



NEWSBRIEFS

Benefits workshop

Social Security Staff with support from Senior Adult Program will hold workshops on Feb. 20 and Mar. 13, 2010 at EPCC Administrative Service Center, 9050 Viscount, Building B, Room 320, El Paso, Texas 79925. There will be two sessions on both dates — in English from 10:00 a.m. to noon and in Spanish from 1:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m. The workshops are free and open to general public. Highlights include:

- An in-depth, step-by-step explanation on how to navigate Social Security Website.
- Save A Trip — Learn how to find answers to your questions directly from your personal computer.
- Learn how to apply for benefits, change an address, direct deposit, how to obtain a benefit letter or how to obtain SSA forms and much more.
- If you are within 3 months from retirement or if you are unable to work due to a disability, SSA Staff will be on hand to assist you in getting started.
- Staff will also assist you in submitting changes to your current benefits portfolio.

There are limited computers on hand, so please call ahead for registration. For more information or for registration, call Ray Vigil at 866-563-9310 ext. 27404.

Crime Stoppers

A man walks up to a gas station employee, shows a handgun and demands money. When told the money is inside, the gunman violently shoves his victim inside the store where he aims his weapon at a cashier, and demands money, making this the Crime Stoppers "Crime of the Week." On Sunday, January 31, shortly after 6:00 a.m., the lone gunman approached his first victim at the gas pumps outside a 7-11 convenience store located in the 2000 block of North Piedras. The suspect showed a handgun, but was told the money was inside the store. At that time the suspect shoved the victim into the store, where he aimed his silver handgun at the cashier and again demanded money. After receiving money, the suspect also took cigarettes and fled on foot heading eastbound in the alley north of the store. The suspect is described as an Hispanic male, 5'7" to 5'8" tall, heavy-set, wearing a black wool mask over his face, a black hoodie sweatshirt with white lettering, red undershirt, and white shoes. He spoke Spanish and was also wearing white gloves. He had a nickel-plated semi-automatic handgun. If you have any information about the identity and location of this suspect, please call Crime Stoppers at 566-TIPS (566-8477) or on-line at www.crimestoppersofelpaso.org. You will remain anonymous and, if your

See BRIEFS, Page 5

It's extremely difficult for a child to live right if he has never seen it done.

— Quips & Quotes



— Photo by Jamie Henneman

GETTING PREPARED — Instructor James McKenzie (center) helps a group of volunteers prepare for their next CERT training exercise. From left are Gary Whitman (kneeling), Eric Gutierrez, Betty McKenzie, McKenzie, Larry Valles and Eva Doyle.

Communities participate in CERT training

Local citizens ready themselves for disasters

By Jamie Henneman
Special to the Courier

When a major disaster strikes it is often the organization and cooperation of the local community that helps people get through. Thanks to a recent Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) training hosted at the Socorro Fire Station, local communities are even better prepared to handle the worst case scenario.

Around 30 volunteers recently completed the CERT training that was hosted by the Socorro Fire Station and sponsored by the Clint Police Department. The group used a CERT unit that

was loaned by the Tigua Indian Reservation to complete the training that covered disaster medical operations, emergency response, fire safety, light search and rescue, and team organization. Using the training learned in the classroom and during exercises, CERT members acquired the skills for helping others in their neighborhood or workplace following an event when professional responders are not immediately available.

The workshop was also made possible through the efforts of one Clint High School sophomore, James McKenzie, who acted as the workshop instructor. McKenzie completed 30 hours of training in order to teach the class and is volunteering with the CERT program as part of his goal to become an Eagle Scout.

Clint Police Chief Alex Sanchez said having

community volunteers who have been CERT trained will be a benefit not only to the police department but the community as well.

"The community really is our eyes and ears in most cases and we need them to help us best serve the community, especially in a time of crisis," he said. "Having people who have been trained to assist in a disaster situation means we are all better prepared and can respond to things with a group effort."

In order to get more volunteers CERT trained, McKenzie and others are working to develop quarterly CERT training sessions for interested volunteers in the El Paso County area. They are also hoping to raise the \$18,000 through grants or fundraisers needed to purchase a CERT equipped trailer.

For more information about the next CERT training, contact Chief Sanchez at 637-4020.

Canutillo ISD contest winners meet author

By Kim Guzman
Special to the Courier

CANUTILLO — Fourth grade students at Garcia Elementary School (GES), in the Canutillo Independent School District, were recently treated to a special visit by well-known author, Benjamin Alire Saenz, who has written more than 15 books including poetry, novels, and children's books.

Saenz was invited to GES not only to read to the students, but also to listen as the fourth grade composition winners read their own stories in front of peers. As aspiring writers,



— Photo courtesy Canutillo ISD

PROSE PROS — Fourth grade students from Garcia Elementary School that won a writing composition contest gathered around author, Benjamin Alire Saenz. From left are Sergio Saucedo, Vivian Sanchez, Marissa Sandoval, Saenz, Cory Carrillo, Gabriella Ana, and Romelia Acosta.

See AUTHOR, Page 4

View from here By Robert Romano

Debt held by the public

Last week, Moody's issued a very public warning against the profligate spending of the federal government just a day after the Obama Administration released its ten-year budget plan that will add some \$10.634 trillion to the national debt by 2020. According to the warning, "If the current upward trend in government debt were to continue and become irreversible, the [nation's Triple-A debt] rating could come under downward

pressure."

When asked about the prospect of the U.S. losing its Triple-A rating, Treasury Secretary Timothy Geithner, speaking on ABC News' "This Week" said, "Absolutely not... That will never happen to this country." Never?

Clearly uncomfortable by Secretary Geithner's dismissal of the problem, the Washington Examiner's Mark Tapscott compared Geithner to the last emperor of Rome swearing up

and down that Rome would never fall. The comparison is fitting. After all, the U.S. is not immune to the laws of gravity. This nation can be bankrupted, it can fail, and it is foolish to proclaim that it cannot.

Never say never, Mr. Secretary.

This year alone, the White House's Office of Management and Budget (OMB) projects that Congress will add some \$1.556 trillion to the national debt, which today totals \$12.4 trillion. By the end of Fiscal Year 2011, the national debt will probably surpass 100 percent of the Gross Domestic Product, reaching an all-time high of \$15.144 trillion.

In its primer on the national debt, "A Double-A USA?", the Wall Street Journal argues that the U.S. must bring down drastically the ratio of "debt held by the public" to Gross Domestic Product. It also suggests that the "U.S. isn't in imminent danger of losing its Aaa rating, and it won't do so even in the medium or long term if our political class responds in the right way."

But what of the debt-to-GDP problem? Particularly, it argued in favor of utilizing the "debt held by the public" figure, currently at about \$8 trillion, as opposed to the total national debt, which is \$12.383 trillion, when discussing the dangers of sovereign default. Why?

Because more than \$4 trillion that has in essence been pillaged from the Social Security Trust Fund and other government accounts represent "promises that politicians have made to taxpayers and can repudiate." Therefore, that figure should not be utilized when publicly comparing the national debt to the economy's ability to pay it back.

Only, it hasn't been repudiated. Nor is it politically likely that it will be repudiated any time before the actual national debt surpasses 100 percent of the GDP. Indeed, Barack Obama promises to borrow an additional \$2.873 trillion from Social Security and other government accounts through 2020 to finance government spending.

