



NEWSBRIEFS

Canutillo ISD closed for game

Classes in the Canutillo Independent School District will be cancelled on Friday, December 12, to give students and employees the chance to travel to Lubbock to see the Canutillo Eagles play in the Texas State Football Semifinals. All schools and offices will be closed for business on Friday. Students and employees will make up the day on January 19, 2015. “We are all very excited about the football team and the unprecedented run they have had in the playoffs,” said Superintendent Dr. Pedro Galaviz. “We know that many of our students and our employees want to support the team, so we are happy to be able to provide this opportunity.” Canutillo is making history as the first team from El Paso to play in the University Interscholastic League Football State Semifinals in Class 5A. The Eagles will play the Ennis Lions at 6 p.m. MST at the Plains Capital Park in Lubbock. Pre-game tickets are being sold at Canutillo High School for \$7 for adults and \$5 for students. Tickets will be \$10 for both adults and students at the gate.

— Gustavo Reveles Acosta

Elderly motorists

The American Automobile Association says most seniors are safe drivers, themselves, and that they are in favor of measures to ensure that elderly drivers are fit for the road. A new report issued by the AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety says that 80 percent of drivers over the age of 75 are in favor of medical screenings for drivers who are over 75 years of age. In fact, says the Association of Mature American Citizens, older drivers tend to be safer drivers and the triple-A’s study proves that they are concerned about road safety. In fact, says AMAC, the study shows that “nearly 90 percent of older drivers (65 and older) reported no crashes in the last two years and that 90 percent of older drivers reported no moving violations.” “Even though public perception tends to unfairly characterize seniors as a menace on the road, these findings indicate that older Americans tend to support policies to keep themselves safer behind the wheel,” says Peter Kissinger, President and CEO of the AAA Foundation.

— John Grimaldi

EPCC graduation

El Paso Community College (EPCC) will hold its Fall 2014 commencement exercises at 5:00 p.m. on Friday, December 12, 2014 at the Don Haskins Center. A total of 1,987 degrees and certificates will be granted. The commencement speaker will be Andres Alcantar the Chairman and Commissioner Representing the Public

See BRIEFS, Page 5



— Photo by Alfredo Vasquez

A GREAT PLAGE TO GO – Ascarate Lake Park lays nestled in the heart of El Paso with a scenic view of the mountains. The park supports a variety of facilities including a 48-acre lake, a challenging golf course, a 50-meter Olympic-size competition pool, a children’s pool, a large water slide, and two kiddie water slides. Nearby are regulation-size sand and grass volleyball courts. Picnic areas with grills are available throughout the park. The park is open to the public. The lake offers some of the best fishing in West Texas. A license is required, and the Texas Fish & Wildlife fishing rules and regulations apply.

Ascarate Lake looks better than ever

By Alfredo Vasquez
Special to the Courier

EL PASO COUNTY – It’s time to rediscover a tradition that has spanned over 60 years in El Paso County...Ascarate Lake Park. El Paso County’s largest park offers much-improved recreational areas for different sports, fishing, picnicking, and other activities.

Spanning over 400 acres, the park features a 48-acre surface lake, an 18-hole 72 par golf course, a 9 hole executive course called the Delta 9, a lakeside boardwalk, a fully-equipped aquatic center, playgrounds, picnic areas, and a soft-surface, 1.4 mile jogging/walking trail that encircles the

main lake.

The centrally-located park is under the County Commissioners’ Court jurisdiction. Recently commissioners moved to replace a 40-year-old well to help fix low water levels at the lake. Their actions are showing a noticeable difference as the lake’s water level has increased, and its surrounding grounds and facilities have been spruced up. Officials said that two of the three wells that feed the lake are now working; at one point, there was only one well working.

County officials said that in the near future the Public Works Department will present a plan to commissioners’ court that will map out a strategy for enhancing the lake’s condition. Meanwhile, the park has undergone some

improvements.

For anglers, the lake provides an array of fish including Black Bass, Blue Catfish, Carp, Brown Trout, White Bass, Largemouth Bass, Rainbow Trout, Bluegill, Channel Catfish, Smallmouth Bass and Crappie. Fishing is restricted to two fishing poles per person, with a limit of five fish per visit to the lake. Adults (17 and older) are required to have a fishing license, which may be obtained at most sporting goods stores.

In addition to fishing, the lake offers canoe and pedal boat rentals with fees at \$12 for one hour or \$7.50 for a half hour.

Ascarate’s golf course, which sits on 280

See ASCARATE, Page 5

Canutillo students produce award-winning art

By Gustavo Reveles Acosta
Special to the Courier

CANUTILLO – Three students from Canutillo Middle School earned high marks

– including the top spot – in this year’s Five Points Lions Club Peace Poster Contest.

Sixth-grader Sara Saucedo’s pencil drawing earn first place in the contest and will now represent the Five Points Club in the area competition. The Peace Poster Contest is an

international competition organized by Lions Clubs throughout the world in an effort to promote understanding and diversity among students ages 11 through 13.

“Canutillo Middle School has a wonderful art program and an amazing diversity campaign. I’m sure those helped Sara find inspiration for her drawing,” said Principal Mark Paz. “I feel extremely proud to be able to have a student of her artistic talent represent our school and our community in this prestigious contest.”

Two other students received high marks from the judges in the contest. Celina Castillo earned third place in the contest and Janelle Hernandez received an Honorable Mention.

The grand-prize winner of the international Lions Club Peace Contest receives a cash prize of \$5,000 and a trip to receive the award in person. Millions of children from nearly 100 countries have participated in the contest over the last 25 years.

Saucedo’s poster, which features people of different races and backgrounds helping a woman wearing the flags of many countries hold the globe afloat, has a great chance of earning top honors as the contest proceeds, school officials said.

“The poster is beautiful,” said CMS art teacher Laura Biernacki. “She showed great skill and wonderful use of color in drafting her vision for this poster.



