



WEDNESDAY
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THE FINE PRINT

Please see page 12 for all SCHOOL EVENTS

Special Notices:

City Offices

The City of Trinidad Offices & the Landfill will be closed on Monday, May 17, for a mandatory furlough day. Normal business hours will resume on Tuesday, May 18, 2010. Furlough days will occur on the 3rd Monday of each month throughout the remainder of the year.

Rotary Club

Calling all golfers! The Rotary Golf Tournament starts 12 p.m. Friday @ Trinidad Municipal Golf Course. Entry forms can be picked up at the golf course or from any Rotarian. Call Fred Vaugeois @ 845-8489 or Jesse Manzanares @ 846-4447 for more information or if you'd like to play on a team or be a sponsor. This event funds the Rotary's Scholastic Dictionaries Program, which will distribute dictionaries as gifts to all county third graders & has for the last 7 years.

WEDNESDAY

TSNH

Celebrating National Nursing Home Week May 9-16. Today is "Western Wednesday" in honor of Housekeeping & Maintenance with Sloppy Joes & Chili Dogs for residents & their guests & evening entertainment with Western, Country Band & Line Dancers. Call 846-9291 for more information or to see how you can participate.

Angel Food

May orders need to be placed by today @ Fishers Peak Community Church or Town & Country Realty or online @ <www.angelfoodministries.com>. Call 846-3853 or 846-6018.

Arthritis Exercise

Free Arthritis Exercise Class every Mon & Wed @ 9 a.m. @ Corazon Square & 1 p.m. @ Early Learning Center. Info call: 845-1133 ext. 224.

PAL

Playgroup meets 9:30 - 11 a.m. every Weds at Alta Vista, 415 S. Indiana. Moms & caregivers with infants, ages birth to 3. Playroom is also available for same time use Tues & Thurs. Information: Martina at 846-4400.

Continued on page 8

WEATHER WATCH

Today: A 20 percent chance of showers and thunderstorms after noon. Mostly cloudy, with a high near 61. West wind 5 to 15 mph becoming northeast.

Tonight: A 20 percent chance of showers. Mostly cloudy, with a low around 32. West northwest wind between 5 and 10 mph becoming calm.

Thursday: A 10 percent chance of showers. Mostly cloudy, with a high near 58. East wind between 5 and 10 mph.

Thursday Night: A 10 percent chance of showers before midnight. Mostly cloudy, with a low around 37. South southeast wind around 5 mph.

RIVER CALL

Purgatoire river call as of 5/11/10 South side priority #74 2/17/1876 Trinidad Lake accounting: Release 286.57 acre ft. Inflow 202.96 acre ft. Evaporation 19.39 acre ft. Content 30969 af Elevation 6194.51 Precipitation 0 Downstream river call Lamar 11/4/1886 (Provided by Division of Water Resources)



Trinidad State Nursing Home celebrates Mother's Day



Photo by Mike Garrett

Trinidad State Nursing Home kicked off its celebration of National Nursing Home Week this week and Mother's Day Saturday with lots of food, flowers and corsages for its employees and residents in the chapel room.



Photo by Tim Keller

Willard Loudon shows petroglyphs to tour participants along the Dry Cimarron River.

Folsom Museum's annual spring historical tours are here

By TIM KELLER
The Chronicle-News

FOLSOM - As it has for many years, the Folsom Museum in greater downtown Folsom is sponsoring a pair of historical tours this month.

First up, this Saturday, May 15, at 8:00 a.m., participants will meet at the museum for the annual all-day Dry Cimarron Tour. The tour begins with the museum itself before going all the way to Kenton, Oklahoma, via roads of gravel and caliche. Car pools will form at the museum. The tour ends at Kenton around 5:00 p.m.; it's a 2-hour drive back to Folsom.

The tour stops first at Folsom Falls Ranch for a visit with Fred Balmer astride his longhorn steer, Bob. Other early stops include the site of one-time

settlement Madison, and an Indian burial site discovered decades ago in Toll Gate Canyon by artist and archaeologist Willard Loudon of Branson. Health permitting, Loudon plans to be along as tour guide, with Abbie Reaves and Vinita Brown.

