



NEWSBRIEFS

Library concerts

The El Paso Library concert series will next feature soprano Erika Wueschner and pianist David Shimoni, of the Piatigorsky Foundation of New York, performing in classical music concerts at several El Paso Public Library facilities in January, according to Library spokesman Jack Galindo. The concerts, sponsored by the Friends of El Paso's Public Libraries, are free and open to the public. The concerts also allow patrons of the arts to enjoy live classical music with their families in the casual and intimate confines of the Public Library.

The concert schedule includes:

- Jan. 6, Saturday, Richard Burges Library, 9600 Dyer, 3 p.m.
- Jan. 7, Sunday, Main Library, 501 N. Oregon, 2 p.m.
- Jan. 9, Tuesday, Dorris Van Doren, 551 Redd Rd., 6 p.m.
- Jan. 10, Wednesday, Canutillo High School, 10:30 a.m.
- Jan. 10, Wednesday, Westside Library, 125 Belvidere, 6:30 p.m.
- Jan. 12, Friday, Memorial Park Library, 3200 Copper, 4 p.m.

Wueschner recently she performed the role of Lucia in Hindemith's *The Long Christmas Dinner* with the Lincoln Center Theatre Lab at the esteemed Vivian Beaumont Theatre. She has appeared as Mimi in Puccini's *La Boheme* with both Opera of the Pacific and the Brevard Music Festival. A recent graduate of the Juilliard School, she was a member of Juilliard's Opera Theatre where she performed the roles of Contessa in *Le Nozze di Figaro* and Donna Anna in *Don Giovanni*. Equally at home as a recitalist, she was recently featured as soprano soloist in Mozart's Mass in c at St. John's Smith Square, London. For more information on the artists, log on at <http://www.piatigorskyfoundation.org/index.cfm>. For information on the concerts contact any local public library.

Pruning experience

The trees in your yard need a haircut just like you do so they can grow healthy and strong. Learn how to give your own trees a "haircut" with *How to Prune Trees* from the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Easy-to-follow diagrams and explanations give you directions on everything from clearing away dead branches and keeping tree branches away from power lines to tips on the best time to prune your trees. This booklet costs \$3.75. For a copy, send name, address, and a check or money order for to the Federal Citizen Information Center, Dept. 119P, Pueblo, CO 81009. Or call toll-free 1 (888) 878-3256 and ask for Item 119P. Have your credit card handy. And visit www.pueblo.gsa.gov to place your order online or to read or print this and hundreds of other FCIC publications for free.

Affinity Fraud

Don't let the fancy name confuse you —
See BRIEFS, Page 3

Before deciding to retire from your job, stay home a week and watch daytime television.

— Quips & Quotes



— Photo courtesy El Paso Zoo

Demolition man

BRINGIN' DOWN THE HOUSE — Snow didn't stop demolition from starting Tuesday on the Reptile House in the Americas section of the El Paso Zoo. This building housed snakes — both poisonous

and nonpoisonous, and other reptiles such as a gila monster, red sliders and an alligator snapping turtle. The reptile building will be replaced and should be ready in about a year. The \$1.2 million cost for demolition and rebuilding is being funded by the 2000 Quality of Life Bond money for the Western Expansion projects.

— Contributed by Liz Kern

Canutillo Middle School families benefit from operation backfield

By Kim Guzman
Special to the Courier

UPPER VALLEY — Families in the Canutillo Independent School District (CISD) benefited from Operation Backfield-Guardian Angels, an organization of civilian police officers from Fort Bliss who collect various household items year round and donate them to El Paso area families in need.

Officer Herbert Baker, Lieutenant Todd

Pidone, and Officer Hector Hernandez, members of Operation Backfield, recently delivered a truckload of various household goods, clothing, and shoes to Canutillo Middle School to help those families who were affected by the floods in August.

"We receive donations year round from places as far away as Arizona and deliver them to families needing assistance. We are able to help even with specific items such as furniture as long as we know what is needed," said Lt. Pidone.



— Photo courtesy Canutillo ISD

LIGHTENING THE LOAD — Fort Bliss civilian police officers worked with CMS students who helped unload donated items provided through Operation Backfield. In photo, in back row from left, is Officer Hector Hernandez, Lieutenant Todd Pidone, Sylvia Martinez, CMS parent liaison, Officer Herbert Baker, and Mike Dillard, CMS Assistant Principal; front row, from left, are CMS sixth grade students Josue Escobedo, Robert Graft, Carmen Renovato, Stephanie Corral, and Daniel Morales.

EPWU water production falls to 20-year low

By Hector Gonzalez
Special to the Courier

EL PASO COUNTY — El Paso Water Utilities produced 35.5 billion gallons of water in 2006, reducing production to a level last seen in the late 1980s, according to a EPWU release.

EPWU serves 97 percent of El Paso County through retail or wholesale water service. In 1987, the Utility produced 36.6 billion gallons of water to serve the county's 558,000 residents. The county's population reached 752,000 this year, reflecting an additional 194,000 residents, but 1.1 billion fewer gallons of water were produced.

Reducing water production saves capital and operating costs because it requires fewer chemicals and less power. At the same time, the Utility defers the cost of building infrastructure that would be needed to accommodate higher demand.

General Manager Ed Archuleta said the reduced production is due to a number of factors, including incentive programs, enforcement of an aggressive water conservation ordinance, consumer education and expansion of the reclaimed water system. The average daily water use, once nearly 230 gallons per person, fell to 136 gallons per person this year.

The increasing block rate structure also encourages customers to reduce water use. While the rates are competitive with those in other areas of the arid Southwest, the rate structure encourages conservation in months when large volumes of water are used for outdoor irrigation and evaporative coolers.

Water conservation is a key component in the El Paso Water Utilities long-term water resource management plan, Archuleta said. The Utility's goal is to continue to reduce water use through education and technology.



One perspective

By Francis Shrum

Stocks and potatoes

We used to put people who committed public offenses into stocks with their heads and hands exposed to the street. Then their neighbors could walk by and pelt them with rotten fruit, mud, dung and spittle.

The garbage-throwing part has apparently been eliminated but justice has otherwise made a full circle. More and more judges seem to be inclined to make examples of people who break so-called "lesser" laws that create cost and inconvenience for the public.

