



NEWSBRIEFS

Student loans

With federal student loan interest having resumed on September 1 and payments required again resuming this month, the personal-finance website WalletHub has released its report on the *States Most Impacted by Student Loan Payments Moratorium Ending*, as well as expert commentary. Accompanying this study, WalletHub also released the results of its *2023 Student Loan Moratorium Survey*, which uncovered a number of interesting findings that are listed below. Texas was rated 22nd in the report. Impact of the End of the Student Loan Payments Moratorium in Texas (1-Most, 25-Avg.):

- 37th – Average Student Debt per Borrower;
- 26th – Share of Residents with Student Debt;
- 19th – Average Student Debt as Share of Income;
- 9th – Share of Student Loans in Past-Due or Default Status;
- 31st – Average Student Loan Debt Eligible for Forgiveness per Borrower; and
- 11th – Share of Student Loan Borrowers Eligible for Forgiveness.

Visit <https://wallethub.com/edu/states-most-affected-student-loan-moratorium-ending/127985/> for the full report.

Student Loan Moratorium Stats

- Taxpayer Fairness: 48% of people think the student loan moratorium was not fair to American taxpayers.
- Huge Help: More than 3 in 4 people with student loan debt say the student loan moratorium was helpful for them.
- Future Impact: 56% of people with student loan debt say the end of the student loan moratorium will affect their finances a lot.
- Uncertain Timeline: 1 in 3 Americans with student loan debt say they don't know how long it will take them to pay off

See BRIEFS, Page 4

Traffic lights give pedestrians so much confidence that they never see who or what hits them.

– Quips & Quotes



– Photo by Alfredo Vasquez

ONE HOT PROPERTY – A new law creates harsher penalties by making catalytic converter thefts a felony. In photo above, a catalytic converter is held by Robert Balderrama, who works with ASAP Towing Service & Mechanic and Body Shop. Law enforcement data indicate that 350 converters were reported stolen in 2022, up from three in 2019.

Statewide efforts seek to stop catalytic converter theft, other vehicle crimes

By Alfredo Vasquez
Special to the Courier

You know you've been "catalytic converted" if you start your car and it makes a roaring sound that gets louder when you put your foot on the gas, or your car begins to sputter when you accelerate and it starts to reek of exhaust fumes.

Catalytic converter thefts have become a national concern recently. Insurance claims for these thefts have risen from 16,000 to 64,701 claims nationwide between 2020 and 2022, according to the National Insurance Crime Bureau (NICB).

In 2022, Texas ranked second in catalytic converter thefts, averaging 136 thefts per every 100,000 automobiles, according to recent news reports.

El Paso County law enforcement data indicate that in 2019 only three catalytic converter thefts were investigated. This number increased to 45 in 2020, it surged to 216 catalytic converter thefts in 2021, and 350 converters were reported stolen in 2022.

Catalytic converters are a common stolen car part because of the precious

metals used to make them. Thieves can make hundreds of dollars for each one. Commercial vehicles and those with higher ground clearance are targeted more often due to the converters' easy accessibility.

The data on these surging thefts are only a snapshot of an underreported crime that affects communities nationwide, according to David Glawe, NICB President and CEO. Glawe pointed out that while a catalytic converter can be removed in just a few minutes; for vehicle owners, the cost is much more than the replacement parts. "Victims must find alternate transportation, schedule necessary repairs, and may face loss of work as a result," he added.

To address the rising number of catalytic converter thefts statewide, Texas Gov. Greg Abbott signed Senate Bill (S.B.) 224, which went into effect immediately. The bipartisan bill was authored by District 6 Senator Carol Alvarado and District 15 Senator John Whitmire.

The new law creates harsher penalties by making catalytic converter thefts a felony and grants prosecutors the ability to treat

Catalytic converter theft prevention tips

- Etch or paint the vehicle's catalytic converter.
- Contact local law enforcement to determine whether departments offer free catalytic converter engraving and high-heat painting or have community events planned to do so.
- Park in a garage, secure area or well-lit area to discourage thieves.
- Install a catalytic converter anti-theft shield, which bolts over the converter and acts as a deterrent to thieves whose goal is speed.

Anti-vehicle theft and burglary prevention tips

- Hide valuables from plain sight to avoid attracting thieves.
- Lock the vehicle and take the keys.
- Never hide a second set of keys in or on your vehicle.
- Park in well-lit areas and attended parking lots.
- Never leave your vehicle running, even if you will only be away for a minute.

If your vehicle is stolen, call law enforcement and your insurer immediately. Reporting a vehicle as soon as possible after it is stolen increases the chance of recovery.

– Motor Vehicle Crime
Prevention Authority

See THEFT, Page 4

The electric car sham

Joe Biden has seen the future, and it is electric cars. Lots of electric cars. Electric cars – or else.

Donald Trump has seen the future, and it is a backlash against the mandate for the mass adoption of electric cars. The former president is promising to “stop this

Madness, IMMEDIATELY!” Who wins this political argument may determine who has the upper hand in a state like Michigan in a 2024 rematch. Regardless, all-caps aside, Trump is right about the lunatic urgency across the Western world to use government coercion to render all-but- obsolete a popular, tested, highly efficient means of transportation.

The European Union wants to ban gas-powered cars in 2035. California and New Jersey are doing the same.

