

NEWSBRIEFS

Horizon festival

The First Annual Spring Days Festival in Horizon City, April 5-8, will bring four days of unprecedented fun and festivities to 14100 Horizon Blvd., between Darrington and Kenazo in downtown Horizon City. Co-sponsored by the newly forming Eastlake Lions Club and the Five-Points Lions Club, the fun will begin daily at noon and run to 10 p.m. with a full carnival, food, games, live entertainment, a classic car show and motorcycle rides. Parking and admission are free. Proceeds will benefit the Lions Club charities in their service to the local community.

Be anything

MTV's *Making the Band II* artist Jonessa and Universal Record's Veer will be at Mountain View High School on April 11 as part of the Third Annual *You Can Be Anything* high school benefits tour. Five local artists will open for Jonessa and Veer, beginning at 7 p.m. at the Mountain View Gymnasium. Seating is limited — only 950 tickets are available — and at \$7 each are expected to go quickly. The artists will be available to autograph T-shirts and CDs after the show. The event, organized by Mary Allaire-Curtis, director of the award-winning Lobo Strutters Dance Team, was brought about through the assistance of Kimberly Baldwin, a former Mountain View dance team member, who now works for the CEO of BP World Media. Proceeds will assist the Strutters to attend competitions in Phoenix, Arizona.

In other news

■ The community of Anthony is invited to "Come Meet Our County Judge" on Thursday, April 5 at 6 p.m. at the American Legion Hall, 221 Popular Street. The Honorable Judge Anthony Cobos will discuss plans for the County and the community in a question and answer forum.

■ The Clint Independent School District will be open for school and business on April 9, 2007 to make-up for the Jan. 23, 2007 inclement weather day closure.

■ The Oz Glaze Senior Center is having a rummage sale on April 14 at 13969 Veny Webb in Horizon City. Donated articles from the community to sell to support the center are being accepted until Friday, April 13. Vendor tables for arts and crafts or other items are available for \$10. For more information call Alice Bennett at 852-4006.

■ Desert Hills Elementary will host the First Annual Spring Festival on Saturday, April 28, 9 a.m. - 4 p.m. at the Desert Hills Elementary campus at 300 N. Kenazo in Horizon City. Admission is free for games, raffles, crafts, car seat checks, food, music, face painting and more.

See BRIEFS, Page 4

The trouble with public debt is that private individuals have to pay for it.
— Quips & Quotes

Two San Eli seniors transform ambition into scholarships

By Cynthia P. Marentes
Special to the Courier

SAN ELIZARIO — For many San Elizario High School seniors, spring signals the arrival of something very important for their college careers — scholarships. As they head into the final months of high school, seniors begin taking stock of rewards they have received, or are waiting for, as a result of their accomplishments both inside and outside of the classroom. This is a critical inventory that will determine whether or not students will have the funds necessary to pay for college costs. Two students who will soon have most of their college expenses met have done so by pushing themselves and being resourceful in finalizing

all the details involved in preparing for higher education.

Jesus Martinez recently received a \$1,000 scholarship at the 15th Annual Senior All Star Football Classic banquet for being chosen as the only player representing San Elizario High

See SCHOLARSHIPS, Page 5



— Photo courtesy San Elizario ISD

IN THE MONEY — Fernie Ibarra and Jesus Martinez have already secured financial assistance for their college education.

Canutillo ISD educators noted for accomplishments in bilingual education

By Alfredo Vasquez
Special to the Courier

EL PASO COUNTY — Canutillo Elementary School Principal Hector Giron and Daventport Elementary School Teacher Laura Schenk were recognized for their contributions to promote high quality bilingual education programs, during the 14th Annual BEEMS (Bilingual Educators Emphasizing and Mastering Standards) Conference.

Giron was named BEEMS' Outstanding Administrator of the Year, a recognition shared with Ysleta Elementary School Principal Homero Silva, for their achievements as educational leaders and for their professional development

efforts in bilingual education.

Schenk, in her eighth year as a teacher in Canutillo ISD's Two-Way Dual Language program, will be recognized as BEEMS' Outstanding Bilingual Education Elementary School Teacher of the Year.

Candidates for the BEEMS awards were nominated by school districts throughout the area. Winners now qualify for the Southwest Association of Bilingual Educators (SWABE) awards program.

"These educators are examples of individuals who understand and promote the academic benefits of bilingual education. Their contributions go a long way in establishing additive models of bilingual education programs," said Antonio Del Campo, BEEMS Coordinating Committee member.



Hector Giron



Laura Schenk

Socorro ISD teacher honored at Bilingual Conference

By Irma Flores
Special to the Courier

EL PASO COUNTY — Socorro ISD teacher Sharyl Ferguson was honored as the Outstanding Secondary Teacher of the Year at the 14th annual Bilingual Educators Emphasizing and Mastering Standards (BEEMS) Conference held March 29-31.

Ferguson is the ESL (English as a Second Language) Department Chair at Montwood High School and has taught ESL students for nearly 20 years, most of those years at Montwood. "It's important to know your stu-

dents well and meet their needs," says Ferguson. "As an ESL teacher you have to be committed to doing whatever it takes to make sure they succeed."

SISD Superintendent Dr. Sylvia P. Atkinson says Ferguson exemplifies what teaching is all about. "Her commitment to her students is amazing, but it is a team effort. She leads a group of dedicated individuals who believe in helping their students succeed in life."



Sharyl Ferguson

CBP offers ways to make holiday border crossing a little easier

By Roger Maier
Special to the Courier

EL PASO, TEXAS — U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) officers at the El Paso port of entry and other area international crossings are providing guidance to assist travelers who intend to travel between the U.S. and Mexico in the days around the Easter holiday. These tips are designed to ease the crossing process as CBP officers maintain their principal anti-terror mission.

The upcoming Easter/Holy Week season is historically one of the busiest travel periods at southwest border crossings. Along with a general 10-15 percent increase in overall traffic figures, another area that experiences a significant increase in volume is the number of Mexican laser visa card holders who request the I-94 travel documents required to travel beyond the border zone. Applications for I-94's typically double or triple at the El Paso port of entry during the week before Easter. CBP officers routinely process about 1,000-1,500 I-94's a day in El Paso but that number jumps to between 2,500 and 3,000 a day in the week before Good Friday. Similar increases are typically recorded at other major border crossings.

CBP officers also typically seize large numbers of confetti-filled cascarones in the days leading up to the Easter holiday. The colorful eggshells are prohibited because they may introduce Exotic Newcastle's Disease to the U.S. poultry industry and should not be imported from Mexico. Violators will be subject to penalties.

In an effort to provide the best possible service to the traveling public during the upcoming holiday season, CBP officials are proactively reminding members of the traveling public that there are a number of steps they can employ to cross the border as quickly and safely as possible while avoiding violations of U.S. law.

"By getting the word out early and working closely with the community, we believe we will be able to keep holiday related traffic moving while insuring that all our enforcement concerns are properly addressed," said David Longoria, U.S. Customs and Border Protection El Paso Port Director. "It is important that we do all we can to protect the American public while allowing law abiding border crossers to reach their destinations in a timely manner. We believe these tips will help the process."

- Visit border ports early to obtain I-94 travel documents (\$6 each). This will allow travelers who require I-94 documents (those planning to travel beyond the border zone or stay in the U.S. for more than 30 days) to by-pass busy I-94 issuing lines when they formally enter the U.S. They will still be subject to the inspection process.

- Travelers should prepare for the inspection process before arriving at the inspection booth. Individuals should have their crossing documents available for the inspec-

See CROSSING, Page 4



One perspective

By Francis Shrum

Hitching 'em up

I was sitting in Arby's having lunch when this fellow in the booth near me stood up. He was a grown man, old enough to know better, but instead of hitching his pants up, he pulled them down.

You see, he was wearing a pair of those pants that are way too big. There are plenty of uncomplimentary names used to refer to this style of pants but for the purpose of this article we'll call them by the generic term "sags."

Now, why on earth anybody thought this was a form of clothing that had any sort of style, class, or even the most off-the-wall fashion sense, I'll never understand. Sags are also inconvenient, as was about to be demonstrated by the fellow who made the unfortunate mistake of hitching 'em down.

One of the strangest things about this saggy-bottomed fashion is that somehow, somewhere, some male creature decided that it was exciting and interesting to show off his underwear and that someone, hopefully youthful females, might actually want to see them.

