

RATON ~ NEW MEXICO NEWS

Standing room only at MCMC special meeting

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Fernandez and several miners from Raton that attended the committee hearing in Santa Fe. Fernandez invited Rep. Thomas Garcia, who sponsored the bill, to visit Raton to discuss HB 100, which proposes to change the number of MCMC board members from the current five to nine. Because Rep. Garcia is currently in legislative session in Santa Fe, Dr. Vigil attended as Garcia's representative.

Vigil addressed the standing room only crowd that attended the meeting held in the MCMC Long Term Care Facility meeting room on Wednesday afternoon. He explained that with a larger board, the hospital and long-term care facility would benefit by having a larger number of individuals with a variety of backgrounds and experiences and broader community representation. Lawyers, doctors, accountants and nurses on the board would be able to provide their own personal experiences and expertise for any number of concerns that may arise. Vigil congratulated the current board members on their excellent work and expressed his confidence in CFO Albino Martinez' ability, who had temporarily served as the CEO until a new CEO could be found and thanked Martinez for "connecting the past with the future." Vigil also stated that he believed that MCMC has the best CEO in the state with the hiring of Mike Carter, who began his duties for MCMC on Monday. Vigil emphatically said that Rep. Garcia had no hidden agenda, and there is no



Miners and other community members attend the special meeting called by the MCMC Board of Trustees to voice concerns about HB 100, pending in the NM legislature. (Photo by Laura L. Brewer)

plan to move the hospital or gain control over the trust fund. He shared with the audience that there are already three or four hospitals that are failing financially and that he didn't want to see that happen to MCMC. His believes a larger board would be better able to address complicated economics in the future.

Fernandez emphatically replied that he was very concerned about HB 100 because it would change the ratio of miners on the board, going from 40% to 33% if the bill passes. And, that the original intent of the creation of Miners' hospital was to provide care for disabled miners. The amended bill, as it reads now, would include one doctor, one nurse, three miners, two public at large, one accountant or attorney, and one interest group involved in some aspect of mining. Fernandez was also concerned that the board of trustees was not included in discussions about

the bill before it was submitted. When he asked, "Who here wants to see the bill passed," no hands went up. But, when he asked the audience to raise their hands if they wanted to "kill the bill," it looked to be unanimous.

Each member of the board spoke in turn to Vigil.

Randy Rubin stated, "My concern is the same. I don't see the need for it." He also voiced concern that perhaps this administration's motives did not include taking control of the trust fund and moving the hospital, but "In future years - things change. Perhaps not this administration, but..."

Jenny Garcia quietly said, "Kill the Bill. That's all I have to say." After which the audience erupted in applause.

MCMC board member and a member of the local miner's union have been very vocal about its opposition to the bill, Mike Colangelo, stood to address the crowd.

"I really don't have to say anything. You know how I feel. Kill the Bill!"

The lone dissenting voice came from board member Dr. Byrch Williams, who was on a teleconference call because he couldn't attend the meeting in person. Williams agreed that generally a larger board could be beneficial to an organization because of the broader expertise available through its members.

Later, several members of the audience spoke to Vigil, all saying the same thing, "Kill the Bill." Alex Romero, who had been a miner for 32 years, now retired, explained that changing the make-up of the board is "taking the voice of the miner away."

Jake Tapia, another retired miner stated his disbelief at Vigil's statement that the state was not after the trust fund. "How much corruption is there in this state? New Mexico is second in the nation for corrupt politics, and the second poorest state. Does it go hand in hand? Everywhere there is money there is a Judas."

At the end of the meeting, Dr. Vigil stood to address the audience. "Just to be clear, I've heard. But, I must respectfully disagree with anyone who thinks we have any intent to take over the trust fund or the hospital."

Fernandez closed the meeting by inviting Vigil and Garcia to visit with the MCMC board at a later date to discuss possible changes, but he hoped that the bill would die in committee, or that Garcia would pull the bill.



Today is the last chance to purchase books at the Columbian Elementary Book Fair. (Photo courtesy of Pam Hunnicut)

Teens form peer support group

By LAURA L. BREWER
The Chronicle-News

After two Raton High School students reported that they had been raped, one that resulted in an arrest, and the other investigation still pending, several young people began voicing concern about teen violence, and a sense of helplessness. Students held their first meeting Saturday, Feb. 7, 2009 and followed that with a second meeting this past Saturday at the local Service Organization for Youth building. There they could talk about their feelings, and adult mentors encouraged them to take steps to help other young people who may feel intimidated, threatened, or have suffered physical or emotional abuse. SOY provided a place where the teens could meet with adult volunteers who would be able to provide counseling and advice.

