



Shorts

Line dancing returns to Tri County Senior Citizens

MONTE VISTA — Line dancing is returning to Tri County Senior Citizens. Starting on March 28, from 5-6 p.m. there will be line dancing on Tuesday and Thursday.

Natalie Barela will be the instructor. There is no charge, but donations are appreciated. Tri County is located at 311 Washington St., Monte Vista.

MV Cemetery board asking for public's help cleaning

MONTE VISTA — The Monte Vista Cemetery Board of Directors is asking the public for help in cleaning the cemetery for spring.

Due to the large number of tumbleweeds that have inundated the cemetery grounds it is now more important than ever that cemetery spring cleaning rules are followed.

Patrons that have personal items such as Christmas trees, gifts, fake flowers or any other items on graves are being asked to come and clean their plots prior to the start of spring weather and high wind.

Any items left are subject to damage when work to clear the tumbleweeds and summer mowing operations resume.

Next town hall meeting set

ALAMOSA — Scheduling conflicts with both the state representatives and the venue has postponed the March town hall meeting with Sen. Cleave Simpson and Rep. Matthew Martinez until Saturday, March 25.

The public meeting will again be held at Society Hall here from 6-8 p.m.

Del Norte Food Bank monthly distribution is March 18

DELNORTE — The Del Norte Food Bank will be open for its monthly food distribution from 9 to 11 a.m. on Saturday, March 18.

The Del Norte food bank serves Del Norte and South Fork and is situated in the alley behind the Pioneer United Church at 630 Spruce St., Del Norte.

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.

Center Fire Protection District examines boundaries

By **PATRICK SHEA**

CENTER — The Saguache County Commissioners attended the Center Fire Protection District regular meeting on March 14 to discuss protection west of La Garita.

When flames erupt outside a fire protection district, volunteers arrive from multiple directions to put them out. EMS technicians and firefighters from Center routinely respond to calls

outside the designated service area, and crews from other districts do the same to fulfill urgent duties.

Board President Arthur Holland started the meeting by welcoming the commissioners for a discussion about a potential firehouse in the La Garita area. Residents met earlier this year to provide their input about the idea. Providing funding, however, likely requires a mill levy increase.

According to district Secretary Kim Schuett, the Center Fire Department formed in 1941, but 28 years passed before they created the Fire Protection District. The current district mill levy is 4.924 mills. Building a new firehouse in La Garita would require a significant increase.

Current producers with multiple circles pay commercial taxes, and a new facility on the western flank of the Valley would require paying more to

receive the same service. On the other hand, residents in the unprotected areas west of La Garita pay fire insurance premiums or are uninsured and risk losing everything to a fire.

Commissioner Lynne Thompson summarized the proposal to the fire district, a consideration for using 10 acres of county-owned land and significant funding.

Please see FIRE on Page 2A



Photo by Patrick Shea

Seen here holding Chloe, the 14-week-old service dog he is currently training, seventh-grader Westlea Tipword held a Veterans Suicide Awareness event in the Mountain Valley School gym on March 11.

MVS middle schooler hosts event

By **PATRICK SHEA**

SAGUACHE — When seventh-grader Westlea Tipword creates a plan of action, like hosting his Veterans Suicide Awareness Walk at Mountain Valley School on March 11, he follows through with the plan.

"If something really comes to my attention and it's kind of easy to do like this," Tipword explained in the Mountain Valley School gym, "then I'll do it. I could do a lot of things like that, like my business."

Once Tipword decided to raise awareness of veteran suicides, he told himself, "OK. Today's the day I'm going to start it. This is how it's going to go."

Although he might be overlooking enormous help from his mother

Wanetta, Tipword acknowledged the people who helped make his event a reality. When he presented his idea for the walk to the Saguache Chamber of Commerce, he met board member and veteran Terry Gillette. In addition to running Gillette's Trading Post (and Jeep Museum) on Highway 285 in Saguache, Gillette helps maintain the veteran network in the region.

Tipword also met Michael BonDurant, the Saguache County Veterans Service Officer. BonDurant passed out fliers with his contact information — 719-655-2680 and mbondurant@saguachecounty-co.gov. Another flyer listed warning signs for Post Traumatic Stress Syndrome (PTSD).

BonDurant also said he wants more

veterans to know about the Saguache County Sales Tax Grant Veteran Assistance Program. He encourages vets to call if they need emergency help with necessities, for example, fuel for their vehicle or home.

Tipword is an honorary member of the Saguache Chamber of Commerce. He started "Generational Homestead Candy and Snacks" almost two years ago. The Saguache Chamber of Commerce website — saguachechamber.org — provides more information about Tipword's enterprise.

Under the Young Entrepreneurs category, the website lists students like Tipword who have honorary chamber status until they graduate.

Please see TIPSWORD on Page 7A

Saguache commissioners conduct volunteer interview

By **PATRICK SHEA**

CENTER/SAGUACHE — The Saguache County Board of Commissioners received an abundance of interest from community members who applied to fill seats on the Planning Commission. Partly in response, the board voted 2-1 to interview candidates.

Jeff Shook is the lone representative from Villa Grove, and fellow resident Rebecca Brian sent her letter of interest to fill the alternate position. At home with three children, Brian attended the board's working meeting on March 14 via ZOOM. She was the first candidate interviewed.

Commissioner Lynne Thompson voted against the practice of *Please see VOLUNTEER on Page 2A*



Photo by Patrick Shea

Presenting to Saguache County Commissioners, volunteer Courtney "Crow" Carag described strategies and challenges for reopening the Crestone Food Bank.

San Luis Valley completes Hazard Mitigation Plan update

CONTRIBUTED

SAGUACHE — The San Luis Valley Region and its six participating counties — Alamosa, Conejos, Costilla, Mineral, Rio Grande, and Saguache — are in the final stages of updating their Hazard Mitigation Plans.

A Hazard Mitigation Plan analyzes vulnerabilities to natural hazards and identifies mitigation actions that can be taken to minimize property damage and public safety risks.

An up-to-date Hazard Mitigation Plan is required under the Federal Disaster Mitigation Act of 2000 to be eligible to receive certain federal disaster assistance and grants for hazard mitigation projects. These plans must be updated every 5 years. The updated plan sets priorities for mitigation projects in the San Luis Valley region for 2023-2028.

The planning process began in February 2022. It has resulted in an update to each county's existing Hazard Mitigation Plan into one cohesive, regional plan. This update combines the six county Hazard Mitigation Plans drafted independently in 2017 and 2018 into one unified region-wide plan.

The process followed a methodology that adheres to federal guidance. It consisted of two levels of planning teams; a coordinating Planning Team

Please see UPDATE on Page 2A

OBITUARIES

Sharon Sowards

Longtime Manassa resident Sharon Sowards, 84, died March 9, 2023, at the San Luis Valley Health Regional Medical Center in Alamosa.

Sharon's life began on Jan. 16, 1939, at home in Sanford, Colo., where she was born to Birl Gilbert Reed and LaVina Marvelle Reynolds Reed. She married the love of her life, Larry N. Sowards, in the Mesa, Ariz., Temple of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints on Feb. 11, 1960.

Sharon loved music. In her younger years she would play the piano for her husband Larry, who sang at many weddings and funerals. She was a big sports fan and loved watching her "Duke" boys and BYU games on the television. She was a Sanford girl through and through, and when in school she was the Homecoming Queen and the Pioneer Queen. She built many floats for the Pioneer Day celebration over the years.

Sharon is survived by her children Debra Sowards-Cerny (Keith) of Alamosa, Bryan (Terese) Sowards of Alamosa, Lori Sowards of Pleasant Grove, Utah, and Kirk Sowards of Manassa, Colo.; her siblings Leon (Kathy) Reed of Thornton, Colo., Ross (Donna) Reed of St. Louis, Mo., and Van (Claire) Reed of Loveland, Colo.; her sister-in-law Jeanne Reed (Carl Hutchins) of Sanford, Colo., and brother-in-law Bill Powell of



Reno, Nev.; as well as numerous grandchildren, great-grandchildren, nieces, nephews and extended family and friends.

Sharon was preceded in death by her parents, her husband Larry, her son Scott, and her siblings Calvin Reed, Gordon Reed, LaVerne Williams, and Beverly Powell.

A Visitation will be held from 9:45-10:45 a.m., followed by a Funeral Service 11 a.m. Friday, March 17, 2023, at the Manassa Stake Center of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Interment will follow services in the Manassa Cemetery.

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

Marilyn Joyce (Sawyer) Davey

On Friday, March 10, 2023, Marilyn Joyce (Sawyer) Davey, loving wife, mother, and longtime resident of the San Luis Valley passed away at the age of 73. Marilyn was born to Derrell and Ruth Sawyer in Lamar, Colo.

She attended Colorado State University and studied fashion and design where she met her husband of 51 years, John Allen Calvert Davey. After their marriage, they made their home in Del Norte and she transferred to Adams State College where she earned a degree in Business. She raised two daughters, Jennifer Snyder, and Gwendolyn Dall.

Marilyn owned and operated Shades, Quilts & Etc. at 129 Adams St. in Monte Vista for 27 years. Marilyn was an accomplished seamstress and loved to create handcrafted masterpieces for her family and friends.

She is survived by her husband, Allen Davey, her daughters Jennifer Snyder (Matthew) and Gwendolyn Dall (Tyler) and her grandchildren Ashley Zulauf (Tyler), Jonathan Snyder, Weston Dall, Jeffery Snyder (Lexington), Abigail Dall, Caleb Dall, Joshua Snyder and great-granddaughter Logan Zulauf.



The funeral will be held at 10 a.m. on Monday, March 20, at the Monte Vista United Methodist Church at 215 N. Washington with a reception and refreshments to follow in the parish hall. The graveside service will follow the same day at 1 p.m. at the Saguache Cemetery "Hillside Cemetery" with a reception and refreshments to follow at the Saguache United Methodist Church.

In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to the PEO International, Chapter V of Monte Vista.

Arrangements are in care of Strohmayer's Funeral Home of Monte Vista.

SAGUACHE COUNTY SHERIFF'S REPORT

SAGUACHE COUNTY — The following information was provided by the Saguache County Sheriff's Office for the period between March 6 and March 11, 2023.

Sheriff's staff made a welfare check in Del Norte, arranged five ambulance rides, completed vehicle identification inspections, and provided information. Deputies issued speeding citations on March 3,

5, and 9 (\$640 in potential penalties). They heard two traffic complaints, made four traffic stops, managed a crash near Hooper, and assisted a motorist. Staff issued a REDDI Report (Report Every Drunk Driver Immediately) on March 10. On March 11, they also responded to a fatal crash on Highway 17 north of mile marker 99.

Staff patrolled Saguache and

Crestone, monitored two controlled burns, and transferred inmates to Rio Grande County Jail. They also dealt with theft in Moffat and Saguache. In addition to suspicious activity in Center and Saguache, staff responded to reports of trespassing in Sargents and Saguache. Criminal mischief in Crestone required attention, as well as two civil disputes and a civil standby in Moffat.

UPDATE

Continued from Page 1A

made up of the County Emergency Manager Coordinators, and six County Planning Teams consisting of local government representatives — one for each county. Every municipality within each county was invited to participate.

A virtual public workshop was held

on Jan. 4, to introduce the updated plan and mitigation strategies. Following the workshop and public comment period, the plan was then submitted to both the State of Colorado and the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) for their review and approval.

FIRE

Continued from Page 1A

"We had a public meeting about all this," she said. "But it seems like the firehouse won't be sustainable for the county to run it, and it won't be sustainable for you unless you consider expanding your fire district and getting the mill levy."

The board agreed. As Schuett explained, "The landowners have to sign a petition that they would like to be included. You have to do inclusions to the district, and it has to go through district court. You also have to do exclusions too, and the court decides."

In addition, building a firehouse alone

is not enough to ensure protection. Storing a truck in La Garita does no good without two firefighters — at a minimum — required to run it.

John and Cydni Drake, the owners of Farm Service Center Co., had suggestions. John was a former president of the Rio Grande Fire Protection District who recalled receiving help through a partnership with the Colorado State Forest Service (CSFS). By housing a state forest truck in South Fork, they could use the firetruck in exchange for helping with forest fires. Drake encouraged board members to contact the CSFS for support.

VOLUNTEER

Continued from Page 1A

interviewing candidates, so she explained that she would not be asking questions. Commissioners Tom McCracken and Liza Marron took turns seeking answers from Brian.

When the 27-minute ordeal was done, McCracken asked, "I'm curious if this experience of being interviewed was uncomfortable. Did you feel like it was positive? Negative?"

"I felt like a lot of it was my own personal opinion," Brian replied, "and I don't think that on the planning commission we make decisions based on those. There's a whole group of us there, so one person's opinion should not play that big of a role. Since I was the only one who was interviewed, it was nerve-racking. I didn't know how to study, at all."

She did, however, read much of the 200-plus pages of Saguache County land use codes.

Brian's father bought property in the Cotton Creek area near Moffat in 1978. She became a full-time resident there in 2016 and moved to Villa Grove in 2018.

McCracken posed questions based on Brian's vision for meeting anticipated growth in the county. McCracken referenced commissioners in Chaffee and Gunnison Counties

who predict that "a lot of population pressure is going to be coming over the hills from both ways."

Brian said, "I think that the Master Plan is a good idea for that. That also includes a lot of public comment, so it's not just from the planning commission directly."

When asked about alternative building practices, Brian said, "My husband works in the construction industry, so I know a lot about hempcrete, pressed-earth block, and that kind of thing. I think that those can be built into the land use code as long as they follow the state requirements."

Brian fielded more questions about the Colorado Right to Farm Act, designating open space, renewable energy, marijuana grows, Dark Skies designation, and the interview process itself.

Since commissioners do not vote during working meetings, they will announce their decision at the next regular meeting on March 21.

