



– Photo courtesy Clint ISD

**TOP OF THE CLASS** – Clint High School, above, is one of eleven high schools in El Paso County to earn an A-rating in the Texas Education Agency’s recent accountability ratings report. There are 39 high schools, including public and charter campuses, in the county.

# Eleven El Paso County high schools earn an A-rating in latest TEA accountability report

By **Alfredo Vasquez**  
*Special to the Courier*

EL PASO COUNTY – With schools in full swing for the 2025-26-year, district and campus administrators of the seventeen El Paso County school districts and charter schools are closely perusing the latest state ratings and accountability reports to analyze their students’ strengths and weaknesses and pinpoint strategies that will help them reach their goals.

The Texas Education Agency (TEA) recently released the grades for the 2023 and 2024 school years. The grades are based on an A through F letter rating that is based on students’ performance in three areas: student achievement, school progress, and closing the gaps. These categories assess how well students perform on state standardized tests like the STAAR exam, students’ growth over time, graduation rates, college and career readiness, and success in closing achievement gaps for underserved student groups including English learners and students with

disabilities, according to TEA officials. The outcomes are combined to determine a final rating which is then assigned an A through F grade. In ascertaining the final rating, student achievement and school progress make up 70 percent of the grade and closing the gaps comprise the remaining 30 percent. In reviewing the ratings for the school districts and charter programs in El Paso County, the first observation is that no one earned an A-rating. However, twelve districts and charters did receive B-ratings. The school districts that garnered B-ratings include Anthony, Clint, El Paso, Socorro, Tornillo, and Ysleta. Canutillo and Fabens received C-ratings with San Elizario getting a D-rating. Among the local charter schools, the ones

See **RATINGS**, Page 5

# SISD has 49 campuses designated Purple Star for 2025–2026

By **Christy Flores-Jones**  
*Special to the Courier*

EL PASO COUNTY – the Texas Education Agency (TEA) has designated 49 out of 51 Socorro Independent School District (SISD) schools as Purple Star schools for the 2025–2026 academic year. SISD is highly committed to supporting military-connected students and their families. “As SISD celebrates this milestone, we reaffirm our commitment to creating welcoming and supportive

environments that meet the unique needs of our military-connected students,” said Superintendent James Vasquez. “These families have sacrificed so much, and we are honored to serve them.” SISD currently serves 6, 707 military-connected students and their families across the district. The Purple Star Designation is awarded to schools that demonstrate a strong commitment to providing comprehensive support for students from military families. A total of 541 campuses in Texas earned this designation for the 2024-2025 and

2025-2026 school years. To earn this recognition, campuses have met rigorous criteria, including creating a dedicated webpage with resources for military-connected families, instituting a campus transition program for military-connected students, and appointing a campus-based military liaison at each campus. The designation remains valid for district’s commitment to supporting two years, and schools that meet military families with the resources the criteria can re-apply for the they need to transition successfully.”



**James Vasquez**

designation. “Our military-connected students face many unique challenges, including frequent relocations, school transitions, and the absence of a parent during deployment,” said Dr. Carmen Olivas-Graham, SISD director of Administrative Services. “The Purple Star designation shows our district’s commitment to supporting military families with the resources they need to transition successfully.”



# The National Guard isn't the Gestapo

Donald Trump's alleged fascist crackdown is finally here – federal troops are on the streets of major U.S. cities with almost certainly more on the way.

First, they came for Los Angeles, then for Washington, D.C., and next, if reports are to be believed, Chicago.

There's no doubt that Trump loves the optics and sense of strength that comes with deploying the National Guard to U.S. cities, while many of his political enemies love the thrill of decrying the arrival of the dystopia they've always warned about.

The Guard troops obviously aren't Trump's equivalent of Mussolini's squadristi or Hitler's brownshirts–brawlers and enforcers operating outside the law to crush a political party's opponents.

They are a well-trained, entirely lawful military

force that isn't engaging in street fights or arresting dissidents. The Guard's role has, mostly, been to stand in front of federal buildings and other public landmarks. In Washington, D.C., they walk along Metro platforms and generally make themselves visible (they are often seen drinking coffee and taking photos with tourists). In short, they've been a benign presence, although still a political flashpoint.

For Trump, the Guard deployments are an emblem of the restoration of public order. Nothing says the lawman is back in town quite like Humvees parked in front of Union Station and camouflaged federal troops walking the streets. That the troops are overkill makes them even more potent as a symbol – Trump really means it.

That they generate a reaction from his opponents is even better, since it prompts them into attacking a token of lawfulness in places that suffer from endemic disorder.

So, Trump feels an urge to take the show on a national tour, with the Windy City or perhaps Baltimore as the next stop. This is a bad idea. D.C. and L.A. present unique circumstances not replicated in other cities.

