

COURTESY BOB WHEELER
The remains of a creature were a conversation piece to Albuquerque resident Bob Wheeler.

It's Creepy, Yes, But No Chupacabra

BY BARBARA ARMILJO
Journal Staff Writer

The Weekly World News won't need to bump the latest two-headed alien sighting off its cover for the oddity identified by New Mexico Game and Fish biologists last week. A creepy-looking skeleton found on the West Mesa about four years ago is not the remains of a dreaded chupacabra, a mythical creature said to suck the blood from goats. Chupacabras have been

immortalized in the TV show "X-Files." They have been said to be haunting ranchers in Puerto Rico for generations. No haunting in Albuquerque. The creature's a skate, a member of the stingray family that for whatever reason wound up on the mesa before someone stumbled upon it. "My friend was walking out there and he kicked it up," Bob Wheeler said. Wheeler kept the skeletal remains because he said they were just creepy enough to be

interesting. "I'd show people, just to freak them out," Wheeler said. "Just kept it in a box." Then one day someone who worked at Game and Fish suggested he take it into the office to find out what it really was. "We identified it that day," Brian Gleadle, chief of Northwest Operations for New Mexico Game and Fish, said. "No mystery. It's a skate that has been cut up. It's common for a slice of the actual wing to be used as a food source, and

that's what we believe was the case with this one." The myth was put to rest last week. Gleadle said there he couldn't tell if someone intentionally cut and molded the skeleton to make it look even more weird than it already is. "Someone had to have caught it in the ocean, most likely in the Gulf of Mexico," Gleadle said. "Then they probably cut the part that was edible and tossed the rest." He said the remains are at

least a couple of years old. Wheeler said he found the skeleton in 2002 and just never cared to find out what it was until someone suggested he take it into Game and Fish. After state biologists identified it, Wheeler put it back in the box he had brought it in and took it home. "Like I said, it's something weird, so I'm going to keep it," he said. "You know, conversation piece."

Students Bless 'Ultima'

■ Eighth-graders are angry Rudolfo Anaya's book was banned in a Colorado high school

BY ANDREA SCHOELLKOPF
Journal Staff Writer

Fourteen-year-old Johnny Valtierra discovered himself amid the pages of Rudolfo Anaya's "Bless Me, Ultima."

The Jimmy Carter Middle School eighth-grader had not found too many books he liked to read until his language arts teacher, David Salmon Ornelas Jr., assigned "Ultima."

And when he read about the protagonist getting teased in the school lunchroom for eating beans and tortillas, he thought, "That's me."

"I really didn't get into books until now," Valtierra said. "Until (my teacher) introduced this book."

He was among Jimmy Carter eighth-graders who were shocked when they read that a Colorado superintendent had banned copies of the book from a high school there. "I didn't see anything worth banning," said 15-year-old Rebecca Martinez.

It wasn't so much the issue of censorship, Ornelas said, but that the book that touched these students — the majority of whom are Hispanic — was banned in another school.

Ornelas had read the book as a senior in college and wondered why it took so long in his education to finally get to something that had a Hispanic voice.

