



Photo by Marty Mayfield

Raton Mayor Jesse Johnson, April 30, presented a Proclamation for Arbor Day, to Colfax Soil and Water Conservation District member Jerry Seward, right, Tuesday evening. Arbor Day began when J. Sterling Morton, in 1872, proposed to the Nebraska board of Agriculture that a special day be set aside for planting trees and was first observed by planting more than a million trees in Nebraska. Trees have many benefits in reducing soil erosion, cut heating and cooling costs, moderate temperatures, clean air and produce life-giving oxygen.

## Raton City Commission deals with budget woes

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include selling non-essential property that the city obtained mostly due to paving liens.

City Manager PJ Mileta is talking to department heads about belt tightening and is hoping too, that the city will not have to deal with layoffs or other drastic measures. He told commissioners that since 60 percent of the budget is public safety, that furloughs probably wouldn't be a very productive cost savings.

The city is looking at a June 15 opening of the aquatic center and hopefully no later than July 4. The date will be contingent on training of lifeguards and staffing.

In other commission matters, Jennifer Sparaco was approved to the Planning and Zoning board.

The purchase of a new

fire truck from Freedom Fire was approved in the amount of \$214,296, which was the low bid. The new truck will be purchased with fire fund money and will replace a vehicle that has over 600,000 miles on it.

Commissioners approved the introduction of the Fair Housing Ordinance for review, which is a part of the CDBG grant process.

The city will continue to participate in the North Central New Mexico Economic Development district.

The City received a letter of thanks from the Springer Correctional Facility for help the Water Department provided when their water supply was disrupted.

Commissioners will meet Wednesday, May 5 for a budget workshop and then again on May 11 for their regular meeting.

## Family Literacy Night to be held at Trinidad Middle School

Special to The Chronicle-News

Trinidad Middle School will be hosting its annual "Family Literacy Night" on Thursday, April 29. This year we are happy to announce that with sponsorship from the Trinidad Area Arts Commission, our guest author will be recording artist, Dr. Monte Selby.

Dr. Selby's distinctive work spans over two decades, impacting educators from North America, South America, Europe, and Asia. He is widely popular for his practical, humorous, and engaging presentations, the keynote speaker for dozens of state, national, and international conferences; but is perhaps best known for his music.

As a critically acclaimed songwriter and recording artist, Dr. Selby shares comical and insightful music for children, parents, and educators. His musical endeavors are cultivated from an award-winning career as a teacher, principal, and professor. In addition, Monte's contributions as an author and co-author include numerous articles and a leadership column for Middle Ground magazine as well as numerous books from Incentive Publications.

Literacy Night will begin at 5:30 p.m. for Trinidad Middle School students and parents. The community is invited to join the final presentation and keynote by Dr. Selby at 7:00 p.m. in the TMS auditorium. There is no admission charge for the event and refreshments will be served. Please join us for this once in a lifetime event!



Photos by Tim Keller

The Brewster sisters try to stop their nephew Mortimer from tasting the poisoned elderberry wine intended only for Mr. Gibbs. From left, Bill Fegan is Mr. Gibbs, Adella Garcia is Aunt Abby, Clint Henson is Mortimer, and Sara Kowalski is Aunt Martha.

## A bit of 'Arsenic' at the Shuler

By TIM KELLER  
The Chronicle-News

Among the many events spanning an extended weekend of celebration for The Shuler Theater's 95th Anniversary was a three-day run of the durable comedy *Arsenic and Old Lace*, written by Joseph Kesselring in 1939 and best-known for the 1944 Frank Capra film version starring Cary Grant.

Bill Fegan produced the Raton show for the Santa Fe School of the Performing Arts and the Shuler Restoration Commission. The 16 acting parts were filled by well-known locals, several of whom are mainstays of Raton's theater scene without having actually performed on the stage for many years: part of the fun was seeing these familiar names and faces in character, dusting off their acting chops on stage.

The action revolves around young New York drama critic Mortimer Brewster as he tries to advance engagement plans with his girlfriend Elaine Harper, played by Shana Donati. The problem is, Mortimer is the only member of his extended family who is not criminally insane. His spinster aunts, Abby and Martha Brewster, have been murdering lonely old men by serving them poison in homemade elderberry wine – the elderberries grow in the cemetery across the street. Discovering his aunts' undertaking, Mortimer is mortified.

