

DESERT exposure

Arts & Leisure in Southern New Mexico



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DECEMBER 2020

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A Quiet Season

Approaching the holidays with a creative eye

My father died this year. It was before we heard those strange words – coronavirus, social distancing, community spread. I am honored and grateful I was able to travel to Connecticut and spend a week with him in his world in February. Another month and I never would have seen him again.

There are a lot of things I can imagine – a world without trees, Europe without Facebook, eating crickets, wearing jeans to a wedding, jumping from an airplane, sailing over a waterfall, writing a symphony, traveling time and space in a blue police box. Every time someone says those words, “can you imagine that?” I say yes, because I can.

But now there are things I really can't imagine – never seeing a family member again when they go into the hospital, being the nurse who makes the calls every day telling people their loved one will not survive, stirring hate into the world.

And things I see that I never imagined because they are so strange – silent streets, a line of masked people that extends around the corner of Lowe's Home Improvement waiting their turn to get in, lines of hundreds of cars with masked occupants waiting to get tested, the country turning on itself violently.

The caregivers of the world

have a particular burden to carry, support can be hard to find. There are those at home, taking care of family members; in hospitals taking care of patients; and in-between there are professionals and volunteers, loving and kind individuals who go into homes to support and provide services for those who need help.

My friend Chinda Lucoski has been a caregiver for 40 years, since her daughter Alicia was a 1-year-old. She said it is essential for caregivers to take care of their own needs, as well as those of others.

“You have to take care of yourself before you can take care of other people,” Lucoski said. “Be connected with other caregivers to talk to. Find a network for people dealing with similar disabilities.”

Caregivers must put up with a lot of emotions, she said, so they need support from others in similar situations to help prevent burnout.

Encouraging all caregivers, from unpaid family members to professionals hired in the home, to become familiar with what's going on with the person(s) for whom they are caring, Chinda suggests searching on a computer, making calls and looking for referrals for the right caregiver coalition for the condition. There often is a small local group or a statewide organization.

“You need to know why the mood swings,” she said. “You have to understand the condition and then try to understand someone. You might have to walk slow, go to an appointment, be patient.”

For example, Chinda said in the evenings a Parkinson's patient might get down and moody. The caregiver will need to be proactive in order to manage the conditions.

When things are overwhelming “take a break, walk away, no confrontation,” she said.

“It's all taking a different spin for care team members,” Chris Chaffin, communications director for the Alzheimer's Association's New Mexico Chapter said. “The challenges are many, and now we're entering the holidays. Caregivers tend to neglect their own issues which increases mortality. The burden of caregiving is great.”

Time has taken on strange proportions, passing so fast it seems a blink turns over a new month and here is the December issue of Desert Exposure, Christmas, finding a way to plan for another year but having no way to see the shape of it. But then again, my middle son married last November, and it seems so long ago it's hard to remember, especially the part where everybody is hugging, dancing and swinging children in circles.

But as the world moves for-

ward, the creative nature of humankind rises. My sister arranged a menu where we could all cook the same thing for Thanksgiving with our favorite foods, even though we can't. My son will make a smoked turkey, my mom her rosjle (Estonian potato salad with beets), and those will be delivered by another son.

Some families are taking it further, cooking together via Zoom and/or eating together the same way. Holidays are good times to support local too, ordering meals from area restaurants. We can up the sharing elements by sending cards and gifts thoughtfully assembled.

We can be thankful too that some of the normal holiday stress is gone. We don't have to count heads, set tables, and people don't have to face a fallen cake or a weird sweet potato concoction. We don't have to drive or fly anywhere and – wait! We can eat dinner in our pajamas if we want to. Creating new traditions, families can change mindsets, think about ways to share their blessings, get closer to those normally not included in the party because they are too far away or shy or socially awkward. Suddenly those distant connections are more important. Create a new dessert that everyone can make, take a walk in the wild places.

“Rituals make the ordinary ex-

traordinary,” Catherine Sanderson, professor of psychology at Amherst College, told the Associated Press. “A pumpkin pie on a random day in October is just a pumpkin pie. But a pumpkin pie on the fourth Thursday of November is not just pumpkin pie: It's part of Thanksgiving. Our intentions, coupled with the season, elevate it.”

And that's true even if the ritual has been moved because of unique circumstances.

The key this year, Sanderson said, may be accepting that things needs to evolve – and avoiding comparisons with celebrations from years past. If you try to replicate past holidays exactly, it's likely this year's will feel inferior.

If we accept the world as new, and focus on the joy, whatever it may be, the season can still be a blessing. Mazel tov.

Elva K. Österreich is editor of Desert Exposure and would love to meet Desert Exposure readers in Silver City or any of our coverage areas. Please contact her at editor@desertexposure.com or by cell phone at 575-443-4408 to set a place and time to meet.



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Older home on two acres. Barn and fenced in lot could keep horse or farm animals. House in need of repairs.
MLS # 37496 \$59,900



Corner lot home. Ceramic tile throughout. Walking distance to downtown and San Vicente Creek. Come see this home to appreciate it's charm.
MLS # 37567 \$89,500



Country living in rural New Mexico, this 4 bedroom 2 bath home has plenty of room for the kids, FHA animals and borders the fair grounds and Cliff School. This property has Duck Creek, a semi-annual creek flowing through the east end of the 7.9 acres. You'll be delighted with the amount of covered storage this property boasts. Close to the Gila River, Bill Evans Lake and the Gila National Forest, this property is a great escape from the fast paced city life.
MLS # 37424 \$245,000



Nice 3 bedroom home that comes from Santa Rita and relocated to Silver City. This backyard provides great outdoor space for evening bbq's. Some hardwood floors under carpet may still be in great condition. The kitchen boasts the old wood stove that is iconic of New Mexico. Great center of town location with easy access from any direction.
MLS # 37457 \$123,000



Located just one block from the Senior Center and around the corner from La Capilla, this well-maintained manufactured home has city amenities but with a little country feel. Features include a split floor plan, country kitchen with breakfast nook, laminate floors, newer appliances, Ring doorbell, cameras for security, programmable lights, covered porch, outside storage building and absolutely fabulous views.
MLS # 37392 \$142,000



Wonderful opportunity for a Live/Work situation close to Downtown Silver City! Live in one half, and work out of the other. Off street parking for 2 vehicles. Sweet, fenced side yard with storage/work-shed and established garden beds. New forced air gas furnace and new windows in the living area. On demand hot water heater. 3/4 bath and laundry area. Gas range, Refrigerator and washer/dryer convey. Get those ideas flowing! Lots of options!
MLS # 37519 \$160,000



MOUNTAIN HOME IN THE MIMBRES VALLEY! Nestled in the trees on 4 acres with views of the Black Range. Upgrades include metal roof, ceramic tile, kitchen upgrades and new septic. Master bedroom downstairs with two bedrooms upstairs. Nice shop garage plus 2 stall carport and two storage buildings. Dog run and plenty of parking for all your toys. Unrestricted with horses allowed. County maintained road. Minutes from Bear Canyon Lake and short drive to the Gila National Forest for world class hunting, hiking and recreation.
MLS # 37301 \$174,000



Spectacular views from the covered deck on this home. The nearly 1.5 acres of pine and juniper trees provides cool, and tranquil mountain living. The additions to the home include large covered decks, and expanded bedrooms. Pellet stove insert provides warm living space through the winter. Private well perfect for maintaining a garden in the fenced in patio area. Driveway loop can park toys, trailers and possibly an RV. Come check out this amazing property.
MLS # 37616 \$199,000



Very spacious feeling 3 bedroom 2 bath home near Lake Roberts. The tasteful rock fireplace from floor to ceiling commands your attention and lends a certain ambience to this getaway in the Gila. Open kitchen/living area make a great place for entertaining with covered decks both front and back. This is one of the finer built mountain homes in the region by renowned builder, Craig Findley. You'll want to move right in. Call today.
MLS # 37242 \$269,000



Very charming 2 bedroom, two bath country cabin on 15+ acres, solid construction and open concept floor plan. Passive solar with strategic windows placement to take full advantage of the Southwest New Mexico sunshine. Wood stove and in floor radiant heat make this a cozy home throughout the winter. The attached Trex deck is perched above Tularosa River and allows for some spectacular canyon views. Master suite has an attached sunroom to allowing for some massive solar gain.
MLS # 37486 \$319,000



Lake Roberts Motel owners have continuously remodeled since purchase, which had a major overhaul in 2012 on almost every inch of the original structures. There are 6 "cabin style suites" that are more than adorable, the rooms are spotless, decorated with love in a southwestern theme. This place is becoming not just a place to stay, but a destination to repeat customers. There is also a cabin rental in addition to owners retreat and store. A "Woodhenge" fire pit area is equipped with roasting forks, a cooking grate, and a generous supply of firewood, topped off with Tiki torches surrounding the pit to create a special ambiance. They have many beautiful memories here and are seeking to pass the torch to new owners with their fresh ideas and energy!
MLS # 37199 \$499,900

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ABOUT THE COVER:

Photo by Elva K. Österreich. Finding sanctuary in a little house near the San Lorenzo Mission Church in the Mimbres Valley, a rustic cross stands up for the season. This icon, created by some unknown craftsman of the past, provides a symbol for today, representing a still hopeful future while honoring what has gone before.



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DESERT exposure

RAISINGDAD • JIM AND HENRY DUCHENE

Party Parades? Phooey!

One thing I've noticed about the Coronavirus is it's given people a reason to be cheap.

Cheaper than they normally are.

Cheaper than me, even.

Actually, I'm not cheap. I'm frugal. When it comes to paying, I'm the first to put my hand in my pocket... and keep it there.

I'm constantly invited to party parades. Well... not me, actually. People know if they want something good, my wife is the one to invite. These celebrations include baby showers, graduations, even dog adoptions.

I invited my father to come along once.

"What's that?" he asked.

"You don't know what a parade is, pop?" I teased.

"Not the kind you're talking

about," he answered.

I explained to him, "That's where you drive to the person's house, drop off a gift without getting down, and then leave."

"No food?"

"No food."

"I'll pass."

Sometimes they'll hand out cupcakes. My father's not big on cupcakes. He's more a steak and potatoes kind of guy. Me, too, for that matter. Maybe there'll be a candy bag in it for you, but just one. So there's no food, no drinks, no socializing. If you ask me, a party parade is a cheap way to get a free handout.

At one of them, the mother of the little girl whose birthday they were celebrating wanted a headcount of who would be coming. My wife thought it was for them to be sure they had enough cup-

cakes and candy bags for everyone who was kind enough to take part, so my wife RSVPed with three: her, our daughter, and our granddaughter. When they drove by, the three of them were handed two cupcakes and a candy bag. I guess one of the cupcakes was meant to be split. Later, the mother Instagrammed pictures of the birthday girl opening her gifts and she thanked everyone who took part. "God will bless you," she wrote.

I told my wife, "God will bless you' is a cheap person's way of passing the buck to the almighty."

This is especially true of my buddy Maloney's mother-in-law, who's so cheap she won't even give you the time of day. After she borrows a few bucks, she always assures him, "God will pay

you back."

"She says that because SHE doesn't plan to," I tell him.

The very first party parade my granddaughter attended took place on the other side of town. My daughter dressed her in her prettiest party dress, gussied up her hair in curls and ribbons, and then drove with my wife a total of an hour and a half for the ten seconds it took to hand over a birthday present.

"Aren't we going to play?" my granddaughter wanted to know, not understanding why they weren't stopping.

I tagged along to one for the six-year-old granddaughter of some friends of ours. They wanted us to meet them in the parking lot of a steakhouse.

"Think they're feeding us?" I asked my wife.

"Maybe," my wife said.

She was being hopeful, and there's nothing wrong with hoping, but, as it turned out, sometimes a cigar is just a cigar and a starting point is just a starting point. We could smell the beef grilling in the air.

"Mmm... that smells good," our granddaughter said as we drove off like a happy funeral procession, following our friends who were leading the parade.

My wife and I just looked at each other.

Trying to sneak a peek at the festivities ahead of us, our granddaughter graciously said of the birthday girl, "I bet she's going to be dressed so pretty."

As we drove by the birthday house, I noticed our friends had parked, giving everybody room to drive by and away. I didn't tell my wife, because they're her friends more than they are mine, but I thought, "They're staying behind because, as soon as the rest of us suckers leave, they're going to go inside and eat."

And that's just what these parades seem like to me. The people who take time out of their

busy day, spend money on a nice gift, and leave with disappointed children... WE don't get invited to take part in the actual celebration.

"You're just being grumpy," my wife told me when I finally aired my observation to her later, but, wouldn't you know it, the very next day her friends posted pictures on their Facebook accounts. Pictures of them having a very good time at a birthday party no one in the parade was invited to.

Just so you know, we're throwing a party parade for our granddaughter on her birthday. Consider yourselves invited. Knowing my wife, she'll find a way to make it special for our guests. Especially the wee ones.

Don't get me wrong, I understand the necessity for parades rather than parties. This pandemic has been tough on kids. They can't play with their friends. They can't go to school, or, when they can, they have to sit in their seats the entire time, even eating their lunches there. No P.E., no recess, no games of tag.

My granddaughter was visiting us the other day. She and I were outside playing when she saw some friends of hers from the neighborhood riding their bikes in front of our house. They invited her to join them.

