



NEWSBRIEFS

Fast and smart

The El Paso Community College (EPCC) Women's and Men's Cross Country teams were named as Cross Country Scholar All-American Teams by the National Junior College Cross Country Coaches Association. Those nominated had to have participated at the Regional or National Cross Country meets held in the fall of 2016. The nominated individual student athletes had to have a grade point average (GPA) of 3.40 or better for the fall 2016 semester. The EPCC Women's team placed 4th with a team GPA of 3.894. Cuyahoga Community College (Ohio) placed 1st with a 3.954 GPA. The women's Scholar team consisted of: Karla Enriquez, Kelli Kirkpatrick, Shalet Mitei, Rose Jebet, Ocean Stevens and Michelle Renteria. The EPCC men's team placed 9th with a GPA of 3.464. Hesston Community College (Kansas) placed 1st with a 3.911 GPA. The men's Scholar team consisted of: Michael Flores, John Sandoval, Evan Gerdes and Brian Rowley.

— Jim Heiney

Blame technology

We're living longer than ever before, but don't blame rising health care costs on senior citizens, says health economist Austin Frakt, reports the Association of Mature American Citizens. Frakt puts the blame on new health care technologies. "Technology change is responsible for at least one-third and as much as two-thirds of per capita health care spending growth," he says.

— John Grimaldi

You can do it, too

Don't give up on that New Year resolution to get more exercise this year, says Association of Mature American Citizens. Let Edna Sheppard be your inspiration. She's a 94-year-old grandmother who has been dedicated to her daily exercise regimen for no less than 91 years. She started at the age of three and is still going strong as she prepares for her 95th birthday. In fact, her hometown in Australia recently honored Edna for her dedication to health and fitness. "Many use excuses to avoid exercise and a healthy lifestyle; Edna proves that age is no barrier," says the town's Mayor.

— John Grimaldi

It's not what we have, but what we enjoy, that makes up our abundance.
— Quips & Quotes



— Photo by Alfredo Vasquez

BIG JOB – The recent severe hail and wind storms that hit El Paso County are deemed catastrophic events by insurance companies. Shortly after these events the number of roofing companies ready to offer assistance quadruples, according to a local roofing contractor. Shown in photo above is a roof repair crew that works on a house in the upper valley.

Roof repair is big business in county

By Alfredo Vasquez
Special to the Courier

EL PASO COUNTY – With the hailstorms that the El Paso County region experienced the past two years, the most recent one being felt last October and November, significant damages were caused to roofs of hundreds of homes throughout the area. Following these storms, as always, are the storm-chasers, construction contractors who come from all parts of the country to cash-in on the work that homeowners must contend with

as they seek to repair their roofs.

Roof repair work usually encompasses replacing any damaged wood, tearing off all of the existing shingles, tarring and laying rolls of asphalt paper and new shingles, and installing new air-duct vents and sky lights.

According to Jose Escalante, 56, owner of Escalante Roofing and Construction Company of El Paso, when these weather events, that are deemed catastrophic by insurance companies, hit this region the number of roofing companies ready to offer assistance quadruples.

Escalante said that normally there are

about 50 roofing companies located in this region, but after severe wind and hailstorms burst through the area, soon afterwards, that number rises to more than 200. Most of them are legitimate, he stated, but some of them are scoundrels. He warned that homeowners need to do their due diligence in selecting a roofing contractor, whether it be an out-of-town or local company.

Escalante, who has been in roof construction since 1973 and a roofing business owner since 1983, said that

See ROOF, Page 4

Hurd visits Garcia-Enriquez Middle School

By Hector Gonzalez
Special to the Courier

SAN ELIZARIO – San Elizario Independent School District's (SEISD) Garcia-Enriquez Middle School (GEMS) had a special visit from Republican Congressman, Will Hurd (TX, US Rep. District 23) on Friday, Feb. 10, 2017. He stopped by the *Introduction to Computer Science* classroom where he got to meet and interact with students and see some of the amazing work they have done.

"My students were amazed and grateful with the Congressman's visit to our campus," said John Jara, *Introduction to Computer Science* teacher. "We are very thankful for the opportunity to showcase how intelligent, creative, and gifted our students are. We would definitely like for



— Photo courtesy San Elizario ISD

BASIC TRAINING – San Elizario ISD middle school students in John Jara's *Introduction to Computer Science* class impressed Congressman Will Hurd, right, with their work.

See HURD, Page 3

Finances

By Nathaniel Sillin

Make the most of your rewards program membership

I’m often intrigued and sometimes inspired by stories of people traveling the world using points and miles. There’s a well-known (within certain circles, at least) man who earned over a million airline miles by purchasing more than \$3,000

worth of pudding during a special promotion in 1999. Or, you might have heard about people using coupons during a grocery store’s membership-only sale to get food and household products for free.

While I might not be as enthusiastic as some world travelers, or as extreme as some couponers, I do see the benefit in a program that’s free to join and offers you potentially money-saving perks. However, I also know it’s important not to get so caught up that I wind up spending more money than I would otherwise. As a friend of mine loved to say, “never spend a dollar to save a nickel.”

The perks of membership. There are many loyalty or rewards programs to choose from and the rules and benefits can vary. For example, a grocer’s program might offer the same in-store savings and exclusive coupons to all its members. By contrast, travel rewards programs often have tiers, different levels of membership with varying benefits depending on how often you travel or how much you spend. While the basic tier may offer discounted hotel rates or free Wi-Fi, the higher tiers might come with free room upgrades (including to coveted suites) and guaranteed early check-in and late check-out.

Recognize why companies might have rewards programs. When you’re a big fan of a company or product, getting rewarded for your loyalty can be great. After all, it’s a free perk

if you were going to make the purchase anyway. But try not to get too attached to a particular company or product based solely on the rewards program.