The goals here would make Soviet central planners blush. Last year, electric vehicle

accounted for about 7% of U.S. sales, but according to the panjandrums at the Environmental Protection Agency, they’ll have to be nearly 40% by 2027. A couple of years after that, they’re supposed to be higher than 60%.

And why not? All that’s missing is the charging capacity and supply and processing of the minerals necessary to build the 1,000-pound batteries, not to mention the consumer demand.

For Biden and his allies, though, what kind of automobiles we drive is not a practical question but almost a



theological one. Believing that electric cars are key to saving the planet, they bring all the flexibility to the question as the organizers of Albigenian Crusade.

Insofar a rush to electric cars throws us into the arms of Chinese manufacturers and suppliers, it should rightfully be thought of as an anti-industrial policy.

We foolishly haven’t made adequate arrangements for mining or processing the minerals the batteries require, and it’s hard to ramp up quickly. Fortunately, there’s a country that’s a leader this area. Unfortunately, it’s China.

China is projected in the years ahead to maintain near total domination of the production of anode and cathode materials, key components of electric car batteries.

We’ve already begun to see how aggressive electric-vehicle mandates in Europe

1973
50
Years
2023

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COURIER

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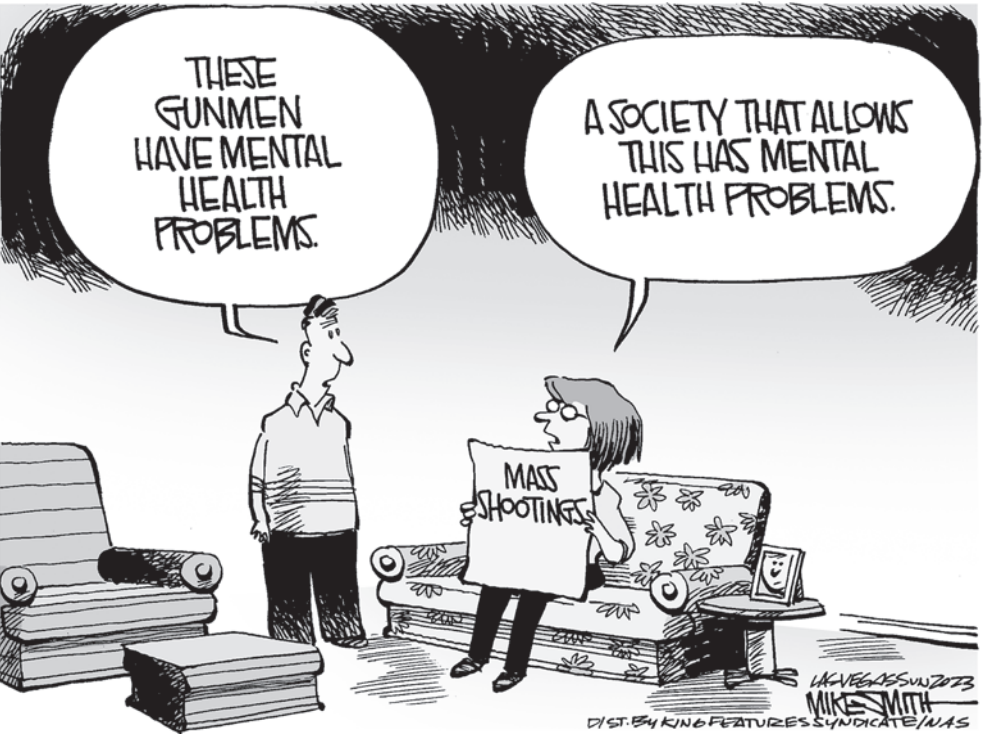
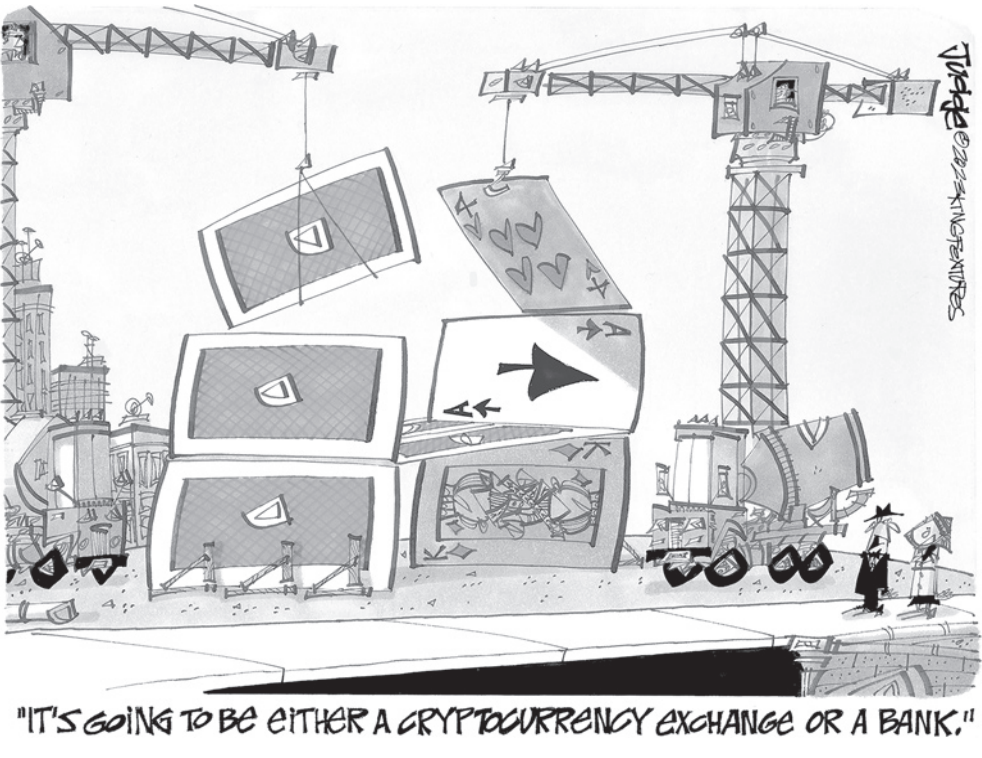
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**PUBLIC
NOTICE**

