; and free for churches, youth groups, non-profit organizations, military and veteran groups.

Businesses can pay online with a credit card using PayPal or by mail with a check. The entry deadline is July 1. For more information contact Wieland, at [wielandlu1953@gmail.com](mailto:wielandlu1953@gmail.com) or by text, at (915) 549-9270.

# Báñez heading to Barnard

By Sofia Maciel  
Special to the Courier

FABENS – Fabens High School class of 2023 valedictorian Ariana Báñez will be attending Barnard College, a pathway to Ivy League Columbia University.

Ariana is an award-winning musician and thespian, singing the final piece of the UIL-winning Gatos Salvajes mariachi group performance that secured them a position in state competition during their inaugural year.

“College was not a long-standing dream, but a love that blossomed through exploration... The call from admissions, bearing the news of my acceptance, forever etched in my heart, marks one of my most treasured memories,” said Ariana.

Liliana Báñez, Ariana’s mother, is a teacher at Fabens Elementary School. She stated “I am proud my first-born daughter was admitted to such a prestigious Ivy League school. She has worked so hard all her school years. Her work ethic is impeccable and is now paying off! Who would have thought that a Fabens girl from tiny Fabens would be attending Barnard College – Columbia University!”

Ariana will be attending Barnard College in the fall.



Ariana Báñez

– Photo courtesy Fabens ISD

# Briefs

From Page 1

of abandoned items found in the back seats of their cars such as an ankle monitor, fake blood, a fog machine, a Danny DeVito Christmas ornament and, oddly enough, six cheese cakes.

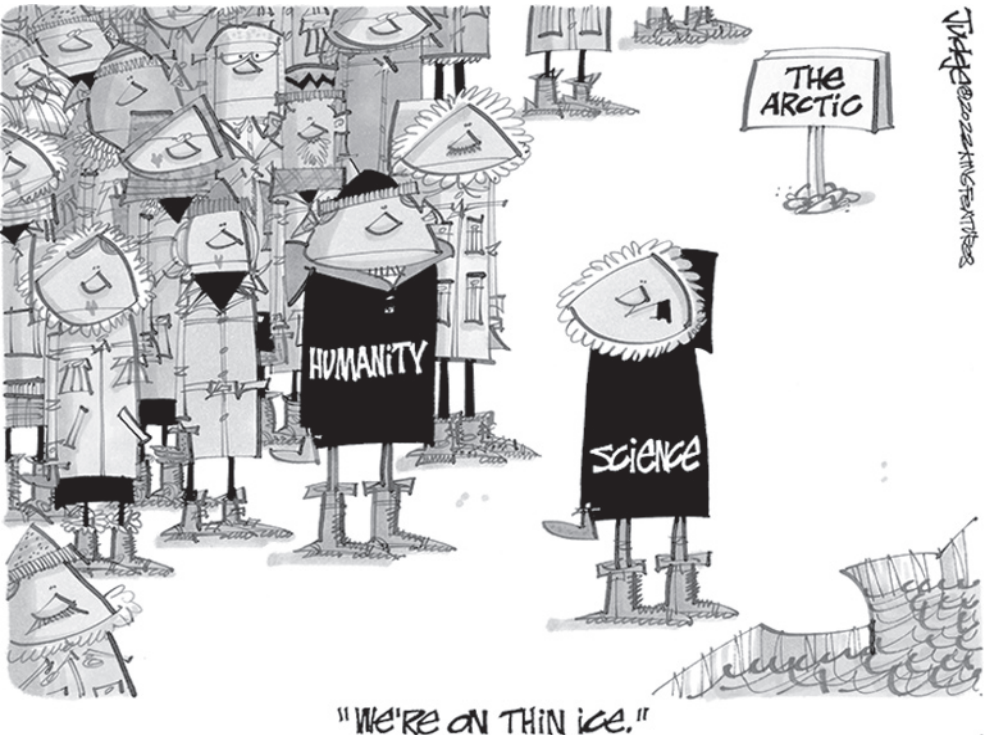
– John Grimaldi

# ‘Bee-lieve it or not’

A Delta Airlines flight could not take off recently at the Houston-Bush airport “after a friendly group of bees evidently wanted to talk shop with the winglet of our airplanes, no doubt to share the latest about flying conditions at the airport,” according to the airline. Thousands of the pesky insects had settled on a wing of the aircraft to rest their wings, preventing a takeoff. No efforts, such as hosing down the plane, were allowed. But three hours later the pilot revved his engines scaring the swarm to take flight themselves, allowing the plane to take flight as well.

– John Grimaldi

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CELEBRATION – Bohuslav Rattay, above center from a previous performance, will lead the El Paso Symphony Orchestra on July Fourth during the 12th annual *Pop Goes The Fort* concert at Biggs Park.

# EPSO set to perform on Fourth of July

By Rosemary Flores  
*Special to the Courier*

EL PASO COUNTY – The El Paso Symphony Orchestra is honored to perform and celebrate at the 12th annual *Pop Goes The Fort* concert in salute of the brave men and women of Fort Bliss and all those who served to protect our country.