Buying something simply because you get a discount as a member, or making a purchase “for the points,” might be a waste. You could find yourself with a pantry full of products that are slowly going bad, or paying more for a trip because you didn’t comparison shop the offerings from other airlines or hotel chains.

Joining a rewards program could lead to overspending if you’re not careful. Recognizing that the programs could be designed to get you to spend more, and more often, can help you refrain from overspending. Here are a few additional ways to make sure you maximize your benefits.

- **Don’t double-count your savings.** You’re tricking yourself if you consider the rewards points from a retailer’s program as savings when making a purchase and then consider the same points as savings (again) when you redeem them for store credit. Count the rewards once, or don’t make them part of your buying decision at all.

- **Keep your programs organized.** Points in some programs expire if you don’t use them within a specified period or have recent account activity. You could use a website, app or spreadsheet to help track your accounts, how many points or

miles you’ve earned and when they expire.

Another way to avoid overspending is to consider your net cost when comparison shopping. To do this, you’ll need a list of the dollar value of each programs’ rewards points. You could take a shortcut and copy the values other enthusiasts place on each program’s points. Or, you could make estimates of your own based on trips or purchases you regularly make.

Now you’ll know when 1,000 points are worth \$1 or \$10 and can plan your purchases accordingly. In the end, you want to be able to make as close to an apples-to-apples comparison as possible, inclusive of the value you place on the rewards.

Bottom line: Consumer rewards programs offer a wide variety of benefits, including exclusive savings and complimentary perks. While it’s often free to join the programs, and you could get rewarded for doing so, keep the big picture in mind and be careful about letting your membership lead to unnecessary purchases.

This article is intended to provide general information and should not be considered legal, tax or financial advice. It’s always a good idea to consult a tax or financial advisor for specific information on how certain laws apply to your situation and about your individual financial situation.

Veterans Post

By Freddy Groves

VA cemeteries earn top rankings

The Department of Veterans Affairs National Cemetery Administration (NCA) has bested corporations and federal agencies in a survey of customer satisfaction -- for the sixth time. Since 1999, the government has used American Customer Satisfaction Index methods to gauge satisfaction with agencies.

Here is the most important stat this year: NCA was ranked at 96 points out of a possible 100, the highest score in public and private sectors, and 32 points above the average of 68 for federal agencies. (As a comparison, the IRS received 58 points for individual paper filers and 67 points for small business and self-employed filers. The Weatherization Assistance Program of the Department of Energy netted 67 points.)

The National Cemetery Administration was scored on maintenance of the national cemeteries, customer service and respectfulness of the service and interment. The customer service score was the highest since the survey first began and next-of-kin respondents indicated a

willingness to recommend NCA to others.

Burial in a VA cemetery is open to those who meet the eligibility requirements for minimum active-duty service, were discharged under other than dishonorable conditions and more. Spouses and minor children may be eligible, even if the service member or veteran is still alive. The VA provides headstones or markers, U.S. flag, opening and closing the grave and perpetual care of the site.

For the complete list of eligibility requirements, go to www.cem.va.gov/burial_benefits/eligible.asp. Note the extra information links down the left side of the page.

The VA recently started providing pre-need eligibility determinations for early planning. Having this sorted out can take a burden off loved ones when the time comes. To apply, you’ll need VA Form 40-10007, available on the www.cem.va.gov website, along with your DD214 or similar documentation.

