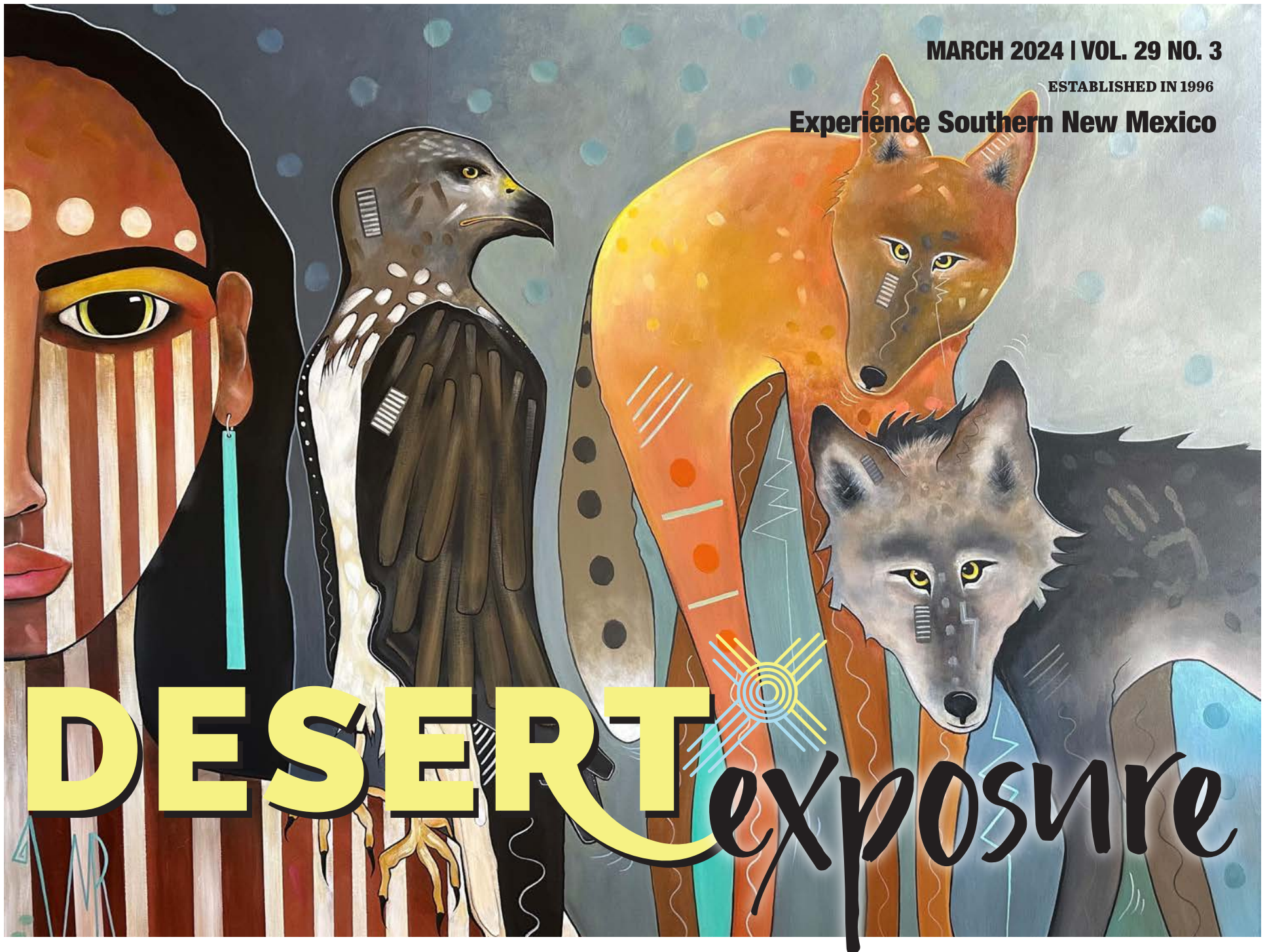


MARCH 2024 | VOL. 29 NO. 3

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WHERE DREAMS DIE **PAGE 8** | IT'S PRETTY LIVELY **PAGE 14** | BREWERY OPENS **PAGE 16**



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DESERT exposure

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APRIL DEADLINES

All stories and notices for the editorial section
due Friday, March 15
Space Reservation and ad copy
due Friday, March 15.

EDITOR'S NOTE | ELVA K. ÖSTERREICH

The Dark and the Light

Finding balance can equal finding hope

The news is dark sometimes. It is popular to try and avoid the darkness, to put down the video games, to decry the violence we are thrown every day and call it bad. But why are we drawn to this angry form of communication, the the heart wrenching and tragic and sad?

One theory says dark carries more psychological weight than positive information, which makes sense in evolutionary terms: We want to know where the potential dangers and threats are in our environment,

and so our attention is drawn to problems and negative information.

We probably need to find balance, each his own. We can't hide the bad things, but we must see the good too. In this edition of Desert Exposure, we see new endeavors (Open Space Brewing), light creations (Tree of Life) and musical joy (It's Pretty Lively) all of which bring some fun in our lives.

But let's look too and question when we see the story of artist Alvaro Enciso (where Dreams Die) and consider books banned in the schools

with Algernon (Desert Sage).

"It's understandable that humans pay attention to negative information; it seems important, and it may have survival value," said Julie Exline, professor in the Department of Psychological Sciences at Case Western Reserve University-Cleveland.

"So, there's no need to beat yourself up about it. But if you find yourself going after a steady diet of negative information, you might consider how this scary, sad or anger-inducing input might be affecting your

mood."

Exline writes it is natural to be drawn to tragedy because it carries more psychological weight than positive information. Humans want to survive and solve problems, and so we naturally look for where the problems are.

Tragedies can seem exciting because of the life-or-death, risky situations involved—adding more fuel to the attentional fires.

And, for a truly dark side, some of us may be drawn to tragedy because we dislike or resent the person/

people who suffered in the tragedy. Some part of them might indulge in Schadenfreude (a German term meaning "shameful joy"). With Schadenfreude, people find a sense of pleasure in seeing an enemy or rival punished.

Finally, a recent study from researchers at the University of Augsburg, Germany and the University of Wisconsin-Madison found that people are more likely to watch movies with gory scenes of violence if they felt there was meaning in confronting violent aspects of real life.

Elva K. Österreich is editor of Desert Exposure and would love to meet Desert Exposure readers of southern New Mexico. Please contact her at editor@desertexposure.com or by cell phone at 575-443-4408.



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LETTER TO THE EDITOR

'Beef Country' doesn't need to be monument

In his letter, "Monument designation should be welcomed," Michael Sauber missed the mark. After standing-room-only attendance at both the Deming City Council and Luna County Commissioner meetings, in which 95 percent of attendees expressed displeasure at such a national monument proposal, both the City of Deming and Luna County voted against turning approximately 250,000 acres into a national monument. Such a designation would severely restrict ranching, mining, and hunting activ-



ities in the proposed area. Ranching has been a family business in Luna County since the turn of the 19th century, and ranchers have been exemplary stewards of the land for generations. In Luna County you can see many ranchers driving pick-up trucks proudly bearing the slogan, "This is Beef Country."

Paul Hoylen, Deming

CORRECTION: Because the December Desert Dumbfounder puzzle was inadvertently repeated in February, we didn't want you to miss out on it. So here are both February and March puzzles. Don't look at #93 if you don't want to spoil #92.

ABOUT THE COVER

"Tricksters" by Virginia Maria Romero is a 48" X 60" acrylic on canvas. Romero said tricksters in mythology exhibited a great degree of secret knowledge often used to defy conformity, which lacked independence and originality.

"Within my visual poetry are characters representative of how tricksters prevail in the modern era," Romero said. "Without specific intent my work begins – a subconscious evolution to render form. The effort at once seamless and fluid, a commingling of pigment, touch, and spirit, moves towards shape and purpose. The now recognizable images translate as symbols of new life steeped in mystery from which they were born. In their eyes is a voice that speaks of secrets. If you look and listen closely you will hear them too."



Romero's piece, "Wolf," was selected by the Las Cruces City Art Board and Quality of Life Department/Public Art as part of the "Art Stop" rotating art exhibit in and is exhibited at the bus shelter at Water Street and Griggs Avenue, by the former El Paso Electric Co. parking lot in Las Cruces.

More of Romero's work can be seen at www.virginiamariaromero.com. Her work is represented by Bill Hester Fine Art, 613 Canyon Road, Santa Fe.

Desert #92 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

"GVM LMDNMGCNH JB MZEDCGPJQ YCL DJXPQR BJN CQ CLLMKXKH. YVMQ P VMCNZ XH QCXM, PG YCL JQ JOMNYVMFXPQR VJQJN." - ZMXPQR GMCDVMN XCRCFP RJXMU, JQ NMDMPOPQR GVM XPFWMQ CYCNZ

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: "JUNE SECOND, TWO THOUSAND AND TWENTY-FOUR WILL BE A HISTORIC DAY IN MEXICO WITH THE ALMOST-CERTAIN ELECTION OF THE COUNTRY'S FIRST WOMAN PRESIDENT." - MORGAN SMITH *Secret Words: "MILEPOST AND WHY" Congrats to #91 solvers: Kaustuv Sengupta*, Mike Arms*, Will Adams*, Claudette Gallegos*, David Pino*, Shorty Vaiza*, Sue Merrick*, & Connie Tull*!

Desert #93 Dumbfounder
by Dave Thomas

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"XRHD HD F GHDVSPBCL GBVFGBD HI XRB WFUHIJ." - GC. FIXRSIL ZHSCHKKS SZ IWWIRD, SI F TFYQSIB GHDVSPBCBG LBFCDFJS FX BKBARFIX QEXXB QBHIJ CBVSJIHOBG FD F IBY DABVHBD SZ X-CBN.

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: "THE SECRETARY OF EDUCATION WAS COMING FOR AN ASSEMBLY. WHEN I HEARD MY NAME, IT WAS ON OVERWHELMING HONOR." -DEMING TEACHER MAGALI GOMEZ, ON RECEIVING THE MILKEN AWARD *Secret Words: "FACULTY OBSERVING" Congrats to #92 solvers: Kaustuv Sengupta*, David Pino*, Will Adams*, George P. Burdell*, Mike Arms*, Shorty Vaiza*, Skip Howard*, and Sue Merrick*!

