

FEBRUARY 2024

Questa del Rio News

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

IN THIS ISSUE



BUSINESS

Commitment To Serve Transcends 75 Years and Four Generations
Page 4

LOCAL GOVERNMENT & POLITICS

Text Notifications for Questa Residents
Page 7

Gun Regulations Survey
Page 8

SPORTS & EDUCATION

NM Vistas Scores Released
Page 10

Years of Service and Outstanding Youth
Page 14

Questa Wildcats Sports Recaps
Page 11

COMMUNITY NEWS

Area-Wide Acequia Association Being Formed
Page 7

Big Changes In Red River
Page 7

Esteemed and Loved Leader George Woerndle Dies
Page 20

Questa Blood Drive
Page 29

OBITUARIES

Helen Elena Cisneros
Yvonne Maes
Aida Isabel Trujillo
George Woerndle
Page 28

Multimillion Dollar Bill to Fix Acequias Heads to Legislature



Photo Courtesy New Mexico Acequia Association

By MIKAYLA ORTEGA

New Mexico's water systems can be traced back as far as AD 800. Ancestral Pueblos utilized the water that flowed from major rivers and tributaries—this is how they created agricultural opportunities for their communities. When the Spaniards arrived in the 1540s, they brought with them irrigation practices and governance used in Spain.

While Native American people are credited for creating the system, the Spanish settlers brought in the written documentation, forming the governance of water law over acequia systems to create an equitable and functioning process, so that all would benefit. This practice is still in place to this day, however, over the past several hundred years, the acequia systems have seen little improvements or investments in its critical infrastructure, which poses a threat to the way of life for people in the small communities of northern New Mexico.

Over the past several weeks, Senator Bobby Gonzales has been working with Norteños in northern New Mexico to identify critical projects which could use funding to improve their viability. A bill is being proposed in the upcoming legislature, which requests funding to repair and improve centuries-old water systems. Overall, an unprecedented \$12.7 million is being requested to fix 16 projects between 2025 and 2028.

Community leader and generational rancher Juan Cisneros spoke with *Questa del Rio News* about the bill and how it could impact and change lives in northern New Mexico. "I am the sixth generation farmer in my family. I grew up on the ranch learning lessons and providing food for my family. I can still remember my grandpa working before the sun came up and coming home after the sun went down. He never had a watch... he kept at it until the work was done."

Cisneros says this bill could change the agriculture landscape in northern

New Mexico as we know it. "The acequia systems have not been able to keep up with the major repairs needed to ensure the water is utilized at its full capacity. This has resulted in a lot of wasted water leaking out from various areas, so people who are toward the end of the acequia won't get water at all. These improvements could change things like that."

The improvements proposed in the bill are asking to effectively fix many of the structural issues, which negatively affect field yields and production. These fixes could ensure that ranchers and farmers will continue to produce hay to feed their animals and food to feed their families. "Ranching has taught us that no matter what, regardless of the setbacks and struggles, you remain grateful for the lessons. This bill could help reduce the number of setbacks for people, while ensuring our traditional way of life can be maintained.

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EL FONDO PARA EL DESARROLLO ECONÓMICO DE QUESTA

MIKAYLA ORTEGA Editor/ Jefe de Redacción editor@questanews.com

LYNN SKALL Business Manager/Gerente de negocios

JESSICA TRUJILLO Assistant Editor/Editor asistente

MARTHA SHEPP Copy Editor/Editor de copia

DINA COLEMAN Sales Associate/Asociada de ventas
sales-1@questanews.com

JEREMY ORTEGA Sales Associate/Asociada de ventas
sales-2@questanews.com

EMILY WILDE Graphic Design & Pagination/Diseño gráfico y paginación

DYLAN R. N. CRABB Reporter/Reportero

TERESA DOVALPAGE Translator/Traductora

Columnists/Columnistas:
Monthly Features/Presentaciones Mensuales:

DUANE ABEL

BRYCE FLANAGAN

MARTA GLOVER

JAY BOUCHARD

CHARLENE R. JOHNSON

CLAIRE CATLETT

SHARON NICHOLSON

J. ORTEGA

DAWN PROVENCHER

MANDY STAPLEFORD

BARBARA TRACY

JOHN WALSH

MICHAEL WILSON

ELLEN WOOD

CHUCK KROON Distribution Manager/Gerente de distribución
chkroon@gmail.com (575) 586-2360

MICHAEL BARBEE Calendar Coordinator/Coordinadora de calendario
events@questanews.com

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MIKAYLA ORTEGA

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JESSICA TRUJILLO

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Questa del Rio News

PO Box 1072

1 Highway 38

Questa, NM 87556

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

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

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(575) 586-2258

The Governor's Strategic Water Supply Proposal

By contributing writer
MALAQUIAS RAEI

As chairman of the Questa Economic Development Fund (QEDF), I read the Governor's Strategic Water Supply announcement (<https://www.governor.state.nm.us/2023/12/05/>) and was struck by its boldness and vision. Increasingly constrained freshwater resources are one of the great challenges faced by our great state. Most notably, this effort will turn our growing oil and gas industry into an asset for transitioning New Mexico into a net-zero carbon economy.

I see immediate benefits to the Village of Questa and Taos County if the 3 acre-feet of water treated daily by the treatment plant at the former Questa Mine could be included in this effort.

1. Treated water could be provided to a renewable energy producer or a manufacturer newly recruited to our community. Questa already has a business park and land which can easily house such operations.
2. Local green hydrogen production could fuel heavy haul trucks on the Questa site remediation. It also could make Kit Carson Electric Cooperative's electricity production 100 percent renewable.
3. The project could include built-in revenue streams for the Village of Questa, the QEDF, and our local acequias.
4. High-skilled jobs would be created for Taos County and neighboring areas.

5. Increased GRT for the Village of Questa and Taos County.
6. The Questa Mine Superfund Site would be converted from an environmental liability into an environmental asset by supporting New Mexico's energy transition.
7. Most importantly, by enabling the use of brackish water in the central and southern parts of the state, there will be fewer demands on our ground and surface freshwater resources in the north. This will reduce efforts to permanently remove water from our community.

Given the crucial role the private sector will play, the QEDF stands ready to work with project developers and operators, whether they be Chevron, WSP (the current water treatment plant operator), KCEC, Avangrid, or those not yet operating in New Mexico.

Additionally, as the QEDF continues to work with the Office of the State Engineer, Chevron, and the Village of Questa for resolution of the outstanding water rights issue, we see the Governor's Strategic Water Supply push as a complementary effort and perhaps even part of the solution.

Thank you, Governor Lujan Grisham for your leadership and vision. I fully support this legislative effort and look forward to working with you on its implementation.

Malaquias Rael is Chairman of the Questa Economic Development Fund, a local business owner, and a former Mayor of the Village of Questa.

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

ZACH BEHRENS, JAY BOUCHARD, CASSANDRA CARDENAS, MARIA CINTAS, JUAN CISNEROS, ARTHUR GALLEGOS, LOUISE GALLEGOS, MARIA AND JASON GONZALEZ, AEDON HANNON, LOUIS HERRERA, BETSY IRWIN, NASH JONES, RACHEL KUC, CRYSTAL LOPEZ, DANIELLE LOVATO, SHERA MAHER, C.W. MARTIN, KARI MARTINEZ, SARA MARTINEZ, TONER MITCHELL, KUNM NEWS, FELIZ ORTEGA, J. ORTEGA, MALAQUIAS RAEI, MARIANA ORTEGA, MARCUS RAEI, MELLIE RODRIGUEZ, JOHN WALSH, MICHAEL WILSON, GHOST WRITER MIGUEL

MILION DOLLAR BILL cont'd from page 1

This bill could save us,” Cisneros says.

Louis Herrera, President of the Llano Ditch Association, shares the same sentiment, saying, “Senator Gonzales understands the importance of water that irrigates our farmlands in Northern New Mexico. With such a precious resource, the need to update critical infrastructure required to accurately measure and channel water to various irrigation associations is greatly appreciated as so many are in desperate need of improvement. This bill will have a lasting impact on our communities, our culture, and the future farmers and ranchers of our community, as we preserve our way of living in northern New Mexico.”

Chistian Isely, Chevron State Government Affairs Representative provided a statement which reads, “Chevron is very pleased to be supporting Senator

Bobby Gonzales’ water infrastructure bill for the benefit of the Village of Questa, domestic water providers, and acequias. If passed, this bill will be a game-changer for communities throughout Taos County by enabling more efficient water usage, improving water system reliability, and supporting our acequia-based farmers.”

A list of the bill’s proposal includes:

- \$1 million to plan, design, improve and construct a wastewater treatment facility and water system for the Village of Questa
- \$1 million to plan, design, improve and construct a wastewater treatment facility and water system for Taos County
- \$380,000 to plan, design, and construct improvements, including a diversion dam, for the Questa Citizen’s middle ditch
- \$1.2 million to plan, design, construct, repair the Llano Irrigation Company (Llano Ditch), including diversion

- structures, including Cabresto Lake
- \$30,000 to plan, design and construct improvements, including a diversion dam, for the Jose Cleofes Arellano Acequia Association in Amalia
- \$275,000 to plan, design and construct improvements, including a diversion dam, for the Santa Barbara Ditch Association in Peñasco
- \$30,000 to plan, design and construct improvements, including a diversion dam for Los Cordovas ditch association in Los Cordovas
- \$180,000 to plan, design and construct improvements, including a diversion dam, for Los Lovatos Acequia Association
- \$250,000 to plan, design and construct ditch improvements, including an irrigation pipeline, for the Rio Lucio Water Ditch Association
- \$2.4 million to plan, design, construct and improve an irrigation system for the

- Rio Costilla Ditch Association
- \$35,000 to plan, design, construct and improve a flume project for the Tramps ditch association in Trampas
- \$35,000 to plan, design, and construct ditch improvements, including an irrigation pipeline for the Sanchez Ditch Association
- \$1.8 million to complete construction of a mitigation well for Acequia del Monte del Rio Chiquito to comply with the Abeyta settlement
- \$2.2 million to plan, design, construct, to improve water system infrastructure for the El Prado Water and Sanitation District
- \$1.6 million to plan, design and construct a mitigation well for Llano Quemado Mutual Domestic Water Association
- \$300,000 to plan, design, and construct a water line for the El Valle de Los Ranchos Water and Sanitation District.

More To Water Rights Change Than Originally Thought

By MIKAYLA ORTEGA

Questa native Kari Martinez contacted *Questa del Rio News* to discuss a recent issue she experienced in purchasing land in Questa.

“I bought the land in the summer of 2023 and was told I just had to contact my local association to get the water rights changed over to me, but my mom, being the treasurer of the Questa Ditch Association, felt that wasn’t accurate,” Kari says.

Kari made a trip to the Office of the State Engineer to do an application to get the water rights changed over to her. “That was also more difficult than I thought, because a lot of the maps in northern New Mexico are difficult to find in the database. The water rights had never been recorded so it was hard for them to find them.”

The Office of the State Engineer sent Kari to the Taos County Clerk’s Office

to perform a “chain of title” in order to correct her records. “This is the more stressful part because who knows how many landowners there were before me, and I have to get a copy of all the warranty deeds for the Office of the State Engineer before they can be changed into my name,” she says.

Looking forward, Kari has a good idea on how to proceed, but she isn’t done with the work yet. While the local association has her local record updated, Kari needs to ensure that the Office of the State Engineer and Taos County Clerk’s Office both have it recorded as well.

Compounding the issue further is that the Office of the State Engineer can retire your water rights if they’re not used. “People who do not have their water rights properly registered could potentially get their water rights retired because they have to use them, or they could lose them.

It’s really important to ensure they’re registered with the state,” Kari says.

Kari’s mother, Louise Gallegos, shares that it’s important for the association to help their members ensure that their water rights are registered to the correct owners through the official databases. “The area-wide acequia association we are forming in northern Taos County is a great resource because it could help with issues like this. It centralizes resources and ensures our members are supported,” Louise Gallegos says.

To check if your water rights are registered correctly, you can call the Office of the State Engineer at (505) 827-6120. To file an application to ensure your water rights are transferred to your name, visit <https://www.ose.state.nm.us/WR/forms.php> (See *area-wide acequia association article on page 7*)

POEM OF THE MONTH

The 7 Days of Valentine's Week

- Each one is just a sneak peek
- *Feb 7th is the day of the rose
- *Feb 8th pick one to propose
- *Feb 9th chocolates you hear
- *Feb 10th squeeze a teddy bear
- *Next 3 days a promise, hug and kiss
- *The 14th is Valentines Day, a day you don't want to miss

—Ghost Writer Miguel



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The Society of Professional Journalists declares four principles as the foundation of ethical journalism and encourages their use in its practice by all people in all media. We have adopted these principles as our own:

- Seek Truth and Report It.
- Minimize Harm.
- Act Independently.
- Be Accountable and Transparent.

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75 Years and Four Generations of Dedication

By MIKAYLA ORTEGA

In the early 1950s in the small Village of Questa, the infrastructure was just being established to create better opportunities for residents. “My dad was instrumental in bringing the water system, along with electrical systems, to Questa,” lifelong Questa resident Marcus Rael says.

His father, Malaquias Rael Sr., was a community leader, businessman, and entrepreneur whose dream was to establish a business in the small village he called home. “In those days, he would work 16-hour days, getting up early and working until 10 p.m. every night milling lumber. The next day, he was right up working at it again because he had a dream and a vision to provide resources for his community.” That vision is what led to Questa’s first hardware and lumber store, now known as Questa Lumber & Hardware Co.

“The business was established in 1951 and it was first located in a small front room. The store then moved to where the Questa Visitor’s Center now sits. They would keep their supplies across the way where Jay’s Thrift Store is now located.” While Malaquias Sr. was the business lead, his wife Lucy Rael was equally as important to the equation. “When my dad had to go out of town, my mom would fill his place and mana Sara Cordova would take care of my siblings and I. It was a team operation and we saw how hard they worked together.”

While the store has gone through many changes through the years, the main theme has remained, and that has been to provide and take care of the community. “My dad always told us it was important to work with our customers and earn their trust. We have had so many repeat customers over the years, and we work with them. There have been times when people couldn’t afford their full bill so we would work with them on credit. My dad also felt it was important to help the elderly and the widowed, and we have always done everything we can to ensure they know



Courtesy Photo

Left to Right: Marcus Rael, Matthew Rael, Dedrick Rael, Mike Rael, Martin Rael, Ralph Rael, Danielle Lovato, and Malaquias Rael Jr.

we’re there to support them.”

In 1989, when the Questa Mine shuttered its operations, the Rael family looked at it as an opportunity to provide jobs and more resources, which led to bringing on Carquest Auto Parts & Rentals under their business umbrella. “My brother Mario was the lead on the auto parts business, while my siblings Malaquias, Ralph, Roxanne and I ran the hardware business. Now, my nephew Martin has taken over and is doing great things there.”

Fast-forward to today, and the Rael’s business umbrella has expanded to four businesses, including the NorthStar Tire and Auto Repair, which is run by Malaquias Rael, Jr. The businesses are entering their fourth generation of family employees who are keeping them alive and well. “All of our kids have worked and continue to work at the store as our family continues to grow. We have grown together as a family while we serve our community. Currently, we have my sister Roxanne Cisneros, my brothers Ralph Rael, Matthew Rael, Malaquias Rael Jr., my niece Danielle Lovato, my nephews Martin Rael and Mikey Rael, and my great-nephew Dedrick Rael—all working the businesses. Overall, we have 22 employees including our family across all three businesses.”

Danielle Lovato serves as the Chief



Courtesy Photo

Vintage photo shows Malaquias Rael Sr. at the original Questa Lumber and Hardware Co.



Courtesy Photo

Lucy Rael stands proudly behind the counter at one of the family businesses

Financial Officer, Human Resources Lead, and Business Operations Manager for all of the family businesses. She handles all the business aspects, from marketing and communications to personnel, including hiring and firing, to procurement and operations.

While Danielle has been in her current role for nearly 11 years, there was a point, in 2002, when she left Questa for Denver, to pursue a life outside of her community for a decade. Graduating from IIT Technical Institute, she obtained a degree in computer networking. She and her family decided to move back to Questa in 2010. “It was an adjustment coming back home. I enjoyed the city and the conveniences it offers, but in the long run, I believe this was the right decision and move for me and my family.”

Playing a one-woman band of sorts, Danielle believes her work is important because it’s advancing the vision her

grandfather set forth for their family. “I hear stories about the work my grandparents had to do to establish the family business just to support their family—that’s what drives me every single day. I am carrying on the same mission and that is so fulfilling for me.”

Danielle shares the same sentiment as her uncle Marcus when it comes to working with customers. “We are always working to meet people where they are. We are here to serve our community. Although there are Home Depot and Lowe’s in the big city, here in Questa, you can get the same products from people who will gather around you and

QUESTA LUMBER cont’d on page 6



Crystal (Martinez) Lopez

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 February issue, we spoke with Crystal (Martinez) Lopez.

Upon graduating from Questa High

School in 2004, Crystal moved to Colorado Springs to attend college. “I always knew I wanted to work in the medical field. At first, I thought about physical therapy or physiology, but quickly narrowed down my interest to respiratory therapy,” she says.

At the time, she wasn’t able to find a respiratory therapy program in Colorado, which influenced her to move to Albuquerque to pursue that degree. “I worked at the University of New Mexico (UNM) hospital and intended to complete my education and move back to Colorado,” she says, but life had other plans.

“I met my now husband Mark at school and work. We were classmates and both worked at UNM. One day we were giving each other a report-out and he asked me how life is going. That’s when we both found out we were single and he asked me out, and the rest is history,” Crystal says. The two were married in 2011, and currently have two kids: Marcos, 17 and Leilani, who is 8.

While both Mark and Crystal are respiratory therapists by trade, Crystal says she has a strong passion for growing her career through multiple disciplines. She currently works as a registered cardiovascular invasive specialist (RCIS), specializing in cardiac catheterization. She also continues to work in respiratory therapy part-time, at UNMH.

Speaking in depth about how the COVID-19 pandemic affected their family, Crystal says, “in order to see and



Courtesy Photo

truly feel the impact of the pandemic, you would’ve had to work in healthcare.”

Every day, she and her husband worked on the front lines, coming in contact with patients who needed help, while also knowing that by helping them, they would potentially be putting themselves at risk, as well as their children.

“It was psychologically such a difficult thing to navigate. We didn’t know what this thing was, or why patients were dying in numbers. Mark was working directly with COVID-19 patients who were being intubated,” she says. “There was a point where I just knew... someone in my family would inevitably die from this, and unfortunately, we did lose my grandma Eloisa...”

When asked what one of the hardest

things about the two years during the pandemic was, she says, “seeing people at their worst, who are sick, who are scared. It’s my job to make them better, but sometimes no matter what you do, you can’t help them. That’s definitely the toughest part of this job.”

With vaccines, medication, and natural immunity, the world has transitioned out of the COVID-19 pandemic and into an endemic stage. When asked what her biggest lessons from this experience were, she says it helped her see what was important in life.

“Now, I realize the time we have with our kids is so short, they’re growing so fast—and soon they will be out of the house. Now we just really want to value our time with our kids, our families, the people who we love and mean the most to us,” she says.

Living in the South Valley in Albuquerque, Crystal says that while Questa will always be her home, she feels the same connectedness to her community and family where her husband’s family is from. Together, they love being outdoors hunting, fishing, and celebrating with Matanzas (gathering to kill and cook animals). “I joke and say I married a country boy because he loves all the things we did back home.” Questa still serves as a place of peace and solace, “my kids and close friends love Questa and it’s where we go to escape and get away, camping and hunting. It’s a part of us and it will always be.”

