



## NEWSBRIEFS

### Labor issues

With the labor force participation rate at 62.5% and 0.8 percentage points below pre-pandemic levels, WalletHub has released its report on *2024'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. While the economy is still recovering from the pandemic, the labor market is showing signs of improvement. The national labor force participation rate is nearing pre-pandemic levels, at 62.5% as of January 2024, and the unemployment rate is just 3.7%. Plus, employees have been getting progressively less inclined to leave their employers, allowing companies to focus on filling new positions rather than simply backfilling them from employee turnover. Despite these positive statistics, though, many businesses are still facing labor shortages, finding it difficult to hire new employees. Texas is struggling, rated 21st in the report. Other stats:

- Job openings rate during the latest month: 6.00%; and
- Job openings rate in the past 12 months: 5.62%.

### Commentary

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

“There are many reasons attributed to the increased competition in the labor force. We have seen job growth recover and continue to rise since the pandemic. However, labor force participation during the pandemic is just now hitting close to pre-2020 levels and is still below the levels in the late 2000s. This is complicated by the accelerated rate of baby boomers retiring during the pandemic and the decrease in overall hours worked by those in the labor force. These difficulties can also be felt unevenly in industries where there is already a talent shortage, such

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*The chief evil of many people consists not so much in doing evil, but permitting it.*

– Quips & Quotes

## Four candidates vie for District 77 seat

By Alfredo Vasquez  
Special to the Courier

EL PASO COUNTY – Early voting runs from Feb. 20 to March 1. Primary Election Day is March 5.

With the primary election’s early voting period now in progress, the race for State Representative District 77 is garnering countywide interest because it is pitting a proven businessman against three longtime politicians.

The four Democrat candidates vying for the District 77 post are Homer Reza, Norma Chavez, Vincent Perez, and Alessandra Anello. Primary voters in that district, which encompasses most of Central El Paso and parts of the Lower Valley, will choose their next state representative as no Republican candidates are running in its upcoming primary election.

Reza, 73, a businessman with over 30 years of experience, asserted that state government is so divided that nothing is getting done and that part of the problem is that voters keep putting people in government who put personal political interest first over people’s needs.

“My three opponents fit that description, and so I decided to run to change that culture,” Reza contended. “Putting the same people back in office will not change that culture. I am running to put the needs of the people first over political interest,” Reza recently stated.

The successful businessman is challenging three well-known politicians: Chávez, 63, a former state representative, who is reentering politics after a 13-year pause having served as state representative for District 76 from 1997 to 2011; Perez, 42, a former El Paso County Commissioner who served two terms until being voted out in 2020; and Anello, 39, a former city representative who recently stepped down from her position, causing a \$275,000 special election to find her replacement.

Reza, a graduate of Jefferson High School and the University of Texas at El Paso, is a life-long resident of El Paso County and has been married to his high school sweetheart, Margarita, for over 50 years. Currently, he is an independent insurance agent specializing in the senior market, a service he has been providing for the past 14 years. He has also worked for IBM for 16 years, for Eastman Kodak for 6 years, and for the Texas Department of Human Services for 5 years.

Reza noted that in District 77, twenty-five percent of residents live in poverty and 37 percent make \$25,000 or less per year. “Based on these statistics, I would direct my efforts on making sure education



– Photo courtesy Homer Reza

**LONGSHOT – Homer Reza is vying for the office of State Representative District 77 against three well-known politicians.**

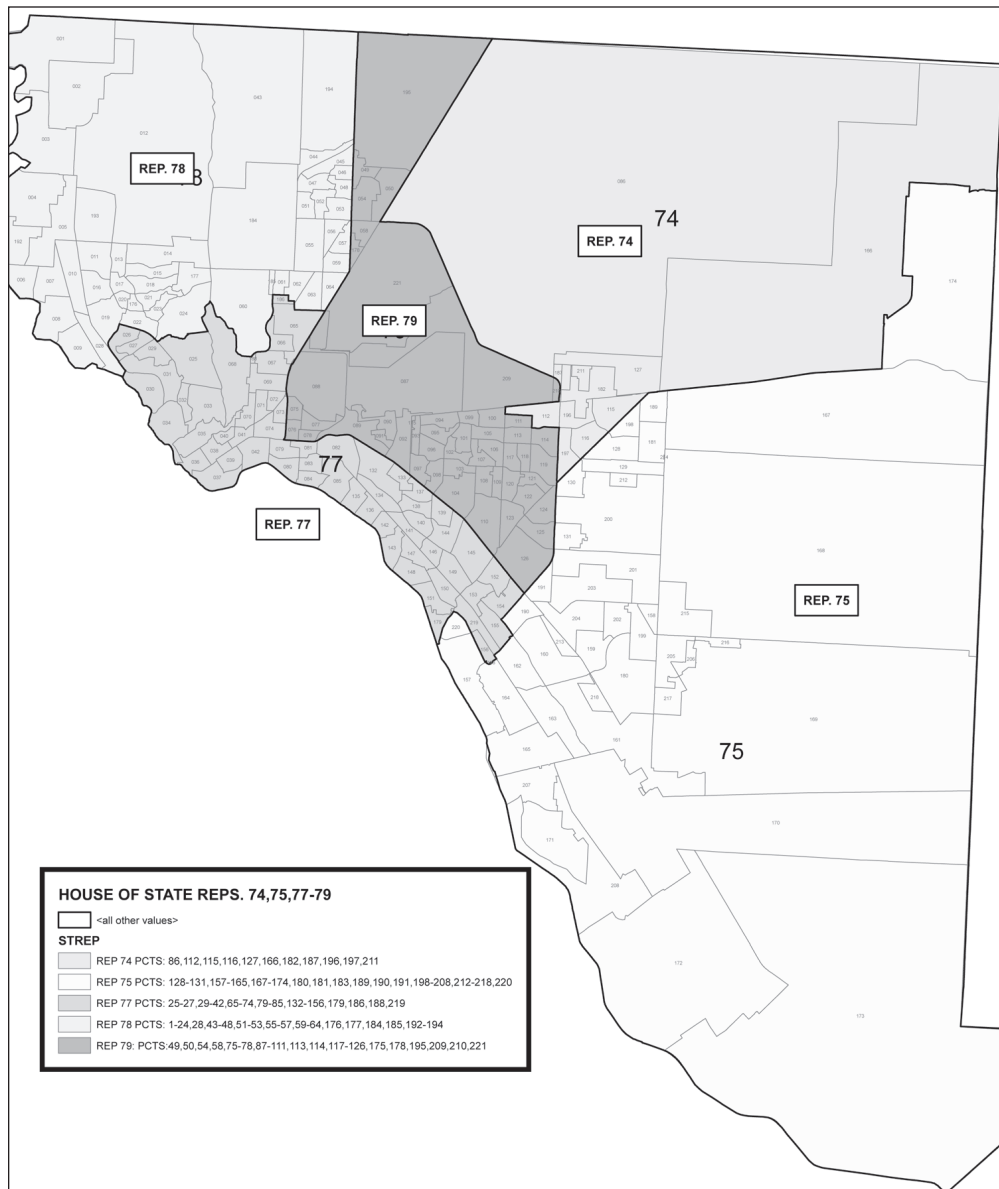
becomes a key issue where every child, no matter their income level, has an equal opportunity to receive a high-quality education so that they can have the same chance of succeeding in life as any other child,” he stated as one of his main goals. “Along with that, I would work on strengthening school protection by enhancing security measures.”