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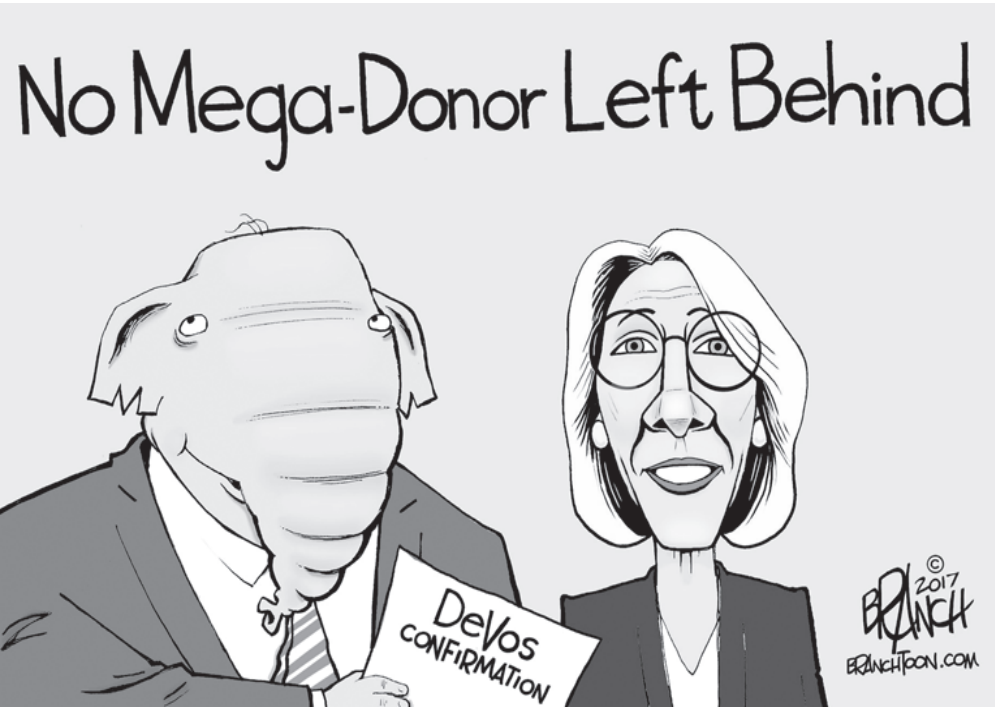
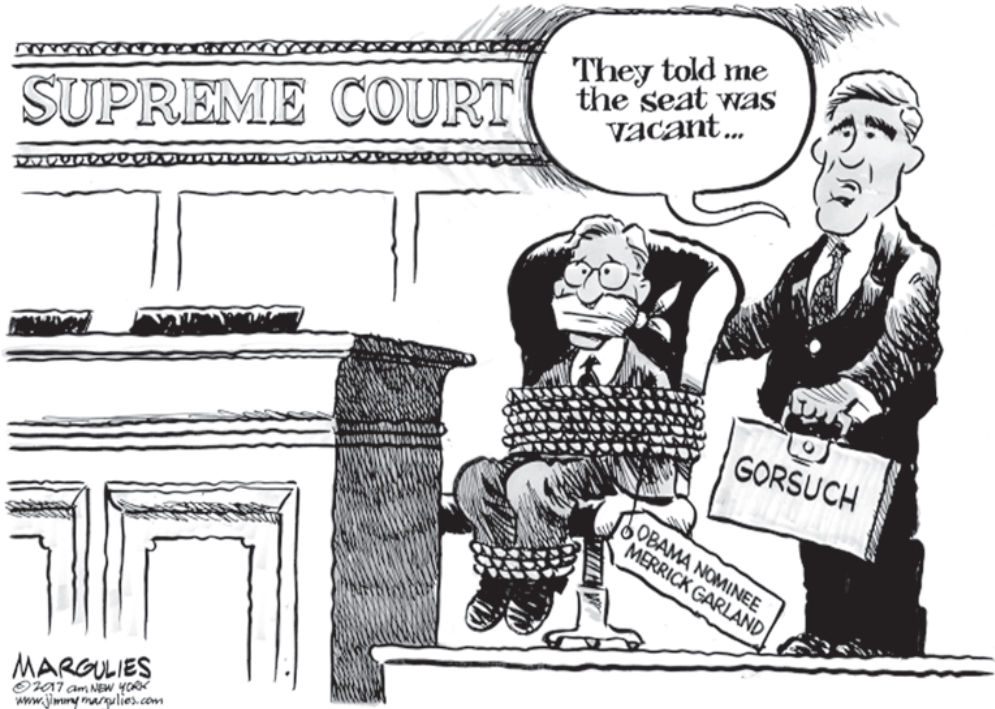
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View from here

By John Grimaldi

Obamacare does not work

“Obamacare will be repealed and replaced. That is a certainty. Why? Because the American people demand it,” declared Dan Weber, president of the Association of Mature American Citizens.

According to Weber, voters cast their ballots in favor of a Republican Congress and a Republican President because they were fed up with the attempt by big government to control their personal lives.

“Yes, there is a faction that may like the Affordable Care Act. But, the majority knows that however you look at the law, it just does not work. It did not lower the cost of healthcare insurance, as was promised. Instead, the costs are disgracefully high. Perhaps for some people premiums are low. However, when you factor in the high deductibles that are imposed by plans offered under the ACA, for most of us the overall costs are downright unaffordable,” he said, noting that some ACA plans have deductibles as high as 10 to 13 thousand dollars.

Weber said he is confident that Congress “will enact a new, better healthcare law. One that works for everybody.”

Grace-Marie Turner, president of the Galen Institute, a public policy research organization, is also confident that the ACA will be repealed and replaced. It will be replaced “through a step-by-step enactment of a market-friendly reform that provides a safety net for those currently on the program, gives states more authority to oversee their health-insurance markets, and provides states with revenues to help those who have difficulty purchasing or affording health insurance.”

In a recent posting on the Galen Web site she wrote: “The replacement measures will protect the people who are on Obamacare now so they don’t lose their coverage again, and they will build a bridge to new coverage that will protect others from the damage that the law has done to their pocketbooks and the quality of their medical coverage.”

Paul Ryan, speaker of the House of Representatives, told reporters earlier this week that a new healthcare law will be completed by year’s end. He said that implementation of a new law will be put on a fast track.

Even the liberal cable news organization CNN has its doubts about Obamacare. An article on its Web site posted before the Obamacare debate Tuesday night between Senators Bernie Sanders and Ted Cruz admitted that the ACA “doesn’t do much to help the middle class afford coverage.”

It is interesting to note that during the Town Hall debate between Sanders and Cruz one woman in the audience said that her access to care was limited because of the high deductible of her Obamacare insurance. Sanders confessed that ACA deductibles are outrageously high. “The idea that we have policies like that, like the one you describe, is clearly an outrage.”

The Association of Mature American Citizens (<http://www.amac.us>) is a senior advocacy organization that takes its marching orders from its members. We act and speak on their behalf, protecting their interests and offering a practical insight on how to best solve the problems they face today.

Hurd

From Page 1

him to come back soon.”

Hurd, in partnership with the University of Texas Center for STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) Education, is working on a new STEM initiative geared to make computer science education a top priority in Texas schools. According to Hurd, at current, “In Texas, over 40,000 computing jobs are waiting to be filled, but we only graduate 2,000 computer scientists each year.” This gap can only be bridged by extending computer science programs down to the middle school and eventually even the elementary school level. His goal today, is to see what a successful middle school computer science program looks like, such as the one at GEMS.

“Garcia-Enriquez Middle School received a Project Lead The Way/Verizon grant allowing for the purchase all necessary hardware and software as well as provide professional development to the instructor teaching the course,” said Michael Rodriguez, SEISD’s Coordinator of Career and Technical Education. “Our middle school was one of only seven districts in the state of Texas to receive this grant during the 2015-2016 school year. This is the second year our course

has been in place and students have been successful.”