Legally, D.C. is an easy question. Although Congress has granted D.C. home rule, the federal

See LOWRY, Page 7



Food for thought

By Dr. Glenn Mollette

## Please, conversation not assassination

Charlie Kirk was a man who had opinions and vocalized them. He believed in free speech. He also believed in the right of free speech for those who disagreed with him. In his Turning Point rallies, he gave untold numbers of people the opportunity to express their opinions and to debate him. He respectfully gave each person the time to state their case on whatever the subject. Charlie was adamant, profound and articulated strong convictions.

Sadly, a deranged 22-year-old man from Utah took Charlie's life. It has been reported that the gunman had previously stated at a family dinner that he thought Kirk was filled with hate. When Kirk spoke at a University rally in Utah, the gunman plotted and positioned himself to shoot a single long-range rifle shot that took Kirk's

life. The man ran back to his home where he later had no choice but to confess to his father that he was indeed the man who had been videotaped at the rally who took Charlie Kirk's life. The lone assassin is an evil coward who silenced one of America's star voices. At least he thought he did. Charlie Kirk has become more known and his sound clips have been heard more in the last few days than in his entire ministry/career. Kirk has been propelled by the assassin to a status in American culture that will never be forgotten. Instead of silencing Kirk he magnified Kirk's voice and message a hundred or more times. Kirk is now being remembered around the world.

Charlie Kirk used his voice. Every American is entitled to this freedom. His voice cost him his life.

Abraham Lincoln gave his life reuniting our country and abolishing slavery. A cowardly assassin took Lincoln's life as he leisurely watched a play at Ford's Theatre in Washington, D.C. John F. Kennedy used his voice to excite the American people and to bring about a positive attitude in the country, but was gunned down by an assassin from a hidden window in downtown Dallas, Texas. Martin Luther King, Jr. was a man with a great voice who stirred the hearts of millions of Americans and brought about liberating change for black

Americans. An assassin who disagreed with King cowardly hid and took King's life with a bullet. Malcom X and Bobby Kennedy were orators for positive change in America but someone who disagreed with their views killed them.

The greatest voice of hope, love, change and forgiveness, who ever lived, was Jesus Christ. A cowardly crowd yelled for him to be executed. These mentioned voices were not silenced by hideous crowds or hidden gunmen. Each of their voices have rung loudly and clearly. Their legacies have only grown bolder and stronger.

It is sad that Charlie Kirk's

assassin did not go down to the rally, stand up like a man and challenge Kirk in a debate. He could have told Kirk what he thought about him and given Kirk a chance to respond. But no, he was a weak, spineless man filled with more hate than probably anyone in America at that given moment. It's one thing to have a hateful, negative thought, but it's another to allow hate to act itself out in such a way.

Violence is never the answer. Let's keep America free. Free to speak, free to debate, free to practice and express our religion. Let's have peaceful and strong conversation not assassination.

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Years  
2025

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Phone: 852-3235

E-mail: [wtxcc@wtxcc.com](mailto:wtxcc@wtxcc.com)  
Website: [wtxcc.com](http://wtxcc.com)

**Publisher**  
Rick Shrum

**Contributors**  
Alfredo Vasquez  
Steve Escajeda





PUBLIC NOTICE

TO ALL INTERESTED PERSONS AND PARTIES:

The *West Texas County Courier* will publish two editions early. The October 9 and 16, 2025 issues will go to press on Tuesday, September 30, 2025.

All material for these publications must be submitted to the *West Texas County Courier* no later than Friday, September 26, 2025.

The *West Texas County Courier* office will close beginning Wednesday, October 1, 2025. The office will open again on Friday, October 17, 2025



# Canutillo campuses earn Purple Star designation

By Gustavo Reveles  
Special to the Courier

CANUTILLO – Two more Canutillo Independent School District campuses have earned the Texas Education Agency’s Purple Star Designation for their work supporting military-connected students and their families.

Canutillo High School and Canutillo Middle School were notified earlier this month that they met the state’s rigorous criteria for the recognition, which honors schools that demonstrate a strong commitment to meeting the unique needs of children of military service members and exposes the benefits of the military to the entire campus.

The new designations mean six Canutillo ISD schools now hold the honor. Alderete Middle, Davenport Elementary, Childress Elementary and Reyes Elementary were recognized last year. Schools maintain their designation for two years.

The recognition highlights the district’s long-standing efforts to support military families who make up a significant part of the Canutillo community due to its proximity to Fort Bliss.

The Purple Star program was created by the Texas Legislature in 2019 to help military-connected students transition successfully into new schools and communities. Criteria for the designation include appointing a campus-based military liaison, creating a dedicated web page with resources for military families,

maintaining partnerships with local military organizations, and providing transition programs for incoming students.

At Canutillo High School, students were exposed to several opportunities to engage with and learn from members of the military. Additionally, the campus also provided specialized support to ensure students meet graduation requirements even when transferring from schools in other states or countries.