**TO ALL INTERESTED
PERSONS AND
PARTIES:**

**The West Texas County Courier
office is closed.**

**The office will open again on
Wednesday, October 11, 2023.**



Classified Ads

LEGALS

VILLAGE OF VINTON, TX

PUBLIC NOTICE

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS #09-19-23

The Village of Vinton, Texas, is requesting proposals for:

Health and supplemental insurance, to include health, dental, vision, life, short-term and long-term disability and AD&D, for eligible employees and their dependents.

GENERAL INFORMATION

The Village of Vinton currently contributes 100% of the employees cost for all products. Employees cover dependents at their costs.

Current employees have open enrollment period in December. The Village is requesting that benefit plans be matched. Carriers are to clearly indicate deviations from current plan designs.

Submission packages can be obtained through the City Secretary's office at 436 E. Vinton Rd., Vinton TX 79821 or the Village website https://vintontx.gov/office2.com/otheropportunities

Sealed proposal must be delivered to: (late, faxed or emailed proposals will not be accepted): Village Administrator, Village of Vinton, 436 E. Vinton Rd., Vinton, TX 79821. Should be clearly marked: Village of Vinton. Sealed Proposal. Health, Dental, Vision and Life Insurance #09-19-23. Delivered no later: 5:00 p.m. on Monday, October 16, 2023. Bids will be open at City Hall (436 E. Vinton, RD) at 10:00 a.m. on October 17, 2023. Proposals must include 3 hard copies and 1 digital copy via thumb drive.

A complete request for proposals is available on our website: https://vintontx.gov/office2.com/otheropportunities

The City Council may select one or more firms. The Village reserves the right to reject any and all proposals and to accept any proposal deemed advantageous to

the Village.

Please submit any questions you have in writing to the Village of Vinton or email to acarrillo@vintontx.us. All eligible questions will be answered in writing through email. Addendums or changes will be posted on the City's website.

Andrea N. Carrillo
Village Administrator

WTCC: 09-28-23
10-05-23

PUBLIC NOTICE
Alliance of Border Collaboratives
Invitation to Bid

Alliance of Border Collaboratives (ABC) is a recipient of

Homeowner Rehabilitation Assistance Program Contract #1003433 from Texas Department of Housing and Community Affairs.

ABC will accept proposals from licensed Architect for up to 50 Single Family Home Appraisals for each contract. A Bid packet can be picked up starting October 5, 2023 through November 3, 2023 from 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. Bid packets or proposals can be picked up from and delivered to Alliance of Border Collaboratives, 3627 Durazno Ave., El Paso, TX 79905.

Submitted Bid Packets or proposals must have Homeowner Rehabilitation Assistance Program Contract #1003433 written on the lower lefthand side of the envelope. A public opening of the packets will take place on November 8, 2023 at 11:00 a.m. at the office of the Alliance of Border Collaboratives. Phone (915) 584-2875.

The Architect must ensure that employees and applicants are not discriminated against because of their race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, sexual orientation or disability. Architect must be certified and licensed with El Paso County and the City of El Paso, TX. Architect must also know new current El

Paso County Construction of Single Family Homes Codes with a minimum of 3 years of experience. ABC has a conflict of interest procedure in accordance with 24CFR 92356. ABC has a Bidders Protest Rights Procedure. ABC reserves the right to reject any bids or to waive any informality in the bidding.

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Theft

From Page 1

thefts as acts of organized crime. The bill essentially amends the Texas Penal Code to consider this type of theft as a separate offense, which means that the crime can be categorized based on the stolen property value, according to state officials.

Now, if the stolen value is less than \$30,000, it is considered a state jail felony. If the value exceeds \$30,000, the offense can be upgraded to a third-degree felony. If the value exceeds \$150,000, it becomes a second-degree felony. If the value exceeds \$300,000, it becomes a first-degree felony. Additionally, if the person who commits the theft is caught in possession of a firearm, prosecutors can upgrade the offense to the next highest level.

As per a report by the Texas Senate Research Center (TSRC), the new bill presumes those who possess two or more catalytic converters removed from vehicles are stolen if owners are unable to prove it is lawfully theirs. Anyone found in possession of a stolen catalytic converter can be charged with a felony, even if they aren't caught in the act. However, the bill offers protection for certain businesses, such as metal recycling businesses or repair shops that may obtain stolen catalytic converters under good faith.

Alvarado stated that she helped design the bill with public safety in mind. She stated that she was compelled to take action after the shooting and death of Harris County Deputy Sheriff Darren Almendarez. The senator related that Almendarez and his wife were coming out of a grocery store and interrupted three guys stealing a catalytic converter from his truck; suddenly, he was shot and killed right there in front of his wife.

