



– Photos from Internet

NEW VEHICLE INSPECTION RULES – El Paso County officials stated that all gasoline-powered vehicles two- through 24-years old are now required to undergo an emissions inspection only. Exempt from the emissions checkup are the electric-only vehicles. Diesel-powered vehicles and motorcycles are exempt from emissions testing but are still required to have the annual safety inspection.

Major change for Texas car owners is now official

By **Alfredo Vasquez**
Special to the Courier

TEXAS – Texas Motor vehicle safety inspections are no longer required for non-commercial vehicles as part of the annual vehicle registration process, El Paso County officials announced recently.

The announcement came after Texas Governor Greg Abbott signed House Bill (HB) 3297, which abolished the Vehicle Safety Inspection Program. As of January 1st vehicle safety inspections are a thing of the past for most Texans.

Texas lawmakers and supporters of the bill asserted that eliminating the annual inspection requirement would save Texas drivers money. According to the Texas Department of Public Safety, a safety inspection in Texas costs \$7 and up to \$18 more for a safety emissions inspection. The safety and emission items during the inspection would include

brakes, tires, fuel system, headlights, taillights and turn signals, exhaust system, and mirrors.

Proponents also noted that eliminating the requirement would make things more convenient for Texas drivers, particularly in rural areas where access to inspection stations might be limited. And they claimed that it would also reduce the administrative burden for the state government, which had to oversee the inspection program.

HB 3297, signed into law in 2023, removes the requirement for state inspections of noncommercial vehicles. However, county officials emphasized that all non-commercial vehicles registered in El Paso County still need to obtain a passing emissions inspection before applying for a current vehicle registration sticker whether in person, in an email, or online.

El Paso County officials said that inspection stations automatically report and upload inspection status onto the Texas Department of Public Safety (DPS)

system. They then provide this information to the Texas Department of Motor Vehicles (TDMV) and update the vehicle record in real-time. Nonetheless, to avoid delays county officials recommended that a hard copy of the passing emissions inspection report be provided to the Tax Office or any private full-service offices when applying for a new registration sticker.

While the vehicle inspections were eliminated by the state the fees were not. El Paso County officials reported that non-commercial vehicles are still subject to a \$7.50 inspection program replacement fee. This fee will be added to the total when a person registers his or her vehicle with the Texas Department of Motor Vehicles.

County officials stated that all gasoline-powered vehicles two through 24 years old are required to have an emissions inspection. Exempt from the

See **VEHICLES**, Page 3

Retamoza earns ATSSB All-State Symphonic Band membership

By **Sofia Maciel**
Special to the Courier

FABENS – Azul Retamoza, a Fabens High School junior, has been selected as a member of the distinguished ATSSB (Association of Texas Small School Bands) All-State Symphonic Band. Out of more than 10,000 student musicians across Texas who began the rigorous audition process, Retamoza’s selection places her in the top 2% of high school musicians in the state. This extraordinary accomplishment earned her a place among Texas’s most elite young musicians.

Miguel Soto, the director of the Fabens High School band, has been

invited to perform alongside Retamoza at the ATSSB All-State Concert, which will take place on February 15, 2025, at the Lila Cockrell Auditorium in San Antonio.

“We are incredibly proud of Azul and her commitment to excellence. This honor showcases her talent and reflects the hard work and dedication of our entire band program,” said Soto. “It is exceptional to have the opportunity to perform with one of my students at such an exceptional event.”

“I am beyond proud of my daughter for making it to the All-State Band! This is such an incredible achievement, and I am so grateful for all the hard work and

dedication she has put in to get here. Thank God for blessing her with the gift of music and the strength to pursue it. I also want to give a huge thank you to her band director, Mr. Soto, for his guidance, support, and encouragement. I am so excited to see where this journey takes her! We love you, Azul!” said Rebeca Marque Retamoza, Azul’s mother and a teacher at Fabens ISD.

Retamoza competed in the ATSSB auditions for the past three years. This year is the first she has been selected to go to state. “I did not expect to make it; I teared up when I found out. I feel this accomplishment reflects all the hard work, dedication, and perseverance in my love of music.”



Azul Retamoza

– Photo courtesy Fabens ISD

The fiscal hawks never win

It feels like 2013 again.

Back then, a beleaguered Republican Speaker of the House was forced into a government shutdown by firebrands in his caucus who considered him insufficiently pure.

A revolution in GOP politics has happened since, and yet a beleaguered Republican Speaker of the House has been forced to the verge of a government shutdown by firebrands in his caucus who consider him insufficiently pure.

The difference is that Mike Johnson – unlike his predecessor, John Boehner – isn't just dealing with an internal revolt; he also had the most powerful Republican politician on the planet and his extremely influential sidekick blast his handiwork, namely, Donald Trump and Elon Musk, respectively.

Johnson did make a misstep with the so-called continuing resolution to keep the government funded past a looming deadline. In negotiations, he let it balloon into a true monstrosity. What was supposed to be a stop-gap measure to avoid a government shutdown became a vehicle to pass new legislation in a last-minute, 1,500-page bill that no one was going to read.

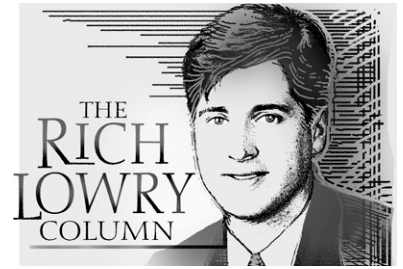
The yet-to-be-resolved episode shows that Republican hostility to spending still exists a decade after Tea Party Republicans roiled the establishment – and made John Boehner's life miserable – demanding massive deficit reduction.

