TRINIDAD STATE MAGAZINE

December, 2019

FIRST FEMALE National Champ

ROBOTICS TEAM AGAIN CONQUERS THE SAND DUNES

PROSTHETIC, :::: HAND PROJECT

NEW PRESIDENT Meet Dr. Rhonda Epper

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President - Dr. Rhonda M. Epper Editor - Greg Boyce - Greg Boyce, Margaret Sanderson, Toni DeAngelis and Kyle Masterson Writers Designer - Raven Paiz Contributors - Matt Young, Todd Cotton, Mike Salbato



>>> A MESSAGE FROM OUR PRESIDENT



As Trinidad State approaches our 95th birthday in 2020, we have many reasons to celebrate. Each year we serve thousands of students, many of whom are the first in their families to attend college. Countless graduates have transferred to universities or moved into the workforce, contributing to our local and state economies. In fact, Trinidad State boasts one of the highest graduation rates of any community college in Colorado, earning recognition from the Aspen Institute as a "Top 150" college out of over 1,100 community colleges nationally.

Through the years, our institution has witnessed prosperous times and it has weathered tough times. But it's important to remember that throughout our 95 year history, we have consistently changed students' lives for the better. No other institution in our society can change the trajectory of a student's life as significantly as a community college. Trinidad State is proud of our open access mission and our impact on generations of students and their families.

In these pages, you will see some of the stories that bind us to our history and are propelling us into the future. From our first female national champion, to our work with the next state park at Fisher's Peak, to our Teacher Education partnership leading to more certified teachers in our service area – we are working to build brighter futures for our students and our communities. It's an exciting time to be at Trinidad State!

Sincerely,

Thonda M. Epper

Dr. Rhonda M. Epper President

Dr. Rhonda Epper came to Trinidad State from Community College of Denver where she served as Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs. During her tenure as provost, she guided the institution through a transformation of developmental education, a comprehensive accreditation review, implementation of institutional outcomes assessment, a new process for program review, over 30 new transfer agreements, and the adoption of guided pathways.

Prior to her role at Community College of Denver, Epper was Chief Academic/Student Affairs Officer at the Colorado Department of Higher Education where she



DR. EPPER ARRIVED IN JUNE

engaged statewide stakeholder councils of provosts, student affairs and admissions officers, and the statewide General Education transfer council. She also served CCCS at the system level for nine years in various roles, including Assistant Provost and Co-Executive Director of CCCOnline.

Dr. Epper replaced Dr. Carmen Simone who led Trinidad State for five years before taking a job in South Dakota. Dr. Kerry Hart of Alamosa served as interim president from January to May.



STUDENTS EXPERIENCE SALMON SPAWN

For an aquaculture student, a field trip doesn't get any better than a mountain lake and the spawning of Kokanee salmon. Jim White, biologist





for Colorado Parks and Wildlife, led the demonstration for the Trinidad State Aquaculture program at Lake Nighthorse near Durango.

This was a hands-on trip. Students learned how science can help assure there's a salmon crop in future years. Trinidad State students stood on a platform that has a series of nets attached to it which allow fish to swim in, but not out. The students learned how to express eggs from the female fish and how those eggs can be given the best change of hatching.

"When you get somebody that's naturally passionate about fish, like Chris (Valesey), and you cultivate that passion and bring them into an opportunity like this, they do extremely well," said Aquaculture Director, Ben Webster. "My best students are the ones like Chris that just love fish and love fishing," he said.

Alumni Memorials

- John E. Clark, '40
- William Eastman, '41
- Scott Henline, '48Jack C. Stoney, '49
- Villiam Ferver, '50
- Nick Furia, '51
- Louise (Armijo) Pachelli, '52
- Louis J. Amato, '53
- Christine (Olson) Lawrence, '55
- Elizabeth (Mestas) Schill, '55
- Albert Anthony Blasi, '58
- Roger Frederick Brunelli Sr., '59
- Donald Gene Falagrady, '59
- William Donges, '60
- Yolanda V. (Trujillo) Olguin, '61
- Karen (Hainlen) Neet, '63
- Mike J. Smith, '65
- Stephen J. Gunther, '66
- John Cunico, '68
- Mark William Daman, '68
- Christina Sena, '70
- George Martin Salvatore, '71
- Kathryn S. (Stenson) Vaglienty, '71
- Geraldine "Jerrye" Garcia-Swift, '72
- Alfonso "Al" Adair, '73
- Susanna M. Key, '73
- Linda (Shea) Pfalmer, '73
- David C. Milinazzo, '74
- Kelvin K. Doss, '78
- David Leroy Cisneros, '83
- Dave Morgan, '85
- Billy Haddow, '91
- Lesha (Karp) Williamson, '91
- Richard Carlisle, '96
- Mary Martha Campos, '98
- Vanessa Rivera, '18

FRIENDS OF TSJC

- Virginia (Putaturo-Meek) Cesario
- Patricia Chandler
- Margaret B. Fodor
- Charles A. Healy
- Roy Mitchell
- Mary Ann (nee Smith) Newnam
- Herbert "Bert" J. Pedri
- Anna (Rino) Risley

The Aspen Institute College Excellence Program in early November named Trinidad State as one of 150 community colleges eligible to compete for the \$1 million Aspen Prize for Community College Excellence. This is the nation's signature recognition of high achievement and performance among America's community colleges. Based on strong and improving student outcomes—including in learning, completion rates, employment rates, earnings, and equity—15 percent of community colleges nationwide have been invited to apply for the Aspen Prize.

>>> COLORADO'S NEXT STATE PARK



Only five miles from the Trinidad Campus, Fisher's Peak is synonymous with Trinidad. The peak and surrounding land have not been available for recreation, but that will soon change.