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ARTS EXPOSURE

Tree of Life

Kelly Hart continues his creative legacy

Story by
Elva K. Österreich

Kelly Hart has been creating all his life. From being a freelance photographer

and art student at the San Francisco Art Institute to cinematographer. In the 1970s he developed a technique for making animated movies and was awarded a US patent. In the 1980s he

produced video programs ranging in topics from llamas, animal telepathy, student life in the Soviet Union and Mexico, and sustainable architecture. At the turn of the century, he developed several websites related to sustainable architecture and wrote several books on the topic.

Now Hart is creating in wood. Remodeling, designing and assembling many things with his work, most recently his artistic eye has taken on a tiny house project. Taking a fifth-wheel RV and changing it into a "Tree of Life," Hart



Kelly Hart stands in front of his tiny house, "Tree of Life." (Courtesy photo)

put together a detailed and beautiful creation.

"I decided to devote myself to creating art and

sculpture for the past five years," He said. "So I am combining that interest in remodeling and making

homes out of vehicles into art so I call this sculpture a tiny home."

The piece/tiny home, "Tree of Life" theme relates on a number of different levels. He incorporated trees into the shingles on the sides of the home, and wooden art adorns the inside and outside from flat inlay pieces to curved sculptural pieces.

"I had a rough idea of what I wanted to do," he said. "Not so much the tree patterns but the arrangement."

The work can be moved as needed but is intended

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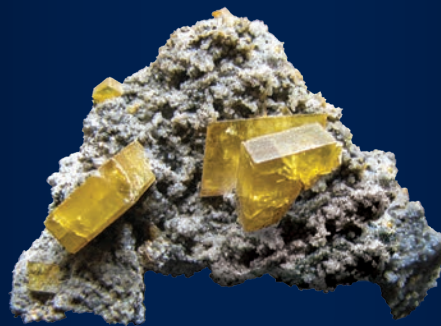
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The theme of life in ancient and modern forms is repeated throughout Kelly Hart's tiny house art. (Photos by Elva K. Österreich)

to stay in one location, maybe in the woods somewhere.

"I can see it in a forest," Hart said. "I can see it in a lot of different places. This awning comes out. These steps can move."

Incorporated in the work are reflections of DNA strands, and many cultures are represented in individual pieces. He drew inspiration from Egyptian gods, a cave in Africa and the Dogon people, the Kabbalah tree of life, the Nazca lines in Peru, Indonesian stone carvings from a cemetery marker and much more.

In the bathroom, ancient images are featured, Olmec and then an image from Turkey from about 12,000 years ago.

Now Hart is ready to take on a new project. He would like to sell his "Tree of Life" piece to make room for the next step.

"I have worked on stuff all my life," he said. "I've been a wood worker and an artist basically all my life, I see no reason to stop. I just had my 80th

birthday. My plan is to go to 100 because I enjoy it so much."

Hart's work and art can be found at hartworks.com. His woodwork is also on display at a)sp."A"©e gallery, 110 W. Seventh St. in Silver City.



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ON THE BORDER

Where Dreams Die

Long life's journey leads back to the border

Story and photos
by Morgan Smith

“You leave your country, you leave your language, you leave your family, you leave everything that you knew to come here looking for a better way of life,” says Alvaro Enciso, who migrated to the United States from a town called Villavicencio in central Colombia, when he was 20, with the goal of getting an education. This has been a much more complicated journey than he would have anticipated.

He served in the Army and 14 months in Vietnam, went to college on the GI Bill, got a BA in Cultural Anthropology at Queens College in New

York City, earned graduate degrees at Towson University in Maryland and worked for the Department of Health and Human Services in the Washington-Baltimore area as an analyst and expert in Hispanic culture. Eventually, in the late 1990s, he decided to become an artist and moved to New Mexico.

“I don’t like the word artist,” he said, “because I don’t know if I am one or not. The word artist is loosely used, you know, anyone can be an artist.”

He then moved to Tucson in 2011 and saw an article about a retired Marine and Methodist preacher who was taking water, medical supplies and blankets to the border to help migrants.

Thinking of his own migrant background, he soon began working with the Tucson Samaritans, a nonprofit formed in 2002 that takes water, food and medical assistance into the desert area south of Tucson. Initially he would hike out to the sites where bodies had been found and “stand there and see if there was anything there, a vestige of what happened there, the suffering and the disappointment and the failure and everything.”

Then he realized that he wanted to make “the invisible visible. ... So I needed to give these people presence.”

The concept of placing crosses at the sites was a complicated one.

“[The cross] is a symbol



The second cross, placing rocks.

of finality,” he said. “The Romans used to make crosses, big ones, to kill people. I was a little reluctant because I didn’t want to be seen as some kind of a Christian fanatic putting crosses out there.”

He sees the cross as a “universal symbol” and not a “religious cross.”

“It was nothing more than a geometric equation,” he said. “You know, a vertical one on a horizontal line. The vertical line means that you’re still alive, still walking. And the horizontal line means that you’re dead. And where those two lines meet, that’s the point where the tragedy took place.”

Alvaro makes the crosses himself and paints them different colors with donated paint. In the last decade, he has placed over 1,400 in the

Arizona desert, and gets the location from the medical examiner in Tucson. He goes every Tuesday with his team, using a 4-wheel high clearance vehicle provided by the Tucson Samaritans.

I had a chance to meet him in Tucson in April and we met again in tiny Columbus, N.M. (pop. 1,500) on the afternoon of Dec. 19. Columbus is just two miles from the border and the town of Palomas, Mexico.

With him were the team members who have been working with him in Arizona – the young Bryce Peterson, who is a genius at finding the sites, most of which are in remote areas; David Whitman, who moved to Arizona from New York city several years ago and met Alvaro through the Tucson Samaritans; and Peter Lucero, who has been

working with Alvaro for five years.

My wife, Sherry, was with me. We followed Alvaro’s team to the first site where the body of a 34-year-old woman from Guatemala had been found. She had been raped and murdered and then dumped there just east of Columbus.

The team moved quickly. Alvaro dug a hole in the soft dirt and Peter placed the cross. Then they poured water in the hole, added a quick drying cement, then sand. Alvaro made sure the cross was aligned properly. Then they each looked for stones to place around the cross.

“This is an important step,” David said to me, “because we are alone with our thoughts when we go to look for the rocks.”

Peter would place a rosary

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on the cross.

The second stop would be for a 24-year-old man who had died of exposure.

The third was on the edge of the highway between Deming and Columbus, a boring stretch of road that I have driven dozens of times without ever thinking of death.

On Sept. 18, 2021, however, an accident occurred here when a Border Patrol vehicle was chasing a van in which there were 10 migrants. Two were killed, one from Brazil and one from Ecuador, so two crosses were placed. While I thought of the two deaths, Alvaro said, "Imagine the others, the injuries they must have suffered."

We spent the night in the Comfort Inn in Deming and met for breakfast the next morning before daylight. The plan was to find at least three more sites. Then Alvaro and his team would return to Arizona and Sherry and I would go back to Santa Fe.

Our first stop that morning was just off what is called Sunshine Road. A Brazilian woman had been traveling with a group of Brazilians, couldn't keep up and died. It was a bitter cold morning with an overcast sky, a day when you couldn't imagine the heat that must have over-

powered her.

The second stop was for a 24-year-old man who died on August 29, 2021, but his nationality was unknown.

We then drove west from Deming on a service road that paralleled the very busy Highway I-10, finally turning off near a large truck stop and heading south on a dirt road.

Stopping, Bryce indicated that this site would be about a quarter mile through the desert. This is barren but starkly beautiful country, yet with the temperature about 52 degrees, this was not the reality migrants face during the summer, when it will typically be over 100 degrees.

The man whose body was found there was never identified. Although he was surely from Latin America, he is referred to as John Doe. As Alvaro dug the small hole for the cross, I realized that we were less than a half mile from the highway and the truck stop. Of course, the man who died didn't know this. He couldn't have heard the heavy truck traffic on Interstate 10 or seen the truck stop. To recognize that he came thousands of miles only to die perhaps 20 minutes from safety was heart wrenching.

In these last five years, Sherry and I have met with hundreds of migrants – in



Left: Alvaro Enciso, west of Deming, Dec. 2023.
Right: One of Alvaro's crosses.



various shelters, camped on the riverbank between El Paso and Juárez or living on the streets. Most are exhausted from their journeys and unsure where they will end up. But they are also optimistic and full of hope that they

can start decent and safe lives in our country. They exude an enthusiasm about our country that few Americans can emulate.

These two days with Alvaro and his team, however, showed the other side of these brutal experiences. Whether it was standing in the bitter cold or slogging through the barren desert as Alvaro, Peter, David and Bryce placed these crosses, I felt I was helping give these migrants a last gesture of respect.

Alvaro has named his project "Donde Mueren los Sueños," or "Where Dreams Die." Now, several weeks after our placing of the crosses

in the desert, the memory of these deaths hangs over me like a huge dark cloud. What to do? The answer is simple. Tomorrow I will be leaving for the border again, my car packed with donated shoes. A trip to help the living. But I will be passing the two crosses between Deming and Columbus. I will be thinking of those for whom the dream died.

Morgan Smith has been writing about border issues for the last decade and can be reached at Morgan-smith@comcast.net.

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SKY WATCH

Follow The Moonlight

Monthly hikes at White Sands National Park

By Sylvia Quintanilla

Beginning in March, White Sands National Park will offer a unique experience on the sand dunes. Moonlight Hikes is a ranger-guided program on the one-mile Dune Life Nature Trail happening monthly between March to November. Guests are not

only treated to picturesque views on the hike, but are also provided educational presentations from the ranger.

“Previously known as Full Moon Hikes, the Moonlight Hike better describes the special opportunity visitors have to experience the dunes at night as the moonlight reflects off the bright, white gypsum sand,” WSNP program man-

ager and public information officer Brian Powers said.

For more than 12 years, White Sands has offered the guided hike program. It has been one of the most popular programs they offer. Powers said topics covered by the park ranger can vary, but may include Tularosa Basin space history, astronomy, nocturnal animals, White Sands Na-



Visitors gather for a Moonlight Hike at White Sands National Park. (Courtesy photo)



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tional Park history, interdune ecology and the night sky as a resource.

There is a maximum number of 50 guests allowed on the moonlight hikes, to ensure the safety of all.

