



## NEWSBRIEFS

### EPSO auditions

The El Paso Symphony Orchestra will be holding string auditions on Sunday, February 18, 2024, 11a.m. in the Fox Fine Arts Recital Hall at the University of Texas at El Paso, 500 W University Ave M301, El Paso, TX 79968, for the following positions: Concertmaster, Section Violin, Section Viola and Section Cello. Should any position be filled by a current member of the EPSO, the resulting vacancy(s) may be filled at these auditions. Audition application and requirements/music can be downloaded at [www.epso.org](http://www.epso.org). For further information, contact El Paso Symphony Personnel Manager Leann Isaac at (915) 637-8144. Applications are due by January 26, 2024.

— Rosemary Flores

### Finding work

With the labor force participation rate rising to 62.8% in September, WalletHub has released its report on 2023's *States Where Employers Are Struggling the Most in Hiring*, as well as expert commentary. In order to see where employers are struggling the most in hiring, WalletHub compared the 50 states and the District of Columbia based on the rate of job openings for both the latest month and the last 12 months. Texas was rated 42nd in the report. Texas hiring stats:

- Job openings rate during the latest month: 5.50%
- Job openings rate in the past 12 months: 5.97%
- Overall rank: 10th smallest hiring struggle in the country

Visit <https://wallethub.com/edu/states-employers-hiring/101730> for the full report.

### Hiring factors:

#### *Why do employers have difficulties in filling employment positions?*

“It is simple supply and demand. After Covid, several people dropped out of the employment market. For whatever reason, they decided that they did not want to continue working, and if they had the means to exit, they did. This means that fewer workers are chasing the same number of jobs. That means employers, then, have to raise wages or provide other perks if they want to attract workers. In short, it is a buyer

See BRIEFS, Page 2

*Diplomacy couldn't prevent the last war, but it usually does a good job of preventing the peace.*

— Quips & Quotes



— Photos by Alfredo Vasquez

**STEPPIN' OUT** – El Paso County's 27th Annual Veterans Day Parade and Ceremony will be hosted by the San Elizario Veterans Committee of the San Elizario Genealogy and Historical Society. The parade will begin at 9 a.m., on Saturday, November 11. Afterwards, a ceremony will be held at the Veterans Memorial Park (La Placita). Last year's parade is shown above.

## San Elizario, Clint to observe Veterans Day

*Organizers anticipate the events will be the biggest in their histories*

By Alfredo Vasquez  
*Special to the Courier*

EL PASO COUNTY – The San Elizario community will hold its 27th Annual Veterans Day Parade, beginning at 9 a.m., Saturday, November 11th. “San Elizario has the only Veterans Day Parade in El Paso County's Lower Valley,” boasted Ray Borrego, head of the Veterans Committee of the San Elizario Genealogy and Historical Society.

“And we invite all of the Lower Valley and El Paso County veterans and families to come to Historic San Elizario and join us in honoring all veterans. After all, every day is Veterans Day in El Paso County,” Borrego proudly asserted.

The Parade Grand Marshal is Eutimio “Timio” Reyes, a Viet Nam Era veteran from San Eli, and Honorary Grand Marshal is Iliana Holguin, El Paso County Commissioner for Precinct 3. The parade will include participants from several area high school bands and JROTC programs, veteran and military organizations, law enforcement agencies, as well as matachin dancers and decorative floats.

Additionally, tribal groups, school

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**STAR-SPANGLED** – Clint Veterans Park is maintained by a group of veterans that took over the acre lot in the heart of the town and converted it into a community park.



# The Trump doctrine

Luck is the residue of design, they say. Might it also be the residue of frightening and confusing foreign adversaries?

Donald Trump’s relatively crisis-free presidency in foreign affairs has created a sense, perhaps an

accurate one, that he cowed enemies into not challenging the U.S.

As Sen. Tom Cotton has pointed out, Kabul didn’t collapse on Trump’s watch, Russia didn’t invade Ukraine and Hamas didn’t launch a historic terror attack on Israel.

Yet, despite the feeling of chaos created by his constant shoot-from-the-hip bombast, things basically stayed on the rails.



The fact that Trump was erratic and took perceived slights so seriously made it difficult to know how he would react to any given provocation. It was personal unpredictability elevated to the level of game theory.

