San Elizario HS Navy cadets clean park

By Cynthia P. Marentes Special to the Courier

It would have been difficult to hear the sounds of children laughing and see them playing as overgrown dry brush and tall weeds some almost six-feet high obscured the Parque de los Niños, a community park in San Elizario, from street view. After learning about the dismal condition of the site, cadets with the San Elizario High School Navy Junior ROTC (NJROTC) program decided to do something to make the park more inviting for children in the neighborhood. On a recent Saturday morning, 20 NJROTC students led by Lieutenant Commander James W. Snarr and Chief Manuel P. Jaquez volunteered to clear all the dry vegetation and debris from the park.

"Many times we ignore things that have a lot of meaning to us and we walk by them without lending a hand but when you help the community, you feel better because it helps everyone not just yourself," Chief Jaquez stated.

The cadets descended on the neglected park with shovels, hoes, and other tools borrowed from Chief Jaquez and their own homes to cut weeds off at the ground level and to pickup trash. They stacked enormous piles of weeds and collected about 15 huge bags full of trash.

WHACK–A–WEED – San Elizario HS NJROTC cadets cleaned up the Parque de los Niños on Saturday, Feb. 26. The park was full of weeds – some taller than the cadets themselves.

PLAYTIME – The cadets take a ride on the swings after finishing the clean up of Parque de los Niños.

Downtown parks are backdrop for First Annual Neon Desert Music Festival

By Alfredo Vasquez Special to the Courier

El Paso Downtown’s San Jacinto Plaza and Cleveland Square parks will be the backdrop for the inaugural presentation of El Paso’s Neon Desert Music Festival, which is scheduled for Saturday, April 30. Festival grounds will cover the two parks and the space in between. Organizers estimate that the designated area can hold up to 25,000 people, and they are aiming for at least 8,000. The twelve hour festival will include a variety of musical groups, arts and crafts displays, and food and drink vendors.

Latin Grammy-winning Venezuelan rock/jazz/funk band Los Amigos Invisibles, San Antonio’s Girl in a Coma, Mexican rockers Kinky, electronic music duo Designer Drugs, Austin rockers Through The Trees, Subrosa Union and Nicosounds, San Marcos’s electronic/dance group Gobi and El Paso’s DA, the Royalty, Lustiania, and Bulletproof Tiger will be among the 27 acts who will play on four stages that will be located in separate areas throughout the event premises.

Zach Paul, Gina Martinez, and Brian Chavez, of Austin’s Splendid Sun Productions, are the promoters behind the new El Paso event. The three grew up in El Paso but now

Cleveland Square Park is located between the El Paso Museum of History and the Main Public Library. The return of Cleveland Square Park to a beautiful green space that everyone can be proud of and enjoy came with the recent renovation and expansion of the Main Library and construction of the new Museum of History.
View from here  
By Tim Simmons

Be sure you’re the only one receiving your Medicare benefits

What do the new health care laws require? Hundreds of law enforcement officers and you have in common? They’re all crucial in helping fight Medicare fraud. Just last month, the federal government announced that it filed charges in fraud schemes around the country totaling more than $225 million. All these alleged schemes had one thing in common— they sought to defraud Medicare.

Texas is one of the hot spots for these criminals who seek to steal Americans’ hard-earned tax dollars at our expense. In Houston, the fraudulent claims involved physical therapy and chiropractors. In Dallas, they involved home health care and medical equipment.

The good news is that the new health care law will help crack down on waste, fraud and inefficiency in Medicare. The new law devotes $350 million to fight fraud, which experts say will save the program as much as $4.9 billion. Investigators will also be able to act more quickly when Medicare enrollees report fraud and even stop payments on suspected claims.

You also play a crucial role in helping fight fraud. As we celebrate Consumer Protection Week on March 6 through 12, AARP Texas provides some timely tips on how to make sure you’re the only one receiving your Medicare benefits.

