

Celebrating

50

1969

2019

YEARS

THE LAS CRUCES  
Bulletin

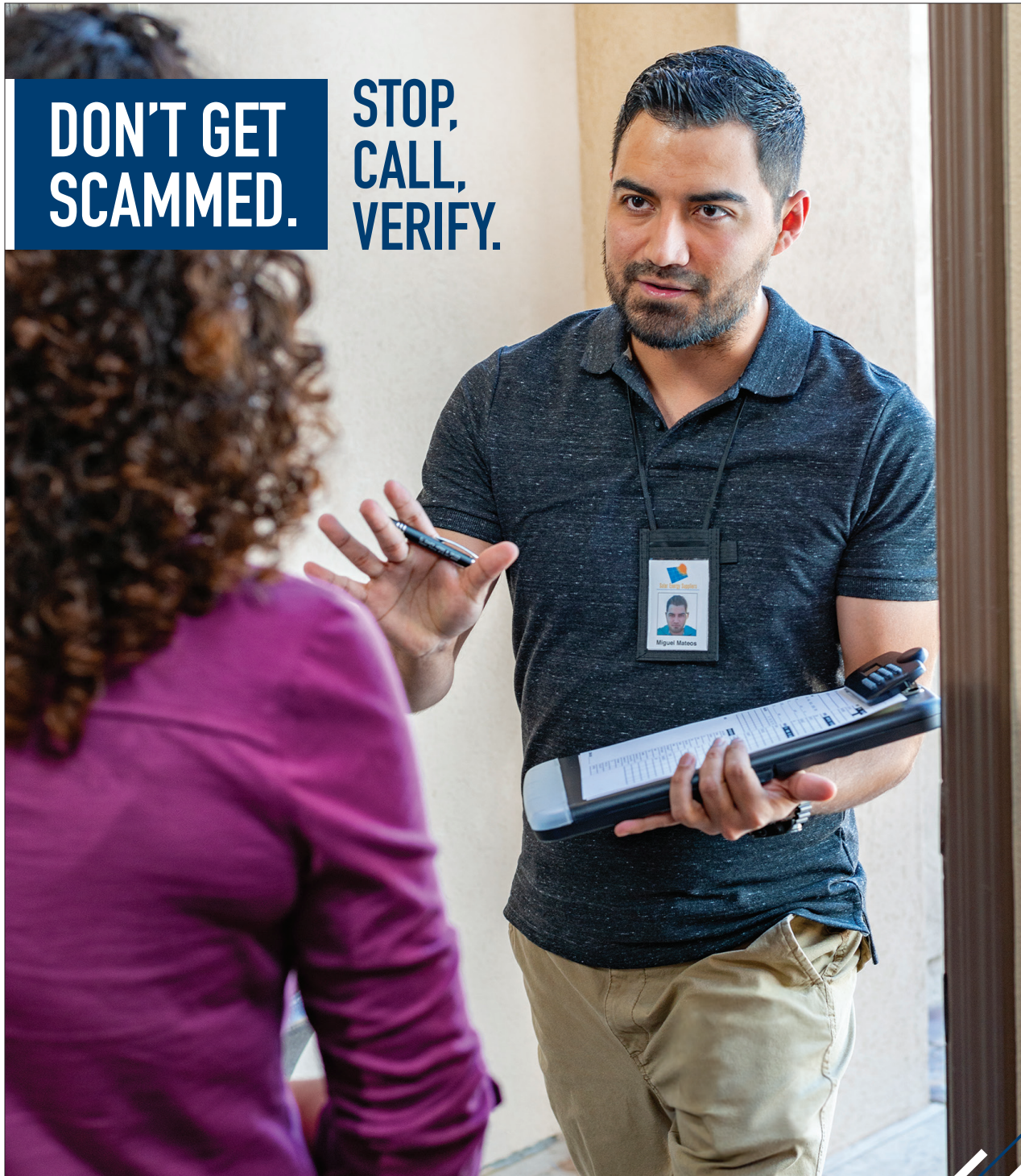
DECEMBER 4, 2019





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## The Spirit of the Valley

Looking back through old issues of the Las Cruces Bulletin, you see the different tones and approaches the newspaper has used over the last 50 years.

Sometimes things change due to a new editor, a new owner or new trends in the newspaper business.

In the 1980s, the Bulletin's slogan was "We get there first every Thursday and stay all week!" It was plastered right on the front page, above the newspaper's name and almost as big. That was primarily a marketing message, aimed at differentiating from the competition. However, it's not particularly inspiring or creative.

Today's slogan, in much more subtle and smaller type above our name, is "Local news and entertainment since 1969." I believe that's a very accurate description of what we do, and have done, for 50 years.

In the 1990s, a different slogan appeared above the newspaper's name: "The Spirit of the Valley."

This one I really like.

Since 1985, I've worked for six newspapers directly. And during one stretch in my career, with the Donrey Media Group, I worked indirectly for about 60 newspapers. But until I joined the Las Cruces Bulletin in 2010, I've never had people so frequently go out of their way to tell me how much they enjoyed the newspaper. Almost every day in the past nine years, at least one person has told me something they liked about the Bulletin.

It's incredibly humbling, but I believe that's because we work hard to reflect our community here in the Mesilla Valley. There is definitely an amazing spirit among the people here. And if we're accurately reflecting those people, then the Las Cruces Bulletin will have that "Spirit of the Valley" as well.

Our infinite gratitude goes to the readers, advertisers and community members who have supported us the past 50 years, and to the many talented, hardworking people who have made it their passion to help keep the Bulletin thriving since 1969.

From our spirit to yours, thank you.

