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# Valley Courier

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LOCAL NEWS... LOCAL VIEWS

February 27, 2024

\$1

## SLV Today

### Alamosa Commissioners to meet on Wednesday

**ALAMOSA** — The Alamosa County Board of County Commissioners will have a regular meeting on Wednesday at 8:30 a.m., in their chambers located at 8900 Independence Way in Alamosa.

On the agenda is a report from the Alamosa Weed Control District, a presentation from airport manager Will Hickman, a resolution regarding parking fees at the airport, a 12th Judicial District update from Court Executive Kyle Gustafson. Also on the agenda is an update from Alamosa County Coroner Joe Dzuris, Emergency Manager Eric Treinen, and an update from Beverly Strnad Interim Director of Alamosa Public Health.

The meeting is open to the public in-person or via Zoom at meeting ID 270-314-6874.

### Dark Skies meeting in Alamosa on Wednesday

**ALAMOSA** — The Alamosa Planning Commission will discuss the impacts of the suggested land use regulations to reduce light pollution and support the creation of the Sangre de Cristo Dark Sky Reserve at a work session on Wednesday at City Hall in Alamosa.

The meeting will be with the City Council and City Hall is located at 300 Hunt Ave., Alamosa. The public is welcome to attend.

### Storytime at the Conejos Library District

**LA JARA** — Every Thursday morning from 11:40 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. the Conejos Library Maria De Herrera Branch in La Jara hosts a weekly Storytime and Crafttime.

The stories selected are usually seasonal in nature with a craft activity related to the story. In February, young patrons listened to Valentine stories and got to make Valentines for Veterans.

Sometimes though, the story-subject is what the librarian wants to learn more about. Take for example last week, the librarian wanted to know more about giraffes and so several books fictional and nonfiction were read, and the librarian learned about giraffes and the smallest patrons learned about giraffes.

This week, young patrons will hear a story called "The Doorbell Rang" by Pat Hutchins, which is a story about sharing and problem solving, as well as a memorable introduction to the concept of division.

### SLV WEATHER

Chance of Snow, Very Windy 46/3

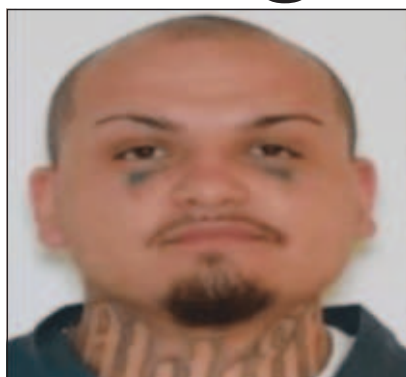
**Wed:** Sunny, Breezy 47/14

**Thurs:** Sunny, Breezy 51/18

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## Adre Baroz pleads guilty to all charges in Los Sauces murders



Courtesy photo  
**CBI photo of Adre Baroz when a statewide bulletin was issued naming him as suspect in the murders.**

### Julius Baroz and Francisco Ramirez plead guilty to lesser charges

By PRISCILLA WAGGONER  
Courier Reporter

**ALAMOSA** — After three and a half years of court proceedings, Adre Baroz, 29, has pleaded guilty to all charges in connection with the murders and dismemberment of five people whose remains were

found in two burn pits in Los Sauces in late November of 2020.

Over a period of several months, as forensic pathologists examined the remains, the victims were identified as Korina Arroyo, Selena Esquivel, Xavier Zeven Garcia, Myron Martinez and Shayla Hammel. As court documents in each case obtained by the Valley Courier revealed, those five individuals were murdered between Aug. 25, 2020, to Nov. 13, 2020.

Baroz pleaded guilty to five counts of murder in the first degree, a class 1 felony, with each count carrying a sentence of life in prison with no hope of parole; five counts of tampering with remains of a deceased human body, a class 3 felony, which will carry a sentence of 4-12 years for each count; one count of assault in the first degree with serious bodily injury, a class 3 felony, which will carry a minimum sentence of 10 years and a maximum of

■ See BAROZ page 3

## Four candidates vie for Alamosa's Chief of Police

By PRISCILLA WAGGONER  
Courier Reporter

**ALAMOSA** — The City of Alamosa is progressing in the hiring of a new chief of police for the Alamosa Police Department with an initial field of eight candidates now narrowed down to four.

According to Alamosa City Manager Heather Sanchez, the interviews are currently being conducted with a committee that includes herself, Erich Schwiesow (city attorney), Holly Martinez (city clerk), Bill Stone (Alamosa fire chief), Harry Reynolds (public works director), Kathy Woods (economic development director) and three representatives from the Alamosa Police Department.

Interim Police Chief Joey Spangler, who has said he was not interested in the position, was part of the interview committee but is no longer listed.

Sanchez had also tentatively planned on George Dingfelder (Monte Vista Police Chief) and Bob Brammer (Durango Police Chief) being involved, but Chief Jeff Satur (Longmont Police Chief) and Bill Gurule (Chief Probation Officer) are serving on the committee, instead.

Prior to beginning the process, Sanchez had said that initial interviews would be done over Zoom with finalists brought in for an in-person interview, which will include a



Photo by Priscilla Waggoner

**An interview team comprised of department heads with the city, representatives from the Alamosa Police Department and law enforcement officials outside the agency are conducting interviews with four candidates to replace former Alamosa Police Chief Ken Anderson.**

meeting with the Alamosa Police Department and a tour of the community. Whether the four candidates currently being interviewed are viewed as finalists or if there will be a further narrowing of the field was also not disclosed.

More than three and a half months have passed since former Police Chief Ken Anderson officially resigned from his position on Nov. 2, 2023. Since then, Capt. Spangler has been acting as the interim police chief.

When asked at the beginning of January for an update on the hiring process, Sanchez wrote, "Working with Interim Chief Spangler, we decided that the hiring process could wait while we worked on better understanding the needs of the department and providing information to City Council as

they worked through the concerns of former Chief Anderson. With the work session on January 3rd addressing the remaining concerns, we are now able to move forward [with] the process."

At that time, Sanchez also said she anticipated working with the interview team to develop questions and review applications.

When asked for information about the four candidates, such as were any of the applicants from the Alamosa Police Department, other law enforcement agencies in the Valley or across the state, Sanchez would only confirm four were under consideration.

"No further information would be provided," she stated.

It is not known when a hiring decision can be expected.



Sierah Campbell

## Adams State doctoral student receives fellowship

By ADAMS STATE UNIVERSITY

**ALAMOSA** — A clinician and social justice advocate, Sierah Campbell recently received the prestigious National Board for Certified Counselors (NBCC) Minority Fellowship. An Adams State University School of Counselor Education second-year doctoral student, Campbell is currently a private practice owner-clinician for Perry Behavioral Wellness, LLC, in Clarksville, Tenn.

Campbell said the Minority Fellowship Program (MFP) will aid in her dedication to research, advocacy,

■ See CAMPBELL page 3

## Rogers speaks candidly about being on 'Farmer Wants A Wife'

By MARIE MCCOLM  
**CENTER** — Potato and barley farmer Brandon Rogers recently spoke candidly about his experience on the reality dating series "Farmer Wants A Wife."

Rogers, 29, is one of four farmers that is on season 2 of the Fox show that airs Thursday nights. The four farmers, looking for the loves of their lives, were selected from across the United States. Each farmer selects five women from a pool of 29 to come live with them on their farm. This gives the ladies a full taste of what it takes to be a farmer's wife.

