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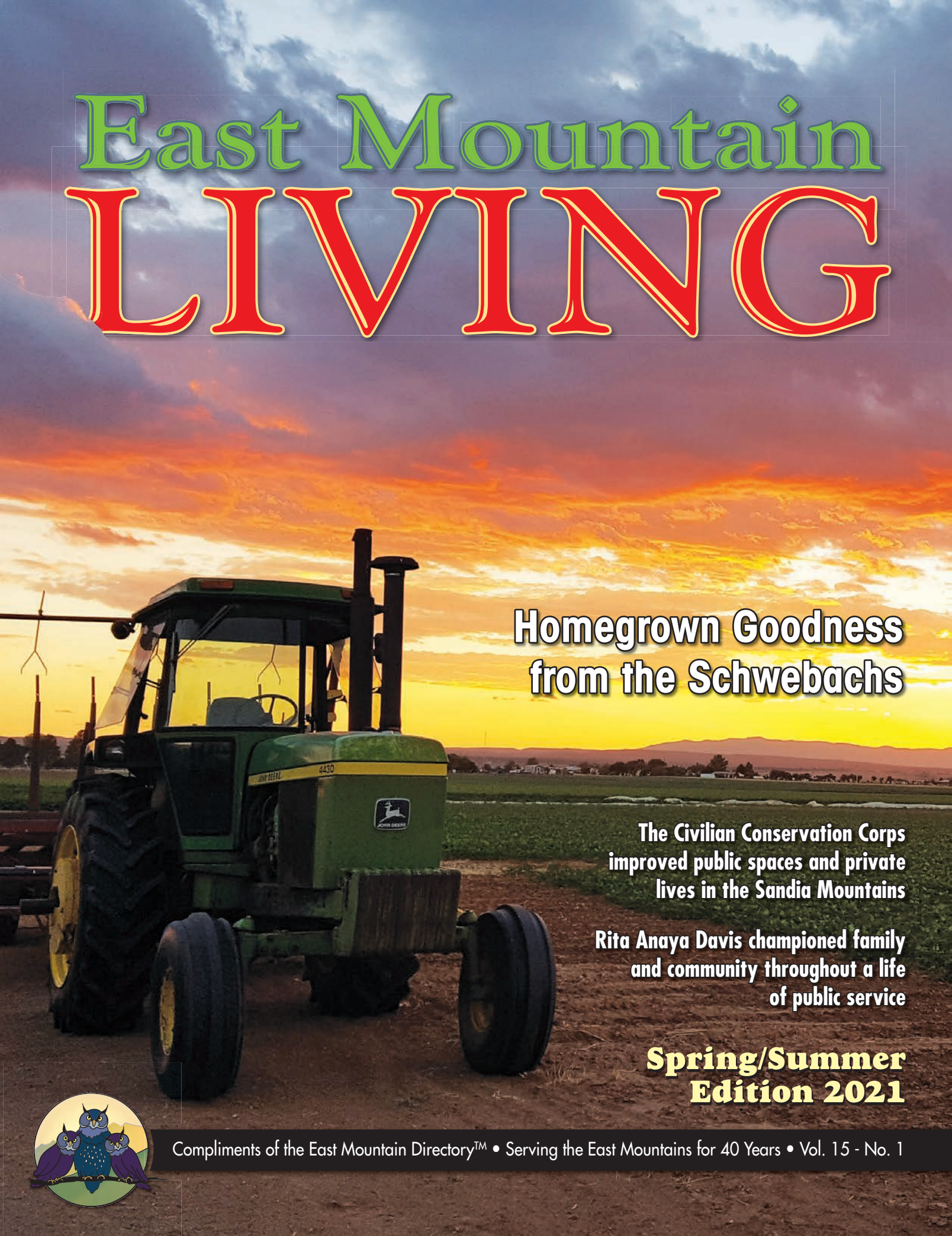

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Community Events • Spring 2021

Amigos de Cerrillos Hills State Park

Currently, the park has suspended its programming due to COVID-19, but it is open daily to New Mexico residents only from sunrise to sunset for hiking, mountain biking, horseback riding, and picnicking. Check the website for more information and park alerts: cerrilloshills.org

Man Alive 365 Food Drive

Cedar Crest

Cedar Crest Tire accepts contributions year round to benefit the East Mountain Pantry, but individuals and families in need can feel the crunch especially hard during the holidays. Drop your non-perishable food items off at their office at 1212 N Hwy 14 and they will transport to the Pantry. For more info call 505-281-9100.

Manzano Mountain Art Council

Mountainair

Sponsors a variety of programs and events year-round, including the popular Sunflower Festival, scheduled to resume this summer, date TBA. Check manzanomountainartcouncil.org for more info.

Vista Grande Community Center

Sandia Park

While many classes are still canceled or have moved online due to COVID-19, the fitness center is now open by appointment weekdays from 7 a.m. to 2 p.m. (505) 468-7500

On the Cover

Farm work gets underway as the sun peeks out from cloud cover on a recent morning at Schwebach Farm in Moriarty, NM. Photo courtesy of Schewach Farm.

Letter from the Editor

Rena Distasio

It's usually April when I sit down to write the editor's letter for our spring/summer issue, and it can be one of our wildest months of the year weather-wise. Last weekend I was out and about in 70-degrees. Now I'm staring out my window at a dusting of snow. But that's the reality of living in the East Mountains, and many people will happily trade the aggravations of city life for a few (okay, more than a few) snow days.

Speaking of looking out the window, I've not only lived in the East Mountains for the past 25 years but I've also worked here for 20 of them. From home. Given all that's gone on this past year, you're likely doing so as well, maybe permanently. Because for many people, 2020 will be the year they finally snagged a corner office . . . a corner of the kitchen, a corner of the dining room, a corner of the living room. Whether your transition to working from home was seamless or is still problematic, you'll likely find something helpful in Maggie Grimason's advice on how to productively work remotely on page 44.

I'd also like to welcome back to this issue Denise Tessier, who is with the East Mountain Historical Society and who has contributed several articles to *East Mountain Living* over the years. Denise wrote this issue's Women of the New Mexico Frontier column (page 24), which Dixie Boyle conceived and wrote for us for many years before handing over the reins last year when she and her husband retired. As luck would have it, though, Dixie didn't stop writing entirely. For this issue she was able to contribute a charming piece, page 32, on the return of Mountainair legend Clem "Pop" Shaffer's artwork to the town he called home for nearly 60 of his 84 years.

When it comes to assigning stories, we like to strike a balance between the historical and the contemporary, the latter of which always includes a piece on the artists and artisans who live and work in the region. This issue we've focused our attention on longtime East Mountain resident and master weaver Bethe Orrell, who many readers might have met at her former store, Good Fibrations, or at the popular East Mountain Fiber Farm & Studio Tour, which she co-founded in 2003. While Orrell closed Good Fibrations in 2011, her work is available on her website, as noted in Megan Kamerick's story on page 28.

An artist of another kind is now settled into her new location up here in the mountains. Aude Masters, who has owned and operated Le Paris, a French bakery, in Albuquerque for more than 20 years has now relocated her shop to the Turquoise Trail Center in Cedar Crest. That means mountain residents will have easy access to delicious, fresh-baked French breads, pastries, and other goodies. You can read her story on page 12.

Now the snow that was falling when I started this letter has ended, the sun is peeking out, and the air is noticeably less blustery—typical April! And, by the time you read this, things will likely be even warmer, as mid-May days give way to the full-on warmth of summer. We hope this issue finds you all well and ready to get out and about to enjoy another beautiful summer on the green side of the mountains.

Rena Distasio

Editor-in-chief

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Dixie, a retired history teacher, now works as a freelance writer and fire lookout on the Cibola National Forest. She has written numerous articles and books on New Mexico's history. Her latest book, *A History of the Shaffer Hotel*, was published in 2019.

Jeanne Drennan

Jeanne has lived in the East Mountains with her family since 2004. She is an occupational therapist, women's health counselor, freelance writer, and author of the book, *Live Well. Be Well, 14 Healing Habits to Extraordinary Wellness*. She loves blogging about health and wellness and making organic herbal remedies whenever she can.

Antonio Garcez

Antonio is one of the country's foremost experts in the paranormal, and he has written extensively about peoples' otherworldly experiences in a series of award-winning books. You can visit him at *www.ghostbooks.biz*

Maggie Grimason

Maggie is a writer living in Albuquerque. She contributes to many independent publications covering arts, science, and travel. When she's not writing, she's watching the birds.

Megan Kamerick

A journalist for 23 years, Megan has worked at business weeklies in San Antonio, New Orleans, and Albuquerque, and has produced and hosted shows and stories for New Mexico PBS, KUNM-FM in Albuquerque, National Public Radio, and Latino USA. She is the former president of the Journalism & Women Symposium and her TED talk on women and media has more than 340,000 views.

Mike Smith

Mike is the author of *Towns of the Sandia Mountains*, a writer for the *Weekly Alibi*, and is at work on a genre-expanding memoir, *Shadows of Clouds on the Mountains*. His essays have appeared in *Tin House*, *Booth*, *Eunoia Review*, *The Florida Review*, *The Baltimore Review*, and elsewhere.

Tom Smylie

Tom and his wife, Cherie, have lived in Edgewood since his retirement in 1994 from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service as Assistant Regional Director. A graduate of the University of New Mexico, he has worked in wildlife education and research for most of his life. As an avid falconer, he conducts educational programs with live raptors at various organizations, including Wildlife West in Edgewood, and continues his 50-year affiliation with the Peregrine Fund in Boise, Idaho.

Denise Tessier

Denise is an award-winning New Mexico journalist who has written previously for *East Mountain Living* about the late Sheriff's Deputy Tomás "Tom" Herrera and notorious 1880s outlaw Marino Leyba. She is past president of the East Mountain Historical Society and has been on its board of directors more than 25 years, currently serving as historian and long-time newsletter editor.

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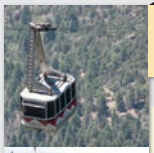

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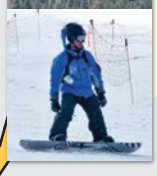

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Wooded hills roll behind the assorted buildings and tents of Sandia Park Camp F-8-N, shown here in this photograph from 1939.

The Civilian Conservation Corps

A great New Deal that improved public spaces and private lives

BY MICHAEL FARRELL SMITH • *PHOTOS COURTESY OF DIRK VAN HART*

If you watch John Ford's 1940 adaptation of John Steinbeck's novel *The Grapes of Wrath*, a classic film with second-unit footage shot here in central New Mexico (Laguna Pueblo, Route 66, Tijeras Canyon, Ranchitos, San Antonio, Cedar Crest), note the scene in which the besieged Joad Family, jalopy refugees in their own country from the Dust Bowl and the Great Depression, arrive at an experimental government-run camp, a program of Roosevelt's New Deal, and experience relief and joy at this unexpected opportunity to eat, drink, live, and work.

