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Questa del Rio News

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Questa Mayor John Ortega

By MIKAYLA ORTEGA and LORA ARCINEGA

The year 2024 was a busy one for Questa, according to Mayor John Ortega, who has been working with his staff to push many municipal projects forward to improve the overall well-being of the community.

When asked about the accomplishments that have improved the village over the past year, he notes the Cabresto Road drainage project as a major highlight. "The project is currently in phase one and will have three phases. We are still working to secure the funding to complete the project and that will be a big priority for us in 2025."

Infrastructure improvements were one of the projects Mayor Ortega campaigned on in his run for mayor; he had also promised to reinstate a police department to serve Questa. "I am so proud that we have done exactly what we said we were going to do, and that we have a police force working locally to respond to calls for service." While the numbers weren't readily available, Mayor Ortega says there has been a decrease in property crime across the board. "People are able to get a quicker response when they need us and that makes our community safer, which was my goal in bringing back the police force." Questa currently has five certified police officers serving our community.

As far as increasing the community's resilience and preparedness, Mayor Ortega acknowledges that the fire and EMS department needs increased resources to be able to respond to fires during the day or middle of the night. "I have come to realize that things have changed and people cannot volunteer and leave their jobs like they did 20 years ago, and so I was supportive in seeing Questa EMS Director and Fire Chief Raynelle Cordova garner a grant to create paid positions in the department."

Mayor Ortega says the recent death of Josiah Mandonado



Red River Mayor Linda Calhoun

By MIKAYLA ORTEGA

Rounding out the first year of her fifth term as Red River's mayor, Linda Calhoun says it's been one of the best years yet. "We had change and growth this year, with one of the biggest changes being transitioning the annual Memorial Day Motorcycle Rally to the new family-friendly Mayfest in the Mountains, following last year's biker gang shootout. We were nervous because we didn't know how it was going to turn out, but it was a very successful first year," Mayor Calhoun says.

While the transition drew criticism from some, Mayor Calhoun says she used this first year as a learning and growing opportunity. "We are going to continue to improve and make it better. We have heard the community, and we are working to ensure we continue to improve our event. Bikers are always welcome in our community, but we cannot have biker gangs doing what they did in 2023."

In addition to this major transition, Mayor Calhoun says the town has been focused on upgrading and improving infrastructure throughout the town. A major sidewalk project to improve the walkability of the area is underway. The project starts in the middle of town, in front of Lifts West and will expand throughout central Red River. Contractors are creating "bump-outs" which extend curbs into the street, to make pedestrian crossings safer. "Our sidewalk project has been a big project to improve the access and safety of town for tourists who are walking to get around. We are very excited to see it come to completion in 2025."

The town has also been focused on increasing the resiliency of the town and has improved the overall public safety equipment and resources, to include adding CAD systems to the Marshal vehicles, license plate readers, and cages to better protect police officers. "Red River is a very safe town, and our crime rate is very low. We do have a lot of people in and out

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Questa del Rio News

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EDITORIAL

Thank you

By MIKAYLA ORTEGA

Two simple words: THANK YOU. These two words are simple and meek; however, they cannot fully express the depth of gratitude we feel for the outpouring of support we've received for this December's fundraising campaign.

As of press time, we have raised nearly \$18,000 to cover our operating expenses in 2025. We have been humbled at the outpouring of support this year from various people across the community.

Whether you supported our fundraiser at the town's Christmas Celebration, or if you dropped your spare change in a collection box at a local store, or if you gave through Venmo, Zeffy, Paypal or by check, we are incredibly thankful and grateful.

In 2025, we are planning to expand our grant writing and fundraising efforts. We are exploring cash raffle tickets, pancake breakfasts, a community dinner, and grant writing throughout

the entire year. If you're a local business and are interested in partnering with us for advertising, we have extensive reach across central New Mexico, with our top readers living in Questa NM, Cerro NM, Costilla NM, Amalia NM, Albuquerque NM, Santa Fe NM, Taos NM, Amarillo TX, Pueblo CO, Las Vegas NM, Rio Rancho NM, Red River NM, and Espanola NM. Every 28 days, our digital content garners upward of 200,000-250,000 views.

Our journalism is deeply invested in representing the community, giving our people a voice and a platform to tell their stories, document their history, and pave their future being fully represented. We would love to work with you, partner with you, hear from you, and join with you as we move forward into 2025.

May you and your loved ones have a wonderful, prosperous New Year filled with very few tribulations and many, many blessings.

In Loving Memory Of Auntie Quetta



Of all the special gifts in life, however great or small, to have you as one of our aunts was the greatest gift of all.

May the winds of love blow softly and whisper in your ear. We love you and miss you, auntie, and wish that you were here.

Deep in our hearts, your life is kept, loved and cherished, never to forget.

No more tomorrows that we can share, but yesterdays are always there.

A silent thought, a secret tear keeps your memory ever near in our hearts forever.

This poem was written by 12-year-old Sofia Vigil in honor of her aunt, Enriqueta Vigil, who passed away in May 2021.

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

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Questa Grapples with Loss of Firefighter Josiah Mandonado



Photo by E. Wilde

By MIKAYLA ORTEGA

The community of Questa united to share in their grief and suffering as they coped with the sudden passing of Questa Fire Department member Josiah Mandonado on December 7. Mandonado was a firefighter and was described by many as cheerful and full of life. He loved riding his Harley and his horses.

Mayor John Ortega ordered flags to be flown at half staff until December 14. A release from the Village read, “Our thoughts and prayers go out to the Mandonado family, all first responders and all who have been touched by Josiah.

We appreciate Josiah’s commitment and devotion to the Village of Questa and our surrounding communities.”

On Sunday, December 15, hundreds of people gathered in Perovich Park for a prayer vigil to honor Mandonado. The vigil was led by Living Word Ministries pastors Peter and Gayle Martinez. Freedom Church pastor Kristi Gonzales also offered support to attendees.

Oftentimes, it’s difficult to seek support when we’re struggling with mental health issues. According to researchers at Yale University, one of the most effective ways to reduce the stigma around men-

tal health is to talk about our emotional well-being.

Grief, sadness, hurt, anger, confusion, devastation, hopelessness are all normal and healthy emotions every human experiences. Knowing we do not have to cope with them alone is vital and essential.

If you or someone you know needs support, call or text 988 or chat 988life-line.org. 988 connects you with a trained crisis counselor who can help.

New Mexico also offers free mental health support through the NM Connect App.



Courtesy Photo

Josiah Mandonado

Our December Fundraiser was a huge success!!!

Thank you so much!

Since this January issue is being produced before the month of December is actually over, a final fundraising report will appear in the upcoming February issue, but we still want to make sure to share our immense appreciation right away to our community and donors!!

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

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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:

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- Minimize Harm.
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- Be Accountable and Transparent.

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Business Profile

Yoga Sala

By LORA ARCINIEGA

As you drive into Questa from the south, Yoga Sala sits on your right-hand side just as you cross the little bridge. The word “sala” is painted on the front of it, as well as an abstract mountain landscape. Owner Gaea McGahee opened the doors of this multi-use space in 2019 and since then it has hosted many events and groups centered around health and well-being.

As soon as you walk into the studio at Yoga Sala there is a calmness that overcomes you. Perhaps it's the oak floors or the way the light shines through the many windows that provide just the right amount of ambience to encourage you to drop your shoulders and take a deep breath.

McGahee grew up in southern New Mexico and moved to the Questa area in 2013. She immediately attended public meetings to help understand what Questa was about. While attending these public meetings, McGahee was absorbing information and learning what was important to the people of Questa.

This helped her discover the possibility of establishing a local farmers market. Growing and cultivating food played an important role in her formative years, and it was clear that Questa also shared this common thread of agriculture and farming. The idea of a farmers market made sense. The pieces were in place, but there was not a communal space for farmers and entrepreneurs to meet and offer their specialties in a central location.

McGahee got excited about the idea—it was something that she felt many people could enjoy. She also believed that it was aligned with the attributes of Questa she was hearing about in the public meetings.

The first Questa Farmers Market took place in 2016 at Perovich Park (the corner lot at the intersection of Highways 38 and 522) and later moved, to allow for growth and ongoing physical improvements, to the front of the Questa Visitors Center.

The idea of promoting health and wellness didn't end there.

While the Farmers Market was making headway in Questa, McGahee was taking classes to become a yoga



Photo by Lora Arciniega

Gaea McGahee



Photo by E. Wilde

Sala space is rented for community events as well as for hosting wellness classes and fitness classes



Courtesy Photo

Interior view at Sala

Instructor in 2016. In February of 2018, McGahee purchased the current building where Yoga Sala resides. After a year of renovating, McGahee and her partner opened the doors to Yoga Sala and provided the first yoga class in September of 2019.

Yoga Sala operates as both a nonprofit and for-profit business. As a nonprofit, free community classes in yoga and Tai Chi are offered. All classes are free for youth. You can attend McGahee's “Seated Yoga” and “Gentle Yoga” classes for \$10 if you buy a pass or \$12 for drop-ins. Classes run about 1 hour 15 minutes.

Since its doors opened, Yoga Sala has hosted music events, storytelling events, and workshops hosted by community members. Some of those include a microgreen workshop by Kenny Lacombe and a financial literacy class hosted by the Questa Credit Union. Other rooms in the building offer office space for nonprofit programs to use, as well as a kitchen. A tiny store inside the studio offers local coffee beans, tinctures and companion plants, art, cards, and jewelry—all produced locally.

McGahee leads a few nonprofit programs that operate under Localogy, a fiscal sponsor for many nonprofit programs in Questa and other northern New Mexico communities. There are three programs McGahee organizes from which many have benefitted. Sala Reach is the moving arts program at Yoga Sala that promotes whole health; the Questa Farmers Market operates from May to October; and the newly established Cultivo is a youth-centered agriculture program. The focus of her programs and the mission of the “sala” remains promoting the culture of health—whether that is through movement, food, or the land. The connection between land and people is something McGahee is very interested in maintaining, as her roots are firmly there.

McGahee offers a monthly class at the Questa Health Center for those in recovery. “I feel very strongly about supporting people in our community who are in recovery.” McGahee provides these classes for free under her non-profit program, Sala Reach, and those who wish to continue the class can go to Yoga Sala

free of charge. “If we want to ever see a more beautiful world and community, we can't leave anybody behind. We need systems in place that bring healing to everybody,” says McGahee.

Currently, Yoga Sala offers classes in yoga, Tai Chi, and kickboxing. Classes for kids such as ballet and dance will hopefully resume once new instructors are in place. Any teens interested in kickboxing can attend for free. Periodically, Yoga Sala offers a local food stand outside the building, with produce grown at Cerro Vista Farm by Cultivo.

One thing that McGahee wants to share with Questa residents and surrounding communities is that the space at Yoga Sala is open and ready for your event needs. If you are interested in hosting an event or having a gathering, Yoga Sala should be on your radar.

Yoga Sala has their schedule of events listed in the *Questa del Rio News* community calendar as well as on their website at <https://yogasalaquesta.org>. **Donations to the nonprofit are always accepted and appreciated.**



Manufactured Homes: Affordable Housing Or Compromise?

“Buy land and pick out a manufactured home,” they say. Nowadays, manufactured homes are quite nice, and with all the modern fixtures available, purchasing one can be surprisingly easy. Plus, the timeline is often much shorter than building a home from scratch.

After more than two years of elevated real estate prices, mortgage rates and rents, the housing affordability crisis in

the U.S. is more apparent than ever. Policymakers, economic experts, and regular households have been searching for tools to alleviate the pressure of housing costs.

Expanding manufactured housing is one possible solution. But is it the right option for you? Manufactured housing can be defined as homes prefabricated in a factory and then transported to their final destination. Because these homes often have simple designs and materials that are efficient to produce, they tend to be significantly less expensive than site-built homes. According to a 2023 report from the Manufactured Housing Institute, the average cost per square foot of a manufactured home was \$87—roughly half the \$160–200 per square foot cost of a site-built home.

Here are some costs to consider when comparing mobile home prices in New Mexico. This data was gathered from recent United States Census Bureau reports to provide the most up-to-date information:

Manufactured Homes Prices in the U.S.

- Average: \$124,700
- Single-Wide: \$85,200
- Double-Wide: \$155,400

While the initial costs of manufactured homes are lower, the design and features you choose can affect the final price. Do you want a basic design with limited features, or are you looking for something more customized? Modern advancements in construction and technology, as well as the popularity of contemporary farmhouse styles, have gradually driven up prices. Today, customization, energy efficiency, and luxury amenities influence the cost of a manufactured home.

For lower- and middle-income families, manufactured homes remain an appealing option. Currently, 21.2 million Americans live in manufactured homes, which make up about one in every 10 new homes constructed in the U.S. annually. However, while the quality of manufactured homes has improved, one question remains: Do they hold their value?

The common perception is that manufactured homes don't appreciate as well as traditional site-built homes. While they generally appreciate at a slower rate, they can hold or even increase in value under the right circumstances—especially in areas like Taos County. Factors

such as location, condition, and market demand play a role in resale value. Buyers should carefully inspect any home for necessary repairs before purchasing.

Another important consideration is financing. Finding lenders who specialize in manufactured home loans can be challenging. Many banks and lenders won't finance these homes unless they are titled as real property. To qualify as real property, the home must be affixed to a permanent foundation, with the tongue and axles removed, and the owner must hold title to both the home and the land it's on. Keep in mind that once a manufactured home is considered real property, it will be taxed accordingly. While financing may be more complex, it's not impossible. A knowledgeable real estate professional can help guide you to the right lender and navigate the process of purchasing land and setting up your manufactured home. I'd be happy to help you find your next property and guide you through the steps to place your manufactured home. Let's talk about your next move!

Homeowners Insurance Renewals Soar for Northern NM residents

By MIKAYLA ORTEGA

With recent devastating disasters, fires, and flooding across the country, insurance companies are changing their regional homeowners insurance qualifications based on risk factors.

In the northern New Mexico region, the fire season has expanded to be year-round. We have a dry, arid environment, coupled with persisting drought, unpredictable monsoon rainfall, and dry, fine fuels in our forested areas—this is a direct result of climate change. Historically, peak fire season begins in early May and runs from June, until monsoon season in July.

In 2022, northern New Mexico saw the largest and most destructive fire in its history, burning 341,471 acres between early April and late June in San Miguel, Mora, and Taos counties. 2022 is also recorded as the most significant and record-breaking fire season, causing several hundred homes and structures to burn.

