

San Luis Valley Graduation 2021
 Inside this week's Local Newspaper

Center Sanitation District receives \$3.2M

Colorado USDA Rural Development invests in rural water infrastructure in San Luis Valley

STAFF REPORT

DENVER — On Earth Day 2021, Colorado Acting State Director Irene Etsitty announced the United States Department of Agriculture

Rural Development is investing \$3.2 million in the Center Sanitation District.

The money will go to critical infrastructure that will help Colorado communities build back better and stronger while prioritizing climate-smart solutions and environmental stewardship. USDA is making the investments in Colorado under the Water and Environmental Program

(WEP).

“Water is a critical resource for every community. The assistance provided today, can help mitigate health risks and increase access to safe, reliable drinking water and sanitary waste disposal services,” said Etsitty.

Center Sanitation District, in Center, was awarded an additional \$3,273,000 to complete a Mechanical

Wastewater Treatment Plant. The District has an existing lagoons system that is currently out of compliance and this subsequent funding package will contribute toward the completion of a new Mechanical Wastewater Treatment Plant which will better serve the community and surrounding areas.

Having proper wastewater treatment

Please see USDA on Page 2A

Shorts

Mountain Shoot Out open for entries

CREEDE — The Mountain Shoot Out call for entries is now open. The deadline for entry is June 11. Opening day at the Creede Visitors Center will be June 25.

“If conditions are right, we will have our traditional opening day reception at 5 p.m. that day,” officials stated.

The judge is Susan Urrutia. She will select first through third place awards and honorable mentions, and she will give feedback on the photos and the selection process.

Visitors can vote for their favorite photo, and the winner will receive the People’s Choice Award. The Arts Council may purchase the People’s Choice photo for permanent display at the Visitors Center.

This year there is a new program emphasizing winter photographs. This is part of the Chamber of Commerce’s promotion of winter tourism. There will be an award for Best Winter Photograph, and they will select up to 10 wintry photos for display on banners the Chamber plans to install on Main Street. The banners will include the artists’ names.

For more information and to download the call for entries, visit the Creede Arts Council website <https://creedeartscouncil.com/mountain-shootout-photography-exhibit>.

Trinidad State will not increase tuition

STAFF REPORT

TRINIDAD — Trinidad State Junior College will not raise tuition rates for the 2021-2022 academic year after a decision made April 14 by the Colorado Community College System.

“The pandemic has hit our students particularly hard,” said Joe Garcia, chancellor of the Colorado Community College System. “Our State Board,

Please see TSJC on Page 2A



Sargent royalty

Sargent High School's Prom King was Brennan Gearhart, and the Queen was Alycia Urbina.

Photo by Cranson Photography

Single-vehicle, serious-injury crash north of Saguache

STAFF REPORT

SAGUACHE COUNTY — The driver of pickup was airlifted to Memorial Hospital in Colorado Springs with serious injuries following a crash Sunday morning, April 25, reported Colorado State Patrol.

A black Dodge pickup pulling a small utility trailer was Northbound on Colorado Highway 285 approximately 4 miles north of Saguache. The black Dodge ran off the left side of the roadway and collided with a rock embankment.

The pickup then began to skid and rotate clockwise back onto and across the roadway. The pick-up then skidded off the right side of the roadway and rolled 1.5 times down an embankment.

As the vehicle rolled, the unrestrained driver was ejected from the vehicle onto a barb wire fence. The pickup rolled across the fence and came to rest on its top facing west.

The driver was transported via helicopter from the scene to Memorial Hospital in Colorado Springs with serious injuries.

Rio Grande National Forest finishes thinning project at Bear Creek



BY LYNDIE FERRELL

RIO GRANDE NATIONAL FOREST — The maintenance of Colorado open lands takes dedicated work and time. Various organizations partner to create trails, complete mitigation projects and oversee the management of the forest in order to offer the best opportunities available. From fire mitigation to wildlife habitat

Rio Grande National Forest Wildlife Biologist Dale Gomez explains the process of tree thinning projects in the Rio Grande National Forest and how it plays a role in improving large game habitats throughout the area.

Photo by Lyndie Ferrell

improvement, everything that is done is done for a specific reason.

A current project nearing completion is at Bear Creek outside of South Fork. Behind the scenes, there are several projects underway to make the forest a versatile and enjoyable place for both wildlife and visitors. Many aspects come into play when managing a massive expanse of land like the Rio Grande National Forest. The Rio Grande National Forest is comprised of nearly 2 million acres. Bear Creek is a small portion compared to the larger forest but the work that is being completed on this portion of land can impact the bigger picture.

When one ventures into the Rio

Please see PROJECT on Page 4A

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Sunflower Bank gives another \$10,000



Photo courtesy of Sunflower Bank

Sunflower Bank of Monte Vista generously contributed another \$10,000 to the Ski-Hi project in Monte Vista for a total contribution of \$20,000. 'This is such a great community project, and our institution sees the benefit it will bring to the whole San Luis Valley,' said Senior Branch Manager Maria Aguilar. Friends of Ski Hi are still accepting donations and reminds all that this is

an Enterprise Zone Tax Credit project to qualified Colorado taxpayers (25% of the total donation over \$100). Donations may be sent to Friends of Ski Hi, P.O. Box 262, Monte Vista, CO 81144. Pictured are Sunflower Bank staff Savannah Romero, D'Anna Martin, Shavannah Duran, Maria Aguilar, Miguel Gomez, and Friends of Ski Hi Karla Shriver.

SLV REC Scholarship winners announced

SAN LUIS VALLEY — For the past several years, the San Luis Valley REC has made secondary education a priority when giving back to the Valley. With more than \$180,000 given in the past five years, the REC annually awards several scholarships to local students.

The board of directors announced the 2021 scholarship recipients:

- SLV REC Adams State University Four-Year Scholarship: Desiray Tolsma, Alamosa
- Electric Lineworker Scholarship: Abel Ojeda Jr., Sierra Grande
- Robert Wolfe Scholarship: Gabriel Heersink, Alamosa

• SLV REC Past Director Scholarship: Aidan McComas, Del Norte HS

• SLV REC Past Retired GM Ray Villyard & CEO John Villyard Scholarship: Alyssa Bagwell, Centauri

• Basin Electric Power Cooperative Scholarship: Lindsey Gammill, Creede

• SLV REC Scholarships: Eric Lorenz, Del Norte; Sara Nehring, Monte Vista; Chloe McComas, Del Norte; Caleb Riggerbach, Monte Vista

• Tri-State G&T Scholarships: Logan Cestone, Del Norte; Soren Bailey, Del Norte

• REC Dependent Scholarship: Ryker Alonzo, Alamosa



Courtesy photo

Alamosa High School senior Desiray Tolsma was awarded the 2021 SLV REC Adams State University Four-Year Scholarship.

SAGUACHE COUNTY SHERIFF'S REPORT

SAGUACHE COUNTY — The following information was provided by the Saguache County Sheriff's Office for the period between April 12 and 19, 2021.

The Sheriff's Department's activity on the road included one traffic complaint, eight traffic stops, and five motorist assists.

In addition, staff recorded one

case of fraud, one assault, one case of protection order violation, five cases of theft, two cases of harassment, two animal problems, two vin inspections, two welfare checks, two citizen assists, one alarm, one agency assist, two civil standby, and four cases of suspicious activity. They also monitored 14 controlled burns.

Arrests

• Domanic Michael Gallegos, 19, Monte Vista, warrant

• Gilberto Ramos, 35, Center, fugitive of justice.

• Christopher Bell, 36, Saguache, fugitive of justice.

• Brandon Ray Stewart, 22, Saguache, fugitive of justice.

USDA

Continued from Page 1A

and disposal systems is important for a community's economic vitality and public health. Previously, in 2020, Rural Development provided \$8.5 million in loan and grant funding for the project.

"Once complete the project will ensure the residents of Center have clean waste disposal services for years to come," said Etsitty.

The USDA Rural Development WEP program provides funding for clean and reliable drinking water systems, sanitary sewage and solid waste disposal, and storm water drainage to households and businesses in eligible rural areas.

Nationwide, USDA is investing \$487 million in critical infrastructure that will help communities in 45 states under the Water and Environmental

Programs, the Rural Energy for America Program, the Electric Loan Program, and the Higher Blends Infrastructure Incentive Program.

Under the Biden-Harris Administration, Rural Development provides loans and grants to help expand economic opportunities, create jobs and improve the quality of life for millions of Americans in rural areas.

This assistance supports infrastructure improvements; business development; housing; community facilities such as schools, public safety and health care; and high-speed internet access in rural, Tribal and high-poverty areas. For more information, visit www.rd.usda.gov/co.

USDA touches the lives of all

Americans each day in so many positive ways. In the Biden-Harris Administration, USDA is transforming America's food system with a greater focus on more resilient local and regional food production, fairer markets for all producers, ensuring access to safe, healthy and nutritious food in all communities, building new markets and streams of income for farmers and producers using climate smart food and forestry practices, making historic investments in infrastructure and clean energy capabilities in rural America, and committing to equity across the Department by removing systemic barriers and building a workforce more representative of America. To learn more, visit www.usda.gov.

