



GRADING SCHOOL DISTRICTS – The Texas Education Agency (TEA) recently released the latest scores for the rating system that assigns districts and campuses a letter grade based on metrics – such as student performance on standardized tests, graduation rates, and college readiness. The ratings are meant to give parents and community members’ information on how their schools are performing and where they may need improvement.

TEA releases latest school district ratings

By Alfredo Vasquez
Special to the Courier

EL PASO COUNTY – The 2025-2026 school accountability ratings were released recently by the Texas Education Agency (TEA). El Paso County’s nine school districts scores showed that seven districts received a ‘B’ overall rating with two of them earning a ‘C’ grade.

The TEA reports use an A to F accountability ratings system that evaluates public school campuses, districts, and charter schools across three areas Student Achievement, which measures what students know and can do based on STAAR scores, graduation rates, and college/career readiness guidelines; School Progress, which indicates how far students have come or how campuses have done compared to similar comparison groups; and Closing the Achievement Gap, which shows how different student groups are performing.

Together the scores give a snapshot of how well districts are preparing their students for college, a career, or the military.

Schools and districts with low ratings may face additional state monitoring and interventions. Those that receive a D rating or below for several consecutive years could ultimately face a state takeover if improvements aren’t made. To view the complete report on a specific district or campus go online to txschools.gov for more information.

“Every student in Texas deserves access to a great public education. Without an accountability system, Texas would have no consistent and fair way to ensure that,” said Mary Lynn Pruneda, director for education and workforce policy at Texas 2036. “Today’s ratings are a critical signal to Texas parents

See RATINGS, Page 2

Local School Districts’ 2025-2026 Ratings	
Scores based on student achievement, school progress, closing achievement gaps	
Anthony ISD Total enrollment – 681 students Overall rating – B (86/100) Student Achievement – C (79/100) School Progress – B (85/100) Closing the Gaps – B (87/100)	Student Achievement – C (72/100) School Progress – B (81/100) Closing the Gaps – C (78/100)
Canutillo ISD Total enrollment – 5,604 students Overall rating – C (78/100) Student Achievement – C (77/100) School Progress – B (80/100) Closing the Gaps – C (72/100)	San Elizario ISD Total enrollment – 2,776 students Overall rating – C (71/100) Student Achievement – D (68/100) School Progress – C (76/100) Closing the Gaps – F (58/100)
Clint ISD Total enrollment – 9,829 students Overall rating – B (86/100) Student Achievement – C (79/100) School Progress – B (86/100) Closing the Gaps – B (85/100)	Socorro ISD Total enrollment – 45,850 students Overall rating – B (87/100) Student Achievement – B (84/100) School Progress – B (89/100) Closing the Gaps – B (83/100)
El Paso ISD Total enrollment – 46,244 students Overall rating – B (82/100) Student Achievement – C (78/100) School Progress – B (83 / 100) Closing the Gaps – B (81/100)	Tornillo ISD Total enrollment – 694 students Overall rating – B (80/100) Student Achievement – C (73/100) School Progress – B (82/100) Closing the Gaps – C (76/100)
Fabens ISD Total enrollment – 1,812 students Overall rating – B (80/100)	Ysleta ISD Total enrollment – 32,661 students Overall rating – B+ (88/100) Student Achievement – B (84/100) School Progress – B (89/100) Closing the Gaps – B (87/100)

Trump’s fondness for Kim Jong Un sends the wrong signal

It’s hard to believe that Kim Jong Un is really this charming. President Trump touted his fond relationship with the North Korean dictator in a Truth Social post calling for scaling back a long-running annual military exercise with the South Koreans.

“Based on my very good relationship with Kim Jong Un,” Trump wrote, “I am not happy with the fact that the United States has, long ago, agreed to participate in Joint Military Exercises with South Korea.” According to Trump, the exercises “send a signal that is totally inappropriate and hostile, to a Country that, as long as Donald J. Trump has been President, has been unthreatening and respectful.” Then he added that South Korea had recently declined to take a role in the Iran war, clearly irking Trump, as he subsequently explained to reporters

at the White House.

The joint exercises have been a key element of the U.S.-South Korea military alliance for decades. They are meant to ensure that the two countries are prepared in the event of a North Korean assault, and perhaps now have an added importance given the experience North Korea has gained in high-intensity modern warfare by bolstering Russian forces in Ukraine.

Much more important than the practical effect of Trump’s fusillade, though, is the signal it sends, yet again, that he is easily disenchanted with longtime allies whose friendship should be considered a strategic boon to the United States.

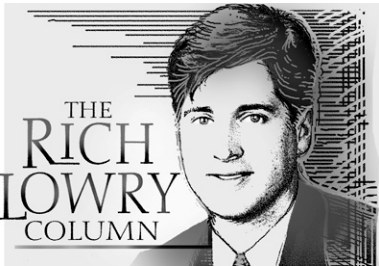
Whether musing about making Canada the 51st state, briefly campaigning to take control

of Greenland, imposing tariffs on friend and foe alike or hammering NATO, Trump has been careless of the goodwill of our allies.