Now, though, this reflex has taken a new form. It is expressed in fierce opposition to “the swamp” – in this case, business-as-usual logrolling in Congress

– and excitement about the prospects for Musk's DOGE, the new Department of Government Efficiency.

The bipartisan agreement in Washington, D.C., to perpetually spend more money is indeed disgraceful, and DOGE could be a welcome force for new thinking. Yet, both of these are really beside the point when considering the red ink that one day – probably not tomorrow and maybe not even several years from now – could cause a horrendous fiscal crisis.

There are idiotic programs and senseless regulations aplenty, but the money that can be found in the federal



See LOWRY, Page 7

Americans cannot rely on main stream media, platforms, to be objective or truthful

Source: An E&P Reprint
(Meta's fact-checking shift: Katie Sanders on what's next for PolitiFact and the news industry from a podcast 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 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).

The end of an era: Meta's move away from fact-checking

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.”

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

How news publishers can 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 www.PolitiFact.com or reach out directly at KSanders@politifact.com. For the full transcript visit <https://alpha.creativecircledn.com/editorandpublisher/files/20250111-102715-3f0-META-PolitiFact-Episode-266-AudioTranscript.pdf>. Visit www.editorandpublisher.com/vodcasts/ for other vodcasts.



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Strange BUT TRUE

By Lucie Winborne

- Shonda Rhimes got the idea for the TV series "Grey's Anatomy" after a doctor told her how hard it was to shave her legs in the tiny hospital shower.
- The first Hershey's chocolate bars with almonds were produced in 1908 because they were cheap to make. The nuts took the place of some of the more expensive milk chocolate,

which meant Hershey's could keep the price of the candy at a nickel.

- The Hardy Tree in London's St. Pancras churchyard is named for Thomas Hardy. The Victorian author worked at the burial ground in the 1860s and rearranged tombstones around the base of an ash tree to make room for a railway expansion.
- A website called Myfridgefood.com lets you enter whatever ingredients you have in your fridge and tells you what you can make with them.
- One of the reasons your

lungs feel refreshed when walking through a pine forest is because of an anti-inflammatory compound called a-Pinene, found in conifers. It is used as a bronchodilator in the treatment of asthma and is abundantly present in marijuana.

- An estimated 10% of Europeans are immune to HIV infection because they have an ancestor who survived bubonic plague, or "Black Death."
- If you're a man and pee on a pregnancy test and it's positive, you could have cancer.
- Because of the amount of

granite in its construction, Grand Central Station produces more radiation than is allowable at a nuclear power plant.

- In India, a statue of Jesus had "holy" water mysteriously dripping from its toes, which worshipers would collect and sometimes drink. A man traced the fluid's source to a clogged toilet behind the wall, condensing on the statue.

Thought for the Day: "A good example has twice the value of good advice."
— Albert Schweitzer

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EL PASO COUNTY
• HOUSING AUTHORITY •

Public Notice Salvage Sale

A sealed bid auction will be held for items to be sold consisting of used maintenance equipment, office supplies, vehicles. All payments must be made in the form of money order or cashier's check. All items will be sold "as is". Rules, procedures and terms of the sale will be provided upon arrival. The El Paso County Housing Authority (EPCHA) makes no written or implied warranties of the items.

Date, Time and Location:

Friday, June 24, 2025
8:30 A.M. to 11:30 A.M.
1101 Yann Road
Fabens, TX 79838

FOR INFORMATION ONLY:

Call the office at
(915) 764-3559.
WTCC: 01-23-25



www.wtxcc.com

Vehicles

From Page 1

emissions checkup are the electric-only vehicles, but payment of the appropriate annual inspection replacement fee will still be required. Diesel-powered vehicles and motorcycles are exempt from emissions testing but are still required to have the annual safety inspection, according to Texas DPS.

County officials added that new vehicles purchased in Texas that have not been previously registered in Texas or another state are required to pay an initial inspection program replacement fee of \$16.75 to cover two years.

Whether a vehicle requires an emissions test depends on the county

where the vehicle owner resides. Drivers in counties surrounding major Texas cities like Austin, Dallas-Fort Worth, El Paso, and Houston are required to undergo mandatory emissions tests. San Antonio is expected to be added to this list in the near future.