Rogers operates a 1,000-acre farm in Center. He said he started farming in 2014 and is proudly carrying on the family tradi-

tion — his mom and dad are both farmers. He enjoys living in the San Luis Valley and giving back to the community.

"I pride myself on being a big part of everything with my family and friends," he said. "I enjoy the outdoors. I am an avid fisherman, and I like to hunt. I like to be involved in the community. I am the vice president of the Ski-Hi Stampede. I serve on the Monte Vista Noxious Weed Board. I like being part of this community and I am proud of

■ See ROGERS page 3

**Center's Brandon Rogers, far right, is one of four farmers on season 2 of the Fox series 'Farmer Wants A Wife.'**

Courtesy photo



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# Record

## Dems to hold caucus and assembly in Saguache County

**CONTRIBUTED SAGUACHE** — The Saguache County Democratic Caucus and Assembly will both be held together on Tuesday, March 5, starting at 6 p.m. at Mountain Valley School, 403 Pitkin Ave., Saguache.

All Saguache County Democrats within all seven precincts will conduct their caucuses together at that time. Delegates will

be chosen to support two candidates for County Commissioner for District One, County Commissioner candidate for District Two, and other offices and positions.

Registered Democrats are asked to sign in starting at 5 p.m.

All participants must be signed in by 6 p.m. to participate.

Organizers ask that people bring issues to add

to the Saguache County Platform.

The Democratic Assembly will be held directly after the caucus. This is when the delegates will vote for their candidates and other election business will be attended to. Local students will provide a snack bar.

For more information, call Democratic Party Chair Lynne Thompson at 719-850-3254.



Courtesy photo

The Creede Repertory Theatre is ready to kick off its 59th season with a season packed with discovery.

## 2024: Creede Repertory Theatre looks to 'season of discovery'

By **LYNDSIE FERRELL**

**CREEDE** — Each year is a unique and inventive season for the Creede Repertory Theatre and this year, the organization is looking to rediscover what CRT is, what it means to the community and what it can be for anyone who has not discovered the theatrical company that sits above 8,000 feet of elevation.

Interim Artistic Director Kate Berry recently spoke with the Mineral County Miner about what the coming 59th season at CRT will look like and what the theatre is hoping to share with theatregoers from all over the world.

"We are excited about the coming season. It will be a season of discovery, rediscovery and every play has that element of discovery. We are celebrating 50 years of Christy Brandt who has been an integral part of CRT, and we are really happy to celebrate her," said Berry.

To kick the 59th season at CRT off, the first production comes to the stage through a playful and innovative take on a classic character. Ken Ludwig's "Baskerville: A Sherlock Holmes Mystery" is exactly what is great about CRT. Directed by Christy Montour Larson, this play is sure to captivate audiences and add that mysterious flare that CRT has become known for. This play opens May 25 and runs through Sept. 14.

"Mystery and mayhem... From the award-winning mastermind of mayhem, Ken Ludwig ("Sherwood"; "Dear Jack, Dear Louise"), comes a fast-paced comedy about everyone's favorite detective solving his most notorious case. Sherlock Holmes and Dr. Watson must crack the mystery of "The Hound of the Baskervilles" before a family curse dooms its newest heir. Watch as five actors deftly portray more than 40 characters. Does a wild hellhound prowl the moors of Devonshire? Can our heroes discover the truth in time? Get your deerstalker cap on — the play's afoot!"

Next up is another well-

known production that is sure to bring tears of laughter to anyone who sees it. Beginning on June 8 and running through Aug. 31 Mel Brooks' "Young Frankenstein" hits the stage ready to make audiences laugh all summer long.

Directed by Amanda Berg Wilson with music and lyrics by Brooks and based on the book by Brooks and Thomas Meehan, "A monstrously hilarious musical...The grandson of the infamous Victor Frankenstein, Frederick Frankenstein (pronounced 'Fronk-en-steen') inherits his family's estate in Transylvania. With the help of his sidekick, Igor (pronounced 'Eye-gore'), and sultry lab assistant, Inga, Frederick finds himself in the mad scientist shoes of his ancestors. Eventually, of course, the monster escapes and hilarity continuously abounds. Young Frankenstein has all of the panache of the classic film from Gene Wilder and Mel Brooks with a dose of theatrical flair, so you'll be 'Puttin' on the Ritz' and having a monstrously good time!"

The fun doesn't stop there. Opening on June 28 and running through Sept. 8, this classic play offers the perfect setting for some intricate costume designs. Set in the Victorian Era, Oscar Wilde's "The Importance of Being Earnest" will capture the creative essence of CRT and show off the artistic talent that comes to the stage every year.

Directed by Berry and starring Brandt and Annie Butler, this production will bring audiences through time. "A classic comedy of manners...The most renowned of Oscar Wilde's comedies tells the story of two bachelors, John 'Jack' Worthing and Algernon 'Algy' Moncrieff, who create alter egos named Ernest to escape their tiresome lives. They attempt to win the hearts of Gwendolyn and Cecily, two women who, conveniently, claim to only love men called Ernest. The pair become tangled in a tale of deception, disguise, and misadventure. This

classic comedy of manners pokes fun at Victorian sensibilities with some of the best loved characters to be found on the modern stage. Our production features Christy Brandt as Lady Bracknell and Annie Butler as Miss Prism."

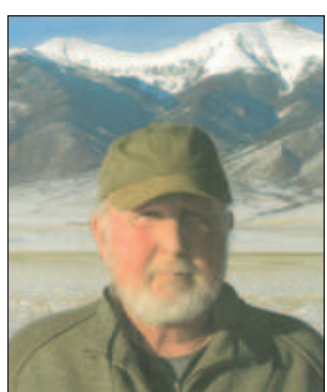
Finally, the season rounds out with a play set in the San Luis Valley. "Prima's Guide to Funerals" by Leonard Madrid will run from July 12 through Sept. 14. This play is directed by Yesenia Garcia Herrington, and this will be the play's world premiere set in the San Luis Valley. The production will also be hitting the road and will be performed at the San Luis Valley Federal Bank Theatre at Adams State University for three performances in September.

"A comedy in one funeral...Three cousins (primas), an urn, and one really long day. It's the day of her mother's funeral and Arcie is losing her grip. But her cousins Nando and Clara are having none of it. A fast-paced and hilarious world premiere set along the waters of the Rio Grande in the San Luis Valley of Southern Colorado, 'Prima's Guide to Funerals' tells the story of family, laughter, grief, love, and finding yourself alongside the ones who know you the best: your primas."

More details about the Creede Musical Arts Collective, the annual KiD Show production and the Young Audience Outreach Tour will be announced soon.

### OBITUARIES

#### Robert M. Kirkham



Robert M. Kirkham of Alamosa, Colo., passed away Nov. 17, 2023, at his home following an extended illness. Bob was born August 14, 1951, in Highland, Ill., to Marshall and Blanche (Paul) Kirkham.

Surviving him are his wife Lois (McMahon) Kirkham, brothers Dennis (Jo) Kirkham of Greenville, and Ed (Tana) Kirkham of Sherwood, Ore. Also survived by nieces, Kari Kirkham of Houston, Texas, and Krista Kirkham of Bloomington, Ill., and nephew, Kristopher Kirkham of Liberty, Mo.