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America’s Independence is on Tuesday, July 4, 7:00pm at Biggs Park, 11388 Sergeant Major Blvd. EPSO conductor Bohuslav Rattay will lead the El Paso Symphony in a patriotic and pops concert including traditional Sousa marches like *The Washington Post* and *Stars and Stripes Forever*, music from *E.T.*, *Indian Jones* and *Skyfall* plus more. The concert will culminate with a spectacular fireworks display.

The concert is open to public. Civilians interested in attending can now get a Fort Bliss community access pass. Visit <https://bliss.armymwr.com/happenings/fort-bliss-community-pass> or call contact the MWR at (915) 568-3500 for more information. Gates open at 4 p.m. No outside alcoholic beverages, glass containers or pets allowed. Food trucks will be available in the park.

“This concert is a highlight in our season. What a wonderful opportunity to get to start our season performing for our troops at Fort Bliss,”

said Ruth Ellen Jacobson, Executive Director of the El Paso Symphony Orchestra Association. “Bohuslav has put together an exciting and varied program mixing traditional patriotic music, contemporary patriotic music, and pop music.”

The El Paso Symphony is working with Fort Bliss, Family and Morale, Welfare and Recreation (MWR) to make this event special. The El Paso Symphony Orchestra is supported in part by the City of El Paso Museums and Cultural Affairs Department, Texas Commission on the Arts and the National Endowment for the Arts. The El Paso Symphony Orchestra is sponsored by Hunt Companies. *Pops Goes The Fort* is sponsored by El Paso Community College, First Light Federal Credit Union, and Shamaley Ford; the fireworks spectacular by USAA.

For information and further details on Pop Goes the Fort contact the MWR at (915) 568-3500.

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Answer

What teal-colored barrier  
might some police be  
wrapping around a crime  
scene. Cordon blue.

## Strange BUT TRUE

- By Lucie Winborne
- The “Guinness World Records” holds the world record for being the most stolen book from public libraries.
  - Some New York City taxis are actually undercover cop cars.
  - Nintendo was sued and found guilty because kids were getting blisters from playing too much Mario Party.
  - A cow named Cincinnati Freedom lived up to her name when she evaded police officers for 11 days after jumping a 6-foot fence to escape a slaughterhouse. Once caught, she was given the key to the city by Cincinnati’s mayor and allowed to peacefully live out her remaining days in a New York sanctuary.

• Before he became the axman for Guns N’ Roses, Slash auditioned for the band Poison but decided not to join when he was asked about wearing makeup.

• Persian King Agha Mohammad Khan ordered the execution of two servants for being too loud. Since it was a holy day, he postponed the event for 24 hours and made the servants return to their duties. It turned out to be an unfortunate decision, as they murdered the ruler in his sleep that very night.

• When George Washington died, Napoleon Bonaparte gave a personal eulogy and ordered a 10-day mourning period for France.

• By 1930, doping had become so prevalent and even accepted in the Tour de France that its organizers felt compelled to inform cyclists in the official rulebook that drugs would not be provided.

• Onions are the only commodity banned from futures trading in America.

• The average person spends 38.5 days brushing their teeth.

• The man for whom Mount Everest was named, George Everest, didn’t want the honor, pointing out that his name was difficult to write or pronounce in Hindi and that all previous Himalayan peaks were officially given indigenous names.

Thought for the Day: “Live deep instead of fast.”  
– Henry Seidel Canby





• On June 19, 1968, 50,000 people participated in The Poor People’s March, organized by Martin Luther King Jr. and the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, to address economic justice. The campaign culminated in Washington, D.C., to demand aid for America’s most impoverished communities and focused not just on Blacks, but all minorities.

• On June 20, 1947, gangster Benjamin “Bugsy” Siegel was murdered at the Beverly Hills, California, mansion of his girlfriend, Virginia Hill, while reading the evening newspaper. Though the case has never officially been solved, one theory holds that Siegel died by order of mob associates disgruntled about the soaring costs of his pet project, the Flamingo resort in Las Vegas.

• On June 21, 2006, two recently discovered moons orbiting Pluto were named Nix, after the Greek goddess of darkness and night, and Hydra, after a mythological, multiheaded serpent defeated by Hercules. The moons had initially been spotted by the Hubble Space Telescope a year earlier.

• On June 22, 1940, the first Dairy Queen restaurant opened on historic Route 66 in Joliet, Illinois. While frozen sweet treats are, sadly, no longer served at the site (especially at their original prices of 5 cents for a cone and 8 cents for a sundae), it remains a local landmark.

• On June 23, 1951, a hailstorm in El Dorado, Kansas, dropped over 12 inches of ice and caused \$1.5 million in crop damage, with another stunning \$14 million in property damage.

• On June 24, 1916, Mary Pickford (born Gladys Marie Smith), affectionately known as “America’s Sweetheart” during the silent-film era, became the first female actress to be offered a million-dollar contract, which also allowed her the freedom to choose the movies she would star in.

