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Questa Del Rio News

QUESTA • RED RIVER • CERRO • COSTILLA • AMALIA • LAMA • SAN CRISTOBAL

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BREAKING NEWS

**Volunteers needed at the North Central
Food Pantry this holiday season;**
give the gift of time and make a difference.
Call Jeannie at (575) 586-0486

Angels Among Us at the Food Pantry



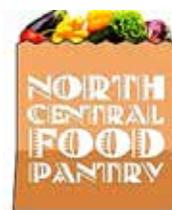
Photo by Gaea McGahee

A truckload of 240 turkeys purchased from the Questa Center Supermarket were distributed at the North Central New Mexico Food Pantry, on November 20. An anonymous angel among us donated this gift to the community. Thank you, angel!



Photo by Gaea McGahee

Volunteers at the Questa Food Pantry, from left to right, Lawrence Cisneros and Larry Sanchez.



From THE NORTH
CENTRAL FOOD PANTRY

If current events are discouraging and you need some good news, here it is! According to Jeannie Masters of the North Central Food Pantry, there are angels among us, right here in Questa. An angel in Questa wanted to do something nice for the community, so he paid for 240 turkeys to be distributed at the Food Pantry on November 20. And the gift included stuffing, too!

"This is one fantastic angel, and Kate Cisneros and I and all the family at the Food Pantry want to thank him in a big

way!" said Jeannie of the generous individual who chooses to remain anonymous. The turkeys and stuffing added up to over \$5,000 and the good news is that the money will stay right here in our community. The turkeys were ordered from Questa Center Supermarket, who Jeannie describes as "more angels among us."

"Questa Market has been very good to the Pantry," said Jeannie. When the Food Pantry overflows with abundance and needs more storage space, they have cheerfully provided space in their walk-in freezer. Esther and her family at the supermarket are angels and do a lot for the community. Jeannie adds that all the volunteers who help at the Pantry and the folks at Questa Del Rio News are also angels among us. *[Editor's Note: Thank you, it takes one to know one!]*

Questa Del Rio News

NOTICIAS QUESTA DEL RIO

Published Monthly by the
QUESTA ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT FUND
Publicación mensual por
EL FONDO PARA EL DESARROLLO ECONOMICO DE QUESTA

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DE LA COMUNIDAD DE QUESTA

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PO Box 1072

1 Highway 38

Questa, NM 87556

OUR MISSION

To Inform, Inspire, Connect and Unite the Communities of Northern Taos County.

NUESTRO OBJETIVO

Es informar, inspirar, contactar, y unir a toda la comunidad del norte del condado de Taos.

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BY THE 12TH OF THE MONTH

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ENVÍE ANTES DEL DÍA 12 DEL MES

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EDITORIAL

'Tis the Season to be Jolly...

Fa la la la la, la la la la, right? It's impossible to resist chiming in on the fa la la part! Let's not let current events cramp our style this holiday season (or ever). There is much negativity on the planet now; it has succeeded in sucking a lot of the world down into the negative spiral along with it. Misery loves company? Well, guess what? So does joy. So, let's unite this divided world by shining our light on the dark places. Let's have some fun, let's get jolly! I am asking you, our readers, to do our absolute best to make this holiday season if not the best ever – at least the most meaningful.

Full of meaning, in many ways.

First, think on the true meaning of all the traditions that have come before us. Let's honor these traditions and build on them, and as we adapt to changing times, let's create new beautiful and positive traditions... and meaningful.

What do the HolyDaze mean to you and especially this one? Let's all hold in our hearts those among us who are suffering and do not have all the blessings that we do.

Hardships are teachers, so let's be sure and learn the lessons as they are thrown at us. My hope is that everyone is reflecting on the opportunities to grow with each crisis and to find deep meaning in them.

What is it that we really value? For some, it may be a matter of whether they get what they want from Santa. Let's hope the shakeup in our daily lives will offer a clear perspective about what is truly valuable.

At our house, we have a Christmas Every Day policy, all year long. We have sleigh bells by our front door and Pete likes to jingle them when he walks by and sing out in a thunderous voice, "Ho, ho, ho!" You can imagine how the grandkids love that! We also turn on Christmas lights in our dining room at night. As the nights get longer, it is very special – our own personal Festival of Lights.

The most fun part of Christmas Every Day is the presents. Why wait until December 25 to give? Whoever said, "It is more blessed to give than to receive," had it right. It's fun to give and receive presents, just for the joy of giving. I know that now.... I had always loved receiving presents, who doesn't? It was the giving part that was a challenge; partially because of the media's influence on our society and the pressure to shop and spend and wrap. That is why I took to calling it the HolyDaze. How grueling Christmas had become, a corporate nightmare. Not for the corporations, of course...

Did you read Lynn Skall's article in our November issue about Small Business Saturday and her new article in this issue? I hope our community is shopping local to keep our small businesses alive and thriving. They are grateful when you choose to spend your hard-earned dollars with them. Ten dollars, or \$70 or \$200 may not mean much to Amazon or to Walmart, but it is a significant purchase to a small business and could mean the difference between remaining in business or not.

Speaking of grateful – on page 9, Barbara Tracy talks about being grateful in her BODY/MIND/SPIRIT column. There is much to learn from being thankful for what we have and continue the Thanksgiving theme. In fact, let's celebrate Thanksgiving every day, too! Barbara will tell us how.

We have much to be grateful for. As this crazy 2020 comes to a close, most of us are ready to greet the New Year. Thank you to our readers who send us well wishes and thanks. Every month we hear how that month's issue is the best ever. We like knowing that people actually read the paper. And thank you to everyone who has shown appreciation and support by making donations, either on our website, by mailing us a check, or for those who occasionally hand us a \$50 bill. You know who you are. And big gratitude to all the volunteers who step up, pitch in, and contribute to putting out a pretty darn good local newspaper every month. We absolutely couldn't do it without a lot of help from our friends. Thank you. Blessings to you all and Happy HolyDaze.

LOU McCALL

EDITOR

QUESTA DEL RIO NEWS

Dina Coleman's Community Connections

My name is Dina Coleman. I'm 45, married with three beautiful adult children and four precious grandchildren. I am originally from Phoenix, Arizona and family brought me to Questa. I have been in the Questa area for 16 years. I am a full-time employee of the Village of Questa as the Chief Procurement Officer, Deputy Clerk, and Alternate Municipal Judge. I also work part time with the QEDF as Office Manager and Event Coordinator.

When I am not working, I am spending valuable time with my husband Kambrel Coleman of Bubba's Bar-B-

Que and our family. I also find time to craft and create. I enjoy this the most when I can share with others something that I've made.

As I embark on the new journey as the Questa Del Rio News ad salesperson, I am truly excited to build stronger connections with our surrounding communities. I have met so many people and have such great relationships with the people in the area. I have truly grown to love our community and northern New Mexico through the people that I have connected with.

It is my intention to give my best and

assist with the continued growth of the Questa Del Rio News. It is also essential for me to partner with local businesses to help support their growth, and I believe that using our local newspaper is a prime way to do so. Small businesses helping small businesses is big business to me.

I look forward to being out and about connecting and talking with people real soon. I can be contacted at (575) 586-2258 or QuestaDelRioNewsAds@gmail.com and PO Box 1072, Questa, NM 87556.



Photo by Dezirae Walker

Questa Del Rio News welcomes our new ad sales person, Dina Coleman!

Questa News Welcomes Vanette Harris!

By LOU MCCALL

Many of you know Vanette Harris from her fun articles that we have featured over the last couple of years. Vanette and her husband David have been two of our most enthusiastic supporters. As full time-RVers, they spend half the year in the Questa area, and winter in Texas, to be closer to their grandkids.

Vanette has stepped up as our newest volunteer, and has transitioned smoothly and beautifully! Jessica Arbour stepped down last month as our Subscription Manager to pursue other creative projects. Thank you, Jessica, for your two years of selfless service and for training Vanette so thoroughly! In addition to managing subscribers to our digital email edition, we are launching our snail mail subscriptions this month. Vanette will be managing the mailing addresses, too. Faithful volunteer Donna Mitchell-Moniak will continue to mail the newspapers through the USPS. If you would like to have a real Questa Del Rio News to hold in your hand every month, sign up now for \$60 a year, or \$5 a month on our website www.questanews.com (processing through PayPal). You can also mail a check for \$60 to Questa Del



Photo by David Harris

Vanette Harris, our new Questa del Rio News Subscription Manager. Welcome to the team!

Rio News, PO Box 1072, Questa, NM 87556. Make a note on your PayPal message or check that it is for a subscription to the newspaper and please make sure we have your full name and mailing address.

Please consider sending us an end-of-the-year donation, either through the mail or on our website. Thank you to all the community members for your support. Have a Happy Holiday!

POEMS OF THE MONTH

Small Solitude

at 5 in the afternoon
in the dark quarter of the year
a candle feels good

Flatlanders

at the top of the world we are
downstream from nowhere
our water can only come from the sky
flatlanders don't understand this

The Imperative of Fire

gets me out of bed on cold morning
to warm the house before lax sun arrives
how i count down the afternoon
the hours 'til time to build it

Veteran's Day

i use a magnifying glass
to watch mercury crawl across
the 5-inch sun on my laptop screen

there is no longer an armistice in effect
the beautiful boys sing tenor on the radio
proportion is everything

Anne MacNaughton is a writer and poet living in northern New Mexico. Cofounder of SOMOS and director of the long-running Taos Poetry Circus, she has promoted and performed poetry around the Southwest for five decades. She is a recipient of the New Mexico Literary Association's Gratitude Award.

Keepin' it Real

MAILED Subscriptions now available for thos folks living out of town. See page 31 for details.

2020
Happy & Safe Holiday Wishes

Not a member yet? Joining is easy. Call today!
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Questa Economic Development Fund Reflects on 2020



By LYNN SKALL

The Questa Economic Development Fund, along with so many other businesses, had to reimagine how to do business in 2020 due to COVID-19. The pandemic impacted day-to-day operations, how we interact with one another, and even where we are permitted to travel. The QEDF's goals remained unchanged, to support the transition of Questa and the surrounding community to a diversified, sustainable post-mining economy; with the support of the Questa community, we continued to move our objectives forward for a successful year.

Early in 2020 QEDF Director Lindsay Mapes moved into a new community role as Director of the Questa Lodging Project. Thanks to San Antonio del Rio Colorado Historic Preservation leaders, and funding provided by Chevron, the LOR Foundation, and QEDF, renovations are currently underway on the first Lodging Project house, with others soon to follow.

Lynn Skall was hired as the new QEDF Director just before the pandemic shut everything down. One of the new Director's first projects was to become an essential communication resource to businesses, conveying COVID-19 information. This included publishing the first COVID RESOURCE GUIDE in the Questa Del Rio News. QEDF sent timely emails to local businesses about stimulus funding, operating mandates, and protocols, and even helped businesses complete grant applications. Numerous Questa businesses benefited from these stimulus programs.

The QEDF Director secured two grants for the North Central Food Pantry, from the Taos Community Foundation and All Together NM Fund. The Food Pantry is serving up to 350 people each month, an increase of 300% from pre-pandemic operations, to families who do not have the resources for this food. Seeing the need for more localized food production and sustainability, funding from Chevron enabled QEDF to hire Pivotal New Mexico, grant specialists, to locate and submit additional grants to support these local food-related initiatives.

In May, Cynthia Rael-Vigil and Malaquias Rael revived the Questa



New Questa Welcome Sign, painted by Peggy Trigg with hand-carved support by Manders Vigil.

Business Entrepreneur Network (QBEN) meetings via Zoom. These public meetings provide a community forum where businesses and individuals can network, share ideas, hear Village news, and receive information from QEDF about area projects, employment opportunities, and free business training through the Small Business Development Center and the University of New Mexico-Taos.

QEDF is proud to be a sponsor of the Questa Del Rio News, which will head into its fourth year of publication in February. Thanks to the dedication of editor Lou McCall, graphic designer Emily Wilde, and a team of passionate, skilled volunteers, the paper is brought to life each month. The paper has become a primary source of local information, and is mailed free to postal customers in six regional communities and hand-distributed to area businesses. It has widespread reach, and fulfills its mission to “inform, inspire, connect, and unite the communities of northern Taos County.”

Other projects QEDF funded and worked on this year included promoting the 2020 Census to ensure that Questa is eligible for the maximum federal funding over the next ten years. Construction of a North Central Transportation District Park and Ride at the Visitor Center was thoroughly evaluated by the QEDF Board of Directors, and ultimately turned down due to insurance issues. A new Questa Welcome Sign was completed in June featuring an original painting by local artist Peggy Trigg, hand-carved by longtime resident Manders Vigil. The NM Department of Transportation finally approved the sign for installation in November, which will welcome visitors to Questa arriving from the north on Hwy 522. The Questa light pole banners, in the Village center, were a partnership with the Questa Creative Council. Three sets of banners were

produced. The talents of local artists and artisans will be displayed on the next set of banners, which will be installed soon.

The Questa Visitor Center was open five days a week during the summer with steady visitors; Margo Cardenas, in her third year as our Information Specialist, warmly greeted all guests. Many New Mexicans took “stay-cations,” traveling in-state to take advantage of our area's abundant recreational offerings and wide open spaces.

Recognizing the attraction of Questa's outdoor recreation, QEDF contracted a comprehensive Recreation Assessment with the non-profit Public Land Solutions. The goal of the project is to identify key recreational resources, evaluate access, and make recommendations on how Questa can use recreation to stimulate additional economic growth.

A grant application was submitted to the NM Department of Tourism for matching funds to advertise Questa. Unfortunately, due to the pandemic, the State's NM True campaign was postponed, replaced by an initiative that conducted an evaluation of Questa's online presence and that of Questa businesses.

The LOR Foundation and Taos Community Foundation awarded QEDF a grant to completely redesign the VisitQuesta.com website. The website will be launched in the coming months with a new business directory dedicated to promoting all Questa businesses.

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Pivotal New Mexico grant specialists to locate and submit additional grants to support these local food-related initiatives.

In a longstanding partnership with the Questa Independent School District, Chevron, Los Alamos National Lab, QEDF, and UNM, the Questa High School Welding Lab Pilot Program was poised to launch this past fall. Social distancing prevented the hands-on class. A distance learning trades class is being offered in January 2021, with the Welding Lab becoming available as soon as permitted. A Life Skills and Entrepreneurship Class at QHS, sponsored by QEDF and the LOR Foundation, is underway, preparing students for a spring product pitch competition.

QEDF is honored to support the exceptional events that took place this year, all reimagined to meet pandemic protocols. Congratulations to Gaea McGahee for another successful Questa Farmer's Market, now enhanced with recycled-plastic adobe-covered walls, and a dance floor and storage facility funded by QEDF. Kudos to Peggy Trigg and the Questa Creative Council for their first ever online artist auction, and to LEAP's NeoRio, for literally thinking inside and outside the box with their hands-on community art project.

The annual QEDF Fishing Derby was held virtually this year, envisioned by local fishing guide Chris Michael along with Toner Mitchell, of Trout Unlimited. Registration was online and photos of the fish caught in Questa's waters were emailed, to determine derby winners. The traditional fall Cambalache, redesigned by Dina Coleman and a team of volunteers, completed the year's events. Michael Rael “Zoom-ed” in as Master of Ceremonies and even performed live music; a real-time Facebook feed recorded the event in the Visitor Center parking lot. The ceremonial burning of the COVID-headed Cucui was particularly satisfying this year; stuffed with written penas – concerns, problems, troubles, and worries – Questeños watched gratifyingly as their burdens all went up in flames and vanished like smoke.

The QEDF is proud to be a part of the incredibly special place that is Questa, to make contributions that enhance the economy and quality of life in the community, and to partner with so many amazing people. It's the commitment of the Board of Directors and the widespread support of the community that enables QEDF to look back and gratefully reflect on the year that was 2020.



Business Profile

GERAINT SMITH PHOTOGRAPHY
MASTERY TO UPLIFT AND
ADMIRE

By CYNTHIA NAJIM

One local mega-talent moves in harmony with the natural world. Geraint Smith of San Cristobal showcases the raw beauty of the American Southwest through his photography, and mentors those who would like to improve their photography skills and orientation. We are fortunate to have such an accomplished photographer in our area.

Born in Wales, England, Geraint (pronounced Gār-eyent) was introduced to photography, expansive landscapes, and endless skies early on. His father let him hold the family Kodak Brownie camera at just three years old, and on occasion take a photo. His family regularly went to the cinema to watch westerns, a visual treat at any age to incite the imagination. Years later, in his teens, he purchased his first movie camera, which cemented his deep love for photography.