There are plenty of jokes about men with "plumber's crack" but I can understand that a little better. After all, that is a natural phenomenon that tends to occur in the process of bending over. It is — as far as I know — not a "style" that any fellow so afflicted ever set out to adopt intentionally. Most people I know with the so-called plumber's problem usually get around to hitching 'em back up and, thankfully, we are never accursed with knowing what kind of drawers he had on, if any.

Not so with the aficionados of sags. They seem to take great pride in

showing off their underthings, which usually wind up in a lumpy bump just above the waistband which is already hanging precariously below the equator, so to speak. There was a time when it was considered a disadvantage to get caught with your pants down. Apparently that doesn't apply anymore.

Anyway, this fellow in Arby's gets up and hitches 'em down. And he's wearing a pair of bright red, slicky undergarments that look something like a pair of basketball shorts. When thus encouraged by his downward tugging, his baggy pants readily complied and slid plumb down to his thighs.

This is cool? With a rueful grin, he finally coaxed his pants part way back up, and the whole mess wound up in a wad just above the obscenity level and he shuffled off. And I do mean shuffled. Because, you see, this fad which seems to have the sticking power of the gum you stepped on in the parking lot has caused young men who wear it to adopt the strangest way of walking.

They are forced to lean as far back as possible without falling over backward with their hips thrust forward to give their pants something, anything, to cling to. Then they walk by thrusting their knees out the side in an odd and unnatural way which I assume is to counteract the downward gravitational pull.

At any rate, it looks very funny. I've often wondered if some enterprising manufacturer makes pants like this with Velcro strips in the waistband that can be attached to special saggy-bottom underwear with corresponding Velcro patches so that the fashion-conscious young man can still show off large portions of his undergarment without running the risk of revealing the whole thing. You

know, leave a little for the imagination. Are safety pins considered cheating?

There are various ideas about how and why this fashion got started but there are two that I figure are pretty close to the truth. The first is that young people enjoy rebelling and there is nothing more rebellious than an obnoxious, abnormal silhouette that allows you to be border-line obscene at the same time. It's a match made somewhere other than heaven.

Secondly, it is rumored that if a

rebellious-minded young man should decide to shop-lift, he has a lot of room in which to store his ill-gotten gains. One young man reportedly managed to walk out of a music store with a cymbal concealed in his pants.

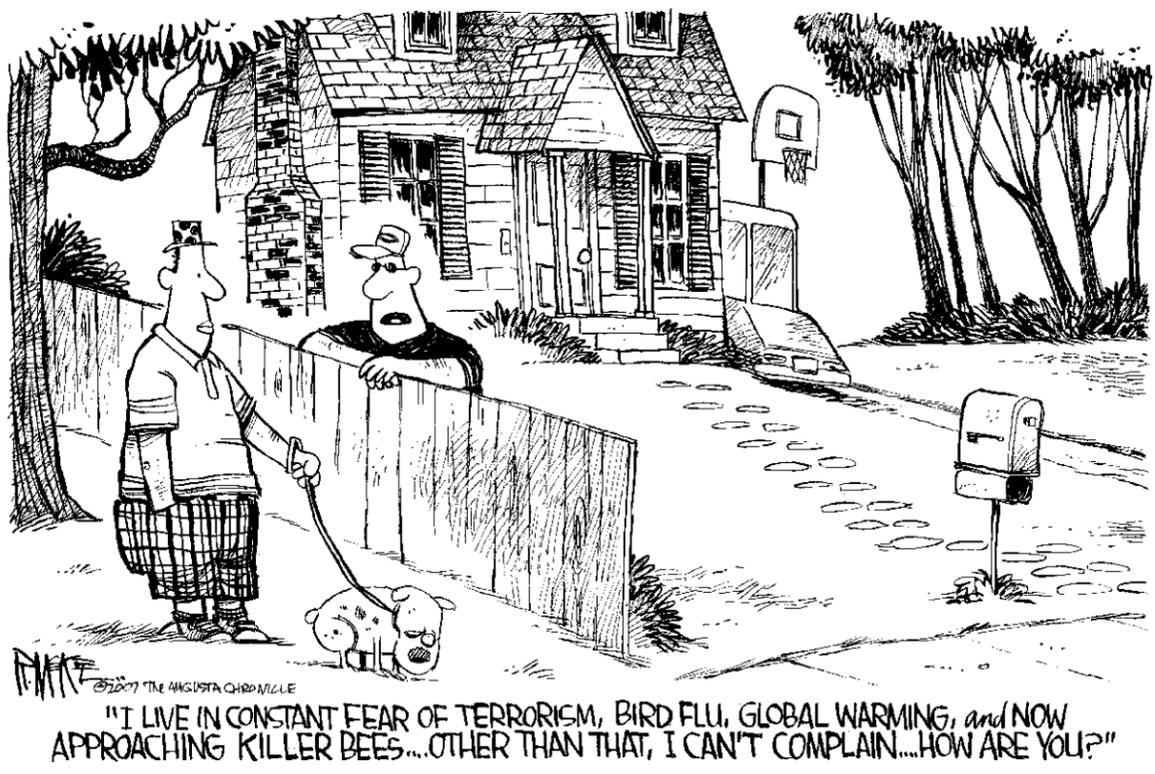
Sags are prohibited, and rightly so, as accepted forms of dress in most organized institutions like work and school. Even the city of Dallas last year considered passing an ordinance to prohibit wearing sags on the streets. The move was sponsored by a school board trustee who boldly

proclaimed that people shouldn't run around "like third-class citizens in a first-class city."

It didn't pass — civil liberties and all — still, I don't think anyone who can objectively look at a young man with his pants falling down can help but chuckle a little — even the youthful females they hope to impress.

I asked my teenage daughters what they think of sags. They didn't say anything. They just laughed.

C'mon, guys, give us a break. Hitch 'em up.



WEST TEXAS COUNTY COURIER

1973 34 YEARS 2007

PUBLISHED: Published each Thursday by Homesteader News, Inc. Appreciation to our many contributors. Office open Monday through Thursday.

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MAIL SUBSCRIPTIONS: 52 issues for \$35. Delivery via 1st class mail.

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Homesteader News, Inc.
Est. 1973

View from here By Michael Quinn Sullivan

Greedy taxpayers?

With Texas taxpayers struggling under rising property taxes, the former Democratic candidate for governor, Chris Bell, calls them greedy. In demonstrating why 70 percent of Texans voted for someone else, Bell says taxpayers shouldn't be asking for a refund of the tax surplus.

In a commentary being distributed by the failed candidate, Bell chastises me for pointing out that voters should get back the \$14.3 billion surplus — extra revenues collected by the state during this current budget period. It's their money!

My organization, Texans for Fiscal Responsibility, has now mailed almost 33,000 voters in nine senatorial districts. The districts were selected based on senators who either serve on the important Senate Finance Committee, or chair another influential committee.

Bell complains that his home was one of those to receive the mailing. He describes our mailing as inspiring voters to "summon all the greed they could muster and demand money back from the Texas state government."

He suggests that a long litany of failings in government welfare services are "proof" taxpayers have under-funded the bureaucracy.

As was evident to Texans in the November '06 campaign, Bell simply has his facts wrong. He is either unaware of, or indifferent to, the fact that state funding for Child Protective Services, public education, and the Children's Health Insurance and Medicaid programs have all increased year-after-year for years, and especially during the last two sessions. Again, legislators grew government at 18.7 percent; that is real — unsustainable — growth in spending.

But on one important point, Bell is right. He is correct in characterizing many government programs as failing. He's just wrong about the cause.

We've tried the Bell approach for years: throwing more and more taxpayer money at problems. The result has been failure.

Let's try something different. Let's let taxpayers keep more of their money, and address

social problems through real charity and efficient stewardship of government programs, not wasteful bureaucracy.

The state's surplus amounts to \$600 per Texan. If Mr. Bell and other liberals feel guilty about the rest of us being under-taxed, they can simply write extra checks to their charity of choice: big government.

Of course they don't have the humility or charity to do that. They prefer to use your money, and a lot of it, to fund high-cost programs that simply don't work.

Is it greedy to ask for your change back? That is precisely what thousands of taxpayers have now done as a result of TFR's mailing.

Bell wants to grow government with your money. And he correctly understands that returning the surplus to taxpayers takes money out of the pockets of the spenders, and puts it back in the hands of the earners.

Taxpayers are continuously told to foot the bill for an increasingly costly government. Last legislative session state lawmakers grew government 18.7 percent, and yet our economy has still managed to produce a surplus of \$14.3 billion.

Far from being greedy, Texans want lawmakers to be honest with our money. We were given a price tag for the cost of government, we overpaid, and now we should get our money back. As a trial lawyer, Bell can apparently afford to overpay everywhere he goes, but most working Texans cannot.

