



NEWSBRIEFS

Vehicle registration

If you have an outstanding traffic warrant in the city of El Paso, you won't be able to register your vehicle without clearing it up, thanks to recent action taken by the municipality which hopes to collect some of the \$29.5 million in unpaid fines currently on its books. The program, known as Scofflaws Program, flags the files of vehicle owners with moving violation warrants, which are forwarded to the Texas Dept. of Transportation, which in turn transfers the markers to the state system. The program involved an agreement between TxDOT, the city and El Paso County. The county already has a similar program in place with the state which took effect on Jan. 1, and has netted the county as much as \$5,000 a week in previously uncollected fines. The county also marks files of vehicle owners who owe the county in child support payment fees.

Boll weevil rates

The Texas Department of Agriculture has established the 2004 assessment rate, due date and discount date for the El Paso/Trans Pecos Zone of the boll weevil eradication program. The assessment for 2004 in the EP/TP is \$20 per land acre, the rate established by growers and landowners in the original referendum. Growers who plant Bt cotton can qualify for a \$10 credit, if they specify the amount of Bt cotton acreage planted when they certify their crop with FSA. Growers with failed acres are eligible to receive a credit on those acres destroyed before the final certification date. Qualifying failed acres must remain free of all hostable cotton until a killing freeze to receive the credit. Assessment notices will be mailed by Aug. 12, and payment is due Sept. 14. Growers who pay by Aug. 30 are eligible to receive a 2 percent discount on their assessment.

Victim unidentified

The identification of one of the two men killed near Tornillo on Sunday, Feb. 22 when they were run over by a Union Pacific train is still unknown by law enforcement officials. One of the victims has been identified as Ernesto Aaron Rosas Sanchez, 22, of Chihuahua, Mexico. The unidentified victim was terribly disfigured in the accident which occurred while the two men appeared to have been resting on the railroad track. The train sounded its horn to warn them but they were struck and died instantly. Information: 546-2285.

In other news

San Elizario parents Maria Isela Venzor and Francisca Maciel, and Title III Clerk Josie Campos have been selected to present at the UTEP 11th Annual BEEMS Conference on Saturday, March 27. The

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A political war is one in which everybody shoots from the lip.

— Quips & Quotes



LETHAL SYMPTOM — Though the driver of this truck escaped with life intact, injuries were sustained that required hospitalization. The busy intersection of Eastlake Drive and Horizon Blvd., where this accident occurred, handles heavy traffic. Horizon's food store, two schools, a bank, a shopping center, and a gas station/convenience store are all in the immediate vicinity. Horizon Blvd. is also the most heavily used connecting route to numerous homes in the desert east of Horizon City.

Unfortunate side effect of growth

Traffic accidents on the rise in Horizon City

HORIZON — They knew it was coming, this inevitable and unfortunate symptom of rapid growth in a previously small community, but they hoped it wouldn't come this soon. The Horizon City Police Department is reporting a significant increase in traffic accidents this year.

"It's been something we knew would come with the increase in traffic as the city grows," said HCPD Sgt. Ron Swenson. "We therefore have trained one of our officers in Specialized Traffic Accident Investigation and recently hired another who already possessed the training." From Jan. 1 to March 1 of 2004 the Horizon City Police have handled 18 motor vehicle accidents, some of which occurred on private property but were reportable.

"That doesn't sound too bad," said Sgt. Swenson, "but when you consider that last year we only had eight during the same time frame and three the year prior, it's shows a drastic increase."

Most recently a truck rolled over at Eastlake and Horizon and the driver was taken to the hospital for treatment of injuries.

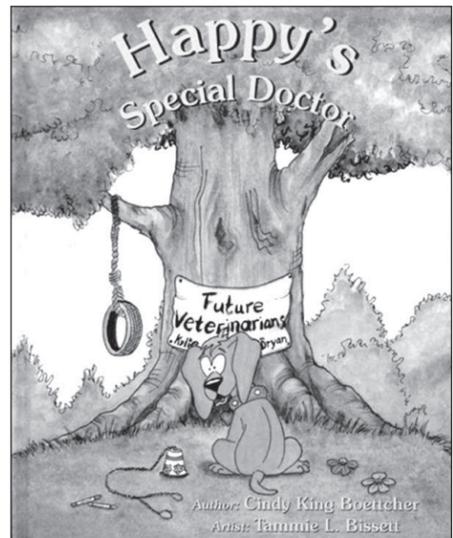
Another accident at the same location resulted in more injuries on Feb. 23 when a car was struck broadside. Rescue crews had to extricate one of the passengers using the Jaws of Life.

"Our goal is to keep the roads safe and prevent accidents. One way we do this is by enforcing traffic laws — especially speeding, stop sign violations and reckless driving" said Sgt. Swenson.

Horizon City Police have been working areas of high traffic volume such as Darrington Rd., Horizon Blvd., and Eastlake Dr. and have issued over 300 traffic citations this year.

The Horizon City Police urge all motorists to obey speed limits, stop signs and be cautious of construction areas — including the intersection of Horizon Blvd. and Darrington Rd. which has been under construction for months.

The HCPD is also seeking public input and invites calls from citizens with a specific area of concern or to report a continuous traffic hazard in their area. Contact the Horizon City Police at (915) 852-1047 or, if it is an emergency, call (915) 546-2280.



EL PASO COUNTY — The El Paso Veterinary Medical Association has been distributing **Happy's Special Doctor**, a new book on pet health care, to ten schools throughout the county.

Veterinarians donate books countywide

EL PASO COUNTY — Campestre Elementary School third-grader Javier Phelps got some expert advice on taking care of his eight Dalmatians on Feb. 26. His friend, Javier Gurrola, says he'll feed his Chihuahua well — and let it rest.

These Socorro ISD students were acting on expert advice from veterinarians Dr. George Navar and Dr. Jim Gearheart, who came to the campus to donate 21 copies of the Texas Veterinary Medical Association's new book, *Happy's Special Doctor*, to Socorro students. The book was written by Cindy King Boettcher and illustrated by Tammie L. Bissett. Socorro ISD Superintendent Dr. Robert J. Duron accepted the books on behalf of the District. The book tells the story of a family who adopts and learns to care for a dog.

"These books were published in honor of the 100th anniversary of the Texas Veterinary Medical Association, so the local association is donating books to all the different schools in the El Paso area," says Navar.