“Canutillo High School is honored to be recognized as a Purple Star campus,” Principal Candace Marrufo said. “We are committed to ensuring that military-connected students and their families feel supported and welcomed as they transition into our school community. This recognition is a testament to the hard work of our staff and students.”

Canutillo Middle School has focused on building military connections for all students through orientation activities and extracurricular clubs.

“This designation highlights the dedication our teachers and staff have to the unique needs of military families,” Principal Christopher Judge said. “We will continue working to ensure that every child feels at home and every family knows they are part of our school.”

Texas is home to more than 160,000 military-connected students. TEA leaders say the Purple Star schools provide models for how to meet the needs of students who often face multiple school transitions and long periods of separation from parents due to deployments.

## King Crossword

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ACROSS

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4 Country great

8 Chew (on)

12 Singer Rawls

13 Holiday lead-ins

14 Peregrinate

15 Belief

16 Tide variety

17 Currier's partner

18 Dick Tracy's sweetie

21 Method

22 Gear tooth

23 Daisy part

26 "Incidentally," in a
- text

27 Lass

30 Crooned

31 Hosp. areas

32 Pizzazz

33 Boy king

34 Coach Parseghian

35 Used a stopwatch

36 "Exodus" hero

37 007 creator

Fleming

38 Classic Hank Williams song

45 Dutch cheese

46 Ovid's 53

47 "A pox upon thee!"

48 Jeansmaker

Strauss

49 Harrow rival

50 Mimic

51 Future atty.'s exam
- 52 Big rig

53 Scarlet

DOWN

1 Landed

2 Valentine flower

3 Fall bloomers

4 Tourist's car

5 Without exception

6 Suitor

7 Features

8 "Peer Gynt Suite" composer

9 Bright star

10 Say it's so

11 Compass point

19 Booty

20 Explanation

23 Calif. clock setting

24 Water (Fr.)

25 Blaster's need
- 26 Bikini top

27 Tiara jewel

28 Enzyme suffix

29 British "Inc."

31 Baltimore

baseballers

32 Fan publication

34 Rainbow

35 Sesame paste

36 Fess up

37 Figure of speech

38 Prison room

39 Praiseful pieces

40 Volcanic flow

41 Low-calorie

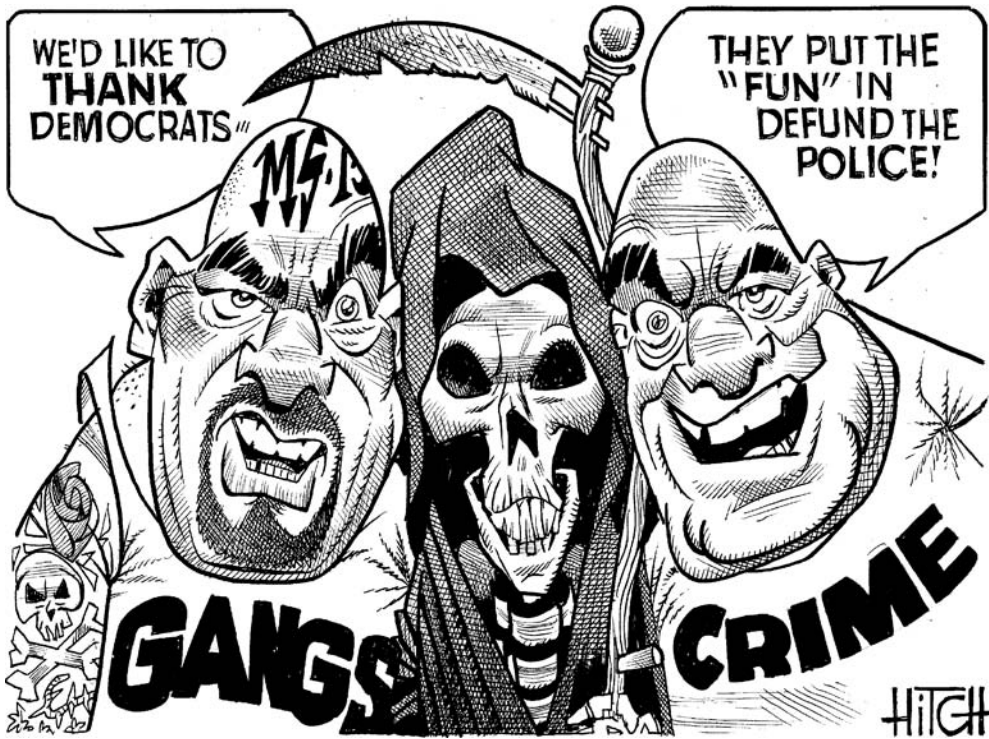
42 Miles away

43 Ready for harvest

44 Ticked (off)

Answer Page 5

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





# EPCC adds esports to its athletic program

By Beau Bagley  
Special to the Courier

EL PASO COUNTY – El Paso Community College (EPCC) has added a new athletic program – esports! The college will now participate in activities and competitions with more than 200 other institutions across the nation sanctioned by the National Junior College Athletic Association esports (NJCAA).