OBITUARY

Connie J. Hill

Long-time Del Norte resident, Connie J. Hill, 83, passed from this earth peacefully, but unexpectedly, of natural causes on April 16, 2021, surrounded by her family. She was born in Del Norte on July 1, 1937, her daddy's "little firecracker."

Connie grew up in the Monte Vista area. Her great-grandfather, Senator A. E. Headlee, was one of the founders of the Ski Hi Stampede. She loved working in her yard and had beautiful flowers and plants.

Connie was preceded in death by her husband Bill Hill, her parents, George and Betty (Headlee) Phillips, and one brother Paul Phillips.

She is survived by her two sons, Carl (Cindy) Hill of Del Norte and Jon (Julie) Hill of Peyton. She is also survived by her grandchildren Thad (Stephanie) Hill, Taylor (fiancé, Madison) Hill, Miranda (fiancé Trey) Hill, and Bailey Hill; great-grandchildren Lorelei, Brooke, Julie, and George. Also surviving is her brother Gary (Karen) Phillips of Virginia and sister in law Diane Phillips of Monte Vista, close friends, Katherine and Murry Polk and Monica and Irene Falk plus numerous cousins, nieces



and nephews.

Cremation was selected. A memorial service will be held on Saturday, May 1 at 3 p.m. at the Rogers Family Mortuary in Monte Vista. In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to the Rio Grande Hospital in care of Rogers Family Mortuary.

To leave online remembrances, words of comfort and condolences for Connie's family, please visit www.RogersFunerals.com.

TSJC

Continued from Page 1A

recognizing that we cannot ask our students and their families to shoulder a greater share of the burden during these difficult times, made the wise but difficult decision to freeze tuition for the upcoming academic year. Our colleges are the most affordable, accessible options to obtain a high-quality education and workforce training — and we intend to keep it that way."

All 13 colleges in Colorado that are governed by the State Board for Community Colleges and Occupational Education will keep the same tuition rates that are currently in effect.

"We're doing our best to balance the needs of Trinidad State with the needs of the community," said Trinidad State President Dr. Rhonda M. Epper. "Our budget will be tight, but this is the right thing to do."

Chancellor Garcia noted that CCCS was able to hold tuition flat thanks to Colorado's Governor and Joint Budget Committee providing increased state funding to higher education this year and for prioritizing resources to students who were most negatively affected by the pandemic, including first-generation and minority students. "While our needs remain substantial and fall enrollments are far from certain, we are grateful for the state's demonstrated commitment to higher education

quality, access, and affordability," said Garcia.

As the state's largest provider of undergraduate education and workforce training, CCCS has worked aggressively to contain costs while maintaining its academic excellence. The system's priorities of affordability, access, and graduating more students are critical factors when setting tuition rates.

CCCS's average annual tuition this year for a full-time student, taking 30 credits, is \$4,470. Many paid less because of financial aid or scholarships. Of students who apply for financial aid, 63 percent pay no tuition costs, allowing them to graduate debt-free.

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OPINION & EDITORIAL

Being prepared

The US armed forces have slogans or sayings about their mission such as Semper Fidelis or "Always Faithful" which has been made famous by our very own Marine Corps. Other branches have their own mottos such as the U.S. Coast Guard's Semper Paratus or "Always Ready." The U.S. Navy's unofficial motto is Semper Fortis or "Always Courageous" and these cannot ever be doubted as they all have long kept this nation safe from external threats.

But Ol' Dutch does know of one particularly Latinish phrase that they seemed to have missed and that is Omnia Paratus or "prepared in all things or ready for anything." Official groups may have missed it, but I can tell you that Miss Trixie certainly fits that one to a tee.

Way back in the infancy of our relationship — you know that place where Trixie could not stand to be without me — I soon learned that preparedness was the order of the day no matter what we were going to do together.

I should have known she would be like that after I found out she led an expedition to Mt. Everest in that faraway nation home also to Shangri-la. It seems that she found it necessary to organize said activity and spent 80 days trying to breathe near the top of said mountain while doing so.

So, while I do understand that organization obviously was paramount in importance of anything of that magnitude and difficulty, having a complete medical kit, food, water, rain clothes and Plan B for a date seemed like maybe just a bit too much to "Spur of the Moment Ol' Dutch." Some would define me as idiomatic but that sounds mighty close to idiot and Ol' Dutch resembles that remark.

One of our first real dates was going on a bear hunt and I have related that story here in these pages in the past. We did get a bear, unbelievably, but almost missed the entire hunt while she packed to go. We had everything needed to spend a month on the mountain. Not all bad, except we were always only about a quarter mile from the truck. Just a little bit of overkill for this mountain man.

Now I do have to admit that Ol' Dutch has gone out ill prepared more than once and my backpack has slowly been trimmed down to the bare minimum as my legs get older. And having cell service where I hunt does give me some feeling of safety or at least being able to call for help if needed.

But this is not Miss Trixie's modus operandi as if we had to ever call search and rescue, they could use



Trout Republic
by Kevin Kirkpatrick

her supplies to do full on surgery including heart replacement on site.

This has caused a few forks in the road in our normally peaceful routine and the one that comes to mind is one time standing in the forest in pouring rain, her with full rain gear on and Ol' Dutch getting soaked to the skin because mine was in the truck. The look in her eyes was one of sheer anger and disbelief as I stood in the rain laughing and giggling while she steamed. It was worth getting wet, let me tell you.

Ol' Dutch has gradually grown used to Trixie's preparing for the worst and I have learned to just get in the truck and patiently wait for her to show up to leave the house.

And nothing shows how well prepared we are like this past year as we faced the COVID-19 crisis. She has taken care of us well and it's a godsend although I really wish you would keep this kind of information to yourselves as she might get The Big Head.

Just last week was just such an opportunity to show how she is ready for anything when we went in for our Covid shot. Believe in the shot or not is not the story here, but rather Trixie's choice of outfit.

She wore a top with built-in holes, which effectively exposed the exact spot on her arm where to stick the vaccine. Yep, that's correct, Omnia Paratus Trixie. Always ready. She had planned what to wear to get the shot while Ol' Dutch had tried to just remember to wear clean clothes and get himself and his coffee into the truck to go to town.

I guess maybe that makes us a good fit as she takes care of me and Ol' Dutch doesn't really have to do much in that regard. Which is tantum quæ ego volui, or "just what I wanted."

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.

Parents decide reading or math — why not both?

The Colorado Measurement of Academic Success, known as the CMAS test, is a federally mandated end-of-year assessment. Under the 1994 Every Student Succeeds Act, every state must test students in grades 3-8 yearly and once in high school. Tests are administered in math and English/language arts (reading). Students must also be tested periodically in science. If you could decide, what test(s) would you select for your child this Spring?

CMAS tests how students compare nationally and lets parents and teachers choose what additional help a student might need. The assessment brought the READ Act (Reading to Ensure Academic Development) to Colorado's forefront in 2012 and again in 2019 (SB19-199). Only 40% of our fourth-grade students are reading at grade level. Since the legislature determined that reading was the number one priority for student success, they passed this law unanimously. The state board of education unanimously agreed.

With the pandemic disrupting the school year, the federal government canceled the federal testing requirement for 2020. As the pandemic continued, many began to question the loss of learning that was occurring. CMAS tests could help answer that question, and many

were wondering about the possibility of testing again being canceled this Spring. The Colorado Department of Education told districts to prepare for testing, although there was talk of another possible cancellation.

Due to the ongoing pandemic's unique circumstances, Colorado state legislators, through House Bill 21-1161, asked the federal government for a waiver. The waiver, including taking only half of the tests, was granted. Students in third, fifth, and seventh grades would only take the English language arts test (reading), and students in fourth, sixth, and eighth grades would only take the math test.

Reading is critical to success. The legislature agreed when they passed the READ Act emphasizing the importance of learning to read in grades K-3. Why then is math the test given in fourth grade? Wouldn't fourth-grade reading be the critical area to assess for learning loss due to the pandemic?

One key element of House Bill 21-1161 is that parents can "opt-in" to have their child take the English language arts (reading test) instead of the math test. Some parents may want their child to take both the math and English language arts assessments to get a complete picture of the pandemic's effect on their child's learning. This bill allows for that.



Across the Street
By Joyce Rankin
State Board of Education

Check with your district to make changes.

This summer, school activity will include opportunities for students to take additional coursework to "catch up." Parents can make better choices when they are informed.

Parents, you have assessment choices to make this Spring. Talk to your child and make knowledgeable choices together. Discuss your decision with your child's teacher. Together you can make a difference, not only now but for your child's future.

Joyce Rankin is on the State Board of Education, representing the Third Congressional District.

YOUR NIGHT SKY

Moon and Mars

By DARLENE DANKO

On April 26 we had the first Super Moon of this year. The next and last one of this year will be the May Full Moon. If you don't know, a Super Moon is when it's closest to Earth making the Full Moon very large.

A lunar perigee is when the moon is closest to Earth. The May Full Moon will occur 9 hours after it reaches its perigee to Earth. When the Full Moon and perigee are less than 24 hours apart, it's called a Super Moon.

What's interesting about this is that it always raises the Ocean tides. The Full Moon always does this, but when it's also a Super Moon it raises them even more. So when you go to the ocean, be aware of this.

