



NEWSBRIEFS

No drugs for Xmas

Agents in the El Paso sector seized marijuana and cocaine worth almost \$1 million last week. The marijuana seizure was near Ft. Hancock at about 8 a.m. on Monday when agents stopped a suspicious vehicle and a canine alerted on the bed of the truck. In a separate seizure near Las Cruces that day, agents seized 11 pounds of cocaine in a fabricated compartment in a truck after a canine alerted to the transmission area.

Year-end work news

Here's some good news — according to a recent survey by AccounTemps, a staffing agency, 72 percent of the workers who made career-related resolutions at the beginning of last year achieved their goals. The bad news is that only 12 percent of the workers surveyed actually made resolutions of any kind. As for 2007, a new survey finds that of 599 workers surveyed, 24 percent have set goals. Enhancing their skills was number one. Earning a raise or promotion came in a close second. As for time off, being a worker rather than a senior executive may allow you to truly "leave work at work." According to an OfficeTeam survey of 150 senior executives and 559 full or part-time workers, the managers stayed tied to the job. Forty three percent of managers said they worked at least a few times a week while on vacation, and 33 percent said they did everyday while on vacation, via electronic communication or by phone. Of the employees only 10 percent did everyday and 54 percent said they never did.

Transplant needed

Steven Gonzalez needs a bone marrow transplant and it will cost \$90,000 to do it. His friends and family in the Friendswood, Texas area and the Children's Organ Transplant Association are asking for donations to save his life. Steven is the son of Rosie and Steven Gonzalez Sr. He has a sister, Sabrina. He has been diagnosed with Acute Myelogenous Leukemia. Individuals and groups interested in assisting can contact Campaign Coordinator Linda Bankerd at 281-890-7571 or linda.bankerd@hp.com. Donations may be made directly to Bank of America branch locations to the account number 488002987565, or sent to COTA "In Honor of Steven Gonzalez" at 2501 COTA Drive, Bloomington, Indiana, 47403.

In other news

■ The 8th Annual National Cheer Association (NCA) and the National Dance Alliance (NDA) Americas Cup 2007 will be on Feb. 2 and Feb. 3 in the Americas High School Blazer Gym. This event is open to all teams and all grades and levels: Elementary, Middle, Junior High and High

See BRIEFS, Page 4

He who receives a good turn should never forget it; he who does one should never remember it.

— Quips & Quotes



UP IN FLAMES — As a result of hazardous electrical overload, there was a major fire at 749 Ascension on Nov. 26, in which several mobile homes at this location were destroyed. Three days later it was discovered that a gasoline-powered generator had been brought to the property as a power source since the electricity had been shut off due to the fire.

Landlord convicted of housing families in dangerous conditions

By Elhiu Dominguez
Special to the Courier

HORIZON — A landlord who had several families, including half a dozen children, living in dangerous and unhealthy conditions was successfully prosecuted last week by El Paso County Attorney José R. Rodríguez.

Luis Torres, the owner of a trailer park located at 749 Ascension Rd. in the Horizon area, was found guilty of one violation of the Texas Water Code (failing septic system) and of another public nuisance charge of unsanitary and fire-hazard conditions at his property.

Justice of the Peace Precinct 6, Rubén Luján, sentenced Torres to pay a \$259 fine for the septic tank violation, and to pay \$200 plus court costs for the public nuisance violation. The defendant was also ordered to abate the nuisances, and was prohibited from leasing or otherwise inhabiting any dwelling at 749 Ascension. Torres will also have to remove all but one dwelling, install a new septic system, and re-apply with the El Paso county Road and Bridge Department for a certificate of compliance to obtain electrical power and water

for his property.

The charges originated from an incident in September 2006, when a resident reported a spill of raw sewage underneath a mobile home at 749 Ascension. An investigator from the El Paso City-County Health District found several families living in buildings with missing walls and leaky roofs. The investigator also found evidence of cockroach infestation in one kitchen and bathroom.

Some residents complained of sewage discharging underneath some of the four mobile homes on-site. The investigator also reported multiple dwellings connected to only one septic system, and numerous electrical extension cords running from unauthorized circuit breaker boxes to some of the dwellings, and from room to room throughout the trailer park. Some of the extension cords were running on the ground and were frayed.

Torres was issued two violation notices asking him to abate the nuisances; he was also told that the multiple electrical extension cords were a fire hazard and that he had to disconnect them.

Two months later, on November 26, 2006, a fire caused by an electrical short was reported

at the same address. Three mobile homes were burned and several families were displaced as a result of the fire.

The next day another inspector from the Health Department was called to the same address to investigate a complaint of overflowing sewage from the septic tank. The inspector confirmed several families with young children were still living on the property even though there was no electrical power because of the fire. Witnesses observed children wading through the sewage.

On Nov. 29, 2006, two of the El Paso County Attorney's Office investigators discovered that Torres had obtained a gasoline-powered generator and was distributing electricity through extension cords to several families living in the apartments and mobile homes that were not burned.

Because of the impending freezing temperatures over night, the investigators and El Paso County Emergency Services District No. 1 Fire Chief Stephen Hoeller were able to obtain shelter for the families. The Baptist Church and El Paso Baptist Association

See LANDLORD, Page 4

\$42 million in illegal drugs confiscated throughout 2006 by Stash House Unit

By Darrel Petry
Special to the Courier

EL PASO COUNTY — The West Texas HIDTA Stash House Unit comprised of Investigators from the El Paso Police Department, Drug Enforcement Administration, and El Paso County Sheriff's Office has seen continued success in 2006. The unit has seized 33,116.24 pounds of marijuana, 214.89 pounds of cocaine and charged 176 individuals with drug-related offenses as of the end of November. The street value of the marijuana seized is \$26,492,992.00. The street value of the cocaine is \$15,628,363.60. The combined street value of the illegal narcotics taken off the streets by the West Texas HIDTA Stash House Unit is \$42,121,355.60 as of the end of November.

The West Texas HIDTA Stash House unit would like to remind the public of indicators that a house in your neighborhood may be used as a stash house.

These houses are usually rentals with attached garages; have unkempt yards and little, if any, furniture. Occupants usually keep to themselves, are not visible on a daily basis and do not hold to a normal pattern of lifestyle such as putting out the trash regularly or gathering advertisements off the front walk. There may be sudden episodes of activity around the home after weeks of apparent vacancy.

There are usually many different vehicles parked at the residents, especially vans and pickups, which enter and exit the garage frequently. These vehicles usually have out-of-town state plates from New Mexico, Mexico or "buyer" or "dealer" paper plates.

These are some of the typical indicators of a stash house. However, these indicators alone do not necessarily mean that the occupants of the home are running a stash house. As a general rule, if residents believe there is suspicious activity in a home in there area they should call the West Texas Stash House Unit at 629-8600 or Crime Stoppers at 566-8477(TIPS).

Local organizations to participate in MLK canned food drive

By Jack Galindo
Special to the Courier

EL PASO COUNTY — On the third Monday in January, people across the country will pay homage to the legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. by serving those in their communities who are less fortunate.

