



NEWSBRIEFS

Lotto winner

An El Paso County resident claimed a second-tier Mega Millions® prize worth \$1 million for the drawing on Aug. 8, 2023. The ticket was purchased at In and Out Gas Station, located at 10197 Alameda Ave., in Socorro. The claimant elected to remain anonymous. The winning Quick Pick ticket matched all five of the white ball numbers drawn (13-19-20-32-33), but not the Mega Ball number (14).

— Texas Lottery Commission

Fencing tourney

Socorro High School will host the second of two fencing tournaments on Feb. 10. The first took place on Jan. 27. The Socorro Bulldogs are expected to compete against fencers from Montwood and Parkland high schools, and Salle De Long Fencing School in El Paso. The event will take place at Socorro High School (auxiliary gym, 10150 Alameda Ave.) on Saturday, Feb. 10 from 9:15 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. Between 24 to 28 fencers in the epee (sword) event. It is open to male and female fencers with a D-rating or below. The tournament will consist of a pool round followed by a direct elimination round. Medals will be awarded to the first, second and third place winners of the elimination round.

— Christy Flores-Jones

Debt

Americans have hundreds of billions of dollars in personal loan debt, and the personal-finance website WalletHub has released its report on the *States Adding the Most Personal Loan Debt*, along with expert commentary, to help illustrate where people are struggling the most. WalletHub ranked the states with the biggest personal loan debt increases based on its proprietary consumer data from Q3 2022 to Q3 2023. Montana residents added the most personal loan debt between Q3 2022 and Q3 2023, as the average loan amount increased by a whopping 31%, reaching \$12,817. Fortunately, Montana doesn't have a lot of people in financial

See BRIEFS, Page 2

The average Americans' income is at a high point. It's almost as high as their expenses.

— Quips & Quotes

Students should file for FAFSA now

High school seniors urged to file new Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) to get money for college

By Alfredo Vasquez
Special to the Courier

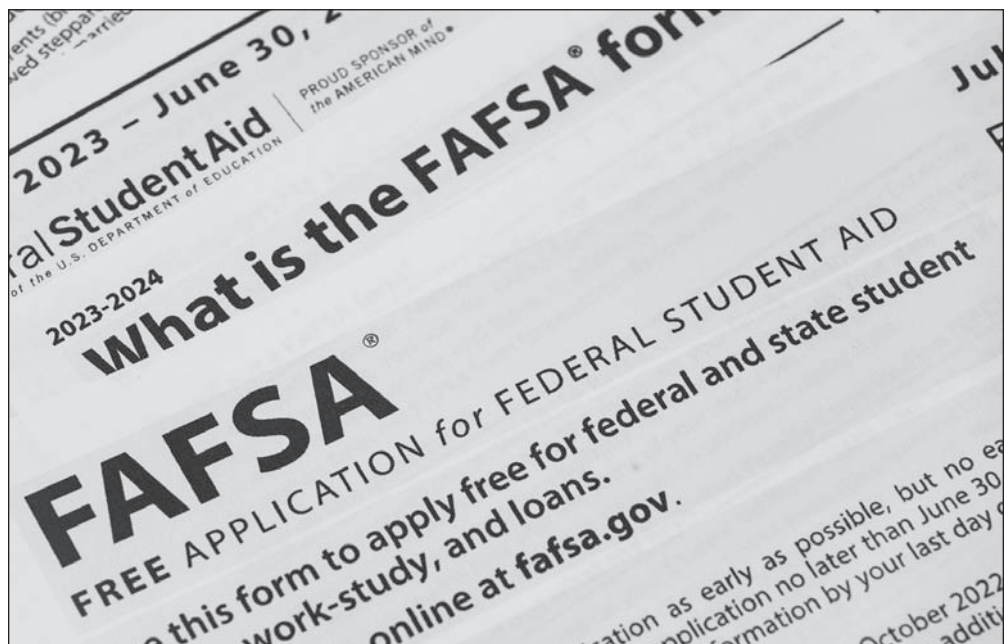
NATION — High school seniors who plan to continue their education should fill out the new federal student aid application as soon as possible to get financial help for college. The Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) is the single best way to get assistance to help pay for college because it opens the door for federal, state and school grants and scholarships.

Because the deadline for the revamped federal application to receive aid for college was delayed this year, local financial aid counselors are advising college hopefuls to fill out the forms as soon as possible to increase their chances of getting needed funds.

The latest financial aid form updates are the biggest in decades, according to U.S. Education Department officials. Mandated by Congress in 2020, the changes are expected to streamline the application to make college accessible for more families. Also, students will see fewer questions and a different assessment formula when they apply for the need-based aid.

The application forms came three months late because the Education Department needed more time to roll out the changes, officials explained. At the onset, the forms were only accessible for intermittent periods of time making it difficult to complete. But officials recently stated that after the first week in January, the forms have been available 24 hours a day.

And because the changes to the new



— Internet

MONEY — In Texas, about 51,000 new students will now qualify for the Pell Grant and about 133,000 Pell recipients will get the maximum amount of \$7,395 per year under the new FAFSA eligibility guidelines, according to a U.S. Education Department report.

form were released late, the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board pushed its own priority deadline for financial aid applications from January 15 to March 15.

Therefore, students are encouraged to fill out the forms as early as they can so that financial aid counselors can help them resolve any hitches they might encounter with the new system.

More importantly, many schools provide their own award packages to students on a first-come, first-serve basis. While a student may qualify for federal aid, a school's pot of money to subsidize tuition can be depleted quickly; it depends on how much the schools set aside for financial assistance and how generous they

want to be with each student's aid package.

That means the sooner a graduating senior submits the FAFSA, the better his or her chances are at getting sizable award packages, stated one financial aid official. "The real challenge... is that many of our state institutions will have run out of money before the state deadline. You really just have to get it done early," the official emphasized.

A recent Education Department announcement stated that it would start sending information from completed FAFSAs to colleges by the end of January, meaning that some schools will start putting together financial aid

See FAFSA, Page 2

DEA Administrator names Thorne-James as El Paso SAC

By Carlos A. Briano
Special to the Courier

ELPASOCOUNTY—The Drug Enforcement Administration's El Paso Division has a new Special Agent in Charge (SAC). On Sept. 11, 2023, DEA Administrator Anne Milgram named Towanda R. Thorne-James as the new Special Agent in Charge (SAC) of the El Paso Division, which serves New Mexico and West Texas. Thorne-James reported to El Paso in December 2023.

Thorne-James began her law enforcement career in 1993 as a Police Officer with the Philadelphia Police Department and in 1998, joined the DEA. As the SAC of the El Paso Division, she is responsible for 50 counties in two states, covering a total of 159,284 square miles.