They need us more than we need them, which means they are willing to put up with a lot, but sowing dissension unnecessarily is a foolhardy game at a time of growing international threats.

South Korea has been a treaty ally since 1953, and is a wealthy, technologically advanced democracy that occupies strategically important ground in Northeast Asia. It is obviously both

See LOWRY, Page 7



Food for thought

By Dr. Glenn Mollette

There are different ways to learn

There is more than one way to learn.

The formal method is the classroom. Elementary, junior and senior high school. This is of course the minimum standard for our society today.

Many of us spent years in other classroom studies. Today many people are studying online or via correspondence. There was a day when such a concept seemed ridiculous and even unacceptable but now is common.

Education does not always involve disciplined classroom type studies. Another method

of education is trial and error, or “doing.” We learn by doing. You can read about farming all day but it’s another thing to do farming. Planting, tending and harvesting are learned by actually attempting the process. Anyone would be smart to work with an experienced farmer for a season. Often when we start doing anything different, we will mess up a few times but that’s how we grow and become better. We often fail and learn from the failure. This enables us to try again with a plan to do better next time.

We also learn by seeing. I

saw the ocean on television but never saw the ocean personally until I was 23 years old. I had heard about flying but had never flown until I was 27 years old. I had heard about the Grand Canyon and the Eiffel Tower but never saw either until later in life. Twenty plus years ago my wife and I experienced much of Israel and many of the religious sites that I had read, heard and had talked about for years. If I could have seen these sites when I was much younger it would have enhanced my biblical understanding. You can read about a place but it’s far different when you can see and experience it first-hand.

Another way to learn is by

listening. Many today don’t have the ability to listen because they are always talking. If you will listen to others, you will soon know everything they know plus what you know. If you talk all the time then you won’t learn anything from other people.

Another way to learn is experiencing what you don’t like and then moving forward to something else. You may learn that you don’t want to own your own business. I’ve known people who have lost everything owning their own businesses including all their retirement savings. Or, you may have learned you simply cannot work for someone else and being your own boss is the only way you can survive. Either way is often learned through a few years

of experience.

Regardless of your current status in life, keep in mind that we all have lots to learn. We never know everything. The older we are the more we realize how much we don’t know. Keep reading, doing, listening, trying and keep learning.

Dr. Glenn Mollette is the author of 15 books. He is a graduate of Georgetown College, Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville Kentucky, Lexington Theological Seminary, Lexington, Kentucky, and is the founder of Newburgh Theological Seminary, Newburgh, Indiana. His column is published in over 600 media outlets nationally.

King Crossword

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ACROSS

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4 Out of control

8 Regretted

12 U.S. Navy vessel

13 _ Crunch (breakfast cereal)

14 Singer Guthrie

15 Mel of baseball

16 Manitoba tribe

17 The same

18 Cold-hardy salad veggie

21 Whatever amount

22 Green shade

23 Kick out

26 Send electronically
- 27 Extinct bird

30 Sunrise direction

31 Future flower

32 Border on

33 Tipsy

34 A Bobbsey twin

35 Dish

36 Cat's coat

37 Three, in Rome

38 Young person, metaphorically

45 Mideast airline

46 Bern's river

47 Actress Longoria

48 Lighten

49 Wall St. debuts

50 Profit

51 Times Sq. force

52 Salamander

53 Hosp. areas
- DOWN**

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2 Wine region

3 Envelope abbr.

4 Emphasize

5 Tie the knot

6 Autobahn auto

7 Skateboarder's protection

8 Indian yogurt dish

9 Language of Pakistan

10 Power co. supply

11 Stadium top

19 Diplomacy

20 _Mex cuisine

23 Long, skinny fish

24 _alai

25 Proposal fig.

26 Gaiety

27 CEO's degree,
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28 Chic no more

29 Chowded down

31 Shopper's quest

32 Novelist Waugh

34 Mother Teresa, for one

35 Mass celebrant

36 Mailed a tax return

37 Toss

38 Beheld

39 Stage show

40 Grate

41 Superhero's garment

42 Vegas game

43 Always

44 D.C. baseball team

Answer Page 5

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Homesteader
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Ratings

From Page 1

on how well their student’s school is performing. They tell us if students are able to read and do math, and whether or not they’re prepared for life after high school.”

However, public school leaders worry that the financial challenges currently being faced by many districts will have an impact on their ability to provide the educational services today’s students need to succeed.

As Ysleta ISD Superintendent Xavier De La Torre recently stated, “Any time that you’re facing financial uncertainty, there is a possibility that you don’t have enough revenue to do all of the things that we’ve been doing... If you start removing resources, there’s no question that it will make the job more difficult for the teachers, and when you make the job that is already incredibly difficult more difficult, you’ll see the results in how students perform.”

Lower Valley Water District Notice of Public Hearing on Tax Rate

The LOWER VALLEY WATER DISTRICT will hold a public hearing on a proposed tax rate for the tax year 2026 on September 24, 2026 at 5:15 PM at District Office, 1557 FM 1110, Clint, TX 79836. Your individual taxes may increase at a greater or lesser rate, or even decrease, depending on the tax rate that is adopted and on the change in the taxable value of your property in relation to the change in taxable value of all other property. The change in the taxable value of your property in relation to the change in the taxable value of all other property determines the distribution of the tax burden among all property owners.

