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## State encourages primary voting by mail

—SIGNPOST STAFF

Pandemic or not, the June 2 New Mexico primary election is a go, although voting by mail rather than in person requires action by registered Democrats, Republicans, and Libertarians.

Voting in person early, and on primary day, will continue, although with fewer sites and social-distancing restrictions in place. Early in-person voting starts on May 16 and ends on May 30, the Saturday before the primary.

Registered voters whose addresses are current can expect to receive an application for an absentee ballot in the mail if they haven't already. This comes after the New Mexico Supreme Court ruled state law does not allow the automatic mailing of actual ballots to voters—even during a public health emergency.

Instead, the five Supreme Court justices, in their unanimous ruling, ordered the secretary of state to mail absentee applications to registered voters. Since New Mexico does not have an open primary, only voters registered with one of the three major political parties can participate in the party primaries.

Mailing of ballots begins on May 5, and those must be returned before the polls close at 7:00 p.m. on June 2. The ballots can be mailed or dropped off at early and primary-day voting sites.

Current voters have until 5:00 p.m. on May 5 to update registrations and add or change a party affiliation. New voters, including 17-year-olds who will turn 18 before the November 3 general election also can register by May 5 and vote in the primary.

Changes and new registrations can be handled online through NMVote.org, which redirects to the official New Mexico Secretary of State website. In Sandoval County, that also can be done by calling the county Bureau of Elections at 867-7577 during regular business hours.

The county clerk's office, which includes the bureau, is currently closed to the public, except for appointments to obtain marriage licenses.

County Clerk Eileen Garbagni told the *Signpost* that the county has approved an extra ten thousand dollars for postage, and that she'll likely ask for more as the volume of absentee ballots becomes clear. She also said the official list of early and regular voting sites won't be known until it's approved by county commissioners during a special meeting on April 27 and then by a District Court judge.

With pueblos closed by the outbreak of the COVID-19, Garbagni said that only Sandia Pueblo and the Navajo chapter at Counselors had confirmed early voting days at their sites. Depending on pueblo participation, the county anticipates 15 early voting sites with 31 sites, nine of them in Rio Rancho, open on June 2.

"We have a plan, and we're sure it's going to work," she said. "We don't want to disenfranchise anyone."

The primary is being upended in other ways, too, as the plan calls for 103 poll workers instead of the usual five hundred. And given the public health order limiting gatherings to five people, only two voters can be in polling places at the same time, since there will be three poll workers.

The secretary of state is providing personal protective equipment for those workers to include the facemasks also encouraged for members of the public. Poll workers are being asked to sign waivers absolving the county of liability should they contract COVID-19 from their election work.

—continued on page 3

COURTESY SANDOVAL COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE



Sandoval County sheriff's deputies in mid-April took time out to show support for the men and women of the medical professions. Led by a county rescue unit, they arrived at Presbyterian Rust Medical Center with red lights on and signs of gratitude for the medics work in keeping people safe.

## Commissioners question lack of data on virus locations

—BILL DIVEN

While Sandoval County emergency and medical services have enough personal protective equipment, detailed information on the locations of the COVID-19 outbreak remains in short supply.

The state Department of Health initially only released statistics by county, citing a legal requirement to protect patient privacy. Daily updates from the governor's office, however, have identified by name troubled nursing homes, long-term care facilities, senior residential complexes, and pueblos with significant numbers of infections.

"I don't understand why they don't give other areas," Commissioner Kenneth Eichwald of Cuba said by phone during the socially distanced April 13 meeting. "They don't have to specifically say an individual... I get that question all the time about, 'Do we have anything in our area? Do we have anything here where we're at?'"

Commissioner Jay Block of Rio Rancho said he's written to Gov. Michelle Lujan Grisham about the issue and noted such information would be important for first responders to have. Other states and municipalities have released information based on ZIP codes, he added.

There have been problems using ZIP codes, however, since the numbers may reflect patients in hospitals rather than surrounding residents, Commission Chair

David Heil of Rio Rancho said. And Commissioner Katherine Bruch of Placitas said there is concern it would be too easy to identify individuals in rural ZIP codes with small populations.

Later in the month, the state began adding data by ZIP code to its online dashboard linked at CV.NMHealth.org. That showed three cases in Placitas and 14 in the ZIP code that includes Bernalillo and Santa Ana and Sandia Pueblos.

In his update, county Emergency Manager Seth Muller said the New Mexico Air National Guard through the state Emergency Operations has been filling requests from counties for personal protective equipment. Weekly shipments to Sandoval County are being distributed from Fire Station 21 near the intersection of Tamaya Boulevard and U.S. Highway 550.

"Right now, we're doing pretty well," Muller said. "We do have some SNS, Strategic National Stockpile supplies, and we are able to help some of the smaller organizations or even some of the county departments that have small requests, they only need a handful of masks or they just want one box of gloves... But we don't have a ton of stuff in storage."

At the moment, no shortages are being reported, he added.

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This project is 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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## from page 1— Voting

Once the list of voting sites is approved, it will be posted on the county website [SandovalCountyNM.gov](http://SandovalCountyNM.gov) under Departments/Bureau of Elections. Questions can also be directed to the bureau by phone.

The plan calls for one early and primary day site in Placitas at the Placitas Community Library, 453 Highway 165. Also to be open nearby is the county Voting Machine Warehouse at 800 South Hill Road in Bernalillo.

Other area sites on the list include the County Administrative Building off State Road 528 and Idalia Road, Bernalillo High School, and Algodones Elementary School.

## Crowded field competes in Senate District 9 primary

~SIGNPOST STAFF

While some candidates enjoy a free ride in the June 2 primary, the open state Senate seat affecting Placitas has drawn six hopefuls.

Three each Republicans and Democrats are competing to be on the November 3 ballot to succeed Sen. John Sapien, D-Corrales, who is not seeking a fourth term in Senate District 9. Democrat Jodilynn Ortiz of Placitas, a member of the Bernalillo Board of Education, was a candidate before a successful court challenge to her number of petition signatures.

District 9 encompasses Placitas, Bernalillo, Algodones, and Corrales. No Libertarians filed to run in District 9.

Here are capsule profiles of the Senate District 9 and House District 65 primary candidates in the order listed by the Secretary of State:

### DEMOCRATIC PARTY PRIMARY

• Brenda McKenna—53, of Corrales—is on leave as a field representative

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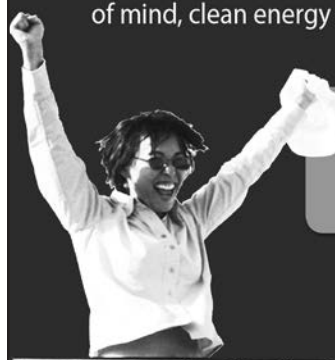
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for U.S. Rep. Deb Haaland, D-N.M., as she makes her first run for public office. The native of Nanbé Pueblo (Nambé is the nonindigenous spelling) sees this step as a natural progression for someone who has considered herself a Democrat since the fourth grade.

Since then, she has been a citizen lobbyist and party volunteer, has held precinct and ward offices, and has encouraged others to become involved in the political process. Along the way she earned a bachelor's degree in psychology and a master's degree in organization management and volunteered with wildlife advocacy groups.

"When I look at the composition of the state Senate Chambers, we need more women in there and more Native Americans," she said.

"My background and graduate program in organization development are about how to make teams work better... I'm very concerned about our economy and will work with the governor to be part of the recovery program from COVID-19."

(For more, see [BrendaMcKennaForSenate.com](http://BrendaMcKennaForSenate.com))

• Ben Rodefer—57—whose Corrales roots date to childhood, served one term in the New Mexico House in 2009-2010 and ran unsuccessfully against Sapien in the 2012 primary. He is an art dealer, a founder of a Bernalillo based renewable-energy company with corporate and government clients, and a past president of the New Mexico Renewable Energy Industries Association.

"It's really important to know the

—continued on page 5

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Brenda McKenna

Ben Rodefer

Kevin Lucero

Senate District 9 Democratic primary candidates, June 2, 2020

## from page 3—Senate

# UP FRONT

district and respect the nuances,” he said. “What Placitas wants is different from what Bernalillo wants... While good policies on education, health care, and the environment don’t necessarily require money, the state is in crisis and sitting not only on a \$1.5 billion cash reserve, but a multi-billion-dollar permanent fund... We did not build that up for retirement. The fund is for emergencies, and this is an emergency.”

Rodefer said he went into the Legislature promising to be fearless and that hasn’t changed.

(For more see BenRodefer.com)

- Kevin David Lucero—47, of Corrales—farms and ranches with his father on land in the Jemez that his family homesteaded in 1905. He’s been active locally in the Democratic Party and has served since 2018 on the Corrales Village Council.

But it’s his 27 years in law enforcement, first as a livestock inspector and now as a Bernalillo County sheriff’s deputy, that fuels his passion for public service and public safety, he said.

“That’s a fight I’ll take to Santa Fe,” Lucero said. “I see it on a ground-level experience every day, every day, and can speak to it with a certain amount of authority... Let’s not incarcerate ourselves out of a problem.”

While some steps have been taken toward criminal-justice reform, more needs to be done to provide assistance for those with mental-health and addiction issues, he said. Lucero also calls New Mexico uniquely positioned for the transition to alternative energy sources.

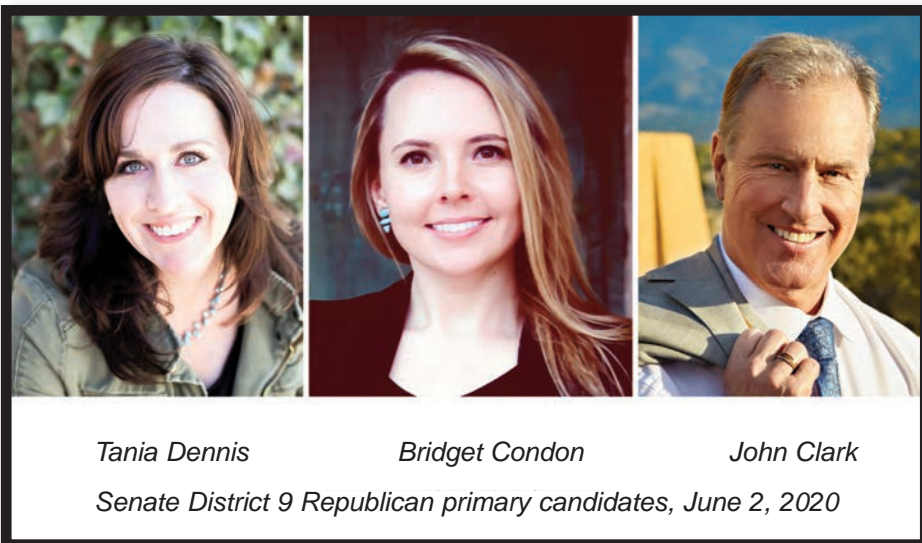
(For more see Kevin4NM.com)

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Tania Dennis

Bridget Condon

John Clark

Senate District 9 Republican primary candidates, June 2, 2020

### REPUBLICAN PARTY PRIMARY

- Bridget Condon—29, of Rio Rancho—followed a Republican path from high school through a political science degree and internships in the 2012 New Mexico Legislature and Rep. Steve Pearce’s Washington office. After staff jobs with Pearce in D.C. and back in New Mexico, she is now director of business development for the Rio Rancho-based Sandoval Economic Alliance.

“New Mexico is my home, and I want to help create job opportunities and promote economic growth so that others can choose to work, live, and stay here in our beautiful state,” she said. “My career has been focused on bringing people together to further grow our region’s economy, promote business-friendly policies, and create new jobs for hardworking New Mexicans.”

She cites first-hand observations that the state’s tax code, regulations, aging infrastructure and education system make New Mexico less competitive in attracting job creators.

“As a Senator I will reach across party lines and build consensus, while never comprising my core values as a pragmatic Republican,” she added.

(For more see Bridget4NM.com)

- John Clark—59—was already a successful sales executive in 1994 when a visit to Placitas sealed the deal, after researching Albuquerque as a place to launch his own business, manufacturing and retailing window coverings. The Tennessee native chose business after earning a political science degree in Colorado and said, it’s now time to give back to the community.

“I’m just a super pro-business kind of guy,” Clark said. “We’re good to our customers, and I’m going to treat my constituents the same way.”

Describing himself as a businessperson with a different view of government, Clark said the crash in oil prices shows how the state essentially treats such revenue backwards. As forty percent of the base budget, that revenue should be banked and then spent rather than budgeted solely on forecasts, he added.

Clark also said he didn’t just jump at an opening to run for office, but held his first fundraiser before Sapien decided not to run for reelection.

(For more see JohnClark4NM.com)

—continued next page



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from page 5—Senate

SENATE DISTRICT 9 REPUBLICAN  
—CONTINUED

• Tania Dennis of Corrales finds that having been an intelligence analyst for the U.S. government provided a strong base for parenthood, creating a communications company, working with homeless families, and seeking public office.

"I'm used to working with people of varied backgrounds—diverse people and a lot of women—to be able to go back and forth," she said. "I see both sides and am not stuck between the blinders of my own opinions."

The Michigan native said that one of her passions is working with the only transitional shelter for homeless families in Metro Albuquerque. She also sees a need to improve education and taxation so small businesses can keep more of their revenue.

