



## NEWSBRIEFS

### Hi sweetheart

An 80-year-old woman had a South Florida judge in stitches and avoided disorderly conduct charges when, instead of calling the magistrate “your honor,” she referred to him as “sweetheart,” according the Association of Mature American Citizens. She even asked him to buy her breakfast. Dolores Sheinis was in court to answer charges that she violated a restraining order requiring her to stay away from her former husband. She denied the charges and that’s when she started cracking wise. Ms. Sheinis’ antics seemed to amuse the judge, but not enough to dismiss the case against her. “I don’t particularly feel like keeping an 80-year-old woman in jail who has no criminal record, but this is your second warning: Don’t go around him again,” he said after ordering her to wear an ankle bracelet.

– John Grimaldi

### Socorro ISD invites realtors

Team SISD invites Realtors from the Eastside, the City of Socorro and Horizon City to a breakfast meeting to learn more about the school district. Superintendent José Espinoza and district administrators will share information regarding school boundaries, enrollment and district policies. The district, which has seen much growth in far east El Paso, will open its 47th school north of Montana for the 2015-2016 school year. Purple Heart Elementary, 14400 GR Campuzano Dr., will help ease enrollment at Hurshel Antwine and Chester Jordan elementaries. In addition, El Dorado 9th Grade Academy will officially become Pebble Hills High School, 14400 Pebble Hills Blvd., at the start of the new school year. The academy opened in 2010 and alleviated overcrowding at El Dorado High School. The meeting will take place Tuesday, March 10 at 9:30 a.m. in the District Service Center, Rooms C & D at 12440 Rojas.

– Christina Flores-Jones

### Wanted

A man holds up a west El Paso store at gunpoint. Detectives from the El Paso Police Department are asking for your help in identifying this robber

See BRIEFS, Page 8



– Photo by Rick Shrum

**TOP NOTCH FACILITY** – The new Horizon City Emergency Services District #1 facility is a 24,800 square-foot, two-story complex that includes ample sleeping quarters, modern kitchen and dining areas, spacious training facilities, eight separate offices, a TV room, weight room, central heating and cooling system, and garage bays that adequately accommodate the station’s fire trucks, equipment, and accessories.

## New emergency services station boosts firefighters’ morale

*EPCESD#1 responded to 2,788 calls in 2014*

By Alfredo Vasquez  
Special to the Courier

HORIZON – “The firefighters morale is way up now that the new \$4.6 million emergency services station in Horizon City is fully operational and the latest equipment and vehicles are in place,” said Ron Larson, administrator for El Paso County’s Emergency Services District (ESD) #1.

“We now have bedrooms so that the crew working has a place to sleep. (The old station did not have sleeping quarters). And, we have enough bays to house all the trucks inside so maintenance issues are down,” stated Larsen. He added that the new station also has ample space for administrators and fire marshal, and for a huge training classroom that is designed to be used as an emergency operations center should the need arise.

Furthermore, with the new facility comes an enhanced communications system. “We are now being dispatched through the local police department which is speeding up our receiving of calls. Trucks are usually

out of the station within one minute of receiving the call,” Larson stated. He said that firefighters, who get paid a minimal stipend but still considered volunteers, are now working shifts 24 hours a day thanks to the accommodations that the new station provides.

ESD#1 currently has 50 volunteers and a long waiting list of several interested applicants. “Because the guys work on a stipend program for their pay, we will not let the roster get too big so that they can work a few shifts each month and make a little money,” Larson stated.

Each firefighter is required to work two day and two night shifts each month. A shift is from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. or vice versa. The volunteer firefighters also participate in weekly training sessions to learn and improve their emergency medical services and fire fighting skills which are utilized when they respond to a variety of emergency calls.

As for equipment, the Horizon fire station took delivery of a new pumper truck recently as the other pumpers are more than 14 years old and need upgrading because they will still be in reserve service, Larson explained. “Also, this March we will have a new heavy rescue/pumper delivered. The truck will have all the equipment of a pumper but will also carry equipment for rescues including Jaws of Life, air bags, among other special features,” he stated.

Assisting Larson with ESD#1’s administrative duties are administrative assistant Tami Noel and administrative accountant Katherine Ames. Larson and Noel are full-time employees while Ames works part-time. The Horizon City station’s annual budget is about \$1.8 million.

ESD#1’s service area is approximately 156 square miles in far east El Paso County

## San Eli HS administrator receives BEEMS Award

By Cynthia P. Marentes  
Special to the Courier

SAN ELIZARIO – Patricia Franco, Assistant Principal at San Elizario High School, was recently named Administrator of the Year at the 22nd Annual Bilingual Educators Emphasizing Multicultural Settings (BEEMS) Conference. Although, Bilingual Education/English as a Second Language Coordinator Susie Frescas nominated Franco, she had to put in most of the work for the nomination herself, which included submitting an application and resume. Once her submission was chosen to advance to the next round, a committee then interviewed Franco. She became a finalist but did not know she had been chosen as the winner until



Patricia Franco

her name was announced on February 6 during the annual event held at the University of Texas at El Paso.

Franco has been an administrator at San Elizario High School since 2011. Her main administrative duties include guidance and instruction, University Avenue, and Limited English Proficiency/English as a Second Language programs among many others.

Conference organizers estimated that nearly 500 participants from the U.S., Mexico and other Central American countries shared dual-language research and best practices during the 22nd Annual BEEMS Conference. The conference offered sessions for teachers, parents and administrators. Three awards are also presented during the annual BEEMS event, which include Teacher, Administrator and Advocate of the Year.