Bell claims the surplus grew out of "draconian cuts" to the state's budget by legislators. If an 18.7 percent increase in state spending is a "cut," not even Bill Gates could afford the "increases" that Bell apparently wants imposed on us. It's no wonder 70 percent of us said "no" to his liberal philosophy.

Texans deserve true tax relief. Lawmakers should continue to ignore Chris Bell, and return the surplus to Texas' taxpayers.

Michael Quinn Sullivan is president of Texans for Fiscal Responsibility (www.EmpowerTexans.com), an Austin-based organization promoting budget reform and taxpayer protection.

View from here By Marc A. Levin

Legislature must empower Texas crime victims

The U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit recently overturned a murder conviction — solely because the victim's brother sat in the courtroom wearing a small pin with a photo of the victim on it.

Fortunately, a December decision by the U.S. Supreme Court reversed this miscarriage of justice and reinstated the conviction. But this case, *Carey v. Musladin*, demonstrates how victims have been marginalized from not only the courtroom, but the entire criminal justice system.

The 80th Texas Legislature should act to restore the primacy of victims.

First, restitution must be more than an empty promise. Only one-third of restitution owed to crime victims is actually collected. House Corrections Committee Chairman Jerry Madden (R-Plano) is filing a constitutional amendment to allow Texas judges to order the garnishment of an offender's wages to pay restitution. Currently, the Texas Constitution only permits garnishment for child support, but restitution to crime victims is equally important.

Texas can also strengthen restitution for crime victims by linking the funding of probation departments to their restitution collections. Not all departments report their collections to the state.

The Texas Public Policy Foundation, based on our research, has recommended to the Corrections Committee that five percent of basic adult probation funding be tied to restitution collections so that departments receive 9.4 cents for every dollar in restitution they collect. Such performance-based funding will encourage departments to maximize their efforts in collecting restitution, which should include assisting offenders with finding work and effectively managing their finances.

However, victims cannot drink from a well that is dry, and inmates earn no money to pay

restitution. The Legislature should promote the availability of victim-offender mediation as a voluntary alternative to traditional prosecution and incarceration in cases involving minor property offenses by first-time offenders.

Such mediations result in a written agreement that typically requires restitution, community service, and counseling, which is then ratified by the prosecutor or judge. Failure to comply subjects the offender to traditional prosecution and, if necessary, incarceration.

Victim-offender mediation results in improved restitution collection, better offender outcomes, and reduced costs. There are more than 300 such programs in North America and their success is well documented. Some 95 percent of cases mediated result in a written agreement, and 90 percent of these restitution agreements are completed within one year, giving victims a sense of closure.

This indicates that coming face-to-face with a victim instills a moral obligation in many offenders. And because completion of the agreement avoids a conviction, offenders are more likely to hold a job that enables them to pay restitution. Victim-offender mediation has also been found to reduce recidivism by 32 percent.

Furthermore, mediations cost \$250 per case, a fraction of the cost of court proceedings, let alone incarceration. The state could impose an offender fee paid by property offenders upon conviction or a participant fee for offenders who choose victim-offender mediation that would cover the up front cost of grants to local district attorney's offices for such programs.

Victim-offender mediation is not for everyone, but many victims of minor property offenses primarily want answers, an apology, and restitution — all of which only the defendant can provide. Victims deserve this option in such cases and studies suggest 60 to 70 percent would choose it.

Finally, Texas must ensure that restitution and other priorities of victims are fully

See VICTIMS, Page 5

Reyes Reports By U.S. Rep. Silvestre Reyes

Intelligence Committee investigates FBI's misuse of NSL



The House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence held an open

hearing recently on the Federal Bureau of Investigation's (FBI) use of National Security Letters. The focus of the hearing was the recent report by the Justice Department Inspector General, who found that the FBI had misused this tool — the authority to request private records, secretly, without judicial review — hundreds of times between 2003 and 2005.

As someone who spent over 26 years in law enforcement prior to becoming a member of Congress, I appreciate the importance of strong investigative tools. I want the FBI to have strong authority to find terrorists. But massive data collection does not serve that purpose. If you are sifting through mounds of irrelevant data on people you believe have done nothing wrong, you are more likely to miss the relevant leads that can stop the next terrorist attack.

The expanding use of NSLs would not be troubling in itself, if the FBI had proper controls for this powerful investigative tool. But the FBI does not. And, in fact, Inspector General Glenn Fine — our first witness

— found significant misuse by the FBI of this authority.

The Committee received testimony from two separate panels. The first consisted of witnesses from the Executive Branch and included the Inspector General Fine of the Department of Justice; Kenneth Wainstein, Assistant Attorney General for Na-

tional Security; and John Pistole, Deputy Director of the FBI.

The second panel consisted of experts from outside of government: Jim Dempsey, Policy Director of the Center for Democracy and Technology; Lisa Graves, Deputy Director of the Center for National Security Studies; and Viet Dinh, Professor of

Law at Georgetown University and former Assistant Attorney General for Legal Policy.

The IG's report found several serious problems in the issuance and record-keeping of NSLs, to include an absence of effective FBI controls on the use of NSLs; possibly as many as 3,000 violations of law or policy;

vast under reporting to Congress on the number of NSLs issued; and extensive misuse of the "exigent letters" provision.

We have learned that, despite repeated assurances, the FBI was unable to do an effective job of policing its own use of this powerful tool for investigating terrorism.

The FBI uses National Security Letters to obtain information from third parties, such as telephone companies, financial institutions, Internet Service providers, and consumer credit agencies.

NSLs are no longer a limited, precise tool. They have become a broad license to collect information on Americans. Much of the information sought is not useful to a terrorism investigation. Indeed, FBI officials admit that most of the time, the FBI uses NSLs to gather information on people it believes are not suspects in order to eliminate them from further consideration.

In passing and reauthorizing the USA PATRIOT Act, we entrusted the FBI with very effective investigatory powers. Unfortunately, whether through abuse or simple mismanagement, they have betrayed that trust, and there must be accountability.

We will remain focused on this subject moving forward in the 110th Congress.



Tornillo High School senior starts medical studies early

By Marla Vranish
Special to the Courier

TORNILLO — What are the chances that a senior student might be accepted to a high quality medical school before they even begin their college career? Impossible? Not anymore. Just ask Jennifer Cortez, a senior at Tornillo High School.

The Early Medical School Acceptance Program (EMSAP) at UTEP, coordinated by Dr. Donna Ekal, offers an opportunity to students who enroll in the program a reserved place at renowned medical schools across the country.

Cortez has been nominated

to join the program which partners with UTMB medical school in Galveston, Texas. She is assured acceptance to UTMB upon completion of all undergraduate requirements at UTEP.

She will be among peers from the El Paso area, gaining research skills, knowledge, and clinical experience that will prepare them for the rigorous medical school experience.

Jennifer said she has dreamed of becoming a doctor since she was a little girl. Her desire is to practice general medicine in a rural setting and work with families in need.

She is the daughter of Adalberto and Rosa Cortez of Tornillo.



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Resignation of Anthony ISD's superintendent tops area school news

By Don Woodyard
Courier Staff Writer

EL PASO COUNTY — After three years at its helm, Vern Butler is retiring as superintendent of the Anthony Independent School District.

The AISD board of trustees approved his letter of resignation at its monthly meeting last week.

Butler, who has been in the education field for 36 years, says he and his wife are moving to the Fort Worth area to be with family. Asked about future plans, he was noncommittal, merely saying he was "leaving my options open."



Vern Butler

Butler will finish out the current school year.

Sally Flores, president of the AISD board, praised Butler's work, saying he has been a "wonderful addition, a wonderful asset to the district."

Flores says the board voted to ask Dr. James Vasquez, executive director of Region 19 Education Service Center, to work with them to find a successor. With Region 19's assistance, she hopes the board can have a successor in place before Butler leaves in June.

"He will be missed," she added. "He is a good man to work with. He is totally dedicated to the kids."

Butler's resignation was the highlight of actions by trustees during March board meetings in the An-

thon, San Elizario and Canutillo school districts.

San Elizario ISD

The results of preliminary TAKS (Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills) reading tests came for third- and fifth-graders under sharp scrutiny by SEISD trustees at their March 21 board meeting.

Principals from Sambrano, Borrego, and Alarcon Elementary Schools were taken to task as they reported results ranging from 50 percent to overall scores of 79 percent.

Indicating something has to be done, trustee Armando Martinez said he was "very upset" with the teachers and the low scores. His concern was echoed by other board members as well.