Questa Honor Student Nominated To Congress Of Future Medical Leaders Program

By STAFF WRITERS

Mariana Ortega is a freshman and honor student at Questa High School. She has been selected as a delegate to the Congress of Future Medical Leaders to be held from June 26 through June 28, 2024, just outside Boston, on the University of Massachusetts campus.

Mariana’s nomination was signed by Dr. Mario Capecchi, winner of the Nobel Prize in Medicine and the Science Director of the National Academy of Future Physicians. The program is an honors-only program for high school students who want to become physicians or go into medical research fields.

The purpose of this event is to honor, inspire, motivate, and mentor top students in the country who are interested in these careers, while helping them map

out a plan to succeed. The program will provide networking opportunities to help students understand what resources are available to help them achieve their goals.

During the three-day program, Mariana will join students from across the country and hear Nobel Laureates and national Medal of Science recipients as they discuss leading medical research across the country. She will also receive mentorship from top Ivy League medical school deans on what to expect in medical school. The program also offers the opportunity to experience stories told by patients who are living medical miracles, while connecting with like-minded peers to network and build relationships as they continue on their journey.

Mariana is an active member of her community, as a part of The Ques-



Courtesy Photo

Mariana Ortega

ta Achievers 4-H group, winning a Reserve Grand Champion Buckle and a Showmanship Buckle at the local 2023

Taos County Fair. She is also a New Mexico Girl Scout and worked at the Questa Farmer’s Market for the summer of 2023.

Her impressive resume also includes membership to the National Junior Honor Society, Questa Mariachi, JV volleyball, JV basketball, varsity track and varsity cheer. Notably, her cheer team are the 2022/23 New Mexico Athletic Association state champions in their district.

Prior to attending the Congress of Future Medical Leaders, Mariana will be hosting several fundraising efforts to help her raise money to pay for her travel expenses. If you would like to support her involvement in this program, you can contact her mother, Feliz Ortega, at (575) 770-1676 or at felizelena1@hotmail.com.

Village of Questa Department Reports in January

By DYLAN R.N. CRABB

At the first monthly meeting of the new year, on January 9, 2024, Village of Questa staff from various departments gave status updates. The first to speak was Questa Public Library Director Sharon Nicholson, followed by Judge Michael Rael, Motor Vehicle Division Supervisor Sara Trujillo, Emergency Medical Service Director and Fire Chief Raynelle Cordova, and Anthony Martinez from the public works department, speaking on behalf of supervisor John Rael.

“We are endeavoring to move the library to an even higher standard of service for our community,” Sharon Nicholson began. “Our collection will grow with thoughtful and informed choices... We even have archives for the [*Questa del Rio News*] now... With the implementation of the new Questa Business Bridge that we’re doing in collaboration with the [Questa Economic Development Fund] we’re going to reach out to the community in a different way, providing business services and training to Questa and surrounding communities.”

Village Councilor Louise Gallegos asked her about surveillance cameras at the library. Nicholson explained that there was a recent incident behind the library that necessitated more property surveillance. “We thought it was vandalism, [concerning] two trees that we put in the back, and we thought it was time to [put] exterior cameras back there... The cameras went in today [January 9].”

Judge Michael Rael gave a brief update about the status of the municipal court. “After the pandemic, we started getting busy again,” said the Judge. “We have our officers... giving citations... The court itself is not really busy; we do get a few people in complaining about [traffic citations].... We did get a new phone system after 23 years,” said the Judge gleefully as he turned toward the Village administrators with a smile. “And we’re required by the Supreme Court to have cameras in there.

We need one camera outside, one inside, and one in the courtroom, basically.” The Judge also wants Village employees to know that his personal phone number can be given out to inquiring community members. That number is (575) 779-1169 and is also available on the village website at <https://questa-nm.com/municipal-court/>.

“If anyone needs to come to the court for anything and no one’s around, give me a call, and I’ll come in,” said Judge Rael. “We’re here to serve the people as best we can.”

Next to speak was MVD Supervisor Sara Trujillo. “Our goal for 2024 in the MVD department is set by the State of New Mexico. We go by their rules, their regulations, their policies,” said Trujillo. “We are constantly seeing changes... We have many trainings we need to do yearly aside from all the new changes they make throughout the year. Our goal for our office is to continue to provide quality customer services. Three areas that we focus on are making improvements in customer service, document security, and confidentiality. Our mission is to always move forward and achieve excellence in all areas.”

Supervisor Trujillo continued with some physical needs for the office that would be of help: a larger office for improved organization and more efficient employee movement; the need for better parking, particularly for designated handicapped drivers; and the need for a security button for improved communication between the MVD and the Questa Police in cases of irate customers.

Next to speak was EMS Director and Fire Chief Raynelle Cordova, whose departments may be the most overworked. “This last year Fire and EMS combined have been really busy,” said Cordova. “[In 2023], we had 603 calls.” The first needs of these two departments is a permanent raise in pay, to be comparable to Red River and Taos. Despite raises given to EMT staff from within the department, Cordova says more efforts are needed

to improve recruitment. She is also managing at least two 24-hour shifts, so improved recruitment would help significantly. Cordova would like to build up the Fire and EMS staff enough to cover all the shifts more efficiently and cover their territory more effectively, thereby lowering the need for outsized support from other fire departments.

Funding for more equipment was also stated as a need: battery chargers and compressors for improved road transportation; a new Lucas compression device for one of their ambulances, which prices out at \$20k. A Lucas compression device is a specific device used in the administration of cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR). She said it is valuable in that it “frees a set of hands in the ambulance.” One of the ambulances is equipped with a Lucas and another would help with the administration of the other ambulance in transit. Along with new office supplies and updated computers for EMS, the fire department is in need of an updated building, with improved parking. Lastly is the need for a new wildland fire truck.

The Questa Fire Department holds meetings every second and fourth Wednesday of the month. EMS does not hold regular meetings but anyone is welcome to walk in and talk to them any time. The departments also do so-called “ride-alongs” for citizens.

Anthony Martinez spoke on behalf of Public Works Supervisor John Rael. He first explained how the department was able to purchase a vacuum truck last year, for cleaning out pipes. Alongside the vac truck the department also has two jet rodders, specifically for sewer pipes. “The staff has been really good in terms of knowing [our] problem area... so they address those periodically... making sure there’s no sewer backups,” said Martinez.

According to Martinez, a vac truck is helpful because it decreases the constant reliance on fire hydrants and allows workers to fix breaks more efficiently.

The public works department is investigating putting in a new well at the

library which will help improve water flow between all the wells, particularly from the high school. Public works is also looking to improve its bank of replacement and spare parts to make repairs more efficient.

The Village Clerk and Chief Procurement Officer Valerie Vigil was next to speak. She explained that the village received three different grants from state capital outlay within the last couple of years, in the amounts of \$175k, \$75k, and \$190k, so the Village was able to purchase a vac truck to assist public works with digs when there are water outages.

The Village will also extend their “Clean and Beautiful” grant for \$6,900 to June 31, 2024. This includes \$2k for recycling receptacles, \$1k for clean-up activities, \$3,500 for landscaping, and \$400 for youth group empowerment.

A public health and safety grant was received in the amount of \$9,894 for the Questa Health Center and police department, as well as a grant from the NM Department of Finance Authority, for \$112,454, for a new playground. The design for the playground is awaiting approval. It will then take about three months to receive the parts for construction according to Ms. Vigil.

The skatepark project received \$40k in capital outlay, which will be used for planning and design.

A recording of the full VoQ Council meeting is available at *Questa del Rio News*’ YouTube channel: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Zf-c28K-Tkdo&t=3333s>.

Mayor John Anthony Ortega is planning on a regular communication event this year, “Coffee With the Mayor,” tentatively scheduled for the first Monday of every month from 4:30 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. for anyone who would like to speak with him about concerns and needs for our community. The Mayor can be contacted at the following e-mail address: jortega@villageofquesta.org.

QUESTA LUMBER cont’d from page 4

support you when you’re down on your luck. You can trust our family and that’s what sets us apart from the big box stores,” she says.

When asked why she decided to return to Questa, she says that although

the transition back home has been an adjustment, the slowdown is what her family needed. “Living in Questa has made us appreciate everything so much more. Our quality of life feels more meaningful and knowing we’re contributing to the community that raised us makes it all the more fulfilling.”

When asked what contributed to

the family being so dedicated and entrenched in helping their community, Marcus is quick to point to God. “We lived right next to St. Anthony’s church, so we were always in mass every Sunday. If we wouldn’t wake up on time, my parents would say, well it’s up to you if you want to go to mass looking all disheveled—but regardless, you’re

going to church... and they did make us,” Marcus chuckles. “In reality, our faith is truly what drives our mission as a family to give back to our community. We believe it’s important to take care of our people and help them when they need us. That was planted by my father and mother, and we are still carrying it forward to this day.”



VILLAGE VOICE

Announcing Text Notifications For Residents

By MIKAYLA ORTEGA

The Village of Questa is working to ensure they can communicate with residents on utility issues, road closures, upcoming events, public safety alerts and safety notifications. The village is using TextMyGov to ensure residents receive timely and important information when it matters most.

Starting on February 1, the village is encouraging residents to opt-in to receive the alerts by texting they keyword: **VOQUALERTS** to the number **91896** from your cell phone. You

will get a response asking you if you want to opt in for alerts. Reply with **YES** and you will be enrolled for any updates sent from the village.

“This new texting service allows the Village to send text notifications to residents about important updates and local events. As part of our commitment to keeping our community informed and engaged, a release sent from the Questa Public Information Officer Jacob LaFore says. “We encourage all residents to opt-in for important notifications and village announcements. This new communication tool underscores our dedication to transparency and community engagement. We look forward to connecting with our residents and enhancing our ability to communicate effectively.”

Additionally, if you move or decide these notifications are no longer useful to you, you can disenroll at any time by texting **STOP to 91896**.



Big Changes Happening In Red River



Photo by Dylan R. Crabb

By MIKAYLA ORTEGA

The small town of Red River has some big changes happening. The town took to social media to announce the official transition from the annual Red River Memorial Day Motorcycle Rally to Mayfest in the Mountains. According to a press release from the town, “Mayfest in the Mountains promises a refined and family-friendly experience with a focus on community engagement and cultural celebration.”

Many residents and visitors weren't happy about the change, taking to social media to share their thoughts. Damiana Littlefoot writes, “This change is not going to be that easy. The financial consequences are huge. Shunning a person or group of like-minded individuals bears unintended consequences as well. Many motorcycle enthusiasts are not violent and don't participate in violence. Boozing and wild behavior was held in check once upon a time. No colors allowed once upon a time. Gang related activity was not tolerated once upon a time.”

Others welcomed the news. Kristen Rychlik shared, “my 17-year-old daughter was at work on Main Street that evening when the shooting took place and we were home in the upper valley. The hour it took for me to get my hand on her was the most scared I've ever been in my entire life. She saw things that she should have never seen. Our families are worth more than the risk of any retaliation. Sometimes change is just necessary.”

Mayor Linda Calhoun, who led her community through the traumatizing gang shootout in 2023, shared her thoughts in the release stating, “Mayfest in the Mountains embodies the spirit of our community, fostering a sense of togetherness and honoring those who have made lasting contributions to our country. This Memorial Day weekend will be filled with family-friendly festivities, outdoor recreation, and artistic expression, providing an unforgettable experience for everyone.”

In addition to this major announcement at a recent council meeting, Red River also had some personnel changes to follow, including the resignation of Red River Marshal Marshall Johnson.

Questa native Jason Rael was appointed to the seat of Marshal and shared a statement, which read, “I'm happy to be a part of this community and to hold the position of Town Marshal. I look forward to working with the governing body and the people of this community to ensure the safety of all residents and visitors to the Town of Red River.”

At the meeting, the council members voted for Angela Black to replace the late Mayor Pro-Tem George Woerndle, who passed away on January 16. Woerndle held the seat for six terms and his current term was set to expire in 2025.

To read more about George, see page 20 and see his obituary on page 28.

Area-Wide Acequia Association Being Formed

By LYNN SKALL,
Director, Questa Economic Development Fund

An area-wide Acequia Association was proposed by members of the acequia community to create a singular, centralized organization as a resource and ally to all of the ditch groups in the Questa area.

There are 15 acequia associations from San Cristobal, south of Questa, to the state line in the north. Each “ditch” is an independent, self-governed entity, with its own leadership structure—this will not change with the establishment of the regional organization.

The Questa Economic Development Fund received a grant from Chevron to act as fiscal agent while working as a liaison with the community to initiate efforts to form the Association. In 2023, \$60k was received from Chevron with an additional \$50k committed for each of the next two years.

QEDF hired Judy Torres, current Director of the Taos Valley Acequia

Association (for the last 14 years) as a consultant, to facilitate public meetings and planning.

Since May 2023, seven public meetings have been held. To reach the greatest number of parciantes (landowners with acequia water rights), the meetings were held in the communities where the acequias are located.

Examples of the benefits of the regional association were presented (see sidebar), with water rights adjudication often cited as important to help retain and protect water rights.

Torres said, “The biggest benefit I see is the roundtable discussions; the acequias are able to come together and see some issues that are common and get ideas on how other acequias have dealt with them. Also, it is easier for one main organization to set up workshops, meetings, etc. so that the commissioners are able to concentrate on their roles as volunteer leaders.”

ACEQUIA ASSOCIATION cont'd on page 29

Survey: Gun Owners Against Most Gun Regulations

By DYLAN R.N. CRABB

United States Senator Martin Heinrich introduced a bill last year, the GOSAFE Act, that increases regulations on most semi-automatic firearms at the manufacturer, business, and consumer level. *Questa del Rio News* published a brief summary of the bill in its February 2024 issue.

In Senator Heinrich's words, this bill aims to "prevent unlawful modifications of permissible firearms, mandate that future gas-operated designs are approved before manufacture, and prevent unlawful firearm self-assembly and manufacturing." (www.heinrich.senate.gov/gosafe)

Questa del Rio News reached out to Senator Heinrich for comment but did not receive a response as of press time.

Critics who stand against gun regulations generally feel that law-abiding citizens are being punished, rather than criminals. They also argue that the U.S. Constitution's second amendment was never meant to apply to government controls, considering that our founders had just fought a war against a more powerful government. Rather, it was designed to be a populist protection against governments.

There is an exemption in the GOSAFE Act for any gas-operated semi-automatic firearm in circulation prior to the (potential) passage of the Act, which places the focus of the bill on future manufactured specimens and the gun industry overall.

In an interview with a local gun owner, Taos Bakes Production Lead Jeremy Morris, *Questa del Rio News* was able to obtain more information on the nuances of the gun operation industry.

"Not all semi-automatics are gas-operated. Some of them operate off a system which they would call blowback, which is using the recoil of the actual shell to slide the mechanism back to chamber the next round—gas-operated is going to be primarily targeted towards AR-15 and AK-47 style firearms," Morris told *Questa del Rio News*.

"What do you think about gun regulations in general," asked *Questa del Rio News*. "There is a time and a place for it... I personally don't think it needs to be regulated on the commercial aspect of it, people should be able to buy whatever they want... I know a lot of this is coming into play [for] the safety of the communities and stuff like that but... in the last couple of years we had a gentlemen in Albuquerque driving down sidewalks running over homeless people. Just because stuff like that happens, are we gonna ban cars?... A small waiting period isn't necessarily the

worst, it is a deterrent... but criminals are criminals, unfortunately."

Morris seemed to be somewhat more moderate when it comes to gun regulation suggesting waiting periods, mandatory training upon purchase, and possibly psych evaluations prior to purchase, but he also emphasized one sobering question: if someone is willing to break the law, why would that person follow the law on gun ownership?

"I have multiple semi-automatic firearms which are in question, never once have they ever been thought to be used against a person, never once have we thought to use them for any criminal activity; we are recreational shooters. I have various hunting rifles that we use to go and take out big game to feed ourselves," said Morris. "So if they were to put a ban on these kinds of firearms, you're taking a lot of law-abiding citizens and creating criminals out of [them]... because I don't think anyone is just going to give 'em up."

Again, there is an exemption in the GOSAFE Act for current legal firearms owners who may be in question upon the (potential) passing of this bill. However, the bill also places control over the manufacture of future firearms with the U.S. Attorney General and the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives.

"The right to bear arms is there in case the government were to become tyrannical, so we can overthrow or at least defend ourselves against it," said Morris. "If we give them the opportunity to manufacture, design, regulate our weapons, then we basically put ourselves at a disadvantage in all aspects... If we can't have high-capacity magazines, then that puts us at a disadvantage if we were to be in a gunfight having to reload, or if they were to regulate the amount of new semi-automatic gas-operated firearms that they'd be producing—then future generations are at that same disadvantage."

In conversation with another local gun owner, Juan Vigil, *Questa del Rio News* found that he expressed a similar sentiment regarding the collective need for individual gun ownership. However, rather than placing restrictions on gun ownership, Vigil believes that schools should be required to teach gun education with props, so that people can learn more about guns at younger ages.

"It's all about education," said Vigil. "You educate people about guns and we'll have fewer accidents." Vigil's ideal for "Fortress America" as he worded it, would be for every citizen to be educated and armed

to a point where it would be unthinkable for a foreign nation to invade.

Questa del Rio News also reached out to the local branches of the two major political parties, the Taos County Democratic Party and the Republican Party of Taos County.

Of all the responses solicited by *Questa del Rio News*, it was TCDP Darien Fernandez who gave the sole positive endorsement of the GOSAFE Act.

"I think this bill has reasonable provisions," said Chairman Fernandez. "It doesn't prevent people from owning guns and respects the Constitution. A majority of Americans, including people of differing political opinions, think there should be some reasonable regulation of guns in this country. Thoughts and prayers will not stop more mass shootings. It's shameful that the gun lobby would prioritize guns over the right for... school children to live. I'm a gun owner, like millions of Americans, and I don't see this legislation as a threat to my constitutional rights. I applaud Senator Heinrich for being proactive in wanting to reduce the impact of gun violence. To the argument that more people with guns will prevent mass shootings and that good guys with guns will stop bad guys with guns—look at the failure in Uvalde, Texas."

"To be fair, the failure in Uvalde was in part the fault of the police," this reporter commented.

"Uvalde is an example of good guys with lots of training failing to stop a shooting," said Chairman Fernandez.

"What about the argument that governments should not have a monopoly on guns," this reporter asked. "The courts have already accepted restrictions on guns," Chairman Fernandez responded. "Bump stocks have been banned, you can't walk around with a shoulder-fired missile, [and] you have to get a background check to buy a gun from a retail store. There's a fundamental governmental role at all levels in providing for health, safety, and welfare."

Questa del Rio News also received a statement from RPTC Chairman Sarah Valenti. "The GOSAFE Act, targeting so-called assault weapons and large capacity magazines, is deeply concerning to me and other members of the Republican Party," said Chairman Valenti. "Though it has no chance of passing this go-around, the mere testing of the waters with each of these proposed federal gun grabs is problematic. This proposal takes aim at law-abiding citizens' Second Amendment rights by

restricting the sale and manufacture of semi-automatic firearms with detachable magazines including certain handguns and devices affecting a gun's rate of fire. Despite claiming to focus on gas-operated systems, the bill's broad language encompasses various operating systems, revealing a disingenuous naming of the bill. While I acknowledge the importance of addressing public safety concerns I firmly believe that depriving law-abiding citizens of their constitutional rights is not the solution. As I've said before, conservatives believe that untreated mental health issues are one of the biggest threats to the citizenry today and are the sole reason behind an increase in mass shootings.

