



## NEWSBRIEFS

### Military retirement

With May being Military Appreciation Month and Memorial Day approaching, the personal-finance website WalletHub has released its report on the *Best & Worst States for Military Retirees in 2024*, along with its Memorial Day Facts infographic and expert commentary. To help our troops plan their years after service, WalletHub compared the 50 states and the District of Columbia across 28 key indicators of retirement-friendliness for veterans. The data set ranges from job opportunities for veterans to housing affordability to the quality of VA hospitals. Texas was rated 28th in the report, ranking (1-Best; 25-Avg.):

- 43rd – Veterans per Capita;
- 5th – Number of VA Health Facilities per Number of Veterans;
- 28th – Percent of Homeless Veterans;
- 35th – Veteran Job Opportunities;
- 22nd – Housing Affordability;
- 20th – Percent of Veteran-Owned Businesses;
- 13th – Number of VA Benefits-Administration Facilities per Number of Veterans; and
- 30th – Quality of VA Hospitals.

### Memorial Day Facts

- 3.5M – Number of people expected to travel by plane over Memorial Day weekend (up 5% over 2023).
- 818 – Number of hot dogs consumed every second from Memorial Day to Labor Day (seven billion total).
- 15 to 80 Percent Off – Discount shoppers can expect during Memorial Day weekend sales.
- 100M+ – Number of households worldwide that will watch the National Memorial Day parade broadcast on TV.

“Transitioning from military to civilian life isn’t easy, but the best states for military retirees make that adjustment as smooth as possible. In addition to providing the conditions necessary for our veterans to thrive financially, they also have ample resources for taking care of

See BRIEFS, Page 2

*A man is seldom as smart as his thinks, or as dumb as his mother-in-law says he is.*

– Quips & Quotes



– Photos by Alfredo Vasquez

**LONG-TERM PROJECT** – The Rio Bosque Park is in a wetlands ecosystem initiative that began in the 1990s to revive a dried-out river bend just east of the Ysleta Port of Entry. The idea got off the ground when UTEP’s Center for Environmental Resource Management took over the site and named John Sproul the park’s manager. Sproul, who is still with the park, is shown above in a 2014 photo.

## Conservationists, utility, seek alternate Border Highway plan

*Opponents ask for route that does not impact Rio Bosque and other historical, cultural sites*

By Alfredo Vasquez  
Special to the Courier

EL PASO COUNTY – Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) is developing plans to extend El Paso County’s Border Highway further east, all the way to Fabens. TxDOT officials reported that they are currently studying three roadway possibilities, and all three options run adjacent to the revived Rio Bosque

wetlands park. Those plans have many local conservation advocates worried.

TxDOT officials noted that the region needs more road capacity and that they are in the early planning phase to improve mobility in the Mission Valley, which consists of clusters of small communities.

Mission Valley is named for the area’s three original Spanish missions – Ysleta, Socorro, and San Elizario. Ysleta is now within the El Paso city limits and just north of Rio Bosque

Park, with the Socorro and San Elizario municipalities south of the park.

Mission Valley is the county’s most important agricultural area which is watered by the Rio Grande. It is also home to Ysleta del Sur Pueblo (Tigua Tribe), one of three federally recognized tribes in Texas. TxDOT’s concepts also have the highway passing by the Tigua’s tribal lands.

The current Border Highway, built in the 1990’s, runs from Downtown El Paso through the county’s south-central and southeast neighborhoods, along the Rio Grande and border wall, and then ends in the Ysleta area.

Jennifer Wright, TxDOT spokesperson for the El Paso office, said that if a project comes out of this border highway study, it will take years

See ROUTE, Page 4



**CORPORATE OPPOSITION** – Local utility company, El Paso Water, helps manage the Rio Bosque wetlands park. Company officials recently came out against the three Border Highway options proposed in TxDOT’s route study. They maintain that the highway could impact the utility’s nearby Bustamante wastewater treatment plant, above, as well as the Rio Bosque Park wetlands.

# Biden disastrously misplayed the politics of Gaza



It's bad enough that President Joe Biden is playing politics with the war in Gaza, but even worse – at least for his purposes – that he is doing it so poorly.

Biden may imagine that he is maneuvering with incredible skill – subtly balancing geopolitics, alliance management and domestic imperatives –when he is really upsetting all sides in the course of further undermining his already-rickety presidency.

This is less Otto von Bismarck than Jimmy Carter minus the Camp David Accords.

A couple of centuries after Machiavelli warned against the allure of a fence-straddling neutrality and counseled instead being “either a true friend or downright enemy,” Joe Biden is sort of, but not completely with Israel and certainly not with

Hamas, but not in favor of the terror group getting destroyed with all due dispatch, either.

The way Bill Clinton once put it in the aftermath of Sept. 11 is that “when people are insecure, they’d rather have somebody who is strong and wrong than someone who’s weak and right.”

Biden is weak and wrong, and he’s not doing himself any favors.

First of all, he should want the war to end as quickly as possible. As long as it continues, he’ll be caught in a crossfire on his own side between the pro-Hamas left and pro-Israel moderates. The easiest way to reduce the intensity around the issue would be for the war to end, but the administration’s jawboning of Israel has stayed the hand of the Jewish state and prolonged this phase of the conflict.

Also, when presented with a choice between placating a fraction of public sentiment or siding with the majority, it’s usually the smart play to go with the majority. Yet, Biden – desperate to stop his bleeding among young voters who are more pro-Palestinian than the rest of the electorate – can’t resist the pull of the fraction.

