

DECEMBER 2023

Questa del Rio News

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Photo by E. Wilde

Santa and Mrs. Claus ride in on their motorcycle trike to watch over the semi truck that carried the official annual christmas tree that is used at the White House in Washington D.C. The tree was harvested in Red River from Carson National Forest in 2019

By MIKAYLA ORTEGA

The Santas Helpers del Norte group consists of approximately 12 families from northern New Mexico who have been joining together to bring Christmas joy to Questa-area kids for the past 25 years. They will be hosting their annual event once again on Saturday, December 16 from 4 p.m. to 7 p.m. at the residences of Ralph and Lisa Rael and Jacqui and Isaiah Ortega, at 179/179-A North Kiowa Road in Questa, New Mexico. The event is free and open to the public.

Delfino “Joey” Ortega, the chairman of the group, has been involved since the early 1990s. “We work together with one mission in mind, and that is to provide Christmas for the kids of northern Taos County.” He points out that while many of the members of the group ride motorcycles, including Santa and Mrs. Claus, when they make their grand arrival on their sleigh (consisting of a trike motorcycle), they are not a motorcycle club.

While the group’s busiest time is the Christmas holiday, they work to fundraise all year long to ensure they can afford to provide hundreds of gifts for children during their event. The group goes on to purchase age-appropriate educational toys for the children with the funds raised through the year.

“We have made several modifications through the years to ensure we’re in the safest location possible; we’ve held the event on Cabresto Road and we also tried to do the event in town. Our current location on North Kiowa has worked out well for us.”

While the project is a labor of love, the organizers are as unassuming as they come. Delfino says they don’t like to do this project for praise, rather, they do it because of the difference they make for local children. “The members of our group are all volunteers and the one thing that keeps all of us going is seeing the joy on kids’ faces when they visit Santa, Mrs. Claus, and his helpers from the North Pole. That is all the payment and recognition we need,” he says.



Courtesy Photo

Santa and Mrs. Claus and the Grinch hand out educational, age-appropriate toys to kids at their Annual Christmas Event

The group does a lot of work setting up the North Pole, preparing for their big event day. “It really is a big effort for our whole group. People can help most by supporting our fundraisers and donating to our cause,” he continues.

SANTA CLAUS cont’d on page 3

Annual Fundraising Month.
 Keep it Free,
 Keep it Local.
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Got a story? Email us at editor@questanews.com

Published Monthly by the
QUESTA ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT FUND
Publicación mensual por

EL FONDO PARA EL DESARROLLO ECONOMICO DE QUESTA

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The Real Impacts of the Former Molycorp Mine

By MIKAYLA ORTEGA

The impact the former Molycorp Mine has had on the community of Questa is no secret to people who have lived through it.

The mine operated from c.1914 to 2014 and was a source of financial stability for so many families in northern New Mexico communities for generations. All too often in life, when we are seeing the immediate rewards, it's oftentimes difficult to recognize the unintended consequences.

Pollution from the mine was an inevitable consequence of mining activities. Decades of mining operations resulted in the generation of tons of tailings, and impacts to soil, sediment, groundwater, and surface water (including Eagle Rock Lake) with most impacts occurring from the 1960s through the 1990s.

A recent Op Ed in the Santa Fe New Mexican alleged that our publication refused to speak about the damage done by the mine because Chevron funded our paper. I state the above facts to recognize that we, in fact, are not afraid to discuss the damage the mine did to our community.

Something unique about this story, however, is that Chevron, who acquired the mine in 2005, committed itself to helping the people reclaim the land, improve the quality of life for residents, and diversify the local economy.

This is unheard of in today's society. Big corporations look out for themselves — however, Chevron has recognized its moral responsibility and has committed to being a fixer, to the best of their abilities, by investing in the communities which were impacted by its operations and the operations by previous owners of the former mine.

Since the closure of the mine, the reclamation of the Superfund Site has been underway, reemploying hundreds of locals from the northern Taos County area to complete projects which improve the way of life for Questeños and surrounding communities.

According to a press release published in 2017 by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), the agency honored and recognized several groups for excellence and innovation in the restoration of Eagle Rock Lake. The release goes on to say the EPA presented the Greenovations Award to Chevron Environmental Management Company,

the U.S. Forest Service, New Mexico Department of Game and Fish, the Village of Questa, and Chevron's project contractors Arcadis and ENTACT, for redeveloping Eagle Rock Lake.

The Greenovations Award can be given to a responsible party, developer, site owner, nonprofit, local government or community member who has demonstrated excellence in working cooperatively with EPA to support safe and responsible cleanup and reuse, especially those that promote innovative and sustainable reuse outcomes.

The continued reclamation of the Questa Superfund Site remains under the regulation of the EPA, and the progress for the site can be tracked by visiting: <https://tinyurl.com/39k62c9h>.

The Op Ed in the New Mexican also alleged that Chevron is making an "insidious attempt at corporate colonialism" through the work Chevron has invested in for the Questa community, to include funding the Questa Economic Development Fund (QEDF), which was recently recognized for excellence by the state at the Governor's Conference for investing millions of dollars in the Questa community. Additionally, to set the record straight, the QEDF is run by five local board members, including the mayor, and the QEDF Executive Director. A Chevron representative attends the meetings but is not a voting member for decisions on how the funding is allocated.

More recently, the work the QEDF has been spearheading is an effort to establish an area-wide acequia association. The idea is for this organization to provide grant-writing, technical, and legal services for local acequias. It is also intended to enable our acequias to work together to advocate for more resources from the legislature and to protect local water rights.

In parallel to this push for equity amongst all acequia associations, Chevron has been working diligently to have the Office of the State Engineer recognize all of the mine's water rights, not only so Chevron can complete its reclamation of the former mine, but also to make those water rights available for the benefit of Questa and surrounding communities.

We encourage community members

MOLYCORP cont'd on page 3



MAIL CALL

Dear Editor,

I was the first doctor to live in Questa, and remember the town and many friends with much warmth. A little over a year ago we were able to visit two families — Andy and Christine Martinez, and Eric and Elizabeth Vom Dorp. My wife, Gail, and I hope to return for a longer visit before we're too old to travel.

A neighbor told us about *The Questa del Rio News* and we have subscribed and are delighted to read about the people and town. How things have changed since Margery Howe wrote "The Bee Line" in *The Taos News*. A good editorial (Let's Not Tear Down Statues, Let's Erect More) caught Gail's attention and she made me read it. I agree with her that it is very well written, but disagree with its point.

The Questa Health Center started in an abandoned house beside the elementary school, but we were delighted to move to much larger quarters below Christine and Andy's home, on the

hill just to the west of the highway. In addition to the clinical part, there was a small area in the back for offices. The back office was also used for education, including CPR classes. Resusci Annie was stored there — on the floor. Several times I walked into the back office and saw Annie lying on her back and had a strong emotional reaction. Of course I knew intellectually that she wasn't a real person and that she hadn't just had a cardiac arrest, however her presence there was frightening to me.

I am a white male and a member of the dominant social structure. I have come to realize, however, that Americans with other backgrounds can have strong adverse reactions to stimuli and situations that would seem benign to me. For instance, even though seeing a Confederate flag makes me a little angry, I can understand that the same red, white, and blue symbol could elicit fear in other people.

Yes, there are intellectual reasons to leave offensive statues standing. However, for some people the statue may be psychologically damaging, even though it might seem just intellectually stimulating to me.

Richard Grossman

SANTA CLAUS cont'd from page 1

When discussing the importance of this event, he says, "Life is hard enough with the challenges we all face every day. Being able to give back in this way, it really means something to all of us, and we will continue to bring Christmas to local kids for as long as we are able."

Santa Claus has a special message to all the little boys and girls:

Be good and be kind to each other,

Santa Claus is making the list and checking it twice, he's going to find out if you're naughty or nice! Santa Claus is coming to Questa!

Note about donations: While the group is grateful many community members get in the holiday spirit, all toys purchased through this effort are new and based on age and educational value. Please do not drop off used toys for this event.

MOLYCORP cont'd from page 2

to reach out and have healthy discussions with one another. You might learn something, or grow contextual knowledge about a situation, or change your mind. Either way, the progress, growth, and improvement in Questa is push-

ing forward with the investments of a company who is cleaning up the damage once caused to the land.

Having the whole community united and working together can only benefit the continued improvement in the quality of life for all.



Show Your Hometown Pride!

By LYNN SKALL
Director, Questa Economic Development Fund

Show your hometown pride this holiday season and support your community and the businesses where you live by shopping "local." When you "Shop Questa," and all of the surrounding areas, you'll be strengthening these communities and their culture, while promoting economic growth and investing your dollars where they will continue to spread throughout the area.

A 2018 Small Business Economic Impact Study reported that approximately 67 cents of every dollar spent in local small businesses stays in the community. Small independent retailers have also been shown to return more than three times as much money per dollar of sales into the local economy than similar chain competitors.

When you shop locally, chances are good that you'll be personally greeted by your neighbors who own those shops and restaurants. And, to make you feel even better, many merchants sell local

products — specialty items that are often made by hand by area residents — unique and one-of-a-kind gifts.

The annual Alumbra Holiday Market, now sponsored by the Questa Creative Council, is an event where items are displayed for sale from these local talents, on Saturday, December 9, at the Questa VFW Hall. You'll find other original works from area artists and authors on the QCC website: questacreative.org.

When your money is spent locally, it directly contributes to the livelihood of these local entrepreneurs, and your in-store purchases support the families who own local businesses. It's convenient — everything is nearby, and you're helping to preserve the community's cultural identity, strengthening local jobs. In addition, it's kinder to the environment. By not ordering online, you eliminate the extraneous cardboard and packaging materials required to ship your personal order across the country, and you greatly reduce the high carbon footprint of the many forms of transportation required to deliver your package.

Keeping it local also keeps the gross receipt taxes in the area, which are directly re-invested into the community to provide essential services such as police and fire protection, and street repairs.

Don't forget about local gift certificates: they make great stocking stuffers! They are easy, one-size-fits all, and are always in season. Get gift certificates from area retailers, restaurants, services, yoga and fitness studios, even from gas stations.

This season, do all of your holiday shopping right here where you live, and show your hometown pride.

THANK YOU TO EVERYONE WHO CONTRIBUTED TO THE DECEMBER ISSUE OF QUESTA DEL RIO NEWS!

DELFINO "JOEY" ORTEGA, JACQUI RAE-ORTEGA, MARIA "MARI" CASTILLO-QUINTANA, MARIA GONZALEZ, CLARA ADAMS, TARYNCE HISE, SERENITY H AND HAYLEY C, MICHELLE GARCIA-SPEARS, DIANE LEON, JENNIFER VIALPANDO, ALYANA LEON, THE SOURCENM, BRYCE FLANAGAN, BARBARA TRACY, MARTA GLOVER, CHARLENE R. JOHNSON, ELLEN WOOD, QUESTA CREATIVE COUNCIL, SHARON NICHOLSON, ZACH BEHRENS, TONER MITCHELL, JAY BOUCHARD, MELLIE RODRIGUEZ, JOHN WALSH, GHOST WRITER MIGUEL, J. ORTEGA.

Questa del Rio News is an editorially independent local news source published by the Questa Economic Development Fund, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization that works in the public interest to advance a diversified sustainable local economy.

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Questa Native Wins Regional 40 Under 40 Award

By MIKAYLA ORTEGA

Maria “Mari” Castillo-Quintana graduated from Questa High School in 2007. Her school journey was different than most, having given birth to her first son when she was a junior in high school. “I remember how hard it was to keep going to school, but I was determined to get my diploma.”

She and her husband Patrick went on living in Questa while he worked at the Molycorp Mine. At 19, she had a second son and was a stay-at-home mom. In 2009, Patrick was laid off and their small family decided to relocate to Carlsbad, where Patrick could continue pursuing his career in mining.

“We were all alone in Carlsbad, living in a two-bedroom apartment with no friends or family. That’s when I decided to start visiting the public library with my kids.”

Mari’s connection to books was a personal one, as she says books taught her to speak English. As her kids got older, she pursued a degree in Library Science. She continued to foster her connection to the local library, which

ultimately turned into a major opportunity for her and her family. “I was hired in 2017 at the Southeast New Mexico College Library.”

Although her title has stayed the same for the most part, she has worn many hats due to vacancies within her respective departments. When COVID hit, she was laid off from her position at the college, where she was responsible for planning summer programs for kids.

She went back to being a full-time stay-at-home mom, but her heart and passion remained rooted in helping young kids engage with learning, grow their knowledge, and identify opportunities outside their small community.

She was recruited to return back to college and at that time, she was more than ready. “I remember getting called and started in July and my programs were planned and ready to go by August.” She is creative in how she engages students ages four through 16. “We’ve had themed events including a Royal Tea Party, Encanto Camp, Spanish classes, cooking classes. The goal is really to make kids excited about learning,” she says.



Courtesy Photo

Questa Award Winner Maria “Mari” Castillo-Quintana poses with her 40 Under 40 award

While she is passionate about working with kids in the community, Mari and her husband Patrick are also foster parents, taking in children who are in unhealthy situations at home. Currently, they parent four children and have two additional foster children. “We do it because we want to help kids who don’t have a safe place. It’s our passion to help

these kids and we have really enjoyed it.”

Mari speaks about many of the challenges she’s experienced as an immigrant in America, who moved and grew up in a small community like Questa. Her goal is to build opportunities for local children. Her lived experiences are what drives her work.

Recently, she was awarded with the Carlsbad 40 Under 40 Award for the work she does with local youth. The nominations are anonymous, and she was honored to have been recognized for the education category for her work through her position. Her impact extends beyond her chosen career. She also serves on the Boys and Girls Club of Directors, helping with the program planning committee.

“Being a teen mom was difficult and scary at the time, I didn’t get to do things the traditional way. I had to raise my kids first then go to college and start my career but with the support of my parents and husband I have accomplished so much. If you are in a difficult situation now, just know things will get better so don’t quit and don’t give up!”

Annual Light Parade and Tree Lighting Ceremony on December 9



Photo by E. Wilde

Armando, Valerie, and Emmanuel Vigil pose for a photo near the community nativity

By STAFF WRITERS

The Village of Questa will be holding their annual Light Parade and Tree Lighting Ceremony on Saturday, December 9. The parade will start at 5:30 p.m. at Herrera Road, across the street from the Village of Questa offices, and end at Station 522 & Cisneros Gas Station.

After the parade, people can head to Perovich Park (the Questa stoplight intersection) where the tree lighting will take place, followed by an evening of hot cocoa, Christmas caroling, cookies, and holiday cheer.

“This event is a chance to unite our communities in northern New Mexico,



Photo by E. Wilde

Residents gather together at the 2021 Light Parade and Tree Lighting Ceremony

while bringing holiday cheer to the community, especially for those who may not be very cheery or if they feel alone during the holiday season,” Village of Questa organizer Valerie Vigil says.

This year’s event is sponsored by the LOR Foundation, who pride themselves in providing solutions and stories from

the historic village between the Rio Grande Gorge and the Sangre de Cristo Mountains.

The event is free and open to the public. If you’re interested in participating in the parade, you can contact Valerie Vigil at (575) 741-5334 or vvigil@villageofquesta.com



Maria Gonzalez

By MIKAYLA ORTEGA

Being raised in a community where your history connects to every part of your present, it's difficult to find the courage to leave. It is similarly difficult to forge a path and stay.

Questa del Rio News is committed to highlighting different members of our community, both those who have created their paths and planted their own roots in the community that raised them, and also those who have pursued lives outside of the community — through our Representando series. This series is dedicated to those who are Representando al Norte in various facets of life.

For our December issue, we spoke with Maria Gonzalez.

Maria graduated from Questa High School in 1999. Initially, she went to Las Vegas, Nevada with her brother to attend the University of Las Vegas there. Finding herself at odds with her older brother, she felt it was necessary to go out and forge a path for herself, leading her to a move to Maui.

"We went to Hawaii on our senior trip and I made friends there who I kept in touch with so when Las Vegas didn't work out for me, I went back to Maui and lived in Lahaina," Maria says.

She worked two jobs at the famous Lahaina Fish Company and at Maui's Swiss Café while preparing to start school at the University of Hawaii. When she was admitted to school, she found herself homesick around the holidays, so she realized it was time to return back to Questa.

Coming home, Maria's vision to attend college didn't waiver and she enrolled at the University of New Mexico in Taos. This was right around the time

she started dating her now husband, Jason Gonzalez.

"I decided to stay in Questa for a bit longer, since Jason and I were getting serious," she recalls. In February of 2001, she found out she was pregnant with her oldest daughter, Anastacia. "She was born on 9/11/2001 but thankfully, she was born at 1:30 in the morning, so she entered the world before the towers collapsed, I am glad because it was before all that bad juju was in the air," she says.

After a long night of bonding with and caring for her new baby, Maria recalls waking up to screaming in the Midwifery. "It was about 7 or so in the morning and Jason and I were sleeping and all the screaming woke us up. We freaked out and asked the midwives what was going on and they turned on the TV and we realized what had happened."

Within hours of their first child being brought into the world, Jason, who was in the National Guard at the time, had to report to active duty at the armory in Taos. "It was such a traumatic time for our new little family. While we were overjoyed at just bringing new life into the world, we were devastated because we missed out on bonding time."

Thankfully, Maria found support from her mom and sister who lived in Questa. Just when she had gotten the hang of being a mom, Maria found out she was pregnant with her second daughter. She gave birth to Araceli in 2003. With two babies under two, Maria and Jason were planning a big Catholic wedding when they got news in December of 2003 that Jason would be deployed overseas to the Operation Iraqi Freedom war.

"It was such a hard time for us as a family. We were working with Father Doug to get our classes taken care of to ensure we could be married before he left. Because this was an extenuating circumstance, the archdiocese gave us permission to proceed without completing all of our classes. We planned a wedding in four days! Father's joke was "you are the only family I know who receives four sacraments in one day: Confession, Baptism (Araceli), Holy Eucharist, and Marriage." Our families worked together and threw us a potluck for our wedding. It was a crazy time, but we made it work," she said.



Courtesy Photo from the LOR Foundation Web Site

Maria Gonzalez

While Jason was deployed, Maria continued to take care of their daughters while working part-time at his family-owned gas station. "Jason would call maybe once a week and it was always in the middle of the night because of the time change. His unit was hit with an improvised explosive device (IED) and the first thing he did was call me to tell me he was alive."

After 18 months being deployed in active combat, Jason returned home to his daughters, who were 2 ½ and 4 years old.

