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WEEKEND EDITION
FRIDAY, SATURDAY
& SUNDAY
APRIL 29-MAY 2, 2016

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50 CENTS
TRINIDAD
COLORADO

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THE FINE PRINT

WEEKEND: APRIL 30 - MAY 1

THE ANIMAS SINGERS
FRI. & SAT. (7 p.m.) The new group under the direction of Mark Winchester will begin their first season with a Spring Concert at the Massari Theater at the corner of Broom and State St. Admission is free.

REPUBLICAN WOMEN
SAT. (11:30 a.m.) Group will meet for lunch at the Mission at the Bell on Main St. All are welcome. Info: Paula Marshall, 719-845-9544.

RATON'S JOHNSON LIBRARY
SAT. (1-4 p.m.) Book signing with authors Kurt Jansen (Vermejo Park Guides: Their Stories) and Sharon Niederman (New Mexico Farm Table Cookbook) will be at the Library, 244 Cook Ave., Raton, NM. Info: 575-445-9711.

WILDFIRE RISK WORKSHOPS
Sponsored by the Stonewall Fire Protection District at the Stonewall FPD Station, 7375 Hwy 12. Free admission, refreshments served and reservations required. Info: 719-868-2249.

SAT. (1-2 p.m.) Firewise Plants and Landscaping
MAY 7 (1-3 p.m.) Improving Your Home's Fire Safety

COMMUNITY CLEAN-UP DAY
SAT. (8 a.m.) Comcast and Trinidad Community Foundation will host the annual event that starts at Cimino Park. Registered volunteers will receive a free t-shirt, breakfast and lunch. Info: TCF, 719-846-3943 or info@trinidadcf.org.

Today's Quote

"No matter where you go; there you are."
- Bumper Snicker

MONDAY - MAY 2

FREE ART CLASSES
MON. (10 a.m.-Noon) Open to Hoehne and area Home School Students, a second Earth Day Word Play Class at Gallery Main, 130 E. Main St. Info: 719-846-1441.

PLANNING COMMISSION
MON. (1 p.m.) A Public Hearing with Pamela Good Wind proposing an educational business featuring a Native American Living History Immersion Program will be held at the County Court House, 200 E. First St., Room 201. Info: 719-846-4486.

PUBLIC CITY MEETING
MON. (6 p.m.) Water, Sewer and Streets Dept. meets to discuss future needs of City's infrastructure at the Trinidad Community Center, 1309 Beshoro Dr. Info: 719-846-9843.

PUBLIC SERVICE

GOOD FOOD PROJECT
Get involved, help raise your own healthy veggies and schedule class or organization farm field trips at mile marker 68 off Hwy 12 in Jansen. Volunteer hours for service are: Tues. (4-8 p.m.), Weds. (7-11 a.m.) and Fri. (3-8 p.m.) More info: Olympia Gioulekas, 719-310-4294.

HEALTH CARE JOB FAIR
MAY 4 (9-11 a.m.) Trinidad State will host this event for colleges and universities that are recruiting for continuing education classes focused on allied health programs in the Pioneer Room of the Sullivan Center on the Campus. Info: 719-846-5530.

CONCERT "LEAD WITH ME"
MAY 5 (7 p.m.) Trinidad Children's Chorale will present their annual free Spring Concert at the TMS Auditorium, 614 Park St. Info: Connie Pallone, 719-846-2513.

ARTIST'S RECEPTION
MAY 6 (5-8 p.m.) Gala opening for "The Garden Party" featuring works by Judith Fuentes, Paula Little and Roberta Lutzgens will be held at Gallery Main, 130 E. Main St. Show runs thru May 28. Info: 719-846-1441.

CINEMA UNDER THE STARS
MAY 6 (7:30 p.m.) The City of Trinidad will host this free event with free popcorn in Cimino Park - bring a lawn chair. Info: City Hall, 719-846-9843.

CARNEGIE LIBRARY
All free events. Info: 719-846-6841.

EVERY SAT. (10 a.m.) Chess Club meets in the Community Room.

RAG TIME (11 a.m.-Noon) 1ST & 3RD Fridays thru MAY 20

TUESDAY TOTS (11 a.m.-Noon) 2ND & 4TH Tuesdays thru MAY 24

ART SCHOLARSHIP
THRU MAY 20: One scholarship is available for a high school senior on behalf of the Hartman Foundation and TAAC. Apply at Gallery Main, 130 E. Main St. Info: 719-846-1441.