Turning back down the Dry Cimarron valley, the tour visits Darien Brown's historic ranch before stopping for lunch at Boyd Burchard's ranch. Fred and Marijo Balmer will provide a barbecue lunch for all, with donations accepted to support the Folsom Museum.

Other highlights on the way east to Kenton include petroglyphs along the road and a geological demonstration at Trevesier Canyon. Once reaching

Continued on page 2

Mantz is serious about sound fiscal decisions

Editor's note: This is the third of three stories offering perspectives on the state of the City and City Commission from Raton City Commissioners. Three of the Commission's five members are facing recall efforts by certain citizens. Today's installment features Commissioner Sandy Mantz will follow.

By RICHARD SITTS
The Chronicle-News

RATON - Concerning the Raton City Commission, Sandy Mantz is the new kid on the block. Although she and her husband Robert have lived in Raton for the past 30 years, this is her first foray into local politics.

She, along with fellow Commissioner Tresa Jo Kagan, are the only commissioners that do not have recall efforts aimed against them. Mantz represents District 1 and her term is up in 2014. Shortly before she was elected back in March she held a Saturday morning public meeting at a downtown bakery to meet constituents and about 50 people showed up. She says she plans to continue to do this quarterly to meet and hear from townfolk.

"I think it's extremely important to keep a line of communication open with the people," Mantz says. "If you can't keep that line of communication open, I think you're in a bad place."

During that coffee meeting, Mantz took notes and says she



Photo by Richard Sitts

Raton City Commissioner Sandy Mantz spends a lot of time in her husband's accounting office in the heart of downtown Raton.

already has gotten some things resolved. Having huge potholes repaired in the alley behind the courthouse is a start, she says.

One reason she ran for commissioner is that last year the City put out a Request for Proposal (RFP) for a sole-source vendor to handle the lodgers' tax money. The contract contained errors and using this person as contract labor violated IRS laws, Mantz says. "I felt they should have put it out for proposal, but they were in a time crunch and didn't." However, the Commission did

address these errors and they were corrected when the contract was written, she adds.

"I do a lot of research. I read all the state statutes and talk to a lot of people. If I have an issue I take it to the city attorney. I would like to see all our contracts with local vendors, or at least have the opportunity to bid on the job. We can't give them preference - it's against the law in New Mexico. That was one of the huge complaints that I heard from the citizens while I was running for

Continued on page 8



Karen Ann Pietrolungo

Pietrolungo cuts deal in Popoff murder case

By C-N STAFF REPORT

"Justice was not served! We do not agree with the District Attorney's decision to bargain with Karen (Pietrolungo)." With tears and in anger, this is what members of the family of Jeremy "Alex" Popoff, 33, Trinidad, told *The Chronicle-News* on Monday after Las Animas County District Attorney Frank Ruybalid worked out a deal with Pietrolungo's attorney Glenn Davis.

"We, as loved ones, think this was unfair and the district attorney did not represent Alex completely in this case," Alex's wife Darcy Ramos said.

Pietrolungo, 35, Trinidad, was accused of hiring John Rason and Mark Whatley to kill Popoff on May 15, 2008 for a payment of \$6500, to be split between Whatley and Rason.

Whatley admitted that both he and Rason stabbed Popoff.

Rason was present in the court-

Continued on page 2

Budget woes forces lawmakers to look at closing a prison

By DAVID J. SANTISTEVAN JR.
The Chronicle-News

State legislators are battling over a late bill in the Colorado House of Representatives relating to the closure of at least one Colorado state prison.

The action came late last week on House Bill 10-1421, which, in its original form, because of budget cuts state wide would have closed at least one state-owned prison that houses over 500 inmates.

There are 11 state-owned prisons that meet this criteria, and eight of those prisons are located in southern Colorado, including the Trinidad Correctional Facility east of Trinidad.

A "flexibility clause" was amended on HB10-1421. This amendment passed 4 to 1 through a Committee for Veteran and Military Affairs, and HB10-1421 will now return to the House with this "flexibility" change.