*Life’s greatest failure is failing to be true to the best you know.*  
– Quips & Quotes

See STATION, Page 5



Finances

By Jason Alderman

# How to avoid online vacation rental scams

Imagine renting a home on a beautiful beachfront from a trusted website, arriving to start your vacation and finding out you’ve been scammed? This scenario reflects thousands of complaints placed with the U.S. Federal Trade Commission

(FTC) last year involving local vacation rentals. The FTC reports some victims lost money by wiring cash to thieves posing as property owners. Others lost money through fake websites replicating legitimate sites.

In today’s economy in which home sharing has become more popular, how do travelers protect themselves from a range of potential online scams? Here are some suggestions:

**Review rental contracts carefully.** Check the address of the property you’re interested in with on-the-ground resources like the local tourism office or the leading real estate brokerage in the community. While you’re speaking with the tourism office, ask if there have been any specific complaints against the rental service you have consulted or if there might be more reliable and possibly more affordable rental resources in town.

**Be wary of your source.** Legitimate property owners may use free print or web classified ads to save money, but it’s important to vet any free listing very carefully. Also, confirm with a live representative to ensure the site is legitimate.

**Compare rental rates in the immediate area.** A good deal might be tempting to

seize immediately, but the FTC notes that severely below-market pricing for rentals and other vacation services in a community might indicate a scam. Crosscheck the pricing of home rentals and related services in the community before you make a reservation. Given the example above, don’t rely on the Internet alone. Pick up the phone and talk directly to a representative.

**Check transient license law in your destination city.** Transient licenses regulate properties rented to guests for time periods generally 30 days or less. Call your destination city to get details on their transient license law and whether you can confirm the registration of the property you’re considering. Ask the property owner for a copy of his or her transient license and see if the city will share the same license for your inspection to make sure they match. Also ask the city whether any specific complaints are available for the property you are considering.

**Be wary of phishing scams.** Be on the lookout for email and phonscammerswhomasquerade as employees of businesses you trust – they’re after your bank or credit information. If you receive

emails or phone calls demanding advance payments, contact the original website to confirm your reservation and payment policy. Recently, travel site Booking.com had to pay out compensation to more than 10,000 customers from the U.S., UK, France, Italy, Portugal and the UAE who were victims of a phishing scam.

**Follow recommendations.** Personal recommendations from friends and family can ensure a safe transaction. If you know someone who has visited a destination or rented property recently, ask which companies or individuals they would recommend.

**Report fraud.** Inform the local police at your vacation destination, the local Better Business Bureau and the FTC. When you get home, notify your local police or your state attorney general’s consumer protection office to alert them to this particular cybercrime if you made the money transfer from your home state.

**Bottom line:** As online vacation rentals grow, so does cybercrime. Be cautious when booking arrangements online to protect your payments data.

*Jason Alderman directs Visa’s financial education programs.*

Veterans Post

By Freddy Groves

## Medical marijuana banned at the VA

Medical marijuana is legal in only 23 states. To gain access to it in those states with marijuana dispensaries, physicians are required to give advice and sign forms.

The problem for veterans: The Department of Veterans Affairs is required to follow federal guidelines. Federal law bans VA doctors from prescribing marijuana, even in those states where it’s legal.

In November, Oregon Rep. Earl Blumenauer submitted a bill to the House of Representatives called The Veterans Equal Access Act of 2014, number H.R. 5762. It has 15 co-sponsors (half on each side of the political aisle) and has advanced to full-committee consideration by the Subcommittee on Health. The bill would direct the secretary of the VA to “authorize VA health care providers to: 1) provide veterans with recommendations and opinions regarding participation in their state’s marijuana programs, and 2) complete forms reflecting such recommendations and

opinions.”

There are a lot of veterans waiting on this bill to pass, especially those with PTSD and chronic pain.

On the one hand, veterans can participate in programs in their states and still get VA care, but their doctors at the VA cannot advise, leaving patients on their own to acquire marijuana. Some 1 million veterans instead choose other VA treatments and drugs, such as opioids. Many get hooked on those, creating other problems.

Medical marijuana can reduce symptoms of re-experiencing, avoidance and hyperarousal in PTSD by 75 percent, according to a New Mexico survey conducted from 2009 to 2011. New Mexico was the first state to authorize marijuana as a treatment for PTSD.

If this is an issue you care about, call Rep. Blumenauer in Washington, D.C., and say so. The number is (202) 225-4811.

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Heart disease is the number one killer of men and women in America. But did you know that just 30 minutes a day of physical activity can improve your health and decrease your risk of heart disease? An easy way to work physical activity into your regular routine is to start walking. For every single hour of regular, vigorous exercise, you can add two hours to your life expectancy.