Upon his return to Questa, Maria was able to find a job with Community Against Violence (CAV) in Taos, where she worked as a Shelter Advocate. She had obtained her associates degree during her husband's deployment.

While working as CAV, she recognized her passion for working in the community helping local youth. "I recall seeing Valerie Segura, who worked with the Boys and Girls Club. I told her I really wanted to work with their group and when a position came available she called me."

This is when she realized she wanted a career working with youth and helping

them recognize their potential.

Part of her driving force for her career choice is an experience she had in high school with her counselor. "I remember he told me that I needed to go into the military because I had no chance of getting into college. That experience really made me realize words matter and I would prove him wrong."

In 2009, Maria graduated with her bachelors degree and continued pushing her career forward, holding positions with the TeamBuilders, Presbyterian Insurance Company, and Las Cumbres Community Services.

One of the more memorable experiences she had was in her job with Presbyterian Insurance Company, where she was responsible for traveling the northern New Mexico territory helping people who were experiencing mental health crises. "I remember traveling to Raton and seeing how economically devastated the area was. The coal mining industry just stopped there and left the community in shambles. I thought about Questa and really worried about what would happen to Questa now that the mine had closed," she says.

Currently, Maria is a driving force ensuring the town of Questa and the northernmost communities in Taos County have resources necessary to invigorate change and growth. She is the Community Officer with the LOR Foundation, who is responsible for funding nearly a dozen initiatives in the area over the past year. Additionally, she is the Coordinator for the Vida del Norte Coalition, whose mission is to unite northern Taos County communities to prevent and decrease youth substance use.

"Our youth are our future, and I am so honored to be able to serve in the roles I currently am, where I am able to empower and encourage kids to reach their greatest potential. They need us and honestly, we need them," she says.

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Big R Stores Invest in Red River Conference Center

By STAFF WRITERS

The Town of Red River announced it has received a donation from Big R Stores to purchase new basketball equipment for the Red River Conference Center. The Town of Red River says this donation will help their aim to support the enhancement of sports equipment and provide improved recreational opportunities for local residents and visitors during the winter season.

“We believe in investing in the communities we serve and supporting initiatives that improve the quality of life for our customers,” says Director of

Marketing and E-Commerce Christine Pittman. “By donating funds for new basketballs, we are proud to contribute to the ongoing development of the Red River Conference Center and its role in promoting an active and healthy lifestyle for the community.”

According to town officials, the Red River Conference Center has always been dedicated to providing free access to sports facilities for the community. Recognizing the need to upgrade the sports equipment and further enhance the athletic experience, the town sought support from Big R Stores, which will

help ensure that the facility can cater to the needs and aspirations of the local residents and visitors alike.

The town hopes that the upgraded sports equipment will enable individuals of all ages to engage in recreational basketball games, fostering a sense of community and promoting physical fitness during the winter months.

“Our commitment to corporate social responsibility extends beyond our business operations, and we are thrilled to be able to give back to the community in a meaningful way,” explains Pittman. “We hope that this contribution will

inspire other businesses and individuals to support the development and maintenance of local recreational facilities.”

The management at the Red River Conference Center expressed their gratitude for the generous donation from Big R Stores. “We are extremely grateful for Big R Stores’ support,” shared Max Khudiakov, Director of Economic Development and Tourism for the Town of Red River. “Their contribution will make a significant difference in upgrading our sports equipment and enhancing the overall experience for individuals utilizing our facilities.”

Mayor Linda Calhoun on Winning Mayor for Fifth Term

By DYLAN R.N. CRABB

Questa del Rio News reached out to Mayor Linda Calhoun on her presumptive election victory, in which 47 percent of the vote was tallied in her favor, making her a five-term mayor for the Town of Red River. Election results were certified on November 16.

Mayor Calhoun shares, “I’m very thankful to have the opportunity to serve as mayor for the next four years. Elections are always a time for reflection, and I heard some definite concerns from the voters that I hope to address

going forward.”

While gratitude to residents was her main message, she goes on to speak about goals to improve in the future. “We’ve had some things happen, especially over the past year, that have shown we need to improve our communication with the community. We are working on a new town website that will have the capability of communicating through texts, emails, and phone messages.”

She goes on to say, “With the large projects starting in the spring, this should help keep our businesses and

residents more aware of scheduling and issues that might affect them. It will also help with communication during any type of unforeseen emergency. This website will also give us the ability to catalog our ordinances to make them more easily searchable and have our meeting agendas, minutes, and recordings more readily available. We received a \$50,000 planning grant for a new comprehensive plan. I’m excited to work very closely with the community as we develop a plan for Red River, moving forward.”

Although she was just recently

reelected, Mayor Calhoun is planning full steam ahead. “Our organizational meeting will be at the regularly scheduled council meeting in January. This is when committees will be appointed. We will be actively seeking input from any interested community members that would like to serve on a committee.”

In closing, she underscores her commitment to transparency. “I have always had an open door policy and look forward to continuing with open lines of communication over the next four years.”

Red River Vying for National Best Winter Destination Awards

By STAFF WRITERS

The town of Red River has captured the attention of snow enthusiasts and nature lovers alike, having been nominated again for the highly coveted “Best Destination for Snow” and “Best Ski Town” awards in USA Today. In 2021, according to Visit Red River’s Facebook page, the town of Red River accrued serious ski season bragging rights by winning “Best Ski Town.”

Mayor Linda Calhoun expressed her excitement and gratitude for Red River’s nominations, saying “we are truly honored to be recognized by USA Today as a top contender in both... categories. Our town is dedicated to providing an unparalleled winter experience for visitors, and these nominations further validate our efforts.”

Red River offers visitors the enjoyment of ski adventures, snowshoeing expeditions, snowmobile sessions, sleigh



Photo by Brian Tongret

Skiers seen cascading down “The Face” during a previous winter torchlight parade

rides, and winter torchlight parade fireworks — a unique sight, viewing skiers racing down the mountain at dusk in

zig-zagging unison!

The nominations for this award were carefully selected by a panel of experts

who considered factors such as the variety of winter activities available, the picturesque snow-covered landscapes, and the presence of ample snowfall.

Voting for the Best Destination for Snow and Best Ski Town awards is now open to the public. Locals and visitors alike are encouraged to cast their vote for Red River once per day until Monday, December 4, at 10 a.m. MST. The results will be announced on Friday, December 15, celebrating the top 10 winning destinations.

For more information about Red River’s nominations and to cast your vote, please visit the USA Today website urls:

Best Destination for Snow:
<https://10best.usatoday.com/awards/travel/best-destination-for-snow/>

Best Ski Town:<https://10best.usatoday.com/awards/travel/best-ski-town-2023/>.



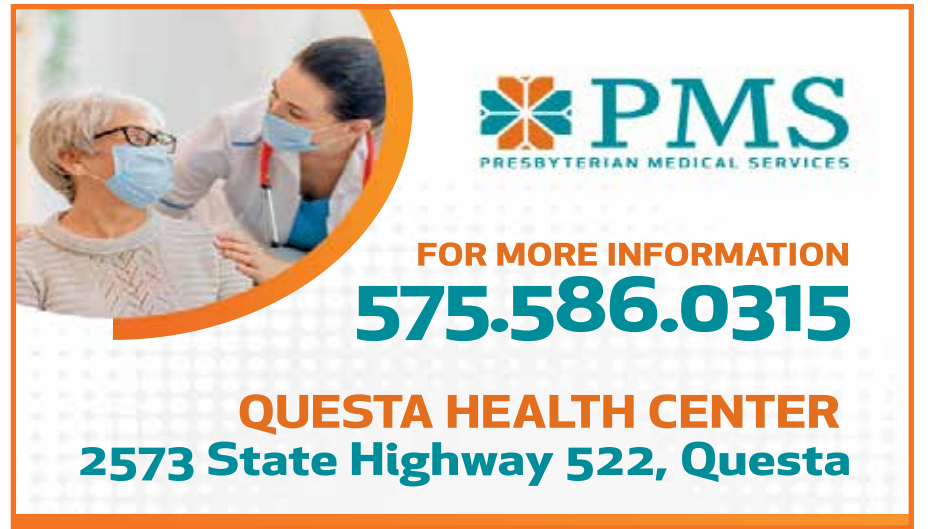
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COMMUNITY
DINNER**

SUNDAY, December 17
4:00 - 7:30 PM
Questa VFW

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NCUA



Makerspace

Friday, December 15
1 p.m. - 3 p.m.

Come make an ornament, holiday cards and other decorations with us! All supplies will be provided.

Redeem your coupon for your art gift from the Questa Creative Council! questacreative.org

 **Questa Public Library**
questalibrary.org

Agua es Vida: Molybdenum Mine Tour

Highlights Need to Resolve Ongoing Water Rights Dispute

By DYLAN R.N. CRABB

Earlier in the year, we covered the ongoing dispute between Chevron and the Office of the State Engineer (NM-OSE), most recently on a bill asking NM-OSE to work with the mine, village, and the QEDF to resolve the water rights issue. The bill was supported by public testimony given by Questa Mayor Ortega, Chevron, Kit Carson Electric Cooperative, QEDF Chair Malaquias Rael, Trout Unlimited, the Llano Community Ditch Association, and local farmers and ranchers. You can read more on this here: [Legislation encourages resolution of Questa Mine water rights.](#)

While a resolution with the Office of the State Engineer still has not been reached, progress is being made. Representatives from Chevron held a tour of the molybdenum mine Superfund site on Thursday, November 16, in which the workings of the Superfund program were explained to a group of 10-15 people. Chevron's Government Affairs Representative Christian Isely was the tour's host.

The tour began in a boardroom inside the administration building on Goat Hill Road, where Isely showed a mandatory safety video and then delivered a presentation explaining a short history of the mine, who manages the Superfund site today, and how Chevron and other contracting companies like Granite and Archadis (above-ground earth-moving and surveying), Red Tail Surveying, and WSP (water treatment) are handling the reclamation efforts.

Isely wants the community to understand Chevron's commitment to assisting the Questa area in eventually getting back on its feet and becoming independent from Chevron, which is why Chevron has been working to ensure the NM-OSE recognizes the water rights owned by Chevron, which will ultimately benefit the village and its residents.

"You can have all the funding you need, but if you don't have the water, you can't really accomplish any of it," said Isely.

Water rights are key to environmental remediation and transitioning Questa into a post-mining, low-carbon economy.

"The work that Chevron is doing here is exceeding the requirements put on them by the federal government and the EPA," said QEDF Chairman Malaquias Rael in the board room. Rael made a passionate defense of Chevron's efforts to unite the acequias under the area-wide association while underscoring the need for Chev-



Photos by E. Wilde

Inside the water treatment facility, several large tanks connected through a series of tubing



Machines for collecting waste material and filtering all moisture out of it



The waste product that forms looks like sediment



After the water treatment plant, the tour group was driven to the open pit section of the mine

ron to get the water rights recognized by the NM-OSE.

Currently, Chevron is advocating for an area-wide acequia association, which would increase the community's ability to have protections and representation. "No one is protected. We need representation in the state as an association," Rael continued. "Right now, no one in Questa has a voice, because we're not in an association."

John Painter of the El Prado Water Sanitation District was in attendance, and he brought up the topic of a past sale of water rights from Top of the World Farms, in which about 8,000 acre-feet were transferred down south. He hopes that never happens again.

"I think it is extremely important that [our] water stays in the area," said Painter.

One way that Chevron keeps water rights local is with deed restrictions of up to 75 years on sales and donations. This contractual maneuver stipulates that recipients of water rights cannot move the water outside of a given area.

After the presentation segment of the tour, the group was thinned slightly, and hard hats, reflective vests, and safety glasses were distributed. The tour group then was divided and shuffled into two vans to head up Highway 38 to the water treatment plant. There the group was led by Lead Operator Eloy Montoya.

Inside the water treatment facility, several large tanks were observed to be connected through a series of tubing. Montoya explained the filtration process, where runoff water from the old mine collected in various catches throughout the site is piped into the facility and tubed through several filters that extract metals and impurities from the water. Differing levels of acidity are utilized to extract different metals until the water is brought back to a neutral pH of 7 at the end of the filtration process, according to Montoya. The tubing is also designed to take advantage of gravity through the different filtration stages, so that while it takes energy to pipe the water into the facility, gravity does the rest. After the water collected from the mine has been filtered and cleaned, it is piped back into the Red River at approximately three acre-feet per day.

As the tour continued up the mountain, the two vans were frequently passed by large earth-moving dump trucks moving up and down the mountain. Crews are working to separate various sediments as well as constructing canals down the mountain to direct any kind of runoff.

Northern New Mexico Celebrates Veterans Day In Grand Fashion

By MIKAYLA ORTEGA

For the last home volleyball game of the school season, starting on Thursday, November 9, Questa Independent School District waived the entry fee for all veterans, active military, police, EMS, and firefighters.

On Saturday, November 11, at the

eleventh hour of the eleventh day of the eleventh month, the Cerro Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) publicly commemorated their Veterans Day memorial in the Cerro Cemetery.

The significance of the eleventh hour goes back to the armistice, which ended the violence of the first world war on November 11, 1918.

Cerro VFW Commander Corey Mead began the commemoration with Pastor Kristi Gonzales leading the group in prayer and U.S. Marine Corps veteran Ronald Gallegos explaining what Veterans Day means to him and this community. Additionally, a big thanks goes to David Cisneros, who envisioned this memorial and privately

funded the site.

During the day, there were two separate meals provided free of charge by the Questa Ladies Auxiliary at the Cerro VFW, and Freedom Center Church.

The *Questa del Rio News* solicited names from the community to honor and recognize. Our readers and followers contributed the list below.



Courtesy Photo



Courtesy Photo

Commemoration Ceremony

Commemoration Ceremony

VETERANS DAY: THANK YOU TO THE HEROES WHO HAVE SERVED AND SACRIFICED FOR OUR GREAT NATION

Abe Cardenas
Abel Martinez
Abel Montoya
Adonario Gallegos
Agapito Salazar
Agapito Salazar
Alejandro Rael
Alfie Gonzalez
Alfonso Vigil
Alfred Martinez
Alfredo Garcia
Andres Abelino Blea
Andrew Cardenas
Andrew Cisneros
Andrew J. Cisneros
Anisa Trujillo
Annette Cintas
Antonio Cintas
Antonio Salazar
Arnold Rael
Aron Rael
Arsenio Gallegos
Arsenio Jones
Art Sanchez
August Beckwith
Benerito Santistevan
Benerto Santistevan
Ben Garcia
Benito Vigil
Bernabe Jaramillo
Bernadette Borders
Bob Dorsey
Bolivar Rael

Brenda Duran
Brian Valente
Carlos Roger Herrera
Charles Cisneros
Charlie Gallegos
Clarence Lacombe
Claudio Rael
Clodoveo Segura
Clyde Cisneros
Conrad Garcia
Crescencio Chavez
Crisiforo Gallegos
Daniel Chavez
Daniel Gallegos
Daniel L. Martinez
Daniel R. Trujillo
Danny Garcia
David Cisneros
David Leon
Dickie Martinez
Donaciano Archuleta
Donaciano Espinosa
Elias Montoya
Eli Castellano
Eliseo Espinoza
Eliseo Rael
Eliu Herrera
Elivy Jose Segura
Ellis Borders
Eloy Montoya
Emily Wilde
Epifano Aguilar
Epimeno Leon

Estaney Cisneros
Estevan Segura
Eugene Ortega
Ezequiel Rael
Federico Sandoval
Felimon Garcia
Fermin Herrera
Fidel Santistevan
Floyd I. Ortega
Floyd Montoya
Frank Vigil
Fred E. Ortega
Fred Rael
Gabriel J. Herrera
Gary Ortega
Gaspar Vigil
Gene Santistevan
George Ernest
George F. Vigil
George Passino
Georgette Young
George Wisehart
Gerry Culbertson
Gilbert Arellano
Gilbert Gallegos
Gilbert Garcia
Gilbert John Chaves Sr.
Gilbert John Chaves Jr.
Gomersindo Martinez
Gustavo Rael
Harold Buzis
Hector Gonzales
Hernando Jaramillo

Issac Arellano
Jaime Gonzales
Jake Montoya
James Cordova
James Medina
Jason Arellano
Jason Gonzalez
Jason MaGee
Jeremy Torres
Jesse Bailon
Jimmy Maes
Jimmy Martinez
Jimmy Ortega
Jimmy Rivera
Jimmy Salazar
Joe Damian Ortega
Joe Felimon Montoya
Joel Martinez
Joe Martinez
Joe Montoya
John B. Rael
John Buzis
John G. Trujillo
John Johnny Torres
Johnny Gallegos
Johnny Gonzalez
Jonathan Cisneros
Jonathan N. Cisneros
Jose Abedon Lopez
Jose Antonio Mondragon
Jose Horacio Segura
Jose Ignacio Sanchez
Jose Lucas Sanchez

Jose Martinez
Jose Perfecto Garcia
Joseph Cintas
Joseph G. Cisneros
Joseph Gallegos
Jose R. Rael
Jose Salazar
Jose Segura
Juan Sanchez
Julian Cisneros
Julian Procopio Segura
Kelly Montoya
Kenny Gallegos
Korey Mead
Larry Sanchez
Lawrence Bustos
Lawrence Gallegos
Lawrence Jaramillo
Leann Trujillo
Lelo Chavez
Les Martinez
Lino Garcia
Lita DD Mead
Lolita Ortega
Louis E. Herrera
Louis Ortiz
Maria Ortega
Mario Sanchez
Medardo Aguilar
Melecio Rael
Michael G. Pacheco
Michael Gaillour
Milton Cisneros

Modesto Cisneros
Moises Sanchez
Nabor H. Martinez
Nathan Gallegos
Nicanor Archuleta
Nick Ortega
Norman Sanchez
Patricio Martinez
Paul Buzis
Paul Garcia
Paul Gonzales
Paul Quintana
Paul Visarraga Jr.
Paul Visarraga Sr.
Pedro Montoya
Perfecto Baca
Pete Gonzales
Philip Pacheco
Phillip M. Trujillo
Rachel Rael
Raymond Martinez
Raynaldo Allen Cordova
Rebecca Lucero
Rev. Fidel Montoya Sr.
Richard Rael Jr.
Richard Rael Sr.
Richard Trujillo
Rich Martinez
Rick Tunnell
Robert Garcia
Robert Garcia Jr.
Roberto Medina
Roberto Sierra

Robert Segura
Rodney Rael
Roger Blanco
Roger Ortega
Roger R. Archuleta
Ronald Chavez
Ron Gallegos
Rudy Cisneros
Salomon Quintana
Samuel Moises Gonzales Jr.
Samuel Moises Gonzales Sr.
Shelly R. Pacheco
Sierra Jose
Steven Herrera
Steven Segura
Tanyalynn Salazar Badger
Ted Buzis
Ted Cisneros
Thomas Selph
Thomas Tharnish
Tom Chavez
Tony Vigil
Valdemar DeHerrera
Valoy Gallegos
Vences Arellano
Vergilio Trujillo
Victor Salazar
Virgil Gomez Jr.
Virgil Gomez Sr.
Vito Rael
Willie Cardenas

Taos Pueblo's Aspen Song Kids Take on the World with Poetry

By DYLAN R.N. CRABB

Taos Pueblo's Aspen Song Kids are showcasing their millennia-old culture through art and poetry.

