

Boeing's layoffs impact Arizona's Mesa plant amid nationwide cuts

ARIZONA — Boeing has announced a significant reduction in its workforce, planning to lay off 17,000 employees—approximately 10% of its global staff—as part of a massive cost-cutting drive. The aerospace giant's decision affects facilities across the United States, including a substantial impact on its plant in Mesa, Arizona.

The Mesa facility, renowned for producing the AH-64 Apache attack helicopter for the U.S. Army and international customers, is experiencing layoffs that reflect Boeing's broader strategy to realign its workforce amid financial and regulatory challenges. According to official notices filed with Arizona state agencies, 184 employees at the Mesa plant have been notified of their impending layoffs.

The reductions at the Mesa facility are part of Boeing's nationwide effort to streamline operations across its commercial airplanes, defense, and global services divisions. While the company has not indicated plans

to cease operations in Mesa, the layoffs represent a significant workforce reduction that could impact production capacity and local economic stability.

Boeing's layoffs come in the wake of ongoing financial difficulties and heightened regulatory scrutiny. The company's troubles began after two fatal crashes of its 737 MAX jetliners in 2018 and 2019, which resulted in the deaths of 346 people. These incidents led to a global grounding of the 737 MAX fleet and intense investigations into Boeing's safety practices and corporate governance.

In January 2024, Boeing faced additional setbacks when a panel blew off the fuselage of an Alaska Airlines plane, raising further concerns about manufacturing quality and aircraft safety. The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) subsequently imposed production limits on Boeing, capping the production of the 737 MAX at 38 planes per month—a threshold the company

See Boeing layoffs, page 4

Rancho Santa Fe Parkway project begins construction in Kingman

KINGMAN — The City of Kingman has taken a significant step in addressing its transportation needs with the groundbreaking of the Rancho Santa Fe Parkway Traffic Interchange on December 2, 2024. The project, managed by the Arizona Department of Transportation (ADOT), will enhance connectivity within the region and prepare Kingman for integration with the future Interstate 11 (I-11) corridor.

Kingman Mayor Ken Watkins called the groundbreaking “the result of years of dedication and collaboration from countless community leaders and stake-

holders.” He emphasized the project's importance in enhancing connectivity and creating economic opportunities for the city's future.

The interchange will link Kingman's Municipal Airport, Industrial Park, and Interstate 40, providing critical infrastructure to support the area's growing role as a transportation hub. The \$40 million project, awarded to Pulice Construction, Inc. in September, is expected to be completed by the summer of 2026.

The Rancho Santa Fe Parkway
See Rancho Santa Fe, page 8

Local property owners compensated in Bullhead City sewer overflow settlement

BULLHEAD CITY — Bullhead City has agreed to a \$90,000 settlement with local property owners Blaise and Carla Falche over a sewer system malfunction that contaminated their waterfront property in 2022. The settlement, pending formal approval by the city council, resolves allegations of negligence and

brings attention to the city's ongoing infrastructure challenges.

The lawsuit, filed in early 2023, accused the city of failing to adequately maintain and repair its sewer system, resulting in multiple overflows that flooded the Falches' property on Mosier Avenue. The property, a one-acre parcel with short-term

rental units and Colorado River access, was significantly damaged by raw sewage. The flooding disrupted the property's use, caused environmental harm, and led to substantial cleanup and remediation costs.

City officials disputed some claims, citing debris on the private
See Sewer overflow, page 8



Holiday Magic Lights Up Mohave Community College: Families across Mohave County are invited to celebrate the season with MCC Shines, an annual tradition bringing joy to all four campuses. Featuring festive activities like ornament-making, caroling, cultural performances, and live music, along with sweet treats and a visit from Santa Claus, this free event offers something for everyone. Gather your loved ones and join the community for a night of holiday spirit and cheer. See the full story on page 21.

Arizona set to resume executions after two-year pause, reigniting death penalty debate

ARIZONA — After a two-year hiatus, Arizona is preparing to resume executions of death row inmates, a decision that has rekindled the longstanding debate over capital punishment in the state. Attorney General Kris Mayes announced plans to seek an execution warrant for Aaron Brian Gunches, convicted of the 2002 murder of Ted Price, his girlfriend's ex-husband.

The pause on executions be-

gan in early 2023 when Governor Katie Hobbs ordered a comprehensive review of Arizona's death penalty procedures. The review aimed to address concerns about the state's execution protocols, including issues with lethal injection drugs, the qualifications of execution personnel, and previous instances of problematic executions. Notably, in 2014, the execution of Joseph Wood drew national attention when it took nearly two

hours and required 15 doses of a two-drug combination, leading to claims of a botched procedure.

Governor Hobbs initially appointed retired U.S. Magistrate Judge David Duncan to conduct an independent review. However, the process faced challenges and was ultimately halted when Hobbs dismissed Duncan, citing a lack of confidence in his ability to fulfill the objectives of the ex-

See Death penalty, page 6

MCC Kingman Campus honor society inducts over 30 students

MOHAVE COUNTY – Mohave Community College Phi Theta Kappa Honor Society – Alpha Chi Omega chapter on the Kingman Campus hosted its induction ceremony Thursday for new members for Fall 2024.

Thirty-one new PTK members were inducted: Trevor Agee, Sherry Alvarado, Marcos Anaya, Dani Asplin, Aaron Barnes, Stephanie Bowen, Jamie Bower, David Burgin, Teresa Chen, Erilyn Dean, Tegi Elovirta, Maria Espar-

za, Candida Fernandez, Jennifer Gunn, Tiffany Hendrick, Kaitlyn Holmes, Stephen Krueger, Joshua Ladson, Crystal Longwell, Bailey Mack, Breanne McDaniel, Attica McEwen, Emilie Newcomb, Adrian Rosales Alejandro, Josh-

ua Ryan, Summer Sauer, William Schleeter, Jamil Spears, Robert Strawn, Tayla Taylor and Amanda Thurman.

Students are invited to join Phi Theta Kappa if they have achieved a cumulative 3.5 GPA and earned 12 credit hours, or if they are in a certificate program and have earned 6 credit hours.

MCC President Dr. Stacy

Public Relations, Lisa Sanchez.

“I hope these new members were inspired tonight to make the leap of becoming active members within PTK – to bring fresh ideas, service, vigor, and to help build and establish community within our chapter,” said John Hansen, PTK advisor.

Before the newly minted members took the official oath, an

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Klippenstein officially opened the ceremony by welcoming all of the new members and guests. He spoke about how meaningful PTK is, and how all of the services and outreach the club does in the local community is so impactful.

Other MCC administration in attendance included Dr. Tim Culver, Executive Vice President; Dr. Lucinda Leugers, Dean of General and Transfer Education; and Dr. Tonya Jackson, Associate Dean of Instruction on the Kingman Campus.

Shawn Bristle, Interim Dean of Student and Community Engagement & Future Initiatives at MCC, was the guest speaker and told the new inductees to practice healthy skepticism and to always embrace the idea of helping others. He also spoke about how everyone has a significant journey ahead and that he hopes they all find meaning and purpose along the way.

Advisors are John Hansen, English faculty, and Janice Tubbs, institutional research. Officers include President, Robert Gale; Vice President of Leadership, Heather Sprague; Vice President of Service, Elizabeth Benson; Vice President of Scholarship, Debbie McKee; and Vice President of

overview of the PTK symbol was explained.

“Across the slab you will observe a black band. It represents the three ideals which bind us together, and the cultural self-control which is the necessary foundation for true wisdom, aspiration and purity,” Gale said.

After the inductees signed the record book, received a white rose, and a candle, advisor Janice Tubbs closed the ceremony.

“All of you worked so hard to get to this point. But always remember to be grateful and appreciative of the friends and family that encouraged, supported, and sacrificed on your behalf,” she said.

Phi Theta Kappa’s mission is to recognize and encourage scholarships among two-year college students by providing an opportunity for leadership, service and development.

To learn more about MCC, visit Mohave.edu. Registration for the 2025 spring and summer semesters is now open. Spring semester starts January 13 and the summer semester begins June 2. New and returning students are encouraged to get started by visiting Mohave.edu/Admission.

—MCC Newsroom

Arizona Attorney General and DOJ propose remedies to end Google's monopoly

ARIZONA — Attorney General Kris Mayes, alongside the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) and a coalition of state attorneys general, has proposed sweeping remedies to dismantle Google's alleged monopoly over the online search market. This bipartisan effort seeks to restore competition in the digital marketplace, giving consumers greater choice and ensuring fair business practices.

"This bipartisan effort reflects a shared commitment to restoring fair competition in the digital marketplace," said Attorney General Mayes. "By ending Google's illegal monopoly, we can ensure consumers have real choices and that businesses can compete on a level playing field."

The antitrust case dates back to 2020 when a coalition of 38 state attorneys general filed a lawsuit accusing Google of using anticompet-

itive contracts to dominate general search services and online advertising. This lawsuit paralleled a federal antitrust case filed by the DOJ the same year. Both cases alleged that Google's practices harmed competition, stifled innovation, and ultimately harmed consumers and advertisers.

In August 2024, U.S. District Judge Amit Mehta ruled that Google had violated federal antitrust laws by maintaining its dominance in search and search advertising through unlawful means. This decision marked a significant victory for regulators and set the stage for the current remedies aimed at breaking Google's market grip.

The proposed remedies target the structural and behavioral practices that have allegedly allowed Google to dominate the search market. Key measures include:

1. Ending Default Agreements

Google would be barred from securing exclusive distribution contracts that make its search engine the default on devices, browsers, or platforms. This aims to provide rival search engines an opportunity to compete on equal footing.

2. Divestiture of Chrome Browser

Google would be required to divest its Chrome browser, which accounts for significant internet traffic and serves as a gateway for its search engine dominance. This separation is intended to prevent Chrome from being used to reinforce Google's search and advertising monopolies.

3. Divestiture of Android

If Google fails to comply with the proposed remedies or if the remedies prove ineffective, regulators may require Google to separate Android from its other business lines to reduce market concentration.

See Google, page 20

The tipping point: how gratuity culture is reshaping America's service economy

NATION — Tipping in the United States, a long-standing custom rooted in the service industry, has undergone a remarkable transformation. Once reserved for restaurant servers, bartenders, and select service professionals, tipping is now expected in an array of contexts. From gas station attendants to coffee shop baristas and even warehouse packers for online orders, the scope of tipping has expanded dramatically. This shift has ignited debates about fairness, economic implications, and the sustainability of a system that increasingly places the burden of compensation on consumers.

The rise in tipping expectations is evident in the percentages suggested by payment systems and service providers. While tipping 15% at restaurants was once considered the norm, consumers are now often prompted to leave gratuities of 20%, 25%, or even 30%. In some cases, these expectations extend to self-service kiosks and minimal-service interactions, fueling widespread frustration among

customers who feel pressured to tip in situations they never encountered before.

Tipping became ingrained in the U.S. during the late 19th century, particularly in the hospitality industry, where workers earned low wages and relied on gratuities to supplement their income. Over time, tipping norms solidified, and by the 20th century, leaving 10-15% for restaurant service was standard practice. This system, while controversial, became a fixture of American culture.

In contrast to the United States, tipping norms in Europe are generally more restrained and structured. In many countries, such as France and Italy, service charges are often included in the bill, making additional tipping optional and typically modest—rounding up the bill or leaving small change is common. In countries like the United Kingdom, Spain, and Greece, tipping around 10-15% is customary but not obligatory. This system reflects a fundamental difference: European service workers are usually paid

higher base wages, reducing their reliance on gratuities and placing less pressure on customers to supplement incomes through tipping.

In recent years, however, the boundaries of tipping have expanded. Digital payment systems, often equipped with pre-set tipping suggestions, have contributed to this trend. Whether buying a cup of coffee, picking up a takeout order, or receiving a package, consumers are increasingly asked to leave tips. These prompts often suggest amounts well above historical norms, subtly encouraging customers to tip generously, even in situations where they may not have tipped at all a decade ago.

This evolution is not without precedent. During the COVID-19 pandemic, tipping surged as a gesture of appreciation for frontline workers risking their health to serve the public. Restaurants and service industries also implemented higher gratuities or added service charges to recover from pandemic-induced losses. As businesses reopened,

See Tipping point, page 4



Amber Tacey, a longtime Mohave Community College staff member and facilitator for the creative Ovis Club, has been published by Hiraeth Publishing for her drabble "Weeding," showcasing her passion for storytelling and libraries as reservoirs of knowledge, marking her first publication outside MCC's art and literature journal.



MacKenzie Dexter, Meghan Knox, and Kay Lynn Trybus (pictured, l-r) were recognized by President Stacy Klippenstein and the Cabinet for their contributions to enhancing Corporate & Community Education at Mohave Community College, alongside Helen Garcia, Enj Yangco, Eleanore Blair (honored via Zoom), and Adam Romano, Tracy Wensel, and Tricia Hanks (unable to attend).



Nicole Bratley, a Mohave County leader with a background in community development, has been appointed to the Mohave Community College Board of Governors, where she will focus on expanding workforce education, enhancing infrastructure, and fostering economic growth, succeeding Candida Hunter in January 2025.

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Tipping point

tipping habits became more entrenched, with many consumers continuing to tip more frequently and generously than before.

The expansion of tipping culture has not been universally embraced. Surveys indicate that many Americans are uneasy with the growing prevalence of tipping requests. According to Pew Research Center, 72% of U.S. adults believe tipping is expected in more places today than five years ago, but only 34% feel confident about when and how much to tip. This uncertainty has led to what some call "tipping fatigue," with consumers expressing frustration at being asked to tip for services they perceive as part of a provider's regular duties.

Younger generations, particularly Gen Z, are leading the backlash. Many view tipping as a tool used by employers to shift the financial burden of fair wages onto customers. Social media is rife with stories of tipping requests that some find absurd, such as prompts at self-checkout machines or for minimal interactions, like handing over a coffee cup. Critics argue that these practices undermine the original intent of tipping: to reward exceptional service.

Others contend that tipping

Continued from Page 3



has become a source of social pressure. Digital payment systems, which display tipping options prominently, often make it awkward for customers to decline. This phenomenon, dubbed "guilt tipping," leaves many feeling compelled to tip even when they believe it is unnecessary.

At the heart of the tipping debate is the issue of worker compensation. In many states, tipped workers can be paid below the standard minimum wage, with the expectation that tips will make up the difference. For these workers, tips are not merely a bonus but a crucial part of their income. According to industry data, service employees in restaurants and bars earn nearly 60% of their wages from tips.

Proponents of tipping argue that the system benefits both work-

ers and customers. For workers, gratuities provide an incentive to deliver excellent service. For customers, tipping allows them to reward good performance and maintain a sense of control over their experience.

Critics, however, see tipping as an outdated practice that exacerbates income inequality. They argue that tipping enables businesses to keep wages low while shifting the responsibility for fair pay onto consumers. Some suggest that eliminating tipping in favor of higher base wages would provide greater income stability for workers.

Businesses experimenting with alternative models have seen mixed results. Restaurateur Danny Meyer, for example, attempted to eliminate tipping at his New York

See Tipping point, page 16

Boeing layoffs *Continued from Page 1*

has struggled to meet.

Compounding Boeing's challenges was a nearly two-month strike by its unionized machinists, which began in August 2024. The strike involved 33,000 workers across various facilities, including those connected to the Mesa plant. Workers protested for better wages, job security, and working conditions.

The strike ended earlier this month after the International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers (IAMAW) voted to accept Boeing's fourth contract offer, which included a 38% wage increase over four years and a \$12,000 ratification bonus for each worker. While the resolution allowed production to resume, the strike disrupted Boeing's operations and added to financial strains.

Boeing CEO David Calhoun addressed the layoffs during an October call with analysts, stating that the reductions were necessary due to overstaffing and not solely because of the strike. "We must reset our workforce levels to align with our financial reality," Calhoun said. "There is much work ahead to return to the excellence that made Boeing an iconic company."

