



MONDAY  
JANUARY 26, 2015

Vol. 139, No. 18

# THE CHRONICLE-NEWS

50 CENTS  
TRINIDAD  
COLORADO

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## THE FINE PRINT

**JANUARY 26**  
**Trinidad Area Arts Council**  
**Monday (6 p.m.)** The public is welcome to attend the monthly Trinidad Area Arts Council Board of Directors meeting that will be held at Gallery Main, 130 E. Main St. Info: call 719-846-1441.  
**El Moro-Hoehne Pipeline Assoc.**  
**Monday (6 p.m.)** The El Moro-Hoehne Pipeline Association will hold their annual meeting on Monday at the Hoehne Community Center.

## Today's Quote

**"Believe in yourself! Have faith in your abilities! Without a humble but reasonable confidence in your own powers you cannot be successful or happy."**

~Norman Vincent Peale

**JANUARY 27**  
**Las Animas County**  
**TUESDAY (9 a.m.)** Board of County Commissioners work session is in the Las Animas Courthouse, 200 E. First St., Room 201. Information: 719-845-2568.  
**Trinidad City Council**  
**TUESDAY (1:30 p.m.)** Work session in Council Chambers, City Hall, 135 N. Animas St., Third Floor. Information: Audra Garrett, 719-846-9843.  
**Vision Loss Support Group**  
**TUESDAY (1:30-3:30 p.m.)** OIB (Older Individuals Who are Blind or have Vision Loss) hosts a monthly support group at the Trinidad Work Force Center, 140 N. Commercial. Refreshments will be served and family and friends are encouraged to attend. Info: 719-546-1271.  
**Calling all Square Dancers**  
**TUESDAY (6-8 p.m.)** Step up, swing your partner, join the fun at the Square Dance Club at LaCasa on Hwy 12 in Jansen. Beginners welcome. Info: Peter Monzon, 719-845-0375 or prmm49@hotmail.com.  
**Writers' Group**  
**TUESDAY (2 p.m.)** The Trinidad Writers' Group meets every other Tuesday. Call for date and place: Dana Miller, 719-422-8352 or danamiller65@gmail.com.

**PUBLIC SERVICE**  
**SPECIAL NOTICE**  
The Chronicle-News 2014 Collector Mugs with beautiful artwork by Trinidad Artist Paula Little are here and waiting for you to come pick them up, 200 West Church St. Info: 719-846-3311.

**ABSTRACT WORKSHOP**  
**SATURDAY & SUNDAY (10 a.m.-3 p.m.) & FEBRUARY 7-8 (same time)** TSJC's Professor of Art Vilas Tonape will offer a 2-weekend abstract painting workshop at the College Art Department. Registration and info: Josephine Chacon, 719-846-5474.

**SW Youth Art Show**  
**THRU FEBRUARY 1:** The 3rd annual Shades of the Southwest Youth Art Show is now showing at Raton's Old Pass Gallery, 145 S. First St. in Raton. Info: 575-445-2052.

**VETERAN'S TOWN HALL**  
**FEBRUARY 3 (5-6:30 p.m.)** All veterans and their families are invited to attend an open Town Hall meeting at the Raton VFW Post, 106 Park Ave. Speaker will be Director Andrew Welch with the NM VA Health Care System. Questions will be taken. Info: 505-256-6495.

**Senior Driving Class**  
**FEBRUARY 12 (9 a.m.-1 p.m.)** The AARP Driving Class will be held at the Sayre Senior Center, 1222 San Pedro St. Registration and information: Carl Mozeno, 719-868-2288.

**9HEALTH FAIR**  
**APRIL 18 (7:30 a.m.-Noon)** The annual 9Health Fair will be held at the Mt. San Rafael Hospital, 410 Benedicta Ave. Info: Kim Lucero, 719-846-8053.

**Donations for Doggies!**  
**And kitty too!** The Noah's Ark pantry can always use dog and cat food supplies, which will be used to help elderly and in-need residents maintain their pets. If you'd like to make a donation of food or funds stop by the animal shelter at 224 N. Chestnut St. or call 719-846-8578.

**Low-Cost Spay/Neuter**  
The Fisher's Peak Veterinary Clinic (719-846-3211) and the Trinidad Animal Clinic (719-846-3212) offer grant-funded, low-cost spay/neuter surgeries. Call for information and appointments.

**SUICIDE/CRISIS HOTLINES:**  
**\*ADULT HOPE: 800-784-2433**  
**\*TEEN: 877-968-8454**  
**\*GLB-YOUTH: 866-488-7386**  
**\*VET-2-VET: 877-838-2838**  
"It is often in the darkest skies that we see the brightest stars."  
**ABUSE HOTLINES:**  
**\*Domestic Abuse Hotline:** In Trinidad call 719-846-6665 (24-hours a day). In Walsenburg call: 719-738-0770. National Hotline: 1-800-790-SAFE (7233).  
**\*Animal Abuse:** Report animal abuse and dog/cock fighting at Crime Stoppers anonymous tip line: 720-913-7867.

