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LOCAL NEWS... LOCAL VIEWS

January 12, 2024

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SLV Today

Holiday coloring contest winners named

VALLEY — Winners have been announced in the annual Christmas coloring contest sponsored by the Valley Courier and several local businesses. Coloring books were distributed to San Luis Valley schools and entries were submitted and voted on on-line.

First place winners receiving \$100 prizes were: Aspen Ruybal, Alamosa K-2, Jeremiah Medina, Bill Metz Elementary (Monte Vista), Kayli Gurule, Centauri Middle School, and Alexia Rivera, Monte Vista High School.

Second place winners receiving \$50 prizes were: Makai Abeyta, Alamosa K-2, Kate Ruybal, Alamosa 3-5, Kaylen Medina, Monte Vista Middle School, and Angel Quintana, Alamosa High School.

Third place winners earning gift cards from participating sponsors were: Grayson B., Alamosa K-2, Javonna Miller, Sanford Elementary, Makalan Duran, Centauri Middle School, and Kira Taylor, Centauri High School.

DN Food Bank distribution is Jan. 20

DEL NORTE — The Del Norte Food Bank will be open for its January distribution on Saturday, Jan. 20. Anyone in need of food assistance is welcome. If you are unable to attend during distribution hours and need food assistance, call 719-850-2643.

SLV WEATHER



Sunny, Breezy 26/-2

Sat: Sunny, Breezy & Gusty 33/9

Sun: Chance of Snow 35/3

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Cotten, top water guy in the SLV, talks water



Craig Cotten
Division 3 engineer

By PRISCILLA WAGGONER
Courier Reporter
ALAMOSA — Aside from air, water is the most crucial resource for human survival. In the San Luis Valley, water is crucial to economic survival, as well, and snowpack in the Sangre de Cristos is 65% of what is typical for this time of year.

With that in mind, Rotary Club members spent

a question-answer period with Craig Cotten, Division 3 engineer with the Colorado Division of Water Resources (DWR), during their monthly meeting this week was especially relevant.

Cotten started off the conversation by providing a rundown on Division 3, which encompasses the San Luis Valley. Division 3 is responsible for the administration of water

rights — both surface water and groundwater — which they do with a staff of 31 employees, including water commissioners, staff who make certain large capacity wells have meters on them, others who assure dam safety plus employees in administration.

“We’re one of the smaller divisions geographically but one of the bigger divisions in terms of is-

sues,” he said.

Cotten then provided the group with an excellent primer in understanding some of those issues, including legal issues around water rights.

“Groundwater use rules were approved by the water court in 2017,” he said, “and rules are now in effect. Any large capacity wells have to have meters on them and

■ See COTTEN page 3

ACSO swears in significant additions to staff

By PRISCILLA WAGGONER
Courier Reporter
ALAMOSA — Former Chief of Police of the Alamosa Police Department (APD) Ken Anderson was sworn in on Wednesday to serve as the new Division Chief with the Alamosa County Sheriff's Office (ACSO) where he will be in charge of the patrol division.

Sheriff Robert Jackson praised Anderson for his 23 years of experience in law enforcement, citing APD's creation of a co-responder program under his leadership, something that Jackson thinks would work well at the county level.

“That’s just an example of the expertise he brings with him,” Jackson said.

Anderson, who was reluctant to make

■ See ACSO page 3



Photo by Priscilla Waggoner
Ken Anderson is being sworn in as the new Division Chief at the Alamosa County Sheriff's Office.



Photo Courtesy Will Hickman, San Luis Valley Regional Airport
Work continues on the Snow Removal Equipment building under construction at the San Luis Valley Regional Airport.

Airport reaches important passenger number threshold

By JOHN WATERS
Courier News Editor
ALAMOSA — At the end of 2023, the San Luis Valley Regional Airport in Alamosa had a total of 10,904 enplanements (passengers) for the year. This is an important number as it enables the airport to receive \$1 million in federal funding.

Under the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021, the Federal Aviation Administration established Airport Rescue Grants. The plan grants airports that have more than 10,000 annual passenger enplanements funding of \$1 million.

In other airport news, a Snow Removal Equipment building is under construction at the airport and is expected to be completed sometime in June, 2024.

Airport Manager Will Hickman announced the good news at a regular meeting of the San Luis Valley Regional Airport

Advisory Board on Jan. 11.

Denver Air Connection, the passenger airline that serves the airport with jet flights to Denver will have a new schedule starting on February 1. On Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday, and Saturday, flights will depart Alamosa at 8 a.m., and on Wednesday and Sunday flights depart at 3:30 p.m. The airline uses 50-passenger ERJ-145 aircraft and 30-passenger Dornier 328 jets.

Trujillo brings wealth of experience to Adams State BOT

By ADAMS STATE UNIVERSITY
ALAMOSA — Colorado Governor Jared Polis appointed Anne Trujillo, of Littleton, to the Adams State University Board of Trustees. Trujillo's term began Jan. 1, and will end Dec. 31, 2027. The position was vacated when Michele Lueck's term ended in 2023.



Anne Trujillo

An alumna of the University of Colorado, Boulder, Trujillo sees Adams State as a perfect place for providing opportunities, which compliments her belief in opening doors for all Coloradans, especially those for whom higher education has not been a consideration or an option.

to know the campus and those who make it such an inviting place,” she said.

“This is personal to me; I am a first-generation college student and remember well what it was like to navigate the higher ed system on my own,” she said.

As a Latina and long-time Coloradan, Trujillo appreciates Adams State's distinction as a Hispanic Serving Institution.

As the newest BOT member, Trujillo will rely on her experience as a journalist to observe and listen at the beginning of her term.

“I don't think enough people know how meaningful that designation is to families who are looking for a welcoming environment and a place to kickstart a new phase in life, for themselves and their families,” she said.

“I'm excited to work with President Tandberg and the rest of the team who are deeply committed to helping students succeed. I look forward to meeting faculty, staff and students, and getting

Trujillo has experience working with urban and rural students through her volunteer work with the Denver Scholarship Foundation, providing scholarships to first generation families; and the Nathan Yip Foundation, ■ See TRUJILLO page 3

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Record

OBITUARIES

Patsy 'Patricia' Farris



Alamosa resident Patsy "Patricia" Farris, 83, passed away peacefully in her daughter's home in Monte Vista, Colo., surrounded by her loving family on Jan. 7, 2024.

Patricia was born on Feb. 7, 1940, to Eugene Durward Holland and Elvie Lou Duncan Holland in Fox, Ark. She met and fell in love with Austin J. Farris Sr., and they were married on Dec. 24, 1958, in Solgohachia, Ark. They enjoyed 54 years together until his passing in 2013. She worked at Sunshine Laundry for over 10 years and loved working with "all the little old ladies".

Patricia was the epitome of a homemaker. She took great pleasure in making her home and yard immaculate for all to enjoy. She had the most beautiful flower gardens and grew a wonderful vegetable garden. She would often help her daughter

can all the vegetables out of their gardens. She enjoyed crocheting, she specialized in making afghan blankets, tablecloths and doilies. Patricia enjoyed doing crossword puzzles and sketching pictures of Elvis Presley. Family was very important to her, she always loved to spend time with them all.

Patricia is survived by her daughters Tamera (Stan) Townsend of Monte Vista, Colo., Sheila

(the late David) Schwulst of Soda Springs, Idaho; her grandchildren Matthew, Ethan, Katy, Chelsea, Kendra and Allyson and great-grandchildren Beau, Ridge, Trayson, Ainsley, Austin; her brother Dwaine Holland of Mountain View, Ark.

She was preceded in death by her husband, both of her parents, her son Austin Joe Farris Jr., of Alamosa, Colo.; her siblings Robert Holland of Heber Springs, Ark., and Donna Bagby of Mountain View, Ark.

A graveside service will be held on Wednesday, Jan. 17, 2024, at the Alamosa Cemetery at 1:30 p.m.

Rogers Family Mortuary is in care of the arrangements. To leave online condolences, tributes and words of comfort for Patricia's family, please visit www.RogersFunerals.com.

Fidenzio John Zertuche



Fidenzio John Zertuche, lovingly known as John, passed away on Jan. 9, 2024, leaving behind a legacy of hard work and a zest for life. He was born on Jan. 20, 1944, in Monte Vista, Colo., and his presence will be deeply missed by all who knew him.

Cremation was selected and a graveside service will take place at a later time at the Homelake Veterans Cemetery in Monte Vista. To express condolences, please visit www.mvmortuary.com

John's life was spent in Monte Vista. He spent much of his younger years in the potato fields farming. Later in life, John transitioned into trail maintenance and various other jobs for the US Forest Service. This career change allowed him to fully embrace his love for nature and the great outdoors. John's tireless efforts ensured that trails were well-maintained and accessible to everyone who sought solace in nature.