Among the common ways that scammers try to steal from Medicare— intentionally or unintentionally—are: A doctor’s or other provider’s office might bill the government for treatment you never received; the office might double-bill a patient or an overly anxious patient might agree to accept unnecessary procedures or tests; a company might charge for equipment you never used; someone may try to use your Medicare card for their own use.

What to do? Regularly check your bills and Medicare summary notices. If you notice something wrong or that you’re unsure of, ask your doctor or care provider. Be sure to verify the dates of service and the address listed for your doctor’s office on the bill. Sometimes the billing address may be different from where you see your doctor or other care provider, but that’s okay to check with the office. By carefully monitoring your statements for accuracy, you can help guarantee that services will be there when you really need them.

It may sound obvious, but also be sure to check the doctor’s name. The little details can be very important. Make sure it’s your doctor or someone who works closely with your doctor. Safeguard your Medicare number just like your Social Security number. If you lose your card or it is stolen, report it immediately by calling 1-800-MEDICARE (1-800-633-4272). Don’t let anyone but doctors and other medical professionals review your medical records.

Be cautious about any free gifts, services or supplies, such as bottles. Don’t buy medical supplies from door-to-door salespeople, but instead ask for a way to contact them at a later date. If they respond by urging you to take action immediately, something is probably wrong. The same is true for calls you receive from people who say they’re with the government or one of your medical providers. If you’re suspicious, tell the caller you will call him back, and then verify his phone number.

If you find evidence of fraud, you can report it anonymously to the inspector general of the Department of Health and Human Services by calling 1-800-HHS-TIPS (1-800-447-8477). You can also report suspected fraud online at Medicare’s website at www.medicare.gov/anti-fraud. Click on “Report fraud, waste and abuse.”

See BENEFITS, Page 6
Por la Gente  By State Rep. Chente Quintanilla

Money tight in Texas

Hola mi gente. In ten days, the session will have reached the halfway point. The pace is picking up rapidly with more and more bills being heard in committees.

Unsurprisingly, the bills that the governor designated as emergency have proceeded on the fast track in the Senate and should be close to a floor vote in the house.

Any person with common sense would be puzzled as to why those bills are emergency issues and not the budget. With each passing day, more dismal news is published about the impact of the cuts. After a period of consistent positive economic growth, this budget with the extremely high numbers of jobs lost will put the recovery at a complete halt. It doesn’t seem like most of the leadership sees that.

That’s the bad news.

The better news is that Texans from all over are voicing their adamant demands that certain steps be taken to soften the budget impact. There are so many school districts that are strongly objecting to the cuts and also insisting that the rainy day fund be used that there is now a crack in the wall. Several members with seniority have finally spoken in favor of using the fund and finding new revenues.

Only time will tell if the moderate voices take over.

It is very obvious that the number of bills that have been filed is well below the number of past sessions. There is probably about four or five thousand bills filed. Normally the house will have about four or five thousand bills filed. There are fewer than three thousand at this point. That may be a good thing because sometimes we over legislate.

I remain your friend and public servant.

Chente por la gente.

Music

From Page 1

live in Austin, and they have been working for over a year and a half to bring this event to fruition. The group hopes to make this an annual affair.

“We love El Paso, and our love for live music is why we decided to bring the music festival here. We felt that it was time for us to give back to our hometown. We want to provide an outlet for local artists and musicians to display their talents at a large scale event alongside national and international headliners,” Martinez stated.

“Our goal is also to make an economic impact on El Paso, and hopefully have it become a success and something that people from El Paso, Juarez, Las Cruces, and the surrounding areas grow to love and enjoy,” she added.

Paul said that the city’s Museum and Cultural Affairs Department (MCAD) and the Convention and Visitors Bureau (CVB) helped them navigate through the city permits process.

In January, city officials granted the production company $20,000 to help get the Neon Desert festival off the ground. “They saw that we were really serious about this, that we had good intentions and that it was more than about having a business and making money. They saw that we want to do this for El Paso,” stated Paul.