The *Questa del Rio News* spoke with the sponsor of the group, Tarynce Hise, about the Taos Pueblo youth group's aspirations with their art.

"It started [in 2022], just by us wanting to give the kids a positive outlet to do stuff," Hise told the *Questa News* on November 14. "Also as a way to make learning about our culture fun."

The youth group published a poetry anthology, "Sacred Spiral," which they are now promoting on a book tour across New Mexico and Colorado. According to Hise, it's the first book published by Pueblo kids to be featured in the U.S. Library of Congress.

"We're doing all the libraries, every single library... so we can take our book and share it," said Hise as he explained



Photo by Dylan R.N. Crabb

Tarynce Hise holding opened book, "Sacred Spiral"

the group's plans to visit Talpa, Santa Clara Pueblo, as well as Monte Vista and Walsenburg.

All the profits from the book go back into the Aspen Song Kids organization, as they hope to publish more books as

well as bring the hip-hop scene to Taos Pueblo with concerts.

Hise explained his own ambitions for Taos Pueblo artists keeping their culture alive — by attracting more visitors to the Pueblo through sharing their art, as well as his ambitions for getting elected to the Board of the Taos Day School. He even hopes to get the books translated into other languages, including an audiobook in their own language, Tiwa.

The Aspen Song Kids will be at the Embudo Valley's first annual powwow at the Embudo Valley Library on December 23, called the Dixon Intertribal Powwow. Hise says it will be "open to everyone."

Hise's ultimate goal for the Aspen Song Kids is to visit every library that exists, sharing the culture of Taos Pueblo all over the world. He hopes to see his culture thrive after the suffering it endured over previous centuries.

Taos County Historical Society Christmas Luncheon and Silent Auction, with Dr. Theresa Córdova

By Contributing Writer
MICHAEL WILSON

LOS PASTORES: A CENTURIES-OLD SPANISH-LANGUAGE PLAY ABOUT THE SHEPHERDS WHO JOURNEYED TO FIND MARY, JOSEPH, AND THE NIÑO JESÚS

The Taos County Historical Society will hold its annual Christmas luncheon and silent auction, launching its members and guests from throughout the county into the Christmas season. The event will take place on Sunday, December 3, at noon, at the Sagebrush Inn in Taos.

Los Pastores is the subject of this year's luncheon program, a wonderfully appropriate topic for Christmas time in northern New Mexico. Dr. Theresa Córdova, the founder, director, and curator of Las Pistoleras Instituto Cultural de Arte in El Prado, will speak on Los Pastores and her devotion to the preservation and recovery of the history, traditions, and culture of northern New Mexico and southern Colorado.

The title of Dr. Córdova's program is "Sangre de Cristo Liturgies Rendition of Los Pastores: Forty-Two Years of Communal and Cultural Resilience."

Los Pastores is one of many Span-



Photo by Dr. Jaelyn de Maria

Dr. Theresa Córdova, founder of Las Pistoleras Instituto Cultural de Arte in El Prado, will speak on the Christmas play *Los Pastores*, now in its 43rd year of performances throughout Taos County

ish-language religious plays with roots in the Middle Ages. The Spanish brought them to Mexico and then to Nuevo México in the earliest years of the conquest, to entertain and teach the Catholic faith. Scripts were often written out — the International Folk Art Museum in Santa Fe has over 42 versions of *Los Pastores* on file — but at their core, the plays have always been part of oral folk tradition, very much alive and thus open to change. Music is central to the plays, with songs both old and new, as the spirit moves.

In 1980, Córdova's father, the late and



Photo by Dr. Jaelyn de Maria

Cast members bring song, drama, and humor to *Los Pastores*, the centuries-old Spanish-language play about the shepherds who journeyed to find Mary, Joseph, and the Niño Jesús

beloved Arsenio Córdova, along with about 14 other Arroyo Seco residents, presented the first *Los Pastores* seen in the Taos area since about 1928. Arsenio, his then wife Dr. Kathryn Córdova, and now Theresa, have directed the *Los Pastores* pageants every year since, in several northern New Mexico churches and beyond.

Dr. Córdova's presentation on December 3 will include music, many photos, and as a special treat, a screening of the 1997 PBS documentary "Los Pastores: The Shepherd's Play," which was broadcast at Christmas on public television stations around the country, and also premiered at the Taos Film Festival

in 1998. Filmed in part in the 1770 San José de Gracias Church in Las Trampas and directed by Arsenio and Larry Torres, the documentary also shows the 28 actors, musicians, and support crew as they travel in a yellow school bus to bring their production to churches across Taos County.

Dec. 3 at noon at Sagebrush Inn. Tickets for the Christmas luncheon and silent auction are \$40 for TCHS members, and \$45 for non-members. To purchase tickets, email Donovan Lieurance at tchsmembership750@gmail.com or call Ernestina Córdova at (575) 770-0681. For further information call Michael Wilson at (612) 743-6546.

Vida del Norte Receives Funding

By Contributing Writer
MARIA GONZALEZ

As of October 1, 2023, Vida Del Norte is fully funded again! We look forward to kick-starting things up after a year-long gap. Our last events were the annual New Year's Eve event and our annual summer camp.

Vida Del Norte is committed to continuing to serve our community, and providing support for our youth, by engaging them in activities that are proven to reduce substance misuse. Vida Del Norte also hopes to expand its workshops and education to parents, families, and the community as a whole. Maria Gonzalez will continue to serve part-time as the Vida Del Norte program coordinator, and will be looking to hire support staff in the near future.

To kick off the new grant cycle, our Active8 Youth Coalition would like to invite you to a holiday dinner on Sunday December 17, from 4 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. at the Questa VFW.

We hope to host our annual New Year's Eve event as well, and if all falls into place, we will be advertising in the community as soon as we can. Be on

the lookout for the many family fun and friendly events, along with workshops to help support community.

A short overview of what the Drug-Free Community Grant entails:

Created in 1997, the Drug-Free Communities (DFC) Support Program funds community-based coalitions that engage multiple sectors of the community to prevent youth substance use. Vida Del Norte was first funded in 2017. We have applied for funding since 2014 and functioned as a coalition since then. Vida is currently on their second 5-year grant, and we hope to create a sustainable coalition that will last far beyond the next five years.

The DFC Support Program provides grants of up to \$125,000 per year for five years to community coalitions to strengthen the infrastructure among local partners to create and sustain a reduction in local youth substance use. After five years, community coalitions may re-compete for another five-year cycle.

Recognizing that local problems need local solutions, DFC-funded coalitions

VIDA DEL NORTE cont'd on page 13

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Questa Ladycats Volleyball Team Competes in State Tournament after Five-Year Hiatus

By MIKAYLA ORTEGA

The Questa Ladycats Volleyball team, coached by Michelle Garcia-Spears, Diane León, and Jennifer Vialpando, traveled to the state playoffs in mid-November, finishing second in district 5-2A with a 14-6 overall record with a 7-3 record in 5-2A.

The Ladycats were the #10 seed pick. They played their first game in the state tournament on Thursday, November 16 at noon against Menaul High School. The girls lost to Menaul in three sets. The tournament was a double elimination tournament, giving the girls the opportunity to play a second game against Estancia. The girls went on to lose in three sets, eliminating them from the state tournament.

Coach Michelle Garcia-Spears says she is proud of the team's work through the season. "This was my first time back, after taking a six-year break from coaching. Overall I am so proud of the girls and how resilient they were this season. There was adversity they had to overcome, and they did it by focusing on how they responded to the adversity," she says.

The Ladycats last state tournament qualification was in 2017, the last time Michelle coached. When asked what the secret to their success was, she says, "It was great to be back and to work with the team. We set goals early in the year and the goal was to focus on the positive and become the best possible versions of ourselves we could be."

Michelle attributes much of the team's success this year to assistant



Courtesy Photo

coaches Diane León and Jennifer Vialpando. "They can see things I may miss and vice versa. We work as a true team with the goal of helping the girls be the best athletes they can be."

Looking at next season, Michelle says she is excited and hopeful to continue coaching the girls' volleyball team. "We have a young team, and we only have one senior graduating this year. I see so much potential with our girls, not only

within our current team, but with the upcoming athletes as well."

Notably, Michelle's great-niece, Ashlynn Rael, and her cousin, Alyana León (Diane León's daughter), play on the team. When asked if the family dynamic ever blurs lines or makes coaching difficult, she is quick to respond, "No. The girls were my students when I was teaching, and I am their coach when they are on the team. I coached my daughter

Arianna and there are never any special privileges; they are treated like any other athlete, and they never expect special treatment either."

Following the state tournament, assistant coach Diane León reflected on her coaching career on social media, sharing a drawing her daughter Alyana drew in 2012, when Diane traveled to Albuquerque for the state tournament for the first time. The image, dated 11-14-2012, says "I miss my mom."

Fast-forward 11 years, and Alyana is now playing on the varsity volleyball team, having experienced her first state tournament with the team. Reflecting on her youth, seeing her mom coach volleyball, Alyana says, "As we left for the weekend, I thought about how I got to this point and the answer is: my mom. She has taught me almost everything I know, both about life in general and volleyball. She has spent money for volleyball camps, motivated me with words of encouragement, and her love and support. I am so incredibly grateful for her and for the love she has instilled in me for the sport."

Although the team didn't bring home a state championship, Michelle is looking to the future with hope and pride. "Even though the outcome wasn't what we hoped for, the girls know what they have to work on and improve for next year."

Michelle went on to share her gratitude with the Questa community for their continued support of the Questa Ladycats.

Incumbents Juan Cisneros and Esequiel Romero Presumed Victors in QISD Board Election

By Dylan R.N. Crabb

Despite Taos County Bureau of Elections reporting to *Questa del Rio News* that the Cisneros votes would be certified on November 15, as of press time, the New Mexico Secretary of State website still has the vote counts listed as "unofficial."

As we write this article, Questa In-

dependent School District Board Member Juan Cisneros holds 45 percent of the vote while Board Vice-President Esequiel Romero holds 41 percent, and challenging candidate Jason Gonzalez holds 14 percent.

Prior to the election, Cisneros told *Questa del Rio News* that he would continue to focus on improving and upgrading school infrastructure,

including playground equipment, sports fields, outdoor learning spaces, and an auxiliary gymnasium for the high school.

Cisneros also strongly believes in parents' right to be informed of what their children are being taught within the district and hopes to improve communication between parents and staff.

Board Vice-President Romero

told *Questa del Rio News* that he will "continue to make a change in the right direction for the student body and staff at the Questa Independent Schools."

Candidate Gonzalez ran to add some competition to the race. He told *Questa del Rio News* that had he been elected, he would have liked to focus on improving mental health assistance in the district.

2023 Winter Sports Schedules

HS Boys Basketball

DATE	TIME	LEVEL	OPPONENT
12/1/2023	6:30 PM	Away	Varsity Coronado High
12/11/2023	6:30 PM	Home	Varsity Springer High
12/14-12/16	TBD	Home	Varsity Questa Tournament
12/21/2023	5:30 PM	Home	Varsity Coronado High
12/28-12/30	TBD	Away	Varsity Dual Cities - Santa Rosa
1/4-1/6	TBD	Away	Varsity NRG- Espanola
1/9/2024	6:30 PM	Away	Varsity Springer High
1/13/2024	1:30 PM	Away	JV Dulce High
1/13/2024	4:30 PM	Away	Varsity Dulce High
1/17/2024	4:00 PM	Home	JV Cimarron High
1/17/2024	7:00 PM	Home	Varsity Cimarron High
1/20/2024	1:00 PM	Away	JV Clayton
1/20/2024	4:00 PM	Away	Varsity Clayton
1/23/2024	6:30 PM	Home	Varsity McCurdy Charter School
1/25/2024	5:30 PM	Home	JV Escalante High School
1/25/2024	8:00 PM	Home	Varsity Escalante High School
1/27/2024	1:00 PM	Away	JV Mora High
1/27/2024	4:00 PM	Away	Varsity Mora High
2/1/2024	4:30 PM	Home	JV Mesa Vista High
2/1/2024	7:30 PM	Home	Varsity Mesa Vista High
2/8/2024	5:30 PM	Away	JV Penasco High
2/8/2024	8:00 PM	Away	Varsity Penasco High
2/10/2024	2:30 PM	Away	JV Escalante High School
2/10/2024	5:30 PM	Away	Varsity Escalante High School
2/15/2024	4:00 PM	Home	JV Mora High
2/15/2024	7:00 PM	Home	Varsity Mora High
2/17/2024	2:30 PM	Away	JV Mesa Vista High
2/17/2024	5:30 PM	Away	Varsity Mesa Vista High
2/20/2024	5:00 PM	Away	Varsity McCurdy Charter School
2/24/2024	3:30 PM	Home	JV Penasco High
2/24/2024	6:30 PM	Home	Varsity Penasco High

HS Girls Basketball

DATE	TIME	LEVEL	OPPONENT
12/1/2023	5:00 PM	Away	Varsity Coronado High
12/7-12/9	TBD	Away	Varsity Santa Rosa Tournament
12/11/2023	5:00 PM	Home	Varsity Springer High
12/14-12/16	TBD	Home	Varsity Questa Tournament
12/21/2023	4:00 PM	Home	Varsity Coronado High
1/4-1/6	TBD	Away	Varsity NRG- Espanola
1/9/2024	5:00 PM	Away	Varsity Springer High
1/13/2024	12:00 PM	Away	JV Dulce High
1/13/2024	3:00 PM	Away	Varsity Dulce High
1/17/2024	5:30 PM	Home	Varsity Cimarron High
1/20/2024	1:00 PM	Away	JV Clayton
1/20/2024	2:30 PM	Away	Varsity Clayton
1/23/2024	5:00 PM	Home	Varsity McCurdy Charter School
1/25/2024	4:00 PM	Home	JV Escalante High School
1/25/2024	7:00 PM	Home	Varsity Escalante High School

1/27/2024	2:30 PM	Away	Varsity Mora High
2/1/2024	3:00 PM	Home	JV Mesa Vista High
2/1/2024	6:00 PM	Home	Varsity Mesa Vista High
2/8/2024	4:00 PM	Away	JV Penasco High
2/8/2024	7:00 PM	Away	Varsity Penasco High
2/10/2024	1:00 PM	Away	JV Escalante High School
2/10/2024	4:00 PM	Away	Varsity Escalante High School
2/15/2024	5:30 PM	Home	Varsity Mora High
2/17/2024	1:00 PM	Away	JV Mesa Vista High
2/17/2024	4:00 PM	Away	Varsity Mesa Vista High
2/20/2024	4:00 PM	Away	Varsity McCurdy Charter School
2/24/2024	2:00 PM	Home	JV Penasco High
2/24/2024	7:00 PM	Home	Varsity Penasco High

Cheer

DATE	TIME	LEVEL	OPPONENT
1/6/2024	TBD	Home	Varsity Pride of Q
2/3/2024	TBD	Away	Varsity Spirit of Hope- Albuquerque
3/12-3/14	TBD	Away	Varsity Halftime Hoorah- Albuquerque
3/22-3/23	TBD	Away	Varsity St. Pius Cheer Showcase- Albuquerque
4/4-4/5	TBD	Away	Varsity State Cheer

JH Boys Basketball

DATE	TIME	LEVEL	OPPONENT
11/13/2023	5:00 PM	Home	7th Grade Escalante Middle School
11/13/2023	7:00 PM	Home	8th Grade Escalante Middle School
11/15/2023	5:00 PM	Home	7th Grade Dulce Middle
11/15/2023	7:00 PM	Home	8th Grade Dulce Middle
11/20/2023	5:00 PM	Home	8th Grade Mesa Vista Middle
11/27/2023	TBD	Away	7th Grade Mora Middle
11/27/2023	TBD	Away	8th Grade Mora Middle
11/29/2023	5:00 PM	Home	7th Grade Penasco Middle
11/29/2023	7:00 PM	Home	8th Grade Penasco Middle
12/4/2023	5:00 PM	Away	7th Grade Escalante Middle School
12/4/2023	7:00 PM	Away	8th Grade Escalante Middle School
12/11/2023	5:00 PM	Away	8th Grade Mesa Vista Middle
12/13/2023	5:00 PM	Away	7th Grade Dulce Middle
12/13/2023	7:00 PM	Away	8th Grade Dulce Middle
12/18/2023	5:00 PM	Away	7th Grade Penasco Middle
12/18/2023	7:00 PM	Away	8th Grade Penasco Middle
12/21-12/23	TBD	Away	8th Grade NRG- Mesa Vista
12/29/2023	2:00 PM	Home	8th Grade Springer
1/4/2024	6:00 PM	Home	8th Grade McCurdy Charter School
1/8/2024	6:00 PM	Away	8th Grade McCurdy Charter School
1/11/2024	TBD	Home	7th Grade Mora Middle
1/11/2024	TBD	Home	8th Grade Mora Middle
1/15/2024	5:00 PM	Away	7th Grade Eagle Nest Middle
1/15/2024	7:00 PM	Away	8th Grade Eagle Nest Middle
1/19/2024	5:00 PM	Home	7th Grade Cimarron Middle
1/19/2024	7:00 PM	Home	8th Grade Cimarron Middle

JH Girls Basketball

DATE	TIME	LEVEL	OPPONENT
11/13/2023	4:00 PM	Home	7th Grade Escalante Middle School
11/13/2023	6:00 PM	Home	8th Grade Escalante Middle School
11/15/2023	4:00 PM	Home	7th Grade Dulce Middle
11/15/2023	6:00 PM	Home	8th Grade Dulce Middle
11/20/2023	4:00 PM	Home	8th Grade Mesa Vista Middle
11/27/2023	TBD	Away	7th Grade Mora Middle
11/27/2023	TBD	Away	8th Grade Mora Middle
11/29/2023	4:00 PM	Home	7th Grade Penasco Middle
11/29/2023	6:00 PM	Home	8th Grade Penasco Middle
12/4/2023	4:00 PM	Away	7th Grade Escalante Middle School
12/4/2023	6:00 PM	Away	8th Grade Escalante Middle School
12/11/2023	4:00 PM	Away	8th Grade Mesa Vista Middle
12/13/2023	4:00 PM	Away	7th Grade Dulce Middle
12/13/2023	6:00 PM	Away	8th Grade Dulce Middle
12/18/2023	4:00 PM	Away	7th Grade Penasco Middle
12/18/2023	6:00 PM	Away	8th Grade Penasco Middle
12/21-12/23	TBD	Away	8th Grade NRG- Mesa Vista
12/29/2023	1:00 PM	Home	8th Grade Springer
1/4/2024	5:00 PM	Home	8th Grade McCurdy Charter School
1/8/2024	5:00 PM	Away	8th Grade McCurdy Charter School
1/11/2024	TBD	Home	7th Grade Mora Middle
1/11/2024	TBD	Home	8th Grade Mora Middle
1/15/2024	4:00 PM	Away	7th Grade Eagle Nest Middle
1/15/2024	6:00 PM	Away	8th Grade Eagle Nest Middle
1/19/2024	4:00 PM	Home	7th Grade Cimarron Middle
1/19/2024	6:00 PM	Home	8th Grade Cimarron Middle

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VIDA DEL NORTE cont'd from page 11

engage multiple sectors of the community and employ a variety of environmental strategies to address local substance use problems. DFCs involve local communities in finding solutions and also helps youth at risk for substance use recognize

the majority of our nation's youth choose not to use substances. As demonstrated by independent evaluations, the DFC Support Program significantly reduces substance use amongst youth, the target population.

