



MONDAY  
FEBRUARY 9, 2015

Vol. 139, No. 28

# THE CHRONICLE-NEWS

50 CENTS  
TRINIDAD  
COLORADO

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## THE FINE PRINT

**FEBRUARY 9 VALENTINE CANDY GRAMS THRU MONDAY:** Place your order for a fun Candy Gram to be delivered to your beloved on Feb 13, by a member of the Chamber of Commerce. Info: 719-846-9285. Proceeds benefit the Chamber Projects Fund.

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

**Trinidad Community Coop MONDAY (6-7:30 p.m.)** American Sign Language Classes begin at the Coop, Corner of Elm and Maple Streets. Sign up: Joni Steiner, 719-680-0215.

**Mesa Cowboy Church MONDAY (6 p.m.) NOW AT NEW LOCATION:** Potluck fellowship every second Monday at New Hope Ministries Church, turn right on Hwy 160 east of Trinidad and go 10 miles (across from Feed & More.) Information: James Duran, 719-846-8590.

**Trinidad Schools MONDAY (6 p.m.)** The Board of Education will hold a special meeting at the District Administration Office, 612 Park St. Information: 719-845-2048.

## Today's Quote

**"A happy family is but an earlier heaven."**

—George Bernard Shaw

**FEBRUARY 10 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.)** Step it up, swing your partner, join the fun at the Square Dance Club at LaCasa on Hwy 12 in Jansen. 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.

**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.

**Abstraction & Refraction FRIDAY (6-8 p.m./Opening Public Reception)** A fine abstract art and jewelry show hosted by TAAC opens at Gallery Main, 130 E. Main and runs thru Feb. 26. Info: Chloe Butler, 719-846-1441. Proceeds benefit the Youth Art Program.

**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 Mozengo, 719-868-2288.

**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 will be at the FC Community Church, 10377 Santa Fe Trail. Info: 719-846-6018.

**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 Ave. Info: 719-845-4880.

**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.

**OPERA TRINIDAD SATURDAY (NOON)** Enjoy LA FORZA DEL DESTINO by Giuseppe Verdi that will be showing at the Movie Picture Showhouse.

**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.

**FUN & FUNDRAISER DINNER FEBRUARY 28 (6 p.m.)** Trinidad State will host their annual fundraiser dinner "Aim for the Fence" with guest speaker Colorado Rockies great Todd Helton. Info: Linda Perry (719-846-5649) or Toni DeAngelis (719-846-5520).

**CALL FOR FUN! MARCH 14 (entry deadline)** Call for artists for "There's No Such Thing as an Ordinary Cat" all-media art show scheduled for March 20 at Oasis Studios/Galerie Vivant, 214/218 E. Main. Info: Susan Palmer, 805-603-6181.

## RIVER CALL

**Purgatoire River Call as of: 02/06/15. Johns Flood ditch: Priority # 5 --- Appropriation date: 03/20/1862.**

**Trinidad Reservoir Accounting:**  
Release 0.14 AF  
Inflow 30.14 AF -- 15.19 CFS  
Evaporation 0 AF  
Content 16,426 AF  
Elevation 6,178.30  
Precipitation 0

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



## ALL PROPERTY RECOVERED

# County Sheriff's Deputies apprehend burglars: Four arrested after rural Aguilar theft



David Brown, Trinidad



Shelby Choate Brown, Trinidad



Oscar Meraz, Trinidad



Vincent Vigil, Pueblo

Photos courtesy of the Las Animas County Sheriff's Department

By Steve Block  
The Chronicle-News

Four people have been arrested and each faces multiple felony counts for their roles in a burglary at a residence in rural Aguilar on Jan. 23, 2015, with the total value of the property stolen being estimated at approximately \$22,000. David Scott Brown, 25, Shelby Choate, 23, and Oscar Meraz, 18, all of Trinidad, and Vincent Vigil, 25,

of Pueblo have all been charged in the theft of two vehicles, multiple firearms, a safe, a 55-inch TV, jewelry and a laptop computer.

County Sheriff's Deputies were called to the residence at 25700 County Road 50.9 when the homeowner came home from work at approximately 5:30 p.m. and noticed that his house had been broken into and said he didn't know if anyone was still inside. He told deputies that his green 1997 Chevy

pickup truck was missing, along with his wife's blue 2003 Chrysler PT Cruiser.

Eyewitnesses had noticed three males in a black Chevrolet Blazer with out of state license plates in the area that day where the burglary occurred near Trujillo Creek. All of the property was later recovered and the four alleged thieves arrested by Sheriff's Deputies, who were assisted in their efforts by Trinidad City Police.

The PT Cruiser was recovered from the El Moro rest stop along Interstate 25, while the pickup was recovered from a ravine approximately one mile west of the Trinidad Skate Park. The safe containing the guns was recovered from a pond near County Road 20.8.