Another issue that Reza said he would pursue is to eliminate barriers that keep startup and established companies from succeeding so that well-paying jobs can be created. “I would work on finding ways to provide needed capital, on making low interest loans available, and on providing tax incentives,” he said.

Additionally, Reza said that he would look for ways to streamline the maze of access to state services for military veterans and elderly citizens so that they can enjoy a better quality of life. “If, however, the needs of my community differ from my issues, I will prioritize their needs first,” he emphasized.

While his three politically connected opponents have reported that they have received funding from prominent benefactors, Reza claimed that he is financing his campaign

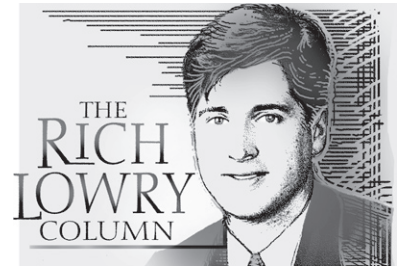
See DISTRICT 77, Page 4



– Map courtesy El Paso County Elections Department

**THE GRID – El Paso County has five state representative districts – 74, 75, 77, 78, and 79, as shown on the map above. District 76 is now combined with 77. District 77 encompasses most of Central El Paso and parts of the Lower Valley. Those voters will chose their next state representative in the March 5th primary election. The current office holders of the other districts are District 79, Rep. Claudia Ordaz; District 78, Joe Moody; District 75, Mary Gonzalez; and District 74, Eddie Morales. District 74 includes 11 counties extending from Eagle Pass to the north east portion of El Paso County.**

# ‘Masters of the Air’ does a public service



Steven Spielberg and Tom Hanks have once again done a public service.

Like “Band of Brothers” and “The Pacific” before it, the new series “Masters of the Air” is a profound act of devotion to the memory of the men who won World War II, this time focused on the air war in Europe.

Telling the story of a nation’s history will always depend on popularizers more than academic historians (especially when the latter don’t like their country’s history very much), and Spielberg and Hanks are better popularizers than anyone has cause to expect.

“Masters” tells the story of the 100th Bomber Group of the 8th Air Force, known as the “Bloody 100th,” not for the destruction it wrought, but the punishment it took in some of the most hazardous

duty of the war.

No one has ever reproduced the story, the machines, the conditions and the missions of this aspect of the war as accurately and carefully before, and we can assume, no one ever will again.

Ten years in the making with a \$250 million budget, this is a production at the very highest level of technical proficiency. The B-17s – the long-range bombers known as Flying Fortresses, or “Forts” for short – steal the show. They are lovingly reproduced and often look like something out of a painting.

Which doesn’t obscure their deadly purpose or the deadly business of flying one over hostile territory.

If nothing else, “Masters” brings home the experience of flying in a tin can breathing through primitive air masks in below-zero temperatures,

while getting shot at by German anti-aircraft guns and trying to fend off ferocious assaults from much faster German fighters.

It is as terrifying as it sounds.

Relying on Air Force records, the show’s makers have obsessively reproduced the exact position of each plane and its precise fate during missions. As the screenwriter John Orloff has explained, they felt a factual rendering was mandatory; this wasn’t “Star Wars” – a made-up conflict involving fictional people – but real battles in which Americans gave

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# Socorro ISD’s Carman moving to Arizona school district

By Christy Flores-Jones  
Special to the Courier

EL PASO COUNTY – Socorro Independent School District Superintendent Dr. Nate Carman has been selected as the lone finalist to serve as the superintendent for the Higley Unified School District in Gilbert, AZ beginning July 2024.

“I am grateful for the opportunities and success that I have enjoyed while serving the Socorro ISD community. While I am eager to join Higley USD, it is bittersweet because Team SISD has been an incredible district to work and live in,” Dr. Carman said. “It has been a pleasure becoming part of this tight-knit district full of talented and impressive students, employees, families, and community members. That said, our work together is not done. I look forward to

finishing this year and further building on our success over the last two years.”