"If you want your children to grow up and stay in New Mexico, they have to feel like they have a good start," Dennis said. "Lots of taxes in the state are not making us more than No. 50."

(For more see  
[TaniaDennisForNM.com](http://TaniaDennisForNM.com))

**Democrat vs. Democrat highlights  
House primary ballot**

~SIGNPOST STAFF

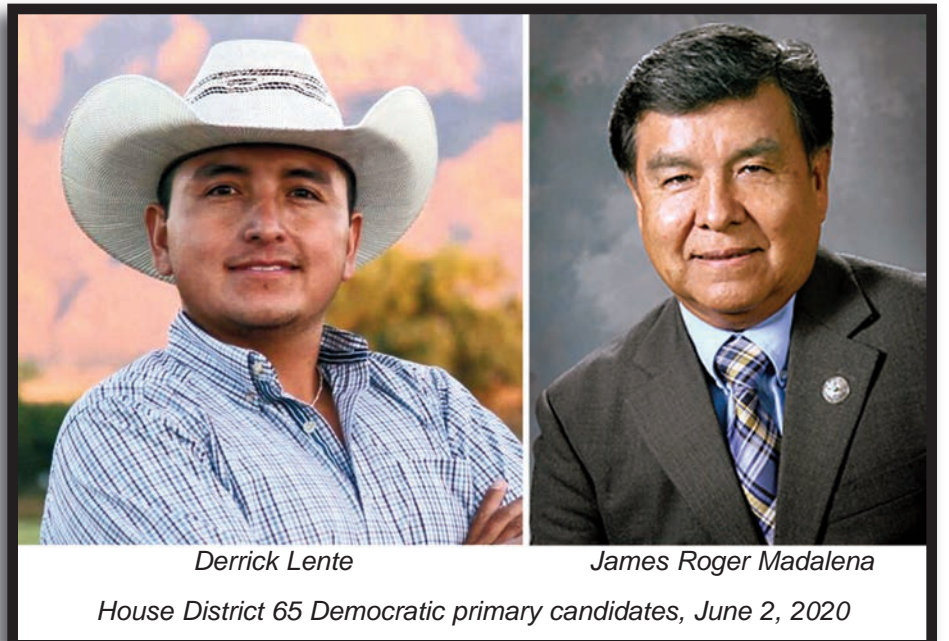
While the Republican party in the sprawling House district that includes Bernalillo and tribal lands eases through the June 3 primary, a battle has broken out within the Democratic Party.

Rep. Derrick Lente, D-Sandia Pueblo, who has held the District 65 seat for two two-year terms, faces a challenge from James Roger Madalena of Jemez Pueblo, who occupied the seat for 32 years. Lente won the position in 2016, defeating Madalena's son in the primary and being elected without Republican opposition in November.

In the District 65 Republican primary, Phillip Salazar of Dulce is running unopposed. No Libertarian candidate filed for the district that extends from the south boundary of Sandoval County through Bernalillo to the Colorado border taking in parts of Rio Arriba and San Juan counties.

The District 22 House seat covering Placitas, La Madera, Albuquerque's East Mountains, and a portion of Santa Fe County is up for grabs now that one-term Rep. Gregg Schmedes is running for an Albuquerque-area Senate seat. His Democratic challenger in the 2018 election, Jessica Velasquez of Sandia Park, is unopposed in her primary, as is Republican candidate Stefani Lord, also of Sandia Park.

And, in House District 44, which includes a portion of



Derrick Lente

James Roger Madalena

House District 65 Democratic primary candidates, June 2, 2020

western Bernalillo, the state Supreme Court upheld a lower-court ruling that found Rep. Jane Powdrell-Culbert, R-Corrales, had sufficient signatures on her nominating petition. In November, she'll face Democrat Gary Tripp of Rio Rancho, who filed the court challenge, and Libertarian candidate Jeremy B. Myers also of Rio Rancho.

In his campaign for reelection, Lente lists the combination of his law degree, experience as a farmer, father, and business owner as offering a unique perspective for serving in the Legislature.

"In four years, I've been able to pass legislation tied to our community," he said, citing, among other issues, education reform, boosting the minimum wage and protect-

—continued next page

**UP FRONT**  
~CONTINUED



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- Expand Sandoval County broadband internet coverage

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## from page 6 —House

ing cultural sites. "I've really been at the forefront of these issues.

"It's been refreshing to hear mention that my youth brought new life and a new voice to the district."

Lente said he considers himself a moderate Democrat who's been criticized for working with Republican Powdrell-Culbert in advocating for Bernalillo and jointly securing funding for town projects. While they disagree on other issues, he said he respects her (and in other venues she has returned the compliment).

Lente also said he's ready to deal with the financial fallout from the crash in oil prices and the COVID-19 pandemic.

"My first session we were dealt similar cards, had to tap reserves, and rob Peter to pay Paul to scrape up a balanced budget," he said. While a special legislative session expected to be called for in June will face tough budget decisions, Lente said that education, essential services, and the people of the district need to be protected.

Madalena said he is returning to politics at the urging of tribal leaders and others.

"Some are not too comfortable with the incumbent," he said. "I was getting calls about these issues, native versus nonnative issues... They call me as well to reconsider, to help with environmental issues and whatever is facing the state."

A former Sandoval County Commissioner, Madalena holds a sociology degree and counseled Native American students at Eastern New Mexico University and New Mexico State before returning to Jemez Pueblo to work with a coalition of pueblos. He is a former Jemez Pueblo administrator and governor and is a member of the tribal council.

After 32 years in the Legislature, it was time for a break, he said.

"I was not a radical," Madalena continued. "I was more quiet than most."

New issues have arisen around oil and gas development and the contamination of ground water, he said. Education funding for tribal schools remains an issue as well.

He said his health is good, and he runs every day, although he's been so busy he only ran eight hundred miles in the last year. "I've been tilling the soil, trying to plant chile," he added.

## UP FRONT ~CONTINUED

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- Required Minimum Distributions (RMD) rule changes
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**Second-Half Property Tax Season for the 2019 Tax Year April 10th- May 11th**

**THE SECOND HALF OF THE 2019 PROPERTY TAXES BECOME DELINQUENT ON MAY 12, 2020. TAXES NOT PAID PRIOR TO THE DELINQUENT DATE ACCRUE INTEREST AT THE RATE OF ONE (1) PERCENT PER MONTH, AS WELL AS A PENALTY OF ONE (1) PERCENT PER MONTH UP TO FIVE (5) PERCENT.**

Due to the State of Emergency and for the protection of human life, the Treasurer's Office is closed to the public until further notice. We are encouraging you to utilize the following payment methods instead of in-person transactions:

- Pay By phone: 1-866-873-0944 (English and Spanish)
- Online at [sandovalcountynm.gov/paytaxes](http://sandovalcountynm.gov/paytaxes)
- Drop box located at the North end of the Administration Building
- Pay by mail: P.O. Box 40 Bernalillo, NM 87004

\*Drop box or mailed payments must be by check or money order. Please include your coupon or account number.

If you have any questions concerning your tax bill, please contact STO at [treasurer@sandovalcountynm.gov](mailto:treasurer@sandovalcountynm.gov) or by calling 505-867-7581.

I know that times are difficult for many New Mexicans. I would like to thank everyone who is able to make their 2019 property tax payments. This will help many critical entities such as our municipalities, hospitals and schools. In addition, this helps services such as delivery and carry out meals for our seniors and pick up meals for students and families as well as funding for fire & E911, public safety, mental health, roads and the detention center.

Warm regard,  
Laura M. Montoya, Sandoval County Treasurer



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"Pete"  
SALAZAR  
SANDOVAL COUNTY CLERK  
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- I will lobby the State Legislature for less-restrictive voting legislation
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**Primary voters have multiple choices for some offices**

-SIGNPOST STAFF

The June 2 primary ballots features a handful of intra-party contests, some by district, but others countywide.

Here's a list of duels confronting Democrats and Republicans voting in their party's primary, including candidates running unopposed for nomination to the same office:

13TH JUDICIAL DISTRICT ATTORNEY:

DEMOCRAT:

- Barbara A. Romo, Rio Rancho
- Mandana Shoushtari, Rio Rancho

REPUBLICAN:

- Joshua Joe Jimenez, Los Lunas

COUNTY COMMISSIONER DISTRICT 5:

DEMOCRAT:

- F. Kenneth Eichwald, incumbent, Cuba
- Darryl F. Madalena, Jemez Pueblo
- Taylor Pinto, Cuba

REPUBLICAN:

- None

COUNTY CLERK:

DEMOCRAT:

- Anne S. Brady-Romero, Algodones
- Bob Perls, Corrales
- Ignacio Pedro "Pete" Salazar, Bernalillo

REPUBLICAN:

- Lawrence D. Griego, Rio Rancho

COUNTY TREASURER:

DEMOCRAT:

- Jennifer A. Taylor, Rio Rancho
- Ronnie A. Sisneros, Bernalillo

REPUBLICAN:

- Carlos Sanchez, Rio Rancho
- Benay P. Ward, Rio Rancho

**State looks ahead while battling virus outbreak**

-BILL DIVEN

As New Mexicans hunker down in a social and commercial deep freeze, the coronavirus continues to work its way through the population.

At the same time, the state is moving toward reopening businesses and society—although when that will happen remains uncertain.

During an April 22 media briefing, Gov. Michelle Lujan

Grisham said the state is on parallel paths of decision-making, one aimed at protecting people and the other planning for economic recovery.

"These things have to be done together; you don't get to choose one or the other," she said. "If anyone tells you you have to choose one or the other, it's a false choice... You do one thing, you bulge out a problem someplace else. You aren't solving things."

Lujan Grisham also said she would be extending the emergency orders set to expire at the end of April through at least May 15.

—continued next page

**BUSINESS**

—LUIS SANCHEZ / SANTA FE NEW MEXICAN (POOL)



New Mexico Gov. Michelle Lujan Grisham displays her facemask during one of the regular updates on the state's response to the coronavirus pandemic. The updates are being streamed live through her Facebook page.





# JESSICA VELASQUEZ

DEMOCRAT NM HOUSE DISTRICT 22  
2020

**Due to the Coronavirus, Jessica is urging everyone to vote by absentee ballot in this year's primary election.**

**You can request your absentee ballot online by going to the NM Secretary of State's website at:**

**[www.sos.state.nm.us](http://www.sos.state.nm.us)**

**A link to request your absentee ballot is on the home page.**

*"It is important that we do not let this situation keep us from exercising our democratic right to vote.*

*Please be safe and vote by absentee ballot." ~ Jessica*

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PAID FOR BY VELASQUEZ CAMPAIGN COMMITTEE, AMY NORIEGA, TREASURER

## from page 8 -Outbreak

As of April 27, confirmed cases of COVID-19, the disease caused by the virus, stood at 2,726, although the rate of growth had slowed somewhat. The actual number of people infected, most of whom would display mild or no symptoms, was unknown as the number of tests was just 56,615 out of a population of 2.1 million.

Fatalities had risen to 99, with three Sandoval County women in their 50s, 80s, and 90s, among the latest, and 161 people had been admitted to hospitals. More than six hundred patients had been released from hospitals.

Confirmed cases were reported in 29 of the state's 33 counties, with McKinley County at 720 cases surpassing Bernalillo County's 688. McKinley, San Juan, and Sandoval counties reported significantly more cases than other counties, reflecting outbreaks in the Navajo nation and several pueblos where extended families living in multigenerational homes are common.

In other state-level developments:

- The Department of Workforce Solutions announced that self-employed, independent contractors and gig-economy workers can apply for unemployment insurance benefits under a federal program starting April 26. The state has not previously

had a similar program. More details at [DWS.state.nm.us/COVID-19-Info](http://DWS.state.nm.us/COVID-19-Info).

- The governor appointed 15 business leaders to a New Mexico Economic Recovery Council to plan for a phased reopening of the state's economy for "when we are sure that the virus is being successfully suppressed."

- The Department of Health launched an online portal with state and county-level data on the COVID-19 outbreak. That can be found through the general outbreak site [CV.NMHealth.org](http://CV.NMHealth.org) by clicking the Public Dashboard link.

- As of April 22, NMDOH had 64 COVID-19 testing sites spread among all 33 counties, prioritizing testing of at-risk populations like residents of long-term care facilities, tribal communities, and more recently essential workers at grocery stores, and elsewhere, who are not displaying symptoms of the virus. At full capacity with the aid of private labs, the state can conduct five thousand tests a day. The DOH lists testing information and sites including drive-throughs, most of which require appointments or referrals, at [CV.NMHealth.org](http://CV.NMHealth.org).

## BUSINESS -CONTINUED



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Mrs. Pickel has a Master of Laws (LL.M.) in Estate Planning and Elder Law, is the former chair of the Elder Law Section of the New Mexico Bar, is the former division chair of the Estate and Trust division of Real Property, Estate and Trust Section of the New Mexico Bar, is a member of the National Academy of Elder Law Attorneys, and was a prior board member of the Greater Albuquerque Habitat for Humanity. She served as an Assistant Judge Advocate General (JAG) with the U. S. Air Force before settling in Placitas.



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# Bernalillo Town Hall closed outside, busy inside

~BILL DIVEN

Bernalillo's municipal employees continue to put in full days at their jobs, although some are working from home while public access to offices is limited to phone and email.