Visit [Texas.gov/PropertyTaxes](https://www.texas.gov/PropertyTaxes) to find a link to your local property tax database on which you can easily access information regarding your property taxes, including information about proposed tax rates and scheduled public hearings of each entity that taxes your property.

FOR the proposal: **Henry Trujillo, Rosalinda Vigil, David Estrada and Rodrigo Chavez**

AGAINST the proposal: **David Carrasco**

PRESENT and not voting: **NONE**

ABSENT: **NONE**

The following table compares taxes on an average residence homestead in this taxing unit last year to taxes proposed on the average residence homestead this year.

	Last Year	This Year
Total tax rate (per \$100 value)	\$0.176899/\$100	\$0.185771/\$100
	Adopted	Proposed
Difference in rates per \$100 of value	+ \$0.008872	
Percentage increase / decrease in rates (+/–)	+ 5.02%	
Average residence homestead appraised value	\$ 176,297	\$ 182,727
General homestead exemptions available (excluding 65 years of age or older or disabled person’s exemptions)	\$ 0	\$ 0
Average residence homestead taxable value	\$ 176,297	\$ 182,727
Tax on average residence homestead	\$ 311.87	\$ 339.45
Annual increase / decrease in taxes if proposed tax rate is adopted (+/–)	+ \$ 27.58	
and percentage of increase (+/–)	+ 8.84%	

If the proposed combined debt service, operation and maintenance, and contract tax rate requires or authorizes an election to approve or reduce the tax rate the Board of Directors of LOWER VALLEY WATER DISTRICT proposes to use the tax increase for the purpose of sustaining the debt tax rate while ensuring sufficient funding for both current and future infrastructure projects.

NOTICE OF TAXPAYERS’ RIGHT TO ELECTION TO REDUCE TAX RATE

If the district adopts a combined debt service, operation and maintenance, and contract tax rate that would result in the taxes on the average residence homestead increasing by more than eight percent, the qualified voters of the district by petition may require that an election be held to determine whether to reduce the operation and maintenance tax rate to the voter-approval tax rate under Section 49.23603, Water Code.

The 86th Texas Legislature modified the manner in which the voter-approval tax rate is calculated to limit the rate of growth of property taxes in the state.

Paseo del Este Municipal Utility District No. 11 of El Paso County

Notice of Public Hearing on Tax Rate

The Paseo Del Este Municipal Utility District No. 11 of El Paso County will hold a public hearing on a proposed tax rate for the tax year 2026 on Thursday, September 10, 2026, at 11:30 a.m., in person at the offices of TRE & Associates, LLC, 110 Mesa Park Drive, Suite 200, El Paso, Texas 79912. Your individual taxes may increase at a greater or lesser rate, or even decrease, depending on the tax rate that is adopted and on the change in the taxable value of your property in relation to the change in taxable value of all other property. The change in the taxable value of your property in relation to the change in the taxable value of all other property determines the distribution of the tax burden among all property owners.

Visit [Texas.gov/PropertyTaxes](https://www.texas.gov/PropertyTaxes) to find a link to your local property tax database on which you can easily access information regarding your property taxes, including information about proposed tax rates and scheduled public hearings of each entity that taxes your property.

FOR the proposal: **Directors Jose R. Soto, Cynthia Ruiz, Alexandra Treviño, and Marcela Quintana**