Dr. Carman led Socorro ISD to great success over his tenure by creating new programs for students and expanding existing ones, supporting faculty and staff, increasing academic achievement, and refining operational processes for overall excellence in the district. Under his leadership, Socorro ISD improved overall STAAR passing rates over the last two years, outpacing the state average, and maintaining a three-percentage point lead over the regional average. Based on 2018-2022 rating methodology, SISD’s student performance scores would result in an “A” rating for the district for 2023.

Most notably, Dr. Carman launched six first-of-their-kind elementary academies providing opportunities for young students across the



– Photo courtesy Socorro ISD  
Dr. Nate Carman

region to harness their talents and capture their interests with specialized instruction in science and the arts. The Escontrias STEAM Academy and Paso Del Norte Fine Arts Academy opened for the 2022-2023 school year and the Ernesto Serna Fine Arts Academy, Sierra Vista STEAM Academy, Vista Del Sol Environmental Science Academy, and O’Shea Keleher

Whole Child Academy opened for the 2023-2024 school year. All academies have led to increased enrollment, improved student achievement, increased attendance and decreased disciplinary issues.

“We have welcomed many new students and families to Team SISD with our fantastic new elementary academies and endless opportunities across the district,” Dr. Carman said. “I appreciate the hard work, collaboration and professionalism among our district administration, campus leaders, teachers and staff that has ensured the great success of our new and existing programs.”

He also led the introduction of holiday tutoring which has contributed to increased student performance on state assessments, amplified recruitment efforts which has filled positions with highly qualified staff and decreased job vacancies and contributed to a future cleaner environment with a \$9.875 million EPA Clean School Bus grant that is enabling SISD to

build charging infrastructure and replace 25 buses with new electric models.

“Dr. Carman has been a remarkable leader and innovator for Socorro ISD,” said SISD Board President Michael Najera. “We appreciate his vision, leadership and service for our students, staff, and schools. He has contributed to the great legacy of Team SISD, and we wish him the best as he moves on to his new endeavors.”

Dr. Carman acknowledged that the people of Socorro, Horizon City and East El Paso and its rich commitment and traditions are integral to the achievements of Team SISD.

“It continues to be an honor working with everyone in this awesome district. I am extremely proud of the progress we are achieving together to help students and staff seize their opportunities,” he said. “I thank the community for embracing me as the leader of SISD and I know the district will continue its success in public education this year and beyond.”

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# Canutillo ISD sets bond election for May

## Briefs

From Page 1

as information technology and healthcare.”

– Abbie Lambert, Ph.D., PHR  
Assistant Professor  
University of Central Oklahoma

“In today’s professional environment, across generations, potential employees are highly considering the type of work upon which they engage. Although this is not a new direction for any job-seeker, the pandemic allowed many to reflect upon what is important in life – and this often does not mean working in a traditional role (9-5) or even working remotely, where work is often monitored and the ‘on camera’ presence is deemed necessary throughout the day. Additionally, work ethic has diminished. The impetus to strive for excellence, to go above and beyond, and to even compromise work/life balance as was done more so in the past, no longer exists. This new mindset also impacts professionalism. There have been many instances that I have come across where professionalism is simply absent. Lastly, the ‘Gig Economy’ has led many Millennials and GenZ individuals to seek work, even ‘just to get by’, to ensure their personal happiness, and personal time, and to enjoy what they do. This trend has grown over the past 4 years, and I suspect that it will continue to be an alternative approach to traditional employment.”

– Dr. Dena Bateh  
Adjunct Faculty

See Briefs, Page 4

By Gustavo Reveles  
Special to the Courier

CANUTILLO – On February 13 the Canutillo Independent School District (CISD) Board of Trustees accepted the recommendation of its Facility Advisory Task Force and called for a May 4 bond election to address growth and the continued loss in enrollment because of lack of schools in new neighborhoods in the District.

The \$387-million bond proposal would re-build and relocate the Davenport Elementary and Alderete Middle campuses from their current locations to the fast-growing Enchanted Hills subdivision. If approved, the bond also would re-build and relocate Canutillo Middle School from its current landlocked location to a fast-growing Upper Valley location.

Other projects include the construction of a brick-and-mortar Northwest Early College High School campus, upgrades to the HVAC systems at existing schools, district-wide roof replacements, safety and security improvements and other repairs at aging campuses.

“Canutillo ISD is El Paso’s only Triple-A Rated School District and the region’s highest performing school district in spite of the state of its facilities,” said Board President Armando Rodriguez. “The Facilities Assessment Task Force, which is made up of parents and stakeholders,

recognizes the need to invest in our schools and the strategic placement of campuses to help us reverse declining enrollment trends.”

CISD earlier this year announced that nearly 1,800 students who live within the District’s boundaries do not attend CISD campuses, which is costing the District around \$17 million in state funding. The District this year attributed lower enrollment as one of the factors that led to a deficit in the budget.

Superintendent Dr. Pedro Galaviz said the District is once again asking voters to consider the bond as a way to address the two main critical issues impacting CISD—loss of enrollment and the shifting of general funds to address infrastructure needs.

Voters will consider two propositions on the May 4 ballot:

- Proposition A: The issuance of \$379 million for new construction, repairs and upgrades; and

- Proposition B: The issuance of \$7.2 million to repay the maintenance tax notes the District issues in 2020 to issue laptops to all students during the pandemic. The repayment of these notes would relieve the general budget deficit by about \$1 million each year.