Prior to Brian's interview, volunteer Courtney "Crow" Carag provided an update for reopening the Crestone Food Bank. With Baca Grande Property Owners Association Community Manager Jay Walther attending via ZOOM, Crow said the results of a POA-owned building inspection will

"We need fire protection," Drake said. "But it's not fair for us to depend on Center or Del Norte and not have any contribution to the cause."

The board discussed next steps, which would come in the form of residents organizing a petition drive if they want to be included in the district. The process then continues through district court.

Board member Craig Perrin agreed to serve another four years, so the board passed a motion to cancel the election scheduled for May 2. The next monthly board meeting is scheduled for April 11 at 8 p.m. at the firehouse.

determine perhaps the biggest expense for reopening the food bank. She described short-term and long-term cost categories and will return to the board with a request for funds.

Food distribution continues Fridays at the Baca Grande Library, and Crow said they received suggestions for other locations. However, the space requires rodent protection, electricity, ADA-compliance, and accommodation for storage and staff. Reinforced flooring, for example, may be required for heavy refrigerators.

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OPINION & EDITORIAL

Spring has sprung YOUR NIGHT SKY

BY DARLENE DANKO



Time to write about Uranus

Over the years I have written about the Sun, moon, Pluto and five other planets. Now, it is time to write about Uranus. It is an interesting planet with an interesting name. How many of us pronounce it the crazy way instead of the proper way?

Uranus is the seventh planet from the Sun and the third largest in our solar system. It is 1.786 billion miles from the Sun and takes slightly more than 84 years to orbit the Sun. There are 27 moons and 13 sparse rings surrounding it. Uranus is twice as far from the Sun as Saturn which is why it is so pale for us to observe, although it is visible with unaided vision.

It was the first planet to be discovered with a telescope. This happened in 1781 by William Herschel. Officially, it has been observed since 129 BC, but because it looked so small and pale, it was thought to be a star. The first astronomer to officially observe

it was the Greek astronomer Hipparchus.

It is named for Uranus who was the Grand Father of Zeus. Our planets have been named after ancient Greek and Roman gods. Uranus was also the father of Saturn. It is the only planet in our solar system named after a god from Greek mythology rather than the Roman version.

Because Uranus is so far away, we knew little about it until the Voyager 2 flew by it in 1986. Nothing has flown by it since then.

Its pale blue color comes from the methane gas in its atmosphere. Uranus contains three layers. There is a rocky core, an icy mantle in the middle, and an outer layer of hydrogen and helium. Although it is four times larger than Earth, its surface gravity is less than Earth's.

Our early solar system was a violent place with planets smashing into each other pushing one another into different orbits. Some were probably spun out of the solar system or into the Sun. It is thought its sparse ring system and all

its moons probably came from these collisions.

An interesting fact about Uranus is that it rotates on its side. It is tipped over 98 degrees, so its moons and rings encircle it from top to bottom. Also, its spin is retrograde, so it orbits the Sun in the opposite direction that Earth and most planets do. Only Venus orbits the Sun that way too.

It rotates fast as 17 hours, 14 minutes, and 24 seconds. There are four seasons like us, but each one lasts 21 years. Because it is on its side it only appears to rotate once in its orbit. It does not turn in its orbit. Remember that it spins on its side. So, the North Pole faces the Sun 21 years, then the side faces the Sun 21 years. The South Pole faces the Sun for 21 years and then the other side faces the Sun for 21 years.



Trout Republic by Kevin Kirkpatrick

to provide electricity at the touch of a button. And you all know how the purchase of such items usually goes too. As soon as you buy something like that then you never have another outage until such time as the generator will not start from lack of use.

Oh, I know a person can and should periodically go out there and start said contraption just to make sure it works, but out of sight and out of mind seems to come into play and it does not get done as you well know. Miss Trixie says it may be more of an "out of my mind" type situation and I want you to know that I thank her daily for her kindness and wisdom about my age and mental capacities.

This past winter true to form we had a big old ice storm come roaring through our area and Ol' Dutch was lathered up like a racehorse finishing the Belmont Stakes just thinking about getting to use the generator. But as you can well imagine by now as you read this, the lines stayed up almost in an anthropomorphic one-finger salute to all my efforts to prepare for an electric failure.

And no, I did not get to use the new generator and save the day. So, I guess being too late now in the Season for another icy attack I should go out and at least start up the beast and make sure it runs. But then again, it is tucked away out of sight, and I am still out of my mind so I will do the manly thing and wait for inevitable failure instead.

Kevin Kirkpatrick and his Yorkie, Cooper, fish, hunt, ATV, or hike daily. His email is Kevin@TroutRepublic.com. Additional news can be found at www.troutrepublic.com.

LETTER

Group forms to recall MVSD Board of Education

Editor,
Many Saguache residents have questions regarding the effort to recall four members of the Mountain Valley School District Board of Education — Lisa Hammel, Lacy Reed, Mona Kay Lovato, and Christian Archuleta.

Citizens for Mountain Valley Students is made up of parents, staff, and concerned citizens who believe the BOE has done a disservice to our school. To explain why this recall is necessary and be fully transparent with our community, we wanted to publicly announce our intentions and what led us here.

First, there are no personal issues toward these four individuals. This is a business decision to better our school and provide our kids with the best opportunity to succeed. We ask our community to treat everyone involved in this recall respectfully and remain civil.

We have requested answers publicly regarding numerous issues. There have been letters, public comments and concerns, and an ignored request for a special meeting.

With their failure to respond, we held a public Vote of No Confidence where we read our grievances and questions aloud and asked community members to stand if they, too had no confidence in our BOE. Over 100 community members supported this

vote. The four individuals were asked publicly to resign for continually displaying personal bias, violating ethics, and having no accountability to those who elected them.

Below are a few of the many reasons we have initiated this recall:

- Policy Violations
- Board members bring complaints without regard to the chain of command and bypassing the Superintendent, Principal, or Educators to implement unofficial policy that has not been discussed or approved.
- Failure to follow Policy H (Negotiations for Teachers)
- Unethical Practices
- Divulged private-identifying information about minor students and parents.
- Allowing family members to dictate agenda and demanding executive session. A board member entered executive session with their family member in direct violation of state law.
- 2022 non-renewed bullying grant. 2023 accused staff of failing to address bullying.
- Bias shown in meetings regarding who can speak over 3 minutes.
- Actively seeking negative information-complaints against specific staff.
- Sending private messages smearing the superintendent's

reputation without justification for his non-renewal.

- Fiscally Irresponsible
- Misappropriation of preschool grant funds (\$7,000)
- 2022 and 2023 — \$10,000 in Superintendent searches
- Retaliation
- Threats and actions were taken against staff who disagreed with this board. Staff has been made to fear for their jobs.
- Abuse of power.

You will hear that this recall is costing the district unnecessary money, but it should be noted that if the board resigned as requested, this would eliminate recall-related expenses.

The board has yet to address many offers to resolve these issues. Their lack of integrity, transparency and disregard warrants this recall. This is about what is best for our children and school going forward. We have not entered into this decision lightly.

Please help by signing petitions, leading to a public vote to recall these four individuals. Let's restore our community trust in the MVS BOE. www.citizensformvsstudents.com. Facebook @ Citizens for Mountain Valley Students

McKeeg Russell
Citizens for Mountain Valley Students

LETTERS POLICY

Letters are welcome and encouraged. They should be fewer than 300 words, unless arranged beforehand with the editor, and they are subject to editing for length and clarity.

All letters must be signed by the author and include a phone number and address where the author can be reached (these are not for publication). Letters forwarded from other organizations or sent to staff and not for print must be designated as such. Letters over 300 words and without contact information will be returned to the

sender or discarded.
We will accept one letter per person, per subject, per four issues. We reserve the right to reject letters for reasons we believe are appropriate. Please send letters to Letter to the Editor c/o Valley Publishing, PO Box 607, Monte Vista, CO 81144 or e-mail to bwilliams@valleypublishinginc.com (Attention: Letter to the Editor).
Deadline for letters is 5 p.m. Friday.
Political letters may be limited due to space constraints.

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Fire destroys two homes on Clay Street in Monte Vista

A family is displaced and being assisted by Red Cross

STAFF REPORT

MONTE VISTA — Bernadette Duran hugged and huddled with former neighbors and watched in dismay as flames destroyed two homes — a blue stick house and a purple mobile home — in the 700 block of Clay Street on Wednesday, March 8. She lived in the blue home for 10 years.

“We lived there from 1988 to 98, but I don’t know who lives there now,” Duran said. She learned of the fire after talking to her brother.

“He said, ‘your old home is burned down’ So, I came out here,” Bernadette said. “Oh my gosh that is so sad.”

The fire in southwest Monte Vista destroyed two homes on Wednesday afternoon, March 8, according to the Monte Vista Police Department. A family was displaced by the fire and received assistance from the American Red Cross and victim’s advocates.

At approximately 2:45 p.m. on Wednesday, the Monte Vista Fire Department was notified of a residential fire in the 700 block of Clay Street.

The fire was fanned by northeasterly winds and quickly spread, fully engulfing the homes. No injuries were reported.

MVPD, Colorado State Patrol, and the Rio Grande Sheriff’s Office assisted MVFD with evacuations and securing the area.

Black smoke billowed from the fire into the mostly cloudy sky and could be seen for miles. People gathered on the edge of the incident as firefighters worked, taking photos, and shooting videos with their phones.

Law enforcement stopped people and vehicle traffic from entering four at four intersections — Clay and Pennsylvania, Cass and Clay, Morton and Pennsylvania, and Cass and Morton.

Less than an hour after putting water on the fire, MVFD had it contained to the two properties, preventing further damage or destruction, MVPD Chief George Dingfelder stated in a press release Thursday morning. Both properties were considered a total loss.

MVFD had two engines on Clay Street dousing the blaze with water guns. A third engine was in the alley behind the homes and a fourth was on Cass Avenue.

During the fire, the Monte Vista School District sent a notice to parents that Bill Metz Elementary was being evacuated to the high school and that students could be picked up there, emphasizing that the evacuation was “just a precaution.”

Parents were advised that students normally dropped off at Bill Metz would be taken to the high school instead. They further advised those living in the Lariat area to not allow kids to walk home.

After the fire was knocked down, firefighters spent a couple of hours mopping up.

The origin and cause of the fire have not been determined, Dingfelder noted. MV Fire Chief Pat Sullivan requested the assistance of Colorado Division of Fire Prevention and Control (DFPC) investigators to help determine the origin and cause. The Monte Vista Police Department is assisting in the investigation along with the 12th Judicial District Attorney’s Office. Investigators were looking over what remained of the two homes Thursday morning.



Photos by Brian Williams

Investigators on Thursday, March 9, were looking over what remained of two homes that were destroyed by a fire in the 700 block of Clay Street.



The Monte Vista Fire Department contained a fire to two homes on Wednesday afternoon, March 8. The blaze destroyed the homes and left a family homeless.



“It is too early in the investigation to determine whether this was accidental, carelessness or intentional,” Dingfelder stated. “That will be determined with the help of the state fire investigator. Once the investigation is completed, law enforcement and the District Attorney will review the information to determine whether charges are appropriate.”

This is an ongoing investigation, and it will take time to determine the origin and cause of the fire, Dingfelder stated.



Prescribed burns planned at Alamosa, Baca, and Monte Vista National Wildlife Refuges

CONTRIBUTED

ALAMOSA — The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service will be conducting prescribed burns this spring on the Alamosa, Baca, and Monte Vista National Wildlife Refuges to remove old, matted vegetation to improve wildlife habitat. Professional fire personnel from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Mid-Plains Fire Zone and state and federal partners will conduct the burns. The exact burn dates will depend on weather conditions and other prescription requirements. Target dates start mid-March but may extend through mid-April.

Smoke will be visible to adjacent neighbors, towns and highways during

and for a few days following burning operations. Signs will be posted along the nearest major roads and all burns will be monitored until they are declared completely out.

Prescribed fire smoke may affect your health. For more information, see www.colorado.gov/pacific/cdphe/wood-smoke-and-health.

For up-to-date information, “Like” the San Luis Valley National Wildlife Refuge Complex Facebook page at www.facebook.com/SanLuisValleyRefugeComplex or contact Alamosa and Monte Vista Refuge Manager Suzanne Beauchaine at 719-589-4021x 1003.

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40th SLV Crane Festival swoops into Valley

By MARIE MCCOLM
MONTEVISTA — People migrated to the San Luis Valley for the 40th annual Monte Vista Crane Festival on March 10-12.

Assistant MV National Wildlife Refuge Manager Dean Lee was at the refuge on Sunday morning. He said a good amount of people came to the refuge to see the cranes this year during the festival.

“The crowds that we have seen out here have been pretty steady,” Lee said. “We don’t have a total count, but we have seen an uptick of people over here and out at Ski Hi park this year for the festival. I think it’s because this is our first full year back, you know after COVID, and with the new facility and everything out at Ski Hi too, we have seen a bigger crowd also. I have heard a lot of people express how it’s been nice to get out into nature and really enjoy the cranes this year. The cranes have been coming around for thousands of years, but this is the 40th for our town. It’s cool that we get to come out and enjoy the cranes. I also enjoy teaching people about the cranes and talking to them about the festival.”

There were a variety of vendors at the Outcalt Event and Conference at SLV Ski Hi Complex for the festival selling jewelry, soaps, perfumes, wood crafts, homemade baked goods, candles, carved signs, clothing and much more. There were also booths at the complex, including one from the Colorado State University SLV Area Extension Office, and one with rangers from the Monte Vista National Wildlife Refuge to answer questions about Sandhill cranes and other wildlife.

On Saturday night at the Ski Hi Complex, the world premiere of the movie, “Where the Cranes Meet the

Mountains,” was shown. The movie was made possible by a grant from the Colorado Tourism Office and made specifically for the 40th annual MV Crane Festival.