In addition to her current assignment, Thorne-James has served the DEA at the New Orleans Division, Philadelphia Division, New Jersey Division, the Camden Resident Office, the Atlantic City Resident Office, the Belmopan Country Office (Central America), and DEA Headquarters Office of Inspections, located in Arlington, VA. Her previous managerial roles have included Assistant Special Agent in Charge, Resident Agent in Charge, Group Supervisor, Acting Country Attaché, and Senior Inspector.

Thorne-James is highly decorated and throughout her career has been the recipient of numerous national and DEA awards, to include the esteemed DEA Administrators Award of Valor, the Federal Law Enforcement Officers Association National Bravery Award, Women in Federal Law Enforcement Julie Y. Cross Award of Valor, and the International Narcotics Enforcement Officers Association Medal of Valor, to name a few.



— Photo courtesy DEA

Towanda R. Thorne-James

Trump's opponents not playing by the book



You might have heard that Donald Trump is going to be a dictator if he wins the presidency next year. Among other things, he's threatening to target his political opponents.

Let's stipulate that Trump is a provocateur who freaks out his opponents even when he's on relatively good behavior. And his conduct after the 2020 election was genuinely alarming and deeply wrong. He shouldn't talk about going after his political enemies, let alone actually do it if he takes power again.

But the vapors over Trump's threatening statements are rich coming from people who have targeted their enemy by any means necessary for years now. The Russian-collusion investigation, the Hunter Biden cover-up and the ongoing, politically timed legal onslaught against Donald Trump are among the most shameful and tawdry efforts to destroy a

political opponent in memory.

They all have involved the abuse of power by national-security or law-enforcement officials, with the connivance of a complicit press. This is Watergate-break-in-level political subterfuge, or the something drawn from fever dreams about Ronald Reagan's "October Surprise," except it has all happened in plain sight.

I'm not opposed to, or shocked by, political hardball. Count me out on all the saccharine cliches about how Ronald Reagan and Tip O'Neill were great friends despite some polite political differences between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m. The stakes in our debate are enormous, and that debate should be litigated robustly, even harshly.

But that's different from abusing investigative processes and leveraging the presumed professionalism and moral authority of current and

former national-security and law-enforcement officials for a political campaign against one man.

The press coverage of Trump makes it sound as though we are starting on a fresh playing field, where everything has been strictly by the book since 2016.

You'd never know that back then, top law-enforcement officials began a poorly predicted investigation into Trump-campaign officials, lied to the FISA court, connived to win appointment of a special counsel, and then, that special counsel – puffed up by the press with "walls are closing in,"

See LOWRY, Page 7

FAFSA

From Page 1

packages soon for students who have already applied.

The new FAFSA is supposed to be easier for families to complete. The number of questions has dropped from 108 to about 36, applicants can skip as many as 26 questions, and it takes most individuals less than an hour to fill out the forms, according to Education Department officials.

Members of Congress ordered the changes to the financial aid application after complaining that the old version was unduly complicated and acted as a barrier to college. Also, the funding formula, which determines how much federal financial aid students are eligible to receive, needed updating. Consequently, the changes now expand eligibility for some benefits, but they are also expected to result in less

aid for certain applicants.

The new formula extends eligibility for the Pell Grant, a subsidy that goes to the lowest-income families and doesn't have to be paid back. Eligibility will now be calculated based on family size and income. That means that in Texas, about 51,000 new students will now qualify for the Pell Grant. Also, an Education Department report indicates that about 133,000 current Pell recipients will get the maximum amount of \$7,395 per year under the new grant regulations.

Furthermore, high school seniors in Texas must fill out the FAFSA or sign an opt-out form to graduate. This is the third academic year Texas is mandating the completion of financial aid applications. Texas was the second state to institute such a requirement in 2019 after Louisiana, as research suggests that students who file the federal forms are

more likely to attend college.

This also means Texas high school counselors will be increasingly busy this spring semester. Because of the FAFSA delays, counselors have a shortened window of time to get every student to fill out the forms before graduation. That's added pressure, as counselors also

try to understand the changes in the new system.

Typically, high school counselors offer one-on-one assistance to graduating seniors and their families. Nonetheless, students should look out for FAFSA workshops led by local high schools, college career centers, and university financial aid

offices.

For more information, high school seniors can call the national FAFSA hotline at (800) 433-3243. Also, students working on the FAFSA online can use the "Live Help" function on the website, which starts a chat session with a customer service representative.

Socorro ISD theater program earns recognition

One of 14 districts in Texas to earn honors for exemplary theater arts education

By Christy Flores-Jones
Special to the Courier

EL PASO COUNTY – The Socorro Independent School District (SISD) was one of 14 school districts in the state recently awarded the Texas Thespians Premier Communities for Theatre Education Award, leading the way in fine arts

education in the El Paso region.

The award recognizes and honors school districts that provide theater programs with the resources to achieve above standard, as rooted in the Educational Theatre Association's Opportunity to Learn Standards, Texas Theatre Knowledge and Skills for Fine Arts (TEKS), and support of International Thespian Society Troupe involvement.

"We are honored to be recognized by Texas Thespians for our commitment to providing our students a high-quality fine arts education," said SISD Fine Arts Director Armando Martinez. "This award validates Socorro ISD's dedication to offering students ample opportunities to showcase their talents in the performing arts across the region and beyond."

To qualify for the award, Socorro ISD answered detailed questions about curriculum, scheduling standards, class sizes, facilities, theater safety, technical equipment, production elements, overall support for the theater program, and thespian troupe involvement. Responses were verified and reviewed by Texas theater education specialists.

Research on theater education continues to demonstrate numerous educational benefits across student populations, student age levels, and learning environments. Theater education provides several social benefits including teamwork skills, how to give and receive constructive criticism, problem-solving, trust, cooperation, and collaboration. Additionally, theater education helps students develop a strong sense of self, build empathy and understanding amongst peers, and broaden their knowledge of the world around them while preparing them for future careers.

Texas Thespians, an affiliate chapter of the Educational Theatre Association (EdTA), is the largest chapter in the nation. The Texas Thespians chapter provides local, state, and regional support for adult members, Thespians, and Junior Thespians. With over 600 troupes, Texas Thespians represent over 16,000 middle school and high school students. Visit www.texasthespians.org for more information.

1973 51 Years 2024 WEST TEXAS COUNTY COURIER

PUBLISHED: Published each Thursday (minimum 50 issues) by Homesteader News, Inc. Office open Monday through Thursday.

AD DEADLINE: Friday 4 p.m. for the next Thursday.

CLASSIFIED RATES: \$15 for 25 words, \$20 for 40 words. Ad must be in writing and pre-paid. The West Texas County Courier reserves the right not to publish advertising it considers inappropriate.

DISPLAY RATES: Open rate — \$40 per column inch. Call for more information or to set an appointment. The West Texas County Courier reserves the right not to publish advertising it considers inappropriate.