**Richard Coltharp**  
*Publisher*

### THE LAS CRUCES **Bulletin**

**PUBLISHER**

Richard Coltharp

**DESIGN**

Albert Vasquez

**ADVERTISING**

Claire Frohs  
Ian Clarke  
Pam Rossi  
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Angel McKellar

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# Ranchway celebrates the Bulletin's 50th...

It is an honor to celebrate the 50th anniversary of a great publication. The Bulletin is an admirable and respected source of information for our community. We wish the best to all the Bulletin Family.  
*Congratulations! Mil Gracias.*

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Since  
1965

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# History of The Las Cruces Bulletin

The Las Cruces Bulletin weekly newspaper was founded in 1969, led by general manager Ken Dahlstrom. The first issue was published Dec. 4, 1969. On March 31, 1983, Dahlstrom sold the newspaper to Steve Klinger, who converted the format from the large broadsheet to smaller tabloid. In 1996, Klinger sold the Bulletin to Kilpatrick Newspapers, Inc. of Austin, Texas. Seven years later, on May 1, 2003, owner Mark Kilpatrick sold the newspaper to FIG Publications, LLC, headed by Jaki and David McCollum.

On Nov. 1, 2012, the McCollums sold the Bulletin to OPC News, LLC, headed by the Osteen family, whose first newspaper opened in 1894 in Sumter, South Carolina. OPC also has two weekly newspapers in Florida, and one in Alabama.



Among the awards the Bulletin has received include the "Community Arts Award" from the Doña Ana Arts Council in 2010. In 2012, the Bulletin was named

"Business of the Year" by the Hispano Chamber of Commerce de Las Cruces. New Mexico State University presented their "Spirit of Service Award" to the Bulletin in 2008. The company was cited for "its work to provide a positive environment for employees and its dedication to local content." In 2006, the Bulletin was named New Mexico's "Newspaper of the Year" by the New Mexico Farm and Livestock Bureau. The newspaper was named Business of the Year for 2005 by the Greater Las Cruces Chamber of Commerce. In 2012, the Bulletin earned the General Excellence award from the New Mexico Press Association as the top weekly newspaper in the annual Better Newspaper Contest.

## The First Bulletin Issue

### BULLETIN REPORT

Fifty years ago this week, the Las Cruces Bulletin debuted.

We've been perusing old bound issues of the Bulletin the past few months, especially the inaugural issue, from Thursday, Dec. 4, 1969.

There were 16 pages in that first issue, but not a single brief article explaining why or how the Bulletin was started. At the bottom of Page 1 is a line, in big blue type, that says: **FIRST PUBLICATION - A NEW LAS CRUCES NEWSPAPER - A NEW VOICE.** Page 15 includes a brief technical article about offset printing the Bulletin used.

The cover photo features general manager Ken Dahlstrom, and the staff box on Page 2 lists six people:

Doris M. Boyd Donnelly, president; Norman E. Donnelly, vice president; Mae E. Donnelly, secretary; Kenneth Dahlstrom, general manager; E. Dean Whitten, editor; and Janet D. Randall, Society Editor. The news office address is listed as 118

SEE **FIRST BULLETIN**, PAGE 6

# RT Electric, Inc. and the Bulletin: Shining Light on Las Cruces



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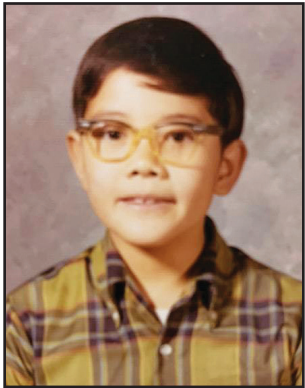
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# Las Cruces and New Mexico History

By **MIKE COOK**  
Las Cruces Bulletin

Thomas J. Graham was in his sixth year as mayor of Las Cruces in 1969, serving with a city council that included future mayors Albert Johnson and Herculano Ferrazlez, along with Ben Alexander and Juan Gomez. Current Mayor Ken Miyagishima was six years old that year and attending Conlee Elementary School.



**Future Las Cruces Mayor Ken Miyagishima**

PHOTO COURTESY OF KEN MIYAGISHIMA

The city had a population of nearly 38,000 in 1969, up almost 29 percent from a decade earlier.

The high temperature in Las Cruces in 1969 was 99 degrees, recorded that July; the low was seven degrees, recorded in December. The city recorded 10.58 inches of rain that year, with August being the wettest month and June the driest.

The NMSU football Aggies were 5-5 under Head Coach Jim Wood in 1969, outscoring their opponents 235-199. A highlight of the season was the Aggies' win over the UTEP Miners, 41-38, in El Paso. The Aggies lost to another major rival, the University of New Mexico Lobos, 24-21, in Las Cruces. Likely in the stands at many Aggie games that year was then-NMSU President Roger Corbett. A native of Morgantown, West Virginia, he was president of the university 1955-70 and was succeeded by Gerald Thomas.

Republican David Cargo was completing the second year of his first two-year term as governor of New Mexico in 1969. Democrats controlled both houses of the state legislature that year: 25-17

in the state Senate and 44-26 in the state House of Representatives. The speaker of the House was then-future Gov. Bruce King. Clinton P. Anderson, who served 1949-73,



**ROGER B. CORBETT**  
NMSU PHOTO

and Joseph Montoya, who served 1964-77, both Democrats, were the state's U.S. senators. Las Cruces Ed Foreman was sworn into New Mexico's Second Congressional District seat in January 1969. The only member of Congress to win and lose in two states in the 20th century, Foreman would be the only Las Cruces resident