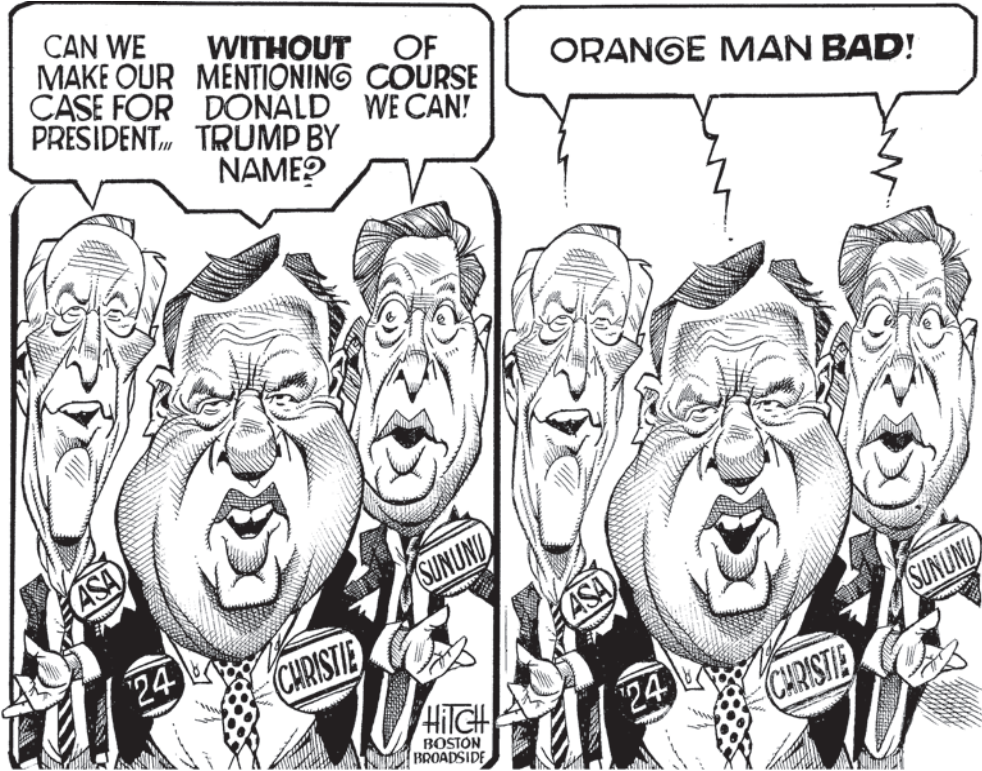
Maybe he was just blustering. Maybe he was ready to take it further. But who would want to find out?

In other words, Trump spoke loudly and carried a stick of indeterminate size, and this was perhaps as good as carrying a big stick.

It’s worth noting, though, that he followed through on his promise to bomb ISIS into near-oblivion, and when given the chance to hit a committed enemy of the United States, the notorious Iranian operative Qasem Soleimani, he targeted him for killing despite the considerable risks.

The New York Times reported at the time: “After initially rejecting the Suleimani option on Dec. 28 and authorizing airstrikes on an Iranian-backed Shiite militia group instead, a few days later Mr. Trump watched, fuming, as television

See LOWRY, Page 7



Now this may have just been good fortune. Four years isn’t a large sample size. But the argument that adversaries feared him, and therefore acted with a measure of restraint, is quite intuitive.

No one is going to mistake Trump for Cardinal Richelieu or Henry Kissinger. His view of the world was highly personal and reflected a few obsessions, especially the notion that we were getting ripped off by foreigners. His trade war with China was a waste of time, and his commitment to NATO was genuinely in doubt.

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## Briefs

From Page 1

market for employees.”

– Darin Gerdes  
Professor, Charleston  
Southern University

*Will this imbalance in the labor market continue to be an issue throughout all of 2023 or will it get solved faster?*

“I think it will persist. There needs to be some recognition that the pool of job seekers has fundamentally changed. There is a lot of untapped talent – one study estimates 16 million potential workers without college degrees, but possessing the relevant experience for high-wage work. Once more, eliminating outdated licensing requirements would also play a complementary role here.”

– Edward J. Timmons  
Associate Professor, West  
Virginia University

market will continue to loosen through 2023 and possibly swing to a bearish labor market for workers at the end of the year as high-interest rates and a potential government shutdown have an impact on demand in the larger economy. The outlook for labor in 2024 may be very different than it was in 2022 and 2023 as the bargaining power may strongly shift back to employers.”

– Joshua M. Congdon-Hohman  
Associate Professor,  
College of the Holy Cross

“I believe the tight labor

– Diana Polk

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Publisher  
Rick Shrum

Contributors  
Alfredo Vasquez  
Steve Escajeda



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Veterans

From Page 1


clubs, and caballeros on their proud horses, along with motorcycles and antique cars will be part of the entourage that starts marching at 9 a.m., from the intersection of Socorro and Thompson roads, goes east on Socorro to Main Street and Alarcon Road, and ends up at the steps of the San Elizario Presidio Chapel.

After the parade, a Veterans Day ceremony will be held at the Memorial Veterans Park, i.e. La Placita, which is in front of the historic chapel. Among the ceremonial presentations, five veterans will be recognized for their service to their country. The honored servicemembers, who have ties to San Eli, are Rene Alvarez, Army; Cynthia M. Borrego, Army; Donavon Cruz, Coast Guard; Edmundo Ramirez, Army; and Octavio Trujillo, Air Force.

Also during the event, special plaque awards will be given to the San Elizario Volunteer Fire Department, Deacon Grijalva, Efrain Sanchez, and Martin Medina. They will be honored for their years of work in organizing the San Elizario Veterans Parade and Ceremony that showcases the community of San Elizario.