Police officers, firefighters, and Public Works crews have become the visible faces of town duties, but behind the scenes, others manage water and wastewater services, planning and zoning, and the internal processes that support the others.

"I'm just really grateful they're not only doing their jobs but doing them with a positive attitude," Mayor Jack Torres told the *Signpost*. "To me, that's a really positive aspect of this crazy situation... It speaks volumes about the staff and how they consider themselves public servants and professionals."

Social distancing is in practice, as is the wearing of facemasks, he added. An analysis shows the town is currently in a good financial position, so no furloughs are on the horizon, Torres said.

The city of Rio Rancho, on the other hand, has announced that more than one hundred of its employees in nonessential positions—about 15 percent of the total workforce—would face reduced hours and furloughs beginning May 2. However, the city would pay to keep their health insurance in force.

Torres said the town is encouraging residents who may be having trouble

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paying utility bills to contact town hall at 771-7120 or 771-7122.

"We're not doing any shutoffs," he said. "Some people are in a tough situation, and we're working with them to try to get through this situation."

The Bernalillo Town Council meeting, on April 13, welcomed two newly elected councilors, although both Phillip Valverde and Sharon Torres-Quintana were at home, participating through an online meeting service. Councilor Tina Dominguez and most of the administrative staff also dialed in, while Torres, Councilor Dale Prairie, Clerk/Administrator Ida Fierro, and Finance Director Terri Gray kept their safe distances in the council chambers.

During the meeting, Prairie was named mayor pro tem

to serve in the absence of the mayor succeeding Councilor Marian Jaramillo (who

was defeated in the March election). Councilors approved the hiring of a firefighter and accounts payable clerk and awarded a \$1.5 million contract for water-line improvements and fire hydrants in the Mountain View neighborhood in eastern Bernalillo.

Directions for the public to tune in to observer meetings or comment via computer, tablet, phone, and smartphone are on the council agendas, posted on [TownOfBernalillo.org](http://TownOfBernalillo.org).

## AROUND TOWN

# Federal pandemic aid prompts restaurant re-openings

~SIGNPOST STAFF

You can now add Bernalillo's Range Café, and sister enterprises, to your dining options for takeout service.

Federal assistance through the Small Business Administration is allowing the Range and the Freight House in Bernalillo, the Standard Diner in Albuquerque, and other Range locations to reopen, Matt DiGregory said in a Facebook post on April 24. The restaurants were to begin serving takeout from a limited menu on May 1 with the SBA money enough to support eight weeks of operation.

DiGregory urged his readers to support not just his places but other restaurants, since all are suffering.

In Placitas, that would include the Placitas Café and Blade's Bistro, both offering curbside pickup in the Homestead Village Shopping Center.

The Bernalillo Range will be open 9:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. daily, while the Freight House operates from 11:00

a.m. to 9:00 p.m. They will be taking orders by phone and through the DoorDash delivery service, with online ordering coming soon.

Payment can be by cash or card with DoorDash taking online payments. When the restaurants begins taking online orders directly, payment can be made there.

And don't forget to appreciate your servers!

For menus and more information as online service returns, navigate to:

- RangeCafe.com—867-1700, 925 S. Camino del Pueblo
- FR8House.com—588-2143, 200 S. Camino del Pueblo
- StandardDiner.com—243-1440, 320 Central SE, Albuquerque
- DoorDash.com
- PlacitasCafe.blogspot.com—771-1700, 221 Highway 165
- BladesBistro.com—771-0695, 221 Highway 165

# Jemez Springs discouraging visitors

~SIGNPOST STAFF

The normally welcoming people of Jemez Springs are asking visitors to stay away for a while for everyone's mutual protection from COVID-19.

Much of the concern is visitors taking a nature break from self-isolation at home to enjoy the Santa Fe National Forest, which surrounds the community, Mayor Roger Sweet told the *Signpost*.

"I'm very sympathetic; I'd want to get out," he said. "We were getting hordes and hordes of people coming up here... The citizens of Jemez Springs are very concerned about staying home and protecting themselves."

Visitors are parking along the highway, blocking some driveways, and people are gathered in groups despite the urging to practice social distancing, he added. Residents of neighboring communities of Cañon, Ponderosa, Gilman, and others also are concerned about crowds of visitors, Sweet said.

Jemez Springs itself boasts a population of about 250. Sweet said that the residents trend older, adding to the pandemic risk.

Early on, the village closed its historic bathhouse, where personal contact was an issue with services, including massages and wraps. The village park also was closed.

While State Road 4 remains open, travelers headed north from San Ysidro on U.S. Highway 550 soon encounter Jemez Pueblo, which, like all pueblos, is currently off limits to nonresidents. Jemez Springs is another ten miles up the road.

"Be respectful," Sweet continued. "If you're moving through, just keep going on... We don't want to be rude. We do depend on tourists, and we love our mountains and like to share."

But while businesses can recover, it's the potential loss of people that has the village on edge, he said.





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## Federal crimes alleged in multiple highway shootings

-BILL DIVEN

A second, and apparently unrelated, suspect has been charged in at least eight of the twenty or so random shootings at an ambulance and other vehicles on and near Interstate 25 in Sandoval County this year.

In this case, however, the suspect is facing federal charges and is alleged to have injured multiple people.

Byron Rosetta, about 35, was arrested on April 11 and charged with assault with a dangerous weapon and discharging a firearm during a crime of violence. Those are federal charges because the criminal complaint cites, as its primary allegation, a shooting on tribal lands of Kewa Pueblo.

At *Signpost* deadline, Rosetta, a Kewa resident, had requested a public defender and had yet to enter a plea to the charges. U.S. Magistrate Judge John Robbenhaar ordered Rosetta to remain in custody as a flight risk and threat to public safety.

An amended criminal complaint and affidavit filed by an FBI special agent lists eight shootings between February 3 and April 5, seven on I-25 and the last on State Road 22 on Kewa Pueblo (formerly Santo Domingo Pueblo). In the April 5 incident, a driver reported his outside mirror suddenly exploded as a dark-colored sedan, driven by a young clean-shaven man, passed by.

Thinking a rock damaged his mirror, he turned around to pick up the pieces and among the debris found shotgun pellets and a spent shotgun shell.

A security camera at a gas station about two miles away recorded both the victim leaving and a black vehicle heading the other way about seven minutes later. Several agencies already investigating the shootings canvassed the pueblo, finding a similar car and witnesses who identified Rosetta as its owner.

One witness claimed to have been riding with Rosetta when he allegedly pulled out a pistol and reached past the passenger's face to shoot at a traffic sign. A search of Rosetta's home turned up a shotgun and handgun ammunition, now at the state crime lab being compared to bullets retrieved from the shootings.

The interviews also revealed Rosetta had been "acting up" in recent months after an unspecified life change, according to the special agent's affidavit supporting the criminal complaint and arrest warrant. The affidavit credits State Police with identifying Rosetta as a suspect.

In a March 4 shooting on I-25 at about 5:40 p.m., a bullet breaking through the driver's-side window grazed the driver's neck and struck the passenger's arm. A baby in the backseat was not injured. On March 9, a bullet hit another driver in the back of the head.

Then, on April 4, two people traveling southbound were struck by what they at first thought was a rock kicked up by a passing car and then noticed they were both bleeding. First responders from Kewa Pueblo, on their way to that scene, reported hearing a popping sound before projectiles struck their windshield as well. Uninjured, they continued to pick up the two injured people for transport to a hospital.

Earlier this year, as reports of shootings on I-25 between Bernalillo and Kewa Pueblo multiplied, New Mexico State Police organized a multiagency task force that included Bureau of Indian Affairs Police, Sandoval County Sheriff's Office, the Bernalillo Police Department, the Drug Enforcement Administration, and the FBI. On March 11, their work led to the arrest of Gunner Johnson, 44, of Capitan in Lincoln County.

He was charged with aggravated assault with a deadly weapon and other alleged crimes in what court records describe as a road-rage shooting near Algodones on March 9. Johnson remains in pretrial custody at the Sandoval County Detention Center after District Judge Chris Perez ruled there was sufficient evidence to consider Johnson a threat to public safety.

Johnson is scheduled for a preliminary hearing on May 13. There is no indication in the separate court records that Rosetta and Johnson are somehow connected.

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 Squeeze Chute "Model 04-Combo"-----\$4,295.00  
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 2"x14' Bull Gate-----\$183.00  
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 64"x12' "PREMIER" Corral Panel-----\$162.00  
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 3/8" Arena Cable Galvanized-----\$.20¢ft

**ALL PRICING IS SUBJECT TO CHANGE**

## Pandemic prompts multiple cancellations

~SIGNPOST STAFF

With the public health emergency orders limiting gatherings and telling people to stay home, numerous scheduled events have been cancelled.

One event, the Keep Bernalillo Beautiful free dumping at the Sandoval County Landfill, is still on for May 16, from 8:00 to noon. Proof of residency in Bernalillo is required.

Dumpsters also will be located at the town Public Works yard—585 Calle Chaparral—from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. Neither the landfill, nor the dumpsters, accept large appliances, tires, hazardous materials, and some other items

Here is a small sampling of recent, and currently cancelled/rescheduled, events:

- BERNALILLO ARBOR DAY-April 24: cancelled
- BERNALILLO NATIONAL DRUG TAKE BACK DAY: rescheduled to October 24
- PLACITAS ARTISTS SERIES: May concert and visual arts exhibit to be rescheduled
- BERNALILLO INDIAN ARTS FESTIVAL-May 2-3: rescheduled to October 3-4
- RIO GRANDE CELTIC FESTIVAL (Bernalillo)—May 2-3: cancelled; Edgewood festival third weekend in October
- PLACITAS STUDIO TOUR—May 9-10: rescheduled to August 29-30
- MEMORIAL DAY (Bernalillo)—May 25: cancelled
- SANDOVAL COUNTY PUEBLOS are currently closed to the public.

## New Mexico Senior Olympics cancels 2020 State Summer Games

The New Mexico Senior Olympics (NMSO) Board of Directors unanimously voted to cancel the 2020 Ernesto Ramos State Summer Games for safety reasons related to COVID-19 and to refund applicable registration fees. Athletes can be assured that the Board's decision considered many factors concerning the safety of senior athletes, volunteers, and staff. All NMSO athletes will receive an email or phone call regarding game cancellation and can expect a full refund, minus any processing fees. Athletes who paid with a debit/credit card will be automatically refunded. All others will receive a check refund from NMSO. NMSO will post the official notice of Game Cancellation on the website at www.nmseniorolympics.org.

For more information on all other team tournaments scheduled for the fall, visit the official website at www.nmseniorolympics.org or call 575-623-5777.

## May 2020 Night Sky

~CHARLIE CHRISTMANN

Spring is here, and the evenings are getting warmer—that is great for being outdoors and sky watching. Unfortunately, the sun is setting later in the evening, shortening our time before bed.

### BINOCULAR BINARIES

A binary star is defined as "A stellar system consisting of two stars orbiting about a common center of mass and often appearing as a single visual or telescopic object," according to www.thefreedictionary.com. Many cannot be resolved even with a telescope. We only know about them by watching the light from the stars change frequency (Doppler method). Many can be resolved using good telescopes, but this month, we will focus on those that are observable with something less than a telescope.

Let us start with an easy one. Find the handle of the big dipper. The end star is Alkaid. The next one in is our target: Micor and Alcor. Some can actually see both stars without binoculars. Alcor is the one closer to the pole star. Micor is known to be a quadruple system, and Alcor is a binary, bring the total to six stars in this system, though we only can see the two. Alcor and Micor are about one light-year apart and reside about 83 light-years away from Earth.

Look in the East Northeast for bright Vega. Just to the east of Vega is Epsilon Lyrae. In reality, with a telescope (100x magnification), you will see each of this pair is also a double star. The two main components reside

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about 0.16 light-years apart and are around 160 light-years from Earth.

For a bit of a challenge, try finding Albireo, the foot of the cross of Cygnus, opposite Deneb. This wondrous pair shows it colors: the larger is a golden orange, and its fainter companion shows a sapphire blue color. This pair is about 380 light-years away.

Feeling patriotic? Try looking just west of Deneb for Omicron-1 Cygni. You can see three widely separated stars sporting the red, white, and blue about two-hundred light-years from us.

Almost overhead at 10:00 p.m. is Bootes, featuring the bright star Arcturus. Along the line from Arcturus, through Mirak, and neighboring the constellation Corona Borealis is Princeps. The brighter member is becoming a giant star having exhausted its hydrogen fuel. The dimmer star is thought to be similar to our sun. They reside some 120 light-years from Earth.

And, finally on Bootes, just north of Princeps is the star Alkalurops. This triple system's larger member is a yellow-white sub giant, which may not be gravitationally bound to the others. The other "star" in the group is a true double system with the primary being yellowish. With magnifications over 100x, the secondary component looks orange. All of these stars are around 120 light-years distant.

So, that is your challenge. Go out and find you some double stars.