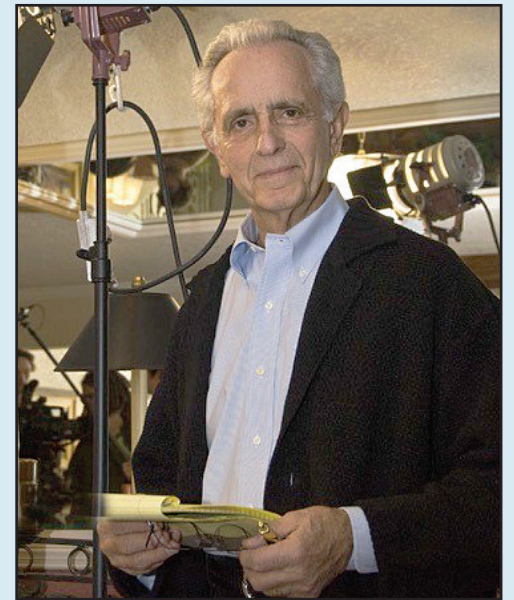
SEE **HISTORY**, PAGE 7

## Mark Medoff was writing award-winning plays in 1969

Tony winner and Oscar nominee Mark Medoff began his playwriting career while teaching at New Mexico State University in the late 1960s.

One day, as he and then NMSU English and theatre student – and future professional actor – William Frankfather (his best-known role was as Whitey Jackson in “Foul Play”), passed each other in a university hallway, Frankfather (1944-98) said to Medoff, “Why don't you write a play and we'll put it on?”

The result was “The Wager,” which was first produced at Las Cruces Community Theatre in 1966 and became Medoff's second play to be produced off-Broadway



**MARK MEDOFF**  
COURTESY PHOTO

SEE **MEDOFF**, PAGE 6

# EL PALACIO

## SINCE BARR 1936

*“Come as a Stranger - Leave as a Friend”*

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## FIRST BULLETIN

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 4

S. Main St., No. 5 in the Meyer Arcade.

It includes a lot of advertising, about nine pages worth, with many of the ads promoting Christmas specials.

As best I could tell, that first issue contains ads from only five businesses that still exist in Las Cruces today:

- Ikards Furniture
- Malooly's Discount Center
- JC Penney (known as Penneys back then)
- Baskin Robbins
- Ramada Inn
- Sears (although they will be gone soon)
- There's an ad for the Fox Rio Grande theater (which I believe is the current Rio Grande Theatre, although the address is one space off. The ad is promoting the



The first issue of the Las Cruces Bulletin, Dec. 4, 1969

movie "Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid," held over.

A little jarring is the ad right below that one, for the Fox State theater, promoting two X-rated movies, "Succubus" and "House of 1,000 Dolls."

There are other ads

for familiar stores, such as T.G. & Y., Gibson's Discount Center, Kinney Shoes, Radio Shack and Sandoval Dodge. There are other ads for places that don't ring a bell with me, but might with you. Stores such as Surplus City, Fodarama,

Dunlap's, Curt's Flower Shops and many more.

The lead story on Page One is about an impending statewide vote on a new state constitution.

The article I found most interesting, however, was a small one on Page 2, called "Students prepare packages." The article talked about Project Chili, in which Las Cruces High School students filled 81, 20-pound packages, with lots of toiletries and goodies, but featuring cans of green chile. The packages were to be sent to Las Cruces area soldiers in Vietnam.

The article demonstrates clearly the times; the Vietnam War was at its peak. But it also demonstrates some things that haven't changed. We are an incredibly giving community, and we always love our green chile.

## MEDOFF

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 5

when it opened in New York in 1974.

"When You Comin' Back, Red Ryder?" had opened the previous November and would earn Medoff the 1974 Drama Desk and Obie awards for outstanding new playwright. It was made into a 1979 movie, with Medoff writing the adapted screenplay.

While working on his play "The Majestic Kid" at the University of Rhode Island under a grant from Rockefeller Foundation in 1977, Medoff was first introduced to actress Phyllis Frelich (1944-2014). "Within 20 minutes of meeting her, I told her, 'I'm going to write a play for you,'" Medoff remembered. The play he wrote for Frelich, "Children of a Lesser God," won the

1980 Tony award for best play and won Frelich and John Rubenstein best actor Tony awards. Director Gordon Davidson was nominated for best director. Actor James Earl Jones, announcing the award, "changes our lives with a few words," Medoff said. Using notes he had gotten out of bed the night before to write – "just in case" – Medoff had to set his award down to give his acceptance speech in American Sign Language – the ground-breaking play is about a speech teacher who falls in love with a deaf student. Medoff thanked his cast and crew, NMSU and his wife, Stephanie, and took his place in the history of American theatre. Also in 1969, Samuel Beckett, the author of Medoff's favorite play, "Waiting for Godot," won the Nobel Prize for Literature.

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|||

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# Las Cruces longtime businesses

Below is a sampling of some of the many businesses that have stood the test of time in Las Cruces. For the next year, the Bulletin will be offering special rates on commemorative ads for businesses celebrating their longevity, whether in business for five decades or five days.

- Las Cruces Sun-News 1881
- New Mexico State University 1888
- Malooly's Flooring Company 1907
- Allen Theatres 1912
- El Patio 1934
- Bank 34 1934
- Palacio Bar 1936
- La Posta de Mesilla 1939
- Ikards Furniture 1943
- American Linens 1949
- La Nueva Casita Café 1957
- City Barber Shop 1958
- Binns Enterprises 1963
- Big O Tires 1963
- Nopalito's 1964
- Bob and Wanda Bowman 1971 (currently Ashley Homestore)
- Ranchway BBQ 1965
- Bogart's Service Center 1967
- Citizens Bank 1970
- Getz Funeral Home 1971
- RT Electric 1976
- Roberto's 1977
- Mesilla Valley Mall 1981
- Sisbarro Dealerships 1981
- Aguirre Auto Service 1982
- Abraham's Restaurant 1983
- Double Eagle 1983
- COAS Books 1984
- Borman Autoplex 1986
- Beasley, Mitchell & Co. 1987
- Wilson Binkley Advertising & Marketing 1989
- Casey Carpet 1990
- Spence Asset Management 1992
- Casa Bonita 1995
- Las Cruces Homebuilders Association 1959
- Casa de Peregrinos 1979
- Community Foundation of Southern New Mexico 1989

## HISTORY

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 5

to represent the Second Congressional District until Xochitl Torres-Small won the seat in 2018.