Calhoun emphasized the need for Boeing to focus on quality workmanship, safety, and rebuilding trust with customers, regulators, and employees. He acknowledged the challenges ahead in revamping the supply chain and meeting production targets in a constrained environment.

The layoffs at the Mesa facility have raised concerns about the economic impact on the local community. Boeing is one of the largest employers in the region, and its presence has been a cornerstone of Arizona's aerospace and defense industry. The job cuts are expected to have ripple effects on the local economy, affecting not only the displaced workers and their families but also suppliers, contractors, and businesses that rely on Boeing's operations.

State and local officials are mobilizing resources to support

affected workers. The Arizona Commerce Authority has announced plans to coordinate with workforce development agencies to provide job placement services, retraining programs, and counseling. Educational institutions in the area are exploring opportunities to offer certification programs and skills training to help workers transition to new roles within the aerospace sector or other growing industries in the state.

Mesa Mayor John Giles expressed his concern over the layoffs but remained hopeful about the city's economic resilience. "Boeing has been a vital part of our community for decades," Giles said. "We are committed to supporting the affected employees and will work closely with state and federal partners to mitigate the impact on our local economy."

The Society of Professional Engineering Employees in Aerospace (SPEEA), representing engineers and technical workers at Boeing, reported that over 400 of its members nationwide received layoff notices, including employees at the Mesa plant. Affected workers will remain on the payroll through mid-January 2025.

Ray Goforth, SPEEA's executive director, expressed disappointment over the layoffs. "Our members have contributed significantly to Boeing's success," Goforth said. "We understand the company's need to adjust to market conditions, but we are concerned about the loss of talent and the impact on our communities."

Laid-off employees are eligible for severance packages, which typically include one week of pay for every year of service. Boeing is also providing career transition services and subsidized health care benefits for up to three months. The company stated that it is committed to treating all employees with respect and dignity during the transition.

As Boeing navigates through these challenges, the company's focus is on stabi-

See Boeing layoffs 2, page 6



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Harris campaign a testament to the toxicity of woke politics

By Rich Lowry

We've passed the peak of woke politics in the U.S., and the Harris for president campaign is the leading indicator. Of all the things that Kamala Harris wants you to know about her -- that she grew up in a middle-class family, that she's not Joe Biden, that she has a "to-do list" for the American people -- perhaps foremost among them is that she's not woke.

She doesn't have any rote line asserting this, but achieving distance from the fashionable left-wing politics that defined the Trump years and their immediate aftermath motivates much of what she says and does.

That Harris now feels compelled to disavow so many of the ideas that she once embraced is a powerful testament to their political toxicity.

An idea has won or lost in American politics when both parties favor or oppose it, or simply don't want to fight over it anymore. Ronald Reagan's economics truly prevailed when the Democratic Party, via Bill Clin-

ton in the early 1990s, accepted his basic approach. Gay marriage won politically when Republicans decided to stop talking about the issue.

By this standard, woke attitudes and policies are in marked decline, and Kamala Harris is Exhibit A. Except for her abortion radicalism, she's turned her back on much of what she once professed to believe or sympathize with.

Defund the police?

Absolutely not.

Abolish ICE? No way.

DEI? Haven't heard of it.

Medicare for All? That was a long time ago.

The Green New Deal? Let's not get carried away.

She has backed off her extravagant positions on the trans issue and the border. She now insists that rather than pushing the envelope on either, she simply wants to follow the law. You could be forgiven for thinking the only pronouns she knows are she/her and he/him.

See Woke politics, page 7

Working conditions under scrutiny

Dear Editor,

As a concerned citizen of the global toy-receiving community, I feel compelled to expose the questionable labor practices at the world's most famous toy manufacturer: Santa's Workshop. While we've been distracted by twinkling lights and jingling bells, a scandal of North Pole proportions has been brewing beneath our frost-covered noses.

For centuries, we've romanticized the image of happy elves

singing while they work, but let's examine the facts. These "cheerful helpers" work in sub-zero temperatures, face mandatory overtime starting in September, and receive compensation in the form of candy canes and hot chocolate. Is this the 19th century? Even the Industrial Revolution would blush at such practices. The workshop's "competitive benefits package" consists primarily of magical health insurance that covers only tinsel-related injuries and chronic

carol-induced hearing loss.

The workplace safety standards are abysmal. Elves routinely handle dangerous materials like glitter without proper PPE (Pointy-ear Protective Equipment). The workshop's "anti-gravity" toy testing department has zero fall protection, and the rainbow slide to the packaging department hasn't passed inspection since 1823. And don't get me started on the reindeer stable

See Working conditions, page 7

Homeless programs and services

By Freddy Groves

Back in March, the Department of Veterans Affairs announced its goal of getting 41,000 homeless veterans into housing during this fiscal year. As of this time, they not only reached that goal, but exceeded it. Nearly 48,000 homeless veterans have permanent housing now.

The numbers are impressive. Not only did they exceed the intended number, but they surpassed their goal of keeping veterans in that housing, aiming for 95% who stayed. They reached 96% this year.

The VA's Housing First ap-

proach considers stable housing to be the first and most important in the whole menu of services and help that a veteran can receive. The model promotes the theory that getting veterans into stable housing should be first in the list of priorities, with other concerns -- such as completing an alcohol program or beginning treatment for mental health issues -- to be addressed afterward and not as a requirement to receiving housing services.

The housing program has a number of services, including working with HUD to provide vouchers to get into privately

owned housing. Additionally, there are case managers who connect veterans to support services such as mental health treatment, legal services, health care, job training, counseling for substance abuse and employment services. The Housing First approach seems to be working, because veteran homelessness has been reduced over 50% since the program started in 2010.

For low income veterans with families, the VA has support services and case management that includes preventing homelessness or finding other housing. Go on- *See Homeless programs, page 19*

Trivia

By Fifi Rodriguez

- 1. A GEOGRAPHY:** In which country would you find the Angkor Wat temple?
- 2. SCIENCE:** Which vitamin aids in blood clotting?
- 3. MUSIC:** Which pop music icon has a Pantone color named after him?
- 4. TELEVISION:** Which 1990s TV comedy series features the theme song "Cleveland Rocks"?
- 5. U.S. STATES:** Which state is last alphabetically?
- 6. ANIMAL KINGDOM:** What is an adult female turkey called?
- 7. MOVIES:** Which popular 1994 movie features a character named Red?
- 8. AD SLOGANS:** Which company's advertising slogan is "Like a Good Neighbor"?
- 9. GENERAL KNOWLEDGE:** How long is the Macy's Thanksgiving Parade route?
- 10. ANATOMY:** What are beta cells?

Answers on page 19

Boeing layoffs 2 *Continued from Page 4*

lizing its financial position and restoring confidence among stakeholders. For the Mesa plant, maintaining its role in producing the Apache helicopter remains critical. The facility's future will depend on Boeing's ability to secure new defense contracts, optimize production processes, and possibly diversify its product offerings to adapt to changing market demands.

Industry analysts highlight the complexities involved in Boeing's recovery efforts. Cai von Rumohr, an aviation analyst at financial services firm TD Cowen, commented on the difficulties of ramping up production and reviving the supply chain af-

ter disruptions. "Restarting production is not as simple as flipping a switch," von Rumohr said. "Boeing will need to address supplier readiness, workforce training, and quality control to meet its targets."

Sandra Watson, President and CEO of the Arizona Commerce Authority, emphasized the state's resilience. "While Boeing's layoffs are unfortunate, Arizona's aerospace industry remains strong," Watson said. "We are home to a diverse range of aerospace and defense companies, and we will continue to support growth and innovation in this critical sector."

—Jeremy Webb

*"It takes years
to build up trust,
and only seconds
to destroy it."*

—Vince Lombardi

Death penalty *Continued from Page 1*

ecutive order. Instead, the Arizona Department of Corrections, Rehabilitation, and Reentry (ADCRR) conducted its own review, resulting in significant revisions to execution policies and procedures.

Attorney General Mayes expressed confidence in the updated procedures. "We have worked with ADCRR throughout its process to carefully review and improve the state's death penalty procedures, and I am confident that executions can now proceed in compliance with state and federal law," Mayes said in a statement sent to the Associated Press.

Mayes plans to request an execution warrant for Gunches from the Arizona Supreme Court in the coming weeks. "Back in May, I indicated that executions would resume by early 2025. In accordance with that timeline, I plan to move forward and request an execution warrant... for Aaron Brian Gunches, who was sentenced to death for the murder of Ted Price," she stated.

Christian Slater, the governor's spokesman, said, "The Governor remains committed to upholding the law while ensuring justice is carried out in a way that's transparent and humane." He added, "Corrections officials conducted a thorough review of policies and procedures and made

critical improvements to help ensure executions carried out by the state meet legal and constitutional standards."

Aaron Gunches was convicted of first-degree murder and kidnapping for the killing of Ted Price near Mesa, Arizona. In 2002, Gunches abducted Price, drove him to a remote desert area, and fatally shot him. Gunches pleaded guilty to the charges and was initially sentenced to death in 2008. After an appeal due to a procedural error, he was resentenced to death in 2013.

In November 2022, Gunches filed a request for his own execution warrant but later withdrew it upon learning of Attorney General Mayes' intentions to pause executions for a procedural review. With the review now concluded, the path is clear for the state to proceed.

Mayes said she has communicated with the victim's family. "Earlier today, I spoke with Ted Price's family and expressed my deepest condolences for the unimaginable pain they have endured since his murder. I remain committed to seeking justice for the victims of violent crime and their loved ones," she stated.

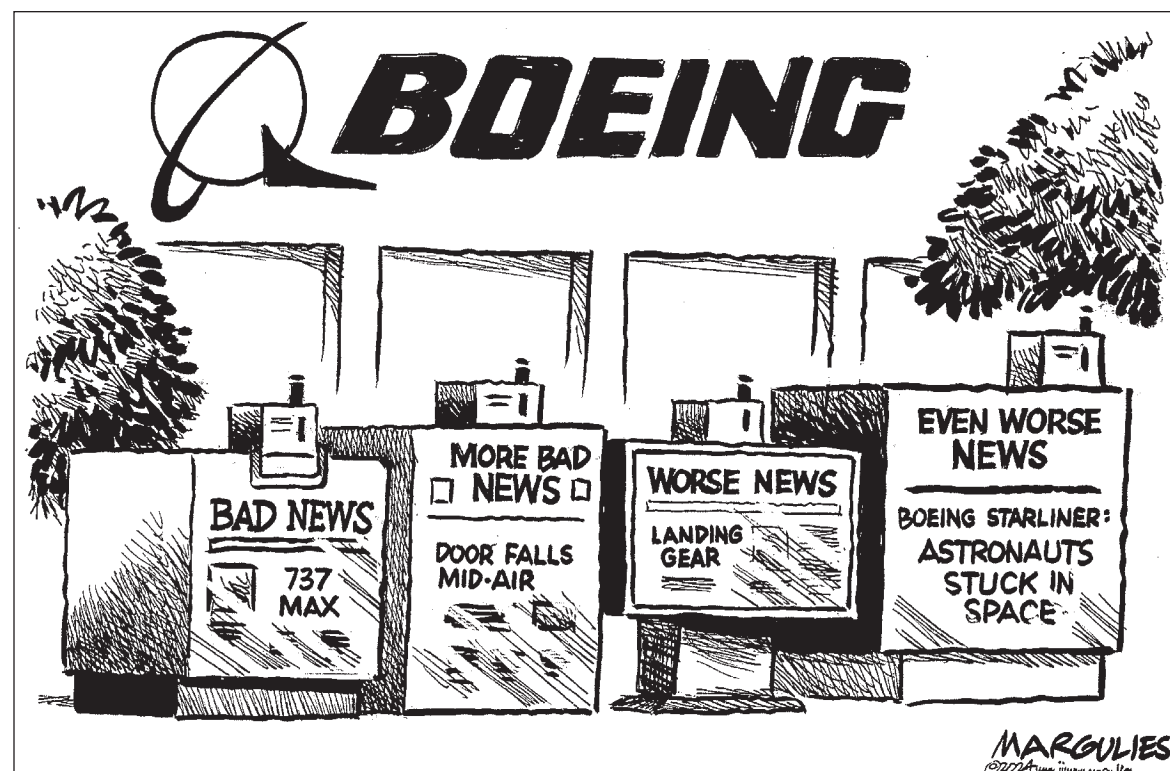
The decision to resume executions has drawn criticism from death penalty opponents, who argue that systemic flaws remain un-

addressed. Organizations such as Death Penalty Alternatives for Arizona have voiced their concerns. In a statement released following the announcement, the group said, "More than two years ago, the governor promised a thorough review of the state's deeply flawed death penalty process, acknowledging its systemic issues. Instead, she has walked back on that commitment, ignoring unresolved concerns about botched executions and the lack of proper oversight within the system."

Pima County Attorney Laura Conover, who has publicly opposed the death penalty, expressed her reservations. "We stopped tinkering with the machinery of death: a failed system proven to be racially biased, subjective, and dangerous, as our wrongful conviction team knows all too well," Conover said in a statement. "Arizona can be so much smarter in its use of precious resources and shut down death row for good."

Conover highlighted the cost savings and resolution achieved by pursuing life sentences without parole instead of the death penalty. "We have saved an absolute fortune in taxpayer money in litigation, staffing, experts, testing, court, and security costs for our own agency, the jail, the courts, and the prisons,"

See Death Penalty 2, page 16




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Arizona logo project sparks conflict of interest & misallocation allegations

A \$700,000 rebranding initiative by the Arizona Office of Tourism (AOT) has drawn sharp criticism over allegations of ethical misconduct and questionable use of public funds. The controversy centers on a potential conflict of interest involving AOT Director Lisa Urias and the project's allocation of federal pandemic relief funds.

The logo, intended to symbolize Arizona's natural beauty and cultural diversity, is part of the state's "Vibrant Arizona" branding campaign. However, its unveiling has been overshadowed by accusations that Urias facilitated the selection of individuals with personal ties to her for key roles in the

project. Artist Kevin Coochwyte-wa, who contributed to the logo's design and received \$27,500, is the brother of Jason Coochwyte-wa, the CEO of Urias Communications—a marketing firm founded by Urias.

Critics, including State Representative Teresa Martinez, argue that the circumstances surrounding the project's development warrant further scrutiny. "This is not just about the money spent; it's about the trust placed in government officials to act in the public's best interest," Martinez said, calling for an investigation into potential violations of Arizona's conflict-of-interest laws.

The project has also faced

backlash over its high cost, funded by federal pandemic relief money. Opponents argue that these funds should have been allocated to more urgent needs, such as public health or economic recovery. Governor Katie Hobbs, acknowledging the growing concerns, accepted Urias' resignation on November 24, 2024, stating, "Public trust is paramount, and even the appearance of impropriety cannot be ignored."

Supporters of the initiative contend that the rebranding effort is a worthwhile investment aimed at boosting Arizona's tourism industry, which contributes significantly to the state's economy. They argue that the year-long pro-

See Arizona logo, page 8

Strange BUT TRUE

By Lucie Winborne

- NASA's first interplanetary CubeSats, a pair of briefcase-size spacecraft called Mars Cube One, or MarCO, which flew by Mars in 2018, were named for the Pixar characters Wall-E and EVE.
- Figure skate blades were originally made of animal bones.
- Dolphin calves are typically born tail first, so they don't drown during the birthing process.
- Christian Louboutin manufactured a limited edition shoe for brides. They had baby-blue soles to give the bride "something blue," but the company ceased production after copyright issues.
- It takes Pluto 248.09 years to make one orbit around the sun.
- And speaking of shoes ... England's Queen Elizabeth II had hers broken in for her by her personal assistant and senior dresser. The idea was that she couldn't afford for her shoes to be uncomfortable or give her blisters while on official business.
- Jim Henson made his first Kermit puppet using his mother's old coat and two halves of a ping pong ball.
- Bacon was used to make explosives during World War II.
- Peter Pan creator James Barrie used to act as if he were his dead brother, David, to cheer his mother by dressing in his brother's clothes and whistling like his sibling used to do. On one such occasion, his mother thought for a moment that David had actually returned from the dead.
- Automobile tires were originally white.
- The Caesar salad was actually invented in Tijuana, Mexico, in 1927. Hotel Caesar owner Caesar Cardini wanted to make dinner for friends but didn't have a lot of available options, so he tossed lettuce into a bowl with a dressing made from whatever he could find at the moment.