Tickets are available two months before the day of the event online at recreation.gov. For example, for the May 22 hike, tickets will be available on March 22 at 8 a.m. MT. There is not a waitlist for sold-out hikes. However, if tickets are canceled, they will be immediately available online. Park entrance fees and a special program fee of \$8 per

person for ages 16 and older and \$4 per child ages 15 and younger.

“The Moonlight Hike is a very popular program and some of the best feedback is the fact that the tours fill up so fast, often within a matter of minutes. There is always a lot of anticipation and excitement from the community about these programs as we receive many positive and enthusiastic comments on our social media platforms and the Moonlight Hike page on recreation.gov,” Powers said.

Once you obtain tickets, be prepared and plan ahead. The

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Dune Life Nature Trail is rated as a moderate hike. Guests should be ready to walk on soft sand, up and down sand dunes.

Make sure to check the weather for the event as the temperature drops very quickly when the sun goes down. Powers advised coming prepared with appropriate footwear, dressing in layers and bringing water and snacks.

“In my opinion, being on a gypsum sand dune as the moon rises over the Sacramento Mountains and illuminates the sky is a very special opportunity that the park offers during Moonlight Hikes,” Powers said. “Visitors have the chance to experience the moonlight reflection on the bright, white gypsum sand and the peace and serenity of this unique environment at night. The ranger presenting the guided hike will also interpret the stories and resources the park has to offer.”

Powers added that these moonlight hikes are not the only ranger-guided walks offered at White Sands National Park.

“We also offer the Sunset Stroll, which is ranger-guided through the gypsum sand dunes,” he said. “It is a fantastic opportunity to experience the dunes first-hand while learning about the park’s geology, plants, and animals. As a bonus, the stroll is timed to end near sunset, providing a panoramic view of the sun setting over the mountains and the potential for some breath-taking photographic opportunities. Sunset Strolls do not require reservations and are currently offered on Friday, Saturday and Sunday.”

For up-to-date information

IF YOU GO:

Moonlight Hike schedule for 2024

- Monday, March 25 at 7:30 p.m.
- Tuesday, April 23 at 7:30 p.m.
- Wednesday, May 22 at 7:30 p.m.
- Saturday, June 22 at 8:30 p.m.
- Saturday, July 20 at 8 p.m.
- Tuesday, Aug. 20 at 8:15 p.m.
- Wednesday, Sept. 18 at 7:15 p.m.
- Wednesday, Oct. 16 at 6 p.m.
- Saturday, Nov. 16 at 5 p.m.



Reservations needed: nps.gov/whsa/index.htm

on White Sands, visit their website at nps.gov/whsa/index.htm. There, you can learn about our park hours, ranger programs, park entrance fees, safety information, current conditions and the history and natural resources the park has to offer.



The moon rises over visitors at White Sands National Park offering a unique view of old luna. (Courtesy photo)



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OPPORTUNITY

Call for Veterans & Military Connected Artists: In Alamogordo, Otero Arts will hold its “Second Annual Otero Veteran Arts Showcase” (OVAS) in June at the Otero Artspace, 1118 Indiana Ave., Alamogordo. OVAS will feature a month-long art exhibition, performances and writing workshops all featuring Veterans and Military connected artists. Deadline for entering is May 1. To apply: contact Lori Arella, drloria@gmail.com or call 845-797-3642. Info: Oteroarts.org.

SILVER CITY

• **The Silver City Art Association** hosts a **First Friday gallery walk** on March 1 in the Historic District of downtown Silver City. Galleries and their business friends will be open from 5-7 p.m. for receptions, art talks and other art events, with several galleries featuring artists on site to discuss their work. First Fridays are held from 5-7 p.m. on the first Friday of every month. For a map of participating galleries, or for more information about the Silver City Art Association, see silvercityart.com.

• The weird (and sometimes not so weird) creations of local wood carver **Mark Cantrell** are on display at the **Grant County Art Guild Gallery**. Cantrell discusses his process at the GCAG 5-7 p.m. on March 1 during Silver City’s First Fridays at the gallery art walk. Refreshments will be served, and Cantrell

will display a progressive selection of his work from raw wood to finished sculptures. The gallery carries the work of 35 local artists working in a wide range of mediums and styles with an equally wide range of prices. The Grant County Art Guild Gallery is located at 316 N Bullard, Silver City. The hours are 10 a.m.-5 p.m., seven days a week, with additional hours for special events. Info: gcag.org.

• **Light Art Space**, 209 W. Broadway in Silver City, features “**Picturing Wilderness**” in celebration of the 100-year anniversary of the Gila Wilderness. The exhibition features images by 26 Grant County Photographers. In the Flash Gallery, “**Border to Border**,” features the new works of Stephan Höglund. Höglund’s work comes from a sense of place or more accurately, places. Gleaming both inspiration as well as surface found material of his region. Northern Minnesota is where it first began and he now continues in the open High Mesa and High Desert of Southwest New Mexico near Silver City. These places not only have been the source of the materials in much of the work, but also seem to sustain a creative and spiritual roadmap. The reception for both exhibitions is scheduled for 5-7 p.m., Friday, March 1. The gallery is open 11 a.m.-5 p.m. Thursday, Friday and Saturday; 10 a.m.-2 p.m. Sunday; and by appointment. Info: lightartspace.com.



Mark Cantrell wood carvings, Grant County Art Guild Gallery. (Courtesy photo)

ALAMOGORDO

• Otero Arts features “**Chasing the Light**” an en plein air pastel exhibition with work by **Janet Amtmann** and **Lyn Canham** at the **Artspace** located at 1118 Indiana Ave. in Alamogordo. The exhibition opens with a reception 5-7 p.m. on March 1. The two artists are members of Otero Arts as well as Plein Air Painters of New Mexico, Pastel Society of New Mexico, and Cloudcroft Art Society. In the course of winding down her career as a cognitive psychologist, Canham reintroduced herself to drawing and painting by studying with various New Mexican

art teachers. Her pastel paintings flow from her lifelong love of nature. Amtmann’s interest in painting began as a young child studying with her mother, a landscape and portrait artist. She studied oils, acrylics and watercolor in her teen years. “My work carries with it the whispered teaching of many artists I have known and the joy and excitement I feel when confronted with the natural world that is New Mexico,” she said. Info: oteroarts.org.

DEMING

• The March 2024, exhibit at the **Deming Arts Center** features the creations of the local quilting club – **The Quilting**

B’s. On display are bed-size quilts, along with wall hangings, challenges, dolls, bead art and smaller quilted items. Many will be for sale. This year two quilts that are part of a drawing and a silent auction featuring several antique quilts, two antique throws, and some new quilts. The raffle and silent auction close at 3 p.m. March 29. There will be a time to meet the quilters 1-3 p.m. Sunday, March 3. The Deming Arts Center is at 100 S. Gold St., Deming. The gallery hours are 10 a.m.-4 p.m., Monday-Friday and 10 a.m.-1 p.m. on Saturday. Info: 575-546-3663 and at demingarts.org.

TRUTH OR CONSEQUENCES

• **RioBravoFineArt**, 110 North Broadway in Truth or Consequences, presents a combined artists show by two New Mexican artists, **Nolan Winkler** and **Raul Dorn**. The show runs through April 21. For this joint show, Winkler has chosen the title of “**The Dance Begins**” for her pieces. This show for combined artists is an opportunity to compare the styles of two different artists while gaining an enhanced understanding of the distinctive characteristics of each one. Rio Bravo Fine Arts Gallery is at 110 N. Broadway in Truth or Consequences. Info: riobravofineartgallery.com.

CARRIZOZO

• Artist **Joan Malkerson**, known for paintings, ceram-

ics, sculpture and installations, is set to unveil a solo art show centered around the theme of seeds. The exhibition, titled “**The Seed Woman**,” showcases a diverse collection of artworks that delve into the aesthetic and profound significance of seeds in our world. There will be an opening reception 5-7 p.m., Saturday, March 2. **The Red Door Gallery** is located downstairs in the Lutz Building at 401 Twelfth Street, at the Photozozo Gallery of Photography in Carrizozo. 88301. Info: 612-963-1499.

MAGDALENA

• **Charmaine Locke’s** “**Scenes from A Blues Opera**” is featured this at **kind of a small array**, 106 N. Main in Magdalena. Locke’s early eighties oil pastel and putty drawings came straight out of her daily life in the woods of the Big Thicket in east Texas, where she made her home and studio for twenty years. Her figures are players in an allegory, her dwellings psychological as much as physical. The strokes in the drawings are hewn and carved, as if drawing a life out of the woods. In fact, she was. Info: kindofasmallarray.com.

LAS CRUCES

• In his first solo show at **Gallery 925 Shane Wiggs** is showing his acrylic paintings, graphite, acrylic and India ink for large drawings as well as hand cut linoleum prints, some hand colored with watercolor. Wiggs was born in

El Paso in 1970. As early as 4 years old he was painting. Decay has become a primary concern in his work "because I find beauty and pathos in the aging works of man; specifically in aging agricultural/ industrial architecture and facilities." An Opening reception is First Friday, 4-7 p.m., March 1. Wiggs will be at the gallery 11-5 p.m. on Saturday and Sunday, March 16,17 to talk about his work. Gallery 925 is at 925 N Mesquite St. Gallery hours are 1-5 p.m. Fridays and 11 a.m.-5 p.m. Saturdays and Sundays. Info: gallery925nm.com.

• **The Tombaugh Gallery** presents a combined show featuring two well-known Las Cruces artists, **Carrie Greer** and **Karen Ziebert**. Both artists have explored various mediums over the course of their careers, but both have discovered the breadth of expression possible with encaustic or

working in wax. The artwork is painted with melted pigmented wax or fused to the substrate using a heat source, such as a propane torch. The exhibit opens with an artist's reception 11 a.m.-2 p.m. on Sunday, March 3. The show runs through March 24. The gallery, located in the Unitarian Universalist Church in Las Cruces, is open 10 a.m.-2 p.m. Thursday through Saturday, and 11:30a.m.-2 p.m., Sunday. Info: 575-522-7281

• **The Las Cruces Museums** opens two new exhibitions that investigate how artists relate to the natural environment. "Connection : : Conjunto" is at the **Branigan Cultural Center** and features artwork from The Border Artists in which they consider the connection between artists, the natural environment, and the community in which they live. At the **Museum of Art**, "The Desert Was Red and



Karen Ziebert encaustic art at the Tombaugh Gallery in Las Cruces. (Courtesy photo)

"Red the Dust Was Raised" desert landscape and how it uses abstraction to consider influences an artist's imagery. The relationship between the The exhibitions run through

March 23. The Branigan Cultural Center is located at 501 N. Main St. and the Museum of Art is located at 491 N. Main St. They are open from 10 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Tuesday through Friday, and from 9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. on Saturday. There is no admission charge. For additional information, visit the website at lascruces.gov/museums or call 575-541-2154.