John was described as someone with a serious demeanor but possessed a delightful silly side that would often bring joy to those around him. He had a unique ability to lighten up any room with his infectious laughter and playful jokes. It was this combination of seri-

ousness and silliness that endeared him to both colleagues and friends alike.

Aside from his professional achievements and lighthearted personality, John had many passions outside of work. Hunting, fishing, and spending time outdoors were among his favorite pastimes. His appreciation for nature went beyond maintenance work; it ran deep within his soul. The serenity he found while engaged in these activities brought him unparalleled joy and contentment.

In addition to his remarkable professional accomplishments and hobbies, John served as a Sargent in the United States Army during Vietnam. His bravery on the battlefield was recognized when he received the Purple Heart — an honor bestowed upon those who have been wounded or killed while serving our

country. John's courage during times of adversity is a testament to his strength of character.

Now, as we bid farewell to John, we must remember the lasting impact he had on those closest to him. He was a beloved husband to Julia Zertuche and a devoted father to Fidenzio, Jennifer, and John. His presence radiated love and warmth in their lives, creating cherished memories that will forever be held dear.

John's grandchildren — Lucas, Jamie, and Angelica — were treasured by him. He showered them with affection and guided them with wisdom, instilling in them the same appreciation for nature and zest for life that brought him so much joy. Collin, John's great-grandson, also held a special place in his heart.

In addition to his immediate family, John is survived by his sisters Mary Zertuche, Libby Espinosa, and Sally Ortiz. They were a source of unwavering support throughout his life journey.



Jose David Lucero



Jose David Lucero was born on June 9, 1936, in Blanca, Colo. Eternally Gone Fishing on Jan. 6, 2024, in Colorado Springs, Colo. He was the youngest of 13 siblings. Dave was a Blanca Eagles High School Basketball State Qualifier in 1952 and he graduated from Blanca High School in 1954.

After graduation from high school, he began attending Adams State College in Alamosa. This was made possible by using the \$64 monthly insurance money his mother Beatrice was receiving from his deceased brother Pascal's death benefit provided by the US Government after he was killed in action 4 weeks before the end of WWII. Dave was inducted into the Army on July 14, 1960. He served 2 years active duty, 1 year of which was overseas in Korea.

After military service, Dave eventually returned to Adams State College where he completed his studies in 1968. Around this same time Dave pursued a career as park ranger. He worked at the Sand Dunes National Monument and Yellowstone National Park as a summer park ranger. Dave did his student teaching at the

San Luis High School in the 1967-68 school year. He began working in Manzanola the following year.

It was at this time that he suffered a major life altering event. He suffered a debilitating brain hemorrhage from an aneurysm that nearly ended his life. His sister Aurelia took care of him and nursed him back to health. He was mostly unchanged afterward except for the three boreholes from the brain surgery to clip off and contain the aneurysm that had nearly ended his life. Later in life he would put marbles in those indentations to entertain his little nephews and nieces. After his recovery, Uncle Dave applied for a position in the Social Security Administration. He worked there until he retired in 2001.

After retirement he mostly enjoyed doing what he loved most: traveling, fishing, gambling, watching the Broncos and visiting with family and friends. He eventu-

ally moved to the Spanish Peaks Veterans Community Living Center in August of 2021. He developed a respiratory ailment in December of 2023 which eventually took his life.

Dave was preceded in death by his Mother Beatrice Esquivel Lucero, his Father Magarito Lucero, infant sister Julianita and infant brother Magarito, brothers Tito Benigno, Reynaldo Pascal, Pablo Amado, Gaspar, Juan Fransico Carlos, and Ruben Fernandez. Sisters Manuelita Emilia and Aurelia.

He is survived by his sister Marcella Lucero Roybal of Blanca, Colo., sister-in-law Priscilla Salazar (Gaspar) Lucero of Pueblo, Colo., numerous nieces, nephews, grand nieces, grand nephews, and many friends. A special thank you to those who cared for him during his last days.

Vigil Services with Recitation of the Rosary will be held on Saturday, Jan. 13, 2024, at 9:30 a.m. Funeral mass will follow at 10 a.m. Burial to follow after mass at the Ft. Garland Cemetery. Friends and Family are welcome to enjoy a meal and fellowship at the Blanca/Ft. Garland Community Center after the burial.

To Leave online condolences, please visit romerofuneralhomes.com. The care of arrangements has been entrusted to Romero Valley Funeral Home of Alamosa.



Coy Stocking, a participant in the initial Larry Holder Exercise and Cancer Survivorship program, continues to use a rowing machine for his daily cardio workout. The Adams State School of Kinesiology is seeking volunteers to participate in this ongoing program again this spring.

Larry Holder Exercise and Cancer Survivorship program is seeking participants

By ADAMS STATE UNIVERSITY ALAMOSA — The Adams State University Larry Holder Exercise and Cancer Survivorship program offers cancer survivors in the San Luis Valley the opportunity to participate in an individualized exercise program conducted in a group setting which meets three times per week for 10 weeks.

Now in its fifth year, this program continues to offer a place where participants can work toward their personal fitness goals in a non-judgmental setting while enjoying a support network of fellow cancer survivors. The program also gives Adams State undergraduate and graduate kinesiology students experience in fitness testing and guiding and supporting program participants throughout the exercise program.

The Department of Kinesiology will continue important research on the benefits of several types of exercise on the physical, mental, and social health of cancer survivors. The program is funded through local support from the SLV Health Foundation, including the Larry Holder Memorial Golf Tourna-

ment, after completing a two-year grant from the Colorado Cancer Coalition.

All cancer survivors ages 18 years or older are welcome regardless of gender, type, or stage of cancer. This spring's research study begins the week of January 22 with appointments for individual fitness testing. There is no cost to the participant, but completing the entire twelve weeks of the study is crucial to ensure accurate results are obtained. The study consists of one week of pre-testing followed by 10 weeks of exercise programming, with post-testing starting the week of April 8.

All participants will take part in the exercise program which consists of a combination of a resistance training circuit plus cardio training. Participants will be post-tested to determine any changes in fitness and overall health at the end of the study.

Interested participants are encouraged to attend one of the following pre-registration meetings: 12 p.m. Tuesday, Jan. 16; or 12 p.m. Wednesday, Jan. 17. All meetings will be held in the Adams State East Campus Building, room 109. The East Cam-

pus building is on the corner of First Street and La Veta Avenue in Alamosa.

For more information, or for those who can't attend one of the scheduled pre-registration meetings, contact the Adams State School of Kinesiology program coordinator: Nico Alvarez: 720-272-4635, alvarezna@adams.edu; Rob Adams: 480-249-7859, adamsrr@adams.edu; or Peggy Johnson: pjohnson@adams.edu.

PENDING OBITUARIES

Marcia Lucero

Alamosa resident Marcia Lucero, 62, passed away peacefully in her own home on Jan. 5, 2024. Rogers Family Mortuary is in care of the arrangements. To leave online words of comfort, remembrances, and condolences for Marcia's family, please visit www.RogersFunerals.com.

Virginia Chavez

Manassa resident Virginia Chavez, was called home Jan. 10, 2024. Arrangements are pending and will be announced through Romero Funeral Home of Alamosa.

ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS MEETINGS

VALLEY — The San Luis Valley offers many Alcoholics Anonymous and Narcotics Anonymous groups.

A.A. and N.A. members primary purpose is to

stay sober and help other alcoholics/addicts to achieve sobriety.

There are AA and NA 12-Step Meetings throughout the valley. The 6th Tradition states that we are not affili-

ated with any outside organizations, but in the spirit of cooperation, we list these meeting schedules for friends and family. For information, call 719-937-5083 or see our website: slvaa.org

COURIER OBITUARY POLICY

The Courier charges \$75 for each obituary per day. Pending arrangements or death notices are free. This charge affects funeral homes, family or other representatives that place obituaries. All paid obituaries are published on www.alamosanews.com, for no additional fee.

Please email obituaries if possible to squintana@alamosanews.com If the newspaper errors in publishing an obit, corrections will be made and the obit rerun. If the errors are on the part of the submitting party, an additional fee will be assessed.

School Menu Friday January 12, 2024

No School Breakfast & Lunch Free for all students Alamosa School District To sponsor the School Menu call 589-2553

Valley News

CDA hiring for two Regional Assistant Commissioners

By COLORADO DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE BROOMFIELD

The Colorado Department of Agriculture announced a search to fill two new regionally based Regional Assistant Commissioner of Agriculture positions that will serve as a liaison between the Department and agricultural communities across Colorado.