Esports is short for Electronic Sports, a form of organized competition using video games, and is popular worldwide. It’s a fast growing ‘non-traditional’ sport, which requires careful planning, precise timing, and skillful execution, in the form of individual or team competition. There are various leagues and tournaments, in the same manner as traditional sports, with the aim of finding the top player or team in a category. Top Games include Halo, League of Legends, Call of Duty, Madden 24, Rocket League, Street Fighter, and Mario Kart, to name a few.

“Everything we do is to enhance the potential of our students,” EPCC President Dr. William Serrata said. “We are committed to ensuring every student has an opportunity to succeed – academically, personally, and professionally. Whether it’s through rigorous academic programs, robust support services, or meaningful extracurricular opportunities, we strive to create an environment where students can thrive and achieve. Esports is another example of that commitment.”

The idea of esports was first proposed to the EPCC Board of Trustees by the EPCC Student Government Association who expressed their interest and the value of this type of program. “Our board has a laser-focus on student success – both in academics and athletics,” Judge Brian Haggerty, EPCC Chair of the Board of Trustees, said. “Our decision to support esports reflects that same commitment. We see esports not just as a game, but as an opportunity – one that aligns with our vision of excellent experiences for students.”

The NJCAA is working to positively impact institutions and their students through the use of Esports and gaming as well as creating a sustainable environment that gives students the tools they need to build successful careers. Matt King, NJCAA Director of esports, says the NJCAA National Office is extremely excited to welcome EPCC as one of the first adopters of collegiate esports in its service area and looks forward to building a strong foundation of innovation for the region.

“Esports are important to collegiate athletics and a student’s educational journey as a whole as esports connects to an untapped audience of potential and current students alike who previously had no strong connection to furthering their education,” King said. “Additionally, esports offer a wide variety of academic and experiential learning opportunities that can give students real world experience outside of just playing games. This helps to build a well-rounded experience for students, better preparing them for their future career.”

EPCC will start competing in tournaments later this fall. The Tejanos



– Photo courtesy El Paso Community College  
**READY TO LOG ON – Two esports team members are, from left, Dinamaris Guevara Dominici and Joshua Jenkins along side Coach Adan Lara and EPCC President Dr. William Serrata.**

esports team will be coached by Interim Coach Adan Lara and is currently expanding its team of esports student athletes. One member of the team, Art major Dinamaris Guevara Dominici, is excited about this new opportunity at EPCC. “Through esports, I have been able to meet great people with skills in their games, learn to work as a team, help each other to be better every day, express ourselves freely in our passions and hobbies, and now share a goal, which is to win major competitions and raise EPCC’s profile in esports,” Dominici said. “Perhaps we are all the first to start this, but we won’t be the last. I know we will achieve great results, great victories, and great teammates.”

Lara also expresses similar optimism and plans to build a strong esports team for the college. Lara, a Burges High school alumnus, received his Master’s in Biological Sciences from UTEP in 2016. He has been an adjunct Biology Professor and then a Kinesiology Lab Supervisor at EPCC since 2016. He has more than 10 years’ experience in online gaming and esports and is committed to building a strong program that empowers student-athletes to succeed both in and out of the game.

“For me, esports has always been more than just competition – it’s about passion, teamwork, and opportunity,” Lara said. “I’ve been playing since I was a kid, and along the way I’ve had the privilege of helping small teams grow and succeed. Now, I’m grateful to bring that same energy and experience to EPCC. My

vision for this team is simple: to build a program that not only wins, but also lasts. I want EPCC to lead the way in esports – not just in El Paso, but across community colleges nationwide.”

“Coach Lara has had a lifelong passion for gaming and esports, beginning as a child and growing into years of experience competing and supporting small teams,” EPCC Athletic Director Felix Hinojosa said. “His dedication to fostering team work, discipline, and growth in players has shaped his coaching philosophy.”

Esports is incredibly popular, with more people getting involved every year. In 2022, there were 532 million esports viewers worldwide, and that number is expected to grow over the next few years.

“Today, the video game industry and competition have changed, and esports have grown exponentially, opening up opportunities that we would have probably laughed at before,” Dominici said. “Now, thanks to EPCC, we can get a taste of the greatness of esports.”

As esports expands at EPCC throughout the upcoming semesters, the Valle Verde campus student union will eventually host gaming tournaments, accessible to in-person and remote competition, with upgrades to technology and infrastructure. It will be equipped with Gaming PC’s and other devices to be available for students.

Visit: [www.epcc.edu/Services/Athletics](http://www.epcc.edu/Services/Athletics) and [www.njcaaEsports.org/](http://www.njcaaEsports.org/) for more information about NJCAA esports.



