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Federal land plan that includes Placitas heads for final review

—BILL DIVEN

The new plan for managing mineral mining and other activities on federal lands in Placitas and across a large swath of central and western New Mexico may finally be published this month.

At *Signpost* deadline, the internal review of the Rio Puerco Resource Management Plan by the Department of Interior was scheduled for July 31. Depending on the outcome of the review and any additional work needed, formal notice of the document's release could appear in the Federal Register by the last week of August.

Publishing the notice starts the clock on thirty days of public comments and sixty days for Gov. Michelle Lujan Grisham and her staff to review the plan for consistency with state laws and policies. Under that timeline, the Record of Decision putting the RMP into effect then would be expected no later than mid-December.

Regardless of the actual timing, scheduling the department-level review 12 years after the planning process began is significant, said Ruben Sanchez, acting field manager of the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Rio Puerco Field Office in Albuquerque.

"We'll see what Washington says," Sanchez told the *Signpost*. "From there, we'll make changes as need be... That's a big milestone, a huge milestone, getting to the Washington briefing."

Once the RMP is released, multiple Placitas organizations with a stake in the land uses and particularly opposition to more gravel mining here are expected to mobilize. The Eastern Sandoval Citizens Association (ES-CA) and the Las Placitas Association (LPA) are two of the larger groups.

"We have a plan, and we're putting it together," said ES-CA president George Franzen. "The LPA and ES-CA boards met (online) and went through an 18-point document on how we're going to notify the public and the two pueblos."

However, while more people have become aware of local issues since the draft RMP was released in 2012, under the BLM process only new comments from those who commented before are considered.

The draft RMP updating a 1986 plan covers nearly a million surface acres and 3.6 million subsurface mineral rights that the BLM administers, spread across six counties (from seventy miles east of Albuquerque to Arizona). Part of the delay in producing a final RMP was dealing with the fifty thousand comments submitted on the draft—which touches on everything from recreation to grazing and oil and gas development.

The draft recommended leasing part of the 3,129-acre parcel known as the Buffalo Tract in northwest Placitas for mining sand and gravel. A hilly and undeveloped two-hundred acres in central Placitas would be slated for disposal through sale, exchange, or dedication to public use through the Recreation and Public Purposes Act.

Ongoing attempts to add the 917-acre Crest of Montezuma to the Cibola National Forest will continue.

Santa Ana and San Felipe pueblos have both staked informal claims to the Buffalo Tract as ancestral homelands. Advocates for the free-roaming horses in Placitas have seen it as a possible refuge, and the San Antonio de las Huertas

—continued on page 5

—BILL DIVEN



Custodians Robert Olson (left) and Pat Miera work their way through a Bernalillo High School classroom armed with general and disinfectant cleaners. Students will sit at the table corners as part of social distancing in response to the coronavirus pandemic.

Cleaning, prepping, and hot-spot buses— Bernalillo district readies for school year

—SIGNPOST STAFF

By the time Gov. Michelle Lujan Grisham in late July ordered a delay until after Labor Day for opening schools to in-person instruction, the Bernalillo Public Schools already had made the move.

Absent a worsening of the coronavirus pandemic, BPS will welcome students back to campuses, phasing in grade levels, beginning September 9. All should be in place on September 21.

Grades will be split into A and B groups, based on the first letter of last names, with each spending two days in classrooms and the rest of the week mostly online.

Before that will come four weeks of virtual classes starting August 12. When classrooms open, parents will have the option of continuing the virtual teaching full time, according to reentry guidelines posted on the BPS website Bernalillo-Schools.org.

While education remains a priority, student, family, faculty, and staff safety has taken on added importance, BPS Superintendent Keith Cowan said.

"We'll continue to look at the data, continue to look at the trends, the guidelines from the New Mexico Department of Health, the CDC, the New Mexico Public Education Department, and base our decisions as we move forward and hopefully with a goal of being able to get back to some sense of normalcy," he said.

Within the myriad difficulties have been some positives, like teachers—through online networking—collaborating like never before, Cowan continued. And federal aid from the Cares Act has added an additional 1,400 Chromebook laptops so each student can have computer access, he added.

"It kind of jump-started something we would have loved to have in place prior," Cowan said. "The different communities we serve—that's always been an issue we face in terms of not only providing the technology device, but also making sure there's connectivity."

Connectivity is a technological and financial burden for a significant portion of New Mexico's Latino families, according to a survey of parents and grandparents caring for children conducted by the research firm Latino Decisions released on July 22. The six-state survey was commissioned by six groups including New Mexico Voices for Children and Somos Un Pueblo Unido, a civil and workers' rights group.

"New Mexico has one of the greatest digital divides," Gabriel Sanchez, Ph.D., a principal of Latino Decisions said during an online news conference. For 28 percent of households in the survey, their only access is by cell phone, and 21 percent have no regular access, he said.

While eighty percent of New Mexico

—continued on page 5

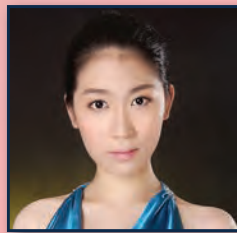
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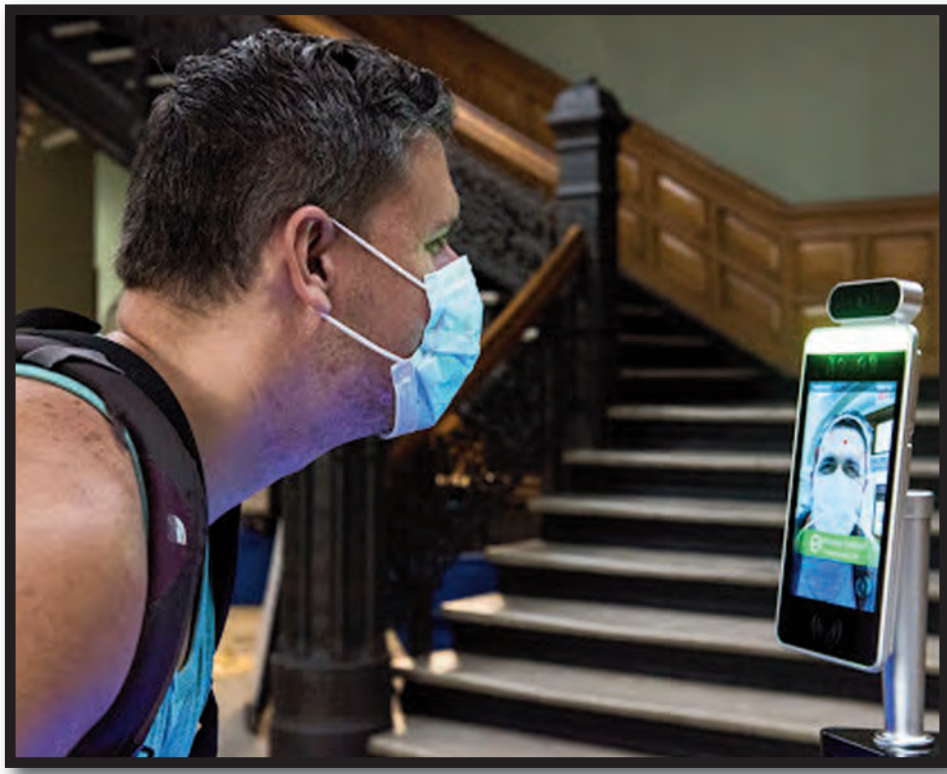
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—COURTESY BERNALILLO PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Go Safe scanners like this that can perform facial recognition and forehead temperature checks will greet Bernalillo Public Schools students when in-person classes resume.

from page 1— Schools

UP FRONT

respondents approved of how schools are handling things, about one third were at least considering not sending their children back to school, Sanchez said. Survey results were shared with the state Public Education Department.

While Cowan said the survey had not filtered down to BPS, the district, which is predominantly Hispanic and Native American, conducted its own survey of parents on the best way to provide education and preserve safety. BPS also invested heavily in connectivity, which was recognized early as a critical issue.

“Some of our remote areas where connectivity may be an issue, we’ll be uploading information on thumb drives,” Cowan said. “And we’re working with our bus transportation department; they’ve got hot spots. They’ll be parking our buses out in some of our areas where connectivity may be a problem... Also we equipped all of our school parking lots with WiFi access.”

Getting to this point hasn’t been easy for anyone—students, parents, teachers, administrators, tech and maintenance staff—since COVID-19 erupted earlier this year, closing schools in March initially for three weeks. Ultimately, schools never reopened as districts cobbled together online-teaching programs as everyone

learned new methods with mixed results.

With the initial shock gone, lessons learned, and a lot of work, Cowan said BPS is ready to launch a school year like no other.

“I have to really applaud our team here at Bernalillo,” he said. “Our principals, our teachers—we’ve been working all summer long... Oftentimes the summertime is a break for teachers, and this has been full speed ahead.”

Online registration began July 1. During the month, administrators went through training sessions, teachers set up classrooms modified for fewer students farther apart, students received computer devices, and staff joined mandatory online sessions to learn Google Classroom, COVID-19 issues, and handling social and emotional learning and support tools.

Scheduled for early August is online training for parents and students in using Google Classroom and the BPS Virtual Academy. A virtual back-to-school convocation for staff from BPS, Rio Rancho, Cuba, and Jemez is planned for August 5.

Virtual classes start on August 12 for what was to be two weeks of online teaching. But on July 21, the board of education opted to extend that two additional weeks.

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Classes will be under what is being called the hybrid model, as half the students are in classrooms and half in the virtual classrooms on Mondays and Tuesdays swapping on Thursdays and Fridays. All will use Google Classroom on Wednesdays while classrooms undergo deep cleanings.

Google Classroom, a tool for teachers to manage class work, make and grade assignments, and provide feedback to students only requires initial access and not continuous streaming, Cowan said.

In addition to a general cleaning solution already in use, desks, chairs, and other busy classrooms areas will be wiped down at the end of each day with a hospital-grade disinfectant, Facilities Manager Martin Montaña said. An electrostatic sprayer on order will speed up the deep cleanings, which also occur after school on Fridays, he added.

“Cleaning always was a continuous job,” Montaña said. “Now we’re just using it more often.”

Montaña said he stockpiled 15,000 facemasks for staff and students who don’t have one and a good supply of cleaning solutions, starting with a large order in March.

School hallways have six-foot intervals marked for social distancing, masks are required, and classrooms have half the seating of past years. Box lunches eaten at desks will come with a disposable placemat.

In late July, custodians Robert Olson and Pat Miera were part of the crew preparing Bernalillo High School for the new year.

“It’s work now, but once the kids are here, staying ahead of the them will be work,” Olson said.

Before they could respond when asked for their job titles. Montaña volunteered: “heroes.”

from page 1—Land plan

Land Grant has expressed interest in using part of it.

Vulcan Minerals, operator of three of the four gravel quarries spread along the east side of Interstate 25, has drilled test holes in part of the Buffalo Tract under a BLM exploration permit. The company has said it wants to open a quarry there to replace one near I-25 and State Road 165 when it closes in 2027.

In 2015, the then-manager of the BLM Rio Puerco Field Office told the *Signpost* no lease applications would be accepted until the RMP was final. Under BLM policy, however, that was a discretionary decision, and guidance

released in 2018 and aimed at oil and gas leases tilted that discretion to accepting applications while an RMP is still pending.

Meanwhile, the New Mexico congressional delegation is shepherding the Buffalo Tract Protection Act through the House and Senate. Were it to become law, it would withdraw the Placitas BLM lands from mineral development, although any existing activities could be grandfathered in.

[See related article from ES-CA and LPA on page 24, this *Signpost*.]

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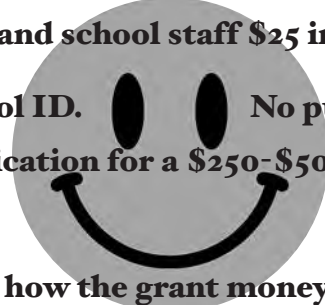
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AROUND TOWN

Centuries-old Bernalillo tradition moves to the Web

-SIGNPOST STAFF

Las Fiestas de San Lorenzo continues an annual tradition dating to 1693 this month in Bernalillo, although for the first time, public participation will be limited to watching live streams on the internet.

Regardless, the community after 327 years continues the tradition of La Promesa, a vow to honor the martyr San Lorenzo, made when settlers returned to Bernalillo on August 10, his feast day, 13 years after fleeing south during the Pueblo Revolt.

Days of processions, religious events, and traditionally expressive dances by the masked figures of *Los Matachines* would normally draw crowds of residents and visitors to town streets.

—BILL DIVEN



In pre-COVID days crowds gathered in Bernalillo to watch the dances of Los Matachines and other events remembering settlers return to their villages in 1693 after 13 years in exile. This year with a public health emergency still in effect, public access is limited to live streaming on the Internet.

But, with the coronavirus pandemic unabated, public health orders have banned such gatherings.

So, this year, events from August 1 to August 11 will be streamed live on both Facebook and YouTube, where they can be found by searching for

“Bernalillo Fiestas de San Lorenzo.” The same search on Facebook also produces a schedule of the events, past photos and videos, and other information.



