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TUESDAY  
FEBRUARY 17, 2015

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# THE CHRONICLE-NEWS

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## THE FINE PRINT

**FEBRUARY 17**  
Las Animas County  
**TUESDAY (9 a.m.)** Board of Commissioners meeting is in the Las Animas Courthouse, 200 E. First St., Room 201. Information: 719-845-2568.

**Beautiful Quilt Raffle**  
**TUESDAY (2 p.m.) DON'T MISS THIS!** The Sayre Senior Center at 1222 San Pedro will raffle off the new Senior Quilt Club creation. Tickets can be purchased at the center. Info: Anna Riskey, 719-846-3336. Proceeds help support the Center's senior projects. See Page 2 for quilt picture.

**Writers' Group**  
**TUESDAY (2 p.m.)** The Trinidad Writers' Group will meet at 109 E. Fifth St. Info: Dana Miller, 719-422-8352 or [danamiller65@gmail.com](mailto:danamiller65@gmail.com).

**Annual Pancake Supper**  
**TUESDAY (4-6 p.m.)** Holy Trinity Academy's Maundy Tuesday Pancake Supper will be held at Holy Family Hall (The Soup Kitchen) on Church St. Info: 719-846-4522. Proceeds benefit the school.

**Primer Schools**  
**TUESDAY (5 p.m.)** District Board of Education will meet in executive session with regular session to follow at 6 p.m. in the Primero School Cafeteria, 20200 Highway 12. Information: Tina East, 719-868-2715.

**THS SPORTS**  
**TUESDAY (6 p.m.)** The Spring Sports Parent/Athlete meeting will be held in the THS Cafeteria. All required paperwork will be handed out at this time. Info: [randy.begano@trinidad.k12.co.us](mailto:randy.begano@trinidad.k12.co.us)

**Trinidad City Council**  
**TUESDAY (6 p.m.)** A special session followed by the regular session will be held in Council Chambers, City Hall, 135 N. Animas St. Information: Audra Garrett, 719-846-9843.

## Today's Quote

"A simple life is good with me. I don't need a whole lot. For me, a T-shirt, a pair of shorts, barefoot on a beach and I'm happy."

-Yanni

**FEBRUARY 18**  
Trinidad Community Coop  
**FRIDAY (10:30 a.m. & 6:30 p.m.)** Vegan Cooking Class on Friday mornings and Kirtan chanting (Sanskrit chanting call) on Friday evenings at the Coop, Corner of Elm and Maple Streets. Info: [communitycooptrinidad@gmail.com](mailto:communitycooptrinidad@gmail.com).

**E-911 Authority**  
**WEDNESDAY (3 p.m.)** The Board will meet in the County Courthouse, 201 E. First Street, in the Commissioners' Chambers. Information: Rita Mantelli, 719-846-4441.

**COOKIES FOR READERS!**  
**WEDNESDAY (4:30-6 p.m.)** The adult community is invited to bring 2-dozen favorite cookies and recipe for a pleasant afternoon Cookie Swap and fun social time at the Carnegie Library, 202 N. Animas St. Info: 719-846-6841.

**Purgatoire Watershed**  
**WEDNESDAY (5 p.m.)** The Partnership annual meeting will meet in the NRCS Office, 3590 E. Main. Information: Karen Wolf, 303-543-8688.

**FP Fire District**  
**WEDNESDAY (6 p.m.)** Fishers Peak Fire Protection District Board of Directors public meeting will be at the Starkville Fire Station. Information: 719-846-6077.

**Hoehe Fire Protection**  
**WEDNESDAY (6 p.m.)** District Board of Directors meets at the Trinidad Ambulance District, 939 Robinson Ave. Information: Dana Phillips, 719-846-2080.

**NASA & Nighttime Sky**  
**WEDNESDAY (7 p.m.)** Informational presentation "New Horizons Mission to Pluto" and Star Party by University of Colorado-Boulder Professor and Mission Co-Investigator Fran Bagenal will be held at the Massari Theater on the campus of TSJC. Tickets available at the door. Info: Elise Russell, 719-846-5725.

**PUBLIC SERVICE**  
**GET 'EM WHILE THEY LAST!**  
The Chronicle-News 2014 Collector Mugs with beautiful artwork by Trinidad Artist Paula Little are here and waiting for you to come pick them up, 200 West Church St. Info: 719-846-3311.

