



– Photo courtesy of Cross Texas Trail

**TRAIL BLAZER** – Charlie Gandy heads the Cross Texas Trail, a non-profit group. He is a veteran trail hiker, bike-riding adventurer, and former Texas state representative that grew up in Mesquite and later moved to Austin. He currently lives in Poulsbo, WA. He came up with the Cross Texas Trail idea while hiking the Tahoe Rim Trail in California.

## Gandy sees a 1,500-mile hiking trail from El Paso to Orange

By Alfredo Vasquez  
*Special to the Courier*

TEXAS – Ninety-six percent of the land in Texas is in private hands and a lot of it is really jewel-like – like a national park – according to Charlie Gandy, founder of a fledgling enterprise that is promoting the Cross Texas Trail project.

Gandy has been sharing his vision of a Texas trail that, when completed, he said would be comparable to America’s hiking trails triple crown – the Pacific Crest, Appalachian and Continental Divide. These three paths draw thousands of outdoorspeople from all over the world each year and have inspired countless books and films.

Gandy asserted in a recent news article that while Texas is home to a range of natural wonders, only 4.2 percent of the largest state in the lower 48 is public

land, which is mostly concentrated in the remote western fringes and leaves whole ecosystems and cultural zones out of reach for the public to enjoy.

To remedy that, the Cross Texas Trail project founder is asking fellow Texans to imagine a trail where hikers, bikers, and horseback riders would be able to experience a new adventure in the form of a 1,500-mile trail across the state – from El Paso to Orange. He said that end to end, the route would meander through all types of terrain from swampy bayous and sky islands to salt flats, sand dunes, and mountain ranges.

So far, efforts for the proposed project have been mainly spreading the word and connecting ranchers, adventure seekers, and volunteers with this innovative undertaking. “We’re rebooting Texas,” Gandy stated recently in a West Texas newspaper article. “We’re opening up peoples’ minds to what they couldn’t see before,” he asserted.

Gandy and his wife, Melissa Balmer, have been bicycle advocates for years. They have been pushing folks to get active on two wheels through a nonprofit called Bike Texas. The Cross Texas Trail project is an extension of that work, as both work to bring hikers and horseback riders into the bikers’ endeavor.

Gandy related that after an article about his project was published in the Texas Monthly magazine last fall, about a hundred individuals signed up to volunteer. He said that he foresees the project taking about five years and \$5 million to establish the initial trail and that construction could start by 2030.

“The route I have created is target-rich with things Texans and visitors to Texas are interested in,” Gandy explained. He said that while much of the Cross Texas Trail will attempt to connect state and national parks, the gaps in between will be filled by participating

See TRAIL, Page 4

## El Paso County joins legal fight over birthright citizenship

By Elhiu Dominguez  
*Special to the Courier*

EL PASO COUNTY – El Paso County has joined a coalition of local governments in filing an amicus brief to support a lawsuit challenging President Trump’s executive order titled “Protecting the Meaning and Value of American Citizenship.” The order seeks to redefine citizenship by removing birthright citizenship for

children born in the U.S. to parents without legal immigration status.

The El Paso County Commissioners Court voted Monday, Jan. 27, 2025, to approve filing the brief, which argues that the executive order violates the 14th Amendment of the U.S. Constitution. That amendment guarantees citizenship to all persons born in the United States and subject to its jurisdiction. The lawsuit also contends the order conflicts with the Immigration and Nationality Act,

which mirrors the language of the 14th Amendment.

“This executive order is a direct challenge to constitutional principles that have defined who we are as a nation,” said El Paso County Attorney Christina Sanchez. “Joining this legal fight is essential to protect the rights of children in our community and to ensure no family faces unjust barriers to opportunity.”

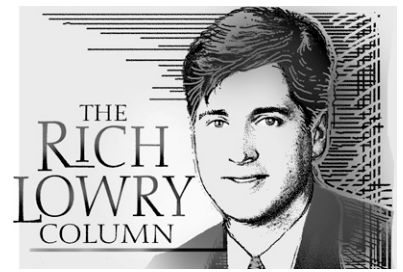
The amicus brief warns of significant harm if the order is implemented.

It highlights that local governments would face administrative chaos and financial strain. Birth certificates would no longer serve as proof of citizenship, requiring new systems for verification. Children could lose access to essential benefits like Medicaid, SNAP, and CHIP, further burdening local resources.

“This order threatens to deprive vulnerable children of healthcare,

See FIGHT, Page 3

# Trump the expansionist knows real estate matters



In business, Donald Trump was a real estate guy. In the presidency, he might be one, too. The prospective foreign policy of his second term has taken an unexpected turn, with his recent talk of annexing Canada, buying Greenland and taking back the Panama Canal. Rather than the neo-isolationist that he's often accused of being, Trump is talking like a neo-imperialist, at least in our own hemisphere.

Even if President Trump does none of these things – he's largely joking about the Great White North – his musings are a reminder of the crucial importance of geography and the control of territory.

