



Thunderbirds defeat Tigers in double overtime

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Ribbon cutting held for Meyers new agent for Farm Bureau Insurance

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LOCAL NEWS... LOCAL VIEWS

January 24, 2024

\$1

ASD Superintendent Jones contracted through 2025-26



Photo by Priscilla Waggoner

Summer of 2022, Superintendent Diana Jones (right) and Assistant Superintendent Luis Murillo (left) smiling following completion of successful negotiations with the Alamosa Education Association for a substantial raise in teachers' salaries, setting them at a competitive level.

By PRISCILLA WAGGONER
Courier Reporter
ALAMOSA — In a move that communicates clear acknowledgement of the strides Alamosa School District (ASD) has taken under her leadership, Diana Jones' contract to serve as superintendent of ASD has been renewed by the Board of Education through the 2025-2026 school year.

For her part, Jones was prepared to make that commitment as she had shared with the Valley Courier several months

ago that it was her desire to stay with the district. The commitment to have steady leadership going into the future was further solidified when Luis Murillo, Assistant Superintendent, signed a two-year contract.

To see where the district is headed, a look at what has already been accomplished is a good indicator.

When Jones and Murillo were both hired at the same time beginning with the 2021-2022 school year, the school district was somewhat in a state

of flux.

The current superintendent was functioning in an interim role after her predecessor's unexpected resignation. The pandemic was disrupting learning at all levels with no sign of relief in the immediate future. And teachers were being recruited by other school districts who offered higher salaries and four-day school weeks.

But as Jones had stated during her interview for the position, she was committed to creating a safe, inclusive and wel-

coming environment at school and building relationships with students, families and staff members as a primary foundation, resulting in the administration's often repeated phrase of "All means all," that reflected their philosophy of district management.

Neither Jones nor Murillo have ever been about "quick fixes" but, instead, have approached rebuilding and improving the district through thoughtful, forward-thinking planning created with

■ See JONES page 3

SLV Today

Five Ward 4 residents to be interviewed for council seat

By PRISCILLA WAGGONER
Courier Reporter

ALAMOSA — After delaying until January 19 the deadline for residents of Ward 4 to submit a letter of intent to city council regarding filling the seat vacated by Councillor Michael Carson, City Manager Heather Sanchez has made public the names of five individuals who are interested in the position.

The individuals include Jamie Dominguez, Bonnie Gonzales, Sandra Ortega, Leland Romero and Meaghan Smith.

The five candidates will be interviewed by members of city council during a work session scheduled for 6:30 p.m. on Wednesday, January 24, in the Jury Conference Room. A vote will be taken by council members following the interviews.

It could not be confirmed with the city by press time if the interviews would be open to the public, but work sessions are typically open to public attendance with no participation allowed. It is also not known if the

■ See COUNCIL page 3

SLV WEATHER

Cloudy to Mostly Sunny
41/15

Thurs: Mostly Cloudy
39/16

Fri: Chance of Snow
42/7

INSIDE

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Rio Frio 5k returns to the Rio

By KEITH R. CERNY
Courier Publisher

ALAMOSA — After a two-year hiatus due to unsafe ice conditions, the premiere event of the Rio Frio Ice Fest is back on the frozen Rio Grande.

Event officials have confirmed a safe route for the Rio Frio 5k has been mapped out with up to 10-inches of ice on the river, beginning in Cole Park, Saturday morning at 10 a.m. Those same ice conditions will mean the return of Sunday's popular "polar plunge" and ice carousel beginning at noon.

Dalton Carleo, recreation division manager for the City of Alamosa, said more than 200 had pre-registered for the 5k as of last week and another record number of participants could eventually toe the line.

You won't necessarily need a tuxedo to participate in the 2024 Rio Frio Ice Fest, but it would be fitting with this year's theme of a "Penguin Party."

Organized by the City of Alamosa Parks and Recreation, Alamosa County Chamber of Commerce and "Visit Alamosa," the ice fest committee chose the penguin theme after making suggestions to the community. The annual ice sculpting downtown will follow the theme.

Aside from the popular race/walk, Saturday's highlights will include ice carving demonstrations beginning at noon, a disc golf tournament on the city course just north of town from 12-2 p.m. and the shop local raffle from 12-3 p.m. on San Juan Avenue, not to mention that evening's bonfire in ice.



Courier file photo by Keith R. Cerny

This group of penguins was a precursor to the 2024 Rio Frio Ice Fest as they were among the many costumed participants that appeared for the ninth annual Rio Frio 5k event in Alamosa's Cole Park last year. The race drew a record 275 entrants in spite of ice conditions not allowing the race to be run on the Rio Grande.

The Young Professionals of Alamosa, an offshoot of the Chamber of Commerce, will sponsor the Shop Local Raffle Extravaganza from 12-3 p.m. on San Juan. Receipts from any Alamosa business dated 1/27/24 for a minimum of \$10 will earn one raffle entry per \$10 spent.

Find mini penguin figurines in downtown businesses and turn them in at the YPA table for one raffle entry per penguin.

Festivities begin Friday night with race packet pickup at Milagros Coffee House at 6 p.m. and a cross country/luminaria ski event at Blanca Vista Park, again snow conditions permitting, from 6-8 p.m.

Race packet pickup continues Saturday from 8-9:30 a.m. at the Alamosa Senior Center in Cole Park, followed by the

race starting at 10 a.m. on the bordering Rio Grande. Race awards will be given on site following the event.

An information tent will be manned from 1-4 p.m. at Main and San Juan Avenue.

The second annual "Rio Frio Flight" will offer drink and snack samples from 4-6 p.m. on San Juan, featuring a drink "luge", carved from a block of ice, and possibly an "ice bar."

Returning is the ever-popular "fire and ice" bonfire on San Juan Avenue beginning at 6:30 p.m. Saturday featuring a blazing fire inside a tower of ice blocks. This event has been moved to the middle of the block to prevent damage to new lighting above the south one-half block of San Juan.

For more details, go to www.riofrioice.com or rioraces.com.

Ferguson to serve 30 years for murder of Taylor

By PRISCILLA WAGGONER
Courier Reporter

SAGUACHE — Dustin Ferguson,

37, who was convicted of committing murder in the second degree, a class two felony, plus a crime of violence, was sentenced by District Judge Amanda Hopkins last week to serve 30 years in the Department of Corrections for the murder of 41-year-old Brian Taylor. In his sentence, Ferguson was given credit for 695 days served.

The sentence was delivered just shy of two years after Taylor was murdered in February of 2022.

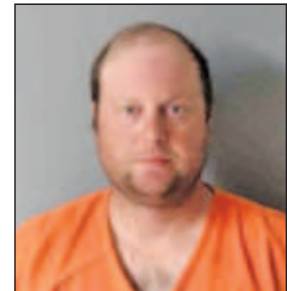
According to the arresting documents obtained by the Valley Courier from the clerk of the court, at 10:30 p.m. on Feb. 23, 2022, Saguache County Sheriff's Office (SCSO) deputies were dispatched to a residence on County Road LL57 in Villa Grove in response to a reported stabbing.

The person who called the office was actually a neighbor calling on behalf of David Jackman, the owner and resident of the house who had fled the scene after witnessing the incident. Jackman named Ferguson as the suspect.

When deputies arrived at the house, Hansen reported seeing blood on the storm door to the residence. The door was locked.

He then looked through a window and saw the body of a man — later

■ See FERGUSON page 3



Dustin Ferguson

Finding loving homes for pets at 9,000 feet in elevation

By JOHN WATERS
Courier News Editor

SAN LUIS — At the San Luis Valley Animal Welfare Society located at an elevation of 9,000 feet in Costilla County, "We are no-kill, we are classified as shelter/sanctuary," says Aileen Peek, Executive Director, Shelter Owner, and Founder of the 35-acre haven. The volunteer organization provides dog and cat rescue and adoptions.

Aileen and her husband Frank mortgaged their home to buy the property for the current

shelter in 2016. Since that time, they have found loving homes for over 10,000 homeless dogs and cats. The shelter was named in the 2020 edition of the Best of Alamosa for their Humane Services.

"We go to Colorado Springs, and we've been doing this for 25 years to Pet Smart where they have adoptions. Most of our adoptions happen on the Front Range and Colorado Springs and we have people from those areas come down to us. Yesterday, we had some folks who drove

down from the Springs and adopt a puppy." On the website of the shelter, a recent adoption fair in Colorado Springs offered a guarantee, "If an adopted animal turns out not to fit your home, we gladly take him/her back and provide a full refund. We want all families to enjoy their new companions and all animals to enjoy their new homes.," said Peek.

"Right now, we have about 50 adult dogs and about 20 puppies, adoptions have been slow, maybe because

■ See HOMES page 3



Photo courtesy Aileen Peek

Baby (left) and Princess are two of the many dogs up for adoption at the San Luis Valley Animal Welfare Society.



Record

Firewise program offers hazard assessments



Courtesy photo

SAGUACHE COUNTY — The Saguache County Firewise Program is getting low on 2023-24 grant funds but will probably be able to complete another month of free wildfire hazard assessments and hands-on projects. Text Daniel Johnson at 719-480-9764 if you're ready to prepare for possible wildfires this coming summer.

OBITUARIES

Melanie Maxine Garcia

Melanie Maxine Garcia, born Nov. 19, 1961, in Antonito, Colo., sadly left this world on Dec. 22, 2023.

Her loving and free-spirited presence will be missed by many.

Her mother and father Placida and James Garcia along with her brother Tony Martinez preceded her in death.

She leaves behind her two daughters Amy Lopez and family husband Anthony, children Aleasha and Strength Lopez. Daughter Jessica Juanita Pacheco and family Antonio Pacheco, Kiana Pacheco, Elijah Medina, Kaila Jaramillo, Nazario Pacheco, and Nevistancia



Medina; as well as her beloved brother and sisters along with her cherished nieces and nephews, Raymond (Sofie) Garcia with two sons, Anabelle (Joe) Duran with two sons, Darlene Martinez, Lucille

(Ernie) Romero with two sons and three daughters, and Louisa Floyd with two daughters.

A celebration of life will be held at a later date as her headstone will be set in Las Mesitas cemetery alongside her family who have preceded her in death.

Melanie, a mother, sister and aunt will be forever missed and never forgotten. May she find her forever peace with the Lord forever more.

