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Mis Crismas Memories with Berlinda Herrera



Courtesy of Myra Trujillo

Berlinda Herrera and daughter Myra Trujillo

By LORA ARCINIEGA

For so many of us, the Christmas season brings back many memories, often taking us back to simpler times as a child. The days when excitement and anticipation filled our hearts as we inched closer to Christmas Day. This year, Berlinda Herrera and her daughter Myra Trujillo of Questa give us a glimpse into "Mis Crismas" memories of cherished times past in northern New Mexico.

Herrera grew up with her mom and dad in a home near the Moly Mine. "We were poor back then but our Christmas-es were very special and memorable," she says. With limited finances, winters proved to be the most difficult time of the year. She shared a story of Christmas one year when her father was very ill. "The only time I recall having a Christmas tree in our home was when my cousin, Ben Garcia, took it upon himself to go cut one down and bring it to us. He

knew my father was sick and couldn't do it." Herrera was at school at the time and when she came home she saw the tree. "It was so big and beautiful." That evening Herrera and her mother cut strips of colored paper and made a chain out of the paper and wrapped it around the tree. They then cut out a cardboard star, wrapped it in foil, and put it on top of the tree. "I asked my parents if we could get a string of lights for our tree and with the little money we had my parents bought a small strand of lights. That tree is one I've never forgotten," she says.

On Christmas morning, Herrera and her mother would prepare a feast consisting of a small pork roast, provided by good friends. "My mom would make fresh beans, fried potatoes, and fresh bread. Our desserts were usually homemade jellies and jams my mom had prepared in the fall, served along with biscochitos," Herrera recalls. All of

these treats were enjoyed after they came home from Christmas mass. Herrera remembers one Christmas where she and her parents came home from mass and under the tree a present awaited her. "It was from the wife of our school superintendent and it was a sweater she made for me. It was the only gift I ever received," Herrera says.

Herrera has many fond memories of her school days, specifically during the Christmas season. The Moly Mine school Berlinda attended from first to fourth grade was located where the main office of the mine is now. "We would participate in plays, sing Christmas carols, and wait for Santa to come. The school had stockings hanging for all the students during Christmastime and the children would anxiously await Santa to come and fill the stockings with candy

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Providing public access and representation for historically underserved communities in northern Taos County and the San Luis Valley, preserving the culture, history, traditions & stories of the people through strong, meaningful journalism.

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EDITORIAL

We're Asking Our Readers To Help Us Continue Forward

By MIKAYLA ORTEGA

On Friday, November 15, I had the honor of representing the Questa del Rio News as a panelist at the New Mexico Local News Symposium in Santa Fe.

Other panelists included Brian Stelter of CNN, Jessica Garate of KRQE News 13, Trip Jennings of New Mexico In Depth, and Jarel LePan Hill of the Thornberg Foundation.

In northern Taos County, our small towns are filled with people who deserve meaningful journalism. Our people deserve equity, opportunity, and access. So often, we have been disenfranchised in mainstream media coverage because we're "too far" or "not relevant enough."

As editor of the *Questa del Rio News*, it's a priority of mine to work with staff and volunteers to guarantee we're covering stories, making sure the people are seen and heard, while preserving our history—making a resounding impact.

Growing up in Questa, I didn't have the same access and equity as others, which required me to work harder to simply be on the same playing field as my colleagues.

It was such a full circle moment as I sat on the stage in front of nearly every major media outlet in New Mexico to talk about the great work we're doing in northern Taos County.

Many publications and news outlets from across the state were impressed and

supportive of the work we do day-in and day-out by providing helpful, relevant, and important news for our community.

Now I am turning to you, our readers, and asking for your support for our publication for our annual December fundraiser. Our publication's overall operating budget on an annual basis is \$150,000. This includes what it costs to pay our part-time staff of six to publish a 32-page paper. The cost includes postage, supplies, and our printing and delivery fees from Santa Fe.

The holidays are tough, and I acknowledge that. We are all feeling the squeeze as we near Christmas. Fortunately, we received a matching grant from the New Mexico Local News Fund. This means every donation made in December will be doubled!

Whether you're able to give \$5, \$20 or \$100—please know we are incredibly grateful for your support, because your impact will be doubled!

Checks can be mailed to PO Box 1072, Questa, NM 87556. If you wish to donate online, our Venmo account username is @QuestaNews1. Or scan the QR code to locate our account.

Thank you so much for your consideration to support our publication. We look forward to continuing to serve our local community in 2025.

Mikayla Ortega

Editor, Questa del Rio News



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

AEDON HANNON, ALEXANDRA GOLDMAN, ALYSSAH DURAN, BARBARA TRACY, BELINDA HERRERA, BERNA TRUJILLO, BRENDALEE REIPLINGER, BRITTANY MAES, BRYCE FLANAGAN, CHARLENE R. JOHNSON, DAWN PROVENCHER, DOMINIC APODACA, DUANE ABEL, ELLEN WOOD, FELIZ ORTEGA, GHOST WRITER, J. ORTEGA, JACOB VALLEJOS, JOSE DURAN, KEITH JAMESON, NASH JONES, MARTA GLOVER, MELLIE RODRIGUEZ, MYRA TRUJILLO, PEGGY TRIGG, PETER WHITE, QUESTA CREATIVE COUNCIL, QUESTA LADYCATS, QUESTA PARISH CENTER, SHARON NICHOLSON, TAOS COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY, TERESA DOVALPAGE, TONER MITCHELL

BERLINDA HERRERA cont'd from page 1

and nuts. It was the best tasting candy and nuts I've ever had," says Herrera.

Later in life, when Herrera married, she and her husband Eliu created their own Christmas traditions with their family. Berlinda and Eliu would take their five children to midnight mass, sing Christmas carols, and say a prayer in front of the Christmas tree. "All our kids would sit on the floor and our oldest child would play the part of

Santa. Our children would eat cookies and then be ready for bed," she recalls. Christmas day was a feast, consisting of homemade tamales, chile, empanadas, biscochitos, and prune pies.

When asked how Christmas has changed over the years Herrera says, "I feel it's very commercialized. I've tried to instill in my children and their families the importance of the Christmas season, which is the birth of our savior, the importance of attending mass, being with family, and helping others."

Trujillo says that when she hears her mother's Christmas memories it brings her to tears. "My siblings and I grew up not wanting for much. We didn't get everything we wanted but we had everything we needed," Trujillo recalls. "We always had a Christmas tree and a vehicle to take us places. Listening to my mother's story and how tough it was for her growing up made me think Christmas was more meaningful back then. It made me think about being more appreciative for everything you have

and everything you get. I hope to instill in my children the importance of the Christmas season and just being kind to others," says Trujillo.

When asked what advice they'd give to others as we prepare for this Christmas season both Herrera and Trujillo say it's about what you do during the Christmas season that matters, and serving others. Both ladies advise, "call someone and check in on others, especially the elderly. People crave companionship, especially during the holidays."

Community Support Surrounding Aria Duran's Heart Journey

By LORA ARCINIEGA

Aria Duran is ten years old and is in fifth grade at Alta Vista Elementary School in Questa. She lives with her mom, Alyssah, her dad, Jose, and 6-year-old brother Noah. Her parents describe her as "sweet, feisty, and friendly."

When Aria was four years old, she was at her annual hematology appointment when the doctor discovered a heart murmur. Aria is a symptomatic carrier for hemophilia VIII, a rare condition in which the blood doesn't clot in the typical way when a person bleeds. The hematologist recommended they go see the cardiologist. It wasn't long before Aria was diagnosed with hypertrophic cardiomyopathy (HCM), a disease in which the heart muscle becomes thickened, which makes it harder for the heart to pump blood. Jose and Alyssah's understanding was that at some point in Aria's future she would need a heart transplant.

Aria kept up with her routine check-ups and continued living with her condition. It wasn't until the second grade when her symptoms started progressing. "Her blood pressure was up and she was often tired and short of breath," Alyssah says. At this time, Aria changed doctors and it was like turning over a new leaf.



Courtesy of Alyssah Duran

Aria Duran

After six months and another checkup, Dr. Grenier referred her to Colorado Children's Hospital in Denver. "Our doctor felt that Aria's condition was serious enough to be seen by specialists for HCM in children. She did everything she could to get us into the Children's Hospital in Denver. Our doctor was amazing," both Alyssah and Jose express.

It was 2021, and after rounds and



Courtesy of Alyssah Duran

Jose, Alyssah, Aria and Noah Duran

rounds of going back and forth to Denver and a plethora of doctors later, Aria found a team of doctors that helped her and her parents fully understand her condition. Aria's followup appointments were initially every six months and then moved to once a year. Aria was living a seemingly normal life with HCM. It wasn't until summer 2024 that things started to take a turn again: she started

having a harder time breathing during sports and needed to sit down more than usual.

Right before the 2024 school year started, Aria had her routine checkup. Her parents, Jose and Alyssah, knew this appointment was different. After a straightforward conversation with Aria's doctor, Jose and Alyssah learned that since Aria was on the highest dose of medication she could tolerate, the next step to treat Aria's HCM was to intervene surgically. Surgery for HCM in children is not common and hopes of having surgery in the near future seemed unlikely, but with the tenacity of Aria's doctor, she was scheduled for open heart surgery on November 21. On November 25, Aria was scheduled for a follow-up procedure to insert a defibrillator to address irregular arrhythmias. Aria's blood clotting disorder, hemophilia, complicates the procedure but thankfully, her surgery was a success. Aria and her family are expected to be in Denver for up to four weeks post-surgery.

Jose and Alyssah are the kind of parents that will ask questions until they fully understand something, and Aria's HCM condition and surgery specifics are no different. "It's been rough,"

ARIA DURAN cont'd on page 4

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

OUR JOURNALISTIC ETHICS POLICY

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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Business Profile

Village Stop & Go and Tewa Lounge

By LORA ARCINIEGA

The Village Stop & Go has been a town staple, and according to current business owner Berna Trujillo, the business has been operating in Questa for over 70 years. You might be in the mood for one of their slushies or stop in for a beverage in the lounge, but there are many other items in her inventory that owner Trujillo takes pride in carrying.

Some of the unique items that Trujillo seeks out include Questa postcards, magnets, and coffee cups made locally, osha lollipops made by a close friend, homemade flaxseed heating pads created by Granny Creations out of Cerro, a piñon-rose body mist, incense, and lip balms made by Brenda's Botanicals, a Cerro local. "I tell people, if you want to sell your homemade items here, go ahead. Many of these items make great one-of-a-kind gifts," she says.

Trujillo listed the many iterations that the Village Stop & Go and lounge have undergone over the past 70 years. Tewa Lounge offers a warm fireplace to keep patrons nice and cozy while enjoying a beverage, as well as a wood-paneled bar providing a drink to your liking. One is welcome to order and bring food into the bar and listen to music or chat with Trujillo and her employees, creating a pleasant atmosphere. A massage chair sits by the fireplace and in the corner an old pay phone gives you that nostal-

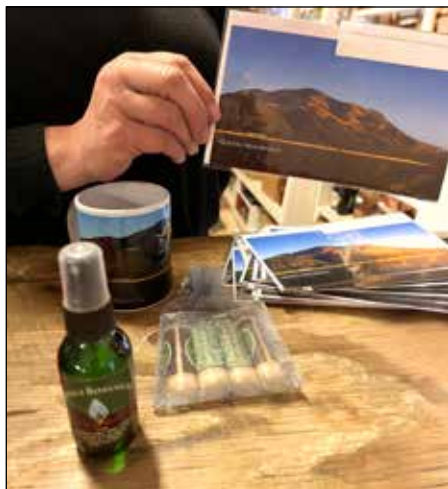


Photo by Lora Arciniega

gic feeling.

Thursdays tend to be the busiest night at the lounge. Trujillo's staff consists of four part-time employees, while Trujillo is there during the day. The lounge opens at approximately 7:30 a.m. with Trujillo's brother, Tony Trujillo, serving coffee for regulars; the bar closes after the evening crowd leaves. The business is open every day except for Christmas Day.

Being a business owner in Questa for many years, you learn a thing or two about what works and what doesn't. Trujillo says the best business advice she's received is "the wheel is already rolling, you don't have to reinvent it. The previous owner knew what worked and what items sold, and I've stuck with that and it's proven to be beneficial for my business." Trujillo expressed her willingness and ability to work with other local businesses in Questa and continues to offer a place for people to come and relax. Trujillo has been integral in community efforts that help families in need, offering her lounge for pool tournaments. "It's not only me. I'll sponsor the event, but the community comes together to pull off these fundraisers. Questa is very unique. When somebody needs something, the community is right there



Photo by Lora Arciniega

to help them. We all know each other and are connected to each other in some way," says Trujillo.

"We have a great village here and these smaller businesses can survive because the locals and tourists continue to support us." Hard work remains important to Trujillo as a business owner but her family, staff, and customers are part of her success. In addition to being a business owner, Trujillo is raising her three grandchildren, and along with

her brother helps care for her mother. Trujillo says, "If you continue to work hard for yourselves, things start falling into place." The people that work here and the people that come here are my extended family," Trujillo expresses. "I love my customers and they keep me going." Trujillo has made many connections throughout her 20-plus years as the owner and operator of the Village Stop & Go and hopes to continue to intrigue locals and tourists alike.

ARIA DURAN cont'd from page 3

says Alyssah. "The thing that gets me through is realizing as parents we don't have a choice, we have to do it for our kids. Our faith, the support from the community, as well as the belief that it's gonna be okay gets me through." Jose says "the thing that keeps me going is the overall outcome that she'll be able to be a normal kid and do all the things that she hasn't been able to do."

Alyssah's mom, Amanda Leon, wanted to help ease the financial impact this

would have on their family, so she started a GoFundMe account to help with expenses. The account quickly grew and by the next morning Aria was halfway to her goal. "I was overwhelmed and just super grateful for all of the support. At first we were asking ourselves 'how are we gonna get through this,'" says Alyssah. Some community members really stepped up and took charge. Specifically, Jennifer Vialpando, a close friend. Vialpando held a raffle for her artwork during Oktoberfest and raised \$1,800 all on her own for Aria. Vialpando's sister Rosie Turpin, of Rosie's Smokehouse,

sold cinnamon rolls on a Sunday and had all proceeds go to Aria. Turpin also keeps a donation jar at her restaurant for Aria. Many other community members have stepped up and asked how they can help.

This comes as no surprise as our little town is eager to help those in need. Jose and Alyssah officially moved back to Questa in 2022 due to Aria's health condition, and needing help from family members. Since they arrived, they have been involved with community activities and volunteering their time as coaches in youth sports. "Seeing all

of the support is mind-blowing. Look at all of these people who are willing to help our family and have such good things to say about Ari. We're looking forward to watching her live a long and healthy life and feel that Questa is exactly where we're supposed to be," says Alyssah. When asked how all of the support from the community makes her feel, Aria says, "Loved, it makes me feel loved." Jose and Alyssah remain steadfast through it all and are thankful for all of the community support surrounding Aria. They ask that prayers continue for their daughter.

Reflecting On One Year Under New Ownership

By MIKAYLA ORTEGA

The Sangre de Cristo Market in Questa has been open and operating under owner Dominick Apodaca, grandson of the original owners, Gomersindo and Ofelia Martinez, since December of 2023. Apodaca has been hard at work since its opening, making upgrades and structural improvements to the store.

“I am taking the money I am earning from the store and reinvesting it right back, by fixing many things like the parking lot and refrigeration system. I am also starting to expand a bit and see how we can utilize the building across the way,” Apodaca said in an interview with the *Questa del Rio News*.

Overall, his goal is to see Questa have what it needs here in town, making trips to Taos less necessary over time. “Our people tell us what they want and like to see, so I want to work to create opportunities for businesses that can serve the people. I really want Questa to thrive, economically.”

Over the past year, Apodaca has grown in his ability to lead his staff of approximately seven employees. “Things go wrong, sometimes with orders or food or staff, and it’s important to remain cool, calm, and collected. Inside I may be worried, but on the outside, I want to show my staff I have it under control.” He says this skill is something he learned when he was



Courtesy Photo

Sangre de Cristo Market owner Dominick Apodaca works the cash register with local Julian Garcia

drilling oil in Colorado prior to taking the leap into store ownership. “I learned that you need to show others you’re calm and confident to handle whatever is going on. That’s how you build that trust.”

While he has been running the store as the sole owner, he knows there is a wealth of information and experience available from his mom, who ran the store for many years while he was growing up. “My mom helps me understand how to forecast and gauge orders, staffing, and payroll. I am fortunate to have her and my stepdad’s guidance and help—they are a big reason I have been successful.”

Over the past year, the store has kept regular hours, from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. Apodaca is considering shifting this by an hour due to the slower winter months. “We are considering reducing by an hour during the winter, but I am not too sure we will go through with it. My priority is to be open when our people need us.”

Apodaca says the community has been very supportive of the grocery store and he is so grateful for that. “Without our people, I would be nothing. I need them as much as they need me, so I cannot express how grateful I am for their support and business.”



Courtesy Photo



Courtesy Photo

Racks of ribs being cooked in the smoker at the Sangre de Cristo Market

Apodaca remains committed to providing options for the community. Breakfast burritos are made fresh daily, and the deli area has a variety of sandwiches, salads, and other entrees for locals to pick up for a quick meal. “I am always looking for ways to diversify to give our people the best. That is my commitment, and I won’t stop working towards that.”

Questa Dentist Dr. Jameson to Retire after 43 Years

By MIKAYLA ORTEGA

Questa’s longtime dentist, Dr. Keith D. Jameson, has decided to retire at the end of 2024, after serving the northern New Mexico community for 43 years.