In remembrance of the lawman, the S.B. 224 authors named the bill the Deputy Darren Almendarez Act. "The theft of catalytic converters has become a very organized crime. A very dangerous crime and sophisticated. It's happening way too much," Alvarado stated. She added that the bill should be able to curb this crime wave.

In conjunction with the new catalytic converter legislation, the Motor Vehicle Crime Prevention Authority (MVCPA) and the Insurance Council of Texas launched an awareness campaign that encourages Texans to "Lock It Down!" as other vehicle-related crimes are also surging across the state. MVCPA is a program within the Texas Department of Motor Vehicles established in 1991 by the Texas Legislature to combat motor vehicle theft, burglary, and fraud-related motor vehicle crime.

"Texas currently ranks second in the country for the largest number of motor vehicle crimes, with more than 65,000 cars and trucks stolen and nearly 200,000 burglarized every year," stated Rich Johnson, Insurance Council of Texas director of communications and public affairs. "This campaign is designed to increase awareness of these issues and empower community members with simple, highly effective ways to help prevent motor vehicle crime," he explained.

In addition to thefts within vehicles, there have been more than 65,000 reported incidents of stolen vehicle parts in Texas this year, totaling in excess of \$95 million, according to a MVCPA report.

Other types of vehicle crime that law enforcement officials investigate include Title fraud, which is fictitious paperwork



By Lucie Winborne

- More people from nudist colonies play volleyball than any other sport.
- New York's Girl Scout Troop 6000, whose entire membership is homeless or living in shelters, has sold more than \$1.6 million worth of Girl Scout cookies since 2017, earning not just national recognition, but money to benefit about 2,500 women and girls in more than 20 shelters throughout the greater New York area.
- Competitive trash collecting is a sport in Japan.
- Just in time for global warming, scientists have developed a paint that reflects the sun's rays, potentially reducing the need for air conditioning by up to 40%.
- In 5th-century Greece, handshakes were done to make sure that the other person wasn't carrying a hidden weapon. The hand clasp proved that your hand was empty, and shaking it was meant to "shake out" any weapons hiding in the sleeve.
- If a woodpecker goes too long without food, it will pin down other birds and peck at their heads until it can eat their brains.
- Holy flipping flapjacks! In 2012, Brad Jolly of Australia set the Guinness World Record for the most tosses of a pancake, with an astonishing


140 flips a minute.

- To add authenticity to a fictional criminal underworld, Rockstar Games hired real-life gang members to voice background characters in Grand Theft Auto V.
- The full name of the famous Chuck E. Cheese mouse is Charles Entertainment Cheese.
- Trees were not around for 90% of Earth's history.
- Only humans have chins.
- Heavy metal band Black Sabbath's original name was The Polka Tulk Blues Band, after the brand name of a talcum powder used by Ozzy Osbourne's mother.
- A sloth takes two weeks to digest the food it's eaten.
- Oh, my aching feet! In an average day of walking, those appendages at the ends of our legs experience forces totaling hundreds of tons – the equivalent of a fully loaded cement truck!
- Carnauba wax, which is used on cars, is the same type of wax used to give gummy candy its sheen.

Thought for the Day: "Did I offer peace today? Did I bring a smile to someone's face? Did I say words of healing? Did I let go of my anger and resentment? Did I forgive? Did I love? These are the real questions. I must trust that the little bit of love that I sow now will bear many fruits, here in this world and the life to come."

— Henri Nouwen

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Moments in time
THE HISTORY CHANNEL

- On Oct. 2, 1614, Louis XIII of France was declared an adult. His mother, Marie de' Medici, continued to act as his Regent, however, as she had begun upon the assassination of his father, King Henry IV of France, in 1610, until Louis turned 16.
- On Oct. 3, 1967, singer/musician/activist Woody Guthrie, lauded by Bob Dylan as "the true voice of the American spirit," died from complications of Huntington's disease at age 55. His music focused primarily on American socialism and anti-fascism, influencing numerous other artists ranging from Johnny Cash to Jerry Garcia.
- On Oct. 4, 2006, the widows of two war veterans brought a lawsuit against the United States government for the right to include Wiccan religious symbols on graves in military cemeteries. While the religion is recognized by the military, its followers were not permitted to display a Wiccan pentacle on such markers until the following year.
- On Oct. 5, 1999, torrential rains caused flooding and mudslides that completely buried 80 homes in the small Mexican city of Teziutlan. Authorities estimated the village received nearly half the amount of its annual rainfall in just three days.
- On Oct. 6, 1945, tavern owner William Sianis bought a seat for himself and his pet goat, Murphy, for Game 4 of the World Series, featuring the Chicago Cubs vs. the Detroit Tigers. Chagrined that Murphy was denied admission, legend holds that Sianis declared the Cubs would never win a game again until the animal was allowed on Wrigley Field. Though he "lifted" the curse in 1969, the Cubs didn't see another victory until 1984.
- On Oct. 7, 1979, President Jimmy Carter and First Lady Rosalynn Carter welcomed Pope John Paul II as the first pontiff to visit the White House. Carter greeted the Polish-born pope in his native tongue with "Niech bedzie bog Pochwalony" ("May God be praised").
- On Oct. 8, 1871, the Great Chicago Fire broke out in the barn of Patrick and Catherine O'Leary and lasted for two days. By the time it ended, 300 people had died and a large swath of the city had been devastated. The exact cause of the blaze was never determined.