Bob attended Greenville Schools, graduating from Greenville High School with the class of 1969. He attended the University of Missouri-Rolla and Western Illinois University, graduating with a degree in Geology in 1973. He obtained a Master's Degree from the University of Nevada-Reno in 1975, also in Geology.

He began his working career with the Colorado Geological Survey and worked with mine reclamation, earthquake hazards, geological mapping, and other areas in earth sciences. He authored and coauthored many geological publications. After retiring, he started his own consulting firm, GeoLogical Solutions and continued working until the last few months.

Bob and Lois adventured to all continents with many unique experiences including backpacking for several months in the Himalayan Mountains, viewing mountain

gorillas in the wild, and riding elephants to explore a rhino preserve. Robert recently completed an extensive genealogical search of the Kirkham name.

Robert never knew a stranger and was always good for a long conversation. He and Lois made many friends through their travels. He loved his nieces and nephews, taking each for a week-long Colorado adventure for the 16th birthday. He will be greatly missed by his family, friends, and colleagues.

Cremation was chosen and a Celebration of Life will be held Sunday, March 17, 2024, at 3 p.m. at the Society Hall, 400 Ross Ave., Alamosa CO 81101.

Rogers Family Mortuary is in care of the arrangements. To leave online condolences, remarks for Bob's family and words of comfort, please visit [www.RogersFunerals.com](http://www.RogersFunerals.com).

#### Lorrita R. Vance



Monte Vista resident Lorrita R. Vance, 50, died Feb. 24, 2024, at the Joni Fair Hospice House in Pueblo, Colo.

Lorrita's life began in Alamosa, Colo., on March 9, 1973, the daughter to Robert Ira Francis and Lorrine Lorell Claunch Francis. She married the love of her life, Cory Vance in Alamosa on Aug. 30, 1993. They enjoyed more than 30 years together.

Lorrita worked as a Social Services Director at the River Valley Rehabilitation and Nursing facility in Del Norte. She was a loving wife, mother and grandmother. She loved spending time with her family. Lorrita was a member of the Feed Store Church in Monte Vista and was a supporter since its inception. She enjoyed riding motorcycles with her husband Cory and seeing the countryside.

Lorrita is survived by her mother Lorine Francis of Monte Vista, her husband Cory Vance of Monte Vista; her children Brandi Nichole (Jason) Ensz of Del Norte, Colo., Austin Cory (Kendra) Vance of Idaho, and Jacob Cole (Yesenia) Vance of Monte Vista, Colo.; her grandchildren Quierra Ensz, Sadie Ensz, Lyle Ensz, Caroline Vance, Liam Vance, and Caleb

Vance; her parents-in-law Don and Gloria Vance of Utah; her siblings Irene (Maurice) Gibson of La Jara, Colo., Albert (Katrina) Francis of Monte Vista, Colo., Bonnie (Ed) Gylling of Arizona, and Cindy (Bubby) Morgan of Alamosa, Colo.; as well as numerous nieces, nephews, cousins, extended family and friends.

Lorrita was preceded in death by her father Robert Ira Francis.

A Funeral Service will be held 10 a.m. Saturday, March 2, 2024, at the Feed Store Church in Monte Vista. Interment will follow services in the Monte Vista Cemetery.

Rogers Family Mortuary is in care of the arrangements. To leave online words of comfort, remembrances, and condolences for Lorrita's family, please visit [www.RogersFunerals.com](http://www.RogersFunerals.com).

### SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENTS

#### Gilbert D. Ortega

Gilbert D. Ortega passed on Nov. 10, 2023. His memorial is taking place on March 2, 2024, from 11 a.m.-1 p.m. at the Elks Lodge, 406 Hunt Ave., Alamosa.

**School Menu**  
**Tuesday**  
**February 27, 2024**

**BREAKFAST**  
Frudel  
Fruit & Milk

**ELEMENTARY**  
Chicken Tacos/Salsa  
Black Beans/Cornbread  
Veggie Bar  
Fruit & Milk

**MIDDLE SCHOOL**  
Chicken Tacos/Salsa  
Black Beans/Cornbread  
Veggie Bar  
Fruit & Milk

**HIGH SCHOOL**  
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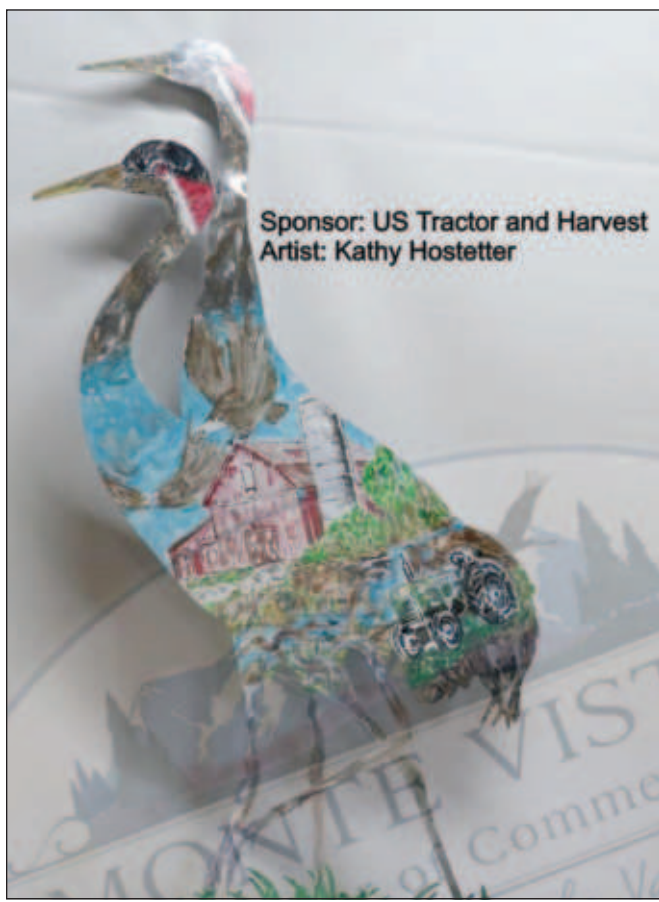
# Valley News

## Swoop of the Cranes back for fifth year in Monte Vista

By MARIE MCCOLM  
MONTE VISTA — The Swoop of the Cranes is once again headed for Monte Vista to fill downtown with beautifully decorated, painted cranes. For the past five years, the Monte Vista Chamber of Commerce has worked with Valley artists on this community art project.

Local businesses are given the chance to sponsor a 5-foot flat piece of steel in the shape of a Sandhill Crane. The crane is decorated and transformed by artists into a personal crane creation. Downtown Monte Vista is then adorned, during the Crane Festival in March, with these creations. Each is attached to a downtown light pole. The 41st Crane Festival is March 8-10.

The cranes are on display through the summer and into the fall. In the fall, the artist or sponsor of each crane can either buy it back for \$100 or it can be auctioned off to the highest bidder. The money from the auction and buy back is used in the community for development projects such as planting trees, or flowers, and other landscaping or storefront improvements. One purpose of this beautification project is to bring attention to the town and draw tourists. Many people travel through town during the summer and fall months



Decorated cranes will again be on display throughout Downtown Monte Vista just in time for the annual Crane Festival on March 8-10. This decorated crane is from last year.

and the cranes are part of what makes Monte Vista an artistic landmark. The Swoop of the Cranes project was created in 2020 by then chamber board member Ken Hamko. He had the idea of creating the cranes, and having artists provide their unique touch to each one. Hamko believed by doing this, the cranes would help draw in tourists, and attention during the Crane Festival. The Monte Vista Cham-

ber Director Heather Hillin is excited about the project for this year and encourages residents and tourists to walk the town and enjoy the cranes. The Chamber of Commerce is requesting that anyone who did not get to sponsor a crane this year, keep the project in mind for next year. For more information on the project, contact Hillin at the Monte Vista Chamber of Commerce at 719-852-2731.