The first thing you need to do to understand the world, and to a large extent the behavior of nations, is to look at a map.

“Geography is the most fundamental factor in the foreign policy of states because it is the most

permanent,” the 20th-century strategist Nicholas Spykman observed. “Ministers come and go, even dictators die, but mountain ranges stand unperturbed.”

The world was never “flat,” in the formulation of New York Times columnist Thomas Friedman that became the catchphrase of a complacent globalism.

No, the world is full of mountains and steppes; rivers and coastlines; temperate, tropical and dry zones. Some nations, by virtue of their location, are secure, others vulnerable; some naturally rich, others resource-starved.

The first thing you need to know about Britain, for instance, is that it is an island, “this precious stone set in the silver sea,” as Shakespeare had it. This basic, ineluctable fact has crucially shaped Britain's strategic orientation and national character. It is why

it became a naval power committed to global trade, and why it considered far-flung places – courtesy of the waves – relatively nearby.

The English Channel has been an indispensable buffer between it and continental Europe. There's a reason Nazi Germany invaded Poland, France, the Soviet Union, Denmark, Norway, Belgium, the Netherlands, Luxembourg, Greece, Yugoslavia and Italy – but not Britain.

As for Germany, Robert Kaplan writes in his illuminating book “The Revenge of Geography” that it “faces both east and west with no mountain ranges to protect it, providing it with pathologies

See LOWRY, Page 7

# Mariachi los Gatos Salvajes earns third straight trip to UIL State

By Sofia Maciel  
Special to the Courier

FABENS – Mariachi los Gatos Salvajes has again demonstrated excellence and earned a coveted spot at the UIL State Mariachi Festival for the third consecutive year. Competing at Eastwood High School on February 1, 2025, the talented student musicians delivered an outstanding performance that secured their place among the top mariachi ensembles in Texas.

“Making it to UIL State for the third consecutive year is an incredible achievement for Mariachi los Gatos Salvajes,” said Carrasco. “Our students have worked tirelessly to perfect their craft, and their dedication and passion for mariachi music continue to shine. We are so proud

to represent Fabens on this prestigious stage and showcase the rich musical tradition that defines our community. My heart is full at the end.”

“On behalf of the Fabens ISD Board of Trustees, I want to congratulate our very own Gatos Salvajes and Mariachi Director, Ms. Carrasco. Their hard work and dedication in representing Fabens ISD are evident, as they will make us proud at the state level for three consecutive years,” said Superintendent Dr. Rogelio Segovia.

“I feel very proud of my group. What makes me happy is this has been our most challenging piece, and it has taken us to state for the third year in a row! This is such an accomplishment,” said mariachi vice president Mya Orozco, Fabens High School sophomore.



– Photo courtesy of Fabens ISDI

**JOY JOY** – Mya Orozco, a sophomore at Fabens High School and vice-president of the Mariachi Band holds her hat in one hand and the coveted trophy in the other, high for all to see just after receiving their rating at Eastwood High School. Her exuberance and big smile says it all.

Fabens Middle Schooler Celeste Delgado said, “It's a honest. I hope we get the state pleasure and opportunity to make it to state. We worked very hard to get here, and

we deserve it, if I'm being the top high school mariachi groups from across Texas. Los Gatos Salvajes will compete in the 4A category on February 20, 2025, in Seguin, TX.

