

NEWSBRIEFS

Road safety

TxDOT is reminding drivers to follow a few simple rules of the road throughout the holiday season. They include:

- Pay attention – put phone away and limit distractions;
- Buckle seatbelts – everyone in car has to be buckled;
- Drive to conditions – slow down when weather is bad;
- Left lane for passing only;
- Never drink and drive; and
- Obey all traffic laws.

Drivers also should:

- Ensure your vehicle is properly maintained;
- Stay tuned to local news, road closures, changing conditions and weather alerts; and

- Check online highway conditions information at www.DriveTexas.org.

Motorists who must drive during bad weather are reminded to drive to conditions – that means lowering your speed when it's raining or if there's snow and ice. Also, allow extra travel time to reach your destination and leave plenty of room between your car and the one you're following. DriveTexas is mobile friendly and a great tool that offers real-time road conditions, traffic and weather feeds. Travelers also can call TxDOT's highway conditions line at (800) 452-9292 for routing and trip-planning information.

Wanted

Omar de la Fuente, 24, is this week's Manhunt Monday Most Wanted Fugitive. He also uses Lucero. He is 5'9" tall, weighs 180 pounds and has brown hair and eyes. He has a mole on his right chin.



Omar de la Fuente

On Tuesday, Oct. 22, 2013, deputies conducted a traffic stop on a White Ford F-150 traveling east on Montana near Geronimo. Deputies made contact with the driver identified as de la Fuente. While speaking to him, they noticed the smell of marijuana coming from the vehicle. A search of the truck was conducted by a K-9 unit that resulted in the discovery 117.5 pounds of marijuana wrapped in bundles. Authorities investigating the case have now charged de la Fuente and are looking for him. If anyone has seen or has any information on the whereabouts of de la Fuente they can contact Crime Stoppers 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 de la Fuente.

— Jesse Tovar

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Happiness will never come to those who fail to appreciate what they already have.

— Quips & Quotes

County Commissioners consider building new downtown jail



— Photo by Alfredo Vasquez

REPLACE OR FIX? – El Paso County Commissioners are trying to decide whether to tear down the current downtown jail, above, and invest in constructing a more cost-efficient facility or to sink millions of dollars into fixing the current building.

By Alfredo Vasquez
Special to the Courier

EL PASO COUNTY – El Paso County commissioners agree that doing nothing about the downtown jail situation is not an option. The dilemma they are facing, however, is: Should the downtown jail be replaced or renovated?

Commissioners are turning to a consulting firm to help them decide. In its 2014 budget the county recently set aside \$250,000 to hire a consulting firm to figure out what they are going to do.

Commissioners approved moving forward with drafting the specifications to get the process of finding a consulting firm underway. When that's complete, the project will go out to bid, stated county officials. It's just the beginning in what will be a several-year project, possibly five years or longer, officials added.

El Paso County Sheriff's Office operates two main jail facilities: the downtown jail which is about 30 years old and the jail annex in far-east El Paso which was built in 1997.

The current downtown jail was opened in 1983 after more than three years of construction. Before the jail was built, the previous jail dated back to 1916.

County Judge Veronica Escobar said that the court is still far from designating money or selling bonds to build a new jail. If the court decides to add a new jail to the county's plans, then the commissioners have to decide how much money to spend on repairing the current jail until the new one is built.

The downtown jail is currently undergoing renovations to make it compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act. Work has also begun on curbing the mold problem found throughout the jail building. In addition, upgrades to the plumbing, domestic water source and climate control systems need to be addressed in the near future, Escobar reported.

County auditor's office estimates that a new modern jail could save up to \$9 million a year, but the commissioners want to know what the construction costs would be and if those costs would wipe out the savings. Right now, there is no estimate on how much a new jail would cost.

Annually, the downtown jail's operating expenses are about \$33.7 million to maintain its 1,000 beds; the annex costs \$36.9 million a year for 1,450 beds. According to the county auditor, it costs about \$96.79 a day to house an inmate at the downtown

See JAIL, Page 5

San Elizario is county's newest municipality

By Alfredo Vasquez
Special to the Courier

SAN ELIZARIO – El Paso County Judge Veronica Escobar recently signed the order of incorporation of the city of San Elizario, after San Eli residents voted in the November election to incorporate as a Type A general-law municipality with about 7.88 square miles including the historic district.

The next step is to select a mayor and a council. San Eli residents by law have six months after the election to elect their mayor and four council members. So, an election will probably take place in May.

Now that San Elizario has become a municipality, it will have to provide street maintenance, police and other services; and city officials will have the authority to levy a tax on residents to provide those services.

The city council will be in charge of creating a city charter, rules and ordinances including the type of financing the city will have. Official city work,

however, will not start until a city government is in place.

Until then, the San Elizario Incorporation Efforts Group, the organization that spearheaded the push for an election, indicated that it is going to be looking at other cities in Texas similar to San Elizario to see how they manage their cities and how they generate revenue, stated Maya Sanchez, president of the incorporation efforts group, in a recent news report.

Sanchez stated that group members would do research and develop plans to help the new city council make informed decisions.

A proposal to hold the election in January instead of May was brought up at a recent meeting among county officials, but County Judge Escobar said she does not think an election in January is viable.

"The earliest date to host the mayoral election may be the May 10 uniform election date, but there are some challenges with that," Escobar said. She said that

See SAN ELI, Page 4



ALL LEGAL NOW – San Elizario became the seventh city in El Paso County after the order of incorporation, above, was signed in November by county officials.

Veterans Post

By Freddy Groves

We need more whistleblowers

Let’s give a big thumbs-up to Dr. H, a physician at a regional Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Center... and a whistleblower.

