

# RATON ~ NEW MEXICO NEWS



Juvenile probation and parole officer Steven Brooks agrees says gang prevention programs will be better now than later.

## To Be or Not to Be: Gangs in Raton

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It'll be a lot more cost effective now. And we'll save more kids." In other words, getting out ahead of the problem will be much more effective than waiting until everyone in

suppression - he or she often finds the greatest effect in the prevention stage, working with students in the schools. There's been discussion within Raton Public Schools during the past year about creat-

school-based, law-enforcement officer-instructed classroom curriculum," reads the organization's introduction. "With prevention as its primary objective, the program is intended as an immunization against delinquency, youth violence, and gang membership."

G.R.E.A.T. has developed partnerships with nationally-recognized organizations such as the Boys & Girls Clubs of America and the National Association of Police Athletic Leagues, encouraging positive relationships among the community, parents, schools, and law enforcement officers. The program's lessons focus on providing life skills to students to help them avoid using delinquent behavior and violence to solve problems, offering a continuum of components for students and their families.

Steve Brooks maintains that if Raton doesn't act soon to address a growing gang problem, the costs will only grow much higher later. Those costs will be measured not only in dollars, but in damages to property...and to young people's lives. Chief Sisneros agrees, but he lacks the budget to do much. Yet doing nothing now may prove, in the long run, to be "penny wise and dollar foolish".

Brooks would like to see unified action from throughout the community - through



The Raton police chief's office displays this flag, left over from the days when Raton did have gang prevention - before the money ran out.

town agrees that there's a problem. By then, it will be difficult to handle.

"We need to start in the elementary schools," Brooks maintains. "There are 8-year-olds here in Raton who have gang signs posted on their MySpace pages."

Chief Sisneros agrees. In fact, from his own desk he looks at a large blue flag he's hung on the wall. The flag reads, "G.R.E.A.T. - Gang Resistance Education and Training." He recalls, "We ran that program here in Raton, at the middle school, from 1993 to 1996." Raton Police Captain Mike Gagliardi joins Sisneros to recall those days. "The G.R.E.A.T. Program is like the D.A.R.E. program," Gagliardi says, "but it's specifically aimed at gang resistance."

Why was the program discontinued? "Lack of funds," says Gagliardi. The best RPD can do nowadays, he says, is to send an officer to visit with a class when a teacher requests it. Chief Sisneros, a 1980 graduate of Raton High School, suggests a two-pronged approach that he believes would prevent gangs from gaining any further foothold in Raton.

"Re-institute the G.R.E.A.T. Program, and place a full-time resource officer in the Raton schools," Sisneros says. The resource officer is a position already common in large cities and a growing number of small towns. A police officer is assigned to full-time duty in the schools and throughout school programs. Sometimes the officer wears plain clothes, though identified as an officer, not undercover. Other resource officers remain in uniform. The officer gets to know the students, and vice versa.

Though the officer might engage in all three levels of combating gang activity - prevention, intervention, and

ing the resource police officer position, in conjunction with RPD. "We're looking into that," says Sisneros, "but at this point the problem is staffing." He means funding. He says there are federal grants available to support such a position but, again, he lacks the staff to devote someone to writing and pursuing the necessary grant applications.

As for the G.R.E.A.T. Program, that's still going strong - throughout the country, though not in Raton.



A railroad sign in Raton is tagged with the sign of West Side Locos.

Administered by the Bureau of Justice Assistance, in the United States Department of Justice, the long-running program offers a wealth of assistance materials and programs, many of them at no cost. The bottom line, though, is the training and pay of personnel to deliver the programs themselves. To bring the program back to Raton would require new funds.

The G.R.E.A.T. Program maintains an excellent website, www.great-online.org, which outlines its four programs: a 13-session middle school curriculum, an elementary school curriculum, a summer program, and a families training program. "The G.R.E.A.T. Program is a

the schools, from community organizations and businesses, and with the police. With adequate funding, Sisneros would like to place a full-time resource officer within the Raton schools, and he'd like to send one or two of his officers to receive G.R.E.A.T. Program training so they can again deliver the program's various components in Raton.

As posed by Brooks and Sisneros, the question is whether the community of Raton can afford to implement such proactive programs. Or, perhaps more aptly stated, can the community of Raton afford not to?

This 2-part series is archived at www.TimKellerArts.com.

## RATON POLICE BLOTTER

### ARRESTED

■ 05/19/09- Joseph Garcia, 20-Bench Warrant out of Magistrate Court for failure to comply with conditions of probation of DWI offense

■ 05/26/09- Leo Jiron- Driving with suspended revoked license, Bench Warrant out of Bernalillo for failure to appear and Arrest Warrant out of Municipal Court for unlawful taking of a motor vehicle

■ 05/26/09- Joe Lopez JR.- Bench Warrant out of Magistrate Court for failure to attend Aspen Program, failure to complete MIP program.

■ 05/26/09- Joe Lope Jr.- Bench Warrant out of Municipal Court for failure to appear for possession of alcoholic liquor by minor, resisting obstructing

refusing to obey, unlawful use of license suspended revoked, larceny

■ 05/26/09- Brittany Sandoval- Arrest Warrant for probation violation for unlawful taking of a motor vehicle.