According to the Associated Press, a 33-year-old Georgia man was sentenced to wear a sign stating "I Am a Liar" for 10 hours on a busy roadway after he admitted filing a false police report. He told AP that he had never been more embarrassed or humiliated. The charges stemmed from an August incident in which the man told police he was kidnapped and beaten by two men. Later he admitted to making up the abduction scenario, and police say they don't know what really happened to him. The judge wasn't amused.

In another Georgia case, a 23-year-old woman was sentenced to walk up and down on the sidewalk in front of the courthouse wearing a sign that read "I Am A Thief. I Stole What You Worked For." The sentence was part of her probation for burglary.

The upswing in sentences of this kind illustrates a desire by judges to spotlight offenses that would otherwise be punishable by a figurative slap on the wrist which allows the offender to slip quietly away without the public ever knowing what he or she had done.

A Municipal Court Judge in Ohio,

Michael Cicconetti, seems to be gaining quite a rep for handing out "creative" sentences for low-level crimes. According to the AP, Cicconetti has agreed to significantly reduce the sentence for a man convicted of shooting a dog in the head if the man agrees to wear a dog costume and speak on safety issues while visiting five elementary schools in his community.

This kind of justice makes a lot of sense to me — the sentence fits the crime and forces offenders to face up to their actions rather than living off the taxpayers during a few days jail sentence or ponying up cash they can borrow and not repay.

Cicconetti has also sentenced speeding motorists to work as crossing guards, while in South Carolina a man was sentenced by Magistrate Judge Jeff Bailey to stand in front of a grocery store with a handmade sign that read: "I Am Not Handicapped. I Just Parked There, Sorry."

The offender told the magistrate he couldn't afford the time off from work for a 30-day jail sentence or the \$325 fine. He noted that admitting his offense so publicly was better than paying the fine. He also seemed to take the punishment to heart. "I know I won't do it no more," he told the AP.

The sad side of this public display of crime and punishment is an admission that our justice system, like our education system, is having to absorb more and more of the teaching aspect of society that our families are neglecting. Offenders who pull these kinds of stunts were likely never made to face up to much of anything

See POTATOES, Page 3



View from here By Brooke Dollens Terry

End-of-course exams better measure than TAKS

For too many Texas students, a high school diploma signifies little more than a certificate of attendance.

While today's high-tech, global economy demands students to have a rigorous education and a high level of skills to succeed, too many students are graduating without the basic skills needed in the "real world." Part of the problem is a poor assessment for measuring subject-area mastery and student progress in high school. With billions of dollars spent each year on Texas schools, students and taxpayers deserve better.

End-of-course exams can move us in the right direction.

Inflated grades, inflated course titles, and lack of rigor in the high school curriculum fail to prepare Texas students for success in college or a career. Regrettably, students in disadvantaged and low socio-economic areas tend to suffer the most.

An analysis by the U.S. Department of Education found that students in poor schools typically receive As for work that would earn a C- in wealthy schools. Imagine the

surprise and frustration when these "honor" students get to college and are placed in remedial reading and math classes!

Some teachers admit they are pressured to inflate grades. According to an American Federation of Teachers' survey, 30 percent of American teachers admitted to feeling pressure to give higher grades than deserved and to decrease the difficulty and amount of work assigned.

Grade inflation does not benefit the student; instead, it gives students an inaccurate representation of their skills and abilities and sets them up for future frustration.

As schools enroll more students in advanced courses, course inflation is also becoming a problem. According to the National Center for Educational Accountability, "high percentages of students receiving credit for advanced courses are not learning the content implied by their course titles." Their research found a startling 60 percent of low-income Texas students who received course credit for Geometry and Algebra II failed

the Texas exit exam covering Algebra I and Geometry.

Texas must ensure that students are given an accurate assessment of their comprehension and skill levels in each subject area as they progress through school to immediately identify where and when improvement is needed. The current testing system, which assesses students in the spring of 11th grade with a multi-subject cumulative test, does not provide parents and students with timely information to identify and remediate problems.

Texas should replace the TAKS test with a series of end-of-course exams in math, science, social studies and language arts in each grade of high school. End-of-course exams are statewide finals given at the end of each course to provide an in-depth measure of comprehension and skill attainment. As a result, educators can evaluate subject mastery, determine if the student is ready for the next level of the

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Potatoes

From Page 2

while they were growing up. It may be the first times they were ever called on the carpet to actually admit to wrongdoing out loud — or to apologize.

Our jails and prisons are full of offenders who would not be there if, as kids, they had been given age-appropriate responsibilities and standards of behavior.

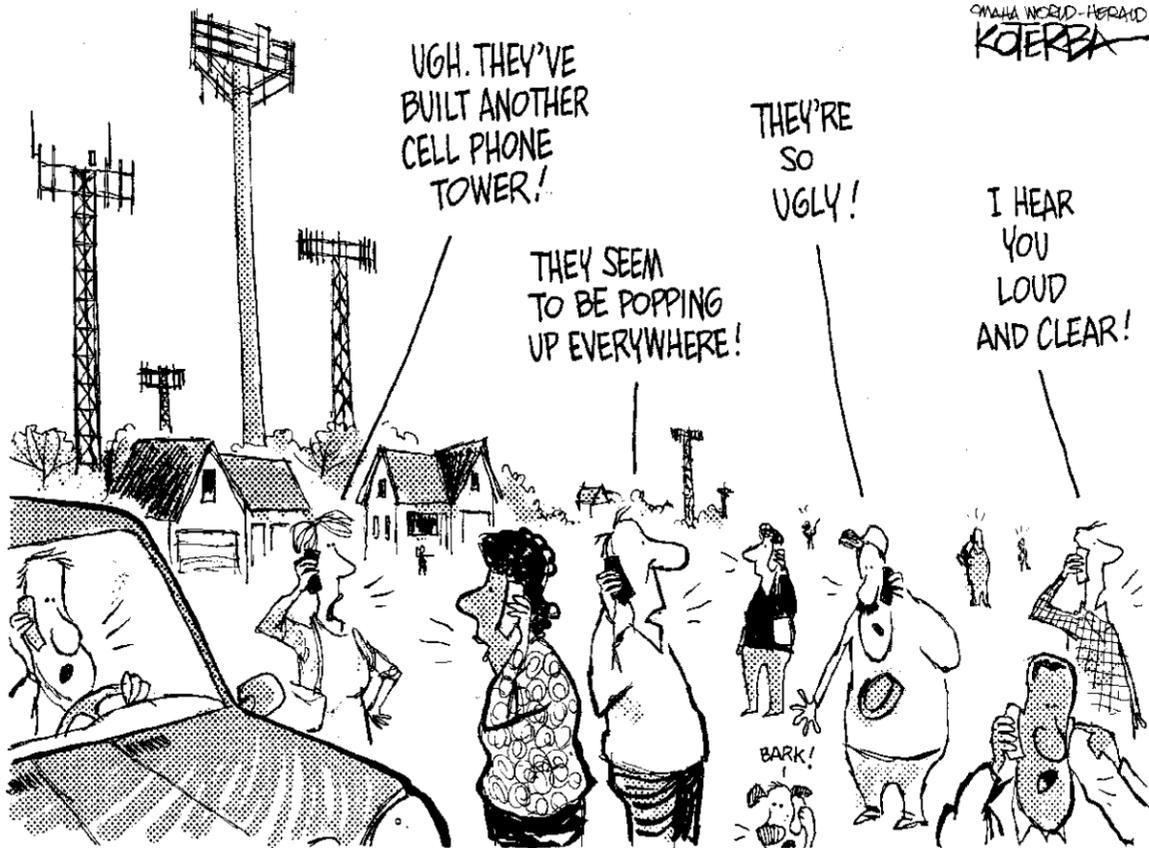
Then they wouldn't be inclined to behave like children when they are supposedly grown up. A good illustration of this is the potato lady.