The scene illustrates just how essential such programs were for people in that time of severe poverty, inequality, and deprivation, and it sends my mind to the literal remains of another related and overlapping part of New Mexico history: The Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC), one of the many government programs of the New Deal that offered jobs improving and/or developing public land to almost anyone willing and able to work. I'm reminded of the many CCC buildings, tents, and people of Camp F-8-N, near Sandia Park, in the Sandia Mountains east of Albuquerque—and the many bridges, campgrounds, roads, and buildings they built that can still be seen and touched today.

The Soil Soldiers: The Civilian Conservation Corps in the Great Depression, a 1976 book by Leslie Alexander Lacy, is a good place to start for an overview of the CCC—documenting "Roosevelt's New Deal Army," a scattered collection of more than two million young men ages 18 to 25, working hard, before the program was defunded by Congress in 1942 and its monies diverted to fighting World War II.

Lacy writes:

> For a dollar a day plus room and board[,] they went to work fighting dust storms, restocking streams, and saving the forests of America. It was a very popular force, and young men from all over the country adjusted themselves to living close to the land in a quasi-military environment while they literally saved several "dust bowl" states from blowing off the map, planted half the trees ever planted in America, and kept their families from relief... The CCC was a good idea that remains a good idea . . .

Author Stephen Ausherman has found in his research, and mentioned in his guidebook *60 Hikes within 60 Minutes: Albuquerque*, that almost any young man could join the CCC, just as long as

From left to right: Felix Cabrera, Fred Leckman, Max Trujillo, and A.B. Barela in this photograph from 1998. With the exception of Leckman, all of the men were former CCC camp workers.

they had at least three good teeth, so they could chew their own food.

Roosevelt had established the CCC in 1933, and that same year, one of the first CCC camps in New Mexico was established in the Sandias, near the village of San Antonito and the then-young mountain community of Sandia Park. This camp, Camp F-8-N, was first located back in Sulphur Canyon, from 1933 to 1935, a little city of billowing white tents, firewood piles, and parked trucks in a wooded valley.

Later, from 1935 on and off until 1941, the camp was situated in a clearing at the base of sloping pine fields near the future location of Pete Jojola's first food stand and then Tinkertown Museum, Ross Ward's epic out-of-time folk-art world. This second site was ultimately more developed, with buildings and roads among the rows of tents. The young men, or "huskies," of the camp, known collectively as Company 814, came from various mountain towns and villages—Tijeras, Sandia Park, Placitas—as well as from Albuquerque and elsewhere in the

Continued on next page

A small group of camp F-8-N workers head perhaps to the nearby Tilton Store on a weekend in 1939.

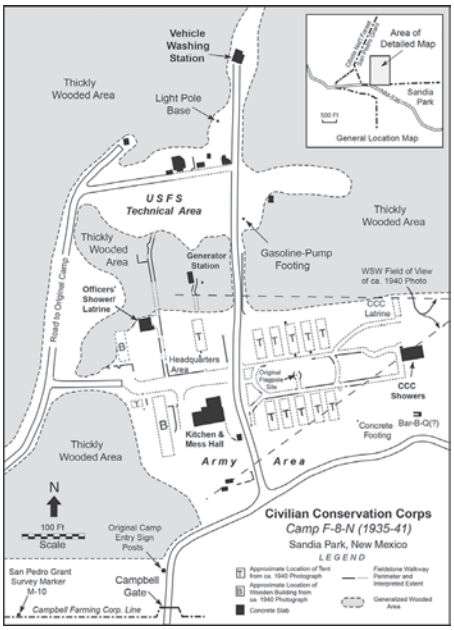
Continued from previous page

state. Huskies worked at least 40 hours a week and were paid $30 at the end of every month, $25 of which they had to send to their families. Weekends were for dancing and drinking in San Antonito, which sometimes resulted in lasting relationships and marriages.

Up until at least 2006, the surviving members of Company 814 who were still in the area would meet at a now-closed Shoney's Restaurant on Menaul Boulevard, in Albuquerque, to reminisce over breakfast foods about that time and that camp and that fruitful experiment, the CCC having formed a basis for many other future programs—and I was lucky enough to get to join them more than once, while researching *Towns of the Sandia Mountains*, my 2006 photo-history book.

All the former huskies, then with oxygen tanks and/or walkers, would transform into good-natured young men when they laughed as they recalled their expe-

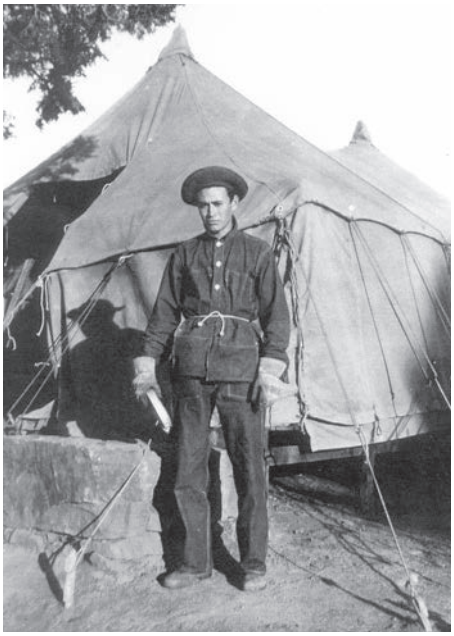
The exact date of this photo of Camp F-8-N staff is unknown. A.B. Barela, seen in the color photo on the previous page, is seated in the center row, far left.



TOP: *A detailed map of Camp F-8-N.*

ABOVE: *Workers construct the still-standing Kiwanis cabin at Camp F-8-N in 1936.*

RIGHT: *CCC worker Felix Cabrera is pictured at Camp F-8-N in 1939.*



riences building the stone Juan Tabo and La Cueva campground buildings and picnic tables, or using shovels to grade the road up to Sandia Peak, or building the photogenic stone Kiwanis cabin on Sandia Peak, or playing pranks on one another in their tents, or the time one of them left the lunch truck's back doors open on the road up to the Crest and a black bear climbed inside and ate everyone's sandwiches. They talked also about those dances in San Antonito, and about how many of the area parents didn't like them, but the young people, at least, usually did.

Robert Julyan and Mary Stuever's *Field Guide to the Sandia Mountains* contains an excellent list of much of the "elegant stonework characteristic of CCC projects" done in the Sandias by the huskies of Camp F-8-N and its various auxiliary camps, all of which can still be visited. And Mike Coltrin's *Sandia Mountain Hiking Guide* contains helpful information for anyone wishing to find the now-ruined overgrown trailside foundations of Camp F-8-N's two sites.

It is of course rewarding to read about this time and place, but encountering actual physical remnants of it after learning about it can feel absolutely electric. Touch a crumbling slab of concrete that once served as a tent platform, release your historic imagination, and find yourself transported back in time, as those laughing, grinning old men were transported back over photographs. Think of that pop-up culture; the individual lives within it; the hope offered to them all as they worked year-after-year, from May to November; the anecdotes and moments lived; and the legacy they left behind—a legacy of real-life locations, improved and lasting, allowing others to connect with nature and the land, but also the immortal legacy of a good idea—a legacy outlasting even rock.

Much thanks to Dirk Van Hart for his help with photographs for this article. His book Camps and Campsites of the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) in New Mexico, 1933-1942 *came out in 2020 and can be purchased through Amazon.*

Baker's Delight

The owner of longtime Albuquerque-based Le Paris bakery moves her operations to Cedar Crest

BY MAGGIE GRIMASON

PHOTOS COURTESY OF LE PARIS BAKERY

Having years of experience problem-solving the challenges of both the altitude and the vagaries of American water and flour, Masters produces boules, baguettes, and pastries as close to authentic French as you can get.

It's late in the day when I arrive at the Albuquerque storefront of Le Paris, so the door is locked and the front of house lights are off, though the afternoon light bouncing off the cheery pink walls offers its own glow. In the back, flashes of hands in motion across steel tables come into view. I knock, and Aude Masters, with the quick step of someone who stays busy, rushes to the front door, twists the lock open, and greets me like an old friend.

We sit at one of the Paris-cafe-style metal tables by the big windows that front the bakery, and Masters presents me with a box of four of her tarts. Each precisely scalloped crust is baked to a warm shade of buttery brown with fillings of almond and lemon. They are each so perfectly formed that it's hard to believe they're real. Yet for an artist who has been working at the craft of baking for the last 27 years, such quality has become the norm and has won Masters a devoted crowd of admirers well beyond city limits.

I'm here to talk about her history and artistry and her second, soon to be only, location in Cedar Crest, which she opened in 2019 In her bubbly way, as I offer compliment after compliment (the tarts are as delicious as they are beautiful), she offers up bits of explanation about the origin of her expertise. "You know Chef Ramsay?" she asks, every syllable colored by her charming French accent. She's referring to the volatile British reality show chef, and says that's how her teachers were when she attended pastry school in Paris. "It's very French," she adds with a laugh. "You have to execute everything perfectly."

And so, such perfection has been a habit for Masters throughout her decades of work. An artist even outside of the bakery (her most current pieces made from upcycled metals are in the windows and wrapped over display racks behind us), she explains how early on in life she wanted to be a graphic designer. However, "there were no jobs in that at that time," she remembers, and so she spent a year working at a florist in Paris, carefully arranging bouquet after bouquet during something of a gap year. At the end of that year, she began her culinary training, specifically in pastries, chocolates, and candies. In France—she's quick to note—bread is its own course of study.

> Masters' clientele has steadily grown, and they walk through her doors daily to snatch up cream puffs, French bread, cookies, meringues, and other "goodies," as she refers to her creations.

There were 70 students in her class, only two of whom were women. At a time when it was rare in France to see a woman working anywhere but at the cash register in a bakery, Masters committed to the hard work, the stress, and the alienation that came with the very serious study of preparing pastries. It was a hard road, and among her few classmates, dozens dropped out.

She graduated in 1995 and in 1999 began to look for her own shop. After locating one for sale in Albuquerque of all places, she decided to buy it for the simple fact that it was "affordable and available." She didn't immediately find herself at home in New Mexico, nor did her "fancy French pastries." Yet, in other ways, her move to the Southwest felt like something of a return.