• On June 25, 1978, the rainbow flag was flown for the first time at the San Francisco Gay Freedom Day Parade. Previously, gay pride had been represented by a pink triangle, but as that symbol was used during the Holocaust to identify homosexuals, people wanted a more positive image.

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View from here

By John Grimaldi

# Dr. Rich McCormick opens up on Biden presidency

Congressman Rich McCormick, M.D. (R-GA) was a Marine pilot, an emergency room doctor and now he is a “Republican warrior in Congress.” In a recent appearance on the *AMAC Better For America* podcast, he discussed a wide range of political issues with host Rebecca Weber, CEO of the Association of Mature American Citizens (AMAC), including government spending, health care issues, President Biden’s open Mexican border and the state of Social Security.

The Fiscal Responsibility Act that President Biden signed into law is intended to avert a debt default and set government spending limits for two years. McCormick was one of 71 members of Congress who voted against the spending bill and he told Weber that whatever savings are to be had under this new law, it doesn’t stop the president from using an executive order to override the legislation’s limitations, which are based on just 11% of the budget. The president “still continues to have privileges that are out of check. So, any meager savings we might have can be overridden by an executive order and that was my red line” when it came time to vote on it.

Noting that health care is a big-buck share of the budget, Representative McCormick went on to praise the introduction of the Helping Everyone Access Long Term Healthcare (the HEALTH Act). It offers a solution that would help provide healthcare services for low-income individuals and families and help Medicaid and Children’s Health Insurance Programs (CHIP) save on costs. The legislation would let

doctors and other healthcare workers offer free care services for the needy in exchange for a charitable tax deduction. McCormick explained that some doctors don’t accept Medicaid because it doesn’t pay its bills.

The HEALTH Act “allows doctors to see people who are basically impoverished, people who are on Medicaid, people who need help. It basically is a tax credit that lets us continue to see patients. What we want to do is serve patients and do what is right. But if you’re doing it at a larger payer mix than you can afford, you have to limit the number of Medicaid patients.”

McCormick went on to address another health issue that has emerged since Joe Biden and his progressive lawmakers took office and opened the Mexican border allowing illicit drug traffickers to enter the country. “It is a very real problem and it’s created at the southern border. There are a lot of nefarious people involved with drug trafficking at the southern border. A lot of bad guys come across the border with no accountability. We have a record number of terrorists who have been caught and have encouraged people to break the law, thanks to the Biden administration.” McCormick said that the numbers of Americans – mainly kids – who’ve died due to drug overdoses, thanks to this administrations come-one-come-all migrant policies, is in the hundreds of thousands.

He added, “America has been overwhelmed by societal problems, whether it be crime, gun violence, drug overdoses, suicide. Once again, you can make laws and rules. [But] you cannot

get rid of racism, for example, with a law. We keep on turning to the very institution that created the problem to begin with. And the more we do that, the more we’re going to lose our way. I’m a conservative. I believe that we are the solution, that the Constitution was created to empower us. We are unique in that way. That’s what has made America wildly successful. And the more we turn to the government to solve our problems, the worse our problems get.”

McCormick said that President Biden didn’t make things any better when he relied on a “dishonest” argument in his State of the Union address. “The president said that Republicans want to cut Social Security. But the Social Security law was a bipartisan endeavor and so to say Republicans want to cut Social Security is a deliberate lie. We want to save it, but we will have to make some hard decisions. When Social Security was initially instituted, it had an age limit based on age expectancy to see that time. Since then, our age expectancy has gone dramatically up, but the law remains the same. So we have to have a conversation about that. I don’t think we can continue with what we have right now. That’s obvious. It will become insolvent. I’m open to any solution that’s going to save Social Security,” he said.

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.

## Classified Ads

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#### TEXAS COMMISSION ON ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY



#### NOTICE OF APPLICATION AND PRELIMINARY DECISION FOR SMALL MUNICIPAL SEPARATE STORM SEWER SYSTEM (MS4) RENEWAL

General Permit Authorization No. TXR040615

#### APPLICATION AND PRELIMINARY DECISION.

illage of Vinton, 436 East Vinton Road, Vinton, Texas 79821, has applied to the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) under Texas Pollutant Discharge Elimination

System (TPDES) Small MS4 General Permit No. TXR040000 for a renewal of authorization number TXR040615 to discharge stormwater to surface water in the state from the Village of Vinton MS4. The notice of intent (NOI) and stormwater management program (SWMP) were received by the TCEQ on July 23, 2019.

The MS4 is in the Village of Vinton limits within the El Paso Urbanized Area in El Paso County, Texas. The discharge from the MS4 will eventually reach Rio Grande Above International Dam in Segment No. 2314 of the Rio Grande Basin.

A copy of the NOI, SWMP, general permit, and general permit fact sheet are available for viewing and copying at the Village of Vinton City Hall located

at 436 East Vinton Road, Vinton, Texas 79821. The SWMP can also be viewed online at the Village of Vinton's website at <https://vintontx.gov/office2.com/>. Substantial changes to the MS4's SWMP during the permit term will be posted on the same website.

