



THE TRUTH WELL TOLD

A small cartoon character with red hair, wearing a red shirt and blue pants, is sitting on the letter 'I' of the word 'Independent'.

Independent

Monday

February 6, 2017
Number 61 Volume 130



GALLUP, NEW MEXICO 87301

©2016 THE GALLUP INDEPENDENT CO.
http://www.gallupindependent.com

PHONE 505-863-6811

PER COPY 50¢

Area voters to decide school board posts, bonds

By Independent staff

In Gallup and McKinley County, all rural precincts and voter convenience centers will be open Tuesday for voting. There are two bond questions on the ballot:

General obligation bond question:
(Applies to all McKinley County Precincts excluding Zuni Public School Area)
“Shall the Board of Education of the Gallup-McKinley County School District, County of McKinley, New Mexico, be authorized to issue up to \$25,000,000 of general obligation bonds for the purpose of erecting, remodeling, making additions to and furnishing school buildings; purchasing or improving school grounds; purchasing computer software and hardware for student use in public schools; providing matching funds for capital outlay projects funded pursuant to the Public School Capital Outlay Act; or any combination of these purposes?”

Capital improvements (1 mill) tax question:
(Applies to all McKinley County Precincts)
“Shall the governing Local Board of the University of New Mexico-Gallup Branch Community College, in the University of New Mexico-Gallup Branch Community College District, County of McKinley, State of New Mexico, be authorized to levy a tax of \$1.00 per each \$1,000.00 of net taxable value on all taxable property within the College District under the Property Tax Code for the property tax years 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020, 2021 AND 2022, to be used for current operations, maintenance and capital improvements of the College District as permitted by law?”

Gallup-McKinley County Schools
Three seats on the Gallup-McKinley County Schools Board of Election are up for grabs in Tuesday’s election. Incumbent and Albuquerque resident Sandra Jeff, Freda Joe and Charles Long are racing against one another for the District 2 seat. Charles Mortensen is running against Brenda Chicharello for the District 4 seat. The candidates for District 5 are Esther Macias, Gerald O’Hara and Michael Schaff.

Grants/Cibola County Schools
See Election, Page 5



Cable Hoover/Independent
Inga Ruiz, right, helps Canyon Curley cut a piece of cloth at the crafts table of the Story Garden at the Gallup Flea Market Jan. 28.

Story Garden: Fun, education, socialization and crafts

By Sonia Waraich
Staff writer
education@gallupindependent.com

GALLUP — On any given Saturday in the center of the Gallup Flea Market, 6-year-old Canyon Curley darts from reading stories to playing with puzzles before deciding to rest in the quiet of the ocean-blue trailer donated to the nonprofit All Together in Dignity Fourth World’s weekly Story Garden.
“This is Canyon’s favorite place to come to,” Canyon’s mother Dawn Curley said. “These guys are great with the kids. ... It’s like a secondary education with socialization and crafts.”

The Story Garden offers kids and families a free weekly opportunity to engage in fun educational activities together with different stations offering different activities, such as picture books, puzzles and computer games. ATD Fourth World also has special activities for the kids to do on occasion, such as having adult education students from the University of New Mexico-Gallup North Campus come tell stories to the children.
Nine-year-old Tavjeana Negale, who has been going to the Story Garden since she was 5, was playing computer games helping her learn the state capitals Saturday. But Negale said what she really

See Story Garden, Page 5



Cable Hoover/Independent
Gabriel Mescal studies the board while playing a round of Connect 4 in the Story Garden at the Gallup Flea Market Jan. 28.

Council tables tribal name change bill

By Marley Shebala
Diné Bureau
navajo1@gallupindependent.com

WINDOW ROCK, Ariz. — The Navajo Nation Council tabled legislation to change the name of the Navajo Nation to Diné Nation to give tribal members more time to discuss and consider the name change. Legislation 0395-16 was tabled with a 14-3 vote during the Council’s spring session in January after two hours of debate. Health, Education and Human Services Committee Chairman Jonathan Hale, the sponsor of the bill, agreed that the tabling action would allow for more public comments and that the bill would return to the Council during its spring session in April.
“The intent of the legislation was to question how we identify ourselves,” Hale said in a news release. “Then we question ourselves as Council delegates, should this question be up to the Navajo people or the legislators? We also need to hear what our people think about this.”
He noted that the bill received no public comments when it was electronically posted for its five-day comment period on the Council’s website.