“I just decided it’s time to retire and enjoy life,” Dr. Jameson says. His father was a dentist, and he followed in his footsteps. “We came to New Mexico originally from Wisconsin. My dad traveled through the Air Force and finished up his career working at the Bureau of Indian Affairs. That’s how I got to New Mexico.”

Dr. Jameson was hired by two Taos dentists after graduating from dental school in 1983. “After some time, I decided to go my own way and open my practice.” While he hasn’t been in the same location his entire career, he has consistently worked in Questa two days a week to serve residents.

Over the past 43 years, he has seen thousands of patients, providing crucial



Courtesy Photo

Dr. Jameson looks through records in his dental office

dental services, including reconstructive dental work, root canals, and crowns. Currently, the practice has 400 to 500 patients. “We’ve been letting people know that I am retiring. Now as for the practice, I own this building so I am looking at options on what to do with it,” says Dr. Jameson. “I have spoken with a few dentists in Taos about taking over, but they haven’t committed to anything, so the future is still

developing.”

Working in his practice are dental hygienist Katrina Gonzales, dental assistant Michelle Pacheco, and office manager Janet Martinez, who has been with the practice for 40 years.

“I’ve seen a lot of changes and improvements over the past 43 years. Questa has transitioned from a full-blown mining town and now, it’s figuring out its



Courtesy Photo

L to R: Dental Assistant Michelle Pacheco, Office Manager Janet Martinez, Dr. Jameson, and Dental Hygienist Katrina Gonzales

identity, in tourism and as an economic hub. It’s been a great experience serving Questeños,” he says.

As for Dr. Jameson, he says he’s looking forward to retiring. “I have a small ranch in Cabresto and that is my retirement home. I have a few grandchildren and I want to take some time to be a grandpa,” he says. “Most of my best friends are Questeños and I am so grateful for my time in this community which has embraced me.”

Town of Red River Wins Inaugural Judges' Choice Hospitality and Tourism Award

BY STAFF WRITERS

The Town of Red River received its first-ever 'Judges' Choice Award' at the 2024 New Mexico Top Hospitality & Tourism Award Ceremony on Nov. 20. This honor was announced through a press release on Friday, Nov. 22. According to the release, this prestigious award was unexpectedly introduced during the ceremony and was presented by the New Mexico Hospitality Association in partnership with the New Mexico Tourism Department.

The Judges' Choice Award highlights the extraordinary efforts of small destinations working with limited resources to achieve big results. The panel of judges, comprising representatives from destination marketing organizations across the country, commending Red River's innovative and impactful marketing campaigns that position the town as one of the premier vacation destinations in New Mexico and the Southwest.

"This award is a testament to the



Courtesy Photo

Town of Red River employees sit together at the award ceremony on Nov. 20, 2024

creativity, passion, and hard work of our team in showcasing Red River's charm and hospitality," said Max Khudiakov, Director of Economic Development & Tourism for Red River. "We are honored to be recognized for our efforts to make Red River a must-visit destination."

During the award ceremony, Red River was named a finalist in seven nominations, including:

Best Digital Marketing Campaign for outstanding digital video, streaming audio, and social media advertising pieces.

Best Print Marketing Campaign for

creative print media pieces in many publications including the New Mexico Magazine and Texas Monthly magazine as well as billboard campaign in the Dallas/Fort Worth, TX area.

Best New Experience for the newly introduced Mayfest in the Mountains event.

The recognition underscores Red River's efforts to deliver dynamic marketing campaigns and create unique, memorable experiences that attract visitors year-round. The Mayfest in the Mountains event, a springtime celebration of music, food, and outdoor activities, has quickly gained popularity as a standout addition to the town's offerings.

Red River's success in recent years reinforces the town's commitment to driving tourism, fostering economic growth, and sharing the beauty of this mountain destination with the world, the release goes on to say

For more information on Red River's tourism initiatives, visit redriver.org.



Commercial Real Estate: A Growing Market With Unique Opportunities

New Mexico's commercial real estate market offers a unique blend of opportunities, driven by the state's diverse economy, growing industries, and distinctive cultural heritage. Here in the southwestern U.S., where there are expanding sectors such as technology, aerospace, and tourism, there are attractive prospects for investors, business owners, and developers alike. The New Mexico commercial real estate market varies significantly across different regions, from the urban core of Albuquerque to more

rural and emerging areas like Taos and Colfax Counties.

Office Space

Albuquerque is the central hub for office space in New Mexico. The office market there has been impacted by the shift to remote work, but demand remains steady in areas that attract technology firms, government contractors, and educational institutions. With a growing trend toward flexible workspaces, coworking environments, and work-from-home opportunities, workers can live in more rural areas.

Santa Fe and Taos, while smaller, are growing centers for arts, culture, creative industries, and government-related office space. The office space here tends to be more boutique.

Retail Space

Retail space is largely shaped by the tourism industry in New Mexico. Santa Fe and Taos are prime examples, with historic downtowns attracting large numbers of tourists looking to buy art, crafts, and southwestern goods. Retailers in these areas often cater to both local residents and visitors, with many shops and boutiques housed in adobe-style buildings, creating a unique shopping experience and often broadened with

online presence. While the retail market is adapting to the rise of e-commerce, it has both pros and cons.

Smaller towns, such as Taos, are seeing some retail growth, with an emphasis on local businesses and not big-box stores. There is still hope for new developments in 2025.

Industrial Real Estate

Industrial real estate is one of the strongest segments of New Mexico's commercial market, driven by logistics, manufacturing, and technology sectors. Albuquerque and the surrounding areas are key locations for industrial properties, with access to major trade routes on highways (I-25 and I-40) and proximity to the Mexican border.

The southern New Mexico region, including cities such as Las Cruces and Hobbs, is gaining attention, driven in part by growth in energy production (oil and natural gas) and a growing focus on e-commerce distribution. Demand for warehousing, logistics centers, and light manufacturing is on the rise, with the need for more supply chain infrastructure.

Kit Carson Electric Cooperative's green hydrogen energy project in Questa is intended to benefit the entire service territory in northern New Mexico,

while repurposing reclaimed water from the closed Chevron Mine, now a Superfund site. The project will produce hydrogen, promote its adoption, and add new energy infrastructure in targeted communities in Taos County, including Questa, Taos, Picuris Pueblo, and Taos Pueblo. As part of the planned project, each community will have custom green hydrogen facilities and corresponding renewable-energy-generation technology within their borders, according to KCEC.

Commercial Real Estate Available Nearby

From a prominent auto dealership and service center, to a modern bowling alley, to the iconic Old Martina's Hall (one of the largest music and dance halls and wedding venues nearby), northern New Mexico offers the most versatile commercial spaces suitable for entertainment venues, office, microbreweries, or industrial use. Reach out today to inquire about opportunities to purchase commercial spaces near you.

As with any real estate investment, it's important to do due diligence, understand the market trends, and work with a knowledgeable local realtor to ensure you make the best decision for your needs. I am here to help!

Historic St. James Hotel Purchased By Father-Daughter Duo

By MIKAYLA ORTEGA

The historic St. James Hotel in Cimarron, New Mexico, opened in 1872 and has hosted numerous Wild West legends including Jesse James, Wyatt Earp, and Buffalo Bill Cody. In our October issue, we covered the news of the business closing its doors, with uncertainty about the hotel's future.

Last month, in November, M Vacation Properties shared a press release with select media, announcing the sale of the business to father-daughter team Alyse and Chad Manz. The release goes on to say, "...the duo draw from their Kansas heritage... this project promises an enchanting blend of history, adventure, and culinary delights, establishing the hotel as a must-visit destination in New Mexico for travelers, food lovers, and history aficionados."

The new ownership is poised to connect guests with rich narratives of the Old West, while offering modern hospitality. Additionally, renowned chef Bila Conchas will lead the cherished bar and restaurant, serving Mexican cuisine. "The bar will showcase New Mexico's finest craft beers and inventive cocktails, celebrating local flavors and traditions, making it a genuine Old West social hub," the release notes.

Alyse and Chad Manz shared this message as they take on their new endeavor:

"As we stand on the threshold of reopening the St. James Hotel, there's a deep, almost indescribable joy in our hearts. This historic space is more than a building to us—it's a story, a legacy, and a call to adventure. From its origins along



Courtesy Photo

New owners Alyse and Chad Manz toast to becoming the new owners of the St. James Hotel

the Santa Fe Trail, the St. James has seen life and legends pass through its doors, and now it's ready for a new chapter. We want to share with you why this hotel, with its rich past and the magical landscape of Cimarron, New Mexico, captured our hearts and led us to take on its stewardship. We're a family rooted in history. Growing up in Kansas, just north of Dodge City and Fort Larned—both iconic stops along the Santa Fe Trail—we were never far from reminders of the Old West. The spirit of that time has always fascinated us, but it's about more than the legends; it's about the resilience, grit,

and dreams of those who lived it. When the opportunity arose to take over the operations of the St. James Hotel, we knew it was a way to preserve and share these values with others.

For us, this isn't just business; it's deeply personal. I'm Chad, a father who sees this journey as a way to teach my daughter, Alyse, about honoring the past while building something for the future. And I'm Alyse, a daughter who feels honored to stand alongside my father in this endeavor, knowing that we're preserving a piece of history for generations to come. This is our legacy, not just for



Courtesy Photo

Chef Bila Conchas

our family but for everyone who walks through these doors.

Together, we believe that every family, every traveler, and every adventurer deserves a place to create lasting memories. We're here to make sure the St. James Hotel is that place—a destination where history, culture, and heart converge to create something truly unforgettable.

To everyone who visits, we extend our heartfelt thanks. We look forward to welcoming you and sharing this incredible journey with each of you."

The restaurant is set to re-open on December 20.

Red River Brewery Wins Best Craft Vodka Award

By STAFF WRITERS

According to a press release, the Red River Brewery & Distillery has earned a spot on the USA TODAY "10 Best" list for best craft vodkas in the country for the third consecutive year, as voted by the readers of USA TODAY and 10Best.com. This is a highly competitive award.

The star of the show, known as the Silver King Vodka, is described as a smooth, refined, and exceptionally clean distilled spirit made with pristine snowmelt water from the mountains of Red River, New Mexico, and distilled at

one of the highest elevation distilleries in the world.

This vodka has won 14 prestigious national awards, including a double-gold medal and a best of class award from the American Distilling Institute.

"Our pristine water and relatively low-temperature distillation made possible at this elevation gives Silver King Vodka its smooth and subtle flavor profile," explains Head Distiller Gavin Whealy. "I'm proud of what we've done with Silver King Vodka." "Wow—three years in a row!" exclaims Michael Calhoun, owner of Red River

Brewery & Distillery. "We are honored and humbled by the continued support and recognition from our fans and customers. We're passionate about crafting high-quality spirits and deeply grateful for the award."

Silver King Vodka, along with other Red River Brewery & Distillery products, is available at over 320 liquor stores and is distributed through Southern Glazer's in New Mexico and Green Light Distribution in Texas.

To learn more about the Red River Brewing Company, you can visit www.redriverbrewing.com or follow them on Facebook and Instagram.



Questa Residents Surveyed on Housing Affordability

By ALEXANDRA GOLDMAN,
Taos Housing Partnership

Most of the Questa community thinks it is difficult to find safe and affordable housing in Questa, according to a recent survey conducted by the Questa Economic Development Fund (QEDF), in collaboration with Taos Housing Partnership.

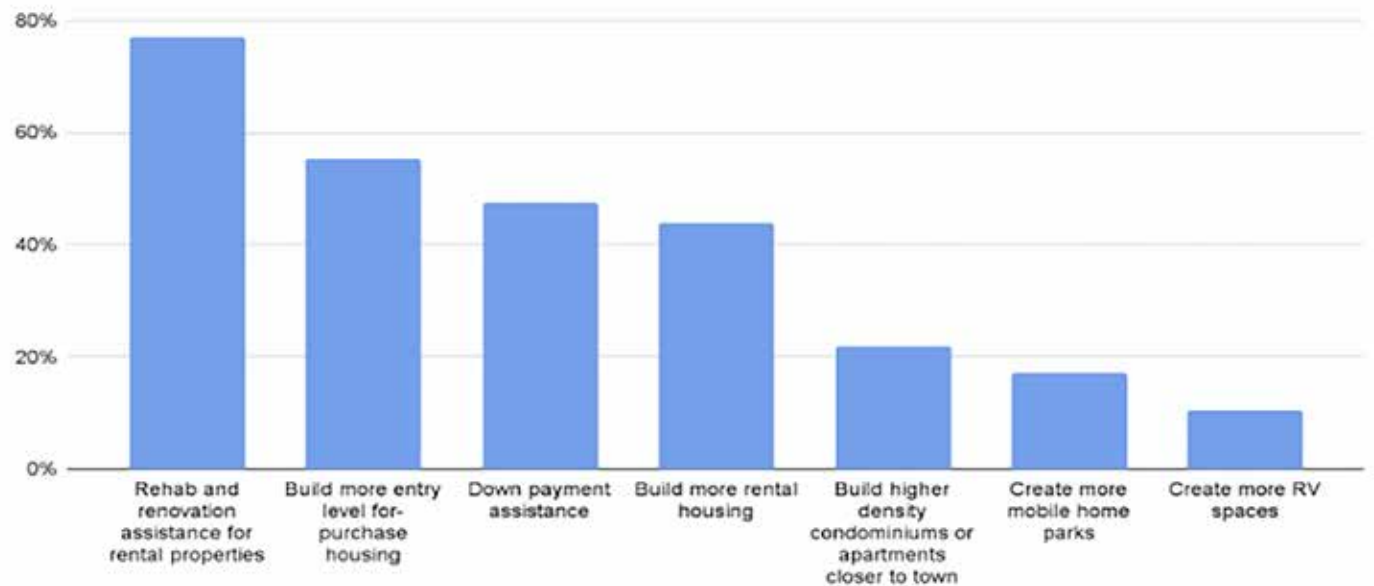
This survey was focused on housing affordability and preferences and gathered over 100 responses at the Questa Fiestas and Questa Farmer's Market this past June. The survey is part a larger effort to create housing affordability strategies for the Questa community.

Potential Solutions

When asked about potential housing solutions, 77 percent of survey respondents said community leaders should explore a renovation and rehabilitation program for existing rental properties. The survey indicates wide support for a program like the Questa Lodging Project with a rotating loan fund for renovation and rehabilitation of rental properties

The surveys also show support for exploring the possibility of building new entry-level for-purchase homes (55 percent) and for building new rental housing (44 percent). A large portion (48 percent of respondents) would

What options would you like Community Leaders to explore to meet Questa area housing needs?



like community leaders to explore a down-payment assistance program as well.

Housing Preferences

When asked about their own housing preferences, the most popular option was homeownership in a detached, single family home, close to town. On a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being the best, these were the responses:

The Affordability Gap

The survey also asked respondents to self-report an affordable monthly

rent or mortgage payment. The responses were far lower than the current cost of housing in the Questa area. For example, most respondents said they could afford a monthly mortgage payment of \$1,000 or less, however a mortgage payment for a home selling for \$350,000 is approximately \$2,000 per month. At this time, there are very few homes selling for less than \$350,000 in the greater Questa area.

Not surprisingly, respondents overwhelmingly indicated that housing in Questa is expensive and difficult to find.

The survey was made possible by a grant from the LOR Foundation, and is part of a months-long project undertaken by Taos Housing Partnership in collaboration with QEDF and other Questa community members. The survey results, along with community interviews, will be used to formulate several concrete, actionable strategies that Questa could implement to increase housing affordability. Stay tuned for updates on these strategies in the coming months! alexandra@taoshousingpartnership.org



Another Big Year for Questa and LOR

Things are crazy—we get it. It's the holiday season. You've got to feed and occupy your family. People are traveling. Kids are getting out of school. And now it gets dark before 5 p.m. Not to mention all the work that's piling up as the year comes to a close. Whew. This time of year is magical, but it can be a lot.

That's why we're taking a step back. And we hope you do, too. December is for family and fun, festivity, and warmth. But it's also a time for reflection. It's a chance

to look back on 11 months that feel both recent and like a distant memory. So, what has your 2024 been like? What have been the triumphs and tribulations?

In our view, it's been a remarkable 2024, thanks to you. Over the last year, Questa locals have led more than 40 community projects, strengthening Questa with more than \$330,000 in support from the LOR Foundation. If there's one thing 2024 showed us, it's that people across the Questa community are hungry to lead projects that make life better for their families, friends, and neighbors.

And you can see it in the numbers. Since Maria Gonzalez joined LOR as the Questa community officer a little over two years ago, Questa locals have championed more than 75 projects, with more than \$550,000 in support from LOR.

"Questa is special because of the dedicated, caring, and thoughtful people who call our community home," Gonzalez says. "Over the last year, local champions have continued to be the driving force behind the projects LOR has supported,

and you can see their impact all over the community."

Around town, it's not hard to find community-led projects from the last year that are making a difference for residents. Attended a basketball or volleyball game? Two school staffers reached out to Gonzalez with the idea to purchase a digital scorer's table with LOR's support. Now, the scoreboard is helping local businesses advertise to residents, while the Questa Independent School District is using the proceeds to support its athletic programs. Visited the C. A. Cisneros Youth and Family Center? One Village of Questa employee approached Gonzalez with a vision to revitalize the center. With repairs, new furniture, and updated equipment, the center is becoming a growing hub for local youth and community activities. Gotten your hands dirty at the Questa Creative Council's Ceramic Café workshops? Council members wanted to offer pottery classes to even more residents, so they reached out to LOR for help. With new supplies, the Creative Council is growing the Ceramic

Café program so even more Questa locals can pursue the creative arts.