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

Loretta Gayle Heinz



Loretta Gayle Heinz (Thompson, Wright), 80, passed away peacefully on Dec. 29, 2023. She was born and raised in Alamosa, Colo., and lived for many years in Santa Maria, Calif., and Mesa, Ariz.

She was preceded in death by her par-

ents, Perry and Ila Mae Thompson and her brother, Gary Thompson.

She is survived by her two daughters, Rhonda Hunter of Mesa, Ariz., and Shelly Brunelle of Laconia, N.H. She leaves three grandchildren: Travis Hunter, Corey Hunter and Ashley Brunelle and one great-granddaughter, Michelle Hunter.

She was very lucky to have lifelong friends and extended family members to whom she remained close.

She had many careers including office support, working at The Sands,

traveling the produce circuit, owning the Wounded Moose and working for Arizona Department of Corrections Training Department.

She was a perpetual optimist despite her health challenges. She was funny and kind! Everyone who knew her well would attest to these facts.

She requested that upon her passing, everyone should read her favorite poem "The Dash". She had a good life and will be greatly missed!

There will be a small memorial/celebration of life at a later date to be announced.

Marcia Lucero

Alamosa resident Marcia Lucero, 62, passed away peacefully in her own home on Jan. 5, 2024.

Marcia was born to Asis-delo "Si" and Cecelia Gallegos Gonzales on Jan. 22, 1961, in Alamosa, Colo. She graduated from Centauri High School in 1979. Marcia met the love of her life, Tim Lucero, and they were wed on July 11, 1987, in Denver, Colo.

Marcia was one who loved to be outdoors. She enjoyed fishing and camping. She really liked to read, so much that she was always reading, even when she was watching TV. Marcia was an amazing cook, her family always enjoyed eating her home cooked meals and desserts. Family was very important to her, and she loved to spend time with them. Cremation has been chosen. Recitation of the

her husband Tim; her children Felicia Gonzales of Alamosa, Colo., Vanessa Lucero of Denver, Colo., Samuel Lucero of Alamosa, Colo., and Steven Lucero of Alamosa, Colo.; her grandkids Joseph Lauro III of Alamosa, Colo., Timothy Gonzales, Alamosa, Colo., Alexis Wartman of Denver, Colo., and Jeremiah Mills of Alamosa; her siblings Monica (Phil) Ramirez, Jimmy (Sharon) Gonzales, Genevieve Gonzales, Andy Gonzales, Patricia Gonzales and Michael (Roberta) Gonzales; as well as numerous nieces and nephews.

Marcia was preceded in death by both of her parents, her sister Martha Gonzales, her brother Phillip Gonzales, and her maternal grandparents.

Cremation has been chosen. Recitation of the



Rosary will be Friday, Jan. 26, 2024, at 12:30 p.m. at the St. Joseph Catholic Parish in Capulin. A Memorial Mass will be held Friday the 26th at 1 p.m. at the Saint Joseph Catholic Parish in Capulin. Inurnment will follow in the Capulin Cemetery.

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.



Photo by Caroline Burkhardt

Letty Gallegos with her art.

PALS art show sells out

By CELIA SPINK
Community Engagement Coordinator with La Puente

ALAMOSA — Milagros Coffee House is well-known for showcasing the artwork of local artists. On Friday, Jan. 19, the coffee house displayed a special collection of nearly 100 pieces made by 24 children.

The artwork was made by the children of the PALS program, transforming the walls of Milagros into a colorful display. The children's artwork, featuring a diverse range of themes from Pikachu to rainbows to PALS Director Don Hanna, was created using acrylic, pastels, and clay.

Attendees had the opportunity to admire the artwork before the PALS kids made their grand entrance to warm applause. Each child got to practice their public speaking skills by introducing themselves to the audience, and then the

shopping began.

Despite the sheer volume of artwork, the walls were cleared by the end of the night. The PALS children were thrilled to have earned money that they could spend as they pleased.

The success of the event was not just measured by the amount of money raised, but by the positive impact it had on the children. The event will sponsor a shopping trip for the artists, where they will reap the rewards of their hard work and learn how to make independent choices while managing their money.

Many of the kids never had the opportunity to participate in an art show or speak publicly before. The experience gave them a sense of accomplishment and taught them how valuable their creativity is.

The art show's impact will last longer than one night. PALS, a referral-based childcare program

for children aged 5-9 who have gone through adverse childhood experiences, believes that every child deserves the opportunity to grow and thrive. Through play therapy, one-on-one mentorship, field trips, and events like the art show, the kids of PALS are given the chance to have positive life-shaping experiences.

Whether they purchased artwork or just contributed to the friendly ambience of the event, all attendees at the PALS art show invested in the future of the kids. The PALS program is grateful for the ongoing support of the community and looks forward to continuing to make a positive difference in the lives of these children.

To learn more about PALS and get involved in future events, visit lapuentehome.org/pals or visit any La Puente service including Milagros Coffee House and Rainbow's End Thrift Store in Alamosa.

12th Judicial District announces Mineral County Court vacancy

Commission sets date to select nominees

By COLORADO JUDICIAL DEPARTMENT

The Twelfth Judicial District Nominating Commission will meet Feb. 26 at the Alamosa County Courthouse, to interview and select nominees for appointment by the governor to the office of county judge for Mineral County. The vacancy will be created by the retirement of the Honorable Ruth Acheson. The vacancy will occur on May 1.

To be eligible, the applicant must be a qualified elector of Mineral County at the time of investiture and have graduated high school or attained the equivalent of a high school education as indicated by the Department

of Education, based upon the record made on the General Education Development test. The annual salary for this position is \$36,940.80, and it is a 20 percent position. The initial term of office of a county judge is a provisional term of two years; thereafter, the incumbent county judge, if approved by the voters, has a term of four years.

Application forms are available from the office of the ex officio chair of the nominating commission, Justice Carlos A. Samour, Jr., 2 E. 14th Ave., Denver, CO 80203; and the office of the court executive, Kyle Gustafson, 719-589-4996. Applications also are available on the court's home page at www.courts.state.co.us/Careers/Judge.cfm.

The completed application must be e-mailed to the address listed in the instructions below no later than 4 p.m. on Feb. 13. Late applications will not be considered. Any person wishing to suggest a candidate to fill the vacancy may do so by letter to be submitted to any member of the nominating commission, with a copy to the ex officio chair, no later than 4 p.m. on Feb. 6.

The members of the nominating commission for the 12th Judicial District are Charles Powers of Creede; John Montgomery of Del Norte; Emma Rae Martinez of La Jara; Christine Canally of Crestone; and Aaron Miltenberger and James Valenti both of Alamosa.

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.

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 affiliated 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

School Menu Wednesday January 24, 2024

BREAKFAST
Mini Pancakes/Turkey Sausage
Fruit & Milk

ELEMENTARY
Pork Soft Tacos/Mexican Corn
Cowboy Bread
Veggie Bar
Fruit & Milk

MIDDLE SCHOOL
Pork Soft Tacos/Mexican Corn
Cowboy Bread
Veggie Bar
Fruit & Milk

HIGH SCHOOL
Pork Soft Tacos/Mexican Corn
Cowboy Bread
Veggie Bar
Fruit & Milk

Breakfast & Lunch Free for all students
Alamosa School District
To sponsor the School Menu call 589-2553

Valley News

Sonia Perez named director of the SBDC

By ADAMS STATE UNIVERSITY

ALAMOSA — San Luis Valley native Sonia Perez quickly established herself in the Adams State University School of Business after accepting the position as the executive director of the Small Business Development Center (SBDC).

"I am deeply committed to the idea that thriving small businesses are the backbone of a strong community," she said.

School of Business Director Liz Hensley, Ph.D., was instrumental in bringing the SBDC back to campus.

"I have the utmost confidence in Sonia and believe she will be a tremendous asset to the community as director of the SBDC," Hensley said.

Having grown up in the San Luis Valley, forming meaningful relationships with people holds special significance to Perez.

"It's a personal commitment to contribute to the

prosperity of the community I call home and build partnerships that benefit us all," Perez said.

Perez has already begun community outreach and building awareness of SBDC services. Her immediate goals include ensuring client engagement and support; providing assistance to businesses affected by the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic; and establishing strategic partnerships with local entities, including a collaborative effort with Adams State.

"Together we can identify and support incoming entrepreneurial students who are graduating, ensuring a seamless transition into the business community," she said.

By aligning resources and expertise, Adams State and the SBDC can provide students with tailored services, mentorship opportunities, and access to the SBDC's comprehensive support network.

"Through this partner-

ship, we aim to foster a dynamic environment for business growth within the community and contribute to the long-term success of both the SBDC and the aspiring entrepreneurs we support," Perez said.

The San Luis Valley SBDC maximizes economic potential through business consulting and training. With a mission to foster the growth of existing and new businesses, Perez said the goal is to empower emerging and existing entrepreneurs in taking control of their operations. The SBDC offers free guidance on funding, business development, and more, striving to support business growth and startups.

"While we can't eliminate risk, we minimize it by assisting with business plans, financial forecasts, marketing strategies, funding applications, and operational improvements," Perez said.

Perez will attend chamber of commerce meetings

around the San Luis Valley and establish a strong presence in neighboring towns.

"I look forward to reconnecting with familiar faces and forging new relationships as we work together towards shared success," she said.

A graduate of Sierra Grande High School, Perez earned a bachelor's in business management from Adams State. While attending college, she worked full-time in the Adams State Prison Education Program. She is bilingual and dedicated to serving her community.

The Small Business Development Center program (SBDC) is an initiative of the Small Business Administration. SBDCs provide counseling and training to small businesses, with the purpose of supporting business startups and existing business expansion.

"The prospect of playing a pivotal role in providing resources, guidance,



Sonia Perez

and opportunities to small businesses in the San Luis Valley is immensely captivating. It's a chance to contribute to the economic life of our community that I am passionate about and a meaningful step in my

journey to make a positive impact on local businesses," she said.

For more information or to schedule an appointment call 719-587-7460; email sperez@adams.edu; or visit slv-sbdc.com.