See Tribe name change, Page 5

Piñon man with history of arrests arrested again

By Nathan J. Tohtsoni
Shiprock Bureau
navajo2@gallupindependent.com
Twitter: @njtohtsoni

CHINLE, Ariz. — A man with two current cases pending trial was arrested Christmas Day and charged with one count of possession with intent to distribute methamphetamine, possessing a firearm in relation to drug trafficking and forfeiture allegations.
According to court records, Helwood Begay, 37, of Piñon, Arizona, has a history of felony charges dating back 11 years. He was arrested on or about Dec. 25 in Arizona on the Navajo Nation related to knowingly and intentionally possessing methamphetamine with the intent to distribute. He was in possession of a .44 Magnum Super Blackhawk Ruger during and in relation to a drug-trafficking crime.
These latest counts come as he has two other felony cases scheduled for trial.

See Arrested, arrested and arrested, Page 5

Cibola sheriff, deputy presented lifesaving awards



Sheriff Tony Mace



Deputy Lester Lister

By Kathy Helms
Cibola County Bureau
cibola@gallupindependent.com

GRANTS — Call it fate, divine intervention or mere coincidence, but two children are alive today because of the quick thinking of Cibola County Sheriff’s Office personnel.
Deputy Lance Lister thought he was going to help Sheriff Tony Mace with a presentation when he showed up at the Jan. 26 meeting of the Cibola County Commission. Instead, the shy officer was recognized as deputy of the year for going above and beyond what his job requires. But that wasn’t all.
“Back in June 2016, Deputy Lister was recognized for saving a young child’s life out at the Sky City Casino,” Mace said.

Lister had gone to the casino’s hotel where his relatives were staying while visiting family in the Grants area, according to Independent reports.

Breath of life

Lister was sitting with relatives beside the pool around 8:30 p.m. when he noticed a man dive into the water and retrieve a young girl who was floating near the bottom. Lister ran to the side of the pool and as the man brought the girl to the surface, Lister reached out and placed her on the ground.
“I have no idea how long she had been in the pool,” he said. When he first saw her, she didn’t appear to be breathing and her lips had turned a shade of purplish-blue. He yelled to family members to call 911, but

realizing they wouldn’t get there in time, he rolled the child on her side and administered CPR.
“Once her airway was cleared, she was able to breathe, and vomited,” Lister said. “She then began breathing and crying.”
The girl’s family rushed to thank him. In the confusion, he never got their names. Lister’s name was submitted to the state of New Mexico, and he was recognized by the state with a Lifesaving Award, which Mace presented at the County Commission meeting.
But Lister was not the only one to receive such an award.
Undersheriff Mike Munk addressed commissioners.
“Back in March 30, 2005, your sheriff – (then-)Deputy Tony Mace – was on patrol out at Interstate I-40 at milepost 126 and

came upon a very horrific crash – a multiple fatality crash,” Munk said. “During the time he was investigating, he came across a 4-year-old little girl that was trapped inside a burning vehicle with gasoline all over her. He ended up pulling that little girl to safety and saved her life.”
“He was recognized by the state of New Mexico for his bravery, but one of the highest awards that an officer can get is the Lifesaving Award, so tonight, it gives me great pleasure to present this award to my very close friend and former academy roommate, Sheriff Tony Mace,” Munk said, then added, “Long overdue, sheriff.”
“Just doing my job,” Mace responded.

No time to think
See Lifesaving awards, Page 5

Tribe name change

Continued from Page 1

Navajo law mandates that legislation for the Council and its standing committees be electronically posted on the Council’s website for five days for public comments, which must be submitted to the Office of Legislative Services executive director.

As soon as the five-day public comment period ends, the legislation is ready for committee and Council action.

But public comments must be accepted up until final action is taken on the legislation and they are rarely read publicly into the record when legislation goes before the Council or its standing committees.

When legislation is electronically posted to the Council to begin its five-day public comment period, the Office of the Speaker’s public information office does not issue news releases. The executive director for legislative services issues emails to the executive, judicial and legislative branches, which includes the president and 110 chapters. The media are also on the email list at their request.

Pros and cons

During the Council debate on the legislation, Council Delegate Herman Daniels Jr. expressed opposition to the name change and concern about the cost, especially to changes that would have to be made to supplies, equipment and other items.

