

NEWSBRIEFS

Heat takes toll

El Paso Fire Department emergency crews continue to respond to heat related emergencies. Heat emergencies have affected people ranging in age from eight- to 84-years old in all areas of the city. The El Paso Fire Department offers these heat safety tips:

- Dress for the heat. Wear lightweight, light colored clothing. Light colors will reflect away some of the sun's energy. It is also a good idea to wear hats or to use an umbrella.
- Drink plenty of water. Carry water with you and drink continuously even if you do not feel thirsty. Avoid alcohol and caffeine, which dehydrate the body.
- Eat small meals and eat more often. Avoid foods that are high in protein which increase metabolic heat. Avoid using salt tablets unless directed to do so by a physician.

• Slow down. Avoid strenuous activity. If you must do strenuous activity take plenty of breaks in a shaded area or do it during the coolest part of the day, which is usually in the morning between 4:00 a.m. and 10:00 a.m. Stay indoors when possible.

The public is also asked to continue supporting the El Paso Fire Departments and the Extreme Weather Task Force Fan Drive. People can donate and drop off new fans at any fire station in the city. The donated fans are given to the elderly, disabled, and needy families throughout the El Paso area. Anyone needing a fan or if they know of someone who needs a fan can call 211. Extreme Weather Task Force members are also asking the public to practice the Buddy system. A Buddy can be a relative, friend, or neighbor who checks up on an elderly or disabled person on a daily basis.

Reading rally

The El Paso Public Library is hosting a reading rally on Tuesday, July 17 from 10 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. at the Park in Cleveland Square. The rally will include special readings and performances from local authors and dignitaries including Denise Chavez, Lee and Bobby Byrd, Felipa Solis and others. There will also be a free book distribution for all ages. There is no cost to attend. For more information call 543-5468. Paint El Paso READ (red) is designed to draw attention to the importance of reading and literacy in our community. The children's books to be given away are brand new books that were donated to the library for the specific purpose of being given away. The books for adults are primarily pre-owned books that were donated to the library and its partners, and cannot be used as part of its regular circulating collection.

Ethics speech

On Friday July 13, 2007, El Paso County Attorney José R. Rodriguez will address the members of the Downtown Lions Club to talk about ethics in government and the importance of good government in fostering a strong and healthy business climate in our community.

*Thousands of nuts hold a car together
— but one can scatter it all over the road.
— Quips & Quotes*



— Photo courtesy San Elizario ISD

GOLDEN — Mario Saenz (back row from left), Sammy Dominguez and Jose Olivas along with Syria Alvidrez (bottom row from left) and Maria Aguirre earned a gold medal at the 43rd Annual SkillsUSA National Leadership and Skills Conference.

San Elizario HS students strike gold at SkillsUSA

By Cynthia P. Marentes
Special to the Courier

Facing a massive competition of over 4,800 students from across the United States, four students from San Elizario High School were

able to capture a gold medal at the 43rd Annual SkillsUSA National Leadership and Skills Conference (NLSC) held in Kansas City from June 26-June 29, 2007. Seniors Maria Aguirre, Syria Alvidrez, and Sammy Dominguez and

See SKILLSUSA, Page 4

Escontrias Campus receives makeover

By Irma Flores
Special to the Courier

When students head back to Escontrias Elementary on July 19, they will see a couple of new additions to their campuses. Thanks to the hard work of community volunteers and help from Socorro Independent School District Partners in Education, Home Depot and Sam's Club, the school will have a shaded structure to keep students cool and a new reading garden. In a period of two days, parents and volunteers rolled up their sleeves to plant new bushes and build two sitting areas in front of the Escontrias Early Childhood Center. At the same time, another group of volunteers braved the first day of summer building the structure that is located in the back of the elementary.

"It really is a true partnership," says Esther McCarthy, Escontrias Principal. "I felt very blessed by the efforts of our school counselors and the relationships they built with Home Depot and Sam's. I hope our



— Photo courtesy Socorro ISD

HELPING HANDS — 1st grader Rhiannon Hernandez with mom Ramona Hernandez and Vicky Cabrera helped set up a garden area at Escontrias Elementary.

See ESCONTRIAS, Page 5

Construction, security impacts multiple El Paso ports of entry

By Roger Maier
Special to the Courier

EL PASO COUNTY — U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) officials in El Paso are instituting a number of changes at area ports of entry designed to maintain the flow of cross border traffic and the agency's anti-terror mission. The goal is to maintain CBP's balance between enforcement and facilitation in the wake of the Paso Del Norte (PDN) construction project. The changes went into effect Sunday.

The most significant change is at the Ysleta port of entry where CBP officers will keep all 10 available lanes open during peak travel periods. Normally six of 10 lanes are open. The change does not impact the two Dedicated Commuter Lanes at the Ysleta crossing.

At the Bridge of the Americas (BOTA) crossing all 14 lanes will remain open during peak traffic periods. In addition CBP managers will monitor traffic flows and keep additional lanes open beyond midnight as traffic dictates. Usually several lanes are closed at midnight as traffic generally decreases in the overnight hours.

At the PDN crossing, CBP officers will staff the four open lanes at the port 24 hours per day, seven days a week. CBP officials have abandoned the use of "double up" inspections at the PDN crossing. CBP employed this tactic for the first four weeks of major construction and found that it was not an effective traffic management tool. CBP will staff additional "overflow" pedestrian inspection lanes at the crossing to better process the increase in pedestrian traffic the port has experienced since the construction project began.

Drivers who normally use the PDN crossing may also wish to consider using alternative crossing points including the Santa Teresa port of entry, which is routing some weekend overflow traffic into the cargo inspection lot, increasing inspection capacity at the port by 50 percent. Port of entry crossing times are posted on the CBP website (www.cbp.gov) and updated hourly.

During the first eight days of July, CBP officers at PDN have processed an average of 20,014 pedestrians daily, up from an average of 17,435 in July of 2006. Last month, CBP officers at PDN processed an average 20,191 pedestrians a day compared to 16,318 per day in June 2006.

While pedestrian traffic has increased in the wake of the construction, vehicular traffic at PDN has dipped. An average of 6,850 cars crossed per day this month, down from 9,498 a day in July 2007. In June, CBP officers at PDN processed 8,081 cars a day compared to 9,112 a day in June 2006. When combining the car and pedestrian numbers, the overall number of people entering downtown El Paso from Mexico at the PDN crossing is virtually unchanged from a year ago.

In addition to traffic management efforts

See BRIDGES, Page 6



One perspective

By Francis Shrum

A toilet paper saga

Toilet paper is one of those inventions of our time which we tend to take for granted.

Strange that not so many years hence it was virtually unknown, sort of like the cell phone. We didn't miss it until we had it.

