

## NEWSBRIEFS

### Tennis anyone?

The El Paso Tennis & Swim Club will host Special Olympics Texas' second annual Tennis Scramble on Saturday, April 1. Walkup registration opens at 9 a.m. followed by the Tennis Scramble at 9:30 a.m. This event is designed to raise funds for providing sports training and competition for more than 2,300 children and adults with intellectual disabilities in the Greater El Paso area. The cost to play is \$20 per person and the fee includes lunch. Registration is now open at El Paso Tennis Club. Please register in person or call Ed Phinney to register over the phone at (915) 532-4373. Players can sponsor a SOTX athlete to be their doubles partner for an additional \$20 or \$150 to sponsor an athlete for a full year of SOTX programming. For more information, contact Marsha Baray (mbaray@sotx.org) at (915) 533-8229.

— Steve Helm

### Technology shmecnology

I had some work done on an "old" AC unit last year and replaced it this year. It was just six-years-old and built with the "new, improved" high-pressure system using R-410A as the coolant. It replaced R-22 that operated at much lower pressure. Trouble is that some of the older "new and improved" units weren't built stout enough to weather the high-pressure and would get pinhole leaks in the condenser coils. Technology shmecnology. So I call Longhorn Maintenance Heating and Cooling in Horizon and talk to Ian Hicks. Last year the summer was almost done so he did a quick patch/charge job and then before it got hot this year he replaced the unit. He even wrangled a minor discount on the new unit though I was out of warranty. I liked his work and told him I'd put a nice comment on Longhorn's Google page. Ian's going to have to settle for low-tech. I have not been able to get into my Google account. I'm in the circle of dead ends. I put my account info in and Google tells me the password is wrong. So I enter my info to get a password reset and Google replies that it can't find the account. I try to start from scratch using my info and Google says an account with that email — my email — already exists. Technology shmecnology. Anyway,

See BRIEFS, Page 6

*Never gamble in heavy traffic. The cars are stacked against you.*  
— Quips & Quotes



— Photos courtesy Jennifer Shugert (Legislative Director for Rep. Joe Moody)

**MAKING A CASE** — Representative Joe Moody (D - District 78) spoke at a press conference for House Bill 81 on February 16, 2017. HB 81 reduces penalties for possession of small amounts of marijuana. Several law enforcement and criminal justice advocates joined Moody at the conference. Over Moody's shoulder is Nick Novello, an active duty officer with the Dallas Police Department.

## Moody leads effort to decriminalize small quantities of pot

*Bill does not change penalties for marijuana trafficking*

By Alfredo Vasquez  
Special to the Courier

TEXAS — A push is on in the Texas Legislature — currently in session — for a full debate on the need to decriminalize small amounts of marijuana. And, the effort is being led by El Paso's state representative Joe Moody, a democrat who was named in January as chairman of the House Criminal Jurisprudence Committee, which hears legislation related to crimes and punishment.

According to Moody's proposal, being caught with a small amount of marijuana (an ounce or less) would be punishable only by a civil fine and would not involve the criminal justice system.

"Marijuana possession, even in small amounts, would still be illegal in Texas and it would still be confiscated and destroyed; but the difference is, merely being in possession of a small

See POT, Page 4



— Photo courtesy Fabens ISD

**SHOWTIME** — Andrea Osmond, center in all black, is flanked by her cast and crew — with their awards — of *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof*. The Fabens HS troupe will put on their play this Saturday in competition at Canutillo High School.

## Fabens' troupe hopes to stay hot in competition

By Denise Peña  
Special to the Courier

FABENS — After competing at the UIL district level, Fabens High School's One-Act Play production of *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof* will advance to Bi-district competition on Saturday, March 25 held at Canutillo High School. In addition to placing first out of four schools, Fabens brought home several awards including Best Actor which went to Leon Gandara

for his portrayal of Brick Pollit. "It's an honor," Gandara said. "And a proud recognition that will drive me into doing great things with my talents."

Jayline Silva, Marcela Rodriguez, Edgar Quijas, Alejandra Esparza and Wendy Salinas were awarded Best Tech Crew. Wendy Salinas was also awarded Best Lights. "My heart stopped after hearing 'from Fabens High School,' Stage Manager Alejandra Esparza said. "I couldn't be any more proud that my crew and I were so in sync during our performance."

April Silva, who played Maggie, Angel Ochoa, who played Gooper and Hannah Camarillo, who played Big Mama received Honorable Mention for All-Star Cast. "These students have given up all their weeknights, as well as most weekends and all vacation days to work on this play and represent Fabens High School's Fine Arts ability," said Director Andrea Osmond. Osmond is an English teacher at Fabens High School. "This year, I feel that the potential this cast has to go beyond Bi-District is great."



Finances

By Nathaniel Sillin

Lessons from the tiny house phenomenon

You may not have seen one in your neighborhood yet, but the tiny house phenomenon has spread across the country. For some, the move is driven by a desire to downsize and live a

minimalistic lifestyle. Others see it as a way to decrease their impact on the environment. Economics are often a large part of the equation. Buying and maintaining a tiny home is

relatively inexpensive, and the savings can help many people on their path towards financial freedom. Tiny-home living (often shortened to tiny living) isn't for everyone. However, tiny living requires ingenuity and resourcefulness and we can all learn something from those who choose tiny.

**Freedom from debt is priceless.** Living within one's means is a foundational belief to many within the tiny living community. Between labor and materials, a tiny home could cost about \$20,000 to \$60,000 to build. By contrast, the U.S. Census Bureau found the median sale price for a new home in December 2016 was \$322,500.

The relatively low price gives you a chance to own a tiny home without having a mortgage that'll take three decades to pay off. The ongoing savings in the form of lower utility, tax and maintenance bills also make it easier to pay off non-housing debts, such as student loans, and live a debt-free life.

That being said, you can live in a larger home and still look for ways to lower your monthly expenses and fight lifestyle inflation (spending more as you make more money). A common tip is to allocate half of your next raise or bonus to your savings or use it to pay down debts. But why not challenge yourself and use your entire raise or bonus to build your net worth?