"This year has been an overwhelming success," Gonzalez says. "Questa locals have come up with dozens of projects that are already benefiting our community, including solutions that will help residents for years to come."

The LOR office will be closed from December 21 through January 6 so that Gonzalez and the LOR team can enjoy the holidays and reset before what we expect will be the busiest year yet. But don't worry, there's still time if you have an idea for a community solution! Reach out to Gonzalez at maria@lorfoundation.org or (575) 665-2001 to set up a time to talk and learn how LOR can help you bring your idea to life.

From Gonzalez and all of us at LOR, we wish you a warm and joyful holiday season!

LOR works with rural communities in the Mountain West to enhance livability and prosperity while preserving the character that makes each community unique.

Questa Food Pantry Distributes Free Thanksgiving Turkeys And Fixings



Photo by Wendy Vigil

Volunteers distribute 350 turkeys at the Questa Food Pantry

By STAFF WRITERS

Questa's North Central Food Pantry is constantly working to ensure local northern Taos County residents have access to basic food necessities. President Jeannie Masters is a passionate and crucial part of the pantry's success.

"We have been blessed beyond measure," Masters says. "This year, we were able to get approximately \$10,000 in donations from the community to purchase frozen turkeys, chickens, and Thanksgiving fixings to give to the community." The giveaway was on Friday, November 22. The organization had 350 turkeys and 363 people had registered to receive them.

The program has been ongoing for four years and every year, an 'anonymous angel' has paid for turkeys to be given to the community. This year, the LOR Foundation gave \$4,000, River Community Church gave \$1,000 and an anonymous donor from Kansas contributed \$5,000. "God is so good to us and he blesses us abundantly," Masters says. "I don't worry, because I know regardless of if we need more donations or more volunteers, God will provide."

The pantry maintains that food is free to anyone in the Questa community and surrounding areas within the state

of New Mexico, regardless of income. "I am not afraid to ask businesses for help collecting money or donations. The people here understand it's to feed families in our community who need food, and they are happy to help out."

Treasurer Joan MacDonald says "we do this to help out the community, it's needed and that's why we do this." Many of the community members who attended the give-away expressed their sincere gratitude for the wonderful items they received, many saying it was a blessing and a gift.

The North Central Food Pantry is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization. The five board members include President Jeannie Masters, Vice President Kate Cisneros, Secretary Nancy Parker, Treasurer Joan MacDonald, and member-at-large Gaea McGahee. If you're interested in donating your time, funding, or other resources, visit the pantry's website at <https://www.ncfpquesta.com/support-us>. You can also call (575) 586-0486.

"We have to walk in faith—because at the end of the day, all we have is our faith," Masters says. "God is so good to us every day and I thank the Lord for his countless blessings that allow us to feed those who are hungry in our community."



Photo by Wendy Vigil

Local volunteers distribute Thanksgiving food boxes



FREE WORKSHOPS

CONNECTING THE COMMUNITY TO BUSINESS RESOURCES, TRAINING, AND SERVICES

AT THE QUESTA PUBLIC LIBRARY

DECEMBER WORKSHOPS

<p>DECEMBER 4 WEDNESDAY</p> <p>Quickbooks for Business: Beginner</p> <p>5:30-7:30 With Aline Robertson Als Helpers</p>	<p>DECEMBER 13 FRIDAY</p> <p>Technology Assistance for Seniors</p> <p>By Appointment Only With Martin Maes</p>	<p>DECEMBER 19 THURSDAY</p> <p>1:1 Confidential Business Consulting</p> <p>By Appointment Only With Anwar Kaelin</p> 
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COMING IN JANUARY!

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A collaborative session where business owners and entrepreneurs share insights and ideas to guide the development of impactful future business trainings at the Questa Business Bridge.



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online for full class descriptions
and to register for a class.**

<https://sites.google.com/questaedf.com/questabusinessbridge/class-schedule>



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Questa VFW Narrowly Avoids Shutdown



Photo by E. Wilde

By MIKAYLA ORTEGA

Across the country, VFWs are feeling the impact of member attrition. Many veterans of foreign wars are passing away.

In May of 2024, we saw the same situation in our own community. We reported how Questa's VFW was at risk of shuttering its charter due to dwindling membership. At that time, Commander Danny Garcia said the biggest hurdle was low membership numbers, as veterans from the Korean War, WWI, and WWII were passing away. "The numbers were so low, we couldn't even get enough people to have a quorum," Garcia says.

Now, more than seven months later, we caught up with him, and he says he's hopeful—as membership numbers have increased. "Not only have we had an increase in membership numbers, but we've also seen members actively attending meetings to ensure we have a quorum. It's a start," he says.

The increased numbers and active participation are a good sign for the VFW and its future. "We're not on probation anymore, which is a good sign. Now we need to ensure we remain active and involved."

Commander Garcia shared that he takes care of his son, Antonio (Tono) Garcia, who became paralyzed from a motorcycle accident more than 20 years ago. "A lot of my time goes to taking care of my son, so I appreciate our membership stepping up and being active so the Questa chapter can continue forward for the community. I will do as much as I can, but I am not able to do it alone."

The current membership of the Questa VFW includes Commander Danny Garcia, Clyde Cisneros, Abran Montes, Louis "Eddie" Herrera, Louie Herrera, Jason Gonzalez, Gabriel Herrera, and Arnold Rael.

Prospective members must have been combat veterans of a foreign war.

One new aspect of the monthly meet-

ing requirement is the hybrid model: the ability to meet through Zoom to host and attend the meetings, as well as in person. "We use Zoom to allow people who can't be there in person, to join."

Meetings are held on the second Wednesday of every month at 6 p.m.

In addition to running and maintaining the hall for events such as funerals, parties, and community events, the membership is also responsible for maintaining the Pueblito Cemetery, on the mountain across Lagunita Lake.

When asked what is needed at this point, Commander Garcia says, "active and engaged members. We also need support from the community shoveling snow at the VFW, or cutting weeds, or even maintaining the road to the Pueblito. We are stretched thin with our duties and our work is volunteered by the membership, so any [additional] volunteer help would really be appreciated."

In addition to joining the membership or volunteering, you are also eligible to join the Auxiliary if you're a family member of a veteran of a foreign war. "The Auxiliary used to be called the Ladies Auxiliary, but that has since changed, so now both women and men can join and be a part of the work to keep the Questa VFW alive," Commander Garcia says.

While Commander Garcia works with other members to push the chapter forward, they continue to work through hurdles, such as the rising cost of utilities and insurance for their commercial building. The group is working on solutions and ways to make up for the rising costs while also setting its sights on active community engagement and presence.

If you're interested in helping with solutions and are eligible to join the VFW, or if you'd like to volunteer with the Questa VFW, contact Danny Garcia at (575) 779-6214. If you're interested in getting involved with the Auxiliary, contact Vikki Cisneros at (575) 770-1299.



WEDNESDAY EVENINGS
AGES 5-12 YRS
BRILLANDO KIDS CLUB
6-7:30 PM
Jan 2025
LIVING WORD CENTER | 12 LLANO RD | QUESTA

WEDNESDAY EVENINGS
AGES 9-12 YRS
BRILLANDO KIDS CREATIVE ARTS
LWM QUESTA | 12 LLANO RD

FREE voice lessons
BRILLANDO Kids Voice
LED BY RACHEL LEON
WEDNESDAYS
6:45PM - 8YRS
7:30PM - 9-12YRS
LWM 12 LLANO RD QUESTA

BRILLANDO KIDS LEAD
Wed 6-6:45PM
JAN 2025
Ages 9-12
LWM1 Questa | 12 Llano Rd

Water, Manufacturing, and New Mexico's Economic Future

By CONTRIBUTING WRITERS

New Mexico stands at a crossroads. As the state grapples with economic challenges and seeks to diversify its revenue streams, it must address critical issues related to water availability and sustainable growth. In particular, the intersection of manufacturing, freshwater resources, and budgetary considerations demands strategic planning and bold action.

The Role of Manufacturing in Economic Diversification

Diversifying the economy is not just a buzz phrase; it's a necessity. While oil and gas have historically played a significant role in New Mexico's economy, we

cannot rely solely on these industries. Manufacturing offers a promising avenue for growth. By attracting manufacturing companies, we create jobs, stimulate local economies, and enhance our competitiveness on a national and global scale.

Manufacturing jobs provide stability and upward mobility for workers. They span various sectors, from aerospace and electronics to food processing and renewable energy. New Mexico's skilled workforce, strategic location, and existing infrastructure make it an attractive destination for manufacturers seeking to expand or relocate.

However, there's a catch: manufacturing requires water. Freshwater resources are precious, and we cannot afford to deplete them for industrial purposes. Our rivers, aquifers, and reservoirs sustain communities, agriculture, and ecosystems. Balancing the needs of manufacturing with water conservation is essential.

Establishing a Strategic Water Supply

To address this challenge, Governor Lujan Grisham introduced the strategic

WATER DISCUSSION cont'd on page 20

Water Supply Policy Summit

Sponsored by Senator Bobby Gonzales

Wednesday, December 18th

8 a.m. - 3:30 p.m.

Buffalo Thunder Resort & Casino
30 Buffalo Thunder Trail, Santa Fe

Free to attend, to register,

see ad on page 19

URGENT: Survey Input Needed to Extend Municipal Sewer System in Questa

By STAFF WRITERS

The Village of Questa is calling on all full-time residents to participate in an important income survey that will help secure funding for vital sewer infrastructure improvements. The survey results are necessary to assist the Village of Questa in obtaining funding from state and federal authorities to extend the municipal sewer system to an estimated 66 homes along North Kiowa Road and Gallegos Road. The village is also hopeful of extending the project, if funding allows, to 31 homes on Old Llama Road.

Currently, the village cannot apply for USDA Preliminary Planning Grant (PPG) funds because of current census data on household income levels. For Questa to qualify, the survey must establish an accurate representation of the area's Median Household Income (MHI).

Every completed survey brings Questa one step closer to obtaining these essential funds.

Survey forms have been sent to full-time residents along with pre-addressed, postage-paid envelopes for easy return. All responses are entirely confidential. Completing this survey will require only a few minutes and will impact the Questa community for years to come.

The Village implores residents to complete the survey to ensure your voice is heard.

If you didn't receive a survey, misplaced it, or if you have questions, you can contact Hannah Whittaker, Small Utility Consultant I, RCAC Environmental Services via email at hwhittaker@rcac.org or by phone at (279) 219-2783. Or contact Jacob LaFore, Village of Questa Project Manager, via email at jlafore@villageofquesta.org or by phone at (575) 586-0694.

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The Tradition Of Las Posadas in Northern New Mexico

By LORA ARCINIEGA

The tradition of Las Posadas has been occurring in New Mexico for many years. It's a time of preparation and remembrance of the Christmas season. Originating in Spain, the tradition began in order to teach people about the Christmas story. The term "posadas" means lodging or an inn. Las posadas are traditionally held the nine days before Christmas, beginning December 16, until the final posada on Christmas Eve. The tradition is held at local Catholic churches or in people's homes during the nine days before Christmas, which signifies the nine months Mary carried baby Jesus in her womb.

A knock at the door signals the start of the tradition, with celebrants carrying statues of Mary and Joseph as they traveled, seeking shelter. There are some members inside the building and some outside accompanying Mary and Joseph. Mary and Joseph continue to knock on the door of the church or the home and ask for posadas, or lodging, for the night. Each time Mary and Joseph ask for shelter the people inside the building re-



Courtesy Photo

Meal after Las Posadas at the Questa Parish Center

spond saying there is no room for them. The conversation goes back and forth in song until finally Mary and Joseph are let into the building or allowed posadas. Then you hear the song "Vamos todos a Belén con amor y gozo, adoremos al Señor nuestro Redentor" which translates to "Let's all go to Bethlehem with love

and joy, we will worship the Lord our Redeemer." A Catholic mass is followed by the procession and it's not until the last night of the posadas, Christmas Eve, that baby Jesus is brought out and all the traditional Christmas songs are sung.

Whether the event is held at a local church or someone's home, a tradition-

al meal consisting of posole, red chile, tortillas, biscochitos, and something to drink is offered afterwards. If you attend posadas at your local church, the meal is usually held at the local parish center. When the tradition is held at someone's home, the meaning is very special for that family and those attending. Sometimes families work together to host the event, which can bring up to 20 people. An altar is prepared in the home where the statues of Mary and Joseph are placed. Special blessings are offered for the hosting family by the priest who celebrates the mass.

There was a time when posadas were held each of the nine days before Christmas. Recently, only a few families from the area have opened up their homes for this tradition, but the celebration held at local Catholic churches remains strong.

This year you can find Las Posadas at St. Anthony's Catholic Church in Questa on December 16 starting at 5 p.m., followed by a meal at the Questa Parish center. On December 20, you can find the traditional celebration at Sacred Heart Catholic Church in Costilla at 5 p.m. followed by a meal at the Costilla Parish center.

Northern Taos County Catholic Communities Continue Fundraising Efforts To Build Church Rectory

By MIKAYLA ORTEGA

Over the past 19 months, faithful parishioners from the five Catholic Churches in northern Taos County have worked together to fundraise and volunteer to build a new rectory for our local parish priest, Father Ifele. "Parishioners are responsible for housing their parish priests, so we got to work, building and raising money for the rectory," fundraising committee lead Louise Gallegos says.

The work has been done mostly by volunteers, under the leadership of contractor Mark Sideris. Sideris was also the lead on rebuilding St. Anthony's Church.

"The old rectory was a small building which sat near the church property, however, over the years it had developed mold and mildew. It had structural issues, so we decided to demolish it and rebuild a new structure," Sideris says.

Father Ifele serves the parishes in northern Taos County, including Saint Edwin's Catholic Mission Church in Red River, Nuestra Senora de Guadalupe Church in Cerro, Sagrado Corazon Church in



Courtesy Photo

Mark Sideris welcomes us into the rectory to see the progress of the project

Costilla, Santo Nino Mission Church in Amalia, and St. Anthony's Catholic Church in Questa—therefore providing housing for him is a joint community effort and need.

The fundraising efforts have ranged from raffle sales to benefit dances. "We have about \$20,000 left to go to fully cover the rectory project," Gallegos says.

The new rectory is a three-bed, three-bath home with a chapel. Each room has a built-in desk to allow for a space to study and pray. "Questa will host traveling priests and dignitaries at times, so the extra rooms serve the purpose of



Courtesy Photo

Church Rectory nearing completion

giving hospitality to our traveling guests," says Sideris.

He went on to say much of the work has been donated by skilled workers who gave of their time and talent to do the electrical, plumbing, installation of the garage door, and stuccoing the building. "Our people from here, they're givers, and they rise to the occasion, doing whatever is needed to get us closer to the finish line,"

he continues.

The rectory is on track to be completed in early December, however, permits have been extended through December 19, should there be any hiccups along the way.

If you are interested in donating, send a check to St. Anthony's Parish. Be sure to note in the memo line that it's for the Rectory Project. The address is PO Box 200, Questa, NM 87556.

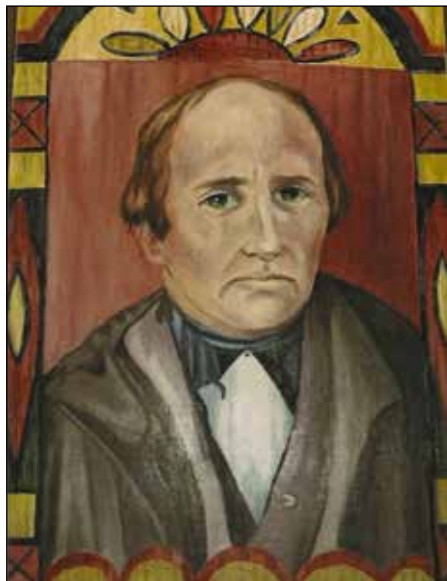
History of the Duran Chapel: December THS Presentation

By CONTRIBUTING WRITERS
TAOS COUNTY
HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Perhaps the most tumultuous era in northern New Mexico history was the territorial period. This was a time of major political, cultural, and religious change. After the Mexican-American war, New Mexico became the territory of a new country, the United States.

On the cultural front, New Mexicans would have to adapt to a new language, new customs and traditions, and new political realities. On the religious front, the Catholic church, a bedrock of Spanish and Mexican culture, created a new church hierarchy, transferring jurisdiction from Durango, Mexico, to the Diocese of Santa Fe under the leadership of newly ordained Bishop Jean Baptiste Lamy.

Perhaps the most influential person living in northern New Mexico at the time was Padre Jose Antonio Martinez. Padre Martinez was first appointed as priest in charge of Our Lady of Guadalupe Church in 1826. In 1842, Governor

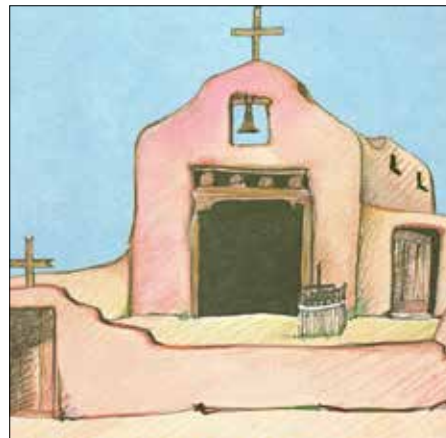


Courtesy photo

Padre Martinez

Armijo certified Martinez as a civil lawyer. Padre Martinez brought the first printing press to New Mexico and founded the first formal school: The Home-Preparatory Seminary, working out of his home.