Even though, by its very nature, toilet paper is intended to be the most temporary of our possession, some people are downright fanatical about what kind they purchase. They want the fluffiest, softest, most substantial product they can get that will still dissolve and not clog up the sewer line.

Some kinds of toilet are, sad to say, virtually useless, so thin and wispy are they. Whatever you paid for that kind was too much, unless, of course,

you are going to use it to toilet paper someone else's vegetation.

Ever versatile, toilet paper can be a verb as well as a noun.

Like almost everything else, the Chinese are known to have used toilet paper first. As early as 1391, the Bureau of Imperial Supplies was producing emperor-sized sheets of toilet paper, two feet by three feet, for use by — who else? — the emperors.

It took Americans, however, to expand on and refine the concept of toilet paper until it truly fit the needs of everyone, from kings right on

down to the common man. It wasn't until almost the turn of the century that toilet paper first became commercially available in the U.S. Joseph C. Gayetty started producing what he called "The Therapeutic Paper" or "Gayetty's Medicated Paper," since we were more sensitive to what we called things back then. He wasn't shy about it though. He added aloe to the paper and had his name printed on each sheet.

The Scott Paper Company caught onto the idea and the rest is history with a few colorful twists — the advent of the first toilet paper guaranteed to be splinter free in 1935; the introduction of two-ply toilet paper in 1942 and, as is inevitable at some point in the history of all good things, an actual shortage in 1973 when Johnny Carson made a joke about a possible scarcity and people took him seriously. There was a run on stores and supplies were cleaned out. People stockpiled rooms full so they wouldn't be without.

Carson, however, isn't the only one

who has contributed to toilet paper taking on a value system all its own. It has become so much a part of our lives that you could make some serious cash if you're the only guy on the hunting trip who remembered to pack plenty.

Toilet paper can also be a big issue for those suffering incarceration and, in at least one case, it may be the actual cause of one woman going to jail.

In a Kansas correctional facility, the prison officials decided to get serious about enforcing limitations on how much toilet paper was being dispensed. They felt this commodity was being utilized carelessly. Therefore, like all things that are regulated by supply and demand, toilet paper suddenly became a trading commodity among prisoners.

The inmates were most unhappy with being restricted to only four rolls per person per month. They said toilet paper serves a multitude of sanitizing uses in their daily lives from blowing their noses to cleaning toi-

lets, tables and sinks. Prison officials finally said they could come ask for more, if they used up their allotment, and they wouldn't be denied if they handed over an empty roll.

Meanwhile, at a courthouse in Iowa, a woman was arrested for stealing three rolls of toilet paper out of the supply room. The fifth-degree charge against her for this offense, a misdemeanor, isn't a very serious crime, except this lady already had prior theft convictions. She could go to jail for as long as three years — a year for a roll.

That's not the end of the story, of course.

The police chief had to struggle to keep a straight face as he relayed the story of how custodial workers noticed the toilet paper supply was disappearing at an unusually rapid rate. Then someone caught this woman in the act. The cause of his mirth was the woman's name: Suzanne Butts.

You could say her arrest was literally the end of at least one toilet paper saga.



Por la Gente By State Rep. Chente Quintanilla

Fireworks trash tax may become necessary

Hola, mi gente,

I hope that

all of you had an enjoyable Fourth of July celebration. But most of all I hope that you and your family had a safe holiday. Apparently, the celebration passed without any serious fires or injuries. Thank God.

I had the privilege of attending the Eastside Civic Association Fourth of July parade on Wednesday. This year the event was much larger than any previous parades that I attended as your Representative. I was positioned almost halfway between the beginning and the end of the parade; yet the parade ended a full hour after I arrived at Album Park. I saw a lot of

friends along the parade route. I think that everyone enjoyed the parade, both the participants and spectators.

And, as always, the fireworks on the Fourth were magnificent. Several shows throughout the city thrilled those who watched. Of course, thousands of El Pasoans flocked to the outskirts of the city to purchase and shoot their own fireworks displays. The vendors who sell the product must have had a good season as the weather was good and, for the first time in years, aerial fireworks were not banned. Many areas, especially the Montana Vista area, resembled war zones as the sky was lit up with all forms of explosions.

As enjoyable as the fireworks are,

there is a very big negative to the celebration. Like a bad hangover, many residents in the area where the fireworks were lit wake up the next morning to the ugly spectacle of left over garbage from the revelers. You cannot imagine the ugly sight of spent fireworks combined with empty beer bottles and picnic trash. None of you would like that in your neighborhood or yard. Yet every Fourth of July, my constituents in Montana Vista and other parts in the unincorporated areas of the county wake up on the July 5 to such a scene.

It should not be this way. Celebrants should be responsible and clean their area after enjoying themselves. Unfortunately, it takes special

efforts by the residents to take back their community from the "hang-over."

Fortunately, some of the fireworks vendors, especially TNT Fireworks, took an extra effort to clean the area around their stands. I applauded them for that. It was, however, not enough.

During the legislative session which ended in May, I drafted a bill which would have levied a tax on fireworks to provide additional grant money for cleanup and also to pay for the cost of emergency services. It is my intention to revisit that bill in the next session. My staff is working on the bill now. I don't relish the idea of new taxes but in order to have a better Fourth, I am compelled to take this approach. If the fireworks vendors have a better way resolving the issue, my door is open for discussion.

Gracias, mi gente, and I remain your friend and public servant,

Chente for la gente.



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WEST TEXAS COUNTY COURIER

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Reyes Reports By U.S. Rep. Silvestre Reyes

Tri-Caucus Health Equity and Accountability Act of 2007

The Health Equity and Accountability Act of

2007 was recently introduced in the U.S. House of Representatives. I am proud to serve as a cosponsor of this bill, which is an important step forward in efforts to reduce persistent health care disparities in minority communities like El Paso and others across the country. This "Tri-Caucus" bill, introduced by the Congressional Hispanic Caucus, of which I am a member, the Congressional Black Caucus and the Congressional Asian Pacific American Caucus, is the result of our important partnership to address these critical health care needs.

This Tri-Caucus endeavor will especially serve residents of the colonias in El Paso and along the Southwest border, and is aimed at combating the root causes of health disparities by addressing the following goals:

- Expanding health care coverage;
- Removing language and cultural

barriers;

- Improving workforce diversity;
- Supporting and expanding programs to reduce health disparities;
- Improving data collection;
- Ensuring accountability; and
- Strengthening health institutions that serve minority populations.

The Health Equity and Accountability Act enhances opportunities for minority students. It requires federal health agencies to develop and implement a national strategic action plan to eliminate racial and ethnic health disparities, creates grants to Hispanic-serving health profession schools for recruiting, and specifically awards grants to entities that improve health of residents in border areas.