At the end of Fiscal Year 2009, which ended on September 30th, the "debt held by government accounts" stood at \$4.331 trillion. It's been called "money owed to ourselves." In essence this is money owed to the American people. Money that was taxed on the promise to be paid back in retirement benefits, but was instead raided and now, having been spent, may forever be lost.

But, it is still real money. The total national debt still represents nearly \$12.4 trillion more spent than was taken in via revenue. Congress really spent that money.

The government will keep "debt held by government accounts" on the books, even if it has no intention of ever paying it back, if for no other reason than to keep those books sound and to leverage it to finance the budget. Even if by doing so, it is merely engaging in a funny con-game; accounting gimmickry that would make Bernie Madoff blush.

That is, if there is even any money left to raid. Consider this, as reported by USA Today, "Social Security's annual surplus nearly evaporated in 2009 for the first time in 25 years as the recession led hundreds of thousands of workers to retire or claim disability... The impact of the recession is likely to hit the giant retirement system even harder this year and next. The Congressional Budget Office had projected it would operate in the red in 2010 and 2011, but a deeper economic slump could make those losses larger than anticipated."

If the U.S. were going to repudiate the Social Security IOU's, now would be the time. These losses to Social Security are coming harder — and sooner — than previously expected. And millions of Baby Boomers are retiring or are about to retire.

Or else, it would be high time to immediately present a plan that balances the budget and pays down the national debt. Before it is too late and the nation's credit rating really is downgraded.

The Obama Administration, for

its part, assumes substantial growth over the next ten years, an average of 4.97 percent every single year. According to the White House, with its rosy glasses, the total national debt will not surpass 100 percent of the GDP until 2013, and the "debt held by the public" will never surpass it.

The assumptions are absurd. The government assumes an almost 1:1 ratio between deficit-spending and economic growth: \$10.634 trillion in new debt will equal \$9.555 trillion in economic growth through 2020. That assumes that all of the

money will be invested and, further, that over 90 percent of it will be invested profitably such that it will generously grow the economy.

Only, that money is not being invested, nor will it become profitable, because it will increasingly be spent on the collapsing entitlement system. So-called "mandatory" spending will increase from the current annual \$2.123 trillion for 2010 to over \$3.384 trillion for 2020.

The Journal puts the lie the OMB's rosy scenario: "These White House estimates are surely understated if current U.S. policies continue. The Obama budget assumes its tax increases won't affect investor behavior or reduce growth. Passing ObamaCare would send the debt ratio even higher, probably past 100% within a few years as spending soared and the illusionary cost savings failed to appear."

To make matters worse, net interest owed on the national debt will grow from the annual \$188 billion in 2010 to over \$840 billion in 2020. And, that's a conservative estimate, assuming that the nation manages to keep its Triple-A debt rating between now and then, and that interest rates on that debt do not radically jump as result.

Apparently, it's hard to see the red stop light when one is wearing rose-colored glasses.

Robert Romano is the ALG Senior News Editor.



Veterans Post

 By Freddy Groves

Stolen Valor Act faces challenge

You had to know this was going to happen.

No sooner do we start seeing some real action on the Stolen Valor law, with real arrests, and somebody comes along and wants to change it.

The Stolen Valor Act prohibits people from stating that they've been awarded medals they didn't earn, or worse, wearing them. Those found guilty in a court of law can get up to six months in prison.

In this case, we've got a guy in Colorado who was charged with five counts of violating the act. Not only did he wear medals he hadn't earned and talk it up to others, but he changed his name to further the ruse and collected funds meant for veterans.

Now we've got the president of a civil liberties organization who apparently doesn't like the fact that people can actually be prosecuted for telling lies. The organization filed a brief in court against the Stolen Valor Act.

And there's an attorney (of course) for the same group who

says that nailing the guy for those claims are "an unconstitutional restraint on the freedom of speech."

He says that real veterans — the ones who sweated, and held comrades while they died, and were themselves injured, and left loved ones at home while they fought in foreign lands, and honestly earned the medals they wear — aren't harmed in any way.

Aren't harmed in any way? Are you seeing red yet?

Thankfully, we have Jeremy Silbert, assistant U.S. attorney, who says that the lies are not protected speech, that "the Act withstands the scrutiny because it serves the compelling interest of protecting the reputation and meaning of decorations and medals."

Write to Freddy Groves in care of King Features Weekly Service, P.O. Box 536475, Orlando, FL 32853-6475, or send e-mail to columnreply@gmail.com. (c) 2010 King Features Synd., Inc.

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 Letter must not be more than 250 words in length. They should be dated, must be signed and have an address and daytime phone number. Only the name and city will be printed with the letter. The Courier reserves the right not to print letters to the editor or other submitted materials it considers inappropriate.

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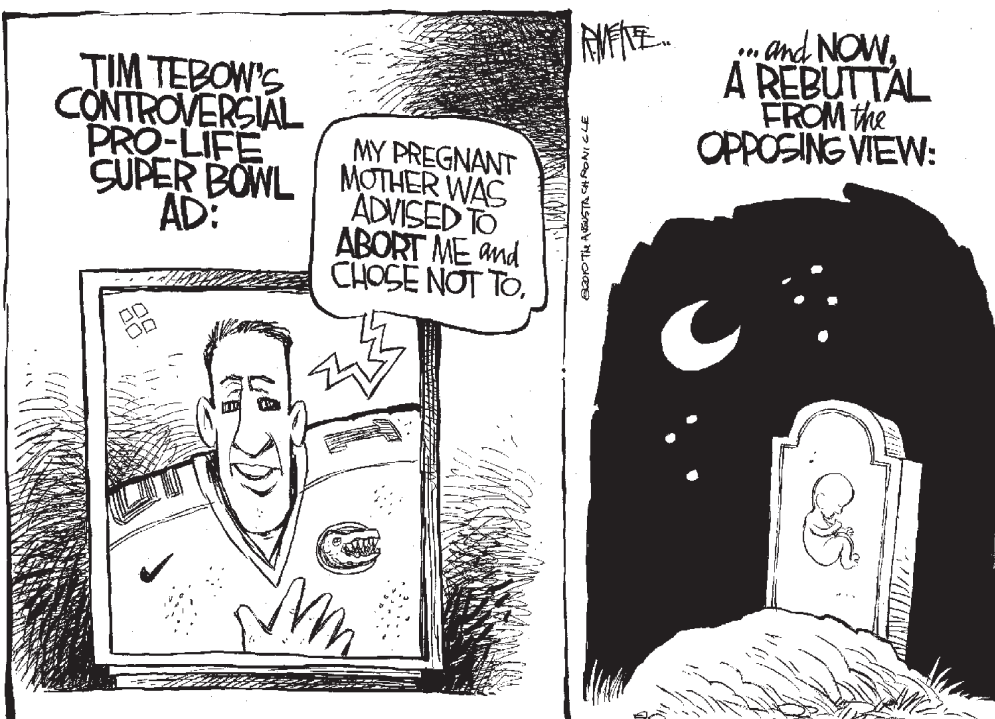
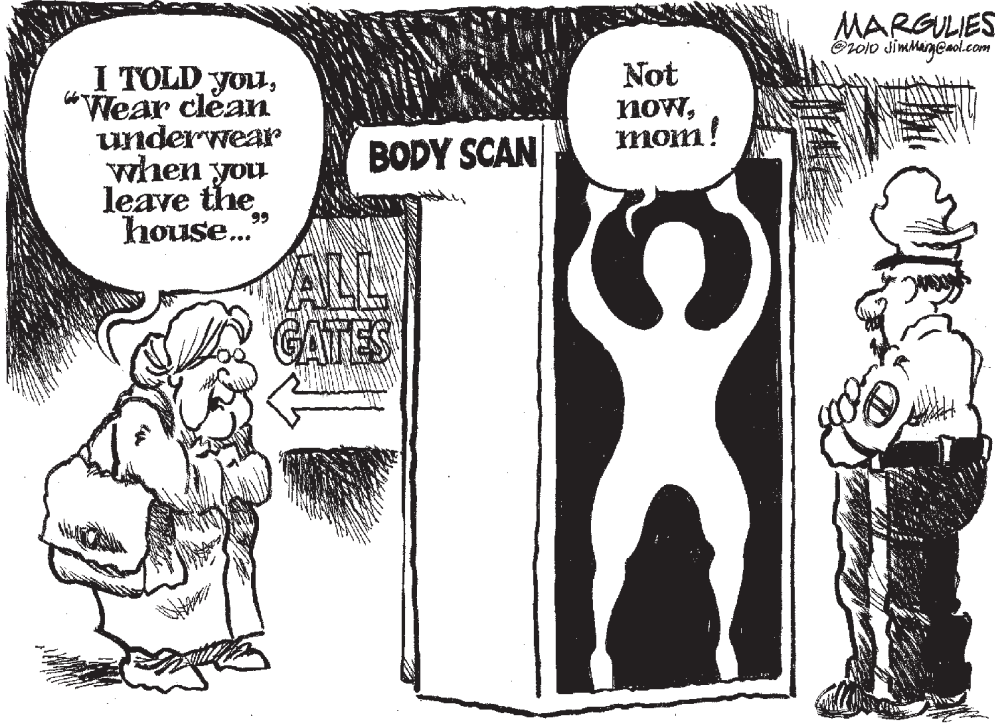
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Por la Gente By State Rep. Chente Quintanilla