## RIVER CALL

**Purgatoire River Call as of: 01/23/15. Chilili ditch: Priority # 7 --- Appropriation date: 04/30/1862.**

**Trinidad Reservoir Accounting:**  
Release 0 AF  
Inflow 41.00 AF -- 20.67 CFS  
Evaporation 0 AF  
Content 15,837 AF  
Elevation 6,177.31  
Precipitation 0

**Downstream River Call / John Martin Reservoir: 05/31/1949.**



File photo / The Chronicle-News

Raton, N.M.'s Kearney Elementary School is scheduled to close at the end of the current school year after the local Board of Education passed a consolidation plan on a 3-2 vote at its meeting on January 12.

## EDUCATION

# Raton to close Kearney Elementary School

By Steve Block  
The Chronicle-News

Raton, N.M.'s Kearney Elementary School is scheduled to close at the end of the current school year after the local Board of Education passed a consolidation plan on a 3-2 vote at its meeting on January 12. The New Mexico Public Education Department (NMPED) must give its final approval of the plan before it can go into effect.

Raton's school district will only submit its application to close Kearney Elementary to the NMPED after a special school board meeting is held on January 26 to consider going forward with the plan. Under the plan's terms, fourth- and fifth-grade students and teachers currently at Kearney would move to Raton Middle School, and the middle school's eighth-graders would move to Raton High School, which currently has students in ninth- through twelfth-grades.

A second option would be to close two elementary schools, and that

Continued on Page 2 ...

## PERFORMING ARTS SERIES

# Ventriloquist Todd Oliver bringing dogs, laughs to Shuler

By Tim Keller  
Correspondent  
The Chronicle-News

RATON - Todd Oliver appears to do all the heavy lifting in his act. He spends his days driving across state after state, and his nights performing with his several co-stars, while they spend much of their time laying down and napping.

Oliver is an acclaimed comic and ventriloquist bringing his touring show to the Shuler Theater Wednesday night, Feb. 4, at 7 p.m., the fourth of six shows in the

Performing Arts Series presented annually by Raton Arts & Humanities Council.

While Oliver carries the bulk of the workload, co-stars Irving and Lucy steal the show. They're dogs. Small, adopted, rescue dogs of indeterminate breed. Irving has been in Oliver's show for 14 years. He's getting pretty good at it. He stands at the microphone and talks.

"We live in Branson, Mis-

Continued on Page 2 ...



Photo courtesy Todd Oliver & Friends

## Todd Oliver & Friends

Veteran ventriloquist and comic Todd Oliver brings three large puppets and a pair of live dogs that steal the show, presented at Raton's Shuler Theater Wednesday night, Feb. 4 at 7 p.m.



File photo / The Chronicle-News

The Southwest Chief as it turns into Trinidad. The Santa Fe New Mexican reports that neither the New Mexican Governor, nor the Legislative Finance Committee, have sought to allocate the estimated \$4 million a year it will cost to maintain the route in New Mexico over the next decade.

## AMTRAK RAIL

# New Mexico lawmakers have not funded SW Chief track upkeep

Associated Press

SANTA FE, N.M. (AP) — New Mexico lawmakers have not allocated funding for the upkeep of tracks along a historic passenger train route through northern New Mexico.

That puts the state at risk of losing the Amtrak Southwest Chief

passenger train route. The train stops in Raton, Las Vegas and Lamy.

The Santa Fe New Mexican reports that neither Republican Gov. Susana Martinez nor the Legislative Finance Committee have sought to allocate the estimated \$4 million a year it will cost to maintain the route over the next decade.

Rep. Roberto "Bobby" Gonzales, D-Taos, said lawmakers will seek state capital outlay funds and federal transportation grants to cover the cost.

The Martinez administration says the state is coordinating with towns and counties to pursue grants and that the state supports keeping the route.

## CRIME

# Stolen Coveralls land Castle Rock man in Jail

## Wal-mart theft results in cold misdemeanor

By Steve Block  
The Chronicle-News

People can do the strangest things when it gets cold outside. A Castle Rock man was arrested and charged with a misdemeanor count of shoplifting after he allegedly stole a pair of brown coveralls, a black winter coat and some other items from Wal-Mart, located at 2921 Toupal Drive.

Timothy Petersen was arrested and charged with the theft after a Wal-Mart employee noticed him changing clothes and putting on the coveralls and coat in the store's parking lot, that employee took a photo of him with a cell phone and

Continued on Page 2 ...