The two new positions are in addition to those filled in 2023. The Regional Assistant Commissioner of Agriculture roles serve as a key resource and conduit to CDA to support the Department's goals of community engagement and developing and maintaining trusted relationships with rural communities.

Current Regional Assistant Commissioners Jo Stanko of Routt County and George Whitten of Saguache County have been serving since early 2023, and their success in these roles has led CDA to hire two additional positions. These new positions will also represent a region of Colorado. While the positions are open for anyone in Colorado meeting the minimum requirements to apply, CDA is specifically seeking applicants from Eastern Colorado and from the State's urban, Tribal, or other underrepresented communities.

These positions will average 5-10 hours per week, will be based in diverse agricultural communities, and will operate with a high level of flexibility to allow working farmers, ranchers or ag workers to consider this role. These positions were developed through conversations with Colorado's agricultural community as to how to expand representation and deepen partnerships.

"We created the Regional Assistant Commissioner roles to allow more working agricultural families to be part of CDA and represent their communities across the state," said Colorado Commissioner of Agriculture Kate Greenberg. "We are looking for two new Regional Assistant Commissioners to join the team who have a proven

track record of cultivating meaningful relationships and advancing shared goals in their communities. These positions are also critical members of my leadership team."

These unique positions will work closely with the Commissioner of Agriculture, the Agricultural Commission, and CDA's senior team to serve as a direct connection between the Department and their community. Qualified candidates will have experience and knowledge in the agricultural field and in ag economics, stewardship and conservation practices, supporting future generations in agriculture, and promoting animal health and welfare. The position will advise the Department on issues related to agricultural production and other policies impacting agricultural communities and provide policy position recommendations and feedback.

The Department is looking for leaders from agricultural communities who are skilled in engaging local decision makers, building and strengthening relationships, and committed to increasing equity, diversity and inclusion in agriculture. The Regional Assistant Commissioner applicants should be able to demonstrate a wide range of community involvement and have experience that covers multiple areas of the agricultural industry.

These part-time, term-limited positions will serve as a spokesperson for CDA in their community and will bring feedback from various ag communities back to the Department. The positions do not oversee staff or programs but support the department's work by connecting stakeholders with appropriate decision makers and acting in a liaison capacity with ag communities across their region of Colorado.

The full position description and application can be found online. The application period is open now and closes on Jan. 31. Qualified applicants should fill out the online application form. A paper application form is also available at the link above.

Trujillo

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focused on providing assistance to teachers in rural districts. "I have learned the importance of making personal connections to help people chart their course in life. That's where I see my goals aligning with those of Adams State University and I am honored to be a part of the Board of Trustees," she said.

Trujillo's career as a news anchor with KMGH Denver 7 spans over 39 years. She is a Latino Leadership Institute Legacy Award Recipient; and a 12-time National

Association of Television Arts and Sciences (NATAS) Emmy winner for excellence in reporting, anchoring and breaking news coverage. She was inducted into the NATAS Silver Circle for service to journalism; and was named to the 2019 Denver Press Club Hall of Fame.

Trujillo currently serves on multiple community boards; and served as co-chair of the E.W. Scripps Latino/Hispanic Employee Resource Group, and as a member of the Denver7 Diversity Committee. She is co-founder of the Colorado Chapter of the National Association of Hispanic Journalists.



Photos by Priscilla Waggoner

Eighteen new commission deputy sheriffs were also sworn in who will be working in the Alamosa County Detention Center. Top Left to Right: R.A. Ramirez, D. Gandall, J. Clark, C. Valesey, K. Forrester, S. Zeigle, Sheriff Robert Jackson, M. Reimann, B. Lira, M. Decker, Z. Sanvig. Bottom Left to Right: R.A. Lopez, B. Carson, D. Lopez, R. Martin, T. Falcon, G. Alcorta, R. Williams, J. Boss.

ACSO

Continued from Page 1

a speech, said he looks forward to working with ACSO.

"I think I bring a little to this agency," Anderson said. "[Sheriff Jackson] taught me a lot ever since I was a kid and he hired me. It's kind of ironic that he's hired me again. I look forward to it in a county I don't know much about. I need to learn the geography. That's kind of clear. I do look forward to getting to know the guys in the patrol division and a lot of the jail deputies, as well. Thank you for this opportunity."

Jackson then swore in Zach Decker as ACSO's investigator, a position Jackson has been wanting ACSO to have for quite a while.

Before hiring on with ACSO, Decker worked at the Great Sand Dunes National Park, Alamosa Police Department and Adams State University Police.

"I started [as an investigator] about 7 months ago, in June," Decker said in a speech. "At first, they had me get to know the geography of the county



Photos by Priscilla Waggoner

Zach Decker being sworn in as ACSO's investigator.

then I rode patrol with Alamosa Police Department and then, a week later, they gave me a homicide and said 'welcome to the team'. It's been busy ever since."

There was also a swearing in ceremony for 18 newly hired commission deputy sheriffs who will work in the Alamosa County Detention Center.

"Commissioners were a big part in allowing us to expand to the point where we could bring Chief Anderson on board," Jackson said. "This is a good thing. It brings us almost up to complete in the sheriff's office and we're almost up to par in detention, so

things are looking good. One of my campaign promises nine years ago was to provide 24/7 and we're close to making that happen. It wasn't that long, back in the day, when there was a separation between the sheriff's office and the city. We're glad we don't have that anymore."

After the swearing in ceremony, Jackson expanded on the apprentice program with the Valley Courier.

"There are five individuals who are working in the jail who are also in the police academy," Jackson said. "We'll take two of those and put them in our apprentice pro-

gram where they'll go to the academy and then make up hours when they're not in school by going on patrol, where they can get a lot of their [training] check-offs done. Then, when they get out of the academy, their field training will be cut from 14 weeks to 7. That's a good thing."

A number of people attended the ceremony, including deputies and administrative staff with the sheriff's office, APD Interim Police Chief Joey Spangler, Alamosa County Commissioners Vern Heersink and Arlan VanRy and County Administrator Roni Wis-

Cotten

Continued from Page 1

replace depletions to the streams because we know that pumping groundwater has an impact on surface water — that is the water that runs in rivers, streams and ditches."

Water rights in Colorado are based on the prior appropriation system, also known as "first in time, first in line." Put simply, the owners of water rights that were issued the longest time ago are also the owners whose water rights will be fulfilled before those with younger water rights will receive water.

Because surface water rights, including ditches, were issued before rights to groundwater, they are referred to as "senior" water rights. Any action that would negatively impact senior water rights is described as an "injury."

When asked how people can "replace depletions", Cotten explained that sometimes well owners will lease or purchase a ditch and, instead of taking that water out to divert or irrigate, they leave the water in the ditch to offset water they have pumped from wells underground.

He was also asked about the feasibility of building more reservoirs.

In terms of engineering, "reservoirs are very realistic," Cotten said, "but they're also political." He cited the Conejos Water Conservancy District that has been attempting for "about 12 years" to get

a reservoir on the Conejos stream system just outside Antonito.

"They've learned that, if they can put [the reservoir] off the stream and just dig a ditch versus building it on the stream, that's a lot less red tape."

Cotten also gave an overview of the seven subdistricts in the Valley, described as "a conglomeration of well owners in the Valley who, among other things, assess fees based on how much water is pumped and then use money they have collected to keep water in stream systems."

That led to a discussion of sustainability.

There are two main components of wells, he said. One is replacing depletion of the rivers, and the other is to ensure sustainability of the aquifer, which is unique to our area.

"There's no other place in the state where people are required to sustain the aquifers, specifically by statute, except for here," he said.

In 2012, Subdistrict No. 1 submitted their first plan to ensure sustainability, which cut back water usage over a 20-year period to rebuild the unconfined aquifer to a sustainable level.

"We're 12 years into that 20-year period and [water in the aquifer] is lower than 2012. The state engineer sent some letters a few years ago saying they had to build the aquifer back up or face the possibility of wells being shut down. Shutting down wells would dev-

astate our agricultural economy," he said,

As a result, Cotten said, Subdistrict No. 1 developed a new plan that's currently in water court and is based on the rule that any water pumped out of the aquifer must be replaced one-to-one.

"So, if you have surface water rights for one Cubic Foot per Second (CFS), then you can put that into the aquifer and pump your well at one CFS. It works well. It's a good approach."

But people who don't have surface water rights to offset their groundwater pumping oppose the rule.

