



– Photo by Alfredo Vasquez

GET YOUR APPLICATION IN – Starting this fall semester, financial aid offices, like the one at UTEP (above), will be able to offer free tuition options to University of Texas System students from families earning \$100,000 or less. To apply for the free tuition program, university students must first complete state and federal financial aid applications. Currently, annual tuition and fees at the University of Texas at Austin are close to \$11,000. At the University of Texas at El Paso, tuition and fees cost less than \$9,000.

University of Texas schools offer free tuition to students with family earnings up to \$100K

By Alfredo Vasquez
Special to the Courier

TEXAS – The University of Texas (UT) System Board of Regents recently announced that, as part of the Promise Plus program, it will expand its free tuition program to include families whose annual income is \$100,000 or less.

The updated free tuition guidelines for undergraduate students will begin in the fall of 2025 and will cover tuition and fees. School officials stated that this move will make the UT system one of the few in the United States to offer “such a sweeping financial aid benefit.”

The UT system, with nine universities and five health institutions, is the largest university system in the state and one of the largest public systems in the country, with over 256,000 students enrolled, according to official reports.

The expansion of the program comes after the UT Board of Regents established a \$167 million endowment at UT Austin in 2019 to cover tuition and fees for in-state undergraduate students for families with an annual gross income of up to \$65,000 and reduce tuition costs for families earning up to \$125,000. In 2022, a second endowment extended that program to all UT academic institutions.

Three years later, regents established the

Promise Plus Program with a \$300 million endowment fund to help other UT system universities expand their existing financial aid programs. For example, the University of Texas at El Paso expanded the income threshold for free tuition from \$60,000 to \$75,000, which reached 75 percent of households in the region, according to UT system officials.

School officials asserted that the culmination of these actions will ensure that the average student debt at UT academic institutions continues to decline and is the lowest across Texas public four-year universities. They pointed out that UT graduate debt declined from 53.6 percent in 2019 to 47.8 percent in 2023.

UT System Chancellor James B. Milliken related that across UT institutions, enrollment is growing and student debt is declining, which to him indicates success in both access and affordability. “That’s a rare trend in American higher education, and I’m proud the UT System is in a position to be a leader,” the chancellor stated.

To fund the updated guidelines, UT system officials explained that \$35 million will be sent directly to the universities to support the expansion

which will apply to eligible students at all nine universities. They stated that the new monies will come from endowment distributions, the Available University Fund (investment returns from a state fund that provides money from the UT system), and other resources.

“To be in a position to make sure our students can attend a UT institution without accruing more debt is very important to all of us, and as long as we are here, we will continue our work to provide an affordable, accessible education to all who choose to attend a UT institution,” Board Chair Kevin Eltife said in a statement.

Tuition and fees vary depending on the university within the system. At the University of Texas at Austin, tuition and fees are close to \$11,000. At the University of Texas at El Paso, tuition and fees cost nearly \$9,000.

Across UT institutions, enrollment is growing, and student debt is declining, indicating success in both access and affordability. That’s a rare trend in American higher education, and I’m proud the UT System is in a position to be a leader.

– James Milliken, UT System Chancellor

In recent years, many universities and community colleges in Texas and across the country have launched similar tuition programs to increase college access for low-income students and to encourage enrollment for those who might be hesitant to take on student debt. Many universities structure these programs so

they pay what’s left on a student’s tuition bill after federal or state grants have been applied.

To qualify for UT’s revamped program, students must be Texas residents enrolled full-time in an undergraduate program and must apply for state and federal financial aid.

Trump's fear factor

If they have any instinct for self-preservation, Iran and Hamas should be monitoring President-Elect Donald Trump's communications closely these days.

A couple of weeks ago, there was the Truth Social post promising "ALL HELL TO PAY" if Hamas didn't release its hostages by Trump's inauguration on Jan. 20.

"Those responsible," Trump noted, "will be hit harder than anybody has been hit in the long and storied History of the United States of America."

He followed up during a press conference Monday. When asked what he meant by his prior threat, Trump left it menacingly vague. "Well," he said, referring to our adversaries, "they're going to

have to determine what that means, but it means it won't be pleasant. It's not going to be pleasant."

What does that signify? Does Trump have something in particular in mind, or is he making it up as he goes along? Is he bluffing? Or is he deadly earnest?