In 1994, congress ratified the King Holiday and Service Act bringing King's vision of public service and non-violent social change once again to the forefront of the American conscience. Since then, the Corporation for National and Community Service in partnership with the Martin Luther King Jr. Center for Non-Violent Social Change, and communities across the country have worked to make the King holiday a day "on," instead of a day off. The idea is to encourage people to volunteer on the third

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One perspective

By Francis Shrum

A credible source

It's the stuff of legends. Urban legend that is. That's what folks nowadays call folk tales and fables. As history proves, some legends began in truth.

There are two really big problems with the internet and our ability to snatch information right out of thin air. First, it is incredibly easy to spread unverified information quickly. Secondly, once received, it is very difficult to verify if that information is factual.

There is a message entitled "How Long Do We Have?" that has circulated widely across the electronic landscape of America following the last Presidential election. There is

little doubt that the ideas quoted in the message were composed sometime around the early 1800s but there is plenty of disagreement over who did the authoring.

The quote goes something like this: "A democracy cannot exist as a permanent form of government. It can only exist until a majority of voters discover that they can vote themselves largess out of the public treasury.

"The majority always votes for the candidates who promise the most benefits from the public treasury, with the result that every democracy will finally collapse due to loose fiscal policy, which is always followed by a dictatorship.

"The average age of the world's greatest civilizations from the begin-

ning of history, has been about 200 years. During those 200 years, these nations always progressed through the following sequence: From bondage to spiritual faith; from spiritual faith to great courage; from courage to liberty; from liberty to abundance; from abundance to complacency; from complacency to apathy; from apathy to dependence; from dependence back into bondage."

The message attributes the quote to Alexander Tyler, a Scottish history professor at The University of Edinburgh, in a 1787 book entitled *The Fall of The Athenian Republic*.

According to the research website snopes.com — which major search engines usually run right up front when it comes to urban legends — they can verify that the professor existed, though history spells his name several different ways. However, they can't find the book nor the quote in any of his writings.

Further research turns up that variations of these words have been quoted as far back as 1804. They've

also been used by Strom Thurmond, Ronald Reagan, Bill Moyers and P.J. O'Rourke, and attributed to more sources than most people have fingers.

No one, however, including the research departments of *The New York Times* and *American Notes & Queries*, have been able to pinpoint the exact origin. Researcher Loren Collins said the fluidity of this quote is more common to a proverb.

"(I) suspect that these quotes were probably coined by separate individuals in the first half of the twentieth century... The passage of time merely encouraged quoters to attach an author's name that strengthened the authority behind the words," Collins wrote. "Anonymous quotes... should not be given fictitious attributions merely to lend credence to the messages they impart."

I'd have to agree on that point.

On the other hand, I'd say these words, like most proverbs, need no documented source to be credible.

History alone is witness to their voracity and the behavior of human governments are their origin. Over and over again.

Many Americans in leadership today — especially those of us who are second or more generation — are children reaping the rewards of the sowing done by our ancestors. We've grown up in a beautiful bubble, isolated from the terrors of deprivation and warfare that stalk much of the earth.

Now the borders are encroaching and those outside want inside and we are ill prepared in courage or character to deal with the challenge, having grown soft and complacent ourselves. We didn't earn what we have so we never learned to value and manage it properly, let alone share it with wisdom and compassion.

So where are we now on the so-called "Fatal Sequence" in the message? Sender of the message says as a nation we are somewhere between complacency and apathy. Individually, the answer lies within ourselves.



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Write stuff

Dear Editor:

(The recent) well-publicized immigration raid on the Swift & Co. meatpacking plant in Cactus, in the Texas Panhandle, serves as a troubling reminder that our immigration system is broken and needs to be fixed.

Texas businesses want and need to follow the law. Unfortunately, they lack a sensible and reliable system to verify an employee's legal status.

Employers are forced to navigate tricky waters each time they make a hire. Texas businesses must deal with complex immigration regulations; a glut of seemingly valid, but sometimes counterfeit, worker identification documents; and the threat of discrimination lawsuits if they ask the 'wrong' questions about employees' documents.

Enforcement alone will not fix our immigration system, and it has failed in the past. We can't just build walls around a broken system — we need to fix the system to make sure we achieve real security, restore law and order and have enough workers to continue growing our economy.

It is time for a serious solution to this serious challenge. It is time for Congress to act.

Bill Hammond
President, Texas Association of Business
Austin

Dear Editor:

So, state lawmaker Rep. Edmund Kuempel (TX) wants to help hunters who are legally blind by allowing them to use laser sights to tar-


get animals.

What's he going to do to help hunters who aren't visually impaired but still can't shoot straight?

Hunters have shot — and sometimes killed — other hunters, people walking their dogs, people tending to disabled cars alongside the road, people sleeping in their beds (yes, inside their homes), and sometimes, themselves. Other hunters injure themselves falling out of tree stands, they get lost in the woods, or they suffer heart attacks because their bodies are not used to anything more demanding than changing channels with the remote.

For the sake of both animals and humans alike, hunters (legally blind or not) should lay down their weapons and stick to less dangerous pursuits, like bingo or shuffleboard.

Paula Moore
People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA)
Norfolk, VA



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County attorney wins argument over responsibility of bail bond companies

By Elhiu Dominguez
Special to the Courier

EL PASO COUNTY — El Paso County government will be able to collect thousands of additional dollars yearly from bail bond companies, and District and County Judges all over the state will have better control of their criminal dockets, according to legal arguments brought forward by El Paso County Attorney José R. Rodríguez.

On Nov. 30, 2006 the Court of Appeals of the Eighth District of Texas declared unconstitutional a legal loophole approved in 2003 by the Texas Legislature that removes the financial incentives for bondsmen to keep track of defendants and make sure they appear in court.

The legal decision arose from a 2004 case, where Rocky Bail Bonds refused to resolve a bail bond case after its client failed to appear in court. Rocky Bail Bonds argued that Article 22.13 (a) (5) of the Code of Criminal Procedure exonerated him from having to pay the forfeited bond.

The law absolves bail bond companies from liability if the accused who missed court is apprehended by a law enforcement agency within a certain period of time — six months in the case of a misdemeanor; nine months in the case of a felony. The amendment was approved in 2003 during the 78th Legislative Session.

Assistant County Attorney Arne Schonberger explained that bail bond companies were using the loophole to refuse or delay payment of forfeited bonds, even though their clients failed to appear in court. It is estimated that the County of El Paso failed to collect nearly \$200,000 since the amendment went into effect.

The County Attorney's Office successfully argued that, by not forcing bail bond companies to pay the forfeited bonds immediately after a defendant failed to appear in Court, the statute effectively limited the District Judges' control over their dockets. The statute also eliminated their ability to enter judgment amounts which reflected the evidence submitted in the case.

The constitutionality of the statute

was first challenged by the El Paso County Attorney in a felony bail bond forfeiture case pending before the Honorable Yvonne Rangel of the 171st District Court. The bondsman appealed, but the Court of Appeals sustained the ruling of Judge Rangel.