"I always wanted to be somebody, but now I realize I should have been more specific."

—Lily Tomlin

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Working conditions *Continued from Page 5*

cleaning crew – those red noses aren't just genetic, they're a workplace hazard indicator.

Speaking of red flags, let's talk about housing. Santa claims to provide "magical accommodation," but sources suggest it's just overcrowded dormitories with perpetual Christmas music. Some elves haven't heard silence since the Middle Ages. The "cozy cottages" are actually converted gingerbread houses with questionable structural integrity, while Santa lounges in a palace that would make tech billionaires jealous.

Perhaps most concerning is the workshop's archaic dress code. Mandatory pointy shoes have led to an epidemic of elfin toe syndrome, yet management

insists they're "essential for maintaining holiday spirit." The required hat-to-height ratio clearly violates several international fashion conventions.

The North Pole's HR department (Holiday Resources) dismisses all complaints with "but it's magic!" That's not a valid response to workplace violations. Neither is "but the children!" Children would probably prefer their toys weren't made by overworked immortal beings surviving on sugar and holiday spirit.

It's time for change at the North Pole. I call for:

- Fair wages (preferably in something other than gingerbread)
- Reasonable working hours

(the sun doesn't even rise for months – how do they know when to clock out?)

- Modern safety standards (magic is not a substitute for proper ventilation)
- An end to the "eternal workshop cheerfulness" requirement
- Recognition of the Elvish Brotherhood of Toy Artisans and Candy Makers (EBTAC)

Until these demands are met, I suggest we all take a hard look at where our Christmas presents come from. And Santa, if you're reading this – yes, I still want that new gaming console, but maybe let the elves take Boxing Day off?

Sincerely,

A Concerned Gift Recipient

Woke politics *Continued from Page 5*

Harris doesn't bring up identity politics at all. Not only does she not talk about the once-ubiquitous concepts of white privilege or "equity," she doesn't even talk about breaking the glass ceiling or the history-making nature of her candidacy. Listening to her campaign, you'd have no idea that the twin "isms" -- racism and sexism -- have been consuming obsessions of the Left for years now.

There's also no hint of the hostility toward law enforcement

that characterized progressivism with the rise of Black Lives Matter. No, Harris is a Glock-wielding tough-as-nails prosecutor, who, you might have heard, is the only person in the race who has prosecuted transnational gangs.

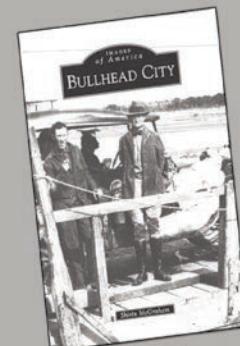
This is as complete a volte-face as we've seen in recent American politics. In French Revolution terms, Harris once was a fellow traveler with Robespierre, the famous radical, but now is happy to go along with the Ther-

midorian Reaction that toppled him. It's as if William Jennings Bryan decided, after inveighing against them so famously, that the gold standard and Eastern financial interests weren't so bad after all.

What happened is that many Democratic politicians believed that the reaction to Trump and the revulsion over the killing of George Floyd had fundamentally reoriented American politics

See Woke Politics 2, page 19

Images of America Bullhead City By Shirin McGraham



Snapshots of the Old West

McGraham's book depicts historic records of skirmishes between Indians and white intruders in the region during the 1850s thru the 1870s. The quest for water and the endeavor to tame the wild Colorado River would eventually lead to the development of Bullhead City.



Pick your copy up on Amazon, at Barnes & Noble, the Bullhead Museum (CRHS), Jackass Junction (Oatman), or at shirinmcgraham.com.

Rancho Sante Fe

Continued from Page 1

way Interchange has been designed to align with plans for the I-11 corridor, a proposed interstate intended to connect the U.S.-Mexico border in Arizona with the Canadian border. I-11 is expected to improve North American trade and transportation networks by alleviating congestion on existing highways and providing a more direct route for freight and passenger traffic.

The I-11 project has been designated as a high-priority corridor under federal transportation legislation. While the Final Tier 1 Environmental Impact Statement was completed in 2021, the project remains in the planning and funding stages. Detailed Tier 2 studies will be required to finalize alignments and construction timelines.

Once constructed, I-11 is expected to bring substantial economic benefits to Kingman

by positioning the city as a key node in this expanded transportation network. The Rancho Santa Fe Parkway Interchange will serve as a critical connection to this corridor, enhancing local logistics and attracting new business opportunities.

For Kingman, the interchange represents more than just a road improvement; it is an investment in the city's future. The project is expected to reduce traffic congestion, improve access to industrial and commercial areas, and stimulate economic growth by facilitating easier movement of goods and people. Local officials and stakeholders have worked for years to secure this project, recognizing its potential to address immediate infrastructure needs and support long-term development.

ADOT and Kingman city

officials have underscored the importance of collaboration in bringing the project to fruition. The community's support has been instrumental in moving the interchange forward, and its integration with broader transportation strategies highlights the city's proactive approach to growth.

Construction is set to continue over the next two years, with Kingman aiming to solidify its role as a regional transportation hub. The Rancho Santa Fe Parkway Interchange is poised to provide immediate infrastructure benefits while preparing the city for the eventual completion of I-11, ensuring Kingman remains a critical part of the southwestern transportation network.

For updates on the project, visit cityofkingman.gov or illstudy.com.

—Jeremy Webb

Sewer overflow

Continued from Page 1

side of the property's sewer lines. However, they acknowledged that mechanical failures at the nearby Section 18 lift station contributed to the overflows. The settlement includes \$90,000 in damages, jet-cleaning of

the Falches' sewer lines, and relocation of a backflow valve to their property to prevent future incidents.

The case underscores the city's broader infrastructure challenges, particularly with aging water and

sewer systems. The Section 18 lift station, identified as the source of the malfunction, is undergoing extensive renovations scheduled for completion this fiscal year. These upgrades are part of a citywide effort to modernize critical infrastructure to support a growing population and avoid similar incidents in the future.

Bullhead City has experienced steady population growth in recent years, with its current population approaching 44,000. This growth has increased demands on public utilities and highlighted the need for proactive infrastructure management. Issues such as the Section 18 malfunction illustrate the delicate balance between maintaining existing systems and preparing for future development.

In addition to sewer system upgrades, Bullhead City has taken steps to improve transportation infrastructure. Recent projects include acquiring control of a major stretch of State Route 95 and constructing new turn lanes to ease traffic congestion.

The resolution of the Falche lawsuit provides a measure of closure for the property owners while serving as a reminder of aging infrastructure.

—Jeremy Webb

SENIOR NEWS LINE

Ready to volunteer?

By Matilda Charles

Have you considered what you'll do with your spare time in the New Year? How about volunteering? There are so many ways we can step up.

AmeriCorps Seniors (americorps.gov/serve/ameri-corps-seniors) provides opportunities to over 200,000 seniors every year to go into the community and give back. If there's an interest, there's likely a place that needs help.

The Foster Grandparent Program hooks up seniors and children ranging from premature babies all the way to young teenage mothers.

In the Seniors RSVP Program, seniors are matched with organizations that help others in the community.

The Senior Companion Program pairs a volunteer with another senior who needs help with daily living activities.

What do we seniors get out of volunteering? We gain new skills or improve the ones we already have as we share our experience. We can earn a small stipend. We can lessen our isolation and feel-

ings of loneliness as we interact with others. And we experience better health, including mental health with a decrease in anxiety and depression.

The only eligibility requirement is that volunteers must be age 55 and older.

If you're interested in exploring volunteering opportunities, go online to the AmeriCorps website and click on the Pathfinder. Put your state or area of interest in the search box. You'll be shown lists of agencies that can use your volunteer help as well as the email contact and website for those agencies.

You might end up teaching a child to read, or volunteering as an aide in a kindergarten class. You might help another senior with tasks he or she can no longer do, such as laundry or writing letters to family. You could work behind the counter at a recreation center signing out basketballs. You might sort vegetables in a food bank. The opportunities are nearly endless.

If you need inspiration, look at the National Service Reports for your state to see what others have been doing.

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Arizona logo *Continued from Page 7*

process of public consultation, which included nearly 2,000 residents, reflects an inclusive approach to developing a brand that resonates with Arizonans.

Despite these defenses, the controversy has intensified scrutiny of the project's procurement process and overall transparency. The Arizona Attorney General's office has not announced whether it will formally investigate the

matter, leaving questions about potential accountability unanswered.

The new logo, featuring turquoise letters and a sun design incorporating state symbols, was unveiled to highlight Arizona's identity as a premier destination. However, its rollout has been mired in public distrust and criticism, overshadowing its intended purpose.

—Stephen Lightman

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Medical Professionals

Common thyroid drug linked to bone mass loss

NATION – Could a commonly prescribed thyroid drug lead to bone loss? Levothyroxine is a frequently prescribed drug in the United States, particularly for older people, as lower thyroid function can be associated with aging.

- Questions remain over how appropriately it is prescribed, however, as side effects can cause problems.
- A recent abstract presented at the annual meeting of the Radiological Society of North America suggested that levothyroxine use in people with typical hormone ranges could lead to lower bone mass and density in older people, over time.

Levothyroxine, a drug used to treat hypothyroidism, can lead to reduced bone mass and density in older adults with normal thyroid levels, a small cohort study has

shown.

Researchers from Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine in Baltimore, MD, showed that total body bone mass and density both decreased in adults over the age of 65 who received levothyroxine over a 6-year follow-up period.

They presented the results at the Annual Meeting of the Radiological Society of North America on November 25, 2024. These results are yet to appear in a peer-reviewed journal.

The results came from a small study comprising 81 participants who had typical thyrotropin levels, which are used to indicate thyroid function, and who were taking levothyroxine.

The study authors point out that levothyroxine is one of the most commonly prescribed drugs in the

See Thyroid Drug, page 13

Dietary strategies to enhance protection against COVID-19

NATION — As cold and flu season approaches, many people are looking for ways to boost their immune defenses and reduce the risk of falling ill. While COVID-19 remains a top concern, it's also important to protect against other common viruses that circulate this time of year. One key factor in supporting immune function is nutrition.

Monique Richard, MS, RDN, LDN, a registered dietitian nutritionist and owner of Nutrition-In-Sight, recommends starting by consulting with a qualified nutrition professional to assess individual needs and develop a personalized plan. "First, Richard suggested meeting with a registered dietitian nutritionist (RDN) or other qualified, credentialed nutrition expert to learn

more about your unique needs," she advised.

From there, she emphasized the importance of consuming a variety of nutrients that play critical roles in immune health. These include vitamins A, B (thiamine, riboflavin, pantothenic acid, B6, folate, and B12), C, D, and E, as well as minerals like zinc, magnesium, and selenium. "Many of these are found in fruits, vegetables, whole grains, proteins and fat," Richard noted.

However, she cautioned against relying on supplements to meet these needs, explaining, "Keep in mind that dietary supplements for each of these nutrients do not necessarily have the same impact as the whole food and in fact can often

See COVID-19, page 11

Managing cardiovascular risk factors to live a heart-healthy life

NATION— Cardiovascular disease (CVD) refers to a number of health conditions that affect the circulatory system, including the heart, arteries, veins, and capillaries. The treatment, symptoms, and prevention of the conditions that are part of CVD often overlap.

CVD is now the most common cause of death worldwide. However, there are many ways to reduce the risk of developing these conditions. There are also many treatment options available if they occur.

Types

CVD comprises many different types of condition. Some of these might develop at the same time or lead to other conditions or diseases within the group.

Diseases and conditions that affect the heart include:

angina, a type of chest pain that occurs due to decreased blood flow into the heart

- arrhythmia, or an irregular heartbeat or heart rhythm
- congenital heart disease, in which a problem with heart function or structure is present from birth
- coronary artery disease, which affects the arteries that feed the heart muscle
- heart attack, or a sudden blockage to the heart's blood flow and oxygen supply
- heart failure, wherein the heart cannot contract or relax normally
- dilated cardiomyopathy, a type of heart failure, in which the heart gets larger and cannot pump blood efficiently
- hypertrophic cardiomyopathy, in which the heart muscle walls thicken and problems with

relaxation of the muscle, blood flow, and electrical instability develop

- mitral regurgitation, in which blood leaks back through the mitral valve of the heart during contractions
- mitral valve prolapse, in which part of the mitral valve bulges into the left atrium of the heart while it contracts, causing mitral regurgitation
- pulmonary stenosis, in which a narrowing of the pulmonary artery reduces blood flow from the right ventricle (pumping chamber to the lungs) to the pulmonary artery (blood vessel that carries deoxygenated blood to the lungs)
- aortic stenosis, a narrowing of the heart valve that can cause blockage to blood flow leaving the heart

See Cardiovascular, page 10



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Is coffee good for your heart health?

NATION – How does caffeine affect heart health? The latest research offers new insights. Studies on caffeine's effects on heart health have gained interest in recent years. One crucial question remains: How much caffeine is too much?

In this roundup of the latest studies exploring the effects of caffeine on cardiovascular health, *Medical News Today* compiles the most recent evidence to highlight key findings and takeaways.

Some studies suggest that consuming caffeine may help boost vascular health and lower the risk of type 2 diabetes, while others indicate that consuming too much may increase the risk of stroke.

Millions of people are regular coffee drinkers. Some people prefer to consume the popular caffeinated beverage in the morning to increase alertness and alleviate fatigue, while others consume it throughout the day for multiple other health benefits.

Considering that around 1 in 7 deaths worldwide are caused by coronary heart disease, coffee's potential cardioprotective benefits make it an exciting topic of research.

The most recent study on this topic, published in *Rheumatology* on October 9, found that consuming more caffeine—found in sources such as coffee, tea, and cocoa—may help improve blood vessel health. What made this study particularly interesting was that it was conducted in patients with lupus, an autoimmune disease that has been tied to an increased risk of stroke, heart attack, and cardiovascular disease.

But what does all the evidence so far say? Can coffee improve heart health, or does too much cause harm?

Can drinking coffee lower diabetes, heart disease risk?

In a nutshell:

According to a study published in September in the Endocrine Society's *Journal of Clinical Endocrinology & Metabolism*, consuming coffee and caffeine in moderation on a regular basis could help prevent conditions like type 2 diabetes, coronary heart disease, and stroke. The amount the researchers found that had the most protective effects was around 200–300 mg daily, or roughly 2-3 cups of coffee.

Key takeaways:

See *Coffee*, page 13

Cardiovascular

- atrial fibrillation, an irregular rhythm that can increase the risk of stroke
- rheumatic heart disease, a complication of strep throat that causes inflammation in the heart and which can affect the function of heart valves
- radiation heart disease, where-in radiation to the chest can lead to damage to the heart valves and blood vessels

Vascular diseases affect the arteries, veins, or capillaries throughout the body and around the heart.

They include:

- peripheral artery disease, which causes arteries to become narrow and reduces blood flow to the limbs
- aneurysm, a bulge or enlargement in an artery that can rupture and bleed
- atherosclerosis, in which plaque forms along the walls of blood vessels, narrowing them and restricting the flow of oxygen rich blood
- renal artery disease, which affects the flow of blood to and from the kidneys and can lead to high blood pressure
- Raynaud's disease, which causes arteries to spasm and

Continued from Page 9



- temporarily restrict blood flow
- peripheral venous disease, or general damage in the veins that transport blood from the feet and arms back to the heart, which causes leg swelling and varicose veins
- ischemic stroke, in which a blood clot moves to the brain and causes damage
- venous blood clots, which can break loose and become dangerous if they travel to the pulmonary artery
- blood clotting disorders, in which blood clots form too quickly or not quickly enough and lead to excessive bleeding or clotting
- Buerger's disease, which leads to blood clots and inflammation, often in the legs, and which may result in gangrene

It is possible to manage some health conditions within CVD by making lifestyle changes, but some conditions may be life threatening and require emergency surgery.