## Diverse coalition urges New Mexico to protect the Upper Pecos Watershed

-RALPH VIGIL

The New Mexico Acequia Association, San Miguel County, the Village of Pecos, the Upper Pecos Watershed Association, and Molino de la Isla Organics LLC have submitted a petition to the state of New Mexico to protect water quality in the Upper Pecos Watershed. The coalition of community members, local governments, farmers, and ranchers is asking the New Mexico Water Quality Control Commission (WQCC) to nominate portions of the Upper Pecos River Watershed as Outstanding National Resource Waters (ONRWs) under the Clean Water Act. This critical watershed supports agriculture and large outdoor recreational industries threatened by development and transportation, waste disposal, potential hard rock mining, and climate change. As New Mexicans' health, jobs, and communities are impacted by COVID-19, it is important, now more than ever, that the state safeguards the lifeblood of our communities.

"The designation of the waters of the Pecos River as Outstanding National Resource Waters will go a long way in protecting both the quality of the water and the local traditional uses," said Pancho Adelo, President of the Upper Pecos Watershed Association and Pecos business owner. "ONRW protections will also contribute to the economic significance of recreational tourism in the area."

The Upper Pecos Watershed is culturally significant to the people of Jemez Pueblo, as ancestral homelands. Since the mid-16 century, people in the Upper Pecos Watershed have depended on these waters for traditional land-use practices like growing crops and raising livestock. There are numerous acequias in the Upper Pecos Watershed for which clean water is vital to support local food, agriculture, and communities.

"Agua es Vida and the Upper Pecos Watershed provides water for our acequias which are the life-line for many of our cultural traditions and ecosystems," added Acequia user, farmer, and petitioner Ralph Vigil. "It is through the preservation of this precious resource that our ancestors have maintained their will to survive, and it is through ONRW protections that they will continue to sustain future generations for centuries to come."

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Pecos Canyon in the Upper Pecos Watershed is one of the state's top outdoor tourism destinations and popular among New Mexicans for a variety of outdoor activities. These local users and visitors spend money at local outfitters, stores, restaurants, and hotels. In 2013, anglers alone spent \$29 million in San Miguel County, while hunters spent more than \$18 million. Outdoor recreation is a booming business in the Land of Enchantment, confirmed by the state legislature's creation of a new Outdoor Recreation Division of the New Mexico Economic Development Department in 2019. It is critical that New Mexico's outdoor recreation industry – and the local jobs it supports – can thrive once people emerge following the pandemic.

The clean, clear waters of the upper Pecos River and its tributaries are a refuge for Rio Grande cutthroat trout and significant investments have been made to conserve this species across the state. The area is also home to Rocky Mountain bighorn, elk, mule deer, mountain lions, bobcats, and golden eagles.

The petitioners are calling on the WQCC to designate 14.1 miles of the Pecos River, 56.2 miles of its named tributaries, 698 acres of wetlands, and 180.03 miles of ephemeral and intermittent drainages of the Pecos River Watershed as ONRWs. ONRW protections allows current activities, such as farming and ranching to continue, but requires new activities to demonstrate that they will not degrade water quality.

Upon receiving the petition, the WQCC will vote on whether to schedule a hearing on the matter later this year.

To view a copy of the nominating petition, go to: [www.ourNMwaters.org](http://www.ourNMwaters.org)

To learn more about the WQCC, go to: [www.env.nm.gov/water-quality-control-commission/wqcc-rules-and-responsibilities/](http://www.env.nm.gov/water-quality-control-commission/wqcc-rules-and-responsibilities/)



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## #StrandedInNepal

—KATE CLARKE

I'm back in Placitas six weeks early, having been number 113 of the 302 people evacuated from Nepal on a Qatar Airways flight chartered by the U.S. Embassy. The month of March was a roller-coaster ride of changing plans and emotional turmoil as the coronavirus scare took hold in Nepal and the government began closing off the country.

First, they stopped giving visas-on-arrival. They canceled the entire spring climbing season. Land borders were already closed to people, thankfully not to commercial goods. The lockdown was announced around 7:00 p.m. on March 23—effective 6:00 a.m. the following morning—and the entire country ground to a halt. I suddenly joined the ranks of some ten thousand foreigners stranded in Nepal.

I came to Nepal on January 1, planning to spend four-and-a-half months at the Abiding Heart Education Program, studying Buddhist philosophy, meditation, and Himalayan arts. There were nine of us in the program, a mini-United Nations with people from the U.S., Germany, Spain, Brazil, Mexico, Singapore, Ukraine, and Nepal. We all lived in a guesthouse run by a monastery a five-minute walk from the school campus.

I have visited Nepal six times before, first in 1988 and last in 2015, arriving home two weeks before the big earthquake hit. I've always been a tourist, however, and wanted the experience of living in Nepal for an extended period of time, away from the backpacker hostels, pizza, banana pancakes, and shops selling trekking gear. This program offered the opportunity to do just that.

I was thoroughly enjoying the experience, even though it turned out to be more academically demanding than I had anticipated. A large part of

## REAL PEOPLE

—PHOTOS BY KATE CLARKE



The streets of Kathmandu, usually crowded with people and traffic, are empty, as a bus from the U.S. Embassy carries ex-pats to the airport for their evacuation flight home.



U.S. citizens line up outside the Kathmandu airport for their evacuation flight home to the U.S.

me longs to still be there. There was so much more I wanted to do on what was, most likely, my last trip to Nepal. The other part is relieved to be home.

Until March 21, I was planning to stay, figuring I was safer there than on an airplane or in the U.S., where coronavirus cases were escalating rapidly and toilet paper hoarding was in full swing.

Nepal still (as of April 19) had only 31 confirmed cases, and people there generally face disasters with more calm, less panic than is seen in Western countries. I held out hope that I would be able to fly home in May, perhaps not through Guangzhou on China Southern Airlines, but somehow. My program was continuing, the following week was our break (euphemistically referred to as Reading

Week), and I had reservations at a lovely resort in the Himalayan foothills. I saw no reason to leave.

We all went out for Saturday lunch in Thamel to celebrate a birthday. While we were there, someone noticed the frantic WhatsApp message from our program director, telling us all to cancel our travel plans and return to the guesthouse immediately. We complied—grudgingly. Three days later, a total lockdown was imposed. We, and everybody else, were essentially prisoners wherever we happened to be.

With the government shutdown of all incoming international flights, the rumors began to fly about how this was likely to be extended, how there might not be flights leaving until Nepal opened to

—continued next page



# REAL PEOPLE

~CONTINUED

## Placitas food bank filling more boxes

~SIGNPOST STAFF

As the national economy shudders and sputters, the Casa Rosa Food Pantry in Placitas is seeing an uptick in demand for its service.

Closing its building to the casual shopping that had been the norm for years, the food bank has been evolving to match current safety precautions for COVID-19. Volunteer teams now meet patrons in the driveway next to the Las Placitas Presbyterian Church to load prepacked food boxes into trunks and backseats.

And, in another recent change, food boxes are now being delivered to the homes of people over eighty. Saturday mornings at the food bank used to be something of a community social event, but for now with social distancing, that is not the case.

"Other than that, we're still moving along with precautions," said Claire Harwell, chair of the Casa Rosa board. Where typically about fifty people would visit the food bank each Saturday, that number recently has risen above sixty.

Casa Rosa previously announced that it no longer could take donations of food and other items, since operations are not set up to disinfect them. Monetary donations, however, are still welcome, and have come in handy, as Casa Rosa shops on the open market for items out of stock with its usual nonprofit distributor.



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"We're really grateful for all the help from the community," Harwell said. "Everything costs more now. Scarcities are driving prices up." Still, she added, "We're here for the long haul."

Open Saturdays from 9:00 to 11:00 a.m. CasaRosaFoodPantry.org. Call 867-5718 to leave messages at Las Placitas Presbyterian Church. Amazon Smile customers can designate the church on the Charities List to send 0.5 percent of purchases to Casa Rosa.

## from page 14—Stranded

flights coming in again, bringing tourists. That could be August. Or October. Or 2021. I began to feel trapped.

I joined a WhatsApp group called Stuck in Nepal—U.S. I contacted the U.S. Embassy. I briefly had a flight scheduled on Qatar Airways that was canceled, rebooked, and canceled again. The Crisis Cell of the Nepal Tourism Board deserves huge kudos for their amazing job of putting out accurate, timely information and for arranging transport for many trekkers stuck far outside the city.

Embassies began chartering flights for their citizens. My German and Spanish colleagues went home. Our Nepali student managed to get a bus the day before the lockdown to return to her village in the mountains. My program made plans to have classes online.

Finally, the U.S. Embassy scheduled a flight for March 31. I indicated my extreme desire to be on that plane. For once, being older has its advantages. They gave 65 and over people some priority. My anxiety level was high for two days, waiting for confirmation. I repacked my bags for the third time.

Luckily, my program knew a reliable taxi driver who wasn't afraid to brave the police roadblocks and took me to the pickup point in Thamel. The embassy staff did a great job, things went smoothly, and I landed in Washington D.C. about 1:00 a.m. EST.

Back in Placitas, I'm done with the two-week quarantine, continuing with my classes, now downloaded audio files, and wondering if I'll ever return to beautiful, chaotic, polluted, colorful, entrancing Nepal.

## Biscotti Blessings project treats many

~DIANE SHEPARD

What started off as an effort to stay in touch with members and friends on the Deacon's Prayer List evolved into a project to stay connected with all Las Placitas Presbyterian Church (LPPC) members and friends. Cheryl Ferrell, Master Baker, came up with an idea to make some pastries, and together we spearheaded an effort to make Biscotti and distribute packages to 127 LPPC households—thus became the "Biscotti Blessings" project.

Baking, packaging, organizing deliveries, and just visiting with friends (from a distance) became a fun and social activity. Adding an Irish poem to the mix and a note of friendship and grace, The Deacons

went to work and managed to connect with almost all LPPC members and friends. There are still a few deliveries to make but, for now, the Deacons have visited over ninety homes.

The response was overwhelmingly positive as friends visited and caught up on local news and activities, one of which, was the installation of the Church's new septic system (now in progress).

This has been a fun and delicious project, so until we all meet again, continue to communicate, call, Zoom, FaceTime, and socially connect—from a distance.



*Biscotti Blessings delivery*



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## Flash in the Pan—Find your farmstand

—ARI LEVAUX

A brand new farmstand sits on a dirt road on the outskirts of Huson, Montana, population 210. Out of the way does not begin to describe its location, even by Huson standards. Tracy Potter-Fins, owner of County Rail Farms, sets out the offerings for the farmstand's second day of business. Day #1 had resulted in one sale, thanks to Potter-Fins' post on Nextdoor, the neighborhood based social network.

"She got onions, she got kale starts, she got carrots, she was psyched," Potter-Fins recounts, according to the customer's follow-up post on Nextdoor.

Prices are listed at the farmstand, but a sign says to pay as much as you can. In small town Montana, that often isn't much. The original idea, first proposed by her employee Arlyce Rosko last summer, was to offer unsold produce to the local community at a steep discount.

"We want to get as much food into the hands of low-income people as we can without hurting our business," Potter-Fins says.

Thanks to the pandemic, Potter-Fins' marketing plan remains fluid, and her farmstand could play a crucial role beyond its original job as discount surplus liquidation site. From a social distancing perspective, that first sale could not have gone better. The customer came, shopped, and left without any face-to-face or hand-to-hand interactions. In addition to being an unstaffed point of sale, the farmstand will also be a drop-off point for online orders, and perhaps more, depending on how the season unfolds.

Consumers of fresh veggies, meanwhile, are also weighing their options. For numerous virus-related reasons, many are looking to take a more active role in their food supply chains. Some are stockpiling canned goods, while others don't want to go anywhere near a supermarket. Many are preparing to grow their own, or doubling down on their local food networks.

Many people finally have the time to dig that garden or build that chicken coop. But the only hitch is if you want an actual chicken for that coop, or seeds for that

garden, you'll have to wait. Chicken hatcheries are about a month behind the backlog of orders, and seed companies are behind as well. Some have stopped taking new orders until they catch up. Johnny's Seeds, the lion in the family farm seed space, has suspended sales to non-commercial growers.

Vegetable farms like County Rail, meanwhile, are preparing for farmers markets that may or may not be busy, or even open, and restaurant accounts that may or may not exist. "Most of us don't know what for sure to do right now," Potter-Fins says. "We don't know if we will be able to sell our food, or if people will be able to pay for it. We're looking at all the different ways that might work to get food into the community."

At Frank's Little Farm in nearby Missoula, the Roadside Stand is as old as the farm itself. After building a farmstand on another farm, Frank's co-owner Sean McCoy built his own on newly purchased land in 2014. McCoy loves that farmstand. "The idea is to have something available seven days a week, dawn to dusk, with no staffing cost. We stock it, and people come serve themselves."

Frank's Little Farm is named in honor of slain Montana labor activist Frank Little. The Roadside Stand has a locked cash box and an unlocked change box with a bunch of dollar bills. They also accept Venmo. "The honor system works well, because most people are honest."

Nobody has any idea how the summer will play out. But as long as the honor system holds, neighborhood farmstands could become important links in many new food supply chains—with or without a global pandemic.

"I don't know anyone who has put up a stand and not done well with it," Potter-Fins said. The hardest part is letting them know you exist. "It will be interesting to see if we get any traffic." To augment her new internet ordering system and other advances online,

—ARI LEVAUX



Potter-Fins also has a local marketing plan. "I'll put a sign at the communal mailboxes, letting people know we are here, and one at the bar," she says.

In Huson, Montana, that counts as total saturation.

### FINDING YOUR FARMSTAND:

A good farmstand can require detective work to locate. Here are some rules of thumb to help in your search.