## Baroz

■ Continued from Page 1  
32 years in prison; second degree kidnapping, a class 3 felony, which will carry a sentence of 10-32 years; and second degree assault, a class 4 felony, which has a sentencing range of 5-16 years.

For the "lesser" felony charges, Baroz will serve anywhere from 45 to 140 years in prison. However, in the resolution reached between Baroz's defense counsel, David Lipka, and special prosecutor, Fred Johnson assigned from the Boulder District Attorney's Office, the life sentences will be served consecutively, totaling 200 years sentencing Baroz to spending the rest of his life in prison.

Baroz went through the court proceedings with, initially, three co-defendants: his brother, Julius Baroz, 33, Francisco Ramirez, 41, and C.J. Dominguez, 31.

Dominguez reached an agreement with prosecutors in December of 2022 when he entered a guilty plea of tampering with a deceased human body, which severed him from the case.

However, Julius Baroz and Ramirez remained as co-defendants until Monday's resolution with the prosecution.

Julius Baroz pleaded guilty to conspiracy to commit murder in the first degree of Myron Martinez, which will carry a prison sentence of 16-25 years with 5 years mandatory parole.

Ramirez pleaded guilty to three counts of tampering with de-

ceased human bodies, where he will be sentenced to eight years in the Department of Corrections for each sentence to be served consecutively.

All resolutions reached on Monday were entered after Adre Baroz's plea of not guilty by reason of insanity (NRGI) was withdrawn. On April 29, 2022, Baroz had entered the NRGI plea, which began a protracted period of 22 months where two psychological evaluations — the second one requested by the defense — led to a series of continuance after continuance due to delays in getting the evaluations completed.

Finally, several months ago, Judge Gonzales stated that "enough was enough" and the case needed to proceed in a timely manner. In fact, today's proceeding was slated as a hearing, based on the assumption that the results of the second evaluation had been completed and in possession of both defense and the prosecution.

When Judge Gonzales entered the courtroom, counsel requested to meet in chambers and Gonzales said, "the case was headed in a different direction."

As Gonzales read each plea deal, he asked Johnson if the victims — in this case, members of the families of the five people Baroz murdered — had any objections to the agreements that had been reached. Although there was mention of some opposition to Julius Baroz pleading guilty to conspiracy with other charges dismissed, Johnson said that, with the sentence enhancer that increased Julius Baroz's sentence, the family was satisfied.

This case originally garnered national attention when, in late November of 2020, the deceased remains of human beings were found in two separate burn pits in the small town of Los Sauces in Conejos County. At that time, Adre Baroz was identified as a suspect as the Colorado Bureau of Investigation, along with local law enforcement from Conejos, Alamosa and Rio Grande Counties and agencies in New Mexico, began a manhunt.

On Nov. 19, 2020, Baroz, who already had several outstanding warrants in Alamosa for failure to appear on a drug related charge, was taken into custody in Gallup, N.M.

Back in the Valley, investigators immediately began interviewing people associated with Baroz and soon built a case that led to his initial charge in the murder of Selena Esquibel.

Sentencing for Julius Baroz and Francisco Ramirez is scheduled for May 3, at which time victims — should they so choose — may address the court directly as well as individuals who may choose to speak on behalf of any of the defendants.

"These pleas represent a tremendous victory for justice in the Valley," wrote District Attorney Anne Kelly in an email to the Valley Courier. "I am thrilled that we can deliver a result for the families of these victims that may help them move through their nightmare. I cannot express enough how appreciative our community is for the tireless and fearless work of our law enforcement team in achieving this result."

## Rogers

■ Continued from Page 1  
where I am from." Rogers said his stepsister, who lives in Los Angeles and is "kind of in the industry, she does commercials and different things" was the person who said he should apply to be on show.

"She called me up and said, 'Hey there's a new show coming out and I think you should sign up for it,'" Rogers recalled.

"I was skeptical at first and I asked her OK what is it. She said, 'it's called 'Farmer Wants A Wife,' and I know how dating is in the Valley and a small town. I told her I don't know I am busy I don't know if I want to be on TV and do all of that. She said, 'just fill out the application.' So, I filled out the application to please my stepsister," he said with a chuckle.

About two months later production from Los Angeles started calling and "got the ball rolling. So, that's how it all started," he said.

Rogers said he was surprised to get the call. When he saw the call coming in from Los Angeles, he thought it might be his stepsister calling from a different number.

"It ended up being casting producers. They said they had looked at my social media and wanted to hop on Zoom to see if I looked like my social media representation, and that's when it all really started," he said.

Rogers said filming started in September at his farm in Center. He received confirmation around Sept. 15 that he got the part, and around Sept. 25, they showed up to start filming. "They had me filling out



Brandon Rogers said he had a good experience on the Fox series 'Farmer Wants A Wife.'

paperwork and stayed connected with me the whole time, but when I got the confirmation on the 15th, that's when it made it all real," he said.

Rogers had never been on camera before. He felt that the crew represented him well and documented his family in a genuine way.

"They really showed what's it's like to be in a small town on a farm, to be a part of the San Luis Valley," he said. "A little nerves at the beginning, yes, but around week three of filming, I settled in and felt comfortable with everything."

Rogers said that meeting the women on TV for the first time was the most intense first date he had ever experienced.

"Essentially for the show, the ladies got a 1-minute video clip of me, and I got one picture and like 5 to 7 sentences about the women that I chose from," he said.

Rogers said as they walked up on camera that it was the first time they met.

"It's an intense situation," Rogers said. "You meet someone you have never met on camera, and



Brandon Rogers operates a 1,000-acre farm in Center and is on the Fox series 'Farmer Wants A Wife.'

you have 10 minutes to decide if this is someone that you want to get to know more. It's a different animal for sure."

Rogers said that he met eight women at the first mixer and had to reduce that to five women and ask those five women to come experience life on the farm.

Rogers said that all through the filming, he had a great experience. He would recommend other farmers try it.

"I enjoyed it. I felt like it was great networking. I met a lot of great people," he said. "The women were all very sweet. I would say if you're not too shy, fill out the application. It's a great experience."

Rogers considers himself an "open book."

"This is who I was before the show, and I am the same person after," he said. "I feel like the best part of the show for me was I did not acting at all. What you see is my true, authentic self. I went up there with an open mind and open heart. I tried to make the best of the entire experience and I enjoyed it all."

Rogers said that there are many beautiful wom-

en in the San Luis Valley but dating in the Valley is hard.

"A lot of the theory behind what I was doing on the show was looking for someone who would want to be on farm with me," he said. "I am not looking for a housewife or a farm wife, but I do think that it takes a special person to realize what farmers do on a farm, how demanding their jobs really are."

Rogers said that part of the show that interested him was that there were women who were there who would understand the sacrifices of the farm work.

"This was an influential part in me joining the show," Rogers said. "There is nothing like farming all year, and at the end of the season seeing the fruits of all your labor come to life. It's important to me to find someone to share that with, too."

As for spoilers, Rogers said he could not reveal whether he found love on the show.