COURTESY SANDOVAL COUNTY

Sandoval County has ordered a climate-controlled kennel similar to this one to temporarily impound dogs and cats picked up by animal control officers. Meanwhile planning has begun for a county animal shelter.

County moves toward major upgrade to animal-welfare programs

~BILL DIVEN

Sandoval County expects to have a proper animal shelter at some point in the future under a process that took important steps last month.

At their July 9 meeting, county commissioners unanimously tasked new County Manager Wayne Johnson and the county staff with finding a location, funding mechanism, and operational details for a shelter. Then, on July 26, the county published a request for information (RFI) seeking prospective providers of animal medical and shelter services.

"All things considered, the County's priority now, and for the near term, is to begin with something smart and sufficient, and, over time, phase-in additional development as demands and resources allow," the RFI states. The goal is a public/private partnership with the shelter as anchor for veterinary services, adoptions, community outreach, and professional mentorship and training.

The RFI runs 24 pages, although 17 of those recite the county Animal Control Ordinance and shelter standards enforceable under the New Mexico Administrative Code. The deadline for responding to the RFI is August 26.

While the county is open to other possible sites, initial research is centering on the commercial and undeveloped corridor on the east side of Interstate 25—that includes parts of Bernalillo, Placitas, and Algodones, according to the document. Currently, the only municipal animal shelter in the county is operated by the city of Rio Rancho.

"This is going to be a tough, long project," Johnson told commissioners. "We can get there, but it does need community engagement before we just show up with an animal shelter."

Short term, the county is waiting on the delivery of a \$56,000 climate-controlled kennel with seven pens to replace the inadequate structure used by animal control officers (ACO). At 14 x 36 feet, the kennel can be set up now and moved later to the shelter site if necessary.

Earlier this year, the county included the shelter as the 16th priority in its five-year Infrastructure Capital Improvement Plan (ICIP) with an estimated cost of \$3.85 million. District 1 Commissioner Katherine Bruch, of Placitas, has asked for the project to be ranked higher in the next update of the ICIP, a document required for projects to receive state funding.

"If you go back and read through the public com-

ments made recently, it is very clear it's something we have a need for and that many people want and support," Bruch told the *Signpost*. The county's animal ordinance is woefully behind, and there are compliance issues with state regulations, she added.

"We need to get ahead of this instead of playing catch-up," Bruch said.

County staff is already on the project, led by the Community Services Department, working with the Sandoval County Sheriff's Office, whose ACOs pick up stray cats and dogs and occasional wildlife, respond when animals attack people and livestock, and enforce the county ordinance.

The recently released SCSO annual report for 2019 lists 518 calls for service with ACOs initiating 1,112 calls. Of 83 impounded dogs, most were returned to owners, adopted via the Lost Pets webpage, or transferred to other shelters, while 16 were euthanized by a licensed veterinarian due to injuries, attacks on humans and other animals, and behavior that makes them unadoptable, according to the report.

Before the July 9 commission meeting, 34 public comments, submitted largely from Algodones, Placitas, and Bernalillo were unanimous in supporting a shelter. Reasons ranged from the number of strays needing rescue to returning lost pets and to providing spay-and-neuter services.

"I was so excited to find out someone in our county wants to start an animal shelter," Debra Padilla of Rio Rancho wrote. "As a resident of Sandoval County for over 29 years, my tax dollars finally will be used for something I can get behind."

Other commission action during July:

- Renewed an intergovernmental agreement for the Cochiti Fire Department to continue to provide emergency medical services to Peña Blanca and Sile at an annual cost of \$53,000.

- Confirmed its intent to issue up to \$30 million in multifamily housing revenue bonds for an affordable housing complex on U.S. Highway 550 near Paseo del Volcán in Rio Rancho. The county incurs neither costs nor liability as middleman for

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the bonds, while the city of Rio Rancho handles all the permitting and local-government oversight of the project.

- Updated financial policies to assure advance commission approval for grant applications, depending on the amount of the award and required county matching funds.

- Passed an ordinance allowing the Public Works Department and Sandoval County Fire Rescue to recover extraordinary expenses when emergency events damage roads or require a public-safety response beyond usual costs.

- At the request of the Planning & Zoning Department, removed land-use and zoning definitions from existing area plans to make the Comprehensive Zoning Ordinance the sole source of definitions. The change will avoid inconsistencies and confusion, according to the department.

- Amended the list of polling stations approved in 2019 for the November 3 General Election to account for the effects of the coronavirus pandemic and the increase in mail-in voting. There will be 38 voting convenience centers, and County Clerk Eileen Garbagni said she has applied to the secretary of state for funds to mail absentee-ballot applications to every voter registered in the county.

- Accepted a three-year \$625,000 federal COPS Hiring Grant, requiring a \$514,700 county match. Sheriff Jesse James Casaus can use the money for new hires or to rehire or retain officers subject to any layoffs due to budget cuts. SCSO is authorized for 54 sworn officers and currently has five vacancies, Casaus said.

- Received the 2020 first-quarter report of the Sandoval County Ethics Board, showing it had received no allegations of improper behaviors by county staff, volunteers, and elected or appointed officials. "I'm happy to report it's been very quiet," said board Chair Robert Wilkins.



—BILL DIVEN

Bernalillo Police Department Chief Tom Romero (left) congratulates newly certified BPD Officer Anthony Jaramillo on his graduation from the CNM Law Enforcement Academy. Romero is retiring at the end of the month after 6-1/2 years as chief and more than 40 years in law enforcement.

Bernalillo hikes police salaries as chief announces retirement

~BILL DIVEN

The difficulty in finding and retaining police officers has the town of Bernalillo significantly boosting office salaries.

And now the town also is looking for a new person to lead the Bernalillo Police Department. Chief Tom Romero, architect of the program that turned recruits into certified officers, is retiring at the end of the month after more than six years leading BPD.

"I've been doing this since I was 18," Romero told the *Signpost*. "The hard part will be not coming to work every day and seeing the people I made friends with and came to know.

"The people here are wonderful, the department is great, the administration, staff and council, schools and businesses are wonderful."

Romero began his career in 1976 as a dispatcher with the Tukumcari Police Department, becoming an officer there and in Hobbs. He served as an instructor and bureau chief at the New Mexico Law Enforcement Academy and, for a time, was the security executive and later CEO of the New Mexico Lottery.

Among his accomplishments in Bernalillo were implementing a bike patrol team, rewriting operating policies, upgrading officers' body cameras and use policies, having officers walk through businesses and events, and reducing response times.

"A lot of it was trying to bring the officers and the community closer together," he said.

Mayor Jack Torres, in a news release announcing Romero's retirement, expressed gratitude and appreciation for the chief's commitment to Bernalillo during challenging times.

"When we hired Tom in 2014, he gave me his word that he would adopt us and treat us as his hometown," the mayor said. "He has lived up to his word.

"Community policing in today's world takes a strong leader who understands the demands on patrol officers as well as the vision to problem-solve issues that none of us have ever seen before."

Romero, current vice chair of the state academy board, proposed (and the town councilors approved) creating their own in-house training program for new officers. For successful recruits, the town paid their way through the academy at Central New Mexico Community College under an agreement to stay with BPD at least two years or repay the costs.

The town made the unusual move when the pool of certified officers willing to work in smaller communities dried up as Albuquerque and other large departments began aggressive recruiting, offering financial incentives that Bernalillo and others couldn't match. Four of the five officers who completed the CNM program last year are still with BPD. The town recently hired another CNM graduate, and, on July 13, town councilors approved hiring another recruit for the town program.



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She served as an Assistant Judge Advocate General (JAG) with the U. S. Air Force before settling in Placitas.



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Also at the July 13 council meeting, Romero recommended, and councilors approved, across-the-board raises of eight percent for BPD's certified officers. That would kick the starting salary from the current \$21.89 an hour to \$23.64.

"Since 2018 we've tried and failed to hire experienced officers," Romero said. "It's critical we reduce the turnover."

The Albuquerque Police Department starts experienced officers at a minimum \$29 an hour on top of a five thousand dollar signing bonus, according to the APD website.

BPD benefits are comparable with other departments, salaries are as good or better than agencies of similar size, and the atmosphere of working in a smaller community is different, Romero said. However, the town can't match the shift differentials and other financial incentives offered by APD, the Santa Fe department, and Bernalillo and Santa Fe county sheriffs' offices, he added.

BPD fields 25 certified officers including the chief, and had seen an average of three officers leave the department each year. Last year, eight officers left, and the four vacancies reported on July 13 would become five by the end of the month.

The estimated cost for the first year of the raises is \$180,000, Torres said. Conservative budgeting in recent years, a drop in some town expenses and still-strong tax revenue leave more than enough to cover the cost, he added.

While budgeting for the fiscal year that began July 1, councilors agree to wait until the second quarter to consider staff raises. Councilors Tina Dominguez and Dale Prairie questioned whether the cost will be sustainable in future years and might affect raises for other town staff.

"We're not taking away from the rest of the employees to do this," Torres said. Any raises approved for Oct. 1 or later now would not include the police officers, he said.

Torres also presented a letter from Darci Tolbert of Prosper, Texas, commending Officers Rey Ruiz and Amanda Garcia for their June 13 response when her vehicle blew a tire. That left her and her sons exposed on the shoulder of Interstate 25 "in a scary spot on a curve."

The officers turn on emergency lights and set up cones to protect them without needing to block a traffic lane preventing both a traffic jam and possible accident. When Tolbert struggled to change the tire, they took over.

"Both officers are an asset to the Department and the community," Tolbert wrote. "More importantly, the officers showed that Bernalillo, New Mexico, has an upstanding, kind, and professional Police Department."

Tolbert also sent her note to the *Albuquerque Journal*, which published it as a letter to the editor.

One suspect from Placitas lockdown jailed, another on the loose

-SIGNPOST STAFF

One of two people believed responsible for the helicopter pursuit, vehicle fire, and manhunt that locked down Placitas for hours on June 25 has been captured.

At last report, his presumed accomplice remained at large.

New details contained in court records also fill in more of what happened that day. Still unexplained, however, is how the man and woman escaped a law-enforcement cordon as their abandoned Hummer burned and exploding ammunition kept firefighters at bay.

"He gave no explanation to us," Sandoval County sheriff's Capt. Allen Mills told the *Signpost* after the arrest of Omar José Griego, 39, of Rio Rancho. The second suspect, Sarah Garduño, 33, of Bernalillo is known to investigators and, when captured, is unlikely to reveal what happened, he added.

Rio Rancho police arrested Griego on July 13 after a vehicle and foot pursuit related to an armed robbery. Officers there were on alert for a Chevy Suburban pulling a trailer after a man reported the woman passenger stepped out of it in front of a Rio Rancho home, pointed a handgun at him, and stole his BMW.

While the woman and BMW disappeared, an officer quickly spotted a matching Suburban touching off the chase that ended shortly after officers flattened one tire with spike strips. The driver kept going but fled on foot when the Suburban became stuck in soft sand.

"He was located in a backyard under a tarp on Epic Court," Rio Rancho Lt. Ray Alderete told the *Signpost*. "He complied voluntarily and was taken into custody without incident."

Griego remains in the Sandoval County Detention Center as prosecutors move to keep him jailed until his trials for conspiring in the BMW theft and multiple charges related to the pursuit that ended in Placitas. He faces a combined 11 felony counts and two misdemeanors, in addition to an April allegation of stealing a front loader from a construction site.


The theft and recovery of the front loader also led to charges against Griego's brother and father.

Court records show Garduño is believed to have been Griego's passenger in both the Rio Rancho and Placitas incidents. The only charges currently on file for her are identity theft and credit-card fraud from events contributing to the Placitas lockdown and an earlier case, alleging she forged a signature on a stolen check.

Both Griego and Garduño have extensive arrest records dating back about ten years. A court document shows Garduño completed probation from a 2017 forgery and heroin-possession case on June 21.

June 21 also marks the beginning of the Placitas episode when SCSO deputies

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investigated two auto burglaries at the Algodones Dam parking lot. There, the thief, or thieves, made off with a .40-caliber handgun from one car and items including two debit cards, a notebook with passwords, and a cell-phone with a tracking app from the other.

Before the debit cards could be canceled, they were use at six or more locations ringing up nearly \$1,900 for purchases of ammunition in multiple calibers, night-vision binoculars, a radio scanner and other merchandise. Investigators collected store videos showing a man and woman making the purchases and driving off in a blue Hummer H2 with black front fenders and a gas can in the bed.

Investigators identified Griego and Garduño as the suspects, according to an affidavit for an arrest warrant filed by a member of the SCSO Street Crimes and Intelligence Unit. On June 25 three officers with the unit followed the Hummer a short distance into Bernalillo County where one officer recognized the couple during a confrontation on a levee road.

After the Hummer struck two of the officers' vehicles in escaping, a pursuit ensued on Roy Road to south-bound Interstate 25 where the officers shut down their emergency equipment and followed at a distance east on I-40. Aided by a State Police unit, the pursuit resumed in Tijeras, continued to Edgewood, and roamed northwestward into the East Mountains.

