

INSIDE TODAY



Bea Sanders

Outstanding lay leader for Trinidad's Jewish congregation. See Timeline, Pg. 6

THE FINE PRINT

Friday

Closure Notice

Offices for the city of Trinidad and Las Animas County are closed today for a mandatory furlough day. Normal business hours will resume Monday. The landfill, courthouse and district courts will not be affected.

Angel Food

Anyone can save money on groceries. March orders are due today with distribution scheduled for March 26. Information: Barbara Krause, 719-846-3853.

Al-Anon Adult Child

Group meets at 6 p.m. at the Fisher's Peak Community Church, 10377 Santa Fe Trail Dr. (south door). No fee charged to participate and all are welcome. Information: 719-846-9999.

Trinidad Schools

Board of Education special session is 6 p.m. at the Administration Office, 215 S. Maple St. Information: Karen Power, 719-846-3324.

Youth Explosion!

Everyone is invited to join the area wide "Youth Gathering" at 7 p.m. at Faith Christian Church, 2608 Santa Fe Trail. Information: Bill Frashuer, 719-846-9673.

Saturday

Tax Help

2010 Tax Returns prepared and e-filed at no charge (must be Colorado resident with household income less than \$49,000) by IRS certified college students 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. at Trinidad State Junior College, Mullen Building, Room 305. Information: 719-846-5728.

Charity Benefit

17th Annual St. Patrick's Day Dance with music by "Turning Point" sponsored by the Friends of ABATE, 7 - 11 p.m. at El Rancho, 1901 Santa Fe Trail. Information: 719-868-2040. Proceeds benefit Thomas Moreno and Family.

Sunday

St. Joseph's Table

Everyone is invited to St. Joseph's Table 8 a.m. - 3 p.m. at Holy Family Hall, 308 Church St. Refreshments will be served and all proceeds benefit the Fisher's Peak Soup Kitchen. Information: Felicia Pearce, 719-846-2330.

Trinidad Lake State Park

Looking for interested outdoor enthusiasts to volunteer in several capacities to assist in the upcoming season's park functions. Come to the Volunteer Open House, noon - 4 p.m. Sunday, at the Park Visitor Center, 32610 Highway 12. Refreshments will be served. Information: Brian Kerrigan, 719-846-6951.

Protect yourself!

Don't miss this free educational workshop on identity theft prevention from noon to 1 p.m. at Zion's Fellowship Hall, 613 Prospect St. Information: Carol Passig, 719-252-0467 or Zion's Lutheran Church, 719-846-2844.

Community Chorale

Rehearsals are 2 p.m. at the First United Methodist Church, Broom and State St. No auditions required and new members are always welcome. Information: Jerry Chetelat, 719-846-1427.

RIVER CALL

Purgatoire river call as of 3/17/11
Johns ditch priority #9 1/1/1863
Trinidad Reservoir accounting
Release 0.02 AF
Inflow 58.92 AF
Evaporation 5.90 AF
Content 19,571 AF
Elevation 6,179.51
Precipitation 0
Downstream river call
JMR 12/31/1948
Notes
· 1 cubic (cfs) foot per second equals one cubic foot of water passing a point in one second of time.
· 1 acre-foot equals a quantity of water required to cover one acre of 1 and to a depth of one foot.
1 cubic foot per second = 1.9835 acre-feet per day (24 hrs

School board passes contracts for two health, safety projects

By RICHARD SITTS
The Chronicle-News

Placing the health and safety of students above dipping into district reserves, the Trinidad School District #1 Board of Education approved two Building Excellent Schools Today contracts for projects at Trinidad High School and Eckhart Elementary School.

The two projects -- installing new doors at the high school and a heating/venting/air-conditioning system at Eckhart -- carry a total cost of \$384,000. The projects came in at about \$180,000 over budget, money that would have to come out of reserves, knocking that fund down to \$3.5 million from \$3.6 million, Chief Financial Officer Jack Bay said.

