

# Drunk driving crashes in Texas peak in December

*Keep your holidays happy by getting a sober ride*

By Jeff Salzgeber  
Special to the Courier

TEXAS – The loss of a loved one hits even harder over the holidays. There are empty chairs at thousands of tables for Texas families devastated by deadly drunk driving crashes.

As Texans gather to celebrate this time of year, the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) is urging Texans to extend their well-known kindness and courtesy to others on the road and always choose a sober ride.

“The holidays are a wonderful time to be with family, and yet they can also be a painful reminder for those who have lost loved ones to preventable crashes,” said TxDOT Executive Director Marc Williams. “Let’s make a new holiday tradition to drive like a Texan: kind, courteous and safe. That means always getting a sober ride.”

December had the highest number of crashes caused by drunk drivers in Texas last year. There were more than 2,000 drunk driving-related crashes during the 2024 holiday season. All of these could have been avoided by taking a sober ride.

“Every day, I sit at a table with an empty chair,” Charisse Thomas said.

A drunk driver killed Charisse Thomas’ daughter Destani in a head-on crash as she drove home from high school in 2020. Earlier that same day, Destani had

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– Internet

**TOO MANY** – Over 1,000 people died in alcohol related crashes in Texas in 2024. One study of TxDOT/DPS data put this figure at 25% of all traffic fatalities. Another 2,242 people were seriously injured, requiring hospitalization according to data from TxDOT and local police departments. Statistics were not available for lesser injuries or the much larger number of people whose lives were impacted by drunk driving crashes.



– Photo by Alfredo Vasquez

**EXPANSION** – The Village of Vinton has been experiencing a lot of growth recently. Because of its location and business-friendly approach, the upper valley community is attracting business enterprises like the new Xpress Fuel truck depot located on Vinton Road and Interstate-10, which held a grand opening, above, this summer.

# Village of Vinton voters decide mayor’s race in runoff election

By Alfredo Vasquez  
Special to the Courier

VINTON – Election Day for the Village of Vinton’s mayoral runoff race is scheduled from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m., Saturday, December 13. Polling

place for the upper valley contest will be the El Paso County Northwest Annex, located at 435 E. Vinton Road.

Vinton’s eligible voters are urged to cast their ballots in the runoff election that features incumbent Mayor Rachel Quintana and challenger Juvencia Rios Ontiveros.

The runoff election is being held because neither mayoral candidate received more than 50 percent of the votes in the November election. Quintana, who won the election by a 20-vote margin, received 94 votes (43.52 percent), and Ontiveros garnered 74

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# The tariffs aren’t helping

Ronald Reagan once said that the most frightening words in the English language are: “I’m from the government, and I’m here to help.” U.S. manufacturers must know exactly what the Gipper meant.

Donald Trump is a wholeheartedly pro-manufacturing president, and he’s definitely here to help – with a dizzying array of tariffs. So far, the evidence is that, on net, his tariff agenda is not helping, and almost certainly hurting, the manufacturing sector he’s out to rejuvenate. The September jobs report was pretty good overall, but manufacturing continues to be a sore point. The U.S. has shed nearly 100,000 manufacturing jobs over the last 12 months, and blue-collar jobs are declining.

The theory of the tariffs is that American manufacturing has been decimated by imports and

if the imports are made more expensive by tariffs, people will buy more American-made products and companies will bring manufacturing operations back to the United States.

The problem is that this story is overly simplistic. There’s been a long-term decline in the share of manufacturing employment in the U.S., from roughly 27% in the 1960s to a little above 8% now. As the researchers Gary Clyde Hufbauer and Ye Zhang point out, this is driven, to a large extent, by the fact that as people get richer, they tend to spend more of their income on services, whether health or entertainment. This means that the manufacturing share of the economy inevitably shrinks. The same trend is evident in other advanced economies.

This suggests that seeking a return to a bygone era

of manufacturing via tariffs is the economic equivalent of King Canute and the waves (which wouldn’t recede despite his command). Worse, sweeping tariffs make imported materials that are used to manufacture goods in the U.S. – so-called inputs – more expensive. As a result, manufacturing becomes less cost-effective. Right now, for instance, the price of heavily tariffed steel has been on the rise. That’s good for steel companies – a small slice of the economy – but bad for all the other firms that use the steel to make stuff.

Then, there’s the downside that U.S. tariffs cause



See LOWRY, Page 7

## Food for thought By Rick Shrum

# Beware of the ER, urgent care, billing entrapment

El Paso is heading into one of the busier times of the year for trips to emergency rooms and urgent care facilities. The winter months (Dec. to Feb.) for flu/respiratory issues as well seasonal accidents associated with the Christmas and New Year’s holidays.

The biggest Christmas accidents involve decorating falls, fires (from lights, trees, candles), drunk driving, toy-related injuries, and food-related incidents like burns or poisoning, with thousands of ER visits annually for falls from ladders, electric shocks, and burns, highlighting dangers from festive lights, alcohol, and kitchen mishaps during holiday preparations.

Major New Year’s accidents often involve deadly drunk driving crashes, numerous fireworks injuries from illegal or mishandled pyrotechnics, and occasional incidents involving gunfire or fires that highlight recurring holiday dangers from impaired judgment and dangerous celebrations.

When something happens that requires medical attention on a holiday, people are generally left with three choices. They can wait for their doctor to reopen, they can go to an emergency room (ER), or like most insurance companies prefer, they can go to an urgent care facility. Choosing where to go is where it gets tricky.