DFC Coalitions consist of community leaders representing twelve sectors that

organize to meet the local prevention needs of the youth and families in their communities. These twelve sectors are:

Youth, Parents, Businesses, Media, School, Youth-serving organizations, Law Enforcement, Religious/fraternal organizations, Civic and volunteer organizations, Healthcare professionals, State,

Local and Tribal governments, and other organizations involved in reducing illicit substance use. Vida Del Norte is currently looking for more coalition members to join their efforts, if you are interested, please contact Program Coordinator Maria Gonzalez at (575) 779-2260 or email at Maria.gonzalez@vidadelnorte.com



Kids Art at the Questa Library

By Contributing Writers at the Questa Public Library

Who doesn't love kids art — art produced through the love of creativity, color, curiosity and fun! The Youth Art Show, currently featured at the Questa Public Library, at the library embraces this statement and much more. Students from Questa to Red River came together to produce a great display. On Saturday, November 4, the students arrived at the library for a public opening and awards ceremony.

Maya MacDonald, the art teacher from Alta Vista Elementary in Questa, brought in colorful and expressive work from her students. She focuses her program by stating, "The Alta Vista art program is one that strives to encourage creativity, problem-solving, and exploration through art. At the same time, we work to introduce classic art-making techniques which open new worlds of creation to students. Students are able to explore topics relating to themselves, their home, and their identity; all while building fundamental skills." Maya used many creative techniques with her students. You will see watercolor self-portraits, pastel landscapes, and printmaking.

Lorie Hawkes, from Red River Charter School, rounded out the display with more elementary student work and with a nice display of junior high student artwork. Mrs. Hawkes describes her program as "inspiring her students to observe the beauty of the world around them," and uses "academic connections, works of famous artists, and seasonal themes" to plan enjoyable lessons with a purpose.

Mrs. Hawkes older students' artwork merged with the curriculum. These artworks were focused around



Photo by Peggy Trigg

Sharon Nicholson, presenting Ava Ortega her award

two connective curriculum projects. One was drawings of poppies, tied to the remembrance poppies that are still worn in Commonwealth countries to remember veterans of wars that her 7th and 8th-graders learned about while studying WWI. Her second project used the theme for the annual Youth Hispanic Heritage Contest this year: "Todos Somos, Somos Uno", or "We are All, We are One." In keeping with this theme, her 7th and 8th-grade class created color wheels to represent the world in space. Some placed the continents of North and South America over the color wheel, where the majority of Hispanic people live. The colors represent the many races and personalities, or "colorful" people of the world.

While every elementary student received a fun, inspiring ribbon, only a select few of the upper-level students received ribbons. This included five place ribbons, with the top three receiving a little something extra in the form of a gift certificate to Walmart. A very special award, the "People's Choice" award, with a gift card, was also given out. This award was open to all the students, both elementary and upper level.

The upper-level awards went to students from Red River Charter. First place went to Ava Ortega, second place to Gideon Hampton, third to Mich-



Photo by Peggy Trigg

Ryan Pacheco, People's Choice award

kayla Jadlocki, fourth to Amari Martin, and fifth to Lydia Prentice. The People's Choice award went to Alta Vista student Ryan Pacheco for his colorful self-portrait.

We would like to thank the two art teachers who participated in this year's display. A special thanks goes out to Maya MacDonald and Lorie Hawkes for helping our youth grow and develop critical thinking skills through art. Creativity is the driving force behind all problem-solving. We are very lucky to have you working with our youth.



Photo by Peggy Trigg

Ava Ortega, first place ribbon



Photo by Peggy Trigg

Gideon Hampton, second place ribbon

If you haven't already stopped by the library to have a peek at that wonderful, creative show, please do. The display is up through the end of January, 2024.

One last thing, as an additional salute to creativity, please remember that on December 18, 19, and 20, the Questa Library will be giving out free art materials to all local youth, through the "art kits for kids" Questa Creative Council project. If you would like to help the QCC raise money for the endeavor, please go to questacreative.org and donate a few dollars: every little bit helps.



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Electric Car Competition & Alta Vista Art

By Contributing Writer
JOHN WALSH

Questa's middle school was invited to compete in this year's NM Electric Car Competition on November 4 at Kennedy Middle School in Albuquerque, along with 50 other middle schools. Two teams of six members each were recruited from the 6th, 7th, and 8th grade middle schools to attempt to build two small electric cars to compete in races.

Each team was supplied with these supplies: a balsa wood platform, small electric motor, axles, wheels, battery pack, and multiple gears. The gears were to be used in building a workable transmission and motor gear. The balsa wood platform had to be cut out to fit the transmission gears, which in turn



Photo by Serenity H and Hayley C

Logo design by Alice

had to be mounted on an axle which was hot-glued to the car body. The motor needed a gear mounted on it and then synced to the transmission, and then hot-glued in place. The battery pack also needed to be attached to the body with Velcro so it could be removed, and batteries replaced. A Morton Salt container had to be mounted on the body for weight. The salt container needed to be removed during the competition so we could use the salt container provided by the judges.

The month of October was spent constructing cars and running timed laps to see which set of gears would be fastest on a 10-meter track. This process entailed trying different gear ratios. After many different gear ratio speed



Photo by Serenity H and Hayley C

Zach M becoming one with the boys car

tests and time trials, a car put together by the girls' team was selected to represent Questa's middle school at the competition.

Along the way, we lost multiple team members to playing sports and ended up with three girls and one boy at the Albuquerque competition. We knew our car could do a 4.67-second run and felt confident it could compete. We had geared our car for a drop start and were surprised to find that the competition raceway included a six-foot starting gate. During the first 20 minutes of the competition, we observed that the fastest times were running in the low 5 seconds, which excited everyone on the team. Indeed, we had the fastest time recorded, until some other middle



Photo by Serenity H and Hayley C

The E-Car that took 12th place out of 39 teams!

schoolers who had previously competed and knew about the starting runway, had their cars geared for this initial runup. They started in the low 4 seconds and a few were running in the high 3 seconds. For those of you who don't know about gearing, it takes a low gear to start from a stop, which limits your top speed, while a higher gear ratio when you have a six-foot runup can create a faster speed.

Our 4.67 time put us in 12th place out of 39 teams. We learned a lot about electric car racing and will build our cars accordingly for next year's competition.

Along the way, our team learned how to cut out car bodies, design a t-shirt, live with hot-glu-gun burns, redesign gear boxes, and have a good time.



Photo by John Walsh

1st Grade: Mrs. Ida's class community board



Photo by John Walsh

Alta Vista art



Photo by John Walsh

Alta Vista art



Photo by John Walsh

Alta Vista art

Critical Survey for Youth Substance Abuse Data Fails in School Board Meeting

By DYLAN R.N. CRABB

The Youth Risk and Resilience Survey (YRRS) had been placed on the agenda for a second time at the Questa Independent School District board meeting on November 15.

It had been shot down by the board along with a proposal from Sunrise Clinic two months ago. The concerns over the survey from board members remain largely the same, suspicion over the questions asked and a lack of knowledge by parents on where the information goes. The action item listing the YRRS survey was ignored, with no discussion leading to its second failure in front of the board.

In the audience at the meeting were two representatives of Vida del Norte, Janie Corinne and Maria Gonzalez, whose organization relies on the YRRS to collect data on substance use and abuse among youth — data which Vida is required to obtain for federal funding.

“The surveys are optional, voluntary, and completely anonymous,” Corinne told the *Questa del Rio News* in an email. “No one here ever sees the raw data, only summaries that the state department of health and the University of New Mexico/Albuquerque provide to us.”

Kids participate in the YRRS anonymously and they are able to skip questions if they desire. The purpose of the survey is to better understand mental health states at the schools in order to better serve at-risk students.

This is a part of a phenomenon all over the United States, with parents fear-

ful of particular opportunities available in schools. The discussion has a focus on mental health and gender identity, which is where much of the fear among parents arises.

The YRRS is available to the public upon request at youthrisk.org. There are separate surveys for junior high and high school students.

- “How old are you?”
- “What grade are you in?”
- “What is your sex?”
- “What’s your race?”
- “Are you Hispanic?”
- “When you ride a bicycle, how often do you wear a helmet?”
- “Have you ever carried a weapon to school?”
- “How often have you felt like you were treated badly or unfairly?”
- “Have you ever been bullied at school?”
- “Do you smoke cigarettes?”
- “Do you vape electronic cigarettes?”
- “Do you smoke marijuana?”
- “Have you ever gone without eating for 24 hours?”
- “How often do you go to a physical education class?”
- “How often do you use social media?”
- “Where do you usually sleep?”
- “What kind of grades do you get in school?”

The above questions are examples from the sample survey at the youth-risk.org website. The survey for high school students asks some more esoteric questions on relationships, including questions regarding pregnancy and preventing pregnancy, but nothing inappropriate as far as this reporter can observe.

“The last time you had sexual intercourse, did you or your partner use a condom?”

“The last time you had sexual intercourse with an opposite sex partner, what one method did you or your partner use to prevent pregnancy?”

Are the two above questions normal to ask high school students?

Since the board has not approved the YRRS, Vida del Norte will need to draft their own survey following their own core measures, in order to obtain the information from students needed for their federal funding.



CURRENT USE (past 30 days)	2015	2017	2019	2021
At least one drink of alcohol	43.4%	39.3%	59.0%*	28.0%
Smoke cigarettes	17.7%	14.4%	26.2%	5.0%
Tobacco use, any of the 5 forms of use	-	-	68.1%	58.3%
E-cigarette use	-	-	61.7%	-
Use marijuana	45.8%	54.0%	48.9%	40.7%
Use a prescription drug (such as OxyContin, Percocet, Vicodin, codeine, Adderall, Ritalin, or Xanax) not prescribed to you	9.9%	16.3%	29.8%	5.8%
PERCEPTIONS OF RISK	2015	2017	2019	2021
Moderate or great risk if people “take one or two drinks of an alcoholic beverage nearly every day”	56.9%	55.1%	40.0%	63.5%
Moderate or great risk when people “have five or more drinks of an alcoholic beverage once or twice a week”	67.8%	71.4%	60.9%	-
Moderate or great risk if people “smoke one or more packs of cigarettes per day”	81.0%	80.4%	67.4%	80.0%
Moderate or great risk if people “smoke marijuana once or twice a week”	26.6%	22.7%	32.6%	24.0%
Moderate or great risk if people use prescription drugs (such as OxyContin, Percocet, Vicodin, codeine, Adderall, Ritalin, or Xanax) not prescribed to you?	88.2%	80.6%	73.3%	80.4%
PERCEPTION OF PARENTAL DISAPPROVAL	2015	2017	2019	2021
Wrong or very wrong for you to have one or two drinks of an alcoholic beverage nearly every day?	84.3%	79.6%	80.4%	88.0%
Wrong or very wrong for you to smoke cigarettes?	87.9%	88.8%	78.3%	92.2%
Wrong or very wrong for you to smoke marijuana?	69.2%	54.6%	57.8%	72.5%
Wrong or very wrong for you to use prescription drugs (such as OxyContin, Percocet, Vicodin, codeine, Adderall, Ritalin, or Xanax) not prescribed to you?	93.3%	88.7%	84.8%	92.2%

PERCEPTION OF PEER DISAPPROVAL	2015	2017	2019	2021
Wrong or very wrong for you to have one or two drinks of an alcoholic beverage nearly every day?	44.7%	51.0%	41.3%	66.7%
Wrong or very wrong for you to smoke cigarettes?	67.2%	66.0%	69.6%	68.0%
Wrong or very wrong for you to smoke marijuana?	28.3%	21.6%	32.6%	30.0%
Wrong or very wrong for you to use prescription drugs (such as OxyContin, Percocet, Vicodin, codeine, Adderall, Ritalin, or Xanax) not prescribed to you?	85.6%	80.4%	73.9%	90.0%
ATTITUDE TOWARD PEER USE	2015	2017	2019	2021
Somewhat or strongly disapprove of someone your age having one or two drinks of an alcoholic beverage nearly every day?	69.8%	63.5%	47.8%	62.0%

The above table displays the Core Measures that each Drug-Free Communities coalition is required to collect biannually.

*The 10th grade class was not available to participate in YRRS data collection in 2019. Since alcohol use rates are greater in each grade from grades 9 through 12, this gap in data may have contributed to the dramatic rise in alcohol use rates between 2017 and 2019.

Efforts at QHS Focus on Practical Skills in Agriculture and Welding

By DYLAN R.N. CRABB

Former English teacher Clara Adams now teaches agriculture and welding at Questa High School, as part of the schools' programs to teach students practical skills and diversify the local economy into the future.

"I grew up on a farm; I'm very passionate about farming," Adams told the *Questa del Rio News* in a November 16 interview.

Agriculture, welding, and carpentry classes are based in a vocational building on the east side of the Questa schools campus. Adams and Spencer Warnock share the building with their respective classes.

"Learning how to work with your hands also keeps both the right brain and the left brain active," said Adams. "Not only are the students learning practical skills, but it helps fight depression."

Questa High School also partners

with Future Farmers of America (FFA) and competes with other participating schools. The Questa Independent School District board approved a field trip for Adams' ag class to visit a greenhouse built on the campus of Alamosa High School; that field trip will be the furthest trip away from Questa thus far. The board is also in favor of Adams and her students building their own greenhouse next to the vocational building, with the intention of creating a direct food source

for the school.

The FFA is a national organization, dedicated to agricultural education, with a three-pronged system: inquiry-based classroom learning, implementation-based experiential learning, and engagement-based leadership learning.

Ms. Adams can be reached at: cadams@questa.k12.nm.us. Utilize the school district contact page at their website for more contact info: <https://bit.ly/3stVFg0>.



Photo by Dylan R.N. Crabb

Students learn welding techniques at Questa High School



Photo by Dylan R.N. Crabb

Greenhouse Model



Photo by Dylan R.N. Crabb

Clara Adams displaying Ag Competition jackets

Toddlers Sickened By Tainted Applesauce

By JONEL ALECCIA
Associated Press

Nearly two dozen toddlers have been sickened by lead linked to tainted applesauce pouches, says the Center for Disease Control and Prevention. U.S. health officials are warning doctors to be on the lookout for possible cases of lead poisoning in children after at least 22 toddlers in 14 states were sickened by lead linked to tainted pouches of cinnamon apple puree and applesauce.

Children ages one to three were affected, and at least one child showed a blood lead level eight times higher than the level that raises concern, the CDC said.

There's no safe level of lead exposure, but the CDC uses a marker of 3.5 micrograms per deciliter to identify children with higher levels than most.

The affected children's blood lead levels ranged from 4 to 29 micrograms per deciliter.

The reported symptoms included headache, nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, a change in activity level, and anemia.

The illnesses are part of an outbreak

tied to recalled pouches of fruit puree marketed to kids from the brands WanaBana apple cinnamon fruit puree and Schnucks and Weis cinnamon applesauce pouches. The products were sold in stores and online.

Parents and caregivers should not buy or serve the products, and kids who may have eaten them should be tested for lead levels. Children who are affected may show no symptoms, experts said.

Lead exposure can lead to serious

learning and behavior problems. Heavy metals like lead can get into food products from soil, air, water, or industrial processes, according to the American Academy of Pediatrics.

The CDC said there were cases in the following states as of November 7: Alabama, Arkansas, Louisiana, Maryland, Missouri, New Mexico, New York, North Carolina, Ohio, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, and Washington.



Courtesy photo

This photo provided by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration on Oct. 28, 2023, shows a WanaBana apple cinnamon fruit puree pouch. (FDA via AP, File)



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The Arts Brighten Our Holidays

Art Kits for Kids!

December in Questa will be brightened for us all with art and crafts, from the traditional to the modern, to the blank canvas of a 10-year-old child!

Once again, we are in the middle of our favorite fundraiser; Art Kits for Kids! Professional New Mexico artists and art lovers alike are supporting the next generation with their donations.

How does it work? We obtain age-appropriate art supplies and distribute these at the Questa Public Library. The fund drive continues until December 10, and then we must get our order to Santa! Many thanks go to Peggy Trigg, for keeping the annual Art Kits project going.

Donations can be made on our website at QuestaCreative.org — look for the Art Kits program illustrated on the home page and click on the picture. You'll find an easy donate feature. Donations are tax-deductible and will be used immediately. If you prefer, you can mail a check to PO Box 1025, Questa, NM, 87556, with "art kits" on the memo line.

So, kids! Come and collect your art-themed holiday presents from December 18 through 21, at the Questa Library during regular hours, Monday through Saturday, noon to 5 p.m..

QCC Open House Community Celebration

December brightness continues with a fun Questa Creative Council Open House Community Celebration on Saturday, December 2, when we host you and all our event participants, supporters, and fans — with food and music and a chance to get to know each other outside of the busyness of summer event season! If you are one of our Art Tour artists, or just enjoyed visiting all the studios and hubs, or enjoy what the QCC does in so many other ways — we want to see you there! Drop in between 4:30 p.m. and 8:30 p.m. at the Sala on the south side of town, 2331 Highway 522. Music will be provided by local



Photo Courtesy QPL Staff



Photo Courtesy QPL Staff

favorites Chris and Rodney Arellano around 5 p.m. and Mark and Justin of the High Desert Acoustic Duo, around 6:30 p.m. Bring your friends, so they can learn what we're up to, also. This is a FREE event for you.