The mountains on the horizon and the heat in the air reminded her of where she was born, the small island of St. Martin in the Caribbean. Situated east of Puerto Rico and a bit north of Saint Kitts and Nevis, it's split down the middle between French and Dutch settlements. While in other ways New Mexico is wildly different from the Caribbean, and certainly from Paris, something about its food, topography, and people resonated with her.

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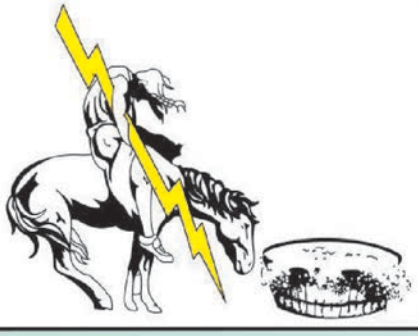

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LEFT: *The Le Paris logo in white icing tops a Napoleon.*

ABOVE LEFT: *A fruit tart with fresh blueberries, strawberries, kiwi, and peaches on a bed of pastry cream atop a pastry crust.*

ABOVE RIGHT: *Aude Masters with her husband, Josh Masters.*

Continued from previous page

In the decades that have passed since then, both Masters and the state around her have changed. All those fancy French pastries are now in high-demand, and Le Paris has moved its home base to Cedar Crest, slowly transitioning the Albuquerque business to full operation in the East Mountains, where Masters and her family live. Her clientele has steadily grown, and they walk through her doors daily to snatch up cream puffs, French bread, cookies, meringues, and other "goodies," as Masters refers to her creations. They visit her at festivals and farmers' markets, and have followed her to every storefront she's ever baked out of. The new bakery in a small plaza on North 14 is cozy and close to home, a pocket of the region that Masters has fallen in love with.

"It's different," she explains of the character of the place. It's hard to put into words, so she uses examples. Like greeting everyone she sees and feeling like neighbors even if they live miles apart. Watching children she's known since they were babies grow up. The surrounding nature that she simply describes as "the green." The quality of snow. The drive through the canyon into the city. She bookends her examples with the simple but powerful sentiment that because of these little differences, "it's special."

Yet when it comes to the daily hustle of getting the work done, there are just as many—and much less charming—differences. From the quality of butter and yeast, variations between the "summer flour" and "winter flour" sourced stateside, to the wild fluctuations in humidity throughout any given week in New Mexico, baking here can be difficult even for those with a highly trained eye for proofing time, baking temperatures, and the subtle

Cinnamon twists and an assortment of danishes are just a few of the pastry options available at Le Paris.

variations in ingredients. Over time, "the baking will teach you how to react," she says. Which is precisely how she picked up her bread-baking techniques, teaching herself over the course of many years, steadily adjusting every element until she hit on what works.

"I bake to make people happy," Masters says. "I just want to see them enjoy themselves."

It's for that reason that she rises early and works long hours almost every single day of the week. "It's like having a baby," she says of her role as owner and operator, "it controls you." But underlying the effort, the time, and the loss of sleep is the simple dedication to the craft. She's put in as much as 120 hours in a single week, dozing for a half hour at a time amid the ovens and other equipment. She mulls over the memory of those hectic weeks and extends the baby metaphor with the practical wisdom of a parent whose baby is all grown up: "You have to love it."

And love is the only way the effort she's put into Le Paris can be explained. "Everything you see here, everything I make," she gestures broadly, "I love it. If I didn't love it, I wouldn't make it." She laughs out loud and then says, "And because if you don't eat it, I will."

12220 N. Hwy 14, Ste #2 (in the Turquoise Trail Center, just north of the Cedar Crest post office) • (505) 299-4141

Turkey Vulture Culture

Mother Nature's clean-up crew has a lot to teach us about the cycle of life

BY TOM SMYLIE

A turkey vulture stands on a wooden post. The birds evolved their distinctive naked red heads as a result of their feeding patterns, digging deep into animal carcasses.

In school we learned about food chains, or the movement of food from organism to organism. A basic chain begins with plants, which receive nourishment from the soil and are eaten by grazing animals, and ends with predators, who eat the grazing animals.

For some time, I believed that animals like wolves, eagles, and lions were at the top of the food chain. Now I know there's one more step not usually considered and that's the role played by scavenger animals like vultures.

Here in New Mexico that means turkey vultures. You may have noticed them soaring through the air as they scout for food or gathered in groups at the side of the road as they pick apart a carcass. Think of them as the final link in the food chain: nature's diligent sanitation workers.

While not our most beautiful bird, they are an impressive one, with large, black bodies weighing in at about four pounds and standing two feet tall. They have five-to-six-foot wingspans with silver-colored under-wings. Close observation shows a naked red head like that of a turkey, a feature unique to these birds that evolved due to the way they feed, by digging deep into animal carcasses. Their featherless heads help them stay clean, plus allow ultraviolet sunlight to burn off unwanted pathogens collected from eating decaying animals. Their featherless legs likewise keep them clean from offal.

Sunlight also allows vultures to warm up and dry off before flying, which is why you'll often see groups of them sunning themselves with open wings. This is particularly important in the mornings, since their body temperature drops some six degrees when roosting at night.

Unlike other birds of prey, turkey vultures don't kill their food. They lack the powerful feet to catch and hold their prey but compensate by having an exceptionally strong bite, which allows them to easily tear into carcasses. They are able to feed on diseased and decaying, but not rotten, carcasses because of an amazing digestive system with a ph of zero (a thousand times more acidic than humans), which grants them immunity from diseases like anthrax, botulism, rabies, and other deadly pathogens. Additionally, they defecate on their feet, which not only helps to keep them cool but, along with their strong digestive juices, further kills off bacteria and other pathogens since their urine acts as an antiseptic wash, thus giving their legs and feet a white appearance.

Turkey vultures are harmless, but when stressed they possess a repulsive but effective defense mechanism: regurgitating their last meal. This mass of foul-smelling, partially digested meat is enough to drive most attackers away. Let me put it this way: I know from personal experience that I'd rather be sprayed by a skunk than regurgitated on by a vulture!

On the ground, these birds have an ungainly, hopping walk, but in the air they are masters of static soaring flight. They seldom flap their wings, taking advantage instead of rising thermal air. In flight they are often confused with eagles, however, eagle wings protrude straight from the body and they fly in a stable manner. By contrast, the turkey vulture

holds its wing in a V or dihedral position, with its body hanging beneath the wings, and it has a wobbly, side-to-side bouncing flight profile.

Like other birds of prey, turkey vultures have exceptional eyesight, but also possess the unique advantage of having a keen sense of smell. They're able to detect the odorous gasses of a decomposing animal from over a mile away, even when carcasses are buried or not visible. Once a carcass is detected, they change their flight pattern, alerting other patrolling vultures of a potential meal. Being gregarious, it's not unusual to see 20 or more vultures feeding on the same carcass. This behavior alerts other scavengers such as crows, magpies, ravens, and raptors to a potential meal.

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Turkey vultures are the only species of vulture that lives in New Mexico, and like all birds of prey they are protected. They arrive in our state in spring, stay the summer and fall, and then migrate south to Mexico and South and Central America for the winter. While here in April and May, they will nest either on ledges or in caves, abandoned hawk nests, or old buildings. They do not build nests but instead lay two to three eggs on a flat surface. The eggs are cream-colored with brown spots and hatch in 30 to 40 days, with the chicks fledging in 9 to 10 weeks. They remain with their parents until the fall migration.

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Turkey vultures are the most abundant of the three species of vultures found in the United States. The other two are the Black Vulture of the southern and midwestern sections of the United States and the majestic California condor, which is presently confined to Arizona, Utah, and California.

Five hundred years ago, condors could be found throughout the Southwest, including New Mexico, and along the Pacific Coast. However, by the 1960s, their numbers dramatically declined due to habitat destruction, poaching, and poisoning from eating fragments of lead bullets found in the carcasses of killed game animals or in the remains of their gut piles. By 1987, there were only 22 condors left in the wild, placing the largest flying bird in North America—with a wingspan of nine-and-a-half feet, a height of four feet tall, and a weight of 20 pounds—on the brink of extinction.

In order to save the species, these remaining wild birds were trapped and placed in specially designed breeding chambers. With the cooperation of federal and state wildlife agencies and private conservation organizations, progeny from the wild captive birds were released back into their former home range to begin the reestablishment of a natural wild population. From the 22 birds captured in 1987, through captive breeding and the cooperation of hunters who agreed not to use lead bullets, we now have over 330 wild California condors soaring the skies of Utah, Arizona, and California.

TOP: Wings extended, a turkey vulture floats on rising thermal air. The wingspans of turkey vultures typically reach five or six feet.

ABOVE: A turkey vulture picks over the remnants of an animal carcass.

Thankfully, turkey vultures are not in peril. Although they won't win any beauty contests—and many people might find their eating habits repugnant—we can still admire and appreciate the critical role they play as nature's sanitation workers by removing dead and decaying animals, thereby helping to recycle nutrients and contributing to a healthier and cleaner environment.

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Brought to you Fresh by the Schwebachs

For over 50 years locals have enjoyed the home-grown goodness of this small family farm

BY JEANNE C DRENNAN, OT/L

PHOTOS COURTESY OF SCHWEBACH FARM

If you live in the East Mountains, you have surely tasted the heavenly sweet corn or the scrumptious pinto and bolita beans grown by Schwebach Farm in Moriarty. A visit to the Schwebach family's quaint farm store or one of its several roadside markets during the August thru mid-October harvest has long been a favorite seasonal outing for folks in the area. Although 2020 presented many challenges, it thankfully did not deter loyal customers, as the farm stands remained open and heavily frequented.

"Overall, 2020 was a very good season, with regards to the demand for local produce, and we're very thankful for that," says Dean Schwebach, who together with his wife, Ive, runs the farm that was started by Dean's parents over 50 years ago.

Certainly no strangers to the ebb and flow of farm life, Dean and Ive Schwebach met the challenging times of 2020 head-on by revamping their website and launching the Schwebach Farm online store, giving them the ability to serve the community by offering curbside pick-up before the farm store even opened for the season. The Schwebachs will continue to offer the online store option this season as well. "It's a seamless transaction," Dean says. Just make your selections and pay online two days prior to the deadline, then on the predetermined day and time, show up and the staff will deliver the order to your car.

As the country song goes, *the more things change, the more things stay the same*... Beans, potatoes, carrots, and, of course, the sweet corn that remains synonymous with the Schwebach Farm name are still going strong. In addition, the family is now growing okra, a wider variety of melons, and more garden vegetables. "We haven't done anything extravagant as far as adding new varieties," Dean says, "but we're experimenting with new varieties within our current vegetables, as we've always done."

