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TUESDAY
FEBRUARY 10, 2015

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THE CHRONICLE-NEWS

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THE FINE PRINT

FEBRUARY 10
Las Animas County
TUESDAY (9 a.m.) The Board of County Commissioners regular meeting will be held in the Las Animas County Courthouse, 200 E. First St., Room 201. Information: 719-845-2568.

Trinidad City Council
TUESDAY (1:30 p.m.) Work session in Council Chambers, City Hall, 135 N. Animas St., Third Floor. Information: Audra Garrett, 719-846-9843.

ASK A LAWYER
TUESDAY (3-6:30 p.m.) Walk-in for a free 20-minute consultation (anything other than criminal cases) with an experienced attorney at the Las Animas County Courthouse, 200 E. First St. Childcare will be provided. Info: 719-680-7333.

Calling all Square Dancers
TUESDAY (6-8 p.m.) Join the fun at the Square Dance Club at LaCasa on Hwy 12 in Jansen. Beginners welcome. Info: Peter Monzon, 719-845-0375 or pmm49@hotmail.com.

Caregivers Support Group
TUESDAY (6:30 p.m.) This group meets at the LaQuinta Inn on Toupal Drive. Information: Age Wise Advisors, 347-852-0752.

Today's Quote

"Very little is needed to make a happy life; it is all within yourself, in your way of thinking."

-Marcus Aurelius

FEBRUARY 11
Trinidad Schools
WEDNESDAY (4:45 p.m.) The Calendar Committee will meet at the District Administration Office, 612 Park St. Info: 719-845-2048.

Housing Authority
WEDNESDAY (5 p.m.) Trinidad Housing Board of Commissioners will meet in regular session at the Trinidad Housing Authority Conference Room, 128 W First St. Info: Rosemarie Shier, 719-846-7204.

Abstraction & Refraction
FRIDAY (6-9 p.m.) Abstract art and jewelry show hosted by TAACI opens at Gallery Main, 130 E. Main and runs thru Feb. 26. Info: 719-846-1441. Proceeds benefit the TAAAC Youth Art Program.

PUBLIC SERVICE
Calling all ARTCAR Volunteers!
Volunteers are needed for the Prison Art Car Project for the 2015 ArtoCade Festival. Must be willing to take training class workshop for prison admission. Info: Rodney Wood, 719-334-0087.

Senior Driving Class
THURSDAY (9 a.m.-1 p.m.) The AARP Driving Class will be held at the Sayre Senior Center, 1222 San Pedro St. Registration and information: Carl Mozeno, 719-846-2288.

VALENTINES BAKE SALE
FRIDAY (7:30 a.m.-Noon) Treat your Valentine to a special treat from the Chamber of Commerce Bake Sale that will be held at the Las Animas County Courthouse, 200 E. First St. Info: 719-846-9285. Proceeds benefit the Chamber's Projects Fund.

The Art of Marriage
FRIDAY (6 p.m.) & SATURDAY (8 a.m.-3:30 p.m.) Inspiring seminar at the FP Community Church, 10377 Santa Fe Trail. Info/Reg: 719-846-6018.

SCRIT SHOWTIME
FRIDAY-FEB 22: The Dixie Swim Club runs at the Southern Colorado Repertoire Theatre, 131 West Main St. Info: 719-846-4765 or www.scrtheatre.com.

FREE Father/Daughter Dance
FRIDAY (7-9 p.m.) Grab your dad, grandpa, uncle or fatherly friend for some fun, food, games and more at the Valentine's Day Father/Daughter Dance hosted by The Lord's Chapel of Segundo at Mt. Carmel, 911 Robinson. Info: 719-845-4880.

Friends of the Library
SATURDAY (Noon-5 p.m.) Special Sweetheart of a Deal for members — join or renew and get a special gift with your membership at Books & More 132. N. Commercial. Info: 719-846-6840.

OPERA TRINIDAD
SATURDAY (NOON) Don't miss LA FORZA DEL DESTINO by Giuseppe Verdi that will be showing at the Movie Picture Showhouse.

Trinidad Italian Club
SUNDAY (Noon-?) The community is invited to bring a dish and join us for a potluck luncheon at St. Joseph's Hall, 1704 Buena Vista St. (on Goddard).

FREE Felting Workshop
SUNDAY (2-5 p.m.) Felting with Cat Fur, a super fun workshop to make items for the upcoming "There Is No Such Thing As an Ordinary Cat" Art Show at Gallery Vivant, 218 E. Main St. Materials will be provided. Info: Susan Palmer, 805-603-6181.

Abstract Art Show
SUNDAY (3 p.m.) The community is invited to the opening reception of the "7 Artists—7 Dialogs" exhibition that is the result of TSJC Art Professor Villas Tonape abstract workshop instruction for seven area artists at the Corazon Gallery, 149 E. Main St. Show runs thru Feb. 28.