• **Agave Artists Gallery** features its newest member, **Cate Thomassen**. She initially worked with mixed media - found object sculpture and painting. She has combined her two loves, painting and sculpting with mosaics. The gallery is open 11 a.m.-5 p.m. Friday to Monday and until 8 p.m. on the second Saturday of each month at 2250 Calle de San Albino. Info: 575-339-9870.

• **The Mesilla Valley Fine Arts Gallery**, 2470-A Calle

de Guadalupe, across from the historic Fountain Theatre features two local artists for the month of March: **Frank Rimbach** and **Naida Zucker**. Rimbach's work is primarily in landscapes, bookcase series and modern abstracts. He is currently exploring landscapes, capturing the rugged beauty of surrounding Las Cruces. Zucker, a mixed media artist, combines gelatin monoprinting (hectography) with digital photography. Gallery hours are 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. daily. Info: 575-522-2933, mesillavalleyfinearts.com.

• **Las Cruces Arts Fair** 2024 features booths and exhibits and takes place 10 a.m.-5 p.m. Saturday, March 23 and 10 a.m.-4 p.m. Sunday, March 24 at the Las Cruces Convention Center, 680 E. University Ave. Info: 575-523-6403.



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MUSIC SCENE

‘It’s Pretty Lively’

Illusion band: local, fun and family

By Elva K. Österreich
It was 2001, Rick and Monica Garcia were newly married and ready to start their lives together.

Both had been married before and they were ready for a new journey.

“When we got married Rick said, ‘Do you want a band?’” Monica said. “So, we

made a band and we are hoping to not stop. I hope I have another 30 years.”

Now, what started out as a family band, The Illusion Band is still playing the mu-

sic they love, and it is still going strong more than 20 years later.

“What you see now is a group of very talented musicians bringing their all to

the stage and the practice room, every time working as a team,” Monica said. “The group strives to bring Tejano music to our corner of New Mexico and beyond.”

Both Rick and Monica grew up with music around them.

Rick’s family were all musicians. Born and raised in Hurley, he said there was

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always music in his parents' home and his grandparents' house as well.

"My mom loved to sing," he said. "I have been playing bass guitar since 1974."

The couple's son, Ricardo, grew up as part of the Illusion Band scene. As a baby he slept on a blanket behind the speaker. He had a plastic saxophone he would pretend to play on stage when the band was performing, then a toy guitar. Now Ricardo is be-

hind a very real drum set and enjoying himself immensely.

"Our whole house is nothing but music equipment," Rick said. "Ricardo just grew up in it. It's in his blood."

In addition to Ricardo on the drums, the band includes Monica on the flute and as lead vocalist; Rick on bass guitar and vocals; Andy Flores, tenor and alto saxophone/vocals; Navor Madrid on the keyboards; Kenny Salazar, alto saxophone/vocals; and Ian Valenzuela, lead



Rick and Monica Garcia (Photo by Elva K. Österreich)

Rick said when on stage, they are fully engaged and

there is nothing else to think about or worry about.

"You are just right there," he said. "There is nothing else around us. I tell my son 'It's our time,' and we just do it."

Monica says when she sings, she is in a whole other world. She can't imagine life without it.

"I close my eyes," she said. "I love it, I love it. To be on stage in front of all the people and you feel the energy and

you just feed off of them. It's amazing – it's an indescribable emotion."

She describes the drive behind the band as "just a natural feeling. My son has a drive that is amazing."

In March, 14-18, Illusion Band is heading to San Antonio, Texas, to take part in a three-day event, the 2024 Tejano Music Awards Fan Fair,

LIVELY

continued on page 19

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Story & photos by Elva K. Österreich

Beer, trails, people and Bobber's Schlobbers



Matt Leef

IF YOU GO: Open Space Brewing

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Location: 11998 U.S. Highway 180, Santa Clara, NM
(in Grant County) behind the Santa Clara Armory

Information: openspacebrewing.com

Alexa Tubbs and Matt Leef met while hiking the Continental Divide Trail in 2019. Then, within 24 hours, they bonded over bright green cans of brown ale featuring a Moose on the can – Moose Drool beer.

And there it was, the dreams came together and the focus began. Their venture turned into the Open Space Brewery, a place on the edge of a trail system where both their passions meet.

Officially starting with a soft opening on Oct. 28, 2023, the brewery welcomes camaraderie, music lovers, beer aficionados and dogs.

"It's overwhelming in the best way," Alexa said. "It's a privilege to finally be focusing on what we are excited about – beer, trails and getting to meet people around here. It's exhausting but it's so rewarding and it's so like a life fulfilled. I get to talk about trails and Matt gets to talk about beer."

After signing the lease in January 2023 and jumping through licensing hoops for almost a year,

the business has been for more than a year now.

"For most of year we batches," Alexa said. "License came through in my job. Matt was still w time but then we said put our all into this."

After that it was 24 hours a day, 7 days a week to get Halloween themed open Alexa said, the brewery their annual anniversary Halloween every year.

"So now its like the fun thing ever," she said. "as characters from pulp maybe we are doing Jo themes forever."

For Matt, the brewing started in 2010, when basic home brew kit as his parents.

"The words my dad t were 'okay here is a ho make it anything more by,'" Matt said. "And of was very good at listen father, so I turned it into career."

LIVE MUSIC IN MARCH

Jonathan Contreras at 6 p.m. Friday, March 8 – A singer Paso. Contreras is influenced by the music and writing of He is a musical chameleon jumping from Americana to R

Forrest McCurren and Margaret McCurren at 6 p.m., M heart of the heartland, where the foothills of the Ozarks s souri. Blazing his own trail while stylistically tipping his ha McCurren wields the magic of lyricism to cast a light on t against vignettes of Middle America.

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Matt fell deeper and deeper into the beer brewing hobby, becoming involved in the San Diego brew club, the Quality Ale and Fermentation Fraternity, (QUAFF). Now, at Open Space, he is working toward building a local beer club.

Matt's love for the beer brewing business comes down to science involved.

"It comes down to all the different components that go into making beer," he said. "You are not just a chemist; you are not just a biologist. You are a physicist, you are a biochemist, you are an artist. It's a balancing act."

Matt's voice gets faster and faster, his eyes glow, his arms wave about ...

"For me it was always about the mash - how many amazing enzymes there are in the grain already and when you add the hot water and all of those enzymes release and act upon all of the carbohydrates that are in the mix. All the chemistry in the mash and all the biochemistry is absolutely

fascinating and then down the line when you have a beer, you are counting on a good saccharomyces, that's the type of yeast that I use and we all (brewers) use."

But then again, a brewer also must be an engineer and a plumber to plan, organize and figure out how the equipment will fit together.

"You have to know all the trades to be able to be a brewer," Matt said. "There is just so much that goes into making beer and so much understanding of the way the world works."

Matt's enthusiasm and love of the craft has rubbed off on Alexa in a big way. She said she is excited about starting a craft beer club. Participants wouldn't have to be brewers, anyone who is interested in learning about beer craft would be welcome.

"He always taught me how craft beer is made and he's such a great teacher," she said. "He teaches you a greater appreciation for the product that you are drinking."

One of the things Alexa has learned is a deep appreciation of how things work in the beer world. For example, she describes the scent of the hops, "I get a log of like green pine and citrus and floral."

"But that's half the fun of craft beer," she said. "No one wrong. It's a beautiful experience. It's like talking about art. The experience is your own and what you bring to the table is your own."

Alexa can talk about the beers on the Open Space menu in detail and with enthusiasm. The La Chancla Porter, for example, was

brewed in collaboration with folks putting on the Tamal Fiesta. NM-15 Hazy IPA is the house flagship which will "slightly evolve" with every batch and is named after one of their favorite scenic highways. The Waterworks is made with fresh local hops from the Waterworks Restoration Site in Silver City. Garden Day is brewed with local Clary Sage, a light floral ale.

Also on the menu are some non-alcoholic choices Matt and Alexa have created, Pomegranate Bubbles seltzer and The Lonely Boot root beer.

And of course, at the end of the bar counter is a jar of home-made dog

treats, created from spent grain. Bobber's Schlobbers, named after their dog, Bobby, and a combo of slobber and the German schlabbern, which is "to slurp."

In keeping with the outdoorsy theme of Open Space, are outdoorsy activities, including live music.

"Each of those things brings people together," Matt said. "Trails and the outdoors and beer bring people together. This is a common space to enjoy a chit chat and just to sit and talk. There is a very intentional reason we don't have a TV in this space, we don't want people to be distracted

by a TV and we want them to have conversations with their neighbors."



Alexa Tubbs

◆ ◆ ◆ ◆
-songwriter, musician and actor from El
Tom Waits, David Bowie and Kate Bush.
Rock, to Country to Cabaret with abandon.
March 14 - McCurren comes from the
meet the Big Muddy: The Middle-of-Mis-
at to the songwriting giants of the past,
the many intricacies of everyday life set

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Peripheral Neuropathy Breakthrough!

"My feet feel like they're on fire." "Each step feels like I'm walking through wet paint." "I live in constant fear that I'll fall." "I can't sleep, my hands and feet tingle all night."

What do all of these people have in common? They suffer from **peripheral neuropathy**. It is estimated that more than 20 million people in the United States have peripheral neuropathy. Unfortunately this figure may be significantly higher as the disease is often mis-diagnosed because of its wide array of symptoms.

Dr. Janet Quintanilla of Sonoma Acupuncture Integrative Health in Las Cruces shares this belief. "I've been treating neuro-pathy, in all its various forms, for over a decade and so often my patients come to me because of the symptoms, not because of a diagnosis. They saw one of my television specials, or read the testimonial of another patient and say to themselves 'hey, I feel the same thing'."

Frankie M. of Mesilla testified to this. "I remember my husband driving me to my consultation and I saw a woman running just outside our neighborhood. I was so envious - I just kept thinking 'I would give anything just to walk again'. My primary care doctor told me my troubles with pain and balance were just symptoms of old age and gave me a prescription. I was so depressed."