In 1978, the 22-year-old crossed the pond, moving to Los Angeles, California, and studied cinematography and film. While enthralled by this medium, his livelihood would come from a career in still photography. Geraint became a freelance photographer when Pasadena was cultivating its identity as a trendy, creative community. He landed coveted clients including the City of Pasadena, the Pasadena Symphony Orchestra, and the Los Angeles Philharmonic.

During that period, he travelled for six months through Europe, photographing new sights in the Old World. Upon his return to Los Angeles, he developed and printed a harvest of images. To his delight, he has been steadily selling his fine art photography for over 40 years.

In 1988, after several visits to New Mexico, Geraint relocated to Taos, eager to embrace a more tranquil lifestyle. Captivated by the unique blend of cultures, the vast wild environments, and the superb play of light, Geraint found his forever home and the dramatic, ever-changing subject for his lens.

Like with many working artists, his creative pursuits evolve with his interests and the opportunities that appear. Building on his stint as a prop-maker in Hollywood, Geraint started making distressed-style wooden furniture with punched tin panels and accents in 1994,



Photo by Geraint Smith

The serene reflection of Taos Mountain in autumn.



Photo by Pam Smith

Geraint Smith on the open road, where his photography adventures begin.

alongside his photography. The business took off and sustained itself for 15 years. His creations were exhibited in galleries in Taos, Santa Fe, and around the country.

Winding down that venture, Geraint began designing websites to ride the tech wave. His company, Taos Designs, served 60 clients, most of whom commissioned his photography for their websites and marketing. Before that endeavor tapered off in 2008, Geraint formally launched his popular photography workshop tours in 2007. He had been taking friends out with him for years, but discovered there was great interest in this experience. People from all over the world come to learn tips and techniques in the field from the expert, who generously shares his knowledge and treasure chest of favorite locations across northern New Mexico and southern Colorado. Geraint typically leads four to five dozen workshop tours each year, but in 2019, he topped that with over six dozen! He still runs these tours but has altered some of the logistics for COVID-19.

Through the twists and turns in his creative path, Geraint stays true to himself. "I only like doing what I like to do," he asserts. "I'm grateful that I have never had

HOLIDAY GIFT IDEA: Geraint's art prints and/or workshops may be that perfect gift for someone special.

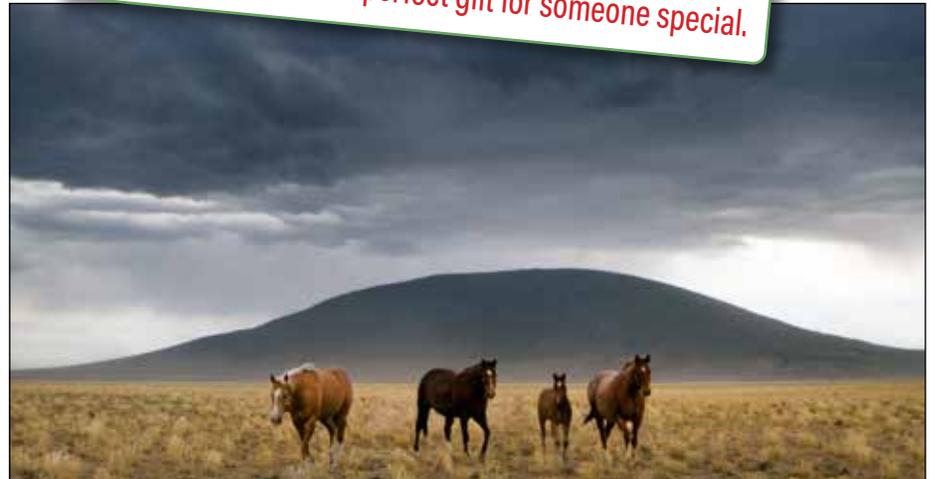


Photo by Geraint Smith

Wild horses and a storm on the move at Ute Mountain.

to take a side job to survive." He's learned how to let go of expectations when out shooting. "In some ways I think that's why I've been lucky with timing. I'm open and sensitive to my surroundings." While many of his fans "ooh and ah" over sunsets and bright blue skies, Geraint remarked, "Blue skies to me are like a gray sky to others. I'm drawn to the interaction of the elements unfolding in front of me. Ultimately, I don't take photos or capture subjects – that's too confining. I like to call it image-making."

When a true master produces spectacular results, we often think they are easy to achieve. That is rarely the case. Multiple factors go into creating the perfect image. Geraint's success is a testament to his keen eye and talent, his technical expertise, and his dogged dedication. He has been posting a Photo of the Day online since 2005. That represents nearly 5,500 drool-worthy images, all of which are published on his website.

Geraint looks forward to spending more time at home with his wife Pam and his grown children Annika and Dylan when they visit. He is focused on enhancing his digital presence and online store, where you can conveniently buy his masterpieces to hang in your home and office. With the holidays fast approaching, you can make your special someone very happy with a gift from Geraint Smith Photography: landscape prints, his photo book, a personalized one-on-one workshop tour with the pro, or a gift certificate.

Even though we too are blessed to live in this scenic location, nature's canvas is ever shifting. Geraint's images preserve moments of splendor to uplift your spirit and admire every day.

Geraint Smith Photography
PO Box 83, San Cristobal 87564
Tel: (505) 501-4880,
geraint@geraintsmith.com
<https://geraintsmith.com/photography-tours-workshops/>



**CHANGE YOUR FOCUS,
CHANGE YOUR WORLD.**

PONY THERAPY

Growing old can be difficult and frightening, especially for those experiencing Alzheimer's or dementia. In parts of Scotland, a roving band of Shetland ponies is soothing those fears and spreading the love to the elderly who need it most.

Therapy Ponies Scotland is run by Elaine and John Sangster. Together with their herd of 15 adorable miniature horses, they travel to nursing homes across the country to provide therapy for patients suffering from dementia and Alzheimers.

The effect the ponies have on these patients is profound. The ponies help stimulate conversation and social interaction amongst their participants. Their soft fur and loveable cuddles inspire a sense of childlike wonder for the patients that caregivers are reporting has a lasting impact on even the most withdrawn of residents.

Equine therapy is not a new notion however, these Shetland ponies can go where most horses cannot – straight into a patient's room. With an average shoulder height of just 40 inches, they'll even take an elevator to get there.

All the therapy ponies have undergone vigorous training to ensure their excellent behavior. And their coats are just as well-groomed as their manners. To prepare for their visits, each pony is brushed to be "teddy-bear soft" and sweet smelling. Through touch, sight, and just unconditional love, the ponies bring out the best in the most stoic of patients.

Caregivers and families are astounded to see their aging loved ones, who have often been silent and withdrawn for weeks, strike up a conversation with the handlers, often reminiscing about past experiences they've had with horses.

When asked what kind of therapy the ponies provide, Elaine Sangster simply says, "We bring in the ponies and they make you smile. There is no better therapy than that."

Mandy Stapleford
www.goodnewsgoodplanet.com

YouTube:
<https://youtu.be/PQk7UBWtrcg>

SoundCloud:
<https://soundcloud.com/user-259154859/gn3-41takecoatleavecoat/s-g0ZKB>



**MORE FUN AT THE CERRO
TRANSFER STATION!**

STAFF WRITERS

Taos County employee Michael Pacheco, at the Cerro Transfer Station, is very enthusiastic about the "free books" shelf he has set up in the metal can recycling shed. When a lady brought in a pile of books to go to the landfill, he decided they were worth saving. He dug out a metal shelf from the metals dumpster and set up this free book library: reduce, reuse, recycle. Bring a book – take a book! There are free jigsaw puzzles, too!

Note from a reader: We are amazed at how clean and uncluttered Michael keeps the whole place. He always greets us with a smile and is wonderfully helpful and kind. We call it "dump dates" when we take our trash and recycling to the Cerro Transfer Station and then stop for lunch "to go" at Tia's Cafe in Cerro. Now we can browse the bookshelf, too!



Photos by Martha Shepp



Michael Pacheco has initiated a free bookshelf in the metal cans shed of the Cerro Transfer Station. Don't throw your old books away!

Michael Pacheco chums it up with soon-to-retire Taos County employee Richard Rivera at the Cerro Transfer Station.

Repurposing Plastic. Repurposing Lives

By TODD WYNWARD

The Repurposing Plastic Project is back! We had great success with the building projects in Questa that were made from the plastic that was kept out of the Taos County landfill. Now we are a business, and we want you to be a member: sign up at <https://www.repurposingplasticaos.com> for just \$5/month!

When you register as a member of the Repurposing Plastic Project, you're doing far more than getting rid of your plastic. You're getting in right relationship with yourself, your community, our watershed, and our planet. You are turning waste into walls and investing in community economics. You're helping to create the more beautiful world you want to see.

As a member, your personal ID# will allow you to drop plastic at either of our two locations: downtown Taos or Questa. Your clean dry plastic can

be dropped off in a tied trash bag with all caps or lids removed from containers. Crush it first if you want to save space and put in more plastic per bag!

For more information, contact tiltcoordinator@gmail.com, (575) 770-8681. The Repurposing Plastic Project. Repurposing Plastic. Repurposing Lives.



Courtesy Photo

The Repurposing Plastic Team, in front of one of a "Waste to Walls" built from post-consumer plastic waste. From left: Angelo Herrera, Holly Armstrong, Randall Martinez, Todd Wynward, Savannah Herrera, and Daniel "RYNO" Herrera. Not pictured is architect Doug Eickleburger.

ANGELS AMONG US cont'd from page 1

Thank you, Food Pantry, for sharing the good news. Sometimes we need a reminder that all is not bad in our world. In this season of giving, let's remember to celebrate the angels among us!

A Message From The North Central New Mexico Food Pantry

In an effort to comply with the state health mandates and to keep our family of volunteers safe and healthy, we are suspending our distribution services until further notice. Check our Facebook page

or call the village office (575) 586-0694 to find out when services will be restored.

If you are in need of an emergency food box please call: Jeannie Masters (586-0486 Cell: 779-9194) or Nancy Parker (586-2096 cell: (505) 699-7563). We hope to be able to serve you again soon.

If you would like to make a donation on the Food Pantry website go to <https://www.ncfpquesta.com/> or mail a donation to: North Central Food Pantry, P.O. Box 1076, Questa, Nm 87556. For more information, please email wrmesquire2@gmail.com Happy Holidays from all of us at the North Central Food Pantry.

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Christmas Chaos? We are here to help!



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Questa Del Rio News
WORKING SMART FOR OUR COMMUNITY

Share your favorite Soup Souper Recipe!

Send us your favorite winter soup recipes to share in the January issue of the *Questa Del Rio News*.

Email soup recipes to Editor,
Lou McCall at: News@QuestaEDF.com

Deadline for recipes:
January 10, 2021



The Questa Del Rio News reserves the right to edit what gets printed and cannot guarantee that all submissions will be included for publication. By sending your contribution, you are giving the paper permission to use your name and reprint your submission.

Third Thursday of each month
from 2pm-4pm.



SBDC Free and confidential One-on-One Questa Business Counseling Sessions

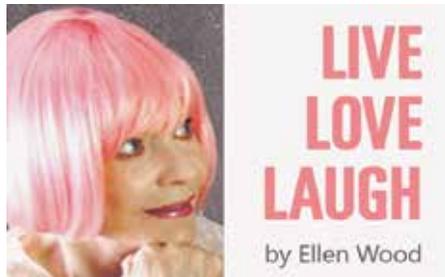
**DEC
17**

Join the Drop-in Session online by Zoom:
<https://zoom.us/j/5757376219>
Join by phone: (346) 248-7799 Meeting ID: 575 737 6219

For more information call SBDC,
575-737-6219.



Change is as certain as death and taxes



The presidential election is over, and we're headed for change. Hold on now... I'm not going to rehash the election; many pundits are already doing that. I just want to mention one little phase of change about the election that tickled my heart: Joe Biden's dog Major will be the first rescue dog from a shelter to live in the White House.

Major is a German Shepherd the Bidens adopted from the Delaware Humane Society in November 2018. He's the first rescue pet from a shelter but not the first rescue pet to live in the White House. President Lyndon B. Johnson's daughter Luci brought home a mixed-

breed pup that had been abandoned at a gas station, and Socks, the Clintons' cat, was also a rescue pet.

So, after four petless years, 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue will again house a dog. In fact, there will be two dogs in the White House starting January 20. Champ, also a German Shepherd, has been with the Bidens since December 2008, right after Joe Biden became Vice President Elect.

Dogs in the White House! I planned to talk about change as it relates to our everyday lives, but I got sidetracked by Major's big brown eyes. So back to the subject: Benjamin Franklin said, "In this world nothing can be said to be certain, except death and taxes." We can add: and change – change is also certain because everything changes.

Lao Tzu said, "Life is a series of natural and spontaneous changes. Don't resist them; that only creates sorrow. Let reality be reality. Let things flow natural-

ly forward in whatever way they like."

My response is, "Easier said than done." This common expression was first seen in print in the Terentius Afer's book of 1483, *Vulgaria Terentii*, worded in the language of the day as: "It is easier to say than to do."

I don't like change when it's upsetting. That's when I usually go into resist or worry mode – and its subsequent suffering. Abraham Lincoln said, "And this too shall pass..." reinforcing the certainty that nothing remains the same. I find myself saying, "This too shall pass," when I'm experiencing change I don't like, but I never say it when I'm going through a happy change, even though it applies equally to each kind of change. What I really strive for is equanimity – I just haven't succeeded yet.

Rumi said, "Yesterday I was clever, so I wanted to change the world. Today I am wise, so I am changing myself"

Ah, yes. Tomorrow I'll start changing

myself. In the meantime, let's all love ourselves and others just exactly as we are – even flawed, voted-for-the-other-guy, drives-us-crazy others – during this Christmas/Navidad season. And if you're buying presents this year, please shop local. For great gift ideas, go to our local shops and www.NorthernNewMexicoArtists.com and see what our area artists have to offer. Just click on Artist Profiles on the top menu and scroll to the bottom for each artist's name or use the Search function at the top if you want to browse by paintings, sculpture, photos, etc.. No mask, no social distancing. Easy and safe shopping.

Merry Christmas! *Feliz Navidad!*
Live. Love. Laugh.

Ellen Wood of Questa is the award-winning author of the series of books, "The Secret Method for Growing Younger," available at northernnewmexicoartists.com. Her website is www.howtogrowyounger.com. Contact Ellen at ellen@howtogrowyounger.com

El cambio es tan seguro como la muerte y los impuestos

POR ELLEN WOOD

Las elecciones presidenciales terminaron y vamos rumbo al cambio. Espera ahora. . . no voy a hablar sobre las elecciones; muchos expertos ya lo están haciendo. Solo quiero mencionar un pequeño y discreto cambio traído por las elecciones que me hizo calentó el corazón: el perro de Joe Biden, Major, será el primer perro rescatado de un refugio que viva en la Casa Blanca.

Major es un pastor alemán que los Biden adoptaron de la Sociedad Protectora de Animales de Delaware en noviembre de 2018. Es la primera mascota rescatada de un refugio, pero no la primera mascota rescatada que vive en la Casa Blanca. La hija del presidente Lyndon B. Johnson, Luci, trajo a casa un cachorro de raza mixta que había sido abandonado en una gasolinera, y Socks, el gato de Clinton, también era una mascota rescatada.

De manera que, después de cuatro años sin mascotas, 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue volverá a albergar un perro. De hecho, habrá dos perros en la Casa Blanca a partir del 20 de enero. Champ, también pastor alemán, ha estado con los Biden desde diciembre de 2008, justo después de que Joe Biden se convirtiera en Vicepresi-

dente Electo.

¡Los perros de la Casa Blanca! Planeaba hablar sobre el cambio en lo que respecta a nuestra vida cotidiana, pero los grandes ojos marrones de Major me desviaron del asunto. Así que volvamos al tema. Benjamín Franklin dijo: "En este mundo no se puede dar nada por seguro, excepto la muerte y los impuestos." Podemos agregar: y el cambio—el cambio también es algo que podemos dar por seguro porque todo cambia.

Lao Tzu dijo: "La vida es una serie de cambios naturales y espontáneos. No te resistas a ellos; pues eso solo crea dolor. Deja que la realidad sea la realidad. Deja que las cosas fluyan naturalmente hacia adelante de la manera que quieran."

Mi respuesta es: "Es más fácil decirlo que hacerlo." Esta expresión común se vio por primera vez impresa en el libro de Terentius Afer de 1483, *Vulgaria Terentii*, redactado en el idioma de la época como: "Es más sencillo hablar que hacer."

No me gusta el cambio cuando trae disgustos. Ahí es cuando normalmente entro en modo de resistencia o preocupación—y el sufrimiento posterior. Abraham Lincoln dijo: "Y esto también pasará..." reforzando la certeza de que nada permanece igual. Me encuentro



Courtesy Photo

Meet Major, the first rescue dog in the whitehouse.

diciendo: "Esto también pasará" cuando estoy en medio de un cambio que no me gusta, pero nunca lo digo cuando estoy pasando por un cambio feliz, aunque se aplica por igual a cada tipo de cambio. Lo que realmente busco es la ecuanimidad; todavía no la he conseguido.