No one has come up with a Trump Doctrine yet, but a candidate might be: Find out if I'm serious or not at your own risk.

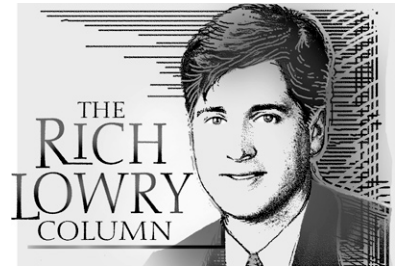
The most basic thing to note about Trump's threat, though, is that it is the first time an official of the U.S. government – or a soon-to-be government official – has sounded appropriately outraged and harsh about an ongoing crime perpetrated against our fellow citizens.

Trump's "hell to pay" is a throwback to Andrew Jackson or Teddy Roosevelt, making it clear that we aren't to be trifled with, and doing it in a clarion tone.

It's been shocking how muted the Biden administration has been about the hostages. Whereas Trump is expressing a

righteous indignation in thunderous terms, the Biden administration has spoken as compellingly as a deputy Secretary of State summarizing the notes of a three-hour-long committee meeting.

This kind of jawboning comes naturally to Trump, of course. His approach doesn't represent any particular foreign-policy theory. It's not realist, or neocon, or isolationist. It's less Clausewitz's "On



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Who decides the facts

Meta to leave PolitiFact's fact-checking services

(Published from a vodcast series hosted by Mike Blinder. Episode 266 of E&P Reports)

Meta's recent announcement to end its third-party fact-checking program by January 2025 has sent ripples through the media and fact-checking industries. To unpack the implications of this decision, Editor & Publisher Publisher Mike Blinder spoke with Katie Sanders, editor-in-chief of PolitiFact, a Pulitzer Prize-winning fact-checking organization under the Poynter Institute (www.poynter.org).

Meta moves away from professional fact-checking services

Meta's plan to replace its program with a community-driven content moderation model, similar to X's (formerly Twitter's) Community Notes,

raises significant questions. According to Sanders, Meta's transition could open the floodgates to more unchecked misinformation.

"We think platforms like Facebook, Instagram, and Threads are going to attract much junkier content," Sanders stated. "People are likely to fall for scams and clickbait that, for the last eight years, came with warning labels identifying them as false."

Sanders emphasized the wide scope of PolitiFact's work within Meta's fact-checking program, which extended far beyond political claims. "We covered all flavors of online content—public health misinformation, consumer scams, and even AI-generated graphics. It was always about helping people avoid falling for hoaxes," she explained.

Community Notes: A replacement or a step backward?

When Sanders was asked whether X's Community Notes model could adequately replace the thoroughness of professional fact-checking. Sanders expressed skepticism about its effectiveness, noting key differences between the two approaches.

"Community Notes attaches context to only a fraction of false claims," she said. "The approval process, requiring consensus from users across political divides, makes it hard to scale. This consensus-based approach isn't suited to combat widespread misinformation."

Sanders highlighted the benefits of PolitiFact's in-depth method, which pairs rigorous research with transparent sourcing. "It takes more time—sometimes a day or two—but thoroughness is what people will miss most," she added. Sanders also lamented the missed opportunity to combine professional fact-checking with community-driven approaches. "We wish we

could've had conversations with Meta about blending the two models."

What does this mean for journalism – biased or unbiased?

Meta's decision raises broader questions about its relationship with the news publishing industry. Historically, the company has faced criticism for its inconsistent support of credible journalism. Sanders was asked whether this move signals further disinvestment in supporting trusted news sources.

"We don't have plans to retreat," Sanders affirmed. "Journalists, not just fact-checkers, need to pay attention to how influencers and regular users talk about major events. This is a brave but essential exercise in countering false information."

Drawing parallels between misinformation and natural disasters, Sanders warned of the chaos unchecked claims can create. "When disasters strike, false narratives—like conspiracy theories about relief efforts—spread quickly,

breeding distrust when people need clarity the most."

Sanders urged news publishers to embrace fact-checking as a necessary tool, not censorship. "Holding people to account isn't censorship," she said. "Fact-checking equips people with the information they need to decide for themselves."