MAIL SUBSCRIPTIONS: Minimum 50 issues for \$50. Delivery via 1st class mail.

MAIL: 15344 Werling Ct. Horizon City, TX 79928

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR: Letters must not be more than 250 words in length. They should be dated, must be signed and have an address and daytime phone number. Only the name and city will be printed with the letter. The West Texas County Courier reserves the right to edit or reject letters to the editor or other submitted material it considers inappropriate.

Phone: 852-3235
E-mail: wtcc@wtcc.com
Website: wtcc.com

Publisher
Rick Shrum

Contributors
Alfredo Vasquez
Steve Escajeda

Homesteader News, Inc.
Est. 1973

Briefs

From Page 1

distress, so it seems like residents are able to handle a larger debt load for now. Texas was rated 35th in the report. Texas stats:

- Change in Average Unsecured Personal Loan Amount: The average unsecured personal loan amount in Texas decreased by 2.21% in Q3 2023 compared to Q3 2022.
- Average Unsecured

Personal Loan Amount: The average unsecured personal loan amount in Texas was \$8,420 in Q3 2023.

"In a time of continued higher-than-average inflation, one would think the average personal loan size would be increasing in most states. However, the opposite is true – only 18 states had increases, which suggests that either people are handling the current economic conditions

well, or they are turning to other sources of borrowing like credit cards and buy now pay later offers. Given Americans' ever-growing mountain of credit card debt, the latter seems to be true." – John Kiernan, WalletHub Editor
Visit <https://wallethub.com/edu/states-with-the-most-unsecured-personal-loans-debt/132123> for the full report.

– Diana Polk



- Photo courtesy San Elizario ISD

THE GANG'S ALL HERE – First row: Students Jasmine Hernandez, Jasmine Bromell, Ethan Alvarez, Leobardo Macias, Erick Martinez, Adam Cedillo, Jaden Harrison, Logan Zaragoza, Johnny Tapia, Diego Rosas, Derek Padilla and Coach Orlando Castro. Second Row: Alexander Corona, Soledad Gonzalez, Lourdes Falcon, Araceli Muñoz, Carmen Martinez, Lizette Lopez-Vacio, Amanda Franco, Brenda Jara, Paloma Ruiseco and Principal Richard Salcido. Third Row: Beatriz Pedroza, Maria Castorena, Norma Mitchell, Blanca Estrada, Juanita Loya, Idania Rodarte, John Jara and Julieta Vitela. Fourth Row: Marisol Galarza, Lorenzo Soto and Roman Rodriguez. Fifth Row: Trustees Lupe Caro, Monica Chavez, Lorenzo Luevano, Dr. Jeannie Meza-Chavez (Superintendent), Eduardo Chavez, Sandra Licon, Myrna Hernandez and Axel Lopez.

Ann M. Garcia-Enriquez named a 'School to Watch'

By Horacio Hernandez
Special to the Courier

SAN ELIZARIO, TX – The San Elizario Independent School Board of Trustees

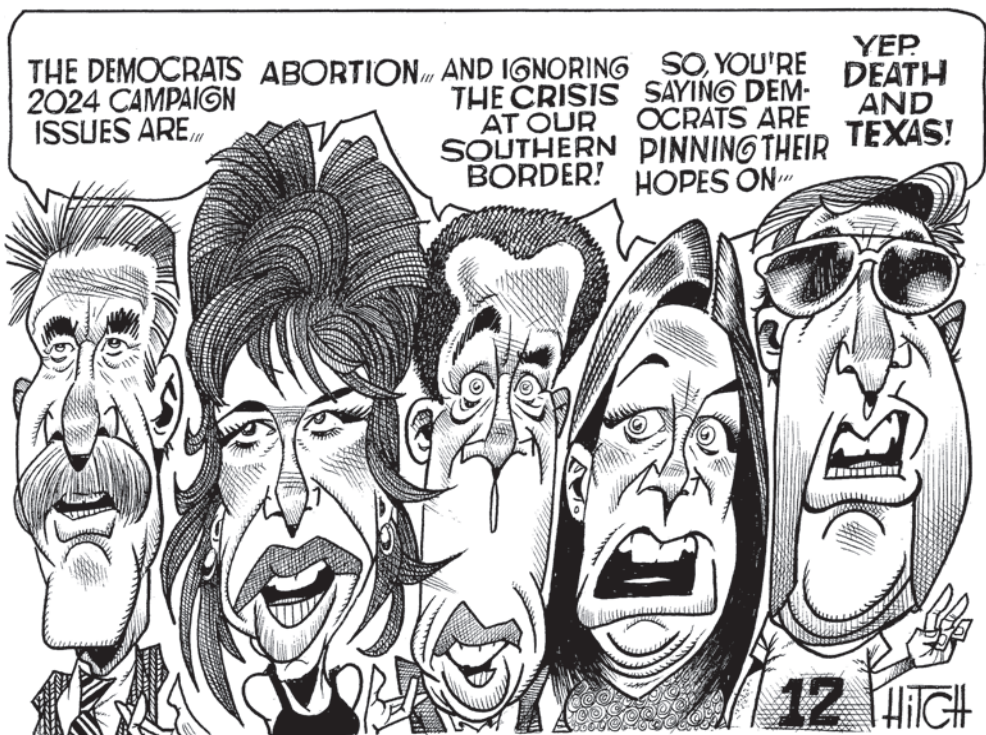
recognized Ann M. Garcia-Enriquez Middle School (GEMS) for being named a School to Watch (STW) by the National Forum to Accelerate Middle Grades Reform and the Texas Association of

Secondary School Principals (TASSP). A distinction that approximately 60 other campuses in Texas share. Leticia Menchaca, State Director for STW in Texas and TASSP Associate Executive

Director for Middle-Level Services, stated, "We congratulate Principal Richard Salcido and his staff, students, and parents for being a campus that does great things for all their students. This school

has demonstrated that a high-performing middle school is a place that focuses on academic growth and achievement. Garcia-Enriquez MS is a

See GEMS, Page 5



Senior moment By Matilda Charles

Here we go again

I'm not the only one who has opted, once again, to stay home. Both the rec center and the senior center are cutting back on classes and hours because of the lack of participation, again, but mostly because of the sudden increase in cases of Covid, again. Of course this could include the flu and RSV (respiratory syncytial virus), but no one is specifying. It's just clear that more and more people here are getting sick.

At the rec center, the number of exercise classes has been halved, and so has the number of people who can sign up for them. They're going back to

spaces outlined in blue painter's tape on the floor, giving a spot to each person to work out. No more walking with pals in a group around the indoor track. Instead, they're going back to single walkers staying a minimum of 10 feet apart.