**Make room for things that are important.** Moving into a tiny home can require major downsizing, but some view that as a feature rather than a disadvantage. It's not about getting rid of things that aren't absolutely necessary, after all sometimes "unnecessary" decorations turn a house into a home. Rather, from furniture to clothing, you have to decide what's important to you and leave the rest behind.

It's easy to fill a large home with clutter and then attempt to clean every spring. Perhaps a better approach would be to take a tiny-home mindset to the store with you. Don't get bogged down by asking yourself if you can live without something – you can live without many things – instead, try to only spend money on things that add meaning and joy to your life.

**You have more space than meets the eye.** Watch a tour of a tiny home, and you'll see that great organization skills and original storage ideas are a must. Tables turn into benches and chairs double as shelves – everything seems to have at least two purposes.

How could a little imagination transform your home? Might a new shelving system and selling items that aren't important to you anymore give you more room? Inventiveness and thinking outside the box are keys to making the most of what you have.

**High-quality products are worth the investment.** Many tiny-home owners are keenly aware of the waste they're putting back into the world. Some even choose to live in a tiny home because it'll reduce their ecological footprint. The savings that come from tiny living and this approach to life often lead to investments in long-lasting products rather than cheaper alternatives.

Quality over quantity is certainly a worthwhile mentality to adopt. Put it into practice by looking for companies that offer lifetime warranties on their products. You might be surprised to find that from socks to power tools there are dozens of manufacturers that uphold this promise.

**How will you make use of these lessons?** Simple living and conscious buying aren't exclusive traits of tiny-home owners. Regardless of the size of your home, you may find that incorporating these principles and practices save you time and money – two valuable resources that should never be wasted.

*This article is intended to provide general information and should not be considered legal, tax or financial advice. It's always a good idea to consult a tax or financial advisor for specific information on how certain laws apply to your situation and about your individual financial situation.*

Veterans Post

By Freddy Groves

Drug thieves at the VA

The Government Accountability Office has found serious problems with the way the Department of Veterans Affairs handles controlled substances and guards against having those drugs stolen by VA employees.

Out of four facilities the GAO was asked to review, one had missed its required monthly inspection of patient-care areas and the pharmacy 43 percent of the time. Three facilities failed follow three of the nine requirements for handling controlled substances, including verifying that shipments were complete and doing a physical inventory two or three times per week.

One facility only completed one of the nine steps, that of verifying that a substance was dispensed. Two of them could not even verify that controlled substances actually made it from the pharmacy to patient-care areas. If there's one dangerous hole in the system, this is it.

Consider what happens when an addict pharmacy worker either takes or changes

the drugs he or she is to deliver to a hospital ward or surgical unit. There was a case where an employee had been confiscating fentanyl (an anesthetic) destined for surgery patients and was using it for himself – while refilling the vials with saline solution. He apparently was on staff at numerous hospitals in the area, doing the same thing. Not only that, but he was infected with hepatitis C, which he passed on to at least one patient. Another junkie, an emergency-room nurse, gave herself injections of painkillers and then noted on the records that that they had been given to patients.

The GAO report concluded in part that the VA's "ability to detect diversion and protect its veterans from harm – such as depriving them of needed pain medications – is limited."

I cringe to think about the patients who didn't get their pain medication or anesthetic – especially the one about to have surgery.

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**PUBLISHED:**  
Published each Thursday (minimum 50 issues) by Homesteader News, Inc. Office open Monday through Thursday.