The cost of truth: Challenges in a polarized era

Sanders also touched on the personal toll fact-checking takes on journalists in today's polarized environment. Sanders acknowledged that her team frequently faces hate and threats, especially women and minorities on staff.

"Yes, this work comes at a cost," she admitted. "We train reporters to defensively prepare and lock down their profiles. We also have plans in place to handle threats when they escalate."

Despite these challenges, Sanders underscored the importance of newsroom support systems. "We don't

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1973
52 YEARS
2025

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Facts

From Page 2

hide when we're under pressure. Instead, we rally around each other to provide the support needed to continue this work."

Newspapers and publishers should support fact-checking

As the conversation concluded, Sanders was asked how news publishers could support PolitiFact and the broader fact-checking community. She responded with a call for more open conversations about the value of fact-checking in journalism.

"Fact-checking isn't a fad, nor should it be treated like a dirty word," she said. "It helps journalists parse the spin from leaders at every level—national, state, and local. We need to be specific about the value this brings to the industry."

Sanders also encouraged publishers to educate audiences about what fact-checking truly entails. "Our process page on PolitiFact.com is a model of transparency," she said. "It explains how we decide what to check, our methods, and our funding. News organizations should prioritize similar transparency."

Moving forward

Despite the uncertainties Meta's decision introduces, Sanders remains steadfast in PolitiFact's mission. "We've always been about adding context and providing vetted sources. Encouragement is welcome, but so are criticism and new ideas. We're here to listen."

For more on PolitiFact's work, Sanders invited readers to visit PolitiFact.com or reach out directly at KSanders@politifact.com.

Full story and links: https://www.editorandpublisher.com/stories/metasp-fact-checking-shift-katie-sanders-on-whats-next-for-politifact-and-the-news-industry,253729?newsletter=253736&vgo_ee=vpg7MjLr7QAuZityRcjOP%2BpY8UL0cagP3xoVTvO2dg%3D%3D%3Az4RePJiwu69h%2BjvN5IE8f6nkjKqPPAME



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Strange BUT TRUE

By Lucie Winborne

• Despite the NFL making more than \$9 billion annually, being projected to make more than \$25 billion a year by 2027, and paying its CEO more than \$30 million a year, 68% of NFL stadium construction costs since 1923 have come from taxpayer money.

• One of Walt Disney's first art jobs was drawing cartoons for a local barber in exchange for haircuts.

• Cats are believed to be the only mammals that don't taste sweetness.

• The first-ever fashion magazine was sold in Germany in 1586.

• The Khasis are a tribe in India that grow their own bridges. For generations, they have passed down the art of tree-root manipulation, forming centuries-old "living bridges" out of the powerful roots of *Ficus elastica* trees.

• Jesse James once gave a widow who housed him enough money to pay off her debt collector and then robbed the debt collector as the man left the widow's home.

• A French general, the Marquis de Lafayette, gave John Quincy Adams a pet alligator. Our sixth president not only kept it in a White House bathtub, but enjoyed showing it off to visitors.

• In 2007, a Swiss woman was unable to enter the U.S. because she had no fingerprints. She had a rare genetic disorder called adermatoglyphia, where a person is born without fingerprints. There are only four known extended families worldwide that are affected by this condition.

• Arnold Schwarzenegger was paid \$15 million for his role in "Terminator 2," which averaged out to a most impressive \$21,429 per word.

• Lions, tigers, leopards and other big cats go wild for Calvin Klein's Obsession for Men cologne! It's used by researchers to lure animals toward cameras in the wild and is sprayed at zoos and wildlife refuges.

Thought for the Day: "There's no hope without endeavor. Hope has no meaning unless we are prepared to work to realize our hopes and dreams."
 — Aung San Suu Kyi

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Moments in time

THE HISTORY CHANNEL

• On Jan. 13, 1995, America3 ("America Cubed"), an all-female sailing team, won the first race of the America's Cup defender trials in little more than a minute. The team was the sport's first all-women crew to compete in the Cup's 144-year history.

• On Jan. 14, 1942, President Franklin D. Roosevelt issued Presidential Proclamation No. 2537, requiring non-U.S. citizens from World War II-enemy countries (Italy, Germany and Japan) to register with the United States Department of Justice, after which they were given a Certificate of Identification for Aliens of Enemy Nationality. The Proclamation facilitated the beginning of full-scale Japanese American internment the following month.