Alumbra de Questa Holiday Market

And even more brilliance! The following Saturday, December 9, is when the QCC, the Village of Questa, and more supporters kick off the holiday season with a full day and evening of Christmas fun. First comes the 8th annual Alumbra de Questa Holiday

Market, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., at the VFW Hall. Expect to find your favorite local artists and craftspeople, plus delicious food, homemade goodies to take home, hot chocolate to enjoy while listening to live Christmas music, and maybe you'll run into Santa Claus! We hear he will visit with some gifts on hand for good (and trying to be good) children. There will be a few tents full of artistic items outside, too. New this year, a living nativity setup will be hosted by the Living Word Church. Do plan to

HOLIDAYS cont'd on page 20

SENIOR MENU: DECEMBER 2023

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
All Meals Served With 8oz. 2% Milk as available	Taos County Senior Program (575) 737-8927 PLEASE NOTE THAT THE MENU IS SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT NOTICE			1 Tossed Salad w/ Ranch Dressing oven baked chicken, mashed potatoes and Gravy, Vegetable Medley, Wheat roll, Spiced Peaches
4 Turkey and cheese melt, broccoli soup, Crackers, California Blend Vegetables, Vanilla nonfat yogurt, Mandarin oranges	5 Fish and Chips, coleslaw, Wheat roll, Fresh Pear	6 Chile Beans, Spinach, Roasted Zucchini cornbread, Apple slices	7 Chicken Fettuccine Alfredo, Italian blend vegetables, Wheat roll, Gelatin w/ banana	8 Chef salad, ranch dressing, crackers, fruit salad
11 Chicken Tenders, mashed potatoes and gravy, Carrots, Cornbread, angel food cake, w/ Cherry Topping	12 Beef Stew, steamed cabbage, Tossed salad w/ Ranch Dressing, Crackers, orange	13 BBQ Pulled Pork on a Bun, Beets, Honeydew	14 Pepperoni Pizza, garden salad w/ Ranch, dressing garbanzo beans, Nonfat vanilla yogurt, strawberries	15 Frito Pie, Pinto Beans, Beet and Red Onion salad, Gelatin w/ banana
18 Chile relleno, pinto beans, Cauliflower, Beets, flour tortilla, apple	19 Christmas ham, scalloped potatoes, green beans w/ red peppers, roll, fruit salad w/ Nonfat vanilla yogurt, sugar cookie	20 Chicken Fajitas, Yellow Squash, Black Beans, sliced peaches & Apricots	21 Tuna Pasta salad, Tomato Soup, crackers, Grapes	22 Closed
25 Closed	26 Chili Cheese Hot Dog, Roasted Herb Red Potatoes, broccoli salad, Peach Cobbler	27 8 oz Pork Posole, Calabacitas, Tossed salad w/ Ranch Dressing, Flour Tortilla, Mango	28 Egg salad sandwich, Mediterranean Blend Vegetables, nonfat Mixed Berry yogurt	29 Closed

This Senior Lunch Menu applies to all Senior Centers in Taos County. Meals are cooked fresh at each location.

Lunch donations recommendations are \$1.50 and up. Lunches for people under 60 years old are \$7.50 a person.

To qualify call the Ancianos at (575) 586-0508. They will fill out an assessment and file an application.

Currently, exercise classes are not available.

Donations for transportation is encouraged.

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We are fighting against those odds, and we encourage you to join us as we work to create a sustainable future for our paper.

This December, we are partnering with the New Mexico Local News Fund (NMLNF) to host an annual fundraiser to raise funds to cover our annual operating costs in 2024.

Every donation you send will be matched by NMLNF.

Donations can be sent via Paypal or mail to PO Box 1072 Questa, NM 87556.

Thank you for your support and we look forward to continuing to cover your stories in the new year.

With sincere gratitude,

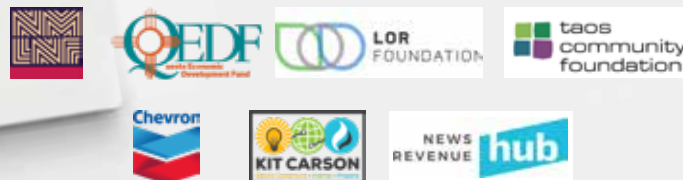


Mikayla Ortega
Editor
Questa del Rio News

WHY SUPPORT QUESTA DEL RIO NEWS?

- *Questa Del Rio News* is a source of news specific to and that which connects and unites our communities of northern Taos County.
- *Questa Del Rio News* provides a platform for the community to publicly voice opinions, to inform and to be informed about community specific issues.
- *Questa Del Rio News* builds community by encouraging economic growth and development through local ads, business coverage, community events, community programs updates, job listings and more.
- *Questa Del Rio News* encourages social cohesion, healthy political debate and supports local government transparency.
- *Questa Del Rio News* provides news that matters locally.
- *Questa Del Rio News* is doing it's best to revive and restore trust in media which we feel largely starts at the local level.
- *Questa Del Rio News* provides local jobs and paid internships.
- *Questa Del Rio News* is free and will remain free.
- *Questa Del Rio News* is delivered directly to the mail boxes of six zip codes (87556, 87519, 87564, 87524, 87512, 87558) as well as distributed to stands at businesses in this region.

Since launching your free, local newspaper in 2018, we have aimed to be a catalyst for good and to celebrate the communities we serve in northern Taos County. *Questa del Rio News* is a community-supported newspaper that provides a forum for local voices: businesses, politics, community organizations, educational departments, government, non-profits, and all things local.



The *Questa Del Rio News* is a project of the Questa Economic Development Fund (QEDF), a 501(c)3 non-profit organization, and relies on advertising, your tax-deductible donations, your volunteer time, and contributions to support your local paper.

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The LOR Foundation Thanks Questa for a Big First Year!

By JAY BOUCHARD
with LOR Foundation

It's hard to believe it's been more than a year since the LOR Foundation opened its office in Questa, hiring lifelong resident Maria Gonzalez, as the organization's first Questa community officer. And what a year it's been: In 2023, LOR supported more than 30 community-led projects, committing more than \$180,000 to make Questa an even better place to live.

"I'm so grateful we were able to

bring so many resources to Questa this year," Gonzalez says. "But it wouldn't have been possible without all the community champions who brought ideas to the table."

The solutions LOR supported this year covered a wide range of elements, from the economy to education, to health, transportation, the environment, and more. For instance, when the pastor of a local church heard that some locals hadn't been trained in financial literacy, she reached out to LOR for help creating a free class that

helped locals take control of their personal finances. And when the Village of Questa realized the lack of shaded areas was a problem at the Municipal Park, LOR was able to help them purchase and install shade structures and additional seating. LOR also helped locals restore important traditions like the Fiestas De San Antonio, which was hosted this past June for the first time in more than a decade.

"These are the types of solutions that make our community even stronger," Gonzalez says. "Next year,

I look forward to working with even more people and supporting more solutions."

The LOR office will be closed from December 15 through January 2, as Gonzalez and the rest of the LOR team celebrate the holiday season and recharge for what will be a busy 2024. If you have any ideas you'd like to share with Gonzalez before then, you can reach her at maria@lorfoundation.org or (575) 665-2001.

Happy holidays from everyone at the LOR Foundation!



I DARE YOU

By MARTA GLOVER

The Holiday Season

The holiday season is here and just beginning. At Thanksgiving and Christmas we gather with our family and friends and celebrate the holidays with warmth and good cheer. For some folks, the holidays are challenging. For the people and the animals who are struggling during the holidays, spend some time with them this season sharing joy and happiness and spreading the gift of love and compassion. Many situations can happen during the holidays and some, unexpected. Has something out of

the norm happened to you or those you know? Was it a daring thing to do or say or to act upon? Did it change your life? Did it change the family dynamics or the holiday rituals? What moved you or motivated you to...?

Rush:

I want to be a magic scientist. At Christmas I wished for a science experiment kit. I took everything out and mixed them up. I did not read the directions and it did not come out right. But it came out cool cause I put a lot of stuff together. Some was a hard substance, others liquid that I put in containers and I wore a doctor's science coat. I dared myself to do the experiment my way without any structure. Next time I want to do it with my family. (Rush is five years old and my grandson. Lucky me!)

Evelyn:

When I was little, about eleven years old, we had 20 puppies during Christmas time, from two different litters. When I see Christmas lights, I

remember the spirit of the puppies. We had two dogs by the same father at the same time. Negligent parenting! One of the overwhelmed mothers surrendered the rights to her puppies and the other mother dog cared for all 20 puppies. We built a puppy shed inside an enclosed patio. I crawled through the puppy door into a den of puppies and it was Christmas time.

Morton:

I was a baby in New Mexico, the time my dad and I went skiing on a snowy mountain at the Red River Ski Area. I don't know if it was fun. I was skiing at two years old and it was my first time. This was during Christmas vacation. I was happy, sad, and frustrated without knowing which one. I guess it was pretty daring at two years old.

Todd:

I bought somebody a car for Christmas. Who did you buy the car for and why? I bought a 1969 MG convertible for my partner because she wanted one.

Was it expensive? No, it was a used older model. I had to push it home a quarter of a mile because it wouldn't start! I saw this MG for sale in my neighborhood and thought it was a good idea. She was very startled by the gift. What did she give you for Christmas? Well, she gave me a pair of woolen socks and some yarn and knitting needles, which was a little strange. Is there a dare in this story, Todd? The dare is she still loved me on Christmas, even though the car didn't start and it was a risky present.

Pam:

A simple Christmas imprint of my childhood stands out: visiting Santa's home in my historic downtown of Wichita, Texas, touring Santa's creaky house and baking cookies with Mrs. Claus in her airy Christmas kitchen. As a 7-year-old little gal, it was truly magical. It helped encourage my love for divine magic and charm! I dared to believe in the spirit of Christmas and still do!

HOLIDAYS cont'd from page 18

come enjoy the holiday spirit with your neighbors and friends — what a great way to SHOP LOCAL and keep your dollars in Questa.

Tree Lighting and Light Parade

If the evening is still feeling young for you, then you can head south on 522 and attend the Village of Questa annual Light Parade and Tree Lighting Ceremony (story on page 4). The parade starts at 5:30 p.m.

Amazon's Smiles donation program

for non-profits has been discontinued, but if you are of a mind to do some year-end giving to our non-profit, we would more than welcome your generosity! Come and find us at the Sala on Saturday, December 2 — there is sure to be a donation jar amidst the goodies. Or, go to our website and scroll to the very bottom for giving information.

We mean every word of our mission; to strengthen community through arts, culture, history, and education. We wish you all a very happy holiday season, and hope to see you soon!

POEM OF THE MONTH

Xmas was not always a time for Joy and Cheer.
St. Nick was sad drinking too much German Beer.
Hard to get help when they rather play Video Gear.
Not much to do about the cost of hay for Reindeer.

Elves working for free but picketing on Strike.
Climate Change actually flipped the Night.
The Aurora Borealis just didn't look Tight.
"Blank dot.Gov" could never get it Right.

Latinos discovered a Muy Bueno Plan.
Wire Ristras "chillies" around the Zia Fan.
Popcorn threaded through Chamisa Span.
Candles in paper bags along the Rio Grande.

One look at the Scene,
"Itza Mean"
Because Chillies Glow
Red or Green
—Señor Miguel, Ghost Writer

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Village of Questa Presents

Light Parade & Tree Lighting

Saturday, December 9th

**Light Parade to start at 5:30pm
followed by tree lighting**

**Peroviche Park
Next to the Main Light
Questa NM 87556**

**Hot Cocoa & Cookies
Caroling & Holiday Cheer**



If you would like to participate in the light parade or just need more info please call Valerie Vigil at (575) 741-5334 or email at vvigil@villageofquesta.org



Chevron is proud to sponsor this ad in support of the *Questa Del Rio News*.

QUESTA ALUMBRA *Holiday Market*

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10 AM - 4 PM

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By Toner Mitchell

Fishing the Rio Hondo Tributaries

What many visitors to northern New Mexico see on a map as the Columbine-Hondo Wilderness Area is recognized by every Questeno in very simple terms: my back yard. At first glance, the mountains south and east of town don't appear notably spectacular. There are no sky-scraping peaks like the Sierras or Denali, no hundred-foot waterfalls on postcards at Rael's Market. The thing about wilderness areas, though, what makes them so special, is that you have to enter them to feel the power. You have to immerse yourself before you can access the sublime.

Climbing Flag Mountain is still on my bucket list, as are all the summits stretching east towards the ski areas. My problem with targeting mountains in the area is that fishing always gets in the way. The Columbine-Hondo contains some of the best Rio Grande Cutthroat habitat in all of New Mexico. The moun-

tains are big. They catch a lot of snow and hold it a long time. The streams, as a result, are cold and clean.

Besides my aging hips, the cutthroats in Columbine Creek may be my greatest obstacle to ever beholding the view from atop Lobo Peak. One might think approaching the peaks from the Rio Hondo side would present fewer fishing distractions. But one would be wrong. That side is rich with good fishing, in the Hondo itself, but also Yerba, Italianos, Gavilan, and Manzanita Creeks, where ancestral pure cutthroats still hold on.

Most people know these creeks for the accumulation of cars usually parked at their trailheads. The trails are bigger than the creeks, which are so small and overgrown that you usually hear them instead of see them. But they each harbor cutthroats, as you will learn if you can find a way to get your fly to a holding spot.

On the Hondo tributaries, a holding spot is any place a cutthroat trout can move from side to side to feed on aquatic insects and find sanctuary from predators, all while staying wet (not a given on these tiny creeks). If you can find such a spot and land a fly on the water, you will definitely get a hit.

I fish small creeks with a 6-foot rod. Sometimes I dangle my bug a foot below my rod tip, reaching out and lowering my fly to the creek surface, ready to set the hook. This is called dapping, and it requires an angler's willingness to crouch and crawl in the water. Another useful tool is the bow and arrow cast,



Photo by Toner Mitchell

Rio Grande Cutthroat Trout

which requires holding your fly on a tight line, bending your rod back, and releasing your fly. If executed correctly, the bow and arrow shoots the fly straight and on target.

I'm not biased against other fishing methods, but fly fishing is the best way to catch trout on small New Mexican creeks. You want a lure that drifts, if only for a few inches, as opposed to a spinner or bait that just plunks and sinks to the bottom. Your fly should be made of buoyant materials like hair or foam, since you won't have much room to dry your fly off by casting. Keep in mind that your fly doesn't need to keep

floating to remain effective. But it does need to be visible, with white wings or tags of orange, yellow, or pink in case it drops below the surface.

No joke, fish in the Hondo tributaries will eat anything they can fit in their mouth. They don't have a choice, given the short growing season between the snow times and the general shortage of food bugs floating by. And since the tribs are so difficult to fish, their cutthroats don't encounter a lot of people and are relatively forgiving.

They are, however, as beautiful as the day the mountains were born. Sometimes they can get pretty big as well.

U.S. Senators Lujan and Hoeven Co-Sponsor Bill for Agriculture and Energy Research

By DYLAN R.N. CRABB

On November 14, United States Senators Lujan, of New Mexico, and John Hoeven, of North Dakota, introduced the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) and U.S. Department of Agriculture (DOA) Interagency Research Act.

"To provide for Department of Energy and Department of Agriculture joint research and development activities, and for other purposes... in general, the Secretary of Energy and the Secretary of Agriculture (referred to in this section as the "Secretaries") shall carry out cross-cutting and collaborative research and development activities focused on the joint advancement of Department of

Energy and Department of Agriculture mission requirements and priorities."

Senators Lujan and Hoeven are both members of the U.S. Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry. According to a press release from Senator Lujan, the bill if passed will require "interagency collaboration on activities including environmental science, electric grid modernization, and rural technology development."

"New Mexico is blessed to have a thriving agriculture sector, expansive public lands, and National Labs right in our backyard. With such resources at our disposal, it's critical we capitalize on every opportunity to harness the power of our National Labs to further ground-

breaking research," said Senator Luján. "That's why I'm proud to join Senator Hoeven to introduce this bipartisan bill that will boost our public lands and agricultural industry by improving coordination with DOE and USDA. This legislation will help codify this partnership and ensure our Labs are being used to their full potential to support the USDA and the challenges facing our farmers, ranchers, and producers."

"In North Dakota, our two biggest industries are energy and agriculture, and we've found innovative ways to connect these industries and create value-added opportunities for both our agriculture and energy producers," said Senator Hoeven. "This legislation will

help strengthen the research partnership between the Department of Energy and the U.S. Department of Agriculture to expand the nexus between the two foundational industries of ag and energy."

The text of the bill emphasizes "collaborative research" in the form of "modeling and simulation, machine learning, artificial intelligence, data assimilation, large-scale data analytics, and predictive analysis" for purposes of "optimizing algorithms" to advance agricultural, biological, computational, and environmental science and engineering in "a competitive, merit-reviewed process that considers applications from

AG AND ENERGY cont'd on pg 24



BIRD IS THE WORD

By Bryce Flanagan

Piñon Jays In Peril

A new visitor is curiously inspecting the bird feeder I've just filled. A grayish-blue cloak of feathers beneath a bright indigo cap: it's not without reason they're called blue crows. It's a Piñon Jay, and he's digging past the millet filler to get to the scrumptious seeds he craves. I send a telepathic apology to him for skimping on the bird food this month, as he's come to expect black sunflower seeds and even nuts and fruit at this location. Like all the avian visitors that grace my yard, I treasure the opportunity to see him up close and personal, not behind museum glass or an LED-lit screen. I treasure this scene not only because these birds are beautiful creatures with cute, gregarious attitudes and quavering, high-pitched caws, but because I may one day live in a world where I can only see them behind a sterile screen or in a museum.

The Piñon Jay population has declined 84 percent in the last 50 years. Without protection they are on track to lose half their population by 2035. The conservation group Defenders of Wildlife recently petitioned the Fish and Wildlife Services (FWS) to protect Piñon Jays under the Endangered Species Act. The New Mexico representative of Defenders of Wildlife, Patricia Estrella, notes a "suite of factors including removal of its piñon-juniper habitat, drought, and climate change" that threaten the species.