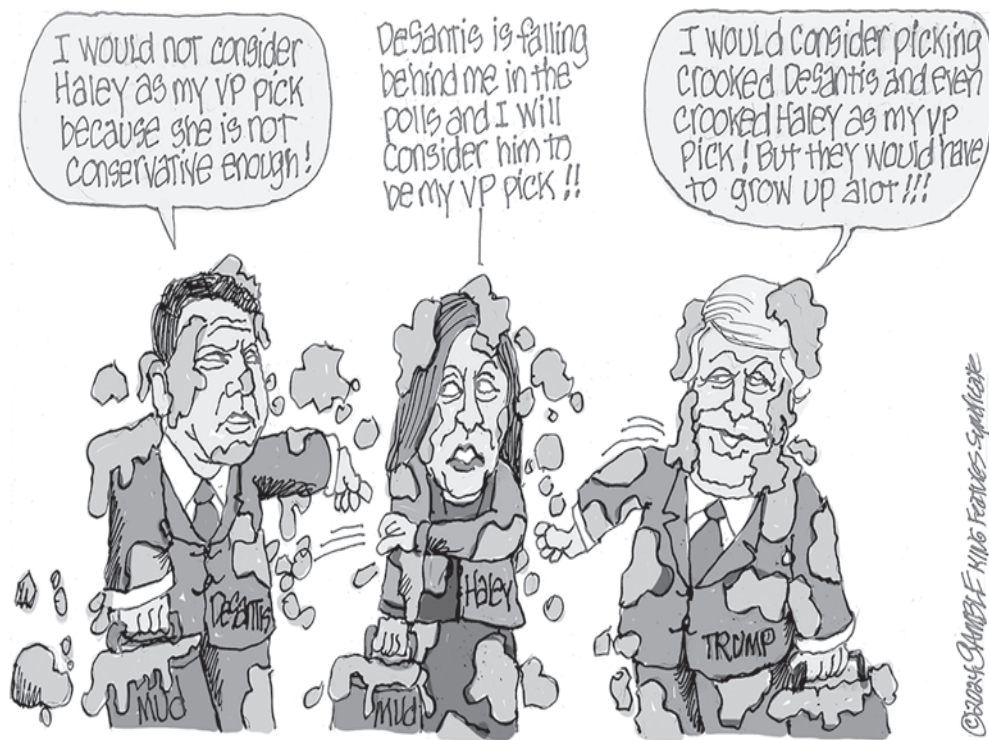
If approved, the bond would add two cents to the District’s current tax rate of \$1.1605. The impact to the average CISD home worth about \$288,000 would be about \$3.17 per month in school taxes. Qualifying senior citizens would not see their tax rate increase if the bond is approved.



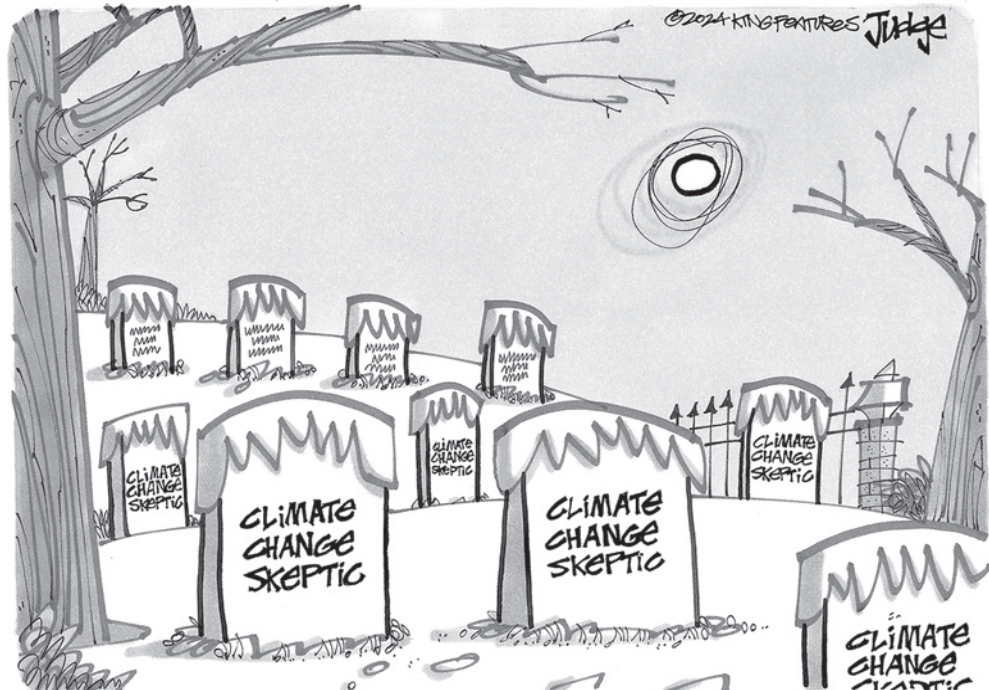
– Photo courtesy Canutillo ISD

Dr. Pedro Galaviz

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### DOZENS OF DEATHS ARE LINKED TO WINTER STORMS:



### District 77

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and has received small donations from individuals who believe in his cause.

Reza feels that he has the most experience in skills needed to be a strong state representative. "During the time I worked with IBM and Eastman Kodak, I had the opportunity to learn how to seek solutions by listening to the needs of my customers, understanding their needs, and putting solutions to work. And I had many successes during that time," he explained.

"I will put my problem-solving skills to use by working with my constituents to prioritize their needs and fighting for them in Austin. If I need to fight for more funding for public schools, I will; if I need to work on strengthening school protection, I will; if I must eliminate barriers so that small businesses and startups can succeed, I will. Whatever the need is, I will be there fighting for them," Reza stressed.

The Democrat primary winner will take office in 2025 and will hold a two-year term with an annual salary of \$7,200. The top vote getter will replace Rep. Evelina 'Lina' Ortega who is not seeking reelection. She has held the office since 2017. Her replacement will represent over 200,000 El Paso county residents.