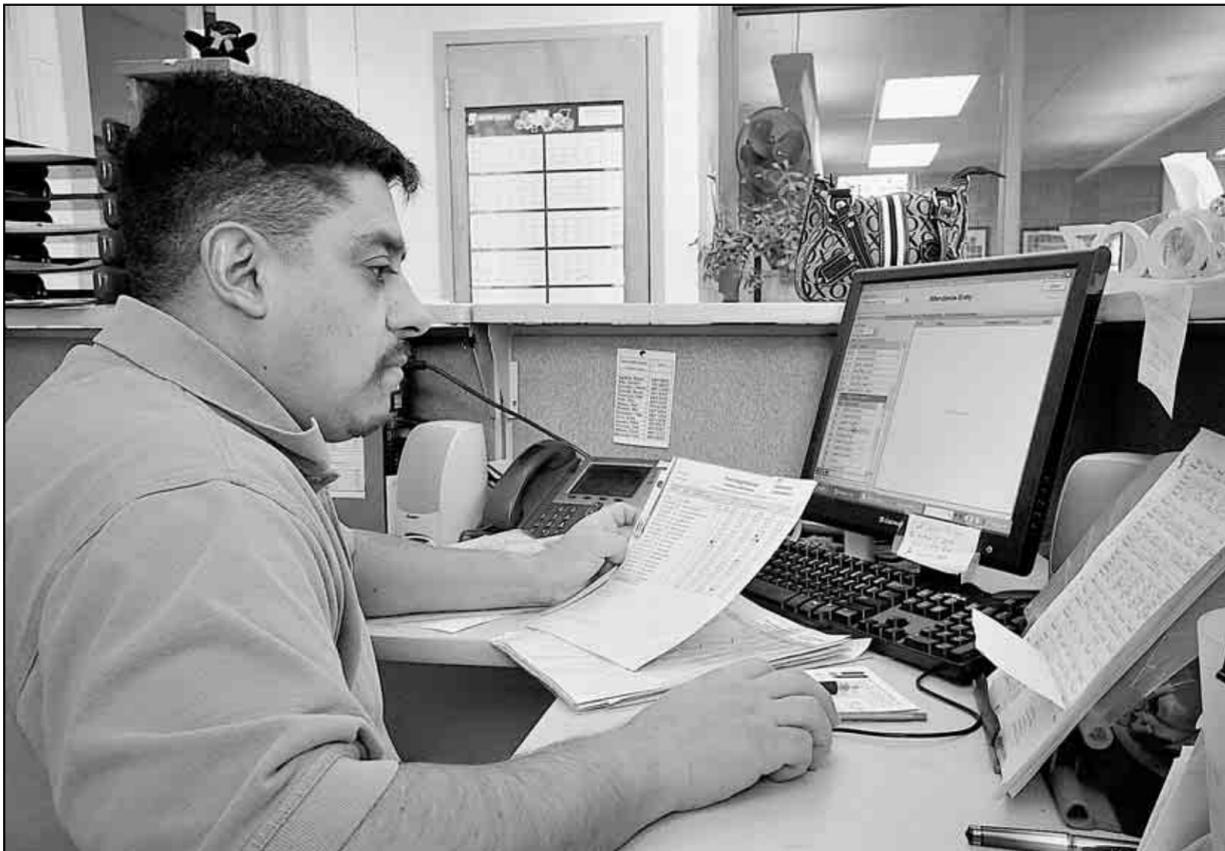
Carrie Stevens, who has had several years experience working with Alternatives to Violence, volunteered to organize the group after speaking to Fermin Ulibarri, director of SOY. Ulibarri appointed Stevens as the Youth Violence Prevention Program Coordinator. Stevens

enlisted the help of Michael Merkel, licensed independent social worker; Gregg Wiltfang, licensed master social worker; Carl Patty, New Mexico State Police Officer; Max Bryson, Raton Middle School teacher; Mike Sparaco, Raton High School Principal; and Olga Neurautor, Raton Middle School Principal.

Ulibarri and Stevens hope that this core group will be able to attend conferences, trainings, and develop their own material for outreach. The teens have researched programs in other communities that address similar problems, and are in the process of creating a name for the group, a mission statement and a logo.

During the meeting on Saturday, the teens shared some of their concerns about bullying in school, and the fights that have occurred on and off school grounds. As the program is developed, the group hopes to increase its numbers and become very active in the community.

For more information, call Carrie Stevens at (575)445-8568 or (575)445-2809.



Raton High School attendance officer J.R. Alderette goes through attendance reports yesterday to separate absentees from the dozens of students away on trips with school organizations. (Photo by Tim Keller)

Raton High School keeps teens engaged with wealth of activities

By TIM KELLER
The Chronicle-News

The halls of Raton High School are noticeably less crowded today. Though one often hears teens complain, "There's nothing to do in Raton," several high school organizations are off in other cities today pursuing exciting activities. Add the Ski and Snowboard Club's 18-student trip to Angel Fire two days ago and a total of 105 students - 27 percent of the student body - have participated in special events off campus over the past three days.