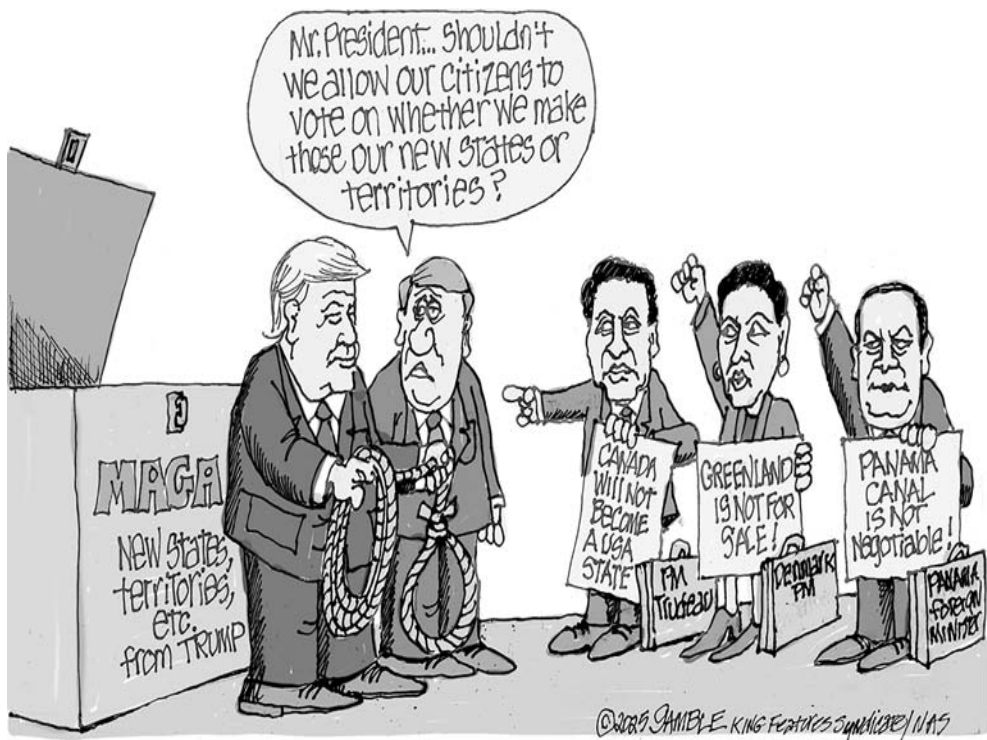
The counties that will require emissions testing to comply with federally mandated clean air requirements include El Paso, Brazoria, Collin, Dallas, Denton, Ellis, Fort Bend, Galveston, Harris, Johnson, Kaufman, Montgomery, Parker, Rockwall, Tarrant, Travis, and Williamson.

Bexar County will join this requirement in 2026.

Cost of emissions testing varies depending on the county and type of vehicle but typically ranges from \$11.50

to \$25.50. The following is what one will pay in these counties: \$18.50 for a Safety emissions inspection in El Paso, Travis, and Williamson counties; and \$25.50 for Safety emissions inspection in Dallas, Tarrant, and Harris (Houston) counties. Cost for emissions-only vehicles inspections in El Paso, Travis and Williamson counties is \$11.50. Emissions-only vehicle inspection in Dallas, Tarrant and Harris counties is \$18.50.

County officials stated that pricing for safety emissions testing covers safety and emissions inspection, while an emission-only inspection tests exhaust systems and emissions outputs. They added that inspection cost is determined by the county of registration and the type of inspection required.



Millan earns a 'Keep Moving' scholarship

By **Adriana Candelaria**
Special to the Courier

ANTHONY, TX – Anthony High School senior Yuliana Millan was recently awarded the “Keep Moving” Scholarship from the Texas Association of Latino Administrators and Superintendents (TALAS) El Paso Chapter.

Millan was selected by TALAS after submitting a

written and video application highlighting her academic achievements, leadership qualities, and resilience in overcoming challenges.

She was surprised with the presentation by TALAS and district leaders on Jan. 9 while she was in class.

“I was really surprised when I saw the group walk into the classroom. I didn’t expect it at all, but I was really happy,” Millan said.

The scholarship – worth

\$2,000 – can be applied to any college or university of the student’s choice. For Millan, every penny counts as she embarks on a years-long academic journey to become a veterinarian.

“I’m very grateful for the scholarship because those two thousand dollars will be very helpful for college,” Millan said.

Millan is one of six students in the El Paso area to receive the scholarship.



– Photo courtesy Anthony ISD

Yuliana Millan

Moments in time

THE HISTORY CHANNEL

- On Jan. 20, 1973, Jerry Lee Lewis, aka “The Killer,” made an appearance at the Grand Ole Opry, declaring, “I am a rock-and-rollin’, country-and-western, rhythm-and-blues singing [expletive deleted]!” before launching into his set, which notably included all the rock-and-roll classics he’d promised Opry officials not to play. Shunned by the pop music world following his controversial second marriage to his teenage cousin Myra Gale Brown, Lewis had staged a successful comeback with country music.

- On Jan. 21, 1959, Carl Switzer, aka the cowlick-sporting, warbly-voiced Alfalfa of the beloved “Our Gang” film series, was fatally shot by Moses Stiltz during an altercation over a debt Switzer believed he was owed by Stiltz.

- On Jan. 22, 1981, Annie Leibovitz’s final portrait of John Lennon and Yoko Ono, for the cover of Rolling Stone magazine, hit newsstands, a month and a half after Lennon’s assassination by Mark David Chapman.

- On Jan. 23, 1984, Hulk Hogan defeated World Wrestling Federation champion Iron Sheik and earned his first WWF title at New York City’s Madison Square Garden when he also became the first wrestler to escape Sheik’s signature move, the “camel clutch.”

- On Jan. 24, 1956, Look magazine published the confessions of J.W. Milam and Roy Bryant, who were acquitted in the previous year’s abduction and murder of Emmett Till, a Black teen from Chicago. The men were reportedly paid \$4,000 for their participation in the article.

- On Jan. 25, 1776, the Continental Congress approved the first national Revolutionary War memorial, honoring Brigadier General Richard Montgomery, who died during an assault in Quebec nearly a month earlier. The monument was crafted by King Louis XV’s personal sculptor, Jean-Jacques Caffieri, after he was hired for the job by Benjamin Franklin.

- On Jan. 26, 1961, about a week after his inauguration, President John F. Kennedy appointed orthopedist Janet Travell as his personal physician, making her the first woman in history to hold that post. Following Kennedy’s assassination, she retained her position and became President Lyndon B. Johnson’s personal doctor.