I had an issue requiring immediate medical treatment on Memorial Day. No alcohol or fireworks involved, but an issue none the less. I chose an



– Photo by Rick Shrum

LOOKS RESPECTABLE – This UCare Urgent Care is on Eastlake Blvd.

urgent care facility on Eastlake Blvd. called UCare Urgent Care over the emergency room, as my insurance would have wanted. I could have gone to Providence ER – it was closer but my out of pocket would have been \$135.

I was aware of the need to be in network and, being very cautious and persistent, I asked the people at UCare Urgent Care, on the phone and in person, multiple times before I saw the doctor and once more when paying, if I was in network. Not one, but three people at the front counter, all reassured me at least eight times that I was in network and my visit would cost \$60 and there would be no further bill. UCare Urgent Care is now trying to claim an additional \$145 dollars for the visit. That’s \$70 more than the ER!

*took my insurance and if they were in-network. She said they do, and that they were in-network. I just saw that my insurance provider denied my claim, saying it was from an out-of-network provider, and that I have to pay \$326 out-of-pocket. I’m going to appeal after talking to the provider tomorrow to understand how this could have happened, but does anyone have any other suggestions for addressing this so I don’t unfairly lose out on \$326.*

*for the visit, but that this turned out to be incorrect. If you can remember the receptionist’s name, submit that as well because they will need to speak with the receptionist to investigate.*

- Hope that they will make an “adjustment” and remove this bill/charge from your account at the Urgent Care due to an employee error.

*I hope it goes well for you! I worked for a large health system and knew other managers that had to adjust/reimburse patients due to their staff making incorrect statements. ([https://www.reddit.com/r/healthcare/comments/1aii3eu/urgent\\_care\\_gave\\_me\\_misinformation/](https://www.reddit.com/r/healthcare/comments/1aii3eu/urgent_care_gave_me_misinformation/))*

While my dispute with UCare Urgent Care hasn’t followed the advice above, it is ongoing. I turned the matter over to my credit card company and after a several weeks investigation they found they billing from UCare Urgent Care to fraudulent, denying the out-of-network charges and for also attempting to re-bill the account from a different physical location. The credit card company gave UCare Urgent Care 45 days to appeal and give reason to reinstate the charge. They did not and the credit card company, yes the company, told me they

See BEWARE, Page 3

1973

52

Years

2025

WEST TEXAS COUNTY

COURIER

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Vinton

From Page 1

votes (34.26 percent). Coming in third was Samuel “Sam” Monrreal, who received 48 votes (22.22 percent).

Also in the November ballot were races for the Village of Vinton’s Alderman Place 1 and for Alderman Place 2 positions. In the Place 1 contest, David Duran won with 136 votes, or 64.76 percent of the votes, defeating Dolores Diaz who garnered 74 votes, or 35.24 percent. In the Place 2 race, Leticia Gonzalez got 119 votes, or 56.13 percent, to incumbent Perry Duby’s 93 votes, or 43.87 percent.

The newly elected alderpersons join the three current council members who will be up for re-election in 2026. They include Paula Monrreal, Alderperson Place 3; Lourdes

Cloud, Alderperson Place 4; and Santos Lucero, Alderperson Place 5.

Winner of the upcoming mayoral race will lead the growing community for the next four years. According to the 2020 U.S. Census, the Village of Vinton’s population was 2,684 residents.

A major project that Vinton town leaders are in the midst of completing is the collaboration with El Paso Water Utilities officials in the installation of water and sewer lines for residential and business developments.

Other current investments being made by developers in the Village of Vinton area include the multimillion-dollar expansion of Vinton Steel’s mini-mill, Tropicana’s housing construction boom, and the new Vinton Xpress truck fuel station.

Early voting for the Village of Vinton mayoral runoff election was held from December 1st through the December 9th.

Beware

From Page 2

were issuing a new card so UCare Urgent Care would not be able to try to charge it from a third location. They also blocked all other avenues so they could not charge the new card. I’ve never known a credit card company to do that before, though it must be a practice they use when they encounter what they deem continuing fraudulent behavior.

UCare Urgent Care declined to justify their extra charge in the 45 days, instead turning the matter over to a collection agency.

I reported the matter to both the Sheriff’s

office and the El Paso County Attorney’s office. They say there’s nothing they can do stop this ugly practice unless they hear from more than one person – otherwise it’s just finger pointing. If you have been treated this way, don’t stand for it. Report it. If you don’t want to contact the Sheriff or the County Attorney, send an email or letter to the addresses in the publisher’s box on page 2 and your information will be forwarded to be attached to the complaint I’ve filed.

Hopefully you and your family will be safe over the holidays, enjoying time spent with one another. But if you require medical attention, whether it’s a holiday or not, beware of the ER/urgent care billing entrapment.