Clint’s Veterans Day Ceremony will begin at 11 a.m., at the Clint Veterans Park, which is nuzzled underneath the town’s iconic water tower. The annual celebration is coordinated by local veterans who came together in 2004 and named their group VICTORY (Veterans In Clint

See VETERANS, Page 4



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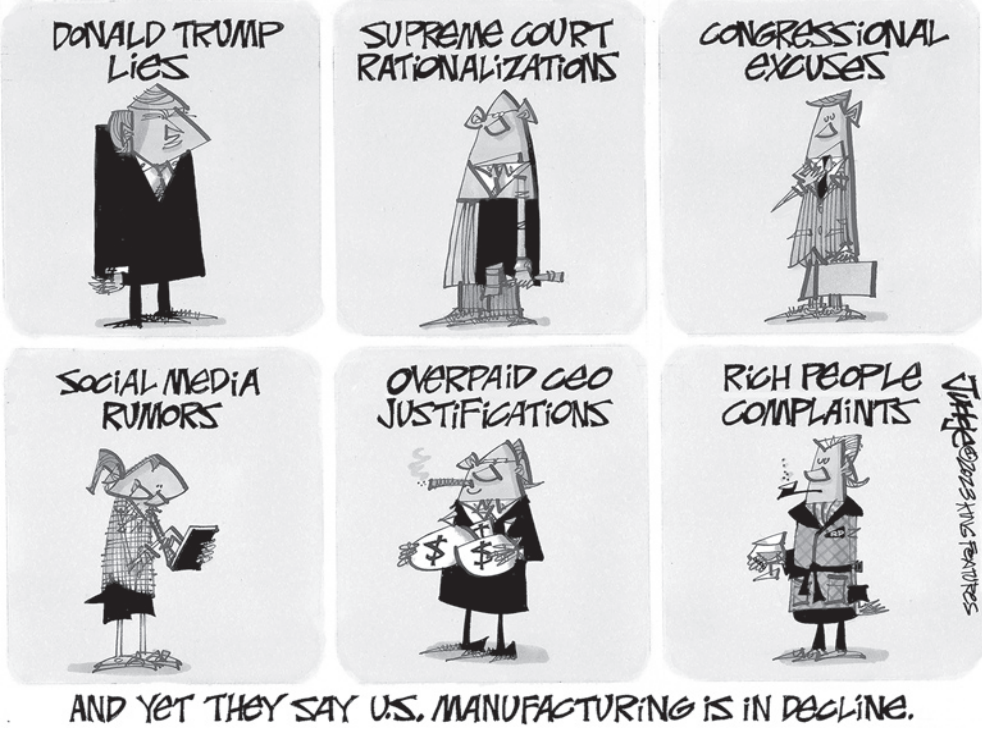
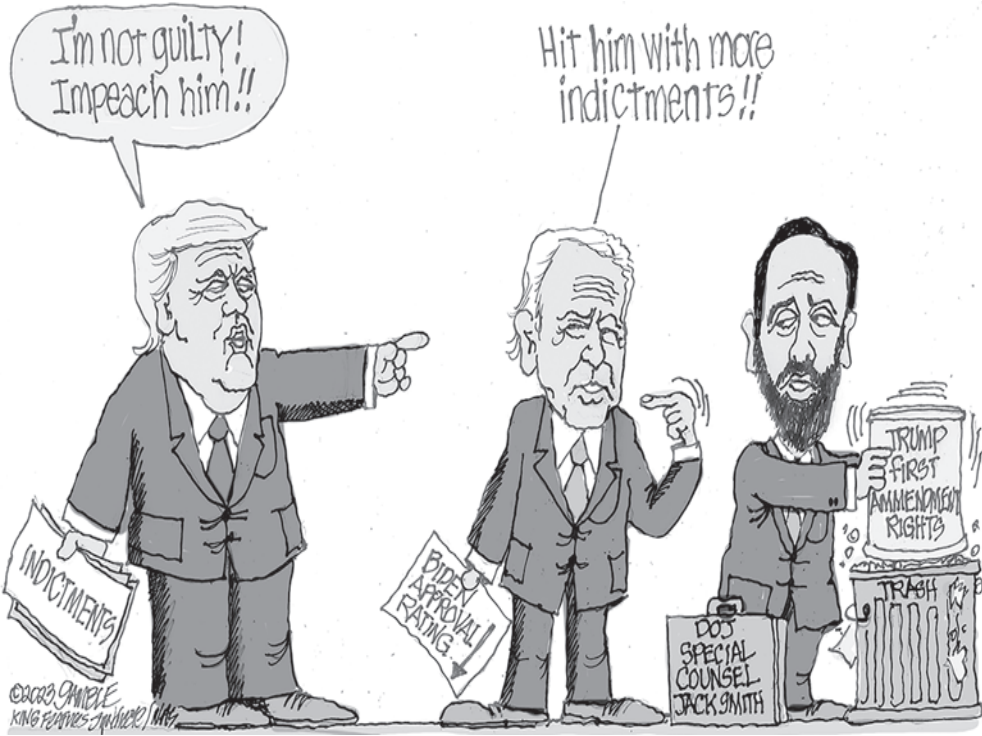
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– Photo by Alfredo Vasquez

**NOT FORGOTTEN** – In 2012, a special memorial wall supporting honorary plaques, like the one above, was erected at the Clint Veterans Park. The monument is dedicated to all individuals from the surrounding communities who honorably served in any one of the U.S. military branches.