RIVER CALL

Purgatoire River Call as of: 02/09/15. Chilli ditch: Priority # 7 --- Appropriation date: 04/30/1862.

Trinidad Reservoir Accounting:
Release 0.42 AF
Inflow 42.42 AF -- 21.38 CFS
Evaporation 0 AF
Content 16,553 AF
Elevation 6,178.51
Precipitation 0

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

EMBRACING THE CHALLENGE

Eckhart Kids — Learning to lead

By Steve Block
The Chronicle-News

The staff members at Eckhart Elementary School are trying to get their students to become leaders, and the kids seem to be embracing the challenge. School Principal Olivia Bachicha gave a power point presentation to the members of the Board of Education last Wednesday about the progress that students are making in developing leadership skills.

This year, Trinidad School District No. One is implementing the principles embodied in the book, "The Leader in Me," by Dr. Stephen R. Covey, which focuses on the seven habits of highly effective people and is in use at nearly 2,000 schools worldwide. Bachicha talked about how Eckhart's teachers were working to help their students become classroom leaders. Schools that have successfully implemented the principles in the book have often found that they can let the students lead their own school's activities.

Eckhart has quarterly award assemblies to honor individual and class achievement, as do the other Trinidad public schools. The most recent assembly was led by the students themselves, as Bachicha explained.

"Every teacher picked one little guy and they ran the assembly," Bachicha said. "They ran the whole thing. The only thing I did was the perfect attendance, but next time they're going to do it all. They read their fellow students'



Steve Block / The Chronicle-News

Kindergarten Teacher Anna Armijo shows Board of Education members the student data books that help measure student academic progress. Also visible in the photo are Superintendent Scott Mader and Board President Jack Vallejos.

names perfectly. One little guy came dressed up in a tie. It was an amazing moment for everyone. The parents who were there said, 'What? They're going to do it? They're first-graders.' It was so amazing it gave me goose bumps."

Kindergarten Teacher Anna Armijo showed Board members

how she's helping her young students become leaders. Each classroom has a 'Learning Tree' to measure student progress toward achieving academic goals. Armijo also has student data books, where the students can measure their own individual progress toward meeting those goals. She's try-

ing to get her kids to be proactive rather than reactive and a target is placed on one wall of the classroom where students can write down their ideas on how to be proactive and post them on the target. Armijo's students are also as-

Continued on Page 2 ...

JUDGE APPROVES PLEA BARGAIN

Former City secretary gets deferred sentence, supervised probation, must pay \$24K restitution

By Steve Block
The Chronicle-News

Trinidad's former City secretary, Anna Ridolfi, pled guilty to a felony count of theft for stealing City funds, and received a deferred sentence of four years of supervised probation, plus restitution of \$24,000 to the City. The sentence was the result of a plea bargain between the District Attorney's office and Ridolfi's attorney, Joseph Koncilja, and was approved by District Court Judge Leslie J. Gerbracht Friday morning in Third

of two years. The initial investigation revealed that Ridolfi had charged \$25,501.52 fraudulently on the city's credit card from approximately May 1, 2012 through approximately Dec. 18, 2013, according to a city police bulletin dated Friday Jan. 10, 2014.

Ridolfi was fired from her job at City Hall on Dec. 19, 2013 after being arrested on three felony counts of distributing a controlled substance, part of a major drug sting in the Trinidad area. Those drug charges were later dropped.

Should Ridolfi fail to abide by the terms of probation in her deferred sentence, she could be arrested and imprisoned without trial, with the prison sentence at the discretion of the presiding judge at a sentencing hearing. Ridolfi was required to pay \$15,000 of the restitution payment at Friday's plea hearing. The remainder will be paid in \$200 monthly increments until the restitution is completed. She'll have to complete 50 hours of community service, submit to drug testing and collection investigations by the Probation Department.

Judge Gerbracht said she thought the sentence was appropriate to the crime, and did not impose stiffer penalties than those in the plea agreement.

Attorney Koncilja said he felt Ridolfi's case was "a tragic cir-

Continued on Page 2 ...



Photo courtesy of Trinidad Police Department

Anna Ridolfi

District Court in Trinidad.

Ridolfi was arrested in early January, 2014 and charged with multiple felony counts of embezzlement, forgery and theft for allegedly misusing a City credit card for personal use for a period



Photos by Tim Keller / The Chronicle-News

Pops and Miss Lilly are two of three ventriloquist's dummies that travel with funny man Todd Oliver. They've all gotten to know each other well over the years. Oliver last performed at the Shuler Theater 20 years ago.