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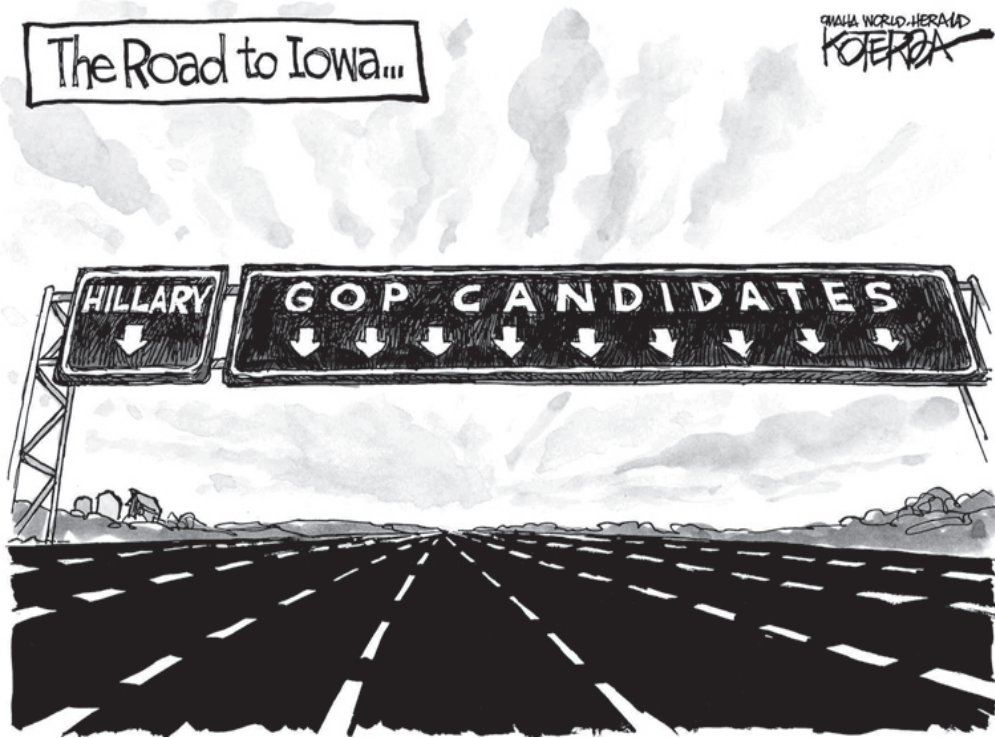
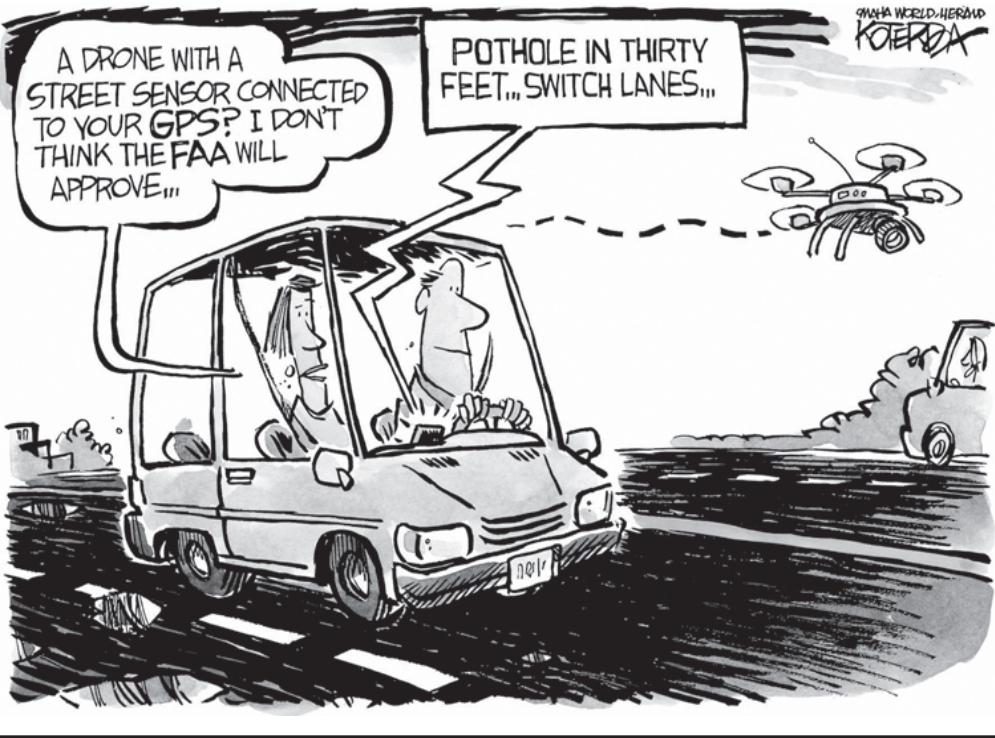
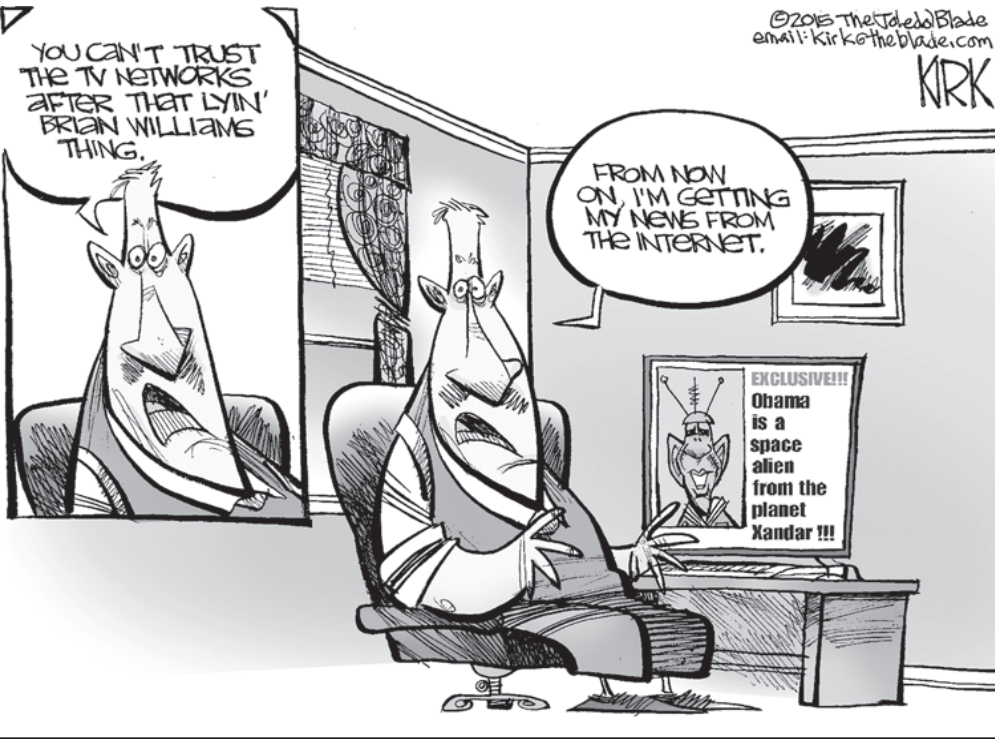