The movie featured an artist by the name of Amanda Charlton Hurley. Hurley spoke about her artistry and how the cranes inspired her to paint a steel crane for the “Swoop of the Cranes.” She said this was her first year seeing the cranes and spoke of their beauty. Hurley added that she loved how the cranes brought so many people with diverse cultures and backgrounds to the San Luis Valley.

Hurley was introduced in person at the movie’s premiere, and the steel crane she painted was also on display for everyone to see at the premiere.

Keynote speaker and co-founder of the International Crane Foundation, Dr. George Archibald, gave a talk that was all about the Sandhill cranes, including where the cranes come from, their migration patterns, what the cranes eat, specific habits of the cranes, and how cranes populate. He also spoke about the cranes being in Monte Vista for the festival.

On Friday, Saturday, and Sunday residents could buy tickets in advance or the day of to take a tour of different wetland and wildlife areas around Monte Vista and the Valley. Each morning or afternoon, depending what time the tours were held, residents were taken to various locations for a guided tour of the wetlands or the wildlife refuge and could watch the cranes in their natural habitat.

The Sunday morning tour took people to the MV National Wildlife Refuge and was led by Doug Ouren. Ouren said the cranes followed patterns on their migration to the Valley every year and that Monte Vista was one of their major



stopping points during their migration. He mentioned that although it was a grandiose thing for people to witness every year, for the cranes it was simply part of their way of moving from one place to another.

Ouren said it was “wonderful” that people traveled near and far to watch the migration and witness the beauty of the cranes.

“The cranes really enjoy being here,” he said. “They enjoy loafing in the water, and then they go and feed. The cranes are omnivores and will eat what they find, like frogs, fish, and plant matter. You can often see them basking in the sun, and raising their wings before they take flight out at the refuge. This migration is an annual thing, and our place at the refuge is a spot they really



Photos by Brian Williams
The Sandhill cranes returned to the San Luis Valley during their annual spring migration. People came to the Monte Vista to view the cranes and for the annual Crane Festival on March 10-12. For more information about the annual Crane Festival, visit the website at mvcranefest.org.

San Luis Valley Scoreboard Basketball 2022-2023

STATE BOYS Class 2A

Thursday
Sanford 53.....Simla 33

Friday
Sanford 40.....Limon 27

Saturday
State Championship
Wray 45.....Sanford 41

Class 3A

Thursday
Windsor Charter 51.....Centauri 39

STATE GIRLS

Thursday
St. Mary’s 56.....Centauri 39

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Sargent Elementary breaks its record in donations for the American Heart Association

BY MARIE MCCOLM
MONTE VISTA — Sargent Elementary Physical Education teacher Sami Cotten is proud of her students.

“Our kids had a heart challenge with the American Heart Association,” Cotten said. “The association used to be Jump Rope for Heart but changed their name. We had a goal of raising \$5,000 for the association, well the kids surpassed this goal in like a week or so. We ended up beating our 2001 school record. In 2001, our school raised \$6,940, and the kids now ended up raising \$12,688.30. They almost doubled the amount! I am extremely proud of these students. These kids just blew this out of the water. The kids worked really hard for this, and they are already talking about beating the record for next year. This is great.”

Cotten is a 2015 Sargent High School graduate. She attended college in Grand Junction and taught first grade in Grand Junction for almost 4 years. Cotten and her husband moved back to the San Luis Valley when her husband obtained a job with an Adams State University basketball team. Cotten then applied for and received the job as the Physical Education teacher for the elementary school at

Sargent. Cotten is also a volleyball coach for Sargent High School.

Cotten explained how with this record-breaking goal, Sargent is now a ranked school in Colorado. Cotten said that there are usually about 10 schools that rank in Colorado, and Sargent is among the 10. Cotten said that many of the other schools are finishing their challenges in March, so she doesn't think many of the numbers are finalized yet, but she was proud that the students at Sargent, made it to the top 10 to be ranked.

“For a school as small as ours, with as big as a lot of the other schools are, for us to be ranked, we are very proud of that,” Cotten said.

Cotten said that for the month of February, the kids learned a lot about heart health. Cotten said that the kids were excited about the challenge because they were told if they raised over \$100 in donations, they would get to throw slime at her.

“We ended up having over 60 kids that raised \$100 or more. So, we had this big cool slime party last Thursday. We had 60 kids that got to dump some cups of slime on me,” Cotten said with a chuckle. The top three kids that raised the most got to use 5-gallon buckets of slime. “The kids



A banner signed by Sargent Elementary School students shows the amount of money that was raised for the American Heart Association.

really loved that. It was a lot of fun and a good reward for them.”

Cotten said one of her favorite things about being a P.E. teacher is

that she gets to see all the kids at the school.

“I have really enjoyed P.E. I did first grade in the past, so this has been a really

big change, but a good change. It's really cool getting to see every single kid in the school every single day, that's very special to me,” she said.



Sargent Elementary School P.E. teacher Sami Cotton is slimed by students who raised more than \$100 in donations for the American Heart Association.

Road closures to begin on RG National Forest

CONTRIBUTED
MONTE VISTA — The Rio Grande National Forest (RGNF) announced Thursday, March 9, that the annual spring road closures have begun across the forest. Each year, as temperatures rise and the snow melts, the forest roadbeds soften and develop an increased risk of damage from vehicle traffic.

Wheels can cause ruts in roads that can increase water run-off velocity and cause subsequent erosion. Increased silting into local water sources can damage the waterway and aquatic life within. Vehicles on soft roads can also cause large mud holes. To avoid these

problems, roads are closed for short periods to allow for the drying and hardening of the roadbed. The closures typically last from three to six weeks.

“The short-term closures are necessary to protect your national forest resources,” said Andy Kelher, deputy forest supervisor for the Rio Grande National Forest. “They typically don't last long and, by respecting them, we can together provide a damage-free roadbed to utilize the rest of the year.”

Kelher noted that restricted access to your favorite locations can be frustrating but encourages the public to help prevent the potential for

widespread negative effects.

As soon as it is determined that the roadbeds will not be damaged by heavy vehicles, the closed roads will be opened. It is important to note that some roads may appear to be dry in lower elevations near the closure, but they will remain closed until the higher sections of the roads are also appropriately dry enough for vehicle use.

Current road conditions can be found on the RGNF's home page, www.fs.usda.gov/riogrande, by navigating to the individual ranger district's “road conditions” link on the right side of the page.

The Amazing Benefits of Living from the Inside Out

I remember many years ago when I was young in the ministry and a woman came to me for counseling. She had recently accepted Christ as her Savior, and while she was talking, it became clear to me that she was living with her boyfriend. I was just waiting for her to finish talking so I could tell her that was wrong, but God stopped me. He spoke very clearly to my heart and said, “No, you're not going to do that. I will tell her at the right time, when she's ready to hear it.”

This was a powerful lesson for me because it helped me understand that people have to be grounded in God long enough, and love Him enough, that they are willing to give up the things that are wrong for them. And a religious attitude that is judgmental and critical toward others can be worse than the issue we feel we need to “correct.”

First Samuel 16:7 (NIV) says, “... The Lord does not look at the things people look at. People look at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart.” The truth is God cares most about what's going on in my heart—why I do what I do—more than anything else. And the best thing I can do is keep my focus on Him and make sure my heart is right with Him.

Your Inner Life and Your Outer Life

We have two lives – an inner life and an outer life. The inner life is what we think and feel and the attitude we choose to have. It's our soul, which is our mind, will and emotions. Our outer life is what we see on the outside—the way we look, what we have, what we do. Both are important, but God is more concerned with our inner life and why we do what we do. He is looking at our hearts.

As believers in Christ, we belong to God; His Spirit lives in us and works in us to make us more like Jesus. When the changes in our heart show in the way we live, we're living from the inside out. That's when others can see the righteousness, peace and joy that we

have in Christ operating in our lives.

Romans 14:17 (AMPC) says, “[After all] the kingdom of God...is righteousness (that state which makes a person acceptable to God) and [heart] peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.” God wants us to enjoy our everyday lives, even the ordinary, sometimes mundane daily routines that we can become tired of doing. And a religious, judgmental attitude—like the one I had toward the woman who came to me for counseling—only steals our joy and peace.

Going Through the Process

We have to learn how to live this way, and the first thing God wants to change in us is the way we think. He wants us to learn to think the way He thinks.

Romans 12:2 says we will know “what is the good and acceptable and perfect will of God” when we've been “transformed (changed) by the [entire] renewal” of our mind (AMPC). Transformation takes time and is a process that happens gradually. God is still working in my life to transform me into His image, but I know I've made progress because I recognize more quickly now when I have “stinkin' thinkin'.”

I can feel it inside...something isn't right and I've lost my peace and joy. That's when I need to stop and think about what I'm thinking about and what I'm talking about. I've gotten to the point where God has brought conviction to my heart in the middle of a conversation because I was saying something I shouldn't. So I stopped myself, apologized and said, “God just corrected me. I shouldn't be talking about this.”

The way we think and speak determines our reality. If we want to live for God—with righteousness, peace and joy—we need to adjust our attitude when it's not good. I know there are times when we want to say, “Well, I can't help the way I feel.” But we can help the way we think and talk, and we can choose our attitude.



Feelings are fickle and most people live by the way they feel too much of the time. Sometimes we need to remind ourselves: “I can't always help how I feel, but I don't have to act according to my feelings.” God created us with a free will, and we can choose to do what's right as we trust Him for the grace and strength to do it. We may not be able to choose how we feel all the time, but we can decide not to let our feelings determine how we will live our lives.

This is the key to overcoming the things that steal our joy in everyday life, like a critical, judgmental attitude. I want to encourage you to make a determined decision to live for God and make it your number one priority to have a right heart toward Him. Then, even when your circumstances aren't joyful and peaceful, you can have joy and peace because they are in your heart. When you have life in Christ, it's so wonderful to live from the inside out!

For more on this topic, order Joyce's four-teaching resource *The Gift of Everyday Joy*. You can also contact us to receive our free magazine, *Enjoying Everyday Life*, by calling (800) 727-9673 or visiting www.joycemeyer.org.

Joyce Meyer is a New York Times bestselling author and founder of Joyce Meyer Ministries, Inc. She has authored more than 140 books, including *BATTLEFIELD OF THE MIND* and *LOVING PEOPLE WHO ARE HARD TO LOVE* (FaithWords). She hosts the *Enjoying Everyday Life* radio and TV programs, which air on hundreds of stations worldwide. For more information, visit www.joycemeyer.org.

Please note: The views and opinions expressed throughout this publication and/or website are those of the respective authors and do not necessarily reflect those of Joyce Meyer Ministries.

PROFESSIONAL SERVICES

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Property tax exemption available to senior citizens, disabled veterans

CONTRIBUTED
SAGUACHE COUNTY — A property tax exemption is available to senior citizens, qualifying disabled veterans, the surviving spouses of Gold Star veterans, and the surviving spouses of senior citizens or disabled veterans who were previously granted the exemption.

For people who qualify, 50 percent of the first \$200,000 in actual value of their primary residence is exempted. The state pays the exempted portion of the property tax. Once approved, the exemption remains in effect for future years, and the applicant need not reapply. The General Assembly may eliminate the funding for the Senior Citizen Exemption or Disabled Veteran Exemption at their discretion in any year that the budget does not allow for the reimbursement.

Application requirements are as follows:

SENIOR CITIZEN EXEMPTION
The exemption is available to applicants who: a) are at least 65 years of age as of Jan. 1 of the year of application, b) owned their home for at least 10 consecutive years as of Jan. 1, and c) occupy it as their primary residence and have done so for at least 10 consecutive years as of Jan. 1.

Limited exceptions to the ownership and occupancy requirements are detailed in the qualifications section of the application. The exemption is also available to surviving spouses of senior citizens who previously met the requirements. The application deadline for 2023 is July 15. The application form is available from the website of the Colorado Division of Property Taxation or the county assessor of the county in which the property is located.

The application must be submitted to the county assessor at the following address: Saguache County, PO Box 38, 501 4th Street, Saguache, CO 81149, 719-655-2521, mstephens@saguachecounty.net.

DISABLED VETERAN EXEMPTION

The exemption is available to applicants who: a) sustained a service connected disability while serving on active duty in the Armed Forces of the United States, b) were honorably discharged, and c) were rated by the federal Department of Veterans Affairs as one hundred percent permanent disability through disability retirement benefits. Disabilities rated at less than 100 percent and VA unemployability awards do not meet the requirement. The applicant must have owned and occupied the home as his or her primary residence since Jan. 1 of the year of application; however, limited exceptions to the ownership and occupancy requirements are detailed in the eligibility requirements section of the application. The application deadline for 2023 is July 1.

Applications are available from the Colorado Department of Military and Veterans Affairs, from the website of the Colorado Division of Property Taxation or the county assessor of the county in which the property is located. Completed applications must be submitted to the Colorado Department of Military and Veterans Affairs at the address listed below.

DISABLED VETERAN SURVIVING SPOUSE EXEMPTION

The exemption is available to surviving spouses of disabled veterans who had the disabled veteran exemption

and who passed away prior to Jan. 1 of the current year. The property must be owner-occupied and used as the primary residence of an owner-occupier who is the surviving spouse of a qualifying disabled veteran. The application deadline for 2023 is July 1.

Applications are available from the Colorado Department of Military and Veterans Affairs, from the website of the Colorado Division of Property Taxation or the county assessor of the county in which the property is located. Completed applications must be submitted to the Colorado Department of Military and Veterans Affairs at the address listed below.

DISABLED VETERAN GOLD STAR SPOUSES

Beginning in January 2023, this exemption is available to surviving spouses of "Gold Star" veterans. The property must be owner-occupied and used as the primary residence of an owner-occupier who is the surviving spouse of a qualifying Gold Star veteran. The application deadline for 2023 is July 1.