It’s true that young people look at the conflict differently. According to a New York Times survey of the swing states, voters ages 18-29 sympathize with the Palestinians over the Israelis, 44-to-23, while every other age group is with the Israelis,

See LOWRY, Page 7

## Food for thought By Dr. Glenn Mollette

### Memorial Day Weekend

# Savor your time

Summer officially begins this weekend and most of us love summer.

Millions of Americans will enjoy having a weekend free from work next weekend. However, not everyone will be vacationing. Keep in mind that many Americans will keep the convenient stores, grocery stores, restaurants and many retail stores open for your shopping pleasure. Many of these hard-working people will have a day off but it may not be Monday or even during the weekend. They are a hard-working group in our country who will make it possible for you to be out and about having a fun weekend. Let them know you appreciate their work. Be kind to them. Tip them as you are able and don't give them any grief. Most likely they would like to be out enjoying the holiday just like you.

can drive 65-70 and arrive at your destination just the same as driving 75-80. Take your time and converse some with your passengers. Enjoy the drive and scenery. There are lots of crazy drivers on the nation's highway. People will pass you going 90 mph. Motorcycles will weave in and out of traffic. People will ride your bumper and honk their horns at you. Let them go and focus on your own driving. So many people will be on the highway this weekend that it's critical to not be in a hurry. Leave early so you don't have to hurry. Be sure you are packed the day before you start out. Have everything ready before you go to bed at night. Don't try to do anything extra the day you are traveling. Cemetery time. It's

nice to have all the graves decorated on Memorial Day. The main point is to decorate your family graves when you can. Your deceased family would not want you to have a heart attack over decorating their grave. This is one reason why some people are cremated today – so the remaining family won't have to stress out about grave maintenance and decoration although, most choose cremation because of cost. You can put flowers on a grave in April or June. Why not select an off day when you can really take the time to visit your family graves and update your remembrances? If you decorate in a hurry then you are going to miss out

on the joy of doing it right. Honor and remember our soldiers this weekend. Remember those who paid the ultimate price so that you and I can be out and about enjoying the holiday.

Whatever you do this weekend, soak in your time. Wherever you are, be all there and savor the moment.

Glenn Mollette is a graduate of numerous schools including Georgetown College, Southern and Lexington Seminaries in Kentucky. He is the author of "Uncommon Sense" and 12 other books. His column is published weekly in over 600 publications in all 50 states. Learn more at [www.glenmollette.com](http://www.glenmollette.com) or [www.facebook.com/glenmollette](http://www.facebook.com/glenmollette).

### Briefs

From Page 1

military retirees' physical and mental health. South Carolina is the best state for military retirees, in part because it has many policies in place to help veterans. The state allows businesses to give preferential hiring to veterans, offers academic credit for military service, and has veteran treatment courts, which give services like treatment and mentoring to veterans in the criminal justice system. South Carolina doesn't tax military

pensions, either. In addition, the Palmetto State has the fourth-best VA hospitals in the country, and the fourth-most veteran-owned businesses per capita."

– Cassandra Happe  
WalletHub Analyst

Visit <https://wallethub.com/edu/best-states-for-military-retirees/3915> for the full report.

– Diana Polk

### Nat's little lamb

Natalie Renot, of Wiggins, MS, known for rescuing animals in need, has a new patient to care for – a lamb born with five legs who she

calls Spider-Lamb. When she found her lamb he was in dire need but he has been responding to the care she and local veterinarians have provided. As she tells it, "I am still having to force-feed him, but I did stand him up and he walked a little bit, so I call that progress." Veterinarian Jason Gulas confirmed Natalie's assessment, noting that "he definitely has some abnormalities. He might not be normal compared to other lambs, but I think that he will live a normal-for-him life,"

– John Grimaldi

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— Photo courtesy San Elizario ISD

**NICE REWARD** – Teacher Incentive Allotment recipients, from left, include Michelle Delgado, Talia Reyes, Jessica Ortega, Claudia Murphy and Bianca Mendoza all received significant checks for their teaching abilities. The checks are part of the Texas Education Agency’s efforts to recruit and retain top teachers.

# Teachers in San Elizario ISD receive state incentives for excellence

By Jeannie Meza-Chavez  
Special to the Courier

**SAN ELIZARIO** – During a recent San Elizario Independent School District meeting, the Board of Trustees honored teachers for their commitment to improving student