Dr. H testified before a House Veterans Affairs oversight and investigations subcommittee about her whistleblower complaints to the Office of Special Counsel, which have resulted in numerous investigations and findings of serious wrongdoing at the regional center. For example:

- Nurse practitioners weren’t supervised. They were labeled Licensed Independent Practitioners, which they weren’t, and they were “practicing outside the scope of their licensure.” There was never any oversight or review of the care they gave.
- Thus empowered, nurse practitioners prescribed narcotics “in flagrant violation of Federal and individual state laws and VA Handbook regulations,” using one-size-fits-all institutional DEA tracking numbers on the drugs, with no physician oversight whatsoever and no means of tracing who prescribed what.
- Doctors were pushed to sign prescriptions for patients they hadn’t even seen. When the doctors objected, the chief of staff brought in residents from a local medical school to write prescriptions after hours.
- Veterans were scheduled into fictitious “ghost” clinics where there were actually no doctors, only nursing staff. Many veterans were unaware that they were being seen only by a nurse, not a doctor.
- Doctors were pushed to sign collaborative agreements concerning the nursing practitioners’ status (essentially monitoring agreements), and when they objected (they could be sued for the work of the nurse), they were told that 55 percent of their performance pay would be withheld.
- Nurses weren’t taking complete histories for patients, just “pasting in” previous information.

I’ve read a lot of terrible medical-center reports over time, but this beats them all. I haven’t named the medical center because I fear these problems aren’t unique in the VA health-care system.

Freddy Groves regrets that he cannot personally answer reader questions, but will incorporate them into his column whenever possible. Send email to columnreply2@gmail.com. (c) 2013 King Features Synd., Inc.

Finances

By Jason Alderman

Over 70 ½? Don’t forget mandatory IRA withdrawals

With final holiday preparations looming, the last thing anyone wants to think about is next April’s tax bill. But if you’re over 70 ½ and have any tax-deferred retirement accounts (like an IRA), put down the wrapping paper and listen up: IRS rules say that, with few exceptions, you must take required minimum distributions (RMDs) from your accounts by December 31 of each year – and pay taxes on them – or face severe financial penalties.

Here’s what you need to know about RMDs:

- Congress devised IRAs, 401(k) plans and other tax-deferred retirement accounts to encourage people to save for their own retirement. Aside from Roth plans, people generally contribute “pretax” dollars to these accounts, which means the contributions and their investment earnings aren’t taxed until withdrawn after retirement.
- In exchange for allowing your account to grow tax-free for decades, Congress also decreed that minimum amounts must be withdrawn – and taxed – each year after you reach 70 ½. To ensure these rules are followed, unless you meet certain narrowly defined conditions, you’ll have to pay an excess accumulation tax equal to 50 percent of the RMD you should have taken; plus you’ll still have to take the distribution and pay regular income tax on it.
- You can delay or avoid paying an RMD in certain cases, including:
 - If you’re still employed at 70 ½, you may delay starting RMDs from your work-based accounts until you actually retire, without penalty; however, regular IRAs are subject to the rule, regardless of work status.
 - Roth IRAs are exempt from the RMD rule; however, Roth 401(k) plans are not.
 - You can also transfer up to \$100,000 directly from your IRA to an IRS-approved charity. Although the RMD itself isn’t tax-deductible, it won’t be included in your taxable income and lowers your overall IRA balance, thus reducing the size of future RMDs.

Another way to avoid future RMDs is to convert your tax-deferred accounts into a Roth IRA. You’ll still have to pay taxes on all pretax contributions and earnings that have accrued; and, if you’re over age 70 ½, you must first take your minimum distribution (and pay taxes on it) before the conversion can take place.

Ordinarily, RMDs must be taken by December 31 to avoid the excess accumulation tax. However, if it’s your first distribution you may wait until April 1 the year after turning 70 ½ – although you’re still must take a second distribution by December 31 that same year.

Generally, you must calculate an RMD for each IRA or other tax-deferred retirement account you own by dividing its balance at the end of the previous year by a life expectancy factor found in one of the three tables in Appendix C of IRS Publication 590:

- Uniform Lifetime Table if your spouse isn’t more than 10 years younger than you, your spouse isn’t the sole beneficiary or you’re unmarried.
- Joint and Last Survivor Table when your spouse is the sole beneficiary and he/she is more than 10 years younger than you.
- Single Life Expectancy Table is for beneficiaries of accounts whose owner has died.

Although you must calculate the RMD separately for each IRA you own, you may withdraw the combined amount of all RMDs from one or more of them. The same goes for owners of 403(b) accounts. However, RMDs required from other types of retirement plans must be taken separately from each account.

To learn more about RMDs, read IRS Publication 590 at www.irs.gov.

Jason Alderman directs Visa’s financial education programs.

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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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THE BEST TIME TO LEARN THE SIGNS