By April 29 the moon starts to rise later each night giving us more sky watching time. Now in late April and

early May, we'll be able to see the daytime moon. Just look in the west to see the morning moon.

Planet Mercury shines at its brightest early in May, and then dims down. But since it's going to move farther from the Sun, it will actually get brighter. It will reach its greatest elongation from the Sun on May 17 when it becomes as bright as a 1st magnitude star.

When you look in the west after Sunset, you will see that Venus is beginning to rise to become evening viewing. Mercury is currently a little higher than Venus and slightly to the left.

In early May Mercury sets 1 hour and 15 minutes after Sunset. Mid May it sets 1 hour and 55 minutes after sunset. Late May it sets 1 hour and 5 minutes after sunset. The last week of May Venus will begin to climb away from the Sun's glare, and on May 28 it will catch up with



Mercury. With them together you will most likely need binoculars to see fainter Mercury, since Venus is so bright. In early May it shines 40 times brighter than it will when it joins up with Venus.

Also, on May 3-4-5 the moon joins up with Jupiter and Saturn in the early morning. I still observe them every morning as soon as I get up. They're fun to look at. Also, now is the start of the Eta Aquarid Meteor shower. It runs from April 19 to May 28, and peaks on the morning of May 6. It appears just to the upper left of Jupiter. So when you look at Jupiter and Saturn, look for the meteors too.

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THE CENTER POST-DISPATCH (USPS 775-900) Published weekly (every Thursday) by Valley Publishing. (719) 852-3531 at 835 First Ave., Monte Vista, Colorado 81144-1423. Official newspaper of the Town of Center, and a legal newspaper in Saguache County.
Box 607, Monte Vista, Colo. 81144
Main office, Want ads and Subscriptions: (719) 852-3531
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POSTMASTER: Send change of address to P.O. Box 607, Monte Vista, Colo. 81144
Subscriptions: \$39 one year in San Luis Valley; \$49 elsewhere. Out of Valley First Class Mailing \$115.00 one year.
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News Media Corporation website: <http://www.newsmediacorporation.com>

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PROJECT

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Grande National Forest, the one thing that stands out is the dead trees which are due to the Spruce Bark Beetle but looking into the forest there are many other things to consider. Rio Grande National Forest Wildlife Biologist Dale Gomez is front lining projects to help maintain and improve natural habitats for local large game wildlife and he has a crew in tow to make headway in improving forage in critical winter habitat.

Gomez has completed over 2,000 acres of tree thinning in areas where openings will provide for improved forage conditions for wintering mule deer and elk with the hope that they will have a place to feed without encroaching on private land and deter the animals from coming close to highways where interactions can be dangerous for all involved.

"We have worked in partnership with the Southwest Conservation Corps with the generous funding from the San Luis Valley Habitat Partnership Program," Gomez stated. "We would not be able to do what we are doing without both entities. We have crews of eight chainsaw qualified individuals who come out and work with us to mitigate trees in specific areas to create and improve natural big game habitats. Our hope is to minimize big game impacts on private land and to keep these animals away from highways, like highway 160. We have been rather successful throughout the 20 years that I have been a part of this program and it's amazing how much we have been able to do to benefit our natural ecosystems."

The Southwest Conservation Corps works with young adults and youth

to place them on projects like the one at Bear Creek. In addition to the tree thinning work that is being done, these workers also train to be youth crew leaders for future projects that take place throughout the Valley and neighboring forests during summer. Crew Leader Kiersten King helps Gomez oversee the projects and helps organize the crew throughout the hitch which typically lasts 5-10 days.

During this time, SCC members do as much work as possible and on this job have a goal of completing approximately nine acres. The focus is to remove encroaching Pinyon and Juniper and to remove smaller trees from around the base of larger Ponderosa Pines.

Ponderosa Pines are fire adapted due to their thick bark and other fire-resistant features. Removing smaller encroaching trees further helps to protect these trees in the instance of a forest fire. These trees are left for this reason. In the years to come, the

debris or slash scatter, will deteriorate and become mulch for future plants that large game eat.

One species in particular, Mountain Mahogany, is a shrub that is highly sought out by mule deer to eat. It is dubbed the ice cream plant for these animals. Thinning projects such as this not only help mitigate lands for wildland fires but make room for plants like the Mountain Mahogany and Ponderosa Pines to grow.

Other projects like this happen throughout the forest during the summer months though it is often done with forest service crews. A grant through the San Luis Valley Habitat Partnership Program is helping pay for the crew on this project. The project will be completed by the end of this week.

The Southwest Conservation Corps is currently hiring. For more information, visit <http://www.sccorps.org/youth> or email King at kking@conservationlegacy.org.



The Bear Creek Crew with Southwest Conservation Corps have worked to thin trees in a section of Bear Creek near South Fork. The Crew works two five-day hitches to complete as much as they can in that time frame.



Photos by Lyndsie Ferrell

Above: A tree thinning project in the Bear Creek area just outside of South Fork is coming to an end. The work will help improve large game wildlife habitat for years to come. Plants like the Mountain Mahogany can grow and help feed large game animals such as mule deer.



Left: A lone Ponderosa Pine soaks up the sunshine on a hill just west of the main work area in Bear Creek. The downed Juniper and Spruce trees can help create an ecosystem that supports local large game wildlife and help decrease chances of wildland fires in the area.

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Baroz facing a fifth murder charge

Latest charge in connection to death of Arroyo

By PRISCILLA WAGGONER

ALAMOSA — The 12th Judicial District Attorney's Office announced Monday, April 26, that Adre "Psycho" Baroz is now facing murder charges in connection with the death of Korina Arroyo of Monte Vista.

Charges in Arroyo's death are framed as part of "the investigation involving human remains located in the San Luis Valley and missing persons cases in late 2020."

In the case of Arroyo, Baroz, 26, is charged with murder in the first degree, tampering with deceased human remains and assault in the first degree.

Arroyo is the fifth murder charge for Baroz. All five were reported missing over a span of roughly two months in 2020 with Arroyo on Aug. 28, followed by Selena Esquibel in early September. Xavier Zeven Garcia was reported missing on Oct. 16. Shayla Hammel was last seen in late October and was allegedly in the presence of Myron Robert Martinez the night he was allegedly murdered. Martinez was reported missing on Nov. 6, 2020.

On Nov. 17, 2020, law enforcement officials with five different agencies, including the Conejos County Sheriff's Office, the Alamosa Police Department, the Monte Vista Police Department and Colorado Bureau of Investigation uncovered the remains of three people on two different properties in Los Sauces. One of those properties was being rented by Francisco Ramirez.

Baroz, who was initially a suspect in the case and already had an arrest warrant for the murder of Esquibel, was apprehended in New Mexico and returned to Alamosa for failure to appear in court. He was then charged with murder of Esquibel.

When the human remains of two of the three people were identified as Martinez and Hammel, Baroz was charged with their murders, followed in early March by murder charges related to Garcia. The third victim found at Los Sauces has yet to be identified.

Baroz continues to be held in the Alamosa County jail without bond.

This investigation is still ongoing. Arroyo, who also went by the name Korina Marquez-Arroyo and Korina Arroyo-Marquez, was from Monte

Vista and was 31 years old at the time of her death. According to posts on her Facebook page, she had a son whom she called "Choco" and described as her "inspiration for living a wonderful life," adding "I thank God every day for another day and coming home to my house filled with my crazy sisters is amazing, I couldn't ask for a better family to share my life story with."

In a post made in April of 2020, Arroyo announced that she was moving from the San Luis Valley. "I guess it's time, gonna pack my stuff and go! I don't know how I feel right now if to be happy or be sad, nervous, excited. I have so much on my mind but one thing is for sure. Today is the start of my new life!!!"

When a friend asked her where she was moving, she said she was moving to Denver.

"It's time I move on. This valley will end up killing me," she posted. According to the Monte Vista Police Department, Arroyo was last seen in Monte Vista on Aug. 25, 2020. Her family reported her missing three days later.

Details of the case are not yet known at this time, but Arroyo's name previously appeared in one of the court documents relating to Ramirez who is currently facing charges related to helping Baroz dispose of the bodies of victims Baroz is accused of killing.

According to the court document, Ramirez allegedly told a friend that Baroz "shot those two girls on Facebook," referring to Esquibel, who was reported missing shortly after Arroyo. Ramirez allegedly said that Arroyo was killed "because she was a snitch and was on people's paperwork," which the investigator defined as someone identified through court discovery as assisting law enforcement with a criminal case.

In that same court document, the investigator states that it is believed by the Monte Vista Police Department that "Korina was murdered due to her statements in a drug case in which she was due to testify as a state's witness." The investigator went on to state that Arroyo was reported missing within a few weeks of when the trial was scheduled to begin.

Since court proceedings have begun, prosecutors associated with the case — including both the former DA, Robert Willett, and the current special prosecutor, Fred Johnson with the Boulder County DA's office — have



Courtesy photo

Korina Arroyo requested of the court that certain documents remain sealed.

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Straight Talk on the shots: How the vaccine works

BY PRISCILLA WAGGONER

SAN LUIS VALLEY — Understanding how the vaccine works within the human body starts with a basic understanding of the human body itself.

