



State, local, elections wrap November 4



– Photo by Alfredo Vasquez

MAKE YOU MARK – Voters in the Village of Vinton, above, will cast their ballots for mayor and for two alderman positions in the Nov. 4 election, with early voting already underway.

Socorro ISD, Tornillo ISD voters have say on taxes; Clint, Socorro, Vinton residents cast ballots for town councils

By Alfredo Vasquez
Special to the Courier

EL PASO COUNTY – Early voting is now underway for El Paso County’s upcoming election as registered voters in the Socorro and Tornillo independent school districts cast ballots on voter approval tax ratification elections (VATRE) and decide who will fill seats on the Town of Clint, City of Socorro, and Village of Vinton councils.

A VATRE is held when a taxing entity, like a school district, is asking whether it can increase the property tax rate above what’s allowed by law.

Voters can cast their ballot at any voting location during the early voting period that ends October 31. For locations and times and to view sample ballots, visit El Paso County website. On Election Day, November 4th, polling places will be open from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m.

Socorro Independent School District (SISD) is asking its voters to ratify the ad valorem tax rate of \$1.0589 per \$100 valuation for the current year, a rate that will result in an increase of 14.91 percent in maintenance and operations tax revenue for the current year as compared to the preceding year, which is an additional \$15,080,585.

If approved, SISD officials stated that the tax rate increase could bring the district \$49 million a year, which is needed for employee compensation and maintain facilities, among other priorities to keep the district solvent.

SISD officials pointed out that if Texas voters

approve the constitutional amendment that is included in this election to raise the homestead exemption, SISD homeowners would likely see a decrease in the school portion of their tax bill.

According to SISD officials, if the amendment passes and SISD voters approve the tax rate proposition, homeowners in the district can expect to see the school portion of their property tax bills reduced by about \$345 a year on average home valued at \$232,700. They added that if voters reject the tax proposition, SISD school tax bills would save an additional \$110.

Tornillo ISD’s VATRE is seeking to ratify the ad valorem tax rate of \$1.207800 per \$100 valuation for the current year, a rate that would result in an increase of 29.88 percent in maintenance and operations tax revenue for the current year as compared to the preceding year, which would be an additional \$237,252 for the district.

Tornillo ISD’s proposition is also technically a tax increase, but again homeowners would likely see a decrease in the school portion of their tax bill if Texas voters approved the constitutional amendment to raise the homestead exemption.

According to school officials, if the amendment passes and Tornillo ISD voters approve the tax rate proposition, homeowners in the district can expect to see the school portion of their property tax bills eliminated almost completely depending on their property valuations. Taxpayers with average-value homes of \$119,220 would pay no school taxes, if the state amendment is approved

See **BALLOTS**, Page 5

Property tax cuts are up for vote on November ballot

Proposition 11 and 13 deal with Homestead Exemptions

By Alfredo Vasquez
Special to the Courier

TEXAS – On Tuesday, November 4, registered voters in Texas will have the opportunity to vote on 17 constitutional amendments, with some of the choices dealing with billions of dollars in property tax cuts for homeowners and businesses. To weigh in on the constitutional amendments, Texas voters must have been registered to vote by Oct. 6 with early voting currently underway through the 31st.

Several of the proposed constitutional amendments are meant to lower taxes for most homeowners including the elderly and disabled homeowners, spouses of veterans, homeowners who had their home destroyed in a fire, and property owners affected by border security infrastructure.

Also, some of the proposed amendments could affect business owners such as those who sell animal feed, or deal with personal and business capital gains, or those working in securities, securities transactions, and inheritances.

Other proposed amendments would fund water infrastructure, the Texas State Technical College system, and research on dementia treatment and prevention. And a few of the proposals would amend the constitution to limit when a person can

See **PROPOSITIONS**, Page 2

Hegseth is right about physical fitness

Doesn't Secretary of Defense Pete Hegseth realize that push-ups are passe? His speech to an audience of generals he'd summoned to Washington, D.C., has mystified and outraged critics who think his obsession with physical fitness is out-of-date at best and ridiculous at worst.

"Frankly, it's stirring to look out at combat formations, or really any formation, and see fat troops," Hegseth told the assembled brass. "Likewise, it's completely unacceptable to see fat generals and admirals in the halls of the Pentagon."

"Today, at my direction, every member of the joint force, at every rank, is required to take a PT test twice a year, as well as meet height and weight requirements twice a year, every year of service," he continued.

Cue the eye-rolling.

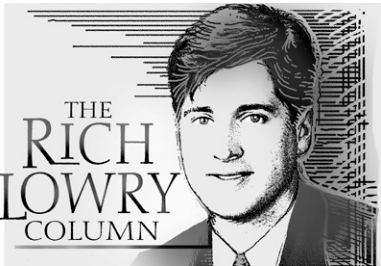
A piece in The Atlantic observed that Hegseth's "dream world is the world of Ranger school" – an Army training program – "not the actual world of complex military operations involving land, air, sea, space and cyberspace."

He was accused of fat-shaming, and the ladies on "The View" didn't get it. Joy Behar called him out for "his very retro vision for our armed forces," and asked, "Why is he obsessed with fat?" Her colleague Sunny Hostin chimed in, "Yeah, and fitness?"

There's no doubt that physical fitness is very personal to Hegseth, who said the day of his confirmation hearing that he'd done five sets of 47 push-ups that morning. "If the secretary of war can do regular, hard PT, so can every member of our

joint force," he told the generals.