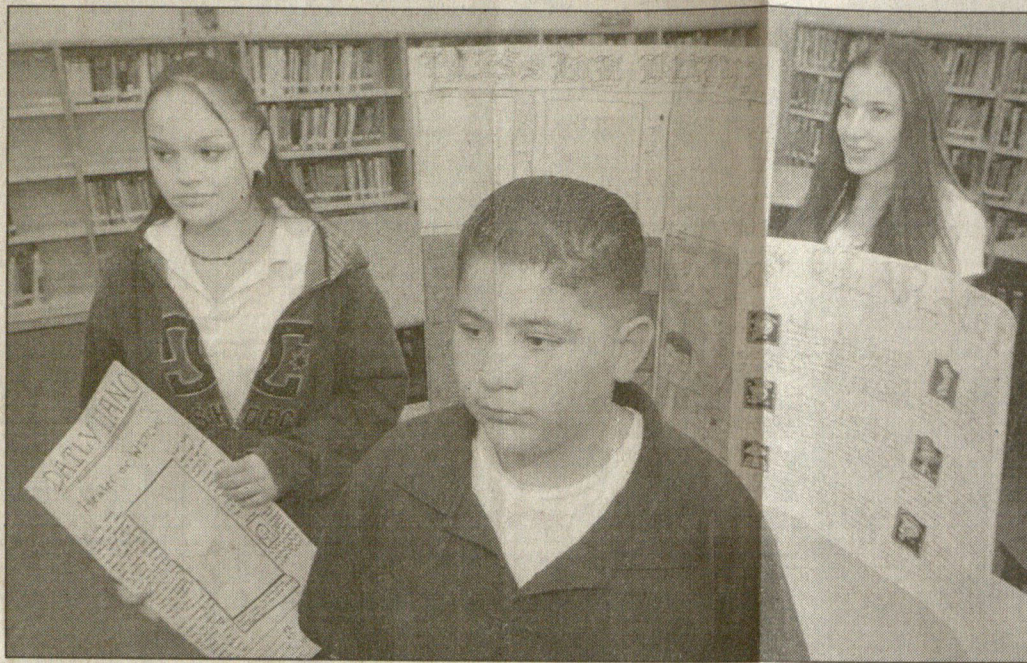
"It was a shame I waited until then to read about my own culture," said Ornelas, who once taught Anaya's nephew.

Ornelas has taught the book to students from seventh through 12th grade in his last 12 years as a teacher.

His eighth-graders had just read excerpts of the book.

"I was shocked," Ornelas said when he heard of the ban. "I was angry."

But instead of voicing his own concerns, he thought he would ask his students to react.



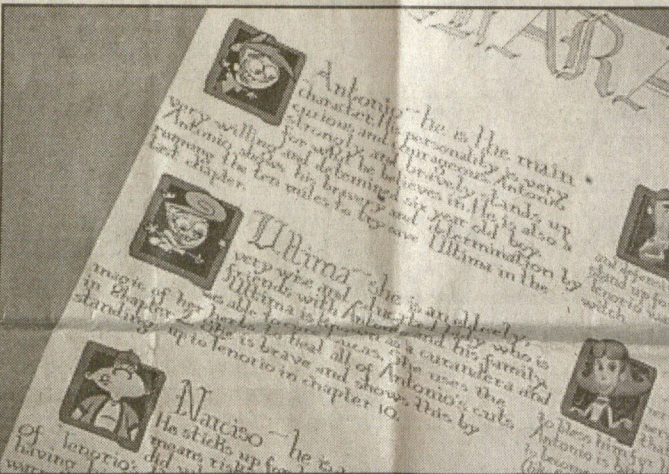
Jimmy Carter Middle School eighth-graders Jennifer Moya, left, Johnny Valtierra and Brianna Grajeda wrote letters to the Albuquerque Journal in response to the ban on Rudolfo Anaya's book "Bless Me, Ultima" at a Norwood, Colo., high school.

Thirteen students recently wrote letters to the Albuquerque Journal protesting the Colorado superintendent's banning of the book.

"The book really depicts what it's like growing up," Jennifer Moya wrote in a letter to the Journal. "Rudolfo really understands how it is like. From kids cussing when they know it's wrong to getting picked on in the lunchroom."

The Norwood superintendent, who admitted he had not read the entire book, gave his Colorado high school's copies of "Ultima" to a parent to destroy after that parent complained about offensive language and paganistic practices, The Associated Press reported. Superintendent Bob Condor has said the parent threw the books in the trash.

The Montrose (Colo.) Daily Press reported the ban resulted in protests to return the book to the school's curriculum as well as Anaya recommending Condor write a book report.



Brianna Grajeda's display describes the characters in "Bless Me, Ultima" by Rudolfo Anaya.

Condor has since apologized and has vowed to personally pay for new copies of the book once a district review committee reinstates the book.

The book is ranked 75th on the American Library Association's 1999-2000 list of most frequently challenged books.

Anaya is a University of New Mexico professor emeritus

who was awarded the National Medal of Arts by President Bush in 2002. The book depicts a 7-year-old boy and his life in 1940s New Mexico with his Roman Catholic mother and Ultima, a curandera who uses herbs and magic to heal.