OF STROKE IS BEFORE YOU HAVE ONE. STROKES

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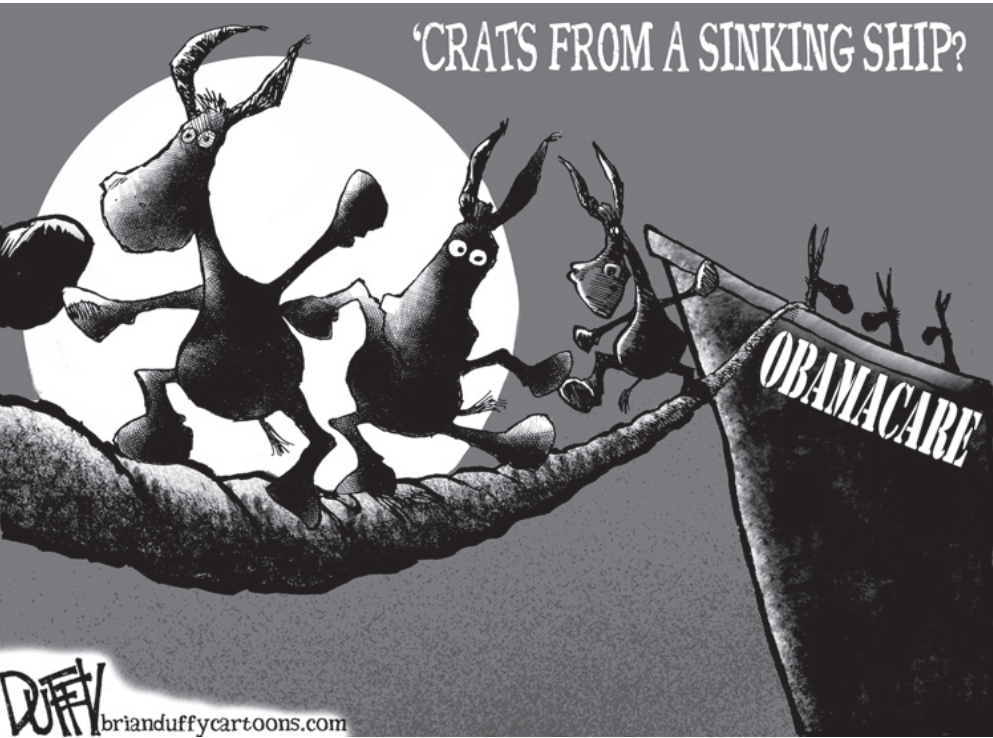
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View from here By Lance Lumford

Behavioral health care needs in Texas are no myth

TEXAS – Holiday blues and a spike in suicides are often assumed to occur during the holidays. But, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the supposed uptick in depression-related issues is just a myth.

The challenges facing Texas’ behavioral health care system, however, are not a myth. They include:

- An insufficient workforce to serve all individuals in Texas with mental health or substance use issues;
- A high rate of uninsured among individuals with behavioral health conditions;
- Lack of funding for care that will keep people out of crisis, thereby reducing reliance on hospital emergency departments; and
- Lack of supports outside the health care setting to assist those with serious mental illness or substance use disorder.

Individuals with behavioral health conditions suffer the most from an underfunded and fragmented system. There are adverse consequences, too, for hospitals, taxpayers, law enforcement, employers and the economy. Texas hospitals experience increased uncompensated care, reduced emergency department capacity and financial penalties from preventable readmissions.

“The devastating effects of an underfunded behavioral health care system are felt most profoundly by individuals living with untreated disorders. But we all pay the price for a system that fails to provide timely and appropriate care,” said Dan Stultz, M.D., FACP, FACHE, THA president/CEO. “The 83rd Legislature recognized the importance of behavioral health and made an investment that can be built upon.”

The 83rd Legislature invested an additional \$300 million in the state’s behavioral health care system for 2014-15. The funding is critical, and communities across the state will benefit. Long-term policy solutions that address insurance coverage, workforce, access to services and funding are also required. The most effective solutions include:

- Accepting federal funds to expand coverage for low-income adults. Many of the adults who are served by the state’s behavioral health care system would qualify for comprehensive coverage if Texas increased Medicaid eligibility as allowed under the federal health care reform law or devised a private-market alternative. State general fund expenditures for behavioral health care services currently exceed \$1.1 billion. Providing individuals currently receiving limited state-funded services with access to comprehensive insurance coverage that is paid for almost entirely with federal funds would free up at least \$440 million in state funds.
- Increasing funding to train qualified mental health professionals. Three-quarters of the state’s counties are designated as mental health profession shortage areas; 70 percent of counties have no practicing psychiatrists.
- Increasing funding for substance use disorder treatment. Often mental health and substance use disorders are co-occurring; treating just one part of the equation is not effective.
- Increasing funding for intensive case management for patients who are high utilizers of emergency room services to ensure they are compliant with prescribed medications and have access to transportation, child care, housing and other supports.
- Increasing funding for after-hours non-emergent mental health care so that individuals requiring urgent access to medication refills or other interventions can access care in a more appropriate setting.
- Support the use of telemedicine to address the shortage of psychiatrists.

Auto thieves, burglars lurking during holidays

By Michelle Lanham
Special to the Courier

TEXAS – The holiday season is upon us and it’s the most wonderful time of the year... especially for vehicle thieves who are looking for opportunities to play Scrooge.

The Texas Auto Burglary and Theft Prevention Authority (ABTPA), a division of the Texas Department of Motor Vehicles, reminds drivers that a vehicle is burglarized every two minutes and stolen every eight minutes in the state. These crimes can escalate during the holiday season when drivers are frequently out shopping for gifts and traveling to visit friends and family. During these times, drivers are more likely to leave belongings within view inside vehicles as well as become negligent in locking doors and taking keys. To make matters worse, a thief won’t necessarily stop with taking your vehicle and the things inside. They may also look for personal documents and items that can help them steal your identity or gain access to your home, where they can burglarize additional property. In other words, the theft or burglary of your vehicle may simply be a gateway to the commission of additional crimes.

Auto burglars are more likely to scout malls, shopping centers, entertainment venues, hotels, and other business parking lots this time of year looking for opportunities to break into vehicles. Drivers need to understand that almost anything they leave inside their vehicles can be valuable to a thief. And when vehicles are left unlocked and unattended, drivers are inviting thieves to walk away with everything they see inside, which often includes gifts, purses, wallets, packages, electronics, suitcases, garage door openers, keys, and personal information.