Call any local farmers you know how to contact, and check in. Find out what their plans and outlooks are.

Go to the website for your local farmers market, and scan the list of vendors for any you recognize. Hopefully there will be contact info. If not, look them up.

Look for chat rooms, email lists, twitter accounts, or local online resources. Type the keyword "farmstand" into any search field you can find.

In each of the conversations inspired by the steps above, ask about farmstands. Do they have one? Do they know of any? Do they know anybody who might know?

This is the way to not just find a farmstand, but to find your way around your own personal food network. And even if the search doesn't end in an actual farmstand, hopefully you will have still found what you are looking for.

*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.*





# Crafty Placitas group fighting pandemic one mask at a time

# HEALTH

—BILL DIVEN

The rich and ancient tradition of mask-making came to Placitas this year not for entertainment and cultural rituals but on the heels of a national emergency.

In the early days of the COVID-19 outbreak, late February into early March, it became obvious that the demand for protective face-masks for medical personnel and others far outstripped the supply. As the call went out across the country, volunteers turned to their sewing machines.

While they couldn't produce respirator-quality N-95 medical masks, they could sew cotton masks that still offered some level of protection and are intended to be washed and reused.

"I was a quilter for many years and so have all my quilting supplies and skills," Connie Falk of Placitas told the *Signpost*. "That's why I jumped on this when I saw the first mask-making video, I think on Facebook, and I'm like, 'Oh, I can do that.'"

Falk, professor emeritus of agricultural economics at New Mexico State University, spread the word through email to women in an activist group to which she belongs.

Then, KOB-TV, on March 22, reported on mask-making in the "quaint suburb of Placitas" and interviewed Falk. The story focused on artists involved in the cancelled annual Placitas Studio Tour (now rescheduled to August 29-30) combining their skills to make masks for healthcare workers.

Donations of materials suddenly began flowing until Falk said she was overwhelmed. That's when Donna Dowell, a neighbor on Falk's email list, dropped by.

"Once I got to Connie's house, I saw she just had yards and bolts and bolts of material and realized we needed to get organized if we were going to make use of this resource," Dowell said. "We needed to get an army together."

So, Dowell, a nurse family practitioner and media coordinator for the statewide Health Security Campaign, plowed into organizing. Falk led the production army, as the team of women and men grew to around fifty people, about half of them sewing by machine or stitching by hand.

Just as important were the folks handling other tasks: washers, cutters, ironers, those assembling mask kits, and a driver delivering finished masks who roamed as far afield as Window Rock, Arizona, capital of the Navajo Nation. By early April, the team was producing five hundred masks a week. Through requests and connections, those were donated to hospitals, law enforcement, pueblos, and organizations with the priority being for health care providers.

"Everybody is so desperate," Falk said.

By late April, the team had produced more than three thousand masks in just under a month and with a few additional people was completing those at a rate of 750 to one thousand a week.

"At the end of the quarantine, we'll have a great masked ball," Falk added.

The Placitas group calls itself Sandoval Maskmakers—Stopping the Spread of Coronavirus: One Mask at a Time. Other smaller groups are operating independently in Placitas, although some merged into Sandoval Maskmakers.

—BILL DIVEN



Margaret Bruch and Alfons Schuster take a break for the camera during their production of fabric facemasks as part of the Sandoval Maskmakers group. The Placitas group of about 50 sewers and supporting players produced 3,000 masks in its first month.



A little cotton and elastic goes a long way toward limiting the spread of coronavirus.

And they're not alone, as the spread of the coronavirus and the resulting COVID-19 illness revealed an extensive national shortage of medical protective gear. Hospital staff have found themselves forced to reuse gowns, masks, and gloves as national stockpiles dwindled and disruptions in supply chains limited manufacturing.

The N-95 respirator mask, which was not intended for decontamination and reuse, derives its name from being able to keep out 95 percent of the tiny microbes causing COVID-19. By some estimates, the fabric masks are around sixty percent effective.

The national Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommends the cloth masks for use by the public, especially in disease hotspots and when visiting places like grocery stores and pharmacies, where social distancing may be difficult. While the fabric masks do offer the wearer some protection, they more particularly keep people who may have the disease and not know it from transmitting it to others.

Mask patterns vary but generally involve two rectangular pieces of cotton or quilting fabric sewn as two layers, sometimes pleated to expand on wearing, and two elastic bands to fit around and behind the head. The Placitas group has used pipe cleaners and rubber-covered garden ties for nose bridges.

The CDC website—CDC.gov—section on Coronavirus Disease 2019 includes, under How to Protect Yourself, patterns for cloth face covers, including methods that don't require sewing.

Additionally, WeNeedMasks.org lists, by state, places needing masks and the types needed. At this

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writing, in New Mexico, requests are for surgical-style and Olson masks, which contain a pocket for holding a filter.

At *Signpost* deadline, health departments around the country were still calling on local volunteers to produce masks for emergency and other essential workers. In the Winston-Salem, N.C., three friends saw their sewing effort mushroom into two thousand volunteers who produced 25,000 masks, according to an April 20 report in the *Winston-Salem Journal*.

And with stay-at-home orders around the country, people with sewing machines have been making masks, some with imaginative designs including animal snouts, for family and friends. A Mask Maker Leader Board on the website of Albuquerque fabric store and quilt shop Hip Stitch lists more than one hundred individuals and small groups producing from a dozen to hundreds of masks, some destined for homeless shelters.

In mid-April, the New Mexico state government reported it has pursued hundreds of orders for personal protective equipment, coming up with nearly 99,000 N-95 masks as well as face shields, gowns, gloves, and surgical masks. Beyond hospitals, first responders, and local and tribal governments, some of those have gone to nursing homes, hospice, shelters, and long-term care facilities.

Meanwhile, Placitas Maskmakers was receiving more requests than they could fill. Donations of fabric, one-eighth-inch to one-quarter-inch elastic, cloth ties, and cash are still being accepted.

Inquiries about the mask-making can be directed to Falk at cfalk@nmsu.edu, while Dowell is handling questions about donations at dowelldirect@gmail.com.





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## Construction begins on additions to Placitas Library

—BILL DIVEN

Anyone who's built a home in Placitas, or trenched for a water line, knows that surprises lurk beneath the ground.

"As sometimes happens in New Mexico, we ran into a big rock," said Doris Fields, Ph.D., board chair of the Placitas Community Library (PCL). On the plus side, finding the rock, and then another and another, means construction of the library addition is underway.

"I've been going down just about every day, several times a day," she continued. "It was glee, looking at them digging a hole and tearing out concrete. It's very exciting."

Fields was describing the demolition phase of the project that removed the patio behind the library. Fields took over chairing the PCL board of directors in January, succeeding Ruth Bouldes, who led the board during its fundraising campaign the past three years.

By late April, two weeks into the nearly \$900,000 job, the crew from Anissa Construction Inc. of Albuquerque had cleared the patio site, trenched its east and north edges, and was installing concrete forms for the stem wall. New space there includes a children's area and the library office.

Around the corner, on the west side, others in the crew were working on the covered breezeway that will be enclosed to become a reception, reading, and gallery area. That space will open into an addition, extending into the dirt parking area to create a significantly larger meeting and event space.

"We have a good contractor, too, and the architect, everybody," Fields said. "It's a good team, which I think is what will make this project go very, very well."

The expansion adds nearly 2,700 square feet,

expanding the current building, opened in 2009 at 453 Highway 165, by eighty percent.

The target for completion is January, 2021. While the independent community library received some state assistance for the project, the library relies heavily on local support, including a successful capital campaign for the building addition. Donations for furnishings are still being accepted, as is support for ongoing operations.

"Our funding source really is the community for the most part," Fields said.

Meanwhile, the library building has been closed since March 14 under state public health orders related to the pandemic emergency. So, for now, it operates remotely, providing online services like e-books, access to some subscription materials, and responding daily to email queries on how to access those, and other, questions.

Services are available to library patrons, with the PCL website being updated to handle online applications for library cards. The public Wi-Fi internet connection remains active in front of the building, and the labyrinth is open for socially distanced walking and contemplation. (For more information on services and the building expansion, visit PlacitasLibrary.com)

Library Director Tim Blevins said that while he can help people set up computer, tablet, and smartphone access, a gap in services remains for those who don't have such devices. One thing made clear in the incoming emails is that Placitas misses its library, he added.



—BILL DIVEN

The patio on the north side of the Placitas Community Library is gone as the crew from Anissa Construction works on the stem wall for the part of the building addition. The breezeway and wall in the background will be incorporated in the addition on that side of the building.

"What's so ironic about this time is people have time to read and either watch DVDs or take advantage of all the resources that are in this building, yet we can't make those available," Blevins said. "That's frustrating for our patrons; it's frustrating for us... The encouraging words are people are really, really anxious for us to reopen."

As the public health orders allow, the library likely will open in phases perhaps starting with curbside services, he added.

The construction project launched without fanfare as state-ordered closures shut the library on March 14 and scuttled plans for a groundbreaking ceremony. Everyone attending was to receive tiny commemorative shovels, Fields said.

While the state orders are not impeding construction progress, for now it's wait-and-see on any plans to celebrate opening the addition.

"Let's hope we're able to meet and actually enjoy it all together," Fields said.



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## 2020 Placitas Studio Tour rescheduled for August

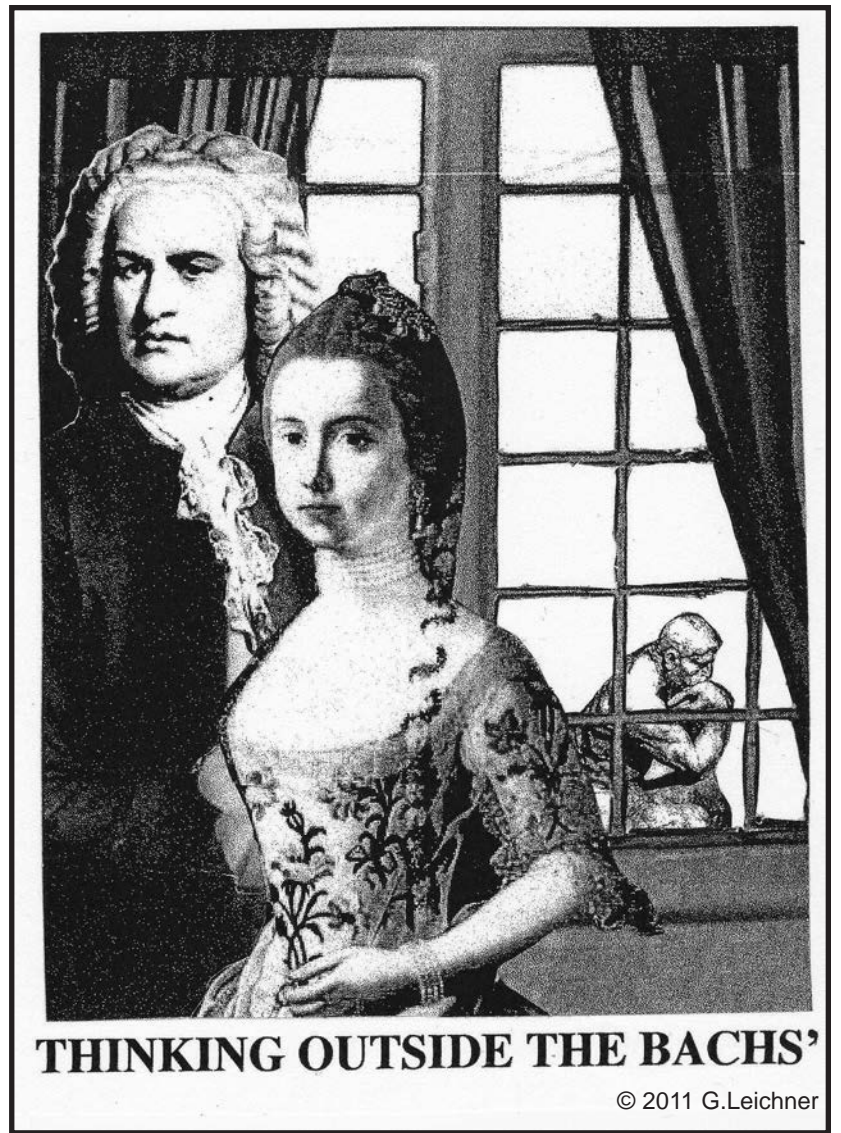
-NANCY HOLLEY

Due to COVID-19, the 2020 Placitas Studio Tour (PST) has been tentatively rescheduled for August 29-30, depending on the status of the Stay at Home order.

Traditionally held, for the past twenty-two years, over Mother's Day weekend, the Placitas Studio Tour is having a virtual sale. Most of the sixty participating artists of this year's tour will be listing a special item for sale for Mother's Day on the tour's Facebook page and you can still purchase directly from the artist.

Visit the Placitas Studio Tour's Facebook page and support your local artists at: [www.facebook.com/PlacitasArtists/?ref=bookmarks](http://www.facebook.com/PlacitasArtists/?ref=bookmarks).

Also visit the tour's beautiful website at [www.placitasstudiotour.com](http://www.placitasstudiotour.com), where all the



participating artists for the 2020 PST are listed with their contact information.

The Placitas Studio Tour appreciates the continued support from our wonderful community, our sponsors, and the artists that inspire us all.