Symptoms

Symptoms will vary depending on the specific condition. Some conditions, such as type 2 diabetes or hypertension, may initially cause no symptoms at all.

However, typical symptoms of an underlying cardiovascular issue include:

- pain or pressure in the chest, which may indicate angina
- pain or discomfort in the arms, left shoulder, elbows, jaw, or back
- shortness of breath
- nausea and fatigue
- lightheadedness or dizziness
- cold sweats

Although these are the most common ones, CVD can cause symptoms anywhere in the body.

Lifestyle tips

People can take the following steps to prevent some

of the conditions within CVD:

- **Manage body weight:** The National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Disorders advise that if a person loses 5–10% of their body weight, they may reduce their risk of developing CVD.
- **Get regular exercise:** The American Heart Association (AHA) recommend doing 150 minutes of moderate-to-intense physical activity every week.
- **Follow a heart-healthy diet:** Eating foods that contain polyunsaturated fats and omega-3, such as oily fish, alongside fruits and vegetables can support heart health and reduce the risk of CVD. Reducing the intake of processed food, salt, saturated fat, and added sugar has a similar effect.
- **Quit smoking:** Smoking is a key risk factor for almost all forms of CVD. Although quitting can be difficult, taking steps to do so can drastically reduce its damaging effects on the heart.

Treatment

The treatment option that is best for a person will depend on their specific type of CVD. However, some options include:

- medication, such as to reduce low density lipoprotein cholesterol, improve blood flow, or regulate heart rhythm
- surgery, such as coronary artery bypass grafting or valve repair or replacement surgery
- cardiac rehabilitation, including exercise prescriptions and lifestyle counseling

Treatment aims to:

- relieve symptoms
- reduce the risk of the condition or disease recurring or getting worse
- prevent complications, such as hospital admission, heart failure, stroke, heart attack, or death

See *Cardiovascular 2*, page 24



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Eleven tips for giving up smoking

NATION — Various tips can help a person with smoking cessation. Nicotine replacement therapy, medications such as varenicline, e-cigarettes, and more may help a person with quitting smoking.

Scientists have found links between smoking and numerous health conditions, including cancer, heart disease, stroke, and lung disease. On average, smokers die 10 years sooner than non-smokers, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

In 2020, a scientific brief from the World Health Organization (WHO) concluded that there was a higher risk of severe symptoms and death among people in the hospital with COVID-19 who smoked compared with non-smokers.

Despite the risks, almost 14% of adults in the United States smoke. The main reasons for this are that nicotine is addictive and eliminating the habit is difficult. However, there is much support and help available.

Research shows that, with the right approach, it is possible to break this unhealthy routine and kick the habit once and for all. Here are 11 of the most effective methods to quit smoking.

1. Varenicline

Doctors commonly prescribe varenicline (Chantix or Champix) for people who wish to quit smoking. Varenicline triggers a release of dopamine, the chemical in the brain that makes people feel good. Smoking nicotine induces the same effect but involves higher amounts of dopamine — however, these satisfying effects do not last long, leading to a person craving for another cigarette.

When people try to quit, they often also experience depression and anxiety. Varenicline works by blocking nicotine receptors in the brain, reducing cravings and nicotine withdrawal effects. Doctors often recommended or prescribe nicotine patches or antidepressants with varenicline to prevent a decrease in mood.

Current guidelines from the American Thoracic Society

recommend using this drug for at least 12 weeks as a first-line treatment for stopping smoking. This treatment is preferable to starting with nicotine patches, electronic cigarettes, and other medications. However, a doctor may suggest using nicotine patches alongside this drug.

2. Nicotine replacement therapy

Nicotine in cigarettes can lead to dependence, so people experience unpleasant withdrawal symptoms when they try to quit. Nicotine replacement therapy (NRT) provides a low level of nicotine without the other poisonous chemicals in tobacco smoke.

It can help ease some of the symptoms of nicotine withdrawal, which include:

- intense cravings
- nausea
- tingling of hands and feet
- insomnia
- mood swings
- difficulty concentrating.
- NRT is available as:
 - gum
 - patches
 - sprays
 - inhalers
 - lozenges

Patches are available from a pharmacy without a prescription. They slowly release nicotine, which the body absorbs through the skin. Over several weeks, the amount of nicotine gradually reduces as the person switches to lower-dose patches. Eventually, they will no longer crave the substance.

Some people wear their patches continually and have a steady dose of nicotine over 24 hours, while others remove them at night. A doctor can advise on the best option.

Inhalers, gum, lozenges, and sprays work quickly, but their effects only last a short time. They can help relieve intense cravings, while patches provide a daily dose.

Current guidelines recommend using varenicline as a first-line option to quit smoking, but state that using nicotine patches alongside the treatment can also help.

3. Bupropion

Bupropion (Zyban) is an antidepressant that may help people stop smoking. Similar to varenicline, it reduces the dopamine shortfall associated with nicotine withdrawal effects. As a result, it may reduce a person's irritability and difficulties with focusing that people often experience when they quit smoking.

Guidelines from 2020 recommend using varenicline rather than bupropion, as it appears to be more effective. While bupropion may be cheaper, it may also be less cost-effective.

4. E-cigarettes

An e-cigarette is an electronic device that allows people to inhale nicotine in a vapor without the other harmful byproducts of tobacco, such as tar and carbon monoxide. Some research suggests that e-cigarettes can help in quitting smoking because people can gradually reduce the nicotine content of the e-liquid in a similar way to NRT.

However, electronic cigarettes may have other risks. For this reason, current guidelines urge doctors to recommend varenicline or NRT over e-cigarettes. Many healthcare professionals hoped that e-cigarettes would help smokers quit, but currently there is limited research to suggest this.

5. Cognitive behavioral therapy

Cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT) is a method of counseling or talking therapy that helps people change habits that are not helpful.

A 2008 study looked at 304 adult smokers undergoing 20 weeks of CBT, with treatments focused on strategies to help them avoid smoking. Results suggested that this approach may help encourage long-term abstinence.

In 2016, a team of researchers started a clinical trial to see how cognitive behavioral interventions affect adults aged over 18 years who smoke at least eight cigarettes a day and wish to stop.

The researchers expect to find that the treatment — known as cognitive behavioral smoking cessation treatment with components of behavioral

See Smoking, page 20

COVID-19 *Continued from Page 9*

be counter-productive especially in high doses by depleting a different nutrient."

Richard provided the example of zinc, a mineral that is essential for immune function but can interfere with copper absorption when consumed in excess. "For example, too much zinc can deplete copper," she said. "Taking a zinc supplement may not be necessary especially if you are obtaining enough in your diet, it is not advised for a prolonged period of time. This is one of many I see in practice being overconsumed and consequences are not always benign."

To help people assess whether they are getting enough immune-supporting nutrients from their diets, Richard posed a series of questions:

How many fruit servings am I consuming in a day? Are they coming from a variety of fresh or frozen sources such as citrus fruits (oranges, grapefruit, tangerines), berries, apples, and stone fruit (plums, peaches, apricots)?

Fruits are rich in vitamin C, folate, and other antioxidants that support immune cell function and protect against oxidative stress. Eating a colorful assortment helps ensure a broad range of beneficial plant compounds.

How many servings of fresh or frozen vegetables am I consuming in a day? Are leafy greens such as spinach, arugula, kale, or turnip greens included? Are bright orange and red vegetables included, such as carrots, peppers, tomatoes, sweet potatoes, radishes, beets, etc.?

Like fruits, vegetables provide a plethora of vitamins, minerals, and phytochemicals that bolster immunity. Dark leafy greens are especially high in vitamins A, C, and folate, while red and orange vegetables tend to be top sources of beta-carotene, another immune-enhancing antioxidant.

Where do I get my protein? Beans? Frozen or fresh or canned fatty fish such as salmon, sardines, herring, or tilapia for example?

Adequate protein is critical for immune cell production and function. Legumes like beans and lentils provide zinc and folate in addition to plant-based protein. Fatty fish are among the few food sources of vitamin D, which helps regulate im-

mune responses.

Are fat sources in my diet quality olive, avocado, or nuts and seeds sources? Full-fat dairy? Or is it mostly saturated fat from animal sources, which is then processed, breaded, and deep-fried?

The types of dietary fats consumed influence inflammation in the body, which in turn impacts immune function. Anti-inflammatory unsaturated fats from plant oils, nuts, seeds, avocados, and fish are preferable to pro-inflammatory saturated and trans fats prevalent in red meat, full-fat dairy, fried foods, and ultra-processed snacks.

Am I cooking and seasoning foods with antioxidant-rich spices and herbs such as ginger, garlic, onions, turmeric, basil, thyme, rosemary, parsley, cilantro, or scallions, just to name a few?

Many herbs and spices contain potent anti-inflammatory and antioxidant compounds that provide an extra immune boost. Using them generously in cooking is an easy way to ramp up protective benefits without excess calories, sugar, or sodium.

The common thread throughout Richard's guidance is an emphasis on whole, minimally processed plant foods. The fiber, nutrients, and bioactive compounds they provide work synergistically to support the body's natural defenses against infection.

See COVID-19 2, page 14

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What is the best type of meditation?

NATION — There are a variety of meditation methods that suit most people. However, there is no “right way” to meditate, meaning someone can explore the different types until they find one that works for them.

Meditation denotes an array of techniques that promote mind and body integration. Some types involve keeping mental focus on a sensation, while other types entail focusing awareness on the present without making judgments.

People use meditation to foster relaxation and heightened awareness in a stressful world where senses often become dull. Research suggests that meditation may have the potential to improve physical well-being, as well as emotional health, but most of the

evidence is preliminary.

Types of meditation

The following eight examples are some of the best-known ways to meditate:

Loving-kindness meditation

This type is also known as Metta meditation. Its goal is to cultivate an attitude of love and kindness toward everything, even a person’s enemies and sources of stress.

While breathing deeply, an individual opens their mind to receive loving kindness. They then send messages of loving kindness to the world, specific people, or their loved ones.

In most forms of this meditation, the key is to repeat the message many times, until the individual feels an attitude of

benevolence.

Progressive muscle relaxation

During a progressive relaxation session, practitioners start at one end of their body, usually their feet, and work through the whole body.

Some forms of progressive relaxation require someone to tense and then relax muscles. Others encourage a person to visualize a wave, drifting over their body to release tension.

Progressive relaxation can help to promote generalized feelings of calmness and relaxation. It may also help with chronic pain. Because it slowly and steadily relaxes the body, some people use this form of meditation to help them sleep.

Mindfulness meditation

Mindfulness is a form of meditation that urges practitioners to remain aware and present in the moment. Rather than dwelling on the past or dreading the future, mindfulness encourages awareness of an individual’s present surroundings.

Crucial to this is a lack of judgment. To illustrate, rather than reflecting on the annoyance of a long wait, a practitioner will simply note the wait without judgment.

Mindfulness meditation is something people can do almost anywhere. For example, while waiting in line at the grocery store, a person might calmly notice their surroundings, including the sights, sounds, and smells they experience.

A form of mindfulness is involved in most types of meditation. For instance, breath awareness encourages practitioners to be aware of their breathing, while progressive relaxation draws attention to areas of tension in the body.

Because mindfulness is a theme common to many types of meditation, it has been studied extensively. Research has found that it can:

- reduce fixation on negative emotions
- improve focus
- improve memory
- lessen impulsive and emotional reactions
- increase relationship satisfaction

See Meditation, page 14



Rheumatoid Arthritis Patient Should Continue Biweekly Injections

DEAR DR. ROACH:

I’m a 67-year-old healthy male, but I do take Humira for rheumatoid arthritis (RA). It does a wonderful job for me with no side effects. It does such a good job that I can periodically extend the time between injections, such as one every three weeks instead of the recommended dose every two weeks. I can even go as long as six months between injections without noticing much of the RA symptoms.

My rheumatologist is aware of this and encourages me to use the lesser amount if I still get relief. My quandary is that I was recently talking to my gastroenterologist about Humira, and he said that they use a very similar drug for gastrointestinal issues. But apparently, you aren’t supposed to stop taking it consecutively because the body will become immune to the drug, and the drug can lose its effectiveness.

Naturally, I don’t want to lose the great relief I am lucky to be getting, but I also know it’s a strong drug. It seems that the less I take of it, the better. -- J.C.

ANSWER:

I share your gastroenterologist’s concern. He may be thinking of a similar medication, vedolizumab (Entyvio). When this drug is stopped in someone with Crohn’s disease, it will cause a flare-up in about half of the cases within six months. In a third of them, the medication will no longer be effective.

The situation is similar with adalimumab (Humira), as

there is the possibility of a relapse if you stop it entirely. Taking it every three weeks led to a flare-up in 36% of people who had their disease well-controlled for years. The researchers were unable to identify any way to predict who would flare up. Restarting Humira regained control for over half of the study participants -- but not everybody.

I do understand that these are powerful medicines with side effects. Even if you aren’t noticing any, many people will, and there can be very serious side effects to many organs. Fortunately, these are uncommon, and in most cases, it is far better to stay on the medicine, as long as you are being monitored.

As a medical student, I remember seeing what RA looked like before we had effective medications such as methotrexate and TNF inhibitors like Humira. Years of inflammation caused terrible hand deformities, mostly in the women I saw. Since you aren’t having any side effects, and it is working well, I don’t recommend the three-week dosing -- and certainly not six months between doses.

DR. ROACH WRITES:

A recent column on hair loss and thyroid disease prompted many readers to write me with their experiences. One reader noted that increasing protein in their diet seemed to slow down hair loss and even cause some regrowth. Another reader recommended biotin. I often recommend this as a trial, despite a lack of good evidence that it works. Biotin is a B-type vitamin that is very safe, although it can interfere with a lab assay when it comes to thyroid levels and other hormone levels.

Note that both hair loss and thyroid disease are very common, and it is not always the case that thyroid disease causes hair loss.

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.

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Thyroid drug

Continued from Page 9



United States, particularly among older adults.

Sean Ormond, MD, of Atlas Pain Specialists, dual board-certified in anesthesiology and interventional pain management, who was not involved in this research, said:

“Levothyroxine is a very common medication because thyroid problems become more likely as we age. Older adults are more prone to hypothyroidism, where the thyroid slows down and doesn’t make enough hormones to keep the body running smoothly.”

“When the thyroid underperforms, people often feel tired, gain weight, get cold easily, or even feel depressed. These symptoms can make life difficult, so doctors often prescribe levothyroxine to restore hormone levels and help

people feel like themselves again. It’s especially important in cases where untreated thyroid issues could harm the heart or other organs,” he further explained.

Why is the thyroid gland important?

The thyroid is found in the neck, and is responsible for producing hormones that in turn play a role in metabolism, growth and development in children, temperature regulation and in the functioning of the heart and digestive system.

Thyroid stimulating hormone (TSH) is produced by the pituitary gland, another hormone-producing organ in the head. This in turn causes the thyroid to produce T3 and T4, which play a role in the aforementioned processes.

Low levels of thyroid hormones can lead to symptoms including fatigue, weight gain, cold intolerance, dry, flakey skin, loss of hair and inability to concentrate.

Conversely, hyperthyroidism — where thyroid levels are too high — is associated with weight loss and muscle weakness, high heart rate and blood pressure, feeling anxious and irritable. y

Levothyroxine: Can it raise osteoporosis risk?

The team behind the recent study had previously shown that levothyroxine use, particularly in people it is used in unnecessarily, can have an array of unwanted side effects.