• On Jan. 15, 1951, Ilse Koch, known as the "Witch of Buchenwald" for the extraordinary sadism she displayed toward that camp's prisoners, was sentenced to life in prison for crimes against humanity by a West German court. The sentence was reduced to four years and Koch was released, then imprisoned again with a second life term. She escaped that fate by hanging herself with a bedsheet in 1967.

• On Jan. 16, 1973, the final episode of "Bonanza," written and directed by Michael Landon, aired on NBC, completing a 14-season run centering on thrice-widowed patriarch Ben Cartwright, his sons, and their adventures on the thousand-square-mile Ponderosa Ranch in Nevada.

• On Jan. 17, 2013, Sergei Filin, the artistic director of the Bolshoi Ballet, was attacked outside his Moscow home with acid by a masked man later revealed to have been hired by company dancer Pavel Dmitrichenko.

• On Jan. 18, 1862, America's 10th president, described in his New York Times obituary as "the most unpopular public man that had ever held any office in the United States," John Tyler died at age 71 in Richmond, Virginia.

• On Jan. 19, 2007, Beijing, China got its first drive-through McDonald's restaurant, a two-story building next to a gas station that celebrated its christening in a ceremony complete with traditional Chinese lion dancers and, of course, a Chinese Ronald McDonald.

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CryptoQuip Answer

If I were to fill all these test tubes with non-acidic solutions, I'd declare "Bases loaded!"

3	+	6	×	8	=	72
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 SPED TOYSHOP ESTRAGON

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Things are looking up for UTEP sports and fans

By Steve Escajeda
Special to the Courier

The last couple of decades haven't been kind to UTEP athletics.

The football team has continued to do what it always has, lose games. The men's basketball team hasn't been anywhere near what it was during those Don Haskins days.

The women's basketball and volleyball teams have good seasons every once in a while, but nothing very consistent.

UTEP is in Conference USA, which is considered one of the least competitive in college sports.

CUSA teams go to smaller bowl games, they are a one-bid league in basketball and their TV contract is one of the worst in the NCAA.

But things are looking up.

Over the last four months there's been a change in UTEP athletics. And all of it has been for the good.

We're not going to count UTEP's humiliating 28-point loss to NMSU last Saturday, but in some ways, that was a win as well.

Let's look at the news that started the positive ball rolling.

Back on Oct. 1, UTEP got the one call they've been waiting for, for what seems like an eternity.

The Mountain West Conference called and invited the Miners to play in their league. This is probably the

best thing to happen to UTEP athletics that I can remember.

The MWC is a definite step up from CUSA. The competition is better, the TV revenue is higher, they go to better bowl games and last year they sent six teams to the NCAA basketball tournament.

And not only that, but El Pasoans aren't excited when Kennesaw State comes to town, or Florida International, or Jacksonville State or Middle Tennessee.

What they are excited about is to take on New Mexico and UNLV and Wyoming and Nevada and Air Force and Hawaii, all former rivalries.

When football season comes up this September, that will be start of UTEP's final season in CUSA and they'll officially join the MWC on July 1, 2026.

Then there was the incredible season that volleyball just had. The women finished the season with a 27-6 record and advanced to the NCAA Tournament. Sure, they lost to Oklahoma (3-2) in the first round, but

it was the first time the team had ever reached the tournament and by the looks of things, it won't be the last.

The UTEP football team only won three games, but for the second straight year head coach Scotty Walden and his staff have the top recruiting class in the league.

But there are many who felt they didn't have the type of quarterback they needed to get to the next level. A couple weeks ago that might have changed.

Out of the blue, the top-rated high school quarterback entering college in 2023, Malachi Nelson, signed with the Miners. At USC, Nelson backed up Heisman Trophy winner Caleb Williams, and this past year he was the Boise State backup. The Broncos made it to the College Football Playoff.

Nelson might be the answer UTEP football has been looking for.

In today's college athletics, in order for UTEP to compete at a higher level it needs for the community to step up and help with dollars. And they have.

In the last two months, UTEP has received two separate \$2.5 million

donations from the Hunt Family Foundation and Foster Family Foundation.

This will help pay the approximately \$8 million buyout UTEP has to pay CUSA for leaving the league.

