



WEDNESDAY  
AUGUST 6, 2014  
Vol. 138, No. 156

# THE CHRONICLE-NEWS

50 CENTS  
TRINIDAD  
COLORADO

Proudly Serving Southeastern Colorado and Northeastern New Mexico • www.thechronicle-news.com

## THE FINE PRINT

**AUGUST 8**  
-Continuum of Care  
**THURSDAY (8 a.m.)** Group meets at Fisher's Peak Soup Kitchen, 308 Church St. Information: Charlene Tortorice (Advocates Against Domestic Assault) 719-846-9159 or Tom Power (Colorado Coalition for the Homeless - Denver), 303-285-5221.

-Network Council  
**THURSDAY (8 a.m.)** Meeting will be held in the Bell Block Building's Trinidad Community Foundation room. Information: Margaret Apodaca, 719-846-3943.

-Tenpin Topplers  
**THURSDAY (6 p.m.)** Bowling League is looking for teams and bowlers (18 and older). Interested parties should come to the League meeting at Trinidad Lanes, 823 Van Buren. Information: 719-846-6852 or 719-846-7440.

-Hoehne Schools  
**THURSDAY (7 p.m.)** Hoehne School Board will meet in special session in the Superintendents' Office. Information: Hannah Baca, 719-846-4457 ext.109.

-SPPRCD Meeting  
**THURSDAY (7 p.m.)** Spanish Peaks Purgatoire River Conservation District meets at the District Office. Information: 719-846-3681 Ext. 117.

-PRCWD Water District  
**THURSDAY (7:30 p.m.)** The Purgatoire River Conservancy meets in City Hall Council Chambers, 135 N. Animas. Information: Thelma Lujan, 719-846-7285.

## Today's Quote

**"The problem with having a sense of humor is often that people you use it on aren't in a very good mood."**

-Lou Holtz

**TRINIDAD LAKE WEEKEND**  
**Park Office, 719-846-3818**  
\***FRIDAY (8 p.m.)** "Ranger Campfire Talk" at the park amphitheater.  
\***SATURDAY (9 a.m.)** Kids Saturday Morning Walk-About. Meet at the Visitor Center.  
\***SATURDAY (7 p.m.)** Join Park Ranger Dara Garretson at the Visitor Center for a fascinating look into the lives of the raptors who live in the Trinidad Lake State Park.  
\***SUNDAY (6 p.m.)** NEW THIS YEAR: A Ranger Hike every Sunday night thru Labor Day. Meet at the Visitor's Center to begin the adventure.

**AUGUST 8-10**  
-Free Summer Lunch Program  
**THRU FRIDAY (11 a.m.-1 p.m.)** All kids (18 and under) can eat a free lunch Mon.-Fri. at the TMS Cafeteria, 614 Park St. Adults can join in for \$3. Information: 719-845-2051.  
-Snap Pea Jamboree  
**FRIDAY-SUNDAY:** Join in the festivities — hear Jaquie Gipson and others in concert at the annual Snap Pea Jamboree at Earth Mountain Education Farms. Take Highway 12 to Weston and follow the signs. Information: www.earthmountainfarm.org.  
-Farmers' Market  
**SATURDAY (8 a.m.-Noon)** The Trinidad Farmer's Market is open every Saturday in Cimino Park until mid-October. Information: 719-846-7386.  
-Guadalupe Society  
**SUNDAY:** Potluck dinner will be held after 11 a.m. Mass and Rosary at Holy Trinity Church with dinner at Holy Family Hall. Questions, call Rose Mestas at (719) 846-3647.  
-Meditation Group  
**SUNDAY (11 a.m.)** Free group meets the 2nd Sunday of every month at the La Quinta Inn on Toupal Drive. Information: Noah Simpson, 719-680-0109.

**PUBLIC SERVICE**  
-ArtoCade Call for Artists  
**Hubcapalooza** at Galerle Vivante (214 E. Main St.): Carevously embellished hubcaps — paint, sculpt, collage, glue or whatever. All pieces will be for sale for under \$100. Need a hubcap? Some are available at the gallery for \$4 -- or find your own. Entries due by Sept. 5-6 -- show opens Sept. 12. Information: 719-334-0087.  
\***AutoMotivation** at Gallery Main (130 E. Main St.) Earthly bound vehicle-inspired art in any media. Stop by the gallery for a prospectus. Completed pieces to be delivered to gallery on Sept. 2-3 (10 a.m.-4 p.m.) Event opening reception is Sept. 5 (5-7 p.m.). Information: 719-846-1441.

**\*SUICIDE/CRISIS HOTLINES:**  
\***ADULT HOPE: 800-784-2433**  
\***TEEN: 877-968-8454**  
\***GLB-YOUTH: 866-488-7386**  
\***VET-2-VET: 877-838-2838**

## RIVER CALL

Purgatoire River Call as of: **08/05/14. South Side ditch: Priority # 40 / Appropriation date: 04/30/1868.**

**Trinidad Reservoir Accounting:**  
Release 234.23 AF  
Inflow 241.82 AF -- 121.92 CFS  
Evaporation 7.59 AF  
Content 12,241 AF  
Elevation 6,170.56  
Precipitation 0.12

**Downstream River Call / Amity Canal: 04/01/1893.**



## UNCERTAIN FUTURE

# Local Social Security office could be at risk

By Steve Block  
The Chronicle-News

Trinidad's Social Security office at 111 Waverly Ave. provides many important services to people in this area. Pam Baca works at that office, and said it's in imminent danger of being closed because of new policies by the Social Security Administration (SSA) that are directed at closing as many local field offices as possible in the near future.