The TCEQ Executive Director has completed the technical review of the application and SWMP. The SWMP, if approved, would establish additional terms and conditions, not included in the general permit, under which the MS4 must operate. The Executive Director has made the preliminary decision that the SWMP meets all statutory and regulatory requirements and made a preliminary decision to approve the small MS4's authorization under the TPDES Small (Phase II) MS4 General Permit No.

TXR040000.

#### PUBLIC COMMENT / PUBLIC MEETING.

You may submit public comments or request a public meeting about this application. The purpose of a public meeting is to provide the opportunity to submit written or oral comments or to ask questions about the application. The TCEQ will hold a public meeting if the Executive Director determines that there is a significant degree of public interest in the application or if requested by a local legislator. A public meeting is not a contested case hearing. If significant interest exists, the Executive Director will direct the applicant to publish a notice of the public meeting and hold the public meeting. The applicant must publish notice of a public meeting at least 30 days prior

to the meeting in a newspaper of general circulation in the county where the MS4 is located. If the MS4 is located in more than one county, the applicant must publish notice in a newspaper of general circulation in the county containing the largest residential population.

**All written public comments and public meeting requests must be submitted to the Office of the Chief Clerk, MC 105, TCEQ, P.O. Box 13087, Austin, Texas 78711-3087 or electronically at <https://www.tceq.texas.gov/goto/comment> within 30 days of the date of newspaper publication of this notice.**

After the deadline for submitting public comments, the Executive Director will consider all timely comments and prepare a response to all

relevant material, or significant public comments. The response to comments will be mailed to everyone who submitted public comments and to those persons who are on the mailing list for this application.

#### MAILING LIST.

If you submit public comments, a request for a public meeting, or a reconsideration of the Executive Director's decision, you will be added to the mailing list for this specific application to receive future public notices mailed by the Office of the Chief Clerk. In addition, you may request to be placed on: (1) the permanent mailing list for a specific applicant name and permit number; or (2) the mailing list for a specific county. If you wish to be placed on the permanent or the county mailing list, clearly specify which list(s) and send your request

to TCEQ Office of the Chief Clerk at the address above.

#### INFORMATION AVAILABLE ONLINE.

For details about the status of the application, visit the Commissioners' Integrated Database at <https://www.tceq.texas.gov/goto/cid>. Search the database using the permit number for this application, which is provided at the top of this notice.

#### AGENCY CONTACTS AND INFORMATION.

Any personal contact information you provide to the TCEQ will become part of the agency's records; this includes your name, phone number, email address, and physical address. For more information about this application or the permitting process, please call the TCEQ Public Education Program, toll free,

at 1-800-687-4040 or visit their website at <https://www.tceq.texas.gov/goto/pep>. Si desea información en español, puede llamar al 1-800-687-4040.

Further information may also be obtained from Village of Vinton at the address stated above or by calling Ms. Andrea Carrillo at 915-886-5104.

Issuance Date: June 09, 2023

WTCC: 06-22-23

### SALES

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Clint, TX

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# Some UTEP football players realize there’s no place like home

By Steve Escajeda  
*Special to the Courier*

UTEP fans go into every football season with the same hopes and dreams, “could this be the year they put everything together?”

And almost every single year over the last five decades those hopes and dreams were not answered. In fact, For the most part, not only do they not win – they were usually among the very worst programs in the country.

But there are several factors why El Paso football fans should be fairly confident about the 2023 season.

First of all, there’s the whole addition by subtraction scenario.

Conference USA is saying goodbye to Charlotte, Florida Atlantic, North Texas, Rice, Alabama-Birmingham and UT San Antonio. They’ve all left the league for greener pastures.

Slightly lower-tier teams like Liberty, New Mexico State, Jacksonville State, and Sam Houston are joining the conference in 2023 and Kennesaw State will enter the league in 2024.

Those changes alone should elevate UTEP toward the top of the league standings this coming season, but it’s not just the change in teams, there have been some personnel changes as well.

The Miners lost their top receiver, Tyrin Smith, who transferred to Texas A&M. They also lost their leading rusher Ronald Awatt, and dual threat rusher and pass catcher Rey Flores to graduation.

That’s the bad news, the good news is that Smith (71 catches, 1,039 yards, 7 TDs) had a change of heart and is returning to UTEP for the 2023 season.

Then the big news broke last week

that former Americas High School star running back Aaron Dumas has transfered to UTEP. Dumas spent the last two season with the New Mexico Lobos and the Washington Huskies where he led the Lobos in rushing with 658 yards in 11 games and was the first freshman to lead the team in rushing since 2002.

Washington decided to red shirt and not play him, so Dumas decided to transfer to UTEP and has three years of eligibility left.

Yamil Oaxaca was a very talented receiver with the Montwood Rams and signed to play with UT Permian Basin. But he too was red-shirted so he has also transferred to UTEP.

I guess Dorothy had it right when she said there was no place like home.

With starting quarterback Gavin Hardison returning to reunite with big-time receiver Tyrin Smith, UTEP’s air game will always be a threat.