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See BOOK, Page 5

WRAM is on the air

By Phillip Cortez
 Special to the Courier

SAN ELIZARIO — There's a sort of energy or vibe you feel behind the scenes of a news production, an excitement generated because you are getting to see what the rest of the television viewing world doesn't. Borrego Elementary fourth and fifth graders know something about this, not only because they recently paid a visit to the set of ABC 7's noon show, but because they're producing a newscast of their own.

WRAM is more than just morning announcements on television; it's kids

putting on a program for kids. From the camera work, writing, prompting, camera switching, and Power Point presentation, Borrego students are making it happen.

"It was generated during one of our technology meetings earlier in the school year," Jose Zavala said, the school's computer lab instructor. "Ms. Holt brought it up and said she had seen it at another school, so we asked Mrs. Hopp (principal) if we could do it and she told us to research it."

While some people might have thought the expense would be too great, all Zavala needed to turn a classroom

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LIVE FROM... — Borrego Elementary fourth and fifth graders recently went on a field trip to the Channel 7 newsroom. With some training and new equipment, the WRAM team now produces the morning announcements and other news items for their school. It is broadcast on the school's TV system.



One perspective

By Francis Shrum

Dark side of the moon

He could have been anywhere from 30 to 60 years old. He moved with the long, easy stride of a Tarahumara Indian, though I never asked if that was his lineage. He wasn't very tall, and rail thin, but he was strong as a horse and could work all day in the brutal heat of the West Texas sun — mostly without a hat, a practice which

burnished his already dark skin. We called him by something other than his real name. His real one was about as long as my arm, filled with "Maria" and "de" this or that. He showed me his green card once and his name took up half the available space. For simplicity, I'll call him Juan. He lived in Mexico with his wife and family, and when we first met him he talked about them incessantly.

He showed me pictures of them, too. I never saw him wear anything new, and though he worked hard and made money, he clearly wasn't spending it on himself.

He drove a pickup that was so old and beat up it was a minor miracle that it didn't break down before he turned the corner at the end of the block, but Juan knew how to keep a vehicle running long after others would have given it up.

His truck was several different colors, none of them very attractive, and its exhaust was pretty potent, but Juan was proud of it. It gave him a kind of independence and capability that was clearly hard-won.

I always knew when he was working in my neighbor-lady's yard because I'd see the truck in the street.

She said he was the best yard man she'd ever had. I was surprised one day when he knocked on the door. His truck wasn't parked at the curb.

I could see he was truly upset. He told me, "they have put my truck in jail."

I didn't understand at first, until the whole ugly tale unraveled, enough to make you clench your teeth, then your fists.

He was driving in a Juarez neighborhood when he was rear-ended by a speeding Mercedes sedan. His truck was forced completely off the street and into a rock wall. When the police arrived, however, they arrested Juan. He said the policemen knew the father of the young man who was driving the Mercedes — a person of power and financial means.

The police impounded his old

truck, too, and before they released him from jail, he had to put up the title to the mobile home where his family lived as bond. He said he had to report to the police station every week with payment for damages to the Mercedes and the rock wall. And they wanted \$3,000 to release his truck.

He was devastated but determined to get his truck back. I wanted to tell him that the old truck couldn't possibly be worth that much money, but I didn't have the heart. To him it was.

After that, things didn't go well for Juan. He would come on the bus sometimes, and sometimes my friend went to pick him up. For awhile his visits were sporadic and he became even thinner than before.

He couldn't get his truck back and couldn't afford another one. He lost the ability to get to and from the jobs he worked at so hard, and he could no longer transport items back across the border to leverage into a little profit.

The worst part was that he stopped talking about his family. I didn't ask. He was unfailingly polite and always a gentleman but he lost the sparkle that had gleamed behind his dark, inscrutable face.

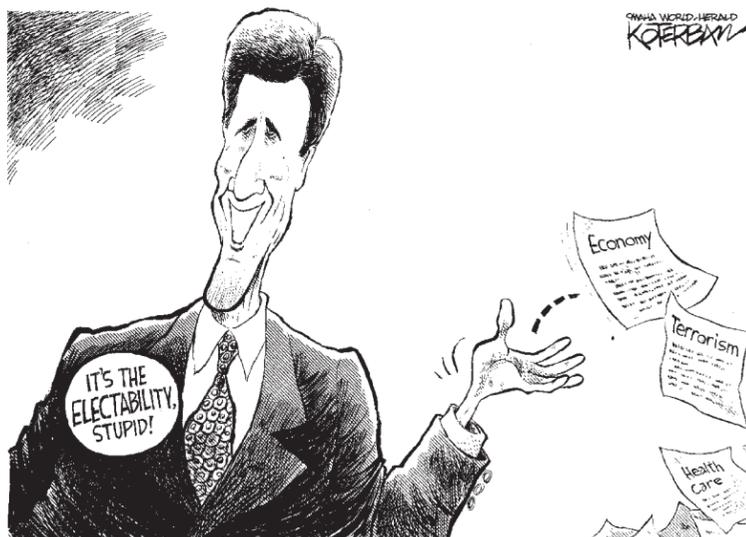
Recently a friend of his came to tell my neighbor that Juan is seriously ill and can no longer come to do her yard work. She says she doesn't know what she'll do without him.

I don't know where he lives and even if I did there would be little I could do for him — Juarez may be only a few miles away as the crow flies, but it might as well be on the moon.

Justice, economic fairness and hope have been rare commodities in Juan's life. Though I visited with him regularly for years and consider him a good friend, our realities are as different as night and day. While I live in a society where people can access free legal assistance and economic support without ever working a day, this thin, brown man worked day and night but was denied everything in a moment of chance — he was simply in the wrong place at the wrong time, and had no recourse.

Next time we get to feeling sorry for ourselves, maybe we should consider what it would be like to walk a mile in Juan's well-worn shoes as he trod the dark side of the moon.

Brookins PHOENIX TIMES-DEPICTED 2/04



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Reyes Reports By U.S. Rep. Silvestre Reyes

Minorities needed in top financial positions

El Paso's nearly 1,000 small businesses provide a source of hope for our community during this period of economic decline, unemployment and decreased income levels. With small businesses playing such a critical role in El Paso, we are lucky to have such active chambers of commerce that provide the services and information local businesses need to get ahead.