Rumi dijo: "Ayer era inteligente, de

modo que quería cambiar el mundo. Hoy soy sabio, de modo que me estoy cambiando a mí mismo".

Ah, sí. Mañana empezaré a cambiarme a mí misma. Mientras tanto, amémonos a nosotros mismos y a los demás exactamente como somos—incluso a los que tienen defectos, a los que han votados por el otro, a los que nos vuelven locos a los demás—durante esta temporada navideña. Y si va a comprar regalos este año, compre en tiendas locales. Para obtener excelentes ideas para regalos, visite nuestras tiendas locales y www.NorthernNewMexicoArtists.com y vea lo que los artistas de nuestra área tienen para ofrecer. Sólo haga clic en Perfiles de Artistas en el menú superior y desplácese hasta la parte inferior para ver el nombre de cada artista. Sin máscara, sin distanciamiento social. Compra fácil y segura.

¡Feliz Navidad! Vive. Ama. Ríe.

Ellen Wood de Questa es la galardonada autora de la serie de libros "The Secret Method for Growing Younger" que se encuentra disponible en northernnewmexicoartists.com. Su sitio en la red es www.howtogrowyounger.com

*Para contactar a escribe a ellen@howtogrowyounger.com
Traducido por Teresa Dovalpage*

BODY | MIND | SPIRIT

By BARBARA TRACY

GRATEFUL

I start my morning with gratefulness – it is a marvelous way to begin the day. I normally experience this while lying in bed with my eyes still closed from sleeping. I begin an inner monologue with myself about all that I am grateful for. This is not to be taken as a repetition or rote experience, but a deeply sincere envisioning and embracing of various events, people, and life in general. Being grateful is amazing when done from a loving sincere place. It is a good way to alleviate any negative thinking that may be lurking in my unconscious mind.

I often begin with being grateful for being snug, warm, and comfortable in my bed. I may elaborate on how it feels to be so blessed to be able to simply lie there and enjoy the bliss of the silence around me, and the beauty of not doing anything physically.

When we are grateful, there is no time

to judge anything or anyone. There is no space for comparing or wallowing in what we may feel we are lacking. It begins to reset our thinking in a direction that is both positive and dedicated to the uplifting of our consciousness, as well as contributing to raising our mass consciousness, with thoughts that are helpful instead of

“For unto every one that hath shall be given and he shall have abundance; but from him that hath not shall be taken away even that which he hath.” — Matthew 25:29

destructive. Remember, we are the ones responsible for what we use our thinking processes for. When we take responsibility for our attention and intention, we

can create from a place of beneficial and loving design.

“For unto every one that hath shall be given and he shall have abundance; but from him that hath not shall be taken away even that which he hath.”

Matthew 25:29

I interpret this as saying that when we

are grateful for what we have we will have more of it, we will be added unto. We are added unto because of our attention to what we are grateful for, so then the law

of the universe comes forth with more of what we are grateful for. But when we come from lack, then our attention is placed on what we do not have and therefore, the universe will respond in kind and give us more lack.

What am I grateful for? Many things. Living to a ripe old age so far with many wonderful memories and some maybe not so wonderful memories, but all is what creates the “me” of each of us. I am deeply grateful for my loving family, the sound of the wind in the trees, laughter, and the gift of sight and sound, exchanging smiles with a stranger, the smell of coffee brewing in the morning, rain, mountain air, friends, and especially this precious human body that allows me to experience this amazing life on earth.

The holiday season is here and this is a very special and opportune time to look deeply inside and find those wonderful times, places, people, and things that are truly meaningful to us and honor it all with a deep embrace of gratefulness from the heart.

Have a beautiful and blessed holiday season, everyone.

Positive Thoughts

by Donna Mitchell-Moniak

Hmm. Positive thoughts. How about peace, love, and understanding? Hands up if you want these in your world, your family, and yourself. What about open-mindedness, listening skills, and warm-heartedness? Yes, please. Meaningful employment, that which engages one's passions and intelligence and is respectful of the variations that life brings, and the needs of those who depend upon you? Definitely; sign me up.

In truth, it all comes from the inside. One who is the head of the household, an employer, or one who tends to and supports the community – they all know that their care, understanding, respect, and right motivation come from within. It's in daily life that these positive qualities flower and bear fruit.

We know that patience is a gift and that impatience is poison. Courtesy given generates courtesy received; and truth in one's words and actions are acknowledged with a good reputation, being recognized as fair, wise, and trustworthy.

The year 2020 has been unlike any other, even for those who have lived through the Great Depression, wars, epidemics like influenza, polio, and Scar-

let Fever, or the Cold War (remember hiding under our desks at school?). Pandemics, hardships, food shortages, being out of work or having no direction, or the abject pressure of how to feed and house a family with no income – these have been facts of life on earth throughout history. Why was 2020 so different? Can some of the helpless feelings come from a lack of skill?: communication skills, patience, collaboration skills, growing food skills and knowing how to fix things? These come from the inside, too. And, since we have all seemed to have gone inside more this year, how about discovering the wealth of wisdom that is innate to heart and mind and inside those we love as well?

Frustrated? Then face it head on, and let go of trying to control something. Sad or lonely? Call to heart-mind all the people in the world who feel the same as you do. Send a prayer into the world that everyone who is feeling as you are be comforted.

Being purposeful with our emotions, using them to undo them, is a skill that was not taught in school, but one that is easily learned. Fearful of COVID or of political twists and turns, or of getting older, or not knowing if you'll have a job in the new year? Be present with the feeling. Be present to the cascade of thoughts torrentially running through

your mind and realize that a human being has choice as to how to think, what to think about, and that taking a walk, chopping wood, breathing, or gazing into the sky all provide perspective and space inside a claustrophobic mind.

Humanity alone is responsible for bringing peace, love, and understanding into the world, our family, and neighborhood. Open-mindedness, warm-heartedness, and creative, collaborative solutions stem from a gold mine within each of us. Everyone is enriched.

Additionally, what have you wanted to learn but have not had time for? Explore your interests, and learn something new. Discover yourself freshly in the process. Let's add contem-

plation and meditation to the mix, as well as homemade music. My family did that years ago; Dad on 12-string, Mom on autoharp, me on banjo or 6-string, sister on penny whistle, and brother on homemade washtub bass (yes, with a broom and string). We had a great time and actually made decent music!

Let's complete this kooky year with peace, love, understanding, joy, fun, contemplation, and prayers for everyone in the world – including Mother Earth.

Happy Christmas, Happy Hanukkah, Happy Kwanzaa to all. In this season of gifts, be the gift that deeply matters. It's free, no delivery charge, and no cardboard to recycle!

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A Night of Worship and Adoration



QCC UPDATES FOR DECEMBER

FROM THE QUESTA
CREATIVE COUNCIL**Thank you, Peggy Trigg!**

Many thanks to Peggy Trigg for her three years of service to the Questa Creative Council. Since its founding in September of 2017 she had a key role in establishing the non-profit that is dedicated to strengthening the community through arts, culture, history, and education. Although she has stepped down as chair, she continues her involvement as a project leader for two signature QCC programs: the Questa Studio Tour and Wild Rivers Plein Air Festival. She is currently spearheading the Northern New Mexico Artists website and leading the Art Kits for Youth drive.

**"Art Kits" Supply Drive this month continues - please donate!**

This holiday season, from November through December 15, the QCC is again hosting an art supply drive for local "art kits" to be donated to our community's children. We held a successful drive last year and distributed 57 art kits to local youth, raising over \$800 in donations. This year, the need is even greater, with so much schooling happening at home because of the pandemic. Your monetary

donation will go toward buying basic art materials – a sketch book, watercolor set, and colored pencils. Please donate today! Go to questacreative.org and select the Art Kits options in the dropdown menu of the donation button.

Look Up!

Look up! The QEDF folks are planning to change out the streetlight pole banners and install the final and third set - the art-themed banners – to brighten up the winter. Last year, local artists and craftspersons sent in images of their work, which were then formatted to fit the vertical format. The art banners will be a festive change for the holidays and winter, and a great way to celebrate our community.

The first set of banners funded by the Questa Economic Development Fund (QEDF) were installed in July 2019 and displayed the beautiful hand-painted retablos in St. Anthony's historic church. The retablo artists are Arlene Cisneros Sena and James Cordova. The current set of banners shows historic imagery of our town and its people.

**Shop Local Artisans at
NorthernNewMexicoArtists.com**

Do you want to find something unique, inspiring, and beautiful for your holiday gift-giving? Are you trying to stay home because of the current COVID -19 risk? Why not shop local through our NorthernNewMexicoArtists.com website? With over 47 local artists represented, you are bound to find that perfect, keepsake gift. If you want to special order something, now is the time to contact that artist or craftsperson!

Many types of work are represented on this site. Shoppers will see textile art (quilts and custom western shirts) by the Questa Quilters Guild and Joan Young. Woodcarving is represented by Armando Vigil and Mose Rainault (furniture),

Andy Jaramillo (burl bowls), Clarence LaCome, and Marcus Herrera (folk art carving).

Local potters include Mike Ridder, Kathy Morsell, and Sandra Harrington. Area painters include Peggy Trigg, Roger Harrington, BJ Konior, Cami Thompson, Maria Mikhailas, Joan Norris, Scotty Mitchell, and Karen Ahlgren.

Mixed media art is represented by Monique Belitz, Diane deFremery, and Martha Shepp. Local printmakers are Betsy Peirce and Barrie Andrews. Other local crafts include leatherwork by Michael Coleman and Torre Strong, and jewelry artists Julienne Hadfield and Audrey Kunkel. We also have our local author Ellen Wood and herbalist Cathy Hope. This large assortment is not a complete listing of all the local artists represented on the site.

If you are an artist who is interested in joining the site, please contact Peggy Trigg at pegtrigg@gmail.com.

**Check Out the NeoRio Artist Roundtable Videos**

On October 9, 10, and 11 as part of this year's NeoRio project, we hosted three dynamic Artist Roundtables via Zoom, exploring their diverse cube artworks, home reflections, and stories. Thank you to all of you who joined us on Zoom and especially to our participating artists. If you missed the live Zoom sessions, you're in luck! They are now available as videos on the LEAP website - click here. <https://leapsite.org/neoorio/home/artist-roundtables/>

**Concert Video Available of La Sala Sept. 18 Hybrid Concert**

Hear the hybrid concert with Quetave Quartet, dancers, and poet-

ry readings that took place at La Sala on Sept. 18 here, with other QCC project videos to enjoy: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCJqsSTyz-VQTDCECweCWAAVA>

**Support the QCC with Amazon Smiles!**

Our non-profit has registered with AmazonSmile, where Amazon donates 0.5% of the price of eligible smile.amazon.com purchases to charities selected by customers. Spread the word to all your friends, to help us generate donations for the QCC when they shop. Here is the link to set up your choice for Amazon Smiles gifting to the QCC: <https://smile.amazon.com/ch/82-2748963>

**Locals Buy Local,
and Shop Questa**

This holiday season it is more important than ever to support your local shops and restaurants. The Questa Economic Development Fund is launching a "Shop Questa" campaign and you can help by making your holiday purchases locally, and keep your money circulating in the area.

COVID is impacting small businesses in a big way, so when you see the "Shop Questa" logo, think about your local merchants for your purchases. Developed by E. Wilde Graphic Design, the logo will begin to appear around town as window decals, yard signs and more.

An easy one-size-fits-all present is a gift certificate from a Questa area retailer, restaurant, service, or gas station. For a one-of-a-kind gift, buy from local artists and authors online at

NorthernNewMexicoArtists.com.

In Questa you can find everything from unique home goods and antiques to a variety of foods, beverages, and desserts, yoga and fitness services, hand-made items, and so much more!

Visit your local merchants and "Shop Questa" this holiday season. Wear your mask, use hand sanitizer, stay 6 feet apart, and stay safe.

HAPPY HOLIDAYS.

My Ute Mountain Art Residency

By APRIL HOLDER

When my daughter Aurora and I arrived at Ute Mountain Studios (aka UTE A.I.R.) in Questa, I knew it would be a life-changing experience for us. What we didn't anticipate was how very much the world would be changing in this time as well. The pandemic started just as we were getting settled in. And through these trying times, we have been welcomed with the compassion of this community. I see the growth in my work, from my installation to my painting. The landscape is inspiring and beautiful here and has fed into my creative process. But the comfort and kindness that my daughter and I have received from the community has truly been what has given my work power. I came here to create art and found a second home here. I depict this in the work, incorporating the mountains into portraits. I have done my best to capture part of the warmth and beauty that lives here.

[Follow April on Facebook/](#)
[April Holder Art](#)



HOLIDAY GIFT IDEA: ART!

Photos Courtesy of the Artist

Dream, Baby, Dream
acrylic on canvas, 36x24 inches

Living Medicine
acrylic on canvas, 24x36 inches



“JR” aka MALAQUIAS RAEL is Mr. NorthStar!

Comments from Customers (not enough room for them all)

“From pulling my truck out of a ditch in the dark, to servicing our vehicles expertly and in a timely manner, J.R. and the men at NorthStar always treat us with respect and kindness.”

- Ron Rutledge Ph.D.

“Why get tires anywhere else? Free fixing and rotation for the life of the tire at NorthStar.” - Martha Shepp

“JR is a wonderful, kind man I can depend on. He’s a blessing to me and I love him.” - Gloria Gonzalez, 77 years old

“A+ service and always honest. We give NorthStar FIVE STARS!”

- Laurie and Brian Lambert

“I’ve taken my 2001 Toyota FourRunner into JR’s dozens of times. Always great service at reasonable prices!” - Francis Donald

★ JR is happily married to Danette and they have 3 children: Danielle, Malaquias & Miguel.

★ The guys at NorthStar say, “One heckuva great boss,” “He’s good to us,” “It’s great to work for JR,” “He cares about us.” - Lucas, Rodney, Sundance and Art.



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Four Unsexy Tips for Better Fly Fishing

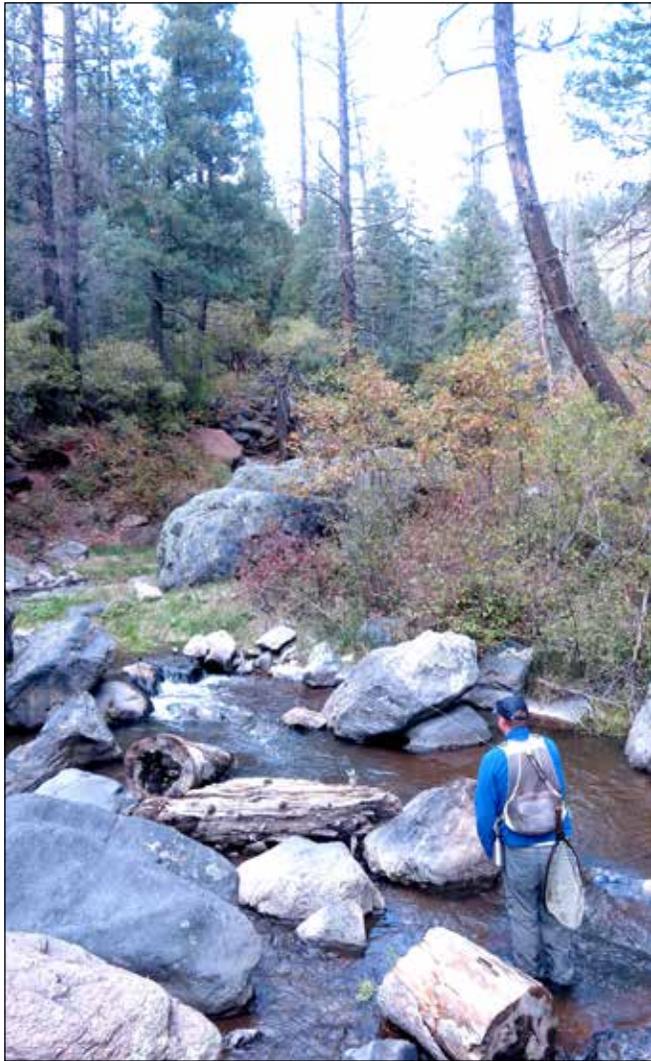


Photo by Toner Mitchell

Andrew Black puts a rock between himself and the water while fishing in Dark Canyon.