Agreeing with the thrust of the trustees' questions and concerns, Dr. Mike Quatrini, SEISD superintendent, looked directly at the assembled principals and said, "We cannot tolerate mediocre teaching; our kids don't deserve it. Enough is enough."

He suggested that the principals need to get out and into the classrooms and find those teachers who are not measuring up to standards.

The board received an update on \$8 million in construction projects at Alarcon Elementary and Garcia-Enriquez Middle schools. Aug. 1 is the scheduled completion date on



Mike Quatrini

construction of the new 10,000-square-foot cafeteria at Alarcon. Work on the new library and classroom addition at Garcia-Enriquez is expected to be completed sometime later in August.

The board also approved administration recommendations for new math textbooks in the middle school and high school.

It also approved Aug. 27 as the starting date for classes for the 2007-08 school year.

Canutillo ISD

Dr. Pam Padilla, superintendent of the Canutillo ISD, reported that the Gates Foundation has invited the district to apply for a grant to establish an Early College High School program in conjunction with El Paso Community College. She



Pam Padilla

said the administration is in the process of completing the grant application and getting more information about the program.

The board approved adoption of mathematics textbooks as recommended by the District Textbook Committee.

During the open forum, parents and residents expressed support for the naming of the two elementary schools. One parent suggested that future school buildings be named after geographical features or significant landmarks in the area.

Crossing

From Page 1

tion and they should be prepared to declare all items acquired abroad. In addition, individuals should end cellular phone conversations before arriving at the inspection booth.

- Travelers should familiarize themselves with the "Know Before You Go" section of the CBP website at http://www.cbp.gov/xp/cgov/travel/vacation/kbyg/introduction_mission.xml to avoid fines and penalties associated with the importation of prohibited items.
- Travelers should look to alterna-

tive entry routes. Border crossers may consider using the nearby and less utilized Fabens or Santa Teresa ports of entry instead of the El Paso port.

• Travelers should plan to build extra time into their trips in the event they cross during periods of exceptionally heavy traffic. This includes Dedicated Commuter Lane users.

• Unless absolutely necessary, border crossers may wish to avoid crossing the border during traditionally heaviest periods of traffic including morning/evening rush hour periods and weekends.

• Members of the traveling public should consult the CBP website site at www.cbp.gov to monitor border wait times. Information is updated hourly

and is useful in planning trips and identifying periods of light use/short waits.

• Drivers should insure that the vehicles they use to cross the border are properly maintained and mechanically sound and that occupants avoid riding in areas of vehicles not specifically designed to carry passengers. Failure to follow these steps can expose crossers/passengers to carbon monoxide.

CBP officials will closely monitor traffic and border crossing times during the upcoming holiday period. They plan to fully staff all inspection lanes during peak periods and to implement various traffic management operations to maintain the flow of traffic during periods of exceptionally heavy usage.

Briefs

From Page 1

■ Students from kinder through 12th have a chance to test their chess skills at the Second Annual Crusader Scholastic Chess Tournament hosted by O'Shea Keleher School, 1800 Leroy Bonse. The tournament will be held on Saturday, April 14, 2007 from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. First, second and third place awards will be handed out in each division. More than 100 students are expected to participate. The tournament is open to all schools in the El Paso area. For more questions or to register a team or student, call Raul or Veronica Bravo at 856-7383 or 526-7441.

■ Movie magic came to San

Elizario ISD this week via Science in the Movies, a non-profit organization that demonstrates the academic concepts behind some of the most amazing stunts and special effects. Over 800 students from the district were able to attend various demonstrations held at the Garcia Enriquez Middle School gym. Mechanics, kinetics, heat, electronics, optics, chemistry, engineering, mathematics, computers and safety issues were all topics to assist the students to view science in imaginative and enjoyable ways, said Cristina Alvarez, GEMS 8th grade science teacher.

■ Free ESL classes for adults are being offered by the Socorro ISD Community Services at H.D. Hilley School, 693 N. Rio Vista Rd., Room #220, in Socorro. ESL I, II, III and Spanish Literacy are offered. For a

complete schedule call 937-1700, 937-8468, or 937-8400.

■ The El Paso Street Department has scheduled significant maintenance projects on Scenic Drive from April 9-22. Due to the difficulty of working on this section of roadway Scenic will be closed during these maintenance operations to through traffic. The roadway will remain closed until repairs are completed. Only the El Paso Police Academy will be permitted access. The maintenance will consist of repairing damaged concrete paved sections, repairing damaged concrete joints, re-sealing concrete joints and cracks, plus backfilling the shoulder of the road. The estimated total cost for this project exceeds \$60,000. Questions can be addressed to the Street Department at 621-6750.

Town of Horizon City PUBLIC NOTICE

A PUBLIC HEARING will be held during a **Regular Planning and Zoning Meeting on Monday, April 23, 2007 at 6:30 p.m.** at City Hall, 14999 Darrington Road, Horizon City, Texas. The purpose of the public hearing is to allow any interested persons to appear and comment regarding the following properties:

- 1) Rezoning from, M-1 Light Industrial to C-1 Light Commercial. Being a portion of Tract 1-A, Section 42, Block 78, Township 3, of Texas and Pacific Railroad Surveys, El Paso County, Texas. Approximately 7.65 acres.

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.

Fidel Morales
Interim Town Clerk



— Photo courtesy Socorro ISD

HOPING TO SAVE LIVES — Bennie Grayson, right, teaches 8th grader Jesse Contreras about trains and safety with a scale train console during Operative Lifesaver's presentation at Ernesto Serna School. Approximately every two hours, in the United States, a person or vehicle is hit by a train. About half of all crossing collisions occur at highway-rail intersections when people ignore the flashing lights and/or gates.

Operation Lifesaver teaches students to stay safe and off of railroad tracks

By Irma Flores
Special to the Courier

A train horn echoes through the hallways at Ernesto Serna School but its not coming from the railroad tracks near the school. The horns and whistles are coming from the school's gym as students try their hand at being a train conductor. The simulation is part of "Operation Lifesaver" that aims at increasing awareness about railroad safety. As students take their turn at the real train console, engineers and conductors are showing them why they need to stay away.

"We are educating the public about train safety and working on the trespassing issue," says Bennie Grayson, engineer and Operation Lifesaver

presenter. "We want kids to stay away and stay safe. Most of them did not know that it is illegal to be on or near train tracks."

According to the Federal Railroad Administration, in 2006 Texas ranked second with 51 pedestrian rail trespass fatalities. Topping the list is California with 91. Operation Lifesaver is a non-profit, international continuing public education program first established in 1972 to end collisions, deaths and injuries at places where roadways cross train tracks, and on railroad rights-of-way.

"By using a real train console, we are showing students what we experience. We teach how dangerous trains can be. We show them that trains can't go left or right to avoid cars and that trains don't stop quickly," says Grayson. "This gives

them an idea about being inside the cab and hopefully they share the lesson with their parents."

One of the students who had the chance to be a conductor was Jesse Contreras who surprised to learn about the laws protecting rail yards.

"It was interesting to learn what you can and can't do around trains," says the 8th grader. "Kids don't understand how dangerous it is to be around trains when they are passing or not to play by the tracks or under the trains when they are stopped."

Grayson along with other engineers, conductors and bus drivers will spend another day with students at Serna. Their presentations will be held on Thursday, April 5, starting at 7:45 am until 10:00 am. Grayson expects to reach more than 500 students by the end of this four-day session.

Scholarships

From Page 1

School in the West vs. East All Star Football Game. "I am very proud to be the only one nominated," Jesus said.

The skills and determination that Jesus showed on the field in high school were recognized by Stephen F. Austin University (SFA). Jesus was accepted into the university after being recommended as a prospective football player and has just received news about another upcoming scholarship from SFA that will cover all of his tuition. Although he has enjoyed his time at San Elizario High

School — especially the close-knit community — Jesus is excited about attending school in East Texas. Jesus is considering a career in the FBI and will focus either on a criminal justice or forensics program at SFA.

Fernie Ibarra is another student who has shown remarkable ambition in realizing his higher education goals. The Alumni Association of the University of Tulsa awarded Fernie with a renewable scholarship of \$8,000 which he qualified for after he submitted an application to the school. Fernie will study engineering at the Oklahoma University and is currently in the process of finalizing his financial aid paperwork. "I like that it is a small, private university

and being able to talk to teachers because of the small student to teacher ratio," Fernie said. He has been actively involved in SkillsUSA and taken several Career & Technology Education (CATE) classes at San Elizario High School and as a result, will also be receiving a scholarship from the Career and Technology Advisory Committee (CTAC) in the amount of \$750.

