



NEWSBRIEFS

Welcome home

Thousands of soldiers returning to Fort Bliss received a warm welcome filled with banners and goodies thanks to students from the Socorro Independent School District. SISD Students joined others across the county to create thank you cards and goodie bags for returning soldiers as a way to thank them for their service to the country. A number of schools including Helen Ball, Hurshel Antwine, Loma Verde and O'Shea Keleher schools packed and decorated thousands of goodies bags and thank you cards as part of the District wide effort in conjunction with Fort Bliss.

Texting hoax

Text message warning going around El Paso is a hoax. The El Paso Police Department learned many in our community received text messages and or emails claiming the Department was giving a warning to the public. First, the El Paso Police Department does not typically use these forms of communications for safety advisories. Secondly, this type of threat mentioned in the messages is a hoax and has been moving around the country. This hoax is similar to other hoaxes in the past and is intended to cause fear in the community. The threat states gang members will ask women for directions and then shoot them. These threats have been investigated and are not true. The Department asks the public to disregard this message and to not forward it to anyone else and unnecessarily spread this fear.

ACORN fair

El Paso ACORN will be hosting a citizenship fair on Jan. 19 at 6000 Welch in suite 15. The fair will feature immigration attorneys, trained volunteers to assist with the N-400, and a photographer. The goal is to facilitate the naturalization process for permanent legal residents. Interested parties should contact ACORN to schedule an appointment for pre-registration. Entrance to the fair will cost \$25 plus an optional \$10 for photographs if needed. To register for an appointment, call 633-5412.

Crime Stoppers

Both the County Commissioners Court and El Paso City Council have proclaimed January as Crime Stoppers Month in honor of the non-profit organization's continuing work to bring together the community, law enforcement agencies and the media to solve crime. El Paso is the second safest city of our size in the nation and law enforcement agencies credit Crime Stoppers for being a major contributor to crime reduction in our area. The program was started in Nov. 1978. Crime Stoppers of El Paso was the first in Texas and only the second in the United States. Now in its 30th year of operation, the program is the

See BRIEFS, Page 3

The ability to say no is perhaps the greatest gift a parent has.

— Quips & Quotes

Horizon students learn the value of service



— Photo courtesy Clint ISD

GIVING BACK — The C.T. Welch Intermediate Panther Paws Student Organization gather every week to serve their community by making fleece blankets for families in need. The material for the blankets is donated by parents, employees and other community members. The students also prepare bags filled with toiletries and school supplies for families who have lost their home and belongings due to fire. In the photo above, from left, students Gabriel Munoz, Clarissa Farmer, Anthony Meraz, Javier Chairez, Dael Chavez, Isabel Nieto hold blankets they made and donated to the Horizon City Fire Department. Horizon City Fire Chief Ron Larson (back row) was on hand to accept the blankets for distribution to the community. The Panther Paws are sponsored by C.T. Welch Intermediate Counselor Denise Brewster (back row). The students will continue to make blankets and will donate them to other organizations throughout the year.

IRS tax packages to begin arriving in mail this week

By Lea Crusberg
Special to the Courier

WASHINGTON — With millions of tax packages beginning to arrive in mailboxes this

week, the Internal Revenue Service today reminded taxpayers to watch for commonly overlooked tax credits and late tax law changes that could affect their tax returns.

"The IRS will work to make this tax season as smooth as possible for taxpayers," said Linda

Stiff, Acting IRS Commissioner. "We strongly encourage taxpayers to file electronically, particularly those affected by late tax law changes. Filing electronically makes things easier by reducing errors and speeding up refunds."

The IRS is sending 16.5 million 1040 tax packages to taxpayers this month who have filed paper tax returns in the past. The number of paper packages has dropped rapidly in recent years, falling from 34 million packages in just four years. The paper packages are becoming much less common as the popularity of electronic filing soars. Last year, nearly 80 million tax returns used e-file, representing about 57 percent of all returns.

This year, the individual income tax packages mailed to taxpayers do not include any tax credit forms and certain other forms due to late tax law changes involving the alternative minimum tax (AMT) "patch." Copies of these forms are available on IRS.gov. Taxpayers who e-file should update their tax software to ensure that they are using the updated forms.

The AMT changes also mean that as many as 13.5 million taxpayers using five forms related to the Alternative Minimum Tax (AMT) legislation will have to wait to file tax returns until the IRS completes the reprogramming of its systems for the new law. The IRS has targeted Feb. 11 as the potential starting date for taxpayers to begin submitting the five AMT-related returns affected by the legislation.

The February date allows the IRS enough time to update and test its systems to accommodate the AMT changes without major

Third Mexican candy with lead recalled

By Emily Palmer
Special to the Courier

A San Antonio company is voluntarily recalling a third candy imported from Mexico after testing by the Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS) found elevated lead levels that could cause health problems.

Villa-Mex Imports, Inc., is recalling Miguelito Azucar Salada Enchilada Acidulada. The candy is a reddish powder in a clear cellophane packet with blue lettering. The net weight is marked as 1.7 ounces. The label also reads: Elaborado Por: Fabrica de Dulces Miguelito, S.A. DE C.V. Totonacas No 293 Col. Ajusco Coyoacan, Mexico.

Recent laboratory tests of Miguelito candy samples showed lead levels ranging from 0.161 to 0.291 parts per million, above the 0.1 parts per million lead level considered to be a potential public health hazard by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration. The tests were part of DSHS product surveillance conducted over the last several months.

Villa-Mex also has voluntarily recalled Barrilito, a dark brown thick syrup sold in 3.3

ounce glass barrel-shaped jars with white plastic lids; and Tarritos, a dark reddish brown paste packaged in 3.3 ounce mug-shaped glass jars with a handle and white plastic lids. Both labels read: Productos Avila, S.A. de C.V. Puerto Malaque 1379 Col. Sta. Maria Guadalajara, Jal. Mexico. DSHS officials said the problem is with these products, not with the distributor, Villa-Mex Imports.

Eating products containing lead can be especially harmful to infants, young children and pregnant women. Too much lead intake can result in delayed mental and physical development and learning deficiencies. Children who have high blood lead levels may be tired or cranky, not have much appetite, not be able to pay attention, have headaches, vomit, be constipated, be clumsy or weak or not be able to sleep. Some children who have lead poisoning may not look or act sick.

DSHS officials say consumers who have the recalled products should not eat them and should return them or throw them away. The only way to know if a child has a high blood lead level is to have a blood lead test. People concerned about blood lead levels should call their doctor or health clinic about testing.

See IRS, Page 8



One perspective

By Francis Shrum

Cruel and unusual

They don't say that they

should not be killed.

They say the way they are going to be killed might be painful.