The officer's affidavit clarifies that the ground pursuit ended as the Hummer approached State Road 14 near San Antonito with a helicopter from the Bernalillo County Sheriff's Office soon tracking it into the national forest. From that point the SCSO officer's narrative jumps ahead to Placitas without mentioning the village by name.

In the interim the Hummer went up the Sandia Crest Road and turned down unpaved State Road 165 to pavement in Placitas. There is no mention of Griego and Garduño being familiar with Placitas, but they passed other side roads before taking Paseo de San Antonio, the

first turn into the village, and then crossed an irrigation ditch along Camino Los Altos into a space shielded by heavy brush and a canopy of cottonwood trees.

"The BCSO helicopter observed smoke and then advised they observed the Hummer H2 on fire," the SCSO officer wrote. "A resident where the vehicle was burning advised they observed a male and female exit the vehicle, remove multiple duffle bags, and then the vehicle began to smoke and burn.

"The resident advised he observed the male ... run away with the duffle bags. The resident advised the female was armed with an AR15 style rifle and ran in a different direction."

Village resident Tim Nadeau told the *Signpost* that his first hint of trouble was near 5:30 p.m. when he heard an explosion and a helicopter overhead and his wife saw black smoke rising near their home.

"A sheriff's deputy drove by a couple minutes later and then a second deputy, and within a half hour there was a whole mess of deputies with guns drawn," Nadeau said, adding he also saw a police dog. "They were yelling into the arroyo telling them to come out or we're going to send the K-9 in."

Reverse-911 phone alerts from the county advised residents to shelter in place and to report any suspicious activity. Meanwhile firefighters were ordered to monitor the burning Hummer from a safe distance due to the exploding ammunition.

Whether there was still a gas can in the truck bed that may have contributed to the fire is not known. A small amount of brush burned as flames also scorched the cottonwoods.

By the time law enforcement mobilized dozens of officers to seal off the village, the suspects had either found safe haven or escaped on their own or with assistance. As the search continued, other officers blocked NM 165 at mile marker 4 near the Placitas Community Library cutting off traffic to eastern Placitas for about five hours.

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—RICHARD HASBROUCK



San José Mission Church burned in the Jemez Revolt of 1623.

HISTORY

The Jemez Revolt of 1623

—MATTHEW J. BARBOUR, REGIONAL MANAGER, CORONADO AND JEMEZ HISTORIC SITES

In 1623, the Jemez revolted against the Spanish. As part of this revolt, they burned the Mission of San Jose de los Jemez. Exactly what caused the revolt in 1623 remains a mystery. However, if Spanish estimates are to be believed, more than 3,000 Jemez lost their lives in the uprising. This article will explore the archaeology, archival documents, and oral history associated with the conflict and its effects on Pueblo settlement throughout the Jemez Mountains.

In 1623, the Jemez revolted against the Spanish. As part of this revolt, they burned the Mission of San Jose de los Jemez and abandoned the surrounding pueblo of Giusewa, roughly translated as “Pueblo at the Sulphur Place” or “Pueblo at the Hot Place.” Today, this location is preserved as Jemez Historic Site.

At the time of the 1623 Jemez Revolt, Giusewa was among the largest -if not the largest- pueblo village in the Jemez Mountains. It sprawled over 18 acres at the confluence of the Jemez River and Church Canyon (Oak Canyon) Creek. It is presumed to have been a trading mecca for the Jemez People and may have served as a production center for Jemez Black on White pottery. Exactly how many people lived at the site is unknown. Franciscans boast, that prior to the revolt of 1623, roughly 6,566 Jemez were baptized. It is possible hundreds, if not thousands, of those “converts” were settled at Giusewa.

Looming on the hillside above the village was the Mission of San Jose de los Jemez. Founded by Fray Geronimo de Zarate Salmeron in 1621, this structure stood as high as four stories in many places. It included a church, sacristy, kitchen, storerooms, animal pens, and a possible smithy. Completely walled off from the surrounding village, it was one of the biggest and most elaborate Franciscan missions built in New Mexico. Yet, it burned only two years after construction.

Exactly what caused the Jemez to revolt in 1623 is unknown. Local lore of the Jemez people tells of Salmeron requiring the Jemez of the surrounding villages to attend Sunday mass at Giusewa. This included the large farming center, known as Amoxiumqua or “Old Anthill Place,” atop Virgin Mesa. The people of Amoxiumqua did as instructed utilizing hiking sticks to make the steep descent into the valley. Upon reaching the church, they discarded the sticks and entered. The priest saw this as a sign of submission before God and allowed the pile to build as a means of demonstrating the sway he had over his flock. Weeks passed and the pile grew. When the moment was right, the Jemez set the pile of walking sticks on fire and the mission burned.

Others have attributed the burning of the church to the Navajo. However, this may be a conflation of the Jemez conspiracy with the Apache in the 1640s. Under this telling, Navajo warriors incited more troublesome elements within Jemez society to attack the mission. Together, the two groups fled to the Dinetah—an area in and around present day Navajo Reservoir- to hold up in their pueblitos, or fortified strongholds. Archaeologically, this interpretation does have some merit. Large quantities of Jemez Black on White pottery are often found on these early Navajo pueblitos suggesting at the very least contact, if not cohabitation, of the two peoples within these defensive

—continued next page



Seshukwa Pueblo abandoned at or near the time of the 1623 Jemez Revolt.

—MATTHEW BARBOUR

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from page 10—Jemez

structures. Even today, the Navajo "Ma'ii Deeshgiizhini," or Coyote Pass Clan, are considered to be Jemez origin.

Regardless, San Jose Mission was abandoned and the Jemez went into revolt against both the priests and the Spanish. Spanish officials characterized this as a civil war among the Jemez people. However there is no evidence at Giusewa to suggest non-Christian Jemez attacked the Christian tribal members. Only the church was burned indicating the target of Jemez aggression was the Franciscan priests not the village of Giusewa. It is possible the "converts" at Giusewa participated in the uprising or at the very least did not defend the priests against their non-Christian brethren. Spanish suzerainty over the Jemez Mountains collapsed.

Reconquest of the Jemez fell upon Spanish residents residing in Santa Fe and the surrounding area. Many of these men were located in the Galisteo Basin and what was then called the Sandia Jurisdiction (which included the Bernalillo area). Among them was Encomendero Don Pedro Duran y Chaves, who owned a large hacienda, through his wife Dona Isabel de Bohorquez (Baca), at Arroyo del Tunque near San Felipe Pueblo.

Duran y Chaves was a military man first appearing in the New Mexico archives exacting the Governor's tribute at Taos Pueblo in 1613. By 1623, he had risen to the rank of Sargento Mayor, or major. By the end of the uprising, in 1626, he was Maestro de Campo, second to only the Governor in the military affairs of New Mexico, and his land grant extended from San Felipe Pueblo to Atrisco in the south valley of present day Albuquerque. Among the many Native peoples who paid him tribute were those of the Jemez Mountains.

Exactly what occurred during the reconquest is unclear. It appears that Tano, Tewa, and Keres Indian auxiliaries participated in most of the fighting with Spanish horsemen and gunners providing support. Several Jemez villages were likely abandoned during the conflict. Based on the absence, or near absence, of Glaze F pottery, Amoxiumqua (Old Anthill Place or Virgin Mesa Ruin), Kwastiyukwa (The Giant's Footprint or Holiday Mesa Ruin), and Seshukwa (Eagle's Nest or San Juan Mesa Ruin)

were presumably among those deserted.

In the wake of the conflict, the Jemez people were rounded up, forced to resettle Giusewa, and build the new pueblo of Walatowa (present day Jemez Pueblo). At Giusewa, the Franciscan Martín de Arvide reactivated San Jose de los Jemez Mission. At Walatowa, he founded San Diego de la Congregacion. If Spanish estimates are to be believed more than 3,000 Jemez lost their lives in the uprising which occurred over the course of three years.

As with many early Native American uprisings in New Mexico, little is known of the Jemez Revolt of 1623. However, events such as these have great importance in our understanding of seventeenth century Native American and European interactions in New Mexico. In terms of the Jemez, the 1623 Revolt cost the lives of many more people than the more famous Pueblo Revolt of 1680.

This later revolt on August 10, 1680 unified the Pueblo peoples and resulted in the removal of the Spanish from

the northern parts of New Mexico Province for more than a decade. However, it did not occur in a vacuum. Rather it represents one in a line of many actions by Pueblo peoples to resist Spanish rule and Catholicism. Despite the many unknown details, the Jemez Revolt of 1623 should not be forgotten.

Want to learn more about Native American uprisings in the Jemez Mountains? Jemez Historic Site is located at 18160 Highway 4 in Jemez Springs and is open five days a week, Wednesday through Sunday, from 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Admittance is \$3.00 per adult. There is never a charge for children. Jemez Historic Site is free to New Mexico seniors on Wednesday and all New Mexico residents on Sunday. For more information:

575-829-3530 or matthew.barbour@state.nm.us;
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NEOWISE

If you have not yet looked, comet C/2020 F3, called NEOWISE, will be visible for a few weeks. Astronomers watching the comet hope it will be visible through the middle of August. It will look like a fuzzy streak in the sky under dark skies, but binoculars will reveal its bright head and extended tail riding higher into the sky. City dwellers will definitely need binoculars to find NEOWISE as the city lights will obscure it.

After several false alarms this year with other comets, NEOWISE has come through. One promising comet was C/2019 Y4, nicknamed ATLAS, that was on a course to be as bright as the star Vega in March of this year. However, as it neared the sun, the comet started to shatter apart and quickly dimmed.

Just as ATLAS was falling apart after the media hype, another comet, C/2020 F8, SWAN, came into the picture with the hope it would survive its trip around the sun. It was not to be, as it, too, broke apart before becoming bright enough to see with the unaided eye.

Astronomers were not so keen on hyping NEOWISE after ATLAS and SWAN fizzled, yet they predicted a good show should the comet survive the solar blasting it would receive as it whipped around the sun near the orbit of Mercury before heading back to the frozen outer solar system.

Survive it did, and NEOWISE can be seen low in the west-northwest sky. On August 1, look in the constellation Coma Berenices, "Berenice's Hair." From there, it rapidly moves westward each night, and gets dimmer. By August 13, the comet will be 25 degrees above the horizon at about 9:30 p.m., directly below the star Arcturus in the Bootes constellation, the "herdsman."

If you miss this year's naked eye comet, NEOWISE will be back in our neighborhood in another 6700 years.

THE ZONE OF AVOIDANCE

Yes, there is such a thing in the astronomical world. It is an area of dust and gas comprising the bulk of our galaxy, the Milky Way. It is so dense that visible light is obscured, blocking about twenty percent of the visible sky. Astronomers have, until recently, been unable to see beyond it.

Recent surveys using long-wave infrared and radio waves have started to pierce this zone. These observations are giving us a better view of the shape and structure of our own galaxy, and finding what is hiding on the other side.

Two previously unknown galaxies, Maffei 1 and Maffei 2, were found very close to our galaxy. Only discovered in 1967, Maffei 1 is a massive elliptical galaxy only visible through the Milky Way in infrared light. Maffei 2 is a spiral type galaxy. Both are located in the constellation Cassiopeia.

Dwingeloo 1 and Dwingeloo 2 are two more galaxies found in the Zone of Avoidance in the mid-1990s. Also in Cassiopeia, Dwingeloo 1 is a barred spiral. Dwingeloo 2 is a smaller satellite of Dwingeloo 1. MB3, another barred spiral, is associated with the two Dwingeloo galaxies discovered in 1997.

IC 342 is another galaxy residing behind the dust and gas of the Milky Way. Found in the constellation Camelopardalis, it would be naked eye visible if not for the dust.

A June, 2020, article reports that a monstrous wall of galaxies has been found behind in the Zone of Avoidance spanning more than seven-hundred-million light years. If you had superhuman vision, you could see this wall stretching from the constellation Perseus, named after the Greek mythological hero, in the north to the constellation Apus, meaning "without feet" in Greek, in the southern hemisphere. It may be larger, according to Daniel Pomarède of Paris-Saclay University and R. Brent Tully of the University of Hawaii, who found this wall.

As more studies are made, we will likely find more hidden wonders on the far side of our galaxy. Or, we can wait around 125 million years when the sun, along with Earth, orbits to the other side of the Milky Way and just look up in the night sky.



Monsoon weather clouded Placitas skies in July although cleared enough for Comet NEOWISE to be visible for the patient and persistent.