Additionally, the Schwebachs actually decreased the farm's size, limiting the amount of sweet corn and beans they're able to grow while allowing them to be more intensive with all their crops. In

2015, due to water concerns, they cut back on some of their cash crops, taking them from 110 acres to a little less than 80 and decreasing the output by about 30 percent. Being very conscious of water usage in the high desert, subsurface drip irrigation was established on 100 acres which, Dean says, "helped tremendously in staying efficient with our water."

The Schwebachs have long had a heart to teach people how to grow their own food so they can in turn teach their children and perhaps recover a way of life that's being lost. They want people to know that even on a smaller scale, they can be very productive. With the exception of 2020, they have consistently offered growers classes at Bethel Community Storehouse in Moriarty, and hopefully that opportunity will be restored in 2021.

In 2017, Schwebach Farm introduced the CSA (Community Supported Agriculture) model, which enables consumers to purchase food directly from the farmers who grow it. They began by offering 30 membership shares, and in 2020 that number had grown to 60. This season the Schwebachs are considering offering 100 shares. Members can choose from full shares, where they receive a box every week for 16 to 18 weeks, or half shares that allow members to receive one box ev-

Continued on next page

FACING PAGE, TOP: *Schwebach Farm is synonymous with corn, and their stands are a fixture on local roadsides during harvest season.*

FACING PAGE, BELOW: *The Schwebach farm store, which sells a variety of farm goods as well as products from other local vendors.*

TOP: *The family hopes to resume their popular Dinner in the Field events starting this fall.*

ABOVE: *The USDA tested the Schwebach's corn a few years back and found zero pesticide residue.*

RIGHT: *The Schwebach family: Dean, Ive, and their six children.*

Continued from previous page

ery other week, equaling 8 to 9 boxes over a four-month period. Either way, by participating, CSA members help ensure the ongoing presence of their local farm in the community, become connected with their food and the people who grow it, and provide nutritious, healthy, locally grown food for themselves and their families.

To provide their customers with a greater variety of goods, the Schwebachs are now offering a selection of products from neighboring producers in their market as well, including local green chile sausage and beef, lamb from just west of Fort Sumner, milk and yogurt from Clovis, and cheese from Tucumcari.

In addition, the family's short-term vacation rental, located at the farm, makes a nice option for people if they want to get out of town and spend a couple of nights in the country. Combining a few night's stay with a garden u-pick-it or an evening bonfire makes for a relaxing and fun getaway.

This fall the Schwebachs also hope to resume their Dinners in the Field, which they began in 2018 as a family-style event incorporating an introductory talk, 30-minute farm tour, farm-to-table dinner, and evening music. The Schwebachs have been working closely with Daniel Pachini of Roots Farm Cafe in Tijeras to prepare the menu using fresh ingredients grown in the Schwebach's fields. "It's a lot of work to arrange in the middle of harvest season," Dean says, "but it's also a lot of fun."

All produce is non-GMO, and while the farm is not certified organic, the

Schwebachs continue to utilize organic practices in their crops, which are managed by hand as opposed to machines. As always with their conventionally grown crops, one of which is their sweet corn, they strive to minimize the use of synthetic products. "Sweet corn," Dean says, "is one of the best crops to grow conventionally because it doesn't absorb pesticides thanks to the husks protecting the kernels." In fact, a few years back, the USDA did a test on their corn and found zero pesticide residue.

The 53-year history of Schwebach Farm continues to be one of family and faith. Dean's parents moved to the Estancia Valley in 1960 and eight years later they purchased the land that would become the farm and built the home that Dean, Ive, and their children live in today. The following year, the Schwebachs grew their first crop. In 2018, the family celebrated 50 years on the property with a big anniversary party, complete with a corn-eating contest and other fun activities. Their philosophy remains simple and refreshing: They strive to honor God in all they do, provide food for their family, be good stewards over what has been entrusted to them, and offer good quality food that their neighbors can afford. The entire family of eight continues to be involved to some degree in running the farm. "There's always so much going on during the season," Dean says, "but it's such a blessing that we get to work together."

Dean and Ive Schwebach realize that people have choices when it comes to buying produce, and while they are always grateful for the support of the community, they were particularly thankful for the loyalty of their customers in 2020.

For a complete listing of their produce and all the happenings on the farm, visit schwebachfarm.com

Rita Anaya Davis

Moriarty's "local hero" was a champion for her family and community

BY DENISE TESSIER • *PHOTOS COURTESY OF FAMILY OF RITA DAVIS*

When Moriarty's Mike Anaya was nominated to be interviewed for the East Mountain Historical Society's oral history project in 2010, he insisted that his younger sister, Rita Carmen Anaya Davis, be recorded for posterity as well.

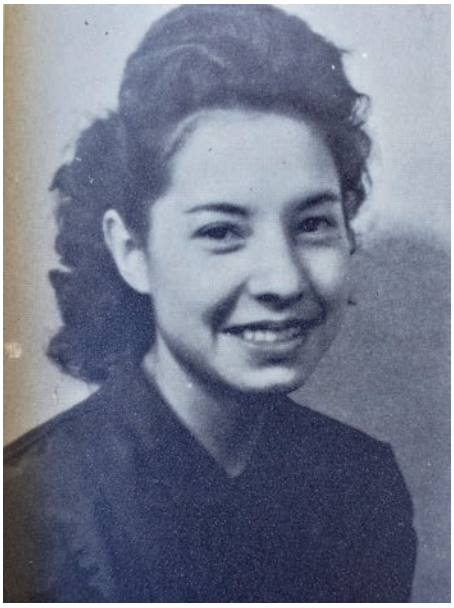
As it turns out, this female member of the Anaya family—long-time movers and shakers whose ranks include a New Mexico governor—spent several decades of her life facilitating the growth and success of Moriarty and Torrance County.

Anaya family roots pre-date Moriarty's 1902 founding by two years, and the family claims a maternal aunt, Virginia Pino, was the first baby born there, in 1905, once it became a town. Moriarty didn't incorporate, however, until 1953, and Rita Davis, who was born there in 1931, helped shepherd its transition to the modern age. "We watched it go from village to town to city," she said in an oral history interview that Anabel Maldonado Sanchez and I conducted in 2012.

Even before she finished high school, young Rita's talents were recognized. In 1949, she wrote a song, "Sitting in the Moonlight (With Your Honey)", that was published and recorded in Hollywood. It was one of countless poems she wrote throughout her life "just for fun."

Soon after graduating as 1950 Moriarty High School valedictorian (in a class of seven), she married high school sweetheart John Davis; on January 1, 1951, days after her 20th birthday, Rita was hired as Torrance County deputy school superintendent, working out of the County Courthouse in Estancia.

Rita didn't go to college, but she was a quick study; in four years, she was acting superintendent. A year later, she became Torrance County deputy treasurer. A few months into 1955, she left the job to stay home with her toddler, John Wayne, and newborn son, Joe. But two years later she was appointed Moriarty city clerk-treasurer, and held that position for 26 years, through the birth of two daughters (Rita Angelita and Monica) and the creation of numerous services and regional successes, including a few "firsts." Whatever the effort, noted brother Mike, Rita handled the paperwork. At 92, Mike is the oldest living Moriarty resident born in the town, himself a former city councilor and owner of Mike's Friendly Store and El Comedor restaurant.



While still in high school, a song Davis wrote, "Sitting in the Moonlight (With Your Honey)," was published and recorded in Hollywood.

Working together, Rita and Mike accomplished a lot for the community. They helped set up a park, start an annual Fourth of July celebration, and prevent I-40 from completely bypassing the town. In 1962, Rita was instrumental in bringing water and sewer to city residents, going door to door with another employee explaining the benefits and acquiring signatures on contracts.

Soon after, she embarked on the two-year process of establishing the Estancia/Mountainair/Willard (EMW) Gas Association, a municipality-owned utility that required legislative action to form. The system benefits three towns as well as irrigation farmers, who at the time needed an alternative to pricey propane. Rita did the paperwork, took minutes at meetings (Mike was on the board) and using data from each town's meter readers did the first billing, by hand, "on a little statement book I bought from Mike's Friendly Store," she remembered.

With Mike and brother Toney, who later became governor of New Mexico but then was working for Sen. Joseph Montoya, she helped Moriarty build its

Rita Davis far right, and her staff, left to right: Shirley Gallant, Colleen Bunton, Susan Encinias (seated), and Dolly Encinias, in 1974. Davis and Gallant put together a series of scrapbooks that helped Moriarty win the designation of Cleanest Town in a national contest in 1966 and 1968.

first community building, possibly the only structure west of the Mississippi built under the USDA's Neighborhood Facilities Administration.

Rita stepped up wherever she saw a need outside her official clerk-treasurer role as well. Daughter Monica Astorga likes to joke that her parents had the "most happening bedroom in Moriarty."

But it was no joke: For more than 40 years, Rita (or whoever was handy) called in reports at least twice daily after the National Weather Service expressed a need for readings near Moriarty airport. Wind speed and direction towers in the Davis backyard sent data to devices located in their bedroom.

Because John was police chief, the bedroom also housed a police scanner that consistently squawked, as Moriarty in the '60s straddled busy two-lane Route 66. John's closet served as "evidence" space, Monica says, and a dedicated line—separate from the house phone—rang with emergency calls. "From Santa Rosa to Albuquerque, we were the only emergency number listed," Rita said, adding that there were lots of accidents, many involving travelers in Model T's and A's who'd get "antsy" to pass caravans of farmers hauling wood to sell in Albuquerque.

The alarm for Moriarty's branch of First National Bank of Belen was also located in the bedroom. Upon removing it in 1988, the bank thanked the Davises, noting, "Allowing our alarm unit in your home must be considered . . . far above the normal consideration of any law enforcement officer and his family . . ."

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In addition, the Davis's porch for a time served as an "office," where residents could pay water bills. Folks could also get driver's licenses and plates there because Rita made it an MVD satellite, which John Wayne said operated from 1957 to 1983.