Perhaps it was inevitable that the two most powerful figures within the Catholic church in northern New Mex-



Courtesy of Taylor Museum, Colorado Springs, Colorado

Duran Chapel

ico would quarrel over leadership. After several minor clashes, a major rift developed centered around Padre Martinez's close association with the Hermandad, Los Penitentes, and use of the Duran Chapel as his base of operations. Bishop Lamy formally excommunicated Padre Martinez in April of 1858. Thereafter, Padre Martinez continued to hold on to power and exert influence, and used the Duran Chapel in a central role, as his

base of operations.

The chapel, built by Nicolas Sandoval in 1838, remained intact into the 1960s then fell into disrepair. Today it is little more than piles of adobe dirt on the foundation of the old chapel walls. Doreen Duran, a descendant of Nicholas Sandoval, is leading an initiative to restore this historic New Mexico landmark.

The history of the Duran Chapel is the topic of the December lecture of the Taos County Historical Society. The featured speaker is Fr. Juan Romero, the author of "Reluctant Dawn: Biography of Padre Martinez," "Cura de Taos," and many articles on the history of the Duran Chapel.

The event will be held on Sunday December 8, at noon at the Sagebrush Convention Center. The event includes a New Mexican buffet lunch. There will also be a silent auction offering great Christmas gifts. Tickets are \$40 for Society members; \$45 for non-members. To obtain tickets, contact Ernestina Cordova at (575) 758-9243 or email cordova@newmex.com.

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Questa Volleyball Season Comes To an End in Third Game at State Playoffs

By MIKAYLA ORTEGA

The Questa Ladycats broke many records this year, ending the regular season with 21 wins and 2 sole losses. They ended district playoffs with 9 wins and 1 loss. The girls were seeded sixth in the State Playoffs, a record high placement for the Questa volleyball program.

In the State Playoff Tournament, the team played Santa Rosa in the first match on Thursday, November 14 at noon. They won match one, 25-18. Match two also went to the Ladycats with a 27-25 set. In match three, Santa Rosa ran on a six-point advantage, winning the set with a close 25-23. Questa ultimately finished the game, winning the fourth set 25-21.

On that same day, the Ladycats played their second game against Mesilla Valley at 4 p.m. "We spent the whole day at the gym that day; it was such a long day... we had left Questa at seven in the morning," head coach Michelle Garcia Spears says.

The Ladycats moved forward ready to take on Mesilla Valley. "The girls on Mesilla Valley were really tall, and it was intimidating, but the girls didn't shy away. They pushed forward, putting their best foot forward," Garcia Spears says.

In the match against Mesilla Valley, the Ladycats fell short in all three sets. "I was so proud of their effort. In set two, the score was 28-26. That was a close set, and I am so proud of them," Garcia Spears says.

The tournament was a modified double elimination tournament. The Ladycats were pushed on to play Raton after their second loss. It was Raton's first loss. The double elimination game was

held Friday, November 15 at 8 a.m.

Raton took the first set 25-21. The second set was owned by Questa 25-19. Raton took set three, 25-17 and then, Raton took set four, 25-19.

When asked if the exhaustion from traveling to Rio Rancho, then playing two games on the same day, immediately followed by an early game on Friday may have contributed to the players' performance, the coach responded, "I am not going to make excuses for not getting as far as we would've liked. It is what it is, and we adapted to the situation as best as we could. We were exhausted and it was a lot, but I am happy knowing we did our absolute best."

While the Ladycats didn't bring home a state title, they showed up every single game, giving their best. The team ended the season with three all district players, to include #2 Alyana Leon, #11 Delilah Rael, and #25 Alexis Brown. They also had two all-district honorable mentions, to include #13 Alianna Gonzalez and #20 Kiara Arellano.

"I am bittersweet about the seven seniors we're losing. I had only been with them for two years as their coach, but I will miss them all dearly. We had a very special bond. I am not terribly worried because we have a strong future. Varsity has been working with JV closely and we know they will fill those shoes," Garcia Spears says.

We caught up with a few of the seniors to hear their thoughts on closing the book to this phenomenal chapter of their high school volleyball career.

Senior Delilah Rael notes, "This season was the best; all the ups and downs



Courtesy Photo

Questa Ladycats play at State Playoffs against Santa Rosa



Courtesy Photo

(L to R) Delilah, Alianna, Alexis, Kiara, Alyana stand together after receiving All District in 5-AA Volleyball recognition

shaped us into a team we were. Being able to play with these girls was one of the best things in the world. The endless memories on and off the court are the moments that will never be forgotten."

"As I reflect on the last season, I feel nothing but gratitude," Alyana Leon says. "I am grateful for my teammates, my coaches, opponents, community members, and refs—but most importantly, I am grateful for the game. Playing with this team made me a better person and taught me so much. It's bittersweet, finishing the season, but I couldn't be happier or prouder of my teammates. I am so excited to see the future of the volleyball program,"

Senior Aliyah Santistevan says, "It was a fun run while it lasted," and senior Kiara Arellano says "I am definitely going to miss this year and volleyball overall. I want to thank fans, coaches,

teammates, and everyone who helped us this season. I am going to miss every single one of my teammates. I don't know what I am going to do without this sport. My fellow seniors have been playing together since we were small and I wouldn't trade crying with my girls on the court when the last point hits for anything in the world."

Coach Garcia Spears says she is sincerely grateful for the support from the Questa community. "I just need to thank all the Questa fans! The first time we played at the state playoffs we had such an incredible crowd. Many people who are from Questa and now live in Albuquerque and Rio Rancho showed up to support our girls. Additionally, a lot of our Questa fans traveled to the game to support us. That really meant a lot to us, and I am so grateful."

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Years Of Service: Recognizing Feliz Ortega

By LORA ARCINIEGA

Teaching may be one of the oldest professions in the world. It's defined as the practice of transmitting skills and knowledge to learners. Skills aside, the heart of a teacher comes from the deep desire to inspire, motivate, and help others succeed. This month we honor Questa Alta Vista Elementary educator and third-grade teacher, Feliz Ortega.

Feliz Ortega has been a teacher at Alta Vista Elementary for nine years, since 2015. She's worked with second to fifth grades but most of her classroom experience has been with the third grade.

Born and raised in Taos, her career working with children started out in the daycare at Taos High School. She then moved on to be an educational assistant (EA) at Enos Garcia Elementary School in Taos for seven years. Then she transitioned to a secretary position at Questa High School and soon after that obtained her teaching degree from the University of New Mexico.

There was one instance that really sparked Ortega's interest in teaching. When she was about ten years old, she saw

an advertisement with children describing what they wanted to be when they grew up. Several kids listed the many professions kids often do, but one little girl stood up and said she wanted to be a teacher. The other kids laughed and made fun of her. The little girl in the ad said in return, "Where would all of you be without teachers?" The notion that all professions are influenced by teachers stuck with Ortega.

Ortega's teaching style is hands-on and science-based. With a teaching endorsement in science, she leads with this and connects it to lessons, whether in language arts or social studies. "I really love hands-on learning because the kids really enjoy it and it gets them excited," Ortega says.

Ultimately, Ortega is inspired to teach by her father, a retired educator and administrator—as well as retired lieutenant colonel in the National Guard. From her father comes Ortega's aptitude for classroom management and routine, and from her mother comes her nurturing touch. Ortega was raised with a stay-at-home mother and three sisters, with whom she remains close. "We are very family oriented," says Ortega.

Another valuable trait Ortega brings



Courtesy of Feliz Ortega

Alta Vista teacher Feliz Ortega

to the classroom is the ability to allow her students ("her kids," she calls them throughout the year) to have a voice. She allows them to express their opinions and even challenge her at times. This year she held a class vote where "her kids" decided what she would be for Halloween. She says they were so surprised and happy when

she walked into the classroom dressed as their choice!

When asked to share something with readers they might not know about her, Ortega replied, "I love to travel. I have a bucket list that I refer to about twice a year with my two kids. I've traveled to 10 states and 13 different countries. I try to go somewhere new every year." Ortega has twin children, Diego and Mariana, both 16. "They keep me busy with their sports and activities. I continue to push them and encourage them to expand their interests, activities, and knowledge," says Ortega.

In the classroom, Ortega is constantly reminded that children can teach adults as well. She recalled one instance when she first started teaching when a seven-year-old boy showed her a new way of solving a math problem. She says, "Even though he was only seven years old, he taught me something new. It made me realize that everyone learns at their own speed and with their own style," and states "our classroom is our little family, our own little community. I want to be the kind of teacher that tries to understand my students' needs and give them an opportunity to shine wherever they can."

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Jacob Vallejos

By MIKAYLA ORTEGA

For our December Outstanding Youth Report, senior Jacob Vallejos was nominated to be featured.

Vallejos lived in Denver until he was 8 years old. His family relocated to Amalia and he says he has been happy living in the country ever since. “I was raised by hardworking people. I give credit to them for the person I am today,” he says. Vallejos says his family instilled morals, integrity, and a good work ethic by their example.

Vallejos is a member of the soccer, basketball, baseball, and track and field teams in the Questa Independent Schools. While he is an outstanding athlete, he is also academically thriving, currently serving as the president of the honor society.

He is appreciative of his upbringing in a close-knit community. “Growing up in a small community has affected my life in a positive way, giving me an understanding and knowledge of what real community is. It showed me the importance of not only helping yourself, but to help others in need of your help.”

Vallejos volunteers at the food pantry in Questa to fulfill the 30 hours that is required by the honor society. “Living in a small community has taught me leadership skills. Moreover, respect and concern for the people and elderly that live in small communities.”

When asked what he would tell younger generations for advice, he says “I would tell younger kids that you can do whatever you put your mind to. Hard work and determination are very important aspects of your life, whether that is in your education, job, or life in general.”



Courtesy Photo

Jacob Vallejos



Brendalee (Vialpando) Reiplinger

By MIKAYLA ORTEGA

Being raised in a community where your history connects to every part of your present, it is 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 those who have pursued lives outside of the community—through our Representando series. This series is dedicated to those who are Representando communities in northern Taos County, in various facets of life.

For our December issue, we interviewed Brendalee (Vialpando) Reiplinger. Brendalee graduated from Questa High School in 2005. Ever since she was 15 years old, she had an interest in culinary arts and hospitality. “When I was very young, my cousin Jennifer Sanchez and I would make menus and set up a restaurant for my family,” she said with a laugh. “When I was a sophomore in high school, I told my parents that I wanted to go to culinary school and become a chef. My mom encouraged me to enroll in a culinary class at UNM Taos to see if it was something I really wanted to do.”

Upon graduation, Brendalee moved to Flagstaff near her sisters, while she attended the Art Institute of Los An-

geles remotely. She worked at the Little America Hotel, which was her first experience working in hospitality first-hand. “It was that winter after graduating that I had the opportunity to move to California and attend school on-campus in Santa Monica.”

While attending school in California, she worked two jobs to make rent. “I worked as a Line Cook at Beacon Restaurant for a couple years, and that’s when it was suggested to me to make a move to Las Vegas, Nevada.” Brendalee went on to work for Joel Robuchon at the MGM Resorts and Casino as she turned 21 years old. Robuchon has been coined as the ‘Chef of the Century.’ As well as being a part of the opening of Aria Resort and Casino at Julian Serrano Restaurant. “I spent much of my time learning how to cook in restaurants, it really helped me develop strong skills and experience which have served me well in my current role.”

While living and working in Las Vegas, Brendalee met her now husband Jason Reiplinger who also works in the hospitality industry. In 2013 they moved to San Francisco, CA. After nearly 4 years of cooking at the St. Regis Hotel and TORC in Napa, Brendalee had a great opportunity to join Woodside Hotel Group in her first Executive Sous Chef role, in 2016. Brendalee and her husband have worked for the Woodside Hotel Group in California for the past decade, with the exception of a stint in Colorado between 2022-2023. “Woodside Hotel Group is really a home for both of us. I work as the Executive Chef, and my husband is the Managing Director of the company’s flagship property on the Sonoma coast in Bodega Bay. It holds a soft spot for both of us,” she adds.

While much of her career has been in California, Nevada and Colorado, Brendalee’s passion for hospitality comes from her upbringing in Questa. “When our families would get together for the holidays, it was always centered around food. I grew up in a household that was incredibly encouraging and



Courtesy Photo

Brendalee Reiplinger

supportive. I credit a lot of any success I have to how and where I was raised. My mom is the most hospitable person I have ever met, she taught me how to cook, welcome family and how powerful food can be. My dad is the hardest working person I know, and every day I try to emulate that. I am incredibly proud to be from New Mexico, I bring it up as often as I can. Questa is a place of respite for me. When I come home, I seek tranquility and most of all family time. I love the community I grew up in. No question, it has helped shape who I am today.

Best of all, when I come home, I don’t cook as my family treats me to the best of northern New Mexico cooking. Yes, I come with plenty of requests,” Brendalee says with a smile.

When asked what she would tell others who may be interested in pursuing a career as a chef, she says, “Seek to understand what the craft truly is while also understanding the career path you may need to take. It’s important to take chances and live outside your comfort zone. It will help you grow. Most importantly, do not give up!”

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Alumbra de Questa; Light of our Community

¡Es hora de alumbrar el árbol de Navidad! And not just our Christmas trees, it's time for all the candles and farolitos and bonfires and glowing lights that have celebrated this darkest time of the year throughout the ages! We at the Questa Creative Council celebrate this time with arts, crafts, and giving. Two bright events await you this month.

Art Kits for Kids!

Is our favorite fund drive. This annual project provides FREE art and craft supplies to area kids of all ages. While the collection of donations continues through the month, distribution of the art kits is at the Questa Public Library on Friday, December 6 during open hours, from noon to 5 p.m. These gifts will be available while supply lasts. (See sidebar for donation information)

Plus Kids' Maker Space December 6

Kids can collect their art supply gifts and then stay for the creative fun at a kids' "maker space" of guided craft projects with a holiday theme, fun for the whole family! Projects will include 3D ornaments, Christmas cards, and decorating your own, big holiday cookie! The maker event will run from 1 to 3 p.m.

Alumbra de Questa Holiday Market December 14

Our non-profit will again host the Alumbra de Questa holiday market at

Questa's VFW Hall on Saturday, December 14, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. This one is for us, the community. Expect to find your favorite local artists and craftspeople, your neighbors, offering gift items, ornaments, and homemade goodies to take home. From exquisite glass jewelry to leather accessories to woodworks, beadworks, wreaths and jams, you will find something unique to fit every budget. Plus, enjoy hot chocolate and delicious foods while soaking up the holiday spirit with your family and friends—what a great way to SHOP LOCAL and keep your dollars in Questa.

As a local non-profit, we more than welcome your tax-deductible year-end giving! Come find us at the holiday market! There is sure to be a donation jar amid the goodies.

We hope to see you all this festive season, and wish you and yours much peace and happiness!

HOW TO DONATE FOR ART KITS FOR KIDS

Donations for our kids this Christmas (or any donation or membership to support the QCC) can be made online at [QuestaCreative.org/join](https://www.questacreative.org/join). Donations are tax-deductible. You can also mail a check to the QCC at PO Box 1025, Questa, NM, 87556, with an "art kits" note on the memo line.

ALUMBRA VENDORS

While space is limited to 24 vendors, there may still be tables available for the Alumbra holiday market by the time of publication. You will need to call or email to confirm there is still space, at QuestaCreativeCouncil@gmail.com, (575) 586-5658. The fee is \$25, for a 6-foot table, with setup from 9 a.m., and close-down from 4 to 5 p.m. You can mail your vendor fee and application to QCC at PO Box 1025, Questa, NM, 87556, with "Alumbra" noted, or click on the Alumbra box on our website.



Courtesy photo



Courtesy Photo

Art Kit paints from the 2023 distribution

An excited youngster holding his art materials



Courtesy photo

Alumbra elves!



Courtesy photo

Alumbra 2023, Sierra and Kami

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A Life Lived with Intention, Creativity, and Love



Courtesy Photo

Juniper Tree by David Zimmerman

By PEGGY TRIGG

The Questa Public Library is proud to present David Zimmerman's photography display entitled "A Life Lived with Intention, Creativity, and Love." This special glimpse of David's world will be on display from December 2 through January 31, 2025. The display's opening celebration will be Saturday, December 7, from 2 to 4 p.m. Refreshments will be served.

In the quiet heart of northern New Mexico lies the small town of Questa, a place where the rugged beauty of the land meets the resilience of those who call it home. Here, nestled among the mountains and under the vast, ever-changing skies, David Zimmerman has crafted a life that is as much about creating as it is about capturing. Since 1980, his metal and sculpture shop has been a place where raw materials are transformed into art, a reflection of the enduring spirit of this unique corner of the world.

But David's artistry doesn't end with metal and fire. Armed with a camera and an eye attuned to the subtleties of

light and landscape, he has documented a life rich in experience and connection. The photographs collected in this book are more than mere images; they are glimpses into the adventures shared with those closest to him—his family and friends. These moments, captured in the vast wilderness or in the intimate settings of home, tell a story of a man who sees the world not just as it is, but as it feels.

Through his lens, David invites us to explore the beauty and simplicity of the everyday, to find wonder in the landscapes that surround us, and to appreciate the bonds that make life meaningful. This collection is a testament to a life lived with intention, creativity, and love—an ongoing adventure that unfolds with each new journey and every cherished moment.