The human body is made up of cells. Within each cell is something called DNA.

DNA is like a built-in instruction manual on how the body works.

RNA is a transcript of DNA. That is to say, RNA is transcribed from DNA. RNA is then fed to other parts of the cell (called ribosomes) that “read” the transcript and create proteins FROM the transcript.

Once the transcript is read from the RNA and proteins are made, the RNA gets degraded and goes away. In other words, it’s gone. It’s history. It no longer exists.

So what are proteins? Proteins are, more or less, the guys on the ground working the front lines. Using the instructions that originated in the DNA and were transcribed into the RNA, proteins really get everything going in the body, such as developing, growing, surviving, reproducing. All those things that

living human bodies do.

The virus is like an imposter RNA that has come into your body. It will pretend to be your own RNA, but it’s not. It’s foreign. It’s an impersonator that’s loaded with the virus that causes infection. But the parts of the cell that “read” RNA (called ribosomes) to make proteins don’t recognize it as foreign, so it takes in these bad instructions, resulting in the creation of a bucketload of virus.

This is how you get sick from the COVID virus.

Some of the COVID-19 vaccines are mRNA vaccines. (The “m” stands for messenger.) mRNA is a special type of molecule that’s a natural part of the cells in our body and, like RNA, gives instructions on how to make different types of proteins.

Scientists have been using mRNA in the creation of vaccines for decades, but unlike traditional vaccines, mRNA vaccines don’t expose people to the real or living virus. Because of that, they can be made more easily and safely in a lab.

So how does the vaccine work?

The COVID-19 mRNA vaccine, containing a specially constructed

set of instructions is injected into a muscle, usually in the upper arm. Muscle cells then read those mRNA instructions, causing those instructions to be destroyed. As stated before, that mRNA which consists of those instructions is now gone. It no longer exists.

Some have expressed concerns that the mRNA vaccine can affect or even alter a person’s DNA, but there’s no risk of that happening. The mRNA never goes inside the nucleus of the cell where the DNA is stored.

Then, following the instructions it read in the mRNA, the muscle cells make a harmless piece of a protein called a “spike protein”. This is the kind of creepy, spikey looking protein that’s found on the outside of the virus that causes COVID-19.

The newly created, harmless spike protein then sits on the surface of muscle cells.

The immune system, sensing something foreign that it needs to destroy, begins to build antibodies to defend against anything that has the spike proteins, thus preparing your body to fight against the real virus, in case it shows up, before it can enter

the cells of your body and create the infection.

That immune system’s response is also why some people have reported feeling a little achy and fatigued after getting the second shot of the vaccine. According to Dr. Sonderegger, family medicine physician with Valley-Wide, those symptoms are not a sign that a person is getting sick. Instead, they are signs that both the vaccine and the immune system are doing their jobs.

Research has shown that the vaccine is not only very effective at preparing

your body to defend against the virus before you get sick, it also lasts longer than the immune response that occurs from being infected with the virus, itself, due to the longer lasting part of the immune system that’s activated by the vaccine.

Special thanks to Dr. Lauren Sonderegger with Valley-Wide Health. Dr. Sonderegger is a family medicine physician who provides full-scope family medicine including outpatient clinic and obstetrics.

ASU will host in-person graduation ceremonies

STAFF REPORT

ALAMOSA — Adams State University announced it received local public health approval to conduct in-person, outdoor commencement ceremonies on Saturday, May 8, in Rex Field Stadium.

The Spring 2021 Undergraduate Commencement Ceremony will begin at 10 a.m. and will award 198 bachelor’s and 121 associate degrees. The Honorable Carlos F. Lucero, Adams State Class of 1961, and Senior Judge of the United States Court of Appeals for the Tenth Circuit, will be the commencement speaker. He will also receive an honorary doctorate during the ceremony.

Lucero has always been an outstanding supporter of Adams State, having been recognized with the 1997 Outstanding Alumnus Award; the 2019 Billy Adams Award; and he and his wife, Dorothy Lucero, Adams State Class of 1961, received the 1999 Willis Fasset Jr. Award.

In all phases of his life, Lucero has placed great importance on education. The Luceros established and funded the Lucero Project through the Adams State Foundation in 1994. The program

provides students with work-study positions to mentor at-risk children in the San Luis Valley public schools.

In 1995, Lucero was appointed to the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Tenth Circuit, in Denver, by President Bill Clinton. He has taken senior status effective Feb. 1.

The graduate ceremony will begin at 2 p.m. and will hood 328 master’s candidates and seven doctorate degrees will be conferred.

Adams State will continue to recognize and emphasize its COVID-19 health and safety protocols for the outdoor ceremonies. Guests for each ceremony are limited to two per graduating candidate. Guests for each ceremony are limited to two per graduating candidate.

A live stream of each ceremony will be available for those who are unable or do not wish to attend in person at adams.edu/live.

In the event of major inclement weather or if COVID-19 restrictions change, the ceremonies will shift to a virtual format and can be viewed at adams.edu/live. All graduates will be notified by Tuesday, May 4, should this occur.

State to add congressional seat

STAFF REPORT

DENVER — Colorado will be getting an eighth congressional seat in 2022. While long suspected, the Census Bureau confirmed the additional seat when it released the nationwide apportionment count Monday, April 26.

Every 10 years, the apportionment count reallocates the 435 seats in the House of Representatives based on where the population has grown or shrunk. Colorado’s population growth over the past decade enabled it to just squeak in, nabbing the 432nd spot. In a show of how close the numbers were, it was a mere 89-person difference that cost New York a seat.

This eighth district will give Colorado slightly more say in the House, and an additional vote for president in the Electoral College. The last time Colorado gained a congressional seat was in the 2000 census.

Rep. Diana DeGette, the dean of the Colorado delegation, said it was great news for the state. “The more votes we have in the U.S. House of Representatives, the more we can do for Colorado,” she said in a tweet.

An Independent Redistricting Commission will be responsible for drawing up the new lines for

Colorado’s congressional districts, including deciding where this new 8th District will be formed. The panel is already in the early stages of its work, and commissioners have been concerned that the delay in final census data will make that effort more difficult, and possibly vulnerable to legal challenges.

Migration trends in the last decade mean this census is generally shifting House seats away from the Northeast and Midwest toward Western states.

“Since 1940, there has been a combined net shift of 84 seats to the South and West regions,” said Dr. Ron Jarmin, acting director of the U.S. Census Bureau. And this decade’s overall change was the smallest.

This census saw a total apportionment shift of seven seats among 13 states.

Colorado joined six other states to gain seats. Texas picked up two seats, while Florida, North Carolina, Montana and Oregon also gained one.

The seven states that each lost a seat were California, Illinois, Michigan, New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania and West Virginia.

In addition to the apportionment data, the Census Bureau released

population totals. As of April 1, 2020, the U.S. population was 331,449,281. The population grew by 7.4 percent this decade, slower than the 9.7 percent growth rate from 2000 to 2010.

Colorado’s population clocked in at 5,773,714, an increase of more than 725,000 from the 2010 apportionment population count of 5,044,930.

The Western part of the country grew up 9.2 percent, beaten by the South which saw a population spurt of 10.2 percent. The Northeast grew by 4.1 percent and the Midwest by 3.1 percent.

Demolish Your Doubts

In Acts 27 (AMP), there’s a great story about the apostle Paul. He was travelling by ship with some people when “a violent wind...[a northeaster, a tempestuous windstorm like a typhoon], came rushing down from the island” (v. 14). For days they were caught in the storm, and at one point it was so fierce, they were “violently tossed about by the storm” (v. 18) and had to throw the ship’s equipment overboard. They ended up without food, hungry, stranded — seemingly without hope.

In that moment, Paul stood in the midst of the survivors and said to them, “I urge you to keep up your courage and be in good spirits, because there will be no loss of life among you...” (v. 22). He said that an angel of God told him this, and said in verse 25, “So keep up your courage, men, for I believe God and have complete confidence in Him that it will turn out exactly as I have been told.”

How could Paul, in the middle of a horrible storm, ask the people to “be in good spirits” and have a good attitude? Because he believed in his heart—without a doubt—that it will turn out exactly as I have been told.”

I love that! It’s a great picture of the power of faith in God when all hope seems lost. And we can have the very same faith that Paul had if we will overcome doubt.

We all face storms in life, and some are more difficult than others. That’s why we have the gift of faith. Ephesians 6:16 (ESV) calls it “the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming darts of the evil one.” Doubt is a type of “flaming dart” that the enemy uses to attack our faith.

We usually experience doubt after we’ve made a decision. In James 1:6, the Bible says having doubt is like being tossed about like the wind, which feels like you’re trying to go in

two different directions at the same time. And it’s miserable to be torn between two places, not able to decide what you really believe.

It’s in those moments we have to choose whether we are going to believe God or the enemy... God or our feelings... God or what people tell us... God or our circumstances.

When doubt comes against us, we have to lift up the shield of faith. We do this when we open our mouth and say what God’s Word says, rather than grumbling and complaining about the problem. Our faith is released as we say, pray and do the Word. So in those times, open your mouth and say, “I believe that everything God has told me will come to pass!”