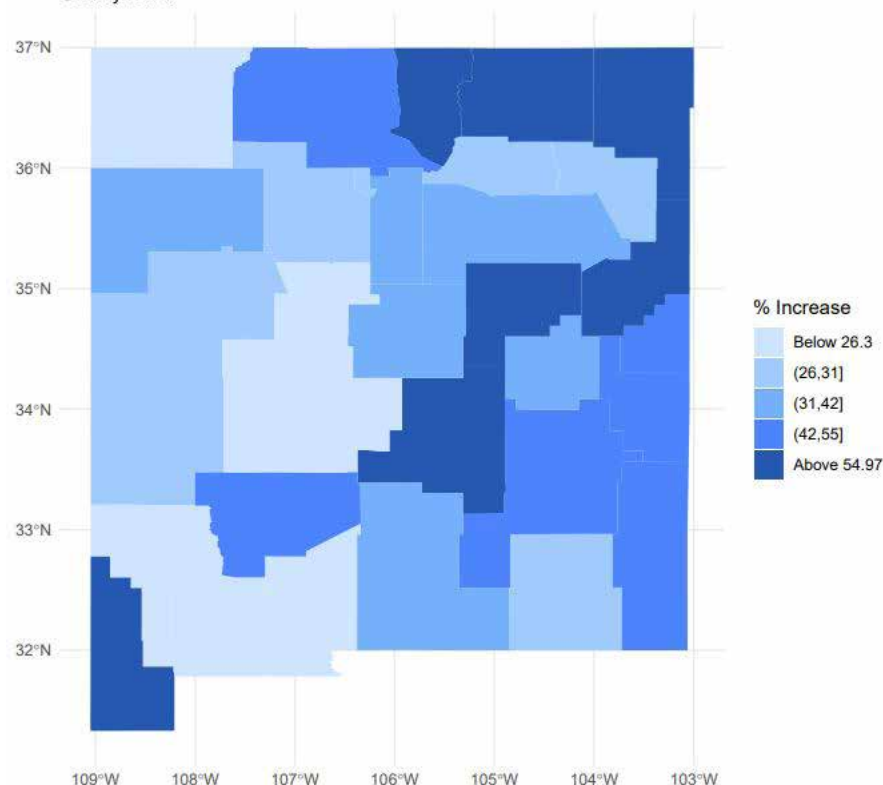
Still recovering economically and emotionally, many residents in northern New Mexico counties and other areas across the country are now finding themselves being denied homeowners insurance, based upon the regions in which they reside.

In early December, the Senate Budget committee on Capitol Hill presented a report entitled *The Climate-Driven Insurance Crisis is here, and Getting Worse*.

The report detailed the economic cost of climate change and how it could potentially destabilize and pose a threat to the U.S. economy and global financial systems. Item 4-B on the agenda outlined how homeowners insurance markets and property values were chief economic threats.

It goes on to note that some insurers are unable to justify doing business in communities on the front lines of climate change and have pulled out of markets entirely. They cite “rapidly growing

Premium % Increase 2018 – 2023, NM County Level



HOME INSURANCE cont'd on page 8

RCCLA and Kit Carson Electric Cooperative Partner to Build Storage Facility

By STAFF WRITERS

On Friday, December 6, the Taos County Planning and Zoning Commission approved Kit Carson Electric Cooperative's (KCEC) storage facility plan, named Amalia II, which is approved for construction on Rio Costilla Cooperative Livestock Association (RCCLA) land in early 2025.

The facility will house a solar array and battery energy storage system, which will add additional renewable resources to northern Taos County communities.

"It's a great accomplishment for our members and communities as KCEC continues progressing its 100 percent renewable initiative," a release states.

A unique aspect of the Amalia II renewable energy project was the novel partnership between KCEC and the Rio Costilla Cooperative Livestock Association RCCLA.

The RCCLA membership is made up of local ranching, farming, and hunting families who own and manage the land in the Rio Costilla area. The RCCLA members are known as the "caretakers of the land," and their mission is to sustain and grow the abundant wildlife population in the area.

Stakeholders coordinated jointly to ensure the facility would not impact the beauty of the land or wildlife migration.



Courtesy Photo



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LOR FOUNDATION UPDATE

BY AEDAN HANNON

Breathing New Life Into Community Programs

The arts have a deep history in Questa. Locals have long used drawing, painting, pottery, and music to display their talents and highlight the culture and history of Questa.

Other media also have deep roots in the community, including the

performing arts. But the last few years have been challenging for Questa's thespians and budding actors, as the performing arts program at the Questa Independent School District wilted with the effects of the pandemic, retirements, and other hurdles.

It was amid the recent struggles that one teacher reached out to the LOR Foundation's Maria Gonzalez with the idea to revitalize the schools' performing arts. With a grant from LOR, this teacher and other passionate educators and volunteers are now working to rebuild the district's drama program, helping students to attend performances, participate in workshops, and restart their own productions.

"There hasn't been a drama program in Questa in almost six years," Gonzalez says. "Art is how we express ourselves and celebrate our community, so we were happy to lend a hand

to get this essential program up and running again."

Rejuvenation has been a theme of a number of the projects LOR has supported in Questa as of late.

Like the school district's drama program, the greenhouse at the Roots and Wings Community School was in need of a boost. Over the last 20 years, the greenhouse has served as an important teaching tool, offering students lessons about agriculture, biology, and the local environment. But the greenhouse's aging infrastructure was increasingly hampering the efforts of teachers. With a grant from LOR, the school will now be able to replace the greenhouse's insulation and install new windows and a new exhaust fan so students can continue their hands-on learning year-round.

"We're always looking to fund brand new ideas," Gonzalez says. "But we also want to support long-stand-

ing work that continues to make our community better for everyone."

As 2025 gets underway, Gonzalez is looking forward to supporting more essential community projects. She's particularly interested in ideas that would improve transportation and housing, two areas that continue to pose challenges for many Questa residents. Have an idea that would help veterans find rides to doctor appointments? Or, a project that could help seniors maintain their homes? You can reach Gonzalez at maria@lorfoundation.org or (575) 665-2001 to share your idea and learn how LOR can help.

Happy New Year from the LOR Foundation!

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



Kari Lynn D. Martinez

By LORA ARCINIEGA

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.

Kari Martinez was born and raised in Questa, attending school within the Questa Independent School District, until she transferred to the New Mexico Military Institute (NMMI) for her freshman and sophomore years, between 2005-06. She returned to Questa and graduated from Questa High School in 2007. “I always wanted to be in the military and liked the structure. My family came from the military, and I grew to love that environment.” Upon high school graduation, Martinez moved to Albuquerque to pursue more opportunities.

Martinez grew up in a very family-oriented home where she was able to develop her love for the outdoors and the freedom to get her hands dirty was instilled. Oftentimes, she would find herself gaining invaluable work skills early in life in assisting her mom, Louise Gallegos, at St. Anthony’s Parish Office, and also working with her dad, Dean Martinez, on cars and home improvement projects. “I was never afraid to get my hands dirty or do things that only guys do. If I didn’t know how to do something, I’d ask my dad or try and figure things out on my own.”

While growing her expertise and in various career fields, she attended college a few times but found it wasn’t the right fit for her. “I could never find time to study and never really had the money to be successful at college. I was always working to try to make ends meet.” Her eagerness to learn growing up helped pave the way for her to find an alternate route in the pursuit of happiness.

Martinez took advantage of her varied adeptness, taking any job she could while living in Albuquerque. “I learned many different skills in different areas of the workforce: from HR roles, to being on job sites with my dad working in construction. If I didn’t know how to do something, I’d figure it out. One way or another, I was going to get the job done.”

Martinez finds her upbringing in Questa shaped her future outcomes. “I was blessed enough to grow up in Questa where my love for the ‘country’ way of life grew into what it is today.” This served Martinez well when she recently purchased some land in Peralta, New Mexico, and created a homestead for her and 5-year-old daughter, Isabella, that she and her dad remodeled.

“My upbringing has taught me to work hard and enabled me to create my own ranch—The Glitter & Glam Ranch.” The ranch was named by Isabella. It cur-



Photo by Sarah Rowe Photos – Los Lunas, NM

Kari Lynn Martinez and daughter Isabella

rently houses goats, a lamb, and a ranch dog, and provides lots of space for Isabella to run and have some of the same freedoms Martinez had when she was a child. Isabella is currently taking horse riding lessons at Serenity Stables in Los Lunas and participating in kids’ rodeos.

Currently, Martinez serves as a program manager for J.G. Management Services on a support contract for the Los Alamos field office.

Martinez attributes her success to her family, friends, and daughter, who are

the main driving forces in all she does. One person she credits much of her success and determination to is Liz Vialpando-Poe, a Questa native and former Representando candidate, who is credited with playing an instrumental role in Martinez’s career path. “She has been a mentor to me in the workforce and has been an inspiration in all she has accomplished. Without her guidance, I would not have had the privilege of holding some job positions and gaining invaluable work experience and knowledge.”

“My story is proof that you don’t always have to take the college route to achieve success,” Martinez says. “Growing up in rural Questa, I developed a strong work ethic and admiration for the simple things in life, which has carried me along the path towards my own American Dream. Despite financial challenges and the struggle of moving from job to job, I never let obstacles define who I am. I took on every opportunity, taught myself new skills, and refused to quit.” Martinez believes that “you grow through what you go through, and success is just waiting for you to make it happen, one way or another.”



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Senator Gonzales Hosts NM Water Policy Summit

By STAFF WRITERS

In mid-December, State Senator Roberto “Bobby” Gonzales hosted the New Mexico Water Policy Summit at Buffalo Mountain Thunder Casino. The event, which drew over 200 participants, was in part sponsored by the Questa del Rio News and the Questa Economic Development Fund. “I am especially grateful to the Pueblo of Pojoaque for co-hosting this summit with me, and to the New Mexico Chamber of Commerce Foundation for bringing together such a diverse group of leaders,” said Senator Gonzales. “This included representatives from our tribes, acequias, mutual domestic water associations, state legislature, state agencies, counties, municipal governments, water treatment companies, and the oil and gas industry.”

An overview of the Governor Michelle Lujan’s 50-Year Water Action Plan was presented and served as the basis for many of the discussions around the challenges and opportunities related to water availability and utilization throughout the state.

Senator Gonzales added, “our open, respectful, and productive discussions about the Governor’s 50-Year Water Action Plan, including the treatment and use of brackish and produced water, were invaluable. It is only through continued dialogue that we will find the best solutions for New Mexico’s water challenges.”

The critical factor that drives the importance of addressing this issue now is that New Mexico is projected to have approximately 25 percent less water available in its rivers and aquifers over the next 50 years. “They’re not making any more



Courtesy Photo

State Lt. Governor Howie Morales welcomes attendees to the NM Water Policy Summit

water,” said Peter Vigil, district manager for the Taos Soil and Water Conservation District, “we have to find ways to conserve the water we have and use technology to manage the strategic water supply.”

The panel discussions were productive and covered topics that included the need for aquifer mapping and infrastructure investment, a focus on K-12 water curriculum, and training of a workforce skilled in water treatment. The role of the strategic water supply in fostering economic development through the use of treated brackish and produced water for industry was emphasized as important to preserving freshwater resources, especially in northern New Mexico.

Questa Mayor John Ortega shared his perspective on how the Summit “brought some of the biggest agenda items to the forefront in regard to the Village of Questa. We’re always cognizant of the need to upgrade our water system infrastructure and wastewater facilities. The use of reused water is also important for our future

green hydrogen project. And acequias are vital to our community, to the farmers and ranchers in our area.”

As part of the event, Senator Gonzales presented the Agua Es Vida Lifetime Achievement Award to Questa’s Mary Trujillo-Mascareñas and the Agua Es Vida Amigo del Agua Award to Don Bush, the Chevron Questa Mine Waste Rock Pile Advisor. Both individuals were recognized for their outstanding contributions to water policy and management.

“Don’s award reflects Chevron’s commitment to the environmental remediation of the Questa Mine and to protecting the water resources of neighboring communities,” said Christian Isely, Chevron’s New Mexico Government Affairs Representative, “Chevron remains committed to assisting the acequias in northern Taos County and to donating water rights to the Village of Questa.”

Throughout the event, many speakers, including Lt. Governor Howie Morales, Governor’s Infrastructure Advisor Rebecca Roose, and State Representative Tara Lujan, stressed the importance of open and respectful conversations in shaping effective water policies. These conversations are critical to fostering collaboration and ensuring that solutions are developed with input from all stakeholders.

The Water Policy Summit successfully brought together diverse voices to address the urgent water challenges facing the state. With increasingly scarce water resources, the conversations and collaborations initiated at this summit will be crucial in developing sustainable water management strategies. Senator Gonzales concluded the event with a call

for continued dialogue, emphasizing that the summit was just the beginning of a much-needed statewide effort to protect and manage the state’s water resources.

Here is the link to a downloadable pdf of the 50-Year Water Action Plan: www.nm.gov/wp-content/uploads/2024/01/New-Mexico-50-Year-Water-Action-Plan.pdf

WATER 101

An **acre-foot** of water is the amount of water it takes to cover one acre of land with one foot of water. To visualize this, it would cover a football field with a foot of water.

This is 325,851 gallons of water, or 43,560 cubic feet of water (1 cubic foot of water = 7.4805 gallons)

This is enough water to meet the needs of two families of four people for one year.

Freshwater is groundwater, water from rivers, lakes, or wells, which originate from precipitation and snow melt, subject to periods of drought.

Brackish water is unrelated to oil and gas production: it is naturally occurring salty water originating from the geographic basins that were flooded with ocean water over 75 million years ago.

Produced water is a byproduct of drilling, brought to the surface with oil and gas processing.

Treated water is the result of any process that improves the quality of water to make it available for drinking, industrial use, irrigation, river flow maintenance, and water recreation.

HOME INSURANCE cont’d from page 5

catastrophe exposure, and a challenging reinsurance market.” Additionally, it states “major companies have stopped writing new policies in particularly high-risk regions.”

According to data from 2023, New Mexico sits at #11 for non-renewals of homeowner insurance policies due to increased fire risk of the state. Additionally, over 54 percent of residents saw a premium increase in 2023.

The report says that while counties may not yet be considered at significant climate risk, they are beginning to experience significant insurance non-renewal

risk, likely because insurance availability is at risk in proximate counties.

The report notes that as climate change gets worse, so does trouble in insurance markets, threatening mortgage markets and property values. In certain communities, high insurance premiums and unavailable coverage will make it nearly impossible for anyone who cannot buy a house in cash to get a mortgage and buy a home.

This data is valuable to help New Mexicans prepare their homes and properties, making them fire-resistant and safe. Some tips include:

- Remove all trees and large shrubs within 30 feet of the home.

- To a distance of 100 feet (200 feet on steep lots), remove some trees and shrubs to create 10 feet of space between adjoining trees’ outermost branches. Prune lower branches of remaining trees up to 10 feet off the ground.
- Remove ladder fuels, young trees, and shrubs planted close to larger trees that could carry a surface fire into the tops of large trees.
- Minimize flammable debris. Keep roofs and rain gutters free of pine needles, leaves, and other flammable material.
- Keep firewood and other flammable debris a minimum of 50 feet from the house, preferably on the uphill side.

- Mow grasses to a height of less than 6 inches within 50 feet of the home.
- Use fire-resistant construction and landscaping. Wood shake shingle roofs are highly flammable. Convert roof to Class A fire-resistant materials such as fiberglass-asphalt, metal, and tile.
- Construct decks and siding with non-combustible materials.
- Screen openings under decks and attic and foundation vents.
- Check with local nurseries to learn about fire-resistant landscaping.
- Call your local forestry office for more information.

QUESTA - REVIEW cont'd from page 1

rocked the entire village to its core. "He was such a good guy, always positive and happy. It was really a big loss for the entire community, and we are working to see how we can support our staff, so they know there are resources."