The issues involve some guys who are on death row for doing something so heinous that our court system has condemned them to death for doing it.

Our method of killing killers has hit another snag.

This hiccup is big enough that the U.S. Supreme Court has agreed to hear it, and as a result, executions across the nation have ground to a virtual standstill, at least until this summer when the nation's highest judicial body expects to have something definitive to say about it.

At stake is the assertion that the three-drug protocol used by most death-penalty states in the U.S. to put convicted killers to death might involve some pain at various times during the execution.

The standard protocol involves injecting the convicted person with a powerful barbiturate, sodium thiopental, in a much higher dosage than what is used to put a person to sleep for surgery. Then they administer a second drug, pancuronium, which is a paralytic and prevents the condemned from twitching and convulsing. This is intended to give the whole process "a sense of dignity and avoid distress for both the condemned man and the witnesses." Then he receives an injection of potassium chloride, which stops the heart.

Now the point of the argument these men and their lawyers have come up with is that "if not properly administered," the dying person could "possibly feel as if he is suffocating" and the drugs could "make

the prisoner feel as if his veins are on fire." Well, I don't mean to be rude about this, but the person being put to death is, in fact, suffocating and, yes, his veins are experiencing chemical burning.

After all, this is an execution. This person is being put to death. I fail to see how we can expect this undeniable reality to be dignified, painless or anything other than what it is.

The last time the Supreme Court issued a ruling on the method of putting condemned people to death was back in 1878 when it ruled that death by firing squad was legal. Since that time, it has pretty much been the purview of the states to decide how to kill a killer, and executions have moved from electrocution, to gassing and, finally, lethal injection. The method was developed in Oklahoma and was first used in 1977.

Having watched a few documentaries on those other methods, if I was sitting on the Row, I'd be pretty happy if I had a shot as that final choice.

That's not what any of this is about, though. It has nothing to do with honest repentance, or justice, or compassion. Many opponents of the death penalty are like unbalanced animal-rights activists who don't believe that a wolf will eat you just for the sport of it.

They may have finally hit upon a politically-correct nerve so sensitive they might actually get their wish — abolition of the death penalty entirely. Why, you just can't do that sort of thing to another human being, can you?

Or can you?

Apparently, human compassion didn't stop the condemned person

from inflicting unspeakable degradation, pain and suffering on another helpless human being with no concern at all about whether it hurt when their life was ripped, stabbed and torn from their living bodies. The horrific details of the crimes that put inmates in their cells on death row are enough to keep you up nights.

The sad and simple fact of the matter is that our system of justice is based on artificially "objective" legal interpretation, so it will never satisfy the deep desire for justice and morality that humanity vainly seeks to assuage. Because humans are inherently subjective in all things, the death penalty issue becomes little more than another legal competition,

all about winning and losing.

If a man commits the acts that many are executed for doing, he is no longer a viable human being and repeated appeals only pander to his desire to stay alive. Killing him, on the other hand, offers little comfort to the survivors — it won't bring back the victims nor will it blunt the grief of those left behind.

I read recently that it costs the U.S. more to put a man to death than it does to maintain him in prison until he dies of natural causes, i.e. illness or old age. We're not discussing those who meet their premature demise at the hand of a fellow inmate. The addition of the death penalty to any prosecution adds hundreds of thou-

sands to the cost of a trial. The amount of time between sentencing and execution for a prisoner in 2006 was about 12 years and in January of 2007, there were approximately 3,350 prisoners sitting on death row — each a personification of untold suffering, wasted humanity, expense and unfulfilled potential.

None of it really makes sense. Whatever the Supreme Court comes up with won't change the unpleasant truth — as we are in this present age, humans kill and are killed. There's nothing humane or compassionate about any of it.

Cruel and unusual is just the way human beings generally treat each other.

DSHS offers cold weather health precautions

By Emily Palmer
Special to the Courier

Freezing temperatures, chilling winds, ice storms and snow can create severe problems for Texans who are more often used to dealing with heat waves. The Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS) urges people to take extra precautions against hypothermia and other winter-related dangers.

Hypothermia, the severe or prolonged loss of body heat, begins when a person's body temperature falls below 95 degrees. Because the temperature drop may be gradual, and an early symptom of hypothermia is mental confusion, the victim may not know a problem exists.

People most susceptible to hypothermia include those 60 and older,

infants and small children, the sick, those taking certain prescription drugs or drinking alcohol, the homeless, auto or boating accident victims and those unable to find temporary shelter in cold weather.

To reduce potential dangers:

- Watch for hypothermia symptoms including confusion, drowsiness, slurred speech, a drop in blood pressure, shallow breathing and a pinkish tint to the skin. Anyone with these symptoms related to cold temperatures is in immediate danger. Get medical help right away.

- Check on elderly or ill people, especially if they live alone or in isolated areas.

- Wear several layers of loose-fitting clothing, mittens, hat and a face cover. Stay dry.

- Be extremely cautious in the wind. A strong wind, even in only moderately cool weather, can cause

a wind chill far below freezing.

Winter storms also may cause power outages, leading to food safety problems. If you lose power for more than four hours, take these precautions with refrigerated food products:

- Keep refrigerator and freezer doors closed as much as possible.

- Discard any potentially hazardous foods such as meats, eggs, dairy products and leftovers that may have exceeded 40 degrees. When in doubt, throw it out.

- Any frozen food that has thawed but not exceeded 40 degrees should be prepared as soon as possible. Do not re-freeze.

DSHS officials warn that people should not underestimate cold weather and should dress appropriately. Anyone planning outdoor activities in cold weather should check local weather forecasts.

Hand washing helps thwart MRSA

By Brent Annear
Special to the Courier

What do "Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star," hand washing, and methicillin-resistant Staphylococcus aureus (MRSA) have in common?

Plenty, according to Texas physician leader Gary N. Butka, MD. Given recent news about the spread of MRSA, a few extra seconds of musical prevention is worth a symphony's worth of cure, the Brownwood internal medicine spe-

cialist says.

The physician chimes in with this simple prescription: People should sing a simple tune while washing their hands, because doing so can help minimize passing germs on.

"The most important thing we can do to prevent the spread of staph and MRSA is wash our hands," notes Dr. Butka, a former member of the Texas Medical Association (TMA) Committee on Infectious Diseases. "I'm not just talking about running your hands under the faucet." Hand washing reduces the risk of spread of the staph infection, but only if it is done for at least 15 seconds and thoroughly. "I recommend humming a tune like 'Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star' or 'Yankee Doodle Dandy' while washing your hands. When you finish the song, you have finished washing your hands," Dr. Butka says. Prevention is important because tougher strains of MRSA are showing up outside of health care settings.

