



NEWSBRIEFS

8th Annual Parade

The Horizon City Youth Association will sponsor the 8th Annual Christmas Parade on Saturday, Dec. 13 at 8 a.m. with many special events. The parade will begin at John Ensor Middle School on Ashford and follow a route up Ryderwood to Darrington, turning up Darrington to Horizon Blvd., then left on Horizon to Breau, where the route will make a right at the Good Time Store, then left onto McMahon. The parade will conclude at Carroll T. Welch Middle School where the Horizon City Lions Club will be cooking their famous bratwurst. Other special events will conclude the festivities. The public is invited.

Simple giving

Tags that represent real people from the Fabens, Tornillo, Ft. Hancock, San Elizario and surrounding border communities who are not likely to have many holiday niceties this year are hanging on or around the Giving Tree at Ryan Hardware and Supply, 117 North Fabens St. for the taking by someone who can provide a gift. The tags share a little about the person, their age, circumstance, family, etc. and a gift suggestion, some as simple as glove, socks or hand lotion. There are tags for all ages, from infants to elderly, and gift ideas that fit every budget. The community is asked to stop by and select a tag and provide a wrapped gift by Monday, Dec. 15. Donations to cover providing a gift will be accepted and the gift will be provided for the person for you. Information: 764-2239.

In other news

■ The 11th Annual Christmas Store is open weekday at the Socorro ISD Operational Services Complex, 201 Tanton Rd. in Socorro, to collect donated items and distribute them to the less fortunate in the Socorro community during the holidays. "Last year we helped about 500 families, said Juan Natividad, warehouse manager. "It's been kind of slow so far, but I think we'll get busy as we get closer to Christmas. We have a lot of people asking for small space heaters this year," he added. Toys, clothing, furniture, blankets, non-perishable food items and other household items are collected and then redistributed to families referred to the Store by SISD schools. Families qualify for items in the store by picking up and filling out a voucher from any SISD campus and bringing it to the store. Persons wishing to donate to the store can arrange for pick up on Wednesdays, 7 a.m. to 4 p.m. by calling Natividad at 937-0805 to schedule.

■ Entitled "An Ecstasy of Color for the Holidays," the many and varied pieces of the Titovets' school are being featured at

See BRIEFS, Page 4

A man never gets so confused in his thinking that he can't see the other fellow's duty.

— Quips & Quotes



NO DUMPING ZONE — Itza Beltran and Crystal Martinez show how easy it is to recycle.

Recycling comes to San Elizario

By Phillip Cortez
Special to the Courier

The San Elizario Independent School District and the City of El Paso have reached an

inter local license agreement that designates San Elizario High School as a recycling drop off station for the surrounding community.

The news took Monica Mata, a science

See RECYCLE, Page 4

TDH recommends targeted use of limited flu vaccine

AUSTIN — The Texas Department of Health (TDH) has recommended that physicians and other medical providers target their remaining supplies of the influenza vaccine to groups at the highest risk of severe complications from the flu.

The recommendation was prompted by nationwide concerns that an unprecedented demand for the vaccine this year could soon use up the remaining vaccine supply.

Texas Commissioner of Health Eduardo Sanchez said remaining vaccine supplies should be targeted for the elderly, children six months through 23 months of age, persons with chronic health conditions such as diabetes and asthma, and people with weakened immune systems.

"It could be that most of the people in the high risk groups who wanted a flu shot have already gotten a flu shot, but we don't know that. We're taking this step as a precaution," Sanchez said.

He said that while this season's vaccine originally was plentiful, it appears that compliance with public health get-a-flu-shot messages and earlier-than-usual high levels of flu prevalence have led to concern that the vaccine supply soon will be used up.

He encouraged people to take additional steps to reduce the risk of influenza. These in-

clude covering your mouth and nose when coughing or sneezing, and washing your hands frequently and thoroughly.

Sanchez emphasized that people with flu-like symptoms should stay home to avoid infecting colleagues or classmates and added that parents should try to keep babies and young children away from people who have flu-like illnesses.

He said people in the high-risk categories should contact a doctor if they experience flu-like symptoms.

Influenza is a viral respiratory illness marked by the sudden onset of fever, headache, extreme tiredness, dry cough, sore throat, runny or stuffy nose and muscle aches. The illness is spread when an infected person coughs, sneezes or talks, sending the highly contagious virus into the air.

Influenza is not a reportable illness in Texas, so exact flu case numbers are not known. Instead, TDH relies on a surveillance network of reporting sites around the state to track influenza levels and identify circulating strains of the virus.

Influenza activity in Texas last week was classified as "widespread," the seventh week in a row for the highest prevalence classification.

More information about the flu is available online at: www.tdh.state.tx.us

Legislation authority claimed by both sides in brewing water dispute

By Francis D. Shrum
Courier Staff Writer

WEST TEXAS — Texas Land Commissioner Jerry Patterson says he is duty bound by oath of office and all the little school kids in Texas to make deals to sell West Texas Water.

The Far West Texas Water Planning Group claims an equally lofty responsibility from the state legislature which mandated in its 75th Session that the FWTWPG formulate a water planning strategy to ensure their region has

enough water to meet future demands.

The FWTWPG therefore says that Patterson's proposal is a wrench in the works that makes their job impossible.

Every member of the public who spoke during two West Texas meetings at which Patterson's proposals were discussed think the little school children in West Texas won't hold it against Patterson if he doesn't go through with — or at least puts the brakes on — a proposal to contract with Rio Nuevo Ltd., a private Midland-based

See WATER, Page 5

Socorro mayor says something is 'fishy' after being locked out of city hall

By Arleen Beard
Special to the Courier

SOCORRO — Socorro City Mayor Irma Sanchez said she felt something "fishy" was going on when she found that her keys to the Socorro City Hall no longer worked.

In a surprise announcement during the Dec. 4 Socorro Council meeting, Sanchez told the audience that the Socorro City Hall had been re-keyed without her knowledge and she had found herself locked out earlier that evening.

In a later interview with the *Courier*, she said her husband dropped her off that evening at the city hall prior to the meeting so she could make last-minute preparations and she was "dumbfounded" to find her keys no longer let her in.

When she located Interim City Manager Reyes Fierro to find out why he told her the city hall had been re-keyed almost two months ago because, she said, apparently he was concerned about former employees who might have access to the facility.

She said he told her it was an honest mistake and a complete oversight on his part that she did not receive new keys to the building. However, she said he did not offer to give her keys at that time and she did not receive any until the following day after considerable coaxing on her part.

Sanchez said she was unaware that her keys did not work prior to Dec. 4 because she is seldom in the Socorro City Hall before or after regular business hours.

Mayor Sanchez told the *Courier* she has suspicions as to whether it was simple oversight that she had not been informed about the new locks. "It looks pretty suspicious when all employees receive their key to the building, and somehow, I never received my key to the building," she said.

Mayor Sanchez said she has further concerns because she has seen city employees shredding documents. When she inquired of Fierro if he, as interim city manager, was documenting exactly what is being shredded she said he had no response.

"This feels too fishy," Sanchez said. "What are they trying to prove by not giving me a key?"

Mayor Sanchez said she received a key to the building on Friday, Dec. 5, only after making everyone aware that she did not have a key to open or lock the building.

