

DESERT exposure



Furniture artist Robert Winston, page 16



Meet the maestro, page 24

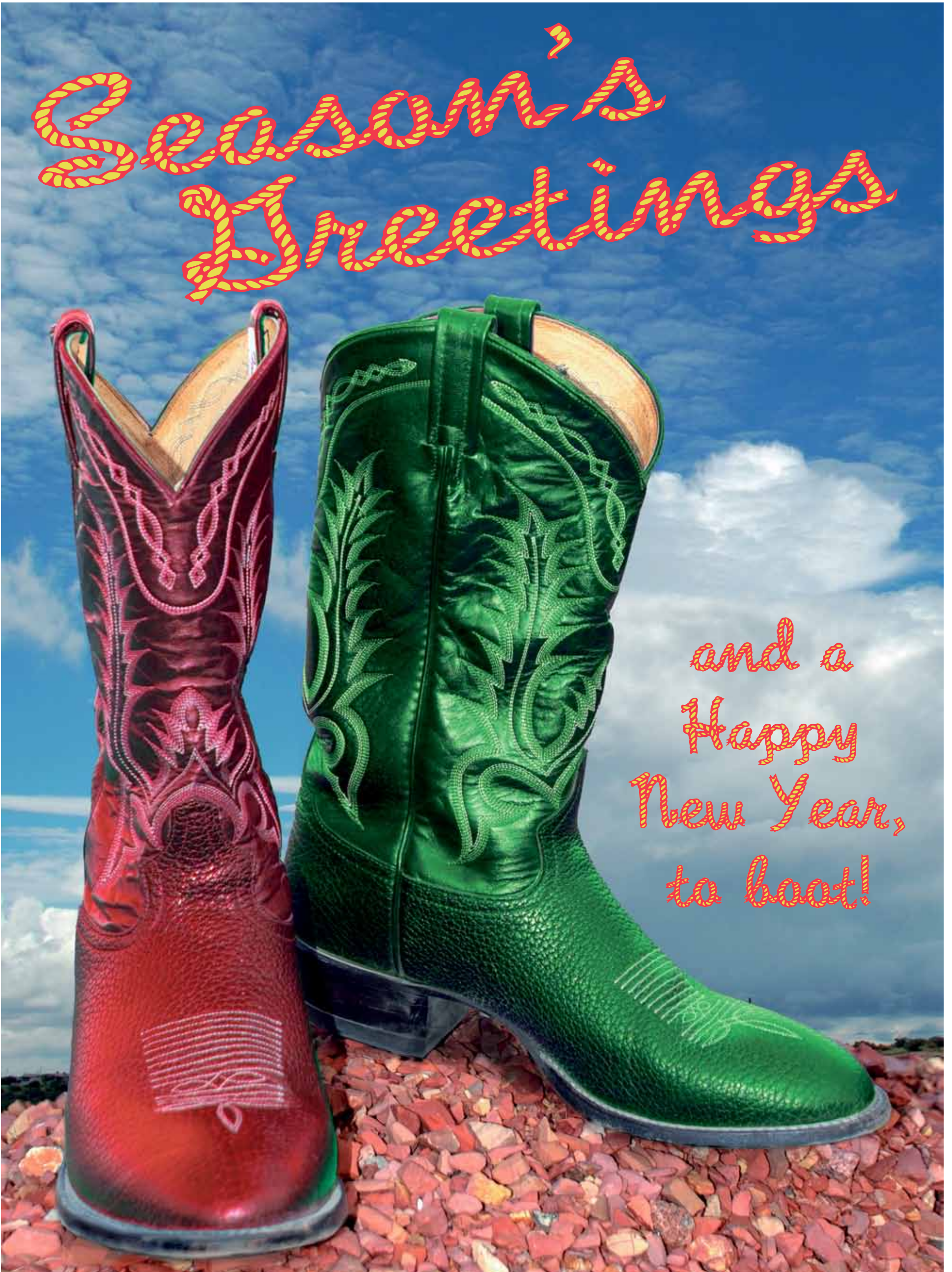


The useful yucca, page 30

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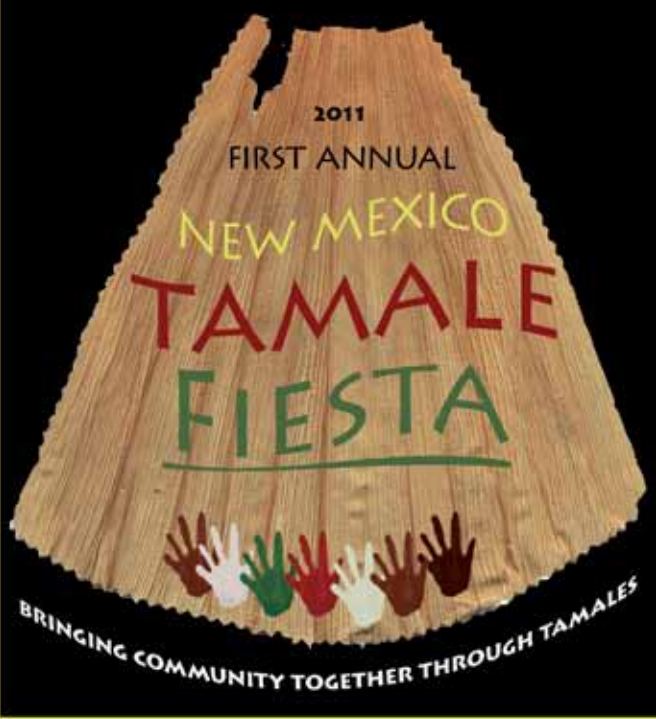
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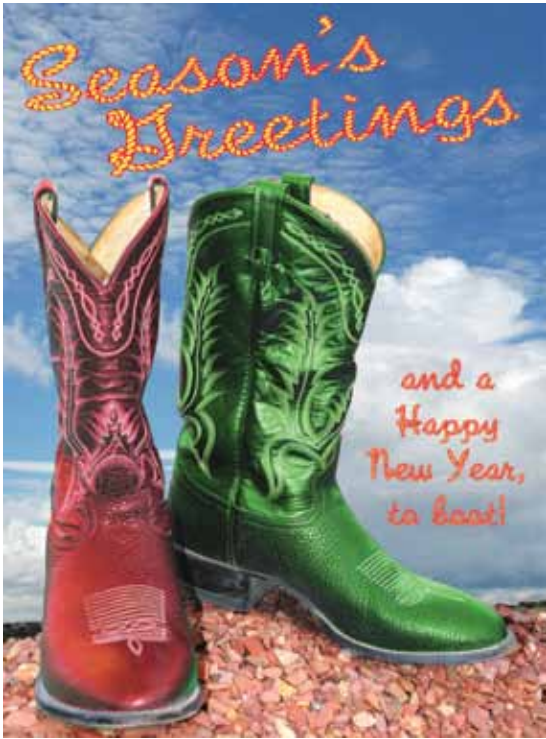
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Occupational Therapy

Are we finally mad at the real culprits in the financial meltdown?

As protests inspired by the Occupy Wall Street movement spread to Tucson, Albuquerque, Las Cruces and even Silver City, commentators have opined about the "occupiers'" absence of an organizational hierarchy or clear demands. Some have scoffed at protesters' sometimes scruffy appearance and inchoate agenda, which can range from anger at Wall Street far afield to concerns over animal cruelty and chemicals in our food supply. Isolated incidents of violence have tarnished the movement.

But when it comes to the Occupy movement's core complaint about America's rising plutocracy at the expense of the 99% of the rest of the nation, what really comes to mind is: What took you so long?

The nation's financial system, after all, imploded back in 2008. That crisis was brought on (as those who now decry "big government" have already forgotten) by deregulation dating back to 2000, when leaders from both parties overturned restrictions and lessons learned from the last massive financial meltdown, in 1929. By enabling transactions such as "credit swaps," Uncle Sam let once-staid insurance companies and investment houses run risks that would make Vegas casinos blanch. The nation's financial powers-that-be also inflated a housing bubble by gimmicks like subprime mortgages, lending to people who had little prospect of being able to keep up their payments if the bubble ever stopped inflating.

Then taxpayers bailed out the bankers—because, despite what the reckless ideologues (like our own Rep. Steve Pearce) who voted against the bailouts would have you believe, in their instant rewrite of history, to do otherwise would have triggered a global depression. It's true, however, that the bailouts had far too few strings attached. Partly as a result, ordinary folks have continued to suffer even as the financial sector has gone right back to huge bonuses while hoarding the money that was supposed to spark economic recovery.

No wonder groups like the Tea Party got mad. But by focusing their ire on the bailouts and the federal deficit, those protests missed the real miscreants. They've confused an imperfect cure with the underlying disease.

The plutocrats of the financial sector and polluters like the Koch brothers have cannily helped misdirect this understandable anger, away from themselves and toward a demonized big government. As Nobel Prize-winning economist Paul Krugman recently put it, "Bankers showed their gratitude by turning on the people who had saved them, throwing their support—and the wealth they still possessed thanks to the bailouts—behind politicians who promised to keep their taxes low and dismantle the mild regulations erected in the aftermath of the crisis."

To cite just one example of the topsy-turvy priorities in Washington: Republicans in the Senate, along with two senators identified with the Democrats, recently blocked a bill that would have created jobs by rebuilding the nation's roads and bridges. The \$60 billion cost for these infrastructure

improvements would not have added a dime to the deficit, but would have been paid for by a 0.7% surtax on people making more than \$1 million a year, affecting only 345,000 wealthy taxpayers. It's simply common sense, and a policy long followed by Republicans and Democrats alike, to boost employment in down economic times by investing in America's infrastructure. But a large faction in Washington puts the interests of millionaires ahead of those of ordinary Americans, no matter what the cost to the country.

You'll hear, of course, that the rich already pay plenty in taxes. And what about people who pay no federal income taxes at all? (That's largely an effect of the Earned Income Tax Credit, a highly efficient way of aiding the working poor that was enacted under the Ford administration and expanded by President Reagan. People who owe no net income taxes as a result nonetheless do pay other taxes, such as payroll taxes.)

One reason so many people pay no net income tax is that so much of the nation's income has shifted to the rich—more precisely, to the richest of the rich. And if rich households now pay a greater percentage of the US tax bill, it's because (to paraphrase bank robber Willie Sutton), that's where the money is. Even so, Americans' current tax burden is at its lowest since 1950, and the share of income paid in taxes by the very richest

has dropped from 30% to 18%.

According to a recent report by the nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office, the bottom 80% of US households by income now earn less than half of total income. Virtually all the shift of income away from lower- and middle-income Americans has gone to the highest-earning 1%. When the Occupy protesters rant about what's become of "the 99%," they're right.

Indeed, Krugman notes that saying the bulk of the upward shift of America's wealth has gone to the richest 1% may be setting the cutoff too low. It's actually more like "the 99.9%" who have suffered income stagnation and economic uncertainty while the top 0.1% have prospered. An earlier report found that two-thirds of income gains have gone to the richest *one-thousandth* of Americans, whose incomes soared 400% from 1979 to 2005.

The defenders of America's new oligarchy will argue that this is as it should be, because these rich folks are "job creators." Far from being heroic entrepreneurs, however, the wealthiest Americans are mostly overpaid corporate executives who've balanced their firms' bottom lines by cutting jobs or shipping them overseas.

There's nothing wrong with getting rich—that's the American dream. But there's a difference between a Steve Jobs or a Bill Gates, who built empires from scratch while enriching plenty of others along the way, and, say, Transocean Ltd. CEO Stephen L. Newman, who earned \$6.6 million in salary, bonuses and other compensation in 2010. That's almost \$1 million more than the prior year, and he's getting a 22% raise for 2011. Transocean, you'll recall, built and staffed the Deepwater Horizon oil rig that exploded in April 2010, killing 11 people and gushing crude oil into the Gulf of Mexico for 86 days. Imagine if Newman's company had enjoyed a *good* year!

Is it "class warfare" to complain about such outrages? Don't kid yourselves: Class warfare has been going on for a long time now, and Wall Street is winning. At least Occupy Wall Street, for all its fuzziness and eccentricities, is finally fighting back. ☘

David A. Fryxell is editor and publisher of Desert Exposure.



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LETTERS

Voting, Memory Lane

Our readers write.

Time to Stand Up

I must disagree with Henry Lightcap's article in the November issue ("Taking a Seat"). Henry, I always enjoy your "tongue in cheek" view of the world, but feel I must enlighten you and others.

This is not the time in this country to "Occupy my seat." Many folks in this country have been too complacent for too long. We have been mesmerized by commercial TV, cell phones, video games, "reality TV" and consumerism. We are witness to some radical changes, and in my opinion, not for the good of all.

There is a concerted effort on the right to suppress voters' rights. Just using the vote is not the panacea you might think. There have been several laws enacted in several states, requiring picture ID (i.e., driver's licenses), which affect many seniors, students, veterans, low-income and urban folks who don't have driver's licenses. A lot of these folks either can't afford a car, don't or can't drive any more, or live in areas of good transportation, so don't have a need for driver's licenses. This is not about illegal immigrants with driver's licenses voting, although the right would like you to believe that.

You can go online and research voter fraud and see it is more about suppressing the vote, than voter fraud itself. It is about disenfranchising those who don't vote Republican.

Some states are beginning to require proof of citizenship to vote, or are finding other ways to make it harder to register. Some are cutting back on programs allowing early voting, or imposing new restrictions on absentee ballots, alarmed by early voting among black voters supporting Obama in 2008.

I am concerned about electronic voting, where there is no paper trail to check if these machines have been compromised, hacked, or....

Our democracy is being abused for partisan reasons. We must be vigilant. There is an awaking, finally, in this society.

I respectfully disagree that just voting will see us through these trying times.

Pat Wolph
Silver City

Memory Lane

After all these years of being away from Silver City, a friend finally sent me a copy of your wonderful paper. My heart has always been in Southwest New Mexico, ever since I arrived there in 1972. I lived on the East Fork of the Gila for seven years. During that time I wrote a column ("My Enchanted Forest") for the *Silver City Enterprise* until its demise at 100 years of age. I left in 1982 and returned again a few years later. I first lived in the Hacienda downriver from Lyon's Lodge. My husband, Ray Foulkes, owned all that land until he sold off the lodge.

I scanned all your back issues recently and felt like I'd fallen down a rabbit's hole into "my" Silver City area. Names I had not thought of for ages came to life; places I loved returned to me again. Thank you for your terrific publication. My only regret is that I can't save your covers as I would love to frame them for the walls in my little retirement apartment.

I remember when Tour of the Gila first came through the Gila Hot Springs and how we residents of the area stood and cheered on the sidelines. The time in the 1980s when Joan Day-Martin discovered the Hot Springs and asked to use my hummingbird feeder for tagging. She gifted me with a feeder, which I took with me when I moved to Tucson. Sadly, it was later stolen. Joan, I have never been without a feeder since 1972.

The name Dahl-Bredine is so familiar but I can't remember where our paths crossed. At 84 years of age I've learned not to expect too much from my memory. BUT, I do remember Murray Ryan bidding against me at a 4th of July Auction JUST TO GET THE PRICE UP for the Republican Party! And me a Democrat. But Ray was happy because he was a Republican. In those days we all lived together happily.

If I may, I'd like to suggest some articles that I don't think you have covered as yet from both my lives on the Gila. Did you know about the hanging of a horse thief on the East Fork? Or the mail plane that "accidentally" crashed on the East Fork? The pilot, a famous daredevil (whose name I have also forgotten), had been flying over the area many times and finally gave in to the lure of the river. He made headlines for several days before he walked out of the forest with his fishing rod, which he had luckily brought with him on the mail flight.

The story of Doc and Ida Campbell is worth re-telling.

Bill and Garlyn Hoge. She worked for the Forest Service and Bill was one of the first to really make the dwellings reachable to the public. He lost so much valuable Mexican pottery in the Big Flood during the 1970s. He was going to sell them for big money, poor guy. They went with part of his home into the river. That flood also took out most of the XSX graveyard! Thankfully, the Hacienda was saved by a rock wall built in the 1940s by Mexican workers.

"Hello" to Jane Alley, whose magical bead store fed my spirits during the 1980s. Jane, I continued beading in Tucson but had to give it up when I moved into a small apartment in a retirement home.

One day Ray found a pink stone arrow across the river from the Hacienda. He fixed it for me to wear and I still have it. When I hold it in my hand it takes me back to the best years of my life.

Lots of what I'm telling you appeared in my columns, but I don't know if they even exist anymore. I remember getting caught in the Cliff Dwellings during a terrific thunderstorm. What grand music rang through the rooms!

I believe it was Kathy Gritton who came to the Hacienda to give me an Ouija board reading. I had seen a "ghost" of an Indian boy up-river from the house. According to the Ouija he was my son in a previous life. I don't believe or doubt. Who really knows where we've been before?

Thank you for letting me stroll down Memory Lane for a while. I hope I haven't bored you with my mental wanderings. I will continue to read *Desert Exposure* via my computer as long as I can. I have so much respect for your work. Thank you for bringing the *Desert Exposure* to life.

Dorothy Foulkes Rivers
Tucson

Let us hear from you! Write *Desert Exposure Letters*, PO Box 191, Silver City, NM 88062, fax 534-4134 or email letters@desertexposure.com. Letters are subject to editing for style and length (maximum 500 words, please), and must be in response to content that has appeared in our pages. Deadline for the next issue is the 18th of the month.

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Un-Scrooged

Waking up alone on Christmas morning.

Last year, for the first time in my meandering life, I woke up alone on Christmas morning. Unlike Ebenezer Scrooge, I did not awaken filled with the spirit-sponsored fire of Yuletide revival, tossing surplus shillings to wayward boys for the purchase of large waterfowl carcasses to be delivered to whiny employees. Instead, I was a victim of cruel insomnia, an erratic condition that will suffer no holiday traditions. It was 4:30 a.m., a most unholy hour to displace any lingering visions of sugarplums still dancing in the heads of others still sleeping, so it's not like I could call anybody. Likewise, it seemed imprudent to drive at an hour when the streets are the sole domain of sallow alcoholics and stray reindeer. So I wrote a note to a very dear friend, and recounted my own memories of Christmas mornings long gone.

I remembered waking up equally early, decades prior, to go sneak a look at what was under the Christmas tree. The only night the tree lights were left on all night long was Christmas Eve, so the multi-color pinpoint hues of light would splash enticingly across the mysterious packages labeled from Santa. My brother and I would whisper in reverential tones and awed excitement as we inventoried who got which package, always cognizant of the danger of waking mom and dad and being sent back to bed. Eventually, we would drag out our blankets and pillows and sleep a fitful sleep under the tree with our soon-to-be-opened booty within close proximity.

Fast-forward a few years: My family had a great passel of kinfolks from out-of-town staying with us for Christmas. Dad borrowed a small camper and four of us boys stayed out in the driveway that night so that the grownups could all have beds. My older teenage cousin was with us, and became our de facto leader because he smoked cigarettes and had long hair. We young boys stayed up late, listening to his expansive stories about girls and rock 'n' roll and cars. It was like an early present, being around somebody that cool. I don't know how late we stayed up, but I know the world outside the camper was as still and quiet as any night I have ever known.

When you wake before sunrise on Christmas morning, you can witness one of the grandest holiday tragedies ever seen. If you look out the cold window pane in those wee hours, much like the ones I was awake at last year, you'll see the sad flickering of a few remaining luminarias in the indifferent December night. The small, warm lights gutter out, one by one, surrendering their tawny glow to an

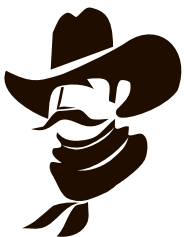
empty audience, unattended and alone. Their passing is lonely and invisible to those who only hours before had marveled at their beauty. Like watching a released balloon rise up into the limitless sky, it is sad and melancholy, yet beautiful.

These were the thoughts I wrote to my friend, the soft stream of memories that came to mind as I reflected in the snuggling quiet and solitude of the morning. I knew that in a few hours, I would be surrounded by multitudes of family, and the raucous exultations of my young nephews would drown out the gentle laughter of my father, chuckling at their excitement. There would be flavored coffee and sweet rolls, and laughter and joy. But at that moment, there was only melancholy. My life had taken a lot of turns in recent years; my kids were at their mom's house, my parents were next door. My little abode was quiet save for the humming of a refrigerator and the muted roar of the heater.

Christmas morning is the domain of magic and laughter. That morning last year, it was a time to reflect on the faint echoes of the magic that I still vividly remember from my wide-eyed youth. Those were years of innocent wonder and inexplicable goodness, when the adults would become like children and when the children were allowed to be exactly as intended. Is that precious brand of magic used up now, never to return?

I reject that bleak notion. Since that solitary Christmas morning last year, my life has improved drastically. The new friend that I was writing to that morning wound up to be much more; she will be my wife in two months' time. Far from being sad, last Christmas was a time to wake up with the best present ever—myself. Each of us carries within us volumes of innate grace and redemption, and our memories are the bookshelves we store it on. Memories define us and give purpose to our mortal trajectory, and without them we learn nothing. Take time to hug your kids, your parents, your spouse on Christmas morning. These are the precious trappings of the ghosts of Christmas past, the stuff that truly lasts. Scrooge was right about something else—it's not too late. There's still time, then. ❄️

Henry Lightcap hangs
his stockings in Las
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Postcards from the edge... We're finally catching up with the (wonderful) backlog of photos from readers traveling near and far who send us photos of themselves with a copy of "the biggest little paper in the Southwest." Which means it's time to send *your* photos in!

It also means it's belatedly time to share this photo, "taken in February 2011 at the Red Hat Holiday Dazzle Funtion at the Hotel Encanto in Las Cruces, sponsored by the Queens' Council of Las Cruces—a very fun two-day event for Red Hatters. This picture shows four of Queen Jan Sherman's Red Hat Roadrunners from Silver City. From right, standing: **Lauris Goll**, Kim Gugliotta from Tucson, Margaret Grant from Las Cruces, **Lin Townsend**. Seated from right: **Laura Wiest**, **Doris Lugo**."

The joke's on us... We like to think this yarn, sent our way by the **Silver City Greek**, shows the flip side of certain stereotypes:

"An old Italian-American man lived alone in the country. He wanted to dig his tomato garden, but it was very hard work as the ground was hard. His only son, Vincent, who used to help him, was in prison. The old man wrote a letter to his son and described his predicament.

"Dear Vincent: I am feeling pretty bad because it looks like I won't be able to plant my tomato garden this year. I'm just getting too old to be digging up a garden plot. I know if you were here my troubles would be over. I know you would be happy to dig the plot for me. Love, Dad'

"A few days later he received a letter from his son. 'Dear Dad: Don't dig up that garden. That's where I buried the bodies. Love, Vinnie'

"At four the next morning, FBI agents and local police arrived and dug up the entire area without finding any bodies. They apologized to the old man and left. That same day the old man received another letter from his son.

"Dear Dad: Go ahead and plant the tomatoes now. That's the best I could do under the circum-

stances. Love you, Vinnie"

From the Italians we go to the Irish—and again, no ethnic-joke offense intended. Some jokes are just funnier if read in an accent, any accent! This one comes via **The Santa Claran**:

"Paddy was driving down the street in a sweat because he had an important meeting and couldn't find a parking place. Looking up to heaven he said, 'Lord take pity on me. If you find me a parking place I will go to Mass every Sunday for the rest of me life and give up me Irish whiskey!'

"Miraculously, a parking place appeared.

"Paddy looked up again and said, 'Never mind, I found one.'"

Send your tales about any ethnicity, hair hue, animal, vegetable or mineral to Desert Diary at diary@desertexposure.com.

Mythbusters... This account of scientific investigation in our time arrived in our inbox from **Charles C**:

"A Kansas farm wife called the local phone company to report her telephone failed to ring when her friends called—and that on the few occasions when it did ring, her dog always moaned right before the phone rang.

"The telephone repairman proceeded to the scene, curious to see this psychic dog or senile lady. He climbed a telephone pole, hooked in his test set, and dialed the subscriber's house. The phone didn't ring right away, but then the dog moaned and the telephone began to ring.

"Climbing down from the pole, the telephone repairman found:

- "1. The dog was tied to the telephone system's ground wire with a steel chain and collar.
- "2. The wire connection to the ground rod was loose.
- "3. The dog was receiving 90 volts when the number was called.
- "4. After a couple of jolts, the dog would start moaning and then urinate.
- "5. The wet ground would complete the circuit, thus causing the phone to ring.

"Which demonstrates that some problems CAN be fixed by pissing and moaning."

Annals of inebriation... This important health warning comes courtesy of **Aletter-Action** (whom we're certain does not in any way mean to minimize the dangers of alcohol):

"When you drink vodka over ice, it can give you kidney failure.

"When you drink rum over ice, it can give you liver failure.

"When you drink whiskey over ice, it can give you heart problems.

"When you drink gin over ice, it can give you brain problems.

"Apparently, ice is really bad for you."

And the same caveat goes for this just-kidding tale from **Geerichard**:

"I would like to share an experience having to do with drinking and driving with you all. As you know some of us have had brushes with the authorities on our way home in recent times. Well, I for one have done something about it. The other night I was out for a dinner and drinks with some friends. After having far too much vino, and knowing full well I was wasted, I did something I've never done before. I took a bus home.

"I arrived home safely and without incident, which was a real surprise, as I have never driven a bus before."

Losing the battle of the sexes... To understand the difference between men and women, just compare these diary entries sent our way by **Judge Hazard A. Guess**:

"Wife's diary entry: 'Tonight, I thought my husband was acting weird. We had made plans to meet at a nice restaurant for dinner. I was shopping with my friends all day long, so I thought he was upset at the fact that I was a bit late, but he made no comment on it. Conversation wasn't flowing, so I suggested that we go somewhere quiet so we could talk. He agreed, but he didn't say much. I asked him what was wrong;

"He said, 'Nothing.' I asked him if it was my fault that he was upset. He said he wasn't upset, that it had nothing to do with me, and not to worry about it. On the way home, I told him that I loved him. He smiled slightly, and kept driving. I can't explain his behavior. I don't know why he didn't say, 'I love you, too.'"

"When we got home, I felt as if I had lost him completely, as if he wanted nothing to do with me anymore. He just sat there quietly, and watched TV. He continued to seem distant and absent. Finally, with silence all around us, I decided to go to bed. About 15 minutes later, he came to bed. But I still felt that he was distracted, and his thoughts were somewhere else. He fell asleep. I cried. I don't know what to do. I'm almost sure that his thoughts are with someone else. My life is a disaster!'

"Husband's diary entry: 'Boat wouldn't start, can't figure it out.'"

Wedding-bell blues... The more prudish among you are urged to skip this one, from **Old Grumps**. We figure, though, that nothing sounds too naughty if it's told in a

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Postcards from the edge... Then there's this one, sent in by **Betty St. John** of Silver City, who writes: "Happy Mardi Gras!" (We told you, we've been a bit behind.) "My friends, Patti Corrigan, and I were in New Orleans for Carnival and posed for this photo."

Whether you're in Las Cruces or Louisiana, snap a picture of yourself holding *Desert Exposure* and send it to PO Box 191, Silver City, NM 88062, or diary@desertexposure.com.

Norwegian accent:

"Olof Swenson, out in his pasture in northern Minnesota, took a lightning-quick kick from a cow—right in his crotch. Writhing in agony, he fell to the ground.

"As soon as he could manage, he took himself to the doctor. He said, 'How bad is it, doc? I'm going on my honeymoon next week and my fiancée, Lena, is still a virgin—in every way.'

"The doctor told him, 'Olof, I'll have to put your willy in a splint to let it heal, and keep it straight. It should be okay next week, but leave it on dere as long as you can.' He took four tongue depressors and formed a neat little four-sided splint, and taped it all together—quite an impressive work of art.

"Olof mentioned none of this to Lena, married her, and they went on their honeymoon to Duluth.

"That night in the Motel 6, Lena ripped open her blouse to reveal her beautiful, untouched bosom. She said, 'Olof, you're the first vun! No vun has EVER seen deez.'

"Olof immediately dropped his pants and replied, 'Look at dis, Lena—still in DA CRATE!'"

Can you hear me now?... We're just old enough to chuckle along with this one from **Teresa O:**

"Bert feared his wife Peg wasn't hearing as well as she used to and he thought she might need a hearing aid. Not quite sure how to approach her, he called the family doctor to discuss the problem.

"The doctor told him there is a simple informal test the husband could perform to give the doctor a better idea about her hearing loss. 'Here's what you do,' said the doctor. 'Stand about 40 feet away from her, and in a normal conversational speaking tone see if she hears you. If not, go to 30 feet, then 20 feet, and so on until you get a response.'

"That evening, the wife was in the kitchen cooking dinner, and Bert was in the den. He said to himself, 'I'm about 40 feet away, let's see what happens.' Then in a normal tone he asked, 'Honey, what's for dinner?' No response.

"So the husband moved closer to the kitchen, about 30 feet from his wife, and repeated, 'Peg, what's for dinner?' Still no response.

"Next he moved into the dining room, where he was about 20 feet from his wife, and asked, 'Honey, what's for dinner?' Again he got no response.

"So, he walked up to the kitchen door, about 10 feet away. 'Honey, what's for dinner?' Again there was no response.

"Finally Bert walked right up behind her: 'Peg, what's for dinner?'

"Peg replied, 'For God's sake, Bert, for the FIFTH time, CHICKEN!'"

Pondering the imponderables... Now it's time for some deep thoughts, meditatively sent our way by **Ned Ludd:**

"I planted some bird seed. A bird came up. Now I don't know what to feed it.

"I had amnesia once—or twice.

"I went to San Francisco. I found someone's heart. Now what?

"Protons have mass? I didn't even know they were Catholic.

"All I ask is a chance to prove that money can't make me happy.

"If swimming is so good for your figure, how do you explain whales?

"Show me a man with both feet firmly on the ground, and I'll show you a man who can't get his pants off.

"Is it me, or do buffalo wings taste like chicken?"

We have Catholic tastes... Apparently this month we're destined to be equal-opportunity offenders. Please don't alert the Vatican about this yarn from **Toni in the Vet's Office:**

"A new priest, born and raised in Oklahoma, comes to Louisville to serve and is nervous about hearing confessions, so he asks the older priest to sit in on his sessions. The new priest hears a couple of confessions, then the old priest asks him to step out of the confessional for a few suggestions.

"The old priest suggests, 'Cross your arms over your chest and rub your chin with one hand and try saying things like, "Yes, I see," and, "Yes, go on," and "I understand."

"The new priest crosses his arms, rubs his chin with one hand and repeats all the suggested remarks to the old priest.

"The old priest says, 'Now, don't you think that's a little better than slapping your knee and saying, "No shit! What happened next?"'"

Likewise with this oddly similar tale from **Fred in the Garage:**

"Two nuns, Sister Catherine and Sister Helen, are traveling through Europe in their car. They get to Transylvania and are stopped at a traffic light. Suddenly, out of nowhere, a tiny little Dracula jumps onto the hood of the car and hisses through the windshield.

"Quick, quick!" shouts Sister Catherine. "What shall we do?"

"Turn the windshield wipers on. That will get rid of the abomination," says Sister Helen.

"Sister Catherine switches on the wipers, knocking Dracula about, but he clings on and continues hissing at the nuns.

"What shall I do now?" she shouts.

"Switch on the windshield washer. I filled it up with Holy Water at the Vatican," says Sister Helen.

"Sister Catherine turns on the windshield washer. Dracula screams as the water burns his skin, but he clings on and continues hissing at the nuns.

"Now what?" shouts Sister Catherine.

"Show him your cross," says Sister Helen.

"Now you're talking," says Sister Catherine. She opens the window and shouts, 'Get the hell off our car!'"

Looking on the bright side... Finally, the next time you're worried about something, think of this lesson learned by **Charlie:**

"I live in a small southwest New Mexico town. Being small, the post office is run out of a store that also has become a public meeting place for coffee, lunches and conversation. The friendly couple who run it give a warm welcome to all who enter. One day I came in and picked up my mail and sat down to talk to the proprietor. I was particularly concerned that day about a problem that I had. So I unloaded on my friend, the proprietor, the whole gory details.

"He listened very attentively and when I had finished he said to me, 'Don't worry about anything! You may not wake up in the morning!'"

Just in case, send your favorite anecdotes, jokes, puns and tall tales to Desert Diary today—don't wait until tomorrow. Mail to PO Box 191, Silver City, NM 88062, fax (575) 534-4134 or email diary@desertexposure.com. The best submission each month gets a brand-new Desert Exposure mouse pad, scientifically proven to take the strain out of emailing jokes to Desert Diary.





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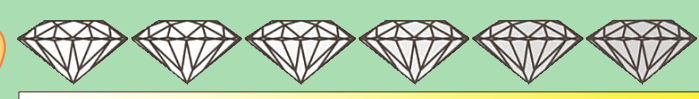
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Mission to Mañana

As Virgin Galactic delays mount, not all its \$200,000 customers are willing to keep waiting.

New Mexico may still have patience with Virgin Galactic, whose plans to fly into near-orbit from Spaceport America recently got pushed back again, to 2013, but one of Sir Richard Branson's first spaceflight customers is tired of waiting. The Associated Press reports that venture capitalist Alan Walton, one of the "Founder" first 100 customers to sign up with Virgin Galactic, has asked for his money back.

Walton, who has trekked to the North Pole, climbed Mount Kilimanjaro and skydived over Mount Everest, hoped to top his adventures with a few minutes of weightlessness. But he's waited seven years since forking over his \$200,000 deposit and he turned 75 earlier this year. On his birthday, Walton gave up on Virgin Galactic and asked for a refund.

The company, which originally planned to commence flights in 2008, gave Walton his money back. Virgin Galactic says it still has 450 ticket holders, and only about 10 have asked for refunds.

The state of New Mexico, which built Spaceport America near Truth or Consequences largely on promises from Virgin Galactic, might want to consider getting in line for a refund of its own. The spaceflight company was supposed to fly a few trial missions from the airport in Mojave, Calif., then quickly ramp up to launch about 60 times in 2010 from Spaceport America. By 2020, projections were for 426 launches a year, for a total of 1,959 flights in the first 10 years of operation (2010-2019).

Although the company now says flights should begin in 2013, it's not clear when the launch action might actually begin at Spaceport America, rather than the Mojave test facility. The *Wall Street Journal* cautions that even after successful flights in California, "Virgin Galactic will need to move a team into New Mexico to conduct what could turn out to be additional months of operational tests and efforts to verify the adequacy of ground facilities."



Gov. Susana Martinez and Sir Richard Branson at the Spaceport America dedication. (Photo by Mark Greenberg)

Once Spaceport America finally has a space-tourism liftoff, the *Journal* adds, don't expect a fleet of spacecraft carrying hundreds of passengers each month. A Virgin Galactic spokesman told the newspaper that current plans call for only one flight a week: "We will keep that going until we feel comfortable."

Caution is probably called for, given the rocky results of the company's SpaceShip Two passenger vehicle testing. Of about 75 test flights, more than a dozen ended with the spaceship having to glide back to earth without any power. During a recent test flight, "the twin tails of SpaceShip Two stalled and the craft descended more quickly than normal."

John Gedmark, executive director of the Commercial Spaceflight Federation trade association, isn't worried. He told the AP, "Everything in aerospace always takes longer that you originally think."

But John Logsdon, a space policy expert at George Washington University, wonders about that \$200,000 pricetag: "In the current economic climate, how many people have that level of discretionary money?"

Would-be space tourist Alan Walton does, now that he's gotten his money back. ☘

Hi-Yo, Silver City!

The *Lone Ranger* movie is on again, minus some supernatural coyotes.

The *Lone Ranger* is riding again, after some belt-tightening including a smaller paycheck for star Johnny Depp (right), who plays not the title character but sidekick Tonto. The Disney-financed film was originally scheduled to start filming on location in and around Silver City last fall. Then Disney abruptly pulled the plug, citing concerns over the \$260 million-plus budget and the disappointing box office of this summer's *Cowboys and Aliens*. Like that film, *The Lone Ranger* was to be a decidedly unconventional take on the Western genre—and not just because it spotlights Tonto more than its silver bullet-shooting masked man (played by Armie Hammer).

One colleague of original co-screenwriter Ted Elliott described the film as, "Tonto and the Indian spirits like Obi Wan Kenobi and the Force. The driving engine was going to be Native American occult aspects worked in with werewolves and special effects. But flavored



with doses of Native American spirituality in a serious way." (*Revolutionary Road* screenwriter Justin Haythe is now scripting the film.)

