

Weather



National Weather Service
Tonight: Mostly clear, with a low around 48. Southeast wind between 5 and 10 mph.

Thursday: Sunny, with a high near 77. East wind 10 to 15 mph becoming north.

Thursday Night: Mostly clear, with a low around 44. North wind between 10 and 15 mph becoming calm.

Friday: Sunny, with a high near 79. South wind between 5 and 15 mph.

Friday Night: Mostly clear, with a low around 48.

Saturday: Sunny, with a high near 81.

Saturday Night: Mostly clear, with a low around 50.

Sunday: Sunny and windy, with a high near 79.

Sunday Night: Partly cloudy and windy, with a low around 41.

Monday: Mostly sunny and breezy, with a high near 61.

Monday Night: Mostly clear, with a low around 38.

Tuesday: Sunny, with a high near 68.

Monday: High, 80; Low 35
 Tuesday: High, 75; Low 35
 Precip: Monday None
 Tuesday None
 Month: 0.78 inches
 Year: 1.67 inches
 Normal: 2.11 inches
 (K-State Experiment Station)
Sunrise and Sunset
 Thursday 7:32 a.m. 8:06 p.m.
 Moon: waxing, 39 percent

Narc's grades too good for school

By Tracie Cone

The Associated Press

EXETER, Calif. — On his second trip through high school, former C-student Alex Salinas got a lot of A's.

He was 22, however, and an undercover narcotics officer going by the name Johnny Ramirez. When his first semester progress report showed a 3.25 grade average, the baby-faced police rookie made a mental note: Stop turning in homework assignments.

Eight months later, the ruse was up, and Exeter, a bucolic citrus-growing community in California's Central Valley, was turned on its ear after a school-day police sweep ended with a dozen Exeter High students in custody on drug charges.

Some people wondered how the deception by Salinas could have gone on for so long in the small town of just 10,000 people. Others lamented that the problems of the big city had come to the quaint community of antique shops and historic murals set amid a stunning backdrop of the snow-capped Sierra Nevada.

"It's amazing we were able to keep a secret in this little town for that long," said Police Chief Cliff Bush, who had been searching for years for just the right officer to pull off the undercover ploy. "People in little towns tend to know everything about everybody."

Leading the campus sweep this month was the tall, lanky Salinas, dressed in the crisp black uniform and combat boots of the Exeter Police Department instead of the T-shirts and sneakers he had worn as Johnny Ramirez.

Still, there was no mistaking the boyish face and the wide smile gleaming with braces.

"A lot of jaws dropped when they saw me," Salinas said. "They knew me as that kid at school that they hung around with, and then the next thing they're in handcuffs and I'm in a uniform."

The sting got more attention from the me-

dia than a drug bust of 12 students normally would because of something the chief now laments: It happened the same week as the debut of the Hollywood comedy "21 Jump Street," which features — you got it — undercover cops fighting crime at a high school.

Chief Bush insisted it was not a case of life imitating art.

"A day or two later, I became aware of the movie," Bush said. "The last thing I would do is check movie premieres. This just happened to coincide with the movie's release."

There had been no major complaints about drug dealing at the 1,000-student school that sits within sight of the police station, but Bush said he had been thinking for years about doing an undercover sting to send a message.

One day last summer, he ran into Salinas, who was weeks away from graduating from the police academy. Salinas had ridden along with Bush years earlier when the chief was still a patrolman.

Bush eventually approached Salinas with the plan. With it came a full-time job on the city's 17-member Police Department — an offer Salinas wouldn't refuse.

As Johnny Ramirez, Salinas attended Monarch football games and pep rallies. He purposely landed himself in detention so he could meet people outside of the four classes he attended before reporting each afternoon to the county drug task force headquarters for briefings and homework assignments. He made a Facebook page and forged friendships, which made the deception hard for him to bear.

"There were a few students I got to know who are good kids," he said, "and I did feel kind of bad for being their friend and then being something different."

Only the principal, vice principal and Johnny's guidance counselor knew about the operation, school Superintendent Renee Whitson said.

"Even I didn't know the name he'd go by," she said.

Fire kills two, burns homes west of Denver

From "FIRE," Page 1

said. It was during Monday's patrol that a state forest service crew spotted the wildfire — also on Denver Water property — and alerted authorities, Lockwood said.

It wasn't clear if the wildfire was inside the controlled burn zone.

The sheriff's office will determine the cause of the blaze, while the Colorado State Forest Service was conducting its own review, Lockwood said.

Stacy Chesney, a spokeswoman for Denver Water, said the agency was "trying to be proactive" to protect water supplies from soil runoff caused by deforestation.