King Crossword

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50			51				52	53				
54							55					
56							57					

Average Solve Time 21 Minutes

ACROSS

1 Novelist Carr  
6 Posture  
12 Criminal's "why"  
13 Tribulation  
14 Small beard  
15 Japanese automaker  
16 Queue after Q  
17 500 sheets  
19 Pot brew  
20 Elite alternative  
22 Standard  
24 Non-Rx  
27 Yoga class pads  
29 Modern "carpe diem"

32 No. 1 hit by Men at Work  
35 Wife of Jacob  
36 Rebuff  
37 Sean, to Yoko  
38 Ultra-modernist  
40 Recipe meas.  
42 Paper Mate rival  
44 Amorphous mass  
46 "House" actor  
Omar  
50 Surround with light  
52 Woodwind player  
54 Radio components  
55 Tourist's vehicle  
56 Fancy fiddles  
57 Birds' homes

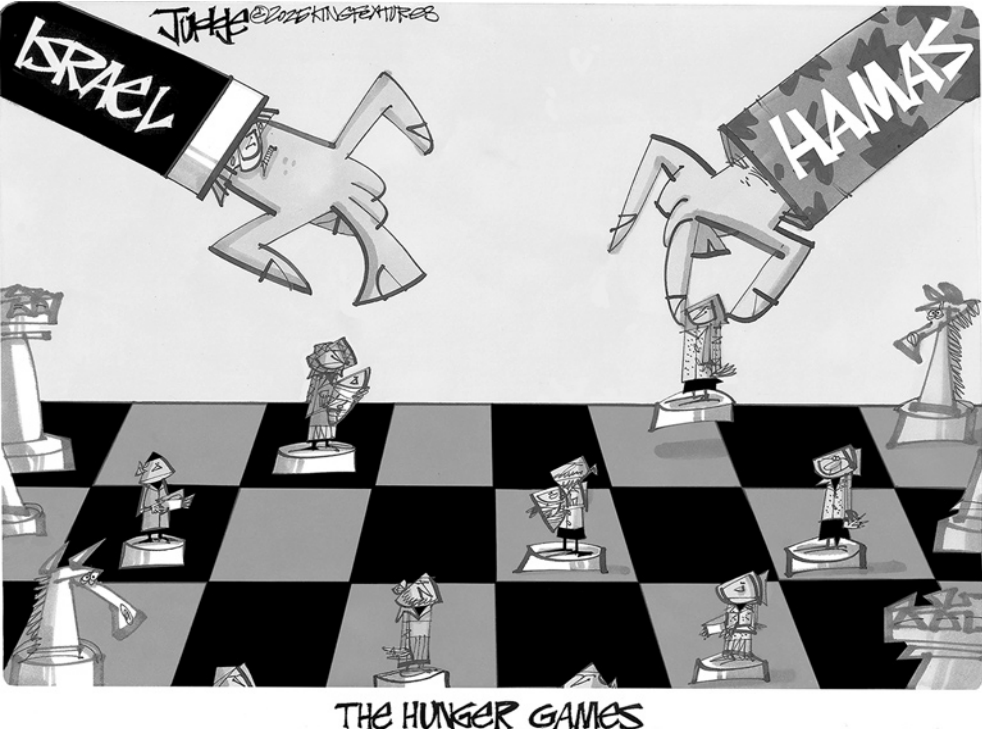
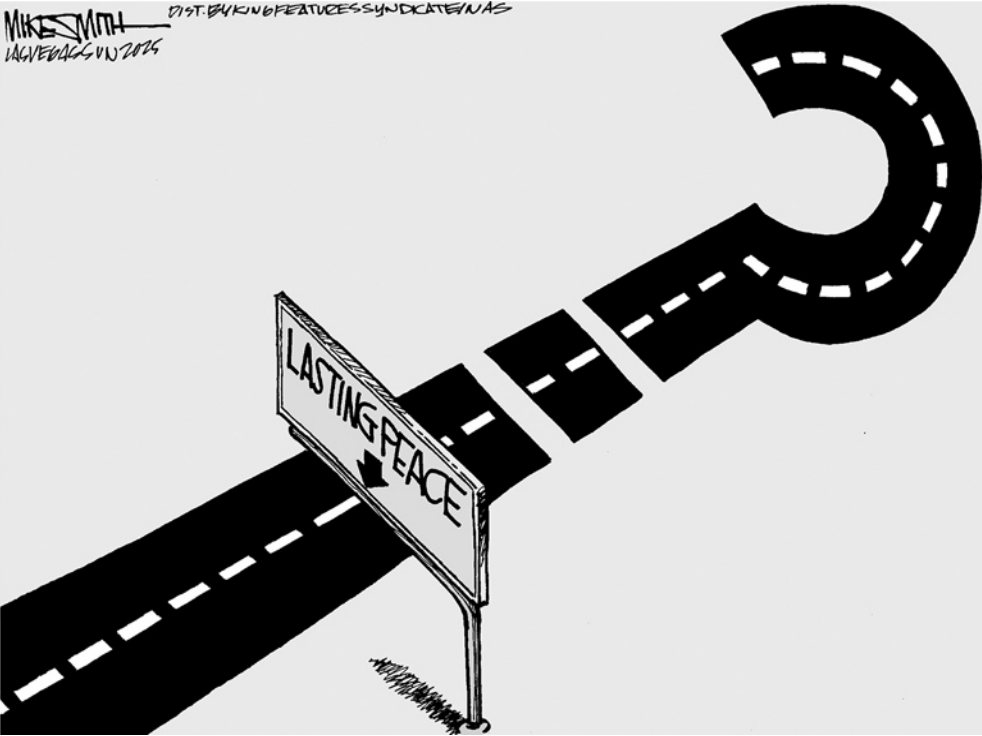
DOWN