Some of those special effects also got axed from the budget, according to producer Jerry Bruckheimer, who told *The Hollywood Reporter*, "We cut a sequence involving a coyote attack—supernatural coyotes—and a small animated segment."

Shooting will still take place in New Mexico as originally planned, with production now set to begin in February. But Bruckheimer said some filming may move to Louisiana, which offered sweeter tax incentives, adding, "We're asking New Mexico to come closer to the Louisiana incentive."

Now budgeted at \$215 million, *The Lone Ranger* also has a new release date, sliding from its original 2012 holiday plan. Look for a hearty "Hi-yo, Silver!" on May 31, 2013. ☘



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Following the Money

In Grant County, according to a new report, Social Security adds up to one dollar out of every nine in personal income.

The graying of America means green for places like Grant County—but that means rural counties and small towns also have a greater stake in the future of Social Security. According to a new analysis by the Center for Rural Strategies, 11.5% of total personal income in Grant County—

more than \$103 million in 2009—comes from Social Security payments. That means Grant County is more dependent on Social Security payments than is the rest of the country or the rest of New Mexico. Nationally, 5.5% of total personal income in 2009 came from Social Security payments, while in New Mexico that figure was 6.2%.

In Grant County, 8,170 people receive some form of Social Security payment, either an old-age pension, a survivor benefit or a disability check, according to the Social Security Administration and the Bureau of Economic Analysis. Social Security beneficiaries represent 27.3% of the total county population.

Total Social Security payments in Grant County amounted to \$3,472 per person in 2009. The na-

tional average was \$2,199 per person and in New Mexico it was \$2,107.

Social Security payments in Grant County have been increasing as a proportion of total income, according to the report. These payments amounted to 4.4% of total income in 1970, 6.6% in 1980, 9.3% in 1990, 9.7% in 2000 and 11.5% in 2009.

Cuts to Social Security, experts quoted in the report point out, would disproportionately affect rural counties and small towns because those payments represent a greater share of total income and the money is largely spent in the community. ❄

TUMBLEWEEDS continued on next page

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TUMBLEWEEDS
continued

Take a Deep Breath

We're still not sure about the methodology or even the exact source of Silver City's latest claim to fame, but what the heck, we'll take it: In case you missed it, earlier this fall, *Time* magazine—citing “a new World Health Organization report [that] details air-pollution rates around the globe”—listed Silver City as one of the nine “cleanest cities in the country.”

Silver City was one of three New Mexico locales to make the list, along with Santa Fe and Farmington. *Time* wrote: “If it's not clear by now, it should be: If you want smog-free air and lungs clear of bronchitis, move to New Mexico. And the environment in Silver City has probably gotten better over time—it began as a mining tent city back in the late 1800s, and let's just say those settlements did not have much in the way of envi-

ronmental regulations. It makes sense that after the silver ran out, Silver City became a haven for tuberculosis patients. The desert air will do you good.”

Other cities on the list were Clearlake, Calif.; Cheyenne, Wyo.; Kahului-Wailuku, Hawaii; Dickinson, ND; Jackson, Wyo.; and Pocatello, Idaho.

The Tumbleweeds Top 10

Who and what's been making news from New Mexico this past month, as measured by mentions in Google News (news.google.com), which tracks 4,500 worldwide news sources (trends noted are vs. last month's total hits; * indicates new to the list). Number in parenthesis indicates last month's Top 10 rank. A slow news month for New Mexico topics—except for drought worries and ex-Gov. Richardson, whose 2008 presidential campaign funds are under scrutiny.

1. (3) **Gov. Susana Martinez**—415 hits (▼)
2. (10) **New Mexico drought**—406 hits (▲)
3. (1) **Virgin Galactic**—397 hits (▼)
4. (6) **Ex-Gov. Bill Richardson**—319 hits (▲)
5. (8) **Ex-Gov. Gary Johnson + president**—233 hits (▼)
6. (-) **Billy the Kid**—123 hits (▼)
7. (-) **New Mexico wolves**—114 hits (▲)
8. (-) **Sen. Jeff Bingaman**—107 hits (▼)
9. (2) **Spaceport America**—102 hits (▼)
10. (7) **Sen. Tom Udall**—101 hits (▼)



The Mimbres Culture Heritage Site is now operated by the Imogene F. Wilson Education Foundation.

Moving On in the Mimbres

The Silver City Museum and the Mimbres Culture Heritage Site (see “Mimbres Memories,” December 2009) have parted ways, with the Mimbres site now under the wing of the Imogene F. Wilson Education Foundation. The foundation plans to develop a museum in the Gooch House on the historic property. Planning is already underway to develop two galleries, which will deal with the Matlocks Ruin and the development of the Mimbres Valley. The Gooch and Wood houses, both part of the site, are rare surviving examples of the Territorial ranch-house style. The site is also the only Mimbres site open to the public with interpretative signs.

Now that it's soloing, the Mimbres Culture Heritage Site is looking for volunteers to assist with showing tourists and student groups around. If you're interested, call volunteer coordinator Dorothy Bullock for details at (575) 536-9957.

Fort-ifying History

You might say local history buffs Andrea Jaquez and Neta Pope are obsessed with Fort Bayard. After all, they've spent seven years researching and writing their new book, *The Fort Bayard Story: 1866-1899*. The book, they say, is the first thoroughly researched and sourced history of Grant County's National Historic Landmark.

The 400-page book tells how, in the “Apache Wars,” Fort Bayard's soldiers tried to capture the warring chiefs and their followers to protect the lives of the settlers of Southwest New Mexico and Southeast Arizona. It showcases the stories of the soldiers, the Apaches and the early settlers of all cultures who were most often the vic-

tims of raids.

Two chapters the authors characterize as “unexpected” cover Central City, the soldiers' “downtown,” and the Post Cemetery, focusing on the causes of death of those who died while stationed at the fort. Dozens of photographs and drawings of the old fort are also included.

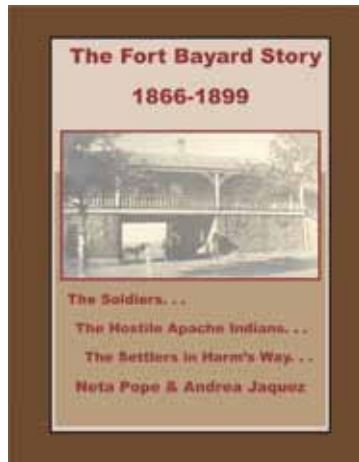
Jaquez grew up in the San Fernando Valley of Southern California, first getting a taste for history rising through the mountains of Chatsworth on what was the old stage coach road going over into Simi Valley. She and her husband and two young children relocated to Silver City in 1998. “While taking a Sunday afternoon drive through Fort Bayard with my family,” she recalls, “I was mesmerized by the beautiful old houses still standing there and by the grounds of the old fort.” She became an active member of the Fort Bayard Historical Preservation Society, serving as vice president and re-enacting the role of Mrs. Frances Boyd, an officer's wife in 1873, for Fort Bayard Days.

Co-author Pope came to Silver City in 2003 from St. Louis, after retiring from a 37-year career in education. She had followed the Santa Fe Trail to New Mexico, retracing the path taken by Cathay Williams, a female who successfully impersonated a male and served in the 38th Infantry at Fort Cummings and Fort Bayard. Introduced by Cecilia Bell of the Fort Bayard society, she and Jaquez became friends and began researching the fort's history.

“We decided to try to make the old fort live again by searching out its secrets, mysteries and forgotten stories,” Pope says. This meant travels to wherever old records could be found. As Pope remained a full-time RV-er, they traveled by motorhome and found research at

Carlisle Barracks, Pa., and the National Archives much to their liking. ☼

The Fort Bayard Story, 1866-1899 is available in paperback for \$30 and hardcover for \$45. Contact Neta Pope at netapope@yahoo.com or (575) 313-1992 to order copies.



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100% for Whom?
A “well-funded front for corporations” ranks Rep. Steve Pearce “perfect” on labor issues.

Last month, Rep. Steve Pearce sent out a news release touting that he'd received an “A+” rating and perfect 100% score on the Competitive Enterprise Institute's (CEI) Labor Scorecard. “Jobs have been and continue to be my top priority in Congress, so I am honored to receive this recognition,” said Pearce. “Hardworking Americans need government to take a stand to return our nation to the land where success is rewarded, opportunities are unlimited, and anything is possible. By focusing on job growth, we can help our families, communities and nation return to economic security. This is my focus, and it is the focus of the Competitive Enterprise Institute. I thank CEI for recognizing my efforts in Congress and for the work they do to help promote job growth.

“CEI's principles of limited government line up with my own,” Pearce continued. “Washington's job is to expand job creation, not to control jobs. The American public wants efficient and effective government.”

If you've never heard of the CEI, “a public policy organization dedicated to the principles of free

markets and limited government” founded in 1984, you might assume that Pearce's 100% ranking on labor issues makes him a friend of the working person. Presumably the CEI is a lot like those other alphabet-soup groups, the AFL-CIO and AFSME and SEIU, right?

Actually, getting a perfect score on labor issues from CEI is a bit like getting a perfect score on butchering from PETA. CEI's corporate and industry backers include ExxonMobil, the American Petroleum Institute, Dow Chemical and Monsanto. Among its private patrons are ultra-right wing millionaire Richard Scaife and the Koch Brothers, whose various businesses rank them among the nation's top-10 polluters. Not surprisingly, CEI is a vigorous global-warming denier, while advocating “privatizing” the Endangered Species Act and eliminating federal fuel-efficiency standards and the environmental-cleanup Superfund.

With a long record of support from the tobacco industry, notably Philip Morris, CEI has scoffed at the dangers of secondhand smoke and filed a lawsuit against what it called the “corrupt” 1998 settlement of claims against tobacco companies. Americans for Nonsmokers Rights calls it “another one of the tobacco industry's front groups.”

Overall, PR Watch says CEI is “a well-funded front for corporations that attacks environmental, health and safety regulations.”

In 2008, when Pearce last served in Congress, the AFL-CIO gave him a 13% lifetime score for his labor-voting record. AFSME, which represents public employees, scored Pearce at 4%. ☼



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ARTS EXPOSURE • HARRY WILLIAMSON

Sitting Pretty

Robert Winston finds the soul in a piece of wood and turns it into a chair or other usable work of art.



Above: Robert Winston works to complete a piece of furniture in his Silver City workshop. (Photo by Harry Williamson). Below: Slabs of Pennsylvania black walnut provide a background for rocking chairs and a table built by Robert Winston. (Photo by Robert Winston)

Seeing a piece of furniture in an art gallery is significantly rare that it can stop people in their tracks.

It's not that it shouldn't be there, centered in its own display space. It is obviously art.

But still, *it's just a chair!*

In this case, it's a rocking chair, its thin rockers swept back in an elegant curve. The entire chair flows together in balance and harmony, almost as if carved from a single piece of wood. The chair glistens softly in the light, the wood grain almost lyrical in its patterns. The arms sprout with no apparent break from the back, flowing smoothly down to the front legs. The back of the chair consists of six spindles, curved to mimic the human spine. The seat is not flat, but deeply hollowed on both sides to increase the sitter's comfort.

"Okay, it's art," the viewer might think, "but oh, how I wish I could just go sit in it for a spell."

"When I tell them they can sit in it, they are blown away," says Lois Duffy, owner of the gallery

that bears her name at 211-C N. Texas St. in downtown Silver City. "First, they can't believe how comfortable it is; then when they touch it, they can't believe how smooth the wood is. They're fascinated by how it's joined together.

"When I have the doors open in the summertime, the furniture actually brings customers into the gallery," she adds. "It's the styling and the superb craftsmanship. His furniture is truly pieces of art."

The furniture—including a black-walnut dining room table currently on display at Duffy's gallery—is the hands-on work of Robert Winston, master craftsman. He and his wife, Ann, moved from Pennsylvania to Silver City to be closer to their three children: Raven, a daughter in Tucson; another daughter, Wren, in Utah; and their son, Thatcher, who works with his father and operates their sawmill.

Duffy says Winston was one of the first artists she signed up after her opening in 2005. "Rob came by one day, explained who he was and asked if I was interested in carrying his furniture. At that time the gallery was pretty empty except for my paintings, and I needed something big to put in it.

"I gave him his own show in 2006 when he filled the place with his furniture. It was a big hit," Duffy adds. "Over the years it's been a real good working relationship for both of us."

Winston's furniture is also carried at the Shidoni Foundry & Gallery, located in Tesuque, NM, five miles north of the Santa Fe Plaza.

He says that the core of his woodworking business has always been people seeing things he puts in the galleries and buying those. Commissions come and go, he adds.

"This is functional art," Winston says. "It's not like people are looking to buy a chair when they come in the gallery, but they are blown away by how it looks, and then they sit in it, and it's very comfortable, so they take it home to live with and use every day."

Duffy says that with all the locals and out-of-towners who come in to look at and buy Winston's pieces, she also gets a lot of professional woodworkers who want to study Winston's construction techniques. She also recalls one day watching a man exit his car in front of her shop, obviously with no intention of coming in, and then noticing one of the rocking chairs through the doorway.

"He came in all excited, asking if that was a Sam Maloof chair," she says. "Maloof was a well-known, hands-on furniture maker from California, whose stuff really brings in the big bucks, tens of thousands of dollars. The man had some Maloof pieces, and purchased one of Rob's chairs to add to his collection."

Interestingly enough, it was Maloof's woodworking and lifestyle—shown through a single experience in 2001—that caused Winston to decide to devote the rest of his life to building artistic furniture. More about that later.

In one way or another, Robert Winston has been working with wood almost since his toddler years. "Ever since I was a tiny kid, I was making things. It's always been a part of me, part of the total package," Winston says, adding that his medium of choice has always been wood.

"The tree's entire history is shown in its grain. That has always inspired me."

By the seventh grade he was making musical instruments, a guitar and then 23 others, realizing before long, however, "that it would be a very hard way to make a living."

In high school, one of his friends was a nephew of George Nakashima, one of the most renowned American woodworkers. Winston recalls, "Where we lived in Pennsylvania was fairly close to his workshop, and there were several pieces of Nakashima's furniture in my friend's house. I saw those pieces and I was amazed."

He adds that one of the first pieces of furniture he built was a coffee table, constructed from wood attributed to Nakashima's vast collection of woods collected from throughout the world.

"We woodworkers have the audacity to shape timber from these noble trees," Nakashima wrote in his book, *The Soul of a Tree: A Woodworker's Reflections*.



Featuring the beauty of natural wood is typical in furniture made by Robert Winston, such as this crested-back table, custom made for a California customer. (Photo by Harry Williamson)

tions, published two years before in death in 1990. "We work with solid wood, the better to search for its soul. We search for the essence, to share the tree's joys and tragedies, content to work on a small scale integrally with nature and not violating it."

Since his father was an engineer, commuting to a big company in New York City, Winston first decided to study engineering at Lehigh University. He later changed his major and graduated with a degree in Natural Resources, a combination of biology and geology.

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“I didn’t want to be an engineer and end up being a cog in some company where there was no hands-on contact,” Winston says. “That end of it didn’t interest me.”

He and his wife, Ann, built their first house with their own hands when they were 20. Shortly after that he began a construction company, a design/build kind of operation, which grew into Creative Structures, Inc., in Quakertown, Pa. While there he designed and made solar greenhouses, constructing the frames from large wood beams. He employed as many as 17 people before selling the firm in 1995. After that, he did extensive woodworking and furniture-building at a religious retreat for several years.

It was at this point, in 2001, at the Renwick Gallery of the Smithsonian American Art Museum, in Washington, DC, that Winston happened to attend a retrospective on Sam Maloof’s life and work. From that experience, everything fell into place. It was decided: This was how he would spend the rest of his life. Working with his hands, designing and building fine furniture, using the same aesthetic energy that fuels fine paintings, sculpture and architecture.

In short, using suburb craftsmanship to continue the usefulness of God’s trees—just as Nakashima, Wharton Esherick (another Pennsylvania furniture craftsman), Maloof and others had done.

“It was not any one piece of his furniture. It was



Wood needs to dry on a schedule of one year per inch of thickness, with the stack here coming from one New Mexico walnut tree. (Photo by Harry Williamson)

how Maloof lived his life. It gave me the impetus to do what I’ve done. I’ve followed this path. The man in his shop with the wood. Covered in sawdust. Making his stuff,” Winston says. “From that day it was a direction that got set, and I haven’t turned back on that a bit.”

In his breathtaking book, *Sam Maloof: Woodworker*, Maloof wrote, “Once you have breathed, smelled and tasted the tanginess of wood and have handled it in the process of giving it form, there is nothing, I believe, that can replace the complete satisfaction gained.

“I hope that happiness with what I do is reflected in my furniture. I hope that it is vibrant, alive and friendly to the people who use it,” Maloof added.

So how does Winston build a piece of furniture?

Slowly, taking his time, enjoying the wood, and having fun.

“At this stage of my life, a lot of it is just for the fun of it. I try not to be too goal oriented,” he says.

For example, he recently built a specific type of rocking chair that he hadn’t done in a couple of years because of the slipping economy.

“I was amazed by just how much I still enjoyed doing it even though I’ve done it many, many times. It was just plain fun,” Winston says. “Now that I’ve worked out the mechanical skills of how to do it, I

WINSTON continued on next page



Thatcher Winston moves a log that came from a juniper tree blown down in the Silver City area. (Photo by Robert Winston)

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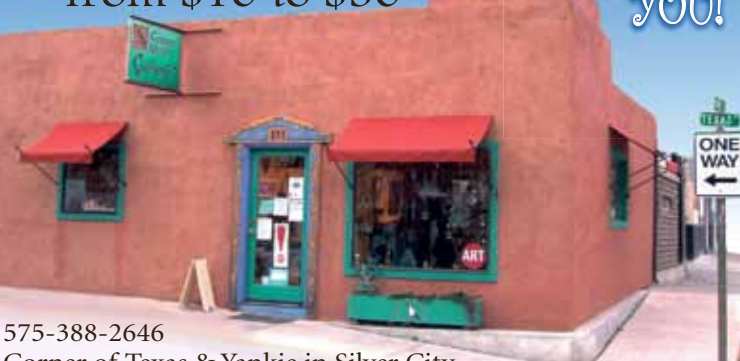


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Above: Peter Hurd, Skylab, 1973 | Watercolor on paper

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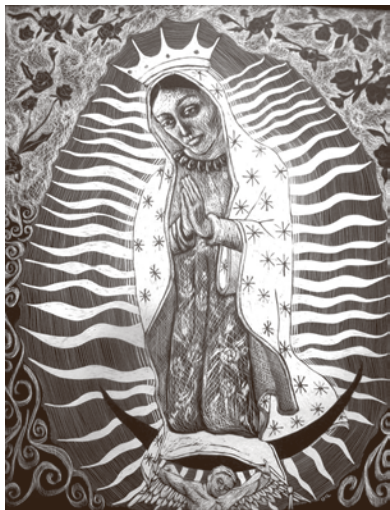
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WINSTON continued

can just relax, go slow, and enjoy the process.”

The building process starts with making a marriage between what he wants to do, what the customer wants, and what type of wood he has that will best express his ideas.

Winston begins by making pencil sketches, various views of the item he is going to build, along with some basic dimensions. He says he always tries to incorporate something different every time he makes a piece, even something he has built many, many times. Next, he makes full-size drawings on white board, producing templates of the various parts needed. Using a pen, he draws around the templates on the wood he's chosen, then goes to the band saw to make his rough cuts, with everything at least a sixteenth of an inch oversized, wood that will be removed during the lengthy finishing process. He does the joinery work, most often using complex mortises or dowels, with some joints visible, some hidden. The frame of the piece of furniture is glued together, and when it's dry, he uses a router freehand, removing bulk material to do the initial shaping—not a technique recommended for the average home carpenter.

“You can't do too much detail work with the router because it's too easy to do damage—one slip and it's ruined,” Winston says.

If he's building a chair, he places the seat wood onto a machine he invented that roughs out the seat by quickly removing wood.

“I'm not a purist who does everything by hand. If a power tool will do the job, I'll use it,” Winston says. “There's no glory in digging out huge quantities of wood by hand.”

That said, he then spends many hours doing all of the final shaping by hand, getting into all of the curves and corners by using grinders, various size rasps, gouges, chisels and files, or a drawknife.

“As you work by hand and dig down in, you uncover a knot, a branch, worm holes and other imperfections you can use to make the piece more beautiful and interesting,” he says.

Winston has even found bullets lodged in the wood, some from Pennsylvania, perhaps as old as the Civil War.

This final shaping and smoothing is all done freehand, using judgment honed by years of experience. Winston then uses various grits of sandpaper to smooth out the rough areas and cut marks. As one example, a very small end table requires a minimum of 10 hours of sanding, he says.

Before starting to apply the final finishes, he



Robert Winston's workshop occupies a large downstairs room in his Silver City home. He built the European-style woodworking table, shown in the foreground, while in high school in Pennsylvania. (Photo by Harry Williamson)

goes over the entire piece of furniture with 400-grit sandpaper.

He uses two types of finishes, starting with a mixture of urethane varnish and tung oil, which darkens the wood and makes all the remaining scratches and tiny defects more apparent. Once that's dry, he sands again with a 400-grit sandpaper, then applies another seven coats or so, lightly sanding between each coat.

To put the finish on he uses a rag and rubs hard, much as Maloof did. Maloof wrote that when his hand started getting hot, he knew he was doing it correctly.

“At this stage, you don't rush,” Winston says. “You want it to get nice and hard or it just gums up your sandpaper or steel wool.”

He then puts on two coats of a mixture of tung oil and beeswax, which gives the wood a smooth, satiny feel and look.

Including all of the finish work, Winston estimates that 70% to 80% of the construction process is done by hand, often spending as much as 100 hours on a single piece.

The entire process starts, of course, with the trees and the wood—topics that get Winston the most excited.

“Being connected to the tree and what you could do with it was the start of my interest in woodworking,” he says. “It still is. To me, the tree itself is a work of art.”

He moved some 35,000 pounds of black walnut and cherry when he came to Grant County, and has since added an equal amount of local woods, mostly New Mexico walnut, mesquite and juniper. He adds that his son Thatcher mills and sells most of the pine they get, plus they are in the process of using their pine boards to construct a building that will house the saw mill, along with providing room for the many stacks of sawn wood slabs in the year or two they require to become completely dry. The pair has rigged up a truck with a crane that can

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handle 3,000-pound logs.

His favorite types of wood are mesquite, curly maple, cherry and especially black walnut, because of its contrasting colors and texture and beautiful grains. He also likes the character and colors in all of the desert woods.

Winston adds that when he builds rockers out of a variety of woods and takes them down to Duffy's shop, the mesquite chairs always seem "to fly out the door first."

He says, "Trees out here that get big enough to make something out of have gone through decades of good years, bad years, insect infiltration, human abuse and God knows what else. It becomes tough and it's got heart. Then you open it up and there is all that history, and it speaks to you."

Juniper is a softer wood, brittle and often filled with cracks and imperfections, but it's another tree that has great stories, he says. "You can work with all of the imperfections, the burls, the cracks and the insect holes that greatly enhance the tree's charm."

Once milled, some types of wood lend themselves more readily to specific uses. "I have some magnificent walnut slabs that almost have to go into a table," Winston says. "They're telling me right there, 'I want to be a table,' and that's what they'll become."

He adds that other pieces of wood have such wonderful graining and character they deserve to be featured—being used, for example, as the crest rail on a chair or the back on a crested-back table.

Where does Winston find his wood?

Anywhere he can.

"Since I build big things, I need big trees. So I get the word out and keep looking around," he says.

He points out stacks where slabs of woods are drying, indicating one stack that came from a tree off Arenas Valley Road, another from a tree that blew down in the Cottage San area, and a monster juniper log hauled in from the Burro Mountains. His son Thatcher also hauls mesquite logs from the Tucson area and other places in Arizona. They get a lot of trees through their connections with Forest Service thinning projects.

As he rummages through the stacks of timbers, one piece in particular, a beautiful New Mexico walnut, catches his attention.

"That piece," Winston exclaims, "is crying out to be a stretcher between the legs on a big table! And I hear it." ❧

Robert Winston's work is shown at Lois Duffy Art, 211C N. Texas St. in Silver City, 534-0822, www.loisduffy.com.

Harry Williamson moved to Grant County three years ago after reporting and editing for newspapers in New York, Oklahoma, Colorado and Texas. Feel free to contact him at editorharrydad5@gmail.com.

ARTS EXPOSURE

Arts Scene

The latest area art happenings.

Silver City/Grant County

Since the last half of the 19th century, East and West Coast artists as well as European artists have been attracted to New Mexico, joining Native American artists already here to appreciate the unique landscape and light. A new exhibit at **Cow Trail Art Studio** focuses on the original etchings, drawings and lithographs of seven of these artists. Some were permanent New Mexico residents; some spent summers here. Only one artist was born here and returned after living and studying in Pennsylvania. Artists include Will Schuster, Charles Dahlgreen, Gustave Baumann, Birger Sandzen, Peter Hurd, Earle Loran, Eric Gibberd, Garo Antresian, and Fritz Scholder.

Some of the prints were created shortly after New Mexico gained statehood status, a few were printed around the 1950s, and two of the prints are considered contemporary in style.

Visitors are welcome to view the exhibit during regular hours at Cow Trail Art Studio, 119 Cow Trail in Arenas Valley. Open Monday, Thursday, Friday and Saturday afternoons from noon to 3 p.m.

Leyba & Ingalls Arts will host an invitational art show on the theme of Our Lady of Guadalupe, opening Dec. 2 with a reception from 5-7 p.m. and running through the month of December. 315 N. Bullard, 388-5725, www.LeybaIngallsARTS.com.

Seedboat Gallery's annual jewelry show continues, with an opening reception Dec. 2, 5-7 p.m. 214 W. Yankee St, seedboatgallery.com.

The holiday season brings the **31st Annual Mimbres Hot Springs Studio Sale**, Saturday and Sunday, Dec. 3-4, from 10 a.m.-5 p.m. More than 30 artists will be selling a variety of handcrafted gifts, plus there will be live music, refreshments and door prizes. To get there, take Hwy. 152 to the Mimbres, Hwy. 61 south to Royal John Mine Road (between mile markers 19 and 20). Follow signs two and a half miles. No pets. www.studiosalemimbres.com.

Former *Desert Exposure* cover artist **Narrie**



The Mesquite Art Gallery will feature works by Harvey Daiho Hilbert.

Toole (February 2007) will have an art exhibit and sale at the Mimbres-La Paloma Real Estate office, Dec. 3-4 from 10 a.m.-5 p.m., and Dec. 17, 10 a.m.-3 p.m. The office is 9.5 miles north on Hwy. 35, right side. 313-2565.

The San Vicente Artists and Grant County Art Guild will be sponsoring a **Holiday Arts and Fine Crafts Fair** at the Silco Theater on Bullard Street, Saturday, Dec. 10, 9 a.m.-5 p.m.

The **5th Annual Nizhoni Pottery Studio Sale**, featuring contemporary Navajo pottery and prints by award-winning potter Romaine Begay, will be held Saturday, Dec. 17, 12-4 p.m., at 3235 Little Walnut Road. Traditional Navajo stories will be featured from 1-2 p.m. 590-0698, www.nizhoni-pottery.com.

Lois Duffy Art will have extended gallery hours for the holidays, from the day after Thanksgiving to Christmas: Sunday, 10:30 a.m.-2 p.m.; Monday, Wednesday-Saturday, 10:30 a.m.-4 p.m.; closed Tuesdays. 211C N. Texas, 313-9631, www.loisduffy.com.

Las Cruces & Mesilla

The **Mesilla Valley Fine Arts Gallery** showcases Roberta Leavelle Widner and Phil Yost this month, along with a Christmas Sale. The

ARTS SCENE continued on next page

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Rio Brass Quintet will be performing a selection of holiday favorites on Saturday, Dec., 1-3 p.m. 2470-A Calle de Guadalupe, 522-2933.

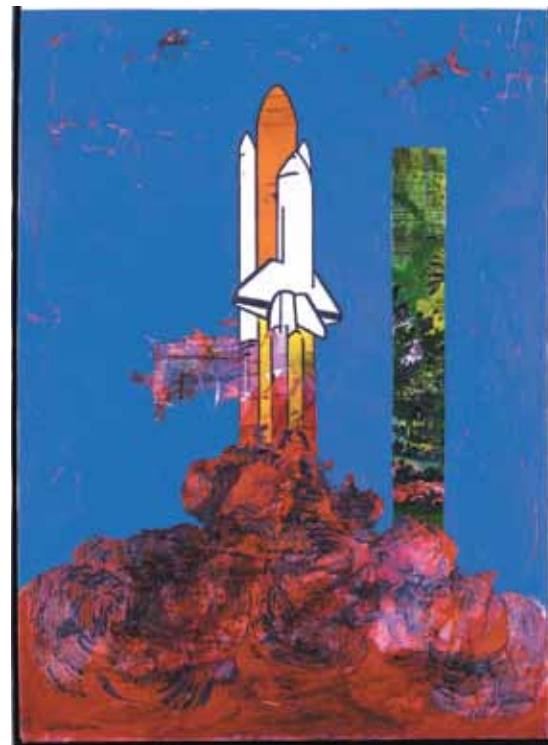
The **Mesquite Art Gallery** will feature works by Harvey Daiho Hilbert, Dec. 8-Jan. 7, with a reception Dec. 10, 3-5 p.m. A Zen priest, Hilbert paints as a contemplative practice. He says, "My artistic process is one of getting out of my own way, joining the paint, brush and canvas, in order for a painting to manifest itself. I am consumed by color and love to allow color, in broad strokes, to create an image on its own." 340 N. Mesquite St., 640-3502.

The **Las Cruces Museum of Art**, together with the Las Cruces Museum of Natural History and Branigan Cultural Center, has a big payload of events planned in conjunction with its ongoing "NASAART: 50 Years of Exploration" art exhibit. These include (at the Museum of Art except as noted): Science Café with Michael Shinebery, educational specialist at the Museum of Space History, Dec. 1, 5:30-6:30 p.m. Music from the Heart of Space with Dan Lambert, Dec. 2, 5-7 p.m. Painting the Night Sky, workshop with Lyuba and Aleksander Titovets, Dec. 1-3, 9:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m., \$50. The Night Sky: Photographing in Low Light, with Paul Schranz, Dec. 2, 2-3 p.m. Sky Safari Photography Workshop, Dec. 3, 7:30-9:30 p.m., Leasburg Dam State Park, \$5 per car. Starry Night, singles event, Dec. 6, 6:30-8:30 p.m. Student Launch Program from Spaceport America, by Patricia Hynes of the Space Grant Consortium, Dec. 8, 1-2 p.m., Branigan Cultural Center. Space Age Art Workshop, with Bob Diven, Dec. 17, 11 a.m.-4 p.m., registration required. 491 N. Main St., 541-2137, www.las-cruces.org/museums.

The **Branigan Cultural Center** presents "Don Jose Castro: A Final Farewell," featuring the photography of Robert Kaiser, opening Dec. 2, 5-7 p.m., and on view through Dec. 31. Castro was a legend in the world of rodeo riding in Mexico; Kaiser is a photojournalist currently based in Las Cruces. 501 N. Main St., 541-2154, las-cruces.org/museums.

The **Tombaugh Gallery** hosts its second annual juried craft exhibit, Dec. 4-30, with an opening Dec. 4, 11:30 a.m.-1:30 p.m., featuring a talk by juror Suzanne Kane, award-winning ceramicist, NMSU instructor and Archie Bray Fellow. The artists showing include: Joe Angelo, ceramics; Margaret Berrier, sterling silver jewelry with semi-precious stones; Greta Burger, cast glass; Tony Celenzano, ceramics; Malika Crozier, ceramics; Les Fairchild, segmented wood turnings; Karen Feder, jewelry; Diana LeMarbe, ceramics; Meredith Loring, mixed media; Rudy Lucero, ceramics; John Northcutt, ceramics; Kris Northcutt, quilting; Rebecca Speaks, fabric; Lois Wilson, fused glass; and Danielle Wood, porcelain. 2000 S. Solano in the Unitarian Universalist Church, 522-7281.

ARTS SCENE continued



The Las Cruces Museum of Art's "NASAART" show continues with many special events this month. Above: "Liftoff at 15 Seconds" by Jack Perlmutter.

Deming

The **Deming Arts Council** will host a reception for an exhibit of works by the Black Range Artists on Dec. 4, 1-3 p.m. Deming Arts Center, 100 S. Gold.

Sierra County

The annual Hillsboro Christmas celebration, **Christmas in the Foothills**, on Saturday, Dec. 3, from 10 a.m.-4 p.m., will include an array of vendors selling specialty handcrafted gifts in the Hillsboro Community Center and the popular \$49.99 Art Show and Sale. Each item will be sold for \$49.99 to a winning ticket holder, and all items are guaranteed to be worth more than that—many several times more. One-dollar tickets can also be purchased for a chance to win framed artwork created especially for the event by Julie Shufelt. The winning ticket will be drawn at the Community Center at the end of the event.

The **Monte Cristo Gift Shop & Gallery** will hold its 6th Annual Yuletide in Chloride, Dec. 3-11. The holiday event features more than two-dozen local artisans, each working in different mediums and styles, including watercolors, acrylics and pastels and black-and-white photographs of scenic New Mexico. Decorative items include pillows and throws, lamps and hand-crafted shades, luminous glassware, hand-painted candles and unusual wine racks. The gallery is located in the historic ghost town of Chloride, 35 miles northwest of Truth or Consequences via Hwy. 52. From I-25 take exit 83, follow the signs to Winston and then to Chloride. Open daily 10 a.m.-4 p.m. 743-0493, montecristogallery@windstream.net.

Except as noted, all phone numbers are area code 575. Send arts events to events@desertexposure.com.

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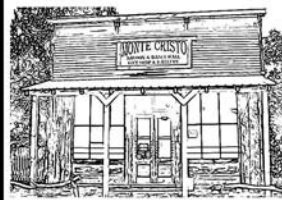
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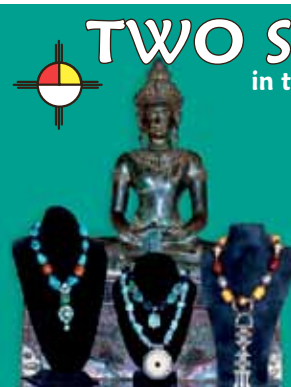
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ARTS EXPOSURE

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ART + CONVERSATION, 614 N. Bullard, 388-3350. Mon.-Sat. 10 a.m.-6 p.m., Sundays 12 a.m.-6 p.m. Gallery and gathering space. www.artandconversation.com.
ARTESANOS, 211-B N. Texas St., 519-0804. Mon.-Sat. 10 a.m.-5 p.m., Sun. 12-6 p.m.
[a]SP.“A”@E, 110 W. 7th St., 538-3333, aspace.studiogallery@gmail.com.
AZURITE GALLERY, 110 W. Broadway, 538-9048, Wed.-Sat. 10 a.m.-5 p.m. www.azuritegallery.com.
BLUE DOME GALLERY, 60 Bear Mountain Ranch Road (Bear Mountain Lodge, 2251 Cottage San Road), 534-8671. Mon.-Sat. 11 a.m.-5 p.m., Sun. 11 a.m.-3 p.m. www.bluedomegallery.com.
CLAYFUL HANDS, 622 N. California, 534-0180. By appointment. Phoebe Lawrence.
CLAYMOON STUDIO, 13 Jade Dr., 313-6959. Marcia Smith. By appointment.
COMMON THREAD, 107 W. Broadway, 538-5733. Mon., Thurs. Fri. and Sat. 10 a.m.-5 p.m. Retail and gallery space for fiber arts. www.fiberartscollective.org.
COPPER QUAIL GALLERY, 211-A Texas St., corner of Yankee and Texas, 388-2646. Tue.-Sun. 11 a.m.-4 p.m. Fine arts and crafts.
COW TRAIL ART STUDIO, 119 Cow Trail in Arenas Valley. Mon., Thurs.-Sat., 12-3 p.m. www.victoriachick.com.
CREATIONS & ADORNMENTS, 108 N. Bullard, 534-4269. Mon.-Sat. 9 a.m.-5 p.m. Work by Diane Reid.
DRAGONFLY STUDIO, 508 W 6th St., 388-8646. By appointment.
FENESTRA’S PANES IN THE GLASS, 102 W. Kelly St., 534-2087. By appointment.
FRANCIS MCCRAY GALLERY, 1000 College Ave., WNMU, 538-6517.
GALLERY 400, Gila House, 400 N. Arizona, 313-7015. Tues.-Sat., 1-6 p.m. www.gilahouse.com.
GINNY WOLF STUDIO & GALLERY, 108 W. Yankee St., 313-5709, www.ginnywolf.com.
HOWELL DESIGN & GALLERY, 200 W. Market St., 388.2993. www.anthonynhowell.com.
JEFF KUHN’S POTTERY, 3029 Pinos Altos Road, 534-9389. By appointment.
KAREN CARR STUDIO, 117 W Market St., 388-4505. By appointment.
LEYBA & INGALLS ARTS, 315 N. Bullard St., 388-5725. Mon.-Sat. 10 a.m.-6 p.m. Contemporary art ranging from realism to abstraction in a variety of media featuring artists Crystal Foreman Brown, Romaine Begay, Christana Brown, Susan Brinkley, Gordée Headlee, Diana Ingalls Leyba, Dayna Griego, Constance Knuppel, Mary Alice Murphy, Phillip Parotti, Betsey Resnick, Teri Matelson, Joe Theiman, Zoe Wolfe, Melanie Zipin. www.LeybaIngallsARTS.com, LeybaIngallsART@zianet.com.
LOIS DELONG STUDIO, 2309 Paul Place, 388-4759. By appointment.
LOIS DUFFY, 211C N. Texas, 534-0822. Fri.-Sat. 10 a.m.-4 p.m. The studio and gallery of Lois Duffy presents a unique and thought-provoking view of the world through the eyes of an artist. Imaginative portraits, surreal places and realistic scenes of life. Original paintings, cards and prints. www.loisduffy.com, loisduffy@signalpeak.net.
MARY’S FINE ART, 414 E. 21st St., 956-7315. Mary A. Gravelle.
MIMBRES REGION ARTS COUNCIL GALLERY, Wells Fargo Bank Bldg., 1201 N. Pope St. www.mimbresarts.org.
MOLLY RAMOLLA GALLERY & FRAMING, 307 N. Texas, 538-5538. www.ramollaart.com.
OL’ WEST GALLERY & MERCANTILE, 104 W. Broadway, 388-1811/313-2595. Daily 11 a.m.-6 p.m.
SEEDBOAT CENTER FOR THE ARTS, 214 W. Yankee St., 534-1136. Mon.-Sat. 10 a.m.-5 p.m. info@seedboatgallery.com.
SILVER SPIRIT GALLERY, 215 W. Broadway, 388-2079.
STONEWALKER STUDIO, 105 Country Road, 534-0530. By appointment. Barbara Jorgen Nance.