Previously, the authors had shown that the use of levothyroxine in people with higher thyroid hormone levels had a negative effect on leg mass in older adults, in a study whose results appeared in *Frontiers in Aging*.

That study included an analysis of the Baltimore Longitudinal Study of Aging, as does their latest research.

To look at the impact of levothyroxine use on a similar cohort of adults, in their latest research, the authors studied 32 males and 49 females who were aged 65 or over at the start of the study, with a mean age of 73.

They matched these

participants to five other members of the cohort by biological sex, body mass index (BMI), age, race, history of alcohol consumption, history of smoking, other treatments they were undertaking, and TSH levels to create a quasi-control group.

The analysis of this cohort occurred following two visits where they had their bone mass and density measured using Dual-Energy X-ray Absorptiometry.

Researchers showed that over the course of the study, those who had typical thyroid hormone levels and were on levothyroxine demonstrated a lower bone mass and density.

The results suggest that bone loss could be an effect of levothyroxine use in older adults, even when used at the appropriate dosage, which could be a concern in

terms of osteoporosis risk.

Is levothyroxine overprescribed?

Questions have been asked for sometime whether levothyroxine is overprescribed for older adults, with a letter published in *Clinical Chemistry* in 2023 suggesting that hypothyroidism was overdiagnosed in many people.

It cited research showing that TSH levels vary significantly throughout the year, peaking in the winter and dropping in the summer months.

Hypothyroidism is diagnosed by looking at the free thyroxine (T4) levels in people with elevated TSH levels, and comparing the ratio between them.

People with high TSH and low T4 get a diagnosis of hypothyroidism. Those with slightly elevated TSH

See *Thyroid drug 2*, page 15

Coffee

Continued from Page 10

The researchers compared people who did not consume any caffeine or who drank less than 100 milligrams (mg) per day with people who drank about 200 to 300 mg of caffeine a day, or the equivalent of three coffee drinks.

The latter group, who consumed a moderate amount of caffeine, had a 48.1% or 40.7% reduced risk of developing cardiometabolic diseases.

The study used data from the UK Biobank with a large sample size of over 360,000 people ages 37–73.

Melanie Murphy Richter, MS, RDN, a registered dietitian nutritionist who was not involved in the research, explained that the mechanism through which caffeine may reduce the risk of type 2 diabetes is by enhancing insulin

sensitivity, as well as boosting fat metabolism to support overall cardiometabolic health.

Experts such as Cheng-Han Chen, MD, a board certified interventional cardiologist who was not involved in the study, cautioned as to overestimating caffeine’s benefits and said: “[B]oth coffee and tea are complex beverages that contain hundreds of bioactive compounds, and it is likely that their biological effects extend beyond those of the caffeine itself. Compounds such as flavonoids, alkaloids, and polyphenols, are thought to have antioxidant and anti-inflammatory effects, and might be involved in glucose and lipid metabolism as well.”

Can too much caffeine increase heart disease risk?

In a nutshell:

A study not yet published in a peer-reviewed journal but recently presented at ACC Asia 2024 in India in August found that people who chronically consume high amounts of caffeine at least five days per week may have an increased risk of cardiovascular disease. This was true even if the study participants were otherwise in good health.

Key takeaways:

For this study, the researchers defined chronic caffeine consumption as drinking any caffeinated beverage—including coffee, tea, soda, and energy drinks—five days a week for over a year.

This equaled about 400 milligrams (mg) of caffeine daily, or roughly four cups of coffee, two
See *Coffee 2*, page 18



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Meditation

Continued from Page 12

Breath awareness meditation

Breath awareness is a type of mindful meditation that encourages mindful breathing. Practitioners breathe slowly and deeply, counting their breaths. The goal is to focus only on breathing and ignore other thoughts that enter the mind.

As a form of mindfulness meditation, breath awareness offers many of the same benefits as mindfulness. Those include:

- reduced anxiety
- improved concentration
- increased emotional flexibility

Mantra-based meditation

Mantra-based meditation involves the continuous repetition of a set of syllables, phrases, or words either aloud or silently. A person may perform it with or without religious content.

It works by overriding and redirecting negative thoughts. A 2022 study found it produced small to moderate decreases in anxiety, as well as small reductions in depression. However, study bias and the scarcity of research may weaken these findings.

Transcendental meditation

Transcendental meditation is a spiritual form of meditation where individuals remain seated and breathe slowly. The goal is to transcend or rise above the person's current state of being.

During a session, a person

should focus on a mantra. If they are working with a teacher, they will determine the mantra based on a complex set of factors.

An alternative form allows people to choose their mantra. This more contemporary version is not technically transcendental meditation, though it may look substantially similar. A person might decide to repeat "I am not afraid of public speaking" while meditating.

An older 2014 clinical trial assessed the value of this form of meditation in 40 teachers. The authors concluded that it may help reduce stress, burnout, and depression. However, further research is necessary to verify the results.

Mindfulness-based stress reduction

More than 30 years ago, Jon Kabat-Zinn developed a course in mindfulness-based stress reduction (MBSR) to manage chronic pain and mental health conditions in people who were not responsive to conventional treatment.

The original course lasted 8 weeks and included body scan, belly breathing, yoga, and present moment awareness meditation.

MBSR includes homework involving tasks, such as keeping a positive events log or gratitude journal. Researchers have found that people who participated in MBSR scored significantly better on psychological tests and experienced less pain, according to an older 2014 study.

Guided meditation

The voice of either a live person or a taped recording can act as a guide in directing various types of meditation. This differs from forms of self-guided meditation that an individual's own mind directs.

Someone may use guided meditation for mindfulness or MBSR. People who are new to meditation may wish to start with a guide in some form. A live guide may be available in group settings, while a recording is available via videos, podcasts, apps, and audio recordings.

How long does it take to work?

Meditation is not a results-focused undertaking. Some

practitioners say that fixating too much on the results can provoke anxiety that undermines the benefits of meditation.

However, most research shows that meditation can work quickly. Studies of meditation typically follow individuals for weeks or months, not years. Many report an immediate improvement following a meditation session.

How often to meditate

There is no right answer to this question. One argument is that any meditation is better than no meditation. If a person is only able to meditate once a week, this should not be a barrier to trying out the therapy.

People can consider starting with a few mindfulness sessions per week and increasing the frequency if they feel it is necessary. Meditation may also be a tool someone uses on an as-needed basis.

Disadvantages of meditation

Although meditation is linked to a few risks, very little research has explored the potentially harmful effects. For this reason, it is too soon to make conclusions about its safety.

Research from 2017 investigated the unwanted effects of meditation in 342 participants. It found the most common ones occurred at a rate of 4.2 to 4.6%. They included:

- feelings of being alienated from society
- trouble feeling comfortable in the world
- feeling that something is missing

Most unwanted effects were mild and did not necessitate discontinuing the meditation. Additionally, the effects occurred more often in people who engaged in the practice more frequently and in individual sessions rather than group sessions.

What happens when you stop meditating?

There are anecdotal reports of losing mental clarity and focus when meditation stops. However, based on the previously mentioned research, unwanted effects increase with meditation frequency. This is something to keep in mind because even if negative effects occur

See Meditation 2, page 18

COVID-19 2

Continued from Page 11



A recent study published in the journal PLOS ONE found that people who closely followed a Mediterranean-style eating pattern had lower odds of testing positive for COVID-19. The researchers, led by Dr. Andre Marolop Pangihutan Siahaan of the Universitas Sumatera Utara in Indonesia, analyzed data from over 55,000 participants across six observational studies. They consistently observed an inverse relationship between Mediterranean diet adherence scores and COVID-19 infection rates.

However, it's important to remember that a healthy diet alone is not a panacea. Dr. Siahaan emphasized that diet is just one factor influencing COVID-19 risk and outcomes. "It is important to note that diet alone does not determine the impact COVID-19 may have on an individual," he said. "There are a multitude of factors that play a role including current health conditions, genetic predisposition, level of exposure, organ function, age, metabolic function, and environment just to name a few."

Family medicine physician Dr. David Cutler also cautioned against overstating the significance of the observed correlations

in the absence of clear causation. "Even if there was an association between diet and COVID outcomes, that doesn't imply that there's any cause and effect relationship," he told MNT. "And while that might be interesting, I really don't think it's all that important. I think most people would agree that a Mediterranean diet is a helpful diet and it's a good idea to follow one, regardless of whether or not it changes COVID outcomes."

Lifestyle factors like sleep, stress management, and physical activity also play key roles in overall immune function. Getting recommended vaccines, practicing good hygiene, and following public health guidelines remain critical as well.

Nonetheless, as Richard highlights, focusing on nutrition is an important strategy for strengthening viral protection throughout the cold and flu season and beyond. By filling one's plate with a rainbow of fruits, veggies, legumes, whole grains, and healthy fats, while limiting sugary, highly refined, and heavily processed items, anyone can give their immune system an edge.

—Elliot Mercer

Thyroid drug 2

Continued from Page 13

and slightly low T4 get a diagnosis of subclinical hypothyroidism, which might be treated with levothyroxine.

The letter proposed that by not taking normal seasonal variation in TSH levels into account, many people were being prescribed drugs that might not help them, and they may even experience negative, avoidable side effects.

Deprescribing is an option for patients who experience unpleasant side effects, said Sue Clenton, MD, a consultant clinical oncologist at Weston Park Cancer Centre in Sheffield, U.K.

"Indications for prescribing levothyroxine include elevated TSH levels (indicating an underactive thyroid), fatigue, weight gain, and cognitive slowing. However, deprescribing may be considered if a patient experiences side effects like rapid heart rate, anxiety, or bone loss, or if their thyroid function tests normalize," she explained.

She said the study highlighted "the importance of careful monitoring and individualized treatment plans, especially in older adults."

—Hannah Flynn

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Business Development

3 reasons why your business should ditch paper checks

NATION — Technology has become so ingrained in our daily routines that it feels like paper checks should already be a thing of the past. In fact, many young adults have never even written one, and many major retailers no longer accept them. And in today's era of smartphones, online banking and digital payments, it may be surprising that paper check fraud has more than doubled in recent years.

Accepting paper checks isn't only riskier than ever - they are also more costly, less efficient and take more time to process than before. Even so, 75% of businesses still use paper checks, including many small and midsize businesses (SMBs). If your business is reluctant to give up paper, now may be the time to take the plunge and go digital. The good news is, making the switch is a lot easier now - and today's digital payment processes are faster, safer and more secure than ever before.

Top reasons to go digital

Need help weighing the pros and cons of ditching paper checks? Here's a look at the risks that paper checks can bring, and the advantages of digital payments.

1. Paper checks bring more risks than rewards

Risks from paper checks are at an all-time high, and here's why:

Time is money - Think about it: Checks need signatures and approvals, postage and mailing time - costing more, using more labor and plenty of unnecessary paper. Then there's the postal system, which can delay transactions, and lead to less transparency. Checks also have to clear banks, which may hold funds for a period of time to ensure there are sufficient funds to guard against fraud. And checks with higher dollar amounts are more likely to take longer to clear.

Theft and loss - Checks contain the sender's banking info, leading to security risks if they're lost or stolen. You send banking



details through unsecure channels (the postal service) when a check is mailed, putting that information at risk. For example, one new trend has thieves targeting the "arrow keys" that provide mail carriers with access to USPS mailboxes. And once the sender's information is out there, it can be sold on the dark web and be used to forge additional checks, putting the account balance, the sender's good name and credit score in serious jeopardy.

Your bottom line - Checks have been around for ages and for long-time users, it may seem like their cost is "free," but do you really know the cost of issuing paper checks? It can range from \$4 to \$20 per check - as opposed to only approximately 30 cents for digital payments. Even worse, manual check processing opens more opportunities for errors and lack of visibility - and time and money lost when your business has to track down sent and received checks.

BILL customer and leading plastic and cosmetic surgery practice RenewalMD has experienced the risks of paper checks firsthand: RenewalMD didn't have a good process for accounts payable man-

agement. Their administrative assistant sorted through snail mail and entered bills into their accounting system manually.

"It was a nightmare," recalled RenewalMD COO Scott Regan. "We'd find out later we'd been cutting checks for things that didn't need to be paid."

Then serious financial fraud occurred when someone from another state used their routing and account numbers to write fraudulent checks. Worse yet, their bank wouldn't help them recover the money, and all they could do was close the account.

"I didn't want to write another check on that account," Regan said. "The more checks you have in circulation, the easier it is for someone to lift your routing and account numbers to fake a check."

His team upgraded to financial automation software from BILL, so they now make digital payments quickly, easily and - most importantly - securely.

2. Digital transformation is gaining momentum

Digital transformation is not going away and businesses every-

See Paper checks, page 16

Three ways small businesses can use technology to thrive

NATION - The holiday season is right around the corner, and if recent retail sales forecasts are any indication, it's going to be a massive year for small businesses. The Mintel Holiday Shopping Report 2024 predicts U.S. retail sales in November and December will reach upwards of \$1.07 trillion and people are planning to start their shopping early. Are small businesses ready?

For many small to medium-sized businesses (SMBs), the holidays can make or break their year. Small businesses don't have the same luxury as big corporations and, in most cases, operate with a lean team, tight inventory and limited resources. With this in mind, every second and every dollar matters. So, how can businesses ensure that they're optimizing internal processes and utilizing their employees effectively to drive growth?

Technology can be a powerful enabler, opening up new opportunities and giving small businesses a significant edge toward success. The right technology will allow businesses to reach the right audience, meet customer demand and drive maximum traffic.

Here are three ways SMBs can leverage technology to stand out and scale up this holiday season, from the pros at Lenovo.

Use AI to improve efficiency

AI isn't going to replace people, especially in customer service and sales, and it can be a big help in improving the way owners op-

erate their business. According to the Small Business & Entrepreneurship Council, 75% of small businesses are using AI for a variety of tasks, and nearly half of those report AI allows their (human) employees to focus on more meaningful, higher-level tasks. Whether it's streamlining processes, generating new ideas, tracking inventory or creating custom marketing materials, AI can be molded and incorporated into your business to address your needs. AI can also provide support with analyzing customer data to create targeted advertising and personalized recommendations, automation of repetitive tasks like data entry, and creating chatbots for simple customer service questions or needs, allowing team members to prioritize more complex projects.

Create and optimize an online presence to attract consumers

Consumers expect businesses to have an online presence in addition to a physical presence. In fact, data from Expert Market shows 98% of small businesses have some kind of online presence, however, only 63% have e-commerce integrated into their website. That's a missed opportunity. According to the Mintel report, 82% of people are multichannel shoppers who shop online. Adobe Analytics predicts online holiday sales will top \$240.8 billion this year, with this being the most "mobile" shopping year to date. With all of those online and multi-

See Technology, page 16

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Technology

Continued from Page 15

nel shoppers, small businesses must include ecommerce on their sites to stay competitive.

Improve customer experience

SMBs should ensure they are reaching customers where they are by offering an omnichannel experience. For those with an established online presence, they must continue to incorporate new techniques that elevate their customers' online experience so they continue to return. A robust, user-friendly website with ecommerce creates a great customer experience. You want shoppers to feel as welcome online as they do in your physical business. Chatbots can help out with customer service, personalized email campaigns can make your customers feel seen and heard, while social media marketing can build loyalty, create community and put you in touch with people all over the world. Other tools like customer



relationship management systems can store customer data, track purchase history and provide targeted offers, further upping the relationship level.

By leveraging technology, small businesses can level up just before the holiday rush. Technological advancements will help

small business owners create an engaging, personalized presence for customers and can help run your business more efficiently and smoothly, too. For more information about how technology can help your business, visit [Lenovo.com](https://www.lenovo.com).

—BPT

Death penalty 3

Continued from Page 6

she noted. "And most importantly, we have won convictions and then won our sentencing request for life in prison with no chance for parole, which is in fact a death sentence: a sentence to die in prison."