This amendment might save the state lawmakers from closing a prison. The bill in its original form would have excluded smaller state prisons from closing. The amended bill will now open the door to closing these smaller prisons.

According to sources at the capitol, no jobs would be lost if a prison were to close. Rather, employees would have the opportunity to transfer to other facilities.

On Tuesday, the legislature took a step forward by voting to approve cuts to the state's correction system. The amendment passed to reduce overall bed capacity by 300. Lawmakers believe the reduction can be accomplished by closing a prison or by reducing private prison beds or other means identified by the department.

One group opposed to the bill said, however, "Colorado legislators today took a wrong turn. Making cuts to our prison system when it's already stretched to the limit further compromises the

Continued on page 8

Folsom Museum's annual spring historical tours are here

Continued from page 1

Kenton, the Kenton Museum will be open for the tour. Tom Cummings will give a talk about nearby Robbers' Roost, and organizers hope to be able to take the tour across private land to visit the one-time criminals' refuge.

The following Saturday, May 22, the Folsom Museum presents its annual tours of the Folsom Archaeological Site, where the "Folsom Man" was found, proving human habitation in North America 10,000 years ago. Because the tour crosses private land, the site is available to the public only once a year, through this tour.

Car pools will again be formed at the museum for the drive over rough roads. Tours depart at 8:00 a.m. and 1:00 p.m., with both tour groups intersecting at the museum at noon for a lunch of barbeque, again provided by the Balmers with donations accepted for the museum.

The Folsom Archaeological Site tour



Photo by Tim Keller

One of the Dry Cimarron Tour's first stops is the popular visit with Fred Balmer and his longhorn steer Bob on the Folsom Falls Ranch.

will feature demonstration lectures from David Eck of the New Mexico State Lands office and, hopefully, Adrienne Anderson, who wrote her dissertation on the site.

For more information on either tour, or to register for the free tours, contact the Folsom Museum at museum@folsomvillage.com or call 575-278-2122. Leave a call back phone number.

Folsom Museum is currently open weekends from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. From Memorial Day weekend through Labor Day weekend, it will be open daily, seven days a week.

TSJC nurses to graduate

Special to The Chronicle-News

A pinning ceremony for the Trinidad State Junior College Trinidad Campus 2010 Associate Degree Nursing (A.D.N.) students will be held Thursday, May 13, 2010 at 6:30 p.m. in the Pioneer Room Sullivan Student Center.

This year's graduates are: Thea A. Larkin, Trinidad; Serenity D. Ozzello, Trinidad; Rachelle Rodriguez, Trinidad; Audrey A. Trujillo, Trinidad; Jennifer M. Valentine, Raton, NM; Shawnette M. West, Rye, CO; Shelby Wold, Trinidad; and Sherry L. Wood, Trinidad.

The pinning ceremony will be conducted by TSJC Nursing Program Director Louise Sowards and nursing instructor

Sarah Wilkinson.

Family members will 'pin' the students, who have completed three rigorous years of education to reach this milestone that includes the first year completing pre-requisites, the second year earning an LPN, and the third year completing requirements for the ADN. Clinical hours were completed at the Colorado State Hospital in Pueblo (CMHIP) and Mt. San Rafael Hospital in Trinidad.

All but one of this year's graduates has children, three are single moms, two moved from out-of-state (California and Pennsylvania) to enroll in TSJC's nursing program.

These nursing students will graduate with Associate of Science Degree in Nursing during TSJC's Trinidad Campus commencement ceremonies Friday, May 14th. Following graduation, they must sit for State Boards to receive their



Photo courtesy of TSJC

TSJC Associate Degree Nursing students, class of 2010, are pictured as follows: (Back row from l-r) Audrey Trujillo, Serenity Ozzello, Sherry Wood, Jennifer Valentine and Thea Larkin. (Front row from l-r) Shawnette West, Rachelle Rodriguez and Shelby Wold.

RNs.

The TSJC nursing program has been in existence for more than 50 years. Over the past several years the college has continued to provide the best education and training, acquiring cutting-edge technology and expanding capacity through the use of simulators with the help of local donors and grants. TSJC recently received a \$2.4

million competitive grant provided by the American Recovery & Reinvestment Act of 2009 to expand the nursing programs at both TSJC campuses.