Some of the duties of the 150 members of the Texas House of Representatives are to consider proposed laws and resolutions, to decide whether to refer proposed constitutional amendments for submission to the voters, to file bills that may become state law, and to appropriate all funds for the operation of state government.

"I believe that Homer provides the voters with an opportunity to select someone who has none of the political ambitions that the other candidates exhibit," said younger brother Tony Reza. Tony Reza is a former CFO for both Canutillo ISD (10 years) and Socorro ISD (13 years). "He offers the voters a candidate who will work hard to come up with solutions for the benefit of all his constituents without the thought of what's in it for him and his political career," he said.

## PSB names new member

### Gitter to fill communications, education role

By Denise Parra

Special to the Courier

EL PASO COUNTY – On Wednesday, Feb. 14, the Public Service Board welcomed its newest member, Anna Giter. She is an Assistant Professor with UTHHealth Houston School of Public Health in El Paso.

Giter will fill the Communication and Education role on the PSB. She succeeds Dr. Kristina Mena who served two four-year terms on the Board.

"Dr. Mena did an outstanding job on the Board and I'm appreciative of her commitment," said EPWater President and CEO John Balliew. "EPWater, the Board and community will benefit from Anna Giter's appointment and her expertise in water resources management and environmental sustainability."

Giter has a Masters and Ph.D. in Water Management and Hydrological Science from Texas A&M University. She works closely with the Community Health Worker network to provide environmental health training and resources for local schools and underserved communities. She was a researcher with the Texas Water Resource Institute for six years, where she led grant-funded programs throughout the state to address water quality improvements.

"My passion is water and when I moved here a few years ago, I wanted to find a way to give back," said Giter. "It's an honor to be selected based on my expertise to help the utility continue providing sustainable water for the future."

EPWater is governed by the PSB, which consists of the Mayor of the City of El Paso and six board members, who are appointed by the City Council. Board members serve four-year terms.



Dr. Anna Giter

– Photo courtesy El Paso Water

## Strange BUT TRUE

By Lucie Winborne

• A UCLA study determined that football players with lower jersey numbers are perceived as slimmer and faster than their teammates with higher jersey digits.

• The Sullivan Ordinance of 1908 in New York City aimed to prohibit women from smoking in public places, sparking not just widespread debate about women's rights, but marking a symbolic battleground for female activists dedicated to gender equality. The law was vetoed by Mayor George B. McClellan Jr. just two weeks later.

• A study of over 10 million births revealed that children are 4.6% more likely to be born in the same month as their mothers.

• When Kentucky Fried Chicken expanded its operations to China in the 1980s, the food chain's iconic slogan – "It's finger-lickin' good!" – was mistakenly, if amusingly, translated in Mandarin to "Eat your fingers off."

• King Charles III was the first British royal to go to a traditional school.

• During the Napoleonic campaigns in the early 19th century, French soldiers observed an odd condition among many local Egyptian men, who reported blood in their urine, leading to the misnomer label "the land of the menstruating men." The actual cause was the parasitic disease schistosomiasis.

• Some scientists make a habit of consuming the organisms they study, a practice that dates to Charles Darwin's sampling of exotic animals such as pumas and iguanas during his voyages.

• The word "gymnastics" comes from the ancient Greek "gymnazein," meaning "to exercise naked."

• Are you a fan of Cheetos? If so, you might want to visit the town of Cheadle in Alberta, Canada, which is the proud possessor of a 20-foot statue of a... Cheeto. Bonus: It even lights up at night!

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### Briefs

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Rochester Institute of Technology

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

– Diana Polk

### State capitals

With the 2024 election deciding who represents us in our state capitals, the personal-finance website WalletHub has released its report on 2024's Best State Capitals to Live In, as well as expert commentary. To identify the most livable seats of state government, WalletHub compared all 50 state capitals across 48

key metrics, ranging from the cost of living to K-12 school-system quality to the number of attractions. Austin was rated 1st in the report. Best vs. Worst:

• Concord, NH has the lowest violent-crime rate per 1,000 residents, which is 13.3 times lower than in Little Rock, AK, the city with the highest.

• Austin, TX has the highest median household income (adjusted for cost of living), which is 2.2 times higher than in Hartford, CT, the city with the lowest.

• Montpelier, VT has the highest share of adults age 25 and older with at least a bachelor's degree, which is 4.3 times higher than in Trenton, NJ, the city with

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8x8 grid of numbers for Cryptiquip puzzle

Cryptiquip puzzle grid with letters: P, A S H, I T C H Y, R O, C A B L E, E, H I, S, F A S C I A, I, S E R I F, H, Y

Cryptiquip puzzle grid with words: ADJUNCT, THEBABE, ETHOS, COUTURE, HASANIN, LOATH, ANDANOTHER, THING, INNER, DET, NEATO, EAT, OGLE, THEYSHALLNOTGROWOLD, JOHANN, DUEL, EON, NOS, UNITI, SET, BREA, PETA, LIVEDONTHEEDGE, ELISHA, ETES, NAHUM, RESIDEIN, PSY, CUP, SMITTEN, NECCO, HAPPILYDIVORCED, ASHOT, ELYSEES, OCR, RDS, CHAPTERI, GHALI, SEAT, CARTON, EVER, S, SLIGHTLY, DOWD, DECO, WAS, EERIE, PGA, EOS, ACTA, ARLISS, AFTERWHILE, ECROCODILE, WOVES, SON, CZECH, VEE, PROTO, FAIRYTALE, ENDING, ACRES, ANTI, AIR, ARIANNA, DEKES, RESTOCK, NEXTGEN

### Cryptiquip Answer

New book about ticks and fleas who couldn't find proper hosts: "Parasites Lost."