## Strange BUT TRUE

- By Lucie Winborne
- AI systems can simulate the language patterns and personality traits of the dead using their digital footprints, resulting in “deadbots” or “griefbots.” Researchers from the University of Cambridge have warned that this “afterlife industry” could cause psychological harm unless strict design safety standards are implemented.
  - According to one study, most dogs reach peak cuteness between 6 and 8 weeks old.
  - The American Psychiatric Association’s DSM-5 handbook classifies caffeine withdrawals as a mental disorder.
  - A Canadian police officer named Ward Clapham created a program that gives “positive tickets” to people who do good deeds.
  - “Baby,” “sport” and “waterproof” sunscreens don’t exist. They’re just marketing tactics.
  - In 2016, scientists measured pollution variation in Los Angeles and Chicago, and found that violent crime rose when pollution was worse.
  - Snow in Alpine regions can be pink due to pigments produced by algae, resulting in what’s known as “watermelon snow.”
  - Michelle Pfeiffer was literally vacuum-sealed into her Catwoman costume in “Batman Returns.”
  - In 1864, Gen. William Tecumseh Sherman captured Savannah, Georgia, and in a telegram to President Lincoln wrote, “I beg to present you as a Christmas gift the city of Savannah, with 150 heavy guns and plenty of ammunition, also about 25,000 bales of cotton.”
  - The largest playable instrument in the world is the Great Stalacpipe Organ, located in the Luray Caverns in Virginia. It uses rubber mallets to tap on the cave’s natural stalactites.
  - At a specific temperature and pressure, water can exist simultaneously as a solid (ice), liquid (water) and gas (steam).
- Thought for the Day: “Life ought to be a struggle of desire toward adventures whose nobility will fertilize the soul.”  
– Rebecca West







# Some sports use technology the right way, some don’t

By Steve Escajeda  
*Special to the Courier*

Anyone who watches sports on a fairly regular basis knows that it just isn’t the two teams or the two coaches or the home field that determines winners and losers: sometimes it’s the officials.

How many times has the umpire, or referee, or official made a call that was so bad it actually cost a team a win or ruined an entire season?

And the truth we sometimes forget is that these people are as human as the rest of us. They will make mistakes, but sometimes those mistakes come at the most crucial part of the game.

That’s why most of the sports entities keep coming up with technology that helps these officials as much as possible.

Whether it’s additional cameras, or adding more referees, or simplifying some of the rules, sports leagues are always trying to help those poor souls get the call right.

Baseball, which was stuck in the past for decades, has led the way recently by going to a digital strike zone that can assure a pitch is a strike or a ball. Major League Baseball has also added video challenges that a manager can use if he thinks a call was missed.

The ultimate goal is to get the call

right.

The NFL has been using technology to help their officials get the call right for years. They’ve added cameras above the field of play, in the pylons and even on the referees themselves.

Of course, the NFL has had the red challenge flag available to the head coach that he can throw if he believes a call was missed.

And although the officials occasionally still look at the video and get it wrong, the vast majority of the time they make the right call.

Speaking of technology, the NFL is no longer using those two guys with the chains to measure a first down. They’ve gone to a virtual laser system to measure where the ball is within millimeters.

Tennis has been using this virtual laser system for years to see whether a 160-mph serve was in or out. And if you’ve seen it, it also measures the ball with millimeters.

Going back to football, when the game is stopped for video review

of a play, and you see the official stick his head into that small video screen on the sideline, do you sometimes wish you could see what he’s seeing or hear the conversation he’s having?

Well, in a further effort for more transparency, during the Clemson-Georgia Tech game last Saturday, when the referee went under the hood, the TV audience was allowed to see what he was seeing and hear the actual conversation between him and the guys in New York as they broke down the camera angels and make a decision.

It was awesome to see and hear them go through the process.

With many sports stepping it up technology-wise, I have to wonder what is going on with basketball?

I’ve often felt that NBA basketball is easily the worst officiated sport of them all. And I’m not alone.

What do you expect when everyone in the building can see when a player travels, except for the three guys in stripes.

NBA officials have a tough job; was it a charge or a block, was he actually fouled on that 3-point try or did he kick his feet out to initiate the contact, was the ball really over the cylinder for that goaltending call?

And everyone knows that NBA game is probably the fastest team sport there is, and the refs have to blow, or not blow, their whistles in fractions of a second.

So, what is the NBA doing to help the referees get the calls right?

Not much at all, the league does have a regular grading and feedback system in place, but that doesn’t do anything for in-game real-time calls on the court.

C’mon NBA, if old-time baseball can start using technology to improve its officiating, you definitely can too.

And I can’t think of a sport that needs it more.

It gets tiring seeing the NBA stars get all the calls just because they make the most money.

Way to go to all the sports that get it. As for the NBA, we’ve got to talk.