"You will just have to keep watching," he said. "What I can tell everyone is I am very happy with the outcome of the show. It was a great experience."

## Cambell

■ Continued from Page 1  
counseling, and educational advancement to address gaps in treatment for underserved populations, which aligns with the MFP goal to reduce health disparities and enhance the well-being of the community.

The MFP mission is to change the face of counseling; including counseling in underserved areas, educate and lecture on topics of interest, and research and develop exciting new counseling initiatives.

"My goal is to aid in the reduction of health disparities by addressing barriers to equitable treatment among marginalized groups," Campbell said. Alongside colleagues, she is currently conducting research on the training and experience of licensed mental health providers working with people of color navigating an eating disorder(s). The results of this study could better inform education and better equip field-based licensed mental health providers to render culturally responsive treatment.

Additional research interest was fueled by Campbell's childbirth experience during the fall 2023 semester.

"Due to my challenging pregnancy and birth experience while navigating doctoral coursework, internship, and clinical duties as a counselor, I am interested in researching the experience of women of color navigating pregnancy and motherhood

while pursuing a Ph.D. in counselor education," she said.

Campbell intends to sustain her commitment as a counselor. "As the daughter of a Veteran, I am dedicated to continued counseling and advocacy to serve Veterans, active-duty military, and their families."

The NBCC minority fellowship will support her professional growth to collaborate with other mental health professionals dedicated to being change agents addressing barriers to culturally competent counseling and strengthening contributions to research, education, and advocacy.

After completing her doctoral degree in counselor education and supervision, Campbell plans to continue her dedication as a clinician, educator, researcher, and advocate.

"I intend to further develop culturally responsive and trauma-informed curriculum for counselors-in-training and continuing education for licensed mental health providers," Campbell said.

As a published co-author on multicultural counseling practices, Campbell will continue to contribute to the counseling profession to address gaps in counseling literature.

"Through culturally informed research, I also intend to advance evidence-based practices among marginalized populations," Campbell said. Campbell received her bachelor's and master's from Lipscomb University.

# Lifestyles



Courtesy graphic

CPW provides tips to help people recreate responsibly in the winter.

## CPD provides outdoor winter tips on how to recreate responsibly

By COLORADO PARKS AND WILDLIFE

**DENVER** — Colorado is a winter wonderland and a world-class destination for outdoor activities involving snow and ice. For those willing to explore in colder temperatures and leave the hibernation of home, Colorado state parks and state wildlife areas offer unique outdoor experiences like snowshoeing, ice fishing, snowmobiling, ice skating, wildlife watching, and cozying up in visitor centers while enjoying scenic views.

Venturing outside for winter recreation can be an exhilarating and unforgettable experience. But before you bundle up and head outside, knowing how to navigate Colorado's extreme winter weather is a paramount first step in planning a winter adventure.

Below are tips and resources from Colorado Parks and Wildlife (CPW) outdoor experts to help you plan winter fun and recreate responsibly.

### Know Before You Go

- Colorado's winter weather is unpredictable and changes quickly. Research your destination, weather, and road conditions before your trip.
- Check the weather forecast for where you are going before you depart and pack layers, sun protection, and appropriate footwear.
- Choose your destination based on the weather forecast and your activity based on your skill level and safety gear.
- Find a Colorado State Park Map and see what activities are available at each state park using the Colorado State Parks Guide (el folleto de parques en Español) or the online Park Finder Tool.
- Discover park events and classes on the CPW Events Calendar.

### Backcountry and Avalanche Safety

- Avalanches happen in Colorado, so planning ahead and monitoring the weather will ensure the safest time possible.
- Check the Colorado Avalanche Information Center (CAIC) Forecast to learn the Avalanche Danger Rating Scale, dai-

ly weather predictions, and avalanche advisory and warning information.

- Things won't always go to plan, and you should be willing to stay home or pivot from your desired destination if conditions dictate.
- Be prepared for winter travel conditions. Ensure your car has winter-appropriate tires, and stock your vehicle with winter emergency gear, like extra-warm clothing, food, water, and a sleeping bag.
- Cell phones don't always work in the backcountry, so bring paper maps and beacons in case of an emergency.

### Stick To Trails

- Walk on the designated trails — even if muddy, slushy, or icy to prevent erosion and disturbing wintering wildlife.
- Respecting trail closures is a must — they're closed for a reason. Trails may be closed because they are dangerous during winter months or to protect wildlife from being disturbed by humans.
- Download the CO-TREX app to discover Colorado's expansive network of trails and closure alerts.

### Leave It As You Find It

- Parking in designated areas is critical — undesignated parking can destroy vegetation and block outdoor first-responder vehicles in an emergency.
- Colorado's trees provide shade and oxygen. Help keep them thriving by not carving into them or pulling down branches that may kill or disfigure them.
- Avoid stacking rocks because they play an essential role in stabilizing and protecting the erosion of trails.

### Trash the Trash

- Keep our winter playgrounds clean by not leaving any trash behind. Consider your responsibility to take action to protect our climate — today's snow is tomorrow's water.
- Pack it in, pack it out. Whatever you bring into the outdoors, take it out with you.
- Remove makeshift toilets from hunting camps that contain human waste, toilet paper, trash, or leftover camping

gear.

- Don't leave pet waste bags on the trails or bury them in the snow.

### Keep Wildlife Wild

- Wildlife are extra vulnerable in the winter when their energy demands are high, temperatures are low, and food is scarce, but there's a lot we can do to avoid disturbing them.
- Colorado has multiple big game species, including elk, mule deer, moose, and bighorn sheep. Winter disturbance or stress caused by humans jeopardizes these animals' ability to survive the following season and reduces females' chances of successfully raising offspring.
- Watch and photograph wildlife from a safe distance to avoid startling them.
- Do not feed wildlife or approach young wildlife.
- Keep dogs leashed on trails to prevent them from chasing wildlife.
- Help reduce human-bear conflicts and be bear aware.
- Takedown hammocks, outdoor ropes, and other tangle hazards from your yard that may impact wildlife as they migrate this winter.

### Be Careful with Fire

- Although parts of Colorado have received high moisture levels this year, drought conditions still impact whether campfires are allowed or restricted this winter.
- Check fire restrictions or bans at [www.co-emergency.com](http://www.co-emergency.com).
- Use designated campfire areas when allowed and available.
- Put fires out with water until you can touch the embers.
- Never leave a campfire unattended.

### Share our Trails and Parks

- Being kind and considerate to others helps build more inclusive outdoor spaces.
- Be mindful of your group's noise level so everyone can appreciate our shared spaces.
- Get a \$29 Keep Colorado Wild Pass to support local search and rescue teams and avalanche safety programs. Learn more at [cpw.info/keepcoloradowild](http://cpw.info/keepcoloradowild) and [cpw.info/keepcoloradowildpasspanish](http://cpw.info/keepcoloradowildpasspanish).

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# Lifestyles



Photo by Marie Mccolm

Regency Tax and Bookkeeping Services owner-operator Benjamin F. Terry cuts the ribbon during his grand opening celebration on Feb. 16 at his office, 260 Adams St., Monte Vista.

## Regency Tax and Bookkeeping Services holds grand opening

By MARIE MCCOLM MONTE VISTA — The Regency Tax and Bookkeeping Services Agency held its grand opening and ribbon cutting on Friday, Feb. 16, with support from the Monte Vista Chamber of Commerce and the Opti-Mystics Citizen Action Network.