The GOSAFE Act's exemptions do little to alleviate my concern that this is, in fact, a massive gun grab... limiting access to firearms by law-abiding citizens. Banning firearms based on their operating systems will not prevent criminals from obtaining them through illegal means. These guns exist and therefore will continue to flood the black market for many years to come. Instead of preventing crime, this bill once again attempts to infringe on the rights of law-abiding citizens, undermining the very principles our nation was founded upon. Conservatives stand firm in our commitment to preserving our constitutional rights, safeguarding our ability to protect ourselves, and potentially against tyranny. Again, the people poised to lose in this matter are not the criminals, but the group that continually loses rights as the government grows more brazen: the law-abiding citizens of the United States of America, many of whom do not wish to be sitting ducks."

The statements from our two major political parties seem to be along party lines. This reporter does not foresee the GOSAFE Act passing both houses of Congress.

Citations:

Questa del Rio News,
<https://questanews.com/u-s-senator-martin-heinrich-takes-aim-at-gas-operated-semi-auto-firearms-in-gosafe-act/>

Southwest Firearms,
<https://www.southwestfirearms.com/threads/martin-heinrichs-gosafe-act.10527/>

US Senator Martin Heinrich,
<https://www.heinrich.senate.gov/gosafe>

Taos County Democratic Party,
<https://www.taosvotesblue.com>

Republican Party of Taos County,
<https://taoscountygop.org>

Latest Federal Court Order Favors Right to Carry Guns in Some NM Public Parks

By MORGAN LEE,
Associated Press

A U.S. District Court judge is standing by her decision to block portions of a public health order from New Mexico's governor that would suspend the right to carry firearms in many public parks in the Albuquerque area, with appeals pending before a higher court.

The order from Albuquerque-based Judge Kea Riggs denied a request from

the governor to leave in place a temporary ban on firearms in some public places in greater Albuquerque, including most public parks.

Riggs earlier concluded that Gov. Michelle Lujan Grisham has not yet demonstrated a historical tradition of banning firearms in public parks or similar areas in the past, in response to a lawsuit by Torrance County resident James Springer — a plaintiff in one of

several lawsuits filed against the governor by gun rights advocates.

"Our position is that's not something that is contemplated under the Second Amendment," said Springer's attorney, A. Blair Dunn, applauding the judge's order.

Last year, U.S. District Judge David Urias ruled in the other direction in a victory for the governor, rejecting a request from other gun rights advocates to block temporary firearms restrictions while

challenges move forward. It will likely fall to the U.S. 10th Circuit Court of Appeals in Denver to reconcile the orders from Urias and Riggs.

Lujan Grisham spokesperson Maddy Hayden said that the governor "respectfully" disagrees with Riggs.

"Judge Riggs' opinion ignores this caselaw and the massive amount of

GUN RIGHTS cont'd on page 15



Questa Business Bridge Survey

By STAFF WRITERS

The Questa Economic Development Fund is partnering with the Village of

Questa to expand the offerings of the Questa Public Library by creating a bridge to needed business resources, training, and services: The Questa Business Bridge at the Questa Public Library. The Questa Public Library is already a community resource and gathering space.

We have created a survey to identify the needs and interests of entrepreneurs, businesses, and young adults.

Your feedback is important to us and will help us move the Business Bridge training plans forward and will support us in meeting community needs. Please take a few moments to participate in our survey, please follow the link below or scan the QR code. We appreciate your ideas, input, time and consideration.

<https://forms.gle/oZ-RMyd5jChLttNax9>



Questa News Celebrates Six Years With Archive Project

By Contributing Writer
LOU MCCALL

This month, *Questa del Rio News* is celebrating its sixth year in publication, woo hoo! Our first issue was February 2018, and we are just getting started. Thank you, readers, we couldn't have done it without you. And deep gratitude to all the donors and funding organizations who have supported us in so many ways throughout the years. Every issue of *Questa del Rio News* is a historic record for generations to come. This month's news is tomorrow's history!

Last year, the LOR Foundation granted *Questa del Rio News* funding to archive all back issues of the newspaper for posterity. Thank you, Maria Gonzalez, LOR's community officer, for working with us on the project. Creating an archive of each print edition of the paper has been a long time in the making.

Newspapers are printed on the cheapest and lowest quality paper possible; newsprint is highly acidic and does not hold up to time or to the elements. Our readers may have noticed how quickly the newspaper becomes brittle and yellow. Even when left in a sunny place for a few days, a newspaper will show

signs of aging. To protect our paper as a historic record, each issue must be stored in museum quality, acid-free archival materials, which are not cheap. With help from the LOR Foundation, we purchased materials to archive the last six years of the paper and throughout 2024. We are already seeking funding to protect our upcoming issues, moving forward. With the materials in place, we can simply place the papers every month in archival storage before they start to decay.

Each issue of the paper is stored in a clear polyester archival sleeve; then a whole year of sleeved newspapers is placed in its own box. Both sleeves and boxes are pH-balanced, acid-free, and will withstand the test of time.

Over the years there have been conversations about creating a historic museum in Questa. Such a place would house copies of archived copies of *Questa Del Rio News*. Let's keep that conversation going!

There have been several newspapers published in Questa and Red River over the years, some dating as far back as the mid-1800s. Unfortunately, few copies of these historic newspapers have survived. If our readers have copies of these old papers, please tell us about them, even if you



Photo By Dylan R.N. Crabb

From left to right: Lou McCall, founding editor of *Questa Del Rio News* and Maria Gonzalez of LOR Foundation present *Questa del Rio News* archives to Questa Public Library Director Sharon Nicholson. Copies of all back issues of the newspaper will be available in the reference section of the library for historians, students, and anyone interested in the history of Questa!

can just tell us the names of the papers. More recently, local community-owned newspapers have come and gone in Red River, Angel Fire, and Eagle Nest.

Currently, you can find sets of *Questa del Rio News* archives at the Questa Visitor Center, Rael's Story & Coffee Shop,

and the Questa Public Library. They may be viewed at the Questa Library during regular hours but may not leave the library. If you are interested in the archive project, have questions, or would like more information, please contact loumccall@gmail.com.

Do you have copies of old *Questa Del Rio News* lying around? We are missing critical back issues to complete our archival sets.

March 2019, May 2019, October 2019, January 2020, May 2020, November 2020
June 2021, October 2022, January 2023

If you have extra copies of these newspapers, please leave them with Cynthia Rael-Vigil at Rael's Store during their regular business hours. Thank you for supporting local news!

Questa Hosts Second Annual 'Pride Of The Q' Cheer Competition

By STAFF WRITERS

Coaches Angel Medina and Maria Medina along with their co-ed cheer team coordinated and hosted the second annual Pride of the Q cheer competition on Saturday, January 6 at the Questa High School Mini-Pit.

Other teams who participated included the Taos Tigers, Cuba Rams, McCurdy Bobcats, Clayton Yellowjackets, Pojoaque Elks, Española Sun Devils, and Taos Xtreme.

Questa High School graduate Cassandra Cardenas, a former Questa cheerleader, was in attendance as she assisted the judges. Her niece, freshman Mariana Ortega, cheers on the Questa team.

"It's amazing to have the opportunity to re-live the cheer experience through my niece. Not only is she in cheer, but she is also in confirmation class, Honor Society, volleyball, basketball, track and field, mariachi—she does a lot!" While talking about her niece's involvement, she says her

family does everything they can to support her. "The kids are working so hard and they practice long hours and give a lot of themselves to be their best. It's amazing to see how far the cheer team has come and I am there to support them as I scream and yell from the stands."

In the A-3A division, the host team Wildcats garnered first place for their game day routine. Taos won the Grand Champion Title in the 4A division.

Following the event, a Facebook post by the Questa Wildcat cheer team was shared, which reads, "We would like to thank everyone who participated in the second annual Pride of Q Cheer competition. Taos Tigers, Cuba Rams, McCurdy Bobcats, Clayton Yellow Jackets, Pojoaque Elks, Espanola Sun Devils, and Taos Xtreme: you were all amazing! Good luck with the rest of your season! Thank you to our amazing volunteers. We wouldn't have been able to get it done without you."

The next competition the Wildcats



Courtesy Photo

Questa Wildcat Cheer team at the second annual Pride of Q Cheer Competition in Questa

will participate in is the Spirit of Hope competition at Tingley Coliseum in Albuquerque on February 3. The event starts

at 8 a.m. There is a \$7 parking fee. Visit spiritofhopeabq.com for more information about the event.

Local Schools Receive 2023 NMVistas Scores

By STAFF WRITER

Area schools have received their NMVistas scores for the 2023 year. To view results, visit the below links:

Alta Vista Elementary School (42):
https://nmvistas.org/Questa/Alta_Vista_Elementary

Alta Vista Intermediate School (40):
https://nmvistas.org/Questa/Alta_Vista_Intermediate

Questa Jr. High School (36):
https://nmvistas.org/Questa/Questa_Jr_High

Questa High School (48):
https://nmvistas.org/Questa/Questa_High

Red River Valley Charter School (43):
https://nmvistas.org/Red_River_Valley_Charter_School/Red_River_Valley_Charter_School

Roots & Wings Charter School (51):
https://nmvistas.org/Roots_And_Wings_Community/Roots_%26_Wings_Community

Schools earn points by performing well across multiple components. The components reflected in a school's overall index include English Learner progress, attendance and graduation rates, college and career readiness, as well as traditional metrics for academic proficiency and growth. Schools can earn the maximum number of points if they meet or exceed the state target for that student group and that indicator.



Whose Bridge Will Prevail?

By JOHN WALSH

In the contest of bridge building and breaking, the finals were completed, and two teams tied for the winner's circle. We broke 33 bridges—every bridge was broken except two. The 7th and 8th grade each had a team bridge which could handle 100 lbs without cracking or breaking. I would like to give a shoutout to the 7th grade team of Alexia and her silent partner, and the 8th grade team of Allison and Seveah. JOB WELL DONE!



Photo By John Walsh

Alexia and her silent partner, the 7th grade co-champions in bridge-building. This bridge took 100 lbs and didn't break

LOCAL NEWS ANYTIME AT QUESTANEWS.COM



Questa Ladycats Midseason Recap

By C.W. MARTIN

The Questa Ladycats basketball team has started the 2023-24 season off well and were in second place of Class 2A District 5, behind the Mesa Vista Lady Trojans, at the time of this publication.

In December, the Ladycats started 3-1, with wins over Coronado, Santa Rosa and Tularosa. In their next four games, the Questa girls team went 3-1 again, with wins over Centennial (San Luis, CO), Legacy Academy (Albuquerque) and Rehoboth Christian (Rehoboth).

To begin January, the Ladycats went 3-1 again, with wins over fellow District

5 teams McCurdy and Escalante at the Northern Rio Grande Tournament in Espanola. Questa then beat Springer in their next game before a loss to Dulce on Saturday, January 13th.

Questa's Girls basketball team is led by their outstanding Sophomore Shooting Guard Alyse Lovato leads the team in scoring with 12.9 points per game, and with 8.3 rebounds per game. Lovato also shoots 37% from the field. Junior Point Guard Kamryn Cardenas leads the team with 4.0 assists per game and averages 8.6 points per game. Junior Forward Aliyah Santistevan is an outstanding scorer, averaging 9.8 points per game for the Ladycats.

The Ladycats got a win over Cimarron at home in Questa on Wednesday, January 17th, 46-28.

Questa's most recent game was on January 20th in Clayton. The Lady Yellowjackets won, 58-48. After the loss, the Ladycats had a 10-5 record on the season.

The Ladycats will begin their official district portion of the schedule on Tuesday, January 23rd, at home against the McCurdy Lady Bobcats. They play one more non-district game against Des Moines also. Here is the Questa Ladycats remaining regular-season schedule for the 2023-2024 season:



Courtesy Photo

Thursday, January 25th

Questa, New Mexico
Escalante Lady Lobos at Questa Ladycats

Saturday, January 27th

Mora, New Mexico
Questa Ladycats at Mora Rangerettes

Thursday, February 1st

Questa, New Mexico
Mesa Vista Lady Trojans at Questa Ladycats

Tuesday, February 6th

Questa, New Mexico
(non-district game)
Des Moines Lady Demons at Questa Ladycats

Thursday, February 8th

Penasco, New Mexico
Questa Ladycats at Penasco Lady Panthers

Thursday, February 15th

Questa, New Mexico
Mora Rangerettes at Questa Ladycats

Saturday, February 17th

Ojo Caliente, New Mexico
Questa Ladycats at Mesa Vista Lady Trojans

Tuesday, February 20th

Espanola, New Mexico
Questa Ladycats at McCurdy Lady Bobcats

Saturday, February 24th

Questa, New Mexico
Penasco Lady Panthers at Questa Ladycats

Questa Wildcats Midseason Recap

By C.W. MARTIN

The Questa Wildcats Boys basketball reached the midway point of the season with a 3-12 record. For a Wildcats team in the midst of a rebuild, with first year head coach Mike Rael at the helm, their record does not tell the full tale of their season up to this point.

Questa opened their season on the road in early December with a win over former 2A District 5 rival, Coronado 33-31.

After losses to Springer, Legacy Academy and Centennial, the Wildcats hosted Coronado for their second game of the season. The Wildcats beat the Leopards 46-39, in that game, for their second win of the season.

The Wildcats then made an appearance at the Dual Cities Tournament, hosted by the Santa Rosa Lions. Questa lost to district-rivals Mora in the first game and to the Cimarron Rams in the next game. The Wildcats then got their third win of the season over the Monte Del Sol Charter Dragons, 33-26.

For a team that won only two games last season, including one by forfeit, the

Wildcats had a record of 3-5 after their first eight games this season.

Throughout this season, the Wildcats have relied heavily on their Seniors Antonio Romero, Martin Rivera, Nathaniel Rael and Estaban Gomez for the bulk of the team's scoring output.

The Wildcats then began January with a rough stretch of games at the Northern Rio Grande Tournament. Questa opened the tourney with a loss against the perennial powerhouse Pecos Panthers, followed by a loss to fellow 2A District 5 team Penasco and a loss to the Dulce Hawks.

Questa hosted another outstanding team, the Cimarron Rams, the following week, which ended with a big win for Cimarron. The Wildcats then hit the road to face the Clayton Yellow-jacket on Saturday, January 20th, which was their last non-district game of the season. Clayton won the game 65-31.

Questa opens district play on Tuesday, January 23rd, at home against the McCurdy Bobcats. Here is the remaining 2023-24 schedule for the Wildcats:

For more coverage of Boys 2A District 5 and other Class 2A teams, as well as teams from around the state of New Mexico throughout the season, including recaps and game highlights, please visit cwmartinsports.blogspot.com and youtube.com/CWMartinSports.

Tuesday, January 25th

Questa, New Mexico
McCurdy Bobcats at Questa Wildcats

Thursday, January 27th

Questa, New Mexico
Escalante Lobos at Questa Wildcats

Saturday, January 27th

Mora, New Mexico
Questa Wildcats at Mora Rangers

Thursday, February 1st

Questa, New Mexico
Mesa Vista Trojans at Questa Wildcats

Thursday, February 8th

Penasco, New Mexico
Questa Wildcats at Penasco Panthers

Saturday, February 10th

Tierra Amarilla, New Mexico
Questa Wildcats at Escalante Lobos

Thursday, February 15th

Questa, New Mexico
Mora Rangers at Questa Wildcats

Saturday, February 17th

Ojo Caliente, New Mexico
Questa Wildcats at Mesa Vista Trojans

Tuesday, February 20th

Espanola, New Mexico
Questa Wildcats at McCurdy Bobcats

Saturday, February 24th

Questa, New Mexico
Penasco Panthers at Questa Wildcats



Courtesy Photo



Ceramic Cafe Success At The Youth & Family Center!

By CONTRIBUTING WRITER

New neighbor and skilled ceramicist, Anna Fuenning, has been filling the Questa Creative Council's Art Room at the Youth & Family center on Thursday evenings with eager learners. Her open studio concept has been popular with many area residents, ages four to 40.

"I love getting folks hooked on ceramics, especially those who have been intimidated by it before," Anna says. "There is something so elemental about getting your hands in clay. It's such a functional and ancient art form, which you can take in many different directions."

Anna reports, "A varied group of folks have enjoyed the sessions so far. They each have had a different motivation in attending, from just always wanting to try working with clay, to bettering their skills, to expanding their creativity in a communal setting."

Anna was raised in a large family, in Lincoln, Nebraska. Even with nine kids in the house, her parents made art muse-



Courtesy Photo

Local residents working with clay at Ceramic Cafe open studio

ums, performing-arts events, and galleries an integral part of their children's lives. By high school, Anna was in an arts and humanities-focused program, then she moved into working at a studio co-op with friends, and took advantage of her proximity to the University of Nebraska with its great ceramic facilities.

This creative gal lived in Washington state, then Alaska, before living most recently in Austin, Texas. She and her partner had enjoyed camping in our beautiful Carson National Forest, and, after visiting friends in Questa, fell in love with the area. They moved here in 2022 and are building a cabin north of the village, and raising two young boys, one of whom attends Alta Vista Elementary. Anna and her partner both also became volunteer firefighters.

"As a long-time fan of folk art, or even so-called outsider art, it feels right

to be in this locale with its deep history of skilled craftsmanship. It has been a blast to see what people, even with no experience, create today when given the space and resources. I love what the Creative Council has done, and it is so nice to see the collaboration with the village government in providing them space at the Youth and Family Center for a reasonable rate," Anna says. "I would love to see this open studio project expand to connect with more segments of the Questa community."

Come meet this new, most welcome, neighbor at the Youth and Family Center, just next door to the Questa Library, on Thursday evenings from 5 to 9 p.m. Drop in or stay the whole time! These sessions are for hand-building techniques, and all materials are supplied. Any donation you can afford will help keep the program running!



Courtesy Photo

Anna Fuenning assisting a child with clay

Find more information at the QCC's website, QuestaCreativeCouncil.org, or call (575) 586-5658 and leave a message for Anna.

Come to the next Questa Music Series concert, sponsored by the QCC!

Valentine Concert — Latin Music for Cello & Piano, with Mark Dudrow and Martha Shepp

Bring your sweethearts and enjoy the lush, deep, stirring, restful and awakening (all at the same time!) music of composers from Brazil, Argentina, and Spain for part two of the Latin music concerts this local musical duo has put together for you.

WHEN: Sunday, Feb. 11, 4 p.m.

WHERE: The Sala, 2331 Hwy 522, Questa

TICKETS: at the door, sliding scale, \$10-25

EXTRAS: Valentine-themed hot beverages and desserts on offer

Mrs. M's pre-K class made polar bears at the Red River Public Library



Blayke



Natalia



Silas



Luke



Luna

Courtesy Photos

Nature Scopes: Works by Shera Maher and Betsy Irwin

BY Contributing Writers
SHERA MAHER and BETSY IRWIN

Questa Public Library announces its latest exhibit, "Nature Scope: Works by Betsy Irwin and Shera Maher," February 2 through March 30, 2024. An opening reception will be held Saturday, February 10, from 2 to 4 p.m. While their styles and mediums vary widely, both Shera's 2023 inked spirit creature series and Betsy's gourd work, mostly sculptural, reflect both artists' nature-focused spirituality.