New Mexico had just over one million residents in 1969, about half its current population. The state's number one export in 1969 was beef cattle, just as it is today. In-shell pecans sold for 11.5 cents a pound that year, compared to \$2.96 in 2016.

In case you're wondering, these Las Cruces icons had important 1960s dates, although none was in 1969: the First National Bank Tower (now Electronic Caregiver Tower) was built in 1962; St. Genevieve's Church, built in 1857, with a brick cathedral replacing its

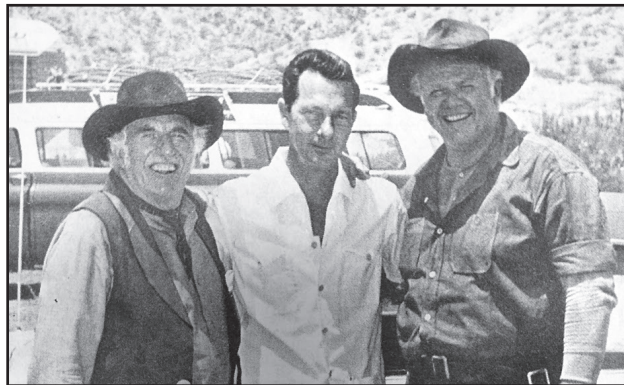


PHOTO BY AMADOR

Another product of the early Las Cruces film industry was "Hang 'Em High," starring Clint Eastwood and shot in the Mesilla Valley in 1967-68. Pictured on the set are Ed Begley Sr., star of stage, television, and screen; Case Kowall of Las Cruces; and Alan Hale, Jr., most famous for playing the Skipper on TV's "Gilligan's Island."

original adobe structure in 1886, was torn down in 1967; the Clint Eastwood classic "Hang 'Em High" was released in 1968, after the film's opening lynching scene was filmed

along the Rio Grande in Las Cruces in 1967. Eastwood would return to Las Cruces 50 years later to film part of "The Mule" here. Mesilla Valley Mall opened in 1981.

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Isabel Vigil, MD  
156 Wyatt #1  
(575) 522-1628

### RELOCATED CLINIC WITH NEW PROVIDERS

**MVMG Internal Medicine at Lohman**  
**MountainView Building 4**  
4371 E. Lohman Ave., 2nd Floor  
(575) 521-4808  
Michael Bell, MD & Laura Cashin, DO welcome  
Virginia Corpus, MD and Cindy Montgomery, RNCWP who are now accepting patients

### CHANGE OF PROVIDERS

**MVMG Family Care at North Main**  
2970 N. Main St.  
(575) 525-3531  
Announces the retirement of Fay LaFon, MD and arrival of Matthew Bezzant, PA-C and Melinda Brooks, FNP

### RELOCATED CLINIC

**MVMG Heart and Vascular Center - Vascular Services**  
**MountainView Building 3**  
4351 E. Lohman Ave., Suite 202  
(575) 522-5955  
Michael Keller, MD and Cheryl Lombardi, CNS

### EXPANDED SERVICE LOCATIONS

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and  
**MVMG Family Care at Telshor**  
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### NEW PROVIDER

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(575) 526-7139

### NEW PROVIDER

Kate Nixon, DO Osteopathic Medicine  
**MVMG Osteopathic Medicine**  
**MountainView Building 4**  
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### NEW PROVIDER

Omar Hashmi, MD General Surgery and Trauma  
**MVMG General Surgery**  
**MountainView Building 3**  
4351 E. Lohman Ave., Suite 320  
(575) 522-4940

### NEW PROVIDER

Theresa Heynekamp, MD Critical Care and Pulmonology  
**MVMG Pulmonology and Sleep Medicine**  
**MountainView Building 3**  
4351 E. Lohman Ave., Suite 310  
(575) 556-8950



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# A snapshot of the year 1969

By **RICHARD COLTHARP**  
Las Cruces Bulletin

Every year, things happen that change the world, for better or worse.

Most of the happenings are small and incremental, but some years contain events humanity cannot ignore.

The year 1969 had a lot of those events, not just the birth of the Las Cruces Bulletin. One of the events was described by a participant as “one giant leap for mankind.”

**SCIENCE** – That giant leap was only one small step for man, or at least for American astronaut Neil Armstrong, when he stepped on the moon July 4, 1969. Putting a man on the moon was obviously a great feat,

but just as important was, as President John F. Kennedy said when he recommended America commit to the effort, “returning him safely to the Earth.” Did you know two New Mexicans subsequently walked on the moon? Edgar Mitchell, who grew up in Artesia, walked on the moon with Apollo 14 in 1971. Harrison Schmitt, from Silver City, and the first astronaut-scientist, landed with Apollo 17 in 1972. And in 1968, Frank Borman, who for many years lived in Las Cruces, orbited the moon with Apollo 8. Many New Mexicans helped the space program through work at NASA, White Sands Missile Range and our Air Force bases.

The Advanced Re-

search Projects Agency went online in December 1969 connecting the computers of four major U.S. universities. This is considered by many the first step toward what we now know as the Internet.

**POLITICS** – Richard Nixon was sworn in as the 37th U.S. president Jan. 20. The Vietnam War was still in full swing, and more than 11,000 Americans died in combat. Former President and World War II Army General Dwight Eisenhower died March 28, at age 78.