MRSA spreads primarily through person-to-person contact. "An organism that was usually seen only in the hospital is now becoming very common in the community," says Jaime E. Fergie, MD, past chair of TMA's Committee on Infectious Diseases. Dr. Fergie specializes in treating pediatric infectious diseases in Corpus Christi. Physicians and other health care experts are concerned over the spread of MRSA, a "superbug" that is a drug-resistant

infection of the skin.

Some super-strains like MRSA are difficult to treat. MRSA is resistant to methicillin, penicillin, and similar antibiotics, but it can be treated effectively with other drugs, including nonpenicillin-related antibiotics.

While thorough hand washing is far from a new prescription, people may have become more complacent than they once were. "Part of the situation that we're in today is a sense of false security that has been created by the advent of antibiotics," adds Dr. Butka. "Before we had penicillin, hand washing was really emphasized."

Therefore, better to revert to old ways to prevent MRSA, physicians say, since it can be as easy as hand washing — for a song.

Texas physicians also recommend that people take these steps to prevent contracting MRSA:

- Use running water, soap, and paper towels or hand sanitizer or antiseptic wipes for proper hand hygiene.

- Routinely wash hands with soap and running water before eating, after using the bathroom, when hands are visibly dirty, and before and after physical contact with people — particularly if they have sores or wounds or if contact is made with blood, body fluids, or mucous membranes.

- Use liquid soap, which is effective in killing staph; antibacterial soaps are not necessary.

- Do not share razors and other hygiene supplies.

WEST TEXAS COUNTY COURIER

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Letter must not be more than 250 words in length. They should be dated, must be signed and have an address and daytime phone number. Only the name and city will be printed with the letter. The Courier reserves the right not to print letters to the editor or other submitted materials it considers inappropriate.

AD DEADLINE:
Monday 4 p.m. for Thursday publication.

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\$5 for 15 words, \$10 for 35 words. Ad must be in writing and pre-paid. The Courier reserves the right not to print classified advertising it considers inappropriate.

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Phone: 852-3235
Fax: 852-0123
E-mail: wtcc@wtccourier.com
Website: wtccourier.com

Publisher
Rick Shrum
Business Manager
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Contributors
Don Woodyard
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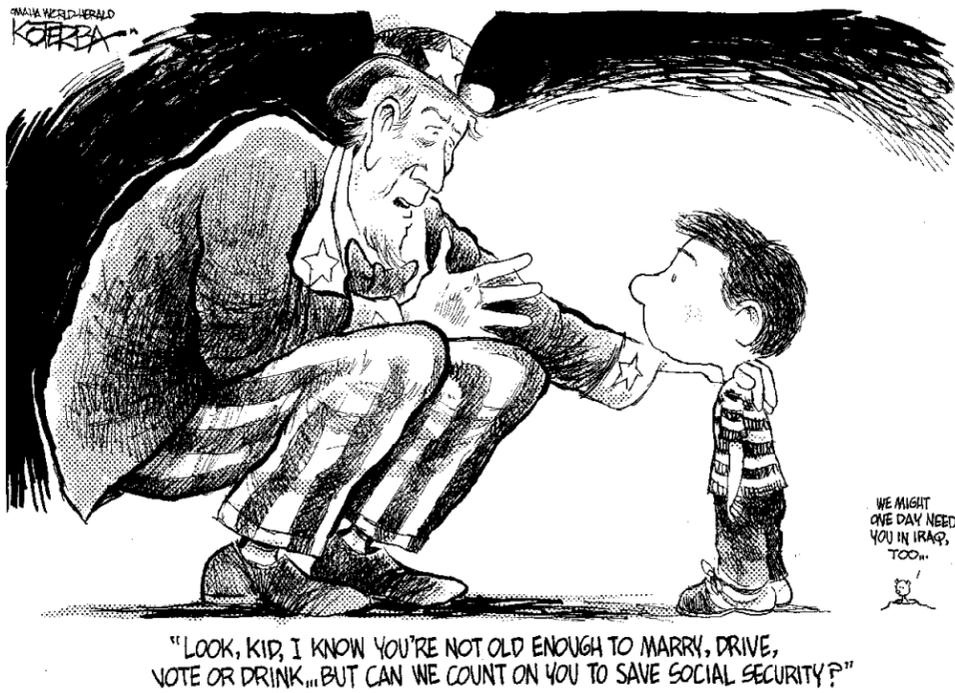
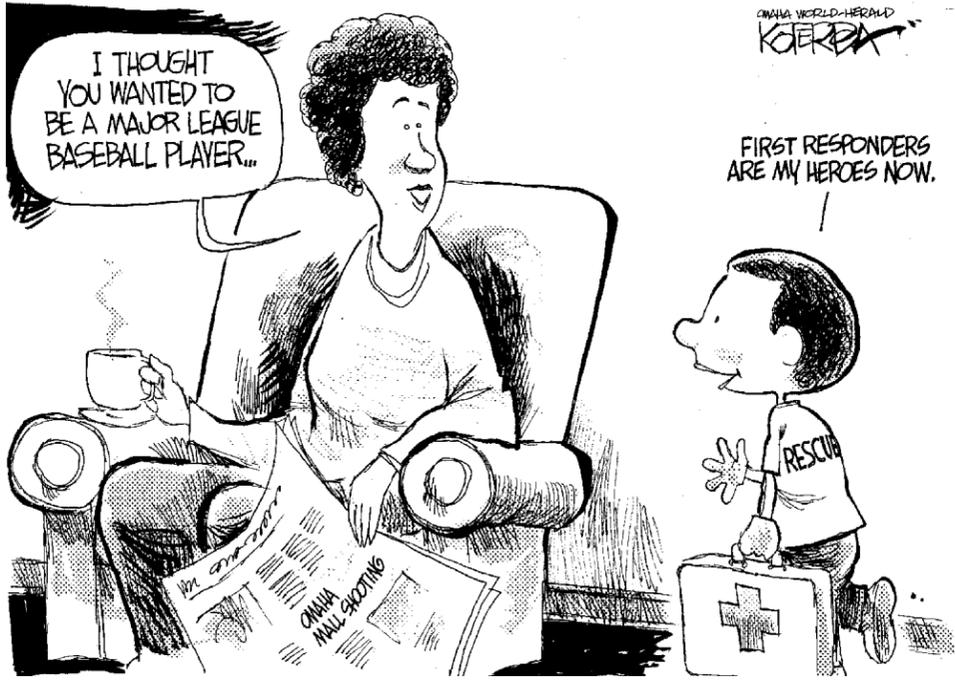


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Briefs

From Page 1

only crime fighting, non-profit agency that serves El Paso, Hudspeth and Culberson

Counties. Since its inception Crime Stoppers of El Paso has paid out over \$820,000 in cash rewards to bring about the arrests of more than 3,500 suspects, cleared over 4,200 cases, and has caused the removal of more than \$47 million dollars worth of narcotics from the streets.