In Washington, I work on the federal level for resources that will help our chambers of commerce and small businesses improve and be more competitive.

My efforts also focus on supporting the El Paso Hispanic Chamber of Commerce in securing a Minority Business Development Center for El Paso, increasing the number of certified HUB Zone businesses, and streamlining cross-border trade. I am partnering with the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) to provide loans to minority-owned and

disadvantaged businesses and fight contract bundling.

I am also working with my colleagues in the Congressional Hispanic Caucus to address the challenges minority-owned businesses face. We are working to fully fund the Small Business Association's (SBA) loan programs, such as the 7(a) program and the Microloan program, which provide 40-percent of all long-term lending to small businesses. In addition, we are working to establish national lending goals for minority businesses. We are pushing the SBA to set a lending goal of 20-percent for Hispanic-owned businesses and hope to expand that goal to include women-, Asian-, and African-American-owned businesses.

Also important is increasing representation of Hispanics in the financial industries. In order to understand the needs of the Hispanic community, Hispanic individuals need to fill more senior positions in financial institutions, such as banking, consulting, trading and financial management. This would also foster the development of more Hispanic-owned finan-

cial institutions.

The SBA's 8(a) program, the federal government's primary program to ensure minority and disadvantaged business development and access to the federal procurement market, also needs to modernize. As the main vehicle for Hispanics to gain entry to the federal marketplace, we will work to improve this valuable program. As with the SBA's lending programs, we are working to establish government-wide goals for the 8(a) program. In past years, 8(a) numbers have slipped — they now account for less than 3-percent of federal procurement and since 1998, the number of 8(a) contracts has decreased by more than 35,000. To ensure success, federal agencies must be held accountable.

With all the contributions local small businesses make to El Paso and the country as a whole, they deserve every opportunity the federal government can provide. I am working on national and local priorities to improve our economy and business opportunities and look forward to what we can achieve as the year progresses.

Supersizing your meals is creating supersize kids

COLLEGE STATION — Childhood obesity is no laughing matter. “Supersize portions are leading to supersize kids and supersize health problems,” said Dr. Debra Reed, Texas Cooperative Extension nutrition specialist. “According to the 1999-2000 National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey, 15 percent of children and adolescents from 6 to 19 years old are overweight,” she

said. “This represents a nearly three-fold increase since the 1960s.” The problem is serious on many levels, added Dr. Steve Green, Extension child development specialist. “Unhealthy weight gain due to poor diet and lack of exercise is thought to be responsible for over 300,000 deaths each year in the United States, with the annual cost to society estimated at over \$100 billion,” he said,

quoting 2003 figures from the office of the U.S. Surgeon General. Information from National Hospital Discharge Survey of 1979 through 1999 shows annual hospital costs relating to obesity in children ages 6 to 17 increased from \$35 million to \$127 million. Obese children often grow into obese adults, and obesity in adults has been linked to many serious health

issues, Reed and Green wrote in an article for Child Care Connections Newsletter. These issues include type 2 diabetes, heart disease, hypertension and some cancers, such as colon, gall bladder, prostate and kidney, as well as trouble breathing, arthritis and other joint problems. But for heavier children, the problems can cut much deeper than that. Researchers from the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry have found that too much poundage can also damage children’s psychosocial and emotional development, Green said.

The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends no more than two hours each day for screen time. • Limit screen time. That includes time spent watching television and/or playing computer games. “While there is nothing inherently wrong with such activities,” Green said, “they do take away from time that can be spent in physical activities.”

The Al and Joe Medicine Show

By Albert M. Balesh, M.D.

“Come and get it. You want it. We’ve got it. Welcome to Al and Joe’s ‘Kitchen of Forbidden Delights,’ where the customer is always right, and where your pocketbook guarantees you limitless access. Come and choose from a vast array of vitamins, elixirs, and potions. Let your palate be the judge. If they taste bad, they certainly must be good for you. Imbibe the waters, go easy on the wine, and partake of our quintessential fountain of youth. What’s that you say? Charlatans? Quacks? Come on, Joe, it’s time to move on. Maybe the folks in Las Cruces will appreciate us.”

From north to south and east to west, in circus sideshows, medical literature, and the hallowed halls of prestigious research institutions, hawking medicinal wares has become a quotidian way of life. “Take this pill for gas, that one to make a baby, and a drop of Kaopectate to prevent those nasty squirts.” Damn the long clinical trials, turning back the hands of time has become big business. In an epoch where the good die young and the old die miserably, edges and hedged bets are desperately sought.

March 2004, as National Nutrition Month, beckons us all, as captains of our protoplasmic ships, to throw Al and Joe overboard and set a course that will take us the long way around. Living longer, more productive lives, with an emphasis on quality of life,

and freeing children from the ethical and financial handcuffs of caring for aging, “baby-boomer” parents in frail health is our destination.

It has been shown on numerous occasions that the risks of type 2 diabetes mellitus and stroke can each be lowered by 30 percent with brisk walking two to three hours a week. High blood pressure can also be reduced or prevented with moderate exercise, and osteoporosis and bone fractures will occur less often. Furthermore, three hours of brisk walking a week will lower the risk of heart disease by 40 percent.

Those pesky little vitamins that we sometimes think are so good must be carefully scrutinized for benefits, side effects, and cause and effect. Very large amounts of vitamin A can harm bones, make hip fractures more likely, and cause brain damage, liver damage, and birth defects. Folic acid can increase the risk of neurological problems in people lacking adequate vitamin B12, and the anemia caused by high doses of vitamin C is no laughing matter. High doses of vitamin D can cause dangerously abnormal blood levels of several minerals. Finally, vitamin E can cause excessive bleeding in surgical patients or people taking anticoagulants such as warfarin.

French researchers have found that people who eat fish at least once a week are less likely to develop dementia. It has been suggested that fish

oils (particularly omega-3 fatty acids) are at the heart of the matter, and help control inflammatory processes that are associated with Alzheimer’s disease. Don’t forget to take French wine “to heart” also.