Meanwhile, a public hearing was held at the Dec. 4 meeting regarding the introduction of an Ordinance Establishing and Reaffirming the Establishment of the Municipal Police Department Pursuant to the 1871 Legislation and Section 4.05 of the Socorro City Charter.

Whether the Socorro Police Department has been operating as a legally authorized entity has been challenged in a court of law because no ordinance to establish it has been adopted by any Socorro council.

There was extensive input from the

See SOCORRO, Page 6



One perspective

By Francis Shrum

Do unto each other

There's nothing that unites folks like a common enemy.

off water from under tracts of public lands in West Texas.

That's a pretty low-down idea, I agree. Especially since they went about it in such a back-handed way. Made secret deals with private companies. Skirted the very edge of ethics. Bent water law so far it sprung a leak. Didn't consider the wants and the needs of the people who will be most affected.

Just like we've been doing to each other for years.

Just look at West Texas.

We've risen up like a pit full of sleeping rattlers awakened by a hound dog — that hound dog being, of course, the Texas Land Office which proposes to contract with a private Midland-based company called Rio Nuevo to pump and sell

What's that? Did I really say that out loud?

Well, I suppose it was time somebody did.

West Texans have been beating and bashing each other over water for so long you'd think no one would be surprised when the state government finally waded into the melee.

The El Paso Public Service Board has been making deals and padding El Paso County's water interests at the expense of small, isolated communities for so long it's not even news anymore.

Just ask the ranchers over near Valentine, or those folks who live in Dell Valley, about 100 miles east of here, who have been hearing this strange sucking noise as their water reserves are gargled down the throat

of the water monger with the biggest pocketbook.

Funny, isn't it, how the folks who were perfectly happy to sell out each other in Dell Valley are the ones yelling loudest when the state of Texas started poking it's nose into the water market?

They got plumb territorial, all of a sudden.

Reminds me a little of the kid on the playground who likes to push others around but runs to tattletale when a bigger bully shows up.

Water-grabbing has been going for a long time on right here in El Paso County between the agricultural community and the municipality of El Paso. I saw some pretty hair-raising deals go on during the 80's and

90's when the big push was on to have people who weren't using their irrigation water sign their water allotments over to their community water provider.

And you should have heard the screams of indignation recently from the offended upstream when they found out that some of "their" water had leaked out down as far as Ft. Hancock in Hudspeth County. I'm surprised they didn't send somebody down with a bucket and a siphon hose to retrieve it.

Water equals money equals power. That's a potent equation when you factor in greed without neighborly concern. Unfortunately, that's the only kind of interest that still exists, the formula that says get yours first.

In other words, do unto others before they get a chance to do unto you.

Of course, big numbers count heavily in this formula. You can do all sorts of unneighborly things in the name of numbers — the number of people who chose to live all bunched up in one place or, more importantly, the number behind the dollar sign.

Just ask Texas Commissioner Jerry Patterson. While he has raised the hue and cry for Texas to re-examine and update Texas water law, do you reckon he'll wait for the legislative committee to issue their findings and make those recommended changes?

Don't hold your breath. He certainly isn't holding his. In fact, he'll give the public only 90 days to make comment — and we all know just how much big money cares about public comment — before he decides whether to hand the big straw over to Rio Nuevo. Those boys know all about sucking wealth out from under the ground — much of the interests in Rio Nuevo are founded on oil and gas money — and if they are interested, you can bet there is gold in them thar aquifers in Hudspeth, Presidio, Culberson and Jeff Davis counties.

And when the water comes in, who do you think will be at the head of the line to buy the life blood of their nearest neighbors?

Why, the good folks of El Paso County, of course.



Canutillo ISD will miss the sharp eyes of tax verifier Pegoda

By Alfredo Vasquez
Special to the Courier

CANUTILLO — Who is going to keep an eye on the property tax assessments for Canutillo Independent School District now that Joe Pegoda has retired?

Pegoda has served CISD for more than 30 years in two capacities: he has been the only warehouse manager that the district has ever employed, but his second job has probably had a bigger impact on the growing Upper Valley school district.



LONG SERVICE — Joe Pegoda stands next to an aerial photomap of Canutillo ISD. He served the district as tax assessor from 1969 to 1974, then as property tax verifier from 1975 to the present. Pegoda retired this month after 33 years with Canutillo ISD.

From 7 a.m. to 3:30 p.m., Pegoda supervised in-coming and out-going shipments to the district warehouse as well as maintained the steady flow of mail for the district. After work hours, Pegoda donned the role of the property tax verifier for CISD. It was his job to supplement the review of properties in the district conducted by the Central Appraisal District. He did not set the tax rate, establish property values, or collect taxes. His job was to ensure that the tax rolls were as accurate as possible. That, in turn, meant more money to help educate students in the Canutillo district.

As a property tax verifier, Pegoda's job was to find property in the school district that might be missing from the tax rolls or recent property re-

valuations that needed to be re-assessed. He did that by scouring the district to make sure that all taxable property was accounted for including new homes and businesses. In addition, he looked for property that dropped in value or businesses that closed, so that the tax books could be updated.

"My job was also to make sure that property sites were listed in the appropriate school district," Pegoda said. "A few years ago, two industrial sites on the borderline between Canutillo ISD and El Paso ISD were considered part of the larger school district. That was during a brief period when I was not working as the CISD property verifier," he said. "When I was given that job back, I looked into the matter and discovered that they were both in the Canutillo District."

Globe Manufacturing Co. was one of the firms, and it was valued at about \$1 million. The other site was a radio tower valued at \$70,000. Together, that meant an additional \$57,000 for CISD over a two-year period, Pegoda related.

Pegoda also worked with Doña Ana County and Gadsden ISD officials in New Mexico to ensure that properties that appeared to be straddling the state line were listed in the correct school district.

Pegoda said that when he started working for CISD in 1969, Canutillo

was just a sleepy village with one large business, Border Steel. Now, the district encompasses 675 commercial and industrial properties that include mom and pop stores, warehouses, offices, and a large industrial park.

The recent development of the Northwestern Industrial Park, located east of Interstate 10, has definitely increased the district's tax base, Pegoda stated. He estimated that the commercial value of this area is over \$220 million in buildings, personal property, and real estate.

The Canutillo school district consists of 67.4 square miles including the communities of Canutillo, Vinton, Westway, Borderland, and Montoya. About one-third of the district, however, is tax-exempted because it is federal or state property. A large part of the tax-exempted property is owned by the El Paso Public Service Board. "This reduces considerably the amount of taxable property in the district," Pegoda commented.

Like other school districts in Texas, CISD obtains its local funds from real estate taxes — real and personal property. Real property is all land and appurtenances including buildings, parking lots, fences, or anything else tied down. Personal property includes machinery, office equipment, computers, or anything that can be moved, Pegoda explained.

Pegoda gave his final tax assessment report to the Canutillo ISD Board of Trustees during the regular monthly School Board meeting in December. After his report, the School Board presented Pegoda with a special recognition plaque for his valuable service to CISD.

"School funding is a critical issue throughout the state, and any procedure that a district can use to enhance its finances is certainly advisable. Joe Pegoda knows every nook and cranny in this district; it will be difficult to replace him," said Charles Hart, CISD Superintendent.