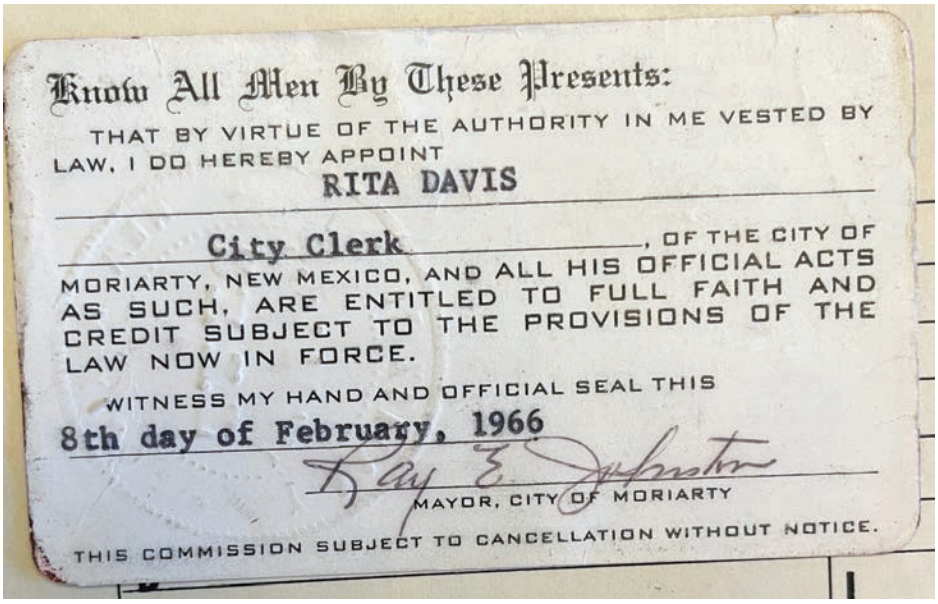
Rita retired as clerk-treasurer in 1983 but didn't finish serving: In 1991 she was elected Torrance County Treasurer and served two years. "She didn't run for a second term because my dad was in poor health and she felt she needed to be at home with him," John Wayne noted when Rita's name was placed in Moriarty's Heritage Arena Hall of Fame in 2008.

Rita's public service swept up her children in a swirl of activity as well. John Wayne recalls that Rita would come home and make sure the kids had supper before going to council meetings. "We didn't know it at the time but [my parents] were influential just because they did things that needed to be done," he says.

Neither did they realize then how extraordinary their childhoods were. They had chores, but sometimes found themselves answering emergency calls and checking weather-reading gadgets when they got home from school. At first, John Wayne and Joe thought all children knew 10-4 police codes. Sometimes one of them accompanied a patient in the back of the ambulance—a '54 Chevy station wagon—because state law required two people on ambulance calls.

Monica recalls how much she enjoyed it when winter storms stranded Route 66 travelers and she could bring them blankets, make them dry-packet onion soup, and talk as they hunkered down at the community center. When the roads closed, the family made sure people had a place to go. John, with help from Rita and others, started a coffee and donuts roadblock on Route 66, encouraging drivers to stop and stretch—and perhaps reduce chances of accidents once back on the road. Travelers loved it and told friends back home, resulting in national publicity.

Weekends, the family worked at the Davis family ranch and farm, where they rendered lard and Rita held down cattle for branding. "She was short and small, but she was mighty," Monica says.


Know All Men By These Presents:

THAT BY VIRTUE OF THE AUTHORITY IN ME VESTED BY LAW, I DO HEREBY APPOINT

RITA DAVIS

City Clerk, OF THE CITY OF MORIARTY, NEW MEXICO, AND ALL HIS OFFICIAL ACTS AS SUCH, ARE ENTITLED TO FULL FAITH AND CREDIT SUBJECT TO THE PROVISIONS OF THE LAW NOW IN FORCE.

WITNESS MY HAND AND OFFICIAL SEAL THIS

8th day of February, 1966

Ray E. Johnston

MAYOR, CITY OF MORIARTY

THIS COMMISSION SUBJECT TO CANCELLATION WITHOUT NOTICE.

Davis's official card certifying her appointment as City Clerk of Moriarty.

The four youngsters chased cattle all day to round them up—"we didn't have chutes"—and before they set out in the morning, Rita tied onto their saddles mason jars filled with cream. "After shaking all day we'd have butter for our biscuits at dinnertime," Monica says.

Working together, Rita and Mike accomplished a lot for the community. They helped set up a park, start an annual Fourth of July celebration, and prevent I-40 from completely bypassing the town. In 1962, Rita was instrumental in bringing water and sewer to city residents.

Rita's children remember her as a caring neighbor and mom who sewed outfits for her daughters' barrel racing meets, took the kids to 4-H, served the PTA and numerous organizations, was active at church, and loved to sing. "She was talented at everything," John Wayne says. Rita's sister-in-law, Mary Anaya, points out that Rita had several college degrees worth of skills. "She was so good in math. She dealt with budgets and was very accurate."

Rita herself wrote several ordinances, using Municipal League examples. She said the city couldn't afford to hire an attorney, so she'd write them herself and have a lawyer review her drafts. She recalled attending a Municipal League meeting with "CPAs and finance officers from these big cities, and I thought, 'What in the world am I doing here?' And when they asked me to speak and I told them what we did . . . several of them said, 'We envy you. All we get is this assignment and this assignment. We don't get it from the beginning to end'."

Rita said it was Mary Anaya's idea to enter Moriarty in a national Cleanest Town competition. But Mary said Moriarty won twice—in 1966 and 1968—because of the scrapbooks submitted for the award, made by Rita and her assistant Shirley Gallant. (The scrapbooks are now housed at the Moriarty Museum.)

Rita's achievements did not go unnoticed. In 1989, she was the recipient of the Governor's Award for Outstanding New Mexico Women, and in 2018, soon after passing away, she was honored by the town of Moriarty as a Local Hero, a woman who worked tirelessly for her family, her community, her town, and her state.

More stories about Rita and the Anaya family are included in the EMHS history book, Timelines of the East Mountains, *available at select local outlets and at eastmountainhistory.org.*

Shop Your Local Farmers' Market

It's that time of year again, when growers throughout the East Mountains harvest their bounty and share it with people eager to shop local and eat healthy. And when you buy direct, you know exactly where your food is coming from and how it was produced. Here are a few of your options for this growing season, all of which will follow social distancing and other safety protocols. So come on out—buy local and buy fresh!

Cedar Crest Farmers' Market

Location: North side of Triangle Grocery, 12165 NM 14 in Cedar Crest

Season: May 12–October 13

Schedule: Wednesdays, 3pm–6pm

Contact: Pete Withers, 505-550-6991

Features East Mountain-produced organic and pesticide-free fruits and vegetables, baked goods, and potted plants. Farm-fresh meats include chicken, lamb, turkey, rabbit, beef, and heritage pork. Eggs will include chicken, duck, turkey, and quail. The market accepts EBT/SNAP and offers Double Up Food Bucks. For updates, check them out on Facebook.

Cerrillos Farmers' Market

Location: Cerrillos Station on First Street in Cerrillos

Season: End of April–October

Schedule: Thursdays, 4pm–7pm

Contact: Barbara Briggs at 505-474-9326

Enjoy produce and other foodstuffs from a variety of area growers, along with live music.

Schwebach Farm in Moriarty

Location: 807 W. Martinez Road

Season: late July–mid October

Schedule: Mon–Sat 10am–6pm, closed Sundays

Contact: 505-832-6171 • info@schwebachfarm.com • schwebachfarm.com

Known primarily for their delicious sweet corn, Schwebach also produces a variety of other pesticide-free, sustainable, and non-GMO produce, including sweet yellow onions, carrots, beets, and heirloom tomatoes. Sweet corn is available for purchase starting around August 1, with other produce available through October. Winter vegetables go on sale starting in September.

Times and locations are subject to change, so call or check with each market's website for the most up-to-date info.

TOP LEFT: Bethe Orrell weaves a new creation.
ABOVE: A blanket with colorful accents sits partly-woven on the loom.

Warp and Weft

An East Mountain weaver finds joy in complexity

BY MEGAN KAMERICK • *PHOTOS COURTESY OF BETHE ORRELL*

Weaving takes a lot of patience and attention to detail. But that is exactly why Bethe Orrell loves it.

Take warping, one of the two basic components of weaving. Orrell transfers yarns to a beam to form a parallel sheet of the fiber, then winds the material onto a back beam of the loom and finally threads it through the loom pedals. For just one towel, that's upward of 400 needles to thread, all before she actually starts weaving.

"People say they don't like warping. I love to warp. It's like a dance," Orrell says.

The owner of Bee's Fiber Studio in Tijeras came to weaving relatively later in life, at age 43. She was living in Carlsbad in 1996 with her husband when a colleague mentioned she wasn't using her loom, so Orrell decided to buy it and give weaving a try.

"I made a mess of the first warp I tried so I signed up for a class in Taos," she recalls.

"It became a passion right away. Weaving involves many different steps, and every step you do, if you don't do it right, it turns out bad. It's a process, and your attention is on each step of the process. I like that."

From her home studio in Edgewood, her second in the East Mountain area over the last two decades, Orrell creates a range of home goods, from napkins and towels to runners, blankets, and rugs. She draws inspiration for her designs from her surroundings and her travels. Her blue rose pattern was inspired by the windows in cathedrals she saw in Germany and the shades of blue sky around her. A trip to Scotland inspired her tartan designs. The Sandia Tram pattern is a nod to the pink shade of the Sandia Mountains at sunset. Another embodies the eternal New Mexico question of "red or green."

She also favors overshot designs, which may have roots in ancient Persia, but gained great popularity in the 19th century for coverlets. Those were usually created with a plain, woven, undyed cotton warp and weft and repeating geometric patterns made with a supplementary dyed woolen weft.

"It's an old weaving technique, but I love it," Orrell says.

For her rugs she uses mohair, alpaca wool, or wool from Churro sheep raised in northern New Mexico.

Given her family history, Orrell seemed destined to work in some kind of fiber. Her ancestors came from the Alsace region of Germany to Pennsylvania in 1753 and were linen weavers. "They probably grew flax, and they also made whiskey," Orrell says. "Almost every generation I know of had some fiber business."

A stack of placemats with intricate woven patterns can add artistic flair to any meal.

Her great grandparents started a factory in Pittsburgh that sewed gloves for the steel industry. "My grandmother had a spinning wheel, but I never saw her spin," Orrell says. "Mother had a yarn store and knit for 75 years. She used to knit socks for the troops in WWII. So I did knitting and spinning and dyeing."

Born in Pittsburgh, she eventually ended up in New Jersey, where her family moved and where she lived until her mid-20s. She moved to Carlsbad, New Mexico, in 1981 with her then-husband, got her master's degree in teaching, and worked in continuing education. The couple moved to Houston in the late 1990s, which she hated, but the city did have a large weaving community, so she was able to continue improving her weaving skills.

After her divorce, Orrell moved back to New Mexico in 2002 and lived in Edgewood, where she began weaving as a profession. Like so many in the area, she owned goats and sheep, which inspired her to co-found the East Mountain Farm & Fiber Tour in order to showcase the entire fiber process from beginning to end. Her yarn store, Good Fibrations, became a gathering place for weavers and knitters, but the store was a casualty of the financial crash and closed in 2011.

