



NEWSBRIEFS

Thanksgiving

Two local Clint churches, Bond United Methodist Church and Clint First Baptist Church, will hold a joint Thanksgiving church service at Bond UM, 201 McKinney St., Clint, on Sunday evening, November 22, 2009, at 6:30 p.m. Everyone is invited to attend and refreshments will be served afterwards. 592-9081 or 851-2702.

— Erma Nelson

Food drive

Harvest for the Hungry Food Drive is accepting canned or dry goods through Nov. 15 at National Self Storage in Horizon City (490 N. Kenazo). They are also accepting formula and powdered milk for delivery to a Juarez orphanage. Items can be dropped off Monday to Friday from 9:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. and Saturday from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Information: 852-8300.

Food drive II

People who donate a turkey or ham to the West Texas Food Bank between now and Dec. 11, 2009 will receive a coupon good for a dozen doughnuts from Krispy Kreme. Donations will be accepted at 3727 Shell, El Paso, Texas, 79925. Food can be dropped off Monday to Friday from 8:00 a.m. to noon and from 1:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. Information: 595-1060.

— Celeste Hardts

Crime Stoppers

Someone brutally murdered a 71-year-old woman in her own home, and you could hold the key to unlocking this case. Crime Stoppers and the Police Department's Crimes Against Persons Office is requesting any assistance with a cold case murder in our city. On Friday, July 20, 2007, the body of 71-year-old Joyce Villalobos was found in her residence at 3804 Cambridge. Mrs. Villalobos, a retired school teacher, suffered a violent death sometime during the afternoon or early evening hours that day. Investigators are asking if neighbors noticed anything unusual that day. Perhaps someone saw a suspicious person or persons hanging around the area? Maybe a suspicious vehicle circling around? If you have any information at all about this case, please call Crime Stoppers at 566-TIPS (566-8477) or on-line at www.crimestoppersofelpaso.org. You can remain anonymous and, if your tip leads to an arrest, you can qualify for a cash reward.

— James Klaes

Club meet

The Junior Woman's Club of El Paso will be holding a meeting on Saturday, Nov. 21 at the Woman's Club clubhouse located at 1400 North Mesa. Parking is located across the street. Provisional members will meet at 9:30 a.m. followed by the general meeting at 10:30 a.m. During the general meeting Blake Barrow from the Rescue Mission of El Paso will speak. For information contact Ruth (915-525-8380) or Denise (704-957-5202). Cost for non members is \$10.

— Beth Podol

When you're up to your ears in trouble, try using the part that isn't submerged.

— Quips & Quotes



— Photo courtesy San Elizario ISD

TROOP SUPPORT — The Borrego Elementary School Rams' cheerleaders display a banner showing support for America's veterans.

San Elizario students honor vets with parade

By Cynthia P. Marentes
Special to the Courier

SAN ELIZARIO — On a crisp Saturday morning, many San Elizario students arose early to march down Socorro Road in tribute to veterans from the community and the El Paso

area. Students from different campuses in the district participated in the 13th Annual Veterans Day Parade honoring the many brave individuals who served in the United States Armed Forces. Some of the San Elizario ISD campuses and student groups participating in the parade included the following:

- Girl Scout Troop 251 consisting primarily

of Daisies who are students from Loya Primary School decorated a float with a patriotic theme and wore of red, white and blue as they participated in the parade. Loya kindergarten teacher Nora Almanzar, sponsor of Girl Scout Troop 251, helped the girls prepare the float which was driven by Principal George Augustain.

- Students in grades 1st through 4th from Alarcon Elementary waved small flags as they joined in on the parade walking from the San Elizario Cemetery to the Veterans' Memorial Plaza.

- The Borrego Elementary School Rams cheer team proudly marched and animated on-lookers with their lively chants.

- Several groups from Sambrano Elementary rode on floats and marched in the parade including the volleyball team, football team and cheerleaders. Region 19 Elementary Teacher of the Year and Texas Elementary Teacher of the Year Finalist Virginia Solis-Cera also rode in the parade in a float driven by Principal Marta Alvarez. Sambrano Elementary students Belen Chavez, Homero Perez and Brianna Parra took part in reciting the Pledge of Allegiance and the Texas Flag Pledge at the ceremony.

- The San Elizario High School Navy JROTC color guard led a special U.S. flag folding ceremony.

Nancy Torres, Borrego Elementary 5th grade teacher and cheerleading coach, stated that it was rewarding for her to see the students happy to be participating in an event that honored all service members and to hear the crowds cheering the students on. "It was a beautiful sunny morning and we saw many veterans on the side of the road that smiled as they enjoyed the parade," Torres added.

Other teachers in San Elizario ISD incorporated recognition of veterans in their classes during the week leading up to the parade. According to Cynthia Meza, 4th grade teacher at

Jensen named Commended Student

By Kim Guzman
Special to the Courier

CANUTILLO — Canutillo High School's principal, Jim Fry, announced recently that Samuel Jensen has been named a Commended Student in the 2010 National Merit Scholarship Program. The announcement came when Fry presented a Letter of Commendation to Jensen from the school and the National Merit Scholarship Corporation (NMSC), which conducts the program.

Jensen, a scholastically talented senior, was honored in front of the entire student body and CHS faculty during a pep rally held for the annual homecoming week festivities.

"Samuel is by far one of the most intelligent, talented, creative, and outstanding students that I have had the honor of teaching. Teachers and students alike often recognize Samuel as a strong academic leader and a respected role model," said Charissa Saenz, CHS English teacher. "Samuel has never been one to shy away from challenging himself when it comes to his education, his personal goals, and especially when it comes to his writing," she added.

About 34,000 Commended Students throughout the nation are being recognized for their exceptional academic promise. Commended Students placed among the top five percent of more than 1.5 million students who entered the



— Photo courtesy Canutillo ISD

COMMENDED — Samuel Jensen, Canutillo High School senior, gives a thumbs-up sign to his peers after being recognized as a Commended Student by Jim Fry, CHS principal.

See JENSEN, Page 6

See PARADE, Page 4



Por la Gente By State Rep. Chente Quintanilla

Victim assistance is vital service

Hola, mi gente. One of the biggest perks of my office is to provide assistance to the constituents of District 75. Sometimes we even have the opportunity to assist people from outside of Texas and even outside of the contiguous United States.

I had such a privilege seven days ago when a family from Puerto Rico was in El Paso to attend to a tragic incident involving one of their own. The story begins on the final weekend evening of October when a young man and young lady apparently exited a nightclub in the very early morning hours. Attempting to cross the street, the couple was struck by a vehicle traveling on Lee Trevino. The driver of the vehicle left the scene without rendering aid. The young man and lady died.

The young man was from Puerto Rico and had no family in El Paso. His parents flew into El Paso to take their son back to Puerto Rico for the final services.