**SPORTS** – In Super Bowl III, played Jan. 12 in Miami, the New York Jets defeated the Baltimore Colts 16-7. This was the first Super Bowl victory by a team from the supposedly

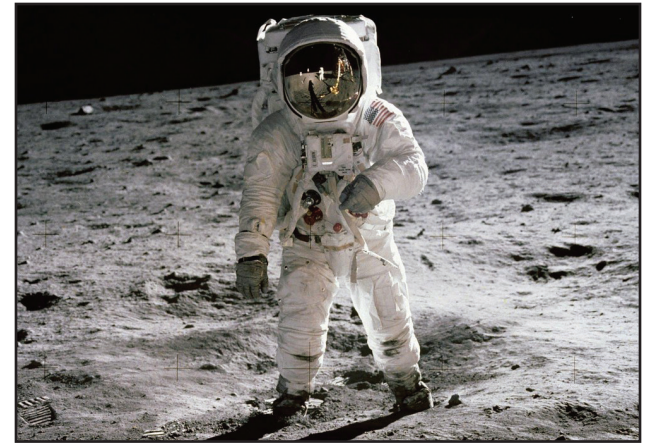
inferior American Football League over a team from the National Football League, paving the way for the merger that would happen within two years. The victory helped turn “Broadway” Joe Namath into a folk hero.

The World Series was also New York over Baltimore as the “Miracle Mets” defeated the Orioles four games to one in October.

**SOCIETY** – The Stone-wall Riots, in June in New York City, are considered the beginning of the gay rights movement.

In Los Angeles, over two days in August, members of the Charles Manson “Family” murdered seven people.

The FCC bans all cigarette advertising from radio and television.



Apollo 11 Moon Landing July 4, 1969

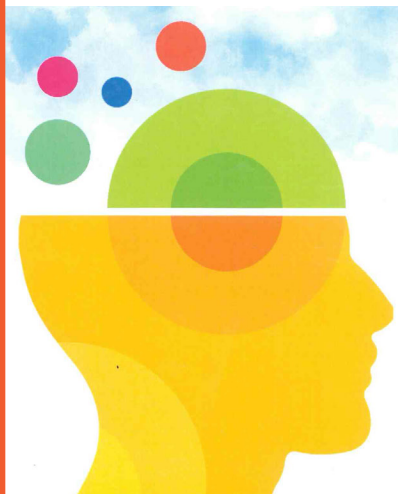
**POP CULTURE** – “Aquarian Exposition: 3 Days of Peace & Music,” an all-star rock-and-roll event in the rain, takes place on a farm southwest of Woodstock, New York. The Public Television show “Sesame Street” debuts. Author Mario Puzo releases his book “The Godfather.” The counter-culture movie “Easy Rider,”

featuring Dennis Hopper, Peter Fonda and Jack Nicholson, includes scenes filmed in New Mexico.

**BUSINESS** – Cyclamates, widely used as sweeteners in diet sodas, are banned, having been determined carcinogenic, causing Tab, Diet Rite Cola and others to find new ways to flavor their beverages.

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# Pop music in 1969: last gasp of innocence

By **MARTY RACINE**

Las Cruces Bulletin

On Dec. 6, 1969 – 50 years ago to the date of this issue – the Altamont Speedway Free Music Festival changed the direction of pop music forever.

Rarely does the calendar coincide with a cultural “decade,” but this sordid event did, following seemingly endless summers of love that wafted like incense across “The Sixties” – actually, just the years 1964-69.

As it turned out, on the horizon were trends far removed from flowers in your hair, sunshine supermen, magic carpet rides, the Age of Aquarius, Lucy in the sky with

diamonds and music eight miles high.

The immediate future would yield pretentious prog-rock (Yes, ELO, Kansas, Rush); LA flash (Van Halen); Southern rock (Allman Brothers, Marshall Tucker, 38 Special, Lynyrd Skynyrd); power-pop (The Cars, Boston, Cheap Trick); punk (The Clash, Generation X, Lou Reed, Ramones, Black Flag); glam-rock (NY Dolls); and, finally, new wave (Talking Heads, Devo, Television).

Nineteen sixty-nine began innocently enough. The Beatles’ “Abbey Road,” their final album in which all four participated in the studio, was released in September with titles such as “Come Together,”



The Beatles' Abbey Road

“Here Comes the Sun” and “Octopus’s Garden”; Bob Dylan’s “Nashville

Skyline” was warm and apolitical; Crosby, Stills & Nash debuted with

sweet harmonies on “Suite: Judy Blue Eyes,” “Marrakesh Express” and “Wooden Ships.”

But the dark undercarriage of all that – drugs, excess, greed – arrived on a barren hillside east of Oakland during the gloomy winter of everyone’s discontent and light years removed from earlier Haight-Ashbury, which had become a tourist trap and a haven for hard drugs; indeed, Meredith Hunter, notoriously knifed to death by the Hells Angels motorcycle club at Altamont and a centerpiece of the ensuing documentary “Gimme Shelter,” had methamphetamine in his system (and a gun in his hand), according to the toxicology report.

Tune in, drop out, and all will be groovy – and then it didn’t fall that way. The comedown was devastating to the collective hippie psyche, already turning cynical from Vietnam and distrustful of a predacious recording industry.

In the process, reputations got trampled, including Altamont bands the Rolling Stones (“greedy,” for their ’69 tour ticket prices) and the Grateful Dead (“cowardly,” for refusing to perform in a hostile environment). Suddenly, cultural icons were no longer saintly, their music no longer healing and transformative.

It was pop music’s last gasp of innocence. Enter the 1970s.