Maybe you’re doubting whether you can hear God’s voice or not. This happens because we usually doubt ourselves more than we doubt God. Now I’m not talking about actually hearing a voice; I’m talking about that knowing we have inside our hearts about what is right or wrong. That’s the still, small voice of God. Believers in Jesus Christ all have it, but many don’t have the confidence to trust it.

The Bible says in James 1:5 that when we need wisdom, we can go to God, “who gives generously to all without finding fault” (NIV). This means that even with our imperfections, God will be faithful to us and give us what we need if we will ask Him for help. He loves us, blesses us and uses us in spite of us, because He is faithful! And we never have to doubt that.

I’ve learned through my own relationship with God that He’s not expecting me to be perfect; He wants me to do my best to be in His will and take steps of faith as He leads me, through His Word and the promptings He speaks to my heart. Remember, He wants us to put our confidence in Him. God really does want to speak to

Moving Up Higher

with
Joyce Meyer



you personally and lead you in His great plan for your life. So don’t be afraid to step out and do what’s in your heart. If you make a mistake, you’ll learn from it and go on. That’s how we “step out and find out.” And we all have to do it.

I want to encourage you to make confessions every day that will help you grow in your faith and confidence in God. We need to make declarations like, “God loves me. He wants to speak to my heart. I can hear from God. He is faithful to me and will lead me in His will for my life. And I believe it will be exactly as God has told me!”

By God’s grace, we can be bold in faith and overcome every attack of doubt during the storms of life.

For more on this topic, order Joyce’s five-teaching CD series **Bold, Confident & Courageous**. 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 130 books, including *BATTLEFIELD OF THE MIND* and her newest devotional *QUIET TIMES WITH GOD (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.

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URGSD students start school newspaper

By LYNSIE FERRELL
DEL NORTE — Two students with the Upper Rio Grande School District decided a few months ago that what their school needed was a school newspaper. Reyna Flores and Celestina Martinez went to their teachers with their idea and have since created a newspaper-magazine for the entire school to enjoy.

The two sixth-graders have gone above and beyond to learn the ins and outs of the making a newspaper, learning along the way how to design, gather stories and content and have even landed themselves in the advertising realms of the print world.

“They came to their teachers and asked if they could start a newspaper all on their own. We were so proud to see their desire to create something in their spare time for their own reasons.

It just goes to show how great these students are and how much they want to learn,” said Upper Rio Grande School District Elementary Principal Amy Duda. “We are very proud of what they have created and hope they will continue on.”

In an effort to keep the two students motivated. The school district invited the Del Norte Prospector to the school to talk to the students about the fundamentals of writing for and creating a newspaper. Flores and Martinez both were very excited to learn from a reporter that has chosen to make their career out of what the two has started at their school.

When asked what prompted them to start the newspaper Flores stated, “I really enjoy writing stories. I think there is a story for just about anything and there is something

about writing it down, making it last.”

Martinez, who has taken the more editorial approach for the paper stated, “Reyna came to me one day and asked what I thought about helping her start a newspaper. I thought it would be so fun, so we stated looking at how we could design it.”

Both students have used their free time, as much as there is in their busy schedules, to learn from several different teachers how to design the project, how to interview students, teachers and staff as well as how to come up with a final product.

The newspaper so far is a monthly edition that has different themes, with the last one being Valentines and friendship.

“We were going through the COVID stuff here at the school and I just thought we should do something



Photo by Lyndsie Ferrell
Celestina Martinez and Reyna Flores have gone above and beyond for the Upper Rio Grande School District and in their spare time created a newspaper for fellow students, teachers and staff to enjoy.

to keep students informed and to add something fun,” said Flores.

Other content includes advertisements for events, sports and announcements from teachers and staff. Flores and Martinez hope to continue their project into next year when they are seventh-graders.

South Fork Logger Days confirmed for July 2021

By LYNSIE FERRELL
SOUTH FORK — South Fork’s Loggers Days event is being planned for July. Exact dates are still being worked out by the committee.

South Fork has a rich history surrounding the logging industry and for over 20 years the town has embraced its historical heritage through the annual event. Last year, due to COVID-19 safety precautions, the event was canceled but hopes are high that year’s event can move forward with some additional precautions in place.

South Fork was incorporated in 1992 yet was established as a stage stop along the rigorous trail leading north to Creede

in 1870. It began as a place for travelers to rest along their journey, catch a bite to eat and continue on their way.

After the railroad came to South Fork in 1882, a new type of industry bloomed out of the forests surrounding the one stop town. Lumber from the area became a staple for the community of settlers that had gathered there. In what seemed to some as an overnight industry, the timber and sawmills took over much of the area.

The mills produced lumber for railways and mining communities nationwide. Due to the timber industry and Creede’s silver boom, the area became a destination place for rich persons seeking a Colorado experience.

People came from all around to hunt, fish and stay in the wilderness.

South Fork has come a long way through the past and into the present. The lumber boom is over, and it has left a mountain destination with a wide variety of outdoor recreational opportunities in its place. In the years since the lumber boom, South Fork has come to enjoy the rich history in the area and celebrate in unique and original ways.

To celebrate South Fork’s history that surrounds the town, a festival was created several years ago to pay homage to the lumber trade that created the community that resides there today. The Logger’s Day festival is full of entertainment based

on the logging trade and the men and woman that worked the trade in the past.

The festival kicks off in mid-July with a craft fair that will run throughout the weekend. Vendors from all over come to sell their wares, food and arts to the public. Many booths will feature handmade jewelry, sculptures, and paintings, a unique touch to the typical shopping experience.

On Saturday the fun starts with axe throwing, the plunge cut, timed wood chopping, and many more. The competitors are competing for over \$1,000 in cash prizes. After the logging competitions, there will be fun activities for the while family such as horseshoe

games and more.

Sunday is dubbed to be the most exciting day of the festival featuring several more logging events. An overall award for the Saturday and Sunday events will be given to an amateur winner. Sunday will feature, speed cutting, two man crosscut, and a choker race.

Children activities will be available for the younger crowd such as creating crafts, a saw dust pile full of hidden treasures and more. More details about the event will be announced as the date draws closer but for now, knowing that the event will be taking place is enough for the small mountain town.



Courtesy photo

Vendors from different locations come to the annual Logger Days Festival.

Town of Saguache Public Notice for Sale of Real Property

Notice is hereby given that the Town of Saguache Board of Trustees will receive sealed bids to purchase the following surplus Town-owned real property:

Address/Location: Town of Saguache, 305 9th Street, Saguache Colorado, 81149
 Lot/Block: 1 and 2 in Block 30 (Also known as 305 9th Street)
 Size: each lot is 50' by 130.38'
 Minimum Bid: \$35,000
 Deposit: 10% of bid amount

The property will be sold on an “as-is” basis, without any warranties of any kind and has a minimum bid reserve. All bids must be received by 12:00 PM, May 7, 2021 to be considered. For information and full bid packet please contact Iris Garcia, Town Administrator at 719-655-2232 or by email at townclerk@townofsaguache.org.

No. 1592 published in the Center Post Dispatch, Thursday, April 22 and 29 and May 6, 2021.

The Saguache County Board of Commissioners are accepting sealed bids for the following County Owned items. The sealed bid will be accepted by the Commissioners, at their discretion until Monday, June 28, 2021 by 3PM.

If you would like to submit a sealed bid offer for any available items, a bid packet and a list of items up for bid is available on the Saguache County website at www.saguachecounty.colorado.gov or you can call the Administration office at 719-655-2231 or by email request to administration@saguachecounty-co.gov.

Bids must be submitted on a County bid form and must be in a sealed envelope with the item listed on the outside of the envelope. ONE ITEM PER BID SHEET please.

Funds must accompany bids. NO CASH WILL BE ACCEPTED. If bid is not accepted bid and funds will be returned.

To view items for bid please contact the Saguache County Road and Bridge office at 719-655-2534.

2021 AUCTION ITEMS

1. Black & Decker Radial Arm Saw – Minimum bid amount - \$50 – works great
2. Husqvarna Weedwhacker – Minimum bid amount \$20 - Does not stay running
3. Truck Tool Box – Minimum bid \$50 - Fits standard width box
4. Truck Tool Box – Minimum bid amount - \$50 – fits standard width box
5. 2000 Ford Escort – Minimum bid amount \$250 - VIN - 3FAKP1139YR211153 - Color - Gold - Mileage - 176,702 Condition - not good needs a lot of work
6. 2009 - Black Ford Crown Victoria - Minimum bid amount \$200
7. 1998 - 4-Wheeler Trailer - Minimum bid amount \$500
8. #203 - 1979 Ford F600 Truck – bad motor - Minimum bid amount \$3000
9. #208 - 1989 IHC S1700 Truck SA (single axel) Plow – bad motor - Minimum bid amount \$2500
10. #209 - 1989 IHC S1700 Truck SA (single axel) Plow – bad motor, clutch and transmission - Minimum bid amount \$2500
11. #306 - 1980 Chevrolet Bruin TA Truck (no bed) – bad engine - Minimum bid amount \$1000
12. 1998 – Mercury will not start (title) - Minimum bid amount \$250
13. 1975 International Scout will not start (no title/has VIN Inspection) – Minimum bid amount \$2000
14. 1972 International PV (no title/has VIN Inspection) - Minimum bid amount \$1000
15. 1977 VOG Motorhome – (no title/has VIN Inspection) - Minimum bid amount \$500

No. 1593 published in the Center Post Dispatch, Thursday, April 29, 2021.