It was at this point that my office became involved in an effort to assist the parents. The father has a brother in law who lives in New York. Through a political network, the in-law became acquainted with a well known lobbyist in Austin. He asked the lobbyist for assistance here in El Paso.

The lobbyists called my office and explained to my staff that the father was having a little difficulty with his attempt to obtain victim assistance money to help with the transfer of the

remains. Although Puerto Rico is part of the U.S. and the common language is Spanish, the idiom of the islanders is not the same as El Pasoans. So the request to our office was to provide information for the in-law in New York who would pass it on to the father in El Paso.

Since the actual monies are disbursed by the Texas Attorney General's office, we had to speak with the El Paso Police Department and the office in Austin. Several phone calls were made and eventually both the city and state offices responded with a call back.

As it turned out, the parents submitted an application for assistance to the El Paso office which was faxed to the Austin office. During the transmission, one important sheet did not get scanned. This was the hold up. By Wednesday the entire process came to an end for the grieving parents.

The role my office played was that of an information conduit. Our efforts provided the parents with the needed facts so that they could be comfortable that the resolution was soon at hand. While our actions were not on a grand scale, they were enough to calm the anxieties that are experienced when certain facts are unknown. Our visitors from Puerto Rico left with the knowledge that El Pasoans care enough to work toward resolving their conflicts.

The grant was approved by the Attorney General's office and the young man was taken home to his final resting site. Everyone in my office felt very good about this simple effort to assist.

Gracias, mi gente, and I remain your friend and public servant, Chente por la gente.

Veterans Post By Freddy Groves

Stand Down thieves deprive needy vets

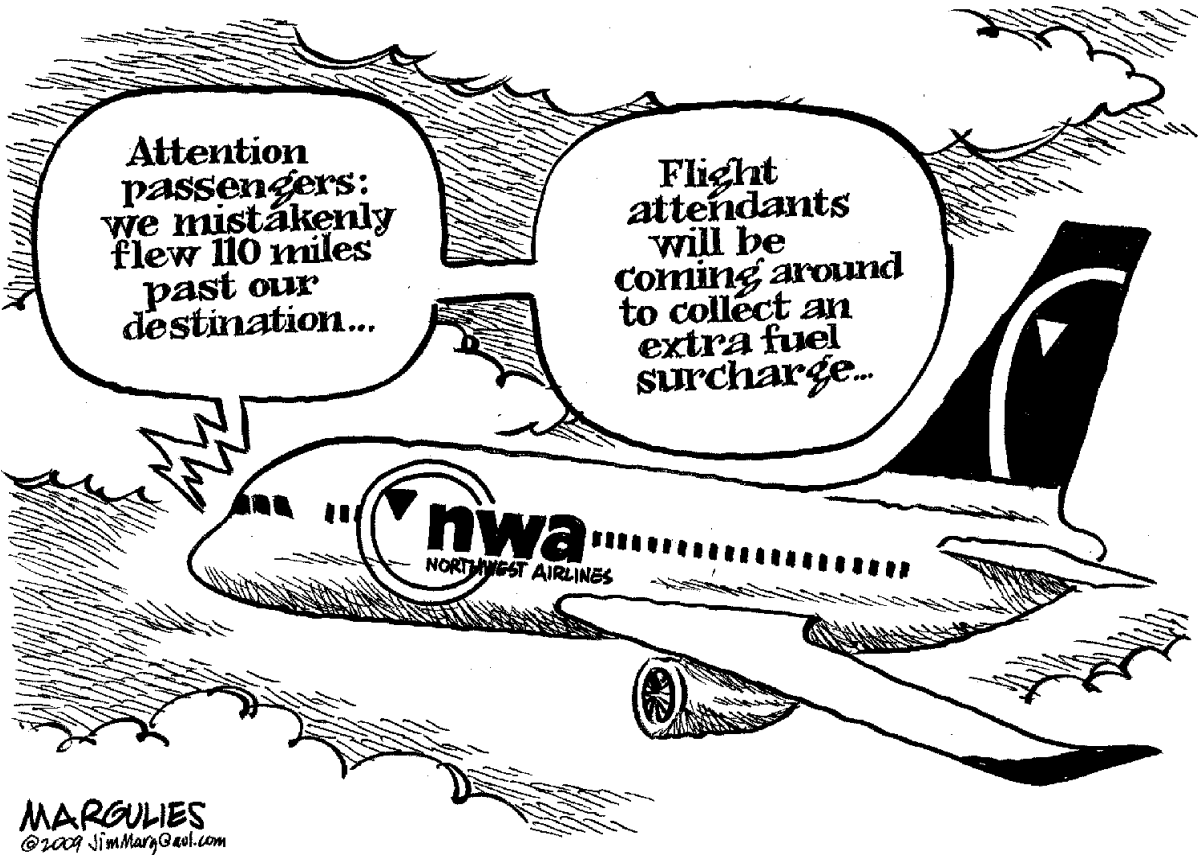
Just before a three-day Stand Down in Redding, Calif., was due to start, volunteers showed up to find their storage locker wide open — and empty. Stolen were \$26,000 in goods and supplies intended for the expected 400 homeless veterans who were coming in from seven surrounding counties to get assistance.

The more than 100 volunteers jumped in and gathered things from their own homes to make up for what had been stolen: cots, 1,500 blankets, socks, winter coats, shoes, underwear and other types of clothing, as well as the tents, towels, first-aid kits, office supplies, sleeping bags and other things needed to run the event. The police have no idea who did it.

It was apparently a different scenario at a recent Stand Down in another state. Reported by a veterans Web site, it was after the Stand Down that goods were stolen, all under the guise of "Gee, someone said we could have what's left over." In this case the perps are known: They were Department of Veterans Affairs employees who'd worked the event. Someone spoke up, the cops came and the pilfering was halted. An e-mail went out the next day, and most of the stuff was returned under an amnesty. (Rule of thumb for VA employees who work in any capacity with donated items: They don't belong to you.)

That's not the case in California. At this point, volunteers could use a hand in replenishing their supplies because, naturally, they're going to keep doing Stand Downs. If you can spare a few dollars, send it to: North Valley Stand Down Association, P.O. Box 991088, Redding, CA 96099-1088.

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Homesteader
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Don't miss the first game of the season!