Gloria Fogerson, San Elizario High School Librarian, has witnessed the commitment that both seniors have shown in carrying out their plans for the future. "What is special about these students is they have shown incredible initiative," Fogerson said.

Victims

From Page 3

incorporated in sentencing. Plea bargaining accounts for 90 percent of sentences, but Texas is not among the 22 states that require prosecutors to obtain the victim's opinion concerning a proposed plea.

Arizona requires prosecutors to consult with victims, guarantees

victims the right to be present and heard during any settlement discussions, and requires that judges consider the victim's viewpoint in deciding whether to accept the plea. Texas law only says the judge must "inquire as to whether a victim impact statement has been returned."

We must not view crime as simply an offense against the state, and instead ensure that crime victims have a place in the courtroom and a seat at

the table. The marginalization of victims is not only unjust, but deprives us of the public safety benefits that are only realized when an offender's conscience is awakened upon realizing the harm caused to another human being.

Marc A. Levin, Esq. is Director of the Center for Effective Justice at the Texas Public Policy Foundation (www.texaspolicy.com). He can be reached at mlevin@texaspolicy.com.

Town of Horizon City PUBLIC NOTICE

During the Regular Council Meeting on Tuesday, March 13, 2007 the Town of Horizon City Council approved the following ordinance(s):

- 1) Amendment 014 to Ordinance 0102 to add Section 812 — "Yards" to address yard regulations of buildings permitted within required setbacks.
- 2) Amendment 015 to Ordinance 0102 to amend Section 502 "A-1" — Chapter 5 (Apartment District) to increase allowable residential density and to institute a site plan review process for apartment developments.
- 3) Amendment 016 to Ordinance 0102 to amend Chapter 1 "Administration", Section 101.6 "Rezoning", Subsection C "Public Hearings; Notice" to reduce the number of signs required for rezoning when such rezoning is initiated by the City.
- 4) Amendment 017 to Ordinance 0102 to amend Chapter 6 "General Commercial Districts", Section 603 "C-1" to allow the sale of alcoholic beverages for on-site consumption within restaurants by specific use permits.

Ordinances are always available for viewing or copying upon request from the City Clerk at Town Hall, 14999 Darrington Road, Horizon City, Texas, Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. or call 915-852-1046.

Fidel Morales
Interim City Clerk

WTCC: 04-05-07

Town of Horizon City PUBLIC NOTICE

A PUBLIC HEARING will be held at **6:30 p.m. on Tuesday, April 10, 2007** during the **Regular 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 testify regarding the following proposed ordinances:

- 1) Repeal and Replace Ordinance No. 0038 — Establishing a Curfew for Minors Under the Age of Seventeen Years of Age.
- 2) Amendment No. 001 to Ordinance No. 0092 — Amending Paragraph XI (A) to Make Exceptions to the Requirement of a Surety Bond for Certain Vendors and Non Profit Organizations.
- 3) Amendment No. 003 to Budget Ordinance 0154 FY 2006-2007. The purpose of the amendment is to transfer the salary from the position of Human Resources Director to the position of Administrative Aide to Mayor.

Those who are unable to attend may submit their views in writing to the City Clerk of Horizon City. 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 available for viewing or copying upon request from the City Clerk at the above address or call 915-852-1046, Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Fidel Morales
Interim City Clerk

WTCC: 03-08-07

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Wayman Tisdale gets an unfortunate, but lucky, break

By Steve Escajeda
Special to the Courier

For any of you that have ever spent any time in the hospital, you probably can't think of an instance when you considered being there a great thing, or a time to rejoice.

Well, for former NBA star and current award-winning jazz musician Wayman Tisdale, a trip to the hospital may be among the best things that ever happened to him.

It all started when he fell down some stairs at his home. The 6'-9" former power forward, who still holds almost every offensive record at Oklahoma, broke his leg and went to the hospital for medical care.

The kicker — pardon the pun — is that when doctors examined his leg they found a cancerous cyst below his right knee.

And because they found the cancer when they did, Tisdale is expected to make a full recovery.

The 42-year-old will begin chemotherapy next week. The treatments are expected to last about six months. He will also have to undergo knee-replacement surgery.

Wayman Tisdale may not be a graceful as he

once was, but he's luckier than he's ever been.

He also proved, once again, that the entertainment term "break a leg" does indeed bring good luck.

T-shirt trouble

It's no secret that the National Invitation Tournament (NIT) ranks far behind the NCAA Tournament when it comes to appeal, status, talent, interest, coverage, stature and just about any other category you can think of.

And though it's still nice that the country's "other" good teams have a tournament they can compete in, they just don't get the love the NCAA guys get.

And to prove it, West Virginia, the winner of this year's NIT title received cool "NIT Champion" T-shirts after their win over Clemson. Only problem was — well — the name on the T-shirts were misspelled.

Yes, that's rlyght — I mean, yes, that's right. The T-shirts, which were printed before the game, were donned by the players as soon as the final whistle blew, but the shirts read, "West Virginia."

C'mon, look closely, you sports fanatics. Here's a hint — the word "West" is not misspelled.

Ouch! Now that's a top-notch organization. According to West Virginia officials, the T-shirts were printed by the NIT and not by the school.

Makes you wonder how they can spell "National Invitation Tournament" correctly. I'm not sure what's going to happen with the shirts.

But let's look on the bright side — those T-shirts with the misspellings will probably end up being collector's items one day.

Now, let's see — where's my spell-check button?

The Rap Sheet

Nobody will ever argue that to play in the National Football League you've got to be a tough guy.

There's no room in the NFL for wimps. Every guy has got to stand up to someone who is either bigger, stronger or meaner than he is.

The Tampa Bay Buccaneers have a reputation of being one of the tougher teams in the NFL. And why not, when you have a running back like Lionel Gates on your team?

It's apparent that the 6', 233-pound Gates not only likes to run with the football, he also enjoys beating up pregnant women.

Well, I'm not positive he enjoyed it but ac-

ording to police in Tampa, he did it.

Seems Gates was arrested and charged with hitting the pregnant woman in the face and shoving her against a wall during an argument.

Now, that's the kind of aggression we pay to see on the football field. Let's only hope that Gates will pay a much higher price for his actions.

But Gates didn't just smack Peggie Lavender in the face. He also gave the police a whole plethora of other things to charge him with.

Let's see, first he kicked in the door to the woman's apartment, then he took out his anger on the electronics and destroyed two televisions. He must hate wood because he also destroyed two more doors and punched a hole in the wall.

Why this guy isn't an interior decorator, I'll never know.

Lionel Gates' actions couldn't have come at a better time. I say "better time" because the NFL is conducting hearings, even as we speak, on the notorious behavior of some of its players.

The NFL claims it is going to clamp down on ruthless behavior like the kind Gates displayed.

I mean, what kind of a man beats up a pregnant woman? I've got the answer to that question. No real man beats up a pregnant woman.

What does that make Gates? You figure it out.

Socorro High School names new athletic coordinator and football coach

By Irma Flores
Special to the Courier

SOCORRO — Michael Ferrell has been named the new Athletic Coordinator and Football Coach for Socorro High School. He brings with him a wealth of experience, coming to El Paso from Fort Bend ISD in Sugar Land, Texas, where he has been Head Football Coach and Athletic Coordinator at H. Kempner High School since 2003.

Ferrell was the "winningest" coach in Kempner history, including the most playoff wins. During his tenure,

Kempner's football team was 5A Division 1 Bi-District and regional finalists for three straight years. Twenty of his players at Kempner received football scholarships and 26 players have gone on to play college football.

From 1998-2003, Ferrell was the Offensive Coordinator for L.V. Hightower High School in Fort Bend ISD where his team took 5A Division 2 State Playoffs all three years. He was the Offensive Coordinator for Pecos High School in Pecos, Texas from 1996-1998 where he coached one All State player and two Permian Basin players. Ferrell also served as

a Dallas Cowboys Football Operations Intern for the Summer Training Camp from 1990-1994 and in 1998.

Ferrell was the All State Game Head Coach in 2006 for the Houston Area Blue Chip South Squad and won 50-14. He also has served on the Board of Directors for the Greater Houston Football Coaches Association since 2005. He belongs to the Texas High School

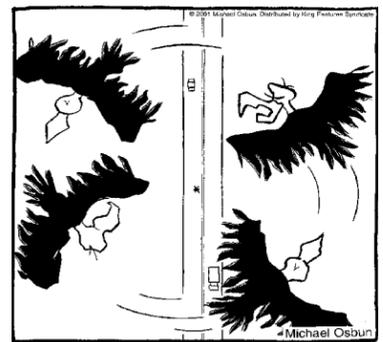


Michael Ferrell

Coaches Association, the American Football Coaches Association, the Greater Houston Football Coaches Association and the Fellowship of Christian Athletes.