AGAINST the proposal: **NONE**

PRESENT and not voting: **NONE**

ABSENT: **Director Jon Muir**

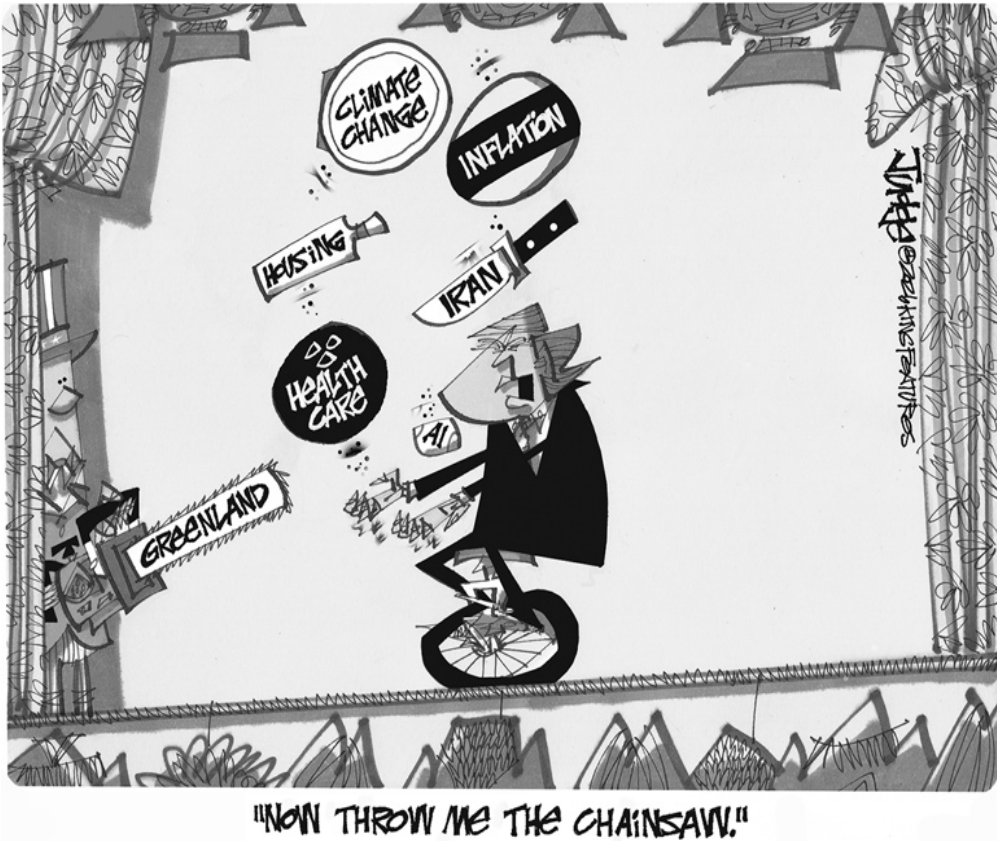
The following table compares taxes on an average residence homestead in this taxing unit last year to taxes proposed on the average residence homestead this year.

	Last Year	This Year
Total tax rate (per \$100 value)	0.7638/\$100	0.7984/\$100
	Adopted	Proposed
Difference in rates per \$100 of value	+ \$ 0.0346	
Percentage increase / decrease in rates (+/–)	+ 0.49%	
Average appraised value	\$ 247,268	\$ 255,449
General exemptions available (excluding 65 years of age or older or disabled person’s exemptions)	\$ –	\$ –
Average residence homestead taxable value	\$ 247,268	\$ 255,449
Tax on average residence homestead	\$ 1,888.63	\$ 2,039.50
Annual increase / decrease in taxes if proposed tax rate is adopted (+/–)	+ \$ 150.87	
and percentage of increase (+/–)	+ 7.99%	

NOTICE OF TAXPAYERS’ RIGHT TO ELECTION TO REDUCE TAX RATE

If the District adopts a combined debt service, operation and maintenance, and contract tax rate that would result in the taxes on the average residence homestead increasing by more than eight percent, the qualified voters of the district by petition may require that an election be held to determine whether to reduce the operation and maintenance tax rate to the voter-approval tax rate under Section 49.23603, Water Code.

The 86th Texas Legislature modified the manner in which the voter-approval tax rate is calculated to limit the rate of growth of property taxes in the state.





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CryptoQuip Answer

When a particular coniferous tree felt a freaky prickly sensation, that was pine-tingling.

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Moments in time

THE HISTORY CHANNEL

- On Aug. 24, 1572, King Charles IX of France, influenced by his mother, Catherine de Medici, ordered the assassination of Huguenot Protestant leaders in Paris, which launched a widespread stream of murders resulting in the deaths of tens of thousands of Huguenots all across the country.
- On Aug. 25, 1875, merchant navy captain Matthew Webb became the first known person to successfully swim the English Channel, in 21 hours and 45 minutes. Hailed as a national hero, a triumphal arch was erected in his honor in his hometown and The Daily Telegraph called him “probably the best-known and most popular man in the world.”
- On Aug. 26, 1873, the first free kindergarten in America was started by Susan Blow in Carondelet, a suburb of St. Louis, Missouri.
- On Aug. 27, 2007, Michael Vick, a star quarterback for the Atlanta Falcons, pleaded guilty to a federal felony charge related to running a dogfighting ring. Four months later, he was sentenced to 23 months in federal prison.
- On Aug. 28, 1963, acclaimed gospel singer Mahalia Jackson helped turn Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.’s speech at the March on Washington into one of American history’s most famous orations when she instructed him to “tell them about the dream, Martin” from behind the podium on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial, prompting him to put aside his notes and improvise the entire next section of it.
- On Aug. 29, 1982, Swedish-born actress and three-time Academy Award winner Ingrid Bergman died of cancer on her 67th birthday. Best known for her role as Ilsa Lund opposite Humphrey Bogart in “Casablanca,” Bergman had stirred up an international scandal three decades earlier by bearing a son with Italian director Roberto Rossellini, to whom she wasn’t then married.
- On Aug. 30, 2023, West Point announced that an archaeologist had taken a second look at an 1828 time capsule, opened in an earlier livestream and believed to be empty, and discovered valuable coins and a medal under sediment at its bottom.