1 Dove calls  
2 Rat-  
3 Illuminated  
4 Prior night  
5 Six-pack units  
6 Slugger Sammy  
7 Surpass  
8 Wood-shaping tool  
9 Uncharged particles  
10 Birthday cut-up?  
11 Director Kazan  
12 Store boss (Abbr.)  
18 Corrode  
21 "... Believer"  
23 Sailor's assent  
24 Barn bird  
25 Commonest English word  
26 One of a news

show pair  
28 Unwilling to budge  
30 Privy  
31 Have  
33 "Evita" narrator  
34 Small ammo  
39 Gawked at  
41 Drudges  
42 Hotel furniture  
43 Monogram pt.  
45 Privation  
47 Brad of Hollywood  
48 Unpaid TV ads  
49 Cardinal cap letters  
51 Nabokov novel  
53 Spelldown

Answer Page 4

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# Moments in time

THE HISTORY CHANNEL

- On Dec. 8, 1985, The Byte Shop opened in Mission Valley, California, selling the first 50 Apple-1 computers at a price of \$666.66. Nowadays, collectors shell out hundreds of thousands of dollars for them.
- On Dec. 9, 1979, scientists announced that smallpox had been eradicated. Carrying about a 30% risk of death for those infected, it remains the only infectious disease affecting humans to have officially been eliminated.
- On Dec. 10, 1869, Wyoming granted women the right to vote. Some male supporters were motivated by loneliness as much as or more than justice, since the territory had more than 6,000 adult males but only 1,000 females, and it was hoped the latter would be more likely to settle in the area if they could vote.
- On Dec. 11, 1934, following a 13-year struggle with alcohol addiction, stockbroker Bill Wilson took his last sip of booze. The following year, he founded Alcoholics Anonymous, which aimed to treat alcoholism as a disease and not a moral failing.
- On Dec. 12, 1899, George F. Grant, an African American dentist from Boston, received a U.S. patent for the world's first golf tee. He gave away a few copies of his creation, but was neither a professional marketer or inventor, and made no money on his product before his death.
- On Dec. 13, 1942, Nazi propaganda minister Joseph Goebbels detailed in his journal his contempt for the relatively humane treatment of Jews in Italian-occupied territories, stating that, "The Italians are extremely lax in their treatment of Jews. They protect Italian Jews both in Tunis and in occupied France and won't permit their being drafted for work or compelled to wear the Star of David."
- On Dec. 14, 1863, President Abraham Lincoln announced a grant of amnesty for his sister-in-law, Emilie Todd Helm, the widow of a Confederate general, under the Proclamation of Amnesty and Reconstruction, which allowed former Confederates amnesty if they took an oath to the United States. While Helm received the pardon, though, she never took the required oath.
- On Dec. 15, 1945, Gen. Douglas MacArthur, in his capacity as Supreme Commander of Allied Powers in the Pacific, ended the role of Shintoism as Japan's established religion. Shintoism included the belief that the emperor was divine.
- On Dec. 16, 1998, President Bill Clinton announced his order of air strikes against Iraq, due to the country's refusal to cooperate with U.N. weapons inspectors. Key

- members of Congress did not support the decision, accusing Clinton of using the strikes to direct attention away from his impeachment proceedings.
- On Dec. 17, 2003, "The Lord of the Rings: The Return of the King," the final film in the trilogy based on J.R.R. Tolkien's beloved fantasy novels, debuted in theaters. A tremendous hit, it won 11 Academy Awards, and the trilogy became one of the highest-grossing franchises in cinema history.
- On Dec. 18, 1961, the Tokens' version of "The Lion Sleeps Tonight" became not just a No. 1 song, but a classic – one of the most covered and most successful pop songs ever recorded. Sadly, a sequence of business arrangements that made millions of dollars for a handful of prominent U.S. music publishers yielded just a \$1,000 personal check from folksinger Pete Seeger to Solomon Linda, a South African performer who composed the tune.
- On Dec. 19, 1986, Michael Sergio, an actor and Mets fan who parachuted into Game Six of the 1986 World Series at New York's Shea Stadium, was fined \$500 and sentenced to 100 hours of community service for touching down on the infield with a "Let's Go Mets" banner to the cheering support of more than 55,000 spectators.
- On Dec. 20, 1880, a section of Broadway between Union Square and Madison Square was illuminated by Brush arc lamps, becoming one of the first electrically lighted streets in America and earning the nickname "The Great White Way."
- On Dec. 21, 1913, the first modern crossword puzzle was published in the New York World, part of a set of what the paper called "mental exercises." Clues included "sunk in mud," "the fibre of the gomuti palm," and "such and nothing more."
- On Dec. 22, 2001, the world's first cloned cat, appropriately named CC, or Copy Cat, made her debut in a Texas biomedical lab. She lived for 18 years, possessed all the attributes of a normal cat, and her birth jumpstarted a pet-cloning industry around the world.
- On Dec. 23, 1982, the Missouri Department of Health and the federal Centers for Disease Control told residents of Times Beach, Missouri, that their town was contaminated by the chemical dioxin sprayed on its unpaved roads, with the unfortunate result that the town would have to be demolished. By February, the federal and state governments had spent \$36 million to buy all the town's houses, with the exception of one that the owners refused to sell, and the city was officially disincorporated.
- On Dec. 24, 1801, British inventor Richard Trevithick took seven of his friends for a test ride in his "Puffing Devil," aka "Puffer," the first steam-powered passenger vehicle.

