

RATON ~ NEW MEXICO NEWS



Photo by Tim Keller

Raton High School Art Club members prepare for Wednesday's annual show. From left, back row: Jessica Vertovec, Augusta Ahlm, Erin Gansz, Samantha Iacobelli, Tamara Johnson, T.J. Hall. Front row: Kaycee Bustos, Hilary Bayliss, Heather Cochran, Heather Romero.

RHS presents arts and writing awards shows at International Bank

By **TIM KELLER**
The Chronicle-News

Two united Raton High School arts clubs present their big annual student awards shows this week - with a twist. While past shows have filled the school's media center, this year they move downtown to the International Room at International Bank, the same venue used by the prestigious International Art Show each September.

Wednesday evening at 7:00, the RHS Art Club will present a ceremony awarding high-quality award ribbons and cash prizes to student winners in eight categories of art plus five best-of-class awards and Best in Show. The following evening, Thursday at 7:00, in the same room with the art show still on display, Students for Students' Publishing will present its ceremony awarding similar ribbons and cash prizes to winning student writers in the six categories of the "Through the Eye of the Tiger" annual writing competition. Topping the evening will be the Writer of the Year Award, won last year by Greg Ordemann.

Community contributions to the two awards funds this year caused each to grow dramatically over past years. The writing awards will be dividing \$1700 in prize monies this year, while the art show, with 260 pieces entered, will divvy up \$2300. This year's increased



Photo by Elizabeth Strnad

"Black Beauty", an illustration from the new RHS writing awards book "Through the Eye of the Tiger", from a photograph by senior Elizabeth Strnad.

awards funds will allow all winners, in 1st, 2nd, and 3rd place of each category, to win a cash prize along with the large ribbon. One goal is motivation, that students will feel valued

for their work and continue pursuing their artistic directions.

Both contests are open to all students of Raton Middle School and Raton High School for works produced in a class or independently. The writing contest also includes the elementary grades. Awards are determined by qualified independent judges. Much of the art will be priced for sale, further demonstrating to the young artists the value of their talents and work. Winning writers will see their work published by Students for Students' Publishing.

In fact, the hardbound book "Through the Eye of the Tiger" containing all of last year's winning writings and many winning art works has just been published and will be distributed to last year's winners at Thursday evening's presentations.

In addition to students, staff, and families, Wednesday and Thursday evening's shows and awards presentations are open to the public. Refreshments will be served and student art works and publications will be available for purchase. Added to the award ribbons and cash prizes, attendance by the public will add further encouragement to the community's young artists and writers.

RHS Band earns superior ratings

By **TIM KELLER**
The Chronicle-News

The Raton High School band Tuesday performed at the Northwest District Concert and Sightreading Festival in Bloomfield, New Mexico, earning three "Superior" ratings. RHS was the highest-scoring school, outranking all other participants, including those from larger schools with 4A and 5A standings.

The performance qualified the RHS band for the 2010 New Mexico State Concert Band Contest. Band director Russell

Woods expressed surprise, excitement, and appreciation as his young musicians rose to such a level, praising their dedication and performance.

Woods came to Raton Schools in the middle of the 2007-2008 school year to fill a vacancy; this is his first full year as Director of Performing Music for the Raton Schools, directing both the band and choir at both Raton High School and Raton Middle School.

Tuesday's triumph signals a resurgence of the Raton music program.



High Praise Ranch volunteers Suzy Gayle, Patty Kneip, and Denise Richards, spend Thursday handing out brochures for the High Praise Ranch located east of Raton.



New Mexico National Guard recruiters, Specialist Melissa La Porte and Staff Sgt. Chris Griego look on as Jeremiah Trujillo checks out some of the material about the New Mexico National Guard.



An almost carnival-type atmosphere filled the Raton Convention Center during Thursday's Health Fair.



Photos by Laura L. Brewer

Shelly Porter, organizer of the Health Fair, and Steve Brooks, Team Builders, speak with KRTN radio personality Buddy Springer during this year's event.

RHS students pledge to keep their prom 'BuzzFree'

By **TIM KELLER**
The Chronicle-News

With prom coming Saturday night, a new pilot program has just arrived at Raton High School. Sponsored by the Colfax County DWI Program, "BuzzFree Prom" rewards students who sign a pledge to not use drugs or alcohol on prom night. Students who sign the pledge will receive a BuzzFree ID tag which can be presented to participating retailers to receive prom discounts.

The list of retailers is skewed toward restaurants and florists - Black Jack Steakhouse and Flowerland were the first two to sign on. RHS junior class officers and the Colfax County DWI Program have been out signing up many more businesses throughout the past week. Participating retailers will be given a poster that identifies them as a BuzzFree Prom supporter and participant. They'll also be featured in advertisements for the BuzzFree Prom this week.

DWI Program Coordinator Mary Gansz says Raton High School was selected to pilot the new program because it's the



Photos by Tim Keller

Raton High School members of the Colfax County DWI Student Task Force gathered last week as they planned for this week's BuzzFree Prom program. Pictured from left are Justin Apodaca, Amy Grubelnik, Haley Gansz, Arissa Maldonado, Chelsea Chavez, Jordan Valdez, Christina Harrison, Megan Holland, and Tamara Johnson.

biggest school in the county. "We thought if we can make this work here we will take the program to the other county schools next year."

Gansz continues, "BuzzFree Prom is about making responsible choices, on prom night or any other night for that matter. And it's about acknowledging the

right choice because smart decisions aren't always the easiest, or even the most obvious. Prom night is very important in the eyes of most teens. It is fun, memorable, and can be quite expensive. But when alcohol and other drugs enter the picture, it can be quite dangerous - even deadly." She cites a study that

showed 46 percent of all fatal crashes on prom weekends in 2004 involved alcohol.

Retailers who participate in this year's pilot program, Gansz says, "are sending a message that they value the kids and their smart decisions. The result should be a prom night to remember; and for all the right reasons." For participating teens, they get a substantial discount on flowers and they can afford to go out to a special restaurant before the prom Saturday night. Best of all, they and their loved ones can feel much more confident that on Sunday they'll have nothing but golden memories of this year's prom.

18th Annual Colfax County Health Fair draws big crowd

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at reduced rates. Visitors were encouraged to donate blood, learn about healthy life-style choices, and volunteer for many worthwhile organizations.

The fun atmosphere was tempered at times with very serious subjects like Alternatives to Violence, Save our Suicides, and Camp Bereavement on the High Praise Ranch, Foster Care and adoption.

Held in April every year, the Colfax County Health Fair gets bigger every year, and provides more health-related services for all ages, from birth to seniors. According to one vendor, the number of visitors stayed pretty steady throughout the day, but was busiest when several students arrived after local schools dismissed in the early afternoon. For more information about the health fair, contact Shelly Porter at the Colfax County Extension Office, (575)445-8071.