



Opens Tonight!

Art of Murder

February 26-28, March 4-6

Fridays, Saturdays @ 7

Sundays @ 2

\$18

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WEEKEND EDITION
FRIDAY, SATURDAY
& SUNDAY
FEB. 26-28, 2016

Vol. 140, No. 41

THE FINE PRINT**■ WEEKEND—FEB. 25-27****TASPERA MEMBERS**

FRI. (1 p.m.) The Trinidad Area School and Public Employees Retirement Association luncheon meeting will be in the Sayre Senior Center, 1222 San Pedro. Info: and lunch arrangements please call: Paul Montero, 719-846-2423.

FREE MEN'S BREAKFAST

SAT. (8 a.m.) Food, fun and fellowship every 4th Saturday at the First Christian Church, 402 E. First St. Info: Tom Berry, 719-846-0879 or 719-846-3843.

Today's Quote

"Always we begin again."

~ St. Benedict

■ MONDAY—FEB. 29**MONDAY—FEB. 29**

LEAP DAY: A common year has 365 days and a leap year 366 days, with the extra, or intercalary, day designated as February 29. A leap year occurs every four years to help synchronize the calendar year with the solar year, or the length of time it takes the earth to complete its orbit about the sun, which is about 365.25 days.

■ TUESDAY—MAR. 1**TUESDAY—MAR 1**

LAS ANIMAS COUNTY
TUES. (8 a.m.) Board of County Commissioners regular meeting is in the Las Animas Courthouse, 200 E. First St., Room 201. Information: 719-846-2568. **COUNTY COMMISSIONERS:** Gary Hill (719-845-2595), Mack Louden (719-845-2592), and Anthony Abeyta (719-846-9300).

SAMARITAN CLINIC

1st & 3rd TUES. (9 a.m.-4 p.m.) Here to serve the under-insured and non-insured community with free health care and low-cost lab work, 413 E. Frost and corner of Linden Ave. Info: 719-846-3536.

CITY COUNCIL

TUES. (7 p.m.) Regular session will be held in Council Chambers, City Hall, 135 N. Animas St. Information: Audra Garrett, 719-846-9843. **CITY COUNCIL:** Mayor: Phil Rico and Council Members: Joe Bonato, Pat Fletcher, Carlos Lopez, Anthony Mattie, Michelle Miles, and Liz Torres.

DEMOCRATIC CAUCUS

TUES. (7 p.m.) Meetings at each voter designated precinct. Info: Paula Luccero, 719-680-0709.

REPUBLICAN CAUCUS

TUES. (7 p.m.) Trinidad meeting at the La Quinta Inn, 2833 Tougal Dr., Aguililar (Hoech Community Center), Branson Public School, Kim Public School and Primero Public School. Info: Stan White, 719-859-0548, or Kim Lewis, 719-469-2982.

■ PUBLIC SERVICE**CARNEGIE LIBRARY**

All free events. Info: 719-846-6841.

*WEDS. (1 p.m.) Chess Club (Adult/Teen)

*WEDS. (5:30 p.m.) Kay Evans "Aromatherapy-Blending Essential Oils" (Adult)

*MAR. 9 (1 p.m.) Bocce at Cimino Park (Adult/Teen)

*MAR. 10 (5:30 p.m.) Kelley Eden "Nutrition & Lifestyles" (Adult)

*MAR. 17 (10 a.m.) Join Tim Crisler for a hike up Simpson's Rest (Adult/Teen)

*MAR. 23 (1 p.m.) Join Tom Potter for beginner & intermediate golf workshop at the Trinidad Municipal Golf Course (Adult)

*MAR. 30 (1 p.m.) Bocce at Cimino Park (Adult/Teen)

VETERANS SERVICES

NEW OFFICE HOURS are Monday thru Friday, 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. (lunch 11:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.), 200 East First St., Room 101. Info: Al Trujillo, 719-846-3940.

SAYRE SENIOR CENTER

MAR. 3 (9 a.m.-1 p.m.) Take the AARP Safe Driver Course and you could reduce your overall vehicle maintenance and car insurance costs at the Center, 1222 San Pedro St. Info: Carl Mozeno, 719-868-2288.