- On Dec. 25, 1971, Garo Yepremian punted a 37-yard field goal in the second overtime of an AFC playoff game, giving the Miami Dolphins a 27-24 victory over the Kansas City Chiefs in the longest game in NFL history: 82 minutes and 40 seconds.
- On Dec. 26, 1946, mobster Benjamin "Bugsy" Siegel opened the Flamingo Hotel in Las Vegas, Nevada. Singer/comedian Jimmy Durante headlined the entertainment, with music by band leader Xavier Cugat. The opening flopped, however, due to bad weather that kept away many Hollywood guests, and as gamblers didn't have rooms at the hotel, they took their winnings and gambled elsewhere. The casino lost \$300,000 in its first week.
- On Dec. 27, 1935, Regina Jonas became the first woman ordained as a rabbi. After many male rabbis fled Germany during World War II, she stepped into the void, though synagogues, at least, would not welcome her. She died in Auschwitz.
- On Dec. 28, 1917, writer/satirist H.L. Mencken published a history of the bathtub, including a claim that bathing was unlawful in Boston between 1845 and 1862. The story, which was a spoof designed to test reader gullibility, was widely shared by newspapers and historians.

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## Driving

From Page 1

found out she was accepted into college. The driver, just 22 years old himself, had been binge drinking all weekend.

"He got four years in prison, and my family got a life sentence," Thomas said.

If you drink any amount of alcohol, do not drive. Instead:

- Designate a sober driver before the party starts;
- Call a sober friend;
- Use public transit or rideshare; and
- Stay put until you are sober.



TxDOT's "Drive Sober. No Regrets" campaign supports a heightened law enforcement period from Dec. 12 through Jan. 1, when more officers will be on alert looking for drunk drivers.

Visit [DriveLikeATexan.com](http://DriveLikeATexan.com) to learn more.

## PUBLIC NOTICE TO ALL INTERESTED PERSONS AND PARTIES:

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on Friday, December 26,  
2025.



SATURDAY  
JAN 10


10:00 AM  
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ENTRY


\$100

REGISTRATION  
DEADLINE

FRIDAY  
DEC 12



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THE DISTRICT OF INNOVATION





# The NFL has some new playoff kids on the block

By Steve Escajeda  
*Special to the Courier*

The National Football League is gearing up for the final month of the regular season.

This is the time when every game means just a little bit more as teams compete for the precious playoff spots that are still available.

Among the teams expected to make the playoffs are many of the usual suspects, the Philadelphia Eagles, the Detroit Lions, the Green Bay Packers and the San Francisco 49ers in the NFC.

The AFC usuals who look like they’ll make it are the Buffalo Bills, the Los Angeles Chargers, and Baltimore Ravens and the Pittsburgh Steelers.

What’s crazy this year is the number of new teams at the top of the standings. And equally as crazy is the few teams who appear to be out of the playoffs.

Anyway, the first real surprise, and probably the biggest surprise of them all, are the New England Patriots.

No, not the Tom Brady-Rob Gronkowski-Tedy Bruschi-Bill Belichick Patriots. These are a bunch of young guns led by former Patriots tough guy linebacker Mike Vrabel.

New England is led by second-year quarterback Drake Maye and a bunch of no-names except for veteran wide receiver Stefon Diggs.

The Patriots are two games ahead of the Bills with just four games left to play, which pretty much guarantees the Patriots a playoff spot.

The Indianapolis Colts are another surprise. The Colts had a losing record last year (8-9) but had been one of the best teams in the league this year at 8-4. Former New York

Giants quarterback Daniel Jones has shined in Indy, looking poised and confident after a lackluster six years with the Giants. Jones had his team heading to the playoffs until the first quarter of last Sunday’s game when he suffered a season ending Achilles injury. The team is now depending on rookie Riley Leonard with the Colts now at 8-5.

Another surprising first-place team is the Denver Broncos.

Remember, the Broncos are in the same division as the Chargers and a little team you may have heard of... the Kansas City Chiefs.

Young quarterback Bo Nix, along with a tough defense, and don’t forget head coach Sean Payton, have the Broncos as a real threat for this year’s big game.

In the NFC, things are going more as expected, except for a couple of teams.

Just as surprising as the Patriots, are the Chicago Bears.

Daaaa Bears have been down for

such a long time that it seems strange just to talk about them being a playoff team. But they are. Their offense is shaky but their defense is solid and that icy weather they love is right around the corner.

They’re not in the playoffs yet, but the Carolina Panthers are definitely in the mix.

Carolina had gone 7-27 the last two years, so the fact that they are anywhere near the playoffs is amazing. Quarterback Bryce Young looks like he’s finally figuring the NFL out, which makes the Panthers a dangerous team.

The next two surprises are raising eyebrows for the opposite reason.

The Washington Commanders were the shocking team a year ago when they made the playoffs for the first time in forever. Not only that, they made it all the way to the NFC title game and just missed the Super Bowl by losing to the Eagles.

This year the Commanders, who were 3-9 last week, have gone through

too many injuries and haven’t played the same kind of inspired ball they did in 2024.

And the award the 2025 season’s biggest surprise – it’s none other than the Chiefs.

Yes, the Chiefs, who have played in five of the last six Super Bowls, and won three, are very much in danger of not even making the playoffs this year.

There isn’t any obvious reason, they might be getting a little older and they aren’t winning all the close games like they used to.