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Strange BUT TRUE

By Lucie Winborne

- Some of the earliest universities in the world were Sumerian scribal schools, which were created soon after 3,500 B.C. and called eduba, which possibly meant “house of tablets.”
- Lint can be used as a highly efficient fire starter.
- NASA defines an astronaut as someone who has flown 50 miles above sea level.
- A rare condition known as “exploding head syndrome” can cause people to hear loud bangs, crashes or explosive noises while drifting to sleep. Researchers believe the phenomenon is generally harmless, if alarming.
- During an attempt to use electrocution to kill the turkey meant for his Christmas dinner party, Benjamin Franklin accidentally shocked himself so badly that all of the blood temporarily drained out of one of his hands.
- Fred and Wilma Flintstone were the first married couple to be portrayed as sharing a bed on television.
- The Rainbow Group, a government-funded organization in Amsterdam, hires alcoholics to clean litter from city streets and includes beer as part of their payment.
- The word Islam is often translated as “peace through submission to God.”
- Some scorpions rub their legs together to “sing” like crickets. However, while crickets aim to attract mates, scorpions make the sound to warn away predators or rivals.
- The longest recorded pickleball rally, held on Oct. 10, 2021, consisted of 16,046 shots and was launched by players Angelo and Ettore Rossetti to help increase awareness of children under age five who die of preventable causes.
- The first known reference to the word baseball was in a 1744 publication “A Little Pretty Pocket-Book,” by children’s publisher John Newberry.

Thought for the Day: “We make a living by what we get, but we make a life by what we give.”
– Winston Churchill

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High school football season kicks off this week

By Steve Escajeda
Special to the Courier

In 2025, the El Paso high school football season featured some of the best talent ever to come out of the Sun City.

Some of the bigger names include Del Valle quarterback Jake Fette going to Arizona State, Frankin running back Ernie Powers signing with Navy, Chapin do-everything running back Daveon Singleton is going to UTEP and El Dorado running back Ryan Estrada is headed to Minnesota.

It used to be that maybe one El Paso player, if any, would sign on with a division-1 school. And that would usually be with either UTEP or NMSU.

But those days are over.

With the 2026 season getting underway this week, it'll be interesting to see which players will standout and possibly sign on with big-time football programs at the end of the year.

And because there are five districts in El Paso and the top four teams in each district advance to the playoffs, every team feels confident because out of these 29 teams, 20 of them advance to the postseason.

District 1-6A (the big boys) features seven teams; Coronado, Eastwood, Eastlake, Franklin, Montwood, Pebble Hills and Socorro.

It appears that Eastwood, Eastlake, Franklin and Pebble Hills are the favorites. Coronado and Montwood could sneak into the fourth-place slot. Socorro is still just working on finishing with a .500 season.

The Troopers look like the best team in the league, returning players like quarterback Kingston Jeffries (23 TD passes), running back Matthew Ramirez (1,100 yds rushing) and wide receiver Jordan Nava (9 TD catches).

Though Eastlake QB Julian Williams and Pebble Hills QB Joe Fernandez

(23 TD passes each) may have a little something to say about that.

District 1-5A Div-1 is made up of Americas, Bel Air, Hanks, Horizon, El Dorado and Parkland.

The top four teams look like El Dorado, Hanks, Americas and Parkland, with Bel Air and Horizon on the outside.

Hanks may have the top quarterback in the city in Jordan Morales (2,577 passing yards in 2025) while Americas may have the best player in Maurice Edwards (707 yds rushing, 775 yds receiving, 13 total TDs).

District 1-5A Div. 2 features Burges, Canutillo, Chapin, Del Valle, El Paso and Jefferson.

The obvious big three here are Canutillo, Chapin and Del Valle. The interesting battle will be for the fourth and final playoff spot between Burges, El Paso and Jefferson.

It's hard to pick a best team from this district, but after 28 years, this will be

coach Scott Brooks' final season as head coach at Canutillo, he's just five wins away from 200, so they will have that added incentive behind them.

District 1-4A Div. 1 has just five teams; Andress, Austin, Riverside, San Elizario and Ysleta.

You've got to feel bad for San Elizario in this grouping. The Eagles were 2-8 last season while the other four teams (all winning records) finished a combined 34-11.

There's a lot of star power in this district starting with Riverside QB Carlos Rojas (already signed with UTEP) and his 25 TD passes and 2,279 rushing yards and 30 more TDs.

Don't forget Andress' trio of QB Jamari Milton (23 TD passes), RB Carmelo Jones (15 rushing TDs) and WR Aavant Clayton (9 TD catches). Ysleta counters with QB Rodrigo Martinez and his 33 TD passes against just 1 interception.

District 1-4A Div. 2 is the most

wide-open division in the city with Bowie, Clint, Fabens, Irvin and Mountain View.

Any of these teams can win it or finish last.

Mountain View junior QB Gerardo Gandara threw for over 1,900 yards last years but had 9 Interceptions to go along with his 9 TDs. His top target is back; receiver Ruben Castro caught 65 passes for 737 yards.

In TAPPS, after a 2-6 season a year ago, the Cathedral Fighting Irish will try to get back to its winning ways this season with local games against San Elizario, Clint, Anthony and Tornillo.

Well, it's finally here, another year of passing and running and tackling and cheerleaders and marching bands and yelling coaches and cheering fans and blaring whistles.