The bill also creates Health Empowerment Zones, which assist individuals, businesses, schools, minority health associations, non-profit organizations, and hospitals in improving health care in underserved areas. The bill offers grants to improve health care for communities with low functional literacy as well

as diversity enhancement programs that create a greater number of bilingual, culturally sensitive physicians.

As a representative of a border district, I have long been working to address the underserved families and children in the El Paso region seeking quality health care. We do have many quality doctors and health care professionals working hard in our community to serve our health care needs, but we need more and I believe this legislation will assist and empower providers as well as patients.

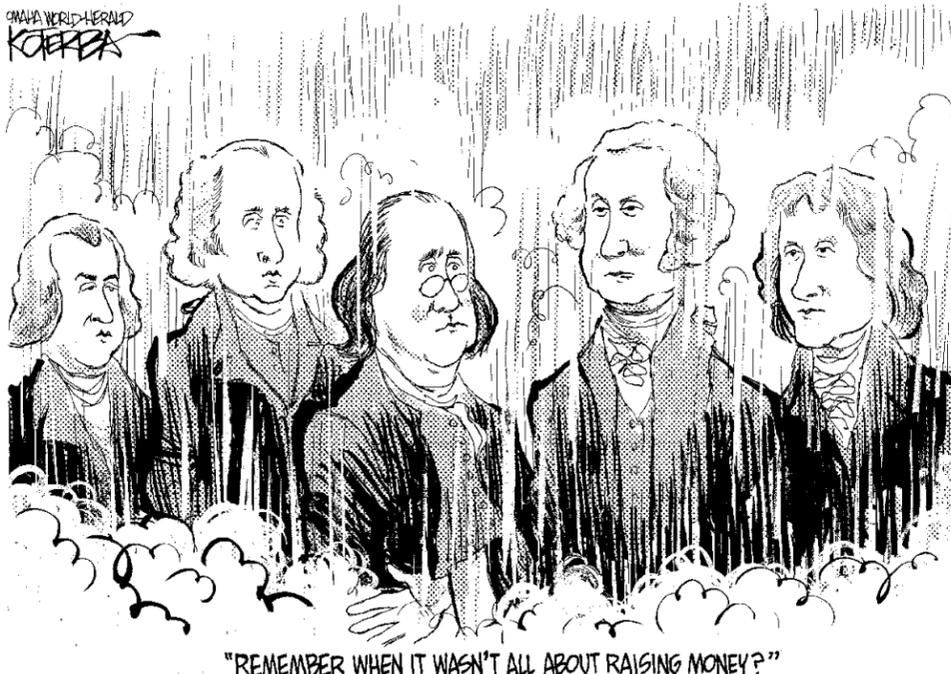
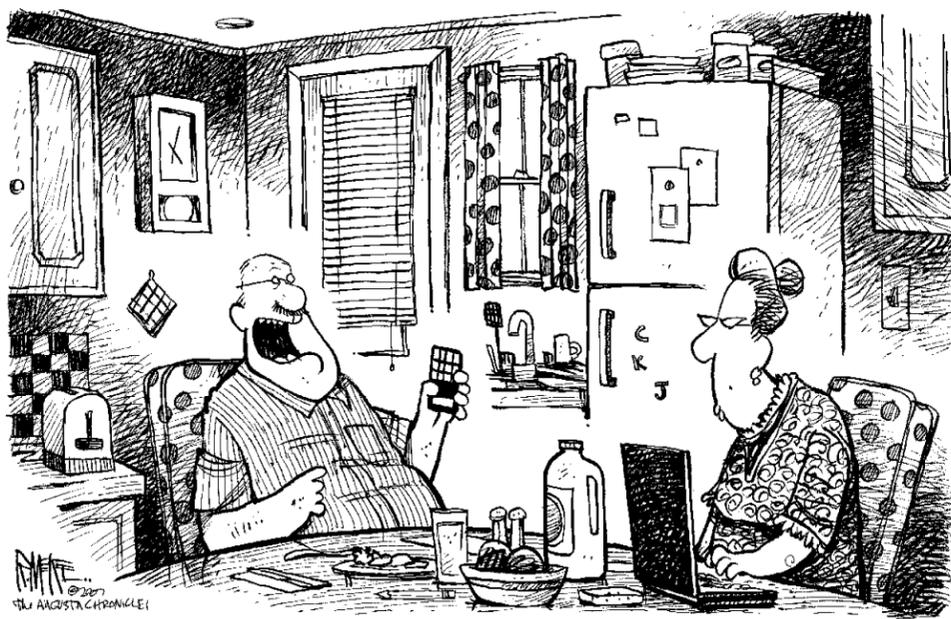
Everyone needs and deserves quality health care, and troubling trends exist in our nation today regarding minorities and medical treatment. The Health Equity and Accountability Act aims to provide quality treatment and eliminate health disparities in our country. I will continue to work with my colleagues in the Congressional Hispanic Caucus, the Congressional Black Caucus and the Congressional Asian Pacific American Caucus to urge passage of this important and timely bill.



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FROM THE SECRET FILES OF THE CIA...



View from here By Jerry Patterson

Heroes need not apply

Texas has a proud military heritage. From the Alamo to Baghdad, Texas veterans have served our country in every major conflict, in every corner of the globe.

Yet, Texas heroes like William B. Travis, John Bell Hood, Earl Rudder and Audie Murphy would shudder to think Texas is denying educational benefits to her veterans. Even combat veterans in harms way are barred from receiving certain Texas educational benefits under state law.

The law is called the Hazelwood Act and it exists in Section 54.203 of the Education Code. It exempts eligible military veterans from paying tuition and most fees at state colleges and universities. This educational assistance is extremely helpful to returning veterans anxious to enter or finish college to begin a career.

Yet, in the fine print, the Hazlewood Act only provides this benefit to veterans who are U.S. citizens residing in Texas at the time they joined the Armed Forces.

Problem is, there are more than 35,000 men and women in our Armed Forces – thousands of them from Texas – who are not U.S. citizens. They are called legal permanent residents, or "green card" holders. And they serve and fight and die – just like a U.S. citizen. Even if they become citizens after they join the military, they will still be denied because of their status upon joining the service.

This is not right and it is most likely unconstitutional.

Texas needs to amend the Hazelwood Act to ensure that any Texan who wears the uniform of the U.S. Armed Forces is entitled to the benefits reserved for them by the people of Texas.

Right now a lawsuit is working its way through the courts that may settle this question. The case involves two Gulf war veterans – both legal permanent residents – who were denied Hazelwood benefits because they had

not yet become U.S. citizens when they joined the Army. They are both now citizens, but have been rejected for the benefits afforded to their Gulf War buddies.