“If we change the Nation’s name to Diné Nation, how much will it cost? Where will the money come from to make the change?” Daniels asked. “Also, many of our local chapter governments have changed their names to Navajo translated names but majority of the public still use the old names.

“For example Navajo Mountain Chapter changed their name to ‘Naa’tsis’ Aán Chapter,’ but people still identify the chapter as Navajo Mountain,” he said. “Our Navajo people are used to the name Navajo.”

Council Delegate Nathaniel Brown, who supported the name change, said the name change would allow the people to properly identify themselves as Diné.

“It may be true that we are known as Navajo to the world but how do we identify ourselves in prayers? We identify ourselves as Diné in front of the Holy People,” Brown explained. “The word Navajo is a generic term that was given to us by the federal government.”

He added, “We constantly tell our children to learn the language and culture, and allowing the name change will be a first step to revitalizing our language.”

Brown emphasized that many people interpret the word Diné as “the People,” but some Council members are concerned that the word Diné could be associated with different meanings and interpretations.

Daniels argued that the word Diné could be translated into “the People” or could refer to a male.

Council Delegate Kee Allen Begay Jr. led the tabling motion to allow more time for the legislation to be considered by the public.

“The legislation arises many questions. I believe that we need insight from the elders, chapters and youth,” Begay said. “We also need clear recommendations and explanation of the word Diné.”

The legislation mandates that its approval would allow for it to go into effect in October, which would provide sufficient time for the planning and implementation of the name change.

Public comments for the bill can be submitted in the following ways:

- Digital comments may be emailed to comments@navajo-nsn.gov.
- Written comments may be mailed to Executive Director, Office of Legislative Services, P.O. Box 3390, Window Rock, Arizona 86515.
- Written comments may be faxed to 928-871-7259.

Tabled legislation

The Council also tabled the following:

- Legislation 0345-16: Requesting assistance from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency in Arizona and Apache County to address uranium contamination in the Sanders, Arizona, water supply.
- Legislation 0431-16: Approving \$248,587 to the Navajo Election Administration to hold the Transportation Stimulus Plan Referendum.
- Legislation 0355-16: Adopting the Sihasin Fund Twin Arrows Glittering Mountain Family Entertainment Center Economic Development Expenditure Plan.
- Legislation 0343-16: Approving \$157,662.57 for the Tse Si Ani Chapter powerline extension.
- Legislation 0361-16: Amending CAP-26-16 by exempting range units 110, 601, 602, 603, 301 and 301 from Navajo Partitioned Lands Range Unit boundaries and grazing districts; amending IGRJN-110-10 by exempting range units 110, 601, 602, 603, 301 and 310 from eligibility criteria for issuance of new NPL grazing permits; authorizing Kayenta and Chilchinbeto Chapter officials to discuss with land users, permittees and residents of range units 110, 601, 602, 603, 301 and 310 the boundaries and grazing permits eligibility criteria for these range units; and directing the Kayenta and Chilchinbeto Chapter officials to provide a report to the Council.
- Legislation 0403-16: Amending Resolution CJA-03-14 to extend the time for a limited waiver of sovereign immunity to allow the tribe to be sued in federal district court for compliance with the National Environmental Protection Act to implement the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development grants and authorizing the tribe’s president to be the certifying tribal official to execute form 7015.5 through Sept. 30, 2021.



Cable Hoover/Independent

Karen Stornelli helps children build a puzzle in the Story Garden at the Gallup Flea Market Jan. 28.

Story Garden

Continued from Page 1

enjoyed was the arts and crafts over the years, including making a dream catcher and a mask.

The Story Garden is usually set up and ready for the kids at 11 a.m. — weather permitting — and wraps up around 2 or 3 p.m.; however, it starts up earlier in the day when the weather is warmer in spring and summer, around 9 or 10 a.m.

Start of the Story Garden

Working with the kids Saturday were Inga Ruiz, of the UNM-Gallup North Campus, Erick Sanders, of ATD Fourth World, and Karen Stornelli, also of ATD Fourth World who originally decided to bring the Story Garden to Gallup with the aid of community input.

“The idea for doing this actually came out of a community forum we went to the first year we were here where parents, educators and academics were all saying we need more opportunities just for literacy — for family literacy spaces — and for kids to be stimulated educationally, socially, all of those things,” Stornelli said.