A group of well owners called Sustainable Water Augmentation Group (SWAG) with land north-east of Center who don't have many surface water rights have objected to the new water plan for Subdistrict No. 1, he said. Their objection will lead to a trial in water court.

SWAG has also filed a court case to get out of Subdistrict No. 1 and develop their own augmentation plan, which will also go to court.

One Rotary member brought up water exports, asking, "Where does the Division [of Water Resources] stand on that?"

As a general statement, Cotten said, any time anyone wants to change a water right, (taking water out of the Valley would clearly be a change), they have to go to water court where, initially, the Division of Water Resources acts as the court's engi-

near.

"We advise the court if the case should be approved or denied."

Cotten added that, if DWR is concerned that a water court case will injure other water rights holders, "We can step out of our consultation role into a former opposer role and become a party to the case. The injury part would be a big issue. How can you move water and not cause injury?"

In a further illustration, Cotten brought up the Great Sand Dunes which has a water right "that says they have to hold water in the ground to a certain elevation or the sand will blow away."

A brief article on the nps.gov/grsa website related to hydrology in the Great Sand Dunes describes the situation in more detail. "As in our own bodies" the website reads, "water is the glue that holds this complex system together, through flowing streams, wetlands, and moisture that allows unique plants and animals to survive in the sand. [These streams] are critical parts of a huge natural system that shapes and maintains the Great Sand Dunes as we know them today."

With the statute that requires sustaining the aquifers in the San Luis Valley plus the water right owned by the Great Sand Dunes that must be used to hold water in the ground, Cotten summarized his point by saying, "Taking water out of the valley would be a big hurdle."

Opinion

Good news, bad mood

By STEVEN ROBERTS

As the new year dawns, the American economy is in good shape. But the public is in a bad mood. That contradiction dominates our political life, and how voters untangle their feelings over the next 10 months could well decide the election in November.

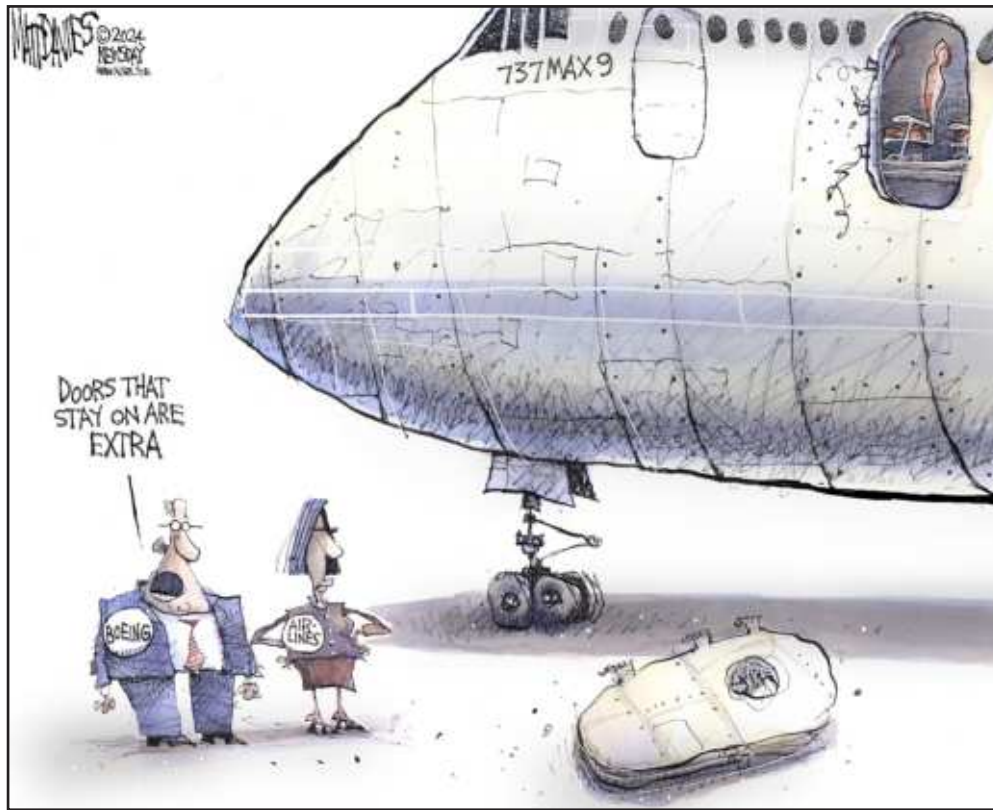
The only real certainty is uncertainty. “Things are getting better and people think things are going to get worse — and that’s the most dangerous piece of this,” Democratic pollster Celinda Lake told the Associated Press. “Honestly, I’m kind of mystified by it.”

The statistics are, in fact, mystifying. “By many measures, the U.S. economy is rock solid,” reports the AP. Almost 200,000 jobs were created last month, reducing the unemployment rate to 3.7%. Inflation over the last year has dropped from 9.1% to 3.2%, and the economy seems headed for a “soft landing” without a recession. The Federal Reserve foreshadows future interest rate cuts, fueling a stock market boom.

And yet, gloom persists. Navigator Research polled voters in key congressional districts and found only 26% viewed the economy positively while 73% were negative. In a CNBC survey, only 33% approved of Biden’s handling of the economy, with 62% giving him poor marks.

So, what gives? Start with the persistent, and poisonous, impact of inflation — always the most damaging of all political issues. As the economic writer Annie Lowery put it in the Atlantic in 2022, “Inflation is an everyone problem and unemployment is a some-people problem.”

Much attention has focused on fuel prices, for good reason, but the real Ground Zero in the inflation war is the grocery store, not the gas station. The Atlantic conducted a na-



tional survey, trying to pinpoint the real cause of voter unhappiness, and reported: “When the results came in, one finding jumped off the screen: Americans are really, really unhappy about grocery prices.”

Yes, those prices have settled down, but they have stabilized at much higher levels than before the pandemic. And that gap, that memory, is killing voter confidence. “Collectively, there’s still this coming to grips with the idea that we’re never going back to 2019,” explained Joanne Hsu, director of consumer surveys at the University of Michigan. “We’re in a new normal now, and we’re still adjusting to what that new normal feels like.”

Economists agree there is always a lag time before perceptions catch up with reality, and that’s what Democratic strategists are counting on. As Jared Bernstein, Biden’s chief economic adviser, tells AP: “We just need more time to get these gains to working Americans -- that’s our plan.”

But lingering price hikes are only part of the problem. Many households are feeling the loss of emergency pan-

dem relief payments, plus high interest rates are aggravating credit card debt and delinquency rates are soaring.

Moreover, as a messenger of good news, Biden faces many obstacles. Polarization is so deep that many Republicans simply refuse to believe the facts. New York magazine raises the possibility that the economic turmoil during Biden’s first two years in office “poisoned his image as an economic manager.”

No one has ever described Biden as an eloquent or inspirational leader, and he’s thrashing around for a message that works. “Bidenomics” has fallen flat as a campaign slogan. Lately the president has started blaming others for his failure to change opinion — the news media for being too negative, big corporations for “price gouging,” Donald Trump for handing him an economic mess.

“You can’t jawbone people into feeling better,” Democratic political strategist David Axelrod warned on CNN.

The lingering economic effects of the pandemic, while serious, don’t fully

To submit news, email:
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To submit sports, email:
khamrick@alamosanews.com

Letters policy

Letters are welcome and encouraged. All letters submitted for publication in the Valley Courier must be typewritten, signed by the author, and must include a phone number and address where the author can be reached. Letters must not be libelous. The Courier will not run letters that are negative to specific businesses. We reserve the right to edit for clarity, civility and accuracy. Please limit letters to 500 words or less.

The Courier’s editorial board reserves the right to reject a letter for reasons it believes are appropriate. Letters may be subject to editing to fit available space, or exclusion from the Opinion Page. Please, no poetry. Please send signed letters to P.O. Box 1099, Alamosa, CO 81101 or email them to news@alamosanews.com. Letters to staff, not for publication, should be marked “personal.”

explain the disconnect between fears and facts. There’s something else going on. The larger impact of the pandemic goes well beyond prices. It has damaged our national confidence, our ability to believe in the future. Democratic pollster Jay Campbell said on CNBC, “people have this continued malaise about them” and added, “The fact is, bad news and difficult times stick with people much longer than good news and happy times.”

“People still seem rattled and disconnected by the shock of the pandemic,” Claudia Sahm, former Federal Reserve economist, tells AP. “People have really been jerked around. Things have been turned on and off. Everything has moved fast. It’s been disruptive and confusing. We’re just tired.”

The problem for Joe Biden is that he seems tired, too. Can he summon the energy, and the message, to change the national mood? To lift our spirits? To restore confidence in ourselves?