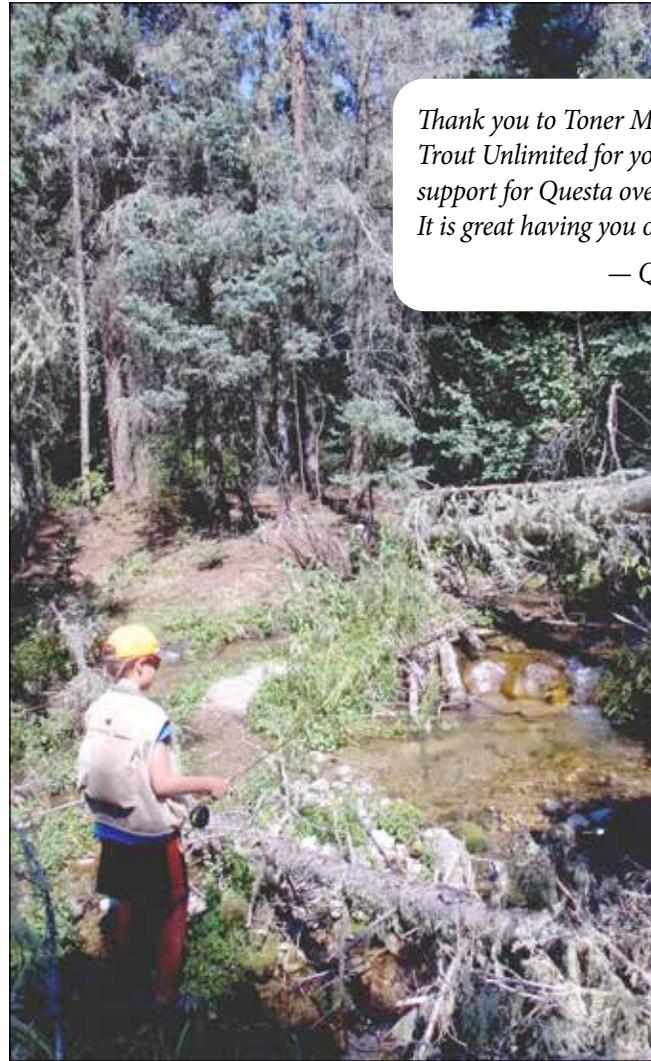


Photo by Toner Mitchell

Gus Curtiss-Mitchell fishing in Rio de los Trampas. Fishing behind a log, good. Wearing a bright orange hat, not good.

Thank you to Toner Mitchell and Trout Unlimited for your tremendous support for Questa over the years. It is great having you on our team!

— Questa del Rio News

By TONER MITCHELL

With their belief in good luck charms and voodoo, fly fishermen can be as superstitious as baseball players. I know guys who will ditch you for bringing a banana in your lunch, so certain they are that the banana will get them skunked. Some, like my grandfather, will make you sit in the car if you can't stop running along the stream bank. Angler behavior can be truly nonsensical, but some of it is informed by old-fashioned common sense.

Master Your Knots

By far the best way to improve at fly fishing is to become expert at tying knots: the nail knot, the double surgeon's knot, and your favorite knot for attaching the fly.

Practice while watching TV, to teach your fingers to tie knots as well as your eyes can. Especially as my eyesight declines, I am glad I did this at an early age so I could change flies by feel during the sundown insect hatches, when the fishing's usually good. Being able to change flies fast enables me to take optimal advantage of such brief opportunities.

Expert knot-tying improves your catch by enabling you to actually fish instead of sit on the bank fumbling with your knots. If you don't know your knots, you will avoid having to tie them, which means you will avoid doing what must be done (change flies or tippet) to catch fish at a particular moment.

Buy a Stream Thermometer

Being cold-blooded, trout are governed enormously by water temperature. Water between 50 and 65 degrees presents the broadest range of fishing options, since the trout's metabolism – hence its appetite – is firing on all cylinders between those temperatures. Otherwise, fish will slow their eating in accordance with their temperature-driven metabolism. In extremely cold water (less than 40 degrees), anglers can adjust by fishing subsurface flies and making sure they fish slower currents thoroughly. Extremely warm water (more than 68 degrees) triggers a similar metabolic slowing, though with lethal implications.

Anglers with thermometers can save a lot of headache by knowing whether fishing is even worth it. During summer months, anglers will benefit their local

streams by not fishing during the hottest hours, when heat-stressed fish can die on the line or soon after release.

Don't Get Busted

Particularly in New Mexico's small streams, trout are wired to bolt at the slightest sign of danger. Fortunately, concealing your presence is pretty intuitive. Hide behind things like trees, logs, and boulders. Fish from the shade instead of out in the full sun.

Clothing matters. Before going fishing, consider the background colors where you are going. On the Red River and Cabresto wear light and dark green. On the Rio Grande, try to blend in with the gray boulders. A sky-blue shirt is a good summer fishing tool, though save the sky blue pants for the golf course. Think seasonally: while yellow and orange cause trout to freak in the summer, they often blend in well during autumn.

Whatever color you're wearing, remember that trout spook at quick movements, as well as flashes of light coming from your rod, jewelry, or sunglasses. Lighter-skinned anglers should wear long sleeves and gloves and keep their faces in the shade of a hat.

Short Casts

It's hard to beat the rhythm and grace of fly casting, the beauty of that loop in the air. Long casts pull on the heart strings, and they definitely have their place, as when the angler and distant target are separated by deep water, or when you see a fish that looks too big to take chances with.

Still, the shortest POSSIBLE cast is the one you must make. Let your feet do the work. You'll be surprised at how close you can get to a promising target if you move slowly enough and read up on the mechanics of a trout's vision. Casting short reduces the number of currents your fly must navigate, as well as the number of potential snags it must pass in the air. It makes getting a bite more likely, as well as actually hooking and landing fish.

Approach to within a rod's length of the area you want to fish. Is there a rock to stand behind? Should you crouch or kneel to conceal yourself better? Scan the water to gauge how short a cast you can use. If you see a fish that could spook the whole pool, fish to it first. Cover the water in front of you before moving to within a rod of the next spot.

New Mexico's Outdoor Economy Contributed \$2.4B to 2019 NM GDP

By BRUCE KRASNOW

The Bureau of Economic Analysis (BEA) released data on November 11 about the size and scope of the outdoor recreation industry in the U.S. and in New Mexico. In our state, the updated data show that the outdoor economy contributed \$2.4 billion to the state's GDP in 2019 (2.2% of GDP). According to the report, 35,065 people were employed in this sector, with \$1.2 billion in total income. The outdoor recreation economy accounted for 2.1 percent (\$459.8 billion) of U.S. GDP in 2019.

Here are a few highlights from the report:

- New Mexico's outdoor recreation economy is growing faster than the whole country's, at 5.9% since 2018 (compared to a 3.7% growth for the U.S.).

- Employment in this sector is also expanding much faster in New Mexico than in the country as a whole. Since 2018, the number of outdoor recreation jobs in New Mexico has grown by 5.3%, compared with an increase of 0.4% for the U.S.

- Since 2018, outdoor recreation income has grown 7.6% in New Mexico, compared with an increase of 3.9% for the U.S.

For the first time, the data highlights specific activities' contributions to the state GDP. In 2019, RVing, equestrian, and snow sports were the top three contributors to the New Mexican outdoor economy, followed closely by boating and fishing.

"We know the outdoor economy is a powerhouse in New Mexico, employing over 35,000 people annually," Outdoor

Recreation Division Director Axie Navas said. "But there is much more work to be done. The COVID-19 health crisis has hurt many of our businesses in this space – a fact not captured in this new tranche of data. It's our job to aid in the recovery of the outdoor industry, so it continues to be a vibrant economic engine in the state."

"We aim to continue growing wages in outdoor recreation jobs, and we want to see New Mexico at the top of the pack when it comes to the size and scope of its outdoor economy. We live in the most beautiful state in the country – the BEA numbers should reflect that," Navas said.

Earlier this year, ORD issued a survey to 128 outdoor recreation businesses in New Mexico. Over 90% of respondents stated they had lost revenue and/or hadn't been able to cover basic expenses due to the pandemic-induced economic

crisis. Almost 78% of respondents are small, local companies with fewer than 15 employees.

For more information on the BEA data, find the full tables here: BEA OREC: <https://www.bea.gov/news/2020/outdoor-recreation-satellite-account-us-and-states-2019>
 NM: <https://apps.bea.gov/data/special-topics/orsa/summary/sheets/ORSA%20-%20New%20Mexico.pdf>
 ORD Survey: <https://www.nmoutside.com/covid19-response>

Bureau of Economic Analysis

Data show New Mexico outdoor recreation economy growth outpaced national average

Questa Stakeholders Meet Public Land Solutions

By KRISTYNA DILLARD-CRAWFORD

The outdoor recreation economy in New Mexico has been growing by leaps and bounds, faster than the country's outdoor recreation economy creating thousands of jobs and spurring economic growth and development in gateway communities like Questa, NM. Already in the midst of connecting communities in the region, Questa has many activities to offer visitors. From Off Road Vehicle Trails (OHV) trails and hiking to fishing and watersports, the area has strong potential to draw both visitors and businesses geared toward outfitting and guiding activities, as well as those seeking high quality of life.

On November 18, representatives from Questa, NM engaged in a preliminary outdoor recreation stakeholder meeting with Public Land Solutions (PLS), a nonprofit focused on the recreation economy, to discuss current and future opportunities for outdoor recreation on nearby public lands. Public Land Solutions helps communities identify current and potential recreation assets as part of a larger, community-based proposal to enhance the local outdoor recreation economy. Motivated by improving the health and resiliency of local communities to

changes in economic sectors, Public Land Solutions also works to ensure that policies supporting that growth are put into play to preserve outdoor recreation assets.

As part of this stakeholder process, PLS will continue outreach to local elected officials and members of the community over the course of the next few months. Already, land managers from the USFS have offered information about current projects in the Questa area and others have indicated that there are many opportunities to begin new projects benefiting the community and increasing quality of life for residents of Questa. The goal of the work is to create a community-supported proposal for Questa's recreation economy that can be utilized to coordinate with local land managers. This process of identifying recreation assets will require even more local input. If you are interested in learning more, contact Public Land Solutions and you'll be included in future stakeholder meetings. See related story on this page.

Krystyna Dillard-Crawford
 Executive Coordinator
 /Public Land Solutions
 P: (970) 361-4410

krystyna@publiclandsolutions.org
www.publiclandsolutions.org

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La Sala to Host Online Classes, Book Club, and More

By MARTHA SHEPP
AND GAEA MCGAHEE

Martha Shepp interviewed her good friend and colleague Gaea McGahee, owner of La Sala. Gaea has been shaping La Sala, located at the south end of Questa, for the past few years. Gaea also is the spirit and on-the-ground person behind Questa Farmers Market, a space for community gathering in the context of local agricultural and entrepreneurial small business.

MS: What is La Sala, and what's your vision for this place?

GM: La Sala is a simple and beautiful renovated space, with hardwood floors, nice natural light, and great acoustics. We've beautified this large room – this sala – to be used for yoga, zumba, and other health and fitness classes. In February and March we had kids' ballet and tai chi classes. We've hosted music events and special gatherings. My vision? I want this place to contribute to overall community health by providing regular classes, events and workshops, all with our mission in mind: to support a culture of health.

MS: How has COVID-19 impacted La Sala?

GM: We opened in October 2019, then had to close, like everyone else! After the March closure I kept thinking... this will be short and we'll be open soon... Five months later, when fitness classes were permitted again by the updated public health order, I was immersed in Questa Farmers Market, so it has taken time to help La Sala adapt. Martha, you created a special event at La Sala on September 18. We hosted the Questa Chamber Music Series sponsored by the Questa Creative Council and Sala Reach.

MS: I was inspired by some other performing groups who were finding inventive ways to bring the arts to people during the shutdown, and you and I started a conversation, resulting in this hybrid concert. My feeling: the notion of essential work and workers was leaving out the healing and naturally uplifting elixir qualities of the arts. The direct experience of creativity, and imagination in times when most activities are virtual and individualized is truly essential. You agreed! It fit right in with your mission to support a culture of health. You provided La Sala, and your fabulous summer garden for the audience with socially distanced seats. **GM:** Oh yes, the garden!



HOLIDAY GIFT IDEA: Designed in Questa, made in Taos, La Sala T-Shirts for ONLY \$22 each

Photos by E. Wilde

(above) Gaea McGahee at La Sala

(right) Original LaSala T-Shirts available for holiday gift giving.



The backyard of La Sala was an oasis this year, my mental health garden.

MS: Since everything is still shifting, what are your plans?

GM: In the beginning of last month, we held small group classes – yoga and zumba. The in-person classes are paused again for now, but we are trying out online classes. At least for December and January, we'll use Zoom to host yoga, and more – all related to a culture of health: art-making, wellness/nutrition groups, a fermentation workshop, plus a book club starting in January. In this way we can “gather” online while physically being in our homes. When we can have group classes again at La Sala, we'll be looking to support small groups in need of a physical space to come together to meet and study. La Sala is a resource!

MS: Tell me about the program you've set up to contribute even more to Questeños' well-being, Sala Reach.

GM: I coordinate a nonprofit program called Sala Reach, a program of Localogy, a nonprofit in Questa whose mission is: “To move local people and communities from passive consumption to active production of livelihoods

and culture” (localogy.org). Sala Reach supported the dancers at the September concert, hosted the kids ballet classes, the monthly yoga class for military veterans, Gold Star Families, First Responders, Peace Corps veterans, and civil servants; and makes yoga available to folks in recovery of any kind.

MS: How can people connect with you and La Sala and learn about your offerings?

GM: To find out about everything, go to LaSalaQuesta.com and subscribe to “News.” I update the calendars and schedules of ongoing classes. Please feel free to email me at YogaSalaQuesta@gmail.com or call (575) 224-2102. We're on Instagram @lasalaq and Facebook @LaSalaQuesta.

MS: Anything else?

GM: If people want to support us and are looking for gifts for the holidays, we have super cool t-shirts! There are three designs, each with a story. Some elements were hand-drawn by an artist who did a residency at Ute A.I.R in Sunshine Valley, and some were vintage print elements. I relied on Emily Wilde, our local graphic designer, to pull all of the elements together. They are on our website: take a look! yogasalaquesta.org. We look forward to being together at La Sala again. Until then, stay connected, stay well, and take care of each other.

*La Sala is located at
2331 State HWY 522, Questa, NM 87556.*

<http://yogasalaquesta.org>

Carson National Forest Christmas Tree Permits Available Online



Courtesy Photo, Alta Vista Elementary and Intermediate School

Christmas Tree, painted by Alta Vista second-grader, Mariah Arellano.

By JAVONNE GOODMAN

This year it's easier than ever to purchase a permit to cut your own Christmas tree in the Carson National Forest. Online sales through Recreation.gov opened up in early November and continues as a safer alternative to traditional in-person sales at Carson National Forest offices during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Once they set up their account at Recreation.gov online customers can print their permits and place on the

vehicle dashboards for easy viewing. The web page includes need-to-know rules and guidelines, maps, and tips. Please become familiar with the information before you head into the woods.

Permit holders are asked to practice good stewardship: tree cutting is prohibited within 300 feet of streams, rivers, paved roads, and in all recreation camp areas and congressionally designated Wilderness Areas. You should be prepared for unpredictable weather changes and colder conditions at higher elevations. Forest Service staff may be in the cutting areas to check permits and answer questions. Tree permits are valid only on land within forest boundaries, and the permit expires on Dec. 31.

Christmas tree permits can also be purchased over the phone by calling any of the Carson National Forest district offices; your permit will be delivered via postal mail along with guidelines for harvesting a tree. Questa Ranger Station: 9 am-12:30 pm, 1:30 -4 pm (575) 586-0520. Supervisor's Office 8 am-4:30 pm (575) 758-6200

The prices for the nonrefundable Christmas tree permits are:

- 10' and under – \$5/tree
 - 10 - 15' – \$10/tree
 - 16 - 20' – \$15/tree
- with an additional \$2.50 service fee. There is a limit of three permits per household.

As part of the "Every Kid Outdoors" initiative, fourth and fifth graders are eli-

gible for a free holiday tree permit with a valid Every Kid Outdoors pass, downloadable at www.everykidoutdoors.gov. The student's unique passcode is required to receive a free permit. Kids can apply for their free permit through the online system by selecting the option and entering the code on their pass when prompted. (The online Every Kid Outdoors permits will also include the \$2.50 service fee.)

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SANTA CLAUS!

By DONNA MITCHELL-MONIAK

The snow was blinding. Daddy had already told us that we would probably not visit the nanas and grandpas tomorrow, Christmas Day. I asked, "How is Santa going to find all the houses?" He will, my father assured. "Time for bed, everyone!"

After he tucked us in, Daddy gave me an extra kiss on the forehead. "Santa has gotten through snowstorms before, hon. He's been delivering love and joy for a long time." Though my young mind appreciated hearing father's words, I was unconvinced.

When my siblings were fast asleep, I sat cross-legged at the headboard of my bed, wrapped in my blanket, and gazed into the fast falling snow, backlit by an obscured full moon. "Please, angels. Help Santa and his reindeer find their way to all the chimneys in the world." Over and over again, I whispered the prayer.