Weekly SUDOKU

by Linda Thistle

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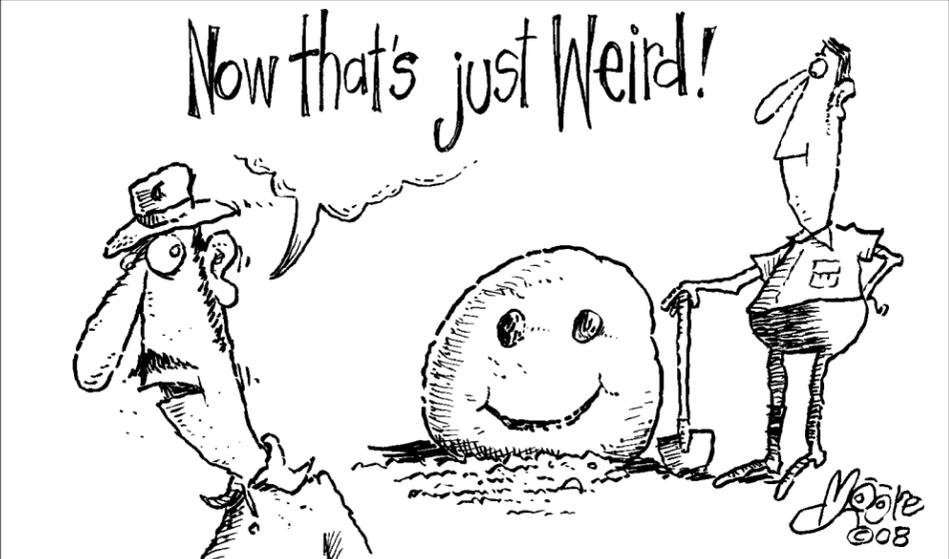
Place a number in the empty boxes in such a way that each row across, each column down and each small 9-box square contains all of the numbers from one to nine.

DIFFICULTY THIS WEEK: ★★

★ Moderate ★★ Challenging
 ★★★ HOO BOY!

Answer Page 6
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Moore Texas by Roger T. Moore In 1929, workers digging for gravel near Trinidad found three large mysterious "head sculptures" fashioned apparently by prehistoric Texans.

Socorro High NJROTC receives top scores in inspection



— Photo by Stacy Hendrick/SISD

SPEAK UP CADET — Navy Commander Pamela Holland smiles as cadets answer her questions.

By Irma Flores
Special to the Courier

The Socorro High School Naval Junior ROTC battalion receives high scores during its annual military inspection. The 161-member unit went through its annual inspection on December 13 at the football field at Socorro High School. The day-long inspection included personnel inspection, marching drills and pass-in-review.

“We received the highest score we could get,” said Lieutenant Commander Ben Spaulding, CEC, USN (Ret.), Senior Naval Science Instructor. “Our students are more than excited. Several received individual awards for appearance.”

“Our NJROTC program has consistently been ranked among the top teams in the nation,” said SISD Superintendent Dr. Sylvia P. Atkinson.

“We are very proud of Socorro and expect our other units to perform just as well.”

Sixty medals were awarded to NJROTC cadets for their performance. Spaulding explained the inspections check for personal appearance, uniforms and grooming. He adds the students spent several hours after-school and on weekends to prepare for the inspection.

“We are very proud of these students for this accomplishment,” said SISD Board President Charles Garcia. “They have worked very hard with their instructors to get ready for this inspection.”

The day began with Commander Pamela Holland, Commanding Officer for the Navy Recruiting District in Phoenix. Commander Holland inspected minor property, spaces, security and financial records of Socorro’s NJROTC Battalion. She then conducted a personnel inspection of the battalion which was followed by basic Marching Drills by each of the six platoons.

Along with the six platoons, the Color Guard and NJROTC Staff, which is comprised of officers and chief officers, were reviewed as well. Following the pass-in-review and Drill Team performance, Commander Holland completed her inspection with a final review of cadet records and uniform inventory.

“We received the maximum points. We broke a record,” said Chief Oscar Reyes. “Our cadets were outstanding across the board. They received favorable comments from the inspectors. This puts us on the top line.”

The annual inspection is to review that the 663 NJROTC battalions throughout the US, including Socorro High School, and those located on international military installations live up to the Navy and community standards. The Socorro Battalion’s score will go toward a goal of receiving Distinguished Unit honors. Socorro High School had received the honor for 19 out of 20 years.

“We put this in the hands of the cadet leadership,” said Spaulding, LCDR, CEC, USN (Ret). They are running this like the military does.”



— Photo by Stacy Hendrick/SISD

PROUD CADETS — From left, CPO Cordova, PO-FC Espinosa, Ensign Molina, Ensign Ortiz and Ensign Ortega.

NO FEE REQUIRED NOTICE TO TAXPAYERS

Jerry R. Griffin, RPA, Executive Director/Chief Appraiser, El Paso Central Appraisal District, is currently accepting application(s) for the following:

RENDITIONS

1. Business Personal Property (**mandatory as of 2004 — failure to file a business personal property rendition will result in a 10% penalty**).
2. Real Estate

DEADLINE FOR FILING OF RENDITIONS, PROPERTY INFORMATION REPORTS, AND REPORTS OF DECREASED VALUE IS TUESDAY, APRIL 15, 2008.

A filing extension will be allowed for business renditions upon receipt of a written request received by the filing deadline, Tuesday, April 15, 2008.

EXEMPTIONS*

1. Residential Homestead Exemption
2. Over-65 Exemption**
3. Over 55 Surviving Spouse of a person who received the Over-65 Exemption
4. Medical Disability Exemption**
5. Veteran's Disability Exemption
6. Widow of Disabled Veteran Exemption

*If you previously received a Homestead and/or an Over-65 Exemption, or an Over-55 Surviving Spouse of a person who received the Over-65 Exemption, a Disability Exemption, or a Disabled Veteran's Exemption, it is not necessary for you to file again this year. However, if the level of certified disability for the Veteran's Exemption has changed, you may file a new application.

**The Over-65 School Homestead Exemption or Medical Disability Exemption can be transported to another home within Texas on a percentage basis.

TAX DEFERRAL OR ABATEMENT

Eligible persons may obtain a deferral or abatement.

PLEASE CONTACT THE APPRAISAL DISTRICT FOR EXEMPTION(S) AND DEFERRAL OR ABATEMENT FORMS AND EXPLANATION.