TSJC FOOD FOR THOUGHT

MAR. 3 (12:15-12:45 p.m.) Free program "Coal Mining Built Trinidad" will be held in the Pioneer Room of the Sullivan Center at TSJC. Lunch can be had on your own at the cafeteria. Lunch RSVP: Donna Haddow, 719-846-5541 or donna.haddow@trinidadstate.edu.

DEMOCRATIC ASSEMBLY

MAR. 12 (9 a.m.) Event will be held at the Trinidad Middle School, 614 Park St. Info: Paula Lucero, 719-680-0709.

SPRING BAZAAR

MAR. 19 (9 a.m.-3 p.m.) The Heritage Christian School will host a school benefit event at the Faith Christian Fellowship Church, 2608 Santa Fe Trail Dr.: Info: Priscilla Santistevan, 719-680-7691.

BAR NI COMMUNITY GRANT

MAR. 31 DEADLINE: The Bar Ni Ranch Community Fund is accepting grant proposals for area non-profits. Info: Tom Perry at tomardinaperry@gmail.com.

RIVER CALL

Purgatoire River Call as of:
 02/25/16. Elmoro Ditch: Priority # 8 --- Appropriation date:
 11/15/1862.

Trinidad Reservoir Accounting:

Release 0.02 AF

Inflow 56.42 AF -- 28.44 CFS

Evaporation 5.40 AF

Content 27,575 AF

Elevation 6,193.39

Precipitation 0

Down stream call: John Martin
 Reservoir: 12/31/1948.



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THE CHRONICLE-NEWS

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BUSINESS EXPANSION

Taylor hired, fills new economic development director's position

Goal is to build department from ground up

Eric John Monson
News Editor
The Chronicle-News

"That's how I get through the day, with a sense of humor," said Taylor, a couple days after his introduction to the Trinidad City Council. "I can be very serious, but when you deal with finance and you deal with development, you have to have a positive sense of humor. Sometimes dry, sometimes sarcastic, but you have to have that."

Taylor was selected for the newly established position of Director of Economic Development, following a national search undertaken by the City of Trinidad and Las Animas County. According to the city, Taylor "will have overall responsibility for managing and directing the City and County's approach in economic develop-



Photo by Eric John Monson / The Chronicle-News

The City of Trinidad and Las Animas County recently announced the hiring of Jonathan Taylor to fill the newly established position of Director of Economic Development.

ment."

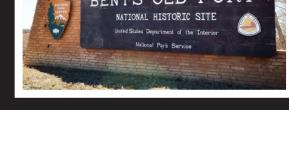
City Manager Gabe Engeland explains that Taylor's position was created after joint discussions between Trinidad and Las Animas County on their needs for econom-

ic development. "We had to take a hard look in the mirror and decide what the city and what the county needed. What we decided is that

Continued on Page 5 ...

Exploring Bent's Fort

Tim Keller's 2-part Travel Feature



LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Council approves Artspace agreement

Steve Block
The Chronicle-News

Plans for new live / work spaces cleared a big hurdle as City Council approved a Predevelopment Agreement with Artspace Projects, Inc., by a 6 to 0 vote at Tuesday's Special Meeting of Council. While some Council members expressed reservations about approving the plan, the consensus among Council seemed to be that the risks involved were outweighed by its potential benefits in promoting arts and culture in Trinidad. Council Member Michelle Miles was out of town and unable to attend the meeting.

Trinidad has been selected to host the demonstration project for Space to Create, Colorado, the first state-driven initiative in the United States for affordable for Artists and Creatives. Artspace is the Minnesota-based nonprofit that



Steve Block / The Chronicle-News

City Manager Gabe Engeland, left, talks to City Council members about the Artspace contract, as City Attorney Les Downs looks on.

has developed 49 arts-related across the U.S. to provide live / work spaces for Artists and Creatives.

The Space to Create, Trinidad effort is a collaboration between the Trinidad Creative District and its major partners, who include Governor John Hickenlooper's Office, the State Office of Economic Development and International Trade (OEDIT), Colorado Creative Industries (CCI), the Boettcher Foundation, the Colorado Department of Local Affairs, History Colorado and Artspace.

The City's agreement with Artspace calls for a \$650,000 financial commitment from the City over a three-year period. Council Member Joe Bonato said he was in favor of the Artspace agreement, but had concerns that the City could wind up in financial difficulties if anything went wrong with the contract.