It helps when members of the community feel so strongly about the program and buy-in to all that it could possibly grow into.

Speaking of buying in. I said there were some good things surrounding UTEP's 85-57 drubbing at the hands of the rival NMSU Aggies last Saturday.

The big positive was that the game was played in front of a packed Don Haskins Center. The fans of El Paso (include a few from Las Cruces) bought in and showed up to support their team. The MWC commissioner, Gloria Nevarez, was at the game and she saw the kind of support the Sun City can provide its teams.

So, there's a definite feeling in the air about UTEP athletics. For once, the air has a sweet taste and feel to it.

Things are changing for UTEP sports – for the better.

Senior moment By Matilda Charles

Retirement: Not yet for many of us

Many of us didn't plan for this. Years after we expected to retire, we're still working. For too many of us, working is still a necessity for financial reasons.

Careful planning likely convinced most of us that with a bit of savings and a monthly Social Security check we could safely (and voluntarily) retire. A recent study concluded that roughly 80% of us fall into this category, thinking we would be financially OK in retirement.

On the flip side of the coin, there are those who were pushed into early retirement before they were financially ready. Whether it was because of the health of a spouse and the need to become a caretaker or corporate downsizing, they were out the door and left in a difficult financial position, forced to sign up for Social Security before their full retirement age and giving up nearly one-third of the monthly benefit amount because of the early retirement. Many grab onto part-time jobs

just to have a few extra dollars coming in every month. Those few extra dollars mean the difference between paying the light bill... or not.

I did an informal poll of neighbors and acquaintances, all of whom are past retirement age. A full 90% are employed, with most of them working at part-time jobs. All of them said it was for financial reasons. One gentleman shared that he's working to save up for the glasses he needs, the costs that Medicare won't cover. Another is working to put every possible dollar into paying off the last of her mortgage. Everyone else, it seems, is still working to put groceries on the table, keep gas in the car or make the mortgage payment.

Clearly, the small Social Security increases we've been receiving aren't enough. They just aren't.

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4	5	3	9	2	7	8	1	6
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- CATCHING SOME WAVES**
- ACROSS**
- Biblical boat of refuge
 - 1971 Best Actor winner Gene
 - Sewing line
 - Classroom instructor, in Aussie lingo
 - Long South American river
 - Toothpaste container
 - Start of a riddle
 - Said aloud
 - Sleekly designed
 - Muscles to crunch
 - Persona non _
 - Riddle, part 2
 - Special multi-book packages
 - Cyberauction site
 - Botching, with "up"
 - Travis of country music
 - Thick slice
 - Stare
 - Go gray, say
 - Riddle, part 3
 - Hall-of-Fame Giant Mel
 - Debt slips
 - "Exodus" novelist Leon
 - Toe the line
 - Actress Liu
 - Angelina of Hollywood

- DOWN**
- Australian state whose capital is Sydney: Abbr.
 - Scottish interjection of surprise
 - "Eureka!"
 - Scorching
 - Lawn turf
 - Red Sox and Orioles' div.
 - Construction bolts
 - Actress Knightley
 - Tilling tool
 - "_ longa, vita brevis"
 - Buzzy insect
 - Having rounded protrusions
 - Timid
 - Often-injured knee part, for short
 - Start to doze
 - Birds bringing bundles of joy
 - Russia locale
 - Easing off
 - Hodgepodge
 - Sanders' title: Abbr.
 - Sticks with pasty stuff
 - "_ Subsequent Moviefilm" (2020 sequel)
 - Have life
 - Narrow land strip: Abbr.
 - _ pot (sinus-clearing apparatus)
 - Not fatty

- Eases off
- Union Jack and Old Glory
- Exude slowly
- Vitamin also called riboflavin
- "Disco" guy on "The Simpsons"
- _ Angeles
- "Peer Gynt" composer Edvard
- Particular specialty
- Maja painter Francisco
- Quiet spells
- Moistureless
- Track tipsters
- Dir. opposite WSW
- Turkey Day tuber
- Wonder Woman player Carter
- Brand of potato chips
- Knightly fight
- Word of joint ownership
- 14th-century Russian ruler called "the Moneybag"
- Tiara stone
- "NCIS" ailer
- State of rage
- Whole bunch
- "_ were the days!"
- Seeks the love of
- Cake froster
- Goose eggs
- Egg: Prefix
- Partners of pas
- Big Apple