The high-fat, low-carbohydrate diet, first introduced back in 1972, is based on the premise that heavy carbohydrate consumption causes the body to store more food as fat, and reducing the intake of carbohydrates subsequently forces fat reserves to be burned. Balanced nutrient diets (1984), which limit daily intake to 30 percent protein, 30 percent fat, and 40 percent carbohydrate, stimulate the body’s ideal production of the hormone insulin, which in turn encourages weight loss. Back-to-basics diets (1988), which cut out grains like white flour, promote consumption of fruits and vegetables, and substitute free-range animal meat for fatty, grain-fed beef, herald a return to the nutritional habits of our ancestors. Finally, the high-fiber diet (1990) favors consumption of vegetables, beans, whole grains, and fruit, as well as low-fat dairy products like skim milk, nonfat yogurt, and egg whites in moderation. Meats, oils, olives and sugar are avoided as much as possible.

“Sell it, Joe. Sell it all! Maybe we can earn enough Frequent Flyer miles to blow this place for good.”

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

The glory of Texas

This week marks a special occasion for our great state. It is the anniversary of our state’s independence from Mexico. On March 2, 1836 a convention of 54 men met in the small settlement of Washington-on-the-Brazos to sign the Texas Declaration of Independence.

The Texas Declaration of Independence was produced, literally, overnight. Its urgency was paramount. While the founding fathers of Texas prepared the document, the Alamo in San Antonio was under siege by Santa Anna’s army of Mexico. In near-freezing weather, in an unfinished building, the convention voted in the early morning hours of March 2 to unanimously accept the resolution. Ultimately, 58 members signed the document. And thus was born the Republic of Texas.

The declaration sent a sign to Mexico that Texans would no longer live under what many of them regarded as a tyrannical rule from a distant source. It was testimony that Texans were ready and willing to

fight for their freedom. And fight they did.

Four days after signing the document, William Barret Travis and 184 brave men concluded their gruesome battle against more than 5,000 Mexican troops. The odds were against the Texas volunteers, but they were determined to stay the course and fight until the end. When the battle was over, only 15 people — mostly women and children — were spared. Familiar names like Davey Crockett, James Bowie and Juan Badillo lost their lives that fateful day. These brave souls did not give their lives in vain. The casualties that the Texas forces mounted against Mexico, and the time lost in fighting at the Alamo cut short Mexico’s campaign. It gave Sam Houston just enough time to perfect his plans for the defense of Texas and enabled him to win the Battle of San Jacinto on April 21, 1836. This victory spelled a final freedom for Texas.

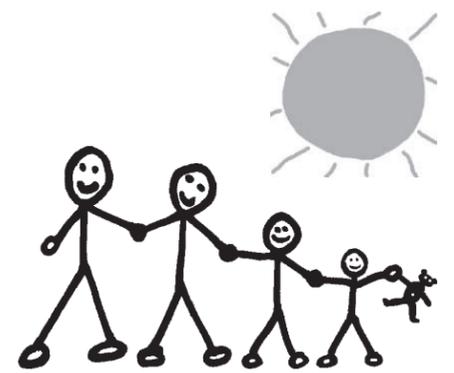
In the saga of Texas history, there is no period as distinctive as Texas’

struggle for independence. The period’s heroes are remembered in the names of cities and towns, streets, plazas and public buildings. The Lone Star flag, inherited from the original Texas Republic, still flies proudly throughout our state.

I’d like to leave you with a quote by Sam Houston just before the Battle of San Jacinto.

“We view ourselves on the eve of battle. We are nerved for the contest, and must conquer or perish. It is vain to look for present aid: none is at hand. We must now act or abandon all hope! Rally to the standard, and be no longer the scoff of mercenary tongues! Be men, be free men, that your children may bless their father’s name.”

Texas Independence Day is an occasion for all Texans to stand proud and remember the men who stood up for their rights and fought for their freedom. God Bless Texas!



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View from here By Brooke Leslie Rollins

Government meddling in insurance costs tamper with free market benefits

Once again, the ability of consumers to get a good deal is under attack — by state regulators allegedly empowered to help consumers. With the imposition of new rules regulating insurance rates, many Texans won't be getting the discounts they have been.

All in the name of "protecting" the consumer, of course.

If you are one of nearly 60 percent of Texans who get a cheaper rate on your insurance, you might decide the pain of higher prices is alleviated by knowing state lawmakers and bureaucrats are protecting you.

But for the rest of us, we will prob-

ably decide we cannot afford this kind of protection. In the free market, any number of factors can go into the final price agreed upon between the seller and buyer of a product. More importantly, in a free market the seller and buyer should be allowed to reach that price without government interference.

After all, what is charged for a product is more than simply the sum of the costs. The price reflects things like perceived values, personal preferences and even social goods. Similarly, discounts are given for intangible reasons: to build a customer base, promote consumer loyalty, or

reward a particular behavior.

Airlines give free tickets based on miles traveled to encourage a customer to stay with that airline for all their travel needs. Restaurants give toys to children as a way to encourage family dining. Movie theaters discount rates on matinees to fill the seats during the day.

That is the beauty of the free market: sellers and buyers engaging in behaviors that produce the most profitable outcomes for both. Insurance companies have similar tools and motivations. Rates are discounted for a host of reasons: having multiple lines with the same company, a history of safe behavior, good credit ratings and the like.

The consumer has the ultimate protection: the market. If the market truly

does not want discounts, or doesn't want particular criteria used in determining criteria, the market will ensure companies exist that cater to that clientele.

It is important to remember two things. First, when a company establishes these discounting tools, it is for the purpose of attracting and keeping business. Second, when a consumer chooses to take part — most generally simply by doing business with the company — it is to get purpose of getting a better deal, whether saving a buck or getting service.

However, the Texas Department of Insurance is considering new rules that will prevent insurance companies from using credit scoring — one of a host of tools proven to demonstrate a person's "risk" status — to offer discounts.



B. L. Rollins

So who, exactly, will be protected? Exactly no one.

The problem is one of politics, not true consumer protection. Politicians have decided that they — not the seller and buyer — are better able to determine how prices and discounts are to be set.

In a grand instance of all-too-common political irony, government rules allegedly constructed to protect Texans may end up forcing 60 percent or more of us to pay higher insurance premiums.

Consumers will always get the best deal from the free market, not political meddling. When government gets in the way, consumers suffer. Some may call it protection. But for the rest of us, it is just a costly racket.

Brooke Leslie Rollins is the president of the Texas Public Policy Foundation, a non-profit, non-partisan research institution based in Austin.