"Among our accomplishments, I'd say the biggest was the partnership with Kit Carson Electric Cooperative in preparation for the Green Hydrogen Project." The project is set to kick off in 2025 and Mayor Ortega says he is hopeful the new administration will be supportive of this project. "Renewable energy is the way of the future, and we are working with Kit Carson to create this groundbreaking innovation which will make northern New Mexico a green hydrogen hub. It will create jobs, clean energy, and resilience in northern New Mexico. It's a big win no matter how you look at it."

Looking ahead, Mayor Ortega says he is very proud of the major projects for which the village has laid groundwork and their continuance into 2025. "We are very excited to say we have some big projects on the helm including getting Embargo and Cabresto Roads repaved and also, we're planning to complete the drainage project on Shirley Drive." The village is also prioritizing obtaining funding for new equipment for the playground near the Questa Library and making improvements to the Questa Business Park. The village is also working to upgrade the sewer systems across neighborhoods in Questa.

Mayor Ortega is also looking forward to updating planning and zoning codes, which have not been updated since his grandfather, the former Mayor Max Ortega Sr., was in office. "I want to update and also get a board in place who will be able to work to advise the village on the decisions we make about land use, development, and zoning



Photo by E. Wilde

Flag Mountain, Questa NM

regulations."

While the past year has been very busy, Mayor Ortega says he feels like he's barely scratching the surface. "We have so much more work to do, and I am really looking forward to achieving a lot as we enter into 2025."

Early in his term as Mayor, Ortega

says he held several "Coffee with the Mayor" sessions but it didn't continue. "I am still very accessible to our residents. They can send me an email if they have anything to discuss and I am happy to see what we can do to help." Mayor Ortega's email is jortega@villa-geofquesta.org.

RED RIVER - REVIEW cont'd from page 1

because we are a tourist town, so ensuring our Marshals have what they need to do their jobs has been a priority for us this year."

Red River has gained regional and national recognition following the 2023 Ski Town in North America designation in USA Today. "We were also nominated for this recognition in 2024 and while we didn't receive it, having won last year and being nominated again this year, that is a huge honor. It really goes to show how much people love having the ski area right in town. You can go up the mountain and enjoy the slopes while your family can stay in town and walk around, shopping or eating out.

It really is a wonderful experience and people love it."

While this recognition is a big honor for Mayor Calhoun, she says her big focus is helping the locals, so Red River businesses can be successful. "We've had some businesses close shop, but then another one comes in their place. We've had several new restaurants open in town this year alone, including Yu Garden, Vine, Lost Hiker, and the Bistro, to name a few. We've also had new retail shops open up and this helps Red River maintain its appeal to people who visit."

This year, the town invested \$35,000 to create a "winter wonderland" in Brandenburg Park. "We worked with a contractor who really transformed the space into something special, with tons of Christmas lights and displays. People

have loved it and we are so happy with how it turned out."

Looking forward into 2025, Mayor Calhoun says she is very excited to see the sidewalk project reach completion, as well several other infrastructure projects. A special endeavor the town has taken on is a Workforce Housing initiative to create affordable housing for seasonal workers, teachers, police officers, and other employees who work in Red River. "We want people to have options when they work in Red River and we understand that housing availability and affordability are major barriers to allowing people to plant their roots and make Red River their home." Assuming all goes well, the town is hoping to break ground on this project in the spring of 2026.

Looking at the 2025 legislature, Mayor Calhoun is ready to make her appeals on behalf of the town of Red River. "We have a lot of goals for our town, but without the funding, we're not able to do a lot, so I am hopeful and positive as we head into the legislative session."

Mayor Calhoun says she is excited for the upcoming year and is grateful for the staff who make the town run smoothly. "I genuinely believe the municipal staff at the town are the best staff in the country. I am so grateful for their dedication and their work to make Red River great. 2025 is going to be a great year for us and I believe it will be a good time for real estate and for tourism, so these are all good things for the Town of Red River."

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Red River Valley Foundation Dissolves, Awards Remaining \$10,000 To Red River Valley Charter School

By STAFF WRITERS

The Red River Valley Foundation (RRVF) presented a \$10,000 check to the Red River Valley Charter School during a ceremony held on Monday, December 16. According to a press release from the Town of Red River, the contribution will “support the school’s efforts to enhance educational opportunities for students and further its mission of academic excellence and community engagement.”

The check was presented by RRVF board members Ted Calhoun, Daniel Lamb, and Angela Black to the school’s Executive Director/Superintendent Kimberly Ritterhouse and School Board President Courtney Henderson. The

event was attended by representatives from the Town of Red River, the Rex Foundation, and the Red River Chamber of Commerce, showcasing the strong partnership between the school, the foundation, and the broader Red River community.

“We are thrilled to support the incredible work being done at the Red River Valley Charter School,” said RRVF Board President Ted Calhoun, “This donation, originally contributed by the Red River Business Alliance, is a testament to the lasting legacy of businesses that have supported our town’s progress. We are honored to carry that forward through this gift to the school.”



Courtesy Photo

The Red River Business Alliance, which dissolved earlier this year, allocated its remaining funds to the RRVF to ensure its contributions would continue to benefit the community. The \$10,000 donation to the charter school reflects the Alliance’s dedication to local educa-

tion and community development.

Ritterhouse expressed her gratitude, stating, “This generous donation will make a meaningful impact on our students, allowing us to enhance resources and programs that support their learning and growth. We deeply appreciate the continued support from the Red River Valley Foundation and the legacy of the Red River Business Alliance.”

The RRVF’s ongoing support for local organizations highlights its mission to strengthen the region through philanthropy and collaboration. This donation will be allocated for key projects and initiatives that benefit students, teachers, and the school’s long-term goals.



Recognizing Clara Adams

By LORA ARCINIEGA

You know when you talk to somebody about something they’re passionate about, and their words start flowing seamlessly? That’s what it’s like talking to Clara Adams, the Questa High School agriculture and welding teacher.

Adams grew up in Jaroso, Colorado, and didn’t initially consider teaching, but circumstances led her to obtain her degree in English and eventually licensure and certificates in teaching.

“I was on the path towards becoming a veterinarian but my professors would tell me periodically that I would make a good teacher. I often found myself the go-between for teachers and students.” When Adams would hear how teaching was a recommended career choice, she would brush off that idea and continue on her route toward becoming a veterinarian. By the time she got married, in 1995, Adams



Courtesy Photo

Clara Adams

had her pre-veterinary degree completed.

A big change happened when Adams decided she wanted to start a family. That’s when she switched majors to English. She graduated in 1997 and began teaching soon after. The school was small so many of the teachers wore several hats. Adams found herself helping out as a volleyball and basketball coach. Once her children were born, Adams decided to step away from the classroom for a while and focus on being a new mom.

It wasn’t until her kids were in elementary school in Costilla, New Mexico, that the opportunity presented itself. “Arlene Sanchez was the principal of the Questa Schools at the time and she encouraged me to be a teacher there... and helped me get the certification I needed.” Adams went back and forth, teaching in positions in Colorado and New Mexico.

Then, in January of 2004, Adams found



Courtesy Photo

Clara Adams barrel racing

herself at the Questa High School teaching English and language arts as well as agriculture. “I was at Questa High School from 2004 to 2011 and met a lot of great people there. Bob Jaramillo was a great mentor for me. He made it through the day with a positive attitude and encouraged me to do the same. Gordon Robinson, Lynn Galusky, and Barbara Rael also served as role models.”

In 2011, Adams returned to Colorado to teach and it wasn’t until 2023 that a teaching position presented itself at Questa High School once again. “I was so excited to focus on just agriculture. The field is something I feel very passionate about. I’m a very hands-on learner and encourage that type of learning in my classroom.” Adams is also the coordinator for the Future Farmers of America (FFA) program at Questa High. Both agriculture and FFA are near and dear to her heart as she grew

up in a farming and ranching family. Currently, she has 24 students in the program and couldn’t speak more highly of them.

Adams recounted a story about a past student who didn’t need to take her science class. He had already taken and passed that course, but kept coming back wanting to learn more. She eventually asked him, “Why are you here?” He told her he wanted to be there because he wanted to become a soil scientist. Later, the student enrolled at Colorado State University, earning his degree in environmental sciences. That was a moment where she felt that what she was doing was making an impact on students.

This led to the realization that you cannot be a teacher without a servant mindset—that you’re ultimately there for the kids. This is how Adams described the environment at Questa High School. “I work with great teachers who are there for the kids. We work together to help the students succeed.”

When asked what she might be doing if she wasn’t teaching, Adams said it would probably have something to do with horses or maybe being a veterinarian. She then expressed how she had past experiences with kids and horses in a therapeutic manner and how that made an impact on her.

A couple things you may not know about Adams are that she is a barrel racer, a published author, and a stellar athlete. All of these traits, combined with a determination to help kids learn is what makes Clara Adams such a valuable asset for the Questa Independent School District.

Red River Valley Charter School Report Card

By STAFF WRITERS

The Red River Valley Charter School Report Card is available at available online at nmvistas.org.

OVERVIEW

Grades served: PK-8

Red River Valley Charter School is rated a Spotlight School for the 2023-24 School Year.

Math proficiency is 10 percent, reading proficiency is 50 percent, and science proficiency is 23 percent.

The median growth of students in math compared to their peers across the state who had similar scores of previous tests is 57th percentile.

The median growth of students in reading compared to their peers across the state who had similar scores of previous tests is 65th percentile.

Red River Valley Charter School is a public charter school and is accepting applications for the 2024-25 school year from now until April 10. The new student lottery for available seats will take place on April 23, 2025.



Courtesy Photo

Red River Charter School

Questa Independent School Report Card

By STAFF WRITERS

The Questa Independent Schools Report Card is available online at nmvistas.org.

QUESTA HIGH SCHOOL OVERVIEW

Grades served: 9-12

Questa High School is rated a Spotlight School for the 2023-24 School Year. This school has an overall index score above the 75th percentile and is among the highest-performing schools.

The median growth of students graduating high school has increased by 1.8 percent.

85.2 percent of students participated in overall college and career readiness. 72.9 percent of students regularly attend school.

The total number of students enrolled between grades 9 through 12 are 104.

QUESTA JR. HIGH SCHOOL OVERVIEW

Grades served: 7-8

Questa Jr. High School is rated a Spotlight School for the 2023-24 School Year. This school has an overall index score above the 75th percentile and is among the highest-performing schools.

Math proficiency is 15 percent.

Reading proficiency is 48 percent. Science proficiency is 46 percent. The median growth of students in math compared to their peers who had similar scores on previous tests is 71st and the median growth of students in reading compared to their peers who had similar scores on previous tests is 60th.

The overall regular attendance rate is 80.9 percent.

ALTA VISTA INTERMEDIATE SCHOOL OVERVIEW

Grades served: 4-6

Math proficiency is less than 5 percent. Reading proficiency is 20 percent. Science proficiency is less than 20 percent. The median growth of students in math compared to their peers who had similar scores on previous tests is 35th and the median growth of students in reading compared to their peers who had similar scores on previous tests is 48th.

The overall regular attendance rate is 75 percent.

ALTA VISTA ELEMENTARY SCHOOL OVERVIEW

Grades served: PK-4

As of print time, this data was not yet available for an overview.

HAPPY NEW YEAR!



Thank you all for a great 2024. We wish everyone the very best upcoming 2025 year!



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Questa Ladycats Mid-Season Recap

By C.W. MARTIN

The Questa Ladycats basketball team has had a great start to their 2024-25 season with a 6-0 record. After reaching the first round of the 2A State Playoffs and finishing with a 19-11 record last season, the Ladycats have continued to build on that foundation in the early part of this season.

After a dominant 49-16 win in the season opener November 30, playing the Raton Lady Tigers in Questa, the girls team had an equally dominant performance over the Clayton Lady Yellowjackets, winning 54-16 on December 2, on the road. The Ladycats then improved to 2-0 at home after a win over the Dulce Lady Hawks on December 3. This was another good game offensively for the Ladycats, who led by 21 points midway through the fourth quarter, before winning 49-34.

Their next win came against the Santa Fe Prep Lady Blue Griffins on December 12, at home in Questa. The Ladycats scored the first 31 points of the game, before allowing Santa Fe Prep's first basket; an outstanding team defensive effort. After leading 39-2 at the half, the Ladycats continued to pour it on offensively in the second half.

Twelve different players scored a basket in the game, and three players scored in double figures. Questa was led by junior shooting guard Alyse Lovato with 14 points. Sophomore forward Madison Schave had 12 points on the night, and senior small forward Alianna Gonzales added 10 points for the Ladycats. Senior leader Kamryn Cardenas added 9 points, which included Questa's only 3-point field goal of the night, as well as distributing the ball. The Ladycats finished with a 69-6 win.

In their next game, against the Coronado Lady Leopards on December 16, the Ladycats picked up where they left off, with another big win, 69-5. There was outstanding consistency on the offensive end for the Ladycats this season.

The Ladycats next played the St. Michael's Lady Horsemen in Santa Fe on Thursday, December 19, as part of the St. Michael's 2024 Lady Horsemen Christmas Tournament, on the road. This was the toughest opponent the Ladycats had faced so far this season. Questa shot well to start the game, hitting three 3-point shots in the first quarter, and holding a 13-8 lead. The second quarter was very physical. Senior



Courtesy Photo



Photo Courtesy Maria Gonzalez

power forward Aliyah Santistevan made several nice drives to the basket with an underhanded finish for points. St. Michael's was able to tie the game before the half, 17-17.

The Lady Horsemen took an early lead in the third quarter, before a three pointer from senior point guard Kamryn Cardenas gave Questa the lead again. Junior shooting guard Alyse Lovato then made two straight tough baskets in the low post to extend Questa's lead. The Ladycats led 26-23 at the end of the third quarter.

Questa continued playing good team defense into the fourth quarter, forcing several turnovers that resulted in points, including several more baskets for Lovato. The Ladycats extended the lead to 9 points after an outstanding half-court length inbounds pass from Santistevan to Lovato for points on a break. Questa was up by 11 points before St. Michael's scored a few late baskets. Questa closed it out with a win of 36-29, to improve to 6-0 for the season.

An outstanding start to the season for Coach Steve Rael and the Ladycats!

After the first six games of the season, the Ladycats were averaging 54.3

points per game. They will need this kind of offensive output going forward, as they play in one of the toughest districts in New Mexico, the Girls 2A basketball, which includes last season's defending 2A State Champions, the Penasco Lady Panthers, as well as the Mesa Vista Lady Trojans and the Mora Lady Rangers; three good teams in their own right.

Ladycats Coach Steve Rael is pleased with his team in the early part of this season. "We're a veteran team, having only graduated three players in the last two years. They've really bought into the system. They're very eager to play, and are coming around, playing team ball with good team chemistry which is nice to see when you have numbers and a solid bench. We want to run. Defense should create offense. We just try to get one percent better each practice and each game," Coach Rael said.

The Ladycats finished their weekend in Santa Fe at the St. Michael's tourney before a holiday break, with the 2025 Northern Rio Grande Tournament in Espanola set for January 2-4 to look forward to.

Roots and Wings School Report Card

By STAFF WRITERS

The Roots and Wings School Report Card is available online at nmvistas.org.