A grocery store manager in Ohio was hit in the head with a 10-pound sack of potatoes by a woman who

was angry because she didn't want to wait in line for her turn at the cash register. This woman, 59, didn't like the manager's response to her complaint and as he turned to walk away, she struck him in the back of the head.

Now, this particular offense is fraught with creative sentencing possibilities for some enterprising judge who might get to hear the case. Should she be sentenced to growing a potato garden for the homeless? Serving up potatoes for Thanksgiving dinner at the community soup kitchen?

Better yet, she could be sentenced to sit on a sofa with her head and hands in stocks, while the fellow she assaulted lobs hands full of mashed potatoes at her. Now that's a real couch potato!



Briefs

From Page 1

'Affinity Fraud' is nothing more complicated than investment scams targeted at a specific group of people by someone who claims to be part of that group. Although the returns can sound solid, it pays to be wary. More than 100 Texas seniors lost \$2.5 million to fraudsters who encouraged them to liquidate their retirement savings and invest them in securities with higher returns. In another scheme, a group of 375 mostly African-American

investors were told they could get profits of up to 300 percent with no risk to their principal. They lost at least \$2.8 million. This type of fraud is real, and it can happen to you. Learn how to avoid becoming a victim with Affinity Fraud from the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission. For your free copy, send your name and address to the Federal Citizen Information Center, Dept. 592P, Pueblo, CO 81009. Or call toll-free 1 (888) 878-3256, and ask for Item 592P. And visit www.pueblo.gsa.gov to place your order online or to read or print this and hundreds of other FCIC publications for free.

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Reyes Reports By U.S. Rep. Silvestre Reyes

AMT needs amended, not eliminated

The first few weeks of January will certainly not allow House

Americans must pay, no matter how many deductions would otherwise apply.

Although the logic behind AMT may seem sound, problems have arisen over the years preventing the AMT from fulfilling its original aim. Unlike the standard income tax, the AMT is not indexed with inflation. In other words, as people's wages increase, more and more taxpayers begin to be liable for the AMT. What was originally intended only for those with more than enough money to spare has increasingly begun to affect upper-middle class and middle-class taxpayers who often feel the pinch from the extra tax requirement.

In the past, Congress has addressed this problem by passing legislation — referred to as a "patch" — to raise the minimum income cut-off level that exempts taxpayers from the AMT. If no action is taken, however, the current exemption level of \$62,550 for joint returns will return to its previous level of \$45,000. This will mean that married couples

whose incomes exceed \$45,000 may be liable to pay AMT. Many of these people should clearly not be targeted by a tax provision intended only for our nation's richest taxpayers.

If the AMT exemption level remains where it is, the number of families liable for the AMT will skyrocket in the coming years. In 2004, for example, Texans filed only 118,000 AMT returns, but if no action is taken, this number is expected to grow to 865,000 in 2007. In El Paso alone, the number of people liable for the AMT in 2007 is likely to exceed 30,000. Many of the El Paso families that will be affected simply do not have the income to support paying a tax designed for the very rich. Further aggravating the problems raised by the AMT is the fact that filing an AMT return in addition to one's standard income tax return is often a very complicated and time-consuming process.

Unfortunately, like many of the issues facing our nation, there is no easy solution to the AMT dilemma.

Democrats much time for recuperation from the holidays, as we will quickly begin to address the many issues that Speaker Nancy Pelosi has identified as our top priorities for the new year. One item sure to make everyone's list of New Year's resolutions is amending the Alternative Minimum Tax (AMT), a tax provision in dire need of repair that will soon affect many thousands of El Pasoans if action is not taken.

The original thinking behind the AMT was straightforward and well-intended. Before the AMT, it was possible for many of the nation's wealthiest citizens to avoid paying much of the taxes they owed by taking advantage of deductions and incentives. Congress enacted the predecessor to the current AMT in 1969 to establish a required minimum amount of tax that the wealthiest



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Simply eliminating the tax provision would result in a drastic reduction in tax revenue that our nation would likely not be able to afford. Some have argued that eliminating the provision would cost the nation \$1 trillion over a 10-year period beginning in 2006. There are, however, measures that can be taken, short of eliminating the AMT, which will help to realign the tax provision with its intended aims. My colleagues in the

House and I will fully investigate these measures, and I hope that we will find a solution that will amend the AMT in a way that is fair for middle-class taxpayers. Those taxpayers with the highest incomes should certainly pay their fair share of the nation's tax burden, but Congress must also ensure that middle-class workers are not made to pay the excessive and overly complicated AMT that was never intended for them.

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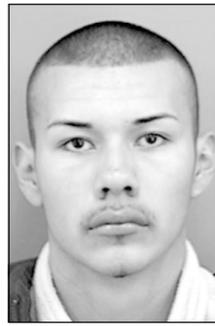
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Man charged with firing gun at eastside night club

EAST EL PASO COUNTY — El Paso County Sheriff's deputies responded to a report of shots being fired at a night club east of Horizon City in the county on Dec. 30, about 1:30 a.m.

Deputies subsequently arrested Jorge Luis Diaz, 18, and charged him with aggravated assault with a deadly weapon and deadly conduct. His bond is set at \$35,000. He remained in the El Paso County Downtown Detention Facility as of 2 p.m. on Dec. 30, 2006.