— Photo courtesy Canutillo ISD

PEACE BABY – Three Canutillo Middle School students received high marks in this year’s Fine Points Lions Club Peace Poster Contest. They are, from left, Celina Castillo, third place, Janelle Hernandez, honorable mention, and Sara Saucedo, first place. The contest is open to students ages 11 through 13 in schools around the world in an effort to promote peace and tolerance among people. This year’s theme was “Peace, Love and Understanding”.

The human mind was intended to be a storehouse, not a wastebasket.

— Quips & Quotes

Veterans Post

By Freddy Groves

Trusting the OIG

The snafu in Phoenix, with its claims that 40 veterans died because of scheduling problems, got our attention. What has us perking up our ears now is the allegation that the Office of the Inspector General for the Department of Veterans Affairs hid or buried information that it had for years about the Phoenix scheduling mess.

Over the years, I've read a few hundred reports out of the OIG. I've seen the care and effort that go into every investigation, as well as the subsequent recommendations that show complete understanding of the facts at hand. In the details, I can see the OIG ferreting out information in paperwork and interviews, digging deep.

If the OIG has fallen down in any area, it is in being too trusting in its recommendations – trusting that those at the top in any VA facility will work to make changes based on those recommendations. It's only on the next inspection go-round that the OIG discovers that its recommendations often were ignored. There needs to be an intermediary level of accountability to stick around

and crack the whip while the OIG goes on to other investigations.

Between April and September 2014, the VAOIG produced: eight national health-care reviews, 25 hotline health-care inspections, 27 CAP (Combined Assessment Program) reviews and 34 Community Based Outpatient Clinic reviews. They opened 41 investigations into the diversion of controlled substances, four for health benefits fraud, 53 for criminal activity – and much, much more in the form of audits, evaluations and assessments. The math shows that the OIG saved \$1.59 billion in total dollar impact.

If you want to take a close look at the new report, go online to va.gov/oig and click on publications. Look for Semiannual Report to Congress (April to September 2014).

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) 2014 King Features Synd., Inc.

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Finances

By Jason Alderman

Smart financial moves for transitioning vets

The latest generations of veterans face a particularly complicated financial picture, attributed to multiple deployments, a tough civilian economy, predatory lending threats at home and disability and health issues.

That's why the Veterans Financial Coalition (<http://www.veteransfinancialcoalition.org>) was formed in June 2014 by a diverse group of organizations including Visa's Practical Money Skills for Life, Association for Financial Counseling and Planning Education (AFCPE), Consumer Action, and the Consumer Federation of America. The coalition welcomed three new members in November – Call For Action, the National Consumers League (NCL) and the National Foundation for Credit Counseling (NFCC).

The organization aims to meet the needs of veterans reentering civilian life by executing three goals:

- Educate veterans and the community organizations that serve them.
- Research consumer protections for veterans.
- Raise awareness for veterans' financial needs.

Aside from the Veterans Financial Coalition, returning veterans and reservists can also use the following suggestions and resources to build their post-military financial and career path:

Get personalized advice. Throughout the military career lifecycle, active military, reservists and retired military personnel have access to specific savings, investing and spending resources. But nothing takes the place of personalized financial/tax advice and lifetime personal finance education. Veterans can view and download resources such as budgeting tips, tax break information and educational games from the Veterans Financial Coalition. As part of the Coalition's free resources, the AFCPE also provides an online database to locate a certified professional financial counselor to help with savings, spending, investing and tax issues. On the credit front, Wells Fargo has partnered with the National Foundation for Credit Counseling and its Sharpen Your Financial Focus initiative to deliver Wells Fargo's Hands on Banking (<http://www.handsonbanking.org/financial-education/hands-on-banking-for-military/>) education program specifically for servicemembers.

Take advantage of all transition assistance programs. The Transition Assistance Program (TAP) offered by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) is a first-step clearinghouse for information on VA career, educational, financial and vocational rehabilitation assistance. Workshop and video guides are available on the site in addition to links to the Veterans Opportunity to Work (VOW) program and other VA training and career success programs. The U.S. Department of Labor's Career One Stop site also offers additional information on military-specific career programs.

Avoid scams. Sadly, active and returning military personnel are often targets for a diverse range of financial fraud. Veterans Financial Coalition member Consumer Action offers an Economic Survival Guide for Servicemembers and Veterans.

Get tax help. The Internal Revenue Service website provides a variety of tax resources for active military and veterans. It is also worthwhile to work with a licensed tax professional with expertise in military transition issues. It's a good idea to rely on trusted friends and family for referrals to tax professionals who have experience working with active military and veterans, but you can also contact your state CPA (Certified Public Accountant) society to gather names of professionals in your area. Always remember to interview professionals before you hire them.

Go deeper on education breaks. Check the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs website for its education benefits. The Post-9/11 GI Bill, for example, may cover the full cost of in-state tuition and fees for a public college for up to 36 months (four years) after release from active duty. A combination of VA tuition and training programs can offer more assistance. Student aid programs also exist for the children of deceased and disabled veterans. FinAid.org offers background on many of these programs.

Bottom line: If you're a veteran or know one, take advantage of the full range of financial, career and training resources to secure a bright, post-military future.