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Great Sand Dunes announces dates for Youth Archeology Expedition

STAFF REPORT

Great Sand Dunes National Park and Preserve will host two summer Youth Archeology Expeditions (YAE) for San Luis Valley middle school and high school students.

YAE is a 6-day program that introduces participants to the discipline of prehistoric and historic archeology through place-based learning.

Participants will gain an understanding of the various applications of archaeology and the need to protect and preserve archaeological sites through hands-on activities and fieldwork alongside archeologists, park resource management specialists, and other public land managers throughout the San Luis Valley.

The goal of the program is to create the next generation of stewards by exposing them to the discipline of archeology (including excavating, and collections management) and the value in telling the story of local,

state, and nationally significant sites.

The program is free and includes transportation, and supplies. Students who are completing, sixth, seventh, and eighth grade are eligible to apply for the middle school expedition which will take place Monday, June 21-Saturday, June 26.

Students completing ninth, 10th, and 11th grade are eligible to apply for the high school expedition which will take place Monday, July 12-Saturday, July 17. Eligible students from all 14 districts in the San Luis Valley can apply.

The park will select 8-12 participants for each expedition and implement COVID-19 safety guidelines throughout the program. For more information about this opportunity and to obtain an application, contact Evan Portier via email at Evan_Portier@nps.gov or by calling 719-378-6349. Applications are due by Monday, May 3.

Sen. Bennet announces over \$6M for Colorado Open Lands Rio Grande Project

STAFF REPORT

Colorado U.S. Senator Michael Bennet announced Tuesday, April 27, that the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)'s Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP) will award over \$6 million to the Colorado Open Lands Rio Grande Partnership to Preserve Agriculture and Restore Aquifer (PARA).

"The Upper Rio Grande Basin is vital to our regional economy and provides important wildlife habitat," said Bennet. "I'm delighted that the Colorado Open Lands Rio Grande Project will receive over \$6 million in funding from the Regional Conservation Partnership Program. This will unlock an innovative and locally-developed new approach to groundwater management in an effort to sustain the local agricultural economy and maintain wildlife habitat. Last summer I was able to visit with producers in the San Luis Valley pursuing this project and I look forward to continuing to support their work."

Project partners include Colorado Water Conservation Board, Rio Grande Headwaters Land Trust, Rio Grande Water Conservation District, San Luis Valley Water Conservancy District, and Conejos Water Conservancy.

"As a long-time resident of the San Luis Valley, I have seen this community come together time and time again to address water challenges and this RCPP award is a testament to that longstanding collaborative culture," said Judy Lopez, Colorado Open Lands Conservation Project Manager.

In total, \$330 million from the RCPP was awarded to 85 locally driven, public-private partnerships across the country. These projects will support producers and also

address climate change, improve the nation's water quality, combat drought, enhance soil health, support wildlife habitat and protect agricultural viability.

"Colorado Open Lands is excited to move toward implementing this idea which we've been developing with irrigators and water managers over the last two years to couple permanent water savings with flexibility. We hope that this not only leads to long-term viability for agricultural producers and the wildlife that benefit from their water use, but also serves as a new tool for other aquifers," said Tony Caligiuri, Colorado Open Lands President and CEO.

Bennet learned about this project during a visit with farmers in Rio Grande County in August 2020. In November, Bennet wrote a letter of support for the proposal. As a member of the Senate Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry Committee and then-Ranking Member of the Subcommittee on Conservation, Climate, Forestry, and Natural Resources, Bennet helped to craft the RCPP in the 2014 Farm Bill and secured increased funding for the program in the 2018 Farm Bill.

This innovative project will reward reduced groundwater pumping through a conservation easement concept while maintaining the community's agricultural economy and protecting wildlife habitat. PARA will use RCPP funds to purchase conservation easements in the San Luis Valley that will focus on groundwater pumping restrictions to keep 8,000 acre-feet of water in the aquifers. Additionally, it will enable a cost-share program to allow irrigators to install surface capture irrigation systems to remain viable as they reduce or discontinue groundwater pumping.



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Home Lake being drained, improvements planned

STAFF REPORT
MONTE VISTA — Colorado Parks and Wildlife is draining Home Lake and making plans to improve the local fishery.

“We know this will be a disappointment for some local folks, but this will help us better utilize our water right and improve the fishery,” said Tony Aloia, a water technician for CPW in the San Luis Valley.

The lake is a popular fishing spot, but a lack of water caused a fish die-off in early April. Water was too low in early winter to utilize a floating solar-powered machine that normally can keep sections of the lake free of

ice. This winter the lake froze over completely, was covered with snow and all the fish died.

No water will be diverted into the lake this spring and the ground will be allowed to dry — a process that will take all summer. After it dries, CPW will use heavy equipment to remove the fine silt sediment that has accumulated over the years which will help to make the lake deeper. Work to remove the silt will begin after it is dry, probably in October.

CPW staff will also test the sediment to determine if it could be used as a soil supplement for compost

See HOME LAKE on Page 2



Photo by Brian Williams

Colorado Parks and Wildlife staff have removed aerators from Home Lake in preparation of draining the small reservoir.

Rio Grande Hospital again named top 100 critical access hospital in U.S.

STAFF REPORT
DEL NORTE — Once again, Rio Grande Hospital was recognized nationally as one of the top 100 hospitals in the United States by the Chartis Center for Rural Health. CCRH recently released its annual list of the top 100 critical access hospitals in the U.S.

To determine the 2021 list, the Chartis Center used the Hospital Strength Index, which assesses performance in eight areas: inpatient market share, outpatient market share, quality, outcomes, patient perspective, cost, charge, and financial efficiency.

Out of the top 100 critical access hospitals in the U.S., Colorado had two. Rio Grande Hospital in Del Norte and



East Morgan County Hospital in Brush. This is the second time Rio Grande Hospital has received this honor.

“This award is more special this

year due to the global pandemic and the challenges faced in healthcare within the past year,” RGH officials stated.



Photo by Stephen Jiron

At the opening of the new diversion dam were plenty who helped the project become a reality, from left, Natural Resources Conservation Service Engineer Rod Clark, New Cenicerito Ditch Company President Elliot Salazar, Rio Grande Basin Roundtable Chair Nathan Coombs, Adam Robins of Robins Construction and from the Colorado Division of Water Resources, District 33 Water Commissioner Aaron Holman and CDWR Staff Engineer Pat McDermott.

New diversion dam in Antonito complete

Project cost \$1.66 million and includes intuitive design

Cenicerito Ditch Company (NCDC) celebrated the newly completed renovation of its diversion dam on April 16.

BY STEPHEN JIRON

ANTONITO — The New Ce-

As the Rio San Antonio, a tribu-
Please see DAM on Page 2

Prejudice

I grew up in a county that was 65% Spanish-speaking. The biggest distinction between races was not color, it was Catholics and Baptists. My first experience with prejudice was the summer I spent on a job in Kansas City...1978... the year after the city burned itself down.

Years ago in Kansas City, I set out one night to find one of them ‘down home’ guitar blues pickers that I had read about in the Sunday paper. I was drivin’ around Saturday night lookin’ for Walter’s Crescendo Lounge. I had some ribs at Money’s on Prospect and asked directions. The feller told me not to go over there after dark. Then, after thinkin’ about it, he scribbled his name and phone number on a piece of paper and said, “When you git in trouble, have’m call me.” Nice of him, I thought.

Somehow I never found Walter’s but at the corner of 39th and Jackson I spied Willie’s



BAXTER BLACK

ON THE EDGE OF COMMON SENSE

Total Experience Lounge. I recognized the name from the paper so I went in.

I was dressed normal; hat, Wrangler’s and boots. The bartender was a lady named Bertha. She served me a scotch and cream

soda. I sat at a table in front of the band. As the clientele came in they all sat around by the walls. Kind of like they were circlin’ me. Nobody said much and they weren’t friendly. Finally the band leader, Freddy, came over to my table and asked me, “Hey man, what are you doin’ here?”

I told him I heard this was the best music in Kansas City and I came to find out!

Well he must have thought the same thing ‘cause it sure tickled him! He couldn’t do enough to make me feel at home. His sister was the waitress and he told her to make sure my grape Nehi never went dry.

By then I wuz smarter’n a tree full o’ owls, ten foot tall and bullet proof, as Tink would say! But I couldn’t get nobody to dance with me! Eventually this lady named Elizabeth consented. She must have figured I wasn’t so bad after all ‘cause she sat at my table and invited Louise and Wilma to join us. The four

of us danced until closin’ time. It was a fine evening and although they didn’t take to me at first they must have decided that cowboys aren’t from outer space, just different.

I remember that little lesson when I see a kid wearin’ a headband and sandals in a cowboy bar. I always try to give ‘m the benefit of the doubt. After all, he might be friskin’ customers at the door next time I make it Willie’s Total Experience Lounge!