The Eighth Court of Appeals held the Texas statute to be unconstitutional because it violated the Separation of Powers Doctrine. The result of the ruling is that trial court judges can once again set a bail bond forfeiture case for final hearing at any time which fits the Court's docket. Upon hearing the case, the judge can enter a judgment up to the full amount of the original bail bond.

However, the litigation involving this issue might not be over. It is expected that the Texas bondsmen will appeal the decision all the way to the Texas Court of Criminal Appeals, the equivalent to the Texas Supreme Court in criminal cases.

Assistant County Attorney Arne Schoenberger said "This decision helps courts protect the public by forcing bondsmen to do their job: making sure the defendants come to court to face justice."

What’s up, doc? By Albert Balesh, M.D.

Setting sons

The next time you go down to your friendly, neighborhood physician, be sure to wish him or her a fond farewell. The sun may be setting on our illustrious healers, who appear bent on going the way of bobby socks, juke boxes, and barber shop poles in the continuing saga of vanishing Americana.

We have no one to blame for this but ourselves. We were just not hungry enough, and we let our guard down. Our elite position in the world’s pecking order burned stone cold, as legions from Bangalore and other faraway places fueled a reverse brain drain that now threatens the U.S. medical sacrosanct and weakens the very foundations of our medical institutions. Think about that when you try to decipher the names and places etched in cursive ink in your medical chart, that is, if you are even provided an opportunity to view such a document and navigate its hieroglyphics.

Now, while there are positives to the outsourcing of U.S. medicine, I prefer to concentrate on the negatives, in order to possibly salvage that which I believe in and hold most dear.

I did not become a physician to observe glory’s wane and the baton passed into the hands of a foreign infidel whose primary concern is financial. While you may or may not agree with what I have to say, you cannot negate the main premise of this piece: that rising health care costs have driven federal and local authorities, large corporations, major health care institutions, and heads of house-

holds to seek cost-cutting alternatives to “greenback hemorrhage.” If, however, the main impetus for change is strictly monetary, we are inadvertently inviting an unwelcome guest to dinner who will most certainly overstay his or her welcome.

It goes without saying that outsourcing medical expertise and judgment to exotic places creates a fertile environment for the germination of charlatans in the ranks of competent providers. How will we differentiate well-schooled and weathered medical professionals from the chaff, when different laws, value systems, and licensing criteria cloud the transparent process of medical qualification uniformity?

Human nature being what it is, patients are always going to need, as well as choose, local physicians and hospitals. We must accede to those preferences in a truly connected and digitized world by finding ways to provide the highest standard of medical care at the lowest price. A competitive edge we lost some time ago must be regained. Otherwise, U.S. physicians will be relegated to the same junkyard populated by the U.S auto, manufacturing, and textile industries.

Many argue that technology has provided a cost-effective means for the U.S. health care market to remain solvent via cheap, remotely placed language interpretation services, reading of radiographs, interpretation of laboratory tests, patient monitorization through electronic intensive care units in real time, billing, and other varied medical services by lower-wage foreign professionals whose appetites for material gain

have paled in comparison to those exhibited by their American counterparts. Furthermore, non-U.S. physicians are all too happy to buttress fiscally challenged U.S. hospitals and to free domestic providers from off-hour duties and round-the-clock services. Therein lies their attractiveness.

Beware of what you ask for, however! We, as a nation, must pose two questions: are we willing to put American physicians out of work for the sake of lower prices? And how much money are we going to borrow from China to rebuild our failing health care system? If we cannot find answers to these queries, then I’m afraid the future health of our nation looks grim. We must be pragmatic, and, generally speaking, that means an open-minded change in course, policies, and doctrine when they do not work. Specifically, while we seek better training, technical skills, and delivery systems for our health care professionals and institutions, we must not lose sight of the fact that low-tech is not a bad thing. Local doctors and hospitals can go far by enhancing those proven practices and patient empathy, which are best delivered in person. Building on what they already do best, while at the same time increasing their competitiveness in the world arena, will keep our physicians closer to home, even as the outsourcing controversy continues.

As our sons and daughters begin to set, this is no time to bury our heads in the sand!

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View from here By Llewellyn H. Rockwell, Jr.

The real cause of blackouts is not deregulation

This summer, major parts of Queens, New York, were without electricity following a failure of power that plunged much of the city into darkness amidst sweltering heat for more than a week.

For many, it was the Ten Days of Hell. There were thousands without air conditioning, lights, refrigeration, internet connections, and modern life generally.

And get this: no one is sure why, precisely, it happened, other than to say that the system became overloaded.

What will happen as a result? Hearings, reports, meetings, yammering, resolutions, reforms, and, in time, another blackout followed by hearings, reports, meetings, etc.

What do the consumers do about it? They follow the news and keep paying the bills, to the same company that let them down. They can’t switch. They can’t influence the production process. They are powerless — in more ways than one.

Meanwhile, on the other side of the country, California residents are putting up with blackouts, threats of more blackouts, denunciations from politicians, and even death: 56 people so far.

And in Texas, “consumer advocates” are pushing for re-regulation of electric rates, having most recently convinced regulators to keep companies from terminating service to cus-

tomers who don’t pay their bills.

All because of a heat wave, and all because the structure of the industry is not designed for extremes.

Now, if markets were in charge, a heat wave would not be looked at as a problem but an opportunity. Entrepreneurs would be swarming to meet demand, just as they do in every other sector that is controlled by markets. The power companies would be praying for heat waves!

After all, do shoe manufacturers see a massive increase in footwear demand as a problem? Do fast food companies see lunchtime munchies as a terrible threat? On the contrary, these are profit opportunities.

Just who is in charge of getting electricity to residents? Public utilities, which usually means “state-run” and “state-managed” enterprises, perhaps with a veneer of private trappings.

This centralization and cartelization began nearly a century ago, as Robert Bradley points out in *Energy: The Master Resource*, when industry leaders agreed to price controls based on a cost-plus formula in exchange for franchise protection from market competition — a formula that survives to this day.

Then the economists got involved *ex post* and declared that electrical power is a “public good,” under the belief that private enterprise is not up to the job of providing the essentials

of life.