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– Photo courtesy of the El Paso Museum of Archaeology

**TAKE AIM –** Campers participating in an Atl-atl throwing activity during last year’s El Paso Museum of Archaeology spring break day camp practice throwing a spear.

# Museum holds spring break archaeology camp

By Alfredo Vasquez  
Special to the Courier

EL PASO COUNTY – El Paso Museum of Archaeology will hold its annual Spring Break Archaeology Day Camp, from 9 a.m. to 12 p.m., Tuesday through Friday, March 10 - 13, for youth ages 9 to 12, at the museum’s mountain fairgrounds, 4301 Transmountain Road.

The archaeology day camp is an interactive course designed to teach children the purpose, methodology, and value of studying ancient cultures and heritage through the interpretation of material culture or artifacts, according to Brittany Hutchinson, community

engagement coordinator for the museum.

“The archaeology camp’s focus is on respecting and appreciating the prehistory of the El Paso-Juárez region, especially its people and diverse cultures,” Hutchinson stated. Hands-on activities will include conducting a survey, mock excavation, field trip to Hueco Tanks State Park and Atl-Atl throwing demonstrations.

Registration fee for the camp experience is \$55 for archaeology museum members and \$70 for non-members. Registration is on a first come, first serve basis, and enrollment is limited to 12 students.

For more information and to register for the camp, contact the museum at (915) 755-4332 or send email to [Hutchinsonbm@elpasotexas.gov](mailto:Hutchinsonbm@elpasotexas.gov).

# AARP offers free tax help, prep

By Kim Loop  
Special to the Courier

TEXAS – This year, AARP Foundation is again providing free tax assistance and preparation for taxpayers with low to moderate income through the AARP Foundation Tax-Aide program. In its 48th year, the program is the nation’s largest free tax assistance and preparation service, giving special attention the older population. You do not need to be a member of AARP or a retiree to use this service.

“Tax code is incredibly complex, and many Texans struggle to navigate it and get the refunds they’re due,” said Ron Craig, the volunteer leader oversees all AARP Foundation Tax-Aide volunteers in Texas. “We’re here to help. We see many folks coming back year after year to get help they trust from volunteers in their own neighborhood. We’re always taking new clients as well.”

Last year, AARP Foundation Tax-Aide’s 36,000 volunteers nationwide provided 2.6 million people with free tax help. Of these, more than 2,000

AARP volunteers and more than 162,000 taxpayers were Texans. The program is offered at approximately 284 sites in Texas including senior centers, libraries and other convenient locations.

AARP Foundation Tax-Aide volunteers are trained and IRS-certified each year to ensure their knowledge of revisions to the U.S. tax code. In Texas alone, taxpayers who used AARP Foundation Tax-Aide received more than \$106 million in income tax refunds and more than \$22.8 million in Earned Income Tax Credits.

Preparation of tax returns under the Affordable Care Act rules will require additional documentation from taxpayers this year. The good news is that taxpayers on Medicare or Medicare Advantage don’t need any further information. For everyone else, health insurance coverage information, including information about Marketplace purchases and health care exemptions.

For more information or to locate an AARP Foundation Tax-Aide site, visit [www.aarp.org/findtaxhelp](http://www.aarp.org/findtaxhelp) or call 1-888-AARPNOW (1-888-227-7669). AARP Foundation Tax-Aide is offered in conjunction with the IRS.



# Keep Vinton Beautiful starts Saturday

By Marina Ramirez  
Special to the Courier

VINTON – Keep Vinton Beautiful is kicking off the Great American Cleanup this Saturday, Feb. 28 by partnering with UTEP for Project Move. Project Move is UTEP’s annual day where students volunteer for

different organizations across the borderland. This year’s activities for Project Move in Vinton will consist of installing four Little Free Libraries around the community, making planters out of recycled tires, collecting removing tires from illegal dump sites, prep soil to plant planting flowers and bushes for a butterfly garden and repainting the butterflies on the

sidewalk at Mariposa Park. The Great American Cleanup is the country’s largest community improvement program where over 20,000 communities participate each year to beautify and clean their communities. Other activities Keep Vinton Beautiful will host as part of the Great American Cleanup are:

- Rio Grande River Cleanup –

March 21;

- Don’t mess with Texas Trash-Off – April 11;
- Arbor/Earth Day Tree Planting – April 25; and
- Helping Hands to paint homes for the elderly and disabled – May 16.

If your organization or club would like to volunteer for any of the events please feel free to contact Jannette Monrreal at (915) 886-5104 or email her at [jmonrreal@vintontx.us](mailto:jmonrreal@vintontx.us).

## STRANGE BUT TRUE

By Samantha Weaver

• Though they seemingly have little in common, early 20th-century American politician William Jennings Bryan and 19th-century French author Honore de Balzac seemed to share a distrust of great wealth. Bryan observed, “No one can earn a million dollars honestly,” and Balzac, echoing that sentiment, stated, “Behind every great fortune there is a crime.”