In early January 2023 applications were available on the Colorado Department of Military and Veterans Affairs, from the website of the Colorado Division of Property Taxation or the county assessor of the county in which the property is located. Completed applications must be submitted to the Colorado Department of Military and Veterans Affairs at the following address: Colorado Department of Military and Veterans Affairs Division of Veterans Affairs, 155 Van Gordon St., Suite 201, Lakewood, CO 80228. Call 303-914-5832, fax 303-914-5835 or visit online vets.colorado.gov, for more information.

TIPSWORD

Continued from Page 1A

Tipsword's product page begins with, "We offer a wide variety of freeze-dried sweets that have a unique flavor and texture." He lists 19 items with descriptions and pictures that show how items grow when freeze-dried.

The Colorado Cottage Foods Act that passed in 2012 has been refined to accommodate foods that can be sold directly to customers without licensing or inspection. Since Tipsword's freeze-dried products do not contain dairy, his business falls under the Colorado Cottage Foods Act.

The 13-year-old described his production and distribution process.

"I buy these nylon bags from Amazon or eBay or wherever," Tipsword explained. "Because they're cheap bags and they're just what we need for the candy."

"Basically," the middle schooler continued, "I use any type of candy, like a snickers bar. I cut it up, put it in the freeze dryer, put it in the bag, and sell it."

Visitors at the 2022 Hollyhock Festival in Saguache had the opportunity to buy Tipsword's unique sweets. After his first event — Monte Vista Farmer's Market — the middle schooler now works at a number of events and other festivals throughout the year. He also sells his product at Mountain Valley School. Options include a variety of taffies, candy bars, and different kinds of skittles.

"It still profits me," Tipsword

explained. "That's why I'm still doing it."

Like a true entrepreneur, the 13-year-old has a vision. He said, "My goal for the future? Down the line I'd like to have a warehouse."

The smallest freeze-drying units can run thousands of dollars, so Tipsword is fortunate to borrow time on smaller equipment today. He described refrigerator-sized units that run six figures. He wants 20 of them in his future warehouse. Instead of cutting up candy for life, he said he might sell the business at that point and do something else.

A long-time member of 4-H, Tipsword learned about business early. This year, he had to come up with a new revenue plan because the avian flu hit hard and ruined his plans for the chickens he raised.

On top of schoolwork and playing games of chess, Tipsword also devotes time to raising therapy dogs. He is currently training a 14-week-old puppy named Chloe.

His involvement in 4-H also requires significant time and effort. Without the support of his mother, however, he might not be as productive. She suggested creating a freeze-dried process and helped direct her son with all his projects. She swept the MVS gym to close the event. A substitute teacher in Center, she also distributes Tipsword's candy at the school.

ATTENTION GRADUATING HIGH SCHOOL SENIORS

The Saguache County Board of County Commissioners are accepting scholarship applications for graduating seniors who will be graduating high school in 2023. Commissioners will be awarding graduating seniors' college scholarships that will be paid through the Marijuana Excise Tax funds. Scholarships may be used at a trade school, college or university but you must reside in Saguache County to apply and possibly receive scholarship funds. Applications are due by April 14, 2023 and are available through our website at www.saguachecounty.colorado.gov to download the application or by contacting Wendi Maez at 719-655-2231 or by email at wmaez@saguachecounty-co.gov.

No. 1662 published in the Center Post Dispatch, Thursday, February 9, 16, 23, March 2, 9, 16, 23, 30 and April 6, 2023.



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Wray comeback denies Sanford state title

By Ken Hamrick

LOVELAND – The seventh-ranked Wray High School had a 10-point halftime lead over fourth-ranked Wray in the Class 2A State Tournament championship game Saturday at the Budweiser Events Center.

The Eagles then put together an effective full-court press in the second half, which worked in their favor. Wray forced several turnovers and bad shots by the Mustangs, and the Eagles took advantage and came back to win by a score of 45-41.

“We had a hard time breaking their press,” said Sanford coach Brice Crowther. “We definitely had a hard time breaking it. We were hoping for one more win.”

Wray took the early lead on layups by Rafael Trejo and A.B. Ruiz. Justin McCarroll put the Mustangs on the board and then Ben Sittler made a 3-point basket to give Sanford a 5-4 lead.

Chris Arambula made a three for the Eagles to help them regain the lead. Ben Sittler drove for a layup to tie the score, but Joey Uyemura drained a trey for a 10-7 Wray advantage.

McCarroll and Ben Sittler both scored to put Sanford back into the lead, and Cash Caldon made two free throws for a 13-10 Mustang lead at the end of the first quarter.

Sittler and McCray Larsen extended the lead to 17-10 before Arambula made another 3-pointer. Trason Gartrell scored a layup, and Larsen hit a jumper and he added a free throw for a 22-13 advantage.

Ruiz ended the Sanford run with a layup, but Gartrell scored another layup, and Craig Ford buried a three to give Sanford a 27-15 lead with two minutes left in the second quarter.

Uyemura ended the period with a layup, but the Mustangs led 27-17 at halftime.

Uyemura opened the second-half scoring with a layup, but Caldon hit a 3-pointer for a 30-19 advantage.

Arambula scored a layup, but Larsen made back-to-back layups to give Sanford its largest lead of the game at 34-21 with 4:10 left in the third.

Ruiz started the Wray comeback with a layup, and Trejo and Ruiz both scored to bring the Eagles within 34-27 at the end of the period.

McCarroll opened the fourth quarter with a layup, but Trejo split at the free throw line, and he then scored in the paint to reduce the Mustangs’ lead to 36-30. Larsen split at the line, but Trejo scored again.

Arambula then made back-to-back 3-pointers to give Wray the lead at 38-37 with 4:29 to play. He then made two free throws, and so did Uyemura and the Eagles led 42-37.

Uyemura made one of two from the line, but Caldon drove for a layup to bring the Mustangs within 43-39. Arambula also split at the line, but Ben Sittler made a layup to help Sanford cut the deficit to 44-41.

Wray turned the ball over to give Sanford a chance to tie the game. However, the Mustangs also recorded a turnover, and Adonay Gonzalez made one of two free throws to seal the victory.

Ben Sittler led Sanford in scoring with 11 points, followed by Larson with 10.

Arambula was Wray’s top scorer with 14 points, and Uyemura scored 13.

Sanford ended the season with a record of 18 wins and nine losses, and it loses four seniors to graduation,

including three starters.

“We’re losing a lot of size and a lot of great leadership,” Crowther said. “But hopefully we’ll get some of these younger kids to grow some and also grow as leaders too.”

Del Norte girls finish sixth
The sixth-ranked Del Norte High School girls basketball team finished its season with a 41-32 loss to 13th-ranked Limon in the Class 2A State Tournament consolation championship Saturday at the University of Northern Colorado’s Bank of Colorado Arena.

The Lady Badgers led 8-3 after the first quarter, but the Lady Tigers closed to within 14-10 at halftime. Limon increased the lead to 32-17 after the third quarter.

Del Norte attempted a comeback in the fourth quarter but could come no closer than the final score.

Individual statistics for the Lady Tigers were unavailable.

Del Norte ends the season with 20 wins and seven losses.

Wray 45, Sanford 41
Sanford – Ford 1 0-0 3, Caldon 2 2-2 7, B. Sittler 5 0-3 11, McCarroll 3 0-0 6, Larsen 4 2-3 10, A. Sittler 0 0-0 0, Reynolds 0 0-0 0, Gartrell 2 0-0 4. Total 17 4-8 41.

3-point goals – Caldon 1, Ford 1, B. Sittler 1. Total 3.

Wray – Arambula 4 3-4 14, Teejo 4 1-2 9, Ruiz 4 0-0 8, Riggleman 0 0-0 0, Uyemura 4 3-4 13, Gonzalez 0 1-4 1, Peterson 0 0-0 0, Shay 0 0-0 0. Total 16 8-14 45.

3-point goals – Arambula 3, Uyemura 2. Total 5.

Sanford 13 14 7 7 – 41
Wray 10 7 10 18 – 45

Fouls – Sanford 17, Wray 12.
Fouled out – Larsen.



Photos by Ken Hamrick

Sanford High School's McCray Larsen (23) looks to make a move to the basket against Wray's A.B. Ruiz (20) and Chris Arambula (4) in the Class 2A State Tournament championship game Saturday at the Budweiser Events Center in Loveland.



Sanford's Ben Sittler (11) moves the ball against Wray's A.B. Ruiz. The Mustangs lost to the Eagles 45-41.

Sangre de Cristo National Heritage Area 2024 grant cycle opens

ALAMOSA — The Sangre de Cristo National Heritage Area (SdCNHA) recently announced its 2024 grant application cycle is open, as of March 1.

Grants awarded from SdCNHA are intended to encourage local cultural and historic heritage preservation activities, educational programs and support Heritage Tourism within the heritage area.

“Our past grantees have used grant funds to restore historic buildings; provide historical and cultural interpretation; restore or promote scenic, artistic and recreational resources; and to document culturally significant components of the way of life in the heritage area,” SdCNHA officials stated.

Sangre de Cristo National Heritage Area is administered by a non-profit board of volunteers who represent Alamosa, Conejos and Costilla counties. Heritage area grants are available to local schools, municipalities, and non-profits annually. For more information about SdCNHA’s mission, vision, and a list of past grants, visit www.sangreheritage.org.

The selection process is competitive, and applicants are encouraged to develop proposals carefully utilizing SdCNHA’s Management Plan Goals and Objectives. These resources are on the management plan page at www.sangreheritage.org/management-plan/. Funding is available up to \$25,000. Applications and guidelines can be found at www.sangreheritage.org/colaborate/. SdCNHA funds development projects, archeology projects, survey and planning projects, and education projects.

Development projects involve excavation, preservation, stabilization, restoration, rehabilitation, or reconstruction of a designated property or site.

Two examples of development projects funded by SdCNHA are the Rehabilitation and Restoration of the Denver and Rio Grande Depot at Antonito and Coach 256. Rehabilitation and Restoration of the Denver and Rio Grande

Depot in Antonito was an exterior rehabilitation which included stucco repair and stone repointing. In addition, the historic exterior lighting was restored and new low profile, wood storm windows was fabricated and installed over the restored historic wood windows. The Denver and Rio Grande Depot at Antonito was placed on Colorado’s Most Endangered List in 2007.

Coach 256 is part of the Cumbres and Toltec Scenic Railroad Engine 168 and Historic Car Project, which has been returned to a complete, vintage 19th century passenger train, adding a new heritage tourism attraction to the area. Engine 168 and the four other passenger cars are important elements of this project. This has successfully recreated a passenger travel experience popularly known as “The San Juan” as it was in 1915.

Archaeology Projects involve the identification, documentation, preservation, and interpretation of archaeological resources. This includes prehistoric and historic sites as well as artifact collections. Section 106 compliance-consultation of the National Historic Preservation Act will be required and should be part of your planning efforts. Sangre de Cristo National Heritage Area will assist with the completion of a Section 106 application.

The following three projects received grants from the Sangre de Cristo National Heritage Area. An example of an archaeology project that was funded by SdCNHA is the Archaeological and Biogeographical Investigations at the La Botica Site. This exceptionally large and complex archaeological site located in the La Jara Canyon; preserves a unique record of American Indian lifeways spanning at least 8000 years. The site is an important locality for the San Luis Valley’s Hispano residents, who have gathered medicinal plants there in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The demonstrated complexity and time depth of the site’s occupation, combined with its unique biological setting,

make La Botica one of the most significant sites in the San Luis Valley.

The Paleo-cultural Research Group’s multi-disciplinary project aimed to better understand the site’s place in the regional cultural landscape as well as the factors that have shaped it over time. Their primary goal was to better document the site and its current condition, and to gather the baseline data needed to reconstruct the history of human use and changes in the local plant community.

Education Projects provide historic preservation information or information about historic sites to the public. These projects can include curriculum development, youth training, lectures, interviews, archiving and preservation of cultural information.

Two examples of an education project that were funded by SdCNHA are Congreso de Acequias and the Lifeways of the San Luis Valley Course and Lecture Series. Lifeways of the San Luis Valley Course and Lecture Series is a course and lecture series explored the cultural richness of the San Luis Valley within the context of the multitude of Southwestern and Rio Grande traditions. The SLV geography, ecology, languages, and literature along with other elements of regional heritage, such as acequia systems, were exemplified in order to better understand local values and spiritual expressions of place.

Congreso de Acequias is a unique event which brings together the acequia community each year to celebrate and strengthen Colorado’s oldest farming communities. Acequias are a critical piece of the Heritage Area’s living history, celebrating the ancestors of those who settled under the Mexican land grants. The 2023 Congreso will give community members an opportunity to participate in the living history of the Acequia Community. It also provides critical water rights information to irrigators, as well as the opportunity to learn, cropping types, estate planning

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Congreso de Acequias, Coach 256, Rehabilitation and Restoration of the Denver and Rio Grande Depot, Rainbow Trout Ranch Conservation Project, Archaeological and Biogeographical Investigations at the La Botica Site, Lifeways of the San Luis Valley Course and Lecture Series

SANGRE DE CRISTO NATIONAL HERITAGE AREA

and the protection of an individual acequia through by-laws. The Congreso also showcases Costilla and Conejos County student artwork and writing skills about the Acequias using the annual poetry, coloring and poster contests.

Survey and Planning Projects involve identification, recording, evaluation, designation, and planning for the protection of significant historic buildings, structures, sites, and districts. This is not for the acquisition of property. Section 106 compliance-consultation of the National Historic Preservation Act may be required for this project type and should be considered for your planning efforts. Sangre de Cristo National Heritage Area can help with the completion of a Section 106 application.

An example of a Survey and Planning grant that was funded by SdCNHA is Rainbow Trout Ranch Conservation

Project. The historic property is a guest ranch, which has been in operation for over 85 years. Located on the Conejos River, it encompasses 590 acres. Highly visible from Highway 17 (Los Caminos Antiguos Scenic and Historic Byway) it provides substantial wildlife habitat. Rio Grande Headwaters Land Trust worked with the owners to protect the land through a permanent conservation easement.