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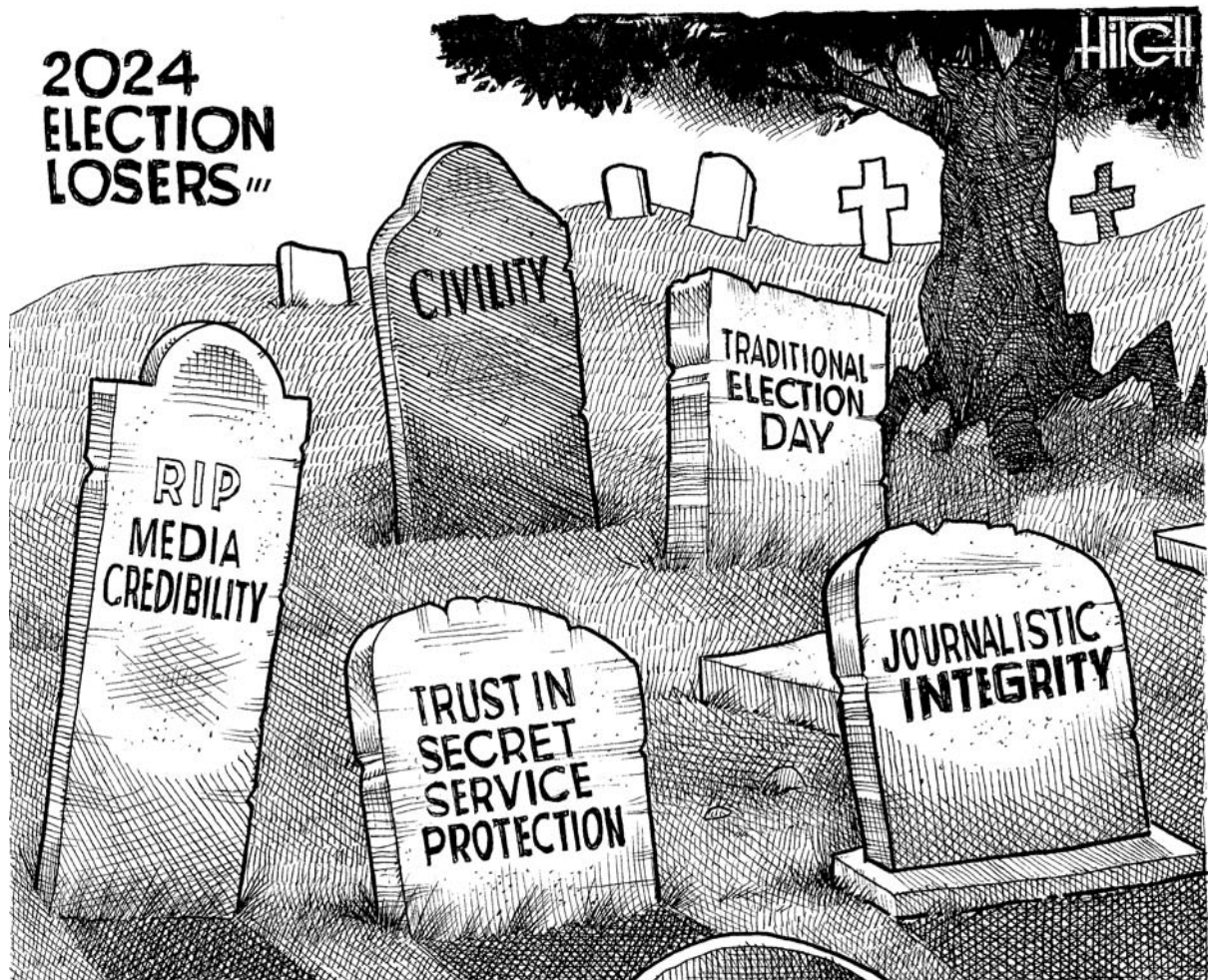
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# Fabens ISD puts historic HS up for sale

By Sofia Maciel  
Special to the Courier

FABENS – The Fabens Independent School District Board of Trustees recognizes the historical and cultural significance of the 1925 Fabens High School building. While the building has not served as a high school for over 60 years, it has sustained significant fire damage, which presents challenges to its preservation.

The Board profoundly values the building's place in our community's history and has resolved to explore options that could restore and maintain the structure. However, FISD does not have the financial resources to undertake such a restoration independently.

To address these challenges, the Board has authorized the Superintendent to advertise the

building for sale. This sale will be contingent upon the purchaser agreeing to restore and maintain the building in a way that preserves its historical character while providing a public and educational benefit to Fabens ISD students and the broader community.

This decision reflects the district's commitment to balancing historic preservation with the safety and financial responsibilities of the community. The district will continue to engage with local stakeholders and potential partners to explore solutions that honor the legacy of the building while meeting the current and future needs of our students.

FISD appreciates the community's support and input as we navigate this process and will provide updates as developments occur.

*(Sofia Maciel is the Media Specialist for Fabens Independent School District.)*

## Fight

From Page 1

food assistance, and other basic needs," Sanchez said. "It also risks creating a permanent underclass in our society, harming education outcomes, public health,

and local economies. This is something we cannot allow to happen."

The brief argues that a nationwide injunction is necessary to prevent widespread harm and protect constitutional rights. El Paso County is joining this effort to stand up for its residents

and uphold the integrity of the Constitution.

"Protecting our community means fighting against policies that undermine fairness and equality," Sanchez said. "We will continue to stand firm in our commitment to justice and to the well-being of El Paso families."

**To Advertise Call 852-3235**  
**Archives: [www.wtxcc.com](http://www.wtxcc.com)**

## Clint Independent School District Public Notice

Clint Independent School District will hold a public hearing to discuss the District's 2023-2024 Texas Academic Performance Report (TAPR) as part of a School Board meeting, which is scheduled for 5:30 p.m., Wednesday, February 19, 2025, at the Clint ISD Administrative Office Board Room, 14521 Horizon Blvd., Horizon City, TX, 79928.

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

For more information, call 926-4051.

