

Raton friends plan teaching careers

By TIM KELLER
The Chronicle-News

RATON, N.M. — Raton High School seniors Samantha Atwater and Samantha Iacobelli have been friends and classmates for so many years that they can smile over shared memories of their fourth grade class at All-Saints Catholic School, where both recall Ms. Vivian Frey as one of their all-time favorite teachers. Now, the seniors plan to follow in the footsteps of Frey and other teachers whom they credit with inspiring them.

They're headed off in the fall to pursue elementary education degrees, although after all these years together, their paths will finally diverge. Atwater is headed down Interstate 25 to New Mexico State University at Las Cruces, while Iacobelli is leaving New Mexico to pursue her degree, with an emphasis in art education, at West Texas A&M in Canyon, Texas.

Meantime, they're leading Raton High School's fledgling chapter of Future Educators Association. The chapter's only veterans in a group that consists mostly of freshmen, the friends have divided the leadership duties, with Atwater serving as vice president and secretary, Iacobelli as president and treasurer. They hold weekly chapter meetings on Wednesdays, both before and after school to accom-

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Samantha Atwater

modate members' conflicting schedules. With support from Phi Delta Kappa and sponsor Christalina Donovan, the club sponsors the high school's Teacher of the Month program and other activities, but the big draw is job shadowing.

For each year in the program, every high school FEA member gets to spend one full school day with a teacher of their choice; thus, new members get one day of job shadowing this year, but "the Samanthas" are three-year veterans, so each gets to shadow teachers three days this year.

Donovan, the sponsor, says, "Most students look back and choose to shadow their favorite teacher. Some pick their favorite subject, or a class their sibling is in. A lot of freshmen choose the middle school, which might be nostalgic."

Atwater has chosen a different teacher each time, mostly in grades one through four. "My brother

is in the fourth grade this year. He tells me who the best teachers are and I go there." She's especially enjoyed shadowing Lisa Sanchez at Columbian Elementary and Shawna Forni at Kearny Elementary. She's also benefited from opportunities to shadow Raton High School teachers Loretta Smith, Kathy Vertovec, Verna Adams and Justin Malano.

"I try to see different kinds of classes and grade levels. I want to teach elementary kids, but I also want to keep my options open," Atwater says.

While Iacobelli has valued opportunities to shadow Raton's elementary school art teachers Melissa Medina and Phyllis Trujillo, she's returned time and again to spend whole days with one teacher — her own fourth grade teacher, Vivian Frey, who, when All Saints Catholic School closed, moved right over to a 4th-grade classroom at Kearny Elementary.

"She was my favorite," Iacobelli says. "I remember having really good times in her class. I remember reading some crazy books, and Ms. Frey would draw our calendars by hand: they were great."

"I've enjoyed learning, through job shadowing, what a teacher's day is like. At Kearny, Ms. Frey is not on a bell schedule, so she has to keep track of time. They have a certain