Anthony Independent School District Statement of Revenues, Expenditures and Changes in Fund Balance Governmental Funds For the Year Ended August 30, 2024

| Data Control Codes | General Fund | Stronger Connections Grant | Other State Special Revenue Funds | Other Funds | Total Governmental Funds |
|--|--------------|----------------------------|-----------------------------------|-------------|--------------------------|
| REVENUES: | | | | | |
| 5700 Total Local and Intermediate Sources | \$ 1,791,877 | \$ – | \$ – | \$ 434,100 | \$ 2,225,977 |
| 5800 State Program Revenues | 8,281,956 | – | 763,996 | 230,653 | 9,276,605 |
| 5900 Federal Program Revenues | 1,052,776 | 184,033 | – | 874,081 | 2,110,890 |
| 5020 Total Revenues | 11,126,609 | 184,033 | 763,996 | 1,538,834 | 13,613,472 |
| EXPENDITURES: | | | | | |
| Current: | | | | | |
| 0011 Instruction | 5,108,847 | – | 132,665 | 788,282 | 6,029,794 |
| 0012 Instructional Resources and Media Services | 165,717 | – | – | 8,186 | 173,903 |
| 0013 Curriculum and Instructional Staff Development | 23,827 | – | 79,611 | 28,097 | 131,535 |
| 0021 Instructional Leadership | 316,260 | 44,166 | 26,367 | 32,685 | 419,478 |
| 0023 School Leadership | 754,721 | – | – | 9,893 | 764,614 |
| 0031 Guidance, Counseling and Evaluation Services | 323,086 | – | – | 101,683 | 424,769 |
| 0032 Social Work Services | – | 139,867 | – | – | 139,867 |
| 0033 Health Services | 125,559 | – | – | 8,397 | 133,956 |
| 0034 Student (Pupil) Transportation | 381,288 | – | – | – | 381,288 |
| 0035 Food Services | 938,977 | – | – | – | 938,977 |
| 0036 Extracurricular Activities | 421,076 | – | – | 2,927 | 424,003 |
| 0041 General Administration | 956,664 | – | – | 3,112 | 959,776 |
| 0051 Facilities Maintenance and Operations | 1,255,647 | – | 25,290 | – | 1,280,937 |
| 0052 Security and Monitoring Services | 221,747 | – | 500,063 | 800 | 722,610 |
| 0053 Data Processing Services | 469,061 | – | – | – | 469,061 |
| 0061 Community Services | 618 | – | – | 32,259 | 32,877 |
| Debt Service: | | | | | |
| 0071 Principal on Long-Term Liabilities | 55,239 | – | – | 365,000 | 420,239 |
| 0072 Interest on Long-Term Liabilities | 3,636 | – | – | 109,850 | 113,486 |
| Intergovernmental: | | | | | |
| 0099 Other Intergovernmental Charges | 25,873 | – | – | – | 25,873 |
| 6030 Total Expenditures | 11,547,843 | 184,033 | 763,996 | 1,491,171 | 13,987,043 |
| 1100 Excess (Deficiency) of Revenues Over (Under) Expenditures | (421,234) | – | – | 47,663 | (373,571) |
| OTHER FINANCING SOURCES (USES): | | | | | |
| 7949 Proceeds of SBITAs | 52,106 | – | – | – | 52,106 |
| 1200 Net Change in Fund Balances | (369,128) | – | – | 47,663 | (321,465) |
| 0100 Fund Balance – September 1 (Beginning) | 4,397,002 | – | – | 235,453 | 4,632,455 |
| 3000 Fund Balance – August 30 (Ending) | \$ 4,027,874 | \$ – | \$ – | \$ 283,116 | \$ 4,310,990 |

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CryptoQuip Answer

What teal-colored barrier might some police be wrapping around a crime scene? Cordon blue.

School Boards Make a Difference

Presidents



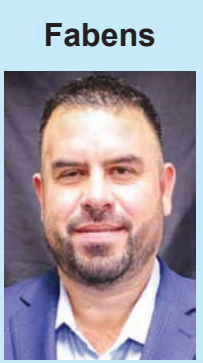
Angel J. Cuellar



Armando Rodriguez



James R. Pendell



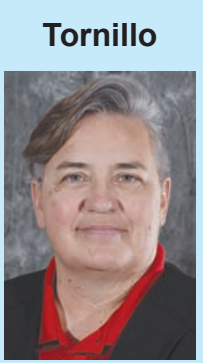
Luis "Charlie" Estrada



Eduardo Chavez

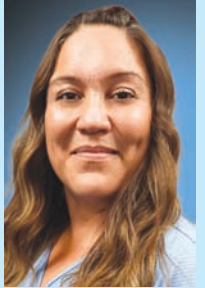


Michael A. Najera



Marlene Bullard

Vice Presidents



Cynthia Ramirez



Lucy Borrego



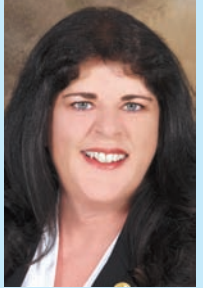
Arturo Cruz



Angel Ornelas



Myrna Hernandez



Cynthia Ann Najera



Ida Estrada

Secretaries



Christine Singh



Cindy Zuniga



Eric Gardea



Crystal Ramirez



Sandra Licon



Paul Guerra



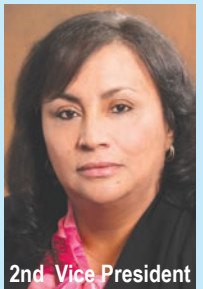
Ofelia Bosquez



Sylvia Chavez



Breanne Barnes



2nd Vice President
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Orlando O. Flores