As units responded to the scene, Horizon City Nite Club at 14831 Horizon Blvd., dispatchers informed deputies a white Ford van had left the scene and the passenger had a weapon.



Jorge Luis Diaz

Horizon City Police spotted a vehicle near the area matching the description of the van and initiated a traffic stop. The vehicle and two occupants were detained until deputies arrived on scene.

Deputies on site at Horizon City Nite Club confirmed that a suspect pointed a handgun at a victim but no one was injured. The suspect matched the description of one of the two men in the van.

The weapon was recovered by Crime Scene Technicians in a desert area away from the crime scene. Horizon City Police arrested the driver of the van and charged him with driving while intoxicated. No information on that individual is available at this time.

"Sheriff's deputies and Horizon City Police did a great job in solving this case so quickly. Good communication from a witness talking to dispatchers, and the immediate response by law enforcement made the difference," said Rick Glancey, Director of Public Affairs for the El Paso County Sheriff's Office.

Town of Horizon City PUBLIC NOTICE

A PUBLIC HEARING will be held at **6:30 p.m. on Tuesday, January 9, 2007** during the **Regular City Council Meeting** at City Hall, 14999 Darrington Road, Horizon City, Texas. Purpose of the public hearing is to allow any interested persons to appear and comment regarding the proposed ordinance:

1) Ordinance 0156 — Rezoning property from R-2 Residential to R-GV Zero Side Setbacks, Residential. Being a portion of Section 30, Block 78, Township 3, Tracts 1B, 8, 10 and a portion of Section 31, Block 78, Township 3, Texas and Pacific Railroad Surveys, El Paso County, Horizon City, Texas. Area consists of approximately 20.028 acres.

This public hearing was originally scheduled for Tuesday, December 19, 2006; however, due to a lack of a quorum the meeting was not conducted.

Those who are unable to attend may submit their views in writing to the City clerk at the above address or call (915) 852-1046. Accommodations for handicapped persons will be available; and individuals in need of special assistance for attending the hearing are encouraged to contact the City Clerk at 915-852-1046, forty-eight (48) hours prior to this meeting. Ordinances are always available for viewing or copying upon request from the City Clerk at the above address.

Sandra Sierra
City Clerk

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March 2, 1836: The Declaration of Independence is so grammatically flawed that another copy must be done.



"Declaration of In-Dependence?"
"Who penned this?"

Happy Bday TEXAS!

MARCH 2007

WARNING!
Yep, this calendar **STARTS MARCH 2nd** Texas Independence Day.

↓

You, good Texans know the New Year really **BEGINS** on Texas Independence Day!

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4	5 1835: The Alamo falls to Santa Anna's army.	6 1851: The bluebonnet is named the Texas State Flower.	7	8	9	10
11	12 1835: Cattle are branded as the Runaway Scrape begins.	13	14	15	16	17
18	19 1836: The Fanning Convention is held in Austin.	20	21	22	23	24 1836: The state constitution is signed.
25	26	27 1836: The Texas Declaration of Independence is signed.	28	29	30 1845: Texas is admitted to the Union.	31

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Here lies a fellow named Taylor... who rhymes quite well for a Sailor... but he now won't forget when he writes of Lafitte to be respectful and no Agitator!

Moore Texas by Roger T. Moore Jan. 1, 1819, Galveston Island: Jean Lafitte's pirates celebrate by writing "roasts" of each other.

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View from here By Todd Stottlemeyer

When 'Free Choice' means 'No Choice'

In every Congress, many laws are introduced that go nowhere, simply languishing in the process, particularly when proposed by the minority party. Now that control of Congress has flipped, several ideas that have been in legislative limbo are likely to be revived, and small businesses need to be concerned about two of these.

Labor-union organizers are pushing legislation that would make it easier for unions to be certified and represent employees in businesses of all sizes. The process they favor, known as card checks, is an attempt to bypass the long-held principle of

the secret ballot. The method is at the centerpiece of federal legislation known as the Employee Free Choice Act. Under current law, a business can voluntarily recognize unions based on card checks, but it's not required. This act would allow unions to choose a card-check campaign, rather than a secret-ballot election, effectively shutting employers out of the process. Further, a small business could find itself unionized in as little as 60 days.

America was built on the idea that true choice comes in the privacy of a voting booth. In a secret ballot, employees aren't subject to intimidation,

harassment or other coercion. In addition, the current election process guarantees companies a six-month period in which they are given an opportunity to discuss with their employees why they shouldn't join a union.

In the second instance, numerous groups are gearing up to expand the 1993 Family and Medical Leave Act to both increase benefits and to lower the number of employees that would force a business to comply with the act.

Currently, businesses with 50 or more employees are subject to FMLA. The act requires employers to provide up to 12 weeks of unpaid leave for reasons including family illness and maternity leave. However, legislation was introduced last year in both the House and Senate that requires companies with at least 15

employees to comply with the FMLA and to provide seven paid sick days a year. Paid leave would be required not just when workers are ill, but when family members are sick, or simply need to go to the doctor for checkups and tests.

Lowering the threshold imposes additional mandates on small businesses regardless of whether or not the employer can afford to keep a position open pending the return of the employee. Small-business employers want to do what's right for their employees, but they also need to keep their businesses running. It's just too great a burden for most small-business owners to keep a job open for long periods for even the most valued employee, a significant difference between small and large companies. Larger businesses simply have greater resources and can be more flexible.

The law also would interfere with the flexibility that small-business

owners offer — a critical factor when competing for employees. In fact, a recent poll conducted by the National Federation of Independent Business' Research Foundation revealed that 96 percent of independent business owners already provide flexible hours when personal situations arise, regardless of the firm's size. Small employers also are free to tighten their policies when an employee abuses benefits, or expand them when a situation merits special consideration.

Legislation on these two issues is likely to be introduced this spring and now have some momentum behind them. So small businesses face a tough fight. But we still have the choice now to make our voice heard on these important bills.

Todd Stottlemeyer is president and CEO of the National Federation of Independent Business in Washington, D.C.

You can protect your home and investment

By Rebecca Ewing
Special to the Courier

Now that housing prices are cooling off, you may be considering taking the plunge into home ownership. Whether you're buying a home for the first or the fifth time, the *Your Home, Your Investment* package from the Insurance Information Institute, FEMA, the Federal Reserve Board, and the Federal Citizen Information Center is sure to come in handy.