Do Texans really believe these veterans are somehow less worthy, or less deserving, of these benefits? Do we support the idea of a second-class veteran?

Here at the Texas Veterans Land Board, we provide the best veterans benefits of any state. All of our benefits, from low-interest loans to veterans' homes and veterans' cemeteries are available to every legal resident Texas veteran regardless of their citizen status.

When I authored the Texas Concealed Handgun Law, I ensured that the law allowed permits to be granted to legal permanent residents as well as citizens. I did so because I believe the right to bear arms is a constitutional right that applies to every legal resident, whether or not they have achieved citizen status. After all, they are in America by choice, rather than by accident of birth.

By the same token, I believe the Equal Protection clause of Fourteenth Amendment also applies in this case. Every honorably discharged veteran should be treated equally under law, regardless of whether or not he or she is a citizen.

If a Texan is willing to pick up a rifle in defense of our country, then they deserve the financial, educational and social benefits their sacrifice demands.

After all, there is no higher qualification for citizenship than one's willingness to lay down their life in defense of their country.

When it comes to veterans' benefits, a Texas veteran should never be told, "heroes need not apply."

Jerry Patterson is a former Marine and Vietnam Veteran. He was elected Land Commissioner in 2002 and again in 2006.

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Moore Texas by Roger T. Moore July 13, 1903: The Texas Legislature offers \$50,000 to anyone who can eradicate the Boll Weevil.

Canutillo ISD schools recognized for excellence

By Kim Guzman
Special to the Courier

UPPER VALLEY — El Paso Collaborative for Academic Excellence, an education reform initiative through the University of Texas at El Paso (UTEP), recently named Canutillo Middle School (CMS) and Deanna Davenport Elementary School (DDE), as 2006-2007 Schools of Excellence.

Only eight schools in the region were selected for this recognition. Selection of these two Canutillo Independent School District (CISD) schools was based on improvements in student achievement and making science education a significant part of their curriculum, resulting in improved science achievement across their campuses.

Dr. Monica Reyes-Garcia, CMS principal, and Sylvia Gonzalez, DDE principal, along with representative teams of teachers, parents, and stu-

dents were honored during a special reception held at UTEP's Hoover House, residence of Diana Natalicio, president of the university.

Dr. Reyes-Garcia said, "Our science teachers have been working collaboratively to ensure that they are providing well-planned, research-based lessons that do not just address TAKS but also establish a solid foundation for high school science requirements."

"This award is not all about TAKS. It has to do with the effort the entire school has placed on teaching science and how we are preparing our staff to teach scientific processes and inquiry based science in order to create long term achievement in the field of science for our students," stated Gonzalez.

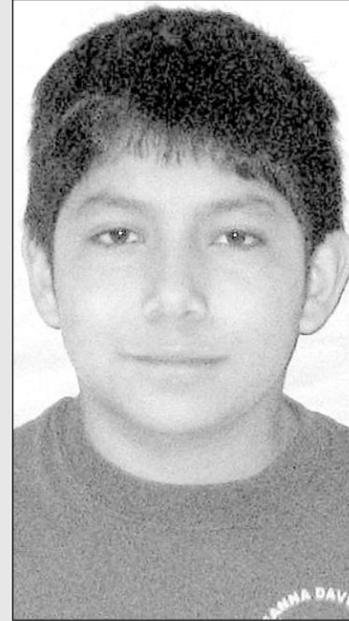
"DDE has striven to impact science learning for all our students in the past three years through the support of the El Paso Collaborative for Academic Excellence. The Collaborative assisted

in training three of our teachers to become trainers of trainees among our staff," Gonzalez added.

"The Schools of Excellence awards are truly the highlight of our year, one that we look forward to because it gives us the opportunity to recognize a whole school community — teachers, students, parents and administrators — and their continuing efforts to achieve excellence," said Susana Navarro, Ph.D., El Paso Collaborative executive director.

Founded in 1991, The El Paso Collaborative for Academic Excellence is a community wide systemic reform effort aimed at improving academic achievement of all students in El Paso from kindergarten through college. Founders and partners include the National Science Foundation, the U.S. Department of Education and The Pew Charitable Trust, in addition to businesses and organizations in the community and throughout Texas.

Spelling in Español



— Photo courtesy Canutillo ISD
SPELLING CHAMP — Miguel Martinez, fifth grader at Davenport ES, won Canutillo Independent

School District's Seventh Annual Spanish Spelling Bee recently and received several books from Barnes and Noble along with his trophy. DDE received a plaque designating its campus as the 2007 District Spanish Spelling Bee Winner.

Coming in second was Stefany Terrazas, fifth grader at Canutillo ES; third place went to Antonio Maldonado, fifth grader at Damian ES; Carolina Sanchez, fifth grader at Davenport ES was fourth; and April Cruz, fifth grader at Canutillo ES came in fifth place. For placing in the top five, they also received books from Barnes and Noble.

The District Spelling Bee brought together the top 20 participants from each of the four CISD elementary schools. The contest was open to third through fifth grade students. All participants received a goody bag with school supplies.

Keeping a healthy home means keeping out unwanted guests

By Samantha Donaldson
Special to the Courier

You may have some uninvited guests creeping around your home, and they're not your relatives.

They're allergens — dust mites, animal dander, and molds that reduce the quality of the air in your home and can harm your family's health.

Find out how to protect your home from these unwanted visitors with the new Healthy Home package. This

free package is filled with helpful publications from the Environmental Protection Agency, the FDA Office of Women's Health, and The Soap and Detergent Association.

Start by conducting a room-by-room assessment of your home using the handy checklist in this package. Be on the look out for unusual and noticeable odors, excessive moisture or condensation, vapors that could be harmful, and dust that could be from asbestos or lead. These signs are good indicators that the air in your home may be unhealthy. Moisture in your kitchen, bathrooms, and laundry room, for instance, encourages the growth of mold and mildew and attracts cockroaches and dust mites.

And for millions of Americans, exposure to these household irritants

triggers their allergies. An allergy is your body's adverse reaction to a substance that doesn't bother other people. Symptoms include watery eyes, runny nose, sneezing, nasal congestion, and coughing. Indoor allergens also play a significant role in causing asthma attacks. Learn more about asthma, including how to keep it under control, with this informative package.

Although indoor allergens are a common problem, there are things you can do to keep your home healthy. One of the most effective and least expensive ways is to clean as often as possible. Wash bedding, such as sheets, bedcovers, and blankets, once a week in hot water. Fix water problems and leaks and regularly clean humidifiers and air conditioners. Store food in tightly sealed con-

tainers. And clean up spills and crumbs on kitchen counter-tops and floors immediately.

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but only in the first few hours after symptoms begin. Every minute counts.