The area has several watersheds that feed metropolitan Denver and is several miles from the location of a 2002 fire, one of Colorado's worst, which destroyed 133 homes and 466 outbuildings over 215 square miles.

Protocols for controlled fires include monitoring them until they are determined to be cold — meaning nothing is at risk for re-igniting, said Roberta D'Amico, spokeswoman for the National Interagency Fire Center in Boise, Idaho. Fire officials normally check weather, terrain and other factors to create a burn plan and alert municipal authorities, D'Amico said.

Carole Walker, director of the Rocky Mountain Insurance Information Association, said state agencies have limited immunity for performing regular duties.

"They have immunity on the duties of managing a forest," Walker said. "It would have to be determined they were negligent or acting outside their duties (for property owners to seek compensation)."

Officials found the bodies of a couple at a destroyed home, said Daniel Hatlestad of the Jefferson County Incident Management Team. They were identified as Sam Lamar Lucas, 77, and

Linda M. Lucas, 76. A cause of death was pending for both.

On Tuesday, evacuees formed a long line to see a list of damaged properties posted by the Red Cross at Conifer High School. Residents groaned when Hatlestad told them it wasn't known when the fire would be contained.

"I understand that it's a difficult situation, but it's our house, and we're in the target zone," John Ryan, 47, said.

Hatlestad said the fire burned so hot that it melted farm and construction machinery, creating a silver stream of molten metal and softening the soles of deputies' shoes.

The fire threat in much of Colorado has grown during an unusually dry and warm March. On March 18, a grass fire charred 37 square miles in eastern Colorado and injured three firefighters.

As the fire near Conifer burned, Jefferson County officials implemented fire restric-

Still, a moment of panic erupted on the first day of school last fall when a teacher pointed to the new kid and joked, "We've got a new narc on campus. They tell me he's wearing a green shirt." Johnny Ramirez's shirt was green.

Eventually students sold the new kid marijuana and cocaine, the prescription painkiller hydrocodone and the muscle relaxer Soma.

"There was certainly no celebration on the day of conclusion. It was a very sad day," Whitson said. "These are our students. We hope this is the necessary wakeup call to make this positive for their lives."

As the school year winds down, the arrested students are in the midst of review board hearings. Only three are older than 18, and one student's parents were also arrested for investigation of methamphetamine possession.

In the end, large quantities of drugs were not confiscated and none of the arrests involved trafficking significant quantities, though many purchases were for amounts that exceeded "personal use," Salinas said.

Was it worth keeping an officer off Exeter's streets and on a school campus for eight months?

Yes, Chief Bush said. But he is almost embarrassed that the undercover operation has garnered so much publicity, mostly because of his own bad timing regarding the release of "21 Jump Street."

"This is what I was trying to avoid, that we busted the local Scarface at the high school," Bush said, making reference to another Hollywood movie, this one about a drug kingpin. "Turns out they were just tiny amounts, but if you've got just one kid dealing drugs at school, that's too many."

The chief hopes the arrests have a lasting impact on all students, though he does realize he might have created a problem of another kind in Exeter.

"I'd hate to be the new kid at school next year," he said. "They won't make very many friends."

tions prohibiting any use of fireworks; fires unless they are built in permanently constructed fire grates in a developed park, campground or picnic area; and smoking, except within enclosed vehicles or buildings, a developed recreation site, or an area barren of combustible material within 3 feet.

Across the West, most states face normal wildfire danger, according to the National Interagency Fire Center in Boise, Idaho. However, the potential for summer fires is significantly "above normal" for New Mexico, Arizona, Utah, Nevada and California, center meteorologist Ed Delgado said.

"It's just a changing weather pattern. We're exiting La Nina, and becoming more neutral in that pattern," he said. "Historically when we've entered this weather pattern, we've had situations that would be conducive to those areas having a higher fire threat."

Briefly

Heartland open house for families Thursday

Heartland Christian School will have an open house at 6:30 p.m. Thursday for parents and prospective students for next year, including children who will be 3 and 4 years old and eligible for preschool and those ready to start kindergarten. Come have some fun and see what Heartland has to offer. For information, call the school office at (785) 460-4219.

Kiwanis egg hunt starts at 10 a.m. Saturday

The annual Easter egg hunt sponsored by the Colby Kiwanis Club will begin at 10 a.m. Saturday at Fike Park. Starting times will be 10 a.m. for ages 3 and under, 10:10 a.m. for ages 4 to 6 and 10:20 for ages 7 to 9. In case of bad weather, listen to KXXX Radio for information. For information, call Scott Haas at 460-3922.