There's nothing like high school football in Texas, and there's nothing like those Friday night lights in El Paso. Get your popcorn ready.

Senior moment By Matilda Charles

Medicare Part D drug plan costs going up

Many of us avoid talking about politics, but now and then an issue comes along that needs to grab our attention.

The one we need to be concerned about now is the Medicare Part D subsidy that will expire at the end of the year and won't be offered in 2027.

It started as the Part D Premium Stabilization Demonstration and was intended for those with stand-alone Part D drug plans. The money, \$3.6 billion this year alone, was given to the drug companies to protect consumers from price spikes in the premiums. It helped 25 million beneficiaries.

And now it's going away.

What does it mean for us? Likely it means higher monthly premiums for our Part D drug plans. The pundits who talk about these things think that our monthly drug plan premiums will only go up \$10 per month. Others say it will be \$20 per month, or maybe even lower than we're paying now. At this point they're only guessing.

Between now and the end of the year we need to learn how to study the various drug plans. Become

familiar with the Medicare drug plan comparison tool at www.medicare.gov/plan-compare.

And, as much as I hate to even contemplate it, we need to figure out how to shave even more from our monthly expenditures. One place to start is with the cost of our drugs.

Look for lower costs for your prescriptions at WellRx (www.wellrx.com), GoodRx (www.goodrx.com), SingleCare (www.singlecare.com) and Community Cares (www.communitycaresrx.com).

Learn how to navigate Trump's drug website (trumprx.gov), although they don't have all drugs listed yet.

Talk to the pharmacist where you get your prescriptions. Many pharmacies use a generic plan to save customers money – and the savings can be significant.

With a little preparation, we can be ready for whatever is coming.

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“OH, GO ON!” ACROSS													
1	Classic candy with a white, gooey center	63	German conjunction	115	Adds to a film, as music	29	Pianist Schnabel	73	Of a wedding woman				
9	“Don’t _ step further!”	64	_ polloi	118	Response to “Are you?”	30	Small-time	74	Lauren of “The Fan”				
12	Subj. for U.S. citizens-to-be	65	Ike’s inits.	121	Boa of South America	32	Beatrix Potter’s “The Tale of Mr. _”	75	Delphi deity				
15	What food is in a food fight	66	Yasser of Palestine	122	Small dance club?	34	Not reflecting light	77	Parade ruiner				
19	First-aid plant	67	Popular crafts website	125	Some chewy candies	35	Display boldly	80	Roman 1,900				
20	Cyber-address	69	Publicity video made by 12th graders?	126	RV hookup org.	36	Units of capacitance	82	Drifting sort				
21	More lethal	72	“Chiquitita” pop group	127	Countertenor	37	Most weepy	83	“Enough, I get it!”				
23	Musical ensemble that likes taunting its audiences?	76	Pupils’ places	128	Linear, briefly	38	Sheriff Wyatt	84	Cabbie’s car				
25	Brainstorming question	78	Galloped	129	Colorant	40	Fast-food pizza chain	85	Hitter Maris, for short				
26	IRS form info	79	Daiquiri liquor	130	Many an heir	41	California mountain	86	Toon pics				
27	War horses	81	Lil Durk or Lil Jon’s music	131	Most strict	42	A Jackson 5 brother	87	Macho sorts				
28	Identify the star of “The Godfather”?	82	Brief, tight shorts	DOWN			43	With a sharp image, briefly	90	Make furious			
30	Taint	85	Marx brother with extreme views?	1	Antislip items	44	Pinkish-red	94	Fine_ wood	95	In the form of a circle		
31	Peripheral	88	Mammal with striped legs	2	Bar brews	46	Prefix with laryngology	96	Photo _	98	Authorize		
33	Pistol, in slang	89	_ Paulo	3	Bank offering	48	Prefix with	103	Dennis of hoops fame	104	“It’s my turn”		
34	Speed of corporate employees?	91	Apple core bit	4	The, in Caen	49	Club in a Barry Manilow hit, for short	105	Remnant of a burned coal	106	Kingdom given to Esau		
39	Alexis I, e.g.	92	Olympic prize	5	Egg capsule	51	_ degree	108	Some skin scars	110	Mexican treat		
41	Move a little	93	Beatles drummer participating in a bout?	6	Middles, in London	53	Longish skirts	111	_ even keel	112	Filly’s mother		
45	Think ahead	97	Tell tall tales	7	Compulsion	54	Prefix with skeleton or spine	113	Jack fish	114	Simplify		
46	Whale locale	99	Big shopping center	8	Speed	58	Lab slide dye	116	Comic thuds	117	“Shoo!”		
47	Two-ply cotton twill fabric?	100	_ From Muskogee”	9	Gets clogged with icky stuff	59	On _ firma	118	Oahu, e.g.	119	Deeds		
50	Outfielder Judge	101	“Puffball” director	10	Celestial ball	61	Hobby with call letters	120	Irrelevant	123	Tic-tac-toe victory		
52	French for “weapon”	102	Stringed instrument played by people in jail?	11	Without help	62	Into a state of conflict	124	Swimmer Thorpe				
55	_la-la	106	Water, in Vichy	12	Certain Dutch cheese	66	Golfer Palmer, informally						
56	Sacred vows	107	_ salts (bath supply)	13	Dakar’s land	68	Rebel like Abbie Hoffman or Jerry Rubin						
57	Horse with color patches on one-fourth of its body?	109	Pewter metal	14	Uncover	70	Moniker of a loch monster						
60	Great delight	110	Moola earned by	15	“Paper Lion” star Alan	71	Paw parts						
				16	Outward appearance								
				17	Honey wine								
				18	Roughly								
				22	Inside dope								
				24	Former Laker								