## Here's to the Bulletin!



### Rio Grande



**Rio Grande Vineyard & Winery salutes the Bulletin on its 50th anniversary. We appreciate what you've done for us and for the entire community.**

**Rio Grande Vineyard & Winery: Building on our success since 1998**

**575-524-3985 • RioGrandeWinery.com • 5321 Highway 28 • Las Cruces, NM 88005**

**Open Friday-Sunday Noon - 5:30 pm or by Appointment**



# 50 years ago: Aggies' greatest hoops season

By **RICHARD COLTHARP**  
Las Cruces Bulletin

Thursday, Dec. 4, 1969, the day the first issue of the Las Cruces Bulletin came out, New Mexico State University hosted Wichita State University, in the Aggies' second game in their second season playing in the brand-new Pan American Center.

Led by star seniors Sam Lacey and Jimmy Collins, and a fourth-year head coach by the name of Lou Henson, NMSU won the game going away, handing the Wheat Shockers a 108-76 thumping on the Pan Am's signature parquet floor.

It was the first of seven 100-point games the Aggies would have that season, setting the stage for



**LOU HENSON**

NCAA tournament earning a berth in the vaunted Final Four, the only NMSU team (in fact, the only team from the state of New Mexico), ever to make it that far.

The banner commemorating the accomplishment hangs proudly in the Pan Am.

The Aggies lost only two games in the regular season, to Creighton and Baylor, each of whom they played twice, beating them the other time. They defeated rivals New Mex-

ico and UTEP twice each, and had victories over Brigham Young, Arizona and Arizona State.

NMSU defeated Rice, Kansas State and Drake in the NCAA tournament to earn their spot in the Final Four.

## Legendary names

The Aggies' regulars that season were superstar Jimmy Collins, who led the team scoring 24 points a game, center Sam Lacey, 6-8 forward Jeff Smith, the mighty mite 5-8 guard Charlie Criss, and the local kid, Chito Reyes of Las Cruces.

Joining the Aggies in the Final Four that year were St. Bonaventure, Jacksonville and, of course, John Wooden's heavily favored UCLA, which had won five of



This photo of the 1969-70 New Mexico State University Aggie men's basketball team appeared in the very first edition of the Las Cruces Bulletin, Dec. 4, 1969, as part of a season preview. It has appeared a few times since, because this is the Aggie team that reached the Final Four in that year's NCAA tournament. **FRONT ROW:** Eddie Huff, Milton Horn, Assistant Coach Keith Colson, Head Coach Lou Henson, Charlie Criss, Tom McCarthy, Jimmy Collins. **BACK ROW:** Rudy France, John Burgess, Chito Reyes, Jeff Smith, Sam Lacey, Lonnie Lefevre, Roy Neal, Bill Moore.

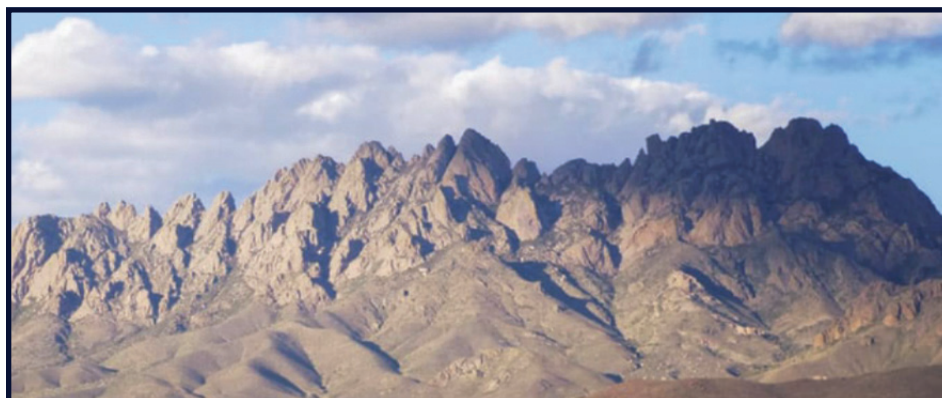
the previous six national titles, and would win five of the next six.

Each of the Final Four teams featured a big man

who would play professionally for years. Jacksonville had 7-foot-2 Artis Gilmore, who would play five years in the ABA, and

12 years in the NBA and is now in the Naismith Hall of Fame. St Bonaventure

SEE **AGGIES**, PAGE 11



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## AGGIES

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 10

had 6-10 Bob Lanier, who played 14 seasons, with Detroit and Milwaukee, also earning a spot in the Hall of Fame. The Aggies' 6-10 Sam Lacey (known as Slammin' Sam) played 13 years, 12 of them with the franchise now known as the Sacramento Kings. Lacey's No. 44 was retired by the Kings, and he's in the Aggie Hall of Fame and Ring of Honor. The fourth big man was UCLA's legendary 7-2 Lew Alcindor, who changed his name to Kareem Abdul-Jabbar and would win three NCAA titles (earning national player of the year honors all three years), win six NBA championships, and score more points than anyone in basketball history.

The Aggies drew Alcindor and his Bruins in the first game of the Final Four, losing 93-77. In those days, there was a national third-place game, in which the two semifinal losers played. In that game, NMSU beat St. Bonaventure 79-73.

### Trouble in LA

In the spring of 1969, when the Aggies made the Sweet Sixteen of the tournament for the 1968-69 season, they also lost



NMSU PHOTO  
NMSU basketball star  
Sam Lacey circ. 1969.

to Alcindor and UCLA, who had the luxury of hosting the regional game in their own gym, Pauley Pavilion. (The Aggies, like everyone else in college basketball, had trouble beating UCLA, but each of the Aggies' tournament runs in 1968, 1969 and 1970, were ended at the hands of the Bruins.)

Forty years later, in 2009, the Aggies returned to Los Angeles to play UCLA in a regular season game. Reyes, then living in California, attended the game and talked with the Los Angeles Times about his memories.