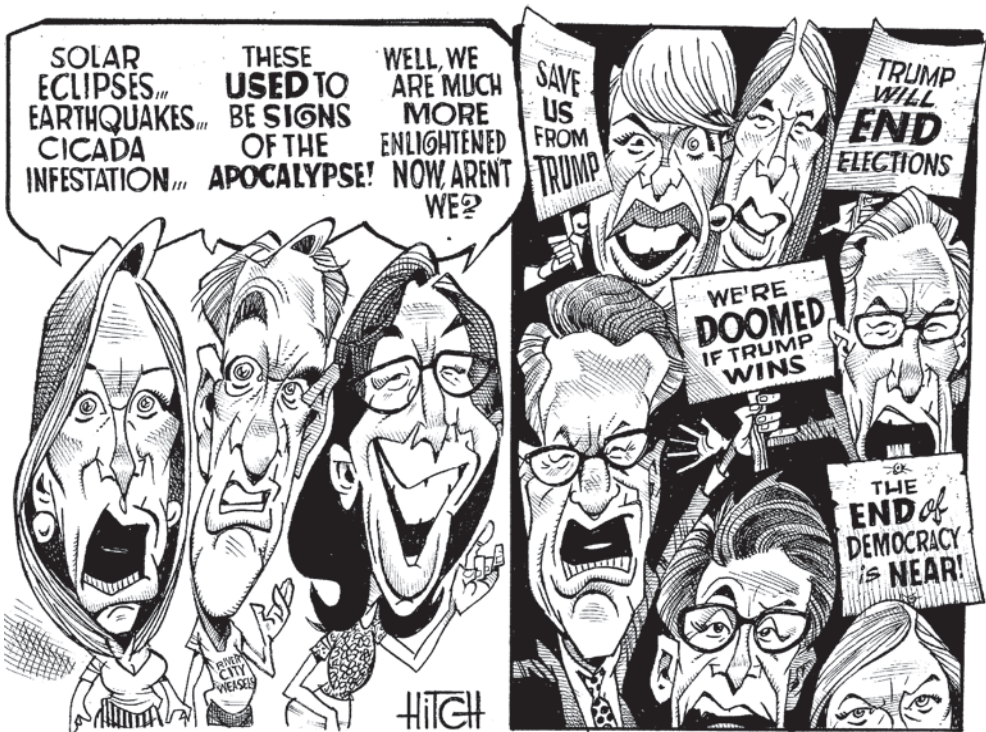
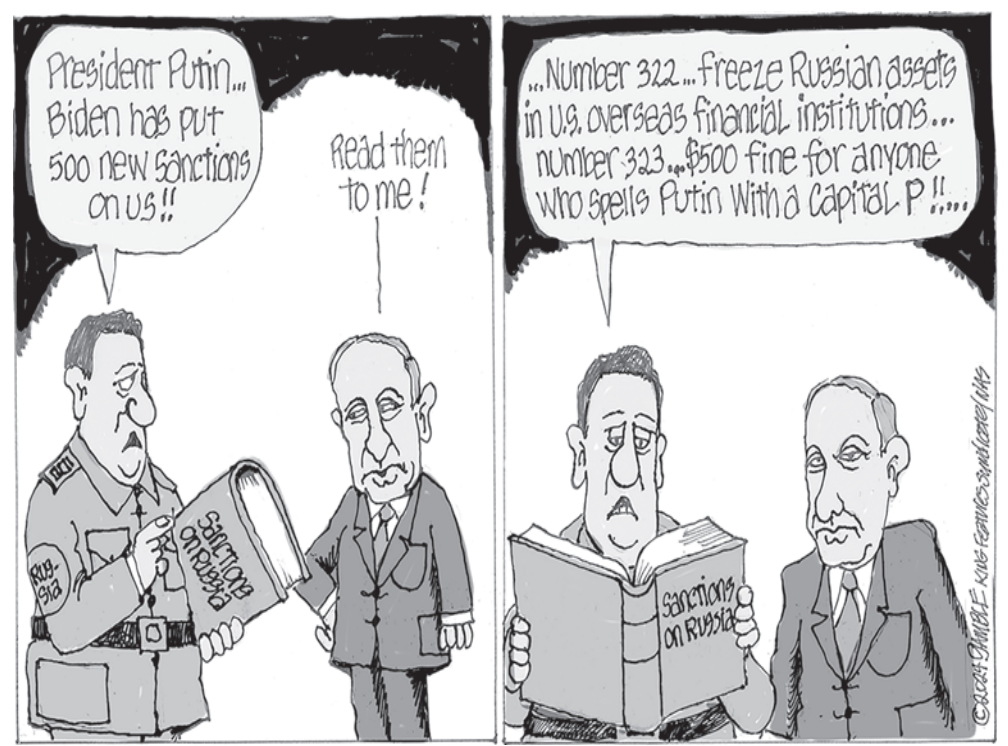
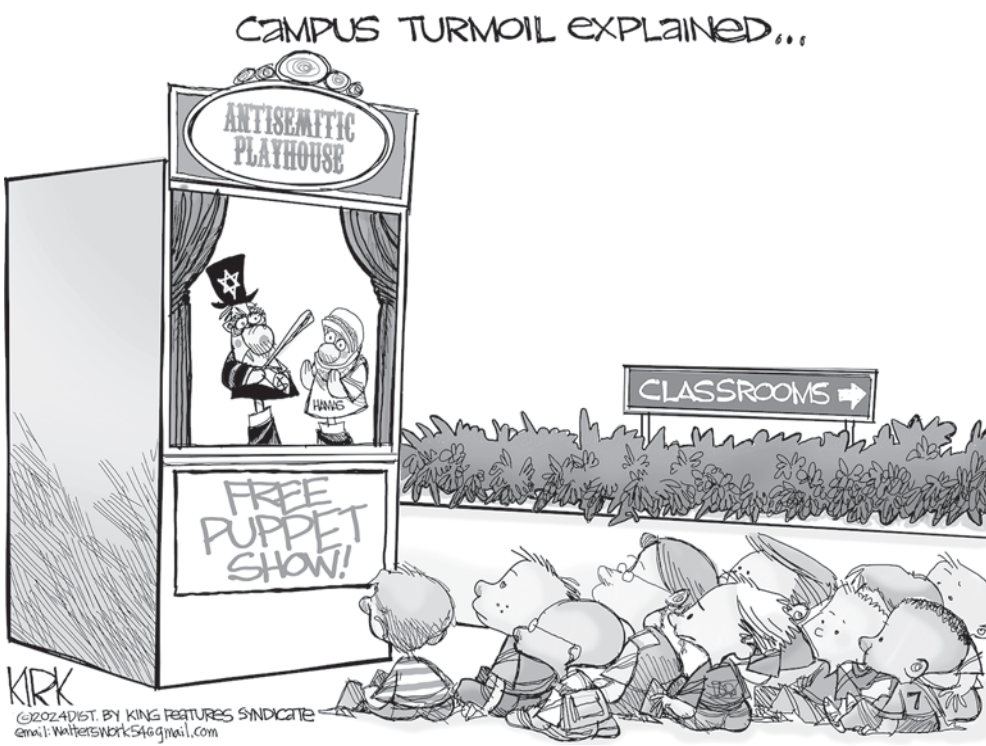
outcomes through their participation in the Teacher Incentive Allotment program (TIA) run by the Texas Education Agency (TEA). The TIA program offers educators a pathway to a six-figure salary by demonstrating exceptional classroom performance.