The senior center has been hit the hardest, I think, because so many of their classes involved sitting around a large table learning a new language, doing painting or fiber art or sharing a meal. The local weekly sightseeing events are stopped because they no longer want to fit 20 seniors into the bus. For some seniors, those social events were the highlight of

their week. Now it looks like they'll be back to Zoom meetings.

The good news is that the food bank is still up and running with no sign (yet) of slowing down what they do. Participants will pull up and stay in their vehicles, while volunteers bring out the bags and boxes.

And bless their hearts, the drivers are still out there, picking up seniors to take them to appointments. Rumor says they vowed, as a group, not to stop what they're doing.

Have we really been doing this for four years?

©2024 King Features Synd., Inc.



By Lucie Winborne

- From 1953 to 1959, the Cincinnati Reds baseball team went by a different moniker, the Cincinnati Redlegs, in response to America's fear of communism during the McCarthy era, when the term "Reds" could be problematic.

- The word "whisky" comes from the Gaelic phrase "uisge beatha," or "water of life."

- An AI program using merely 10 seconds of human speech has been able to identify whether someone has diabetes with 89% accuracy.

- Workers at an Akron, Ohio, auto wrecking company creatively stopped a potential car thief by using a forklift to raise him, while inside the vehicle, 20 feet into the air until (no doubt amused) police arrived on the scene.

- If you make a visit to Iceland, you might run across a tiny, intricately designed house known as an alfhof. But it wasn't built for a family of dolls. Rather, such structures are created for the "hidden folk" of Icelandic folklore, creatures often invisible to humans but who are believed to lead lives similar to ours.

- Smokers with better math skills are more inclined to quit smoking.

- When Reza Baluchi, a 44-year-old man from Florida, aspired to cross the Atlantic on a visit to London, he didn't take a plane or boat, but a floating contraption much like a giant hamster wheel! Unfortunately, his mode of transportation was deemed "manifestly unsafe" by the Coast Guard off the coast of Georgia's Tybee Island, and after a three-day standoff, Baluchi's mission was aborted.

Thought for the Day: "What you get by achieving your goals is not as important as what you become by achieving your goals."
— Zig Ziglar

©2023 King Features Synd., Inc.

Iowa, New Hampshire, good indicators for 2024 presidential candidates

Wallethub studies link two states to US demographics

Iowa

Wallethub compared Iowa's demographic characteristics and public opinions against that of the U.S. to answer: How Closely Does Iowa Resemble the U.S.? The data set of 22 key measures included sociodemographic, economic, educational and religious metrics as well as public stances on certain issues. The overall Resemblance Index for Iowa is 89. Stats:

- Sociodemographics: 84;
- Economics: 89;

- Education: 92;
- Religion: 87; and
- Public Opinion: 91.

63.6% of Iowa-caucus winners have won the Democratic Party nomination and 44.4% the Republican Party nomination. The Iowa caucuses, therefore, are a much better predictor of advancement for Democrats than for Republicans.

Iowa least resembles the U.S. in terms of race, with a 50.00 percent difference; religious composition, with a 74.52 percent difference; wealth gap, with a 76.41 percent

difference; and employment by industry, with an 80.30 percent difference.

Iowa most resembles the U.S. in terms of mean work hours, with a 99.48 percent similarity; unemployment rate, with a 99.10 percent similarity; school enrollment, with a 99.02 percent similarity; and importance of religion in one's life, with a 99.00 percent similarity.

Visit <http://wallethub.com/edu/iowa-us-resemblance/18578/> for the full report.

New Hampshire

New Hampshire held the first primary election in the U.S. on January 23. The state's primary has predicted 82% of past Republican nominees. Wallethub compared the Granite State's demographic characteristics and public opinions with those of the U.S. to determine *How New Hampshire Voters Resemble U.S. Demographics in 2024*. The data set of 22 key measures, like Iowa, included sociodemographic, economic, educational and religious metrics as well as public

stances on certain issues. The overall Resemblance Index for New Hampshire is 83. Stats:

- Sociodemographics: 82 ;
- Economics: 89;
- Education: 91 ;
- Religion: 62 ; and
- Public Opinion: 91.

82% of New Hampshire-primary winners have won the Republican party nomination and 55% have won the Democratic party nomination. New Hampshire least resembles the U.S. in terms of race (41.10% similarity); religious composition (60.28% similarity); importance of religion in one's life (64.00% similarity); and wealth gap (76.90% similarity). New Hampshire most resembles the U.S. in terms of the average workweek length (99.74% similarity); gender (99.20% similarity); unemployment rate (98.90% similarity); and party affiliation among adults (96.00% similarity).

Visit <https://wallethub.com/edu/new-hampshire-us-resemblance/18589/> for the full report.

— Diana Polk



CLASSIFIED AD FORM

25 words - \$15 per week; 40 words - \$20 per week

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

Deadline: Monday, 4 p.m.
Please print. Send form and payment (no cash) to:

West Texas County Courier
15344 Werling Ct.
Horizon City, TX 79928

Contact Information:

Name: _____

Phone: _____

YOUR Gift IS A WAY TO CONQUER LUNG DISEASE

Give the gift that remembers by helping others ...

When you lose someone dear to you — or when a special person has a birthday, quits smoking, or has some other occasion to celebrate — memorial gifts or tribute gifts made for them to your local American Lung Association help prevent lung disease and improve the care of those who suffer from it.

www.texaslung.org

1-800-LUNG-USA

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

LAB
E A E
FITLY
T I E
N FIG
BEING U A
O PLUM
E U E
LITANY

HALBERD UTAHN EOS GTS
ETAILER RAMIE ACTSOUT
WHIRLPOOLBAHT STATUURE
DIEIN TOMATORUPEE
SIR MATISSE ARM VTEN
TOOLATETOTURNBACKWON
ADDINS PERU NUI
TIED ACHE NOS KDLANG
ENO INFO DOWNTHEDINAR
DEB COREA PATIO ONTO
UNIVERSITYOFKRONA
OSLO SCIRE PLIED POR
ROLLSTHECEDITEEGS ANE
GOSOLO DEF L CDS DQED
ADS UCLA TIRAUMA
AREYOUCALLINGMEARIAL
OPEL BUC ONTOAST NNE
STRIKEAPE SO BUSTA
HEADIER DONTGIVEARAND
ESTELLE ISERE ERITREA
ATE TSA TOYED SALETAG

CryptoQuip Answer

We can no longer rely on that old rocket to lift off the ground. It's not thrust-worthy.

1	x	8	+	7	15
+		+		x	
9	-	4	x	3	15
x		x		-	
2	x	1	x	5	10
20		12		16	



Moments in time
THE HISTORY CHANNEL

• On Jan. 29, 1845, Edgar Allan Poe's poem "The Raven" was published in The Evening Mirror in New York. The eerie work, which earned its author the sum of \$9, was both panned and praised by critics and parodied soon after its publication, but remains one of the most popular poems in literary history.