"Lew Alcindor," he told the Times. "You didn't want to admit it, but when you saw that guy you felt like you were already 10

points down."

Reyes had grown up on a pecan farm just outside of Las Cruces. When his parents moved to Southern California, Reyes stayed behind to live with his grandmother. But by the time high school came around, he joined his parents and starred at Marshall High.

Reyes was recruited nationally, but Henson had an inside track: Reyes' grandmother still lived near Las Cruces.

The hometown kid returned and was instantly a fan favorite, and played an important role for the Aggies, defending, rebounding and chipping in 8-10 points a game.

"You talk about a guy with charisma, I've never seen anybody who has more," Henson told the Times about Reyes.

### Henson's bold step

It's interesting to note neither Jacksonville, St. Bonaventure nor the Aggies have ever been back to the Final Four. One contributing factor is racial segregation.

One reason those schools got those outstanding big men was because many major schools, particularly in the South, were still only recruiting white players. Aggie Coach Lou Henson was an early practitioner

of integrating college basketball. Henson played basketball at NMSU, and not long after graduating was coaching the boys basketball team at Las Cruces High School. He led the Bulldogs to three consecutive state championships in 1959, 1960 and 1961, which caught the attention of colleges.

In 1962, Hardin-Simmons University in Abilene, Texas, offered Henson their head coaching job.

Henson was interested, and he pondered the offer, but told school officials he would take the job only under one condition.

The condition was that he be able to recruit and bring in African-Americans. The university team was previously segregated, but they agreed to the terms. His first year, he had a losing record, but then reeled off three straight winning seasons, finishing with a mark of 67-36. Then he received an offer from his alma mater, and took over the Aggies' head coaching position in 1966.

Among his earliest recruits were Collins, Criss and Lacey, a tall, skinny kid from Mississippi. That trio forged the heart of the team Henson took to two Sweet Sixteens and the Final Four.

Henson would leave Las

# Jans celebrates 50 this year, too

The year 1969 featured another event that would one day have an impact on New Mexico State University basketball.

On a spring day in April — April 12, to be exact — in Fairbank, Iowa, a baby named Chris Jans was born.

The little boy would grow up playing basketball, and become a three-year starter and captain at Loras College in Dubuque, Iowa.

After graduation, he immediately went into coaching, climbing the ladder at smaller colleges and junior colleges before landing an assistant position at Illinois State, and then a seven-year stint at Wichita State before taking his first NCAA Division I head coaching role at Bowling Green in Ohio.

Then, a few days after his 48th birthday, in April 2017, Jans was named head coach at NMSU.

In Jans' first two years with the Aggies, the team went 58-11, winning two Western Athletic Conference titles and earning two NCAA tournament appearances.



CHRIS JANS

Cruces in 1975 for the University of Illinois, a Big Ten team he would take to the 1989 Final Four. Henson retired from Illinois in 1997, but came out of retirement for one more stint coaching the Aggies,

from 1997-2005.

The home basketball courts at both Illinois and NMSU are named for Henson, who was inducted into the College Basketball Hall of Fame in 2015.

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# Las Cruces filmmaking also celebrates 50-year milestone

BY MIKE COOK  
Las Cruces Bulletin

Long before it was a profitable or fashionable industry in New Mexico, Orville “Buddy” Wanzer was making films in Las Cruces and teaching others how to make them.

Wanzer directed the first feature film created and produced in Las Cruces, “The Devil’s Mistress,” which had a national screening at the Rio Grande Theatre in 1965 and helped establish Wanzer as an artist and filmmaker. He started the first fully functional film department at New Mexico State University in 1967 and continued to run it until his retirement in 1983. Wanzer died in 2019.

Wanzer “defined the college experience of filmmaking (at NMSU) and how they went forward,” said NMSU instructor Julia Smith is making a docu-

mentary about Wanzer titled “The Birth of the Acid Western,” which chronicles Wanzer’s relevance to southern New Mexico film culture and his desire to transform the western into what he described as a “modern western, without the cavalry and without the Indians,” Smith said.



PHOTOS COURTESY JULIA SMITH

On the set of “The Devil’s Mistress” are, left to right, actors Wes Westmoreland and Teddy Gregory and director Orville “Buddy” Wanzer.

Rather than defining good and evil, the 72-minute film “explores issues

of eroticism, power and fear of death in a Western setting,” she said. It was “deeply influenced by European cinema” that didn’t become popular in American filmmaking until the 1970s with the work of Martin Scorsese, Federico Fellini, Francis Ford Coppola and other Hollywood filmmakers, she said.

Smith’s documentary, “The Birth of the Acid Western,” explores this variant of the revisionist subgenre of the classic Western without heroes and enemies.

Wanzer was also instrumental in growing an independent film scene in southern New Mexico through various foreign film series, special screenings and student mentoring, Smith said. He started the Las Cruces Film society, bringing

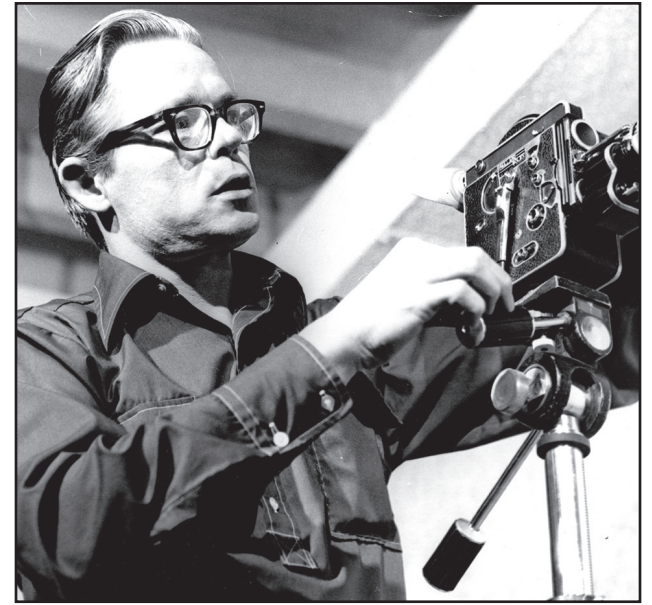
European films to local audiences that were otherwise only available in

large cities. Wanzer’s film study course in the NMSU English Department was one of the first classes of its kind in the United States, said Smith, rivaled only by places like UCLA.