Lorenzo G. Loya Elementary School teachers Bianca Mendoza

and Michelle Delgado received \$14,203 each and have been honored as exemplary educators. Jessica Ortega received \$7,101, and she has been honored as recognized. Their dedication to fostering a positive learning environment and facilitating student progress has been instrumental in achieving this recognition.

Talia Reyes and Claudia Murphy, teachers from Lorenzo G. Alarcon Elementary School, were awarded \$7,759 for their impactful teaching methods and commitment to student success. And Maria Carrillo from Alfonso Borrego, Sr. Elementary

See TEACHERS, Page 5





– Photos by Alfredo Vasquez

**FINDING THE RIGHT PATH** – TxDOT is moving forward with expansion plans for the Border Highway in the southeast part of El Paso County. Conservationists are advocating that the route should steer clear of the Rio Bosque wetlands. One of the Rio Bosque Park entrances, above, invites visitors to take a walk and experience a landscape that thrived before people settled in the region.

## Route

From Page 1

to secure funding and go through the permitting process. She said that the current concept maps are nothing more than ideas from engineers about what options would be “reasonable and feasible” to address traffic issues in the area and that, for now, there is no “imminent threat” to the Rio Bosque wetlands.

Nonetheless, several individuals showed up to a recent public meeting held by TxDOT to display the proposed options. The overwhelming message from most attendees, however, was “Don’t build a highway near our wetland.”

The Rio Bosque wetlands is a 372-acre park managed by the University of Texas at El Paso (UTEP) and El Paso Water, the local water utility. The restored wetland ecosystem efforts began in the 1990’s to revive a dried-out river bend just east of the Ysleta Port of Entry. Today, the wetlands attract hundreds of bird species, and local universities use the park for a variety of fieldwork studies.

Rio Bosque is one of a handful of wetlands restoration projects along the Rio Grande in Southern New Mexico and West Texas, which environmental scientists compare to a “string of pearls” that improves wildlife connectivity across the region.

Conservation advocate Jon Rezendes stated in a recent news story that a highway next to Rio Bosque would be a “death trap” for birds and flying insects and that it would functionally kill the Rio Bosque Park experiment.

“Rio Bosque is a true rewilding success story,” Rezendes asserted, referring to the process of increasing biodiversity and restoring the natural processes of an

ecosystem, including the reintroduction of native species. “For me, the idea – of returning the land to its natural state in any way we can – is beautiful,” he added.

When oversight of the Rio Bosque park first started in 1973, it was a dry patch of land overtaken by invasive salt cedar trees. But local conservationists envisioned a wetlands like the ones that once lined the banks of the Rio Grande.

The real work to create the envisioned wetland park at Rio Bosque got off the ground when UTEP’s Center for Environmental Resource Management signed on to manage the site, and it named John Sproul to serve as the park’s manager. A few years later, he would be joined by assistant park manager Sergio Samaniego, a UTEP graduate.

The biggest challenge was securing water to fill the wetlands, especially in dry years, according to Sproul. He added that finally UTEP and El Paso Water worked out a way to provide treated wastewater from its nearby treatment plant to augment the scarce irrigation water that the park gets from the Rio Grande and pump wells.

Today, those efforts are paying off as native vegetation like cottonwood and willow trees are now well-established and the park has become a popular spot for birders who keep a running list online of their sightings.

An array of birds have flocked to the park, which the border fence separates from the Rio Grande. According to a recent report, the threatened species western yellow-billed cuckoo, which migrates from Central and South America and had not been sighted for years in El Paso, was recently spotted once again at Rio Bosque.

While the park wetlands was taking shape in the late 1990s, transportation planners were also studying the area.

TxDOT completed a feasibility study in 1997 that laid out conceptual designs for a highway that would stretch 20 miles between the Zaragoza bridge, two miles north of Rio Bosque, and the border crossing at Fabens.

The study sat dormant for years, until TxDOT revisited the study in 2013 and 2014 and created an updated Border Highway East Corridor Study. The conceptual route for the highway ran northeast of the Rio Bosque wetlands.

Meanwhile, the communities around Rio Bosque are changing. Farmland are gradually being developed for housing, bringing more cars to the area’s aging roads. Commercial truck traffic from Juárez into El Paso at the Ysleta-Zaragoza International Bridge steadily increases.

“With the increase in population and commercial traffic and activity at the port of entry, the congestion is getting worse and worse,” El Paso County Commissioner Iliana Holguin commented recently. Holguin represents Precinct 3, which includes Socorro and the Lower Valley. “We have tremendous mobility needs in that area, but we also have to protect the resources that are there,” she said.

The utility company, El Paso Water, which helps manage the park, recently came out against the three concepts from TxDOT’s study. Water company officials purported that the highway could impact the utility’s nearby wastewater treatment plant and Rio Bosque. In a statement, utility officials said that all three options would “pose serious environmental threats.”