Project Lead The Way has indicated that GEMS is one of the most successful computer science programs put in place under the initial grant and has had administration and staff present at their annual conference in an effort to assist other middle schools with program implementation. San Elizario is not stopping at the middle school though. Rodriguez adds that in addition to the middle school computer science program, this district has also implemented robotics training for 5th and 6th graders at every elementary campus in the district and is currently reviewing a video game design curriculum for placement in those same grade levels.

Moving upward, SEISD is also constructing a new STEM building that will be open for student use beginning next year. Among other programs the new facility will house a full computer science/robotics lab, an engineering lab, and a biomedical science lab. Students in SEISD are definitely being prepared to meet and bridge that gap identified by Hurd. If anyone is interested in learning more about any of the several STEM initiatives in place in SEISD they can contact Michael Rodriguez, Coordinator of Career and Technical Education, at (915) 872-3900.



– Photo courtesy Fabens ISD

HITTING THE RIGHT NOTES – Miguel Soto, right, with Fabens UIL Solo and Ensemble students that participated in both band and guitar competitions.

Fabens’ music students going to State competition

By Denise Peña
Special to the Courier

FABENS – Saturday, February 4 marked a day of many first for Fabens High School’s music department. With 22 students having scored a Division 1 with certification to advance to the State UIL Solo and Ensemble Competition, Fabens is sending its largest group to Austin on May 27.

“Our program has been growing slowly but steadily for the past few years,” Band Director Miguel Soto said. “This is by far the biggest group we’ve ever had going to Austin.”

In addition to having the largest group advancing to state, this year the school is also sending its first ever percussionist: junior Gabriel Gonzalez

Another first for the school involves the youngest member to advance to state. UIL rules state that middle schoolers

can perform in ensemble so long as the majority of the group is composed of high schoolers. As a result, Isaiah Gonzalez is the first Fabens ISD 8th grader to advance to State.

“These accomplishments are not unheard of at bigger schools,” Soto said. “But this is big deal for a school our size to show our students that it can be done.”

To advance to state students play piece of Level 1 difficulty music. Retired band

directors and college music professors from the area take part of the process as judges ultimately deciding which solos and ensembles should advance.

Soto attributes the success all to the students’ dedication.

“The kids have to want it,” Soto said. “There’s no practicing the day before and hoping to play well. It takes hours upon hours of practice. A lot of kids quit, but those who don’t learn to succeed in life by pushing through difficult times.

Roof

From Page 1

home owners must realize that after a catastrophic event like a hailstorm, roofing repair work solicitations become quite competitive and what might seem as a great offer at the onset could turn into a constant hassle.

For example, Escalante noted, that when an out-of-town company does work the homeowner should understand that once that job is completed, they are stuck with the end product – good or bad. “It is difficult to get an out-of-town company to come back and address any flaws or pertinent issues once the job is finished,” he said.

Escalante also pointed out that even if the roofer says that he is a local contractor that does not necessarily mean that he will complete the job to

the homeowner’s satisfaction. “Anybody can go out and offer to repair one’s roof because there is no roofing contractor licensing permits required in the state of Texas, unlike Arizona and New Mexico which have such a requirement,” he said.

So what should homeowners do when faced with repairing their roofs and are looking for a contractor to do the work? First, Escalante advised, check with the Better Business Bureau (BBB) to see if the company is listed; and if so, find out what its rating is and how long that company has been in business. Find out if the contractor has a business location or is he working out of his home and can he work with insurance companies. Also important is that the company be bonded and have liability insurance, he added.

Escalante said that a company’s longevity says a lot about its work performance.

“A company that has been in business for three years and has an A+ rating is obviously not the same as a company that has been in business for 30 years and also has an A+ rating,” Escalante asserted.

Escalante’s company is a family business. He proudly explained that his wife, Rosa, is the bookkeeper; daughter, Jessica, is the office manager; and sons, Jonathan is the insurance companies’ liaison and Chris is the jobs’ estimator. “We have an “A+” rating and are

a profitable business because we stand behind our work. We will always go back and fix any issue that our customer brings up,” Escalante said.

Currently, Escalante has two roofing crews out in the field, each with eight workers. He said that a key to his success is that he has been able to keep experienced roofers working for him for a long time. A roofer with experience makes about \$15 an hour, while a rookie- a worker who is just beginning- starts out making about \$8.50 an hour , he stated.

Me” website has tailor-made information for preparing for your future. Our richly diverse country is made up of countless backgrounds, ethnicities, and nationalities, yet we all want the same thing – a secure future. You can see many of the diverse people we serve at www.socialsecurity.gov/people.

Younger people need to know, the earlier

Escalante admits that the recent hailstorms have been a boon for his business. He related that at present he has about 50 roofing jobs lined up throughout the county.

One local home owner that recently had a repair job done on his roof by Escalante said the biggest challenge in the whole process was to get the insurance company to accept my roof damage claim. “After I overcame that hurdle, everything else went relatively smoothly thanks to Escalante’s employees,” he said.

Veterans and wounded warriors, as well as their families, sometimes face unique obstacles when saving for their future. Our website has life-changing information at www.socialsecurity.gov/people/veterans.

Saves

From Page 8

you start saving, the more your money can grow. Our website for young workers at www.socialsecurity.gov/people/youngpeople/saving.html has many resources that can help you secure today and tomorrow.

What words could you use in reference to groups of regular, common sailors? The ahoy polloi.

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CryptoQuip Answer

What words could you use in reference to groups of regular, common sailors? The ahoy polloi.