Brewster students sponsoring blood drive

The American Red Cross will hold a blood drive from 10 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Monday at the Brewster School, sponsored by the student council. Call (785) 694-2236 for information or to make an appointment. Walk ins are welcome.

Free help with taxes offered by senior group

Free tax preparation will be available from experts trained by the American Association of Retired Persons Tax-Aide program, by appointment only, on Wednesdays through April 11 at the Colby Community College library. For an appointment, call Earle Rice at 462-2990.

Workshop will teach how to manage disease

A workshop to help people learn to self-manage chronic diseases will be offered from 5:30 to 8 p.m. Mondays from next week to May 7 in the Citizens Medical Center conference room. A light meal will be served, and preregistration is required. For information or to register, call Jeanene Brown at the hospital's education department, (785) 460-4850.

Kindergarten sign up next week at school

Kindergarten pre-enrollment and visitation for the 2012-13 school year will be from 6:30 to 8 p.m. on Tuesday at the Colby Grade School activity room. Bring your child's birth certificate, immunization records and Social Security card. For information, call the school office at (785) 460-5100.

Preschool plans enrollment, open house

An enrollment open house for the 2012-13 school year for Puddle Duck Preschool will be from 4 to 6 p.m. Wednesday, April 4, at the school, 520 W. Fifth St. The preschool is for children 3 to 5 years old. For information, call teacher Amy Jennings at 460-2603.

Map splits Topeka votes

TOPEKA (AP) — Kansas House members are considering a redistricting bill that would split the city of Topeka between two congressional districts.

The bill up for debate today adjusts the lines of the state's four U.S. House districts to account for changes in population over the past decade.

Topeka is now entirely in the 2nd District of eastern Kansas, but the bill would extend the 1st District of western and central Kansas into the capital city.

The Big Frist would take in the Statehouse and heavily minority neighborhoods in the eastern part of town. Republican-leaning, predominantly white neighborhoods in the city's west side would remain in the 2nd District.

LOCAL TV Listings Sponsored by the COLBY FREE PRESS

Thursday Evening March 29, 2012										
	7:00	7:30	8:00	8:30	9:00	9:30	10:00	10:30	11:00	11:30
KAKE/ABC	Missing	Rules	Grey's Anatomy	Private Practice	Local	Nightline	Jimmy Kimmel Live			
KBSL/CBS	Big Bang	Rules	Person of Interest	The Mentalist	Local	Late Show Letterman	Late			
KSNK/NBC	Community	30 Rock	Office	All Night	Awake	Local	Tonight Show w/Leno	Late		
KSAS/FOX	American Idol	Touch	Local							
Cable Channels										
A & E	The First 48	The First 48	First 48: Missing	First 48: Missing	The First 48					
AMC	Swordfish		WarGames		Swordfish					
ANIM	American Stuffers	American Stuffers	American Stuffers	American Stuffers	American Stuffers					
BRAVO	Shahs	Housewives/Atl.	Housewives/Atl.	Atlanta	Happens	Tabatha Takes Over	Shahs			
CMT	The Rookie		The Singing Bee	The Singing Bee	The Singing Bee					
CNN	Anderson Cooper 360	Piers Morgan Tonight	Anderson Cooper 360	E. B. OutFront	Piers Morgan Tonight					
COMEDY	Futurama	Futurama	Futurama	South Pk	Tosh.0	Daily	Colbert	Tosh.0	Tosh.0	
DISC	Dual Survivor	Dual Survivor	Unchained Reaction	Dual Survivor	Unchained Reaction					
DISN	ANT Farm	Lemonade Mouth	Good Luck	Austin	Shake It	Wizards	Wizards			
E!	The Soup	Ice-Coco	The Hot Chick	Chelse	E! News	Chelse				
ESPN	College Basketball	College Basketball	SportsCenter	SportsCenter						
ESPN2	ATP Tennis	Women's College Gymnastics	NFL Live	MMA Live	Dunks of the Year					
FAM	Miss Cong	Pretty Woman	The 700 Club	Prince	Prince					
FOOD	Chopped	Chopped	Sweet Genius	Sweet Genius	Chopped					
FX	Two Men	Two Men	Two Men	Two Men	What Happens	What Happens				
HGTV	Selling	Selling	Sell LA	Selling	House	Hunters	House	Hunters	Sell LA	Selling
HIST	Swamp People	Swamp People	Mudcats	Modern Marvels	Swamp People					
LIFE	The Bodyguard		Life Swap	Life Swap	The Bodyguard					
MTV	Jersey Shore	Jersey Shore	Punk'd	Pauly D	Pants	Punk'd	Pauly D	Fantasy		
NICK	My Wife	My Wife	George	George	70s Show	70s Show	Friends	Friends	Friends	Friends
SCI	Troy		Cyclops							
SPIKE	Jail	Jail	MMA	Repo	Repo	Jail				
TBS	Fam. Guy	Fam. Guy	Big Bang	Big Bang	Conan	Office	Office			
TCM	Scott-Antarctic		Ice Station Zebra							
TLC	Dateline: Real Life	Dateline: Real Life	Dateline: Real Life	Dateline: Real Life	Dateline: Real Life					
TNT	NBA Basketball		NBA Basketball							
TOON	MAD	Regular	King/Hill	King/Hill	Amer. Dad	Amer. Dad	Fam. Guy	Fam. Guy	Delocated	Childrens
TRAV	Extreme Fast Food	Sand Wars	Sand Wars	Sand Wars	Fast Food-Glbl	Sand Wars				
TV LAND	Home Imp.	Home Imp.	Raymond	Raymond	Raymond	Raymond	King	King	King	King
USA	NCIS	NCIS	NCIS	NCIS	In Plain Sight	CSI: Crime Scene				
VH1	Hip Hop Mmts	Behind the Music	Hustle & Flow							
WGN	How I Met	How I Met	How I Met	How I Met	WGN News at Nine	30 Rock	Scrubs	Scrubs	Death	
Premium Channels										
HBO	Scott Plg	REAL Sports Gumbel	Too Short	Game of Thrones	Real Sex	Cedar Rapids				
MAX	Girl Next	Endure	Last Man Standing							
SHOW	Thanks	Rita Rudner	Shameless	Comedy	Sunset	Lies	Californ.			