OVERVIEW

Total Enrollment: 53

Reading proficiency is 36% and science proficiency is 36%. The median growth of students in math compared to their peers who had similar scores on previous tests is listed at 35th percentile and reading growth is listed at 69 percentile.



Alyana León

By LORA ARCINIEGA

Alyana León is a senior at Questa High School. She is 18 years old and the daughter of Diane and Ricardo León. She lives with her mom, dad, and 16-year-old brother Ricardo Jr. in Cerro, New Mexico.

Upon meeting León, you are immediately left with the impression of a very confident, self-aware individual. She is a very determined 18-year-old. She's one of those types of people who know themselves very well and have confidence and a wittiness about them that keeps you on your toes.

Sports and academics aside, León has the heart of a nurturer. Many of her friends would call her the responsible one, or the one who's always checking in on them. One might say that these are traits passed down from generation to generation.

When it comes to academics, León excels. She's in the top tier of her class and is working on obtaining an associate's degree concurrent with high school graduation. She is currently enrolled in six college courses at UNM-

ALYANA cont'd on next page

Questa Wildcats: Boys Mid-Season Recap

By C.W. MARTIN

The Questa Wildcat boys basketball team began their 2024-25 season with an offensive output that is a drastic improvement from last season's team. The Wildcats have averaged 57.0 points per game in their first four games this season, which is a 23 point improvement from last season's 34.3 team average. Despite the team's 1-3 record to begin the season, there is a noticeable improvement in this year's team.

In the season opener at home against the Raton Tigers on November 30, the Wildcats led 57-51 at the end of the third quarter, before a big 32 point, fourth quarter from Raton that sealed the win for the Tigers, 83-65. Questa's next two games came against two teams that had reached the 2A State Playoffs last season. Questa then lost, 69-40, on the road in Clayton on December 2 versus the Yellowjackets. The Wildcats hung tight with the Dulce Hawks on December 10 through the first half, down just eight points, before Dulce pulled away in the second half to win, 64-50.

The Wildcats' next opponent was the Coronado Leopards, on December 16. The Wildcats had won the last three meetings between the two teams coming into this game. Questa led after the first quarter, 16-13. Coronado's Zach Aragon had a big first half for the Leopards, hitting four 3-point shots to give the



Photo by Jerome Ortega

Leopards a 2-point lead going into the half, 34-32.

In the third quarter, the Leopards led by eight points, 48-40, nearing the two-minute mark, before the Wildcats went on a run which was kicked off by an offensive rebound putback by sophomore Juan Cisneros. Another sophomore for Questa, Isaac Segura, then hit a three, followed by a tough basket with a foul and subsequent free throw by freshman Larry Roybal to give the Wildcats their first lead of the second half, 51-49. Questa extended their lead to five points to end the third quarter 55-50.

The Wildcats played well early in the fourth quarter, leading by 11 points, 61-



Courtesy photo

50, after a bucket with a foul from junior Dominic Vallejos, inside the 6-minute mark. Coronado went on a run of their own, tying the game at 65-65 near the three-minute mark. The Wildcats sealed the game with several sets of free throws down the stretch, from their sophomore captain, Covo Cardenas, who finished the game going 15 of 23 from the foul line and scored 20 points on the night. Those free throws from Cardenas ended up being the difference in this game. It was an outstanding finish by the Wildcats in a tight game here, winning 73-69. With the win, Questa has now won four straight games over the Coronado Leopards, dating back to the 2022-23 season.

This is a good young core of players for the Wildcats, moving into the early part of the season. In his second season as head coach, Mike Rael has this team trending in the right direction. "We're excited for the future. (We have) young talent that needs experience. (We're) undersized, so we need to play fast," Rael said.

The Questa boys team has their work cut out for them with their next opponent: the Santa Rosa Lions, on the road as part of the Dual Cities Holiday Tournament, on December 26. Santa Rosa reached the quarterfinals of last season's 2A State Playoffs and look just as tough this season.

ALYANA cont'd from previous page

Taos and has been a member of the Honor Society since 7th grade.

Being a member of the Honor Society comes with a hefty amount of community service hours. One of the community activities that León says she enjoys the most is helping at the local food pantry. "I love to see the smiles on people's faces when they get what they need," says León.

Sports play a big part in León's life. She participates in volleyball, cheerleading, and basketball at Questa High. Being a multi-sport athlete can be difficult at times, but she seems to manage her busy schedule as well as make time for the things that are most important to her—time with friends and family.

When she's not at school, participating in sports, or hanging out with friends and family, León loves to hunt,

but her most cherished hobby is art. Following in her father's footsteps, León's favorite hobby continues to be cultivated by Ms. Vialpando's challenging art assignments at Questa High. León prefers using pencil but welcomes other media and techniques.

As the daughter of an educator and a natural resource manager, León's career path is not set: it's yet to be determined. "I want to do something in the medical field... I'm interested in being a diagnostic sonographer," says León.

Someone León mentioned as inspirational is her mother, Diane. "My mom is always putting others before herself. She also instilled her work ethic in me, teaching me that there is always a way to get things done," she says.

León works at the Wildcats Den, where her boss, Miguel Rael, offers encouragement when it comes to keeping her Catholic faith at the forefront,



Courtesy Photo

Alyana León

even for a busy teenager. "He's always encouraging me to sing in the choir and participate in pilgrimages," says León.

One thing that León is very excited about is her trip to Greece and Italy this



Courtesy Photo

summer with a few of her classmates and friends. "I'm excited to see how the trip inspires me and encourages me to take the next step after high school."

When asked what advice she would give to younger classmen, León says, "Don't let the pressure 'pressure' you, and try not to let other people's thoughts or perceptions of you bother you."



Planning a Dynamic 2025!

The Questa Creative Council saw ever increasing participation in our activities last year, more local support than ever, and many more visitors from around the southwest discovering Questa and its arts and surrounding beauty.

To review our key events: The Questa Art Tour in August is our signature event, drawing customers from around the southwest to discover local art and artists. The Alumbra holiday market is an alternative chance for area crafters to find customers. The 24/7 access to the Questa History Trail with its walk and related website is a valuable community asset.



Courtesy Photo

Founding members of the QCC board from 2017, left to right: Claire Cote, Peggy Trigg, Jeannie Masters, Roger Harrington, Kate Cisneros, Martha Shepp, and Alberta Bouyer. Missing are Flavio Cisneros and Nancy Parker

We have struggled for all our years to engage area youth and that effort continues. We have had success with our December Art Kits for Kids free art-supplies giveaway in collaboration with Questa library, plus our all-ages

Ceramic Cafe open studio at the Youth & Family Center.

We are already putting in many volunteer hours to manage these existing activities and events, so your vote of confidence is appreciated! AND, we

would love it if any additional suggestions came with an offer of your active participation!

This coming year we hope to continue our successful events, and focus some new attention on new activities to best serve you, neighbors and fans. Please help us out by lending your opinion? Here is our quick informal survey for residents/visitors/our valued members:

Which events/activities would you like to see continued or added?

- Summer Questa Art Tour
- Winter holiday art/crafts market
- History/culture talks, activities
- Clay Cafe, open ceramics studio for youth and adults
- Art, drawing, painting, collage-activities/workshops/lessons
- Quick-Draw painting event that celebrates local scenic beauty
- More children's activities
- Music events
- Other

Reach out to us via email at QuestaCreativeCouncil@gmail.com, or leave us a phone message at (575) 586-5658. Thank you so much!



Alumbra 2024

Questa's Alumbra was a great success thanks to our amazing community.

Photos by E. Wilde

Los Dias Rings In 2025 Year

By LORA ARCINIEGA

Imagine being woken up early on New Year's morning to singing from musicians outside your door. Some people may expect it, for others it might be a surprise, but for either party it's a traditional way to ring in the New Year that has been occurring for at least a century in northern New Mexico and southern Colorado.

The tradition of Dando Los Dias, or simply Dias, is a custom where musicians go from house to house singing for neighbors and friends to celebrate the New Year in song. Originating in Spain, the tradition continues in northern New Mexico thanks to the families that seek to keep it alive. With the recent loss of two musicians, including his brother Andy Torres, finding the motivation to establish a new group proved difficult this year for Bernie Torres of Costilla, New Mexico.

Bernie Torres is the lead "versista" or singer of verses specific to family surnames for the Los Dias songs which he learned from his mother, a master versista. "My mother and a handful of ladies had their own group and would visit houses for Dias. My mother would not want me to let this family tradition die. Beginning at the age of 12, during Dias celebrations my mother would tell me in Spanish to follow my brother Andy out the door and learn from him. So I did," says Bernie. Thinking of his mother, brother Andy, and the many families that enjoy this celebration gave Bernie and his team of musicians inspiration to keep the tradition going another year.

This celebration of the New Year has biblical roots. In the smaller villages of northern New Mexico and southern Colorado, Los Dias was originally only celebrated in those homes with the names of Manuel and Manuelita due to their connection to the name Emmanuel, meaning "God is with us." "People loved the tradition so much that others would ask the musicians to stop at their houses too," says Bernie, "so we started to do that."

Starting at 1 a.m. and continuing until noon on New Year's Day, musicians would go from house to house first asking if they may enter, saying goodbye to El Año Viejo (old year), welcoming el año nuevo (new year), and then addressing individual family surnames in song. El Año Viejo is represented by an older person and el año nuevo by a younger person. Bernie is a master versista coming up with lyrics on the spot for each family. Bernie says, "It got harder and harder to wake up families at 1 a.m. so now we start in the early morning hours and visit families' homes. There was a time

when we used to visit about 35 homes."

The group also visits community centers, serenading families at the Amalia Community Center and the Cerro VFW. "There's a big breakfast and we sing, bringing joy to everyone by creating unique verses for each of the families there. It's a big celebration," says Bernie. Some houses will still be visited, especially those elderly who can't make it out anymore.

Bernie mentioned mother and daughter Velma Bailon and Inez Monotoya of Cerro, and how their home has been a central location for many families to come celebrate Los Dias. "There must be 50 families who would come out to join and they would throw a big celebration," says Bernie. Loveida Cisneros of Cerro says she has always participated in Dias. "I remember one time when I was young and Bernie and his mom came to our house. They brought El Año Viejo which was represented by Bernie's mom and my dad participated as El Año Viejo as well. Bernie's mom and my dad danced around the table saying goodbye to the old year. It was so much fun," says Cisneros. Loveida also remembers being woken up by singing outside the door of her home on another occasion and "the singers saying in Spanish, 'Don't be lazy and sleep. Wake up and welcome the new year.' So we woke up and made some coffee and offered some goodies to the singers," says Cisneros.

The musicians participating this year include a top violinist from San Luis, Danny Quintana, versista Bernie Torres, David Garcia, a master musician from Española, Dean Swift playing bass, Eric Rivera and Virgil Arellano on guitar, and Aron Eichwald playing the harmonica. Ron Quintana, coordinator, Lino Trujillo as El Año Viejo, and Lalo Quintana as El Año Nuevo will be joining as well.

Bernie would like to extend his gratitude to all those who participate, with special recognition for Adelita Mead and David Cisneros of the Cerro group and Karen Gonzales of the Amalia Community Center.



Photo by Wendy Vigil



The winter solstice on December 21 marks the shortest day and longest night of the year, a time when many reflect on the turning of the seasons and the slow return of light. It's a period of warmth, introspection, and celebration, often centered around sharing comforting and meaningful meals. These three recipes are inspired by seasonal traditions and flavors that honor this time of renewal. From a citrus-glazed roasted vegetable dish that balances earthiness with brightness, to a hearty lentil stew for cozy nourishment, and a citrus almond cake adapted from Mediterranean culinary traditions—these dishes offer something for everyone, as we move from winter's depths toward brighter days. We invite you to gather around the table, reflect on the beauty of the solstice, and welcome the light-filled days ahead.

Roasted Winter Vegetables with Citrus Glaze

(adapted from "Barefoot Contessa Family Style")

INGREDIENTS

2 c carrots, parsnips, and sweet potatoes, cubed
3 T olive oil
2 T honey or maple syrup
Zest and juice of 1 orange
1 t rosemary
Salt and pepper to taste

INSTRUCTIONS

Preheat the oven to 400°F.
Toss vegetables with olive oil, honey, orange juice zest, rosemary, salt, and pepper.
Spread on a baking sheet and roast for 25–30 minutes, stirring halfway through.



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

Lentil and Vegetable Stew

(inspired by "Hearty Winter Soups" by Anna Green)

INGREDIENTS

1 c green or brown lentils
4 c vegetable broth
1 c diced carrots and celery
1 diced onion
2 c chopped kale or spinach
1 t turmeric
1 t cumin
Salt and pepper to taste

INSTRUCTIONS

Sauté onions, carrots, and celery in a large pot until softened.
Add lentils, broth, turmeric, and cumin. Simmer for 30–35 minutes.
Stir in kale or spinach and cook for 5 minutes.
Serve with crusty bread.



Citrus Almond Cake

(adapted from "Mediterranean Desserts: A Taste of Sunshine" by Maria Lopez)

INGREDIENTS

2 whole oranges, boiled and puréed
2 c almond meal
1 c sugar
4 eggs
1 t baking powder

INSTRUCTIONS

Boil oranges for 1 hour. Let cool, remove seeds, and purée.
Preheat oven to 350°F.
Mix puréed oranges, almond meal, sugar, eggs, and baking powder.
Pour into a greased pan and bake for 40–50 minutes.

Former *Questa del Rio News* Editor Lou McCall Releases Book On Meditation

By MIKAYLA ORTEGA

Over the past ten years, former *Questa del Rio News* editor Lou McCall has been working on perfecting her newly published book, "Meditation for Everyone: Your Secular Guide to Spiritual Growth."

Through her book, she works to break down the transformative power of meditation, designed to reach people of all backgrounds and beliefs. In this book you'll discover practical techniques and ancient insights that demystify the practice, making it relevant and achievable in today's fast-paced world.

McCall works to answer important questions from people who may have taken interest in meditation but have not experienced it first-hand, including: Who can meditate? What methods work best for you? When and where can you practice effectively? Why is meditation crucial for personal growth and a peaceful world? And how can you integrate it seamlessly into your daily life?

Whether you're a curious beginner or looking to deepen your existing practice, McCall provides clear, step-by-step instructions, engaging anecdotes, and evidence-based benefits. Dive into the timeless world of mindfulness and

self-discovery, free from dogma and accessible to all. Embrace the journey toward greater awareness, peace, personal fulfillment, and better health—because meditation is for everyone.

Practicing meditation for 50 years at this point, McCall recalls she first began her meditative practices in college. "Meditation helps me make life easier. It's a natural ability we all have and it improves my life," she says.

The paperback version of the book is available on Amazon for \$14. "I wanted this to be accessible for people; it doesn't have to break the bank to find solace in meditation. It's readily available to any-



one who is willing to still their thoughts, minds, and hearts, and find stillness and serenity in simply being."

Book: Tales of First Hispano Settlers of the San Luis Valley

By JOSEPH RIOS, LA
VOZ COLORADO

A new book detailing the first Hispano settlers of the San Luis Valley and surrounding areas is now available for purchase. Author and genealogist Maria C. Martinez wrote the book, entitled "First Settlers: Las Cuatro Plazas de la Culebra," detailing the lives of each household in the area from the 1860 census.