Democratic governors ask Congress for immigration aid to reverse years of 'inaction'

Gov. Polis calls for increased border security

By ARIANA FIGUEROA Colorado Newsline

WASHINGTON — Nine Democratic governors sent a letter to President Joe Biden and congressional leaders Monday, requesting federal aid and urging changes to immigration law as their states take in an overwhelming number of asylum seekers.

"The sustained arrival of individuals seeking asylum and requiring shelter and assistance, due to lack of Congressional action on infrastructure and policies, can only be addressed with federal organizational support and funding to meet the public safety and humanitarian needs of our local communities," the letter led by New York Gov. Kathy

Hochul read. The letter was also signed by Govs. Katie Hobbs of Arizona, Gavin Newsom of California, Jared Polis of Colorado, J.B. Pritzker of Illinois, Wes Moore of Maryland, Maura Healey of Massachusetts, Michelle Lujan Grisham of New Mexico and Phil Murphy of New Jersey.

New York City has taken in 168,000 migrants in the past 18 months, according to Mayor Eric Adams. Republican Texas Gov. Greg Abbott has added to the strain in major Democratic-run cities by placing migrants on buses and planes to such cities, often without warning local officials.

"While the Biden Administration has made important progress in managing immigration at the Southwest border, the number of migrants arriving in states and cities seeking emergency shelter continues to increase at record pace," according to the letter. "States and cities have

spent billions to address inaction by Congress and match these challenges with solutions for our state and local economies."

In a statement, Polis called for more border security, other policy reforms and federal funding.

"We need Congress to take action to secure our border and pass comprehensive immigration reform. States can't do this alone," Polis said. "Without seriously securing the border, providing interior states relief and real reform the challenges facing states and localities will only grow."

A bipartisan trio of Senate negotiators — Sens. James Lankford, Republican of Oklahoma, Kyrsten Sinema, independent of Arizona, and Chris Murphy, Democrat of Connecticut — are hammering out the final details of changes to immigration policy as part of negotiations for a global security aid package of more than \$100

billion. Some Republican senators had demanded immigration policy changes to be applied to the Southern border as a condition of considering Biden's request for overseas aid.

The governors asked that Congress grant Biden's request to include in a supplemental funding bill \$4.4 billion for a federal migration strategy and \$1.4 billion in aid to states and local governments dealing with an influx of migrants.

The governors are requesting Congress and the White House include "federal coordination and decompression at the southern and northern borders; federal funding for both border and interior states and cities receiving new arrivals; and a serious commitment to modernizing our immigration system in the United States."

Of the \$100 billion in supplemental funding, about \$14 billion would go toward U.S. border se-

curity, and the rest would be for aid to Ukraine, Israel and Taiwan. Senators have not released bill text on the immigration policy, but the proposals they are considering would mark the most significant change to immigration law in the last 30 years.

Proposals being floated include making changes to asylum law that would set a higher bar for migrants to claim asylum and curbing the White House's use of its parole authority that it has used to grant temporary protections to migrants from certain countries and others at the U.S.

southern border.

"With ongoing conflicts around the world, global migration is at a historic high," according to the letter. "States and cities cannot indefinitely respond to the subsequent strain on state and local resources without Congressional action."

The letter comes after Biden said in a speech to more than 300 bipartisan mayors at a conference in Washington, D.C., that he is supportive of "significant policy changes" to asylum law — a stark reversal from his administration's earlier position to protect asylum law.

Council

Continued from Page 1 interviews will be available to watch on Zoom. Anyone interested in

knowing the answer to those questions is advised to call the city.

A city council work session was previously held where council members decided on those ques-

tions which would be best in learning who would best fill the vacant seat. Those questions have not been made public.

The seat for Ward 4 became vacant when Councilor Michael Carson ran for the at-large seat vacated by former Councilor Kristina Daniel. Carson ran unopposed in the race, which immediately created the vacancy.

for the at-large seat vacated by former Councilor Kristina Daniel. Carson ran unopposed in the race, which immediately created the vacancy.

Jones

Continued from Page 1 crucial input from stakeholders in the educational process — both on staff and in the community.

Countless references are made in conversation to "The Strategic Plan" that, once in place, has guided their decisions in all areas, from hiring security guards on campus to reaching out and engaging with underserved students and families.

That plan has been effective and is continuing to be so, as evidenced by consistent trends in academic improvement demonstrated at Alamosa Elementary and Ortega Middle School, one of the schools in the district that had been encountering the greatest challenges.

After extensive negotiations with the Alamosa Education Association, which represents teachers and staff, the district instituted a significant pay raise over two years that made the district competitive, not just with other districts in the San

Luis Valley but some districts across the state.

A four-day school week was finally agreed upon, addressing the other primary reason that teachers, even those with tenure, were accepting jobs elsewhere. The need for that strategy was well documented and effectiveness has been quantified in more successful recruitment efforts and increased retention of teachers with the district.

In awareness of some of the psychosocial needs of some of the students, ASD was also able to hire a counselor to be on staff at each school, a stunning achievement as students are still struggling with the lingering effects of their education being disrupted at the most basic level for an extended period of time.

In partnership with Shooting Stars Cultural and Leadership Center, Jones and Murillo have also taken one of the most innovative steps imaginable in opening the Alamosa School District Family Center, a facility opened to students and families

throughout the week and located in the midst of the south side of Alamosa.

The purpose of the Family Center is to reach out engage in meaningful ways with students, parents, grandparents, and families in the community who feel disconnected from the school district because of barriers such as language differences, lack of cultural relevance or access to technology.

Just one example of the enormous potential to be found in The Family Center was evident in the highly successful "Back to School Bash" where roughly 500 students and families registered for the 2023-2024 school year in a celebratory "welcome back to school" environment with free food, music, information provided from community organizations, backpacks filled with school supplies and, yes, free haircuts.

In terms of infrastructure, the district also obtained funding to make the physical environment of the classrooms safe and conducive to learning with a newly installed

HVAC system.

And, in perhaps the clearest demonstration of where administrative priorities lie, Jones, Murillo and administrative staff gave up their offices on Victoria Avenue and moved to a location on Highway 160 to create a space for the Alamosa Alternative School where students may be more likely to succeed in a smaller, more supportive, and individualized environment.

Jones and Murillo have additional forward-thinking plans in place, which will be discussed in a separate article to appear in the Valley Courier. No doubt, the Strategic Plan will be referenced.

But, for now, one of the most important questions that has been overshadowing discussions of the future has been answered. For at least the next few years if not beyond, Superintendent Jones and Assistant Superintendent Murillo will be at the helm to guide Alamosa School District in meeting goals currently set and new ones to be developed.

Ferguson

Continued from Page 1 identified as Taylor — inside the house. Deputies announced their presence and forced entry into the house where they found Taylor on the floor, showing no signs of life. The deputy reported seeing that Taylor had apparently been stabbed several times in his back, head and neck.

A deputy went in pursuit of Ferguson, who was still in the area, ultimately taking him into custody without incident. In his report, a deputy states he saw several cuts on Ferguson's hand that "were not actively bleeding." Ferguson was then transported to the sheriff's office in the custody of another deputy with SCSO.

A deputy then spoke

to Jackman who said that Ferguson was his roommate. Taylor, who had reportedly worked with both Jackman and Ferguson in the past, had come to Jackman's house when his car had "broken down" nearby.

The three men were reportedly drinking a beer when, according to Jackman, Ferguson made it apparent he did not like Taylor. Jackman then witnessed Ferguson stabbing Taylor, at which point Jackman fled from the house and ran to the neighbor's residence where the sheriff's office was called.

"I'm hoping now as a family we can heal, as well the town of Villa Grove, and all the others affected by this sad tragedy," said a family member who reached out to the Valley Courier following the sentencing.

Homes

Continued from Page 1 of the economy, and many shelters are overwhelmed with dogs."

The shelter is now named in honor of Lori Schubert who for many years along with her husband Rick, donated time, blankets, collars, chewies, and just about anything else dogs needed. The couple also made regular generous donations.

According to Peek, "Through numerous grants, we now have state-of-the-art kennels, both inside and outside."

The shelter has a very user-friendly website

where monetary tax-free donations can be made. There is also an Amazon.com wish list for items such as grain-free adult and puppy food, clear plastic totes, collars and leashes, and green cow rawhide chips. Visit www.slvaaws.org. Monetary donations can also be mailed to the shelter at 76 El Rio Drive, Alamosa, CO 81101. This is a mail-only location.

The website also has photos of the many adorable dogs currently ready for adoption.

The shelter is located near San Luis and is open by appointment only from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. Text or call 719-588-5560.

Opinion

Energy guru says energy gap can be bridged

The experts tell us an energy gap looms. Fossil fuels are phasing out, and solar and wind power can't produce enough electricity to meet the demand in coming decades.

But that's not the thinking of Amory Lovins, the 76-year-old co-founder of RMI, formerly the Rocky Mountain Institute in western Colorado.

A Harvard and Oxford dropout who's been called the "Einstein of Energy Efficiency," Lovins said recently: "If we do the right things, we'll look back and ask each other, 'What was all the fuss about?'"



Amory Lovins

His solution then was greater efficiency and reliance on renewables, and they, he insists, are still the answer.