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Date	Sun	Mercury	Venus	Mars	Jupiter	Saturn	Moon
Aug 1	Jupiter 2 deg N of Moon						
Aug 2	Saturn 2 deg N of Moon; Eid al Adha Ends (Islamic)						
Aug 3	Full Moon at 8:59a						
Aug 4	Obama Day						
Aug 7	r 5:56a s 8:27p	r 4:55a s 8:04p Mag -1.3	r 2:28a s 5:31p Mag -4.3	s 11:45a r 10:59p Mag -1.2	s 3:47a r 7:00p Mag -2.7	s 4:28a r 7:26p Mag +0.2	r 9:55a r 10:41p Ill 88%
Aug 7	Purple Heart Day						
Aug 9	Mars < 1 deg of Moon; World Indigenous Peoples day						
Aug 11	Moon last Qtr						
Aug 12	Perseid Meteor Shower peak						
Aug 14	r 6:04a s 8:16p	r 5:42a s 8:17p	r 2:26a s 5:33p	s 11:30a r 10:37p	s 3:16a r 6:30p	s 3:58a r 6:57p	r 1:13a s 5:18p Ill 27%
Aug 15	Venus 4 deg S of Moon; Assumption of Mary (Catholic)						
Aug 17	Mercury passes behind the sun						
Aug 18	New Moon at 7:41p, begin Lunation 1208						
Aug 19	My wife's birthday - Don't forget it this year!						
Aug 20	Islamic New Year						
Aug 21	r 6:13a s 8:04p	r 6:32a s 8:21p	r 2:28a s 5:35p	s 11:13a r 10:15p	s 2:46a r 6:01p	s 3:28a r 6:28p	r 9:13a s 9:51p Ill 6%
Aug 24	St. Bartholomew Day (Catholic)						
Aug 25	Moon 1st Qtr						
Aug 28	r 6:22a s 7:51p	r 7:16a s 8:18p Mag -0.9	r 2:33a s 5:36p Mag -4.3	s 10:54a r 9:51p Mag -1.7	s 2:16a r 5:32p Mag -2.6	s 2:59a r 5:59p Mag +0.3	s 1:19a r 5:40p Ill 75%
Aug 28	Jupiter 2 deg N of Moon						
Aug 29	Saturn 2 deg N of Moon; Ashura starts (Islamic)						

Key: r = rise, s = set, a = am, p = pm, Qtr = quarter, Mag = magnitude (negative values are brighter than positive values), deg = degrees, N = north, E = east, S = south, W = west, Ill = Illumination. Three middle fingers together at arm's length span about 5 degrees; the width of your little finger at arm's length is about 1 degree.

Ten rare plants added to state endangered plant species list

-WENDY MASON

A newly approved rule change will better protect an additional ten plant species in danger of extinction in New Mexico. On July 9, Energy, Minerals, and Natural Resources Department (EMNRD) Cabinet Secretary Sarah Cottrell Propst approved an amendment to the New Mexico Endangered Plant Species List and Collection Permits rule (19.21.2 NMAC), which adds ten plant species to the state endangered plant list. The rule prohibits protected endangered plant species from being collected, removed, transported, exported, processed for sale, or offered for sale unless issued a valid permit for specific scientific purposes by the state forester.

This effort follows years of research by the Forestry Division's Endangered Plant Program and other rare plant scientists across the state. The additions took nearly two years to complete and involved public comment and input from numerous stakeholders.



—ROBERT SIVINSKI

Sclerocactus cloverae (Clover's cactus) is found only in a small area of the Four Corners region of New Mexico.

While climate change is the primary threat to extinction of our endangered plants, this law provides an additional level of protection by prohibiting collection of some of our rarest plants," said Daniela Roth, Forestry Division Endangered Plant Program Manager. "Adding new plants to the state list should encourage land managers to provide better protection."

The amendment also delists the more common and widespread *Mammillaria wrightii* var. *wilcoxii* cactus, resulting in a total of 45 species listed endangered in the state; changes the names of three other species already on the New Mexico State Endangered Plant List to reflect current classifications; and clarifies the overall text of the rule

to better reflect the law's intent.

The ten species added to the state list of endangered plants due to their rarity and documented threats are *Townsendia gypsophila* (Gypsum Townsend's aster); *Sclerocactus cloverae* (Clover's cactus); *Scrophularia macrantha* (Mimbres figwort); *Castilleja tomentosa* (tomentose paintbrush); *Penstemon metcalfei* (Metcalf's beardtongue); *Cymopterus spellenbergii* (Spellenberg's springparsley); and *Linum allredii* (Allred's flax); *Agalinis calycina* (Leoncilla false-foxglove); *Hexalectris colemanii* (Coleman's coralroot); and *Castilleja ornata* (Swale paintbrush).

The complete rule amendments and Statement of Reasons can be found on the EMNRD Forestry Division website at www.emnrd.state.nm.us/SFD/. The rule amendments will go into effect upon publication in the New Mexico Register on July 28.

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As the West dries, adaptation is in the air

-BILL DIVEN

Casey Spradley's great-grandparents homesteaded west of Cuba in 1921 giving them ample time to establish themselves before the Dust Bowl of the 1930s nearly blew them out.

Others weren't as lucky, especially in the lower Midwest and in northeast New Mexico where drought and sandstorms buried dreams and turned hardworking families into migrants seeking work anywhere. Spradley and her husband, however, still ranch the family land.

"Personally, I think about what it was like for them living on the land and not knowing when the drought would end," Spradley, the president of the Sandoval County Farm and Livestock Bureau, told the *Signpost*. The crops they could grow probably was the difference between survival and not, she added.

Now it's dry for farmers again this year, as March rains and a warm spring assaulted the "not horrible" snowpack in the mountains above Cuba.

"We had an early irrigation season that ran out real fast," Spradley said. The seasons seem to be off, she added, warming sooner and cooling later.

All that draws Spradley back to the ten-year drought of the 1930s and makes her wonder how long this dry spell will last.

She's not alone. In April, climate



—BILL DIVEN

The moist monsoon flow finally arrived in latter July bringing storms from the south over the Sandia Mountains and into Placitas. This one dropped only a little rain, but the one a few hours behind it was more generous.

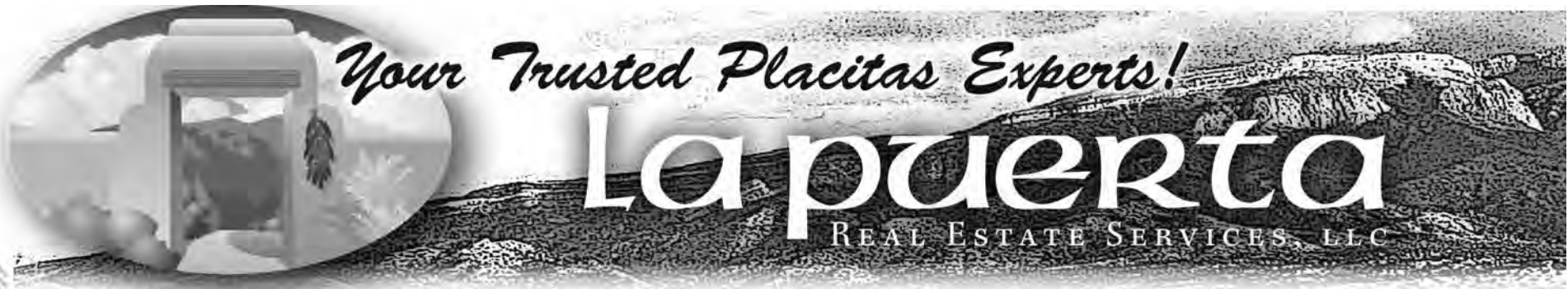
researchers, using tree-ring data spanning 1,200 years, reconstructed soil-moisture conditions in the Southwest and published their work in the journal *Science*. Their paper generated national attention, saying warming from human activity is contributing to an emerging megadrought.

By their reckoning, 2000-2018 is the second-driest period here in 1,200 years, exceeded only by a period in the late 1500s. The authors' study area extended from thirty-to-45 degrees north latitude, roughly cen-

tral Baja California to northern Oregon, and 105-to-120 degrees west longitude, central New Mexico and Colorado to the West Coast.

Beyond their climate reconstructions, the researchers observed warming since the early 1900s is consistent with their modeling of decreasing snowmelt runoff and warm-season soil moisture, abetted by reduced snowpack and increasing evaporation.

—continued on page 15



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from page 13— Monsoon

**ECO-
BEAT**

~CONTINUED

Senior Service Hydrologist Royce Fontenot of the National Weather Service Albuquerque forecast office said he understands the researchers concerns but isn't adopting their terminology.

"I'm hesitant to use 'megadrought,' but we are entering a drier period," he said. "Saying 'megadrought' gives the concept of we're going to return to normal at some point and this is temporary... We're seeing a shift in the Southwest, seeing a change in the pattern."

"Normal" also is an interesting term. Fontenot notes U.S. drought monitoring has only been around since 1999, and what otherwise is considered normal is a baseline of thirty years of data shifting ahead with each new decade. So, when TV weathercasters speak of normal numbers today, that's based on 1981-2010 data, which included a wet period. The baseline will soon advance to 1991-2020.

"So next year we will get those new 'normals,'" Fontenot said. "The expectation is compared to 1981-2010 most stations will likely see an increase in temperatures and a decrease in precipitation."

As this is being written, Placitas is cool, wet, and under a flash flood watch, as the expected south-to-north monsoon flow of moisture washes over the state later than usually expected. Some locales in the broader watch area could receive two inches of rain during this episode, according to the weather service.

On July 25, rain in Placitas as logged by weather service spotters over the previous five days ranged from 0.14 inches to 0.97 inches.

—continued on page 17

TIME OFF

Cabresto Lake gets you away from it all

—KARL F. MOFFATT

Try putting a couple miles of bad road behind you as you climb into the high country to stalk brook trout at a remote mountain lake.

Cabresto Lake, above Questa in scenic northern New Mexico, is a 15-acre lake at 9,500 feet is surrounded by towering mountaintops and provides a peaceful place to escape life's challenges for a day.

With very limited camping and two miles of narrow, twisty, rocky road to negotiate, the lake sees far fewer visitors than its popular cousin in the valley below, Eagle Rock Lake.

But those willing to make the trip are greeted by a postcard-picture scene amid the cool, lofty pines found on the outskirts of the nearby Latir Peak Wilderness.

Self-sustaining populations of colorful brook and cut-throat trout await anglers in the clear, deep waters of the impounded lake.

The steep slopes around the lake can make getting around difficult, but like the rest of the venture here, it's worth the effort.

Anglers armed with a spin casting rig, sporting a Pistol Pete, wooley booger, or bead-head below a bubble can be very effective here. But casting a fly line to rising fish could be troublesome for some due to the cramped confines of the shoreline. The creek above and below the lake is far more suited for fly-fishing.

And while anglers love the place and account for most visits, many backpackers and day-trippers use the trail-head to hike into the aspen groves and alpine meadows

—KARL F. MOFFATT



Cabresto Lake at 9,500 feet elevation in the Carson National Forest is a bit difficult to reach and offers only primitive amenities. Yet the fishing is good and the scenery spectacular, outdoor writer Karl F. Moffatt says in this month's Time Off.

found in the surrounding wilderness.

The altitude here can leave some flatlanders breathless, so taking a few days to acclimatize before visiting might be necessary.

A lone vault toilet stands in the lakeside parking lot and visitors can help keep it clean and usable by bringing one's own toiletries and cleaning supplies.

There are a few hardscrabble, primitive campsites to be found near the parking lot and a few others are carved out on the cliff side overlooking over the dam and creek below.

Those hardy enough to spend a night here should be extra mindful of keeping a clean campsite to avoid attracting wildlife. The surrounding wilderness is home to lots of bears, mountain lions, coyotes, skunks, and raccoons. Pack out your trash to help keep it clean and usable for others.

Just getting to Questa is part of the journey, with travelers apt to come across plenty of great scenery along the way.

Those heading north to Questa on State Road 68 through the Rio Grande Gorge between Espanola and Taos will find many tempting spots to stop along the river.

A great side trip along the way includes jumping off NM 68 at Pilar and following the river to the Taos Junction Bridge. After crossing the bridge, the road turns to dirt and climbs to the top of the canyon wall.

Low-slung, passenger cars navigate this road all the time, so don't be afraid to continue. At the top the road returns to asphalt and then splits with one branch continuing to head north along the Rio Grande Gorge.

Along the way there are plenty of pull-offs that lead down to the canyon's edge where the views can be spectacular. Those lucky enough may spy a group of bighorn sheep climbing the canyon walls or resting among the bushes on top.

Travelers can follow the road to its intersection with U.S. Highway 64 where they can get back to the east side of the river by crossing the Rio Grande Gorge bridge. Visitors can park at the well-kept rest area here and walk out onto the bridge for even more spectacular scenery before continuing on to Questa.

Stepping out onto the six-hundred-foot-high bridge and looking over the edge is not for the faint of heart. This side trip can be made either going to or coming back from Questa. Consult a map for more details.

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Additionally, in order to provide a world-class getaway close to home, the resort will offer special rates for locals this summer. The property is featuring rates starting at \$115 plus a reduced resort fee of \$15 per night which can be booked by calling the resort at 867-1234, or booking online at HyattRegencyTamaya.com.

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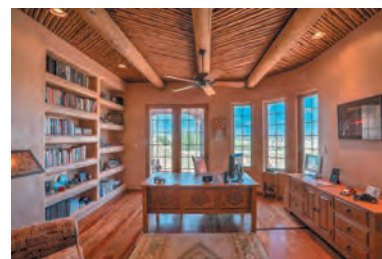
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from page 15—Monsoon

“There’s a nice monsoon burst right now,” Fontenot said. “The general outlook is not that good depending on where you look in the state.”