They still have the best quarterback in football – Patrick Mahomes – and he’s having a real good season. But he can’t play all the positions.

So, of the new contenders, do any have a realistic chance of making it to the Super bowl?

The only team I think is for real are the Patriots.

But the Bills and Eagles and Lions and 49ers will have something to say about that.

## Senior moment By Matilda Charles

# Stay calm to foil scammers

This is a new scam, but then it’s what we expect from thieves – yet another way to steal from us. This one involves our innocent-seeming bank debit card, a scammer and a pair of scissors. Here’s how it works:

You’ll get a call from someone claiming to be from your bank who says there is fraudulent activity happening on your account, and they need your help. You’ll be told that you need to act fast before you lose all your money.

The scammers will tell you to cut up your debit card, but not to cut up the little microchip on the card. Put all the pieces, they’ll say, in an envelope and leave it at your door, because a bank “official” is going to rush over to take possession of the evidence. Oh, and there will be one last little detail they’ll need – your bank PIN. By that time, if you’re sufficiently rattled, you’ll willingly tell them the number.

A scammer will quickly show up at your door to grab

the envelope. Armed with that little card chip and your PIN, they can quickly empty your account.

The key is for you to not get rattled, to not let scammers direct your actions.

If you’re suspicious about any call, hang up! It’s OK (even preferable in this case) to be rude! Call the bank or company on their official number and ask if they were trying to contact you about fraudulent activity on your account.

If your debit card (or any card) expires and the bank or company sends you a replacement, cut up the old one. Be sure to cut through the chip, the magnetic strip on the back and the numbers as well as your name. Divide them up in multiple trash bags to keep the pieces apart.

Remember: Stay calm to defeat the scammers.

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- 118 Maui garland
- 119 Bother a lot
- 120 Sprinted faster than
- 121 Prefix with byte or ton
- 122 Org. on a

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- 124 Sneeze catcher
- 125 "You, over there..."
- DOWN**
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- 2 Worker welfare org.
- 3 Rodent-built channel blockers
- 4 "Vexations"
- 5 Composer Erik
- 5 Churlish sort
- 6 Difficult task
- 7 Gridiron gp.
- 8 Prefix with term or week
- 9 Eye, to poets
- 10 Casual shirt
- 11 Tiered temples
- 12 Pale tan
- 13 "Preach it!"
- 14 "Sleeper" co-star Diane
- 15 Old fast jet, for short
- 16 Worker purifying petroleum
- 17 Breath-holding reef explorers, e.g.
- 18 Lose color
- 24 Bowl-shaped frying pan
- 25 Brand of PCs and tablets
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- 32 Hotelier Helmsley
- 33 Otherwise

- 34 Huskies, e.g.
- 36 Expand on
- 37 Swiss \_ (beet variety)
- 38 \_ Lama
- 39 Math game with matchsticks
- 40 "I'm \_ loss"
- 41 Resign from
- 42 Hearth waste
- 43 Succinct
- 45 Just slightly
- 46 Rips into
- 51 Coup d' \_ (rebellion)
- 53 Dot of land in the ocean
- 55 Is given the chance to chime in
- 57 Darth Vader, as a boy
- 60 Hue
- 61 Roadwork goo
- 62 Eds. mark them up
- 63 '80s sitcom
- 66 Took the gold
- 67 Poker stake
- 68 Deteriorate
- 69 Man-goat of myth
- 70 Where aid is urgently required
- 71 While not physically attending
- 72 Ice cream alternatives
- 75 Pen tips
- 76 "Phantom Lady" co-star
- 77 Prolonged attack
- 78 Zapped with a

- stunning weapon
- 80 Camel cousin
- 82 "DMZ" actor Benjamin
- 83 " \_ is an Englishman" ("H.M.S. Pinafore" lyric)
- 86 Kind of 35mm camera
- 88 High coif
- 89 Furniture wood option
- 90 Bridal bio word
- 93 Avian mimics
- 95 Rock guitarist Barrett
- 97 Luau hellos
- 98 Ward for preemies
- 102 Decimal base
- 103 Be too thrifty
- 104 Spaghetti \_ bolognese
- 106 Goat cheese
- 107 Miles away
- 108 Jacob's twin, in the Bible
- 109 Region
- 110 Nest fillers
- 111 Exam for an atty.-to-be
- 113 Vietnamese New Year
- 114 Deteriorate
- 115 Anna of fashion
- 116 Non-earthlings, for short
- 117 " \_ longa, vita brevis"

Answer Page 7

## Super Crossword

1	2	3	4		5	6	7	8	9	10		11	12	13	14	15		16	17	18
19					20							21						22		
23				24							25							26		
27											28						29			
		30					31	32	33	34					35	36				
37	38				39	40							41	42						43
44			45	46								47				48				
49							50				51		52		53					
54							55				56	57			58					
59					60	61				62				63			64			
				65				66	67							68				
69	70	71	72		73								74				75	76	77	78
79				80			81				82	83				84				
85						86			87	88				89	90					
91					92		93		94				95							
96					97				98									99		
	100								101							102	103			
104					105	106	107							108	109				110	111
112											114	115	116	117						
118					119						120						121			
122					123						124						125			