According to the Texas Department of Public Safety, thieves committed 221,023 acts of vehicle burglary and stole 64,982 vehicles in Texas during 2012. In some jurisdictions, more than half of vehicle thefts occurred because doors were unlocked and keys left inside. But drivers can avoid becoming part of these statistics. The ABTPA and its 29 vehicle crime task forces in Texas promote a basic vehicle crime prevention philosophy: “Protect It, It’s Yours.” Motorists should practice three basic safety tips to help prevent theft and burglary during the holidays and throughout the year: remove belongings from view, secure vehicles, and never leave keys inside. In addition to practicing these prevention methodologies, drivers should park in areas that are well-lit, near surveillance cameras (if available), and near heavy foot and vehicle traffic. The more thieves feel threatened by detection, the less likely they are to focus on targets in such areas.

A bounty of turkeys for San Elizario families

By Cynthia P. Marentes
Special to the Courier

San Elizario – The San Elizario Food Bank held its annual turkey giveaway on November 21 ensuring that hundreds of families enjoyed a bountiful Thanksgiving. This year the food bank received a generous donation of 900 frozen turkeys as well as a large assortment of other food staples.

The turkeys were distributed to low-income families with children attending school in the San Elizario Independent School District and elderly residents. Other individuals who waited patiently to receive food assistance walked away with a bag of groceries and a frozen chicken.

Dozens of volunteers from

San Elizario ISD and the Border Patrol helped to make the turkey distribution run quickly and efficiently. Most of the food was given away within a span of a couple of hours with volunteers helping to organize, pack, and carry heavy food packages to people’s cars. One of those volunteers was San Elizario ISD Superintendent Sylvia Hopp

See TURKEYS, Page 5

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– Photo courtesy San Elizario ISD

SPIRIT OF GIVING – San Elizario ISD Superintendent Sylvia Hopp hands out turkeys and bags of groceries to families at the San Elizario Food Bank.

San Eli

From Page 1

according to Texas law, the county cannot hold an election 30 days before the primary election.

The primary election is scheduled for March 4, and the primary run-off election is set for May 27, according to the Texas Secretary of State website.

The county judge said that even if the county tries to have the mayoral election in January, the elections department would not meet the time lines required to set the early voting dates and get candidates registered.

She said that the county would ask the Secretary of State whether or not the county can host the mayoral election on May 10 or if it has to wait until June 17.

The effort to incorporate San Elizario as a city began last January after the Socorro City Council approved an annexation plan that included a portion of the historic town. Because San Elizario was part of Socorro’s extraterritorial jurisdiction, Socorro had the right to annex part of the town without San Elizario residents’ consent.

The Socorro council’s annexation plan was stopped, however, by a district judge in April because two

council members had violated the state law by extending their terms in office. Since then, members of the San Elizario group worked to take the incorporation proposal to an election.

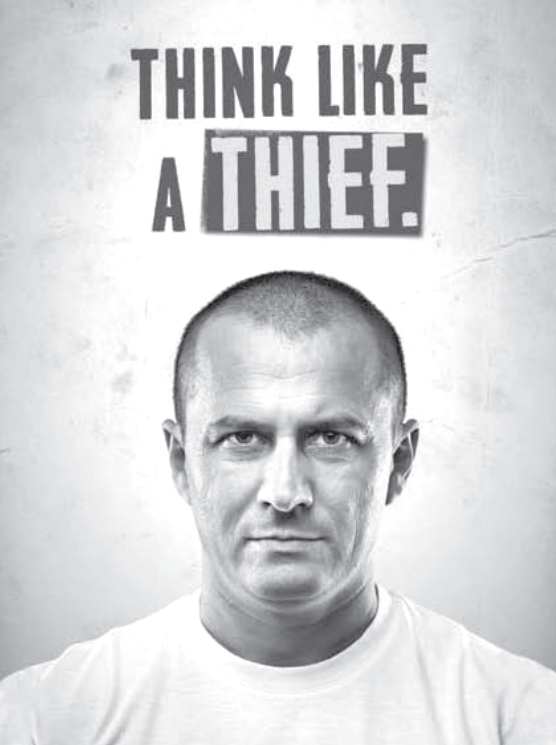
Nearly 88 percent of those who cast a ballot voted in favor of incorporation, according to numbers released by the El Paso County Elections Department. Of the 611 people who voted in the election, 539 voted for the incorporation. Only 72 voters were against it, according to the elections department.

County elections officials reported that 3,854 people were eligible to

vote in the incorporation of San Elizario. There are about 13,000 people in San Elizario, according to the 2010 U.S. Census Bureau.

Sanchez stated that the election was about protecting the community from being absorbed by neighboring municipalities. She stated that there was a very good chance that if San Elizario had remained an unincorporated community, part of the town would have continued to be subject to annexation by Socorro.

“It’s really about protection of our identity and preservation of our history, but most importantly, it is about having a say over how our tax dollars are spent,” Sanchez stated.



TOP 5 TIPS TO AVOID
BECOMING A VICTIM OF AUTO CRIME

1.

Always lock your vehicle and **take your keys**. Never leave your vehicle running and unattended. Half the cars stolen in Texas have the keys inside.

2.

Always park in a **well-lighted** area.

3.

Use auto theft **deterrents**, such as car alarms, steering wheel and ignition column devices and kill switches.

4.

Keep all valuables and packages **out of sight**.

5.

Participate in the statewide H.E.A.T. (Help End Auto Theft) Program, a vehicle registration program aimed at **reducing auto theft**. Call 1-888-447-5933 or visit https://records.txdps.state.tx.us/DPS_WEB/Heat/ for details.



The Texas Auto Burglary & Theft Prevention Authority (ABTPA) was formed to help reduce auto burglary and theft in Texas. The funds are provided by an annual \$1 fee on every insured vehicle in Texas. The fee is charged to insurance companies that provide vehicle coverage in Texas and is collected by the Texas Comptroller of Public Accounts.