## New book by local poet Larry Goodell

-SIGNPOST STAFF

A new book from Placitas poet Larry Goodell is now ready for purchase. *Commons—Poems 2017-2019*, is available at Bookworks—4022 Rio Grande Boulevard NW—and Organic Books—111 Carlisle Boulevard SW—or online at [www.larrygoodell.com](http://www.larrygoodell.com).

As in previous recent books, the poet includes many of his drawings interspersed with the poems. It includes "Earth in Oligarchal Grip" 2017 poems, "Thunder" 2018 poems, and "Early Riser" 2019 poems.

John Nichols, author of *Milagro Beanfield War*, wrote about the book: "You got moxie, humor, politics, and you're crazy like a dancing Fox!"

Anne Waldman wrote: "A personal vocal mythology of New Mexico expressed in songs of words."

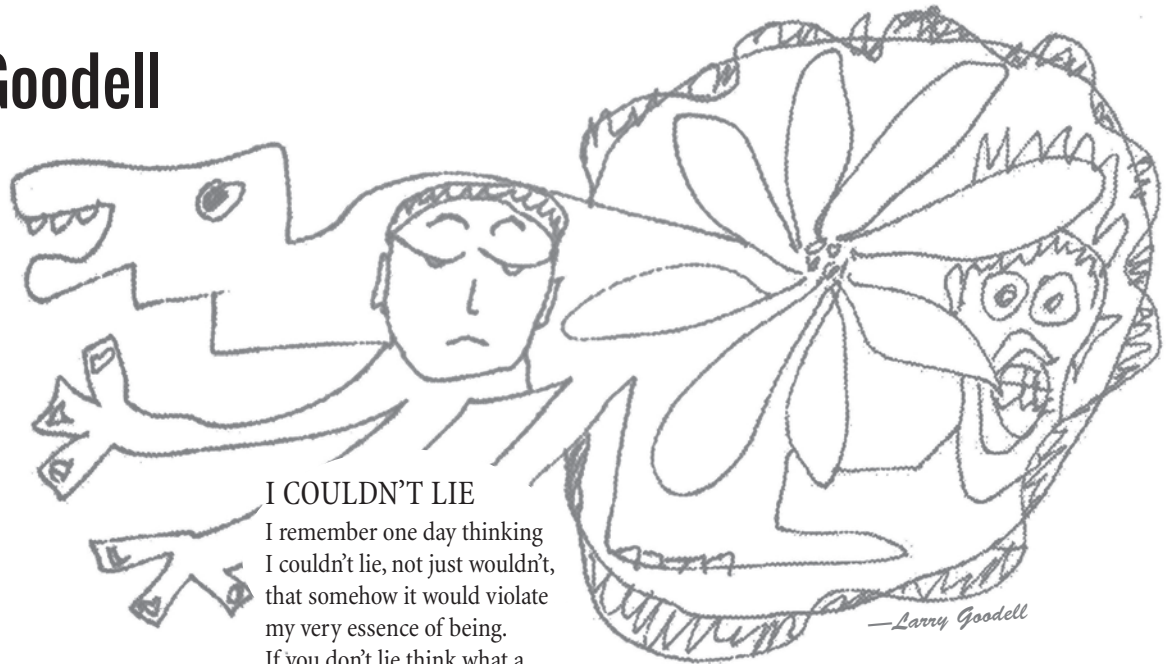
Three poems from *Commons—Poems 2017-2019*, by Larry Goodell:

### NOT CAMPING

It's so depressing. It's awful  
to not carry water in your hands  
to not carry the seeds there, the nuts  
the jerky, the coolers full of ice and food.  
everything for cooking out far away from  
anyone else...  
*to not be there at all.*

### WAKING UP TOO EARLY

I am so tired. The sky falls out of the eyes.  
And it's morning. There ought to be up music.  
Time to fold everything together or apart or do something.  
The darkness comes through the window  
and surrounds the dim light. The low powered radio  
tells me of "lots of stuff coming up" after Celtic Raga.  
The possibility of no possibility hearkens the day  
if I don't push it away. That is, it's too early to get up.



### I COULDN'T LIE

I remember one day thinking  
I couldn't lie, not just wouldn't,  
that somehow it would violate  
my very essence of being.  
If you don't lie think what a  
precious good person you are.  
And what a practical good asset  
that can be in love, in friendship  
in just self reflection  
and open evaluation  
and shouldn't we all  
be so?  
Isn't a good feeling  
something sustaining  
a healthy character  
a dependable being  
a reliable maybe even  
useful human  
capable of  
a partnership of love  
with even another even  
a society of friends  
based on the truth  
of interrelationships.  
What is better, ever, or is there  
anything better than truth?  
A reliable relationship with  
the universe, as it is?



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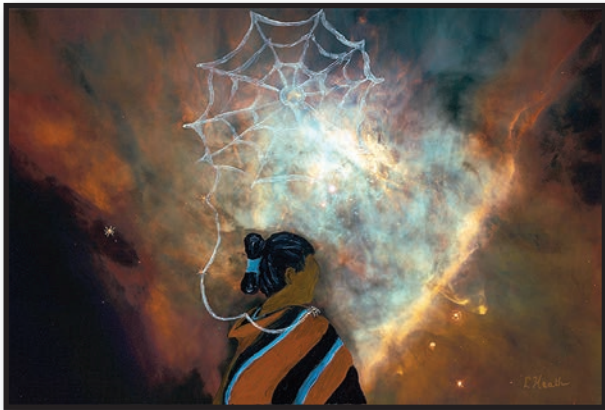
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Whispers of Eternity, by Linda Heath

### "Reaching Back, Looking Forward"- -a virtual art gallery exhibition

-PAM TROUTMAN

Due to COVID-19, the Placitas Community library (PCL) Art Committee is taking its themed exhibition program online. Because the library and its Collin Room gallery are temporarily closed, the upcoming show *Reaching Back, Looking Forward*, featuring work by local talent, will be a virtual one, debuting May 1, at [www.PCLArt.com](http://www.PCLArt.com).



Marseille, by Tolly Hicks

This month's theme is particularly timely, as communities all over the globe reminisce about life prior to Coronavirus, while trying to envision the ways current events will alter the days and months and even years ahead. The artists participating in *Reaching Back, Looking Forward* were encouraged to look back at important influences on their art and to consider new ways to use the past to inform new work. Just as the act of creating art can be an emotional salve, so, too, is experiencing (and buying) art a way to ease and improve life during these trying times.

At [www.PCLArt.com](http://www.PCLArt.com), visitors may enjoy the work of more than a dozen local artists working in a variety of media and styles. These include Carol Allen, Susan Burden, Rebecca Cohen, Linda Heath, Charlotte (Toll) Hicks, Claire Lissance, Lavon Maestas, Karen Jones Meadows, Bobby Middendorf, Jules Nyquist, Susan Pine, Elizabeth Potter, and Ilene Weiss.

Return as many times as you like to the site. Host your own very private reception and please note that the work is available for purchase online. As always, twenty-five percent of the income from sales will benefit the library's operating budget. The rest will benefit some of the fine artists working in our community.

Meanwhile, stay home, stay healthy, and enjoy the exhibition.

## SANDOVAL ARTS

### Artists of Mariposa post virtual art show and sale

-PAM TROUTMAN

Due to COVID-19 protocols and restrictions, the annual May art show at the Mariposa Community Center is cancelled. Luckily for all of us, the twenty-plus professional artists who were to exhibit are not going to miss a chance to reach out virtually to share their art.

Visit our Facebook page in May and see their artwork—[www.facebook.com/AoMRioRanchoNM/](http://www.facebook.com/AoMRioRanchoNM/). Commission a piece. The Virtual Art Show & Sale will showcase paintings, ceramics, pastels, jewelry, lapidary, metal art, drawings, fiber art, mixed media, wearable art, and more.

As a special bonus, towards the end of the month, some artists will have a twenty-percent-off sale for Memorial Day Weekend. Warning: if you see something you like, don't wait for the sale; it might be gone by then!



Metalcraft art and artwork by Eric Gregory and Linda Gregory, from Artists of Mariposa

### Where The Ocean Grows

The Cottonwood trees in late March  
tall, framed by blue, blue, more empty blue.  
Bare branched lines criss-crossing the sky  
like a game of pic-up-stiks that landed vertically.  
Silent, motionless, still, swollen with hopeful sap of spring

The Cottonwood trees in mid April  
filled out in leathery green leaves  
outside my kitchen window  
hover over spring greens and onions.

I close my eyes and hear the ocean  
growing in the breeze  
A series of waves that grow strong  
then decay into ripples on my eardrums,

I take a grain of coarse salt on my tongue and listen for hours  
traveling to the coast of my imagination.  
My heart feels the ease of leaving my house.  
The breeze stops,  
my eyes open  
and the ocean is Cottonwood again  
outside my kitchen window.

—PATTY STEPHENS, 4/19/2020



# 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](mailto: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](http://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>.

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](http://www.riorancholibraries.org).

Monthly: **Urban Horticulture classes.** Sponsored by the SandovalMasterGardeners.org. Free. Open to public. Registration preferred. [Sandovalmastergardeners.org/public-class-registration](http://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](http://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 [sheriarms@gmail.com](mailto:sheriarms@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](http://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](http://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](http://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](http://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 ([escafa.com](http://escafa.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](http://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](http://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.rraousa.org](http://www.rraousa.org), [www.rioranchoartassociation.blogspot.com](http://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 (except December): **Las Placitas Association Board meeting.** 6:30 p.m. Held at the Placitas Community Center. [lasplacitas.org](http://lasplacitas.org).

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](http://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 Administration Building, 1500 Idalia Road Building D, Bernalillo. Info or meeting agenda: [www.sandovalcounty.com](http://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](http://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](mailto: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](http://www.sandovaldemocrats.org).

Second Fridays: **Monthly luncheon of the San-Bern Federated Republican Women.** 11:30 a.m. Held at El Pinto restaurant—10500 Fourth St NW. The group offers meet-and-greet luncheons to discuss business and politics for both Sandoval and Bernalillo County Republican interests. Aim is to promote an informed public through political education and activity. All Republican women and men invited to attend. Contact Julie Wright at 720-4883 or go to [www.sanbernfrw.org](http://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](http://losranchosgrowersmarket.com).

Second and fourth Saturdays: **Placitas Saturday Market.** 7 a.m.-1 p.m. Held at Homestead Village on Highway 165 in beautiful Placitas. Vendor spaces are \$10 for each 10x15 space. Spaces are on a first come basis. We cannot sell food, beverages, or firearms. Vendor set up time is from 5:30 a.m. Bring your own table, chairs and tents, which must be weighted down in case the winds pick up. All vendor fees go to a selected charitable organizations. 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](http://www.rrnmnaacp.org).

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



# COMMUNITY CENTERS

## Sandoval County Senior Centers continue to serve 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.

## Firefighters find innovative solution for disinfection

-PAUL C. BEARCE, FIRE CHIEF, RIO RANCHO FIRE RESCUE

The current COVID-19 pandemic has created a number of challenges for first responders across the country. Departments and agencies are learning to adapt to the ever-changing situation by introducing new protocols and procedures to help keep the responders and the public safe from exposure to COVID-19. Rio Rancho Fire and Rescue (RRFR) firefighters and emergency medical providers are using personal protective equipment (PPE) to keep them safe as they attend to the medical needs of patients. After the call is complete and the crew returns to the station, they begin a labor- and time-intensive decontamination process. Members of the response team must remain in their PPE while they use a bleach-dilute to wipe down the surfaces in the back of the rescue/ambulance. This helps to eliminate any potential exposure to the virus.

Following the lead of several fire departments in other states, most notably Tulsa (OK) Fire Department, RRFR is developing a method to use self-contained breathing apparatus (SCBA) to create a light mist of a disinfectant to spray on surfaces inside the rescue/ambulance, on emergency equipment, and even inside of their station's living quarters. They are utilizing out-of-service SCBAs that have been delegated to training as they lack the most current safety features. Adding an air hose and an inexpensive paint sprayer from the hardware store, firefighters are able to accomplish their decon procedure in a fraction of the time and provide an effective method for disinfecting tools and vehicles that are vital to their jobs.

We are very excited that we have found this solution to help us during this health crisis, and I am proud of our personnel for looking to our colleagues in Tulsa to find creative methods to address some of the challenges facing our department.

## COMMUNITY BITS

## NM food industry unites to deliver food to needy

-KRISTIE GARCIA, PUBLIC AFFAIRS DIRECTOR, NEW MEXICO DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, New Mexico's food industry has supplied tons of food to Indian communities across the state and is gearing up to provide more wherever needed.

Participants include private food producers, the Departments of Agriculture, Indian Affairs, Aging & Long-Term Services, Human Services and Homeland Security and Emergency Management, the National Guard, New Mexico State University, the Southwest Border Food Protection and Emergency Preparedness Center at New Mexico State University, the New Mexico Farmers' Marketing Association, the New Mexico Farm & Livestock Bureau, and others.

The project began at the Lujan Grisham administration's Emergency Operations Center, where many agencies are coordinating efforts to assist New Mexicans during the COVID-19 pandemic.