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Briefs

From Page 1

their student loans.


- What People Would Do to Be Free: 45% of people with student loan debt say they would start an OnlyFans account to be free from student loan debt, while 51% would eat student cafeteria meals for a year, 33% would move to another

country.

- Student Debt vs. Credit Card Debt: Nearly 2 in 4 people think student loan debt is more concerning than credit card debt.
- Fairness of Forgiveness: 3 in 5 Americans say it is fair for some people's student loans to be forgiven.

Visit <https://wallethub.com/blog/student-loan-moratorium-survey/128617> for the full report.

— Diana Polk



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Hard to believe

The Pac-12 will soon be is a thing of the past

By Steve Escajeda
Special to the Courier

When I was growing up there were a few things you could always rely on in the world of college sports.

One of them was that UCLA, with either Lew Alcindor (Kareem Abdul-Jabbar) or Bill Walton, would be winning the national basketball championship. Heck, they won it 10 out for 12 years from 1964 to 1975.

One of the years they didn’t win was in 1966, when a little team from El Paso known as the Texas Western Miners won it all.

Anyway, another thing you could rely on was a big Rose Bowl football game in Los Angeles every year with either Michigan or Ohio State or Wisconsin or Michigan State from the Big Ten taking on either USC or Stanford or Oregon or Washington.

What both of those memories have in common is that they included the Pac-12 conference.

Over the years we’ve seen Southern Cal, UCLA, Stanford, Oregon, Washington, Arizona State, Cal, Arizona, Washington State, Oregon State and Utah battle it out amongst themselves and against the rest of the country.

The modern Pac-12 started in 1959 and had been going strong ever since. In fact, no conference in America had won as many titles in all collegiate sports than the Pac-12.

And it just a matter of a couple years, it has blown up completely.

Former Pac-12 schools have bolted for conferences all over the country.

UCLA, USC, Oregon, Washington have all left for the Big Ten next year. Arizona, Arizona State, Colorado and Utah will become members of the Big 12. Stanford and California have left for the ACC.

Washington State and Oregon State are still figuring out what they are going to do, but most figure they’ll probably join the Mountain West Conference.

All of this moving around for better TV money deals is really sad for an organization (the NCAA) which bills itself as always putting the needs of the student athlete first.

And how about all of these college presidents and athletic directors who are moving their teams all over the country just to make more bucks.

You now have teams like Cal and Stanford from the Pacific coast, playing in the ACC, which is located near the Atlantic coast.

I wonder how much those airline tickets are going to cost when

the volleyball, tennis, baseball, cross country, soccer, gymnastics, swimming, wrestling, softball, golf and lacrosse teams make the cross-country trips to compete, and then get back home in time to study for that big exam?

It doesn’t sound like it helps the student athletes in those sports, who also see almost none of the NIL (name, image and likeness) money that the football and men’s basketball athletes will rake in.

It’s almost impossible to believe how quickly the Pac-12 was dismantled.

This, of course, will affect the Tony the Tiger Sun Bowl next season. The two conferences that send teams to the Sun Bowl are the ACC and the Pac-12. But next year there will be no Pac-12.

So Sun Bowl executive director Bernie Olivas and his group are going to have to come up with a plan to add another participant.

It’ll be interesting to see how that decision goes.

There’s still questions to be answered. Now that the Pac-12 has been

completely picked apart, who’s next?

Will all this cannibalizing of weaker conferences keep happening? We all know UTEP’s Conference USA was recently picked apart, leaving it much weaker and less relevant than it used to be.

But that’s the whole idea anyway, right? For the big conferences to get bigger and fatter while the little guys sick back and shut up and just be thankful that they get anything at all.

Paying the athletes as much as they do, allowing them to jump from college to college just like professional free agents, and colleges leaving their conference affiliation whenever they see a shiner conference winking at them, is slowly destroying collegiate athletics.

But college armature athletics turned into a business many years ago, the only difference now is that unlike past years- it’s all out in the open.

Bill Walton used to call the Pac-12, “the conference of champions.”

And he was right.

Well, he used to be.

Senior moment

By Matilda Charles

Wrapping up the year

The end of the year is a perfect time to review where we’ve been in 2023 and gather some ideas about how we might do things differently next year. Saving money is at the top of many to-do lists now, especially for entertainment and groceries.

Look at all your streaming services to see which ones you might be willing to stop using. Make calls to the cellphone services around you and see who has good deals, likely with bundling. Phone plans for seniors generally have a lower cost. A surprise for me: I recently changed cellphone companies. Since I was bringing my own phone number and did not want a deal to buy a phone, I was given a \$200 promo gift card to spend anywhere.

Consider the money you could save with a store affinity account. At my local grocery store, I typically accrue \$5-

10 per quarter just for buying the store brand and using the coupons offered.

On Walmart Plus, I often earn \$3-\$4 each time I place online orders for free delivery to my home because of the deals and discounts that pop up on the screen. Additional Plus benefits include travel, video streaming, 10 cents per gallon saved at several gas stations and more. The first 30 days are free to try the service, with a whole year costing \$98. If you’re on SNAP, Medicaid or other programs, your cost would be half that.

Take a look at “500 Great Ways to Save for Dummies” by AARP. The book is on Amazon, both in paperback and for a Kindle e-reader, as well as thousands of other places online. This book might be one you want to keep for a long time. You can also ask your library or senior center if they will purchase the book to keep on the shelves.