Bay said three local companies bid on the projects, but Houston Construction from Pueblo was the low bidder on both jobs and was awarded the two separate contracts.

"Financially, it's painful, because it's going to run us \$180,000 over budget," Superintendent Mike Tranter told the board. "My recommenda-

tion is, it's a safety issue and we should do it, but it's tough. The doors are a major safety issue. It's been a neglected item for a long time." As it is now, some of the old doors have to be chained shut, and if students had to vacate the building in a hurry, the doors would have to be unlocked and unchained.

Tranter also said the district should take advantage of the \$100,000 it received from the Colorado Department of Education and move on the projects.

The Eckhart project addresses a concern with air circulation and radon measurements at the school. About 223 kindergarten and first-graders attend Eckhart.

Principal Olivia Bachicha said the school's doors and windows pretty much remain closed from November through March, and there is no air exchange and the air gets stale. It was also mentioned that students at that age often carry a lot of cold and flu germs.

"I think we'd be somewhat negligent if we don't proceed and get this issue taken care of," Tranter said.

If approved, Bay told the board work would accelerate because the system would have to be installed by the end of June. The board approved the contracts by a 5-0 vote, although board member Karen Montero said that she and fellow veteran board member Vic Meyers had been taught to never touch the reserve fund, which the district strives to keep at a minimum of \$3 million.

Also by 5-0 votes, the board approved the Boards of Cooperative Educational Services administrative unit operating agreement, and an early retirement package to offer to veteran teachers who are nearing retirement age. Tranter told the board that a couple of teachers retired last year. Meyers said when he looked at the list of qualifying teachers he saw some of the district's "absolutely best" teachers.

By 4-1 votes, the board approved an online application so the district can begin an online program, and evaluation tools for an instructional coach, counselor and nurse. Meyers voted against both action items.

On the first item, Meyers said the board had not discussed the

online program in months and that he did not know anything about it. Tranter said the application does not lock the district into anything and that approving it would move the district forward.

Regarding the second item, Meyers said he wanted to see a job description for instructional coaches before approving an evaluation. Tranter said the evaluations are due by April 1. Board member Charlene Bertolino said the evaluation is a working tool and is subject to change.

Louis Simpleman of the Trinidad Community Foundation was recognized and thanked for his efforts in helping bring eight refurbished Dell computers to the district. Simpleman said he worked with a Colorado Springs company, L3 Communications, and he told the board that there would be more on the way.

The board wrapped up its regular agenda and held a work session during which it discussed how to add or increase physical education at the elementary schools, extending its meeting just beyond the three-hour mark.



Photo by Tim Keller

The Raton BPA Video Production Team spent this year creating a three-minute film so good that it won the young filmmakers a trip to Washington, D.C. Chante Valdez, Amanda Eggebrecht, and Danielle Leininger, from left, are currently expanding their film for national competition in May.

Young filmmakers merit a trip to Washington

BY TIM KELLER
Special to The Chronicle-News

Amanda Eggebrecht has enjoyed making short films since she was in the eighth grade at Raton Middle School. Her friend Chante Valdez has assisted from the beginning; last year, classmate Danielle Leininger joined them.

Together, the girls formed the Video Production Team of the Business Professionals of America at Raton High School. Last month, their untitled three-minute film won second place in New Mexico, earning the three seniors a May trip to Washington, D.C., where their film will compete for national honors.

"This year we didn't want to just present facts," Eggebrecht said. "We tried to convey emotions, too, because of what happened here in town, at the Electric Light Parade."

The girls say they were inspired to make a film against texting and driving when another Raton teen was said to be texting and driving, when she ran into an older Raton couple out to enjoy the parade. A 78-year-old man was

killed, his 59-year-old companion injured.

"That gave us the motivation to make a big impact on teens who view our film," Eggebrecht said. "We didn't want teenagers to believe that they are invincible. Negative consequences can come out of their choices."