Baxter Black, former large animal veterinarian and irregular commentator on National Public Radio, is America’s best-selling cowboy poet. He is a frequent performer at national stock shows and rodeos as well as in many smaller local events. He is author of several books, including Cactus Tracks, Croutons on a Cow Pie, Hey, Cowboy, Wanna Get Lucky? and Dunny and the Duck. Baxter Black can be contacted via e-mail at: vikki@baxterblack.com



Photo by Stephen Jiron

The New Cenicerito Ditch Company's diversion dam just southeast of Antonito held a ribbon cutting on Friday morning, April 23, celebrating completion of the \$1.66 million project.

DAM

Continued from Page 1

ary of the Conejos River, makes its way through the lower San Luis Valley it cuts through Antonito, feeding several diversion ditches. Built on the Los Coyotes Ranch, belonging formerly to the late Aniceto Lucero, a beloved Valley native, the Cenicerito Ditch was adjudicated in 1856 and incorporated in 1904 to 16 shareholders in the area and served an allocated 1,500 shares. Things have changed, during the past century the ditch has grown from 16 shareholders to 42 and the technology has grown with it, from a pile of rocks to a multifunctional dam.

When it came time to start moving earth, the NCDC had strict criteria for the parameters of the job, whoever took the contract needed to finish before the irrigation season, and they needed to have prior experience, so they chose Robins Construction of Antonito.

Boasting a \$1.66 million price, the new dam is full of intuitive design. Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) Engineer Rod Clark spoke on fitting form to function.

"We've got to realize we're still on a river and a river has to do what a river is supposed to do, and that's carry sediment," Clark said.

The dam features two pneumatic lift gates that can operate independently and are fed by an above-ground Schrader valve which is functional on as little as 10 pounds per square inch (psi). With the gates up, it ensures NCDC shareholders see their allotment and with the gates down, the river is allowed to flow freely removing sediment and debris.

The diversion dam also has a built-in fish ladder, a sloping channel with small pools to allow fish to pass freely

HOME LAKE

Continued from Page 1

and possibly be used at farms and in gardens.

CPW usually stocks the lake with rainbow trout, catfish, bluegill and bass.

CPW will also use this time to rebuild the pump system that is used to bring water to Homelake.

In the meantime, low water and exposed mudflats are proving to be a boom for birds. Eagles and osprey are scavenging the dead fish. Shore birds, which are migrating through the San Luis Valley now, are feeding along the edges of the water.

"It's a good time for some bird watching at Home Lake," Aloia said.

from one side of the dam to the other, which is specified to be friendly to all species. The gates are currently manually operated but management hopes to automate the process soon.

Funding was provided in large part by the NRCS which kicked in just under two-thirds of the total. Roughly another third was provided by the Rio Grande Basin Roundtable and the rest came from the New Cenicerito Ditch Company

Many were excited to see new development propelling Colorado agriculture into the future.

"One of the challenges we're facing in Colorado a lot of it is aging

infrastructure. All of our ditches, headgates, dams, canals and our pipelines are aging out, they're 100 years old or more," said Colorado Division of Water Resources Staff Engineer Pat McDermott. "This is the kind of structure we need for the future."

The new diversion ditch is important to all the current shareholders as it will give them the chance to fully regulate the Cenicerito's allocation of 18.3 cubic feet per second (cfs) flow from the Rio San Antonio making flow much more consistent.

"Things can always get better, they should progress not regress," said NCDC President Elliot Salazar.

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Craft and vendor fair set for May 1 in downtown Alamosa

ALAMOSA — Support local artisans and small businesses by shopping Valley Vinyl Supply's Craft and Vendor Fair on Saturday, May 1 from 11 a.m.-5 p.m. on the block of 4th and San Juan Avenue in downtown Alamosa. Find unique gifts and home decor; admission is free and all ages are welcome. There will also be a silent auction with funds benefiting a local non-profit. If interested in becoming a vendor, stop by Valley Vinyl Supply, 412 San Juan Ave. or call 719-298-8400 or email valleyvinylsupplyllc@gmail.com.

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Annual 5K Run/Walk and Veterans Golf Tournament for Sgt. Martinez is May 29-30

STAFF REPORT

MONTE VISTA — The 11th annual 5K Run/Walk and Veterans Golf Tournament will be held at the Monte Vista Golf Course on Saturday, May 29 (5K) and Sunday, May 30 (golf tourney).

All proceeds benefit the Sgt. Glen E. Martinez Memorial Scholarship Fund, in which \$1,000 scholarships will be awarded to a senior boy and senior girl of Monte Vista High School.

Martinez was a sergeant in the United States Marine Corps when he and three other Marines were killed in action on May of 2008 while on a combat mission. The Humvee they were riding in hit a roadside bomb in the Al Anbar Province of Iraq.

The 5K Run/Walk will begin at 7 a.m. on Saturday, May 29, at the Monte Vista Golf Course and will include breakfast, t-shirt and ribbons (eight different age groups). Cost is \$20 pre-registration or \$25 on event day. Deadline for mail-in registration and online registration is May 27. Send mail-in registration

to P.O. Box 181, Monte Vista, CO 81144 and register online at www.glenmartinezmemorialscholarship.org. For more information, call Ron or Carol at 850-3758 or 849-1830.

Veterans Golf Tournament will begin at 10 a.m. on Sunday, May 30, shotgun start at the Monte Vista Golf Course. It will be a 4-man team scramble format, 18 holes and will cost \$180 per team. The tournament is limited to 15 teams. Cost is \$45 for singles; they will be grouped up.

Cost includes golf cart (limited to 15 carts), team entry fee, complementary range ball, and a gift certificate for first and second place teams and lunch after golf tournament. To sign up or for more information, call the Monte Vista Pro-shop, 719-628-0130.

Martinez knew the value of education and the value of physical fitness. Growing up in Monte Vista, he participated in nearly every sport available including football, wrestling and baseball. He played in the band and was an excellent student. He was quarterback for the Pirates football team for three years and competed four years on

the state wrestling team and played baseball all four years. Glen chose to play baseball for Ottawa University in Ottawa, Kan., on an academic and baseball scholarship where he earned his bachelor's in Mathematics.

Martinez subsequently earned a surveying degree from Westwood College and was going to work on his master's in Hydro-Engineering at Boulder, when he decided to join the Marine Corps. Living in Boulder, he explained, "he got tired of hearing

people cutting down his country," so he decided to do something positive.

Martinez could have gone directly into officer candidate school but chose to start at the bottom like all the other recruits. Should he go on to command, Martinez said, he wanted to have hands-on experience rather than classroom philosophy.

"I want those I command to know

that I have been where they are," he said in an interview just after basic training. He was ready for whatever came. After a childhood filled with the challenge of athletic competition, staying in peak physical shape was second nature to him and he strongly supported the discipline and leadership skills learned on the mat, football field, baseball diamond and the school room.



Courtesy photo

Sgt. Glen E. Martinez

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Colorado State Patrol urges motorists to take safety precautions

STAFF REPORT

COLORADO — During the first quarter of 2021, Colorado State Patrol (CSP) troopers have responded to over 5.5% more fatal crashes than at this same time in 2020. While excessive speed and motorists traveling outside of their designated lane were found to be the top causal factors by CSP crash investigators, a decrease in the use of safety equipment was also discovered.

In the CSP investigated fatal crashes for the first quarter, two trends were discovered:

- For seatbelts in fatal crashes, 56.14 percent of victims were not using a seatbelt.
- For helmet use in fatal crashes, 50 percent were not using helmets; compared to last year at this time 40 percent were not using a helmet.

"We're losing ground Colorado. While we will always want drivers to practice responsible and lawful behaviors while operating a motor vehicle, it is equally important for anyone, driver

or passenger, to use safety equipment," stated Chief Matthew C. Packard, Colorado State Patrol. "We have to do better. We have to use these tools to increase the chance of surviving an unplanned crash."

According to the Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT), the most recent statistics available (2019) show that Colorado's seat belt use rate is 86 percent — well below the national use average of 90 percent.

"When making traffic stops, your Colorado State troopers hear a wide range of reasons and excuses that folks aren't wearing a seatbelt or helmet," stated Chief Packard. "None are acceptable."

Colorado law requires the driver and every front seat passenger of a motor vehicle and every passenger in an auto-cycle to wear a seat belt whenever the vehicle is operated on a street or highway. Drivers under the age of 18 years whose occupants in motor vehicles are not properly restrained or wearing a seat belt commit a traffic infraction.