Martinez examined census information on the first settlers that included names, value of real estate, personal property, and birth places. The book contains narratives about the first settlers, including information about who they were, where they came from, and family group sheets.

The cover was designed by Martinez' cousin Barbara Cordova, whose father is from Costilla.

"It's not taught in schools, and I'm hoping the schools can use this as a history book," said Martinez. "That's what it is. It's our history."

Martinez is from San Pedro, Colorado and graduated from high school at Centennial High School in San Luis. Tracing genealogy for people since 1990, Martinez has access to a genealogy database with information on tens of thousands of people from southern Colorado and northern New Mexico, as well as information about the founding families of La Culebra, La Veta, Walsen-



Courtesy Photo

Author and genealogist Maria C. Martinez

burg, Conejos, San Miguel de la Costilla, and other San Luis Valley towns.

Martinez first began taking an interest in genealogy thanks to her father

who would constantly share information about her family's history. Among those stories is a true account of an attack on a wagon train near Santa Fe, New

Mexico, which left everyone dead except for a baby boy who was taken in by the Martinez family.

"(Her father) triggered my interest, and I say that in the book," she said.

Since finding her passion, Martinez has released several genealogy books and is in the process of writing another book based on information from voting records in Costilla in 1861, which she hopes will further illuminate the lives and contributions of early Hispano settlers.

Her books are more than records, serving as bridges to the past and connecting readers with the stories and struggles of the first settlers. This dedication underscores her mission to preserve Hispano heritage.

Martinez' work is inspiring and provides rich information about the culture of the San Luis Valley. Through her meticulous research, she has created a resource for people interested in the cultural and historic fabric of the region. Martinez' unwavering commitment to honoring and preserving the legacy of these families ensures their contributions are acknowledged and remembered.

"First Settlers: Las Cuatro Plazas de la Culebra" is available for purchase for \$100. You can purchase it directly from Martinez by emailing her at sanpedro65@yahoo.com.



We're not just books!

Your Questa Public Library is not just books, it's your connection to our community and to the wider world.

You can start connecting by visiting our website at <https://questalibrary.org/>. We have many materials that you can access from your home computer or cell-phone. The resources page has links to a wide range of government, health, jobs, legal, local, and other information.

"Search the Library!" connects to digital book and audiobook collections through Libby, Project Gutenberg's thousands of free eBooks, as well as LibriVox book recordings and the biomedical and life sciences research literature at PubMed Central.

The Questa Public Library History Archive offers historical photos of Questa and surrounding areas, photos and videos of the moly mine, and indexes of Questa history items that are available at the library. If you can't find what you want here, you can call or email us to request an interlibrary loan for a wide range of materials. Our librarians are happy to help you with finding what you need.

Even better is coming in person to

our library. You can speak with our librarians to help you find what you need and access historical items from the QPL History Archive as well as the library's extensive book collection about our local history, geology, and natural resources.

Browse our books and our very popular DVD collection, which are available for checking out on your library card. (If you don't already have a library card, we're happy to sign you up for one.) And spend time catching up with a current art or historical exhibit on the library walls.

Perhaps you want to interact with our community—even make new friends! We have regular community programs such as the Questa book club, which meets every third Monday from 3 to 5 p.m., to discuss the latest books. There is also the Dropped Stitch club, which meets every Thursday at 2:30 p.m. where you can knit, crochet, and sew (or learn how!) and catch up on local news.

For our very young folks, ages 0 to 3, the Wildcat Kitty Club provides storytelling and play opportunities. And when school is out during the summer, our Summer Reading Program delivers a wide range of exciting activities for children ages 4 through 10.

You can keep up to date with all of these activities on the Library's Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/questalibrary/>. Here you will also find notices of special events at the library—art exhibits by members of our community, lectures on subjects of local interest and histor-



Photo by E. Wilde

Peaceful and pleasant, the back yard area of the Questa Public Library

ical topics, our very popular big truck event, book sales, and musical events. Also check the bulletin board at the post office for event notices.

On the practical side, we offer free computer and internet access for adults and specialized, child-friendly computer access for our youngsters. A state-of-the-art copy machine is available for printing and copying for a small fee.

Many of our community organizations use the library's spacious meeting space. Most recently, the Questa Business Bridge provides programming at the library that "Connects the Community to Business Resources, Training, and Services" through interactive workshops, one-on-one consulting, mentorships, and other resources. Questions regarding the opportunities at the Business Bridge can be directed to Lynn Skall at

lynn@QuestaEDF.com

But perhaps you just want to relax and take a break from your busy life. You can do that too at our library. Our new garden with its spectacular view of the mountains, a gurgling fountain, and beautiful flowers and plantings, when in season, is just the place!

Questa is a small community, but we have a terrific public library, and it's not just books. Come and check us out! We are located just off Route 522 next to the Questa Youth and Family Center and just north of the Questa Health Center. We're currently open Monday through Saturday from noon to 5 p.m., but we will be announcing new extended hours soon. Call us at (575) 586-2023 or email us at library@VillageOfQuesta.org. We hope to see you soon!



History Show Opening



Dropped Stitch Club



Questa Business Bridge Opening



Free Community Classes



Annual Questa Art Tour: Hub #10



Wildcat Kitty Club



Best Stories of 2024



JANUARY

An Abuelita's Love Carried on Through Memories: the Christmas Edition



FEBRUARY

Agua es Vida: Multi-million Dollar Bill Heads to the Legislature



MARCH

Family Who Lost Everything Finds Comfort in Outpouring of Love from Community



RE-READ ANY STORY ONLINE AT QUESTANEWS.COM



JULY

Business Profile: Rosie's Smokehouse



AUGUST

Questa del Rio News Selected to Be Archived in U.S. Library of Congress Archives



SEPTEMBER

Local Rodeo Teen Qualifies For Tuffest Jr. World Championship

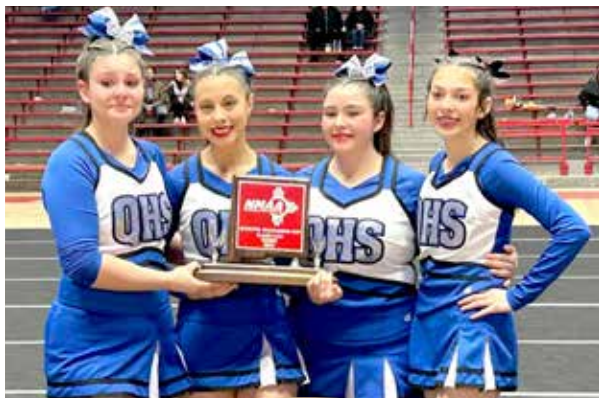


Questa del Rio News



APRIL

Que Viva Cristo Rey: Faithful Locals Walk Over 20 Miles for Good Friday



MAY

Questa Wildcat Cheer Brings Home 2nd!



JUNE

Old Questa Featured In New York City Exhibit: American Latinos



RE-READ ANY STORY ONLINE AT QUESTANEWS.COM



OCTOBER

Our Historical Images: Preserving Our History to Shape our Future



NOVEMBER

Faith, Family, and Perseverance: Valdemar DeHerrera, a Decorated Life



DECEMBER

Mis Crismas Memories in Northern New Mexico with Berlinda Herrera





By Toner Mitchell

Wildlife Focus in the Legislature

Outdoor recreation in New Mexico generates approximately \$3.2 billion toward our economy each year, a testament to the beauty of our desert and mountain landscapes, not to mention the stewardship afforded by management agencies, elected officials, and most important, our outdoor enthusiasts whose appreciation of our state's natural bounty is heartfelt and bone-deep.

In the 2025 legislative session, a coalition of anglers, hunters, and other wildlife advocates will be working to pass legislation to ensure our wildlife management is built for the 21st century and is protected for future generations.

The effort has three goals: update the mission of the NM Department of Game and Fish (NMDGF) to account for non-game species, depoliticize and strengthen the State Game Commission, and generate funding to sustain hunting and fishing traditions and improve wildlife conditions.

Historically, NMDGF has focused on hunting and fishing, but this does not

reflect the growing popularity of enjoying wildlife through binoculars and cameras. Like hunters and anglers, non-consumptive wildlife enthusiasts stay at hotels and eat at restaurants. Wildlife in New Mexico is interconnected; when we conserve critical habitat for non-game species like birds and beavers, it has a positive ripple effect that keeps our entire ecosystem healthy.

The NMDGF is overseen by the State Game Commission, an independent governing body charged with making wildlife management decisions affecting all New Mexicans. Game commissioners are appointed by the governor, regardless of experience or expertise in wildlife, and they can be removed from the Game Commission at the whim of the governor as well. That must change, and the Commission should be reformed to ensure legislative and public input, and they must be informed by voices from the agricultural, hunting and fishing, science, and wildlife advocacy communities.

To make any reforms meaningful, we must modernize the current funding mechanisms to enable comprehensive management, benefiting not just game species but the broad array of other species comprising the ecosystems that help fish and game flourish. NMDGF receives no money from the legislature, relying instead on revenue generated by the sale of fishing and hunting licenses. License fees haven't increased in 20 years, while the costs of managing wildlife have gone up a lot.

In order to ensure the Department has the resources it needs to manage wildlife



Courtesy Photo

New Mexico Wild Cranes

in our state, we must raise license fees. Hunters and anglers support a license fee increase because they know it's necessary to ensure healthy populations of game, fish, and other wildlife. The coalition has worked hard to ensure increases are minimal for New Mexico residents; the average increase is about \$15 a year for residents, and there will be no change for more than 10 types of resident licenses. Discounts will remain for veterans, seniors, youth, and people with disabilities.

The region around Questa possesses unparalleled hunting and fishing richness. The Rio Grande gorge, Valle Vidal, Eagle Nest Lake, and the Latir Peaks Wilderness generate a disproportionate share of license fee revenue. Imagine how

much more could be brought in with just a small increase, and how much better hunting and fishing could be as a result.

NMDGF also needs a source of non-fee revenue to supplement license fee revenue. We need to ensure that costs for the conservation of non-game species doesn't fall entirely on the backs of hunters and anglers. This is fair but also common sense; if, as described earlier, license fee revenue is currently insufficient for the task of managing game species, spreading it even thinner to manage non-game species will ensure that all of our wildlife get the short end of the stick.

We can't allow this to happen. The effort to reform wildlife management in the 2025 legislature deserves our support.

NM Army National Guard Rescues Women On Wheeler Peak

By STAFF WRITERS

A New Mexico Army National Guard helicopter crew rescued two women in their 20s, who were stranded overnight on Wheeler Peak. The women were reportedly without cold weather gear, following a request for assistance from New Mexico Search and Rescue.

Pilots Chief Warrant Officers 3 Dominic Anderson and Carlton Charles, along with crewmembers Staff Sgts. Benjamin Vasquez and Adam Gross, and Sgt. Tiffany Boggs flew to the extraction site in a NM Army National Guard UH-60 Blackhawk helicopter.

The crew arrived near Wheeler Peak just before 1 a.m. on December 21 and assessed the condition of the women, preparing them for the flight to Santa Fe

Regional Airport.

While an ambulance was available in Santa Fe, the women decided to self-transport to the hospital.

"We're glad we were able to get these women to safety so they could be treated if necessary," said Maj. Gen. Miguel Aguilar, the NM National Guard Adjutant General. "The Guard has been tremendously busy with rescues this year. This latest one underscores what we do for our state and demonstrates our commitment to New Mexico."

According to a release by the Guard, Aguilar says the Guard's work this year best defines the difference between the National Guard mission, and that of the other services. "Guardsmen live here, work here and serve here on behalf of their fellow New Mexicans."



Photo Courtesy NM National Guard

A NM Army National Guard UH-60 Blackhawk Helicopter



BIRD IS THE WORD

By Bryce Flannagan

Winter Birding in the Enchanted Circle

New Mexico is known for having a wide variety of bird species at every elevation, with an ever changing assortment of species by season. This winter is a perfect time to take family and visiting friends on a tour of the enchanted circle to search for these beauties.

There's a checklist of species at the bottom of this article, and if you have a smartphone the Audubon app allows you to download their field guide for offline use. Otherwise I can personally recommend the invaluable book "Birds Of New Mexico Field Guide" by Stan Tekiela.

Log your sightings on eBird to help ornithologists understand habitat and migration patterns and let us at *Questa Del Rio News* know what other birds you spotted!

Orilla Verde Campgrounds Starting just south of Taos on NM 570, the Orilla Verde campgrounds are home to raptors, waterfowl, and songbirds. Its location right next to the Rio Grande makes this a prime place to see a wide variety of our feathered friends. Cost is \$3 for day use.

Heart Lake This is a moderate hike with a steep 4.8-mile climb that rewards you with a breathtaking serene lake scene. If you're a more experienced hiker and want an adventure, take the Bull Creek trail off Lake Fork for a 14-mile ascent to a deeply secluded spot. There are pre-existing campsites near the lake. How to get there: Start at Cabresto Lake and follow the Lake Fork Trail for 1.7 miles, then turn left for the Heart Lake Trail. No cost to hike this trail.

Oeste Vista Loop A shady 2.5-mile loop nestled in Angel Fire that provides views of the Sangre de Cristo Mountains and expansive Moreno Valley.



Photo by E. Wilde

Eagle Nest Lake

Eagle Nest Lake How to get there: Head toward Eagles Nest along US 64. Keep an eye out for Angel Nest RV retreat in Eagles Nest, and turn onto the road next to it: B11 B/ Marina Way. The lake is at the end of the road. No cost.

Lost Lake Trail Located between Red River and Eagle Nest, this intermediate trail is also a great fishing spot as it's stocked via helicopter with native cutthroat trout. Birds that shelter in aspen and spruce trees will be here. How to get there: Travel south about 6 miles on NM 578 to the junction of Middle Fork and East Fork. The pavement ends here. Take the road to the right, Forest Road 58, for approximately 1.1 miles to a parking area. No turnaround or parking is available beyond this point. No cost.

Goose Lake Trail A moderate trail that climbs 5.5 miles to Goose Lake and is also accessible via ATV. Alpine inclined birds will be found foraging here. How to get there: Travel 2.5 miles up NM 578. Look for the trailhead on the west side. No cost.

BIRDING CHECKLIST

Raptors

- Bald Eagle
- Northern Harrier
- Great Horned Owl
- Red Tailed Hawk
- Rough Legged Hawk

Songbirds

- Clark's Nutcracker
- Western Meadowlark
- Lewis' Woodpecker
- Evening Grosbeak
- Cedar Waxwing

Waterfowl

- Gadwall
- Ring-Necked Duck
- Common Goldeneye
- American Coot
- Common Merganser

BRILLANDO KIDS CLUB

JANUARY 2025

WEDNESDAY EVENINGS

5-12 Years
6:00-7:30 PM

KIDS VOICE 5-12 YEARS

FREE

Rachel Leon, Instructor
Voice Lessons

ART

KIDS CREATIVES

5-8 Years: Art & Games
Esel Cunanan, Instructor

KIDS LEAD 9-12 YEARS

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MORE INFO:

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By **BARBARA TRACY**

Happy New Year

H is for a Hopeful Heart and a Healthy vision of our future by acknowledging those Habits that prevent us from our lasting freedom, joy, and Happiness, and releasing them.