Flow in the Rio Grande, described in June as the worst in 45 years, has irrigated agriculture scrambling. The Middle Rio Grande Conservancy District negotiated an emergency release of stored water from El Vado reservoir on the Rio Chama to water crops in Sandoval, Bernalillo, Valencia, and Socorro counties, while creating a water debt for next season owed to irrigators farther downstream.

“Absent that the middle Rio Grande is essentially out of water now for all non-Indian irrigators,” said John Fleck, director of University of New Mexico Water Resources Program and a Department of Economics faculty member. The pueblos maintain senior water rights as part of the agreement that created the conservancy district, he added.

“If we don’t have a wet monsoon, irrigation for non-Indians could run out by Labor Day,” he said.

The city of Albuquerque shut down the intake it uses to access its share of water drawn from the San Juan River, a Colorado River tributary diverted to the Rio Chama as part of the Colorado River Compact.

Fleck is the co-author with Eric Kuhn of *Science be Dammed: How Ignoring Inconvenient Science Drained the Colorado River*, published by the University of Arizona Press in 2019. In short, they recount how scientists’ warnings in the 1920s were overridden by developers’ and boosters’ optimistic predictions of future river flows when seven U.S. states and Mexico created the Colorado River Compact and a

current water crisis.

“For the Colorado in the near term, the next decade or so, we’re probably secure,” Fleck said. The two major risks beyond that are the changing climate, perhaps the megadrought, affecting the San Juan River headwaters, and the compact rules written a century ago that put upper-basin states including New Mexico at more risk than lower-basin states including California, he added.

Yet Fleck also sees a West awakened to its water issues. Riding his bike in Rio Rancho he passes residential development still sprawling but on smaller lots with minimal landscaping, low-flow plumbing and outbound water returning to aquifers after treatment.

In general, water consumption is dropping, even as population increases.

“We’re seeing enormously successful adaptation in the municipal water-use sector in the West, and when you combine that with the fact that sixty or seventy or eighty percent, depending on where you are, is still going to agriculture, I think the cities of West will be fine,” Fleck continued. “There are localities that are going to be hammered in very particular ways... All water ends up being local in a sense, which is interesting.”

Agriculture has long been concerned about maintaining its water rights in the face of urban development. Droughts, of course, don’t respect water rights or traditions.

“It’s important to understand that while for people who are irrigating this is incredibly important, irrigated agriculture is not a big part of our econ-

omy here,” Fleck said. “There are very few people who are making their primary income off of it.”

“But it’s incredibly important culturally, especially to the pueblos. It’s the way people have lived in the valley for centuries, really going back to time immemorial.

“So this change is changing a way of life for people who have long depended on the Rio Grande to irrigate the land around their communities.”

Farmers are nothing if not adaptive, from shifting away from water-consuming crops like cotton to drip irrigating some crops and laser leveling fields so flood irrigation goes where it’s needed and not farther. In the Cuba area, as in other communities with traditional acequia systems, efficient water delivery is becoming a priority.

Dirt storage tanks are being lined to prevent leakage, as is happening in Placitas, while in Cuba installing pipe is making ditches less subject to evaporation and seepage. Also driving those changes are fewer farmers available for spring ditch cleanings and other maintenance and more people with separate jobs who can’t be fulltime farmers, Spradley said.

“I think farmers are adjusting,” she said. “We’re still deeply rooted in traditional acequias, but we’re learning and looking for new ways to keep this land in the families and productive.

“And we have a younger generation coming along.”

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Flash in the Pan— Spicy grape juice

—ARI LEVAUX

Every October I make Concord grape juice and then seal it away in jars. I hoard these sweet vessels until the following summer, when I mix a chilled beverage called “spicy grape juice.”

I don't remember my first taste of chocolate, or of bacon, or even mayonnaise, but I'll never forget my first sip of spicy grape juice. I was an eight-year-old city boy, visiting friends deep in the Massachusetts countryside. One hot day our pack of kids came into the house thirsty. Joan, their mom, emptied jars of grape juice and bubbly into a pitcher of ice, and poured the mixture into glasses on the big dark dining room table. It hit the spot like a jump in the lake.

Carbonated water—aka seltzer or bubbly—contains carbonic acid, which triggers receptors on the taste buds that detect mustard and horseradish. This produces the distinct spicy taste of bubbly. For some reason, a little pain in the water makes it more drinkable, for some people anyway. The action is similar to how a dash of spicy hot sauce can make a taco more delicious. LaCroix, the beverage company, has leveraged the resulting endorphin rush into drinks that feel like soda pop, even when completely unsweetened.

It was unusual to consume something so completely satisfying out of Joan's kitchen. Her style of cooking was my first exposure to the unprocessed, “natural,” far-left wing of food. Of whole grains, carob, nuts, and beans. Her arch-enemy was sugar.

I wondered if this diet had something to do with the fact that Joan's kids were as tough as superheroes. They would jump off the roof for fun, and cover long distances through the woods (sometimes

popping out near a gas station that sold candy).

Although I didn't realize it at the time, Joan's simple drink harnessed multiple forces into that unusually satisfying drink. It contained plenty of those elusive sugar molecules, thanks to that sweet grape juice. Thanks to the carbonic acid, bubbly has a sour taste and that harmonizes with the sour component of the grape's flavor. In that hot, dehydrated moment around the dark wooden table, the cold combination of spicy, sour, and sweet flavors was like being plugged into an electrical socket of thirst-quenching power.

Years later I found myself with a Concord grape plant of my own, and, as luck had it, a home seltzer maker. Suddenly, I had all the spicy grape juice I cared to drink, which is a uniquely satisfying feeling. Nowadays, I use Joan's mix as a base for exploring more complex combinations of sweet, sour, and pain.

My current spicy grape juice recipe includes both lemon and grapefruit juices as well, which add extra shades of tartness to complement the grape juice and carbonic acid. Grapefruit is also bitter, a flavor that, like sour and like bubbles, softens with a little sweetness. I like to add spearmint, which has a sweet flavor and. And I add rose petals, when available, preferably yellow, which goes best with purple. The petals float there and smell beautiful while you drink, a reminder to smell those roses while you can, because summer won't wait. And this is one of the best ways to enjoy it. Whether you take your spicy grape juice mixed, spiked or straight, the sweet bubbles and acids will help you

HEALTH

—ARI LEVAUX



Bubbles and Roses

squeeze every drop of summer onto the melting ice cubes of life.

BUBBLES AND ROSES

Rose petals are not essential to the architecture of this drink, so don't sweat it if you can't find any. But if you know a rose bush that has not been sprayed, then by all means pick a few—with permission, if necessary. Rinse off any bugs or dust that might be on the petals, and prepare to add them to the drink. Just make sure to use a straw so you don't get petals in your mouth.

If you can't get spearmint, find the sweetest mint you can. If you wish to add booze, I suggest limoncello or something like it, such as the Licor de Limon I brought home from Spain.

—continued next page

COMMUNITY CENTERS

Sandoval County Senior Centers continue to serve meals to public

While activities at all Sandoval County Senior centers are cancelled due to the COVID-19 pandemic, meals are still available for pick up only and potentially home delivery. The menu will be the same for all of the Sandoval County senior centers on any given day.

To learn more about the weekly menus or to receive a reopening update from your local senior center, give them a call:

Placitas: 867-1396; Bernalillo: 867-9448; Corrales: 897-3818; Rio Rancho: 891-5818; Jemez: 575-834-7630; Cuba: 575-289-3510.

If you are a senior or a disabled adult who cannot access groceries due to COVID-19 (Coronavirus), call the Aging and Long Term Services Department at 1-800-432-2080 for assistance.

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—BILL DIVEN

James Deuel of Huertas Canyon Farm in Placitas lays out three types of beets and other produce offered at the Bernalillo Farmers' market held each Friday through October. The market is open from 4-7 p.m. under the pavilion in Rotary Park at the south end of Camino Don Tomas.

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Season picking up for growers' markets

—SIGNPOST STAFF

It's already been a good year for one farmer's beets, as the Bernalillo Farmers' Market adds vendors and more products come to market.

"This year I've been inundated with beets, carrots, and radishes," Scott Deuel of Huertas Canyon Farm in Placitas said. "I have more of just about everything the gophers don't eat."

On this day, Deuel also was selling Swiss chard and mild shishito peppers. Some of the vegetables he and his wife Nancy Kellum-Rose produce can be found incorporated in dishes at Blade's Bistro in Placitas.

Protected under the shaded pavilion of Bernalillo's Rotary Park, the market operates from 4:00 to 7:00 p.m., on Fridays, through October. Pandemic restrictions apply, including mandatory facemasks. Hand sanitizer is available.

"People are coming for the veggies, and they are selling out," market manager Bonnie Hill said. "That part has been good. Plants are almost selling out."

Noticeable this year is the absence of vendors from the pueblos, which are largely closed off due to the pandemic.

Meanwhile, the Corrales Growers Market, which opening in April only for drive-through shopping, now welcomes customers on foot and with masks to its location on Corrales Road, opposite the Corrales post office. Vendors and the products are posted at CorralesGrowersMarket.com in advance so shoppers can plan their shopping.

The market operates from 9:00 to noon on Sundays and since July 22, also on Wednesdays.

from page 11—Juice

Serves 6

- 2 lemons, 1 juiced and one sliced
- 1 grapefruit, half juiced and the other half sliced
- 6 sprigs spearmint
- Petals of a rose, preferably yellow (optional)
- 1 quart grape juice
- 1 quart seltzer

Divide the lemon juice and grapefruit juice among six glasses. Add a sprig of mint to each glass. Layer in the ice cubes with rose petals and thin slices of fruit in each glass, and then add the grape juice. Finally, add the bubbly to each glass, slowly, so it stays on top and doesn't mix until you want it to. Serve during a hot summer afternoon.

Ari LeVaux writes from Missoula, Montana, though a big piece of his heart haunts the hills, washes, and ditches of Placitas, where he spent three dreamy years. His column appears nationally in more than 70 newspapers.

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S A N D O V A L

SIGNPOST

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**News and information of interest
to the residents of Sandoval County**

Summer: a time of garden triumphs and tragedies

—LINDA GARVIN, SANDOVAL MASTER GARDENERS

Summer is here and, for gardeners, this time of year may bring triumphs and tragedies. Are your actions the phenomenon that is happening to your tomatoes, squash, roses, or fruit trees? Do you know how often you should be watering? If you have questions about your garden, help is available.

Sandoval Extension Master Gardeners receive training and certification from New Mexico State University and are tasked with providing science-based gardening information to the public. In the past, you could find master gardeners at information tables at grower's markets, plant clinics, and events around the county. But things are different this year. You may not find Master Gardeners at information tables, but they're still around and ready and able to answer your gardening questions. To reach them:

- Email questions (and photos of your problems) at the "Ask An Expert" button on the home page of Sandoval Extension Master Gardeners website (sandovalmastergardeners.org) or email directly to: emailhelpline@sandovalmastergardeners.org.
- Call the organization's helpline at 907-1353. Keep checking the Sandoval Master Gardener website for updates. We hope to offer gardening classes again soon. You can also subscribe to our email newsletter on the homepage of our website.

HEALTH
-CONTINUED

City of ABQ partners with Little Free Library on community volunteerism

—MARGRET ALDRICH

The Little Free Library (LFL) nonprofit organization and the City of Albuquerque are delighted to announce a new initiative that encourages volunteers to establish Little Free Library book-sharing boxes in the community.

The partnership is part of the Office of Civic Engagement's One ABQ Volunteers program, which helps match volunteers with service projects that align with their skill sets and interests. Establishing a Little Free Library is now one of the projects One ABQ endorses to help make Albuquerque a more inclusive and innovative city. LFL joins the AmeriCorps VISTA program as one of the first national organizations to partner with the Office of Civic Engagement.

"We are honored to engage with the city in this way, and we are excited to see how the landscape of this community changes with a focused effort around building community and creating greater book access," said LFL Director of Programs Shelby King. "One book-sharing box at a time—that's all it takes to have an impact."

The partnership between LFL and the City of Albuquerque was first prompted by the COVID-19 pandemic in an effort to support literacy and provide access to books while public libraries, schools, and bookstores were closed. But what began as an emergency measure quickly became an opportunity to expand equitable book access far beyond the pandemic.

"We are excited to partner with the Little Free Library organization to support community collaboration and expanded access to books and literacy resources," said Albuquerque First Lady, Elizabeth Kistin Keller. "For years we've been fortunate to have community members build their own Little Free Libraries. Over the last few months, in particular, we've seen how they can maintain a love of reading in kids when schools and libraries are closed and serve as a powerful way for communities to connect and share with each other from a distance during the coronavirus pandemic. We are thrilled to share this program with volunteers in Albuquerque and look forward to expanded access to books and literacy resources as the number of Little Free Libraries grows in our community."