After learning of a need on the Navajo Nation, Marshal Wilson, assistant director of the Agriculture Department's Agricultural Production Services Division, called Mesilla Valley Produce, which grows, packs and ships produce. Mesilla Valley Produce's president, TJ Runyan, agreed at once to help.

"By the next morning, his truck was in Albuquerque, and food was being unloaded," Wilson said.

Runyan said after talking to Wilson, he reached out to growers he thought would have fruit and vegetables in storage. They responded by procuring eighty thousand pounds of beans, rice, potatoes, onions, watermelons, and apples.

"I was pretty amazed with how quickly it happened, and I was proud of our staff," Runyan said. "Our team is small, but we were efficient. As a New Mexico company, I'm honored to be able to pitch in and help."

The New Mexico Farm & Livestock Bureau also helped. It connected the Emergency Operations Center with J&D Produce, based in Edinburg, Texas, which donated a truckload of onions, and with Colorado Farm Bureau member James Henderson, who provided potatoes.

The National Guard unloaded the food at its armory in Rio Rancho, then distributed it to five staging points on the Navajo Nation over Easter weekend.

Meanwhile, Department of Agriculture workers (who are also employees of New Mexico State University), as well as employees from the Departments of Human Services and Homeland Security and Emergency Management, were coordinating with food supplier/distributor Sysco New Mexico to procure food boxes for the San Felipe and Zia Pueblos.

"As many of you know our tribal communities are also some of our most vulnerable communities. Through partnerships like these we can continue to ensure deliveries of food, water and other essential supplies to our tribal citizens throughout the state," said Indian Affairs Department Secretary Lynn Trujillo. "Thank you to all who contributed to getting this food out to our tribal communities."

In an ongoing effort during the pandemic, the

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

### SUNDAY WORSHIP

Las Placitas Presbyterian Church is closed for services and all other activities at this time. We will reopen when it becomes safe for our congregation, visitors, and staff to gather once more.

Until then, stay healthy and trust in the unending love of God.

### 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: Wednesday 9 a.m.—1 p.m.  
Phone: 505-867-5718 Website: www.lasplacitaschurch.org  
Mothers' Day Out Preschool: 867-3371

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New Mexico Farmers' Marketing Association is coordinating donations, purchases from small-to-medium-sized growers, and deliveries.

"We're trying to not only assist with securing shelf-stable items, but to provide access to fresh produce as well," said Michael Venticinqué, the association's value chain coordinator, who is leading those efforts.

Also, for the month of April thus far, the Aging & Long-Term Services Department delivered 27,608 food boxes to seniors and disabled adults (including 127 from Adult Protective Services).

New Mexico Agriculture Secretary Jeff Witte said these efforts prove New Mexicans and neighboring states can work together to provide food for those in need.



# Eastern Sandoval Citizens Association (ESCA) report

~GEORGE FRANZEN, PRESIDENT, ESCA

To all our Eastern Sandoval County friends, a gentle hello and a virtual handshake to everyone. Like you, we are weathering this pandemic and all that it entails. And, we are always monitoring what is happening in the Placitas area, regarding land-use issues and more.

Here are some reminders of topics that we are still following—even as we hold virtual monthly meetings:

1. A proposed development that would create 16 townhomes in the vacant area immediately west of The Merc shopping center is the type of multi-family development that has not been seen in Placitas for decades. The Eastern Sandoval Citizens Association requests community input about the project because it goes to the heart of the question of what type of community Placitas wants to be. The townhomes, proposed on land east of The Merc, are proposed by Vineyard Homes, the builder, and the McCallister family (the owners).

Meanwhile, the passage of the Buffalo Tract Bill—which has passed out of committees and is awaiting to be attached to a Bill to be brought to the floor of the House and Senate—would preserve much of the Bureau of Land Management tract north of Placitas.

In the words of Rep. Deb Haaland, who carries the bill in the House: “Passage of the Buffalo Tract Bill in committee brings us one step closer to passing this community-driven effort to protect public health, water, and cultural resources in Sandoval County. Local community organizations understand that continued vigilance and a strong community push are needed to get this legislation over the finish line. Community solidarity is absolutely essential to this process.”

The next ES-CA Board Meeting is scheduled for May 11. Due to the Governor’s order limiting gatherings, board meetings are now held online. For more information visit our website: [es-ca.org](http://es-ca.org).

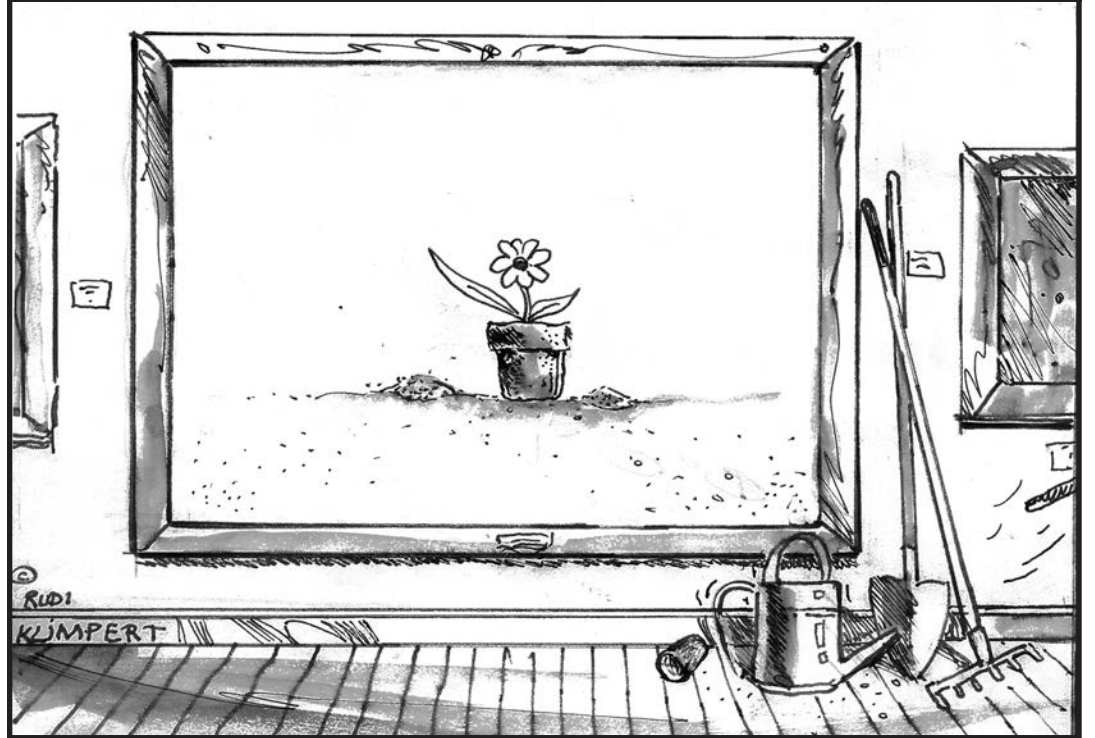
# GAUNTLET

LETTERS • OPINIONS • LOCAL ISSUES

The Signpost welcomes letters of opinion. Letters are subject to editing for length, clarity, libel, and other considerations.

Send to: Signpost, P. O. Box 889, Placitas, NM, 87043  
or [email@sandovalsignpost.com](mailto:email@sandovalsignpost.com)

## IN THE GALLERY —by Rudi Klimpert



## Las Placitas Association (LPA) and Pathways Wildlife Corridors news

~JOAN FENICLE

The May Native Shrub talk and demonstration at the new radio station building has been postponed until Fall. Watch for the new date and time in our monthly report and on our website: [lasplacitas.org](http://lasplacitas.org).

While current legislative action is concentrated on the economic impact of the virus, Deb Haaland has assured us that our Save the Buffalo Tract Bill, removing all mining rights from Placitas’ BLM lands (including the crest of Montezuma), is still live and viable in congress.

KUPR is considered an essential business, but is practicing social distancing for the safety of its volunteers, many of whom are in vulnerable age and health categories. Only one person is permitted to be in the studio at a time with sanitizing routines in place for those coming and going. DJs with the technology to produce their shows at home have been encouraged to do

so. In a few cases, the station is on automatic, but still on the air 24/7. With many of their business supporters closed, they are worried about paying the bills. If you can, go to [kupr.org](http://kupr.org) and send them a dollar or two to help keep the lights on.

Pathways has produced a wonderful video showing the variety of the wildlife moving to and from Sandia Mountain via the Crest of Montezuma wildlife corridor. It is now available on YouTube. Watch a beautiful ten minutes of wildlife using this wildlife corridor that would be protected with the Save the Buffalo Tract legislation at [www.youtube.com/watch?v=8KGKrCqWP34](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8KGKrCqWP34).

In this time when we share the act of survival with all the rest of life, Pathways reminds us that our wild neighbors struggle to survive all the time. Be kind; stay strong; stay safe.

## re: Signpost correction

A story in the April, 2020, *Signpost* mistakenly listed Sandoval County Clerk candidate Ignacio Pedro “Pete” Salazar as Republican. He is now registered and running as a Democrat. We apologize for the confusion.

## re: Our Lady of the Open Road celebrates birthday

During this unprecedented time, it is especially meaningful to see a smiling face or a friendly wave. If you’re out driving along Highway 165, then you probably see both as my mom runs by. Our Lady of the Open Road, as she’s affectionately known, is 68 years young and loves her special time out running and visiting with the people of Placitas. It warms her heart every time someone honks, waves back, or even stops to say hi. It’s tough right now, and we can’t all be together like we’d hope, but we can still spread love. So, if you bike, run, or walk, it might be fun to spread cheer and celebrate her birthday this month and dress up with a silly hat or glasses and join my mom by waving and sharing smiles. I know the world needs more people like her! And as I always kindly ask, please drive slow; she’s precious, and we want her and everyone safe!

Love, from her daughter,  
—LISA, WASHINGTON STATE



*Our Lady of the Open Road*

—“Gauntlet,” continued next page



## The Phenomenology of Grief

*"The soul would have no rainbow  
if the eyes had no tears."*

—Native American proverb

The dictionary gives us a preliminary definition of grief as the anguished experience after significant loss, usually the death of a beloved person.

In C.S. Lewis's *A Grief Observed*—that he wrote in memory of his wife—we found a straightforward statement about the intensity of his grief: "Talk to me about the truth of religion and I will listen gladly. Talk to me about the duty of religion, and I will listen submissively... But don't you talk to me about the consolation of religion, or I shall suspect that you don't understand."

An intense grief could be described as a broken heart because, in essence, it is a spiritual shock. We feel an energy disconnection when the heart can no longer use the physical body to bring in the energy of the loved one. We feel as if its power lines have been cut. Cardiologists can measure this phenomenon called "cardio energetics," because our heart cells have consciousness, memories, and imprints.

We may say that to cope and endure grief requires an act of faith, but it is good to know that faith and doubt grow together as a unit; they are indeed inseparable like the "yin-yang," which leads us to the question: Why do bad things happen? In the final analysis, this question transmutes itself into different questions, no longer asking why something happened, but asking how we will respond, what we intend to do now that it has happened.

And how about faith? St. Thomas of Aquinas said that "To one who has faith, no explanation is necessary, but to one without faith, no explanation is possible." St. Augustine remarks that "Faith is to believe what we do not see; and the reward of this faith is to see what we believe." The truth is that when you do not believe in something, you end up believing anything.

During the 17th Century, two philosophers and scientists, René Descartes and Blaise Pascal, introduced two different and provoking arguments. Descartes dictum "I think therefore I am" became the cornerstone of rationalism. Pascal counterpointed that statement by saying that, "The heart has its reasons which reason knows nothing of." For Descartes, the seat of the soul (that for him was synonym of mind) is located in the center of the brain, in the pineal gland. For Pascal, the seat of the soul is located in the heart, which is the center of the gravity of the body.

Grief is associated with the feeling of abandonment (probably the stronger of all feelings together with love and fear). According to Mark 15:34, the last words of the crucified Christ (*Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani?*), "God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" synthesizes the singular intensity of that feeling.

During the period of grieving, three visitors usually join the atmosphere: silence, loneliness, and solitude. It takes to learn to be alone together (with yourself) in order to appreciate the real dimension of silence and solitude. Pascal said that "all human unhappiness comes from not knowing how to stay quietly in a room." Albert Einstein and Paul Tillich (the author of *The Shaking of the Foundations*) show a common sensical approach to solitude and loneliness. Einstein says that he "lived in that solitude which is painful in youth, but delicious in the years of maturity." Tillich notes that "language has created the word 'loneliness' to express the pain of being alone, and 'solitude' to express the glory of being alone." Surely intuition, inspiration, and dreams usually manifest in silence and solitude. Mozart said that "the music is not in the notes but in the silence between," suggesting that the good listener could hear the voice of silence as well as the voice of the spheres.

The truth of the matter is that our society has produced a severe dislocation in our relationship between the old and the new, the ancient and the modern, the sacred and the profane, and especially between the elderly and the youth. The core of human life and existence is not about material things only but about relationships. When the relationships we created throughout the years disappear, our lives change and we begin to know and experience what is to be alone and abandoned, and to be in

—BILL DIVEN



*Two hikers pause as Cabezon Peak looms over the Ojito Wilderness in western Sandoval County. The Bureau of Land Management area is among the public lands open during this time of social distancing.*

## The great outdoors beckons, but some restrictions apply

—KARL F. MOFFATT, OUTDOORSNM.COM

TIME  
OFF

Much of New Mexico's great outdoors, including most public campgrounds and all state parks, remain closed due to the coronavirus crisis.