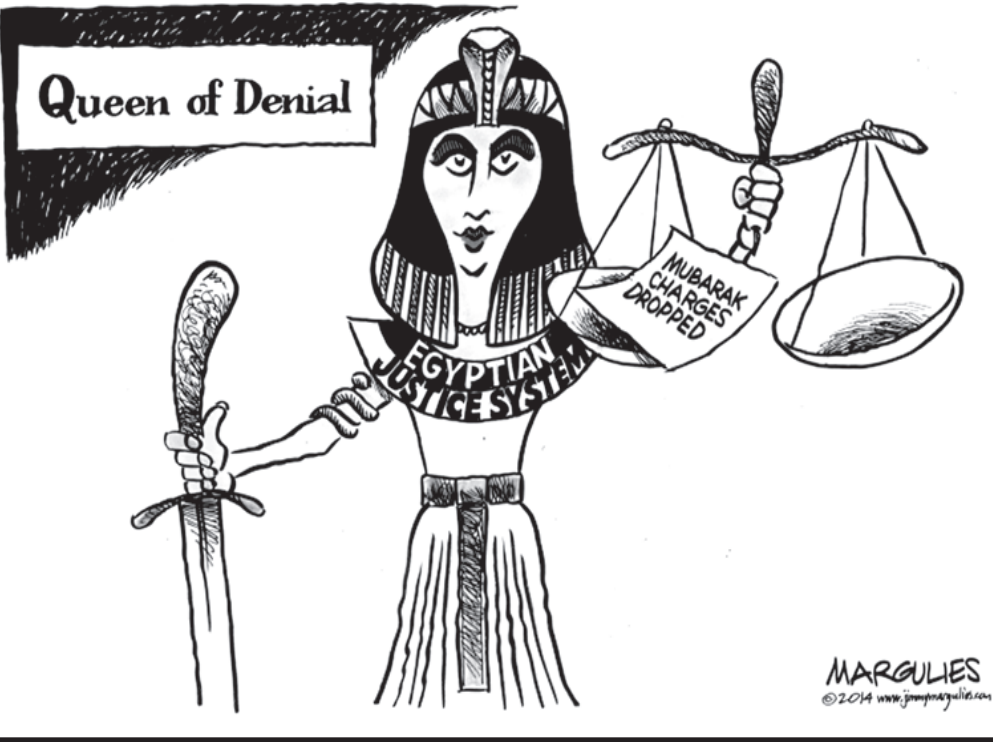
IRS pension update: New limits for 2015

Is it ever too late to plan for retirement? No, as long as you're willing to be thrifty and extend your working years and be mindful of your individual and employer-based retirement savings options. Building a successful, comfortable retirement depends on a variety of individual factors, including where you live, how long you plan to work, your health and your other investments and assets.

The IRS recently announced an update for your options, including cost-of-living adjustments that will give many taxpayers the advantage of putting more away during 2015. Here's a summary:

- **Regular contribution limits for 401(k), 403(b), most 457 plans, and the federal employee Thrift Savings Plan. Increased from \$17,500 (for tax year 2014) to \$18,000 (for tax year 2015).** The catch-up contribution limit for employees aged 50 in these plans is increased from \$5,500 to \$6,000. Contribution deadline: Dec. 31.
- **Annual contribution limits, Individual Retirement Accounts (IRA).** For both traditional and Roth IRAs, the annual contribution limit is not subject to a cost-of-living adjustment and remains at \$5,500. The over-50 catch-up contribution amount is \$1,000. There are particular restrictions (<http://www.irs.gov/publications/p590/index.html>) based on income levels, workplace retirement plan coverage among other issues. Contribution deadline: April 15.
- **Higher 2015 income phase-out levels for traditional IRA contributions.** For singles covered by a workplace retirement plan, the 2015 cutoff is now increased to a modified adjusted gross income (AGI) between \$61,000 and \$71,000. The IRS website details other significant increases and updates in phase-out levels for married couples and singles.
- **Higher 2015 income phase-out levels for Roth IRA contributions.** For singles covered by a workplace retirement plan, the 2015 cutoff is now increased to a modified adjusted gross income (AGI) between \$61,000 and \$71,000. The IRS website details other significant increases and updates in phase-out levels for married couples and singles.

Jason Alderman directs Visa's financial education programs.



View from here

By Jamie Woo

It’s time to clamp down on tax extenders

While the dust is still settling from the mid-term elections and the pundits are trying to figure out what it all means, the American people have made their collective voices heard and delivered a message that they do not like the country’s direction. Exit polling data from Election Day showed clear majorities in against growing corporate influence on the political process and in favor of greater corporate accountability. The message is clear: inversions must stop, corporate tax avoidance must end, and special corporate loopholes must close.

The question that remains, of course, is whether Congress will hear that message. As the post-election lame duck session gets underway, Congress has an excellent opportunity to show that they’ve heard the American people loud and clear by acting on tax extenders. There are two extenders that exemplify the very worst of corporate tax avoidance and should be allowed to fade away.

The first is the Controlled Foreign Corporation (CFC) Look-Through rule. The CFC Look-Through rule allows multinationals to create “stateless income,” moving income to low or no-tax countries and avoid U.S. tax in the process. They do this by setting up a network of subsidiaries, one of which own copyrights and patents used by the other foreign subsidiary. The fees paid from the one subsidiary to another create vast profits for these entities and avoid any tax anywhere. Google has heavily utilized the CFC Look-Through rule in its tax avoidance efforts.

The second is the Active Financing Exception. This is an exception to the rule that passive income (interest, dividends,

royalties, etc.) is treated as taxable income even if it is not brought back to the United States. Instead, if the income is used for financial operation like financing the sale of jet engines, there is no U.S. tax so long as the profits from the deal stay offshore. However, what constitutes financial operations is so broadly defined as to enable virtually any multinational to take advantage of it. The Active Financing Exception explains why G.E., through its G.E. Capital subsidiary, has paid a negative tax rate on billions in profits over the last five years.

Public sentiment is overwhelmingly against these and other tax avoidance tricks that continue to benefit corporations that are already seeing record high profits. Those who doubt this need to look no further than Walgreen’s, which halted a planned inversion of its own in the face of massive public outrage.

These policies hurt all of us. When multinational corporations are able to avoid taxes, it leaves individual citizens and domestic corporations picking up the tab in the form of higher taxes and more public debt. And it further places small businesses, which pay a higher tax rate with none of the loopholes, at a competitive disadvantage. The message to Congress is clear: it is time for corporations quit cashing out without chipping in.

Jaimie Woo is Tax and Budget Associate for U.S. PIRG, a member of the FACT Coalition. Founded in 2011, the Financial Accountability and Corporate Transparency (FACT) Coalition unites civil society representatives from small business, labor, government watchdog, faith-based, human rights, anti-corruption, public-interest, and international development organizations. We seek an honest and fair corporate tax code, greater transparency in corporate ownership and operations, and commonsense policies to combat the facilitation of money laundering and other criminal activity by the legitimate financial system.