• A single speck of blood contains around 5 million red blood cells.

• You might be surprised to learn that ebooks are not a recent phenomenon; back in 1971 a man named Michael S. Hart began to digitize printed works, typing them in by hand. His first project – The Declaration of Independence.

• Woodrow Wilson is the only U.S. president who held a Ph.D.

• With a height of 321 feet, the Memphis Pyramid, completed in 1991, is the largest pyramid in the Americas, and the sixth-largest in the world.

• The Dalai Lama likes to repair watches as a way to relax.

• Before modern medical techniques became common, it was not unusual for people to be inadvertently buried alive. In 1819, the Doctor Regent of the Faculty of Medicine in Paris estimated that one-third to one-half of people who died in bed were, in fact, still alive when they were interred. This led to the invention of the “security coffin,” which was connected to a monitoring station by a long tube. If the presumed corpse did regain consciousness, food and drink could be transported through the tube while the coffin was exhumed.

• In ancient China, snail shells were used as currency.

Thought for the Day: “Good humor is a tonic for mind and body. It is the best antidote for anxiety and depression. It is a business asset. It attracts and keeps friends. It lightens human burdens. It is the direct route to serenity and contentment.”

– Grenville Klieser

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# Station

From Page 1

and provides emergency support to more than 48,000 residents. It is responsible for emergency services – in conjunction with the county contracted ambulance service – to Horizon City, Agua Dulce, Ascension, Lakeway, and other surrounding communities.

When necessary, ESD#1 also provides assistance to ESD#2 which encompasses Sparks and other communities located in both districts as well as provides mutual aid for large scale incidents within the county of El Paso to support the El Paso Fire Department.

ESD#1 was established in 1974 originally as the Horizon City Volunteer Fire and Rescue Company and was comprised of 13 members, one fire station, one Seagraves pumper truck, and one rescue truck, according to the present district’s website (epcesd1.com).

Then, in 1975 the El Paso County Rural Fire Prevention District #1 was organized in pursuant to the provisions in Article III, Section 48-d of the Texas Constitution and Article 2351-6, Vernon’s Annotated Texas. It was a taxing entity and employed the firemen for one dollar a year. At that time, El Paso County Judge T. Udell

Moore appointed a five member Board of Fire Commissioners to govern the district.

Subsequently, the Horizon City Volunteer Fire Dept, Inc. was dissolved as a corporation in May of 1981, and on February 26, 1994 an election was held and approved by the voters (129 in favor of formation and 9 votes against the formation) to change the El Paso Rural Fire Prevention District No.1 to a new taxing entity, the El Paso County Emergency Services District #1.

Presently, the two El Paso County ESDs are governed by the Texas Health and Safety Code and overseen by a local board of directors that collects taxes from property owners in the county to run the services. County commissioners set the ESDs’ tax rate of 10 cents per \$100 property valuation – the maximum allowed under state law.



– Photo by Alfredo Vasquez

**NEW EQUIPMENT** – Ron Larson, administrator for El Paso County’s Emergency Services District #1, checks instrument panel of new pumper truck that is housed in Horizon City’s new fire station.

## Classified Ads

### LEGAL

**ANTHONY ISD**  
**REQUEST FOR**  
**COMPETITIVE**  
**SEALED**  
**PROPOSALS**  
**FOR ERATE**  
**DISTRICT WIDE**  
**INTERNAL**  
**CONNECTIONS**  
**AND BASIC**  
**MAINTENANCE**  
**RFP NUMBER:**  
**2015-01**

The Board of Trustees of the Anthony ISD is requesting CompetitiveSealed Proposals for Erate Category 2 District Wide Internal Connections and Basic Maintenance. The work sought includes installing a new wireless network and providing hardware support, the scope of work is more fully described in the RFP.

Interested firms may obtain a copy of the full Request for Competitive Sealed Proposal by contacting Ms. Emily Levario at the phone number or email address listed below or online at:

http://www.anthonysid.net/departments/purchasing/bids.html

Competitive Sealed Proposals will be received by the School District until 2:00 p.m. on Monday, March 16, 2015. All Competitive Sealed Proposals must be delivered by hand or mail to the School District at the following address:

Anthony Independent School District  
840 Sixth St.  
Anthony, Texas 79821  
Attn: Ms. Emily Levario, CPA  
Director of Finance  
RFP #: 2015-01  
Phone: 915-886-6500  
Email: elevario@anthonysid.net

CompetitiveSealed Proposals not received timely will not be considered. Anthony ISD is an Equal Opportunity Employer.

WTCC: 02-19-15  
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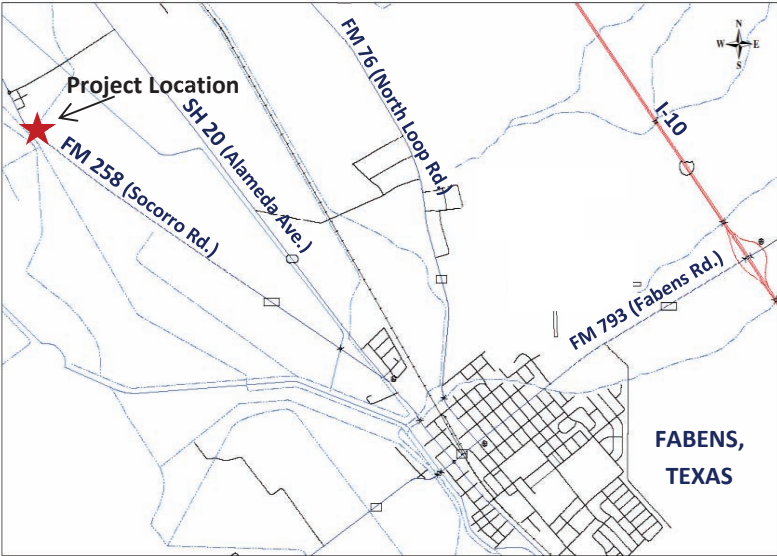
### INFORMATIVE MEETING FM 258 (Socorro Rd.) – BRIDGE REPLACEMENT PROJECT