Primaries on March 2

Hola mi gente, early voting in the March 2 primary election starts on February 15 and continues through February 26. The period for candidates to get their message across to the voters is quickly closing and the time to focus on getting supporters to the polls is now upon us.

Because there are so many important races on the ballot, El Pasoans must exercise their right to elect the person of their choice by voting. We have no other means to preserve our form of government. As the years go by, if fewer and fewer people are voting, then the ability of a few to control the decisions at all levels of government is greatly enhanced. I hope that you will be sure to vote.

As you may be aware, I am unopposed in the primary and the general election. As I did in a previous article, I thank the constituents of District 75 for the support they have given me this year. If you were not satisfied with the efforts that my staff and I have put forth, someone would have made an effort to replace me. I pledged before to continue to work hard so that your confidence in me will be sustained.

Because I am not required to do campaign activities, my office has begun to focus on issues that may be considered for the next legislative session in 2011. We shall begin discussions with a variety of constituents, agencies and other members of the Texas House of Representatives, including the El Paso delegation, to determine which issues are viable.

On February 9, 10 and 11, my staff and I will be in Austin to engage in several meetings. Also, we will be attending a public meeting by the Texas Lottery Commission.

One of the meetings we will have is with the new executive director of the Texas Department of Aging and Disability Services. As its title clearly suggests, this agency has a direct impact on the lives of

seniors and those who are disabled. Part of the dialogue is for the purpose of meeting the new director. The other purpose is to advocate face to face on behalf of El Paso for grant money. The money is to be used by LULAC Project Amistad for a senior resource center. There are several in East and Central Texas, but none on the border. I intend to do all I can to have the center established here.

We will also be meeting with executive staff from the Texas Alcoholic Beverage Commission. This meeting will be the start of several conversations about possible improvements to the Alcoholic Beverage Code beneficial to licensed businesses and for the communities in which they are located.

Finally that same day, we will meet with the Director of the Texas Turnpike Authority to discuss ports of entry in El Paso County. This is more of an update of the projects that are being considered.

On the 11th, we attend the Lottery Commission monthly meeting. Our particular issue will be the discussion about GTECH, the lottery manager, and some conflicts of interest that may have arisen recently.

Back in El Paso on the 12th, I will be meeting with news reporters to discuss some serious concerns I have about the census outcome. After that, I will meet with U.S. Census administrative staff in order to provide them with assistance from my office. Since we have provided constituent services and campaigned in the area, my staff and I can make a tremendous difference.

I think it is a definite advantage to be able to start considering issues in the next legislative session. The issues listed here do not comprise all that we will be considering.

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

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Moore Texas by Roger Moore **The greeter at the State Fair of Texas, BIG TEX, wears a 75 gallon hat.**

Census employment will not affect benefits in Texas

DALLAS — Those electing to work for the 2010 Census won't lose their Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (previously known as the Food Stamp program), thanks to a recent federal interpretation of eligibility rules. The rules interpretation from the Food

and Nutrition Service, a division of the U.S. Department of Agriculture, is good news for those seeking employment in tough economic times, and when the Census Bureau is still seeking qualified applicants to help complete the 2010 Census.

Workers could already hold onto their Medicaid and Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) aid if they took temporary jobs with the Census. The interpretation allows the nearly 1.4 million adults receiving SNAP aid in Texas to continue receiving their nutrition benefits if they elect to work for the 2010 Census.

The U.S. Census Bureau is hiring about 84,000 workers to conduct the Census in Texas. Hiring has already started and will extend through spring 2010 for temporary assignments, most lasting eight weeks to a few months. The Dallas Regional Census Center is expected to hire about 111,000 workers to complete its task in its region, which includes Texas, Louisiana and Mississippi.

Besides building a resume, a Census job allows workers to take

part in the country's once-in-a-decade population count, which was constitutionally mandated and carved into law by Congress in 1790. Pay ranges from \$8 to \$24 an hour for job titles ranging from clerk to supervisor. Counts established by these individuals will help determine congressional representation and the annual distribution of more than \$400 billion in federal funds for local and regional services.

"The jobs, which offer competitive wages and flexible schedules, also allow people to work in their neighborhoods and for their neighborhoods," said U.S. Census Bureau Dallas Regional Director Gabriel Sanchez. "We hire locally, and an accurate count means a fair distribution of money for schools, roads, neighborhood improvements and elderly care in your community."

The Census Bureau is now recruiting temporary workers to manage this year's count with pay running from \$8 to \$24 an hour. Those who wish to schedule a basic skills test to qualify for positions should call (866) 861-2010.

Author

From Page 1

these seven students were able to share their work with a published author and gain valuable knowledge from his experience.

After listening to their fellow students' compositions, GES students focused on Mr. Saenz as he began to read his book, "The Dog Who Loved Tortillas". The students experienced many emotions, from laughter to almost tears, as they listened to Saenz read. When Saenz had finished reading his book, a student asked him, "Why did you want to be a writer?"

Saenz explained, "When I was a boy, all I did was read, I read, and read, and read, so I was always reading, which made me want to become a writer. I think I can I said to myself." "And so I did," he added.

As a final encouragement to the students, Saenz stated, "When I was in fourth grade, I loved writing; it was a way that I could express myself."