If you have an idea for a grant or have any questions about the grant process, email SdCNHA at info@sdcnha.org, call 719-580-7366 or visit the office located at 231 State Ave., Alamosa. Applicants will be notified of status in October of 2023 and funding will be available in 2024.

Deadline to submit an application is 5 p.m. June 1 — postmarked to SdCNHA, P.O. Box 844, Alamosa, CO 81101, or delivered by hand to 231 State Ave., Alamosa.

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Courtesy photo

On Jan. 29, First Christian Church and Grace and Mercy Church approved the new bylaws, and the two churches became one with a new name — Grace and Mercy Christian Church.

The two become one — Grace and Mercy Christian Church

CONTRIBUTED

MONTE VISTA — It is a typical Sunday morning at 200 Washington St. There are about 20 people in attendance, singing songs, partaking in the Lord's Supper, and listening to a sermon. It looks very much like a normal church. It feels and looks like a single church. However, in the background there are two sets of books and two sets of bylaws.

Until now.

In 1887 a group of believers came together to form the First Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in Monte Vista. The congregation grew and in 1909 construction began on the current building, making it one of the oldest buildings in Monte Vista. The congregation continued to serve the community and

Please see CHURCH on Page 7

Local couple writes, illustrates children's book honoring San Luis Valley potatoes

BY MARIE MCCOLM

MONTE VISTA — Ann Marie Kuhn is proud of the children's book she has written and collaborated on with her husband Chances Kuhn.

"My children were a real inspiration to me when I was writing this book. I dedicate this book to them," Ann Marie Kuhn said. "I also looked around at the Valley and saw the beauty in all the agriculture that we have here. The people in the book are called the Atopots, this is potato rearranged to form the name of the people. The book is my vision, put down on paper. I painted all the pictures in the book on canvases, before I ever put them into the book, and my husband helped me with all the words. I am hoping young people will look at this book and really enjoy it."

The title of the book is "The Atopots." According to Ann Marie Kuhn, the book tells the story of benevolent beings, as different cultures with different occupations. The book is centered around teaching children the beauty of different cultures of the world, with positive and simple words, so that children can see the beautiful differences in all people and see how people fit together and work together, to make the world flow together.

Ann Marie Kuhn was born and raised in Minnesota and graduated from the Art Institute of Minneapolis in 2009. She said she has been painting



Please see BOOK on Page 7

Local resident trying to open a non-profit diesel mechanic school

Linares says there is a need for one in the Valley

BY MARIE MCCOLM

MONTE VISTA — Joseph Linares wants to open a diesel mechanic school for the San Luis Valley. Linares believes the school could help with education and productivity in the Valley.

"There are so many residents that this could benefit, not just younger kids but anyone who is interested in diesel mechanics and learning this trade," he said.

Linares is the owner of American Diesel in Monte Vista. Linares and his wife have been thinking about building the school for some time.

Linares sold tickets last year to win a 1991 high mobility multi-wheeled vehicle to help build a school. He has also held many yard and garage sales and other fundraising events to build the school.

Linares also holds online free teaching courses from his shop in Monte Vista, for anyone who is interested in learning diesel mechanics and the trade.

Linares would head up the school, once it is open, and he would teach diesel mechanics to anyone who is interested for free.



Courtesy photo

Joseph Linares wants to open a diesel mechanic school for the San Luis Valley.

"This has been a dream of mine for a long time," he said. "TSJC (Trinidad State Junior College) closed their local school, and there are so many students that are graduating that want to learn these skills, so many jobs that we could bring to the Valley with this school. I want to expand the school and offer the opportunity to as many people as I can. This is a way to really boost our economy in town. This is a way we can enable people to really learn a new trade and put it to use here. We may even have people wanting to move here to attend our school."

Linares said he is looking into more funding opportunities to get the school going.

"Every business starts with a dream," he said. "I have spoken to Evette Atencio with the LOR Foundation, and I am also looking at grants and lots of fundraising this summer. I have a dream for the Valley and I believe I can accomplish this and help the economy here grow, and boost job opportunities for everyone, too. There is so much opportunity for people here with this school. I am hoping to turn this into something real very soon."



Courtesy photos

Flying over forests allows managers to detect disturbances from insects and diseases, such as this roundheaded pine beetle infestation in a ponderosa pine forest in the San Juan National Forest in Dolores County.

Ongoing drought leaves Colorado's forests vulnerable to pests, other health issues

CONTRIBUTED

FORT COLLINS — The annual forest health report, released Tuesday, Feb. 28, by the Colorado State Forest Service, details how ongoing warm temperatures and below-average precipitation create challenges for Colorado's forests. Even though monsoonal rains came in

2022 to parts of Colorado, relieving some of the drought, it will take several years of adequate precipitation for trees to recover their natural defenses to bark beetle attacks. And these forest pests continue to expand into new areas with vulnerable, drought-stressed trees.

Please see FOREST on Page 2

FOREST

Continued from Page 1

Large swaths of forests affected by forest pests and diseases increase the potential for large, uncharacteristic wildfire, making living with wildfire and watershed protection top priorities for forest management across the state. Additionally, having sufficient tree seedlings to reforest areas affected by wildfire and floods is another top concern for the future of Colorado.

“Challenges persist for Colorado’s forests,” said Matt McCombs, state forester and director of the CSFS. “This report highlights how ongoing drought, an indicator of a warming climate, continues to stress our forests, setting the stage for insect and disease outbreaks and large, destructive wildfires. We know people continue to move into wildfire-prone areas as Colorado’s population grows and more homes are built in the wildland-urban interface. These challenges are enormous, but the state is on the right path to bringing about fundamental changes in the landscape that protect water quality, reduce fuels and sustain our outdoor recreation economy.”

Through collaborative, cross-boundary forest management, grants, and education and outreach, the CSFS addresses these multiple challenges. Healthy trees and forests are fundamental to the Colorado way of life, and this report acknowledges the stressors on forests and the myriad actions taken to protect our forested landscapes.

2022 Key Forest Takeaways
The 2022 Report on the Health of Colorado’s Forests focuses on three top priorities for the CSFS and its partners for forest management in Colorado:

- **Insects and Diseases:** Aerial survey data show Colorado has a new top bark beetle: the western balsam bark beetle affected more acres last year statewide than spruce beetle, which had held that title for a decade. Scientists from the CSFS and the U.S. Forest Service flew over 29.9 million acres of forests to spot insect damage and followed up with observations on the ground. Throughout the state, bark beetles and other pests continue to move into areas of Colorado’s forests with drought-stressed trees susceptible to attack.

- **Living with Wildfire:** The number and intensity of wildfires in Colorado in 2022 was less than in previous years, but communities and homeowners must continue to take steps to reduce their risk of loss from wildfire. Community Wildfire Protection Plans are an important way for people to work together to prepare for wildfire, and the CSFS updated the guidelines for these in 2022. Funding from the legislature in 2022 will support a wildfire awareness campaign in 2023 that will target individual homeowners with tips on how they can reduce risk to their homes and properties.

- **Watershed Protection:** Colorado is a headwaters state, and residents of Colorado and 18 other states rely on water from our forested watersheds. Reducing the risk to infrastructure and water quality from uncharacteristic wildfire is critically important, and the CSFS leads projects with partners across the state to safeguard this precious resource.

- **Regional Forest Health Issues**
- **Northeast Colorado:** Long-term

drought conditions continue to influence forest health in this part of the state. Foresters are monitoring a potential outbreak of mountain pine beetle in the Interstate 70 corridor near Black Hawk, and western spruce budworm is active in Jefferson and Park counties, affecting Douglas-fir, true fir and spruce trees.

- **Southeast Colorado:** Dense forests and ongoing drought allow the spread of piñon Ips beetles; outbreaks can kill wide swaths of trees, altering the composition of piñon-juniper and ponderosa pine forests. Severe winds in April and May 2022 caused about 1,260 acres of windthrow in different areas, leaving downed trees vulnerable to bark beetles.

- **Southwest Colorado:** Spruce beetle, mountain pine beetle, round-headed pine beetle and western spruce budworm are the major causes of forest mortality in this region of Colorado.

- **Northwest Colorado:** The risk of uncharacteristic wildfire remains high in this area due to the mountain pine beetle epidemic in the early to mid-2000s that left forests thick with dead trees, resulting in a large amount of fuel. Also, high-elevation forests in this area are losing stands



Landowners can reduce their risk of wildfire by removing flammable materials, such as dead and dying trees or dense woody material, near their homes and other structures.

of subalpine fir trees to a combination of the western balsam bark beetle and fungi that cause root decay.

Each year, the forest health report provides information to the Colorado General Assembly and residents of Colorado about the health and condition of forests across the state. Information for the report comes from an annual aerial forest health

survey by the CSFS and USFS, Rocky Mountain Region, as well as field inspections, CSFS contacts with forest landowners and special surveys.

For the first time, the report is exclusively online. Read the report and explore interactive maps of insect and disease activity at bit.ly/ForestHealthReport.

Rio Grande Headwaters Land Trust 2023 Virtual Auction and Open House

DEL NORTE — The Rio Grande Headwaters Land Trust (RiGHT) is having a virtual auction and open house in March.

The virtual auction will open at 8 a.m. on March 15 and close at 7 p.m. on March 31.

“We have many exciting items in the auction this year including fishing and hunting on private lands, horseback riding, a two-night stay at Trinchera Ranch, custom chaps, and local food and artwork,” organizers stated. The

auction items can be viewed at 32auctions.com/RiGHTAuction2023.

Proceeds from the auction will directly support RiGHT’s mission to conserve the land, water, and way of life in the San Luis Valley, organizers stated.

On March 31 at the RiGHT office, 840 Grand Ave., Del Norte, an open house will be held to close the auction and celebrate the start of the new water year in the San Luis Valley. Light refreshments will be served.

Puzzle Sponsored by MDS Waste & Recycle



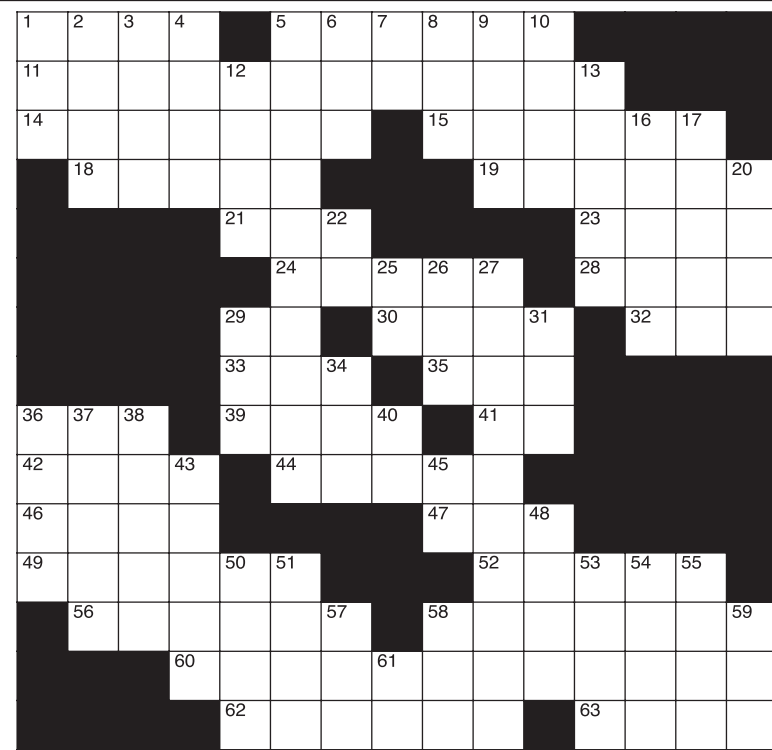
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CLUES ACROSS

- Greek mountain
- One dependent on something
- Gratitude
- Glazed ceramic ware
- Paddling
- Step
- More greasy
- Upper-class young woman
- Light beige
- Belief in a supreme being
- Indigenous people of Scandinavia
- A beloved princess
- Transfer property
- Field force unit
- Automated teller
- When you hope to get there
- Sino-Soviet block (abbr.)
- Politicians Fischer and Conroy are two
- Blood type
- Stringed instrument
- Curses
- Barbary sheep
- Belonging to a thing
- Supporters
- Leaf-footed bug
- A shower of water
- Attribute to
- Intermittent
- Soda waters
- Scottish island

Solution to last week's puzzle

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



CLUES DOWN

- Klutz
- Relaxing places
- Expel saliva
- The extended location of something
- Certified
- Cease to exist
- Powerful legal pro
- The OJ trial judge
- Popular greeting
- “90210” actress Spelling
- ___ Blyton, children’s author
- “This Is Us” star Fitch
- Battery cell with a nickel alode
- Full of bacteria
- Remains of an old building
- Exist
- It gets you into places
- Witness
- The spreading of a disease to another part of the body

- Father
- Touch gently
- Licensed for Wall Street
- Herring-like fish
- Lute used in N. Indian music
- Mirabel shouldn’t talk about him
- Atomic #62
- Religious
- Silvery-white metal (abbr.)
- Influential civil rights organization
- Acknowledgment (abbr.)
- Turn away
- Kidney disease (abbr.)
- Smooth-feeling fabric
- Competently
- Sea eagle
- General’s assistant (abbr.)
- It helps you see
- Emerging technology



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Mud-season and forest road closures are here again

It happens every year around this same time. As we eagerly anticipate the “spring forward” of daylight-saving time, the sandhill cranes fill the San Luis Valley skies by the thousands. Below the cranes, the quiet, imperceptible flow of water begins as the snowpack slowly saturates the ground below. Eventually, the soils can’t soak up any more water obliging a slight adjustment to the gravitational pull on the water rivulets. Unseen under the snow, the rivulets gather and form pools, ranging in size from small coins to massive puddles. Most pools eventually begin a stream-like advance down slope, with no particular destination in mind. Just down. Seeking the lowest place has been their destiny since they took their first infant step as a snowflake and fell from the sky many months ago. The rivulets join together and as a group flow down, following

only the path of least resistance.