Colorado Governor Jared Polis announced in September Fishers Peak and 19,000 surrounding acres will become Colorado's 42nd state park and will be open for visitors by January of 2021.

This will be the second Colorado state park within 10 miles of the Trinidad Campus.



Gibson Girls

Trinidad State's Samuel Freudenthal Memorial Library is home to many amazing pieces of history saved over the last 95 years. One group of photos recently displayed was from the early 1900s, depicting the age of the "Gibson Girl." This style was the creation of Charles Dana Gibson (1867 to 1944). This was Gibson's vision of America's "ideal woman." She was a mix of old fashion (elegant and refined) and new fashion (witty, independent and athletic). Many other artists then adopted the Gibson Girl look, which was popular until the beginning of World War I in 1914.

The illustrations on display were mostly music scores with these "modern" women on the covers.





Trinidad State's Mike Sisneros was selected Recruiter of the Year for 2018 by the Colorado Council on High School/ College Relations. The volunteer council, comprised of high school counselors and college admission's staff, selects the best recruiter from all the two and four-year colleges and universities in the state.

Sisneros recruits, not only in the Valley, but in Northern New Mexico and Kansas as well. He attends career fairs where he talks, not only to traditional students moving immediately on from high school to college, but to older non-traditional students who may want to make a career change. "I love what I do," said Sisneros, "and I'm proud that my efforts have benefitted Trinidad State."

FOUR-YEAR TEACHING DEGREE WITHOUT LEAVING TRINIDAD

Trinidad State, through a partnership with the University of Colorado Denver can now offer four-year education degrees for students who don't have the ability to leave southern Colorado for college.

Students take their first two years to obtain their associates degree at the TSJC campus. Starting in year three, they work primarily with CU Denver faculty, teaching courses locally and through online coursework. The program features a full year of teaching residency in the fourth year. Students may focus on elementary education or early childhood education.

The statewide teacher shortage has been felt most acutely in rural areas and this is one way to help ease that shortage.

2018 GRADUATE GETS COVETED NASAINTERNSHIP

Only five community college students from across the nation were selected in August to intern this fall semester at NASA's Wallops Flight Facility on the eastern shore of Virginia near Chesapeake Bay. Jennifer Kramarz, a 2018 Trinidad State graduate, is one of them. Kramarz was one of 17 in her 2016 high school graduation class from Hoehne, Colorado. She started taking college classes from Trinidad State when she was a junior in high school. She now attends the University of Colorado at Colorado Springs.

"The amount (of knowledge) I gained from the robotics team and from Cynthia Clements (Trinidad State mathematics instructor and robotics advisor) is just phenomenal," said Kramarz. "Without that, I would not be doing this internship at NASA right now, without a doubt."

The Wallops Flight Facility is primarily a rocket launch site to support science and exploration missions for NASA (National Aeronautics and Space Administration) and other federal agencies.



Branson School team members position their robot during the BEST competition on October 19, 2019



SOCO BEST ROBOTICS

The SoCo BEST Robotics event in October brought 10 area middle/high school teams to Scott Gym. BEST (Boosting Engineering Science and Technology) Robotics is a national competition requiring students to build a remote control robot in six weeks. The 2019 theme was Off the Grid. The game required robots to try to restore power after a hypothetical catastrophe.

Game Award:

1st Place – Branson School (Branson, Colorado) 2nd Place – Rocky Ford High School (Rocky Ford, Colorado) 3rd Place – Liberty High School (Colorado Springs, Colorado)

BEST Award:

1st Place – Liberty High School (Colorado Springs, Colorado) 2nd Place – Branson School (Branson, Colorado) 3rd Place – Swink School (Swink, Colorado) Awarded to the team that best embodies the concept of Boosting Engineering, Science and Technology. Winning the BEST Award is considered the highest achievement any team in the competition can accomplish.

Top teams have the option of participating at a regional competition in Denver.

BUILD A ROBOT IN SIX WEEKS...

STRINIDAD STATE'S ROBOT "GRIFFIN" OUTPERFORMS THEM ALL AT NASA EVENT



Thirteen years ago, when the Great Sand Dunes National Park and Preserve, with its Mars-like terrain, was deemed a good site for robot practice, the Colorado Robotics Challenge was born. NASA had originally tested the Mars Viking Landers at the Sand Dunes back in the 1970s. On April 13, in freezing 19-degree windy weather, Trinidad State's autonomous "GRIFFIN" (Golden Roaming Intelligent Fantabulous Fabricated Independent Navigator) conquered the six-course challenge. GRIFFIN navigated independently by using an array of sensors around rocks, pits or barriers to a beacon mounted on a tripod placed in the center of the approximately 40-foot diameter pie-shaped course.

Trinidad State teams are always among the top performers at the event. Unlike past years, no traditional college students were on the team. It consisted of only students coming to Trinidad State from four different high schools: Branson, Goal Academy, Hoehne and Trinidad High. The seven students were required to take Intro to Programming in the fall and then First Year Engineering Projects in the spring. Taken while in high school, students earn both high school and college credit for the same class.

The annual event is sponsored by NASA's Colorado Space Grant Consortium (COSGC) of which Trinidad State is a member. The event was a brainchild of Adams State University which hosts a practice day for the teams in their SLV STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Art and Mathematics) Shop the day before the event. Here the teams can exchange ideas and finalize their strategies. Thirty teams were entered in the event.



According to Bernadette Garcia Galvez, Associate Director of COSGC and organizer of the event, GRIFFIN outperformed all other robots and was one of three to finish the course.