Fortunately Frankie would eventually see Dr. Quintanilla on the local news talking about similar symptoms and how she offers a real solution at Sonoma Acupuncture. "I just knew I had to see her. She was my last hope."

"Almost all of our patients come to us with a story similar to Frankie's. They've been told there's no hope. They've been told 'it's just part of getting older'." shares Heather, a Patient Care Technician at Sonoma. "It just breaks my heart but I know how much we can help people like Frankie so I'm always so happy when they walk through our door."

Those diagnosed with peripheral neuropathy often face a very grim reality; Western medicine declares that there is no solution while most alternative therapies carry large price tags and offer little to no resolve. Which is why Dr. Quintanilla and the staff at Sonoma Acupuncture pride themselves on being 'the last resort with the best results'.

Peripheral neuropathy is a result of damage to the nerves and this damage is commonly caused by lack of blood flow in the hands and feet. Lacking nutrients; the nerves then begin to degenerate and die which causes pain ranging from discomfort to debilitating. Because neuropathy is a degenerative condition, once those nerves begin to deteriorate they will continue to do so until they are completely expired, leaving those suffering with crippling balance issues. "In this case, the absence of pain is not necessarily a good thing," shares Dr. Quintanilla. "This usually indicated that your nerves are hanging on by a fragile thread."

So how exactly is Dr. Quintanilla able to reverse the effects of this degenerative disease? "Acupuncture has been used to increase blood flow for thousands of years which helps to get the necessary nutrients to the affected nerves. But the real magic happens when I integrate ATP Resonance BioTherapy. This is tech that was originally developed by NASA to expedite recovering and healing."

"I just can't say enough about Sonoma Acupuncture," Frankie just shared through tears of joy. "My husband and I moved here 3 years ago and he's gone out for a walk almost every day. I always stayed home because of the pain and discomfort. Yesterday I walked with him! And next week we're starting dancing lessons! I am truly living life these days."

According to Frankie's test results, she has seen a 74% improvement in pain and functionality, which is on par with a majority of our patients," shares Heather.

"But more important than those test results is the joy she's expressed being there and hearing about all the amazing things she's able to do so because she feels great!"

By seamlessly blending the ancient science of acupuncture with modern medical solutions Dr. Quintanilla has achieved a 90% success rate in reversing the effects of neuropathy. She starts each patient with an initial consultation during which a sensory exam is performed.

"This not only aids in making a proper diagnosis but it helps to define just how much nerve damage has occurred" tells the doctor. "This is important because if a patient has suffered more than 95% damage, there is little that I can do to help them. I'm familiar with the medical miracle but I know my limits as a practitioner and the limits of my medicine."

When it comes to treating peripheral neuropathy, regardless of its origin, early detection greatly improves your chances of a full recovery.

If you or someone you love is suffering with chronic pain that presents as burning, tingling, or 'pins and needles' or you've recently been diagnosed with peripheral neuropathy, it's important to know that there are options. There is hope.

Call (575)618-6900 to schedule an initial consultation or visit sonoma-acupuncture.com to read more incredible success stories.



LIVELY

continued from page 15

where they have been invited to participate. This is their third year with an invitation. The group will be performing twice, once on Friday and once on Sunday, Monica said. They have been fundraising for the trip.

“Last year did a lot of fundraising too,” she said. “The community came together and helped us.”

But Illusion Band doesn't only hit the big festivals. They are truly a community group, performing at local weddings, birthday parties and reunions, sometimes donating their time and talents to various causes throughout the county. Some of the bigger venues they have played include local fiestas, Carnitas, Musica y Mas, the Lordsburg Tejano Fiesta and Fiesta De

Las Flores. This year, they have been invited to the Silver City Blues Festival and are preparing a blues set, Monica said.

“We don't do it only just to make money,” Rick said. “Sometimes you get paid a good amount and sometimes not.”

Monica said she has been singing since she was around 12.

“When I was little, I wanted to make myself sound like Elvis Presley,” she said. “It was my dad's favorite favorite. I would lie on the floor and listen – put my ear on the speaker and make my voice go as low as it could.”

She had a choir teacher who pushed her when he found out she could sing.

“The very first time he made me do a solo, I was in middle school,” Monica said. “He made me go out and stand up there and I did it and



Illusion Band founders Rick and Monica Garcia on stage with a young Ricardo in the background on his toy guitar. (Courtesy photos)

I got a standing ovation, and I started bawling and I ran inside. It was ‘You Light Up My Life.’”

After that she was approached to sing at church and she did that weekly through her 30s and still does weddings, rosaries and funerals on occasion.

So the Illusion Band dances on with its cumbias, rancheras and classic pop

pieces. Rick loves to sing the cumbias, the upbeat dancing, the Latin beat. Monica loves the salsa, the movement, the interaction.

“But we do a lot of things,” Rick said. “We have a lot of fun. It's not about ego or anything like that.”

“My favorite part is, I walk through the crowd,” Monica said. “I want to sing to people. Now that's kind of



Rick Garcia grew up with music in his ears, top, with his parents taking to the stage. Monica too grew up with the music, seen here with her grandfather.

my signature. I feel like I'm talking to you.”

For more information call

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EDITORIAL

Featured Columns

RaisingDad

Red cheese enchiladas and, I'm begging you, no salad

By Jim and Henry Duchene

It's funny about the restaurant I used to buy my mother's gourmet enchiladas from.

What am I talking about?

I'm talking about back when my beloved mother was still alive, I'd go over every Saturday morning for breakfast. When my schedule at work changed, so did the time I'd go over and visit. Breakfast became lunch, and the routine changed from her feeding me, to me feeding her. I always asked in advance what she would like, but her order never changed. It was always red cheese enchiladas, extra onions, and no salad.

"What about your father?" you might ask.

You sure do ask a lot of questions, my friend.

Well, my father preferred home-cooked meals, so my mother would grudgingly fix him something else to eat. I'm sure he would have preferred the enchiladas I was bringing over, but to him it was a matter of pride.

The reason I tell you all this is because I was thinking about the lady who, week after week, would

take my order. She was an older lady with a bad case of arthritis in one hand. Why she was working as the cashier, I don't know. I always thought she might have been the owner of the restaurant, but she could have been a former waitress whose waitressing days were long behind her.

"Welcome to Las Fuentes," she would greet me. "You can seat yourself."

I was only there every Saturday and she would act as if she had never seen me before in her life.

"Maybe she's one of your old high school girlfriends," my older and less attractive brother suggested. "Assuming you had any."

Believe me, if she had been one of my girlfriends she would have given me my food for free.

There was a separate To Go section at the restaurant's cashier's station, and that's where I would stand, just under their "Order Here" sign. Why she would always assume I wanted a sit-down meal, I don't know.

"I'm ordering out," I would politely tell her.

If there was a to-go order there ready to be picked up, she'd ask me, "is this yours?"

"No," I would tell her.

"Are you sure?" she would respond.

Of course, I was sure.

You see, I never ever called in and only ordered the red cheese enchilada plate with extra onions every time I went there. Remember how I just wrote "with extra onions"?

"Did you want onions with that?" she'd always want to know.

"Extra onions," I'd repeat.

My mother didn't care for their salad, so I'd also tell the lady, "No salad, please."

"No salad?" she'd say, like not wanting shredded lettuce with your meal was beyond her comprehension.

"That's right."

To read the full column you've grown to love, visit us online at desertexposure.com.

Everyday Observations

The meaning of keeping things from the past

By Abe Villarreal

Whenever you think of your grandparents, you think of the things they had but are now long gone. Things that you wish you still had but for some reason don't. Only grandparents have those kinds of things. We'll all be grand-

parents soon enough.

Like those treasure chests at the end of beds or in closets. They looked like something too fancy for your household, and you wondered how they were passed down through the ages. They surely must have been handed down from aristocrats or royal families. The people you wish to claim as far away ancestors.

My grandparents liked to keep things, just to keep them. That's what you do when you grew up in the great depression. The old jacket from high school. The wedding dress you can't fit into anymore. The lucky hat, the noisy washing machine, the big box TV. The kinds of things that we switch out regularly because we can. Those things they kept.

Not only did they keep them, they worked, and they looked new despite their age. We don't keep things anymore. We throw things away. "It's time for a new one," we tell ourselves. "Let's get rid of that old thing."

Maybe it's a statement of our society, our culture. Out with the old and in with the new. It looks like progress when everything you own is shiny and bright. "This doesn't feel new," we think. "Why keep it?" Our grandparents saw the value in old things. The fact that those

things were old made them even more valuable.

Little things, too. Like the manual for the old film camera, still in its bag. The can crusher bolted on the garage wall. There are newer, faster models, you tell him. "This one still works," grandpa says. The rake that has most of its tines missing, but it has done the job for a long time and it has a few more yards to clean.

Grandparents like to keep trinkets, too. Funky-looking salt and pepper shakers. Figurines that have lost a lot of their original hues. They know that if they keep these insignificant things, they will hold on to something with much more significance.

Memories. Relationships. Good moments. Band ones, too. Keeping a hold of something that doesn't work for today keeps yesterday alive. Grandmothers know this.

I'm one of those who don't keep anything, but I appreciate those who do. Everything we have is in "the cloud." It's somewhere but not anywhere. You can access it, but it's not in your face. Others can't see it and stumble upon it.

To read the full column you've grown to love, visit us online at desertexposure.com.

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Stories From
Home
March 1



Kirk Matthews
March 15

EVENTS

What's Happening

Events you won't want to miss in March

FRIDAY, March 1

Grant County
10th Natural History of the Gila Symposium
All Day at the WNMU Global Resource Center
wnmu.edu/gilasymposium

Hieronymus Bogs Orchestral Folk/ Performance Art

7 p.m. at Whiskey Creek Zócalo, 11786 U.S. Highway 180 E. Arenas Valley
whiskeycreekzocalo.com
Otero County

Launch Pad Lecture

9 a.m. at the New Mexico Museum of Space History, 3198 State Route 2001, Alamogordo
nmspacemuseum.org

Live Music: Gunhild Carling Swedish musical sensation

7 p.m. at the Flickinger Center of Performing Arts, 1110 N. New York Ave., Alamogordo
flickingercenter.com

Socorro County **Stories from Home** Vibrant series of dances-Latine heritage stories

7:30 p.m. at New Mexico Tech's Macey Center, Socorro
nmt.edu/pas

Doña Ana County **"Alice in Wonderland"** With a Children's Theatre of the Mesilla Valley

6 p.m. and 8:30 p.m. at the Rio Grande Theatre, 211 N.