After some time, it occurred to me that other parts of the world might not have chimneys. I wondered how Santa delivered the perfect present or needed clothes or blanket to those children. Oh! Maybe they are not having a snowstorm either. "Dear Santa, please go to the warmer countries first. The storm might be over by then and you'll be able to find every home here."

More time passed. Sleepy eyelids drooped. Catching myself, I'd pray again for Santa's safety and that of the reindeer. The snow had piled up three hands high on our roof. I measured it against the window and thought again of the angels invoking their guiding presence for Santa.

With head on arms folded on the headrest, unable to keep my little eyes open, a dream danced in my mind. Where people lived in huts, Santa winked and made himself as small as a mouse. His bag of presents shrank too. If a cat or dog caught wind of him, he would smile, put his finger to his lips and the animal would go back to sleep. Delivery of the goods was placed wherever was just right for that family; then he would snap his fingers. Magically, Santa would be outside with his sleigh and reindeer and the presents would be

full-size in the house.

With amazement, I woke up. Outside my window, far away through the falling snow, was a red glow that seemed to be followed by a gentle radiance moving through the sky. My heart leapt. He made it! He made it through the storm! Daddy was right!

"Thank you, angels," I said over and over again as I watched the soft red light pilot an unmistakable comet tail of luminous joy across the sky.

I am 64 now; and that memory is indelible, as is my faith that Santa Claus is still delivering love and joy all over the world. I know that he takes many forms, and has over his seemingly immortal life sometimes taken the form of women or animals or a sacred tree, the Yule log, or of mom and dad. That's how magical and kind he is. He uses whatever is necessary to accomplish the task of goodness for all.

Shape-shifting is captured in the long history and legends of Santa. His various names together with the cultural traditions of the Eve of Christ's Mass (Christmas) display not only the eternal generosity of Santa and his helpers, but of people, which is why Santa most often manifests as a jolly, benevolent, all-wise person. His gift to the adults of the world is that we are like him; but unlike him whose abundance and kindness mark only one night, our generosity of spirit, time, energy, and resources is called for every day and in all circumstances.

In much of Europe and North America, Santa Claus is known as St. Nicholas and Kris Kringle. "Santa Claus" comes from the Dutch name Sinter Klaas which is a shortened version of Saint Nicholas. The man who would be canonized as Saint Nicholas, the patron saint of children, lived in Patara, which is in modern-day Turkey. In the early 300s AD, Nicholas became a monk in the Christian church. Born into moderate wealth, he gave away all his wealth while traveling the countryside giving and being a benefactor to the poor and sick, which were most people at that time. His assistance included providing dowry for three sisters who would otherwise have been sold into slavery by their poor father. Over the course of many years, his thoughtfulness and care of children became legend and was instrumental in his beatification. December 6 was and still is his day. Much later, giving to help the poor became a widespread custom associated with Christ who was seen as a gift to humanity. Therefore, Christmas became a time of charity to all in need and of giving to one another.

Some of the look of Santa Claus is from Scandinavian folklore. A "nisse" or "tomte" is one of the little-folk who wear a bright conical hat, is rotund, and invisibly helps farmers or common people.

Reindeer live in the Arctic belt that runs across the northern hemisphere. Nomadic indigenous people of Norway, Sweden, and Finland have had semi-domesticated reindeer for millennia. Reindeer pulling the belongings of families on pole-skids is likely the source of the legend of a flying reindeer driven sleigh.

Santa's happiness, in part, is an antidote to the mid-winter darkness. Candles, yule logs in the hearth, warm cider and mead, puddings, and breads have long been part of the welcoming and sharing in the Scandinavian countries long before Christianity made its way to those northern countries. The Winter Solstice was the celebrated day. As Christianity spread through Europe, the warm-hearted festivities merged with the celebrations of the birth of the Christ child. Happiness and giving of oneself is a gift as substantial as the red glow in the blinding snow that I saw as a child.

All gifts used to be handmade: baked goods or foods to add to a Solstice/Christmas Eve dinner, hand-knitted socks, mittens, a rag doll, or a whittled toy. This year, many people have more time on their hands, due to the world pandemic. Make something for someone: a baked good, a pot of soup, or a craft. Explore the fun of giving something that has come from your creativity and joy. I did that last year. The pandemic was not on the horizon; I wanted to give friends and family in Massachusetts something that came from my new life here in south-central Colorado. Everyone got coasters made from Mexican tiles with cork backing that I glued onto them. People loved them!

This article comes to you under the auspices of December's Volunteer of the Month. In alignment with that, we focus momentarily on

giving. Time and energy, skill or enthusiasm is something that everyone has. Some have more than others; Nicholas had wealth and time to share. There are lots of ways that we can support one another as the world and our country continue to chart new times and ongoing changes. Together, helping one another, being there for one another is how humanity has always gotten through challenges. Now is no different.

This Solstice and Christmas season be the light in people's lives. Be the sparkle that the world needs. Remember, the angels sang, "Peace on Earth. Goodwill to all." Happy Goodness, everyone!

Courtesy Photo, Alta Vista Elementary and Intermediate School

This month's Volunteer of the Month, Santa Claus, depicted here by Alta Vista student Hailey Rael.



Taos Feeds Taos Celebrates 35 Years



By LOUISE GALLEGOS

MERRY CHRISTMAS – it is that time again! After 34 years of providing baskets of food to those in need during the holiday season, Taos Feeds Taos, for our 35th annual event, has had to reinvent how we provide this service to our community during the

COVID-19 pandemic.

In order to keep our recipients and volunteers safe, we are limiting person-to-person contact as much as possible. The following are the changes we have made:

- Applications will be made over the phone
- Food certificates will be given instead of food baskets
- Certificates will be mailed by December 10
- Recipients will shop at Super Save in Taos

While we will miss our personal contact with recipients and volunteers, we feel it is more important to protect

our community.

Please, phone calls only! Leave your name/number and we will call you to fill out the application by phone. We still require the same

information for the application: Name, mailing address, physical address, number in household, monthly income, etc. Have a blessed and happy holiday!

DONATIONS CAN BE MADE TO:

Taos Feeds Taos, P.O. Box 234, Taos, NM 87571 Or with Pay Pal – www.taosfeedstaos.org

APPLICATION DATES:

Questa/Cerro – Monday, November 30, 8 am - 4 pm (575) 586-2144; (575) 779-6444; (575) 613-5490

Costilla/Amalia – Monday, November 30, 8 am - 12 noon (575) 770-9088

Taos – November 30-December 1, 9 am - 4 pm (575) 770-7841

Penasco – Monday, November 30, 9 am - 4 pm (575) 770-1621; (575) 741-8210; (575) 224-4859



Thankful. Thankful for the Holidays, for food, family, and friends. Everyone gathered around the dinner table with laughter and stories that never end. I am so happy to be in this family that I am in, I can't help but to have this great big grin. And this is why I am thankful for the holidays, for food, family, and friends. But don't forget about all the love we have and all the time we get to spend.

Happy Holidays
from
Alta Vista
Elementary and
Intermediate School



Santa's stocking from Hayley Cordova



Away in a Manger by Juan Cisneros



Merry Christmas from Thiago Padilla



Remington Smith, Happy Fall



Christmas Lights from Ryan Arellano

Preparation



Day-Of: Getting Ready



Streaming Live



Burn



Commemorative Cambalache 2020 T-Shirt

HOLIDAY GIFT IDEA: COVID CUCUI HEAD T-SHIRT for ONLY \$5.00 at Rael's Market



COVID CUCUI HEAD

Streamed Live from
Cambalache 2020 (a recap)

Photos by E.Wilde



and clean up



See Video
on YouTube at Visit Questa NM

The Sober Sight Fundraising Campaign and Online Auction



By RACHEL KUC

Vida Del Norte Coalition has been engaging with the youth in our community to see what they think would help them keep themselves and their peers from misusing substances. They wish they had a safe drug and alcohol-free place where they could be together, work on homework, play games, get creative, and just hang out.

Creating a safe place for youth can help protect them from the factors which cause them to be at risk for misusing substances. A safe place also provides them with opportunities to learn life skills through interactive engagement. Vida Del Norte wants to transform the new location they

now have in Questa into a center that can be used by the youth, as well as continue to host activities for the community.

The Coalition is launching “The Sober Sight,” a fundraising campaign, through December 21 to raise money to transform their new office space into a safe environment for the youth and the community. They are hosting an online auction with great gifts for the holidays donated by local businesses and artists. You can also make a donation to this fundraising campaign without purchasing an item on the auction. Visit www.vidadelnorte.com/auction today to place your bids or make a donation.

It is also not too late to make a tax-deductible donation of an item to the Vida Auction, you can contact Maria Gonzalez, Coalition Coordinator at (575) 779-2260. Vida Del Norte wants to thank everyone for helping to prevent substance misuse in our communities. Together we can reduce the risk and influence of drugs and alcohol on our youth.

Youth Risk and Resiliency Survey
Once every two years, the Vida Del Norte Coalition in Questa conducts a Youth Risk and Resiliency Survey to assess the risk of substance misuse for the youth in our community. After the survey is completed the data are published in a report. The results of the last survey in 2019 are alarming. According to this survey, 59% of youth in high school drank

alcohol at least once in the 30 days prior to the survey, 68.1% had used tobacco products, 48.9% had used marijuana and 29.8% had used prescription drugs that were not prescribed to them. These percentages are higher than the national averages. Please visit www.vidadelnorte.com/data if you would like to see the full report, with complete from the Youth Risk and Resiliency Survey.



Praying Hands Cross made of Ponderosa Pine Wood by local artist George Vigil

HOLIDAY GIFT IDEA: Handmade unique works of art made locally.



Photos by Rachel Kuc

Original Oil Painting of St. Anthony Church in Questa, NM by Michelle Samantha Martinez

Vida del Norte Coalition Honors Local Law Enforcement Officers

By MARIA GONZALEZ AND RACHEL KUC

Vida Del Norte hosted a luncheon on October 7 to honor and thank our local law enforcement officers for the work and commitment they have brought to our communities. The law enforcement sector is an integral part of our coalition. Without their support to enforce and assist in creating policies, it would be much more difficult for us to continue the work we do to prevent substance misuse among the youth in northern Taos County. We wanted to thank them for their hard work!

The luncheon was also a good opportunity for Vida Del Norte and our Active8 youth members to share some of the data we collected from our youth survey, conducted this past September, and create connections: Several of the officers were surprised at the rise in alcohol use among our young people. Active8 youth members discussed their concerns about community issues with our Sheriff’s Department officers as well as the Red River marshalls and Red River Mayor Linda Calhoun.

Vida Del Norte acknowledged that these officers put their lives on the line daily for the wellbeing of our communities and it was truly an honor to pay



Courtesy Photo

Local Law Enforcement were honored at a luncheon by the Vida Del Norte Coalition. Thank you for all you do!

tribute to their profession. We appreciate their continued involvement in our communities. Thank you, officers!

We also want to thank local businesses, coalition members, and community members for helping make this event a success. My Tia’s Cafe in Cerro provided the delicious food, Party On

Rentals from Questa provided the tents and chairs, and Rael’s Store in Questa provided their amazing coffee. The Coalition members, including the youth in Active8, helped decorate, set up, and host the event and members of the community showed up to help us say thank you. We invite anyone who would

like to continue this conversation or get involved with our Coalition to visit us at our new office at 62 Highway 38 in Questa. For more information, please contact Coalition Coordinator Maria Gonzalez, at (575) 779-2260 or maria.gonzalez@vidadelnorte.com or visit <https://vidadelnorte.com>

NCRTD Blue Bus: Awards of Excellence

By JIM NAGLE

The North Central Regional Transit District (NCRTD) continues to receive awards! They have received the Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting from the Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA) of the United States and Canada for its Fiscal Year 2019 Comprehensive Annual Financial Report (CAFR). This is the fifth consecutive year the NCRTD has received the award.

This marks the third of the GFOA's top national awards that have been bestowed upon the NCRTD this year and follows the Distinguished Budget Award for the FY 2020 Annual Budget and the award for Outstanding Achievement in Popular Annual Financial Reporting (PAFR) which has been achieved for the second year in a row. This makes the district one of only five governmental entities in New Mexico to have garnered

each of the three GFOA awards this year.

NCRTD Executive Director Anthony Mortillaro commented, "This award significantly reflects the commitment of the NCRTD to meet the highest principles of governmental accounting, financial reporting, and standards of communication and accountability to the constituents of northern New Mexico. We were graded proficient in each category, and this is the highest rating available in government accounting. It marks a significant achievement for the district."

The NCRTD provides fare-free and some premium fare public transit service to a service area that encompasses over 10,000 square miles of north central New Mexico including the counties of Taos, Los Alamos, Rio Arriba, and Santa Fe; as well as the Pueblos of Pojoaque, Ohkay Owingeh, Nambé, San Ildefonso, Santa Clara, Tesuque, Taos, Picuris, and the Jicarilla



Courtesy Photo

Locals and travelers alike take advantage of free public transportation offered in northern New Mexico. Passenger seen here is boarding Blue Bus at San Cristobal.

Apache Nation. The agency's signature "RTD Blue Buses" provide additional transit connections to New Mexico Rail Runner, Santa Fe Trails, New Mexico

Park and Ride, Los Alamos Atomic City Transit, and Red River Miner's Transit. More information at <https://www.ncrtd.org/>

RTD Blue Bus Routes Temporarily Suspended



By JIM NAGLE

North Central Regional Transit District RTD Blue Bus routes, districtwide, were temporarily suspended effective November 16.

Three employees based in the RTD Taos facility tested positive for COVID-19. Some of those employees

had interacted with employees from the Española facility. To guarantee proper safety measures, while taking extra precautions to ensure the safety of employees and passengers, all services will be placed on hold.

Employees based in Taos, as well as Santa Fe and Española will be tested and quarantined until results are confirmed. Routes are expected to start to be reinstated in late November. As we get into December, routes will be placed back into service and expected to operate on a reservation-only and/or demand basis until further notice. For the most up-to-date information and status on the 320 Questa and 310 Red River routes, you can go to www.RidetheBlueBus.com or call toll-free (866) 206-0754, ext. 2.

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Chimney Fires: A Reality You Can Prevent

By CYNTHIA NAJIM, LATIR VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENT

As we rely on our wood stoves and fireplaces to heat our homes this winter, it's important to minimize the risk of chimney fires, which can occur when chimneys are dirty. We typically don't think about the condition of our chimney when relaxing in front of the fire or feeling warm and cozy.

A chimney's function is to safely carry out of the house the dangerous flue gases emitted from the fireplace, wood stove, or furnace. These harmful by-products include smoke, water vapor, gases, unburned wood particles, hydrocarbon, tar fog, and assorted minerals. As these substances exit the fireplace or wood stove and flow up into the relatively cooler chimney, condensation occurs. The resulting residue that sticks to the inner walls of the chimney is called creosote.

Creosote is a black or brown residue that can be crusty, flaky, tar-like, drippy and sticky, or shiny and hardened. All forms are highly flammable. When there is sufficient creosote build-up on the chimney lining and the flue temperature is high, a chimney fire can

ignite. In extreme cases, the fire can quickly spread from the chimney to the structure of your home.

Chimney fires can burn explosively and be noisy and dramatic enough to be detected by neighbors or passersby. Flames or dense smoke may shoot from the top of the chimney. Homeowners often report being startled by a low rumbling sound that reminds them of a freight train or a low flying airplane. Those are chimney fires you can see and hear. However, most chimney fires go undetected.

Before you next light that crackling fire, please take these important precautions to ensure the safety of your home and family:

Have your chimney professionally cleaned and inspected every year – or twice a year if needed.

Have a plan for your family in case of a chimney fire: get everyone out of the house to a safe location and call 9-1-1.

While you can purchase consumer products for suppressing chimney fires – PREVENTION IS BEST.

Remember - Clean chimneys don't catch fire!



QUESTA PUBLIC LIBRARY

HOW WELL DO YOU KNOW YOUR LIBRARY?

While the community watches the construction progress of the Questa Public Library's expansion, we thought it might be a good time to take stock of the current library and what it has to offer, even during this time of the pandemic. Time for a little fun!

Everyone is invited to take our little quiz. Answer at least one of the questions below and send your response to library@villageofquesta.org by Thursday, December 10. You will be entered in a drawing for a \$25 Walmart gift certificate. Answers to the quiz will be printed in the January edition of the *Questa de Rio News*.



Photo by E. Wilde

Current look at the Questa Public Library; progress is being made!