• On Jan. 30, 1862, the first American ironclad warship, the USS Monitor, was launched into the East River. Construction of the vessel was inspired by talk of the Confederate Navy's building an impenetrable ironclad that could break the Union's blockade of the port city of Hampton Roads, Virginia.

• On Jan. 31, 1747, the first clinic for treatment of venereal diseases opened at London Lock Hospital. Unfortunately, its cure methods were ineffectual, with mercury (and its highly debilitating side effects) being the most common.

• On Feb. 1, 1587, England's Queen Elizabeth I signed the death warrant for her cousin, Mary, Queen of Scots, after Mary was found guilty of being "not only accessory and privy to the conspiracy, but also an imaginer and compass of her majesty's destruction." In her final days, Elizabeth admitted to regret about the order.

• On Feb. 2, 1970, British mathematician, logician and philosopher Bertrand Russell, who is considered the founder of analytic philosophy and won the Nobel Prize in Literature for his idealism- and humanitarianism-themed writings, died at his home in Wales at the age of 97.

• On Feb. 3, 1994, President Bill Clinton lifted the trade embargo that had been in place on the Republic of Vietnam for 19 years, following the capture of Saigon by North Vietnamese troops during the Vietnam War.

• On Feb. 4, 2010, Barack Obama's 57-year-old Kenyan aunt, Zeituni Onyango, appeared at a court in Boston for a second attempt to gain political asylum in the U.S., but the hearing ended without an immediate decision. Ms. Onyango had moved to America in 2000, and her first asylum application was rejected four years later, with an order for her deportation. Her immigration status would become an issue during Obama's election campaign.

GEMS

From Page 3

place that recognizes the importance of meeting the needs of all students and ensures that every child has access to a challenging, high-quality education."

GEMS will be officially announced and recognized at the TASSP Making Middle School Matter Symposium on Monday, March 4, 2024, in Austin, TX, and nationally recognized at the STW schools from across the country in Washington, DC, at the National Forum of Schools to Watch Conference on June 20-22, 2024. Of the STW recognition, Salcido said, "This is a campus recognition. I want to thank all students, parents, and teachers. This recognition demonstrates we can compete with anyone."

After Salcido submitted a written application he was told that GEMS had met criteria developed by the National Forum to Accelerate Middle Grades Reform. That earned GEMS a state team visit where classroom observations took place and interviews of administrators, teachers, students, and parents. The visit also looked at achievement data, suspension rates, quality of lessons, and student work.

The site team saw numerous examples of the STW criteria, such as the incorporation of Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID) using the Fundamental 5 Lesson Framing and the master schedule providing common planning periods by content for Professional Learning Communities (PLC) and targeted tutoring interventions for special needs and Emergent Bilingual students are embedded throughout the day with 'Strengthening Your Wings Camps.'

The STW Designation is set for three years, and GEMS must show evidence of continuous improvement to be redesignated. GEMS is named after Ann M. Garcia-Enriquez, a former school board trustee, and has approximately 419 students enrolled in grades 7 and 8, with 352 students identified as at risk and 393 economically disadvantaged. Salcido has been the principal of GEMS since July 2020.

"Principal Salcido uniquely understands middle school, and his leadership has continued to strengthen the work teachers, staff, and all personnel contribute to make GEMS the optimal learning environment for students. We are proud of Mr. Salcido and all GEMS students, teachers, and parents," said Superintendent Dr. Jeannie Meza-Chavez states.

Clint Independent School District Public Notice

Clint Independent School District will hold a public hearing to discuss the District's 2022-2023 Texas Academic Performance Report (TAPR) as part of a School Board meeting, which is scheduled for 5:30 p.m., Tuesday, February 20, 2024, at the Clint ISD Administrative Office Board Room, 14521 Horizon Blvd., Horizon City, TX, 79928.

The public is invited to attend. The TAPR report will also be available for review after the hearing at all Clint ISD campuses, the Clint Administrative Office and at www.clintweb.net.

For more information, call 926-4051.

Distrito Escolar Independiente de Clint Junta Pública

El Distrito Escolar Independiente de Clint tendrá una Reunión Pública para informar sobre el "Reporte de Rendimiento Académica de Texas" (TAPR) del año escolar 2022-2023. El reporte sera parte de la reunión de la Mesa Directiva del distrito programada para el martes, 20 de febrero del 2024 a las 5:30 p.m. en el cuarto de sala de Clint ISD oficina administrativa, 14521 Horizon Blvd., Horizon City, TX, 79928.

Todos los interesados están invitados a asistir. El reporte TAPR estará disponible después de la reunión en todas las escuelas del distrito, en el edificio de las oficinas administrativas y en www.clintweb.net.

Para mas información, favor de llamar al 926-4051.

Host families sought for international students

By Adriane Wagner
Special to the Courier

NATION – ASSE International Student Exchange Programs (ASSE), a Non-Profit, Public Benefit Organization, is inviting local families to discover the many rewards of hosting a foreign exchange student. ASSE students come from more than 50 countries worldwide: France, Denmark, Spain, Italy, Ukraine, Japan, Australia, to name a few. They are between the ages of 15 and 18 years, and they are enthusiastic and excited to experience American culture, family life, school, sports, etc. They also love to share their own culture and language with their host families, who welcome the students into their home, not as a guest, but as a family member, giving everyone involved a rich cultural experience. Host families may be single parents, couples and single persons.

The exchange students have pocket money for

personal expenses and full health, accident and liability insurance. ASSE students are carefully selected based upon academics and personality, and host families choose their student from a wide variety of backgrounds, countries and personal interests.

ASSE also offers qualified American students the opportunity to learn another language and culture by spending a school year, semester or a summer with a host family in another country.

Those interested in hosting an exchange student or becoming an exchange student abroad, should call Adriane at 1-800-473-0696, visit www.asse.com or send an email to asseusasouth@asse.com to request more information or start the application process. Students are eager to learn about their American host family, so begin the process of welcoming your new son or daughter today. The memories and the friendship you create with your exchange student will stay with you forever.



Fabens Independent School District Public Notice of Meeting

Fabens Independent School District will hold a public hearing to discuss the District's 2022-2023 Annual Report. The meeting will be held at 6:30 P.M. on Wednesday, February 21, 2024 in the Fabens Independent School District's Board Room at 821 N.E. "G" Avenue, Fabens, Texas.

The public is invited to attend in person. For more information, call (915) 765-2600, x2102.

Junta Pública

El Distrito escolar independiente de Fabens celebrará una audiencia pública para discutir el informe anual 2022-2023. La reunión se celebrará a las 6:30 p.m. el miércoles, 21 de febrero de 2024 en la sala de juntas de Fabens ISD, 821 N.E. "G" Avenue, Fabens, Texas.