“It’s a first time event but we are modeling it after successful events,” stated Bill Blaziek, head of the El Paso Convention and Visitors Bureau. “In fact, we talked about the humble beginnings of events like Austin City Limits and South by Southwest.”

Paul stated that it would be great if it ever happens to be like Austin’s popular music festivals years down the road. “But we’re not trying to do that, just something similar to that on a smaller scale,” he stated.

Tickets will cost $25 for the first 1,000 ticket-buyers and active military, and $35 general admission after that. For more information, visit the festival’s website at neondesertmusicfestival.com.

San Jacinto Plaza has been the center of downtown El Paso for over 100 years—a source of entertainment, a center for public transportation and a place to rest from the hustle and bustle of everyday life. There are often noon and afternoon concerts, and the traditional lighting of the city tree in the Plaza still officially begins the Christmas season in El Paso.
Art contest
The Texas Clean Rivers Program (CRP) for the Rio Grande of the United States Section of the International Boundary and Water Commission (US/IBWC) is sponsoring a drawing contest for students from kindergarten through twelfth grade. The contest is in honor of World Water Day, celebrated March 22 as an international day of observation and action to focus attention on the importance of freshwater and advocate for the sustainable management of freshwater resources. The CRP is seeking student artwork about the Rio Grande or the importance of water. Winning entries will be published in the 2012 CRP Rio Grande Basin Calendar. The contest is open to all schools within the Rio Grande Watershed in Texas. All submissions must be turned in by a teacher. There will be one award in each of the following age groups: kindergarten – grade 3, grades 3 – 6, and grades 7 – 12. All students who submit an entry will receive a free calendar. Students are encouraged to draw how water is important to them, how the Rio Grande is important to them, or how they enjoy the river. A committee will judge the entries based on creativity, representation of the Rio Grande, and representation of the importance of water. The deadline for entries is April 29, 2011. Complete contest rules are available at: http://www.ibwc.gov/CRP/documents/studentdrawingcontest.pdf or by contacting Elizabeth Verdecchia at Elizabeth.verdecchia@ibwc.gov. The goal of the Texas Clean Rivers Program for the Rio Grande is to maintain and improve quality of water in the river basin in Texas through an ongoing partnership involving the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality, other agencies, regional entities, local and state governments, industry, and citizens. — Sandy Spencer

Bray on board
Gov. Rick Perry has reappointed Michael Bray of El Paso to the Manufactured Housing Board for a term to expire Jan. 31, 2011. The board regulates the state’s manufactured housing industry. Bray is a Realtor with Prudential BKB Realty. He is director of the National Association of Realtors and Frontera Land Alliance, and a member of the Texas Association of Real Estate. Bray received a bachelor’s degree from the University of Texas at El Paso. He will continue to serve as president of the board for a term to expire at the pleasure of the governor.

— Katherine Cesinger

McLaughlin named
Gov. Rick Perry has reappointed Scott McLaughlin of El Paso as a member of the Camino Real Regional Mobility Authority. He is president of the El Paso Association of Local Real Estate Boards. McLaughlin is a graduate of the University of Texas at El Paso and received a bachelor’s degree in business administration.

— James Kluesner

Classified Ads


S E R V I C E S

RESIDENTIAL WINDOW

To the Residents and Citizens of the Lower Valley Water District:

The Lower Valley Water District (“LVWD”) is currently accepting resumes for the position of Executive Director. The LVWD is an Equal Opportunity Employer. All qualifications and requirements for this position should be submitted in writing to the office of the Chief Financial Officer, Lower Valley Water District, 401 E. Vinton Rd., Vinton, Texas 79821.

A d m i n i s t r a t i o n

The Village of Vinton, Texas, has received funding through the Texas Department of Housing and Community Affairs for the down payment and property rehabilitation of (1) residential units in the Village of Vinton, Texas. The Bid Packets will be available at the Administration Building or at 300 Vinton St., Vinton, Texas, 79821 from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. from Monday through Friday (excluding weekends). The deadline to submit sealed bids is February 11, 2011. The Village of Vinton reserves the right to reject any or all bids or to waive any irregularity in the bidding.