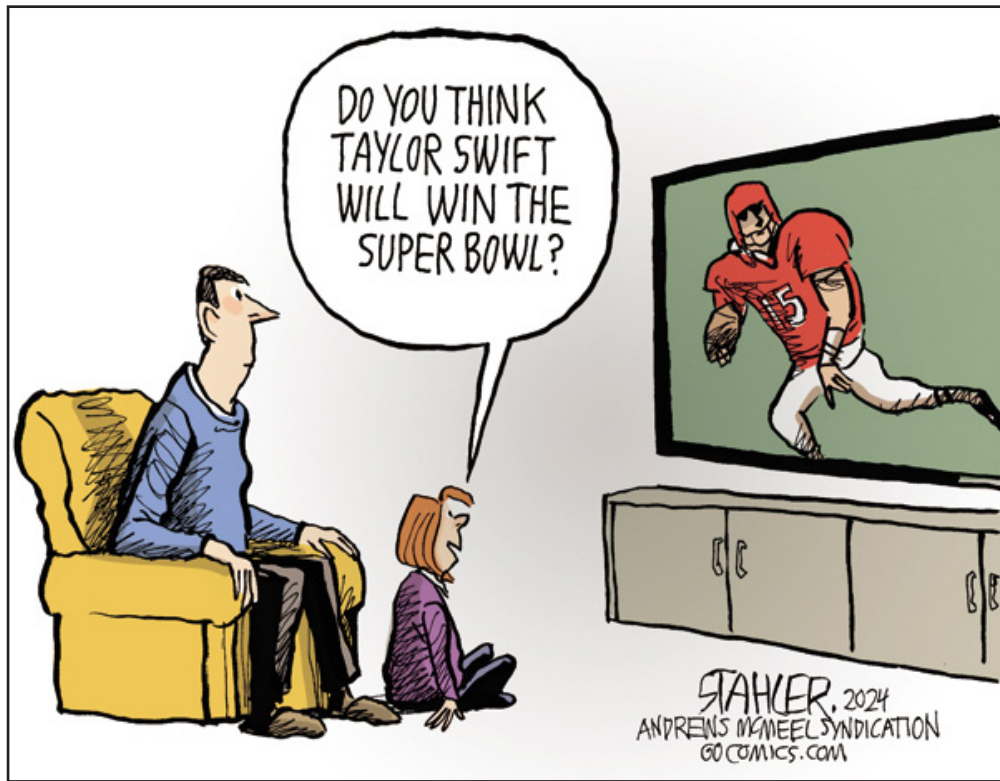
"Though it's invisible, efficiency will cut 50% of energy use and up to 80% if we do the right things," he told me recently. "Most of the energy we use is wasted, which makes it much cheaper to save it, rather than buy it or burn it."

According to a recent Princeton paper, he's right: 84% of all energy consumed

Writers On The Range



Dave Marston



goes to waste during delivery or by leakage.

To prove it decades ago, he built a passive solar, super-insulated house at 7,100 feet of elevation in Old Snowmass, Colo. It never had a heating system though winters regularly recorded 40 degrees below-zero temperatures.

When I arrived there recently at 8 a.m. it was 12 degrees F. Yet the house featured banana and papaya trees growing in natural light around a koi pond.

We became acquainted when he read my January 2023 Writers on the Range column entitled; "The energy gap nobody wants to tussle with." I'd advocated building small modular nuclear reactors to bolster the grid when the wind doesn't blow and the sun doesn't shine.

Lovins called to set me straight, and after a second conversation and more research, I'm beginning to think he's right.

Though Lovins has many solutions for the energy gap, he touts three major ways to find more energy in what we already do. Tops on the list is changing how we build and retrofit existing structures because buildings consume 75% of the electricity we buy.

Most energy jobs in the United States are already increasing efficiency, ranging from upgrading windows and other retrofits, far outpacing the shrinking fossil

fuels industry (energy.gov).

As one example, Lovins advocates "out-ulation" for older structures, defined as adding exterior insulating panels to save heat. Courtesy of the European Union, my Irish in-laws recently had their house "wrapped" and saw their heating bills plummet.

His second way is demand-response, which Lovins calls flexiwatts. An example is cycling air conditioners off for 15-30 minutes at a time, a barely noticeable adjustment that cuts demand for peaker-power plants, those big emitters of greenhouse gases.

His third way is using renewables more effectively. Diversifying renewables by location and type within a region evens gaps from windless and cloudy weather.

As for electric cars being a drain on the grid, they will prove to be sources of electricity, he said, as the next generation batteries will be cheaper and likely have double the storage. Daytime solar stored in vehicles will be bi-directional, spooling out power during peak evening demand.

Lovins also cites LED lights dramatically cutting the cost of energy. In just a decade, they've become 30 times more efficient, 20 times brighter and 10 times cheaper.

Lovins is quick to admit that an energy

To submit news, email: news@alamosanews.com

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."

No good reason for CD4 voters to import Boebert

By MARK HILLMAN
Capitol Review

Colorado's Fourth Congressional District has produced some of the finest Republican leaders in our state's recent history.

- Decorated for his Navy combat duty in Vietnam, Greeley's Hank Brown represented CD4 for 10 years before his election to the U.S. Senate. He later served as president of University of Colorado and the Daniels Fund.

- Wayne Allard won two terms in the U.S. Senate after representing CD4 for six years. The Fort Collins veterinarian defined the role of a low-key politician, often described as "a workhorse, not a show horse."

- Yuma native Cory Gardner ousted Democrat Betsy Markey to win his first of three terms in Congress. The most recent Republican to win a significant statewide office, he toppled incumbent Mark Udall for U.S. Senate in 2014.

- Bob Schaffer (Fort Collins), Marilyn Musgrave (Fort Morgan), and Ken Buck (Greeley) also did the essential, often-unglamorous work of serving their constituents. Each had a demonstrable record of service to the district before running for Congress.

Now consider Rep. Lauren Boebert,

who currently represents the Western Slope, San Luis Valley and Pueblo in the Third Congressional District but plans to seek election this fall in CD4 while collecting a paycheck "representing" CD3.

I'm not a frequent Boebert critic, but this decision reveals an irresponsibly self-centered approach to a serious job. Too many politicians of both parties now confuse serving in Congress with starring in a reality TV show.

Boebert's transition to celebrity-politician was manifest by her disgraceful behavior during a September date night at a Denver theater where she engaged in an extended groping session with her date, quarreled with others in the audience when asked to sit down and stop vaping, and displayed the trademark slogan of self-importance ("do you know who I am?") upon being escorted from the theater.

Like many Coloradans, I knew little about Boebert when she upset an incumbent in the 2020 Republican primary. Charismatic and vivacious, she had an inspiring story — a high school dropout who supported herself by working unglamorous jobs and ultimately found success and notoriety at the restaurant which she and her husband opened. Wanting Republicans to keep that seat, I donated to her campaign.

After the election, her early association with Rep. Marjorie Taylor Greene was troubling, so it was encouraging that she later parted ways with the Georgia conspiracy peddler.

The 2022 election brought more surprises. One-third of Republican primary voters favored her opponent. She won re-election by just 536 votes (compared to 26,000 two years earlier) — even after CD3 was reconfigured to be more favorable to Republicans. Had she focused more on constituent services and less on media opportunities, voters surely would have rewarded her.

She justified her plans to jump districts by claiming that she doesn't want to risk Republicans losing CD3. But that horse has already left the barn, thanks entirely to Boebert. Her leading Democrat opponent has more than \$5 million in the bank — a massive head start against any Republican.

If she's squandered the GOP advantage in CD3, why would CD4 Republicans want to import her baggage — and the Democrat money it attracts?

Obviously, Boebert is making this switch because being in Congress is the best job she's ever had.

CD4 voters have been through this before. Marilyn Musgrave riled Demo-

crats with her advocacy for defining marriage as solely between one-man and one-woman. Billionaires Tim Gill and Pat Stryker funded relentless attacks on Musgrave, creating parody commercials with an actress dressed to resemble her. Her margin of victory dwindled (13%, 6.3%, 2.5%) until she was defeated in the Obama wave of 2008.

But there's a big difference between Musgrave and Boebert. Musgrave is a fundamentally decent person who never sought the spotlight but didn't duck her principles. She always conducted herself with dignity. That's why her opponents had to create commercials to mock her. By contrast, Boebert's own behavior mocks what she claims to stand for. I believe in grace and do not wish Boebert ill, but Congress has not brought out the best in her.

Republicans from Weld to Douglas counties and across the Eastern Plains have plenty of well-qualified local candidates to choose from. Let's make our choice from those who have lived here and served us for decades.

Mark Hillman served as Senate Majority Leader and State Treasurer. To read more or comment, go to www.MarkHillman.com.

LETTERS

An email to Israeli Consulate in Washington, DC

Editor,
Today, I sent this in an email to

the Israeli Consulate in Washington, DC.

"So, descendants of Jews who were persecuted and killed during WWII

are now the persecutors. European Jews were slaughtered by Nazis, Israeli Jews have now become the Nazis. "You are committing ethnic cleansing in Gaza and the West Bank against Palestinian civilians. It is one of the most disgusting and horrific spectacles I have seen in my life. "Israel should be ashamed. You could have the strength, humility and equanimity to show how to bring peace to yourselves and the world. You will not achieve this by killing innocent Palestinian children. Already over 8,600 are confirmed dead. Thousands more children are missing under the rubble created by your bombing of Gaza. You have an opportunity to be better than the ugly, savage Hamas. Why don't you?"

David Lenderts
Alamosa

Keith R Cerny
Publisher

Valley Courier
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New Arrivals at the Alamosa Public Library

From the Librarian's Desk

By MARIA KRAMER
New books are always

coming in at the Alamosa Public Library! Here are 10 of our most intriguing arrivals. For more information, or to have a book reserved for you, check alamosalibrary.org or call 719-

589-6592.

Fiction

• Alice, Sadie, Celine by Sarah Blakley-Cartwright
Told through three interwoven timelines, this book follows the stories of three women. Alice has a role in a play, hopefully, the start of her acting career. Sadie, Alice's best friend, asks her mother Celine to attend the play in her place. This request leads to a strange triangle of relationships as Celine finds herself falling for Alice.

• Beyond the Door of No Return by David Diop
In 18th-century Senegal, a French botanist becomes obsessed with the story of a mysterious woman named Maram - who is rumored to have escaped slavery in America and made her way back to Senegal as a teenager.

Local

• Sky Bridge by Laura Pritchett
Libby is a twenty-two-year-old supermarket clerk in Lamar, Colorado. Despite her humble job and poor self-image, Libby has big dreams. When her younger sister disappears, leaving Libby in custody

of her baby, those dreams seem more far away than ever.

Nonfiction

• Humanism Possible by Sarah Bakewell
Humanism is a philosophy focused on freedom, self-determination and enhancing the well-being of all people. In this sweeping history, Bakewell charts the progress of humanism from Erasmus and Voltaire to the secular thinkers of our own time.

• The Spirituality of Dreaming by Kelly Bulkeley
Across all religions and cultures, dreams are seen as a source of inspiration and spiritual guidance. In this book dream expert Dr. Kelly Bulkeley brings us a set of time-honored methods to stimulate innate dreaming capacities and amplify their impact in our waking lives.

• The Land of Hope and Fear by Isabel Kershner
A correspondent who has spent thirty years working in Israel, Kershner reveals the core of what holds Israel together and the forces that threaten its future.