Gov. Michelle Lujan Grisham has ordered schools and many businesses closed and the public to stay home during the crisis. But she has acknowledged folks still need to get outdoors to exercise and asks they continue social distancing and other precautions while doing so.

"You can go outside, but you must do it cautiously, and there are best practices," she said in a recent news release. "Avoid crowded trailheads and parking lots, and don't carpool with people outside your family unit."

Some guidelines to follow while venturing outdoors include:

- Stay close to home. Try to limit outdoor recreation to your immediate neighborhood. When traveling avoid other people, limit stops at open businesses and practice preventative measures. Wear a facemask and wash hands often.
- Be cool. Avoid risky outdoor recreational activities to avoid getting hurt and needing rescue. Take a leisurely hike instead of going rock climbing or mountain biking and give our emergency responders, law enforcement and health care workers a break.
- Check for closures. Visit the various land management agencies' websites before venturing out to public lands. Most open spaces are closed right now to protect the public and agency staff. Visit the state's Outdoor Recreation Division website at [www.nmoutside.com](http://www.nmoutside.com) for links and lists of closures.
- Avoid others: try to limit your recreation to off hours or days to avoid others. Stay away from popular trailheads that are typically crowded and stay closer to home. Get some exercise but stay safe.

Outdoor enthusiasts will find most of the lands managed by the federal Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and the National Forest Service (NFS) are still open to the public, but most campgrounds and some trailheads and roads could be closed. Do your homework before venturing out.

Campers are advised that campfires are currently prohibited due to fire danger.

Visit [www.OutdoorsNM.com](http://www.OutdoorsNM.com) to read great stories and view fabulous pictures of many of New Mexico's best outdoor recreational activities to be better prepared to enjoy them when the crisis is over.

such condition is one of the most painful and devastating feelings of our mind, heart, and soul can endure.

Finally, let's reflect for a moment on the words of Pierris Teilhard de Chardin, and let's try to make the effort to raise (just for a moment) above the limitations imposed upon us by the culture in which we live:

*"We are not human beings having spiritual experiences, but we are spiritual beings (souls) having human experiences."*

Therefore, only good old listeners may hear now the voice of Paul Harvey at the end of his daily radio newscast saying ... "and now you know the rest of the story."

—ANTONIO PLANELLAS, *Rio Rancho*



## Easter baskets delight first-graders at Carroll Elementary

—DIANE HERRERA SHEPARD

As an English as a Second Language teacher serving adults in Bernalillo, I became aware of the closure of Bernalillo Public Schools in mid-March. Many of my adult students had lost their jobs, and now, had children staying home because of the COVID-19 pandemic. As the schools began to organize their efforts, I thought I might help one of my student's seven-year-old by putting together a backpack filled with first-grade activities, books, games, and snacks. Another parent mentioned that their child was in his class and asked for another backpack. It became clear that his whole class might be helped by our community

I decided to try to "adopt" his class and got the go-ahead from the Superintendent and Principal. I went on NextDoor Placitas and asked for help in collecting educational supplies and monies to buy backpacks. One thing led to another, and several neighbors offered donations to buy supplies. In addition to individual donors, Sophia's Giving Circle provided monies to purchase many of the supplies. More

donations allowed for the purchase of Easter Baskets for not only this one student's class, but all five first grade classes at the school! By the week before Easter, we had enough money to buy the Easter Baskets. One neighbor negotiated with the Manager at Walmart, and he worked with us to discount the price of the baskets.

As the teachers got involved, we managed to purchase and distribute all one hundred baskets. Parents were informed and met the teachers at the school to pick up the individually-wrapped and personalized baskets wrapped in pre-packaged cellophane for personal safety.

Needless to say, teachers, parents, and most importantly, the children were thrilled to receive the baskets. We've received several notes from parents thanking us for our efforts.

We hope to continue to try to support these selected teachers and students with their work during these difficult times. If you'd like to help out, contact me at DianeHShepard@gmail.com.



—DIANE HERRERA SHEPARD

Faith, a first-grader, gives her new bunny a hug.

This has been a delightful community partnership with Placitas and Bernalillo Schools, and it has been a joy to see these children surprised with school materials, backpacks, Easter Baskets, and more.



—BILL DIVEN

Third grader Phaedra Sealy is taking advantage of the Wi-Fi at the Placitas Community Library to work on her French lesson while her charter school in New Orleans is closed. Her mother Christine is supervising the home schooling-moved-outdoors, because their Placitas cabin lacks an Internet connection.

## Rio Rancho summer program registration postponed

Due to increased public health safety measures related to COVID-19, the City of Rio Rancho's Parks, Recreation, & Community Services Department has postponed registration for its summer programs, such as Summer Camp, youth and adult athletic programs, and aquatics programs, until further notice.

Check the City's website—[www.rrnm.gov/parksandrec](http://www.rrnm.gov/parksandrec)—and social media outlets for updates about registration.

Registration for summer programs was initially scheduled to begin April 13, 2020.

## Memos show Feds killed four endangered Mexican gray wolves in late March

—CHRIS SMITH, WILDEARTH GUARDIANS

In three memos written between March 3 and March 24, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service surreptitiously authorized the killing of four endangered Mexican gray wolves in New Mexico on behalf of the livestock industry. In response, the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Wildlife Services program killed one wolf on March 23 and three more on March 28.

The quick-succession shootings of two members of the Prieto pack and two from the Mangas pack make this the bloodiest bout of federal wolf-killing in the Southwest since 2006, when an entire nine-member wolf family in Arizona was taken out.

"It is absurd that the onus for coexistence is placed on these endangered, native wolves rather than on subsidized public-lands ranchers who have introduced cattle where they don't belong," said Chris Smith of WildEarth Guardians. "A subset of

ranchers who would rather have native species killed than improve their livestock management is literally calling the shots for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service."

The Mangas pack lives near the state line with Arizona, while the Prieto pack lives several dozen miles to the southeast. Both are in so-called "problem allotments," where chronically poor livestock management has resulted in previous removals of wolves.

"This killing spree shows us how little has changed in the mindset of wolf managers since the days of federal wolf extermination a century ago," said Michael Robinson of the Center for Biological Diversity.

"The Wolf Conservation Center has committed nearly twenty years of resources to Mexican gray wolf recovery in partnership with USFWS," said

Maggie Howell, executive director of the Wolf Conservation Center. "That our partners are open to delivering this unnecessary blow to lobo recovery is beyond disappointing. Given the species' precarious status, killing should never be a management tool."

Scientists have long recommended that ranchers be required to clean up or render inedible (i.e. by applying lime) the carcasses of cows that die on their watch in order to prevent wolves from being drawn to the proximity of vulnerable livestock. Yet the Fish and Wildlife Service opposes making such measures mandatory to prevent predation on stock.

"Ranchers are allowed to graze their private livestock on public lands with so little accountability," said Kirk Robinson of Western Wildlife Conservancy. "The wolves are the scapegoats, and lamentably, it puts their recovery at risk."





# New feathered dinosaur was one of the last surviving raptors

-STEVEN JASINSKI, UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA (PENN)

A feathered dinosaur that lived in New Mexico 67 million years ago is one of the last-known surviving raptor species, according to a new publication in the journal *Scientific Reports*.

*Dineobellator notohesperus* adds to scientists' understanding of the paleo-biodiversity of the American Southwest, offering a clearer picture of what life was like in this region near the end of the reign of the dinosaurs.

Steven Jasinski, who recently completed his Ph.D. in the University of Pennsylvania's (Penn) Department of Earth and Environmental Sciences in the School of Arts and Sciences, led the work to describe the new species, collaborating with doctoral advisor Peter Dodson of the School of Veterinary Medicine and Penn Arts and Sciences, as well as Robert Sullivan of the New Mexico Museum of Natural History and Science in Albuquerque.

In 2008, Sullivan found fossils of the new species in Cretaceous rocks of the San Juan Basin, New Mexico. He, along with his field team of Jasinski and James Nikas, collected the specimen on federal land under a permit issued by the Bureau of Land Management. The entire specimen was recovered during four field seasons. Jasinski and his coauthors gave the species its official name, *Dineobellator notohesperus*, which means "Navajo warrior from the Southwest," in honor of the people who today live in the same region where this dinosaur once dwelled.

*Dineobellator*, as well as its Asian cousin *Velociraptor*, belong to a group of dinosaurs known as the *dromaeosaurids*. Members of this group are commonly referred to as "raptor" dinosaurs, thanks to movies such as "Jurassic Park" and "Jurassic World." But unlike the terrifying beasts depicted in film, *Dineobellator* stood only about 3.5 feet at the hip and was six-to-seven feet long, much smaller than its Hollywood counterparts.

Raptor dinosaurs are generally small, lightly built predators. Consequently, their remains are rare, particularly from the Southwestern U.S. and Mexico. "While dromaeosaurids are better known from places like the northern United States, Canada, and Asia, little is known of the group farther south in North America," says Jasinski.

While not all of the bones of this dinosaur were recovered, bones from the forearm have quill nobs—small bumps on the surface where feathers would be anchored by ligaments—an indication that *Dineobellator* bore feathers in life, similar to those inferred for *Velociraptor*.

Features of the animal's forelimbs, including enlarged areas of the claws, suggest this dinosaur could strongly flex its arms and hands. This ability may have been useful for holding on to prey by using its hands for smaller animals such as birds and lizards or perhaps its arms and feet for larger species such as other dinosaurs.

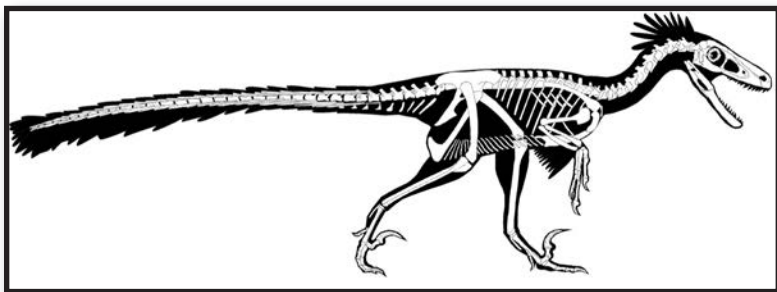
Its tail also possessed unique characteristics. While most raptors' tails were straight and stiffened with rod-like structures, *Dineobellator's* tail was rather flexible at its base, allowing the rest of the tail to remain stiff and act like a rudder.

"Think of what happens with a cat's tail as it is running," says Jasinski. "While the tail itself remains straight, it is also whipping around constantly as the animal is changing direction. A stiff tail that is highly mobile at its base allows for increased agility and changes in direction and potentially aided *Dineobellator* in pursuing prey, especially in more open habitats."

This new dinosaur provides a clearer picture of the biology of North American



*Dineobellator notohesperus*, reconstruction by Mary P. Williams



*Dineobellator* outline



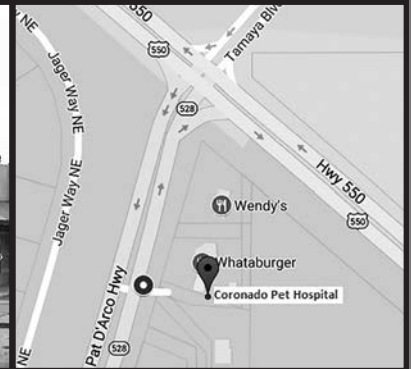
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dromaeosaurid dinosaurs, especially concerning the distribution of feathers among its members. "As we find evidence of more members possessing feathers, we believe it is likely that all the dromaeosaurids had feathers," says Jasinski. The discovery also hints at some of the predatory habits of a group of iconic meat-eating dinosaurs that lived just before the extinction event that killed off all the dinosaurs that weren't birds.

Jasinski plans to continue his field research in New Mexico with the hope of finding more fossils.

"It was with a lot of searching and a bit of luck that this dinosaur was found weathering out of a small hillside," he says. "We do so much hiking, and it is easy to overlook something or simply walk on the wrong side of a hill and miss something. We hope that the more we search, the better chance we have of finding more of *Dineobellator* or the other dinosaurs it lived alongside."

Steven E. Jasinski is a curator of paleontology and geology at the State Museum of Pennsylvania and earned his doctoral degree in the Department of Earth and Environmental Science in the University of Pennsylvania School of Arts and Sciences.



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—BILL DIVEN



Pole squirrel

—TODD RENNECKAR



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—TODD RENNECKAR



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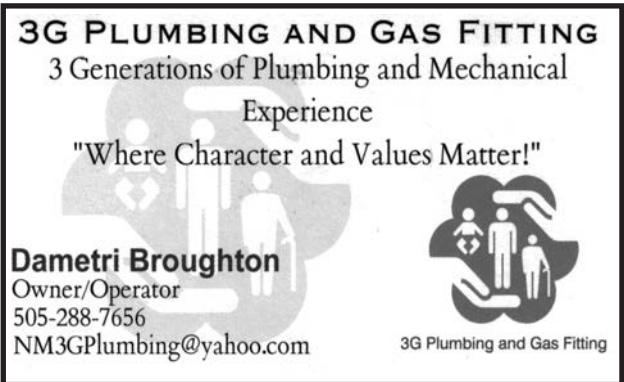


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