HANG LOOSE — San Eli High School seniors stop for a quick photo at Diamond Head. Each student raised \$900 to take the Hawaii trip.

Hard work, dedication equals Aloha!

By Phillip Cortez
Special to the Courier

EAST EL PASO COUNTY — It seems as if Ruben Rodriguez's desk is littered with more pictures than a Walgreen's photo shop, each containing the smiles of San Elizario High seniors enjoying paradise.

"This one's a funny one," Rodriguez says with a laugh. In it, a student sitting at a booth has ice cream and whipped cream smeared all over his face. "It was his birthday and when he went to blow out the candle, the waitress pushed his head down in it."

The photos, taken from last month's San Elizario High School senior trip to Hawaii, are more than just the typical vacation variety. Sure, you have your Pearl Harbor shots and Waikiki sunsets. But behind every smile and shaka or "hang loose" sign is a success story, according to Claudia Rodriguez and her husband Ruben, teachers at the Lower Valley school as well as senior class sponsors.

"These kids worked extremely hard," said Ruben Rodriguez, still smiling at the many photographs spread out on his desk. "They sold cupcakes, had flauta, enchilada, tamale, and Hawaiian dinner sales. They even had a booth set up at the El Paso Street Festival a while back."

In a community that lacks the resources to send its students on such an exotic trip, many students loved the idea of jetting off to an island paradise for their senior trip. They just didn't know how realistic it was going to be.

"When they said we were raising money to go to Hawaii, everyone said it wasn't going to happen," said Valerie Valencia, 17. She added that last year's senior class had plans of going to Cancun but the trip never materialized. "Even a day before we were supposed to leave I didn't know it was going to happen until I got on the plane."

One of Valencia's favorite memories was witnessing a true Hawaiian sunset. But without the hard work from the group of determined students, such memories would not have been made. According to some students, the hard work and dedication it took to raise the money — the trip came with a \$900 price tag for each student — got so frustrating that some wanted to give up.

"By about mid-October, I told (senior class sponsors Ruben and Claudia Rodriguez) that I wasn't going. I was sick of it," said student Miguel Eugenhoffer. He was one of the last seniors to come up with his money for the trip. The days of getting up early and selling enchilada plates, tamales and everything imaginable were getting to him and he wasn't alone.

Tony Hernandez, a senior at San Elizario High School, was frustrated at the responses he received from people when he asked them if they'd make a donation for his senior class trip to Hawaii.

"Some people would ask, 'Where's San Elizario?'" Hernandez, 17, said. "You get these people that think we're a poor Mexican school that has nothing. I saw a lot of funny looks; it was awkward."

Selling chocolates was another frustrating experience for Hernandez. "We were all selling the same thing!" he laughed. "I ended up buying the boxes of candy myself."

Dago Garcia agreed with his classmate. "We'd be at Tinseltown at, like, 8 or 8:30 in the morning until who knows," he said.

"Until they kicked us out," Hernandez quipped, which was followed by laughter.

"We'd be selling hats and leis," Garcia continued. "But through it all, Mr. and Mrs. Rodriguez were there for us from beginning to end."

"They supported us a lot," Hernandez agreed. "They never let you give up."

One student, Alex Velez, was only able to raise \$70 with a month left before takeoff. According to Rodriguez, Velez raised the rest of the money by taking donations, working the Wal-Mart parking lot and selling inflatable beach balls.

"He went from \$70 to \$900 in about a month and was able to experience the trip," Rodriguez said. "This group of kids really developed a bond and helped each other."

The community also helped the students, according to Rodriguez. One faculty member at the school, math teacher Fuad Abujawayed, convinced his friend Osama Azam who owns the San Eli Quick Stop to donate \$300. Sam's Club made a \$1000 donation while Wal-Mart and Tinseltown allowed students to raise donations in their parking lots. The athletics department donated a Friday night's worth of concession sales during the football season.

Just because not every student could get their parents to cut them a \$900 check for this trip of a lifetime didn't mean that parents did not help their kids. Parents were responsible for making food to sell as well as spending large amounts of time waiting in parking lots while their kids raised donations.

"It still amazes me to this day that we were able to go on this trip," Hernandez said. "But you know something? Those people who didn't know where San Elizario was when we were raising the money and working hard, we made sure people in Hawaii knew who we were."

Whether it was winning tour bus

Eye on D.C. By U.S. Rep. Henry Bonilla

Just a letter from home

As our nation fights the War on Terrorism, we place our lives and liberties in the hands of the brave men and women fighting on the front lines. These individuals risk their lives every day to preserve our freedom and safety. While we attend holiday parties and decorate our trees, our troops find themselves alone in foreign territory. Now, more than ever, it is paramount that we rally behind our troops and show our support.

When I think of our troops away from home over the holiday season, I am reminded of a story I heard many years ago. During the Vietnam War, Sgt. Billy Thompson sent a simple holiday request to news columnist Abigail Van Buren. He suggested that "just a letter from home" would make a wonderful Christmas present. This resulted in the holiday letter writing campaign called "Operation Dear Abby."

For 17 years, American citizens sent letters and cards to servicemen deployed away from home. These cards served to boost morale and

spread holiday cheer to thousands of military personnel.

Many years later, during Operation Desert Storm, a new letter-writing campaign was born. Rather than focus only on the holiday season, "Any Servicemember" aimed to promote troops morale year round. During operations in Bosnia, the campaign continued to grow and brought joy to many members of armed services.

Unfortunately, recent threats of Anthrax and biological warfare, have made delivering large amounts of mail to our troops unsafe. The Department of Defense was forced to announce that both of these highly successful campaigns would be indefinitely suspended. In the midst of a new kind of war, we must find new means of supporting our servicemen and women.

In light of these events, the Navy created a web-based alternative to traditional letter-writing campaigns. The new "Any Servicemember" web site, provides a simple system to send e-mail greetings to our troops.

Anyone wishing a reply to their message, need only to include a return e-mail address. This simple process allows those sending the message to chose any branch of the military to send their greetings. While our troops will miss the brightly-colored envelopes and picturesque cards, they are excited about the convenience of e-mail.

As our troops face new challenges, we must demonstrate true conviction for our armed services. Each person must do their part to help boost the morale of those who will not be home for the holidays. I urge each of you to participate in this thoughtful and patriotic campaign. It will take only a few minutes, but think of the joy it will bring to these very special and admirable men and women.

For more information about the Navy's "Any Servicemember" campaign visit: <http://anyservicemember.navy.mil/>



Recycle

From Page 1

teacher at San Elizario High School, by surprise last week. As the sponsor of the campus Recycling Advocates of America (RAA) program, Mata said that the agreement comes as good news to the RAA because the scheduled Saturday recycling days could serve as a great opportunity for students to get more involved in recycling.

"It also helps in our initiative in furthering our own goals in expanding our efforts with the community," Mata said.

The club is currently about 25 members strong and meets on a weekly basis in order to gather recyclables within the campus. A long line of recycling containers are located in the main hall of the campus where students can easily identify where, for example, colored paper can be separated from white paper or cardboard from glass.