From 2.52 Miles west of FM 258 (Socorro Rd.)/SH20 (Alameda Ave.) Intersection  
to 2.39 Miles east of FM 258 (Socorro Rd.)/SH 20 (Alameda Ave.) Intersection  
El Paso County, Texas  
CSJ: 0002-14-042

The Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) El Paso District will conduct an Informative Meeting for the proposed improvement to Highway FM 258 (Socorro Rd.) at:

**Fabens Middle School – Cafeteria**  
**800 Walker Avenue**  
**Fabens, TX 79838**  
**Thursday, March 5, 2015**  
**5:00 P.M. to 7:00 P.M.**

This informative meeting will be conducted in an open-house format. Those wishing to attend are encouraged to do so at their convenience between the hours of 5:00 P.M. and 7:00 P.M. Plans and other displays will be available for review, and project staff will be available to answer any questions regarding the project. All handouts will be presented in English and Spanish. No formal presentation will be given. The purpose of the meeting is to provide information about the proposed project. The proposed project consists of the replacement of the FM 258 (Socorro Rd.) bridge. All of the proposed work is anticipated to occur within the existing TxDOT right of way and El Paso County Water Improvement District #1 (EPCWID) right of way, and would not result in any commercial or residential displacements.



PROJECT LOCATION MAP

Persons interested in attending the Informative Meeting that have special accommodation or communication needs are encouraged to contact TxDOT El Paso District Public Information Office, Blanca Del Valle, at (915) 790-4200 at least two working days before the meeting. TxDOT will make all reasonable efforts to accommodate special needs as requested.

Written comments from the public regarding this project are encouraged. Comments may be submitted either at the Informative Meeting or within 10 days after the meeting. Written comments may be mailed to the following address: **Texas Department of Transportation El Paso District, Attn: FM 258 (Socorro Rd.) Bridge Replacement, 13301 Gateway Boulevard West, El Paso, Texas 79928.** Comments must be postmarked on or before **Monday, March 16, 2015** to be included as part of the public record. If you have any questions or would like to discuss the project in more detail, please contact Mr. Guillermo Garcia, P.E., TxDOT Project Manager, at (915) 790-4310.



# Mayweather-Pacquiao fight is about six years late

By Steve Escajeda  
Special to the Courier

There are some things we wait for that come around frequently like a paycheck. There are other things we wait for that come around with less frequency like that occasional big night out at Cattleman’s or some other fancy restaurant. And then there are other things that we wait for that come around every year like that summer vacation or even Christmas. But there are some things we wait all our lives for and never get, although we really wanted it in the worst way. That’s the way it is in the world of sports. We always want our teams to win it all but honestly, how often does that happen? For an example you can go to Wikipedia and check out “Cubs fan.” One of the most anticipated sporting events that we all wanted and never received was the boxing match between the two best fighters in the world, Floyd Mayweather and Manny Pacquiao. It’s too bad that we will never have the

opportunity to see that classic matchup. There’s no doubt it would have been one for the ages. I guess we’ll just have to sit and wonder how it would have all turned out. Now before any of you starting sending in your cards and letters informing me that Mayweather and Pacquiao will finally fight each other on May 2 of this year, allow me to explain. I know that these two fighters will meet each other in three months in Las Vegas. But it’s not the fight that real boxing fans wanted to see. Fans were clamoring for this fight six years ago when both fighters were in their prime and at the top of their game. In actuality, they’re not battling each other on May 2, they’re both battling the real undisputed, undefeated champion of the word – father time. In the world of boxing, this is a match between a couple of still good, but on the decline, fighters that need a big payday. The 37-year-old Mayweather and 36-year-old Pacquiao are a shell of what they once were. Mayweather has knocked

only one guy out in the last eight years and the hard-hitting Pacquiao hasn’t had a knockout since 2009. This fight is like watching Larry Bird take on Magic Johnson – TODAY. The Bird-Magic game might be close, it might even come down to the last shot, but I wouldn’t pay to watch it. Now I know I’m stretching a bit with the Bird-Magic comparison, but the fact remains that everybody wrote this fight off a few years ago after the two fighters’ promoters could never make it happen. They’ve gotten older. Their boxing reputations have gone south. And there hasn’t been the demand to watch either of these guys that there was in their prime. Pacquiao has no defense and has lost his power. Mayweather is better suited for an episode of Dancing With The Stars because that’s all he does. Oh, and Mayweather never had power. Now the promoters, the pay-per-view guys and even the sports commentators are referring to this as one of those fight-of-the-century events.

And there’s no doubt that people will go out and buy the fight by the millions, expecting to see the same two fighters they would have seen five years ago. As a true boxing fan of 40 years, I refuse to be duped. I’ve seen too many fighters continue to climb into the ring way past their prime. And like them I would be hoping for a miracle, for the “way back” machine to send them back to a time when they were at their best. But 95 percent of the time, when the referee is raising the hand of the younger, stronger fighter in victory, reality slaps you back into the moment. In this Mayweather-Pacquiao fight, there is no younger, stronger guy. Just two old guys who have already won. They’ve won in the sense that they will always have great legacies to look back on and they’ve won in the sense that they will both walk out of the ring even more rich than they already are. The only losers here are the fight fans who missed out on the real fight-of-the-century five years ago – when this fight was worth it.