1. What year did the Questa Public Library open?
2. What state senator was instrumental in first establishing the Questa Public Library?
3. Who donated the building that is now the Questa Public Library?
4. How many years has the Questa Public Library held a Summer Reading Program?
5. Where is the Questa Public Library located?
6. When is free wireless internet available from the parking lot?
7. Who can access the free use of computers at the library by appointment?
8. What does a person need to borrow books, CDs, or DVDs from the library?
9. How long can you borrow a book from the library?
10. What can the Questa Public Library offer during this time of COVID-19?
11. What is the name of the Library Director?

questalibrary.org

Biscochitos: Sweet Treat Holiday Tradition

By DEBORAH
ARCHULETA-MORENO

As the Christmas season approaches, we are reminded of the celebration of our faith, family, and traditions. One of the most popular Christmas traditions in northern New Mexico is Las Posadas (posada means lodging). Las Posadas is a nine-day celebration of religious observance beginning every year on December 16 and ending on Christmas Eve, December 24.

Posadas is Spanish for "lodging," and Las Posadas is a traditional play enacted nine days before Christmas, telling the story of Joseph and Mary on their journey, looking for a place to stay before their baby, Jesus, was born. Each day corresponds to one month that baby Jesus was carried in the womb of the Virgin Mary.

This celebration is a time to come together for nine days and nights of devotion and purification. Las Posadistas go to different houses each night and are sent away, until the ninth night, when

they are finally given posada. People along the route decorate their homes with farolitos to light the way and cook traditional foods like tamales and biscochitos, which are given to the posadistas; and a prayer is recited for them and the community.

The tradition of biscochitos and the original recipe for this sweet treat was brought to New World by the Spanish conquistadors and colonists who had settled along the Rio Grande Valley throughout northern New Mexico. "Biscochito" (a.k.a. bizcochito), is based on the diminutive form of the word bizcocho, meaning "biscuit." This simple cookie made of sugar, anise, and cinnamon spice was not only given to the posadistas during the nine-day celebration; but also served as a dessert over Christmas meals, weddings, baptisms, and other special occasions.

Though the traditional cookie has evolved over the centuries, influenced by local and indigenous traditions and families applying their individual spin to

the recipe, it did not take away from its popularity; so much so that New Mexico recognized the biscochito as the official "State Cookie" in 1989!

BISCOCHITOS Ingredients

- 1 lb. lard
- 1 c sugar
- 2 t anise seed, crushed to bring out the flavor
- 3 or 4 eggs (4 medium or 3 large)
- 1 oz whiskey
- 1/2 c orange juice
- 6 c flour
- 3 t baking powder
- 1 t salt
- Cinnamon sugar
- 1 c sugar
- 1 cinnamon

Cream lard and sugar together until fluffy. Add anise, eggs, orange juice and whiskey. Mix thoroughly.

Sift flour, baking powder, and salt together. Combine with lard mixture. Blend thoroughly to create dough.

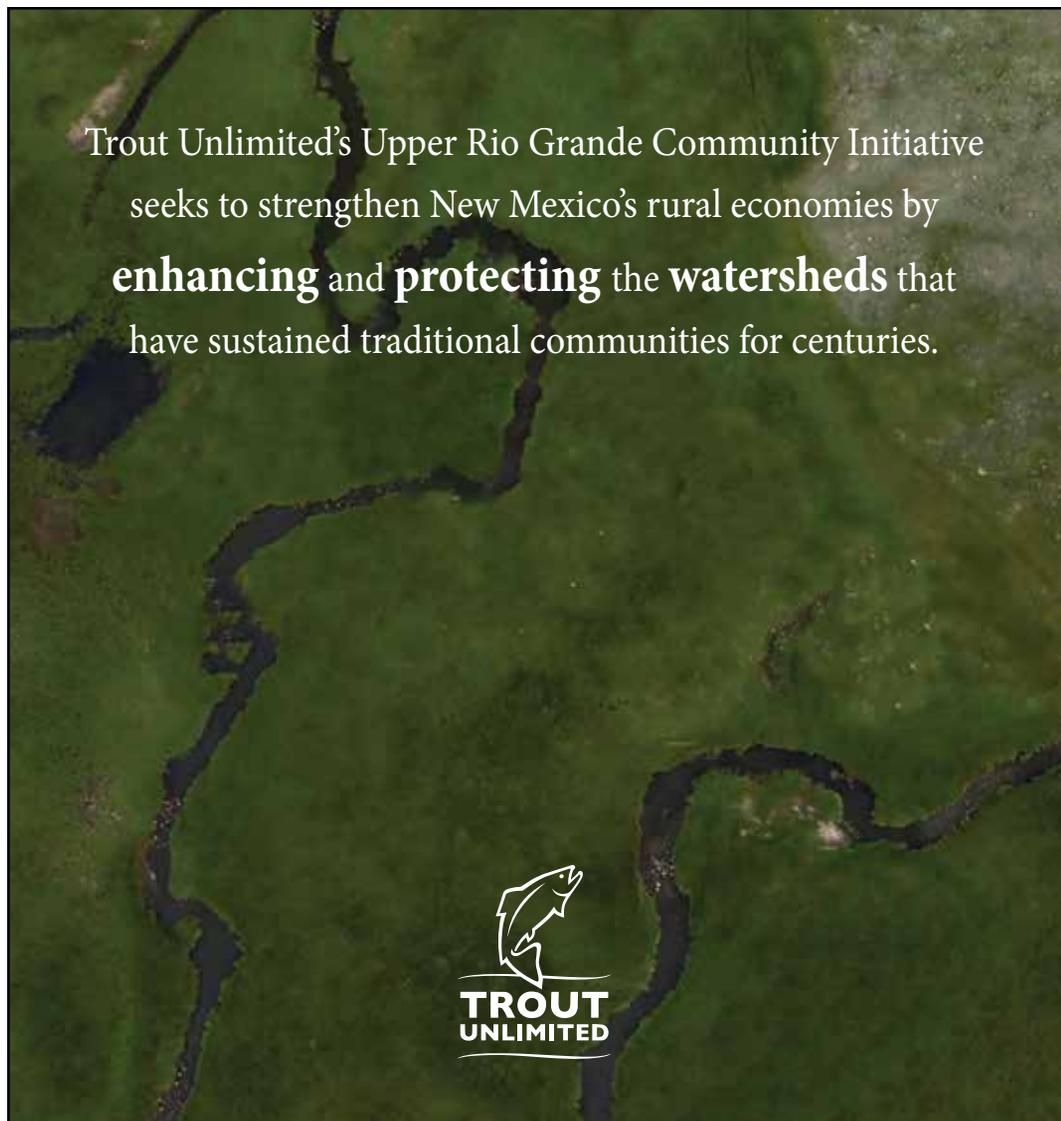


Courtesy Photo

Biscochitos, a tradition for the holidays, is the official state cookie of New Mexico!

Roll out very thinly, to about 1/8"–1/16." Cut with desired cookie cutter shapes. Press each cookie in cinnamon sugar to coat. Place sugar side up on a cookie sheet.

Bake at 350° for 12 - 15 minutes, until lightly browned (think light adobe!).



Trout Unlimited's Upper Rio Grande Community Initiative seeks to strengthen New Mexico's rural economies by **enhancing** and **protecting** the **watersheds** that have sustained traditional communities for centuries.

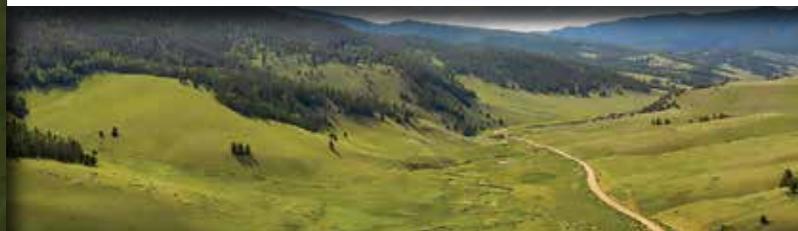
Since 2013, TU has supported the Village of Questa's expansion of its fishing-based economy through re- storing the Red River, developing a restoration work force, and improving the village's capacity to lodge and serve visitors.



TU has joined a diverse coalition of local stake- holders opposing a proposed copper, gold, and zinc mine in the Pecos River watershed. The mine would destroy the economy of the Village of Pecos, which depends heavily on revenue generated by the river



For over a decade, TU has engaged in restoring the Comanche Creek watershed, supporting reliable irrigation flows and imperiled Rio Grande cutthroat trout, a species of significant cultural value.



Be inspired to make more money for yourself in the New Year

SPEAKERS:

- Bookkeeping – Amanda Dean
- Agriculture – Daniel Hutchison
- Virtual Assistant –Jeanette Ortega
- Network Marketing – Janie Corinne
- Turning a Hobby into a Business - Valerie Vigil

LEARN FROM LOCALS

THINKING ABOUT:

- Starting a side gig
- Owning a business
- Creating Additional Income
- Get Tax benefits
- Working remotely
- Being your own boss



Questa Business Entrepreneurial Network

For more information, contact Lynn Skall, 575-586-2149

FIVE PRIZE DRAWINGS FOR ATTENDEES:

- \$20 Gift Cards from local Questa Businesses
- Funding provided by the LOR Foundation.*

Presents: Earning from Anywhere!
Wednesday, December 16 at 6:00pm



EVERYONE IS WELCOME

Join the QBEN Meeting on Wed, December 16th at 6:00pm:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87849364259?pwd=Mms0TjBBR1dJR2FyUVlCem44RVVZQT09>
 Call in by phone: (346) 248-7799 Meeting ID: 878 4936 4259 Passcode: 282982

Less-Sugar Healthy Sweets

Soothing Applesauce*

From Martha Shepp

- 4 apples
- 1/4 c raisins
- 1/2 t cinnamon
- Or, 1/2 t minced lemon peel
- 1 c water (or mix with apple juice)
- 1 heaping T kuzu (Japanese seaweed powder that causes sauces to thicken, but is healthier than arrowroot)
- 2 T water or juice

Like apple pie but without the crust. The delicate flavor soothes and relaxes.

Peel, core, and slice the apples. Place in a saucepan with raisins, cinnamon, or lemon peel, and water. Bring to a boil, cover, and simmer for 10-15 minutes, until apples are tender. Dissolve kuzu in the 2 T water, add, and stir until thick over the low heat. For crunch, top with granola, toasted seeds, or nuts.

Baked Apples*

From Martha Shepp

- 2 large apples (Rome, Pippin, Granny Smith, or Jonathan work best)
- 1 T roasted sunflower seeds
- 1 T raisins
- 1/4 t vanilla
- 1/4 t cinnamon
- 2 t water
- Sesame oil

Slice off and save the tops of the apples. With a small knife or apple corer, hollow out 1" in the center of each apple, being careful not to poke through the bottom. Mix all other ingredients and fill the apples. Replace the top slice of apple, and bake at 375 for about 40 minutes or so until tender. For juicier apples, cover halfway through cooking.

Chocolate Beet Bundt Cake

From Martha Shepp

- 4 large beets
- 3 c flour (ww, pastry, all-purpose, or brown rice)
- 3/4 c cocoa powder
- 2 t baking soda
- 1 t baking powder
- 1/2 t salt
- 3 eggs
- For sweetening, use Stevia, or Swerve, or applesauce. If it's dry use about 1/2 c. If wet, 1 c and go from there, to get the right consistency
- 1 c plus 2 T water (may need to adjust to get the right consistency)
- 1 c canola or other oil
- 1 t vanilla extract

Prepare beet puree. Roast or boil til tender, drain, allow to cool slightly, then puree in blender or food



Courtesy Photos

Beet Bundt cake (top) and Almond & Tahini Cookies (bottom).

processor. Use about 1 1/4 c of it for the cake, and use the rest as you see fit.

Preheat oven to 350 and butter a Bundt pan. If you don't have one, use an iron skillet and turn a ceramic ovenproof bowl over, placing it in the middle to act like a Bundt pan.

In medium bowl, whisk together flour, sweetener (if dry like Stevia or Swerve), cocoa powder, baking soda, baking powder, and salt.

In a separate larger bowl, lightly beat the eggs with a whisk, then whisk in water, oil, vanilla extract, and sweetener (if it is wet, like applesauce). Add beet puree and whisk well.

Add flour mixture to beet mixture and stir with rubber spatula or wooden spoon until fully incorporated.

Pour batter into the prepared pan and bake 50-60 minutes, until knife inserted in the center comes out clean. Set aside to cool.

Carrot Cake

From Martha Shepp

- 1 c raisins or other dried fruit
- 2 c chopped walnuts (black walnuts, if you dare!)
- 2 1/2 c self-rising flour
- 1 1/2 t cinnamon
- 1 t baking soda
- 1 c sweetening (use Stevia, or Swerve, or applesauce. If it's dry use about 1/2 c. If wet, 1 c and go from there, to get the right consistency)
- 1 c oil
- 4 large eggs
- 3 c grated carrots
- Add as needed to moisten: applesauce or coconut milk
- Parchment paper
- 13 x 9 glass baking dish or 3 round cake pans

Preheat oven to 350. Arrange 1 c of the walnuts in a single layer in the pan. Bake 12 minutes or until toasted and fragrant. Reserve the rest.

Sift together cinnamon, baking soda, and flour (and sweetener if you're using the dry kind, like Stevia or Swerve)

Line bottoms of pan(s) with lightly greased parchment paper.

Beat oil with eggs until smooth, adding gently one at a time. Add wet sweetener (if you're using applesauce instead of dry sweetener) and stir in.

Add flour mixture, beating by hand just until blended. Fold in the carrots and 1 c toasted walnuts that were left over. Spoon the batter into pan(s).

Bake at 350 for about 50 minutes or until wooden toothpick in the center comes out clean. Cool in pans on wire racks for 20 minutes. Remove from pans to wire racks and let cakes cool 1 hour or until completely cool.

Top with your favorite cream cheese frosting

Will get exact name of cookbook if you use these

Almond and Tahini Cookies

From Robyn Black

- 2 c almond meal or almond flour
- 3/4 c tahini (sesame butter)
- 1/2 c maple syrup (or honey for vegetarian)
- 1/2 t sea salt flakes
- 2 t vanilla extract
- Crushed cocoa nibs, chopped pistachios or almonds to garnish

Preheat oven to 340 degrees if convection or 300 for conventional fan forced. Line a rimmed cookie sheet with parchment paper.

Place tahini, maple syrup or honey, salt, and vanilla in a medium heavy-bottomed saucepan on medium heat. Heat for a few minutes, stirring constantly until smooth and blended. Remove from heat and allow to cool for 10-15 minutes.

Add almond meal to the tahini mixture and mix until dough forms. Roll 1-2 tablespoons' worth of dough in the palm of your hands into a ball. Place on the prepared tray and flatten slightly with your fingertips. Alternatively, use an ice cream scoop to drop dollops of the dough on the prepared tray and flatten with your fingers.

If decorating, press the toppings (nuts, seeds, cocoa nibs) on top of the cookie discs in the center. Bake in the pre-heated oven for approximately 10 minutes, switch the oven off and let the cookies brown slightly in the hot oven for another 5 minutes before removing.

Cool on wire racks. Store in an airtight container at room temperature for up to a week. (They won't last that long... but you should know they can!)

* *The Self-Healing Cookbook*,
by Kristina Turner



**MICHAEL'S MOVIE
MOMENTS**
JUDY

By just about any measure, Judy is an acting triumph for Renee Zellweger. She won the Oscar for her performance in this movie, and I don't think anyone questions that award. There were also terrific performances by leading actresses in *Bombshell*, *Little Women*, and *Marriage Story*, but in all three movies there were also additional outstanding performances by other nominated men and women. My argument would be that it is easier to give an outstanding performance when you are acting with one or more additional outstanding performers. But if a single person carries the acting burden and does it well, then the recognition is even more deserving, and this might explain why the Oscars recognize such performers.

From that fact, there are two important observations about this movie: the first being, of course, that Zellweger does a simply brilliant job in this movie. She obviously puts every ounce of her soul and body into this performance. She spent over a year taking voice lessons and, despite what one critic mistakenly said, she sings all Judy Garland songs herself and brings to each performance wonderful interpretations which, even if not exactly like Garland's originals, still provide sufficient emotional power to bring them home. Reportedly, she lost some 24 pounds to look more like Garland. And she studied Garland's performances to bring to her role even some of the facial tics and body movements that characterized the *Wizard of Oz* legend. Critic Lisa Mullen (in *Sight & Sound* magazine) wrote, "With a jaw-dropping performance from Renee Zellweger at its pulsing, neurotic heart, the film is funny, warm, and satisfyingly self-aware." Manohla Dargis (New York Times) echoed "Zellweger's performance is credible, with agitated flutters and filigreed touches, though it leans hard on Judy's tremulous fragility, as if

she were a panicked hummingbird."