But you know who'd agree with him about the centrality of fitness to the military profession? The great 20th-century statesman George C. Marshall. In a 1920 letter, Marshall called being "physically strong" one of the foundations of the military profession. As he said of military leaders in 1940 congressional testimony, they have to inspire their men "when they are hungry and exhausted and desperately uncomfortable and in great danger," and "only a man of positive characteristics of leadership,



See LOWRY, Page 7

Propositions

From Page 1

be released on bail, preserve parental rights, clarify citizenship requirements for Texas voters, and overhaul the State Commission on Judicial Conduct.

Texas lawmakers have used multibillion-dollar budget surpluses, the result of inflation and temporary federal stimulus dollars during the COVID-19 pandemic, to pay for tax cuts in recent years. Proponents of tax cuts and bans, including Gov. Greg Abbott, have said they will maintain Texas as a competitive, business-friendly state and contribute to economic growth. But some lawmakers and budget analysts have raised concerns that passing more tax cuts, especially on school district taxes which the state helps pay for, could be unsustainable.

According to some local government officials, state and local governments could face

a hard time paying for public services such as education, health care, and infrastructure needs in the future because of the tax cuts and tax bans in the upcoming constitutional amendment elections.

Officials with Texas cities and counties say they are already being forced to either cut spending or raise taxes and fees to make up for budgets stretched thin by economic uncertainty, inflation, strict state limits on property tax collections and uncertainty around future federal funds.

Below is a brief overview of the 17 amendment propositions:

- **Proposition 1 (SJR 59)** amendment would create an endowment for the Texas State Technical College Program. If voters approve the constitutional amendment, TSTC officials said that the funds would be used to fix campus infrastructure, upgrade classroom equipment and expand its footprint across the state.

- **Proposition 2 (SJR 18)** would ban the state from taxing people or businesses on profits or potential profits from capital assets, such as investments, real estate, valuable items and certain personal property. It would also eliminate a franchise tax on business trusts.
- **Proposition 3 (SJR 5)** would require judges to deny bail in certain cases for individuals accused of committing specific felonies, such as murder, aggravated assault and indecency with a child. The state would have to demonstrate that bail is not enough to prevent the defendant from being a flight or public safety risk. Defendants, who are legally presumed innocent, would also be entitled to the right to an attorney during their bail hearings.
- **Proposition 4 (HJR 7)** would dedicate a portion of the revenue derived from state sales and use taxes to the Texas water fund and to provide for the allocation and use of that revenue. State lawmakers are asking voters to approve

- \$20 billion for water projects over the next two decades. If approved, up to \$1 billion of sales tax revenue would be deposited into the Texas Water Fund each year starting in 2027. The money would go to fixing aging pipes and other infrastructure, developing and increasing new water sources, such as desalination, flood mitigation projects, and supporting conservation efforts. The amendment would also give the Texas Water Development Board flexibility in distributing funds.
- **Proposition 5 (HJR 99)** would authorize the legislature to exempt from ad valorem taxation tangible personal property consisting of animal feed held by the owner of the property for sale at retail. This constitutional amendment would allow state lawmakers to extend tax exemptions on animal feed to include when animal feed is held as inventory to be sold.
- **Proposition 6 (HJR 4)** would prevent the state from creating new taxes on securities transactions, such as stock trading, and from taxing those

- who operate or work in the securities market, including financial institutions, brokers and dealers.
- **Proposition 7 (HJR 133)** would allow state lawmakers to give property tax breaks on homes to the un-remarried spouses of U.S. veterans who the federal government determined died in connection to their service. The change is meant to align Texas with a more recent federal law that expanded benefits for veterans exposed to toxic substances during their service.
- **Proposition 8 (HJR 2)** aims to prevent lawmakers from trying to impose a tax on an estate or when an estate or inheritance is transferred. It would not eliminate other existing taxes that can be associated with an inheritance, such as unpaid property taxes.
- **Proposition 9 (HJR 1)** would exempt up to \$125,000 of businesses' inventory or equipment from being taxed by school districts, cities, counties or any other taxing

See PROPOSITIONS, Page 4

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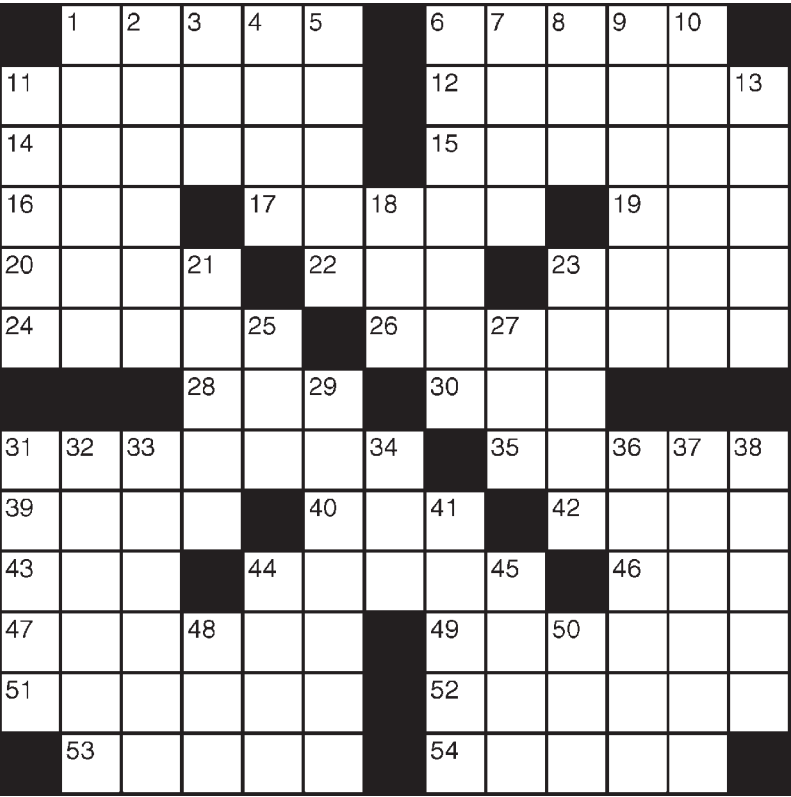
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King Crossword