Comix

OUT ON A LIMB By Gary Kopervas



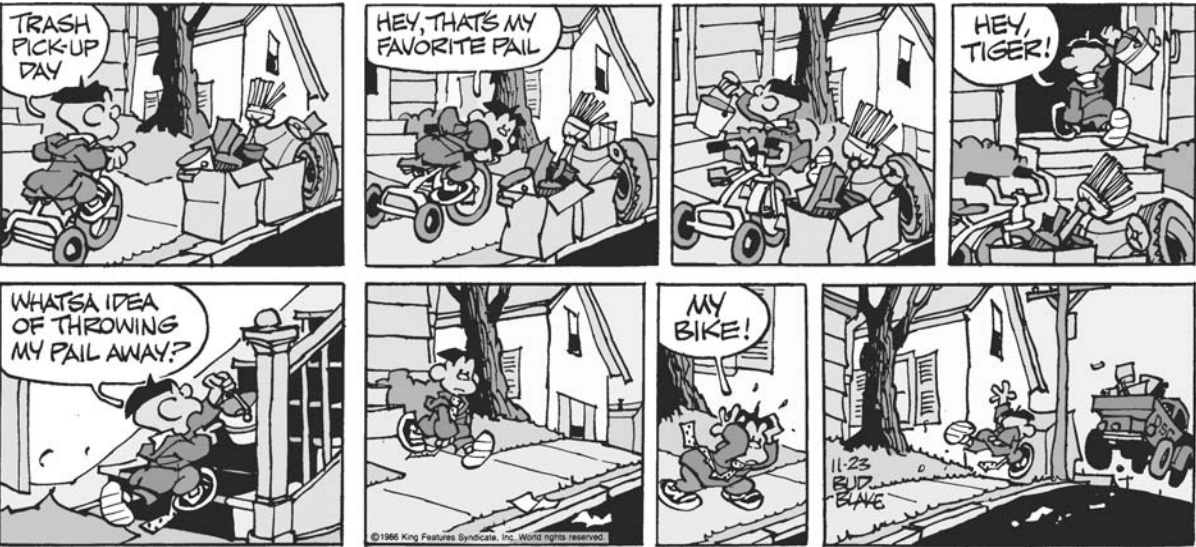
AMBER WAVES By Dave T. Phipps



THE SPATS By Jeff Pickering



TIGER By Bud Blake



Lowry

From Page 2

foreignretaliation, harming U.S. manufacturers that export their products. Finally, when uncertainty is layered on top of this – about when and if tariffs will come into effect and for how long – it’s a truly toxic brew.

There’s a reason that the National Association of Manufacturers – a group that one would expect to support any policy designed to assist manufacturing – doesn’t like the tariffs. It has warned “against broad tariffs that could disrupt supply chains, increase costs and undermine the global competitiveness of our member companies.”

All signs point to its prescience. An Institute for Supply Management survey found that in October, the manufacturing sector contracted for the eighth consecutive month. The respondents to the survey, who are executives of manufacturing firms, frequently mention the tariffs as a cause of distress.

“Tariffs continue to be a large impact to our business,” one respondent in the machinery category explained. “The products we import

are not readily manufactured in the U.S., so attempts to reshore have been unsuccessful. Overall, prices on all products have gone up, some significantly. We are trying to keep up with the wild fluctuations and pass along what costs we can to our customers.”

A survey of Texas businesses by the Dallas Federal Reserve found the same thing. About half of businesses reported negative effects from the tariffs, and only 2% positive. “The effect is most widespread in manufacturing,” the bank noted, “where more than 70% of firms noted negative impacts.”

The Trump administration has backed off tariffs on coffee and various food items, an implicit concession that they were a mistake and led to higher prices. It’s probably too much to ask that the administration acknowledge the deleterious effect on many manufacturers.

These companies will have to endure the economic drag created by a government that wants to help.

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

Casein sensitivity mistaken for lactose intolerance

DEAR DR. ROACH: My wife believed that she had lactose intolerance. After some tests, it was found that she was sensitive to casein rather than lactose. Are there other things in cow’s milk besides lactose and casein that people are sensitive to? – K.A.



There are three main components of cow’s milk that can lead people to having a bad reaction.

Lactose is a type of compound sugar called a “disaccharide,” which includes two separate single sugars (“monosaccharides”) – glucose and galactose – that are connected by a chemical bond. This chemical bond is broken by a specific enzyme called lactase. Deficiency is rare in children but common in adults, especially in people with ancestry from Asia and Africa, as well as Native Americans.

Without the ability to break lactose into its component monosaccharides, a person is likely to get abdominal cramps, gas and diarrhea if they consume lactose. This is because lactose passes into the colon, where colonic bacteria will digest the lactose and produce gas (as well as discomfort). There is a wide variety in the amount that people need to consume to have symptoms, with some people being exquisitely sensitive and others needing a fair amount of it to develop symptoms.

Milk allergies are different. Eighty percent of adults with cow’s milk allergies are women. Cow’s milk allergies are most commonly due to the protein casein (the “curds” of the nursery rhyme) but may also be due to whey protein. People who are allergic to whey protein often have less symptoms if the protein is heated or cooked (for example, milk in baked goods) or if it is changed by digestive enzymes, as in yogurt.

Cow’s milk allergies can have various symptoms. They can be serious and cause anaphylaxis, a life-threatening allergic reaction. But they may also cause symptoms that people might not recognize as a food allergy, such as skin changes, symptoms of the mouth and esophagus, and food- and exercise-associated anaphylaxis. Some people develop eosinophilic esophagitis, which can resemble gastroesophageal reflux disease; this causes heartburn that doesn’t respond to the usual treatments.