Albuquerque currently has more than sixty Little Free Libraries, but that number is expected to rise thanks to this new initiative. LFL hopes it motivates other cities and towns to start book-sharing programs as well.

"We are passionate about improving book access and building community using Little Free Library book-sharing boxes as the vehicle to do so," says King. "And we are eager for the work we're doing with the City of Albuquerque to serve as a model for other communities across the country that may have similar goals. We know there are cities all over looking for ways to bring people together and hope this partnership inspires action elsewhere."



Little Free Library volunteers encourage book-sharing.

Placitas Community Library issues call for artists for October's exhibit "Flights of Fancy"

—PAM TROUTMAN, PCL PR VOLUNTEER

Remember this? "It's a bird, it's a plane... it's Superman!" Experiencing or simply observing the wonders of flying through the air was a human obsession long before George Reeves donned that skin-tight blue suit and red cape. We constantly strive for freedom of movement with no boundaries, soaring and swooping whether emotionally or physically.

For October's Placitas Community Library art exhibit, share your artistic vision of how to escape the bounds of earth and find freedom from confinement either physically or spiritually through flight. All mediums welcome.

Submission forms and detailed information can be found on the PCL website: placitaslibrary.com/library-activities/art-exhibits/artist-exhibit-submission-form/.

Address questions to the Art Committee at PCL.art.committee@gmail.com. Submissions accepted through September 13, 2020.

Time Travels: The Journey to a New Reality

~ROSEMARY BREEHL

Joan Fenicle has been wandering through the *caminos* and *callejones* of New Mexico and Colorado for over fifty years, capturing villages and vistas in paintings and photographs. This wanderlust and her interest in art came from her father who was creative and encouraged her to draw and paint at a very young age. The need to explore and document her experiences has fed her artistic curiosity ever since.




Leaving La Bajada After The Rain,
oil painting, by Joan Fenicle

Since the beginning of her artistic journey, Fenicle has captured images that caught her eye and begged her to share their stories. Her vision for this show was to revisit some of her favorite places in New Mexico and create new images in a variety of media. Then a pandemic began, and she had to create a new reality.

"I revisited my archives, letting my imagination do the traveling, reinventing the stories. Belgian Linen glued onto birch panel became my new substrate. Oil paint and brushes came out of hiding, and I became absorbed for weeks at a time, delving into film, slides, and digital images, combining bits and pieces into new story lines. I learned that I am more than a painter or a photographer, I am a storyteller. The resulting ten paintings are familiar and comforting, stories that I have always chased: a deserted old truck, a menacing cloud formation, a ceremonial cave in the desert, a hawk searching for a meal. Join me. Shift your state of consciousness, feel the hot sun beating down, inhale the smell of rain on parched earth, hear the hawk's call echo in the canyon, take a journey with me through time and space."

In 2016, Fenicle was honored with the Albuquerque Art Business Association President's Award, part of the Local Treasures program, which recognizes artists



July 28 thru Sept. 27, 2020
Artist's Reception
Saturday, Sept. 12, 1-4 p.m.
Current Hours:
11:00 am – 2:00 pm, Tuesday thru Sunday

JOAN FENICLE
Time Travels:
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that are devoted to both giving back to the community and encouraging others to continue the legacy of New Mexico's diverse culture.

Wild Hearts Gallery is an artists' collective, supported by 16 longtime local artists. Wild Hearts Gallery is currently open, Tuesday through Sunday, from 11:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. This featured artist exhibition will be on display until September 27. An artist reception will be held on September 12, from 1:00 to 4:00 p.m.

Placitas Artists Series announces 34th season

~ALLEN BOURNE

The Placitas Artists Series (PAS) announces another exciting season of monthly concerts and visual arts for its 2020-2021 season, which runs September through May.

"Putting on this year's concert series presents some unprecedented challenges," said Rich Reif, board president for PAS. "While our intent is to still hold live performances, we're cognizant of potential state restrictions on public gatherings and are making plans to stream our events, in part or in full, so that our audiences can still enjoy our scheduled season."

The 34th season lineup begins on September 13 with Rachel Barton Pine livestreaming a performance of classical works on solo violin. Following concert artists include Wei Luo, solo piano; Kim Fredenburg, violist; David Felberg, violin; Ana Vidovic, solo classical guitar; Tzufeng Liu, solo piano; James Holland, cello; enhakē, chamber music with piano, violin, cello and clarinet; and Le Chat Lunatique, gypsy jazz. For more information about all nine concerts, see the Placitas Artists Series ad on page 2 of this *Signpost*.

PAS will continue to pair visual arts with each of its scheduled concerts. Forty individual New Mexico artists—working in media ranging from painting, sculpture, and photography to fabric art, stained glass, and jewelry—have been selected for exhibit throughout the season. PAS will also be collaborating again with the Placitas Studio Tour for a preview show in April that is expected to feature forty-to-fifty artists participating in the annual Placitas Studio Tour in May.

Live concerts take place at 3:00 p.m. at Las Placitas Presbyterian Church in the village of Placitas, located six miles east of I-25 on NM 165 (Exit 242). The musical performances are preceded by a free visual artists reception at 2:00 p.m. where the public can meet the artists whose works are on display that month. A short virtual video art show featuring each month's artists will be posted on the PAS website, presented with streamed concerts.

Concert goers are encouraged to visit the PAS website for the latest in-person or streaming ticket purchase information and for performance updates. Given current restrictions on public gatherings,

*The
Placitas
Artists
Series*

tickets will be available only on a concert-by-concert basis for this season. Tickets for live performances at the church can be purchased at the door one hour before the concert, subject to availability. Advance purchases can be made at The Merc Grocery Store in Homestead Village Shopping Center, Placitas; Under Charlie's Covers Fine Used Book Store, 160 S. Camino del Pueblo, Bernalillo; or at www.placitasartistsseries.org/concerts.htm. For more information call 867-8080 or email us at email@placitasartistsseries.com.

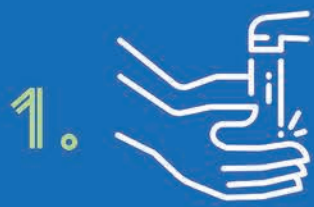
Placitas Artists Series projects are made possible in part by New Mexico Arts, a division of the Department of Cultural Affairs, and the National Endowment for the Arts.

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5. **Rinse** your hands.



6. **Dry** with air or paper towel. Close tap with towel.

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SIGNPOST COMMUNITY CALENDAR

MANY OF THESE ONGOING LISTINGS ARE TEMPORARILY CANCELLED DUE TO THE NOVEL CORONA VIRUS PANDEMIC.
CHECK VIA THEIR CONTACT INFORMATION FOR DETAILS AND TO SEE WHEN AND IF THEY WILL RESUME.

To submit a listing, send it to: email@sandovalsignpost.com. Deadline for submission is the twentieth of the month prior to publication. The calendar is for nonprofit organizations. "First Monday" means the first Monday of each month.

Daily: **The Mayor Hull Show.** Go to rrnm.gov/mayorhullshow. Rio Rancho Mayor Gregg Hull talks about issues facing Rio Rancho.

Daily: **Free hikes at Valles Caldera National Preserve**—from Magma to Magpie. For a complete list of activities at the National Preserve, go to <https://www.nps.gov/vall/index.htm>.

Daily: **Alcoholics Anonymous meetings in Bernalillo.** Monday, Tuesday, and Thursday Noon; Thursday 6:30 p.m.; and Saturday 9:00 a.m. For a complete list of schedules, visit the website at www.albuquerqueaa.org or call Central Office at 266-1900, open 24/7.

Monthly: **Various community events at Rio Rancho Libraries.** Rio Rancho libraries—Esther Bone and Loma Colorado—will be hosting a variety of events all month long ranging from book signings, to poetry readings, lectures, concerts, arts and crafts, meet and greets, etc. For more information about the library or each month's activities, visit www.riorancholibraries.org.

Monthly: **Urban Horticulture classes.** Sponsored by the SandovalMasterGardeners.org. Free. Open to public. Registration preferred. Sandovalmastergardeners.org/public-class-registration.

Mondays: **Bernalillo/Placitas open Al-Anon meeting** for families and friends of alcoholics/problem drinkers. 7:30-8:30. Held at the Bernalillo United Methodist Church, 136 Calle Don Andres (behind Abuelitas), Bernalillo, 262-2177.

Second and fourth Mondays: **Bernalillo Town Council meeting.** 6:30 p.m. Held at Bernalillo Town Hall. Info: call 867-3311, townofbernalillo.org.

Second and fourth Fridays: **Westside Neuro Choir**—A chorus for adults living with brain challenges & caregivers. Includes ALS, brain injury, MS, Parkinson's, strokes, and others. 1-2:30 p.m. Held at Grace Outreach Church, 2900 Southern Boulevard, in Rio Rancho. Use entrance on the south side of the of the building. For more info, contact Sheri Armendariz at 917 7981 or sheriarmz@gmail.com.

Mondays through Fridays: **Placitas Mothers' Day Out childcare.** A caring, cooperative, community childcare program since 1989. Hours: 8 a.m.-3 p.m. daily, \$23. Info: Ms. Debbie Steuber, 867-3371.

Tuesdays: **Teen Hang Out at the Martha Liebert Public Library.** 4 p.m. 867-1440.

Tuesdays: Yoga with Patricia, 1-2 p.m., at the Town of Bernalillo Martha Liebert Public Library, 124 Calle Melinche, Bernalillo, NM 87004, (505) 867-1440.

Tuesdays and Thursdays: **Pickleball at the Bernalillo Community Center.** 1-4 p.m. Pickleball is a game played on a court with paddles and a whiffle ball. The court is smaller than a tennis court and allows people to play who no longer want to run and jump as they did in their younger years. Anyone can play, even if they have never played tennis. 934-2649.

First Tuesdays: **Albuquerque Newcomers' Club Welcome Coffee.** 10 a.m. Held at Sandia Presbyterian Church (not affiliated with church)—10704 Paseo del Norte. Membership is open to residents who have lived in the Albuquerque area (including Sandoval County) for five years or less, or who are having major changes in their lives. Make new friends and increase your social life. Sign up for monthly luncheons and speakers, dining out, visits to area attractions, book and movie groups, bridge, bunco, mah jongg, walking, wine tastings, etc. Singles' and men's groups. www.abqnewcomers@gmail.com. 321-6970.

First Tuesdays: **Coronado Kennel Club meeting.** 7:30 p.m. All-breed kennel club. Schedule changes in August and December. Call 867-4510 for meeting location.

First Tuesday: **Monthly ice cream social hosted by the Kiwanis Club.** 6 p.m. Held at the Paleta Bar in Bernalillo—510 NM Highway 528.

Third Tuesday: **Open meeting of the Sandia Vista Amateur Radio Club.** 7 p.m. Held at Fire Station 41 on highway 165, just east of the Placitas Community Library. Everyone is welcome to attend meetings, whether or not they have an FCC License.

Third Tuesdays: **Monthly meeting of the Republican Party of Sandoval County (RPSC).** 7 p.m. Held at the Gospel Light Baptist Church, 1500 Southern Boulevard in Rio Rancho. www.SandovalGOP.com.

Third Tuesdays: **Sandia Vista Amateur Radio Club.** 7 p.m. Help provide emergency communications in Placitas. Become a "HAM" radio operator. We will help you get your FCC license. Visitors welcome. Held at the Placitas Fire Station No. 41, Hwy 165, near the Library. Info: sandiavista.net.

Fourth Tuesdays: **Pathways: Wildlife Corridors of NM monthly meeting.** 6:30 p.m. Held at Placitas Community Center. Open to the public. pathwayswc.wordpress.com. Election of Board officers will be held on January 28.

Fourth Tuesdays: **Eastern Sandoval County Arroyo Flood Control Authority (ESCAFCA) meeting.** 6 p.m. Held in the Town of Bernalillo Council Chambers. Persons wishing to be on the agenda or persons with disabilities who need accommodations should call 771-7110 by the first Tuesday. Board meeting agenda is posted on the ESCAFCA website (escafca.com) and at the front desk of the Town Hall by Friday preceding the meeting.

Fourth Tuesdays: **Placitas Democrats and Friends.** 6-7:30 p.m. Held at Placitas Community Library. Meetings are open to the public and feature candidates for local, state, national offices. www.sandovaldemocrats.org, 259-5860.

Tuesdays: **Haven House Domestic Violence Support Group** for women whose lives have been touched by domestic violence. 6:30-8:00 p.m. Topics include: Dynamics of Domestic Violence, Safety Plans, Developing Healthy Relationships, and information about available services. All sessions are confidential and free of charge. Held at Rio Rancho First Baptist Church, corner of Route 528 and 19th Avenue. 896-4869 or 1-800-526-7157.

Wednesdays: **Seniors (62+) ride free on the Rail Runner.** Bring valid photo ID (with birthdate).

Wednesdays: **Thinking Straight open meeting of Alcoholics Anonymous.** 6-7 p.m. Have a Desire to Stop Drinking? Celebrate Sobriety with us and learn how to stay sober. Held at the First Assembly Church, 274 Camino Don Tomas (Room 8), Just south of Highway 550 in Bernalillo. 266-1900.