"I can't!" she called back longingly. "I don't have a mask!"

Another little girl rode by. This one she didn't know.

"Hola!" my granddaughter called out in her best Spanish, giving the girl a friendly wave.

"Hola," the girl said, but kept on going.

My heart broke a little.

Playing with your grandfather is a cheap substitute for playing with kids your own age.

You know what else is cheap? Talk. Except when politicians do it. theduchenebrothers@gmail.com; @JimDuchene



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Friday, Dec. 11 at 11AM: Space reservation, ad copy, all stories and notices for the editorial section due.

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Desert #54 Dumbfounder
by Dave Thomas

"Desert Dumbfounder" by Dave Thomas is a simple substitution cipher; one letter stands for another. Solution is by trial and error. Solution will appear in next month's *Desert Exposure*. Send full solution, or just the Secret Words, to nmsrdave@swcp.com, and be recognized!
TIPS: www.nmsr.org/secretword.htm and www.nmsr.org/cypher-how2.jpg

"MLGZI LX YLKK BGKD WI GIJH J UKBYLGS HLB SHJGAI J UHJZXLBG
BU XVI XLNI, L MFSSIMX J GIY GJNI - XVI 'ABG RFLQBXI XHJLK.'"
- XJDKBH MXHILX, BG J CHBCBMIA 500-NLKI HLTIH XHJLK.

Use the answer key below to track your clues, and reveal Secret Words!

A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z

Previous Solution: "AS THE RATCATCHER ROBERT, MY WHOLE PATTERN WAS ABOUT A DEADLY PLAGUE SWEEPING THE WORLD AND HOW IT CHANGED EVERYTHING." - BOB DIVEN, ON THIS YEAR'S RENAISSANCE ARTSFAIR *Secret Words: "GHOSTLY PANDEMIC"

Congrats to #53 solvers : Skip Howard*, Mike Arms*, Shorty Vaiza*, and Will Adams*!

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Arts Scene

Upcoming area art happenings

SILVER CITY



Crafted Chair by Robert Winston

• **Lois Duffy Art Gallery**, 211 N. Texas St., is featuring hand crafted rockers by Silver City master craftsman Robert Winston through the holidays. Also available are fine paintings by Lois Duffy. Open Saturdays from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. or by appointment. Info: www.loisduffy.com or 575-313-9631.



Light Art Space Gallery

• At **Light Art Space** "Facing Forward," is a juried exhibition of handmade prints, including photographic processes, created by women of color. During this time of unrest and uncertainty, this exhibition seeks to present works by women of color that speak to the future in challenging and inspiring ways. This exhibition continues through Jan. 2, 2021. "New Perspectives" includes recent work by **Karen Hymer, Mimi Calise Peterson,**

Claudia Porcelli and Carmen Ruiz. This exhibition features a variety of media including painting, printmaking, fashion and photography. Also on view is the work of Light Art Space gallery artists Joel Armstrong, Valerie Galloway, Eugene Starobinskiy and Art Peterson. The gallery is open 11 a.m.-5 p.m. Thursday – Saturday and by appointment. Social distancing is observed and masks required. Info: www.lightartspace.com.

• The fifth annual **Arte Chicano Exhibit** is currently at the Silver City Museum. The exhibition series is a chance for the museum to support and celebrate Chicano artists working in the area. **Arte Chicano 2020** features the work of Chris Alvarez and Buck Burns as curated by Diana Leyba-Ingalls. The exhibit is installed in the **Dodge Gallery** and can be seen at www.silvercitymuseum.org in the form of a video tour with commentary by the artists. It will be waiting for in-person viewing when the museum is able reopen to the public. Info: 575-597-0229.



"Ollas" by George Thompson

• The **Grant County Art Guild Gallery** is featuring the work of three artists in its windows through Dec. 14: woodworker **George Thompson**, who specializes in segmented turned-wood bowls, painter **Thia Utz** and painter **Donna Schmidt.** Thompson began

working with wood early. He made his own toys while growing up on a farm in eastern Colorado. He uses as many local woods as possible, but has a particular fondness for working with cholla cacti. Utz began painting with oils after she retired from the education system in 2012. Schmidt began painting after she retired to Silver City, studying with multiple local artists. Schmidt says both the New Mexico landscape and her faith provide inspiration for her work. The Grant County Art Guild Gallery is located at 316 N. Bullard St. in Silver City. It is normally open 11 a.m.-3 p.m. Sunday-Friday and 10 a.m.-5 p.m. Saturday. Info: www.gcag.org.

DEMING

• December is the time for the annual **Holiday Gift Boutique** at the **Deming Art Center.** The Gallery is located at 100 S. Gold Ave. in Deming, and open 10 a.m.-3 p.m. Monday-Friday and 10 a.m.-12:30 p.m. Saturdays (closed Christmas Day). The boutique will run Dec. 2-30. Info: 575-546-3663 or www.deming-arts.org.



"Grille" by Renee Short

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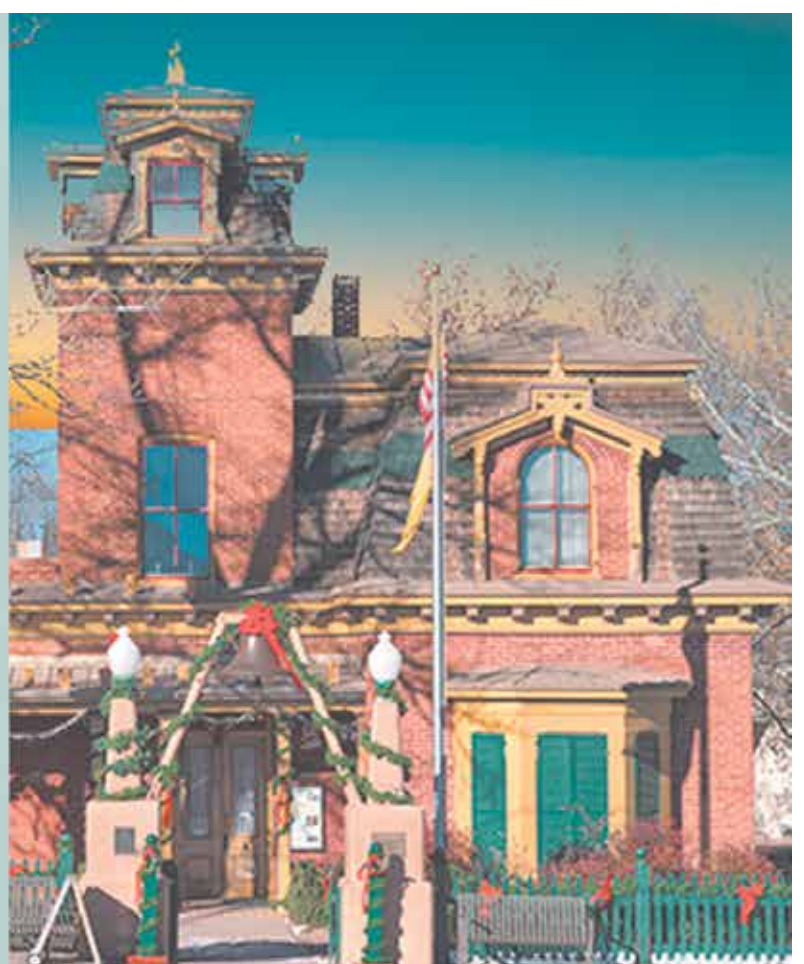
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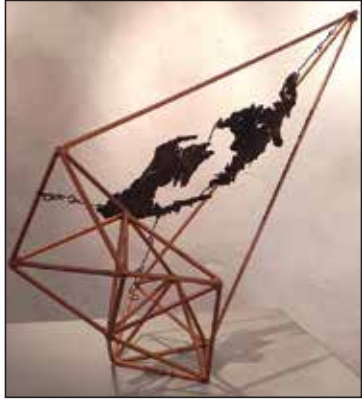
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lery space welcoming art lovers to a to its broad walls. The gallery was supposed to open on Black Friday but now will wait until the first day Doña Ana County opens its non-essential businesses. The little art and frame shop owned by **Malu Bender** and her sister, **Sandra Bender**, moved to a new space at 144 Wyatt Drive in August. Now the sisters are preparing to welcome local artists and shoppers to a gallery at their shop. Mas Art will be open for COVID-safe business as soon as possible. Visit www.masartllc.com for more details or check it out at Facebook or Instagram. Info: info@masartllc.com or call 575-526-9113.



"Compressedz Mapamundi"
by Brian Pottorff



"Orange Ballerina"
by Mimi Garten

• **The Doña Ana Arts Council (DAAC)** features the work of artists **Mimi Garten** and **Brian Pottorff** at the **DAAC Arts & Cultural Center** gallery from Dec. 2-30 during regular business hours and on Saturday, Dec. 12, noon-5 p.m. The show, **"Untethered Times,"** is comprised of photographic prints, video slideshows and sculpture. The theme is reinforced with a poem by Mimi Garten that will

be printed and made available for gallery visitors to read as they experience the show. Brian Pottorff is a sculptor and mixed media artist; Mimi Garten is a photographer and poet. "We met through social connection in Deming," said Mimi. "Over time, our families spent time together and Brian and I became familiar with each other's work. I understand Brian's intent with his work, and my images speak to him." Their collaboration results in an unusual and visually arresting show. Info: www.daarts.org or 575-523-6403.



Richard Spellenberg woodwork

• **The Mesilla Valley Fine Arts Gallery**, 2470-A Calle de Guadalupe, across from the historic Fountain Theatre, is currently accepting applications from artists to display their artwork. Two local fiber artists are featured for the month of December, Jane Madrid and Richard Spellenberg. Madrid's main media of painting is oil and some acrylic. Her major artistic themes center around nature, with a particular emphasis on animals, flowers, birds, butterflies, landscapes, and the interaction of these within the environment. Spellenberg's medium, wood, is a continuation of his scientific endeavors as a botanist. He "toyed" with his father's treadle lathe as a teenager and since retirement, his interest in the differences in the wood and patterns has deepened. The Gal-

lery is pleased to announce its newest member, Suzanne Thiesfeld, a fabric artist. First American Bank in Mesilla, is well represented by gallery members who rotate the galleries artists' work monthly. COVID-19 adjusted gallery hours are 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. daily with limited access. Info: 575-522-2933, www.mesillavalleyfinearts.com.

VIRTUAL NEW MEXICO

• **Desert Exposure Virtual Gallery** offers a visit to the art of southern New Mexico artists in their web-based galleries. While we can't yet go to all these galleries and studios and spend our time perusing the amazing work of southern New Mexico artists and craftspeople, we can take a journey through their creativity. This section of the Desert Exposure website journeys through some of the talent we have south of Interstate 25. If you are a southern New Mexico artist and would like to be included in this listing, please contact us at editor@desertexposure.com or by calling Elva at 575-443-4408. Website: www.desertexposure.com/virtual-gallery/.

• An area-created format showcases artists' work on Facebook at **"Las Cruces NM Artists & Art Showcase"** on a page is specifically for the many undiscovered artists and artisans in Las Cruces and Doña Ana County. No matter what it is you do, painting, photog-

raphy, sculpting, pottery, jewelry, fiber arts, woodworking, decorative arts, etc., anything created by you is welcome to be displayed. Please note, this Facebook page is meant to be a

digital art gallery, rather than a sales tool. This Facebook page is the creation of Robert Paquette, a long-time volunteer for many Las Cruces community service organizations.

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2020 Writing Contest



M. JOHN FAYHEE

Still

Part One: Cosmic eddy

It is a small window when time meets action in New Mexico's Gila Country. During monsoon season, the diminutive creek next to which I am walking — a regular tromping haunt — courses high, muddy and loud. Upstream campgrounds are often closed due to flash flood concerns. Soon enough, though, as the inevitable slide toward the dry that defines America's empty quarter manifests itself, this creek, like all the watercourses that transect this generally parched land, will begin to diminish and will become mucky and stagnant till finally it might wither entirely until next year's rains come ... if they come. But now, in the middling days of autumn, there is enough water to require a running leap of faith to get to the other side, but not so much that the creek is defined by tumult and resultant opaqueness.

I stop next to a pool, which is clear enough that I can discern pebbles lining the bottom. The pool is about 20 feet by 20 feet and perhaps a yard, yard-and-a-half deep. On the far side lies a tall rock wall. Above the pool is a trickle of a chute. And my feet are planted upon a boulder that juts over the water like a ship's prow.

Save the gurgling of the flow, it is quiet, almost eerily so.

There is no wind ruffling the tops of the surrounding Gambel

oaks and Ponderosa pines.

Even the birds are inexplicably mute.

Even my normally fidgety dog is sitting in rare contemplation.

It is still.

Though I auditorily perceive the tinkling of water over rock, I do not allow my attention to drift that way.

My native habitat is movement. I am normally unsettled by stillness. I am by nature restive. Were I an elementary-school student in these hyper-diagnostic times, I would assuredly be prescribed significant doses of Ritalin, probably injected directly into my cerebral cortex. When I remember, which is not always, I force myself to stop for five tick-tick-tick measured minutes during my daily backwoods wanderings to look and smell and maybe even see. Rarely is this successful. Rarely am I able to remain still for that long be-

fore I start twitching.