"This book reminds kids of their families, of their background," Ornelas said.

Potty Breaks Are Testers' Concern

State Wants Kids Walked to Toilet

BY ANDREA SCHOELLKOPF
Journal Staff Writer

Albuquerque Public Schools officials are raising their hands to ask if students can go to the potty during the upcoming standards-based testing.

The testing — which begins Feb. 28 and ends March 18 — has more than doubled in length, from 20-25 minute subtests to 50-60 minute subtests, said Rose-Ann McKernan, APS director of Research, Development and Accountability.

The fear is that some of the younger students — testing starts at third grade and goes up to ninth and 11th grades — may not be able to wait for a break when nature calls. APS also was concerned about whether students having to leave mid-test would be able to return and complete the high-stakes exam.

"Typically, it's a standardized test procedure to not allow students out of the classroom once they've started the subtest," McKernan said during a meeting Thursday with the Del Rio Citizens Advisory Committee at Washington Middle School.

The standards-based tests have 11 subtests in the subject areas of math, reading, writing and science, she said. The schools will be spreading out the subtests over a three-week period.

But the state's Public Educa-

tion Department said it doesn't want to get in the way of a student's need to go to the potty in the middle of a test.

"The rule is kids do need to be accompanied by somebody" to the bathroom, spokeswoman Jennifer Chavez said Friday.

Chavez said that while schools should allow for suitable breaks between tests, those children that can't wait should go individually.

Susie Rayos Marmon Principal Maria Barraza-Martinez said her school's bathrooms are so close to the classrooms that it shouldn't be a problem.

"We have it pretty much set up so we're going to have the kids very comfortable," Barraza-Martinez said Friday.

Valle Vista principal Theresa Archuleta said her students will be taking only one subtest a day, so she doesn't anticipate any problems.

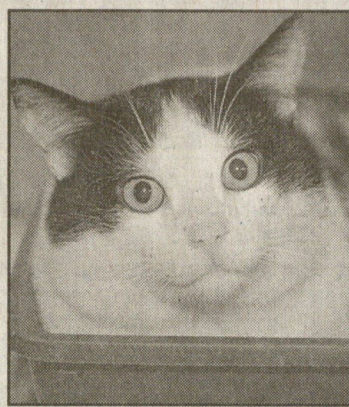
Zia Elementary principal Linda Hudson said the bathroom issue is a huge concern for teachers.

Under the federal No Child Left Behind act, schools must have a 95 percent participation rate in the standards-based test.

Tracy Herrera, principal of Navajo Elementary, said she had feared that students would lose credit for taking the exam if they got up and left the room.

"They have to stop the test and they can't resume," Herrera said earlier Friday.

PET WATCH



ROBERTO E. ROSALES/JOURNAL

Bright eyed and bushy tailed, this black and white 10-month-old domesticated male is waiting patiently for a home. He can be found at the city's East Side Animal Shelter. His adoption number is A84935.



ROBERTO E. ROSALES/JOURNAL

This pooch is a lovely 5-month-old female brown German shepherd mix. She is awaiting adoption from m the city's East Side Animal Shelter. Her number is A848944.

EAST SIDE

The city of Albuquerque's East Side animal control shelter is at 8920 Lomas NE. Kennel hours are Tuesday through Sunday, 10:30 a.m. to 6 p.m.; office hours start at 9 a.m. Call 768-1975 for more information and wait for the "for other situations" prompt to transfer call to an operator. Looking for a lost or adoptable pet? Check out www.cabq.gov/animalservices.

WEST SIDE

The city of Albuquerque's West Side Animal Control Shelter is at 11800 Sunset Gardens SW, west of 98th and Central on 114th SW. Kennel hours are Tuesdays through Sundays, 10:30 a.m. to 6 p.m. Call 768-1975 for more information.

BERNALILLO COUNTY

For information about pets picked up in the unincorporated areas of Bernalillo County, call the city of Albuquerque's shelter at 768-1935.