Continued on Page 4 ...

## RIVER CALL

Purgatoire River Call as of: 02/13/15. Chilli ditch: Priority # 7 --- Appropriation date: 04/30/1862.

**Trinidad Reservoir Accounting:**  
Release 0.77 AF  
Inflow 43.16 AF -- 21.76 CFS  
Evaporation 0.39 AF  
Content 16,724 AF  
Elevation 6,178.79  
Precipitation 0

Downstream River Call / John Martin Reservoir: (Conservation Storage) 05/31/1949.



## TSJC IMPROVING EDUCATION BEST Program works to teach marketable skills

By Steve Block  
The Chronicle-News

Students need to graduate from high school with as many marketable skills as possible, to prepare them as they enter the workforce or pursue a higher education. The Boosting Engineering, Science and Technology (BEST) program teaches middle school and high school students how to build robots and how to analyze and solve problems, and Trinidad State Junior College is one of three BEST hubs in Colorado.

Trinidad State's Debbie Ullbarri and Jenn Swanson are the co-hub directors for the BEST robotics program, with a third co-hub director working out of

Trinidad State's Alamosa campus. The hub directors will be contacting schools across the region to inform them about the BEST program and invite them to develop their own robotics teams and prepare them for a robotics competition. The program is free for both the students and the schools. All the supplies needed for students to build their robots are supplied through the BEST program. A website, [www.SoCoBEST@trinidadstate.edu](http://www.SoCoBEST@trinidadstate.edu), is currently under development and will have plenty of information about the BEST robotics program.

The timeframe for the BEST program begins in September with the start of the next school year, when a kickoff meeting for the



Steve Block / The Chronicle-News

Jenn Swanson is a co-hub director for Trinidad State's BEST program. See Page 6 advertisement that Jenn is holding for the "New Horizons Mission to Pluto" program slated at the Massari on Wednesday.

program will be held. Five weeks after the kickoff day will come a practice day with the robotics competition held one week later at Trinidad State's Scott Gym.

The BEST program is designed to help students learn the skills that industry needs in its future workforce, and what communities

need in their future leaders. The program supplies plywood, PVC pipe of various sizes, threaded rod, boxes of screws, washers and nuts, plenty of other hardware, Velcro, piano wire, aluminum rods, a bicycle inner tube, various odds and

Continued on Page 2 ...

## RATON'S RADIO SHACK



Photos by Tim Keller / The Chronicle-News

Alan and Dorothy Best married in Tucumcari as teenage sweethearts 43 years ago. They took over management of Raton's Radio Shack store in 1979; two years later they bought what is today one of downtown Raton's most iconic businesses. With three full-time employees, the store will continue relatively unaffected by the problems of the national Radio Shack corporation.

## Relax: We're not going anywhere

By Tim Keller  
Correspondent  
The Chronicle-News

RATON – When Radio Shack this month announced bankruptcy proceedings that will close many stores, the phone at Raton's downtown Radio Shack store started ringing; it hasn't stopped. "We've had hundreds of inquiries," says Alan Best. "Mostly it's been our own customers worried that they might lose us."

The customers can relax. Alan and Dorothy Best purchased the Raton electronics store in 1981 after managing it for two years as youngsters still in their 20s.

Continued on Page 3 ...

## COUNTY SEES LITTLE CHANGE

### Update — Drought continues to hold steady in S.E. Colorado area

The National Weather Service  
Special to The Chronicle-News

Last December was another month of temperature extremes across southeast Colorado with the first 25 days indicating temperatures well above the seasonal mean. A strong arctic air mass invaded eastern Colorado bringing well below seasonal temperatures for the rest of the month. Near to slightly below normal precipitations readings were experienced across most of south central and southeast Colorado, save for areas along the Continental Divide and portions of the southeast Plains, which saw above normal precipitation for the month as a whole.

The current drought monitor shows little change in current conditions with severe drought (D2) conditions remaining in place across the eastern two-thirds of Crowley County, Eastern Otero, the eastern two-thirds of Las Animas and all of Kiowa, Bent, Prowers and Baca Counties.

CPS and VIC Soil Moisture calculations continue to indicate near normal conditions across most of southeast Colorado, with slightly drier conditions being indicated across portions of the San Luis Valley and the far southeast Plains.