Welcome to the world of David Zimmerman, where every photograph is a memory, and every memory is a work of art.

Come celebrate with David on December 7, from 2 to 4pm at the Questa Public Library, 6-½ Municipal Park Rd., in Questa, New Mexico.



QUESTA
PUBLIC LIBRARY

From the Librarian's Desk...

By SHARON NICHOLSON

Perhaps you've noticed it's December. We have less daylight. It's colder. And the holiday season is here. Are you ready?

For many of us, it's time to be together... to observe family and personal traditions. These traditions might include giving and receiving gifts. Did you ever get a book for Christmas? Can you remember how special that felt?

Receiving a book is like being handed a new adventure. From the anticipation of turning the first page, to the excitement of discovering new characters and plots, and finally to the satisfaction of finishing a story, these are all part of the joy books can bring.

For children, receiving a book can ignite a lifelong love of reading, opening up endless possibilities for learning and imagination. For any of us, a book can provide comfort, provoke thought, or simply an escape from the everyday.

My favorite holiday book tradition from other lands is from Iceland. The tradition of Jólábókaflóð, or the Christmas Book Flood, is a beloved part of the holiday season. On Christmas Eve, Icelanders exchange books and spend the evening reading them. This tradition dates back to World War II when paper was one of the few commodities not rationed,

making books a popular gift. (I have also heard that consuming chocolate is traditional to accompany this holiday reading.)

Incorporating books into holiday traditions can enhance our shared experiences. Reading a special book together or exchanging books not only celebrates the joy of reading, but also strengthens relationships and creates lasting memories. In a world of digital distractions, giving and receiving books is a reminder of the simple pleasures of reading.

So this holiday season, consider the joy that a book can bring and share that joy with those you love.

UPCOMING LIBRARY FAMILY EVENTS

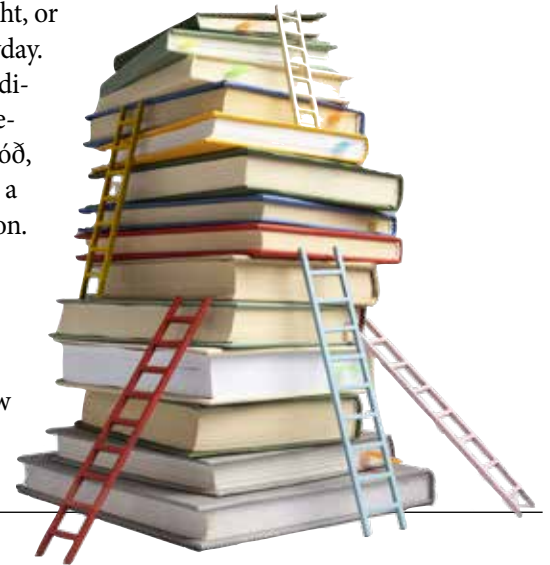
Friday, December 6

Free "Art Kits for Kids" pickup: 12 - 5 p.m.

Holiday Maker Space: 1 - 3 p.m.

Friday, December 13

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- OUR CULTURA WITH OUR FUTURE
- INFRASTRUCTURE FOR URBAN AND RURAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

State Senator Roberto "Bobby" J. Gonzales, the Pueblo of Pojoaque, and the New Mexico Chamber of Commerce Foundation are convening this day of discussions that will bring together leaders from our state legislature, tribes, acequias, water treatment companies, environmental groups, local government, and the agriculture sector to discuss water policy in New Mexico.



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By Toner Mitchell

Great News For Rio Grande Cutthroat Trout

In early October, I received the following message from Rio Grande Basin Native Fish Supervisor Bryan Bakevich, from the New Mexico Department of Game and Fish:

"I'd like to share some great news with you about the long-term collaborative project in the Rio Costilla watershed. Last week we captured many young Rio Grande Cutthroat Trout (RGCT), documenting natural reproduction in Rio Costilla and Comanche Creek upstream of the project barrier. This is the last portion of the larger project and added another 14 miles to the distribution of genetically pure RGCT.

In addition, we documented reproduction on Middle Ponil Creek, just east of Costilla in the Canadian Basin—another amazing and responsive project that involved rescuing fish from Morphy Creek threatened by the Calf Canyon fire, holding them while we conducted piscicide treatments, and restocking them into Middle Ponil later that year.

There are far too many people and organizations that collaborated on these projects to mention individually, but many thanks to our partners at the Forest Service, Fish and Wildlife Service, Trout Unlimited, Turner/Vermejo Park Ranch, New Mexico State University, and Colorado Parks and Wildlife. You know who you are!"

Though not intentionally overlooked, the partners not mentioned here, the ones I believe are most critical to the recovery of the Rio Grande watershed's favorite fish, are the rural communities of northern New Mexico. Northern communities have brought their traditional knowledge and a generous sense of ownership to bear on bringing this fish back from the brink. Truth be told, the cutthroat would not have come this far without them.

These communities include Canones near Chihuahueros Creek on the north slope of the Jemez, where raising



Courtesy Photo

Baby Cutthroat Trout destined for the Rio Grande gorge.

the riparian water table will help the cutthroat and local cattle. In El Rito Creek and Canjilon Creek, cutthroat restoration is being conducted with an eye towards improving irrigation flows. The Village of Pecos has cooperated for years and through several potentially devastating fires to recover its unique strain of cutthroat (Pecos strain cutthroats have fewer and larger spots, which are concentrated near the tail). Community participants in the Cimarron Watershed Alliance—Angel Fire, Eagle Nest, Cimarron, and Raton—have always shown a soft spot for helping cutties thrive throughout the Ponil Creek system.

Not to be outdone, Costilla's attempts to share water with beavers have been extremely constructive in showing how conservation outcomes must be married with empowering communities to sustain themselves.

And Questa, whose efforts to diversify its economy in the wake of the mine closure have always included the cutthroat as a deserving stakeholder in the recreational future, has invested its heart and soul in filling the Rio Grande gorge with its original trout species every spring.

The popularity of the annual Rio Grande cutthroat stocking is a testament to not only the tenacity of the fish but of the power of heritage in our special corner of the world. Baby fish stocked years ago are being caught as far away as Pilar, a sign that the annual project isn't just for show. It's real results, for which we should all be thankful.

Fishing Licenses From 2023-24 No Longer Valid



Courtesy Photo

By STAFF WRITERS

If you have a 2023-24 fishing license, it's no longer valid. A 2024-25 fishing license is now required. Purchasing a license is simple, just visit www.wildlife.state.nm.us or call 1-888-248-6866.

The cost of an annual fishing license for New Mexico residents is \$25; non-residents cost \$56. One-day fishing licenses run \$12 for residents and non-residents. You may also purchase 5-day fishing licenses for \$24 for both residents and non-residents. Discount-

ed licenses are available for children between the ages of 12 and 17, adults over the age of 65, and members of the military are available at a discount. Licenses are available free of charge to disabled New Mexico veterans.

As a general reminder, you can visit the New Mexico Game and Fish website to get familiar with the rules and regulations governing fishing in northern New Mexico.

Fishing licenses can be purchased at Questa Lumber and Hardware, 2349 NM-522 in Questa, (575) 586-0414.

WATER DISCUSSION cont'd from page 11

water supply to help diversify our economy and protect our freshwater resources. Here's how we can achieve this:

Reclaimed Water Systems: Investing in reclaimed water systems is a smart move. These systems treat and reuse wastewater, providing a reliable source of non-potable water for industrial processes. By separating industrial water needs from domestic consumption, we protect our freshwater resources.

Desalination and Brackish Water: New Mexico has vast underground brackish water reserves. Implementing desalination technologies can convert this brackish water into usable freshwater for manufacturing. It's a win-win: we create jobs in desalination plants while safeguarding our traditional water sources.

Produced Water: For every barrel of oil produced in New Mexico, between four and ten barrels of "produced water" is also produced and most is currently injected back into the ground for disposal. This water can be treated, cleaned and repurposed for various industrial uses.

Public-Private Partnerships: Collaboration between government agencies, private companies, and research institutions

is crucial. Public-private partnerships can fund water infrastructure projects, develop innovative solutions, and ensure long-term sustainability. Let's leverage federal grants, private investments, and local expertise to build a resilient water supply.

Water Supply Policy Summit on December 18

To keep this conversation moving forward, I will convene a Water Policy Summit at Buffalo Thunder Resort on December 18th. Discussions will include legislators, tribal leaders, acequia communities, environmental groups, energy sector representatives, unions, and project developers. I also extend this invitation to you. All voices are welcome. Attendees may register at this QR Code.

Roberto "Bobby" J. Gonzales is the State Senator for District 6 (covering portions of Taos, Rio Arriba, Santa Fe, and Los Alamos Counties)





BIRD IS THE WORD

By Bryce Flannagan

The Dark-eyed Junco Carries Winter On Its Wings

Each summer, flocks of Dark-eyed Juncos make their way to northern reaches of Canada in search of a mate. Then, as temperatures drop, they head south, populating the entire continental United States (minus the southern tip of Florida) until the snow melts. Early ornithologists nicknamed them the “snow bird” due to their frequent appearance during winter and total absence in spring and summer.

Many of our readers likely know that “junco” is Spanish for “rush,” from the Latin *juncus*. Its scientific name is *Junco hyemalis*, literally “rush of the winter.”

The Junco template is simple—they come in uniform size, about five inches from tail feather to beak, a gray body,

white underside, and a stubby, pink beak. But within this template exists over a dozen subspecies. So many subspecies, in fact, that scientists use juncos as a model for what’s called “rapid speciation.”

Speciation refers to an evolutionary process wherein a population within a species develops unique characteristics that set it apart from the greater population. Scientists theorize that Dark-eyed Juncos branched off from Yellow-eyed Juncos about 1,800 years ago in response to melting glaciers and more territory becoming habitable across North America. From there, genetic drift and selection lead to further speciation among Juncos. Genetic drift is the fluctuation of a particular gene in a population due to chance, and selection just means the process by which a mate is chosen, with better adapted and flashier males prevailing over their drab counterparts.

Most of the differences between Juncos have no bearing on how well adapted they are to their environment and have more to do with small populations being cut off from one another and breeding within those habitats. Thus, we have these variations: red-backed juncos, pink-sided juncos (the common subspecies in northern New Mexico), gray-headed juncos and white-winged juncos. Telling these subspecies apart is very difficult and can stump even professional birders. Further complicating matters is the fact Juncos carry



Photo courtesy of Chad Morsch

A dark-eyed junco.

no animosity for other subspecies and will frequently interbreed, creating even more new combinations.

Juncos prefer coniferous forests, but you won’t spot them up in the branches. No, this is a bird that likes to lay low, hopping about the pine-needle-strewn ground for seeds and insects. Even their nests are built into the ground, typically a small cup-shaped indentation in the earth covered by loose vegetation or whatever the homemaker can scrounge together.

You can attract them to your yard with a seed feeder, and don’t worry about buying the fancy seeds, these guys

will eat anything. If you have messy eaters that knock seeds all over the ground, Juncos will be your cleanup crew, dutifully chirping away as they feast on the leftovers.

These tiny birds are nothing if not resilient, braving freezing temperatures and proving remarkably adaptable. While other species flee urbanized areas, Juncos have been studied for their ability to live within urbanized areas. This was first documented in a population of them at the University of California-San Diego. While other Juncos migrated, the campus population remained year-round. Because of this they yielded four broods each year instead of the standard two, leading to increased competition and selection. Upon studying the genes of these Juncos, scientists found they had, in a span of mere decades, developed a gene that provided high tolerance to the heavy metals found in urban areas. The research on Juncos is scant but further study promises to illuminate the mysteries of how birds adapt to urban environments.

The good news is because of their ability to adapt, these little guys aren’t going anywhere anytime soon. Their population is estimated to be around 630 million, almost twice the human population of the United States. Scatter some seed around your yard and enjoy these winter visitors before they fly back to Canada next spring.

Do You See Smoke? It’s Likely A Prescribed Burn

By STAFF WRITERS

The U.S. Forest Service has had a busy fall, managing multiple prescribed burns across central and northern Taos County. The cold, wet, and calm environment provides perfect conditions for prescribed burns.

A burn is prescribed near Highway 150 in the Valle Vidal. Due to the unpredictability of weather patterns in New Mexico, the U.S. Forest Service doesn’t have an exact timeframe for the burn.

“After a productive month of understory burning, we’re looking forward to continuing this critical work by taking advantage of snow for a different kind of prescribed fire,” said Fuels and Fire Staff Officer Brent Davidson. “We seek winter weather for pile burning because the dampened or snow-covered forest floor reduces the chances of fire creeping away.”

A full list of all potential prescribed

fires this fall and winter as well as current forest restoration conditions are available on the Carson National Forest website at fs.usda.gov/goto/CarsonRx.

The forest restoration work is part of the Forest Service’s Wildfire Crisis Strategy to reduce the threat of wildfire to communities, critical infrastructure, and natural resources.

The projects are part of larger landscape efforts:

- The Enchanted Circle on the east side of the forest, where high-risk fire sheds are found, is one of the 21 priority landscapes in the nation.
- The Rio Chama Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration Project on the west side is a priority within the southwest, protecting forest communities and increasing the health of the watershed, which serves millions of people downstream.



Courtesy Photo

Piles ignite recently as part of the Rio Trampas prescribed burn project

**BODY
MIND
SPIRIT**



By **BARBARA TRACY**

A Gift For Yourself

In our journey through this labyrinth called life, we encounter any number of challenges that can catch us unawares and trigger negative thoughts within ourselves, toward ourselves, and toward others.

As we move through our years we consciously and unconsciously store many issues. Oftentimes these begin in our childhood and then progress and accumulate as we grow into adults. We

may be harboring old cobwebs related to sibling rivalry, parents, friends, neighbors, and loved ones. Most often, however, the one we carry the heaviest burden with is our own self, our own transgressions against ourselves.

This is our personal journey and precious passage through this life; and it is our gift from the spirit that resides within us to forgive. When we do not forgive, we remain trapped in a limbo that is painful, attached by an unseen strand that is linked to a past which is gone; nonexistent. To refuse to forgive only hurts me. I am the one choosing to carry this burden around endlessly, even though it is useless drudgery.

The negative ego plays a part in the forgiveness experience. The negative ego wants to be right and has a grand time making others wrong. This is a trap of the negative ego that is potent and can make the experience of forgiving a true challenge. The dance of the negative ego can be seen when there is a desire to be right no matter what, even though it is a

slow destructive force that has power over our happiness.

When forgiveness seems difficult, this is when we must be very vigilant and strong in our intent. In such times it feels as though the negative ego and I are having an inner war, because there is the delicious juice of being right, and who wants to give up being right? However, this is when I know it is up to me to stand strong and make a firm decision in the direction I wish to go.

I have several books of inspiration and poetry that I keep by my bed; and in the morning I choose one of the books, open it without needing to control what page it opens to, and that is my reading for the day. We are coming into the holiday season that for many is a time of gift giving. The reading this morning reminded me of a gift we can give ourselves.

This is an excerpt from a reading in "Watering the Soul" by Courtney Peppernell. Have a beautiful and loving holiday season.

HOW TO FORGIVE YOURSELF

By taking responsibility -

By speaking the mistake to the universe -

Let the universe bear witness that despite the mistake you have made, it does not change your place on this earth. Your healing begins when you speak of your journey to forgiveness and all it's worth.

By making amends -

Forgiveness starts with an apology, sometimes to yourself, sometimes to others, always to your heart.

By not blaming yourself -

The blame isn't going to help you move on or learn to let go. Forgiving is about navigating away from all the guilt and learning of all the hope in the things that can be rebuilt.

By renewing -

Life always regrows from the dust and the ashes, and so too will you. There is more to this life than holding on to all the mistakes that in the end should not ever control you.

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	
2 Sweet and Sour Pork 1c Oriental Vegetables 3/4c Brown Rice 1/2c Mandarin Oranges	3 Swedish Meatballs ½ c Egg Noodles 1c Cauliflower w/ Brussel sprouts 1.5c Tossed Salad w/ 2 TBSP Light Dressing 1 Fresh Pear	4 8oz Chicken Pot Pie 1.5c Tossed Salad w/ 2 TBSP Light Dressing WW Roll Banana	5 3oz Salisbury Steak 1c Capri Vegetables 1/2c Mashed Potatoes w/ 2oz LS Gravy 1oz Cornbread 1c Mixed fruit	6 3oz LS Herbed Chicken 1/2c LS brown Rice Pilaf w/ 1/4c Mushrooms 1c Roasted Broccoli w/ Red Pepper WW Roll 3/4c Apple slices	
9 3oz Chicken Fried Steak 1/2c Mashed Potatoes w/ 2oz LS Gravy 1/2c Carrots WW roll w/ 1 tsp margarine 1/2c Peaches	10 5oz Carne Adovada 1/2c LS Pinto Beans 1c California blend 1 6in Flour tortilla 1c Grapes	11 Hamburger 1/2c LS Three Bean Salad 1/2c Potato Wedges Orange	12 3oz LS Baked Fish (Cod) 1/2c succotash, 1/2c Spinach 1.5c Tossed salad w/ 2 TBSP light Italian Dressing WW Roll w/ 1 tsp margarine 3/4c Apricots	13 Veggie Pizza 1.5c Tossed Salad w/ 2 TBSP Light Dressing w/ 1/4c Garbanzo Beans 1c Tropical fruit Salad 1/2c Light nonfat vanilla yogurt	
16 Chicken Alfredo 1c Italian Vegetables w 1 tsp margarine 1.5c Tossed Salad w/ 2 TBSP Light ranch Dressing, Fruit Salad	17 Tuna salad Sandwich 1c LS tomato soup 3/4c Brussel sprouts 1/2c. Light nonfat vanilla yogurt 1c Berries	18 3oz Baked Pork Chop 2oz LS gravy 1/2c LS Wild and brown Rice 1c Asparagus w/ mushrooms WW roll 3/4c Plums	19 Beef Fajitas (3oz Beef, 1/2c Peppers and Onions, 1 6 in flour tortilla, 2 TBSP salsa) 1c Yellow Squash NAS Diced tomatoes 1/2c Pinto beans 1/2c applesauce	20 Christmas Lunch 2oz Glazed Ham 1/2c Candied Sweet Potatoes w/ 1/3 chopped pecans , Vegetable medley WW Roll Strawberry Shortcake	
23 Spaghetti with Meat Sauce 1c Island blend vegetables 3/4c Tossed Salad w/1 TBSP Light Italian Dressing 1c Pears 1/2c Lemon Pudding	24 CLOSED	25 CLOSED	26 2oz. Kielbasa Sausage 3/4c Peppers and onions 1/3c Diced potatoes 1c cucumbers and tomatoes Wheat roll, Banana 1/2c Light nonfat vanilla yogurt	27 Garden Salad w/ Chicken and Egg Wheat roll 3/4c Pineapple chunks	
30 3oz Orange Chicken (1oz sauce) 1/2c Brown rice 1c Oriental Vegetables 1c Mandarin oranges	31 Beef & Potato Burrito with Green Chili Sauce 1c Carrots and green beans 3/4c Mixed fruit				All Meals Served With 8oz. 2% Milk as available

SENIOR MENU: DECEMBER 2024

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 are encouraged.