## Senior moment By Matilda Charles

### Retirement regrets?

I was eavesdropping on two senior ladies in a big box store, specifically in the furniture aisle. Being discussed was a very large TV cabinet with doors and shelving. While it was on sale, the price was apparently not enticing.

“I regret not buying a big television back when I had the money for one, before I went on Social Security,” said one.

“I hear that,” replied the other one. “But my regret is moving into a place that’s too small for me to even have a big TV cabinet like this.”

And there I was, enticed. What is it we all most regret now that we’re seniors? I posed the question to AI (artificial intelligence).

Our most common regret, says AI, is that we didn’t save enough for retirement. Or that we didn’t start saving early enough in our lives.

Money was a major theme, according to AI, especially when it came to underestimating health care expenses.

For a different take on things, I turned to my local informal poll group.

The replies ranged from “I regret moving into a community with no sidewalks” to “I regret not getting a cat because now I’ve reached the cutoff age and the animal shelter won’t let me adopt a very young cat because I might die before the cat does.” The third one chuckled, “Well, I regret encouraging my son to take that job across the country because now he’s not around to do heavy lifting.” Another was serious when he replied, “I wish I’d bought a boat. It would be paid for by now. I’d head for the Bahamas.”

If you’re curious about what kinds of regrets seniors have about retirement (especially if you haven’t yet retired and have time to make a course correction in your retirement plans), do an online search for “biggest regrets of retirees,” or something similar.

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## Super Crossword

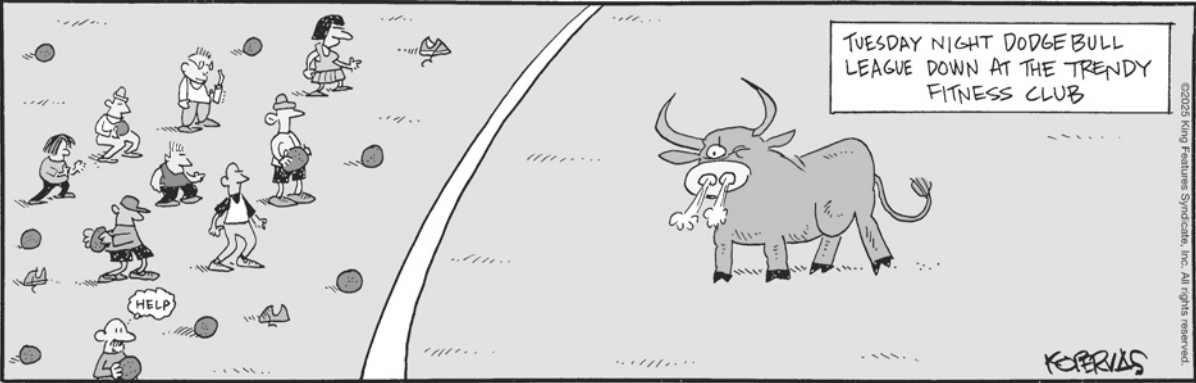
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WRITING SWEET NOTES ACROSS	63 Flight check-in stand	122 Faxed, e.g.	28 Food items with shells	80 Neighbor of Windsor, Ont.
1 Sailing guy	66 Mob group	123 Tempo faster than largetto	33 Fully content	82 Remain unsettled
8 Dump vermin	69 Likely	124 Singer Julio or Enrique	34 Shoelace snarl	83 Luggage
12 Increased, as security	70 Riddle, part 4	125 Picnic intruders	35 Carpenter's curved tool	84 Weep noisily
20 Singer with the 2018 hit "Let You Love Me"	73 "Monsters, _"	126 Dawn crower	37 Grow feathers large enough for flight	85 Cavern effect
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22 Still growing	76 Clan emblem	DOWN	39 Ill-bred guy	87 Hard drinker
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25 Cereal with a Honey Clusters variety	79 Watch over	3 No less than	43 Gershwin or Levin	95 Bella's "Bye!"
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29 Reluctant	84 Frat party	5 Change form little by little	50 Disheveled	98 Maker of crocodile-logo shirts
30 Suffix with ranch	88 Road no.	6 Zone	51 San _ Obispo	99 Tam-o'-_ (Scottish cap)
31 Sty dweller	89 Emphatic assent in Acapulco	7 Sadat's predecessor	53 Dispensers filled with bills	101 Gain entry to
32 _ Lankan	90 First play part	8 Intersect again	54 Disney World conveyance	102 Alexander Pope's " _ to Abelard"
33 Reggae forerunner	91 Horse pace	9 Wan	55 Pueblo tribe	103 Chinese revolutionary Sun _
36 Overhead railways	93 Saints' and Cardinals' gp.	10 Slow-movement martial art	56 Legacy levy	104 Bee juice
37 Riddle, part 2	96 Twangy vowel sounds	11 Suck out with a tube	57 Additionally	110 Ralph _ Emerson
41 Sell directly to consumers	100 End of the riddle	12 Bully in "Back to the Future"	58 Old Iraqi political party	111 Bits of land in el agua
44 Very secretive org.	105 "Prob'ly not"	13 Go-between	59 Like thick fog	112 "So it is!"
45 Mysore dress	106 Bagel fish	14 Going aboard	64 Strike defier	113 USMC VIPs
46 Completely	107 Britain's Lord Sebastian _	15 Spenser's "The _ Queene"	65 Davis who was the 2018 major league home run leader	114 Pointer
47 Old Palm smartphone	109 Issa of "Insecure"	16 Gigi's "to be"	67 Atahualpa, e.g.	115 Baseball's Robinson _
49 _-de-sac	110 Neopagan practice	17 Band of two	68 Sore, as a muscle	116 " _ always say..."
52 Blasting stuff	112 Riddle's answer	18 Fancy vase	70 Weasel's kin	117 Badger
54 Riddle, part 3	116 Liqueur in some biscotti recipes	19 Baseball's _ Wee Reese	71 Equipment	118 Indisposed
60 Old Pontiacs	119 Nile goddess	27 Video game or sci-fi film	72 Ventilating	
61 Parks of civil rights	120 Most lofty		75 Be worthy of	
62 _ monster	121 Guys with pitches		78 The thing here	