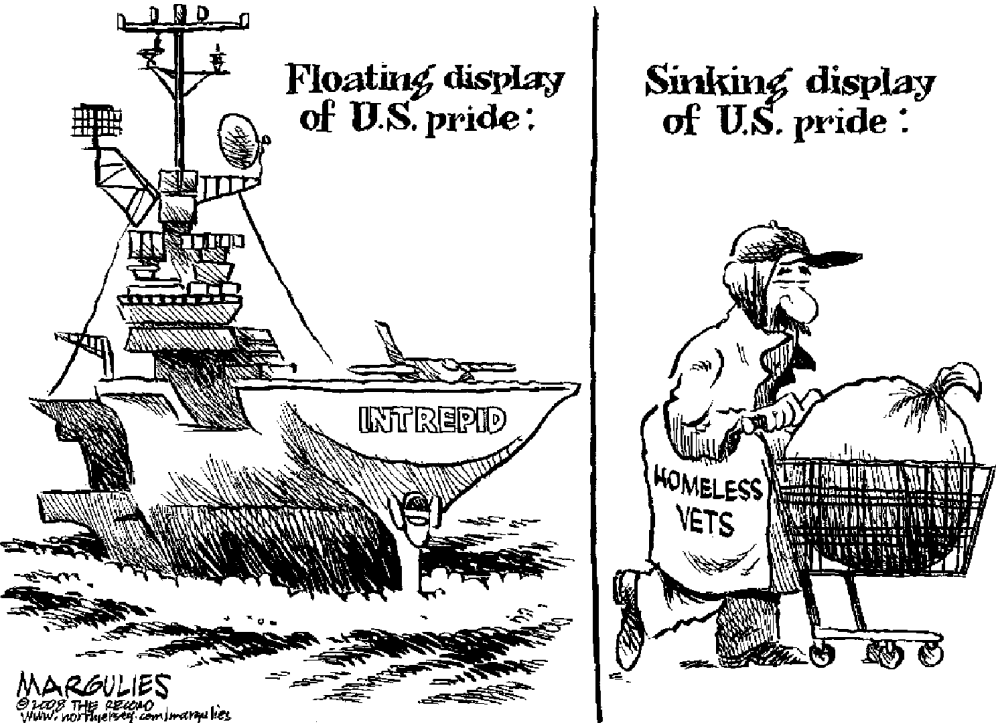
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What's up, doc? By Albert Balesh, M.D.

Al Capone was a Capricorn

For some time now, animated and often hostile debate has raged over a proposed connection between astrology and medicine, or what is called astro-medicine. Even Al Capone weighed in on the subject, and there were those, critics and curiosity seekers alike, who linked his fateful demise in prison from neurosyphilis to a not-so-casual alignment of his stars in Capricorn. Going back still further, it has come to light that the ancient Babylonians and Egyptians, who were far from ignorant and who gave the world horticultural marvels, a magnificent library, monuments in stone that still stand and awe today, recorded history in the form of hieroglyphics, and willow bark, or aspirin, for rheumatism and pain, were students of medicinal astrology and a perceived influence of stars and planets on health. Their “captive audience” of Jews also kept a knowledge of astrology among their confidential doctrines. It didn’t end there, either. The Middle Ages was a particularly florid period for “star power,” with faculties of astrology springing up in such diverse Spanish cities as Cordoba and Toledo, and with kings, Popes, aristocrats like Catherine de’ Medici, and even a famous doctor-astrologer and bubonic plague authority or two such as Michel Nostredame, better known today as Nostradamus, plying their wares in the heavenly-body arena of the early and middle 1500s. It was thought that a star disharmony between physician and patient would lead inevitably to incomplete recovery from physical malady or no recovery at all. Physician promulgators of astral alignment familiarized themselves with the horoscopes of their patients, and, when that was not the case, patients took it upon themselves to investigate those of their healers. Furthermore, a common conception, or misconception, whichever you prefer, arose that the way the planets were arranged at the moment of a child’s birth dictated a later predisposition to disease.

So, that is all well and dandy, but where does the field of astro-medicine stand today, if it can be considered a field at all? Before that question is answered, some startling revelations bear denouement to incredulous minds. One of them is the fact that two-thirds of the world’s population seek health care from sources other than conventional biomedicine, otherwise known as allopathy. Closer to home, 42% of American households have tried complementary and alternative medicine in recent years, and the staid and somber National Institutes of Health (NIH) has supported no less than 50 investigations into the usefulness of various alternative therapies, of which astro-medicine is no stranger. Demand for attractive, afford-

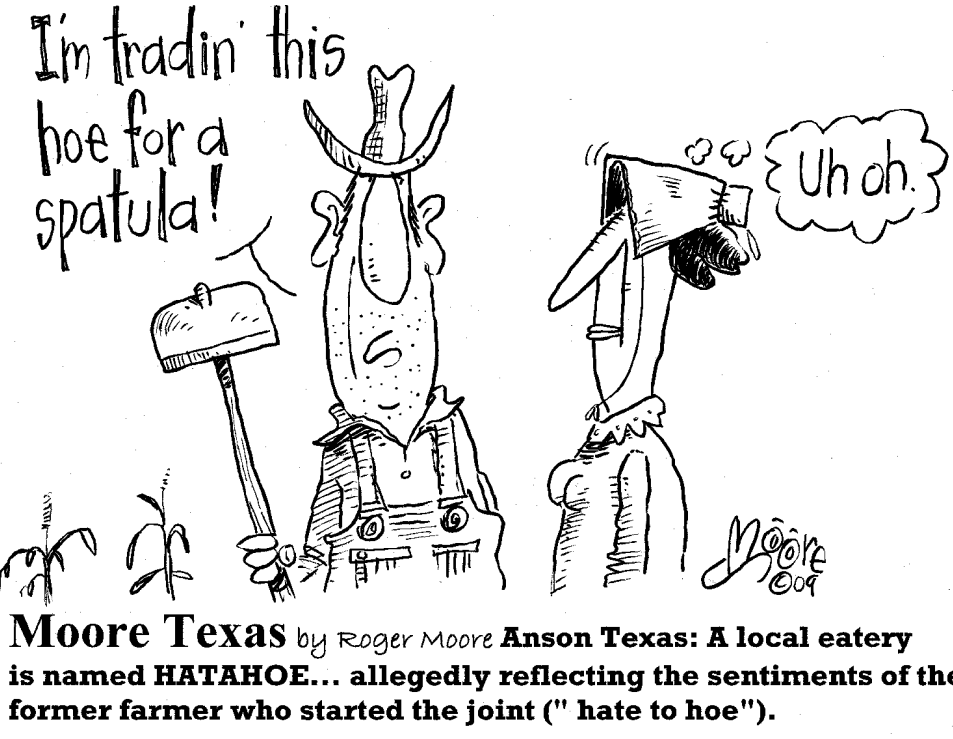
able, alternative medicine approaches to chronic disease has grown exponentially, especially on the preventive and public health care stage. In mysterious India, where truths are often hidden and minds open, allopathy rides shotgun to yoga, massage, prayers, spiritual healing, tantra/mantra, gem therapy, hypnosis, acupuncture, magnet therapy, and that old acquaintance, astro-medicine. Can we dismiss the swelling legions of astro-medical warriors and a hungering public so lightly?