ATD Fourth World sets up similar spaces across the world, generally called street libraries, so Stornelli said creating that space seemed like a natural fit.

Because educational opportunities are difficult to deliver to kids in vast, rural

areas such as McKinley County and the surrounding communities, Stornelli said the Gallup Flea Market seemed like the perfect place to set up that kind of family literacy space.

“It is a hub for the social and economic life for this part of the country,” Stornelli said. “It’s one of the reasons we chose it as a strategic place to do what we’re doing because we knew that a lot of lower income families in the region come here for their economic viability. ... It’s an important place for the community.”

Fostering positive change

Andy and Sandy Romero, who have a stall across the way from the Story Garden and have been at the flea market since 1981, said they’ve seen positive changes since the Story Garden popped up about five years ago, particularly in some children who had attitude problems.

Sandy Romero recalled one girl who frequents the flea market: “Before she was a little brat — point blank, she was a brat. Now you hear her say please and thank you. Her attitude is much better.”

Andy Romero said he attributes that to the fact that Stornelli, Sanders, Ruiz and the other people who have helped with the garden have patience with the children and treat them with kindness.

“They believe in them,” he said. “That support system is really important to a

small child. ... Even for an hour or two hours, it helps them develop.”

“They’re good to all the kids,” Sandy Romero added.

The Romeros said because of the positive changes they’ve seen, they try to help the Story Garden succeed in whatever way they can, including donating the trailer now used by ATD Fourth World to the nonprofit after finding it abandoned in the flea market. Andy Romero said the kids spent a Saturday painting the trailer with an oceanic motif.

“They’re a positive feature at the Gallup Flea Market,” Andy Romero said.

Dawn Curley said she’s been coming to the Story Garden with Canyon for about the past nine months and really appreciates what the space offers her son, who is autistic and doesn’t do well in classroom settings.

Dawn Curley said the people involved in the Story Garden give her son the one-on-one attention he needs, particularly Sanders, while she can take a breather, walk around the flea market and check on Canyon from time to time.

“He’ll stay here all day,” she said, “from the time they open to the time they close.”

Information or to volunteer: 101 E. Hill Ave. in Gallup, where ATD Fourth World’s office is located, or call Stornelli, 505-488-3624.

Lifesaving awards

Continued from Page 1

“You don’t know how you’re going to react until you’re put in that situation,” Mace said Wednesday in a follow-up interview. “In society, we have a soft spot for children, so when you’re presented with something like that, it really shocks the conscience. For me, there was no thinking about it. It was just action — get in there and get it done.”

For no particular reason, Mace decided to drive to the county line on New Mexico Highway 6 while on patrol that

March day nearly 12 years ago.

“I went down there and made a loop, and I was coming back and drove up on the crash. It had just happened. Basically, a wrong-way driver had crossed over the median and hit this SUV and caused it to collide head-on with a semi. When it did, it basically ejected and killed everybody in the vehicle,” he said, except for the young girl.

“She was thrown out of the vehicle and the vehicle came to rest on top of her,” he said. “She was trapped underneath it. The fuel tank was ruptured. All the

fuel was spilling out on top of her and the engine compartment of the vehicle was catching fire.”

Assisted by some passersby, Mace ripped open the back of the SUV, took out the jack, and jacked up the vehicle enough to slide the girl out from underneath.

Adrenalin pumping, Mace then flagged down an ambulance that just happened to be coming through on its way to Albuquerque with a heart patient transfer.

“I was able to stop that ambulance and basically pass this

kid off to them. At first they were kind of reluctant because they had this heart patient that was in cardiac arrest that they were trying to deal with,” he said. “Now you have a critically injured child. It’s tough on them. But you know, they did it.”

The child suffered chemical burns from the fuel and broken limbs, but she survived, Mace said. She is now a high school senior, and the two remain in close contact.

“I think it was fate,” he said. “The right people were in the right place at the right time.”

Arrested, arrested and arrested

Continued from Page 1

Begay filed a 60-day extension recently for a kidnapping case that is scheduled for a March 7 trial in Prescott, Arizona. He and a co-defendant have another case set for trial April 4 in Phoenix in connection with an assault on an officer.

Two previous cases

The five counts of assault charges stem from an Oct. 6, 2014, incident on the Navajo Nation in which he and co-defendant Johnny Grandson Jr. allegedly knowingly assaulted two Navajo Nation Police officers with a motor vehicle with intent to do bodily harm. Both defendants were also charged with ad-

ditional assault charges. They allegedly used a floor jack and railroad ties with the intent to do bodily harm.