Proponents of the death penalty argue that resuming executions is a necessary step toward justice for victims and their families. They contend that capital punishment serves as a deterrent to heinous crimes and provides closure to those affected.

Maricopa County Attorney Rachel Mitchell has emphasized the importance of enforcing lawful sentences. While not quoted directly in the provided materials, it is noted that her office has been advocating for the resumption of executions, particularly in cases where all appeals have been exhausted.

The ADCRR's revised protocols aim to address past issues with the execution process. The department has made significant changes, including improved training for execution personnel, better procedures for obtaining and handling lethal injection drugs, and measures to increase transparency during executions.

ADCRR Director Ryan Thornell was credited by Attorney Gen-

eral Mayes for his efforts. "I am grateful to ADCRR Director Thornell for his leadership and the work he has done to increase transparency around the state's death penalty procedures," Mayes said.

However, the details of the revised protocols have not been fully disclosed, leading some advocacy groups to question whether the changes are sufficient to prevent future problems.

Arizona's history with the death penalty has been fraught with controversy. Prior to the 2022 pause, the state faced legal challenges due to difficulties in obtaining execution drugs and concerns over execution methods. In response to these issues, Governor Hobbs ordered the initial review to ensure that executions could be carried out without violating constitutional protections against cruel and unusual punishment. The dismissal of Judge Duncan, who was initially appointed to lead the review, has been a point of contention.

Duncan himself expressed shock at his dismissal. "To me, it was nothing I have seen in my nearly 40-year legal career, and certainly nothing I saw in the worst behavior of lawyers before me when I

was a judge for 17 years, so I was very disappointed," he said in an interview with FOX 10 Phoenix.

The resumption of executions in Arizona reflects a broader national debate over the death penalty. While some states have moved to abolish capital punishment or impose moratoriums, others continue to carry out executions.

Opponents argue that the death penalty is inherently flawed due to the risk of wrongful convictions, high costs associated with capital cases, and ethical considerations. They point to studies suggesting that the death penalty does not effectively deter crime more than life imprisonment without parole and highlight disparities in how it is applied, particularly concerning race and economic status.

Supporters maintain that the death penalty is a just response to the most heinous crimes and that it provides a necessary tool for prosecutors. They argue that with proper protocols and oversight, executions can be carried out humanely and in accordance with legal standards.

As Arizona prepares to carry out its first execution in two years, the state stands at a pivotal moment. The forthcoming execution

See Death penalty 4 page 19

Tipping point 2

Continued from Page 4

establishments, opting instead to raise menu prices and pay employees higher wages. While the initiative initially received praise, it was eventually rolled back during the pandemic as workers expressed concerns about losing income and customers resisted higher prices.

For consumers, the rising prevalence of tipping presents practical and ethical dilemmas. As inflation drives up the cost of goods and services, tipping adds another layer of financial strain. A simple transaction—such as purchasing a coffee or ordering takeout—can become a fraught decision, with customers weighing their budget against social expectations.

Some consumers have begun pushing back, arguing that tipping should be reserved for service-oriented interactions rather than routine transactions. Social media platforms have amplified these sen-

timents, with influencers ridiculing tipping requests for non-service roles. Others advocate for transparency in pricing, suggesting that businesses include service charges or higher base prices to eliminate the ambiguity surrounding tipping.

Not all consumers are opposed to tipping, however. Many still view it as an essential way to support workers, particularly in industries where wages are notoriously low. For these individuals, tipping is a social contract—a way to ensure that workers are fairly compensated, even if the system itself is imperfect.

As tipping norms continue to evolve, some businesses are experimenting with alternatives. A small but growing number of coffee shops and restaurants have adopted no-tipping policies, raising prices to cover higher wages for employees. In Brooklyn, for example, several cof-

See Tipping point 3, page 24

Paper checks

Continued from Page 15

where are reaping the rewards by leveraging technology to better serve their customers and stay ahead of competitors. According to BILL's 2024 State of Financial Automation Report, 90% of SMBs agree that automation is key to improving business efficiency. Although the thought of adopting new technologies may seem daunting, the benefits of going digital are clear:

- **Increased efficiency:** Online payments for businesses can cut the time associated with bill approval by over 50% - helping your business collect money up to two times faster.
- **Enhanced security:** With digital payments, your financial data and documents will be safer due to secure, encrypted, password-protected servers.
- **Better accuracy:** Digital business payments can automatically sync with your accounting software, so the information is never entered twice - making the process of paying and reconciling payments that much more precise.
- **More visibility and control:** Online payments let you track every step, including everyone who touches that payment

within your company and outside of it.

- **Convenience:** Payments can be made from anywhere using any computer or mobile device.

3. Going digital is an easy way to up-level your business

Most importantly, your business needs a simple way to make payments and get paid quickly and securely. Today's digital payment methods make it easier, faster and more secure to pay, receive and track bills - and it's not hard to set up, with leading financial operations platform BILL, which is simple and easy to use. Switching to electronic eChecks/ACH payments or other types of payments saves time on manual tasks while cutting costs of materials like check stock and postage. With help from BILL, your company can:

- Streamline and track payments by choosing your payment method, paying bills and tracking payment information on one platform.
- Be more flexible with all the payment methods you need, when you need them.
- Save time by automating your AP process to eliminate the

See Paper checks 2, page 24

Home Improvement



Ways to keep projects on budget with affordable kitchen and bath products

NATION — With multifamily construction projects reaching as high as \$700 per square foot this year, effective cost planning is essential for any build. Identifying affordable, yet functional products and services across kitchen and bath spaces is an effective way for contractors to reduce excess spending. Other factors to consider when developing a multifamily build are high-quality materials

steel. This material is highly valued for its strength and durability, corrosion resistance, minimal maintenance and aesthetic appeal, making it a reliable choice for commercial-type projects. In multifamily units, stainless steel could be used for interior design and aesthetic features like in railings and handrails, elevator doors and cabins, and even fixtures.

Ceramics are another high-

leak-proof and rarely need repairs, whereas ball valves are more prone to leakage and the ball itself might need to be replaced over time. Brands like Peerless Faucet do a great job at offering high-quality, cost-efficient bath fixtures that not only look good but are incredibly functional. The brand offers ceramic valves across all fixtures, so no matter what contractors choose, they're always guaranteed quality

5 ways to maximize comfort and minimize your energy bill

NATION — As the days grow shorter and temperatures drop, it's time to ensure your home is ready to help keep you warm and comfortable all winter long. From preventing frozen pipes to optimizing heating costs, proactive steps can help safeguard your property and well-being.

"A system tune-up at the beginning of the cold weather season can prevent problems and expensive repairs as the temperatures get more extreme later in the winter," says Jon Ryan, president of Genz-Ryan Plumbing & Heating based in Minnesota and Honeywell Home HVAC customer. "We've been servicing homes for over 70 years - my team has seen it all - and we know that being proactive with system maintenance is one of the best things a homeowner can do to keep their systems running smooth and the home comfortable."

To prepare your home for the cold, consider these tips:

Schedule a Pro to Check the HVAC System

Just like your car, your furnace needs regular maintenance. Contact a professional HVAC technician to inspect and tune up your system to keep it at peak performance. An inspection can

check system performance, air filters, and identify indoor air quality opportunities. Professionals also can check the system for harmful cracks, which could potentially lead to carbon monoxide (CO) seeping into the home.

"Have your heating system serviced every year," suggests Ryan. "As temperatures drop, the use of fuel-burning heaters increases as people try to stay warm, and winter can bring a higher risk of carbon monoxide poisoning - so be sure your professional tests for cracks in the heating unit."

Also be sure your utility room and home are properly outfitted with CO alarms.

Upgrade to a Smart Thermostat

By learning your home's heating trends and adjusting temperatures accordingly, smart thermostats can ensure your home stays comfortable and can help you optimize your energy consumption. For example, during winter, smart thermostats like the Honeywell Home T9 Smart Thermostat can automatically lower temperatures when you're away and increase them as you return, creating a cozy atmosphere without wasting energy through Geofencing technology. Thermostats also

See Energy bill, page 18



and reliable warranty programs. See below for helpful tips and solutions contractors and professionals alike can take into action when embarking on a new project.

Quality and Durability

Selecting quality materials will set up contractors for success in their next project. Quality can dictate overall durability, longevity and in general, less maintenance. Lower quality materials can depreciate at a faster pace and oftentimes require more repairs. Decreasing duplicative spending over a material's life will ultimately create savings that can be leveraged elsewhere.

A cost-effective material contractors often rely on for construction projects is stainless

steel. This material is highly valued for its strength and durability, corrosion resistance, minimal maintenance and aesthetic appeal, making it a reliable choice for commercial-type projects. In multifamily units, stainless steel could be used for interior design and aesthetic features like in railings and handrails, elevator doors and cabins, and even fixtures. Ceramics are another high-

A seamless way to incorporate ceramics in multifamily projects is in fixtures within the bathroom. Ceramic valves are almost

and durability.

Reliable Warranty and Incentive Programs

When beginning a new project, contractors should ensure the products they select have reliable warranties that will repair or replace (free of charge) parts if ever defective. Reliable warranty programs are essential in construction projects like multifamily because they provide a safeguard for financial investment against potential defects or failures in products and materials, while also enhancing trust between suppliers, builders and clients. In fact, many manufacturers also offer extended warranty terms and have local representatives available who can

See Project budget, page 18

Energy bill

Continued from Page 17

offer programmable features that let you effortlessly adjust temperatures based on your schedule. By lowering your thermostat just 7-10 degrees for eight hours a day, you can potentially cut heating costs by 10% annually, according to the U.S. Department of Energy. Plus, many utilities offer rewards for enrolling in demand response programs that can reduce energy consumption during peak times.

Change Air Filters

Regularly replacing your air filters is a proven way to help maintain indoor air quality and support a comfortable environment.

Ryan said: "We get a lot of calls about systems not working properly, and in fact the issue was a result of a dirty air filter."

Clean air filters also help the overall health of your heating system and allow for better air flow, reducing the stress on your home's HVAC system and promoting energy efficiency. Inspect your filter once a month for signs of dirt or dust buildup.

Protect Your Pipes

Following a cold snap, pipes in the home prone to freezing (i.e., pipes on outside walls, in the basement, or crawl spaces), could burst following the water expansion. As the water melts, it could



create costly water damage and disruptions. To help protect your home, cover pipes with insulation and shut off the water supply to outdoor faucets. For added protection, consider installing a First Alert L1 Water Leak and Freeze Detector in areas like basements, laundry rooms and utility closets to effectively detect winter leaks or freezing temperatures and help prevent home damage. Talk to a professional plumber about installing an automatic shutoff valve that can turn off the water to the whole home in case of a leak.

Seal Gaps Around Windows and Doors

Drafty windows and doors can significantly increase your heating costs. To prevent heat

loss, inspect the areas around your windows and doors for gaps. Use weatherstripping to seal cracks and gaps and consider applying caulk to larger openings. For extra insulation, install thermal curtains or blinds. By blocking cold air from entering your home, you'll enjoy a warmer and more energy-efficient living space.

"Just a few easy steps can help make sure your family stays cozy and your home is protected from the havoc winter weather can wreak," said Ryan.

For more winter home preparation tips or to find an HVAC professional visit Honeywellhome.com.

—BPT

Project budget

Continued from Page 17

intervene on your behalf in case of any issues, which in turn, can prevent project delays.

In addition, in many states, there are programs and cost-efficient incentives available to multifamily professionals through tax breaks or direct funding. Building developers may be able to access things like new energy efficient home credits, commercial building deductions and low-income community bonus credit programs. Professionals can find available programs and incentives like these in their state by visiting www.energystar.gov/homesavings or www.dsireusa.org (Database of State Incentives for Renewables and Efficiency).

Ease of Installation and Functionality

With labor accounting for 40-50% of construction project costs, it's crucial for contractors to purchase products that are easy to install and maintain. Easy-to-install products save time, allowing projects to stay on schedule and within budget, while simplifying the work for laborers, potentially reducing the need for specialized skills. Products that are easy to maintain also enhance the long-term value of the project by lowering maintenance costs and reducing downtime for repairs, ensuring the structure remains functional and durable with minimal disruption

over its lifespan.

Peerless designs user-friendly products that make installation a breeze while also allowing for flexibility. For example, in the bath, the Multichoice Universal Valve offers the ability to update shower fixtures without altering the plumbing behind the wall. It also pairs with all shower trims across the Delta Faucet Company portfolio if updating them is ever desired.

Putting It into Action

Cost planning is a critical component for a successful multifamily project. Trade professionals can select high-quality materials to create savings not only for contractors but for future homeowners. Additionally, identifying plumbing that's easy to install and modify will future-proof the build and allow tenants the ability to renovate or swap fixtures as they'd like. Contractors should also ensure that the brands they are selecting are backed with extensive warranties to protect their investment and the livelihoods of those who will be living in the finished units. Professionals should give these cost-effective products and services a gander for their next tasks; cross-reference plans and you're sure to identify savings for your next multifamily or commercial project.

—BPT

Coffee 2

Continued from Page 13

energy drinks, or 10 cans of soda.

The researchers discovered that people who consumed at least 400 mg had increased heart rates and blood pressure over time, and this was even more pronounced for people who consumed 600 mg of caffeine a day.

Commenting on their findings, Nancy Kagathara, MBBS, lead author of this study and researcher in the Department of Internal Medicine at Zydus Medical College and Hospital in India, said: "Due to its effect on the autonomic nervous system, regular caffeine consumption could put otherwise healthy individuals at risk of hypertension and other cardiovascular events. Increasing awareness of these risks is vital to improve heart health for all."

How does coffee or tea

consumption affect stroke risk?

In a nutshell:

According to a study published in the *Journal of Stroke* on September 27, carbonated drinks, fruit juices and drinks, and too much coffee may increase the risk of experiencing stroke and intracerebral hemorrhage. However, the risks associated with these beverages varied depending on the population and where the participants were geographically located.

Key takeaways:

Drinking more than four cups of coffee daily raised the likelihood of a person having a stroke by 37%. However, drinking less than four cups of coffee daily or a moderate amount daily was not associated with an increased risk of stroke.

The data the researchers collected came from a large number of participants from 32 countries.

Among other caffeinated beverages, the researchers found that drinking three to four cups of black tea a day—such as Earl Grey or breakfast tea—lowered the risk of stroke by 29%. However, tea's effects differed according to the region in which people lived.

While the caffeine in coffee can cause an increase in blood pressure and, therefore, increase stroke risk, Christopher Yi, MD, board certified vascular surgeon at Memorial Orange Coast Medical Center in Fountain Valley, CA, who was not involved in the research, said: "Like most things being consumed, moderation is safer than excessiveness."

—Yasemin Nicola Sakay

Meditation 2

Continued from Page 14

when meditation stops, the risk of unwanted effects increases with more frequent use.

Tips for better meditation

Meditation is a process-oriented undertaking that focuses on the moment, not on the results, so enjoying the moment is key to success.

An individual should not judge whether the meditation session is good or bad. Instead, they should simply try to remain in the moment.

Meditation is a skill that takes time to master. Some people feel frustrated and even angry when they first attempt it. Whatever the immediate reaction, a person may wish to persist with their meditation practice to determine if it will

help them.

Some beginners may benefit from enrolling in a class or having the support of a teacher.

Summary

Meditation is a simple strategy that can promote calmness and relaxation. There is no one-size-fits-all form because people have different preferences. Some aficionados may say that the best meditation is the one that an individual enjoys practicing regularly.

It takes time to master, as does any other skill. If a person sticks with it and is willing to experiment with the various methods, they are more likely to discover a meditation type that suits them.