## WEATHER WATCH

**Monday:** Sunny, with a high near 61. West wind 5 to 10 mph. **Night:** Mostly clear, with a low around 34. West south-

west wind 10 to 15 mph.  
**Tuesday:** Mostly sunny, with a high near 63. West southwest wind 10 to 15 mph. **Night:** Mostly clear, with a low around 32. West southwest wind 10 to 15 mph.  
**Wednesday:** Sunny, with a high near 56. West wind around 5 mph. **Night:** Partly cloudy, with a low around 28. North wind around 5 mph.

**Thursday:** Partly sunny, with a high near 44. North wind around 5 mph becoming southeast in the afternoon. **Night:** A 10 percent chance of snow. Mostly cloudy, with a low around 27. Southwest wind around 5 mph.  
**Friday:** A slight chance of rain and snow. Mostly cloudy, with a high near 44. Southwest wind around 5 mph. Chance of precipitation is 20 percent.

Weather Sponsored by:  
  
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719-845-0102

60 Obituaries

60 Obituaries

**Dr. Sharon W. Swope**



Dr. Sharon W. Swope—world adventurer, intrepid traveler, dedicated educator, spiritual warrior and fierce friend—slid off this mortal coil on Jan. 16, 2015, laughing and enjoying the ride until the very end. Sharon died in Fairbanks after a brief but epic battle with pancreatic cancer, surrounded by family and friends.

Sharon was born in Ohio for the Tsulagi Nation in 1946, but was adopted and raised by her parents, Carl and Susan Roniger in rural Florida.

She graduated from Fort Lauderdale High School in 1964 and earned her bachelor's degree at the University of Florida. Later she earned her master's degree at the University of Illinois Springfield, her education specialist degree at the University of Wyoming and her doctorate from Arizona State University.

Sharon met her husband, Bob, while both were overachieving undergraduate students taking a graduate course in sociology. They began their Alaskan adventure together the summer before they married in 1969, carrying on a long-distance love affair over ham radio while Bob was working on Amchitka Island in the Aleutians.

Sharon worked as a psychologist, principal and school superintendent for multiple school districts throughout rural Alaska. In 2008, Sharon retired from 30 years in public service and moved to Colorado to be closer to family.

Sharon was known for working behind the scenes but not in the spotlight. She had an innate curiosity towards the unknown and believed wholeheartedly in the power of relationships. She was passionate about paying it forward to the next generation and living life to the fullest. Her life motto was "live well, laugh often and love much."

In 2012, Bob and Sharon moved to La Veta, where she worked on Alaska Native beading artwork in the shadow of the Sangre de Cristo mountains. In 2013, Bob and Sharon moved to Trinidad to welcome the birth of their first grandson, Jackson Fletcher.

After being diagnosed with terminal cancer, Sharon decided she wanted to die in Alaska. Numerous friends from the Trinidad community came together to make her last wish come true, including: Bella Luna Pizzeria, Tire Wine Shop and Spirits, The Mail Store, Spanish Peaks Bon Carbo Fire Department, The Trinidad Chronicle-News and the Brick City Roller Derby team.

Through their love and support, Sharon made it back home to Alaska. She died surrounded in laughter and joy.

Sharon is survived by her husband of 45 years, the Rev. Robert L. Swope, of Fairbanks, Alaska; her daughter Jennifer, son-in-law

David and granddaughters Mikaela and Julia Brenner of Tustin, Calif.; son Jason Swope of Denver, Colo. and granddaughters Michele and Desiree Swope of Phoenix, Ariz., daughter Jillian Swope, son-in-law Jack Fletcher and grandson Jackson Fletcher, formerly of Trinidad, Colo.; and numerous family and friends from around the world.

A Mass of the Resurrection was held Jan. 24 in Fairbanks. In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to the University of Alaska Foundation to support the Rev. Bob and Dr. Sharon Swope Scholarship or to Hospice of Tanana Valley.

62 Memorials

**Diana (Festi) Coberly**



July 1949-January 26, 2012 It's been three years since you left us, the heartache of losing you never ends.

You're in our hearts and thoughts always and forever. We hold you close within our hearts and there you shall remain to walk with us throughout our lives.

Love you,  
Your husband Donald Sons, Travis and Kristee and Girls, Candace & Brittnee Douglas and girls Sydney and Brookelyn Troy & kids Dakota and son TJ Troy Jr



# COMMUNITY

... Continued from Page 1

## Ventriloquist Todd Oliver bringing dogs, laughs to Shuler

souri," he says. "Branson's like Mayberry with a cover charge. The other day Todd took me on a walk downtown. He goes into a store and leaves me tied to a parking meter. He says 'Stay, Stay, Stay.' I'm thinking, 'I'm tied to a parking meter, Moron, Moron, Moron.'"