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Strange But True

By Samantha Weaver

- It was beloved 20th-century American humorist and author Will Rogers who made the following sage observation: “A king can stand people fighting, but he can’t last long if people start thinking.”
- The next time you’re dining at a seafood restaurant, consider this tidbit: Those who study such things say that 80 percent of a crab or lobster’s dry weight is wax.
- Researchers at Cornell University have determined that if chickens are kept in a coop that is artificially lighted to simulate a 28-hour day, the eggs laid by those chickens will be larger and have stronger shells.
- If you try to come up with an image of the pioneers’ westward trek in search of land, gold and new futures, what comes to mind is likely to be covered wagons (also known at the time as Prairie Schooners) crossing vast grasslands. A group of wagons circling up at dusk has become emblematic of that long journey. Most people assume that the wagons were placed in a circle for protection, to keep potential intruders out, but that’s not entirely true. While that may have been an advantage to the arrangement, the primary motivation was to keep livestock from wandering off.
- The English word “infant” comes from a Latin term whose literal meaning is “one unable to speak.”
- You might be surprised to learn that fruit flies can become intoxicated, too – and they don’t even have to take a drink. Just the smell of alcohol affects them.

Thought for the Day: “The people can always be brought to the bidding of the leaders. That is easy. All you have to do is tell them they are being attacked and denounce the pacifists for lack of patriotism and exposing the country to danger. It works the same way in any country.”
– Hermann Goring

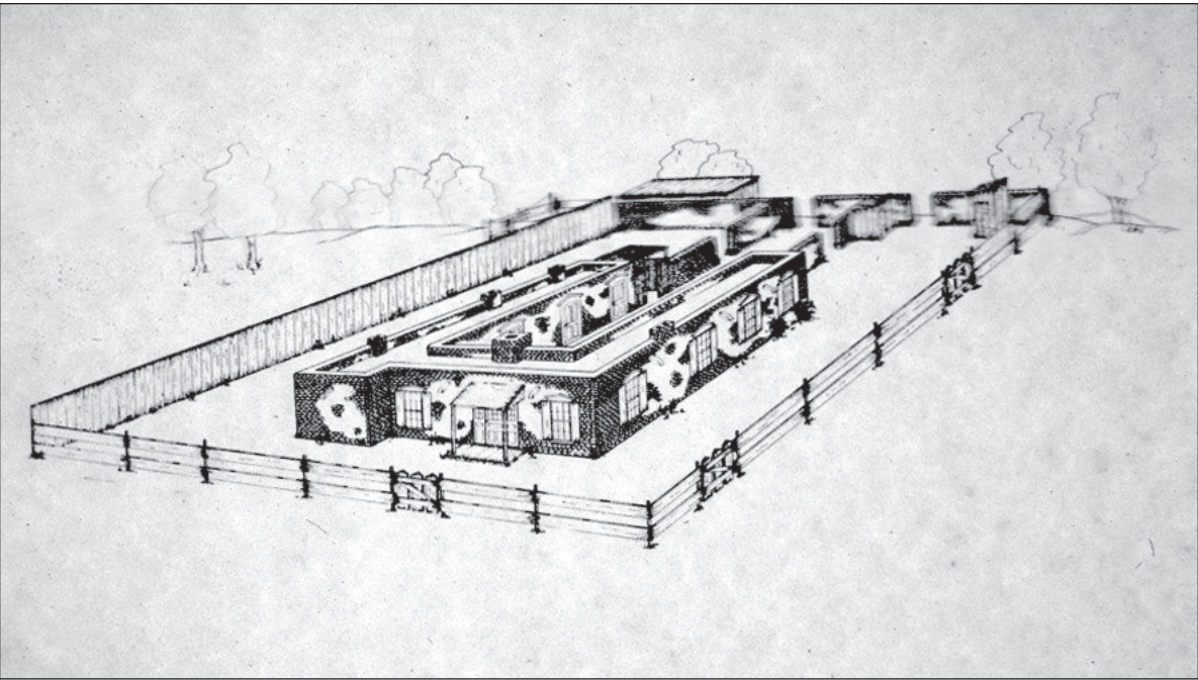
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Moments in Time

The History Channel

- On Feb. 28, 1982, the J. Paul Getty Museum becomes the world’s most richly endowed museum when it receives a \$1.2 billion bequest from the American oil billionaire. Getty died in 1976, but legal wrangling over his fortune by his children and ex-wives kept his will in probate until 1982.
- On March 1, 1692, in Salem Village in the Massachusetts Bay Colony, authorities begin seeking out witches after two children began experiencing fits. After a doctor concluded that the children were suffering the effects of witchcraft, others stepped forward and incriminated more than 150 women and men of Satanic practices.
- On March 2, 1966, the Ford Motor Company celebrates the production of its 1 millionth Mustang, a white convertible. More than 400,000 Mustangs were sold in the first year, perhaps boosted by its appearance in the James Bond movie “Goldfinger.”
- On March 3, 1952, the U.S. Supreme Court upholds a New York state law that prohibits communists from teaching in public schools. The statute applied to anyone who called for the overthrow of the government.
- On March 4, 1933, at the height of the Great Depression, Franklin Roosevelt is inaugurated as the 32nd president of the United States. In his inaugural address, Roosevelt outlined his “New Deal,” an expansion of the federal government as an instrument of employment opportunity and welfare.
- On March 5, 1770, a mob of American colonists gathers at the Customs House in Boston and begins taunting British soldiers. The British regulars responded by firing their rifles, killing five colonists. Later, two British soldiers had their thumbs branded with an “M” for murder as punishment.

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– Image courtesy of Human Systems Research

The illustration above is a reconstructed drawing by Linda Hart of the McSween house that was the site of a gun battle during the 1878 Lincoln County War.