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SkillsUSA

From Page 1

junior student Mario Saenz competed against 42 other teams in the Tech-Prep Showcase category winning first place in the Tech Prep-Arts, Audio Visual Technology and Communications contest. Although several high schools from the El Paso area advanced to national level, the team from San Elizario was the only one that placed at the competition, winning the top spot in their event. In total there were over 300 competitive categories at the conference.

"I knew we were going to win. We were nervous during the presentation but I knew our project was the best from all the others," Syria said.

The Tech-Prep Showcase is one of the more comprehensive contests in SkillsUSA because it incorporates many of the elements that students in career and technology courses have learned. It involves the design and construction of a display that applies all the skills and knowledge that students have acquired in the classroom. The students then also have to deliver a professional presentation on the theme they have selected for their project.

The San Elizario High School stu-

dents chose to implement a community service project on dropout prevention and created a traveling counseling center to enter into the contest. They included many details into their display including calling cards, magnets, brochures, water bottles, bags, and many other marketing materials lacking from the other participating schools, which mostly focused on PowerPoint presentations or videos, according to Syria.

Sponsor Jose Olivas traveled with the students to the University of Kansas and has guided their efforts, along with assistant Sylvia Ruvalcaba from the beginning of the project in September of 2006. "I told them from day one that their project could go to nationals and they just had to work on how to present it because communications was our weakest point. And they worked at it and believed in themselves," Olivas said.

Olivas has been teaching at San Elizario High since 1990 and has been instrumental in building up the district's SkillsUSA chapter in the district for the last five years. Olivas also believes that support from the district including having the right graphic design equipment for students in the classroom was a major factor in the students' outstanding performance at the national conference. "It's a big honor for these students because they have really put

San Elizario on the map with what they have done," Olivas added.

For the San Elizario seniors, winning a gold medal at the national SkillsUSA Conference was the perfect culmination of their high school experience. Syria and Maria will next tackle other goals at El Paso Community College. Sammy, whose family moved to California the same day he returned from Kansas City, will begin adjusting to life in a new state and also attending college there. Mario on the other hand has big plans for his senior year, including competing again in SkillsUSA and becoming an officer for the organization.

SkillsUSA, formerly known as VICA or Vocational Industrial Clubs of America, Inc., is an organization for secondary and post-secondary students. Its mission is to engage students in activities that will help develop and expand their leadership and workforce skills specifically for those preparing for careers in trade, technical and skilled service occupations, including health and law enforcement. The SkillsUSA program also promotes community service and integrating workforce standards recommended by industry into academic settings. The San Elizario team is but one of many in the nation and Canada that form part of the SkillsUSA program.

Pet Care-A-Van offers free dog and cat spay, neuters

Services will be offered at the locations listed below during July. The public is invited to take advantage of this free spay and neuter service.

Central	211 Shelter	July 11, 12, 13
Lower Valley	Shawver Park, 8100 Independence	July 16, 17
Socorro	901 N. Rio Vista	July 18
Fabens	1330 Fabens Road	July 20
Northeast	Sue Young Park, 9730 Diana	July 23, 24
Tornillo	Wencho's, 140 O.T. Smith Rd.	July 26
Buena Vista	3401 Zapal Ave.	July 30
Anthony, TX	401 Wildcat Dr.	July 31

- Spay/neuter services are limited to 20 animals per day. First come, first served. No appointment needed.
- Be there at 6:30 a.m. The van arrives at 7:00 a.m.
- Services will be cancelled if there is severe weather.

Owners must follow these guidelines for dogs and cats getting spayed/neutered:

- No food for 12 hours prior to registration, water is okay;
- No animals under 4 months;
- No animals over 6 years; and
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For more information call: (915) 274-4270 or (915) 842-1000.

Escontrias

From Page 1

students use these areas and appreciate the work the volunteers did for them.”

Both projects were supported by a grant from Sam’s Club and Home Depot in collaboration with Kaboom. The Home Depot on Rojas store donated more than \$2000 in materials

and labor while Sam’s Club provided additional support and bottled water.

“Home Depot is working on a “1000 Playgrounds in 1000 Days,” says Ricardo Avelar, Home Depot Store Manager. “But we are also doing small projects like this one that normally take a day. This is a way to give back and say thank you to this community which supports us.”

Also helping set up the new areas were members of the 5th Brigade Combat Team 1st Armored Division

(Army Evaluation Task Force (Future Combat Service). With 45 volunteers, the project took less than two days to complete.

“We were asked if we wanted to volunteer,” says Sgt. Adam Felix. “We wanted to come out and help the school and give back to the community.”

For more information about Kaboom grants or for Home Depot’s “1000 Playgrounds in 1000 Days” project log onto <http://www.kaboom.org>.



— Photo courtesy Socorro ISD

A PLEASANT PLACE — Escontrias Elementary now has several landscaped areas where students and staff can go to for shaded comfort.

Clint ISD students recognized

By Laura Cade
Special to the Courier

Horizon Middle School students, Paulina Barron (6th grade) and Brenda Chavez (7th grade), were recognized at the 2007 International Empowering Women in Law Enforcement Conference in April at the Radisson Hotel El Paso Airport. Both Barron and Chavez submitted essays based on the theme “I believe women are important to law enforcement in because...” and each were selected for the top essay in their grade level. The goal of the conference and essay contest was to encourage young women to continue or pursue careers in law enforcement, foster pride, and to grow professionally as well as individually to meet the needs of our society. Ana Martinez, Mother/Daughter Coordinator at Horizon Middle School, accompanied the girls to the recognition luncheon.

Clint Junior High student, Sarah Melendez, was selected one of two national finalists for “Do the Write Thing” essay contest. Melendez wrote one of the winning essays out of approximately 1500 essay submissions from eight participating school districts. The Do the Write Thing Challenge is a program where students are given the opportunity to “examine the impact of youth violence on their lives” by writing their thoughts in an essay. The two national finalists are sent on an all expenses paid trip to Austin, Texas and Washington D.C. to present their essays. Honorable Judge Patricia Macias of the 388th District Court presented the winners with trophies as they were honored at a dinner reception at the Marriott on May 22, 2007.



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Sport or spectacle: Hotdog eating champion, Kobayashi, toppled by Chestnut

By Steve Escajeda
Special to the Courier

It is a sad but undeniable fact that all sports dynasties eventually come to an end.

The Boston Celtics of the Bill Russell-era eventually returned to Earth. The Terry Bradshaw-led Pittsburgh Steelers and Joe Montana's San Francisco 49ers eventually stopped winning.

And the individual sustained success of Joe Louis, Wayne Gretzke, Joe DiMaggio, Pete Rose, Cal Ripkin Jr., Magic Johnson and even Babe Ruth had to come to an end some time.