Billed as "clean, universal comedy that is situational and contemporary," Oliver voices his canine co-stars as well as three more-wooden characters named Pops, Miss Lilly, and Joey.

They're good enough that when David Letterman chose five ventriloquists to feature during his show's Ventriloquist Week, Oliver and Irving got one of the coveted nightly slots.

Todd Oliver and Friends reached the semi-finals on America's Got Talent, and they've been featured on The Today Show and late night shows hosted by Jay Leno, Craig Ferguson, and Letterman. They've performed often in Nashville and Branson. In Las Vegas, they've performed at the Hilton, the MGM Grand, and the Luxor. They've been featured performers on four cruise liners.

After being based in Nashville for ten years, the home base has now been Branson for longer than that. They must enjoy playing awhile in one place like Nashville, Branson, Las Vegas, or a cruise ship, because when they hit the road, it's constant driving and one-nighters.

The tour that brings them to Raton began January 15 in Lebanon, Missouri, and ends March 1 in Mediapolis, Iowa. They're performing



Photo courtesy Todd Oliver & Friends

Veteran ventriloquist and comic Todd Oliver brings three large puppets and a pair of live dogs that steal the show, presented at Raton's Shuler Theater Wednesday night, Feb. 4 at 7 p.m.

37 shows in 14 states in six weeks.

Oliver's website and press materials left unclear whether he's bringing three musicians that sometimes accompany him as "The Smiling Eyes," with Oliver playing guitar, piano, and lead vocals accompanied by lead guitar, bass, and drums in songs Oliver writes with his band.

One element that's certain in his shows is audience participation, along with Irving, Lucy, Oli-

ver and his three ventriloquist's "dummies." Audience reviews on TripAdvisor and Ticketmaster show some people underwhelmed by the humor but most appreciating a laugh-out-loud family show enjoyed by all ages.

Reserved seat tickets are \$20 for adults, \$15 seniors, and \$10 students, available in advance at Old Pass Gallery, 145 S. 1st St., (575) 445-2052, or at the Shuler Theater before the 7 p.m. show.

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## Raton to close Kearny Elementary School

option will also be sent to NMPED as a backup plan. Superintendent Neil Terhune said the district would save an estimated \$350,000 to \$400,000 per year under the current proposal, according to a published report in the Raton Comet. He added that the figure could change based on utility, personnel, operations and maintenance costs. If the NMPED approves the plan and Kearny closes, one administrator, a secretary and a custodian would see their positions eliminated.

Raton's school district has experienced a serious decline in student enrollment. The district had 1,344 students in October 2008, but that figure declined to just 975 students October 2014, a reduction of 369 students over that time period.

Terhune said in a Friday phone call that the school board still had the option of changing its mind and closing two elementary schools at the January 26 meeting.

"There is a possibility that the board could vote to close two schools instead of one," Terhune said. "I have proposals prepared for both options to send to NMPED, depending on what the board decides to do. This has been a very painful and difficult process for everyone associated with our school district."

School Board President Arthur Armijo voted for the most recent consolidation plan, along with Board members Melissa Mack and Beaver Segotta, while Board Vice President Ted Kamp and Secretary voted against the plan. Armijo said the move was necessary due to the district's serious decline in enrollment, according to the Comet report. He said he originally favored closing two elementary schools, but changed his mind when he realized how much time and work teachers had put in to the plan the Board decided to approve.

"The only reason I chose that one was because of the teacher buy-in," Armijo said. "We need buy-in from our teachers or it's not going to work."

There are problems with the approved plan. The grades at each school don't match up with the teaching certifications. Teachers typically have either a K-sixth-grade certification or a seventh-through twelfth-grade certification, which doesn't match up with the new school alignments. The plan will also create problems during teacher evaluations, Terhune said, adding that the new configuration means the district's principals would be responsible for supervising five, four, three and two grade levels. He said he's going to have to figure out how to equitably share administrative responsibilities under the new configuration, adding that he expects that to be a very difficult task indeed.

... Continued from Page 1

## Stolen Coveralls land man in Jail

called police. Trinidad police arrested Petersen at approximately 9:30 a.m. on Friday, January 16 and noticed that the price tags were still on the coveralls and coat, which appeared to be brand new. Petersen gave his permission for an officer to search his back-

pack, and the officer found some old clothes and what appeared to be a brand new, green fishing tackle bag.

The store manager identified the items as clearly being Walmart merchandise. Store surveillance video showed a man, later

identified as Petersen, holding several items underneath his left arm as he left the store.

The total value of the stolen was estimated at \$183.80. After his arrest by police, Petersen said, "I'm sorry."

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**Business Hours:**  
Monday - Friday  
8 AM - 5 PM

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Family Fun for Everyone

**Trinidad Community Center**  
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**Tuesday, February 3 • 5 pm to 7pm**

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Sabine 719-680-2013 or  
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