STRANGE BUT TRUE

By Samantha Weaver

- It was François VI, duc de La Rochefoucauld and prince de Marcillac, a noted 17th-century French author and memoirist, who made the following sage observation: "Few are agreeable in conversation, because each thinks more of what he intends to say than of what others are saying, and listens no more when he himself has a chance to speak."

- Rutherford B. Hayes, the country's 19th president, was the first to install a phone in the White House.

- It was 1948 when the first vinyl musical recording was made. The piece of music so immortalized was Tchiakovsky's "Nutcracker Suite."

- Although we tend to think of the bikini as a modern fashion innovation, two-piece bathing suits can be seen in murals in the ancient city of Pompeii.

- According to Romanian tradition, a sure-fire hangover remedy is tripe soup. In Poland, drinking sour pickle juice is supposed to cure the morning-after agonies. And if you're in Germany, you should try the local remedy: pickled herring.

- The shortest street on record can be found in the small town of Wick, Scotland. Ebenezer Place is a mere 6 feet, 9 inches long.

- Do you suffer from pogonophobia? If so, you probably have some issues with Santa. Pogonophobia is a fear of beards.

- If you're like most Americans, you've stolen from your employer — though probably not much. It seems that 58 percent of your fellow citizens admit to taking office supplies for personal use.

- The Hundred Years' War actually lasted 116 years.

- Albert Einstein's final words are lost to history. He spoke his last words in his birth tongue, German, and it seems that the nurse who was attending him during his last moments spoke only English.

Thought for the Day: "The most wasted of all days is one without laughter." — E.E. Cummings

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Socorro Independent School District Statement of Revenues, Expenditures and Changes in Fund Balance Governmental Funds For the Year Ended August 31, 2009

Data Control Codes	General Fund	Food Service Fund	2006 Capital Projects	Other Funds	Total Governmental Funds
REVENUES:					
5700 Total Local and Intermediate Sources	\$ 64,701,342	\$ 3,380,683	\$ 637,213	\$ 15,035,304	\$ 83,754,542
5800 State Program Revenues	195,703,810	124,742	—	26,504,229	222,332,781
5900 Federal Program Revenues	3,120,742	12,316,725	—	23,147,772	38,585,239
5020 Total Revenues	263,525,894	15,822,150	637,213	64,687,305	344,672,562
EXPENDITURES:					
Current:					
0011 Instruction	159,998,487	—	143,008	22,228,896	182,370,391
0012 Instructional Resources and Media Services	4,440,441	—	—	152,238	4,592,679
0013 Curriculum and Instructional Staff Development	3,256,120	—	—	4,346,886	7,603,006
0021 Instructional Leadership	5,364,577	—	—	341,161	5,705,738
0023 School Leadership	16,164,967	—	122,811	162,783	16,450,561
0031 Guidance, Counseling and Evaluation Services	8,603,501	—	—	2,169,421	10,772,922
0032 Social Work Services	1,212,124	—	—	162,204	1,374,328
0033 Health Services	3,601,275	—	—	350,551	3,411,826
0034 Student (Pupil) Transportation	7,396,825	—	—	—	7,396,825
0035 Food Services	237	17,276,793	—	26,197	17,303,825
0036 Cocurricular/Extracurricular Activities	7,468,904	—	—	35,099	7,504,003
0041 General Administration	6,776,673	—	—	17,863	6,794,536
0051 Plant Maintenance and Operations	31,622,188	—	—	214,509	31,836,697
0052 Security and Monitoring Services	5,675,661	—	—	29,798	5,705,459
0053 Data Processing Services	3,709,213	—	—	13,960	3,723,173
0061 Community Services	801,666	—	—	1,029,931	1,831,597
Debt Service:					
0071 Debt Service - Principal on Long Term Debt	1,267,464	—	—	10,657,524	11,924,988
0072 Debt Service - Interest on Long Term Debt	107,104	—	—	21,173,461	21,280,565
0073 Debt Service - Bond Issuance Cost and Fees	—	—	—	434,515	434,515
Capital Outlay:					
0081 Facilities Acquisition and Construction	1,038,884	—	24,173,459	22,632,746	47,845,089
Intergovernmental:					
0099 Other Intergovernmental Charges	1,232,886	—	—	—	1,232,886
6030 Total Expenditures	269,199,197	17,276,793	24,439,278	86,179,743	397,095,011
1100 Excess (Deficiency) of Revenues Over (Under) Expenditures	(5,673,303)	(1,454,643)	(23,802,065)	(21,492,438)	(52,422,449)
OTHER FINANCING SOURCES (USES):					
7911 Capital Related Debt Issued (Regular Bonds)	—	—	—	15,134,984	15,134,984
7916 Premium or Discount on Issuance of Bonds	—	—	—	427,066	427,066
8949 Other (Uses)	—	—	—	(15,135,000)	(15,135,000)
7080 Total Other Financing Sources (Uses)	—	—	—	427,050	427,050
1200 Net Change in Fund Balances	(5,673,303)	(1,454,643)	(23,802,065)	(21,065,388)	(51,995,399)
0100 Fund Balance — September 1 (Beginning)	45,961,669	3,180,997	66,209,034	41,610,645	156,962,345
3000 Fund Balance — August 31 (Ending)	\$ 40,288,366	\$ 1,726,354	\$ 42,406,969	\$ 20,545,257	\$ 104,966,946

Briefs

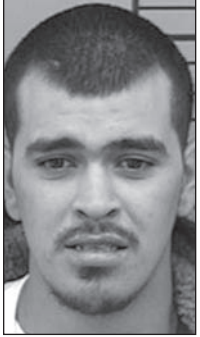
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tip leads to an arrest, you can qualify for a cash reward.

— James Klaes

Wanted

The hunt continues for Eric Isaac Dominguez, 20, wanted in connection with an assault in Canutillo on Dec. 30, 2009. He is wanted for Engaging in Organized Criminal Activity. Dominguez is one of three men who beat another man with a rock and a tire iron. Dominguez is 5'7" tall and weighs 180 pounds.



Eric Dominguez

He has brown hair and eyes. He has "IRMA" tattooed on his left wrist and "BCR" on his chest. The other two assailants, Sergio

Gonzalez (19) and Fernando Lopez (19), have been caught and charged. All three live in Canutillo and are confirmed members of the "Canuto" gang. If anyone has seen or has any information on the whereabouts of Dominguez they should contact the Sheriff's Office (915) 546-2280 or Crime Stoppers of El Paso at 566-TIPS (8477). Callers will remain anonymous and may be eligible for a reward if the information provided leads to the apprehension of the individuals featured.

— Deputy Jesse Tovar

Horse trouble

Tornillo resident Pedro Buentello, 38, pled guilty to 1 count of committing a Deceptive Business Practice, a crime of dishonesty punishable by up to one year in jail and/or a fine not to exceed \$4,000. According to the police complaint, on September 11, 2008 Buentello offered to sell another party 45 horses for \$2,850. A handwritten contract was signed and Buentello was paid \$1,400, but



Pedro Buentello

the horses were never delivered and the money was never returned. After accepting the guilty plea, County Court at Law #1

visiting Judge John L. Fashing sentenced Buentello to 300 days in jail. "The County Attorney's Office is committed to protect consumers from unscrupulous salesmen who prey on unsuspecting and trusting citizens of this community," said El Paso County Attorney Jo Anne Bernal.