- baseballer, for short
- Some Afrikaners
- Early P.M. times, in classifieds
- Want badly
- Pleading tyke's query
- First-class aisle seat on many planes
- Rent_ (temporary wheels)
- "Frozen" queen
- Reproving syllables
- Partners of fathers
- Tourist office handout
- Long, twisty and slippery
- Coagulated
- Main arteries
- Tattletale
- Lawn tools
- Nailed the exam
- Turin's land
- Yes, to Fifi
- Shaw of jazz
- Ready to go
- Rock's Brian
- Zodiac sign
- Sci-fi gift
- It's S. of Leb.
- "_ Na Na"
- Evil woman in fairy tales
- "Evil Woman" rock gp.
- Sanders' title: Abbr.

Answer Page 4

Super Crossword

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103							104					105								
106						107	108				109	110				111	112	113	114	115
116						117							118							
119						120							121							

Comix

OUT ON A LIMB By Gary Kopervas



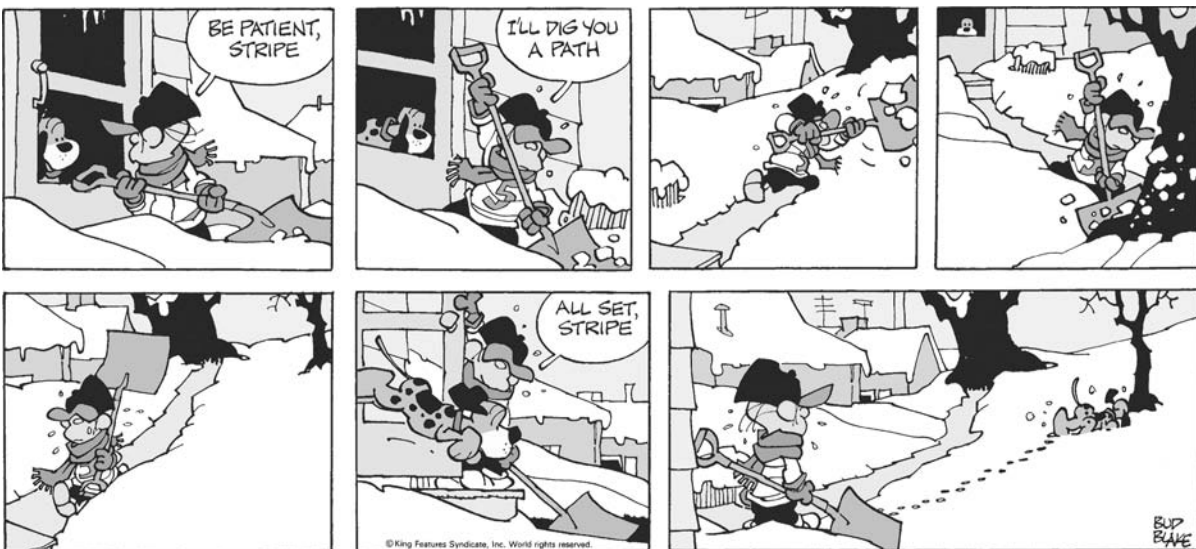
AMBER WAVES By Dave T. Phipps



THE SPATS By Jeff Pickering



TIGER By Bud Blake



Lowry

From Page 2

War” or Thomas Schelling’s “The Strategy of Conflict,” than Trump’s “Art of the Deal.”

The famous British line is that the Battle of Waterloo was won on the playing fields of Eton; in the same sense, every successful Trump negotiation as president has been won on the playing fields of Manhattan real estate, where Trump first learned his distinctive mode of gaining leverage and psychological advantage.

His willingness to escalate and follow through means no threat can be completely discounted, while his sheer unpredictability adds to the difficulty of any foreign actor trying to calculate his next move.

To the famous Machiavellian axiom “It’s better to be feared than to be loved,” Trump adds the proviso, “and it’s best to keep them guessing, either way.”

This couldn’t be in starker contrast to Joe Biden, who always fears escalation and is predictably conventional to the point of being sodden and dull.

Trump is what they call in poker a “loose

aggressive player,” whereas Biden plays measured games of bridge over tea and crumpets.