SPECIAL USE VALUATIONS

Agricultural Valuation - Applications are being accepted for Ad Valorem Tax purposes as provided under Article III, Section 1-d and 1-d-1 of the Texas State Constitution. Properties qualifying under these Amendments are valued on the basis of Agricultural Productivity rather than their market value. The tax that would be levied on market value is deferred. Information on agricultural use valuation is available in the State Comptroller's Publication, *Taxpayers' Rights, Remedies & Responsibilities*. Copies are available at the Appraisal District office.

DEADLINE FOR FILING EXEMPTIONS AND APPLYING FOR SPECIAL USE VALUATIONS IS WEDNESDAY, APRIL 30, 2008, FOR ALL TAXING JURISDICTIONS. ALL OF THE ABOVE APPLICATIONS MUST BE FILED EITHER IN PERSON OR BY MAIL AT THE EL PASO CENTRAL APPRAISAL DISTRICT, 5801 TROWBRIDGE, EL PASO, TEXAS 79925. TO OBTAIN APPLICATION(S) CALL (915) 780-2131 OR WRITE TO ABOVE ADDRESS OR VISIT OUR WEBSITE AT www.elpasocad.org.

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Members of 4th Brigade Combat Team 1st Cavalry Division attend Canutillo High School's NJROTC military inspection

By Alfredo Vasquez
Special to the Courier

Canutillo High School NJROTC received an outstanding rating in its annual Military Inspection held recently at the CHS Julius & Irene Lowenberg Eagles Stadium. CHS military science program has 107 cadets.

"Overall the naval cadets looked very sharp, especially the color guard and the cadet officers staff," stated Commander Pam Holland, who traveled from the Naval Recruiting District in Phoenix to serve as the inspecting officer. Included in the inspection party were Chief Petty Officer David McAllister, Senior Chief Arturo Dornantes, Petty Officer First Class Omar Ramirez, and Petty Officer Second Class Carlo Flores.

Among the special guests invited to observe the annual event were members of the 4th Brigade Combat Team from Fort Bliss Army base, which returned recently from Iraq. The soldiers representing the fourth brigade were Pv2 Michael Rhyder, of Hyndman PA; Pfc. Brenda Jones, of Bronx NY; Sgt. Griselda Wilson, of Ontario CA; Pv2 Michael Tutaj, of Chicago IL; and Pfc. Hans Vehmeier, of Midland

TX. They were presented each in a special recognition ceremony with a bouquet of flowers created by CHS Ag-Science Horticulture students. Making the floral presentation were CISD Superintendent Dr. Pam Padilla and FFA Officer Anne Newfeld, junior.

Also in the stands were the Big Brother Big Sister (BBBS) Littles from Bill Childress Elementary School, about 80 fourth graders who have Bigs (mentors) in the NJROTC program. CHS's NJROTC has participated in the BBBS program since its introduction into Canutillo ISD schools three years ago. Several CHS cadets are Bigs for students in the district's five elementary schools.

"Although we have many freshmen in the program, we did really well," said Cadet Commander Raymundo Duran, senior, "next year, they will do even better." The cadet staff corp also includes Executive Officer Crystal Grado, senior; Supply Officer Angelita De Leon, senior; Chief Petty Officer Brian Boehm, sophomore; and Chief Petty Officer Sarahi Moyers, sophomore.

CHS's NJROTC military science program is under the direction of Navy Commander Gerry Mangrum and Petty Officer First Class Pete Soto.



— Photo courtesy Canutillo ISD

Canutillo High School NJROTC Color Guard (from left) Kevin Kruger, sophomore; Brisa Lopez, sophomore; Ruth Vasquez, junior; and Blaine Crossland, sophomore.



— Photo courtesy Canutillo ISD

Canutillo High School NJROTC Cadet Staff Corp undergoes inspection (from left) Brian Boehm, Angelita De Leon, Sarahi Moyers, Crystal Grado, Commander Pam Holland, Commander Gerry Mangrum, Chief McAllister, Senior Chief Arturo Dornantes.

Master Naturalist program begins February 20

By Susan Petty
Special to the Courier

Apprentice naturalists can receive in-depth training in wildlife and natural resource management by enrolling in the 2008 Texas Master Naturalist program. Certified students can go on to volunteer in community outreach, research, and service projects.

This is a nationally recognized program whose mission is to develop and certify a group of well-informed volunteers to provide education, outreach, and service dedicated to the beneficial management for natural resources and natural area within the community. The Texas Cooperative Extension, Texas Parks and Wildlife, and the Texas Forest Service jointly

sponsor the program here in El Paso. The program is a 13-week course with training topics ranging from geology to botany, archaeology to desert ecology. Experts from universities, museums, special interest organizations, and government agencies will jointly teach the course.

The course will begin on Feb. 20 and classes held Wednesday evenings from 6 p.m. to 9 p.m. for 13 weeks at the TECH H2O Center, 10751 Montana at the Kay Bailey Hutchinson Desalination Plant. Some classes will be held at UTEP in university classrooms. Five Saturday morning field trips will take place throughout the session.

Application forms and information are available by calling The Texas Cooperative Extension, (915) 851-

2515. The deadline for submission of applications is Feb. 9.

With such support, we have served the community of El Paso through educational and service projects. We help at Rio Bosque, Keystone Heritage Park, Franklin Mountain State Park, Feather Lake, Wyler Tramway, McKelligan and McKittrick Canyons. We impact approximately 450 acres.

We help with Wildscapes, Mission Possible, Waterfest, Celebration of the Mountains, Raptor Control, and Gift to the River. At educational fairs and exhibits, classroom presentations, and as trail guides we meet 120 youth and 140 adults each month. Our program supports lowering water use and appreciating the Chihuahuan Desert in which we live.



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Clint Independent School District Notice of Public Hearing

Clint Independent School District will hold a public hearing for the discussion of the 2007 district Annual Report on Wednesday, January 16, 2008, at the Clint Independent School District Administration building board room, located at 14521 Horizon Blvd., at 5:30 p.m. during the regularly scheduled School Board meeting. All interested individuals are welcomed to attend. The report will be available to the public after the hearing at all Clint District School Campuses, the Clint Public Library and the Clint Post Office.

Audencia pública

El distrito escolar de Clint tendra una junta para discutir el Reporte Annual del Distrito de 2007 el miercoles, 16 de enero del 2008 en las oficinas administrativas localizadas 14521 Horizon Blvd. a las 5:30 p.m. Todos individuos interesados estan invitados a asistir. El Reporte se puede obtener en estos lugares; todas las escuelas publicas del distrito, la biblioteca publica de Clint, y el Correo de Clint.

WTCC: 01/10/08

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Miners need to close out games

By Steve Escajeda
Special to the Courier

The UTEP Miners open Conference USA play at home this week, and though they're coming off two disappointing losses, they have a great opportunity to finish the opening week of league play in first place.