Lincoln County War is topic for EPAS meeting

By Alfredo Vasquez
Special to the Courier

EL PASO COUNTY – Dr. David Kirkpatrick will speak on the “Archaeology of the Lincoln County War of the 1870s” at the El Paso Archaeological Society’s (EPAS) next monthly, which is set for 2 p.m., Saturday, February 18, at the El Paso Museum of Archaeology, 4301 Transmountain Road. The presentation is free and open to the public.

Kirkpatrick, an archeologist, will give a slide show and talk on what the Alexander and Susan McSween house excavations in Lincoln, New Mexico reveal about the lifeway’s of the McSweens in frontier New Mexico.

The McSween house was the scene of the most famous gun battle of the Lincoln County War, a violent struggle between two rival factions of businessmen, ranchers, and lawyers for political and economic control of the county.

According to Kirkpatrick, a five-day siege of the McSween house ended during the evening of July 19, 1878, when Alexander

McSween, Billy the Kid, and others fled the burning house. McSween and four others were killed just outside the house, while the other defenders reached the safety of the brush along the Rio Bonito.

Architectural remains and burned artifacts from the McSween house were recovered during archaeological test excavations in the 1980s, stated Kirkpatrick, who is an associate director and principal investigator with Human Systems Research, Inc. (a non-profit corporation).

Kirkpatrick began his career in New Mexico as the program

archaeologist for Philmont Scout Ranch, Cimarron in 1972. He has over 37 years of experience with cultural resource management in New Mexico. He has conducted and supervised projects associated with prehistoric Mogollon, Ancestral Pueblo, and Archaic sites and historic Euro-American and Native American sites.

For more information about EPAS’s upcoming meeting, contact Media & Public Contact: Fernando Arias, EPAS media consultant, at 915-449-9075, or send email to nando79935@yahoo.com.

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 **U.S. General Services Administration**

The Knicks: A New York City sideshow

By Steve Escajeda
Special to the Courier

New York City is often referred to as the city that is so nice, they named it twice. It is the city of the Empire State Building, Broadway, Central Park and the Yankees.

This town is so tough King Kong couldn't even bring it to its knees.

It's hard to think of anything you can't find in New York. It prides itself as the place where you can find anything at any time of the day or night.

And anyone would be hard pressed to prove that statement wrong. But I think I've done it.

New York is the one place where you won't find a successful, well run, stress-free, winning and well-respected professional basketball team.

The New York Knicks may be from the Big Apple, but they've been nothing but a big disappointment for years and years.

Over the last 15 years, the Knicks have put together just two winning seasons.

In the NBA, where almost everybody

qualifies for the playoffs, the Knicks have failed to qualify in 11 of those years.

But there are many teams in the NBA who are perennial losers.

Teams like the Milwaukee Bucks, the Charlotte Hornets, the Orlando Magic, the Philadelphia 76ers, the Denver Nuggets, the Sacramento Kings, the New Orleans Pelicans, the Minnesota Timberwolves and the Phoenix Suns have spent years chasing those little NBA draft ping pong balls.

But where the New York Knicks separate themselves from the rest of the paltry pack is in the woeful category of ineptitude and the lack of self-realization.

The Knicks are the most embarrassingly bad organization since the L.A. Clippers proudly carried that honor for decades.

The Knicks thought they'd pulled off the coup of the century when they hired Phil Jackson as their president of basketball operations.

I mean, yeah, he led the Lakers and Bulls to all those NBA championships as a coach right? What could go wrong?

Of course, somebody forgot to tell the Knicks that Jackson had absolutely no experience as a basketball executive.

Somebody also forgot to tell the Knicks that Phil wasn't bringing Kobe or Shaq or Jordan or Pippen with him.

The New Yorkers also thought they'd conquered their losing ways by acquiring Carmelo Anthony in 2010.

It appears that someone forgot to tell the Knicks that Carmelo doesn't play defense, doesn't pass the ball very much and doesn't make his teammates any better.

So after years of frustration the Knicks are trying to trade Anthony. Only trouble is that when they acquired him, they gave granted him a no-trade clause, which gives him the right to refuse to be traded to any team he doesn't like.

In other words, the Knicks are either stuck with him, or will be forced to make a bad deal to get rid of him.

Making things more interesting for the tabloids is the fact that Anthony and Phi Jackson aren't getting along. They have an ongoing feud that resembles a disgruntled couple on the verge of divorce.

The fact that the superstar and the former supercoach aren't getting along, has everyone believing that the Knicks are working feverishly behind the scenes,

trying to move the soon-to-be 33-year-old Anthony.

But amazingly, just as all the sports news was surrounding the immature spat between Jackson and Anthony, another controversy slapped the Knicks across the face.

Okay, maybe there was no real slap on the face, but it did involve former Knicks tough guy Charles Oakley smacking the arms of a Madison Square Garden security person.

It turns out that Oakley has a running feud Knicks owner James Dolan.

Somebody queue the soap opera music.

So, when Oakley bought a ticket to a Knicks game last week near the owner and allegedly started letting him know his true feelings – security was called over to escort him out the door.

Oakley, in his customary tough guy style, basically told security he was going nowhere.

He was arrested and hauled out of the building, scuffling along the way.

The Knicks have been reduced to a punchline, a cartoon, a metaphor on how not to run a business.

Whoever said if you can make it there, you can make it anywhere – never went to a Knicks game.

A sporting view By Mark Vasto

Brady is the best ever

If you've done a little studying in your life, you know that there are abstract concepts you can ponder (think Descartes) and cold, hard facts (I was told there would be no math, however). The scientific method teaches us that we learn by observing. So, by any measure, if you watched Super Bowl 51, you witnessed something that can only be called irrefutable in the truest, most classic form of the word: Thomas Edward Patrick Brady Jr. is the greatest quarterback to ever play the game of football, in any era, in any stadium, in any game, for any team, ever.