Invitation to Bid

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A d m i n i s t r a t i o n

Lower Valley Water District Notice Concerning Board Member Vacancy

The Village of Vinton, Texas, reserves the right to reject any or all bids or to waive any irregularity in the bidding.

To the Residents and Citizens of the Lower Valley Water District:

Lower Valley Water District

Notice of the Annual Meeting

The Village of Vinton, Texas, is hereby giving notice of the Annual Meeting of the Board of Directors of the Lower Valley Water District to be held on (the “Annual Meeting Date”) at 7:00 p.m. (Central Time) in the Administration Building of the Village of Vinton, Texas, 401 E. Vinton Rd., Vinton, Texas. The Annual Meeting Date shall be the second (2nd) Thursday of each month.

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San Elizario student council visits The Windy City

By Cynthia P. Marentes
Special to the Courier

It’s a long way from San Elizario, TX to Chicago, IL, but several students from San Elizario High School recently made the long trip to The Windy City for a valuable leadership development opportunity and an unforgettable experience. From Feb. 18-20, seven students from the San Elizario Student Council attended the national 2011 Leadership Experience and Development (LEAD) Conference. The students returned to San Elizario excited about implementing some of the new ideas and strategies they learned in order to make a positive impact at their school.

According to Melanie Castillo, a junior who serves as Student Council President, the LEAD Conference offered a variety of sessions and workshops on numerous topics throughout the day. The students from San Elizario High School took full advantage of all the information presented at the conference by separating and individually attending different sessions in order to gain as much knowledge as possible. Everardo Lopez, Student Council Public Relations Officer, was impressed by the inspirational messages and guidance offered by the conference speakers. Everardo specifically mentioned the “Power of One” work session where participants learned a strategy of surrounding themselves with positive people, things, and physiology in order to make good choices in life.

“All of those three things make up who you are and what you will do in the future,” Everardo added.

“It was also great to meet and socialize with students from other places and share ideas, projects and ways to help our community,” Melanie concluded.

Over the course of one busy month, the San Elizario High School Student Council embarked on one fundraising activity after another in order to finance some of the expenses for their trip. The Mission Valley Lions Club also provided funding for travel costs. While the conference was a memorable event, for some of the students the trip itself was an eye-opening adventure since it was a long way from San Elizario.
Every year there is one event that has the entire nation riveted to the TV set. And that particular event is slated for this weekend.

No, it has nothing to do with Americans who can sing and dance or 12 strangers who are suddenly thrown together on a deserted island.

This, of course, is the hour-long show that tells Americas where they’re favorite teams will be dancing – dancing like in the NCAA Basketball Tournament.

I don’t know about you but other than the Oscars, there’s no better feeling of anticipation wondering whether your favorite team will make the tournament and whom they will play.

This year the tournament has expanded to 68 teams – why they added four more teams is a mystery to me but they did… probably has something to do with money.

Any way, once the teams are set that means something is needed selling. Still, it didn’t take much and even Florida won it back-to-back a few years ago.

But there is nothing like that now. There are no dominant programs any more. There are very good ones, but the tournament is wide open and about 20 teams have a real chance to raise that trophy this year.

That is why this year’s selection show is so important. It’s all going to depend on where teams are positioned and whom they play.

If somebody gets a right pairing in the right part of the country in the right bracket, anything can happen.

I believe that because this year’s tournament is so wide open, it should make for the best set of games in years. I think that by the time we get to the final four, there will be at least a couple of four-seed or lower still involved.

And that makes for a more interesting tournament.

So make sure and tune it this Sunday evening for the most riveting hour on television.

This is my favorite kind of reality show.

Young college guys waiting to hear that they will soon have a chance to make history.