As for the community, residents are encouraged to drop off their recyclables from 9 a.m.-1 p.m. at the campus parking lot, 13981 Socorro

Road, every first and second and fourth Saturday of the month that began in November 2003. Recycle dates for the month of December are scheduled for the 13th and 27th. Recyclers need to be aware that no glass or tires will be accepted.

Crystal Martinez, a senior officer in the San Elizario High School RAA, says that putting in her extra time to recycle at the campus as well as at home is worth it. She also said that taking part in the club is a good way of earning extra credit for those students who need it.

"Taking part in this club is necessary because a lot of students do not see recycling as important," Martinez said. "When you think about the products we consume and use on a daily basis, like aluminum cans and paper, it really adds up. It's really all about making things re-usable."

Martinez also agreed with Mata that the campus being a designated recycling station is great for the community.

"Hopefully we can be a good example for this community."

For more information on recycling in San Elizario, contact Lupe Anaya at 872-3985.

Briefs

From Page 1

the Los Paisanos Gallery at Chamizal National Memorial beginning Thursday, Dec. 11, 5:30-7:30 p.m. and the public is invited. The exhibition curated by Lyuba and Aleksander features the best work of their students, many of whom are children. The gallery is open daily 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. For information, call 532-7273.

The Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS) has awarded 2004 Martin Luther King, Jr. Day of Service grants to two El Paso organizations. The grants will assist in planning service projects for the Martin Luther King, Jr. holiday on January 19, 2004. The Opportunity Center for the Homeless won \$7,500 to conducting a county-wide food drive in El Paso County that will replenish charitable food pantries. UTEP and the Paso del Norte Assets for Youth Americorps program won \$2,650 to improve three El Paso Salvation Army shelters. "These grants will help El Paso focus on the real meaning of Martin Luther King Day. Promoting pro-active service programs that assist fellow El Pasoans is the best way to honor Dr. King. The CNCS strives to establish Martin Luther King Day as 'a day on, not a day off,' and

this funding will help El Paso do so," said Congressman Silvestre Reyes, D-El Paso.

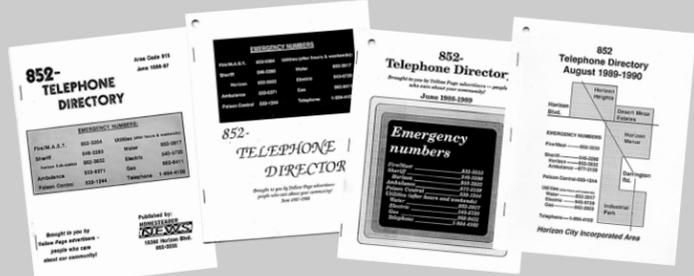
Many couldn't believe that it had been a whole year to the day — while others praised their co-workers and the Loma Verde staff during the school's first anniversary celebration Dec. 2. The campus serves pre-kindergarten through 5th-grade students, and the program was staged in the school's gymnasium. Socorro ISD Superintendent Dr. Robert J. Duron was joined by Board President Guillermo "Willie" Gandara, vice president Martha Contreras, member Ray Rodriguez and member Craig Patton to mark the school's milestone. After the school orchestra and choir performed, Principal Al Garcia introduced a video presentation of the staff's memories of the first year. "Loma Verde is really a special place," Duron told the crowd. "The students are strong, and the staff is very dedicated to the students."

The happy sound of Mexican mariachi music will be featured during a holiday concert performed by Socorro High School's student mariachi group, Los Gavilanes. The musicians are scheduled to play Dec. 10 in the Socorro High School Performing Arts Theater, and will be joined by mariachi groups from other Socorro feeder pattern schools — Los Gavilancitos from Socorro

Middle School, and Los Guerrerros from Salvador Sanchez Middle School. The price of admission to the concert is one new or used toy. The collected toys will be donated to less fortunate children in the Socorro area through the District's Holiday Store. This marks the 10th year of the holiday concert by Los Gavilanes, a student musical group founded by SISD Chief of Police Ramon Rendon.

The U.S. Congress has approved a provision introduced by U.S. Representative Henry Bonilla that will delay implementing what could be a potentially onerous system of Country of Origin Labeling (COOL). Country of Origin Labeling for all commodities will now be put on hold for two years, with the exception of farm-raised and wild caught fish. Bonilla believes the delay is essential so that Congress may commit further time to researching the costs and benefits of the system. The complete bill will now move to the Senate for a final vote and then on to the president for his signature. "Country of Origin Labeling could be disastrous to our meat industry. We owe it to our nation's meat producers, processors, retailers and consumers to investigate before acting," said Rep. Henry Bonilla, Chairman of the House Agriculture Appropriations Subcommittee.

IT'S BACK: The 852 Horizon Area Telephone Directory!



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...a five year hiatus...



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Sponsored by:



Aggies vs MINERS

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*Tuesday, 12/16 Cal Poly, 7:05 PM
-"Kid's on US"-18 and under get in FREE!!
*Saturday, 12/20 NMSU, 7:05 PM
-1/2 Price Ticket if you WEAR ORANGE



*All Home Games played at the Don Haskins Center

BASKETBALL is BACK!!

Visit Big 8 Food Stores: Big8.com

Water

From Page 1

company, to pump and sell water from West Texas underground aquifers to the highest bidder.

In a resolution issued at the Nov. 26 meeting of the FWTWPG in Van Horn, the group said the Texas General Land Office "has not considered the impact of the proposed sale or lease (of state land for water sales) on the economy, people, or environment of Far West Texas," and that the legislature "mandated that all water use strategies affecting the water resources of each region must be considered by the regional water planning groups."

It noted the important responsibility of the GLO to raise funds for schools, but noted that "this responsibility does not allow the Texas GLO to ignore the rights and best interests (of) other Texans who would be affected by the proposed sale or lease of water."

With almost 300 people attending the Nov. 26 meeting, local media said it was easily the best attended event ever held in the Van Horn Convention Center.

It was a drop in the bucket compared to the subsequent Dec. 2 meeting in the Alpine School District Administration Auditorium when upwards of 450 people came from the far reaches of West Texas to hear and be heard by Patterson, the three-member board of the GLO, and the individuals with interests in Rio Nuevo.

What they heard, briefly was this: Rio Nuevo Ltd. — a company formed by a group of already wealthy businessmen with oil, gas and mass communications backgrounds — wants to acquire lease of 355,386 state-owned acres of land. Then they

intend to acquire leasehold interest in another additional 350,000 acres of private land.

This will be followed by drilling of test/monitor wells to establish water availability within various aquifers.

They would then secure long-term sales contracts with West Texas cities and negotiate production/export permits with local groundwater conservation districts followed by water field development/monitoring and pipeline construction.

Rio Nuevo and others have estimated the company could spend anywhere between \$200 to \$400 million on test wells, hydrological studies and shipping costs.

Occidental Petroleum Corp. executive Roger Abel, of Austin, is Rio Nuevo's acting president. He said the partnership hopes to start drilling test wells and begin hydrological studies by the spring.

Based on Rio Nuevo's preliminary figures, they could produce water at about \$1,000 an acre-foot (about 326,000 gallons). The state could make about \$7 million a year based on a 10 percent royalty payment if the water supply and price holds at that estimate, Canon said, but he conceded it is more than what urban markets now pay.