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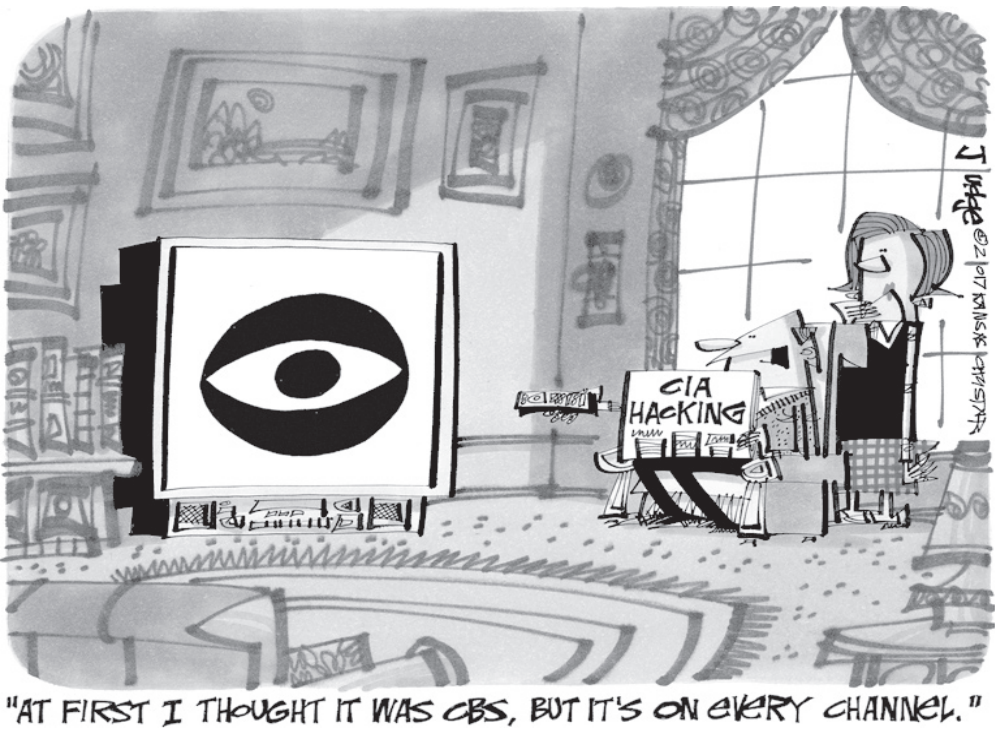
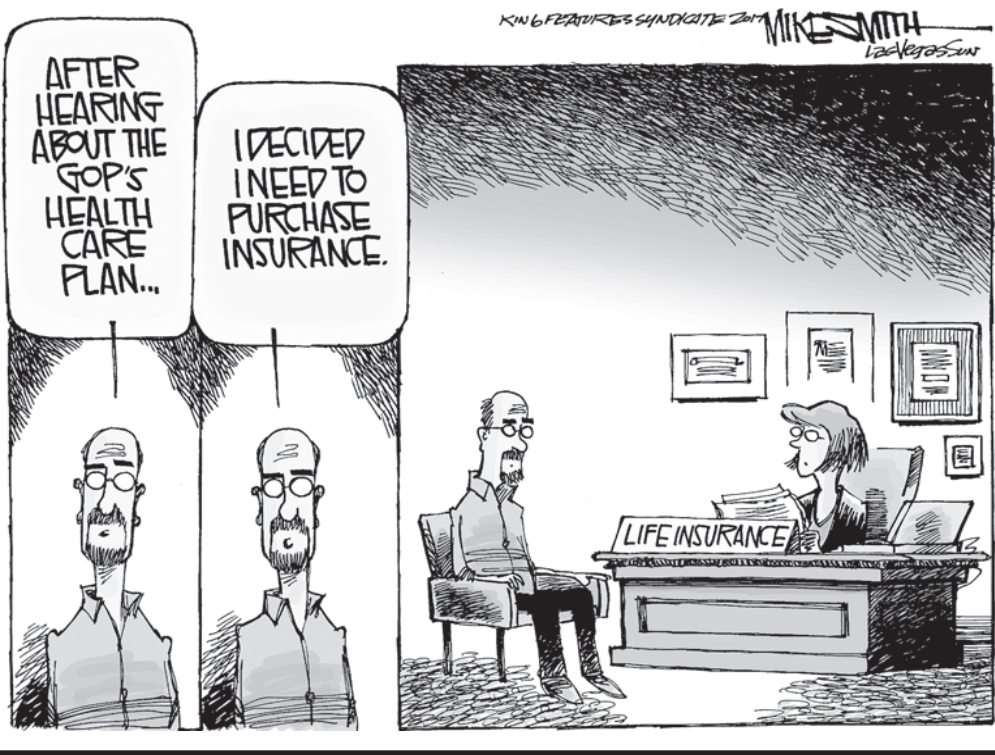
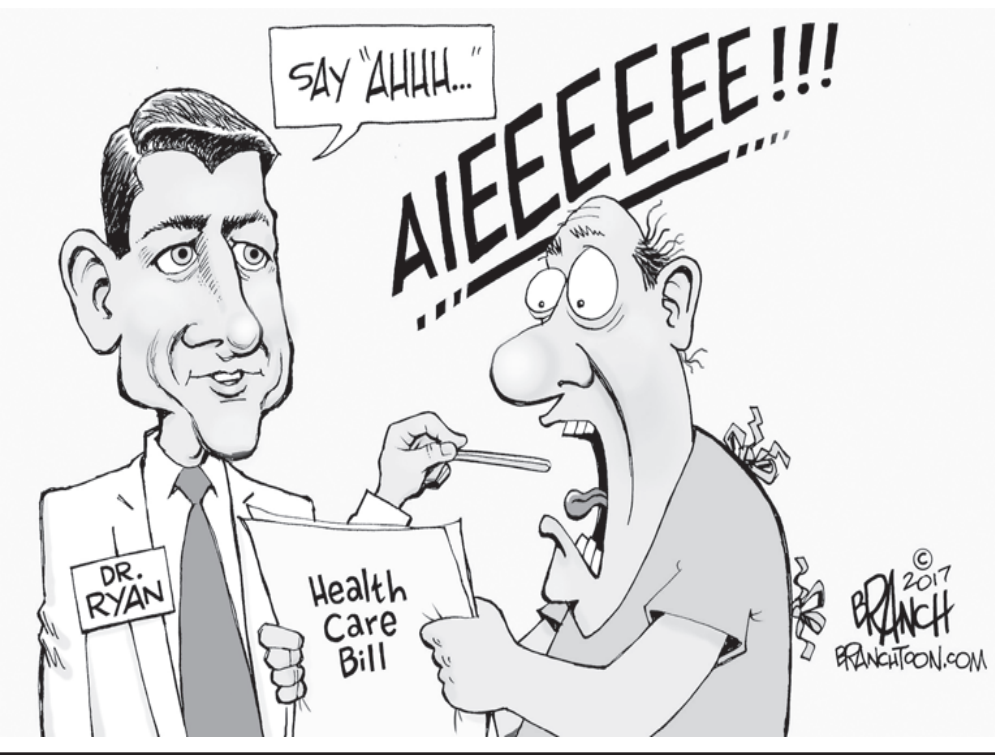
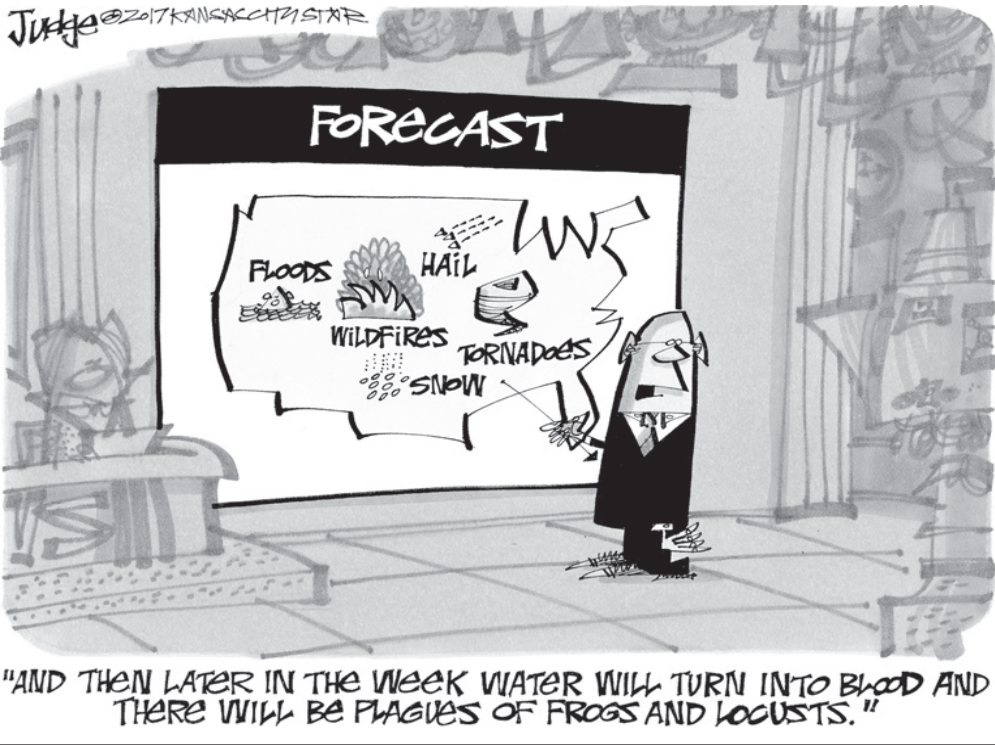
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View from here By Rick Shrum