Perhaps there is more to the story than mere superstitious invention of a medical system that renders various parts of the body, diseases, and drugs subservient to the influence of the sun, moon, and planets. Perhaps the celestial-corporeal association is real, and the instrumentation and investigative methods currently available are too primitive to prove validity beyond allopathic doubt. Can so many people be wrong? Are the purveyors of allopathy so presumptuous as to think that their medical dominion and carte blanche of the last 400 years trumps the collective wisdom of the prior 60 centuries?

Medical astrologers study the anatomical-astrological birth charts of their clients or patients, in order to give advice about the areas of the body most likely to experience trouble. Farfetched and outlandish, you say? Perhaps, but condemning astro-medicine does not mitigate the fact that scores of patients with chronic diseases such as cancer, AIDS, arthritis, asthma, diabetes, and epilepsy, to name a few, have derived solace, comfort, and a measure of symptom control, if not out-and-out cure, from other alternative medical methods. Those remarkable gains, with survival of up to five years in some cancer patients, warrant a closer look at the “attractive nuisance” posed by complementary therapies so easily discarded by undiscerning allopathic eyes. As Shakespeare put it, in Julius Caesar, “The fault, Dear Brutus, is not in our stars, but in ourselves, that we are underlings.” He might have said, instead, to paraphrase, “Open minds breed sound bodies.”

In astrology, there is a dictum that states, “Stars assume, but do not force,” meaning that the influence of the stars and planets on the health of a person can always be weakened by self-discipline, a healthy diet, and benevolent thoughts. Nowhere is this more evident than in the case of Al Capone. The stars reveal that as a Capricorn his knees, joints, and skeletal system should have done him in. As it was, another “bone” brought about his demise, for he lived, loved, and died by the sword.

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Hamilton remembered by friends

Family and friends gathered on October 30, 2009 to share memories of their friend Rose. Rose Marie Hamilton was born to Mary Virginia and Guilford Hamilton on January 25, 1958, in Fabens, TX. She was the youngest of three girls and had a passion for life.

Rose graduated from Fabens High School where she participated in many academic and athletic events. Her work ethic was strong and present from her early teenage years. Rose was a lifelong learner receiving many certifications. Some of her employment experiences included Barton Bros. Inc., Jess Burner Cattle Company, Tornillo ISD Business Manager,



Rose Hamilton

Tornillo Water District, and most recently she was the Assistant Director of Business Services for Clint ISD.

In addition to being a dedicated worker, she was loyal and kind to her family and friends. She always had a way of putting a smile on peoples' faces. Miss Rose, as so many knew her, died on Saturday, Oct. 24, 2009 at age 51.

She is survived by her significant other Tyn Davis, sisters Mary H. LaCapria and Betty J. Jarrell, nephews Patrick Jarrell and Joseph LaCapria, nieces Stella LaCapria-Selander [and husband Michael] and Linda Jarrell, several great aunts and cousins, and many caring friends.

Parade

From Page 1

Alarcon Elementary, all the 4th grade classes and Gifted and Talented students collaborated to produce a special performance to honor veterans in the district and community on Nov. 6. Alarcon students read poems and essays and sang songs. Their distinguished guests included veterans Raymond Borrego, Carmelo Caudillo, Octavio Cortez,

Mario Espinoza, Sammy Fabela, Velen Garcia, Sr., Ramon Holguin, Vicente Padilla, David Prieto, Ben Sanchez, and Antonio Gonzales, who was a former Alarcon student and graduate of San Elizario High School.

"This assembly gave our students a chance to do something special for our veterans and to connect to what they had been learning about in class. I'm very proud of our students and they are very happy for the opportunity to show our veterans their appreciation," Meza stated.

Finance man, Tony Reza, moves from Canutillo ISD to Socorro ISD

By Don Woodyard
Courier Staff Writer

EL PASO COUNTY — Tony Reza says it was hard for him to leave Canutillo ISD (CISD) for the Socorro school district.

"It was hard because key people had already left," says Reza, formerly CISD's executive director of financial services, and who is now assistant superintendent of financial services for Socorro ISD (SISD).

Reza, left in mid October after 10 years service. He was recognized for his service to the district at CISD's Oct. 13 board meeting.

The "key people" to whom Reza reo retired last summer as CISD superintendent. "If she had still been there, it would have been easier for me to leave."

The same phrase also applies to Dr. Pauline Dow, who held the No. 2 administrative position in Canutillo. She stepped down Aug. 31 to accept a new position with the Ysleta ISD.

That wasn't the only reason it was difficult for him to leave.

"I had a sense of loyalty to the Canutillo district. I was very grateful to Mr. Charles Hart (former superintendent of CISD)."

Reza says he was one of several qualified candidates that applied for the financial position long held by Mary Benham who had recently retired. It was an offer Reza felt he

couldn't pass up. "She left big shoes for me to fill," he added.

"(However) it was a unique opportunity; I couldn't pass it up," he says. "I am very excited about this opportunity."

"Socorro is a premier school district, and it is growing. It's a challenge of fast growth — more schools (in the district) and bigger budgets." (CISD, he says, has a student enrollment of approximately 5,700 whereas SISD's student population is 41,000. Reza sees the possibility that SISD could become the second largest school district in the area, supplanting YISD. His reasoning is that YISD is landlocked, and that Socorro is in a growth area on the eastside.)

Because of his years of experience, he says he "feels equal to that challenge."

"My work before has prepared me for this opportunity," he says confidently. "It has trained me for this."

In light of the current economic and recessionary times, Reza speaks, in general terms, of another challenge.

"School districts are facing severe financial challenges. It is tough for all of us."

Dr. Xavier De La Torre, superintendent SISD, explains why Reza was offered the position.

He impressed the panel that was interviewing candidates. "He has a solid financial background and a great deal of experience. He was the most articulate in explaining the realms of public school finance."

"He has a manner of communicating that even a layman could understand," he adds. "We are excited to have him." The superintendent says the district expects Reza "to deliver the highest standard and quality of work in the area of finance."

Looking back on his service to the Canutillo district, which began in 1999, Reza feels his "greatest accomplishment" to CISD was to bring stability to its financial operations.

One of his accomplishments is one that he leaves behind.

According to its district bulletin, Envisions, the district has earned the state's highest accountability rating for the seventh consecutive year. "The Superior Achievement rating is the state's highest measure, demonstrating the quality of CISD's financial management and reporting system."

Being a financial officer is not an easy task, he points out. "You have

Snapshot



— Photo courtesy Socorro ISD

ON THE JOB — Juan Antonio (Tony) Reza oversees the Payroll, Purchasing, Information Services, Budget, Business Services, and Technology Services departments. A native El Pasoan, Reza has a wealth of knowledge and experience in public school finance. Prior to his appointment in the SISD, he was the Executive Director for Financial Services for the Canutillo ISD. He held this position for 10 years and was in charge of the district's complete financial services division, and oversaw facilities and transportation operations from March-October 2009. Under his leadership, Canutillo ISD received the Financial Integrity Rating System of Texas (FIRST) rating of Superior Achievement for seven consecutive years. Prior to working for the Canutillo ISD, Reza worked his way up the ranks in the El Paso ISD. He was hired by the district in 1989 as a School Auditor, a position he held for five years. He was promoted to Program Accountant in 1995 and Director for Budget in 1998. He earned his MBA and bachelor's degree from the University of Texas at El Paso.