And that concerns State Rep. Pete Gallego.

"For Rio Nuevo, this is a business risk," Gallego said. "For those of us who live here, it's asking us to risk our lives and our livelihoods."

He said he doubted small towns could afford Rio Nuevo's price when competing for water with municipalities like the city of El Paso. The city of Valentine, for example, with only 217 people, would have little chance, he added.

Valentine is already in a precarious position because it is known to have some water reserves. El Paso's

Public Service Board (PSB) already owns rangeland there for future water export. Some of the tracts that Rio Nuevo plans to tap are only a few miles from the PSB property.

Canon said he knows how deep the hostility and mistrust runs in far West Texas — and didn't add to the comfort level of anyone when he added that West Texans would be "anti" this proposal, no matter how much sense it made.

About 75 people signed up to speak at the Alpine meeting, and to a man, all were opposed to pumping water from deep in the ground below the Chihuahuan Desert.

In varying language, they all indicated lowering the aquifer levels would dry up springs and wreak havoc with the sensitive desert environment, already suffering from prolonged drought conditions.

City councils, county commissioners courts and water district boards throughout West Texas have passed resolutions opposing the proposal, and those who took the floor in Alpine spoke against any deal or at least urged extreme caution.

"There is no water available for export," said Tom Beard, Alpine rancher and chairman of the FWTWPG.

Marshall Jennings, a hydro-geologist at Texas State University in San Marcos, said that what the company was proposing could pull at least two to six times as much water out the aquifers as they get in annual recharge, which would make the aquifers unsustainable. Rio Nuevo would, by design, be mining the water, he said.

Additionally, all political representatives from the area speaking at the Alpine meeting urged caution and requested that Patterson slow down the process until ramifications could

be studied further.

State Rep. Robert Puente of San Antonio, chairman of the house natural resource committee, said he is opposed to the Rio Nuevo proposal and said it was a statewide issue involving new state policy.

State Sen. Frank Madla, also of San Antonio, whose district includes the Far West Texas region, presented a letter signed by all four members of a newly formed subcommittee he is chairing to formulate state policy to govern state-lands water deals.

Their letter asked Patterson to delay signing anything with Rio Nuevo until hearings can be held early next year. The subcommittee is part of a committee appointed last month by Lt. Gov. David Dewhurst to review the state's water policies.

After four hours of public comment, the GLO board unanimously approved a lease draft for review.

Public input will be accepted for 90 days before a final vote in March. Send comments to: Land Commissioner Jerry Patterson, 1700 N. Congress Ave., Austin, TX 78701-1495. Call 512-463-5256 or visit the website at www.glo.state.tx.us.

San Eli

From Page 3

cheer competitions between other tourist groups or dancing on stage in a grass skirt, the San Elizario group of seniors will never forget this trip.

"I'll never forget the sea at night while we were on cruise," said Dago Garcia. "The water just looked perfect."

"I'll always remember Pearl Harbor," said Miguel Euggenhoffer. "The 23 pairs of brothers and fathers and sons who died stick with me."

Rodriguez said that when the kids were leaving the hotel, some of them walked backwards to get one last memory of where they had been. While photographs help capture memories, each student who attended the trip has made a commitment to return to the island before their 10-year reunion in 2014. The hard part was getting there the first time. But now that they know what it takes to get there, chances are pretty good they'll be in paradise again.





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Clint Independent School District Notice of Public Hearing

Clint Independent School District will hold a Public Hearing for the discussion of the 2003 District Annual Report on Wednesday, December 17, 2003, at the Clint Independent School District Administration Building Board Room, located at 14521 Horizon Blvd., 6:30 PM during the regularly scheduled School Board meeting. All interested individuals are welcomed to attend. The Report will be available to the public after the hearing at all Clint District school campuses, the Clint Public Library and the Clint Post Office.

Aviso

El distrito escolar de Clint tendra una junta para discutir el Reporte Annual del Distrito de 2003 el miercoles, 17 de diciembre del 2003 en las oficinas administrativas localizadas 14521 Horizon Blvd. a las 6:30 PM. Todos individuos interesados estan invitados a asistir. El Reporte se puede obtener en estos lugares; todas las escuelas publicas del distrito, la biblioteca publica de Clint, y el Correo de Clint.

WTCC: 12/11/03

Town of Clint PUBLIC NOTICE

A PUBLIC HEARING will be held during the **Special Town Council Meeting, Tuesday, December 16th at 7:00 P.M.**, 200 N. San Elizario Rd., Clint, Texas. The purpose of the hearing is to hear public comment on the proposed rezoning:

- 1) 11 San Elizario Grant, Tract 5A and 5G from Agricultural to Residential, R-1, as requested by Fay S. Greenwood Family, L.P.

Copies of the proposed rezoning can be obtained at Town Hall upon request from the Town Clerk at the above address. Those that are unable to attend may submit their views in writing to P.O. Box 350, Clint, Texas 79836. Persons in need of assistance to attend are encouraged to contact the Town Clerk at 851-3146.

Jessica Garza
Town Clerk

WTCC: 12/11/03

Town of Clint PUBLIC NOTICE

A PUBLIC HEARING will be held during the **Special Town Council Meeting, Tuesday, December 16th at 7:00 P.M.**, 200 N. San Elizario Rd., Clint, Texas. The purpose of the hearing is to hear public comment on the proposed ordinances:

- 1) Ordinance #121, Requiring a permit for any cuts or excavation in or under any street, alley or public place within the municipal limits of the Town of Clint.
- 2) Ordinance # 122, Regulating the location of adult businesses within the municipal limits of the Town of Clint.

Copies of the proposed ordinances can be obtained at Town Hall upon request from the Town Clerk at the above address. Those that are unable to attend may submit their views in writing to P.O. Box 350, Clint, Texas 79836. Persons in need of assistance to attend are encouraged to contact the Town Clerk at 851-3146.

Jessica Garza
Town Clerk

WTCC: 12/11/03

Cowboys just a quarterback away from glory days

By Steve Escajeda
Special to the Courier

Oh what a roller coaster ride it has been to be a Dallas Cowboys fan in 2003.

At times it's been scary waiting to see what's coming around the corner. At times it's been thrilling — zooming past everyone at break-neck speed. And at other times it's been pretty difficult to watch, knowing that trouble is lurking at the next curve.

And finally at other times, things are so bad that you just feel like throwing up.

The 2003 Cowboys are definitely a better team than they were last season. But after getting off to a great start, a 5-1 start, the 'Boys are beginning to resemble the team that went 5-11 over the last three seasons, especially on offense.

Quincy Carter has really improved this year and I have no doubt that he can help the Cowboys for years to come... as a top backup. Under Bill Parcells, Carter started the season as easily the most improved football player in the NFL.

But over the second half of the season, Carter has proven more than ever that Dallas is just a quality quarterback (and a running back) away from being a Super Bowl caliber team.

While Carter was efficient over the first six games of the year, he has reverted to his old inferior self over the last seven games.

Don't believe me, there's nothing like proof. The Cowboys jumped out to a 5-1 start this

year and Carter, though unspectacular, wasn't hurting the team.