According to Grandson’s detention hearing, the two defendants avoided capture during a high-speed chase by throwing objects, which disabled and/or endangered law enforcement vehicles, when more than half a dozen police officers were trying to stop their vehicle.

Begay also faces nine counts of kidnapping, use of a firearm during a crime of violence, kidnap of two minor children, assault by strangulation or suffocation, and assault resulting in bodily harm.

The charges stem from a Feb. 20 incident on the Navajo Nation. He allegedly used a firearm in the kidnapping of a spouse or intimate partner and two

underage children. Between Feb. 20 and Feb. 22, he allegedly intentionally strangled and suffocated the spouse three times resulting in bodily harm.

Shooting self-defense

Begay previously served six months in the Bureau of Prisons for possession of a stolen firearm. He was in possession of a Heckler & Koch 12-gauge shotgun where the manufacturer’s serial number was removed, altered or obliterated.

Court transcripts indicate Begay received the gun in exchange for meth through a friend, Kelly Joyce, who got them through friends of his in Kayenta, Arizona, who had subsequently stolen them. Begay reportedly used the weapon to shoot a victim in self-defense when the victim banged on the door of

Begay’s residence late at night. Court records indicate the victim, who was recently released from prison, came over to avenge Begay for a friend who was still in prison.

Chinle Police arrested Begay Oct. 21, 2006, when police officers drew their weapons on him when he pulled up to his residence while officers were there to arrest him.

During a detention hearing July 22, 2008, prosecution mentioned the shooting of the victim but only that Begay was charged with possession of the weapon.

Begay’s “lengthy criminal history” was mentioned, which included an aggravated assault charge in June 2004 where he served a year in jail, probation violation in August 2004 where he served six months, battery and disor-

derly conduct in February 2005 where he attended peacemaking, unlawful use of a weapon in December 2006 with six months of community service, tampering with evidence in February 2007, probation violation in May 2007, escape in August 2007, and a series of public intoxication arrests. It is assumed these are tribal charges since they do not show up as federal cases.

The judge stated at the time before placing Begay in a recovery home in Phoenix, “I don’t believe for a moment that if I returned him to the reservation, notwithstanding the best intentions of his family, that he would follow my release conditions.”

Begay is currently detained pending trial as he is considered a flight risk and danger.

UNM-G Local Advisory Board

The University of New Mexico-Gallup has three seats up for election on its Local Advisory Board, but one of the seats has no candidates and will be appointed by the newly elected board.

Incumbent Priscilla A. Smith and Edwin J. Begay are contending for Position 1 while incumbent Ralph Richards is up against Marvin Murphy for Position 2 on the board.

Zuni Public School Board

Positions 3, 4 and 5 — Seeking Position 3 is Jerome Haskie; seeking Position 4 is Shelly C.

Chimoni; seeking Position 5 as a write-in candidate is Willard Zuni. Chimoni is running for Position 4 to fill the remainder of a four year term expiring March 1, 2019.

Early voting

Early voting ended at 5 p.m. Friday for the school elections in Gallup and McKinley County. Rick Palochak, the county election director, said 449 people voted early or by absentee ballots in the county school board races, the Zuni school board elections and the election for the advisory board for the University of New Mexico-Gallup branch. Total registration is about 40,000.

Election

Continued from Page 1

Six candidates are vying for three positions on the Grants/Cibola County Schools School Board in Tuesday’s election.

Candidates for District 1 include incumbent Emily E. Hunt-Dailey and challenger Jolynn B. Sandoval.

Candidates for District 2 are incumbent Dion W. Sandoval and challenger Jerry Sanchez.

Candidates for District 3 are Thomas A. Jackson Sr. and Ronald L. Ortiz, both write-ins.

Polls will be open 7 a.m.-7 p.m. For polling information, contact the Cibola County Clerk’s

Office at 505-285-2535.

Central Consolidated School District

Two candidates are for vying for positions on the Central Consolidated School District Board of Education.

Candidates for District 4 include incumbent Christina Aspaas and write-in challenger Ramondo Clah.

Sheldon Pickering is running unopposed for District 1.

Polls are open 7 a.m.-7 p.m. Tuesday.