Approximately 10 people attended the ceremony at the agency office, 260 Adams St.

Owner-operator Benjamin F. Terry took the big pair of scissors that MV Chamber manager Heather Hillin handed him and proceeded to cut the red ribbon. With a smile, Terry cut the ribbon, and everyone clapped as the celebration began.

Terry said that he has been an accountant for many years. He was originally trained to do taxes in 2001 by Jackson Hewitt.

"The first tax season when I saw how everything operated, I really became interested in becoming an accountant," he said.

Terry has set up a home office in Monte Vista but said he will probably expand to Delta and other places too. Terry has a vision to set up his offices as franchise offices.

"I had my choice between Delta and Monte Vista. This right now is the home office," he said. "What I have figured out is that bookkeeping wise, I have more clients here, but tax wise I have more clients in Delta."

Terry said that as partners come in, the business will then expand.

Terry is originally from Texas but chose the Monte Vista area to move to because he was referred to the area by people from Delta.

Terry specializes in helping non-profit organizations. There are a lot of non-profit organizations that need help in the area, he said.

"My experience with

the folks in the non-profit sector are a lot of next generation folks and they need a lot of help with what their duties are, as well as their work," he said. "Many of them need help straightening their books out or making sure that their taxes have been filed right. A lot of them as second-generation owners, don't understand all of that, so I have been having to educate them as we go along. I am a non-profit specialist, so this is where I can really be of use and help a lot of people."

Terry explained that although non-profit organizations are his specialty, he also does all regular tax returns, including regular 1040s, self-employment returns, rental returns, business returns, and all other tax returns.

Terry is looking forward to servicing the area and meeting new people.

"It's great to be a part of the community. I am looking forward to expanding and helping a lot of people with all their different tax needs," Terry said.



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# Lifestyle

## Colorado saw fewer human-bear conflicts in 2023

By COLORADO PARKS AND WILDLIFE

DENVER — Colorado Parks and Wildlife received 3,526 reports of sightings and conflicts with bears in 2023, which is a 21 percent decrease from the average number of reports received in 2019-2023. Trash continues to be the number one source of conflicts between humans and bears.

Of the 3,526 reports CPW received in 2023, 1,795 resulted in property damage to a shed, garage, home, vehicle, fence, etc. Around 92 percent of property damage reported from bears is linked to an attractant of some kind, with over 51 percent linked to trash, 20 percent to livestock, chickens and beehives, and 19 percent to bird seed, pet food, barbecue grills, coolers and refrigerators.

In 2019, CPW launched a new bear reporting system to help wildlife managers track and quantify bear activity and conflicts across the state. The data collected is used to see overall trends and identify sources of conflict on a localized, regional and statewide level. Since its implementation in April 2019, CPW has recorded 21,310 reports of sightings and conflicts with bears.

The data from the annual bear cycle informs CPW's wildlife managers where bears are at and what they are up to, helping CPW identify sources of conflict and make educated management decisions. If you see a bear causing trouble in an urban area, call CPW to report it.

In an effort to help communities co-exist with bears, CPW provides local Colorado communities with financial resources

to support efforts that reduce human-bear conflicts through its Human-Bear Conflict Reduction Community Grant Program. Last spring, CPW awarded nearly \$1 million in funding to local communities, municipalities, businesses and non-profit organizations for projects working to create innovative ways to reduce human-bear conflicts and keep communities safe. Follow the links above to learn about human-bear conflict reductions grants and find out if your community is eligible.

"Collaboration with local communities is vital to successfully reducing human-bear conflicts and CPW cannot do it alone," said CPW Grant Manager Travis Long, manager of the Human-Bear Conflict Reduction Community Grant Program. "Without individuals and communities taking some action and following proper guidelines on living with bears, the number of conflicts will not go down. Fortunately, the funding CPW provides can help empower communities to take the proper actions."

There are an estimated 17,000 to 20,000 bears in Colorado and every year the majority of incident reports involve bears trying to access human food sources. 2023 was no different with trash continuing to be the number one source of conflicts. Other constant sources of conflict included birdfeeders, livestock and bears accessing open garages and other human-originated items that are left unsecured. These conflicts could all easily be reduced if the public takes some simple steps around their homes and properties to prevent bears from accessing them.

Nature and human be-

havior play a role in the amount of bear activity that we see annually. Drought conditions and other factors that may influence the availability of natural food crops for bears, such as a late freeze, vary across the state, as does the behavior of people when it relates to human-bear interactions.

In 2023, the majority of the East Slope received adequate temperatures and rainfall to produce natural forage for bears. Compared to 2022, reports on the East Slope remained steady with CPW's Northeast region receiving 905 reports and the Southeast regions re-

ceiving 696 reports.

CPW's Northwest region has the largest bear population in the state and received 1,228 reports, a 35 percent reduction from the previous year. Despite good natural forage in the area, an unreasonable number of bears were reported entering homes. Reports remained steady in CPW's Southwest region at 697.

One concern CPW is aware of from the public is a reluctance to report bear activity over a belief it will lead to the bear being put down. Data shows that of the 3,526 reports wildlife managers received on bears in 2023, only 1.8% led to euthani-

zation. The vast majority led to wildlife officers getting involved early enough to prevent the need to euthanize a bear.

When CPW is made aware, especially when conflicts first begin, wildlife officers can educate the community, make site visits to homes to help them secure attractants and can haze bears in an attempt to reinforce their natural fear of humans. In some circumstances, wildlife officers can attempt to relocate bears out of conflict areas to alleviate safety concerns or before that animal's behavior escalates to a dangerous level which may require euthanization.

However, wildlife officers stress relocation is not a fix-all solution as there is no way to unteach a bear once it learns that homes, garages or vehicles might contain food.

Below is the number of reports and bears euthanized and relocated by CPW annually since 2020:

- 2023: 3,526 reports, 33 relocated, 63 euthanized
- 2022: 4,147 reports, 59 relocated, 94 euthanized
- 2021: 3,598 reports, 51 relocated, 66 euthanized
- 2020: 4,806 reports, 118 relocated, 158 euthanized

## More than 70% of Colorado pedestrian fatalities occur in dark conditions

By COLORADO DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

According to data recently released by CDOT, pedestrian fatalities soared to a record high in 2023, representing 18.6% of Colorado's total roadway deaths. The majority of the past year's pedestrian deaths occurred at night or during low-light conditions. With nearly three more weeks of short winter days and extended darkness, CDOT is urging drivers to be cautious and alert while driving at night.

Approximately 74% of the pedestrian fatalities recorded last year occurred at night or in low-light conditions. October had the highest number of pedestrian deaths with 33 fatalities in one month. Over the past four years, October and November have been the months when most pedestrian fatalities occurred.

"Pedestrians don't go away when it gets dark out, especially this time of year when the sun sets early and rises late," said CDOT's Office of Transportation Safety Director Darrell Lingk. "We need a collective commitment from every road user to prioritize safety. Be alert, be aware of your surroundings and treat driving like the immense responsibility it is."

In the last decade, pedestrian fatalities in Colorado have surged by 96%, with a 16% increase between 2022 and 2023.

CDOT is urging individuals and local communities to make pedestrian safety a priority. This can be achieved through slower speeds and im-

proved infrastructure, particularly at intersections where pedestrians cross.