— Elhiu Dominguez

Hernandez to play at Tabor College

By Cynthia P. Marantes
Special to the Courier

San Elizario High School senior Ashly Hernandez recently signed a letter of intent to play softball at Tabor College, a National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics (NAIA) institution in Kansas. Hernandez has stood out as a multi-talented athlete since she began playing both softball and volleyball for the Lady Eagles as a freshman. Last school year, she was part of both the San Elizario High School softball and volleyball teams that earned a bi-district championship.

It is in softball, however, where Hernandez has truly dominated as a powerful pitcher with a record of 192 strikeouts, 142.2 innings pitched and 6 shut outs during the 2008-2009 season alone. She has also been selected to the softball First Team All-District since her freshman year and was named the 2008-2009 Pitcher of the year in District 2-4A.

Ashly has also been playing first base, pitcher and right field for the Texas Sluggers traveling club team



— Photo courtesy San Elizario ISD

Ashly Hernandez

since she was in the 7th grade. She was chosen as a member of Triple Crown and Club USA softball, both are national softball league teams.

Aside from her many athletic accomplishments, Hernandez has also excelled academically. She is a member of the National Honor Society and is in the top ten percent of her class currently holding a 3.7 GPA.



— Photo courtesy Canutillo ISD

Cynthia Diaz, a sixth grader at Canutillo Middle School (CMS), won a \$25 Cinemark gift for her first place anti-violence poster. The Ambassadors for Change club at CMS is running an educational anti-violence campaign, under the theme "Take a stand against violence." Diaz was one of 23 students across all grade levels that designed an anti-violence message and poster. The campaign and contest are part of the club's initiative to create awareness and encourage students and the community to join hands to eradicate violence at all levels. "Our goal is for the students at CMS to benefit from the contest by becoming more aware of the need to be proactive against violence through the messages of their peers," said club sponsor Ms. Pat Gallardo.

— Patricia Tidwell

ELECT
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For **District Clerk**
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Democrat

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Integrity: This has been passed on to me by my family and those around me.
Dedication: Loyalty to my team, service to my community and hard work.

Rosa Cervantes

Political Ad paid by Campaign to Elect Rosa Cervantes for District Clerk. Treasurer Craig A. Patton 2829 Montana Suite 204 El Paso, Texas 79903

ELECT
PATRICIA CHEW
DEMOCRAT
FOR JUDGE • PROBATE COURT #1

DEMOCRAT

Political Ad Paid for by the Patricia Chew Campaign, Enriqueta Firro, Treasurer, 300 E. Main, El Paso, TX 79901

Getting a jump on college



— Photo courtesy Clint ISD

NEW SISTERS — Two Horizon High School students were recently inducted into the Phi Theta Kappa Omega Gamma chapter of the El Paso Community College Honor Society. Claudia Martinez, left, and Janett Nunez were the only two public school students inducted into the prestigious honor society this year. To receive an invitation to membership in Phi Theta Kappa, Martinez and Nunez must have completed at least 12 hours of coursework that may be applied to an associate degree and maintained a grade point average of 3.5 for that coursework. Both were able to complete the coursework requirements through Horizon High School's Dual Credit courses which are available to all students. As members of Phi Theta Kappa, Martinez and Nunez may now apply for some \$37 million in transfer scholarships, provided exclusively to Society members by approximately 700 senior institutions.

— Laura Cade

archives: www.wtxcc.com

Re-Elect

DEMOCRAT

JUDGE ROSALIE "Rosie" DOMINGUEZ

FOR JUSTICE OF THE PEACE Pct. 6 PL2

Early Voting Feb. 16-26, Election Mar. 2

Political Ad Paid for by Rosalie Dominguez, Elena Mata - Treasurer

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CryptoQuip Answer

On the set of "I Love Lucy," one could safely say that everybody involved had a Ball.

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Young quarterback makes verbal commitment to play for USC

By Steve Escajeda
Special to the Courier

As I've said a million times in the past, just when you think you've seen everything in the world of sports — something new comes along.

Now everybody knows that the most powerful organizations in the country are the IRS, the FBI, the CIA and the NCAA.

Okay maybe mentioning the NCAA in this list is stretching it a bit, but there's no doubt that college athletics' governing body runs its product with an iron fist.

Though the NCAA often runs itself as well as Enron did, it loves to throw its weight around.

But even the NCAA can't do a single thing about what new coach Lane Kiffin and his USC Trojans did last week.

While most sports fans are still scratching their heads over USC's hiring of Kiffin, everyone is scratching their heads over his latest recruiting decision.

Kiffin saw some footage of a quarterback

from Delaware recently and walked away totally impressed with what he saw.

He loved the quarterback so much that he got the young man to make a verbal commitment to play football for him at Southern Cal.

This story is not a very unusual one — except for the fact that the quarterback is just 13-years-old.

No that wasn't a typo — I did say the kid was just 13.

Oh, and if you do the math — that makes him a seventh grader.

Heck, the kid is still a couple years away from attending high school.

Just 13-years-old! I've got socks that are 13-years-old.

The first time I heard about this I had to read it again and again to make sure it was legitimate — and it is.

If anyone would have asked me two weeks ago whether a 13-year-old could legally verbally commit to a university, I would've

been almost absolutely positive that it was impossible.

Silly me.

The kid, David Sills, is already six feet tall and can do things that most 16-year-olds can only dream about. But does that make this signing right?

I don't think this is a very good idea at all. And I'm sure the NCAA hates the idea but there is nothing it can do about it.

This kid has enough to worry about just being a seventh grader.

I have two teenage kids and I've always taught them that they will be allowed to do things that are age-appropriate.

I've always told them not to be in a hurry to grow up. All the grown up things they want to do will come at the appropriate time.

There is a definite chance that young Mr. Sills could be the next David Clyde or Michelle Wie or Clint Hurdle or Todd Van Poppel or Kwame Brown.

If you younger readers don't know some of the names above — do yourself a favor and look them up.

Any way, I don't often rout for the NCAA, but I hope it can acquire the right to stop young kids from having to make adult decisions — and soon.

Who knows how the kid will develop over the next six years, both physically and emotionally.

Can we please let kids be kids?

By the way, hasn't USC gone through

enough negative recruiting practices over the last few years?

It's no coincidence that Pete Carroll and Tim Floyd are no longer with the university.

Who Dat

I remember growing up watching football and marveling at the precision of teams like the Dallas Cowboys, the Oakland Raiders, the Miami Dolphins, the San Francisco 49ers, the Washington Redskins and the Pittsburgh Steelers.

At the same time, everybody was laughing at the inept antics of the New Orleans Saints — or the Aint's as many people called them.

Back in the 1970s, 80s and 90s, the thought of the Saints ever making it to the Super Bowl was about as plausible as a black man ever being elected president of the United States.

The Saints did the unthinkable last Sunday by outclassing the Indianapolis Colts 31-17 in the biggest game of them all.

Quarterback Drew Brees is a great NFL quarterback, but I don't think anybody outside the French Quarter thought he could out-duel Peyton Manning. But he did.

The win was not just a victory for a football team, it was a reminder that anything is truly possible with hard work, determination and a strong will.

Of course we already knew that by watching the people of New Orleans who survived Katrina.