Taos County Senior Program
(575) 737-8927
PLEASE NOTE THAT THE MENU IS SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT NOTICE



LIVE LOVE LAUGH

by Ellen Wood
a.k.a. Maruška

Joyful Holidays: Six Ways to Beat the Winter Blues

The nights are long and dark, the sun doesn't shine as much, money is often tight and family squabbles can erupt during the winter holiday season. No wonder we get the blues! Here are six ways to chase away the blues and bring more joy and sunshine into your life.

Observe your thoughts

Internationally recognized cell biolo-

gist Dr. Bruce Lipton has done extensive research into how the mind influences our health and happiness, so watching your thoughts is a good place to start. Begin by deciding to watch your thoughts for 21 days in a row—long enough to form a new habit. The best time is when you're brushing your teeth in the morning. You use muscle memory to brush your teeth, not your conscious mind—so while you brush, watch your thoughts. Don't judge—just notice.

Say affirmations

Your mind is always talking, about 300 to 1000 words a minute. Often it's negative mind chatter. To counteract that negativity, repeat affirmations like: "I am powerful. I feel good about myself. I am magnificent. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you." And if you don't believe what you're saying, just FAKE IT TIL YOU FEEL IT. Pretend it's true and feel the emotion of how it would feel if it were true.

Exercise

Studies show that physical exercise not only benefits your body, it also improves your brain function and memory. Take a brisk walk in nature every day, but do it mindfully. Put all your attention on your body and the feeling in your legs as you walk.

Stay in the present moment

Focus totally in the here and now. If your mind goes to what happened yesterday or what might happen tomorrow, gently bring it back to an awareness of what is going on right here, right now. Say exactly what you are doing, like, "I am washing this plate. I am rinsing this plate, etc."

Love yourself just as you are

Write on an index card: ILYJAYA YAM and put it into the bathroom as a reminder. Then every morning look in the mirror and say, "I Love You Just As You Are. You Are Magnificent." If you find it difficult to love yourself just as you are, fake it 'til you

feel it, and little by little the love will come.

Do something good for somebody

If you know someone who's isolated and lonely, invite them to your house, or visit them. There are many ways to do something good for somebody—as little as a smile—and as large as volunteering to help out at the children's ward of the hospital. And while you're doing something good for somebody, don't forget yourself. Pamper yourself. Tell the family you're unavailable for one hour and go take a long bubble bath. What? You're a man and you don't take bubble baths? Well, then go to your man cave and tinker around for an hour.

Ellen Wood of Questa is an artist and award-winning author of the series of books, "The Secret Method for Growing Younger," available on Amazon. Contact her at ellen@howtogrowyounger.com

Felices Fiestas – Seis maneras de vencer la tristeza invernal

Las noches son largas y oscuras, el sol no brilla tanto como antes, el dinero escasea a menudo y los conflictos familiares pueden estallar durante las vacaciones de invierno. ¡No es de extrañar que nos sintamos melancólicos! Aquí tienes seis maneras de ahuyentar la tristeza y traer más alegría y luz a tu vida.

1. Observa tus pensamientos

El Dr. Bruce Lipton, biólogo celular reconocido a nivel internacional, ha investigado extensamente cómo la mente influye en nuestra salud y felicidad, por lo que observar tus pensamientos es un buen punto de partida. Comienza por decidir observar tus pensamientos durante 21 días seguidos, tiempo suficiente para formar un nuevo hábito. El mejor momento es mientras te cepillas los dientes por la mañana. Usas la memoria muscular para cepillarte, no tu mente consciente —así que mientras lo haces, observa tus pensamientos. No juzgues —solamente observa.

2. Repite afirmaciones

Tu mente siempre está hablando, aproximadamente entre 300 y 1000 palabras por minuto. A menudo es una charla mental negativa. Para contrarrestar esta negatividad, repite afirmaciones como:

"Soy poderoso o poderosa. Me siento bien conmigo mismo. Soy magnífico o magnífica. Gracias. Gracias. Gracias." Y si no crees lo que estás diciendo, simplemente FÍNGELO HASTA QUE LO SIENTAS. Finge que es verdad y experimenta la emoción de cómo se sentiría si fuera cierto.

3. Haz ejercicios

Los estudios muestran que el ejercicio físico no solo beneficia a tu cuerpo, sino que también mejora la función cerebral y la memoria. Da una caminata rápida en la naturaleza todos los días, pero hazlo conscientemente. Pon toda tu atención en tu cuerpo y en la sensación de tus piernas mientras caminas.

4. Concéntrate en el momento presente

Concéntrate totalmente en el aquí y ahora. Si tu mente se va a lo que pasó ayer o a lo que podría suceder mañana, tráela suavemente de vuelta a la conciencia de lo que está sucediendo aquí y ahora. Describe exactamente lo que estás haciendo, como "Estoy lavando este plato. Estoy enjuagando este plato, etc."

5. Ámate tal como eres

Escribe en una tarjeta: TATCE EM y colócala en el baño como recordatorio. Luego, cada mañana mírate en el espejo y di: "Te Amo Tal Como Eres, Eres Magnífico." Si te resulta difícil amarte tal como eres, fíngelo hasta que lo sientas, y poco a poco, el amor llegará.

6. Haz algo bueno por alguien

Si conoces a alguien que esté aislado y solo, invítalo a tu casa o visítalo. Hay muchas maneras de hacer algo bueno por alguien —tan pequeñas como una

sonrisa o tan grandes como ofrecerte de voluntario en la sala de niños de un hospital. Y mientras haces algo bueno por alguien, no te olvides de tu propio ser. Apapáchate. Dile a la familia que te dejen en paz durante una hora y date un baño de burbujas largo. ¿Qué? ¿Eres un hombre y no te das baños de burbujas? Pues bien,

ve a tu "cueva de hombre" y entretente con tus herramientas por una hora.

Ellen Wood de Questa es artista y la autora galardonada de la serie de libros "The Secret Method for Growing Younger," disponible en Amazon. Puedes contactarla en ellen@howtogrowyounger.com. Su sitio web es www.howtogrowyounger.com.

JR (Malaquias) says:

**"May Christ's Light
shine brightly in you."**



And let us make
sure the lights
are working
in your car.
Feliz Navidad!

**Spread the
Light."**



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



I DARE YOU

By MARTA GLOVER

Favorite Foods

This time of year I love to eat comforting food that are warm and soothing. Ice skating and skiing and outdoor activities in the mountains tend to make one hungry and ready to indulge in food and drink. A cup of cocoa with whipped cream, a soothing cup of tea, a bowl of soup, a hearty stew... and then here comes the sweet tooth with delicious pies, cakes, and holiday treats we all love to share with family and friends. What is your favorite food? Is it a seasonal vegetable or fruit? Where is it grown and what is your history with it? Is it a childhood favorite eaten on holidays and special occasions? Is it a comfort food you make to soothe yourself? Did you eat it in a foreign country and is there a history attached to the food? It could also be a meal you had that you never forgot nor could duplicate. Merry Christmas to all our families and friends.

May we be grateful for the meals we all share and eat together. Take time this season to indulge in your favorite food as a gift to yourself.

Chipeta

I really love crepes. I love the inside of the crepes and how they are made. They can be used for anything and reused again. They last a while. I was pretty young when I started eating crepes. Mom made me crepes. She made the insides with fruit, spices, and cottage cheese. She made the crepe with eggs, flour and milk, very thin. We ate Swedish pancakes—blintz, made with cottage cheese, nutmeg, and cinnamon. And what about huckleberry syrup! With fresh milk from our own dairy cow! Every summer we took a trip to the top of the ridge hill, a place full of huckleberries. The huckleberry is a cousin of the blueberry and found mostly in the wild. We would camp overnight and pick the next day. It is an area near Glacier Park, Colorado, called Hungry Horse Reserve.

Weaver

My favorite food is soul, family, deep-rooted food from the south. A warm banana pudding. My mom made it for my birthday and it came out every Thanksgiving. Bananas mashed up, vanilla wafers, baked in the oven. Yum! My mom's recipe

from North Carolina. A southern dish for sure. I was raised on this. Black-eyed peas for good luck. It was very sweet.

Sally Sue

Florence, Italy: 15 years ago. We went out to dinner at 6:30 p.m. No one eats till 9 p.m. so no one was there. We were completely alone. The dish was bow-tie pasta with artichokes and a Parmesan sauce. The whole environment was amazing. When we left the restaurant, it was packed. So memorable. As I get older I lean towards dairy-free, and gluten-free and could not eat that now, so it is a fond memory. I can't duplicate it ever because it was in Italy. A small restaurant with amazing smells, it was that good. The magic of it was the place, the smell, the aromas, chunks of fresh artichokes that melted in your mouth. The flavor was simple but memorable.

Fiona

The first thing that came to mind was mango. Mango season, March to June, July in Central America. So cheap, everywhere, crates of them. I love them in salads, desserts, salsas, and smoothies. I do not eat them all year long. Mangoes are specific to the place and the season to taste good. In California they bring mangoes from Mexico.

Holly

Potatoes, love potatoes right now. I like baked potatoes best, or roasted potatoes with green chili on them. I love garlic mashed potatoes, sometimes with wasabi. I like potatoes for any meal, I am influenced by my English/German lineage. I grew a pathetic crop of potatoes in my garden. They did not produce, too much shade, I think. When I lived in Montana we grew a huge crop of potatoes. My mother was one of the most boring cooks. Meat, potato, or rice and a frozen vegetable. Her mother was a great cook—that was the funny thing. All my siblings are good cooks. I have never screwed up a potato dish. They are really nourishing.

Billy

Grapefruit—a childhood thing. We are coming into grapefruit season, Florida, Texas, and sometimes California. In the beginning of the season, we had grapefruit, growing up. Every morning cut into little triangles with a grapefruit knife in a bowl. We would only eat it fresh, sent from my uncle in Florida. He sent us boxes of different kinds, ruby red, pink, and white ones were the main assortment.

I DARE YOU cont'd on page 28

MENTAL HEALTH MATTERS



By DAWN PROVENCHER

Paint The Pig

My daughter asked if she could share the following for the December paper. Not only is she the best daughter I could hope for, she is a brilliant social worker, a talented artist, and a young woman who battles depression and anxiety. She knows the value of mixing colors, molding her clay, creating beautiful and imaginative floral scenes, while expressing her most personal self. We encourage you to gather some supplies, then paint, sculpt, draw, weave, or carve your red pig. We promise you will feel better.

The ground was soggy and the air was thick. The Indonesian dirt was being

disturbed by boots for the first time. The archeologist who owned them could feel it in the way the ground gave out beneath his feet. He was searching for evidence of prehistoric human existence and he was going to find it in this hidden cave overlooking a rice paddy field.

He knew he would find something, but would it be a stone tool submerged in the mud or something as simple as a carving that only something with thumbs could have etched? It was neither. He was already convinced his efforts had been wasted when he saw it high up on the back wall. A massive, red pig painted on the stone with two human hands outlined above it.

It was all the proof he needed. Proof he was not the first person to walk through this hidden cavern in Sulawesi, Indonesia. Someone existed here and he was going to find out when.

They said it had to have been around 51,000 years ago. Someone, long before you or I existed, felt the need to create something. Something that served no purpose other than to say, "I am here and this is what I've seen."

But, why? Why do human beings feel the need to paint, carve, sculpt, weave, trace, sing, dance, etc.?

Human nature is complex, and that complexity induces intricate feelings that need to be processed. By allowing a concept, our emotions, to evolve into something tangible that can be experienced by our senses, the opportunity to process these emotions arises. Now instead of just feeling our feelings, we are able to hold them in our hands, examine every crevice, listen to the intensity of what is being felt within our bodies, and share them with others, if we choose.

Billions of human beings have existed throughout history, and only a fraction of them are remembered. Yet, there is an urge existing within all of us to create something memorable. Whether it be a legacy passed down through our children, or our paintings experienced 51,000 years from now. Within our children and the art we create, we are saying, "Once upon a time I existed, and although I am now gone, a piece of me remains."

Remembering our past selves is

also a tool which can be used to process our emotions. Examining the art we made, and remembering how we felt 10 years ago, helps us acknowledge how far we've come, the work which still needs to be done, and the good and bad of what we have endured. Taking what we see in ourselves and the world around us, bottling it up, and letting it sit unchanged allows future beings and our future selves to find meaning in what was once just sadness, or just a pig. In documenting our feelings through art we are providing an opportunity for these future beings and our future selves to say, "What I'm feeling has been felt before. I am not alone."

Creating art makes us human. We are not birds creating intricate nests, dances, and songs solely for the function of finding a mate and creating life. We are human beings feeling deep emotions which must be taken out of us, must be turned into art, and must be remembered. It is not only our purpose to create art, but it is our responsibility. Not only should you paint the pig, you have to.

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ESOTERIC ASTROLOGY

SKYDANCE ESOTERIC ASTROLOGY by Charlene R. Johnson
DECEMBER 2024

THE FUTURE

"The conquests of science, the conquests of nations, and the conquests of territory are all indicative of the Piscean method, with its idealism, its militancy, and its separativeness in all fields—religious, political and economic. But the age of synthesis, of inclusiveness and of understanding is upon us, and the new education of the Aquarian Age must begin very gently to penetrate the human aura." —Alice Bailey

We launch this month December 1 with a New Moon in Sagittarius, with Pluto now in the sign of Aquarius, and with a tumultuous year behind us. With 2025 signifying the year most esoteric folk feel we are well into the Age of Aquarius, it seems a good time to examine the current sign of Sagittarius and look to our future, which it rules. New Moons are a time for conceiving the future, for nurturing the seeds of where we'd like to go, be, and become. Sagittarius rules the Spiritual Journey. We journey first through the sign of Scorpio, fraught with obstacles and trying tests, battles, and overcoming egoistic passions before we can clearly see and choose our Path. The symbol of drawing back the bow and aiming the arrow is about tightening the focus along the shaft down to the point, then beyond to the goal. It is the focus and the intent which matter. On this New Moon consider where we have all been, what we have all been through, then focus on where we—as humanity, not just egos—need to go to continue the evolution of this amazing species we are.

Sagittarius rules our Highest Aspirations. This is the sign that encourages you to curb your delinquent impulses and "reach for the stars," to extend yourself in everything that you do, but above all, Spiritual Aspiration. Sagittarius is the Spiritual Fire of Transformation, the last fire sign of the Zodiac. What most needs to be developed in this sign is self-discipline. This indicates a need to learn teamwork, cultivate silence, and accept uncomfortable people and circumstances without evasion—with the recognition that they are part of life's lessons.

Everyone: On December 21, when all the Earth stands still, pause and take a deep breath to focus on the Brother/Sisterhood of Man, mantra for the Age of Aquarius.

ARIES ♈ Planet: Mercury ♀ MARCH 20 – APRIL 19

Dynamic: For a while, the feeling of going backwards is real.

Direction: Remember that feeling for when you do an about-face mid-month.

Soul Thought: "You can't connect the dots looking forward, you can only connect them looking backward." —Steve Jobs

TAURUS ♉ Planet: Vulcan ♁ APRIL 19 – MAY 20

Dynamic: You work with this energy the entire month, in two ways.

Direction: Now's the time to aim for your Highest Aspirations.

Soul Thought: The Zen of Archery.

GEMINI ♊ Planet: Venus ♀ MAY 20 – July 20

Dynamic: You've attained a goal and can now see the Big Picture.

Direction: Be the Observer.

Soul Thought: No Observer, No Matter.

CANCER ♋ Planet: Neptune ♆ July 20 – JULY 22

Dynamic: Mid-month you may have difficulty viewing the target.

Direction: Always, aim for the Light.

Soul Thought: "The fog comes on little cat feet." —Carl Sandburg

LEO ♌ Planet: Sun ☉ JULY 22 – AUG 22

Dynamic: You aimed... and now comes the hard work.