As the slope of the ground increases, so does the water speed. With that principle in mind, roadbeds are designed to slowly drain water off so as to avoid forming faster moving mini or small streams that carry the surface soils away. Which brings us back to the saturated ground I mentioned above. Dirt road surfaces that are soaking wet are easily damaged by heavy vehicles. Tires can create endless ruts in the soft mud that will channel water down along the road surface preventing the waters escape into the ditches. This can result in two types of negative impacts to our natural resource. First, if left unchecked, the ruts will channel increasingly more water into them and be more resistant to drying. The ruts will grow deeper and eventually suck all vehicle tires into them via forces I haven’t a clue on how to explain. It

Land, Water and People

BY GREGG GOODLAND

may be magic but more accurately it is voodoo. You know what I mean if you’ve ever been pulled into those muddy ruts.

As the spring progresses, the roads will eventually dry. But not after tons of sediment washes away that was better suited for and intended to remain on the road surface. Now we have the deeply rutted roads that are difficult to navigate and no where near as pleasant to drive on as a smooth forest road. I’m not going to talk about how expensive it is to maintain those roads when they are severely damaged. And, with thousands of miles of roads to maintain, the public land agencies just can’t get to all of them regularly, not even close. So, they could remain rutted for

years, with frequent potholes, rapidly deteriorating until no one wants to, or can, drive on them.

Second, rutted roads can increase the speed that water exits the roadbed. The faster the water flows, the more opportunity it has to transport the sediment that was once the nice road surface, down into the ditches. Ditches are designed to move water away from the road. However, faster moving water can carry the sediment into nearby waterways, often because the ditch failed somewhere, and the water cut a new channel to expedite its rapid exit to that lowest point it has been forever seeking.

You might think “great, the water is off the road. Mission accomplished.” The problem is that the fast-flowing water carried all that sediment with it and the clean stream becomes cloudy, and the water quality deteriorates. Just like us, the fish and other aquatic life in those waters very much appreciate having clean water. Poor quality water can result in meager reproductive cycles for the fish all the cool insects that live in the water. The fine silt also

has the potential to cover and suffocate those critters and any eggs that may be placed in a gravel bed. A quality gravel bed allows the smaller species to access the oxygen from the water yet remain relatively protected from predators.

Many agencies close roads each spring for a short time to avoid these potential negative effects. The Rio Grande National Forest has been doing it for decades. The closures are not enacted as a means to arbitrarily restrict people from public lands. Rather, they stand as a testament to both the agency’s, and our dedicated employees’ commitment to provide the best land stewardship we can. The roads are closed to motorized vehicles, but you can always access those areas on foot. I urge you to respect those spring closures, if only to prove to yourself that the passion you have for the land runs deep in your soul and you can wait a few weeks to get back out there. Maybe I’ll see you out there when the roads are open.

Gregg Goodland is the Public Affairs Officer for the Rio Grande National Forest. An avid outdoor enthusiast, he promotes the responsible and safe use of our public lands.

Monte Vista Rotary Dick Boyce Memorial Book Scholarship deadline approaching

CONTRIBUTED

MONTE VISTA — The Monte Vista Rotary Club recently announced that it will again offer the Dick Boyce Memorial Book Scholarship to a qualifying high school senior from either Monte Vista High School or Sargent High School. It is also open to a Monte Vista Rotary member’s child who is a graduating senior attending a high school elsewhere in the San Luis Valley. One scholarship is awarded annually. The application deadline is April 7.

“We strongly encourage all Monte Vista and Sargent high school seniors to apply for this scholarship opportunity,” says MV Rotary Club President Larry Foster. “We really want to have a strong slate of candidates to choose from.”

This scholarship is designed to pay

book fees for a 2023 graduating high school senior who will be attending either Adams State University or Trinidad State College on a full-time basis. More specifically, it will pay book fees for up to and including \$500 per year for four consecutive years. It is eligible for Adams State University for four consecutive years or Trinidad State College for two years and then Adams State University for the subsequent two years if the student transfers to Adams State University from Trinidad State College.

“I so encourage eligible students to apply for this scholarship,” said Gracie Burkhardt, 2019 scholarship recipient. “This scholarship helped me so much financially with the purchase of my books, and it is not a difficult application to complete.”

Dick Boyce was an active Rotarian

from the Sargent area who believed in his local community and the education of its youth.

The Monte Vista Rotary is a civic club that has been in existence since 1920, serving the Monte Vista community in many ways. The club annually completes two highway clean-ups, a cemetery clean-up, and financially supports many other community projects throughout the year. The Ski Hi Stampede BBQ is the club’s largest fundraiser.

For more detailed information, contact either the Monte Vista High School or Sargent High School councilors or contact Monte Vista Rotary members David Hinkley (719-852-3442), Larry Foster (405-321-1972), or Karla Shriver (719-850-5808) or any other Monte Vista Rotarian.

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~ B.Gullette

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Student-run business project opens in Center

By PATRICK SHEA

CENTER — In late 2019, Katrina Ruggles began the search for grant money to fund capstone projects at Center High School so students could learn how to start and run a business.

Three years later on Feb. 28, students held the grand opening of the Blue Loft at 371 Worth St., a space for playing games, having meetings, and relaxing.

"I think we called it the business club when we started back then," Ruggles recalled. "We shared ideas and decided to start a youth-run business that students would run as a coop."

Ruggles said they created a 501c3, but making money is secondary to the primary goal of giving students business experience.

A year after securing the first grants, Ruggles worked with Lawrence Trujillo at the Viking Youth Club to advance the program. In the meantime, the building owner at 371 Worth St. arranged for the program to rent the space. After gaining access in January 2022, students scrubbed the floors, renovated, and painted the walls. They also learned the process for submitting bids to do the work.

Mikela Tarlow from ActionLab 360 has helped guide capstone students, and Trujillo has also supported Ruggles and others opening the Blue Loft. Now that the doors are open, Ruggles recently hired Walter Martinez to run the program.

In the future, Ruggles anticipates using the space for scheduled events before settling on fixed hours. For example, students could host a gaming tournament. They have discussed a painting event for adults in the future, although initial events will cater to Viking students. The entrance fee will be factored into the business equation. While entrepreneurs need to make money, many of their fellow students have limited finances. They will need to find the right price point.

Opening the Blue Loft shows another benefit of coordination between town officials, local business owners, and the school district.

When a couple bought four buildings in Center, Town Manager Brian Lujan explained, they wanted to avoid having one of them stand vacant.

"They reached out and said they wanted to be a part of this," Lujan said. "How can we help out? We started looking at a youth-run business."

With the Blue Loft up and running, "They can learn business skills and run a business. You gotta crawl before you walk," he added.

As Center progresses toward Urban Renewal Authority organization, the potential tax revenue from Tax Incremented Financing will subdivide into levies collected for special districts. The Center Consolidated School District, for example, can claim a fixed percentage over 20 years or specify different percentages over the years to accommodate growth. As URA board members, special district representatives participate in the decision-making process over decades, factoring expansion within the context of the town's expansion onto the North 90.

Lujan said the town has received seven or eight letters of intent to join the Center Planning Commission as it takes shape. One board position will be reserved for youth representation, which will include a group of rotating students and young adults to fill the seat at meetings.



The Blue Loft at 371 Worth St. in the heart of Center opened Feb. 28 to introduce Center students to the world of business.

Photo by Patrick Shea

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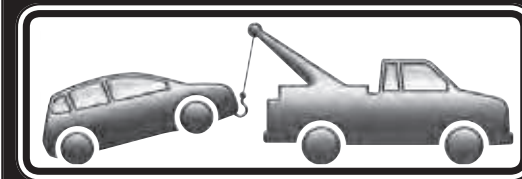
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CHURCH

Continued from Page 1

grow, and a two-story educational wing was added in 1953.

However, like most traditional churches, attendance would decline as the calendar moved into the new century. In June of 2020, longtime pastor Wayne Wittner retired. Regular attendance was down to less than 10 people every Sunday.

The church — once a pillar of the community — pondered closing its doors. How could such a small congregation continue to pay the bills? After much prayer they proceeded forward having faith that God would provide so this ministry to the community could continue.

In 2018, Larry and Ginger Foster moved from Oklahoma to Monte Vista to follow God's missionary call into an area less saturated with the Gospel than their original home. They were leading a Bible study when the COVID-19 pandemic shutdown occurred. The Bible study was moved to online, which worked but nobody was truly happy with. As restrictions were being lifted, everyone in the group agreed they would much rather meet in person.

Grace and Mercy Bible Fellowship started meeting on Adams Street in May of 2020. The church soon found itself at the center of a zoning confrontation with neighboring merchants and was forced to vacate the building for four months until the matter was resolved, during which time they met in the homes of the members. The church's future became a matter of earnest prayer.

"In November of 2020, First Christian Church contacted me", recalls Pastor Larry Foster. They would have several conversations that would eventually lead to Foster preaching as a pulpit supply pastor for First Christian.

"I would preach at First Christian at 9:30 and walk across the street and preach again at 11:15 at Grace and Mercy," Foster recounted.

Little did they know that those meetings would change the course of both churches.

The two congregations would begin to work together on community events, the first being a community supper in February of 2021.

"Grace and Mercy wanted to do a community supper, but we didn't have any kind of kitchen. First Christian was more than happy to let us use their facility and their people gladly joined in the helping of making and serving," said Foster.

This would be followed by a dual church rummage sale to raise money for a mission trip. Both churches would come together to make the community supper a monthly event.

The weekly ladies Bible study led by Ginger Foster would be attended by women from both churches. Friendships were formed and the two groups began their journey together.

With their lease set to expire and in need of more room, in April of 2021 Grace and Mercy started meeting in the First Christian building.

"The original concept was to let each church maintain its own identity," commented Foster. First Christian would meet at 9:30 a.m. and Grace and Mercy at 11:15 a.m.

Those identities would continue to blend as members from both churches continued to work together on outreach events, including another rummage sale, bake sales and various fundraisers for mission trips.

churches started meeting together in the same service on Sunday morning.

"Everybody got along so well with each other there was no point in being separate any longer," remembers Foster.

Later that year it was proposed to merge the two congregations.

It was decided that a completely new set of bylaws would be drawn up.

"We didn't want this to be one church joining the other. We wanted this to be something new. That is where God was leading us," said Foster.

That process would take over 10 months to complete. On Jan. 29, the two churches approved the new bylaws, and the two churches became one with a new name — Grace and Mercy Christian Church.

"I look back at how this all evolved. Grace and Mercy had people, First Christian had the building," Pastor Foster reflects. "But it was more than that. It was people of common faith coming together for a common purpose. I am excited about what we can accomplish for God now that we have brought our people and resources into one."

What does the future hold for the new church?

"We want to do more in the community. Last year, we donated over \$1,000 for school supplies. We want to build on that. Our goal is to offer general interest classes for adults and children one night a week starting in the fall. We have an important message. We need to tell people about it," comments Pastor Foster.

The new church is non-denominational. An open house to celebrate the merger and to honor the 136 years the First Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) served this community will occur later this year.

More information about Grace and Mercy Christian Church may be at www.GraceAndMercy.church or by calling the church at 719-852-5086.

BOOK

Continued from Page 1

since and has focused on her painting for the last decade or so.

Ann Marie Kuhn always dreamed of writing a children's book and said that it all came together when she moved to the San Luis Valley in 2013 and married her husband, Chances.

Ann Marie Kuhn said that the Valley was a major inspiration to her and recalls when she first started painting the pictures for her book.

"It was really important to me to embody how beautiful people are

into my book. Agriculture in the San Luis Valley is a beautiful part of the Valley," she said. "We came up with the Atopots, potatoes grow here in abundance. Each painting that I made is a vision of how beautiful I see the world, my son Rhythm really gave me inspiration. In the book, I have picture of mothers with their children, showing the importance of mothers in the world. There are painters and gardeners, and musicians, there are animal Atopots in

the book, too."

Ann Marie Kuhn explained how at the end of the book her, and her husband show how all the Atopots make the world like a big family, and how together the family has one beautiful song to sing. She is proud that her book shows children in a simple way, a unique beauty of cultures, occupations, and loving people. It is her hope that the Atopots inspire children to always be accepting and loving of each other.

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This South Fork Beauty checks all the boxes, both his and hers - and is a fun place for family and friends. Custom built Log home tucked in the trees and backs up to the National Forest. The main floor consists of an open area with beautiful carved mantel stone fireplace, designer backsplash and large eat in counter space overlooking the living area with custom soft close cabinets and plenty of storage and room for all your entertaining. Kitchen has wonderful large butler pantry with pantry sink and beautiful custom stained-glass door. The Detailed Check Boxes include radiant floor heating with four zones and two Rinnai on-demand water tanks. Light Touch lighting system and electrical in the floor. Master bedroom is on the main floor with sitting area with luscious mountain views. Master bath with beautiful large tiled walk-in shower. Guest bedroom and bath on main floor with elegant soaking antique tub. Upstairs spacious loft with two electronic skylights with rain sensors that will close automatically with additional sleeping areas including office space and additional large size bedroom with barn door and bath. Enjoy your 3-car garage with large workshop and more than enough room for all your mountain toys. Your family and friends will love the upstairs bungalow above the garage with kitchenette, living area, built-in beds additional bedroom and bath. Bring your family and friends to gather to enjoy the great outdoors! Borders National Forest, with streams, creeks, lakes rolling topography, open fields, pine, fir, aspen trees, mountain views and abundant wildlife! Beautifully designed home tucked peacefully into the woods and easily accessible to town, Wolf Creek Ski Area and the Rio Grande Golf Course Resort. Once in a lifetime Opportunity! This property perfectly captures the best of both worlds between outdoor recreation and exceptional entertainment. Start your dream and Call/Text me to schedule your personal showing today! \$1,395,000 MLS #796960
37 Million Court • South Fork

SOLD

Bernadette Gingrass • Steffens & CO. Realty
(719)850-1993 • bernadette@steffenscorealty.com

UNDER CONTRACT IN 7 DAYS

701 County Road 20
3 bedroom 3 bath full log home on 1 acre.
Two-car garage with unfinished apartment above.
Air B&B OK
MLS# 800522

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271 Birch Street
3.5 acres of commercial land in South Fork Between the Post office and the Church of Christ
\$375,000
MLS# 800638



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FOR SALE!