Throw in two of the best running backs in El Paso high school football

history, Deion Hankins and Aaron Dumas, and the Miners are in the midst of building a very explosive offense.

But one thing still worries me about the UTEP offense. In recent years the play calling has been, let’s say, rather predictable.

Don’t get me wrong, I like vanilla ice cream, but I like to add some chocolate syrup and maybe some strawberries, some sprinkles and even some nuts.

The Miners’ play calling has resembled a scoop of vanilla ice cream with nothing extra to go with it. In other words, bland and boring and you know what you’re going to get every time.

Let’s be honest, when fans in the stands can predict what play UTEP will be running next, I imagine the opposing coaches know as well.

Anyway, head coach Dana Dimel must feel like he’s having extra birthday’s this year, receiving tons of gifts in the way of an easier conference

schedule, fewer elite teams to battle for the top spot in the league and a few extremely talented players who left the city, only to return and play in front of the home crowd.

UTEP will still have to contend with returning teams Florida International, Western Kentucky, Louisiana Teach and Middle Tennessee, of which only Western Kentucky had a winning conference record in 2022.

Based on the competition and UTEP’s returning players, the Miners have no reason not to finish in the top three of the nine-team league.

The Miners will also travel to Northwestern (Big 10) and Arizona (Pac-12) in non-conference games this year, but believe it or not, those are winnable games.

This may be the first time I’ve done this in years, but I’m actually going to predict that the Miners are going to win eight games this season.

If not, “there’s going to be some splainin’ to do.”

## Senior moment By Matilda Charles

# Tips and fees eating into our money

Just when so many of us are struggling financially with the rising cost of everything, along comes yet another way to separate us from our dollars: Many businesses are now charging a fee to return items we’ve purchased online from them.

I’m not going to name names or point fingers here, but know that it’s the big name companies that are doing this.

The return fees seem to range from \$5 to nearly \$10 per return. And you don’t have much choice, because they already have your money (from when you paid for the item) and will neatly deduct their fee from your refund.

So, beware what you purchase online. Try to be sure that you’ll want to keep it. And check your state’s consumer protection office to see if it’s even legal to charge a restocking fee ([www.usa.gov/state-consumer](http://www.usa.gov/state-consumer)). There might be a question about whether you were notified at the time of purchase.

And it’s not just online places that sell us items that want extra money from us; it’s places where we actually

go to pick things up, such as fast-food carryout locations when we grab up a cup of coffee on the way home. It’s called “tip creeping,” and it’s spreading everywhere.

Be cautious when you check out with your credit card. In increasing numbers, the establishment might have an automatic tip amount selected, and if you click too quickly you could be saying yes.

I’ve even heard – and this is disturbing – that some people who do not tip are subjected to ugly comments from staff. Don’t give in! Stand your ground. If you feel pushed to give a tip for carryout and don’t wish to, then don’t. Tip creeping is meant to make us feel guilty for not tipping.

What merchants will eventually figure out, if they make enough of us uncomfortable, is that we’ll spend our dwindling dollars elsewhere... or not spend them at all.

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## Super Crossword

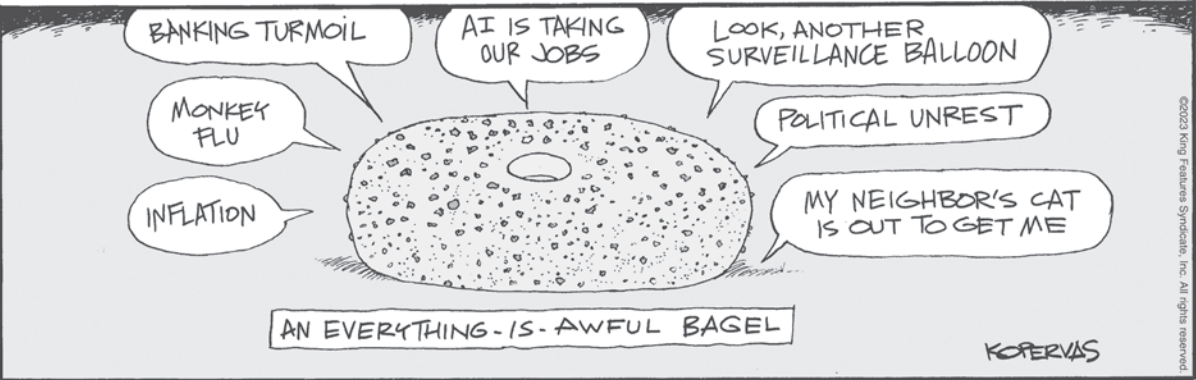
1	2	3	4	5		6	7	8	9		10	11	12	13		14	15	16	17	18
19						20					21					22				
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27						28					29					30				
31						32					33					34				35
				</																