Two groups are in Albuquerque, including the Mock Trial team with nine students at the state Mock Trial competition, and the RHS Business Professionals of America with its 25 students participating in the BPA State Leadership Conference. Both are multi-day events. The Drama Club has been in Portales since Wednesday, with ten students presenting their production of "Why Do We Laugh" at the ENMU Drama Festival.

RHS basketball teams are on the road to Santa Fe today to compete against Santa Fe Indian School with 25 Raton athletes partic-

ipating. Staying closer to home, the 18 members of the RHS Future Farmers of America cap their annual FFA Week activities with a two-hour recruiting stop at Raton Middle School.

Tom Vertovec, assistant principal and athletic director at RHS, says 150 students compete in sports - 40 percent of the student body. Add membership in the school's many clubs and the participation level is 60 percent. Asked about the students - apparently the other 40 percent - who complain there's nothing to do in the area, Vertovec replies, "They need to find out what's available for them in all the clubs. They don't even know." He begins listing clubs such as chorus and band, student senate and class governments, National Honor Society and Key Club, FFA and BPA, FCCLA, the Fellowship of Christian Athletes, Future Educators of America, Ski and Snowboard Club, Drama Club, DWI Club, Pep Club, and Chess Club. The list lengthens when one adds the Tiger Cats Dance Team, the cheerleaders, and the many Tiger athletic teams.

To any bored student, RHS teacher and head baseball coach Mike Marez suggests,

"All you've got to do is get a little initiative, get up and go. There's plenty to do around here." He points out that a student can compete in sports and participate in clubs and still earn high grades in classwork. In fact, higher levels of participation often correlate with higher grades in classes.

RHS attendance officer J.R. Alderette is charged with the task of tracking all of the school's absences. Ironically, his work is busiest when the halls are least crowded. Today he's spending much of his time going through attendance reports and separating names of students who are missing from ones who are off on school trips.

Local radio personality Buddy Springer said on KRTN-FM last week that he grew up fifteen minutes from Manhattan, in New York City, but he and his friends always said there was nothing to do.

When you add local community organizations such as 4-H and Boy Scouts to the many church groups in the area and the wealth of opportunities for exciting activities through the schools ... well, "all you've got to do is get up and go."

RATON POLICE BLOTTER

Feb. 19, 2009
ARRESTED:

■ Aaron Cordry, 35 - Driving with a suspended/revoked license. Cordry was cited for driving suspended/revoked.

■ Joseph A Garcia, 32 - Arrest order out of New Mexico Corrections Department for violating the conditions of his parole/probation furlough by testing positive for methamphetamine on original charges of aggravated assault against a household member.

CITATIONS

■ Tiffany D Osborn, 21 - Battery

■ Joseph Montano - Driving with a suspended license.

■ Crystal Ortega - Passing an ambulance while responding to an emergency call.

■ Paul Glass - Speeding.

■ John Cordova - Speeding.
■ Marie Abron - Speeding.

INCIDENTS

■ There was a currency seizure of drug monies from Alfonso Sanchez-Soria, out of Ninguna, Mexico.

■ Pete Martinez was the victim of a stolen dog collar.

■ Martin Mayfield was the victim of a burglary of a stolen 32" flat screen TV.

CRASHES

■ Jonathan Encinias and Janice Grine were involved in a crash, doing slight damage to the vehicles. Encinias was cited for driving with a suspended license and a turning violation.

■ Peter Hankinson and Patricia Trujillo were involved in an accident doing slight and moderate damage to the vehicles.

COLFAX COUNTY CALENDAR

February
Feb. 22

11 a.m. - 4 p.m. - Enchilada Dinner. St. Patrick's/St. Joseph's Parish Hall. Diane at (575) 445-7123 or the Parish Hall at (575) 445-9763.

Feb. 22

2:30 p.m. - Robert Post Comedy Theater. Shuler Theater. Presented by Raton Arts and Humanities and Title Services, Inc. Tickets at www.ratonarts.org or (575) 445-2052.

Feb. 24

"On The Road To Living Well With Diabetes" classes to be held Feb. 24, March 31 and May 19, 2009 beginning at 8:45 a.m. at the Miner's Colfax Medical Center (MCMC) Long Term Care facility (900 S. Sixth

St) in Raton. Call (575) 445-8071 to pre-register.

The Colfax County Fair Association Board of Directors would like to announce the dates for the 2009 Colfax County Fair and Rodeo will be Aug. 10-16, 2009. If you have any questions or need additional information please contact: Troy Sauble at (575) 375-2790 or (575) 447-0012; Marlene Nystul at (575) 445-3281; or by email at: colfaxcountyfair@hotmail.com

Feb. 28

7:30 pm - BYU Young Ambassadors. Shuler Theater. Presented by Raton Arts and Humanities and Woody's Furniture. Tickets at www.ratonarts.org or (575) 445-2052.