It is estimated that nationwide, sixty percent of registered nurses are educated in community colleges (American Association of Community Colleges).

Pietrolungo cuts deal in Popoff murder case

Continued from page 1

room on Monday during Pietrolungo's sentencing.

Rason's charges were dropped in the fall of 2008 because then-Las Animas County District Attorney Lee Hawke dropped all charges on Rason (in this case due to the lack of DNA evidence against Rason). Also, Hawke agreed to gather information from Rason about Popoff's death, so long as it would not be used to "prostitute Rason for the murder."

Pietrolungo was originally charged with solicitation to commit first-degree murder in the brutal stabbing death of Popoff, who was stabbed over 80 times in his home.

Charges of solicitation to commit first-degree murder were dismissed as part of the plea agreement and Pietrolungo pled down to tampering with physical evidence, a Class Six Felony that carries a minimum of 18 months in the Department of Corrections and mandatory parole. She also entered a guilty plea to second degree burglary in a theft case at the Prospect Plaza, and that charge carries a minimum of six years in the Department of Corrections and a mandatory one year parole. She will serve both sentences concurrently and the sentencing hearing is scheduled for June 25.

Ruybalid told Judge Claude Appel that he made the very tough choice to make a deal because of the mental state of and credibility of Whatley who had pled guilty to second-degree murder in Popoff's stabbing death and in 2009 was sentenced to 32 years at the San Carlos Correctional Facility in Pueblo as part of Whatley's deal he was to testify against Pietrolungo for the D.A.'s office.

Whatley has a long history of mental health issues, according to Ruybalid. "The defense believed that because of letters obtained by this office that Mark Whatley's credibility is substantially impaired." Whatley wants to be put to death and fears for his life and is fearful of both Rason and Pietrolungo.

The family believes that the investigation took a wrong turn when Trinidad Police Detective Phil Martin offered Rason's name to key witnesses in the case, after Hawke offered Rason immunity. According to the family this then made some of the witnesses testimony irrelevant.

In a letter given to the media the by Popoff's family states, "We are speaking on behalf of those of us here and those of us who could not be here. We would like at this time to have it known that we were not allowed an opinion or given any choice in these matters and feel that we were 100 percent railroaded by them. We would also like to state for the record that we do not feel from the very beginning Alex, his life and the manner in which it was lost has received fair and competent representation. As we Alex's loved ones have not received fair representation in this case. Mr. Ruybalid was so kind to point out that we are not victims simply complaining witnesses. There is not a single member of our family that believes any sort of true justice was served."

Alex's mom, Elisabeth Popoff, did say "Mr. Ruybalid inherited this case from the previous district attorney. I believed that Lee Hawke started the ball rolling in the wrong direction from the very beginning.

Popoff leaves behind two children.



Holy Trinity Academy 2010 Graduation

Valedictorian

Catherine Anne Jimenez

Catherine is the 17-year-old daughter of Dr. Joseph and Andrea Jimenez. She has played volleyball and basketball for four years, soccer for three and ran track for one year. She has received numerous academic and athletic awards including All-State for basketball. Catherine has been a member of National Honor Society, Student Council and the HTA yearbook staff.

In her spare time, she enjoys spending time with family and friends, building robots, dance and making Mrs. Massarotti growl at her. Her future plans include attending the Colorado School of Mines in the fall where she will major in physics and play basketball.



Ceremony: Sunday, May 16 at 2 p.m. in the Sebastiani Gymnasium

Class Motto: "Twenty years from now, you will be more disappointed by the things that you didn't do than by the ones you did do. So throw off the bow lines. Sail away from the safe harbor. Catch the trades winds in your sails. Explore. Dream. Discover." - Mark Twain

Class Flower: White Rose with Red Tips

Class Song: "I will follow you into the dark" by Death Cab for Cutie

Class Colors: Neon Yellow and Baby Blue



Shelby Marie Gonzales-Choate



T.J. Kosovich



Brandy Lynn-Janelle Williams

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