“He was really ahead of his time,” she said.

Smith filmed interviews with Wanzer during his last days living at Good Samaritan Village, where he died last February. Wanzer talked about his life as a filmmaker, the decline of Hollywood cinema and how Las Cruces could have become “the Hollywood of the Southwest” in the 1960s despite the Hollywood distributors who bought the rights to the film from which he never saw a profit, she said.

Wanzer filmed much of “The Devil’s Mistress” in the Organ Mountains off Baylor Canyon Road and cast local actors, including Forest Westmoreland and Teddy Gregory. Wanzer’s wife, Joan Stapleton, played the mistress and a local farmer was the devil. Gregory was also the film’s cinematographer and horse wrangler. With a cast of six, “everyone filled multiple roles to make the film happen,” she said. Wanzer shot the



PHOTOS COURTESY JULIA SMITH

Orville “Buddy” Wanzer with the Bolex camera he used to shoot “The Devil’s Mistress” in the Organ Mountains in the late 1960s.

film over the course of several years, using an old Bolex, World War II-era camera.

The film was sold to a Hollywood distributor, who changed its name from Wanzer’s original title “La Bruha” to “The Devil’s Mistress.” The premiere at Rio Grande Theatre included spotlights, a red carpet and actors arriving in limousines, Smith said, along with newspaper headlines about Hollywood coming to Las Cruces. The film

was screened at thousands of theatres nationwide and became a cult classic in New York City, Smith said.

Wanzer didn’t make any money from the film, but his impact on cinema and local filmmakers would continue. “He let students make films,” Smith said. “Let’s take a camera and see what you can do,” he would tell his students, she said, “really transforming their

SEE HONORS, PAGE 13



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"The Devil's Mistress" premiere with the cast at the Rio Grande Theatre in 1965.

PHOTOS COURTESY JULIA SMITH

## HONORS

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 12

filmmaking.

Wanzer was "brilliant and fascinating," Smith said. His "critical, incisive mind was like an encyclopedia," with knowledge of not only filmmaking, but also macrophotog-

raphy, opera, ballet and classical music. He wrote novels and a film study book and was an accomplished stained-glass artist.

Wanzer was "not afraid to create art that wouldn't appeal to everyone," Smith said. He exposed his students and community "to art that's against the grain," she said. As an artist and a teacher, he


championed "not just escapism or mindless art, not just a degree and a job, but a love of learning and of knowledge."

Wanzer felt that artists should expand the artistic vision of the Southwest, Smith said. He believed Las Cruces was "a beautiful place, a place where movies can be made."


The movie "Devil's Mistress" was filmed in Las Cruces and was first shown in 1969 at the Rio Grande Theatre. If you're reading this before 7 p.m. Thursday, Dec. 5, you may still have time to see the special 50th anniversary showing of the movie, again at the Rio Grande Theatre, 211 N. Main St.



The movie "Devil's Mistress" was filmed in Las Cruces and was first shown in 1969 at the Rio Grande Theatre. If you're reading this before 7 p.m. Thursday, Dec. 5, you may still have time to see the special 50th anniversary showing of the movie, again at the Rio Grande Theatre, 211 N. Main St.



Cheers to our friends at the Las Cruces Bulletin for **50 years** of great service by exceptional people. We look forward to many more!



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# Cruces vs. Mayfield No. 50: A game for the ages

By **RICHARD COLTHARP**  
Las Cruces Bulletin

Anyone who has lived in Las Cruces for any time at all understands the importance of the football rivalry between Las Cruces High School and Mayfield High School.

It usually takes place on the first or second Friday in November, often with a district championship on the line. Years ago, the game was moved to Aggie Memorial Stadium on the NMSU campus, because the local high school fields were not sufficient to accommodate the massive crowds. Fans are clearly divided – often even within the same families – between the red-and-blue Bulldawgs and the green-and-gold Trojans.

The rivalry began not

long after Mayfield High School opened in 1965, then just the second comprehensive high school in the Las Cruces Public Schools system.

In 2013, Cruces and Mayfield met for the 50th time, and it just so happened to be for the state championship. Mayfield beat previously undefeated LCHS a month earlier in the regular-season contest, and both teams marched through the initial rounds of the playoffs, leaving both 11-1 heading into the title game, which was also played in Aggie Memorial.

Both teams had previously won several state championships, and this was the second time the rivalry game would be for all the marbles. In 2002, the Bulldawgs beat undefeated Mayfield 17-14 to win the

5A state title. That same year, playing in division 4A, Oñate High School won its only football state title.

Unlike many big games, the 50th edition of Cruces-Mayfield lived up to its billing. It was close the whole way, and with LCHS leading 27-20 with just seconds remaining, Mayfield scored a touchdown to, apparently, tie the game. The Bulldawgs, however, rushed in to block the extra point, and win the game 27-26, and avert overtime.

Each team has made it back to the 6A championship game once since then, and Centennial High School made it to the 2015 5A final, but no Las Cruces team has won a football state title since that amazing game in 2013.



The 50th edition of the Las Cruces High School-Mayfield High School football rivalry was for all the marbles – the 2013 state championship. The story of the game graced the Bulletin pages the week before and the week after.

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