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Briefs

From Page 1

conference, which stands for Bilingual Education Emphasizing Math and Science, begins on March 26 and has been themed "The Power of Two Languages." The San Elizario presentation is titled "Ideas y Estrategias Para Ayudarle a Sus Hijos a Desarrollar la Lectura con Actividades Construidas en el Hogar." For more information contact Josie Campos at 872-3939 ext. 3591.

■ Animal health officials are initiating a targeted disease surveillance plan for poultry flocks in and around Gonzales County to ensure that avian influenza (AI) is eradicated from Texas. A flock of nearly 7,000 broiler chickens were destroyed Feb. 21 after the H5N2 strain of AI was confirmed Feb. 19 in several birds from the flock. The H5N2 AI strain has not been shown to cause human disease or to compromise food safety and is not the same AI strain that has caused disease and death loss in poultry and disease in some persons in more than 10 Asian countries. AI is a res-

piratory disease of birds that usually is transmitted by bird-to-bird contact. However, the virus may be in the feces of infected birds, and the disease can be spread to other sites if equipment, boots, clothing or tires are contaminated with infected manure.

■ Americas High School and the NMSU Choirs will perform *Requiem Mass* in a joint concert on March 5-6, 8 p.m. at NMSU's Music Center Recital Hall in Las Cruces during the Jack Ward Invitational Festival. For reserve seating and ticket information call 505-646-1933.

■ The Socorro High School NJROTC Air Rifle Team has been selected to participate in the NJROTC National Air Rifle Championship at Fort Benning, GA. March 23.

■ Desert Hills Elementary, in Horizon City, will hold registration for the 2004-05 school year for pre-kindergarten and kindergarten in the DHE cafeteria from 9 a.m. to noon and 1-3:30 p.m. on Monday, March 8, and on Tuesday March 9, with afternoon hours extended to 6 p.m. Information: 852-4881.

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Canutillo ISD board looks at term changes, parking at Damian

By Don Woodyard
Courier Staff Writer

CANUTILLO — The Canutillo ISD board of trustees met in regular session on Feb. 10, approving an election on May 15 for two positions on the board. Margarito Arellano and Gonzalo Garcia presently hold the positions.

Board member Sergio Coronado suggested lengthening the term of office from three to four years. Through town meetings, trustee Joe Villarreal wanted to get the input of the community before moving ahead with such a change. Larry Baskind, CISD's attorney, said he would research the legal aspects and ramifications of such an action and get back to the board.

Referring to school district budgets, superintendent Charles Hart said things are going to be tight — "tighter than they were last year," but "we will make it." Hart attended a conference of Texas school adminis-

trators and reported on a possible special legislative session in April to deal with school financing.

Funding also came up in a report by Dr. Pam Padilla, assistant superintendent for student performance. In response to a question from a board member, she expressed concern about finding funds for summer programs/activities for students.

She said the district is focusing on preparing students for upcoming TAKS (Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills) testing in March. "We are looking for strengths and weaknesses in the students."

"We are looking for those who need help and those who need to be challenged," she added.

There was lengthy discussion about limited parking and traffic congestion and the risk to students at Damian Elementary when parents come to pick them up in the afternoon. Principal Max Padilla assured board members, concerned about student safety, there was not a traffic problem. Presently, he

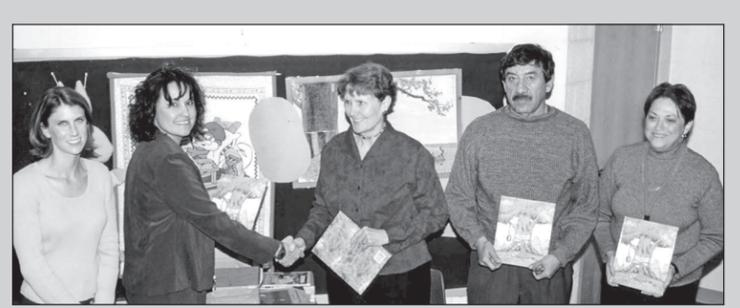
pointed out, it takes about eight to nine minutes for students and parents to clear the area after afternoon dismissal.

However, he said there could be a problem in the future with the planned 10-classroom addition to the school.

One suggestion for a temporary solution was to tear down a fence adjacent to the school to provide additional parking on unpaved, grassy area.

Representatives from Dimensions Architects and Banes Construction gave updates on the new high school. The pouring of concrete for foundations has begun.

There was discussion on developing a detailed master plan for construction and roadways around the new high school site. It would be a plan that would facilitate entities and agencies working in concert. This would include El Paso Community College, the Public Service Board, the city and county as well as the Texas Department of Transportation.



UPPER VALLEY — Canutillo ISD elementary school libraries have also received the special book, *Happy's Special Doctor* which discusses the responsibilities of pet care and promotes veterinary professions, in commemoration of the 100th anniversary of the Texas Veterinary Medical Association. Shown in photo from left are local veterinarians Dr. Misty Callaham and Dr. Margie Zavala, a 1985 graduate of Canutillo High School; Becky Rood, Damian ES librarian; Max Padilla, Damian ES principal; and Martha Veale, CISD Technology director.

Book

From Page 1

says Navar, adding that pets need adequate housing, food, water and vaccinations against illness.

After the presentation, Gearhart and Navar took questions from students. Based on the questions — many of which concerned turtles and snakes — what did Gearhart learn? He smiled. "I learned that I need to brush up on some of my exotic pets."

Donations are also being made to other school districts in the region.

president of the El Paso association. "We also want to give them some exposure to the veterinary field, and we're targeting children from kindergarten through third grade. We're the only veterinary medical association that came up with the idea of donating the books,"

Tornillo elementary students make presence known at district UIL competition

TORNILLO — Lots of cheering and beaming faces filled the Tornillo Elementary School cafeteria as UIL awards were presented as part of the District's February 25 Board Meeting.

Principals Severo Alcoset, Jose Pedroza, and UIL Academic Coordinator Bea Flores, along with the help of Board President Carol Escarciga, presented over 50 awards to students who placed at the annual UIL competition, held Feb. 20 at Alpine, Texas.

Despite the long drive to Alpine, every Tornillo student made the first round cuts, and competed in the final round competitions. "Our students tried very hard, and it paid off," said Alcoset. TIS Principal Jose Pedroza agrees with Alcoset, adding "Our teachers also worked very hard coaching our students to succeed at this year's event."