When accepting students for the robotics team, motivation and time requirements are top considerations for mathematics instructor and advisor Cindy Clements. She said, "The major tasks for this challenge were building a robot that moves in the sand, that is smart enough, through its programming, to "see" and avoid obstacles, is robust enough to survive hitting rocks or falling into a pit, and is programmed to go to a specific location using a compass."

KENYAN RUNNER WINS NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP

Alamosa, Colorado is not quite heaven, but Benadine Chelimo didn't know that in August of 2017 when she sat at Jomo Kenyatta International Airport in Nairobi, Kenya waiting to board a plane. "I was just feeling excited and nervous to be in America and see this country because everybody always talks about it in a good way," said Chelimo, "I thought it was like heaven." Nearly forty hours, three plane rides and a four-hour drive from Denver later, Chelimo made it to her residence hall room in Alamosa, finally able to get some rest before her first day of classes and training. She needed it. The fall semester brings excitement, new beginnings, and fresh opportunities for all college freshmen. For members of the Trinidad State cross country team, fall also brings long hard workouts in the thin air of the San Luis Valley.

Coach Lauren Masterson was worried about her incoming freshman at the start. "When Benadine showed up I was a little unsettled. Her right leg kicked out awkwardly when she ran, she clearly hadn't been training for the previous few months, and she hardly spoke a word. I wasn't sure how she'd get through classes with how quiet she was, and I was pretty sure she wasn't going to be much of a runner with her lack of fitness and inefficient running form."

Chelimo, however, showed she had a special something that Masterson desires to see in all of her athletes during the first hard workout of the season -- fearlessness. "We were working out at Cole Park on a hot day in August," Masterson recalled, "We had told Benadine to only run half of each interval at whatever pace she felt comfortable, as we had no idea what she could manage. She took off with teammate Toni Moore from the start. Toni was in very good shape and Benadine had no business trying to run with her." Chelimo quickly fell behind and then stopped halfway through the interval as instructed. Over

the next few minutes she collapsed on the grass of the community park gasping for air. The coaches figured that would be it for Chelimo for the day, as she appeared to be suffering a heart attack more than recovering. "It was not pretty," remembered assistant coach Kyle Masterson. "She was breathing so hard I thought she might need an inhaler or something."

"I told her that was enough for the day and she could just jog slow until the rest of the team finished the workout. But Benadine pulled herself up and said she'd try another."

Once again, Chelimo took off with Toni Moore, fell behind, stopped half-way through, and fell into a heaving, sweaty lump on the grass. Just as before, the coaches told her that was enough for the day and she could just cool down. Again, just as before, Chelimo pulled herself off the ground before the start of the next interval and took off with the other girls.

"I couldn't believe it," recalled Coach Masterson, "she was looking like she needed a trip to the hospital one second and then taking off with no fear the next. That's when I thought we might have something if we could get Benadine in shape and fine tune her mechanics."

"I used to hate training so much," Chelimo recalled with a laugh. "The first two months were so hard, especially Tuesdays and Fridays when we would do speed workouts. The only thing in my mind keeping me going at that time was the fear of losing my scholarship." Little did Chelimo know, that thought never crossed her coaches' minds. After some time Chelimo started to realize her coaches weren't going to pull any support from her. "I thanked God that I have awesome coaches who understand me and accept me the way I am."

TAINIDAD STA

Chelimo missed becoming an All-American in Cross Country during that freshman season by only a few spots. The following spring, she followed her now close friend Toni Moore to an All-American finish in the 3000 meters at the NJCAA Indoor Track & Field National Championships.

When the outdoor track season started Chelimo took up a new event, the 3,000-meter steeplechase. The steeplechase is a brutal event that entails hurdling large, heavy barriers that don't budge if you run into one. To make it even more difficult, one of the barriers requires runners to land in a 12-foot pit of water. The event is widely regarded as the most grueling in track and field and the most exciting to watch, as errors and fatigue often lead to dramatic and painful falls and pileups.

STEEPLECHASE IS THE MOST GRUELING EVENT IN TRACK AND FIELD

"The steeplechase is an event where one must be fearless," commented Masterson. "It requires one to run to exhaustion while jumping over 30-inch barriers. The last few laps an athlete is at a high risk of hitting a barrier, which can be very painful. This year Benadine had to watch a girl break her leg over the water barrier prior to her own race."

Chelimo would eventually get comfortable enough with steeplechase to place seventh as a freshman at the 2018 NJCAA Outdoor Track and Field Championships. Any coach would be pleased, and most athletes would be satisfied. Chelimo was not. "In the summer I told myself, 'I am tired of running bad, I need to change my attitude toward running and accept it as part of my job.' I started training with friends who were better runners through the summer. With a better attitude and focus on improving my weaknesses I started improving."

Improve she did. Chelimo was the Trojans top runner throughout the next Cross Country season, leading TSJC to a Region IX Championship and a seventh place finish at the NJCAA Cross Country Championships. It was the highest team finish since the program was brought back to Trinidad State in 2016. Chelimo finished twelfth individually, 35 places higher than the year before. "My key for track season was to be more responsible. I told myself that I would go into every race to compete and do my best." Chelimo would go on to set top-ranked times in every distance from 800 meters to 5,000 meters during the indoor season. At the Indoor National Championships she finished fourth at 3,000 meters and seventh at the mile distance, both All-American performances. Coach Masterson felt she was right on the cusp of a national championship. "Benadine battled so well in both races. She never backed down. But at those big races you have to make all the right moves and be at your absolute best to win. She was close, but came up just a few seconds short."