Unless you're Donald Trump, you'll be buying your new house using a mortgage. You may be considering one of the interest-only mortgages or adjustable rate mortgages that are so popular right now. These mortgages make your monthly payments smaller, but make sure you know all the terms and conditions before you get one. Use the *Mortgage Shopping Worksheet* in Interest-Only Mortgage Payments to record all the information you'll need to select the right mortgage, whether it's a traditional fixed-rate mortgage or an interest-only one.

You've probably thought about insurance for your new home. But did you know that traditional insurance policies don't cover damage caused by flooding? For about \$1 a day, flood insurance covers your belongings, your house or condominium, and many items in your basement. About 25 percent of claims come from outside high-risk flood areas, so flood insurance makes sense whether or not you live in an area at risk of flooding. The National Flood Insurance Guide has more information about the program, how to prevent flooding, and where to buy a policy.

When you're trying to decide how much insurance to buy for your new house, a home inventory makes it easier. Remembering where you bought your 10-year-old fridge and how much you paid may be a challenge. But once you've made the first list of what you own, how much it cost, and a basic description, adding to it in the future will be a cinch. Your Home Inventory has lots of suggestions for easy ways to organize and store your inventory, and it even has a handy checklist to get you started.

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Houston vs. UTEP
1/7 @ 7:05pm

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Barry Bonds will be the sports story of 2007

By Steve Escajeda
Special to the Courier

Now that 2007 is finally here, the disagreements as to what the 2006 sports story of the year will go on for the next week or so.

Some will say it was the incredible year put together by the Detroit Tigers, who lost 119 games just three years ago.

Some might think it was the year Tiger Woods had, once again, established himself as the world's best golfer. Or maybe it was the collapse of Phil Mickleson, who seemed on the verge of taking Tiger's crown away.

Some will say that the greatest sports moment was brought to us by 17-year old Jason McElwain, the autistic team manager, who was allowed to play on his high school team's final game of the season. Amazingly, McElwain hit six 3-point shots and finished with 20 points in just four minutes of play.

Some will say it was Vince Young's national championship touchdown against USC, or the ugliness of the Duke lacrosse rape case or the 81 points by Kobe Bryant, or the amazing run by George Mason University in the

NCAA Tournament.

Maybe it was the stupidity of France's Zinedine Zidane, their best (but not their smartest) soccer player who head-butted an Italian player in the World Cup championship game and helped lose his team the title after he was kicked out of the game.

It could be the incredible battle that Triple Crown contender, Barbaro, has put up after breaking his leg, and it could be the stripping of Floyd Landis' Tour de France title for taking all the wrong drugs.

Whatever the best story was, there's no doubt that 2006 was a great — and controversial — year for sports.

What I especially like are the surprises — the stories that you never see coming. You never know what the coming year will bring.

Sadly, though, there will be no surprises in 2007. The sports person and story of the year has already been determined. Only the exact date of the occurrence is still in question.

The person of 2007 will, of course, be Barry Bonds, and for many reasons.

First of all, the ample-headed Bonds will go into the Major League Baseball season just 21 home runs away from tying, and 22 home runs

from breaking, Hank Aaron's all-time record of 755.

That should be the story. Oh, but there is so much more.

At some time in 2007, Barry Bonds is going to make news of a very different sort.

We all know about the allegations of steroid abuse and human growth hormones. And so far, the San Francisco Giants' slugger has avoided any kind of penalty from professional baseball or the legal system for his alleged dirty deeds.

But it's apparent that Bonds will run out of luck in 2007.

The recent decision by an appeals court to allow the list of about 100 baseball players who tested positive for performance-enhancing drugs three years ago to be used as evidence in a federal investigation will be the beginning of a forgettable year for Bonds.

Bonds is also looking at possible charges for tax evasion for not declaring money he received from signing and selling promotional items. There's also talk of money laundering and evading federal banking laws.

The amazing thing is, Bonds continues to claim his innocence and some people continue

to believe him. The main reason I don't is because of the actions of his former trainer.

Greg Anderson is currently in prison for one reason and one reason only — protecting Barry Bonds. Anderson is in prison for refusing to talk to investigators. He's never said he didn't supply Bonds with performance enhancers, he's just refused to answer the question at all.

The fact is, all he has to say is he never gave Bonds any drugs, but for some reason he won't do that. Well, I wonder what that reason is?

It doesn't seem fair that a monumental jerk like Barry Bonds can take the home run title away from Hank Aaron, one of the classiest players the game has ever known.

Though Bonds isn't nearly the player he once was, it seems a lock that he'll be able to hit just 22 home runs this summer. But if there is justice in the world, he won't get the chance.

Past players like "Shoeless" Joe Jackson and Pete Rose have paid the price for violating league rules. Barry Bonds has cheated and lied his way to the top.

A person like Bonds has no place atop baseball's highest mountain, and in 2007, he'll hit rock bottom.



Exams

From Page 2

course, and more accurately measure student progress. Most importantly, end-of-course exams can diagnose weaknesses in academic curriculum and teaching before it is too late.

Research shows that end-of-course exams increase academic standards and student achievement. Researcher John Bishop found that students in both New York and North Carolina, states with end-of-course exams, are about half of a grade level ahead in math and science and almost two-thirds of a grade level ahead in reading among comparable students without such exams. New York's exams are so well regarded for their rigor that the City University of New York uses their English end-of-course exam in place of their own placement test.

Moving to end-of-course exams would put Texas in good company. There are as many as 15 states across the country and several countries in Europe and East Asia using end-of-course exams to evaluate student learning.

Ultimately, the rigor of Texas' academic curriculum is only as tough as the tests used to measure performance. If Texas lawmakers want to improve the quality of a high school education and ensure that all Texas students are taught a rigorous curriculum and have an incentive to learn, Texas should adopt end-of-course exams to better assess student learning and achievement.

Brooke Dollens Terry is an education policy analyst at the Texas Public Policy Foundation, a non-profit research institute based in Austin. She can be contacted at bterry@texaspolicy.com.

Classified Ads

LEGAL

Board Opening

Horizon Regional Municipal Utility District

The Board of Directors of Horizon Regional Municipal Utility District is seeking qualified candidates to appoint to a vacated Director position on the Board. To qualify a person must:

- Be over 18 years of age

- Not be a Developer
- Not be related to an existing Board Member
- Not be related to an existing Consultant of HRMUD
- Own property or reside within the boundaries of the Horizon Regional MUD

If you would like to be considered, please submit a resume to Toby Alvarado, Manager HRMUD at 1539 Pawling Drive, Horizon City TX 79928 or via fax to 915 852 3908. Deadline for

submission is Friday, January 12, 2007.