A is for Action. What is it you wish to Accomplish in this coming year? This is a good time to make a list of all those hopes, dreams, and Aspirations. Then make a list of what it would take to Accomplish them. Are you willing to do whatever Action it takes?

P is for Peace. We are the ones responsible for the Peace in our lives by what we allow our minds to focus on. A Peaceful mind can create a Peaceful world.

P is for Prosperity. Prosperity is not only about having riches and things. Prosperity is about knowing we are Prosperous in what we already have. Perhaps that means good health, a loving family, a beautiful day, freedom, loving, giving and receiving. “The mind is a garden; what we choose to grow there will determine our prosperity.”
—Yung Pueblo

Y is for Yesterday. The past is gone—that was Yesterday. Letting go of those old stories and thoughts that we repeat to ourselves that do not serve our happiness. Yesterday does not exist and when we let go of Yesterday, we make room for the new.

N is for Now. Now is where all potential for creativity, love, hap-

piness—all life exists. Living in the here and Now is living in the eternal breath of life.

E is for Example. We all have visions of how we think the world could be a better place. The key to living in that world we Envision is to be the Example we wish for others and the world.

W is for Wisdom. “God grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change; courage to change the things I can; and the WISDOM to know the difference.” (From the Serenity Prayer)

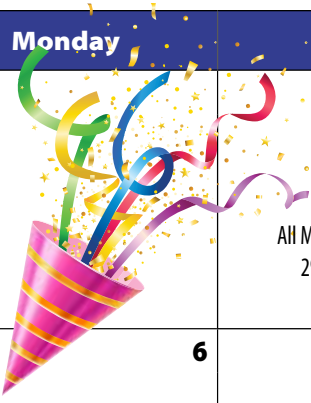
Y is for Yes. To face life with a big Yes. Letting go of phrases that hold us back from accomplishing our dreams and intentions. Phrases like I can’t or I won’t. Open up to the possibilities with Yes, I can or Yes, I will.

E is for Energy. Everything in our Experience is a form of Energy. This Energy is affected by the way we focus our thoughts and Emotions. It’s important to be clear about what we

sincerely want in our lives and create a mind focused on positive Energy to create our desired outcome.

A is for Allowing. We are very busy beings, “thinking” we know how others should be—and how we can correct them, if only they would listen to us. Each of us is a different expression of One Living Energy Source; and in that difference we come from our own unique individual perspective. Unless I am walking in their shoes so to speak, I choose to Allow them to express their uniqueness without placing my limitations upon them.

R is for Response. In any given situation, our Response to it will determine how we feel inside, mentally, emotionally, and physically. If we can take a deep breath when in a challenging situation and take the time to Respond at the most peaceful place we can find within, then we will meet the challenge more easily.

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
	All Meals Served With 8oz. 2% Milk as available	1 CLOSED	2 Hot Turkey Sandwich w/Gravy Parsley Potatoes Mediterranean Veggies Tropical Fruit Salad Nonfat Vanilla Yogurt	3 Herbed Talapia w/Onions & Peppers Brown Rice Pilaf Winter Veggies Salad w/ Lt Italian Dressing Roll Banana
6 Chicken Tetrazzini w/ Mushrooms Capri Vegetables Tossed Salad w/Lt Italian Dressing Baked Cinnamon Apples	7 Chicken Caesar Salad Lght Caesar Dressing Wheat Roll Pineapple Sugar Free Jell-O	8 Soft Beef Taco Salsa Pinto Beans California Blend Veggies Strawberry Shortcake	9 Green Chili Chicken Enchiladas Lemon Sauteed Spinach Spanish Style Cauliflower Rice Fruit Salad	10 Chicken Fried Steak Mashed Potatoes w/Country Gravy Roasted Brussels Sprouts Wheat Roll Fruit Cocktail
13 Hamburger Baked French Fries Broccoli Salad Mixed Fruit	14 Beef Stew w/ Mixed Veggies Steamed Red Cabbage w/Apple Tossed Salad w/ Lt Ranch Dressing Roll Fruit Compote	15 Pepperoni & Green Chile Pizza Garden Salad w/ Lt Ranch Dressing & Garbanzo Beans Hard Boiled Egg Fruit	16 Pulled Pork on a Bun Chateau Blend Veggies Grapes Nonfat Vanilla Yogurt	17 Chicken Tenders w/ Country Gravy Roasted Potatoes Carrots Cornbread w/Honey Fruit Salad
20 CLOSED	21 Chilie Rellenos w/Green Chile Sauce Pinot Beans Vegetable Medley Spanish Rice Honeydew	22 Chicken Fajitas w/ Peppers & Onions Tortilla Salsa Capri Vegetables Peaches	23 Baked Cajun Fish Scalloped Potatoes Green Beans Wheat Roll Chocolate Pudding Banana	24 Frito Pie (Beans, Red Chile, Corn Chips) Tossed Salad w/ Lt Ranch Dressing Tropical Fruit Salad
27 Salisbury Steak w/Mushroom Gravy Herb Roasted Red Potatoes Broccoli Roll Orange Sections w/Cinnamon	28 Stuffed Bell Peppers Tossed Salad w/ Lt Ranch Dressing Wheat Roll Strawberries	29 Baked Ham Dressing Baked Sweet Potatoes w/Chopped Pecans Asparagus, Cranberry Sauce Roll, Applesauce	30 Chicken & Dumplings Mustard Greens Carrots Wheat Roll Spiced Pears	31 Red Chile Beans w/Beef Tossed Salad w/Lt Ranch Dressing Mexican Cornbread Apricots

**SENIOR
MENU:
JANUARY
2025**

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

Release Stress with One Minute of Deep Breathing

Got the heebie-jeebies from too much happening while you're making other plans?

Or is your brain fried from figuring out how to rob Peter to pay Paul?

Or is your blood still boiling from family squabbling at Christmas?

Or do you just have the plain old blues?

Well, you can do something about it. YOU control what you allow into your mind.

Want more joy? Then choose it! Here's how:

- Feel the emotion that's inside you as strongly as you can. For example, are you angry? Then FEEL that anger—stronger, stronger. But here's the trick: do not think about what caused it. Just feel the emotion. Let your mind go to the feeling in your gut or your head but don't give space in your mind to the thought of what caused you to feel that way.
- Lie down (it's okay to sit or stand if you prefer) for one minute of deep breathing.
- Put your hand on your tummy. Inhale, fill your tummy with air and watch your hand rise as you take a good deep breath. Then exhale completely and feel your hand lower.
- When you're inhaling, tell yourself that

love and joy are coming into your body. Feel your cells waking up. Then exhale love and joy out to the world. That's it! Just do this for one minute.

"It's as natural as breathing," is a common expression and we take about 20,000 breaths a day, so it may seem silly to give instructions for breathing—even deep breathing. But sometimes we think we're taking a deep breath and instead we do the exact opposite: we suck in our belly and raise our shoulders.

Keep in mind that deep breathing is not recommended for people suffering from "panic disorder" or "agoraphobia," an illness in which people fear having a panic attack in a place where they can't get help. I'm recommending deep breathing for when you're "stressed out," which most of us feel from time to time when life's challenges overwhelm us.

When you're stressed out, your breath is shallow and you don't give your cells enough oxygen and you don't release

enough carbon dioxide. Shallow breathing contributes to the progressive deterioration of your body and mind—what we call "growing old."

Remember that stress is the number one aging factor. In order to grow younger, become aware when you're stressed out and take a minute to do some deep breathing.

And while you're at it, change those heebie-jeebieing, angry or blue thoughts. Think of all the things you're grateful for. Proper breathing and expressing gratitude can deeply influence your health, happiness, and spiritual development—and bring more joy to your life and to the whole world!

Happy New Year!

Ellen Wood of Questa is an artist using the name Maruska as well as the award-winning author of the series of books, "The Secret Method for Growing Younger," available on Amazon. Contact her at ellen@howtogrowyounger.com. Her website is www.howtogrowyounger.com.

Libérate del Estrés con Un Minuto de Respiración Profunda

¿Te inquietas por todo lo que sucede mientras haces otros planes?

¿O tu cerebro está agotado por intentar resolver cómo "desvestir a un santo para vestir a otro"?

¿O la sangre aún te hierve por las discusiones familiares de Navidad?

¿O simplemente te sientes triston?

Bueno, puedes hacer algo al respecto. TÚ controlas lo que permites en tu mente.

¿Quieres más alegría? ¡Entonces elígela! Aquí tienes cómo lograrlo:

- Siente la emoción que llevas dentro tan intensamente como puedas. Por ejemplo, ¿estás enojado? Entonces SIÉNTELO, más y más fuerte. Pero aquí está el truco: no pienses en lo que causó el enojo. Solo siente la emoción. Deja que la mente se concentre en la sensación en tu estómago o tu cabeza, pero no le des espacio al pensamiento que te llevó a sentirte así.
- Recuéstate (también está bien sentarse o permanecer de pie si lo prefieres) durante un minuto para hacer el ejercicio de respiración profunda.
- Coloca la mano en tu abdomen. Inhala, llena el abdomen de aire y observa

cómo tu mano se eleva mientras tomas una buena respiración profunda. Luego exhala completamente y siente cómo la mano se baja.

- Al inhalar, dite a ti mismo que el Amor y la Alegría están entrando en tu cuerpo. Siente cómo tus células se despiertan. Luego, al exhalar, envía ese Amor y Alegría al mundo. ¡Eso es todo! Solo debes hacerlo durante un minuto.

"Es tan natural como respirar" es una expresión común, y respiramos unas 20,000 veces al día, así que puede parecer ridículo dar instrucciones para respirar — incluso para respirar profundamente. Pero a veces creemos que estamos tomando una respiración profunda y hacemos justo lo contrario: hundimos el abdomen y levantamos los hombros.

Ten en cuenta que la respiración profunda no se recomienda para las personas que sufren de "trastorno de pánico" o "agorafobia," una enfermedad en la que las personas temen tener un ataque de pánico en un lugar donde no puedan recibir ayuda. Recomiendo la respiración profunda para cuando estés "estresado," algo que la mayoría de nosotros sentimos de vez en vez, cuando los desafíos de la vida nos abruma.

Cuando estás estresado, tu respiración es superficial, no das suficiente oxígeno a tus células ni liberas suficiente dióxido de carbono. La respiración superficial contribuye a la progresiva deterioración de tu cuerpo y mente —lo que llamamos "envejecer."

Recuerda que el estrés es el factor número uno en el envejecimiento. Para

rejuvenecer, toma conciencia de cuándo estás estresado y dedica un minuto a hacer respiración profunda.

Y mientras lo haces, cambia esos pensamientos inquietantes, de enojo o tristeza. Piensa en todas las cosas por las que estás agradecido. Respirar correctamente y expresar gratitud puede influir profundamente en tu salud, felicidad y desarrollo

espiritual —¡y traer más alegría a tu vida y al mundo entero!

¡Feliz Año Nuevo!

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:
**"Don't let your ride
turn into a pumpkin
this new year."**



Happy 2025!

**The crew at
NorthStar will
treat you like
royalty."**



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I DARE YOU

By MARTA GLOVER

I had watched my horse, Matty, be sick for six weeks on and off. She was 23 years old and was with me for 17 years. I feel I did everything I could to save her except surgery, which may or may not have healed her. She passed away yesterday as I write this. Sometimes we have to lose what we love most to understand ourselves better and deeper. My heart has broken open with raw feelings of love and grief mixed together. Losing my horse is losing part of myself, the true, authentic part that is revealed in moments of sincere connection. Matty accepted all of me and helped me be true to myself. Her passing has opened up a portal of love for many beings who rode her and were connected to her. The next day, we buried her and held a ceremony celebrating her life with her riders and

friends. Horses define my nature; they are my soul companions. My love for horses runs deep. Riding a horse gives you an opportunity to partner up and feel with a horse. They can read your energy four feet away. They know your bones. You go on adventures together into the woods and fields, along the rivers, sharing these moments of joy.

Who is your animal companion? How does the animal impact your life? What is your favorite animal and why? What do you love about your animal friend? Your story could also be about an animal you greatly admired or saw in the wild and were moved by their beauty and majestic being.

Michelle

I would say a sea turtle. I love to swim with them when I go to Hawaii. I was inspired by a thank you card. Advice from a sea turtle: "Swim the current, be a good navigator, stay calm under pressure, be well traveled, think long-term, age gracefully and spend time at the beach." I resonate with turtles. They are protected. You let them go by—sharing the ocean with

everyone—peaceful critters. Their sense of community is really great. They have special beaches and all come up together to share the beach. They are roped off. You can look but not go up to them. Volunteers are watching and protecting them. I have bumped into a turtle in the ocean. Ooh, they like to get together and flap their flippers in rhythm and sing turtle songs, ha-ha. We need to leave them alone.

Conrad

What about your cat? He loves me so much and is fearless. He rides on top of my car and I have to shoo him off. My cat is not a pussycat. He is lion-like. I have had him for 12 years and he is very loving. He sleeps on my bed at night next to me. Sometimes he lays on my stomach. My friend's daughter named him Furball and I could never change it. Here, I will weigh him for you. He weighs 13.2 pounds. I trained him to be independent. Sometimes he dances on his back legs. He is a cool cat and he ain't afraid of anything.

Jenny

I love little birds. Such a little body mass

to survive the cold. They are of the sky and the earth. I am fascinated by birds the most, and very connected to them. Birds are way deeper than we give them credit for. The big ones!

Marta

Two Sundays ago the congregation at Community of Love mentioned me and my horse, who was dying at the time. They were praying for me and really trying to connect with me and Matty. The Waldorf Free Christian Map of Advent honors the Christmas story in the manger. The first week is the Elements, the second week the Plants, the third week the Animal companions, and the fourth week the Angelic beings. It was the week of animal companions and everyone in the congregation said their favorite animal. There were some surprises, a platypus, a beaver, and dragons. Wow, who would have guessed that! Animals are our friends, companions, and family. I am truly grateful for the years I had with my beloved horse. Bless your animal friends and keep them warm this winter. Happy New Year to all!

MENTAL HEALTH MATTERS



By DAWN PROVENCHER

The Only New Year's Resolution We Need

New Year's resolutions turn out the same way for most of us. By the end of the first week of January, we have either forgotten or broken all the ones we promised ourselves THIS YEAR we would keep.

We dream big. We are going to lose weight. Exercise. Go to church. Call friends and relatives more regularly. Stop drinking. Stop smoking. Stop arguing with our spouse. Stop nagging our kids. Stop, stop, stop, stop!

Why do these good intentions go down the drain so quickly for most of us? Surely we all want to be better

people and really, how hard would it be to just keep our mouths shut instead of repeating an unheeded nag we've said to a loved one a thousand times? Or not reaching for that second piece of pie?

Social scientists who study this kind of thing say we don't prepare for the things we want to happen. I would love to have a big, simmering pot of posole on the stove for dinner tonight. Just wanting it to happen definitely does not make the unmistakable aroma fill the air. I have to soak the chile pods, cube the pork, prepare the posole (I admit I just open a can!), and execute all the other steps before we can sit down and enjoy this New Mexican winter bowl of deliciousness.