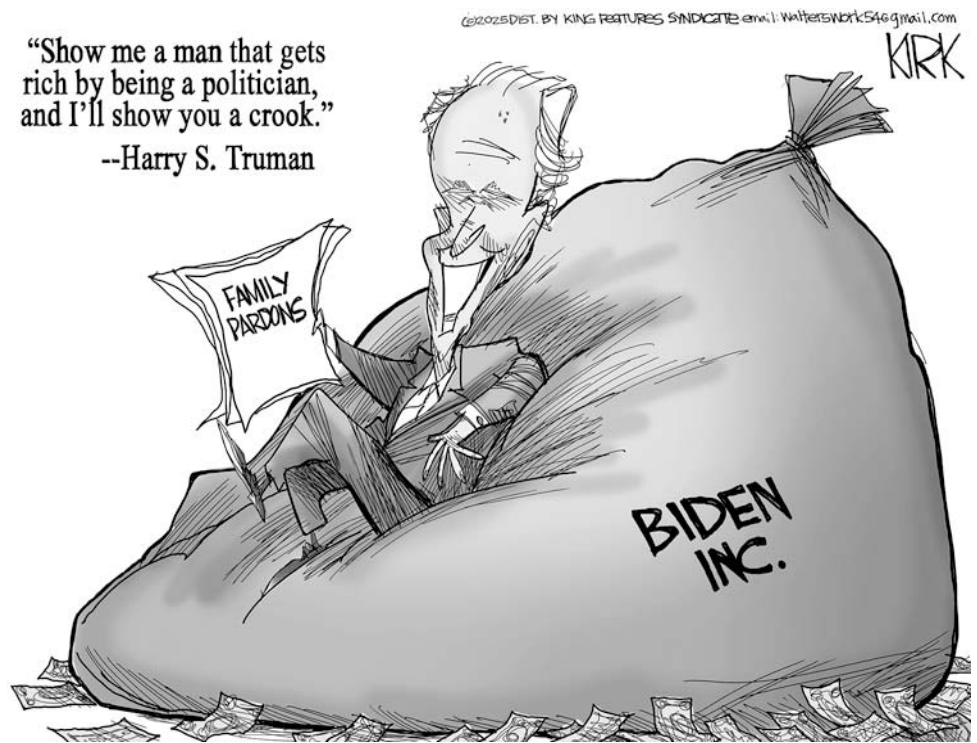
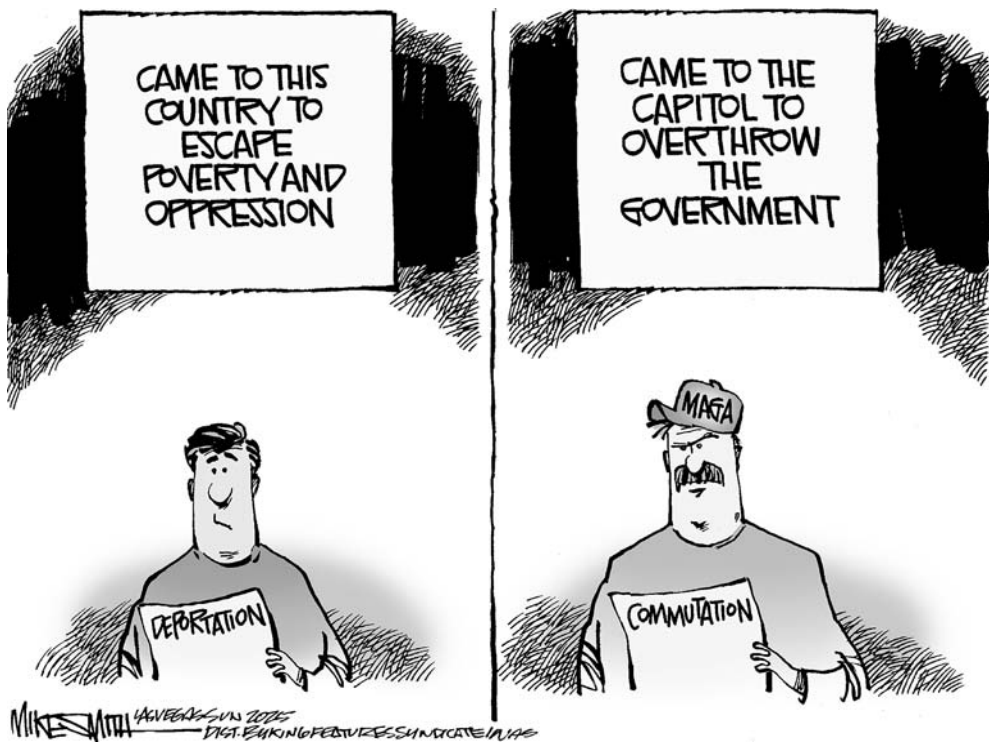
## Distrito Escolar Independiente de Clint Junta Pública

El Distrito Escolar Independiente de Clint tendrá una Reunión Pública para informar sobre el "Reporte de Rendimiento Académica de Texas" (TAPR) del año escolar 2023-2024. El reporte sera parte de la reunión de la Mesa Directiva del distrito programada para el miércoles, 19 de febrero del 2025 a las 5:30 p.m. en el cuarto de sala de Clint ISD oficina administrativa, 14521 Horizon Blvd., Horizon City, TX, 79928.