Se invita al público a asistir en persona. Para obtener más información, llame al (915) 765-2600, x2102.

NBA teams keep scoring and scoring and scoring

By Steve Escajeda
Special to the Courier

It seems that American sports fans like fast action and a ton of scoring. I guess that's why soccer hasn't really caught on here like it has around the rest of the world.

The methodical game of baseball has suffered over the years for the same reason. There may be more scoring in baseball than in soccer, but the game is considered too slow for the young fans.

It's kind of funny though, if we like scoring so much, why is it that fans are always yelling "defense, defense?"

Anyway, I like scoring as much as the next guy. But too much scoring and not enough defense is never good. I like seeing touchdowns but a 62-51 football game is not as exciting as a 27-24 encounter with a good mixture of offense and defense.

The old saying is that offense puts butts in the seats but defense wins championships.

Fans love points, goals and runs, but they also appreciate a good defensive effort.

And that brings us to the National Basketball Association, where defense is literally a four-letter word.

There's no doubt that the NBA features some of the best athletes in the world, who can run faster, jump higher and shoot better than 99 percent of the rest

of us.

But fans also like the guys who try to slow them down.

Over the years, there have been times when scoring was very high and there have been times when teams weren't scoring as much.

The highest scoring NBA season was back in 1962, when there were only nine teams in the league, the average team score was 118.8 points. Not surprisingly, the lowest scoring year was the NBA's first season (1946-47), with a team scoring an average of 67.8 points.

In the sixties, seventies and eighties, scoring remained high, but then from 1995 to 2007, teams averaged less than 100 points. Defense ruled the day.

And we all knew that scoring would eventually come back up, but this is

ridiculous. This season, NBA teams are averaging 115.5 points a game, this is the highest it's been since the 1969-70 season.

Believe me, it's not that players are shooting any better, it's that they're not being guarded.

Last season a player scored at least 50 points in a game 25 times. That's the most since the early sixties. This year, we're a little past the halfway point of the season and there have been 13 50-point scorers already.

But it's not just 50 points, five guys have scored over 60 points and two have already gone over 70.

It's gotten to the point that the NBA is becoming harder and harder to watch. Either a player spends the entire game behind the 3-point line heaving it up from 25-feet away, or

hammering another dunk through the net with no one around him.

It used to be that if a player drove the lane for a layup, the defense would converge on him and swipe at the ball and his body. Now, if a player drives the lane today, defenders simply get out of his way.

Just three weeks ago, four different NBA teams scored 130 points on the same night – and all four lost.

Last year, only the Sacramento Kings averaged 120 points a game. This year, five teams are averaging 120 points or better. And the lowest scoring team is averaging 107.

It seems like every night one team is beating another 147-142 or 139-129. There is absolutely no defense being played and that's a big problem for the league. Some of these regular-season

games remind me of the all-star games, where the stars get together and try to dazzle the fans with fancy passes and thundering dunks, because they know the other guys aren't going to try and stop them.

Golden State Warriors' coach Steve Kerr says it's almost impossible to play defense in the NBA because the rules are geared toward the offense. He also said he likes the scoring but feels it's gone a little overboard.

It used to be that a player scoring 50 points in a game was magical, it was something that led SportsCenter.

It happens so often now that it gets no attention.

Uh oh, I think it just happened again.



Send Your
Newsbrief To:
wtxcc@wtxcc.com

MONEY-CHANGING ACROSS

- 1 Combination spear and battle-ax
- 8 Provo native
- 13 Dawn deity
- 16 Some fast autos
- 19 Virtual merchant
- 20 Strong cordage fiber
- 21 Performs a charade of
- 23 Thai money used to buy a Jacuzzi?
- 25 Height when upright
- 26 Protest at which people lie on the ground
- 27 Bright red Indian money?
- 29 "Madam" counterpart
- 32 "The Dance" painter Henri
- 35 Biceps locale
- 36 Powerful auto engine
- 37 "You missed your chance for folding over that Korean money"?
- 42 Already-included tips, e.g.
- 43 Lima locale
- 44 "Rapa _" (1994 film)
- 45 Like even scores
- 46 Feel sore
- 48 Refusals
- 51 She sang
- "Constant Craving"

DOWN

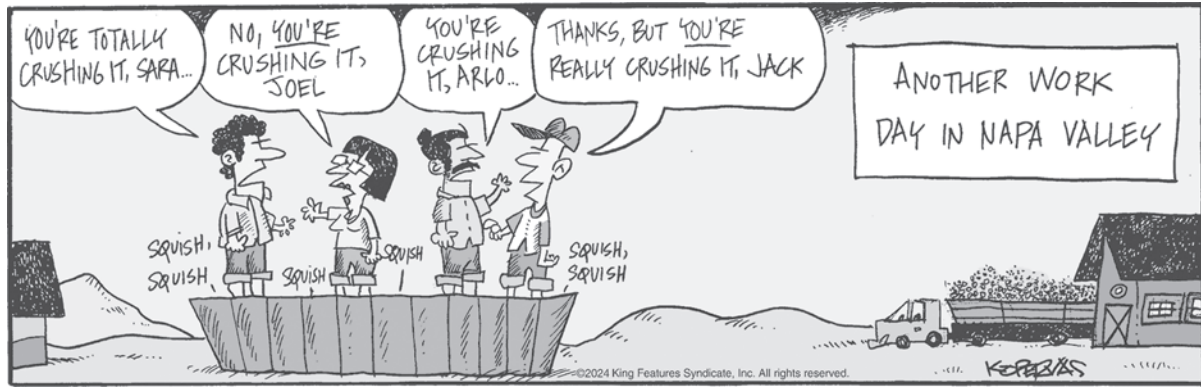
- 1 Use an ax on
- 2 One "A" of NCAA: Abbr.
- 3 Chou En- _
- 4 Nest dweller
- 5 "If I Can't Have You" singer Yvonne
- 6 Says again
- 7 Rive _ (Paris' Right Bank)
- 8 E-address
- 9 Bistro bill
- 10 Unpaid player
- 11 Classic cracker brand
- 12 Tennis-playing guy
- 13 Kodak founder
- 14 Prefix with -genarian
- 15 Pentagram
- 16 Reach as high as
- 17 Large, deep
- Madison dir.
- 107 Whack some
- Mexican money?
- 111 Rapper _ Rhymes
- 113 More intoxicating
- 114 Refuse to contribute South African money?
- 120 Getty of TV
- 121 French river
- 122 Asmara's nation
- 123 Gobbled up
- 124 Airport agcy.
- 125 Played (with)
- 126 Label on a bargain item
- 18 Painter Jan
- 22 R-X fillers
- 24 Attending to the matter
- 28 Certain Wall St. trader
- 29 Said
- 30 Antiseptic element
- 31 Bucking bovines
- 33 Jr., last year
- 34 Spirited horse
- 38 Eye coverer
- 39 Takeoff strip
- 40 Often-pickled veggie
- 41 Pirate "Captain"
- 46 From scratch
- 47 Compelled
- 49 In the lead
- 50 Squelched
- 52 Cat that roars
- 53 "The Piano" Oscar winner
- 54 Cable TV's _ Geo
- 55 Miracle- _
- 57 Here, in Lyon
- 58 Election mo.
- 60 Elected (to)
- 61 Virginia Tech team name
- 64 Cold _ (frigid)
- 68 Court plea, for short
- 69 Very angry
- 70 Rule, in brief
- 71 More than loads up (on)
- 72 Assoc.
- 73 Great Lakes' _ Canals
- 77 Like a single-guy band
- 78 Traditional Irish brew
- 80 Make laugh uproariously
- 81 Hoopla
- 82 "You Be _" (1986 hit for Run-D.M.C.)
- 88 Jargon
- 89 Women's patriotic gp.
- 91 Secondary field of study
- 93 George who played Danny Ocean
- 94 Mosaic tile
- 95 Long rodent feature
- 96 Most suitable
- 97 Assess again
- 98 Skip over in speech
- 99 Chalice, e.g.
- 100 Nailed the test
- 101 Desert of Mongolia
- 102 Some purple shades
- 103 Milo of films
- 108 Piper's wear
- 109 Twisty fish
- 110 Average
- 112 Comic Johnson
- 115 Uno plus due
- 116 H.S. proficiency test
- 117 Gallery work
- 118 Teachers' gp.
- 119 Hammarskjöld once of the U.N.