STUDIO BEHIND THE MOUNTAIN, 23 Wagon Wheel Lane, 388-3277. By appointment. www.jimpalmerbronze.com.
THE STUDIO SPACE, 109 N. Bullard St., 534-9291. www.jessgorell.com.
STUDIO UPSTAIRS, 109 N. Bullard St., 574-2493. By appointment.
SUSAN SZAJER STUDIO, Sanctuary Road, 313-7197 By appointment.
TATIANA MARIA GALLERY, 305 & 307 N. Bullard St., 388-4426. New Mexico landscape oils by Dan Boldman and Maria Brion. Fine art glass panels by Steve and PJ Robowski. Mimbres gourd vessels and masks by Pierre Nichols. Gallery designed furniture.
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TUNDAR GALLERY & STUDIO, 110 Yankee, 597-0011.
TWO SPIRIT GALLERY, 313 N. Bullard, Suite B, 534-4563. Mon.-Sat. 11 a.m.-4 p.m.
WILD WEST WEAVING, 211-D N. Texas, 313-1032, www.hosanaeilert.com. Mon.-Thurs. 9 a.m.-5 p.m., Fri.-Sat. 9 a.m.-6 p.m.
YANKIE ST. ARTIST STUDIOS, 103 W. Yankee St., 313-1032. By appointment.
ZOE’S GALLERY, 305 N. Cooper St., 538-8983. By appointment.
Tyrone
MOONSTRUCK ART STUDIO, 501 Covellite Dr., 956-5346, 654-5316. By appointment.
SUN DAWG STUDIO, 501 Malachite Ave., 388-3551. By appointment.
Pinos Altos
HEARST CHURCH GALLERY, Gold St., 538-9761/538-8216. Open mid-May to mid-Sept. Fri., Sat., Sun. and holidays, 10 a.m.-5 p.m.
Mimbres
CHAMOMILE CONNECTION, 3918 Highway 35N, 536-9845. Lynnae McConaha. By appointment.
KATE BROWN POTTERY AND TILE, HC 15 Box 1335, San Lorenzo, 536-9935, katebrown@gilinet.com, www.katebrownpottery.com. By appointment.
NARRIE TOOLE, Estudio de La Montura, 313-2565, www.narrietoole.com. Contemporary western oils, giclées and art prints. By appointment.
REESE-BENTON ARTS, 3811 Hwy. 35, 536-9487. By appointment.
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LA GARITA, 13 Humboldt, 537-6624. By appointment.
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JW ART GALLERY, Old Hurley Store, 99 Cortez Ave., 537-0300. Weds.-Fri. 9 a.m.-5 p.m., Sat.-Sun. 10 a.m.-5 p.m., www.jwartgallery.com.
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RUNNING HORSE GALLERY, Hwy. 180, Pleasanton, 539-2403. Thurs.-Sun. 10 a.m.-6 p.m. www.gilinet.com/runninghorse.
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Food Matters

Neighbors help hungry neighbors at the Grant County Community Food Pantry.



Open at the Warehouse every last Wednesday of the month from 4-6 p.m. and every first Saturday of the month from 10 a.m. to 12 p.m., the Food Pantry usually sees 80-100 people at a time. (Photos by Sharman Apt Russell)

Twice a month, every last Wednesday and first Saturday, the Grant County Community Food Pantry at the Warehouse on South Texas and South St. Vicente Street in Silver City opens for two hours to distribute free food. Usually, by the time the volunteers at the pantry are ready to start, about 40 people are already standing in line. If you are one of these men and women, you might have come early so you could get your food quickly and go home to your kids. Or maybe you are eager for some of the vegetables and fruit donated by the Silver City Food Co-op and local gardeners—a limited supply that is sometimes gone in the first hour.

Although you try to look pleasant, making the best of the situation, you really don't want to be here. Certainly you never *planned* to be here, in a food line. Maybe one day you had a job, and the next day you didn't. Maybe someone in your family got sick or the car needed repairs or the price of oil and gas shot up—and suddenly you didn't have enough groceries for the week. Maybe you are taking care of your grandchildren now on a limited income. Maybe you are disabled. Maybe you are homeless.

Whatever the reason, here you are, standing and waiting and chatting with your neighbor, talking about the weather or politics, about your cousin in Seattle or your daughter in Phoenix, passing the time.

This fall and winter, you may also be talking—or thinking, anyway—about how much food you will actually get today. The mission of the pantry is to provide emergency food assistance, and each

client can receive this food only once a month. In September you walked out with less food than you did in August, which was less than the month before. Supplies at the pantry are declining, and you can't help but worry about that.

Once the line starts moving and you get inside, you stop at the first table on your left, receiving a red card if you are getting food for one to four people, a yellow card if you are getting food for a family of five or more, and a blue card if you are also getting government commodities. The Food Pantry is jointly run by The Volunteer Center, which buys cheap food from the Roadrunner Food Bank in

Las Cruces, and the Silver City Food Co-op, which donates food and provides other organic and bulk whole foods at cost. Begun in April 2009 as a grassroots community service, the pantry does not ask for proof of need. If you say you are feeding two grandchildren and two of your sister's children, that's fine. If you are picking up food for your sick mother, that's okay, too. Just say what you need and get a card.

The government commodities, however, are different. Although commodities are distributed here by the volunteers, this separate program requires you every six months to sign a statement about your income and provide a picture ID and some proof of a physical address such as a utility bill. If you are homeless, you won't be able to fulfill these requirements.

Now you get your shopping cart from the middle of the room and start down the tables of food. You represent a family of four and you remember what you got last time you were here: one can of vegetables, one can of meat, a package of macaroni and cheese, a can of chilies, a can of jalapeños, a can of enchilada sauce, a jar of peanut butter, a pound of brown rice, a

pound of dried beans, and a pound of rolled oats. From the vegetable table, you took home a bag of yellow onions, a winter squash, and some celery.

Since you qualify for government commodities, you also stopped at the last table in the Warehouse and got a box provided by the US Department of Agriculture. Commodities are "surplus food" purchased by the USDA from farmers and food companies. In September, for example, the box weighed just over 10 pounds and included a packet of dried fig pieces, a package of macaroni pasta, a can of beef stew, a can of spaghetti sauce, two cans of unsweetened apple sauce, one can of low-sodium green beans and one can of low-sodium corn.

Including those 10 pounds of commodities, you walked away with about 30 pounds of food for the four people you are trying to feed. In the end, that came to about six dinners, and you were grateful for every single one. Now you are back, four weeks later.

Carolyn Smith from the Silver City Food Co-op, a key organizer and manager of the Food Pantry, explains the most recent decline in food supplies. Federal cuts to the Roadrunner Food Bank in Las Cruces and Albuquerque mean that the pantry's supplier has less food it can offer at a cheap price. "This is serious," Smith says. "We depend on Roadrunner to fill our shelves with inexpensive food. We have been telling everyone that cash donations go further than direct food donations, because the price per pound at food banks is so much less than at retail stores. Unfortunately, there just isn't very much food available to buy from Roadrunner. What we are trying to do now is partner more with local groceries stores like Albertsons and Food Basket and start organizing local food drives."

The government commodities program has also been sending less free food to Grant County and to food pantries across the country. "Six



Volunteers at the garden on 13th Street in Silver City, where "The Commons" project will be located.

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Volunteers outside the Food Pantry at the Warehouse. (Photo courtesy Alicia Edwards)

months ago, we were giving people 40 pounds of those commodities," Smith says. "Now both the quantity and the variety of foods available are so limited that we've gone from monthly to weekly deliveries to try to put together a reasonable box of commodities, but they weigh less each month."

States receive government commodities based on the number of unemployed workers and people living below the poverty rate. New Mexico ranks high in those areas, but even as the demand increases, the supply of food is dropping—with staples like grain and rice and beans and cheese no longer considered surplus. Smith urges voters in Silver City to call their federal and state representatives about reduced funding for both the government commodities program and the Roadrunner Food Bank. "Let them know that these spending cuts are hurting people who are already hurting."

Mike Torres has been a volunteer at the pantry for over a year and also serves on the board of The Volunteer Center. He says, "People are sometimes surprised at how many of their neighbors are here. And how many seniors. More and more people are also coming for someone else, a sick friend or parent. They hitch rides or take Corre Caminos, however they can."

Torres adds, "Many people in our community don't realize that the Food Pantry has to raise money to buy a lot of the food it gives away. The good news is that for every dollar that a community member gives to the Food Pantry, we can

buy nine dollars worth of food. That's pretty cost effective. And that all stays in Grant County."

Becky Young, another volunteer and board member, is heartened by how much the community has already given to the food pantry, especially in terms of its volunteer efforts. "This all started with ideas that came out of the community and it is staffed and run by volunteers," she says. "This is all about neighbors helping neighbors."

Young says that many of the people who receive food also ask how they can help—and then come back to work at the tables on distribution days, or to repack the 50-pound bags of oatmeal and rice and beans into one-pound bags, or to unload and then sort through the cartons of government commodities. "There is a lot of work that goes on behind the scenes. The food that goes out on the days we distribute doesn't come through one person's hands, it comes through many hands. Many people coming together to help someone who might be between paychecks or who just needs a little extra when things get tough. We can all relate."

Alicia Edwards, director of The Volunteer Center, also emphasizes that the food pantry is a volunteer-based, volunteer-run community effort. On top of distributions at the Warehouse, The Volunteer Center sponsors a monthly mobile food

pantry in Hurley, specifically for Mining District residents. The monthly distribution serves an average of 135 households. Additionally, The Volunteer Center delivers home-cooked meals, provided by local church women, to approximately 75 seniors in Hachita.

Open every last Wednesday of the month from 4-6 p.m. and every first Saturday of the month from 10 a.m. to 12 p.m., the Food Pantry usually sees 80-100 people at a time. But since each person may represent families of five or more, the food is actually getting distributed to many hundreds. And since people who come to the pantry often come erratically—only during an emergency or "bad patch" in their lives—the consistent turnout also represents many hundreds more.

Carolyn Smith says that the Food Pantry roughly receives and gives away 4,000 pounds of food every month, which costs about \$500 a month. Those numbers change all the time, of course, with the steady increase in people served accompanied by the recent decrease in food supplies.

Including backpacks of nutritious snacks for school children going hungry over the weekend, and other meals for seniors, Edwards reports that programs associated with The Volunteer Center provided more than 240,000 meals to Grant County residents last year.

Use of the current Warehouse has been a generous gift by local businesswomen Suzi Calhoun and Janey Katz. But the pantry is scheduled to

move eventually to a new location. In the last year, The Volunteer Center was able to use federal funds to acquire property at 501 E. 13th St., the site of an ambitious vision called "The Commons," a combination of food pantry, classrooms, office space, community gardens, greenhouse, and much more. As soon as funding permits, The Commons will add a commercial kitchen and social enterprise business, allowing it to become self-sustainable. Work begins on The Commons next year.

"The challenges ahead are very real," Edwards says, "and so is this community's commitment to ending hunger and poverty and making Grant County a better and healthier place to live."

How You Can Help

Community members can help the Food Pantry in many ways. You can write a check to The Volunteer Center, remembering that for every dollar you give, the food pantry can buy nine dollars of food to give out to your neighbors, people you know and see on the street. Send the check to PO Box 416, Silver City, NM 88062 or drop by the office at 915 N. Santa Rita St., Silver City, NM 88061. Non-perishable food donations are also accepted at The Volunteer Center office on Santa Rita. And you can donate fresh produce and/or fruit you have either purchased or grown in your garden; stop by the Food Pantry an hour before distribution begins or call Carolyn Smith at the Silver City Food Co-Op to make other arrangements. You can write your elected officials urging them to support better food policies—ranging from a fair minimum wage for workers to immediate support for the most needy in our communities. Finally, you can volunteer your time and energy by working at the Grant County Community Food Pantry on distribution days or "behind the scenes" unpacking and repacking. For more information, call (575) 388-2988.

You are unique. No one else will ever have your consciousness, your experiences, your life. At the same time, you are also a statistic—part of something larger. Poverty and hunger in America are on the rise. The 2008 poverty rate was 13.2% of Americans, the highest since 1997. More than 15 million Americans live in extreme poverty; their family's cash income is less than about \$10,000 a year for a family of four.

In 2010, over 17 million households in America—14.5%, approximately one in seven—were food insecure, the highest number ever recorded in the United States. One-third of those had very low food security—family members had to eat less, parents went without food so their children could eat, and children also skipped meals.

In effect, over one in 10 Americans experiences some form of involuntary hunger. In New Mexico, one in four children go hungry at some time in the year and one in six seniors. You know this already. You know you are not alone. ❧

Sharman Apt Russell is a member of The Volunteer Center board and author of Hunger: An Unnatural History (Basic Books, 2008).

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Meet the Maestro

As conductor and music director of the Las Cruces Symphony Orchestra, Lonnie Klein handles the baton and details from the artistic to the mundane.

For a city the size of Las Cruces and considering the demographics of same, this mini-metropolis is quite fortunate to have some unique people whose passions lie within the different fields of the arts. In recent years, I have profiled several of them, including authors Jennifer Cervantes, Robert Boswell and Charles Bowden, playwright and filmmaker Mark Medoff, playwright Tom Smith, mixed-media artist Mari Broenen, photographers David Taylor and Robert Yee, and even the vibrant founder of the Desert Dolls Burlesque troupe, Camille Adams.

Most, with the exception of Broenen, still live at least part-time in Las Cruces, although Adams and Yee may be leaving the area within the next year or so.

One person in the arts who isn't planning on going anywhere soon, and one who has had an enormous influence on the local classical music scene, is Dr. Lonnie Klein.

Klein is the music director and conductor of the Las Cruces Symphony Orchestra, which is an amazing group of talented musicians for such a small community. The LCSO and guest violinist Stefan Jackiw will be performing in Silver City on Dec. 2 at 7:30 p.m. and in Las Cruces on Dec. 3 at 7:30 p.m. and Dec. 4 at 3 p.m.

Everybody has a mental picture of an orchestra's conductor. But what most people don't know

is that the role of music director is just as important as being the conductor, and encompasses all aspects of the symphony program.

Klein has led the orchestra since 1999, after studying at Murray State University in Kentucky, Michigan State and the University of Evansville in Indiana, and receiving a doctorate from the University of Illinois.

"I ran away to the symphony," he offers in his high-energy style. "I always knew that I wanted to be a conductor, and used to wonder how I could make that happen."

Having a musical background helps, as Klein's father was a clarinetist. He took lessons from his father until the age of 13, at which time a professor in Evansville took over. Klein also took conducting classes as early as high school.

Although his frenetic schedule doesn't allow Klein to play the clarinet any longer, he does miss it. "Too busy," he says, but adds that he did play for 25 years in different orchestras in Kentucky, Michigan, Illinois and Indiana.

"This is my 13th season here, and I came here through an ad I read in a publication from the Director's Guild," Klein recalls. "I noted the opening, liked the size of the city, university and orchestra, and had a strong sense of being able to grow the orchestra. I was artistically driven and liked the quality of the musicians, and also had never traveled much in the Southwest, so I applied."

"There were 67 applicants for the position, and I was one of the final three. I came for a week in March of 1999, and have been here since."

As one can imagine, positions for symphony conductors are few and far between, and the competition can be acute. The El Paso Symphony Orchestra conductor's position is currently available, and Klein says that there were 250 applicants for it.

"There would probably be the same number for this position if I chose to leave it," he adds.

Applying for such a position, of course, can be a rigorous undertaking. Klein says that when a conductor is being considered there are many things that are taken into consideration, including things beyond musical talent and knowledge.

"It is a business, not just an art form," he explains. "It takes us \$40,000-\$45,000 to produce a single LCSO show, and that can go as high as \$60,000 for the Pops show. Our budget is three and a half times higher than it was when I came here, going from \$147,000 to \$462,000."

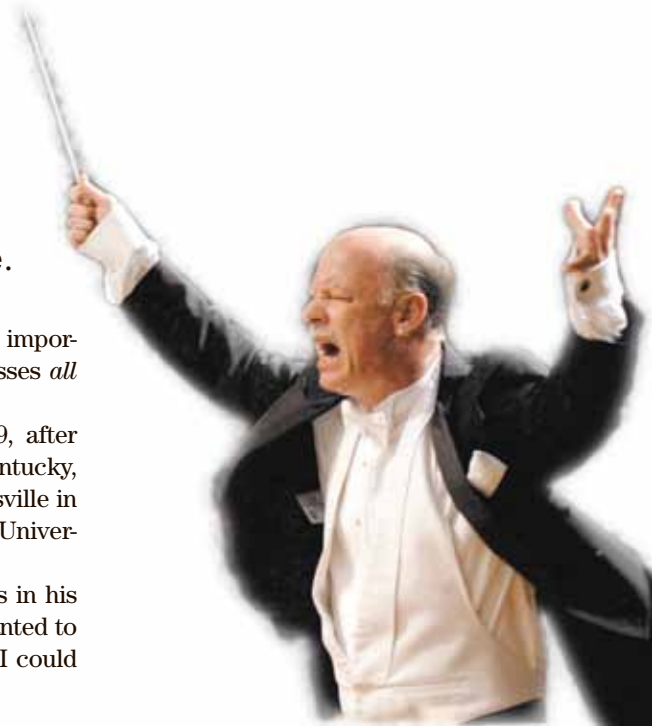
The Pops is a once-a-year, two-performances gala, which this year will take place on Jan. 7 and 8. "Broadway Rocks" is the theme, and it will include rock-inspired music from a number of Broadway musicals such as *The Wiz*, *Hairspray* and *Tommy*. Cocktails and hors d'oeuvres will be available before the show, which will take place at the Las Cruces Convention Center.

The LCSO season takes a long time to pull together. "I start planning a year ahead, so I am currently working on the 2012-13 season now. I'm working to secure guest artists and started studying for next year this past June," Klein says. "It's a continual process."

"I'll usually select what we'll do, and I have a good sense of what the community wants. It will be something that will challenge the orchestra and inspire the audience, while showing the strength of the orchestra. It won't just be selections from dead white European males, but will include current American composers. I think it is important to do 20th-century works and to balance the program with music of our time."

He adds, "There are also students in the orchestra and this gives them an opportunity to play a mix as well."

Klein mentions Samuel Barber and Charles Ives as US composers of note, adding that when planning a performance, he might also add a French



and/or Hungarian piece into the program as well.

His selections are certainly right on target, as almost every show of the previous 12 seasons has sold out, including 10 consecutive years of sold-out shows.

The details involved in a symphony performance are immense and involved. Klein notes that he has to contemplate tempos, time players and work on bowing for the string players. The number of musicians on stage varies a bit from 70-80, and there are only four rehearsals before a concert.

Klein says that he knows how to push the players, but also when to back off. "I'm comfortable with what I am doing and what they are doing, and there is a lot of trust involved. They are symbiotic relationships."

And besides all that, a visiting artist such as this month's violinist, Stefan Jackiw, has to be worked with and accommodated. "I only see the guest artist twice—on Wednesday and Friday, prior to the show," Klein says.

He continues, "It's a pretty stable orchestra and we have a good relationship. I'm able to work well with the concert master."

Klein's skills as conductor are not restricted to Las Cruces, however. Besides the upcoming LCSO show in Silver City, he has done numerous guest-conducting performances in the US and around the world, ranging from Albuquerque to Springfield, Mass., from Chihuahua City, Mexico, to points far beyond, including Canada, Colombia, Italy (several cities), Turkey and Germany.

Among his favorites was a guest-conducting opportunity in 2010 with the Northwest Deutsch Philharmonic in Germany. The group was founded in its current form in 1950, and is the one of several symphony orchestras based in the German state of North Rhine-Westphalia. Since it is funded in part by the state and a group of communities therein, Klein says that the conductor has more control, as the continued need to raise money is at least partially covered by those governments.

"It is a full orchestra," he recalls, "and I found it fascinating to work with them. But if things don't go well, you won't be conducting long. But I found everyone to be very receptive."

During his European travels last year, Klein was stranded for two weeks because of the eruption of the Eyjafjallajökull volcano in Iceland. He was also delayed for part of a day in customs in Vancouver, BC, and the trip home (finally) had him going from Seattle to Las Vegas, to Phoenix, and then to Dallas and finally to El Paso.

Another trip, this one to Bogotá, Colombia, found him dealing with bureaucrats again because of a yellow-fever certificate. With a note of surprise in his voice, Klein says, "They wanted to quarantine me!"

More trouble ensued on that trip when he was stopped again because authorities thought he might be harboring drugs.

"I was simply trying to get home," he says with a sigh, adding, "Music is revealing and cultural, not so much the travel."

So, just what is a conductor doing when he or she is leading the orchestra? As it turns out, almost every movement that Klein makes has



meaning to someone or all of the orchestra.

“Technique....” He ponders a moment. “Know the meter you are in, the compound (meter), whether it is 4/6, 6/8, looking for where the beat is. It can be low, high, fast, or ‘give it to them.’ All the gestures convey something to the musicians. It can be done with my hands, a gesture, body language, eye contact. The musicians will often instinctively know—they can read you.”

Many conductors in cities the size of Las Cruces face an additional challenge—working with a part-time orchestra. But since LCSO is full-time, Klein says he enjoys that more.

“Las Cruces is fun and challenging and it is really up to the conductor to bring the musicians to bear,” he says. “It’s not, of course, as challenging as someplace like New York, for example, but it is a real joy getting from ‘part A to part B,’ and that process is what is important. That’s what makes it joyful.”

When hiring a new musician for the orchestra, the process is also a bit challenging. There is some coming and going within LCSO, in particular among the string players, but there are always applicants waiting for their opportunity.

Klein says, “I’ll have them play a concerto,

movement or sonata, sometimes a Mozart piece, and listen and watch for a steady tempo and if they are in tune. You can usually tell pretty quickly if they have talent.”

The Las Cruces Symphony Orchestra has a long history, which is rather unusual, considering the size of the city and that recently Las Cruces was ranked by AOL’s Daily Finance as the seventh poorest city in the country.

As early as 1958, an orchestra of 50 was put together and conducted by William Cramer, a violinist and local school teacher. They performed several free shows, thus giving birth to what is now the LCSO. By 1962, mostly due to the work of Oscar Butler and Dr. John Glowacki, things were blooming in the symphony desert, with Glowacki being one of the early conductors.

As the LCSO’s current conductor, life is not all work for Klein, although he also teaches a conducting class at NMSU. In his spare time, he loves to take off with his travel trailer to hike, camp and especially fish. He is also an avid reader—“everything from John Grisham to US history.”

But today it is all work.

“I hate to cut this off,” he says, “but I have another meeting at 11.” The title “music director” comes into play here. He’s not off to interview a new timpani player, check the lighting, or even to attend a fundraising meeting.

Klein says, “I’m off to meet with (NMSU) facilities management to make sure that the restrooms are ready for the concert tonight.”

Bravo! 🎻

*Self-proclaimed “tin-eared”
Jeff Berg lives and scrawls in
Las Cruces.*



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HIKING APACHERIA • JERRY EAGAN

No Boundaries

Traveling into Mexican Apacheria recalls what all this area must have been like when only the Apache lived here.



Sierra los Embudos from two miles north of the US-Mexico border. (Photos by Jerry Eagan)

“...the Apache people fought Aztecs, Pimas, Tarahumara and other people... [with the coming of the Spanish and their use of horses and armor and insatiable lust for gold] ...the N’de sent runners to the settled peoples, demanding that all items with gold be discarded. Those who did not comply were annihilated. When the Spanish came, the People of the Rising Sun remained hidden and observed the Spanish and their ways with due caution. Thus, the Chiricahua bands remained unknown to the Spanish as a people for ‘the lifetime of one man.’”—*The Chiricahua Apache, 1846-1876: From War to Reservations* by D. C. Cole

As Brian Huberman and I drove west towards Tucson—the second time in less than 96 hours—it came to me like the first scent of someone burning sandalwood incense, more in a soft rich sensation rather than words: For the first time since I began “Hiking Apacheria” in 2002, I realized I’d finally experienced Apacheria as it was, before Spaniards, Mexicans or Americans—those western European conquerors, intruders, interlopers, soul-stealers and treasure hunters—had first come to take the land from the Apaches with little regard for those who had been here for thousands of years.

Not that they were all Apaches, or always had been called Apaches, but these first-generation native peoples of various names by 1886, when they were called “Chiricahua,” were ultimately driven east, to Florida, Alabama, Oklahoma and finally to Mescalero, NM, finally—places foreign to their mindset. The Apache called themselves “N’de” (NN-deh) or “The People.”

Even though those who’d been here for that time said the Apache had always been here—which I can’t agree with—there’s plenty of evidence that the people we Westerners call “Apache” were nonetheless “first-generation” Americans. Perhaps 1,000 years ago, ancestors of the Athabaskan speakers were without doubt walking south, having crossed the Bering Strait who knows how long before that. Perhaps by 1300 to 1400 AD those Athabaskan speakers had begun to smash into the quieter, less war-like groups that had emerged in this part of the world as much as 1,000 years earlier. Those people we’ve called the Anasazi, Ho-

hokam, Mogollon, Saladan and Sinagua were the ones who first felt the fate of clashing with those ultimately called N’de.

The last of the Athabaskan speakers, many believe, arrived between 1400 and the latter part of the 1600s. Many anthropologists and archaeologists place the people Western Europeans called Apache as arriving in the Southwest relatively close to the Spanish. D.C. Cole states in his book *The Chiricahua Apaches, 1846-1876: From War to Reservations* that the Chiricahua say they “watched the White Man for a generation before they came out of the rugged spaces from where they spied those Spaniards first.”

I’m not an anthropologist or archaeologist. Nonetheless, when I worked at Gila Cliff Dwellings National Monument in 2002, we learned that some archaeologists placed the inhabitants of those dwellings as arriving in the latter half of the 13th century. Archaeologists also believed the inhabitants of the Cliff Dwellings were close in lifestyles to the Tularosa Mogollon and that artifacts found at the Gila Cliff Dwellings were similar to those found in Tularosa Cave, a few miles east of Aragon, NM.

In the 1960s, anthropologists Albert Schroeder and Harry Basehart scoured Spanish records as well as the oral traditions of first-generation peoples such as the Zuni, Hopi and Puebloan peoples for mention of their enemies and friends. The purpose was to establish an official government view on who was where and when in relation to tribal claims being made by many native groups in that



An Apache stronghold, two miles north of the border. This position allows for a distant view of Sierra los Embudos and could have allowed Apaches to provide a fighting or holding position whereby women and children could enter Mexico if being pursued by American forces (or vice versa).

decade. Schroeder laid out a grid in his book, *A Study of the Apache Indians*.

In 1770, according to author and historian David Brugge, the name applied to the peoples who were located in Southeast Arizona (whom we’ve called “Chiricahua”) was “Segliande.” In the Upper Gila, the peoples the Spanish encountered there were called “Chiquende,” who evolved into the Mimbres Apache. Schroeder also applied the names “Iccujenne” and “Tecujenne” to the Mimbres Apache.

By 1874, in a report on the status of the men, women and children he was responsible for at the Southern Chiricahua Apache Agency, Tom Jeffords called those people “Cochise’s Band.” In 1890, Captain John Bourke called the Southern Apache people “Nindehe” and the Apaches of Southeastern Arizona “Chokonni,” which meant “juniper people.” Another translation of “Chokonni” is “People of the Rising Sun.” The Eastern Group Bourke called “Chie” or “Red Paint People.” In 1907, Curtis labeled the Apaches of northern Mexico “Nde Ndai,” which meant “half Apache-half Mexican.” By 1941, Morris Opler called the Apaches of Mexico “Nden-dai,” or “Enemy People.” Schroeder’s grid notes too the “Ndendai” and “Ndein dai” were the Apaches of Northern Mexico, and he listed a variety of other names for other groups of Apaches.

I’ve always believed the Apaches are the only ones with the right to decide what to call themselves. Colonialism wrongly conferred to the colonialist the task of “naming” indigenous peoples. Even so, American scientists have learned as much as possible through talks with Apaches who were confined to the reservations in Florida, Alabama, Oklahoma and New Mexico who had been among those exiled to those places beginning in 1886—the living Apaches survivors of the American, Mexican and Apache Wars of the 19th century. They learned Apache oral traditions that defined their roots. Men like Schrader, Basehart, Bourke, Goodwin, then, were lucky in that they talked with Apache men and women who’d heard those stories from others who went further back into the earliest days of the 19th century.

This process isn’t unique to American archaeologists and anthropologists. The same phenomenon has occurred worldwide as nomadic and semi-nomadic peoples have been overrun and confined. Always the more powerful, more numerous finally say where these previous nomads will live after being conquered.

Because northern Mexico today is so similar now to what it was in 1886, when the majority of the Apache were subdued and sent into exile, I sensed before our departure that Brian and I were going to get closer to places where the Apache lived in periodic peace with the Mexicans. As a result, we were poised for a true adventure.

For four years, Texas-based filmmaker Brian Huberman (see “From Water to Water,” August 2011) had badgered me about going to Mexico. He was obsessed with visiting Cañon de los Embudos, which straddles the north-south line between Chihuahua and Sonora. Less than 30 miles south of the American-Mexican Border, Cañon de los Embudos is clearly more than just the place where Geronimo first attempted to surrender in 1886.

Of course, it was easier for me to state that so clearly since I’d been there in 2007. Brian hadn’t first contacted me until later in 2007, when I’d come back from that trip; now he seemed determined to go there, even though there’d been enormous changes in Mexico since 2007.

In 2009, an acquaintance had sent me photos of a slaughter that one group of drug cartelistas had wrought upon some victims—whether police, soldiers or other “sicarios” (thugs or hit men) was unclear. He suggested I think twice before I opened the link to those photos. “They’re damned grim, Jerry,” he’d added.

Having seen the carnage of war, I went ahead and opened the dozen photo attachments he’d sent. He was right—the scene was something I’d never

seen before: bodies packed like cordwood in a newer model Dodge van. It reminded me of the days in the 1950s or early 1960s when college kids stacked as many bodies as possible in a Volkswagen or phone booth. Those college kids had attempted to set new world records of such feats. Somehow, I doubted the *sicarios* who’d perpetrated this violence cared about setting some new grim Guinness record.

All the bodies had been dismembered. The cuts were smooth, clean, not ragged—as if they’d been made by a surgical saw, not a chain saw. I hoped those beastly surgeons hadn’t performed their grisly work on people still alive—but while I hoped that, I sensed that probably wasn’t the case. In other scenes, the torsos lay in two separate lines, and in some photos men with their faces blacked out were trying to rearrange the body parts with the torsos based on clothing. There were *no* heads.

Brian later told me that somehow, using Google Images, his engineer had found those photos on the web, and that he’d been able to see the heads/faces of those poor human beings who’d been cut apart.

Nonetheless, as each year ticked by, Brian still wanted to go to Mexico. I’d learned more about the mayhem in Mexico and everything I’d read was punctuated by those photos of those dismembered

A wall behind which Apache may have fought.





Brian Huberman (left) and the author (above) in Cañon de los Embudos, Mexico.

bodies. Even so, I had an interest in returning to the Cañon. The experience of being at Cañon de los Embudos in 2007 had fired my mind with possibilities. I'd have returned immediately, but that wasn't possible. As months turned to years, the chaos in Mexico worsened. I talked with law enforcement sources, then to friends of friends whom I knew visited Mexico often.

Our sources in Mexico assured us that things were grim, but not terrible. One had to be circumspect about what one did, where and when. The news had been filled with tales of decapitation and slaughter, but that type of mayhem hadn't happened where we were going.

We prepared as methodically as possible. Brian said he'd been chastised by long-time friends for being reckless and irresponsible in even *considering* the idea. My wife demanded an updated will. I prayed constantly as we made our way across the border and headed south

with some newly made friends (whose names I'll omit here, along with other details of our trip that might endanger someone).

Our friends were dismayed that the Americans who'd visited the sites south of Silver City and Deming—such as Neuvo Casas Grandes, the ancient ruins of Paquime or Mata Ortiz—had stopped coming in the last year. They were hopeful that some of those visits could be reestablished and asked us to inform ourselves that the horror stories we'd heard rarely happened to *norteamericanos*.

We saw many beautiful sites that they had visited and hoped we could visit, too. They showed us photos in an informal slide show of places like the foothills of the Sierra Madre and Tres Castillos, where Victorio and the Chihene Apache had been so horribly attacked and slaughtered.

Traveling to Mexico when neither of us spoke Spanish, when we were unarmed and vulnerable to what only God knew could happen to us and our hosts—that experience gave me a sense of what it must have been like to travel through Apache-ria when the Apaches were fully in control of the country itself. Our destinations—Palomas and parts south and west in Chihuahua and Sonora—were places absolutely linked with the era when

APACHERIA continued on next page

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APACHERIA continued

Spaniards and later Mexicans claimed they were in charge. Those were delusional beliefs: The Apaches were always in charge.

Thankfully, I'd met and talked with several local sources who told me that the people I'd been told might want to work with us were good people, trustworthy. Even so, we didn't know them. We didn't speak Spanish. We were novices at going into Mexico post-cartel violence. Our host told us that yes, there was danger, but he made accommodations to bring us to our destination ranch in Mexican Apacheria.

There we were able to meet and greet Mexicans who were as deeply involved with the study of the Chiricahua and N'de N'ai Apaches as we were. As we talked and listened and looked at their photos, we understood they were as passionate as we in our fascination with these rugged, tough-as-nails people.

I grasped quickly that these places we visited in Mexico were less developed. The bulldozers and land developers hadn't turned their gazes on 99.99% of the Mexican lands we saw as they dreamed of condos, apartments, housing developments.

The towns in Chihuahua were clearly more impoverished than any part of New Mexico I'd seen in my nine years here. The towns were there and then there were desert, hills, mountains, canyons, mesas—clean separations between populated places and unpopulated or lightly peopled. As we rolled south, I had no doubt that if we explored more places in Mexico—primarily, Chihuahua and Sonora—we'd find ourselves so close to the places the Apache last occupied in 1886 that it would be stunning.