And with more teams with a chance to win, more guys have a chance to make a name for themselves.

Let the dancing begin.

---

**Get ready to fill out your NCAA dance card on Sunday**

**By Steve Escajeda**

Special to the Courier

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Any way, once the teams are set that means something to do with money.

As far as the big disappointments, I have a list of teams who are the biggest pretenders in the tournament and don’t deserve the kind of respect they’re getting.

Texas, Syracuse, Kentucky, Louisville and half of the Big East teams getting in will be utter disappointments and will say goodbye by the second round.

As far as teams that have a legitimate chance to make the final four, Ohio State and Kansas have great shots and that’s it.

This season is so even, I can’t think of two other teams who can make the final four.

I guess if I really had to I’d pick Wisconsin, North Carolina, Duke and Notre Dame as four teams that could crack into the final four – but don’t bet on any of them.

When I was growing up the dominant team was UCLA. The Bruins seemed to win it every year. Then after a while Bobby Knight and Indiana took over. Then Duke, UNLV, and even Florida won it back-to-back a few years ago.

But there is nothing like that now. There are no dominant programs any more. There are very good ones, but the tournament is wide open and about 20 teams have a real chance to raise that trophy this year.

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Let the dancing begin.
DEAR DR. DONOHUE: Please explain why I have my shoes off late every day because my feet and ankles have swollen and don't fit into the shoes. I flop around in slippers without heels. In the morning, after a night's sleep, my feet are back to normal. I am 77 and take no medicines. -- K.M.

I can't give you an unequivocal response because there are numerous causes of foot and ankle swelling.

The medical name for such swelling is edema. Even in relatively healthy people, it occurs if people sit or stand for any length of time. Gravity pulls fluid out of the circulation, and it accumulates in the feet and ankles. This is especially true at older ages, when the circulatory system becomes somewhat leaky.

For this kind of swelling, the solution is to elevate the legs when sitting. The most effective elevation is raising the legs above heart level, something that can be done only by lying down with pillows propping up the legs.

Getting up and moving about is another way to prevent fluid accumulation in the feet.

Heart failure is a more serious cause of such swelling. When the heart’s pumping action becomes feeble, fluid escapes from blood vessels and again accumulates in the ankles and feet. Kidney disease with retention of body fluid is another cause of edema. Liver disease does the same.

Another condition called lymphedema produces the same picture. Lymph is fluid that normally escapes the circulation to percolate around tissues and organs to provide nourishment and to wash away any metabolic waste. Fluid vessels called lymphatics vacuum this fluid up and return it to the circulation. Anything that disrupts lymphatics can lead to ankle/foot swelling. An old infection and surgery are two such disruptors.

When the lymph system becomes somewhat leaky, it accumulates in the feet and ankles have swollen and don't fit into the shoes. In the morning, after a night's sleep, my feet are back to normal. I am 77 and take no medicines. -- K.M.

DEAR DR. DONOHUE: I am concerned about my brother, who is 63, diabetic, weighs 300 pounds and is 5 feet 8 inches tall. He falls asleep, wakes and falls asleep repeatedly at the table and when he sits down. Why? He says he's too tired. He picked a scab on his leg and blood squirted out 6 inches. What does that mean? -- Anon.

Your brother might have sleep apnea. His body size suggests that it could be the reason for his daytime sleepiness. Snoring and blood indicates that an artery was broken. No one should pick at scabs, especially a diabetic.

Your brother needs medical attention. He has to lose weight both for control of diabetes and for control of sleep apnea, if that is what he has. He is at great risk of incurring the complications of diabetes -- heart attack, stroke, blindness, kidney failure -- if he doesn't start paying attention to his health.

Dr. Donohue regrets that he is unable to answer individual letters, but he will incorporate these conditions and their treatments. Readers can obtain a copy by writing: Dr. Donohue – No. 106W, Box 536475, Orlando, FL 32853-6475. Enclose a check or money order for $4.75 U.S./$6 Canadian with the recipient’s printed name and address. Please allow four weeks for delivery.