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Pablo Barrera



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Lilla Maldono



Claudia A. Perez



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Monica Chavez



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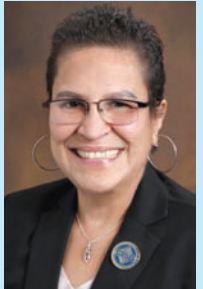
Hector Lopez



Luz Rodriguez



Sergio Martinez



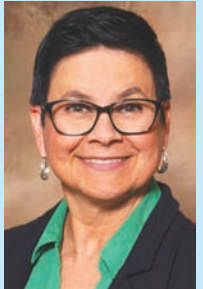
Sandra Ivonne Shay



Julieta Sepulveda Ramirez



Axel Lopez



Alice Gardea



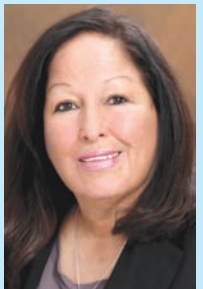
Maria Kika Saldaña



Anabel Vela



Carolina Ortega



Isela Torres



Greg Spence



Lorenzo Luevano



Marivel N. Macias



Enrique Vega



Oscar A. Troncoso



Pedro Galaviz



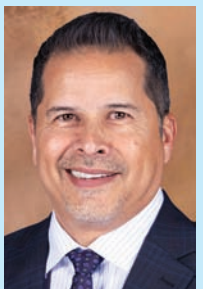
Juan I. Martinez



Rogelio Segovia



Jeannie Meza-Chavez



James P. Vasquez -Interim



Rosy Vega-Barrio

Superintendents

Thank You For Serving

After being knocked out, Miners bounce back big time

By Steve Escajeda
Special to the Courier

After their embarrassing 28-point loss to the New Mexico State Aggies at the Don Haskins Center a couple weeks ago, the UTEP basketball team, and its fans, were about as low as you can get.

In case you didn't know, UTEP and NMSU were both 2-0 atop the Conference USA standings going into the game in front of 12,000 fans, who packed the "The Don" for the first time in nine years.

The Miners are averaging about 4,000 fans a game, so this was a chance for UTEP to shine in front of the extra 8,000 fans who don't usually show up. A big win would almost certainly mean that more sellout crowds would show this season.

But the Miners were awful. They had no fight, they had no hustle, they had no spirit, and they had no chance to beat the Aggies, who flattened UTEP 85-57.

The loss dropped the Miners out of first place at 2-1 in the league, with two big road games coming up this past week. And the Miners haven't done that well on the road the last few years.

Either UTEP was going to reach deep inside themselves and save the season, or they were going to totally

fall apart and throw away any chances they have of winning the conference.

Well, they reached down deep and pulled out two road victories over Liberty and Florida International. The 72-70 win over Liberty last Thursday was especially impressive because the Flames were one of the CUSA favorites coming into the season.

After Liberty tied the game with 12 seconds left, the Miners quickly brought the ball downcourt, when Ahamad Bynum got the ball and pulled up for a jumper that swished through the net with 2.9 seconds left in the game and UTEP was celebrating about three seconds later.

The win showed what kind of mental state the Miners were in. They hadn't given up on the season and they had decided they were going to put that NMSU loss behind them.

To have the internal strength to believe in themselves when many fans in El Paso were starting to doubt, was a pleasant surprise.

To look as bad as they did against

the Aggies and come back just five days later and win a game they were supposed to lose, was quite a feat.

But then they had to follow that two days later with a game against a team the Miners knew they could beat, Florida International. UTEP took control early and built a 16-point lead before holding on for an 81-73 win.

To show you how funny this game can be, NMSU beats UTEP by a whopping 28 points and then goes out and loses at Liberty, the team that the Miners beat two days before.

What does all that mean? It means that the Miners are now tied for the Conference USA lead with NMSU and Middle Tennessee, all with 4-1 records.

Just when things were looking their worst, UTEP rebounded to put themselves right back in contention for the league crown.

I know that sellout crowd left the Don Haskins Center disappointed after that NMSU letdown, but the Miners return home this weekend

for two games against Jacksonville State 3-2 in CUSA, 11-7 overall) and Kennesaw State (3-2, 11-7).

It won't be easy, both teams are just a game behind the Miners in the league standings. These are wins the Miners should get, but they're going to have to avoid any mental letdowns like the one they had against the Aggies.

Hopefully UTEP has a couple of big crowds to cheer them on now that they're back in the league race.

Joe Golding has done a great job coaching this team that doesn't have any big stars, they don't have any height and they're playing teams that want to stick it to them because they'll be leaving the conference soon for the Mountain West.

What the Miners do have is grit and tenacity and the will to scrap out victories. They may not always be pretty, but a win's a win.

Let's hope the fans come out and support this team in a big way this weekend, to accomplish what they did this past weekend – they deserve it.

Senior moment By Matilda Charles

Heavy metals in our dark chocolate

It appears that our beloved dark chocolate candy bars can contain dangerous amounts of lead and cadmium – the dark chocolate we intentionally chose for its health benefits like lower blood pressure and antioxidants that protect cells from damage.

Consumer Reports did research to test the levels of lead and cadmium in dark chocolate candy bars. Of the 28 different dark chocolate bars they tested, all of them had lead and cadmium. Specifically, their tests were to look for mercury, lead, cadmium and arsenic, all heavy metals. The result: 23 of the dark chocolate candy bars had enough heavy metal in them that eating just one ounce of the candy would be harmful.