RIO RANCHO

The Rio Rancho Animal Control shelter is on Northern Boule-

What to do if your pet is missing:

- Visit Animal Services daily to look for your pet. Stray pets with tags are kept seven days before being put up for adoption. Animals without tags are kept four days before being put up for adoption.
 - Check with the Animal Humane Association at 255-5523.
 - Check the Journal's Lost and Found classified ads.
 - Ask neighbors, put up signs.
 - Check Animal Services' Web site at www.cabq.gov/animalservices
- Call 768-1975 for more information.

Mayor Pledges City's Help With School Safety

BY JIM LUDWICK
Journal Staff Writer

Mayor Martin Chávez, addressing Albuquerque Public Schools administrators at a conference about security, pledged to work as their partner to make schools safe and to eliminate graffiti.

When a child walks into a school building, "the mom and dad have to know that the child is safe at all times," Chávez said

Friday. He asked school principals to routinely check their campuses and report graffiti they find at the school or nearby. If they report graffiti, it will be cleaned up within 24 hours, Chávez said.

He said youngsters should not have to see graffiti while at school.

"Don't just look at school property. Look around, look across the street. If you see

graffiti, call us. ... Anything that you see in the neighborhood that you think is unsafe, call us," he said.

Police Chief Gilbert Gallegos said it's vital to coordinate efforts on behalf of the safety of children.

"We're subject to all of the things that happen in any major city. ... It's important, in these days, that we work very closely together," Gallegos said.

"We want to work with you.

We can be successful for the schools and the kids," he said.

James Hunter, the city's emergency manager, said the federal government offers assistance with public safety, but "all emergencies are local. If something happens at some place in the city, it will be the Albuquerque Police Department and the Albuquerque Fire Department that will be the first responders."

AROUND THE METRO AREA

Journal Staff and Wire Reports

Man Police Shot Seen as Strange

McINTOSH — A man shot by authorities after a 12-hour standoff here was described by neighbors as a strange person who stood naked on the roof of his home.

John Loche, 59, fired several shots at Torrance County sheriff's deputies and others who tried to serve an eviction notice at his home Thursday morning. He then barricaded himself in the home until he was shot in an exchange of gunfire Thursday night.

SWAT officers shot Loche after he fired several shots at armored police vehicles, according to a statement issued Friday by State Police.

Glascok said officers who fired weapons during the incident were placed on standard leave. The officers

are Sean Wallace, Johnny Salas and Joe Madrid of the State Police; Shawn Connors and Tim Hix of the Bernalillo County Sheriff's Department; and Zack Stephenson and Russ Carter of the Albuquerque Police Department.

Melissa and Melinda Stalnaker, who grew up living near Loche, said they had seen him naked riding his bike.

Man Allegedly Sent Sex Notes

A 38-year-old Albuquerque man was arrested Friday for allegedly sending sexually explicit messages to a 13-year-old Illinois girl via the Internet.

The attorney general's Internet Crimes Against Children Unit, which made the arrest, charged Thomas Kaufmann with sexual exploitation, child luring and

contributing to the delinquency of a minor.

Investigators in Naperville, Ill., contacted state authorities after the 13-year-old reported Kaufmann was asking questions of a sexual nature. He also allegedly sent her naked photos of himself and suggested they have a sexual encounter, the Attorney General's Office said in a press release.

Police Hunt Nabs Carjack Suspect

The search for a carjacking suspect closed a portion of Interstate 40 during morning rush hour Friday and put four schools, including West Mesa High School, on lockdown, police said.

Joaquin Candelaria, 28, was arrested at The Church where police found him sleeping.

APD spokeswoman Trish Ahrensfield said the hunt for Candelaria started shortly before 2 a.m. when police received a report of a carjacking at Sixth and Central. As police were looking for the stolen car, they received a report from a security guard who had seen a man flashing an AK-47 in a parking garage near Second and Gold.

When officers approached Candelaria, he got in his truck and drove off, she said.

Police pursued Candelaria to west of I-40 and Coors where officers laid down stop sticks. Candelaria drove over the sticks and crashed into a ditch.

Candelaria was let in the church by the pastor, who didn't know police were looking for him.