Gilbert Trejo, the local water utility’s vice president of operations, pointed out that Rio Bosque is one of the few and unique public open spaces in the Lower Valley where families can enjoy trails, go bird watching, and learn what El Paso looked like prior to modern development.

## Strange BUT TRUE

By Lucie Winborne

- Pass the Beano! In Japan, they used to hold contests to see who could fart the longest and loudest. The winner received a prize and high honors.

- Leeches have 32 brains.

- In June 2017, a tire shop in Fort Worth, Texas, was robbed so often that the owner bought a guard dog. But that didn’t solve the problem – the next time the shop was robbed, the intruders stole the dog!

- Native Americans planted “Three Sisters” – corn, beans and squash – together for their mutual benefit. Corn provided a structure for the beans to climb, beans provided nitrogen to the soil, and squash spread along the ground, preventing the growth of weeds.

- PayPal once accidentally credited a man with \$92 quadrillion.

- Andrew Myrick, a storekeeper on a Minnesota Native American reservation, allegedly suggested that starving natives eat grass. While the quote’s validity has been debated, he was notably found dead on the first day of the Dakota War of 1862 with grass stuffed in his mouth.

- The average man spends about one year of his life staring at women.

- A tattoo needle doesn’t actually inject ink. It’s just coated with pigment and your skin absorbs the color via capillary action.

- In 2014, 13-year-old Danielle Lei, a Girl Scout in San Francisco, became the first Girl Scout to make news by selling cookies outside a marijuana dispensary, unloading an impressive 117 boxes in just two hours.

Thought for the Day: “You must believe in yourself enough to be the person now that others will remember you for later.”

– Greg Plitt

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### CryptoQuip Answer

Very peculiar body parts at the sides of folks’ heads that are shaped like chunks of baked bread: ear loaves.

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# Frescas new principal at Josefa L. Sambrano ES

By Jeannie Meza-Chavez  
Special to the Courier



— Photo courtesy San Elizario ISD  
**Susana Frescas**

SAN ELIZARIO, TX – The San Elizario Independent School District (SEISD) has appointed Ms. Susana Frescas as the new principal at Josefa L. Sambrano Elementary School. Frescas holds a Master of Education and a Bachelor of Interdisciplinary Studies.

Frescas has served in many education roles. She began as a bilingual classroom teacher, moving forward to being a curriculum coach, instructional facilitator, and assistant principal.

Frescas' tenure as a Bilingual/ESL Coordinator and Instructional Program Administrator honed her skills in supporting students. In addition to her extensive professional background, she has training in gifted and talented education, Response to Intervention (RTI), 504 accommodations, Kagan Cooperative Learning, and Positive Behavior Interventions and Support (PBIS).

"Ms. Frescas exemplifies the essence of progress and academic focus," said Associate Superintendent Dr. Rogelio Segovia. Josefa L. Sambrano Elementary School has 609 kindergarteners, first and second graders, and approximately thirty-three teachers

## Teachers

From Page 3

School received \$6,853 for her contributions to student growth and achievement.

The TIA program operates on the principle of giving incentives and rewards to educators that demonstrate measurable improvements in student success. By aligning

teacher compensation with student performance, the program not only acknowledges teachers' hard work and dedication but also encourages continuous professional development and innovation in teaching practices. The TEA is making significant strides in attracting and retaining high-quality educators with programs like TIA.

## Moments in time

THE HISTORY CHANNEL

- On May 20, 1506, the Italian explorer Christopher Columbus died in Valladolid, Spain. The first European to explore the Americas since 10th-century Vikings set up colonies in Greenland and Newfoundland, he traveled the West Indies, South America and Central America, but died feeling he had been mistreated by his patron, King Ferdinand of Spain.
- On May 21, 2000, the bones of President James Garfield's spinal column, showing where one of two assassin's bullets had passed through it in 1881, were displayed for a final day at the National Museum of Health and Medicine in Washington, D.C., in an exhibit featuring medical oddities from the

museum's archives.

- On May 22, 1856, South Carolina Representative Preston Brooks, wielding a cane he used after suffering injuries in a duel fueled by a political debate years before, savagely beat Massachusetts Senator Charles Sumner during a meeting of Congress when tensions escalated over the expansion of slavery.
- On May 23, 1900, Army sergeant William Harvey Carney became the first Black American serviceman to receive the Medal of Honor, for heroically protecting the American flag during the Civil War.
- On May 24, 1797, Thomas Jefferson wrote to his friend Angelica Church with a casual inquiry about their mutual friend, Maria Cosway, a woman who'd once captured his heart and inspired a romantically themed essay.

Her marriage, his desire to maintain integrity and their physical distance had helped cool his hopeless passion for her some years before.

- On May 25, 1977, China's communist government lifted its decade-old ban on the writings of William Shakespeare, providing additional evidence that the Cultural Revolution initiated by Mao Zedong in 1966 had ended. Officials also announced that a Chinese-language edition of the Bard's works would soon be available.

- On May 26, 1962, clarinetist Bernard Stanley "Acker" Bilk's instrumental single "Stranger On the Shore" provided an initial, but false, hint of the British Invasion to come when it went to No. 1 on the Billboard Hot 100. Despite its popularity, it was Bilk's only significant hit.