This trip into Mexico, where conditions were dicey and tenuous, I realized was just as many Spaniards, Mexicans and Americans had probably felt when they penetrated Apacheria. Many Spanish and Mexican explorers and citizens had possessed no weapons. It's one thing to go into a place like modern Mexico with weapons. Mere possession of a weapon, even a single live round of ammunition could get us thrown into jail.

As we were headed back to Tucson, I looked south where mountains named Animas, Alamo Hueco, Hatchets, San Luis and Guadalupe were places I'd hiked in, and saw them now as merely extensions of those farther south. Erase the arbitrary border lines on maps, dismantle the fence and boundary markers of both nations, and pretend there were no deeds or patents on land in the US or Mexico, and Apacheria would be more what it was: A vast oval with horizons always receding—no horizon line ever reached, in the 15th, 16th or even 17th centuries, that said this marks the end of Apacheria.

I now knew from direct experience that mountains where I'd been were named Sierra San Luis, Sierra En Medio, Sierra Espuelas, Sierra los Embudos. For nearly a year, I'd been hiking in the Burros and Peloncillos. It was hard to stop hiking in the Peloncillos—15 separate hikes, at least. Oh, to hike Sierra los Embudos!

The clouds that scudded from southwest to northeast moved across Apacheria in ways only



Photo taken near the so-called Conference Site where General Crook and Geronimo met, in Cañon de los Embudos, Mexico.

the Apaches could have known. The names they'd given to springs, water holes, places where piñons, agave yucca, desert spoon yucca, wild canyon grapes, prickly pears and walnuts abounded, mountains, mesas and canyons they knew intimately, were just where they were. All were connected in some cyclical movement that never had really stopped until Western Europeans and Americans drew lines of statehood, private ownership, demarcated by barbed wire or adobe walls guarded by men with guns.

I'd always felt I wanted the life of a nomad. It was impossible, of course, to claim that now. But I understood experientially that being south of the border was much different than north of the border.

I now had an experience of hiking a massive, seemingly endless landscape that was plenty when one stayed solely "in today." I was blessed. I felt different. I'd always felt I wanted the life of a nomad. It was impossible, of course, to claim that now. But I understood experientially that being south of the border was much different than north of the border.

I don't wish it to be the last time I go there.

As every Anglo or Hispanic man, woman and child of the 17th, 18th and 19th centuries could attest, thinking about entering Mexico when the Apaches were there and actually traveling through those empty places were two entirely different things.

The Apaches were tough fighters and could be brutal. But the *sicarios* of today's Mexican cartels have driven deeper into "hearts of darkness" far worse than anything the Apaches ever did to their enemies. It's perplexing and just one more reason to hold the Mexican people in our hearts and ponder the effects there of American drug use.

I found Mexican Apacheria closer to the days when the last Apache warriors were exiled to the east because it's barely been touched by develop-

ment. You know the difference when you drop off the highway into "back country," where there are no guarantees for return, what Apacheria was like. We weren't reckless; we'd planned as much as we could for contingencies and then went with our Mexican friends into a place even they'd never seen. I returned, but I must remember that many settlers in these parts made one trip too many into Apacheria and paid with their lives. I know, because I've found their lonely graves in some of the most remote places I've ever been in life. ☘

This is the 28th "Hiking Apacheria" article Jerry Eagan has written. All are available on our



A camera like that used by C.S. Fly to photograph the Apaches at Cañon de los Embudos.

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The Giving Tree



From food to tools to medicine, the yucca is a veritable Walmart for desert dwellers.

The torrey yucca, leaves and blooms, overlooking the Organ Mountains, east of Las Cruces. Note that the leaves have tendrils of fiber curling away from the edges. (Photos by Jay W. Sharp)

If—like some of our neighbors—you have in your yard a broad-leaf yucca with the last spring and summer flower stalk still standing, you might consider decorating it for the coming holiday season. For instance, you can hang ornaments from the tips of leaves. You can place a cluster of lights (taking care not to create a fire hazard) and ornaments at the tip of the stalk, where the plant's cluster of flowers bloomed during the summer. You can create a distinctively Southwest "Christmas tree."

While most cacti bristle with arrays of modified leaves, or spines, that look like pins and needles or fishhooks, most yuccas—unlikely members of the symbolically peaceful lily family—guard themselves with armaments of leaves, not spines, that resemble sabers. Like the cacti, the evergreen yuccas serve up tasty meals to various animals in spite of their threatening botanical weaponry.

In fact, the yuccas held such an important role in the diets (as well as the economies) of Native Americans that the plants became embedded in folk histories, ceremony and tradition. For one example, in *The Diné: Origin Myths of the Navaho Indians* (recorded by Aileen O'Bryan of the Bureau of American Ethnology of the Smithsonian Institution in 1956), "The Plan, or Order of Things," declared that "There was a plan from the stars down..."

"...they planned how a husband and a wife should feel toward each other, and how jealousy should affect both sexes. They got the yucca and the yucca fruit, and water from the sacred springs, and dew from all the plants, corn, trees and flowers. These they gathered, and they called them *tqo alchin*, sacred waters. They rubbed the yucca and the sacred waters over the woman's heart and over the man's heart. This was done so they would love each other; but at the same time there arose jeal-

ousy between the man and the woman, his wife."

Emblems of the Desert

The yuccas, emblematic of the desert, typically suggest sprays of broadswords or rapiers that crown either a root-stem, a single stem or branching stems. Altogether, at least four dozen species occur in the yuccas' native range of the western United States, Mexico, Central America and the West Indies. More than a dozen species populate our Southwestern region, growing from the bottoms of desert basins to the upper slopes of mountain ranges.

One of the most widely distributed, the banana yucca, has extended its range "from the mountains of the eastern Mohave Desert of California across southern Nevada, southwestern Utah and southwestern Colorado as far east as Trinidad. From this northern boundary it extends south and southeast across northern and central Arizona and the greater part of New Mexico into southwestern Texas," according to Willis H. Bell and Edward F. Castetter, writing in *Ethnobiological Studies in the American Southwest*.

Collectively, the desert species of yucca, all well equipped for surviving under harsh conditions, have several distinctive characteristics.

Their sharply pointed succulent (water-storing) leaves bear greenish, grayish- or bluish-green waxy skins that both reflect the heat of the desert sun and restrict the loss of stored water. The rosette leaf arrangements and the often-channeled upper leaf surfaces function as conduits for funneling water from rains, snowmelt and dew into the plant stem and root system. Most desert species' leaves signal their botanical identity with tendrils of fiber that curl away from the edges.

The yucca stems have a "vascular" structure—scattered bundles of specialized tissues that store and conduct water. Some species—for instance, Our Lord's Candle, a yucca of the western Sonoran Desert—have very abbreviated stems, or "root stems," that barely reach the surface of the ground. Others, like the banana, or datil, yucca (of

all three United States' deserts) have very short or sometimes "reclining" stems. The soaptree yucca (Chihuahuan and Sonoran Deserts) and the torrey yucca (Chihuahuan Desert) have stems, sometimes shaggy with skirts of dead leaves, that can range from several inches to 10 to 15 feet in height. That star of the yuccas, the Joshua tree (Mojave and Sonoran Deserts), has multiple branching fibrous stems as tall as 40 or 50 feet. Some yucca species that grow in dune fields—for instance, the soaptree yucca of northern Chihuahua's Médanos de Samalayuca (Sand Dunes of Samalayuca)—have stems that grow taller very rapidly, as much as several inches per year, to keep the leaf rosettes from being engulfed by the marching dunes.

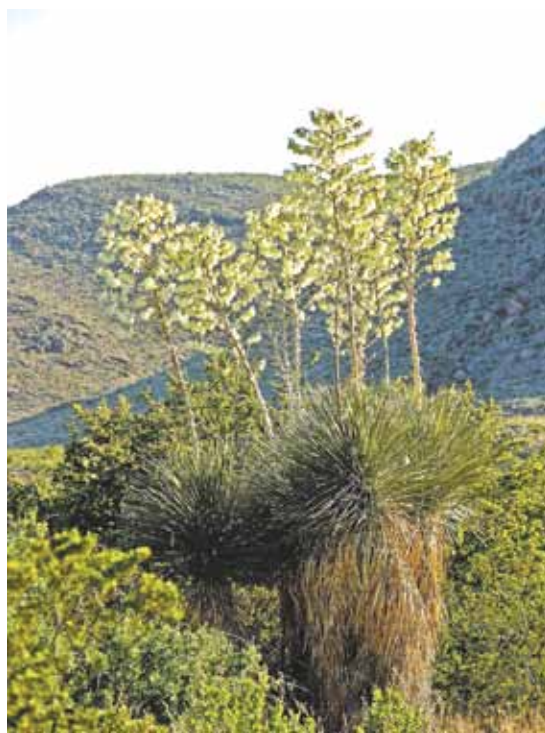
Some species have both shallow radial root systems and deep tap roots. The radial roots intercept rainwater and snow melt as it soaks into the upper soil layers. (Other species have a more limited root system.) The tap roots reach for the deeper water in the lower soil layers, and they have fleshy tissues for storing and conducting water. The roots stake out a claim for water and nutrient resources, guarding a plant's "territory" against encroachment by neighboring yuccas and other plants.

Typically, the yuccas produce a dense bouquet of creamy white flowers, sometimes with a reddish or purplish tinge, on a single stalk in the spring and early summer. The flowers attract a specialized pollinating moth species. The yuccas follow with an equally dense cluster of fleshy green edible fruits during the summer, attracting a veritable lunch line of consumers.

Like cacti, the yuccas minimize the evaporation of water from their tissues by opening their stomata (leaf pores) during the coolness of night (rather than during the heat of the day) to take in the carbon dioxide required for photosynthesis. They open their stomata as darkness falls and effectively inhale carbon dioxide through the night. They put it in short term storage by combining it, biochemically, with an organic acid. They close their stomata as

darkness gives way to sunlight, then free their store of carbon dioxide internally. Fueled by solar energy, they begin the process of photosynthesis, which they continue through the day.

By contrast, many other plants open their stomata for business at sunrise. They take in carbon dioxide during the heat of the day and proceed directly with photosynthesis, without the intermediate step of short-term chemical storage. More efficient, these plants tend to grow more rapidly, but they also squander much of their water store by evaporation through their stomata.



The soaptree yucca in bloom.

Family Members

Generally, the yuccas of the Southwest fall into one of two groups: the broad-leaf yuccas, with mature leaves that measure roughly two inches in width, and the narrow-leaf yuccas, with mature leaves that measure well under one inch in width. Some of the better known species include the broad-leaf torrey and banana yuccas and the narrow-leaf soaptree yuccas, Our-Lord's-Candle and, of course, the Joshua tree yucca.

The torrey yucca, or Spanish bayonet, a signature plant of our Chihuahuan Desert, closely resembles the banana yucca, with both having similar leaves and radiating root systems. In fact, the two species may be hybridizing, according to Clark Champie in his *Cacti and Succulents of El Paso*. The torrey yucca, however, has a rising and shaggy skirted stem that may reach 15 feet or more in height. It produces creamy white, purple-tinged flower clusters and fleshy fruits on a stalk that sometimes extends for several feet above the leaf rosette.

The banana yucca holds residence in the Chihuahuan, Sonoran and Mojave Deserts. Its 30-inch-long leaves typically occur in an open cluster atop

Soaptree yucca leaves with whitish margins.





The torrey yucca bloom cluster with purplish tint.

abbreviated stems. It has a fibrous and highly branched radiating root system. Its flower stalk reaches as much as 40 inches in height, bearing fleshy white flowers with a red or purple tinge. Its produces a green, fleshy, banana-shaped fruit, hence its common name.

The soaptree yucca, among the most common of the Chihuahuan and Sonoran Desert yuccas—and New Mexico’s state flower—has pale green leaves with whitish margins. As it grows and matures, it often develops a branching, shaggy stem perhaps 15 feet in height. It has both a radiating root system and a tap root. Each stem branch produces a cluster of cream-colored, bell-shaped flowers and brown woody seed capsules that tip a flower stalk several feet in length.

Our-Lord’s-Candle, native to the western Sonoran Desert, has a decorative “dense basal rosette of gray-green, rigid, spine-tipped leaves” that span about two feet, according to the Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center website. It has a branched radiating root system. It produces, on a single 10- to 15-foot stalk, a dense cluster of purple-tinged, cream-colored, bell-shaped flowers and a juicy, tender but seed-filled fruit. Its blossoms seem to almost glow in the soft light of dawn or sunset, giving the plant its name. Unlike other yuccas, Our-Lord’s-Candle dies once it has bloomed.

The Joshua tree yucca, the patriarch of the clan, holds primary residence in the Mojave Desert. Its leaves, according to Richard Katz on the Flower Essence Society website, measure about 5 to 12 inches in length, becoming “sword-like in their intensity” as they mature. Resembling a plant you would expect to find in a Hollywood version of an alien world, a mature Joshua tree has a bizarrely branched stem, a result of its inclination to add new growth from the site of a blossom cluster.

According to the Blue Planet Biomes website, the Joshua tree “has two sets of root systems; one stores any surplus water and it also develops bulbs. The bulbs are buried 10 to 30 feet under the soil. Sometimes they reach up to four feet in circumference and weigh up to 40 pounds. The other set is a shallow root system; the shallow roots only reach down to a couple of feet.” The Joshua tree blooms annually if it receives enough rain. Upon flowering, “the light cream or ivory-colored waxy blossom emits a ‘musty odor similar to that of a toadstool’ and reveals a seedpod that is ‘raspberry’ or artichoke in shape.... These blossoms open only at night and only partially, which is considered rather unusual,” according to Graeme Somerville of San Francisco State University. The Joshua tree, which may live for centuries, received its name from Mormon pioneers who thought the plant looked like the Biblical prophet, his arms raised, beckoning them across the desert wilderness to the promised land.

YUCCA continued on next page

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YUCCA continued

A Botanical General Store

The yuccas serve not only as a grocery store for insects, reptiles, birds and mammals—filling an important niche in the desert food chain—but also answer needs for housing, tools and raw materials for these consumers. In fact, with some yucca species, virtually every part—from the leaves to the stems to the roots to the flowers and fruits—winds up on the shopping list of some consumer, frequently including man.

For example, yuccas provide seed stores for feeding the larva of the yucca moth, a partner in a textbook example of “mutualism”—by definition, a biological relationship in which both parties benefit. In the spring, when the yuccas flower, their whitish blossoms give refuge to the moth during the day. The flowers’ ovaries serve as a depository for the eggs laid by the moth during the night. The fruits contain the food seeds, stacked like poker chips in the pod, for feeding the larvae until they emerge from the hull to pupate. In return, the yuccas receive pollination by the yucca moth, the only insect that renders this service. In essence, the yucca and the moth evolved in a kind of extraordinary biological minuet, with each essential to the survival of the other.

Especially during the flowering and fruiting season, the yuccas become a veritable banquet table for their consumers. For example, the leaves attract black-tail jackrabbits, desert cottontail rabbits, woodrats and packrats. The stems draw various insects. The roots provide food for pocket gophers. The blooms, fruits and seeds attract arthropods (invertebrate animals with jointed legs and a segmented body, such as insects), song birds, game birds and rodents. The flower stalks may become food for antelope, mule deer and elk. Even dead yuccas feed somebody, such as termites.

Yuccas also offer accommodations for wildlife. Our soaptree yucca, for instance, opens its botanical apartment doorway to the cactus wren, the Scott’s oriole, flickers, the Swainson’s hawk, the aplomado falcon and others. It offers temporary perches for many birds. The Joshua tree stem gives shelter to the desert night lizard, one of the smallest reptiles in the world.

For the highly resourceful Native Americans, the yuccas not only served as an important food source, but also furnished fibers for making clothing, basketry, mats, cordage, netting, cradles brushes, bindings, bowstrings and gaming pieces, according to Bell and Castetter. Leaves became a poltice for treating sore eyes; leaf points, awls



The torrey yucca, a signature plant of our Chihuahuan Desert, with a cactus wren perched in its bloom cluster. (Photos by Jay W. Sharp)

for sewing leathers and fabrics and piercing ears; leaf fibers, brushes for combing hair and painting ceramics; leaf juice (mixed with a powder made from scorpions, red ants, centipedes and jimson weed), a potion for poisoning arrow points; fresh roots, a detergent for washing bodies, clothing, fresh hides and scalps; dead roots, a fuel for firing pottery; dead and dried flower stalks, tools for making fires; long flower stalks, lances for fighting enemies; and fresh flower stalks, construction material for building lodge walls. An emulsion made from the yucca also was used as a medicine for treating insect and snake bites.

The banana yucca, a Jemez Puebloan told Bell and Castetter, “was the most important of all wild fruits. [The Puebloan] recounted [a] method of preparation known to all the pueblos which consisted of splitting the fruit into halves, removing the seeds, and allowing the halves to dry. Much the commoner method, however, was to peel the fruit and dry the pulp, which was afterwards worked into a cake and dried further. The Jemez boiled the pieces of cake with water and drank the sweet liquid.”

Banana yucca “was abundant in the mountainous country inhabited by the nomadic Yavapai [of the Sonoran Desert] and was one of the wild crops to be gathered in its season,” noted Bell and Castetter. “The Northeastern Yavapai ate the fruit after boiling [it] in water and in addition gathered the tender flower stalks before blossoming and prepared them for use by roasting in the fire.”

In southwestern New Mexico and southeastern Arizona, a narrowleaf yucca helped replenish the Chiricahua Apaches’ larders during the spring, when “the clusters of white flowers... are in bloom,” said Morris Edward Opler in his *An Apache Life-way*. “These are gathered and boiled with meat or bones. Any surplus is boiled, dried and stored. The buds of still another variety of yucca (unidentified) are opened and dried. During the process they must be impaled on sticks ‘as you dry peaches; you cannot put them on a hide because they would stick to it [said Opler’s Chiricahua informant].... These are used to sweeten drinks.”

“In the opinion of the authors,” said Bell and Castetter, “yucca ranked foremost among the wild plants utilized by the inhabitants of the Southwest.”

It seems the least today’s Southwest inhabitants can do, in light of the yucca’s centuries of service to humanity, is celebrate it this season with a few holiday decorations. ❧



Soaptree yucca bloom cluster.

Jay W. Sharp is a Las Cruces author who is a regular contributor to *DesertUSA*, an Internet magazine, and who is the author of *Texas Unexplained*. To read all his guides to wildlife of the Southwest, see www.desertexposure.com/wildlife.

BORDERLINES • MARJORIE LILLY

Turning a Corner

Less violence and more jobs in Palomas.

When I drove through the Port of Entry to Palomas in mid-November, there seemed to be more people in the streets than usual.

There were clusters of Mexicans with luggage just north of the US Customs inspectors, waiting for rides, and maybe a dozen people outside the Presidencia, or City Hall, a block south of the border on the right.

But it could be that the number of the people in the street was related to the balmy weather. The skies were blue, and temperatures were in the high 60s.

I went to talk to Miguel Angel Chacon, who's been mayor of Palomas for a year. He welcomed me into his small, sparsely decorated office where Estanislao Garcia had been mayor before him, and then Maria Lopez, who took Garcia's place after his assassination in October 2008.

Things appear to have returned to relative normality in the Presidencia. It's not in emergency mode any more, where one was always slightly on edge due to the specter of possible violence.

Chacon is stocky and fairly short, and his sober face is often lit by a wry smile. I first asked him how many murders there'd been in Palomas during 2011. I'd heard from a good source that the streets had calmed down, but Chacon said, surprisingly, "One, or maybe two."

He added, "It's more secure now. The army has supported us a lot." He also mentioned a new combined police force in Chihuahua called the Policia Unica.

He then told me the good news that a lot of people in Palomas have been waiting for—the Japanese car parts factory, which employed 300 people before it pulled out a couple of years ago, is returning either in December or January.

Chacon said this meant more Mexicans would be moving to Palomas, whose population is now 6,000. He also claimed there was "an 80% chance" that there'd be two more maquiladoras in Palomas next year. They would build their plants in the area east of town on lots that belong to the state of Chihuahua.

If this is true, it means that the dreams that Palomenses have talked about for well over a decade may finally be materializing.

Another program the town carried out was a temporary work project hiring 80 people to clean the streets. It started in August and ended about the time I visited. The people hanging around the Presidencia were waiting for their last check.

When I left, a photographer from Ascension was snapping a photo of about 30 somewhat rag-tag, grinning members of the group lined up with Miguel Chacon.

In regard to the violence, several other people in town and a couple people in Columbus basically confirmed what Chacon said, saying Palomas was almost entirely at peace. People on the street, a man working at Del Rio supermarket, and a teacher in Columbus all agreed.

A smiling Benita, the Palomas librarian, said that young people were going to dances at night again, although she still walked straight home after work—understandable since it's getting dark at that time now.

I should mention that I know of a few cases where people are still fearful of threats.

But I felt relief and a quiet elation as I drove back across the border. Christmas carols playing at the Family Dollar in Columbus seemed full of

light as I shopped.

It took me a couple of days, however, to remember conversations I'd had with two men in Palomas in March or April. Both had businesses, and both said they thought the killings in the year so far were worse than ever.

I was surprised to hear that, but they both seemed entirely sincere. It's easy to understand why people would want to minimize the violence, but it's hard to imagine why they'd exaggerate.

If what they said was true, or even nearly true, Chacon was stretching things quite a bit.

What I think happened is that the violence started declining in the summer. Javier Lozano, a judge in Columbus and chief of police in Palomas in the early 1990s, said there have been no killings in Palomas for the "last few months." He believes the violence right now is lower than it's been in two decades.

Lending a Hand

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LA LUZ DE LA ESPERANZA, Palomas Outreach, PO Box 38, Columbus, NM 88029, (575) 536-9726, childrenofpalomas@yahoo.com, Palomas_Outreach@yahoo.com

OUR LADY OF LAS PALOMAS HUNGER PROJECT, PO Box 622, Columbus, NM 88029, (575) 531-1101, susan1028@aol.com, ourladyoflaspalomas.org

The violence has plummeted in Palomas at about the same time as it's been declining in Juarez. Some of the same forces may have been at work.

In Juarez, the Juarez Cartel has been in retreat since April, and some say that the security forces made a deal to protect the Sinaloa Cartel toward the goal of putting a brake on the inter-cartel violence. But Howard Campbell of UTEP doesn't believe such a pact was made. "They're just targeting the weaker cartel," he says.

Tony Payan, also of UTEP, doesn't attribute the downward trend in Juarez to the police. Instead, he says, "People are beginning to hesitate about going into gangs when offered money, because it's like a death sentence."

The second reason he gives is that "the new governor [Cesar Duarte] has made a difference by creating the Policia Unica. They have one mission: Let's get those guys, whom they consider trash, out of the streets."

For whatever reason, the murder rate in Juarez, which was eight per day in 2010, was down to almost five a day in September and was still declining in November, down to nearly three per day.

The violence has been increasing in some parts of Mexico this year, with the most extreme case being Acapulco, but may as a whole be beginning to decline. The murders of Juarez have represented one-third of the total in the country, and the decline there has pushed the overall numbers down.

On the New Mexico border, it seems indisputable that Palomas has turned an important corner. Elation for the sake of the people there, who have been through so much in the past four years, is justified this Christmas.. ❄

Borderlines columnist Marjorie Lilly lives in Deming.



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THE STARRY DOME • BERT STEVENS

Amateur Astronomers

Plus the planets for December.

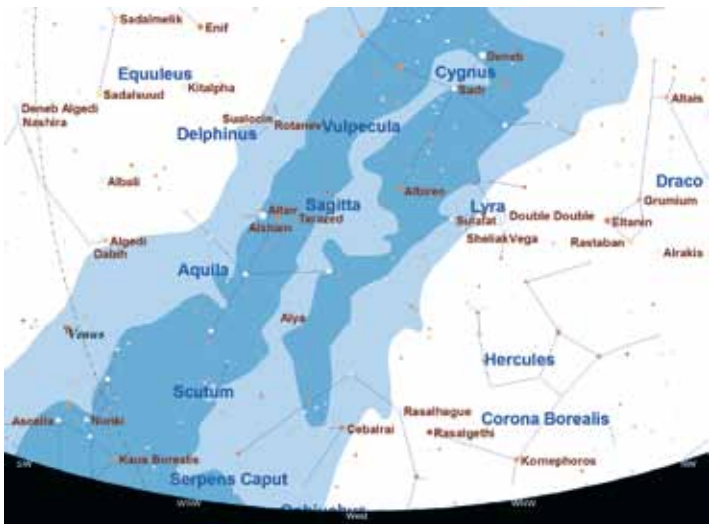
There are many television programs showcasing astronomers. Usually, these programs are talking about professional astronomers, those who make their living from studying, teaching or researching the science of astronomy. There is another group of people who are heavily involved in astronomy, however—amateur astronomers.

The word “amateur” has a number of implications, but its source is from Latin via French for a “lover” or “to love.” So amateur astronomers love astronomy. They buy their own expensive equipment and devote large amounts of their free time to pursuing their love of the sky. And while “amateur” sometimes implies sloppy or inexperienced, some amateurs work at the professional level, contributing to the science of astronomy.

Many amateur astronomers start out when they are young with a small telescope from their parents. They are fascinated by what they have seen from Hubble or NASA’s manned space program. A small telescope does not really do justice to the sky, but the first time they look at the Moon or find Saturn in even a small telescope, they are hooked.

Many times, as they grow up, they have to put astronomy aside to focus more on school, the opposite sex, kids and their job, but as they get older, they many times come back to their early love of astronomy. They are then able to get larger telescopes, which give better views of the sky.

Eventually, they decide to take on an observing



Looking to our west as it gets dark, the Summer Triangle slowly sinks toward the horizon. Off to the left (southwest), brilliant Venus climbs higher in the sky each day as it swings out from behind the Sun. Behind us, the winter constellations of Taurus and Orion are coming over the eastern horizon. (For a larger, printable star map, see www.desertexposure.com.)

program. The Astronomical League (www.astronomicalleague.org) has many different observing “clubs,” targeting different groups of objects to earn an observing pin and certificate of completion. While these clubs enhance observing skills, they do not contribute to the science of astronomy.

The most dedicated amateur astronomers do want to contribute to the science of astronomy. They join groups such as the Association of Lunar and Planetary Observers (ALPO, www.alpo-astronomy.org), the American Association of Variable Star Observers (AAVSO, www.aavso.org), or the International Occultation Timing Association (IOTA, www.lunar-occultations.com/iota/iotaindx.htm). These groups collect observations, analyze them, and provide them to professional astronomers.

Another informal group of amateur astronomers measures the positions of minor planets (asteroids) and report those observations directly to the Minor Planet Center at the Smithsonian Astrophysical Observatory (www.minorplanetcenter.org). These are used to refine the orbit of minor planets so they can be found again in the future. Another group searches galaxies to find new supernovas. Yet another group is searching for planets orbiting distant stars (exoplanets).

Humans are social animals and amateur astronomers are no exception. Area astronomy clubs include the Astronomical Society of Las Cruces (www.aslc-nm.org) and the Silver City Astronomical Society (silverastronomy.org). Las Cruces also has the National Public Observatory program ([### Watch the Skies

\(times MST\)

Dec. 2, 2:52 a.m.—First Quarter Moon

Dec. 4, 2 a.m.—Mercury passes the Sun \(inferior conjunction\)

Dec. 10, 7:36 a.m.—Full Moon \(total lunar eclipse\)

Dec. 17, 5:48 p.m.—Last Quarter Moon

Dec. 21, 10:30 p.m.—December Solstice, winter begins

Dec. 22, 8 p.m.—Mercury greatest distance west of the Sun \(22 degrees\)

Dec. 24, 11:06 a.m.—New Moon](http://www.astro-</p></div><div data-bbox=)

npo.org), which sponsors Stars-N-Parks outings. In nearby Texas, the Sun City Astronomers meet at the Gene Roddenberry Planetarium in El Paso.

These groups all provide an opportunity for members to learn from each other and share their interest in astronomy. They also provide “star parties” for the public and students to show them the wonders of the sky. There are no requirements to join any of these groups, except an interest in astronomy.

The Planets for December

Venus is the first planet visible in the western sky as it gets dark. At mid-month, Venus has a disc that is 12.1 seconds-of-arc across and 86% illuminated. It shines brilliantly at magnitude -4.0. During the month, Venus moves eastward from Sagittarius into Capricornus. Venus sets around 7:15 p.m.

Jupiter starts the month in Aries, moving slowly westward. Two days later, it crosses into Pisces, still moving westward. On Dec. 26, Jupiter becomes stationary and then turns back toward the east, crossing back into Aries early next month. The King of the Planets shines at magnitude -2.7 and its disc is 45.6 seconds-of-arc across. It is visible most of the night, setting around 3 a.m.

Mars comes up in the east around 11:15 p.m. Moving slowly eastward among the stars of Leo’s hindquarters, the God of War’s disc is 7.8 seconds-of-arc across and 90% illuminated at midmonth. Mars shines with a reddish glow at magnitude +0.5. It will be in opposition in March 2012.

Next up is Saturn, rising around 2:30 a.m. The Ringed Planet glows at magnitude +0.7 as it moves eastward in Virgo away from the first-magnitude star Spica. The rings are 36.8 seconds-of-arc across; we see their northern face since they are tipped down 14.4 degrees to our line of sight. Saturn’s disc is 16.2 seconds-of-arc across.

Last up, shortly before the Sun in the east-southeast, is Mercury. Mercury passes the Sun on Dec. 4, becoming visible around Dec. 9. It starts the month in Ophiuchus and moves quickly westward into the northern panhandle of Scorpius. It reaches its greatest western elongation on the Dec. 22 and then turns around and heads back east into Ophiuchus to end the month. At greatest elongation, Mercury will be magnitude -0.3 with a disc 6.7 seconds-of-arc across and 62% illuminated, becoming fuller as it heads around the far side of the Sun.

Winter will begin at 10:30 p.m. on Dec. 21 when the Sun reaches its farthest-south point in the sky. Before that, there will be a total lunar eclipse on Dec. 10; we will see the first part, but then the Moon will set just before it is totally eclipsed. Those in the Pacific and Asia will see the entire eclipse. So get your cold weather gear on for this early morning event and “keep watching the sky”!

An amateur astronomer for more than 40 years, Bert Stevens is co-director of Desert Moon Observatory in Las Cruces.



Body, Mind & Spirit • BINA BREITNER

Holiday Lights Within the Darkness

Especially this time of year, what counts is the quality of your presence—not the quality of your presents.

So it's getting darker, days are shorter, nights are longer, and sometimes it feels too cold. The world no longer cradles us; instead we have to think about defending ourselves against it. The challenge won't last, but that's the way it is, for a while.

For centuries people have lit candles or fires to counteract the darkness and the difficulty it causes us. But they didn't insist everyone be cheerful. The darkness was acknowledged, and the lights were intended to help balance it.

Somewhere along the line, maybe under the infinite glow of Madison Avenue, we started getting bullied. There was something wrong with *us* if we weren't cheerful. We heard singing in every store (even if it came out of a can). The photos of pretty things to buy, give, drink and eat made every family in every picture look happy. The standards became not only optimistic; they became cruel.

Most of us don't belong to eternally happy families. Some of us don't have families at all. Many don't have enough heat, much less blazing hearths to gather around with goblets of eggnog. Often we can't afford to buy all those gifts, yet we feel the pressure to go shopping. There's something bad about *us* if we don't, and people will be upset with us. It's our failure. We should be like those pretty people surrounded by love and plenty. And we want all those gorgeous, delicious things!

The reality is we're dealing with illnesses and losses, divorces, food allergies, stretched finances, absences of people we love, not enough people to care for or be loved by, relatives who will drink too much at the holiday party, a partner who will overeat and upset his blood sugar.... And surrounding all of those bright lights is a penumbra of Failure.

We didn't get it right. Our families, our jobs, our health, our homes, our bodies, our finances, our relationships, the hopes we nourished for years, well, we've come to terms with most of the imperfections. But once we are bullied (again) by the laughing pictures of ever-happy families in perfectly appointed homes, we know we're a mess. There's no room for us at those inns.

What to do?

Start by suggesting that Santa go on a diet and get more exercise. If he travelled on a plane, he'd need a seatbelt extender. As it is, he's making the reindeer work extra hard (not nice). His job is sedentary; his travel is sedentary. He may look ruddy and cheerful, but he's headed for a coronary.

Then recognize that there's a larger issue in all the hoopla. It's an issue that shows up in neon during the holidays, but it's always with us: The holiday or solstice symbols, including the lights, are just that—symbols. They aren't our daily reality, which is puny and idiosyncratic by comparison. Symbols stand in for the deeply important



Somewhere along
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bullied.

events, feelings and patterns of our lives through the generations. Holidays can commemorate the passing of the years, births and deaths, pleasures and pains.

New Year's Eve is just another evening, but symbolically it represents a demarcation, a before and after, a fresh opportunity, a chance to evaluate where we've been and where we're trying to go. It stops our routines long enough to let us celebrate that we're still here.

Symbols are terrific. They're like architecture, helping us delineate the various rooms and phases of our lives. We dream in symbols. We make decisions in symbols. Symbols help us express a level of reality that guides our individual experiences.

Problems arise when we confuse the symbol with the daily details. Even words can lead us astray. "The piano" is not a pia-

no. It's two words, made up of letters, that stand for (in English) a musical instrument we can play. (I confess my first viewing of Magritte's painting of a pipe caught me out. He writes at the bottom, "*Ce n'est pas une pipe*"—this is not a pipe. "Of course it's a pipe," I said to myself. But no, it's a *painting* of a pipe.)

One of the most intense crossroads of a marriage is when your spouse shifts (in your mind) from being your "husband" to being "Alec." That's the moment when you're leaving the realm of symbols and entering the realm of daily reality. Since

BODY, MIND & SPIRIT continued on next page




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BODY, MIND & SPIRIT

continued

no one has explained to you the difference between the symbol and the reality, you might be taken aback. Sometimes you can't "forgive" Alec for your disappointment (as if he invented your attachment to the symbol of "husband"—he was always Alec, wasn't he?). The marriage will probably be all right if you can figure out how to put your symbol of "husband" and this fellow Alec together.

Likewise, the meaning of a "Christmas gift" does not reside in the thing itself but in the relationship between the giver and the receiver. If you get an orange from someone who really loves you, the feeling you see in his eyes exceeds the value of a jewel received from a spouse who's behaved selfishly over the years. Who cares what they cost? For you, the meaning depends on the context. The same gift can bring joy and a sense of connection, can be barely noticed, or can be a source of bitter irritation, depending on your relationship with the giver.

That's the part overt and subliminal holiday symbols ignore (probably on purpose, because daily reality is too complicated). Symbols can be used equally well by con artists and sincere people—in fact, symbols can be a con artist's best friend. He'll use them as glittering Truths to lure you in. In the land of advertising, a holiday symbol is a way to convince you that buying and giving are the best ways to show you care.

"If you buy this gift, you're proving your love." Since when can love be proved? "Well, never mind that. Just buy it. She'll love you for it." It, the gift, as a symbol of your love. Maybe. More likely how she receives the gift will be colored by the quality of your relationship. If she obeys and you provide money, she'll figure it's her due. If she's ambivalent about the relationship, and you're trying to keep her, she might see it as one more bribe. If she already knows you love her, and she trusts you, she'll appreciate the gift.

What counts, in other words, is the quality of your presence—not the quality of your presents. If you're true to yourself, not pretending to be happier than you are, not pretending to have more money than you have, not subliminally demanding of others, your gift will come from *you*. Really showing up is what matters to the people who love you.

So even if the darkness weighs on you, even if your spirit is temporarily in tatters, whether you're feeling well or worried, your holidays will reflect the quality of the way you live. No one can honestly ask for more, from themselves or from others.

It's all right to acknowledge the darkness during the long nights and within each of us. It hasn't



killed most of us yet, and it won't. We are strong enough to include it as part of our journeys. If we allow it, grief washes the soul and leaves us weary but refreshed. Acceptance of our limitations gives us permission to relax.

The holidays are useful for slowing down and giving ourselves time to regenerate. We can't work in the garden anyway, so take the time to regroup. Every crop has a fallow period; we need ours, too. Coordinate with the darkness to get rested (what a concept).

The holidays are also useful for making contact with people who aren't part of our daily lives but who are important to us. The annual winter newsletter from old friends keeps us in touch, and they (or we) sit down to write it only because this time of year is special. It's different from our usual routines, so we take notice of people who have meant something to us along the way.