Here and now, though, the stillness feels comfortable.

Yet.

In the middle of the pool below me is a lone grasshopper fighting for its life. This mortal battle between insect and water is not occurring out in the peripheral provinces, where it can be ignored or subconsciously relegated to the realm of afterthought. It is front and center, aligned perfectly with two pupils that a blink prior had been impressionistically unfocused. I try to push the cognitive reset button, to ignore the plight of the grasshopper, which only gets me thinking about the plight of the grasshopper even more.

The wind picks up.

Jays and ravens start squawking.

My dog expresses her boredom with a long, theatrical sigh and begins rooting through the thick riparian underbrush, looking for lizards, her favorite activity.

The world is no longer still.

Damn!

I throw in the towel and intently gaze upon the flailing grasshopper, at first as though its undeniable troubles are not about it and its place in the pool, but, rather, about me and my place in the cosmos. Then I gaze upon the grasshopper as though its imminent interface with eternal rest is an abstract concept rather than a palpable life-and-death struggle occurring right before eyes that had recently been comfortably glazed over. But this was no abstraction. This was a creature in some seriously deep caca.

As far as I can tell, the grasshopper is in no way exceptional. I have seen some seriously psychedelic examples of the order caelifera during my tropical forays. Stuff that looks like a hallucination, or a nightmare, stuff with long multi-colored antennae and neon stripes and bright red legs and big eyes that glow in the dark like malevolent embers. This unfortunate animal was not like that. Seemed pretty

much a generic grasshopper. No phantasmagoric characteristics I could make out. Faded green fading fast.

And it was not even rare in its ordinariness. It wasn't some otherwise blasé type of grasshopper that supposedly lives only in eastern Bhutan but this one had inexplicably defied all odds by surviving an improbable jet-stream journey halfway around the planet and landing in a small pool of water in southwest New Mexico. Far as I could tell, it was but one of the 500 million exactly-the-same grasshoppers that populate my home turf. It is a member in good stead of whatever the exact opposite of an endangered species is.

There was no reason whatsoever for me to pay it the slightest heed. Mother Nature was clearly taking her often-cruel course. What business would it be of mine to intercede in any manner save staring, pondering life's transience, then walking on to the same place I always walk to when I follow this particular path, an outcropping with a long view of distant summits?

Truth of the matter is: I find myself inexplicably transfixed.

By the time I pull up a figurative chair to watch this foregone conclusion unfold, the grasshopper is listing badly to starboard. But it (since I have no idea how one identifies gender in a grasshopper, I'll stick with the impersonal pronoun) had not given up the ship. Its relatively massive rear legs, legs that, were they proportionately attached to human bodies, would have us leaping tall buildings in a single bound, were still working hard. Perhaps by this time, it was autonomic reflex, but those legs kicked alternately, propelling the poor insect right toward the tall rock wall. But a navigational miscue was functionally irrelevant, as the pool in which the grasshopper found itself was essentially a slow-moving eddy. Even had the hapless creature

been heading toward a shore that was receding farther and further with each kick, it would have simply been pulled back into the heart of the pool. And it would have had added to its already wretched circumstances false hope, which some may argue is better than no hope. But not by much.

Perhaps this grasshopper was by then perfectly comfortable with what little remained of its corporeal journey.

Perhaps its kicks did not amount to an effort to reach safety at all.

Perhaps it was in a middle-ground dream state — halfway between this life and whatever is next — with its merciful mind taking it back to its halcyon days, back when, with the most mere flick of its rear limbs, it could sail through the air, seemingly forever.

Perhaps it was thinking of the first time it found love, and how it hopped together with its soulmate under the endless New Mexico sky.

Perhaps the faces of its children, long since hopped off to greener pastures, were flashing by like a slow-mo slideshow.

I have heard it said that people who are drowning enter into a state of bliss and, that, if they are rescued at the last instant, they often fight the efforts of those trying to save them. Who says such bliss is the exclusive domain of humans?

Though it is almost impossible to view a creature with one foot in the grave in any manner save thinking that overt distress is part of the experience, for all I know, this grasshopper understood fully that its fleeting time on Earth was up and took the plunge intentionally, not necessarily as suicide, though it might well have been that, but the same way native legends that make their way to non-native listeners

STILL

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STILL

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tell how the old Indians, when they decide to no longer burden their tribe, walk off alone into the deep forest to become one with the hungry wolves.

I have no idea if grasshoppers are able to survive winters at 7,000 feet. I have no idea what the natural lifespan of a grasshopper is. I have no idea how grasshoppers normally die. Maybe this one opted to sidestep the inevitable withering away, or freezing to death, or getting eaten by a bird. Maybe it said to hell with it, I'm going out on my own terms!

Of course, maybe it simply messed up big time. Maybe it lost its train of thought while hopping along and, next thing it knew, it was up the creek without the proverbial paddle.

Or maybe it was an extreme-athlete wannabe grasshopper that thought the world would somehow benefit, that, by so doing, others would be impressed and maybe even inspired to follow their dreams, or some such nonsense, if it did something ridiculously stupid and insignificant, like trying to jump across the humble rivulet that lies beneath my feet. The grasshopper equivalent of a climbing without a rope, kayaking off a waterfall or walking a tightrope across a canyon. If so, there were clearly gene-pool implications, which ought to play out of their own natural-selection volition without my interference.

The grasshopper by now had stopped kicking. It was completely at the mercy of the elements, either to be pulled downstream by the current or recycled back through the eddy. It was clearly time to resume my hike and return to my usual va-

pid ponderings. But, well, truth of the matter is, I hate watching animals die. Even animals with six legs, exoskeletons and brains the size of sand grains.

Had it been a puppy or a kitten or a bird, there would have been little hesitation to not only save it, but bring it home, nurse it back to health, give it a cute name and post self-congratulatory photos of its recovery on Facebook.

But this was just a lowly bug. Bereft of self-awareness. Bereft of heart and soul.

I decided, if the current took it downstream, I would remain dispassionate. If, however, it was moved shoreward by the eddy, I would intervene. There was a delicate moment of balance, when the grasshopper's fate hung by a thread it had no idea was dangling. It teetered. It wobbled. It could not affect its own destiny. Then, with no discernible physical impetus, it was back in the eddy. True to my decision, I stepped down off the rock and picked up a long stick. When the grasshopper came within reach, I placed the tip of the stick next to it, soft enough that I did not compromise the surface tension. It was now up to the grasshopper to either save its own life or go with the cosmic flow.

I held the stick there for a few seconds, then, just before coming to the conclusion that my half-assed effort was for naught, the middle of the three appendages on its right side reached out and made tentative contact with the stick, like it could not believe it was actually feeling something solid. Then the front leg followed suit. Then, with what must have been the insect's very last energy reserves, it showed that, faced with a choice of life or death,

most organisms, no matter their place on the evolutionary ladder, will rally back toward the land of the living. It pulled itself begrudgingly onto the stick, which I then picked up and placed on the shore. The grasshopper just sat there, clearly spent. And if I can read body language that,

when push comes to shove, is not species specific, but, clearly universal, that grasshopper was right then about as nonplussed as an animal could possibly be. It had been snatched from the jaws of death by ... what? Were it to relate this unlikely story of resurrection to its grasshopper

compadres later, what would it say? "There I was, about to go under, staring down the bright white light, when, out of the blue, a big stick descended from above and pulled me from the

STILL

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All entrees are served with homemade bread and butter

DESSERTS:
Bread Pudding with homemade caramel sauce and real whipped cream
OR
Chocolate Pound Cake with berries and whipped cream

\$ 60 per person

STILL

continued from page 9

raging waters and set me gently upon the dry ground." Would the other grasshoppers snicker and roll their eyes? Or would they all hop down to the shoreline next to that little pool and stare in wonderment as the grasshopper directed their amazed attention to the big stick still lying where I had dropped it and said, "See! There it is! I'm telling you, it just came down out of nowhere! It was as though it was wielded by some omnipotent being that held power over life and death! And it choose me!"

Would the rapt grasshoppers then be tempted to test the waters themselves, to personally experience being saved by the magnanimity of the Big Stick?

As I departed, I wondered if the grasshopper I had saved was now a born-again prophet for a new grasshopper cosmology: Big Stickism, which, once codified and institutionalized, will espouse as part of its fundamental rubric allegories about Big Stick benevolence, which would of theocratic necessity be counterbalanced by frightful tales of Big Stick wrath wrought against unworthy grasshoppers, tales that stress how, if you are not suitably subservient and righteous grasshopper, the Big Stick might decide to stand by and let

you circulate forevermore in the purgatory of the cosmic eddy.

There was of course no way of telling where the grasshopper would next hop. Maybe to the pinnacle of a nearby mount, from where it would bear rapturous witness to the undisputed glory of the Big Stick to all creatures great and small within earshot. Or maybe it would, accidentally or intentionally, hop right back into the little pool from which it was recently saved.

Part Two: Poker face

A couple days later, I was hiking along a completely different, and different kind of, trail, several miles away from the grasshopper pool.

My dog and I had not gone far when we heard a whirring sound emanating from the desiccated thigh-high grass though which this rocky trail passes. Perplexed, I stopped. And right then, finger-snap-like, a cloud of grasshoppers rose from the field. It was like Alfred Hitchcock's movie, "The Birds," except it was "The Grasshoppers." Visions of the more poignant plague-and-pestilence parts of the Old Testament, which pretty much covers the entirety of the Old Testament, played in my head as the insects swarmed. I would not have been the least bit surprised right then had frogs started falling from the

stratosphere.

Scads of the buggers bounced off my head, pinged off my thorax and ricocheted off my abdomen. Several got temporarily tangled in my locks. One flew into my agape buccal cavity, where it T-boned my uvula, before it executed a perfect bat turn and launched off the tip of my tongue like an Army paratrooper jumping from the back of a plane.

Then they, in seemingly choreographed unison, flew off as one to the northeast, in the very direction of the grasshopper pool.

It suddenly became very still.

The plague lasted a short enough time that, as I was getting ready to re-commence my forward momentum, I was not certain it had really happened. I looked down at my dog, whose noggin was tilted in abject bewilderment, and only then did I notice that, on the front of my T-shirt, was parked a cadre of residual grasshoppers.

The laws of coincidental thermodynamics would argue that, given the large-scale grasshopper chaos that had just transpired, these stragglers, which ended up numbering 12, would have at least been facing in different directions. This was not the case. They were all aligned in parallel fashion, as though they constituted the OCD demographic of the grasshopper population. Thing is, they were not uniformly facing down or off to one side. No, they were, rather, all oriented directly upward, directly toward my tilted-forward face. They formed a modified arc — meaning that all 12 of the grasshoppers had unimpeded views of what I'm certain at that juncture was a denotatively perplexed visage.

And these were some impressive specimens, at least three or four inches long — meaning they were near-bouts large enough to filet.

Their size notwithstanding, it's not as though I had anything to fear from the assembled grasshoppers. It's not like a gang of agitated murder hornets had set upon me. Grasshoppers, even behemoth grasshoppers, do not bite or sting. All they do is dribble out of their mouths what we in our youth used to call tobacco juice, and, in the pantheon of truly funky biological material I've interfaced with in the backcountry over the years, they could spew that viscous liquid like "Exorcist"-level projectile vomit and it wouldn't even register on my Richter scale of recoil.

Nonetheless, there I am with a dozen very large grasshoppers on the front of my shirt ogling in unison, as though they were expecting me to utter words of wisdom. Or maybe give a motivational speech. Or a sermon.

Which was weird.

I figured, if I started walking, they would likely leave.

I did, and they didn't.

Then I figured, if I grabbed hold of the untucked bottom of my T-shirt and shook it vigorously, again, they would take the hint and depart en masse.

They only dug in deeper.

I scrutinized their expressions and determined in short order that these are not entities you would want staring at you across a poker table. You could exhaustively research the etymological origins of the word "inexpressive" — root, prefix, derivatives, fraternal and coincidental synonyms and antonyms, the whole linguistic shootin' match — and not begin to approach the level of inscrutability displayed by those grasshopper mugs. There were no twitches. There were no pupils to dilate. No eyelids to squint. No eyebrows to scrunch. No lips to grimace or smile. You'd have to be a pretty dedicated entomologist to suss out the mental machinations of a grasshopper and consequently predict its imminent behavior based solely upon facial cues, or lack thereof.

Thing is, now that I think about it, you could round up a representative cross-section of the drunkest people at the lowliest imbibery and you could get a 99-percent rate of accuracy predicting imminent grasshopper behavior: They're probably going to hop, and probably through grass.

These, however, appeared to be banner-carrying members of the remaining one-percent; they seemed moored for the long haul, no matter the potential negative consequences related to their stubbornness.

I tried flicking the one closest to my chin. My efforts were ineffectual.

I then started entertaining the unpleasant possibility that I might have to smote the entire congregation in one fell swoop. The thought of wearing a T-shirt thick with grasshopper smooch was not appealing. Consequently, as a last resort, I channeled my inner Gandalf.

"Fly, you fools, fly!" I exclaimed to the assembled fellowship.

And fly they did.