‘Christmas in the Village’ returns to Vinton

By Marina Ramirez
Special to the Courier

VINTON – Christmas in the Village returns on Saturday, Dec. 13 for its 9th consecutive year to Dr. Applegate Park, in Vinton, and is the kickoff celebration for Vinton’s Christmas light display. The Christmas in the Village festivities will start at 1 p.m. with a Christmas entertainment by area schools and the Rebel Fire Band. The event will also host a variety of arts and crafts, local food vendors and Santa Clause, who is scheduled to arrive at 4:30 p.m.

This year we the Ft. Bliss 1st Division Armored Band will close out the entertainment for the event. The 1st Armored Division “Old Ironsides” Band traces its heritage from 1943,

when it was activated in the early days of World War II. Since their start in World War II to today the band has provided musical support to thousands of troops throughout different missions. The Old Ironsides’ Band continues to uphold their motto: “Performance With Pride”. Their performance will start at 5 p.m.

Light displays are sponsored by ArcelorMittal, Texas Gas Service and El Paso Electric Company. The light display will run from December 13 through January 5. Additional sponsors for helping to make Christmas in the Village possible are Inter National Bank, Accurate Coring, Commercial Roofing Systems, Rodriguez Plastics, TEWA, Vinton Village Estates, El Paso Disposal and Pepsi.

Christmas in the Village is free and open to the public.

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– Photo courtesy Canutillo ISD

GEEKING UP – More than 60 students at Northwest Early College High School in Canutillo ISD earned a certification from Microsoft Word 2013 this semester. The students received their certification diplomas during a school assembly at the campus.

Northwest Early College students earn MS Word certification

By **Gustavo Reveles Acosta**
Special to the Courier

CANUTILLO – More than 60 students from Northwest Early College High School in the Canutillo Independent School District earned official Microsoft Word 2013

Certification in November and are now ready to tackle more complex certifications. A total of 62 students spent weeks preparing for the MS Word examination and did well enough to earn official certification. They were awarded their certification certificates at a ceremony in late

November. “This is the first step toward our goal of having our students earn the types of certifications that will make them attractive to employers and colleges,” said Oscar Carrera, a business teacher at Northwest. “MS Word Certification will tell employers that this young candidate

is ready for an entry-level position at an office. Our future certifications will get them ready for more responsibilities at the work place.” The MS Word exam tested thorough knowledge of the word-processing software and looked at each student’s ability to complete complex tasks in an independent manner. The software is used worldwide to produce reports, resumes, correspondence and other business and personal communication. According to Microsoft, individuals with official MS Word certification can earn up to \$16,000 more in annual salary than those who do not have it.

To prepare for the exam, students worked with Carrera during the Business Information Management class. Carrera says students will tackle at least three more certifications before the end of the year: MS PowerPoint, MS Access and Excel 2013. “This type of certification goes in line with the goal of Northwest Early College, which is to make sure our students are both college and career ready,” said Northwest Principal Tracy Speaker. “Our students are already college-bound, so it is important for them to earn the type of certifications we know employers will want from their interns and employment candidates.”

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**The West Texas County Courier
office will be closed from
Friday, December 19 to Friday,
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**The last issue for 2014 will be
December 11, 2014. Our next
publication will be January 1,
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**The office will open again on
Monday, December 29, 2014.**

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Ascarate

From Page 1

acres, has a rich history; it is where generations of golfers learned the game, and playing this course has become a tradition for many local families and out of town guests. The municipal golf course is open year-round. Its challenging 18-hole course features 6,565 yards of golf from the longest tees for a par of 72. The course also has a nine-hole short course.

The golfing facilities include a clubhouse, putting green, driving range and space for meetings. The course, situated alongside the lake, includes another smaller, 4-acre lake in its design. The lakes are fed by a series of underground wells, which provide a portion of the water required to maintain the entire park. The golf course was designed by George Hoffman in 1955.

The golf operations are currently headed by PGA Golf Professional, Mike Smith and Esther Ramirez along with their staff. They are on hand to assist with all game day needs, as well as answer questions regarding the course and the park.

The park’s aquatic center houses a 50-meter Olympic-size, outdoor competition pool. It is one of the few Olympic-size pools in the county. Besides the main pool, the aquatic center has a large slide and four small pools and slides for children. The pool is open daily from 6 a.m. to 10:30 p.m. beginning Memorial Day weekend and closes Labor Day weekend.

Near the pool and throughout the park are shaded picnic areas with barbeque grills, as well as two regulation-size sand volleyball and grass volleyball courts. Additionally, two basketball courts and two tennis courts are located at the north end of the park, and in the center of the park are five softball fields, one baseball field, and two soccer fields available for league play or practice. That’s not all there are two handball courts at the east end of the park.

The park’s facilities are available to the public as well as for private rentals. The pool is suitable for competitive swim tournaments and other events. For more information about the park, visit the county’s website at epcounty.com; for information regarding fishing fees and policies, visit the Texas Park and Wildlife website <http://www.tpwd.state.tx.us/spdest/findadest/parks/franklin/>

Ascarate Lake Park is located at 6900 Delta. Admission to the park is free, Monday through Thursday. Starting at 3 p.m., Friday and continuing through Sunday, a \$2 fee per vehicle is charged at the gate entrance. On holidays (Easter, Memorial Day, 4th of July, and Labor Day), the park entrance fee is \$5 per vehicle. A no alcohol policy is in effect at all times at the park.