— Daniel R. Escobar

to make tough decisions. With the district's operational funds funneling through your office, you have to be fiscally responsible."

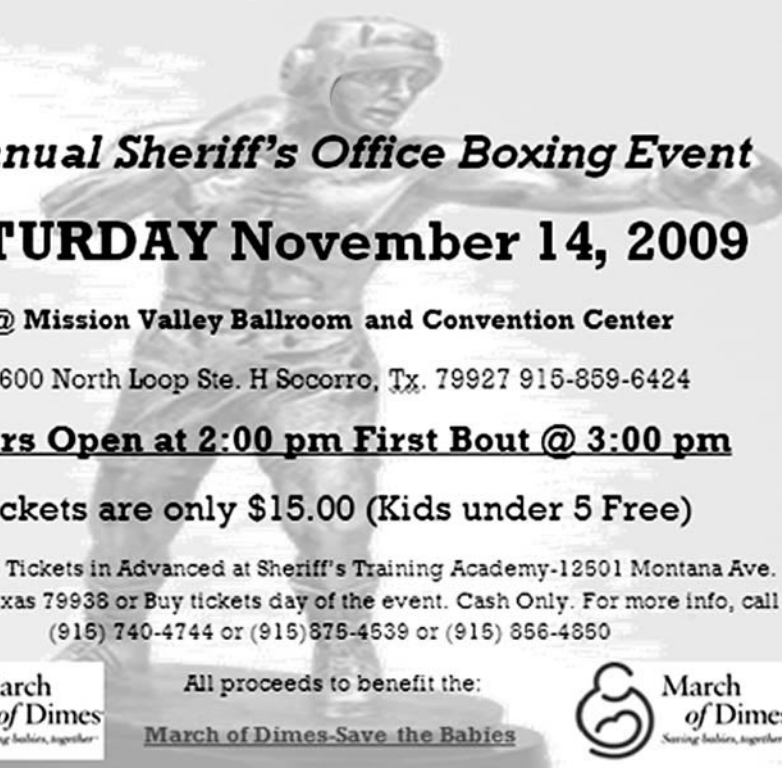
In carrying out his new duties in Socorro, he speaks of the "fine financial staff" he inherited from Benham.

"I want to do a good job. Working for a school district is a noble profession."

"I intend (eventually) to retire from a school district."



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San Eli voters approve tax rate

By Cynthia P. Marentes
Special to the Courier

On November 3, San Elizario voters demonstrated that they were willing to make a small investment in order to secure the financial future of their local schools with the approval of a tax rate increase. According to results of the tax rollback election, the proposed increase passed with 92 votes in favor and 40 votes against it.

The new school tax rate of \$1.16 represents an increase of a little over five cents per \$100 of property value for San Elizario residents. The tax rate for the previous year was \$1.11. An approved increase in the local tax contribution means that the San Elizario Independent School District will receive an additional \$1.7 million in revenue from the state.

Superintendent, Dr. Mike Quatrani stated that voter approval of the new tax rate would greatly benefit San Elizario ISD in the next two years and was grateful for the community's support during the election. "The additional state revenue will be a good opportunity for the district and we appreciate the confidence that the voters showed in the school district," Dr. Quatrani said.

Since school taxes had not increased in San Elizario in the past 13 years, district officials held a series of public meetings during the month of October in order to equip residents

with the facts regarding the proposed tax increase and answer any questions they may have had about the tax rollback election. As a result of passage of the new rate of \$1.16 per \$100 of property valuation, a San

Elizario residence with an average taxable value of \$37,060 will pay an additional annual cost of about \$20 in school taxes. The total additional local tax revenue to be generated by the tax rate increase is approximately \$64,147 an amount separate from the \$1.7 million in revenue expected from the state.

Although San Elizario ISD will immediately set aside the additional state revenue in its general reserve fund, it has no definitive plans to allocate those funds to any specific area. According to Rena Seifts, Assistant Superintendent of Finance, the additional funds from the state would allow San Elizario ISD to build up its general fund balance.

Money from the general fund balance can be used to finance competitive salaries for teachers and employees, enhance the quality of instructional programs, and for other unexpected emergencies or increased costs. Despite the additional state revenue it is now guaranteed to receive, San Elizario ISD will continue to maintain a conservative budget and apply funds from other state and federal resources before it considers withdrawing money from the general fund balance.



Mike Quatrani

Clint ISD administrators take on key roles

By Laura Cade
Special to the Courier

Clint Independent School District Board of Trustees filled four key leadership positions early this school year. The board named two new assistant superintendents and two new principals from among the District's own leadership team.

Josie Perez was named the Assistant Superintendent for Administrative Services. An educator for 19 years, Perez has served as a teacher, counselor, assistant principal, associate principal and principal. Most recently, she was the principal at Horizon Middle School. In her new role, Perez will supervise campus principals.

"The role of principal is that of an instructional leader first, so my intent is to provide opportunities to continue building and facilitating their leadership capacity," says Perez who will also supervise athletics for the District. Perez was named the TASSP Assistant Principal of the Year in 1999. She has been with Clint ISD since 1996.

James Littlejohn was selected as the new assistant superintendent for Instructional Services. "The focus for the department will be to make student achievement a priority through enhancing teacher skills, knowledge base, and provide resources," says Littlejohn who plans to implement new initiatives such as a middle school writing program and new strategies for bilingual and ESL teachers.

Littlejohn has been with Clint ISD since 2003. He formerly served the District as Executive Director of

Instructional Technology. During his sixteen years as an educator, he also served as a teacher, Instructional Technology Specialist and CATE Coordinator.

Robert Mendoza was selected to be the new Principal for Horizon Middle School which is the largest middle school in Clint ISD with over 1,300 students in grades 6, 7 and 8. Mendoza has served the District and the Clint community in many capacities during his 17 years with the District including interim superintendent, assistant superintendent and principal. He brings a wealth of experience to Horizon Middle School having served as Principal of Clint Junior High and East Montana Middle. While Principal as East Montana Middle he led Rattlers to a "Recognized" status by TEA.

"I am confident that Mr. Mendoza will be an excellent leader for Horizon Middle School. His knowledge and skills at the middle school level will serve students well. We are pleased to have him serve in this capacity," said Dr. Edward Gabaldon, Superintendent.

Josephine Angerstein was appointed Principal of East Montana Middle School, a campus she knows well. Angerstein served East Montana Middle school as assistant principal for the last several years. As the leader at East Montana Middle, Angerstein has implemented a teacher collaboration period which she believes will help teachers work toward the common goal of being a "Recognized" campus.