These jays have a symbiotic relationship with piñon trees, which provide them with homes and nourishment. As they consume pine nuts, jays inadvertently plant new trees when they forget where a cache of nuts might be hidden. Retired UNM biologist Kristine Johnson recently described the seeding capabilities of Piñon Jays in an article for Undark, explaining "their esophagus expands to store up to 50 nuts, and since they're highly social, one flock can plant millions of seeds in a fall season." Piñon Jays have an exceptional memory and recover 95 percent of the seeds they store away — the remaining 5 percent become new piñon trees.

Johnson continues by noting the double-edged sword of this relationship: jays become dependent on a "mast crop," an irregular cycle where piñon trees produce an abundance of seeds. These extra seeds go into storage until the following spring when they're used to feed offspring. But under severe drought, these mast crops cannot happen, and Piñon Jays will not have adequate resources to nest and reproduce.

Piñon pine trees themselves are on the decline. A study published in August 2022 by *Global Ecology and Biogeography* found that four out of five juniper tree species are losing range in the west. In Nevada Today, University of Nevada-Reno researcher Robert Shriver explained, "The areas where the Piñon Jay tends to choose are on that border of the sagebrush and the piñon. It likes those habitats that are probably the most vulnerable." This concurs with Johnson's observations of Piñon Jay nesting habits: "...jays tend to place their nests in larger trees in areas with dense canopy cover and low levels of recent disturbance," going on to say these specific habitats are "surprisingly scarce."

Shriver noted the importance of piñon-juniper trees beyond providing habitat for jays and other animals. Their nuts are a culinary staple in Native American and Hispanic cultures, and the trees themselves play a crucial role in water retention and erosion prevention. He gives a grim forecast of what's to come if radical action is not taken to preserve these trees: "a lot of places where we saw forests, we may not see them, especially in lower elevations, because they tend to be the hottest and driest."

Shriver offers hope: "...results also suggest that for some locations, management actions could slow down or reverse the woodland declines." The loss of forestscapes is not solely due to drought. Deliberate destruction and clearing of these forests plays a large role. Bryan Bird, southwest program director for Defenders of Wildlife, told Undark that piñon-juniper woodlands "have long been maligned as having no economic value, and targeted for removal by private, state, and federal managers in favor of grasses for livestock."

Wildfire prevention is another reason given for the clearing of piñon forests, despite studies, such as one published in *The Condor*, finding that "tree reduction treatments in piñon-juniper woodlands have the potential to reduce habitat quality for a suite of bird species of conservation concern." Defenders of Wildlife and other conservation groups are challenging the implementation of the Biden administration's approach to wildfire prevention,



Fs.U.Sda.Gov

which calls for \$1.5 billion, evenly divided between prescribed burns, mechanical tree harvesting, and fuel breaks (a fuel break is a strip of land that is altered to slow down an encroaching fire, for example by replacing native grasses with invasive weeds).

Fuel breaks have been criticized for their ineffectiveness, not just by environmentalists, but by the Forest Service itself, which noted in a 1977 handbook that "a strong criticism of the fuelbreak approach to fire control is that the headlong rush of a large fire can carry it across a wide break — manned or not — under extreme conditions." Defenders of Wildlife worry that these drastic measures will be carried out without consideration of public input or environmental impact studies.

As it stands, the FWS will determine if the petition from Defenders of Wildlife has enough information to warrant a review of the Piñon Jay and its habitat, which could take months. In an email to Undark, a representative for FWS cited "little data on the effects of management on jay populations," and said, "We are exploring the effect of the removal of pines and junipers" to reduce wildfire risk in order "to determine if these contribute to short-term causes of decline."

The Piñon Jay situation is not hopeless. National Public Radio recently interviewed Corina Newsome of the National Wildlife Federation about the rebounding of wetland-based birds. When asked why waterfowl populations are growing while all other bird populations decrease, Newsome gave a simple explanation: "[it's] a result of investment in conservation targeted to help increase the population of birds like ducks [...] those birds that live in wetland environments are a clear indication that when we put our minds ... and our money to it, conservation can work for birds."

It's a concept that may take time for some bureaucrats to understand, but yes, believe it or not, putting resources into the conservation of birds conserves those birds.

If you want to help protect Piñon Jays and the forests they call their home, here are some suggestions:

Piñon jays love sunflower seeds, peanuts, cracked corn, and suet. A backyard feeder gives them a reprieve and gives you a chance to see their beauty. Piñon Jays were once in the millions, but are now in the hundreds of thousands. If we do not act, they may one day be only memories.

Consider participating in the Piñon Jay Community Science project with the Great Basin Bird Observatory. You can sign up and record sightings of Piñon Jays on the Great Basin Bird Observatory website.

Defenders of Wildlife suggests urging federal, state, and local agencies to adhere to the New Mexico Avian Conservation Partners guidelines for forest management. These guidelines include scheduling thinning around nesting Piñon Jays, buffering habitats around breeding colonies, and leaving untouched patches of piñon and juniper trees as they are. You can read the full pamphlet at AvianConservationPartners-NM.org.

Contact numbers for relevant agencies:
 U.S. Fish and Wildlife: (202) 208-5634. You can email them via their website or send mail to 1849 C St., NW Washington, DC 20240
 U.S. Forest Service: (800) 832-1355. You can also email them through their website.
 U.S. Forest Service, Southwestern Region: (505) 842-3292. Mailing address: 333 Broadway SE, Albuquerque, NM 87102 United States
 Bureau of Land Management, New Mexico: (505) 954-2000. Email: blm_nm_comments@blm.gov. Mailing address: 301 Dinosaur Trail, Santa Fe, NM 87508

BODY MIND SPIRIT



By BARBARA TRACY

Yuletide, Christmastide

Have you ever wondered why we sing of the Twelve Days of Christmas in an old and well known Christmas carol? Or the singing of “yuletide carols being sung by a choir” from another familiar Christmas song? How about “good tidings we bring” in yet another Christmas carol? Have you ever wondered why we celebrate with a

Christmas tree?

Yule, or winter solstice, is a midwinter festival usually celebrated on December 21 and the period of 12 days after, as a time of year when the sun reaches the lowest point in the sky, bringing the longest night of the year. It is a time for introspection and a cleansing of our spiritual walk through this labyrinth of life. This is a good time to reflect on the past and look to creating our future in the coming time. It is a time to celebrate the return of light and life as the days become longer, bringing rebirth from darkness to light.

Some celebrate yuletide by purging those things in life that are no longer needed, used, or even wanted. This purging creates new space to fill with new memories and new creations, while leaving the old worn out baggage of unneeded energies behind. This purging allows us to move forward into the new light with an open heart.

The celebrating traditions of yule, which began to merge into what are now today's Christmas traditions, began with the rise of Christianity in England. Nowadays yuletide and Christmastime usually refer to the same season of celebration as one and the same. And so, we can see why we have the Twelve Days of Christmas or that we sing yuletide carols or that we bring good tidings. Over time, yule celebrations during this holy time began to include decorating evergreens (perhaps our Christmas trees and Christmas wreaths), feasting (the holiday feast Christmas Eve and Christmas Day), exchanging gifts (Christmas gift-giving time) and lighting candles. Don't forget the yule log, as that too is part of the original celebration. Regardless of any religious backgrounds, winter solstice or yule, as we speak of it here, is a time when we gather with our loved ones to celebrate.

In this time of celebration, regardless of religion or belief, we as a human family have the opportunity to open our hearts and our minds and remember that we are indeed one family.

Love thy neighbor, be kind to one another, help others when we can, give from the heart, learn patience, honor others with respect. One more thing we have an opportunity to do is to look beyond the human form, look beyond those things that appear to be shortcomings in others, ignoring the differences, and look to the heart and soul and know that each of us is a precious jewel and expression of that which created us. Now is the time we have an opportunity to drop our opinion and live from the beauty of who and what we are in the real Reality. And if you have a disagreement with someone, ask yourself if you would rather be right or happy.

Wishing you all beautiful holidays and a peaceful heart.

MENTAL HEALTH MATTERS



By DAWN PROVENCHER

Helping People We Love

After writing several articles about coping with depression, I have been asked this question a few times: “How can I help my friends (or family) who suffer from depression?”

I was struck with what a loving question this is. Rather than avoiding people who may be difficult to be around, these friends wanted to be present and helpful. That is a true depth of friendship and love. As I thought about this question,

I was sadly reminded of several families I worked with over the past 40 years. Families whom, I am sure, still feel the emptiness at their holiday table after their child chose suicide during this season. These were loving families whose children suffered from depression, sometimes over years, sometimes silently. These are extreme and not-so-common outcomes, but many of us have family members and friends who find daily tasks difficult because of their feelings of sadness and helplessness.

So, what can we do? The first responsibility in this situation is this — stay in contact with your loved one and touch base with them regularly. This is so simple to do in our technological age. A quick phone call (even if you just leave a voice message), a text, a picture of beautiful scenery, a photo of a shared experience from the past, anything that says, “I am thinking of you.” A card dropped in the mail, a note left on the door with some holiday cookies — what would bring a smile to your face? Do

that. And make sure the person knows you are available if they need you.

When your friend does express their feelings, listen. Don't feel you must try to “fix” a situation. Listening is validating, especially during the busy holiday time, showing someone you are giving them the precious gift of time. Even though you won't have the answers, you can always encourage them to continue sharing and suggest professional help. Offer to go with them to their first appointment. Give them this number for New Mexico's 24/7 help-line: 1-855-NMCRISIS.

Invite them for a low-stress activity. During this time of hurried shopping, cooking, family get-togethers — which may be seen as stressful activities — an invitation to take a crisp afternoon hike, a scenic drive, or a quiet evening of dominoes or cards with some healthy snacks available may be a great respite for both of you.

Ask if the person would help you prepare something for someone in need:

a stocking for a foster child, a collection of toiletries for people without housing, a box of pantry items to take to the school counselor for a family in need. Oftentimes, looking outside of ourselves and helping others is uplifting. While offering your time, let them know it is perfectly okay to decline your offer, as they may be far more comfortable with time to themselves.

Be careful not to place any demands on what they “should” be doing. If alcohol is an issue, don't encourage participation in events where alcohol takes center stage. If they do choose to spend time alone, consider a gift of an uplifting book, some beautiful music, a puzzle, or other activity they can enjoy doing on their own.

And after they decline your offer to join you in an activity, continue to extend the invitation and STAY IN CONTACT. Being a friend is an honor and a privilege. Imagine being the flame that offers light to someone. Is there a better way to spend our time?

AG AND ENERGY cont'd from page 22

Federal agencies, National Laboratories, institutions of higher education, non-profit institutions, and other appropriate entities.”

If passed, the bill will require the U.S.

Secretaries of Energy and Agriculture to submit reports no later than two years after the date enactment to the U.S. Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources, the U.S. Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry and the U.S. House of Representatives Committee on Science, Space, and Tech-

nology and the Committee on Agriculture describing the following:

1. Interagency coordination between each federal agency involved in the research and development activities carried out under this section
2. Potential opportunities to expand the technical capabilities of the Depart-

ment of Energy and the Department of Agriculture

3. Collaborative research achievements
4. Areas of future mutually beneficial successes
5. Continuation of coordination activities between the Department of Energy and the Department of Agriculture

December is Double your Donation Month - Donate online at QuestaNews.com



LIVE LOVE LAUGH

by Ellen Wood
a.k.a. Maruška

How To Transform Your Life

At its highest expression, transformation is an inspired art, where you are in communion with something bigger; where something fresh, alive, and meaningful is being birthed through you. So many of us think we need to fix ourselves. True transformation, though, comes when we

surrender critical thoughts and are open to inspiration. You are in-spired – literally in Spirit!

The “how to” part is just permitting creativity to happen. No judgment. No criticism. Just a little prayer for empowerment works wonders for creative transformation.

Being in that living creative flow feels so good. It's often deeply meditative, and it sends ripples of joy through you. That's what happens to me when I write – but even more so, when I paint. I know it wasn't my logical mind that gifted me with a unique painting style. I'm not aware of any other artist who embeds images in the five basic shapes of sacred geometry: spiral, square, straight line, circle, and triangle. I just allowed it to happen without conscious thought and those paintings are my most successful ones.

Have you heard of “The Hero's Journey?” Author Joseph Campbell, who stud-

ied myths and stories from many cultures throughout the world, found patterns. And based on those patterns he created a model called The Hero's Journey. It includes the call to something greater, resistance, crossing thresholds, sacred helpers, tests, and the eventual return with new awareness to share. Along the journey the hero has to make choices, take risks, face fears, and cultivate character. This model shows up in almost every good hero movie and applies to both males and females.

There's a hero in each one of us, waiting for the call to adventure that invites us from an ordinary life to a life of bravery in the special world of the unknown. We are on the adventure. Our choices direct the plot. Moment to moment, we're creating our lives.

There's a pivotal moment in the hero myth where the main character sees beyond who she was, and steps into what she can be. She finds a source of power

far beyond what she thought possible. She may face even more challenges than she did before she “woke up” to her superpowers, but she has new vision and new confidence to meet those challenges.

Our life is a creation. It's our choice whether to focus on the problem or the solution — to be weighed down with self-judgment and fear, or be inspired to see and bring forth our superpowers.

P.S. I'm so glad I'm part of the Questa Creative Council. If you want to join, go to questacreative.org/join/. It's only \$10 a year to become a Friend, and other categories go on up in dollar amounts, and help even more. COME JOIN US. Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!

Ellen Wood of Questa is an award-winning author as well as an artist using the name, Maruška. The website for her books and paintings is <https://questacreative.org/ellen-wood/>. Contact Ellen at ellen@howtogrowyounger.com

Cómo transformar tu vida

En su expresión más elevada, la transformación es un arte inspirado donde te encuentras en comunión con algo más grande; donde algo fresco, vivo y significativo se gesta a través de ti. Muchos de nosotros pensamos que necesitamos cambiar, es decir, arreglarnos a nosotros mismos. Sin embargo, la verdadera transformación llega cuando decidimos evitar los pensamientos críticos y nos abrimos a la inspiración. ¡Estás inspirado— literalmente en Espíritu!

La parte sobre “cómo hacerlo” simplemente consiste en permitir que la creatividad ocurra. Sin juzgarla. Sin crítica. Una pequeña oración para el empoderamiento hace maravillas con respecto a la transformación creativa.

Encontrarse en ese flujo creativo vivo se siente muy bien, a menudo es profundamente meditativo y produce una verdadera cascada de alegría interior. Es lo que me sucede cuando escribo, pero aún más cuando pinto. Sé que no fue mi mente lógica la que me regaló un estilo de pintura único. No conozco a ningún otro artista que ponga en sus obras imágenes de las cinco formas básicas de la geometría sagrada: la espiral, el cuadrado, la línea recta, el círculo y el triángulo. Simplemente, permití que sucediera sin pensarlo conscientemente y esas pinturas han resultado ser las más exitosas.

¿Has oído hablar del Viaje del Héroe? El autor Joseph Campbell, que estudió mitos e historias de muchas culturas en todo el mundo, encontró patrones que se repetían en aquellos. Y basándose en esos patrones, creó un modelo llamado El Viaje del Héroe. Este viaje incluye el llamado a hacer algo grande, a la resistencia, a cruzar umbrales, ayudantes sagrados, pruebas y el eventual regreso con una nueva conciencia y conocimientos que compartir. A lo largo del viaje, el héroe tiene que tomar decisiones, correr riesgos, enfrentar miedos y cultivar el carácter. Este modelo aparece en casi todas las buenas películas de héroes y se aplica tanto a hombres como a mujeres.

Hay un héroe en cada uno de nosotros, esperando el llamado a la aventura que nos invita a ir de una vida ordinaria a una vida de valentía en el mundo especial de lo desconocido. Estamos en la aventura. Las decisiones que tomamos dirigen la trama. Momento a momento estamos creando nuestras vidas.

Existe un momento crucial en los mitos de los héroes donde el personaje principal ve más allá de lo que era, y entra en lo que puede ser. Encuentra una fuente de poder mucho más allá de lo que pensaba que era posible. Puede tener que enfrentarse a más desafíos de los que enfrentaba antes de “despertar” y darse cuenta de sus superpoderes, pero, a la vez, ahora tiene una nueva visión y mayor confianza para enfrentar esos desafíos.

Nuestra vida es una creación. Es nuestra decisión concentrarnos en el problema o en la solución — cargarnos con juicios negativos y miedo, o inspirarnos para ver y manifestar nuestros superpoderes.

Estoy muy contenta de ser parte del Consejo Creativo de Questa. Si quieres serlo tú también, ve a questacreative.org/join/. Solo cuesta \$10 al año para ser Amigo y para otras categorías que suben hasta \$100. ÚNETE A NOSOTROS.

Traducción de Teresa Dovalpage

Ellen Wood de Questa es una autora galardonada y también una artista que utiliza el nombre de Maruška. El sitio web de sus libros y pinturas es www.Questacreative.org/ellen-wood.

Para ponerte en contacto con Ellen escríbele a ellen@howtogrowyounger.com.

JR (Malaquias) says:

“In a world divided,



Spread the
love.....

**CHRIST'S
LOVE
UNITES.”**



Feliz Navidad!

575-586-0561 • 2460 State Road 522, Questa NM



In this month's edition of Enchanted Eats, we present some local holiday flavors. Nothing says holidays to many northern New Mexicans like a warm tamale! Unwrapping the tamale is like unwrapping a little present. Tamales are very time intensive and are often made in large batches for special occasions. And, what better way to end your holiday meal than with a biscochito? The biscochito is New Mexico's official state cookie, as declared by the New Mexico Legislature in 1989. Celebrate the holiday spirit by making the treats below with friends and family!

Pressure Cooker Red Chile Pork Tamales

Courtesy Sunny Beckley, Questa

INGREDIENTS

Meat

- 5 to 6 lbs boneless pork shoulder or butt (trimmed and cut into large chunks)
- 1 white onion cut in quarters
- 1 T cumin
- 1 T salt
- 2 t (4 cloves) minced garlic
- 1 t ground black pepper
- 1/2 t cayenne pepper
- 1 cube chicken bouillon (crushed)
- 3 bay leaves
- 4 c water

Red Chile Sauce

- 6 guajillo chiles, seeded & stemmed
- 3 ancho chilies, seeded & stemmed
- 3 pasilla chilies, seeded & stemmed
- 1 small white onion cut into quarters
- 4 garlic cloves

Masa

- 1 lb (2 c) pork lard
- 4 c pork broth (reserved)
- 1/2 c red chili sauce (reserved)
- 1 T baking powder
- 1 T salt
- 5-1/2 c Maseca Tamal Instant Corn Masa mix

INSTRUCTIONS

Prepare corn husks

1. Place one pound bag of corn husks, rinsed, submerged in hot water at least 2 hours or overnight. Drain and squeeze excess water, place in a colander before use.