—Peter Morales-Brown

Super Crossword NOT A SINGLE SPOT

- ACROSS**
- 1 Hoover, e.g.
 - 7 Hertz rival
 - 12 Military vehicle for recon
 - 20 Roma's place
 - 21 Go into a major tizzy
 - 22 Worth of a security at its face
 - 23 Rare musical gift
 - 25 Being filmed
 - 26 Aug. follower
 - 27 Feel awful
 - 28 Tree's anchor
 - 30 Sandbox toy
 - 31 Elicitor of a rave review
 - 39 Newton and Asimov
 - 41 Beats of life
 - 42 Klutzy sorts
 - 43 Naiad or dryad
 - 44 Plant swelling
 - 46 Ben of "Zoolander"
 - 49 Mint quality
 - 54 "13th" director DuVernay
 - 55 Styne of song
 - 56 TV spots
 - 57 Vaper's item
 - 58 How-to unit
 - 59 Catch sight of
 - 60 Ostrich's kin
 - 61 Big name in cosmetics
 - 64 Big bees
 - 66 Rainforests and such
 - 69 Round one of the corners in Monopoly
 - 72 Mets' div.
 - 73 Vast span
 - 74 Awful review
 - 77 First-aid plant
 - 78 Purplish berry
 - 79 Derby, e.g.
 - 80 Buffalo's county
 - 81 Aladdin's monkey pal
 - 82 Excellent etiquette
 - 88 Wasn't penned up
 - 90 Levi's, e.g.
 - 91 Start
 - 92 Singer Celine
 - 93 Green sushi condiment
 - 96 "M*A*S*H" actor David Ogden —
 - 97 Famed Steelers play of 1972
 - 102 Cole Porter's "— Love"
 - 103 "I got — in Kalamazoo"
 - 104 Toothpaste tube inits.
 - 105 — kwon do
 - 108 O.J. Simpson trial judge
 - 111 Activity that will be unsuccessful when applied to this puzzle's theme?
 - 117 Hans Christian —
 - 118 JFK Library architect
 - 119 The Beach Boys' "Help Me, —"
 - 120 People giving rubdowns
 - 121 Printer brand
 - 122 Motto
 - DOWN**
 - 1 Big cheeses
 - 2 Suited to —
 - 3 Goldfish and minnows are members of it
 - 4 Samuelsson who got the winning goal in the 1991 Stanley Cup
 - 5 Driver's 180
 - 6 Large parrots
 - 7 Cider fruit
 - 8 Chou En- —
 - 9 Picnic pest
 - 10 Emceeding aid
 - 11 Earthy hues, to Brits
 - 12 Satirizes
 - 13 Division of a long poem
 - 14 Tolkien brute
 - 15 Coll. in the Old Dominion State
 - 16 Home of the NFL's Bucs
 - 17 Symbol of a fresh start
 - 18 Gold-related
 - 19 "Royal," in 20-Across
 - 24 Up to, in brief
 - 29 Metal in rocks
 - 32 Small error
 - 33 German for "eight"
 - 34 Design detail
 - 35 — wrestling
 - 36 Strategy
 - 37 Quaint newspaper section
 - 38 Primary
 - 39 Dressed for nighty-night
 - 40 IHOP topping
 - 44 Result
 - 45 — Moines
 - 46 Autograph: Abbr.
 - 47 All tied up
 - 48 Sharp knocks
 - 50 "You are not!" retort
 - 51 Noble acts
 - 52 "All booked up, sorry"
 - 53 Model Tequila
 - 58 Catch sight of
 - 60 Liverpool loc.
 - 61 Purple flower
 - 62 — acid (fat substance)
 - 63 Irish actor Stephen
 - 64 Allowance
 - 65 Sizable vase
 - 66 Put to work
 - 67 A single time
 - 68 Sports sides
 - 69 Early TV host Jack
 - 70 "Dark Angel" star Jessica
 - 71 Healthy intellectuals
 - 74 Introducing
 - 75 Broadcaster
 - 76 Aeries, e.g.
 - 78 Big primate
 - 79 Clutch sitter
 - 80 Film scorer Morricone
 - 82 — -Z (old Camaro)
 - 83 List of options
 - 84 Partly open
 - 85 Neuwirth of "Cheers"
 - 86 Nonclerical
 - 87 "Me? Never!"
 - 89 Husbands-to-be
 - 93 Tots' haulers
 - 94 — discount
 - 95 Smartphone pic, often
 - 96 Railing sites
 - 97 Sunni's faith
 - 98 Animated 2016 Disney film
 - 99 After a time
 - 100 Sup at home
 - 101 Adobe Acrobat file
 - 106 Forever — day
 - 107 "Manhattan Beach" novelist Jennifer
 - 109 Sooner than, poetically
 - 110 Sch. in Terre Haute
 - 112 Gig hookup
 - 113 FedEx rival
 - 114 Zodiac lion
 - 115 Dallas Stars' org.
 - 116 "Yabba dabba —!"

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117																				
120																				

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Trivia Answers

Questions on page 6

1. Cambodia.
2. Vitamin K.
3. Prince ("Love Symbol #2," a purple shade).
4. "The Drew Carey Show."
5. Wyoming.
6. A hen.
7. "The Shawshank Redemption."
8. State Farm.
9. 2.5 miles.
10. Specialized cells in the pancreas that produce insulin

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Death penalty 4

Continued from Page 16

of Aaron Gunches will be closely watched by both supporters and opponents of the death penalty.

Attorney General Mayes emphasized her commitment to proceeding carefully. "We have worked with ADCRR throughout its process to carefully review and improve the state's death penalty procedures," she said. "I am confident that executions can now proceed in compliance with state and

federal law."

However, advocacy groups remain skeptical. "Implementing procedural changes does not address the fundamental flaws of the death penalty," Death Penalty Alternatives for Arizona stated. "As long as the system is prone to errors and biases, the risk of executing an innocent person remains unacceptably high."

—Jeremy Webb

Homeless programs

Continued from Page 5

line to www.va.gov/homeless/ssvf/index.html for more information.

One additional form of help is available at the nearest VA medical center, where homeless coordinators can provide connection to all the homeless services.

If you are a homeless veteran, or are at risk of becoming homeless, call the National Call

Center for Homeless Veterans at 877-4AID-VET (877-424-3838) for help.

You can also go to the VA's homeless services webpage at www.va.gov/HOMELESS/housing.asp. On that same page, scroll to the bottom for 24/7 chat and a link to the nearest VA medical center.

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Woke politics 2

Continued from Page 7

and the hothouse leftism of college campus could be exported to the country at large. In reality, most people were never on board. Joe Biden wouldn't have won the presidency in 2020 if he'd been woke, and Kamala Harris wouldn't be locked in a tight race now if she were still running on her erstwhile causes.

By no means does this suggest that woke priorities are on their way out. They are still dominant in academia and in other elite institutions, and if she wins, Har-

ris could still pursue them.

Her sincerity is neither here nor there, though. That a politician who marinated for decades in progressive California and who once espoused or sounded favorable to every single woke priority realizes that she can't do so and appeal to a majority of Americans speaks volumes. Harris doesn't have great political instincts, yet even she gets this.

Rich Lowry is editor of the National Review.

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Answers to SuperCrossword on Page 20

Smoking

Continued from Page 11

activation (SCBSCT-BA) — would help boost abstinence, reduce the risk of relapse, and manage the mood changes that can occur when people stop smoking.

In 2019, the team reported positive short- and medium-term results. People who underwent SCBSCT-BA experienced lower rates of depression after quitting smoking and were more likely to abstain from smoking after 3, 6, and 12 months.

6. Hypnotherapy and acupuncture

Some people try hypnotherapy or acupuncture to help them stop smoking. While it may help, there is limited research evidence to support these methods, according to the National Center for Complementary and Integrative Health (NCCIH).

At least one review suggests they may increase abstinence, but researchers need to conduct more studies to confirm this.

The NCCIH recommend people seek out a qualified professional to carry out these treatments if they wish to quit smoking.

7. Lobelia

Anecdotal evidence suggests that lobelia — also called Indian

tobacco — can help people stop smoking.

Experts believe lobeline, the active ingredient in the lobelia plant, works by binding to the same receptor sites in the brain as nicotine. It triggers a release of dopamine, helping with the mood swings and cravings that occur when stopping smoking.

Lobelia may also help clear excess mucus from the respiratory tract, including the throat, lungs, and bronchial tubes that smokers often experience while quitting. However, more studies are needed to determine this conclusively.

8. Vitamins B and C

Various studies suggest that smokers have lower concentrations of circulating B vitamins and lower levels of vitamin C compared with non-smokers.

Smokers often report stress as one of the triggers that increase the craving for a cigarette. B vitamins are known as the “anti-stress” vitamins, which can help balance mood.

Vitamin C is a powerful antioxidant that may help protect the lungs from the oxidative stress that cigarette smoke can cause. Therefore, taking these vitamins may help when stopping smoking.

However, while vitamin B and C supplements may help support people’s health while quitting, they will not help them stop smoking.

9. Use an app to track habits

Habits, such as smoking, trigger in response to certain cues. Research shows that repeating a simple action in one setting can encourage people to carry out that action in similar environments. For example, a person who smokes with their morning coffee may find themselves smoking with coffee at other times.

However, people can also form healthy habits in the same way. A variety of free online apps can help people track their progress. These apps can help track smoking consumption and nicotine-craving cues. People can use this information to plan when and where to reinforce a new healthful habit in place of the old unhealthy behavior.

10. Make a list

For those planning to quit “cold turkey,” making a list to stay motivated may help them when they experience difficulties. These reasons may include:

- improving overall health
- saving money
- setting a good example for children
- looking and smelling better
- taking control and becoming free of dependence

By continually reviewing the list, particularly during challenging moments, a person can train their mind to focus on the positive aspects of their goals and reinforce their will to quit.

11. Practice tai chi

A 2014 study suggests practicing tai chi three times a week is an effective method to

help people either stop smoking or reduce their habit. Tai chi can also help improve blood pressure and reduce stress.

Other research indicates that mind and body practices, such as yoga and meditation, may also help those trying to quit.

Summary

Quitting smoking is beneficial for a person’s health,

and various strategies can help.

A doctor can recommend medications to reduce cravings, while apps and lifestyle changes can boost motivation.

Nicotine replacement patches and other aids to help quit smoking are available for purchase online. However, it may be best to start by asking a doctor for advice.

— Catharine Paddock, Ph.D.

Google

Continued from Page 3

4. Data Sharing with Rivals

Google would be required to share certain data and insights obtained through its monopoly with competing search engines. This measure aims to foster competition and innovation while protecting user privacy through strict safeguards.

5. Prohibiting Self-Preferencing

Google would be prohibited from prioritizing its own services on platforms like Android. It would also be barred from degrading the quality of rival services or interfering with their distribution.

6. Publisher Control over Data

Publishers would gain the right to opt out of having their data collected by Google for AI training or generative AI applications. This provision addresses growing concerns about data privacy and AI-related power consolidation.

7. Public Education Campaign

The states propose that Google fund a campaign to educate consumers on its past illegal practices and highlight available alternatives in search engines.

8. Technical Oversight Committee

A five-member independent technical committee would oversee the implementation and enforcement of these remedies for a decade, ensuring compliance and accountability.

If implemented, the proposed

remedies would mark one of the most significant antitrust interventions in the technology sector since the Microsoft case in the late 1990s. By eliminating exclusivity agreements and requiring divestitures, regulators hope to create a more competitive environment that fosters innovation and diversifies consumer choices.

Smaller search engine providers stand to gain from increased access to distribution channels and the removal of barriers imposed by Google’s exclusive agreements. The data-sharing requirement could further enhance competition by enabling rivals to improve their algorithms and services.

Opponents of the proposed remedies caution that breaking up major assets such as Chrome or Android could lead to unintended consequences. These include potential disruptions to ecosystems relied upon by billions of users and increased costs for consumers. Others argue that such measures might reduce efficiency and innovation in Google’s services.

Despite these concerns, proponents assert that intervention is necessary to restore competitive balance in the digital marketplace. They argue that without such measures, dominant firms like Google will continue to exploit their market power and stifle competition.

The court has scheduled a hearing on the proposed remedies for April 22–May 2, 2025. During this period, Google will have the opportunity to contest the measures and present its arguments. The final judgment will determine the implementation of these remedies and their long-term impact on Google and the broader tech industry.

—Jeremy Webb


Super Crossword

Answers

V	A	C	U	U	M		A	L	A	M	O		S	C	O	U	T	C	A	R					
I	T	A	L	I	A		P	A	N	I	C		P	A	R	V	A	L	U	E					
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For the safety of our four-legged friends pets are discouraged.

M O H A V E COUNTY – Mohave Community College is once again bringing the festive spirit to life with its beloved annual event, MCC Shines. Spanning all four of its campuses, MCC Shines has become a cherished tradition for families and community members in Mohave County. The event, scheduled at various locations and dates throughout December, offers free, family-friendly activities designed to spark holiday joy and build connections within the local communities.

Each campus will host unique experiences

tailored to spread seasonal cheer. From lighting ceremonies and photos with Santa Claus to crafts, live music, and cultural performances, MCC Shines promises a memorable start to the holiday season for attendees of all ages.

A Spotlight on Campus Celebrations

North Mohave Campus (Colorado City)

When: Wednesday, December 4, 6-7 PM

Where: 480 S. Central, Colorado City

Families can enjoy a grand lighting ceremony, cookies, cocoa, and caroling led by El Capitan 6th-grade carolers. Santa will make an appearance for photos, providing a magical moment for children. The

See MCC Shines, page 23

Turn holiday leftovers into Classic Turkey Divan

Turkey Divan: A creamy, cheesy casserole that's comfort food at its finest

NATION — One of the best parts of the holidays is the leftovers. I often end up with leftover turkey breast, and if you do too, you'll love this recipe: Turkey Divan. It features turkey, broccoli and mushrooms in a creamy, cheesy sauce topped with buttery breadcrumbs.

Created in the 1950s by Chef Lagasi at New York City's Chatham Hotel, Turkey Divan was the signature dish of the hotel's Divan Parisien restaurant.

Turkey Divan is great for stretching leftovers and reviving dry turkey breast in a rich sauce. This dish became a leftover staple, often made with canned soups. Our version, however, uses a homemade cream sauce for a velvety, flavorful result.

We make a creamy bechamel sauce directly in the pan with sautéed onions and mushrooms, then add cheese. You can use any meltable cheese — cheddar, Monterey Jack, colby or Swiss. I used white cheddar and Parmesan.

Broccoli is traditional, but feel free to swap cauliflower or a mix of veggies. I've added mushrooms, but you can leave them out (or leave out the mushroom haters -- your choice). Turkey Divan is delicious on its own or served over buttered egg noodles or rice.

TURKEY DIVAN CASSEROLE

Yield: 6 servings

Total Time: 45 minutes

- 1 (16 oz.) bag frozen broccoli florets (5 cups)
- 4 tablespoons butter, divided
- 3 cups cooked turkey breast, cut into 1-inch pieces
- 1/2 cup onion, finely diced
- 8 ounces mushrooms, sliced (about 2 1/2 cups)
- 3 tablespoons all-purpose flour
- 3 cups whole milk, warmed
- 2 cups cheddar cheese, shredded
- 1/4 cup Parmesan cheese, grated
- 2 teaspoon Dijon mustard
- 1/2 teaspoon kosher salt
- 1/4 teaspoon pepper
- 2 tablespoons butter, melted
- 1 cup panko breadcrumbs or substitution (see below)
- Cooked egg noodles or rice for serving (optional)

DIRECTIONS:

Preheat oven to 350 F. Coat a 9-by-13-inch baking dish with cooking spray.

If you have "steam-in-bag" frozen broccoli, cook according to package directions, then place in the baking dish.

See Casserole, page 23



MCC Kingman Community Art Collective's Student Art Show and Sale

MOHAVE COUNTY — MCC's Kingman Community Education Art Club, the Kingman Community Art Collective, will host another Student Art Show and Sale at the College's Beale Street Center at 309 E. Beale St. from 5 – 8 p.m. Friday, Dec. 6 and Saturday, Dec. 7. More than a dozen students from a variety of MCC's Community Education art classes will display artwork while community members will have the chance to purchase their favorite pieces to decorate the home or give as gifts.