Each of the four arrestees faces single felony counts of Burglary, Theft, Conspiracy to Commit Burglary and Theft and Criminal Trespass.

## THIRD DISTRICT COURT

# Truancy Program keeps kids in school

By Steve Block  
The Chronicle-News

Kids can only make progress in school if they go to school every day. To that end, the Third District court has a truancy program that's led by District Court Judge Leslie J. Gerbracht and has succeeded in

truancy program at the most recent Board of Education meeting.

Gerbracht was making her first appearance before the Board during the 2014-2015 school year and she said she wanted to update the Board on the progress the truancy program had made so far this year.

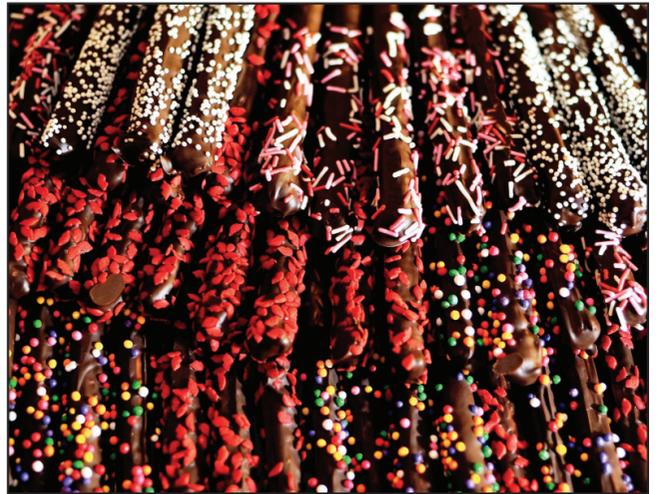
"We have 16 students at Fisher's Peaks Elementary that we review with Shonie Pachelli (the school's principal) on a regular basis," Judge Gerbracht said. "We have four young people from the middle school and six students from the high school. So that's a total of 26 students that I'm reviewing on a regular basis this year."

The judge said she'd closed 34 cases since starting the program, some because they had graduated from high school and some because their families moved out of the area. The program is very active, with the judge reviewing all of the 26 cases about every three weeks.

Pachelli, Michael Guadagnoli, assistant middle school principal, and George Dasko, high school principal, accompany their truancy students to court for the program.

"We've had some really nice successes," she said. "I think some of you have heard me say before that where we can make some really good progress is with the really small kids. If they're not in school it's a parent problem."

She invited the Board members to come to court when the truancy cases were on the docket, so they could see the program in action. The truancy cases are typically scheduled for just after the end of a school day, and the court sessions usually last for just half an hour. There haven't been any new truancy cases this year, and she said she believed that was because the school's principals were doing the right things on the front



Photos by Tim Keller / The Chronicle-News

From white-chocolate mice to cream puffs to cookies, Friday's 5th annual Chocolate Factory at Raton High School will provide a smorgasbord of chocolate confections. Puddings, donuts, cakes, brownies, fudge, and truffles join a chocolate fountain for dipping fruits, pretzels, and nuts—something for every chocoholic.

## ROMANCE IS IN THE AIR

# Chocolate Factory returns to sugar-charge Valentine's weekend

By Tim Keller  
Correspondent  
The Chronicle-News

RATON – A growing body of research suggests that chocolate has multiple health benefits—the Mayo Clinic's website reports reduced risk factors for heart disease, stroke, heart attack, and diabetes, aided by lowered blood pressure. For Valentine's weekend, you might do that gym workout, or

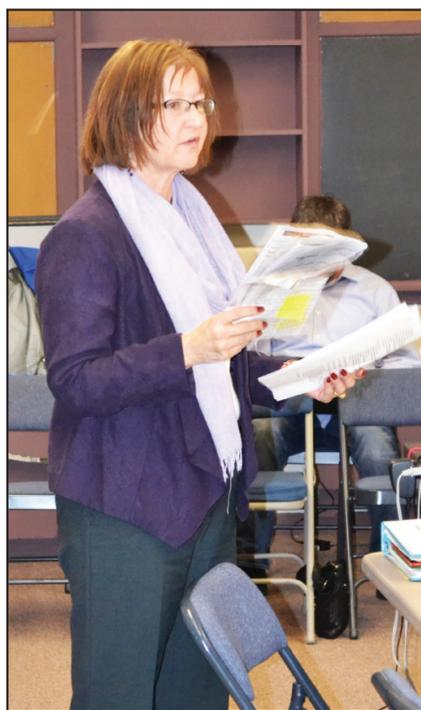


you can enjoy all the chocolate you can eat at the 5th annual Chocolate Factory Friday evening at Raton High School. (Best idea: do both.)