Main St. Las Cruces
riograndetheatre.org

Film: "All of Us Strangers" Romance/Drama

7:30 p.m. at the Fountain Theatre, 2469 Calle de Guadalupe, Mesilla.
mesillavalleyfilm.org

Play: "Home"

8 p.m. at the Black Box Theatre, 430 N. Main St., Las Cruces
no-strings.org

SATURDAY, March 2

Grant County **Fiddling Friends** Live Music

Noon, Silver City Public Library, 515 W. College Ave., Silver City
575-538-3672

Live Music: Lottie & the Ohm Wreckers

8 p.m. at Little Toad Creek Brewery & Distillery, 200 N. Bullard St. Silver City
575-956-6144

Otero County **Coffee and Chat at Oliver Lee State Park**

9-10:30 a.m. at Oliver Lee Memorial State Park visitor center, 409 Dog Canyon Road
575-437-8284

Guided Hike: Lawson Springs Trail

10-11:30 a.m. meet at Oliver Lee Memorial State Park visitor center, 409 Dog Canyon Road
575-437-8284

Luna County**Saturday morning breakfast**

8-10 a.m. at the Deming American Legion Bataan Post 4, 619 W. Spruce St., Deming
575-546-8385

Doña Ana County**Farmers & Crafts Market of Las Cruces**

8:30 a.m.-1 p.m. at Plaza de Las Cruces Downtown, Las Cruces
farmersandcraftsmarket
oflascruces.com

Dr. Seuss Day

10 a.m.-1 p.m. at the Museum of Nature & Science, 411 N. Main St., Las Cruces
575-532-3372

Storytellers of Las Cruces

10:30 a.m., COAS
Downtown, 317 N. Main St. Las Cruces

575-524-8471

Storytellers of Las Cruces

10:30 a.m., COAS on Solano, 1101 S. Solano Drive, Las Cruces
575-524-8471

"Alice in Wonderland"**With a Children's Theatre of the Mesilla Valley**

10:30 a.m. and 1 p.m. at the Rio Grande Theatre, 211 N. Main St. Las Cruces
riograndetheatre.org

Film: "All of Us Strangers"**Romance/Drama**

2 p.m. and 7:30 at the Fountain Theatre, 2469 Calle de Guadalupe, Mesilla
mesillavalleyfilm.org

Play: "Home"

8 p.m. at the Black Box Theatre, 430 N. Main St. Las Cruces
no-strings.org

SUNDAY, March 3**Grant County****Live Music: Pint & Half**

Folk, blues and country
1-4 p.m. at Little Toad Creek Brewery & Distillery, 200 N. Bullard St. Silver City
575-956-6144

Doña Ana County**Film: "Amélie"****Romance/Comedy**

7:30 p.m. at the Fountain Theatre, 2469 Calle de Guadalupe, Mesilla.
mesillavalleyfilm.org

MONDAY, March 4**Grant County****Square Dancing**

3-5:30 p.m. at United Methodist Church, 314 W. College St. Silver City, Use the side entrance
575-956-7186

Future Engineers

LEGO play for ages 6-12

4 p.m. Silver City Public Library, 515 W. College Ave., Silver City
575-538-3672

Doña Ana County**Film: "Amélie"****Romance/Comedy**

7:30 p.m. at the Fountain Theatre, 2469 Calle de Guadalupe, Mesilla.
mesillavalleyfilm.org

TUESDAY, March 5**Grant County****Live music: Moanin' Frogs****saxophone sextet****President's Chamber Music Series**

7 p.m. at Light Hall Theater, Western New Mexico University
wnmu.edu/culture

Doña Ana County**Film: "Amélie"****Romance/Comedy**

7:30 p.m. at the Fountain Theatre, 2469 Calle de Guadalupe, Mesilla.

mesillavalleyfilm.org

WEDNESDAY, March 6**Grant County****Songwriter Series with Jack****Lorang/Nate Porter****Folk/Americana**

7 p.m. at Whiskey Creek Zócalo, 11786 U.S. Highway 180 E. Arenas Valley
whiskeycreekzocalo.com

Doña Ana County**Farmers & Crafts Market of Las Cruces**

8:30 a.m.-1 p.m. at Plaza de Las Cruces Downtown, Las Cruces
farmersandcraftsmarket
oflascruces.com

Author talk: Zita Arocho**"Guajira, the Cuba Girl"**

1:30-3 p.m. at the Branigan

EVENTS*continued on page 24*

First Friday Art Walk

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EVENTS

continued from page 23

Memorial Library
Roadrunner Room,
Las Cruces
575-649-8786

Film: "All of Us Strangers"
Romance/Drama

7:30 p.m. at the Fountain
Theatre, 2469 Calle de
Guadalupe, Mesilla.
mesillavalleyfilm.org

THURSDAY, March 7

**Grant County
Family Movie: "Luca"**

1 p.m. Silver City Public
Library, 515 W. College Ave.,
Silver City
575-538-3672

Doña Ana County

**Live music: "A Thousand
Thanks"**

With Grazie Mille

**Classical art songs and
arias from Italy**

7 p.m. at Good Samaritan

Society, Las Cruces Village,
3011 Buna Vida Circle, Las
Cruces.

espmesilla@gmail.com

Film: "All of Us Strangers"
Romance/Drama

7:30 p.m. at the Fountain
Theatre, 2469 Calle de
Guadalupe, Mesilla.
mesillavalleyfilm.org

FRIDAY, March 8

Grant County

Live music: Jonathan

**Contreras
Singer-songwriter,
musician and actor**

6 p.m. at Open Space
Brewing, 11000 U.S.
Highway 180, Santa Clara
openspacebrewing.com

**Live Music: Barefoot
Bumblebees & Flicker
Alternative folk**

8 p.m. at Little Toad Creek
Brewery & Distillery, 200 N.
Bullard St. Silver City
575-956-6144

Luna County

**State Park Astronomy
Program**

Sunset, 7:30 p.m. at
Rockhound State Park

575-546-6182

Doña Ana County

"Songs in Cello and Cajon"
**Emma Alvarez de la Rosa,
cellist an William Reeves,
percussionist**

7 p.m. at Nopalito's
Galeria, 326 S. Mesquite,
Las Cruces
860-604-2918

Film: "Origin"
Runs through March 14

7:30 p.m. at the Fountain
Theatre, 2469 Calle de
Guadalupe, Mesilla.
mesillavalleyfilm.org

Play: "Home"

8 p.m. at the Black Box

Theatre, 430 N. Main St.
Las Cruces
no-strings.org

SATURDAY, March 9
Grant County

**Future Engineers
LEGO play for ages 6-12**

1 p.m. Silver City Public
Library, 515 W. College Ave.,
Silver City
575-538-3672

**Brea Burns & the Bolaros/
Katie May**

Honky Tonk/Country
7 p.m. at Whiskey Creek
Zócalo, 11786 U.S. Highway
180 E. Arenas Valley
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Live Music: Baracutanga South American ancestral traditions

9 p.m. at Little Toad Creek Brewery & Distillery, 200 N. Bullard St. Silver City
575-956-6144

Otero County**Guided Hike: Lawson Springs Trail**

10-11:30 a.m. meet at Oliver Lee Memorial State Park visitor center, 409 Dog Canyon Road
575-437-8284

Star Party

7-9 p.m. meet at Oliver Lee Memorial State Park group shelter, 409 Dog Canyon Road
575-437-8284

Country Music's "Ricochet"**Presented by Thrive**

7 p.m. at the Flickinger Center of Performing Arts, 1110 N. New York Ave., Alamogordo
flickingercenter.com

Lincoln County**Live music: "Satisfaction" Rolling Stones Tribute**

7 p.m. at the Spencer Theater for the Performing Arts, 108 Spencer Road, Alto
spencertheater.com

Sierra County**Second Saturday Art Hop**

6 p.m. Downtown Truth or Consequences
director@torcmainstreet.org

Doña Ana County**Farmers & Crafts Market of Las Cruces**

8:30 a.m.-1 p.m. at Plaza de

Las Cruces Downtown, Las Cruces
farmersandcraftsmarket
oflascruces.com

Storytellers of Las Cruces

10:30 a.m., COAS Downtown, 317 N. Main St. Las Cruces
575-524-8471

Play: "Home"

8 p.m. at the Black Box Theatre, 430 N. Main St. Las Cruces
no-strings.org

SUNDAY, March 10**Doña Ana County Intro to Plein Air Painting**

2-4 p.m. at the Good Samaritan Society, 3011 Buena Vida Circle, Las

Cruces
nmwatercolorssociety.org

Play: "Home"

2:30 p.m. at the Black Box Theatre, 430 N. Main St. Las Cruces
no-strings.org

Film: "Code: Debugging the Gender Gap" Science on Screen

6:30 p.m. at the Fountain Theatre, 2469 Calle de Guadalupe, Mesilla.
mesillavalleyfilm.org

MONDAY, March 11**Grant County Square Dancing**

3-5:30 p.m. at United Methodist Church, 314 W. College St. Silver City, Use

the side entrance
575-956-7186

WEDNESDAY, March 13 Grant County Farmers Market

9 a.m.-noon at Old Valley Market, 412 Highway 211 at the corner of Clark Road, in Gila
silvercityfarmersmarket.info

Otero County**Dinosaur World Live**

6 p.m. at the Flickinger Center of Performing Arts, 1110 N. New York Ave., Alamogordo
flickingercenter.com

Doña Ana County**Farmers & Crafts Market****of Las Cruces**

8:30 a.m.-1 p.m. at Plaza de Las Cruces Downtown, Las Cruces
farmersandcraftsmarket
oflascruces.com

Landscaping Your Backyard**With Leslie Bezner**

7 p.m. hybrid in-person an Zoom, NMSU Biology Annex, 3080 Williams Ave. Room 101, Las Cruces
lc@npsnm.org

Otero County**Preschool Story Time**

10:30 a.m. at the Alamogordo Public Library, 920 Oregon Ave. Alamogordo
575-439-4140

THURSDAY, March 14 Grant County**Game Day**

4 p.m. Silver City Public Library, 515 W. College Ave., Silver City
575-538-3672

EVENTS

continued on page 26



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MLS#40042. \$265,000

Main Office: 120 E. 11th St., Silver City NM • Toll Free (866) 538-0404 • Office (575) 538-0404
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EVENTS

continued from page 25

Live music: Forrest McCurren and Margaret McCurren Songs for good people who got bad grades

6 p.m. at Open Space Brewing, 11000 U.S. Highway 180, Santa Clara
openspacebrewing.com

Doña Ana County

Play: "Home"

7 p.m. at the Black Box Theatre, 430 N. Main St. Las Cruces
no-strings.org

Sierra County

Square Dancing

1-3:30 p.m. at the New Mexico Old Time Fiddlers Playhouse, 710 Elm St. in T or C
 575-313-9971 or
 505-804-3842

Doña Ana County

Finance Authority Workshop

10 a.m.-noon at Ls Cruces Council Chambers, 700 N. Main St., Las Cruces
 575-541-2150

FRIDAY, March 15

Grant County

Live: "Vanya & Sonia & Masha & Spike"

A Tony Winning Comedy
 7 p.m. at El Sol Theatre, 406 Bullard St., Silver City
silvercitycommunitytheater.com

Three Acts in One Night

Ak'chamel; Casper Allern; Kirk Mathews

5 p.m. and 7 p.m. at Whiskey Creek Zócalo, 11786 U.S. Highway 180 E. Arenas Valley
whiskeycreekzocalo.com

Doña Ana County

Film: "The Taste of Things"
 Runs through March 21

Support Groups

MONDAY

Silver City/Grant County New Hope Al-Anon Family Group — noon at First United Methodist Church, 314 W. College Ave. Silver City. Zoom ID: 389 907 739, Password 658776. Info: nmal-anon.com.