RIVER CALL

Purgatoire River Call as of: 04/28/16. Hoehne Ditch: Priority # 20 --- Appropriation date: 10/07/1865.

Trinidad Reservoir Accounting:
Release 48.89 AF
Inflow 146.49 AF -- 73.86 CFS
Evaporation 11.60 AF
Content 29,545 AF
Elevation 6,195.70
Precipitation 0

Down stream call: Highland Canal: 04/31/1866.



CONSERVATION

Nature Conservancy increases impact in southeast Colorado

Eric John Monson
News Editor
The Chronicle-News

Over the past two years, the Nature Conservancy and Colorado Cattleman's Agricultural Land Trust have negotiated deals to secure over 84,000 acres in southeast Colorado.

Most recently, in late March, the Nature Conservancy announced the purchase of the 34,420-acre Bow and Arrow Ranch east of Walsenburg. Less than a year ago, they also announced the purchase of the JE Canyon ranch, which includes 50,000 acres east of Trinidad in the Purgatoire River Valley.

It's the Nature Conservancy's hope that conservation easements placed on these parcels prevent subdivision and industrial or commercial development.



Photo courtesy Nature Conservancy

Continued on Page 5 ... The JE Canyon Ranch east of Trinidad in the Purgatoire River Valley.

TSJC'S LEGENDARY COACH

Toupal inducted into Colorado Sports Hall of Fame

Doc Leonetti
Correspondent
The Chronicle-News

Coach Jim Toupal, in company with Vinny Castilla (Rockies baseball), Jim Danley (Eaton High School baseball), Rhonda Blandford-Green (University of Nebraska track), Milan Hejduk (Avalanche hockey) and basketball great Ralph (Rockets and Nuggets basketball), was inducted into the Colorado Sports Hall of Fame on a Tuesday evening, April 19, at the Denver Marriott City Center.

Trinidad's consummate coach was the lead speaker at the lectern.

"At Trinidad State I coached football, baseball, volleyball, golf and served as athletic director," said Toupal to an audience of 900. "And, of course, I coached men's basketball. Basketball became a big part of our lives. Our children, John and Tracy grew up in the gym as did our oldest grandchild Jeff and actually, our daughter-in-law Kristy was in that gym too. My



Photos by Doc Leonetti

Legendary TSJC basketball coach, Jim Toupal, is shown being inducted into the Colorado Sports Hall of Fame on Tuesday evening, April 19, 2016 at the Denver Marriott City Center.

wife Nancy always gave her full support. And there were always many loyal fans and family members at the games. Basketball at

TSJC was a big part of our social life with close family and friends. Two of my fondest coaching memories are going undefeated at

home for 10 consecutive years and setting a national record. That, and playing in the national tournament and winning two games."

Toupal, with a degree in Accounting from Boston University, coached at Trinidad State for 35 years. In March 1998, he was inducted into the National Junior College Athletic Association Hall of Fame and in 2013, he was also honored with an induction into the TSJC Educational Foundation Hall of Fame. He was named Region IX Coach of the Year four times and finished fourth on the all-time list in NJCAA history with over 1,200 wins.

"There have been a lot of good players over the years who worked very hard to make our program successful. Many of those young men kept in touch with me and have shared their life successes. Most attribute their success back to TSJC basketball," said Toupal.

In those memorable three and

Continued on Page 5 ...

Exploring the San Luis Valley

Keller's Travels
3rd in a series . . .



COLORADO TRAVELOGUE

Great Sand Dunes: Visually stunning area, ideal family playground

A magical journey across an enchanting land

Tim Keller
Correspondent
The Chronicle-News

Looking at a map from Trinidad, choosing places nearby to explore, Great Sand Dunes National Park and Preserve

is the most obvious choice. Located just 114 miles away, less than two hours, it's produced stunning photography of natural wonders while providing great family-friendly recreation.

Although it's close enough for a day trip, I figured I'd stay just outside the park at Great Sand Dunes Lodge. When I discovered that there's only one restaurant within 25 miles, at Oasis store just below

Continued on Page 7...

Photos by Tim Keller / The Chronicle-News

A family traverses the dunes at Great Sand Dunes National Park and Preserve, less than two hours drive from Trinidad in the San Luis Valley.

WEATHER WATCH

Friday: A 30 percent chance of showers, with thunderstorms also possible after noon. Partly sunny, with a high near

57. South wind 5 to 10 mph. **Night:** A chance of showers. Mostly cloudy, with a low around 35. West northwest wind 5 to 10 mph.