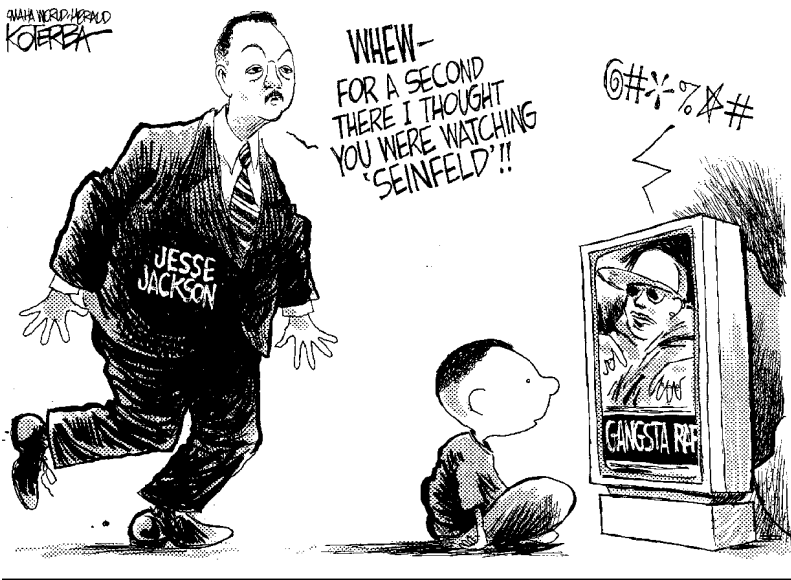
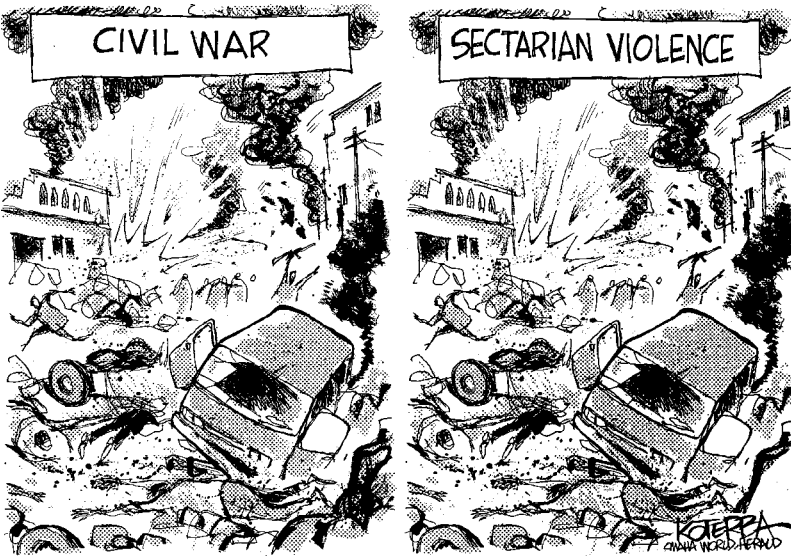
In this system, the priorities of regulators rather than customers are the focus — thus entrepreneurial development is hindered. Entrepreneurs and investors do not compete for the opportunity to meet growing consumer demand. Instead, the system has become focused on limiting consumer demand.

Markets don’t criticize us for our “consumerism” and “greed”; if anything, these things are courted and encouraged. Indeed, isn’t this why markets themselves are criticized? They encourage consumers to spend, spend, spend, consume, consume, consume. Today, however, we are criticized for not wanting to live in 90-degree houses and sleep in puddles of sweat.

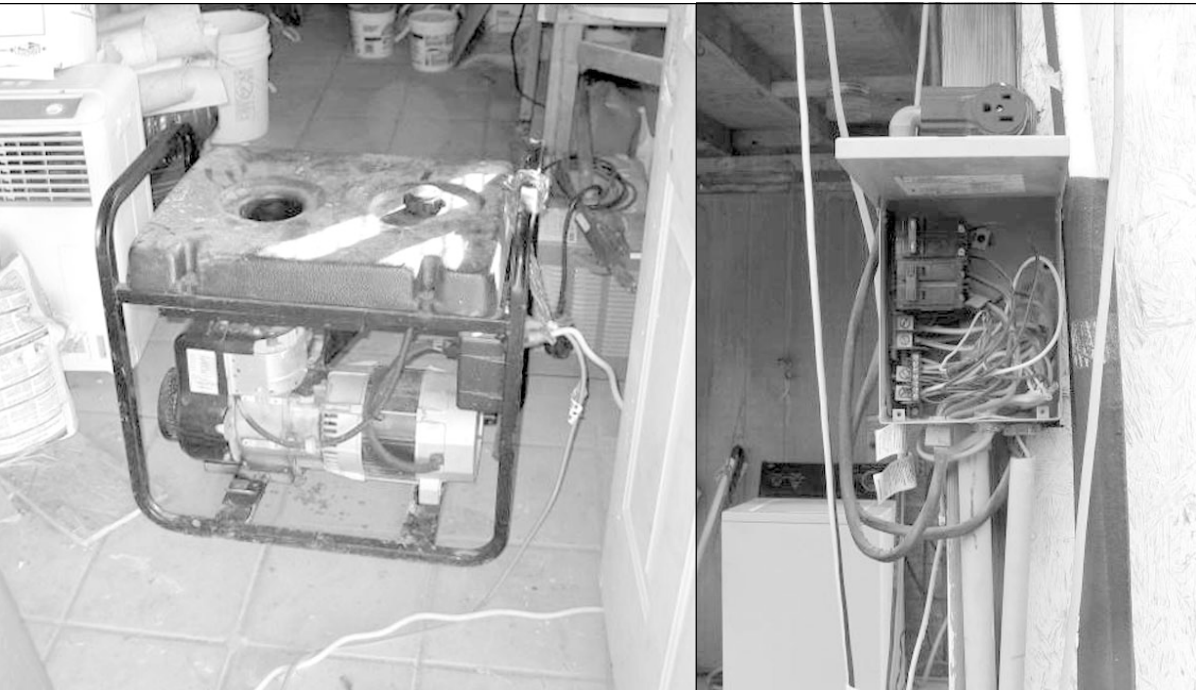
How New York, California and Texas consumers would adore a setting in which power companies were begging for their business and encouraging them to turn down their thermostats to the coldest point. Competition would lead to price reductions, innovation, and an ever greater variety of services — the same as we find in the computer industry.

The Texas Public Policy Foundation has documented some of the benefits to Texas consumers due to the state’s partial deregulation of electric

See DEREGULATION, Page 4




Moore Texas by Roger T. Moore Desperate early South Texas settlers made a bitter coffee substitute out of Mesquite Beans.



UNSAFE WIRING — Unauthorized circuit breaker boxes and a gasoline-powered generator were host to a deadly mish-mash of electrical cords running throughout set of dwellings at 749 Ascension being rented out by Luis Torres. Overflow from an over-loaded septic system on the property was also creating a major health risk.

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Landlord

From Page 1

provided additional shelter. In early December the water service was disconnected after the Health Department revoked Torres’ license to operate the septic system at 749 Ascension.

“Every time we find cases like these where landlords have families living in substandard conditions, we face a big challenge trying to prosecute and find a proper punishment for whoever is responsible, because in Texas county governments lack the power to enact land use and building codes,” said Rodríguez.

“Fortunately no one lost their life as a result of the fire, which was caused by the electrical overload. It is imperative that we protect the

public health and safety by enacting and enforcing more stringent laws. Many people live in substandard conditions and are fearful of complaining because they might be evicted, their rent increasing, or being deported if undocumented, at the hands of unscrupulous, avaricious landlords.”

The County Attorney’s Office is working to convince the Texas Legislature to give counties the power to enact land use and building codes to help prevent the development of new Colonias.

Rodríguez added that public nuisance is an on-going problem in the county of El Paso, and his office will continue to prosecute such offenders.

The penalty for the crime is a fine of up to \$200. To report public nuisances, call the El Paso City-County Health and Environmental District at 860-2378.

Food

From Page 1

Monday in January to help make their communities a better place to live by serving others much as Dr. King did throughout his life.