<b>WORKING IN 2-D ACROSS</b>	comfortable," e.g.?	117 Villain from a Virginia city?	18 Quickness	75 "Someone to Watch Over Me" musical
1 PC program shortcut	63 "A Nightmare on Elm Street" director	120 Roofing tile	24 Twisting fish	76 Made attractive
6 Flog	Craven	121 Writer Wiesel	25 Print quality meas.	77 "I'm _" (greeting in Apple ads)
10 Pelting precipitation	64 Like Dubliners	122 Frightful giant	30 City in Oklahoma	78 "Cagney & Lacey" actress Tyne
14 _ Hopkins	65 Inning third	123 Sewing cases	32 Commercial suffix with Star or Sun	80 Sushi eggs
University	66 Berate loudly	124 Skin qualities	33 State-run game	81 Ritzy
19 Alternative	67 Holy images	125 Split apart	38 Grind, as the teeth	82 " _ dabba doo!"
20 Parka feature	68 Device like a TiVo, in brief	126 Go beyond	40 Natty scarf	83 Obtain by entreaty
21 Quattro or TT carmaker	69 Jigsaw unit	127 Plains shelter	41 Hershey candy bar	88 Pulls hard
22 Consume entirely	70 Repeated		42 Halfway point	90 Earth-scooping machines
23 King penguin's son?	71 Repeated		44 Bird's gullet	91 Preside over
26 Dazzling light	74 U.S. org. with operatives	<b>DOWN</b>	45 Unusual	92 Sided against
27 A, in Berlin	75 One _ (a handful)	1 Is sulky	46 Become rusty, say	93 Bee fluids
28 Italian island	76 Writing tablet	2 Take _ (go somewhere)	47 _ a million	98 Be a braggart
29 Give a steed a spanking?	79 Nylon tights for people who are losing a lot of weight?	3 Porcelain babies, maybe	48 Maker of major repairs	99 _Saxon
31 Handheld firework	80 Hauling rig	4 "The Intern" actress	49 Like musical works with five sharps	100 Thai or Iraqi
33 Ad_	83 " _ la Douce"	5 Tolkien menace	50 Hardware bit	102 Gut problem
34 Direction from Ariz. to Ky.	84 Hauling rig	6 Entire	51 Gershon of "Killer Joe"	104 Old Pan Am competitor
35 Actor Danson	85 Gut-punch reaction	7 Informal German	56 USMC NCO	106 Trail activities
36 Hwy. violation	86 Tree of Illinois	8 The Hawkeye State	59 Sure-footed equine	107 Billy Joel's "Just the Way You _"
37 Back in time	87 Alternative to grits	9 High-tech 'appt. book"	60 Parka feature	108 Hawkins of "Li'l Abner"
39 Western treaty gp.	89 Violins donated to people who've gone broke?	10 Gave birth to Tom, Dick or Harry?	61 Glasses and goggles	109 Mom on "Family Ties"
42 Answer to "Are you?"	90 Cool, 1940s-style	11 " _ Lang Syne"	62 1920s-'30s art style	111 Poker stake
44 Driving coast to coast on icy roads?	96 "See ya!"	12 Screened at a bar door	64 Frosted	112 "Wilde" actress Jennifer
52 _ Purina (old pet food company)	97 With 115-Across, "Quit dreaming!"	13 Twisted cotton thread	67 Potassium _ (table salt additive)	113 No, in Bonn
53 Consumed	98 Ovine whine	14 Archie's pal, in comics	68 Major racket	114 Onetime Nintendo rival
54 Negative point	101 Water, to Yvette	15 World capital on a fjord	69 Counterpart of 54-Across	118 Daddy
55 Platform for speakers	103 K-12 gp.	16 Valentine's Day symbol	70 "No problem"	119 Poker stake
57 Folkie Guthrie	105 Rebuke		71 Slalom curve	
58 "It makes sleeping	110 Presently riding as a jockey?		72 Dish designer	
	114 Mix		73 Half: Prefix	
	115 See 97-Across		74 _ latte (espresso)	
	116 Growing older			