Romance

• The Waltz of Reason by Karl Sigmund
Do you know how integral mathematics is to... well, everything? Together mathematics and philosophy have shaped our understanding of space, chance, logic, cooperation, voting, the social contract, reason, and even morality itself.

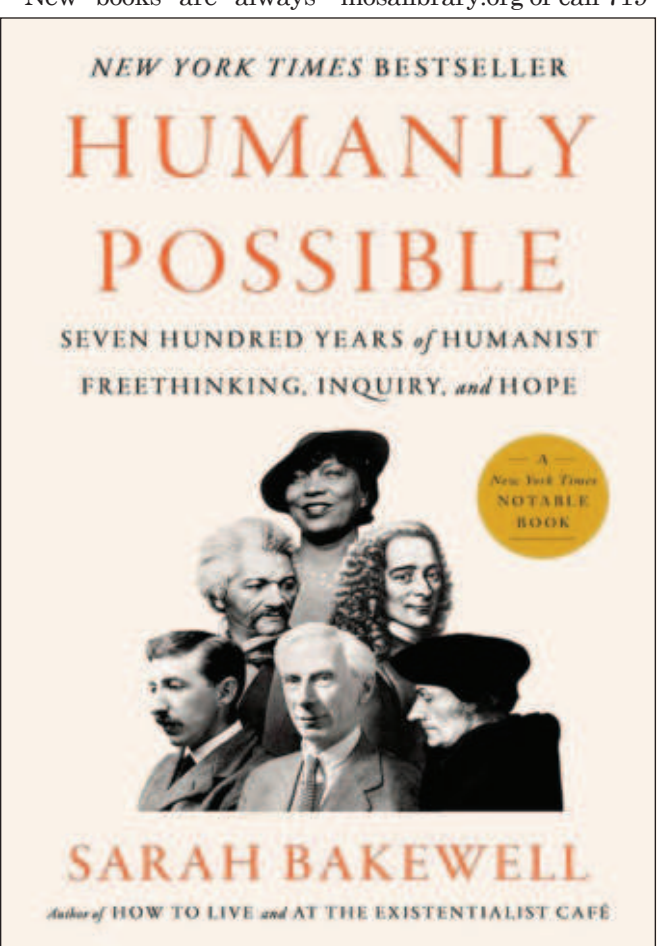
• Seeing One Thing Through by Mel Weitsman
Mel Weitsman started out as a young painter in 1950's San Francisco - and became one of the first American masters of Zen Buddhism. This book is a collection of his talks and writing.

Game On by Seressia Glass

When gamer and diversity consultant Samara Reynolds criticizes one of Aron Galanis' games, he doesn't get mad - he hires her. As the two work together, romantic sparks start to fly. Once their relationship goes public, will their credibility be ruined?

Science Fiction

The Genesis 6 Project by Michael Ferguson
A mysterious "cargo" escapes military containment in the Middle East. Could it be one of the creatures from the Book of Genesis described as both giants and fallen angels - one of the mythological Nephilim?



Benavides named Deputy District Director of Colorado SBA District Office

By U.S. SMALL BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION

One of Monte Vista's own, David Benavides, was recently promoted to the Deputy District Director of the Colorado SBA District Office.

Benavides joined the SBA Colorado District Office as a Lender Relations Specialist in January of 2017. In January of 2024, he was promoted to Deputy District Director for the Colorado District Office.

Benavides brings over 13 years of branch bank and credit union management, along with another

seven years of financial planning and securities experience.

He spent eight years serving his country in the United States Air Force, with assignments in Denver and Australia. Following his military career, Benavides gained experience in the finance world, first as an Investment Advisor for Sun America Securities and then transitioned into mutual funds management for the Financial and Retirement transactions department of Janus.

His banking experience includes retail bank-

ing, branch management, market management and credit union administration for institutions such as Chase Bank, Bank of the West and the Credit Union of Colorado.

Before his career in federal service, Benavides was given the opportunity to open the first Colorado location of Navy Federal Credit Union, where he served as Branch

Manager. He enjoyed working with the credit union membership, as he helped military service members with their banking and financial needs.

Benavides is a Colorado native, having grown up in Monte Vista. He has two children, enjoys camping, hiking and any kind of sports. He officiated high school and college basketball for over 15 years.



David Benavides

UPCOMING GRIZZLY ATHLETIC EVENTS

Friday, January 26

Men & Women's Track at UNM Team Open at Albuquerque, N.M.
1:15 p.m.

Men & Women's Basketball at Westminster University (Utah) at Salt Lake City, Utah
5:00 p.m. - 7:00 p.m.

Wrestling vs University of Central Oklahoma at Alamosa, Colo.
6:00 p.m.

Saturday, December 27

Men & Women's Track at UNM Team Open at Albuquerque, N.M.
10:00 a.m.

Men & Women's Swim at Colorado School of Mines at Golden, Colo.
11:00 a.m.

Women's Wrestling at Colorado Mesa University at Grand Junction, Colo.
5:00 p.m.

Men's LAX vs Air Force (Scrimmage) at Alamosa, Colo
12:00 p.m.

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Sports

Sports Bulletin

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

SCOREBOARD TUESDAY Prep boys basketball

Crested Butte at Monte Vista - no report
Sangre de Cristo 37, Del Norte 35, 2OT
Sierra Grande at Walsenburg - no report
Taos (N.M.) 63, Alamosa 55
Prep girls basketball
Crested Butte at Monte Vista - no report
Custer County at Centennial - no report
Del Norte 38, Sangre de Cristo 24
Sierra Grande 54, Walsenburg 8
Prep girls swimming
Sargent at Pueblo County - no report

SCHEDULE THURSDAY Prep boys basketball

Center at Sargent, 4:30 p.m.
Prep girls basketball
Center at Sargent, 4:30 p.m.
Prep boys wrestling
Monte Vista at Alamosa, 6 p.m.
Antonito hosts Antonito duals, TBA
Prep girls wrestling
Monte Vista at Alamosa, 6 p.m.

FRIDAY Prep boys basketball

Del Norte at Hoehne, noon
Sangre de Cristo at Swink, 3 p.m.
Sanford at Custer County, 3:30 p.m.
Sargent at Crested Butte, 4 p.m.
Centennial vs. Moffat (at Sagua-che), 5 p.m.
Liberty Tree Academy at Antonito, 5 p.m.
Sierra Grande at Creede, 5 p.m.
Bayfield at Alamosa, 7 p.m.
Ignacio at Centauri, 7 p.m.
Prep girls basketball
Del Norte at Hoehne, noon
Sangre de Cristo at Swink, 3 p.m.
Sanford at Custer County, 3:30 p.m.
Sargent at Crested Butte, 4 p.m.
Centennial vs. Moffat (at Sagua-che), 5 p.m.
Liberty Tree Academy at Antonito, 5 p.m.
Sierra Grande at Creede, 5 p.m.
Bayfield at Alamosa, 5:30 p.m.
Ignacio at Centauri, 5:30 p.m.
Prep boys wrestling
Antonito, Centauri, Center, Del Norte, Monte Vista, Mountain Valley, Sargent, Sierra Grande/Centennial at Valley Classic (at Center), 9 a.m.
College men's basketball
Adams State at Westminster (Utah), 7 p.m.
College women's basketball
Adams State at Westminster (Utah), 5 p.m.
College indoor track and field
Adams State at New Mexico Team Open, TBA
College men's wrestling
Central Oklahoma at Adams State, 6 p.m.

Thunderbirds defeat Tigers in double overtime

By KEN HAMRICK
Courier sports editor

MOSCA – Sangre de Cristo High School's Kaiden Smit made a layup with nine seconds remaining to give the Thunderbirds a 37-35 double overtime win Tuesday at the Sangre gym.

Smit opened the scoring by knocking down a jumper. But the Tigers responded with eight straight points to take an 8-2 lead with 2:40 left in the first quarter.

Deagon Rogers made one of three free throws to bring the Thunderbirds within an 8-3 deficit at the end of the period.

Ezra Lopez began the second quarter with a 3-point basket, but Lashawn Trujillo drove for a layup. Smit then scored two layups to tie the score at 10-10 with 3:03 left before halftime.

Smit scored again with 39 seconds before the break to give the Thunderbirds a 12-10 edge at halftime.

Craig Williams tied the score early in the third, but Hayden Cleve drained a trey, and Rogers hit a jumper for a 17-12 advantage.

Kelby Mondragon drove for a layup and later made one of two from the free throw line to narrow the lead to 17-15.

Kolby Shellabarger made a 3-pointer, but Mondragon answered with one on the other end of the court. Josh Gonzales' layup tied the score at 20-20.

Shellabarger made another three, but so did Mondragon and the third period ended in a 23-23 tie.

Shellabarger hit his third 3-pointer to begin the fourth quarter, and after Noah Bailey made one of two free throws for the Tigers, Lopez and Smit both made layups for a 30-24 advantage.

Trujillo ended the run, and Mondragon later scored in the paint to bring the Tigers within a 30-28 deficit. Mondragon made his third trey of the game to put Del Norte back in front at 31-30.

Shellabarger drove for a layup, and Smit made one of two free tosses with 34.7 seconds left for a 33-31 Sangre lead. But Trujillo sank two free throws with 14.6 seconds left to tie the score at 33-33, and the game went into overtime.

In the first overtime, Mondragon stole the ball at midcourt and drove for a layup. But Smit made two free throws with 30.6 seconds remaining.

Both teams had a chance to score the winning basket but were unsuccessful.

In the second overtime, both teams ran some clock in an attempt to get off the last shot. Smit drove the lane and put up a shot which bounced in.

Del Norte quickly moved the ball up court, but its last-second shot was no good.

Smit led Sangre in scoring with 15 points, followed by Shellabarger with 11.

Mondragon led all scorers with 18 points and Trujillo added eight.

Sangre de Cristo (6-4, 0-1) will travel to Swink on Friday and to Centennial on Saturday.

Del Norte (3-8, 2-0) will play at Hoehne on Friday and will host



Courier photo by Ken Hamrick

Sangre de Cristo High School's Kaiden Smit (31) drives to the basket against Del Norte's Craig Williams (5) in Tuesday's game at the Sangre gym. Smit scored 15 points including the game winner as the Thunderbirds defeated the Tigers 37-35 in double overtime,

Custer County on Saturday.