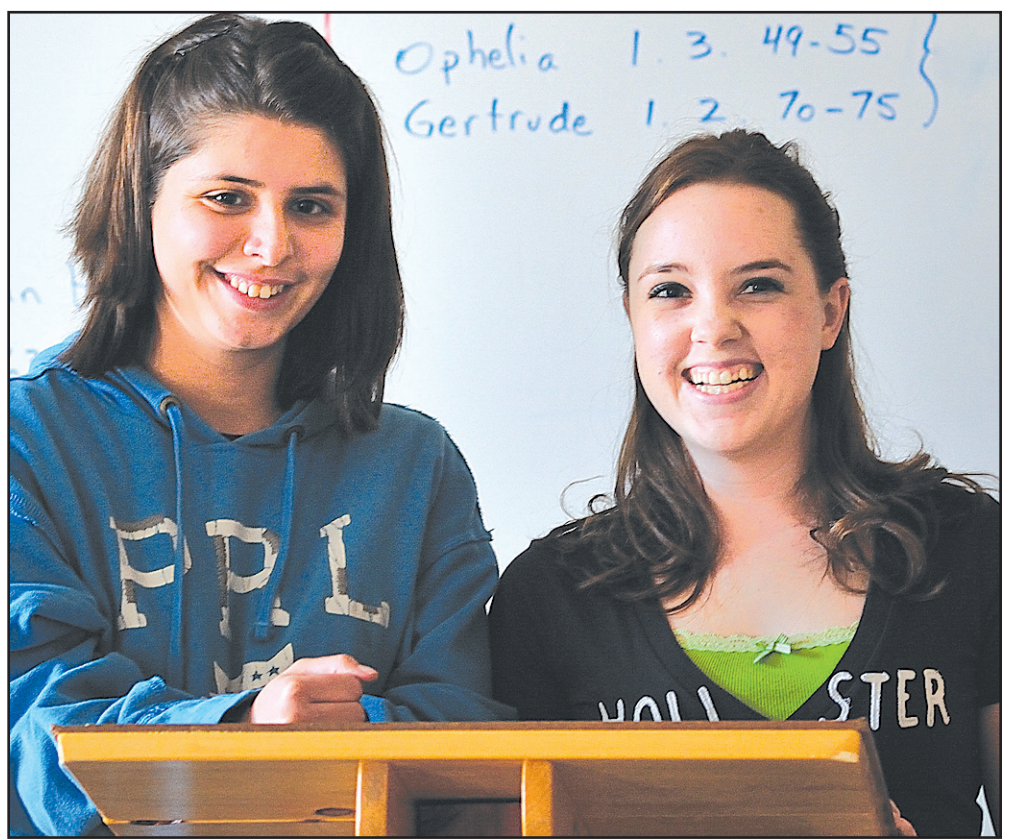


Photo by Tim Keller

Samantha Atwater and Samantha Iacobelli, from left, are looking forward to their transitions from students to teachers.

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Samantha Iacobelli

amount of time for each subject. Ms. Frey keeps an eye on the clock. She has to have good time management skills."

Atwater agrees with Iacobelli on the subject of Ms. Frey. "Yeah, there was never a dull moment in Ms. Frey's class."

For her part, Frey has found this development — the return of the

Samanthas as future teachers — to be inspiring for herself. "It's meant a lot, because I've known them for years. I'm really proud of them."

Frey has gotten Iacobelli directly involved in teaching. "She gave our spelling test one day," Frey says. "I've had her grade some papers for me, and she's helped the students. Teachers tend to endless chores all day and I've gotten Samantha involved in many of those."

"For all the work we do, it's gratifying when we hear of our students going on to successes, and all the more so to learn that they credit us with helping or influencing them."

Atwater says, "I want to teach younger students but do more than is just in the

books, more than just the facts."

Iacobelli says, "Most of my life I've wanted to be involved with children in one way or another. I want to teach art, and I'm a dancer, so I've always thought of teaching dance." Her own dance teacher, Kathy Honeyfield, spends days teaching English at Raton Middle School, and Iacobelli credits her with being another important influence.

As the seniors prepare to leave Raton to attend college and establish their own teaching careers, Iacobelli nods agreement when her friend closes the conversation with the observation, "We both feel that we've never had a teacher that we didn't learn from."

COMI FUNERAL HOME

ELAINE J. ABEYTA



Elaine J. Abeyta, age 69, passed away peacefully at her home on March 16, 2011. She was 69. Elaine was born on May 17, 1941 in Trinidad, Colo. to Pauline and Fred Banovich. She attended and graduated from Trinidad High School in 1959 with a scholarship to TSJC. Elaine was an avid bookkeeper and accountant, having worked at banks in the Trinidad and Alamosa area. She was the office manager for High Plains Medical Center for several years during the center's exist-

tence in Trinidad. She also worked part time as a child health screener at the local health department. On Feb. 13, 1960, Elaine married Anthony Abeyta at Mt. Carmel Church, in Trinidad, where they raised three sons. She chose not to work while her children were in school. She was devoted to them, their school work and activities. She missed very few, if any school functions, especially their sporting activities. Elaine loved traveling with her husband, especially their trips to Las Vegas and New Mexico casinos. Colorado casinos did not agree with her health. You could not find a more passionate person than Elaine. Her personality made it possible to love her immediately and the more you knew her, the more that love grew.

Preceding her in death are parents, Pauline and Fred Banovich, sister Nadine Mondragon, two infant brothers Freddie and Rudy, step father Harold McMahan, step brother Gene McMahan, and maternal and paternal grandparents.

Elaine is survived by her husband of 51 years Anthony Abeyta, her children, Anthony (Celeste) Abeyta Jr., Dr. Ronald "Budge" (Crystal) Abeyta, Fredrick "Fritz" (Corrine) Abeyta, sister Christine (Joe) Sepulveda, grandchildren, Jordan, Ashley, Danielle, Austin, Brittany, Kaylee, and Jayden (her 9/11 baby). She was also called Grandma by Chelsea, Bethany and Chanel Duran. Elaine loved all her grandchildren with a passion.

Visitation will be Monday from 3 p.m. - 6 p.m. at the Comi Funeral Home Chapel. Rosary will be recited Monday, March 21, 2011 at 7 p.m. at Holy Trinity Church. Funeral Mass will be celebrated Tuesday, March 22, 2011 at 10 a.m. at Holy Trinity Church. Interment with Rite of Committal will follow at the Trinidad Catholic Cemetery.

Honorary pallbearers are Perfecto Abeyta, Joe Padilla, Joe Sepulveda, Ray Mondragon.

Active pallbearers are Carlos Abeyta, Herman Abeyta, Floyd Abeyta, Arthur Abeyta, Mike Ossola and Bob Lucero.

Arrangements made under the direction of the Comi Funeral Home.

Transitions in life

By HELGA MEYER
Spanish Peaks Mental Health Center

Change, as the saying goes, is an inevitable part of life. Making any kind of change is usually associated with feeling uncomfortable or stressed. But sometimes we have no choice. The death of a loved one or the loss of a job or home are difficult changes, because they happen suddenly and totally out of our control. But when that happens, it's best to focus on what is in our control, for maintaining a positive attitude through any type of change can make the transition much easier.