For those of us who've believed that a little daily dark chocolate would benefit our health, it turns out all that heavy metal could lead to immune system suppression, kidney damage and more.

Still, there were the five remaining bars that had levels low

enough to be safer. Not completely safe, but safer. They later did tests on an additional 48 chocolate products in several categories: chocolate chips, cocoa powder, brownie mixes, cake mixes and hot chocolate mixes. Of the 48 products, 16 of them had concerning amounts of heavy metals. However, they did find safer options for each item.

How do we get the benefits of dark chocolate without putting our health at risk from the heavy metals? Don't eat it every day, they say. Pick something with lower levels of the lead and cadmium.

I've long been a fan of Consumer Reports and have subscribed for years, now reading each issue online. With a yearly subscription, I have access to all of their past reports and research. To me, the cost is worth it. If you want to take a look, see www.consumerreports.org.

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

- ADDED WEIGHT ACROSS**
- 1 Posh parties
 - 6 Lumberyard tool
 - 12 Rd. crossers
 - 15 Quick bite
 - 19 Japanese film genre
 - 20 Mob code of silence
 - 21 _ au vin (chicken dish)
 - 22 Qualified
 - 23 Milk or egg container in a precinct refrigerator?
 - 25 Volcanic event
 - 27 Bible book after Genesis
 - 28 Strike zones, to pitcher Kershaw?
 - 30 Hefty slice
 - 32 White-coated Scottish terrier, for short
 - 33 Ohio city whose residents all have messy mop tops?
 - 41 It merged with Exxon in 1999
 - 45 Studio alert
 - 46 Off-course
 - 47 Dalai _
 - 50 Brian of electronica
 - 51 Play spiritedly
 - 52 People evaluating a central California city?
 - 55 Wedding vow
 - 56 Seder bread
 - 57 Makes public
 - 58 Suffix with million
 - 59 Has a feeling
 - 61 Shepherd of "Mr. Iglesias"
 - 64 Conjunction with a slash
 - 65 Appliance invented by the first U.S. president?
 - 70 "A Bell for _" (novel)
 - 72 Caged (up)
 - 73 "24" actress
 - 76 William who played Hopalong Cassidy
 - 77 T. Rex, e.g.
 - 78 _ fatuus (delusion)
 - 81 Longtime "Conan" airer
 - 82 Rocker known for the loud crashing noises in his songs?
 - 87 Flapjack chain, in brief
 - 88 Aykroyd of "Soul Man"
 - 89 Sty beasts
 - 90 Beachgoer's headwear
 - 91 Phase
 - 92 Occur next
 - 94 Tactful reply when Churchill asked "Who dislikes me?"
 - 96 Glorify
 - 100 Mai _ (cocktails)
 - 101 Name of a labor union in a city south of Los Angeles?
 - 109 Pressure felt at
 - 110 _ Father
 - 118 Songlike
 - 119 Cleo of song
 - 120 U. of Maryland athlete
 - 121 Born, in Lyon
 - 122 Gave lip to
 - 123 Actor Murphy
- DOWN**
- 1 Stare in awe
 - 2 Strong as _
 - 3 _ & Stitch
 - 4 In the center of a vessel
 - 5 Not religious
 - 6 Mythical bird
 - 7 Apple line
 - 8 Alternative to JavaScript
 - 9 Madrid Mlle.
 - 10 "This is not _" (warning to kids)
 - 11 Desire
 - 12 Act segment
 - 13 Legal wrongs
 - 14 Crouch down
 - 15 "StarTalk" cable chan.
 - 16 NYC theater award
 - 17 ATM hole
 - 18 Egg sources
 - 24 Actor Morales
 - 26 Fundamental
 - 29 Have title to
 - 31 Film director
 - 33 Johnson of Britain
 - 34 Battery pole
 - 35 "Mo' Money" star
 - 36 Health expert on TV
 - 37 Former BP gas chain
 - 38 Shaggy ox
 - 39 Blowup stuff
 - 40 Ear-related prefix
 - 42 Else
 - 43 Opening lines
 - 44 Aesop's hare, notably
 - 47 Actress Dern
 - 48 Playful trick
 - 49 Mothers
 - 52 An obi is one
 - 53 Standard
 - 54 One-named New Ager
 - 56 Prefix with -dermal or American
 - 60 Wall St.'s "500" index
 - 61 Big name in fuel additives
 - 62 Weeding tool
 - 63 Bring to a halt
 - 64 Brings pain to
 - 66 Cake coating
 - 67 Taboo things
 - 68 Mess up
 - 69 Prince, e.g.
 - 70 First five of 26 letters
 - 71 Gold-medal swimmer Tom
 - 74 Cable streaming
 - 75 With 116-Across, it has trembling leaves
 - 77 Scooby-_
 - 78 With a sharp image, briefly
 - 79 Aussie "Hi!"
 - 80 Abbr. on a food package
 - 83 " _ the rub!"
 - 84 "General" on Chinese menus
 - 85 Core
 - 86 Half of dos
 - 87 "Such a pity"
 - 91 Sound from a cold sufferer
 - 93 Maintenance
 - 94 Natal lead-in
 - 95 "Othello" foe
 - 97 Illegal burning
 - 98 Edition
 - 99 Make a goal
 - 101 Figure skater Katarina
 - 102 Horrid giant
 - 103 Regretful person
 - 104 CEOs' degs.
 - 105 Law firm aide, for short
 - 106 Baseballer
 - 107 Siouan people
 - 108 Schnozzola
 - 110 Doping juice
 - 111 Tot's plea
 - 112 Sword variety
 - 115 Silent assent

Super Crossword

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| 120 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | 123 |

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

couch cushions is relatively minimal. Most federal spending has strong public backing, and so a \$6.8 trillion budget that looks like a juicy target is very hard to bring under control.