Answer Page 4

Super Crossword																					
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8		9	10	11		12	13	14		15	16	17	18	
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121										122	123						124				
125										126				127							
128					129					130				131							

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

threatened by and a bulwark against potential North Korean adventurism.

Pete Hegseth visited South Korea last year and said, “Our alliance is stronger than ever before, 72 years strong.” He described the inspiring sight of U.S. and South Korean soldiers standing “shoulder to shoulder working together.” South Korea has been committed to increasing its defense spending to 3.5% of GDP. In light of this, Hegseth subsequently averred, “Model allies that step up, like Israel, South Korea, Poland ... will receive our special favor.”

Such assurances by administration officials are always subject to change, depending on Trump’s animosities at any given time. It’s certainly true that South Korea owes its existence to us. We fought to preserve its independence at a great cost in blood and treasure during the Korean War, and we have nearly 30,000 troops on the peninsula to deter North Korea from assaulting the South again. Seoul has lent support to recent U.S. military operations, typically in

noncombat roles, but it’s understandable that it wouldn’t be enthused about taking part in an Iran war that hasn’t gone as planned and that has no clear endgame.

As for the North, it isn’t our friend. It is firmly within the China-Russia axis, and has been developing its nuclear and missile arsenal apace. There is no reason to believe that any blandishments from Trump will change its behavior, and Kim has been clear that the U.S. needs to abandon its “obsession” with denuclearization.

What we most need from South Korea is for it to be as strong as possible to deter North Korea, and we shouldn’t be lending any credence to its claim that U.S.-South Korean exercises are provocations, or sowing doubt about our commitment to allies.

Such diplomatic episodes, though, are an inherent part of Trump’s governance. To paraphrase the Roman writer Publilius Syrus: Prosperity makes friends, adversity tries them, and Trump distresses them – unnecessarily.

Rich Lowry is editor of the National Review. ©2026 by King Features Synd., Inc.

Lactose intolerance, issues, tend to increase with age

DEAR DR. ROACH: I’m a 74-year-old woman who’s quite healthy (I am active and don’t take any medications), but I have a history of irritable bowel syndrome (IBS-C). Recently, I experienced bad-smelling gas, leg cramps, and finger and toe spasms. I quit eating milk products, and my symptoms almost immediately disappeared. My question is: Do food intolerances increase with age? Also, can leg cramps and digit spasms be attributed to a food intolerance? – H.W.



The most likely diagnosis is lactose intolerance. This is caused by a deficiency in the enzyme lactase, which is used to split milk sugar into its constituent simple sugars. This condition is rare in childhood and does increase with age.

I’ve seen people with lactose deficiencies who complain about abdominal cramps, but digit spasms and leg cramps aren’t usually described with this deficiency. I’ve seen these symptoms in people with severe celiac disease due to low calcium levels.

Since your symptoms disappeared when stopping milk products, it seems clear that these are, indeed, symptoms of a lactase deficiency, but they’re unusual enough that they aren’t well-described.

DEAR DR. ROACH: My husband has had neck pain for over two years. He has been treated with ablation of the neck nerves but hasn’t experienced any significant lessening of the pain. He’s been on oxycodone for at least a year. Nothing seems to be working on lessening his pain on a continuous basis. What’s your opinion on fentanyl patches? He’s 88 and very weak, but he doesn’t have any major physical problems. – D.S.

Fentanyl is a very potent synthetic opiate, and the patch allows continuous absorption through the skin. It’s useful for people who need strong opiates, such as those with cancer. Unfortunately, opiates aren’t always a good choice for muscular or skeletal pain, which is likely the cause of your husband’s neck pain. If oxycodone isn’t working well, fentanyl probably won’t either. The body can quickly get used to high doses of any opiate.

Without knowing a lot more about his neck pain, I can’t make any definitive recommendations. Pain management experts will often try other types of injections (such as epidural steroids), along with different types of medications. Medicines that work on the nerve pain cells (such as gabapentin or duloxetine) can be of benefit in many people. A pain management expert is an essential consultant for your husband.

DEAR DR. ROACH: I have slowed gastric motility and would like to draw your attention to a potentially dangerous reply that you gave in a recent column. There was an 85-year-old with a sluggish gut who asked about fiber supplements. You said that it was good to take fiber supplements for diarrhea and constipation, as well as cholesterol reduction. This is usually sound advice; however, in people with gastric motility issues, fiber supplements can be dangerous. For people with slowed gastric emptying, fiber can increase the risk of bezoars, which can be life-threatening. A person with slowed gastric motility is supposed to limit their fiber intake to no more than 2-3 grams per meal to prevent solid masses from forming in the gut. This may be what they were referring to when they said they heard that fiber supplements mess up your gut. – A.Y.