### CITATIONS

■ 05/19/09- Cesar Rodriguez-Holguin- Battery

■ 05/20/09- Toby Martinez- No proof of insurance

■ 05/20/09- Jerico Fernandez- Driver to be licensed

■ 05/21/09- Larry Montova- Dog at large and vicious animal

■ 05/21/09- Ricky Robinson- Speeding

■ 05/26/09- Domonic Apodaca cited for no valid insurance

■ 05/26/09- Jacob Fleming cited for stop/yield violation

### INCIDENTS

■ 05/22/09- Radio Shack- victim of shoplifting

■ 05/27/09- Shaeryn Chavez- victim of burglary

■ 05/27/09- James Baxter- victim of criminal damage to property

### CRASHES

■ 05/21/09- Ernest C. Vernon Jr and Savannah Martinez were involved in an accident causing moderate damage

■ 05/21/09- Kindred Thorton and Annette Pruett were involved in an accident causing moderate damage

■ 05/21/09- Raymond Muniz struck a fence belonging to the Raton Housing Authority, he swirled to avoid striking a dog that had run out in front of him.

■ 05/26/09- Jacob Fleming and Louis Profazi were involved in a crash and causing heavy damage to both vehicles



Photo by Tim Keller

RHS students Jeffery Redlick and Dale Proctor on the Shuler stage earlier this year

## Shuler issues casting call to kids for 'Little Mermaid'

By TIM KELLER  
The Chronicle-News

The beloved children's classic "Little Mermaid" will be performed by a large local cast on Raton's Shuler Theater stage in two public performances Saturday, June 13. The only thing is, the cast hasn't been...cast. Yet.

Next Monday, June 8, from 10:00 a.m. to noon at the Shuler, a tour team from the Missoula Children's Theater (MCT) company will run auditions to cast 50-60 local students for "Little Mermaid". Eligible to participate are students entering 1st grade through 12th grade. There is no guarantee that everyone who auditions will be cast in the play, but with more than 50 planned for the show it's clear that students showing up by 10:00 Monday morning should be pre-

pared and available for a busy week.

Rehearsals will begin almost immediately after auditions are completed and will last 4? hours each day Monday through Saturday. There will be a dress rehearsal Saturday, then public performances at the Shuler at 3:00 and 5:30 p.m. Saturday afternoon. Not all cast members will be needed at every rehearsal session. Those who do rehearse the full time will be asked to bring a sack lunch, dinner, or snack. A detailed rehearsal schedule will be distributed with cast assignments at the conclusion of the audition Monday.

The MCT team brings its own set, lights, costumes, props and make-up. All it lacks is a cast. It goes from town to town throughout the summer putting on its

productions. MCT is a non-profit arts organization based in Missoula, Montana, touring all over the United States and beyond. Next week's residency at the Shuler Theater in Raton is made possible by the Santa Fe Trail School for the Performing Arts with funding from the Peryatel family in memory of Iris Peryatel, and the Gatti family in memory of Ann Gatti.

The Shuler Theater asks young people to spread the word and bring brothers, sisters, cousins, and friends with them to the "Little Mermaid" auditions at the Shuler next Monday, June 8, at 10:00 a.m. This is a group audition: no advance preparation is necessary, although MCT says "a smile never hurts." Students are asked to just come and be ready to have a fun time.



Photo by Tim Keller

RHS students show off their awards from the prestigious National Spanish Exam. From left are Jimmy Carroll, Gloria Flores, Dale Proctor, Franko Donati, Nathan Aguirre, and Jesus Carbajal; in front are Angelica Saenz and Arthur Armijo. Aron Mott and Sara Mayes also won awards.

## RHS students excel in National Spanish Exam

By TIM KELLER  
The Chronicle-News

By earning a grade of "A" for Spanish class in the fall semester, 20 Raton High School Spanish students qualified to take the 2009 National Spanish Exam administered by the American Association of Teachers of Spanish and Portuguese. The nation's best Spanish students, more than 115,000 students in grades 6 through 12, earn a berth at the test each year. Students scoring in the top half of those "A" students win special recognition and awards.

Half of Raton's delegation scored in the top half and brought home awards, led by Jimmy Carroll who won a silver medal for scoring between the 85th and 95th percentiles among

Spanish I students nationally. Gloria Flores won a bronze medal among Spanish II students in the "outside experience" classification, placing between the 75th and 85th percentile nationally.

Other RHS national award winners included Nathan Aguirre for Spanish IV; Aron Mott for Spanish III; Angelica Saenz for Spanish II; and Franko Donati, Jesus Carbajal, Dale Proctor, Arthur Armijo, and Sara Mayes for Spanish I.

Additional RHS students who earned a grade of A in the fall semester and competed in the National Spanish Exam were Steven Vanderpool and Alex Grine in Spanish IV; Hannah Stolarczyk and Claudio Saenz in Spanish III; Rebekah Henson in Spanish II; and Toni Sproule,

Mallorie Salazar; Hillary Roberts, Jarred Aragon, and Mariah Pilmore in Spanish I.

The exam was administered locally via computers in early March. Dr. Ed Hockett, Raton High School's Spanish teacher, credits Raton Schools Assistant Superintendent Paul Malano for providing the funds to pay for the exams for Raton's twenty participating students.

In addition to class levels, students are grouped for rating according to levels of experience with the Spanish language. The "regular" category has no special experience with Spanish. The "outside experience" category is for students who do have outside advantages. The final experience level is for "native/bilingual" Spanish speakers.