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

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

WTCC: 02-06-25





– Image courtesy of Cross Texas Trail

**LONG TREK** – The map above shows the proposed Cross Texas Trail – from El Paso to Orange. The envisioned route is Charlie Gandy’s attempt to push the boundaries of what a thru-hiking trail could be and to change the state’s reputation as gated and fenced.

### Canutillo Independent School District Public Notice

Canutillo Independent School District will hold a public hearing to discuss the District’s 2023-2024 Annual Educational Performance Report, including TAPR, as part of a regular School Board meeting which is scheduled for 6:00 p.m. Tuesday, February 25, 2025, at the Canutillo Administrative Offices Board Room, 7965 Artcraft, El Paso, TX 79932.

The annual report will also be available for review after the hearing within the Canutillo ISD Testing and Accountability webpage:

[www.canutillo-isd.org/departments/testing-accountability-research-department/district-annual-performance](http://www.canutillo-isd.org/departments/testing-accountability-research-department/district-annual-performance)

For more information, call 915-877-7481.

### Distrito Escolar Independiente de Canutillo Junta Pública

El Distrito Escolar Independiente de Canutillo llevará a cabo una audiencia pública para discutir el “Reporte de Rendimiento Académico de Texas” 2023-2024 del Distrito, incluido TAPR, como parte de una reunión regular de la Junta Escolar que está programada para las 6:00 p.m. martes, 25 de febrero de 2025, en la sala de juntas de las oficinas administrativas de Canutillo, 7965 Artcraft, El Paso, TX 79932.

El informe TAPR también estará disponible para su revisión después de la audiencia dentro de la página web de Canutillo ISD Testing and Accountability:

[www.canutillo-isd.org/departments/testing-accountability-research-department/district-annual-performance](http://www.canutillo-isd.org/departments/testing-accountability-research-department/district-annual-performance)

Para mas información, llamar al 915-877-7481.

WTCC: 02-06-25

### Trail

From Page 1

local ranches. The ultimate goal is for a carefully crafted seasonal route with watering holes and places to stay staged strategically along the way, he noted.

Gandy stated that for safety reasons and to be able to offer interpretive materials along the way, he would like to see Starlink internet connectivity along the proposed trail.

Presidio County rancher and attorney Pene Ferguson is among the first wave of landowners to hop on board. The White House Ranch, passed down through the women in her family for nearly a century, is located along a particularly scenic and history-rich stretch of Casa Piedra Road.

The ranch is located near Big Bend National Park along the old Chihuahua Trail, a major trade route through

See TRAIL, Page 5



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### CryptoQuip Answer

Part of an alarm clock producing the sounds of folks shooting the breeze: the schmooze button.

### Strange BUT TRUE

By Lucie Winborne

• Cheerleading was once an exclusively male sport, and the first cheers, copied from military chants, began at Princeton University around the Civil War era.

• Porsche’s first car, in 1898, was electric.

• Motorola has developed an FDA-approved “edible password pill” which, once digested, is activated by the acid in your stomach and emits an 18-bit signal that is strong enough to communicate with and unlock all your devices.

• On Mars, no resource can be wasted – not even our bodily waste. Urine will be recycled into drinking water and feces into fertilizer.

• The 1,400-page novel “War and Peace” was copied around seven times by Leo Tolstoy’s wife, Sophia, by hand. Now, that’s love!

• U.S. Marine John Kelly was the last person to be awarded two Medals of Honor. He ran 100 yards in advance of the front line and attacked an enemy machine gun nest, killed the gunner with a grenade, shot another man with his pistol, and returned with eight prisoners. He was 19.

• The only difference between a fog and a mist comes down to visibility: If you can’t see farther than 100 meters, you’re in a fog.

• As the planet heats up, flowers are emitting less scent.

• George Washington had one remaining tooth in his mouth when he was sworn in as the first American president in 1789.

• The sound of a Star Wars lightsaber was created by pairing the sound of an idle film projector and the buzz from an old TV set.

Thought for the Day: “Nobody made a greater mistake than he who did nothing because he could do only a little.”

– Edmund Burke

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1	+	8	×	7	=	63
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4	-	2	×	3	=	6
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## Moments in time

THE HISTORY CHANNEL

• On Feb. 3, 1953, French oceanographer Jacques-Yves Cousteau published a memoir co-written with Frederic Dumas, "The Silent World," about his time exploring the oceans. It was made into an Oscar-winning documentary directed by Louis Malle three years later, the success of which allowed Cousteau to retire from the navy and devote himself full time to oceanography.

• On Feb. 4, 1913, Rosa Louise McCauley, better known to us today by her married name of Rosa Parks, was born in Tuskegee, Alabama. The lifelong civil rights activist's refusal to give up her seat on a segregated bus to a white man in 1955 remains a defining moment of America's civil rights movement.