TUESDAY

Silver City/Grant County Co-Dependents Anonymous (beginning Jan. 9) — 5:30-6:30 p.m. at the Episcopal Church of the Good Shepherd, 615 N. Texas St. Silver City. Info: CoDAsilvercity@gmail.com

WEDNESDAY

Silver City/Grant County Arenas Valley Al-Anon Family Group — 6-7 p.m. at the Arenas Valley Church of Christ, 5 Race-track Road, Arenas. Zoom ID: 781471031; password:

954941; info: nmal-anon.com

Las Cruces/Mesilla

Overeaters Anonymous, hybrid on Zoom at noon each Wednesday at St. James Episcopal Church, 102 St. James St., Info: 610-762-3779.

Meditation and Healing Service

6 p.m. each Wednesday at Unity of Las Cruces, 575 N. Main St. Through meditation, experience the presence of God. A new service with Rev. Jennifer Kleitz. Info: 575-523-4847.

THURSDAY

Silver City/Grant County Adult Children of Alcoholic and Dysfunctional Families meeting — 6:30-7:30 p.m. at the United Methodist Church, 300 W. College Ave, Silver City.

Info: 575-567-9410.

Las Cruces/Mesilla

Grief Share Program, 2 p.m. Thursdays at Sierra Vista Community Church, 514 N. Telshor Blvd. Info: Robin Rice, 575-536-9535.

FRIDAY

Silver City/Grant County Women Embracing Recovery Al-Anon Family Group — 5:30-6:30 p.m. First United Methodist Church, 314 College Ave. Silver City. Zoom ID: 411 858 127; password: 954941; info: nmal-anon.com

SATURDAY

Las Cruces/Mesilla Overeaters Anonymous, hybrid on Zoom at 9:30 a.m. each Saturday at Peace Lutheran Church, 1701 Missouri Ave., Info: 575-405-9128.

Epilepsy Support & Education Services, Inc.

meetings. 1 p.m. to 2:30 p.m. second Saturday of every month at Thomas Branigan Memorial Library, 200 E. Picacho Info: 575-636-4500 or EpilepsySupportNM.org.

Breast Cancer Support Group

9:15 a.m. on the fourth Saturday of the month, at Memorial Medical Center Annex meeting room (entrance on the west side of the hospital). Info: Maricela at 505-453-1789.

SUNDAY

Las Cruces/Mesilla Grief Share Program. 3 p.m. Sundays at Morning Star Church, 2941 Morning Star. Program lasts for 13 weeks. Contact: Cris Fernandez, crisfern@me.com.

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"It's Your Vue, Make the Best of it"

7:30 p.m. at the Fountain Theatre, 2469 Calle de Guadalupe, Mesilla. mesillavalleyfilm.org

Play: "Home"

8 p.m. at the Black Box Theatre, 430 N. Main St. Las Cruces
no-strings.org

SATURDAY, March 16**Grant County****Watch the Silver High Band**

11 a.m. at Gough Park, Silver City
575-538-3672

Live: "Vanya & Sonia & Masha & Spike"**A Tony Winning Comedy**

7 p.m. at El Sol Theatre, 406 Bullard St., Silver City
silvercitycommunitytheater.com

Live Music: Rhythm Mystic Variety music

8 p.m. at Little Toad Creek Brewery & Distillery, 200 N. Bullard St. Silver City
575-956-6144

Lincoln County**Dinosaur World****Live****4-6 p.m. at the Spencer Theater for the**

Performing Arts, 108 Spencer Road, Alto
spencertheater.com

Sierra County**Old Time Fiddlers****Saturday Dance**

7 p.m. at the Old Time Fiddlers Playhouse, 710 Elm St., T or C
575-744-9137

**Otero County****Alamogordo Otero County Farmers Market**

8-10 a.m. in Alameda Park, 1987 White Sands Blvd. in Alamogordo
farmersmarketsnm.org

Guided Hike: Lawson Springs Trail

10-11:30 a.m. meet at Oliver Lee Memorial State Park visitor center, 409 Dog Canyon Road
575-437-8284

New York Avenue Ghost, History and Art Walk

10 a.m., starts at Studio Q, 1209 New York Ave., Alamogordo
575-520-2785

Animal Ambassadors

2-3 p.m. meet at Oliver Lee Memorial

State Park group shelter, 409 Dog Canyon Road
575-437-8284

St. Patty's Day Bash

6 p.m. at the Sgt. Willie Estrada Memorial Civic Center, 800 E. First St. in Alamogordo

575-439-4159

Doña Ana County**Farmers & Crafts Market of Las Cruces**

8:30 a.m.-1 p.m. at Plaza de Las Cruces Downtown, Las Cruces
farmersandcraftsmarketoflascruces.com

Maya Textile Sale Weaving for Justice

10 a.m.-3 p.m. in the Atrium of First Christian Church, 1809 El Paseo Road in Las Cruces
www.weaving-for-justice.org

Storytellers of Las Cruces

10:30 a.m., COAS Downtown, 317 N. Main St. Las Cruces
575-524-8471

Play: "Home"

8 p.m. at the Black Box Theatre, 430 N. Main St.

Las Cruces
no-strings.org

SUNDAY, March 17**Grant County****Live: "Vanya & Sonia & Masha & Spike"****A Tony Winning Comedy**

2 p.m. at El Sol Theatre, 406 Bullard St., Silver City
silvercitycommunitytheater.com

Sierra Sáhír**Belly Dance Troop**

2 p.m. at Whiskey Creek Zócalo, 11786 U.S. Highway 180 E. Arenas Valley
whiskeycreekzocalo.com

St. Paddy's Day Pub Crawl**Music all day**

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EVENTS

continued on page 28

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EVENTS

continued from page 27

Doña Ana County

Play: "Home"

2:30 p.m. at the Black Box Theatre, 430 N. Main St. Las Cruces
no-strings.org

Film: "Hell or High Water" Film Noir

7:30 p.m. at the Fountain Theatre, 2469 Calle de Guadalupe, Mesilla.
mesillavalleyfilm.org

MONDAY, March 18

Grant County

Square Dancing

3-5:30 p.m. at United Methodist Church, 314 W. College St. Silver City, Use the side entrance
575-956-7186

Live: "Vanya & Sonia & Masha & Spike"

A Tony Winning Comedy

7 p.m. at El Sol Theatre, 406 Bullard St., Silver City
silvercitycommunitytheater.com

TUESDAY, March 19

Grant County

Robot building

4 p.m. Silver City Public Library, 515 W. College Ave., Silver City
575-538-3672

WEDNESDAY, March 20

Grant County

Wednesday Farmers Market

9 a.m.-noon at Old Valley Market, 412 Highway 211 at the corner of Clark Road, Gila
silvercityfarmersmarket.info

"Hopi Quilts and Textiles as Cultural Artforms" Presentation by Carolyn O'Baby Davis



Sierra Sáhír Belly Dance Troop
March 17

5-6:30 p.m. at the Western New Mexico University Museum, W 10th St., Silver City
www.gcasnm.org

Sierra County
Square Dancing

1-3 p.m. at the New Mexico Old Time Fiddlers Playhouse, 710 Elm St. in T or C. Square dancing and refreshments

575-313-9971 or 505-804-3842

Doña Ana County
Farmers & Crafts Market of Las Cruces

8:30 a.m.-1 p.m. at Plaza de Las Cruces Downtown, Las Cruces
farmersandcraftsmarketoflascruces.com

THURSDAY, March 21

Grant County
Minecraft Club

4 p.m. Silver City Public Library, 515 W. College Ave., Silver City
575-538-3672

Lincoln County
Live performance: Forever Young

7 p.m. at the Spencer Theater for the Performing Arts, 108 Spencer Road,

Alto
spencertheater.com

Sierra County
Square Dancing

1-3:30 p.m. at the New Mexico Old Time Fiddlers Playhouse, 710 Elm St. in T or C
575-313-9971 or 505-804-3842

FRIDAY, March 22

Grant County

Live: "Vanya & Sonia & Masha & Spike"

A Tony Winning Comedy
7 p.m. at El Sol Theatre, 406 Bullard St., Silver City
silvercitycommunitytheater.com

Doña Ana County

Lenten Fish Fry

4-7 p.m. at the Good Samaritan Social Center, 3011 Buena Vida Drive, Las Cruces
480-220-3637

St. Patrick's Day Dinner
March 16th, March 17th & March 18th from 5pm-7pm

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Film: "Golden Years"
Runs through March 28
 7:30 p.m. at the Fountain Theatre, 2469 Calle de Guadalupe, Mesilla.
mesillavalleyfilm.org

SATURDAY, March 23
Grant County
Silver City Farmers Market
 9 a.m.-noon. 901 N. Pope St. in Silver City
silvercityfarmersmarket.info

Family Movie: "Strange World"
 4 p.m. Silver City Public Library, 515 W. College Ave., Silver City
 575-538-3672