The power of the seasonal and climatic shift is such that we might as well join it. By slowing down, we can align ourselves with the winter rhythm to help us appreciate what we do have. If I keep reaching for what I don't have, I haven't got energies left over for recognizing what I do. Then I die. Oops—I forgot to live.

Acceptance of the darkness allows us to be gentler. It's a form of charity, whether toward self or others. I might as well admit I can only do (or be) what I can. It has to be enough, because that's the way it is. If I fuss about it, I become generally fussy, dissatisfied and tense. If I let myself shrug and sigh, and judge myself less harshly, I can have a better time with you and everyone else.

Accepting my own limitations and the limitations of the season requires generosity of spirit. My "spirit" of the season includes being patient, present and grounded. If anything, what the season asks of us all is to be charitable toward the darkness in us, the suffering, the disappointments, the failures, the inadequacies. We're all here on a visit. Light a candle to claim our capacity for resilience, resourcefulness, loyalty and kindness anyway. ❁

Bina Breitner is a licensed marriage and family therapist (LMFT) in private practice at 808 W. 8th St. in Silver City. She can be reached at (575) 538-4380.

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Safer Eating and Drinking

Questions about diet sodas and plastic food steamers.

Dear EarthTalk: I drink diet soda but I'm told it's bad for me and linked to health problems. Is this true and if so can you suggest any healthier alternatives?

While rumors have circulated for years that diet sodas are unhealthy, researchers have found no direct links between such drinks and specific human health problems. Aspartame (also known as NutraSweet) is the sugar-alternative of choice for most diet soda makers. It's 180 times sweeter than sugar but contains no significant calories and does not promote tooth decay. The US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) first approved aspartame in 1974, though health advocates held up its widespread use for over a decade.

Over half of Americans consume aspartame regularly in soda and other foods—all told, diet varieties accounted for some 29% of the soft drink market for the top 10 sodas in 2010, according to *Beverage Digest*—so it is certainly reasonable to be concerned about any potential health effects. However, initial reports that implicated aspartame in seizures, headaches, depression, anxiety, memory loss, birth defects, multiple sclerosis, systemic lupus, methanol toxicity and even cancer turned out to be false (even a hoax), according to a wide range of reputable, peer-reviewed studies and clinical and epidemiological research.

Another concern that has been voiced about aspartame is that it produces methanol when metabolized, which converts to formaldehyde (and then formic acid) in the body. But studies have shown that the amount of methanol in aspartame is less than that found in natural sources such as fruit juices, citrus fruits and some fermented beverages, and that the amount of formaldehyde generated is also small compared to that produced routinely by the body from other foods and drugs.

While aspartame and diet sodas have not been linked directly to specific health problems, researchers who surveyed the eating, drinking, smoking and exercise habits of some 2,500 New Yorkers between 2003 and 2010 did find that those who drank at least one diet soda per day had a 61%



Researchers have found no direct links between diet sodas and specific human health problems. Initial reports that implicated aspartame, widely used to sweeten diet sodas, in a wide range of human health problems including cancer turned out to be false—though certainly much healthier beverage choices abound. (Photo: Jules-reyes, courtesy Flickr)

higher risk of so-called vascular events (e.g. heart attack or stroke) than those who avoided Diet Coke and other products with aspartame. “If our results are confirmed with future studies, then it would suggest that diet soda may not be the optimal substitute for sugar-sweetened beverages for protection against vascular outcomes,” reported the study’s lead author, Hannah Gardener of the University of Miami School of Medicine.

But others say that such a finding constitutes a link, not proof of cause and effect—and that those who have switched to diet sodas may be replacing the calories they used to get from regular sodas with other unhealthy foods that may be increasing their risk of heart attack or stroke.

The takeaway should be that those who drink soda regularly, diet or otherwise, should be sure to exercise and eat right otherwise. Or, better yet, give up the soda entirely. According to Katherine Zeratsky, a nutritionist with the Mayo Clinic, healthier choices abound. She suggests starting off the day with a glass of 100% fruit juice and then drinking skim milk with meals. “Sip water throughout the day,” she recommends. “For variety, try sparkling water or add a squirt of lemon or cranberry juice to your water.”

Dear EarthTalk: Are the plastic tiers on food steamers safe for food and for re-heating? Some indicate they are made from #7 plas-

BODY, MIND & SPIRIT continued on next page

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BODY, MIND & SPIRIT continued

tic. I am very interested in buying a steamer, but not if they are unsafe. What's the best way to go?

While you may never know for sure whether the plastic parts in a food steamer will contribute to health problems down the road, why gamble? Plastic marked with a #7 recycling symbol—signifying mixed sources (polycarbonate) or otherwise hard-to-classify plastics (such as acrylonitrile styrene or acrylonitrile butadiene styrene)—is considered one of the riskiest in terms of chemical exposure. Polycarbonates are the most common types of plastic in items marked #7. And any of these three “feedstocks” just mentioned could contain Bisphenol A (BPA), a chemical in widespread use since the 1930s to harden plastic.

Researchers have found that exposure to BPA, a known “endocrine disruptor” that can mimic the body's natural hormones, can lead to neurological and reproductive problems. As a result, public health advocates recommend not using containers marked with #7 for storing, heating or serving food/drinks so as to minimize the amount of BPA in our bloodstreams. Keeping BPA out of our bodies is an uphill battle: A recent study found that 96% of pregnant women in the US have at least trace amounts of BPA in their systems already (and probably the rest of us do as well).

In response to increased consumer awareness about the potential risks of exposure to BPA, many bottle and container makers are now marketing versions of their plastic products that are BPA-free—and the trend has extended to food steamers, with several now available in BPA-free versions, including Oster's 5712, Black & Decker's HS1050, and Big & Fast's Plastic Electric Food Steamer. Buyers beware: Even some BPA-free steamers have non-stick surface made from PTFE (polytetrafluoroethylene, better known as Teflon), another chemical that some health advocates recommend avoiding.

But to complicate matters further, a July 2011 study by a group of Texas-based researchers published in the peer-reviewed scientific journal *Environmental Health Perspectives* found that just because a plastic product is marked “BPA-free” doesn't guarantee that it won't leach other endocrine-disrupting chemicals—what the study refers to as “estrogenic activity” or “EA”—into food or drinks: “Almost all commercially available plastic products we sampled—independent of the type of resin, product or retail source—leached chemicals



Even though a plastic food steamer may be marked “BPA-free,” there's no guarantee it won't leach other endocrine-disrupting chemicals into food or drinks. Consumers might want to just play it safe and opt for food steamers made of tried and true plastic-free materials, like glass, stainless steel or bamboo. (Photo: Wen-Yan King/Flickr)

having reliably detectable EA, including those advertised as BPA-free,” the researchers reported. In some cases, BPA-free products released greater amounts of estrogenic chemicals than even products known to contain BPA.

In light of all this, consumers might want to just opt for food steamers (and food storage and preparation items) made of tried and true plastic-free materials like glass or stainless steel. Some highly rated non-plastic, non-Teflon food steamers include Secura's 3-Tier Stainless Steel Food Steamer (\$90), Miracle Exclusives' Stainless Steel Rice Cooker and Vegetable Steamer ME81 (\$70), and World Cuisine's 4-quart Red Enamel Cast-Iron Steamer with a tempered glass colander and a tempered glass lid (\$220). And don't forget: You can save yourself some money and kitchen storage space by just getting an inexpensive metal steamer basket, collapsible insert or bamboo steamer, available at any cookware store for less than \$20. ☘

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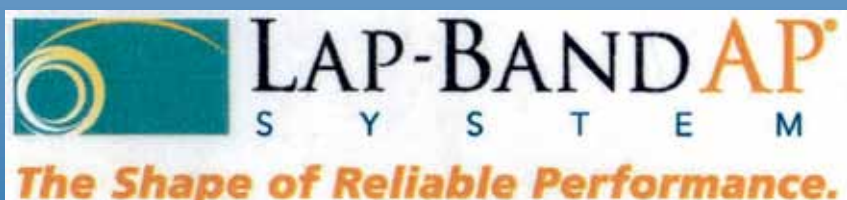
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AARP CHAPTER #1496—Third Monday. 12:30 p.m. Senior Center, 205 W. Victoria. Contact Marcia Fisch, 388-1298

AARP WIDOWED PERSONS—Second Mondays. 11 a.m. Glad Tidings Church. Contact Donna, 538-9344.

AL-ANON—Noon. First Presbyterian Church, 1915 Swan, Silver City. Contact Shawneen, 313-4721.

ART CLASS—9-10:45 a.m. Silver City Senior Citizen Center. Beginners to advanced. Contact Jean 519-2977.

KUNDALINI YOGA—Noon. A Daily Practice, 104 N. Texas St.

OVEREATERS ANONYMOUS—6-7 p.m. Gila Regional Medical Center Board Room. Jerry, 534-4866; Sharon, 534-0079.

PING PONG—5:30-7 p.m. Grant County Convention Center. Beginners 7-8 p.m.

SILVER CITY SQUARES—Dancing 7-9 p.m. Presbyterian Church, 1915 N. Swan St. Kay, 388-4227, or Linda, 534-4523.

Tuesdays

ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS—Men's group, 7 a.m. Unitarian Fellowship Hall. 3845 N. Swan. Jerry, 534-4866.

BAYARD HISTORIC MINE TOUR—2nd Tuesday. Meet at Bayard City Hall, 800 Central Ave., by 9:30 a.m. \$5 fee covers two-hour bus tour of historic mines plus literature and map; call 537-3327 for reservation.

BELLY DANCE WITH ZOE—5:30-6:50 p.m. A Daily Practice, 104 N. Texas St. 654-4910.

COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS—4th Tuesday. 6:30 p.m. Support for those who've lost a child. Episcopal Church, Parish Hall, 7th and Texas St. Charlene Mitchell, 313-7362.

FIGURE/MODEL DRAWING—4-6 p.m. Contact Sam, 388-5583.

GILA WRITERS—6:30 p.m. Gila Regional Medical Center Conference Room, 1313 E. 32nd St. Trish Heck,

pheck@grmc.org, 538-4072.

INTERBODY YOGA—5:30-6:30 p.m., 315 N. Bullard, 2d fl. 519-8948.

KIWANIS CLUB—Noon. Red Barn, 708 Silver Heights Blvd., 590-0540.

LOS COMADRES CANCER SUPPORT GROUP—1st Tues. 6 p.m. Business and Conference Center, 3031 Hwy. 180 E. (next to Ace). 388-1198 ext. 10.

REIKI CIRCLE—First Tuesday of the month, 6:30 p.m. 2035 Little Walnut. Treatment for those in need of healing. Vicki, 388-8114, or Virginia, 388-4870.

RESTORATIVE YOGA—10-11:30 a.m., 5:30-7 p.m. A Daily Practice, 104 N. Texas, 388-2425.

SLOW FLOW YOGA—11:30 a.m. 315 N. Bullard, 2d fl. 519-8948.

SOCIAL SERVICES—Noon. Red Barn, 707 Silver Heights Blvd. 538-5666.

TEA PARTY PATRIOTS—2nd and 4th Thur. 6 p.m. Red Barn Steakhouse, 708 Silver Heights Blvd. 388-4143..

Wednesdays

AL-ANON—5:30 p.m., Sweden-borgian Church, 1300 Bennett St. Ellen, 535-2596, or Jerry, 534-4866.

ARCHAEOLOGY SOCIETY—Third Weds. of every month. Oct.-Nov., Jan.-April 7 p.m. Silver City Women's Club. Summers 6 p.m. location TBA. 536-3092, whudson43@yahoo.com.

BACK COUNTRY HORSEMEN—2nd Weds. 6 p.m. Gila Regional Medical Center Conference Room. Subject to change. 536-2953.

GRANT COUNTY DEMOCRATIC PARTY—2nd Weds. Potluck at 5:30 p.m., meeting at 6:30 p.m. Sen. Howie Morales' building, 3060 E. Hwy. 180.

GROUP MEDITATION—5:30 p.m., A Daily Practice, 104 N. Texas St. 388-2425.

LADIES GOLF ASSOCIATION—8 a.m. tee time. Silver City Golf Course.

OVEREATERS ANONYMOUS—Noon. St. Mary's Academy, 1801 N. Alabama, building by flagpole. Jerry, 534-4866; Sharon, 534-0079.

PFLAG—(Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays) 2nd Weds. 5:30 p.m. Wellness Coalition, 509 N. Bullard. 590-8797.

PING PONG—5:30-7 p.m. Grant County Convention Center. Beginners 7-8 p.m.

PROSTATE CANCER SUPPORT GROUP—3rd Weds. 6:30 p.m. Gila Regional Medical Center Conference Room. 388-1198 ext. 10.

REPUBLICAN PARTY OF GRANT COUNTY—Third Weds. 6 p.m. Red Barn.

TRAUMATIC BRAIN INJURY SUPPORT GROUP—3:30-5 p.m. All-Purpose Room, Billy Casper Wellness Center, Hudson St. & Hwy. 180. James, 537-2429, or Danita, 534-9057.

Thursdays

CANCER SUPPORT GROUP—2nd Thurs. 6 p.m. Gila Regional Medical Center Board Room. 388-1198 ext. 10.

CARDIAC SUPPORT GROUP—3rd Thurs. 4 p.m. Grant County Business and Conference Center, 3031 Hwy 180E, 590-2578.

CITIZEN CORPS COUNCIL—First Thurs. 5:30 p.m. Grant County Admin

Bldg.

DE-STRESSING MEDITATIONS—12-12:45 p.m. New Church of the SW Desert, 1302 Bennett St. 313-4087.

HISTORIC MINING DISTRICT & TOURISM MEETING—Second Thurs. 10 a.m. Bayard Community Center, 290 Hurley Ave., Bayard. 537-3327.

KUNDALINI YOGA—5:30 p.m. A Daily Practice, 104 N. Texas, 388-2425.

MOUNTAIN DULCIMER JAM—6:15 p.m., Public Library.

PROGRESSIVE PILATES—5:30-6:30 p.m., 315 N. Bullard, 2d fl. 519-8948.

TOPS—5 p.m. 1st Presbyterian Church, 1915 Swan, 538-9447.

VINYASA YOGA—5:30-6:30 p.m., 315 N. Bullard, 2d fl. 519-8948.

YOGA CLASS—Free class taught by Colleen Stinar. 1-2 p.m. Episcopal Church fellowship hall, 7th and Texas.

Fridays

GILA AMATEUR RADIO SOCIETY—2d Fri. Grant County Admin. Bldg., 1400 Hwy. 180E. tim@tamr.edu.

KUNDALINI YOGA—Noon. A Daily Practice, 104 N. Texas St.

OVEREATERS ANONYMOUS—6 p.m. Gila Regional Medical Center conference room. Art, 590-6141, or John, 538-8779.

SILVER CITY WOMAN'S CLUB—2d Fri., 10 a.m. 411 Silver Heights Blvd. 538-9326.

TAIZÉ—2d Friday. Service of prayer, songs, scripture readings and quiet contemplation. 6:30 p.m. Episcopal Church of the Good Shepherd, 538-2015.

VETERANS HEALING CIRCLE—2d Fri. 12-4 p.m. Marian Hall, 1813 N. Alabama St. 388-4870.

YOUTH SPACE—5:30-10 p.m. Loud music, video games, chill out. Satellite/Wellness Coalition.

Saturdays

ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS BEGINNERS—6 p.m. Lions Club, 8th & Bullard (entrance at Big Ditch behind Domino's). Newcomers and seasoned members welcome.

BEGINNING SALSA—7-8 p.m. Javalina's. Instructor Gail Willow, 388-3332.

DOUBLE FEATURE BLOCKBUSTER MEGA HIT MOVIE NIGHT—5:30-11 pm. Satellite/Wellness Coalition.

EVENING PRAYER IN THE EASTERN ORTHODOX TRADITION—5 p.m. Theotokos Retreat Center, 5202 Hwy. 152, Santa Clara. 537-4839, theotokos@zianet.com.

KIDS BIKE RIDE—10 a.m., Bike-works, 815 E. 10th St. Dave Baker, 590-2166.

NARCOTICS ANONYMOUS—6 p.m. New 180 Club, 1661 Hwy. 180 E.

SADHANA MORNING PRAYER, MEDITATION, YOGA—Last Sat. 5-7 a.m. A Daily Practice, 104 N. Texas, 388-2425.

SPINNING GROUP—1st Sat., 1-3 p.m. Yada Yada Yarn, 614 N. Bullard, 388-3350.

VINYASA FLOW YOGA—10 a.m. All levels. A Daily Practice, 104 N. Texas, 388-2425. ☼



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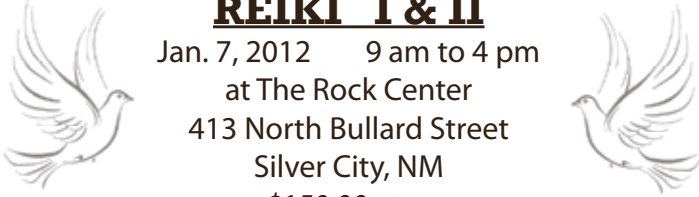


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Apocalypse Now?

What will you do if things go really, really wrong?

I've realized some things about my dreams. For one thing, I dream in color. I researched and found out that most of us dream in color. I also remember my more vivid dreams; I read that there are a heck of a lot of you out there who never remember your dreams, ever (my wife is in that number).

Recently I further discovered that in virtually every dream that I remember, I'm always in my early 40s in age, as are all of the other folks who visit me in dreamland— except for children, who always appear to be under the age of seven. I find that rather odd.

Last night I had one of those vivid dreams. In it I was wandering around in a bleak desert with absolutely nothing else in sight except sand—hill after hill of light-colored sand.

I wandered aimlessly for days, yet I was neither tired, hungry nor thirsty; in fact, I was quite alert! My clothes were in tatters and they too were a shade of desert tan. To my amazement, everything in that dream was a shade of tan, except for my rather dark, brown hair (in real life it ain't been that color for over a decade now!).

A huge sandstorm came upon me and the visibility was down to zero. There was no place to hide, so I decided to walk with the storm at my back.

I walked for a very long time until suddenly the storm quit, and before me stood a desolate grove of stark, dead trees covering about five acres. In the middle of the trees stood a devastated group of adobe buildings, one of which was a half-fallen-down barn. Opposite it was an adobe, flat-roofed house.

Sand covered everything, including the inside of the house.

For some reason I instinctively knew that this was my home, even though I don't live in an adobe house in real life. A thin, tall, blonde-haired woman came out of the barn to greet me and I again knew that she was my wife (my real wife is short and brunette), although the "dream lady" didn't resemble anyone I actually knew or could ever remember having known.

Strangely, in the dream, both the wife and I had total memory loss, so it was by instinct alone that we knew we were married to each other. Hey, it's a dream!

We scrounged around inside the house looking for food, but none was to be found. I went outside and uncovered a water spigot alongside a sand-filled water trough. We drank thirstily from it.

All of a sudden two small, young blonde-haired children appeared in the house—my kids. Then another slightly stoop-shouldered man appeared with them and I knew him to be my benevolent servant. He searched about and found an overly large wagon like I had when I was a kid, except this one is as large as a Volkswagen.

We all got in it except for the servant, who pulled the lot of us over a sand-covered road, and eventually down a long hill, where we passed deserted house after house until we reached an equally deserted, sand-covered town of Silver City! We searched for food but nothing could be found anywhere.

Two men and two women, total strangers to each other, were roaming about Silver, too; they were all blonde and wearing tan clothes.

My dream ended with us all ignoring each other and wandering about the town.

I suppose that dream may have been inspired before bedtime, when I listened to a story on the news about a severe sandstorm hitting drought-stricken Texas. I was walking past the TV when I heard just a mention of it. At least that is my analytical view of the event.

But this whole dream-affair got me to cogitating about reality, or what might become reality.

In the past year or two, many different and unrelated sources, from Biblical Christianity, to the Mayan calendar, to geologists, to weather prognos-

ticators, to militarists, to economists, and many other folk, have separately been predicting that we could possibly be on the verge of disaster.

Last month I spoke of a recently read novel named *One Second After* as one scenario put forth as what could realistically happen to the United States. In the book, terrorists explode several Electro-Magnetic-Pulse (EMP) bombs over the continental US, wrecking everything electric. Coincidentally, after reading that book, I found out that several countries have this capability including Russia, China, the USA, North Korea and probably/maybe Iran!

Without electricity we cannot pump water nor gasoline, drive our cars, provide warmth against winter, coolness in summer, freeze our foods, wash clothes or flush our waste!

Whether a cataclysm is manmade or natural, most so-called experts say that the very first after-effect will be severe anarchy—everyone for themselves. The question we must ask ourselves is: Can we cope, adapt and survive?

The first things that will go will be all food sources from grocery stores, then drugs, then gasoline as abandoned vehicles are sucked dry. Wildlife (at least anything bigger than a bunny) will soon be exterminated by those who have guns. Gardens will be next as desperate folks rob and ravage them from neighbors.

At that point, a person will have to start looking at the "little picture" around them: What can we survive on?

First off, where will water come from to cook, bathe and flush toilets? In fact, where will we go to the bathroom?

Next, where do we get edibles from nature? What plants are immediately around us and do we even know which are edible or poisonous?

For my own self, as I asked these questions, I began to look around at my own rural property and ponder these questions. While out hunting, I noticed that there is much bear scat around this year, and I always stop to see what the critter is eating. Most of that scat is composed of last year's vegetation in the form of juniper berries, piñon nuts and acorns and leaves. So that's what I'll eat, too.

The Bible says that King Nebuchadnezzar went crazy for a period of years and he ate grass. All manner of critters eat grass; I suppose I can, too! Grass tea, stew, fried grass, etc. Roots and bark, too.

For protein, I must think small: bugs, insects, mice, ground squirrels and pack rats.

I find it intriguing that in virtually every reality show about survival, no one kills small songbirds, yet they represent an almost inexhaustible meat supply. (So do ravens, buzzards and, ugh, carrion.)

Okay, I've got food. How will I eat it—raw or cooked? Can I/you make fire from scratch? Do I/you store up plain old wooden stick matches? What will you town folks do for fuel to cook with? Are you ready to tear your own house apart?

How will you heat your home if it is winter when disaster strikes? Natural gas and electricity are gone, and thus too are furnaces and pellet stoves. If you have a wood stove or fireplace and live in town, where will you get wood?

Can you live without toilet tissue? See what I mean about all of the "little things"? If any of these long-term cataclysms happen, the question is: Will you/I be master of it all, or will it master us? Now's the time to think about it.

By the way, have a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year in spite of my hypothetical gloom and doom. I know I plan to! ☘

When not ramblin' outdoors, Larry Lightner lives in Silver City.



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TALKING HORSES • SCOTT THOMSON

Rules for the Road

When riding in a group, keep in mind that you're part of a herd.

One of the most enjoyable parts of my business is working with riding groups. When I started teaching full time in the Northwest, I had the opportunity to work with the membership of several local chapters of the Back Country Horsemen, some boarding facilities where the focus was group trail riding, and organizations like The Pony Club and 4H where trail riding was a topic they were studying.

Prior to any clinic or demo for these groups, I asked the participants to send me questions or topics they would like to cover so that I could make my presentation relevant to the needs of the group. I had attended too many clinics myself where the material being presented looked a lot like pet tricks or was irrelevant for the participants or spectators.

What surprised me was how similar the questions were from the various groups, no matter how old, seasoned or experienced the members were. It led me to try to develop some basic "rules for the road" and suggestions that might be helpful to any trail riding group, whether the group was just a few friends or a larger organization:

- 1. Trail riding is the ultimate team sport.** Not only do you have to ride and be responsible for your own horse, but you must be aware of how what you're doing may affect all the other riders and horses. You're now part of a herd. If you change gaits or speeds without telling the rest of the group or because you can't control your horse, then you could cause other horses to do the same without a rider being prepared. If you decide to pull out a jacket or slicker without communicating beforehand, you may cause another rider to have a very exciting ride. Way too many accidents happen when people act without thinking about how other horses or riders might react. *Every rider in the group must be willing and able to ride to the level of the slowest horse and the least-experienced rider.* If this is a problem then the group needs to reorganize for future rides.
- 2. The ride starts much earlier than you think.** Most people think the ride starts when you get on the horse, but in reality the ride starts the minute you put the halter on and lasts until you take it off and put your horse away. The majority of accidents and frayed nerves happen with the trailer, when tacking up and when mounting or dismounting. You need to practice good techniques and be aware of what is going on with all the other riders as they get prepared. If you hop on your horse and head down the trail a bit, it may cause another horse to think he's being left behind, and then he becomes agitated and difficult to mount for his rider. Now you have a mess and you haven't even left the parking lot.
- 3. Ride every stride.** Group riding can and should be a fun social event. But that doesn't mean you can lose touch with your horse. You need to check in from time to time, ask him to do something, make sure he's still listening to you. A group of horses is "wired" like an old string of Christmas lights—if one goes off they all go. Don't let yourself or your horse "zone out" as you look at the scenery or chat with a friend. Some horses seem capable of going to sleep at the walk, and those are the horses that wake up with a bang when the quail take off.
- 4. Forget peer pressure and speak up.** If you need the group to slow down, stop or help you with something, let them know it. If the terrain makes you nervous or you know your horse has a problem with something, say so. There is nothing to be gained by staying silent and riding in a situation you're not comfortable with. Good leadership should be asking people how they're doing as well.
- 5. Try to leave time for teaching.** If a member of the group gets stuck with something on the trail, try to help the person teach the horse a more permanent fix rather than just "get through it" so you can keep going. It will really help the group on future rides rather than have to revisit it every time.
- 6. Give new members a simple test.** I hate to say it, but people with horses have been known to stretch the truth about their riding ability or the quality of their horse. There's the old "I'm an experienced rider because I rode as a kid, even though I haven't been on a horse in 30 years" syndrome. As I've said, this is a team sport with a herd mentality and potential risk. The group needs to know what a new horse and rider can do. Frankly, asking for a simple demonstration of basic competence should not offend anyone. If it does, then the person probably doesn't understand horses, herd behavior or how to get along in a group. This doesn't mean you'll be telling people they can't join your organization or group, just that they may not be ready to ride with you. This gives you an opportunity to show them what they need to improve or to organize your rides factoring in their skill level. This is about enjoyment and safety for everyone, and if someone doesn't get that then perhaps you don't want to ride with that person. You'd certainly test someone if you were going mountain climbing or skydiving.
- 7. Have a trail riding or obstacle "play day" in the safety of an arena.** This is a great way to figure out how horses will get along, how people deal with basic obstacles, how riders will perform in a group. Practice riding in a line, changing places, having a rider or two move away or change gaits, all looking to see the tendencies of the riders and the horses. It will give you the opportunity to help less-experienced riders or horses with the kinds of things that might happen on the trail. It will also help your planning for future rides. Find this stuff out in the safety of an arena first, not on the trail.
- 8. The fastest horse should not always go first.** I have been reading some interesting studies about the stresses on horses in a group ride situation. They have actually wired the horses up and monitored heart rate, respiration, etc., and found that the lead horse can show signifi-

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cantly more stress. This makes sense as a group ride is now a herd and horses have specific roles or positions in a herd. The lead horse in a herd is the most equipped emotionally and physically for that role, the one the other horses are willing to trust and follow. Evaluating and knowing every horse and rider in your group will help determine which horse is best suited for that role, and this will help all the horses feel more comfortable.

9. Ride side by side carefully. Riding next to a friend is one of life's great joys. But do it only when terrain and conditions are right. Many of our local trails are single tracks where staying in line is safer and easier on the environment. If you're in an area where it seems safe to ride side by side, remember that when a horse spooks he usually goes sideways, so stay in touch with your horse.

10. Choose rides that suit the group. The physical condition of horses and riders varies greatly. It is never a good idea to a push a horse or rider beyond what they can do physically, so plan accordingly. You may have to split the group or plan routes that can be shortened or lengthened, but this is a better idea than risking lameness or a fatigue-caused mistake.

11. Get in the habit of looking behind you. When you ride you should always be thinking forward and going someplace, as this is comforting for the horse. But you need to be looking behind to make sure another rider or horse is not having a problem. We don't hear behind us very well, especially when in the saddle, so use your eyes. I'm amazed at how often people forget this, then wonder where Charlie and Old Paint disappeared to.

12. Do horse PR if you get the chance. Don't assume if you meet hikers or bikers that they know anything about horses or are even comfortable meeting up with them on the trail. A group of horses can be intimidating. If you think a little education is in order, like "don't hide behind a tree and stay silent," then take the opportunity to give some friendly advice. You may help the next rider or hiker who comes along.

13. Be aware at the start and the finish. Many trail-riding problems happen at the start of the ride or the end, especially during seasonal changes where various factors (temperature, wind, humidity, angle of the sun) can get horses pretty amped up. The group leadership should look for signs of this and try to diffuse things. If there are horses that are obviously high and excited, then the owners need to spend more time preparing the horse from the ground *before* everyone mounts up and hits the trail. The same holds true if the end of the ride becomes a rush back to the parking lot. Try to fix it and bring the energy down.

14. Be willing to put your horse back in the trailer and go home. Just because you wanted to go on the ride doesn't mean you should. If the little cowboy sitting on your shoulder tells you the horse doesn't seem right or prepared to go, or if you're not with it on that particular day, don't force the issue. Go home, hang out with your horse and go on the next ride. Your friends will appreciate it.

A lot of this is just common sense, but common sense from the human's perspective. If you've ever seen a nature show with a herd of horses going somewhere, you've probably seen all the things going on within the herd—kicking, biting and reacting to changes in speed or direction. It may look like mayhem, but it is all part of herd dynamics. It is a good illustration of what's going on *in the horse's mind* when on a group ride. Make sure everyone in your group understands the power of herd behavior and factor it into your riding and planning, and you should be safer and have more fun. 🐾

Scott Thomson lives in Silver City and teaches natural horsemanship. He can be reached with comments or questions at hsthomson@msn.com or (575) 388-1830.





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6-18: \$7.50 in advance and \$10 at the door
Under 6 free.

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KRWG FM's Holiday Program Schedule 2011

Thanksgiving Programming

Thursday, November 24

9am - 11am	The Splendid Table's Turkey Confidential (live-APM)
11am - 1pm	Performance Today (delayed 2 hours)
1pm - 4pm	Classical Music

Holiday Programming

Saturday, December 17

5pm - 6pm	Tinsel Tales2: NPR Christmas Favorites
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Sunday, December 18

8pm - 10pm	Christmas Revels
10pm - 12mid	A Paul Winter Solstice Concert (NPR)

Monday, December 19

1pm - 2pm	Christmas Daybreak
2pm - 4pm	Music of the Baroque Christmas Special

Tuesday, December 20

1pm - 2pm	Chanukah in Story and Song
2pm - 3pm	Echoes of Christmas

Wednesday, December 21

1pm - 2pm	Christmas with the Morehouse and Spelman Glee Clubs
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Thursday, December 22

2pm - 3pm	Lessons and Carols from Washington National Cathedral 2011
11pm - 12mid	Jazz Piano Christmas 22

Friday, December 23

1pm - 2pm	A Chanticleer Christmas
2pm - 4pm	St. Olaf Christmas Festival

Saturday, December 24

5pm - 6pm	Hanukkah Lights 2011
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Saturday, December 31

5pm - 6pm	A Season's Griot 2011 (Kwanza Programming)
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New Years Eve Programming

Saturday, December 31
Beginning at 8pm Toast of the Nation LIVE



90.7 Las Cruces/El Paso
89.5 Alamogordo
93.5 Deming
91.3 Silver City
91.9 Truth or Consequences
91.9 Lordsburg

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Red or Green?

Southwest New Mexico's best restaurant guide.

Red or Green? is *Desert Exposure's* guide to dining in southwest New Mexico. The listings here—a sampling of our complete and updated guide online at www.desertexposure.com—include some of our favorites and restaurants we've recently reviewed. We emphasize non-national-chain restaurants with sit-down, table service.

With each listing, we include a brief categorization of the type of cuisine plus what meals are served: B=Breakfast; L=Lunch; D=Dinner. Call for exact hours and days of operation, which change frequently. We also note with a star (*) restaurants where you can pick up copies of *Desert Exposure*.

If we've recently reviewed a restaurant, you'll find a brief capsule of our review and a notation of

which issue it originally appeared in. Stories from all back issues of *Desert Exposure* from January 2005 on are available on our Web site.

Though every effort has been made to make these listings complete and up-to-date, errors and omissions are inevitable and restaurants may make changes after this issue goes to press. That's why we urge you to help us make Red or Green? even better. Drop a note to Red or Green? c/o *Desert Exposure*, PO Box 191, Silver City, NM 88062, fax 534-4134, or email updates@red-or-green.com.

Remember, these print listings represent only highlights. You can always find the complete, updated Red or Green? guide online at www.desert-exposure.com. Bon appétit!

Alotta Words about ALOTTA GELATO



Ho ho ho! You folks absolutely *love* our Pumpkin Pie gelato (which is only available for a limited time)! We'll keep it around a while longer in order to (as they say) satisfy popular demand. Thank you for your enthusiasm!

Our Egg Nog flavor is back again this year, and it should be available through New Years Day and beyond. Also, our Peppermint Stick flavor has returned for the Christmas/Hanukkah/Kwanzaa/Yule/Solstice/You-Name-It holiday season. Hurry on over and try out these fine flavors, and pick up a hand-packed pint or quart for that

holiday party! (And yes, we can put several flavors into each container so everyone can have their favorite.)

If you are stumped about what to give a special someone, we suggest one of our wonderful World Music CDs from the Putumayo label; we also carry CDs from many local artists including the "Sounds of Silver City" collections.

We'd like to point out that gift certificates are available for all occasions, can be purchased in any amount, can easily fit in any stocking, and are always (ahem!) in good taste.

Don't forget: **ALOTTA GELATO** is open 7 nights a week until at least 9:00 PM (10:00 PM on Friday and Saturday nights), and though **we'll be closed on Christmas Day, we'll close early on New Years Eve, and we'll be closed on New Years Day**, we will be open as usual the rest of the holiday season. We have all kinds of hot drinks (such as coffee, 20-plus kinds of tea, hot cocoa, hot cider and even ramen noodles) to warm your insides when it's chilly outside, and we also carry delicious dessert items such as Key Lime Bars, Chocolate Chip Brownies, Raspberry Streusel Bars, Triple Lemon Cheesecake, slices of flourless Chocolate Raspberry Torte, Chocolate Chip cookies, Luscious Lemon Cake and big honkin' wedges of triple-layer Carrot Cake! Come join your friends and neighbors, celebrate the holiday of your choice, impress your out-of-town relatives and guests and enjoy the best gelato in the state! Thanks for reading! As a token of our esteem for you, our valued customer, **bring this ad for 25¢ off any size gelato for each member of your party.**



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GRANT COUNTY

Silver City

ADOBE SPRINGS CAFÉ, 1617 Silver Heights Blvd., 538-3665. "Under new ownership and refocusing on what has made it a longtime Silver City favorite: excellent breakfasts and lunches." (April 2011) Breakfast items, burgers, sandwiches: B L.*

ALOTTA GELATO, 619 N. Bullard St., 534-4995. Gelato and desserts.*

ASIAN BUFFET, 1740 Hwy. 180, 388-0777. "A boundless buffet that would satisfy the Mongol hordes." (April 2010) Chinese, Thai, Malaysian, sushi: L D.

BILLY'S BBQ AND WOOD-FIRED PIZZA, Hwy 180E, 388-1367. "A free-wheeling mixture of barbecued ribs and brisket, freshly made pasta, Cajun catfish, seared Ahi tuna, authentic Greek gyros, and pizzas baked in a wood-fired oven and featuring a wide range of innovative toppings. The baby back ribs and beef brisket—all treated with tasty dry rubs and slow-roasted for long hours in the smoker-cooker—are moist, tender and championship quality." (November 2010) Barbecue, pizza, gyros, pasta: L D. Italian nights Weds., Sat.*

BRYAN'S PIT BARBECUE, mobile location, (660) 247-3151 or (660) 247-3160. "Authentic Southern-style barbecue.... Brisket, pork ribs, chicken and sausage dinners, pulled pork and chopped brisket sandwiches." (August 2010). Barbecue.*

CAFÉ OSO AZUL AT BEAR MOUNTAIN LODGE, 60 Bear Mountain Ranch Road, 538-2538. "Bear Mountain Lodge blends food, art and natural beauty into a memorable experience that pleases all the senses.... The menu changes daily, with entrées that are always imaginative and tasty—comfort food in a form that most of our mothers would never have thought of producing." (March 2011) Weekend brunch, weekday L by reservation only.*

CAFÉ UN MUNDO, 700 N. Bullard, 956-8752. Vegetarian, juice, soup: L.