And so it is for another of the world's great athletes. Another champion has tasted defeat and will now go down in the annals of sports history as one of the best who ever lived.

Of course, I'm talking about the great Takeru Kobayashi, the six-time defending champion of the Nathan's World Championship Hot Dog Eating contest, which took place in, where else — Coney Island.

Kobayashi, who had won the competition from 2001-2006, was dethroned by American Joey Chestnut, who inhaled a record-setting 66 hot dogs in just 12 minutes.

When you do the calculation, that comes out to a hot dog every 10.9 seconds.

There are many questions I have for these two gentlemen, beginning with, why would anyone want to ingest 66 hot dogs in 12 minutes? But I guess that's a topic for another time.

The proud and somewhat bloated Kobayashi finished with an impressive 63 hot dogs but "gave back" a few at the end (if you know what I mean) to lower his final total.

The 23-year-old Chestnut, from San Jose Calif., was tied with Kobayashi at 60 hot dogs with a minute to go but like any true champion, turned it on down the stretch to win the caloric competition.

Now let's get serious for a second. What boggles my mind about how bored all of us really are is that this eating event was carried live on ESPN!

Throwing as many hot dogs as you can into your mouth and swallowing them with the help of a cup of water is now considered a spectator sport.

This is a definite sign of the apocalypse. So as we bid adieu to Kobayashi, and usher in the new Joey Chestnut-era of competitive eating, ask yourself one thing — could it be entirely possible that we have a little too much time on our hands?

You're not your father, Luke

Los Angeles enjoyed the extraordinary play of Bill Walton when he was at UCLA.

Easily one of the best players in the history of the game, there's no telling what he may have accomplished in the pros had he not suffered all those foot injuries.

Now Los Angeles is enjoying another Walton. Bill's son Luke is a dependable role player (and not much else) with the Lakers, who was recently resigned.

The unbelievable thing is that Luke — who is nowhere near the player that his father was

— signed a six-year contract for \$30-million. Thirty-million dollars! Luke averaged all of 11 points and five rebounds last season.

Daddy Walton must be kicking himself for not waiting 30 years to be born.

If the Lakers will pay Luke Walton \$30-million, imagine the zillions they are going to pay the star that Kobe wants the team to go after.

Athletes behavin' badly

Samford University is not exactly one of the powerhouses of college football, and because of that, some of their players have to aim higher to get noticed.

And one Samford player did just that recently. But many of the coaches and people in authority think he may have gone a bit too far.

Seems Samford defensive end, Michael Sherrod Hall, had dreams of playing in the NFL

and making a lot of money. It now appears that Hall wasn't good enough to make it in the NFL. But hey, that doesn't mean you have to give up on all of your dreams.

Hall was arrested last week on federal bank robbery charges for allegedly stealing money from a Hoover Bank.

It took just two hours for police to catch up with Hall, who had \$18,200 in his vehicle.

Coaches say were shocked at his actions. It always makes me laugh when a player shoots at someone with a gun, or rapes a female, is caught selling drugs, or uses a handgun to rob a bank, and nobody in the coaching staff ever saw it coming.

I don't know why they study game films to identify their opponents' weaknesses, when they can't even notice the obvious troubles in their own locker room.

Bridges

From Page 1

employed by CBP, members of the traveling public can also help keep wait times to a minimum by being prepared for the inspection process. All vehicle occupants should have documents in hand when they arrive at the inspection booth. Being ready to declare all items acquired in Mexico and ending cell phone conversations before the inspection will also help. Simple mathematical calculations show that if there are 40 cars in line and each car spends an extra 15 seconds at the inspection booth because the occupants were not prepared for the inspection the last car in that line will spend an extra 10 minutes waiting to cross the border.

When complete, the \$26.6 million project will add nine new pedestrian inspection lanes and two additional vehicular inspection lanes to the existing facility. The project will also remodel and substantially increase the size of existing structures at the port, add new office space, and replace existing kennel facilities. The 900-day construction project is slated to be completed in June 2009.

The most visible past of the project for the traveling public will be the addition of numerous inspection lanes. When the project is completed, PDN will have 14 pedestrian inspection lanes (up from 5) and 11 vehicular inspection lanes (up from 9). Approximately 16,700 northbound pedestrians and 9,200 northbound cars are now processed at the facility on a daily basis.

The space to add the new inspection lanes will be created by relocating the existing CBP "head house" administration building to the far northern end of the secondary inspection capacity. The existing head house currently occupies space between lanes four and five at the port, which will be converted to inspection lanes.

Work on the expansion project will be conducted in phases. During portions of the project, northbound pedestrian traffic will be rerouted east through the CBP secure facility. Pedestrians will exit the facility on Oregon Street. Pedestrians currently exit the PDN facility on El Paso Street. The project should not impact the overall flow of northbound pedestrians. A temporary structure with 12 inspection lanes will be used to process pedestrians during the project.

General construction, the removal of the

existing head house and the addition of new inspection lanes will require the closing of some vehicular lanes during the project. A minimum of four lanes will be available to northbound traffic during the duration of the project and additional lanes will be made available for use as soon as construction allows. CBP officials plan to utilize various traffic management principles to keep traffic flowing as quickly as possible during the project while maintaining their anti-terror mission.

In addition to the new lanes, the project will upgrade and almost double in size the existing 30,309 square foot administration building by providing 25,955 square feet of additions to the building. Plans also call for a new 14,311 square foot dog kennel to house 60-canines at the northeast end of the facility. The existing dog kennel building will be renovated to create office space for Immigration and Customs Enforcement agents. Other changes include the construction of a bus lane next to the administration building, a new TABC kiosk and booth, and enhanced parking and access. The \$26.6 million design-build contract was awarded to TGS/SamCorp Joint Venture in September 2006. Congress funded the project in January 2007.

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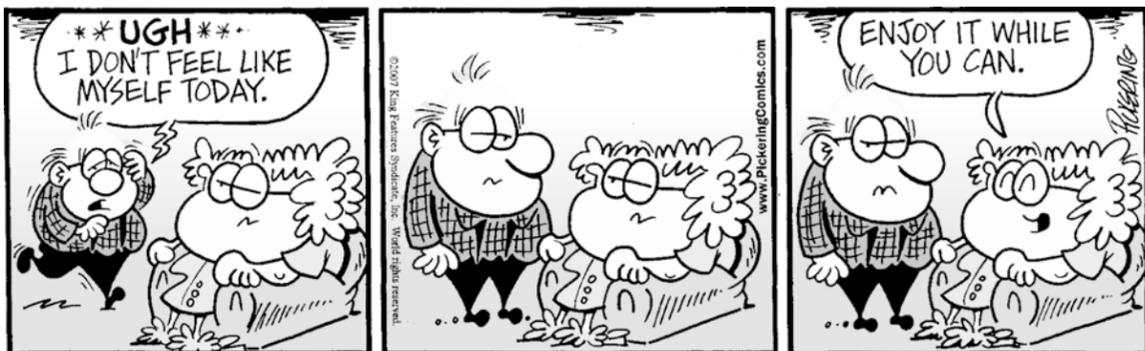
OUT ON A LIMB By Gary Kopervas



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Racing against time

By Don Flood

Turning 50 was the bestest thing that ever happened to me — at least that's the impression I got from the AARP letter that congratulated me on my latest achievement.