Steven Roberts teaches politics and journalism at George Washington University.

Legislators need a lawsuit diet

By MARK HILLMAN

Capitol Review

Businesses that fuel Colorado’s economic engine can’t be blamed for cringing at the specter of the Colorado legislature’s return this month. Plaintiffs lawyers, however, are not cringing. Instead, the people who pay to put their faces on billboards along our busiest highways are licking their chops.

Last year, lawmakers went on a lawsuit binge, introducing a record 25 bills that used private lawsuits for enforcement, rather than entrusting enforcement to a government agency. According to the Common Sense Institute, 43 similar bills have been introduced since 2019.

Using litigation for enforcement violates the constitutional separation of powers. As most of us learned in school, the legislative branch writes the laws, the executive branch enforces the law, and the judicial branch applies or interprets the law. Enforcement agencies are accountable to our elected officials; that’s why enforcement of state laws is typically their responsibility. Billboard lawyers, by contrast, are accountable to no one except their clients, and both are given an incentive to sue by this misguided legislation.

Lawsuits should be a last resort, used when all other options are exhausted. Instead, private lawsuits make litigation a primary means of enforcement. A business owner’s first formal notification of a complaint shouldn’t be when served with a lawsuit.

Traditional lawsuits in which oppos-

ing parties resolve disputes involving injury or damages certainly have their place in our civil justice system. Private enforcement lawsuits are a different mechanism entirely. Instead of solving a dispute involving actual damages, laws that use private lawsuits for enforcement encourage litigation by creating “magic damages” — newly-defined monetary or liquidated damages that would not otherwise exist. These magic damages are merely fines by another name, but rather than being enforced by a government agency, they provide a financial incentive for a billboard lawyer to file a lawsuit.

Private lawsuit enforcement bills typically include one-way fee-shifting (“loser pays,” but only for one side, the plaintiff). Successful defendants rarely recover their costs, so it’s a lose-lose scenario for businesses who always bear the cost of their own defense, even when they’ve done nothing wrong, but can be ordered to pay the plaintiffs’ costs, as well.

Such laws also tend to set up legal presumptions that business defendants are at fault or deprive them of meaningful legal defenses. Instead, businesses deserve the assumption that they intended to comply with the law unless ill-intent or habitual bad behavior can be proven.

With all of these legal advantages, it’s no wonder billboard lawyers favor these bills. Handing the force of government over to a private attorney is intimidating to the Colorado business or individual facing such a lawsuit. Private enforce-

ment lawsuits allow billboard lawyers to use the force of government against businesses for their own profit. When their client does win, the lawyer typically receives up to 40% of the damages.

Twenty years ago, Colorado boasted one of the most stable litigation climates in the nation. That didn’t mean laws were stacked in favor of business. Instead, laws were written by the legislature and applied by the courts in such a way as to make the outcome predictable for both plaintiffs and defendants.

Predictability creates a bright-line standard of expected conduct which discourages unsafe practices or products, protects businesses that operated on the bright side of that line, and rewards legitimate victims when businesses cross into shady conduct.

As recently as 2010, Colorado was among the ten best states in the U.S. Chamber of Commerce Lawsuit Climate Survey.

Now, Colorado is one of the most expensive states for litigation. U.S. Chamber rates Colorado’s tort system as ninth most-costly in the country at \$4,044 per household. That means Colorado residents are needlessly paying more for housing, transportation, health care, insurance and other basic household needs. A study for the American Tort Reform Association found that excessive litigation costs reduced personal income of Colorado residents by \$5.7 billion in 2020.

Litigation has a legitimate purpose — to resolve disputes when all else fails. This year’s Colorado legislature

should halt the lawsuit binge and use traditional means to enforce the laws it passes.

Former Senate Majority Leader Mark Hillman is executive director of Colorado Civil Justice League (www.cclj.org).

Write them

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Lifestyles

Adams State water course is available for community and high school students

By ADAMS STATE UNIVERSITY

ALAMOSA — A thriving community needs people who understand the connection between water and pretty much everything else, including the environment, the economy, our food supply, and our future.

To help students and community members better understand the water challenges and opportunities in the San Luis Valley, Adams State University is again offering the introductory Water 101: Water Essentials: How Water Works in the West course for the spring 2024 semester.

Water 201 will be taught by Kevin Boyle of the Colorado Division of Water Resources. He brings his deep knowledge and understanding

of water to the program. Kevin is teaching the course in order to help students and the community members broaden their knowledge of the legal framework surrounding water. He hopes that course participants will gain a working knowledge of how water resources are administered in Colorado with an emphasis on the Upper Rio Grande Basin. Participants will join Adams State students to learn directly from experts, local water users and managers. Field trips will provide hands-on understanding of regional water use on the ground. Classes begin Jan. 16. Community members

can register to audit Water 101 as a "Listening Course" for \$150 for the full semester. For more information, including how to register, email pdcus@adams.edu.

The water studies classes are designed to:

- Prepare students for challenges that lay ahead,
- Enhance professional development across diverse career paths, and
- Increase community and civic participation for a sustainable future.

In addition to being available to Adams State students, high schools can enroll in this course as a concurrent class, for early college credits, through their school counselor.



Youth hockey tournament to take place in South Fork on Feb. 3

By LYNDISIE FERRELL

SOUTH FORK — The South Fork Chamber of Commerce recently announced the first youth hockey tournament will be held at Rickel Park on Feb. 3 in partnership with the Town of South Fork.

South Fork's new ice rink in Rickel Park is all set to host the inaugural Hockey on the Rio Youth Tournament from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Feb. 3. Youth hockey enthusiasts aged 14 and under can engage in 3-on-3 gameplay across various age brackets.

Attendees are encour-

aged to bring chairs and immerse themselves in the action while enjoying bonfires warming up the event. The tournament promises more than just hockey, with live DJ entertainment, local restaurants offering hockey-themed specials throughout the day, and a variety of attractions adding to the excitement.

"We want this to be a family centered event and we are excited to welcome youth hockey participants from Alamosa, South Fork and Creede. We will be playing a round-robin-style tournament with a 3-on-3 format. The winner of

each age group will receive a customized hockey puck and a picture in the South Fork Times," said new South Fork Chamber of Commerce Administrator Renee LeSueur.

The South Fork Visitor Center will also host its Saturday Skate Night party after the tournament which will have bonfires, free skates for those who need them and sledding opportunities dependent on snow.

For updates, visit www.SouthForkChamber.com or follow the South Fork Chamber of Commerce Facebook page.

First DUI enforcement period of the year underway

By COLORADO DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

It's officially the season of winter fun and powder ski days, but motorists are encouraged not to start their year on a downhill slope toward a DUI. From Jan. 11 to 24, the Colorado Department of Transportation will support the Colorado State Patrol (CSP) and 69 local law enforcement agencies for the Winter Blitz DUI enforcement period. Patrols across the state will remove impaired drivers from roads and encourage Coloradans to begin the new year safely. During enforcement periods, drivers may see sobriety checkpoints, saturation patrols, and additional law enforcement on duty dedicated to impaired driving enforcement.

Based on preliminary data, there were 218 impaired-related crash fatalities on Colorado roads in 2023, down from 286 last year. The 2023 number will likely increase slightly while data is finalized. The counties with the highest number of fatalities involving an impaired driver in 2023 were Arapahoe (26), Adams (22), El Paso (21) and Jefferson (20). Adams County has ranked among the top three coun-

ties for impaired-related fatalities in the state since 2019. Additionally, the Colorado Springs police department reported 740 DUI arrests in 2023, the most of any other police department in the state. CSP reported a total of 1,101 DUI arrests across all 16 high-visibility enforcement periods.

"Last year's Winter Blitz enforcement period resulted in over 370 DUI arrests," said Col. Matthew C. Packard, chief of the Colorado State Patrol. "Don't risk losing your time, money, license or even your life because of a DUI. Even if you think you're okay to drive, it's always better to plan for a sober ride. All motorists, passengers and pedestrians are counting on your decisions this year."

Driving under the influence of any impairing substance is illegal, not just alcohol. The majority of Colorado State Patrol troopers have specialized training in drug detection, known as ARIDE (Advanced Roadside Impaired Driving Enforcement). All Colorado law enforcement agencies are able to administer alcohol and drug toxicology tests to drivers following a fatal DUI crash. Additionally, there are over 120 Drug Recognition Ex-

perts (DRE) in Colorado trained to recognize impairment in drivers under the influence of drugs other than, or in addition to, alcohol.