Darling authentic 1,232 Sq. Ft. 2-bedroom 2 bath log cabin with upgrades galore!
Located in Log Haven.
Tucked along the mountain side backing up to national forest with beautiful views of the surrounding cliffs. Open living room, dining, kitchen area with new propane Vermont Casting stove to keep you cozy and warm all winter long. Kitchen is quaint and bright with custom granite countertops. This cabin has a covered front porch and wonderful back deck. The perfect place to enjoy the wildlife, peace and quiet and that first hot cup of morning coffee. Nice fenced back yard with gate opening to the national forest. Hike for miles out your own back door. Downstairs has a master bedroom and a full bath. Upstairs additional bedroom, bathroom and nice size sitting nook, great space to enjoy that best-selling book or use for your office den. This cabin comes complete with one car garage, storage shed, central well and town sewer. Cabin can be used as a full-time residence, or home-away-from-home winter or summer get-a-way! Rentals are not allowed in this subdivision. Don't wait! Start your adventure today! Only a short 17-mile drive from Wolf Creek Ski area. The mighty South Fork and Rio Grande River, Beaver Mountain reservoir & Million reservoir are just moments away. Bring your fishing pole and enjoy hours of world class fishing. Ski Wolf Creek, go 4 wheeling, hike, camp, hunt, Enjoying everything outdoors! Let's get started call /text and schedule your showing today! \$345,000 MLS #800364
31517 Us Highway 160 • South Fork
Bernadette Gingrass • Steffens & CO. Realty
(719)850-1993 • bernadette@steffenscorealty.com



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We work hard for you!

Call Bernadette today!

Steffens & Company Realty, INC
719-850-1993
Bernadette Gingrass, Broker Associate
30635 US Hwy 160 • South Fork
www.bernadettegingrassrealestate.com

FOR SALE!

Stately 2,818 Sq Ft. Mountain Home with Stunning Natural Light on 3.19 acres. This beautiful 3 bed 4 bath home is your perfect retreat. Open Split floor plan with beautiful cathedral ceiling and fireplace, large windows taking in the breath-taking outdoor sunlight and mountain views. Complete with beautiful furnishing, accessories and decor. The kitchen with eat in counter, gorgeous custom cabinetry, granite countertops and butler pantry is your dream kitchen for entertaining your family and friends. Separate office space off the dining area with patio door leads out to the great outdoors. There are two guest rooms one with private bath could be considered a separate master bedroom. Large master bedroom with large walk-in closet, fireplace gorgeous walk-in shower and access to deck with hot tub. Take in the stunning views from the main floor outdoor balcony. Your perfect place for that hot morning cup of coffee or relaxing evening glass of wine. This is a luxurious home located with private access to the national forest in The Timbers subdivision of South Fork Ranches. All this, just moments from Rio Grande Golf Club, Rio Grande River gold medal fishing and world class skiing at Wolf Creek Ski area. Don't wait call and schedule your private showing today! **\$1,250,000** MLS #798101
497 Timberline Drive • South Fork
Bernadette Gingrass • Steffens & CO. Realty
(719)850-1993 • bernadette@steffenscorealty.com



FOR SALE!

Must See Custom-Built 5,350 sq. ft. Commercial Property in Fabulous South Fork, CO. Great Highway 160 exposure!! This building is extremely well built. The building was built for retail with many amenities. The environment is warm and welcoming. The 3,000 sq. ft. main floor consist of large receiving office, full kitchen and bath and several large open spaces and two additional design show rooms and large 1,000 sq. ft. heated warehouse with plenty of shelves for storage and 12-foot overhead door. Lovely concrete outdoor patio with new vinyl fencing wired for low voltage lights this property sits on two lots with wiring running outside for lighting off outside signage. 1,350 sq. ft. Spacious upstairs with large open space, several large storage closets two additional offices, New ¾ custom tile bathroom and large storage over warehouse. This well-built property has radiant floor heating downstairs and upstairs baseboard hot water heat. Property is wired for Cat 5 telephone jack in all offices, design rooms, kitchen bar, receiving office - etc. Cable tv jack, upstairs big room. There are 3 gas fireplaces, 2 wall thermostats with remote control. Wired for speakers through out the building for music. Swamp cooler and wired for electric dryer, set up for washer and has a Propane fired boiler and propane hot water heater. This property is a blank canvas with so much POTENTIAL for the right builder or person. Because there is no existing business at the present time, this makes this building available for a variety of Business opportunities: Professional Work Environment for Professionals, Restaurant, Brew Pub, Events Center, Lodge or Cottage hotel, Retail etc. Come Paint your Canvas and start Your Business Adventure. Call and schedule your personal showing today! **\$1,250,000** MLS #794078
173 W Frontage Road • South Fork
Bernadette Gingrass • Steffens & CO. Realty
(719)850-1993 • bernadette@steffenscorealty.com



FOR SALE!

Check out this small diverse farm. The home is a 2bed/2bath, 1703.2 sq foot, historic adobe that has been fully and beautifully restored. Enjoy Colorado from the large (768 sq ft) open porch. This home sits on 126.06 deeded acres of land situated in the bottoms of the old Culebra River Drainage. The soil is sandy and loamy and has been used for vegetable crop production in the past w/o the use of pesticides or herbicides. It is watered by the San Acacia acequia with an early decree for 1.62 CFS. There is a domestic house well permit number 284703. The property also has a holding pond for irrigation water. The owner is installing a new side roll sprinkler, which will irrigate up to 80+ acres M/L. The new side roll irrigation system will be installed before closing and will increase production. There are several outbuildings useful for storage and/or animals. The farm is located in Costilla County, Colorado just north of the New Mexico state line. It is about one hour to Taos. The Rio Grande River is about 12 miles away. Red River Ski area and Rio Grande del Norte National Monument are near Questa, New Mexico about 40 minutes away. The Sand Dunes National Park is about 45 minutes north. **\$600,000** MLS #797313
12272 County Road R5 • San Luis
Bernadette Gingrass • Steffens & CO. Realty
(719)850-1993 • bernadette@steffenscorealty.com



FOR SALE!

Majestic Custom-Built Log Home! Fabulous 7 bed, 5 bath 4,619 Sq. Ft. Home with attached garage on 9.04 acres in Beautiful gated Bear Creek. This Home has several outdoor entertainment areas with wrap around decks too enjoy the 360 views of the San Juan Mountains. The main level has an open floor plan with great room and grand fireplace with vaulted ceiling opening into the dining and kitchen area. Entertain in this beautiful large kitchen with large island, custom cabinetry, granite countertops and state of the art stainless steel appliances. The Master bedroom suite is located on main floor with walk out patio, your perfect place to enjoy that hot cup of morning coffee. From here you can access your private boardwalk leading to your entertainment area with fire ring and Jacuzzi. Upstairs beautiful reading sitting loft with additional guest bedrooms, bath and great bunk room for additional family and guest. Lower level of this home includes a large family room with fireplace and pool table. Great for all your entertainment needs, additional bedrooms, and office. Beautiful furniture, furnishings and accessories are all included with this home. Bear Creek also offers a wonderful river adventure for rafting, gold medal fly fishing with a 20-acre area on the Rio Grande River exclusive to Bear Creek property owners. Minutes away from everything outdoors - gold medal fly fishing, hunting, four wheeling and thousands of acres of public land. Start your Adventure! Don't wait, Call, and schedule your showing today! **\$1,650,000** MLS #792162
2951 Bear Creek Circle • South Fork
Bernadette Gingrass • Steffens & CO. Realty
(719)850-1993 • bernadette@steffenscorealty.com





COLORADO NON-PROFIT WEEK

March 13-19, 2023

A special tribute to San Luis Valley Non-Profit Organizations

Published jointly by the *Valley Courier* and *Valley Publishing*.



THE DEPOT

610 STATE AVENUE
ALAMOSA, CO

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Resources Group and
Council of Governmentants
SLVDRG.ORG

Department of Local Affairs
CDOLA.COLORADO.GOV

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SLVGO.COM

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ALAMOSA.ORG

Alamosa Chamber of Commerce
ALAMOSACHAMBER.COM

San Luis Valley Small Business
Development Center
SLV-SBDC.COM

Community Foundation of the
San Luis Valley
CFSLV.ORG

*Alamosa's economic, community and tourism
development organizations - in one central location.*



San Luis Valley Trout Unlimited

Trout Unlimited (TU) is America's Leading Coldwater Fisheries Conservation Organization

- San Luis Valley Chapter of TU is an entirely volunteer organization with members from across the country
- Often mistaken for a fishing club, TU is composed of dedicated anglers and conservationists
- We work closely with many local, state and national organizations, government agencies and businesses

Recent SLV Trout Unlimited Projects

- Jim Creek** - An on-going project to protect habitat of this Rio Grande Cutthroat Trout stream. Home to a core conservation population of Rio Grande Cutthroat Trout, this project has protected and restored over two miles of riparian habitat and enhanced stream habitat. In 2021, two bottomless culverts were installed to improve aquatic organism passage and reduce water quality impacts. Work will continue in 2022 with a workday scheduled for Saturday, May 28th
- Conejos Meadows Resilient Habitat Project** - Completed in the fall of 2021 a few miles downstream from Platoro this project will enhance wintertime/refuge habitat, and

connectivity during low flow conditions on a 2-mile section of the Conejos.

- ✓ A model for projects that benefit fish habitat and wild self-maintaining trout populations all while providing benefits to irrigation water users below a working reservoir
- ✓ A Project is possible thanks to Conejos River Anglers and donations through their annual Superfly contest
- ✓ A Over \$31,000 raised and donated to SLV TU since the Superfly began in 2008.
- ✓ A This project recently received two grants leveraged with Superfly donations, one from the Colorado Water Conservation Board and a second grant from the Fishing is Fun program, for a total of \$219,000
- ✓ The 2023 Superfly event is scheduled for March 3-April 2
- **Sand Creek Rio Grande Cutthroat Trout Reclamation Project** - Located in Great Sand Dunes National Park and Preserve.
 - ✓ Will be the most extensive Rio Grande Cutthroat reintroduction project ever completed in Colorado
 - ✓ SLV Trout Unlimited provides support for all partners in this project including Colorado Parks and Wildlife, the US Forest

Service, and the National Park Service.

- ✓ Phase 1 was completed in the fall of 2020. Included removal of all non-native species. Reintroduction of cutthroat began in 2022 and Phase 2 will begin in 2023 on lower Sand Creek.
- Other recently completed projects: Habitat improvement on the Hidden Mile of the Conejos/two new boat ramps on the Rio Grande/ Rio Grande access fishing map/provide awards for the SLV Regional Science Fair
- **Conejos River Anglers - Partners on all of our Conejos River projects.**
 - The San Luis Valley Chapter of TU is incredibly grateful to the folks at Conejos River Anglers for their generous support over the years
 - The fly shop located in Mogote, Colorado - owned and operated by the Blankenship family and features a full-service fly shop, guide operations and comfortable lodging on site
 - The shop does 100% of the work to organize and host the Superfly event, to give back to the resource and enjoy it at the same time
 - **Annual Fundraiser Auction** - Annual Fundraiser Auction - Features live online and on-site auctions, bucket drawings, casting contest and more on June 3, 2023

✓ Held outdoors at the Colorado Farm Brewery starting at 4 PM it will provide an opportunity for socializing while supporting cold water conservation.

- **Membership** - We are trying to grow our membership and encourage any community member interested to become involved. If you are considering joining us please contact us at slvtroutunlimited@gmail.com or visit our Facebook page or our website at [www.https://troutunlimitedslv.org/](https://troutunlimitedslv.org/). We would love to talk to you about TU and welcome your interest!

"Our mission is to bring together diverse interests to care for and recover rivers and streams so our children can experience the joy of wild and native trout and salmon."



SAN LUIS VALLEY IMMIGRANT RESOURCE CENTER

225 6th Street, Suite B, Alamosa CO 81101

(719) 587-3225 www.slvirc.org



Providing services to residents of the San Luis Valley since 2002

Our mission is to connect and empower immigrants with resources to achieve legal documentation, fulfill their economic needs, and integrate into the community.



Legal Assistance Program

- Family petitions, naturalization, and more
- BIA Accredited; Minimum-fee basis

Por Ti Misma Program for Crime Victims

- Immigration legal assistance - U-Visa and VAWA Self-Petition
- Housing and Utility assistance

Punto de Vista Education Program

- English and Citizenship Prep classes

Center for Restorative Programs has continued to offer services amidst the ever-changing circumstances of the past two years. We are excited to have our office once again staffed regularly—we can be reached at our office, 716 Main Street or (719)589-5255, Monday-Friday, 9am-4pm.

Here's a bit about each of our programs:

Diversion Team: We work with youth and adults referred from the justice system and other referring agencies. Our programs focus on taking responsibility, understanding the impact of one's actions, and working to repair harm that was caused.

School Team: We collaborate with SLV schools and after-school sites to help build cultures focused on Restorative Principles. During the pandemic, we've worked to help schools stay connected, maintain relationships, and bridge conflict.

Wraparound Team: We work with families to create individualized plans that meet their unique and complex needs, based on the strengths and culture of each child and family.

Intensive Case Management Team: Our programs include Law Enforcement Assisted Diversion (LEAD) and other community programs designed to support individuals who are struggling with substance use. We utilize harm reduction, wraparound, and restorative justice principles.