And that brings us to the second observation about this movie – if you take out Zellweger's performance, you don't have much left; Zellweger does a fantastic job in an otherwise mediocre movie. The costumes are all appropriate and probably authentically match at least some of what Garland wore, but there is nothing exciting about them. The production design is bland, and the sets are uninspired. The movie was filmed almost entirely in London, which is fitting for the part of Garland's story being told, but the hotel rooms and club halls are not particularly stimulating by any measure. Cinematography is only occasionally interesting and there really could have been some fabulous mixing of close-up and audience perspectives during performances that just weren't there. The editing is pathetic; long drawn out scenes (when she isn't performing) that test an audience's endurance! Ultimately, the blame for all that falls with the writer (Tom Edge) and director (Rupert Goold), both of whom apparently have more experience with the cooler medium of British television shows than Hollywood movies. I am totally unaware of any of their other work and I'm not sure I want to be.

And that really is a shame. Garland's life has tragedy written all over it. Although our vision of her as Dorothy in *The Wizard of Oz* is of America's hopeful sweetheart, the emotional devastation of the Hollywood system was already tearing her apart. In the movie's flashbacks to her origins in that movie, we see how she was insanely deprived of not just her childhood, but also of basic humanity. In one of the best lines of the movie, Judy says "I just want what everybody wants. I seem to have a harder time getting it." Zellweger, sadly, shows that all Garland really wanted, across her entire life, was just to be loved. There is a profound scene near the end of the movie where Garland, after yet another unfortunate ending, is invited to share in some going-away cake. Garland picks at the cake like she had never really tasted one before. As she takes a bite, Zellweger shows us just what it might be like to experience something you have never been allowed to share, even and maybe especially, as a child.

This is another movie that is difficult to rate. Zellweger's performance is worth five stars. So, see the movie for Zellweger, but don't expect much more. (3.5 Stars)

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It's Been A Good Run Lindsay Mapes

STAFF WRITERS

Lindsay Mapes has been a familiar face in Questa since 2017, when she accepted a contract position with the Questa Economic Development Fund (QEDF) following the departure of Phillippe Chino. While Questa scrambled to recover 300 jobs lost from the Chevron mine over the years, the QEDF emerged as a driving force for our community's transformation. Lindsay's position grew to become Questa's Economic Development Director. And develop our economy she did. Lindsay was instrumental in helping the QEDF redirect the community's identity from that of a mining town to a community reinventing itself. Thanks to Lindsay's work with the QEDF, we are showing off our natural resources, recreational activities, our local history, and the arts – more than ever.

If you didn't interface with Lindsay directly over the last four years, you've probably seen her name in the Questa Del Rio News. She was a catalyst for creating this newspaper in its current form. VISTA volunteer Erin Freiboth created the Questa Community News and Lindsay, with the help of many others, grew the publication into the Questa del Rio News and continued as the first business manager and regular contributor.

Lindsay was also instrumental in helping with the gateway welcome signs



that we're looking forward to seeing installed soon, the creation of the Questa Fishing Derby, the launch of the Questa Welding Lab, and her most recent undertaking – the Questa Lodging Project, among many, many other projects.

When asked about the most memorable times for her in Questa, Lindsay says of the Questa Lodging Project, "I will always remember the USDA 504 Grants for repairing senior citizens' homes. When you get to work directly with people, and those people are so humble and kind, it touches your heart. I will miss those interactions with Questa's elders."

Lindsay has developed a love for Questa and is sad to close this chapter of her life. "I was fortunate enough to come to Questa during a period in this town's history that I can only describe



Courtesy Photo

We celebrate and congratulate Lindsay Mapes and all the good she has done for the Questa area. She has moved to Los Alamos and we will miss her.



as magical – it's when the stars have aligned over a place, God looks down on the people, and progress happens. Questa is experiencing this renaissance and I am so fortunate to have been a part of that moment."

Earlier this summer, Lindsay moved to Los Alamos where her partner, John, accepted a position at Los Alamos National Laboratory. Since then, she has

been phasing out her work in Questa. "I am proud of the work that I did in Questa, my heart was truly in it. But those who work tirelessly, often unrecognized, are the real reason Questa is on the upward trajectory. I can't list all those names, but those reading this will know that I'm talking to them. And, of course, nothing would have been possible without Malaquias Rael and the QEDF Board and the San Antonio del Rio Colorado Historic Preservation Board led by Cynthia Rael-Vigil. Thank you for giving me the opportunity and allowing me to think outside the box." Let us celebrate and congratulate Lindsay Mapes and all of the good she has done for the Questa area.

Welcome, Deborah Torres! New Questa Lodging Project Manager

By LOU MCCALL

The San Antonio del Rio Colorado Historic Preservation (SARCHP) group is happy to announce that they have a new manager for the Questa Lodging Project (QLP).

Lindsay Mapes developed this project as part of her work with the Questa Economic Development Fund (see related story on page 4). The QLP continued to grow under the auspices of SARCHP and has become a success story. When Lindsay moved to Los Alamos recently, the SARCHP board had a hard task in filling Lindsay's shoes, but fill them they did. Deborah Torres came on board October 26, and has a lot to offer the position and the community.

Deborah was raised in Albuquerque and lives in San Ildefonso Pueblo, with

her husband, Elmer Torres, who drove the 12 miles to Los Alamos Labs for 39 years and is now retired. Deborah began working with a custom home-builder, where she developed a passion for lodging. She eventually became a licensed real estate broker and works with Sotheby's International Realty in Santa Fe. Working with a high-end firm such as Sotheby's inspired her to give back to local communities. Her goals are to "keep locals local." In Questa, there is tremendous raw material to build a housing market and make sure there is not just adequate, but excellent housing available for Questeños and visitors alike.

As Chevron continues with its remediation work, they have many employees and contractors who come to the area and are in need of housing. Finding



Photo Courtesy of Sotheby's International

SARCHP is happy to welcome Deborah Torres, new manager for the Questa Lodging Project

lodging in Red River or Taos isn't always an option. One of the services of the QLP is to act as a matchmaker service for those who have properties for rent and those who are looking for housing.

The lodging project also offers many options for loans, grants, and other

assistance to help families renovate their heritage properties, homes that have been in their families for generations and hold a lot of history. Questa is full of beautiful old adobe buildings that would be worth a fortune in Santa Fe. QLP and Deborah Torres are here to save and restore Questa's history.

Do you have a property that could bring rental income to your family with just a little tender loving care? Give Deborah a call or email and let's get started!

Deborah Torres

Questa Lodging Project Manager
San Antonio del Rio Colorado
Historic Preservation
P.O. Box 534
Questa, NM 87556
(505) 301-3956

<https://www.sarchp.org/>
Admin@SARCHP.org

Thank you!

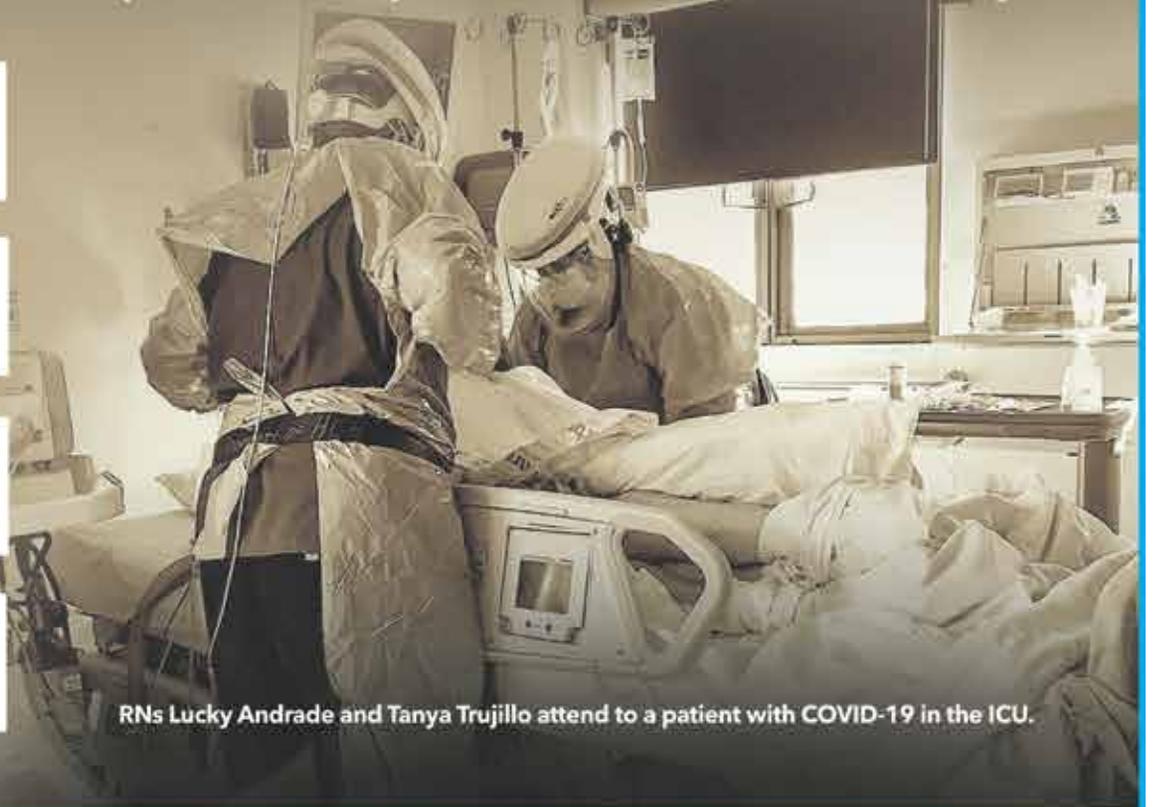
The people of Taos County voted to approve the mill levy. **Thank you for supporting Holy Cross Hospital!**



Help slow the spread of COVID-19

There are steps that we can all take to lower the risk of contracting the coronavirus (COVID-19) and to prevent its spread within our community.

-  Stay home whenever possible.
-  Wear a mask and avoid gatherings and crowds.
-  Cover coughs and sneezes.
-  Wash your hands often with soap and water.



RNs Lucky Andrade and Tanya Trujillo attend to a patient with COVID-19 in the ICU.

WISHING YOU A **SAFE, HAPPY & HEALTHY**

HOLIDAY SEASON

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Thanks to these Questa High School partners for providing funding to make the Welding Lab possible and free for all students:

Under the Stars

By DONNA MITCHELL-MONIAK

Here we are, blessed with being able to see the starry skies at night. Understanding the portents of the heavens was common discussion in generations past. Everyone knew the primary constellations, the zodiac, and others. Recently, you may have noticed that the night sky has been dotted with strong markers of light this year: Mars (a reddish glow as it rises), Venus (always is bright and beautiful), plus Jupiter and Saturn dancing together throughout the year. Astronomically, Jupiter and Saturn are in the constellation Sagittarius (Western astrology puts them in Capricorn). When you read this in December, Saturn and Jupiter will be visible in the southwestern sky for an hour or so after the sun sets. Mars will be bright to the south-southeast.

Astronomy and western astrology are not the same. Astronomy is a science that uses the fixed stars and their constellations as location references, then watches the planets wander through them. "Planet" is Greek for "wanderer." Eastern astrology is the same, but Western astrology adopted a different approach for determining the placement of planets in a chart. Meteorologists might occasionally mention planets to watch in the night sky. If so, they use the astronomical location.

Jupiter-Saturn conjunctions have happened before. Because both planets are quite visible, when they come together (conjunction), the occurrence has always been considered an omen. Jupiter is generally interpreted as a gift-giver, a benevolent influence. Saturn is associated with responsibility, causes-results, and discipline; therefore, Saturn can be seen as a planet of difficulty. This only applies if irresponsibility or dismissing of facts has gotten in one's way. Saturn requires rectification – in other words, if it doesn't work, fix it!

It is said that a Jupiter-Saturn-Venus conjunction was the "Star in the East," guiding the wise men to the Christ Child. Jupiter indicates royalty, blessing, and good news, while Saturn states authority and leadership. It is also thought that Jupiter-Saturn were conjunct when the Buddha was born. In both cases, astrologers were called upon to interpret the signs. The signs showed world-level teachers that

would grow to manhood and provide the world with ideas of truth and justice (Saturn) and equanimity (Jupiter).

Jupiter-Saturn conjunction calls to the heart (Jupiter) and mind (Saturn) of each of us. "What is real?" Saturn asks; and offers discipline, reality-check, and practical assessment. Saturn's rings report that what goes around comes around. Yet, Saturn's clarity and non-emotional assessment mentor us in positive steps forward.

Jupiter is the biggest planet in the solar system and represents abundance, the inexpressible, and all possibilities. Nature is a good example of Jupiterian abundance – life thrives as a result. Jupiter bestows gifts, blessing, benevolence, charity, and generosity, as well as standing in the power of the good for all.

This month, before Christmas, both planets will together enter the next sign of the zodiac. Western astrology states that to be Aquarius, the sign of universal ideas and visionary possibilities for the world. Neither astrology nor astronomy can wave magic wands, however. Humanity is responsible for itself, its choices, and actions. To assist us, we have the teachings of the great teachers of all traditions. Jesus was a revolutionary; Buddha was too. Both boldly went against the established cultural norms. They included women in their inner circle, were inclusive of all castes and races, and both stated doctrines that humanity has yet to fulfill. "Love one another as I have loved you," said Christ – a Jupiterian statement of magnanimity at the heart of every one. Buddha said, "Be your own master. Who else could be?" – calling everyone to stand forthrightly in innate wisdom and inner presence – Saturn's luminous clarity.

Look to the skies, my friends!



ESOTERIC ASTROLOGY

SKYDANCE ESOTERIC ASTROLOGY by Charlene R. Johnson
DECEMBER 2020

THE GREAT CONJUNCTION

**"The distance between this world and the other is exactly the width of a maple leaf."
— Seneca prophet Handsome Lake**

On December 21, the shortest day of the year and the first day of winter in the northern hemisphere and of summer in the southern hemisphere, the two largest planets in our solar system, Jupiter and Saturn, come together in the most intimate meeting between them since the year 1623. This level of closeness won't be matched again until the year 2080. They will literally be only 0.1 degree apart. Considering the size of our universe and the size of those planets, that's pretty close! These are two of our slowest moving – furthest out there – planets, which means that whatever they do affects us all as a planetary species. Both are already visible in our south by southwest skies at sunset.

This has been an unusual year from the start. Although we always begin our year with the Sun, Mercury, and Vulcan in the sign of Capricorn, this January we had six planets in Capricorn, the sign of initiation and long-term karma. Three of them, including Jupiter and Saturn, continued in that sign throughout the year, which provides some explanation for the kind of year we had. This rough period of potential growth is the launching pad for sending humanity into the Age of Aquarius. Jupiter rules the sign of Aquarius. Just two days before this momentous conjunction, both planets will at last shift into the sign of Aquarius, the sign of all humanity, of joy and abundance, of coming together in groups to work toward unity, to bring a sense of brotherhood and sisterhood to the planet. These two planets together in this sign literally translate to, "group initiation." We've had our preparatory period; now it's time to make good on it. This is the age in which we must consciously choose to work together.

Everyone: As you watch our two giant planets come together, feel the sense of unity and destiny this conjunction can mean.

ARIES ♈ Planet: Mercury ♀ MARCH 20 – APRIL 19

Dynamic: It's time to launch into a new chapter of your life.
Direction: Put your wings on.
Soul Thought: When aspirations become concrete.

TAURUS ♉ Planet: Vulcan ♁ APRIL 19 – MAY 20

Dynamic: The urge to spend may need to be reined in.
Direction: Or not.
Soul Thought: How to decide?

GEMINI ♊ Planet: Venus ♀ MAY 20 – July 20

Dynamic: You are still on the battleground, but do you understand the battle?
Direction: Read Bhagavad Gita.
Soul Thought: "The world is a mirror of what we have become within." —Gregg Braden

CANCER ♋ Planet: Neptune ♆ July 20 – JULY 22

Dynamic: The first half of the month you may feel like a fish on a hook.
Direction: Lie low and quiet and they may never know they had you.
Soul Thought: When fear turns into an ally.

LEO ♌ Planet: Sun ☉ JULY 22 – AUG 22

Dynamic: It's a turning point in the world and you are at the center of it all.
Direction: Consider it a spiral rather than a circle.
Soul Thought: From dust to dust.

VIRGO ♍ Planet: Moon ☾ AUG 22 – SEPT 22

Dynamic: At this time of humanity's evolution, your service is needed more than ever.
Direction: Serve: who you're with, where you are, through what you're doing.
Soul Thought: Loving is one way. — Fritz Perls

LIBRA ♎ Planet: Uranus ♃ SEPT 22 – OCT 22

Dynamic: You may undergo a financial irregularity.
Direction: Define your security in ways other than finances.
Soul Thought: What exactly do you value?