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

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Solution to last week's puzzle

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

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Free Aspen Trees. 4-7 Feet. Saturday. May 1, 9-11. No early Birds, Please 219 Dunham Street, Monte Vista. Bring a Shovel. (04/28)

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07 Help Wanted

Dental Assistant- Mineral County Dental Clinic in Creede is seeking a part time dental assistant to work on average, 7 to 8 days per month. Experience is preferred, however, we will train an enthusiastic person with strong communication skills and work ethic. The ideal candidate will be a team player, reliable and committed. Hourly rate is dependent on experience and up to \$16.50/hr., during training. Required application can be downloaded at www.mineralcounty-colorado.com under "Links" or picked up at the HR Office, Mineral County Courthouse, 1201 N. Main Street, Creede. Letter of interest/

application sent to Mineral County, Attn: HR, PO Box 70, Creede, CO 81130, dropped off at 1201 N. Main St., Creede or faxed to 719-658-2931 Attn: HR. Position will be open until filled. (5/19)

Early Childhood Teacher needed for the 2021/2022 school year. Must meet the requirements of the Dept. of Human Services Office of Early Childhood. Please send resumes and transcripts to P.O. Box 787, Alamosa, CO 81101 (5/19)

Care Giver Needed In the Antonito area a young lady needs full time caregiver that is trustworthy and dependable Monday-Friday. Some Saturdays and can include 1 weekend of 2 overnight

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Rio Grande County is seeking a County Administrator. Candidate will serve as the County's Chief Administrative Officer. This includes various functions of the Rio Grande County Government, in accordance with policies set forth by the BOCC. Candidate will be a positive communicator with strong organizational skills, an effective leader with sound judgment, and be able to promote the policies of the BOCC. Education/Experience requirements are a Bachelor's degree

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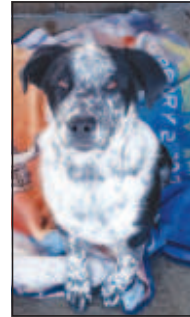
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Beau is a sweet Border Collie mix who is not quite a year old. He is playful, energetic and submissive. He is smart and very treat motivated and thus will be very easy to train. He has not been socialized much, but in his time at the shelter he has been introduced to multiple other dogs and is learning how to be a good canine citizen. He loves to get attention and be taken for walks.



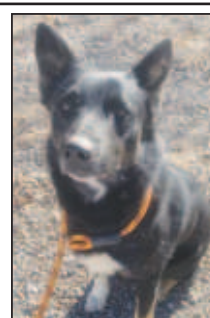
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Valley Publishing seeks a temporary, part-time reporter for the Center Post-Dispatch. Writing and photography experience necessary. Send resume and sample writings to Valley Publishing Inc., P.O. Box 607, Monte Vista, CO 81144 or email to bwilliams@valleypublishinginc.com (5/12)

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The quiet heroes in lab coats

By Dawn Krebs

SLV Health

SAN LUIS VALLEY — As the pandemic took a not-so-quiet hold on the country a little more than a year ago, front-line caregivers stepped up to fight tirelessly to save lives. But a similar fight was taking place behind the scenes.

In medical laboratories across the nation, and especially here in the San Luis Valley, laboratory professionals had to quickly and accurately analyze the COVID-19 test samples that poured into the lab, often in addition to their regular responsibilities.

“During this unprecedented time, we have seen the best facing the worst,” said Jhoanna Marical, San Luis Valley Health laboratory manager. “I couldn’t be more proud of my team, my friends and my colleagues who quietly and confidently go about their duties to provide quality laboratory test results so physicians can make accurate and timely diagnosis.”

At SLV Health, there are two laboratories that are staffed 24 hours a day, seven days a week — one at SLV Health Regional Medical Center in Alamosa, and one at Conejos County Hospital in La Jara. Between the two, approximately 180,000 tests are performed a year, from anatomic pathology to urinalysis.

During the pandemic, the laboratory staff became busy not only testing for the virus itself, but also establishing and coordinating antibody testing for COVID-19, which is currently available by appointment.

SLV Health also offers direct-to-consumer laboratory testing, where the public can receive a variety of laboratory services without an appointment, with the results being sent directly to the person. Those tests include health panels for men and women; lipid panels; testing for specific vitamins such as Vitamin D and B12; pregnancy and blood type testing; and even colon cancer screening kits.

“This week is a great time to recognize our hard-working staff, especially after the year they have all just been through,” said Brent Lehto, SLV Health laboratory director. “Through the COVID pandemic and the increased workload that came with it, the staff here has my heartfelt appreciation, and I just wanted to thank them for everything they do.”

The week of April 18 marks the start of National Medical Laboratory Professionals Week, an annual celebration of medical laboratory professionals and pathologists. The laboratories at SLV Health are

inspected and accredited every two years, and recently passed its latest inspection. The lab in Alamosa receives accreditation through the College of American Pathologists, while the lab at Conejos County Hospital is accredited through Clinical Laboratory Improvements Acts. Both laboratories receive regular on-site inspections and blind-sample proficiency testing.

For more information or to make an appointment for services with

laboratory at SLV Health, go online to www.sanluisvalleyhealth.org/services/laboratory/

Medical Laboratory Professional Week is April 18-24. Pictured from left: Jeremy Merriam, Noreen Chacon, Geraldine Bantay, Winnie Yeneza, Francis Yeneza, Director of Laboratory Services Brent Lehto, and Laboratory Manager Jhoanna Marical.

Photo courtesy SLV Health



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Bears are emerging from their dens; prepare to be bear aware

DURANGO — Someone once said that the only things certain in life are death and taxes. But every spring Colorado Parks and Wildlife adds another item to that list: bears emerging from hibernation.

As the weather continues to warm up throughout Colorado, reports of bear sightings are starting to trickle into wildlife offices throughout the state. So now is the time for everyone in Colorado to shift back into bear-aware mode, said Steve McClung, assistant area wildlife manager for CPW in Durango.

“Please remember, we’re getting back into the season when bears are active,” McClung said. “So please, secure your trash and take down the bird feeders.”

Bird feeders are a major source of bear conflicts. You can instead attract birds naturally with flowering plants and bird baths. Wait until late November to hang feeders again.

Research shows that bears prefer natural sources of food. But they will find sources of human-provided food if it’s available. If bears become habituated to human sources of food they can become dangerous to humans.

CPW also urges residents to report bear problems to local wildlife offices as soon as they see them. If problems are reported early, CPW wildlife officers can use a range of options to deal with the bear. They can tour the neighborhood to look for food sources that are attracting bears, work with residents to correct the situation and set strategies to harass the bear to push it back into wild areas or to trap and move it if necessary. If CPW does not get reports until a bear is breaking into houses or vehicles, officers’ choices are limited.

“The last thing we want to do is put down a bear, every wildlife officer absolutely hates doing that,” McClung said. “So don’t hesitate to call us as soon as you see any bad behavior, even if it appears minor. That gives us a much better opportunity to correct the situa-

tion early.”

Colorado Parks and Wildlife offers these tips and precautions to help you prevent human/wildlife conflicts:

Bearproofing your home:
Keep garbage in a well-secured location.

Only put out garbage on the morning of pickup.

Clean garbage cans regularly to keep them free of food odors: ammonia is effective.

Use a bear-resistant trash can or dumpster; available from your trash hauler or on the Internet.

If you don’t have secure storage, put items that might become smelly into the freezer until trash day.

Don’t leave pet food or stock feed outside.

Bird feeders are a major source of bear/human conflicts. Attract birds naturally with flowers and water baths. Do not hang bird feeders from April 15 to Nov. 15.

Do not attract other wildlife by feeding them, such as deer, turkeys or small mammals.

Don’t allow bears to become comfortable around your house. If you see one, yell at it, throw things at it, make noise to scare it off.

Secure compost piles. Bears are attracted to the scent of rotting food and they’ll eat anything.

Allow grills to burn for a couple of minutes after cooking to burn off grease and to eliminate odors. Clean the grill after each use.

Clean-up thoroughly after picnics in the yard or on the deck. Don’t allow food odors to linger.

If you have fruit trees, pick fruit before it gets too ripe. Don’t allow fruit to rot on the ground.

If you keep small livestock, keep animals in a fully covered enclosure. Construct electric fencing if possible. Don’t store livestock food outside, keep enclosures clean to minimize odors, hang rags soaked in ammonia and/or Pine-Sol around the enclosure.

If you have bee hives, install electric fencing where allowed.

Talk to your neighbors and kids about being bear aware.

Keep garage doors closed.
Cars, traveling and campsites:
Lock your doors when you’re away from home and at night.

Keep the bottom floor windows of your house closed when you’re not at home.

Do not keep food in your vehicle; roll up windows and lock the doors of your vehicles.

When car-camping, secure all food

and coolers in a locked vehicle when you’re away from camp.

Keep a clean camp, whether you’re in a campground or in the back-country.

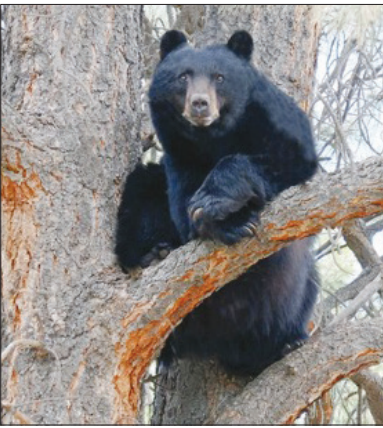
When camping in the back-country,

hang food 100 feet or more from campsite; don’t bring any food into your tent;

Cook food well away from your tent; wash dishes thoroughly.

For more information go to the Liv-

ing with Wildlife section on the Colorado Parks and Wildlife web site: cpw.state.co.us/bears. Should you have questions or need to report bear problems, call your nearest CPW office.



Courtesy photo

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