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the playful river mammal
call his girlfriend
his significant otter?

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– Photo courtesy San Elizario ISD
GLAD TO HAVE IT – San Elizario resident and parent Cathy Perez picks up a turkey and bag of food.

Briefs

From Page 1

Money returned

A man who allegedly had taken an envelope containing a large amount of cash at a Mission Valley Restaurant has come forward and returned the money to the rightful owner. The man was captured on surveillance video at the “Lunch Box” restaurant and detectives from the El Paso Police Department asked for the public’s assistance in identifying him through the Crime Stoppers “Crime of the Week.” The victim in this case decided not to press charges. The man that had taken the envelope, a 76-year-old man, came forward over the weekend and the money was returned yesterday. Due to no charges being filed the identity of this man is not releasable. Crime Stoppers again would like to thank the community, the media and law enforcement. As a reminder anyone with any information on any crime may call Crime Stoppers of El Paso immediately at 566-8477(TIPS), on-line at www.crimestoppersofelpaso.org or you can send a text message by entering the key word “CRIME1” (no space and include the quotation marks) plus your tip information, and text it to CRIMES (274637). You will remain anonymous and, if your tip leads to an arrest, you can qualify for a cash reward.

– Javier Sambrano

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Turkeys

From Page 4

who helped to hand out turkeys, countless bags of groceries, as well as frozen chickens. Hopp stated that all the people who gave up their Thursday morning to help at the San Elizario Food Bank made a difference for someone else that day.

“That is what this season is all about,” Hopp added.

For San Elizario families who are most in need, the turkey and food distribution was especially important since many of them have limited access to nutritious meals for their children while school is not in session. San Elizario ISD, as well as most other school districts in El Paso County, was closed during the week that Thanksgiving Day fell on.

The San Elizario Community Food Bank is located next to Organizacion Progresiva De San Elizario; 1444 Main St.; San Elizario, TX and usually operates on Thursday mornings.

Jail

From Page 1

facility compared with about \$70.71 at the El Paso County Jail Annex on Montana Avenue. About 80 percent of the money goes to personnel cost. The annex has 12 pods, which allows for fewer guards to watch more inmates.

El Paso County Sheriff Richard Wiles told commissioners court during a meeting in November that a downtown jail is necessary because the county and federal courthouses are nearby. However, once a 420-bed extension to the jail annex is completed, Wiles said that he would move as many inmates as possible to the jail on Montana Avenue to save money.

“It’s important that we look at all the alternatives to see what’s going to be most efficient for us,” Wiles said. “We need to have somebody who can give us some good cost estimates.”

Wiles said that if a jail with a new design is built, the county could save as much as \$11 million in

operational costs annually.

In the next three years, the county is projected to spend between \$3 and \$5 million on repairs at the Downtown jail. “These are things that have to be repaired whether you move toward a new facility or not, and the cost does not include replacing the plumbing and electrical system. The cost for those items can be as high as \$30 million in the next 10 years,” Wiles claimed.

“I believe we can save taxpayer money by running a smaller jail downtown,” suggested Commissioner Vince Perez. “The county has limited resources for our growing infrastructure. We may be forced to raise taxes in the future or find a way to be more efficient with our funds. This may be one way to make our resource spending more efficient.”

The next step will come once a consulting firm is hired. “We are hopefully going to get the very best advice that we can get, take that advice, and the end result will be a savings,” Commissioner Pat Abeln commented in a recent news report.

Classified Ads

LEGALS

City of Socorro

Adoption of Ordinances

On November 21, 2013 the City of Socorro, Texas adopted the following ordinance(s):

1) Ordinance 295, Amendment No. 6, an Ordinance of the City of Socorro amending the organizational chart for the City of Socorro.

The Ordinance(s) effective date is immediately upon adoption and publication.

Published by order of the City Council of the City of Socorro, Texas

Copies of the ordinance are available for review at the City Administration Building, 124 S. Horizon Blvd., Socorro, Texas 79927; Monday through Friday between 8:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m.

Sandra Hernandez
City Clerk

WTCC: 11-28-13
12-05-13

POSITION OPEN

El Paso County Tornillo Water Improvement District

Position Open Wastewater/ Water Operator

El Paso County

Tornillo Water Improvement District

accepting applications. Qualifications: H.S. degree or GED, Class C Wastewater Operator license and Class C Water License preferred, or Class D required within one year of appointment, valid Texas Class C driver's license, computer literate, experience in water operation and maintenance wastewater and treatment plant operation. Salary based on experience. Applications accepted until position is filled. Apply at 19225 Highland St., Tornillo, TX, mailing address P. O. Box 136, Tornillo, TX 79853. (915) 764-2966.

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WTCC: 12-05-13
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Coaches looking for any edge to win

By Steve Escajeda
Special to the Courier

There’s no doubt that the world of professional sports has been operating with a win-at-all-cost mentality for quite some time. Players have always tried to obtain that little something that will propel them over their opponents. Whether it’s a pitcher doctoring a baseball or a hitter corking his bat, an edge is always the goal. Some players will even do the simplest things like saying something colorful about another player’s mom, just to get under his skin and get him to react negatively. At times, players have crossed the line for an edge, like taking steroids or other kinds of performance enhancers to illegally give them an advantage and all that has been well documented. What happened last week in separate incidents may be an indication that the edge is now being sought from more than just the players.