SCORPIO ♏ Planet: Mars ♂ OCT 22 – NOV 21

Dynamic: Your new plans may erupt unexpectedly.
Direction: Be prepared to jump.
Soul Thought: Eruptions can expose the flaws.

SAGITTARIUS ♐ Planet: Earth ♁ NOV 21 – DEC 20

Dynamic: The time for education and brilliant ideas is now.
Direction: You can be part of moving us all forward.
Soul Thought: "The problem and the solution occupy the same space." —Seth

CAPRICORN ♑ Planet: Saturn ♄ DEC 20 – JAN 19

Dynamic: It's been a long year, but now you can see the bigger picture.
Direction: Take a deep breath as you gaze.
Soul Thought: The pause that refreshes.

AQUARIUS ♒ Planet: Jupiter ♃ JAN 19 – FEB 18

Dynamic: It's the culmination of an important period in your life.
Direction: Pour forth for others all that you have learned.
Soul Thought: That was then, this is now.

PISCES ♓ Planet: Pluto ♇ FEB 18 – MAR 20

Dynamic: You're the holdout and it's not easy.
Direction: Someone has to hold the door open so that all may pass through.
Soul Thought: Thank you.

To discover your Rising Sign, or for more information, contact Charlene R. Johnson, www.SkyDanceAstrology.com, or email: SkyDance@SkyDanceAstrology.com

Esoteric Astrology is focused on the rising sign more than the sun sign (we suggest you read both) and provides clarity, direction and answers for those seeking a higher level of life.

DATES TO REMEMBER DECEMBER 2020

DECEMBER 1 6:00 PM

Questa Independent School District Board Meeting online via Zoom; call the Administrative Office for the Zoom link and access code to participate, (575) 586-0421.

DECEMBER 8 6:00 PM

Village of Questa Town Council Meeting online via Zoom; call the Village Office for the Zoom link and access code to "attend" the meeting, (575) 586-0694.

DECEMBER 15 6:00 PM

Questa Independent School District Board Meeting online via Zoom; call the Administrative Office for the Zoom link and access for the meeting, (575) 586-0421.

DECEMBER 16 6:00 PM

Questa Entrepreneur Networking Meeting presents "Earning from Anywhere, with Learning from Locals"; see ad on page 23. (575) 586-2149

DECEMBER 17 2:00 - 4:00 PM

Questa One-on-One Business Counseling Drop-in Hour by the Small Business Development Center. By Zoom or telephone. (575) 737-6219.

DECEMBER 22 6:00 PM

Village of Questa Town Council Meeting online via Zoom; call the Village Office for the Zoom link and access code to "attend" the meeting, (575) 586-0694.

**DECEMBER 25
CHRISTMAS**

**SPECIAL DAYS IN
DECEMBER INCLUDE:**

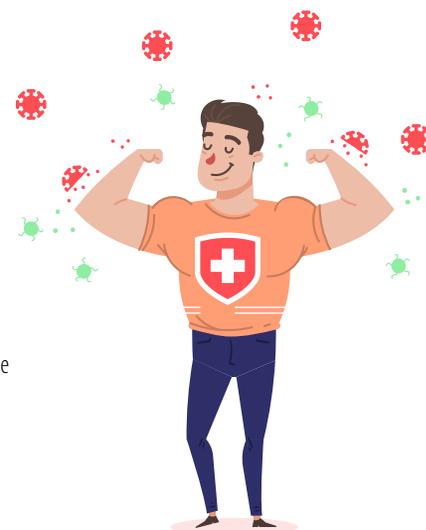
- DEC 1** World Aids Day, Rosa Parks Day
- DEC 2** International Day for the Abolition of Slavery, Giving Tuesday in the U.S.
- DEC 4** World Wildlife Conservation Day
- DEC 5** World Soil Day
- DEC 6** St. Nicholas Day, Miners' Day
- DEC 7** Pearl Harbor Remembrance Day
- DEC 10** Nobel Prize Day, Human Rights Day
- DEC 10-18** Hanukkah
- DEC 13** Worldwide Candle Lighting Day
- DEC 16** National Chocolate-Covered-Anything Day
- DEC 16-24** Las Posadas
- DEC 17-23** Saturnalia
- DEC 18** International Migrants Day
- DEC 21** Winter Solstice
- DEC 24** Christmas Eve
- DEC 25** Christmas
- DEC 25-Jan 5** Twelve Days of Christmas
- DEC 26** Day of Goodwill
- DEC 26-JAN 1** Kwanzaa
- DEC 28** Holy Innocents Day
- DEC 31** New Year's Eve

DECEMBER IS:

AIDS Awareness Month and Human Rights Month.

5 Ways to Support Your Immune Response

1. **SLOW DOWN AND STRESS LESS**
Take steps to reduce stress like taking a warm bath, listening to soothing music, or practicing breathing exercises
2. **EXERCISE REGULARLY**
Stay active by doing 30 minutes of physical activity a day to help your immune system fight back more quickly
3. **EAT A BALANCED DIET**
Reach for immune supporting foods that are high in nutrients like protein, folic acid, zinc, selenium, iron, copper, vitamin C, vitamin A, vitamin E, and vitamin B6
4. **STAY HYDRATED**
Drinking plenty of water helps support healthy immune function by carrying oxygen to cells and by flushing out toxins in the body
5. **GET ENOUGH RESTFUL SLEEP**
Restful sleep helps your immune system release special proteins called cytokines that helped fight off foreign invaders dash shoot for 7 to 9 hours a night



Brought to you by Swansons.com,
Happy Holidays!

HELP WANTED

WELDING INSTRUCTOR NEEDED to teach hands-on classes at the new Questa High School Welding Lab. Classes could possibly begin with the Fall 2020 semester or January 2021. The class will be held on Fridays for 2-3 hours with max 10-12 students. Welding certification required; past welding instruction experience preferred. For more information, and to apply, contact Lynn Skall, Questa Economic Development Fund, 575-586-2149

QUESTA CENTER SUPERMARKET seeks full-time all-around employee; Cashier/Floor/Stocking, etc. Apply in person at 5 Supermarket Road in Questa.

Questa Family Dollar is seeking full-time and part-time cashiers. High school graduation or equivalent experience preferred. Prefer experience in retail. Ability to work flexible, full-time or part-time schedule to include days, evenings, weekends and holidays. Apply in person at Family Dollar at 2339 Highway 522, in Questa NM (575) 586-1985.

FOR SALE

We still have the solid oak regulation pool table for sale! Cue sticks, balls, lights. Great condition. Previous owner: Ray Vinella. \$1500, call Lynn or Krissie at 586-0515.

NOTICES

From The North Central New Mexico Food Pantry: In an effort to comply with the state health mandates and to keep our family of volunteers safe and healthy, we are suspending our distribution services until further notice. Check our Facebook page or call the village office (586-0694) to find out when services will be restored. If you are in need of an emergency food box please call: Jeannie Masters (586-0486 Cell:779-9194) or Nancy Parker (586-2096 cell: 505-699-7563). We hope to be able to serve you again soon. If you would like to make a donation on the Food Pantry website go to <https://www.ncfpquesta.com/> or mail a donation to: North Central Food Pantry, P.O. Box 1076, Questa, Nm 87556. For more information, please email wmesquire2@gmail.com Happy Holidays from all of us at the North Central Food Pantry.

LOVE NOTES FROM LISA FOR

DECEMBER: "We must be the change we want to see in the world." — Mahatma Gandhi

Questa One-on-One Business Counseling Drop-in Hour by the Small Business Development Center at UNM-Taos with Anwar Kaelin. FREE and CONFIDENTIAL no-appointment-needed. Third Thursday of every month, December 17th from 2 – 4 pm. Business owners, independent contractors, entrepreneurs in Questa can drop-in for one-on-one business consulting and training. Planning, accessing capital, marketing, regulatory compliance, technology development, international trade, and more.

<https://zoom.us/j/5757376219> Join by phone: +1 346 248 7799, Meeting ID: 575 737 6219. For specific appointments call 575-737-6219.

LIST IT IN THE CLASSIFIEDS!
QuestaDelRioNewsAds@gmail.com

HOLIDAY GIFT IDEA: Donations to non-profits in our community in friends and family members names

LOTS OF WAYS TO SUPPORT YOUR LOCAL NEWSPAPER

SUBSCRIBE NOW TO THE QUESTA DEL RIO NEWS!

Would you like to keep in touch with the Questa community from afar and receive a real newspaper in your mailbox that you can hold in your hand? Subscribe now for \$60 a year. With PayPal you can choose a recurring payment of \$5 per month. Make a note on your check or PayPal payment that it is for a subscription to *Questa Del Rio News*.

Be sure to include your mailing address.

TO PAY ONLINE go to <http://www.questanews.com/>. Scroll down to the yellow donate button. Many of our supporters have chosen to make an automatic monthly donation. This is an easy way to offer your continuous support for our work. Your tax deductible contributions will help ensure that your local news source will continue.

MAIL A CHECK TO *QUESTA DEL RIO NEWS*, PO Box 1072, Questa, NM 87556, and please make a note that it is a donation to the newspaper.

WE OFFER LOTS OF VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES! Are you a writer or a photographer? Join our team! Would you like to volunteer as a Photo Editor or Volunteer Coordinator or help in another way? Let us know! Email news@questaedf.com.



**QUESTA INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT
 JOB VACANCIES 2020-2021 School Year**

- Special Education Teacher
- School Nurse
- Educational Assistant

Application Packet available at <http://qisd-nm.schoolloop.com>

Application packet should include: Complete QISD Certified Application, Letter of Interest, Current Resume, (3) Three Employment or Education References (Include Current Names, Titles, Addresses and Phone Numbers), Transcripts from each crediting college or university, Satisfactory Completion of Background Investigation

Contact DOMINGO TORRES,
 Director of Human Resources

(575) 586-0421 EXT 1011 or EMAIL dtorres@questa.k12.nm.us

YOUR JANUARY ISSUE

will be celebrating 2021! Have you made New Year's Resolutions? Would you like to share them with us for the January edition? You can remain anonymous if you like.

For our January Food Section, QUARANTINE QUISINE, we will be sharing our favorite soup recipes, especially quick, easy, inexpensive and healthy options (did we mention delicious?). If you have a favorite soup recipe you would like to contribute, send it on! Please email to: news@questaedf.com, by December 15, or mail to PO Box 1072, Questa, NM 87556. Thank you for playing a part in your paper!

HOLIDAY GIFT IDEA: Cool T-shirts!



Questa Farmers Market T-shirts for \$18 each are available year round. Good Gifts for Locals & Out of Towners Alike! All proceeds go back into the Farmers Market for operations & Interns. Call or email today.

(575) 224-2102
growersmakers@gmail.com





Public Health Order announced on August 27, 2020:
Houses of worship may operate at 40% capacity indoors.

CHURCH DIRECTORY

QUESTA

ST. ANTHONY DE PADUA CHURCH IN QUESTA

Father Andrew Ifele 586-0470
Saturday 6:00 pm,
Sunday 7:00 am in Spanish -11:00 am in English

MISSION CHURCHES:

Sagrado Corazon in Costillo - Sunday 9:00 am
Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe in Cerro-
2nd & 4th Saturdays 4:00 pm
Santo Niño in Amalia- 1st & 3rd Saturdays 4:00

HARVEST QUESTA

Pastors Kristi & Johnny Gonzales
2558 Hwy 522
Sunday 11:00 am- 12:30 pm
Phone 575-770-5906
Visit us online: HarvestQuesta.org

LIVING WORD MINISTRIES

Pastors Peter and Gayle Martinez
12 Llano Road
Service: Sunday 10:30 am
Nursery and Kids' Church at 10:30 am
Wednesday Bible Study 7:00 pm
www.lwmsite.org
586-1587

PATH OF LOVE

Teachings of Herman Rednick
Sunday 7:30 am class and meditation
586-1454, Hilece
Sunday 10:00 am Alice Bailey Theosophy Study Group
586-4641, Francis www.earthjourney.org

QUESTA CHURCH OF CHRIST

2 miles north of Questa on State Road 522
We are excited to offer Bible Class at
9:30am on Sundays
Followed by worship at 10:15am
We pray you will join us!

KAGYU MILA GURU SANGHA

Tibetan Buddhism
Thursday at 4:00 pm Chenrezig
Friday 8:00 am-Green Tara
gabrielle.herbertson@gmail.com
www.earthjourney.org
586-1454 or 586-1038

ABUNDANT LIFE CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP

Sunday Service 10:30 am
Potluck & Fellowship 3rd Sunday of the Month
Highway 196, Amalia
Pastors: Lorenzo & Arleen Lucero
575-770-5716

RED RIVER

CROSS CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP

(Standing in the Gap)
The Way Coffee House, 201 W. Main Street
Sunday 10:00 am, Wednesday 6:30 pm
Children's Church at Both Times
Pastor Chris Torres (505) 600-5859

FAITH MOUNTAIN FELLOWSHIP

Corner of River Street and Copper King Trail
Sunday 10:30 am

FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH OF RED RIVER

103 High Cost Trail
Sundays 8:15 am and 10:30 am
Pastor Joe Phillips 754-2882

ST. EDWIN'S CATHOLIC CHURCH

North End of Silver Bell Trail
Saturday 6:00 pm
(Confession prior to Mass or by appt.)
Father Andrew Ifele 586-0470



QUESTA LODGING PROJECT CLASSIFIEDS

The Questa Lodging Project has no listings for rental properties at this time. If you are interested in listing your rental in this newspaper or if you are looking for a place to rent, please let us know. Contact Deborah Torres, Questa Lodging Project Manager at (505) 301-3956 or Admin@SARCHP.org We are a project of San Antonio del Rio Colorado Historic Preservation.



LIKE US ON FACEBOOK!
Questa Del Rio News



Have a voice in your town's future

Attend public meetings via ZOOM!
These meetings are open, and public comments are welcome with a limit of 3 minutes. Check the websites for agenda topics and past minutes. Call your Town Hall for accurate dates and times. (which are fluctuating currently)

VILLAGE OF QUESTA

<http://questa-nm.com/>

Questa Village Council meets the 2nd and 4th Tuesdays, at 6 pm at Town Hall

Mark Gallegos,
Mayor
mgallegos@villageofquesta.org

Renee Martinez,
Town Clerk/Administrator
rmartinez@villageofquesta.org

Village of Questa Town Hall
575-586-0694
2500 Old State Rd. 3
Questa, NM 87556

RED RIVER

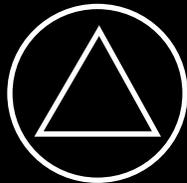
<https://reddriver.org/>

Town Council meets the 4th Tuesday of the month at 5:00 pm at the Conference Center

Linda Calhoun,
Mayor
mayor@reddriver.org

Georgiana Rael,
Town Administrator
grael@reddriver.org

Red River Town Hall
575-754-2277
100 E Main Street
Red River, NM 87558
P.O. Box 1020



AA MEETINGS

Alcoholics Anonymous

Online Zoom Meetings:

https://aa-intergroup.org/directory_audio-video.php

For Information on local meetings call Mose at

575-224-4326

SERENITY PRAYER

God grant me the serenity
to accept the things I cannot
change, courage to change
the things I can, and wisdom
to know the difference.

BUSINESS DIRECTORY

Come in and Hemp Yourself



DAGGLEBEEZ™
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167 Broadway Avenue
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(719) 298-0870

316 Miranda Ave, Ste A
Fort Garland, CO 81133
(719) 298-7093

<https://dabblebeez.com/shop> dabblebeez@gmail.com

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Living Word Ministries
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NM 87556
www.lwmsite.org



KEITH D. JAMESON, D.D.S.

Questa Dental Center
2451 Highway 522
575-586-0259



575-586-0561
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Jason Rice
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mtnrice@aol.com
Questa, New Mexico

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- NM Products • Art Work • Shower Facilities •
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- Meeting Space for Small Groups •

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You need it? We rent it.

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Questa, NM 87556
575-586-0419/0418

MY TIAS CAFE

State Road 378 • Cerro NM
Wednesday-Sunday 11:00am - 6:00pm

SHOP QUESTA

LOCALS SHOP LOCAL

L&E Self Storage

\$40 for 5'x10'
\$60 10'x10'
\$90 10'x20'

(575) 586-0568 (575) 586-0695
32 Sagebrush Rd. (next to Questa High School)

 **Discounted Monthly Rates:**
\$35 Auto Debit Plan (1)
\$65 Buddy Plan (2)
\$120 Family Plan (4)



ELITE FITNESS
Call us: 575-586-6006 www.EliteFitnessQuesta.com

QUESTA LUMBER & HARDWARE CO.



2349 NM HWY-522
Questa, NM 87556
Phone: (575) 586-0414
Fax: (575) 586-1916

Happy Holidays

Questa Del Rio News would like to wish all our staff, our volunteers, our readers, all their families and our community the very best holiday season. We are so grateful for you all. Thank you.