Given the orderliness of their shirt-front docking pattern, I would have assumed they would vamoose in a similar methodical manner, like a tactical fighter formation in search of a helpless thatched-hut village to strafe. I would have assumed incorrectly. A professor of trigonometry could not have designed a more haphazard dispersal pattern had he or she worked his or her entire career on a unified theory of random tangential grasshopper egress.

They flew off into an indiscriminate combination of fate, the four winds and the cardinal compass points — the holy trinity of overlapping tidal forces that guide and sometimes misguide all journeys worth taking.

And, fast as they came, they were gone.

Now, where was I?

Here.

Still.

Addendum: Many years ago, I was hiking with a gaggle of eight or 10 friends not far from where I now stand. One of these friends was part mad scientist, part nerd and part totally insane crazy person. Without warning, he reached down and picked from the ground a grasshopper

that looked very much like the one I rescued from the eddy and the 12 that lighted upon the front of my shirt. He held it with his thumb and index finger by the tip of its ass end, as though he actually knew the proper scientific way to grip and inspect a grasshopper without causing it physical harm or undue stress. He raised it up in front of the group for all to see. We awaited some taxonomic terminology intertwined with some arcane biological minutiae. Instead, he said, very off-handedly, "I wonder what would happen if I did this." He then proceeded to reach around with his other hand and pull the grasshopper's head from its thorax. All jaws, save the one owned and operated by the man now holding and examining a disembodied grasshopper head in one hand and a headless grasshopper body in the other hand, simultaneously dropped. I guess here would be a good time to add that any time that particular group of friends went together into the hinterlands — which was often — there was always some combination of pot, mushrooms, acid, speed, opium, hash, mescaline, poppers and alcohol involved. Most likely, all of those things. Which added a psychedelic veneer to what had become a surreal scene. "Put it back," one of the stoned women in our group, a sensitive artist type, wailed abjectly. Verily, the grasshopper's lobbed noggin had attached to it what well could have been its spine, except I don't believe insects have spines. Whatever it was, it looked like a spiky peg. It looked like my lunatic compadre could have easily reinserted it and all would have been well and forgiven and the grasshopper could have hopped off unaffected into the sunset. The mad scientist looked closely at both segments before dropping them unceremoniously into the dirt. He walked off while the rest of us remained frozen, gobsmacked, mandibles still fully distended in utter astonished disoriented disbelief. Once I popped my eyes back in, I raised my hiking staff above the separated head and body. Something about putting the poor creature out of its misery. I had once read somewhere that people who have been guillotined retain something approximating consciousness for 10 or 15 seconds, which must be strange in the extreme. The last thing that grasshopper saw, if, indeed it was yet able to see, was the butt end of a big stick descending from the heavens. Then its world went still.

For 12 years, M. John Fayhee was the editor of the Mountain Gazette. A long-time contributor to Backpacker magazine, he has written for "Canoe & Kayak," "Overland Journal," the "High Country News," "REI Coop Journal," "Adventure Travel," among many others. Fayhee is the author of 10 books, including "Smoke Signals," which was a Colorado Book Awards finalist. He lives in Silver City.



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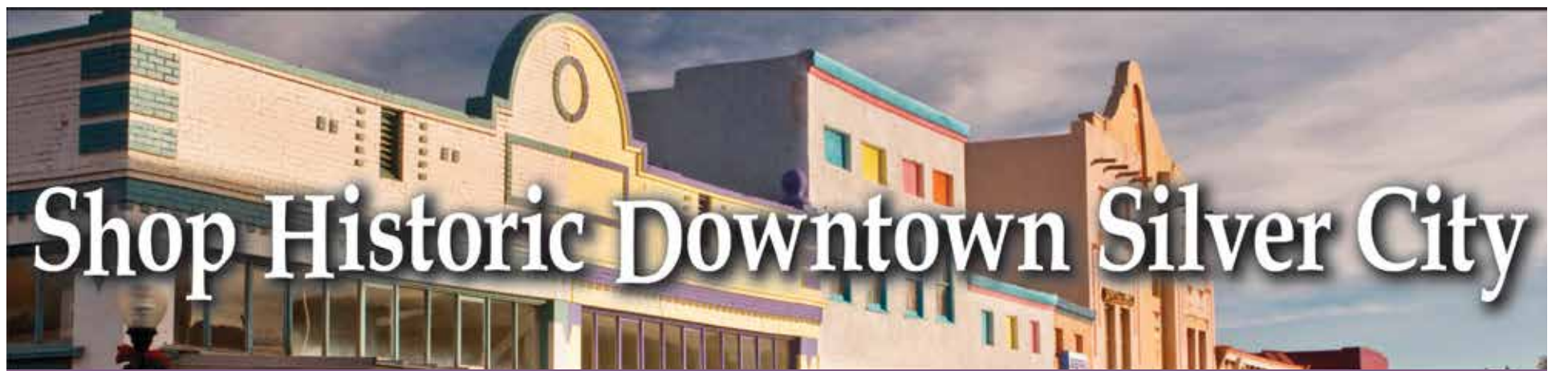
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San Lorenzo Mission Church (Photos by Elva K. Österreich)

TUMBLEWEEDS • CLARA R. BUSTILLOS

Little Mission Church in The Valley

Traditions might be delayed but hearts still beat here

On the western side of the Black Range, in south-western New Mexico, in the small and picturesque village of San Lorenzo, one will find a charming old mission built in the late 1800s. This historical and sacred adobe Catholic church is San Lorenzo Mission.

Built by the loving and hard-working hands of many old families, carpenters and laborers – quiet, unassuming, faithful parishioners who resided along the Mimbres River Valley – San Lorenzo Catholic Church Mission was founded May 25, 1880, and was established in 1883 by Fr. John Grange. A chapel and a small house were also built not far from the river. The land, two lots, was deeded from the United States to the bishop of Tucson, (whose diocese we belonged to at the time) for the sum of \$18.15.

Priests who were sent to serve the small mission in the 1880s were Fr. John Grange and Fr. Eduardo Garard, who were attached to Saint Vincent Catholic Church in Silver City. Later, priests from Santa Rita Catholic Church in Santa Rita and Infant Jesus Catholic Church in Hurley, served the San Lorenzo Mission. These included Fr. Miguel Estivil, Fr. Ramon Estivil, Fr. Pedro Ruiz, Fr. Leoni, Fr. Ordonez, Fr. Morgan, Fr. Nieset, and several others, including Fr. Hinojal.

Later, San Lorenzo Mission became one of the missions served by Our Lady of Fatima Catholic Church in Bayard. Fr. Paulus Kao served the mission from the 1990's until his retirement. Summer of 2019 brought Fr. Martin



St. Lawrence presides over the parish at San Lorenzo Mission Church.

Okonkwo to serve at San Lorenzo. As one of many parishioners said, "We are Blessed to have Father Martin!"

At least seven generations of families, who have worshiped at this quiet mission and are deeply rooted in tradition and are blessed with the sacraments of baptism, reconciliation, first communion and matrimony, as

well as funerals, anniversaries, birthdays and anointing of the sick. This mission that serves the entire Mimbres Valley has held families together for a very long time.

Saint Lawrence, one of the seven deacons of Rome, suffered much for his indestructible and beloved faith. He believed that helping the poor was what

he was meant to do. When asked by the prefect of Rome to bring the "Church's Treasures" to the emperor, he gathered and presented the blind, the crippled, the poor, the orphans and other unfortunates. Furious, the prefect had Lawrence bound to a red-hot griddle. Lawrence bore the agony, and as he was tormented, he instructed the executioner to turn him over, as he was done on the one side.

The death of St. Lawrence inspired a great devotion in Rome, and it quickly spread throughout the entire church. His feast day inspired the devoted parishioners of San Lorenzo Mission to hold celebrations to honor their patron saint on Aug. 10, on the church grounds in the heart of the village of San Lorenzo. Vespers have been held since the beginning of the mission church, on the eve of his feast day, after the

meat is put into the red hot pit for the next day's barbacoa. As the dawn of Aug. 10 arrives, sleepy parishioners greet San Lorenzo with mañanitas at 5 or 5:30 a.m., with the priest celebrating mass for all who have trekked to the church at that hour.

In past years, the bishop of Las Cruces Diocese comes and celebrates a beautiful and spiritual mass at 10 a.m. with help from several local priests. Guitar music lifts everyone's spirits as songs are sung throughout the mass. After the mass ends the bishop leads the faithful and able bodied in a procession with guitar music, following those who carry the statue of San Lorenzo around the village block. Many people, devoted to San Lorenzo, do a pilgrimage to honor their patron saint. Their loving and thankful hearts bring them here from Bayard, Santa Clara, Hanover, Silver City, Hurley, Deming, Las Cruces, Arizona and California in time to attend the 10 a.m. mass. Many are children and grandchildren of the abuelos who instilled that faith in all of our hearts.

A delicious hot meal of fresh barbacoa and side dishes is served to the bishop, priests and altar servers. The kitchen is then opened to all, to enjoy the savory plate of mouthwatering food. The earlier fiesta celebrations also added a refreshing, old timer's drink called Tesguino, available on their beverage list. Throughout the afternoon everyone gathers on the patio to enjoy live music and visit with old

MISSION

continued on page 13



Parishoner Clara Bustillos helps maintain the history of the church.

HOLIDAY EXPOSURE • JEN GRUGER

Luminarias in Tularosa

Follow the path of the Christ Child

The luminaria display on Christmas Eve is perhaps Tularosa's best-known treasure. This one-night-only display of light, love and tradition is one of the best parts of the holiday season in the Tularosa Basin.

This year there is an air of heightened anticipation for two reasons. In 2019, the display was rained out just moments after the last luminaria was set out and volunteers had just begun the lighting phase.

While there was much debate among residents of the village about the actual timeline no official determination has been made on the last time the display did not get lit due to weather, but it is rare for that to happen.

Additionally, it is one of the few holiday events that families will not have to forego due to COVID-19 restrictions. The presentation of luminarias throughout the village is intended to be viewed from your vehicle and

there are no in-person events scheduled. If you have never been, thousands of luminarias are displayed throughout the Village of Tularosa.

A luminaria is a candle carefully set in sand inside of a paper bag. They are arranged throughout the entire village and then lit at dusk.

There are sometimes conflicting opinions about the correct use of the term "luminaria." Most of us refer to the paper bag lantern in this way, but some traditionalists insist the correct term is "farolitos." Historically, a true luminaria is a series of small bonfires lining the road. Originally, small bonfires were used to guide people to Christmas mass. Often, they are associated with the final night of Las Posadas, which is the symbolic representation of when Mary and Joseph were seeking shelter in Bethlehem, walking from home to home for a place to rest.

The Tularosa Arts and History



St. Francis de Paulo Catholic Church in Tularosa with luminarias Christmas Eve. (Photos by Elva K. Österreich)

ry Council (TAHC) was asked by the village to "take over" the project starting in 2017. Expenses are covered through a financial commitment from the TAHC, donations from an ongoing Tularosa Chamber of Commerce fund and generous sponsorships from the community. Additional fundraising for the project also comes from sales of luminaria kits to the community. Each kit includes a sack and a

candle for 25 cents, kits are generally sold in bundles of 25, 50, 100 or 200. Sales this year will be done out of The Merc, located at 316 Granado St.

High School students, 4-H members, FFA participants and Rotary Club of Tularosa volunteers, along with other volunteer community members and village employees, are all involved in the set up. Volunteers start around 9 a.m. on Christmas Eve day filling

sacks with dirt and then loading them up on flatbed trailers. The trailers drive carefully around town setting the sacks along Highway 54/St. Francis Drive and east toward Ruidoso. Then a special long-burning candle is pushed into the sand in each sack.

Businesses and residents throughout the village also do their part by lining them on their rooftops, driveways and storefronts. Close to dusk, more volunteers are needed to light the candles. All this work takes dedication and determination. It is laborious and tiring, but to the residents and to the visitors, it is worth the effort.

For information about the luminaria display or the Tularosa Arts and History Council, call Jennifer Gruger at 505-710-2924.

Don't forget to slow down to 15 mph when you visit and watch out for Santa, who will be escorted through town by the fire department sometime after dark.

MISSION

continued from page 12

friends and family. Many events have taken place throughout the afternoon as different dance groups come and entertain the fiesta participants.

There is an old santuario near the church that was built by the abuelitos of the Merino family. It is filled with many relics, santitos and pictures of loved ones who were ill. Prayers were offered to San Lorenzo, asking him to deliver their requests to Our Lord for healing for their loved ones. Upon entering this small room, as well as the mission and its shrine room, a person receives a feeling of peace and tranquility.

One parishioner recalls that one of the first fiestas was

hosted by the Galaz family. Proceeds from the food-plate donations were used as money prizes for different types of foot races that were held.

An elderly parishioner from Fierro remembers working the fiesta as a boy of 11-12 years. He left home early and walked from his home to San Lorenzo to help an uncle to serve food. He saw how much food was being thrown away and knew that his family and neighbors were having difficulty feeding their families.

So, this young boy received permission from the adults in charge, and started scraping the leftover food from plates into a gunny sack. At the end of the day he carried a sack full of food to his hungry family, arriving home after midnight.



Images pinned to the wall of a santuario near the church remind the faithful of God's love.