The NFL’s Pittsburgh Steelers are nearing the end of what has been a dismal season and the NBA’s Brooklyn Nets are just starting off what appears will be a dismal season. But underachieving is not all these two franchises have in common; they also share the fact that they evidently have extremely desperate head coaches. It isn’t often, if ever, that a head coach tries to personally dictate what goes on in the field of play – while play is going on. Even Bobby Knight at least that the common courtesy to wait until play was stopped before he treated his chair like a javelin. Anyway, the Nets were supposed to challenge for the top spot in the battle for the Eastern Conference title but they’ve struggled under first-time head coach Jason Kidd. The Nets lost 11 of their first 15 games and Kidd, who was a player in the league last year, is beginning to feel the pressure. So mush so that late in last week’s game against the Lakers, Kidd’s team was down by two points with just 8.3 seconds left and out of timeouts. Kidd was thinking that it would sure be nice

to have a stoppage in action so that he could call a play for his team. So he took matters into his own hands by asking one of his players to bump into him; the player did, causing Kidd to spill his drink on the court causing a delay in the action while the liquid was cleaned up. Of course Kidd took advantage and called a play for his team – they lost the game by five points any way. You can tell Kidd is one of those old-school kind of guys because he forgot that there are cameras and social media everywhere. And there was video of him clearly telling his player, “hit me,” right before the incident. But you have to admit, what Kidd did was ingenious. It was imaginative, it was clever, it was worth a shot. Unfortunately for Kidd, it was also very expensive – the league fined him \$50,000. Then there was Steelers’ coach Mike Tomlin and his sideline antics. In last Thanksgiving night’s game against the Baltimore Ravens, the Steelers kicked off after a score and it was returned by Jacoby Jones. But as Jones broke free and was running

toward a possible touchdown near the Pittsburgh sideline, coach Tomlin was actually standing a foot on the field in Jones’ way. At the last possible second, Tomlin jumped out of the way causing Jones to break his stride just a bit and he was tackled before scoring. Of course Tomlin claims it was all an accident and that he didn’t mean to affect the play. Accident or not, it’s rather evident that the NFL will take some action against Tomlin, much the same way the NBA took a bite out of Kidd’s wallet. It’s always been the case that sporadic stupidity and occasional moronic behavior is accepted and somewhat expected by professional athletes. But head coaches have always been held to a higher standard. Maybe a new norm is upon us. Maybe the pressure to win in the pros will cause more irrational behavior from once rational-thinking coaches. The real losers in this new phenomenon are the kids across the country who will ask if the supposed adults in charge can’t act with integrity – why should they?

A sporting view By Mark Vasto

On the trail of the assassins

My wife – pretty, demure and a child of the late 1970s – had never seen the Zapruder film until last year. When she saw it, she had a peculiar reaction: She cried. As a student of history, I was surprised by that. The Zapruder film, which shows the assassination of President John F. Kennedy as his motorcade cruised through Dealey Plaza in November 1963, has ceased to be seen as the important

document of time that it is. Instead, it has transcended and become more a piece of pop culture – a document about pillbox hats, pocket squares, conspiracy theories, spies and Mafia culture. But at its base, what it really is, is something even simpler than that. “It’s murder,” my wife said. “I just saw my first murder.” “Shut it off,” she says, shielding my young son from the TV.

It dawns on me that my kid is about the same age as John-John was when Kennedy was killed. Our Sundays are spent trying to watch football with each other, but more often than not the practice devolves into foot-bawl, as he would rather play something else. That’s fine by me, since the JFK assassination has, predictably, taken over the halftime shows and sports networks, too. We’re reminded that the NFL played the Sunday after the shooting while the country mourned because, hey, JFK would have wanted it that way (and I actually believe he would, too). Flip a channel, and there are the Kennedy kids at

the compound, still playing touch football after all these years, just like millions of Americans... except that most backyard games are not televised or interrupted by Leslie Stahl or Katie Couric for a touching interview about the player’s daddy issues. I have tried to explain to my son what it is that I do. He gets that I’m a “newspaperman,” but that’s an antiquated term. When I introduced him to the world of superheroes, what I saw as an easy entry turned out to be far more complex. Seemingly every superhero is a journalist or philanthropist with a dead father... Clark Kent, Bruce Wayne and Peter Parker being the foremost examples. You know, that bugs me. My kid knows that, too.

This column is called “A Sporting View” because I like what it represents to me and hopefully my kid and all the readers. Let the

other columns and sports talk shows scream and yell with their “strong takes” and stories about illicit affairs and drugs. That market has been cornered. Let this column be one about stories and sports and sporting lives. This year, I’m hitting the road in a sporting recreational vehicle in an attempt to even better tell these stories. There’s a lot more to see than the obvious when it comes to our lives, and I don’t want them to be missed. I’m not hoping for a Zapruder moment, but I will endeavor to bring you something about sports you might have missed, and hopefully we will be all the better for it. And, hopefully, I will live to tell it, too... there’s that.

Mark Vasto is a veteran sportswriter who lives in Kansas City. (c) 2013 King Features Synd., Inc.

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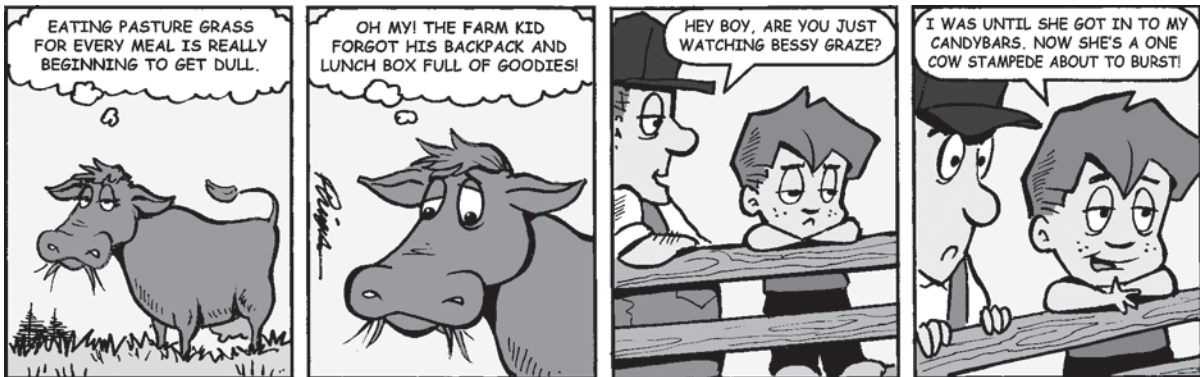
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Comix