Orrell then moved to Santa Fe and worked for several years as executive director of the Española Valley Fiber Arts Center. "She was very willing to try new things and not necessarily stick with the traditional framework of what was done in the past," says Kathy Konecki, who served as chair of the board for the center.

Konecki says Orrell helped improve the nonprofit's revenue streams by ex-

Continued on next page

LEFT: This vertical shot shows Orrell's wave runner in progress, weaving a gently undulating pattern.
ABOVE: One of Orrell's rugs shows another way that weaving can bring New Mexico artistry into the home.

Continued from previous page

panding the retail section to include knitting yarns. Orrell also helped create a temporary pop-up shop to sell a whole household of goods donated by a neighbor of one of the center's founders.

"She's really quite creative," Konecki says. "It's wonderful."

Leigh Alexander is a master weaver who worked with Orrell on another important project, the Heritage Blanket Project, which uses wool from New Mexico and Navajo Churro sheep to create blankets based on traditional motifs and at the same size as Chimayo blankets, but the weaving method was not traditional. Alexander says it was set up as a way for weavers to make blankets more quickly and make more money. Alexander initially conceived of Heritage Blanket as an independent nonprofit, but eventually it became a program of the Española Valley Fiber Arts Center. Orrell helped the project get a grant from the Santa Fe Community Foundation to get it going.

Alexander met with the housewares designers at Ralph Lauren, hoping to interest them in the blankets. Instead, the company asked her if she was interested in weaving Lauren's mohair blankets. She wasn't, but Orrell was.

"I talked to them first, and I said, 'No way,'" Alexander says. "They were the blankets from hell. They're really hard to weave . . . But Bethe is a good weaver."

So Orrell, who left the Fiber Art Center after two-and-a-half years, took the job on, in the meantime moving back to Albuquerque to be near family. The Ralph Lauren commission was a steady project for about five years. "I would make anywhere from 40 to 120 over three months," she recalls.

But when Ralph Lauren retired, so did the demand for the blankets. Orrell has been branching out since then. She moved back to the East Mountains in 2017, where she began selling through her website and, before the pandemic hit, going to shows. She no longer owns goats and sheeps, but her Sandia Mountain Ranch home contains a studio that holds six looms. And she loves the East Mountains, counting herself lucky to have maintained many of the friendships she made during her first stint living there and running the yarn store.

"It doesn't get as hot in summer, and we get little bit of snow—sometimes a lot

Many different colors make up Orrell's "Sandia Springtime" pattern, part of a series that she refers to as "New Mexico tartan."

of snow," she says. "It's not as good for gardening, but I like the weather out here."

A knitting guild that formed around Good Fibrations is still going strong, albeit on Zoom for the last year. Liz Pinkerton, a longtime friend of Orrell's, is also part of the guild. "It's wonderful. The more people we can get into our fiber community the better, because the East Mountains are so spread out and we don't have the people the Albuquerque Guild does."

> Given her family history, Orrell seemed destined to work in some kind of fiber. Her ancestors came from the Alsace region of Germany to Pennsylvania in 1753 and were linen weavers. "They probably grew flax, and they also made whiskey," Orrell says. "Almost every generation I know of had some fiber business."

Like so many small business owners impacted by the pandemic mandates, Orrell has had to get creative. She turned to making masks and selling them online, donating the proceeds to the Roadrunner Food Bank. But as vaccines proliferate and more things open up, Orrell plans to travel to more shows this year.

"I'm slowly getting back into selling things, but this year will be rethinking a bit," she says. "I'm not changing what I do, but I'm changing where I go to sell it, and I'm building my mailing list from those shows."

She is working daily to build up her inventory ahead of her travels, which will range from Arizona to Maryland. She is also restarting her newsletter and pondering launching a YouTube channel.

"Bethe is like one of those bunnies," Konecki says. "She just keeps going."

To learn more, visit Orrell at beesfiberstudio.com

Curiouser and Curiouser

Pop Shaffer's "critters" return home to Mountainair

BY DIXIE BOYLE

About ten years after Clem "Pop" Shaffer opened his hotel in Mountainair in 1924, he left its operation in the hands of his wife, Lena, so that he could purchase and run a ranch south of Mountainair. He named it Rancho Bonito and spent the remainder of his years there, creating fantastical folk art animal sculptures from twisted and gnarled pieces of wood that he nicknamed his "critters." He was happiest when walking through the trees on his ranch and finding new critters to create, and he often vowed he would make one thousand of them before his death.

Shaffer erected small billboards leading into town that publicized Rancho Bonito and the Shaffer Hotel, and soon people from all over the country were stopping to get a look at Shaffer's critters. According to visitation records, 12,000 people visited Rancho Bonito in a single year. Shaffer had a sense of humor and often told stories in an engaging manner, which further delighted visitors.

Shaffer died of a heart attack in 1964, and in 1966, Lena sold most of his artwork critters, numbering around 100, to The Thing, a curiosity shop and roadside attraction on Interstate 10 east of Tucson, Arizona. For over half a century, the critters were exhibited at The Thing alongside a slew of other oddities. Now, they have made their way back home to Mountainair.

Several examples of Pop Shaffer's "critters" highlight the lifelike qualities he was able to bring to the wood. Photos by Dixie Boyle.

Curiosity, or "curio," shops like The Thing thrived in the heyday of cross-country automobile travel, spots where motorists could gas up and rest up, grab a snack or two, and peruse the souvenir racks. Items in curio shops ranged from the unusual to the downright weird. Rattlesnake rattles, ceremonial masks, "mummies," two-headed calves, dead aliens, and other oddities were displayed together in a haphazard assortment, often located in dusty backrooms and outside venues. Some were available for purchase, while others just existed to provide a bit of color to the venue and showcase the owner's collection.

Pop Shaffer's eccentric folk art was exactly what Thomas Prince, the owner of The Thing, was searching for to display at his newest curio shop, which he moved from California to an isolated location in the Arizona desert in 1965. Once there, he acquired the mummies of a woman and child from a traveling sideshow and named his business The Thing after them. He collected unique and often outlandish artwork and curios from around the region to add to his collection, and Shaffer's weird critters became one of his most popular exhibits.

When Prince passed away in 1969, New Mexico-based Bowlin Travel Cen-

Clem "Pop" Shaffer examines a piece of wood. Photo courtesy of Shaffer Hotel, Mountainair, NM.

ters assumed control of the business. In 2018, the corporation spent $3.5 million renovating the old curio shop, updating and adding to its exhibits. The corporation wanted to give the establishment a more professional air than the circus-sideshow feel of Prince's original shop, so after the renovation, most of Shaffer's collection was placed in a warehouse in Las Cruces in preparation for cleaning and refurbishing before being put up for sale.

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An automobile and gas pump place this photo of the Shaffer Hotel in its historical context. Photo courtesy of Shaffer Hotel, Mountainair, NM.

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Learning of the sale, current owner of the Shaffer Hotel Ed von Kutzleben, along with the Manzano Mountain Art Council, Rancho Bonito owners Nick and Francesca Romero, Mayor Peter Nieto, and the Town of Mountainair pooled their resources and purchased Shaffer's remaining critters, which will now be displayed in local businesses throughout Mountainair.

Residents are excited about their return. "I plan on displaying the critters in the Shaffer Hotel and dining room," von Kutzleben says. "The Shaffer Hotel is really a museum of Pop Shaffer's life and the development of Mountainair. People love to stay in historic hotels and learn about the history during their stay. Now they can also look at Shaffer's artwork."

Members of the Manzano Mountain Art Council have built a permanent exhibit at the art center in Mountainair honoring Shaffer's impact on the community. It will include some of his critters, old photographs, and more. Other critters will also be displayed in the garden behind the art center, while still others may become part of a traveling exhibit.

Anne Ravenstone, a founding member and former president of the Manzano Mountain Art Council, was instrumental in raising the funds and organizing transportation to bring Shaffer's critters back to Mountainair. "I am absolutely thrilled to have them back where they belong," she says. "The value of his artwork is that it is representative of the natural world," she continues, pointing out that it appeals to something inside us that appreciates the unusual aspects of Mother Nature.

Pop Shaffer moved to Mountainair during the town's infancy, and he continued throughout his lifetime to be an advocate for the growth and success of the community. Many feel it was due to Shaffer and his tourist business at Rancho Bonito that Mountainair survived when the pinto bean farming industry went bust, along with the town's economy, in the 1930s. Pop Shaffer's colorful life is an integral part of the town's history, and bringing his critters home will keep his memory alive for the next generation of Mountainair and New Mexico residents.

Edgewood

Church of Latter-Day Saints	281-3684
Church of the Holy Cross	281-7722
Covenant of Grace Bible Church	504-2119
East Mountain Cowboy Church	306-3687
East Mountain Vineyard Church	407-2285
Edgewood Church of Christ	281-3477
Good Shepherd Lutheran Church	281-2013
Mountain Valley Church	281-5566
St. Elizabeth Ann Seton	852-6655
Valley View Christian Church	281-8373
Western Region Church of God	286-0995
Woods End Church	286-8344

Estancia

Church of Latter-Day Saints	384-2956
Estancia United Methodist Church	384-5215
First Assembly of God	384-2968
First Baptist Church of Estancia	384-2286
Saints Peter & Paul	832-6655

Moriarty

Bethel United Methodist Church	832-4200
Calvary Chapel of the Estancia Valley	832-6995
East Mountain Assembly of God	832-6320
Estancia Valley Catholic Parish	832-6655
First Baptist Church of Moriarty	832-6385
Jehovah's Witnesses	832-1377
Moriarty Church of the Nazarene	832-4390
Our Lady of Mount Carmel	832-6655

Sandia Park

Community Church of the Sandias	281-3833
Vista Grande Church	228-7890

Stanley

Stanley Union Church	832-4325

Tijeras

First Baptist Church	281-3342
Forest Meadow Baptist Church	281-4105
Holy Child Parish	281-2297
Jehovah's Witnesses	281-5558

Ghost Stories: The Little Blue Coat

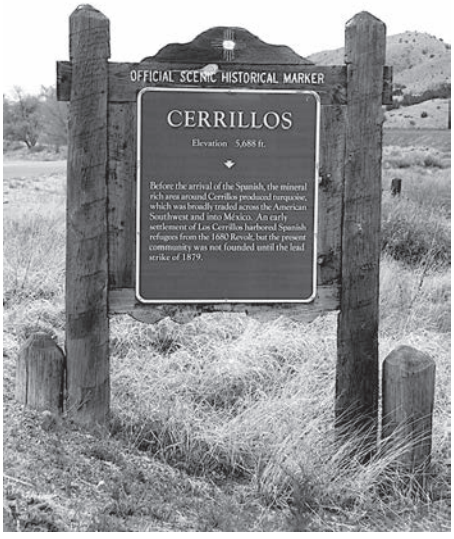
In a time of crisis and mourning, a Cerrillos resident finds comfort from the beyond

STORY AND PHOTOS BY ANTONIO GARCEZ

The Tano Indians were the first people in the Cerrillos, New Mexico, area. Their pueblos, large and small, were spread out randomly throughout the Galisteo Basin. Archaeologists believe that the Tano occupied these sites with no more than a few thousand people at one time. Some of the pueblos may have been abandoned when the farmlands wore out. Evidence has shown that the farmland (Burnt Corn Ruin) five miles east of Cerrillos was destroyed in battle. Tumbled stones, broken potshards, and discarded rock tools were discovered.