Upon reaching his little house he found a distraught mamacita, who had no idea where her young son had disappeared to. Neighbors had helped his family to look for the boy to no avail. The tired boy explained where

he had been and opened the gunny sack on the table to reveal the treasure of delicious food he had gathered. The elated family separated the different foods, ate a feast, shared the bounty of mouthwatering food with other hungry neighbors and stored away enough food for a few days' worth of meals.

"What a blessing San Lorenzo had provided," he said.

These fiestas have been fundamental in raising funds for different projects in and around the church. One of the first projects in the 1960s was to raise enough money to move two classrooms from the Catholic school in Santa Rita. The building was moved to the valley on the old, narrow, Aklin Road, then bypassing the bridge at the Mimbres River,

went down a road cut directly across the river. This is how the church hall became a reality for the parishioners of San Lorenzo Catholic Church Mission. Since then many projects have been completed, upgrading many items in the church and the hall.

This year, 2020, brought an unexpected interruption in hosting the annual Aug. 10 fiesta. Although there are no fiesta donations coming in, San Lorenzo Mission continues to require donations to pay for renovations.

The most urgent need in the church is a new roof to protect the interior of this historic mission. Anyone wishing to donate to our mission renovation project can send it to San Lorenzo Mission, P.O. Box 385, Mimbres, NM, 88049.

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PUBLISHER'S NOTEBOOK • RICHARD COLTHARP

Hello for the Holidays

Christmastime won't be the same, but you can still make it special

The holidays are supposed to be happy, right?

We know that's not always the case. The time from Thanksgiving through New Year's Day has historically been fraught with family feuds, romantic breakups and substance abuse.

In 2020, we add the frustration,

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health danger, anger, economic struggle, isolation and mental and physical fatigue of a global pandemic to the volatile holiday mix. Please, please do not help put a toilet paper shortage on top of that.

Here's how the weeks prior to Thanksgiving went for me: Someone I knew passed away with Covid; the governor shut down the state; I learned of the non-Covid death of a longtime friend, a friend who might have benefited from a comforting call from me, a call that never came.

Even without the layers of coronavirus, many people struggle emotionally around the holidays.

I learned recently that Nov. 10, the eve of Veterans Day, is one of the most common days for suicide among present and former military members. The holidays are even higher on that list. These are serious and very real concerns.

Almost certainly, your Christmas will be an unusual one this year. Large gatherings are out. Long-distance traveling unlikely. Even your holiday shopping will probably be changed.

Remember in the 1970s and 80s when you still had to pay for long-distance phone calls? Remember the Bell Telephone companies and, later, the inde-

pendent long-distance companies, such as MCI?

These companies would air tons of TV commercials around the holidays, encouraging you to call your friends and loved ones you couldn't be with during Thanksgiving and Christmas. "Reach out, reach out and touch someone," was the way one of the jingles went. They might have to re-work that a bit for the Me Too Era, but you get the point.

The ads were well done, and my mom, ever the sentimental lady, would often be moved to tears.

We've all had some of the greatest and most important conversations of our lives over the phone. Today, through the technology of Facetime and other phone apps, we can even see people's faces. And as many of us are becoming Zoom experts, we could have a face-to-face phone call with friends and family members from a dozen different area codes.

However you choose to do it, this may be the most critical year to reach out. And encourage others to do the same.

New Mexico has one of the highest teen suicide rates in the nation. Teenagers may sometimes feign that "old people are boring," or they don't want to talk to some distant cousin. But nothing can replace a few corny lines from a grandparent, and a connection or re-connection to a peer relative could open new

doors for a young person.

We all have friends or family members who are emotionally vulnerable for one reason or another. Make it a point to give them a call, send a meaningful card, or invite them to a group Zoom. And don't assume everything is alright with another friend who is always laughing and joking and saying things are great. They may be the people most in need.

Remember this: You and your experiences make you a valued and valuable person, whether you realize it or not.

Your kind words, your heartfelt thoughts and your sincere interest may be just what another person needs to make it through a difficult time.

Being that hand across the bridge just might help you get to the other side as well.

So maybe these won't be the most normal of holidays, but they can still be happy.

Go ahead, make those calls.

Richard Coltharp is publisher of *Desert Exposure*.

His coldest camping was in Guelph, Ontario. His hottest camping was on Bull Shoals Lake in Arkansas. Those, and all of his other camping trips, brought rain.



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A Quiet World

As Palomas struggles, poverty grows

As the United States braces for another, more extreme, onslaught of the Corona virus, so does Mexico.

When I drove down to Palomas on a Saturday in mid-November, I was amazed by the absence of traffic in the streets. It seemed to me that there was only about one-tenth the normal level of traffic.

The rules imposed on people were more restrictive than ever. I heard from several people that there were fines for about anybody who was out on the streets after 7 p.m. But nobody I talked to knew how much the local government was charging or knew anyone who had been fined. It may have been a hoax.

Yellow tape was stretched around the entire central plaza for the first time to enforce social distancing. Customers can't enter La Favorita Bakery – a woman takes orders in the doorway behind clear plastic sheets that hang down.

A young woman in a little grocery store told me, "The people are huddling in their houses. They're afraid."

Most of Palomas is poor. Unpaved streets are so gouged by enormous potholes that drivers often veer all over the street to avoid them. There are few street signs, a problem for someone like me who gets lost easily. Limping dogs stare at you for handouts.

But unemployment in Palomas



Esperanza Lozoya and Rode Tapia, both working at Luz de Esperanza food bank. (Photo by Marjorie Lilly)

has increased because of the quarantines. Workers who work in the maquiladoras in Juarez (mostly women) have been laid off, and women at the Mizcan America Chile plant in Deming dismissed its workers in late October when they found out that over 40 workers, again mostly women, had tested positive for COVID-19. By this writing, many cars had returned to the parking lot.

The Pink Store has almost entirely ceased its operations.

According to the manager at the Del Rio grocery and pharmacy, Sergio Garcia, sex workers at all eight brothels were laid off at the beginning of the quarantines in the spring.

Esperanza Lozoya has been

feeding people around Palomas and the Copper Canyon for many years. She returned a couple of years ago to open her food kitchen in Palomas again. She said she and some volunteers have been preparing food for 40 people (the sick and elderly) a day, but with the recent emergency they are fixing eight meals a day because of the lack of resources. They are offering food to hungry children for the first time ever.

The director of the clinic in Palomas, Lina Carrasco, has talked to many of the families of people who passed, during the increase of COVID-19 virus in mid-October. From symptoms described by the families, she believes there have been only two coronavirus deaths in Palomas in this second phase.

This was a jolt to me because I'd heard people say that 14 had died.

"People are afraid to come here [to the clinic]," Carrasco said.

Because of this the sick don't get enough diagnoses or treatment. She said recent counts show 51 people had died of the virus in the municipio or County of Ascension, which includes the City of Ascension, Palomas and little towns between, since the second wave started.

The date of this writing, Nov. 15, is still in the early stage of the quarantine and the situation in Palomas will still be watched.

The Friday as I was finishing up my research, the grey skies of the previous days broke open to warm, sparkling sunlight.

Gradually women started putting used clothes out for sale in the brilliant sunshine and young children in groups of three or four started playing outside. I saw three children getting a ride in the back of a truck at the Taqueria Gamez, all without face masks, and I heard a car radio blasting nearby. Guys drove around in two vehicles that looked like go-carts.

In the interminable line of cars waiting to cross the border into the U.S., I saw three guys selling things, sitting knee to knee in a little half-circle of folding chairs and sharing food, completely oblivious to social distancing.

One worried elderly woman understood my concern about the pandemic increasing.

"It might get stronger now," she said, with a dark look on her face.

The alternations of depression and joy were hard to interpret. You can't help but share the happiness they feel in this burst of sunshine and warmth that feels like healing.

The outcome of the town of Palomas' quarantine will have to wait.

Donations to Palomas are essential in this time of crisis. Send check to Casa de Amor Para Niños at the Light at Mission Viejo, c/o Jim Noble 4601 Mission Bend, Santa Fe N.M. 87507. Info: 525-466-0237. Donations are tax exempt. Or send a check to La Luz de Esperanza, P.O. Box 1866 Columbus N.M. 88029. Donations would be appreciated in the form of Walmart or Deming Pepper's Supermarket gift cards.

Borderlines
columnist
Marjorie
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32 YEARS IN SILVER CITY • SUSAN GOLIGHTLY

Community

Knowing the answer, how do we get there?

"If a house is divided against itself, that house cannot stand."
– Mark 3:25

President-elect Joe Biden is inheriting a country that is extremely divided. I assume, most of us, regardless of how we voted, would like to see our country come together and learn to work together for the greater good of our country. Personally, I believe this is possible, but first, let's look at just three of our numerous problems that keep us divided.

1. Right now, 20 percent of our population owns more than 80 percent of our country's wealth while the bottom 40 percent own less than 3/10 of one percent. Does this seem right? Shouldn't we do something about it, or do we choose to blame those who are poor and hungry instead of the rich who are hoarding all the wealth?

2. Our country has a history of discriminating against minorities, people of color and in general anyone different from the "norm." In fact, we bully them,

persecute them, block them from having equal opportunities. Why do we do that? Is it because we are afraid of our own inadequacies and insecurities?

3. Women are 51 percent of our country and yet, since the beginning, we have been a nation where women are treated as second-class citizens. Forty percent of children are raised by single mothers with very little help from the government. Women still get paid less than men for equal work, and one-third of women have been sexually assaulted and abused by men. Very few of these men get prosecuted for these heinous crimes.

So, how do we fix this? The first question is, Do we want to? If the answer is yes, then let's look at what we need to do to fix it. However, in order to fix it, we might have to make some lifestyle changes. Are we willing to give up some of our privileges so that everyone gets a fair shake at having equality and equal opportunities?

Religions used to encourage us to love all people, but now,

not so much. For example, there are more than 45,000 denominations in just Christianity alone. Many of them feel their doctrine is the only truth. That's 45,000 divisions in just one religion. Even though Jesus said, "love your neighbors" and even "love your enemies," it doesn't seem like that advice is being followed by many of our Christian denominations. I don't mean to pick on Christianity. Other major religions have been divided up into many sects or denominations with much of the same divisiveness. And yet, if it wasn't for my getting "saved" by the Christian religion, I don't know if I would ever have found God. However, since I parted with all orthodoxy, I have come to believe that people can and have come to know God (Goddess, Allah, Krishna, Gaia, etc.) in all the different religions on earth, including AA, one of the most loving ways for people to come to know God.

COMMUNITY

continued on page 17



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Red or Green? is Desert Exposure's guide to dining in southwest New Mexico. We are in the process of updating and modifying these listings. We are asking restaurants to pay a small fee for listing their information. Restaurant advertisers already on contract with Desert Exposure receive a free listing. For other establishments, listings with essential information will be \$36 a year and

contact Pam Rossi at pam@lascrucesbulletin.com or 575-635-6614.

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. Unless otherwise noted, restaurants are open seven days a week. Call for

as specified.

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, 1740-A Calle de Mercado, Las Cruces, NM 88005, or email editor@desertexposure.com. Bon appétit!



Southwest New Mexico's Best Restaurant Guide

Update of open restaurants and services being offered.

* = Open; C/S = Curb Side; DEL = Delivery; D/T = Drive Through; P = Patio; T/O = Take Out

(♥)

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GRANT COUNTY

Silver City

* **ADOBE SPRINGS CAFÉ**, 619 N. Bullard St., 538-3665. Breakfast items, burgers, sandwiches: Sunday B L, all week B L D; **P/O T/O**

* **CACTUS JACKS**, 1307 N. Pope St. 538-5042. Gluten-free, healthy groceries, grill fast foods and beverages. Monday to Friday B L D, Saturday and Sunday L. **T/O DEL**

* **CAFÉ OSO AZUL AT BEAR MOUNTAIN LODGE**, 60 Bear Mountain Ranch Road, 538-2538. B L, special D by reservation only. **P T/O**

* **CHINESE PALACE**, 1010 Highway 180E, 538-9300. Chinese: Monday to Friday L D. **T/O**

COURTYARD CAFÉ, 1313 E 32nd St., Gila Regional Medical Center, 538-4094. American: B L.

DIANE'S RESTAURANT, 510 N. Bullard St., 538-8722. Fine dining (D), steaks, seafood, pasta, sandwiches (L), salads: Tuesday to Saturday L D, Sunday D only (family-style), weekend brunch.

DIANE'S BAKERY & DELI, The Hub, Suite A, 601 N. Bullard St., 534-9229. Artisan breads, pastries, sandwiches, deli: Monday to Saturday B L early D, Sunday L.

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

* **DRIFTER PANCAKE HOUSE**, 711 Silver Heights Blvd., 538-2916. Breakfast, American: B L, breakfast served throughout. **T/O**

* **FORREST'S PIZZA**, 601 N. Bullard St., Unit J. 388-1225. Tuesday to Friday L D, slices until 7 p.m. **T/O D/T**

* **FRY HOUSE**, 601 N. Bullard St. Suite C. 388-1964. Seven days L, Sunday L, D. **T/O DEL**

* **GIL-A BEANS COFFEE SHOP**, 1304 N. Bennett St., 538-2239. Monday to Saturday 8 a.m.-noon. **P T/O**

* **GOLDEN STAR**, 1602 Silver Heights Blvd., 388-2323. Chinese: L D. **D/T T/O**

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

HONEEBEEGOODS "A Smudge of Fudge," 714-515-0832. Dessert Catering. Specialty Bakery and more! Honeebegoods.com. 7 Days a Week.