I don't know what it is about the New England Patriots that

inspires every coach not named Tom Coughlin to shave hundreds of IQ points off their cerebrum in the fourth quarter of the Super Bowl. This bewildering tendency to just do the stupidest things imaginable with the Patriots on the ropes is almost as awe-inspiring as Brady's leveling up in response each time. The Seahawks passing instead of running? The Falcons acting like they smoked legal weed at halftime? It almost looks like the equivalent of Ali knocking out Sonny Liston without laying a glove on him.

Either way, Brady is the greatest of all time. This cannot be disputed any longer. Five

Super Bowl rings will tend to work in your legacy's favor. It's a matter of record that I called for a Falcons-Patriots Super Bowl, and I have the texts to prove that I believed the smart money was on the Patriots to win and cover the spread, beating the over.

But like anyone who grew up a Giants fan and can't stand seeing Ben Affleck any more than I absolutely must, I was pulling for the Falcons. It's a great franchise, headed up by a great owner, led by Matt Ryan, the rightful MVP. The people and fans of Atlanta are championship starved, and on any other Sunday, against any other team, they would be coming home with the hardware.

But how could you not root for Brady in the final minutes of the fourth quarter? In overtime? After his 60th passing attempt? And how could you not smirk along with him as Roger Goodell –

possibly the worst commissioner in organized sports history, the guy that stupidly suspended the league's only real marquee star over a few ounces of missing air – had to hand the Lombardi Trophy to him? If your life depended on it, could you imagine starting any other quarterback?

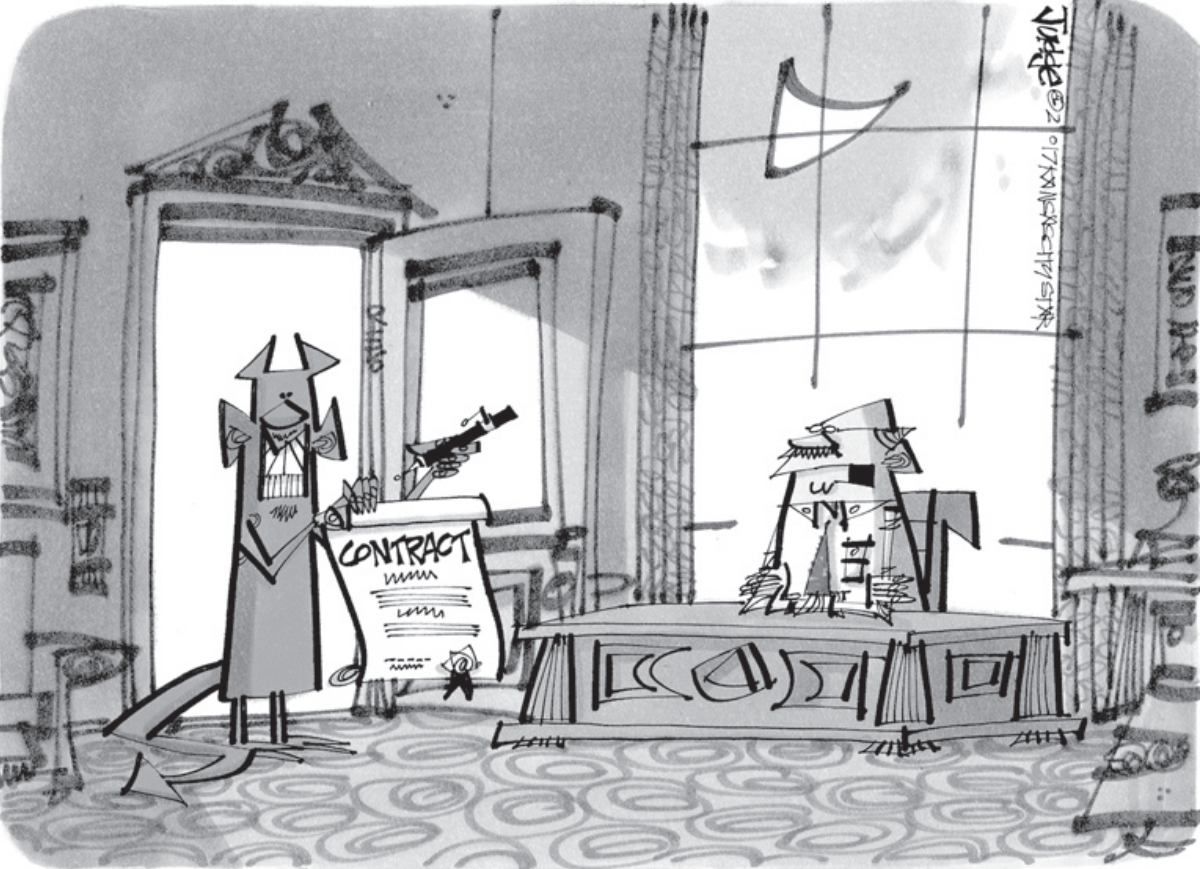
Baby Boomers and subsequent generations have witnessed some of the greatest players and athletes of all-time. We've seen Kareem Abdul-Jabbar, Jordan, Gretzky, Howe, Bonds, Ali, Federer, Nicklaus, Woods, Serena Williams... and now we can say we saw Tom Brady. And nobody summed it up better than the man himself.

"I've been labeled a cheater.

I've been suspended. My mom is dealing with cancer. I've been ripped for my Donald Trump friendship. I'm playing the Super Bowl against the MVP of the league (Matt Ryan). I was a sixth-round pick, No. 199. Nothing is easy. Nothing is handed to me. I'm going to do what I set out to do in this league from the start. And that is become the greatest quarterback that ever played."