Shera Maher and Betsy Irwin have a lot in common. They were both born in Texas and grew up in families working for the military. Betsy lived abroad in Germany and the Philippine Islands; Shera in Spain. Their traveling exposed them to different cultures and environments, also giving them an opportunity to study art in museum settings at an early age. Both were young when they started creating art, Shera drawing obsessively; Betsy inadvertently skipping school in first grade to play in a mud puddle.

They studied art in college and utilized their art skills throughout their "career" phase. Eventually, they both landed in Questa's El Rito community, seeking a simpler life centered spiritually in nature and around making art.

As artists, however, their approach to expressing spirituality and nature are strikingly different. Presently, Shera Maher is primarily a 2D artist, a painter, while Betsy Irwin prefers working in 3D. Betsy's personal artwork has been expressed mostly through gourds and hand-built ceramics.

Currently, Betsy Irwin's work is often determined by a gourd's attributes and



Courtesy Photo

Betsy Irwin with her piece "Stairway to Heaven" at the Harwood Museum

how it "speaks" to her. "For instance," says Betsy, "when I start a sculptural basket, I look for a much thicker gourd, one able to withstand the torque of its handle as it twists up the top of the piece (see "Stairway to Heaven" artwork). Sometimes I have a particular plan in mind; most times the gourd has ideas of its own."

Many of the designs on her sculptural gourds are abstracted forms of the four elements (air, fire, water, and earth) intertwined with spiritual symbols and creatures that appear as she starts penciling on the vessel.

Hit by a burst of creative energy in 2023, Shera Maher decided to return to her first love... drawing. According to Shera, "My intention was to create a nature-themed story of pen and ink illustrations hinting at the connectedness of the animal world and the unseen realm, with animals acting as messengers between dimensions." While many may consider her places and some creatures as mythical, she has a knack for showing



Courtesy Photo

"She's the Queen" drawing by Shera Maher

viewers it can be real.

A jewelry/product designer for over 20 years, Shera started painting in 2014 under the tutelage of Gary Cook, Ray Vinella, and Chris Morel. "I painted day and night, almost obsessively, as if the years of tedious, black and white, tight, accurate drawing were finally coming back as huge oily exuberantly colorful canvases. It was so fun. I went off some deep ends, in the name of being true to myself and I don't look back."

Betsy Irwin's first love in art will always be clay. In fact, an early study where she made intricately carved sculptural pots, thickly pinched from a ball of clay, strongly influences her work today. Betsy stated, "The thickness allowed me to carve lines and shapes

shallow or deep, and I often bored holes through the vessel. I abstracted my designs, frequently deconstructing geometric shapes and patterns; flowing them around these small pots. Because of their size, with no one part the same, these pieces drew patrons to pick them up, turning them over in their hands to see everything." To encourage this tactile experience, she coined the phrase "worry pots" for this series.

Irwin's favorite glazing process for pottery is Raku—an ancient Japanese firing process that quickly produces unusual (and frequently unpredictable) results. Glazed vessel surfaces can flash metallic, and unglazed parts are often

NATURE SCOPES cont'd on page 18

22nd Annual Miniatures Show and Sale Opens in February

By STAFF WRITERS

The Millicent Rogers Museum is holding its 22nd Annual Miniatures Show and sale, on Friday, February 2 through Sunday, March 3, at the Millicent Rogers Museum, located at 1504 Millicent Rogers Road in El Prado, New Mexico.

The show opens with a ticketed preview party on February 2, from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. Artworks will be on sale for the duration of the exhibition. Accord-

ing to a release from the museum, all artwork sales will support both the artists and the museum.

The release goes on to say that the show and sale began in 2003, as a way of celebrating and supporting the artistic community of Taos during the slower winter months. It has since expanded to include artists from Rio Arriba and Mora counties.

This year, more than 180 artists, working in a range of media and subjects, each contributed one small-

scale piece. The creativity from artists falls into categories of jewelry, 2D, and 3D art.

During the preview party, the museum encourages attendees to meet this year's participating artists and mingle with the community. Additionally, the Board of Trustees "Best of Show" awards will be announced during the event. Refreshments will be provided. For more information and to purchase tickets to the preview party, visit MillicentRogers.org.

22nd Annual Miniatures Show and Sale

Show opens with a ticketed preview party on February 2 5:30 to 7:30 p.m.

Friday, Feb 2 - Sunday, Mar 3
Millicent Rogers Museum
1504 Millicent Rogers Road
El Prado, New Mexico 87529

Recognition For Years Of Service: Maria Cintas

By MIKAYLA ORTEGA

Starting in February, we are taking recommendations for educators to be recognized for their years of service teaching the youth in our community. For February, we are recognizing Questa Junior Senior High School teacher Maria Cintas.

How many years have you been teaching?

I have been teaching for 22-1/2 years. It will be 23 years at the end of this year. At the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, I spent a year as high school principal and four months as Interim Superintendent.

Tell us about the subjects you have taught over the years.

I started teaching 7th/8th grade social studies when I first started teaching. Later, I went on to teach high school New Mexico history, world history, western civilization, US history, government/economics, English Language Learner, and psychology. I also taught English and language arts for 7th through 12th grades.

I have taught some electives as community service. In addition to teaching, I have been student council sponsor, Honor Society sponsor, and student class sponsor to different classes. I also coached volleyball when I first started teaching.

What is the most fulfilling thing about teaching in your opinion?

The most fulfilling thing is seeing students succeed in whatever they choose to do in their lives. I take joy in seeing them never give up but continue to grow as individuals. It is so rewarding. I have taught students who went on to earn their doctorate, students who are now running their own businesses, students who are raising their families healthy and success-



Courtesy Photo

fully, students traveling the world in the military, it just makes me so happy when I hear from them every now and then when they check in.

Sometimes I will get a wedding invitation in the mail, or a graduation announcement, a baby shower or birthday invitation. It makes me so happy that they still invite me to significant events in their life, no matter how big or small. No matter how old they get, I am still so very proud of each one of them repeatedly winning at life. It makes my heart happy to witness the greatness that exists within our community, which extends throughout the world.

What is the most difficult part about teaching?

I think the hardest part of teaching is helping students learn to believe in themselves and have confidence to try anything without the fear of failure or being judged. With so much AI and shortcuts to cheating, learning takes a back seat. Having students step up and try and gain knowledge by doing it themselves, while simultaneously being confident in their abilities, will only help them continue to gain the knowledge they need to progress and grow.

We live in a society now where there is always an 'easy button' to accomplish things, and many times students don't even want to try. Students believe it is too hard, a waste of time or just don't want to do it. The internet can produce the same results in five seconds or less, so it's hard to get students to buy in on why it's important to learn. This has been an obstacle since 2020 and it's the reason we saw so many students regress during the pandemic.

Now, we are working to instill and grow that confidence in our students. It is exhausting but so rewarding when they grasp the concept. There is no 'easy button' in life, so I strive to help them understand that the sooner they learn to invest in themselves, their abilities, their knowledge, and their hard work, the sooner they have already set the foundation of where they see themselves and their future.

That is something no one can ever take from them and something that they can be proud of because they attained it through hard work, perseverance, and dedication. This concept applies to all aspects of their life, not just in education.

Why didn't you leave Questa to teach in a different school or community?

Believe it or not, I have always loved my hometown of Questa. I wasn't one that wanted to go far away or to a big city or even see the world. This is just me. When I was in high school, I remember everyone telling us as kids that we needed to leave Questa, because there was nothing here for us. It always made me feel that if you are here in Questa, you are nothing, which is totally not the case.

You can go and be successful wherever you are, but who says you can't be home and make a difference? Yes, there aren't

many opportunities here, but you can create opportunities and make a difference.

Did I always want to be a teacher?

My answer is no. I never wanted to be a teacher when I was younger, but as I entered the profession, it is something that I find to be my calling. I believe that I was put in a place to be the person I needed when I was younger. Someone to tell me it is okay to fail but most importantly, you need to get right back up and keep going. You can be from Questa and still become ANYTHING you want to be whether you stay here, or you travel the world.

You will face judgment, especially living in a small town, but you can rise above it. It won't be easy, but it is possible. I love my community, family, culture, and faith. Being able to embrace the community where I grew up and continue to build a life here has been and always will be a blessing to me. There is nowhere else I would rather be.

Is there anything else you would like to add about your journey?

Without the assistance of my family, faith, and community, I wouldn't be where I am today. Teaching is not an easy profession, there are a lot of obstacles, heartache, tears, and work, more than most people care to recognize.

I have had to teach while mourning the loss of students, not sleeping worrying if students are cold or hungry over the weekend. Just as parents worry about their kids, a teacher worries about their students from past to present. You don't just stop when they graduate. Sometimes students will reach out to me asking for advice as their world is falling apart and I am there to tell them "It's okay, this too shall pass,"

MARIA CINTAS cont'd on page 17



By MIKAYLA ORTEGA

Starting in February, we will begin highlighting our youth for their contributions to the community through our Outstanding Youth Report series. This month, we are recognizing Kingston

Trujillo Gist, grandson of Berna Trujillo and great-grandson of Berlinda Trujillo. Kingston was nominated by Councilman Jason Gonzalez and community leader Maria Gonzalez.

After the December Christmas celebration on Questa's main street, Kingston walked through Questa with a wheelbarrow, picking up the farolito bags. On a regular basis, Kingston helps with the food pantry on Fridays. He cleans acequias, helps with community clean-ups, and is always available to help ranchers and farmers with branding and moving cattle. In December, he assisted with the Active8 community dinner and

also helps the elderly with cutting and stacking wood.

Kingston has a strong commitment to his community and an unwavering dedication to lending a helping hand, in any way he is able. Thank you, Kingston, for your work to make Questa a resilient and thriving place to live.

If you would like to nominate any youth in the Red River, Questa, Costilla, Amalia, Cerro or San Cristobal communities, please send an email to editor@questanews.com and include the student's name and a list of the student's contributions. A photo will also be required.



Courtesy Photo

Kingston Trujillo Gist walking through Questa picking up farolito bags

Ancestry, Libby, BrainFuse, and More...

By Contributing Writer
SHARON NICHOLSON,
Library Director

Here we are, over a month into 2024! Many of you have already tackled your reading list for the year and have visited the Questa Library to check out books. That's great! We have 49 new adult books for you and will order more titles throughout the year. I wonder if you remember what other possibilities our library offers. Let me remind you!

Perhaps you are curious about your ancestors! We have Archives here at the library. We recently added ANCESTRY and related software including a family tree builder on our computers. Take a look soon.

Do you know about LIBBY? Libby is an app offering thousands of books and audiobooks to read on your smartphone, tablet, or computer. Many libraries in New Mexico, including our Questa Library, buy books to be included on the site for you to borrow. Can't find the book you want to read at the library? Or on Libby? Ask us about

INTERLIBRARY LOAN! We can get books for you from other libraries. It is a great way to read a single book or to follow a series of books by your favorite author.

For your use, the New Mexico State Library provides many additional free services. BRAINFUSE offers homework help, a job search function, and a free resume builder. EL PORTAL, accessed through the library's website at questalibrary.org, also connects users of all ages to newspapers, magazines, encyclopedias, and much more.

Additionally, there's New Mexico FamilyPass. It is made possible by the New Mexico Department of Cultural Affairs. FamilyPass provides free admission (up to 6 people) to 15 state museums and historic sites. This pass can be checked out at the Questa Library. Places to go and things to do in New Mexico... free!

I could go on and on! For information on these and many more incredible free services, call (575) 586-2023 or stop by the Questa Public Library, open Mon - Sat from 12 noon to 5pm.



VIDA DEL NORTE UPDATE

By contributing writer
MARIA GONZALEZ

Vida Del Norte kicked off the receipt of its renewal grant with a successful holiday dinner that took place on December 17, 2023. There were about 125 community members that attended and visited with one another.

Vida has had a few setbacks with getting the data that is needed to ensure its grant continues, and we believe we have found an alternative that will meet the requirements of our grant and keep the community satisfied with the way we collect the data.

Vida Del Norte continues to look

for Coalition members who are committed to prevention in its community. Please reach out to coordinator Maria Gonzalez if you feel like you would like to participate in some way.

Vida Del Norte will host its annual Retreat again this year on Saturday February 24, 2024 from 10:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m. at the Youth Center, the building next to the library. We encourage community members to attend its retreat so that you can become educated on how the coalition works and give input on its strategic action plan moving forward.

Remember, it takes a Village!

Annual Retreat

Saturday, February 24
10 a.m. - 2 p.m.
Youth Center
7 Questa Park Road, Questa, NM 87556
(next to the Questa Library)

Changes To 2024 Health Plans In New Mexico

By NASH JONES,
KUNM News

A number of new state laws impact health insurance policies delivered, issued or renewed in New Mexico as of January 1, 2024.

The state only has the ability to oversee health insurance plans that aren't federally regulated. So, not all insured New Mexicans will see the changes. The state regulates plans through the state exchange, fully-funded plans, and plans issued through the Health Care Purchasing Act to public employees and retirees. Still, some of the laws exclude certain plans.

For those the law applies to, diabetics must now have access to the basic care and supplies needed to manage their condition. Additionally, out-of-pocket costs for insulin are capped at \$25 for a 30-day supply.

Cost sharing for other kinds of care has been eliminated altogether. That includes diagnostic breast exams as well as prevention and treatment for

sexually transmitted infections (STIs).

Biomarker testing must now be covered, though the patient may have to pay a portion of the cost. If coverage is denied, the law also requires the insurer provide a "clear, accessible and convenient" appeal process. According to the American Cancer Association, biomarker testing can give people with cancer crucial information about their prognosis and treatment.

A few of the laws require more equitable access to certain care. Insurers in New Mexico can no longer restrict coverage for mental health and substance use disorders more than they do for other types of care. Also, Health Care Purchasing Act plans must cover prosthetics and custom orthotics at least to the extent Medicare does. The medical necessity of those devices and fair trade practices are required for other types of plans, as well. Finally, commercial insurers that offer chiropractic coverage can't charge more for it than they do for primary care.

GUN RIGHTS cont'd from page 9

historical evidence in the record supporting the constitutionality of the temporary restrictions imposed by the public health order," Hayden said in an email. "We respectfully disagree with the opinion and are confident that our ongoing appeal to the Tenth Circuit Court of Appeals will be successful."

Lujan Grisham, a second-term Democrat, invoked the emergency orders last year in response to a spate of gun violence including the fatal shooting of an 11-year-old boy outside a minor league baseball stadium.

Gun rights advocates also are urging the New Mexico Supreme Court to block the orders. The court recently heard oral arguments in the lawsuit brought by Republican state legislators, the National Rifle Association and several residents of the Albuquerque area.

The rest of the public health orders have remained intact, including directives for monthly inspections of firearm dealers statewide, reports on gunshot victims at New Mexico hospitals, wastewater testing for illicit substances at schools and more.

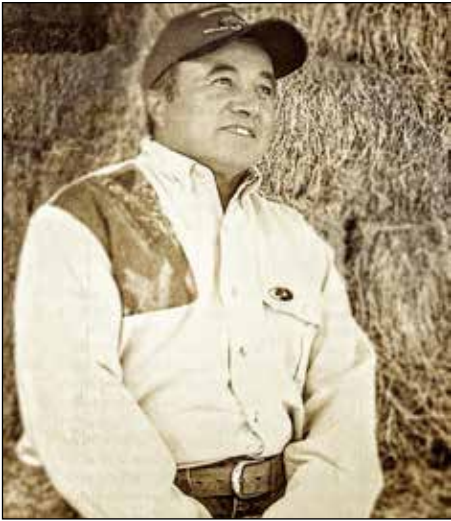
During a 30-day legislative session that concludes Feb. 15, Lujan Grisham also is advocating for a broad suite of legislative proposals on gun control and enhanced penalties for violent crime.

A proposal to shore up New Mexico's red-flag gun law advanced past its first House committee hearing on a 4-2 party-line vote with Democrats in support of the bill from legislators including state Rep. Christine Chandler, of Los Alamos. Votes against the bill were cast by two Republican lawmakers who are pursuing impeachment proceedings against the governor for her emergency health orders on gun violence.

New Mexico's red-flag law, aimed at removing firearms from people who pose a danger to themselves or others, was enacted in 2020 in response to a mass shooting by a lone gunman at a Walmart store in El Paso, Texas, the prior year that killed 23 people. Proposed changes would expedite procedures for obtaining an "extreme risk" order to seize firearms and expand the range of people who can petition to temporarily remove guns to include health care professionals.

LOCAL NEWS ANYTIME AT QUESTANEWS.COM

Growing Up In Questa



Courtesy Photo

Telesfor Gonzales, Taos

By Contributing Writer
MICHAEL WILSON,
Taos Historical Society

LOUISE GALLEGOS TO RECALL GROWING UP IN QUESTA, AT TAOS COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY ANNUAL MEETING ON FEB. 3

The Taos County Historical Society's annual meeting on Saturday, February 3, will host a special guest this year—long-time Questa Village Councilor Louise Gallegos.

The meeting begins at 2 p.m. at the Kit Carson Electric Coop boardroom, 118 Cruz Alta in Taos, with a State of the Society speech by the group's president, Ernestina Córdova. Election of officers and new board members follows, along with a short financial report and brief



Courtesy Photo

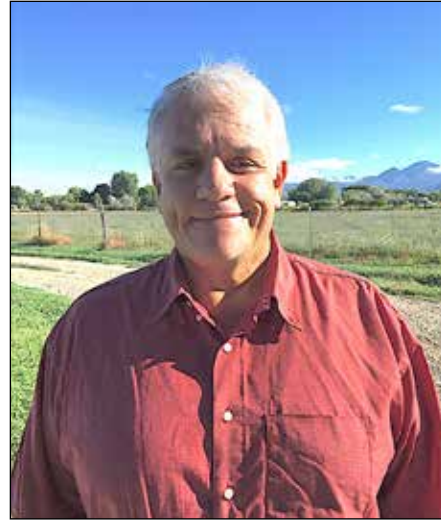
Carmen Lieurance, Taos

comments by committee chairs on last year's activities and plans for 2024.

Then the always-popular "Growing Up in Taos" segment of the annual meeting begins, except that this year attendees will hear about growing up in Questa as well.

Gallegos will join lifelong Taos residents Telesfor Gonzales and John Miera for a panel discussion moderated by the much-loved and respected Carmen Martinez Lieurance. All three panelists, as well as Lieurance, have deep family roots in Taos County. They plan on regaling us with stories and memories both serious and funny about the Taos and Questa of their youth and early adulthood.

Gallegos describes herself as a proud Questeña. The fourth of nine children born to Adonario and Petronila Gal-



Courtesy Photo

John Miera, Taos

legos, she grew up in Questa and graduated from Questa junior and senior high school. She attended Albuquerque Technical Vocational Institute (now Central New Mexico Community College), earning a certificate in bookkeeping.

Gallegos is currently serving her fifth term on the Questa Village Council, with time off from 2012 to 2018 to focus on the restoration of St. Anthony's Catholic Church. She also currently serves as a commissioner for the Questa Citizens Ditch Association and is a member of the fundraising committee to build St. Anthony's Parish Rectory. Louise has also proudly served her community as a member of Taos Feeds Taos for the past 20 years. She is devoted to her two children and granddaughter and their families.



Courtesy Photo

Louise Gallegos, Questa

Please come on Saturday, Feb. 3, to help support your Taos County Historical Society and to take a trip down memory lane with these four delightful Taos County ancianos.

What: Taos County Historical Society annual meeting and "Growing Up in Taos and Questa" panel

When: Saturday, February 3, at 2 p.m.