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	47			48	49	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			99	100				101	102						
103						104					105							106		
107				108	109					110				111			112			
113									114			115	116					117	118	119
120										121					122					
123						124									126					

Comix

OUT ON A LIMB By Gary Kopervas



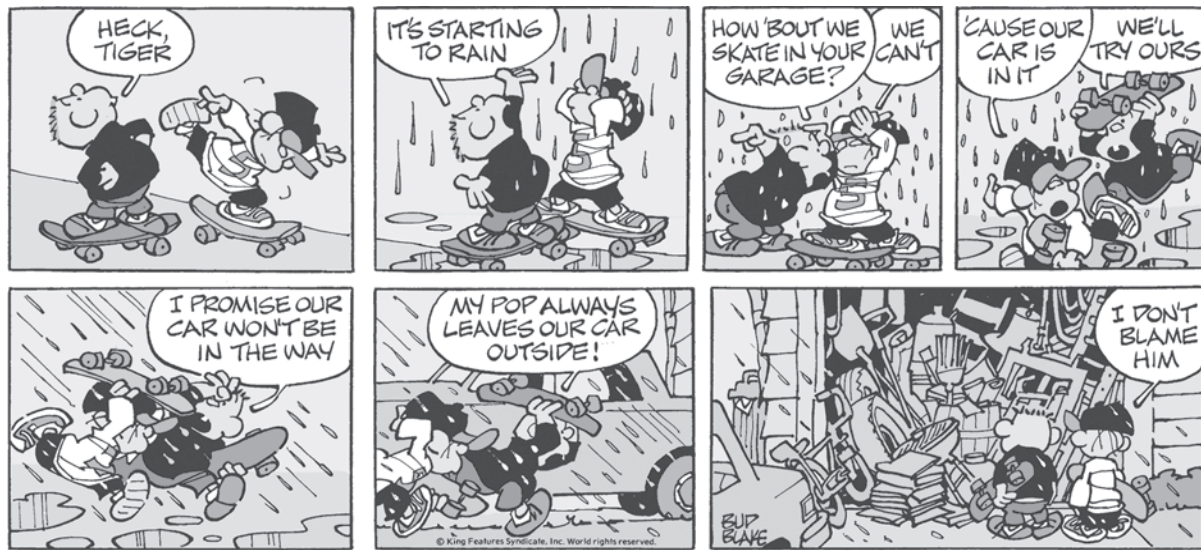
AMBER WAVES By Dave T. Phipps



THE SPATS By Jeff Pickering



TIGER By Bud Blake



Lowry

From Page 2

“only Mueller knows” coverage – kept his investigation going well after he knew there was nothing there.

It’s unmentioned that in 2020, two weeks before Election Day, former national-security officials, some of whom were highly respected, put their names to a letter meant to mislead about the Hunter laptop; Biden, from the debate stage, lied about that laptop and his son’s business dealing; and Twitter censored the story and much of the rest of the media treated it as a non-event at best.

All of this was meant to keep the laptop’s true importance under wraps through Election Day, and – if Joe Biden and compliant Justice department officials had had their way –until this very day. If Hunter’s original sweetheart plea deal hasn’t blown up upon first contact with an independent-minded judge, he would have escaped serious legal consequences.

The entire affair was a rank distortion of the political and legal process. And, oh yeah, Biden Justice Department officials and

Democratic prosecutors are currently trying to put the other side’s leading contender for the White House in jail. As a warm-up act, they are also attempting to kneecap his business in a trial, or “trial,” in which the verdict has already been decided.

Almost all these charges are unworthy, dubious or imprudent, but that hasn’t stopped Trump’s pursuers, most of whom have wanted their trials to start, for some reason, in March right after the Republican nomination will probably be decided.

Trump’s critics would be on firmer ground objecting to his declared campaign of vengeance if they had been willing to forebear during any of these episodes; if they had ever insisted on neutrality or fair play; if they’d been willing to look beyond the man they loathe and make judgments based on truth and professional standards.

Instead, they’ve lit a fuse while pretending that they’re opposed to pyrotechnics, with consequences as yet unknown.

Rich Lowry is editor of the National Review. ©2024 by King Features Synd., Inc.

NSAID risks are small after gastric surgery

DEAR DR. ROACH: I have had weight-loss surgery, specifically an adjustable lap band that was revised to a gastric sleeve in 2018. I have been given and read conflicting recommendations regarding the use of NSAIDs following these procedures. I have read that taking a low dose (400 mg) is considered safe. I have also read and been told to take the children’s liquid form at an adult dosage rather than the tablets. I am a 57-year-old female. I have largely avoided taking NSAIDs for years, but I have developed osteoarthritis and find that I am taking them more often (400 mg once daily, one to two times a week at most). I do ensure that I take them with food and also take a Pepcid whenever I take ibuprofen. – A.W.



There are several types of weight-loss (bariatric) surgery, and the best evidence that I found among those who had a Roux-en-Y gastric bypass shows up to a 70% increase in the relative risk of developing peptic ulcers after surgery.