"Even if you think you're okay to drive, it's always better to get a ride with a sober driver," said CDOT's Office of Transportation Safety Director Darrell Link. "Getting behind the wheel while under the influence puts others in danger and greatly increases the risk of a crash. There's never a good reason to drive impaired."

The recent New Year's Eve Weekend enforcement period concluded with 221 arrests across 82 participating agencies. The agencies with the highest arrests were Denver Police Department (26), Thornton Police Department (15) and Colorado Springs Police Department (11). CSP reported 36 arrests. The next DUI enforcement period will be Super Bowl Weekend from Feb. 8 to 14.

For yearly impaired-driving crash and fatality data in Colorado, visit www.codot.gov/safety/traffic-safety/data-analysis/fatal-crash-data. For local law enforcement agency plans, visit www.codot.gov/safety/traffic-safety-reporting-portal.

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Sports

Falcon wrestlers fly past Pirates 61-15

First On the Mat wrestling rankings of 2024

By KEN HAMRICK

Courier sports editor
MONTE VISTA – The Intermountain League wrestling season opened on Thursday night as Monte Vista High School hosted Centauri, ranked ninth in Class 3A, at the Pirates' gym.

The Falcons proved their ranking as they rolled to a 61-15 victory. "It was an impressive win," said Centauri coach Micah Keys. "The boys wrestled tough."

The Falcons took off to an early lead and never looked back.

Matthew Salazar opened the dual meet by pinning Stetson Romero in 1:26 at 106 pounds. Centauri took the next two matches by forfeit with Caden Casias (113) and Aundre Chavez (120) both recording wins. Riley Valdez increased the Falcons' lead to 22-0 as he defeated Elijah Baumgardner by a 13-1 major decision at 126 pounds.

The Pirates got their first win of the night at 132 pounds as Ethan Wolfe pinned Aiden Knecht in 3:12.

The Falcons won the next two matches by fall. First Konnor Horton pinned Jon Enderle in 1:44 at 138 pounds, and Nathaniel Garcia pinned Deon Baumgardner in 2:59 at 144.



Courier photo by Ken Hamrick

Monte Vista High School's Jeremiah Baumgardner (left) and Centauri's Parker Buhr battle for position in the 157-pound match Thursday at the Pirates' gym. Buhr won the match 2-1 and the Falcons defeated the Pirates 61-15.

Kevin Cisneros won the next match for Monte Vista as he recorded a 7-2 decision over Troy Munson at 150.

The 157-pound contest was a thriller as Parker Buhr scored a 2-1 decision over Jeremiah Baumgardner.

After a scoreless first period, Baumgardner recorded an escape in the second period. Buhr evened the score with an escape in the third and he was awarded another point after Baumgardner was called for excessive stalling penalties and it proved to be the match winner.

Another outstanding match was at 165 pounds with Spencer Smith

defeating Jacob Pacheco. The first period was scoreless, but Pacheco led 3-2 after the second period. Smith evened the score at 6-6 after the third period and the match went into sudden victory. Smith pinned Pacheco in 6:41 to increase the Centauri lead to 43-9.

The final Pirate win came at 175 pounds as Julian Pacheco pinned Aaden Quintana in 3:17.

Centauri took the final three matches. First Dorian Quintana won by forfeit at 190, Josh Polkowske pinned Tyler Bartee in 1:30 at 215, and Skylar Montague pinned Joshua Salazar in 1:38 in the 285-pound match.

Both Centauri and

Monte Vista, as well as Alamosa, will compete in the Mel Smith Invitational in Florence beginning today.

"It's one of the toughest tournaments of the year," Keys said. "We're trying to prep ourselves for that and I think we're ready."

Centauri 61, Monte Vista 15

106 – Salazar (C) pinned Romero, 1:26; 113 – Casias (C) by forfeit; 120 – Chavez (C) by forfeit; 126 – Valdez (C) maj. dec. E. Baumgardner, 13-1; 132 – Wolfe (MV) pinned Knecht, 3:12; 138 – Horton (C) pinned Enderle, 1:44; 144 – Garcia (C) pinned D. Baumgardner, 2:59; 150 – Cisneros (MV) dec. Munson, 7-2; 157 – Buhr (C) dec. J. Baumgardner, 2-1; 165 – Smith (C) pinned Ja. Pacheco, 6:41, SV; 175 – Ju. Pacheco (MV) pinned A. Quintana, 3:17; 190 – D. Quintana (C) by forfeit; 215 – Polkowske (C) pinned Bartee, 1:30; 285 – Montague (C) pinned Salazar, 1:38.

SLVYHA hosts tournament this week

By KEN HAMRICK

Courier sports editor
ALAMOSA – The San Luis Valley Youth Hockey Association is hosting an 18U tournament beginning today.

There are five teams in the tournament.

In addition to the SLVYHA, the remaining participating teams include El Paso (Texas) New Mexico Ice Red, New Mexico Ice White and Taos (N.M.).

The tournament begins today with the SLVYHA

facing the New Mexico Ice White at 5:15 p.m.

Here is the schedule:

Friday
NM Ice White vs. SLVYHA, 5:15 p.m.
El Paso vs. NM Ice Red, 6:45 p.m.
Taos vs. NM Ice Red, 8:15 p.m.
SLVYHA vs. El Paso, 9:45 p.m.
Saturday
NM Ice Red vs. Taos, 1:15 p.m.

El Paso vs. NM Ice White, 2:45 p.m.
SLVYHA vs. Taos, 4:15 p.m.
NM Ice White vs. NM Ice Red, 5:45 p.m.
Taos vs. El Paso, 7:15 p.m.
NM Ice Red vs. SLVYHA, 9 p.m.
Sunday
Third place game, 8 a.m.
Championship, 10 a.m.

Sports Bulletin

Follow sports editor Ken Hamrick on X. His handle is @KenHamrick1.

SCOREBOARD

TUESDAY Prep boys basketball

Sargent 61, Dolores 48

Prep girls basketball

Pueblo County 35, Alamosa 24
Sargent 64, Dolores 16

THURSDAY

Prep girls basketball

Crested Butte at Creede - no report
Prep boys wrestling
Alamosa, La Junta at Florence - no report
Centauri 61, Monte Vista 15
Sargent, Sierra Grande/Centennial at La Veta - no report

SCHEDULE

FRIDAY

Prep boys basketball

Sanford at Escalante (N.M.), 3 p.m.
Custer County at Sangre de Cristo, 3:30 p.m.
Centennial at Coto-paxi, 4 p.m.
Center at Del Norte, 4 p.m.
Moffat at Antonito, 5 p.m.
Sargent at Creede, 6 p.m.
Alamosa at Ignacio, 7 p.m.
Centauri at Pagosa Springs, 7 p.m.
Prep girls basketball
Sanford at Escalante

(N.M.), 3 p.m.

Custer County at Sangre de Cristo, 3:30 p.m.

Centennial at Coto-paxi, 4 p.m.

Center at Del Norte, 4 p.m.

Lake City at Sierra Grande, 4 p.m.

Moffat at Antonito, 5 p.m.

Alamosa at Ignacio, 5:30 p.m.

Centauri at Pagosa Springs, 5:30 p.m.

Sargent at Creede, 6 p.m.

Prep girls swimming

Sargent at Durango, TBA

Prep boys wrestling

Alamosa, Centauri, Monte Vista at Florence Invitational, 9 a.m.

Centauri JV, Center, Mountain Valley, Primero, Sargent at Mountain Valley Invitational, 9 a.m.

Prep girls wrestling

Alamosa at Palmer Ridge, 6 p.m.

College men's basketball

Adams State at Regis, 7 p.m.

College women's basketball

Adams State at Regis, 5 p.m.

College men's wrestling

Colorado Mesa at Adams State, 6 p.m.

SATURDAY

Prep boys basketball

Las Animas at Center, noon

Del Norte at Coto-paxi, 1 p.m.

La Veta at Sargent, 1 p.m.

Mancos at Sanford, 2 p.m.

Moffat at Lake City, 2 p.m.

Sierra Grande at Ch-

eraw, 2 p.m.

Montezuma-Cortez at Alamosa, 3 p.m.

Bayfield at Centauri, 4 p.m.

Creede at Antonito, 5 p.m.

Trinidad at Centennial, 5 p.m.

Prep girls basketball

Las Animas at Center, noon

Del Norte at Coto-paxi, 1 p.m.

La Veta at Sargent, 1 p.m.

Montezuma-Cortez at Alamosa, 1:30 p.m.

Mancos at Sanford, 2 p.m.

Moffat at Lake City, 2 p.m.

Sierra Grande at Ch-eraw, 2 p.m.

Bayfield at Centauri, 2:30 p.m.

Creede at Antonito, 5 p.m.