In the film, two close friends -- played by Valdez and Leininger -- are seen during their school days, then driving and laughing. The driver picks up her phone, then runs straight into a fatal collision. The driver survives, but her best friend is killed.

Emotions, indeed. The lost friend even returns, as a memory or a ghost, tormenting the conscience of the survivor. A variety of cinematic tools are used to add pathos -- music, cross cutting, text overlays, interviews, jump cuts between present and past and between color and black and white -- all of which impressed the judges at the BPA State Leadership Conference in Albuquerque.

They're expanding the film to five minutes for its showing in Washington, D.C. They don't

intend that to be the end of it, though. Eggebrecht explained, "We want to show our film to the community, to present it to the student body and other organizations."

They're filming new scenes at Miners' Colfax Medical Center Hospital and with local police. Valdez said, "We want to get the whole community involved in the film."

By autumn, all three girls will be off to college. Valdez, who also won a state BPA Honorable Mention in Fundamental Accounting, will be in Phoenix studying cosmetology and accounting. Leininger will be at the University of New Mexico in Albuquerque, eyeing radiology or nutrition studies.

Eggebrecht will join Leininger at UNM to complete two years of core requirements at in-state tuition rates, but then she's heading off to San Francisco to complete her studies at the Academy of Arts University. She'll be studying filmmaking, with plans to be a film director. See page 8 for follow-up story.

Parents face host of charges

COLORADO SPRINGS, Colo. (AP) — Prosecutors in Colorado charged the adoptive parents of two missing brothers with theft, forgery and other crimes Thursday as authorities searched for the children, who disappeared in 2003 without anyone reporting they were gone.

Edward Bryant, 58, and Linda Bryant, 54, are accused of collecting nearly \$175,000 in government payments for the care of the boys, even though the children haven't been in their household for years.

They entered no pleas to the charges in their first court appearance Thursday. They both wore orange jail jumpsuits and their hands were cuffed behind them.

Authorities didn't learn that Austin Eugene Bryant and his biological brother, Edward Dylan Bryant, had disappeared until this year. El Paso County, Colo., sheriff's investigators say the Bryants told them the boys had run away by 2003, when Austin would have been 7 and Edward 11. The Bryants have not been charged in the boys' disappearance.

The Bryants adopted the boys in 2000. The couple later moved to Texas, where they were arrested and returned to Colorado last month.

Thursday's hearing was largely procedural. The attorney for Edward Bryant, Sheilagh McAteer, indicated she would ask for a reduction in his \$1 million bail at a preliminary hearing scheduled for June 17.

Linda Bryant is also being held on \$1 million bail. Philip Dubois, the attorney representing her Thursday, didn't indicate whether a bail reduction would be sought. Her preliminary hearing was scheduled for April 12.

McAteer didn't immediately return a phone call after the hearing. Dubois said he was filling in for another attorney, Sarah Christensen, and referred calls to her. She didn't immediately return a message.

WEATHER WATCH

Friday: A 20 percent chance of showers after 9am. Mostly cloudy, with a high near 57. North northwest wind between 5

and 15 mph.
Friday Night: A slight chance of rain showers before 11pm, then a slight chance of rain and snow showers between 11pm and 2am, then a slight chance of snow showers after 2am. Mostly cloudy, with a low around 30. East

wind around 5 mph becoming calm. Chance of precipitation is 10%.
Saturday: Mostly sunny, with a high near 70. Southwest wind 5 to 15 mph becoming southeast.
Saturday Night: Partly cloudy, with a low around 35. Southwest wind between

10 and 15 mph.
Sunday: Mostly sunny, with a high near 73. Breezy, with a west southwest wind between 10 and 20 mph, with gusts as high as 30 mph.
Sunday Night: Partly cloudy, with a low around 36. Breezy, with a west southwest wind between 10 and 20 mph.