Thousands of projects across America will be held on Monday, Jan. 15, 2007 to help make Dr. King’s dream a reality.

In El Paso, the public can participate by contributing to the 6th Annual MLK Canned Food Drive, which will be held from Thursday, Jan. 4 through Monday, Jan. 15, 2007. Since its inception six years ago El Pasoans have donated over 100 tons of non-perishable canned or dried food to organizations in our community, which serve the less for-

tunate. Starting on Thursday, Jan. 4, there will be hundreds of drop-off sites throughout the city where individuals can place their donations.

On Jan. 15 the food will be collected and sent to a warehouse where it will be sorted by hundreds of volunteers and distributed among several beneficiaries including the Salvation Army, the Opportunity Center for the Homeless, the Houchen Community Center, the La Fe Montana Vista Community Resource Center, the Sparks Community Center and others. These organizations have their pantries depleted during the holidays due to the thousands of people that come to them for sustenance during that time. The MLK Canned Food Drive helps to replenish those pantries. For more information on where to donate call 740-7826.

Deregulation

From Page 3

rates. Yet, in order to “protect” consumers, some would roll back the clock to the old regulatory schemes

that led to the New York blackouts.

Contrary to conventional wisdom, we are learning that many essential sectors of life, like electric power, are far too important to be administered by bureaucracies unable to respond to consumers’ needs. How the electric system should be organized we can’t say in advance: that should be left to competitive markets. Whatever the result, you can bet the grid would not look like it does today, nor would its management be dependent on the whims of political jurisdiction.

Competition exists so long as the state is not prohibiting other companies from trying their hand. This means we don’t need two or more companies serving every market. What we need is full, complete, uncompromised deregulation and privatization.

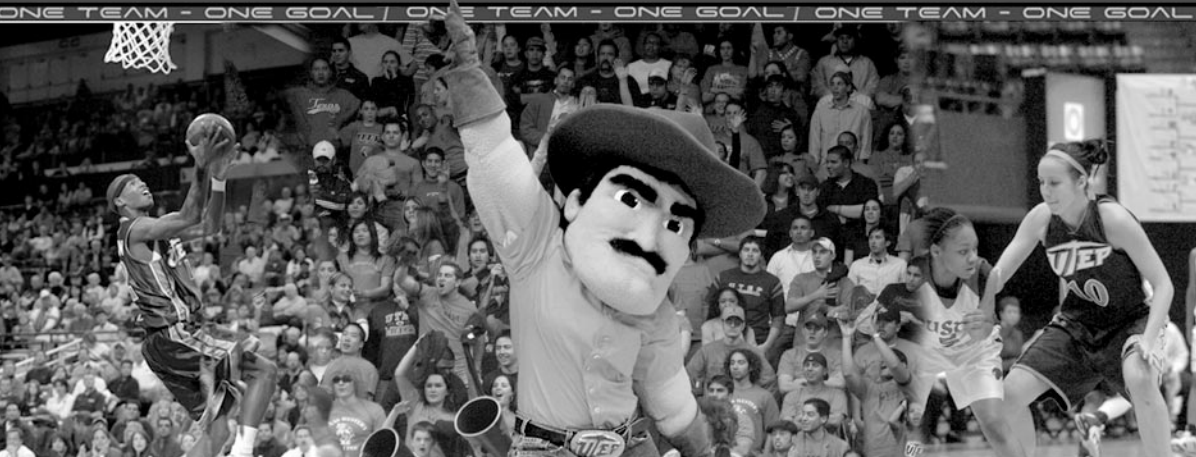
Lew Rockwell is president of the Mises Institute, editor of LewRockwell.com, and a fellow at the Texas Public Policy Foundation’s Center for Economic Freedom.

Briefs

From Page 1

School, All-Star, Recreation and Studio. The dance competition will be on Friday at 5:30 p.m., and the Cheer will be on Saturday at 10:30 a.m. Deadline is Jan. 24, 2007 with limited availability for both events. For information, contact Rose Delgado, Cheerleader and Danzteam Representative at 760-6670 or rdelgado@nationalspirit.com; or Americas High School Student Activities Office at 937-2832.

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READY, SET, READ! — Davenport ES Fourth Graders in Dolores Amero’s class participated in the World Record Project. Shown in foreground from left is Vanessa Campa and Samantha Gutierrez, who led their class in the reading exercise.

Davenport Elementary students join with others nationwide to break Guinness Book’s reading record

By Kim Guzman
Special to the Courier

UPPER VALLEY — Students at Deanna Davenport Elementary School in the Canutillo Independent School District recently joined thousands of other students across the United States to break the Guinness Book of World Record for most people reading aloud simultaneously in multiple locations.


Approximately 120 fourth and fifth grade students from Davenport ES read aloud a passage from the book Charlotte’s Web, written by E.B. White at exactly 10 a.m. (MST). Students, educators, librarians, and

fans across the U.S. gathered in schools, hospitals, libraries and community centers to read the same passage at the exact same time, hoping to break the world record held in the Guinness Book. The current record is held by 155,528 students from 737 schools in the United Kingdom.

Jane Weatherly, special education teacher at Davenport ES, coordinated the event with the fourth and fifth grade teachers. “Our students are currently studying this book, so the record breaking attempt also helps to encourage them to read,” said Weatherly. “Each student who read during the event received a certification of participation,” she added.

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...Happy New Year

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Please remember the men and women serving our country and protecting this nation in this New Year.

— Chente Quintanilla
State Rep., District 75

Pol. Ad Paid For By Hector Delgado, Treasurer; 221 N. Kansas, Ste. 2000, El Paso, TX 79901

Begins MARCH 2ND Texas Independence Day

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by Roger Todd Moore

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March 2, 1836: The Declaration of Independence is so grammatically flawed that another copy must be done.



MARCH 2007

WARNING! Yep, this calendar STARTS MARCH 2nd Texas Independence Day.



Top, good Texans know the New Year really BEGINS on Texas Independence Day!

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
January & February are provided for you folks having trouble adjustin'.	JANUARY '07 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31	FEBRUARY '07 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28	1836: The Texas Declaration of Independence was adopted at Washington-on-the-Brazos.	1836: The Texas Declaration of Independence was adopted at Washington-on-the-Brazos.	1836: The Texas Declaration of Independence was adopted at Washington-on-the-Brazos.	1836: The Texas Declaration of Independence was adopted at Washington-on-the-Brazos.
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31
SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY

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A talented player with a good attitude – priceless

By Steve Escajeda
Special to the Courier

It isn't often that El Pasoans get the chance to watch an NBA player show off his skills. Watching an NBA player hit shots from every angle, drive to the basket with ease and single-handedly lead his team to victory is something we seldom have the opportunity to enjoy. But we saw it last week, though we didn't

exactly enjoy it. The NBA player I'm speaking off doesn't even play in the NBA yet — but he'll be there next year. Jackson State's Trey Johnson was named the State Farm Sun Bowl Basketball Tournament Most Valuable Player after breaking the event's all-time scoring record of 66 points in two games. But it was what he did in the tournament's opening game against the Miners that had Don Haskins Center fans' jaws dropping.