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## Veterans

From Page 3

Thinking Of & Remembering You).

These Clint and surrounding area veterans, which number in the dozens, maintain the town’s serene Veterans Park. Throughout the year they hold fund raising events, like enchilada dinners and prize drawings, to support their various park projects.

VICTORY co-founder Robert Cereceres, a U.S. Army infantry soldier during the Viet Nam War, stated that during their upcoming patriotic ceremony, six local Veterans will be recognized for their service to their country.

Individuals who will be honored at this year’s Clint ceremony are Bob Mabee, Navy; Lawn Fitzpatrick, Army; Lorenzo Flores, Army; Hipolito Hernandez, Army; Carlos Rivera, Air Force; and Raul Villalobos, Army.

After the special recognition presentation, the Clint community and guests will be treated to hamburgers, hot dogs, and soft drinks. “We invite the public to join us and help us honor our veterans,” Cereceres announced.

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### CryptoQuip Answer

That king is so uncommonly benevolent that everybody began calling him “Your Royal Kindness.”

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## Strange BUT TRUE

- By Lucie Winborne**
- In a survey of hundreds of Oreo cookie eaters, Kraft Foods came to the conclusion that biters were easygoing and self-confident; dunkers displayed a more energetic and adventurous side; and twisters leaned toward the sensitive and trendy.
  - The average person spends 38 days brushing their teeth during their lifetime.
  - Not only does the moon have its own time zones, but an astronomer designed a watch relying on “lunations,” the amount of time it takes for the moon to revolve and rotate around the earth.
  - There are more than 10 holidays that support chocolate. Naturally, we fully support that.
  - The “Trembling Giant” in Utah’s Fishlake National Forest includes over 47,000 quaking aspen trees that share the same root system. Some scientists have estimated its age at nearly a million years old.

- An hour of drumming will burn between 400-600 calories. That’s more than hiking or weightlifting.
- The oldest known prosthetic wear, a toe made primarily of wood and bound with leather thread, possibly dating to 950 B.C., was discovered on the mummified body of an Egyptian noblewoman in Cairo in 2000.

- Male Hercules beetles possess an elongated horn that can surpass their body length.
- Stanford University’s English department offers a course titled “The Last Great American Songwriter: Storytelling with Taylor Swift Through the Eras,” in which students analyze Swift’s albums and draw connections between her lyrics and classic literature.

Thought for the Day: “Doubt kills more dreams than failure ever will.”  
– Suzy Kassem

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# Travis, EPSO to present ‘A Broadway Christmas’

By Rosemary Flores  
Special to the Courier

EL PASO COUNTY – Celebrate the sparkling sounds of the holidays, *Broadway Style*, with the El Paso Symphony Orchestra on Friday, December 1 and Saturday, December 2, 2023, 7:30 p.m. Plaza Theatre. Award-winning soprano and Broadway star Katie Travis will join the El Paso Symphony Orchestra (EPSO) led by conductor Bohuslav Rattay and the joyful voices of the UTEP Choral Union for an evening of musical holiday cheer fit for the entire family. The program, which includes holiday favorites like *Sleigh Ride*, *Silent Night*, *Let it Snow*, *Joy to the World*, *Believe* from *Polar Express*, *Hallelujah Chorus*, and more, is generously sponsored by The Marlene & J.O. Stewart, Jr. Foundation.

Travis is an award-winning singer/actor best known for playing Christine Daae in *The Phantom of The Opera* for over 700 performances throughout North America. Broadway: *The Phantom of the Opera* Regional: Cosette

in *Les Miserables* at The MUNY, Fireside Theater, Liederkrantz Opera Theater. Travis has performed with the Saginaw, Midland, El Paso and Mt Rainier Symphonies. In the fall of 2022, Travis did a 37-city tour of Japan as a soloist with the Orchestra

Japan in their “Disney On Classic” show. She is a winner of the Lys Symonette award in the Lotte Lenya Competition. Tickets at ticketmaster.com, the Plaza Theatre Box Office or by phone (915) 532-3776. Prices are \$49, \$44, \$37, \$23 and \$17 plus fees. Student

tickets for \$9 and \$12 plus fees are available.


The El Paso Symphony Orchestra is presented with the support of the City of El Paso Museums and Cultural Affairs, the Texas Commission on the Arts and the National Endowment for the Arts.

Join EPSO prior to each performance at Opening Notes with Nathan Black, 6:30 p.m. in the Philanthropy Theatre, to get insights on the program, composers and artist.