Carter was connecting on 59 percent of his passes (103-176) for an average of a respectable 228 yards per game. He threw only seven TD passes but wasn't hurting his team, throwing just five interceptions. And Dallas was averaging 25.5 points per game.

Over the last seven games however, Carter is throwing for about the same percentage, 58 percent (135-234), but his average yards per game has dropped drastically to 185. Carter has thrown the same number of touchdowns, seven, but has thrown for 13 interceptions. And Dallas is averaging just 12.3 points per game going 3-4 in that span.

In their first six games, the Cowboys were never held to 10 points or less. In their last seven games, the Cowboys' offense has scored 10 points or less on four occasions.

Once considered a shoe-in for the playoffs, the Cowboys, at 8-5, are going to have to win two of their last three games to solidify their postseason spot. Dallas is at the Redskins, at home to the Giants and at the New Orleans Saints.

And the way Quincy Carter is playing right now, the Cowboys are suddenly just a middle-of-the-road team with a better-than-average defense.

I don't know who the next quarterback of the Cowboys is going to be. I've got a feeling that Cincinnati Bengals' running back Corey Dillon will be wearing a star on his helmet next year. But until they get someone to replace

Quincy Carter, the Cowboys will always be just a quarterback away.

Busted College System

Sometimes the experts come up with great ideas — ideas that make a certain system run smoother, better, faster, smarter and wiser.

Then there's the moron that came up with college football's most embarrassing invention, the BCS (*Busted College System*). The BCS, which really stands for Bowl Championship Series, has turned out to be anything but great.

The former #1 Oklahoma Sooners were smacked by Kansas State 35-7 last week and numbers 2 and 3, USC and LSU, each won its games by landslides.

So, as is done throughout the season, the winners move up and the loser falls back, right? Wrong. Well, at least not in the BCS.

This week's AP and USA Today polls (decided upon by actual humans) each have USC at #1, LSU at #2 and Oklahoma #3.

But the BCS computer, which has the final say, said Oklahoma will stay at #1, LSU will jump to #2 and the top rated team in both human polls, USC, is out of the championship game picture all together.

And here's the kicker, both USC and LSU won their respective conference championships. How can Oklahoma play for the national championship when they didn't even win their conference title?

When will the intellectual pigmies in charge of college football ever come to the conclusion that we need a playoff system? How smart do you have to be to figure this one out?

Heck, I figured this thing out years ago, all by myself — and I didn't even own a computer.

Write stuff

Dear Editor:

The so-called Socorro City Attorney Chris Borunda is clearly manipulating the Socorro city representatives like puppets. The attorney sponsors the meetings and agenda items and she continually interrupts the constituents when they are rightfully addressing the council.

The funny thing about council is that they only seem to answer to attack the people of Socorro.

Why are the council representatives not acting on the behalf of the people of Socorro and why are they allowing Chris Borunda to make decisions that affect the residents of the city? Can these representatives not see how this attorney is costing the Socorro people money? She

charges the city every time she opens her mouth.

To add to the dilemma, she also has the interim city-clerk, L. Rodela, under orders to report to her when citizens are making simple open records requests. This also costs the city of Socorro more money because everytime Borunda is on the phone with the city she charges us!

This attorney is apparently overstepping the bounds of city attorney and is taking on all the duties of mayor, council, interim city-clerk, and interim city manager. She discusses cases that are under litigation openly, she talks back to the Mayor when she pleases, and she adjourns the meeting at her will.

Perhaps the title of city attorney does not befit her, perhaps tyrant would be more appropriate since she carries herself as a ruler and governs the people of Socorro oppressively.

Veneranda Soltero
Socorro

Socorro

From Page 1

public regarding this public hearing. Lorenza Fraire, concerned citizen, said the ordinance is not a legal document because it did not having a copy of the original documents from previous years attached to the ordinance now being introduced.

Veneranda Soltero told council that inappropriate means and methods are being used by city employees and council members to clear up the legality issue of the police department.

A second public hearing was held regarding

the introduction of an ordinance calling for a Special Charter Amendment Election.

According to City Attorney Chris Borunda, the election would amend the City of Socorro Charter to allow for election district population change pursuant to Section 6.01 of the City Charter.

Borunda informed everyone this would equalize the population in each district. Several of the community members in attendance expressed their opinion on preferring to have a fifth district instead of having four districts and one at large. They would prefer to eliminate the at-large district and make a fifth district which would give the people someone they could have representing them.



King Super Crossword

- | | | | | |
|----------------------------------|------------------------------|--------------------------------|----------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| CELEBRITY SHOPPING ACROSS | 65 Abbreviated address | 131 Ms. Conn's gift? | word | 91 Former spouses |
| 1 Stevenson scoundrel | 68 Plopped down | 133 "Mila 18" author | 37 Patou or Piaget | 93 Actor Everett |
| 5 Epps of "The Program" | 70 Spartacus, e.g. | 134 Kitchen implements | 38 Sound of shock | 94 British gun |
| 9 One of "The Three Sisters" | 71 Swiss canton | 135 Obligation | 39 Return address? | 95 Downspouts |
| 13 Monstrous dance? | 72 David's instrument | 136 Merry abandon | 40 Astronaut | 96 Adept |
| 17 Deserve a check | 75 Mr. Myers' gift? | 137 Break suddenly | Armstrong | 97 Holy day |
| 18 Possess | 78 Sharp | 138 Doe's darling | 41 Belgrade denizen | 100 Mrs. Eddie Cantor |
| 19 Obscures | 79 Palindromic dictator | 139 Yarn | 46 Took down a peg | 104 Caustic stuff |
| 21 Flu symptom | 80 Largest antelope | 140 Unspecified amount | 48 Levi's "Christ Stopped at..." | 105 In search of |
| 22 Mr. Asner's gift? | 81 Court | DOWN | 50 Variety show | 106 "McTeague" author |
| 24 Esteem | 82 In addition | 1 Musical Myra | 51 Grenoble's river | 108 Rug type |
| 25 Pal | 84 Gun the engine | 2 Big name in locks | 52 John of "The Addams Family" | 110 "The Gong Show" panelist |
| 26 Smooth transition | 85 Note | 3 Smidgen | 54 Inclined plane | 111 Negative terminals |
| 27 River reptiles | 86 Letters of desperation? | 4 Tolerate | 55 -la-la | 112 "The Plague" novelist |
| 29 Sup in style | 88 Reunion attendee | 5 Triumphant cry | 56 Lofty initials? | 113 Decorate |
| 31 Olsen of vaudeville | 92 Word with eel or eye | 6 "La Boheme" role | 58 Vigilant | 114 Gymnast Comaneci |
| 32 Fury | 94 Mr. Von Sydow's gift? | 7 Maintain | 59 Party hearty | 115 Do a double take, perhaps |
| 34 Ms. Rivers' gift? | 98 Dickens' Pecksniff | 8 Change the decor | 60 "Fine Day" ('63 tune) | 120 James Herriot, for one |
| 38 Lee and Bradley | 99 High-flying toy | 9 Vintage | 66 More proficient | 121 May Oliver |
| 42 Wheels of fortune? | 101 Summer-camp activity | 10 Actor Herbert | 67 Biscayne Bay city | 123 Actor O'Shea |
| 43 Yule purchase | 102 _ de France | 11 Lead through the wilderness | 69 Haul a heap | 124 TV's "_ 12" |
| 44 Frehley of Kiss | 103 Novelist Paton | 12 Directionless | 70 Buss | 125 Workday start |
| 45 _ market | 107 Beloved | 13 Singer Davis | 72 Takes on | 127 Kreskin's letters |
| 47 Green land | 109 Dangers | 14 Blessed sound? | 73 "Jane Eyre" character | 129 Cousteau's milieu |
| 49 "Nabucco" number | 112 Mr. Griffith's gift? | 15 Coach Don | 74 Fasten firmly | 130 Unit of work |
| 53 Mr. Reynolds' gift? | 116 Director David | 16 Bruisers | 76 Criticize | 132 Sugary suffix |
| 57 Noblewoman | 117 "Tobacco Road" character | 19 Quick change artist? | 77 Painter Bonheur | |
| 61 Like opposites | 118 To be, in Toulouse | 20 Murcia mister | 78 Actor Dullea | |
| 62 _relief | 119 Steen stand | 23 Dread | 80 CPR provider | |
| 63 English poet | 122 Forum figure | 28 NCO | 83 _Cat (winter wheels) | |
| Wilfred | 126 Way | 30 Poetic preposition | 87 Exclude | |
| 64 James Herriot, for one | 128 Pumice product | 33 Fisherman's need | 89 Nolde or Jannings | |
| | | 35 Fail to mention | 90 Holler | |
| | | 36 Postman's Creed | | |