Sangre de Cristo 37, Del Norte 35, 2OT

Del Norte - Eagles 0 0-2 0, Pacheco 0 0-0 0, Williams 1 0-0 2, Mondragon 7 1-3 18, Gonzales 1 0-0 2, Trujillo 3 2-2 8, Atencio 0 0-0 0, Worz 1 0-0 2, Bailey 1 1-2 3, Vigil-Ledford 0 0-0 0. Total 14 4-9 35.
3-point goals - Mondragon 3. Total 3.
Sangre de Cristo - Rogers 1 1-3 3, Shellabarger 4 0-0 11, Mason 0 0-0 0, Cleve 1 0-0 3, Smit 6 3-6 15, Lopez 2 0-0 5. Total 14 4-9 37.
3-point goals - Shellabarger 3, Cleve 1, Lopez 1. Total 5.
Del Norte 8 2 13 10 2 0-35
Sangre de Cristo 3 9 11 10 2 2-37
Fouls - Del Norte 13, Sangre de Cristo 11.

Del Norte girls start strong to defeat Sangre

By KEN HAMRICK
Courier sports editor

MOSCA – The Del Norte High School girls basketball team had a fast start when it played Sangre de Cristo Tuesday at the Lady Thunderbirds' gym.

The Lady Tigers rode that strong start en route to a 38-24 victory.

Kaitlyn Velasquez scored the first point of the game for Del Norte as she made one of two from the free throw line. Emma Parra then hit a jumper, and Kayleigh Haynie also split at the line for a 4-0 Lady Tigers lead.

Reese Brown made the first 3-point basket of the game, and Baylie Laymon made one of two charity tosses for a 10-0 lead.

Presley Wilson put the Lady T-birds on the board with 1:27 left in the first quarter, but Del Norte led 10-2 at the end of the period.

Jaydra Cordova drove for a layup, and Palma Enriquez split at the line to cut the deficit to 10-5. Laymon's layup made the score 12-5, but Wilson made one of two free throws.

Velasquez made two free throws, but Idahlia Garcia scored in the paint. Hadley Leggett and Laymon both made one of two from the line for a 16-8 Del Norte lead at halftime.

Haynie and Velasquez both scored layups to push the lead to 20-8. Haylee Freel made two free throws, and after Haynie split at the line, Garcia scored another layup to bring the



Courier photo by Ken Hamrick

Del Norte High School's Baylie Laymon (12) drives the ball up court while Sangre de Cristo's Presley Wilson (4) plays defense in Tuesday's game at Sangre. The Lady Tigers defeated the Lady Thunderbirds 38-24.

Lady T-birds within 21-12.

Parra's three gave the Lady Tigers a 12-point advantage, but Garcia scored two straight baskets to reduce the Lady Tiger

lead to 24-16 at the end of the third quarter.

Haynie opened the fourth quarter with a layup and free throw. Enriquez answered with a pair of free tosses, but Laymon scored a layup, followed by Velasquez splitting at the charity stripe. Laymon drained a trey to give Del Norte its largest lead at 33-18.

Wilson answered with a pair of threes to bring the Lady T-birds within 34-24.

Del Norte, however, made four out of 10 free throws in the final 1:44 to clinch the win.

Laymon led all scorers with 10 points. Next for the Lady Tigers was Haynie with nine.

Wilson was Sangre's top scorer with nine points, followed by Garcia with eight.

Del Norte (6-5, 2-0) will travel to Hoehne on Friday and then will host Custer County on Saturday.

(Sangre de Cristo (6-3) will travel to Swink on Friday, and then to Centennial on Saturday.

Del Norte 38, Sangre de Cristo 24

Del Norte - Velasquez 1 5-10 7, Parra 2 1-4 6, Laymon 2 5-10 10, Brown 2 0-0 5, Haynie 3 3-7 9, Gallegos 0 0-0 0, Leggett 0 1-2 1. Total 10 15-33 38.
3-point goals - Brown 1, Laymon 1, Parra 1. Total 3.
Sangre de Cristo - Wilson 3 1-2 9, Knorr 0 0-0 2, Rodriguez 0 0-0 0, Freel 0 2-2 2, Enriquez 0 3-6 3, Sorensen 0 0-0 0, Cordova 1 0-0 2, Garcia 4 0-0 8. Total 8 6-12 24.
3-point goals - Wilson 2. Total 2.
Del Norte 10 6 8 14-38
Sangre de Cristo 2 6 8 8-24
Fouls - Del Norte 14, Sangre de Cristo 27. Fouled out - Enriquez, Wilson.

WINTER BLEND DIESEL

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Lifestyle



Courtesy photos
Farm Bureau Insurance held a ribbon cutting ceremony on Thursday, Jan. 11, at 247 Adams St. Agent John Meyers cut the ribbon.

Ribbon cutting held for Meyers new agent for Farm Bureau Insurance

By MARIE MCCOLM MONTE VISTA — Farm Bureau Insurance held a ribbon cutting ceremony on Thursday, Jan. 11, at 247 Adams St.

Meyers smiled as he cut the ribbon at the ceremony and spoke about how he felt at the ceremony.

“Monte Vista is so welcoming. The ribbon cutting was awesome,” Meyers said. “It makes me very happy at just how well I have been received in the community. It’s kind of a big deal for me. I am from Michigan, so the people in Monte Vista have made me feel as close to home as I could possibly be, and I appreciate it. I just joined the Farm Bureau as an agent in November, I am relatively new, I have been a long-time Farm Bureau customer, but new to being an agent. I am very excited and happy to be in the Monte Vista community with this.”

Meyers is no stranger to agriculture. He has been a part of agriculture his entire life. He was born and raised on a crop farm in Michigan and has a cattle ranch. He has had the ranch for about 3 years now.

“I always wanted to be involved with cattle, I raise Scottish Highlands, do AAC registered breeding stock.”

Meyers stated that his reason for joining Farm Bureau Insurance as an agent had a lot to do with his love of farming.

“Farm Bureau inspired me with the way that they want to help local farmers and ranchers in the area, and across the state,” Meyers said. “I had somebody reach out to me from the insurance side of Farm Bureau, they had heard about my successful businesses in Michigan and kind of wanted to see if I was interested in working with Farm Bureau. It just all worked out together. It was kind of a spur of the moment thing that worked out really well.”

Meyers said Monte Vista was a “perfect fit.”

“As I was driving through Monte Vista, I always thought, man if I was going to move again, it would be to Monte Vista,” he said. “When the agency offered me the office in Monte Vista, I snatched it up. There were a couple of different options, but the one in Monte



Farm Bureau Insurance Agent John Meyers received a plaque during a ribbon cutting ceremony on Jan. 11 in Monte Vista.

Vista was the perfect fit for me.”

Meyers took over the office on 247 Adams St. Meyers stated he was not sure why the prior agents left, but he was excited to be at the agency.

“Since I took over the office, there was already a big client base. We have been working on growing the client base more, too. That has been going better than I hoped for. Being a new agent, I thought it would be a rough, rocky start, but everything has been going great, really smooth. Again, I have been well received in the community and it has just been awesome. I thank everyone in the community for that,” he said.

Meyers is excited about the Southern Rocky Mountain Agriculture Conference early next month in Monte Vista.

“We have a spot at the ag conference already. We plan on doing a raffle. We are going to buy a Yeti cooler and fill it with some bison meat. We are going to raffle that off. We are probably going to have people sign up for a free quote from our agency to enter to win. I am very excited about the upcoming conference,” he said.

Meyers thanked everyone who helped him get his start with the agency, including the two representatives that came from Denver to help him, the Monte Vista Community, the OptiMystics and the Monte Vista Chamber of Commerce.

For more information on Farm Bureau Insurance, visit the agency at 247 Adams St. in Monte Vista.

9 Reasons to Shop Local

- 1 Shopping Local Creates Jobs:** The jobs created allow spending in the local economy and helps create more jobs.
- 2 Local independent businesses invest more in our community:** They support local charities, schools and community events which financially impacts our community.
- 3 Local businesses sell a wide range of great products at affordable prices and cater to the needs and wants of the community.**
- 4 Shopping Local saves you money and time!** Travel expenses and personal time make the overall cost of items higher.
- 5 Shopping Local retains our community:** Without the support in the local community, restaurants, shops and services are forced to close.
- 6 Shopping Local retains our distinctiveness:** Local businesses respond quicker to the needs of the customers and stock products to meet the core community’s needs.
- 7 Shopping Local encourages community growth.** By choosing to do business locally you help maintain Alamosa’s diversity, charm & appeal. Which in turn, attracts new community members.
- 8 Shopping Local invests in community services and city economy.** Your dollars spent in locally-owned businesses have three times the impact on your community as dollars spent outside of Alamosa.
- 9 Local shops value you more:** Local businesses survive by their reputation & repeat business which means you get a higher standard of service.

Rio Frio Ice Fest

January 26TH - 28TH 2024

“Penguin Party”

SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

Friday January 26th
 6pm - 730pm: Packet Pickup at Milagros Coffee House
 6pm - 8pm: Cross Country Luminara Ski @ BV Pond

SATURDAY JANUARY 27TH
 8-930am: Race Packet Pickup @ Alamosa Senior Center
 10am: Rio Frio 5k @ Rio Grande River
 11am (After Race): Race Awards (Race Start/Finish)
 12pm: Ice Carving Demonstrations @ Main Street
 12-2pm: Disc Golf (SOCO Ice Bowl) @ Disc Golf Course
 12-3pm: Shop Local Raffle Extravaganza @ San Juan Ave.
 1-4pm: Info Tent @ San Juan Ave.
 4-6pm: Rio Frio Flights
 6:30pm: Fire and Ice Bonfire

SUNDAY JANUARY 28TH
 12pm: Polar Plunge/Ice Carousel & Pond Skating @ BV Pond
 9am-4pm: Ice Climbing Trip

Website: Rioraces.com
Facebook: @RioRacesAlamosa, #RioFrioIceFest

Public Notices

CONEJOS COUNTY SEMI-ANNUAL FUND REPORT

Table with columns: FUND, BEGINNING BALANCE, REVENUES TAXES AND INTEREST, INTEREST ON INVESTMENTS, SPECIFIC OWNERSHIP, MISCELLANEOUS, DISBURSEMENTS TRANSFERS (OUT), TREASURER'S FEES, WARRANTS, ACH & CHECKS PAID, ENDING BALANCE. Rows include various fund categories like CASH ON HAND, ECTY CASH, CLERK'S OFFICE OPERATIONS, etc.