Katie Travis

– Photo courtesy El Paso Symphony Orchestra



## Moments in time

THE HISTORY CHANNEL

- On Nov. 6, 1869, Rutgers beat Princeton, then known as the College of New Jersey, 6-4 in the first college football game. Played with a soccer ball before roughly 100 fans in New Brunswick, New Jersey, it more resembled rugby than today’s version of football.
- On Nov. 7, 2016, American lawyer and public official Janet Reno, who was the first female attorney general of the United States from 1993-2001, died at age 78 from complications related to Parkinson’s disease.
- On Nov. 8, 1994, Salvatore “Sonny” Bono was elected to the U.S. House of Representatives. Best known as the pop-singer husband of Cher, after their divorce he left the music world behind to launch several successful restaurants, until frustration with bureaucratic hurdles around one of his construction projects in Palm Springs, California, sparked his foray into politics.
- On Nov. 9, 1971, John List murdered his family in their Westfield, New Jersey, home before disappearing. Though police quickly identified the Sunday School teacher and Boy Scout troop leader as the most likely suspect in the

case, it would take another 18 years for them to locate him and bring him to justice.

- On Nov. 10, 1808, the Osage tribe agreed to abandon their lands in Missouri and Arkansas in exchange for a reservation in Oklahoma. The decision eventually made them the richest surviving Native American nation in North America after they amassed enormous wealth in the 20th century from oil and gas deposits.
- On Nov. 11, 1942, Congress approved lowering the draft age to 18 and raising the upper limit to age 37, though initially Black citizens were passed over because of racist assumptions about their abilities and the viability of a mixed-race military. As World War II progressed, however, they were included and finally allowed to serve in combat.
- On Nov. 12, 1799, American astronomer Andrew Ellicott observed the Leonids meteor shower from a ship off the Florida Keys. In the first recorded instance of such an event in North America, he wrote that the “whole heaven appeared as if illuminated with sky rockets, and I was in constant expectation of some of them falling on the vessel. They continued until put out by the light of the sun after day break.”

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Sealed Submission Packages must be delivered to the Village no later than 10:00 a.m. on Monday, November 20, 2023. The proposals will be opened at City Hall (436 E. Vinton, RD. Vinton, TX 79821) at 10:00 a.m. on Monday, November 20, 2023.

The Village of Vinton, Texas is an Affirmative Action and Equal Opportunity Employer.

*Andrea N. Carrillo*  
Village Administrator

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# Cheaters never prosper, but they keep trying

By Steve Escajeda  
*Special to the Courier*

Throughout the history of athletic competition, both sides of the field of play have sought every angle possible to achieve victory.

At times, each competitor has found ways legally, and illegally, to gain the competitive advantage.

Sometimes the cheating has been subtle and sometimes it’s been obvious for all the world to see.

I’m sure the cheating aspect in sports started way before this, but let’s go back to 1919 and the Chicago White Sox.

If you saw the movie “Field of Dreams,” you know who Shoeless Joe Jackson is. If you didn’t see the movie, Shoeless Joe Jackson was the biggest star on the White Sox. Heck, he was one of the biggest stars in all of baseball at the time.

Well, the story goes that he and his teammates were tired of the way the team’s greedy owner, Charles Comisky, was treating them.

So to get even, after the White Sox advanced to the World Series against the Cincinnati Reds, eight members of the team, including Jackson, took money from gamblers to lose the series on purpose. It is now known as the “Black Sox Scandal” and all eight players were banned from baseball.

There is also the case of Olympic sprinters Ben Johnson and Marion Jones, both of whom had to forfeit their gold medals because of steroid use. Johnson, a Canadian, at the 1988 Seoul, South Korea games, and Jones, an American, in 2000 in Sydney, Australia.

We all remember Major League Baseball’s steroid scandal with superstars like Mike McGwire, Barry Bonds, Roger Clemens, Sammy Sosa, Manny Ramirez, Alex Rodriguez,

Jose Canseco, Rafael Palmeiro, Jason Giambi and many others tainted forever.

The world of professional boxing has a long history of cheating for extra money.

Whether it involves drugging, or packing a little extra something in their gloves, or fixing the outcome in advance, boxing promoters, owners, trainers, fighters and gamblers have always found a way to cheat.

In 2017, the Houston Astros used a video camera and a trashcan to cheat their way through the regular season and then through the Los Angeles Dodgers in the World Series.

A guy using a video camera in centerfield would steal signs from the opposing catcher, relay that info to the Astros’ dugout where somebody would bang on a trashcan a certain way to let the Astros’ batter know what pitch was coming.

Hey, you’ve got to give them credit for coming up with something different. They only way anyone found out was

because the next season, a former Houston player spilled the beans.

So why am I talking about all this cheating? Well, the top story in college football right now is not top-ranked Georgia, or coach Deion Sanders, or the final four teams who could make the college playoff.

It’s the Michigan Wolverines and their current cheating scandal.

We’ve all seen assistant coaches on the sidelines frantically contorting their bodies in every way possible, sending signals to their guys on the field. We’ve seen coaches covering their faces every time they speak into their microphones so that nobody reads their lips.

In other words, they know the other team would steal their signs if they could, and vise-versa.

But like the Astros, the Wolverines have apparently come up with something new.