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

government has plenary power over the district. The president of the United States has direct authority over the D.C. National Guard and can also take control of the city’s police department. Constitutionally and legally, Trump is on solid ground.

Since D.C. has a unique status and the feds have taken over the police department, there has been useful collaboration between the federal and local law-enforcement officials. (The early returns have been encouraging, with the city seeing a moderate dip in crime.)

None of this would apply to Chicago or Baltimore. The federal government has no special role in governing them, and politically hostile mayors would maintain full control of their police departments. The emphasis would surely be on resistance to unwelcome federal intrusions rather than reluctant cooperation.

Now, this was true in L.A., as well, but the riots and obstruction of federal immigration enforcement there gave Trump the authority to

federalize members of the California National Guard and protect federal assets.

Unless similar unrest breaks out in Chicago or Baltimore, Trump is going to have to stretch for a legal justification for deploying the National Guard and risk a high-profile legal reverse.

Regardless, the National Guard has limited utility as a police force. Its boots on the ground can create a sense of a safer environment, and perhaps, at the margins, free up local police resources for other duties. But what places like Chicago need is more intensive policing in high-crime areas. The National Guard is not going to – nor should it – become de facto cops making gang and drug arrests in the South and West Sides of the city. (The FBI and DEA, on the other hand, could actually help.)

At the end of the day, there is no easy cure for the flagrant misgovernance of cities like Chicago. It is a long-term, deep-rooted ideological and political phenomenon that won’t be easily reversed, whether the troops in camouflage show up or not.

Rich Lowry is editor of the National Review.  
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Patients need to be wary of ‘upcoding’

DEAR DR. ROACH: When I have appointments with my physicians at our local, highly rated academic health system, they no longer do a physical exam. But in the after-visit note, there is a documented and complete physical exam that doesn’t reflect reality. This happened on all types of visits, including annual visits and pre- and post-surgery visits. If I am examined by a resident, the attending physician will attest in the after-visit note to having examined me alongside the resident when, in actuality, the physician was not in the room. I find this appalling, but it seems to be common practice. These doctors are billing for services that they do not deliver. Do you see any effort in the medical world to respond to this? – J.H.



The new electronic medical record systems make it easy to document a complete physical exam, sometimes with a single click. If this happens once, it’s a mistake. If it happens consistently, this is at least a system error, if not deliberate deception. The term used in the industry is “upcoding” because documentation of a complete examination allows for higher billing to the insurance company.

Physicians need to be very careful not to document a physical exam that they didn’t do. A less-kind word for consistently doing this practice is “fraud.” Penalties can be up to tens of thousands of dollars per false claim.

The rules for resident supervision are complicated. In general, billing can only be done for services that are provided by or are under the direct supervision of the attending physician. There are exceptions to this, such as resident physicians who provide primary care. However, once again, saying that you were there supervising the resident when you weren’t is against the law.

Now if the attending physician comes in the room and asks questions to confirm the key findings of your medical history, they do not have to do a complete examination to fulfill the obligations for the primary care exemption.

Outside of primary care, the attending physician must be physically present for the key portions of the services that are being billed.

DEAR DR. ROACH: I saw your recent column about the wife with intractable depression. I can relate, but you barely glanced over what has been life-changing for me as a treatment: TMS (transcranial magnetic stimulation). It is quick, easy and painless, and most insurance companies (even Medicare) fully cover it. To be frank, Doc, not nearly enough suffering people have ever even heard of TMS as an option. Would you illustrate to your readers just a tad more about how powerful it can be as a treatment option? – R.F.W.