CDOT is actively investing in infrastructure projects to improve pedestrian safety and accessibility as part of the agency's commitment to equity in transportation safety. Examples include:

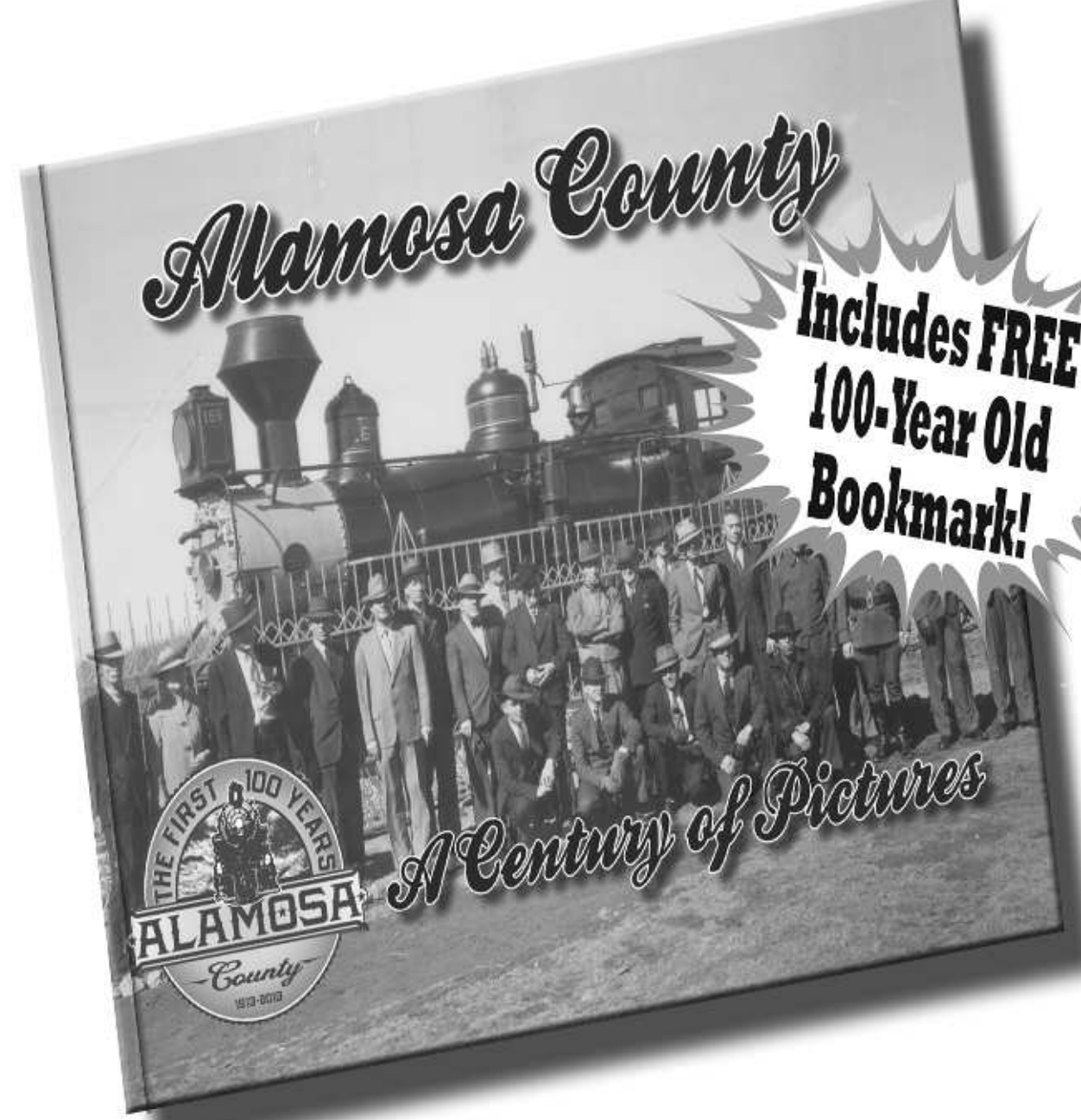
- The Boulder County CO 119 Safety and Mobility project focuses on a popular cycling route and incorporates protected bike lanes and features to enhance pedestrian safety.
- The CO 121 Signal Improvements project in Jefferson County replaced antiquated traffic signals with modern equipment, added pedestrian-focused signage and made improvements for people with disabilities by installing ADA-compliant ramps.

CDOT's Revitalizing Main Streets program further underscores the commitment to community-driven safety enhancements, with over \$75 million awarded through community grants.

In Fruita, the Mesa Street Multimodal Improvements project will create a slow-speed transportation corridor that accommodates pedestrians, cyclists, and vehicles, safely connecting downtown Fruita.

In Basalt, the program supports the Midland Avenue Streetscape Revitalization, which will enhance pedestrian space, create public gathering areas, and invigorate the economic and cultural center of the historic community.

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# Comics

## CROSSWORD PUZZLE

### NEA Crossword Puzzle

- ACROSS**
- 1 Master of ceremonies
  - 5 High card
  - 8 Girl
  - 12 Blade for fencing
  - 13 Soap pad brand
  - 14 Feudal serf
  - 15 Get along
  - 16 All the citizens
  - 18 Motif
  - 20 Spot on a card
  - 21 Take soft steps
  - 22 Cornball
  - 25 — me no questions ..."
  - 28 Baking fat
  - 29 Final sale caution (hyph.)
  - 33 Fabled sailor
  - 35 Nasty beer
  - 36 Dark beer
  - 37 Geese group
- DOWN**
- 1 Bulk
  - 2 Colorful fish
  - 3 Dried out
  - 4 Be overrun with
  - 5 Venomous reptile
  - 6 Maker of barrels
  - 7 Saw