# Putting lipstick on a pig

Every week the *Courier* receives multiple opinions regarding the Affordable Care Act (ACA) or as it's become known, ObamaCare. There is no real meeting of the minds. The bottom line for one side is that millions now have insurance for the first time. The other side resents being forced to buy anything by government decree and points out the ACA is bound to fail financially. Both sides have some valid points that get lost in the confusion.

Up front I will note that I am no fan of the ACA. I have lost insurance options I previously had. Just try to buy individual PPO health coverage in El Paso County that is widely accepted. HMO plans are not accepted by the specialists I have used for over a decade, or by many others in the El Paso region. And this year I lost my primary care physician (PCP) of 20 plus years because he no longer accepts the insurance I now have.

The point here is Americans were misled. All the things I've encountered, along with many of thousands just in El Paso, were not supposed to happen according to then-president Barack Obama. He repeated over and over that Americans would not lose their doctors, would be able to buy the same good insurance plans they had and that prices would go down for the average American.

Before going further, I want to say I am fortunate to live in a country where people do have access to decent health insurance and good medical care. However, as to Obama's statements:

- No, you don't lose your PCP, or other doctors, if you can find a plan you can afford that *all* of your doctors will accept or if you – like many people – pay your specialist visits out of pocket. Just because you have insurance does not obligate your PCP or any other doctor to accept it.
- Yes, you can – and many did – lose your insurance plan. Under the ACA, insurance companies have been able to reshape all of their plans in Texas. Before the ACA an insurance policy offered in any Texas market had to be available across the state. No more. The companies can now offer different policies in different parts of the state. This means a policy that would be good for your needs might be available in Austin but not here, or elsewhere in Texas. And many companies just flat pulled up stakes and left.
- Prices did not go down. Insurance premiums under ACA have skyrocketed.

Let's say you like the ACA, or the principle of universal healthcare. There's no doubt it has helped many people by subsidizing their health insurance premiums. But for many that thought it would help, it didn't.

The most daunting aspect people are encountering is the high deductibles and co-pays many policies come with. A lot of folks find they cannot use the mandated insurance because they cannot afford the up-front, out-of-pocket expenses.

Another issue with ACA is hard to fathom, but true. Many of the politicians – from both parties – that voted for ACA did so because they were afraid to speak out against it in any way, fearing they would not be re-elected. Their logic was simple and cowardly. They knew it would fail and it was better for their personal careers to vote for the ACA and let it fail than take a stand against it. They knew money would be sucked out of the taxpayers' pocket and didn't care enough to be good leaders.

So when will politicians decide to lead on this issue instead of passing legislation to protect their jobs? No country on earth has implemented universal healthcare without laying the burden of paying for it right back on the taxpayer. Where do they think the money comes from? Do some research on what happens to a nation's healthcare when it is mandated. You don't have to look far. Look at the United Kingdom, Canada, Sweden or Denmark. Costs go up, service goes down and wait times actually can be the death of a person. Age discrimination becomes an issue for many procedures. See the financial impact that mandated, universal healthcare cost has had on these nations.

Nor will I, and many others, be any happier with AHCA that no doubt be forever dubbed TrumpCare. It'll be like putting lipstick on a pig. It may have tweaks that appease some people but it still trying to pretty up an unaffordable, unenforceable notion that America can and should pay for every citizens' – legal or not – healthcare. And by America, I mean the taxpayers.

I'm also wondering where President Trump's business acumen is hiding on this issue. He – and every other politician – knows competitive, free markets drive costs down and anything the government mandates drives costs up. The folks that pass TrumpCare, if it passes, will be doing the same thing as the folks that passed ObamaCare – pandering to voters.

And where is all this extra money going? Costs rise, but not like this – unless you create a new government bureaucracy. Granted technology and drug costs are driving some increases. But those costs are nothing to creating and maintaining a workforce dedicated to tracking everybody's mandated insurance, interfacing with insurance companies on multiple levels and – speaking of bureaucracies – reporting to the IRS. The ACA has created a whole new arm of government and insurance related jobs that do absolutely nothing to improve healthcare while driving up overhead.

There's a saying: There is profit in confusion. That could also be expressed as: There is expense in confusion. I believe the one thing almost everybody would agree on about ACA is that it is full of confusion. It's confusing because men cannot write an equitable solution for healthcare in a one-size-fits-all package. Free market providers know this. That's why, whether people think it's fair or not, insurance companies used to ask people about their health when they sold a policy. They wanted to set a market price based on the condition of the individual they were insuring. Nor can it be affordable when personal histories cannot be used to determine rates. Insurance

See LIPSTICK, Page 5



Pot

From Page 1

amount is not going to put you in jail,” Moody stated in a recent news report.

The El Paso representative’s filing, referred to as House Bill 81, stipulates that someone with an ounce or less of pot would be subject to a fine of up to \$250, and no arrest would be made nor would a criminal record be filed.

Moody stated that Texas spends more than \$700 million each year dealing with low-level possession of marijuana cases.

“On top of that, the current punishment doesn’t fit the crime. Arrestees – mostly young people – are being saddled with permanent criminal records that can make them almost unemployable later,” he stated. “They also face driver’s license suspensions, housing and student financial aid denials, and immigration consequences over this pettiest of petty crimes,” he added.

Moody’s legislation is presently supported by state advocates for relaxing criminal laws for marijuana possession, as well as by a retired state district judge and various law enforcement officials. He also has at least one republican co-author, state Rep. Jason Isaac of Dripping Springs, and more than three-dozen democrats as co-sponsors.