Cash on hand 400.00
Community Banks of Colorado 729,216.43
Investments 11,870,846.98
Balance as of Dec 31, 2023 \$ 12,600,463.41

State of Colorado)
)ss
County of Conejos)

I, Mack M. Crowther, Conejos County Treasurer, do hereby certify that the following Fund Balances & Investment Balances to the best of my knowledge and ability are true and correct as they appear from the records in my office Dec 31, 2023. In witness, I hereby place my hand & official seal this 17th day of January 2024.



Mack M. Crowther
Conejos County Treasurer

No. 3758
Published in the Valley Courier January 24, 2024.

COMBINED NOTICE OF SALE-PUBLICATION CRS § 38-38-103

Public Trustee Sale No. 3-2023
To Whom It May Concern: This Notice is given with regard to the following described Deed of Trust: On November 17, 2023, under Reception No.23001578, the undersigned Public Trustee caused the Notice of Election and Demand relating to the Deed of Trust described below to be recorded in the County of Conejos records.

Original Grantor(s) (Borrower): Amy Martha Casias
Original Beneficiary Mortgage Electronic Registration Systems, Inc. as nominee for Midwest Mortgage Associates Corp, Its Successors and Assigns
Current Holder of Evidence of Debt: NewRez LLC, D/B/A Shellpoint Mortgage Servicing
Date of Deed of Trust 12/29/2017
Recording Date of Deed of Trust 1/2/2018

NOTICE OF SALE
The current holder of the Evidence of Debt secured by the Deed of Trust, described herein, has filed Notice of Election and Demand for sale as provided by law and in said Deed of Trust.

COMBINED NOTICE - PUBLICATION
CRS §38-38-103 FORECLOSURE SALE NO. 954-23
To Whom It May Concern: This Notice is given with regard to the following described Deed of Trust:
On October 20, 2023, the undersigned Public Trustee caused the Notice of Election and Demand relating to the Deed of Trust described below to be recorded in the County of Alamosa records.

Original Grantor(s)
CHRISTOPHER V SALAZAR AND KELLI R SHAWCROFT
Original Beneficiary(ies)
CHAMPION MORTGAGE, A DIVISION OF KEYBANK NATIONAL ASSOCIATION
Current Holder of Evidence of Debt
U.S. BANK TRUST NATIONAL ASSOCIATION, NOT IN ITS INDIVIDUAL CAPACITY, BUT SOLELY AS TRUSTEE OF CITIGROUP MORTGAGE LOAN TRUST 2019-RP1

NOTICE OF ANNUAL MEETING OF MEMBERS OF COLORADO MUTUAL HOLDING COMPANY
The notice is hereby given that the annual meeting of members of the above-named Mutual Holding Company will be held at the home office at 402 Edison Avenue, Alamosa, Colorado on the 29th day of January, 2024 at the hour of 1:00 p.m. of said day. The business to be taken up at said meeting shall be:

NOTICE
County Court
Alamosa County, Colorado
Court Address: 8955 Independence Way, Alamosa, CO 81101
Case Number 24C10
Division: B
Court Room: B
In the Matter of: Parent/Petitioner: Ashlee Meis - Trujillo for Minor Child: Rey Deloy Meis



ANNUAL WE LOVE BABIES

Form with fields: Baby's Name, Birthdate, Parents, Grandparents, Phone Number. Includes checkboxes for Brothers and/or Sisters.

GRANDPARENTS, PARENTS, AUNTS & UNCLES...
Show off your son, daughter, grandson, granddaughter, niece, nephew or your favorite beautiful baby (4 years & under) in the Valley Courier's We Love Babies Edition!

THIS IS NOT A CONTEST.
Just fill out the form to the left and mail or drop off the form along with your favorite photo to the Valley Courier, 2205 State Ave., P.O. Box 1099, Alamosa, CO 81101. Include the \$15 fee which must be paid when submitting your form and photo.

Comics



CROSSWORD PUZZLE

NEA Crossword Puzzle

Answer to Previous Puzzle

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

- ACROSS**
- 1 Curved bone
4 Burn
8 Egotist's concern
12 Mex. neighbor
13 Own
14 African ruler
15 Under the weather
16 Footnote abbr.
17 Name on a bank card
18 Archenemy
20 Insignificant
21 Rainy
22 Demand payment from
23 — "Magnolias"
26 Resolved
30 Smoked salmon
31 "— Willie Winkie"
32 Bee housing
33 European range
35 Prosciutto
36 Do wrong

- DOWN**
- 37 Funny mistake
39 Word in a commandment
41 Table scrap
42 Stage signal
43 Snide
46 Bed that can swing
50 Hexagonal state
51 Solid
52 Spirit
53 Caliber
54 Comedian — Johnson
55 "— you kidding me?"
56 Raced
57 Antlered animal
58 Actor — Van Cleef
- DOWN**
- 1 Archaeologist's discovery
2 Ait
3 Salve
4 Sculptor's tool
5 Custom

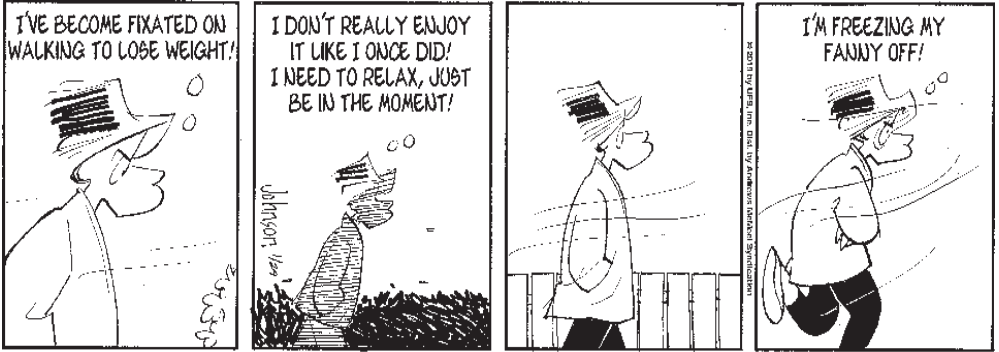
- 6 Hertz
7 Wine type
8 In — heaven
9 Release
10 Roster
11 Unravel
19 Ovine creature
20 Place
22 Judge
23 Sizable slice
24 Bridge charge
25 World's fair
26 Burn
27 "Mona —"
28 Wickedness
29 Fender spoiler
- 31 Sharpen
34 Comforted
38 Use a crowbar
39 Time of year
40 Skirt edge
42 Bill of fare
43 Chicago players
44 Surmounting
45 Counterweight
46 Put on the payroll
47 Televangelist — Roberts
48 Remedy
49 Body joint
51 Craze

1	2	3	4	5	6	7		8	9	10	11	
							13			14		
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18			19				20					
			21				22					
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43	44	45				46				47	48	49
50						51				52		
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56						57				58		