The president-elect doesn’t like foreign conflict, but he bombed ISIS to smithereens as promised in 2016 and killed the top Iranian intelligence official, Qasem Soleimani, without hesitation in 2020. The safest default is to take him at his word, even if you only – in Trump’s words about a threat he says he made to Vladimir Putin in his first term – believe him “ten percent.”

With an eye to the imminent arrival of Trump, there is a chance that Hamas cuts a deal over the hostages in the coming weeks, the same way Iran released the captives from the U.S. Embassy in 1980 just as Ronald Reagan was taking office.

Regardless of how it plays out, we are already re-entering a period when enemies of the United States have to be scared or nervous, not knowing how far they can push us, or what will happen if they do. And that’s exactly where Donald Trump wants them.

Rich Lowry is editor of the National Review. ©2025 by King Features Synd., Inc.

Sodium intake best left to the individual

DEAR DR. ROACH: I read in a health journal that large amounts of sodium are unhealthy for one’s diet. The government standard is no more than 2,300 mg of sodium per day. If one’s health isn’t so good, some doctors say that their sodium intake shouldn’t be more than 1,500 mg per day. Everything you eat or drink counts. If consuming sodium is so bad for your health, then why aren’t there limitations in the amount of sodium a company can put into their products? Shouldn’t this be controlled by the federal government, similar to alcohol or numerous other chemicals in food and drinks that we find in cans, boxes and packages? For instance, why should diet soda have sodium in it? – E.R.



It is true that excess sodium has health risks, and I agree with public health officials in recommending that people consume less sodium. High sodium increases blood pressure levels for most people. Even in people without high blood pressure levels, a high-sodium diet slightly increases stroke risk and predisposes them to kidney stones.

However, sodium is an essential nutrient, and although sodium deficiency is unheard of now, there are conditions where a high-sodium diet is important. I recently saw a patient who had POTS (postural orthostatic tachycardia syndrome) after COVID, and she needs 8-12 grams of sodium daily to keep her blood pressure up.

As a physician, my role is to advise. It’s not for me to dictate public policy, and I worry about the government making regulations about what is a personal choice. Pretzels contain 250-300 mg of sodium in a 1-ounce serving, so a big bag of pretzels might have 5 grams of sodium – two day’s worth. I’m uncomfortable with the government limiting my ability to buy this, even if it isn’t a good idea for me to consume it all in a day.

On the other hand, I think that the decision made by the Food and Drug Administration in 2015 to ban the use of trans fats was correct. Trans fats are exceedingly unhealthy, and manufacturers quickly switched to healthier options. The decision to ban a substance or limit its use must be made wisely.

As far as diet sodas, sodium suppresses the bitter taste that can accompany some artificial sweeteners. A typical diet soda might have 20 mg of sodium (0.02 grams), so those usually aren’t the biggest offenders. On the other hand, a large pizza might have 6-10 grams of sodium.

DEAR DR. ROACH: I am 73 years old with an extremely large prostate. My PSA reading was over 11 ng/mL. I’ve had negative biopsies, and my new urologist put me on finasteride. He told me that he had great results with it and could cut my cancer risk by 80%. I’ve been taking it for more than six months, and my latest PSA was 4.4 ng/mL. I’m reluctant to keep taking it. What are your thoughts on finasteride? – H.D.

I agree that finasteride decreases the risk of prostate cancer and death due to prostate cancer. Unfortunately, the data show more of a 25% to 30% decreased risk rather than an 80% risk. If it were 80% successful at stopping prostate cancer, we would be recommending it to all men (in absence of side effects). Still, a decrease in prostate cancer risk is worth considering when it comes to the treatment of symptomatic prostate enlargement.

Finally, finasteride reduces PSA levels by about half, which needs to be taken into account when interpreting the PSA level.

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. ©2025 North America Synd., Inc. All Rights Reserved.



Moore Texas by Roger Moore

January 16, 1919: Prohibition forces Galveston Brewing Co. to market non-alcoholic GALVO, or "Near Beer".

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: **B** equals **L**

MR M UZDZ NT RMBB LBB
 NGZY Z N ZYN NXHZY UMNG
 CTC-LEMJME YTBXNMTCY, M'J
 JZEBLDZ "HLYZY BTLJZJ!"