Back to resolutions. If we are likely to fail in achieving even one of the resolutions we make this year, why not just resolve to be the same old person we were in 2024? Why look ahead at all? Is there anything we can do to make improvements?

I suggest there is one resolution we could all make AND all achieve. One that is easy to break down into small steps. One that will make a difference in our lives and the people we love.

Here it is: Take better care of myself. That's it! "This year I am going



Courtesy Photo

to take care of myself." So what are the steps to such a vague resolution? Take care HOW?

The answer to that will change throughout the day, but it will lead to some thought and decision-making that could be the start of meaningful change in our day and in our long term.

How can I take care of myself when I wake up in the morning? How can I take

care of myself at work? How can I take care of myself when I interact with my family? How can I take care of myself when I choose my meal? How can I take care of myself when I go shopping? How can I take care of myself when I'm asked to do something I don't have the time to do? How can I take care of myself when someone I love is not listening to me?

Our days are filled with challenges and choices. If each time we are confronted with something, we ask ourselves, "how can I take care of myself in this situation?" our resolution will start to happen.

One spoon of sugar instead of two in my coffee. Parking further from the store so I walk a little more. Choosing a salad instead of french fries. Saying no to an unrealistic request. Cleaning out a closet instead of sitting in front of the TV. Not responding to an argument. Saving the money I might have spent on something I don't need. Going to church instead of staying in bed. Making a dentist appointment. Asking for help. Keeping an unrequested opinion to myself.

All of these things might be the answer to taking better care of ourselves, and might just lead to some much bigger things.

Good luck and Happy New Year!

High Levels of COVID-19 in NM, According to Wastewater Data

BY JEANETTE DEDIOS, KUNM

Recent wastewater analysis from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) ranks New Mexico as one of four states with a very high level of COVID-19.

Since September of 2020, the CDC has been testing wastewater to trace infectious diseases, including COVID-19. Wastewater monitoring can detect viruses before people have symptoms or go to their doctor or hospital.

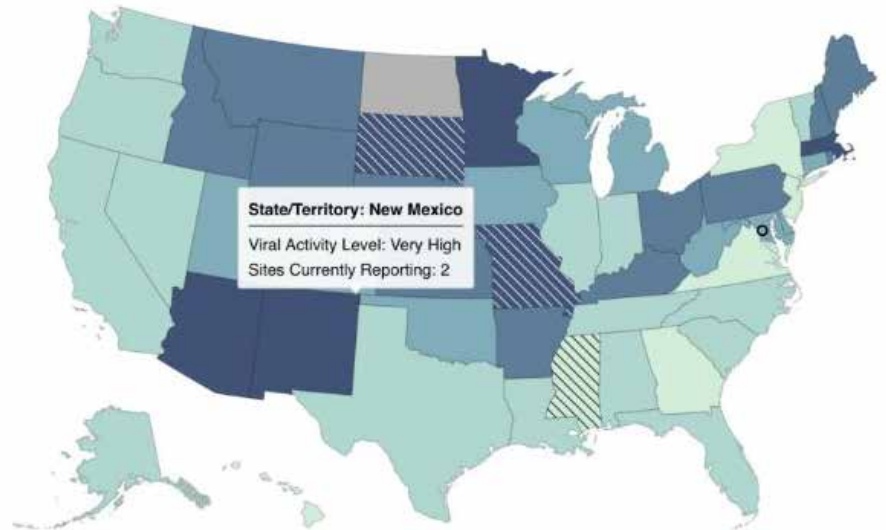
Bureau Chief for New Mexico's Environmental Health Epidemiology Bureau Srikanth Paladugu said they've been monitoring COVID in wastewater. "It has been increasing since the beginning of November," he said. Paladugu said it's hard to say why there is a high prevalence in New Mexico over other states. "It could be just that New Mexico is going through that phase of a peak incidence of COVID at this time," he said.

Chief Medical Officer for the Depart-

ment of Health Miranda Durham said that even with the very high level found in New Mexico (as well as in Arizona, Minnesota, and Massachusetts) it's not at the same level as during the height of the pandemic. "So this would be kind of the normal expected winter bump in cases of COVID-19, not something that's ... pandemic level, and so when they say very high, it's sort of compared to other states," she said. Durham said wastewater is just one data point.

"I think all states are sort of doing the same thing, putting together a combined picture of cases, hospitalizations, testing wastewater," she said. "And you know, if you look at our other indicators, you see a little bump up in COVID indicators, but not anything like off the charts."

But while Durham is not panicking, she said it is not too late to get vaccinated for both the flu and COVID-19 and that everyone six months and older can get this year's vaccine.



Centers For Disease Control And Prevention (CDC)

She recommends the NM department of health helpline for anyone who's unsure if they need to be vaccinated, which vaccination to get, or where you

can get it. She says even people who are uninsured can get help from the public health office where they can get vaccinated at no cost.

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ESOTERIC ASTROLOGY

SKYDANCE ESOTERIC ASTROLOGY by Charlene R. Johnson
JANUARY 2025

THE AGE OF AQUARIUS

"Our enlightened future is certain, but our path to it is not." —Joseph Selbie

At last we are here, in the long-anticipated Age of Aquarius, still a tumultuous time of transition, as we shift away from the age of Pisces.

The Ages are stamped with dynamics which define them. Aries was the age of a jealous god of war, Pisces the age of blind faith and following a leader who taught love. Now we enter an age where knowledge will ultimately rule.

Aquarius is an air sign. According to esoteric sciences, humanity had to first develop a physical body (earth), then an emotional body (water) and now it is time for the elevation of the mental body (air); it is through the mental body that we are able to connect to our higher selves. Thus, it is expected that this is the age when we raise this most rational part of ourselves to a higher level.

Aquarius is the sign of knowledge—"I Know!" as opposed to the sign of Pisces, the age of "I Don't Know!" and thus we must operate on faith. Today, folk no longer buy into a "Trust in Faith" attitude. Now they want the facts, the science, the truth of human existence with all of its pain and beauty, its wounds and healing, its love and hatred.

This is the age when we begin to recognize how completely we are connected to one another, and that it is inescapable. Modern science is finally agreeing with esoteric scientists that we, and everything else, are made up of nothing but waves and particles—How very Aquarian!—and if that is the case there can be no separation. Perhaps the phrase, "Come, follow me and I will make you fishers of men," might now be "Come, walk with me hand in hand and we shall all become as gods."

Everyone: During tough times to come, remember that we are all part of humanity evolving.

ARIES ♈ Planet: Mercury ♀ MARCH 20 – APRIL 19

Dynamic: Time to start up the new business you've been pondering.

Direction: Or the new direction in your current position.

Soul Thought: What is "position?"

TAURUS ♉ Planet: Vulcan ♁ APRIL 19 – MAY 20

Dynamic: Something to sell, or buy?

Direction: Don't be stingy.

Soul Thought: That item is only a wave or particle.

GEMINI ♊ Planet: Venus ♀ MAY 20 – July 20

Dynamic: You may feel a need to go into retreat this month.

Direction: So rare for you; do it!

Soul Thought: The sound of silence.

CANCER ♋ Planet: Neptune ♆ July 20 – JULY 22

Dynamic: You have been feeling a little put down?

Direction: Take this opportunity to understand your part in it.

Soul Thought: "People will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel." —Maya Angelou

LEO ♌ Planet: Sun ☉ JULY 22 – AUG 22

Dynamic: Some damage may occur but rebuilding follows on its heels.

Direction: Breathe deeply and know you are part of the process.

Soul Thought: We all are.

VIRGO ♍ Planet: Moon ☾ AUG 22 – SEPT 22

Dynamic: Part of what is happening now is purification.

Direction: Get rid of that which does not serve!

Soul Thought: What serves?

LIBRA ♎ Planet: Uranus ♁ SEPT 22 – OCT 22

Dynamic: Things you have valued in the past are shifting.

Direction: Create a list of all you value.

Soul Thought: Then in a year do it again.

SCORPIO ♏ Planet: Mars ♂ OCT 22 – NOV 21

Dynamic: You may feel a conflict of loyalties.

Direction: Use your mind, not your emotions, to sort it out.

Soul Thought: Put it in your Spiritual Diary.

SAGITTARIUS ♐ Planet: Earth ♁ NOV 21 – DEC 20

Dynamic: Your planet will have something to say this year.

Direction: You are connected.

Soul Thought: Who is Sanat Kumara?

CAPRICORN ♑ Planet: Saturn ♄ DEC 20 – JAN 19

Dynamic: If you feel you are a victim, there may be truth to it.

Direction: Consider your options carefully.

Soul Thought: We all have the archetype of Victim within us.

AQUARIUS ♒ Planet: Jupiter ♃ JAN 19 – FEB 18

Dynamic: Conflicts with a sibling or friend may occur.

Direction: Before engaging, consider your words.

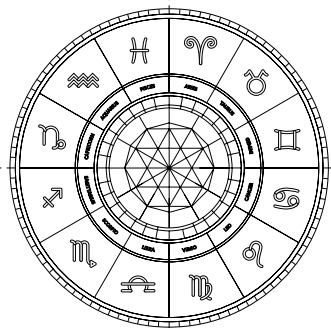
Soul Thought: "Conflict cannot survive without your participation." —Wayne Dyer

PISCES ♓ Planet: Pluto ♇ FEB 18 – MAR 20

Dynamic: If you feel a sense of destiny, it's real.

Direction: You are part of this big time of change.

Soul Thought: "We delight in the beauty of the butterfly, but rarely admit the changes it has gone through to achieve that beauty." —Maya Angelou



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

CARRY-ON

Starring: Taron Egerton, Jason Bateman, Dean Norris

Directed by Jaume Collett-Sierra

Streaming on Netflix

Rated PG-13

First Impression: Despite an interesting premise, "Carry-On" is a moronic cartoonish mess that is an insult to many popcorn thrillers that have come before it. The movie is a stinker and a half that is laughable. The most interesting thing about it is wondering how an A-list actor like Jason Bateman got roped into this box office calamity.

When you think about it, action thrillers are the least respected genre in Hollywood. When it comes around to awards season, year after year the Academy of Motion Pictures largely ignores the category. And it's not like they ignore the genre without good cause most of the time, because when it comes to action thrillers, the special effects (aka explosions and gunfire and scantily clad beautiful women) are mostly more important than the acting and the story. But that doesn't mean that there aren't any good action thrillers—action thrillers can be both audience pleasers and critically acclaimed. Take for example the "Mission Impossible" movies that largely define superstar Tom Cruise's decades-long career. For the past 20 years without fail, a new "Mission Impossible" movie will arrive in theaters and blow audiences away with memorable action set pieces where Tom Cruise will perform death-defying stunts that leave you both impressed and eager for the next release.

So, now saying that there is a major downside to many action thrillers, about 80 to 90 percent of them are forgettable as soon as you leave the theater. Most of the better ones are regulated to basic cable or streamers: that is where I recommend you check out movies like "Source Code," "Unstoppable," "Limitless," "In Time,"

and last but not least, "Red Eye" where our film "Carry-On" mostly takes its inspiration from.

In the film "Red Eye," Rachel McAdams plays a hotel manager who is—you guessed it—taking the red eye flight to Miami where she meets a mysterious man on the flight, played menacingly by actor Cillian Murphy. He needs her to change rooms so his terrorist friends can assassinate a politician. Very simple yet very tense.

With "Carry-On" we get a story about a lowly TSA agent (Taron Egerton) who works at LAX with his wife who is at the wrong place at the wrong time, so the traveler (Jason Bateman) and his terrorist accomplices are forced to use Egerton to get a carry-on suitcase onto a plane in order to kill a politician whose views they disagree with. We also have another man who's involved with the scheme, also being blackmailed by Bateman, all while we have a hapless FBI agent slowly putting the pieces together that, hey! maybe there is poisonous nerve gas that could kill everyone! The story gets so clunky by the end you just don't care any more and none of the characters are particularly memorable or fun and I'm sorry I tried to give Jason Bateman a chance to be a villain but he's been the good guy in way too many movies and tv shows, so this just seemed like a farce to me. This movie will go down as a big swing and a miss for Netflix and a stain on Jason Bateman's impressive acting career.

Final Verdict 1 ½ out of 5 stars



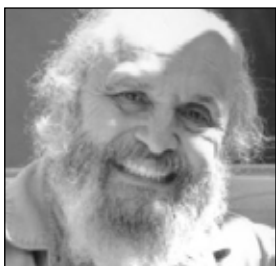
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Questa's Tree Lighting Event 2024

Photos by E. Wilde



OBITUARIES


Roy C. Abeyta
d. December 12, 2024

Roy C. Abeyta, 69, was born in Arroyo Seco, New Mexico, on July 9, 1955. Roy passed away suddenly in the comfort of his own home on December 12, 2024.

He is preceded in death by his parents, Jose Abeyta Jr. and Ofelia Abeyta, and his sister, Faviola Abeyta.

He is survived by his loving wife Karen Abeyta, daughters Roxanne (Dan) Jaecks, Josephine (Patrick) Gabaldon, Claudia Abeyta (Victor); sister Ida McCabe; brothers Archie Abeyta, Rudy (Margo) Abeyta, Alex (Eileen) Abeyta; grandchildren Stacy Johnson (Terrance), Kevin Johnson, Avery Jaecks, Zoe Gabaldon, Jayden Vigil, Cora Gabaldon, Brody Gabaldon, Ryan Torres, Kylee Torres, Ezra Torres; nieces Charlene Lucero, Gina Rael, Angela Abeyta, Maria Stafford, Linda Minkoff, and Jennifer Abeyta.

Pallbearers were: Zeke Tafoya, Charlie Rendon, Kevin Johnson, Jayden Vigil, Brody Gabaldon, Dan Jaecks, Patrick Gabaldon, Terrance Baca, Victor Torres, and Ryan Torres.

Public viewing was held Thursday, December 19, 2024 at The Good News Christian Fellowship Church in Ranchitos, NM. Memorial service and interment was at the Las Cruces Cemetery.


Jeffery A. Herrera
d. December 27, 2024

Jeffery "Jefe" A. Herrera, 61, of Red River, NM, passed away on December 27, 2024. Born and raised in Denver, CO, Jeff moved to Red River in 2001, where he quickly became a beloved part of the community, known for his larger-than-life personality. A devoted Denver Broncos fan, champion soccer player, and darts enthusiast, Jeff could strike up a lively sports conversation with anyone. His iconic "Trump shirt," showcasing his admiration for Donald Trump, brought both laughter and spirited debates.

Jeff was a masterful storyteller, jokester, and prankster, always keeping friends on their toes with his playful antics and mischievous

sense of humor. He loved entertaining others with tales of riches and collectibles. He especially cherished Red River's Motorcycle Rally and never missed a chance to add a Harley Davidson T-shirt to his collection.

Over the years, Jeff worked in various roles but found the most fulfillment in caring for others and being a loyal friend. He was born on January 10, 1963, to Jack and Odila Herrera. He was preceded in death by his father, Jack, and his brother, Scott. Jeff is survived by his daughter, Tonya R. Jury; his granddaughter, Murphy R. Jury; his mother, Odila; his sisters, Jackie, Myra, and Lynn; and numerous beloved nieces and nephews.