Friday Evening March 30, 2012

	7:00	7:30	8:00	8:30	9:00	9:30	10:00	10:30	11:00	11:30
KAKE/ABC	Shark Tank		Primitime: What	20/20			Local	Nightline	Jimmy Kimmel Live	
KBSL/CBS	Undercover Boss		CSI: NY	Blue Bloods			Local	Late Show Letterman	Late	
KSNK/NBC	Who Do You		Grimm	Dateline NBC			Local	Tonight Show w/Leno	Late	
KSAS/FOX	Kitchen Nightmares		Fringe	Local						
Cable Channels										
A & E	Storage	Storage	Storage	Storage	Duck D.	Duck D.	Duck D.	Duck D.	Storage	Storage
AMC	The Brave One		Speed							
ANIM	North Woods Law	North Woods Law	Rattlesnake Republic	North Woods Law	Rattlesnake Republic					
BRAVO	The Patriot		The Patriot							
CMT	Crocodile Dundee		Groundhog Day							
CNN	Anderson Cooper 360	Piers Morgan Tonight	Anderson Cooper 360	E. B. OutFront	Piers Morgan Tonight					
COMEDY	Sunny	Sunny	South Pk	Tosh.0	Ugly Amer	Key	Chappelle	Chappelle	American Pie	
DISC	Bering Sea Gold	Bering: Dredge	Bering: Dredge				Bering: Dredge			
DISN	Jessie	ANT Farm	Phineas	Random	Austin	Good Luck	ANT Farm	ANT Farm	ANT Farm	Jessie
E!	Sex-City	Sex-City	Fashion Star	Fashion Police	Chelse	E! News	Chelse			
ESPN	NBA Basketball		NBA Basketball							
ESPN2	ATP Tennis	Boxing	SportsCenter	SportsCenter						
FAM	The Blind Side	The 700 Club	Prince	Prince						
FOOD	Diners	Diners	Diners	Diners	Diners	Diners	Diners	Diners	Diners	Diners
FX	X-Men Origins	Ultimate Fight	The Marine							
HGTV	House Hunters World	Abroad	Abroad	House	Hunters	Hunters	Hunters	Hunters	Abroad	Abroad
We Celebrate Hometown Life										
Stories from hometowns just like yours. Look for us each week in this paper.										
HIST	American Pickers	Top Gear	Top Gear	American Pickers						
LIFE	I Survived	Amer. Most Wanted	Amer. Most Wanted	Amer. Most Wanted	I Survived					
MTV	The Challenge	Pauly D	Punk'd	Napoleon Dynamite	Punk'd	Pauly D				
NICK	Fred	SpongeBot	George	George	'70s Show	'70s Show	Friends	Friends	Friends	Friends
SCI	WWE SmackDown!	Merlin	Being Human	Merlin						
SPIKE	Star Wars IV	Crocodile Dundee								
TBS	Payne	Payne								