Trinidad at Centennial, 5 p.m.

Prep girls swimming

Sargent at Durango, TBA

Prep boys wrestling

Alamosa, Centauri, Monte Vista at Florence Invitational, 9 a.m.

Antonito, Center, Del Norte, Mountain Valley, Sargent at Custer County Invitational, 9 a.m.

Prep girls wrestling

Alamosa, Monte Vista, Mountain Valley at Vista Ridge Invitational, 9 a.m.

College men's basketball

Adams State at Colorado-Colorado Springs, 7 p.m.

College women's basketball

Adams State at Colorado-Colorado Springs, 5 p.m.

PROGRESSIVE SUNDAYS

Sundays 12 p.m. - 7 p.m., 20 players are drawn to receive \$100* cash and \$100* in Bonus Cash. If a winner is not found, the prize will roll over to the following drawing.

*Rules apply. Visit Ohkay Winners Club for complete details.

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*Prizes are limited.

BIG BUCKS

Saturdays, be one of ten (10) players drawn to win \$250* cash and \$250* Bonus Cash, and two players will qualify for the BIG BUCKS grand prize drawing of \$25,000* on March 30, 2024! Good Luck!

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MONTE VISTA SCHOOL DISTRICT is accepting applications for two **SECONDARY SPECIAL EDUCATION TEACHERS** for the 2024-25 SCHOOL YEAR. A complete list of desired qualifications and experience is posted on the district website. The District operates on a 4-day week (Monday - Thursday) and offers a competitive salary and an excellent benefit package including employee health, dental, vision, HSA match, and life coverage. The salary for this position will be paid from the current MVSD Teacher Salary Schedule, which can be viewed on the district website - Employment Opportunities page. Placement on the salary schedule will be determined by education and experience at time of hire. Applications may be submitted through our online employment application <https://www.pirates.monte.k12.co.us/employmentopportunities> by January 25, 2024 or until the position is filled. For application questions, contact the District Administration Office at 719-852-5996. (1/30/24AS)

MONTE VISTA SCHOOL DISTRICT is accepting applications for full-time **CUSTODIAN**. This is a full-time position with benefits. Preference will be given to applicants with maintenance experience. A full list of desired qualifications can be viewed on the district website. Monte Vista School District offers a competitive salary and an excellent benefit package including employee health, dental, vision, HSA match, and life coverage. The salary for this position will be paid from the current MVSD Maintenance and Custodial Salary Schedule, which can be viewed on the district website - Employment Opportunities page. Placement on the salary schedule will be determined by education and experience at time of hire. Applications may be submitted through our online employment application <https://www.pirates.monte.k12.co.us/employmentopportunities> by January 25, 2024 or until the position is filled. For application questions, contact the District Administration Office at 719-852-5996. (1/31/24)

CITY OF ALAMOSA is accepting **VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTER** applications. As a volunteer member of Alamosa Fire & Rescue, you will have the honor of serving your community in emergency situations. Additionally, all members have the opportunity to meet and work with other highly trained, motivated, and enthusiastic volunteers, and interact with numerous local, state, and national fire and rescue organizations. Please visit our website at <https://cityofalamosa.org/> for more information and to complete an online application. For questions please contact Fire Chief Stone at (719)587-2530. (2/14/24)

MONTE VISTA SCHOOL DISTRICT is accepting applications for a **ROUTE DRIVER FOR STUDENTS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS**. Applicants for this position must have a current driver's license (a CDL IS NOT REQUIRED) and pass a drug test. For additional information contact Mark Hotz, Maintenance/Transportation Director, at 719-852-2881. Applications may be submitted through our online employment application <https://www.pirates.monte.k12.co.us/employmentopportunities> by January 25, 2024, or until the position is filled. For questions regarding the application process, contact the Administration Office at 719-852-5996. (1/31/24)

CITY OF ALAMOSA is seeking a full-time **COMMUNITY SERVICE OFFICER**. Hiring pay is \$21.59 to \$22.67 per hour DOQ. Fringe benefits include CO PERA Retirement employer contribution 14.73% & employee contribution is 9.00%, or Empower 401K, 10% match, 11.5 holidays per year, 2 personal days, 80 hours of sick leave and 80 hours of vacation leave per year. Employer paid life insurance, STD, LTD & AD&D, 75% of medical, vision, and dental premiums paid by the employer. Wellness Program, and discounted recreational memberships. This position performs a variety of professional and technical work necessary to identify, investigate and enforce violations of the Code of Ordinances of the City of Alamosa as specified by Article II, Section 2.37 of the Code of Ordinances authorized by the City Manager. For a full job description and to apply visit cityofalamosa.org or stop by City Hall at 300 Hunt Ave. The City of Alamosa provides Equal Opportunity Employment for accommodations please submit them in writing with the application. Application deadline - open until filled. (1/19/24AS)

1ST SOUTHWEST BANK, a locally owned CDFI community bank, is seeking a **MARKETING and COMMUNICATIONS SPECIALIST**. FSWB offers competitive compensation, generous benefits, & career development. Join FSWB's award-winning team dedicated to supporting rural Colorado's agricultural, nonprofit and small businesses. For details and to apply, visit www.fswb.bank/about/careers. EOE. (1/12/24AS)

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Comics

CROSSWORD PUZZLE

NEA Crossword Puzzle

- ACROSS**
- 1 One-liner
 - 4 Tel —
 - 8 "The — of the Ancient Mariner"
 - 12 Be in arrears
 - 13 Go on horseback
 - 14 Got an A on a test
 - 15 "— Quixote"
 - 16 Sharp
 - 17 Dark horse with some white
 - 18 Distort
 - 20 Supplemental things
 - 22 Ohio's lake
 - 24 Pinna
 - 25 Cash dispenser, for short
 - 26 Filthy place
 - 27 Water barrier
 - 30 Shoemaker's pointed tool
 - 32 "Begone!"
 - 34 Clean air org.
 - 35 Thickness measure
- DOWN**
- 1 Mt. Olympus dwellers
 - 2 Stopped snoozing

Answer to Previous Puzzle

F	L	A	K	A	S	H	S	T	O	W
L	O	N	I	L	E	E	N	I	P	A
E	V	I	L	S	E	R	R	A	T	E
W	E	L	L	S	R	O	U	T	I	N
		J	O	T	D	E	C			
C	O	C	O	N	U	T	S	H	I	P
O	R	L	Y	F	O	G	S	O	W	
O	D	E		T	A	R	S	L	U	E
O	W	N	S	D	I	S	C	A	R	D
		E	A	T	M	O	A			
O	B	S	C	U	R	E	T	R	I	C
M	E	A	T	L	E	S	S	L	A	O
E	T	N	A	E	M	U	E	M	I	T
N	E	E	R	D	E	E	T	A	L	E

- 3** As a rule
- 4** Biblical boat
- 5** Contend
- 6** Notion
- 7** Feud
- 8** Harder to come by
- 9** Object of worship
- 10** Honey drink
- 11** Writer — Ferber
- 19** Intelligence
- 21** Singer — Andra
- 23** Print measures
- 26** Flavoring plant
- 27** Adorned
- 28** Mil. address part
- 29** Chart
- 30** Doctors' org.
- 31** Gain
- 33** Caught
- 37** Agt.
- 40** Islet
- 42** "The Man With the Golden —"
- 43** Hair dye
- 45** Lasso
- 46** Levin and Gershwin
- 47** Office note
- 48** Mottled
- 49** Fly alone
- 51** Get ready to fire
- 54** Parisian pal
- 55** "Non-sense!"