"We've got a ways to go, but I am dedicated to helping our students succeed and committed to helping our teachers grow professionally every inch of the way," says Angerstein.



Josie Perez



James Littlejohn

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Coin toss decides area football playoff teams

By Steve Escajeda
Special to the Courier

It's high school football playoff time and we usually see more El Paso teams make the long bus ride to East Texas and come back covered with the bruises of disappointment.

But this year it's a little different. Of the eight local 4A and 5A playoff games, seven will be played in the Sun City.

Ironically, the only school hitting the road this weekend is the best El Paso has to offer. The undefeated Coronado T-Birds (10-0) travel to Midland Lee Friday night.

And though it's exciting to have so many local schools playing in front of the home folks, there was some bitter playoff disappointment.

The one team that has a legitimate gripe this week is the Bowie Bears.

The Bears, who hadn't been to the playoffs since the mid-90s, finished the District 1-4A season in a tie for third place. Now with four teams eligible for the playoffs, a tie for third would usually mean an instant spot in the postseason.

But that doesn't work when you are tied with two other teams for third place. That means three teams are claiming the final two spots.

I may not be a math major but I know that if there are three hungry guys in the room and only two slices of pizza left — it's going to get messy.

To clear up the playoff mess the district's rules are to get representatives of the three teams in a room and flip a coin to decide the outcome.

What a way to decide who will go to the playoffs. These guys play their tails off all season long between the lines only to have their fates decided in an air-conditioned room.

And there they were, head coach Robert Padilla of the Bowie Bears, Ruben Batista of the Austin Panthers and Cliff Olander of the Irvin Rockets.

EPISD Athletic Director Ken Owen had the three coaches pull their "luckiest" coin out of their pocket and flip it into the air.

All three coins made their way into the sky for what must have seemed like an eternity to the anxious coaches. The coins fell to the ground and each coach was asked to stand next

to his coin.

The only coin showing tails belonged to Olander and the Irvin Rockets, putting them instantly into the playoffs.

The two other coins belonging to Bowie and Austin showed heads, meaning the winner of their head-to-head battle would make the playoffs and the loser would stay home.

The Panthers knocked off the Bears 13-0 back in September and thus the Bowie Bears, the only one of the three teams with a winning record (6-4) would stay home.

When it was all over, the coaches showed a lot of class, shook hands and went along their separate ways.

Two coaches had great news for their young players while one coach had to break the sickening news to a bunch of hopeful 15-, 16-, 17- and 18-year-olds.

After experiencing the entire process firsthand, I have to ask if there is a better way to break these ties — because I can't think of one.

Even if you go to a point-differential system where you take the three teams that are tied and see who-beat-who by the widest margin.

If you start going to point differential a lot

things come into play — throw sportsmanship out the window because teams will try to stretch 35-0 leads into 55-0 leads when the honorable thing would be to call off the dogs.

Also, think of all the second- and third-string players who would never get into blowout games because you have to keep the starters in to roll up the score.

And by keeping the starters in to roll up the score, how many players will suffer season-ending injuries when they should have been sitting on the bench with the game already decided.

Of course you feel terrible for the Bowie players, coaches and fans. And a coin is a lousy way to pick who will advance to the playoffs and who won't.

But maybe it's just like our judicial system, which everyone agrees is hopelessly flawed — but the best system of its kind in the world.

Maybe using coin flips are awful, but until another logical system can be utilized — it's the best we've got.

But that still doesn't help the Bowie Bears — who will be watching the playoff games from the stands this weekend.

A sporting view By Mark Vasto

NFL 2009: Bombs, blitzes, blowouts

At the halfway mark in the National Football League season, several trends and storylines have emerged that brought me, at least, a lot to chew on. The most enjoyable to the mundane, here's my sporting view on the season so far:

Nostalgia: By now we know that the entire throwback uniform craze is little more than a marketing ploy to sell more jerseys and gear to fans who want it all. Still, it's kind of cool to see some of the more memorable "old uniforms" (and by "old," we're going all the way back to the '80s) back in action. Tom Brady tossing six touchdowns in the New England snow while sporting the hiking Patriot helmet? Somewhere Tony Eason is eating his heart out.

The Return of the Long Bomb: This has been an increasing trend for several seasons now as league rules, a change in coaching philosophies and fan demand have led to a more open passing game. Brett Favre has always tossed the ball around as if he was playing in the backyard, but this season most quarterbacks have shown an increased tendency to chuck the ball downfield for big gains. The bomb used to be a low-percentage play — not anymore. It's been fun to watch.

The Lack of Parity: A few seasons ago, fans and sportscasters alike didn't know what to make of the parity across the league. Teams with 9-7 records were making the playoffs. Not so this season. Personally, I kind

of like seeing dominant teams rolling to 6-0, 5-1 starts and, as sad as it's been for the fans in Tennessee, Kansas City, Jacksonville and Washington, D.C., even watching their struggles has been kind of captivating.

Strong Defense: Despite an increase in scoring, even in high-scoring games, many of the defenses around the league have made impressive tackles and strong goal-line stands. The blitz is back (leading to a lot of those long completions) and lots of hard hitting. Shutouts one week, then 48 point blowouts the next (I'm looking at you, New York football Giants).

Changes on the Sideline: Two assistant coaches were dismissed in the weeks before the season started; there was actually a midseason trade for a starting wide receiver — the first since the '70s — and probably by the time you're reading this, a midseason head coach firing or two. We saw a regime change in Kansas City, New York (Jets) and Miami in the past few years. It only goes to show that the old "five-year plan" isn't going to cut it any longer. At the prices fans and owners have to pay these days, teams are expected to put a winning prod-

uct on the field — or else.

Mark Vasto is a veteran sports-

writer and publisher of The Kansas City Luminary. (c) 2009 King Features Synd., Inc.

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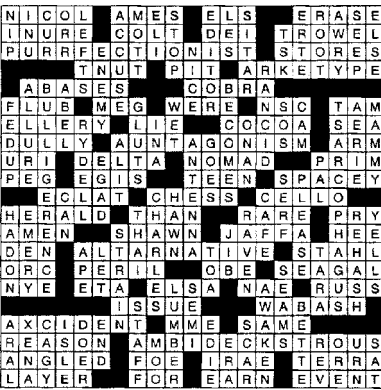
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Jensen

From Page 1

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"Samuel's genuine commitment to high standards, his natural talent as a writer and his willingness to go the extra mile to improve something that others are more than happy to settle for, truly sets him apart," said Saenz.

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U.S. General Services Administration

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

CryptoQuip Answer

If marathoners choose outfits that are too small, might that result in a tight race?

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- 2: Write a check; then
- 3: Send both to us.