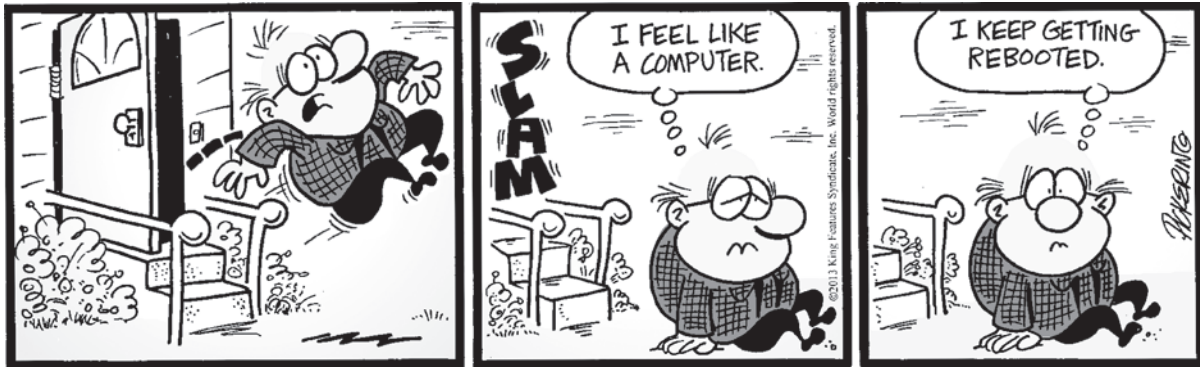
OUT ON A LIMB By Gary Kopervas



AMBER WAVES By Dave T. Phipps



THE SPATS By Jeff Pickering



R.F.D. By Mike Marland



Super Crossword

JOKE TIME
JUMBLES
ACROSS

Joe of "Ragin'

Loss woman

18 Boss woman
19 Gabs with
20 flirtatiously
21 Routinely
22 Explorer Leif
23 Carolina of
fashion
24 Bought brass and
bronze?
25 Swallow greedily
26 Selected
passages
27 Mediocre grades
28 Field marshal
Erwin
30 Took a chair
31 Where a beautiful
woman swims?
32 Jay-Z hit, e.g.
37 Moon of Jupiter
40 Restroom, for
short
41 City in central
Sicily
42 "Alas, it's true,
Ms. Bergen"?
47 Autumn chill
49 Dolled (up)
50 Library of
Congress ID
52 "Hawaiian
Favorites" singer
57 "Yer dam _!"
58 Show off parquet
work?
62 Ocean Spray

flavor prefix
63 Take _ (chance it)
65 Oil qty.
66 "... some kind of
?"
67 Ruminant's chew
68 Guthrie launches
a Jedi master into a
somersault?
73 Addenda to ltrs.
74 Blind as _
76 Hesiod's H
77 Like Carroll's
"borogoves"
78 Part of TLC
80 Tinkerbell's
ancient milky gem?
84 "The Raven"
maiden
86 Blasé feeling
87 Yemen port
88 Sugar quantity
90 During each
92 Maneuver to
avoid a traffic jam
doesn't work?
96 Hot tub locales
100 Succor
102 Beaverlike rodent
103 Driver's peg
104 Inundate Liotta's
bucket?
108 Size up from
medium: Abbr.
111 Actor Brando
112 Big drink
113 Recurring melodic
fragment
118 Scale ranges
120 What each of this
puzzle's eight longest

answers is a 93-Down
 of
 123 Least nice
 124 Hit from behind
 125 Rainer of film
 126 Classifies
 127 Myopic cartoon
 guy
 128 Rocker Bob

DOWN

1 Pontiff
2 PC-sent page
3 Glue _ (adhesive
brand)
4 Gives up
5 Prefix with red
6 Pal of Ernie
7 Savings plans,
briefly
8 Jazz poet Scott-
Heron
9 Cato's 1,150
10 Withdrawn from
people
11 "True Blood" co-
star Stephen
12 Adams of
photography
13 "Evita" role
14 Title king for the
Bard
15 Strong rival of
Sparta
16 _'loeil
17 Homily
18 Spur
19 Simmered
Spanish dish
24 Decided to enter
28 "My Gal "

31 Dandy fellow
32 G1's address
33 Popular Irish
ballad
34 Spellbound
35 Like the conga
drum, ethnically
36 Destine
38 Manipulate
39 Fishing stick
43 " _ girl!"
44 1986 book by
rocker Turner
45 Sassy talk
46 Big inits. in
fashion
48 Many a sharable
PC file
51 Soft as a _ bottom
53 Ending for Rock
54 Like the United
Way and NPR
55 Locale-specific
regulation
56 Meal bits
58 "What's the _?"
59 Molokai or Maui:
Abbr.
60 Penny-pinch
61 Municipal pol.
63 Certain female
opera solo
64 Writer Dahl
67 Snug eatery
69 Not a bus.
70 Ms. Zadora
71 Size that's the
opp. of 108-Across
72 _ clubs (certain
card)
75 Capote, to his

buddies
79 Kournikova of the
court
81 Quick bark
82 Berlin article
83 Yoko _
84 Sticking by
85 In addition
88 35mm camera
type
89 Maui paste
91 Impassioned
93 Letter shuffle
94 Hwy. crime
95 Old religious
scandal inits.
96 Gallery in western
CA
97 Sites
98 Big arteries
99 California county
101 Bad: Prefix
105 Capital of
Delaware
106 Bee cluster
107 Pied _
109 Fish parts
110 Come after
113 _ concern
114 " _ I" ("Me too")
115 Take _ at (insult)
116 Hit with a zapping
gun
117 _ and terminator
119 Aves.
121 Lyric-penning
Gershwin
122 Tripod piece

Answer Page 4

1	2	3	4	5		6	7	8	9	10	11	12		13	14	15	16	17	18	19	
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TRUE TEXAS FACTS *by Roger T. Moore*, Dec. 2, 1854: Texas grants David Crockett's widow \$24 for "services at the Alamo".