Comix

OUT ON A LIMB By Gary Kopervas



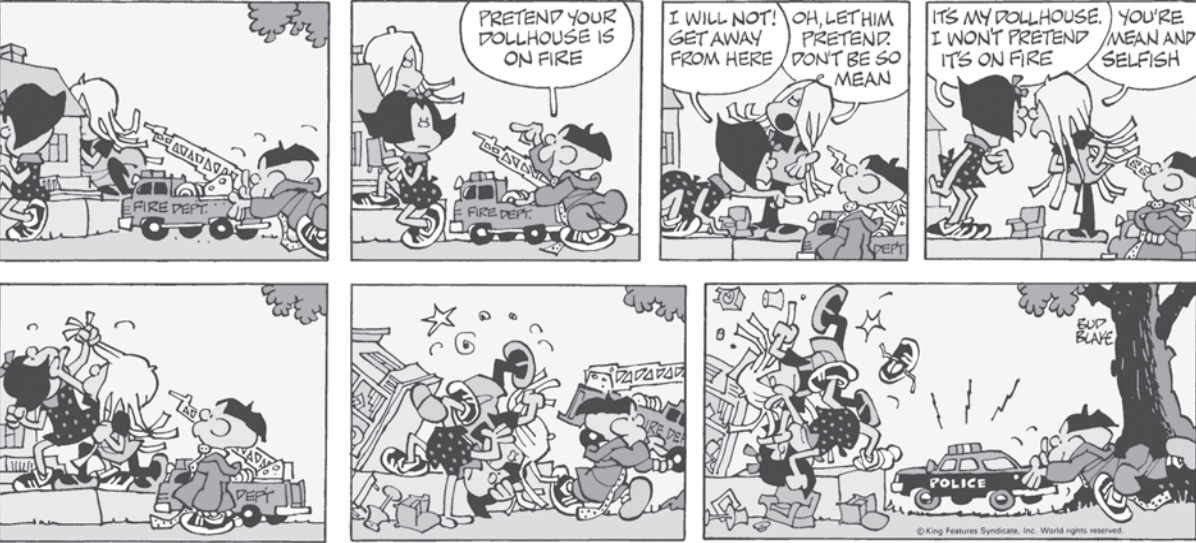
AMBER WAVES By Dave T. Phipps



THE SPATS By Jeff Pickering



TIGER By Bud Blake



Lowry

From Page 2

six for pragmatic reasons before additional stripes started getting layered in.

As it happens, there are dozens of separate flags out there for every gender identity and sexual orientation – pansexual, non-binary, gender fluid, asexual, you name it. How could they be left out?

First, the City of Philadelphia added black and brown stripes to the top of the flag in 2017 to recognize people of color. The next year, a designer took the black and brown stripes – along with light blue, pink, and white stripes incorporated from the transgender flag – and put them in a horizontal chevron to make the Progress Pride flag.

Yet another update added a yellow triangle with a purple circle from the intersex flag.

The resulting banner has all the visual appeal of a TV test pattern. It’s hard to see any principle by which other groups should be excluded. By the time it’s all said and done, the thing could look like a Sherwin-Williams fan deck, if it doesn’t already.

Like the LGBTQ+ cause generally, the flag has become increasingly esoteric and obsessed with identity politics – there’s always another letter or another stripe. But what better representation of a movement that has gone down the rabbit holes of such bizarre causes as insisting that males compete in women’s sports and minors get life-altering “gender-affirming care” that other advanced countries are turning away from as a terrible mistake?

Yet, it flies everywhere as though it were a quasi-national flag with universal popular assent. Even U.S. government buildings here at home and U.S. embassies abroad are bedecked with the flag. If Republicans ever get unified control of government, they should ban this practice. The government shouldn’t be promoting boutique causes, and we already have a flag that includes everyone, that doesn’t require constant ideological makeover, and that isn’t an eyesore.

The Stars and Stripes should be sufficient for this and every month.

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

Buyer beware when choosing supplements

DEAR DR. ROACH: I see supplements advertised on television that are supposed to clear “brain fog” and do many other beneficial things. Are these any good, and can they actually do the things that they claim? If they are effective, why aren’t they sold at drugstores? If not, how is it that companies are allowed to make these false claims and advertise these supplements on television?

– J.L.P.



I believe that there are over-the-counter supplements that are effective for treating some medical conditions, and there are a few instances in which there is strong evidence of benefit, such as a vitamin and mineral formula to slow progression of macular degeneration. Very often, there isn’t enough data to be sure a supplement is either effective or ineffective.

It is certainly true that supplement companies sometimes make claims that they cannot support. By law, supplement advertising can claim to support a body part or function (which is why you see claims like “supports heart health”), but these claims must be followed by: “This statement has not been evaluated by the Food and Drug Administration. This product is not intended to diagnose, treat, cure or prevent any disease.”

Often, the advertising for a supplement is at odds with that statement, and there are many instances of supplement manufacturers having to pay fines or change their advertising. A supplement that is found to be unsafe can be removed from the market by the FDA. In addition, any substance can be toxic if taken at a high enough dose. Vitamin A supplements are a good example.

The U.S. FDA does not regulate supplements the way they do prescription drugs, and supplement manufacturers do not need to prove that their products are effective. Further, there is strong evidence that some supplements sold in the U.S. do not contain as much (or any!) of the supplement they claim to provide. I always recommend getting a supplement that is verified by a third party, such as the U.S. Pharmacopeia or the National Science Foundation, if possible.

There are very few supplements proven to prevent problems, so I generally recommend against supplements in people who are healthy and have no symptoms. This definitely includes vitamin supplements. Supplements may have benefit in relieving symptoms for some less-serious medical conditions, and physicians should be (or get) familiar with more common supplements, their potential benefits and their toxicities.

DEAR DR. ROACH: I read your recent article on lichen planus. I have suffered with this for over two years. After doing a lot of research, I found that many people, like me, have diabetes. Nothing helped it, and the last treatment was too dangerous for me, although it did help me to lose 35 pounds and my sugar levels are now healthy. I understand that I can never get rid of lichen planus and that it’s just in remission now. – N.T.

Most studies show that people with diabetes are somewhat more likely to develop lichen planus (an itchy skin condition). About 1.5% of people with diabetes will develop lichen planus, compared to 0.75% of people without diabetes.