Direction: Don't give up now.

Soul Thought: Who are the Initiates?

VIRGO ♍ Planet: Moon ☾ AUG 22 – SEPT 22

Dynamic: The days and the cycles come and go.

Direction: Time to do the research.

Soul Thought: "Seek, and ye shall find." —Matthew 7:7

Soul Thought: You will be one of the "mothers" of the future.

LIBRA ♎ Planet: Uranus ♁ SEPT 22 – OCT 22

Dynamic: It probably feels like weighing truth and falsehood has become a heavy job.

Direction: Someone needs to do it.

Soul Thought: Who's the Judge?

SCORPIO ♏ Planet: Mars ♂ OCT 22 – NOV 21

Dynamic: Passionate love may slow or steady a bit.

Direction: Take care of your heart, on all levels.

Soul Thought: What is Unconditional Love?

SAGITTARIUS ♐ Planet: Earth ☉ NOV 21 – DEC 20

Dynamic: The focus is on Education.

Direction: We need more!

Soul Thought: To be or not to be, a Teacher.

CAPRICORN ♑ Planet: Saturn ♄ DEC 20 – JAN 19

Dynamic: It may seem like things are going far too slowly.

Direction: Some things simply take time. Relax.

Soul Thought: Which "Time"?

AQUARIUS ♒ Planet: Jupiter ♃ JAN 19 – FEB 18

Dynamic: If you've recently lost a friend,

Direction: Regroup.

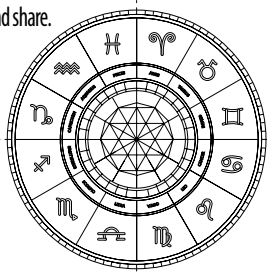
Soul Thought: Friends are Gold.

PISCES ♓ Planet: Pluto ♇ FEB 18 – MAR 20

Dynamic: After literally years of a sense of heaviness, you may begin to feel fizzy!

Direction: Enjoy!

Soul Thought: And share.



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.



BY J. ORTEGA

Top Ten Christmas Movies Edition

Happy Holidays! and for this special edition of Streaming Wars, Merry Christmas! I hope the holidays have found you in good spirits and ready to welcome a new year with family and friends.

Now let's get to it. When I was thinking of compiling my top ten favorite Christmas movies, many things were taken into account, such as how re-watchable the film is, for one. There are a lot of movies that have been released that focus on the Christmas season, but few that you would instantly want to watch again and again. That's the first thing that makes a great Christmas movie—how much you look forward to watching it again even though you may have seen it countless times. Next is longevity—can the movie stand the test of time with new generations able to watch and appreciate it? This is important because there are many Christmas movies that have been released since Hollywood's beginnings that have fallen by the wayside. The true test of a classic is its never-ending shelf life. The last thing that I looked for was the message of each film and how it relates to common themes of the holiday season, where family and selflessness take center stage over empty materialism and commercialism that has engulfed the Christmas season in modern America.

Let's get the list started!

NUMBER 10

Elf (2003)

Streaming on Max

"Elf" is the most recent film on the list, premiering in 2003, but it has been able to hold up for the last 20 years. Yes, some people may find Will Ferrell's brand of comedy off-putting or downright annoying, but in "Elf" he was hilarious and charming, playing a human adopted by the elves at the North Pole.

NUMBER 9

The Santa Clause (1994)

Streaming on Disney+

Sheer creativity is what earned this ranking. In all my years of watching Christmas movies and shows, "The Santa Clause" deserves more respect for being a creative outlier by answering this question: is the job of

Santa Claus for one man only or is it a job passed on from person to person down through the years?

NUMBER 8

Home Alone: Lost in New York (1992)

Streaming on Disney+

The hijinks continue in this highly entertaining sequel for the character Kevin McAllister and the Sticky Bandits. Also, the New York setting is amazing around Christmastime.

NUMBER 7

Home Alone (1990)

Streaming on Disney+

You can't beat the original Home Alone where we see a young Macaulay Culkin become a global star. The you also have to credit Daniel Stern and Joe Pesci for their inept bad guy performances and all the torture they endure at the hands of a crafty 8-year-old!

NUMBER 6

Rudolph The Red-Nosed Reindeer (1964)

Streaming on AppleTV

The origin story of Rudolph the red-nosed reindeer is still as charming as it was when I was a child. A great movie to watch with your parents and grandparents.

NUMBER 5

Doctor Seuss's How the Grinch Stole Christmas (1966) • Streaming on Hulu

The narration and voice work by Boris Karloff alone is worth placing on the list. Karloff will keep you entertained and invested throughout the whole story, which is only 26 minutes long.

NUMBER 4

A Charlie Brown Christmas (1965)

Streaming on AppleTV

The Peanuts gang celebrates Christmas in their own way, where they have that memorable moment of taking in a shabby tree and making it something special with their ingenuity.

NUMBER 3

National Lampoon's Christmas Vacation

Streaming on Max

Slapstick can be overdone and make a film unlikeable, but here it makes the movie so much more endearing and fun as the Griswolds celebrate Christmas with their wacky family that includes the moronic Cousin Eddie and scene stealer, Aunt Bethany.

NUMBER 2

A Christmas Story (1983)

Streaming on Max

What can I say? This movie is such a nostalgic throwback to when you were a kid and you had your heart set on the perfect Christmas present but everyone around you can't take the hint! Ralphie is such a relatable character in this endearing classic.

NUMBER 1

It's a Wonderful Life (1946)

Streaming on Amazon Prime Video

The unquestioned number 1 Christmas movie of all time: it's about family, it's about faith, it's about friends, it's about Christmas. In some ways, we are all George Bailey at some point in our lives where the pressures of the world seem to be crushing us and we feel helpless, but we don't quit, and we persevere even when times are tough and the game is rigged—all with a little help from our friends, family, and guardian angels. Thank you, Jimmy Stewart, for such a great performance.



The holiday season in northern New Mexico is a time to celebrate family, tradition, and the rich culinary heritage that brings people together. These recipes highlight the vibrant flavors of the region, from the warmth of roasted green chile to the sweetness of piñon and honey. Inspired by local traditions and regional experts, these dishes—Green Chile and Cheese Enchiladas, Empanadas de Piñon y Miel, and Chicos Stew—are perfect for creating a festive and memorable Christmas table, steeped in the spirit of New Mexico.

GREEN CHILE AND CHEESE ENCHILADAS

Recipe inspired by “The Rancho de Chimayó Cookbook” by Cheryl Alters Jamison and Bill Jamison.

Ingredients:

- 12 corn tortillas
- 2 c roasted, peeled, and diced Hatch green chiles
- 2 c shredded Monterey Jack or cheddar cheese
- 1 small onion, diced
- 1 c chicken or vegetable broth
- 1 T flour
- 2 T butter
- 1/2 t garlic powder
- 1/2 t cumin
- Salt and pepper to taste

Instructions

Preheat oven to 375°F.

In a saucepan, melt butter and stir in flour to make a roux. Gradually whisk in chicken broth, stirring constantly. Add green chiles, garlic powder, cumin, salt, and pepper. Simmer for 10 minutes.

Lightly fry tortillas in a dry skillet to soften.

Spread 2 tbsp of green chile sauce in a baking dish. Fill each tortilla with cheese and diced onion, roll, and place seam-side down in the dish.

Cover enchiladas with remaining sauce and top with additional cheese. Bake for 15–20 minutes until bubbly

EMPANADAS DE PIÑON Y MIEL (PINE NUT AND HONEY EMPANADAS)

Recipe adapted from the traditional New Mexican empanadas shared in “Southwest Tastes” by Ellen Brown.

Ingredients

- 2 c flour
- 1 t baking powder
- 1/2 t salt
- 1 stick cold butter, cubed
- 1/2 c cold water
- 1/2 c toasted piñon nuts (pine nuts)
- 1/2 c honey
- 1 t cinnamon
- 1 egg, beaten (for brushing)

Instructions

In a bowl, mix flour, baking powder, and salt. Cut in butter until the mixture resembles coarse crumbs. Gradually add cold water until a dough forms. Wrap and chill for 1 hour.

Preheat oven to 375°F. Roll out dough and cut into 4-inch circles.

In a bowl, mix piñon, honey, and cinnamon. Place a spoonful of the filling in the center of each circle. Fold over and crimp edges to seal.

Brush with beaten egg and bake for 15–20 minutes, or until golden.

CHICOS STEW

Recipe inspired by Florence P. Armijo, a historian and proponent of preserving traditional New Mexican foods.

Ingredients

- 1 lb chicos (dried corn, soaked overnight)
- 2 lbs pork shoulder, cubed
- 1 onion, chopped
- 3 garlic cloves, minced
- 6 c chicken or pork broth
- 2 c roasted green chile, diced
- 1 t oregano
- 1 t ground cumin
- Salt and pepper to taste

Instructions

In a large pot, brown pork over medium heat. Remove and set aside.

In the same pot, sauté onion and garlic until fragrant. Add broth, chicos, oregano, and cumin. Simmer for 2 hours, or until chicos are tender.

Add pork and green chile. Simmer for another 30 minutes. Season with salt and pepper.

Serve with fresh tortillas or a side of beans.

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

SATURDAY December 14

10:00 AM - 4:00 PM

ALUMBRA CHRISTMAS MARKET

at VFW Hall, Highway 522. Holiday shopping of unique, local gifts and goodies. Your favorite craftspeople, food and festivities. Bring your family, greet your friends!
Info: visit QuestaCreative.org, or call (575) 586-5658



5:00 PM

QUESTA LIGHT PARADE

with live music, food and live nativity scene.
Info: email vvigil@villageofquesta.org
or call (575) 586-0694





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OBITUARIES



Kenneth Jassmann
d. November 14, 2024

On November 14, 2024, Kenneth Jassmann of Questa, New Mexico, left this world to begin his new journey, free of pain, but full of beauty and wonderment.

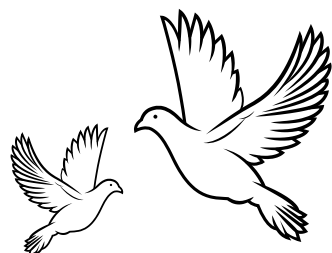
Ken was born in the town of Beulah, North Dakota, to Herbert and Vera Jassmann. After graduation, he joined his dad in road construction and they worked their way south to New Mexico. He was drafted into the armed services where he served in the military at Fort Bliss in El Paso, Texas. After serving, he moved to Questa where his parents had settled, and he met his wife, Margaret Espinosa, from Blanca, Colorado.

Ken worked as an auto mechanic and towtruck operator in Questa with Mike Gaillour at the local Shell Station. He then moved on and joined Colomex Oil and Gas Company and Taos Gravel where he was a truck and diesel mechanic and operator for many years. Then he went to work with his brother at Bruce's Gravel in Eagle Nest until his retirement.

Ken enjoyed boating and fishing with his family and would make friends at any lake he was at while enjoying the outdoors. He loved to work on anything with a motor in it, riding his lawn mower and visiting with all the neighbors. He always loved to read, enjoyed learning about new things, and enjoyed watching his big-screen TV. He was also a ham radio operator and enjoyed listening to transmissions around the world.

Ken was preceded in death by his parents, Herbert and Vera Jassmann, his brother Neil, brother and sisters-in-law Robert, Emma, and Catherine Espinosa, and niece Yolanda.

He is survived by his wife, Margaret, of 52 years; son Joseph and daughter Kendara; brothers, Bruce (Gina), Randy (Karen); sisters, JoAnn Ortega (Ernest), Judy Jassmann-Adams (Cliff), Tammy Butler (Stewart); brothers-in-law, Arnold Espinosa (Flo), Roger Espinosa (Irene) and sister-in-law Charlotte Lee (Riche). He is also survived by three grandchildren, two nephews and seven nieces, as well as many cousins. As per his final request, a private family service will be held.



Gloria Vigil
d. October 25, 2024

It is with the greatest of sorrows that we announce the passing of our mother, Gloria Vigil.

Gloria was born in Cerro, New Mexico, in the summer month of June when all the flowers and trees were in full bloom, in the year of 1940.

She lived 84 wonderful and eventful years. She had 8 children, 28 grandchildren, 41 great-grandchildren and 2 great-great-grandchildren. As God commanded, she was fruitful, and she filled the earth with 79 souls.

On October 25, 2024, as all her children were surrounding her bed in her home, she waved her final goodbye and walked through the pearly gates of heaven. There she was welcomed by her husband, Guadalupe Lopez, her sons Gabriel, Glenn, and Robert Santistevan; her grandson Daniel Morfin; her granddaughters Victoria Santistevan, Jackie Morfin, and Paula Romero-Santistevan, as well as her good friend Gilbert Santistevan. Also in attendance of her arrival to heaven were her parents, Alfonso and Getruditas Vigil, and her two brothers, Ben and Alfonso (Frito) Vigil.

On earth she left behind her remaining children, Cynthia Jo Santistevan (Frank), Vikki Sandoval (Dave), Bonnie Santistevan, Julie Segura (Joseph) and Eugene Martinez (Alyssa) and 71 grand and great-grandchildren. She also left behind six more siblings: Leo Vigil, Elfido Vigil, Barbara Olivarez, Ercilia Aken, Frank (Pancho) Vigil, and Gerti Vigil-Castaneda, a special nephew whom she always referred to as her son, Panchito Vigil, a special granddaughter in Mexico, Emma Herlo, and a self-appointed "Little Sister" Arlene Sanchez.

Our mother was a prayerful woman of deep faith. She was once the Sunday school teacher of her children, and she never went to bed without saying her goodnight prayers. She prayed for many people and was heard praying at any random time throughout the day, every single day. She was witty and had an amazing sense of humor. She studied psychology as she raised her children, living in the college dorm of Adam State College. She passed down the importance of a strong work ethic as she held many jobs, including working in the potato and spinach fields driving the big trucks. She was a professional seamstress working in various factories. She was a legal secretary for the Land Rights Council in San Luis and Alamosa, Colorado. She was a great baker, being known for her strawberry cheesecakes. She worked as a waitress and a cook until we begged her to quit working at the age of 74. Gloria was also known for her amazing artistic talents. She sewed, she crocheted and knitted, she did needlepoint, beading, diamond painting, embroidery, she drew murals, and she was a lead singer in bands. She was an expert gardener of beautiful flowers and could name any kind of flower as if she were a skilled horticulturist. She loved to fish until she could no longer do so. She was most well known for the fact that she was an avid reader.

She read a book every two to three days until the very last day of her life. She had a sharp mind and an intelligent brain to the very end.

Our family would like to offer our deepest appreciation for your kind and comforting words during this difficult time. May God bless you.



Jessica Salazar
d. November 17, 2024

Jessica Salazar, 42, a resident of Questa, passed away unexpectedly on November 17, 2024.

Jessica was truly one-of-a-kind—a woman with a radiant spirit and the voice of an angel who touched the lives of everyone she met. She carried love and kindness wherever she went, and her laughter and warmth will be deeply missed by all who knew her.

She leaves behind a family who cherished her endlessly, including her mother, Donna; her father, Melvin; her brother, Nate; her children, Lucian, Aliyah, and Kianna; her stepson, Eddie; and her granddaughter, Amiyah. Services are pending.



Ricky Nicanor Trujillo
d. October 18, 2024

Ricky Nicanor Trujillo, age 77, was born in Taos, New Mexico, and was a resident of Albuquerque, New Mexico. He passed away on October 18, 2024.

He was preceded in death by his son, Derrick Trujillo, and wife, JoAnn Trujillo. Mr. Trujillo served his country proudly in the U.S. Army where he was honorably discharged. He will be remembered for being a wonderful husband and a loving father, grandfather, and brother.

Mr. Trujillo is survived by his children, Dwayne Trujillo and wife Erin, Daniel Trujillo, and Donna Trujillo; grandchildren Christina Trujillo, Jacob Trujillo, Calissa Matthews, Adrianna Trujillo, David Trujillo, Gabriel Trujillo, Bryan Trujillo, Abraham Trujillo, and Carlito Trujillo; siblings, Pauline Tafoya, Grace Romero, Ida Wright, Vicky Cordova, Diana Quintana, Marie Svenningsen, Gene Cordova, Helen Cordova, and Cindy Ramos.



I DARE YOU cont'd from page 24

Arthur

I love seafood chowder, especially clam chowder, a common dish by the 1700s. I grew up in New England near Massachusetts where some of the best coastal chowder is made. I remember as a kid at low tide digging for clams and eating them raw then and there on the beach by the ocean. There are many types of chowder, depending where you are in the country. New England clam chowder and Manhattan chowder are well known versions, New England being my favorite. There are variations of chowder. New Jersey chowder adds bacon, light cream, and creamed asparagus seasoned with celery powder and parsley. Rhode Island chowder eliminates the creamy base and is made with a clear broth. Mirorran chowder (in Florida) uses Datil peppers, which are both sweet and spicy. Cabo chowder (near the Mexican border) is influenced by Mexican flavors like chipotle and jalapeno, with cumin, cilantro and corn.

Marta

My personal go-to is Cheerios. They are easy to eat with not a lot of sugar. You can eat them one at a time as a snack or add fruit for a morning snack. They are great when you are not feeling well to gain your strength back, eating them slowly. They rarely go stale and you can mix them with other fruit and nuts for a fine trail mix, adding M&Ms for fun. They are not too expensive and are packaged easily into a small bag to eat while walking or driving. Cheerios, my favorite breakfast cereal and comfort food!



Congratulations!

Congratulations to
Arianna and Joseph Serna
on their marriage on October 19!