GO FIGURE! by Linda Thistle

The idea of Go Figure is to arrive at the figures given at the bottom and right-hand columns of the diagram by following the arithmetic signs in the order they are given (that is, from left to right and top to bottom). Use only the numbers below the diagram to complete its blank squares and use each of the nine numbers only once.

	+		÷		3
÷		+		+	
	+		÷		1
+		÷		×	
	+		+		7
7		7		14	

DIFFICULTY: ★

★ Moderate ★★ Difficult
★★★ GO FIGURE!

1 2 3 4 5 6 8 9 9

Anser Page 4

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Social Security Q&A By Ray Vigil

Q: Social Security recently denied my application for Supplemental Security Income (SSI). Can I appeal the decision?

A: Yes. If you disagree with a decision made on your claim, you can appeal it. The steps you can take are explained in our online publication, *Your Right To Question A Decision Made On Your Supplemental Security Income (SSI) Claim*, available at www.socialsecurity.gov/pubs. If you do not agree with the decision, you can file an appeal online. Simply visit the online services page at www.socialsecurity.gov/onlineservices. Then select the “Appeal a decision” link and follow the instructions. You also have the right to be represented by an attorney or other qualified person of your choice. If you would like to learn more about obtaining representation, read our online publication *Your Right To Representation* at the same online publication library.

a child from birth to age 18 may receive monthly payments based on disability or blindness if: the child has an impairment or combination of impairments that meet the definition of disability for children; and the income and resources of the parents and the child are within the allowed limits. Under the Social Security Disability Insurance program, an adult child (a person age 18 or older) may receive monthly benefits based on disability or blindness if: the child has an impairment or combination of impairments that meet the definition of disability for adults; the disability began before age 22; and the adult child’s parent worked long enough to be insured under Social Security and is receiving retirement or disability benefits or is deceased. You will find helpful links to the online forms and the steps you need to take to apply for childhood disability benefits at www.socialsecurity.gov/applyfordisability.

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.

Q: Do disabled children qualify for benefits?

A: Yes. There are two disability programs run by Social Security that include benefits for disabled children. Under the Supplemental Security Income (SSI) program,

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: **B** equals **H**

BZUF OQT FUF1 BFZIY JBF
KPZOVTP IHUFI WZWWZP NZP
BHG EHIPVIHFMY BHG
GHMHHVHNZMJ QJJFI?

Anser Page 4

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Weekly SUDOKU

by Linda Thistle

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

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

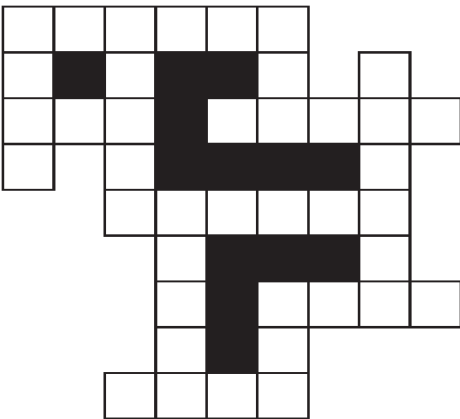
Anser Page 4

★★★ HOO BOY!

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EYN
ROEFAD
MELBU
XYNL
OILBID
XFO
♥EDMA
NAXNE
OMB
BUYOLD
YILNA
ABLF



Anser Page 4

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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STRANGE BUT TRUE

By Samantha Weaver

• It was American author Erica Jong who made the following sage observation: “Advice is what we ask for when we already know the answer but wish we didn’t.”

• Jon Bon Jovi is probably best known for his eponymous ‘80s hair band, but he’s also quite a philanthropist, working on behalf of organizations including the Special Olympics, the American Red Cross and Habitat for Humanity. In 2011, the Jon Bon Jovi Soul Foundation opened a restaurant called JBJ Soul Kitchen, in which patrons pay only what they can afford, or can even volunteer in lieu of payment.

• Those who study such things say that all mammals, from rodents to elephants, urinate for approximately 21 seconds. This now is known as the “Law of Urination.”

• A poll conducted by Gallup determined that 42 percent of Americans believe that people are sometimes possessed by the devil.

• Scientists unearthed frozen 30,000-year-old plant tissue from fossil squirrel burrows in northeaster Siberia. This would not be remarkable, except for what came next: Researchers thawed the seeds and planted them. The seeds germinated and grew, producing viable seeds of their own, making *Silene stenophylla* the oldest viable multicellular living organisms.

• If you die without any friends or family to attend your funeral, Amsterdam is apparently the place to do it. In that city, a civil servant will provide flowers and a poet will compose a eulogy in verse for those who would otherwise make an unaccompanied and unmourned final journey.

• If you leave a cold glass on a table, it’s likely to leave a mark. The Italians (of course) have a word for that mark: cualacino.

Thought for the Day: “The secret of success is to know something nobody else knows.”

– Aristotle Onassis

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