“Every year we arrest about

“Every year we arrest about 60,000 people in Texas for possession of tiny amounts of marijuana.”

– Retired judge John Delaney

60,000 people in Texas for possession of tiny amounts of marijuana,” said retired judge John Delaney, who has long supported marijuana decriminalization efforts. “Each arrest takes about two hours of police time, not to mention the added burden on jails and courts.”

Isaac, who also is vice president of the Texas Conservative Coalition, stated that decriminalization of a small amount of marijuana is a way for these individuals to not be branded as criminals and ultimately waste economic development and waste tax payer dollars. “For me it’s about economic development and those people who may be hurt by this one mistake they may have made,” he said.

In 2015, Moody filed a similar bill to his present one, but it never got to the House of Representatives floor for a vote, mainly because Texas Governor Greg Abbott opposed any attempts that would scale back penalties for marijuana possession. This time, Moody indicated that he intends to schedule his bill for a hearing,



State Rep. Joe Moody is making a case for Texas to take a closer look at its approach to marijuana laws.

although a date is yet to be set. The current legislative session ends in June.

Moody’s marijuana decriminalization bill is part of a broader criminal justice reform movement that is drawing bipartisan support. Republicans and democrats increasingly are recognizing that the “lock ‘em up” approach might not always be the best way to make Texas safer.

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En Voz Alta is a Focus Fund that benefits children with hearing loss and their families. El Paso Children’s Hospital Foundation tax exempt number is 81-2298318.

Fabens Independent School District

PUBLIC NOTICE

The Fabens Independent School District Special Education Department will be destroying confidential student information on special education students who have graduated, moved or were dismissed in 2009. Parents of these students may come to the Special Education Department located at 603 NE Camp Street. in Fabens on Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. to claim their child’s file. The remaining files will be destroyed as per state directives 30 days from the date of this notice. If you have an questions, please call (915) 765-2690.

AVISO

El Departamento de Educación Especial del Distrito Escolar de Fabens va a destruir los archivos confidenciales de estudiantes que estaban en el programa de educación especial que han graduado, se han movido, o fueron despedidos en el año escolar de 2009. Los padres de estos estudiantes pueden venir a la oficina del Departamento de Educacion Especial del Distrito Escolar de Fabens en 603 NE Camp Street, de lunes a viernes de 8:00-4:30 de la tarde a recoger los archivos de sus hijos. Los archivos que no sean recogidos van a ser destruidos como manda el estado en 30 días después de este aviso. Si tienen preguntas, llamen al teléfono (915) 765-2690.

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Answer

When a bird’s call warns others of imminent danger, could that be thought of as a flier alarm?

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# Lipstick

From Page 3

companies know this and their rates now must be set to assume the worst health-case scenario for every client.

And we all need to ask this

of ourselves: Do we want the government to put this kind of burden on every business? Should every roof job cost the same regardless of material and square footage? How about homeowners insurance? Should policies have the same price for every house regardless of size,

quality or location? What about TV options? Should everybody be entitled to the best package on the market for \$29.99 a month? Of course not. The government only requires licensed broadcasters to broadcast their basic HD signal for free. If you want a gazillion channels you pay the price.

How about car insurance? While mandated, car owners have a wide range of free market selections. And guess what – the policies are written based on many factors including age, sex, type of car, location, miles driven in a year and driving records. Should a person with a clean driving record subsidize someone else with tickets, DWIs or a history of wrecks?

I do believe people should buy the best free market health insurance they can afford based on their individual needs. But whatever happens next with healthcare won’t eliminate the most important factor: Personal responsibility. Are you waiting until you get sick to buy insurance? Try wrecking your car and then buying insurance to fix it. Are you saving money because you’re young and healthy and don’t think you need insurance now? Try buying homeowners insurance the day after your home burns down to cover the fire. Buying free market health insurance now will cost you less, protect you from pre-existing condition hassles and save you financially from a catastrophic health event.

You don’t buy it because it costs too much? What did your house cost? What about your car? How much do you have in savings? Investments? What will you do when the bill for your medical care eats up every cent you ever invested or saved?

Personal responsibility includes taking care of your body. Is it equitable for a healthy person – one that doesn’t smoke, eats a healthy diet, drinks in moderation and exercises regularly – to pay the same price for health insurance as a person that lacks control over their personal health habits. That’s subsidizing someone else’s life choices. Nobody would think this way about other expenses like car insurance, homeowners insurance or TV packages. People would say, “Go buy what you can afford.” And the way to afford free market health insurance is to take care of the item you want to insure.

The ACA, in a very basic way, eliminates personal responsibility. It says, “Come as you are, whatever condition you are in and we’ll get you insured.” And please, I’m not ignoring three areas that have a real need. They are congenital conditions, pre-existing conditions and financial hardship. I’ve encountered all of these issues personally. There are ways to handle these legitimate gaps without upsetting – as the

ACA has – the whole apple cart. That’s a completely different opinion piece.

But the real answer to this insurance snafu is still personal responsibility. The ACA robs people of freedom of choice – a liberty – to do what they feel is in their own best interest as well as those around them within their means. It tries to make people do what the government thinks is in the best interest of everyone.

When some municipalities began to tax sodas to discourage consumption, people simply shopped in an adjacent town. America passed prohibition laws and bootlegging and speakeasies

became thriving businesses. And if tomorrow it became law in Texas that everybody had to stop playing and watching football there would be a crush of people going out of state every weekend during the season, if not flat out moving away.

Legislating behavior never works. No matter what the government passes into law, it cannot legislate how people think or how they choose to live their lives. Nobody should be required to pay for how somebody else chooses to live his or her life. But we all should remember that freedom of choice means we live with the consequences of our choices.

## Moments in Time

The History Channel

• On April 3, 1860, the first Pony Express mail, traveling by horse and rider relay teams, simultaneously leaves St. Joseph, Missouri, and Sacramento, California. Ten days later, the westbound rider arrived in Sacramento, beating the eastbound mail packet by two days.

• On April 4, 1933, a dirigible crashes in New Jersey, killing 73 people in one of the first air disasters in history. The Akron was the largest airship built in the United States.