For her final outdoor season as a Trojan, Chelimo would need to be more fearless than ever. The steeplechase loomed again and Coach Masterson set high goals. "I didn't tell Benadine from the start of the season that I thought she was capable of battling for a national title in the event, but it was on our minds throughout the season as we prepared her." In April, Chelimo broke the school record and ran the nation's leading steeplechase time at a meet in California. But only seven days later an athlete from Iowa Central Community College ran thirteen seconds faster. The two athletes would remain ranked first and second going into the NJCAA National Championships in Hobbs, New Mexico, where Chelimo would face her biggest test.

"It was very hot and windy on the day of the 3000 meter steeplechase final," recalled Coach Masterson, "Benadine had competed in the 1500 meter preliminary rounds only a few hours before. I was afraid that her legs would be tired from that race and maybe we had made a mistake letting her run the 1500 meter also."

After a slow start, Chelimo moved to the front, somewhere her coaches did not want her to be on a windy day. "We felt she should be tucked in behind some others to conserve energy, but in the middle of the race she was all on her own," recalled Masterson.

Things looked even more grim when an opposing runner fell. The spikes of that runner sunk into the calf of Chelimo, leaving a deep gash, and pulling off one of her shoes. "When my shoe came off I became more aggressive," Chelimo recalled, "I started telling myself I needed to win the race, no options. So, running with one shoe didn't bother me. I was focused on winning."

With the same fearlessness she displayed on that first day of training in Alamosa, Chelimo continued to lead, putting pressure on the other runners to keep up. Only the top-ranked runner from lowa Central remained close as the race progressed. Coach Masterson recalled, "Benadine was second as the last lap started. I could see the look of determination on her face, but knew that anything could happen as runners sprint on tired legs."

Chelimo followed the leader for most



of the final lap. With 150 meters to go both runners came into the water barrier together, but Chelimo cleared the obstacle with a slight edge. A few meters later she had inched ahead just a little more. For the final 120 meters the two runners were separated by only a few feet, but Chelimo never budged. She hit the finish line only a few strides ahead of second place. Chelimo was a national champion.

"It feels so good to have come so far. I can only say that following my coach's plan and dedicating myself to doing my best was what made the biggest difference from when I arrived at school to when I became a champion," says Chelimo.

The top finish in the 3000 meter steeplechase is the first national title won by a female athlete at Trinidad State Junior College.

MISSING ONE SHOE AT THE FINISH LINE

- THE SPIKES OF A FELLOW RUNNER SUNK INTO CHELIMO'S LEG. LEAVING A DEEP GASH. AND PULLING OFF ONE OF HER SHOES.
- WHEN MY SHOE CAME OFF I BECAME MORE AGGRESSIVE. I STARTED TELLING MYSELF I NEEDED TO WIN THE RACE. NO OPTIONS. SO, RUNNING WITH ONE SHOE DIDN'T BOTHER ME. I WAS FOCUSED ON WINNING.





MORE THAN SCHOLARSHIPS

The TSJC Educational Foundation cultivates lifelong relationships with alumni, friends and donors who care about Trinidad State as much as we do. By exploring the passions of those who love the College, we help people discover new ways to strengthen Trinidad State.

For some people, it's about scholarships. For others, it's program or faculty support—or even capital improvements. The Foundation helps match people's interests to the impact they would like to make.

Scholarships remain a high priority at Trinidad State—and we are grateful to everyone who contributes in this way. Many people appreciate the chance to support a deserving student. Of course, success in one area often encourages success in another. For example:

- Annual Gala in recent years, the Foundation's event has raised funds for Gunsmithing, the Student Emergency Fund, Nursing and Athletics.
- New Faculty Position in Biology the Foundation recently committed funding for a three-year budget period, filling an important gap.

- Health Science Building several years ago the Foundation helped secure a much needed facility for the Valley Campus.
- Prator Gun Range the Foundation owns and maintains the Prator Gun Range for use by the Gunsmithing program and the wider community.

The gifts described above were both restricted and unrestricted by the original donors. Again, the Foundation is always seeking to fulfill a person's interest in making an impact at Trinidad State.

Those who donate create a margin of excellence that benefits our students, faculty, and the broader community we serve. The Foundation remains grateful to all who support the College – our alumni, friends and donors who care about Trinidad State's success.

If you would like to explore ways you could make an impact at Trinidad State, please contact Toni DeAngelis at 719-846-5520 or toni.deangelis@trinidadstate.edu. And if you do reach out, please know there will never be any expectation or obligation whatsoever.

SMART PHILANTHROPY: APPRECIATED SECURITIES

Appreciated securities – stocks, bonds, mutual fund shares – are excellent options when making a gift to Trinidad State. To illustrate, consider the following for someone in the 24% federal income tax bracket:

Cash Gift

\$10,000 – Charitable donation (cash gift)
\$2,400 – Federal income tax deduction
(24% marginal income tax bracket)
\$7,600 – After-tax 'cost' of gift

Gift of Appreciated Stock

To increase your tax benefit, consider a

gift of appreciated stock with the same \$10,000 current value, purchased years ago for \$2,000:

\$10,000 – Charitable donation (appreciated stock, cost basis of \$2,000) \$2,400 – Federal income tax deduction (24% marginal income tax bracket) \$1,200 – Capital Gains tax not paid (15% long-term Capital Gains tax rate, applies if stock is sold) \$6,400 – After-tax 'cost' of gift

Trinidad State still receives the full value of your gift. As a non-profit, we

can sell appreciated assets without any capital gains tax.

Transfer Instructions

To secure all tax benefits, gifts of appreciated securities must be transferred directly to Trinidad State. Please contact Toni DeAngelis at 719-846-5520 or toni.deangelis@ trinidadstate.edu with any questions or to request our brokerage information.

Please consult with your financial advisors before making gifts of appreciated securities.