Briefs

From Page 1

of the Texas Workforce Commission (TWC).
– Jim Heiney

Retirement health care

A new report published by Ameriprise Financial shows that retirees will need an average of about \$230,000 per household for out-of-pocket health care costs in their old age, according to the Association of Mature American Citizens. However, Pat O’Connell, executive vice president, Ameriprise Financial, notes that “Boomers understand that health care costs will be a significant expense in retirement, yet many haven’t planned - or simply don’t know how to plan - to fund these expenses.” The study also found that the great majority of individuals who are approaching retirement age believe that by making healthy lifestyle choices now, they can reduce the amount of money they’ll need for health care when they do retire. In fact, 62% of those who took part in the Ameriprise study said that they were starting a diet and exercise program as a means of reducing future health care costs. But, says AMAC, the older you get the more apt you are to require medical attention for a variety of age-related ailments and so planning for health care needs is a wise choice no matter how healthy you feel today.
– John Grimaldi

Film pass

The El Paso Community Foundation’s Plaza Classic Film Festival isn’t until August. But it’s not too early to get a good deal on next year’s festival. Festival Passes are for sale for \$175 through Dec. 31. That’s \$25 off the regular price. Perks include admission to more than 80 movies, an express lane, admission to the opening night VIP movie and reception, reservations for Philanthropy Theatre movies, and more. The El Paso Community Foundation’s Plaza Classic Film Festival returns to the historic Plaza Theatre Aug. 6-16, 2015. In its first seven years, the world’s largest classic film festival has shown more than 500 movies to more than 250,000 people. It has attracted a glittering array of celebrities, including Al Pacino, Debbie Reynolds, Rita Moreno, Eva Marie Saint, Robert Wagner and Shirley Jones. Call 915-533-4020 or go to plazaclassic.com and order now.
– Doug Pullen

Gluten craze exposed

Consumer Reports says that about seven percent of Americans

suffer from an autoimmune condition that causes gluten sensitivity or celiac disease, but that 63% of the population believe a gluten-free diet is beneficial. They think that cutting or reducing gluten intake has all sorts of physical and mental benefits, according to the Association of Mature American Citizens. But, says AMAC, it ain’t necessarily so. In fact, the Food and Drug Administration agrees with the Consumer Reports study. Rhonda Kane, a registered dietitian and consumer safety officer at FDA, says that “eating gluten-free is not meant to be a diet craze. It’s a medical necessity for those who have celiac disease.” “There are no nutritional advantages for a person not sensitive to gluten to be on a gluten-free diet,” she adds. “The Truth About Gluten,” the Consumer Reports research document, is available on its Web site and in the January 2015 edition of its magazine, which is available on newsstands.
– John Grimaldi

Wanted

A man is using cloned and stolen credit cards to make large purchases of fuel and other items. Detectives from the Pebble Hills Regional Command Center are asking for the public’s assistance, in identifying this thief through the Crime Stoppers, “Crime of the Week.” Between Sunday November 2nd and Thursday November 6th 2014, the suspect used a cloned credit card, to make several purchases of fuel at various Seven Eleven stores in the area. The last transaction that the suspect did, was for more than \$400 dollars, at the Family Dollar Store located at, 1840 N. Lee Trevino, on Thursday, Nov. 6. The suspect was recorded by cameras at the Family Dollar, and investigators are certain that someone can provide the man’s identity. The suspect is described as a Hispanic male, with a medium build, in his late 30s to early 40s, and has a mustache and a small beard on his chin. The man was wearing a long sleeved, camouflage tee-shirt and dark pants. The suspect may be driving a truck. Investigators also believe that the suspect is involved in other similar incidents in the area. Anyone with any information on the identity of this thief, is asked to 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).
– Javier Sambrano



Know him?

AT SHOPPING MALLS, PARKING LOTS, THEATERS, APARTMENT COMPLEXES & CITY STREETS

WHERE YOU ARE, THEY ARE!

YOU ARE BEING SHADOWED. But you’re not the only one. Every year in Texas, car thieves steal close to 100,000 cars and trucks, and burglarize thousands more. Surprised? Don’t be any longer. When you leave your vehicle, **HIDE** your things, **LOCK** your car, and **TAKE** your keys. Remember...**YOU HOLD THE KEY.**

Watch Your Car

TEXAS AUTO BURGLARY AND THEFT PREVENTION AUTHORITY

Chill out El Paso and give the Miners time to gel

By Steve Escajeda
Special to the Courier

One of the traits most sports fans share is the knee-jerk reaction.

Many fans tend to make up their minds about a team or a coach or a player based on the very latest information they’ve received.

And many times that information is flawed because it’s not based on a long-enough timetable.

So fans tend to change their minds from week-to-week and even day-to-day depending on what they’ve seen or what they think they’ve seen.

I learned recently that El Paso fans are no different.

After the UTEP basketball Miners got off to a great 4-0 start, they lost their next three games by a combined total of 13 points.

And of course some of the restless fans out there are beginning to grumble.

Unlike when the years “the Bear” Don Haskins roamed the sidelines, the Miners haven’t feasted on the usual cupcakes to start the season.

The Miners have opened 2014 with one of the toughest schedules in the country. They’ve taken on Washington State, New Mexico State (twice), Princeton, Xavier, Washington and Colorado State.

Three opponents they faced were undefeated going into the game.

All real sports fans know that the difficult schedule will only help the team as they get deeper into the season.

But some fans are already worried. Listening to some talk radio last week, I heard fans complaining about the team’s lack of cohesion and focus.

They were going on and on about how sluggish they look on offense and how dismal they are on defense.

Like Green Bay Packers’ quarterback Aaron Rodgers said when his fans were going nuts when they struggled out of the gate – R-E-L-A-X.

The Miners are going through the same thing every organization goes through when it introduces new people into the mix. There’s an awkward time we all go through as we try to mesh with a new partner.

What are his habits, what are his strengths

and weaknesses, how does he react to adversity?

In this time of supersonic gratification, we forget that some things take time. We forget that getting good at anything takes time.

The Miners have recruited some talented guards to help C.J. Cooper, who was forced to play out of position last year. Everyone knows he isn’t a point guard; he’s a shooting guard.

It’s apparent that freshman guard Omega Harris, who is the quickest UTEP player since Randy Culpepper, will take over the point guard spot.