JALISCO CAFÉ, 103 S. Bullard St., 388-2060. Mexican. Monday to Saturday L D Sunday B.

* **JAVALINA COFFEE HOUSE**, 117 Market St., 388-1350. Coffeehouse. **T/O**

JUMPING CACTUS, 503 N. Bullard St., 654-7367. Coffeeshop, baked goods, sandwiches, wraps: B L.

KOUNTRY KITCHEN, 1700 Mountain View Road, 388-4512. Mexican: Tuesday to Saturday B L D.

* **LA COCINA RESTAURANT**, 201 W. College Ave., 388-8687. Mexican: L D. **T/O D/T C/S**

* **LA FAMILIA MEXICAN RESTAURANT**, 503 N. Hudson St., 388-4600. Mexican: Tuesday to Sunday B L D. **C/S**

LA MEXICANA RESTAURANT, 1105 Tom Foy Blvd., 534-0142. Mexican and American: B L.

* **LITTLE TOAD CREEK BREWERY & DISTILLERY**, 200 N. Bullard St., 956-6144. Burgers, wings, salads, fish, pasta, craft beers and cocktails: Monday to Sunday L D. **P T/O**

MI MEXICO VIEJO, 202 E Broadway St. Mexican food stand: 956-3361. Monday to Saturday B L early D.

* **MI CASITA**, 2340 Bosworth Drive, 538-5533. New Mexican cuisine: Monday to Thursday L, Friday L D. **T/O**

NANCY'S SILVER CAFÉ, 514 N. Bullard St., 388-3480. Mexican: Monday to Saturday B L D.

PRETTY SWEET EMPORIUM, 312 N. Bullard St., 322-2422. Dessert, ice cream: Monday to Saturday.

* **Q'S SOUTHERN BISTRO**, 101 E. College Ave., 534-4401. American, steaks, barbecue, brewpub: Tuesday to Saturday L D. **P T/O**

* **REVEL**, 304 N. Bullard St., 388-4920. Elevated comfort food. Weekdays LD, weekends BD, closed Wednesdays. **T/O**

* **SILVER BOWLING CENTER CAFÉ**, 2020 Memory Lane, 538-3612. American, Mexican, hamburgers: Daily L D **T/O**.

* **SUNRISE ESPRESSO**, 1530 N. Hudson St., 388-2027. Coffee shop: Monday to Saturday B L, early D. **D/T**

* **SUNRISE ESPRESSO**, 1212 E. 32nd St., 388-2927. Coffee shop, bakery: Monday to Friday B L, early D, Saturday B L only. **D/T**

TAPAS TREE, 601 N. Bullard St. in The Hub, 597-8272. Monday to Thursday L, Friday and Saturday L D (closes at 4 p.m.).

* **TASTE OF VEGAS**, 303 E. 13th St., 534-9404. Daily L **P T/O**.

* **WRANGLER'S BAR & GRILL**, 2005 Hwy. 180E, 538-4387. Steak, burgers, appetizers, salads: L D. **P T/O**

Cliff

Duck Creek Café, U.S. Highway 180, Cliff, 535-4500. Visit Duck Creek Café on Facebook. RVs/Big Rigs welcome, Wednesday to Saturday LD, Sunday LD. "Bring home cooking to your table"

DOÑA ANA COUNTY
Las Cruces & Mesilla

ABRAHAM'S BANK TOWER RESTAURANT, 500 S. Main St. 434, 523-5911. American: Monday to Friday B L.

* **ANDELE'S DOG HOUSE**, 1983

Calle del Norte, 526-1271. Mexican plus hot dogs, burgers, quesadillas: B L D. **P T/O**

* **ANDELE RESTAURANTE**, 1950 Calle del Norte, 526-9631. Mexican: Monday B L, Tuesday to Sunday B L D. **DEL P T/O**

* **AQUA REEF**, 141 N. Roadrunner Parkway, 522-7333. Asian, sushi: LD. **DEL P T/O**

THE BEAN, 2011 Avenida de Mesilla, 527-5155. Coffeehouse.

* **A BITE OF BELGIUM**, 741 N. Alameda St. No. 16, 527-2483, www.abiteofbelgium.com. Belgium and American food: Daily B L. **P C/S**

* **BOBA CAFÉ**, 1900 S. Espina St., Ste. 8, 647-5900. Sandwiches, salads, casual fare, espresso: Monday to Saturday L D. **C/S DEL T/O**

BRAVO'S CAFÉ, 3205 S. Main St., 526-8604. Mexican: Tuesday to Sunday B L.

* **BURGER NOOK**, 1204 E. Madrid Ave., 523-9806. Outstanding greenchile cheeseburgers. Tuesday to Saturday L D. **T/O**

* **BURRITOS VICTORIA**, 1295 El Paseo Road, 541-5534. Burritos: B L D. Now serving beer. **T/O**

CAFÉ DON FELIX, 2290 Calle de Parian, 652-3007. Mexican, street tacos, mini-burgers: Wednesday to Saturday L D, Sunday brunch only 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.

CHACHI'S RESTAURANT, 2460 S. Locust St.-A, 522-7322. Mexican: B L D.

* **CHILITOS**, 2405 S. Valley Drive, 526-4184. Mexican: Monday to Saturday B L D. **C/S DEL D/T**

* **CHILITOS**, 3850 Foothills Road Ste. 10, 532-0141. Mexican: B L D. **C/S DEL D/T**

* **DAY'S HAMBURGERS**, 245 N. Main St., 523-8665. Burgers: Monday to Saturday L D. **C/S**

* **PECAN GRILL & BREWERY**, 500 S. Telshor Blvd., 521-1099. Pecan-smoked meats, sandwiches, steaks, seafood, craft beers: L D. **P T/O**

* **DELICIAS DEL MAR**, 1401 El Paseo Road, 524-2396. Mexican, seafood: B L D. **P T/O**

* **DICK'S CAFÉ**, 2305 S. Valley Drive, 524-1360. Mexican, burgers: Sunday B L, Monday to Saturday B L D **C/S P**

* **DION'S PIZZA**, 3950 E. Lohman Ave. 521-3434. Pizza: L D. **DEL D/T**

* **DOUBLE EAGLE**, 2355 Calle de Guadalupe, 523-6700. Southwestern, steaks, seafood: L D, Sun. champagne brunch buffet. **P T/O**

* **EL SOMBRERO PATIO CAFÉ**, 363 S. Espina St., 524-9911. Mexican: L D. **P T/O**

* **ENRIQUE'S MEXICAN FOOD**, 830 W. Picacho Ave., 647-0240. Mexican: B L D. **T/O**

FARLEY'S, 3499 Foothills Road, 522-0466. Pizza, burgers, American, Mexican: L D.

FIDENCIO'S, 800 S. Telshor Blvd., 532-5624. Mexican: B L D.

* **THE GAME BAR & GRILL**, 2605 S. Espina St., 524-GAME. Sports bar and grill: L D. **P T/O**

* **THE GAME II: EXTRA INNINGS SPORTS BAR & GRILL**, 4131 Northrise Drive, 373-4263. Live music on weekends. American, Southwest, now serving weekend brunch 10 a.m. Saturdays and Sundays: L D. **P T/O**

* **GARDUÑO'S**, 705 S. Telshor Blvd. (Hotel Encanto), 532-4277. Mexican: B L D. **P T/O**

WILD PLACES • LAURIE FORD

Losing our Donkeys

Public can take steps to stop slaughter

As encroaching humanity demands more space for production, wildlife is intentionally depleted. In the world of the wilderness, yet another creature, the wild burro, is losing to the needs of unproven Chinese cures and United States government failure to provide adequate science.

Because China has depleted its own supply, it must now import almost five million donkeys annually to meet the country's insatiable demand for ejiao, a gelatin obtained from boiling the hides of slaughtered donkeys. Ejiao is used as an ingredient in Chinese traditional medicines, face creams and glue products, all which are available for purchase here in the U.S. At the current pace, more than half of the world's donkeys may be slaughtered over the next five years making them a critically endangered species

A joint statement the American Veterinary Medical Association and the American Association of Equine Practitioners described the ejiao trade as an "inhumane industry that harms communities and threatens the species worldwide" – an industry in which "live exports from the U.S. include selling off the skins of our wild burros." As donkey populations collapse around the world, U.S. kill buyers continue to purchase and transport domestic and wild burros cross-border to Mexico and Canada for export to China

While this may seem small in

comparison to the horrific consequences from the coronavirus, the difference is that we can do something about this pandemic. We can stop selling and buying the ejiao products available on Amazon and Alibaba. We can stop shipping horses and burros across the border for slaughter. Most urgently, we can stop the massive wild burro roundups by government agencies that contribute to the decimation of our country's donkey population.

From impoverished nations that depend on donkeys for their livelihood to U.S. livestock sale barns and kill pens, the value of a donkey has skyrocketed. This demand is not the only thing escalating. Between 2017 and 2019 the number of wild donkeys sold by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) increased almost 600 percent, and this does not even include the hundreds removed and disposed of by the U.S. Forest and National Park services.

The BLM is currently in the process of removing hundreds of wild donkeys from the Black Mountain Herd Management Area (BLHMA) in Arizona to achieve "a thriving natural ecological balance and alleviate deterioration of the rangeland." No scientific data supports this concept or the BLM's claim that "burros are more destructive to the range than cattle." In fact, science has proven just the opposite. Numerous studies, including over four decades of General Accountability Office



Wild burro in Arizona's Black Mountain Herd Management Area. (Photo by Laurie Ford)

(GAO) reports, have repeatedly flagged livestock grazing, not wild horses and burros, as being largely responsible for the deteriorating health of our public rangelands, riparian areas and wildlife habitat. Since 2015 the BLM itself found their own rangeland health standards were not all being met within several BLMHA livestock grazing allotments, and indicated that grazing use by cattle in these areas was a significant contributing factor – not the donkeys.

Cattle, often weighing up to 1,400 pounds, erode biocrusts that carpet the desert floor, secure the ground in place, store water and carbon and lay the foundation for healthy plant growth. This country has historically witnessed such damage caused by livestock overgrazing

which can still be seen throughout the West today.

On the other hand, donkeys, who on average weigh only 300-350 pounds, have been a beneficial, vital part of the desert ecosystem for centuries. Research by noted scientists has revealed burros help revitalize and maintain the ecosystem by removing dead-stem grass layers, buttress against invasion by non-preferred vegetation, graze down fire-prone brush and dig deep waterholes that help other species access water and create vegetative nurseries in the desert. Even with the current estimated BMHMA population of 1,700-2,000 donkeys, there are 250-300 acres per donkey which, according to wildlife biologist Craig Downer, is double the estimated carrying capacity of 100-

200 acres per animal.

Yet, in the final Black Mountain Wild Burro Gather Environmental Assessment, the BLM continues to make claims unsupported by science:

"Removing excess burros and managing the population at AML (478) would minimize competition for forage between livestock and burros. And with less burros there would be less competition for water and less grazing pressure around water sources, which could reduce impacts to springs and riparian vegetation. Fewer burros or reduced grazing pressure should help improve the health upland plant communities over time."

Both the GAO and the National Academy of Science dispute

DONKEYS

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COMMUNITY

continued from page 15

So, how do we become community?

To start with, we must learn that material possessions cannot be a substitute for love. Material possessions do not bring happiness. I know it is hard for people who have been poor most of their lives to believe the truth of that. I used to say, "I know money doesn't bring happiness, but I would like to have a chance to see if it is true." What brings happiness is to live in community where we are free from worry and stress. Where you know that you are loved, that people care about you, and where you feel you belong.

I have come to believe what keeps our country divided, and what keeps each of us, individually, divided is our insecurity about our future. We have been socialized to feel that if some people are doing worse than we are, then we must be doing okay. Conversely, we feel that if we are not doing as well as other people, then there must be something wrong with us. Where is the love? Where is the trust that we are in God's hands? Let us trade our anger for love.

Our divided world is a world of

our own making. But it doesn't have to be this way. We can as individuals make a collective difference. To do so, we must first and foremost learn to love others as well as learning to love ourselves. Personally, I cannot do this in my own power. I am only able to do so because I know that God (substitute your own experience of a higher power) loves me. I know that we are all, and I mean everyone and every creature, is God's creation. A house cannot be divided if we truly love one another.

I live in a commune of like-minded people. Right now, there are five of us. Soon, perhaps, there will be six of us. We share the house and our lives together. We are all trying to live more humbly and more sustainably.

If we really love others, we will try to live in a way that our consumption is not beyond the sustainability of our planet. That means we live in a way that all 7 billion of us can live without hunger. We live in a world that plays a zero-sum-game. That means that if I use more than my share, there may not be enough for someone else.

It's just that if I think my excess consumption is causing

others to go without, then I really don't feel so hungry. Do we really need to eat meat with every meal? We can buy all the clothes we need at thrift stores. Well . . . I do buy my underwear at Walmart. Anyway, you get the picture. We can all consume less. Just to reinforce the need to establish community and sustainability, let's look at these figures. In the year 1800, the population was 1 billion, in 1900, it was 1.6 billion, by the year 2000, it was 6.5 billion. Now in 2020, it is 7.6 billion. By the year 2050, the population of the planet will be approximately 10 billion.