Unfortunately, I could not confirm that either weight loss or better diabetes control improves the symptoms of lichen planus. Sometimes lichen planus becomes inactive on its own. However, there are many good reasons to keep diabetes under control, and I am publishing your letter in the hope that it helps someone else.

Dr. Roach regrets that he is unable to answer individual questions, but will incorporate them in the column whenever possible. Readers may email questions to [ToYourGoodHealth@med.cornell.edu](mailto:ToYourGoodHealth@med.cornell.edu). (c) 2023 North America Synd., Inc. All Rights Reserved.





**Moore Texas** by Roger MOORE  
In the 1930s cattle rustlers started butchering cattle and were transporting the steaks all over the country.

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: M equals B

HPCY YOCZ-XWZWTOE MCTTDOT  
VDBPY JWVO QWZDXO MO  
HTCQQDAB CTWLAE C XTDVO  
JXOAO? XWTEWA MZLO.

Answer Page 4

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Weekly SUDOKU

by Linda Thistle

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

♦♦♦ HOO BOY!

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Veteran patients need volunteer drivers



by Freddy Groves

Have you considered how much of a problem it would be if you needed to go to a medical appointment and had no way to get there? If you have spare time or if you're retired, there is a task you could take on that would benefit other veterans: Become a volunteer driver.

The Volunteer Transportation Network, supported by the Disabled American Veterans (DAV) group, coordinates drivers to get veterans to medical appointments and home again. For disabled or elderly vets or those without transportation, this service can in every sense of the word be lifesaving.

And you certainly won't be alone in this task if you join up. Last year alone, DAV volunteer drivers took more than 156,000 veterans to appointments. Drivers

use government vehicles and can fill up the tank using a purchase card. The DAV has spent over \$80 million to purchase 3,000 vehicles to transport veterans to their medical appointments.

Your eligibility requirements: a valid license and a physical at the VA (it's free and won't cost you a cent.) You don't need to be a DAV member to volunteer with them.

Take a look at the VA's volunteer website (www.volunteer.va.gov) and click on "Volunteer Drivers." You'll go to a five-minute YouTube video. Or see the DAV site (www.dav.org) and click on "Medical Transportation" for more info.

And then there's the Veterans Transportation Service. Working in conjunction with the individual VA facilities, drivers transport elderly, disabled or mobility-challenged vets to their health appointments, whether it's at a VA facility or a non-VA health site.

Find their participating locations (as well as phone number and contact person) at [www.va.gov/healthbenefits/vtp/map.asp](http://www.va.gov/healthbenefits/vtp/map.asp), or call Voluntary Services at your local VA medical facility.

Consider, too, all the volunteer slots at your local VA Voluntary Services Office: parking lot shuttle driver, office assistant, info desk help, book cart, mailroom help, visitors guide... and so much more. No matter your skill, there's sure to be a place for you.

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• Purchase a large tub of cookie dough, and when you make the first batch, go ahead and portion out the remaining dough by teaspoons onto a cold cookie sheet. Freeze as balls, and then replace them in the container they came from. Refreeze. Now you can take out only as many cookies as you would like to make, and cook them straight from frozen.

• "This is a tip for painting stairs. Paint every other stair. Let them dry. Then paint the other stairs. This will make your staircase usable the whole way through your paint job." – R.L. in Michigan

• Spray old artificial flowers with hair spray to make the look fresh and vibrant.

• Many food containers can be reused to store personal items. Glass jars can be cleaned and labels removed. Paperboard boxes can be custom trimmed and covered with leftover wrapping paper or wallpaper. Paper milk cartons can be cleaned with soap and water, dried thoroughly then painted to hold a variety of items. Don't overlook the many possibilities in a piece of recycling or trash.

• "Use bathroom fans appropriately. Make sure to turn them off. They vent air to the outside, and that includes your paid-for air conditioning, too. Close the bathroom door after showering and let the fan run for about 10 minutes. Then turn it off." – D.A. in Texas

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 4

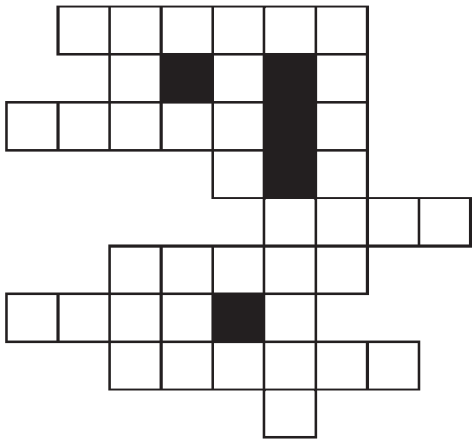
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+		-		+	
	-		×		20
×		×		×	
	×		+		20
26		27		10	

1 2 2 3 4 5 6 8 9

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ECA  
TIPCAM  
EYMAS  
OOLS  
ORTLIA  
YSL  
ACTL  
♥NOGAM  
OMO  
NOYAME  
♥ESYRA  
♥LAAG



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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