The first water supply outlook report of the year indicated that January 1 statewide snow pack was at 99 percent of average overall. Snow pack distribution, however, was not uniform across the state with southern basins indicating lower than average snow pack on January 1 where as the northern basins snowpack was at or above normal. Snowpack in the Arkansas Basin was one of the highest in the state, running at 114 percent of average overall, compared to 100 percent of normal snowpack at this same time last year. Snow pack in the upper portions of the basin was at 146 percent of normal on January 1, with

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Cynthia Berresse Ploski / The Chronicle-News

Dixie Swim Club members, (L-R) Sheree (Judy Lee), Dinah (Leeann Fabec), Jeri Neal (Naomi Segers), Lexie (Cora Warrick) and Vernadette (Pamela Nelson) appear happy that Jeri Neal is pregnant and no longer a nun.

## ANOTHER SCRT SMASH HIT!

### Dixie Swim girls delight audience

By Cynthia Berresse Ploski  
Art Correspondent  
The Chronicle-News

If you were a fan of the Golden Girls in times gone by, you will probably love The Dixie Swim Club, which opened at SCRT on

Friday evening. If you haven't seen it yet, take heart—it will run for one more weekend at the Famous Performing Arts Center at 131 West Main Street in Trinidad. Don't miss it. It's one terrific

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## WEATHER WATCH

**Tuesday:** A 20 percent chance of snow showers before 11 a.m. Mostly sunny, with a high near 35. North wind 5 to 10 mph be-

coming light and variable in the afternoon. **Night:** Mostly clear, with a low around 15. West southwest wind 5 to 10 mph. **Wednesday:** Sunny, with a high near 46. **Wednesday:** Sunny, with a high near 46. West southwest wind 5 to 10 mph becoming light and variable in the morning. **Night:** Mostly clear, with a low around 24. West southwest wind around 10 mph. **Thursday:** Sunny, with a high near 57. West southwest wind 5 to 10 mph. **Night:**

Mostly clear, with a low around 28. West southwest wind around 5 mph. **Friday:** A 10 percent chance of rain. Mostly sunny, with a high near 56. South southwest wind around 5 mph. **Night:** A slight chance of rain and snow. Mostly cloudy, with a low around 26. Southwest wind 5 to 10 mph becoming north northwest after midnight. Chance of precipitation is 20 percent.

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# COMMUNITY

## Relax: We're not going anywhere

... Continued from Page 1

They've weathered the immense transformations of the electronics industry—all the way from CB radios to smart phones—as an independent dealer, only 25 percent of whose products come from Radio Shack. A vibrant anchor business of Raton's downtown historic district, with three full-time employees, they'll survive the national brand's current troubles relatively unscathed.

"The franchise division has always been a separate part of Radio Shack," Alan Best says. "They can't close us because we own our own store. They're just selling us a product, basically, and letting us use their name. We carry all the expenses ourselves—rent, overhead, salaries, everything. After their bankruptcy settles, I expect an even stronger franchise division, because we're the profitable part of their business."

A bankruptcy judge will soon decide whether the Radio Shack brand will survive; if it doesn't, the Raton store will take the corporation name the Bests chose back when they started and the business was dominated by walkie-talkies and CB radios: Two-Way Electronics.

"For the last twenty years," Best says, "our business has been dominated by cell phones and Plateau Wireless cell service. We carry all the major brands—Samsung, Apple, HTC, LG—and the Radio Shack brand is only a small part of our business."

In fact, changes in the national cellular industry provide a bigger threat to the Bests' business than Radio Shack's troubles. AT&T is buying up small cellular providers



Photos by Tim Keller / The Chronicle-News

Over more than three decades, Alan Best has built Raton's Radio Shack store into a vibrant anchor business in the historic downtown.

around the country, then selecting their own vendors. Their purchase of Plateau Wireless is awaiting FCC approval. If AT&T completes the purchase and sticks with the

Bests' store as their agent, as seems likely, the store will continue to flourish.

It's thrived in the Internet age by providing great customer service with consistent friendly staff. "We have the products right here, in stock. You can see it, hold it, and take it right home," says Best. "Local stores have to compete with the Internet; that's just the way it is. Our biggest advantage is one-on-one customer service, compared to

ies, report those store closings with nary a mention of the brand's hundreds of independent dealers and franchisees that are mainstays of rural communities throughout the country. Most of those will do just fine.