- Average Solve Time
21 Minutes

ACROSS

 - 1 Bulgaria's capital
 - 6 Tub toys
 - 11 Bacon pieces
 - 12 Mistakes in print
 - 14 Serengeti howlers
 - 15 Pre-Easter
 - 16 Swiss canton
 - 17 Univ. divisions
 - 19 Toll rd.
 - 20 Lincoln in-law
 - 22 "No seats"
 - 23 Spring
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 - 26 Surpassed
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 - 30 Roofing goo
- 31 Indy 500 skid
 - 35 Singer Norah
 - 39 Marathoner's stat
 - 40 Recipe abbr.
 - 42 Humorist Sahl
 - 43 Chang's brother
 - 44 Unadorned
 - 46 Kanga's kid
 - 47 Asian peninsula
 - 49 Designer Pierre
 - 51 Van Gogh's " _ Night"
 - 52 How chicken may be served
 - 53 Juan's farewell
 - 54 Puccini opera
- DOWN**

 - 1 "Sophie's Choice" author
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 - 3 Shark feature
 - 4 Apple tablet
 - 5 Ninnies
 - 6 Sing loudly
 - 7 Unrefined metals
 - 8 Prince Valiant's son
 - 9 Body art
 - 10 Intervene
 - 11 Closes
 - 13 Bracelet site
 - 18 Expert
 - 21 Unmanned plane
 - 23 PC drive insert
 - 25 Bathroom, to a Brit
 - 27 _ Mahal
 - 29 Expenditures
- 31 Rose parts
 - 32 Target at a fiesta
 - 33 "That makes me happy!"
 - 34 Airport screening org.
 - 36 Type of skiing
 - 37 Beethoven's Third
 - 38 Sculptor's material
 - 41 Loop of lace
 - 44 Arsonist
 - 45 iPod model
 - 48 Onassis nickname
 - 50 Train lines (Abbr.)

Answer Page 4

Martinez qualifies for State competition



Alexia Martinez

– Photo courtesy Fabens ISD

By Sofia Maciel
Special to the Courier

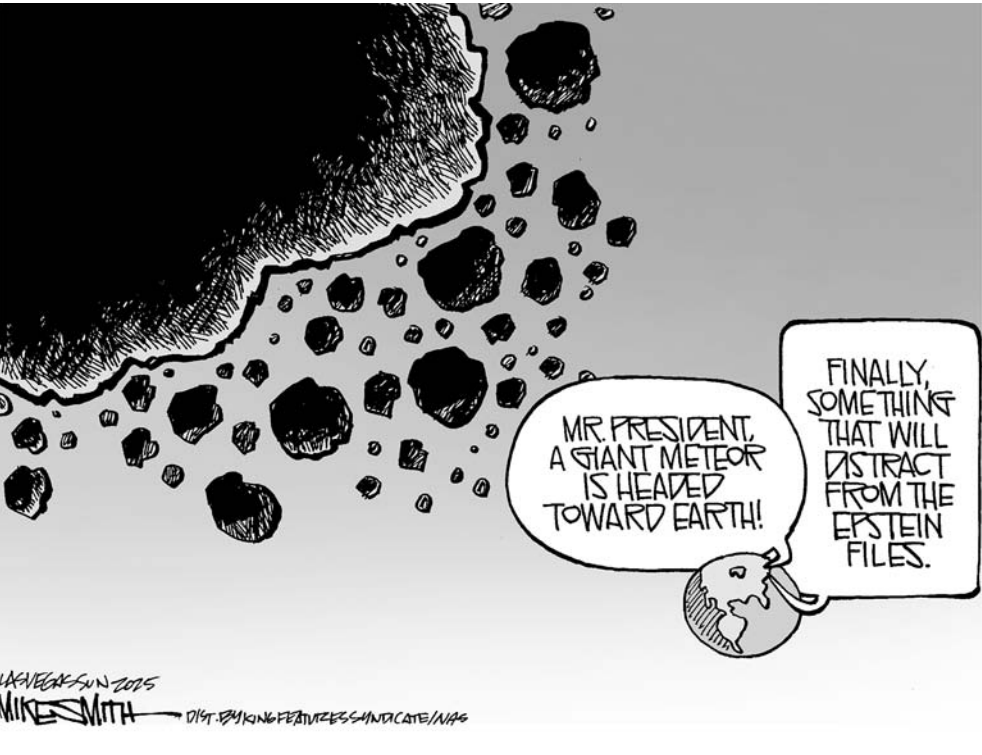
FABENS – Fabens High School junior Alexia Martinez has, for the third consecutive year, earned her spot among Texas’ top runners. She qualified for the UIL State Cross Country Meet by placing 11th at the regional competition in Lubbock.

Martinez’s consistent excellence and determination have become a hallmark of the Lady Wildcats’ running success. She has raced against some of the strongest runners in the region and is a three-time UIL District winner.

Martinez shared her excitement about the milestone. “I ran my regional cross country meet in Lubbock, Texas, and I placed 11th. It means I qualified for state three years in a row. I’m so excited – going on my third trip to the state, and hopefully, I’ll do well. I’m super proud of everyone this season. Everyone did super well,” she said.

The UIL State Cross Country Meet will take place in Round Rock, Texas, where Alexia will represent Fabens High School for the third time in her standout career.