Fun & Friendraiser

The 2019 Fun & Friendraiser was another big success! The Foundation's annual event features a reception, dinner, silent auction, and induction into the TSJC Educational Foundation Hall of Fame—all of which helps raise important funds for the College.

This year's focus—TSJC Athletics. The College offers 14 sports, including six teams on the Valley Campus. More than 150 student-athletes now compete athletically—including students with local, regional, national and (with 28 students) international backgrounds. Despite facing schools with higher athletic budgets, Trinidad State enjoys a tremendous record of success.

"We're competing over our heads and we do an amazing job every year," said TSJC Athletic Director, Mike Salbato. "Our coaches do a great job keeping us at the top of the region, and even on a national stage."

This year's event also welcomed Laura DeBella and Mike Dixon into the TSJCEF Hall of Fame. The Hall honors people who have made extraordinary efforts to strengthen Trinidad State.

Our Fun & Friendraiser has been a signature event since the mid-1990s—and we're already planning our 2020 gathering. More information will follow in the New Year, but we hope to see you there!

RECENT FUN & FRIENDRAISER SUPPORT

2019 – Athletics **2018** – Nursing 2017 – Student Emergency Fund2016 – Gunsmithing





SOCIETY OF 1925

Toni DeAngelis (719) 846-5520 tsjcfoundation@trinidadstate.edu trinidadstate.edu/foundation

HOLLOWAY FAMILY LEGACY ≺

The Foundation was pleased and humbled to receive a generous bequest from Betty (Trinaistich) Holloway. Betty and her late husband, Howard, wanted to support students from Las Animas County interested in eventually pursuing pre-med or engineering. In addition, they especially wanted to honor their son, Vernon, who predeceased them.

Betty attended Trinidad State Junior College during the mid-1950s. She was a member of Phi Theta Kappa and the Pep Club, and served on the Student Council. Betty also excelled as a student, an attribute she passed along to her son, Vernon.

Trinidad State is honored to receive this gift, knowing it will benefit future students for generations to come.

If you would like to learn more about creating a legacy gift, please contact Toni DeAngelis at toni.deangelis@trinidadstate.edu or 719-846-5520.



AQUAPONICS A NEW PROGRAM

Trinidad State has long had an aquaculture program, which focuses on raising fish. But this fall there's a twist. Aquaponics takes the process one step further. Instructor Ben Webster's new program uses the waste from the fish raising process to fertilize plants.

"Aquaponics is an emerging industry," said Webster. "There's a lot of interest and a lot of momentum. I thought it would be something to capitalize on. Being pro-ag and pro-fish why not converge the two and use fish to grow plants?" Aquaponics uses only one tenth the water traditional agriculture does. The same water can be used indefinitely, and the only water replacement needed is caused by evaporation. Otherwise the water is recirculated and used over and over.

There are many advantages to growing plants in fish wastewater rather than soil. Soil loses fertility with each crop and can be



affected by wind, water erosion, and water run-off – not so when using fish wastewater. Fertilizer or compost must be applied each season and achieving the right balance can be challenging – not so with fish wastewater. Managing weeds, insects, and disease, along with application of chemicals and correct water amounts, is time consuming – not so with fish wastewater. Although disease and insects can affect aquaponics, the farming challenges are fewer in comparison to soil-grown plants.

ROCKY MOUNTAIN LINE SCHOOL

Trinidad State's highly successful Rocky Mountain Line Tech Program has a new home on the southeast side of Colorado Springs. The 12-acre site, just south of South Academy at Highway 87 is part of the old Pinello Ranch. Trinidad State recently secured a lease for the property from Colorado Springs Utilities.

"This is the perfect spot for our line tech program," said Dean of Instruction Keith Gipson. "There's a 7,500 square foot building on-site with water and septic systems and plenty of room for a pole farm and a future classroom."

The Rocky Mountain Line School offers a certificate in less than 16 weeks. Each semester about 25 graduates are qualified for entry-level electric utility jobs. These are the people who string new power lines and fix them when the power goes out. Despite operating 100-plus miles from Trinidad State's Trinidad Campus, Rocky Mountain Line School students recently told a site reviewer from the Higher Learning Commission that instructors are ready to help in this immersive program, giving prompt and continuing feedback. All the instructors are retired professionals in the same field. Rocky Mountain Line School opened in Colorado Springs in the fall of 2008.

The class is physically strenuous and requires at least 100 hours of climbing and training atop poles, plus math, safety, First Aid, driving large trucks and Department of Transportation regulation training. The program jams 26 college credit-hours into one semester. By contrast, most programs require 15 credit-hours in order to complete on time. Graduates can expect to get a job making \$18 to \$28 an hour after less than four months of intensive training.

STUDENTS DESIGN **PROSTHETIC HAND** FOR TRINIDAD TEEN

ach summer Trinidad State brings high school students from the region to Trinidad for a six-week, immersive college experience as part of Upward Bound Math Science. These students are low income and first generation college hopefuls from Trinidad to the San Luis Valley and into New Mexico, all the way to Gallup. They stay in the residence halls, eat in the cafeteria and take classes designed to give them a future in a math or science field. Upward Bound Math Science is funded by a federal grant, one of several under the umbrella of TRiO. TRiO is a federal government program that provides assistance to low income, first generation young people designed to help them succeed in high school and college.

This past summer UBMS Director David Dominguez decided to take on an unusual and challenging project. Students would design and build a prosthetic hand for a Trinidad teen who was born without hands.

Since high school, Dominguez has had an interest in prosthetics. "My first bachelor's degree was in electronics engineering technology with a bio medical emphasis." He planned to find an injured veteran for this project and then heard about 14-year-old Juan Zamora, a student at Trinidad Middle School. "He was born without a right hand and without the left arm just below the elbow," said Dominguez. "We asked the family if he'd like to be involved in this kind of research learning environment."