CHINESE PALACE, 1010 Highway 180 E., 538-9300. Chinese: L D.

COURTYARD CAFE, Gila Regional Medical Center, 538-4094. American, Sunday brunch, catering: B L D.*

CUP OF GRACE, 1308 Silver Heights Blvd. (inside Rexall), 388-2115. Coffeehouse.

CURIOS KUMQUAT, 111 E. College Ave., 534-0337. "A hotspot of modern culinary innovation. Lunch (Mon.-Sat.) features soups, salads and sandwiches. Dinners (Thurs.-Sat.) are elaborate, imaginative, exotic five-course culinary creations. Entrees always include vegetarian and the super-duper ham-

burger, plus two determined by what local ranchers have available." (July 2010) L D.*

DELIGHTFUL BLEND, 3030 N. Pinos Altos Road, 388-2404. Coffeehouse.

DELI-SSH, 801 N. Hudson St., 388-2737. Sandwiches, wraps, Italian food: L D.

DIANE'S BAKERY & CAFE, 510 N. Bullard St., 538-8722. "As they serve Diane's fresh, inventive dishes, the staff will make you subtly aware you are indeed enjoying a big-city-caliber dining experience—without the least bit of snootiness to detract from the fact that you are, nonetheless, in small-town New Mexico." (Sept. 2007) American: L D, weekend brunch.

DIANE'S BAKERY & DELI, The Hub, Suite A, Bullard St., 534-9229. "Top-notch pastries in the morning, deli lunch or casual, tasty dinner.... Diane's new Deli has it all—to go!" (Sept. 2007) Sandwiches, deli, baked goods: B L D.*

DON FIDENCIO'S, 901 N. Hudson St., 534-4733. Mexican: B L D.

DON JUAN'S BURRITOS, 418 Silver Heights Blvd., 538-5440. Mexican: B L.

DRIFTER PANCAKE HOUSE, 711 Hwy 180 E., 538-2916. Breakfast: B L.*

EAT YOUR HEART OUT, 800 W. Market, 313-9005. Take-away dinners: 4:30-6 p.m.*

EL RINCON, 3110 N. Silver St., 388-2715. Mexican, American: B L D.

GILA BEANS, 1304 N. Bennett St. Coffeehouse.

GOLDEN STAR, 1602 Silver Heights Blvd., 388-2323. "If you sometimes long for the guilty pleasures of the Chinese food served at a mall food court—think Panda Express—or just want your wontons without waiting, there's good news.... Normal appetites will find the three-item combo tough to finish, so plan on leftovers whether you're eating in or taking out. All of it's plenty tasty, and you can enjoy it just like in the food court." (February 2007) Chinese: L D.

GRANDMA'S CAFE, 900 Silver Heights Blvd., 388-2627. American, Mexican: B L D.*

GRINDER MILL, 403 W. College Ave., 538-3366. Mexican: B L D.*

ISAAC'S GRILL, Bullard and Broadway, 388-4090. "Situated in the historic and massively renovated Isaac Cohen Building.... Though one certainly can linger over a 'serious dinner' here, or enjoy microbrews and appetizers for hours, it's great for a quick bite, too." (November 2006) American, Burgers, Sandwiches, Sushi: L D.*

JALISCO CAFE, 100 S. Bullard St.,

388-2060. "The Mexican restaurant where you take out-of-town guests... Jalisco's massive menu goes well beyond the traditional combination plates, though it has those, too." (December 2007) Mexican: L D.

JAVA THE HUT, 611-A N. Bullard St., 534-4103. Coffeehouse.*

JAVALINA, 201 N. Bullard St., 388-1350. Coffeehouse.*

KOUNTRY KITCHEN, 1505 N. Hudson St., 388-4512. Mexican: B L early D.*

LA COCINA RESTAURANT, 201 W. College Ave., 388-8687. Mexican: L D.

LA FAMILIA, 503 N. Hudson St., 388-4600. Mexican: B L D.*

LA MEXICANA, Hwy. 180 W and Memory Lane, 534-0142. Mexican and American: B L D.

LION'S DEN, 208 W. Yankie, 654-0353. Coffeehouse.

MARGO'S BAKERY, 300 S. Bullard St., 597-0012. Baked goods: B L.*

MARY'S RESTAURANT, 1700 Mountain View Rd., 534-9317. Mexican: B L.

MAS Y MAS TORTILLERIA, Suite C-The Hub Plaza, 534-9255. Tortillas, Mexican: B L.*

MI CASITA, 2340 Bosworth Dr., 538-5533. Mexican: L D.

NANCY'S SILVER CAFE, 514 N. Bullard St., 388-3480. Mexican: B L D.*

OFF THE HOOK, 1700 Mountain View Road, 534-1100. Catfish, chicken, shrimp: B L D.*

THE PARLOR AT DIANE'S, 510 N. Bullard St., 538-8722. Sandwiches, light bites: D.

PEACE MEAL VEGETARIAN DELI, The Hub, 6th and Bullard, 388-0106. "The unique and healthful food is tasty, and the only such of its kind around for miles—maybe even galaxies." (February 2007) Vegetarian: L D.*

PRETTY SWEET EMPORIUM, 312 N. Bullard St., 388-8600. Dessert, ice cream.*

Q'S SOUTHERN BISTRO, 101 E. College Ave., 534-4401. "Q's Southern Bistro has found its niche and honed its 'elevated pub' menu to excellence to serve its fun-loving, casual dining crowd." (October 2010) American, steaks, barbecue: L D.

RED BARN, 708 Silver Heights Blvd., 538-5666. "From the friendly staff to the down-home food—steaks, of course, plus chicken, seafood, burgers, sandwiches and a sampling of superb Mexican fare—you might be settling in for lunch or dinner at an especially large ranch house." (October 2009) Steakhouse: L D.*

SHEVEK & Co., 602 N. Bullard St., 534-9168. "Shevek & Co. will take

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your taste buds on a culinary tour from Spain to Greece, with delicious with delicious destinations all along the Mediterranean in-between. The sheer ambition of the offerings is astonishing.” (March 2009) Mediterranean: D, brunch on selected weekends.*

SILVER BOWLING CENTER CAFE, 2020 Memory Lane, 538-3612. American, Mexican, hamburgers: L D.*

SILVERADO HEALTH SHOP, 303 E. 13th St., 534-9404. Fresh sandwiches, salads, smoothies: L.

SUNRISE ESPRESSO, 1530 N. Hudson, 388-2027. Coffeeshop.

SUNRISE ESPRESSO, 1212 E. 32nd St., 388-2027. Coffeeshop.

TERRY’S ORIGINAL BARBEQUE, Hwy. 180 and Ranch Club Road. Barbeque to go: L D.

3 DOGS COFFEEHOUSE, 503 N. Bullard St. Coffeeshop.

TRE ROSAT CAFE, closed for remodeling of new location.

VICKI’S EATERY, 315 N. Texas, 388-5430. “Serving hearty breakfasts, sandwiches both cold and grilled, wraps and salads that satisfy in a homey yet sophisticated way. Don’t miss the German potato salad.” (Dec. 2009) American: B L.*

WRANGLER’S BAR & GRILL, 2005 Hwy. 180, 538-4387. Steak, burgers, appetizers, salads: L D.

YANKIE CREEK COFFEE HOUSE, 112 W. Yankie St. Coffeeshop.*

Bayard

FIDENCIO’S TACO SHOP, 1108 Tom Foy Blvd. Mexican: B L D.

LITTLE NISHA’S, 1101 Tom Foy Blvd., 537-3526. Mexican: B L D.

LOS CAMPAS FAST FOOD, 1203 Tom Foy Blvd. Sonoran-style Mexican.

M & A BAYARD CAFE, 1101 N. Central Ave., 537-2251. “A down-to-earth, friendly, unpretentious place—kind of a cross between a Mexican cantina and a 1950s home-style diner, serving tasty, no-frills Mexican and American food at reasonable prices.” (October 2011) Mexican and American: B L D.

SPANISH CAFE, 106 Central Ave., 537-2640. Mexican (takeout only): B L.

SUGAR SHACK, 1102 Tom Foy Blvd., 537-0500. Mexican: B L.

Cliff

PARKEY’S, 8414 Hwy. 180 W., 535-4000. Coffeeshop.

Hurley

GATEWAY GRILL, 2705 Hwy. 180E, 537-5001. “From Friday Steak Night to everyday American and Mexican food, worth hitting Hwy. 180 for.” (December 2011) American and Mexican: B L D (Fri-Sat).

Lake Roberts

SPIRIT CANYON LODGE & CAFE, 684 Hwy. 35, 536-9459. (July 2011) German specialties Saturday L.

Mimbres

ELK X-ING. BREAKFAST, sandwiches, Mexican: B L.

MIMBRES VALLEY CAFE, Hwy. 35 N., 536-2857. Mexican, American, hamburgers: B L D.*

Pinos Altos

BUCKHORN SALOON AND OPERA HOUSE, Main Street, 538-9911. “The Buck,” as most locals affectionately call it, has a history of satisfying at the dinner plate with its long-favored menu including generous slabs of meat, hearty green chile stew with kick and ‘honest pours’ at the full bar.” (December 2010) Steakhouse, pasta, burgers: D.

DOÑA ANA COUNTY

Las Cruces & Mesilla

ABRAHAM’S BANK TOWER RESTAURANT, 500 S. Main St. #434, 523-5911. American: B L.

ANDELE RESTAURANTE, 1950 Calle del Norte, 526-9631. Mexican: L D.

AQUA REEF, 900-B S. Telshor, 522-7333. Asian, sushi: D.*

BAAN THAI KITCHEN, 1605 S. Solano Dr., 521-2630. Thai: L D.

THE BEAN, 2011 Avenida de Mesilla, 523-0560. Coffeeshop.*

BLUE AGAVE CAFE, 1765 S. Main St. (inside Best Western Mission Inn), 524-8591. Southwestern: B D.

BLUE MOON, 13060 N. Valley Dr., 647-9524. Brew Pub: L D.

BOBA CAFE, 1900 S. Espina, Ste. 8, 647-5900. Sandwiches, salads, casual fare, espresso: L D.*

BRAVO’S CAFE, 3205 S. Main St., 526-8604. Mexican: B L D.

BREAK AN EGG, 201 S. Solano Dr., 647-3000. Breakfasts, burgers, salads, sandwiches: B L.

CAFE DE MESILLA EN LA PLAZA, 2051 Calle de Santiago, 652-3019.. Pastry, soups, sandwiches: B L early D.

CARILLO’S CAFE, 330 S. Church, 523-9913. Mexican, American: L D.

CATTLEMEN’S STEAKHOUSE, 2375

Bataan Memorial Hwy., 382-9051. Steakhouse: D.

DE LA VEGA’S PECAN GRILL & BREWERY, 500 S. Telshor Blvd., 521-1099. Pecan-smoked meats, sandwiches, steaks, seafood, craft beers: L D.

DELICIA’S DEL MAR, 1401 El Paseo, 524-2396. Mexican: B L D.

DG’S UNIVERSITY DELI, 1305 E. University Ave., 522-8409. Deli: L D.*

DICK’S CAFE, 2305 S. Valley Dr., 524-1360. Mexican and Burgers: B L D.

DOUBLE EAGLE, 2355 Calle De Guadalupe, 523-6700. Southwestern: L D.

EDDIE’S BAR & GRILL, 901 Avenida de Mesilla, 524-8603. Pub Food, American and Southwestern: B L D.

ESTRELLA DEL MAR, 150 S. Solano Dr., 541-9719. Mexican: L D.

GOOD LUCK CAFE, 1507 S. Solano, 521-3867. Mexican seafood. B L early D.

GRANDMA INES’S KITCHEN, 2910 Avenida de Mesilla, 527-0602. American: B L D.

GRANDY’S COUNTRY COOKING, 1345 El Paseo Rd., 526-4803. American, Southern: B L D.

GUACAMOLE’S BAR AND GRILL, 3995 W. Picacho Ave., 525-9115. Burgers, pizza, Hawaiian: L D.

HIEBERT’S FINE FOODS, 525 E. Madrid Ave. #7, 524-0451. Mexican, American: B L D.

HIGH DESERT BREWING COMPANY, 1201 W. Hadley Ave., 525-6752. Brew Pub: L D.*

HOTEL ENCANTO, 705 S. Telshor, 532-4277. Southwestern, Continental: B L D.*

INTEGRITY BAGELS, 1405 S. Solano, 522-3397. Bagels and Sandwiches: B L.

INTERNATIONAL DELIGHTS, 1245 El Paseo Rd., 647-5956. Greek and International: B L D.

JAPANESE KITCHEN, 141 Roadrunner Parkway, 521-3555. Japanese: L D.

JOSEPHINA’S OLD GATE CAFE, 2261 Calle de Guadalupe, 525-2620. Pastries, soups, salads, sandwiches: B (Fri-Sat), L.

KATANA TEPPANYAKI GRILL, 1001 E. University Ave., 532-2042. Japanese: L D.

KIVA PATIO CAFE, 600 E. Amador Ave., 527-8206. Mexican, Southwestern and American: B L D.

LA IGUANA, 139 N. Main St., 523-8550. “The restaurant is an interesting combination of styles, with elements of coffeehouse, deli and fine dining imaginatively woven together.” (February 2011) Sandwiches, soups, salads, coffee bar: B L D.*

LA POSTA RESTAURANT DE MESILLA, 2410 Calle De San Albino, 524-3524. Mexican and Steakhouse: L D.

LEMONGRASS, 2540 El Paseo Rd., 523-8778. Thai: L D.

LE RENDEZ-VOUS CAFE, 2701 W. Picacho Ave. #1, 527-0098. Deli, Sandwiches, coffeeshop: B L.

LORENZO’S, 1750 Calle de Mercado, 525-3170. Italian and Pizza: L D.

LORENZO’S PAN AM, 1753 E. University Ave., 521-3505. Italian and Pizza: L D.

LOS COMPAS CAFE, 6335 Bataan Memorial W., 382-2025. Mexican: B L D.

LOS COMPAS, 603 S. Nevarez St., 523-1778. Mexican: B L D.

LOS COMPAS, 1120 Commerce Dr., 521-6228. Mexican: B L D.*

MESILLA VALLEY KITCHEN, 2001 E. Lohman Ave. #103, 523-9311. Mexican and American: B L D.*

MESON DE MESILLA, 1803 Avenida De Mesilla, 652-4953. Steaks, barbecue, seafood: L D.

MILAGRO COFFEE Y ESPRESSO, 1733 E. University Ave., 532-1042. Coffeeshop: B L D.*

MIX PACIFIC RIM CUISINE AND MIX EXPRESS, 1001 E. University Ave. #D4, 532-2042. “For a true taste of Tokyo, a classic curry, a Vietnamese tidbit or big bite of Australia—all served up with the sophistication of San Francisco—head to Mix Pacific Rim Cuisine in Las Cruces for an international dining experience that satisfies. This elegant yet comfortable restaurant—belying its strip-center address—offers impeccable food from a wide array of cuisines, unhurried service and a deep wine list.” (March 2008) Asian and Pacific: L D.

MOONGATE CAFE, 705 E. US Hwy. 70, 382-5744. Coffeeshop and Mexican: B L D.

MY BROTHER’S PLACE, 336 S. Main St., 523-7681. Mexican: L D.

NELLIE’S CAFE, 1226 W. Hadley Ave., 524-9982. Mexican: B L D.

NOPALITO RESTAURANT, 2605 Missouri Ave., 522-0440. Mexican: L D.

NOPALITO RESTAURANT, 310 S. Mesquite St., 524-0003. Mexican: L D.*

OLD TOWN RESTAURANT, 155 S. Valley Dr., 523-4586. Mexican and American: B L.*

ONO GRINDZ, 300 N. Downtown Mall, 541-7492. “Expect Ono Grindz’ authentic Hawaiian fare to thrill your taste buds in an atmosphere that charms all your other senses.” (Feb. 2008) Hawaiian: B L D.

ORIENTAL PALACE, 225 E. Idaho, 526-4864. Chinese: L D.

PAISANO CAFE, 1740 Calle de Mercado, 524-0211. Mexican: B L D.*

PANCAKE ALLEY DINER, 2146 W. Picacho Ave., 647-4836. American: B L D.

PAOLA’S BAKERY AND CAFE, N. Main St., 524-2025. El Salvadoran.

PARKER’S BBQ, 850 E. Madrid Ave., 541-5712. Barbecue carryout: L early D.

PEPE’S, 1405 W. Picacho, 541-0277. Mexican: B L D.

PEPPERS ON THE PLAZA, 2355 Calle De Guadalupe, 523-6700. Southwestern: L D.

PHO SAIGON, 1160 El Paseo Road, 652-4326. Vietnamese: L D.

PIT STOP CAFE, 361 S. Motel Blvd., 527-1993. Mexican, American, steak: B L D.

PLAYER’S GRILL, 3000 Champions Dr. (NMSU golf course clubhouse), 646-2457. American: B L D.

PUEBLO VIEJO, Picacho Ave. and Valley Dr., 525-9590. Mexican: B L D.

PULLARO’S ITALIAN RESTAURANT, 901 W. Picacho Ave., 523-6801. Italian: L D.

RANCHWAY BARBEQUE, 604 N. Valley Dr., 523-7361. Barbecue and Mexican: B L D.

RED BRICK PIZZA, 2808 N. Telshor Blvd., 521-7300. Pizzas, sandwiches, salads: L D.

DINING GUIDE continued on page 47



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Gateway to Good Eats

From Friday Steak Night to everyday American and Mexican food, Hurley's Gateway Grill is worth a trek along Hwy. 180.

Hurley is a small, unpretentious mining town that is definitely off the beaten track, even though it's located right alongside Hwy. 180 between Silver City and Deming. But a local restaurant, the Gateway Grill, makes a trip to Hurley well worth the time it takes to get there—about 20 minutes from Silver City and 40 minutes from Deming.

The restaurant serves both Mexican and American food, and it is all good quality, down-to-earth, tasty fare.

"The recipes are all mine," says owner Bo Rinehart. "They've been handed down in my family for generations."

Those generations have all been Deming natives, Rinehart says. "We've been there forever." And he still lives there with his wife, Melanie, and their two teenage daughters. Melanie is principal of Deming's Memorial Elementary School.

Rinehart is, however, a relative newcomer to Hurley, having purchased the Gateway Grill just under two years ago. "I've always wanted a restaurant, and this was a good opportunity I couldn't pass up," he says.

The property includes not just a restaurant, but also a motel, a gas station and a small convenience store, which is located in the restaurant building. The complex is known as the Gateway Plaza, and it keeps Rinehart busy. The restaurant is open seven days a week all year long, closing only for three days: Thanksgiving, Christmas and Easter Sunday. The motel, gas station and convenience store, however, stay open even on those special days.

Restaurant hours are 6 a.m. to 2 p.m. Sunday through Thursday, and 6 a.m. to 7 p.m. Fridays and Saturdays.

Friday night is Steak Night at the Gateway Grill. Premium ribeye steak dinners are offered, ranging in price from \$14.99 to \$24.99, depending on the size of the steak. These are by far the most expensive items you'll find at the Gateway Grill.

"I cook all the steaks outside over a mesquite grill," Rinehart says. He cooks them with a special house barbecue sauce. If you don't want your steak cooked with barbecue sauce, you have to specify that when you give your order. Dinner orders are taken starting at 4:30. The official closing time is 7 p.m., but Rinehart says, "I keep cooking steaks until people quit coming."

Steaks are not the only attraction Friday nights at the Gateway Grill. Live music is also provided by local musicians. Rinehart himself has been a performing musician in the past, but he's too busy cooking steaks these days to join in.

Although steaks are definitely the specialty of the house on Friday night, customers are welcome to order off the regular menu, if they prefer.

The regular menu includes breakfast, lunch and dinner options, and all of those options are available throughout the hours the restaurant is open—well, except for Friday night. That's the one time you can't order a breakfast item at the Gateway Grill. "We just have too much going on Friday night to be able to serve breakfasts," Rinehart says.

The rest of the time, however, anything goes. If you want to have a breakfast burrito or huevos rancheros or a stack of silver-dollar pancakes at lunchtime or at dinnertime Saturday night, you can do that. If you simply must have a six-ounce sirloin chili con queso steak or a hamburger or



Gateway Grill owner Bo Rinehart at the restaurant counter. (Photos by Peggy Platonos)

a chile rellenos plate at 6 a.m., you can do that, too.

Prices are reasonable for all items. On the American side of the breakfast menu, three-egg omelets are available for \$6.50 to \$7.25; a full stack of pancakes costs \$4.95, a short stack \$3.95; ham and eggs are \$6.50; biscuits and gravy cost \$4.95 plain or \$5.95 with sausage; and hearty breakfast items like eggs with pork chop, country fried steak, or sirloin steak range in price from \$7.95 to \$10.50. Mexican breakfast options include huevos rancheros at \$6.75, chunky rancheros at \$6.95, chorizo

con rancheros at \$6.95, and an assortment of breakfast burritos, all ranging in price from \$2.25 to \$5.95.

Prices for lunch burgers, salads and sandwiches range from \$5.75 for a plain burger and chips to \$7.25 for the popular green chile cheese-burger, \$6.25 for a chef salad, \$3.95 for the old standby grilled cheese sandwich, \$7.25 for a hot roast beef or turkey sandwich, and \$7.25 for a "Plaza Special" consisting of

"roast beef chili con queso on Texas toast." And these are only a few of the choices available at the Gateway Grill.

There's also a full menu of Mexican dishes to choose from, including enchilada combo plates for \$7.50 to \$7.95, beef or chicken taco plates for \$7.25, a Chimichanga plate for \$7.25, beef or chicken flautas plates for \$6.95, burritos, of course, and a chile relleno plate, both for \$7.25. Individual tacos, enchiladas and rellenos are also available for \$1.25 to \$1.75 each, and burritos cost \$4.50 each, regardless of their filling.

Private parties can be scheduled outside of the restaurant's normal business hours. And the restaurant will also cater outside events, to some extent. "We can supply food for events, but we don't send employees to set things up," Rinehart explains.

For more information, call the Gateway Grill at (575) 537-5002. ☛

Send Mimbres freelance writer Peggy Platonos tips for restaurant reviews at platonos@gilanet.com or call (575) 536-2997.



Grand Opening

Sunrise Espresso II
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DINING GUIDE continued

RENEE’S PLACE, 3000 Harrelson, 526-4878. American.
ROBERTO’S MEXICAN FOOD, 908 E. Amador Ave., 523-1851. Mexican: B L D.*
ROLLY’S PIZZERIA, 5195 Bataan Memorial West, 373-0222. Pizza: L D.
ROSIE’S CAFÉ DE MESILLA, 420 Avenida de Mesilla, 526-1256. Breakfast, Mexican, burgers: B L D.
SAENZ GORDITAS, 1700 N. Solano Dr, 527-4212. Mexican: B L D.
SANTORINI’S, 1001 E. University Ave., 521-9270. “An eclectic blend of Greek and Mediterranean dishes—gyros with different meats, such as lamb or chicken, hummus with pita, Greek salads—plus sampler plates and less-familiar items such as keftedes and pork shawarma. Vegetarian options are numerous.” (July 2010) Greek, Mediterranean: L D.
SARA’S PLACE, 1750 N. Solano Dr., 523-2278. Mexican: B L.
SB’S LATE-NIGHT LUNCHBOX, 120 S. Water St.. New American fare, vegetarian, vegan, wraps: L D.
SEREFINO’S, 1001 E. University Ave., 522-1444. New Mexican: B L.
THE SHED, 810 S. Valley Dr., 525-2636. American, pizza, Mexican, desserts. B L D. *
SI ITALIAN BISTRO, 523 E. Idaho, 523-1572. Italian: L D.
SIMPLY TOASTED CAFÉ, 1702 El Paseo Road, 526-1920. Sandwiches, soup, salads: B L.
SI SENOR, 1551 E. Amador Ave., 527-0817. Mexican: L D.*
SMOKY DICK’S BBQ, 2265 S. Main St., 541-5947. Barbecue: L D.
SPANISH KITCHEN, 2960 N. Main St., 526-4275. Mexican: B L D.
SPIRIT WINDS, 2260 S. Locust St., 521-1222. Sandwiches and Bakery: B L D.*
ST. CLAIR WINERY & BISTRO, 1800 Avenida de Mesilla, 524-0390. Wine tasting, Bistro: L D.
SUNSET GRILL, 1274 Golf Club Road (Sonoma Ranch Golf Course clubhouse), 521-1826. American, Steak and Burgers: B L D.
TACOS SANTA FE, 605 E. Lohman Ave., 541-4905. Mexican, tacos al pastor: L D.
TERIYAKI BOWL, 2300 N. Main St., 524-2055. Japanese: L D.
TERIYAKI CHICKEN HOUSE, 805 El Paseo Rd., 541-1696. Japanese: L D.

THAI DELIGHT, 2184 Avenida de Mesilla, 525-1900. “The menu quite literally has something for everyone. For the adventurous, there are traditional Thai curries, soups and appetizers to choose from, all of which can be ordered in the degree of heat that suits you.... The restaurant is clean, comfortable, casual in a classy sort of way, and totally unpretentious.” (January 2011) Thai, salads, sandwiches, seafood, steaks, German: L D. *
TIFFANY’S PIZZA & GREEK AMERICAN CUISINE, 755 S. Telshor Blvd #G1, 532-5002. Pizza, Greek and Deli: B L D.*
TONY’S RESTAURANTE, 125 S. Campo St., 524-9662. Italian: B L.
UMP 88 GRILL, 1338 Picacho Hills Dr., 647-1455. “An authentic taste of the Emerald Isle in a delightfully authentic pub atmosphere.” (December 2008) Irish pub: L D.
VALLEY GRILL, 1970 N. Valley, 525-9000. American: B L D, Friday Fish Fry.
VINTAGE WINES, 2461 Calle de Principal, 523-WINE. Wine and cigar bar, tapas: L D.
WOK-N-WORLD, 5192 E. Boutz, 526-0010. Chinese, pizza: L D.
ZEFFIRO PIZZERIA NAPOLETANA, 136 N. Water St., 525-6757. “Owner Gary Ebert and his very attentive and efficient staff serve up gourmet-style pizza on hand-tossed crusts.” (August 2009) Pizza, also sandwiches at adjoining Popular Artisan Bakery: L D.
ZEFFIRO NEW YORK PIZZERIA, 101 E. University Ave., 525-6770. Pizza: L D.
Anthony ERNESTO’S MEXICAN FOOD, 200 Anthony Dr., 882-3641. Mexican: B L.
LA COCINITA, 908 W. Main Dr., 589-1468. Mexican: L.
Chapparal EL BAYO STEAK HOUSE, 417 Chaparral Dr., 824-4749. Steakhouse: B L D.
TORTILLERIA SUSY, 661 Paloma Blanca Dr., 824-9377. Mexican: B L D.
Doña Ana BIG MIKE’S CAFE, Thorpe Road. Mexican, Breakfasts and Burgers: B L D.
SAFARI, 2221 Desert Wind Way, 382-0600.
La Mesa CHOPES BAR & CAFE, Hwy 28, 233-9976. Mexican: L D.

Organ THAI DELIGHT, 16151 Hwy. 70 E., 373-3000. Thai, steaks, sandwiches: L D.
Radium Springs COUNTRY CUPBOARD, 827 Fort Selden Rd., 527-4732. American: B L D.
LUNA COUNTY Deming ADOBE DELI, 3970 Lewis Flats Rd. SE, 546-0361. “The lunch menu features traditional deli-style sandwiches, ranging. The dinner menu is much grander, though some sandwiches are available then, too: filet mignon, flat iron steak, T-bone, ribeye, NY strip, Porterhouse, barbecued pork ribs, halibut, Duck L’Orange, Alaska King Crab legs, broiled salmon steak, shrimp scampi, pork chops, osso buco, beef kabobs.” (March 2010) Bar, Deli and Steaks: L D.*
BALBOA MOTEL & RESTAURANT, 708 W. Pine St., 546-6473. American: L D.
BELSHORE RESTAURANT, 1210 E. Spruce, 546-6289. American: B L.
CAMPO’S RESTAURANT, 105 S. Silver, 546-0095. “Owner Albert Campos prides himself on the authentic Mexican and southwestern food he cooks up, inspired by his home in the Mexican state of Zacatecas—such as the fantastic BBQ Beef Brisket Sandwich, a family recipe. But the restaurant has much more than Mexican fare.” (June 2007) Mexican, American, Southwestern: L D.*
CANO’S RESTAURANT, 1200 W. Pine St., 546-3181. Mexican: B L D.
CHINA RESTAURANT, 110 E. Pine St., 546-4146. Chinese: L D.
DAIRY QUEEN, 1414 E. Pine St., 546-820. Frozen desserts, burgers. *
DEMING TRUCK TERMINAL, 1310 W. Spruce, 546-8832. American, Mexican: B L D.
EL CAMINO REAL, 900 W. Pine St., 546-7421. Mexican, American: B L D. *
EL MIRADOR, 510 E. Pine St., 544-7340. Mexican: B L D.
GOLDEN STAR, 500 E. Cedar St., 544-0689. Chinese.
GRAND MOTOR INN & LOUNGE, 1721 E. Pine, 546-2632. Mexican,

DINING GUIDE continued on next page




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Crab Cakes served with a basil lemon aioli
Or
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All served with carrot flan and roasted veggies and homemade bread
Chocolate-Espresso Mousse \$22.
New Year's Eve Dinner
Starter:
Tomato Soup with homemade Croutons and Crab
Entree choices:
Crab Cakes with a Lemon Caper aioli
Chicken Scallopiini with a lemon caper sauce
Pistachio Mustard Encrusted Prime Rib served with roasted vegetables, twice baked potatoes, homemade bread, and asparagus salad
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DECEMBER TAKE AWAY DINNERS
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Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
November 28	November 29	November 30	December 1	December 2
No Take Away	Meatloaf Mashed Potatoes Vegetable Dinner Roll Pie	Pot Roast Potatoes, Carrots, Celery Tossed Salad Dinner Roll Dessert	Green Chile Chicken Enchilada Casserole Pinto Beans Tossed Salad Brownie	No Take Away
Open for Regular Catering Orders	\$10.00	\$10.00	\$10.00	Open for Regular Catering Orders
December 5	December 6	December 7	December 8	December 9
No Take Away	Roast Pork w/Potatoes and Sauerkraut Relishes Rye Bread Cake	Oven Fried Chicken Mashed Potatoes and Gravy Vegetable Dinner Roll Cookie	Brisket with BBQ Cheesy Potatoes Tossed Salad Bun Dessert	No Take Away
Open for Regular Catering Orders	\$10.00	\$10.00	\$10.00	Open for Regular Catering Orders
December 12	December 13	December 14	December 15	December 16
No Take Away	Chicken & Dumplings With Mixed Vegetables Tossed Salad Pie	Pork Loin Twice Baked Potato Vegetable Cake	Beef Stew with Vegetables Tossed Salad Dinner Roll Cookie	No Take Away
Open for Regular Catering Orders	\$10.00	\$10.00	\$10.00	Open for Regular Catering Orders
December 19	December 20	December 21	December 22	December 23
No Take Away	Baked Spaghetti with Meat or Alfredo Sauce Tossed Salad Garlic Bread Dessert	Chicken Pot Pie with Potatoes and Vegetables Tossed Salad Cookie	Pulled Pork BBQ Baked Potato (Sweet or White) Vegetable Salad Brownie	No Take Away
Open for Regular Catering Orders	\$10.00	\$10.00	\$10.00	Open for Regular Catering Orders
December 26	December 27	December 28	December 29	December 30
Closed	Through	January 8 th	Reopening	January 9 th

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 Why Membership Matters"**
 with Carolyn Smith, Co-op Community Outreach Coordinator.
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Presented twice
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Thursday, December 15th noon-1pm

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Table Talk

Barbecue buffs will be delighted to learn that **Bryan's Pit BBQ** is back, now operating out of a mobile trailer rather than its former Mimbres location. That means the smoked sensations we raved about back in August 2010 are once again available, both by the meal-sized serving and by the pound. The new mobile modus operandi also means Silver City barbecue lovers won't necessarily have to drive out to the Mimbres to satisfy their cravings. Call for locations (look for them frequently in the Ace Hardware parking lot on week-ends) and special orders, (660) 247-3151 or (660) 247-3160. Checks and cash only.

Sunrise Espresso's second location is now celebrating its grand opening. The popular Silver City drive-up espresso bar at 1530 N. Hudson has opened at 1212 E. 32nd St., handy to Gila Regional Memorial Hospital. You can still drive through, but the second spot also offers interior seating, freshly baked treats and even free wi-fi. Hours at the new location are weekdays, 6 a.m.-7 p.m.

Also new in the area is **Los Campas Fast Food** in Bayard, opened by owners Sammy Martinez, Tilly Rodriguez-Martinez and Pete Q. Torres. Los Campas will feature authentic Sonoran-style Mexican food, including but not limited to those famous Sonoran-style hot dogs. 1203 Tom Foy Blvd.

Shevek & Co. in Silver City will be celebrating Hanukkah all month long. Spin a dreidel to win

prizes including a discount on that night's bill, free dessert, free coffee/espresso/chai or free scoop of ice cream/gelato. If you don't want a food prize that evening, you can choose a certificate for later use. 602 N. Bullard, 534-9168.

In Las Cruces, **Mix Express Gourmet Japanese Cuisine** has spun off a second location, a mobile eatery parked on Mesa Grande near Oñate High School. Mix Express is itself a spinoff of sorts, with the original on University Avenue adjacent to Mix Pacific Rim Cuisine. Hours of the mobile Mix will be Monday-Saturday, 11 a.m.-7:30 p.m., and Sunday, 12-6 p.m.

If you haven't been to Las Cruces lately, you might have missed two other additions to the dining scene there. **Cafe de Mesilla en la Plaza**, located two blocks from the Fountain Theatre at 2051 Calle de Santiago, serves French pastries, specialty coffees, soups and sandwiches. Hours are Monday-Saturday, 9 a.m.-6 p.m., and Sunday until 5 p.m., plus special evening events. 652-3019.

Baan Thai Kitchen is at 1605 S. Solano Dr., 521-2630, is open Tuesday-Saturday, 10 a.m.-2 p.m. and 5-9 p.m., and Sunday, 11 a.m.-3 p.m., closed Mondays. ☞

Send restaurant news to
updates@red-or-green.com.

DINING GUIDE continued

steak, seafood: B L D.

IRMA'S, 123 S. Silver Ave., 544-4580. Mexican, American and Seafood: B L D.

LA FONDA, 601 E. Pine St., 546-0465. Mexican: B L D.*

LA PARRILLA, 1409 Columbus Road, 544-4443. Mexican: B L.

LAS CAZUELAS, 108 N. Platinum Ave. (inside El Rey meat market), 544-8432. "This gem of a restaurant turns out perfectly cooked steaks and seafood, as well as a full line of Mexican fare." (June 2011) Steaks, seafood, Mexican: L D. Manolo's Cafe, 120 N. Granite St., 546-0405.

MIMBRES VALLEY BREWING CO., 200 S. Gold, 544-BREW. Craft beer, pizza, burgers, wings, paninis: L D.

PALMA'S ITALIAN GRILL, 110 S. Silver, 544-3100. "Even if you think you don't like Italian food, you might want to try this family-run enterprise, with Harold and Palma Richmond at the helm. In addition to the name, Palma brings to the restaurant her Sicilian heritage and recipes that came to the United States with her grandmother. Harold brings training in classic Continental cuisine, along with his family's New England food traditions." (Sept. 2010) Sat. prime rib, Sun. buffet. Italian: L D.*

PATIO CAFE, 1521 Columbus Road, 546-5990. Burgers, American, breakfast specialties: B L D.*

PRIME RIB GRILL, inside Holiday Inn, I-10 exit 85, 546-2661. Steak and Seafood: B L D.*

RANCHER'S GRILL, 316 E. Cedar St., 546-8883. Steakhouse: L D.*

SI SENOR, 200 E. Pine St., 546-3938. Mexican: B L D.

SUNRISE KITCHEN, 1409 S. Columbus Road, 544-7795. B L.

TACOS MIRASOL, 323 E. Pine St., 544-0646. Mexican: L D.