(Hurray for me!)
But there was one advantage — beyond all those swell discounts — to turning 50. I had entered a new age category for 5K runs. I was a kid again, relatively speaking.

So it was that I celebrated my first Father's Day after turning 50 by running a 5K with my son.

One thing that was obvious right away was that the dads wore short running shorts, while the young guys wore long baggy shorts.

In fact, they no longer qualified as "shorts" at all; they were running "longs" — long enough to trail behind the young runners like a wedding train.

Shorter shorts are easier to run in, but I suspected there was another reason: The older guys such as myself had smokin' hot legs. If you got 'em, flaunt 'em.

The younger men, no doubt intimidated by the thought of such a display of middle-aged male gams, wisely declined to enter a competition they could not win.

My son readily agreed this was the reason, though his manner suggested a certain level of sarcasm.

But as we ran through intersections, I noticed the female drivers eyeing us hungrily — or maybe they were just ticked off they had to wait for us old geezers to schlep by.

But we had a race to run — or hobble.

There were some positive moments. I noticed one guy my age

barely creeping along. At least I was in better shape than that!

This elation was eased somewhat by the realization that the reason I could watch him run was because he was ahead of me and therefore, logically speaking, running somewhat faster than myself.

I can't account for this discrepancy, since I was proceeding at a smooth, brisk pace — a stride filled with pep and vigor — whereas he was practically in need of a walker.

No doubt it will remain one of those mysteries of space and time that physicists worry about, especially if they're running a 5K.

Of course a lot of people will say: *You're only competing against yourself* (and not, thankfully, against those 11-year-old girls with Silly Putty in their legs who whiz right by you).

There's a big advantage to having only yourself as a competitor: It's a good bet you're running against a chump — and a middle-aged chump at that.

You can even make deals with him during the race. "Hey pal, you slow down, I'll slow down. We'll come in together."

Fortunately, there were water breaks. Beer stops, including recliners and a wide screen TV, would have been a nice addition, though I suppose some purists would complain that was contrary to the spirit of the race — though I'm more concerned about finishing than in the purity of the experience.

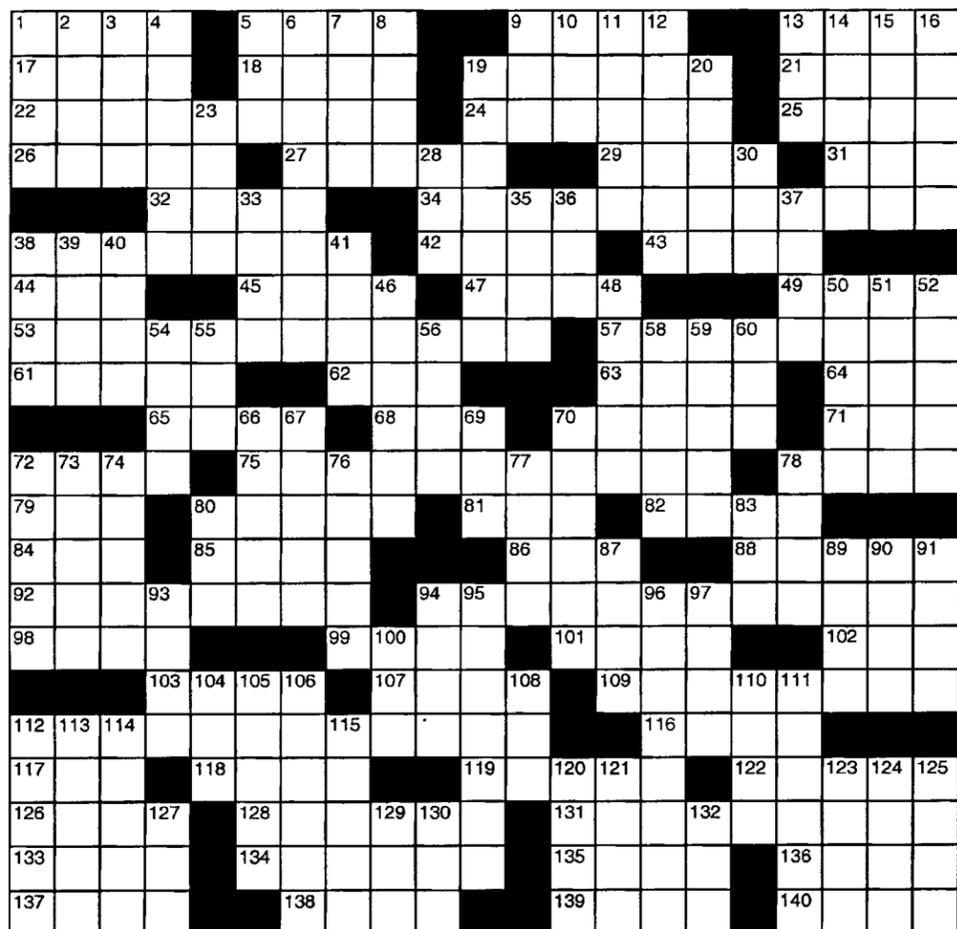
Maybe that's something the AARP could look into.

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Answer Page 6

Social Security Q&A By Ray Vigil

Address changes can be made online

Even when change is necessary or desirable, making changes can be difficult.

Here, then, is some useful advice for any Social Security beneficiary who is thinking about opening a new bank account or changing banks and who may need to change the direct deposit of his or her benefit payments. Just go online to make the process quicker and easier.

First, you will need to get a password from Social Security. You can get a password by applying online at www.socialsecurity.gov or by calling us at 1-800-772-1213 (TTY 1-800-325-0778). Once you have your password, you can do business with Social Security with total confidence in the security of your transactions.

Of course, you can also change direct deposit services by:

- Using our automated phone service at 1-800-772-1213;
- Filling out a direct deposit sign-up form that is available from the Social Security website and taking it to your financial institution or Social Security office; or
- Contacting your bank, credit union or savings and loan association.

You can use any of these methods to set up direct deposit for the first time. However you choose to start or make changes in the direct deposit of your Social Security benefit payments, you can make the process run smoothly by having your Social Security number and a personal check or bank statement handy. Also, we recommend that you wait until deposits are actually going to your new

bank, savings and loan or credit union before you close your old account.