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Propositions

From Page 2

entity. Under current law, businesses don’t have to pay taxes on that property if it’s worth \$2,500 or less. The state would help pick up the tab for the amount of property tax revenue school districts would lose. This would cost the state an estimated \$193.5 million from general revenue in 2027 and more than \$100 million annually from general revenue in subsequent fiscal years.

• **Proposition 10 (SJR 84)** would create a process to temporarily lower property taxes on homes destroyed by fire. Homeowners could apply for an adjusted tax bill on the restored home for the year in which the fire occurred. To qualify, the homeowner’s home would have to remain uninhabitable for at least 30 days after the fire. These property tax bill reductions could lower local tax revenue and require the state to help make up for school districts’ losses.

• **Proposition 11 (SJR 85)** would allow the state to raise a homestead exemption, a discount on school property taxes that lowers how much of a home’s value can be taxed to pay for public schools. The increased exemption would shave off \$60,000 from the taxable value of elderly or disabled Texans’ homes, rather than just \$10,000 under the current exemption. Coupled with another homestead exemption generally available to Texas homeowners, which lawmakers are also asking voters to increase to \$140,000 through another ballot proposition, elderly or disabled Texans could get homestead exemptions of up to \$200,000 if the other proposition is also approved by voters. If the increased exemption for elderly or disabled homeowners is approved by voters, the state would have to help pay for revenue school districts lose. That could cost the state more than \$1.2

billion in general revenue for the next two fiscal years and upwards of \$477 million annually after that.

• **Proposition 12 (SJR 27)** would change the make-up of Texas’ State Commission on Judicial Conduct and related processes and powers. Currently, the State Commission on Judicial Conduct is made up of six judges from six different court levels, two attorneys appointed by the State Bar of Texas who aren’t judges, and five citizens appointed by the governor who are at least 30 years of age and aren’t attorneys or judges. If approved, the constitutional amendment would beef up the citizen representation on the commission by changing the makeup to six judges or justices of courts appointed by the Texas Supreme Court of, two of whom would have to be trial court judges (judicial members of the commission would not be allowed to be judges in the same type of court), and seven citizens appointed by the governor, who are at least 35 years of age. Commission members would still have to be confirmed by the Texas Senate. Other significant changes to the judicial review process would tweak how the chief justice of the Texas Supreme Court selects review tribunals. These tribunals, made up of seven Court of Appeals justices, review the commission’s recommendation for the removal or retirement of a judge. The amendment would also adjust when and how the commission and review tribunal would have to discipline judges.

• **Proposition 13 (SJR 2)** would allow Texans who own their home to see a boost in the state’s homestead exemption, or the slice of a home value that can’t be taxed to pay for public schools. The proposal would shave off \$140,000 off the taxable value of the home, instead of the current \$100,000. Accompanying legislation will put the state on the hook for the revenue school districts lose if the increased exemption passes. That’s estimated to cost the state more than \$2.7 billion

in general revenue for the 2026-2027 budget cycle and more than \$1 billion annually after that.

• **Proposition 14 (SJR 3)** would provide \$3 billion to create the Dementia Prevention and Research Institute of Texas to study dementia, Alzheimer’s, Parkinson’s disease and other brain related conditions. If voters approve the constitutional amendment, an initial \$3 billion in state surplus revenue would be transferred to the fund, and a board would be set up to approve research proposals.

• **Proposition 15 (SJR 34)** would affirm that parents are the primary decision makers for their children. This proposal would include parental rights, as currently outlined out in federal case law, in the Texas Constitution. The intent of the amendment is to protect parental rights and affirm that a parent has the responsibility to nurture and protect the parent’s child and the corresponding fundamental right to exercise care, custody, and control of the parent’s child, including the right to make decisions concerning the child’s upbringing.

• **Proposition 16 (SJR 37)** would add language to the Texas Constitution to explicitly say that “persons who are not citizens of the United States” cannot vote in the state. Though U.S. citizenship is already required to register to vote in Texas, this amendment aims to prevent local governments in Texas from allowing residents who are not citizens to vote in local elections and comes in response to other states passing such policies.

• **Proposition 17 (HJR 34)** would allow the state to prevent property value in border counties from increasing due to border security infrastructure and related improvements. This new exemption could reduce local tax revenue, but costs to the state to help address school district losses are not expected to be significant, however, other local governments may have to raise tax rates to offset the losses.



- By Lucie Winborne**
- In Birmingham, England, 2.5 million Mills & Boon books were pulped to create the top layer of the M6 toll road.
 - Contrary to popular belief, the bottom figures on a totem pole usually hold the most significance, as their placement keeps them closer to viewers.
 - Charles Joughin, the chief baker on the Titanic, allegedly treaded water for two hours before being rescued from the sunken vessel. He later claimed that the copious amounts of whiskey he consumed before the ship went down kept his body warm enough to survive the subfreezing ocean temperature.
 - After an 8.0 magnitude earthquake hit Mexico City in 1985, nearly all newborn babies survived a collapsed hospital for seven days without nourishment, water, warmth or human contact.
 - Alcatraz holds an annual Indigenous Peoples’ Thanksgiving Sunrise Gathering, also known as Unthanksgiving Day, to commemorate the 1969 occupation of Alcatraz and to protest the colonialist history of Thanksgiving.
 - Instead of saying something like “the cat’s pajamas” or “the bee’s knees,” the French say “the baby Jesus in velvet shorts.”

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CryptoQuip Answer

That guy has an emotional character oddly similar to a young male horse. He’s so colt hearted.