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	
12			13				14				
15			16				17				
18			19			20	21				
	22		23			24					
		25				26			27	28	29
30	31		32	33				34			
35				36			37		38		
39			40				41	42			
			43				44			45	
46	47	48				49		50		51	
52				53		54	55		56		
57				58					59		
60				61					62		

SUDOKU

DIFFICULTY RATING: ★★★★★

			2	7			4			
		5		6					8	
3			8	3		2				5
				8	4	3				
		6			5		2	8		
7										1
4				8			9			
		8		9	7					

PREVIOUS SOLUTION

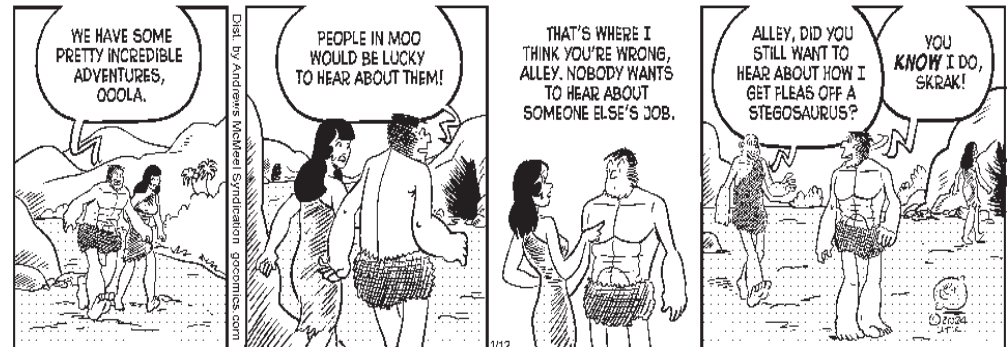
9	4	2	8	1	7	3	6	5
3	7	1	2	5	6	4	9	8
5	8	6	9	3	4	7	2	1
7	6	4	1	9	3	5	8	2
1	2	3	7	8	5	9	4	6
8	5	9	4	6	2	1	3	7
2	9	5	6	4	1	8	7	3
6	1	8	3	7	9	2	5	4
4	3	7	5	2	8	6	1	9

HOW TO PLAY:
Each row, column and set of 3-by-3 boxes must contain the numbers 1 through 9 without repetition.

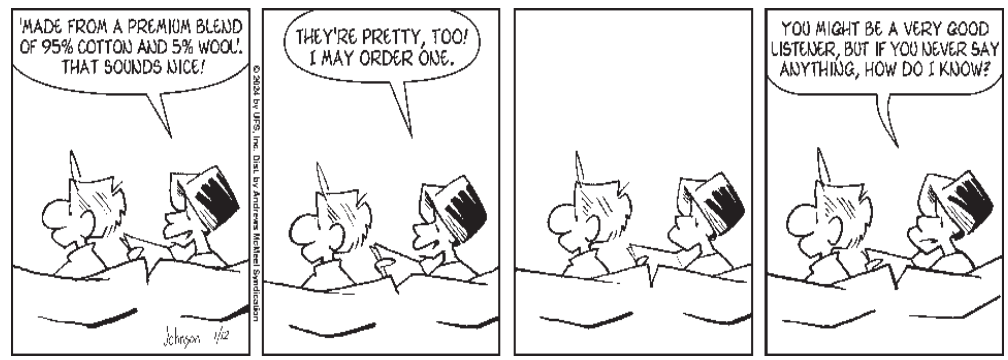
HERMAN



ALLEY OOP



ARLO & JANIS



BIG NATE



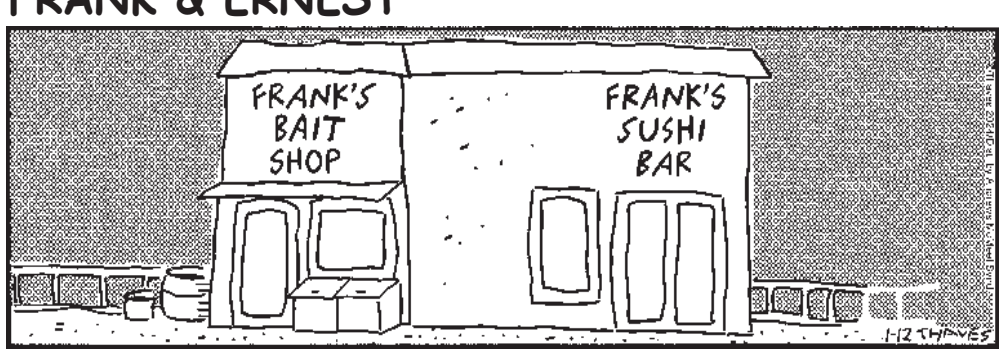
THE BORN LOSER



FOR BETTER OR FOR WORSE



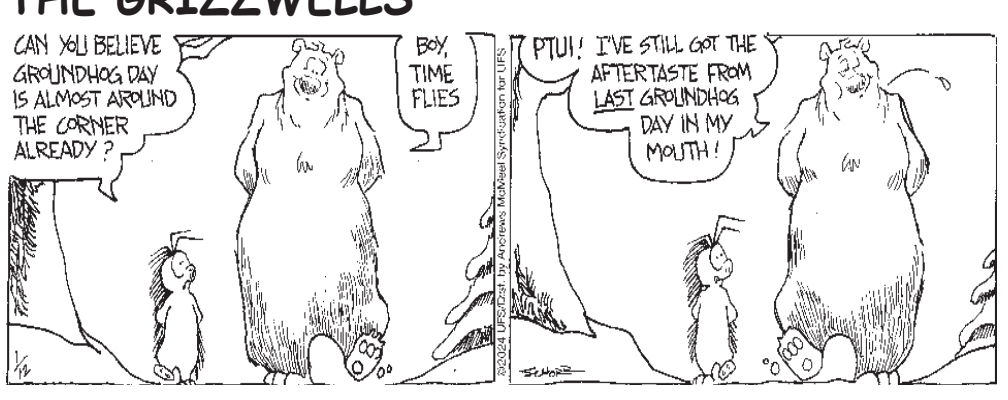
FRANK & ERNEST



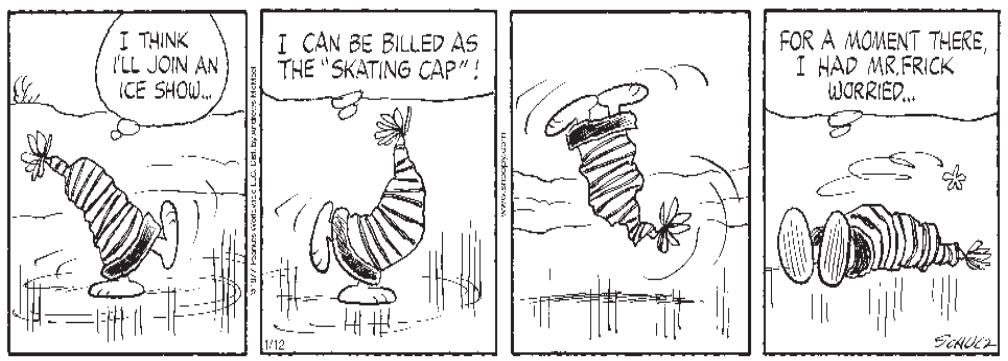
GARFIELD



THE GRIZZWELLS



PEANUTS



Abused spouse believes time to escape is near

DEAR ABBY: I have been with my abusive husband for almost 30 years. I made several attempts to leave him, which resulted in him stalking me and threatening to seriously harm me and our children. Despite all his threats and abuse, I was forced to allow him to take our children unsupervised. I would end up going back so I could be present when he was around the children.

Our youngest just moved out and, surprisingly, my husband has calmed down. I am going to leave, and I'm looking for places out of state where he won't be able to find me. Honestly, I'm terrified. How do I move somewhere new and start over alone? -- ANONYMOUS IN THE U.S.

DEAR ANONYMOUS: Because you feel you may be in danger if you follow through with your plan to leave your abuser and start a new life, contact the National Domestic Violence Hotline. Its toll-free phone number is: 800-799-7233. The people there can help you formulate a safe way to escape. I wish you good luck and a MUCH happier life.

DEAR ABBY: I work nine hours a day in a mental health clinic talking to the clients and doing bill-

ing and collections among many other things. I love my job. The problem is that when I step outside to take a break, I want it to be my quiet time.

Most people say a quick "hi," and that's fine, but a man in the business downstairs from me comes out and chats every time. He calls me by the wrong name (which I have not corrected) and talks while I respond with the bare minimum to show I'm not interested. Is there a nice way to say I am not interested in his company while I am on break? -- DECOMPRESSING IN WISCONSIN

DEAR DECOMPRESSING: Yes, but it will take backbone on your part. The next time you see this person, tell him there are two things about you he needs to know. They are: Your name isn't "Joan," and when you take a break from the pressure of your job, you would like to do it ALONE.

DEAR ABBY: My wife's sister died 14 months ago at the young age of 52. Since then, my brother-in-law has been texting and calling my wife constantly. He is grieving, and his alcohol problem has gotten worse. I have tried to be patient about their communication, but



ABIGAIL VAN BUREN

I'm finding myself getting jealous. What's your advice? -- BOTHERED IN ILLINOIS

DEAR BOTHERED: Have a talk with your wife about this. She is grieving the loss of her sister as well as trying to help her widowed brother-in-law. Put your jealousy aside, at least for now, and suggest she join a grief support group.

As to your brother-in-law, understand that his drinking problem won't resolve itself until he admits he has one and decides to join a support group or to dry out in rehab. You would be within your rights to point that out to him, as long as you do it with compassion rather than anger.