City Manager Gabe Engeland said City Staff recommended approval of the plan and explained the Contract's terms.

"How the agreement works is that the City agrees to fund the Predevelopment Agreement with Artspace in the amount of \$650,000," Engeland said. "That \$650,000 happens in three phases. The first payment is \$150,000. The second payment is for \$250,000, and the third is also \$250,000. We've secured \$150,000 already

Continued on Page 4 ...

WEATHER WATCH

Friday: Sunny, with a high near 54. West wind 5 to 10 mph. **Night:** Mostly clear, with a low around 27. East northeast

wind 5 to 10 mph.

Saturday: Sunny, with a high near 63. Southwest wind 5 to 10 mph. **Night:** Mostly clear, with a low around 34. West wind 10 to 15 mph.

Sunday: Mostly sunny, with a high near 59. West wind 5 to 10 mph becoming north northwest in the afternoon. **Night:** Partly cloudy, with a low around 29. North northwest wind 5 to 10 mph.

LEAP DAY: Mostly sunny, high near 60. **Night:** Partly cloudy, with a low around 31. West wind around 10 mph.

Tuesday: Partly sunny, with high near 57. North northwest wind 10 to 15 mph.

Night: Partly cloudy, with a low around 24. North wind 10 to 15 mph becoming west after midnight.

Wednesday: Mostly sunny, with a high near 53. Northwest wind 5 to 10 mph.

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day trip, leaving home at sunrise, returning at sunset. I'd lucked upon Copper Kitchen years ago on a solo trip; ever since, I've been saying we need to drive up there for breakfast. Although tempted by the Western omelettes, we opted for Mexican, huevos rancheros for her, smothered breakfast burrito for me. Amid the chatter of a couple dozen

sion is free throughout 2016, a gift from the National Park Service on the occasion of its centennial. After laying in ruin for more than a century, the fort was meticulously rebuilt on the original foundations, with rooms replicated from historical drawings and detailed written accounts by occupants of the original fort. Bent's Old Fort National Historic Site debuted in 1976, timed to coincide with Colorado's own centennial and the United States Bicentennial.

The fort sits a hundred yards north of the Arkansas River and a quarter mile from the parking lot. Some used the call box to request a shuttle but we took the opposite approach. After a long drive and big breakfast, the park's one-mile hiking trail was irresistible. Besides, it allowed us to approach the fort as travelers did, on foot from a distance. We crossed marshes and walked along the river, encountering happy groups taking pictures.

Charles Bent and his partner, Ceran St. Vrain, were seasoned trappers, traders and businessmen from Missouri. Focused initially on the Santa Fe Trail trade, they opened stores in Taos and Santa Fe. In a bold business move, they expanded their operations to acquire a brisk Indian trade on the upper Arkansas River, building a trading post near present-day Pueblo. When that proved too far from the buffalo hunting grounds—both the trade and the standard diet were based on the buffalo—they built their new fort downstream toward the Purgatoire River, right where the Santa Fe Trail left American territory and entered Mexico at the Arkansas River.

Bent's younger brother, William, over-



A former history teacher at La Junta's high school and junior college, for the past ten years "John" has been the National Park Service's full-time host and guide at Bent's Fort. Asked how long he'd been there, he replied, "Since 1841."



As a vital trading post, Bent's Fort stocked everything people needed and hungered for on the frontier. Its location on the Santa Fe Trail, at what was then the Mexican border, brought it a steady stream of shoppers—Americans, Mexicans, and Cheyenne and other Native Americans.



The word "fort" is related to the words "fortify" and "fortress." The thick adobe walls of Bent's Fort were, and are, more than 12 feet high. Round bastions at the northeast and southeast corners, along with a watchtower over the fort entrance, allowed for close watch and protection from any hostile visitors.

happy diners, we were charmed when we asked a question and our waitress, coffee pot in hand, sat right down with us. When we left, Christina said she already felt like a regular.

Starting the 80-mile drive north out of Trinidad on Highway 350, we'd enjoyed seeing farmers already out plowing and preparing their fields for spring planting. Continuing an additional eight miles from La Junta to Bent's Fort, we saw a farmer applying fertilizer by repeated dump-truck loads and another making a dramatic controlled burn, sending thick plumes of smoke skyward. Later, we saw other controlled burns on the horizon, each burning out and disappearing after only minutes.