Silver City String Beans Bluegrass
 7 p.m. at Whiskey Creek Zócalo, 11786 U.S. Highway 180 E. Arenas Valley
whiskeycreekzocalo.com

Live: "Vanya & Sonia & Masha & Spike"
A Tony Winning Comedy
 7 p.m. at El Sol Theatre, 406 Bullard St., Silver City
silvercitycommunitytheater.com

A night of Ska
 8 p.m. at Little Toad Creek

Brewery & Distillery, 200 N. Bullard St. Silver City
 575-956-6144

Otero County
Guided Hike: Lawson Springs Trail
 10-11:30 a.m. meet at Oliver Lee Memorial State Park visitor center, 409 Dog Canyon Road
 575-437-8284

Sierra County
Sierra County Farmers Market
 8:30-noon a.m., Ralph Edwards Park, 300 N. Riverside Drive, T or C
sierracountyfarmersmarket5@gmail.com
Rock & Gem Show
 9 a.m.-5 p.m. at the Sierra County Fairgrounds, 1321 Hyde Ave. in T or C
scrags.org

Old Time Fiddlers Saturday Dance
 7 p.m. at the Old Time Fiddlers Playhouse, 710 Elm St., T or C
 575-744-9137

Luna County
Saturday morning breakfast
 8-10 a.m. at the Deming American Legion Bataan

Post 4, 619 W. Spruce St., Deming
 575-546-8385

Lincoln County
Lincoln County Classic 4 Disc Golf Tournament
Oso Canyon, Moon Mountain and Grindstone Lake Disc Golf Courses, Lincoln County
 575-315-2785

Otero County
Alamogordo Otero County Farmers Market
 8-10 a.m. in Alameda Park, 1987 White Sands Blvd. in Alamogordo
farmersmarketsnm.org

Doña Ana County
Farmers & Crafts Market of Las Cruces
 8:30 a.m.-1 p.m. at Plaza de Las Cruces Downtown, Las Cruces

farmersandcraftsmarketoflascruces.com

Storytellers of Las Cruces
 10:30 a.m., COAS Downtown, 317 N. Main St. Las Cruces
 575-524-8471

SUNDAY, March 24
Grant County
Tiny House of Funk
 1-4 p.m. at Little Toad Creek Brewery & Distillery, 200 N.

Bullard St. Silver City
 575-956-6144

Live: "Vanya & Sonia & Masha & Spike"
A Tony Winning Comedy
 2 p.m. at El Sol Theatre, 406 Bullard St., Silver City
silvercitycommunitytheater.com

EVENTS

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Sierra County**Rock & Gem Show**

9 a.m.-5 p.m. at the Sierra County Fairgrounds, 1321 Hyde Ave. in T or C
scrags.org

Doña Ana County**Las Cruces Ukés Stilled Strings Benefit Concert**

3-4:30 p.m. at Morning Star United Methodist Church, 2941 Morningstar Drive, Las Cruces
lascrucesukes.com

New Horizons Orchestra Featuring Piano Virtuosi

3 p.m. at Atkinson Recital Hall, NMSU, Las Cruces
nhsocruces.com

MONDAY, March 25**Grant County****Square Dancing**

3-5:30 p.m. at United Methodist Church, 314 W. College St. Silver City, Use

the side entrance
575-956-7186

WEDNESDAY, March 27**Doña Ana County Farmers & Crafts Market of Las Cruces**

8:30 a.m.-1 p.m. at Plaza de Las Cruces Downtown, Las Cruces
farmersandcraftsmarket
oflascruces.com

Grant County**Nick Bower/Hemlocks w/ Taft****Experimental folk**

7 p.m. at Whiskey Creek Zócalo, 11786 U.S. Highway 180 E. Arenas Valley
whiskeycreekzocalo.com

THURSDAY, March 28**Grant County****Squishy Circuits: Play with connective dough**

4 p.m. Silver City Public Library, 515 W. College Ave., Silver City

575-538-3672

Songwriter's Showcase

7:30 p.m. at Whiskey Creek Zócalo, 11786 U.S. Highway 180 E. Arenas Valley
whiskeycreekzocalo.com

FRIDAY, March 29**Grant County****Casual Drifter Americana**

7 p.m. at Whiskey Creek Zócalo, 11786 U.S. Highway 180 E. Arenas Valley
whiskeycreekzocalo.com

Doña Ana County**Film: "Uproar" Runs through April 4**

7:30 p.m. at the Fountain Theatre, 2469 Calle de Guadalupe, Mesilla.
mesillavalleyfilm.org

SATURDAY, March 30**Grant County****Blues Dawg**

Classic Rock & Blues
8 p.m. at Whiskey Creek

Zócalo, 11786 U.S. Highway 180 E. Arenas Valley
whiskeycreekzocalo.com

Live Music: The Rudy Boy Experiment**SW rock and blues**

8 p.m. at Little Toad Creek Brewery & Distillery, 200 N. Bullard St. Silver City
575-956-6144

Otero County**Guided Hike: Lawson Springs Trail**

10-11:30 a.m. meet at Oliver Lee Memorial State Park visitor center, 409 Dog Canyon Road
575-437-8284

Lincoln County**Annual Bunny Run/Walk and Easter Egg Hunt**

6:30-10 a.m. at Cedar Creek Recreation Area, Ruidoso
575-257-5030

Sierra County**Old Time Fiddlers****Saturday Dance**

7 p.m. at the Old Time Fiddlers Playhouse, 710 Elm St., T or C
575-744-9137

Luna County**Saturday morning breakfast**

8-10 a.m. at the Deming American Legion Bataan Post 4, 619 W. Spruce St., Deming
575-546-8385

Doña Ana County**Farmers & Crafts Market of Las Cruces**

8:30 a.m.-1 p.m. at Plaza de Las Cruces Downtown, Las Cruces
farmersandcraftsmarket
oflascruces.com

Storytellers of Las Cruces

10:30 a.m., COAS Downtown, 317 N. Main St. Las Cruces

575-524-8471

SUNDAY, March 31 EASTER**Grant County****Live Music: Joe Baker Jazz, blues, western swing**

1-4 p.m. at Little Toad Creek Brewery & Distillery, 200 N. Bullard St. Silver City
575-956-6144

MONDAY, April 1**Grant County****Square Dancing**

3-5:30 p.m. at United Methodist Church, 314 W. College St. Silver City, Use the side entrance
575-956-7186

WEDNESDAY, April 3**Doña Ana County****Farmers & Crafts Market of Las Cruces**

8:30 a.m.-1 p.m. at Plaza de Las Cruces Downtown
farmersandcraftsmarket
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Setting Free the Reader

My parents' 'free-range' policy

In Las Cruces there has been some debate lately about what sorts of books should be available for general reading by middle- and high school students, and the process by which the school district considers challenges to books.

Two books in particular – “Jack of Hearts (and other parts)” and “A Court of Silver Flames” – have been singled out by two individuals who have taken up the issue for sexually explicit content, which they have taken to reading aloud to the school board during public meetings. (Surely this is not what the board members thought they were signing up for; but those meetings could do with some livening up.)

Notably, the books are not assigned reading material. They are simply books that have been included in school libraries for voluntary reading. So the question raised by the books' challengers is, what is “appropriate” (specially suitable, proper) reading material for school libraries?

While covering this issue, I have been reminiscing about my days as a precocious reader during my school years. My parents, both of them lifelong readers who also wrote, maintained a free-range policy for their offspring. I don't recall them forbidding me

from reading anything I wanted to read, “adult books” included. There were a few they suggested might bewilder me but they presumed, accurately, that I would give up on a book if it was frustrating me and turn to something else.

At the same time, I rather liked being a little bit over my head when I read a book, though not too much; standing in the lively space of comprehending the action and themes of the story but also having to look closely at what links were being made, what the symbolism was pointing to, asking my parents about historical context and unfamiliar words. Their attitude was: If the child can formulate the question, he deserves an answer. My father,

as I recall, was embarrassed to talk about sex but was sporting and honest about it.

This turned out all right, because reading is not, in itself, a corrupting influence.

It was disconcerting for my teachers, however. I remember a teacher spotting me with John Irving's “Setting Free the Bears,” and sitting with me at lunch to quiz me about it. She was a John Irving fan and familiar with the book. What did I make of the passage about a bear riding a bicycle? After discussing ideas of freedom and captivity a bit, I asked

whether she desired to open cages or close them. It wasn't intended as a pointed question but she left me alone after that; my parents got a note about what I had been seen reading; and my father spoke to me about making teachers nervous.

To be sure, John Irving's books were not among the library books at any school I attended; and the passages read aloud at these school board meetings strike me as more bluntly graphic than what I read in

my youth.

Still I would not object to my own children reading them, if they wanted to.

Algernon D'Ammassa married into Deming and has been raising a family in Luna County since 2008.



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PHOTO OF THE MONTH

“Through the tunnel and into the light” was taken in a culvert under Rock Canyon Road In Elephant Butte by Kathleen “Leeny” Forbes.

If you have a favorite recent photo capturing the nature of life and living in southern New Mexico please share it with us and we will consider it for publication. Submit photos to editor@desertexposure.com.



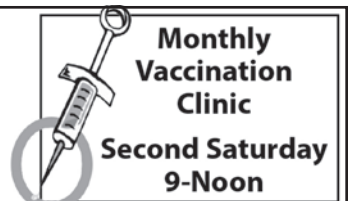
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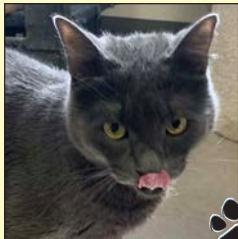
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Dodger, DSH, Orange Tabby, adult male

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Kobe, DSH, black and white, 5 month old male

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Mocha, DSH, Torti, 1 year old female

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Poppy, DLH, Silver Tabby, adult female

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Shadow, DSH, Siamese, 8 year old, already neutered male

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Elmo, Chih X, red coat, 12 week old male

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Georgie, Chih X, tan coat, 6 year old male

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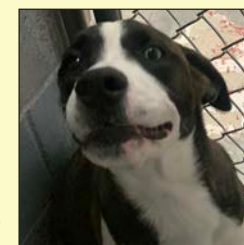
Hoss, Bully, tan and white, huge, 1 year old male

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Knox, German Shepard, black and tan, 2 year old male

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Sally, Lab X, brown and white, 9 month old female

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Thelma, Lab x, tan coat, 1 year old female

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