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Comix

OUT ON A LIMB By Gary Kopervas



AMBER WAVES By Dave T. Phipps



THE SPATS By Jeff Pickering



R.F.D. By Mike Marland



Writer gropes to find his way

By Don Flood

I've just about had it. Look, it's my job to make fun of politicians and celebrities.

And while, as columnist in good (sort of) standing, I don't mind shooting fish in a barrel, I do try to refrain from blasting elephants in phone booths.

But it ain't easy. Let's look at Congress. (I never said this was going to be pretty.)

Recently, as a way to attract attention to their cause, a group of Congresspersons of the Republican persuasion announced they were going to hold: a Slumber Party.

Absolutely true — they even brought cots into the Capitol.

OK, they called it a "debate," but when people stay up and talk all night it's usually during a slumber party.

I am, of course, dating myself.

The slumber parties of long ago were social gatherings where kids stayed up all night talking.

That's all changed. Nowadays we have something called "sleepovers," which are social gatherings where kids, or Congresspersons, stay up all night talking.

To make sure the people really got cranked up about this exciting event, they announced it was going to be for 30 hours straight.

Far be it for me to suggest they might want to try new ways engage the public's interest, but the following conversation probably did not take place anywhere in our galaxy:

FIRST MAN: Did you hear some Congresspersons are going to talk for 30 hours straight?

SECOND MAN: Wow! Could you tape it for me? My VCR's on the fritz.

Now let's look at California, where Arnold Schwarzenegger

hired a private investigator to look into allegations that he, the governor, was a serial groper.

Well, I'm sorry, but that was the last straw.

So instead of this week's column I am offering, free of charge, the following speech to Gov. Schwarzenegger, to be used after his investigator gets to the bottom, so to speak, of the groping issue:

"As you know, before I was governor, Hollywood stars, especially one in particular, used to go around groping young women.

"I was very shocked by this, and I immediately hired a private investigator to look into this matter.

"While earlier reports of groping were exaggerated — the investigator was, in fact, able to confirm that there were a dozen, perhaps as many as 20, women in California who were not groped — it was still a matter of great concern to me as your governor.

"I can now report that after a complete and thorough investigation, the chief groper has been identified and, as of this moment, is no longer working in Hollywood. (Pause for applause.)

"Furthermore, I pledge to you that I will keep a very close watch on this groper throughout my Administration (wild applause) and to see to it that, while I am governor, he appears in no more motion pictures. (Sustained wild applause.)

"That is, of course, unless they come through with really big money for a sequel.

"I am also proud to report that my wife has volunteered to serve our great state by helping me keep an eye on this problem groper. Thank you."

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Classified Ads

LEGALS

SOCORRO INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT Invitation to Bid/Respond:

Sealed bids/proposals/CSP to furnish the District with the following products and/or services will be accepted at the following times:

EQUIPMENT ROOM CABLING CSP NO. 199-0108-0440 **ACCEPTED UNTIL JAN. 8, 2004, at 3:00 P.M.**

EQUIPMENT ROOM SWITCH UPGRADE CSP NO. 199-0108-0442 **ACCEPTED**

UNTIL JAN. 8, 2004, at 3:00 P.M.

SISD WEB SERVER CSP NO. 199-0108-0443 ACCEPTED UNTIL JAN. 8, 2004, at 3:00 P.M.

NETWORK ENCLOSURES CSP NO. 199-0108-0444 ACCEPTED UNTIL JAN. 8, 2004, at 3:00 P.M.

Proposals will be received at Business Services Dept., 12300 Eastlake Drive, El Paso, Texas 79928 until the specified times. Detailed specifications are available from the above office between 8 a.m. and 4

p.m. Mondays through Fridays.

NOTE: The District Offices will be closed during Dec. 22, 2003 to Jan. 02, 2004. Voicemail, inquiries, faxes, etc. will not be checked as regularly. The District will attempt to be as responsive as possible during this time. WTCC-12/11/03

PUBLIC NOTICE

As per Article V, Sec. 5.05(a), all owners and lienholders have ten (10) days from this date to reclaim their vehicles at Southwest Wrecker, 1401 Darrington Rd., 855-1900, 851-2091-fax, or it will be sold at public

auction for charges: VIN - not visible, 1990 Chevy Blazer, black, Chihuahua license 27D-SDS4 WTCC-12/11/03

Town of Clint, Texas Invitation to Bid

The Town of Clint is currently seeking bids for depository services. Bid packages can be requested from Town Hall Monday-Friday, 8:00 am to 5:00 pm, until 5:00 pm, December 16th, 2003. The service will be awarded during the Special Town Council Meeting, December 16th at 7:00 pm.

For more information, call the Town

Clerk at 851-3146.

Jessica Garza Town Clerk WTCC-12/11/03

Town of Clint, Texas Invitation to Bid

The Town of Clint is currently seeking bids for an official newspaper. Bid packages can be requested from Town Hall Monday-Friday, 8:00 am to 5:00 pm, until 5:00 pm, December 16th, 2003. The service will be awarded during the Special Town Council Meeting, December 16th at 7:00 pm.

For more information, call the Town Clerk at 851-3146.

Jessica Garza Town Clerk WTCC-12/11/03

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Two refrigerators, dining room table, sofa table, shop vac. 852-4527

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SPECIAL EVENTS

Power Tumbling and Trampoline Camp - 3-5 p.m. on Dec. 27 at 1477 Lomaland #A5, 594-7223. \$15 registration, \$20 after Dec. 20. Medals and ribbons awarded. Free gift with early registration. Liability release form required. Gym is Tumbling and Trampoline Association Certified. 12/11

SELF-HELP

Persons who have a problem with alcohol are offered a free source of help locally. Alcoholics Anonymous - call 562-4081 for information.