The prosthetic will slide over Juan's arm and sensors will read signals sent from his brain to control movement of actuators, which will be the fingers in the prosthetic hand. The initial design work was done in June and July and will continue for three years. "We want all of our gains to be made inside the classroom environment because we want the students to have ownership of it. If it was just the staff doing it, we could probably have put something together already, but we do want to make sure we're not just giving the students the answers."



with an early design

"We know the ultimate goal we're working towards, so it's really about leading the students to that end. And having them take ownership of what it is they're developing. So it's a process of turning students into leaders. We've also created a student research internship, where three students who were here during the summer, all from the Gallup, New Mexico



Juan's right arm

MATH

area, have applied for the research internship," said Dominguez. "Over the academic year, they're going to work on the design a little more. We do have a design, so we kind of know where we want to go with it, and so it will be leading them to take ownership of the design and start making it even better. We're designing for scalability, designing for maintainability and designing for ease of operation. The hand will have to be easy to put on, easy to charge and will have to grow as Juan grows."

While the design work continues, Juan is working, too. With the help of Trinidad Physical Therapy and a machine called an electro muscular stimulation unit, Juan regularly practices by imagining he is moving his right pinky finger, index finger or thumb. At first any thought of movement gave the same result, a fist. Slowly he has made progress separating the commands. "And incidentally the last time we put him on the BCI [brain computer interface], his signals were very strong and we're also seeing the isolation of his pinky and his index finger reaching toward the thumb. We now have three distinct signals from him - the overall fist, and then the pinky, index and thumb signal. So we've made a lot of progress very quickly with him, but we also have to understand...we have a lot of work left to do."

The project is called ACE, Artifact Controlled Extremity. Dominguez notes, "When we get Juan fully activated it will be called JACE, Juan's Artifact Controlled Extremity."

ATHLETICS

TROJAN CROSS COUNTRY TEAMS DOMINATE

The Trojan Cross Country teams headed to Riverton, Wyoming for the 2018 Region IX Cross Country Meet hosted by Central Wyoming College in October. The nationally ranked Trojan squads each tallied perfect scores on their way to winning a pair of region crowns. Trinidad not only claimed both team awards, but took home all of the gold as they won all of the individual medals and both Coach-of-the-Year awards.

In the Indoor Track and Field nationals in Pittsburgh, Kansas in March, Derek Holdsworth defended his 2017 national titles in the 800 and 1200 meter races. Godfrey Chama finished second in the 800, less than half a second behind Holdsworth. The Trojan Men finished in 7th place and the Women in 18th place. Eleven Trojans were named All-Americans. Related story on page 6.





WOMEN'S SOCCER finished with a record of 6-7.

MEN'S SOCCER





ABRAHAM SOTO

BASEBALL

Our Baseball Team retained the Empire Conference Crown, finishing the regular season with a 22-14 record for first-year Coach Justin Wichert. They then hosted the Region IX tournament in Trinidad and were unable to win that crown, losing to Lamar. But then the following week at the district tournamant were able to knock Lamar out of the competition. They finished the season with a record of 30-28.



SOFTBALL

The Trojan Softball Team finished conference play with a 15-15 record and went into the Region IX Tournament as the third seed. They finished with a 25-27 record.





VOLLEYBALL

Heloisa Niespodzinski, a sophomore libero from Sao Bento Do Sul, Brazil had 545 digs this season. That is 17th best in the nation. She ranked 12th in the nation in digs per set with 5.34. Niespodzinski also had 18 service aces this year.

The Trojans finished with a record of 11-19.

WOMEN'S BASKETBALL

The Lady Trojans ended the year at .500 with a 14-14 record. This was the third year in a row they had hosted a play-off game at Scott Gym.



MEN'S BASKETBALL FINISHES 20-10

The season came to an end for the Trojan basketball team in March as they fell to #6 Casper College at the Region IX Quarterfinals in Sheridan, Wyoming. A bad shooting night put the Trojans into a big hole early and they were unable to recover, falling to the eventual champions 84-61. The Trojans had beaten Lamar 89-77 five days earlier in the first round.

The Trojans finished the year 20-10. They lost four sophomores to graduation including Issac Essein, Ian Kelly, Devin Smith and Prince Wilson. That group helped the team to a combined 41-20 record over the past two seasons.





WEEK LONG HATMAKING CLASSES CRAW STUDENTS FROM ACROSS THE LAND



Five years ago custom hatmaker Tom Hirt was nearing the age when cowboys think about slowing down. He'd been making custom hats for decades. Well known in a specialized circle, his hats have been worn by President Reagan, Sam Elliot and Sharon Stone. The 1993 movie Tombstone, featured a Tom Hirt hat on the head of Doc Holliday, played by Val Kilmer.

In 2015 when asked to pass on his hatmaking skills at a five-day summer class at Trinidad State, Hirt decided to give it a shot. He thought he could teach some hatmaking classes and scale back the number of hats he hand-produces at his home in Penrose, Colorado.

But it didn't work out that way. Hirt became even better known. "I'm busier than I used to be." Hirt, who confesses to be on the far side of 60, now teaches occasional adult hatmaking classes at Trinidad State. It started in Trinidad, then expanded to Alamosa and in the fall of 2019 another classes was added. People come from all over the country to learn how to make a hat. Most people make two. California, Tennessee, North Carolina, Texas. Hirt has never advertised, but through word of mouth, social media and feature articles Hirt's popularity has grown.