And it all involves a guy by the name of Conner Stalions, who was employed as an analyst with the program. He has

since resigned.

It’s been reported that Stalions has been stealing opponents’ signs by allegedly buying tickets to dozens of college games and sending people there to scout teams the Wolverines might face. There is even allegedly video of him on the Central Michigan sideline, wearing CMU gear, pretending to be on their staff to steal their signs.

The real question is how much of this was Michigan head coach Jim Harbaugh aware of?

Could he have known of this? How could he not have known?

With such an elaborate scheme, it’s difficult to think the head coach of Michigan, which is currently undefeated and ranked second in the nation, could not know what was going on.

If all this turns out to be true, it’ll rank right up there with the Astros’ trashcan, the Black Sox, baseball’s steroids, and even Brady’s deflated footballs.

## Senior moment By Matilda Charles

# Social Security in 2024

The 3.2% Social Security increase for 2024 is higher than it has averaged over the past two decades, but it certainly is nowhere near the 8.7% increase we received for 2023.

This 2024 increase will mean \$58 more per month for those receiving the average benefit in 2023. Out of that \$58, we’ll pay an additional \$10 for Medicare Part B.

How do they get these increase numbers every year? They get these numbers by comparing this year’s third quarter to that of the previous year and do a cost of living adjustment (COLA) based on that. They also use the Consumer Price Index for Urban Wage Earners and Clerical Workers (CPI-W) to calculate what they call a “basket of goods and services.”

Therein lies our problem. While that index is no doubt useful for those who have to set financial policy for the country, the CPI-W index they use to calculate our Social Security benefit isn’t geared to seniors. Instead, that index

is geared toward blue collar (hourly) wage earners for 200 items and is broken down into eight groups: medical care, housing, food and beverage, transportation, housing, apparel, education and communication, and other goods and services.

You can see immediately why that doesn’t work for seniors. We have vastly different medical costs, approximately double. Our housing costs are not the same. Transportation isn’t the same, and neither are apparel, education or any of the others.

Another price index, however, the Consumer Price Index for Americans 62 years of age and older (R-CPI-E), considers the differences between the two groups... but they still don’t use the “E” index to calculate our Social Security.

Why is that, we wonder? I bet our representatives and senators in Congress would know the answer if we call them.

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## Super Crossword

|     |     |     |    |     |     |     |    |     |     |     |     |     |    |     |     |     |     |     |    |     |
|-----|-----|-----|----|-----|-----|-----|----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|----|-----|
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| 50  |     |     |    |     |     |     | 51 |     |     |     | 52  | 53  | 54 |     |     | 55  |     |     |    |     |
|     |     |     |    | 56  |     | 57  | 58 |     | 59  | 60  |     |     |    |     | 61  |     |     |     |    |     |
| 62  | 63  | 64  |    |     |     |     |    | 65  |     |     | 66  |     |    |     | 67  |     |     |     |    |     |
| 68  |     |     |    |     | 69  |     |    | 70  | 71  |     |     |     |    | 72  |     |     |     | 73  |    |     |
| 74  |     |     | 75 | 76  |     |     | 77 |     |     |     |     |     | 78 |     |     | 79  | 80  |     |    |     |
| 81  |     |     |    |     |     |     | 82 |     |     |     | 83  | 84  |    | 85  |     |     |     |     |    |     |
| 86  |     |     |    |     |     |     | 87 |     |     |     | 88  |     | 89 |     |     | 90  |     | 91  | 92 | 93  |
| 94  |     |     |    |     | 95  |     |    |     |     | 96  |     |     |    | 97  | 98  |     |     |     |    |     |
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| 105 | 106 | 107 |    |     |     | 108 |    |     |     |     | 109 | 110 |    |     |     | 111 |     | 112 |    |     |
| 113 |     |     |    |     |     | 114 |    |     |     |     | 115 |     |    |     | 116 |     | 117 |     |    |     |
| 118 |     |     |    | 119 | 120 |     |    |     |     | 121 | 122 |     |    |     | 123 |     |     |     |    | 124 |
| 125 |     |     |    |     |     |     |    |     |     | 126 |     |     |    |     |     |     | 127 |     |    |     |
| 128 |     |     |    |     |     |     |    |     |     | 129 |     |     |    |     |     |     | 130 |     |    |     |