A sporting view By Mark Vasto

No doubt like a lot of you

At your workplace, you've no doubt experienced the same situation: There's that one guy, usually a childhood friend of the owner, who has the air conditioned space in the warehouse or the natively furnished office with the graying printer, dusty laptop, patina-ridden ceiling tiles and the window overlooking your workplace. He or she's drinking instant coffee (and

booze), telling you what you to do. Normally, you think they're too hard on you, that you deserve a break. But you let it slide. Why? Because you totally overdid it on Pro Bowl Sunday! And wasn't it the party of the year? (Sarcasm?)

There's nothing I love more than Pro Bowl Sunday. What a game! All the stars (except the best — you know, those that made it to the

Super Bowl but fail to answer the bell for the Pro Bowl... wussies!) and all the action you'd expect from a bunch of multimillionaires who could absolutely care less.

Take Chad Ochocinco (please!). When asked if he was excited about heading to the Pro Bowl on Jim Rome's show, he said he was ecstatic. Why? Because he was heading to Miami Beach and not Hawaii this year. Being a single man in Miami is infinitely more exciting for the average unmarried NFL superstar than what amounts to little more than a second honeymoon in Hawaii for most players, only this

time he's not only with his old lady — his in-laws, nanny and three kids came along for the luau, too.

Modern-day Pro Bowls used to be held in Hawaii, one week after the Super Bowl. It was an event that served to be little more than a televised Hawaiian vacation for the NFL players lucky enough to have been voted into the game. From experience, I'd take the parties of Miami Beach over Waikiki any day. The NFL apparently did, too.

Flashback, 1984: The Chicago Bears "Shufflin' Crew" was in the playoffs. They, as most of the league that year, fell. The next year the Bears dominated and won the league's crown. (And how can you blame them? The Bears were hustling on down, doing it for you!)

A year later and it was the G-Men spilling Champagne in Wellington Mara's suite at the Rose Bowl, thanks to Phil Simms epic (and MVP winning) performance. It surprised many, but why? Simms had thrown for three touchdowns in the fourth quarter and won the Pro Bowl MVP in the previous year's (1984) Pro Bowl. Yeah, that's right — the Pro Bowl.

So let's be frank: the Pro Bowl is a joke — we made that point above — but we should always remember our friends who will do anything for that extra day off... and we're the lucky ones who get to watch.

Mark Vasto is a veteran sportswriter and publisher of The Kansas City Luminary. (c) 2010 King Features Synd., Inc.

Classified Ads

LEGALS

Town of Horizon City

(48) hours prior to the meeting.

Elvia Schuller
Administrative Aide to the Mayor for Karen Ellefson City Clerk

WTCC: 02/11/10

PUBLIC MEETING

A PUBLIC MEETING will be held to discuss the progress on the Park Open Space Recreation and Trails Masterplan. For Citizens living North of Horizon Blvd, the meeting will be held on **Wednesday, 2/17/10 at 6:30 pm** and for Citizens living South of Horizon Blvd, the meeting will be held on **Thursday, 2/18/10 at 6:30 pm**. Both meetings will be held at **14999 Darrington Road, Horizon City, Texas**.

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SELF-HELP

Accommodations for handicapped persons will be available; and individuals in need of special assistance for attending the hearing are encouraged to contact the City Clerk at 915-852-6268; forty-eight

Persons who have a problem with alcohol are offered a free source of help locally. Alcoholics Anonymous - call 562-4081.

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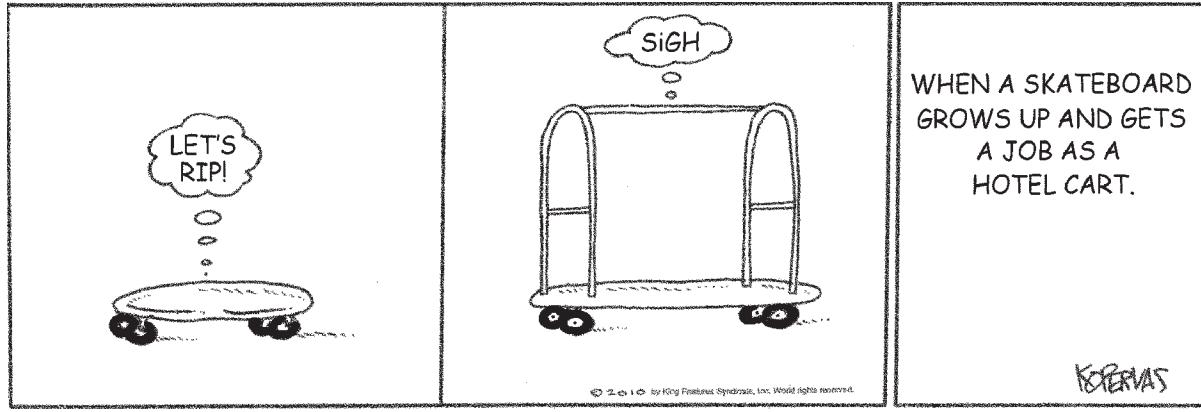
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Deadline: Mondays
Please print. Send form and payment (no cash) to:
West Texas County Courier
15344 Werling Ct.
Horizon City, TX 79928

Contact Information:
Name: _____
Phone: _____

Comix

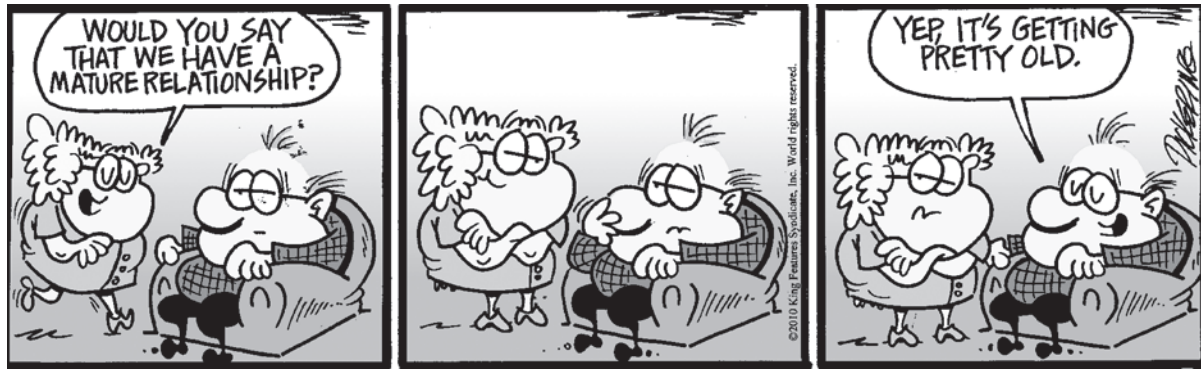
OUT ON A LIMB By Gary Kopervas



AMBER WAVES By Dave T. Phipps



THE SPATS By Jeff Pickering



R.F.D. By Mike Marland



Your good health By Paul G. Donohue, M.D.

DEAR DR. DONOHUE: Is it possible to get wet macular degeneration from a scratch on the left eye during cataract surgery, or could it have been a cyst that caused wet macular degeneration? I am 85, and my right eye is perfect. I had cataract surgery on that eye also. — C.