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- Moments
in time

THE HISTORY CHANNEL
- On Oct. 27, 1873, Joseph Glidden, a farmer in DeKalb, Illinois, submitted an application to the U.S. Patent Office for his new design for a fencing wire with sharp barbs. His version, using two strands of wire twisted together, was an improvement on the single-strand version created by Henry Rose and became the best-selling such wire in the country.
 - On Oct. 28, 1787, composer Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart worked all night to complete the overture of his opera “Don Giovanni,” which was scheduled to debut in Prague the next day. The orchestra had no time to rehearse, but sight-read it in the concert hall to a most enthusiastic response from the crowd.
 - On Oct. 29, 1618, Sir Walter Raleigh, an English adventurer, writer and favorite courtier of Queen Elizabeth I, was beheaded in London under a sentence brought against him 15 years earlier for conspiracy against King James I.
 - On Oct. 30, 1905, George Bernard Shaw's play “Mrs. Warren's Profession,” which dealt frankly with prostitution and had already been banned in Britain, was staged at New York's Garrick Theater, but was closed by authorities after a single performance. The next day the producer and players were arrested for obscenity, but no one (including Shaw) was convicted. The play would not be legally performed in Britain for another 21 years.
 - On Oct. 31, 1950, 21-year-old Earl Lloyd became the first African American to play in an NBA game when he took to the court in the season opener for the Washington Capitols. While he would describe joining an all-white team as “intimidating,” his teammates were welcoming, though not all fans approved.
 - On Nov. 1, 1800, President John Adams moved into the newly constructed President's House, the original name for what we today call the White House.
 - On Nov. 2, 2000, the first residential crew arrived aboard the International Space Station, marking both the beginning of a new era of international cooperation in space and the longest continuous human habitation in low Earth orbit, which continues to this day.

El Paso Symphony Youth Orchestra begins 19th season



Jennifer Martinez

– Photo courtesy EPSO

Ballots

From Page 1

even with the district’s increased tax rate, they noted.

In the Town of Clint council representative elections, voters will decide whom they want to fill the Alderman, District at-large position. Running for the seat are Addam Hernandez, Albert Duran, Daniel (Dan) Vallejo, and Rose Hernandez.

In the City of Socorro council elections, three alderman positions are up for a vote. They include candidates for Alderman, District 1 are Cesar Nevarez and Rene Rodriguez; for Alderman, District 2, the lone candidate is Alejandro Garcia; and for Alderman, District 3, the lone candidate is Gina Cordero.

In the Village of Vinton election, voters will cast their ballots for mayor and for two alderman positions. Running for mayor is the incumbent Rachel Quintana and challengers are Juvencia Rios Ontiveros and Samuel “ Sam” Monrreal. In the alderman race, candidates for Place 1 are David Duran and Dolores Diaz; for Place 2, candidates are the incumbent Perry Duby and challenger Leticia Gonzalez.

In Horizon City, the Horizon Regional Municipal Utility District (HRMUD) is asking its voters to also approve a tax hike. HRMUD has four propositions on the ballot – Proposition A, Proposition B, Proposition C, and Proposition D.

The HRMUD propositions mostly deal with the reconfirmation of the designation of the Ravenna defined area within Hunt properties, and the reduction of an ad valorem operations and maintenance tax. Visit its website at <https://horizonregional.com> or visit El Paso County’s website, at epcountyvotes.com, for more information on HRMUD’s propositions.

By Rosemary Flores
Special to the Courier

EL PASO COUNTY – The El Paso Symphony Youth Orchestra (EPSYO) will kick off its 19th season on Sunday, November 2, 2025, at 3 p.m. at the Abraham Chavez Theatre. The concert will showcase all four EPSYO performing ensembles, under the direction of conductors Nathan Black, Jose Rios, Rodrigo Maldonado, and Jennifer Martinez.

The concerts will open with a performance by students from Tocando Music Project. They will be joined by Bowie High School’s Mariachi Orgullo to perform Cerca del Mar, El Rey, and De Colores. Tocando is a free after-school program of the El Paso Symphony Orchestra that provides music learning and performing opportunities to elementary through high school students in El Paso’s El Segundo Barrio.

The El Paso Youth String Philharmonic is a strings-only ensemble designed for musicians with limited orchestral experience. Under the direction of Rodrigo Maldonado, the ensemble will perform two pieces by contemporary composers: Medieval Kings by Soon Hee Newbold and The Lost Tomb by Sean O’Loughlin. They will also perform The Great Gate of Kiev by Mussorgsky.

The El Paso Youth String Ensemble (YSE), led by Jennifer Martinez, will perform Mozart’s Finding Figaro, Sibelius’s Finlandia, and Rossini’s William Tell Overture. Martinez will be honored at this concert, as it marks her farewell performance with YSE. She has been a member of the EPSYO faculty since 2017, initially serving as the viola sectional coach. In 2021, she took on the role of conductor for YSE. Notably, Martinez was also a student in the program from 2010 to 2013.

Conductor Jose Rios will lead the El Paso Youth Symphony to close out the first half of the program in Schubert’s Symphony No. 8, 1st movement, and The Moldau by Smetana.

The second half of the program will feature EPSYO’s advanced orchestra, the El Paso Youth Orchestra, conducted by Nathan Black, in Dvorák’s Carnival Overture.

Tickets are on sale now and may be purchased at epso.org or by calling the EPSO office (915) 532-3776.

Notice of Public Meeting To Discuss Fabens Independent School District’s State Financial Accountability Rating (FIRST)

The Fabens Independent School District will hold a public hearing at 6:30 p.m., Wednesday, November 19, 2025 in the boardroom of the Fabens ISD Administration Building, 821 NE “G” Avenue, Fabens, Texas.

The purpose of this hearing is to discuss Fabens Independent School District’s rating on the state’s financial accountability system.