Answer Page 4

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VA outreach for blast exposure



by Freddy Groves

The Department of Veterans Affairs has launched a significant outreach to bring more eligible veterans under the VA health care umbrella. The reason: increased concern about the health impacts of repeated blast exposure.

Blast exposure and head trauma can come from any number of situations – anything from heavy fire, IEDs, missile launches, artillery blasts – and can later result in a variety of problems, including thoughts of suicide and mental health concerns.

The VA is reaching out to veterans who served in Vietnam, the Gulf War, Iraq and Afghanistan, and they're going all-out with public service announcements, advertising and even text messages to veterans. Veterans who served in those locations may be eligible for care,

ranging from regular and specialty care, to primary care, mental health care and regular screenings, as well as blast exposure screenings.

Meanwhile, the VA has geared up their research about the health impact of blast exposure and encourages all eligible veterans to sign up for care. The more veterans who sign up, the more research they can do. The more research they do, the better the treatments that can be developed.

Blast exposure isn't the only concern the VA is looking at. Veterans who were exposed to toxins, whether on active duty or in training, are eligible to enroll in VA health care, even if they never deployed to Vietnam, the Gulf, Iraq, Afghanistan or any combat zone post 9/11.

If you suspect you might have experienced blast exposure, call the VA for a screening. For immediate information, go to va.gov and search for "blast exposure." You'll find several podcasts and videos exploring blast exposure and the effects on mental health, how blasts

affect cognitive function and more.

If you need to sign up, see www.va.gov/health-care/how-to-apply for the four different ways to apply for care: by phone, by mail, in person at the closest VA center or with the help of an accredited VSO or attorney. For an immediate connection, call them at (877) 222-8387.

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• Keep medication bottles to hold buttons, spare change or even hand lotion. Be sure to clean well before reusing.

• "Clean foam egg cartons can be stuffed down into boots to keep them from flopping over between uses. If the leg fabric is not heavy, you can even cut one in half. You may use rolled-up magazines for this purpose as well." – I.Y. in New York

• "Used fabric softener sheets can be used to shine faucets and to clean the tub. I use mine for dusting around the house, too. To keep a steady supply, I put an empty tissue box next to my dryer. When the clothes (and the used sheets) come out, I stuff them down in the box, and they are ready whenever I need one." – B.J. in Arizona

• A chef's trick to keep cooked spinach green is to make sure the pot is not covered while cooking.

• "When cooking shrimp in a bouillon, put them in the freezer for about 10 minutes before cooking. They will cook up nice and tender. I have had success with this also when grilling. When putting shrimp on a skewer, I use double skewers, which hold about five shrimp. When I thread the skewers side by side, the shrimp are easier to turn over, and they do not spin on the skewer." – R.R. in Florida

• To keep cheese blocks moist and mold free, place in a container with a tight-fitting lid. Place a piece of napkin dampened with white vinegar in with the cheese.

Send your tips to Now Here's a Tip, 628 Virginia Drive, Orlando, FL 32803. ©2025 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.

	+		×		= 72			
+		+		-				
	+		+		= 18			
+		÷		×				
	-		×		= 7			
=		=		=				
9		15		21				
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9

DIFFICULTY: ★★

★ Moderate ★★ Difficult

★★★ GO FIGURE!

Answer Page 4

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Weekly SUDOKU

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

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

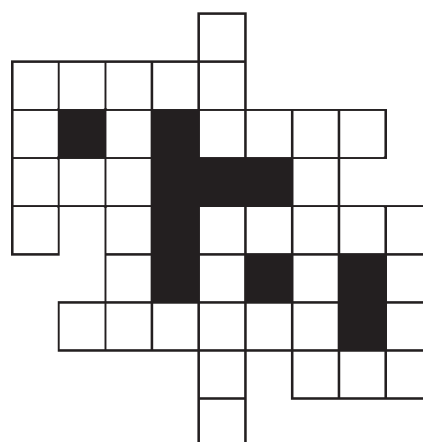
Answer Page 4

◆◆◆ HOO BOY!

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- GRE
- SATIGE
- ♥ ARGEL
- ♥ LYIL
- ♥ ARNGYI
- ♥ GLA
- ♥ ELVA
- GYNIL
- ♥ NYA
- ♥ TELEGA
- ♥ ESARV
- ♥ IGNR



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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