Where: Kit Carson Electric Coop boardroom, 118 Cruz Alta, Taos

For more info: call Michael Wilson at (612) 743-6546.

Please join the Taos County Historical Society!

Building Community With Support From The LOR Foundation

By Contributing Writer
AEDON HANNON

In mid-December, Questa youth organized a holiday dinner for community members who needed a warm meal, kindness, and support. By all accounts, the event—which was put on by Active8, Questa's youth coalition for substance abuse prevention, and supported by funding from LOR—was a triumph. Roughly 125 community members showed up to the VFW for a home-cooked meal and an evening of conversation.

"It was exciting to see an event like this led entirely by youth coalition mem-

bers and Honor Society students who wanted to better their community and lend a helping hand," says says Questa LOR community officer Maria Gonzalez.

Already in 2024, other passionate Questeños are making a difference for area residents and championing community projects with a little help from LOR. On January 11, Questa's second LOR-sponsored financial literacy workshop kicked off. The free 9-week program led by Kristi Gonzales, the pastor at Freedom Center Church, teaches families about budgeting, spending, tackling debt, and building wealth.

Another workshop will begin in late

February. Interested families can sign up by reaching out to Gonzales at kristi@freedomquesta.com, and child care is provided.

"The feedback so far is that the classes have made a world of difference," Gonzalez says. "One Questa family will soon be almost entirely debt-free using the information and financial skills they learned."

LOR is also excited to support a new enrichment program for students at Alta Vista Elementary and Intermediate School. The school's four-day week has been challenging for parents who don't have child care, as well as elementary

students who lack access to out-of-school enrichment. Several teachers worked with school and district leaders last year to come up with a new program that provides elementary students with half-day activities every other Friday. The launch of the initiative helps students and working parents by strengthening support for Questa's families.

As always, Gonzalez is excited to hear more local ideas for projects that will improve the lives of Questeños. If you want to share a solution or discuss ways to improve Questa, you can reach her at maria@lorfoundation.org or (575) 665-2001.

Bis-Snow-Chito And Snowzobra Coming to Snowy Roads in Northern New Mexico Soon

By STAFF WRITERS

The New Mexico Department of Transportation (NMDOT) hosted a snowplow naming contest on social media, which garnered 23,261 votes. Each district had snowplows renamed, each name being a unique nod to New Mexico culture, movies, and language.

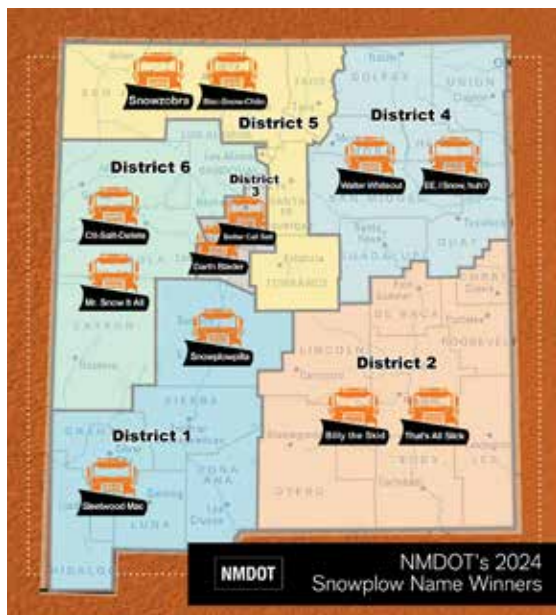
Below is the list of winners:

- District 1: Sleetwood Mac and Snowplowpilla
- District 2: Billy the Skid and That's all Sick
- District 3: Better Call Salt and Darth Blader
- District 4: Walter Whiteout and EE, I Snow Huh?
- District 5: Bis-Snow-Chito and Snowzobra
- District 6: Mr. Snow It All and Ctl, Salt, Delete



Courtesy Photo

NMDOT workers place new name decals on snowplows



Courtesy Photo

NMDOT map of the snowplows per district throughout the state

MARIA CINTAS cont'd from page 12

or “you got this!”

I was blessed with my upbringing because I had a strong support system within my family. I’ve also had coworkers who have become family because in times of my world falling apart, they have stood by my side and never left me to face it alone. My support system has become

one of my biggest blessings. They have been there when all seems to fall around me, and they remind me of my strength. These people have helped me in turn give that strength to my students.

The world is a tough place, but if we help each other reach our full potential, we can get back to the basics of bridging the human connection. Close the bridges society has created, help each other, and give to one another.

Valentine's Maker Space

Friday, February 9 1 - 3 p.m.

We'll provide supplies and share ideas to help you make Valentines for the special people in your life. You bring the creativity! We support intergenerational learning and activities...all ages welcome.

QUESTA PUBLIC LIBRARY
6 1/2 Municipal Park Rd.
questalibrary.org • (575) 586-2023

Show your car some love this holiday. We can help.

See you soon!

2420 St. Hwy 522 • Questa, NM 87556
575.586.0419



By Toner Mitchell

On The Importance Of Staying Involved

Near the end of 2023, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers began maintenance activities on Abiquiu Dam, a project that required the agency to cease flows to the Rio Chama below the dam. The river below the dam provides some of the only winter stream fishing for anglers without the time to drive all the way up to the San Juan River tailwater near Farmington. It doesn't harbor the huge fish populations the San Juan does, but it's a pleasant place to wet a line nevertheless. The red cliff surroundings remind you that you're in a special place, and every now and then you might be lucky enough to tangle with a brown trout the size of a small shark.

Abiquiu Dam isn't managed for fishing or other forms of recreation. It's part of the water delivery system serving the cities and farms along the middle Rio Grande. Keeping the system in top shape is the Army Corps' main job. The cities, mainly Albuquerque, must have

their water.

The Chama's potential as a trout fishery, however, isn't nothing. This is why the Department of Game and Fish invested substantially in a habitat improvement project in 2020. Perhaps to accommodate low winter flows, the project entailed the creation of pool habitat and the installation of boulder structures that would generate turbulence to flush sediment and generate healthy insect populations. Since many area fishing businesses derive substantial winter revenues from this fishery, the Game and Fish project should be considered as an investment in economic development.

The habitat project was envisioned to address low flows, not no flows (although we fishermen should be thankful that the deepened pools might hold enough water to sustain trout throughout the worst of dam maintenance activities). In fact, the complete cessation of flows might not have even registered if concerned Chama anglers had not raised a stink.

Ivan Valdez, owner of Santa Fe's The Reel Life fly shop is one of those anglers. He's fished at Abiquiu since boyhood, and he only became aware of the dam maintenance project at the eleventh hour. Immediately he contacted the Army Corps, then the Department of Game and Fish, and while the agencies might not be able to address Valdez' every concern, they appreciate his outreach and hope to do better the next time dam repairs are necessary.

"If I had my way," Valdez says, "there would be guaranteed minimum flows below Abiquiu for the sake of the



Courtesy Photo

Ivan Valdez, owner of The Reel Life, fighting a fish on the Rio Chama

ecosystem and the outdoor economy. Short of that, there should at least be transparency and better public outreach. I understand that the Corps is responsible to water users elsewhere, but if trout anglers were notified earlier, we might have come up with a plan to minimize the damage. Because there definitely will be damage. Spawning will be impacted, and fish trapped in pools are going to get hammered by fishermen."

It's a fact of our lives that, in the execution of their duties, government agencies responsible for managing one resource will make decisions affecting other resources. We fishermen should remember this, if only to remind ourselves that the fishing we hold so dear

will not take care of itself. We need to engage, which means understanding what's going on in other spaces. Like agriculture: especially in these times of perpetual drought, how our crops and meat is produced involves the same water that our beloved trout live in.

Even in Questa, we should stay informed on urban development projects down south. We need to know who's doing what in the legislature and on Capitol Hill, as well as who's not doing what. There was a time when I didn't care about such things, when I thought each fish on my line was my God-given birthright.

As if I'd never heard the saying, "Here today, gone tomorrow."



Forest Service Brings Back Snow Rangers

By DYLAN R.N. CRABB

The U.S. Forest Service is bringing back its weekly Snow Ranger program this winter in which employees and volunteers will lead 60-minute interpretive ski and snowboard tours at the Red River, Taos Ski Valley, and Sipapu resorts.

"Rangers, who will either ski or

snowboard with visitors, will cover local cultural and natural history, along with information about the special use permits each ski resort operates under," states a press release from the Forest Service. "Wildlife biologists, archaeologists, and firefighters will join some of the sessions and may cover geology, heritage sites, wilderness areas, water, sustainability, fire adapted ecosystems, recreation opportunities, safety and 'Leave No Trace' ethics."

Tours began on January 9 and will continue through March.

Tuesdays and Wednesdays at Taos Ski Valley. Meet at 1:30 p.m. at the bottom of Lift 1.

Fridays at Red River Ski Resort. Meet at 1:30 p.m. at the Ski Tip Restaurant.

Saturdays at Sipapu Ski and Summer Resort. Meet at 1:30 p.m. at the top of Lift 1.

NATURE SCOPES cont'd from page 13

blackened. Her use of metal leaf on gourds, particularly when it's flashed, along with staining all of the gourd's interior and sections of the exterior black, are reminiscent of Raku. "It just gives the vessel an ancient earthy feel."

When asked why they decided to collaborate on the exhibit, Shera Mather replied, "I love Betsy. She is a true, committed artist and a great example. I love her art and her dedication to her craft. I respect her as a person, and it is an honor to bring our nature-themed

symbolism together in the different dimensions in which we express them."

Betsy Irwin said, "Shera was one of the first people I connected with when I moved to New Mexico. Our common backgrounds, our love of nature, our mutual respect for each other and one another's art, not to mention our overlapping spiritual paths, made this collaboration a no-brainer."

Questa Public Library is located at 6-1/2 Municipal Park Rd, Questa. Music will be provided at the February 10 opening by Tim Perigo and refreshments will be served.

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BIRD IS THE WORD

By Bryce Flanagan

Rock Doves Rock: In Defense Of Pigeons

Pigeons get a bad rap, and not without good reason. They can spread disease through their droppings, they crowd birdfeeders to bully away smaller species, and they infest buildings to the degree that people have put up garish spikes and other deterrents to keep them at bay. But the modern attitude toward these “feathered rats” and “gutter birds” is a far cry from the reverence and esteem our ancestors held them in, when they were crucial sources of food, the earliest form of wireless communication, and decorated war heroes.

Emperor Charlemagne would be aghast at the shoddy treatment of the modern pigeon. During his reign, the privilege of pigeon keeping was reserved only for those most deserving and capable, the wealthy nobility. Pigeons lived not in boxes but in luxurious towers called dovecotes. These pigeon apartments allowed for easy the collection of eggs and harvesting of dung for fertilizer or gunpowder while providing cozy nesting quarters for their feathery tenants. Dovecotes were prominently used across Europe and the Middle East, and many of the structures are still standing today. These towers weren't cages; the pigeons could come and go as they pleased and would seek shelter from predators and severe weather when they needed it.

Long before Charlemagne's reign, pigeons (specifically the homing pigeon) were being used by humans as messen-

gers. The earliest evidence of this purpose comes from ancient Egypt. NYU professor Colin Jerolmack, in an article for *Atlas Obscura*, cites “an Egyptian bas-relief from around 1350 BCE depicts a flock of pigeons being released from their cages to fly and then return” as evidence. While some scholars aren't sold on this as concrete proof (perhaps the Egyptians just took some artistic liberty), there is prolific documentation of post-by-pigeon in the Roman empire and in ancient Greece.

The winners of the first Olympics in 776 BCE were announced via pigeon, Ghengis Khan created a pigeon postal service across his empire, stockbrokers in the 19th century depended on the winged messengers for evaluations of stock prices, and it was a pigeon who brought the news of Napoleon's defeat at Waterloo. The use of pigeons during the Napoleonic wars begged the question: could these loyal, agile creatures be used in military service? Having no better option, Parisians under the 1870 Prussian Siege sent off a mail balloon carrying a pilot and three pigeons over enemy territory into a French commune. The pilot landed safely, attached a message stating so to each pigeon, and let them loose. Two of them returned unharmed to Paris. From this initial success, homing pigeons quickly became invaluable in warfare.

Despite the technological advances made by WWI, pigeons were still being used to carry messages over German territory, braving bullets and hawks as they flew through war-torn skies. Snipers were trained for the specific purpose of stopping these pigeons, yet the danger and mortality rate did not deter them. One such brave pigeon was Cher Ami, who was hit by bullets three times during his mission to fly a message from American POWs to their headquarters. The coordinates attached to the remains of his right leg allowed for the rescue of the POWs. Cher Ami died from his wounds the following year. For his service, France awarded Cher Ami their highest military medal, the Legion of Honour. To this day, his taxidermied body is on display at the Smithsonian.

In WWII, pigeons were again used to deliver messages between the allies, such as American pigeon G.I. Joe. After retaking an Italian village from the Germans ahead of schedule, British troops were unable to radio back and call off an imminent American air raid. One hundred lives were saved when G.I. Joe covered a 20-mile distance in 20 minutes, delivering the message as pilots were warming up their engines to take off. He received the Dickins Medal for his service, the animal equivalent of the medal of honor.

A memorial commemorating these and other heroic birds was unveiled in 1951 in England. The inscription reads “In memory of warrior birds who gave their lives on active service 1939–45 and for the use and pleasure of living birds. A bird of the air shall carry the voice and that which hath wings shall tell the matter.”

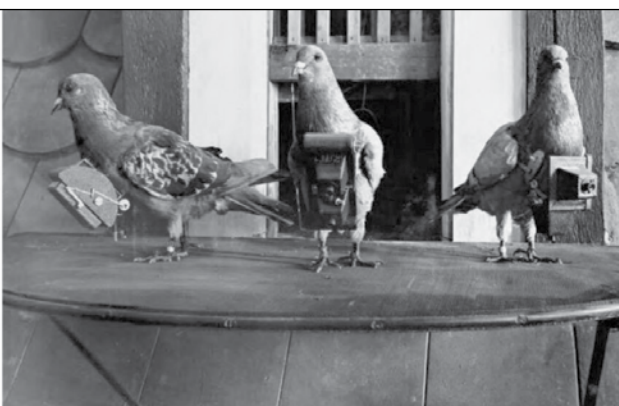
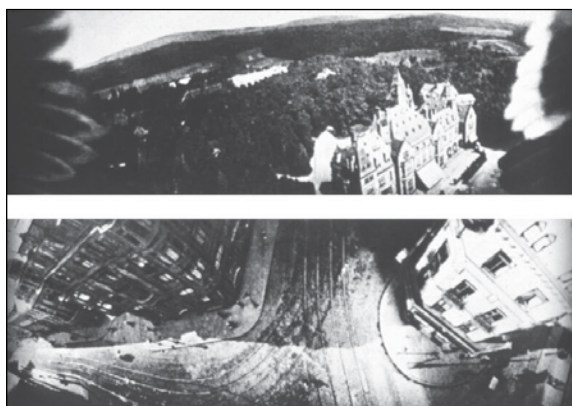
So why the fall from grace? Firstly, pigeons are no longer the avian delicacy of choice, having been usurped by chickens. European colonists brought them along for the journey to the Americas for a stable, familiar food source, having no way of knowing just how well their companions would adapt to a new land. As poultry production increased, as gunpowder replaced pigeon feces, and as technology advanced beyond the pony express and telegraph into the telephone, there was no longer any need for their services. Pigeons were written off as a nuisance. That is, until discoveries were made about their intelligence.

Pigeons are smart. Really smart. A 1995 study showed pigeons could discriminate between paintings done by Monet and by Picasso. The study was replicated in 2001, this time with Van Gogh and Chagall. The pigeons proved to have comparable discernibility to the human subjects. In 2010, we learned that pigeons could not only tell the difference between artists, they could appreciate the art they were looking at. The experiment displayed several sets of two children's paintings, one “ugly” painting and one “good” painting, as determined by the human observers. After being trained to peck at aesthetically pleasing paintings, the pigeons were then

shown ugly and beautiful paintings side by side. They proved to be able to choose the prettier of the two consistently, but this ability declined when the pictures were shown with blur and gray-scale, meaning pigeons use color and patterns for cues in their aesthetic judgments. In 2015 scientists went further, testing if pigeons could identify cancer clusters in radiology images. The findings showed that pigeons “can serve as promising surrogate observers of medical images” and “suggest that pigeons are well-suited to help us better understand human medical image perception.” Being an invasive species, pigeons are under-studied, yet the evidence we have shows we have much to learn about them.

Taxonomy-wise, there is no difference between invasive pigeons (the “Rock Dove”) and native doves like the Mourning Dove. They both belong to the Columbidae family, the same family that hosted the oft-maligned Dodo Bird. These birds are characterized by squat, stout bodies, a diet of seeds and grasses, and the unique ability to secrete “crop milk” from a throat pouch. Also of import is the fact that fledgling doves are called (and this is their scientific name) “squeakers.” Columbidae is made up of 344 different species of dove, from the humble Rock Dove, the melancholy Mourning Dove, the symbolic White Dove, and “fancy pigeons” like the American Fantail, Chinese Owl, and Norwich Cooper, which is one of the only birds that looks like it should be wearing a monocle and top hat.

While Mourning Doves are synonymous with monogamy and romance (the birds mate for life) and White Doves are universally acknowledged as a symbol of peace, no such reservation is made in the popular imagination for Rock Doves. But I invite you, dear reader, to view these birds not as loathsome pests but as valiant warriors, as discerning art critics, as future medical assistants. Let their presence be a reminder of peace in spite of their drab coloring—from the ashes of war they emerge stained gray, a cooing testament against the atrocities of war-mongering here and abroad. “That which hath wings shall tell the matter.”



Courtesy Photo

Left: Pigeon photographers and their photos

Courtesy Photo

Right: Chinese Owl Pigeon

Loved And Esteemed Red River Leader George Woerndle Dies

By STAFF WRITERS

The small town of Red River is grieving the passing of an esteemed leader, businessman, avid skier, and lifelong friend, George Woerndle. Woerndle passed away after a brief stint with cancer. Tributes poured out across social media as people shared stories and memories about what made Woerndle special and unforgettable.

According to a story shared in the Red River Miner in 2021, Woerndle and his family relocated to Red River from Aspen, where he was born. In northern Taos County, he attended the Moly Mine School and Questa Schools before returning to Holy Cross in Canon City, Colorado. He went on to attend college at the University of Denver and the University of New Mexico where he was an inaugural member of the UNM ski team. He was known for his love of skiing, snowmobiling, and giving back to his community—and impacting so many lives of the people in it.

At the time of his passing, George served Red River as Mayor Pro-Tem and was in his sixth term, set to expire in 2025. He leaves behind his wife, Carol, and many family members and friends who will miss him tremendously.

Some of the heartwarming and touching tributes on social media about George read:

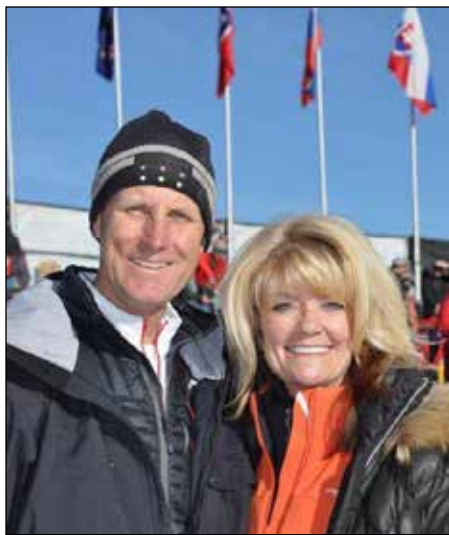
Nick Church:

Red River lost a true legend today. George will truly be missed by so many. Thank you G Dub for teaching me so much while I had the pleasure of working for you, thank you for your friendship, thank you for the many, many smiles and laughs after great turns on the mountain! Rest In peace.