The Miners have played three top quality teams so far this season, Texas A&M, New Mexico and Texas Tech. And with five minutes to go in each game, it appeared Tony Barbee's bunch was on its way to victory.

Unfortunately, college basketball games go on for more than just 35 minutes.

Losing these important games could come back to haunt the Miners at the end of the season, but until then, all they can do is try to win conference basketball games.

And because the Miners open at home against two teams with losing records, they

have an excellent chance to save their season.

UTEP takes on SMU (6-7) and Rice (3-10) this week and should come away with a 2-0 C-USA record by the time you read your Sunday morning newspaper.

Even though they should win, these games won't be easy. It's obvious that the Miners don't rebound, make lay ups or shoot free throws very well. But they do cause turnovers because they can defend.

The one thing the Miners can expect is for their remaining opponents to copy what the Lobos and Red Raiders did to neutralize star Stefon Jackson.

Both New Mexico and Texas Tech frustrated Jackson by muscling him around the court and double-teaming him when he got close to the basket.

Taking Jackson out of the game forced the Miners to shoot way too many 3-pointers. But because they have no inside game, they don't have to many other options.

And let's face it, the Miners are just too young and inexperienced without Jackson on the floor. They aren't the same team and they struggle to stay in any kind of an offense.

Any way, Barbee, being the eternal optimist, knows that the Miners have a great opportunity. The only problem is that there are another 14 conference games left after these two home games.

And the Miners still look like they're a year away from making a real name for themselves.

There's no doubt that the Miners will continue to give it their all. But if they want to have any chance of playing any postseason basketball, it will start with two wins this week.

BCS snoozer

All in all, it was a pretty bad year for college football.

Not the way it began and progressed through the regular season, but the way it ended with its antiquated bowl system.

Case in point: Were any of you looking forward to the BCS national championship game between LSU and Ohio State? Did any of you really consider the game between LSU and Ohio State a true championship game?

Me neither. In fact, I remember driving home after work on the day of the game and hearing on the radio that the title game was that evening. I totally forgot about the national championship game.

I didn't even watch it. Oh, I checked in from time to time to catch the score, but the game didn't interest me at all.

I guess it was my little protest vote over the BCS — by far the dumbest system in sports.

LSU won the game. Do any of you feel LSU is the best team in the country?

Me neither.

If there were an eight-team playoff we could have seen Missouri, Kansas, USC, Georgia, LSU, Ohio State, Oklahoma and West Virginia go at on the field.

You think that would have generated some fan interest?

Me too.

He said, he said

So who do you believe, Roger Clemens or Brian McNamee?

Clemens, who was named as a user of steroids and HGH in the Mitchell report, was turned in by his former trainer, McNamee.

McNamee implicated pitcher Andy Pettitte and Pettitte verified his story by admitting he had taken HGH from McNamee. Of course, this gave the trainer instant credibility.

But Clemens has accused McNamee of lying, saying he never used steroids. Clemens is so upset that he is filing a lawsuit against McNamee.

Word is that McNamee is going to file a countersuit against Clemens.

So who is lying? Why would McNamee lie about Clemens and not about Pettitte?

Who knows, but I have a distinct feeling that Clemens is being less than truthful.

Proving it, however, is a much different matter.

UTEP sets up temporary ticket center

By Laura Cruz Acosta
Special to the Courier

As a new year of exciting athletic and entertainment events kicks off at the University of Texas at El Paso, officials would like to remind the public of its temporary ticket center locations and encourage advance ticket purchases.

"With tickets to upcoming athletic events, concerts and entertainment sure to be in high demand, we'd like to remind the public of our temporary ticket center locations and provide them the information necessary to ensure their experience is a positive one," said Carol-Roberts-Spence, director of UTEP's Office of Special Events. "Our old building off Mesa Street may be gone, but we're still here to serve the public."

The old ticket center was torn down to make room for the construction of a basketball practice facility and a new ticket center.

Event-goers can purchase tickets for various events at the Sun Bowl temporary ticket center at the north end of the stadium off Glory Road by the Larry K. Durham Sports Center.

Customers are encouraged to access the Sun Bowl temporary site through Sun Bowl Drive as access through Mesa Street is often limited due to the construction. The hours of operation during regular business days are 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Monday through Friday and 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Saturday.

On event and game days the Don Haskins Center ticket trailer located on east side of that building off Mesa Street by the construction site is open until halftime or intermission.

Officials highly recommend that customers purchase tickets in advance and pick them up at the designated "will call" windows at either temporary site on event day.

To help ease traffic jams and better serve the public, university officials are working to improve signage in the area and will provide additional and more visible signage during events.

Upcoming shows include Texas Versus the Nation, Monster Jam and Linkin Park, as well as an array of athletic events including men's and women's basketball.

For information, visit www.utep.edu/tickets or call the UTEP Ticket Center at (915) 747-5234.

FHS cheerleaders receive a bid to Nationals

FABENS — Receiving a bid to Nationals at a NCA cheer camp during the summer has the Fabens High School cheerleading squad very excited. "This is something that has never been done in Fabens history," said René King, FHS cheerleading sponsor. Winning the chant division at cheer camp got the squad to Nationals.

"The events at camp were extremely challenging," said Donny Quiroz, co-captain of the squad. The squad went through a vigorous routine where they had to cheer, dance, stunt, and jump for eight hours a day, three days in a row. As tough as it was, the squad pulled through and made the best out of it.

Preparing for Nationals being held on Apr. 8 in Daytona, Florida, the squad is learning new routines and trying to stay in shape. A NCA cheerleading coach has been hired to train them. The squad feels confident — they have

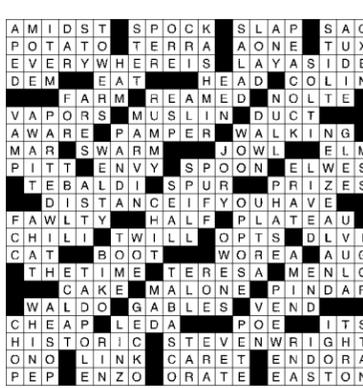
already accomplished a lot this year and plan to keep the momentum going.

Quiroz stood out from the many participants at the camp and received an opportunity to try out for the NCA All-American Squad. "I was so excited to try-out, it was very nerve-racking but it all paid off when I found out I had made the squad, it's cool to be part of a national team," Quiroz said.

That's not all the cheerleaders have accomplished this year, Vivian Manzano, Adriana Castro and Evelyn Nunez are cheering on the El Paso All-City Cheerleading Squad. The squad participates in various events around the city, the latest being the Sun Bowl half-time show that was held on Dec. 31. "I feel honored to have made the All-City Squad because my talents as a cheerleader are recognized," said Manzano.