Events where Tornillo students particularly excelled include 5th grade Spelling, where Priscilla Orozco placed first; Kinsleigh Vranish, second; and Andrew Garcia third; the 4th/5th grade Art Team placed third; Selena Diaz placed first in 3rd Oral Reading; and Myra Ochoa placed first in Spanish Storytelling, Tiny Tot division.

Paul Vranish, District Superintendent, concluded the awards ceremony by thanking parents, students, and the UIL Coaches for their dedication, support and commitment.

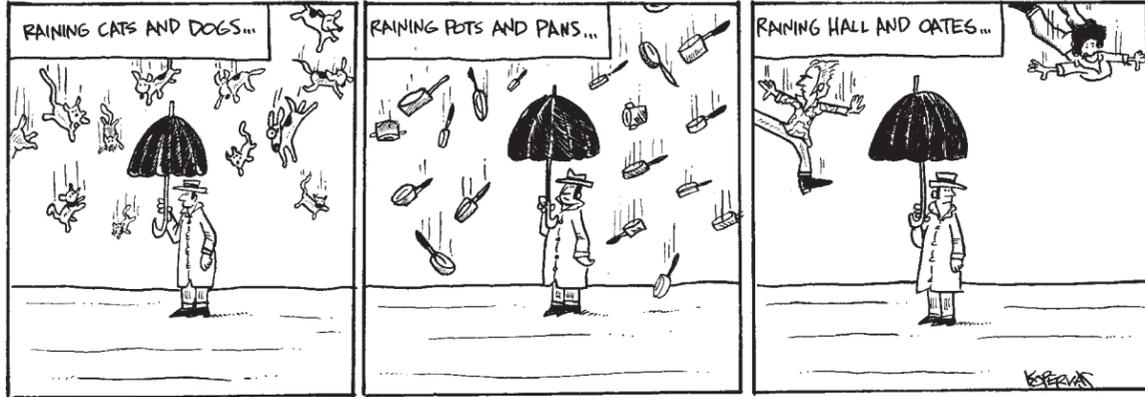


Tornillo Independent School District Statement of Revenues, Expenditures and Changes in Fund Balance Governmental Funds For the Year Ended August 31, 2003

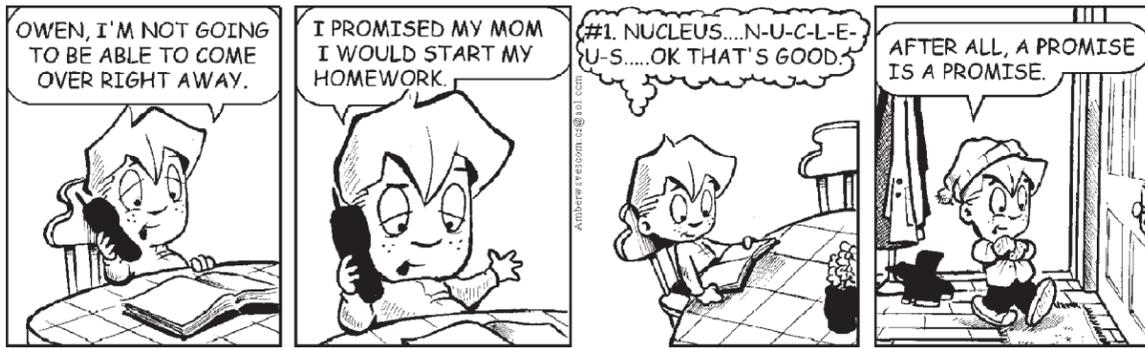
Data Control Codes		10 General Fund	Other Funds	Total Governmental Funds
REVENUES:				
5700	Total Local and Intermediate Sources	\$ 1,397,844	\$ 93,500	\$ 1,491,344
5800	State Program Revenues	6,344,607	1,020,731	7,365,338
5900	Federal Program Revenues	516,367	817,558	1,333,925
5020	Total Revenues	8,258,818	1,931,789	10,190,607
EXPENDITURES:				
Current:				
0011	Instruction	3,449,464	923,347	4,372,811
0012	Instructional Resources and Media Services	191,471	5,420	196,891
0013	Curriculum and Instructional Staff Development	29,231	99,187	128,418
0021	Instructional Leadership	164,970	3,041	168,011
0023	School Leadership	427,659	14,915	442,574
0031	Guidance, Counseling and Evaluation Services	114,204	17,919	132,123
0033	Health Services	88,475	3,040	91,515
0034	Student (Pupil) Transportation	149,739	1,097	150,836
0035	Food Services	449,936	34,613	484,549
0036	Cocurricular/Extracurricular Activities	265,992	1,014	267,006
0041	General Administration	426,244	6,242	432,486
0051	Plant Maintenance and Operations	829,114	20,128	849,242
0052	Security and Monitoring Services	157,102	6,338	163,440
0053	Data Processing Services	183,002	9,010	192,012
0061	Community Services	751	—	751
Debt Service:				
0071	Debt Service - Principal on long-term debt	21,331	265,000	286,331
0072	Debt Service - Interest on long-term debt	3,988	549,629	553,617
0073	Debt Service -Bond Issuance Cost and Fees	—	3,617	3,617
Intergovernmental:				
0091	Contracted Instructional Services Between	—	54,825	54,825
6030	Total Expenditures	6,952,673	2,018,382	8,971,055
1100	Excess (Deficiency) of Revenues Over (Under) Expenditures	1,306,145	(86,593)	1,219,552
OTHER FINANCING SOURCES (USES):				
7915	Transfers In	264,050	39,517	303,567
8911	Transfers Out (Use)	(303,567)	—	(303,567)
7080	Total Other Financing Sources (Uses)	(39,517)	—	39,517
1200	Net Change in Fund Balances	1,266,628	(47,076)	1,219,552
0100	Fund Balance — September 1 (Beginning)	1,598,005	167,371	1,765,376
3000	Fund Balance — August 31 (Ending)	\$ 2,864,633	\$ 145,824	\$ 2,984,928