Kristine Anderson Willis:

I didn't get to know George until I was an adult. What I will tell you is, George wanted to make sure any kiddo in Red River could get their rentals at Sitzmark Sports. The only payment he wanted was Schwan's Ice Cream and luckily, we had a truck come through when my girls were little.

I was able to do some RRFD activ-



Courtesy Photo

George Woerndle and his wife Carol



Courtesy Photo

George Woerndle stands ready to serve his community as a firefighter



Courtesy Photo

George Woerndle and his wife Carol



Courtesy Photo

Steve, Tina, George and Carol enjoying a night out on the town

ities with him over the years as well. We also had some PT sessions at the same time when I had thumb surgery. George would call or text me to check on my progress. He was always a joy to be around, and that laugh was always distinguishable. Red River has lost a true treasure, and he will be greatly missed! I know God had a mountain full of snow ready for him when he got there.

Joyce Archuleta:

I have so many wonderful memories of my friend Georgie, growing up with the Woerndle family. George never forgot a birthday, a holiday or a special

day. I will miss him so much!!! Hugs and prayers to Carol, Rudi, Sandra, Gerdi and the family and friends of our dear George!!

Mayor Linda Calhoun

We are so saddened by the passing of Mayor-Pro Tem George Woerndle today. Please keep the Woerndle family in your thoughts and prayers during this difficult time. George served our community tirelessly for many years and will be deeply missed.

Jess Rael

One person can wear many hats and



Courtesy Photo

George and friend stand with the Capitol Christmas Tree, on its way to Washington D.C. in 2019

be many things to people in different ways. Reading all the beautiful tributes about George makes my heart smile. George was one of the few hardworking, genuine, humble people left to look up to! He gave me an opportunity to open a business and follow my dream with full support and handy advice! I will miss our morning chats and afternoon laughs.

Thank you for loving my family and being so good to us. We will always appreciate you and I know my life was blessed having you in it.

**Woerndle's full obituary can be found on page 28*

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**BODY
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By **BARBARA TRACY**

Encounters On The Road Of Life

In the 1970s my husband and I used to drive to Mammoth Lakes, California at every opportunity we could manage. We were looking to break away from the noise and rush of the Los Angeles culture and the seemingly endless weather patterns that so seldom changed.

We would stop along the way and have lunch, then head out again to the north. Our objective for traveling the five hours to Mammoth Lakes was not only for the breathtaking beauty of the Sierra Nevada Mountains, but also to look for the possibility of purchasing or starting a business that would allow us to move from the city to the mountains.

Our travels were along highway 395, a very busy and interesting route where one can experience Red Rock State Park, the Alabama Hills, Hot Creek Geological Site, the Mammoth Lakes fishing haven and ski resort town, Bodie Ghost Town, June Lake Loop, Lake Tahoe—all the way to Reno, Nevada. As one can see, there are a lot of interesting reasons that this route is heavily traveled by passenger cars and the trucking industry.

On one particular occasion as we were headed north toward Mammoth Lakes, we noticed a large southbound semi-truck that was weaving erratically.

In the next breath the truck veered to the left, crossed over into our lane at a speed of around 55 or 60 mph and headed directly for our car. It was all happening so quickly, there was no time to get out of the way. I remember taking a deep breath and thinking to myself, this is it! This is how I leave this life. Time seemed to stand still, and a deep silence permeated the entirety of my being. Even though everything that was happening must have been more like seconds and not minutes, it felt like an eternity. I recall the truck bearing down head-on to our car and knowing there is no hope of escaping it. The silence became deafening, and it felt as though we were in a bubble of a sort as we watched in awe as the truck glided within arm's reach down along the passenger's side of the car and veered back onto the highway and continued south. How could that happen? It was bearing down directly in front of us with no room for correction. As we sat there with cars

whizzing by us, we looked at each other and knew something remarkable had just happened. We drove the rest of the way in silence, soaking up the possibility that we had just experienced intervention from unseen forces.

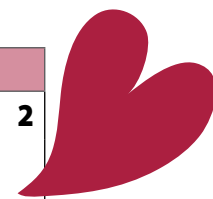
To this day I can recall the feeling of the bubble and deep silence. In my heart I know that there was a greater power at play in that moment. Seeing the impossibility of avoiding being hit head-on and yet this behemoth truck sailing beside and past us as if it was gliding on air!

I am of the understanding that if it is my time to leave this earth, nothing can stop it from happening. And on the other hand, if it is not my time to leave this earth, there will always be something to prevent it from happening.

Oh, by the way, we did move to Mammoth Lakes and lived there for 20 years. The Sierras are a beauty that can't be described and if you haven't been there, put it on your bucket list.



SENIOR MENU: FEBRUARY 2024



Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
All Meals Served With 8oz. 2% Milk as available			1 Tossed Salad, Beef Pot Roast, Roasted Potatoes, Carrots, Roll, Peache	2 Cheeseburger, California Blend Vegetables, Bean Salad, Pineapple and mandarin oranges
5 Herb Pork Chops, Rice Pilaf, Seasoned Spinach, Green Beans, Roll, Pears	6 Barbecue Chicken, Coleslaw, Okra, French Fries, Watermelon	7 Carne Adovada, Pinto Beans, Zucchini w/ tomatoes, Tortilla, Apricots	8 Tossed Salad w/ Italian Dressing, Oven Roasted Turkey Breast, Stuffing, Roasted Broccoli w/ Cauliflower, roll, Baked Apples	9 Ham Cobb Salad w/ Light Ranch Dressing garlic knot, Fruit Salad
12 Tuna Casserole, Tossed Salad w/ Light Italian Dressing, Crackers, Mixed Fruit	13 Tossed Salad w/ Light Italian Dressing, Stuffed Bell Pepper Casserole, Garlic Knot, Brownie	14 Beef Fajita, Salsa, Pinto Beans, Stewed Tomatoes, Diced Mango	15 Oven baked chicken w/ Gravy, Au gratin potatoes, Roasted carrots w/ Chives, Wheat roll, Tropical fruit salad	16 Tossed Salad w/ Light Italian Dressing, Chicken Alfredo, Fettuccine, Italian Blend Vegetables, Garlic Knot, Gelatin
19 Chicken Fried Steak, Mashed Potatoes, w/ Gravy, Collard greens w/ Mushrooms, Wheat roll, Orange	20 Chicken Pot Pie, Tossed Salad w/ Light Italian Dressing, Roll, Apple Crisp	21 Beef Stroganoff, Capri Vegetables, Breadstick, Fruit Cocktail	22 Lemon Herb Chicken, Rice Pilaf, Roasted Brussel Sprouts, Beet and Onion Salad, Wheat roll, Grapes	23 BBQ Rib Sandwich, Potato Wedges, Pasta salad, Cherry cobbler
26 Pepper Steak, Stir Fry Vegetables, Brown rice, Mandarin oranges	27 Diced Chicken Salad, Toasted Sesame Dressing, Mango, Crackers	28 Tossed Salad, Spaghetti w/ Meat sauce, vegetable blend, Garlic bread, Fresh Pear	29 Hot Turkey Sandwich, Parsley Potatoes, Green Beans, Broccoli Salad Berries w/ vanilla yogurt	Taos County Senior Program (575) 737-8927 PLEASE NOTE THAT THE MENU IS SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT NOTICE

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.



**LIVE
LOVE
LAUGH**

by Ellen Wood
a.k.a. Maruška

Remembering Hobos During The Great Depression

I'd stand by the window in the kitchen and watch, often on tiptoes since I was barely able to see over the window-sill. The aroma of Mom's freshly-baked

bread or sticky buns would summon the hobos who occasionally shuffled past our house and I wanted to see them. All were men, each thin and bony with dull, watery eyes, looking as if someone had turned out the lights in their souls and left just a shell to wander in that place beyond despair.

One hobo would gingerly open the gate, walk down the three steps to the small area with uneven bricks at the back of our house, knock on the door and then step back, head down, not wanting to appear too bold.

My mother would open the door and the man—dirt nestled in the creases of his forehead; a tattered headband holding back greasy hair that was probably home to lice; parts of his body exposed through the holes in his filthy, worn-out clothes; a scruffy beard that hadn't seen a razor in years; grimy hands that

shook; teeth brown with rot; reeking of old urine and new booze—would ask my mother for something to eat.

Even though he would normally frighten a child of three, I had seen many of those homeless, godforsaken people come to our back door and I was not afraid.

They seemed drawn especially to our house during the Depression. It was almost as if one of them had marked an "X" on our door, telling others there was sustenance at this holy place.

Hobos. The word had a respectability in our house. "It could be Jesus," my mother would say. But even Jesus had to eat outside sitting on the steps, despite my pleading with her to let the man come in and sit at the table to eat his bread or potato soup or whatever else Mom was cooking up.

None of them looked like Jesus to

me, I can tell you. A picture of Jesus hung on the wall at the bottom of the staircase in the house where I was raised and he had drops of red blood dripping from his heart which was on the outside of his body, encircled with thorns. And his moustache and beard were neatly trimmed. No, not one of them looked like that. And the hobos seemed even sadder than Jesus in that picture with his punctured, bloody heart.

The homeless people had stopped coming by the time I was eight but Mom's goodness (not perfect—she was a venial sins type of mom) and her belief in Jesus never stopped.

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

Un recuerdo de los vagabundos durante la Gran Depresión

Me paraba junto a la ventana de la cocina y observaba, a menudo de puntillas ya que apenas podía ver por encima del alféizar. El aroma del pan recién horneado o de los bollos de Mamá hacía que se nos acercaran los vagabundos que de vez en cuando pasaban por nuestra casa, y yo quería verlos. Todos eran hombres, delgados y huesudos, con ojos apagados y llorosos, que parecían como si alguien les hubiera apagado las luces del alma, dejando solo un caparazón que erraba en ese lugar que está más allá de la desesperación.

Con cautela, el hombre abría la verja, bajaba los tres escalones hasta la pequeña área hecha de ladrillos desiguales que quedaba en la parte trasera de nuestra casa, llamaba a la puerta y luego retrocedía, con la cabeza gacha, sin querer parecer demasiado atrevido.

Mi madre abría la puerta y el hombre—la suciedad acumulada en los pliegues de la frente; una cinta hecha jirones aguantándole el cabello grasiento que probablemente albergaba piojos; partes del cuerpo expuestas a través de los agujeros de su ropa sucia y gastada; una barba desaliñada que no había visto una navaja en años; manos sucias que temblaban; dientes marrones por la

podredumbre; apestando a orina vieja y alcohol nuevo—le pedía algo de comer a mi madre.

Aunque normalmente alguien así asustaría a una niña de tres años, ya yo había visto a muchas de esas personas sin hogar y abandonadas por Dios venir a nuestra puerta trasera y no les tenía miedo.

Todos parecían atraídos especialmente por nuestra casa durante la depresión. Era casi como si uno de ellos hubiera marcado una "X" en nuestra puerta, diciéndoles a los demás que había sustento en este lugar santo.

Vagabundos. La palabra tenía respetabilidad en nuestra casa. "Podría ser Jesús", decía mi madre. Pero incluso Jesús tenía que comer afuera sentado en los escalones a pesar de mis súplicas para que dejara entrar al hombre y le permitiera sentarse a la mesa a comer pan o sopa de papas o cualquier otra cosa que Mamá estuviera cocinando.

Ninguno de ellos se me parecía Jesús, lo puedo asegurar. Una imagen de Jesús colgaba en la pared al pie de la escalera en la casa donde crecí y tenía gotas de sangre roja goteando del corazón que estaba fuera de su cuerpo, rodeado de espinas. Y su bigote y su barba estaban cuidadosamente recortados. No, ninguno de ellos se le asemejaba en nada. Y los vagabundos parecían incluso más tristes que Jesús en esa foto con su corazón perforado y ensangrentado.

Las personas sin hogar habían dejado de venir cuando yo tenía ocho años, pero la bondad de Mamá (no perfecta, era del tipo de madre que cometía

pecadillos veniales) y su fe en Jesús nunca cesaron.


Ellen Wood de Questa es una autora galardonada y también una artista que usa el nombre de Maruška. El sitio web de sus

libros y pinturas es <https://questacreative.org/ellen-wood/>. Para comunicarse con Ellen escriba a ellen@howtogrowyounger.com

Traducción de Teresa Dovalpage

♥ **JR (Malaquias) says:** ♥

“Will you be my Valentine?”



Er, uh, well, at least let us show your vehicle a little love.”

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I DARE YOU

By MARTA GLOVER

What's Love Got to Do with It

Valentine's Day is a reminder to express your love to someone or to do something special for love.

Julia Day led a dance routine called, "One Billion Rising," every year for several years; it was performed on the plaza rain or shine. Many members of the community practiced the dance together at the northside gym. All ages of women, children, and some men gathered each week to practice the dance routine. One Billion Rising is an activist movement to end violence against women and girls. Every year on Valentine's Day the dance is performed all over the world, called "V-Day", that was founded by Eve Ensler and inspired by her award-winning play, "The Vagina Monologues." There are currently 5,800 V-Day related events annually.

The compassionate energy inspired by the dance and the music, "Break the Chain," affected all who danced and witnessed that V-day on the plaza by bringing awareness to break the chain of violence and spread your love and support to all beings. Dare yourself to speak out in support of your community, by dancing, singing and voicing your concerns. That's LOVE. Spread it around.

What is love to you? How do you express love? How do you support and nourish the love you share? Have you ever gone out of your comfort zone for love? Are you in love now? With what? With whom? Is there a song that expresses how you feel about love?

Mountain Joe: (5 years old)

Your mom is love. Everything is my mom. I love Mom. Mostly never done this before but I really want to go to the beach with her. We will swim and build sand castles. A vacation in a car or an airplane to the beach. I like to go everywhere with my mom.

Clem:

My favorite act of love is snuggling with my beloved. We scratch backs and give belly rubs followed by belly raspberries to top it off. I do this because it's my juicy, delicious, nurturing, nourishing

physical expression of sharing our love for and of each other. Physical affection is inclusive, uplifting. Include them in your space of intimacy. Affection makes you feel happy.

Aurora: (6 years old):

My family is love. Mom, Dad, Aliyn, Poppy, Orin, Crew and Wyani. We went to Florida. We loved going to Florida. I love taking walks with my mom collecting things, flowers, acorns. I love being with my brother jumping on the trampoline. We play tag. I went to Albuquerque with my Dad. I loved going to the trampoline park. A lot of trampolines. We went to the zoo too. I saw a snow leopard. I also love playing with my kitty, Poppy.

Mia:

Love is the energy that compels you to move around in this world. Certain times I like to be in love, like with red and pink at Christmas. It gives me so much energy living in color. I have learned to love from animals to perceive love and that's how I carry love today through the layers, through the needs. This is how I contribute to the world seeing peoples layers so they can free their hearts. This is where my lesson of love lies.

Josefa:

My grandmother, Evelyn Valentine

Lawrence, went to her Baptist minister when she found out I was a lesbian, because she was afraid I would go to hell. The minister replied, "Of course not, we are talking about Josefa!" My grandmother calls me to say, "I just want you to know, I know what you are and I love you." Wasn't that so sweet of her to love me that much to go to a minister?!

Holly:

When my son Miguel died, my family and friends came out. This one woman, a friend, asked me to come over and put me in her lap and held me. Her name was Dawn. I knew her from smoke jumping days. I was touched so deeply by someone to hold you like that. I love people who are not afraid to touch. I love that about the French.

Gary:

Love among soulmates. I met a person who does soulmate sketches. A soulmate does not have to be a lover. A soulmate you know forever, something that is eternal. It's a calling you are getting through you. Love attracts everything unlike itself in order to be healed. What you are going through, dispel all those years of purgatory and send it through. When you release, show up in a way you haven't been able to before.

MENTAL HEALTH MATTERS

By DAWN PROVENCHER



Bullying

When asked to write an article on bullying, my heart sank. Having worked to strengthen the mental health of children for almost 40 years, I come up feeling as helpless as others on this subject. My daughter, now an exceptionally strong and independent young woman in her 30s, told me when she was repeatedly a bullying victim in elementary and middle school, "Grownups can't fix it." That was disheartening for a mother to hear, especially one whose job it was, as a school counselor, to keep children safe.

Anti-bullying programs abound. Some work, sometimes. Some never work. None work all the time. I have read scores of articles about bullying, attended workshops, and consulted other professionals. Every parent and teacher has said one or more

of the following. "Just ignore them, they're jealous... Stand up for yourself, if they start it, you finish it... Tell your teacher... Go home and tell your parents... I'll call their mother and talk with her..."

However, the greatest insight I have on this subject comes from my daughter. Before writing this article, she and I discussed her ideas. Instead of repeating what everyone has read about bullying and how to address it, I'm going to share the ideas she so thoughtfully shared.

So, educators and parents, listen up—here are suggestions from a bullying victim (and now a social worker who very successfully confronted one of her bullies years after the fact). My daughter says it is all about restorative justice that is adult-monitored and peer-driven. Briefly, that means to create a setting to repair harm, while the offender accepts responsibility for that harm. Then both of the children work toward an acceptable solution.

Here is how a peer-guided program might work. The person bullied drops a note about the incident and names those involved in a secure box by the counselor's office. With supervision by a trained student mediator (perhaps a high school student) and the counselor, the offender and the child reporting the incident(s) are

brought to a conference room. The child experiencing the bullying has already been supported by the mediator and the counselor, and he or she knows this is a safe place.

The students are each given a paper with these questions to discuss:

*What happened?

*What did you do?

*"What did the other person do?"

*How did you feel?

*What needs to happen to avoid this situation in the future?

Once an offender knows the behavior will not be tolerated, and that adults are aware of the situation and will be checking on whether it continues, a shift in the power difference is created between the children involved. Power is taken from the offender, power is taken by the victim. It also gives the offender the opportunity to develop insight and empathy. My daughter said "Hurt people hurt people." In other words, the offender may be involved in their own harmful situation that needs the involvement of the counselor and/or may be oblivious to the pain their actions are causing.

We changed the middle school my daughter attended when her situation was not addressed by the faculty. Their solution

was for her to ignore cruel and vulgar treatment during her PE class on a daily basis. That changed her life. Several years later, one of those offenders transferred to her high school. My daughter, who was by then stronger and finding her own voice, told this girl how her actions and remarks affected her. The offender had no recollection of any of the events. She cried when she heard how things she didn't even remember had caused such pain. They became friends and supportive teammates.

If your child is bullied, talk with the school about how it is handled and how the offender will be held responsible and given the opportunity to repair the hurt. All schools address bullying in some way. Make sure your child's school is committed to supporting the victim and ensuring the offender makes better choices.

And for all parents, discuss with your child how their actions (in person and online) can cause either pain or joy. Tell them you will not tolerate their causing pain to others. And if you learn your child is the offender, ask yourself what is causing them to make such choices.

Hurt people hurt people. The effects of bullying can be very long lasting for everyone involved.

