

# Raton Museum holds special meeting to address membership concerns

By LAURA L. BREWER  
The Chronicle-News

**RATON** – The Raton Museum board of trustees held a special meeting Monday night to address specific concerns brought to the attention of the board through a signed petition. The petition, which contained 30 signatures, specifically requested a change in voting procedures, term limits for trustees, and annual audits.

Kathy McQuery, president of the board of trustees, brought the meeting to order, welcomed everyone present, and presented the meeting agenda, which included the member attestation, proposed amendments to the museum's bylaws, and comments from members present. McQuery said that the board had spent some time on the issues brought forward, and presented those in attendance with suggested changes to the bylaws that the board hoped would address the concerns. McQuery voiced a consensus by the board of trustees that the bylaws need to be updated and more specific in certain areas.

"Certainly, the bylaws need to be updated. They are just a skeleton of bylaws," McQuery said. To ensure that the board is not filled with all new members, or several new members all at once, the current board suggested that Article V, Section 2 of the bylaws spell out terms of office for the board of trustees to include one new board position be elected each year beginning in 2010 for a five-year term and each year thereafter, one new position would be elected at the annual meeting.

The board of trustees



Photo by Laura L. Brewer

Jeannie Pomeroy asks the museum board of trustees to address membership issues at Monday's special board meeting.

offered that there should be an annual audit, but because of budget constraints, the museum could not afford to hire a qualified CPA, whose auditing fees are generally around \$2,500. Instead, the trustees offered to amend the bylaws to require an annual audit be performed by an auditing committee, which is appointed by the board of trustees and consisting of one trustee and one member in good standing.

Jeannie Pomeroy, spokesperson for the petition committee, took the floor, and questioned the validity of the board election that occurred last December because the voting was not done by secret ballot, as is historically provided by our government. She also requested that the issue of term limits be addressed by the board. Other members asked questions about whether the museum had a budget, how much in membership dues was collected, and how the money was spent.

At that time, McQuery gave a short list of income and percentages and operating expenses. She explained that the museum has always provided an annual report, that includes the financial statements, and

that the reports are available to anyone who wishes to see them. She also reported to the membership that the officers that were elected at the last board meeting were: Kathy McQuery as president, Sue Smith, secretary; Barbara Carlini, treasurer, and although the bylaws did not specify a vice-chair position, Terry Bumpass would serve in that capacity. When asked to respond to the question of the election validity, McQuery said that the election, according to the bylaws, was done properly, and that the results would stand.

Sharon Neiderman, local author, stood to remind McQuery of an offer that she had made concerning a special exhibit for the museum, in which she had not received an answer. Neiderman said that she feels that many new ideas are "squashed." McQuery said that she had brought Neiderman's idea to the board, but because of the recent elections, and other matters that needed attention, they had not acted on it, but would in the near future.

Several members voiced support of the board, but agreed on the need to amend the bylaws and for

better communication. Because of financial problems that other organizations in Raton have experienced, many of the members wanted to ensure that the same fate would not be suffered by the museum. Not accusing anyone of wrongdoing, the members simply wanted to take steps to ensure the health of the museum and to provide for its lasting legacy.

Opinions were shared, and both sides vowed to work together to make the museum even better. However, Howard Woodworth, who serves on the museum board, and has served as a board member of several other non-profit organizations, offered the caution, "Look very seriously at the idea of term limits, ...very seriously." He went on to explain that sometimes by restricting the number of years that a person can serve on the board, the consequences are that "good board members are pushed out" and it can be difficult to get someone else to serve.

"The museum is a pot of gold," exclaimed Gigi Galassini, chair for the board of directors of the Telephone Museum of New Mexico, which is located in Albuquerque. "That's my personal opinion." She continued with an admonishment of McQuery for trying to do it all, and not asking others to help.

"That's not fair to you, and it's not fair to the members."

McQuery agreed and encouraged those attending to serve on a committee to

amend the bylaws, or another museum committee: docent/membership, displays and designs, or the house committee.

## Kiwanis hears from new theatre director



Photo by Mike Garrett

Trinidad Kiwanis Club March speaker chairman Sam Madrid, left, presents a certificate of appreciation to new Southern Colorado Repertory Theatre Executive Director Arthur Espinoza, center, after he was the keynote speaker at Tuesday's weekly luncheon at A Little Catering Co. Also pictured is club Vice President Phyllis Moniot, who presided over the luncheon. Espinoza regaled the large turnout with anecdotes of how he got involved in Colorado theatre and the great potential he sees for SCRT's future. He also discussed this summer season's play lineup of two comedies and a musical, including "Nunsense," "Baby" and "Squabbles."

## Aimee Feldman gives RHS library a makeover

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Longfellow School.

From RHS, Feldman drove over the hill to earn her A.A. degree in liberal arts from Trinidad State Junior College. She'd been working at Raton's Arthur Johnson Memorial Library since she was 15; at 20, the library staff helped her to earn New Mexico librarian certification and took her on full-time.

Two years later, Feldman began an eight-year stint as a teacher's aide at Longfellow. In 2004 she began work on her bachelor's degree in elementary education, graduating from New Mexico Highlands

University in 2007. She spent the 2008-2009 school year as the kindergarten teacher in Maxwell.

One day at Maxwell she received a phone call from RHS Principal Mike Sparaco. He was recruiting. A construction project was creating an entirely new library, the past librarian was retiring, and Sparaco wanted a strong pool of applicants.

"The average publication year of the books here was 1975," Feldman says. "I found a book that had been checked out to my Uncle Frank in the 1950s! And he was the only one listed, the only student who had ever

checked out that book."

Sparaco knew the school needed an energetic and devoted new librarian to bring about a transformation. Feldman got the job.

The new library was a cavernous empty room. Two hundred boxes of musty books were scattered in various storage locations around the campus. She moved in last July, a month before school opened. "My mom and dad even came in to help," she recalls. "We put up shelves and unpacked boxes. When students arrived, I recruited seniors to help carry and unload boxes."

Today, the books are on their shelves. Uncle Frank's book has been discarded. Feldman is buying new books as fast as she can, but, like everything in schools today, there is not enough budget. She's focusing her purchases on the two areas most in demand, medical studies and the social sciences.

She's working on her M.Ed degree in School Library and Technology online from Mansfield University in Pennsylvania, bringing everything she learns to RHS, slowly but surely bringing the library and media center into the 21st century.

Feldman regularly partners with the Arthur Johnson library to provide complete services to her RHS students; she also makes frequent use of the inter-library loan program through the New Mexico State Library.

Given her ambitious and demanding schedule, it's hard to imagine Feldman having free time, but apparently she does. "I love to read!" she says. "I know it's a cliché with librarians, but I really do. I try to read all the new books that come in so I can recommend them to students."

It sounds like the principal made a good hire.

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