Tiene problemas con el alcohol? Hay una solución. Informacion: 838-6264.

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Social Security Q&A By Ray Vigil

Q: I am 70 years old and get a very small Social Security check. I am having a very hard time making ends meet. My arthritis has been so bad lately. I am wondering if I can get extra money through the Social Security disability program.

are low enough, you might be due some extra monthly income through this program. And you would also get Medicaid benefits. Whether or not you qualify for SSI, the staff can also tell you about other programs in your area that provide help to low-income elderly people, including help with paying some or all of your Medicare expenses.

A: I'm sorry, but after you're older than 65, there are no extra disability benefits that can be paid. But you should contact your local Social Security office and ask the staff about the Supplemental Security Income program. If your income and assets

Q: Does Medicare pay for glasses and hearing aids?

A: No. Go to www.medicare.gov for

a list of items that are covered (and not covered) by Medicare.

Q: I turn 62 in a few years and plan to retire and take my Social Security. But I also will begin getting payments from my 401(k) account at that time. Will that prevent me from getting Social Security?

A: No. There are restrictions on the amount of money you can "earn," but not on other income you have. If you are younger than 65, in 2003, we must withhold \$1 from your Social Security benefits for every \$2 you earn over \$11,520. But that rule applies only to "earned" in-

come (wages or self-employment income). It does not apply to pensions, savings, investments or other non-work income.

Q: I plan to retire at age 50. I've been getting estimates of my future Social Security benefits from your agency. Will my benefits be reduced if I stop work at 50? If so, how much?

A: First, you should know that you cannot collect any Social Security retirement benefits until you are at least age 62. Second, that estimate we send you assumes you're going to keep working until age 62. If you retire at 50, your benefits will defi-

nately be less than they could have been had you kept working until age 62. How much less depends on your earnings history. The best way to estimate what your Social Security retirement benefit would be if you retire at age 50 is to use the retirement calculators at our website.

For more information visit your local Social Security office, see www.ssa.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.

WEATHER

AccuWeather.com

SEVEN-DAY FORECAST FOR EL PASO

THURSDAY	THUR. NIGHT	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY
Plenty of sunshine.	Clear to partly cloudy.	Very windy with times of sun and clouds.	Mostly sunny and windy.	A good deal of sunshine.	Mostly sunny and windy.	Abundant sunshine.	Sunny to partly cloudy.
▲ 62°	▼ 34°	▲ 58° ▼ 34°	▲ 56° ▼ 32°	▲ 58° ▼ 34°	▲ 58° ▼ 22°	▲ 60° ▼ 24°	▲ 58° ▼ 26°

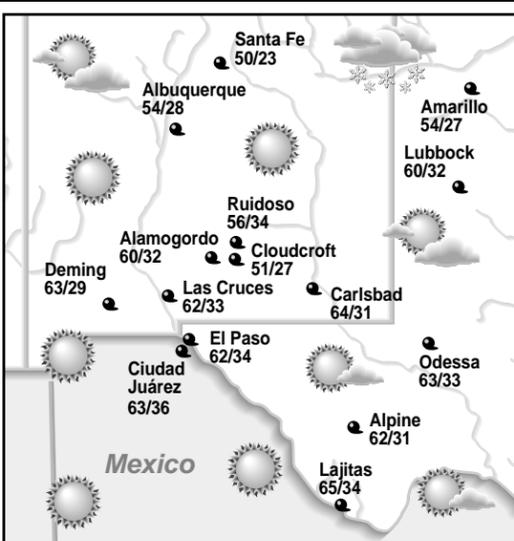
UV INDEX Statistics for noon.

The higher the UV Index, the greater the need for eye and skin protection.

Thursday	4	Low
Friday	3	Low
Saturday	4	Low
Sunday	4	Low
Monday	4	Low
Tuesday	4	Low
Wednesday	4	Low

TEXAS WEATHER

Anthony	63	34
Canutillo	64	35
Clint	62	36
E. Montana	62	34
Fabens	62	36
Horizon	64	35
San Elizario	61	32
Socorro	61	33
Tornillo	62	36
Vinton	64	35



Shown is Thursday's weather. Temperatures are Thursday's highs and Thursday night's lows.

TRAVELERS CITIES

City	Thur. Hi/Lo/W	Fri. Hi/Lo/W	Sat. Hi/Lo/W	Sun. Hi/Lo/W	Mon. Hi/Lo/W
Albuquerque	54/28/s	47/28/c	47/25/pc	47/28/pc	47/18/pc
Atlanta	50/32/s	54/36/s	54/38/pc	54/40/c	55/37/c
Atlantic City	56/36/pc	48/32/s	44/32/s	45/29/pc	50/29/r
Austin/San Antonio	62/40/s	63/45/pc	65/41/pc	65/37/s	61/43/s
Baltimore	54/34/pc	46/28/s	42/28/s	44/36/c	51/25/c
Boston	48/39/r	46/28/pc	40/26/s	40/32/pc	43/37/c
Chicago	30/12/pc	26/12/pc	28/18/c	34/22/c	39/23/c
Dallas/Ft. Worth	59/37/s	57/44/pc	58/36/pc	58/38/s	55/35/s
Denver	43/24/pc	39/21/c	42/24/c	44/24/pc	36/3/c
Flagstaff	44/22/s	38/20/c	40/18/pc	42/22/c	44/16/pc
Houston	62/46/s	68/52/pc	64/48/c	56/40/c	54/34/s
Kansas City	26/17/pc	31/21/c	34/22/c	37/25/c	38/19/c
Las Vegas	56/40/c	54/38/pc	56/38/s	58/36/pc	58/37/s
Miami	73/57/pc	74/61/pc	77/64/pc	78/63/pc	77/62/c
Minneapolis	14/2/pc	12/6/pc	18/9/pc	22/16/c	29/15/c
New Orleans	55/37/s	60/49/pc	65/48/c	63/44/s	59/43/pc
New York City	52/40/pc	47/33/s	41/33/s	43/34/pc	47/37/r
Philadelphia	54/36/pc	46/28/s	42/28/s	44/36/pc	42/29/r
Phoenix	66/46/s	62/44/c	64/44/pc	68/46/pc	69/41/s
Portland	46/38/c	48/40/r	48/38/c	45/41/r	46/36/c
San Francisco	56/46/c	55/48/pc	58/50/pc	55/46/r	55/42/c
Seattle	46/36/c	46/40/r	48/38/c	46/40/r	47/37/c
Tucson	68/39/s	63/37/pc	61/37/s	64/39/pc	66/39/s
Washington, DC	54/38/pc	48/32/s	44/32/s	46/38/c	49/26/c

REAL FEEL TEMP™

The exclusive AccuWeather composite of the effects of temperature, wind, humidity, sunshine, precipitation, and elevation on the human body.

Thursday	67°
Friday	40°
Saturday	42°
Sunday	45°
Monday	45°
Tuesday	51°
Wednesday	47°

AGRICULTURE

A ridge of high pressure building over the region will keep skies sunny on Thursday. This ridge will hold over the region for the next several days, providing plenty of sunshine for the area through the weekend. Temperatures will be quite seasonable for this time of the year, and will stay pleasant through next week.

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