Arithmetic puzzle grid: 4 x 7 = 28, 6 22, +, -, ÷, 8 + 5 = 13, ÷, x, +, 3 x 7 = 21, 9 12, 4 14, 15



**Moments in time**  
THE HISTORY CHANNEL

• On Feb. 19, 1906, American industrialist W.K. Kellogg teamed with Charles C. Bolin to found the Battle Creek Toasted Corn Flake Company, now known as the multinational food manufacturer Kellogg's, after 25 years of working for his brother, John Harvey Kellogg, and buying out his in-debt brother's business.

• On Feb. 20, 1935, Danish-Norwegian explorer Caroline Mikkelsen became the first woman to set foot on Antarctica, though whether on the mainland or on an island is disputed. A small coastal mountain discovered that day is named for her.

• On Feb. 21, 1947, Edwin H. Land publicly demonstrated his instant camera, called the Land Camera, which could produce a black-and-white photograph in just 60 seconds. Two years later he put 57 Polaroid Land Cameras in Boston's Jordan Marsh department store before Christmas, and they sold out within the first day after their demonstration.

• On Feb. 22, 1989, Tina Turner won a Grammy award at age 49 for Best Female Rock Vocal Performance for her album "Tina Live in Europe," featuring recordings from her Private Dancer and Break Every Rule tours.

• On Feb. 23, 2011, 77-year-old broadcaster Larry King announced plans to conduct a one-man comedy tour after retiring from his popular talk show on CNN. The new venture was set to begin in April of that year in Connecticut and end in June in Las Vegas.

• On Feb. 24, 1836, showman P.T. Barnum exhibited an African American slave, Joice Heth, with the claim that she was the 161-year-old former nursemaid to George Washington. After her death from natural causes, and a public autopsy by a respected physician who claimed she was no more than 79 or 80, Barnum eventually admitted to the hoax, which was frequently mentioned by his critics and followed him for the remainder of his career.

• On Feb. 25, 1993, the Florida Marlins introduced their 8-foot-tall, 250-pound mascot, Billy the Marlin. Reportedly, the team's original owner, Wayne Huizenga, chose the name for the fan-friendly fish.

# Socorro ISD students offering free income tax preparation to community

By Christy Flores-Jones  
*Special to the Courier*

EL PASO COUNTY – High school students enrolled in Career and Technical Education (CTE) courses in the Socorro Independent School District are partnering with GECU Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) to offer tax preparation services to the local community. The service will be available through April 15 at Americas, Socorro, Pebble Hills, Montwood, El Dorado, Eastlake, and Mission Early College high schools.

The students, along with their instructors, have obtained advanced certification to help community members file their taxes for free. Taxpayers can visit any of the sites between 5 and 7 p.m. to file their 1040EZ, 1040A, and 1040 forms. Tax preparers will ensure the confidentiality and security of all documents.

Individuals must bring:  
• Original and current proof of identification (photo ID) for individual and spouse (VITA cannot file taxes for

- married couples filing separately);
- Original social security card for everyone listed in the income tax return or a social security number verification letter issued by Social Security Administration;
- All W-2 wage and earnings statements;
- 1099-SSA, 1099-R and 1099-G;
- Work expenses;
- Direct deposit information (account number and routing number);
- Form 1098 for any student loans;
- Both spouses must be present to sign required forms to file taxes electronically on married filing jointly tax return;
- Proof of child or dependent care expenses;
- Property tax statements;
- Forms 1095-A, B or C, Affordable Health Care statements;
- Current IRS PIN letter if individual is an identity-theft victim;
- Notice 1444-C, Economic Impact Payment for 2022; and
- Advance Child Tax Credit letter 6416 or 6416-A.

# 17.9 million registered voters ahead of the March 5 primaries

By Alicia Pierce  
*Special to the Courier*

TEXAS—Texas Secretary of State Jane Nelson announced Texas has 17,948,242 million registered voters ahead of the March 5 primaries. The last day to register in time for the primary election was February 5.

“Nearly 18 million Texans are registered to vote, and my office and election officials

across the state are working to make sure all Texas voters are ready to cast a ballot,” said Secretary Nelson.

Early voting for the primary elections begins Tuesday, February 20, and runs through March 1.

“Early voting is a convenient way to cast your ballot and avoid the rush of Election Day,” said Secretary Nelson. “Now is a good time to plan when you will vote and decide what form of photo ID you

will bring to the polls.”

During early voting, Texans may cast a ballot at any polling location in their county of registration.

When casting a ballot in person, voters are required to show one of the following approved forms of photo ID:

- Texas Driver License;
- Texas Personal Identification Card;
- Texas Passport;
- Texas Handgun License;
- Military Identification Card;
- Citizenship Certificate; or
- Texas Election Identification Card.

Voters who do not possess and cannot reasonably obtain one of the seven approved

forms of photo ID can fill out a Reasonable Impediment Declaration at the polls and present an alternative form of identification, such as a utility bill, bank statement, government check, or a voter registration certificate.

During the primary elections, voters will need to indicate in which party primary they want to vote. Voters who signed a petition for a candidate from the Libertarian or Green Parties are not eligible to vote in the primary.

For more information on ID requirements and voting deadlines, please visit [VoteTexas.gov](http://VoteTexas.gov) for official information or call 1-800-252-VOTE.

## Briefs

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the lowest.

“State capitals theoretically should demonstrate the very best of what the state has to offer. In reality, each state capital has its own pros and cons, and some are among the most desirable places to live in their respective states while others are unfortunately among the least. Texas has the best state capital in the country, in part because Austin has the highest median

household income after adjusting for the cost of living, at \$78,183. Austin has one of the highest high school graduation rates and some of the best universities in the country, too. Residents of Austin have access to a multitude of attractions, too.”