"On behalf of the Socorro ISD Board of Trustees and SHS Administration, I want to welcome Coach Ferrell and his family to El Paso," said Socorro Independent School District Superintendent

Sylvia P. Atkinson. "It is a wonderful place with great kids and awesome parents. He will fit right into the Mad Dog Football Family as he is bent on helping the SHS Football Team reach new heights."



"All this circling is making me dizzy. Let's go eat!"

Classified Ads

LEGAL

FABENS INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

will be received at the above address **until 2:00 p.m., May 9, 2007** at which time they will be publicly opened.

Invitation to Bid

Sealed bids for Full-Line Food Items, Beverage & Snack, Bakery Products, Milk and Dairy Products Bid No. 050907-913.

Bid specification packets may be obtained by calling 915-764-2025. WTCC: 04/05/07-04/12/07

SOCORRO INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

Invitation to Bid/Respond:

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

FRIDAY, APRIL 13, 2007

DISTRICT WIDE MATH PROGRAM K-12 CSP NO. 199-0413-7091 ACCEPTED UNTIL 9:00 A.M.

Food Bids will be received at the above address **until 10:00 a.m., May 9, 2007** at which time they will be publicly opened.

Non-Food Bids

RECRUITING

ASSESSMENT SOFTWARE CSP NO. 199-0413-7093 ACCEPTED UNTIL 9:00 A.M.

Proposals will be received at Business Services Dept., 12300 Eastlake Drive, El Paso, Texas 79928 until the specified times. Detailed specifications are available from the above office between 8 a.m. and 4 p.m. Mondays through Fridays and on the Socorro ISD website: www.sisd.net. WTCC-04/05/07

SOCORRO INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

Invitation to Bid/Respond:

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

THURSDAY,

APRIL 12, 2007 DISTRICT SOFTWARE CSP NO. 199-0412-7089 ACCEPTED UNTIL 2:00 P.M.

FINE ARTS FORMALWEAR CSP NO. 199-0412-7079 ACCEPTED UNTIL 2:30 P.M.

Proposals will be received at Business Services Dept., 12300 Eastlake Drive, El Paso, Texas 79928 until the specified times. Detailed specifications are available from the above office between 8 a.m. and 4 p.m. Mondays through Fridays and on the Socorro ISD website: www.sisd.net. WTCC-04/05/07

COUNSELING SERVICES

D A M I A N MAUREIRA, LCSW - Professional Counseling/Therapy: Youth,

Adults, Marital, Family. Health insurance and fee scale accepted. 657 Winn Rd. in Socorro, Texas. Call 858-3857 for appointment.

HELP WANTED

Need part-time office assistant with very flexible hours. Call 851-2391, ask for Mary.

REAL ESTATE

For Sale, 291 Langford St., Clint. 2,700 sq. ft., beautiful condition, 1/4 acre. 3 bedroom, 2 bath, open kitchen, Great Room w/fireplace, bonus room and laundry room, refrigerated air/central heat, storage shed, sprinkler system, many extras. (817) 657-7818, (915) 525-4790 or (915) 241-3869.

STORAGE

20X45' SPACE FOR LEASE

HORIZON SELF STORAGE 418 S. Kenazo **852-9371**

SERVICES

"Windshield Ding — Gimme a Ring" JIFFY GLASS REPAIR Windshield Repair Specialists By appt. at your home or office: R.V. Dick Harshberger **915-852-9082**

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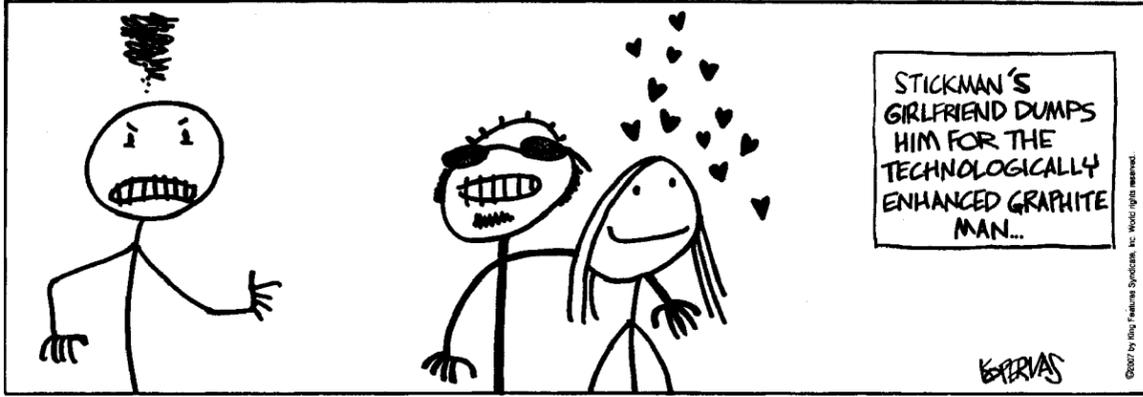
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Comix

OUT ON A LIMB By Gary Kopervas



AMBER WAVES By Dave T. Phipps



THE SPATS By Jeff Pickering



R.F.D. By Mike Marland



What's so great about Canada?

By Don Flood

A recent poll asked people around the world if they viewed various countries positively or negatively.

The United States, unfortunately, landed near the bottom — just behind North Korea.

North Korea — a country led by a crazed dictator with a funky fashion sense who recently set off a nuclear bomb!

And there's more. Canada, our neighbor to the north, ranked first. And France finished third.

Why would France be more popular than us?

OK, I'll give them french fries. French fries were an extraordinary step forward in the development of world cuisine. But would french fries be as popular without McDonald's? I don't think so. So France's reputation rests largely upon the American fast-food industry.

But let's return to Canada.

First, if Canadians had any class, they'd announce they are abdicating their title of "favorite nation" and giving it to the United States, because we deserve it.

But so far, not even a peep. Canadians like to act self-effacing, but inside they're going, "We're No. 1! We're No. 1!"

That is so obnoxious when a country does that — yelling "We're No. 1!" — especially when they do it silently so nobody can hear.

Americans chant "We're No. 1!" too, but we do it out loud. We don't pretend not to be obnoxious.

Clearly, the present situation cannot be allowed to stand.

Here, in the handy "Q and A" format that works so well to clarify issues, are ways we can go about acquiring Canada and/or its reputation.

Is Canada really another country?

Excellent question. Many people seem to think so, including many

otherwise intelligent Canadians.

But I've been there. We walked over while visiting Niagara Falls. Frankly, it seemed about the same, though Canadians like to make a show of having different money and flags and whatnot. But the tacky souvenirs were strictly American, made in China, just like here.

And look at all we share, including baseball, the quintessential all-American sport that a surprising number of people find boring.

Canadians also play in the National Hockey League, even though they have a hard time understanding the sport.

Assuming Canada is another country, how would we go about annexing it?

That's the good part. All we need is an executive order from the President. Canadians need not be involved.

One big advantage to annexation is that it would eliminate the problem of guarding the U.S.-Canadian border, as it would no longer exist.

What if we just want their reputation?

In this case we would simply confront Canada, saying something like: "Look, you have something we want, namely your reputation. Hand it over and nobody gets hurt."

Some experts on foreign relations — in other words, namby-pamby types — consider this line of diplomacy a little heavy-handed.

They favor a more nuanced approach. We could, for example, start by announcing that from now on there would be no more Canada geese. There would be only America geese. Hopefully, they would get the message — the Canadians I mean, not the geese.

The geese, by the way, already love America; they fly here every winter, not North Korea.