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LEGALS

Tornillo ISD is seeking FT junior high school teacher to provide academic instruction to school students in Tornillo, TX. Min. Bachelor's degree and TX Teaching Certificate. Apply online at <http://www.tisd.us/>. WTCC- 01/10/08

PUBLIC NOTICE

As per Article V, Sec. 5.05(a), all owners and lienholders have ten (10) days from this date to reclaim their vehicles at Southwest Wrecker, 1401 Darrington Rd., 855-1900, 851-2091-fax, or it will be sold at public auction for charges: VIN - JHMB7444GC083872, 1986 Honda LXI, grey, NM license

plate HMJ954. WTCC- 01/10/08

PUBLIC NOTICE

El Paso County Emergency Services District #1

Notice of Location

The El Paso County Emergency District #1 (Horizon Fire Department) is located at 14151 Nunda Ave., Horizon City, TX 79928. Phone (non-emergency): (915) 852-3204; EMERGENCY: 911; Fax: (915) 852-4236; Ambulance (county): (915) 779-2111.

WTCC- 01/10/08

HELP WANTED

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Bilingual (English/Spanish), 1 year experience, computer literate, customer service oriented. Please apply at Lower Valley Water District, 1557 FM 1110, Clint, TX 79836.

SELF-HELP

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

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

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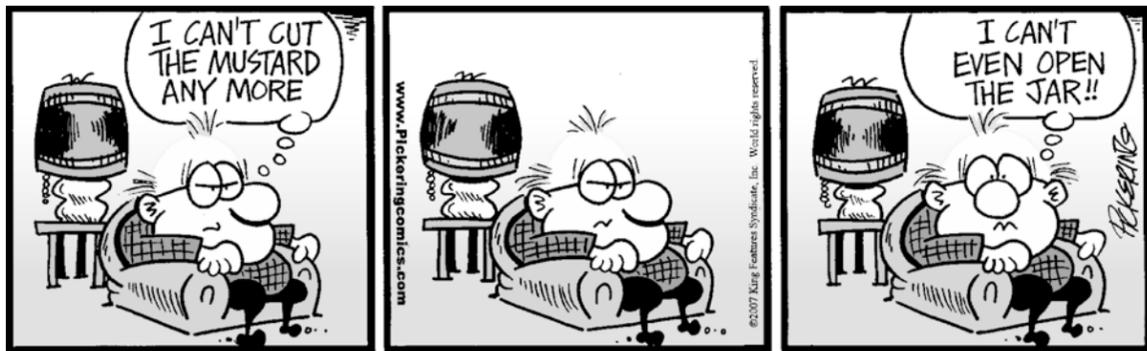
OUT ON A LIMB By Gary Kopervas



AMBER WAVES By Dave T. Phipps



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We may suffer the sounds of silence

By Don Flood

This just in: Pamela Anderson is getting a divorce after two months. Or maybe she isn't. Whatever.

But of perhaps more interest is a surprising scientific breakthrough by none other than Jennifer Lopez: Pregnant women put on weight.

Recently a Web site released the news that, according to an informed source (as opposed to an uninformed source, who are best to stay away from, unless of course you want to make the story more interesting), "Jennifer loves being pregnant, but she's not happy about the weight gain."

The weight gain, apparently, took Lopez by surprise since it's never been noted before in the scientific literature. Interestingly enough, further study by Lopez has determined that virtually all pregnant women suffer from this mysterious malady.

This isn't Lopez's first scientific triumph. Physicists are still shaking their heads over how her barely-there dress for the 2000 Grammy Awards managed to stay on for the ceremonies.

(Recently, the J-Lo Dress Conundrum, as the problem is referred to by scientists, was taken on by the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, which has secured a federal grant to pay for Lopez to model the dress for a group of top MIT physicists. Lopez's pregnancy, unfortunately, has stalled this important project.)

But the Big Word in Hollywood is: (Silence.)

That's right, the writers' strike may actually affect America's leading industry: self-congratulatory awards shows.

The writers have threatened not to write those clever bon mots that stars read while introducing the Golden Globe and Academy

Award categories.

Imagine the horror. Without the writers, we could be in for a night of awful jokes, inane banter and pathetically self-serving blather.

Wait, that's what we have now. Here's a thought. Maybe they could just... present the awards. (I know it's crazy, but it just might work!)

The show would be over by 10 p.m., which is about the time the Oscars usually starts getting warmed up with its more highly anticipated awards, such as the hotly contested Best Catering Award for a Foreign Cartoon Documentary Featuring Central Asian Midgets.

And it could get done even earlier if they would simply tweak the rules a little to allow snipers to shoot award winners who prattle on too long. (This is pretty much all of them.)

Not that I don't support the writers. After all, I have my own personal stable of 15 writers who work night and day to produce this column, allowing me to hang out in Monaco sipping champagne all day with Snoop Dogg.

(His new reality show, "Snoop Dogg's Father Hood"? I helped Snoop create, write and execute that blank space in the middle of fatherhood. Totally makes the show. And that's not the only blank space I've been responsible for.)

Would I be the same writer without my team? It's hard to say, especially since I'm not writing this. You'd have to ask them.

But I do know this. I think the writers deserve whatever revenue streams they have coming to them, especially if they write a movie for me.

Maybe a bio of Pamela Andersen.

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King Super Crossword

- TAKE A HIKE!**
ACROSS
 1 Surrounded by
 7 Nimoy role
 12 Clout a cad
 16 _ Vicente, Brazil
 19 Stew ingredient
 20 _ firma
 21 Top-of-the-line
 22 Prom wear
 23 Start of a remark
 by 108 Across
 25 Reserve
 27 Rep. opponent
 28 Savor the squid
 29 Pin part
 31 Powell or Quinn
 32 Orwell's "Animal _"
 34 Chastised, with "out"
 37 Nick of "I Love Trouble"
 38 Archaic affliction
 41 Cotton cloth
 42 _ tape
 43 Cognizant
 44 Spoil
 45 Part 2 of remark
 48 Deface
 49 Bunch of bees
 51 Bulldog feature
 52 Shady character?
 54 English statesman
 56 A deadly sin
 57 Masters' _ River Anthology"
 59 Cary of "Hot

- Shots"
 61 Diva Renata
 63 Trigger Trigger?
 64 Game-show giveaways
 65 Part 3 of remark
 69 With 6 Down, John Cleese sitcom
 71 Grapefruit serving
 72 Tableland
 74 Tex-Mex favorite
 75 Sturdy fabric
 77 Goes (for)
 78 556, to Flavius
 80 TV's "Top _"
 81 Trunk, in
 Tewkesbury
 82 "She _ Yellow Ribbon" ('49 film)
 84 Holidayless mo.
 85 End of remark
 88 Brewer or Wright
 91 _ Park, NJ
 93 Birthday buy
 94 Danson's "Cheers" role
 95 Greek poet
 96 Emerson's middle name
 98 Word in a Hawthorne title
 99 Sell
 100 Rock's _ Trick
 101 A swan was her swain
 102 "The Gold Bug" author
 103 " _ been ages!"