– Cassandra Happe  
*WalletHub Analyst*

Visit <https://wallethub.com/edu/best-state-capitals/19030//wallethub.com/edu/states-employers-hiring/101730> for the full report.

– Diana Polk



An estimated 1 in every 5 vehicles on our Texas roads has no automobile insurance, but that's about to change. • TexasSure Vehicle Insurance Verification matches vehicle registration information to insurance policy data to immediately tell law enforcement officers and tax assessor-collectors who's driving without insurance. • So, if you're not covered, better get insured! • To learn more, visit: [www.TexasSure.com](http://www.TexasSure.com)

**TexasSure** catches drivers without insurance.

## Classified Ads

### LEGALS

#### VILLAGE OF VINTON, TX

#### NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARINGS

Public hearings will be held at 6:30pm on Thursday, March 7, 2024 during the Planning & Zoning Commission Meeting, and on Tuesday, March 19, 2024 during the Regular Council Meeting at Vinton Village Hall, 436 E. Vinton Road, Vinton, Texas.

The purpose of the public hearings is to allow any interested persons to appear and testify regarding the following items:

1) A request to

amend the Unified Development Code to allow truck stops and gasoline stations on Town Center thru a Special Use Permit.

2) A request to amend the Unified Development Code to allow food trucks in Town Center, C-1 and C-2 zonings.

Those who are unable to attend may submit their views in writing to the Village Administrator at 436 E. Vinton Road, Vinton, Texas 79821. Persons with disabilities that wish to attend this meeting should contact City Hall at (915) 886-5104 to arrange for assistance. Individuals who

require auxiliary aids or services for this meeting should contact City Hall at least two days before the meeting so that appropriate arrangements can be made.

MEETING WILL BE HELD IN PERSON, BUT THE PUBLIC CAN ACCESS THE MEETING THROUGH THE ZOOM.US PLATFORM AT THE FOLLOWING URL:

LINK: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/2520023141?pwd=WVRDZDIFR3ZHR3FVJUlJL3ZLWTB6dz09>

THE VILLAGE PROVIDES TWO-WAY COMMUNICATION FOR MEMBERS OF

THE PUBLIC TO COMMUNICATE WITH THE COMMISSION DURING THE PUBLIC HEARING BY CALLING THE FOLLOWING NUMBER: +1 346 248 7799 AND THEN DIAL IN THE MEETING ID 252 002 3141 AND PASSCODE: 12345 FOLLOWED BY THE POUND SIGN (#). THE MEETING WILL OPEN AT 6:25 PM ON EACH OF THE MEETING DATES SO THAT PEOPLE MAY START JOINING. THE MEETING WILL START AT 6:30 PM.

Andrea N. Carrillo  
*Village Administrator*

WTCC: 02-22-24



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

their last full measure of devotion.

Orloff notes that about three months after its arrival in England, 34 of the 100th's 36 crews had been shot down. The tour of duty was 25 missions, but the aviators made it through just 11 on average.

In contrast to the British who bombed at night, the U.S. engaged in daylight bombing that was supposed to be precision in nature. Without protection from fighter planes, which wasn't available at the beginning, this made the B-17s sitting ducks. Sometimes the missions involved hitting industrial sites, sometimes they targeted cities themselves and German morale, sometimes they were designed to bait the Luftwaffe into combat so it could be degraded.

With the introduction of the long-range P-51 fighters that could properly defend the B-17s, the balance of the air war shifted decisively in 1944.

There's been a long-running debate about the morality and efficacy of the Allied bombing campaign. There's no doubt that there was a

real moral cost to the campaign and its wanton destruction. Unfortunately, though, there was no easy way to take down a totalitarian power that had come to dominate the European continent, and for a long time, strategic bombing was our only serious means to attack the Nazis directly.

As for the efficacy, if nothing else, the campaign diverted massive Nazi resources to air defense. But it achieved more than that.

"By 1945," military historian Cathal Nolan writes, "the bombers would destroy Germany's transportation systems and demolish most vital war industries, especially oil supply and refining, and effectively end fighter production."

He continues, "Neither Germany nor Japan could by the end of their respective wars move military supplies, complete production or deploy weapons and divisions as they wanted, even inside their homelands."

Young American men gave their all in harrowing conditions to make this contribution to victory. "Masters" is their story as it deserves to be told.

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

Use ablation only if meds are intolerable

DEAR DR. ROACH: I'm a 67-year-old man who developed typical atrial flutter two years ago, but I haven't had any symptoms that I am aware of. I don't have a history of heart problems. My heart rate was 117 bpm while experiencing atrial flutter. My cardiologist recommended an ablation, as that can be curative. He specializes in electrophysiology. The ablation was successful, and my heart rate was in the low 60s afterward. Six months ago, atrial fibrillation (AFib) showed up, but again, there weren't any real symptoms for me. My heart rate is nice and low, and I never really feel any problems... perhaps some fatigue. But at 67, I can't always distinguish this from the feeling of getting older. I'm on Xarelto and a low dose of carvedilol. My blood pressure is good. Is it worth having an ablation of the pulmonary veins to try and stop AFib? Or is it better to just live with an irregular heartbeat? Apparently, it's best to have an ablation sooner rather than later, so I'll need to decide as soon as possible. — D.S.



Atrial flutter is an abnormally fast heart rhythm that starts in one of the top chambers of the heart, usually the right atrium. The heart rate in the atria is very fast, typically 240-300 bpm, which is faster than any adult heart can beat. It is common that every other impulse in the atria gets transmitted to the ventricle, so a pulse rate in the range of 120-150 bpm would be typical.

Catheter ablation prevents the progression of the fast impulse to the rest of the heart, and it is successful 65% to 100% of the time in various studies. Unfortunately, studies have also shown that somewhere between 7% and 44% of those who had a successful catheter ablation for atrial flutter will later have a recurrence – or more commonly develop AFib.