Comix

OUT ON A LIMB

By Gary Kopervas



AMBER WAVES

By Dave T. Phipps



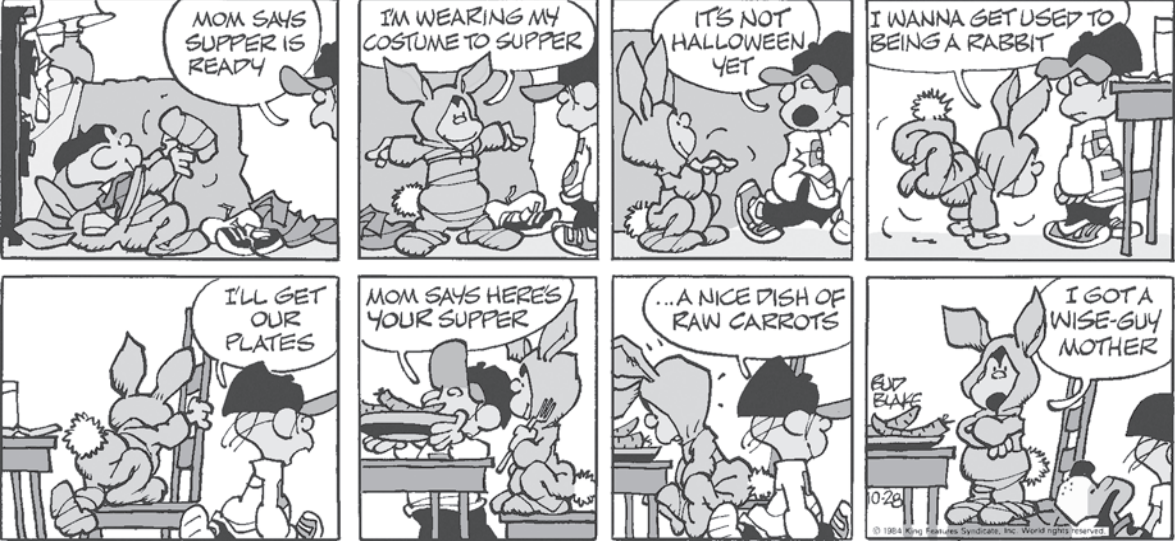
THE SPATS

By Jeff Pickering



TIGER

By Bud Blake



Lowry

From Page 2

reports showed Iranian-backed attacks on the American Embassy in Baghdad, according to Defense Department and administration officials.

“By late Thursday, the president had gone for the extreme option. Top Pentagon officials were stunned.”

If U.S. officials were stunned, how must anyone around the world with American blood on his hands have felt? And wouldn’t it have made adversaries think twice about doing anything to set the president to “fuming”?

In an interview with Bret Baier back in June, Trump made vague reference to a threat he issued to Vladimir Putin about a prospective invasion of Ukraine that supposedly stayed Putin’s hand. Who knows the accuracy of this? But Trump characterized Putin as believing his threat only about 10%, and that gets at what was probably a key element of the Trump deterrent effect – a nagging sense that he might not be bluffing, even if it seemed likely he was.

We saw this dynamic out in public regarding

immigration policy south of the border. Trump rattled the cage of the countries he needed cooperation from until he got it.

He threatened to close the border with Mexico. “If they don’t stop them,” Trump said of illegal immigrants, “we are closing the border. We’ll close it. And we’ll keep it closed for a long time. I’m not playing games.” Actually, he was playing games, but effective ones.

He really did cut off aid to Northern Triangle countries, before restoring it once he had what he wanted.

In short, when Trump says that Hamas wouldn’t have done this on his watch, many Republicans, and perhaps independents in a general election, will tend to believe him.

To his credit, Biden has said the appropriate things in the wake of the Hamas attack, but sentiments go only so far. A more important question is whether the right people fear President Biden as they appeared to be scared of his predecessor.

Rich Lowry is editor of the National Review.  
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Withholding medication depends on procedure

DEAR DR. ROACH: I am 75 and have had Waldenstrom macroglobulinemia for three years, which has been treated with ibrutinib (Imbruvica) and is now in remission. A side effect of Imbruvica is bleeding, and it requires the drug to be withheld before procedures. I need a colonoscopy and a prostate biopsy now. Ideally, how long before and after the procedures should Imbruvica be withheld? If the procedures cannot be performed a day apart, how long is too long an interval between them? How often can Imbruvica be withheld? Also, at my age, how long is the recovery period required for anesthesia when undergoing two separate procedures? – T.



Waldenstrom macroglobulinemia is a rare disease – a type of blood lymphoma and a cancer of the bone marrow. Ibrutinib is a new effective treatment for many people who have this condition and sustain remissions from the disease.

As you correctly say, bleeding can be a problem with this medicine, and it is generally held for three to seven days before and after surgery (depending on the type of procedure and the risk involved). Because a prostate biopsy is a low-risk procedure and a colonoscopy has almost no risk (unless a biopsy is required, then making it a low-risk procedure), most experts would only hold the medication for three days before and after the procedure.

There have been reports of the disease flaring up when withholding the drug, so as little time as possible is the best answer of how long it should be withheld. If you can get the two procedures done within a few days of each other, that would seem reasonable to me, but it is your hematologist whose clinical judgment is required. It would be ideal to coordinate the two procedures.

In my opinion, even a day in between procedures is safe from the standpoint of anesthesia risk.

DEAR DR. ROACH: I am 85 and in reasonably good health. I have been an athlete for most of my life. I developed neuropathy of my feet approximately seven years ago after my back surgery, but now I am to the point where I have difficulty walking. My doctor said I have persistent spinal stenosis with no cure. My feet are now mostly numb, and the heel of my right foot is causing more problems when I walk. Is there any medical procedure to help? – W.T.