Baca, a union representative of the American Federation of Government Employees (AFGE), said at last week's City Council work session that the SSA is determined to close hundreds of field offices across the United States without proper justification or any investigation into the potential harmful effects of such closures on local communities. Over the last few years the SSA has seen its budgets frozen and reduced, resulting in 11,000 fewer staff members to provide face-to-face customer service to the approximately 25 million Americans who visited SSA field offices in 2013.

Eighty SSA field offices have been closed since 2010, and those that remain have seen their hours of operation cut back to only three full days per week. The SSA has only justified the closings by saying its office space leases have expired, which Baca described as a shoddy excuse for the decline in customer service.

The SSA intends to direct its huge volume of customer service traffic strictly to its website at [www.mySSA.gov](http://www.mySSA.gov), and to its 1-800 phone number, but the wait times on the 1-800 line are unacceptably long, and the SSA has advised its customers to call after Tuesday each week, to

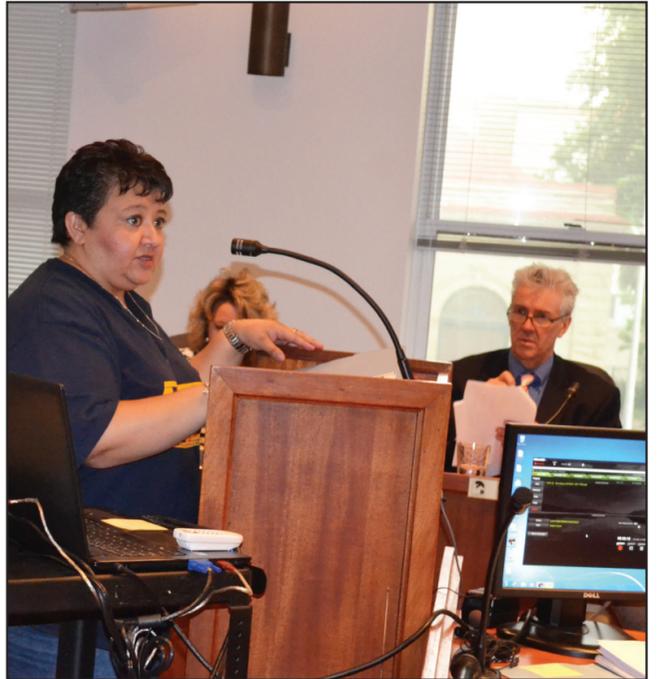
increase their chances of actually getting through to an SSA representative.

The customer service currently provided to people visiting SSA field offices includes personally helping them understand the nuances of Social Security and assisting them obtain replacement Social Security cards and Benefit Verification printouts. People with low-incomes and those with disabilities rely on their local SSA field offices to provide basic services in order to obtain food stamps, apply for jobs and secure mortgages.

Baca said the SSA has outsourced some of its database to a third party, Experian Credit Corporation of Ireland, to validate and safeguard some of its customers' information and the AFGE is not opposed to the SSA's using the website, but it must be safe, workable and accurate. Presently, the website is hard to use and very inaccurate in the information it provides to customers.

The New York Times and USA Today have reported that a Vietnamese criminal organization either broke into or was given access to an Experian database and compromised 200 million SSA accounts. Experian is currently under investigation by the U.S. Secret Service and the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI).

It is extremely difficult for SSA customers to register on the [myssa.gov](http://myssa.gov) website, in part because of having to answer tricky security questions required of those attempting to register. The field offices have self-help computers for their customers, but the Experian registration process is so difficult that SSA employees have to help customers get reg-



Steve Block / The Chronicle-News

Pam Baca, a union representative of the American Federation of Government Employees, spoke to City Council members about the possible closure of Social Security field offices, and how it negatively affects customer service. Acting City Manager Audra Garrett and City Attorney Les Downs are seated in the background.

istered, thus defeating the purpose of the self-help system, which is designed to save time for SSA workers.

Baca presented information at the work session saying that a study by the Pew Research Center had found that 40 percent of senior citizens either can't or won't use a computer, meaning that approximately 17 million people will be forced to go online to do their SSA business if the office closings continue.

AFGE is asking the U.S. Congress to impose a moratorium on further SSA field office closures, until the SSA comes clean about its plans for future office closures. The SSA had been very quietly working behind the scenes to close its field offices and

has not involved either the Congress or AFGE in the process. The field office closures are key in the SSA's Vision 2025 Plan, which strives to replace face-to-face customer service with online services.

Baca asked City Council to pass a resolution requesting that Trinidad's SSA field office remain open. The local office employs seven people.