Most people with depression respond well to treatment with a combination of psychotherapy and one of the standard medications, but some people need to try several medications before they find one that works for them. Unfortunately, there are people who do not get good results with medication. TMS is an option in these situations (but you don’t have to fail with multiple medications to try TMS).

Even in people who have failed with multiple medications, about 30% will have a “marked” improvement or a resolution of their symptoms. TMS doesn’t cure everybody, but I agree that it’s a therapy that needs to be more widely used. The biggest problem is that it isn’t available everywhere.

Dr. Roach regrets that he is unable to answer individual questions, but will incorporate them in the column whenever possible. Readers may email questions to [ToYourGoodHealth@med.cornell.edu](mailto:ToYourGoodHealth@med.cornell.edu). ©2025 North America Synd., Inc. All Rights Reserved.

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**Moore Texas**by Roger Moore  
**Sept. 20, 1967: Powerful storm Beulah roars into the Rio Grande Valley and blows away several weathermen.**

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: A equals D

KH XVD OH V AVAS'H KCAVTJG  
JKCMY KH HYKH XCSSG  
MCG'O ISZ-JVSZD, TCH HYZS  
V YKA K YK-YK LILZSH.

Answer Page 5

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When claims aren't checked out



by Freddy Groves

A veteran and wife duo have been indicted for a whole menu of crimes against the VA, including conspiracy to defraud the United States, theft of government funds and conspiracy to commit wire fraud.

Their scams brought in a lot of VA benefit cash because the husband claimed a variety of problems, including traumatic brain injury, post-traumatic stress disorder and back issues, for which he was granted a 100% disability rating. By later getting a permanent and total disability rating, he no longer had to show up for any reevaluation of his condition.

The couple grabbed additional benefit cash because the wife said she was his caregiver – since the husband claimed he couldn't even go outside

and needed his wife for everything, including feeding and bathing.

Over the years the wife alone had taken in over a quarter of a million dollars. The scam fell apart when an investigation revealed that he'd never been in a combat zone and surveillance showed him driving a vehicle, doing home maintenance up on a ladder, shoveling snow and more.

How, we want to know, was this veteran thief ever approved for a permanent disability rating before anybody even looked in his personnel file and talked to former unit members? At this point the pair could get 20 years each and a fine of \$250,000. I hope this isn't like so many of the crimes against the VA where the thieves are only sentenced to a fraction of what their total sentence could be.

Because here's another case where a scammer could have been sentenced to up to five years and a \$250,000 fine, yet he ended up with a year of supervised

release. In this one, the founder of a medical device company offered doctors a way to make a bit of money in the form of product development consulting fees – for which they never actually did any work. By law those transactions should have been reported.

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by Jo Ann Derson

• “Wet a plain kitchen sponge and place it in a zip-top baggie in the freezer. It's great for bumps and bruises, tired eyes and overheated kids.” – V.I. in New Hampshire

• Always rest your bar soap on a sponge. You won't have a soap slime problem ever again, and the soap stays put. When the sponge starts to look questionable, you can replace it or just toss it in the wash with your towels.

• “Sunday dinner is great for so many reasons, as our family reserves this day to be together at mealtime. It has also become a day to touch base on appointments and obligations for the coming week. We discuss what each of us has going on upcoming, and we post our schedules on the fridge on Sunday evening. This way, we can help one another and keep each of us accountable. It works for us!” – A.A. in California

• “A really nice gift for a family with young children is a family membership to a local science and history museum. It's a gift that keeps on giving, and it's very flexible, because with a membership, you can go all day or just a few hours to keep it light.” – C.W. in Virginia

• A great way to organize in the kitchen is to use the space on the inside of your cabinet doors. You can install a metal sheet (to stick magnetic items to), a chalkboard, a small rack or a section of pocket organizer. The possibilities are endless.

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.

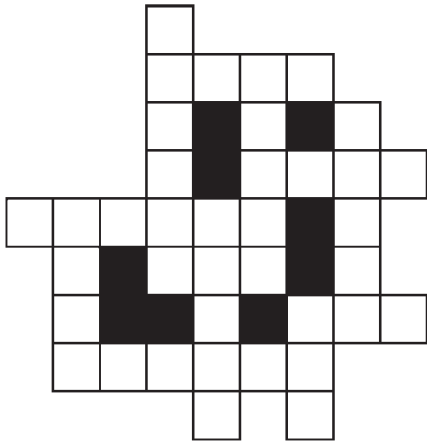
Answer Page 5

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	+		+		= 20			
+		-		-				
	-		+		= 7			
+		×		÷				
	+		-		= 2			
=		=		=				
13		35		1				
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9



YSH  
HODRIC  
SOYNE  
♥USBN  
RESBIC  
AYD  
AFCL  
SOBSA  
♥OSD  
AFOSIC  
♥RHLCU  
DIRN



Answer Page 5

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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Weekly SUDOKU

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

♦♦♦ HOO BOY!

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