This sounds pretty terrible, but it actually means that in an average time span of four years after surgery, 1.4% of people who didn’t take any NSAIDs got an ulcer, while 2.4% of the group that had the greatest amount of NSAID use developed an ulcer. However, the same study showed that only 0.2% of patients who underwent a sleeve gastrectomy developed an ulcer, and the use of NSAIDs did not significantly increase this number.

Finally, other studies have shown that medicines like famotidine (Pepcid) reduce the risk of ulcers by about half when used long-term. NSAIDs always have risks, but for a person with a gastric sleeve, the risks of low-dose ibuprofen are modest and need to be weighed against the benefits for a person’s quality of life.

DEAR DR. ROACH: My mother and one of her brothers had the flu in 1918. She said she was very sick, but unlike her brother, who was profoundly deaf from high fever, she didn’t experience any aftereffects. She died at 90 without getting the flu again or taking the yearly flu vaccine. I am 83, have never had a flu shot and have never had the flu. I have had all the COVID-19 vaccines, but never the yearly flu shots. Could I have received immunity from her? – F.D.B.

No, you don’t get specific immunity from parents. Babies do get a type of “passive” immunity from their mothers, since antibodies are shared through the placenta to the fetus, but this only lasts for weeks or months.

The 1918 influenza pandemic did leave survivors with very long-lasting immunity to some types of the flu (like H1N1). Unfortunately, this immunity does not extend to other types of flu viruses, so I still recommend getting the yearly flu vaccines.

It’s my experience that when people tell me they have never had the flu, it’s not always true. Sometimes, the flu is mild and goes unrecognized. The flu is highly variable, and even young, healthy people with apparently good immune systems can succumb to the flu.

You may have inherited some of your mother’s robust immune system, as this is partially heritable. However, I wouldn’t depend on it entirely and do recommend the vaccine to help your immune system reduce your risk of getting a severe flu. People over 65 may get a special, higher-potency flu vaccine.

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. ©2024 North America Synd., Inc. All Rights Reserved.

To Advertise Call 852-3235 Archives: www.wtxcc.com



Moore Texas by Roger Moore

In 1972 Don Halsell of Keene bit the corner off an imported brick in the Texas Senate Chambers to show its poor quality.

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: **D** equals **G**

LO BZP PN UNPDOI
 IOUH NP ESZE NUK INBJOE
 EN UYAE NAA ESO DINGPK.
 YE'F PNE ESICFE-LNIESH.

Answer Page 4

©2024 King Features Synd., Inc.

Weekly SUDOKU

by Linda Thistle

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

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!

© 2024 King Features Synd., Inc.

Psychedelics for our military



by Freddy Groves

The \$883.7 billion National Defense Authorization Act for 2024 makes for some interesting reading, not only for what it left out, but what it included. What you won't find is the medical cannabis pilot program for veterans promoted by many, but you will find a treatment program using psychedelics for veterans and active duty with traumatic brain injuries and post-traumatic stress disorder.

Specifically, it calls for clinical trials with the Department of Defense to create a system wherein they can spend up to \$10 million on psychedelics research. It only gives them 180 days to get started. Covered conditions, besides TBI and PTSD, include depression and insomnia.

Some of the drugs to be used are psychedelic drugs psilocybin (magic mushrooms), MDMA

(ecstasy) and 5-MeO-DMT (from toad glands).

There are some reported successes from using psychedelics. The Food and Drug Administration said in 2017 that they'd had positive results using LSD and the magic mushrooms. The amounts given are small and are called "microdoses." A short report with a lengthy list of citations in the Marine Corps Gazette in 2019 describes the use of LSD, mushrooms and more to attempt to gain an edge in efficiency and productivity when it comes to attention to detail, mental processing and reasoning. The report points to the way LSD changes the brain's method of problem solving. Maybe this explains why it might be useful in helping veterans who suffer from PTSD. By creating new ways to think about things?

Yet another study, documented in the Lancet Psychiatry journal, found that the magic mushrooms reduced PTSD symptoms. The trial combined three doses of the mushrooms with psychotherapy. After

Phase 2 of the trial, 56% of participants no longer had PTSD when checked 12 months later, after having suffered for many years.

If you want to learn more, listen to a podcast on the topic that includes a veteran who participated in a psychedelics study nine years ago: news.va.gov/124415/exploring-psychedelics-treatment-of-veterans.

©2024 King Features Synd., Inc.



- Here's a fun afternoon of play just waiting to happen: Check with your local grocery store or big box store to see if it has uncrushed cardboard boxes. Get several to create a cardboard city in your living room or child's bedroom. They can be decorated to look like anything, or cut, trimmed and taped into most any shape. Kids even like to stock them with pillows and blankets for a cozy sleepover. When you're done, break them down and recycle until the next adventure. — J.J. in Florida

- Sources who know say that if you drop a marble (clean glass) in your tea kettle, it will prevent it from scaling.

- Like to use paper towels to dry your clean hands? Set them aside to dry, then you can use them for cleaning with glass cleaner or other solutions.

- Use a shower curtain cut or folded in half under baby's highchair to make cleaning up the floor easier.

- Air-popped popcorn is better for you and healthier. If you have an air popper, you'll also have a jar of popcorn kernels. Keep them in the refrigerator or even the freezer. You can use them straight from the fridge, and the bonus is that you'll have less unpopped kernels and bigger, fluffier popcorn. — E.M. in Wisconsin

- Stuck at school with a sticky zipper? Just rub it with a pencil lead and zip back and forth a few times. It totally works. — W.K., a middle-school student, in Georgia

Send your tips to Now Here's a Tip, 628 Virginia Drive, Orlando, FL 32803. ©2024 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.

	x		+		15
+		+		x	
	-		x		15
x		x		-	
	x		x		10
20		12		16	

1 1 2 3 4 5 7 8 9

DIFFICULTY: ★★

★ Moderate ★★ Difficult

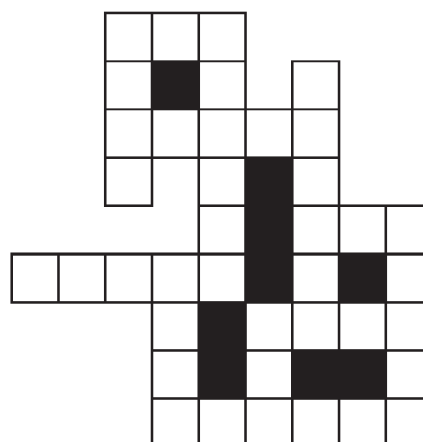
★★★ GO FIGURE!

Answer Page 4

©2024 King Features Syndicate, Inc.



- GFI
- TYNILA
- ♥ NEGBI
- ♥ MLPU
- YUFEEL
- ABL
- ♥ LFTE
- EMYGA
- ♥ UPT
- BIGANT
- FYLTl
- ♥ ONLE



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.

©2024 King Features Syndicate. All rights reserved.