And though he’s already shown signs of future stardom, he is still a freshman and is still learning the game at the Division-1 college level.

Remember a guard at UTEP by the name of Tim Hardaway? He averaged just two points a game as a freshman. I’d say he eventually figured it out.

Another freshman, Lew Stallworth, is the other guard who is expected to help in the backcourt this season and for years to come.

There’s no doubt that when they enter the game there is an instant infusion of energy in the team. The ball moves around the court

quicker and the offense flows a little better.

But defensively, they are lacking because it takes time to learn a new system and let’s face it – how many high school players watch the ESPN highlights for defensive play?

Another new player, junior college transfer Earvin Morris, has also shown signs of being an excellent offensive weapon. But if you’re going to play for coach Tim Floyd, you’re going to play defense first.

There’s no doubt that big men Matt Willms and Hooper Vint have got to start playing like big men around the basket.

But veterans Julian Washburn and Cedrick Lang will provide the leadership the team will need by the time the conference schedule comes around.

Throw in the talent of Vince Hunter, as long as he doesn’t pay too much attention into his press clippings, and the Miners will be a formidable opponent for any team in February and March – when it all counts the most.

We all know that El Paso sports fans have a tendency to view their beer glass as being half empty.

But worry about the federal deficit or Obamacare – don’t worry about the Miners.

A sporting view By Mark Vasto

No more bad nights

Former Baltimore Ravens running back Ray Rice has announced a new profession in recent days – time traveler – and it’s just as well, since he has about as good a chance landing that gig as he does another running back job this year.

Ironically, scientists from NASA announced a few weeks ago that they have found evidence for the possibility of time travel. I don’t recall the specifics ... something about sending a watch into space

and having it return in a different era. While I doubt that Rice was poring over scientific data before his reinstatement press conference, it’s good to know that he was at least cognizant of the space-time theorem.

During the conference, Rice expressed his delight at having been named eligible to return to action in the NFL due to a bizarre interpretation of the law by an appeals court judge... a judgment

that says, hey, it’s OK to knock out a woman in a casino and keep your job if you tell your boss about it first. Rice’s main concern wasn’t poor press coverage or even a lack of support from fans or interest from teams. No, his main concern was how all of this was going to play out on Google.

A few columns back, I wrote about “the right to be forgotten,” a real movement in Europe that allows people the right to request certain information about themselves on Google be removed upon request. Rice, an American and not afforded that right, apparently wants the same deal. For out of this entire ordeal, the whole “I just knocked out my girl

in a seedy casino elevator during a drunken rage and subsequently lost my multi-million dollar running back gig” deal, what bothers Rice most is the idea of his little daughter one day Googling him.

Look up Ray Rice on Google, and here’s what you find almost immediately, on page one: “Elevator knockout.” Contrast that with other sporting veterans and greats:

Roger Staubach: “Top 10 Clutch QB,” “Captain Clutch”

Brett Favre: Tom Brady

Rex Ryan: Mark Sanchez tattoo (See kids? Those things really do last forever.)

Mark Sanchez: Butt fumble

Peyton Manning: Net Worth (\$115 million) and SNL (hulu.com/watch/1603)

Mike Vick: Animal Fighting

Randy Moss: Fastest, most explosive WR ever

Rick Cerone: America’s Favorite Yankee

Yes, Ray, I think you have a problem, the least of which being statements like these made by you to People magazine:


“No relationship is perfect. We’ve had arguments, but when you talk about abuse, you know, that’s something that we know that we’d never cross that path.”

Except for that one time, right? Right.

“We could talk about our one bad night, it just happened to be on video, but we are truly sorry to the people that are really going through it.”


Right Ray. We are, too. We are truly very sorry that you still don’t seem to get it. Here’s hoping you never get to step foot on a football field again, either. Not even for one bad night.

Mark Vasto is a veteran sportswriter who lives in Dallas. (c) 2014 King Features Synd., Inc.






UTEP MEN'S BASKETBALL

VS ARIZONA | DEC. 19 | 9 PM



UTEP MINERS







HOOPS FOR THE HOLIDAYS

WOMEN'S BASKETBALL
VS EASTERN NEW MEXICO
DEC. 2 | 2 PM

VS HOUSTON BAPTIST
DEC. 6 | 7 PM

MEN'S BASKETBALL
VS INCARNATE WORD
DEC. 8 | 7 PM

VS SOUTHEASTERN LOUISIANA
DEC. 16 | 7 PM



New Socorro Early College High School to open next school year

By Christy Flores-Jones
Special to the Courier

The Socorro Independent School District will offer a new early college program exclusive to the Socorro High School feeder area, which will open next school year. Parents of eighth graders at Socorro Middle School, Salvador H. Sanchez Middle School and Ernesto Serna School can learn about this new opportunity by calling 937-2040

The Socorro Early College High School will be located at Socorro High School and will open for the 2015-2016 school year with an enrollment of 125 freshman students. The program will allow students the opportunity to take both high school and college courses in a special campus environment. Upon graduation, the students will have had the opportunity to earn a high school diploma and a two-year Associates of Arts Degree.

“This new program is founded on the belief that many high school students are ready and eager to do serious college work,” said SISD Superintendent Dr. José Espinoza. “This makes it easier for students to transition to higher education academically and socially.”

Benefits of the Socorro Early College include:

- Free college tuition for up to 60 credit hours;
- Free access to El Paso Community College Campus’s facilities and service;
- College textbooks will be paid by the district; and
- Several associates’ degrees offered at SEC, including architecture, industrial engineering, geological sciences and psychology.

Comix

OUT ON A LIMBBy Gary Kopervas



AMBER WAVESBy Dave T. Phipps



THE SPATSBy Jeff Pickering



R.F.D. By Mike Marland



Your good healthBy Keith Roach, M.D.