• On Feb. 5, 2012, 36-year-old Josh Powell, who had been labeled a person of interest in the 2009 disappearance of his 28-year-old wife, Susan, locked out a social worker before killing himself and his two young sons, Braden and Charlie, by setting fire to his Graham, Washington, home. Susan Powell's remains have still not been found.

• On Feb. 6, 1928, a woman calling herself Anastasia Tchaikovsky (later Anna Anderson) and claiming to be the youngest daughter of murdered Russian czar Nicholas II arrived in New York City. Though she fought for recognition of that identity for more than 50 years, it was never verified.

• On Feb. 7, 1974, viewers at a screening of the Mel Brooks Western spoof "Blazing Saddles" at the Pickwick Drive-In Theater in Burbank, California, enjoyed the film not from the expected comfort of their cars, but on horseback, in one of Hollywood's most creative P.R. stunts.

• On Feb. 8, 1986, Spud Webb, one of the shortest players in professional basketball history at 5-foot-7, scored a win over his Atlanta Hawks teammate, the 6-foot-8 Dominique Wilkins, in the NBA slam dunk contest.

• On Feb. 9, 1864, Union General George Armstrong Custer married Elizabeth "Libbie" Bacon in Monroe, Michigan, while he was on leave. A passionate defender of her husband's reputation after his death at the Battle of the Little Bighorn in 1876, her efforts helped establish Custer as an American hero.

## Trail

From Page 4

modern-day Far West Texas through northern Mexico that predates white settlement in the area. Long before county seat Marfa was a boom town, the nearby Alamito settlement boasted almost 400 residents by the early 20th century, according to trail advocates.

Ferguson stated that her family still raises cattle to pay the bills but has also begun to experiment with a more 21st century revenue stream: running a short-term rental. Faced with the question of what to do with an old ranch house in need of repairs, the family opted to restore the building and open it up to guests looking for an off-the-beaten path experience.

By taking part in the Cross Texas Trail, Ferguson said that she would be able to share her family's land and its story

with the public – something that the vast majority of visitors to the nearby Big Bend parks would otherwise never be exposed to. "It's very precious to me because of my family background," she said. "I'm always thrilled when I find someone who finds it interesting too."

Gandy said that he believes in working directly with landowners to get the ball rolling and is hopeful ranchers will hop on board. Meanwhile, he is asking interested individuals to connect with the project through their website and through social media. He added that the proposed trail route is still in flux and that local knowledge will be essential to finalizing the path.

Visit the trail website at [xtexas.org](http://xtexas.org) for information. "This trail will be an adventure route," Gandy said. "It'll be the most challenging (and most interesting) way across Texas."

## Fabens Independent School District Public Notice of Meeting

Fabens Independent School District will hold a public hearing to discuss the District's 2023-2024 Annual Report. The meeting will be held at 4:30 P.M. on Monday, February 17, 2025 in the Fabens Independent School District's Board Room at 821 N.E. "G" Avenue, Fabens, Texas.

The public is invited to attend in person. For more information, call (915) 765-2600, x2115.

### Junta Pública

*El Distrito escolar independiente de Fabens celebrará una audiencia pública para discutir el informe anual 2023-2024. La reunión se celebrará a las 4:30 p.m. el lunes, 17 de febrero de 2025 en la sala de juntas de Fabens ISD, 821 N.E. "G" Avenue, Fabens, Texas.*

*Se invita al público a asistir en persona. Para obtener más información, llame al (915) 765-2600, x2115.*

WTCC: 02-06-25

## Tornillo Independent School District Statement of Revenues, Expenditures and Changes in Fund Balance Governmental Funds For the Year Ended August 31, 2024

Data Control Codes	10 General Fund	Other Funds	Total Governmental Funds
<b>REVENUES:</b>			
5700 Total Local and Intermediate Sources	\$ 1,102,822	\$ 569,345	\$ 1,672,167
5800 State Program Revenues	9,511,233	1,982,683	11,493,916
5900 Federal Program Revenues	1,089,852	2,975,616	4,065,468
5020 Total Revenues	11,703,907	5,527,644	17,231,551
<b>EXPENDITURES:</b>			
<b>Current:</b>			
0011 Instruction	5,613,454	1,873,507	7,486,961
0012 Instructional Resources and Media Services	159,717	5,851	165,568
0013 Curriculum and Instructional Staff Development	299,136	1,202,911	1,502,047
0021 Instructional Leadership	113,337	3,813	117,150
0023 School Leadership	806,368	53,402	859,770
0031 Guidance, Counseling and Evaluation Services	286,044	103,787	389,831
0032 Social Work Services	-	36,638	36,638
0033 Health Services	178,232	13,139	191,371
0034 Student (Pupil) Transportation	252,326	7,609	259,935
0035 Food Services	889,981	26,377	916,358
0036 Extracurricular Activities	354,103	2,075	356,178
0041 General Administration	747,334	63,293	810,627
0051 Facilities Maintenance and Operations	1,605,808	297,016	1,902,824
0052 Security and Monitoring Services	385,586	311,427	697,013
0053 Data Processing Services	533,714	7,710	541,424
0061 Community Services	7,479	158,665	166,144
<b>Debt Service:</b>			
0071 Debt Service - Principal on Long Term Debt	26,304	849,700	876,004
0072 Debt Service - Interest on Long Term Debt	4,550	435,998	440,548
0073 Debt Service - Bond Issuance Cost and Fees	-	2,200	2,200
<b>Capital Outlay:</b>			
0081 Facilities Acquisition and Construction	97,305	110,700	208,005
<b>Intergovernmental:</b>			
0099 Other Intergovernmental Charges	15,983	-	15,983
6030 Total Expenditures	12,376,761	5,565,818	17,942,579
1100 Excess (Deficiency) of Revenues Over (Under) Expenditures	(672,854)	(38,174)	(711,028)
<b>OTHER FINANCING SOURCES (USES):</b>			
7913 Right-to-Use Lease Proceeds	107,731	-	107,731
1200 Net Change in Fund Balances	(565,123)	(38,174)	(603,297)
0100 Fund Balance - September 1 (Beginning)	6,539,578	305,300	6,844,878
3000 Fund Balance - August 31 (Ending)	\$ 5,974,455	\$ 267,126	\$ 6,241,581