Comix

OUT ON A LIMB By Gary Kopervas



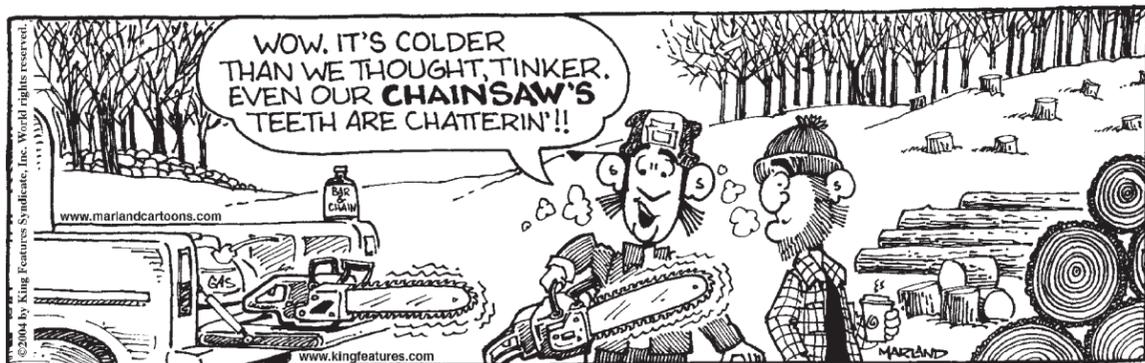
AMBER WAVES By Dave T. Phipps



THE SPATS By Jeff Pickering



R.F.D. By Mike Marland



Beware of exploding whales

By Don Flood

Do you know if your town has a Whale Emergency Plan (WEP)?

Does your family have an evacuation and communication plan in the event of an exploding whale emergency?

These and other questions are more relevant now following the recent explosion of a 50-ton sperm whale on the streets of Taiwan.

The explosion — in case you want the gory details, and you know you do — was caused by gases that formed within the body of a beached whale.

As the whale was being transported through town to a lab, it exploded, causing a scene so gross and disgusting that it's being considered as a centerpiece for a Super Bowl halftime show.

(You might want to be on the lookout this summer, especially since you might see a few gaseous beached whales yourself, particularly after they've eaten a lunch of soda and chili dogs.)

The first thing concerned citizens need to do is to call their local officials and ask them about the town's WEP.

Ask them about how many dead whales are being transported through town at this moment. (Many will pretend not to know. Some may even pretend not to understand the question.)

Many towns lack rules regarding the transporting of gas-filled beached whales through town. Nor are there adequate rules about carrying a concealed whale.

Of course, I realize that some of you may not be worried about exploding whales.

They're about as likely and as dangerous, you say, as a NERF BALL EMERGENCY.

Funny you should bring that up. Consider this absolutely true

fact.

Following reports of various facial injuries, the Consumer Product Safety Commission recently issued a recall for Nerf balls.

That's right, Nerf balls, the softest, safest balls in existence. You can even play with them in the house!

(But, for more fun, wait till Mom's not home and play with a baseball and bat.)

Well, folks, we are managing to hurt ourselves with Nerf balls!

Oh yes, I know what you're thinking. These are a special, lethal form of Nerf balls. They're Nerf footballs, if you can imagine anything so deadly.

(At press time, Nerf footballs had not been found in Iraq. Furthermore, the Bush administration now concedes, it's unlikely that any will be found.)

The Nerf footballs have, according to the story, a "hard interior plastic frame that poses a safety hazard," thus making them too dangerous for poodle dogs, members of Congress and all Americans both above and below the age of five.

In general, health experts say, Nerf footballs represent a hazard when "the football is shoved all the way up the nostrils" or "rammed into the retina."

Obviously, they should have come with warnings and helmets and safety goggles, plus times and locations for special training classes.

But no, they were just thrown into the marketplace, meaning innocent victims will now have to spend the rest of their lives trying to file suit and score a few million bucks — so they can lie around all day like beached whales.

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Classified Ads

LEGAL

Invitation to Bid
Texas Bollweevil Eradication Foundation, Inc. is soliciting bids for the manual application of pink bollworm pheromone ropes. Ropes will be tied to cotton plants at an approximate rate of 200 ropes per acre at certain stages of growth. A minimum of 40 persons over a four-week period will be needed for this activity. Applications of ropes in the El Paso and Trans Pecos areas will begin in late May or early June. Bidders must furnish the Foundation Workers Compens-

sation coverage prior to contract approval. Bids will be accepted through March 10, 2004. For more information and detailed instructions, please contact the local Foundation office at (877) 765-2139, or the Foundation Headquarters office at (800) 687-1212, ext. 3124. WTCC: 03/04/04

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Pension

From Page 6

requirement and that is, the Texas Retirement System must consider this subsequent employment in the computation of your benefit. At the time you file for social security benefits, social security will require proof that subsequent employment is actually covered under Social Security and Texas Retirement System and that it was considered by Texas Retirement System in figuring your pension. At the moment there is a Bill that recently cleared the House of Senate and House of Representatives that will change the "last day of employment exemption" from one day to five years. This means that in order to be exempted from Government Pension Offset, an individual would have to work under employment covered under both Social Security and Texas Retirement System for 5 years before they retired.

The last day of employment exemption applies to Government Pension Offset only when an individual is considering applying for spousal benefits. Another point of interest is participation in Deferred Retirement Option Plan (DROP), although member's contributions to TRS continue, they are deposited into a special account and are not refundable. Therefore since no TRS service or compensation credit

is earned during DROP, these individuals are not considered to be in a position which was covered and included in the period upon which the pension was based. At the same time, individuals that participate under DROP are not able to participate under the last day of employment exemption.

Neither of the provisions applies until an individual retires. There are many situations in which individuals reach their full retirement age (for those born after 1960 age 67) and yet they still continue to work. With life expectancy now at 88, we are finding more and more individuals remaining in the work force. In the year 2000, legislation was passed which eliminated the work retirement test for individuals who reach full retirement age. Under present regulations, if you are under 65, an individual can earn up to \$11640 a year and still receive their social security benefits. The year they attain full retirement age, they can earn as much as \$31,080 up to the full retirement month. Once they are full retirement age they are not limited as to how much they can earn.

For more information log onto our website, www.socialsecurity.gov, call our toll-free number at 1-800-772-1213 or visit your local Social Security office. If you have any questions that you would like to have answered, please mail them to the Social Security Office, 11111 Gateway West, Attn: Ray Vigil, El Paso, Texas 79935.

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WRAM

From Page 1

into a studio was two digital camcorders, two tripods, an audio/video mixer, some microphones and a computer for the Power Point.

An old play set — painted by Moises Hernandez for a PTO meeting last year — is being used as one of the studio's backdrops. Stewart's Photography donated a colorful outdoor school setting, previously used as a backdrop for school pictures.