Akela

APACHE HOMELANDS RESTAURANT, I-10. Burgers, ribs, "casino-style" food: B L D.*

Columbus

PANCHO VILLA CAFE, Hwy. 11, 531-0555. Mexican and American: B L D.

PATIO CAFE, 23 Broadway, 531-2495. Burgers, American: B L.*

HIDALGO COUNTY

Lordsburg

EL CHARRO RESTAURANT, 209 S. P Blvd., 542-3400. Mexican: B L D.

FIDENCIO'S, 604 E. Motel Dr., 542-8989. Mexican: B L early D.

KRANBERRY'S FAMILY RESTAURANT, 1405 Main St., 542-9400. Mexican and American: B L D.*

MAMA ROSA'S PIZZA, 1312 Main St., 542-8400. Pizza: L D.

RAMONA'S CAFE, 904 E. Motel Dr., 542-3030. Mexican, American: B L D.

Animas

PANTHER TRACKS CAFE, Hwy 338, 548-2444. Burgers, Mexican and American: B L D

Rodeo

RODEO STORE AND CAFE, coffee-shop food: B L.

RODEO TAVERN, 557-2229. D (Weds.-Sat.).

CATRON COUNTY

Reserve

ADOBE CAFE, Hwy. 12 & Hwy. 180, 533-6146. Deli, American, Thursday

pizza, Sunday barbecue buffet: B L D (Thurs., Sun.).

BLACK GOLD, 533-6538. Coffee-house.

CARMEN'S, 533-6990. Mexican and American: B L D.

ELLA'S CAFE, 533-6111. Home-style: B L D.

UNCLE BILL'S BAR, 533-6369. Pub Food: L D.

Glenwood

ALMA GRILL, Hwy. 180, 539-2233. Breakfast, sandwiches, hamburgers, Mexican: B L.*

BLUE FRONT BAR AND CAFE, Hwy. 180, 539-2561. "Plentiful appetizer platters, perfectly done and tender ribeye, weekend special barbecue dishes smoky sweet and ample. Try the 'Stevie' sandwich, a grilled cheese with onions, tomatoes and chiles.... A regular haunt for locals who eat out, and a Thursday night yoga group meets and eats here each week." (Nov. 2007) Mexican and American, weekend Barbecue, Friday catfish fry: L D.*

GOLDEN GIRLS CAFE, Hwy. 180, 539-2457. "Dig into an honest taste of the local scene and a down-home breakfast you'll surely wish your mama had made. The specials listed up on the whiteboard all come with biscuits and gravy, and the ample menu has all the usual suspects—omelets, pancakes, French toast and, of course, breakfast burritos—clueing you into the rib-sticking satisfaction ahead." (Nov. 2007) Breakfast: B.

MARIO'S PIZZA, Hwy. 180, 539-2316. "This unpretentious eatery serves up better pizza than you'll find in many a big city. But a recent visit to the tiny, scenic mountain town will forever be remembered as the time I had, absolutely, the best calzone of my life." (Nov. 2008) Italian: D (Tues., Sat.).

Other Catron County

DAILY PIE CAFE, Pie Town, 722-2700. Italian and Homestyle: B L D.

EL SERAPE, Quemado, 773-4620. Mexican and American.

SNUFFY'S STEAKHOUSE AND SALOON, Quemado Lake, 773-4672. Steakhouse: D

SIERRA COUNTY

Hillsboro

BARBER SHOP CAFE, 895-5283. American, Mediterranean, Sandwiches: B (Sat., Sun.) L.

HILLSBORO GENERAL STORE, Main St., 895-5306. American and Southwestern: B L D (Sat.).

NOTE—Restaurant hours and meals served vary by day of the week and change frequently; call ahead to make sure. Key to abbreviations: B=Breakfast; L=Lunch; D=Dinner.*=Find copies of Desert Exposure here. Send updates, additions and corrections to: updates@red-or-green.com. ☞

THE CAMPOS
 RESTAURANT

- Newly renovated Mexican decor
- Former Chef at Double Eagle Restaurant in Mesilla
- Excellent Mexican, Italian and American cuisine
- New Year's Eve Dinner
- New Year's Day Buffet (call for reservations)
- Come in and try our ribeye steak, fresh salmon and Cajun tilapia filet!

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40 DAYS & 40 NIGHTS

What’s Going on in December

Plus a look ahead into early January.

DECEMBER THURSDAY
1 Silver City/Grant County
KNITTING THURSDAYS—Every Thursday. Informal sessions provide beginning knitting instruction or help with your ongoing knitting projects. 10 a.m.-12 p.m. The Common Thread, 107 W. Broadway, 538-5733, fiberartscollective.org.
LIGHT UP A LIFE—Tree memorial lighting ceremony. Call to reserve a light in memory of loved ones. 5:30-6:30 p.m. \$5 donation. Gila Regional Medical Center, 1313 E. 32nd St., 575-4934, grmc.org.

Las Cruces/Mesilla
CARPE DIEM STRING QUARTET—Classical string quartet repertoire, plus gypsy, tango, folk, pop, rock and jazz-inspired music. 7:30 p.m. \$20. Rio Grande Theatre, 211 N. Downtown Mall, 523-6403, riograndetheatre.com.
GREAT CONVERSATION—With Randy Harris. 6-7:30 p.m. Free. Mountain View Market, 1300 El Paseo, 523-0436.
MUSICAL MUSINGS WITH THE MAESTRO—Lunch with Maestro Lonnie Klein. (See story in this issue.) 12 p.m. \$16. Ramada Palms Hotel and Conference Center, 201 E. University Ave., 646-3709, lascrucessymphony.com.
PHILIP GIBBS—High Desert Brewing, 1201 W. Hadley, 525-6752.
PSYCHIC READINGS AND ENERGETIC HEALINGS—Reiki Master and Reverend Dawn Cheney. 12-2 p.m. Mountain View Market, 1300 El Paseo, 523-0436.
SALVATION BOULEVARD—Based on a book by Larry Beinhart, starring Greg Kinnear, Pierce Brosnan, Jennifer Connelly, Ciaran Hinds, Isabelle Fuhrman, Marisa Tomei and Ed Harris. Nightly 7:30 p.m., Sun. 2:30 and 7:30 p.m. \$7 regular, \$5 seniors and students, MVFS members. Fountain Theatre, 2469 Calle de Guadalupe, 524-8287, mesillavalleyfilm.org.
SCIENCE CAFE—NASA Art: 50 Years of NASA Scientific Spinoffs. 5:30 p.m. Museum of Natural History, 700 S. Telshor Blvd., 522-3372, museums.las-cruces.org.
DON JOSE CASTRO—Exhibit through Dec. 31. Artist’s reception. A final farewell through the photography of Robert Kaiser. 5-7 p.m. Branigan Cultural Center, 501 N. Main St., 541-2154, las-cruces.org/museums.

FRIDAY
2 Silver City/Grant County
FIRST FRIDAYS DOWNTOWN—Holiday passport drawing and reception. Luminarias, carolers and cider. 8 p.m. Downtown Silver City, SilverCityMain-Street.com.
JEWELRY SHOW—Exhibit through Dec. 31. Reception. 5-7 p.m. Seedboat Gallery, 214 W. Yankee St., seedboat-gallery.com.
KATE MACLEOD—Buckhorn Saloon, Pinos Altos, 538-9911, buckhornsaloonandoperahouse.com.
LAS CRUCES SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA—With guest violinist Stefan Jackiw. See story in this issue. Mimbres Region Arts Council and Grant County Community Concert Association. 7:30 p.m. \$20, \$5 children to age 17. WNMU Fine Arts Center Theatre. (575) 538-2505, (575) 538-5862, www.mimbresarts.org, www.gcconcerts.org.
LET YOUR LIGHT SHINE!—Lighting of the Gough Park Gazebo holiday lights. 5 p.m. Gough Park.
OUR LADY OF GUADALUPE ART SHOW—Reception. 5-7 p.m. Leyba & Ingalls Art, 315 Bullard St., 388-5725, leybaingallsarts.com.
Las Cruces/Mesilla
8TH ANNUAL TRAILS OF LIGHTS—Free. Railroad Museum. Also on the Downtown Mall. 351 N. Mesilla St., 647-4480, las-cruces.org/public-services/museums.
ANNUAL LA CASA’S HOLIDAY BAZAAR—Preview party. 4 p.m. Convention Center, 680 W. University Ave., 526-2819, lacasainc.org.
BIG BAND DANCE CLUB—The CDs. 7-10 p.m. \$7. Court Youth Center, 402 W. Court St., 526-6504.
HIGHER GROUND—Through Dec. 8. Actress Vera Farmiga’s directorial debut, based on Carolyn Briggs’ memoir, the film depicts the journey of Midwesterner Corinne from godly wonderment to roiling dissatisfaction. As a teenager, literary-minded, curious Corinne (played in these scenes by Farmiga’s youngest sister, Taissa) bristles at the disinte-

grating union of her mother (Donna Murphy) and father. When her own blissful romance with a long-haired rock guitarist named Ethan quickly settles into a workaday marriage, young parenthood and near-tragedy, the pair double down on their bond by turning to the Bible as a way to make sense of their changing lives. Farmiga and Joshua Leonard pick up the roles of Corinne and Ethan as adults. While Ethan can find fulfillment as a musician for Jesus, Corinne’s attempt at self-expression in church is reprimanded as preaching to the men. Nightly 7:30 p.m., Sun. 2:30 and 7:30 p.m. \$7 regular, \$5 seniors and students, MVFS members. Fountain Theatre, 2469 Calle de Guadalupe, 524-8287, mesillavalleyfilm.org.
HOWLING COYOTE COFFEEHOUSE AND OPEN MIC—7-9 p.m. Free. Rio Grande Theatre, 211 N. Downtown Mall, 523-6403, riograndetheatre.com.
LIGHTING OF CHRISTMAS TREE—By the city of Las Cruces. 5 p.m. Free. City Hall, 700 N. Main St., 541-2000, las-cruce.org.
LITERARY OPEN MIC—An open mic for poets and storytellers, sponsored by the Doña Ana Arts Council and Sin Fronteras: Writers Without Borders. 5:30-6:30 p.m. Free. Rio Grande Theatre, 211 N. Downtown Mall, 523-6403, riograndetheatre.com.
NUNCRACKERS—Through Dec. 18. By Dan Goggin and directed by Art Haggerton. Live from the basement of Mt. St. Mary’s Convent! 8 p.m. \$5-\$10. Las Cruces Community Theater, 313 N. Downtown Mall, 523-1200, lcctnm.org.
OLD FASHIONED HOLIDAY DISPLAY—Santa! Holiday music provided by Vista Vibrations Bell Choir and the Central Elementary School Choir. View the model trains, take in the holiday decorations, and complete a craft project. Light refreshments. 5-8 p.m. Railroad Museum, 351 N. Mesilla St., 647-4480, las-cruces.org/public-services/museums.
ONCE IN A LIFETIME—Through Dec. 4. Three vaudevillians head to California to conquer Hollywood’s newest advancement: talking pictures. By Neil Simon. 7:30 p.m. NMSU Hershel Zohn Theatre, 3014 McFie Circle, 646-4515, theatre.nmsu.edu.
SANTA AT WINTERFEST—5-9 p.m. Free. Railroad Museum, 351 N. Mesilla St., 647-4480, las-cruces.org/public-services/museums.
STEVEN KAEPLER—Artist reception. 5-7 p.m. Rio Grande Theatre, 211 N. Downtown Mall, 523-6403, riograndetheatre.com.
White Sands
WHITE SANDS NATIONAL MONUMENT OPEN HOUSE—Live music, luminarias around the historic adobe visitor center, and interpretive programs. 5-8 p.m. Free. White Sands National Monument, 679-2599 ext. 230, 479-6124 ext. 236, nps.gov/whsa.
Deming
COUNTRY CHRISTMAS BAZAAR—9 a.m.-1 p.m. Holy Family Church, 615 S. Copper.
SATURDAY
3 Silver City/Grant County
31ST ANNUAL MIMBRES HOT SPRINGS STUDIO SALE—Through Dec. 4. Over 30 artists, unique handcrafted gifts. Live music, refreshments, door prizes. Bayou Seco. 10 a.m.-5 p.m. Mimbres Hot Springs Studio. Hwy. 152 to the Mimbres, Hwy. 61 south to Royal John Mine Road (between mile markers 19 and 20). Follow signs two and a half miles. No pets. www.studiosale-mimbres.com.
ELI, THE SHEPHERD BOY—Ron McPherson will present an overview of his book. 10 a.m. Public Library.
GIFT WRAPPING—Free. Silco Theater, 311 N. Bullard St., 534-9005, silcotheater.com.
GRANT COUNTY HOME BUSINESS NETWORK CHRISTMAS BOUTIQUE—Grant County Business & Conference Center, 519-2795.
HOLIDAY INDOOR ART MARKET—A Space Gallery, 110 W. 7th, 618-6425.
Joy 2011!—Sponsored by Theatre Group New Mexico and WNMU. Music, dance, a children’s chorus, a sing-a-long, Santa. Free, but bring a monetary donation for the Grant County Food Pantry. 6 p.m. WNMU Fine Arts Center Theatre.
KAS NELSON TRIO—7:30 p.m. Isaac’s, 200 N. Bullard St.
LOZEN—In this part of Victoria

Tester’s 15-act New Mexico Ghost Play Cycle, the Chiricahua Apache woman Lozen, sister of Victorio, who fought as a warrior for the survival of her tribe, is visited by her own Shadow as she lays dying in punitive exile in Alabama. Lozen and her Shadow struggle over the life they have shared. Lozen is played by Manda Clair Jost, and her Shadow is played by Heather Castello. Music by Patrice Mutchnick. 2-3 p.m. Silver City Museum Annex, 302 W. Broadway.
PHILIP GIBBS—Buckhorn Saloon, Pinos Altos, 538-9911, buckhornsaloonandoperahouse.com.
SHOW AND SHINE—Copper Country Cruizers car club’s annual toy run. 9 a.m.-1 p.m. Gough Park.
Las Cruces/Mesilla
NMSU AGGIES FOOTBALL VS. UTAH STATE—Country western game. 6 p.m. \$13-30. NMSU Aggies Memorial Stadium, 646-1420, 532-2060, nmstatesports.com.
BIRDING TOUR—8:15 a.m. \$5 per vehicle. Mesilla Valley Bosque State Park, 5000 Calle de Norte, 523-4398.
NMSU AGGIES SWIMMING AND DIVING VS. NORTHERN ARIZONA—11:30 a.m. NMSU Natatorium, Stewart St., 505-646-1420, nmstatesports.com.
ANNUAL LA CASA’S HOLIDAY BAZAAR—Through Dec. 4. 9 a.m.- 5 p.m. Convention Center, 680 W. University Ave., 526-2819, lacasainc.org.
CAROLS AND CRAFTS—Children will decorate a cowboy stocking, learn holiday songs, and bake stained-glass cookies. Ages 4 and older with guardian. 9:30 a.m.-1 p.m. \$5. Farm & Ranch Heritage Museum, 4100 Dripping Springs Road, 522-4100, nmfarmandranchmuseum.org.
CLASSICS THREE—Also Dec. 4. The Las Cruces Symphony Orchestra, featuring violinist Stefan Jackiw, will perform works by Verdi, Beethoven and Dvorak. See story in this issue. 7:30 p.m. \$35-\$45. NMSU Atkinson Hall, 1075 North Horseshoe, 646-2421.
DOWNTOWN RAMBLE—Art openings, exhibits, music, entertainment, open mic opportunities, shopping, refreshments and more. 5-7 p.m. Free. Downtown Mall, 523-2950.
NATURE HIKE—3:30 p.m. \$5 per vehicle. Mesilla Valley Bosque State Park, 5000 Calle de Norte, 523-4398.
NUNCRACKERS—See Dec. 2. Through Dec. 18. 8 p.m. \$5-\$10. Las Cruces Community Theater, 313 N. Downtown Mall, 523-1200, lcctnm.org.
ONCE IN A LIFETIME—See Dec. 2. Through Dec. 4. 7:30 p.m. NMSU Hershel Zohn Theatre, 3014 McFie Circle, 646-4515, theatre.nmsu.edu.
PEE WEE MOORE—High Desert Brewing, 1201 W. Hadley, 525-6752.
PLUG INTO THE SUN—Solar energy seminar. 2-3 p.m. Free. Mountain View Market, 1300 El Paseo, 523-0436.
RICHARD AND SUSI BERGQUIST—Folklore clay figures and santos. 10 a.m.-4 p.m. Free. Cutter Gallery, 2640 El Paseo Rd, 541-0658.
THE DARK SIDE OF CHOCOLATE—In this short documentary, a team of journalists investigates how human trafficking and child labor in the Ivory Coast fuel the worldwide chocolate industry. With free samples of Fair Trade chocolate; Julie Rice of NMSU will also briefly discuss the Fair Trade marketing concept. Followed by two shorts, “Lobster” from New Mexico filmmaker Jocelyn Janson, and “Low Rider” by Las Cruces filmmaker Mark Steffen. CineMatinee. 1:30 p.m. \$4, \$1 MVFS members. Fountain Theatre, 2469 Calle de Guadalupe, 524-8287, mesillavalleyfilm.org.
Radium Springs
SKY SAFARI—Photographing the night sky. Star viewing event. 7:30-9:30 p.m. \$5 per vehicle. Leasburg Dam State Park, astro-npo.org.
Deming
CALL OF THE WEST—Come enjoy an afternoon of harmony with Jeanne and Jerome. They perform country, western swing, cowboy poetry and their original hits. 2 p.m. Morgan Hall, 109 E. Pine.
CHRISTMAS LIGHT PARADE—6 p.m.
Hillsboro
CHRISTMAS IN THE FOOT-HILLS—\$49.99 Art Show and Sale,
EVENTS continued on next page

La Esperanza Vineyard & Winery

From our Wine Glass to Yours
Happy and Safe Holidays

Join us December 17
for a hot bowl of posole and
homemade biscochitos in exchange
for nonperishable food items.

All donations will go to
Mimbres Valley Commodities Food Bank

Our Regular
Winter Wine Tastings are
Fridays and Saturdays
11am-6pm

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La Esperanza Vineyard and Winery is located off Royal John Mine Road off Hwy 61.
A 30 minute scenic drive from Silver City.





All Showings Saturdays @ 1:30 pm at the Fountain Theatre 2469 Calle de Guadalupe, Mesilla

Admission is \$4, or \$1 for MV Film Society members.

December Shows

Dec 3	The Dark Side of Chocolate (2010, 45 minutes, not rated).
Dec 10	The Stars Fell on Henrietta (1995, 109 minutes, rated PG)
Dec 17	Love Actually (2003, 125 minutes, RATED R)
Dec 24	Merry Christmas! Joyeux Noel! Feliz Navidad! Whatever!
Dec 31	Lust in the Dust (1985, 87 minutes, definitely rated R, but made in New Mexico!)
Jan 1	Special show... Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid (1969, 110 minutes, rated PG, partially made in NM)

For more information call 575-524-8287 • www.mesillavalleyfilm.org

BUCKHORN SALOON & OPERA HOUSE

December 2011

Mondays
Open Mic Night @ 7pm

Wednesdays
Saloon Spaghetti

Fri 2	Kate MacLeod Singer Songwriter - Utah
Sat 3	Philip Gibbs, Singer Songwriter - Austin
Wed	Esther Jamison
Fri 9	Báxtalo Beng w/AlmaZazz!
Sat 10	The Littlest Birds - California
Wed 14	Peter & Michele
Fri/Sat 16 & 17	Boris McCutcheon - Santa Fe
Wed 21	Martyn Pearson
Fri/Sat 23 & 24	Bob Einweck - Tucson
Wed 28	Melanie & Jeff
Fri 30	Rodney Henderson & the Roadrunners

buckhornsaloonandoperahouse.com or 575-538-9911

Celebrate!

Sat., Dec. 31
NEW YEAR'S EVE CELEBRATION
with
Melanie Zipin
& the Sugar Leafs

VISIT HISTORIC DOWNTOWN SILVER CITY

GALLERIES • RETAIL & GIFT SHOPS • LODGING • RESTAURANTS & COFFEE • HISTORIC ARCHITECTURE

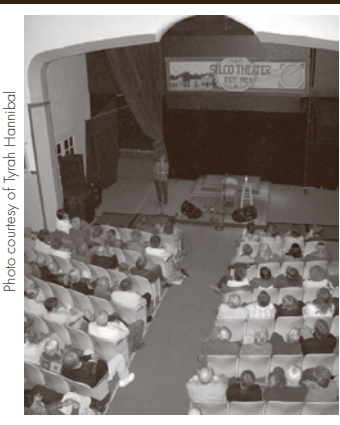



Photo courtesy of Tyrish Hamtibal

THE HISTORIC SILCO THEATER

♦ Sat Dec 10	Holiday Art Fair. 9 am – 5 pm. San Vicente Artists & Grant County Art Guild. Booth space \$20, call 534-2899.
♦ Sat Dec 17	CATS Annual Membership Meeting Holiday Celebration. 5 – 8 pm. Free, public invited. Food, drinks, and music. 534-0130.
♦ Tues Dec 20	City Chicks: Keeping Micro-flocks of Chickens as Garden Helpers, Compost Makers, Bio-recyclers and Local Food Suppliers. Presentation and Book Signing with author Patricia Foreman. 7 pm. \$5 donation appreciated. Sponsored by Viva Verde. 538-8078.

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DECEMBER FILMS

Dec 1 **Salvation Boulevard** (2011, 96 min)
Dec 2-8 **Higher Ground** (2011, 109 min)
Dec 9-15 **Restless** (2011, 90 min)
Dec 16-22 **Happy, Happy** (2011, 90 min, Norwegian)
Dec 23, 26-29 **Special Treatment** (2011, 95 min, French)
Theatre is closed Dec 24-25.
Dec 30-Jan 5 **Blackthorn** (2011, 98 min, in English/Spanish). **Special event Dec 31, no screening.** OPEN Jan 1.

Mesilla Valley Film Society
2469 Calle de Guadalupe, Mesilla • www.mesillavalleyfilm.org • (575) 524-8287
Shows nightly at 7:30- Sunday Matinee at 2:30.
The Fountain Theatre—featuring the best independent, foreign and alternative films in the Southwest. Home of the Mesilla Valley Film Society since 1989!

Broad Mind Media presents

THE MORNING SHOW

with Gwyn & Lori

7am daily on CATS ch. 17, 7 pm nightly on CATS ch. 18
7 am daily & 7 pm nightly on KOOT-TV ch. 8
on Koot Radio 88.1 FM, 7am-9am, 7 Days a Week

Local & National interviews and events
www.themorningshowlive.com

Mariachi Nuevo Sonido



In Concert - December 10, 2011
Place: WNMU Fine Arts 2pm & 7pm
Serenity Acres Horse Rescue & Therapy Services
FUNDRAISER - Tickets \$15
"Healing Hearts and Hoofs"

Ticket Outlets: Ambank-Silver City & Bayard,
Western Bank-Silver City, Lordsburg, Smoke Shop,
Food Basket - Silver City & Bayard, S.W. N.M.
Green Chamber of Commerce-Silver City, Mimbres
Region Arts Council, Rays United - Deming

HIGH DESERT



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LIVE MUSIC THURS & SAT 8:00-11:00
Thu 12/1 • Phillip Gibbs (Austin)
Sat 12/3 • Pee Wee Moore (Austin)
Thu 12/8 • The Deming Fusiliers
Sat 12/10 • David Vidal (Los Angeles)
Thu 12/5 • The Blue Gramas
Sat 12/17 • Dan Lambert (El Paso)
Thu 12/22 • Ernesto Tinajero (Radio La Chusma)
Sat 12/24 • Closing 6 p.m. (Merry Christmas!)
Thu 12/29 • Lillis Urban
Sat 12/31 • Closing 6 p.m. (Happy New Year!)
Closed Christmas & New Year's Day —Stock-up on growlers!
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NONE OF OUR BEERS SUCK!
www.highdesertbrewingco.com

EVENTS continued

specialty gift vendors, live music, free horse-drawn wagon rides, and more. 10 a.m.-4 p.m.

SUNDAY

4 Silver City/Grant County

431ST ANNUAL MIMBRES HOT SPRINGS STUDIO SALE

See Dec. 3. 10 a.m.-5 p.m. Mimbres Hot Springs Studio. Hwy. 152 to the Mimbres, Hwy. 61 south to Royal John Mine Road (between mile markers 19 and 20). Follow signs two and a half miles. No pets. www.studiosalemimbres.com.
DANE DEXTER—Nostalgic piano. Vicki's Eatery, 315 N. Texas, 388-5430.

Las Cruces/Mesilla

HERE WE COME A-CAROLING

Celestial Sounds annual holiday concert. 3 p.m. Good Samaritan Auditorium, 3011 Buena Vista Circle, 524-0930.
A CHRISTMAS CAROL—Also Dec. 7. 2:30 p.m. \$10, \$9 students and seniors. Black Box Theatre, 430 N. Downtown Mall, 523-1223, no-strings.org.
A GIRL IN A LARGE RECTANGLE—Reading and book signing. Poet Deborah Barba Egan. 2-5 p.m. Cultural Center de Mesilla, 2231 Calle de Parian, 523-3988, borderbookfestival.com.

ANNUAL LA CASA'S HOLIDAY BAZAAR

10 a.m.-4 p.m. Convention Center, 680 W. University Ave., 526-2819, lacasainc.org.
BARRY AND MELANIE JAQUESS—Guitar concert. 7 p.m. \$10, \$7 students. Black Box Theatre, 430 N. Downtown Mall, 523-1223, no-strings.org.
CLASSICS THREE—See Dec. 3. 3 p.m. \$35-\$45. NMSU Atkinson Hall, 1075 N. Horseshoe, 646-2421.
JURIED CRAFT EXHIBIT—Suzanne Kane, juror, will give a talk on contemporary crafts. Ribbons awarded. Light refreshments. 11:30 a.m.-1:30 p.m. Tombaugh Gallery, Unitarian Universalist Church, 2000 S. Solana, 522-7281.
NATURE HIKE—3:30 p.m. \$5 per vehicle. Mesilla Valley Bosque State Park, 5000 Calle de Norte, 523-4398.
NUNCRACKERS—See Dec. 2. Through Dec. 18. 2 p.m. \$5-10. Las Cruces Community Theater, 313 N. Downtown Mall, 523-1200, lcctnm.org.

Las Cruces/Mesilla

ONCE IN A LIFETIME

See Dec. 2. 2 p.m. NMSU Hershel Zohn Theatre, 3014 McFie Circle, 646-4515, theatre.nmsu.edu.

Deming

BLACK RANGE SHOW

Deming Arts Council reception and exhibit. 1-3 p.m. Deming Arts Center, 100 S. Gold.
DPAT JAM SESSION—Every Sunday. Come out and dance, socialize and have a great time. 2-4 p.m. Free. Morgan Hall, 109 E. Pine.

MONDAY

5 Las Cruces / Mesilla

GREAT CONVERSATION

With

Randy Harris. 6-7:30 p.m. Free. Mountain View Market, 1300 El Paseo, 523-0436.

NEW PLAY READINGS—Also Dec. 6. Graduate students in the MFA Creative Writing Program at NMSU will read their new plays in rehearsed readings. 7 p.m. Free. Black Box Theatre, 430 N. Downtown Mall, 523-1223, no-strings.org.

TUESDAY

6 Silver City/Grant County

SPINNING TUESDAYS

Every Tuesday in December. Beginning spinners will learn fiber preparation, different spinning techniques, and how to make yarn. More experienced spinners will learn to make a consistently even yarn. 10 a.m.-12 p.m. Free. The Common Thread, 107 W. Broadway, 538-5733, fiberartscollective.org.

Las Cruces/Mesilla

CREATING A CHEMICAL-FREE HOME ENVIRONMENT

With Wendy Robin Weir. 6-7 p.m. Free. Mountain View Market, 1300 El Paseo, 523-0436.
NEW PLAY READINGS—See Dec. 5. 7 p.m. Free. Black Box Theatre, 430 N. Downtown Mall, 523-1223, no-strings.org.

WEDNESDAY

7 Silver City/Grant County

ALDO LEOPOLD HIGH SCHOOL INTERNSHIP SHOWCASE

The event is open to the public to come learn about the school and the work that its students have been doing in the community during the past semester. Refreshments served. 4:30-6:30 p.m. Aldo Leopold High School, 1422 Highway 189 E., 313-0746.
ESTHER JAMISON—Buckhorn Saloon, Pinos Altos, 538-9911, buckhornsaloonandoperahouse.com.

Las Cruces/Mesilla

A CHRISTMAS CAROL

7 p.m. \$10, \$9 students and seniors. Black Box Theatre, 430 N. Downtown Mall, 523-1223, no-strings.org.
BALANCED LIVING BOOKCLUB—With Siddeeq Shabazz. 7:30-8:30 p.m. Free. Mountain View Market, 1300 El Paseo, 523-0436.

THURSDAY

8 Silver City/Grant County

KNITTING THURSDAYS

10 a.m.-12 p.m. The Common Thread, 107 W. Broadway, 538-5733, fiberartscollective.org.

Las Cruces/Mesilla

A MARCH TO STATEHOOD

The museum's annual December living history event will offer visitors a retrospective view of New Mexico history during the holiday season. In celebration of the approaching statehood centennial, each vignette will depict a different era beginning with a 1776 Spanish Colonial Christmas. The audience will then be transported to the year Las Cruces was established, 1849, and there they'll witness a Hanukkah story. After

a stop at a holiday celebration during the Confederate occupation of Mesilla in 1861, visitors will view a Western Frontier Christmas in 1880, featuring Billy the Kid. The New Mexico College of Agriculture and Mechanical Arts (later NMSU) celebrated their first Christmas in 1889 and audience members will witness it. The presentation will culminate with a 1912 Christmas party and festive statehood celebration. 7-8:30 p.m. \$2. Farm & Ranch Heritage Museum, 4100 Dripping Springs Road, 522-4100, nmfarmandranchmuseum.org.

EMOTIONAL FREEDOM TECHNIQUE—Naturopathic Doctor Genevieve Mitchell. 6-7 p.m. Mountain View Market, 1300 El Paseo, 523-0436.

THE DEMING FUSILIERS—High Desert Brewing, 1201 W. Hadley, 525-6752.

FRIDAY

9 Silver City/Grant County

BAXTALO BENG WITH ALMA-ZAZZ!

Buckhorn Saloon, Pinos Altos, 538-9911, buckhornsaloonandoperahouse.com.

Hi Lo SILVERS

Holiday Concert and Sing-Along. 7 p.m. First Presbyterian Church, 1915 N Swan St.
WNMU WOMEN'S BASKETBALL VS. COLORADO MESA UNIVERSITY—5:30 p.m. wnmumustangs.com.
WNMU MEN'S BASKETBALL VS. COLORADO MESA UNIVERSITY—7:30 p.m. wnmumustangs.com.

Las Cruces/Mesilla
MESILLA'S CHRISTMAS TREE LIGHTING—Thousands of luminarias will light up the plaza surrounding the streets in Mesilla. Free. Mesilla Plaza, 524-3262, oldmesilla.org.

NUNCRACKERS—See Dec. 2. Through Dec. 18. 8 p.m. \$5-10. Las Cruces Community Theater, 313 N. Downtown Mall, 523-1200, lcctnm.org.

RESTLESS—Through Dec. 15. In this film directed by Gus Van Sant, Enoch (Henry Hopper, son of Dennis) is a loner who was kicked out of school and now spends his days wandering in graveyards or visiting funerals for dead people he does not know. To further accentuate his dialogue with death, he communicates with the ghost of a Japanese Kamikaze fighter pilot (Ryo Kase). At one of the funeral homes, Enoch meets a soulmate named Annabel (Mia Wasikowska). She is obsessed with death for a different reason: a brain tumor will end her life in three months since her doctors can do nothing more for her. She tries to pull Enoch out of his cocoon of isolation and grief about the loss of his parents. Nightly 7:30 p.m., Sun. 2:30 and 7:30 p.m. \$7 regular, \$5 seniors and students, Free MVFS members. Fountain Theatre, 2469 Calle de Guadalupe, 524-8287, mesillavalleyfilm.org.

SATURDAY

10 Silver City/Grant County

2011 NEW MEXICO TAMALES FIESTA

10 a.m.-4 p.m. Downtown Silver



Find Your Self

in Silver City-Grant County, NM

December EVENTS

December 2 ~ 7:30 PM

Mimbres Region Arts Council
Performance Series
WNMU
Fine Arts Center Theatre
Las Cruces Symphony Orchestra
575-538-2505

December 2 ~ 5-10 PM

FIRST FRIDAY
MAIN STREET
DOWNTOWN

December 10 ~ 10 - 4PM

2011 New Mexico Tamale Fiesta
Downtown Silver City
Southwest New Mexico
Green Chamber
575-538-1337

December 10 ~ 11 AM

Silver City Public Library
The Fort Bayard Story
1866-1899: The Soldiers/The Hostile Apache Indians/The Settlers in Harm's Way
netapope@yahoo.com
575- 313-1992

December 3, 10, 17

HOLIDAY INDOOR ART MARKET
A Space Gallery,
110 West 7th
nickformerlyknown
asprince@gmail.com
(575) 618-6425

December 15 ~4:00 PM

Annual Silver City Victorian Christmas
312 W Broadway St. jessa@silvercitymuseum.org
(575) 388-5721

Exhibitions

JOURNEY TO ENCHANTMENT:
Celebrating New Mexico's Statehood
Current Silver City Museum Exhibit
575-538-5921

WNMU Museum
Main Floor Permanent Mimbres Exhibit
Ongoing exhibitions throughout the
Silver City Historic Downtown Gallery District

Silver City Arts & Cultural District serves as an Arts & Cultural Resource for Grant County
www.silvercityacd.org | email: silvercityacd@gmail.com | phone: 575-538-5560
Paid in part with Silver City Lodgers Tax

City, silvercityacd.org, 538-5560.
AROUND HILLSBORO WITH HARLEY SHAW—Presentation and book signing. 2 p.m. Silver City Museum, 312 W. Broadway, 538-5921, silvercitymuseum.org.

CHRISTMAS PUDDING—Through Dec. 18. Three performances of “Christmas Pudding,” an evening of song, poetry and stories that celebrates the spiritual dimensions of the season. Stories, poems and tales by Charles Dickens, Mark Twain, Frank McCourt, Emily Dickinson, Alfred Lord Tennyson, and a host of traditional carols and holiday songs. 7 p.m. \$5. First Presbyterian Church, 1915 N. Swan St.

DANCES OF UNIVERSAL PEACE—Circle dances celebrating the sacred that unites all beings. Chanting, live music. 7 p.m. \$5-\$10. 1st Church of Harmony, 7th and Arizona St., 534-1441.

FARM BUREAU COWBOY CHRISTMAS—BBQ dinner and dance. Santa, door prizes, silent auction. 6 p.m. Fair Building in Cliff.

FORT BAYARD TOUR—9:30 a.m. \$4. Fort Bayard National Historic Landmark, 956-3294, fortbayard.org.

FRIENDS OF THE UNDERGROUND—7:30 p.m. Isaac’s, 200 N. Bullard St.
GIFT WRAPPING—Free. Silco Theater, 311 N. Bullard St., 534-9005, silcotheater.com.

HOLIDAY INDOOR ART MARKET—A Space Gallery, 110 W. 7th, 618-6425.

LEARN TO NEEDLE FELT—With Praire Small. Learn the basics of needlefelting and create a lovely standing wool doll. 1-5 p.m. \$44, \$39 SWFAC members. The Common Thread, 107 W. Broadway, 538-5733, fiberartscollective.org.

MARIACHI CONCERT—To benefit Serenity Acres Equine Rescue and Therapy. 2 p.m. and 5 p.m. WNMU Fine Arts Center Theatre.

HOLIDAY ARTS AND FINE CRAFTS FAIR—San Vicente Artists and Grant County Art Guild. 9 a.m.-5 p.m. Silco Theater, 311 N. Bullard St., 534-9005, silcotheater.com.

THE FORT BAYARD STORY—See story in Tumbleweeds section. 11 a.m. Silver City Public Library, 515 W. College Ave, 313-1992.

THE LITTLEST BIRDS—Buckhorn Saloon, Pinos Altos, 538-9911, buckhornsaloonandoperahouse.com.

WNMU WOMEN’S BASKETBALL VS. WESTERN STATE COLLEGE OF COLORADO—5:30 p.m. wnmumustangs.com.