Clint Henson brings Mortimer to life with antic exasperation. Henson rightly credits director Gail Dixon-Willden for her talents in developing such effective performances, but Henson deserves praise for his own abundant talents. He has the looks and persona of a movie star with the acting chops of a great character actor. No two of his characters are remotely alike – compare Mortimer to last year's Don Quixote – as Henson immerses himself in each part.

He has a wonderful physicality that includes facial

expressiveness – used to comic effect here – but his body movement, too, was part of this production's comedy. Racing in quick staccato steps to stop Elaine at the door, he seemed to run on the toes of his black loafers. Another time, crossing the stage in the other direction to prevent someone from discovering a body in the window box, Henson's legs recalled the cartoon motion of the Roadrunner.

Adella Garcia and Sara Kowalski brought to life the spinster aunts – cheerily content old ladies convinced they are doing a good deed in eliminating the loneliness of the poor old men who come to them to rent rooms. Dave Proctor portrayed Teddy Brewster, who believes he is Teddy Roosevelt, in a performance that seemed over-the-top, which was clearly the intention.

In contrast, Mark Jansen underplayed Jonathan Brewster, the serial-killer brother whose most recent disguising plastic surgery has left him looking, and sounding, like Boris Karloff's Frankenstein; in fact, it was Karloff who first performed this role on stage, in 1941, as a self-reverent joke. Jansen was unrecognizable, and impossibly tall, in his monstrous make-up; his restrained performance provided a menacing counterpoint to the cheerful zaniness of the aunts and Teddy.

This was too much an



Dr. Einstein (Billy Donati) and Jonathan Brewster (Mark Jansen) prepare to tie up drama critic Mortimer Brewster, played by Clint Henson.

ensemble play for anyone to steal the show, but along with Henson's Mortimer, local KRTN radio personality Bill Donati, aka Billy D, came close with his Dr. Einstein. Jonathan's reluctant criminal accomplice, Einstein, is both a fake doctor and a fake German, a drunk who surgically alters Jonathan's face whenever the law starts closing in. Donati's comic performance was marvelous, and he obviously enjoyed himself. Like Henson, Donati's antic expressiveness included wonderfully elastic facial expressions and delightful physical comedy.

Beloved Shuler impresario Bill Fegan returned to the stage after a 22-year absence to portray Mr. Gibbs, a potential victim of the spinster aunts. His acting chops are intact, leading many to hope that this will be the first of many new roles for Fegan, who received applause when he appeared on stage, and twice as much when his character escaped poisoning and departed.

Raton businessman (Woody's Furniture) and arts supporter Howard Woodworth played the aunts' final victim, Mr. Witherspoon, the proprietor of the asylum to which the aunts have just been committed. But for a small part in Foxfire two summers ago, Woodworth last

appeared on stage as the lead in the Shuler production of *My Fair Lady* 20 years ago.

The cast was rounded out by Michael Kowalski as the Reverend Dr. Harper and Jared Harrison and Toby Henson as – this will be fun on their résumés – dead bodies. Playing police officers were Cian Hazen and Chickey Lee Gomez, plus a forceful performance by Ron Harris as Lt. Rooney and droll humor in Nathan Yardiss's cop who aspires to be a playwright.

In fact, Kesselring used Mortimer's job as theater critic to insert plenty of inside theater jokes. When Elaine's father worries about Mortimer as a prospective son-in-law because of his involvement with the stage, Aunt Abby defends Mortimer, saying, "Oh, no, he hates the theater!" She adds, "Don't be too critical of Mortimer for being a dramatic critic: somebody has to do those things." After a much-desired kiss from Elaine, Mortimer exclaims, "You know, I might just give tonight's play a good review!"

Even without the kiss, it's easy to give this production of *Arsenic and Old Lace* a good review.



## Trinidad - Las Animas County Hispanic Chamber of Commerce Annual Scholarship Banquet

Saturday, May 1st • 6 p.m. – Holiday Inn Hotel & Suites

We cordially invite you to attend the annual scholarship banquet where we honor students and their parents. These deserving students are recipients of the TSJC Regional Scholarships, the Trinidad-Las Animas County Hispanic Chamber Independent Scholarships, as well as the Southern Colorado Coal Miners Memorial Scholarship.