Mitch Peters, 50, an engineer from Las Vegas, New Mexico, saw an article in a regional magazine at a rest stop and asked his parents from Centennial, Colorado to come along. Val Peters said, "Mitch showed it to me and said, "Let's do this." Val isn't a Western hat fan, but Hirt agreed to modify the process for her. "I sent Tom some pictures of the hats I like and he said we could do that." Her son and husband both wear cowboy style hats, so the whole family was in. Mitch said, "It sounded like a great opportunity to work with someone who really knows that they're doing. All the kids go to summer camp, they learn how to blacksmith or make go carts or something and now this is summer camp for adults!" The Peters treated this as an adventure vacation. "We rented on AirBNB. We're staying in Cokedale at a sweet little house," said Val.

Next summer's classes are already in the planning stages.

FOUR MONTHS OF TRAINING OPENS UP **KKK** A LIFETIME OF NEW OPPORTUNITIES

The demand for heavy equipment operators is so high right now, most of the students in the Trinidad State program have serious job prospects before they graduate. The Bureau of Labor Statistics says demand will grow 12 percent a year through 2026.

"On each piece of equipment, like I tell them," said Trinidad State Heavy Equipment Instructor Shem Montoya, "they're not going to leave this program as a master operator, however they'll take the safety side with them." Students train on the skid steer, front-end loader, motor grader, excavator, bulldozer, back hoe, dump truck, compactor and telehandler forklift, plus the basic core curriculum which covers regulations and safety. The class is intensive, with 25 credit-hours needed for completion. Normally a full time college student only takes 15 hours in one semester. Five to 10 students usually enroll in the class, ensuring each one gets plenty of time operating the equipment.

Theresa Garland, 57, went through the program in the spring of 2019. She moved to Trinidad with her husband a few years

ago after he retired from the Marines. She recently graduated as a Registered Nurse and then decided she'd rather be a heavy equipment operator. She had heard about the program while a nursing student. She had been a heavy equipment mechanic in the Marines for a short time and said, "I want to do this more than I want to do anything else."



CLASS NOTES

Richard C. Richmond, '56 attended TSJC following his four years of military service. After TSJC, he attended Adams State and received his degree in 1959. He worked in the education field as a teacher then administrator until retirement. Richard donated three Trinidad Street bricks he saved from the 1969 Urban Renewal Project to the TSJC Educational Foundation.

Bob Leid, '60 commented, "I got a great start at TSJC", earning an AA in business while participating in football, wrestling, boxing and the newspaper.

Francesca Villani, '62 is the owner of the beloved Tutti Scoops, an old fashioned ice cream parlor, in Trinidad. Francesca enjoys her clientele and likes having a small intimate gathering place for her guests to enjoy the old time flavors and hospitality.

Thomas Schenker, '64 commented, "There will always be a warm place in my heart for TSJC". He attributes whatever successes he has had in his life as a direct result of the work ethic and self-discipline learned while attending TSJC.

John Cunico, '68 passed away November 23, 2018. Cunico was born in Sopris, Colorado. John's parents owned the Cunico Grocery Store where he often helped deliver groceries with his Dad. John came from a loving Italian family, he loved sports and playing the trumpet in a band. He graduated from Trinidad High School in 1967 and attended TSJC. He married Jolene Glorioso on June 7, 1969. John started his career as a junior high teacher in 1972 in Colorado Springs District 11. He taught typing, business and tech lab for twenty-eight years. John was a successful boys' and girls' basketball coach, leading teams to numerous city championships. After retirement, John had the opportunity to coach both of his grandsons in the Southern Colorado Basketball league. John was a lifelong Broncos fan and forty-year season ticket holder. John always had a passion for his roots and followed TSJC very closely, donating money to provide more opportunities for students.

Wallace McLeroy, '72 studied gunsmithing while at TSJC and has been employed as a gunsmith 47 years. He has his own shop with customers from throughout the United States.

Kevin Steele, '75 studied music and business while at TSJC. His training served him well in his business life. He worked for Safeway and Petsmart before starting his own karaoke business with his wife Diana. Kevin is now retired and creates wooden and ceramic crosses called Kevin's Krosses. He provided a cross with blue and yellow tiles for the 2019 Fun & Friendraiser.

Jeremy Begley, '01 named 2018 winner of the Gannett Fleming's Innovation Challenge recalls his time at TSJC fondly, especially his professor and Robotics coach, Cindy Clements. He commented to Ms. Clements, "I feel so fortunate to have had you for several math classes. You were really phenomenal. Thanks for always answering my questions on how to do things the long way because I was curious. I enjoyed your office hours so much because you would be willing to go the extra mile to talk about things beyond the scope of the class. I am so grateful for my time in Robotics. It was so much fun and it gives me great pride to see where it is now. Your enthusiasm for teaching is something that will always stick with me. You are greatly appreciated Ms. C!"

Gwyn Snyder, '06 completed her Masters and works as an Adult Gerontology Nurse Practitioner at Salud Family Health Centers in Trinidad, Colorado.

Jonathan Baroz, '10 is currently enrolled at CSU working on his Masters in Applied Statistics.

Zach Scott, '12 is currently designing smart citipoles which are small cell telecommunication towers disguised as street lights. His main responsibilities are thermal design and analysis and then component layouts and mounting. His shared that his excitement for math and robotics began while at TSJC and led to his current engineering career.

Mark A. Ernst, '13 works as a RN with traumatic brain injury, spinal cord injury and stroke patients in a rehabilitation hospital.

Joanna Consuelo Jimenez, '13 is currently enrolled at CU Denver majoring in Biology with a double minor in Math and Religious Studies.

Michael Lehnerz, '13 recently graduated from the University of North Dakota with a Masters in Occupational Therapy. He currently works as an occupational therapist for a pediatric home health agency in Northern Colorado.