"It all just feeds into the mixer," Zavala said. "The feed goes into the classrooms through the in-house distribution system."

Zavala said that the roughly 16 students who help put on the production needed to learn how to use the equipment before WRAM could hit the airwaves, so he put them through a month of training.

Juan Meza, 10, is a camera operator for WRAM and says that he would like to pursue television in the future — but not in front of the camera.

"When I get in front of the camera, I get embarrassed," Meza said. "I'm in control when I'm behind the camera."

His classmate, 10-year-old Yvonne Aguilar, also works the camera as well as the computer. She says that she watches the news differently thanks to her experience at WRAM.

"We can get more ideas by watching the

news on television," she said.

Aguilar has no aspirations about being in television when she grows up — she wants to be a lawyer — but who knows? She may end up on Court TV — the experience is good for her as well as her classmates. According to Zavala, the project has lifted the morale of the school — he enjoys seeing other classes watch their monitors in the mornings. Sylvia Hopp agrees.

"It is so exciting seeing the students actually produce and direct our WRAM station," she said. "They have embraced the program, the technology and the attitude of being professional programmers. The parents have expressed their support and hope this initiative encourages their children in some type of broadcasting/technology career."



WEATHER

AccuWeather.com

SEVEN-DAY FORECAST FOR EL PASO

THURSDAY	THUR. NIGHT	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY
Partly sunny; windy in the afternoon.	Clear, windy and chilly.	Very windy with a good deal of sunshine.	Sunny to partly cloudy.	Sunshine and some clouds.	Partly sunny.	Times of clouds and sun.	A good deal of sunshine.
▲ 58°	▼ 40°	▲ 63° ▼ 38°	▲ 66° ▼ 39°	▲ 70° ▼ 43°	▲ 72° ▼ 45°	▲ 72° ▼ 46°	▲ 74° ▼ 48°

UV INDEX Statistics for noon.

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

Thursday	6	Moderate
Friday	7	High
Saturday	7	High
Sunday	7	High
Monday	6	Moderate
Tuesday	6	Moderate
Wednesday	7	High

REAL FEEL TEMP™

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

Thursday	46°
Friday	51°
Saturday	58°
Sunday	62°
Monday	68°
Tuesday	64°
Wednesday	71°

AGRICULTURE

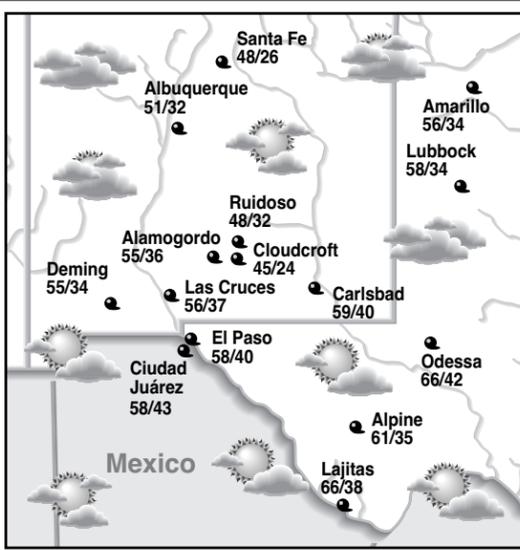
High pressure building over Mexico will bring dry conditions to the region Thursday. With a storm moving through northern Texas, it will be rather windy, with winds from the west-southwest at 15-25 mph. It will remain windy and sunny on Friday as the ridge of high pressure strengthens.

All forecasts and maps provided by AccuWeather, Inc. ©2004

TEXAS WEATHER

Anthony	58	40
Canutillo	58	40
Clint	58	40
E. Montana	58	40
Fabens	58	40
Horizon	59	41
San Elizario	56	38
Socorro	57	39
Tornillo	58	40
Vinton	58	40

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	51/32/pc	51/31/pc	55/33/s	60/37/pc	63/38/pc
Atlanta	74/56/pc	74/56/c	68/48/pc	66/44/pc	63/41/pc
Atlantic City	54/38/c	64/48/c	60/40/c	53/31/pc	53/28/pc
Austin/San Antonio	73/51/c	75/46/s	70/42/s	65/41/s	68/43/pc
Baltimore	58/46/c	68/48/c	62/38/c	54/34/pc	52/30/pc
Boston	48/40/pc	56/42/c	50/40/c	44/34/c	45/27/pc
Chicago	48/38/c	46/28/c	40/26/c	40/28/pc	44/22/pc
Dallas/Ft. Worth	74/49/r	67/45/pc	63/40/s	63/44/s	67/40/pc
Denver	39/23/c	48/23/pc	49/25/pc	57/29/pc	55/29/pc
Flagstaff	40/22/pc	44/20/s	50/22/s	54/26/pc	54/32/c
Houston	78/54/c	74/52/pc	72/50/pc	70/44/pc	68/46/s
Kansas City	45/32/c	37/30/c	46/24/c	53/33/s	51/25/pc
Las Vegas	64/42/pc	66/44/s	68/46/s	70/48/s	71/48/pc
Miami	81/71/pc	84/72/s	84/72/pc	84/70/pc	82/66/pc
Minneapolis	38/18/c	28/18/c	33/20/c	40/20/pc	40/15/pc
New Orleans	80/66/pc	76/60/c	75/56/pc	70/53/pc	68/51/s
New York City	48/45/c	61/46/c	55/37/c	49/37/c	50/32/pc
Philadelphia	54/46/c	65/48/c	60/41/c	50/36/pc	54/32/pc
Phoenix	64/48/pc	67/48/s	74/51/s	76/54/pc	78/60/pc
Portland	52/38/c	50/36/c	52/38/pc	55/39/pc	56/46/pc
San Francisco	60/45/pc	61/47/pc	61/48/s	62/49/pc	64/56/pc
Seattle	50/38/c	48/40/c	50/40/pc	51/37/pc	52/46/pc
Tucson	57/40/pc	63/40/s	70/46/s	73/48/s	76/51/pc
Washington, DC	60/48/c	70/50/c	64/42/c	56/38/pc	54/35/pc

Weather (W): s-sunny, pc-partly cloudy, c-cloudy, sh-showers, t-thunderstorms, r-rain, sf-snow flurries, sn-snow, i-ice.

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