Three-and-a-half minutes into the game, UTEP had scored seven points. Jackson State had 15 points, every one of them scored by Johnson. This was just the beginning. The tournament's all-time single game record was 38 points, set back in 1977. Against the Miners, Trey Johnson had 30 points — at halftime! Johnson destroyed the record by finishing with 49 points. But it was the final three, a 3-pointer at the buzzer to give his team a 100-97 win, that were the most incredible.

I didn't know what to expect after the game but I was delightfully surprised. I figured since the guy played like an NBA star that he probably acted like most NBA stars. You know what I mean — a dismissive attitude, a nauseating arrogance and a look-at-me philosophy. But like I said, I was delightfully surprised. Johnson answered every question after the game from the press with class, a smile, and even a barrage of yes sirs and no sirs.

Johnson seemed embarrassed by all the accolades bestowed on him by those of us who weren't used to what we had just witnessed on the court. His class and respect was so refreshing. It reminded me that not all superstars have super egos.

Though the Miners lost a heartbreaker, you had to leave the arena happy for a young man who conducted himself like a real man. And though there are multi-millions in his future, he'll always be measured by his character — which is priceless.

Cowboys bucked

Watching the Dallas Cowboys on Christmas day you get the feeling that this team is beginning to break down piece by piece. Considered one of the front-runners for the Super Bowl a few weeks ago, the Cowboys are now very lucky the rest of the NFC is so

bad that they clinched a playoff spot early. Being spanked at home, by a Philadelphia Eagles team that was left for dead after Donovan McNabb went down with an injury, showed the rest of the NFL that the Tony Romo experiment is winding down.

I have no doubt that the quarterback is going to be a star in this league. But it will happen next season when he's had time to reflect on this whirlwind season. He will also appreciate it more and take it more seriously. Things came too quick for Romo. The wins, the media, the women, the love, all came too fast for a young man with enough talent to save the season, but even Romo has limitations. The Cowboys' defense, which started the season so strong, is now being pushed around the field. The special teams are anything but special and the offensive play-calling is as original as the newest "Rocky" film. Can the Cowboys get it together in time for the playoffs? It's a possibility, but if you cherish your hard-earned paychecks, don't bet on it.

Kobe?

Did you happen to hear about the 60 points the Washington Wizards' Gilbert Arenas dropped on Kobe Bryant and the Lakers a week ago? Arenas scored all those points in an overtime win over Los Angeles, but Kobe didn't hide his disgust after the game. Amazingly, Kobe was quoted as saying about Arenas, "He doesn't seem to have much of a conscience. I really don't think he does. Some of the shots he took tonight, you miss those, and they're just terrible shots. Awful." Let me get this straight, Kobe was putting a guy down for taking too many shots that could have cost his team the game. What's next, Kobe's going to get after other NBA stars for fighting with their teammates and their coaches, or maybe he'll chastise them for disrespecting women?

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1/4

The City of Socorro

Invitations for Bids

The City of Socorro, Texas is recipient of a HOME Investment Partnership grant contract number 1000484. The City of Socorro, Texas will receive sealed bids for residential rehabilitation for two (2) residences until 10:00 a.m. (local time) on January 12, 2006, at the City Administration Building in Socorro, Texas, 124 S. Horizon Blvd., Socorro, Texas, 79927. All submittals must be sealed and received in the office of the City Clerk. Bid packets are available in the Administration Building as of Dec. 21, 2006 from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Monday through Friday (excluding holidays). The envelope containing the bid submittal should be plainly marked in the lower left corner: "HOME REHABILITATION BID." Be sure to clearly mark your company name and return address on the envelope. There is a \$50.00 fee per package. Fee needs to be paid in cash and/or money order. The City of Socorro reserves the right to award the best bidder, and not necessarily the lowest bid.

All bids will be publicly opened and read aloud on January 12, 2006 at the City Administration Building located on 124 S. Horizon Blvd. at 2:00 p.m. (local time).

The Contractor needs to be registered in the City of Socorro, in the State of Texas, and needs to be insured and bonded. In addition, the Contractor must ensure that employees and applicants for employment are not discriminated against because of their race, color, religion, sex, or national origin. The City of Socorro, Texas reserves the right to reject any or all Bids or to waive any informality in the bidding. The City of Socorro, Texas is an Affirmative Action/Equal Opportunity Employer.

Gina Rodriguez
City Clerk

WTCC: 12-28-06

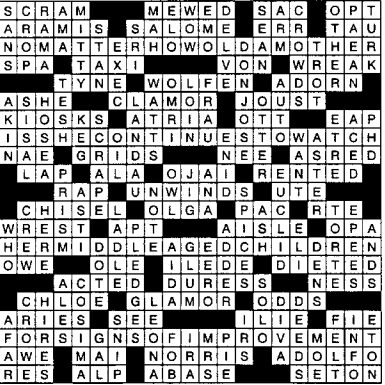
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13	14	15	(STOP HERE) (FOR \$5 AD.)
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20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27
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32	33	34	35

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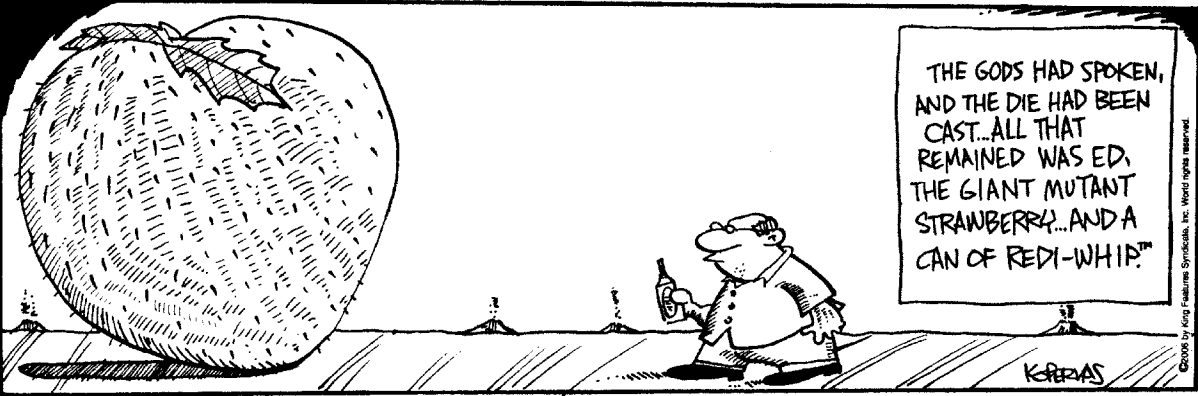
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Comix

OUT ON A LIMB By Gary Kopervas



AMBER WAVES By Dave T. Phipps



THE SPATS By Jeff Pickering



R.F.D. By Mike Marland



Use spell check; dictionary too

By Don Flood

There’s good news for lovers of literature: actress Tori Spelling is planning to write a memoir. Finally, all the questions that readers have been screaming for will be answered:

- How did Spelling, daughter of Aaron Spelling, one of the biggest producers in television history, get her first big break in TV?
- Does she have any talent?
- Where and why does she keep it hidden?