Saturday: A 30 percent chance of snow or rain showers. Mostly cloudy, with a high near 53. North wind 5 to 10 mph.

Night: A 20 percent chance of showers and thunderstorms. Mostly cloudy, with a low around 35. North wind around 5 mph.

Sunday: A 20 percent chance of snow or rain. Cloudy, with a high near 49. **Night:** A 30 percent chance of rain or snow.

Monday: A 30 percent chance of snow showers or rain. Mostly cloudy, with a high near 52. South southeast wind around 10 mph. **Night:** Mostly cloudy, with a low around 35. West southwest wind 5 to 10 mph.

Tuesday: Partly sunny, with a high near 59. Southwest wind 5 to 10 mph.

Weather Sponsored by:

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719-845-0102

Exploring the San Luis Valley

Keller's Travels
3rd in a series . . .



... Continued from Page 1



Four miles from the dunes, Oasis is the only store or restaurant within 25 miles of Great Sand Dunes National Park and Preserve. Its restaurant opens for the season May 1.

COLORADO TRAVELOGUE

Great Sand Dunes: Visually stunning family playground

A magical journey across an enchanting land



Photos by Tim Keller / The Chronicle-News

The Great Sand Dunes are visible from 20 miles south along Highway 160, but they loom more dramatically as the traveler approaches, with late afternoon shadows adding to the impact.

the lodge, and that it doesn't open for the season until May 1, I figured it must be too early in the year for Great Sand Dunes.

I switched plans and decided to stay in Alamosa and explore the whole San Luis Valley instead. On the first Saturday afternoon in April, I drove 34 miles from Alamosa to Great Sand Dunes and found that, while the restau-

rant hadn't started its season, there was no shortage of people who had started theirs. College groups, church groups, individuals and families clustered in the main parking lot and across Medano Creek to the dunes. Of the 100 or so cars and buses in the lot, I noted license plates from Texas, Iowa, Arizona, Alabama, Kentucky, Georgia and Louisiana, and more than one plate each from California, Missouri, Montana, Virginia, Illinois, North Carolina, New York, Florida, New Mexico and Colorado. That's one third of all the states.

High Dune evokes an anthill as dozens of energetic people trudge upward through the sand to the top, 699 feet higher than Medano Creek that they crossed on their way up. High Dune blocks the view of Star Dune behind it, even higher at 755 feet. Most of the visitors, though, are families that stay lower and closer. Wading barefoot in the creek

chore says do not slide on dry sand. The most successful used specially designed sand boards or sand sleds, available for rent at Oasis and at a sporting goods store in Alamosa, but even they spent more time falling than riding.

Long ago and far away, as a Boy Scout in coastal Southern California, I designed and built a fast sand ski. We would camp at Broome's Beach near Point Magu, between Malibu and Ventura, where steep sand dunes stand between the surf and the mountain that drops almost to the shore. I once won a running race down the dune from the top but broke my foot when I hit the bottom. I bodysurfed and camped for another day, but a Sunday afternoon X-ray resulted in my wearing a cast for several weeks.

I'd been making skateboards in my dad's woodshop so now I designed and made a sand ski for the dunes at Broome's Beach. More than four feet long, it was six inches wide near the back where



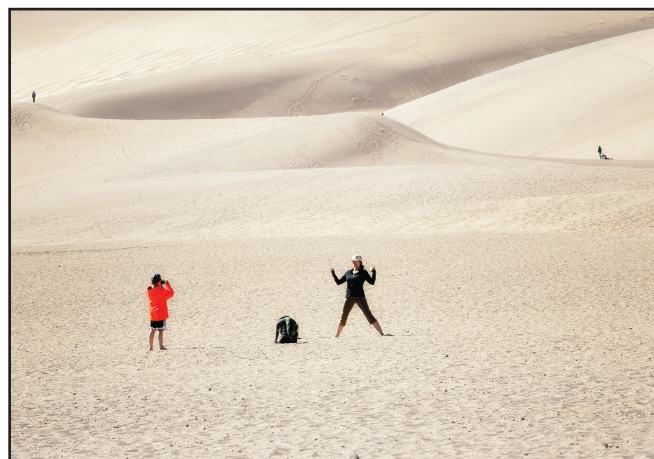
Throughout the spring months, reaching the dunes requires crossing Medano Creek where it emerges from the Sangre de Cristo Mountains and flows along the base of the Great Sand Dunes. Some cross in waterproof hiking boots but most take off their shoes and roll up their pant legs.