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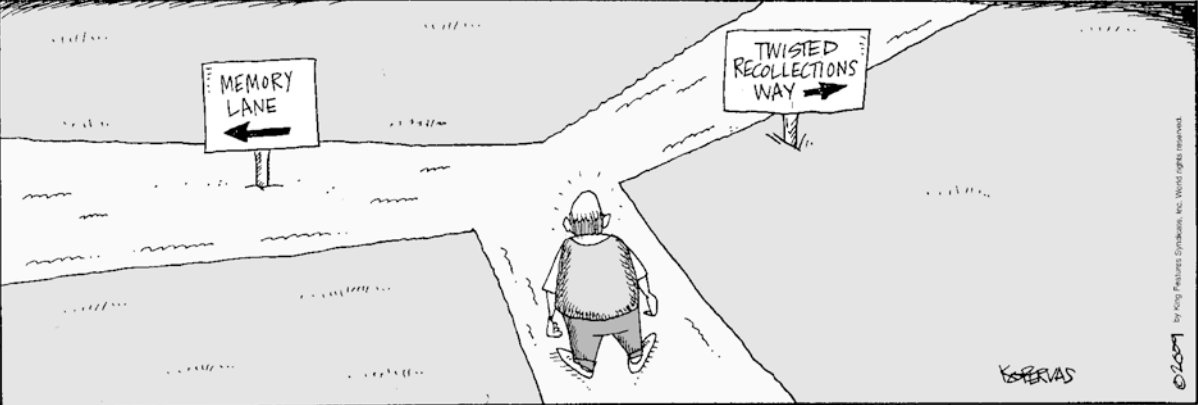
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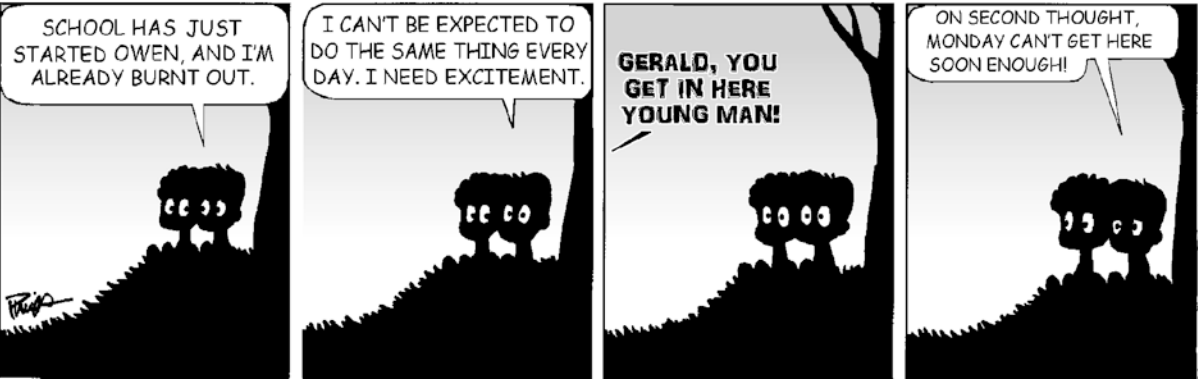
OUT ON A LIMB

By Gary Kopervas



AMBER WAVES

By Dave T. Phipps



THE SPATS

By Jeff Pickering



R.F.D.

By Mike Marland



Your good health

By Paul G. Donahue, M.D.

DEAR DR. DONOHUE: I have burning tongue syndrome. At times, it is almost unbearable. The only thing that helps somewhat is a saltwater mouth rinse. My dentist, my internist and a neurologist haven't offered any relief. I also get sores in my mouth and on my tongue. Any insight? — P.H.

Burning tongue syndrome is also known as burning mouth syndrome because the gums, roof of the mouth and lips also can feel like they are on fire. It happens mostly, but not exclusively, to women after menopause. Although painful and disturbing, it's not a health threat. No one knows the exact cause, but it might be that nerves serving the tongue and mouth are malfunctioning. Let me give you a few home remedies for it: rinsing the mouth with cold apple juice; and combining equal parts Benadryl elixir and Kaopectate as a mouthwash. Don't swallow these rinses, and use them four times a day. Another remedy is six drops of hot pepper sauce (Tabasco sauce) in a teaspoon of water and swishing it around in the mouth four times daily. It might increase the burning at first, but after a day or so it should lessen it. If it doesn't, abandon it.

Don't eat or drink spicy or acidic foods or beverages. Don't use mouthwashes with alcohol in them. Change your toothpaste brand. Chew sugarless gum. When burning mouth fails to respond to the above, the medicines Klonopin, Elavil or Neurontin might help.

Have your doctors looked for things like dry mouth, B vitamin deficiencies, anemia, diabetes, lichen planus, thyroid problems and Sjogren's syndrome?

Sores on the tongue and in the mouth are not ordinarily a part of burning tongue syndrome. Get to a doctor when the sores are present. You might

have recurrent canker sores and not burning mouth syndrome.

DEAR DR. DONOHUE: Will you please define claudication? Is there any treatment for it? — R.L.

Claudication is leg pain that comes on with activity and is due to clogged leg arteries. Depending on where the clog is, the pain can be felt in the buttocks, hips, thighs or calves. The medical name of this condition is peripheral artery (or vascular) disease.

Quite often, pain arises in the calves. Affected people have an uncanny ability to predict how far they can walk before they have to stop because of pain. Resting relieves the pain, and walking can then resume.

Plenty can be done for it. Medicines can sometimes keep the pain from developing. Another way to attack claudication is to open the clogged artery with a balloon-tipped, slender, pliable tube (catheter), just as they do for clogged heart arteries. Or the same kind of heart artery operation in which grafts replace the obstructed artery can be done for leg arteries.

The booklet on peripheral artery disease explains this illness and its treatment. Readers can obtain a copy by writing: Dr. Donohue — No. 109W, Box 536475, Orlando, FL 32853-6475. Enclose a check or money order (no cash) for \$4.75 U.S./\$6 Can. with the recipient's printed name and address. Please allow four weeks for delivery.

Dr. Donohue regrets that he is unable to answer individual letters, but he will incorporate them in his column whenever possible. Readers may write him or request an order form of available health newsletters at P.O. Box 536475, Orlando, FL 32853-6475. (c) 2009 North America Synd., Inc. All Rights Reserved.

King Super Crossword

- SOUNDS RIGHT

ACROSS

1 Williamson of "Excalibur"

6 The _ Brothers

10 Urban transport

13 Get the lead out

18 Harden

19 Stallion's son

20 "Agnus _"

21 Mason's tool

22 Cat-show judge?

25 Puts aside

26 Carpenter's item

27 Cavity

28 Model boat?

30 Degrades

33 Mongoose's enemy

35 Bungle

36 One of the Marches

38 "If I _ you..."