Presented by the school's impressive FCCLA chapter—Family, Career and Community Leaders of America—Chocolate Factory raises funds to send 12 of the group's members to the organization's New Mexico spring conference in Albuquerque March 4-7.



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Steve Block / The Chronicle-News

Third District Court Judge Leslie Gerbracht addressed the Trinidad Board of Education about the Court's Truancy Program.

motivating parents to make sure their children make progress with their education. Judge Gerbracht presented information about the

cause the school's principals were doing the right things on the front

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## WEATHER WATCH

**Monday:** Sunny, with a high near 70. West southwest wind 5 to 10 mph. **Night:** Mostly clear, with a low around 35. West

southwest wind 5 to 10 mph. **Tuesday:** Mostly sunny, with a high near 64. West southwest wind 5 to 10 mph. **Night:** A slight chance of rain before 9 p.m., then a chance of snow. Mostly cloudy, with a low around 32. South wind 5 to 10 mph becoming northwest after midnight. Chance of precipitation is 30 percent. New precipitation amounts of less than a tenth of an inch possible.

**Wednesday:** A chance of snow before 1pm, then a chance of rain and snow. Mostly cloudy, with a high near 42. North wind 5 to 10 mph. Chance of precipitation is 50 percent. **Night:** A 10 percent chance of snow. Partly cloudy, with a low around 24. North northwest wind around 5 mph becoming west southwest after midnight.

**Thursday:** Sunny, with a high near 53. South southwest wind around 5 mph.

Weather Sponsored by:

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# COMMUNITY

## Truancy Program keeps kids in school

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Steve Block / the Chronicle-News

Third District Court Judge Leslie Gerbracht explains to Trinidad Board of Education members the Court's Truancy Program that helps keep local kids in school.

end and working with parents to make sure their students were in class. Some of the truancy students are coming to the end of their contracts with the Court, and the judge said she hoped she wouldn't see them in Court in the future.

"If we can keep the kids in school without having to come see me, that would be wonderful. My purpose is to help kids stay in school, and however I can help the principals and the school board in doing that, I am interested in doing it. I think you would really enjoy attending those sessions, because it's great to see how proud those kids are when they get a good review from Ms. Pachelli. We do have some hiccups. I had a mom who was in jail for 24 hours because she hadn't appeared in court numerous times, even though she'd had several chances. I don't think she'll miss a court appearance with her student again. So there's lots of praise and lots of clapping, but there are also consequences for the parents when they don't follow through."

The judge urged Board members to consider providing some funding to the truancy prevention program when its budget sit-

uation is stabilized. With state funding for education at \$6,700 per student, per year, and with 26 kids in the truancy program, that comes to approximately \$175,000 the school district stands to gain if all those kids were in school on October 1, 2014, the day the Colorado Department of Education does its annual statewide student count.

The judge said she has the same 26 students in the truancy program that she had last year. The families those students come from need counseling support to improve their family situations, she said, and asked the Board to consider funding such a counselor.

"There's a lot more we could do with these kids and their families, working with social service agencies, and it wouldn't take \$100,000. It might take \$15,000. I'd like you to keep that in your minds, and think about what you could actually do that would help the principals and help me with the kids that are in the program. This program is bringing in a significant amount of money into this school district, because they're in school instead of being out of school."

## Chocolate Factory returns to sugar-charge Valentine's weekend

... Continued from Page 1

Chocolate Factory, presented with romantic low lighting and red tablecloths in the RHS library from 4 to 7:30 p.m. Friday evening (Feb. 13), is an all-you-can-eat self-serve chocolate buffet with a constantly restocked supply of 23 chocolate treats. There's also a constant chocolate fountain for dipping an endless supply of pretzels, strawberries, cherries and other fruits.

"Each of our 23 student members brings four batches of a chocolate recipe, usually made by the students or their mothers," says teacher Myra Baird. "I keep a master list so we avoid duplication. The student servers shuttle between the kitchen and the event keeping the plates filled. I have a brigade of adult helpers here in the kitchen to help keep it all moving."

Among Baird's preparations: ordering 100 pounds of strawberries for the popular chocolate fountain, provided by another of Baird's student groups, the RHS Culinary Arts catering team.

Past offerings have included chocolate-dipped Oreos, chocolate truffles, fudge pecan bars, black magic cake, chocolate-covered marshmallows, chocolate tarts, white-chocolate mice, peanut clusters, "dirt cups" (chocolate crumbs over chocolate pudding) and chocolate-almond candy with coconut.

"We want people to come and enjoy the evening, with the romantic atmosphere and light," Baird says, "but this year we're also providing a take-out option because we've



Treat photos by Tim Keller / The Chronicle-News

found that some people just can't stay. "There's a night of basketball games in the gym Friday, along with demonstrations from a weeklong cheerleading clinic, so we know that a lot of people will be getting take-out to carry back to the gym. I've

ordered a case of Chinese take-out containers this year."