DEAR DR. ROACH: I am a 77-year-old male. I had to stop playing golf about two years ago due to joint pain. I had psoriasis from age 15 until I was 40. I am retired from the Navy and had to be hospitalized twice during my time in service due to my skin. Why it disappeared at age 40, I don't know. Is it possible that I could have psoriatic arthritis? One doctor I saw said that I had to have psoriasis in order to get it. I saw that you said that sometimes the arthritis shows up before the skin lesions. Can it show up after you have quit having the lesions? – Anon.

Please tell him that I think it sounds like it might be skin cancer, such as a squamous cell carcinoma, and that he should see a dermatologist immediately. Some people have an immense capacity for convincing themselves that nothing is wrong. The sooner he gets an evaluation, the better.

DEAR DR. ROACH: I am a veteran and have had digestive problems (GERD and gastritis) since I came back from Vietnam in 1968. How closely related are these disorders? – J.R.O.

Indeed, psoriatic arthritis can show up years after psoriasis starts and when there are no skin lesions. Often, pits in the nails or other nail changes are seen in those with psoriatic arthritis. However, having psoriasis doesn't protect you from other types of arthritis, such as osteoarthritis or rheumatoid arthritis. Since psoriatic arthritis is so destructive, you should see an expert, perhaps a rheumatologist. The arthritis booklet discusses rheumatoid arthritis, osteoarthritis and lupus. Readers can order a copy by writing: Dr. Roach – No. 301W, 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.

GERD (gastroesophageal reflux disease) is very, very common, and refers to the passage of food and acid backward – from the stomach into the esophagus. The general cause of GERD is a relative weakness in the lower esophageal sphincter, the muscular, valvelike structure at the bottom of the esophagus. Gastritis is an inflammation of the lining of the stomach. Both of these terms often are used imprecisely, as a guess at what might be causing nonspecific stomach pains. With such a prolonged course, it would be wise to make sure of your diagnosis, as your symptoms actually might be caused a different condition, such as an ulcer or infection by the bacteria H. pylori, which would require different treatment.

Dr. Roach regrets that he is unable to answer individual letters, but will incorporate them in the column whenever possible. Readers may email questions to ToYourGoodHealth@med.cornell.edu. To view and order health pamphlets, visit www.rbmamall.com, or write to P.O. Box 536475, Orlando, FL 32853-6475. (c) 2014 North America Synd., Inc. All Rights Reserved.

DEAR DR. ROACH: About 10 months ago, my husband noticed a small “bleb” on the skin near his right hip area. He used “tag away” and alcohol swabs daily; however, the area is a giant 2-inch-diameter “blotch” with an open sore in the middle. He insists that it is almost gone. I am afraid that it is skin cancer, very serious and that it needs to be checked

Super Crossword

- TEE TIME ACROSS

1 Persistent Dr. Seuss character

7 Total stupidity

13 _faire

20 Actress Wilde

21 Fifth U.S. president

22 Writer Caldwell

23 Dissuade people from using a bridge?

25 “Look, Ma” follower

26 Be a thespian

27 Impressionist

28 Claude

31 Frogs' relatives

30 Destroy the interior of

31 Azure

34 Horse riders' shop?

37 Above, in odes

38 Twofold nature

41 Errand boy

42 Thieving Fink?

46 Grammy winner _ James

48 _Z ('80s Camaro)

49 “Revolver” or “Tapestry,” e.g.

50 Lose iciness

52 Run through small holes

56 “GoldenEye”

58 Bond girl Simonova

58 Open courts used by opera singers?

62 Delayed
- 63 “_be back”

66 Poet Edward

67 Drink in

68 Stiller of film

69 Predicament experienced by humans?

73 Unused, in Ulm

74 Self-evident statements

76 107, in old Rome

77 Actress Irving

78 With 33-Down, whom “nobody doesn't like”

80 Moistens meat while drunk?

83 Puerto Rico's _ Observatory

86 CPR experts

87 Maladies

88 Author Zola

91 Rights org. since 1920

92 Scratched (out)

94 Arrange meals neatly in a picnic basket?

97 Dance with dips

100 Shooting marble

102 “... _ in ‘team’”

103 Actor Feldman after a bad fight?

106 Feisty fish

110 Endorsed

111 Take the loss

112 Put at 000

115 “Nice one!”

116 Zeros

119 Stress caused by
- a “Great” czar?

123 Boy in “E.T.”

124 New Jersey borough next to Fort Lee

125 “Help Me, _” (1965 #1 hit)

126 Midday naps

127 High regard

128 Wised off to
- DOWN

1 Pops

2 Smart _

3 Thurber's Walter

4 “_ done it!”

5 Run on TV

6 Fred of “My Three Sons”

7 “That's my cue!”

8 Shot amount

9 Tech. school

10 “... _ quit!” (threat ender)

11 Hold

12 “Holy moly!”

13 Ivan of tennis

14 Came up

15 Suffix with amateur

16 Jamaican pop music

17 Honor with a tune

18 Tough out

19 Rind-cutting tool

24 Caviar

29 USN ranker

32 Spotted lynx

33 See 78-Across

34 _ Poke (caramel
- lollipop)

35 USAF NCO

36 Raises one's glass to

38 Apply gently

39 Land east of Arg.

40 24-hr. cash dispensers

42 _ Tin Tin

43 Verbal test

44 Plant studier

45 Britain's Tony

46 Suffix with Euclid

47 Time when DST starts

50 Merry refrain

51 A eunuch guards it

53 Like liver, nutritionally

54 Like offenses one can get canned for

55 Perfume since 1931

57 “_ at 'em!”

59 Vintage song

60 Architect I.M.

61 Belittle

64 Rank above maj.

65 Molten flows

68 Slugger Ruth

70 “Hot Stuff” actor

Davis

71 Pot topper

72 Mariah Carey #1 hit

75 New York county or lake

79 Mimosa-family tree
- 81 Honorary law deg.

82 “No big _”

84 Homecoming attendees, e.g.

85 Suffix with poison

89 Former Sprint rival

90 Tina's ex

93 Decked in a boxing ring

94 Foyer sofas

95 Josephine of mysteries

96 Hide-hair link

97 Some steaks

98 It has a pH above 7.0

99 Little bump

100 Day after Fri.

101 Threefold

104 Granny on “The Nanny”

105 Ship parts

106 Diem lead-in

107 Adjectives modify them

108 Throng

109 Forward

112 Russo of “Ransom”

113 Buffalo's lake

114 E-mail clutter

117 U.S. fighters

118 Scorching

120 Little child

121 _ Na Na

122 “Help us!”