WTCC: 10-30-25

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Sport’s new math problem: NBA + MOB = FBI

By Steve Escajeda
Special to the Courier

The National Basketball Association (NBA) has a long history of corruption involving things like drug abuse and trafficking, rape, game-cheating scandals, illegal gun possession, physical abuse and even murder.

The Mafia—La Cosa Nostra—also has a long history of corruption involving things like extortion, physical abuse, robbery, drug trafficking, illegal gambling, prostitution and even murder.

So, should anyone really be surprised that representatives of the two organizations got together to go on a crime spree that crossed the entire United States and went on for a number of years?

I guess everyone’s heard the news about the FBI’s investigation of NBA players throwing games, giving out inside information to gamblers about game situations they can bet on, and even about crazy technology used to cheat big money gamblers at cards.

This sounds more like something Quentin Tarantino or Martin Scorsese would direct for the big screen.

But it’s all true.

The Portland Trailblazers head coach, Chauncey Billups was arrested at his home last week for playing a part in luring gamblers to poker games. Poker games that weren’t exactly being played fairly.

And not only did Billups play a role – he played a role with members of the Bonanno, Gambino, and Genovese crime families.

What makes this story so intriguing is how these guys cheated their victims.

They used x-ray tables and x-ray glasses and contact lenses that allow

you to see marked cards that you can’t see with the naked eye. They used rigged card shuffling machines and a sophisticated signaling system to guys nearby but not involved in the game.

The FBI said their investigation had been going on for over two years and that these crooks had stolen over \$7 million from their targets.

I remember back in the seventies when the NBA was in so much trouble with widespread drug use and fights and violence on the court.

Then two guys named Magic and Bird came into the league and saved the day.

Well, it looks like the NBA is going through major issues once again. The league’s popularity has been struggling in recent years because of the lack of defense being played and the overuse of the three-point shot.

But now this news is going to be tough to get through.

The biggest problem is gambling. And it’s not like this topic didn’t come up when teams started relocating to

Las Vegas and professional leagues started partnering with sports betting organizations like FanDuel, DraftKings, BetMGM, Caesars Sportsbook, and bet365.

I mean really – what did they think was going to happen?

The biggest problem seems to be prop bets – bets that allow bettors to put their money on just about anything. Who will score the game’s first points, will a player score over five points in the first quarter, will a player play for less than 30 minutes, will a player have more than two dunks?

Like I said, bet on anything.

One example in this case is Miami Heat guard Terry Rozier telling certain gamblers to bet the low numbers on his performance in a certain game. In that game, he faked an injury and took himself out of the game just nine minutes into it, to insure his low numbers.

Now if anybody thinks that Billups and Rozier are the only players and coaches involved you’re just fooling

yourself. This is just the beginning.

The FBI is going to come down on these guys so hard with the threat of prison time that they are going to hand out other names like they’re handing out candy on Halloween.

Other big names are already being tossed around, names like Hall of Famer Kevin Garnett, L.A. Clippers head coach Tyronn Lue and even the league’s all-time leading scorer LeBron James.

Who knows how big this scandal is going to get? But it’s getting bigger.

People are already asking for the resignation of NBA Commissioner Adam Silver. There are rumors going around that he knew about all this months ago and has chosen to stay silent about it.

The NBA, NFL and MLB all succumbed to the money and let gambling into their sport. They were hoping simply using the phrase “bet responsibly” would fix everything.

And it did. Only it was a different kind of “fix”.

Senior moment By Matilda Charles

Robotic pets: One might be right for you

Some of us have gotten to the age where we wonder if adopting a pet would be the right thing to do, even though we know that having a pet would help with feelings of loneliness. Or maybe we have a friend or relative with Alzheimer’s or who is in long-term care and needs some company or stress reduction but can’t have a pet.

With those very things in mind, a company has created animatronic robot cats – Joy For All Companion Pets for Seniors by Ageless Innovation.

While mostly marketed to seniors in long-term care facilities, there’s no reason you can’t have one at home!

Look for them on Amazon.com (Joy For All Companion Cats) to get all the details. The cats are the size of adult cats and come in three colors: black and white tuxedo, silver and white, and orange tabby.

They run on four C batteries and there are three settings: on, mute and off. The videos on the Amazon page show just what these robotic kitties do. They roll on their

back, open and close their eyes, move their limbs, turn their head and even meow and purr when petted. And I can verify: When I played one of the cat videos and the robotic cat meowed, my own cat woke up from a nap and reacted to it!

These cats are expensive, ranging from \$125 to \$179, depending whether you find one on sale. They’re also marketed to children, perhaps to get them used to a pet before getting a real one, but they’re not toys.

Not a cat person? Rather have a puppy? You’re not being left out. The Joy For All Companion Pet Golden Pup feels like a puppy, moves, barks, wags his tail and has a heartbeat. It even comes with a bandanna.

Early Christmas gifts maybe? One thing is certain: These little robots are very cute.