Community Education students from Kingman are slated to participate in the art show and sale, the second and final such event of 2024, and the third overall. This will be the first time the show and sale has spanned multiple days, with the upcoming event slated to run alongside the "Live After 5"

and "Street of Lights" events in Downtown Kingman.

The event came to fruition thanks to MCC Community Education Facilitator Delia Munoz, who was looking for a way to give aspiring artists a way to gain experience selling their art. Additionally, the show and sale allows the classes to finish and sell the art to raise funds for more advanced classroom materials and tuition waivers.

"We started the Art Show two years ago to give the community an opportunity to appreciate the



beautiful and creative projects our Community Education students produce in their classes. One of the highlights of my role is seeing instructors and students proudly share their artwork with me," says Lori Gunnette, Associate Dean of Career Training, Professional Development & Community Education. "Now, the community has the chance to not only see the products

See Student art, page 22

Lake Havasu Annual Holiday Boat Parade of Lights returns for 2024

LAKE HAVASU — Lake Havasu City, Arizona, will once again come alive with holiday spirit on December 14, 2024, as the **Annual Holiday Boat Parade of Lights** graces the waters of the Bridgewater Channel beneath the iconic London Bridge. This much-loved event, now held every second Saturday of December, has become a cherished tradition, drawing thousands of locals and visitors to the scenic shores for a spectacular evening of festivity and creativity.

The Parade of Lights will feature over **100 boats** adorned with dazzling holiday lights and festive decorations. From whimsical designs to intricate displays, each boat transforms into a floating masterpiece, glistening against the serene waters of the channel.

The parade will begin at **6 PM** and last until **9 PM**, giving attendees ample time to enjoy the show. Boats will parade through the Bridgewater Channel, offering stunning views for spectators gathered along both shores. Whether you're watching from the English Village, Rotary Community Park, London Bridge Beach, or Lake Havasu State Park, the sight of illuminated boats gliding through the water promises to be nothing short of magical.



Spectators are encouraged to arrive early, as the area around the London Bridge is expected to be bustling with activity. Free parking is available at the English Village, Rotary Community Park, London Bridge Beach, and Lake Havasu State Park. For those seeking an elevated experience, Lake Havasu State Park will offer **free access to the Windsor 4 viewing area**, starting at **4 PM**. This area will also feature designated wood fire pits to keep attendees warm, with firewood provided and controlled by the park staff.

While propane fire pits are allowed, **wood-burning fires** are strictly prohibited at Rotary Community Park, London Bridge Beach, and other locations along the parade route. Additionally, **pets are not allowed** on the white sand beach, and children under 13 must be accompanied by an adult.

For those seeking a unique vantage point, several local tour companies offer **nighttime boat cruises**, providing a front-row seat to the parade action.

Boat owners eager to join the festivities have until **December 6, 2024**, to register their entries. The entry fee is **\$100**, and participants are encouraged to showcase their creativity by designing vibrant, holiday-themed displays for their vessels. Returning participants from the previous year can secure their boat numbers during the priority registration period.

The event's organizer, JJ Gibbs, and the team from "I Love Lake Havasu" are working dili-

Student art

of all the students' hard work but also take their favorite pieces home."

More than 100 pieces of art including ceramics, metalsmithing, glass and lapidary will be available for purchase at the event, the proceeds from which be used to purchase supplies for the artists. The majority of the items will have price tags of less than \$20.

"We invite everyone in the community to visit on Friday, Dec. 6 or Saturday, Dec. 7 to explore the pieces on display," Gunnette says. "It's the perfect opportunity to find unique holiday decorations, and gifts for family, friends or even yourself."

Mohave Community College offers a wide range of Community Education courses, in addition to the arts. For more information on MCC's Community Education offerings, go to <https://www.mohave.edu/upcomingcommunityclasses/>.

The MCC General Educa-

tion and Transfer Division also offers Art and Visual Arts courses in which students can earn college credits. Students enrolled in those programs have the opportunity to earn an associate degree and transfer those college credits to an MCC university partner where they can complete a bachelor's degree. For more information on those college credit programs, please visit <https://www.mohave.edu/academics/certificates/>.

—MCC Newsroom

Continued from Page 21



gently to make this year's parade bigger and better than ever. Prospective participants who experience challenges with the online registration form can contact JJ Gibbs directly at (928) 486-7063 or via email at JJ_Gibbs@hotmail.com for assistance.

"The Boat Parade of Lights is one of the most anticipated events of the year in Lake Havasu City," said a spokesperson for the organizing committee. "It's an event where everyone comes together to celebrate the holidays in a uniquely Havasu way."

- **Arrive Early:** Traffic around the London Bridge area can be heavy, so plan ahead.
- **Dress Warmly:** December evenings in Lake Havasu can be chilly, so bring blankets and warm clothing.
- **Bring Seating:** Lawn chairs or portable seating will make

your viewing experience more comfortable.

- **Respect the Rules:** Adhere to park regulations, including no wood fires or pets in restricted areas.
- **Date:** December 14, 2024
- **Time:** 6:00 PM – 9:00 PM
- **Location:** Bridgewater Channel, beneath the London Bridge
- **Admission:** Free

Whether you're a first-time visitor or a longtime attendee, the Lake Havasu Holiday Boat Parade of Lights is sure to deliver an unforgettable evening of holiday magic. With glittering lights, festive music, and a shared sense of community joy, this event embodies the spirit of the season in a way that only Lake Havasu City can.

For more information, visit the official Lake Havasu tourism website at golakehavasu.com

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MCC Shines

Continued from Page 21

event is organized with support from the Student Activities Council and Phi Theta Kappa.

Bullhead City Campus

When: Thursday, December 5, 5-7 PM

Where: Building 600, 3400 Highway 95, Bullhead City

Featuring crafts with Blaze, MCC's energetic mascot, and festive treats for the first 200 guests, this campus brings the community together with holiday entertainment showcasing cultures from around the world. Santa will also be on hand for photos, spreading joy to attendees young and old.

Lake Havasu Campus

When: Thursday, December 5, 5:30-7:30 PM

Where: Buildings 500 & 600, 1977 Acoma Blvd. West

This event will include ornament-making, a tree-decorating contest, and a performance by the Lake Havasu High School Choir. The evening culminates in a spectacular lighting ceremony, a highlight of the celebration. Santa and Mrs. Claus will be available for photos, making it a night to remember for families.

Kingman Campus

When: Friday, December 13, 6-8 PM

Where: Building 200, 1971 Jager-

son Avenue

The Kingman campus wraps up the MCC Shines series with reindeer-themed games, cookies, holiday punch, and live brass band performances from Kingman and Lee Williams high schools. Santa will meet children for photos, and the first 250 attendees will receive goody bags filled with holiday surprises.

A Holiday Tradition Rooted in Community

Since its inception, MCC Shines has become a staple of the holiday season for residents of Mohave County. The event is more than just a celebration—it's an opportunity for community members to connect, share in the season's warmth, and support the creative talents of local schools and organizations.

"We're thrilled to welcome the community back to MCC Shines," said an MCC representative. "It's a time to come together, celebrate the season, and create lasting memories with friends and family."

Building Lasting Memories

Each campus is infused with its own unique touch, ensuring that no two MCC Shines events are the same. From the multicultural focus of the Bullhead City campus to the musical performances in Lake Havasu and Kingman, attendees can experience a wide array of holiday traditions.

In addition to the festivities, MCC Shines offers an important chance to highlight the college's role in the community. By partnering with local schools, student organizations, and civic groups, MCC reinforces its commitment to fostering a sense of unity and collaboration within Mohave County.



How to Join the Fun

MCC Shines is free and open to the public. Families are encouraged to bring their cameras to capture moments with Santa, as well as their holiday spirit to share in the festivities. For more information about MCC Shines or other events at Mohave Community College, visit calendar.mohave.edu or call the MCC main line at 866-664-2832.

Casserole

Continued from Page 21

If your broccoli needs to be cooked on the stovetop, use a skillet, no need to dirty another pan. In a large skillet, simmer 1/2 cup water over medium-high heat, add broccoli, cover, and return water to a simmer. Cover and cook until tender, about 5 minutes. Drain well and transfer to your baking dish; set aside. Wipe out skillet and return to stove.

Melt 1 tablespoon of butter over medium heat. Add the turkey and cook until heated through. Transfer to your baking dish with the broccoli, set aside.

In the same skillet, melt 2 tablespoons butter, add onion, and cook until softened. Add mushrooms and cook until tender and browned, about 6-7 minutes. Add 1 more tablespoon of butter, sprinkle flour over the onion-mushroom mixture, and stir for 2 minutes to cook the flour.

Reduce heat to low and slowly add warm milk, stirring until thickened, about 8 minutes. Gradually add both cheeses, allowing



each addition to melt. Stir in Dijon mustard, salt and pepper.

Pour the sauce over the turkey and broccoli, toss gently to distribute sauce. Combine the butter and panko crumbs, stirring until crumbs are moistened. Sprinkle on top of casserole before baking.

Bake for 20-25 minutes until golden and bubbly. Let cool for 15 minutes. Serve over noodles or rice if desired.

No leftover turkey? No problem! Use chicken, rotisserie chicken, pork or ham instead.

Some ideas to use in the crumb topping besides panko crumbs would be Parmesan, cracker crumbs, breadcrumbs, potato chips, crispy fried onions, chopped nuts, crispy rice cereal or corn flakes.

— Patti Diamond



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The Staff of Bug Emergency Pest Control wish you a Merry Christmas and invite you to their new location. Receive a FREE coloring sheet and candy gift bag as children await for Santa and his helpers to arrive escorted by police vehicles, Monday, Dec. 16th at 6:15 p.m.



This volunteer project is brought to the community by the Fraternal Order of Police Lodge #50 of Bullhead City



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Cardiovascular 2

Depending on the condition, a healthcare provider may also seek to stabilize heart rhythms, reduce blockages, and relax the arteries to enable a better flow of blood.

Risk factors

Researchers reported in the journal *JAMA* that the lifetime risk of CVD is more than 50% for both men and women. Their study paper notes that even among those with few or no cardiovascular risk factors, the risk is still higher than 30%.

Risk factors for CVD include:

- high blood pressure, or hypertension
- atherosclerosis or blockages in the arteries
- radiation therapy
- smoking
- poor sleep hygiene
- high blood cholesterol, or hyperlipidemia
- diabetes
- a high fat, high carbohydrate diet
- physical inactivity
- obesity
- sleep apnea
- excessive alcohol consumption
- stress
- air pollution
- chronic obstructive pulmonary disorder or other forms of reduced lung function

People with one cardiovascular risk factor often have more. For example, obesity

Continued from Page 17

is a risk factor for high blood pressure, high blood cholesterol, and type 2 diabetes. A person may have all four conditions at the same time.

Causes

Many types of CVD occur as a complication of atherosclerosis. Damage to the circulatory system can also result from diabetes and other health conditions, such as a virus, an inflammatory process such as myocarditis, or a structural problem present from birth (congenital heart disease).

CVD often results from high blood pressure, which produces no symptoms. It is therefore vital that people undergo regular screening for high blood pressure.

Prevention

Many types of CVD are preventable. It is vital to address risk factors by taking the following steps:

- reducing the use of alcohol and tobacco
- eating fresh fruit and vegetables
- reducing salt, sugar, and saturated fat intake
- avoiding a sedentary lifestyle, particularly for children

Adopting damaging lifestyle habits, such as eating a high sugar diet and not getting much physical activity, may not lead to CVD while a person is still young, as the effects of the condition are cumulative. However, continued exposure to

these risk factors can contribute to the development of CVD later in life.

Does aspirin protect a person from CVD?

Many people will have taken an aspirin a day as a routine measure to protect against CVD. However, current guidelines no longer recommend this for most people, as it can lead to bleeding. This risk outweighs any benefit it may have.

That said, a doctor may suggest aspirin if a person has a high risk of experiencing a cardiovascular event, such as a heart attack or stroke, and a low risk of bleeding. Doctors may also recommend it to those who have already had a heart attack or stroke.

Anyone taking a daily dose of aspirin to reduce their risk of CVD should ask their doctor whether or not they should continue.

Statistics

According to the World Health Organization (WHO), CVD is the leading cause of death worldwide. In 2016, around 17.9 million people died from CVD, accounting for 31% of all registered premature deaths. Of these, 85% resulted from a heart attack or stroke. These conditions affect equal numbers of men and women.

The WHO estimate that by 2030, 23.6 million people will die from CVD conditions annually — mostly due to stroke and heart disease. Although these conditions remain prevalent in global mortality rates, people can start taking steps to prevent them.

- **Q:** Can I receive regular screenings to prevent CVD if I have no symptoms?
- **A:** Yes. Everyone, even those with no symptoms, should receive regular screenings for CVD, starting from the age of 20 years.

The frequency of screening and the type of screening will depend on the current risk factors and any other medical problems. Discuss screening with a doctor, as it's never too early to start.

—Adam Felman

Tipping point 3

fee shops now include tax and gratuity in their menu prices. While this simplifies the customer experience, it also results in higher sticker prices, which can alienate budget-conscious patrons.

Other establishments have implemented mandatory service charges, distributing the proceeds among staff. This approach aims to provide consistent compensation while removing the discretionary nature of tipping. However, mandatory charges have their own challenges, as some customers view them as an unwelcome imposition.

Proposals to eliminate the tipped minimum wage, which remains as low as \$2.31 per hour in some states, have gained trac-

Continued from Page 16

tion. Advocates argue that raising the federal minimum wage for all workers would reduce dependence on tips and create a more equitable system. Opponents, however, worry that higher wages could lead to increased prices or reduced employment opportunities in the service sector.

The future of tipping in the United States remains uncertain. While the practice is deeply ingrained in American culture, its expansion into new contexts has sparked significant pushback. As these debates unfold, they reflect broader questions about labor, equity, and the values that underpin the nation's service economy.

—Stephen Lightman

Paper checks 2 *Continued from Page 16*

- manual process of paying bills.
- Manage cash flow with payment flexibility and full documentation that puts you in control.
- Stay in sync thanks to digital payments that automatically sync with your favorite accounting software.
- Reduce risk of check theft and fraud with secure digital payments.

BILL customer and hospice innovator BetterRX has seen the benefits of eliminating manual financial processes and going digital: Before using BILL, BetterRX often paid invoices with paper checks, so staff members had to travel to the office to sign and mail them. With BILL, BetterRX optimized their financial operations within a single platform, eliminating these manual processes - and the need to be tethered to a physical office.

"We've been fully remote for years, thanks in part to BILL," said Randi Letendre, CFO of BetterRX. "This lets our people work from all over the world, accessing the platform anywhere, even from phones and other devices."

Being able to better optimize cash flow through digital automation is a key differentiator for SMBs seeking a competitive edge. Having a choice in payment options helps SMBs transact quickly, securely and efficiently. BILL offers all of this and more to SMBs. Not only can you use BILL's eight different pay-

ment modalities, but you can also benefit from the flexibility of BILL's payment innovations, such as:

ACH payments: ACH via BILL is fast, more secure than paying through your bank's ACH and has low processing fees.

International wire transfers: BILL international payments can be sent from the U.S. to 137 countries and via 106 currencies. BILL offers a \$0 wire transfer fee and competitive exchange rates when paying in local currency.

Credit cards: BILL credit card payments are quick, allowing you to optimize your cash flow through deferred payments, while you earn points, miles, cash rebates and more.

Virtual cards: BILL's one-time-use credit card tokens are perfect for businesses that want a fast, secure, cost-effective payment solution.

Real-time payments: RTP is best for businesses that need to make urgent/time-sensitive payments within seconds or have receivers who need early access to funds. BILL RTPs can be processed 24/7, 365 days a year, including holidays and weekends.

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—Mary Kay Bowman



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