- 106 Notable
 108 Speaker of remark
 114 Plastic _ Band
 115 Sausage segment
 116 Proofreader's mark
 117 "Bewitched" role
 118 Energy
 119 Signor Ferrari
 120 Pound the podium
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 5 Pig's digs
 6 See 69 Across
 7 Dele dele
 8 _ diem
 9 Galena, e.g.
 10 Dernier _
 11 Disputed territory
 12 Bar food?
 13 Burden
 14 " _ Day Now" ('62 hit)
 15 NBC logo
 16 Circus prop
 17 Heroic Murphy
 18 The yoke's on them
 24 Overdramatic thespian
 26 Maestro Georg
 30 Velvet finish?
 32 In place of

- 33 Olympic hawk
 34 Card game
 35 Kreskin's letters
 36 Stout relative
 37 Worthless
 38 Temptress
 39 Watch for
 40 Gave up
 41 Pugilist Hagler
 42 Time to crow?
 44 Black and white delight
 45 Wine and dine
 46 Hillary's home
 47 Mirth
 50 Author Eudora
 51 Victor of "Papillon"
 53 Mag. submissions
 55 Govt. security
 57 Slosh the schnapps
 58 Dragon of song
 59 Part of Q.E.D.
 60 Resided
 62 _ Spumante
 63 Circus barker
 64 Part of a process
 66 Voucher
 67 Block
 68 Marine leader?
 69 TV watchdog
 70 At the drop of _
 73 Soft-palate extension
 75 "Come Softly _" ('59 song)
 76 Distress
 77 Buck or Jesse

- 79 Violinist Oistrakh
 81 South African activist
 83 Exiled dictator
 86 Renown
 87 Frog-to-be
 88 Hot stuff
 89 Building wing
 90 Caviar
 92 Gridiron position
 94 Beyond balmy
 95 Comic Herman
 96 Complain
 97 Famed fabulist
 98 Little lizard
 99 Harry _ Zell
 100 Karate blow
 101 City on the Danube
 102 Rose or Rozelle
 103 " _ You Babe" ('65 song)
 104 Archaic preposition
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Answer Page 6

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

To learn more about stroke, call the American Heart Association at 1-800-AHA-USA1 or visit us online at www.americanheart.org/tx



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Read the signs. Raise a flag.

Social Security Q&A By Ray Vigil

Q: I will be eligible for my company's pension at age 60. But I also have Social Security coverage, having paid into the system for the past 36 years. Will my Social Security retirement benefit be reduced because of my pension?

A: No. But the earliest that you can start collecting Social Security retirement benefits is age 62. If you start your Social Security at 62, your benefit will be reduced — not because you get a pension, but because you are collecting Social Security earlier

than your full retirement age. However, you should check with your pension office to find out whether Social Security benefits will reduce your company pension once your benefits start. Learn more about Social Security by visiting our website at www.socialsecurity.gov, or call us at 1-800-772-1213 (TTY 1-800-325-0778).

Q: I get Supplemental Security Income (SSI) for a physical disability. I would like to try going back to work. Am I allowed to get a part time job

without risking loss of benefits?

A: If you start to work, a portion of your income may affect your SSI benefit amount and eligibility. Social Security encourages recipients with disabilities to try working. Also, in many cases you are able to keep your medical coverage. Social Security has a number of work incentives to help you attempt working without taking away the security net of your benefits. Learn more about them by visiting our website at www.socialsecurity.gov/work. If you do decide to work, be sure to call or visit your Social Security office to report the change before you begin. Call us at 1-800-772-1213 (TTY 1-800-325-0778).

IRS

From Page 1

disruptions to other operations related to the tax season. Although as many as 13.5 million taxpayers will not be able to file their returns until Feb. 11, the effect of the delay may be lessened by the fact that based on previous filing patterns only 3 million to 4 million taxpayers file returns with the five affected forms during these early weeks of the filing season.

The Feb. 11 delay caused by the

AMT patch will affect any taxpayer using any of these five forms:

- Form 8863, Education Credits;
- Form 5695, Residential Energy Credits;
- Form 1040A's Schedule 2, Child and Dependent Care Expenses for Form 1040A Filers;
- Form 8396, Mortgage Interest Credit; and
- Form 8859, District of Columbia First-Time Homebuyer Credit.

Although these five forms require significant additional reprogramming due to the AMT patch, the IRS has been able to reprogram its systems

to begin processing seven other AMT-related forms, including Form 6251, Alternative Minimum Tax - Individuals. Taxpayers filing these seven forms should not experience delays in filing, and the IRS expects to begin processing those returns starting on time.

Electronic returns involving those five forms will not be accepted until systems are updated in February. Similarly, paper filers should wait to file as well. All other e-file and paper returns will be accepted starting in January.

The IRS urges affected taxpayers to file electronically in order to reduce wait times for their refunds. E-file with direct deposit gets refunds in as little as 10 days, while paper returns take four to six weeks. Especially for taxpayers affected by the AMT changes, e-file with direct deposit is the fastest way to get a refund.

Indeed, the IRS expects continued growth in IRS e-file, which is now in its 22nd year. Taxpayers can file their returns electronically one of three ways: through their tax preparer, through over-the-counter software or through IRS Free File.

IRS Free File is a partnership between the IRS and a consortium of tax software manufacturers who offer free software and free electronic filing to taxpayers who meet certain criteria. For 2008, taxpayers who earned \$54,000 or less will be eligible for Free File. Approximately 70 percent of all taxpayers, or 95 million people, will meet the income criteria. Taxpayers must access Free File through IRS.gov.

Taxpayers also should be aware of important tax credits such as the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC), the Saver's Credit and the Child Tax Credit. Taxpayers must meet certain income limits for all three but tax credits such as these can significantly lower tax bills or increase refunds.

The IRS Web site, www.irs.gov, is the round-the-clock source of information. Taxpayers can go to 1040 Central on IRS.gov to find the latest tax news, information about tax law changes, up-to-date publications and information about valuable tax credits.

The IRS also has issued an increasing number of warnings over the last few years about e-mail scams targeting individuals, businesses, exempt organizations and other taxpayers. The scams, popularly known as "phishing" scams, use phony e-mails that falsely claim to come from the IRS. As a rule, the IRS does not send unsolicited e-mails to taxpayers. Taxpayers who receive an unsolicited e-mail communication claiming to be from the IRS can forward the message to phishing@irs.gov using instructions posted on IRS.gov.

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