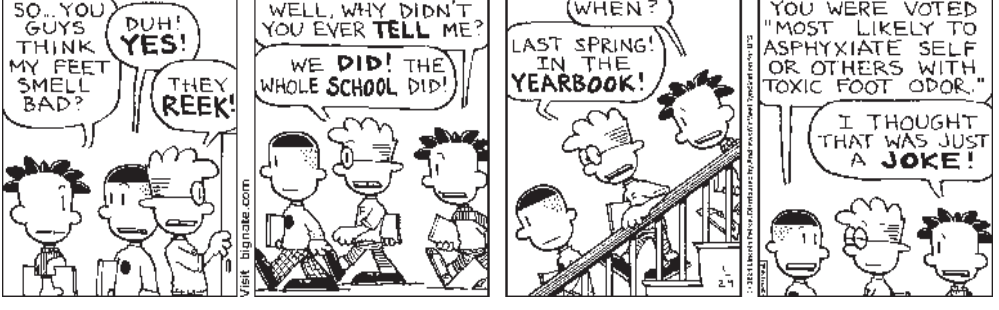
ALLEY OOP



ARLO & JANIS



BIG NATE



THE BORN LOSER



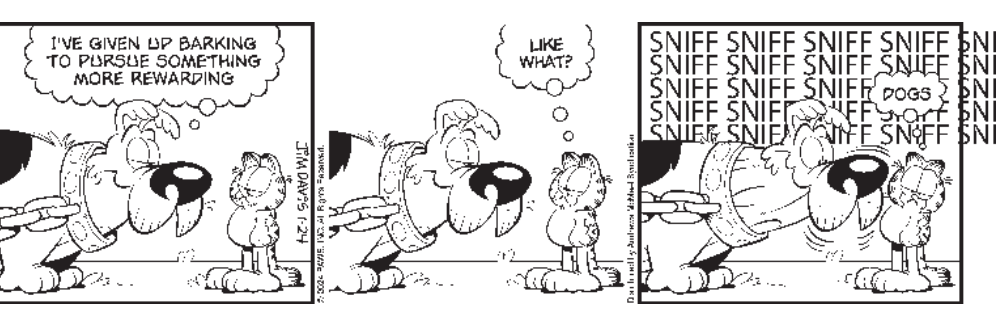
FOR BETTER OR FOR WORSE



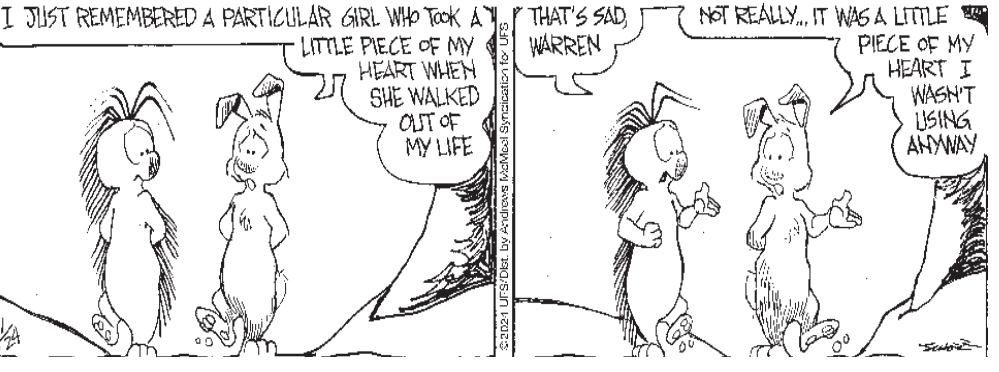
FRANK & ERNEST



GARFIELD



THE GRIZZWELLS



PEANUTS

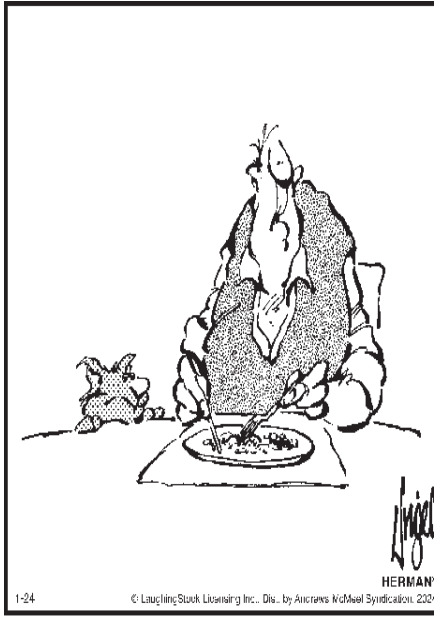


SUDOKU

DIFFICULTY RATING: ★★☆☆☆

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

HERMAN



Wife in unhappy marriage fantasizes about a friend

DEAR ABBY: I am an unhappily married woman with young children. I am attracted to a friend of mine and my husband's, but he is also married. He's a bit older, and I can't tell for sure if he has feelings for me, but sometimes I suspect it. He has made me jewelry and gifts, and I've caught him looking at me a few times. We have exchanged messages on social media and he often asks me questions about myself -- what I like, etc. He's just so quiet that I can't tell if it all means anything. I could never leave my husband and break up my family, and I could never break up someone else's family. But I'm starting to wonder and sometimes think I really am falling in love with him. What should I do? -- **CRUSHING IN THE MIDWEST**

DEAR CRUSHING: Face it: You're **TAKEN**. Because you could "never leave" your husband or break up someone else's marriage, figure out what's gone wrong in your relationship with your husband and resolve to fix it. Some sessions with a licensed marriage and family therapist would be the place to start. Do it **NOW**.

DEAR ABBY: I am with someone who drinks and gambles and has made countless promises that have been broken. I recently checked his Facebook account, and he follows at least 12 women in their 20s, most of whom he barely knows or doesn't know at all. Most of them are almost naked in every picture. I told him it bothers me, but he doesn't seem to care. I told him it is disrespectful to me as his significant other. I have also told him to think about the things he does that affect our relationship. To him, he's doing nothing wrong; to me, he's disrespecting me, and it's not the only time. He has written to a few of them telling them how beautiful they are. Am I wrong? -- **ATALOSSINFLORIDA**

DEAR AT A LOSS: Your gentleman friend may be a voyeur drawn to photos of random "beautiful young ladies." It has nothing to do with respect (or the lack thereof) he has for you. He likes to **LOOK!** It is now time to ask yourself why you stay with someone who gambles, drinks and breaks his promises (which **IS** disrespectful). His voyeurism is the least of your worries.

DEAR ABBY: I went out to eat at a fancy Manhattan restaurant with some of my siblings. One of them over-ordered and ran up a huge bill. When



ABIGAIL VAN BUREN

it came time to pay, he said, "Let's charge it to Daddy's credit card." Our father is well-off and probably would have been OK with it, but I objected on principle. We ended up splitting the bill, which irritated me since my wife and I ordered much less. I can't talk to them about it because they'll accuse me of being cheap. What should I have done and what should I do in the future when it crops up, because it will? -- **MONEY-CONSCIOUS IN NEW YORK**

DEAR M-C: The next time you go to a fancy restaurant with your siblings, before the order is taken, tell the server you would like separate checks.

Lifestyle

Eventful week at HVCC

By HIGH VALLEY COMMUNITY CENTER

What an eventful week! All the fun was had at High Valley Community Center, and we can't wait to do it again.

Our Little Passports got to learn all about Japan and create their own aquarium of koi fish (and a few octopi for some reason) by using their creativity and imagination. They used supplies such as empty toilet paper rolls, paper strips, glue, scissors, and googly eyes to make their fish/octopi come to life! They had a blast getting to use their hands, and it was a great opportunity for them to encourage each other and recognize each other's unique creativity.

We were able to have all our DNES students join us all day on Thursday since they were out of school for the day! We took an incredible field trip to Alamosa, where we split up into two groups to go to different activities. Our K-2 graders enjoyed lots of time at The Playhouse doing gymnastics and pretending to work in a store. Our 3-6 graders had the chance to go to the arcade and practice all sorts of skills, such as problem-solving, teamwork and critical thinking as they aimed to beat the game.

The fun continued into Friday! All the kids created their own bead jewelry and ended up with beautiful bracelets, necklaces, and rings. They also got to let a little competitive spirit come out as they raced each other through an obstacle course at the gym.

Next week will bring lots of new learning experiences and fun things for the kids to participate in. Meals will be eaten together, homework will be done, and all sorts of fun will be had!

We are also beginning our partnership with Del Norte School to offer tutoring to 7-12 grade Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Fridays. Our HVCC staff will be at the school Tuesday and Wednesday from 4-5 p.m. to offer space and resources to any students who need homework help or tutoring. We will also be offering tutoring and donuts at HVCC on Friday mornings from 10 a.m. to 12 p.m.

We hope to see you soon!



High Valley Community Center welcomed students back after the Christmas break and for their first activities, the students learned about Japan and created an aquarium.

Courtesy photos

kids' corner

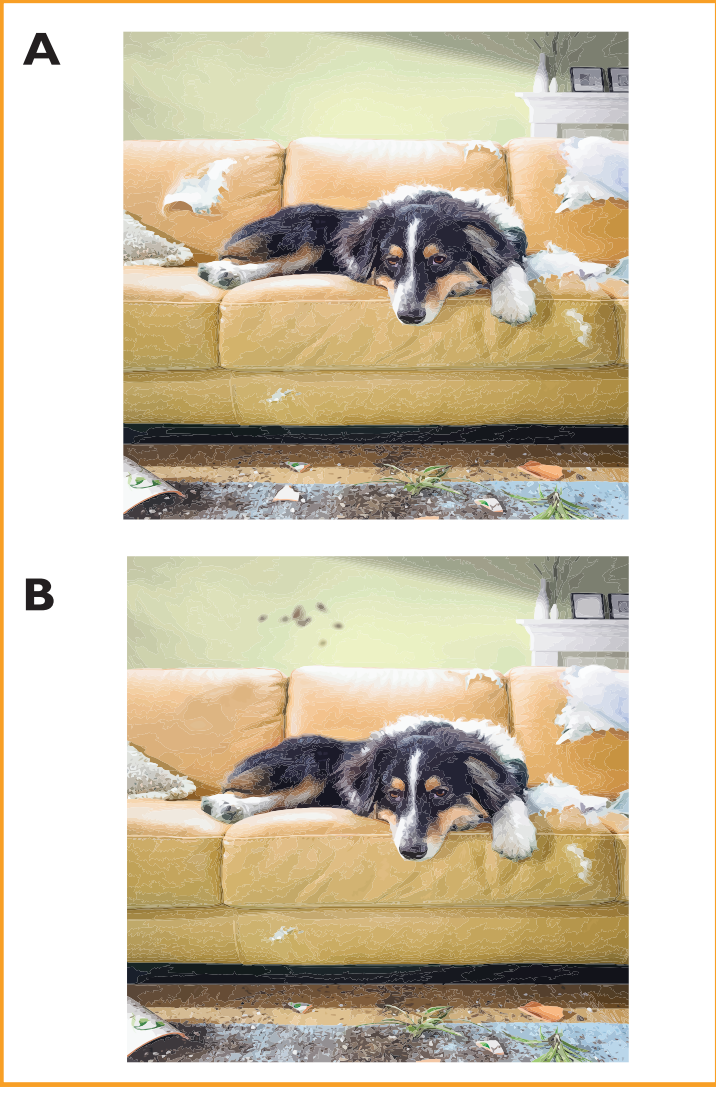
ANIMAL FACT!

THIS HERDING DOG REGULARLY RANKS AS ONE OF THE MOST INTELLIGENT BREEDS.

ANSWER: BORDER COLLIE

What's the Difference?

There are four differences between Picture A and Picture B. Can you find them all?



Answers: 1. Dirt on wall 2. Large rip is repaired 3. Missing pottery on rug 4. Photo frame is blank

THIS DAY IN...



HISTORY

- 1720: SWEDEN AND PRUSSIA SIGN THE TREATY OF STOCKHOLM.
- 1861: THE AMERICAN CIVIL WAR STARTS AND JEFFERSON DAVIS RESIGNS FROM THE UNITED STATES SENATE.
- 1981: PRODUCTION OF THE DELOREAN SPORTS CAR BEGINS IN NORTHERN IRELAND.

New Word

OBEDIENCE

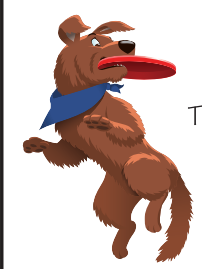
compliance with an order or request

How they SAY that in...

- ENGLISH:** To train (animal)
- SPANISH:** Adiestrar
- ITALIAN:** Addestrare
- FRENCH:** Dresser
- GERMAN:** Trainieren

Did you know?

EXERCISE AND TRAINING CAN HELP A DOG BEHAVE BETTER. WITHOUT TRAINING, THE DOG MAY CHEW OR DESTROY ITEMS OUT OF BOREDOM.



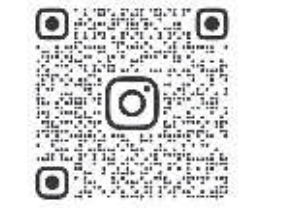
GET THE PICTURE?



Can you guess what the bigger picture is?

ANSWER: DOG WEARING COLLAR

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Our Youth Are Our Future!



ALAMOSA STATE BANK
A Real Community Bank
Local Ownership. Local Commitment.

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