As exciting as this book promises to be, Spelling is, at 33, a late starter in the writing business. Lindsay Lohan, at the tender age of 20, has already assured her place in the History of Great Quotations. In a rambling, ungrammatical and occasionally incoherent public letter of condolence to the family of Robert Altman, the late film director, Lohan redeemed herself by signing off with the enigmatic but profound message of solace for the mourners: “BE ADEQUITE.” Yes, indeed. It’s sad that it sometimes takes a person’s death to make us stop and realize the importance of being “adequite.” But that’s the way life is, especially in Hollywood. Elsewhere in her letter, Lohan encourages people to “make a searching and fearless inventory” of themselves.

(I heartily endorse this. Each morning I look myself fearlessly in the mirror and courageously ask: Do I need to shave today? If it’s the weekend, I get to bail out.) So ask yourself, have you been “adequite” today? Have you encouraged your fellow travelers on this journey we call “Lyfe” to be “adequite”?

If you’re honest with yourself, which is not something I personally recommend, the answer is probably: What the heck does “adequite” mean? Some have said she meant “adequate,” in the sense of passable, tolerable, acceptable, etc. But that’s not much comfort to a family of mourners: “Be passable.” Gee, thanks. So perhaps Lohan was reaching for a much deeper meaning here, such as: Use spell check. Use a dictionary.

And if you’re writing something to be released to the public, you may want to employ both. Or perhaps Lohan, in her own way, was exploring the very meaning of words, and why finding the right words can be so difficult. That’s why it’s important to make up new words, as Lohan did. The English language, after all, is restricted to a few hundred thousand words, many of them old-fashioned and hard to spell. But it’s not fair for Lohan to shoulder the burden all by herself. We all must do our part. Miss Lohan, if you ever read this, let me say that I find your writing very “schmerfluous.” That’s a new word I made up especially for you. I would tell you what it meant, but then everyone would know. Lohan also wrote, “Everytime there’s a triumph in the world a million souls hafta be trampled on. altman its true. But treasure each triumph as they come.” I’m dying to know what that means. I really hafta know, or else I won’t be “adequite.”

(c) 2006 King Features Synd., Inc.

King Super Crossword

- HOPE SPRINGS

ETERNAL

ACROSS

1 "Outta here!"

6 Acted kittenish

11 Cul-de- _

14 Select, with "for"

17 Porthos' pal

19 She knew how to get a head

20 Blunder

21 Kind of cross

22 Start of a remark by Florida Scott-Maxwell

26 Loser's locale

27 Prepare to fly

28 Maria _ Trapp

29 Inflict

30 Daly of "Judging Amy"

31 '81 Albert Finney film

35 Decorate

36 Tennis legend

39 Uproar

41 Knight fight

43 Stalls

46 Courtyards

47 Baseball's "Master Melvin"

48 "The Raven" monogram

51 Part 2 of remark

56 Dundee denial

57 Networks

58 Formerly known as

59 _ as a beet

60 Drink like a dachshund

62 Menu phrase

63 California resort

66 Let

68 Seance sound

70 Relaxes

73 Chanteuse

Lemper

74 Woodworking tool

77 "Eugene Onegin" character

78 Candidate's backer

80 AAA offering

83 Take by force

84 Prone

86 Bridal path?

88 _ -Locka, FL

90 Part 3 of remark

96 Be in debt

97 Seville shout

98 _ France

99 Did without

100 Put on

102 Coercion

104 Famed loch

105 Daphnis' darling

107 Allure

109 "Against All _" ('84 film)

112 Sign of spring

113 "So there!"

114 Nastase of tennis

115 "Pshaw!"

118 End of remark

125 Wonderment

126 _ tai

127 "Walker, Texas Ranger" star

128 Big name in fashion

129 _ judicata

130 Matterhorn, e.g.

131 Put down

132 First American saint

DOWN

1 Without

2 Cut short

3 Sita's spouse

4 Doctors' org.

5 Loydreamer

Walter

6 _ -jongg

7 "Evil Woman" group

8 "Holy cow!"

9 Funnyman Philips

10 Probe

11 John and Yoko's son

12 Peacoat part

13 Packs

14 Different

15 Hymn of praise

16 Ottoman

18 Hockey's Mikita

19 _ Lanka

23 Part of CEO

24 "Carmen" character

25 Horse's gait

30 TV host John

31 Pianist Andre

32 King of Israel

33 Meat cut

34 Wittenberg wife

35 Car

36 Related

37 Rope material

38 Biblical book

40 Martin of "The Majestic"

42 Aquatic mammal

44 Beer barrel

45 Nick one's knee

48 Raison d' _

49 Sailed through

50 Third degree?

52 "Lorenzo's _" ('92 film)

53 Oklahoma city

54 Poverty

55 Fall flower

61 Periscope part

63 He gives a hoot

64 Lively dance

65 Santa _ CA

67 He knew all the angles

69 _ Spumante

71 A bit of Bach

72 Curry components

74 Sailors

75 Present

76 Mete out the minestrone

79 Timber tree

81 Bakery buy

82 Duel-use items?

83 "Says _?"

85 Vows

86 TV's "The Black _"

87 Ivy Leaguer

89 "No ifs, _ or buts"