A copy of a letter addressed to Carolyn Colvin, acting commissioner of the SSA, asking the SSA to reverse its decision to close its field offices and rely on online services instead, was presented to Councilmembers. Sixty-seven members of Congress had signed the letter.

## THE ARTS: RATON'S SHULER THEATER

# 'Wonderland' kids present Alice's journey down the rabbit hole



Tim Keller / The Chronicle-News

Raton's Shuler Theater is celebrating its centennial this month. One hundred years young — and still going strong. This theater community starts its kids on stage at a young age. When the Santa Fe Trail School for the Performing Arts presents its original production, "Wonderland," this weekend, it will feature many young actors that already have years of experience.

By Tim Keller  
Correspondent  
The Chronicle-News

RATON — Beginning the celebration of its centennial this month, Raton's Shuler Theater has spawned a vital theatrical community that starts its kids on stage from a young age. This weekend the Santa Fe Trail School for the Performing Arts presents three performances of its original production, "Wonderland—Adventures with Alice," featuring actors aged 7 to 17, many of whom already have years of stage experience.

In residence for the summer repertory season, Nora Leahy wrote a new script directly from Lewis Carroll's classic books, Alice's Adventures in Wonderland and Through

the Looking Glass. The play begins when young Alice—played by Asia Gentry—falls down a rabbit hole. As she searches for the way home, she meets a procession of the oddest characters imaginable.

"It's a great play for the kids," Leahy says, "because each gets a featured scene as Alice encounters one after another while trying to find her way home." Directed by Leahy's partner, Ian McCabe, the pair worked with their young actors to overcome preconceived notions of the characters based on Disney's animated 1951 film, "Alice in Wonderland," or Tim Burton's 2010 film of the same title.

"Most of the kids had seen Tim Burton's film," Leahy says. "One of our challenges has been to get them to create their own versions of these

characters. We also restored some of Lewis Carroll's great characters, like the duchess and Tweedledum & Tweedledee, that weren't in the films."

Another difference is that the new play is performed mostly in verse. "The first book opens with a ballad," Leahy says. "As I began, I loved the poem so much that I thought, 'I can write the whole play in verse!' A couple weeks later, I'd figured out that it was much harder than I'd imagined."

She included four scenes that break from verse, quoting directly from Carroll and using a variety

of approaches, all accompanied by original music composed for the production by Han Zaw. The Pool of Tears, the Cheshire Cat, the Caterpillar, and the cards in the garden of the Queen of Hearts, painting the roses red—all get musical accompaniment for choreographed dance and even puppets.

The cast and crew have been at work—it's actually looked suspiciously like play—six hours a day for three weeks, in a summer theater camp led by Leahy and McCabe. In addition to Gentry's starring role as Alice, other featured actors include Zoe Gomez as the Queen of Hearts, Emily Miera as the Mad Hatter, Laura Robertson as the Cheshire Cat, and Abby Greenly as the White Rabbit.

Johnny Gentry and Lijah Medina play Tweedledum and Tweedledee. Rounding out the cast are Nicholas Padilla-Gulley, Avery Feldman, Rebecca Ramirez, Kylene Pacheco, and Brandon Robertson. Others are Zander Osborn, Jaiden Osborn, Alie Irvin, Madison Lester, Dominic Baez, and Christina Padilla. Summer youth apprentices Kate Little and Ila Raine Medina are featured as the play's narrators.

Just as the cast spans a wide range of ages, Leahy and McCabe have designed the production to appeal to all ages. Leahy says, "The language is more heightened than most children's plays, but there are so many theatrical elements that

the story's being told on multiple levels at all times. Adults and small children can enjoy it side by side."

"Wonderland—Adventures with Alice" will be presented at the Shuler Theater Friday and Saturday nights at 7:30 p.m., and in a Sunday matinee at 2:30 p.m. General admission tickets are \$15 for adults, \$13 seniors, and \$5 children. Tickets and additional information are available at the Shuler Theater, 131 N. 2nd St., 575-445-4746.

**"It's a great play for the kids."**

Weather Sponsored by:  
**LA QUINTA INN & SUITES**  
Inn & Suites  
Wellness  
Hotel  
719-845-0102

**WEATHER WATCH**  
Wednesday: Mostly sunny, with a high near 88. West wind 5 to 10 mph becoming E-NE in the afternoon. **Night:** Partly cloudy,

with a low around 58. East wind around 5 mph becoming calm in the evening.  
**Thursday:** A 10 percent chance of showers and thunderstorms after noon. Mostly sunny, with a high near 87. Calm wind becoming E-NE around 5 mph in the afternoon. **Night:** A 10 percent chance of thunderstorms before midnight. Partly cloudy, with a low around 59. South wind around 10 mph. **Friday:** A 20 percent chance of showers

and thunderstorms after noon. Mostly sunny, with a high near 86. West wind 5 to 10 mph. **Night:** A 10 percent chance of showers and thunderstorms. Partly cloudy, with a low around 59. South wind around 10 mph. **Saturday:** A 20 percent chance of showers and thunderstorms. Partly sunny, with a high near 85. **Night:** A 10 percent chance of showers and thunderstorms. Partly cloudy, with a low around 59.