Wednesdays: **Cub Scout meetings.** 6:30-7:30 p.m. Held at the LDS Church Center in Bernalillo, west of I-25's Exit 240. New members are always welcome. 867-4689, 867-2047.

Wednesdays: **Rotary Club of Rio Rancho Sunrise.** 7 a.m. For breakfast, fellowship, a great speaker, and a chance to get involved in local and worldwide service projects. At Club Rio Rancho (used to be Chamisa Hills CC), 500 Country Club Drive, Rio Rancho. Info: Mac McKinney, 892-4313.

Wednesdays: **Urban Horticulture Class Continuing Series.** 1-3 p.m. Sponsored by the SandovalMasterGardeners.org. Free and open to the public. Registration preferred. SandovalMasterGardeners.org. Sandoval County Ext. Office, Bernalillo. 929-0414.

First Wednesdays: **Free civil legal clinic offered.** 10 a.m.-1 p.m. Held in the third-floor conference room of the Second District Courthouse, at the southwest corner of Lomas and Fourth, NW. Free legal advice on a number of civil legal issues. No family law services will be offered. Attendance is limited to the first 25 persons who qualify for low-income assistance. Interpreters and bilingual attorneys will be on hand. Attendees should bring all of their paperwork. Expect about a thirty-minute, free legal consultation. 797-6077.

Second Wednesdays: **Rio Rancho Art Association (RRAA) monthly membership meeting.** 6:30-8:30 p.m. RRAA is a non-juried/all mediums regional art association. You need not be a resident of Rio Rancho to join. Held in Don Chalmer's Ford Community Room, 2500 Rio Rancho Boulevard, Rio Rancho. www.rraausa.org, www.rioranchoartassociation.blogspot.com or 301-2009.

Second and fourth Wednesdays: **Sandoval County Civitans.** 6:00 p.m. Held at Fair Winds, 920 Riverview Drive SE, Rio Rancho. 898-6884.

Third Wednesdays: **Meeting of the Coronado Optimist Club.** 6-7 p.m. Held at the Range Cafe in Bernalillo.

Third Wednesdays: **Las Placitas Association Board meeting.** 6:30 p.m. Currently held via Zoom. Attendance by invitation. Visitors welcome. Email: theboard@lasplacitas.org for an invitation.

Thursdays: **Using Microsoft Word at the Martha Liebert Public Library.** 10 a.m. Registration a must. 867-1440.

Thursdays: **El Club del Libro—Our monthly Spanish Book Club.** 6-7 p.m. Recurring. Held at Loma Colorado Main Library Rio Rancho History Room. Join us in reading a book in Spanish, improving conversation skills, and meeting interesting friends who wouldn't have the opportunity to cross paths without "El Club del Libro." This month, in coordination with PBS's The Great American Read program, we will discuss Bendiceme, Ultima by Rudolfo Anaya. No registration required. Walk-ins welcome! Please note new day and time.

Thursdays: **Sandoval County Historical Society archives and library are open** to members and the public for family research, 9 a.m.-Noon. Bernalillo. Info: 867-2755.

First Thursdays: **Sandoval County veteran's outreach and business counseling.** 1-4 p.m. Held at the Sandoval County Administrative Building, 1500 Idalia Road in Bernalillo. All honorably-discharged veterans may be entitled to VA benefits and state Veteran benefits. Come learn about your potential benefits. Bring your DD-214. 383-2414.

First Thursdays: **Art and Music at the Loma Colorado Main Library Auditorium,** Rio Rancho. Info: riorancholibraries.org, 505-891-5013.

First and third Thursdays: **Sandoval County Commission meeting.** 6 p.m. Unless otherwise noted, all meetings will be held in the Sandoval Adminis-

tration Building, 1500 Idalia Road Building D, Bernalillo. Info or meeting agenda: www.sandovalcounty.com, 867-7500.

Second Thursday: **The New Mexico Parkinson's Coalition (NMPC) meets.** 1:30-3 p.m. Held at Grace Outreach at 2900 Southern Boulevard SE in Rio Rancho. The NMPC works to enhance the quality of life for individuals with Parkinson's through education, awareness and support for those with the disease. For more information, call 219-5065 or visit the website: nmparkinson.org.

Second Thursdays: **Visionary Arts & Crafts Guild (VACG).** 6-8 p.m. VACG is a group of juried artists whose mission is to develop a fellowship among craftspeople and facilitate a market for crafts. The VACG supports the "Art of Craft" through exhibitions, education and public awareness to promote the development and appreciation of craftspeople and their work. Baptist Church of Rio Rancho Adult Education Center, 1909 Grande Avenue, Rio Rancho. VisionaryACG@gmail.com, 948-3132.

Third Thursdays: **Placitas Community Library Board of Directors meetings.** At the Placitas Community Library, 453 Hwy 165. 6:30 p.m. Open to the public. Meeting agendas are posted at the library and Placitas Post Office.

Fourth Thursdays: **Sandoval County Development Planning & Zoning Commission.** 6 p.m. Held at the Sandoval County Administration Building, 1500 Idalia Road., Bldg. D, Bernalillo.

Last Thursdays: **Sandoval County veteran's outreach and business counseling.** 11 a.m.-2 p.m. Held at 433 Meadowlark SE in Rio Rancho. All honorably-discharged veterans may be entitled to VA benefits and state Veteran benefits. Come learn about your potential benefits. Bring your DD-214. 383-2414.

Fridays: **Bernalillo Farmers Market.** 4-7 pm. through October. Offering fresh fruits, produce, herbs, and more. Under pavilion at Rotary Park. SNAP EBT dollars are doubled. Vendors welcome. 228-5801.

Fridays: **Toddler Time—music, stories, and crafts.** 10 a.m. Held at the Town of Bernalillo-Martha Liebert Public Library from November 8-December 20. Closed on Thanksgiving. 867-1440.

Fridays: **Sandoval County Stroke Support Group.** 11 a.m.-12:30 p.m. Provides weekly support to survivors of stroke, their caregivers, adult family members, and health care providers. Water and light snacks provided. No charge for meetings. Social outings arranged six times a year. Geri: 620-8802.

Fridays: **Celebrate Recovery**—12 steps to finding freedom from hurts, hang-ups, and habits. 6:30 p.m. Held at the First Assembly Church, 274 Camino Don Tomas, Bernalillo. 867-7226.

First Fridays: **Monthly luncheon of the Democratic Party of Sandoval County.** 11:30 a.m.-1 p.m. Range Cafe in Bernalillo, 925 Camino del Pueblo. Sandoval Democrats gather once a month (most months) to welcome speakers, candidates, and government representatives. You pay for your lunch from the menu, or come for just the meeting. www.sandovaldemocrats.org.

Second Friday: **Luncheon of the San-Bern Federated Republican Women.** Starts at 11:30 a.m. Held at Rio Rancho Inn and Conference Center—1465 Rio Rancho Blvd. SE, Rio Rancho, 87124. The meet-and-greet luncheons are to discuss business and politics for both Sandoval and Bernalillo County Republican interests. Our aim is to promote an informed public through political education and activity. All Republican men and women invited to attend. Contact Julie Wright at 720- 4883 or go to www.sanbernfrw.org.

Saturdays: **Wildflower walks on the Sandia Ranger District.** Starting at 9 a.m. There will be an amenity fee of three dollars. Be sure to bring a hat, water, and sunscreen. Sandia Ranger District: 281-3305.

Saturdays: **Casa Rosa Food Bank.** Open 9-11 a.m. Held in the pink house east of Las Placitas Presbyterian Church at 640 Highway 165, six miles east of I-25. Community outreach program provides nonperishable food items as well as dairy, frozen meats, and fresh produce as available for Placitas residents in need. Donations, volunteers welcome.

Saturdays: **Village of Los Ranchos de Albuquerque Growers' Market.** Free. Sep.-Nov. 8 a.m.-noon. Fresh vegetable, fruits, herbs flowers, jams, cheeses, arts and crafts. Live music. Voted "Best In City." Accepts WIC/Senior. At Village of Los Ranchos tennis court parking lot. losranchosgrowersmarket.com.

Second and fourth Saturdays: **Placitas Saturday Market.** Cancelled until 2021. For additional information, contact Nancy Holley at 515-4323.

Third Saturdays: **Rio Rancho Northwest Mesa NAACP meets.** 11 a.m. Held at Don Newton Community Center. Public is invited. www.rrnmnaacp.org.

Sundays: **Corrales Growers' Market.** 9-noon. Located at Corrales and Jones Road. 259-0203.

What to expect when the BLM releases the Resource Management Plan (RMP) for the Placitas Buffalo Tract

~LAS PLACITAS ASSOCIATION (LPA) AND EASTERN SANDOVAL CITIZENS ASSOCIATION (ES-CA)

This has been a particularly long pregnancy: 12 years! But finally, the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) has leaked that they will release the Resource Management Plan (RMP) for all BLM lands within Placitas by mid-August. This includes the 917-acre Crest of Montezuma, the 3139-acre Buffalo Tract, 37 acres adjoining San Felipe Pueblo, and 196 acres north of the Overlook subdivision. Gravel mining is expected to be their preferred option for the Buffalo Tract, even though Placitans turned in 17,000 opposition comments when the draft plan was released 12 years ago. The pending "Protect the Buffalo Track Legislation" from gravel mining is still in play awaiting congressional action.

We expect no notice when the plan is released, just publication in the Federal Register and perhaps a Public Notice to the *Signpost*. When it is released, the community gets one last opportunity to comment, but the window of time will most likely be only thirty days. Because of COVID-19, there will be NO opportunity for a community meeting, so we will request a 120-day extension but must be prepared for denial of the request. There are reasons for almost EVERYONE in Placitas to submit a comment: preservation of our public lands as part of the wildlife corridor and for recreational and cultural purposes, the health of residents in the vicinity of the mines, protection of our water, the problems caused by heavy truck traffic on our roads, preservation of sites of historical significance; the list goes on and on. This is not just an issue affecting those who live in the vicinity of the mines.

Las Placitas Association will electronically alert its membership

GAUNTLET

LETTERS • OPINIONS • LOCAL ISSUES

The Signpost welcomes letters of opinion.

Letters are subject to editing for length, clarity, libel, and other considerations.

Mail to: Signpost, P. O. Box 889, Placitas, NM, 87043 or email to: email@sandovalsignpost.com

with an email and post a notice on our website and Facebook pages and on KUPR radio. The Eastern Sandoval Citizens Association will also alert its membership as well as their HOA Coalition of the release for the RMP. LPA plans to mail a postcard to every home in Placitas. These notices will provide the how, when, and where to provide your comments. No one will be left out, although the timing of the release and length of the comment period might make some methods of alerting the community less effective.

Placitas already has one large active mine in the community and three additional mines surrounding it. We have documented particulate air pollution, excessive water consumption, debilitating noise, a thousand-acre decades old abandoned mining scar, and degradation to the desirability of our residential community.

Any proposal for new mining must consider the cumulative effect that mining will have on our already overburdened community. The BLM's own data shows there is a sixty-mile swath of gravel from south of Santa Fe to south of Albuquerque. Much of that gravel is in uninhabited areas. Why Placitas?

Environmental justice demands that public policy be based on respect for all the people of Placitas and the ethical, balanced, and responsible uses of our land and natural resources. Placitas and Sandoval County get no benefit from gravel mining—NONE. But we bear the burden of all the negative outcomes.

An excellent white paper about the effect mining has on Placitas, *Land of Enchantment or Gravel*, is available on both the LPA (lasplacitas.org) and ES-CA (es-ca.org) websites.

re: Wild Hearts Gallery is NM Safe

Dear *Signpost*:

I hope this finds all of you in good health. I thought you'd like to know that Wild Hearts Gallery in Placitas obtained certification as a NM Safe Certified Retailer, trained in Covid-safe practices. It's a very simple process and I thought we'd recommend other *Signpost* advertisers do the same. Here is the website address: nmsafecertified.org. It requires watching some videos and taking a short quiz. Our business has been really very good, because even before this certification, we've published our adherence to the State Protocols on Facebook, on our website, and on our gallery door. So, this should help even more. Take care and I do hope to see you soon.

Best,

—ROSEMARY BREEHL, *Placitas*



TRAINED IN
COVID-SAFE
PRACTICES

re: Delaying the re-opening of schools

Governor Lujan Grisham announced that her administration is directing New Mexico public schools to delay the start of in-person classes. This decision is the right move.

The governor's primary responsibility is to care for the people of New Mexico. The most critical criterion regarding school reopening is that it be safe for students, teachers, parents, and caregivers. We are in the sixth month of dealing with COVID-19. It is impossible to know the long-term effects of this disease on young children or its spread in a school setting. We must deal with this problem based on the best available evidence and science.

We know COVID-19 is a deadly, contagious, unpredictable disease. Putting children, parents, caregivers, and teachers at risk is not responsible or acceptable. Sick parents cannot care for sick children, and sick children and teachers must not be in classrooms. The state must keep all of these groups healthy to have a successful school year.