• On April 5, 1792, George Washington exercises the first presidential veto of a Congressional bill, which proposed a new plan for dividing seats in the House of Representatives. Washington decided that the bill would have resulted in a higher number of representatives than that proscribed by the Constitution.

• On April 6, 1970, Sam Sheppard, a doctor convicted of murdering his pregnant wife in a trial that caused a media frenzy in the 1950s, dies of liver failure. After a decade in prison, Sheppard was freed following a re-trial. His story is rumored to have inspired the television series “The Fugitive.”

• On April 7, 1920, Indian sitar legend Ravi Shankar is born in India. Shankar’s “discovery” by the Beatles’ George Harrison in 1965 made him a household name around the world and changed the music sound of the ‘60s.

• On April 8, 1916, at the Boulevard Race in Corona, California, an early racing car careens through a barrier and into a crowd after a wheel breaks, killing the driver and two others. “Wild Bob” Burman had previously set a world speed record for hitting 129 mph.

• On April 9, 1987, U.S. Secretary of State George Shultz states that he is “damned angry” about possible Soviet spy activity in the American embassy in the Soviet Union. Soviet officials called the espionage charges “dirty fabrications.”

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## Strange But True

By Samantha Weaver

• It was the 32nd president of the United States, Franklin D. Roosevelt, who made the following sage observation: “Government by organized money is just as dangerous as government by organized mob.”

• You might be surprised to learn that Helen Keller, best known as the first blind and deaf person to earn a bachelor’s degree, loved performing. She spent years on vaudeville tours, and in 1919 she starred in “Deliverance,” a silent film about her life.

• In the Canadian town of Churchill, Manitoba, most people don’t lock their car doors. The primary motivation for this practice isn’t trust (although, of course, trust is required), but public safety: A pedestrian who unexpectedly encounters a polar bear will be able to find refuge in any car along the street.

• With warmer weather approaching, you might want to consider heading to Sault Ste. Marie, Michigan, to witness an annual rite of spring. Students at Lake Superior State University gather on (or near) the first day of spring for the annual Snowman Burning. Started in 1971 by a campus club known as the Unicorn Hunters, the tradition involves setting alight a 12-foot-tall “snowman” – usually built of recycled paper, wood and wire – to celebrate the end of winter.

• If you haven’t listened to any new music in a while, chances are you’re over 33. Those who study such things say that’s the age at which Americans would rather stick to what they know than try out new tunes.

• If winter seems to be dragging on endlessly, be glad you don’t live on Uranus; there, winter lasts 21 years.

Thought for the Day: “I myself have never been able to find out precisely what feminism is: I only know that people call me a feminist whenever I express sentiments that differentiate me from a doormat.”

– Dame Rebecca West

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## Public Notice Village of Vinton, TX

A public meeting will be held on Monday, April 24, 2017 at 5:00 P.M. at Vinton City Hall, 436 E. Vinton Rd. to discuss the village’s proposed project to construct a citywide wastewater system. One of the purposes of this hearing is to discuss the potential environmental impacts of the project and alternatives to it. The total estimated cost of the project is \$23,508,582.00.

Residents currently do not have a wastewater bill. The estimated monthly bill for a typical resident will be \$33.08 plus an additional fee of no more than \$30 per month for loan repayment. In addition, *an application fee of \$65.00 will be required by El Paso Water.*

An application for financial assistance for the project has been filed with the Texas Water Development Board, P.O. Box 13231, Austin, TX 78711-3231. This project involves construction in the 100-year floodplain. Alternatives to construction in a floodplain, potential impacts on floodplain and proposed mitigation measures will be addressed during the public meeting.

An Environmental Information Document for the project has been prepared which will be available for public review at Vinton City Hall at 436 E. Vinton Rd. between the hours of 8:00 A.M. and 4:30 P.M. for 30 days following the date of this notice. Written comments on the proposed project may be sent to Attn: Wastewater Project, 436 E. Vinton Rd., Vinton, Texas 79821 or to the Texas Water Development Board.

Persons with disabilities that wish to attend this meeting should contact City Hall at (915) 886-5104 to arrange for assistance. Individuals who require auxiliary aids or services for this meeting should contact City Hall at least 48 hours before the meeting so that appropriate arrangements can be made.

Jessica Garza  
Village Administrator

WTCC: 03/23/17



# Grow up fast: Elliott needs to stop acting his age

By Steve Escajeda  
*Special to the Courier*

One of the main highlights of the last NFL season was the re-emergence of the Dallas Cowboys as a league powerhouse. As has been said in the past, when the Yankees are good it’s good for baseball. When the Lakers and Celtics are good it’s good for basketball. And when the Cowboys are good... you get the picture. The NFL knows that whether fans love or hate the Cowboys, they’re going to be watching. And of course it’s one thing for Dallas to get to the top of the league standings, it’s quite another to stay there. To stay there they need a healthy offensive line, an improved defense and a quarterback who won’t suffer through any sophomore jinx. Maybe more than anything else, they need for tailback Ezekiel Elliott to be running on all cylinders. The rookie led the league in rushing by over 300 yards. Unfortunately, he may have also led the league in embarrassing

behavior. Elliott likes to be fed the football, as he demonstrates with his “spoon-to-mouth” hand gesture every time he has a big carry. He had some fun by jumping into the big red Salvation Army kettle after scoring a touchdown against Tampa Bay. The way he carries the ball, catches the ball, blocks for his quarterback and cheers his teammates makes Elliott the ideal member of the football team. But if he wants to continue being eligible for every game, he’s going to have to stop making stupid decisions. And though he isn’t considered mean spirited or violent or a locker room cancer by any means, his behavior at times resembles that of a dumb 21-year-old kid. What a coincidence, he is 21. But the NFL won’t take that into consideration if it suddenly feels Zeke’s actions are harming the league’s reputation. Though it was a rather silly stunt, Elliott pulled down a female partier’s top, exposing her boob at a St. Patrick’s Day parade. The woman has said she wasn’t

upset and Elliott’s people have said it was all just young people having fun. That could very well be the case, but when you’re still under investigation for domestic abuse by a former girlfriend, as Elliott is, it may be better not to pull down a women’s top in public. Some women’s rights groups are calling his actions sexual assault. Anyone with a sensible mind who has seen the video wouldn’t come close to describing his actions as “sexual assault” but it doesn’t give him any points in the “respect for women” department. Then there was his visit to a marijuana dispensary back in August. Elliott didn’t do anything wrong by going into the establishment but it made all the media rounds. Last month, Elliott was at a bar in Ohio when one of his closest friends was arrested for trying to take a gun into the establishment. Though Elliott wasn’t to blame for this, he’s got to understand that there are possible scenarios that could ruin his career. And he has to steer completely away from them.