To learn more about our work in the community, please visit our website at www.restorativeprograms.org



Center *for* Restorative Programs

Mission

Strengthen community in the San Luis Valley by building connection, transforming conflict, and healing relationships

Vision

Restorative Practices are the foundation of a healthy and just community throughout the San Luis Valley.

Values

Relationship: We all have a need for healthy connection and relationship with others. All people deserve the opportunity to build healthy relationships rooted in deep understanding.

Community: Community is built on complex and interdependent relationships, including interpersonal, organizational, and systemic. A healthy community requires mutual understanding and respect rooted in deep listening and authentic communication.

Meaningful Accountability: Our words and actions have ripples of impact. True accountability is possible when we own the impact of our words and actions; when we take responsibility for our own behaviors and allow others to take responsibility for theirs; and when we strive to repair harms as meaningfully as possible.

Equity and Justness: We currently live in a society where systemic obstacles in the justice system, education, and access to resources often negatively impact marginalized groups. Preventing and repairing harm in individual relationships and within systems helps interrupt racism, misogyny, homophobia, and other forms of oppression, allowing everyone to have greater access to achieving their full potential.

Empowerment: We all have the right to transform our lives and heal from the impact of harm we have caused or experienced. When we have agency to act and speak on our own behalf we grow stronger and more resilient.

Dignity: Every person has dignity and value. Our community is stronger when each person has an opportunity to be heard and respected, particularly those that have been historically marginalized.



Tu Casa, Inc.

Empowering all children and adults to live healthy, violence-free lives

Examinations, Wellness Exams, Forensic Interviews, Individual and Family Advocacy, Emergency Shelter, Relocation Assistance, Emergency Financial Assistance, Help Filing a Protection Order, Court Accompaniment, Information & Referrals, and Outreach/Education programs.

Volunteer Opportunities

Volunteering is a great way to make connections and give back to the community. Tu Casa, Inc. is currently looking for hotline volunteers.

For more information about how to apply to be a volunteer, please contact the volunteer coordinators at Tu Casa, Inc.

Tu Casa — Megan Lang
megan@slvtucasa.net
SLV CAC — Shelly Martinez
shelly@slvtucasa.net

More Information

For more information about Tu Casa, Inc. and the services provided or current involvement/career opportunities, please contact Theresa Ortega at (719) 589-2465 or visit our website at www.slvtucasa.net.



Tu Casa, Inc. staff promoting Teen Dating Violence Awareness Month – Feb 2023

About Tu Casa, Inc.

Since 1979, Tu Casa, Inc., a 501(c)(3) nonprofit, has provided free, confidential, bilingual advocacy, and outreach services to children and adult victims of domestic violence, sexual assault, stalking, human trafficking, and child sexual abuse throughout the 6 rural counties of the San Luis Valley, Colorado.

The Children's Advocacy Center of the San Luis Valley (SLV CAC) is a child-focused facility based program, in which representatives from many disciplines work together conducting joint forensic interviews and making team decisions about the investigation, treatment, management, and prosecution of child sexual abuse cases. Tu Casa, Inc. services include a 24-hour hotline which can be reached at (719) 589-2465, Sexual Assault Nurse

SERVING ADULTS 60 AND OVER WITHIN THE SAN LUIS VALLEY South-Central Colorado Seniors, Inc., AREA AGENCY ON AGING

What is and are the responsibilities of an Area Agency on Aging?

An Area Agency on Aging (AAA) is a public or private nonprofit agency designated by a state to address the needs and concerns of all older persons at the regional and local levels.

Area Agencies on Aging (AAAs) respond to the needs of older adults and their family caregivers in the communities they serve. They are advocates, planners, funders and educators, as well as providers of information and referral services. **AAAs** work with public and private partners to respond to the unique needs of older adults and family caregivers in their areas. From the frail older person who can remain at home with the right supportive services, to the older adult who benefits from the wellness and socialization opportunities provided at senior meal sites, **AAAs** offer services that make a difference in the lives of older adults across the state they are located.

AAAs coordinate the provision of low-cost, comprehensive, quality care for older adults (60+) by helping older adults and their families navigate the complex system of services. In their local communities, **AAAs** maximize service potential and avoid duplication of effort by partnering with local agencies. They also co-sponsor events of interest to older adults and

caregivers.

For over thirty years **AAAs** have maximized private and public resources to ensure that essential services are available to minority, frail, rural, and low-income older persons. The sixteen **AAAs** in Colorado play a pivotal role in assessing local needs, developing programs, and creating service plans that build upon local community strengths. They also advocate for improved services for older adults and their families.

AAAs were established under the Older Americans Act (OAA) in 1973. **AAAs** provide or fund services in five broad categories:

v Community-Based Services, such as adult day care, transportation, and senior meal programs

v Elder Rights, including assistance for persons 60+ with financial and legal concerns, and ombudsman services for residents of long-term care facilities

v Information and Assistance to access essential services

v In-home Services, such as Meals-on-Wheels, food shopping, housekeeping, home modifications, and personal care

v Support for Caregivers, including educational opportunities and offering respite (a short break from caregiving responsibilities

for family members)

With more than 40 years experience as the designated Area Agency on Aging (AAA) for the six-county region, South-Central Colorado Seniors, Inc. plans and provides these comprehensive services to address the needs of the region's population of older adults. We are the establishment of comprehensive, coordinated system of community-based supportive and nutrition services for the San Luis Valley's older adults.

We are also an [Aging and Disabilities Resource Center for Colorado \(ADRC\)](#), and provide information and assistance as well as Options Counseling for both older adults and adults 18+ living with a disability. This program helps simplify access to long-term services in the community.

We ask you to please be aware of your senior family member, friend, or neighbor. Are they in need of a friend? Are they in need of a meal? Are you on your way to the store and can pick something up for them? Be Aware!

Nutrition being our largest program, we serve congregate meals for adults 60+ at 10 locations Valley wide. Please join us for an enjoyable healthy meal for lunch at any of the following 10 meal sites.

If you know of a friend, family member or neighbor that is homebound, home-delivered meals are available for the homebound. Inform them or refer them to South-Central Colorado Seniors, Inc., your local Area Agency on Aging.

• CONGREGATE MEAL SITES – (DINE-IN)
• HOMEBOUND MEALS PACKED AND DISTRIBUTED FROM EACH MEAL SITE BELOW

• Alamosa –
Alamosa Senior Center, 92 Colorado Ave., Alamosa

• Antonito –
Antonito Senior Center, 701 Main St., Antonito

• Blanca/FG –
BFG Comm Center, 17591 Hwy 160, Blanca

• Center –
(Call 719-589-4511 for more info)

• Crestone –
Little Shepherd of the Hills, 155 N Alder St., Crestone

• Del Norte –
Pioneer United Church, 630 Spruce Street, Del Norte

• La Jara –
Northerners Senior Center, 43 Main Street, La Jara

• Monte Vista –
Tri-County Senior Center & Housing, 311 Washington St., Monte Vista

• Saguache –
Dept. of Social Svcs., 605 Christy Ave., Saguache

• San Luis –
Costilla County Senior Center, 1101 Salazar, San Luis

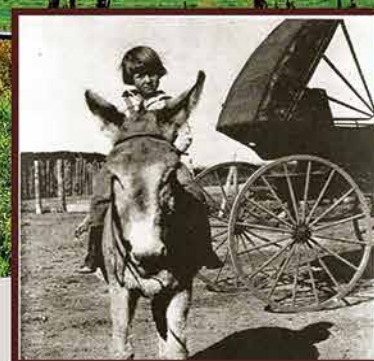
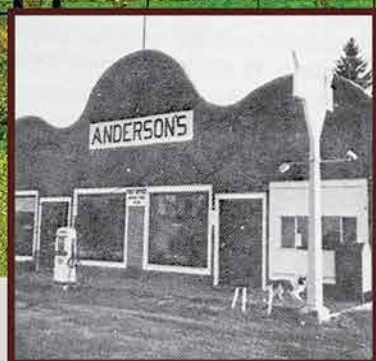
Eligibility for homebound meals (home-delivery): In-Home Assessment
Contact Administration Office for assessment or more information – 719-589-4511



LOCAL AREA AGENCY ON AGING
South-Central Colorado Seniors, Inc.
P.O. Box 239,
1116 3rd Street, Alamosa, CO 81101
719-589-4511



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CRHDC Brings Homeownership Pathways To The SLV

Our vision at Community Resources and Housing Development Corporation (CRHDC), reads, "A Colorado where every community is a place of opportunity with safe, affordable, and attainable housing for all." CRHDC developed phase 2 of Tierra Del Sol Estates in Monte Vista which is set to have just under 60 buildable lots. Xcel Energy is in the process of providing gas and electric to the site. A group of eight families are set to begin construction in Tierra Del Sol later this Fall.

Our mission is to "provide pathways to home and asset building opportunities to benefit low-moderate income communities throughout Colorado." USDA Rural Development is the lender for the 502 Direct Home loan programs. Applicants must qualify for the mutual self-help program and eligibility results in 100% financing with no down payment.

Participants work 30 hours per week with a team of 5 to 6 families; this is termed as "Sweat Equity." Families attend pre-construction meetings, select their house plans, lot, cabinets, flooring, paint colors, along with other individual choices. Families commit to build 65% of their home while learning invaluable lessons of homeownership, construction, and maintenance. Once the homes are complete, everyone gets their keys, and the homeownership journey truly begins.

CRHDC is a HUD (US Department of Housing and Urban Development) approved Housing Counseling Agency, offering free housing counseling and educational services to our communities. Our experienced, bi-lingual staff will provide guidance and solutions to help you understand your housing options. Even in these uncertain times, CRHDC was able to help 276 families prepare for and access home ownership via homebuyer and financial education, and mortgage lending assistance.

"Your Path to Homeownership" starts with you! Our services are detailed on our website, www.CRHDC.org, and registering for them just got easier. Simply visit our website and find the 'Get Started' button located at the top of the page. Fill out a quick application, and you will be in our system instantly, all on your favorite device! CRHDC is located at 1016 West Avenue Unit 5, Alamosa, CO. Call us at (719)589-1680

Services Include:

Mutual Self-Help Program
Housing Counseling
Rental Assistance
Mortgage Lending
Apartment & Storage Rentals




"At first I was a little nervous and scared of what I was getting myself into, but I knew this was going to change my life and my daughter's life. I got to build not only my house and my neighbor's houses but I built great relationships with people I will cherish for the rest of my life."

- Brenda Perez, Homeowner,
Mutual Self Help Client



Community Resources
& Housing Development
CORPORATION

 www.CRHDC.org

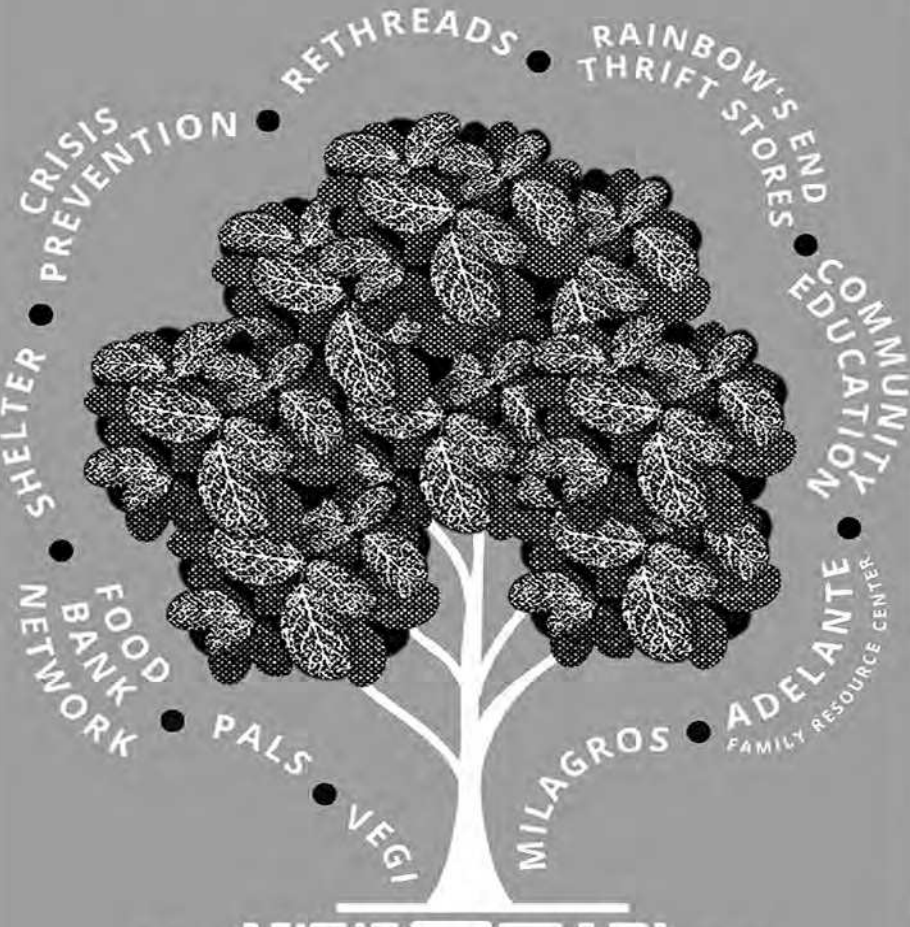
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A SINGLE ACT OF KINDNESS THROWS OUT ROOTS IN ALL DIRECTIONS, AND THE ROOTS SPRING UP AND MAKE NEW TREES. —AMELIA EARHART



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- DONATE MATERIAL GOODS



LEARN MORE:
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WWW.LAPUENTEHOME.ORG
@LAPUENTEHOME





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Summer of 2023

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OR CALL 719-657-3266

Visit our website for other specialty services

If you do not have health insurance, you may qualify for financial assistance.
We have a program to assist uninsured, low-income patients with payment of medical bills.