Cook the meat

2. Trim the fat off and discard from the pork. Cut into large chunks.
3. Place the pork chunks into the pressure cooker along with water and seasonings (onion, cumin, salt, minced garlic, ground black pepper, cayenne pepper, and a crushed chicken bouillon cube). Add 3 bay leaves on top.
4. Close the lid on the pressure cooker and lock into place. Move the steam release handle to the "sealing" position. Pressure cook on high pressure for 90 minutes. Once down, allow the pressure to naturally release for 10 minutes, and then do a quick release by moving the steam release handle to the "venting" position.
5. Carefully open the lid after all pressure has been released. Remove the bay leaves and onion and discard.
6. Using a slotted spoon, remove pork (reserving the broth) and place in a heat-proof bowl. Shred with 2 forks. Stir in 1/2 cup of reserved pork broth and salt to taste, if needed. Cover until you're ready to assemble the tamales. (You can do this step a day or two ahead and put it into the refrigerator until ready).
7. Lay a mesh strainer on top of a heat-proof bowl. Pour the remaining (reserved) pork broth from the Instant Pot liner through the strainer and into the bowl. Cover until ready to make the masa. (Can also be stored in the refrigerator but you will need to warm it before using in the masa).

Make the Red Chili Sauce

8. Remove the stems and seeds off the guajillo, ancho and pasilla chilies. Rinse them to remove dirt and dust.
9. Pour a cup or so of reserved broth back into the pressure cooker and add chilies, onion (cut into 4 chunks), and garlic cloves.
10. Cook over medium-high heat for 15 minutes.
11. Once cooked, remove from heat and allow to cool to room temperature.
12. Using a slotted spoon, remove chilies, onion, and garlic and place in a blender along with 1/2 cup of liquid from the pot. Puree until smooth and then pour through a fine mesh strainer using the back of your spoon to push it through back into your pressure cooker.
13. Use the saute function on med-low to simmer puree for about 15 min and then add salt to taste.
14. Add 1 cup of the chili puree into the shredded pork and stir. Place remaining chili sauce and pork into the refrigerator to save for later.

Make the Masa

(Masa is easiest to spread when fresh, so try to make it right before you're ready to assemble the tamales.)

15. Add lard to the mixing bowl of a stand mixer and, using a paddle attachment, beat on speed level "4" for 5 minutes. Lard should look creamy and fluffy when done.

16. Turn mixer off and scrape the sides of the mixing bowl down with a spatula. Add pork broth, red chili sauce, baking powder, salt, and 1 cup of Maseca Tamal. Turn mixer on speed level "2" and mix until incorporated. Slowly add 4-1/2 more cups of Maseca Tamal, 1 cup at a time, until completely incorporated (scrape sides down with a spatula as needed). Masa should have the consistency of smooth peanutbutter.
17. Test to make sure the masa is ready by dropping a dollop of dough into a glass of water. If it floats, your masa is ready. If it sinks, add 1/4 cup more broth or water, mix for 2 more minutes, and then retest. Repeat until dough floats.

Assemble Tamales

18. Take one corn husk and on the wide end of the corn husk, spread a thin layer of masa (about 1/4" thick) using the back of a spoon or a small spatula.
19. Spread masa over half the length of the husk and about 1/2" away from the long edges. Add 1 to 2 tablespoons of pork in a line down the middle of the masa.
20. Trifold the long sides of the corn husk over the filling. (Fold one long side in over the meat filling and the other long side in over that.) Then, fold the corn husk in half so that both ends meet together (or close to it).
22. Repeat until desired or you run out of ingredients. (should make up to 3 dozen)

Cook Tamales

23. Add 2 cups of water to the bottom of the pressure cooker and insert the steamer basket.
24. Place tamales inside vertically with open ends pointing up. Make sure they are tight enough in there to prevent them from falling over while cooking. Close the lid and lock into place.
25. Move the steam release handle to the "sealing" position and pressure cook on high pressure for 35 minutes. Once done, allow pressure to naturally release for 10 minutes, and then do a quick release by moving the steam release handle to the "venting" position.
26. Carefully open the lid at an angle to prevent moisture from dripping inside the tamales. Allow to cool for at least 15 minutes before serving.

Biscochitos

Courtesy Angelina Vialpando, Taos

- 4 sticks softened butter (2 c)
- 1/2 c lard
- 4 eggs, room temperature
- 2 c sugar
- 3 t anise (crushed)
- 3 t pure vanilla extract
- 7-10 c flour
- 7 t baking powder
- Pinch of salt
- 1/4 c wine, orange juice, or water
- Cinnamon sugar, in shallow bowl, to coat (1 c granulated sugar to 1 T cinnamon) **Colorful round sprinkles can be used instead of cinnamon.

1. In a large bowl, mix about 8 cups flour, baking powder, and salt. Set aside.
2. In a separate large bowl, beat butter and lard until creamy and pale in color. Add sugar and mix until combined. Add egg one at a time, mixing well after each addition. Add vanilla and anise and mix well. Stir in dry ingredients, alternating with 1/4 cup liquid of choice, until dry mixture is gone (the remaining 2 cups of flour can be added if the masa is too sticky). Masa should be easily workable without sticking to your hands or the rolling pin.
3. Preheat oven to 375°. Roll out masa on a floured surface, about 1/4 inch thick. Use cookie cutters of your choice. ** If using sprinkles instead of cinnamon sugar, place on cookies before baking.
4. Bake 8-10 minutes, remove from oven, and coat entire cookie in cinnamon sugar while cookies are still very warm (use a spatula). Makes about 12-15 dozen.

Homemade Eggnog

Courtesy KRQE News Staff

- 6 large egg yolks
- 1/2 c granulated sugar
- 1 c heavy cream
- 2 c milk
- 1-1/2 t freshly grated nutmeg
- Pinch of salt
- 1/4 t vanilla extract
- rum, optional

1. In a medium bowl, whisk together the egg yolks and sugar until light and creamy.
2. In a saucepan, bring the cream, milk, nutmeg and salt to a bare simmer, stirring often. Slowly ladle in 1/2 cup or so of the hot milk to the egg mixture, whisking vigorously. Ladle in another 1/2 cup, continuing to whisk vigorously the entire time. Do this until all the hot milk has been added to the eggs and the mixture is well combined.
3. Pour the tempered egg mixture back into the saucepan of milk on the stove, whisking quickly, and cook the mixture, stirring constantly, until it reaches 160 degrees F on a thermometer.
4. Remove from the heat and stir in the vanilla and rum (if using).
5. Pour the eggnog into a bowl and cover with plastic wrap. Refrigerate until thoroughly chilled.



ESOTERIC ASTROLOGY

SKYDANCE ESOTERIC ASTROLOGY by Charlene R. Johnson
DECEMBER 2023

WINTER SOLSTICE

"Oh, time is short and the days are sweet and passion rules the arrow that flies." —Bob Dylan

December 22 is our shortest day, the day when our beautiful planet pauses, takes a breath and then swings the pendulum of the Sun back in the opposite direction. For the history of mankind this pause has been a moment of celebration, especially for the northern hemisphere. It represents the end of long dark days and the beginning of lengthening sunshine and warmth to come. The evidence of the importance of this time can be found in archaeological sites worldwide, sites where the precise moment in time when the Sun would begin its reverse path could be marked. This proves that people thousands of years ago saw a link between them and the sun. They include the Neolithic passage tomb of Newgrange in Ireland, aligned so the sun shines in for only a few minutes after sunrise on the shortest day of the year. Other examples include Stonehenge in England with its well known connection to midsummer sunrise and midwinter sunset, and Chaco Canyon in New Mexico, where the Fajada Butte Sun Dagger heralds both solstices for about 20 minutes. During summer solstice the dagger of sun splits the spiral, while during winter solstice two sun daggers frame the spiral perfectly. The Mesoamerican preoccupation with solar, lunar, and planetary cycles and conjunctions is equally well known. These are only a few of the well known prehistoric sites for marking this important time of year.

This important day, important to the survival of humanity living through long, cold winters in the north, evolved into the day of celebration we call Christmas. As our Sun, Mercury, and Vulcan shift from the sign of the spiritual journey Sagittarius, into the sign of Initiation, Capricorn, let's end our year with a note of joy, hope, and celebration.

Everyone: More blessings than challenges this month; watch for them!

ARIES ♈ Planet: Mercury ♀ MARCH 20 – APRIL 19

Dynamic: Even as the year ends, you may feel you are going backward.

Direction: It's all an illusion.

Soul Thought: What is real?

TAURUS ♉ Planet: Vulcan ♁ APRIL 19 – MAY 20

Dynamic: It might feel like a shift from solid ground to a rocketship ride, and back again.

Direction: Determine what you want to come back to.

Soul Thought: Life is a spiral.

GEMINI ♊ Planet: Venus ♀ MAY 20 – July 20

Dynamic: You may feel particularly attractive – or handsome – this month.

Direction: Use it with discretion.

Soul Thought: What is meant by "God-given gifts?"

CANCER ♋ Planet: Neptune ♆ July 20 – JULY 22

Dynamic: You're feeling clear and sharp to the end of the month.

Direction: Make decisions now; next month things may get confusing.

Soul Thought: "The more clarity you achieve, the more you will find that the Universe is on your side." —Deepak Chopra

LEO ♌ Planet: Sun ☉ JULY 22 – AUG 22

Dynamic: It's a time for gaining strength and warmth.

Direction: Physically and emotionally.

Soul Thought: When the Sun of God shall come.

VIRGO ♍ Planet: Moon ☾ AUG 22 – SEPT 22

Dynamic: As the source of your light brightens, so can you.

Direction: Go to the Source.

Soul Thought: Do you have to go anywhere?

LIBRA ♎ Planet: Uranus ♁ SEPT 22 – OCT 22

Dynamic: You still have options financially, with virtually no challenges.

Direction: You might have to adjust what you're attached to.

Soul Thought: "Attachment leads to suffering." —Buddha

SCORPIO ♏ Planet: Mars ♂ OCT 22 – NOV 21

Dynamic: It's time for an adventure!

Direction: Avoid sharp pointy things, otherwise nothing holding you back.

Soul Thought: Sharp pointy things may, however, point the way.see.

SAGITTARIUS ♐ Planet: Earth ☉ NOV 21 – DEC 20

Dynamic: You may feel a shift from gabbliness to listening more.

Direction: It's also called caring more.

Soul Thought: Caregiving with words also works.

CAPRICORN ♑ Planet: Saturn ♄ DEC 20 – JAN 19

Dynamic: It's a good time for reflecting upon your belief systems.

Direction: Heavy burdens can be lightened with such pondering.

Soul Thought: "Religion is for people who are afraid of going to hell."

AQUARIUS ♒ Planet: Jupiter ♃ JAN 19 – FEB 18

Dynamic: Are you stuttering over something you need to say?

Direction: Review from both sides, inside and out.

Soul Thought: Some part of you knows.

PISCES ♓ Planet: Pluto ♇ FEB 18 – MAR 20

Dynamic: You may feel you are being punished.

Direction: If you are between a rock and a hard place, sit on the rock.

Soul Thought: It's the Law of Compassion, not punishment.



BY J. ORTEGA

Pain Hustlers

Starring: Emily Blunt, Chris Evans, Catherine Ohara, Chloe Coleman, and Andy Garcia

Directed by: David Yates

Rated R

Streaming on Netflix

First Impression: "Pain Hustlers" is a brash and disturbing look inside the pharmaceutical world, where we see a "based on a true story" scandal, and we see the opioid crisis in America unfold. The movie wants us to take it seriously, but it ends up being a shallow wannabe "Wolf of Wall Street" rip-off in its execution, where greed takes center stage and everyday Americans pay for it with their health and ultimately their lives.

When I first started watching the trailer for "Pain Hustlers," it looked pretty interesting. What really got my attention was that in the first 15 seconds we see a down-on-her-luck woman named Liza (Emily Blunt) repeat her own personal creed: "I will not give up on myself, I will not give up on my dreams, I will make my life count." Initially this sounds great and inspiring, and we want to root for her as a can-do American who's willing to pick herself up by her bootstraps and make the American dream of becoming rich and successful for herself and her daughter a reality.

What we see unfold, however, is a disgusting display of unadulterated greed and grift where low level scumbags are able to influence and buy off medical doctors to prescribe their powerful and highly addictive pain relief drug, fentanyl. This is a drug that has plagued our nation with overdose deaths and painful addiction and that has created thousands of broken homes. Keep in mind this is a Hollywood story, where facts and fiction of what really happened get sliced up and distorted for "dramatic purposes" but it makes one want to investigate the true story to give some greater context to this mess of a film.

The film was inspired by a 2018 New York Times article written by Evan Hughes, who then made it into a nonfiction book entitled "Pain Hustlers." The film ended up being strikingly close to the article in the way we see the rise of startup pharmaceutical companies who marketed fentanyl spray to cancer patients for pain management.

Andy Garcia plays the pharmaceutical company CEO (in real life a doctor named John Kapoor, who inspired the character). He turns out to be quite similar in his behavior: erratic, paranoid, and with an insatiable appetite for increasing profits every quarter.

Kapoor demanded that his sales reps push the opioid spray for all sorts of pain ailments, not solely those caused by cancer. This in turn led to many patients becoming addicted. Once doctors started cutting patients off, it was too late, as many were either overdosing what medicine they had left or were switching to a cheaper alternative, like heroin.

This added context only makes me angrier in how the film treats the subject matter. The director wanted to go for a stylized take on how fast and rich the pharmaceutical reps were living, as opposed to the unsuspecting patients who ended up suffering the terrible fate of addiction.

We see Emily Blunt's character go from living in a motel with her daughter to living in one of the finest penthouses in Miami almost overnight, by peddling these drugs to doctors who had no sense of ethics or morals. Ultimately, her conscience got the best of her, leading her to turn their operation in to federal agents.

In the end, the characters responsible for the drug epidemic got what was coming to them — being sentenced to federal prison — but don't be surprised at how lenient their punishment was... it will just get you more upset and bewildered.

Final Verdict 3 out of 5 Stars



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.

OBITUARIES



Robbie Gallegos
d. October 14, 2023

Robbie Gallegos, age 42, a resident of Taos, passed away unexpectedly and gained his angel wings on October 14, 2023.

He was preceded in death by his great-grandparents Gil B. and Clorinda Gallegos; uncles Johnny and Dennis Gallegos; great-grandmother Eutilla Padilla; grandmother Tanny Quintana; and stepbrother Anthony Padilla Hutt.

Robbie was a kind and loving man who lived life to its fullest. Even though communication was very difficult, he found ways to express his love and compassion.

He loved to eat, travel, and spend time with his friends. Robbie especially enjoyed golf, bowling, his computer, and watching TV. He loved his entire family dearly and will be deeply missed by everyone.

Robbie is survived by his parents, Jeff and Connie Padilla; stepsister Estrella Padilla; grandparents Gil and Margaret Gallegos; godmother Anita Hutt; uncle and aunts Wilfred and Melinda Garcia, and Brenda Struck; nieces Kendrah and Laylah Gomez; good friend Mikey Gurule; plus many other loving relatives and cherished friends.

Public visitation was held Monday October 23, 2023 at DeVargas Funeral Home of Taos. Rosary was recited on Wednesday October 25, at the same location, and funeral mass was held Thursday October 26, at Our Lady of Guadalupe Catholic Church in Cerro, with burial following at the Cerro Cemetery.



Nora Rael-Galvez
d. November 10, 2023

Nora Rael-Galvez was born on January 6, 1927, in Questa, NM and named Nora Estella. Her first name is derived from the Arabic word Noour, meaning "bright light" and describing great beauty and wisdom; and, Estella is Latin for the word star. On November 10, 2023, her light on earth dimmed, but that same day she rose into the sky and became a brilliant star and an ancestor.

Nora was born to José A. Rael and Andrellita Mandonado and was woven from a beautifully

complex ancestry. Her parents preceded her in death, along with all of her siblings (Clarence, Eli, Honorio, Corina, and Selimo). Taken too soon, her son David passed in 2005 and her grandson Jonathan in 2022.

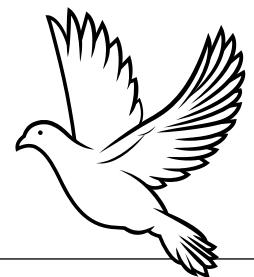
She is survived by her husband of 60 years, Erineo Eric Gálvez, whom she met when she was looking for bolita beans and found them, and love, in him. She lives on in her son, Estevan Rael-Gálvez, who along with his partner, son-in-law, Juan R. Ríos, cared for Nora lovingly for the past several years. She is also survived by daughter-in-law, Michelle Gálvez, and grandchildren William and Hope (partner, Corey), and great grandchildren Emiliano and Aliyana. She leaves behind many beloved nephews, nieces, and generations of students who loved her.

While family was core, education was a thread that also defined her life. She graduated

from Questa Elementary in 1941 and Loretto Academy in Santa Fe in 1945. She began attending Highlands University in 1946, but was hired that year, at the age of 21, as an elementary school teacher in Questa. She eventually earned her bachelor's degree in 1956 from the College of St. Joseph. She loved teaching, which she did for decades in her home villages, instilling basic skills, core values, and encouraging generations of students to recognize their own potential.

A beautiful light, Nora was elegant, intelligent, and beautiful, and will always be loved and forever missed.

Memorial services will be held in spring of 2024.



The Community Fridge

Food insecurity is a problem around the world. In the United States alone, nearly 20 million people live in food deserts, areas without access to nutritious foods. And more than 54 million have daily food uncertainty.

But there's a growing movement to change that statistic through the power of generosity and refrigerators..

Community Fridges is a food sharing initiative that began in Europe in the early 2000s and has since jumped the pond to the U.S.

These colorfully painted coolers offer

fresh produce and home-cooked meals to anyone who needs them — no questions asked.

The food is there for the taking, often along with bottled water, evercanned goods, personal hygiene items, and even medical supplies.

Volunteers maintain and stock the fridges with donations from individuals and local businesses. Even large food chains like Trader Joe's are donating.

Everyone deserves to eat.

And as the community fridges movement grows, it not only feeds those who are hungry, it feeds the communities at their core.

From the local artists who paint the fridges to the members who maintain them and those who are served by them, we are reminded of just how much we are all in this together.

This story brought to you by Arroyo Seco Live.

"Building community through creativity.