## A sporting view By Mark Vasto

### Sports doesn’t need a reality check

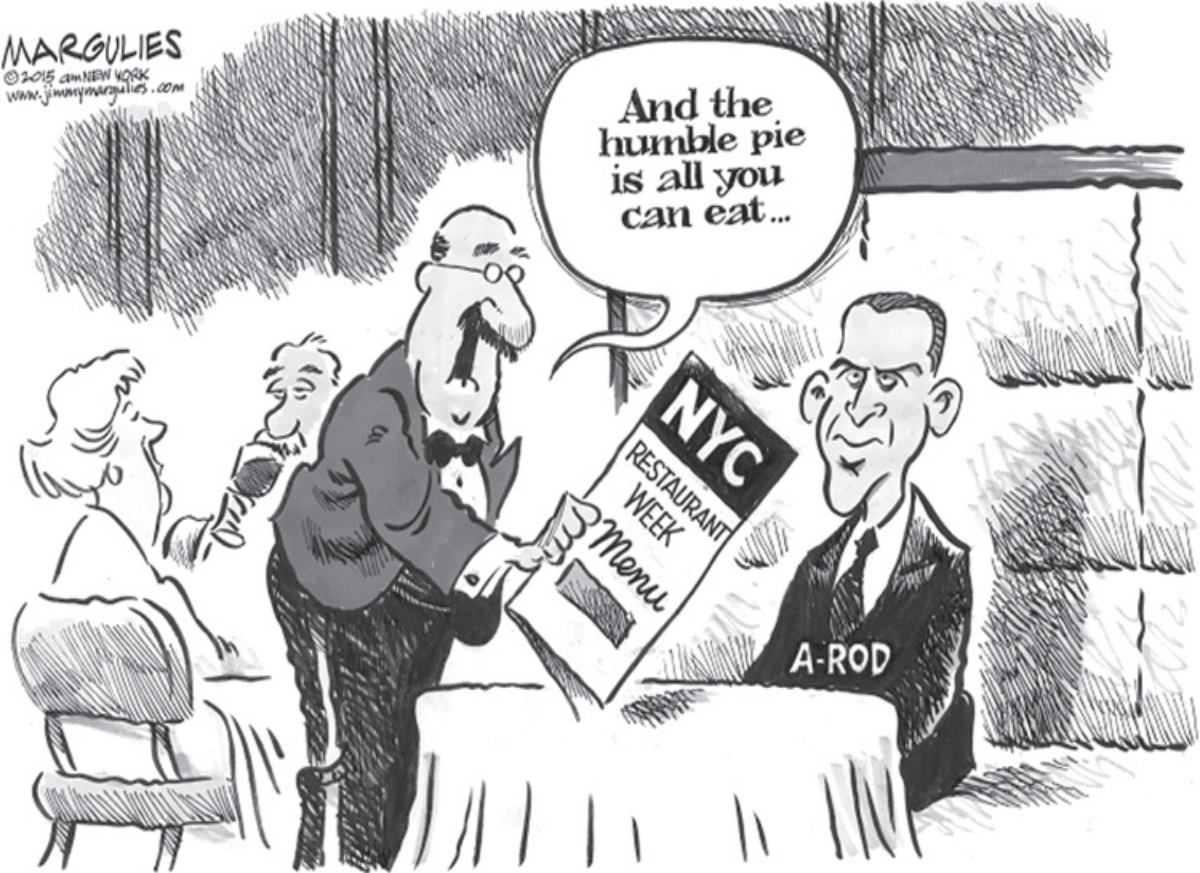
With the exception of the mid-summer classic that Major League Baseball puts on every season, I’m not the biggest fan of all-star games. Skill competitions? Yes... big fan. And why the NFL still can’t figure out how to have some sort of quarterback shootout is beyond me. Who wouldn’t want to see Peyton Manning versus Tom Brady trying to hit, say, a pinata from 60 yards out? This year’s NBA all-star game caught my interest a bit, though. The game was being held in New York, and you couldn’t get a hotel room in Manhattan. Besides the NBA, it was fashion week, or

something along those lines, and you had the 40th anniversary of “Saturday Night Live.” What I found interesting from an NBA sense was that Knicks star Carmello Anthony was planning on “shutting it down” after the game for the season. The Knicks are the worst team in basketball, he’s been playing hurt, and it was being reported that they were going to waive Amare Stoudemire after the game, too. “Wow,” I thought. “I wonder who’s going to play for the Knicks the rest of this year... Sarah Silverman?” Conjecture had Stoudemire heading to the

Dallas Mavericks. Then, it was reported that 21 people were beheaded in Libya. If we still had record players, that would have been the moment where the needle scratched across the disc. Where did that come from? And why? A second earlier, I was thinking to myself that Stoudemire would give the Mavericks an added dimension at the low post if he could stay healthy, and now I feel like a useless jerk for even thinking about him coming off the bench for Tyson Chandler. This game is ruined. All games are ruined. Why watch any games?