WTCC: 01/04/07

TOWN OF HORIZON CITY

Horizon City Police Department

Invitation to Bid

Bid Number: 2007-001

Date Issued: January 5, 2007

Bid Opening Date: January 22, 2007

Horizon City Town Hall. All bids must be sealed. Specifications may be obtained at the City Clerk's office at 14999 Darrington Rd., Horizon City, Texas and any information can be obtained at 915-852-1046 or contact Chief A. Aguilar at 915-852-1047.

WTCC: 01-04-07

AUCTION Horizon Self Storage

418 Kenazo St. South
Jan. 10, 2007, 9 a.m. Selling contents of Unit #8. Race car body, motor, heater, radio, tools. 1/4

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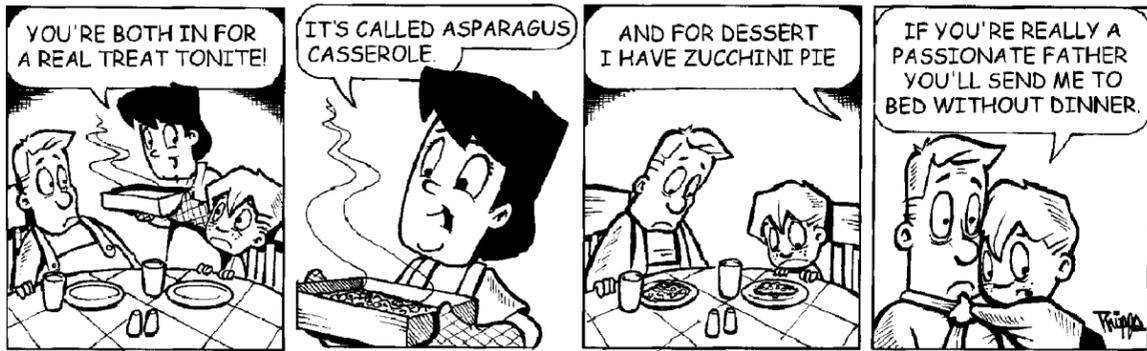


Comix

OUT ON A LIMB By Gary Kopervas



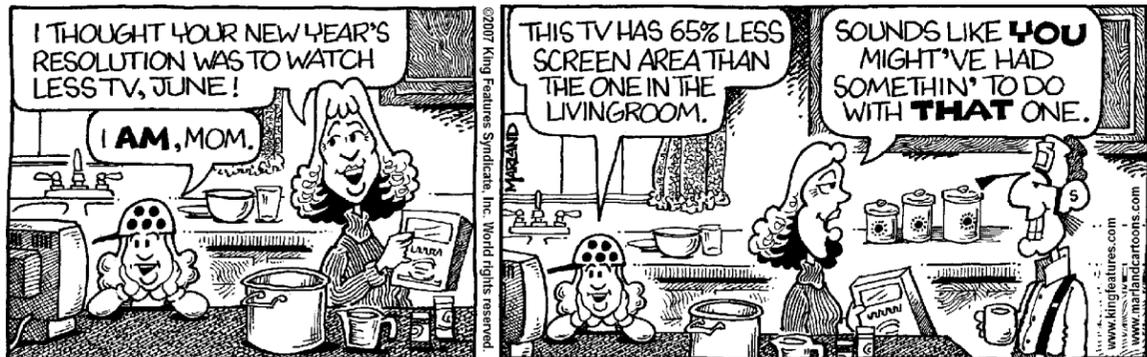
AMBER WAVES By Dave T. Phipps



THE SPATS By Jeff Pickering



R.F.D. By Mike Marland



Government gets serious about fitness

By Don Flood

According to recent study, wine is fast replacing Gatorade as the nation's leading fitness beverage.

OK, it didn't say that *exactly*. But it did say that a substance found in red wine, resveratrol, helps speed up the metabolism and make muscles work more efficiently. (Except tongues, perhaps?)

According to the article, "Mice fed large doses could run twice as far as they would normally." (And presumably not because these were underage mice running from police.)

But there is some bad news. The dosage, the article said, would require people to take hundreds of pills or "drink hundreds of glasses of wine a day to get equivalent levels of the substance tested on the mice, *neither of which would be safe.*"

Glad they cleared that up. Because let's face it, drinking hundreds of glasses of wine a day would be difficult for all but the most dedicated athletes and Paris Hilton.

The article didn't specify whether the mice were administered their dosage via pills or 24/7 happy hours, but the study could be the reason behind the alarming increase in mice, especially celebrity mice, now entering rehab.

Elsewhere on the fitness front, New York has banned trans fat, a move made necessary because of New Yorkers' stubborn refusal to drink as much red wine as New York mice.

But the good news is that the federal government is finally taking our national fitness crisis seriously: In an effort to encourage people to lose weight, it has announced it will soon begin supplying naked photos of all Americans for the Internet!

OK, it didn't say that *exactly*. The Transportation Security Administration is testing new X-ray machines at the Sky Harbor International Airport in Phoenix. The idea, supposedly, is to detect concealed weapons.

Basically, it shows you naked, which most people would find embarrassing, except of course Britney Spears and Paris Hilton, who would refuse to submit to the procedure unless it was *guaranteed* the photos would be circulated on the Internet.

In an amazing but absolutely true display of naked leadership, Susan Hallowell, director of the TSA's security laboratory, posed for an X-ray shot — for the press! I wouldn't say it was pin-up quality but, um, you got a pretty good idea of the contours of her... well, anyway, you get the idea.

(Immediately after the press conference she went out partying with Britney and Paris, which I promise will be the last time I mention her in this column, unless of course it becomes *necessary*.)

Government officials, of course, assured travelers the images would be viewed only by a pervert working in a remote location.

OK, they didn't say that *exactly*. Instead of "pervert" they used the term "security officer." (I feel better!)

And they promised the pictures would be deleted as soon as the person steps away.