"The headlines affect us from the consumer's point of view," Best says, "because a lot of people don't know the difference between us and a corporate store. They think we're all the same."



## RadioShack® Dealer

zero of that on the Internet."

Regular customers come from near and far, long accustomed to a great and convenient electronics store. "We have a lot of customers in Trinidad," Best says. "We're almost the same town in terms of shopping. We eat there and shop there and they do the same here."

The corporate-owned Radio Shack stores are located mostly in America's big cities. The national media, located in the same cit-

It's a good thing Raton's bustling state-of-the-art electronics store has an old-fashioned telephone on the sales counter because it keeps ringing off the hook. No, the store's not closing, and yes, it will continue to ride the seismic waves of change in the electronics business while providing the new products and services needed by its customers throughout southeastern Colorado and northeastern New Mexico.

## Great SCRT performances — Dixie Swim girls delight audience

... Continued from Page 1

show.

The familiar "Golden Girls" mix of belly laughs and poignant moments lives again in this artful and heartfelt comedy about the role that long-term friendships play in our lives. This similarity is not surprising, since Jamie Wooten, one of the collaborating three authors, once wrote for that long-lived golden TV show. The other two authors are also veteran theatre people. Jessie Jones is the author of the "Dearly Departed" TV series, and Nicholas Hope has been the Director of Casting for the Theatre Communications Group of New York, the Goodman Theater in Chicago and ABC Television.

The play is about the ongoing friendships between five Southern women who met long ago on a college swim team. "The faster we swim, the sooner we win!" is their mantra.

Every August the women get together for a long weekend at the same beach cottage on the Outer Banks of North Carolina to recharge and renew their relationships. This play focuses on four of these retreats over a period of thirty-three years.

The captain of the swim team and still leader of the group is Sheree, played pragmatically by Judy Lee. Sheree's obsession for healthy eating and organizing everything frustrates the other women. Her unpalatable healthy snacks that Lexie calls "regurgitated ferret food" end up in a potted plant outside the window. Yet eventually, Sheree's organization skills save the group from being caught in a dangerous hurricane.

Dinah is a career-driven wisecracking, successful lawyer. The stresses of a far less successful personal life lead to over-consumption of alcohol. Leeann Fabec convincingly brings Dinah to life as the outwardly strongest of these five women, but who, in reality, is on a path of looming self-destruction.

Cora Warrick shines as a vain, over-sexed woman, obsessed with keeping young and beautiful so that she may still attract men despite a track record of many failed marriages. Her self-obsession frustrates the other four friends; yet later in the show a serious threat to her life fosters her growth into a considerate, generous woman.

After college, Jeri Neal (Naomi Segers) joined a convent, until at age 44 she held another woman's baby in her arms and decided she had to have a child. Through artificial insemination, she became pregnant. In the Dixie Swim Club's first scene, Jeri Neal shows up at the beach cottage reunion hugely pregnant and (obviously) no longer a nun. This role happily afforded Naomi many opportunities to demonstrate her ample comedic talent.

Perhaps the most poignantly comic of



Photos by Eric John Monson / The Chronicle-News



SCRT's latest hit show, The Dixie Swim Club, is a smash right from the start. This local group of gals really brought it all home for their audiences with wonderful performances. The Dixie Swim Club is about a group of girlfriends who love and support each other through the best of times and the worst of times — a delightful and endearing snippet of what could be real life experiences.

the five friends is Vernadette, played by Pamela Nelson, newcomer to the SCRT Resident Company stage. In her Scene 1 entrance at the beach house she wears a clown suit because her husband took away all her clothes. Though living under the cloud of abusive husband, delinquent children and frequent injuries, she somehow manages to retain a latent energy that volcanically erupts into a rant about preserving the sanctity of Southern biscuits that evokes spontaneous audience applause.

Directed by Ashleigh Hall and supported by the SCRT technical team and volunteers, this show is a delightful overview of friendship and graceful aging.

A special surprise to

SCRT brass Fred and Harriet Vaugeois on Friday afternoon was a personal phone call from the author Jamie Wooten herself, wishing the cast well- (Merde! In theatre talk) -on opening night.

It must have worked. The show was great entertainment.

Next weekend performances will be on Friday and Saturday evenings at 7 p.m., and Sunday afternoon at 2 p.m. at the Famous Performing Arts Center, 131 West Main Street in Trinidad. (719) 846-4765.





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