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- 120 Bed boards

DOWN

- 1 Janitorial tools
- 2 Reversed sort
- 3 Unassisted
- 4 Torque transmitter in a motor
- 5 “Star Wars” won seven of them
- 6 Weeps noisily
- 7 Musician Brian
- 8 S.Sgt. or M.Sgt.
- 9 Tyranny
- 10 Pay-to-stay places
- 11 Sheep-related
- 12 High-IQ club
- 13 Minuscule bit of work
- 14 Jet engine part that includes the igniter
- 15 Muscat-eer?
- 16 Most trifling
- 17 Guys wearing wedding rings
- 18 “My lips _ sealed”
- 19 In a blue state
- 24 Barely get, with

- “out”
- 28 “Don’t _ surprised!”
- 30 Londoner, e.g.
- 31 Author Joyce Carol _
- 32 Unskilled PC gamer, say
- 33 Marlins’ and Mets’ div.
- 34 Decides (to)
- 35 Pick up on
- 36 Blow up
- 37 Big name in photocopiers
- 38 Happy hour locale
- 42 Great devastation
- 43 “_ of angels coming after me” (“Swing Low, Sweet Chariot” line)
- 44 Chocolate substitute
- 45 Santa _, California
- 48 Comics’ Kett
- 49 Like Mutant Ninja Turtles
- 54 Actress Issa
- 57 Alias letters
- 58 Actor Patel
- 60 Corn holder
- 61 Garden tool
- 63 Jelly holder
- 64 Like some waves
- 65 Full of energy
- 66 Tijuana treats
- 67 Wild about
- 68 Fluffy clouds
- 69 Comparable (with)
- 70 Team of dogs on the force
- 73 Less genial
- 74 “Inferno” poet
- 75 Dickinson of “Rio Bravo”
- 77 Sporty English autos
- 78 Supreme Court’s Sonia
- 80 “Let’s move!”
- 81 Natives of Bangkok
- 83 Many a video chat
- 86 Hannah of “Roxanne”
- 87 Design detail
- 88 Raison d’_
- 89 _ Paese (cheese type)
- 95 Thumbs-up
- 97 Witticism
- 98 Part of ASAP
- 100 Mozart’s “Cosi fan _”
- 101 Love, to Gigi
- 102 Regional flora and fauna
- 103 _-Ops (CIA tactics)
- 106 Yemeni city
- 107 Dot in the sea, to Juanita
- 108 Toiling away
- 109 Strong alkalis
- 110 Collar
- 111 Singer Turner
- 112 Grocery holder
- 113 “Illmatic” rapper
- 114 ‘60s Pontiac

Answer Page 4

Super Crossword

1	2	3	4	5		6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13		14	15	16	17	18	19
20						21									22					
23					24										25					
26									27					28						
				29				30	31				32						33	34
35	36	37				38							39				40			
41					42						43	44				45		46		
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55				56		57	58		59				60	61			62			
				63					64	65					66	67				
68	69	70				71							72					73	74	75
76				77	78			79			80	81			82		83			
84				85		86	87						88	89						
90				91							92						93			
94			95		96					97					98					
99				100					101	102					103					
			104					105						106				107	108	109
110	111							112					113	114						
115								116								117				
118								119								120				

Comix

OUT ON A LIMB By Gary Kopervas



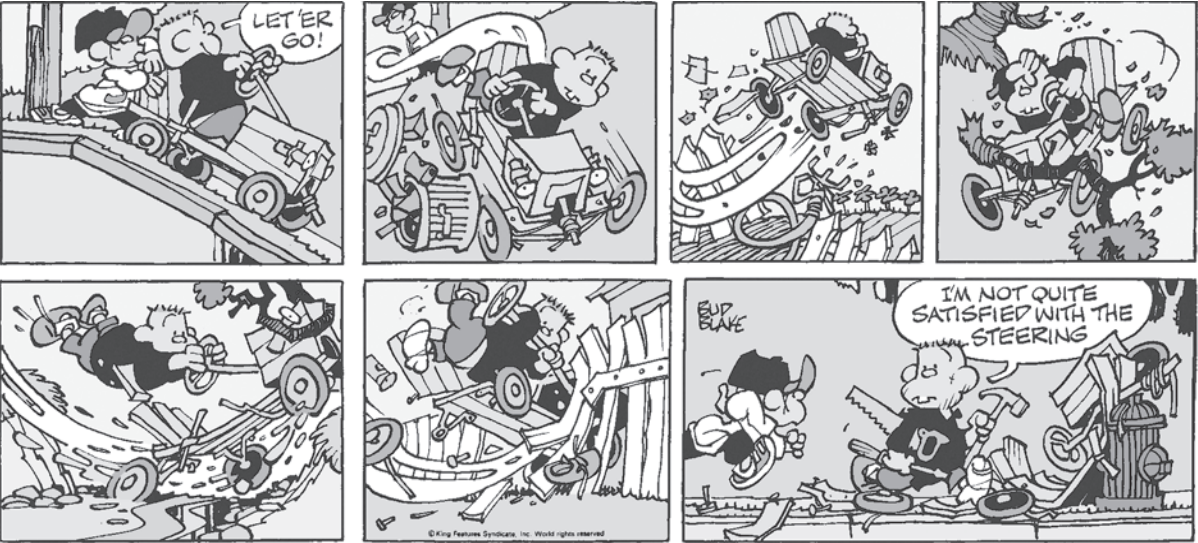
AMBER WAVES By Dave T. Phipps



THE SPATS By Jeff Pickering



TIGER By Bud Blake



Lowry

From Page 2

favor China, which makes serviceable electric cars. The Chinese have doubled their share of such vehicles sold in Europe since 2021, now up to 8%.