91 Make too much of

92 "O patria mia" singer

93 Melancholy

94 Architect Saarinen

95 Bears' lairs

100 Heady quaffs

101 Mrs. Richard Wagner

103 Go it alone

105 Russell of "Gladiator"

106 Takes on board

108 Hotelier Helmsley

110 Pons or Ponselle

111 Exploits

112 Out of range

113 Cut a cuticle

114 April initials

115 Fedora fabric

116 Facts, for short

117 School founded in 1440

119 Guy's counterpart

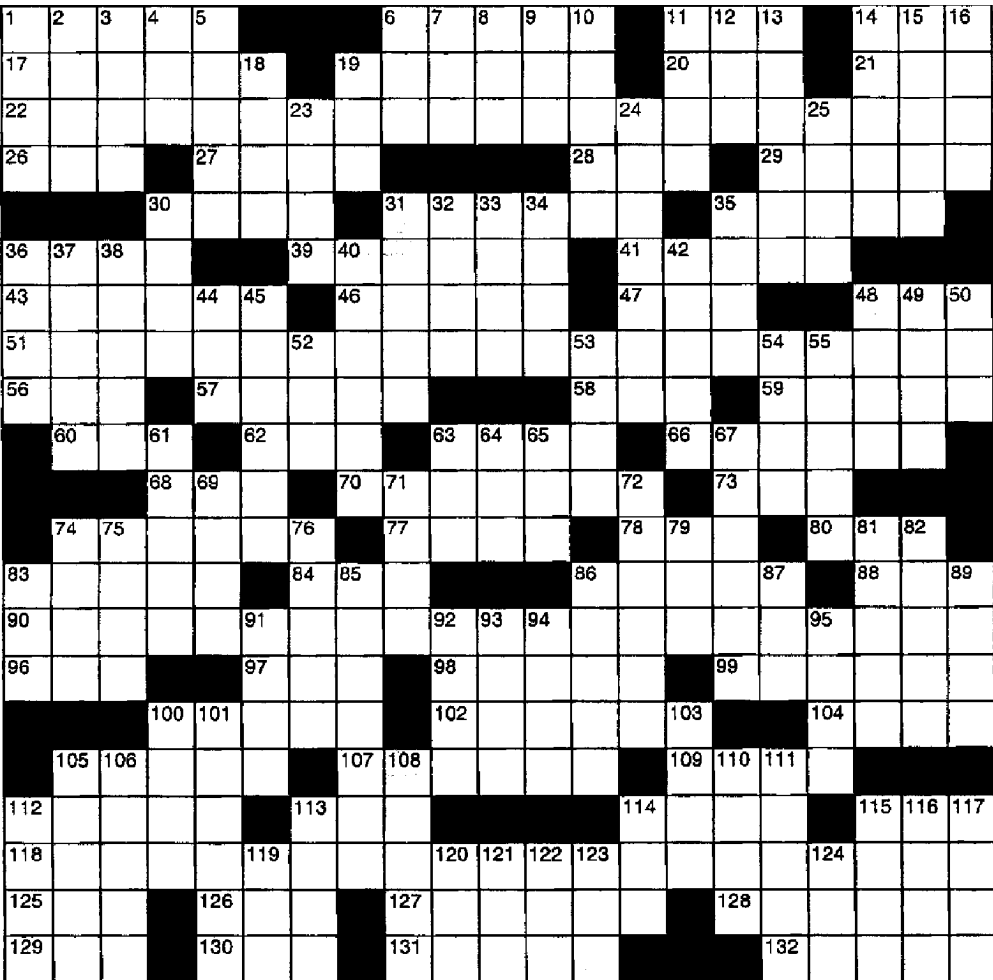
120 Watch pocket

121 Author Levin

122 " _ Brown" ('97 film)

123 Quiche or pizza

124 Shemp sib
- Answer Page 6



Social Security Q&A

By Ray Vigil

Q: I've always kept my Social Security card in my wallet, right with my driver's license and other identification cards. My co-worker told me that I should not carry it with me. Is that true?

A: We advise people to keep their Social Security cards in a safe place. Don't carry your Social Security card with you unless it is needed, such as to show to a new employer. It is best to keep your card in a place where others cannot find it, because if identity thieves get your card, they can use the information to apply for credit, employment or bank accounts. By stealing your card or information, they can steal your identity.

Q: I was thinking about buying a life insurance policy to provide for my wife and kids in case I die, but my boss told me I already have one — with Social Security. Is that true?

A: If you are a worker and pay Social Security taxes, your dependent children and spouse may receive monthly benefits if you die. Currently, the average monthly benefit is about \$970 for an aged widow or widower and \$2,100 for a widow or widower with two minor children. It is still a good idea to consider an additional life insurance policy for expenses involved with a death, but to learn more about Social Security survivors benefits, go to www.socialsecurity.gov/survivorplan.

Q: My husband and I both receive Supplemental Security Income (SSI). A couple of months ago he took a part-time job as a doorman for a funeral home near our house. My situation didn't change, but because of his work both of us will get less in SSI payments. Why is that?

A: Because it is a needs-based assistance program, eligibility for SSI and the amount of any benefit payment depend largely on the applicant's income. A husband and wife who live together normally share their income. Therefore, when one of them applies for SSI, part of the other's income must be counted as though it were the applicant's.

Q: I currently get Social Security disability benefits. Will my Social Security benefits go up when I reach retirement age in 2007?

A: No, the amount of your monthly Social Security benefit will not increase. It will, however, be changed from disability to retirement benefits in our records when you reach your full retirement age.

For more information on any of the questions listed above, visit our website at www.socialsecurity.gov or call us at 1-800-772-1213. If you have any questions that you would like to have answered, please mail them to the Social Security Office, 1111 Gateway West, Attn: Ray Vigil, El Paso, Texas 79935.

7-DAY FORECAST FOR EL PASO, TX

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Thursday	Thu. night	Friday	Saturday	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday
A shower possible; cooler	Mostly cloudy and windy	Partly sunny and cool	Sunny much of the time	Sunny most of the day	Mostly sunny	Plenty of sun	Plenty of sunshine
53°	34°	51° 32°	55° 29°	55° 28°	59° 30°	57° 30°	61° 31°
RealFeel 44°	RealFeel 24°	RealFeel 46° 25°	RealFeel 54° 24°	RealFeel 55° 26°	RealFeel 62° 27°	RealFeel 58° 33°	RealFeel 66° 37°

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WEATHER TRENDS THIS WEEK

IN THE SKY

Temperatures

Precipitation

Sun	Rise	Set
Thu.	7:04 a.m.	5:10 p.m.
Fri.	7:05 a.m.	5:10 p.m.
Sat.	7:05 a.m.	5:11 p.m.
Sun.	7:05 a.m.	5:12 p.m.
Mon.	7:06 a.m.	5:13 p.m.
Tues.	7:06 a.m.	5:13 p.m.
Wed.	7:06 a.m.	5:14 p.m.

Moon	Rise	Set
Thu.	12:28 p.m.	12:53 a.m.
Fri.	1:02 p.m.	2:00 a.m.
Sat.	1:41 p.m.	3:09 a.m.
Sun.	2:27 p.m.	4:19 a.m.
Mon.	3:20 p.m.	5:28 a.m.
Tues.	4:20 p.m.	6:32 a.m.
Wed.	5:25 p.m.	7:27 a.m.

First 12/27 Last 1/11 Full 1/3 New 1/18

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REGIONAL CITIES

U.S. CITIES

City	HI	LO	W	City	HI	LO	W
Abilene, TX	70	42	pc	Atlanta	58	42	c
Albuquerque, NM	43	27	sn	Boston	42	26	pc
Amarillo, TX	54	27	r	Chicago	42	35	c
Austin, TX	68	57	pc	Denver	38	15	sn
Brownsville, TX	80	63	pc	Detroit	40	31	pc
Dodge City, KS	44	30	r	Houston	73	64	c
Jackson, MS	63	56	pc	Indianapolis	47	35	c
Laredo, TX	75	51	pc	Kansas City	47	40	pc
Little Rock, AR	54	50	pc	Los Angeles	63	44	s
Lubbock, TX	60	32	c	Miami	75	69	sh
Memphis, TN	57	51	pc	Minneapolis	37	27	c
Midland, TX	61	36	pc	New Orleans	71	63	pc
Pueblo, CO	43	18	c	New York City	50	35	s
Roswell, NM	55	32	c	Omaha	38	34	c
St. Louis, MO	53	43	pc	Phoenix	58	40	pc
San Antonio, TX	69	52	c	San Francisco	56	41	s
Texarkana, AR	61	55	sh	Seattle	38	30	pc
Waco, TX	68	55	sh	Washington	53	36	pc
Wichita, KS	45	40	r		50	42	pc

Weather (W): s-sunny, pc-partly cloudy, c-cloudy, sh-showers, t-thunderstorms, r-rain, sf-snow flurries, sn-snow, i-ice.

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