The film *Young Guns*, a fictionalized retelling of the adventures of Billy the Kid during the Lincoln County War, which took place in New Mexico during 1877–1878, was filmed in and around Los Cerrillos, New Mexico. A sequel, *Young Guns II*, was released in 1990.

Cerrillos is thought to be the location of the state's oldest turquoise mines. Prior to the 1920s, the state was the country's largest producer of turquoise, though it is more or less exhausted today.



The historical marker for Cerrillos, NM.

Here is Cerrillos resident Margaret P. Garcia's ghost story, as she told it to me in 2014, edited slightly for brevity from its original publication in my book *New Mexico Ghost Stories, Vol. II.*:

I remember exactly when I began to experience a haunting in my house. It was three days after 9/11 . . . September 14. I was in my kitchen that morning watching the television broadcasts from New York while washing apples to make empanadas.

I [had woken] up that morning around seven from a sudden sense of someone in the room with me. I lived alone and owned no animals. I have a history of being sensitive to spirits, and I also get strange vibes from people.

I opened my eyes, and as I was already facing the bedroom door, I watched as the door slowly started to close on its own. The weather was getting quite chilly. I had the house closed up tight to keep the cold out. As the door came to a close, I heard the door's locking mechanism click shut!

Immediately, I thought that a burglar was in my house, so I yelled, "You S.O.B., get the hell out of my house. I'll shoot you in the ass!" I wasn't kidding. I kept a loaded pistol on the floor between my bed and my nightstand and I wasn't afraid to use it.

I didn't bother with dressing. I reached for the pistol, opened the door, and walked into the hall ready for bear. Years before,

when I was married, my husband, Felipe, who has since passed, gave me lessons on how to shoot, and I learned my lessons very well. I knew that if I owned a gun, I better be prepared to use it. So, that morning as I walked out into my hallway, I was prepared to shoot whoever had broken into my home. I looked everywhere in the house, under tables, and in closets. I checked the front and rear doors and windows. They were all locked.

As soon as I realized that no one was in my house, that's when the fear set in. I knew I had not imagined my door closing on its own—I actually saw it close then heard it lock. I made the sign of the cross and sat at my living room sofa praying and asking whatever, whoever, was in my home to leave unless there was a good reason for it to be there.

Later, I got fully dressed and walked into my kitchen, made some coffee, and began to wash the apples. As I was busy washing, I heard a voice coming from behind me, the voice of a small girl who

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called my name, saying, "Margaret, don't cry." I was startled and quickly turned around. Nothing. I knew something was up.

Quickly, reason took hold of me and I thought the terrible events taking place in New York were affecting me to the point that I might be depressed on some level. I pulled up a chair and sat down at the table. I sobbed and sobbed like a child. I guess my emotions were catching up with me.

After composing myself, I phoned a friend of mine, Araceli, who lives in Santa Fe. I explained what had taken place that morning; she asked me if I wanted her to pay me a visit. I answered her that I definitely needed to have someone to talk to. She said she would get in her car and would be at my home within two hours, but first she would need to go to the bank.

Awaiting Araceli's visit, I busied myself with kneading dough and cooking the apples for the empanadas. Two hours passed and she hadn't shown up. After four hours, I became concerned and called her home.

Her older daughter answered the phone and was surprised to hear my voice. I said, "Patsy, are you alright?" She answered, crying, "No Margaret, my mother died!" I broke down and sobbed.

Araceli's daughter, who was a schoolteacher, told me that she had received a phone call at work informing her that her mother had been in a car accident and was taken to the hospital. The surgeons attempted to save her from a terrible injury to her head, but Araceli's brain had absorbed the trauma of the crash. She was pronounced dead on the table.

In the coming days, I somehow I made it through my best friend's funeral and although I missed her so much, I totally became obsessed with sewing, cleaning, and anything that would take my mind away from any thoughts of death and dying. This was almost impossible due to not only her death, but also hearing, seeing, and reading so much of the terrorist attack. That was a terrible time in my life.

I remember waking up in the morning with my pillow totally soaked from my perspiration and sometimes tears. Eventually I sought the help from my doctor, and I was able to function with medication. I was diagnosed with anxiety and depression, but after a couple of months, I came out of it.

I hadn't visited Araceli's grave for several months, but one day in June, I decided that I needed to visit her to face the reality that my friend was, in fact, truly dead. I purchased a bouquet of flowers and drove my car to the cemetery.

When I arrived, I parked the car and waited a few minutes before getting out. I then noticed that a small girl was sitting on the ground near my friend's grave. The girl was dressed in a long coat, which I realized was very dated. No child I knew wore that type of coat. Not since the 1950s have I seen a girl wearing such a coat.

I decided to get out of the car and approach the girl. I turned my head and reached for the flowers, then tucked my purse under the front passenger seat. When I reached for the car door handle, I turned my head and looked out the window. The young girl was gone.

I got out of my car, walked over to the grave, and said my prayers. Surprisingly, my emotions, although sincere, did not overwhelm me as I would have imagined they would. I returned to my car and drove off to visit Araceli's daughter.

Arriving at her home I knew that this visit would be much more difficult for me

I decided to get out of the car and approach the girl. I turned my head and reached for the flowers, then tucked my purse under the front passenger seat. When I reached for the car door handle, I turned my head and looked out the window. The young girl was gone.

This black-and-white rendering of Araceli's blue childhood coat adds to the air of mystery around it.

than visiting the cemetery. Her daughter took the emotional impact of the death of her mother very much to heart. I was hoping I'd be able to get through the visit.

Her daughter was in the process of cleaning out her mother's closet and separating clothes, shoes, and odds and ends. As she brought out a dress or sweater, I'd recall how much she would enjoy each article of clothing. "Oh, Araceli wore that dress to the mall. I remember the time when your mother wore that other dress to the restaurant. She dropped red chile on that one."—things like that.

Then her daughter brought out a blue child's coat. I turned white and said, "Whose coat is that?"

"That's mom's," she answered. "She held on to it since she was ten years old."

I responded, "That's the same coat I saw a little girl wearing that was at your mother's grave just a few hours ago!"

After telling Araceli's daughter about my experience, we both cried, shocked and bewildered by my having heard the little girl's voice months before, pleading for me to not cry, then having seen the little girl that disappeared from me at the cemetery, and now actually holding the same coat in my arms—Araceli's coat!

Attempting to make sense of this, Araceli's daughter said that it might be possible for any of us to revert back in time. Our spirits, knowing we will soon be leaving this earth, can somehow reach back in time and come forward to the present. As in her mother's case, her spirit prepared me for her coming death; she visited me three times—twice in my home and once at the cemetery. All these times Araceli chose to appear in the form of a child so as not to alarm me. I can't explain it any other way.

So, that's my story. I'm not afraid of spirits and anything to do with them. I welcome such things in my life. My best friend gave me so much to think about and so much to learn from.

I hope I offered someone reading my story a bit of support or a sense of peace if they are going through a rough time in their lives. I know we are never alone. We always have our friends and family who have passed still with us, guiding us, and showing us right from wrong.

This story was originally published in New Mexico Ghost Stories, Vol. II, *which can be ordered at www.ghostbooks.biz*

Defensive Measures

A properly functioning immune system is critical to battling stress and preventing disease

BY JEANNE C. DRENNAN, OT/L

Every winter we hear reports about how to boost our immune systems to prevent illness. But what, exactly, is our immune system and, specifically, how can we boost it to stay healthy?

The Cleveland Clinic, a non-profit academic medical center based in Cleveland, Ohio, describes our immune systems on its site, my.clevelandclinic.org, as a "large network of organs, white blood cells, proteins (antibodies) and chemicals that work together to protect us from foreign invaders like bacteria, viruses, parasites and fungi, that cause infection, illness and disease."

In addition to white blood cells, that network includes lymph nodes, the spleen, the thymus gland, bone marrow, the stomach and bowels, and even our skin and mucous membranes, which are our first lines of defense. The skin serves as a barrier and nasal membranes filter out minor pollutants. Our gut also plays a major role, so maintaining a healthy gut microbiome by making appropriate lifestyle and dietary changes can alter the diversity and number of microbes in the gut, thus contributing to overall health and immune function.

When our immune system is working well, it prevents germs from entering our bodies and either kills them or limits the harm they can cause if they do happen to get in. When not working properly, our immune systems cannot attack and eradicate harmful invaders, like certain infections. And sometimes they go into overdrive, mounting an attack when there's nothing to attack or they continue attacking when the invader has long been killed. This can lead to allergies or autoimmune diseases.

Harvard Health (health.harvard.edu) states that while boosting your immune system is an enticing concept, attempts to do so have proven elusive. Several factors come into play here. For one, it's an actual "system not a single entity," so a one-size-fits-all approach will nearly always prove futile.

Harvard further explains that boosting is not necessarily a good thing. "There are so many different types of cells in the immune system that respond to so many different microbes in so many different ways." So, the question then becomes, *Which cells do we boost and how much should we boost them?*

These questions haven't been sufficiently or adequately answered. We do

know, however, that as we age, our immune systems weaken, making them less able to respond appropriately to foreign invaders, which can lead to more infections and, in some cases, cancer. Respiratory infections, including influenza and pneumonia, are the leading cause of death worldwide in people over the age of 65, so it's even more important for this population to support their immune function.

The number of companies selling "secret sauce" immunity boosters make it tempting to take a pill, buy a program, or jump on the latest immunity program bandwagon. In reality, staying healthy comes down to making good choices and putting in the work—sadly, there are no short cuts. Many of these interventions fall under the umbrella of lifestyle medicine, which utilizes evidence-based therapeutic interventions like a whole-food, plant-predominant diet, quality drinking water, regular physical activity, restorative sleep, stress management, avoidance of risky substances, and positive social connection.