A scratch on the eye isn't likely to cause macular degeneration. The possibility of cataract surgery leading to macular degeneration is a remote one. More than 6,000 people who had had a cataract removed were followed for five years after the operation. Slightly more people who had the operation developed macular degeneration, dry or wet, in the operated eye than did a similar group of people who had not had an operation.

This isn't proof that cataract surgery leads to macular degeneration. The same risks that cause cataracts also cause macular degeneration. The numbers that do develop it after cataract removal are small. A cause-and-effect relationship has not been proven. I am not clear what you mean by a cyst causing the degeneration. In what part of the eye was the cyst? I have not seen a link between cysts and macular degeneration.

The retina is the back layer of the eye, the layer that converts incoming images into nerve signals that can be transmitted to the brain so we can see. The macula is a small, round area of the retina where there's an aggregation of cells that are essential for central vision — the kind of vision needed to read a paper, watch TV and drive.

Dry macular degeneration, accounting for 85 percent to 90 percent of cases, is a wasting away of macular cells. Wet macular degeneration results from a sprouting of blood vessels in that region. Those newly formed blood vessels leak fluid

and destroy macular vision. Procedures are available that can halt the progression of wet macular degeneration.

The booklet on macular degeneration explains both kinds and what is available to help those with this common eye problem. Readers can obtain a copy by writing: Dr. Donohue — No. 701W, Box 536475, Orlando, FL 32853-6475. Enclose a check or money order (no cash) for \$4.75 U.S./\$6 Canada with the recipient's printed name and address. Please allow four weeks for delivery.

DEAR DR. DONOHUE: I need some basic facts about the pulse. First, what's considered a normal rate? I have trouble finding my pulse. I feel all over my wrist, but it's hard for me to detect. Is there some other place where I can feel it better? — C.M.

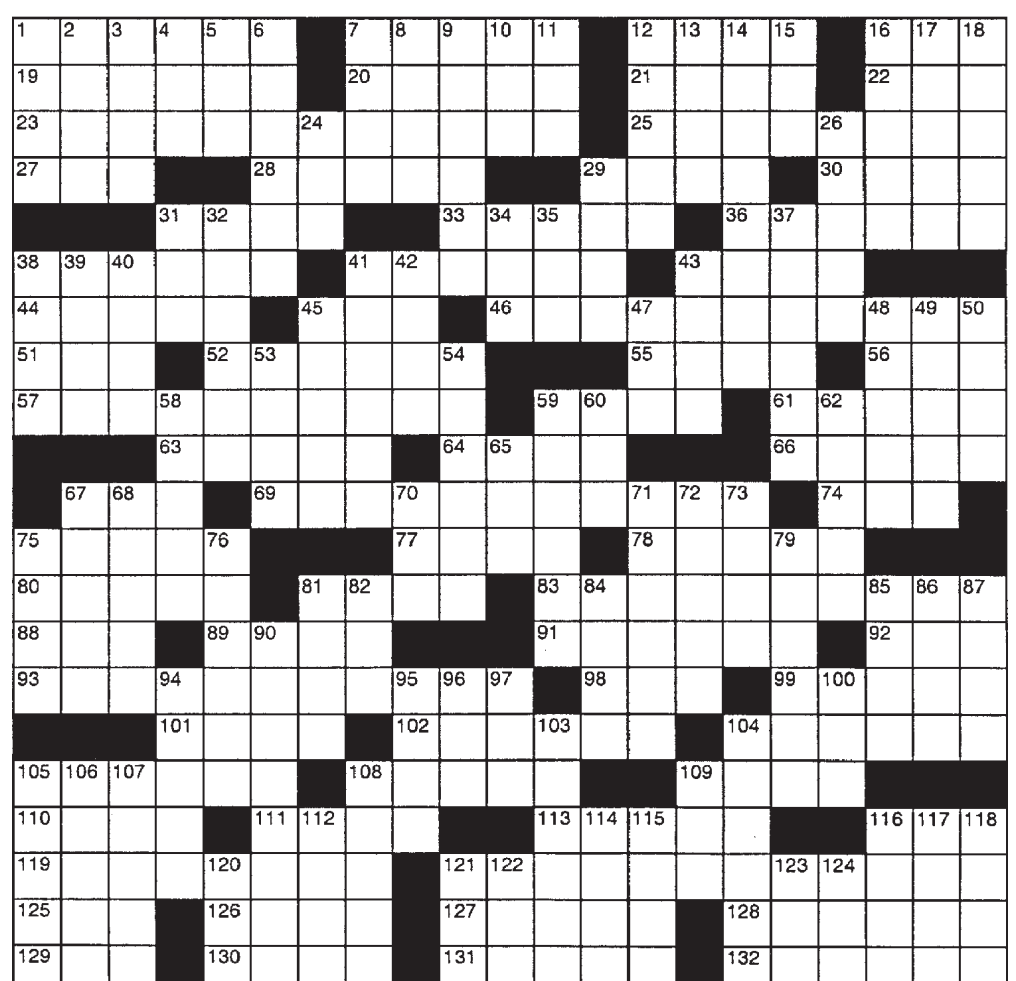
The pulse rate and the rate of the heartbeat are one and the same. When the heart beats, it ejects blood into arteries. The force of that ejection runs down all artery walls and is the pulse beat. A normal pulse (or heart rate) is 60 to 100 beats a minute.

You feel the pulse on the thumb side of the wrist. Maybe you're pressing too hard and obliterating it. If you can't find it there, you can feel it in the neck, slightly below the angle of the jaw. Or you can put your hand over your heart and count the heartbeats.

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) 2010 North America Synd., Inc. All Rights Reserved.