WNMU MEN’S BASKETBALL VS. WESTERN STATE COLLEGE OF COLORADO—7:30 p.m. wnmumustangs.com.

GENTLE CORE YOGA WORKSHOP—With Jose Carrillo. Free. 1-3:30 p.m. 315 N. Bullard (above Leyba and Ingalls).

Las Cruces/Mesilla 3RD ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION—Bird walk, lighting of luminarias. 3-7 p.m. \$5 per vehicle. Mesilla Valley Bosque State Park, 5000 Calle de Norte, 523-4398.

AMAZING MAGICAL MUSICAL ADVENTURES—2 p.m. \$5. Black Box Theatre, 430 N. Downtown Mall, 523-1223, no-strings.org.

AZTEC CALENDAR AND 2012—Author Carolos Aceves teaches the hands-on workshop. Participants will construct a solar count bowl and learn how the earth’s orbit and seasonal tilt are related to the human gestation cycle. 10 a.m.-12 p.m. Free. Mountain View Market, 1300 El Paseo, 523-0436.

BIRDING TOUR—3 p.m. \$5 per vehicle. Mesilla Valley Bosque State Park, 5000 Calle de Norte, 523-4398.

DAVID VIDAL—High Desert Brewing, 1201 W. Hadley, 525-6752.

HEALTHY, HOMEMADE CLEANING PRODUCTS—Participants will learn to make their own non-toxic cleaning products from household items and will leave with a bottle of cleaning product. 1-2 p.m. Mountain View Market, 1300 El Paseo, 523-0436.

NUNCRACKERS—See Dec. 2. Through Dec. 18. 8 p.m. \$5-\$10. Las Cruces Community Theater, 313 N. Downtown Mall, 523-1200, lctnm.org.

PREHISTORIC TRACKWAYS NATIONAL MONUMENT—Take a hike with a park ranger back to life 280 million years ago during a guided hike out to the discovery site, where 2,500 slabs of trackways were excavated by citizen scientist Jerry MacDonald. 10 a.m. Free. 525-4334, 525-4351.

THE STARS FELL ON HENRIETTA—Another example of the time-honored story of the loser making good, with Robert Duvall as an oil wildcatter and perennial loser roaming through Texas in the early 1930s, and Aidan Quinn. CineMatinee. 1:30 p.m. \$4, \$1 MVFS members. Fountain Theatre, 2469 Calle de Guadalupe, 524-8287, mesilavalleyfilm.org.

VIRGIN DE GUADALUPE FIESTA AT ST.

GENEVIEVE’S—Piro-Manso-Tiwa Tribe of Guadalupe Pueblo of Las Cruces. Free. St. Genevieve’s Parish Hall, 1025 E. Las Cruces Ave., 524-9649, stgen.info.

Radium Springs LUMINARIA TOUR—Enjoy living history military re-enactors, 1000 luminarias, free cookies and beverages. 5-9 p.m. Free. Fort Selden, 526-8911, nmmonuments.org.

Deming A COWBOY CHRISTMAS CONCERT—With “New Mexico’s Enchanting Cowboy,” Mike Moutoux. Mike will perform a mix of songs and poetry including his favorite holiday material. \$6. 2-4 p.m. Morgan Hall, 109 E. Pine.

HOLIDAY LIGHTS—1,000 luminarias light the visitor center, native gardens and labyrinth. 5-7 p.m. Rockhound State Park.

SUNDAY 11 Silver City/Grant County 3RD ANNUAL WORLDWIDE

CANDLE LIGHTING—The Compassionate Friends Worldwide Candle Lighting unites family and friends around the globe in lighting candles for one hour to honor and remember children, brothers, sisters and grandchildren who have died at any age from any cause. 6:30 p.m. Bataan Memorial Park.

CHRISTMAS PUDDING—See Dec. 10. Through Dec. 18. 2 p.m. \$5. First Presbyterian Church, 1915 N Swan St.

ENCHANTED CHRISTMAS—Evergreen Garden Club. Come celebrate the festive season touring a historical home in Silver City, featuring 18 Christmas trees, a Christmas Village, and refreshments. 4-8 p.m. \$5, \$1 children under 12. Tickets at Western Stationers, Ambank, Legacy Lighting, Aunt Judy’s Attic, Alotta Gelato. 388-2386.

Hi Lo SILVERS—Holiday Concert and Sing-Along. 7 p.m. First Presbyterian Church, 1915 N Swan St.

THE DESERT LARKS—Elizabethan and Celtic Music. Vicki’s Eatery, 315 N. Texas, 388-5430.

Las Cruces/Mesilla DECK THE HALLS—Fa la la la la with the Mesilla Valley Chorale for a fun holiday concert. 3 p.m. \$10. Rio Grande Theatre, 211 N. Downtown Mall, 523-6403, riograndetheatre.com.

HERE WE COME A-CAROLING—Celestial Sounds annual holiday concert. 3 p.m. Peace Lutheran Church, 1701 Missouri Ave.

HOMEBIRTH, MIDWIVES AND YOU—Becoming informed on midwifery care and learning a trade. 1-2:30 p.m. Free. Mountain View Market, 1300 El Paseo, 523-0436.

NATURE HIKE—3 p.m. \$5 per vehicle. Mesilla Valley Bosque State Park, 5000 Calle de Norte, 523-4398.

NUNCRACKERS—See Dec. 2. Through Dec. 18. 2 p.m. \$5-\$10. Las Cruces Community Theater, 313 N. Downtown Mall, 523-1200, lctnm.org.

Deming GREEN TEA—1:30-4 p.m. Deming Luna Mimbres Museum, 546-2382.

Hillsboro ERIC HISAW—Austin-style blues and folk. 3-5 p.m. \$5. Hillsboro Community Center, Eleonora St., 895-3300, maxyeh@windstream.net.

MONDAY 12 Silver City/Grant County BROWN BAG LUNCH SERIES—Apache movement towards reservations with Joe Saenz. 12 p.m. Silver City Museum, 312 W. Broadway, 538-5921, silvercitymuseum.org.

WIDOWED PERSONS SERVICE—Dr. Joseph Shepard, president of WNMU. 11 a.m. \$10, includes lunch. Glad Tidings Church, 538-9344.

TUESDAY 13 Silver City/Grant County HISTORIC MINING DISTRICT TOURS—Bus tour. Call for reservations. 10 a.m. Bayard City Hall, 537-3327.

SPINNING TUESDAYS—10 a.m.-12 p.m. Free. The Common Thread, 107 W. Broadway, 538-5733, fiberartscollective.org.

TEA PARTY PATRIOTS MEETING—6 p.m. Red Barn Family Steak House, 708 Silver Heights Blvd., 388-3848.

Las Cruces/Mesilla BOOK REVIEW—Sandy Miles reviews “That Used to Be Us.” 1:30 p.m. Free. Branigan Cultural Center, 501 N. Main St., 541-2154, las-cruces.org/museums.

EVERY OTHER TUESDAY—Alma de Arte Theatre Students. 6:30-7:30 p.m. Free. Rio Grande Theatre, 211 N. Downtown Mall, 523-6403, riograndetheatre.com.

TRAP, NEUTER AND RETURN AND WINTER FERAL CAT CARE—Nationally recognized expert on feral cat care Joe Miele. 6-7 p.m. Free. Mountain View Market, 1300 El Paseo, 523-0436.

WEDNESDAY 14 Silver City/Grant County PETER & MICHELE—Buckhorn Saloon, Pinos Altos, 538-9911, buckhornsaloonandoperahouse.com.

Las Cruces/Mesilla A CHILD’S CHRISTMAS IN WALES—7 p.m. \$7. Black Box Theatre, 430 N. Downtown Mall, 523-1223, no-strings.org.

NMSU AGGIE MENS’ BASKETBALL VS. WESTERN NEW MEXICO—7 p.m. \$5-\$20. Pan Am Center, 646-1420, panam.nmsu.edu.

BALANCED LIVING BOOKCLUB—With Siddeeq Shabazz. 7:30-8:30 p.m. Free. Mountain View Market, 1300 El Paseo, 523-0436.

EL PASO BRASS—KRWG presents one of the longest continually performing brass quintets in America, composed of key members of the El Paso Symphony Orchestra and other distinguished artists from across the Southwest. 7-9 p.m. \$7.50-\$15 in advance, \$10-\$20 at door. Rio Grande Theatre, 211 N. Downtown Mall, 523-6403, riograndetheatre.com.

THURSDAY 15 Silver City/Grant County VICTORIAN FRONTIER CHRISTMAS EVENING—Step back into a frontier Christmas at the Silver City Museum’s annual Victorian Christmas, including music, games and re-enactors who bring the late 19th century lives of Silver City to life. 4-7 p.m. Silver City Museum, 312 W. Broadway, 538-5921, silvercitymuseum.org.

KNITTING THURSDAYS—10 a.m.-12 p.m. The Common Thread, 107 W. Broadway, 538-5733, fiberartscollective.org.

Las Cruces/Mesilla BIG BAND DANCE CLUB—High Society Orchestra. 7-10 p.m. \$7 members, \$9 non-members. Court Youth Center, 402 West Court St., 526-6504.

PSYCHIC READINGS AND ENERGETIC HEALINGS—Reiki Master and Reverend Dawn Cheney. 12-2 P.M. Mountain View Market, 1300 El Paseo, 523-0436.

THE BLUE GRAMAS—High Desert Brewing, 1201 W. Hadley, 525-6752.

FRIDAY 16 Silver City/Grant County BORIS MCCUTCHEON—Buckhorn Saloon, Pinos Altos, 538-9911, buckhornsaloonandoperahouse.com.

Las Cruces/Mesilla HAPPY, HAPPY—Through Dec. 22.

In this inventive Norwegian comedy, Kaia is a school teacher who is a very gregarious and cheerful person. Much to her dismay and discomfort, her husband Eirik treats her with disdain and her son Theodor sides with his father against her. This unhappy couple’s existence is set on a new course with the arrival of two sophisticated city folk and their adopted African son. In Norwegian, with English subtitles. Nightly 7:30 p.m., Sun. 2:30 and 7:30 p.m. \$7 regular, \$5 seniors and students, MVFS members. Fountain Theatre, 2469 Calle de Guadalupe, 524-8287, mesilavalleyfilm.org.

GREAT CONVERSATION—With Randy Harris. 6-7:30 p.m. Free. Mountain View Market, 1300 El Paseo, 523-0436.

NUNCRACKERS—See Dec. 2. Through Dec. 18. 8 p.m. \$5-\$10. Las Cruces Community Theater, 313 N. Downtown Mall, 523-1200, lctnm.org.

THE WORLD AROUND US—Exhibit through April 1. Las Cruces artist Linda Hagen’s paintings will be on display in the museum’s Arts Corridor. The 33 paintings, mostly oil, reflect her love of horses and the outdoors. This exhibition demonstrates the connection between the land, the people, and the animals that are part of the landscape. Farm & Ranch Heritage Museum, 4100 Dripping Springs Road, 522-4100, nmfarmandranchmuseum.org.

SATURDAY 17 Silver City/Grant County ALMAZAZZ!—Diane’s Winebar and Restaurant, 510 N. Bullard St., 538-8722.

BORIS MCCUTCHEON—Buckhorn Saloon, Pinos Altos, 538-9911, buckhornsaloonandoperahouse.com.

CATS TV ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING AND HOLIDAY CELEBRATION—Public invited. 5-8 p.m. Free to members, \$5. Silco Theater, 311 N. Bullard St., 534-9005, silcotheater.com.

GIFT WRAPPING—Free. Silco Theater, 311 N. Bullard St., 534-9005, silcotheater.com.

HOLIDAY INDOOR ART MARKET—A Space Gallery, 110 W. 7th, 618-6425.

KAS NELSON TRIO—7:30 p.m. Isaac’s, 200 N. Bullard St.

EVENTS continued on next page



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A holly-jolly month

Need we say that it's beginning to look a lot like Christmas? Not to mention Hanukkah, the Winter Solstice and New Year's. No wonder, then, that this month's can't-miss events have a decidedly holiday tilt. Start with **Joy! 2011**, the annual celebration of the season by Theatre Group New Mexico and WNMU, **Dec. 3** at the WNMU Fine Arts Center Theatre. There will be music, dance, a children's chorus, a sing-a-long and of course a visit by a certain Jolly Old Elf. Admission is free, but bring along a monetary donation for the Grant County Food Pantry, which you can read about elsewhere in this issue.

Hereabouts, the holiday season means tamales, so what could be more appropriate than the first annual **New Mexico Tamale Fiesta**, filling downtown Silver City with fun and food on **Dec. 10**. Music will be provided by Corazon del Desierto and Brandon Perrault, with dancing by the Santa Clara Children's Folklorico.

In Las Cruces, the **El Paso Brass Seasonal**



City farmer Patricia Foreman gives a talk and signs her new book on Dec. 20.



Fun with horses at Serenity Acres, which holds a fundraiser on Dec. 10.

Celebration Concert on Dec. 14 not only will put you in the holiday spirit but also helps raise money for our friends at KRWG. It's 7 p.m. at the Rio Grande Theatre.

Then it's the annual **Victorian Christmas Open House** at the Silver City Museum, **Dec. 15**. The fun includes children's holiday crafts and live music by the Silver City Christmas Orchestra, the Desert Larks, Gleemaiden, Gila Highlanders and Jessa Seavers Violin Trio.

Not everything this month comes with tinsel, but we're sure the sponsors wouldn't mind if you brought your own. Serenity Acres Horse Rescue & Therapy Services is sponsoring a fundraising concert by **Mariachi Nuevo Sonido** on **Dec. 10** at the WNMU Fine Arts Center Theatre.

Also in Silver City, the Gila Resources Information Project is hosting a stop on the book tour of **Patricia Foreman**, author of *City Chicks*. The Dec. 20 talk and book signing is at the Silco Theater.

EVENTS continued

NARRIE TOOLE ART EXHIBITION—10-3 p.m. Mimbres La Paloma Real Estate.

NIZHONI POTTERY STUDIO SALE—Contemporary Navajo pottery and prints by Romaine Begay. 12-4 p.m. 3235 Little Walnut Rd., 590-0698, nizhonipottery.com.

READING AND BOOK SIGNING—"The Other Came" with Phil Dahl-Bredine. 2 p.m. Silver City Museum, 312 W. Broadway, 538-5921, silvercitymuseum.org.

SWEET SALE—Cookie walk, bake sale and gifts. See's candy. 9 a.m.-2 p.m. Silver City Women's Club, 411 Silver Heights Blvd., 313-1091.

Las Cruces/Mesilla

CREATE A KISSING BALL—Fill your home with the aroma of fresh herbs and create a spot for romance with a fresh kissing ball. Joan Keif of New Mexican Lavender. 1 p.m. \$20. Enchanted Gardens, 270 Avenida de Mesilla, 524-1886, gardens@zianet.com, nmenchantedgardens.com.

DAN LAMBERT—High Desert Brewing, 1201 W. Hadley, 525-6752.

HOLIDAY TOY MAKING WORKSHOP—Make a series of simple and fun homemade toys and games to take home. 1-4 p.m. Free. Museum of Natural History, 700 S. Telshor Blvd, 522-3372, museums.las-cruces.org.

LOVE ACTUALLY—Follows the lives of

eight very different couples in dealing with their love lives in various loosely and interrelated tales all set during a frantic month before Christmas in London. Stars Hugh Grant, Martine McCutcheon, Liam Neeson, Emma Thompson, Alan Rickman, Colin Firth and Laura Linney. Rated R. CineMatinee. 1:30 p.m. \$4, \$1 MVFS members. Fountain Theatre, 2469 Calle de Guadalupe, 524-8287, mesillavalleyfilm.org.

NATURE HIKE—3:30 p.m. \$5 per vehicle. Mesilla Valley Bosque State Park, 5000 Calle de Norte, 523-4398.

NUNCRACKERS—See Dec. 2. Through Dec. 18. 8 p.m. \$5-10. Las Cruces Community Theater, 313 N. Downtown Mall, 523-1200, lcctnm.org.

PREHISTORIC TRACKWAYS NATIONAL MONUMENT—Take a hike with a park ranger back to life 280 million years ago during a guided hike out to the discovery site, where 2,500 slabs of trackways were excavated by citizen scientist Jerry MacDonald. 10 a.m. Free. Permian Tracks Road, 525-4334.

TAMALE MAKING 101—Corrine Luchini will demonstrate the art of making tamales for the holiday season. Class size limited, registration required. 10 a.m. \$5 per vehicle. Mesilla Valley Bosque State Park, 5000 Calle de Norte, 523-4398.

Deming

ART WORKSHOP—Open to amateur and professional, any medium. 1-3

p.m. \$2, byo supplies. Deming Arts Center, 100 S. Gold, 546-3663.

SUNDAY

18 Silver City/Grant County CHRISTMAS PUDDING—See Dec. 10. 2 p.m. \$5. First Presbyterian Church, 1915 N Swan St.

Las Cruces/Mesilla

NATURE HIKE—3:30 p.m. \$5 per vehicle. Mesilla Valley Bosque State Park, 5000 Calle de Norte, 523-4398.

NUNCRACKERS—See Dec. 2. 2 p.m. \$5-\$10. Las Cruces Community Theater, 313 N. Downtown Mall, 523-1200, lcctnm.org.

PRIVATE FEARS IN PUBLIC PLACES—See Dec. 2. 2:30 p.m. \$7-\$10. Las Cruces Community Theater, 313 N. Downtown Mall, 523-1200, lcctnm.org.

MONDAY

19 Las Cruces / Mesilla NMSU AGGIE MEN'S BASKETBALL VS. SOUTHERN—5 p.m. \$5-\$20. Pan Am Center, 646-1420, panam.nmsu.edu.

NMSU AGGIE WOMEN'S BASKETBALL VS. UC SANTA BARBARA—7:30 p.m. \$5-20. Pan Am Center, 646-1420, panam.nmsu.edu.

TUESDAY

Hanukkah Begins Silver City/Grant County CITY CHICKS—Keeping micro-flocks of chickens as garden helpers,

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compost makers, bio-recyclers and local food suppliers. Presentation and book signing with author Patricia Foreman. 7 p.m. \$5. Silco Theater, 311 N. Bullard St., 534-9005, silcotheater.com.

SPINNING TUESDAYS—10 a.m.-12 p.m. Free. The Common Thread, 107 W. Broadway, 538-5733, fiberartscollective.org.

WEDNESDAY
21 Silver City/Grant County
FAMILY COALITION SUPPORT—Silver City Police Department spokesman speaks. 6:30-8:30 p.m. Wellness Coalition, 409 N. Bullard St.

MARTYN PEARSON—Buckhorn Saloon, Pinos Altos, 538-9911, buckhornsaloonandoperahouse.com.

Las Cruces/Mesilla
NMSU AGGIE MEN'S BASKETBALL
VS. MCNEESE STATE—7 p.m. \$5-\$20. Pan Am Center, 646-1420, panam.nmsu.edu.

BALANCED LIVING BOOKCLUB—7:30-8:30 p.m. Free. Mountain View Market, 1300 El Paseo, 523-0436.

THURSDAY
22 Silver City/Grant County
KNITTING THURSDAYS—10 a.m.-12 p.m. The Common Thread, 107 W. Broadway, 538-5733, fiberartscollective.org.

Las Cruces/Mesilla
ERNESTO TINAJERO—High Desert Brewing, 1201 W. Hadley, 525-6752.

FRIDAY
23 Silver City/Grant County
BOB EINWECK—Buckhorn Saloon, Pinos Altos, 538-9911, buckhornsaloonandoperahouse.com.

Las Cruces/Mesilla
SPECIAL TREATMENT—Also Dec. 26-29. Writer-director Jeanne Labrune affords Isabelle Huppert yet another splendid role as Alice, an art history major who years ago became a high-priced Paris prostitute specializing in kinky clients who require elaborate role-playing on her part. As she approaches 50, though, she finds it increasingly difficult to deny that her soul is withering away. She crosses paths with Xavier, a middle-aged psychiatrist who is also feeling burned out... In French. Nightly 7:30 p.m., Sun. 2:30 and 7:30 p.m. \$7 regular, \$5 seniors and students, MVFS members. Fountain Theatre, 2469 Calle de Guadalupe, 524-8287, mesillavalleyfilm.org.

SATURDAY
Christmas Eve
24 Silver City/Grant County
ARAMAIC PRAYER OF JESUS—Experience the words of Jesus as spoken in his native language, Aramaic. Based on the work of Neil Douglas-Klotz. 7 p.m. \$10. 1st Church of Harmony, 7th and Arizona St., 534-1441.

BOB EINWECK—Buckhorn Saloon, Pinos Altos, 538-9911, buckhornsaloonandoperahouse.com.

Las Cruces/Mesilla
BECOMING A BIRDER SERIES—8:15 p.m. \$5 per vehicle. Mesilla Valley Bosque State Park, 5000 Calle de Norte, 523-4398.

CHRISTMAS CAROLS AND LUMINARIAS—5:30-7:30 p.m. Free. Old Mesilla Plaza, 524-3262 ext 116, oldmesilla.org.

NATURE HIKE—3:30 p.m. \$5 per vehicle. Mesilla Valley Bosque State Park, 5000 Calle de Norte, 523-4398.

SUNDAY
25 Christmas Day

TUESDAY
27 Silver City/Grant County
SPINNING TUESDAYS—10 a.m.-12 p.m. Free. The Common Thread, 107 W. Broadway, 538-5733, fiberartscollective.org.

Las Cruces/Mesilla
EVERY OTHER TUESDAY—6:30-7:30 p.m. Free. Rio Grande Theatre, 211 N. Downtown Mall, 523-6403, riograndetheatre.com.

WEDNESDAY
28 Silver City/Grant County
MELANIE & JEFF—Buckhorn Saloon, Pinos Altos, 538-9911, buckhornsaloonandoperahouse.com.

Las Cruces/Mesilla
NMSU AGGIE MEN'S BASKETBALL
VS. UNM—7 p.m. \$5-\$20. Pan Am Center, 646-1420, panam.nmsu.edu.
BALANCED LIVING BOOKCLUB—With Siddeeq Shabazz. 7:30-8:30 p.m. Free. Mountain View Market, 1300 El Paseo, 523-0436.

THURSDAY
29 Silver City/Grant County
KNITTING THURSDAYS—10 a.m.-12 p.m. The Common Thread, 107 W. Broadway, 538-5733, fiberartscollective.org.

Las Cruces/Mesilla
BIG BAND DANCE CLUB—Holiday Dance Party. High Society Orchestra. 7-10 p.m. \$7 members, \$9 non-members. Court Youth Center, 402 W. Court St., 526-6504.

LILLIS URBAN—See story in October 2011 issue. High Desert Brewing, 1201 W. Hadley, 525-6752.

FRIDAY
30 Silver City/Grant County
RODNEY HENDERSON & THE ROADRUNNERS—Buckhorn Saloon, Pinos Altos, 538-9911, buckhornsaloonandoperahouse.com.

WNMU WOMEN'S BASKETBALL
VS. COLORADO CHRISTIAN UNIVERSITY—5:30 p.m. wnmumustangs.com.

WNMU MEN'S BASKETBALL
VS. COLORADO CHRISTIAN UNIVERSITY—7:30 p.m. wnmumustangs.com.

Las Cruces/Mesilla
NMSU AGGIE WOMEN'S BASKETBALL
VS. UNM—6:30 p.m. \$5-\$20. Pan Am Center, 646-1420, panam.nmsu.edu.
ALMAZAZZ!—St. Clair Bistro, 1720 Avenida de Mesilla, 534-0390,
BLACKTHORN—Through Jan. 5.

Mateo Gil's elegiac Western takes as its starting point the idea that Butch Cassidy (Sam Shepard) survived, took up the name James Blackthorn, and lived in Bolivia for years. In fact, at the opening of the film he's already at a quite advanced age for the era (he looks to be well into his sixties). This won't be a film about a young hero; it will be about an old man trying to stay alive and get home. In English/Spanish, with subtitles. Nightly 7:30 p.m., Sun. 2:30 and 7:30 p.m. \$7 regular, \$5 seniors and students, MVFS members. Fountain Theatre, 2469 Calle de Guadalupe, 524-8287, mesillavalleyfilm.org.

SATURDAY
New Year's Eve
31 Silver City/Grant County
MELANIE ZIPIN & THE SUGAR LEAFS—Buckhorn Saloon, Pinos Altos, 538-9911, buckhornsaloonandoperahouse.com.

WNMU WOMEN'S BASKETBALL
VS. COLORADO SCHOOL OF MINES—5:30 p.m. wnmumustangs.com.

WNMU MEN'S BASKETBALL
VS.

COLORADO SCHOOL OF MINES—7:30 p.m. wnmumustangs.com.

Las Cruces/Mesilla
NMSU AGGIE MEN'S BASKETBALL
VS. ARKANSAS-PINE BLUFF—12 p.m. \$5-\$20. Pan Am Center, 646-1420, panam.nmsu.edu.

DESERT DOLLS BURLESQUE TROUPE—Return engagement. See story in June 2011 issue. \$10. 7:30 p.m. Fountain Theatre, 2469 Calle de Guadalupe, 524-8287, mesillavalleyfilm.org.

LUST IN THE DUST—Nothing's sacred in Chile Verde, the wild western town where lone gunman Abel Wood (Tab Hunter) arrives after rescuing corpulent saloon singer Rosie Velez (Divine) from being defiled by Hard Case Williams (Geoffrey Lewis) and his gang of misfit gunslingers. Saloon owner Marguerita Ventura (Lainie Kazan) gets hot and heavy for Abel, and passions flare in a race for hidden treasure, the map to which is tattooed in two sections on Rosie's and Marguerita's ample posteriors. Rated R, made in New Mexico. CineMatinee. 1:30 p.m. \$4, \$1 MVFS members. Fountain Theatre, 2469 Calle de Guadalupe, 524-8287, mesillavalleyfilm.org.

White Sands
LAKE LUCERO TOUR—Hike with a ranger to the source of the sands. Reservations required. 10 a.m.-2 p.m. \$1.50-\$3. White Sands National Monument, 679-2599 ext. 230, 479-6124 ext. 236, nps.gov/whsa.

JANUARY 2012
SUNDAY
1 Las Cruces / Mesilla
POPCORN BOWL II—Special screening of the classic 1969 film, "Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid," which was partially shot in New Mexico. 11 a.m. \$4, \$1 MVFS members. Fountain Theatre, 2469 Calle de Guadalupe, 524-8287, mesillavalleyfilm.org.

FRIDAY
New Mexico Statehood Centennial
6 Silver City/Grant County
CHOOSE YOUR OWN NEW MEXICO ADVENTURE—Multiple performances and activities repeating every half-hour, including Chautauqua performance by Randy Carr portraying Sheriff Dan Tucker, vintage 1912 silent movies, and more. 6-8 p.m. Multiple Downtown Venues.

CENTENNIAL BIRTHDAY PARTY—Results of the Centennial Birthday Cake contest. 5:30-6 p.m. Silco Theater, 311 N. Bullard St., 534-9005, silcotheater.com.

DANCE WITH BRANDON PERRAULT AND RHYTHM MYSTIC—8-11 p.m. Downtown Silver City.

FIRST FRIDAYS DOWNTOWN—Statehood day celebration. Downtown Silver City, SilverCityMainStreet.com.

LEGO MINDSTORM—3:30-5 p.m. Silver City Museum, 312 W. Broadway, 538-5921, silvercitymuseum.org.

VOICES OF NEW MEXICO—Kick-off event for the Student Centennial Reading Project essay and illustration contest. 4-5:30 p.m. Silco Theater, 311 N. Bullard St., 534-9005, silcotheater.com.

WNMU CAMPUS HISTORY—Refreshments and a short program. 2-5 p.m. WNMU Campus Museum, 534-4750.

WNMU WOMEN'S BASKETBALL
VS. ADAMS STATE COLLEGE—5:30 p.m. wnmumustangs.com.

WNMU MEN'S BASKETBALL
VS.

ADAMS STATE COLLEGE—7:30 p.m. wnmumustangs.com.

Las Cruces/Mesilla
AT THE HOUR OF SINGING—As part of the centennial celebration, a view of New Mexico history. \$2-\$5. Farm & Ranch Heritage Museum, 4100 Dripping Springs Road, 522-4100, nmfarmandranchmuseum.org.

BOBBY JOHNSON—Artist reception. 5-7 p.m. Free. Rio Grande Theatre, 211 N. Downtown Mall, 523-6403, riograndetheatre.com.

DOWNTOWN RAMBLE—Enjoy art openings, exhibits, music, entertainment, open mic opportunities, shopping, refreshments and more. 5-7 p.m. Free. Downtown Mall, 523-2950.

HOWLING COYOTE COFFEEHOUSE AND OPEN MIC—7-9 p.m. Free. Rio Grande Theatre, 211 N. Downtown Mall, 523-6403, riograndetheatre.com.

LITERARY OPEN MIC—5:30-6:30 p.m. Free. Rio Grande Theatre, 211 N. Downtown Mall, 523-6403, riograndetheatre.com.

THE CENTENNIAL BALL—Hosted by the Amador Museum Foundation. Amador Hotel, 522-1332, amadormuseumfoundation.org.

Deming
TRASH BARREL PAINTING CONTEST—5 p.m. Luna County Courthouse, 700 S. Silver, 546-0494.

SATURDAY
7 Silver City/Grant County
WNMU WOMEN'S BASKETBALL
VS. FORT LEWIS COLLEGE—5:30 p.m.

wnmumustangs.com.

WNMU MEN'S BASKETBALL
FORT LEWIS COLLEGE—7:30 p.m. wnmumustangs.com.

Las Cruces/Mesilla
CENTENNIAL PARADE LAS CRUCES—Parade will mark the passage of 100 years of statehood for New Mexico. Passing through historic parts of Las Cruces, cars, equipment, representations of people and events, and groups formed in each decade will follow the parade route. 11 a.m.-2 p.m. Free. Main & Mesquite Sts., 525-1955.

Deming
ROD ERICKSON—DPAT. 2 p.m. Morgan Hall, 109 E. Pine. ☼

Send events info by the 20th of the month to: events@desertexposure.com, fax 534-4134, PO Box 191, Silver City, NM 88062 or **NEW**—submit your event online at www.desertexposure.com/submittevents.



BEFORE YOU GO:

Note that events listings are subject to change and to human error! Please confirm all dates, times and locations.

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CONTINENTAL DIVIDE • DAVID A. FRYXELL

Getting Ornamented

When you care enough to hang the very best.

Early in our marriage, we—by which I mean my wife—began to collect those cute Christmas ornaments produced, in ever-proliferating numbers, by Hallmark. When we first splurged on an adorable little Eskimo figure ice-fishing with his Husky puppy, or whatever it was that set us on the path to this addiction, we had no idea where it would lead. Little did we dream of curiously inappropriate yet geekily irresistible ornaments such as Batman or a Klingon spacecraft. (Ah, yes, peace on Earth and goodwill to all—except if you're a bloodthirsty alien bent on cosmic conquest! And nothing says "Merry Christmas" like, "You're finished, Joker!")

Nor did we do the math. Even if you're only a little addicted to an annual spree of holiday ornaments (sort of like snorting cocaine only at the holidays), over the years these darned things add up. In this era of omnipresent divorce, newly married couples can hardly be blamed for not considering the consequences of, against all odds, staying hitched for decades. At even a half-dozen or so orna-

ments a year (depending on the number of new "Star Trek" doodads), over more than 30 years suddenly you're talking about a whole collection.

No one sets out to collect these things. Like most collections, it just happens. One day you buy, say, one of those Hummel figurines that look like miniature Cabbage Patch kids after a lederhosen warehouse exploded, and years later you wake up to find the dang things have taken over your entire house. Honest, I once interviewed a woman who collected hats. By the time I met her, the hats had taken over their original farmhouse, and they'd had to build a new house to live in.

At least hats and Hummels you can leave out all year 'round, which is why we call most collectibles "dustables." But Christmas ornaments just look odd if left on display in, say, July—even odder than an itchy-bitsy Wehrmacht of lederhosen-clad demon children. If you don't

want your neighbors eyeing you suspiciously and idly chatting about how much lithium helped their brother-in-law, you have to put the ornaments away come January. And haul them out again every December.

This annual chore makes Sisyphus seem like a can-do guy.

Over the years, as the ornaments mounted up, we have made some savvy adjustments to the holiday routine. The smartest was to ditch the boxes—now carefully stored away someplace we've forgotten against the day when we sell the whole collection and can retire to Malibu—rather than painstakingly matching them to the ornaments every January. Each box and its accompanying packaging are customized to fit one and only one ornament; the *Star Wars* Death Star (blows the crap out of the mistletoe) will not squish into the box for "Santa's Barbecue Adventure," or vice-versa. No amount of brute force or cursing or their combination will make this happen—trust the voice of experience on this.

Anyway, my ever-handy wife (she probably could have made a Death Star ornament if not for fear of retribution from George Lucas) fashioned cardboard dividers for these big plastic boxes, so we could carefully bubble-wrap "Little Eskimo's Big Day" or whatever and tuck everything away until next year. Big time saver. None of the ornaments seems any the worse for wear—and, honestly, if "Christmas Puppy Catches a Frisbee" lost his tail, would it really be the end of the world? (As long as Spider-Man emerges unscathed next holiday season, that is. His webs attach to two separate tree branches, see, so it really looks like a tiny superhero is swinging through our Christmas tree. Perhaps to rescue "Holiday Ribbon Kitten" from Darth Vader.)

Lest you think I'm just a lazy Scrooge, I should add here that every year we also have to assemble the Christmas tree itself. Ever since, in the interest of marital harmony (you don't stay hitched for more than 30 years without learning to give in a little), I consented to an artificial tree, it's been yet another holiday to-do-list item. In the true spirit of the season, I try not to point out more than six or eight times per year that *God assembles real Christmas trees, so we don't have to!*

But now once again we've gotten smart. We realized that we could leave the tree intact, fully assembled with all its fake branches in place, swaddled in an old sheet in a corner of

the garage. Come the holiday season once again, we just have to scare out the mice and raccoons who've taken up residence since January and voilà! The tree is ready to receive its overabundance of ornaments.

To be honest, though, lately the collection has even outgrown the tree. We could probably dispense with a tree entirely and just build (honey, are you listening?) a tree-shaped frame to cover with lights and ornaments. If we put all the ornaments on the tree, I don't know if you could see any artificial green. The poor thing might just collapse under the weight of cuteness.

Instead, we've had to resort to a creeping occupation of the rest of the house by the ornaments. Santa and his entire fleet of reindeer now fly above the holiday village, which in turn sits on a shelf above our TV set. (To give you a sense of numbers of "village" buildings to date, it's a humungous flat-screen. And this year we're going to have to establish a subdivision on top of the Tivo.)

Two competing sets of faux toy trains will have to once again choo-choo into the dining room. The fireplace mantle may have to be home to an array of miniature Santas, there to greet the jolly old elf himself on Christmas Eve. (What if they melt when the fireplace is going? I don't think Santa rewards people who've turned "Jazzy Santa" and "Super Bowl Santa" into "Elephant Man Santa" and "Glob of Goo Santa.")

Nonetheless, we'll be adding to the collection again this year. I'm as much of a sucker as my wife for "Kitten's First Christmas" or "Klingon Bird of Prey Destroys Vulcan." Someday, we tell ourselves, if Malibu doesn't work out, our daughter can use the Hallmark collection to finally pay off her student loans.

Speaking of our daughter, last year we finally did solve the whole ornament-Sisyphus problem: When she and our future son-in-law visited for Thanksgiving, we conned them into decorating the tree! (They may actually have volunteered, but I prefer to think of it as payback for, say, shelling out for her braces years ago.)

All holiday season long, after they'd gone, we could admire the painstakingly decorated tree—as newbies, at least to tackling the whole chore, they gave the project way more thought, trying to keep "Christmas Cat on the Prowl" away from "Mama Goldfinch Feathers Her Holiday Nest," for example, or "Little Nemo's Ready for Santa." Admiring the tree was particularly sweet, of course, because we hadn't had to decorate it ourselves.

Ah, the true holiday spirit!

This Thanksgiving, alas, our daughter and her beau won't be in Silver City, but will be rendezvousing with us in Tucson. Not to worry: I've been calculating whether the tree and the boxes of ornaments will fit in the car, to take to them! By the time you read this, Sisyphus should have that stone right back on top of the mountain. ❄

Desert Exposure editor David A. Fryxell takes his eggnog with just a hint of cinnamon on top.



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