One of the most common reasons for changing banking accounts is because a person has moved to a new address and wants to bank at a nearby institution. It is important for Social Security to have your correct home address, even if you are having your Social Security benefits deposited directly into a banking account, so that we can contact you about other Social Security matters, such as when we mail you your Form 1099 each year.

You also can change your home address and/or telephone number over the Internet at www.socialsecurity.gov. Again, you can use your password to change

your address online. Or you can change your address online by answering a series of specific questions whose answers have to match the information in our records. You can also call us toll-free at 1-800-772-1213 (TTY 1-800-325-0778).

But why not do it online — a fast, easy, convenient and safe way to do business with Social Security.

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.

What's up, doc? By Albert Balesh, M.D.

The Hysterectomy Channel

Every woman has one. When they are gone, they remind us (both men and women) of our mortality, for that which is lost can never be regained. Many decry the fact that our bodies are tombs of the superfluous, hiding from the light of day organs that we can certainly live without, including the appendix, spleen, and gallbladder. Let's not forget, however, that were they not important, they would not have been designed by the All-Knowing Architect in the first place. Don't touch that uterus! Don't place it in the same category as its immediate and distant neighbors. The uterus is the giver of life and home of our future as a species. To evict it by surgeon's hand from its rightful and preordained place at the center of the realm had better require not

only an act of conscience and some soul searching, but also a very convincing reason.

Obviously, there appears to be an abundance of the latter, as each year more than 600,000 hysterectomies are performed, making it the second most common surgery among women in the United States (second only to cesarean section delivery). One in three women in the U.S. has had a hysterectomy, and that trend is destined to continue as we use heavy guns to level a terrain fertile to the possibilities of uterine cancer in women enjoying their golden years after menopause.

Don't ask me to explain it. As a man, how could I possibly know what a woman goes through when making that fateful decision to part

with an important part of her body. What I can tell you is the motivation, good or bad, for performing hysterectomies today. Every woman must be her own judge and jury, to sift through both concrete evidence and medical hearsay in order to reach an informed decision on whether to go under the knife.

Cancers of the uterus, cervix, or ovary, as well as uterine fibroids, are the most well-known motivators for a visit to the operating theater. They are the stuff of talk shows, and, were there a Hysterectomy Channel on cable television, nightly broadcasts would underscore bleeding and painful fibroids as leading the charge for surgical intervention. We must not lose sight of the fact, however, that there are some equally compelling reasons for intervention by "old sawbones." Endometriosis, uterine prolapse, persistent vaginal bleeding, chronic pelvic pain, and labor- and delivery-related emergencies round out our reasons, with recourse to either abdominal hysterectomy, man-

dating a recovery period of four to eight weeks with gradual return to normal activity, or vaginal or laparoscopic hysterectomy, whose advantage (if there is one) lies in an accelerated return to normal activity, often in one to two weeks.

We have been schooled since childhood that nothing in this life is without its risks. So, too, with hysterectomy. Whether one opts for complete or total hysterectomy (removal of both cervix and uterus, the most common procedure), a partial or subtotal procedure (evicting the upper portion of the uterus while leaving the cervix at home), or radical intervention (extirpation of uterus, cervix, and upper part of vagina), operative and postoperative complications can and sometimes do occur. They run the gamut from heavy blood loss, bladder and bowel injury, anesthesia problems, and incision and wound infections to lowered sexual desire. However, most women escape these complications.

With cancer, we are left with little choice but to operate in most cases. Fibroids, uterine prolapse, and endometriosis, on the other hand, extend our options and may even provide a way out, via nonsurgical treatments such as drug therapy, endometrial ablation, uterine artery embolization, myomectomy, and vaginal pessary. Those are just fancy words for a lot less pain, aggravation, and emotional upheaval. You, with the help and advice of your doctor, must once again be the judge of their utility.

Finally, while periodic Pap smears may not be a necessity after hysterectomy, regular gynecologic examinations are. Don't believe everything you see in print or on television, unless, of course, you have access to a real Hysterectomy Channel. For more information on hysterectomy, contact the National Women's Health Information Center (NWHIC) at 1-800-994-9662.

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View from here By Amanda McCloskey

Who will care for the caregivers?

Supporting our family caregivers in Texas makes cents. Dollars and cents. A recent AARP study shows there is a heavy price to be paid by those who give of themselves to ease the burden on their loved ones. Nationally, 92 percent of caregivers report major changes in their working patterns. Eighty three percent arrive late, leave early, or take time off during the day; 41 percent report taking a leave of absence; and 37 percent report going from full-time to part-time to adjust for their caregiving responsibilities.

Most family caregivers are women who are employed full time or part-time. Caregivers provide an average of 21 hours of care per week, or 1,080 hours per year. And with one-fifth of the nation's workforce undertaking the responsibility of caring for a family member who needs assistance with daily tasks, U.S. businesses are feeling the pinch. Caregivers face lower wages, reduced job security, and loss of employment benefits like health insurance, lower retirement savings and Social Security earnings as they

are forced to take time off and work partial days to care for loved ones. Since the caregiving responsibilities fall disproportionately on women, it leads to less certain futures for women with less savings and income, and with their time away from the workforce resulting in reduced retirement benefits. These losses come at a difficult time when income and benefits are critical for the caregiver and their families.

How does this impact us in Texas? AARP estimates that caregivers in the United States provided \$350 billion in unpaid services to the nation's economy in 2006. With nearly 3 million caregivers in Texas, caregivers in the state provided \$24 billion in unpaid services.

Family caregivers play a vital role and are the backbone of long-term

care in our state. While the care they provide often goes unnoticed, their contributions often delay or prevent more costly nursing home care and that can have a positive impact on our state Medicaid budget.

AARP continues to advocate for workplace policies and caregiver support services from government programs. Expanding funding for groups such as the National Family Caregiver Support Program or the Lifespan Respite Care Act would be a step in the right direction. These programs provide information and assistance, respite care, counseling, training, and other services to family caregivers. Once funded, the Lifespan Respite Act will help more people access respite care regardless of the age, disability, or condition of their loved one.

In Texas, AARP is working to ensure that more people receive care in the setting of their choice. With the leadership of Senator Judith Zaffirini (D-Laredo) and in partnership with advocates for the disabled community, AARP Texas succeeded during the 2007 Texas legislative session in getting an additional \$107 million in general revenue added to the state's budget to reduce the waiting list for home and community based services by 10%.

Caregivers protect and support some of our most vulnerable populations. By assisting caregivers, we help ensure better health and well-being for countless Texas families. Let's support them in turn so that family caregiving remains a viable and important contribution to the provision of long term care in Texas.

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