Medical professionals, educators, and Los Alamos National Laboratory working together to analyze data for the safest reopening procedure will increase the likelihood of success. Students, teachers, parents, caregivers, and the entire state will benefit from a well-thought-out return to the classroom.

—ANN E. KEPLEY, *Bernalillo*

re: Au revoir to Too Loose le Truck

A Placitas icon was donated to the Placitas Community Library this month. Many of you have seen an older Chevrolet truck driving around the Placitas village for the past 16 years. The owner, Rich Reif, decided to name his truck and with his tongue planted firmly in his cheek, he called it "Too Loose Le Truck." Rich has had many people walk by the truck laughing and has received many honks and waves when passing other drivers.

After many years of working hard, Too Loose developed too many problems to fix—again. With great sadness, Rich called the Placitas Community Library and donated his beloved truck. One Community Auto came, picked up Too Loose and towed it away. Any money earned from the sale of the truck will go to the library.

A sad ending, but perhaps eventually there will be another truck driving around with a silly name.

—KAREN COX, *Placitas Community Library*



Too Loose Le Truck donation benefits local library

BLM rescinds seasonal fire restrictions in New Mexico

—CATHY GARBER, BLM,
NEW MEXICO STATE OFFICE

With increasing moisture and higher humidity statewide, correlating to reduced fire danger, the Bureau of Land Management is terminating seasonal fire restrictions in New Mexico enacted by Fire Prevention Order #NM910-20-02.

Beginning July 24 at 12:01 a.m., the restrictions are rescinded within the Albuquerque, Farmington, and Pecos Districts, followed by lifting of restrictions in the Las Cruces District on July 31 at 12:01 a.m.

“We appreciate the public’s compliance with these restrictions to reduce the number of accidental fires this season,” said BLM New Mexico State Director Timothy Spisak. While the lifting of these restrictions will allow for the use of campfires, caution is still advised when outdoors as not all areas of the state have received equal amounts of moisture. It is recommended to plan your activity and go prepared when spending time outdoors by having a shovel, fire extinguisher, and extra water on hand. Please take all precautions when operating vehicles and equipment in areas where dry grass and brush are present.

The use of exploding targets will continue to be restricted by Fire Prevention Order #NM910-20-01. This order can be viewed at the BLM NM Fire Restrictions site (<https://www.blm.gov/programs/public-safety-and-fire/fire-and-aviation/regional-info/new-mexico/fire-restrictions>), along with printable and geo-locatable maps of where this restriction applies. Additional fire restriction information can be found at www.nmfireinfo.com or <https://firerestrictions.ur/nm/>

For more information about this and other BLM



Be sure to extinguish your campfires!

fire restrictions in New Mexico, please contact Fire Education and Mitigation Specialist Teresa Rigby at 505-954-2256 or visit www.nmfireinfo.com.

The BLM manages more than 245 million acres of public land located primarily in 12 Western states, including Alaska. The BLM also administers 700 million acres of sub-surface mineral estate throughout the nation. In fiscal year 2018, the diverse activities authorized on BLM-managed lands generated \$105 billion in economic output across the country. This economic activity supported 471,000 jobs and contributed substantial revenue to the U.S. Treasury and state governments, mostly through royalties on minerals.

Follow the BLM on Twitter, Facebook, and Flickr @BLMNewMexico.



¡Bienvenidos todos!
Las Placitas Presbyterian Church
Founded in 1894 the Rev. Bill Humphreys, Pastor

SUNDAY WORSHIP

Las Placitas Church building is closed but our church is open and welcoming via Zoom and telephone.

MOTHERS' DAY OUT PRESCHOOL

CLOSED indefinitely

WEEKLY ACTIVITIES

Sat. 9–11 a.m.—Casa Rosa Food Pantry: Placitas residents

Location: 7 Paseo de San Antonio, Placitas, NM 87043
Church Office Hours: Closed
Phone: 505-867-5718 **Website:** www.lasplacitaschurch.org
Mothers' Day Out Preschool: 867-3371

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YOUTH

Scouts keep busy

—DAVID GARDNER

The Cub Scouts and Boy Scouts are finding things to do to keep busy. The cubs have had two recent activities, one as a family activity at home, and one as a virtual activity online. The virtual activity was an ice cream social during which each cub followed directions in making home-made ice cream in sealed bags and sharing their enjoyment with each other. The second was a scavenger hunt in which each cub had a list of items to find and collect at home, the contest being to see who could collect and report their success in the shortest time. More activities are scheduled for the coming weeks.

The Boy Scouts have been actively working on merit badges. A virtual merit badge clinic originating from Gorham Scout Camp in the Sangre de Cristo Mountains offered work on several merit badges a week over the course of several weeks. That has now been completed and the boys have a few assignments to complete at home. A court of honor to present the badges will be held at a ceremonial camp fire on the 12th of August. Due to the current restrictions, attendance will be limited to one parent per boy and the recipient of the badge. The boys, in a recent virtual meeting, elected officers for the next six months: Patrol Leader, Steven Harper; Assistant Patrol Leader, Shane Southwick; Quarter Master, Noa Sanchez-Ravey; Troop Guide, Preston Bean; and Secretary, Nathan Dabling.

The national office of the Boy Scouts of America has notified us that it is reaching out to anyone who was sexually abused during their time in Scouting. Claims must be filed by November 16, 2020, at 5:00 p.m. Claims can be filed by downloading and filing at www.OfficialBSAclaims.com or by calling 1-866-907-

2721 for help on how to file a claim by mail.

Our Cub Scout Pack 708 has been in existence for over 15 years, during which time we and our predecessors have had the opportunity to work with many fine boys and their parents. One of the first requirements for a boy joining Cub Scouts is that the parent discuss all forms of abuse with the boy, using a provided pamphlet. We follow strict guidelines, and are not aware of any problems, but we do urge former scouts and parents to talk about sexual abuse and file a claim if there has been abuse.

For information about Scouting, call Amanda at 507-1305 or David at 867-4689.



—AMANDA GRIEGO

Fun in Scouting

Bear attacks, injures Los Alamos woman

-SIGNPOST STAFF

Officers tracked and killed a black bear after it attacked and seriously injured a Los Alamos woman at Pajarito Ski Area on July 17.

The New Mexico Department of Game and Fish reported the 37-year-old woman, whose name was not released, suffered multiple injuries that included broken bones, a collapsed lung, bites and scratches. She was airlifted from the Los Alamos Medical Center to UNM Hospital, according to a news release.

The current status of her recovery is not known.

According to the department news release, the woman and her husband were at the ski area in the evening to observe Comet NEOWISE when the bear approached them. It came within

a foot and then began chasing the woman into the parking lot.

Responding officers later killed a bear found in the vicinity eating trash. A forensic investigation is underway to confirm it was the bear that attacked the woman.

The department release also cautions outdoor recreationists to be alert for bears, as they are actively seeking food sources in preparation for winter. Making sure the bear knows you're there, making yourself appear larger by holding out a pack or jacket and slowly backing away while avoiding eye contact is recommended as is fighting with anything available if attacked.

—COURTESY NM GAME AND FISH



An adult New Mexican black bear

If you live or camp in bear country:

- Keep garbage in airtight containers inside your garage or storage area. Place garbage outside in the morning just before pickup, not the night before. Occasionally clean cans with ammonia or bleach.
- Remove bird feeders. Bears see them as sweet treats, and often they will look for other food sources nearby.
- Never put meat or sweet-smelling food scraps such as melon in your compost pile.
- Don't leave pet food or food dishes outdoors at night.
- Clean and store outdoor grills after use. Bears can smell sweet barbecue sauce and grease for miles.
- Never intentionally feed bears to attract them for viewing.
- Keep your camp clean, and store food and garbage properly at all times. Use bear-proof containers when available. If not, suspend food, toiletries, coolers, and garbage from a tree at least 10 feet off the ground and four feet out from the tree trunk.
- Keep your tent and sleeping bag free of all food smells. Store the clothes you wore while cooking or eating with your food.
- Sleep a good distance from your cooking area or food storage site.

S A N D O V A L

SIGNPOST

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IN
THE
GALLERY

by
RUDI KLIMPERT

RUDI



Mule deer buck in the wild

Hunter assessed \$74,000 for illegal taking

-BILL DIVEN

A former New Mexico resident convicted of killing a trophy mule deer buck without a license, out of season, has been slapped with \$74,000 in civil penalties on top of his criminal conviction.

District Judge James Noel, holding court in Bernalillo, levied the assessments on Cody W. Davis to compensate the state for the costs of the investigation and the loss of the prize-worthy game animal. While the deer was killed in Rio Arriba County, the case was transferred to Sandoval County where the skull plate and expansive antlers were recovered.

Court records show the case dates to December, 2015, when a tip came in to Operation Game Thief, a state program that pays rewards for information on illegal hunting and fishing. The tip led game officers to a rotting deer carcass, minus its head, near Lindtrith in far southwestern Rio Arriba County.

About four month later, Davis cut the skull plate and antlers from the head, according to investigators and statements attributed to Davis in the court record. Soon thereafter, game officers keeping an eye on the site saw him place the skull plate and antlers in his pickup truck and followed him down U.S. Highway 550.

Davis later told investigators that he thought he was being followed when he pitched the antlers into the Rio Grande near the U.S. 550 bridge in Bernalillo.

When the antlers were retrieved, they measured higher than the top range for mule deer used to establish civil penalties for hunting violations for multiple game animals. The scoring system was established by the American Safari Club.

At the time Davis was charged in Magistrate Court with four misdemeanor crimes, each alleging a third offense, Davis was living in North Dakota. There, state and federal officers served a search warrant on his residence and obtained a full confession, according to a New Mexico Department of Game and Fish news release.

Davis's history of violating game laws began in 2000, the release stated.

Davis, acting without an attorney, pleaded no contest to the four charges, was placed on probation for ninety days and agreed to fines totaling three thousand dollars donated to Operation Game Thief, which he failed to pay. In April, 2017, the fines were suspended, as was a year in jail, replaced with extended probation and \$420 in court costs.

A year later, the department demanded \$20,000 in restitution for the value of the deer and offered to set up a payment plan but filed suit in District Court when Davis didn't respond.

Davis's attorney argued the criminal sentence was probably illegal and that the game department had waited too long to file suit. Jason Bowles also accused the department of acting improperly in how it handled the court case and called the civil payment an unconstitutionally excessive fine for the underlying crime.

"It is alarming that (the Department of Game and Fish), an arm of the state, can lure an unrepresented defendant into agreeing to pay Plaintiff an unlimited sum to avoid incarceration without mentioning the possibility of civil restitution," Bowles wrote in a December 19 response to the lawsuit.

Judge Noel, however, ruled the state could legitimately seek restitution and that the amount would either be set by agreement of the parties or by



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If the animal you reported no longer needs attention, please email the Signpost by the 20th of the month to have the listing removed.



The Animal Hotline is a free animal-friendly service of the Signpost.

the court after a hearing. With no agreement, Noel, on June 23, set the damages at \$20,000 for the deer and \$54,000 for the investigation listed in the court record to include 1,905 hours of personnel time, nearly 26,000 driving miles, travel to North Dakota, and the aircraft search for a radio transmitter.

"It was a long investigation, involving many conservation officers, Department biologists and staff from every part of the agency," Conservation Officer Ben Otero said in a July 8 news release. "It also would not have been possible without support from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Colorado Parks and Wildlife, and North Dakota Game and Fish Department."

By Signpost deadline Bowles had not responded to a query on whether an appeal of the court judgment is planned.

LALO'S ANIMAL PRINTS

Email your animal photos to "Lalo" at:
email@sandovalsignpost.com



Barnaby the Dog (BtD) says "woof woof" to Lalo.
—MICHAEL SARE



My name is Sophie. I'm a 7-year-old Labradoodle.
I recently moved to Placitas, from Colorado.
My parents and I love it here!

—TINA MILLER



This is Riley Collins,
masked and self-distancing!
—KEJKA COLLINS



...
and
the
cats!

—BARB
BELKNAP

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household, extensive tool shop (many
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PRICE REDUCTION ON WILD CHERRY FARMS IN THE PLACITAS VILLAGE—5 lots in the compound with underground shared well, power and natural gas. Mountain/valley views tucked in among the fruit and cottonwood trees. Owner financing possible and now only \$69,000 per lot. Porter 263-3662, La Puerta Real Estate Services, LLC 867-3388.

VERY CONVENIENT UPFRONT LOCATION IN ANASAZI TRAILS, PLACITAS—Flat buildable site with underground utilities and good view of the mountain and sunset. Owner financing possible. Only \$119,000. Call Porter 263-3662. La Puerta Real Estate Services, LLC 867-3388.

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—“CLEANING,” continued next column

—“FOR SALE-HOMES/LAND,” continued next page

FOR SALE: HOMES/LAND ~ CONTINUED ~

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LOT 128, OCATE COURT—ALL AROUND VIEWS—Sandia Mountain, Mesa and Sunset views from this easy building site comprised of 1.68 acres. Located in gorgeous Anasazi Meadows. Fully improved w/ community water, electric, telephone, cable & natural gas. Build your dream home here! \$115,000

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