Super Crossword

- | | | | | |
|----------------------------|---------------------------------|----------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------------|
| CAN'T STANDISH STILL | 63 Maine town | 126 Actor Barry | 37 Perplexed | 87 Always |
| ACROSS | 64 Space | 127 Murcia mister | 38 Blend | 90 Aged, as paper |
| 1 WWII site | 66 Al _ (cooking term) | 128 Farm adolescent | 39 Jai _ | 94 Poultry serving |
| 7 Serenity | 67 Lear, to Goneril | 129 Weaken | 40 Army vehicle | 95 Cobbler's need |
| 12 Brazos River city | 69 Riddle: Part 3 | 130 _ -Neisse Line | 41 "Makin' Whoopee" singer | 96 Palindromic name |
| 16 Clerical garb | 74 Fleur-de- _ | 131 Early German | 42 Pro foe | 97 Asian ox |
| 19 Point the finger at | 75 Desert schlepper | 132 Spanish _ | 43 "The King and I" setting | 100 Nonclerical |
| 20 Synthetic fiber | 77 _ Romeo | DOWN | 44 Brendel's instrument | 103 It's down in the mouth |
| 21 Christiania, today | 78 Heap of Dickens | 1 Cut | 45 Vandellas' leader | 104 Vandellas' leader |
| 22 Remote | 80 Coeur d' _ ID | 2 Flu symptom | 105 Lock | 106 Biblical book |
| 23 Riddle: Part 1 | 81 Cartoonist | 3 Like some donuts | 106 Biblical book | 107 Summarize |
| 25 Gershwin's " _ in Blue" | 83 Hard to describe | 4 Groan producer | 107 Summarize | 108 Ocean vessel |
| 27 Beatty or Buntline | 88 Hurried | 5 Shakespearean | 108 Ocean vessel | 109 Christie or Costello |
| 28 Gaggle gal | 89 Little one | 6 Equine | 109 Christie or Costello | 112 Lion's pride |
| 29 Watch part | 91 Prate | 7 Kelly's possum | 112 Lion's pride | 114 Melville work |
| 30 Fountain order | 92 _ 4 (Toyota model) | 8 Goofs | 114 Melville work | 115 Like Hitchcock's curtain |
| 31 Rocker Marc | 93 Riddle: Part 4 | 9 Tabloid subjects | 115 Like Hitchcock's curtain | 116 Couch |
| 33 Nature spirit | 98 Loafer part | 10 Dot follower | 116 Couch | 117 Served well |
| 36 Sable, for one | 99 Gladden | 11 Minnesota twins? | 117 Served well | 118 Creole veggie |
| 38 Lee of "The Fall Guy" | 101 Alan of "Gilligan's Island" | 12 Merit | 118 Creole veggie | 120 Trip |
| 41 Cantaloupe's cousin | 102 Frequent Funicello co-star | 13 '75 Wimbledon winner | 120 Trip | 121 Ltr. addenda |
| 43 Team | 104 Scanty | 14 More humid | 121 Ltr. addenda | 122 Where flocks frolic |
| 44 Skater | 105 Roller-coaster feeling | 15 "Alley _" | 122 Where flocks frolic | 123 "Tell _ No" ('65 hit) |
| Berezhnaya | 108 1970 World's Fair site | 16 In progress | 123 "Tell _ No" ('65 hit) | 124 Outer edge |
| 45 Bleak critique | 109 Chatterley or Windermere | 17 Soup scoop | 124 Outer edge | |
| 46 Riddle: Part 2 | 110 Director Nicolas | 18 Adams or Ferry | | |
| 51 Papua New Guinea port | 111 Skip | 24 Actor Chaney | | |
| 52 Contaminates | 113 Turbine part | 26 It needs to be threaded | | |
| 55 Butz or Warren | 116 _ Goncalo, Brazil | 29 Boom or gaff | | |
| 56 Sapporo sash | 119 Avoidance | 31 Swindle | | |
| 57 Tactful | 121 Answer to riddle | 32 Wind instrument? | | |
| 59 Consider | 122 Swell place? | 34 Spitz sound | | |
| 61 Ford flop | | 35 Exec's deg. | | |



Answer Page 5

Social Security Q&A By Ray Vigil

Lower income might mean lower Medicare Part B premium

If you have Medicare coverage and you pay a higher Part B premium due to your higher income, here's some news that may be comforting during these troubling economic times.

If you have experienced a significant reduction in your overall income, Social Security might be able to reduce the amount of your Medicare Part B premium as well.

The significant reduction in income can be as a result of a number of changes: marriage, divorce or annulment, death of a spouse, work reduction, work stoppage, reduction of income due to a loss of income-producing property, and loss or reduction of certain forms of pension income.

If any one of these events has happened to you, just provide Social Security evidence of the event and tell us how it has reduced your income. Evidence could be a death certificate, letter from your employer about your loss of work, or something of that nature. If you filed a federal income tax return for the year in question, we'll need to see your signed copy of the tax return. If your income will not change until the following year, you can give us an estimate of what you think your income will be.

Once you show us evidence of the event and provide proof or an estimate of your reduced income, Social Security will update the records and, if appropriate, adjust your Medicare Part B premium. You can request a new decision and ask that we use more accurate tax return information if:

You amended your tax return for the year we used to determine your premium and it changes the income we count;

You provide proof from IRS of an

error in the tax return information we used to make our decision; or

Your tax filing status for the year we used to determine your premium was "married filing separately" and you did not live with your spouse at any time during that year.

If you wish to report a significant reduction in your income so we can adjust your Medicare Part B premium, visit the Social Security website at www.socialsecurity.gov/mediinfo.htm, or call us toll-free at 1-800-772-1213 (TTY 1-800-325-0778) or visit your local Social Security office.

To learn more about Medicare Part B coverage, visit www.medicare.gov or call 1-800-MEDICARE (1-800-633-4227; TTY 1-877-486-2048).

Q: What's the difference between "SSID" and "SSDI"?

A: SSID, or SSI, is the way some

people refer to "Supplemental Security Income (SSI) disability" benefits. SSI disability benefits are paid to people who have limited incomes and resources. SSDI is the way some people refer to "Social Security disability insurance benefits." Social Security disability benefits go to people who have worked and paid Social Security taxes for a long enough time to be covered for Social Security. Some people qualify for both "SSI" and "SSDI" if their Social Security benefit is low enough for them to receive SSI. To learn more about Social Security and SSI, visit www.socialsecurity.gov.

Q: Why is there a five-month waiting period for Social Security disability benefits?

A: By law, Social Security disability benefits can be paid only after you have been disabled continuously throughout a period of five full calendar months. Therefore, Social Security disability benefits will be paid beginning with the sixth full month after the date your disability began. You are not entitled to benefits for any month in the waiting period. For more information go to www.socialsecurity.gov.

www.socialsecurity.gov or call 1-800-772-1213 (TTY 1-800-325-0778).

Q: I didn't enroll in Medicare Part B back when my Part A started a few years ago. Can I enroll now?

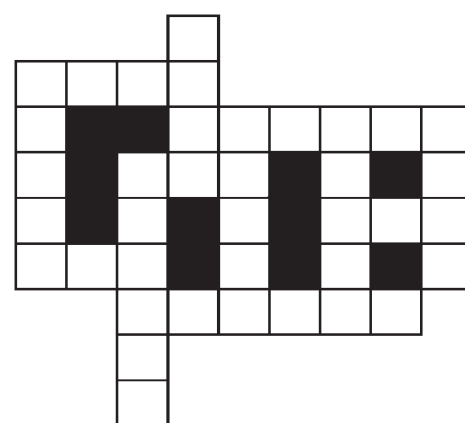
A: Yes — but if you want to do it this year, you'll have to act soon. The general enrollment period for Medicare Part B medical insurance began January 1 and runs through March 31. Keep in mind that although Part A is free, there will be a premium for your Part B. And in most cases, that premium goes up each 12-month period you

were eligible for it and elected not to enroll. To find out more about Medicare, visit the Medicare website at www.medicare.gov or see Social Security's online page of resources by visiting www.socialsecurity.gov and selecting the "Medicare" link.

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.



- ♥ OGB
- OATBIN
- LANUN
- WEBR
- TABLEA
- TRU
- ♥ REWI
- GOINT
- ♥ NWO
- TAINGE
- GRAEW
- BEIG



Answer Page 5

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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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: T equals L

SZ UEN FNU SX "L TSON
 TYAI," SZN ASYTM FNXNTI FKI
 UEKU NONWICSMI LZOSTONM
 EKM K CKTT.

Answer Page 5

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UTEP BASKETBALL

February 13 @ 7:00 PM
Men's vs East Carolina
 2,500 Pete's Pennies giveaway
 La Familia Halftime

February 18 @ 7:05 PM
Women's vs UAB
 National Girls and Women in Sports Day
 Free entrance for everyone

February 20 @ 7:05 PM
Women's vs Memphis
 Pink Zone
 Wear Pink, get in FREE!

 www.utepathletics.com



Weekly SUDOKU

by Linda Thistle

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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 5

★★★ HOO BOY!

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