The math is as brutal as ever. Social Security and Medicare, together with veterans benefits and other health programs, account for more than half of the budget. One of Trump's signature promises, of course, is not to touch Medicare and Social Security. Then, interest on the debt and defense spending take up about another \$2 trillion.

What's left is, in the scheme of things, a pittance, and even programs in this category have constituencies.

If the budget is ever to be put on a more rational basis, there is no substitute for making a public case for a serious reform agenda that includes entitlements like Social Security and Medicare. This is a politically perilous project, which is why the Republican Party abandoned it. How much easier and satisfying it is to tank flagrantly absurd end-of-year spending bills

and to put extravagant hopes in DOGE.

It is telling what else was happening in Washington while Mike Johnson's continuing resolution went down in flames. Congress was busy working to pass, on a bipartisan basis, the Social Security Fairness Act at a cost of roughly \$200 billion over 10 years. It doesn't matter that the legislation is a poorly designed giveaway to public employees that experts across the spectrum think is a bad idea.

DOGE will be hard-pressed just to claw that money back. Musk and Vivek Ramaswamy have talked about cutting a swath of federal workers. According to the Congressional Budget Office, in 2022, the federal government employed 2.3 million civilians at a cost of \$271 billion. So if you can cut 10% of those employees, which would be a stunning accomplishment, you might cover the 10-year cost of the Social Security Fairness Act, while still treading fiscal water.

This points to another similarity with 2013. All the drama and chaos is unlikely to fundamentally alter our dreadful fiscal trajectory.

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

MRI reveals blood vessel disease in brain

DEAR DR. ROACH: A recent fall split the skin below my left eye. I went to the emergency room to see if it required stitches. Since I complained of a headache in the back of my head on the left side, they ordered an MRI, which showed "atherosclerotic vascular disease with mild small vessel ischemic disease." They also saw plaque within my internal carotid arteries. The ER doctors said I should see a vascular specialist soon. Of course, I am scared. I am a 76-year-old woman on Bystolic, rosuvastatin, benazepril and thyroid replacement. I also take sulfasalazine for my inflammatory arthritis. I am thin, take many vitamins and supplements, and exercise four times a week. Does the MRI mean I have dementia or Alzheimer's? What does it mean? – R.M.



No, the MRI cannot make a diagnosis of dementia. Dementia is diagnosed presumptively by a clinical exam that notes impairments in cognitive functioning such as memory, language and attention. (A definitive diagnosis of Alzheimer's is made by a pathological evaluation of brain tissue, which is almost never obtained while a person is alive.)

What the MRI shows is a disease of the blood vessels of the brain caused by cholesterol plaque. High blood pressure, smoking, high blood cholesterol, a previous family history, and other factors put people at risk for this condition. Some, but not all, people with the kinds of blood vessel disease you have will develop dementia, which is caused by cumulative damage to the brain tissue from multiple small strokes. In your case, both the large vessels (carotids) and small vessels are affected, suggesting that your cholesterol and blood pressure haven't been ideal.

Your doctor has already taken some steps to slow or prevent the worsening of this condition. Careful control of your blood pressure (with Bystolic and benazepril) is essential. A statin drug (rosuvastatin) has been shown to reduce stroke risk and your overall dementia risk. I don't know whether these are the best medicines for you or whether they are at the right doses, since only your doctor knows you well enough, but it is clear that your doctor is taking steps to protect your heart and brain.

Inflammatory arthritis (especially rheumatoid arthritis and lupus) increases the risk of blood vessel damage in the brain and heart, so early treatment is more important with people who have these conditions. Unfortunately, not all primary care doctors know how important inflammatory arthritis is when it comes to heart attack and stroke risk.

I do not believe there are any supplements or vitamins that are both safe and effective at preventing stroke, but there are a handful of people who may benefit from them. For example, people with high homocysteine in their blood may benefit from vitamin B12, folic acid, or their methylated counterparts.

A careful review of your overall health condition and diet is critical. You may be referred to a specialist for cognitive testing if there is any evidence of change in your thinking ability. A few blood tests will help further stratify your risk and may show a need for additional 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. ©2025 North America Synd., Inc. All Rights Reserved.