Local Educator Releases Book On How To Thrive As A Highly Sensitive Person

By MIKAYLA ORTEGA

Sara Martinez has been in education for most of her career. She has two master's degrees, one in marriage and family therapy, and the other in school counseling. She has held positions teaching, as a therapist, and most recently, as a school counselor. She says her revelation about being a sensitive person came about 15 years ago, when her therapist told her she was indeed a "highly sensitive person" (HSP) and this helped explain why she was feeling overwhelmed with anxiety and stress. "It was like a light bulb moment, I realized—wait, I am not broken. There is nothing wrong with me. I am just a Highly Sensitive Person."

Sara went on to learn more about highly sensitive traits and she recognized she would soon have to learn how to establish boundaries with her colleagues, family, and friends to not only protect her peace, but also to prevent burnout. "Highly sensitive people often are prone to anxiety and depression because they are sensitive to other people's energy and emotions, so I knew I needed to take this on to figure out how to navigate it." This led to her writing a book, entitled "How to Thrive as a Highly Sensitive Person."

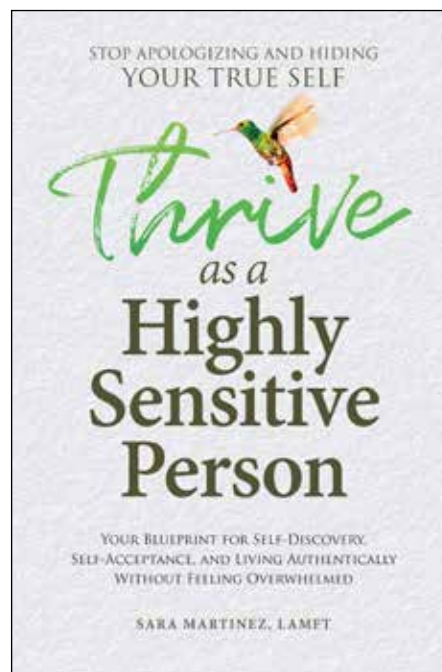
According to research by social psychologist Elaine Aron, Highly Sensitive People "have nervous systems and

minds which permit more stimulation to enter without automatically and unconsciously shutting it out, and further, they then cognitively process the stimulation that they receive in more detail than others do. HSPs typically respond strongly, and quickly reach their natural level of tolerance in loud, bright, or chaotic environments."

As Sara leaned further into acknowledging herself as an HSP, she realized that a lot of clients and students she worked with were also highly sensitive, and they didn't realize it to be so. "I think there is power in recognizing that we are different, and it's okay. It's just important to figure out how we can honor the sensitivity so we can thrive and share our gifts with the world."

In speaking about her experiences living and working in northern New Mexico, Sara says she wants to explore how the cultures and norms impact HSPs, whether it contributes to the sensitivity or not. "I've had early readers from my inner circle and they've told me it's been insightful and helpful to them, as they realized they are also highly sensitive. It brings a sense of connectedness in acknowledgment that we share this trait."

She goes on to talk about how the overall culture in New Mexico is built around surviving. "When you come



Courtesy photo

Ebook Cover: Thrive as a Sensitive Person

from a working-class family, you don't have time to be depressed or process whatever you're enduring. Our parents had to go to work to make ends meet to provide for their families, so often, we push down the emotions because we weren't necessarily taught how to deal with them." This is something Sara works to help people find—their breakthrough in dealing with emotions overall.

When asked about HSPs and what contributes to creating higher sensitivity, Sara says this is not only a trait of humans, but in animals too. "If you think of deer eating in the field, some deer don't pay much attention to their surroundings, they are just there to eat. But some will pause to evaluate the area, looking around for predators before grazing. Populations must have both types of deer for survival of the species. Researchers suggest this is why humans developed a highly sensitive trait. Some of us have to survive in every situation that might come up. However, humans are more complex thinking animals, so we must find a way to be sensitive and not suffer for it."

Her book took 1-½ years to put together and sits at 158 pages. "Lou McCall, the former editor of *Questa del Rio News*, helped proof the book and an online community helped with the logistical pieces," she says. "Even if you yourself are not a HSP, I encourage you to read the book, as it will help you in your relationships with people in your life who are."

You can purchase Sara's book, "How to Thrive as a Highly Sensitive Person," in paperback on Amazon, and the e-book version on Kindle. Additionally, Sara plans to record the book in the coming months for Audible.

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ESOTERIC ASTROLOGY

SKYDANCE ESOTERIC ASTROLOGY by Charlene R. Johnson
FEBRUARY 2024

EXTRA! EXTRA!

“That’s one small step for man, one giant leap for mankind.” —Neil Armstrong

This year, we have an extra day. “Extra” is a form of expansion and Aquarius rules both. We begin this month with the Sun and finally, our Pluto in that sign. We have previously discussed this shift of the generational planet into the sign of Aquarius with high hopes (also ruled by Aquarius) for a lighter, more aware and more inclusive era. Capricorn is the sign of Initiation, long-term karma and suffering. The past 16 years of such Capricornian influence with its often materialistic ambition, narrow focus, and years of a recession, a pandemic, wars over boundaries and religions, is finally behind us and with them, we hope, the national and global divisiveness tearing humanity apart. This is the Age of Aquarius, the Age of Humanity, ALL of humanity and with Pluto finally, fully engaged in this sign, we hold expectations of more kindness, tolerance and understanding, more compassion for one another, that can perhaps be fully realized. While this past time of hardship and pain was long predicted, so has this new era of surmounting the mountain of initiation with expanded consciousness and the exposure of unconscious actions.

The month itself expands with more planets shifting into Aquarius, until by the 17th and 18th, we have six planets in this sign. This is when your greatest hopes and wishes can come to fruition. Then on the 19th, earlier than in past years, thanks to leap year, the sun dives into deepwater Pisces and is followed by four more planets, while Pluto, ruler of Pisces, remains in the clouds to oversee the baptism (ruled by Pluto in Aquarius!). For the next 20 years, Pluto in Aquarius will land in every birth chart and influence every new baptism. What a lovely concept! As we move through this month, feel into the worldwide expansion which is US, at our highest possible levels, and take advantage of an extra day this year and this month of launching this new generosity of spirit.

Everyone: Let’s make Armstrong’s quote real!

ARIES ♈ Planet: Mercury ♀ MARCH 20 – APRIL 19

Dynamic: Your mercurial nature can fly high this month!
Direction: And then, join in the baptism.
Soul Thought: What is Baptism?

TAURUS ♉ Planet: Vulcan ♁ AP RIL 19 – MAY 20

Dynamic: A chain sequence of events may leave you reeling.
Direction: Trim your sails; stay tight to the wind.
Soul Thought: Where is your anchor, just in case?

GEMINI ♊ Planet: Venus ♀ MAY 20 – July 20

Dynamic: You are one who can feel the lightening of the load.
Direction: Be the light.
Soul Thought: Take on another’s load.

CANCER ♋ Planet: Neptune ♆ July 20 – JULY 22

Dynamic: You’ve been waiting; this is the month they all show up.
Direction: Prepare the way.
Soul Thought: John the Baptist.

LEO ♌ Planet: Sun ☉ JULY 22 – AUG 22

Dynamic: You could go from the light shining through the clouds...
Direction: ...to the light shining through the dark water.
Soul Thought: What is light?

VIRGO ♍ Planet: Moon ☾ AUG 22 – SEPT 22

Dynamic: So much dashing about.
Direction: You can’t do it all.
Soul Thought: “Forget your perfect offering. There is a crack in everything; that’s how the light gets in.” —Leonard Cohen

LIBRA ♎ Planet: Uranus ♁ SEPT 22 – OCT 22

Dynamic: You may struggle to see the beauty around you.
Direction: It’s a bit of a teeter-totter.
Soul Thought: “Time will tell us that our present travails are all directed towards the dawning of the new Age, and we will have ended our practice of much that was both unhealthy for our planet and spiritually empty for ourselves.” —Ted Capstick

SCORPIO ♏ Planet: Mars ♂ OCT 22 – NOV 21

Dynamic: You can benefit from this new energy.
Direction: Extra! Extra!
Soul Thought: What does it mean?

SAGITTARIUS ♐ Planet: Earth ♂ NOV 21 – DEC 20

Dynamic: The choice is between remaining in a beautiful place or buckling down to hard work.
Direction: Guess.
Soul Thought: What’s the difference between beautiful and hard?

CAPRICORN ♑ Planet: Saturn ♄ DEC 20 – JAN 19

Dynamic: It’s a rough transition for many people.
Direction: You could be the bridge.
Soul Thought: What is the Antahkarana?

AQUARIUS ♒ Planet: Jupiter ♃ JAN 19 – FEB 18

Dynamic: You have the option of generosity or hoarding
Direction: How to do both in healthy ways?
Soul Thought: An expansion of roots.

PISCES ♋ Planet: Pluto ♇ FEB 18 – MAR 20

Dynamic: The change may feel effervescent.
Direction: To pop the bubble or not?
Soul Thought: Thy cup bubbleth over.



By J. ORTEGA

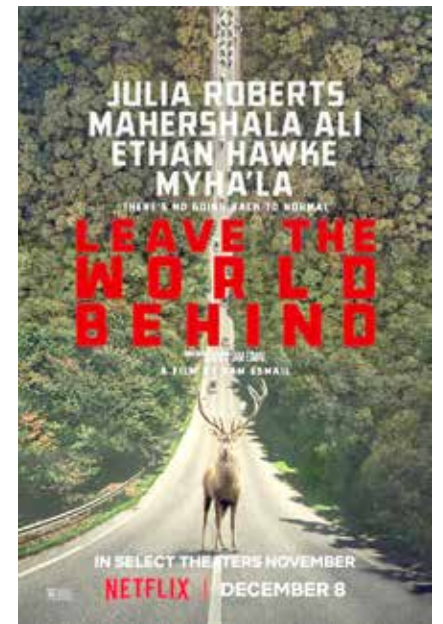
LEAVE THE WORLD BEHIND

Starring: Julia Roberts, Ethan Hawke, Mahershala Ali, Myha’la and Kevin Bacon

Directed by Sam Esmail

Rated R

Streaming on Netflix



First Impression: “Leave the World Behind” is a tense and unnerving apocalyptic thriller that makes its characters and the audience second-guess everything they took for granted, when modern technology suddenly comes to a halt because of a mysterious cyber attack.

If you’re unfamiliar with director Sam Esmail’s work, you may want to check out some of his previous TV show creations, such as “Mr. Robot,” which is streaming on Amazon Prime Video and “The Resort,” streaming on Peacock.

In these shows you will be able to get a sense of the kind of storyteller he is. Esmail is always looking to make the audience feel a bit uneasy and suspicious as to what is really going on. His use of an unreliable narrator as his protagonist in both of these TV shows makes the audience always have to second-guess what is really going on.

Is what Esmail presents on-screen reality, or just what the protagonist is imagining in his or her head?—or is the truth somewhere in between? And that is what makes his latest film, “Leave the World Behind” so intriguing and frustrating.

Esmail’s distinct style is all over this film and creates a sense of paranoia and dread that is not fully realized or understood by its characters, or the audience for that matter, throughout the majority of the film.

In the film we see a married couple, Amanda and Clay, played by Julia Roberts and Ethan Hawke. With their children, they take a spur-of-the-moment vacation to escape New York City. Amanda scores a pretty sweet beachfront Airbnb in Long Island and all seems to be going well... until it isn’t. An utterly strange event takes place with an oil tanker crashing

into the beach where the family was lounging, setting off a chain of events because of a nationwide cyberattack that has knocked out all forms of communication and electricity. So, the family heads back to the luxurious Airbnb to hunker down for the night and hope the worst part of these mysterious blackouts end.

But unexpectedly, in the middle of the night, a mysterious man (Ali) and a younger woman claiming to be his daughter (Myha’la) arrive at the house, saying they are the home’s owners. They want to stay there until the cyberattack is over as well. This sets the stage for excellent tension and paranoia to play out throughout the rest of the movie. Are the man and his daughter who they claim to be? Is it inappropriate for them to stay at the house even though it’s been rented for the weekend? And then there’s the racial component as well because the man and his daughter are African-American. Is Julia Roberts’ character in particular extra critical of them because of that? Esmail wants us to look inward at this scenario that’s playing out and begs us to question of what we would do in this situation. Would we work together with others or would we panic and distrust everyone?

This movie is going to be talked about for awhile and has already created a lot of discussion online about the state of our nation as a whole and how susceptible we are to conflicting propaganda that is presented to us as fact.

Final Verdict: 4-1/2 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.



In this month's edition of Enchanted Eats, we present some Super Bowl favorites! The Super Bowl may technically be an NFL game, but we all know what we're really looking forward to when Sunday rolls around—the snacks. Maybe you love the San Francisco 49ers, the Baltimore Ravens, or maybe even the Denver Broncos, but have any of these teams ever loved you back? Here you'll find classic Super Bowl snack recipes, so regardless of what happens on the field, at least you'll have a winning menu.

Grilled Buffalo Wings

Courtesy of Christopher Trujillo, Taos

Ingredients:

- 1-2 lbs chicken wings, patted dry**
- 1/2 c of your favorite Buffalo-style hot sauce (such as Frank's RedHot)
- 3 T unsalted butter
- Carrot sticks
- Celery sticks
- Homemade Ranch dressing (see recipe below)

Instructions:

1. Begin by seasoning the wings with salt and pepper.
2. Grill the wings over moderate heat, turning frequently, until golden. You don't want the wings to char at all, so keep a close eye on the flame.
3. While chicken cooks, bring hot sauce and butter to a simmer in a small saucepan over medium heat, whisking occasionally until sauce is slightly thickened and coats the back of a spoon, about 1 minute. Cover and set aside.
4. Place chicken wings and sauce in a large bowl; toss until wings are evenly coated.
5. Place wings back on the grill for a couple of minutes.

6. Serve immediately and enjoy with Blue Cheese or Ranch Dressing, and your favorite crunchy vegetables.

**If you buy the wings whole, the wings will consist of three parts: the drum, the flat/double-boned "wing" part, and the tip. To cut up a whole wing, start by cutting off the tip (which you can either discard or save for stock), then cut between the drum and the wing part. Try to cut the sections apart at the joints, where the cartilage is softer than solid bone.

Homemade Ranch Dressing

Courtesy of Josh Oakeley, Taos

Ingredients:

- 1 c mayonnaise
- 3/4 c sour cream
- 1/2 t fresh chives
- 1/2 t dried parsley
- 1/2 t dried dill weed
- 1/4 t garlic powder
- 1/4 t onion powder
- 1/8 t salt
- 1/8 t ground black pepper

Instructions:

1. Prep ingredients. Add all ingredients in a small bowl and whisk together.
2. Dressing can be used immediately or refrigerated and saved for later use (use within a few days).

Green Chile Salsa

Courtesy of Cathy Salas, Taos

Ingredients:

- 1 can fire-roasted tomatoes (14 oz)
- 10 hot dynamite Pueblo green chile
- 1 can of tomato sauce (8 oz)
- 1 t garlic powder
- 1 t garlic salt
- 1/2 onion (more or less to taste)
- Water (use 14 oz fire roasted tomato can to measure)
- Cilantro to taste

Instructions:

1. Prep ingredients. Blend all ingredients together to desired consistency.
2. Add salt, pepper, and cilantro to taste
3. Serve with oven warmed tortilla chips!

Jalapeño Poppers

Courtesy KRQE news

Ingredients:

- 10 fresh jalapenos
- 8 oz cream cheese
- 10 pieces thin-sliced bacon, cut in half

Instructions:

1. Preheat oven to 425 degrees.
2. Cut the jalapenos in half and remove the seeds and veins.
3. Fill the jalapenos with cream cheese and wrap a slice of bacon around each pepper.
4. Secure each with a toothpick.
5. Bake at 425 degrees (or cook on the grill) until the bacon appears to be done, roughly 15-20 minutes.



NM State Police Catalogs Numbers of Arrests & Stops in 2023

By DYLAN R.N. CRABB

The New Mexico State Police (NMSP) issued a press release cataloging their statewide arrests, traffic citations, and commercial vehicle inspections last year.

In 2023, the NMSP issued:

- 121 felony arrests
- 296 misdemeanor arrests
- 167 DWI arrests
- 12,267 traffic citations issued
- 9,230 commercial motor vehicles inspected

"Keeping our communities and roadways safe is one of the New Mexico State Police's top priorities," said Chief of the New Mexico State Police Troy Weisler. "As we welcome 2024, we will continue to offer the same dedication, commitment, and high level of service the citizens of New Mexico have come to expect from us."

Follow the NMSP on social media platforms for continued updates @NMSP.

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If you have a recipe you would like featured in an upcoming issue of Enchanted Eats, please submit to assistanteditor@questanews.com

OBITUARIES



**Helen Elena Cisneros
d. January 5, 2024**

Helen Elena Cisneros, age 89, passed away peacefully at home on Friday, January 5, 2024 and was buried on Saturday, January 6, 2024.

She is survived by her daughter Diane Padilla (Juan); granddaughter Yvette and Daniel Merritt; great-grandkids Michael, Rebecca and Benjamin; granddaughter Mindy and Mike Barbee; great-grandson Rigel; Daughter Joyce and Manuel Romero; grandkids Manuelito, Gilbert and Marcos; great-granddaughter Audrey and Marcus Chavez; great-great grandkids Marika, Jacob and Easton; Daughter (niece) Velma Bailon; sisters Menora Houser, Mary Paco Segura, Shona Kern, Maria Inez Montoya and Kate Cisneros; many nephews, nieces, brother and sisters.

Helen is preceded in death by her husband Adelmo Cisneros; mother Agripina Pina Montoya; siblings Ernesto Montoya, Luis Montoya, Eliza Montoya and Lupe Medina. Helen began working in Denver in the office of a laundry service company; she was good at spelling and math. She was a part-time chauffeur for her employer. This is where the WHITE GLOVES came in. Helen also worked most of her time as a waitress, which she enjoyed. Her hobbies included playing cards and doing laundry. Her favorite pastime was going out to eat, especially at Michael's Kitchen.



**Yvonne Maes
d. January 7, 2024**

Yvonne Andrea Maes born on September 4th, 1982 (41) of Pueblo Colorado, passed away unexpectedly on January 7, 2024 in Questa, NM.

Yvonne was fun, loving, and great to be around. She loved to laugh and be silly with her kids, family and friends. Yvonne was beautiful, and photogenic, she loved doing hair and makeup. She was a great cook and Artist!

Yvonne leaves behind five children: Lorenzo Archuleta (20) Jesus Archuleta (16) Mya Maes (8) Geremiah Maes (6) and Dannielle Maes (4) Her parents: Fred L. Maes, Helen Miera (Danny Martinez) and Sisters: Amanda Leon, Wendy Vigil (Ted), Veronica Maes and Tianna Maes. Nieces and Nephews: Alyssah Duran (Jose and their children), Audrianah Leon and AJ Leon, Marcos Vigil, Kristal Vigil, and Juan Diego Vigil and Joseph Maes. Yvonne is preceded in death by her paternal grandparents Luis & Evelyn Maes, Maternal grandmother Mary Miera as well as her aunt Helen Maes-Sauceda, Aunt Ruby Maes, Cousin Melissa Arguello-Bennett, cousin Jerome Miera and her niece Isabella Rose Vigil.

During this time of sorrow, let us remember Yvonne for her kind and caring spirit. May her soul find eternal peace and may her family and friends find comfort in the cherished memories they shared with her.