The U.S. has stiff tariffs against Chinese imports, but there’s still the question of the supply chain. Morgan Stanley writes, “The path we’re on now, despite existing legislation that attempts to incentivize onshoring, pushes rapid EV adoption which inherently increases reliance on a China-dominated battery supply chain.”

It’s not as though there’s anything inherently wrong with electric cars. If they are reliable, affordable, and valued by consumers – no problem. There’s no slighting the engineering achievement of Tesla or its genuine appeal to high-end consumers.

As Mark Mills of the Manhattan Institute points out, electric cars are overwhelmingly part of the luxury market, and 90% of electric cars sold in the U.S. are second or third cars. What the U.S. government is insisting is that

this niche market be imposed on the rest of the country.

It’s as if the federal government wants everyone to start drinking craft beers when they prefer Modelo.

The sales of electric vehicles in the U.S. have been growing but appear to be plateauing. Electric vehicles were 8.6% of new light-duty vehicle sales in the first quarter of this year, basically flat compared to the last quarter of 2022, at 8.5%.

The climate case for forcing these numbers higher is not as strong as advertised. It’s not clear exactly how much electric cars reduce emissions once all the inputs are factored in. On top of this, transportation accounts for less than 30% of U.S. emissions, and air and rail travel, as well as shipping, make a not-insignificant contribution.

Electric vehicles should be considered a nice, promising addition to the variety of the car market, not a quasi-holy obligation to be pursued at all costs.

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

Smoke most common cause of emphysema

DEAR DR. ROACH: I am male, age 65. I exercise regularly. A shortness of breath led me to get a chest X-ray, which showed that I have emphysema. I smoked for 10 years, but quit 33 years ago. As an avid runner, this revelation was perplexing and depressing. Is it possible that other factors contributed to me getting emphysema, and how do I minimize this disease, if possible? – T.W.

to your good health
WITH
Dr. Keith Roach

Emphysema is most often caused by smoking in North America or by cooking fires in many parts of the world. The exact type of emphysema you have can help tell what caused it, but that usually requires a biopsy, which is generally unnecessary for a diagnosis or treatment.

Although X-rays and CT scans can help with the diagnosis, the definitive study is the pulmonary function test. For this test, you must breathe in and out for more times and in more ways than you ever thought was possible with a respiratory technician and a lot of machines. (When I was a fourth-year medical student, I had my own PFTs done as a learning experience – thank you, Dr. Julian Solway – and have respect for how hard they are to perform correctly.)

Besides smoke exposure, another cause is the genetic Alpha-1 antitrypsin deficiency, which can affect the liver as well. This diagnosis is made by blood testing and confirmed by DNA testing through a genetic counselor. I always consider this diagnosis in a person with emphysema who is a nonsmoker or has minimal smoking history. If you do have AAT deficiency, there may be other treatments available, but specific treatment requires special expertise.

Regardless of the cause behind your emphysema, you have already made the most important change by quitting smoking. Avoiding secondhand smoke and other lung irritants is important, too.

There are no treatments to reverse emphysema, but many can improve symptoms. These include medication (such as inhalers), pulmonary rehabilitation and oxygen in people with emphysema that is severe enough to cause low blood oxygen levels. Most people who quit smoking have a very slow progression of the disease. However, it’s important to quit smoking as soon as possible so that there is enough reserve lung function.

DEAR DR. ROACH: I am a very healthy 74-year-old woman. I don’t take any medications other than a Prolia injection twice a year. I recently started taking 20 g of grass-fed collagen peptides powder, which contains all kinds of amino acids. Will this benefit my hair, skin, nails and joints, as the label suggests? – S.H.

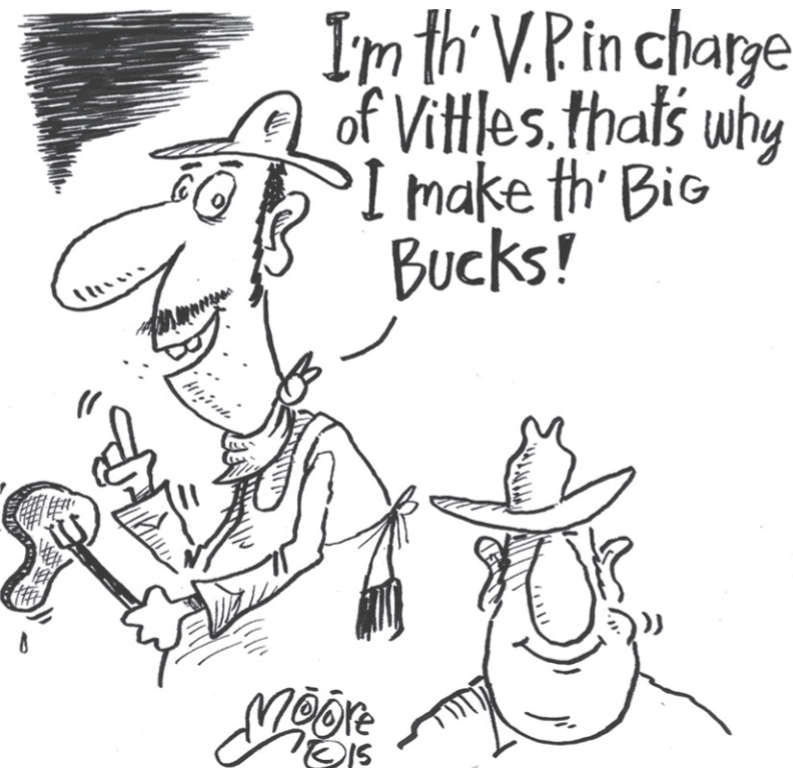
I’d like to tell you it will help, but there isn’t a lot of evidence it does. My anecdotal experience has shown me that only a few people get benefit.