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## Public Notice / Aviso al Público

### Anthony ISD Summer Meal Program 2023

### Programa de Servicio de Alimentos para el Verano 2023

Anthony Independent School District is participating in the Seamless Summer Option. Meals will be provided to all children 18 and under without charge and are the same for all children regardless of race, color, national origin, sex, age or disability, and there will be no discrimination in the course of the meal service. Meals will be provided at the below school sites, with dates and times as follows:

*Distrito escolar Independiente de Anthony está participando en el Programa de Servicios Alimentos de Verano. Las comidas se proporcionará a todos los niños de 0 a 18 años sin cargo y por igual a todos los niños sin importar raza, color, origen nacional, sexo, edad o discapacidad, y no habrá ningún tipo de discriminación en el servicio de comida. Las comidas se proporcionará en los sitios y horarios siguientes:*

<u>Campus/Facility</u>	<u>Address</u>	<u>Dates (Mon. - Thurs. only)</u>
<u>Campus/Instalaciones</u>	<u>Dirección</u>	<u>Fechas (Sólo los Lunes - Jueves)</u>
Anthony MS	813 6th St.	June 5 - July 21*
Anthony ES	610 6th St.	June 5 - June 19*
Enrique Miramontes (Triangle) Park	1015 Franklin St.	June 5 - July 21*
*Breakfast/Desayuno: 7:45 a.m. - 9:45 a.m.; Lunch/Comida: 12:00 (Noon) - 2:00 p.m.		
Torres Altos Park	3009 Bariloche Dr.	June 5 - July 21**
Wet 'N' Wild Waterworld	8804 S. Desert Blvd.	June 5 - July 21**
Gallegos Park	7361 Bosque Rd.	June 5 - July 21**
**Lunch only/Comida solamente: Noon - 1 p.m.		

All Locations Closed / Todos Ubicaciones Cerrado: June 19 and July 3 - July 7, 2023  
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Fechas y tiempos puede ser extendido por el distrito. Información: (915) 886-6542

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**Para presentar una queja sobre discriminación, escriba o llame inmediatamente a:**

USDA, Director, Office of Adjudication  
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#### Request for Qualifications 2024-004

#### Municipal Court Judge Services

Notice is hereby given that the Village of Vinton is accepting sealed applications for a two (2) year-term Municipal Court Judge, which runs from January 1 in odd-numbered years through December 31 of even numbered years. In this case, because there is a vacancy in the term office, the appointment will

be for the reminder of the unexpired term of office only, until December 31, 2024.

The contract specifications may be obtained from the Village of Vinton website under "Opportunities" or directly from the Village Administrator.

Sealed applications must be received by the Village of Vinton no later than 9:00 a.m. on June 17, 2024 at the Village City Hall, located at 436 E. Vinton Road, Vinton Texas, 79821. Applications received after the due date will not be considered by the Village Council.

All applications must be submitted in a sealed envelope marked:

#### MUNICIPAL JUDGE SERVICES RFQ #2024-004.

The Village Council will consider the appointment at its regular Council meeting to be held on July 16, 2024.

The Village of Vinton reserves the right to reject any or all applications, to waive any irregularities or informalities or both in any application, and to make an award in any manner, consistent with the law and deemed to be in the best interest of the Village.

All inquiries concerning this RFQ must be made in writing and addressed to the address or email below, with email being the preferred method.

Village of Vinton Andrea Nichole Carrillo, MPA Village Administrator 436 E. Vinton, Rd. Vinton, TX 79821 acarrillo@vintontx.us

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

Andrea N. Carrillo  
Village Administrator

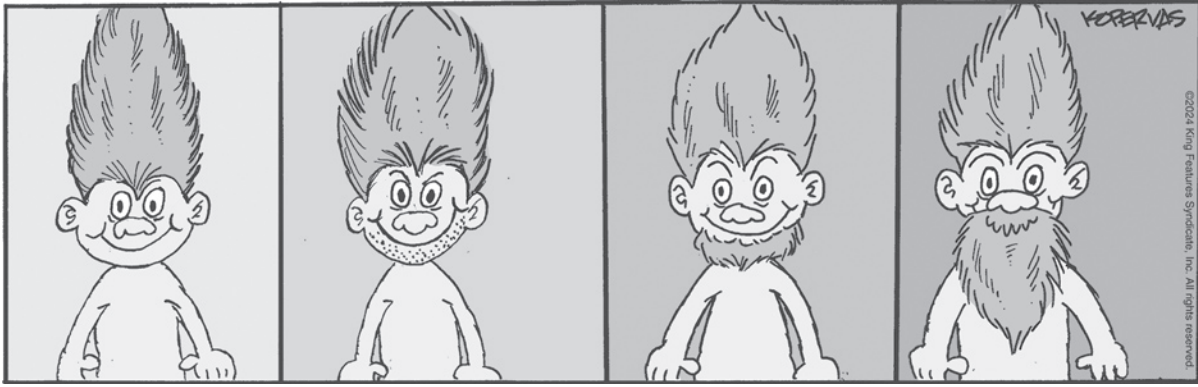
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# Comix