This is only a brief overview of a complicated topic that generally requires an expert in allergy and immunology to help diagnose and manage the condition.

DEAR DR. ROACH: I have a “trigger thumb.” My thumb no longer bends at the middle joint and hurts. Exercise doesn’t seem to work. I tried physical therapy, too, without results. – A.M.

Stenosing flexor tenosynovitis, aka trigger finger, is a common issue that I see very frequently in my clinical practice. Symptoms usually start with some “catching” or locking of the fingers while flexing and extending one or more of them. This may progress to discomfort or pain, and it can progress to the point where a finger or thumb is locked in place and needs to be bent by the other hand.

Initial treatment includes rest and anti-inflammatories. Some experts use a splint to reduce the trauma from repetitive movement in the pulley system of the hand. If conservative treatment isn’t effective, most hand experts will try an injection of a steroid into the area of the pulley and tendon. Surgery is an option if two or three injections haven’t solved the problem.

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.





**Moore Texas** by Roger MOORE  
December 1777: A French engineer Louis Andry and his crew begin mapping the Texas-Louisiana coast all the way to Matagorda Bay.

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: S equals F

VXYCO YS SYDUM PEY  
KYAODZJZDH MCOOYXJ  
PGMKYIMGI'M OXY SYYJLQDD  
JZQA: JEZ VXZZI LQH LQKUZXM.

Answer Page 4

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Weekly SUDOKU

1	9	5		4	8	6	2	3
8			3		5			
			9	1				
		1		5	6	3	9	
6		3	2	9	1	4	8	
	4		8		3			5
5	6				9			8
9	1	7					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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Errors in benefits decisions



by Freddy Groves

I'm all in favor of processing veterans benefits claims as fast as possible, but not like this. It appears that a senior VSR (veterans service representative) was authorizing claims decisions at such a fantastic rate that it came to the attention of the VA Office of Inspector General.

In a legitimate decisions process, there are several steps involved in handling a claim, including doing interviews, looking at the issues, checking the evidence and so forth. After all the steps are correctly completed and a decision is made about an award (which includes granting or denying claims), the whole file is sent to a senior VSR to review for accuracy and to authorize.

That senior review, one assumes, involves actually looking at a file, at the data and evidence involved,

and at the claims processor's conclusion. This is where the senior VSR skipped steps – and managed to process 19 times the number of claims as anyone else in the country. He did this by spending less than five minutes on each file, where others across the country averaged 21 minutes per file. When queried about that, directors said it was “not physically possible” to do that many claims and have them be correct. During one period of time, it was learned that the VSR was processing a claim every one to three minutes, meaning that files weren't being opened at all.

OIG reviewed a sample of claims done by that VSR over a six-month period and estimated that 84% of the claims had errors.

And errors, when it comes to disability claims, mean granting claims, denying claims and awarding money. In this case, the errors came to an estimated \$2.2 million in wrong payments.

There are too many questions at this point to know how the situation

will conclude. But we want to know: Is that VSR still employed? Will denied claims automatically be reviewed? And will overpaid benefits need to be repaid?

Veterans deserve better than this.

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• If you are traveling with pets, you know to bring something for them to drink out of. If you have ice in a container, they can lick the ice to stay hydrated, but it doesn't slosh around or spill easily.

• For moister and softer cookies, use honey as a substitute for a third of the sugar in your cookie recipe.

• No apron? String a dishtowel around your waist using a belt, a bungee cord or a simple ribbon.

• “At a party, a cup of red wine spilled on one of my throw pillows. I love the pillow, since it is just the right size and really soft, but I could not get the stain out. So I covered it with a new fabric. I ended up doing all the assorted pillows in the same fabric, and it made a big change in the room. I wish I had done it sooner.” – I.F. in PA

• “Keep venetian blinds from sticking to one another and discourage dust by rubbing them down individually with a sheet of fabric softener. This effect will last at least a month in my experience.” – S.F. in AL

• “Have a headache? Try drinking a couple of glasses of a sports drink. This works for me and my friends. Maybe we just need to be drinking more water, but the sports drinks get us back on track more quickly than medicine most times.” – E.L. in CO

• Bringing some plants indoors? Use Styrofoam packing peanuts in the bottom of pots when planting. They aren't as heavy as rocks, and they do just as good a job. The pots will be easier to move around should you need to move them.

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.

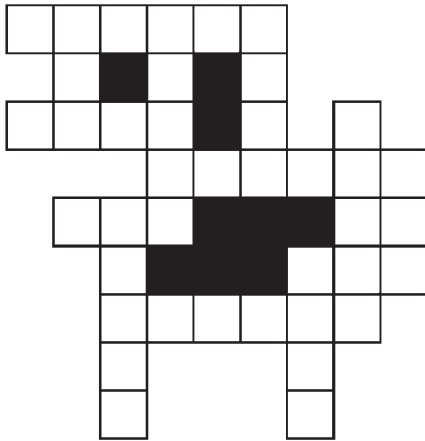
Answer Page 4

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	-		÷		= 5			
+		+		+				
	+		+		= 17			
+		+		×				
	+		+		= 18			
=		=		=				
22		14		20				
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9



IKL  
PLINCE  
PETTM  
♥ARDE  
TRIDGE  
♥TSI  
MIKS  
PYMIL  
♥ADM  
♥RYAPLE  
♥ARELG  
♥TEMI



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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