This is called a chaotic arrhythmia and can cause a fast heart rate, but more importantly, the lack of coordinated heart contractions in the atria can predispose people to the development of a clot in the atrium. The clot can then float downstream where it can lodge and cause damage, specifically a stroke. Each year, a percentage of 5% of people with AFib will develop a stroke without treatment.

Treatment is designed to relieve symptoms and reduce stroke risk – your cardiologist has already achieved both of these aims pretty well. The carvedilol is a beta blocker that helps keep the heart rate under control, and Xarelto is effective at reducing stroke risk.

In my opinion, there isn't a need to consider another treatment like an ablation, which has a small but real potential for serious side effects. In fact, it is not 100% effective; about 70% to 75% of patients are symptom-free a year after the procedure. Many people need to continue anticoagulants like Xarelto even after a successful catheter ablation.

I recommend ablation for people who cannot tolerate medication treatment for their symptoms.

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

AMERICAN LUNG ASSOCIATION of Texas

**YOUR Gift IS A WAY TO CONQUER LUNG DISEASE**

Find out how you can help ...

[www.texaslung.org](http://www.texaslung.org)

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.

**1-800-LUNG-USA**



**Moore Texas by Roger Moore**

February 26, 1888: The less than beautiful Goddess of Liberty is placed atop the State Capital.

**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: Y equals O

HIQ MYYU WMYSV VNLUT  
 WHX ZFIWT QCY LYSFXH'V  
 ZNHX BKYBIK CYTVT:  
 "BWKWTVNIT FYTV."

Answer Page 4

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**Weekly SUDOKU**

by Linda Thistle

	1			3	4			
5			1				2	3
		2		9			5	
3			7					4
		4		8			1	
	8				9	5		
	9			7		1		
		1			5			6
8			2					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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**The records center has caught up**

**VETERANS POST**

by Freddy Groves

The National Personnel Records Center, part of the National Archives and Records Administration, has finally cleared up a huge, four-year backlog of work. Caused by the Covid pandemic, at one time they had a list of 600,000 requests for records.

From what we hear, it was a crazy time, with only a certain number of emergency personnel allowed to work in the building at once to take care of must-have requests for things like documents for funerals and medical emergencies.

Now allowed back to work, they've dealt with longer hours for staff, working weekends, additional staff and shifts, new technology and much more. At this point they've caught up, and ideally any normal requests for separation records should be handled within a week

or so, with other types of records taking approximately 20 days. Meanwhile, they receive over 4,000 new requests each day. That's over a million per year.

The vast majority of the records at the record center are paper copies that must be found by hand. They've been busy digitizing all the files they can find, including asking the VA to digitize all the military service records they hold. In addition, the eVetRecs portal has been upgraded to handle requests for files online, and there is now a phone line to check the status of orders.

The fire of 1973 continues to impact efforts to produce records. With 16-18 million files reduced to ash, it's been necessary over the years to reconstruct information from various sources and locations to produce the requested files, such as DD Form 214. Some of the alternate records they can search are final pay vouchers and medical/hospital records.

Staff at the records

center should be applauded for their work under less than ideal conditions. I personally wondered if they would ever catch up, even with their plan of action and status report one year ago, but they have.

If you need to request service records, go to [vetrecs.archives.gov/VeteranRequest/home.html](http://vetrecs.archives.gov/VeteranRequest/home.html) and file your order online.

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• To get a really good shine on your windows, try using newspaper instead of a paper towel. Spray the window with your cleaner and just use the paper like a towel. Practically no lint!

• "We save the bread ends and any too-hard or molding bread in our freezer until we can get down to the lake and feed the birds and fish. The ducks especially love it." – E.F. in Wisconsin

• Drop a couple of crackers (saltines) in your sugar canister if you have problems with clumping. The crackers will keep it from clumping. Just remember they are there if you dip a measuring cup in the canister. You don't want a bunch of cracker crumbs in your sweet recipe!

• To stretch your gravy, add a spoonful (or two) of bouillon mix to a glass of hot water. Add enough cold water to a tablespoon of cornstarch to make a loose paste, and add both the bouillon and the cornstarch to your regular gravy. Mix well.

• If you have a hard time skinning fish that comes "skin-on," like salmon, try freezing it just long enough to firm up the flesh in order to easily peel it off or trim it.

• "Keep a container or baggie of wet wipes with your shoes so it's easy to give them a quick wipe-down either before you put them on or before you put them away. They will always stay nice and clean." – E.W. and V.O.

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		-		22
+			-		÷
	+		+		14
÷		x		+	
	x		-		12
4		14		15	

**DIFFICULTY: ★★**

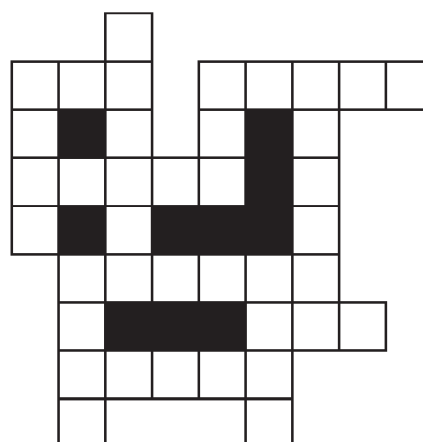
★ Moderate ★★ Difficult  
 ★★★ GO FIGURE!

Answer Page 4

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**FEAR KNOT**  
 By: rj johnson  
 DOUBT? ...OR DARE!

- RYF
- CAFISA
- ♥EFSRI
- ♥HRCA
- ABOHIP
- RIE
- IFHS
- CYHIT
- ♥SHA
- ARCASE
- LECBA
- FYFI



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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