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

from militarism to nascent pacifism, so as to cope with its dangerous location.”

The United States is uniquely blessed by its geography. It is of immeasurable importance that we are both a continental and island nation, combining the massive resources that come with the former, with the protection from hostile European and Asian powers that comes with the latter. We have abundant natural resources, ample coastlines, a massive river system and a disproportionate share of the world’s best soil, among other advantages.

That we ended up stretching from sea to shining sea wasn’t an accident. Our forefathers supported continental expansion as a matter of geopolitics, whether it was the Louisiana Purchase or the Mexican-American War. They believed that it would make us stronger and more secure, and – although their methods weren’t always admirable – they were correct.

Control of territory matters, sometimes even relatively small pieces of territory. Consider

Hawaii. It is of enormous consequence that the island archipelago sits in the middle of the Pacific athwart key sea lanes. Other powers circled it in the 19th century, while the great naval strategist Alfred Thayer Mahan urged us to acquire it. We all know the role of Pearl Harbor in World War II, and as the “Crossroads of the Pacific,” Hawaii remains a major economic and military asset.

As for Greenland, the idea of buying it from Denmark is no more ridiculous than any other land purchase we’ve ever made, including of the U.S. Virgin Islands in 1917... from Denmark.

Greenland has attracted the interest of such estimable American statesmen as Harry Truman and William Seward. Given its strategic location in the Arctic Circle and its wealth of mineral deposits, it’s an alluring proposition.

Geography isn’t everything, but often when it comes to geopolitics, there’s no substitute for cold, hard real estate.

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

**Probiotics can improve healthy microbiome, no health promises**

*DEAR DR. ROACH: You recently wrote that you do not recommend probiotics in healthy people. I am a 78-year-old male who, three years ago, underwent an esophagectomy to remove my esophagus and part of my stomach because of cancer. I was put on 30 mg of pantoprazole, which was later increased to 40 mg. I’ve read that prolonged use of this medicine isn’t recommended. My understanding is that this medicine is used to reduce the chance of acid reflux. I have read that it also kills bacteria (both bad and good) in the stomach. I asked my primary care physician about this and whether she was OK with me starting probiotics to help restore the good bacteria. – E.M.*



Proton-pump inhibitors like pantoprazole are often used in people after surgical treatment for esophageal cancer. They reduce acid reflux and consequently prevent a stricture where the remainder of the esophagus meets the remainder of your stomach.

While it is true that proton-pump inhibitors do have the potential for side effects with long-term use, there are times when the benefits outweigh the risks. Many esophageal cancer experts feel that the benefits outweigh the risks in esophageal survivors like you.

Long-term acid suppression does lead to changes in the gut bacteria, called the microbiome. Using probiotics to improve the quality of the microbiome has been studied, and preliminary studies showed that taking probiotics daily can get more healthy bacteria in the gut. What isn’t clear is whether this translates to better outcomes for the patient or whether any of the long-term adverse effects of proton-pump-inhibitor therapy will be reduced. It makes sense that it might help, but it is unproven as yet.

There is the potential for harm in probiotic treatment, but it’s not common. A very few cases of infection have been shown to be transmitted by probiotics. The main harm is mostly financial, since some probiotics are expensive.

*DEAR DR. ROACH: I am 81 years old and in pretty good health. I often have a hard time getting to sleep and staying asleep. A couple of months ago, I was dealing with a sore lower back from overdoing yard work, so I took two ibuprofen tablets before going to bed for several nights in a row. What I noticed is that I was able to get to sleep quicker. I have continued to take ibuprofen as a sleep aid, and it continues to help me get to sleep. But I am wondering if there might be any medical issue that could arise from the continued daily use of ibuprofen. – J.T.N.*

Most people don’t find that ibuprofen helps or hurts their sleep, so I don’t recommend it as a sleep aid in general. In fact, some people find that ibuprofen can be disruptive to their sleep. Others, however, find that it makes them sleepy.