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Steep sand slopes are popular for sand boarding and sand sledding. Area stores rent equipment to visitors. The adventurous build up high speeds, but they spend as much time falling as they do riding.



Great Sand Dunes is a perfect family outing and a great backdrop for family pictures and selfies.

Most spent the night in Alamosa and enjoyed its dozens of restaurants. Many stayed in the park's 88 well-appointed campsites, with views of the dunes through pine trees. Some came for a day trip from homes within reach.

Although wildlife, creeks and countless miles of high-mountain trails make the park and preserve a backpacker's paradise, North America's tallest sand dunes are the main attraction. From

is popular, and available only now during spring runoff. Friends and family members take pictures of each other against the dramatic backdrop of the dunes.

I took a special interest in a couple dozen kids arrayed along the tops of two steep sand slopes. They used a variety of means to ski—or try to ski—at high speed down the slope. Some tried snow sleds, saucers, plastic or cardboard, which even the park bro-

I'd stand but tapered much narrower at the front and back. A tapered 1-inch-deep wood fin was set into the bottom under my weight, and my feet were kept from slipping by built-in green carpet.

After seeing what people now rent to ride down the Great Sand Dunes, I called my family in California. My dad found my ski in the rafters above the garage and my brother photographed it. Although made from particleboard, it's still straight and true, with even the carpet looking new—remarkable after 53 years. I think it was faster than anything I saw at Great Sand Dunes this month, although I fell exactly as often as they do now—which is, sooner or later, every ride.

I saw parents waiting patiently because their kids didn't want to leave the sand.



Even with a long lens making people look bigger, the view of High Dune evokes an anthill. Many climb the park's second highest dune with its elevation gain of 699 feet. Star Dune is higher at 755 feet but it's hidden here beyond High Dune.



After breaking his foot racing down California sand dunes, Tim Keller designed and built this specialized sand ski—53 years ago! The bottom surface is flat, coated in smooth hard resin like a surfboard; it even has a 1-inch-deep fin near the tail.

Other kids played in the shallow creek. At one point, a new stream came down the flat sand bottom. Throughout the spring, Medano Creek ebbs and flows with the snowmelt from the mountains towering above. I overheard a woman say, "Yes, it's already deeper than it was an hour ago." And then, in the summer, it dries up. Spring, right now, is a great time to enjoy the park.

Zapata Falls, eight miles south of Great Sand Dunes, is another popular attraction at

its peak this time of year. The half-mile hike, 20-foot waterfall, and panoramic views of the dunes all sounded irresistible, but it's up three miles of rough gravel road. I'm convinced that my Toyota Prius averaged 45 miles per gallon on this trip by being made of compressed tinfoil. (I have a 21-year-old pickup truck at home, but it gets 8 miles per gallon.) Afraid that I'd be left with nothing but uncompressed tinfoil, I didn't drive the Prius up to see Zapata Falls.

Another site I couldn't fit into a three-day exploration of the San Luis Valley was Zapata Ranch, near Zapata Falls. The Nature Conservancy owns the 103,000-acre working bison, cattle and horse ranch and nature preserve, available for retreats and lodging with a three-night minimum stay.

I also missed four national wildlife refuges. San Luis Lakes State Park and Wildlife Area joins Baca National Wildlife Refuge, Alamosa

National Wildlife Refuge and Monte Vista Wildlife Refuge in hosting migratory birds and other animals attracted by the rich water resources of the San Luis Valley. From Great Sand Dunes, the four wildlife refuges are within an 85-mile circuit on the way back to Alamosa. The Monte Vista refuge is famed for nearly 20,000 migrating sandhill cranes that stop over for several weeks every spring, reaching their peak for the annual Monte Vista Crane Festival in March.

But I still had some stops ahead in the San Luis Valley, including Kit Carson's family dining room at Fort Garland and a close encounter with swamp creatures at Colorado Gators.

Next Friday — Visions of Buffalo Soldiers and Kit Carson at Fort Garland. Still to come: Colorado Gators!



Late afternoon is the most visually sumptuous time to visit Great Sand Dunes. Just as the parking lot starts emptying as visitors drive to restaurants and hotels 34 miles away in Alamosa, the shadows lengthen on the dunes and the low sun dapples the creek and plants with magical light.

Read Tim's previous travelogue stories "Chasing Billy the Kid," "Exploring Bent's Fort" and "Going Up the River — A first timer's experience of the Highway of the Legends" that were first published in *The Chronicle-News* at thechronicle-news.com, or enjoy those and his other work and photography, at TimKellerArts.com.