It is true that deficiency of amino acids can lead to poorly grown skin and nails, but it’s not at all clear that giving extra collagen will help people who have a healthy diet.

Just to put things in perspective, 1 cup of chicken or beef stock contains about 10 g of collagen, which your body then breaks down into amino acids. I’m guessing that would be less expensive than the supplement.

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.

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Moore Texas by Roger MOORE
The camp cook was plenty important on cattle drives. He drew the second highest salary of the crew.

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 T

MQYM EKGTYRJ AHVV BSVHXSL
AKKB KL DMKRS OLYNGSRMD
XSLJ OYDM. MQSJ SXSR BK
KXSLRHNQM EQHTTHRN.

Answer Page 4
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Weekly SUDOKU

by Linda Thistle

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

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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VA computer glitches, still



by Freddy Groves

The problem was worse than we thought. It wasn't only 32,000 veteran uploads to VA.gov that were caught in a "dead zone" glitch since 2018 with claims left unprocessed. It was an additional 57,000 since 2011.

This newly revealed problem concerned 56,000 veterans who needed to update the number of their dependents — revealed, because it was actually unearthed in 2021.

Consider that problem: Whether a veteran is adding or subtracting a dependent, it changes the monthly disability benefit amount. Yes, those veterans who tried to add one or more dependents will get that backdated money eventually. But what of a veteran who tried to do the right thing and subtract a dependent? Will the Department of Veterans Affairs want that

money back? An additional nearly 1,000 glitches concerned veterans who tried to appeal a decision about their disability benefits. Apparently, when they tried to get the notice of disagreement online, nothing happened. And now the VA is taking a close look at the whole system. They're doing what they call a "full review" to make sure everything is working correctly. Part of this will be to watch the system carefully.

Which begs the obvious question: Why are they just now realizing that a computer system needs to be watched? The VA holds the lives of thousands of veterans (and their families) in their hands. It's infuriating to think that so many errors were allowed to happen over so many years and that no one stopped to consider that maybe they needed to investigate, or add software to monitor things, or pay attention to the phone calls from veterans when expected additional benefit money did not appear, or notice when there were changes in how veterans

seemed to be using (or not using) the online functions. Meanwhile, on the VA.gov website, the information for changing the number of dependents has this: "Question... Can I file by mail? Answer... Yes, but we encourage you to file online." But can the online process be trusted?

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by Jo Ann Derson

- You can plant deciduous trees (trees that lose their leaves in the fall) strategically in order to reduce your heating and cooling costs. Their leaves grow in the spring, blocking summer's heating rays, but when winter comes, they fall off to let the sun in, warming things up a bit.
- Keep nail-polish bottles easy to open by rubbing a little bit of petroleum jelly inside the cap of the bottle.
- M.C. in Arizona would like to know some alternative uses for hair conditioner. Here goes: use as a shaving lotion for legs or face; a makeup remover; ouch-free bandage removal; soften makeup brushes or paintbrushes before storage; get knots out of doll hair or costume wigs; wash delicates (think silks and pantyhose); rub on a shower rod to help curtain glide effortlessly; and lastly, soak a shrunken sweater in a conditioner/water solution to soften the fibers, then gently try stretching the sweater back to size.

• "Clean an egg carton very well. Flip it over and make slits in each egg cup. This works wonders as a child's card holder for card games." — L.P. in Maryland

• Use an empty paper towel roll to store plastic grocery bags. Just stuff to capacity. These "bag sticks" are easy to store in a drawer or even mounted on the side of a trash can with double-stick tape.

• When cleaning glass tabletops or chrome fixtures, try using newspaper instead of paper towels or rags. There is no lint left behind, and newspaper gives a better shine.

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

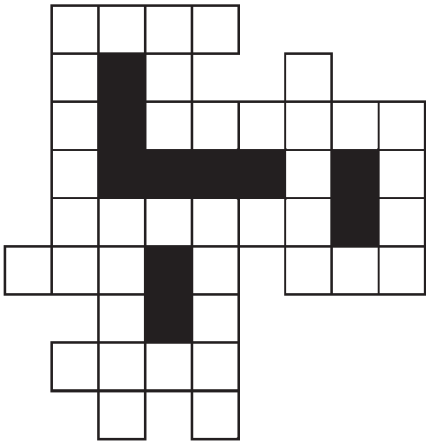
	×		-		27
-		+		×	
	×		+		27
×		×		+	
	-		×		25
32		30		14	

1 3 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

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- AFD
- FEBILO
- LATVU
- ♥TFLE
- ♥SLARTA
- ♥TNE
- EDNL
- ETDAN
- ♥EAL
- AREVAL
- ♥ERFBI
- ♥ELTA



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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