In any case, the risk of two ibuprofen tablets at night, or even every day, is small. A person with a history of ulcer disease or abnormal bleeding shouldn’t take ibuprofen daily without discussing it with their doctor.

*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.*

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**Moore Texas by Roger MOORE**

Cuero calls itself the "Turkey Capitol of the World" and has had a Turkey Trot parade since 1916.

**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: H equals S

UWMB RL WI WVWVG FVRFP  
 UMRSOFTIQ BZY HROISH RL  
 LRVPH HZRRBTIQ BZY EMYKY:  
 BZY HFZGRRKY EOBRI.

Answer Page 4

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**Weekly SUDOKU**

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

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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**Sports clinic 2025: Sign up now**



by Freddy Groves

Registration for the 2025 National Veterans Summer Sports Clinic is now open. Scheduled to take place in San Diego this summer August 23-30, veterans who want to go should get started now on the application process. Those who are eligible could get a free round-trip plane ticket, so it's worth the time to get started on your application. Registration cuts off on March 1.

Go online to va.gov and search for "National Veterans Summer Sports Clinic 2025."

You'll need the 2025 NVSSCVeteranRegistration Packet, and your primary care doctor needs to sign off on the physical exam form (VA Form 0928c). If you're over 40, you'll need a recent EKG strip. Make your VA medical appointment now to make sure there are no delays.

Click the "Forms Submission" link to upload your medical docs.

Then wait. It might take 45 days after the March 1 deadline for you to get your notification (via email) about whether you are approved to attend.

Who qualifies for the clinics? Veterans who have traumatic brain injury, spinal cord injuries, amputations, PTSD, visual impairments and more. See the sports clinic webpage for the details. If you're actively engaged with the VA for care, you'll likely qualify.

Fine print includes items such as weight limit of 250 pounds if you're dependent or 300 pounds if you move independently. If you bring a caregiver, they pay their own way. If you need help with ADL, your caregiver needs to come along. You'll be expected to stay for the whole week and participate in everything, and you'll need to pay for your own lodging (but they get a group discount).

Priority goes to veterans who've never attended,

followed by veterans who've attended one or two clinics. For a third year, you'll need a recommendation. (It still can't hurt to apply. Each application is reviewed individually.)

While the application steps might be a bit daunting, for the rehab, fitness experience and everything you'll learn, the VA sports clinic can't be beat.

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• "Plant banana skins in your garden, just below the surface. They rot quickly and provide nutrients for growing plants." – A.R. in Ohio

• "My girls get a little crazy with clothes shopping – they want everything! Before we go, we pull out all the clothes they have and assess their needs. We keep a count of shirts, skirts, shorts and pants, so we don't overbuy and have too many. They also make outfits out of what they have, so we can see if anything needs to be bought for that purpose. And undergarments and socks are replenished first, so they get included in the budget!" – S.S. in South Carolina

• "Always keep two needles threaded, one with black and one with white. When you have a rip, a button comes off or a hem comes out of your clothes, and you are in a hurry, you can use one of these for a quick repair." – J.R. in Virginia

• When you get near the end of a roll of paper towels, save it to put in your car. Put together a kit to keep in the car with the following items: a small bottle of Windex or other cleaner, a squeeze bottle of water, some wet wipes and the short roll of paper towels. You will always be ready for a quick on-the-road cleanup.

• To kick the itch from bug bites, make a mixture of half lime juice and half water. Apply to bug bite on a soaked cotton ball.

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.

	+		÷		=	3		
-		-		+				
	+		×		=	63		
-		+		÷				
	-		×		=	6		
=		=		=				
1		3		4				
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9

**DIFFICULTY: ★★**

★ Moderate ★★ Difficult

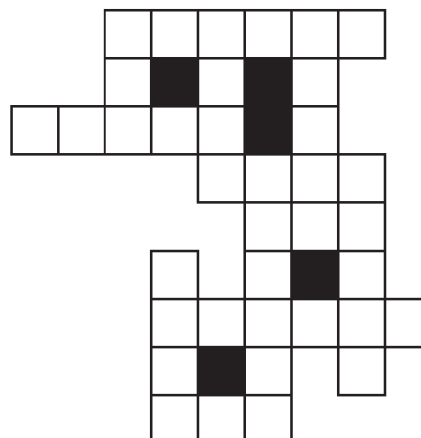
★★★ GO FIGURE!

Answer Page 4

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- WHA
- DINSTU
- ♥ELTPA
- ♥OTDL
- ♥ACDELN
- ♥AET
- ITWT
- ETTEW
- ♥INT
- CEHNEW
- ISAPE
- ♥APLE



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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