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Send Your News To:
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THINK INK ACROSS	65 Brand of fuel additives	123 Ad- (improvise)	40 Meted	80 Initiation, e.g.
	66 Forearm bone	124 Zig's reverse	41 Mano-a-mano fight	81 Pi-sigma link
1 Direct applause toward	67 Crew tool	125 Rind-shaving tools	42 "At Last" singer James	86 Very bad grades
8 Finder's cry	68 "You folks," in the South	DOWN	43 Filing tool	88 Scandinavian "Salut!"
11 April follower	70 West of "Diamond Lil"		44 In progress	91 1986 #1 hit for 19-Across and Michael McDonald
14 Mimic a bird	73 "General" of Chinese cuisine	1 Feline nails	45 Common baby ailment	92 Vow
19 Singer Patti	74 Riddle, part 4	2 Trellis strips	46 Scheduled to arrive	93 Revel at a really hoppin' party
20 Take by force	78 Museum overseer	3 Skip _ (flutter, as the heart)	47 Interval	94 "Carlos" star Edgar
22 Capital on the Red River	82 Golfer Sam	4 Bombard	48 Ice cream brand	95 Neighbor of Ethiopia
23 Art studio	83 Eighth parts of circles	5 French policeman, informally	53 Inuit dwelling	96 Sinister gaze
24 Phases	84 Redding of soul	6 Butterlike product of beef fat	55 Feel faint from ecstasy	101 Like some congestion
25 "Tiny Dancer" singer John	85 Sly laugh sound	7 Air again	56 Divide up	104 Rival of Avis
26 Start of a riddle	87 Gp. with merit badges	8 Many a prep sch.	57 Vital blood line	105 Demean
29 Booming jet of old, in brief	89 On a cruise	9 Star of the past	59 Insurer with a duck icon	106 Lazybones
30 Inseparable	90 End of the riddle	10 Shows up	60 Sch. with a Fresno branch	107 Ship spars
31 Spike of corn	97 "Strut" singer Easton	11 Part of 102-Across	62 Univ. dorm supervisors	108 Postmarked pieces
32 Olive bugged by Bluto	98 Affirm strongly	12 Johnson of old comedy	63 Thesaurus word: Abbr.	109 Zapzyt target
33 Prefix with light or night	99 Flying geese formation	13 Simple kind of question	69 Score _ (earn some points)	110 Perlman of "Cheers"
35 Part of AOL	100 High peak: Abbr.	14 Place with beakers, in brief	70 Minister's residence	111 Roman 651
39 Thing with rungs	102 "No more details!," in texts	15 Disease-free	71 Modify	112 "Moby-Dick" captain
44 Riddle, part 2	103 Sushi tuna	16 Engrossed by	72 Anna's sister in "Frozen"	113 Zingy flavor
48 Zac of 2017's "Baywatch"	105 Archer's skill	17 Building top	73 Eat a bit of	114 Smartphone games, often
49 German linking word	108 Annals, as a law	18 Wrestling win	75 "Poppycock!"	115 Cross paths
50 Org. for teachers	109 Resilient strength	21 Game of falling shapes	76 "Sounds likely to me"	116 Soup flavor enhancer, for short
51 "Sure, we should do it!"	116 Really virile	27 Find out	77 Unglossy photo finish	
52 Desperate, as a situation	117 Apollo 7 astronaut Wally	28 "The Clan of the Cave Bear" heroine	78 Simple beds	
54 Syrian president	118 Annuls, as a law	33 Rosebush sticker	79 Neighbor of Colorado	
58 Auto racer's warm-up circuit	119 Resilient strength	34 Hurricane hazard		
61 Riddle, part 3	120 Certain support group for adolescents	36 Win gold, say		
64 In-vogue thing	121 Lay out for printing	37 Rice of Bush's Cabinet, informally		
	122 Gather bit by bit	38 Prop- or hex-ender		

Super Crossword																					
1	2	3	4	5	6	7		8	9	10		11	12	13		14	15	16	17	18	
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116								117							118						
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122								123					124			125					

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

with the physical stamina that goes with it, can function under those conditions.”

Needless to say, combat is an inherently physical activity. It requires incredible exertion for long stretches of time under great stress. It is necessary to carry heavy objects – a wounded comrade, artillery shells – in the worst conditions imaginable. The age of AI and drones hasn’t changed this ineluctable fact of human existence.

It’s simply a fact that, as any platoon leader will tell you, out-of-shape infantrymen aren’t as good at their jobs.

The emphasis on fitness is especially important when the recruiting pool, reflecting an American society where 40% of people are obese, is in poorer shape than it used to be.

Troops do notice and resent it when they are meeting height and weight standards and their comrades aren’t, or when their superiors are out of shape. If the colonel that’s enforcing disciplinary matters is fat, it is corrosive of his credibility.

Physical fitness standards were dumbed

down over the years, and for DEI reasons. The Army had been developing a fitness test that was supposed to have gender-neutral standards. When it emerged, not surprisingly, that women weren’t doing as well on the test, the Biden-era Army decided to gender-norm the scores and lower the standards generally.

In a telling exchange with Sen. Tom Cotton, the secretary of the Army at the time said that the Army “didn’t want to disadvantage any subgroups.”

This is why it’s so important that Hegseth ordered that the requirement for combat positions “returns to the highest male standard.”

Obviously, having a physically fit force doesn’t guarantee victory in, say, a war with China, which would require much else besides. But Hegseth was right to make it as clear as possible to our military leaders that the basics are back. Making our force more proficient doesn’t begin and end with push-ups, but it does start there.

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

Pacemakers don’t mix with induction stovetops

DEAR DR. ROACH: My husband has a pacemaker. We have an induction stove, and his cardiologist was uncertain if it was safe for him to use it. So, he does not cook on the stovetop and stays clear of it when I am cooking. Is it safe for him to use at least the back burners? When I am out of town or just not home, he is afraid to use the cooktop. I feel like at least the back burners should be at a sufficient distance to be safe. Do you know if it would be safe for him to use? He is 5 feet, 5 inches tall. Thank you. – V.S.



Induction cooking stoves use powerful electromagnets to create a magnetic field. Inside the metal of your cookware, this creates electronic currents, which dissipate heat through electric resistance. However, this powerful magnetic field can also “tell” your pacemaker to turn itself off or change its mode of activity. This is why it’s important to avoid strong magnetic fields when one has a pacemaker.