Jeff Manders, '13 shared that his time on the TSJC Robotic Team re-introduced purpose in his life after his days of playing baseball came to a close. He currently works as a ViCon engineer coordinating solutions to design challenges in the construction industry.

Alex Moore, '13 completed her Bachelors and Masters Degrees and currently works as a school counselor.

Tanyia Talbott, **'13** works as a nurse educator at St. Mary Corwin Hospital in Pueblo, CO. She still uses and shares the clinical calculation methods taught to her by math faculty Cindy Clements.

Megan Archuleta, '14 shared she "misses Trinidad daily and the wonderful teachers that helped me get through school and on to the next step". She currently works as a rehab technician and hopes to get into graduate school for occupational therapy.

Camille Diane Arnn, '14 shared that she fell in love with calculus and robotics and developed a large number of skills at TSJC that she uses in her current work.

McKinley Romp, '14 finished her Bachelors and is currently in radiology school.

Rachel Wondrasek Bundrick, '15 works as an insurance agent in New Mexico and hopes to start her own business with the year.

Correction from last magazine:

Dale Yoakum, '55 did not build cars under Paul Arnold as stated in the Fall 2018 Alumni Magazine. Dale built cars all by himself. Paul was his pilot instructor.

AWARD WINNING PHARMACIST CREDITS

Trinidad State for Success



Shannon Ortiz dispensing medication

After graduating high school in 2007, Trinidad native Shannon Ortiz, wanted to live at home while transitioning to college life. "I wasn't ready to go off to a big university. I wanted the opportunity to live at home with my family while I was transitioning to college life," said Ortiz. Many of her family members had already chosen to study at Trinidad State including her mom, stepdad, grandmother, sister and brother-in-law. By seventh grade she already knew she wanted to be a pharmacist.

Ortiz graduated from Trinidad State in 2009 after majoring in pre-pharmacy. Because she had taken enough prerequisites in high school, she was able to complete her pharmaceutical prerequisites in just two years. She knows of others who took four years to complete their pre-requisites because they had not taken college classes while in high school. While at Trinidad State, she worked first at Hometown Pharmacy as a cashier and then as a certified pharmacy technician at Walmart.

When she needed a biochemistry class at Trinidad State, math and chemistry instructor, Judy Maclaren, took time out of her own schedule to do that class with Ortiz one-on-one. "She's a huge huge reason why I got into pharmacy school. She's a great role model with a great heart," said Ortiz. About Ortiz Maclaren said, "Shannon is a very bright, hardworking young women. Her lab work was exceptional. She was detailed oriented. I feel honored to have worked with her and am proud of her accomplishments."

"I wouldn't have been able to live as comfortably as I did had I not gone to a community college. I was able to graduate at the age of 23 with my doctorate," said Ortiz, who earned her doctorate at Regis University in Denver and started as a pharmacy intern at King Soopers in 2011. King Soopers then hired her as a pharmacist in 2013 and five years later she was named Pharmacist of the Year for all King Soopers stores in Colorado.

Ortiz likes hiking, dancing, eating, traveling and spending time with her friends, family and her cat named Thorazine. Yes, Thorazine. "Although I only have a cat now," said Ortiz. "all my pets will have drug names. Thorazine is an antipsychotic drug. My cat balances me out during my bad times so Thorazine fits him perfectly." Ortiz volunteers at the Adams County Animal Shelter Adoption Center where her focus is on the adoption of kittens and cats.

Trinidad State student represents Colorado college students in Washington D.C.

As a new student at Trinidad State, Destiny Calderon-Ruiz jumped right in to student government. "I love to be involved. It's such a small campus and things are hands-on, up close and personal. I wanted to be an advocate for students."

Thirteen Colorado community colleges serve over 137,000 students on 39 campuses. The student body from each campus with an established student government elects one student to serve on the SSAC (State Student Advisory Council). Calderon-Ruiz is that representative and credits Trinidad State's Ashley Cogburn for her involvement with student government. "I didn't know what I was getting myself in to," said Ruiz, 19, "but it turned out really good and I'm glad." Although Ruiz was born in the United States, her parents came here from Mexico. Bilingual, she is a first-generation (first in her family to go to college) student, who sometimes translates for volleyball team members. "She knows the value of hard work and communication," said Cogburn, "She's in this for the long haul. I think she's found her niche."

Ruiz said the SSAC members meet once a month to focus on what community college students want or need the most. "This has been amazing." said Ruiz. "Learning about the legal process and networking with students from other community colleges – single mothers, fathers, married and coming back, and GED seekers. More young students are coming too. It's fun to hear from other students. One community college has a flight school. We have a gunsmith program. I prefer to do my associate's in a community college and then transfer because there's such diversity. I've learned a lot about other people and their needs."

While in Washington D.C. March 8 – 12, Ruiz had the opportunity to speak to Colorado Congressman Scott Tipton. "He was the opposite of what I expected," said Ruiz. "He was humble, relaxed and casual. He supports the NRA (National Rifle Association) and has been to the Trinidad campus to see the gunsmith program."

"It was so interesting to see how other schools work and their dynamics. It was just such a great experience," said Ruiz about her trip to Washington D.C.



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JULY 2020 REUNION PLANNED



Those who attended Trinidad State from 1970 to 1973 are invited to a reunion in July of 2020.

The inaugural reunion that happened in July of 2018 was a resounding success! More than forty former classmates and friends convened in Trinidad, many of them seeing each other for the first time in over forty years.

For more information please feel free to contact Richard Holmes, (303) 931-5594, Richard.k.holmes@comcast.net or James Luckett, (817) 791-8487 jdluckett28@sbcglobal.net

A closed Trinidad Reunion group has been created on Facebook. To join, search for Allen Gray ASG Group on Facebook and ask to be added to the list.



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