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COMMUNITY CALENDAR • DECEMBER 2024

HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO EVERYONE BORN IN DECEMBER!

DECEMBER 1: SUN 3 - 5 PM
Surviving the Holidays- Grief Share at Living Word Ministries, 12 Llano Rd, Questa. Two hour support group with video and group discussion. Info: visit lwmsite.org, or call (575) 741-080

DECEMBER 3: TUE 6 - 7:30 PM
Red River Trivia Night at Red River Brewing Company, 217W Main St. A fun trivia tournament event. Info: visit reddriverbrewing.com

DECEMBER 4: WED 6 PM
Questa Independent School Board Meeting at QISD Board Room, 2256 Wildcat Rd. # A. Info: call (575) 586-0421

DECEMBER 5: THU 1:30 - 2:30 PM
Wildcat Kitty Club at Questa Public Library, 6 1/2 Municipal Park Road. Engage your baby with reading, songs, crafts and more! Ages 0-3. Older siblings welcome. Info: visit library@villageofquesta.org, or call (575) 586-2023

2:30 - 4:30 PM
Dropped Stitch at Questa Public Library, 6 1/2 Municipal Park Road. We crochet, knit, laugh, teach, and learn. Bring your projects. All skill levels welcome. Info: email library@villageofquesta.org, or call (575) 586-2023

DECEMBER 6: FRI NOON-5PM
Questa Public Library: Art Kits for Kids! Come choose your gift of FREE art supplies from the Questa Creative Council to all area kids. (575) 586-5658.

1 - 3 PM
Family Fun Holiday Maker Space at Questa Public Library, 6 1/2 Municipal Park Road. Craft holiday cards for giving. Make 3D printed ornaments. Create your own Christmas cookie...yum! Pick up your free art kit! Info: email library@villageofquesta.org, or call (575) 613-5299

4 - 8 PM
Holiday Community Craft Fair at Freedom Center Church, 2558 HWY 522 in Questa. Info: email kristi@freedomquesta.com, visit freedomquesta.com, or call (575) 770-1714

DECEMBER 7: SAT 10 AM - 3 PM
Holiday Community Craft Fair at Freedom Center Church, 2558 HWY 522 in Questa. Info: email kristi@freedomquesta.com, visit freedomquesta.com, or call (575) 770-1714

10 AM - 5 PM
Sacret Heart Arts & Crafts Fundraiser St. Anthony Parish Center. Interested Vendors call Maria @ 210-823-2929 or 575-586-0470. To reserve your table, Tables are \$20 - we will have a Silent Auction & Raffle. Sponsored By Sacred Heart Mayordomos.

2 - 4 PM
Opening Celebration of David Zimmerman's Photo Exhibit, "A Life Lived with Intention, Creativity, and Love." At the Questa Public Library, 6-12 Municipal Park Rd., shown through January 31. Info: (575) 586-2023

DECEMBER 8: SUN NOON
Taos County Historical Society Holiday Luncheon: History of the Duran Chapel. Mexican buffet and silent auction at the Sagebrush Inn, 1508 Paseo Del Pueblo Sur, Taos; tickets \$40-\$45, contact Ernestina Cordova (575) 758-9243 or cordova@newmex.com

1:30 - 3:30 PM
Join Storytellers at Questa Sala, 2331 Hwy 522 with Ms. Amber from TWIRL and Ms. Anandi from TISA, plus the Band: Gummywerm! Free, all ages. Info: yogasalaquesta.org

DECEMBER 10: TUE 6 - 7:30 PM
Red River Trivia Night at Red River Brewing Company, 217W Main St. A fun trivia tournament event. Info: visit reddriverbrewing.com

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

DECEMBER 11: WED 6 PM
Questa VFW Meeting second Wednesday of the month in person and on Zoom. Questa VFW Hall Hwy 3 in Questa. For Zoom link and to confirm meeting contact Danny Garcia at (575) 586-1191

DECEMBER 12: THU 1:30 - 2:30 PM
Wildcat Kitty Club at Questa Public Library, 6 1/2 Municipal Park Road. Engage your baby with reading, songs, crafts and more! Ages 0-3. Older siblings welcome. Info: visit library@villageofquesta.org, or call (575) 586-2023

2:30 - 4:30 PM
Dropped Stitch at Questa Public Library, 6 1/2 Municipal Park Road. We crochet, knit, laugh, teach, and learn. Bring your projects. All skill levels welcome. Info: email Sharon Nicholson of Questa Public Library at library@villageofquesta.org, or call (575) 586-2023

DECEMBER 13: FRI 10 AM - NOON
Food for All at North Central NM Food Pantry, 140 Embargo Rd. Info: visit questafoodpantry.org, or call (575) 586-0486

1 - 3 PM
FREE Individualized Technology Support - registration required at Questa Public Library, 6 1/2 Municipal Road. FREE In Person Tech Support for Seniors! Bring your device and all your questions to get personalized support from our tech guru, Martin. Reserve your spot for an individualized session. Info: call (575) 586-2023

1 - 3 PM
Make Holiday ornaments with Twirl Steam Play at Questa Public Library, 6 1/2 Municipal Park Road. Take home 5 special ornaments to share with your family! Geared to elementary-aged children and their families. Parents and kids learn together as they play, create & explore! Info: email library@villageofquesta.org, or call (575) 586-2023

DECEMBER 14: SAT 10 AM - 4 PM
Alumbra Christmas Market at VFW Hall, Highway 522. Holiday shopping of unique, local gifts and goodies. Your favorite craftspeople, food and festivities. Bring your family, greet your friends! Info: visit QuestaCreative.org, or call (575) 586-5658

5 PM
Questa Light Parade with live music, food and live nativity scene. Info: email vigil@villageofquesta.org or call (575) 586-0694

DECEMBER 15: SUN 1 - 4 PM
CULTIVO Farm Stand - a local food sale! Stock up for your winter feasts! Pick up produce - carrots, cabbage, beets, garlic - grown at Cerro Vista Farm, plus honey and other goods! Weather permitting outside in front of the Sala, otherwise indoors. Info: visit yogasalaquesta.org

DECEMBER 16: MON 5 PM
Las Posadas at St. Anthony's Catholic Church starting at 5 p.m. and followed by a meal at the Questa Parish Center, 16 St Anthony's Rd, Questa. Info: (575) 586-0470

DECEMBER 18: WED 8 AM-3:30 PM
Water Supply Policy Summit Sponsored by Senator Bobby Gonzales at Buffalo Thunder Resort & Casino, 30 Buffalo Thunder Trail, Santa Fe. Free to attend, to register, *see article on page 11*.

6 PM
Questa Independent School Board Meeting at QISD Board Room, 2256 Wildcat Rd. # A. Info: call (575) 586-0421

DECEMBER 19: THU NOON - 4 PM
In-person, one-on-one, business advising with Anwar Kaelin, Director of the Small Business Development Center at UNM-Taos. FREE and CONFIDENTIAL for anyone in any stage of business. Make an appointment by visiting: calendly.com/sbdctaos.

5 PM
Cerro VFW Post #9516 Monthly Meeting at Cerro VFW, 108 NM Highway 378, Questa. Info: call (575) 586-2352

DECEMBER 20: FRI 10 AM - NOON
Food for All at North Central NM Food Pantry, 140 Embargo Rd. Info: visit questafoodpantry.org, or call (575) 586-0486

DECEMBER 21: SAT 10 AM - 5 PM
Christmas Market at Red River Conference Center, 101 River Street. As part of the Christmas in the Mountains event, explore a treasure trove of handcrafted and one-of-a-kind gifts. It's the perfect opportunity to support local artisans and find that special something for your loved ones. Info: visit reddriver.org

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

5:30 PM
Light Parade at Red River, Main Street. As a part of the Christmas in the Mountains event, come view the Light Parade in Red River. Info: visit reddriver.org

DECEMBER 22: SUN 10 AM - 5 PM
Christmas Market at Red River Conference Center, 101 River Street. As part of the Christmas in the Mountains event, come join us to explore a treasure trove of handcrafted and one-of-a-kind gifts. Support local artisans and find that special something for your loved ones. Info: visit reddriver.org

7 PM
Torch Light Parade at Lighthouse Bar and Grille, 200 Pioneer Road. Come view the Red River Ski Area's Torch Light Parade. Info: visit reddriver.org

DECEMBER 25: WED
MERRY CHRISTMAS!

DECEMBER 31: TUE 4:30 - 8 PM
Living Word Ministry's Candlelight Service at Living Word Ministries Fellowship Hall, 12 Llano rd, Questa. Join us for games, food, and a candle light service. Info: visit lwmsite.org, or call (575) 741-0805

7 PM
Torch Light Parade at Lighthouse Bar and Grille, 200 Pioneer Road. Come view the Red River Ski Area's Torch Light Parade. Info: visit reddriver.org

JANUARY 1: WED
HAPPY NEW YEAR!

Weekly Events

SUNDAY

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

3 - 6 PM
Open Mic at Noisy Water Winery, 518 E. Main St, Red River. Get ready for a night of music, poetry, and laughter at Noisy Water Winery's Open Mic Night! Whether you're a seasoned performer or a first-time participant, join us for an evening of creative expression, fine wines, and a supportive audience. Info: visit reddriver.org/events/open-mic, or call (575) 754-9957

MONDAY

8 AM
Transportation for Qualified Seniors at Questa Senior Center, 148 Embargo Rd. Accepting donations, by appointment only. Info: call (575) 586-0508

10 AM
Seated Yoga Practice - with Gaea, in person only, \$8-\$10. This three week series offers an accessible yoga practice. We will use chairs for support. First three Mondays in December. Info: visit yogasalaquesta.org

5 PM
Free Community Yoga at Yoga Sala, 2331 NM-522. Free Community Yoga, gentle practice with Rae in person only, free. First three Mondays in December. Info: visit yogasalaquesta.org

7 PM
Kickboxing with Reto at Yoga Sala, 2331 NM-522. In person only, sliding scale \$5-\$15 All classes free for teens. Info: visit yogasalaquesta.org

TUESDAY

8 AM
Transportation for Qualified Seniors at Questa Senior Center, 148 Embargo Rd. Accepting donations, by appointment only. Info: call (575) 586-0508

WEDNESDAY

MERRY CHRISTMAS!



POEM OF THE MONTH

THURSDAY

8 AM
Transportation for Qualified Seniors at Questa Senior Center, 148 Embargo Rd. Accepting donations, by appointment only. Info: call (575) 586-0508

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

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

FRIDAY

10 AM
Free Community Qigong at Yoga Sala, 2331 NM-522, Questa. With Julian, in person only, free. Info: visit yogasalaquesta.org

7 - 9 PM
Weekly Recovery Program at Living Word Ministries, 12 Llano Rd, Questa. New Thirst Christ Centered Recovery Program offered weekly on Friday Evenings. Info: visit taoschamber.com/events/details/weekly-recovery-program-11-15-2024-22744

SATURDAY

9 AM
Free Community Tai Chi, with Reto, in person only, free. All classes free for teens. Info: visit yogasalaquesta.org

7 PM
Torch Light Parade at Lighthouse Bar and Grille, 200 Pioneer Road. Come view the Red River Ski Area's Torch Light Parade. Info: visit reddriver.org

Evening Star

A cold mist, temperature - Dash, Frosted glaze on window - Glass.

Ice forms for all around to - See, Mountain air thick, crisp - To Be.

A mirror reflects on histories - Past, Stories unwritten but spoken - Gasp.

Time passed before humble - Feast, Wise men walked toward the - East.

Their wish for peace - Everlasting, An evening star following - Casting.

As the year nears its calendar - End, Thoughts remembering - Suspend.

A small gift left under the - Tree, What on earth could or - *Tu Si?

* Yes, you see?

Señor Miguel —Ghost Writer

CLASSIFIEDS

For Sale

Property for Sale: 1 Acre Lot with water rights, located in Questa, NM on Sagebrush Road near the High School. \$45,000 OBO. Call or text Kari Martinez at 505-239-7600.

Notices

Sacred Heart Arts & Crafts Fundraiser December 7, 2024, Time: 10am to 5pm @ St. Anthony Parish Center. Interested Vendors call Maria @ 210-823-2929 or 575-586-0470 to reserve your table. Tables are \$20 - we will have a Silent Auction & Raffle. Sponsored By Sacred Heart Mayordomos.

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. Questa Senior Center, 148 Embargo Rd, Questa. Call (575) 586-0508 for more information.

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.

SLV spay & neuter alliance mobile clinic offers low-cost spay and neuter services for cats and dogs in San Luis, Alamosa, and other towns in southern Colorado on a rotating basis. Surgeries include age-appropriate rabies and distemper vaccines. Microchips, bordetella vaccines, dewormer, nail trims, and mat removal are available at additional cost. Book appointments easily online at slvna.org or call (719) 657-7076.

Val Verde 2 Water Association is looking for a well service operator for community well. Duties include quarterly testing, locating breaks, prepare estimates & supervise repair work. WSO certification not required but experience is required. For more information, contact us at valverdewaterassociation@gmail.com.

Rocky Mountain Youth Corps is a non-profit organization located in Taos, NM. We are currently hiring Multiple Positions for our 2025 Season. We are hiring Conservation Crew Supervisors, Assistant Crew Leaders, and Conservation Crewmembers. Join our organization and make a difference in our community. Visit our website for full position descriptions and to apply: <https://youthcorps.org/> or call 575-751-1420

Help Wanted

Questa Senior Center is looking to hire a cook! Monday through Friday 8:00 to 2:30, \$15.97/hr, weekends and holidays off, benefits available. Apply online or by calling the Taos county Senior Program HR department. Please come join our team!





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During "Donation December," we're proud to be one of the many incredible nonprofits serving our Questa community. Please support your local *Questa del Rio News* with a cash donation this season.

Questa del Rio News is a non-profit newspaper, which is produced by local people, for local people, providing a platform for our community voices. Help us continue to deliver this unique and essential news that connects us to each other and helps keep this community strong.

CHURCH DIRECTORY

QUESTA

ST. ANTHONY DE PADUA CHURCH
 Father Andrew Ifele (575) 586-0470
 Sunday 8 a.m. only.

MISSION CHURCHES OF ST. ANTHONY'S:
 Costilla - Sagrado Corazon - Sunday 9 a.m.
 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

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

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

KINGDOM HALL OF JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES
 (575) 586-1947

AMALIA


SANTO NIÑO MISSION CHURCH
 1st & 3rd Saturdays 4 p.m.

ABUNDANT LIFE CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP
 Sunday Service 10:30 a.m.
 Potluck & Fellowship 3rd Sunday of the month
 Highway 196, Amalia
 Pastors: Lorenzo & Arleen Lucero
 (575) 770-5716

RED RIVER

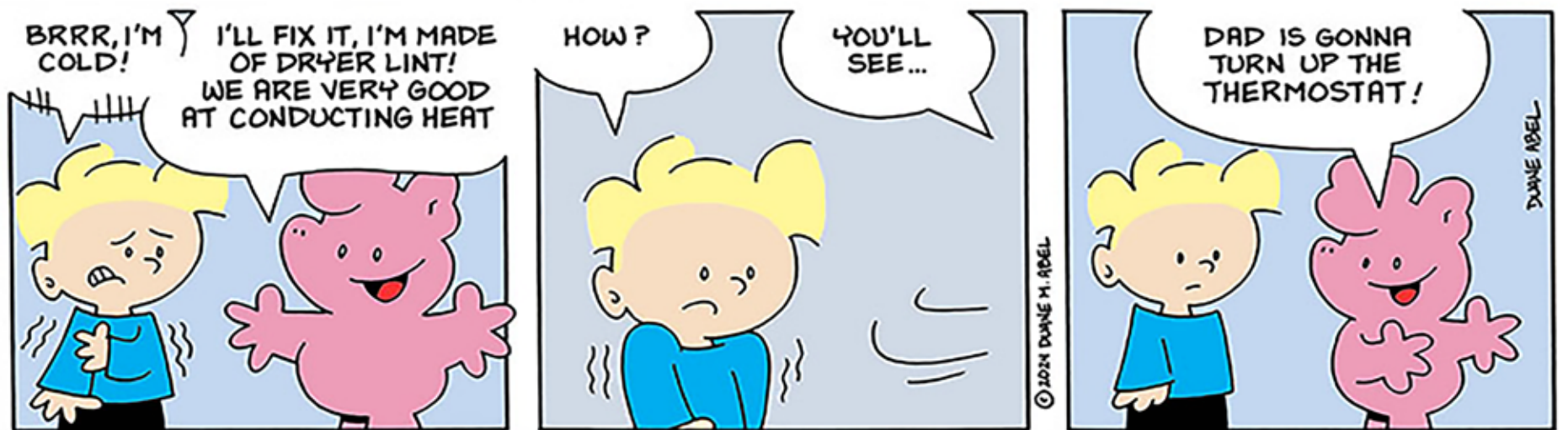
FAITH MOUNTAIN FELLOWSHIP
 Corner of River Street and Copper King Trail
 Sunday 10:30 a.m.
 First Baptist Church of Red River
 103 High Cost Trail
 Sundays 8:15 a.m. and 10:30 a.m.
 Pastor Joe Phillips (575) 754-2882

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,
 Purity and Love.

<p>QUESTA: Sundays 10-11 a.m. Questa Youth Center</p>	<p>RED RIVER: Tuesdays 7- 8 p.m. 417 E. High St. <i>(Erik's Workshop)</i></p>
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zed by duane m. abel

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BUSINESS DIRECTORY

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