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Achieving a healthy weight and body mass by eating a nutrient dense, anti-inflammatory diet is vital to good health and lowering inflammation, which can raise insulin levels and is thought to be at the root of most disease processes. Focus on consuming whole, unprocessed foods while avoiding or limiting grains and sugars.

The Mediterranean diet is touted by many health professionals as the ideal. In a nutshell, the plan consists of a daily consumption of vegetables, fruits, whole grains, and healthy fats, in addition to eating fish, poultry, beans, and eggs on a weekly basis and limiting intake of red meat. Healthy social interaction and sharing meals with friends and family are hallmarks of the Mediterranean Diet.

Osteopathic physician Dr. Joseph Mercola recommends a diet high in healthy fats like coconuts, avocados, olive oil, butter, raw nuts like almonds, and organic vegetables. Good protein is next up on the Mercola food pyramid, and includes grass-fed, organic meats and organic pastured eggs. (The Environmental Working Group, EWG.org, provides data on the clean 15 and the dirty dozen, detailing which conventionally grown foods are safe to eat and which ones should always be organic.) Additionally, Mercola recommends a moderate 25 grams or less per day consumption of fruits because they contain fructose.

Juicing is another way to optimize your immune responses. Homekitchenary.com recognizes that "a daily dosage of fruits and vegetables and quality protein can help repair your body very swiftly." And "the easiest way to get these dosages of vitamins and minerals is from the juices of fresh fruits and vegetables." Beets, carrots, ginger, and turmeric, for example, are a fantastic combination for immune support during cold and flu season and also for decreasing inflammatory symptoms.

In addition to eating healthy foods, supplements can play a role in supporting immune health. Health professionals like those at the Cleveland Clinic recommend getting your vitamins through food whenever possible but they also recognize that supplementing can be an option during times of heightened stress, cold/flu season, or illness. Vitamin C, B6, and E are their top recommended heavy hitters. Additionally, zinc is an important mineral that helps boost the immune system and is thought to have properties that keep the respiratory system strong. Vitamin D, a fat-soluble nutrient, is essential to good health and a properly functioning immune system. We can take D supplements or expose ourselves carefully to a little bit of sunshine every day, preferably in the morning and for no longer than 5 to 30 minutes, depending on our skin shades. It's essential to consider the risk of skin cancer, especially at our high elevation, so when exposing the skin to sun, always avoid allowing your skin to burn.

Herbal remedies are also an option. Proponents believe that herbal immune tonics taken on a daily basis during the fall and winter months will strengthen immunity and lessen the chances of succumbing to common viral infections. Some more common remedies include echinacea, garlic, elderberry, and lemon balm.

Staying active and engaging in physical activity are important parts of immune health and the benefits are even greater when done outdoors. With warmer months and longer days fast approaching, this step should be easier to incorporate into your daily routine. Almost any activity that gets the heart pumping, whether walking, hiking, biking, gardening, swimming, or jumping on a trampoline or rebounder will benefit your immune health. Fresh air does a body good, so get outside and breathe in it in whenever you can.

REAL ESTATE ROUNDUP

BY JEANETTE RAVER

Did you know that New Mexico was ranked as the 7th hottest real estate market in 2020, out of 95, according to a report from Construction Coverage?

It has been over a year since the pandemic started, and while the housing market did slow down for a few months in 2020, it bounced back quickly and has been booming ever since. More existing homes were sold last year than in any year since 2006.

In 2019, there were 676 homes that sold in all the East Mountain communities, including Edgewood and Moriarty. In 2020, 741 homes were sold. Many market watchers want to know how long this housing boom will last. Well, so far, the housing market continues to be sizzling hot, resulting in higher-priced and quick-selling homes.

Housing demand remains strong in the first quarter of 2021 and is predicted to be 6.2 percent higher than last year. Even as mortgage rates drift upward, home purchase demand remains robust. Mortgage rates are expected to remain near borrower-friendly levels and will help maintain strong housing demand in 2021. Jason Pike of Waterstone Mortgage believes the interest rates will stay at 4 percent or under for the year.

Hence, the supply-demand dynamics will continue to push home prices up by 8 percent in 2021. This is up from the previously predicted rate of 4.2 percent (FHA home price index). Another interesting tidbit is that this higher home price forecast more than diminishes the modestly higher interest rate forecast. Therefore, mortgage originations are also expected to go up by 14.5 percent year-over-year.

Even with rising mortgage rates and higher prices, the housing market should remain strong due to very tight inventories and increasing demand as more millennials, most of whom are first-time buyers, are projected to buy houses this year. Millennials make up the largest share of homebuyers in the US, according to a 2020 survey from the National Association of Realtors. About 4.8 million millennials are turning 30 this year and will continue to so do for the next three years—a significant positive force for the economy and housing.

According to a new study by Realtor.com, buying is more cost-efficient than renting in a growing number of the largest cities in the country—also encouraging news for the millions of millennials who are approaching peak homebuying age. The main challenge for markets is meeting this upsurge in demand with declining supply.

Finally, realtors believe that the vaccine roll-out is expected to ease seller apprehension's, which should improve the supply trends throughout the year.

Jeannette Raver has been a full-time realtor for over 35 years and has lived and worked in the East Mountains since 1982.

Sharing Space

Working remotely? Here are some tips on how to establish a productive workspace—and mindset

BY MAGGIE GRIMASON

In my late 20's, armed with only a laptop, I was ready for a change. I began my job hunt with one primary objective: To be employed fully remotely. As I scrolled through national job sites and Craigslist ads, I dreamed of a life that would allow me to travel, work from bed, and enjoy the kind of flexibility that Instagram influencers and YouTube #vanlife proponents seemed to have.

After a few months of searching, I was hired at a company who touted online messaging service Slack as their version of "water cooler chat" and waypoints all over the globe as their "offices." Now, I can confirm that I spend many cold winter mornings propped up on my pillows working from bed, and I've taken trips to far-flung places, working all the while.

But on the heels of 2020, remote work doesn't have the same rare cachet as it once did. Many people have been forced to work from home, and many will continue to do so, perhaps permanently. It likely felt downright odd at first. The places we once retired to as respite from work now became our de facto offices, eight hours a day, five days a week. Many of us struggled to adjust, relocating from room to room to find somewhere quiet for our Zoom meetings, pacing the hallways making calls, and desperately searching for a space that could help us focus.

Last year was tough even for me. My home is my office, but so is my city. Without the freedom to occasionally head out to the library or a cafe, I found it increasingly difficult get stuff done. And that's the first bit of advice I can offer someone transitioning into working remotely or trying to do their remote work more productively: As it becomes more and more possible to get out and about, make sure to take advantage of libraries, coffee shops, and other work-amenable spaces. Working at home can be isolating, and, depending on your line of work, a change of scenery can make you feel connected to other people and the community at large.

But when you are working at home, it's imperative to manage your workspace. There's tons of studies that show

us that humans adapt psychologically to our environments, so make your space a pleasant place to be that is also conducive to work—whether that's a spot at the kitchen table, at a desk in a corner of the living room, a spare bedroom, or a garage apartment.

First and foremost, think of clutter as a distraction. Your desk doesn't need to be empty—you should definitely make sure that everything you need to do your work is handy—but don't let nonessentials pile up. Empty space improves concentration. Try to make a little more room for it.

While you're at it, apply some elbow grease to the rest of the house as well. As much as you might like to think that shutting your office door can save you from the distraction of your disorganized living room, it doesn't. Most people find that it takes more than a tidy desk to really put them in the right headspace for a more productive work session. If you make a habit of cleaning before your work week kicks into gear, that's one less thing on your mind during the week. Just don't use it as an excuse not to work. If you're anything like me, you're a pro procrastinator. I'll scrub the toilet and wash all the baseboards before I sit down to a task that I've been avoiding.

As a result of my stubborn habit of wasting time, over the years I've put to use a few tools that help me accomplish stuff, especially when I'm absolutely not in the mood to do so.

The first is tried and true: the Pomodoro Technique, perhaps the most famous time management hack for the simple reason that it works.

Developed by consultant Francesco Cirillo in the 1980s, Pomodoro involves working in 30-minute increments, each of which includes 25 minutes of focused work and then a 5-minute break. I'm using it right now. The psychology behind this is that if the work period is just 25 minutes, a sense of urgency is created without the dread of endless work with no break in sight. Those 5 minutes are a godsend. If you're the perpetually distracted type, it can even help retrain your brain to focus for longer periods at a time. Since

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you might be doing more sitting while working at home, you can use those few extra minutes to walk around the yard, stretch, or do a few energizing yoga poses. The endorphin boost might help boost your creativity and productivity as well.

The next tool I've found effective is called time blocking, a handy "zero balance" way to fit everything into your day. While I have years of experience and an arsenal of tools to help me out, 2020 was the first year in my work-from-home memory that days began to blur. It could be Monday or Thursday and I'd be none the wiser. Without social obligations and meetings across town, it became harder and harder to manage time on a broader scale. And I started to find that even without a commute, meetings, and dinner dates, I was having trouble getting everything done in a day. Even though it felt like all I had was time. Here's where time blocking is a lifesaver.

It works like this: You parcel out blocks of time, say 8am to 10am, and you write down what you will do during this time. For me that might look like: *Make breakfast and coffee, read and respond to emails, walk the dog.* And you only use that chunk of time to accomplish those tasks. When the clock strikes 10:01am, you move on to the next block of time and the associated tasks, whether or not you finished all tasks from the first block. Time blocking ensures some progress is made on most things every single day and offers a genuine sense of momentum and accomplishment. Working from home can create situations where boundaries become shaky, especially if you have children and pets who demand your time during the day. Time blocking is a great way to establish and maintain those boundaries.

Basically, it's imperative to "know thyself," as the old adage goes. Do you work best when you're under pressure? Then go for it. Is a scrap of paper and a to-do list all you need to get going? Well, flip that old receipt over and write it down. Your workflow is unique to you. Your energy levels change every day, too, so pay attention to your focus, your body, and the rhythms of your productivity. Observe the points you feel more inspired during the day. Use that knowledge to work more productively.

Finally, don't forget to pencil in rest and a little play. Take a day off. Slack off a little, even. Allow yourself the freedom that is supposed to come with remote work. Those 20 minutes you would normally spend driving to and from the office? Use it on yourself. Meditate. Pet your cat. Sleep in.

And take it from me—invest in a lap desk. Working from bed really is the best.

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