1	2	3	4	5	6		7	8	9	10	11	12		13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20							21							22						
23						24								25						
26					27					28		29						30		
31				32	33					34						35	36			
			37				38	39	40						41					
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103						104	105							106				107	108	109
110						111					112	113	114					115		
116					117	118				119		120				121	122			
123										124					125					
126										127					128					

MOORE TEXAS

by Roger Todd Moore

Dec.10,1836: President Sam Houston approved the design of the first national flag of Texas.



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.

	×		÷		18
+		-		×	
	-		×		21
×		×		+	
	+		+		6
26		21		29	

DIFFICULTY: ★

★ Moderate ★★ Difficult
★★★ GO FIGURE!

1 2 2 3 4 5 7 8 9

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Weekly SUDOKU

by Linda Thistle

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

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 4

★★★ HOO BOY!

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Social Security Q&A By Ray Vigil

Q: I moved in with my parents until I get back on my feet. Why did my Supplemental Security Income (SSI) payment decrease?

A: If you receive SSI, your living arrangements can affect your monthly payment. When you live in another person’s home and do not pay your fair share of the living expenses, that is, counted as “in-kind” income and can reduce your SSI payment. You must report any changes in your living arrangement to Social Security within 10 days of the change. When reporting a change in living arrangement, you need to tell us your address, who you live with and what you contribute toward the household bills and expenses. You also need to report if you move into a private or public hospital or nursing home, an institution run by the government, jail, another person’s home or a new place of your own. Report changes in your living arrangement at 1-800-772-1213 (TTY 1-800-325-0778) between 7 a.m. to 7 p.m., Monday through Friday. Learn more about SSI and the things you need to report when you get it at www.socialsecurity.gov/ssi.

Q: I stumbled onto your YouTube channel while looking at funny cat videos. Why does Social Security produce cat videos?

A: It’s just one of many ways for us to connect to people where they already spend time. It’s important for us to let everyone know about all we do for Americans, and we’re especially interested in getting the word out about our easy, convenient, and secure online services. That’s why we look for creative ways to reach people, young and old. Our popular YouTube videos are not only a hit with viewers, but they let people know the best way to apply for benefits – online. See the videos for yourself at www.socialsecurity.gov. Just select the YouTube link at the bottom right side of the page. By the way, the cat videos have already received more than one million views.

Q: I’ve heard you can apply online for retirement benefits. But isn’t it easier just to go into an office?

A: Retiring online is the easier way to go. There’s no need to fight traffic to travel to a local Social Security office and wait for an appointment with a Social Security representative. You can apply in as little as 15 minutes. Just visit www.socialsecurity.gov. Once you submit your electronic application, you’re done. In most cases there are no forms to sign or documents to mail. Join the millions of people who already retired online. Visit [www.](http://www.socialsecurity.gov)

socialsecurity.gov.

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

STRANGE BUT TRUE By Samantha Weaver

- It was American industrialist Jean Paul Getty who made the following sage observation: “If you can count your money, you don’t have a billion dollars.”
 - You’ve doubtless heard the term “bigwig” to refer to a person of importance, but you’ve probably never learned where the word originated. In the 18th century, King Louis XIV of France began wearing large wigs, and the fashion became a trend among the upper classes. At the time, wigs were made from human hair, which was very expensive to obtain; therefore, the larger the wig, the more hair was required and the more money the wearer had to spend to purchase it.
 - In 1950, a patent was issued for a fork that automatically spins to wind spaghetti onto it.
 - You might be surprised to learn that painter and sculptor Michelangelo was also a well-known poet in his day.
 - Medieval times, it seems, were suspicious times. When nobles gathered for social events, each person would pour a little bit of wine from his or her own cup into the cups of others – this was a way to ensure that no one was poisoning the drinks. The tradition continues today (with less suspicion, one would hope) when people clink glasses after toast.
 - It wasn’t until 1933 that an act of Congress made the dime legal tender for all transactions. Before that, it could be used only if the item or items being purchased totaled less than \$10.
 - Besides being former U.S. presidents, what do George Washington, Thomas Jefferson and John Adams have in common? As adults, they all collected and played marbles avidly.
- Thought for the Day: “I’m all in favor of keeping dangerous weapons out of the hands of fools. Let’s start with typewriters.”
– Frank Lloyd Wright

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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: F equals L

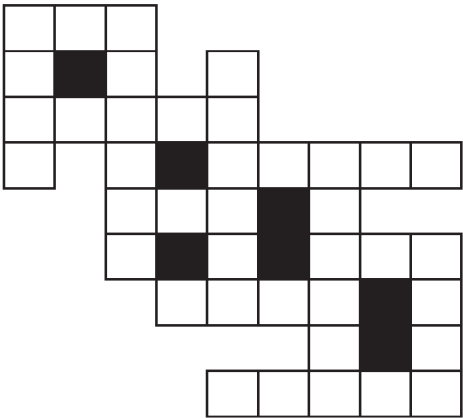
XNSD JT GWTGFW RSFF SZ
SDTFF XNWIW
RNTFWLDWITF-FTXWIQZK JIMKL
SIW GITJMRWJ? LDSDQZ QLFSZJ.

Answer Page 4

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ISH
ANERHI
♥RASNO
♥NADW
WRALPS
♥RTA
KECH
THERC
NWI
KHASTN
♥ECSUR
♥NTRE



Answer 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.

NEW! 30 Fear Knot puzzles \$3.50 • Six Volumes • Order at rbmamall.com

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