## OUT ON A LIMB By Gary Kopervas



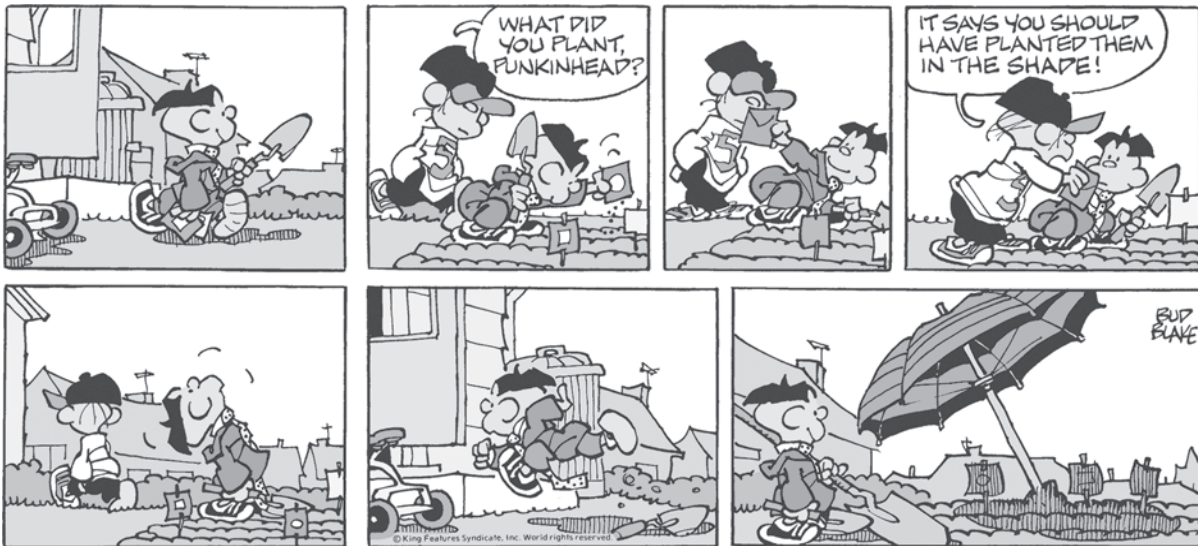
## AMBER WAVES By Dave T. Phipps



## THE SPATS By Jeff Pickering



## TIGER By Bud Blake



## Lowry

From Page 2

by increasingly lopsided numbers as they get older.

There's little doubt what the majority thinks, though. The latest Harvard-Harris poll found that people support Israel over Hamas by 80-to-20, and believe that Israel is trying to avoid civilian casualties in Gaza, 67-to-33. Even voters ages 18-24 support Israel in this survey, 57-to-43, and believe Israel is trying to minimize casualties, 64-to-36.

For all the turmoil over Gaza, it's not a top voting issue. Just 2% of voters say that the Israeli-Palestinian conflict will be the most important issue in deciding their vote in The New York Times poll, and 4% of voters ages 18-29.

What Biden most needs is for people to think that he's a moderate and a steady hand. The White House may tell itself that it's achieving that with a carefully managed, in-between position. But to nearly everyone else it looks like the president has gotten pushed

by the left into flirting from being stalwartly pro-Israel to impeding its war effort.

In other words, in fishing for voters who are small in number and outside the mainstream, Biden has further discredited himself and his leadership with his equivocation.

Perhaps the most astonishing finding in the Times poll is that by 50% to 35%, more voters trust Trump than Biden to handle the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, and Trump leads on this question by a little bit more among voters ages 18-29, 52-to-28.

Trump, who managed to frighten our enemies with his hit against Qasem Soleimani, while also forging a breakthrough peace deal with the Abraham Accords, does indeed look like a giant of statesmanship compared with a Joe Biden whose war policy has been written on water.

Biden has shown that it's impossible to be all things to all people, but it is possible to convince most of them that you don't know what you're doing.

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

# Radiation treatment for cancer harms other organs

**DEAR DR. ROACH:** Recently, I had anal cancer and was treated with chemo and radiation. The radiation burned my insides and severely damaged most of my internal organs. One of the aftereffects was occasional blood and small clots in my urine. A few months ago, both the frequency and amount of blood, especially the clots, increased dramatically. The size and number of the clots got so large that they blocked my urethra. During a visit to my urologist, he looked into my bladder and declared it "angry." Then he told me the same thing every doctor has told me about every problem caused by my treatment: "It was caused by the radiation, and there is nothing that can be done." Shortly after this, I began to take unfiltered apple cider vinegar in hopes that it would improve my digestive problems. It helped a little, but the big difference was that I have not had a single recurrence of either blood or clots in my urine. Can you tell me if this is due to the vinegar or if it is just a coincidence? – A.G.



No, I can't definitively tell you whether the vinegar helped. It was probably by chance, but let me explain a little about it.

Rectal cancer is often treated with radiation, or combined chemotherapy and radiation, either prior to or after surgery. The dose of radiation is quite high compared to some other cancers, and the complications can be significant.

In addition to damage to the bowel and bladder, radiation treatment can damage the bones and bone marrow, leading to poor blood-cell production, infertility, premature menopause, and more cancer years later. On the other hand, radiation is used when it is expected to improve the cure rate of cancer. Still, the side effects can be challenging.

Hemorrhagic cystitis (bleeding from the bladder) can be caused by chemotherapy or radiation. It may start within a few months or as long as 20 years after radiation.

I am surprised your urologist did not offer any treatments, as there are certainly ones available. Although none of the currently available systemic drugs are proven to be very effective, hyperbaric oxygen is one treatment that is, at least, moderately effective. Medicines placed into the bladder and laser bladder treatments are sometimes tried as well.

I was unable to find any study that evaluated the effectiveness of apple cider vinegar. I am skeptical, but reports like yours of apparent improvement associated with its use might convince a researcher to conduct a study to determine whether it really is effective.

**DEAR DR. ROACH:** I am presently taking 300 mg of gabapentin once daily for neuropathy, which had become increasingly severe with burning, itching, and pins and needles. It is helping, but not 100%. I still need ice packs at night for relief sometimes. Do you have any suggestions for alternative treatment? – B.R.

Gabapentin is an effective drug for painful neuropathy, whether the cause is known or not. However, its side effect of sedation limits its use, and the medicine needs to be advanced slowly to be tolerated.