[SecoLive.org](https://secolive.org)

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Seasons Greetings

From our family to yours we wish you a Happy Holiday Season!

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HAPPY HOLIDAYS

CARQUEST QUESTA

From our family to yours we wish you a wonderful Holiday Season!!

2420 St. Hwy 522 • Questa, NM 87556
575.586.0419



WE HAVE SOME EXCITING NEWS TO SHARE WITH EVERYONE!!

With all the amazing support and business that we've had, J&L Powersports has once again outgrown our current location in Red River.

We are moving to a bigger location and will reopen **December 1st** in Questa. The NEW ADDRESS: **2627 HWY 522 QUESTA, NM 87556.**

J&L POWERSPORTS WILL BE CLOSED FOR THE MONTH OF NOVEMBER TO MOVE!!

575.586.2417
SHOP

We would like to thank everyone for your business and for your continued support!! We could NOT do this without you guys!!



ATV DIRT BIKE SIDE X SIDE SNOWMOBILE

"EVERYTHING OFF-ROAD DONE RIGHT"



Cheers, Questa!

This holiday season, we're toasting Questa's incredible citizens.

In 2023, Questa locals led more than 30 community projects with more than \$180,000 in support from LOR. Those local champions were school teachers, business owners, first responders, farmers, students, seniors, and more. They're the folks you see in the grocery store, at soccer games, in church, at the park—and next year, YOU could be a champion, too! If you or your community group have an idea to enhance life in Questa, contact Maria Gonzalez at maria@lorfoundation.org. With no deadlines or formal application, we make it easy to say YES to making Questa even better.



Scan the code to see 2023 solutions from Questa!

COMMUNITY CALENDAR • DECEMBER 2023

HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO EVERYONE BORN IN DECEMBER!

DECEMBER 1: FRI 1 PM
3D Print a personal 3D holiday ornament. Bring your ideas and learn how it is done! All ages welcome. Mike Barbee will be here to help us! At Questa Public Library, 6-1/2 Municipal Park Rd. Call (575) 586-2023

DECEMBER 2: SAT 1 - 3 PM
Kids Holiday Party: Winter Stories. Puppet show, story telling, snacks and crafts. Free at Yoga Sala, 2331 NM-522, in Questa. Info: yogasalaquesta.org

4:30 - 8:30 PM
Open House Community Celebration by Questa Creative Council at Yoga Sala, in Questa, 2331 Highway 522. It's a time to thank our amazing artists and participants of our events and projects. Join us for free food, drink, music from local favorites Chris and Rodney Arellano, and Mark and Justin of the High Desert Acoustic Duo. Raffle with prizes. Info: (575) 586-5658

DECEMBER 3: SUN 1:30 - 3:30 PM
Dance like Nobody's looking, women's dance, at Yoga Sala, 2331 NM-522, in Questa. Donations welcome! Info: yogasalaquesta.org

NOON
Christmas luncheon and silent auction at Sagebrush Inn, Taos. Tickets are \$40 for TCHS members, and \$45 for non-members. To purchase tickets, email Donovan Lieurance at tchsmembership750@gmail.com or call Ernestina Córdova at (575) 770-0681. For information call Michael Wilson (612) 743-6546.

DECEMBER 4: MON 6 PM
Questa Economic Development Fund board meeting at the Questa Visitor Center, 1 NM-Hwy 38; also via Zoom. For the agenda, Zoom link, or more information, email lynn@questaedf.com or leave a message at (575) 586-2149.

DECEMBER 6: WED 6 PM
Questa Independent School Board Meeting, QSID Board Room, 2256 Wildcat Rd. # A. Info: (575) 586-0421

DECEMBER 7: THUR
Happy Hanukkah!

DECEMBER 8: FRI 10 AM - NOON
Food for All at North Central NM Food Pantry, 140 Embargo Rd., Questa. For more info: questafoodpantry.org or call (575) 586-0486 or (575) 779-9194

4 - 9 PM
Festival of Trees fundraiser in Taos at Bataan Hall in Taos 121 Civic Plaza Drive. Hosted by the Taos Milagro Rotary Club. Featuring 26 trees decorated by sponsors and businesses, wreaths, and donor gift items in a silent auction. Funds raised benefit the community through the literacy program, scholarship program, and community grants.

DECEMBER 9: SAT 10 AM - 4 PM
Alumbra de Questa Christmas Market at VFW Building, 2597 HWY 522. Vendors, music and food. Live Nativity Scene. More information at <https://questacreative.org/alumbra-holiday-fair/> or call Sierra (575) 586-5658

5:30 PM
Light Parade Followed by Tree Lighting, Nativity Scene, Hot Cocoa, Cookies, Caroling and Holiday Cheer at Peroviche Park at the main light in Questa. (Line up at 4:30) Info: Valerie Vigil vvigil@villageofquesta.org or (575) 741-5334

DECEMBER 12: TUE 6 PM
Village of Questa Town Council Meeting at Village Town Hall, 2500 Old State Rd 3. For agenda: questa-nm.com/village-council-meeting-agenda, or call (575) 586-0694

1 PM
Come make an ornament, holiday cards, and other decorations with us. All supplies provided. Redeem your coupon from Questa Creative Council to receive your art gift. At Questa Public Library 6-1/2 Municipal Park Rd. Call (575) 586-2023.

DECEMBER 16: SAT 4 - 7 PM
Santa's Helpers del Norte is hosting their annual Christmas event to bring joy to the kids of northern Taos County. Age-appropriate educational toys will be handed out by Santa to children at the residences of Ralph and Lisa Rael and Jacqui and Isaiiah Ortega, at 179/179-A North Kiowa Road in Questa. The event is free and open to the public.

DECEMBER 17: SUN 1 - 3 PM
Drum Class at Yoga Sala, 2331 NM-522, in Questa with teacher Vanessa Morgan. Sliding scale \$15-25. More info: yogasalaquesta.org

4 - 7:30 PM
FREE Holiday Dinner Hosted by Vida del Norte Active8 Youth Coalition. Open to the community, please join us at the Questa VFW. Info: (575) 779-2260

DECEMBER 18 - 21: MON - THUR NOON - 5 PM
Pick up free Art Kits for Kids! Sponsored by the Questa Creative Council, at the Questa Public Library, 6 1/2 Municipal Park Road. For more information call (575) 586-2023

DECEMBER 18: MON 6 PM
La Gente y Mas Community Watch 62 Highway 38 across from Granite at Vida del Norte Coalition Building

DECEMBER 18: MON 3 PM
LOS PASTORES: A centuries-old Spanish-language play about the shepherds who journeyed to find Mary, Joseph, and the Niño Jesús See Los Pastores at Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe church in Taos, 205 Don Fernando Street, on Sunday, Dec. 18 at 3 p.m. youtube.com/watch?v=SEF4g3HJxJc. For more information, call Dr. Kathryn Córdova at 575 758 4920.

DECEMBER 19: TUES 5:30 PM
Kids Ballet performance and party at Yoga Sala, 2331 NM-522, in Questa. Free. Info: yogasalaquesta.org

DECEMBER 20: WED 6 PM
Questa Independent School Board Meeting, QSID Board Room, 2256 Wildcat Rd. # A. Info: (575) 586-0421

DECEMBER 21: THUR NOON - 4 PM
In-person, one-on-one, business advising in Questa at the Questa Visitor Center with Anwar Kaelin, Director of the Small Business Development Center at UNM-Taos. FREE and CONFIDENTIAL for anyone in any stage of business, anyone with a great idea. Make an appointment by visiting: calendly.com/sbdctaos

5 PM
Cerro VFW Post #9516 Monthly Meeting at 108 NM Highway 378 in Cerro. litameadphoto@gmail.com. Call to confirm meeting schedule (575) 586-2352

DECEMBER 22: FRI 10 AM - NOON
Food for All at North Central NM Food Pantry, 140 Embargo Rd., Questa. For more info: questafoodpantry.org or call (575) 586-0486 or (575) 779-9194

DECEMBER 25: MON
Merry Christmas!

DECEMBER 26: TUE
Kwanzaa begins

6 PM
Village of Questa Town Council Meeting at Village Town Hall, 2500 Old State Rd 3. For agenda: questa-nm.com/village-council-meeting-agenda, or call (575) 586-0694

DECEMBER 31: SUN
New Year's Eve

WEEKLY

SUNDAYS

Area Church Directory is on page 31, please call to confirm service times.

MONDAYS

Transportation for Qualified Seniors by donation, Questa Senior Center, 148 Embargo Rd. Call for more info and to make an appointment (575) 586-0508 Not available on Christmas day.

5 PM
Free Community Yoga, gentle practice with Rae in person only, free Classes at Yoga Sala, 2331 NM-522, in Questa. More info: yogasalaquesta.org except December 25

7 PM
Kickboxing, with Reto in person only, sliding scale \$5-15 Classes at Yoga Sala, 2331 NM-522, in Questa. More info: yogasalaquesta.org except December 25

TUESDAYS

Transportation for Qualified Seniors by donation, Questa Senior Center, 148 Embargo Rd. Call for more info and to make an appointment (575) 586-0508

4:30 - 5:30 PM
Free Kids Ballet with Miss Tuesday, in person only Classes at Yoga Sala, 2331 NM-522, in Questa. More info: yogasalaquesta.org except December 26

5:45 - 7:00 PM
Kundalini Yoga, Meditation & Gong, with Jiwanshakti in person only, sliding scale \$10-20 Classes at Yoga Sala, 2331 NM-522, in Questa. More info: yogasalaquesta.org

7 - 10 PM
Red River Trivia Night, at Red River Brewing Company. Free to play, prizes for answering bonus questions and for the top teams at the end of the night. Teams limited to 6 players. For more info call (575) 754-4422

WEDNESDAYS

Transportation for Qualified Seniors by donation, Questa Senior Center, 148 Embargo Rd. Call for more info and to make an appointment (575) 586-0508

9 AM
Gentle Morning Yoga, with Gaea, in person and online, \$8 Classes at Yoga Sala, 2331 NM-522, in Questa. More info: yogasalaquesta.org not on 20th or 27th

10 AM - 2 PM
Repurposing Plastic Project: Come smash plastic and make wire walls! At the old "Movies at Home" building opposite Questa Supermarket on Hwy 522. Call or text (575) 224-7386

1:30 - 2:30 PM
Wildcat Kitty Club at the Questa Public Library, for ages 0-3. Older siblings and guests are welcome. Stories, songs, and play. 6-1/2 Municipal Park Rd. Call (575) 586-2023

7 PM
Kickboxing, with Reto in person only, sliding scale \$5-15 Classes at Yoga Sala, 2331 NM-522, in Questa. More info: yogasalaquesta.org

THURSDAYS

Transportation for Qualified Seniors by donation, Questa Senior Center, 148 Embargo Rd, Questa. Call for more info and to make an appointment (575) 586-0508

2:30 - 4:30 PM
Dropped Stitch meets at the Questa Public Library, 6 1/2 Municipal Park Rd. We knit, crochet, laugh, teach and learn. Bring your projects. All skill levels welcome. Info: (575) 586-2023

5 - 9 PM
Ceramic Cafe, come play with clay! Questa Youth & Family Center at 7 Questa Park Road. More info at QuestaCreativeCouncil.org or call (575) 586-5658. (not on Christmas week)

6 PM
Thursday Night Jam Session at Rael's Market & Coffee House; bring your instrument to jam or just bring yourself and enjoy. Free! 2430 NM-Hwy 522, Questa. Info: (575) 779-9249

FRIDAYS

10 AM - 2 PM
Repurposing Plastic Project: Come smash plastic and make wire walls! At the old "Movies at Home" building opposite Questa Supermarket on Hwy 522. Call or text (575) 224-7386

6 - 8 PM
Live Music every other Friday (December 8 and 22) with Chris Arellano and family and friends, 101 Bar & Grill (formerly The Crazy Beaver), 101 County Rd 13.2, Garcia, CO 81152. Please call to confirm at (719) 672-9022

SATURDAYS

8:30 - 9:50 AM
Contemporary Dance for Adults. For beginners with Monica, in person only, sliding scale \$5-15 Classes at Yoga Sala, 2331 NM-522, in Questa, More info: yogasalaquesta.org except December 23 and 30

10:30 AM
Free Community Tai Chi with Reto, in person only Classes at Yoga Sala, 2331 NM-522, in Questa, More info: yogasalaquesta.org

7 PM
Torchlight Parade and Fireworks at the Lighthouse in Red River.



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PLEASE NOTE:
IN NOVEMBER AND DECEMBER
FOOD DISTRIBUTION WILL BE THE
SECOND AND THIRD
FRIDAYS.

140 Embargo Rd., Questa. For more info: www.questafoodpantry.org or call (575) 586-0486 or (575) 779-9194

CLASSIFIEDS

HELP WANTED

Charles A. Martinez Bus Service LLC (formally Martinez Buses) now hiring Route & Activity Drivers. Drivers must have a Class B CDL with PS endorsement. Positions available now. For more information contact Charlie at (575) 779-5665

Independent Living Skills Worker-Heartland PCA- Red River, NM- The Independent Living Skills (ILS) Worker performs services that develop, maintain and improve the community-living skills of a person. The goal is to increase personal independence through the teaching of skills, so tasks and activities may be performed with decreased dependence on caregivers in the future. The ILS worker operates within the guidelines of a plan of care established by the client and supervising Qualified Professional. To apply, visit www.heartlandpca.com/join-our-team/

NOTICES

Questa Senior Center lunches. Lunches are no longer served to-go. Lunch is served from noon to 1 p.m. and the recommended donation is upward of \$1.50 each. 148 Embargo Rd, Questa. Call (575) 586-0508 for more information.

Happy Holidays from our family at the Questa del Rio News! Wishing all the very best season.

Red River Trivia Nights: The Red River Brewing Company will be hosting Trivia Nights on Tuesdays from 7 - 10 p.m. It is free to play and the Brewery will be giving away prizes for the top teams at the end of the night, and for answering bonus questions. Gather your smartest friends and come on down. Teams are limited to 6 players.

Free Cat Spay/Neuter Vouchers for Lower-Income Households Zimmer Feline Foundation, (505) 466-1676 or email TheLoveofCats@comcast.net

San Luis Valley Spay and Neuter Alliance offers low cost spay and neuter services in Monte Vista, CO. Surgeries include rabies and distemper vaccines. Microchips, Bordetella vaccines, dewormer, nail trims, and matt removal are available at additional cost. Book appointment at slvspayneuter.org or call us at (719) 657-7076. slvspayneuter@gmail.com

Free Transportation for Qualified Seniors Monday through Thursday. Donations are encouraged. Questa Senior Center, 148 Embargo Rd, Questa. Call (575) 586-0508 for more information.

Repurposing Plastic Project: Wednesdays & Fridays 10 a.m. - 2 p.m. Come smash plastic and make wire walls! Meet the team, work your body, lift your spirit, and help the planet! At the RPP World Headquarters, the old "Movies at Home" building opposite Questa Supermarket on Hwy 522. For more info, call or text (575) 224-7386.

North Central New Mexico Food Pantry: During December only, food pick up is on the First and Third Fridays, 10 a.m. - NOON. 140 Embargo Rd. in Questa. If you need an emergency food box or other information, please call: Jeannie Masters (575) 586-0486 or (575) 779-9194, or Nancy Parker (575) 586-2096 or (505) 699-7563. To make a donation, go to ncfpquesta.com or mail to: North Central Food Pantry, PO Box 1076, Questa, NM 87556. For more information, please email wrmesquire2@gmail.com. If you would like to volunteer, please call Jeannie (numbers above).

Questa One-on-One In-Person Business Counseling with Anwar Kaelin, Director of the Small Business Development Center at UNM-Taos. FREE and CONFIDENTIAL offered on the third Thursday of every month, 1 - 4 p.m., at the Questa Visitor Center. Business owners, independent contractors, and entrepreneurs in the Questa area can receive free one-on-one business consulting and support in planning, marketing, regulatory compliance, technology development, accessing capital, international trade, and more. Also offered via Zoom on the same day 2- 3 p.m.: <https://zoom.us/j/5757376219>. Join by phone: (346) 248-7799 with ID (575) 737-6219. For an appointment, or more information, contact Anwar at anwar@unm.edu



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Amalia - Santo Niño - 1st & 3rd Saturdays 4 p.m.

FREEDOM CENTER CHURCH
(previously Harvest Questa)
Pastors Kristi & Johnny Gonzales
2558 Hwy 522, Questa
Sunday Service 11 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.
(575) 770-1714
Visit us online: freedomquesta.com

LIVING WORD MINISTRIES
Pastors Peter and Gayle Martinez
12 Llano Road, Questa
Service: Sunday 10:30 a.m.
Nursery and Kids' Church at 10:30 a.m.
Wednesday Bible Study 7 p.m.
www.lwmsite.com
(575) 586-1587

PATH OF LOVE
Sunday 7:30 a.m. class and meditation in-person north of Questa or on Zoom. For more info: (575) 770-1682 or gabrielle.herbertson@gmail.com

THEOSOPHY
Northern New Mexico Alice Bailey Study Group.
Sunday and Wednesday 10 a.m. - NOON on Zoom.
For more info, contact Francis at oeahoo17@gmail.com

QUESTA CHURCH OF CHRIST
2 miles north of Questa on State Road 522
Sunday Bible Class Sunday 9:30 a.m.
followed by worship at 10:15 a.m.

KAGYU MILA GURU SANGHA
Tibetan Buddhism
Monday 11 a.m. Green Tara. Friday 1 pm Chenrezig both in-person and on Zoom. For more info www.earthjourney.org or contact Gabrielle at info@earthjourney.org or (575) 770-1682

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Pastors: Lorenzo & Arleen Lucero
(575) 770-5716

RED RIVER

FAITH MOUNTAIN FELLOWSHIP
Corner of River Street and Copper King Trail
Sunday 10:30 a.m.
First Baptist Church of Red River
103 High Cost Trail
Sundays 8:15 a.m. and 10:30 a.m.
Pastor Joe Phillips (575) 754-2882

ST. EDWIN'S CATHOLIC CHURCH
North end of Silver Bell Trail, Red River
Saturday 6 p.m. (Confession prior to Mass or by appt.) Father Andrew Ifele (575) 586-0470



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Questa Youth Center

RED RIVER:
Tuesdays 7- 8 p.m.
417 E. High St.
(Erik's Workshop)



Zed by *duane m. abel*

www.corkeycomics.com

BUSINESS DIRECTORY


Art Kits for Kids!
Donate \$\$ by Dec. 10 at questacreative.org
 QUESTA CREATIVE COUNCIL  **Happy Holidays!**

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