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King Super Crossword

DON'T BE ALARMED

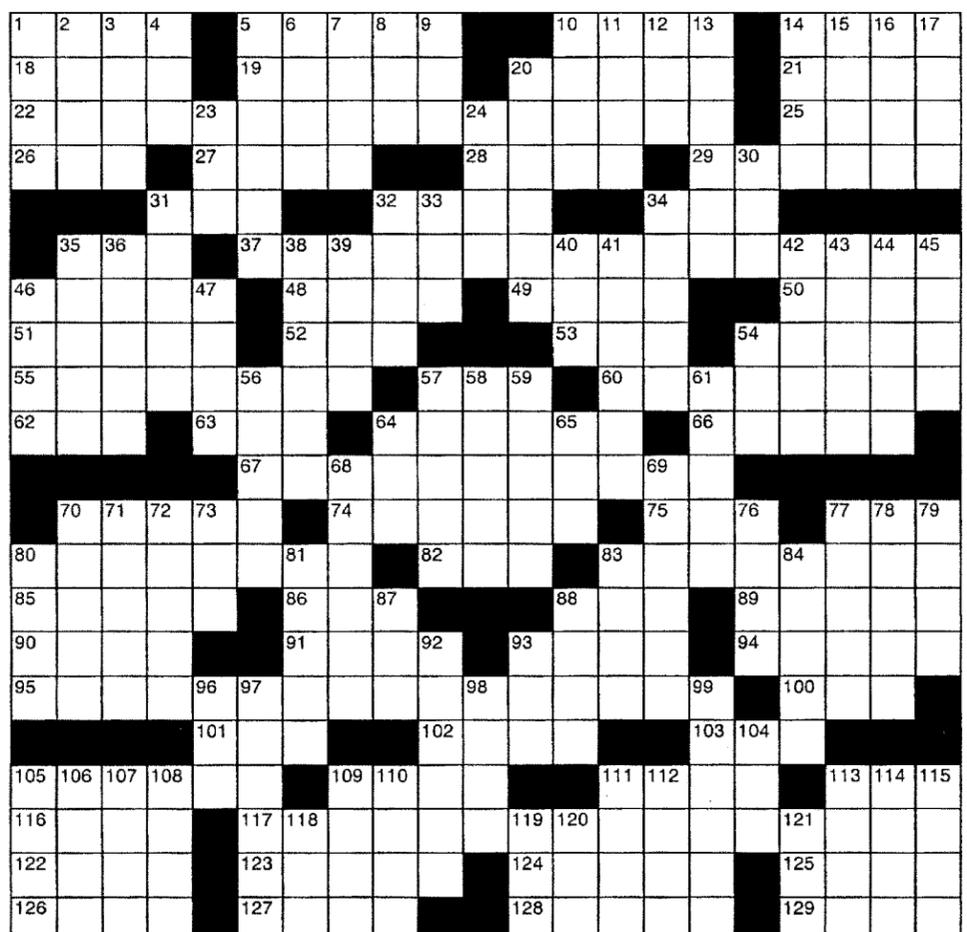
- ACROSS**
- 1 Writer Roald
 - 5 Taxing time?
 - 10 Thousand _ CA
 - 14 _ vu
 - 18 Soap additive
 - 19 Range rope
 - 20 Tall story?
 - 21 25 Across
 - maneuver
 - 22 Start of a remark
 - by Henry Youngman
 - 25 Skater Lipinski
 - 26 Settled on the sofa
 - 27 Pump part
 - 28 Pressing need
 - 29 Runnymede's river
 - 31 Morning moisture
 - 32 Baltic city
 - 34 Sault _ Marie, MI
 - 35 Chop
 - 37 Part 2 of remark
 - 46 Silly Soupy
 - 48 Designer Ricci
 - 49 Mrs. Nick Charles
 - 50 Parent
 - 51 Folklore figure
 - 52 AAA offering
 - 53 _ the Dog' ('97 film)
 - 54 Ballroom dance
 - 55 Fabric ornament
 - 57 Mil. honor
 - 60 Casanova, for one
 - 62 Caviar
 - 63 Wagner's _ Rheingold"

- 64 Vaudeville's Tucker
- 66 Islamic title
- 67 Part 3 of remark
- 70 Frank or Dweezil
- 74 Greet the general
- 75 Peculiar
- 77 "A mouse!"
- 80 Biblical city
- 82 Nice season
- 83 German shepherd
- 85 Cropped up
- 86 Goal
- 88 Pub order
- 89 Elbow
- 90 Quindlen's "One _ Thing"
- 91 Paper quantity
- 93 Trauma aftermath
- 94 "Die Fledermaus" maid
- 95 Part 4 of remark
- 100 Prospector's prize
- 101 Time to evolve?
- 102 Travel with Tonto
- 103 "Tell _ About It" ('83 hit)
- 105 Mideastern mall?
- 109 Singer Lesley
- 111 Iowa city
- 113 Task
- 116 Prayer finale
- 117 End of remark
- 122 Tilt
- 123 Hood's handle
- 124 "Wait _ Dark" ('67 film)
- 125 Similar

- DOWN**
- 1 Place to pontificate
 - 2 _ Romeo
 - 3 Songwriter Axton
 - 4 Singer Sayer
 - 5 They're kept in a quiver
 - 6 Rind
 - 7 Fury
 - 8 Robert of "Quincy, M.E."
 - 9 Chou En- _
 - 10 "Beetle Bailey" dog
 - 11 Like _ of bricks
 - 12 Rib
 - 13 Diva Renata
 - 14 Base stuff?
 - 15 Final
 - 16 Actor Burns
 - 17 "Oh, woe!"
 - 20 With _ of salt
 - 23 Employ
 - 24 Imminent
 - 30 Female fowl
 - 31 Reside
 - 32 Artist Magritte
 - 33 Call _ day
 - 34 Play ground?
 - 35 Silent star?
 - 36 Wed in haste
 - 38 Torrent

- 39 Speck
- 40 Right away
- 41 Concrete component
- 42 Fuming
- 43 Bottled spirit?
- 44 Cartoon Viking
- 45 '82 Jeff Bridges film
- 46 TV's " _ Search"
- 47 Coasted
- 54 Pro _ (for now)
- 56 Doha's country
- 57 Holmes' creator
- 58 Teapot part
- 59 Coal conveyance
- 61 Must-haves
- 64 Police hdqrs.
- 65 _ de France
- 68 More pallid
- 69 Jacket type
- 70 Bernardo's boss
- 71 Romance
- 72 Puzzling problem
- 73 Affix meaning "before"
- 76 Delany or Wynter
- 77 Duck down
- 78 Bald bird
- 79 Patella's place
- 80 Gangsters' guns
- 81 Composer Copland
- 83 Fruit-tree spray
- 84 English dynasty
- 87 Welcome item?
- 88 Lot size
- 92 Udall or West

- 93 Lay down the lawn
- 96 Nay opponent
- 97 Setup
- 98 Appearance
- 99 Automobile, informally
- 104 Kreskin's letters
- 105 Bound bundle
- 106 Author Kingsley
- 107 Gusto
- 108 Relative of 73 Down
- 109 Prepare to bear it
- 110 _ even keel
- 111 Choir member
- 112 Chow _
- 113 Boxer LaMotta
- 114 Model Carre
- 115 Crooked
- 118 Seville shout
- 119 Chew it!
- 120 _ -Cat
- 121 Peke's perch



Answer Page 6

Social Security Q&A By Ray Vigil

Make sure you have a Social Security Number for your newborn child

Are you among the approximately one in 10 parents who last year did not apply for a Social Security number for their newborns before leaving the hospital? If so, you should know that you will need a Social Security number to claim your newest family member as a dependent on your federal tax return. And don't

wait until April 15 to apply for that number. You need to apply now.

Here is what you need to do to get a new Social Security number.

Complete an Application for a Social Security Card (Form SS-5). This form is available online at www.socialsecurity.gov/online/ss-5.html. If you do not have online ac-

cess, you can request a form by calling Social Security's toll-free number, 1-800-772-1213, or visiting a local Social Security office.

You also will need to provide documents that prove both your and your child's identity, and documents that show your child's U.S. citizenship and age. All of these documents must be either originals or copies of originals that are certified by the issuing agency. We do not accept copies or notarized copies of documents.

Keep in mind there are strict requirements on what documents Social Security can accept to prove citizenship and identity. For example, only certain documents can be ac-

cepted as proof of U.S. citizenship. These include a U.S. birth certificate, a U.S. passport, a Certificate of Naturalization or a Certificate of Citizenship. In addition, Social Security will need to verify your child's birth record before you can be issued a card.

You must take or mail the completed Form SS-5 to the nearest Social Security office, together with the originals or certified copies of your supporting documents.

We will return your original documents right away, and we will then mail a Social Security card as soon as your documents are verified, which can take several weeks.

Once you have a Social Security number for your newborn, you should safeguard that number, as well as the numbers of other family members. Keep that card in a safe place with your other important papers. Do not carry your Social Security card in your wallet.

For more information on the topic 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.

Fraudulent telephone tax refunds among IRS top 2007 'dirty dozen' tax scams

By Lea Crusberg
Special to the Courier

WASHINGTON — The Internal Revenue Service today identified 12 of the most blatant scams affecting American taxpayers and warned people not to fall for the schemes.