At Bent's Fort we discovered that admis-

some work on the grounds back in the early 1980s. He spent decades teaching history at La Junta High School and Otero Junior College. He's now been the fort's full-time host and guide for ten years.

Part 1... Continued from Page 1



Photos by Tim Keller / The Chronicle-News

The hiking trail outside Bent's Fort provides rich opportunities for photography and picnicking. Until 1848, the close riverbank marked the end of the United States; the distant trees were in Mexico. Bent's Fort sat beside an international border.

A compact and wiry mountain man welcomed us, introducing himself as John. Clad in moccasins, worn leather pants, homespun blue shirt and soiled red headscarf, he handed us a guidebook which I promptly ignored, too distracted by the seemingly endless possibilities. Only later, at home, did I discover that the guidebook would have taken me on a room-by-room tour with plenty of accompanying stories. Instead, I wandered the fort as visitors did in the 1840s, discovering rooms and riches where I encountered them. I liked that the rooms had no signs or labels, making them more like living places rather than museum exhibits. Of course, if I had opened the guidebook, I could have read about each room.

Instead, I kept going back to John to ask questions, learning much that turned out not to be in any guidebook. For example, travelers arrived with horses worn out by the 530-mile journey from Missouri. The fort traded them one fresh horse for two worn horses. The Bents sent the tired horses south for R&R, grazing beside the Purgatoire River near present-day Trinidad; when restored, the fresh horses returned to the fort and went back out in trade.

Through John, I met the fort cats, D.J. and Fitz, who dozed among stacks of blankets when they weren't wandering the grounds keeping the fort safe from mice. Out back I found corrals housing oxen, mules and horses. The original fort also kept cattle, sheep, poultry and peacocks.

In the high watchtower over the front entrance, I resisted the temptation to ring the huge iron bell. Later I learned that Christina was less successful in resisting the temptation. After ringing the bell, she asked John what that ring meant. He replied, "It means you're cookin' me dinner."

I found hundred-pound bales of buffalo robes, ten robes to a bale, made in the huge fur press in the outside courtyard and stacked for shipping back east. In a storeroom I found sale goods that included five-pound sacks of coffees and teas, tin and copper utensils, macaroni, Bordeaux wine, salt, chocolate and sugar, cast iron fry pans, metal locks, rifles and handguns, smoking pipes, and various types and colors of yarn, cord and rope.

I still hadn't reached the blacksmith and carpenter shops, the bar and billiards room, the "powder room" or the upstairs apartments when I found John tending a small campfire in a corner of the courtyard. I asked how long he'd been here at the fort. "Since 1841," he replied with a straight face.

With some probing, I learned that he did

some work on the grounds back in the early 1980s. He spent decades teaching history at La Junta High School and Otero Junior College. He's now been the fort's full-time host and guide for ten years.

Finally, I asked his last name. He appeared unaccustomed to giving it out. "Carson," he said. And then I remembered from my readings, as I enjoyed "Blood and Thunder" this winter, that Kit Carson's great grandson works now at Bent's Fort.

"That would be me," he affirmed, and I suddenly realized his uncanny resemblance to his famed ancestor, both men small and tough with fair skin and reddish hair.

When I left John at the fire, I walked up the steps to Susan Magoffin's room directly above.



La Junta's Copper Kitchen is packed for breakfast and lunch. The wait staff is the type that stops to chat and might even sit down to visit for a moment. Mexican breakfasts compete with Western omelettes in the morning, and the coffee keeps coming.

Next Friday's conclusion: Living inside Bent's Fort; Zane Grey and espresso in La Junta; and the drive home through a "Badlands" in which the distant Spanish Peaks become Montana.

Read Tim's previous exciting 3-part travelogue series "Chasing Billy the Kid" or view his other work, at TimKellerArts.com.



From 1833 to 1849, the population of Bent's Fort often reached from 150 to 200 people—trappers, traders, craftsmen, laborers, soldiers, herders, health-seekers and others. Employees numbered 60 to 100. The courtyard typically bustled with activity. In its center was a press that baled buffalo robes for transport and sale back east. Each year, as many as 15,000 robes were carried by wagon to the St. Louis markets. The elimination of buffalo contributed to the fort's demise.