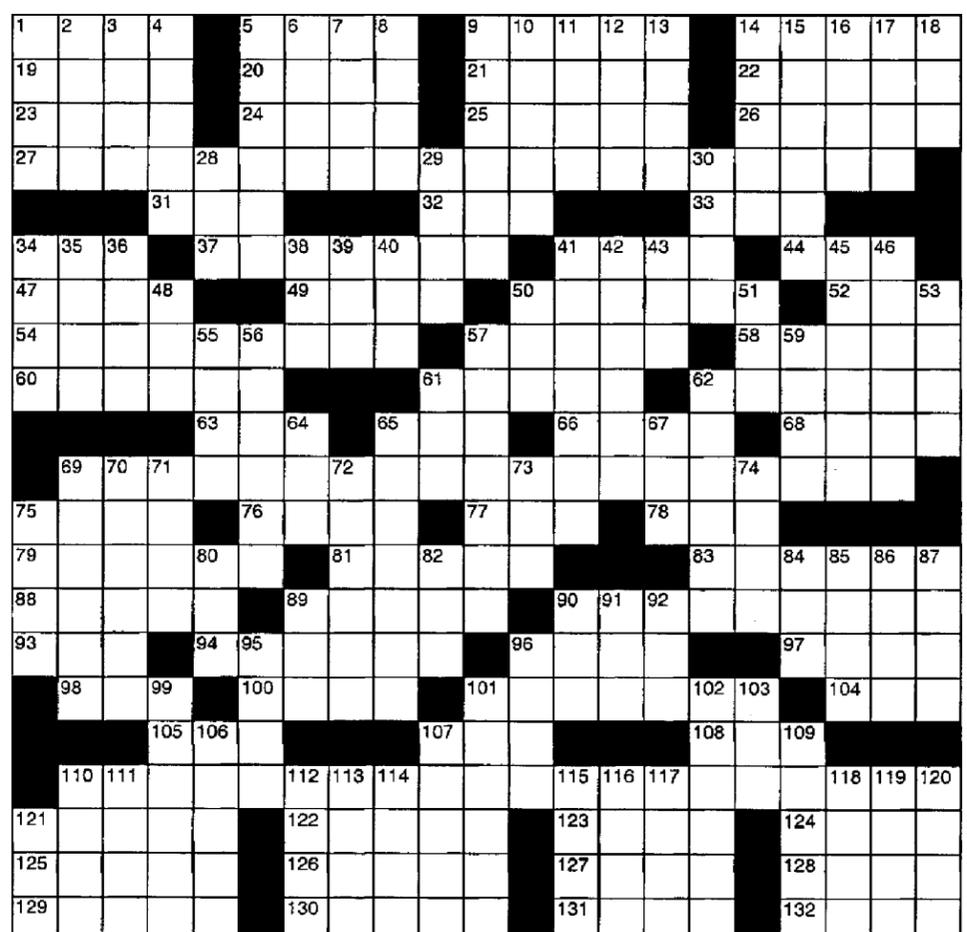
So there is NO WAY possible these X-rays could show up on the Internet. It's inconceivable, ridiculous and utterly impossible — in other words the first shots should be available for downloading within three minutes.

Anybody up for a glass of wine and some exercise?

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King Super Crossword

- | | | | | |
|---------------------------------|--------------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| DILEMMA ACROSS | 58 Neon _ | 124 Gymnast Korbut | 35 Inland sea | 87 " _ la vie" |
| 1 Lump | 60 Cap or dolman | 125 "West Side Story" role | 36 Prix _ | 89 Supportive of |
| 5 Showed sorrow | 61 Bookstore section | 126 Porsche propeller | 38 Baton Rouge coll. | 90 Princess bruiser |
| 9 Anthony of "Boston Public" | 62 Bog | 127 Tel _ | 39 Cloth finish | 91 Klutz |
| 14 Jambalaya ingredient | 63 Precambrian _ | 128 Crucifix | 40 _ Mateo, CA | 92 Plastic _ Band |
| 19 Hammett hound | 65 In honor of | 129 Texas' state tree | 41 Errs | 95 Bill of Rights grp. |
| 20 Where to find an onager | 66 Snick and _ | 130 Marvell marvels | 42 It darkens your doorway | 96 Interoffice communicate |
| 21 Songwriter Greenwich | 68 _ above (somewhat superior) | 131 Coty or Clair | 43 Bird-to-be | 99 Honda competitor |
| 22 Spine-tingling | 69 Part 3 of remark | 132 Dweeb | 45 Join | 101 Wimsey's creator |
| 23 Fertile soil | 75 Baseball family name | | 46 Follow | 102 From C to shining C? |
| 24 Tumble | 76 Antitoxins | DOWN | 48 " _ you for real?" | 103 TV's "Scooby- _" |
| 25 Java joints | 77 Mouth piece? | 1 French Sudan, today | 50 2001, to Tiberius | 106 '81 John Lennon hit |
| 26 _-garde | 78 Long or Peeples | 2 From | 51 Skater Midori | 107 Senator Thurmond |
| 27 Start of a remark | 79 Solidarity leader | 3 Command to Fido | 53 Publisher Conde | 109 Borg of tennis |
| 31 Herriot title start | 81 Forger's need | 4 Mead's milieu | 55 At any time | 110 Actress Skye |
| 32 Vigoda or Saperstein | 83 Cultural | 5 Breakfast treat | 56 Brewer or Wright | 111 Bank's backup org. |
| 33 Slippery character? | 88 Wear away | 6 Morales of "NYPD Blue" | 57 Orlon, for instance | 112 Clammy |
| 34 Brit. fliers | 89 Carthaginian | 7 Disagreeable sort | 59 Part of Q.E.D. | 113 "Typee" sequel |
| 37 Singer Manchester | 90 Part 4 of remark | 8 Hard to believe | 61 Tofu base | 114 A bit of Beethoven |
| 41 Celt | 93 Comic Rickles | 9 Priam's wife | 62 Occupation | 115 Weekend warriors: abbr. |
| 44 Faucet | 94 Bizet opera | 10 Cheer | 64 Sail through | 116 Donated |
| 47 94 Across highlight | 96 Nasty | 11 _ Romeo | 65 Cozy cloth | 117 Frigga's fellow |
| 49 Pants part | 97 "How sweet _!" | 12 Mortgage, for one | 67 Tons of time | 118 South African plant |
| 50 "The Jungle Book" boy | 98 Cpl.'s superior | 13 Actor Amaz | 69 Mild cigars | 119 Sikorsky or Stravinsky |
| 52 Cask | 99 How sweet _!" | 14 Serenity | 70 Fermented tea | 120 Diane of "Chinatown" |
| 54 Part 2 of remark | 100 Type of fuel | 15 Disgust | 71 Deplored | 121 Weaken |
| 57 "Love _ the Ruins" (75 film) | 101 Porgy and bass | 16 Composer Khachaturian | 72 Shock | |
| | 104 Fast flier | 17 Deep red | 73 Word with baby or snake | |
| | 105 He gives a hoot | 18 Volleyball divider | 74 Inauguration Day event | |
| | 107 Cooke or Donaldson | 19 Fenwick or Carter | 75 Filled with wonder | |
| | 108 Male swan | 20 City on the Danube | 80 Instant, for short | |
| | 110 End of remark | 21 Kind of kiln | 82 Coq au _ | |
| | 121 Biblical city | 22 "That's _" ('54 tune) | 84 _ polloi | |
| | 122 "That's _" ('54 tune) | 23 Fenwick or Carter | 85 '87 Streisand film | |
| | 123 Actress Thompson | 24 Snitches | 86 Egyptian deity | |