In my experience, 300 mg once daily is not adequate for most people, but 300 mg three times daily is effective for many. The recommended dose in one type of severe neuropathy, postherpetic neuralgia, is 1,200 mg three times daily. It may take months to be able to get to this dose.

I have also had some success with anti-inflammatory medicines as an adjunctive treatment.

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.

Archives: [www.wtxcc.com](http://www.wtxcc.com)



**Moore Texas by Roger Moore**

May 23, 1541: Coronado was so happy to encounter friendly Indians in Texas that he ordered our first THANKSGIVING celebration... the natives came too!

**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 B

UCPX QCBDWOIP YVLX QIPKG  
 IK KEC GOLCG VS SVWVG'  
 ECILG KEIK IPC GEIQCL WOMC  
 BEDTMG VS YIMCL YPCIL:  
 CIP WVIUCG.

Answer Page 4

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**Weekly SUDOKU**

by Linda Thistle

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

Place a number in the empty boxes in such a way that each row across, each column down and each small 9-box square contains all of the numbers from one to nine.

**DIFFICULTY THIS WEEK: ◆◆◆**

◆ Moderate ◆◆ Challenging

Answer Page 4

◆◆◆ HOO BOY!

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**Avoiding foreclosure with VA help**



by Freddy Groves

At the end of May, the Department of Veterans Affairs will start a new program called VASP, Veterans Affairs Servicing Purchase, to help over 40,000 veterans stay in their homes when facing foreclosure.

If you have a VA home loan, and if you're active duty, a veteran or a surviving spouse, you could be eligible for help through VASP if you're in serious financial trouble. VASP will come in and buy out your loan, modify it and then handle it as a direct VA loan. One of the best parts is that you'll get a fixed 2.5% interest rate. (As of this writing, a standard 30-fixed mortgage rate is 7.9%.)

VASP is not something you apply for. Instead, the mortgage companies will put in requests to the VA to help veterans they've identified as having problems with

their loans. You'll have to do your part by being in touch with your lender. If VASP is the best option, they will be responsible for submitting your name to the VA. If you have a problem with your lender, call the VA at (877) 827-3702 and press 4.

For the specifics of VASP, go to [benefits.va.gov/WARMS/M26\\_4.asp](https://benefits.va.gov/WARMS/M26_4.asp) and select Chapter 9, VA Purchase.

For general information about VA home loans, if you've never had a VA home loan, download the buyer handbook at [www.benefits.va.gov/homeloans/index.asp](https://www.benefits.va.gov/homeloans/index.asp). Start with the Eligibility section.

If you're just starting the process of buying a home, you'll need your Certificate of Eligibility (COE), which will tell a lender that you have that benefit either for the first time or again after you've paid off a previous VA home loan.

Then send for your credit reports either at [AnnualCreditReport.com](https://AnnualCreditReport.com) or by calling 877-322-8228. If there are any errors in your credit history, the time to

get them resolved is at the beginning of your home buying experience, not after you've already picked out a home and have mentally moved in. Get your ducks in a row first.

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• "My best friend recently had her first child. For her shower, we decided to get together and cook her several meals that could be frozen and go right from the freezer to the oven. This way, she has many meals to grab in the first few sleepless weeks." – E.S. in Mississippi

• Need to save money grocery shopping? Studies show that if you shop when the store is least busy, you'll make smarter decisions. Try shopping at off-peak hours, such as later in the evening or early in the morning. Or try your store on Wednesday, traditionally the least busy day of the week.

• "I was making cookies last week and needed to roll out the dough. I couldn't find my rolling pin anywhere. In a pinch, I pulled a bottle of wine off my wine rack and wrapped it tightly in plastic. It did the trick. I'm thinking I might just save the next empty bottle and clean the label off of it to use. I can store it right there in my rack!" – O.V. in Oregon

• Add shredded veggies to tomato sauce to up the veggie quotient. Many vegetables can be added without adding many calories and will not change the taste that much. Try carrots, squash or sweet potatoes. You can even add a tablespoon or two of canned, pureed pumpkin.

• "I found a bunch of guttering at a garage sale super cheap, and was inspired to bring it INSIDE my house. I purchased end pieces at my local hardware store and cut the gutters to fit inside my closet. They line the wall all the way up in horizontal rows. I use them to keep shoes, purses, even small baskets of accessories. It's wonderful." – T. in Tennessee

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

**GO FIGURE!**

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.

	+		×		=	30		
+		+		+				
	-		÷		=	2		
×		+		÷				
	+		-		=	3		
=		=		=				
45		13		1				
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9

**DIFFICULTY: ★★**

★ Moderate ★★ Difficult

★★★ GO FIGURE!

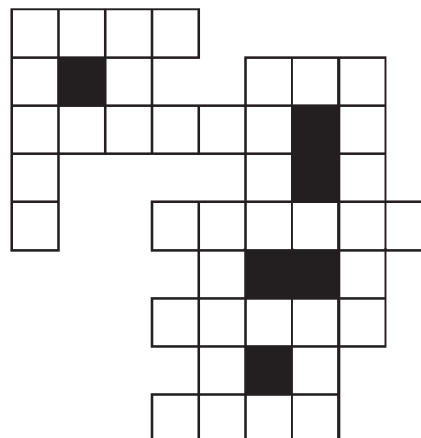
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EFN

- ♥ TURSLE
- ♥ ARLIT
- ♥ WNSE
- LEFIAN
- ♥ SNU
- ♥ ALFE
- ♥ ARFSE
- ♥ RAE
- ♥ SIFTL
- ♥ SELRA
- TSFO



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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