I appreciate your writing. You’re right that in the case of gastroparesis, too much fiber can lead to a bezoar – a nondigestible stone-like mass that can block the gut. People with diagnosed transit problems of the gut should seek specific advice about treatment from their gastroenterologist prior to using fiber supplementation.

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. ©2026 North America Synd., Inc. All Rights Reserved.



Moore Texas by Roger MOORE
August 24, 1917: Gov. Jim Ferguson is impeached. His fatal mistake – vetoing UT funding. It angered its powerful alumni.

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: W equals P

RXSO B WBIYDHFABI
HMODZSIMFQ YISS ZSAY B
ZISBNV WIDHNAV QSOQBYDMO,
YXBY RBQ WDOS-YDOCADOC.

Answer Page 4

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The VA OIG catches more scammers



by Freddy Groves

Once again, the VA Office of Inspector General has nailed fraudsters who are determined to steal benefits and cash from the VA.

A pair of scammers, one of them incarcerated, cooked up a scheme to defraud seriously ill veterans. Specifically, the jailbird would call VA medical centers and impersonate VA employees to get info on veterans, including names and phone numbers. Then, with his scammer pal, they would call a veteran to get banking and credit card info for the alleged purpose of depositing Covid stimulus checks. Armed with that info, the jailbird was able to pull funds into his commissary and phone accounts. The pair was nailed on 26 counts of fraud and had harmed 60 veterans. They managed to pull the scam on over 30 VA medical clinics. The conspiracy to commit wire

fraud and wire fraud are both good for 20 years in prison, with identity theft adding two more years each.

Then there was the non-veteran who applied for benefits and claimed he had both the Purple Heart and a Bronze Star. While there is no central location with a list of all those who've received a Purple Heart for VA employees to check, once an application is made for benefits, the facts would show up on a DD-214. This scam is getting the fraudster four years in prison.

Then there was the Department of Homeland Security employee who faked an application to get a VA-backed mortgage. This was a veteran who should have known better. The fake documents said he had a 100% disability rating and received monthly disability benefits. Both lies. There was no disability rating and no monthly benefit. Not knowing the docs were faked, the lender issued a mortgage for \$478,000 with the VA giving loan guarantee backing. This scheme could

be good for 30 years in prison.

I hate to think of the money that would be lost and the number of veterans defrauded if we didn't have the VA OIG to investigate these things.

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• Decorative lights are not just for Christmas these days. I see them hanging along the eaves of back porches and decorating the landscape to light up garden parties at dusk. Here's a great idea for a hanging lantern, using lights I picked up at my local thrift shop: I basically piled strings of lights in the sections of a three-tier wire hanging basket. I connected them together, and when they are plugged in, they look magical.

• When your bananas hit your desired level of ripeness, put them in the refrigerator. The skin will darken, but the inside will remain white, allowing you to wait a day or two to eat it.

• One way to remove fuzz from between the keys of your keyboard is with a self-stick note. Peel off and run the sticky side of the note between the keys for a quick clean.

• Love books? Remember that bookshelves need to be dusted regularly in order to keep books in good shape. They also need air to circulate, so be sure your shelves are not too crowded.

• "Great gifts and goodies for nursing home resident: note cards with stamped envelopes, hand and face lotion, small blankets, news from home, large-print books, flowers in a pretty vase, a large clock with an easy-to-read face, magazine subscriptions, puzzle books, shampoos and conditioners, photo books and, perhaps most importantly, YOU." – M.W. in Florida

Send your tips to Now Here's a Tip, 628 Virginia Drive, Orlando, FL 32803. ©2026 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.

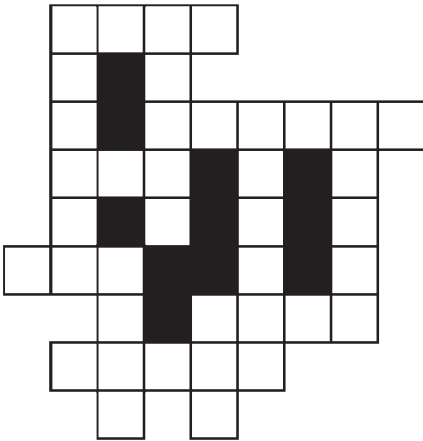
Answer Page 4

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	+		÷		= 13			
+		+		+				
	+		÷		= 3			
+		÷		-				
	-		×		= 6			
=		=		=				
23		2		3				
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9



GIW
WEPORD
AILEK
PEKL
WULOAT
♥ADW
♥AEGP
DALPI
♥RKI
KADLET
ROLGW
♥ERWE



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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Weekly SUDOKU

	4					8	2	
1	9	8				3		
2			1			4		
4				5		9		
		7			4		3	
	3	9				7		
6					9	5	8	
	1		2	4			7	
					6			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
♦♦♦ HOO BOY!

Answer Page 4

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