“Neuropathy” is a term used to describe a syndrome of nerve damage, which can stem from dozens of different causes. Sometimes no cause is found. In your case, the neuropathy may be due to pressure on the nerve roots from your spinal stenosis, which means that the bone canals the nerves go through once they leave the spinal cord are too small.

There are treatments, starting with surgery, to relieve pressure on the nerves, which provides some, but usually only temporary relief. Surgery is not appropriate for everyone, either because of their back anatomy or because they aren’t good candidates for surgery due to other reasons.

Physical therapy can be helpful for some people. Medications are also helpful, but they can only relieve the pain, not the numbness. Medicines that are more specific for nerve pain, such as gabapentin or amitriptyline, are usually more effective than opiate-type medications in the long-term.

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.

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**Moore Texas by Roger Moore**  
November 9, 1936: The Texas Institute of Letters holds its first meeting.

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: T equals K

OGYO TZFA ZP PD NFLDHHDFWR  
ICFCUDWCFO OGYO CUCJRIDER  
ICAYF LYWWZFA GZH  
“RDNJ JDRYW TZFEFCPP.”

Answer Page 4

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Weekly SUDOKU

by Linda Thistle

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

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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A pledge for improved healthcare



by Freddy Groves

The Department of Veterans Affairs has hooked up with 13 civilian health care systems with the goal of improving veteran healthcare, whether those veterans are getting their care in or out of the VA.

The Veteran Interoperability Pledge has been made by those healthcare systems with agreements to exchange information and collaborate with the VA in several ways: Identify veterans when they go for civilian care, connect veterans with resources (especially ones that reduce the veteran’s expenses) and coordinate care. The information will be shared both ways.

Specifically, the VA will:

- Let the civilian health care systems into the VA system to determine a veteran’s status.
- Automate the process of determining eligibility and

referrals.

- Let the health systems have access to health resources at the state and federal levels
- Let the health systems have access to clinical and admin data to assess and coordinate care

I scarcely know where to begin...

If a veteran is seeking civilian care, why? Is it because the local VA just isn’t close enough, or is it because he feels he’ll get better care at a civilian provider?

Will the veteran have a say in whether his personal information is shared with the VA after seeing a civilian provider?

A recent VA news release states that the VA will “safeguard the privacy and security” of veteran information.

Is anyone concerned about hacking? This year one health care group (of the 13 systems that have made the pledge) had a data breach of 1,600 patients. Two years ago another had a data breach that affected over a million people. Two months ago another

healthcare system suffered a breach that affected thousands. Two months ago one had a breach that affected tens of thousands in approximately 40 states. And on and on...

The VA’s news release added a tiny note, that they will strive to “provide proof-of-concept” in early 2024. Which means this is a trial to see if it works.

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by Jo Ann Derson

• It’s (past) time to weatherize your home. Temperatures are dropping, and if you haven’t done it yet, don’t sweat it. We have a few ideas for you. Here are mine: Layer up and keep a sweater on when lounging about the house. Extra clothes don’t cost anything to wear, and they don’t dry out the air, either! – JoAnn

• One of the best investments I made was a water heater cover for my unit. It’s in the garage, and it gets very cold in there. The blanket was easy to install, and it keeps my water heater from having to work to keep all that water heated. It wasn’t very expensive. – R.A. in Washington

• Don’t overlook your outlets when weatherproofing. They are really just a hole that is covered by a plastic plate. The hardware store sells fireproof insulated inserts that work very well to keep electrical boxes from stealing your house heat. – M.M. in Indiana

• Draft dodgers, or door snakes, are easy to make and provide reasonable protection against drafts. To make one for yourself, you’ll need a pair of thick tights, fabric scraps cut into inch-wide strips and a big bag of rice. Cut the tights off into two long leg portions. Stuff them with fabric scraps and then add rice to give weight and fill in the holes. When the long “socks” are full, tie them off. Lay them out along the threshold, pushing them tight against the door, where they will block the draft!

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

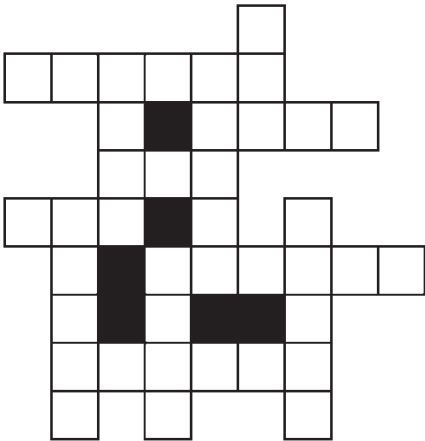
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| –  |   | ×  |   | ×  |    |
|    | × |    | – |    | 19 |
| ×  |   | +  |   | +  |    |
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| 20 |   | 19 |   | 15 |    |

1 2 4 5 5 6 7 8 9

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- NNO  
♥ MAINCE  
ACBIA  
TFNO  
BLONIA  
♥ URB  
♥ NECO  
ATCLO  
♥ NTA  
EEFCUS  
BENLO  
♥ RBNA



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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