Jeff's vibrant personality and warm spirit will be deeply missed by his family, friends, and all who had the pleasure of knowing him.

In lieu of flowers, contributions to assist with the funeral arrangements may be made directly to Rivera Funeral Home or by contacting his daughter, Tonya R. Jury. Your support during this difficult time is deeply appreciated.


Josiah B. (Si) Mandonado
d. December 7, 2024

Josiah B. (Si) Mandonado, age 21, a resident of Questa, passed away unexpectedly on December 7, 2024.

He is preceded in death by his grandfathers, Ben Mandonado and Ramon Pacheco, aunts Epimonia Bailon, Michelle Wilson, and Anita Pacheco.

Josiah's legacy will live on through all his loved ones. There are so many great memories of him. Many will remember his love for riding horses, riding his Harley, and his passions and dedication to serving his community and surrounding communities through Fire and EMS, with his loving heart.

He is survived by his parents, Joe Ben and Teresa Mandonado; siblings Shanece, Joseph, DJ (Daisha Vigil), Noah, and Mathias Mandonado; niece Aliana Mandonado, goddaughter Ameliyah Mandonado; nephews Anthony Montoya, Alija Mandonado Anaya, Adrian Anaya, and Grayson Mandonado; grandmother Linda Pacheco; his padrinos Abe and Reena Garcia, god-sisters Sarah Garcia and Alysia Valencia (Daniel); plus many other loving aunts, uncles, cousins, relatives, and cherished friends.

Rosary was recited on Saturday December 21, 2024, at 11 am, followed by the funeral service at the Questa High School gymnasium. Burial followed at El Pueblito Cemetery.

Serving the family as pallbearers were Shanece, DJ, Joseph, Noah, Mathias Mandonado,

do, Marcus, Nathaniel Mascarenas, and Conrad Sandoval. Honorary pallbearers were Josiah Griego, Noah Rael, Lenny Quintana, Martin Rivera, Samuel Montoya, JR Lee Rael, Mario Wilson, Briason Whitlock, Nathan Mascarenas, Devin Hurst, Elias Chavez, Secundino Martinez (Socks), Miguel Romero, Michael Cordova, Raynelle Cordova, and Julian Garcia.


Rebecca Lynne Trujillo
d. December 20, 2024

It is with a heavy heart, we announce the passing of our beloved mother and cherished grandmother, Rebecca "Becky" Lynne Trujillo. Becky passed away on December 20, 2024, at the age of 68 due to complications from a brief illness.

Becky was born in Ely, NV. On June 5th, 1956. As a young lady she met, fell in love and married her childhood sweetheart, David. The young family moved to Questa, N.M. in 1981. They raised three children, Fred, Roberto and Anita, in a happy and loving home. Becky and David owned and operated D&R Mustang for many years.

Becky was a special grandma to Andrew, James, Kenneth, Mercedes, Kristopher, Alexius and Rylan. Better known as "Grandma Bec", she took the grandkids on exciting outings, supported them at sporting events, had them stay with her every summer, spoiled them rotten and treasured every moment with spent with her grandchildren.

Becky was known for her infectious laugh, kind heart, generosity, carefree attitude and devotion to her family. She was the heart and soul of our home and family. She will be dearly missed.

Rebecca was preceded in death by her husband and soulmate, Miguel David Trujillo after 52 years of marriage. Also preceded in death by her son, Miguel David Trujillo, Jr.; parents Alfredo and Mercy Mascarenas; her brothers, Tom Hays and Benjamin Mascarenas. Becky is survived by her children, Fred and Nica Trujillo, their children Andrew and Alexius. Roberto and Nadine Trujillo, their children Kenneth and Kristopher. Anita and Ryan Vance and their children, James and Mercedes Torrez, Rylan, Brannyn and Tayler Vance. Becky is also survived by many nieces, nephews, cousins and friends.

Rosary will be recited on Saturday, January 4th, 2025, at 11:00 am at St. Anthony's Catholic Church in Questa followed by the Mass at 12:00 pm. In lieu of flowers, donations can be made to Questa Catholic Daughters. Call Cynthia Rael-Vigil at 575-779-9249 for details.


Isaiah James Ortega
d. December 16, 2024

It is with profound sadness that the family of Isaiah James Ortega would like to announce his passing. He was born in December, 2000, in Taos, NM to Melanie Lovato and James Ortega.

Isaiah grew up in Cerro, NM till the age of 7, at which time he moved to Denver, Colorado with his dad, Loren, Mom, Melanie and sister, Pearl. During this time, he also resided in Albuquerque with his father, James, Stepmom Michelle and sister Gianna.

Isaiah had 4 beautiful sisters he loved dearly and protected until his last day on earth. Pearl Lyanne Lovato, Gianna Rose Ortega, Angelika Nevaeh Vigil and Alayna Reylynn Vigil.

Isaiah had 3 brothers, Antonio, Enrique and Brayden Vigil. The bond Tonio, Rick and Zay shared was very special, like that of triplets. Each year at certain times of their life they were all the same age for 5 days.

Due to his short life, Isaiah did not have any children. He did, however, have fur babies he loved dearly and treated like his own kids. Sazia, Rarri, Nala and Zara. The love he had for his animals was very apparent, whether he was howling with Nala, carrying Sazia like a big baby or cuddling with Rarri, his therapy dog. Zara was his other cuddle buddy, his cat whom he bonded with dearly. Zaras purring comforted and soothed his soul.

Isaiah was not married but shared his life with Camryn Shea Martinez. The true love of his life. They shared 5 beautiful years together. Camryn was his rock and always stood by his side. Camryn was there day in and day out, through thick and thin, good days and bad days, for better or worse, regardless of the situation. The love they shared was special and true. Isaiah loved to spoil her, make her laugh, scare her and most of all cuddle with her. Most recently they talked about their future together, about getting married and having children. Their young true love shined brightly throughout their relationship. They were both quick to forgive, forget, learn and move forward to see better and brighter days together. Thank you, Camryn, for never leaving his side and for being his true ride or die.

He attended Mountain Range High School, through his sophomore year and eventually graduated from The New Mexico Youth Challenge Academy in 2017, in Roswell, NM.

Isaiah played sports his entire life. The 2 sports he loved most were football and basketball. However, he thrived in football and was known as one heck of a middle linebacker.

He was fearless on the field and was thrilled when Loren was able to coach him for 8 years, until which time he started High School football. During the 8 years of Loren's coaching, the team won 4 championships. Those championships motivated him to continue high school football with the Mountain Range Mustangs. Isaiah played football with the Mustangs in his freshmen year. Unfortunately, his football career ended after he sustained several concussions and a shoulder injury. Isaiah was born into a Dallas Cowboys family. After his move to Denver, Colorado, he became a diehard Denver Broncos fan. Most of that was due to Loren and his Uncle Jerome Ortega who were also Bronco fans.

Isaiah was a jokester and known for giving family and friends unique and funny nicknames. He too had numerous nicknames. To his Mama he was "Punky, Chunky Butt or Kid". To Loren, he was "The Kid". To James he was "Zaya Monster". To Nana he was "My Guero". To Camryn he was "Stinky, Chunk, Baby Boy and Bub". Other nicknames he acquired over the years were Zay, Zay Zay, Zayo, Flintstone, Isaiah "Bruise" Ortega, Milkweed and Mikko.

Most recently, Isaiah worked as a trailer mechanic. He was starting to learn a lot in the field and told his mom he had finally found his true calling. He was proud of new abilities and used that knowledge to help others with their vehicles. This new knowledge and the ability to help people pushed him to work harder and learn more. He was in the process of enrolling in a trade school to become a diesel mechanic. However, he had also recently spoken to a recruiter about possibly entering the military. Joining the military had been a lifelong dream of his.

Isaiah's hobbies included snowboarding, watching movies, building guns, traveling, and gaming online with family and friends. He also loved gambling and betting on sports games with his dad James. However, his all-time favorite thing to do was spending time with family and friends.

Music was Isaiah's outlet and brought him so much joy. He loved every genre of music. However, as he grew older, his love for country music grew deeply. Rap and hip hop had been his music growing up. Recently you would find Isaiah listening to country music and attending country concerts. His most recent favorites were Morgan Wallen and Jelly Roll. He was proud when he bought his first pair of cowboy boots and wore them proudly with a cowboy hat. Although country was now his music of choice, you would still catch him listening to oldies and Spanish music on Sundays with Loren. He and his sister shared a passion for music and were planning to attend a concert in the near future.

Isaiah loved to make others laugh, even when he was down. He had the most beautiful and contagious laugh, that would fill the room with laughter and joy. His belly laughs

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COMMUNITY CALENDAR • JANUARY 2025

HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO EVERYONE BORN IN JANUARY!

**JANUARY 1: WED
HAPPY NEW YEAR!**

**JANUARY 6: MON 6 PM
Questa Economic Development Fund monthly board meeting**, in person at the Questa Visitors Center and on-line via Zoom. For agenda and zoom link, email lynn@QuestaEDF.com.

**JANUARY 10: 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

**JANUARY 13: MON 3 - 5 PM
Questa Library Book Club** at Questa Public Library, 6 1/2 Municipal Park Road. Join the conversation. For our January meeting, we will be reading about family and food. Info: email library@villageofquesta.org, or call (575) 586-2023

**JANUARY 14: TUE 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

**JANUARY 15: WED 6 PM
Questa Independent School Board Meeting** at QISD Board Room, 2256 Wildcat Rd. # A. School Board Meeting. Info: call (575) 586-0421

**JANUARY 16: THU 10 AM - 12PM
GRT Filing Requirements for New Businesses** at Questa Public Library, 6 1/2 Municipal Road. FREE In Person.

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

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

**JANUARY 18: SAT 12 PM:
Women's March at Taos Plaza** - Join a march in cooperation with the National Women's March. We will gather in Taos Plaza at 12 noon and walk to the Courthouse using city sidewalks, returning to Taos Plaza for music and community until 3pm. Info: call (575) 779-6433

**JANUARY 20: MON
MARTIN LUTHER KING JR. DAY**

**JANUARY 22: 3-5 PM
In Person 1:1 Support with all things related to New Mexico Workforce Connections** with Paula Romo. At Questa Library, 6 1/2 Municipal Park Road. Info: email qbb-coordinator@questaedf.com

**JANUARY 24: 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

**JANUARY 28: TUE 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

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 redriver.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, \$10. This series offers an accessible yoga practice. We will use chairs for support. Info: visit yogasalaquesta.org

**5 PM
Free Community Yoga at Yoga Sala**, 2331 NM-522. Free Community Yoga, gentle practice with Jiwanshakti, in person only, free. Info: visit yogasalaquesta.org

**7 PM
Kickboxing with Reto at Yoga Sala**, 2331 NM-522. Kickboxing, with Reto 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

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

**9 AM
Gentle morning yoga at Yoga Sala**, 2331 NM-522. Gentle morning yoga with Gaea, in person only, \$8. Info: visit yogasalaquesta.org (not on New Year's Day)

**1:30 - 2:30 PM
Wildcat Kitty Club** at Questa Public Library, 6 1/2 Municipal Park Road. A weekly fun program for our youngest guests. We have stories, kitty-sized activities and crafts, friendly play, and opportunities for parents and caregivers to share the joys and trials of being new at the game of raising these incredible small beings. And there are always snacks and treats! Info: email library@villageofquesta.org, or call (575) 586-2023

**5:30 PM
Power Hour Yoga** with Gaea at Yoga Sala, 2331 NM-522. Power Hour Yoga with Gaea, in person only, \$8. Not on New Year's Day. Info: visit yogasalaquesta.org

**6 - 7:30 PM
Brillando Kids Club at Living Word Center**, 12 Llano Rd, Questa. Something or everyone! Geared toward ages 5-12 yr old- These classes are all free! Each child will be encouraged to explore singing, art and leadership skills. Our teachers are professional and excited to work with the kids. Our kids are bright and shining stars! Time to shine! Not on New Year's Day. Info: email Gayle Marinez of Living Word Ministries at gaylelwm@msn.com, visit lwmsite.org, or call (575) 613-8010

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 - 2 PM
Repurposing Plastic Project** at Repurposing Plastic Building, 2380 Highway 522. Come smash plastic and make wire walls! At the old "Movies at Home" building opposite Questa Supermarket on Hwy 522. Info: call (575) 224-7386

**10 AM
Kundalini Yoga at Yoga Sala**, 2331 NM-522. Kundalini Yoga with Julian, in person only, \$10-\$15. 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** at Yoga Sala, 2331 NM-522. Free Community Tai Chi, with Reto, in person only, free. 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 redriver.org

Happy
New Year!
2025



OBITUARIES

OBITS cont'd from page 28

and grits were genuine, and pure from the heart

Isaiah had many friends and held all his friendships close to his heart. He treated friends like family and would give the shirt off his back for those he cared about. He literally made friends everywhere he went. It was easy with his radiant charismatic smile and outgoing personality. He had friends across the country. He took his friendships seriously and kept those relationships imprinted in his heart. He reached out and made it a point to stay in touch. He loved to communicate via facetime. Isaiah was very much a social butterfly and was always the life of the party, wherever he went.

Isaiah made such an impact on many lives, young and old. He valued his elders and always showed them respect, whether it was greeting them with a smile, hug or a kiss. He always gave his seat up to make sure his elders had a place to sit. When Isaiah loved, he loved BIG. He leaves so many broken hearts behind and would want to be remembered for his

big loving heart and radiant smile. Please help us honor him and keep his memory alive. Be good and do good in this cruel and unfair world. God bless you all.

Isaiah is preceded in death by Great Grandparents Eloy and Adonila Rael, Great Grandmother Pearl Vigil, Great Grandparents Bernie and Dolores (Lola) Ortega, and Great Grandparents Tom and Esperanza Kittredge.

Isaiah is survived by his Mother Melanie Lovato (Loren Lovato) and Sister Pearl Lovato, Dad James Ortega (Michelle Ortega) and Sister Gianna Ortega, Girlfriend Camryn Martinez, Grandparents Anthony and Gloria Vigil, Grandparents Lawrence and Rosalie Ortega, Aunt Jenny Vigil (Keyvon Riley), Brothers Antonio, Enrique and Brayden Vigil, Sisters Angelika and Alayna Vigil. Aunt Melissa Rael (Jonathan Rael) cousins JJ (Sydney) and Layla Rael, Eli and Josh Rael, Uncle Jerome (Lori) Ortega, Cousins Mateo and Carlos Ortega, Uncle Lorenzo (Berna) Ortega and cousins Lorenz and Sebastian Ortega, Uncle Jesus (Heather), Braylee and Zamaya Ortega, numerous great aunts and uncles, cousins and an abundance of friends.

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CLASSIFIEDS

Notices

Questa Senior Center Lunches. Lunches are no longer served to-go. Lunch is served from noon to 1 p.m. and the recommended donation is upward of \$1.50 each. 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 slvsna.org or call (719) 657-7076.

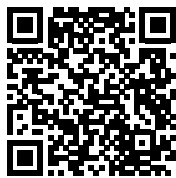
Help Wanted

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

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

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

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Visit us online: freedomquesta.com

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

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

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

QUESTA CHURCH OF CHRIST
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followed by worship at 10:15 a.m.

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

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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

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