Guest speakers for the evening will be Mr. Arthur Espinoza, Jr. Executive Director of the Southern Colorado Repertory Theatre and

2006 Scholarship Recipient Camilla R. Claffin  
Entertainment by – D.J. Youngblood

Arthur Espinoza, Jr. joined the Southern Colorado Repertory Theatre in February 2010 and is the executive director of the growing theatre company. Previously he worked as the general manager of Colorado Ballet having first joined that organization 1999.



At Colorado Ballet, Mr. Espinoza was vice president of sales, marketing, and production departments. His major accomplishments included increasing annual ticket and merchandise sales, boosting annual attendance at the company's events, including its annual holiday favorite, *The Nutcracker*, and overseeing the company's production operations. He produced dozens of the company's events and special performances, including touring productions to New York City and Brooklyn in January 2000 and 2008, respectively. Espinoza also coordinated the Colorado Ballet's international tour to Vancouver, Canada in 2003 where they performed the ballet *Dracula*. Mr. Espinoza was a key negotiator during Colorado Ballet's initial labor contract with American Guild of Musical Artists and was instrumental in negotiating various other union labor agreements and contracts with companies, designers, artists and choreographers.

In Denver, Espinoza also serves as producer of *Unique Lives & Experiences*, a premiere international women's lecture series. The lectures have featured such Hollywood celebrity, journalist and political figures as Mia Farrow, Diane Keaton, Robert Kennedy Jr., Christiane Amanpour, and Ellen Sirlauf Johnson, the first female President of Liberia.

Prior to his tenure with Colorado Ballet, Mr. Espinoza was the Executive Director of Canyon Concert Ballet in Fort Collins. He has also worked with numerous arts organizations within Colorado including Central City Opera, Denver Ballet Guild, Fort Collins Children's Theatre, Opera Fort Collins and OpenStage Theatre and Company. He has directed a variety of musicals, such as *The Fantasticks*, *Beauty and the Beast* and *1940's Radio Hour*, and various stage plays including *Lonely Planet*, which was selected for presentation at the Colorado Governor's Mansion in 1998 at the Governor's Award for the Excellence in the Arts Gala.

"It's truly amazing to be a part of the performing arts. Through it we witness laughter, encourage the spirit and experience a deeper understanding of ourselves. Theatre's an amazing gift." Espinoza adds, "I am especially fortunate to be a part of the magic of the SCRT through my role as executive director. My deepest appreciation goes to the actors and technicians who so generously provide their talent and skill with audiences and students in southern Colorado. My gratitude extends to our patrons and contributors who continually demonstrate their support and appreciation of the SCRT in our community."

\$20.00/person

RSVP – Yolanda – 846-8234, or Jennie – 846 6678  
24-hour – Cancellation Notice



## PUBLIC NOTICE

From May 3 through June 1, 2010, an owner may protest the Real Property value or the classification established by the assessor. This is the taxpayers opportunity to correct values, misclassification, errors in property descriptions or ownership, or other discrepancies that may exist in the property.

Colorado law currently requires a two-year reassessment cycle for all real property. 2010 is the second or intervening year of the current two (2) year cycle. For most properties, the valuation for assessment for the 2010 tax roll year will be the same as it was for 2009. These figures appear on your 2009 property tax notice under Actual Value. It represents the actual value of your property as of June 30, 2008, based upon sales of comparable properties within your property's local real estate market, and as required by law.

Colorado law requires the county assessor to hear objections to real property valuation beginning no later than May 3, 2010. The assessor will be available at the Las

Animas County Courthouse during business hours (8:00a.m. to 4:30p.m.) to hear objection and protests to valuation for the 2010 assessment of real property. Current valuations will become final unless protests are filed with the assessor by the end of business day June 1, 2010.

If you choose to file an objection, the assessor must make a decision concerning your protest and mail you written Notice of Determination on or before the last working day in June. If you are satisfied with the value, the process ends and your tax will be based on the value reflected on the Notice of Determination.

This is the best opportunity you will have to be certain your property value is correct for the 2010 tax year.

(S) Daniel A. Espinoza  
Las Animas County Assessor  
Address: Las Animas County Assessors Office  
200 E. 1st- Room 203  
Trinidad, CO 81082  
Telephone: (719) 846-2295 Fax: (719) 846-7061