Greatest quarterback to ever play the game? Absolutely. Roger that. You bet your life.

Mark Vasto is a veteran sportswriter who lives in New Jersey. (c) 2017 King Features Synd., Inc.



"I'll settle for the same deal Tom Brady got."



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TRUE TEXAS FACTS *by Roger Moore* Feb. 13, 1991: Texas Legislature establishes a procedure to allow the Native American church to use peyote in their ceremonies.



GO FIGURE! by Linda Thistle

The idea of Go Figure is to arrive at the figures given at the bottom and right-hand columns of the diagram by following the arithmetic signs in the order they are given (that is, from left to right and top to bottom). Use only the numbers below the diagram to complete its blank squares and use each of the nine numbers only once.

	+		÷		3
×		÷		÷	
	-		×		5
÷		+		+	
	÷		+		11
3		5		8	

DIFFICULTY: ★
★ Moderate ★★ Difficult
★★★ GO FIGURE!

2 3 4 5 5 6 7 8 9

Answer Page 4

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Weekly SUDOKU

by Linda Thistle

	2	8	6					1
		5			8		3	
7				9		2		
2			7	1		8		
	1		2					3
		7			6		9	
		6			2	4		9
5			9					7
	7			4			1	

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

Answer Page 4 ◆◆◆ HOO BOY!

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Social Security Q&A By Ray Vigil

America Saves Week

Saving for the future is a vital part of ensuring a secure retirement. American Savings Education Council and America Saves coordinate the annual America Saves Week. Started in 2007, the week is an annual opportunity for organizations to promote good savings behavior and a chance for individuals to assess their own saving status.

For years, Social Security has collaborated with America Saves Week to promote our shared mission of helping millions of people save for their future. This year, America Saves Week begins on February 27, but people like you are striving to save every day.

The 2016 annual America Saves Week survey assessing national household savings revealed:

- Just two out of every five U.S. households report good or excellent progress in meeting their savings needs.
- About half (52 percent) are saving enough for a retirement with a desirable standard of living.
- Only 43 percent have automatic savings outside of

work.

- More men (74 percent) report progress with saving than do women (67 percent).
- Those with a savings plan with specific goals (55 percent of the public) are making much more savings progress than those without a plan (23 percent).

Knowing this, it's never too early to start planning for your future. Set a goal, make a plan, and save automatically. Savers with a plan are twice as likely to save successfully. Pledge to save for America Saves Week at www.americasaves.org. Share what you're saving for using the hashtag #ImSavingFor.

You may also want to visit www.myRA.gov if you do not have retirement savings as part of your job. myRA is a retirement savings account from the Department of the Treasury designed to help you put aside money for your retirement. You can invest in the fund according to your budget, putting you in control of your financial prospects.

Social Security's "People Like

See SAVES, Page 4

CryptoQuip

This is a simple substitution cipher in which each letter used stands for another. If you think that X equals O, it will equal O throughout the puzzle. Solution is accomplished by trial and error.

Clue: U equals S

AKOF AJVIU SJNTI XJN NUC ZH

VCECVCHSC FJ BVJNMU JE

VCBNTOV, SJRRJH UOZTJVU?

FKC OKJX MJTTJZ.

Answer Page 4

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FEAR KNOT

By: rj johnson

DOUBT? ...OR DARE!

EWY
CEPSHY
WYNAT
TMHY
LOYWEL
PYS
♥EALM
♥SMAPL
YWH
♥NEALIS
♥PLYTA
♥ASWP

Answer Page 4

Unscramble these twelve letter strings to form each into an ordinary word (ex. HAGNEC becomes CHANGE). Prepare to use only ONE word from any marked (♥) letter string as each unscrambles into more than one word (ex. ♥RATHE becomes HATER or EARTH or HEART). Fit each string's word either across or down to knot all twelve strings together.

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Here's a Tip

By JoAnn Derson

- Seat warmers are for more than cold bottoms: The next time you pick up a pizza, turn on your seat warmer to keep your pie from getting cold on the ride home!
- "My kids love snack crackers, but they can be easy to overdo. When I buy a box, I go ahead and portion them out into snack-size zip-lock baggies. Then the kids can grab a bag and won't just keep eating out of habit (and spoil their supper)." – O.V. in New Mexico
- A beaded necklace can make a fun imprint on the edges of your pie crust. Then, to help your pie crusts hold their shape in the oven, try freezing them for 30 minutes before filling.
- For great-looking candles, use a plain nylon stocking to buff out smudges, nicks and fingerprints. This works especially well on white or cream-colored candles, which can pick up all sorts of ugly-looking soot stains.
- "Use a tab pulled off a soda can to double hang items in your closet. Simply thread the soda tab onto the hanger hook, and put the hook of a second hanger through the bottom hole. This is a great idea for hanging outfits together." – W.P. in Washington
- "With two teenagers and all their friends, as soon as the snacks come home, they seem to disappear. Well, here's the trick to hiding food in plain sight: I stash candy bars in a whole-wheat noodle package. There are ice-cream sandwiches in a bag that used to hold frozen spinach. Also, chips stay nicely in an old-fashioned oatmeal container on a high shelf." – A.R. in Missouri

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Health

From Page 7

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Dr. Roach regrets that he is unable to answer individual letters, but will incorporate them in the column whenever possible. Readers may email questions to ToYourGoodHealth@med.cornell.edu. To view and order health pamphlets, visit www.rbmamall.com, or write to Good Health, 628 Virginia Drive, Orlando, FL 32803. (c) 2017 North America Synd., Inc. All Rights Reserved.