Answer Page 6

Social Security Q&A By Ray Vigil

Q: I moved to a new address after applying for a new Social Security card. I didn't receive the card before moving. What do I do now?

A: Yes. Social Security encourages beneficiaries with disabilities to try going to work. In fact, work incentives are in place to help you do so, including our Ticket to Work program. In most cases you can even keep your Medicare coverage. To learn more about working while disabled, visit our web page on the subject, "The Work Site," at

Q: I get Social Security benefits for a physical disability. I would like to

try going to work. Am I allowed to get a part-time job without risking loss of benefits?

www.socialsecurity.gov/work. Our work incentives may be your key to testing the job place without taking away the security net of your benefits.

Q: I'm a 27-year-old office worker in perfect health. Why should I pay for disability coverage if I don't expect to need it?

A: The fact is, nobody plans to be affected by a disability, but it happens more often than you may think. Nearly three out of 10 of today's 20-year-olds will become disabled before reaching full retirement age. Despite this, 70 percent of the private sector work force has no long-

term disability insurance other than Social Security. No matter what your situation, you and your family are covered.

Q: My niece is 20 years old. Recently she became permanently disabled. She has not paid into Social Security since she never worked. Can Social Security still help her?

A: There is another program called Supplemental Security Income (SSI) that may be able to help your niece. SSI is a needs-based program paid for by general revenue taxes and administered by Social Security. It helps people who cannot work due

to disability, blindness or old age, and who have limited income and resources. People may also be able to receive SSI in addition to monthly Social Security benefits, if their Social Security benefit is low enough to qualify.

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

7-DAY FORECAST FOR EL PASO, TX

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Thursday	Thu. night	Friday	Saturday	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday
Plenty of sunshine	Clear	Mostly sunny and breezy	Mostly cloudy and cooler	Plenty of sunshine	Sunny	Plenty of sun	Plenty of sun
62°	36°	64° / 37°	51° / 31°	55° / 31°	60° / 31°	61° / 33°	63° / 32°
RealFeel 60°	RealFeel 28°	RealFeel 62° / 31°	RealFeel 45° / 24°	RealFeel 56° / 26°	RealFeel 61° / 27°	RealFeel 63° / 37°	RealFeel 68° / 34°

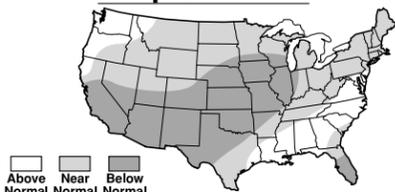
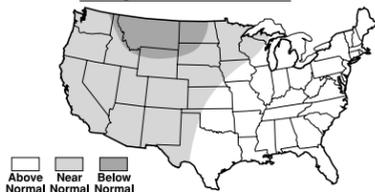
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WEATHER TRENDS THIS WEEK

IN THE SKY

Temperatures

Precipitation



Sun

	Rise	Set
Thu.	7:06 a.m.	5:15 p.m.
Fri.	7:06 a.m.	5:16 p.m.
Sat.	7:06 a.m.	5:16 p.m.
Sun.	7:07 a.m.	5:17 p.m.
Mon.	7:07 a.m.	5:18 p.m.
Tues.	7:07 a.m.	5:19 p.m.
Wed.	7:07 a.m.	5:20 p.m.

Moon

	Rise	Set
Thu.	6:29 p.m.	8:14 a.m.
Fri.	7:32 p.m.	8:53 a.m.
Sat.	8:32 p.m.	9:26 a.m.
Sun.	9:29 p.m.	9:55 a.m.
Mon.	10:23 p.m.	10:21 a.m.
Tues.	11:17 p.m.	10:45 a.m.
Wed.	none	11:09 a.m.

Full	Last
1/3	1/11
New	First
1/18	1/25

Forecasts and graphics provided by AccuWeather, Inc. ©2007

REGIONAL CITIES

U.S. CITIES

City	Thursday			Friday			Saturday			Sunday		
	HI	LO	W	HI	LO	W	HI	LO	W	HI	LO	W
Abilene, TX	64	44	pc	70	40	s	54	35	r	58	35	s
Albuquerque, NM	48	26	pc	48	27	c	43	24	pc	46	25	pc
Amarillo, TX	60	33	s	60	28	pc	46	25	c	51	25	s
Austin, TX	67	43	r	73	48	s	61	45	sh	60	40	c
Brownsville, TX	73	59	c	80	65	pc	78	59	sh	68	53	c
Dodge City, KS	55	29	s	46	20	pc	43	20	pc	47	24	s
Jackson, MS	67	50	r	70	49	s	68	50	c	62	47	r
Laredo, TX	73	53	pc	80	57	s	68	49	sh	64	50	c
Little Rock, AR	51	41	r	60	46	s	57	40	c	52	36	c
Lubbock, TX	62	34	s	65	30	s	46	26	r	57	27	s
Memphis, TN	55	47	r	60	49	s	61	43	c	52	42	r
Midland, TX	64	38	s	72	36	s	51	30	r	53	33	s
Pueblo, CO	55	19	s	39	14	sn	38	8	s	48	15	pc
Roswell, NM	60	31	s	61	30	s	47	27	r	55	28	s
St. Louis, MO	57	39	c	55	37	pc	49	31	c	48	31	s
San Antonio, TX	67	48	r	75	55	s	63	46	sh	61	43	c
Texarkana, AR	53	44	r	65	50	s	59	42	c	54	40	c
Waco, TX	58	46	r	71	50	s	56	42	c	57	41	c
Wichita, KS	56	31	pc	51	28	pc	45	24	pc	45	26	s

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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