Before proceeding, let me add that this month's topic was chosen because my husband and I are facing major changes in our lives — and this article will unfortunately be my last one. We will be leaving Pueblo, along with our jobs and wonderful colleagues and friends here. For each of us, our changes are due to leadership changes at work, and totally out of our control. Having an uncertain future with a blank slate was initially quite unsettling for me, but over time, I've found that it's better to deal with future changes by cherishing the past and believing that the future can be just as good. Fear of the unknown can be paralyzing, but having a positive attitude and an open mind on what's possi-

ble can be energizing. When friends first suggested that this next stage could be an exciting adventure for us, with even more enjoyable experiences in store, I found myself shifting from a "worry" mode to a "wondrous" mode — similar to that which a young child feels when anticipating something new and unexpected! Plus, it's just as easy to think positively about change and uncertainty as it is to feel anxious or worried. This is true for all changes, whether they're under your control or not.

Looking at the big picture, life is all about transition and change — both in how we grow individually, and how we can help our children grow. From the birth process itself, to leaving the comfort and security of our parents' home, to having our own children, to losing a beloved spouse, we continually face major changes, and know that they are inevitable. When we can accept and positively respond to the challenges that come with life's transitions, we're better prepared to enjoy what the next stage of life can bring — plus, we also become stronger and better able to tackle any new challenges that come our way. But when we let worry take over, or avoid making difficult changes, we're less able to enjoy what life can bring, or more likely to become stagnant. For example, it may be easi-

er in the short-term to stay in an unhealthy relationship, remain in a job that is unsatisfying, or continue a bad habit because you want to avoid the uncomfortable feelings through changing things, but in the long term, you can feel more enjoyment, fulfillment, and better health by enduring and dealing with the challenges of change.

I've been writing this monthly column on mental health/mental illness since February, 2003 — and after eight years, it's difficult to end a job that I've greatly enjoyed. Although I've learned a lot in researching and writing the articles, it's been gratifying to know when some of you have also learned something, or been motivated to get help and make some changes. Your comments and insights have kept me "fueled" to continue the articles. It's a given that throughout life, our various experiences can either make us stronger or pull us down, depending on how we can cope, learn from, and react to those experiences. What comes naturally to some people isn't as easy for others, so some may just need to work a bit harder, learn to ask for help, and commit to making changes. But what's most important is that we don't resist change, and actively pursue the path to good mental health throughout life.

Cancer Alliance holds fundraiser

Special to The Chronicle-News

The Trinidad Cancer Alliance sponsored a recent dart tournament fundraiser at JuJo's to provide local support for patients and survivors with cancer in the Trinidad and Las Animas County area.

"We hope to have another one in the future," said TCA President Kathy Jones, who helped organize the fundraiser. The TCA provides monetary donations or gas vouchers in the amount of \$300 per calendar year or as determined by a board of directors for cancer patients and survivors. It also plans numerous fundraisers throughout the year.

Tom Mitchell and Kathy Jones won the tournament by defeating Shawn Jones and Larry Atkins in the championship. Jason Irwin and Dan Leonetti finished in third place.

The next fundraiser for the TCA is the annual volleyball tournament that has been a popular event in the city. This year's tournament will be held at the Hoehne School on April 9-10.

For information, call 680-2889.

Seedling trees for windbreaks now available

Special to The Chronicle-News

The deadline for ordering trees from the state nursery is April 5, according to District Forester C.K. Morey. "But there will be some extra trees to choose from that have been pre-ordered," he added.

Order blanks can be picked up in Trinidad at the Extension Office at the Fair Grounds or Natural Resource Conservation

Service Office at 3590 E. Main St.

More than 45 species of trees and shrubs are offered at cost for windbreak, shelterbelts, erosion control, reforestation and Living Snow Fence by the Colorado State Forest Service. Morey is urging landowners to order seedling trees now for spring planting.

Landowners with two or

more acres are eligible for the program, and should contact Morey if there are questions of planting needs. The La Veta District Office will stock a full line of seedling survival supplies, such as slow-release fertilizer tablets, rabbit guards, sun shades, weed barrier, drip irrigation and polymer.

Morey urges landowners to get orders in as soon as

possible as several species are already sold out. Some species are sold out, so contact the office before ordering at 719-742-3588.

A booklet, "The Farmstead Windbreak," is available from NRCS, Extension, and CSFS Offices. The publication provides information on windbreak planning, planting and care. "Properly designed tree planting can play a major role in land management," Morey said. Information is available at the CSFS website, <http://csfs.colostate.edu/pages/conservation.html>.

For information, call 719-742-3588 or write to the Colorado State Forest Service Office, P. O. Box 81, La Veta, CO 81055. E-mail is ckmorey@lamar.colostate.edu or lamar.colostate.edu.

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LA CONFEDERACION LODGE
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DANCE TO THE MUSIC OF THE **Dynamixs**
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