AMERICAN LUNG ASSOCIATION of Texas

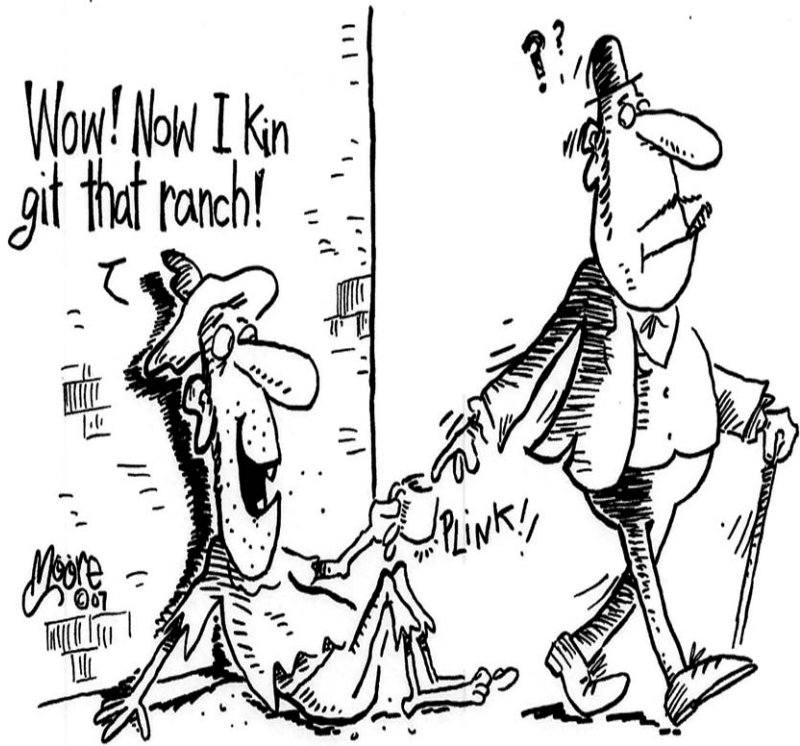
YOUR Gift IS A WAY TO CONQUER LUNG DISEASE

Find out how you can help ...

www.texaslung.org

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

January 22, 1883: The "50 Cent" Act, which allowed the sale of Texas public lands for 50¢ an acre is repealed.

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: **M** equals **B**

HPCY YOCZ-XWZWTOE MCTTDOT
 VDBPY JWVO QWZDXO MO
 HTCQQDAB CTWLAE C XTDVO
 JXOAO? XWTEWA MZLO.

Answer Page 4

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Weekly SUDOKU

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

◆◆◆ HOO BOY!

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Life insurance premium discount



by Freddy Groves

If you have life insurance through the Department of Veterans Affairs, you'll be pleased about what's coming in 2025: a discount in your premiums.

Whether you are insured with Veterans' Group Life Insurance (VGLI), Servicemembers' Group Life Insurance (SGLI) or Family Servicemembers' Group Life Insurance (FSGLI), your premiums will be discounted in varying amounts.

For veterans covered under VGLI, your costs will go down somewhere between 2% and 17%, with most averaging around 11%, depending on your age.

Spouses who receive coverage via FSGLI will see discounts between 11% and 22%, depending on age.

Active duty and those covered under SGLI will see a cost reduction of one cent per every \$1,000

of coverage, bringing the cost of maximum coverage (\$500,000) down to \$25 per month.

And no, you don't have to ask for it. These discounts will be automatic.

There are others types of insurance through the VA as well. See www.va.gov/life-insurance for information on eligibility, and the other forms of insurance that are available, such as mortgage life insurance (if you have a service-connected disability and a specially-adapted home), whole life insurance (if you have a service-connected disability), group life insurance (after you're out of the service) and Traumatic Injury Protection (if that ever becomes necessary after an injury).

If you're already covered and want to check your policy, pay the premium, see the details of your insurance or change beneficiaries, you can do that online. However, accessing your policy online depends on the type of policy it is. See www.va.gov/life-insurance/manage-your-policy for the

details about whether your access will be through the VA portal, through Prudential or via milConnect.

As of now, the VA's insurance covers over 5 million veterans, active duty and families, but there's always room for more. If you're not currently covered and you want to explore getting insurance coverage, see www.va.gov/life-insurance/options-eligibility for your options.

A heads up: You'll need to sign up for certain types of insurance in the first 120 days when you leave the service.

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• Many people have written in the tip to use two similarly sized bowls, one larger than the other, to serve cold salads at picnics. You add a few cups of crushed ice to the larger bowl, then nestle the smaller bowl into it, making it "chilled." In any case, remember: Don't leave food out longer than two hours.

• If you are doing food platters for your barbecue, consider making several smaller platters instead of one large dish. The large ones are harder to store when you prep beforehand, but a better reason is that the items will not go stale/too warm/too cold quite as fast, and it's easy to switch out plates throughout the party.

• "Using plastic cups for a crowd? Remember to put out a permanent marker, colorful rubber bands or some other way to mark one's glass. It's sometimes hard to keep track when they all look the same." – C.L. in Pennsylvania

• "For serving utensils used during picnic lunch, I have two large zip-top plastic bags. I label them 'clean' and 'dirty.' Anything used to touch raw meat goes in the 'dirty' bag. And serving spoons that can be used again to serve are in the 'clean' bag." – M.A. in Arizona

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.

| | | | | | | | | |
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| | + | | + | | = | 14 | | |
| + | | x | | x | | | | |
| | + | | + | | = | 12 | | |
| = | | = | | = | | | | |
| 5 | | 90 | | 65 | | | | |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 |

DIFFICULTY: ★★

★ Moderate ★★ Difficult

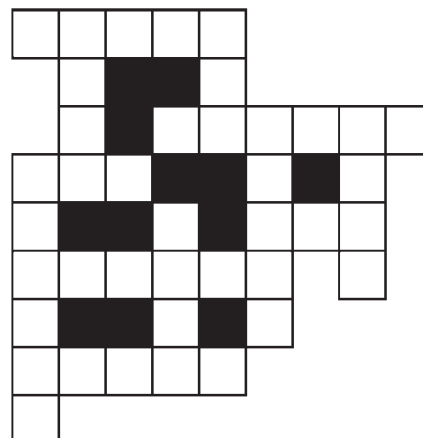
★★★ GO FIGURE!

Answer Page 4

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- LIL
- HIPSLO
- LHOCT
- ♥NTIH
- HINCLE
- OGH
- ♥ESLA
- NURGI
- ♥PTO
- SOGSR
- ♥HENSO
- GLOO



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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