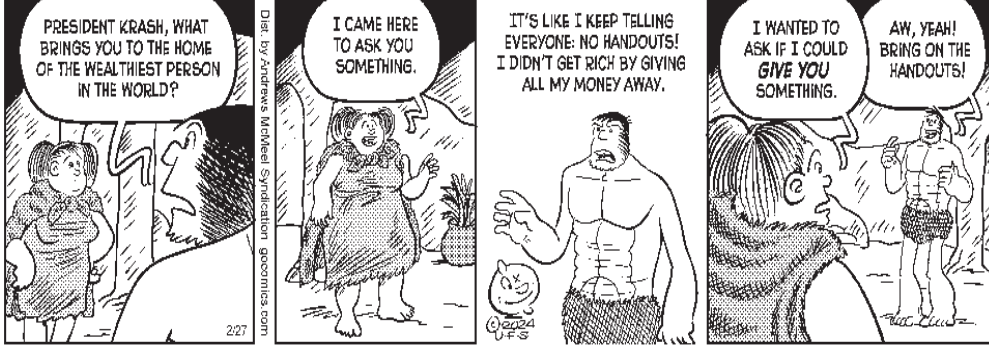
Answer to Previous Puzzle

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

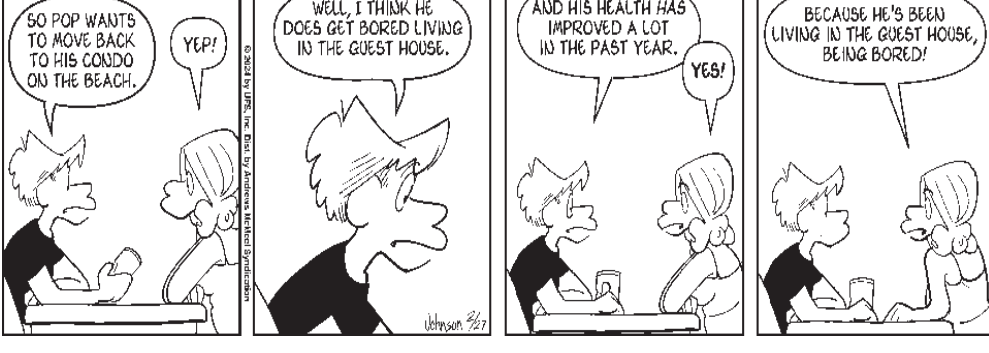
- 8 Spice Girls' B or C
- 9 "On the double!"
- 10 Native Peruvian
- 11 Act
- 17 — the ante
- 19 Brilliance
- 23 Used to own
- 24 Yin and —
- 25 Org. cousin
- 26 Building spot
- 27 Recognize
- 30 Indication
- 31 Run in neutral
- 32 Farming need
- 34 Head statue
- 35 Costly fur
- 37 Liquid meas.
- 39 Allows
- 40 Ceremony
- 43 — polloi
- 44 At the peak of
- 45 — Strauss & Co.
- 46 Perennial plant
- 49 Skillful
- 50 Merriment
- 51 — mater
- 52 Bring to maturity
- 54 "— Doubtfire"
- 55 Versatile bean

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

## ALLEY OOP



## ARLO & JANIS



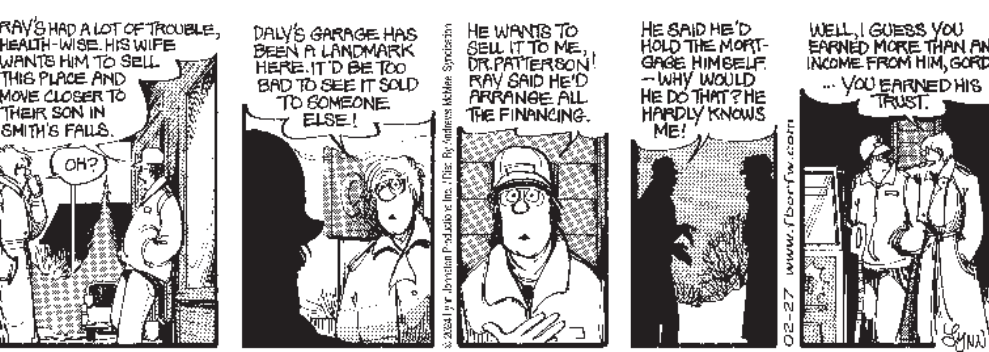
## BIG NATE



## THE BORN LOSER



## FOR BETTER OR FOR WORSE



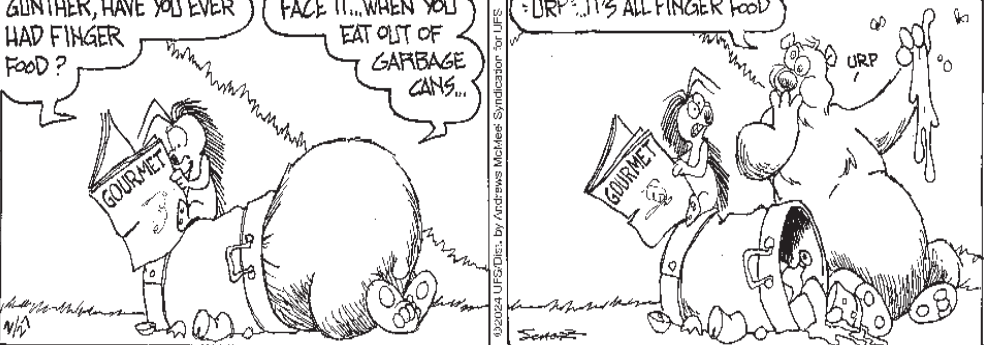
## FRANK & ERNEST



## GARFIELD



## THE GRIZZWELLS



## PEANUTS



## SUDOKU

DIFFICULTY RATING: ★☆☆☆☆

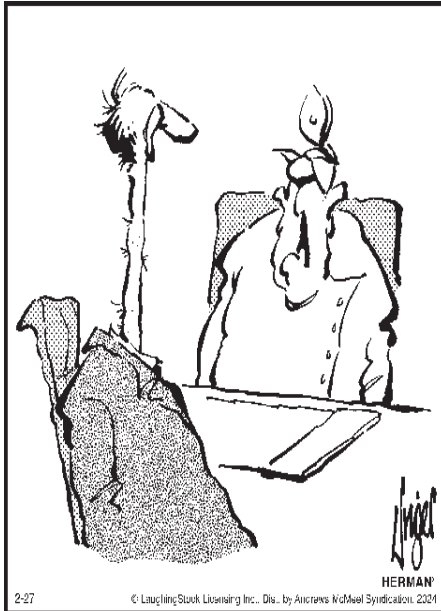
2	6	9	5	3	8		4	7
	5	4		1				
8	3						9	
		5	2				3	1
4		1	9	3				5
9	1		7		8			
	2						5	3
			4		2	8		
3	4		2	5	6	7	1	9

### PREVIOUS SOLUTION

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

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

## HERMAN



# Man's chronic unemployment creates doubt for future

DEAR ABBY: I'm a 32-year-old woman who has been with my boyfriend, my first and only partner, for 11 years. Overall, our relationship is healthy. He's smart, kind, supportive, caring, loyal and funny. I can see us getting married and living a happy life together.

The problem is, aside from a few short-term gigs, he hasn't had a job for the last six years, when he left his office job to move with me for my career. I've done well. But although he has applied for all sorts of jobs -- sales, admin, medical, police, government, fast food -- no one has hired him.

Last year, he developed a heart condition, and he can no longer perform physical labor. He also suffers from depression. So, I've been paying for nearly everything. I'm lucky not to have credit card debt, but at age 32, I have no retirement savings. My job barely covers living expenses for us and our pets.

I want to progress in life and have an equal partner. We've discussed marriage, and I think he's "the one." But how long should I hold out hope of him finding a job? Do I just keep on hoping, or do I consider ending

things and breaking both our hearts? -- BURDENED IN FLORIDA

DEAR BURDENED: Has it occurred to you that the reason the man you love has been unable to find employment all this time may be connected to his depression? It would benefit you both if he consulted a doctor and sought treatment for it. Free and low-cost counseling is available through the county, as well as through colleges and universities with departments of psychology. Please explore this before ending your relationship because it could be the solution to your problem.

DEAR ABBY: My sister has become very interested in Zen meditation. I'm afraid she has become obsessed with it. She spent a week at a special meditation workshop during which she said she meditated all day, every day to the point that her back hurt from sitting so much. She's now saying she wants to become a Zen priest, which necessitates spending three months at a Zen center meditating constantly.

My sister has a husband and two teenage daughters I think she's neglecting. She earned a master's degree in economics at a prestigious university but works only



## ABIGAIL VAN BUREN

part time as a book keeper to allow more time for her Zen center.

How can I politely persuade her to focus on her family and career, and let Zen meditation be her hobby rather than the focus of her life? -- PRIORITIES IN THE WEST

DEAR PRIORITIES: Your sister is an adult, intelligent and capable of making her own decision about the path in life she chooses. Nowhere did you state that her husband and children disagree with it. I do not think your input on this subject, regardless of how "politely" you offer it, will be welcomed. Keep your opinion to yourself unless asked for it.