I know I’m not alone in this. I want to give credit to one of favorite comics, Bill Burr. “As a football fan, those ‘No more’ commercials are driving me up the wall,” Burr told Conan O’Brien during a recent talk-show appearance. “It’s like, I’m sitting down watching the game and all of a sudden I start getting reprimanded... like I know a woman who’s getting beaten and I’m not saying anything. It’s driving me nuts because what I love about sports is that it’s a great way to tap out from the news and, you know, just watch a game and get away from it. Now all of these causes are getting attached to it.” I felt guilty for feeling the same way during the World Series

when everyone stood up against cancer. Again, Bill Burr: “There’s a time and a place. I know somebody who has died of cancer. But I would never go to the movies with you and in the middle be like, ‘Oh, by the way... I know this guy, he died of cancer. It was horrific. By the way, I got molested when I was 9. Enjoy the rest of the movie.’” My feeling is that it’s OK to just want to escape the world for a while. Leave the causes and diseases at the turnstiles. Mark Vasto is a veteran sportswriter who lives in Kansas City. (c) 2015 King Features Synd., Inc.



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MOORE TEXAS

by Roger Todd Moore

In 1989 a crazed vandal poisoned the majestic TREATY OAK in Austin...weird old ( and young) hippies were seen placing Get Well cards at its base. That tree produced a lot of nuts.



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.

DIFFICULTY: ★★

★ Moderate   ★★ Difficult  
★★★ GO FIGURE!

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Answer Page 4

Weekly SUDOKU

by Linda Thistle

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	2			3				7
		5			1	3		
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	8			5			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: My application for disability benefits was denied. What do I do if I disagree with the decision?*

A: You can appeal the decision at [www.socialsecurity.gov/onlineservices](http://www.socialsecurity.gov/onlineservices). This website is the starting point to request a review of our medical decision about your eligibility for disability benefits. There are two parts to this Internet Appeal process:

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

You can complete both forms online. To appeal online, the only form you must submit is an Appeal Request Internet form (Part 1). However, we encourage you to submit an Appeal Disability Report (Part 2) because it will give us more information about you and help us in processing your appeal. To get started, visit [www.socialsecurity.gov/onlineservices](http://www.socialsecurity.gov/onlineservices).

*Q: I need to apply for disability benefits. Where do I start?*

A: Start online at [www.socialsecurity.gov](http://www.socialsecurity.gov).

[socialsecurity.gov/applyfordisability](http://socialsecurity.gov/applyfordisability). There are several advantages to applying online for disability benefits. You can start your disability claim immediately. There is no need to wait for an appointment. You can apply from the convenience of your home or on any computer. And you avoid trips to a Social Security office, saving you time and money. You can use the online application to apply for benefits if you are age 18 or older, have a medical condition that has prevented you from working or is expected to prevent you from working for at least 12 months or result in death, and reside in the United States or one of its territories or commonwealths. Apply for disability benefits now at [www.socialsecurity.gov/applyfordisability](http://www.socialsecurity.gov/applyfordisability).

*Q: I've decided I want to retire. How do I begin?*

A: The fastest and easiest way to apply for retirement benefits is to go to [www.socialsecurity.gov/applyonline](http://www.socialsecurity.gov/applyonline). To use our online application to apply for Social Security retirement or spouse's

benefits, you must:

- Be at least 61 years and 9 months old;
- Want to start your benefits in the next 4 months; and
- Live in the United States or one of its commonwealths or territories.

If you are already age 62, your benefits could start as early as this month. If you are almost age 65, your application for benefits will include Medicare. Just visit [www.socialsecurity.gov/applyonline](http://www.socialsecurity.gov/applyonline).

For more information on any of the questions listed above, visit our website at [www.socialsecurity.gov](http://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.

Briefs

From Page 1

through the Crime Stoppers, "Crime of the Week." Just minutes after 7 p.m. on the evening of Friday, Jan. 16, 2015 a man walked into the Boost Mobile located at 5300 Doniphan. The man covered his face and head with the hood of a blue sweatshirt. The man approached the store employee and threatened him with a handgun. He demanded money from the business and fled the scene with an undisclosed amount of cash. He was seen by witnesses walking towards the neighboring businesses and was seen in the back area of the shopping center. The suspect in this case is described as a Hispanic male, in his late 20s or early 30s, 5'10 in height and weighing approximately 190-200 pounds, and is slightly heavy set. It is possible that the man may have a moustache. He was wearing a blue hooded sweatshirt, a blue baseball cap, faded blue jeans, and black and white colored Nike shoes. Anyone with information on this robbery is asked to call Crime Stoppers of El Paso immediately at 566-8477 (TIPS), on-line at [www.crimestoppersofelpaso.org](http://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

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: H equals E

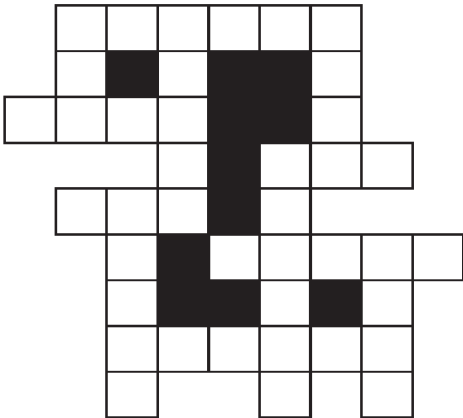
CQH OHRPGUCUPF BPLWHLM  
RTMC IH Z IUD QUC BUCQ  
PFGPPWHLM. CQHJ' LH ZGBZJM  
ILUFDUFD CQH QPTMH OPBF.

Answer Page 4

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WEJ  
PRUBAL  
♥ PLESO  
♥ TEPA  
NUJDOC  
♥ RAB  
♥ SWE O  
♥ SNIRE  
♥ UES  
PENGUL  
TOCRA  
♥ IG NR



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.

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