This year the "Dirty Dozen" highlights five new scams that IRS auditors and criminal investigators have uncovered. Topping off the list are fraudulent refunds being claimed in connection with the special Telephone Excise Tax Refund available to most taxpayers this filing season. The IRS is actively investigating instances of this scam involving tax preparers who are preparing inflated refund requests.

Also new to the Dirty Dozen this year are abuses pertaining to Roth IRAs, the American Indian Employment Credit, domestic shell corporations and structured entities.

"Taxpayers shouldn't let their guard down," IRS Commissioner Mark W. Everson said. "Don't get taken by scam artists making outrageous promises. If you use a tax professional, pick someone who is reputable. Taxpayers should remember they are ultimately responsible for what is on their tax return even if some unscrupulous preparers have steered them in the wrong direction."

Persons who become involved in tax schemes risk significant penalties, interest and possible criminal prosecution.

The IRS urges taxpayers to avoid these common schemes:

1. Telephone Excise Tax Refund Abuses

Early filings show some individual taxpayers have requested large and apparently improper amounts for the special telephone tax refund. In some cases, taxpayers appear to be requesting a refund of the entire amount of their phone bills, rather than just the three-percent tax on long-distance and bundled service to which they are entitled. Some tax preparers are helping their clients file apparently improper requests. The IRS is investigating potential abuses in this area and will take prompt action against taxpayers who claim improper refund amounts and against the return preparers who help them.

2. Abusive Roth IRAs

Taxpayers should be wary of advisers who encourage them to shift under-valued property to Roth Individual Retirement Arrangements (IRAs). In one variation, a promoter has the taxpayer move under-valued common stock into a Roth IRA, circumventing the annual maximum contribution limit and allowing oth-

erwise taxable income to go untaxed.

3. Phishing

Phishing is a technique used by identity thieves to acquire personal financial data in order to gain access to the financial accounts of unsuspecting consumers, run up charges on their credit cards or apply for loans in their names. These Internet-based criminals pose as representatives of a financial institution — or sometimes the IRS itself — and send out fictitious e-mail correspondence in an attempt to trick consumers into disclosing private information. A typical e-mail notifies a taxpayer of an outstanding refund and urges the taxpayer to click on a hyperlink and visit an official-looking Web site. The Web site then solicits a social security and credit card number. It is important to note the IRS does not use e-mail to initiate contact with taxpayers about issues related to their accounts. If a taxpayer has any doubt whether a contact from the IRS is authentic, the taxpayer should call 1-800-829-1040 to confirm it.

4. Disguised Corporate Ownership

Domestic shell corporations and other entities are being formed and operated in certain states for the purpose of disguising the ownership of the business or financial activity. Once formed, these anonymous entities can be, and are being, used to facilitate underreporting of income, non-filing of tax returns, listed transactions, money laundering, financial crimes and possibly terrorist financing. The IRS is working with state authorities to identify these entities and to bring their owners into compliance.

5. Zero Wages

In this scam, which first appeared in the Dirty Dozen in 2006, a Form 4852 (Substitute Form W-2) or a "corrected" Form 1099 showing zero or little income is submitted with a federal tax return. The taxpayer may include a statement rebutting wages and taxes reported by the payer to the IRS. An explanation on the Form 4852 may cite statutory language behind Internal Revenue Code sections 3401 and 3121 or may include some reference to the paying company refusing to issue a corrected Form W-2 for fear of IRS retaliation.

6. Return Preparer Fraud

Dishonest return preparers can cause many headaches for taxpayers who fall victim to their schemes. Such preparers make their money by skimming a portion of their clients' refunds and charging inflated fees for return preparation services. They attract new clients by promising large refunds. Some preparers promote filing fraudulent claims for refunds on

items such as fuel tax credits to recover taxes paid in prior years. Taxpayers should choose carefully when hiring a tax preparer. Remember that no matter who prepares the return, the taxpayer is ultimately responsible for its accuracy. Since 2002, the courts have issued injunctions ordering dozens of individuals to cease preparing returns, and the Department of Justice has filed complaints against dozens of others. During fiscal year 2006, 109 tax return preparers were convicted of tax crimes and sentenced to an average of 18 months in prison.

7. American Indian Employment Credit

Taxpayers submit returns and claims reducing taxable income by substantial amounts citing an American Indian employment or treaty credit. Although there is an Indian Employment Credit available for businesses that employ Native Americans or their spouses, there is no provision for its use by employees. In a somewhat similar scam, unscrupulous promoters have informed Native Americans that they are not subject to federal income taxation. The promoters solicit individual Indians to file Form W-8 BEN seeking relief from all withholding of federal taxation. A recent "phishing" variation has promoters using false IRS letterheads to solicit personal financial information that they claim the IRS needs in order to process their "non-tax" status.

8. Trust Misuse

For years unscrupulous promoters have urged taxpayers to transfer assets into trusts. They promise reduction of income subject to tax, deductions for personal expenses and reduced estate or gift taxes. However, some trusts do not deliver the promised tax benefits. There are currently more than 150 active abusive trust investigations underway and 49 injunctions have been obtained against promoters since 2001. As with other arrangements, taxpayers should seek the advice of a trusted professional before entering into a trust.

9. Structured Entity Credits

Promoters of this newly identified scheme are setting up partnerships to own and sell state conservation easement credits, federal rehabilitation credits and other credits. The purported credits are the only assets owned by the partnership and once the credits are fully used, an investor receives a K-1 indicating the initial investment is a total loss, which is then deducted on the investor's individual tax return. Forming such an entity is not a viable business purpose. In other words, the investments

are not valid, and the losses are not deductible.

10. Abuse of Charitable Organizations / Deductions

The IRS continues to observe the use of tax-exempt organizations to improperly shield income or assets from taxation. This can occur when a taxpayer moves assets or income to a tax-exempt supporting organization or donor-advised fund but maintains control over the assets or income. Contributions of non-cash assets continue to be an area of abuse, especially with regard to overvaluation of contributed property. In addition, the IRS is noticing the return of private tuition payments being disguised as charitable contributions to religious organizations.

11. Form 843 Tax Abatement

This scam rests on faulty interpretation of the Internal Revenue Code. It involves the filer requesting abatement of previously assessed tax using Form 843. Many using this scam have not previously filed tax returns and the tax they are trying to have abated has been assessed by the IRS through the Substitute for Return Program. The filer uses the Form 843 to list reasons for the request. Often, one of the reasons is: "Failed to properly compute and/or calculate IRC Sec 83-Property Transferred in Connection with Performance of Service."

12. Frivolous Arguments

Promoters have been known to make the following outlandish claims: the Sixteenth Amendment concerning congressional power to lay and collect income taxes was never ratified; wages are not income; filing a return and paying taxes are merely voluntary; and being required to file Form 1040 violates the Fifth Amendment right against self-incrimination or the Fourth Amend-

IRS still watches scams that fall off the list

Five of last year's Dirty Dozen tax scams rotated off the list for 2007. While the IRS has seen a decline in the occurrence of some of these scams — abusive credit counseling agencies, for example — other problems, such as offshore abusive transactions continue to be an area of particular concern for the agency. The absence of a particular scheme from the Dirty Dozen should not be taken as an indication that the IRS is unaware of it or not taking steps to counter it.

Suspected tax fraud can be reported to the IRS using IRS Form

All business



— Photo courtesy Canutillo ISD

Moises Lucero, Canutillo High School senior, recently received the Who's Who award for Future Business Leaders of America (FBLA), Canutillo Chapter, which makes him eligible for a scholarship of \$1,000. Lucero has been the chapter historian for FBLA for the past three years, participating in fund-raisers and meetings held throughout the year. He has also competed for the past three years at the area and state level competitions in various business-related events. "This award is given to members who are recognized as outstanding FBLA members for their activity and involvement in the CHS Chapter," said Carmen Guzman, CHS business education teacher and FBLA advisor.

ment right to privacy. Don't believe these or other similar claims. These arguments are false and have been thrown out of court. While taxpayers have the right to contest their tax liabilities in court, no one has the right to disobey the law.

3949-A, Information Referral, available for download from the IRS Web site at IRS.gov, or by mail by calling 1-800-829-3676. The completed form or a letter detailing the alleged fraudulent activity should be addressed to the Internal Revenue Service, Fresno, CA 93888. The mailing should include specific information about who is being reported, the activity being reported, how the activity became known, when the alleged violation took place, the amount of money involved and any other information that might be helpful in an investigation. The person filing the report is not required to self-identify, although it is helpful to do so. The identity of the person filing the report can be kept confidential. The person may also be entitled to a reward.