We need to get serious about living in community, and I mean living in a one-world community. We need to get serious about climate change. We need to move from a commodity-driven society to a love-and-compassion-driven society. We can only do this if we truly learn to love others and esteem them over ourselves.

"Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind [humility] let each esteem others better than one's self. Let each of you look out not only for his own interests but also for the interests of others." – Philippians 2:3.

Susan Golightly, 76, stays active riding her bicycles. She earned both a BA and an MA from Western New Mexico University. Both times she was

valedictorian, the first time as a man and the second time as a woman.




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Grant County Weekly Events

SUNDAYS
Archaeology Society — 536-3092, whudson43@yahoo.com.
Cocaine Anonymous — allwaterman@yahoo.com.

MONDAYS
AARP Widowed and Single Persons of Grant County Contact Sally, 537-3643.
Al-Anon family group, New Hope Contact: 313-7891.
Grant County Federated Republican Women — 313-7997.
Meditation for Beginners — Jeff, 956-6647. www.lotuscentersc.org.
Silver City Squares — Kay, 956-7186 or Linda 590-1499.
Silver Chorale — Contact Anne, 288-6939.
Southwest New Mexico ACLU Bob Garrett, 590-4809.

TUESDAYS
Alzheimer's/Dementia Support Margaret, 388-4539.
Bayard Historic Mine Tour — Call 537-3327 for reservation.
Figure/Model Drawing — Dan Larson, 654-4884.
Gilawriters — Contact Trish Heck, trish.heck@gmail.com or call 534-0207.
Multiple Sclerosis Support Group email for this month's location: huseworld@yahoo.com.
PFLAG Silver City — Unitarian Universalist Fellowship, 3845 N. Swan. 590-8797.
Republican Party of Grant County — 3 Rio de Arenas Road (the old Wrangler restaurant).
Slow Flow Yoga —

Becky Glenn, 404-234-5331.
Southwest New Mexico Quilters Guild — Newcomers and visitors are welcome. 388-8161.
Westerners Corral — Jody Bailey-Hall at: Jody_bailey88045@yahoo.com or call 342-2621 and leave a message.


WEDNESDAYS
Al-Anon family group — Arenas Valley (the old radio station). Contact: 313-7891.
Archaeology Society — Visit www.gcasnm.org, or email webmaster@gcasnm.org, or call 536-3092 for details.
Babytime Sing & Play — 538-3672 or ref@silvercitymail.com.
Back Country Horsemen — WNMU Watts Hall, opposite CVS Pharmacy, Hwy. 180. Subject to change. 574-2888.
Brain Injury and Stroke Support Group — GRMC Billy Sasper Rehab & Wellness Center, 300 E. 16th St., Silver City.
A Course in Miracles — Information, 534-9172 or 534-1869.
Future Engineers — 538-3672 or ref@silvercitymail.com.
Gin Rummy — corner of Yankie and Texas Streets in Silver City.
Grant County Democratic Party Sen. Howie Morales building, 3060 E. Hwy. 180. 654-6060.
Ladies Golf Association — Silver City Golf Course.
Prostate Cancer Support Group — 388-1198 ext. 10.
Storytime — 538-3672 or ref@silvercitymail.com.
Yoga for happiness — Lotus Center, 211 W. Broadway. 574-5451.

THURSDAYS
Blooming Lotus Meditation — Lotus Center, 211 W. Broadway. 313-7417, geofarm@pobox.com.
De-stressing Meditations — New Church of the SW Desert, 1302 Bennett St. 313-4087.
Grant County Rolling Stones Gem and Mineral Society — Memory Lane, Silver City. Anita, 907-830-0631.
Historic Mining District & Tourism Meeting — Bayard Community Center, 290 Hurley Ave., Bayard. 537-3327.
Little Artist Club — Silver City Public Library, 515 W. College Avenue. 538-3672 or ref@silvercitymail.com.
TOPS — First Presbyterian Church, 1915 Swan, 538-9447.
Vinyasa Flow Yoga — Lotus Center at 211 W. Broadway, Becky Glenn, 404-234-5331.
WildWorks Youth Space — Silver City Public Library, 515 W. College Avenue, 538-3672 or ref@silvercitymail.com.

FRIDAYS
Overeaters Anonymous — First United Methodist Church. 654-2067.
Silver City Woman's Club — 411 Silver Heights Blvd. Lucinda, 313-4591.
Women's Al-Anon Meeting: Women Embracing Recovery — La Clinica Health and Birth Center, 3201 Ridge Loop, Silver City. Contact:313-7891.

SATURDAYS
Alcoholics Anonymous "Black Chip" —First United Methodist Church.
Evening Prayer in the Eastern Orthodox Tradition — Theotokos Retreat Center, 5202 Hwy. 152, Santa Clara. 537-4839.
Kids Bike Ride — Bikeworks, 815 E. 10th St. Dave Baker, 388-1444.
Narcotics Anonymous — New 180 Club, 1661 Hwy. 180 E.
Vinyasa Flow Yoga — Becky Glenn, 404-234-5331.

All phone numbers are area code 575 except as noted. Send updates to events@desertexposure.com.



Gila Friends Meeting

The Religious Society of Friends

Quaker Meeting for Worship is being held online until pandemic restrictions are lifted.

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Church of Harmony For information, contact: 575-390-1588
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DONKEYS

continued from page 17

such assertions and found there is no science-based rationale used by BLM in determining the number of animals to be removed. Removing burros permanently from the range could jeopardize the genetic health of the total population. According to geneticist Gus Cothran, a population of 478 donkeys in the BMHMA is not enough for sustainable genetic variability.

Despite the Black Mountain wild burros' importance as one of this country's largest, genetically healthy and historical herds, Arizona remains focused on the genetic health and status of the state's 6,000 desert bighorn sheep and the need to restore herds to suitable habitat throughout their historical range. This includes the Black Mountains – home to the largest herd of desert bighorn sheep on public lands in the nation.

After the Black Mountain burro gather is completed, and Arizona's total donkey population has been reduced to under 1,000, there will not be one herd with sustainable genetic diversity en-

suring long-term survival. They will eventually disappear.

The Black Mountain Herd Management Area should be declared a national wild burro range to insure a truly long-term, genetically viable population in the thousands, allowing them to continue being a fundamental part of the Sonoran Desert ecosystem, where they contribute harmoniously to its native plant and animal species. With the current demand for our donkeys from China, it is imperative that we protect and preserve this country's few remaining wild herds.

Remember Marguerite Henry's beloved "Brighty of the Grand Canyon" – the little wild burro who was loved and respected by all? If Brighty was alive today he would not be "forever wild, forever free." He would be warehoused in a holding facility and the canyons that were once his home would be silent, no brays echoing off the walls, and void of Brighty's faraway voice singing to the Moon.

Follow the science and save our wild burros from hideous ejiao trafficking, from the BLM's



Wild burro in Arizona's Black Mountain Herd Management Area. (Photo by Laurie Ford)

mismanagement to extinction programs and from the studied ignorance about their environmental services and heritage in the American West.

Photography and horses have always been Laurie Ford's passion. Ford lives near Glenwood, New



Mexico and for the past seven years she has been traveling around the west, camping in wild horse areas to observe and photograph the animals in their natural environment.

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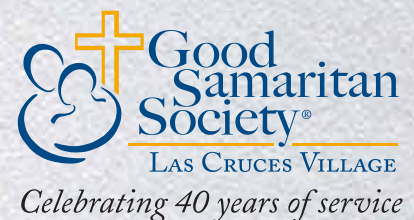
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TALKING HORSES • SCOTT THOMSON

A Holiday Season Unlike Any Other

Maybe if we treated people like horses ...

For the past 10 years I've written a column at this time of the year, our holiday season of thanks and celebration, and the time when we prepare ourselves for another new year, that reflects the spirit of the season, especially for horse owners and lovers. I have to say, it's been much more of a challenge to come up with the words this year. 2020 has been a year unlike anything most of us have ever experienced.

In many ways, I feel those of us in the horse world have managed to ride through all this, so to speak, in ways that almost seem a bit unfair. Having to get up every morning, regardless of how you feel or what the weather is like, and go out to the barn, or maybe to your boarding facility, may seem like a burden, but the rewards that come when you get there can't be measured. Having one of these magnificent animals standing at the gate, nickering and waiting for that morning meal, immediately pushes the troubles in the world out of mind. I've never believed the horses are happy to see me, just happy to see anyone showing up with food, but it still is a soothing and uplifting moment.

When I talk to family and friends who have nothing that has to be done every day, and have tried to keep busy with closet cleaning and endless re-arranging of furniture, clothes and kitchen cabi-

nets just for something to do, I feel very lucky to have three equines that need my attention for several hours every single day. And the fact you can do this at your own pace, outside in the fresh air, without wearing a mask and without risking the health of any other humans makes it even more special. The horses have no idea what's going on in the world and certainly don't care. They expect your attention to be as focused as theirs when you're with them. It's a relief and a nice escape to have to wipe the slate clean and live in the moment, even just for a few hours, every day.

If I had one holiday wish, it would probably be for more people to have the chance to forget about life for a few minutes and spend some time with a horse. I do hope all of us with horses in our lives will take a few minutes this season to remember just how lucky we are this particular year. For the most part, our lives have changed very little compared to what so many have been faced with this year. We may have missed some shows, clinics, some group rides, or in my case some rewarding teaching and training opportunities, but we still have our daily responsibilities and ever grateful equines to look forward to every morning. That's a lot to be thankful for.

I have another holiday wish, and it's an odd one. For many, the turbulent political and social environment of the past

year has been as stressful as the fight against the COVID-19 virus. How about this? Make every significant elected official take a three-day natural horsemanship clinic with a top clinician – no cell phones, no staff, no media – to learn what it really means to be a leader. You want to learn a little humility and how to see things from a different perspective, spend some time in a round pen with a horse looking for leadership. Picture the clinician saying, "OK, Mr. President, send the horse around to the left, disengage his hindquarters, move his shoulders over and head off in the other direction – and do it all with just body language and no talking and no touching the horse." That would be a sight!

I always try to teach my students the five "C's" of good leadership – confidence, communication, clarity, consistency and commitment – because these are the qualities of a good leader for a horse. You will never be a good horseman without them. Add to this, knowledge, patience and observation, and you have the foundation for leadership in any circumstances. A horse absolutely demands these qualities from the leader of its herd or from the human trying to be the herd leader. Shouldn't we demand the same from the people we choose to lead and govern us?

Imagine if our politicians were confident, but not arrogant or bullies. If they communicated with us clearly without the words and phrases that could mean one thing but could mean something else as well. If they were consistent with their actions and words, not fluctuating depending on their audience and what can be gained by simply saying what someone wants to

HORSES

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THE STARRY DOME • BERT STEVENS

Sculptor, The Sculptor

Looking toward the edge of the galaxy

Many of the constellations in our sky can trace their existence back to the ancient Greeks, but the classical constellations did not fill the sky. Renaissance astronomers filled the “empty” regions with new constellations, frequently representing newly discovered animals from the southern hemisphere or technological instruments of their time.

French astronomer Nicolas Louis de Lacaille had spent two years at the Cape of Good Hope cataloging 10,000 stars in the southern sky. From these, he created 14 new constellations. One of these is Sculptor, which graces our southern sky on December evenings. This constellation originally represented a sculptor’s studio, a three-legged table with a bust being sculpted. Beside the bust is an artist’s mallet and two chisels laying on a block of marble. The name was later shortened from “Apparatus Sculptoris” to Sculptor.

Sculptor is low in our southern sky, a kite-shaped group of faint stars laying on its side in a sparsely populated area of the sky. The lack of stars in this area is the result of looking straight south out of the disc of the Milky Way, toward the south galactic pole which is in the northeastern

part of this constellation. Among the few stars that are here, the brightest is Alpha Sculptoris near the south galactic pole at the tail of the kite-shape.

This star is magnitude +4.3, about 780 light-years from Earth. It is a blue spectral class B star, 1,500 times brighter than our Sun. Alpha Sculptoris is slightly variable due to having different temperatures across its surface. Large patches of helium and silicon are scattered over the surface, cooling it slightly. How much of this cooler surface is visible at any given time determines the overall brightness of the star.

Not far east-southeast of Alpha Sculptoris is another variable star, R Sculptoris. This red giant star emits over five thousand times the energy of our Sun, even though it is only 1.3 times the mass of our Sun. The extra thermal energy has made it expand to 355 times the diameter of the Sun. This allowed the surface to cool to a red color.