The dine-in option costs \$7 for all-you-can-eat. Children four and under eat free with a paid adult. The take-out option costs \$5 per filled Chinese take-out container.

Raton's FCCLA students traveling to Albuquerque for the annual state spring conference include chapter president Ashlyn Martinez and state officer candidates Alyssa Aragon, Autumn Archuleta, Brianna Marquez, and Gabrielle Sanchez. STAR event participants include Ivy Fernandez, Lauren Romero, Sofia Maddaleni, Alejandro Esparza, and Jacob Hattaway. Jami Lopez and Natale Castellini round out Raton's contingent of 12.

Chocolate Factory raises funds to help the students pay for transportation, rooms in the conference hotel, event registration, and meals.

The other FCCLA members providing chocolates Friday night are Ashley Atwater, Mia Maestas, Shania Sanchez, Camille Gonzales, Halle Medina, Olivia Ware, William Holland, Nayelli Acosta, Cheyann Duran, Adrianna Sanchez, and Reyes Aragon.

Jumpstart a heart-healthy Valentine's weekend by jumping on a treadmill, or just walk from red tablecloth to red tablecloth,

making the difficult decisions about which chocolates to enjoy at Friday evening's 5th annual Chocolate Factory.



Raton High School sits atop Tiger Drive, the western extension of the Clayton Highway, I-25 exit 451. Information (575) 445-3541.



## EXCITING DEBATES

### Colorado GOP looks to make big education changes

By KRISTEN WYATT  
Associated Press

DENVER (AP) — Colorado Republicans are using their new power in the state Legislature to float a raft of conservative proposals to change public education — but many of the proposals stand little chance of becoming law.

From private-school tax credits to new sex education policies, Republicans say they're using their new Senate majority to address parent complaints. The GOP holds the Senate for the first time in a decade, and Republicans are advancing their education priorities after years of rejection.

Sen. Kevin Lundberg summed it up last week when a GOP-led Education Committee approved his idea to give tax credits to parents who don't send their children to public school.

"I have spent most of my adult life in one way or the other to finding the best solutions for this very issue," Lundberg said.

Democrats voted against Lundberg's idea, one derisively calling it "vouchers light." But the bill advanced.

Other GOP measures:

— A bill to take racial preferences out of a new funding formula for public colleges and universities. Republican sponsor Sen.

Kent Lambert says it's wrong to give colleges more money for higher numbers of black, Latino or American Indian students. "Is this the kind of branding we want for our Colorado universities?" he asked. The bill awaits a final Senate vote.

— A bill to revive a 1990s idea giving parents broad authority to block school curriculum or opt out of vaccines they oppose.

Among other things, the "Parent's Bill of Rights" would send parents information about how to opt out of vaccines. It could also give parents more ability to block instruction they oppose, a conflict that spilled over in Jefferson County last year when hundreds of students walked out of class to protest proposed changes to the U.S. history curriculum.

"Parents need to make the decision when it comes to the moral, the educational, the medical — the upbringing of their children," said Sen. Tim Neville, R-Littleton. The measure passed the Education Committee.

— A bill related to sex abuse awareness in public schools may be amended to add changes to Colorado's sex education.

Colorado allows parents to opt their kids out of public sex ed, but some conservatives complain parents don't get enough warning when sex ed is coming up and that parents should instead have to opt their kids in for sex education.

— A handful of Republican bills in both chambers would reduce required student testing. "There is a wave of dissent against" current testing requirements, said Sen. Vicki Marble, R-Fort Collins.

The proposals give Republicans a

chance to flex their muscle after years of Democratic-led efforts on education, from new teacher accountability standards to an extra effort to boost literacy.

Democrats seem confident that many of the proposals are aimed at narrow interest groups and that they have the votes to keep them off the governor's desk.

"There are a lot of bill ideas Republicans have wanted to run a long time, and now that they have the majority they're running them," said Sen. Michael Johnston, D-Denver and former high school principal.

"I just think that on most of these ideas, the general movement of public opinion has drifted away."

Education lobbyists are circumspect about the partisan battles.

"When you have a division — one house under one party and the other under the other party — that makes for exciting debate," said Jane Urschel of the Colorado Association of School Boards. "And yes, it does mean that some bills will be proposed that they know will die in the second house, but at least they've been aired and discussed."

### Arkansas Valley Regional Medical Center Physician Clinics

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Board Certified in Family Practice

**Hazel J. Abool, M.D.**  
Specializing in Internal Medicine

**Aimee L. Battaglia, D.O.**  
Board Certified in Family Practice

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