For an induction stovetop, the recommendation is to stay 60 centimeters (2 feet) away from the device while it’s turned on. This doesn’t mean that he can’t use it at all, just that he shouldn’t be touching the pot continuously and should be using the back burners, which will likely keep him the requisite distance away.

DEAR DR. ROACH: My oncologist tries to type out his own notes from my office visit, but I think that he copies and pastes info from old notes. My history with him is very long and detailed (MRIs, CT scans, lab results, etc.). In addition, notes from all my hospital stays for chemo are there. After my last office visit, he scheduled me for an MRI but made no mention of any change in medication. I read his notes on the app and noticed there was an order for a new medication that was sent over to my pharmacy. It was for procarbazine, which I took as part of my chemotherapy in early 2024. It was a mistake, but it was very upsetting. I had to make several phone calls to get it straightened out. So, if people have access to online notes, please make sure that you are looking at the most recent information. – M.D.

Having the ability to read your physician’s notes is, in my opinion, a very good thing. Correcting mistakes is probably the most important reason why. One study found that 25% of doctors picked up an important mistake in their record based on patient feedback.

Procarbazine, by the way, is an extremely powerful chemotherapy drug and would never have been dispensed by the pharmacy without confirmation from your doctor. In the hospital, there are multiple layers of protection to make sure that the right person gets the right dose of the right medicine. It wouldn’t be given out lightly.

Reading your doctor’s note hopefully gives a person some insight into a doctor’s thought process and may help people understand why their doctor made the recommendations that they did. Occasionally I have people who ask to change their medical records. This isn’t allowed, but a note can be made about what the mistake was so that the information can be corrected.

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
October 30, 1836: John Jones was appointed as the first Texas Postmaster. He had a tough row to hoe.

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: O equals G

BUKB OQF UKL KR ZHCBSCKV
WUKMKWBZM CEEVF LSHSVKM
BC K FCQRO HKVZ UCMLZ.
UZ'L LC WCVB-UZKMBZE.

Answer Page 4

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Weekly SUDOKU

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

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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Medical equipment missing from the VA



by Freddy Groves

The VA appears to have lost \$211 million worth of medicalequipmentfromtheir facilities, approximately 5% of the total. This includes computers, exam tables, microscopes... over 75,000 items.

Per a recent 13-month audit of medical facilities by the VA's Office of Inspector General, there might be even more missing, because the VA only tracks nonexpendable items, those with a shelf life of more than two years that have a purchase cost of more than \$5,000.

How is it possible to lose that much stuff?

One way to "lose" items is when the batteries in the electronic location tags die, making the item impossible to find.

Items were also "lost"

because they were not in the location indicated by the inventory system. In this recent audit, the OIG could not find 537,000 items (33%) at the locations indicated on the previous inventory.

Add to that staff informed the OIG that if certain items were included in a previous audit, they didn't need to be included in the next audit. Many items had an average of 600 days between inventory dates, increasing the risk that items go missing forever.

It gets worse: The OIG learned that reporting of missing items had not been conducted as it should be in all cases. There were 915 missing item reports (value \$31.2 million) that had not been completely investigated, and over 200 items that hadn't been reported at all.

So what happens when proper inventories aren't done? If nothing else, items can't be assessed to determine whether they're in a condition to be used for

patient care. If inventories aren't accurate, medical items can't be found immediately for patient care. If missing item reports aren't done, it can't be determined just how those items came to be missing. And there can't be accurate planning of future purchases if there isn't an accurate accounting of what is actually on hand.

I hope VA Secretary Doug Collins is paying attention to this.

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• "Want the smells of the season? Here's a great herbal tea that doubles as a whole-house fragrance: Combine one orange cut up, a cinnamon stick, a pinch of ground cloves and nutmeg with a few fresh cranberries and enough water to cover. Boil and waft. Then cool and drink! Happy fall." – A.D. in New Hampshire

• "Dentists say to replace your toothbrush every two months, but they DON'T say to get rid of the old one. There are plenty of good uses for it. In the bathroom and kitchen to clean around the sink. Or for scrubbing stains after you dip it in pretreater. Just make sure you mark it well". – V.E. in Washington

• Use baking soda to clean your stainless steel sink. It is a mild abrasive and will remove gunk and make the sink shine.

• For use when camping: Mix together your dry spices and carefully pour into a straw. You must fold over the end and secure it with tape. Do the same to the other side to seal and you can stick it right in a plastic bag for use at the campsite. You can have many spices without having to bring a bunch of jars. Steaks taste terrific, or maybe you like cinnamon sugar for oatmeal or on baked apple.

• Here's a tip to preserve an arrangement of greens, maybe the last of the season for some of you: Spray with hairspray. Arrange and spray again.

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.

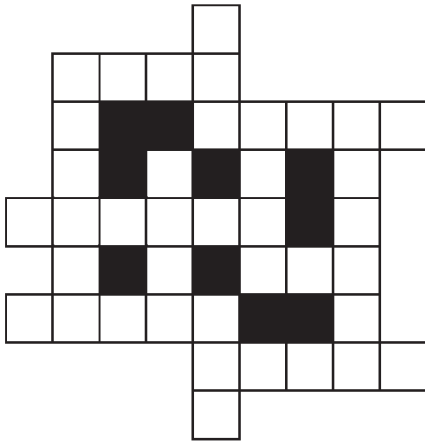
Answer Page 4

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	+	7	÷		=13			
+		-		+				
	+		+		=15			
÷		÷		÷				
	-		×		=27			
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1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9



WME
OWNIMN
♥RYALE
ORZE
UNLERN
ETY
♥REEW
♥MAWSR
♥NWO
SEWARN
RATSZ
♥EMRA



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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