R Sculptoris is a spectral class C5 star, a red giant that has completed its stable life on the main sequence, having already stopped fusing hydrogen into helium and then the helium into carbon and oxygen in its core. This left an inert core of oxygen and carbon with helium still fusing into

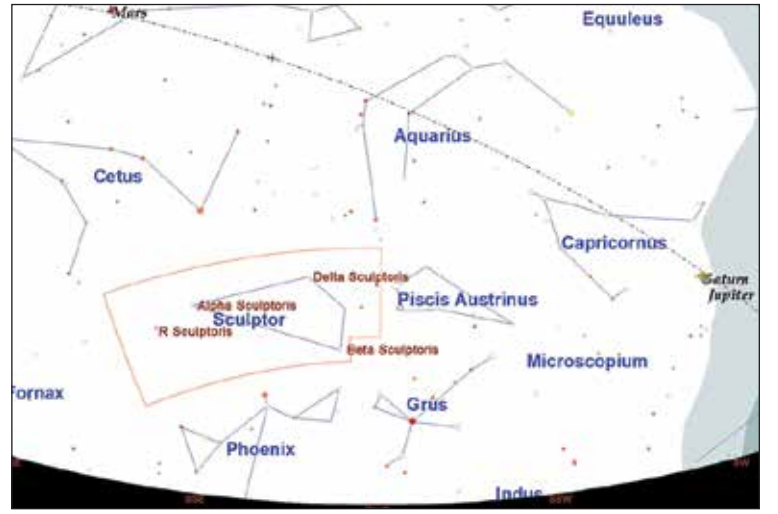
these heavier elements in a shell around it. Above that, an outer shell of hydrogen is still fusing into helium, which then falls inward toward the inner shell.

The helium shell soon (in astronomical terms) burns out and the helium fusion stops in this shell. The hydrogen burning in the upper shell continues to rain down helium onto the helium shell. The helium accumulates until helium burning is restarted in what is called a helium flash. This sudden burst of energy expands the star so much that its outer atmosphere wafts off into space. It also disrupts the hydrogen burning in the upper shell.

The helium shell burning rises from the bottom to the top of the helium shell. When it reaches the bottom of the hydrogen shell, it reignites the hydrogen shell as the helium shell burns out again. This starts the process over again, with the helium flash occurring every 10,000 to 100,000 years.

The helium flash also churns up carbon from near the core, convectively moving it to the surface, making R Sculptoris a carbon star. With the abundance of carbon in the star’s atmosphere, the carbon is carried off when the outer atmosphere

STARRY DOME
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Sculptor is a modern constellation whose name has been changed from the Sculptor’s Studio to just the Sculptor, even though the constellation figure does not look like either. It looks like a kite laying on its side, with the lower point of the kite facing east. All the stars in this constellation are fourth magnitude or fainter. To find Sculptor, locate the bright, first magnitude star Fomalhaut just over the border to the west of Sculptor in Piscis Austrinus.

Calendar of Events – December 2020 (MST)

- 07 5:37 p.m. Last Quarter Moon
- 14 5 a.m. Geminid Meteor Shower peaks
- 14 9:16 a.m. New Moon-total solar eclipse visible in S. Pacific, Chile, Argentina, S. Atlantic
- 19 9 p.m. Mercury passes around the far side of the Sun
- 21 3:02 a.m. December Solstice
- 21 7 a.m. Jupiter 0.1-degree S of Saturn
- 21 4:41 p.m. First Quarter Moon
- 29 8:28 p.m. Full Moon

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We have purchased 5 medical grade air filtration systems to be used throughout our office to keep the air as clean as possible. You might notice other small changes that we’ve made in our facility and during your care that we deem necessary to keep you safe. Please ask us if you have questions!!

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HORSES

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hear. And if they were truly committed to what they are saying or doing, not just trying to stay in office. Imagine if they studied things in greater detail, took a bit more time and learned to shut up, listen and observe as part of their governing process.

With horses, if you skip these steps or ignore what good leadership means to a horse, you're liable to get kicked, bitten or worse. You'll end up with a horse

that does not respect you or your space, and you'll probably end up having to try coercion (treats), force or discipline to get anything done. Sound familiar? Long term, none of these techniques will yield a trusted partnership with a horse, and maybe not with our leaders either.

Crazy idea, but I think most horse people would agree it has merit.

Finally, my guiding principles for working with horses are ones that have been passed down

through some of the greatest horsemen of the last century. It occurs to me that maybe these thoughts have a wider range of meaning beyond just the horse world, and maybe they offer a bit of hope and a way forward from where we are now.

So, a last wish for this holiday season and for the coming new year would be for more of us to approach our horses and all the people around us using these thoughts as a roadmap for the future:

Never do anything that de-

stroys your horse's confidence.

Never do anything that destroys your horse's curiosity.

Never do anything that destroys your horse's sensitivity.

Never do anything that destroys your horse's dignity.

Substitute "your child," "your spouse," "your family members," "your friends" or "your neighbors" for "your horse" and these are good words to live by.

We all have different reasons for wanting to say good-bye to 2020, but I think we can all agree

on this: We can give thanks that it is finally over and we hope, wish and pray that 2021 is better for everyone.

Happy Holidays!

Scott Thomson lives in Silver City and teaches natural horsemanship and foundation training. You

can contact him at hsthomson@msn.com or 575-388-1830.



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STARRY DOME

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drifts off into space during a helium flash. This forms a cloud of dust and gas around the star. This cloud is called a planetary nebula.

R Sculptoris is not alone. It has a secondary star in orbit around it at a distance of 5.6 billion miles, well beyond the orbit of Pluto. This secondary star focuses a stream of dust and gas that forms a spiral, like a rotating garden sprinkler, as the secondary orbits the primary star. At the edge of the spiral is an outer dust shell that was quickly blown off the star in the very intense first helium flash.

R Sculptoris is a unique binary star with a huge, dying primary star shedding dust and gas into space that is shaped by the secondary star into a spiral that stretches outward to form a spherical shell of dust and gas. While this object is too small to see in a small telescope, it would be a wonder to behold hanging in the darkness of space. While our Sun does not have a companion to create a spiral, it will start going through the red giant phase in a few billion years.

The Planets for December 2020

Jupiter has been approaching Saturn for quite a while now and this month Jupiter finally zips by Saturn on Dec. 21, when they will be just 0.1 degrees apart. It will then continue eastward away from Saturn. They will not be near each other again until 2040. At that time, Jupiter's disc will be 33.2 seconds-of-arc across while Saturn's disc will be 15.3 seconds-of-arc across with the Rings 34.7 seconds-of-arc across and they will be tilted down 21.3 degrees with the northern face showing.

Both planets move eastward from far eastern Sagittarius to western Capricornus during the month. They are 21 degrees above the southwestern horizon as it gets dark, setting around 7:45 p.m. Saturn will be magnitude +0.64, while Jupiter will be magnitude -2.0, over 11 times brighter than the Ringed Planet.

The Red Planet is 52 degrees above the southeastern horizon

as it gets dark, setting after 2 a.m. Shining at magnitude -0.7, Mars has a disc that is 12.3 seconds-of-arc across at midmonth. It is moving eastward in far southeastern Pisces.

While Mercury is too close to the Sun to be seen this month, Venus is still illuminating the morning sky at magnitude -4.0. Rising just after 5 a.m., the Goddess of Love is 15 degrees above the southeastern horizon as it starts to get light. It drops slightly lower each day during the month. Venus travels eastward from western Libra, through that constellation, the northern panhandle of Scorpius and ending the month in southeastern Ophiuchus. It has a disc that is 11.2 seconds-of-arc across which is 91 percent illuminated.

Astronomical winter will begin at 3:02 a.m. on Dec. 21 when the Sun reaches its furthest-south point in the sky. The same day, there will be a total solar eclipse across the south Pacific, Chile, Argentina and the south Atlantic. The moon will be south of the Sun as seen from the desert Southwest, so we will not see an eclipse. Also, on that day, Saturn and Jupiter will be at their closest for the next 20 years. It will be a busy day to "keep watching the sky"!

An amateur astronomer for more than 45 years, Bert Stevens is co-director of Desert Moon

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Dad's Hermit

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Back in 18th century England, large naturalistic gardens with winding paths and groves of trees were in vogue among the gentry. It was stylish to build a small, picturesque house – a hermitage – in the middle of these faux forests, and to find an actual hermit to live in it. But hermits were scarce. In her article “The Strange, Short-lived British Trend of Hiring Ornamental Hermits,” Clair Cock-Starkey tells of one such landowner who hired a hermit through a newspaper ad to live in his hermitage for seven years, for the equivalent of today’s \$77,000, only to discover, a few weeks later, his hermit hanging out at the local pub. Eventually, dependable hermits became so hard to find that gentlemen often talked poorer relatives into playing the role, or resorted to displaying mechanical hermits with moving parts.

I recently stumbled onto the above information online and it tickled a memory. I shut my eyes and saw a campsite by a little river, a rusty trailer with a little wooden lean-to built onto one end. The campsite was crowded with wooden boxes, an old plow and a couple of washtubs and buckets. An old man wearing layers of ragged clothes sat on a box next to the trailer unraveling the knots out of a ball of string while two little kids watched from behind a bush at the edge of the site.

Summer of 1953, and my family had just moved from our Indiana town to a farm about six miles away. To me, it might have been a million miles. Gone were the neighborhood kids, always ready for games and adventures. Gone was the park where we climbed trees and waded in the stream and sledged down the hill. On the farm I had no one to play with except a 5-year-old brother. The only time I’d ever even been on a farm was when Barbie Zimmer’s grandfather piled all the neighborhood kids into the back of his pickup truck on a hot summer day and drove us out to his farm to spend the afternoon racing through the woods.

But I had recently discovered

the TV series “The Range Rider,” and my little brother and I rode pretend horses across nearby fields out to a couple of shacks – line shacks we called them – searching for outlaws. When that grew old, we pestered our mom to let us walk down the road to the bridge over the river that formed a boundary of the property. In the middle of canning, she gave in quickly with a warning to hold hands and watch for cars.

Standing on the bridge was okay for a while, but the riverbank looked so inviting on a hot summer day. And Mom hadn’t said we couldn’t go down to the river. So long as we held hands. We cooled our bare feet in the river mud, and I tried to teach my brother how to skip stones. He was about to start crying when we heard a dog bark. Curious, we headed off in the direction of the noise, pretending we were stalking a bear. That’s when we saw the campsite through the trees and the old man sitting on a box with a dog lying beside him. We watched them for a few minutes, then one of us must have made a noise because the dog suddenly sat up and growled in our direction. “Run,” I hissed, and we beat it back through the trees and up to the road.

Neither of us mentioned the campsite or the old man to our parents. Back then, kids kept the secrets of their world to themselves, as did the adults. Eventually, though, I was able to put a name to the old man. Old Joe, my dad called him. Old Joe Tedrow. Apparently, he came with the farm, maybe had lived on it forever as far as I knew. Sometimes when my mom baked cookies, or had extra vegetables from the garden, she would pack up a bag for my dad to take over to Old Joe. And when the church had its rummage sale that fall, Mom told the other women to “save something for Old Joe,” and they gathered up the leftover socks and a shirt and jacket and a wool blanket.

That first winter on the farm, all I remember is snow, snow, snow. I don’t think it ever melted. I had to get used to riding a school bus, but Mom let me join a new Campfire Girls group which

meant I got to spend one overnight a week at my grandparents’ house in town. Life seemed okay. I knew my dad often checked on Old Joe on the pretext of taking him leftovers from our dinners, but my 9-year-old self didn’t spend any time wondering about who he was and why he lived on my dad’s farm.

Spring finally came that year, and I was excited about getting out of school. I was old enough to join 4-H, which meant I’d get another day in town. One afternoon in May I was finishing my homework at the kitchen table when my dad came in and asked for the phone book.

I looked up because Mom did all the phoning, and I wasn’t sure I had ever seen him talk on the phone before. “What’s wrong?”

my mother asked.

“Old Joe. He can’t get out of bed by himself. I’m calling Doc Schreiner.”

The doctor agreed to drive out to our house, and then Dad drove him back to the campsite. About half an hour later they came back and carried Old Joe from Dad’s truck to the doctor’s car.

“How does Joe feel about going to the hospital?” my mother asked when my dad came back inside.

“He’s too far gone to complain. It’s either that or have him just die during the night. At least there he’ll be taken care of.”

But he did die a couple of days later. Even the hospital with its nurses and doctors and clean sheets and three meals a day could not save him from a heart that was just plain worn out.

A few weeks later, my dad was clearing the campsite and found, rolled up inside a tin coffee can, a moldering roll of old twenty-dollar bills. He dropped them off at the bank for the manager to deal with. A few weeks later, he was called into the bank and

given \$420 in nice new bills. A county judge had ruled that the money belonged to Dad because it was found on his land. Four hundred and twenty dollars was a real windfall in 1954; Mom got new living room furniture and I got a brand-new bicycle, which I kept at my grandma’s house.

Every Memorial Day, the women and kids of the town would place flowers on the graves of departed relatives. That Memorial Day and every other one throughout my childhood, we also placed flowers on the grave of Joe Tedrow. Old Joe, Dad’s hermit. May he rest in peace.

Sheila and husband, Jimmy, have lived at Rose Valley RV Ranch in Silver City since 2012, following five years of wandering from Maine to California. She can be contacted at skowder@aol.com.



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OUR PAWS CAUSE THRIFT SHOP
 703 N. Bullard, SC NM, Open Wed-Sat 10am to 2pm
 Donations needed! We want to expand and build a new Adoption Center. Please help.
 TO JOIN THE PET PAGE CONTACT MARIAH AT 993-8193 OR EMAIL MARIAH@DESERTEXPOSURE.COM