DEAR DR. DONOHUE: Please explain why I have my shoes off late every day because my feet and ankles have swollen and don't fit into the shoes. I flop around in slippers without heels. In the morning, after a night's sleep, my feet are back to normal. I am 77 and take no medicines. -- K.M.

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Since ankle and foot swelling is a sign of many urgent medical conditions, don’t fool around with this. See your family doctor.

The booklet on edema and lymphedema clearly describes these conditions and their treatment. Readers can obtain a copy by writing: Dr. Donohue – No. 106W, Box 536475, Orlando, FL 32853-6475. Enclose a check or money order for $4.75 U.S./$6 Canadian with the recipient’s printed name and address. Please allow four weeks for delivery.

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The booklet on edema and lymphedema clearly describes these conditions and their treatment. Readers can obtain a copy by writing: Dr. Donohue – No. 106W, Box 536475, Orlando, FL 32853-6475. Enclose a check or money order for $4.75 U.S./$6 Canadian with the recipient’s printed name and address. Please allow four weeks for delivery.

DEAR DR. DONOHUE: I am concerned about my brother, who is 63, diabetic, weighs 300 pounds and is 5 feet 8 inches tall. He falls asleep, wakes and falls asleep repeatedly at the table and when he sits down. Why? He says he's too tired. He picked a scab on his leg and blood squirted out 6 inches. What does that mean? -- Anon.

Your brother might have sleep apnea. His body size suggests that it could be the reason for his daytime sleepiness. Snoring and blood indicates that an artery was broken. No one should pick at scabs, especially a diabetic.

Your brother needs medical attention. He has to lose weight both for control of diabetes and for control of sleep apnea, if that is what he has. He is at great risk of incurring the complications of diabetes -- heart attack, stroke, blindness, kidney failure -- if he doesn’t start paying attention to his health.

Dr. Donohue regrets that he is unable to answer individual letters, but he will incorporate these conditions and their treatments. Readers can obtain a copy by writing: Dr. Donohue – No. 106W, Box 536475, Orlando, FL 32853-6475. Enclose a check or money order for $4.75 U.S./$6 Canadian with the recipient’s printed name and address. Please allow four weeks for delivery.
Social Security Q&A

By Ray Vigil

Q: I just got a notice from Social Security that said my Supplemental Security Income (SSI) case is being reviewed. What does this mean?

A: Social Security reviews every SSI case from time to time to make sure the individuals who are receiving payments should continue to get them. The review also determines whether individuals are receiving the correct amounts. You can learn more about SSI by visiting our website on the subject at www.socialsecurity.gov/pgm/ssi.htm.

Q: What’s the easiest way to apply for retirement benefits?

A: You can apply for retirement benefits using our online Retirement Application at www.socialsecurity.gov/retire. It’s fast, easy, and secure. There are no forms to sign and usually no documentation is required. Social Security will process your application and contact you if any further information is needed.

Q: I’ve been turned down for disability benefits. How do I appeal?

A: It’s easy to appeal the decision online. Go to www.socialsecurity.gov and select “Appeal a disability decision” in the “Top Services” section on the left side of the page. This is the starting point to request a review of our medical decision about your eligibility for disability benefits. There are two parts to this Internet appeal process:

1. • An Appeal Request Internet form;
   • An Appeal Disability Report that gives us more information about your condition.

You can complete both forms online.

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.

Council

From Page 5

The Parque de los Niños includes a simple set-up of three swing sets, and monkey bars. It was erected in approximately 2001 and sits on top of a covered culvert located at 1400 Pampas Road.

Still energized from their whirlwind journey to Chicago, Student Activities Manager and sponsor Ruben Rodriguez must now focus the students’ attention on the upcoming Student Council competition season. Rodriguez and his 60 member council will next make presentations at the district and state conferences vying for a district president and one of the top 10 spots for student council projects in the state.

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