**Aida Isabel Trujillo
d. January 11, 2024**

Aida Isabel Trujillo, 97, a lifelong resident of Questa, passed away in her casita surrounded by her loving family on January 11, 2024. Isabel was the middle child born to Miguel and Christina Velasquez on February 19, 1926. She is preceded in death by her parents, her husband, Lino Trujillo and her four brothers; Erlindo Velasquez (Margie), Joe Velasquez (Cora), Charlie Velasquez (Patsy), and Tito Velasquez; and two nephews: Lawrence (Chopo) Velasquez and Andrew Velasquez.

Isabel was a devoted mother and grandmother who enjoyed preparing and sharing delicious meals, working puzzles by the fire, attending mass, and praying the rosary. She treasured spending time with family and friends and especially loved to share stories about life in her beloved Questa.

She is survived by her children: Jack Lino Trujillo (Twana) and Angel J. Chamberlain (Chip); grandchildren: Alexander Trujillo (Audra), Samantha Chamberlain Lane (Jake), Valerie Trujillo and Gavin Chamberlain; great-grandchild: Ada Trujillo; Sister/Niece: Tina Martinez (Don "Ojos Azules"); A dear family friend and her "Hijo Mayor" George Montoya (Janice), sister-in-law: Okie Velasquez and many loving nieces, nephews, and friends. She was loved dearly and will be greatly missed.

A rosary was recited on Saturday, January

27th at 9:00am followed by Mass of Christian burial at St. Anthony Catholic Church, Questa with burial which followed at El Pueblito Cemetery. In lieu of flowers donations may be made in Isabel's memory to St. Anthony Catholic Church, Rectory Building Fund, P.O. Box 200, Questa, NM 87556.



**George Woerdndle
d. January 16, 2024**

George ("Georgie" to his little brother) Florian Woerdndle, 70, of Red River, New Mexico, passed away on Tuesday, January 16, 2024 at 12:06 CMT at UC Health Memorial Hospital in Colorado Springs, CO after a brief battle with lung cancer that quickly spread to his liver, lymph nodes and bones. George was the son of the late Anton ("Toni") Woerdndle and the late Ilse Spemann Woerdndle, and was born in Aspen Colorado on January 28, 1953. After graduation from The Abbey School in Canon City, CO in May of 1971, George spent his freshman year of college at the University of Denver, and then transferred to the University of New Mexico, where he was an integral member of the UNM Ski Team and completed his B. A. in business. George's first passion was skiing. He had his own style and technique and never ceased to amaze his family and friends in his ability to ski every terrain effortlessly and at full tilt. He and his wife, Carol, took many ski trips together and enjoyed skiing with Carol's grandchildren. He was an avid mountain-climber and hiker, planting a NM flag on the peak of Mt. McKinley in 1996, and leading many an expedition from the Upper Red River Valley over Mt. Fraser to Taos Ski Valley in time to eat lunch and enjoy a few beers at the Bavarian with his wife Carol, his buddies and occasionally his nephew, Chase. He loved construction, and always looked for opportunities to use his skills, his tools and his equipment to help anyone undertaking a DIY project. If you needed a tool or piece of equipment that you didn't have or couldn't find, you could almost always count on George to come up with it. He had a passion for flying, and was heart-broken when he could not maintain his private pilot's license and had to sell his plane due to a Parkinsons diagnosis in 2018. George was an avid snowmobile enthusiast and loved riding at full speed with his buddies, Randy Lyles, Chuck Fettingner and many others including his brother's late in-laws, Bill and Yvonne Sampson, once almost losing an

ear after riding into a barbed wire fence late at night while riding without a helmet. He was a sucker for buying time-shares on the Mexican Riviera (usually after a few beers too many), which he never hesitated to share with his family and friends. George was a volunteer fire-fighter with the Red River Fire Dept., and served several years on the Red River Town Council and on the Board of Ski New Mexico. He loved Red River and wanted it to remain true to its roots and to remain a mecca for so many generations of Texans and Oklahomans that had been vacationing in Red River for so many years. George was an owner of the Alpine Lodge in Red River until its sale out of the Woerdndle family in 1992. Upon graduation from UNM in 1975, George took over the Alpine ski shop in Red River and in 1977 moved it across Main Street from the Alpine Lodge by purchasing an old store and then laboriously building what became Sitzmark Sports & Lodging in Red River (most of which he built himself). George remained the owner of the Sitzmark until its sale to his "adopted" son, Mark Martinez and wife, Stephanie in 2018. Perhaps most importantly, George was a Christian and professed his faith in Jesus Christ as his Lord and Savior. In spite of the many challenges that life and personal relationships can bring, George served the public in his business and as a volunteer, served his friends, and served his family as a son, brother, uncle, husband, step-dad and step granddad honorably, with courage and integrity, and with all of the capabilities that he possessed. George is survived by his wife, Carol, her son, Daniel Madewell, and Daniel's children, Jade, Enoch and Xandra Madewell of Red River; his brother, Rudi Woerdndle (Sandra) of Midland, Texas and their sons, Graham Woerdndle (Jenni) of Midland, Texas and Chase Woerdndle (Judy) and their children, Julian Woerdndle and Henry Woerdndle, all of Austin, Texas; and cousins, Gerdi Boser Smink and her daughter, Kelly Burman (Steve) of Frankfurt, Germany; Hanni Schuster and her son, Manfred Schuster of Zorneding, Germany; Jutta Spemann Iverson of Rado-Ilfzell Germany, Astrid Spemann Schulz of Nuernberg Germany, and Dorothee Spemann of Pennzberg Germany. The family wishes to thank the hundreds who supported George and Carol with prayers, well-wishes, visits, phone calls, and with emotional, physical and spiritual support, especially Jessica Cross, Red River EMS, Dina and Ron Burnham, Deke Willis, Ed Hampton, and the incredibly capable and compassionate staff, nurses and doctors at UC Health Memorial Hospital in Colorado Springs, especially Dr. Matt Szymaszek, Dr. Pei Zhang, and Dr. Mario Fadila, who did all they could to keep George alive and help him recover. In lieu of flowers, please consider a donation to the Red River Fire Department, Faith Mountain Fellowship Church, or a charity of your choosing.



*Questa del Rio News
sends their
sincerest
condolences
to all who
are mourning
the loss of
their beloved.
May you find
comfort and
peace in your
coming days.*



QUESTANEWS.COM

There were often lively discussions at the meetings around the history of water rights, ownership, transfers, and usage. Attendees expressed concerns about Chevron being involved in the new group, since they are providing the funding. There was a feeling that they would try to control the direction and operations of the organization.

Christian Isley, Chevron's state government affairs representative, explained, "Chevron will place no conditions on the acequias participating in the establishment of the regional association, and, Chevron will not have a role in its governance structure or operations. It will be led by the acequias themselves. It is our intent that the next disbursement of \$50,000 will go directly to the newly created organization, who will decide how those funds are used."

Inaccurate information was voiced throughout the community, creating confusion and dissent. After attending public meetings and speaking with Torres, Danny Garcia, president of the Cabresto Lake irrigation community ditch association, admitted that he had had concerns about the organization because he "got wrong



Courtesy Photo

Area-Wide-Acequia Association meeting at Tia's Cafe in Cerro

information from a community member." Garcia is in support of the association "as long as it continues to come from the community. A collaborative effort is needed in our area."

At the public meeting in Cerro on January 17, it was agreed to create a steering committee to form the Area-Wide Acequia Association. Each acequia will appoint one representative to have a voice in its conceptualization.

After the acequia annual meetings in the spring, the steering committee will meet with Torres, who will facilitate the proceedings. "It might be a slow process, but we need to just be patient and continue to work with the community and all of the acequias," said Torres.

For more information about the Area-Wide Acequia Association, contact Judy Torres at taosacequias@gmail.com or (575) 758-9461.

The Area-Wide Acequia Association:

Protect and preserve local water rights and our acequia heritage for generations to come.

Advocacy

- Monitor water legislation and policy changes
- Advocate to the state and federal governments with one voice
- Mitigate water changes that can negatively impact quality and quantity

Educational

- Engage and train area youth about the significance of the acequia legacy
- Improve individual acequia governance through workshops and training

Administrative / Informational

- Assist with state filings, compliance, water transfers, and banking
- Timely, consistent communication across all groups
- Develop a GIS system with current land ownership
- Create an information center to centrally store area acequia information

Fiscal

- Apply for grant funding
- Share resources, such as technical assistance and on-site consultants
- Job creation with the hiring of a director to oversee operations

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COMMUNITY CALENDAR • FEBRUARY 2024

HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO EVERYONE BORN IN FEBRUARY!

FEBRUARY 4: SUN 1:30 - 3:30 PM
Dance Like Nobody's Watching, women's dance with Sajit Green, at Yoga Sala, 2331 NM-522, in Questa. Donations support kids' dance classes! Info: yogasalaquesta.org

FEBRUARY 7: WED 6 PM
Questa Independent School Board Meeting, OSID Board Room, 2256 Wildcat Rd. # A. Info: (575) 586-0421

6 PM
Questa Economic Development Fund board meeting at the Questa Visitor's 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.

FEBRUARY 9: 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

1 - 3 PM
Valentine Makerspace at Questa Public Library, 6-1/2 Municipal Park Rd. We'll provide supplies and share ideas to help you make Valentines for the special people in your life. You bring the creativity! We support intergenerational learning and activities... all ages welcome. More info: call (575) 586-2023

FEBRUARY 10: SAT 10 - 11:30 AM
Sala Writing Group, free via Zoom, link upon request yogasalaquesta.org

2 - 4:30 PM
Nature Scope Art Exhibit Public Opening Works by Betsy Irwin and Shera Maheer at Questa Public Library, 6-1/2 Municipal Park Rd. Both Shera's inked spirit creatures and Betsy's gourd work reflect their nature-focused spirituality. Music provided by Tim Perigo. Refreshments will be served. The show runs through March, 2024. More info: call (575) 586-2023

FEBRUARY 11: SUN 4 PM
Questa Creative Council Valentine Concert of Latin Music for Cello & Piano, with Mark Dudrow and Martha Shepp. Bring your sweethearts and enjoy music of composers from Brazil, Argentina, and Spain. Valentine-themed hot beverages and desserts on offer at Yoga Sala, 2331 NM-522, in Questa. Tickets at the door, sliding scale, \$12-20. Info: yogasalaquesta.org

FEBRUARY 13: 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

FEBRUARY 14: WED
Happy Valentine's Day!

FEBRUARY 15: 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

FEBRUARY 19: MON
Happy Presidents Day!

FEBRUARY 21: WED 6 PM
Questa Independent School Board Meeting, OSID Board Room, 2256 Wildcat Rd. # A. Info: (575) 586-0421

6 - 8 PM
Financial Peace University, in person, registration required. Wednesdays, Feb 21 - April 24, no class on March 13. Sign up with an email to kristi@freedomquesta.com with "financial peace" typed in the subject line and your name and phone number.

FEBRUARY 23: 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

1 PM
Steam Play by Twirl, join us for Robot Play! Program, paint, and navigate challenges with a variety of robotic platforms for different elementary aged children and their families at Questa Public Library, 6-1/2 Municipal Park Rd. More Info: call (575) 586-2023

FEBRUARY 24: SAT 1 PM
Questa Credit Union Annual Meeting. Members only. Join us at the Questa VFW. Door Prizes and refreshments.

FEBRUARY 26: MON 3 PM
Questa Library Book Club meets at the Questa Public Library, 6-1/2 Municipal Park Rd. Join the conversation. The topic will be short stories. Info: (575) 586-2023

FEBRUARY 27: 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

FEBRUARY 28: WED 6 - 8 PM
Financial Peace University, in person, registration required. Wednesdays, Feb 21 - April 24, no class on March 13. Sign up with an email to kristi@freedomquesta.com with "financial peace" typed in the subject line and your name and phone number.



MARCH 2 - 3: SAT - SUN NOON - 5 PM
Artists and Creative Entrepreneurs - Free Business Development Workshop for the Creative Economy. This 2-day workshop is funded by a Creative Industries grant received by Taos County from the State of NM. A maximum of 40 people are invited to register; food, snacks, and all materials will be provided at no cost. At Living Word Ministries Fellowship Hall, 12 Llano Rd, Questa. This is the first of three identical workshops being held in Taos County. To register for the Questa Workshop and get more information, contact Lynn Skall, QEDF at lynn@questaedf.com or leave a message at (575) 586-2149

WEEKLY

SUNDAY

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

10 AM
Qigong event with Julian, online only, sponsored by Yoga Sala. More info and link: yogasalaquesta.org

10 - 11 AM
Build Your Own Home Yoga Practice in person with Jiwanshakti. This series is for those wanting to learn the basics of yoga and breathing in order to build or strengthen a home practice. 4 week series, February only. Participants must register ahead of time at Yoga Sala, 2331 NM-522, in Questa. More info: yogasalaquesta.org

MONDAY

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

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

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

TUESDAY

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

6 - 7 PM
BREATHE: Open the Gift of the Breath Classes at Yoga Sala, 2331 NM-522, in Questa. 4-week series, February only. More info: yogasalaquesta.org

WEDNESDAY

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

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

5:30 PM
Power Hour Yoga with Gaea, in person only, \$8 at Yoga Sala, 2331 NM-522, in Questa. More info: yogasalaquesta.org

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

THURSDAY

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 continues, come play with clay! Questa Youth & Family Center at 7 Questa Park Road. More info: QuestaCreativeCouncil.org or call (575) 586-5658.

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



FRIDAY

9:30 - 10:15 AM
Twirl Theater Play with Amber Vasquez, play-based class for singing, dancing and storytelling, children ages 2-6, at Yoga Sala, 2331 NM-522, in Questa. More info: yogasalaquesta.org

10:00 AM
Free Community Qigong with Julian, in person only, free at Yoga Sala, 2331 NM-522, in Questa. More info: yogasalaquesta.org

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 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

7 - 9 PM
New Thirst Christ-Centered Recovery Program offered weekly at Living Word Ministries 12 Llano Rd, Questa More Info: lwmsite.org or call (575) 224-5263

SATURDAY

Contemporary Dance for Adults on break until March. More info: yogasalaquesta.org

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.



WELCOME TO THE NEW AREA ONLINE CALENDAR OF EVENTS!

The same area online calendar is now shared on all of the following sites...

QuestaNews.com
QuestaCreative.org
QuestaLibrary.org
Questa-NM.com
VisitQuesta.com

Now you can upload your event once on any of the websites and it will appear on all of the above sites for **FREE!**

Try it today!
<https://questanews.com/questa-events/#/show?distance=15>

CLASSIFIEDS

HELP WANTED

Security Guard Needed, Securitas: Security Officer needed in Questa, NM. Work schedule is Graveyard - from Mon, Tue, Fri, Sat, and Sunday from 10 p.m.-6 a.m. No security experience required! We can train you. Either call our Recruiter Kevin at (505) 235-7927 or apply immediately www.securitasjobs.com

Family Dollar, Customer Service Representative: Family Dollar is looking for a Customer Service Representative. You will be responsible for providing exceptional service to customers; Greet customers and assist them with selection of merchandise; Complete cash register transactions and answer questions regarding the store and merchandise. To apply, visit familydollar.com.

NOTICES

The Village of Questa is excited to announce the launch of **TextMyGov**, a new text messaging service designed to keep residents informed with timely and relevant information directly affecting our community. This new texting service allows the Village to send text notifications to residents about important updates and local events. As part of our commitment to keeping our community informed and engaged, some residents may receive an initial text from the number 91896 during the week of February 1st, 2024. These residents will receive essential and important community updates once they complete the opt-in process. Residents can easily sign up to stay notified about village notifications such as Utility Services, Road Closures, Upcoming Events, Public Safety Alerts, and General Announcements. We

encourage all residents to opt-in for these important notifications to keep informed of all village announcements. Signing up is easy. Simply text VOQ ALERTS to the number 91896. After sending the initial keyword, you will be asked to complete the opt-in process by responding with YES by text to 91896. Users may opt-out anytime from future text alerts by simply texting STOP to 91896. This new communication tool underscores our dedication to transparency and community engagement. We look forward to connecting with our residents and enhancing our ability to communicate effectively. For more information or any inquiries, please contact the Village of Questa's Public Information Officer, Jacob LaFore at 575-586-0694 or jlafore@villageofquesta.org

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.

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 am – 2 pm. 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: Second and Fourth Fridays, 10 am– 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 pm, 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 pm: <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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Cerro - Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe - 2nd & 4th Saturdays 4 p.m.
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 oeaohoo17@gmail.com

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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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Highway 196, Amalia
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

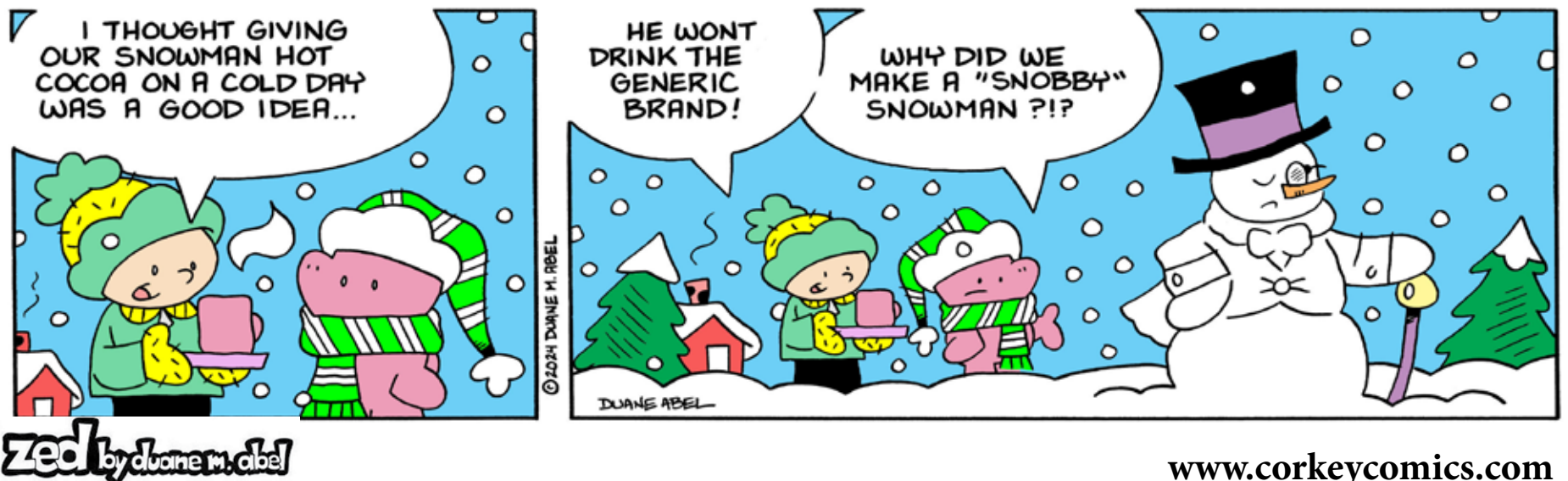


AA MEETINGS
Honesty, Unselfishness,
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QUESTA:
Sundays 10-11 a.m.
Questa Youth Center

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

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BUSINESS DIRECTORY


Valentine's Concert!
Mark Dudrow CELLO
Martha Shepp PIANO
Sunday Feb 11 4 pm
Romantic Latin Music!
 at Yoga Sala in Questa
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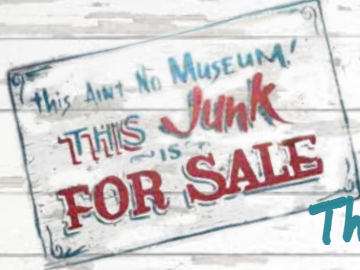

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 \$65 Buddy Plan (2)
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