FUNNY MAN TODD OLIVER DELIVERS

Ventriloquist really pulls laughs out of Shuler crowd

By Tim Keller
Correspondent
The Chronicle-News

RATON — Entertainer Todd Oliver returned to the Shuler Theater last week—he was here 20 years ago — and demonstrated his mastery at providing a rollicking good time to everyone in a large all-ages audience.

He doesn't do it alone. He pulls his friends Joey, Pops, and Miss Lilly from travel cases, while three live musicians walk themselves onto the stage. Oliver also incorporated three audience members into the show onstage Wednesday

night (Feb. 4). The center of the show, though, is a pug-nosed terrier named Irving.

The show opened with a short black-and-white film produced to look like it was made in the 1950s, complete with laugh track. A young boy takes an interest in ventriloquism but one look at the \$300 price tag on a mail-order ventriloquist's dummy leads his mom to suggest the boy try something else. As she walks away, the boy turns his eyes across the room to the family dog, apparently acted by Irving.

Thus the audience learned how Oliver came to use a live dog as his ventriloquist's "dummy." But Irving is no dummy: he's a great comic foil for Oliver, and sometimes smarter than Oliver—although, let's admit, Oliver writes Irving's lines.

Their opening dialog stacked joke after joke at breakneck speed, barely allowing one laugh to end before the next began. The family show came no closer to topical

Continued on Page 3 ...

WEATHER WATCH

Tuesday: Mostly sunny, with a high near 65. Southwest wind 5 to 10 mph becoming east in the morning. **Night:** A slight chance of rain and

snow before 10 p.m., then a 30 percent chance of snow. Mostly cloudy, with a low around 30. Calm wind becoming west northwest around 5 mph in the evening. New precipitation amounts of less than a tenth of an inch possible.

Wednesday: Snow likely, mainly after 8am. Mostly cloudy, with a high near 39. North-northeast wind 5 to 10 mph. Chance of precipitation is 60 percent. New snow accumulation of less than one inch possible. **Night:** A 30 per-

cent chance of snow, mainly before 11 p.m. Partly cloudy, with a low around 24. North wind around 5 mph becoming west southwest after midnight.

Thursday: Sunny, with a high near 58. Southwest wind around 5 mph. **Night:** Mostly clear, with a low around 30. West southwest wind around 5 mph.

Friday: Sunny, with a high near 61. North-west wind around 5 mph

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COMMUNITY

Ventriloquist really pulls laughs out of Shuler crowd

... Continued from Page 1

material than a reference to President Obama's birth certificate—rescue dog Irving can never run for president because he doesn't have one—and another to Kanye West and wife Kim Kardashian—Irving says, "He's black, she's white, I'm black and white, I could be their kid."

The pair did extended segments on Irving's job as a Wal-Mart greeter—it'll be hard for audience members to ever again hear "Welcome to Wal-Mart" without laughing—and on how Irving spends his days. "I went outside. Then I came back inside. I went outside. Then I came back inside," Irving droned on and on. The next day, audience members were overheard laughing as they recited the dog's comic mantra.

Oliver writes songs, sings, and performs on electric guitar, electric piano

with his band The Smiling Eyes—lead guitarist Mike Donoho, bassist Marcus Willett, and drummer Jeff Hauschildt. A half-dozen songs were interspersed throughout the 90-minute set to accomplish what Oliver termed "a modern variety show."

The heart of the show, though, is comedy, and it's produced through ventriloquism. Oliver eventually got successful enough to buy himself three ventriloquist's dummies to augment his dog act. His first dummy, young Joey, emerged onstage from his travel case actively complaining about having to travel inside the case. "It's hot, it's dark, there's no HBO—I might as well be in Maxwell."

Oliver incorporated local humor along with distinctly different voices for Irving and each of Oliver's dummies. Pops has



Photos by Tim Keller / The Chronicle-News

Assisted by his ventriloquist friend Todd Oliver, Irving took audience questions during the "Ask a Dog" portion of last week's Shuler Theater show of comedy, music, dummies and a dog. Todd Oliver showed off his skills by using audience members Pat and Ray as human ventriloquist's dummies.



the voice of an old black man. In a high woman's voice, Miss Lilly defends her big buck teeth. "My teeth are straight, it's my face that's crooked."

Oliver had audience members write questions for Irving on slips of paper in the lobby before the show. (The most Zen-like was "Where am I?") Oliver and Irving used the audience questions for an extended session of comic improvisation.

Then Oliver walked through the audience to choose one woman and one man—

Pat and Ray—to come on stage where they learned that they were about to become ventriloquist's dummies. They opened their mouths whenever Oliver squeezed their necks, and he gave them words and sounds they never would have made themselves. The audience roared.

Simple and effective, Oliver's family variety show delivered a steady stream of laughter. Many in the audience are likely hoping that he won't wait another twenty years to bring his show back to the Shuler.

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