The good thing is that it appears as though Elliott is genuinely a good person. He gives off a positive vibe and looks more like a wide-eyed kid who can’t believe his good fortune, instead of a devious con-man with no regard for the law or anyone else’s feelings. And the NFL is chalked-full of guys like that. Another good thing is that Elliott has a guy on the team like Jason Witten who he can turn to for advice on how to be a better person and make better choices. That is if he’s smart and mature enough to seek it. If he plays his cards right, Elliott is in line not just to be one of the best running backs in the Cowboys organization, but in National Football League history. Of course that will take a little luck by staying healthy, and sometimes players can’t control that. But one part of his life that he has absolute control over is what he does. And as long as he his decisions off the field are as good as his decisions on it, these recent missteps will be forgiven and long forgotten.

## A sporting view By Mark Vasto

### Make March mad again

Six wins during a three-week span in March (and a little bit of April) wins you a college basketball championship. Sounds easy, right? Isn’t the NCAA Tournament the great equalizer? You pick 68 teams out of the 1,281 institutions in the NCAA, put them into brackets, sit back and watch. After all, isn’t this what people are clamoring for on the football side of things? A tournament? But as we all know, college

is supposed to educate you and prepare you for life. Unwittingly, the NCAA Tournament succeeds in that respect because when you really drill down and analyze what’s going on, you find out a few things. Things like: Duke will probably win it all. As long as Mike Krzyzewski is the coach, this will always be the team I pencil in to my bracket’s final blank space. Also, those teams that are so psyched up to get into

the “play-in” game? They have zero shot of ever winning the tournament. For one thing, no No. 1 seed has ever lost to a No. 16 seed, and that might actually be a statistic you take to your grave. While it is, of course, conceivably possible that a team like Mythical State one day sinks the shot to beat Duke or UNC, it’s very unlikely.

It gets better (or worse): No team ranked lower than the eighth seed has ever won the tournament and, again, don’t hold your breath to see things change there, either. While it’s conceivable that a 10th seed can make a six-game run, it’s improbable. It’s also conceivable that monkeys can fly out of your posterior, but I wouldn’t wait for that, either.

So go ahead and fill out your brackets. I always do two of

them. One always has Maryland (my alma mater) winning it all, but my real money is always on Duke. Funny how Duke was given a No. 2 seed this year, too... No. 1 seeds have won 60 percent of the time, but Duke since 1980 has won five NCAA Championships, 12 Final Fours, 12 Atlantic Coast Conference regular season titles and 13 ACC Tournament championships.

Go ahead and pick Oregon or Michigan or any other team. You will lose. Gonzaga, Villanova,

Kansas, North Carolina, Duke or Kentucky will win it all this year. No play-in game can change that... no quirky back-door offense can take it to the bank. Trust me on this.

Don’t get mad at the NCAA for March Madness. The madness you create is your own, and it’s a proven fact... Cinderellas only exist in the movies.

*Mark Vasto is a veteran sports writer who lives in New Jersey. (c) 2017 King Features Synd., Inc.*

### Briefs

From Page 1

if your “new and improved” technology isn’t cooling like it ought to, or your equipment needs replacing, give Ian a call: (915) 852-7334.

– Rick Shrum

### A modern centenarian

“The first hundred years are the hardest. After that you just roll along,” according to 103-year-old Edward Palkot, the father of TV newsman Greg Palkot. Palkot, the younger, says his Dad is the very model of a modern centenarian, “living on his own, staying active with his own family and his girlfriend, Alice. He’s also stayed very much ‘plugged-in’ to the 21st century via email, Facebook and even Twitter.” Palkot, the elder, is also quite busy on a book tour, promoting the new book, Aging Gracefully, in which he’s featured along with 51 other not-so-grumpy old men of the 100-

plus generation. In fact, he believes that if you want to grow old gracefully, “you have to think about positive things. If people are ‘crabby’ that’s going to wear on you. So you should look for people who are pleasant.”

– John Grimaldi

### Heimlich

The late Dr. Henry Heimlich created the Heimlich Maneuver in 1974. Since then, the simple technique for saving choking victims is estimated to have saved tens of thousands of lives, according to the Association of Mature American Citizens. Heimlich died of a heart attack in December at the age of 96. Despite the fact that he taught and demonstrated the procedure countless times throughout his life, he almost never got to actually use it himself. But his opportunity came in the last year of his life in the dining room of the senior living facility where he lived when a fellow resident began to choke during dinner.

– John Grimaldi

1973

44

Years

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By Jeff Pickering



R.F.D.

By Mike Marland



Your good health

By Keith Roach, M.D.

DEAR DR. ROACH: I'm a 77-year-old man in good health except for irritable bowel syndrome for 35 years. Six months ago, I started taking two low-dose aspirins daily as a preventive, and since then all IBS symptoms have disappeared. Stools and frequency are now normal and without any intense cramping, gas or urgency, which I had for all those years. Frankly, I'm pleasantly shocked, since I thought IBS had no cure. I take no other medications or supplements, so it seems likely that the aspirin has alleviated or maybe cured my IBS. I thought other readers might be interested. Any thoughts? – B.C.

Yours is a very unusual but not unheard of response to aspirin. Most people with IBS find that aspirin and other anti-inflammatories worsen IBS symptoms. I have read of others who have the same response you seem to, however.

Aspirin remains controversial as a preventive in people without heart disease, but I believe the benefits outweigh the risks in people at high risk for heart disease, even if they are undiagnosed. Always speak with your doctor before beginning a course of aspirin, even if it's low-dose.

DEAR DR. ROACH: I have taken the same dosage of Synthroid for several years. Since this dose successfully maintains my thyroid level, is it still necessary for me to have my bloodwork done once a year, or could I either stop having bloodwork done or have the test performed every other year? – R.M.