39 White House grp.

42 Beret kin

45 Queen of mystery

47 Tell it like it isn't

49 Winter warmer-upper

51 See 105 Down

52 Sluggishly

53 Dislike of a relative?

56 Branch

57 Swiss canton

58 "_ Dawn" ('73 song)

60 Moving man?

61 Strait-laced

62 71 Across feature

63 Support

64 Not quite adult

65 Kevin of "American Beauty"

67 Renown

69 Board game

71 Casals' instrument

72 Messenger

74 "Younger _ Springtime" ('49 song)

75 Exceptional

76 Be a buttinsky

79 So be it

80 Wallace of "The Princess Bride"

81 Type of orange

82 Bray beginning

83 Lion's lair

84 A different place to get married?

87 Newscaster

Lesley

89 Mythical monster

90 Danger

91 UK honor

92 Steven of "Exit Wounds"

93 Comic Louis

94 JFK info

95 Literary lioness

98 Edinburgh veto

100 Westover or Tamblyn

101 Emit

103 Indiana river

105 Woodchopping

mishap?

111 Married Mlle.

113 Identical

114 Use logic

115 Like a quick-fingered poker player?

122 Chased rainbows?

123 Competitor

124 "Dies _"

125 _ cotta

126 Stratum

127 TV's "Too Close _ Comfort"

128 Deserve

129 Occurrence

DOWN

1 Tuck's mate

2 Shiba _ (Japanese dog)

3 Mongrel

4 Rink legend

5 Bowe blows

6 Charge

7 Reformer Lucretia

8 Lilly or Mintz

9 Command at a corner

10 Perry White, for one

11 Meyerbeer's "-Huguenots"

12 Lucknow lute

13 Art Deco name

14 Carrot or parsnip

15 Crooked

16 Trickle

17 In addition

21 "For shame!"

23 "Sleeping with the _" ('91 film)

24 Mediterranean port

29 Foul

30 Charm

31 Aggressiveness on Wall Street?

32 Genesis figure

34 Suits

35 Disgusted

37 Fills to the gills

38 Moisten

40 Letters of desperation?

41 Machine part

42 Kremlin tomb?

43 Hawk's home

44 One of the Yokums

46 "Swingin' School" singer

48 Claire or Balin

50 _ impulse (suddenly)

53 Landed

54 Centipede's sensor

55 Departs

59 "My word!"

61 Chum

65 Medieval menial

66 Kindly

68 Pantry item

69 Atlas or Aznavour

70 Actress Goldie

71 Java joint

72 Wore

73 Abrasive substance

74 Bangkok native

75 Poe crow

77 Cover old ground

78 Bellows

80 Athlete's injury

81 Triangular sail

84 Mimic

85 Word with on or off

86 _ degree (somewhat)

88 Skater Lipinski

92 Forms a dart

96 Trudge

97 Big rig

99 Come to

102 Employees

104 Ms. Midler

105 With 51 Across, central Asian lake

106 Lucy Lawless role

107 Shrewd

108 Land in the ocean

109 Action figure

110 Greene's "The _ of the Affair"

112 Falco or Adams

113 Injury aftereffect

116 Herd word

117 Significant years

118 Gun the engine

119 Nev. neighbor

120 Decorative vase

121 Tended a tot
- Answer Page 6

1	2	3	4	5		6	7	8	9		10	11	12		13	14	15	16	17		
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Social Security Q&A By Ray Vigil

Q: I lost my Social Security card and am afraid someone else could be using my number. Should I report it to Social Security?

A: If you think someone is using your number to work, call Social Security at 1-800-772-1213 (TTY 1-800-325-0778). But reporting a lost or stolen card to Social Security will not prevent its misuse. That is why you should take further action. If you think someone is using your number, there are several other actions you will want to take:

- Contact the Federal Trade Commission online at www.ftc.gov/bcp/edu/microsites/idtheft or call 1-877-ID-THEFT (1-877-438-4338);
- File an online complaint with the Internet Crime Complaint Center at www.ic3.gov;
- Contact the IRS Identity Theft Hotline by calling 1-800-908-4490 Monday - Friday, 8 a.m. to 8 p.m.; and
- Monitor your credit report.

Q: How much will I receive if I qualify for SSI benefits?

A: The amount of your SSI benefit depends, in part, on where you live. The basic maximum SSI payment is the same nationwide. For 2009, the maximum SSI payment for an eligible individual is \$674 per month and \$1,011 per month for an eligible couple. However, some states add money to the basic payment to help you meet your living expenses. In addition, other income you have can reduce the basic SSI payment amount, and so can your living arrangements if you are receiving help from others. For more information, go to www.socialsecurity.gov.

Q: Is there a time limit on Social Security disability benefits?

A: No. Your disability benefits will continue as long as your medical con-

dition has not improved and you cannot work. Your case will be reviewed at regular intervals to make sure you are still disabled. If you are receiving disability benefits when you reach full retirement age, they will automatically be converted to retire-

ment benefits.

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, 11111 Gateway West, Attn: Ray Vigil, El Paso, Texas 79935.

Weekly SUDOKU

by Linda Thistle

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

Place a number in the empty boxes in such a way that each row across, each column down and each small 9-box square contains all of the numbers from one to nine.

DIFFICULTY THIS WEEK: ★★

★ Moderate ★★ Challenging
Answer Page 6 ★★★ HOO BOY!

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CryptoQuip

This is a simple substitution cipher in which each letter used stands for another. If you think that X equals O, it will equal O throughout the puzzle. Solution is accomplished by trial and error.

Clue: Q equals O

MC YNHNJPQGRHD VPQQDR

QSJCMJD JPNJ NHR JQQ

DYNKK, YMAPJ JPNJ HRDSKJ

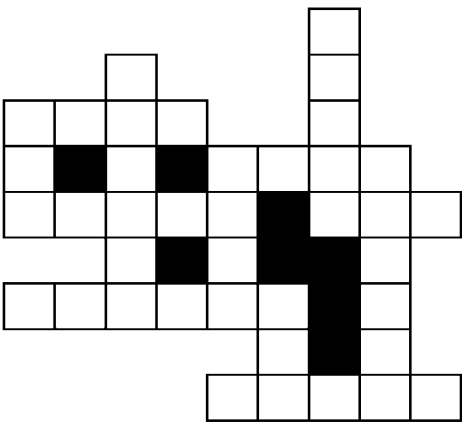
MG N JMAPJ HNVR?

Answer Page 6

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♥ALG
LISHRL
LEBON
SHIS
♥MALRUB
♥ENB
♥UBLE
SARPG
♥PIH
RHIPSM
APGEA
♥ALEH




Answer Page 6


Unscramble these twelve letter strings to form each into an ordinary word (ex. HAGNEC becomes CHANGE). Prepare to use only ONE word from any marked (♥) letter string as each unscrambles into more than one word (ex. ♥RATHE becomes HATER or EARTH or HEART). Fit each string's word either across or down to knot all twelve strings together.

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