In general, the dose of replacement thyroid remains

roughly constant over the long term. However, the dose may need to be adjusted for several reasons, including weight change, other medication use, change in absorption due to gastrointestinal developments or pregnancy. Also, even normal aging alters the metabolism of thyroid hormone, so I'd recommend continuing to check levels once yearly at a minimum.

The booklet on thyroid disorders provides insight into the various forms and treatment of this disease. Readers can order a copy by writing: Dr. Roach – No. 402W, 628 Virginia Drive, Orlando, FL 32803. Enclose a check or money order (no cash) for \$4.75 U.S./\$6 Canada with the recipient's printed name and address. Please allow four weeks for delivery.

DEAR DR. ROACH: Several weeks ago, I contracted a bad cold with much congestion. I have received an antibiotic plus nasal spray, and most of the congestion is gone. I have no pain. My concern is that my ears are still partially blocked. I can clear them by pinching my nose and blowing, such as one does in an aircraft, but I must do this frequently. I am worried about hearing damage. I don't know what else to do. – R.F.

The Eustachian tube connects your middle ear with the back of the throat and equalizes the pressure in your ear. It is common for congestion to linger. Fortunately, it does not permanently damage hearing, and usually goes away by itself. Decongestants can help, but do not use a decongestant spray

See HEALTH, Page 8

Super Crossword

45-DEGREE DROP ACROSS

- 1 Arrange in steps
- 8 Nova \_ (Halifax native)
- 15 Suspect's excuse
- 20 Sailor lurer
- 21 Texas city near El Paso
- 22 Tyke's hauler
- 23 Totally dumb
- 24 With 41- and 60-Across, question whose answer is hidden in this puzzle
- 26 Primatologist Fossey
- 27 Mister
- 29 Ending for Nepal
- 30 Dangerous African fly
- 31 Baseball exec Bud
- 33 Kind of navel
- 35 Gallivant
- 38 Drinking site
- 39 \_ Paulo
- 41 See 24-Across
- 45 Tanning lotion spec
- 48 Kind of navel
- 50 Drooling hounds
- 51 \_ Stanley Gardner
- 53 Grassland
- 54 Former Saturn SUV
- 56 Roloids, e.g.
- 60 See 24-Across
- 65 Gossipy Barrett

- 66 Low opera voices
- 67 Debt slip
- 68 Trompe \_ (visual illusion)
- 71 The Andes, e.g.: Abbr.
- 72 Flamboyant flamenco entertainer
- 73 Armada ship
- 75 Heat's city
- 77 Resistance unit
- 78 Not active
- 80 Oerter and Unser
- 81 Lung-related prefix
- 83 First step of progress
- 85 With 101- and 123-Across, how to find the hidden answer
- 89 Singer Flack
- 92 Camping gear retailer
- 93 OR figures
- 94 Statistician Silver
- 95 "The Barber of Seville" composer
- 98 Desert plants
- 100 The, to Henri
- 101 See 85-Across
- 106 Turn \_ dime
- 108 Romania's basic currency unit
- 109 Makes mad
- 110 Spanish hero of yore
- 112 Fur king John Jacob \_
- 116 Job follows it

- 119 With 127-Down, China's \_tung
- 120 \_tac-toe
- 122 "You bet, amigo!"
- 123 See 85-Across
- 128 Detectives
- 130 Hollywood's Eastwood
- 131 \_ Obispo, California
- 132 National dish of Korea
- 133 Boundary bushes
- 134 University life
- 135 Response to news you already knew about

DOWN

- 1 Iris relatives, for short
- 2 TV's O'Donnell
- 3 Popular font
- 4 Comics "menace"
- 5 Ring legend
- 6 Wallet bills
- 7 Kiddie-song letters
- 8 180 degrees from NNE
- 9 Joint beneficiary
- 10 Singer Ric of the Cars
- 11 Carry along
- 12 Roth \_
- 13 Upper limb
- 14 \_TURN
- 15 Dazzles
- 16 Pathetic

- 17 "It's enough to live on"
- 18 Potted tree
- 19 Buries
- 25 Actor Seagal
- 28 Indonesia's basic currency unit
- 32 Moo goo \_ pan
- 34 \_kwon do
- 35 Sharp rival
- 36 "Fifth qtrs."
- 37 Look on one's face
- 40 Sole male offspring
- 42 Cain and \_
- 43 Sitcom cousin
- 44 Old emperor
- 45 Vojvodina native
- 46 Direct a sermon at
- 47 Seemingly spontaneous public assembly
- 49 Snare
- 52 "Frozen" heroine
- 54 Cello's ancestor
- 55 Howl in grief
- 57 Public
- 58 Private
- 59 The, to Hans
- 61 Actress Petty
- 62 Cow catcher
- 63 "You win"
- 64 Sine qua \_
- 69 Paint applied thickly
- 70 Ding-a-\_
- 73 U. senior's test
- 74 K-12

- 76 Time on end
- 77 Paddle's kin
- 79 Slate clearer
- 82 Bullring cries
- 84 Road's shoulder
- 86 Wet blanket
- 87 "Curses!"
- 88 Kin of Ltd.
- 90 Get rancid
- 91 Jeans go-with
- 96 Social finish?
- 97 Denials
- 98 Ozone-depleting compound, for short
- 99 \_ bad way
- 101 1985 Chevy Chase film
- 102 Fix, as a shoe part
- 103 Beat at eBay
- 104 Federation
- 105 God, in the Hebrew Bible
- 107 In itself
- 111 Spine parts
- 113 Church gift
- 114 Actor Milo
- 115 Step part
- 117 \_ Kong
- 118 Kin of -trix
- 119 Temperate
- 121 Ad award
- 124 She-bear, in Spanish
- 125 Apple buy
- 126 Viroid stuff
- 127 See 119-Across
- 129 British record co.

Answer Page 4

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## San Angelo was first called Over The River.



**Answer Page 4**

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*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](mailto:ToYourGoodHealth@med.cornell.edu). To view and order health pamphlets, visit [www.rbmamall.com](http://www.rbmamall.com), or write to Good Health, 628 Virginia Drive, Orlando, FL 32803. (c) 2017 North America Synd., Inc. All Rights Reserved.*