

# East Mountain LIVING



- The Last Hanging in New Mexico
- The Story of Skyline Drive
- Great Local Beers Reviewed
- Metal Artist Tom Salazar
- Lena Shaffer and the Shaffer Hotel
- Ampersand Sustainable Learning Center
- The Art of Mindful Hiking
- Safe Operation of Your Wood Stove
- The Art and Craft of Crochet
- An Essential Oils Basic Care Kit

Fall / Winter Edition 2018/2019



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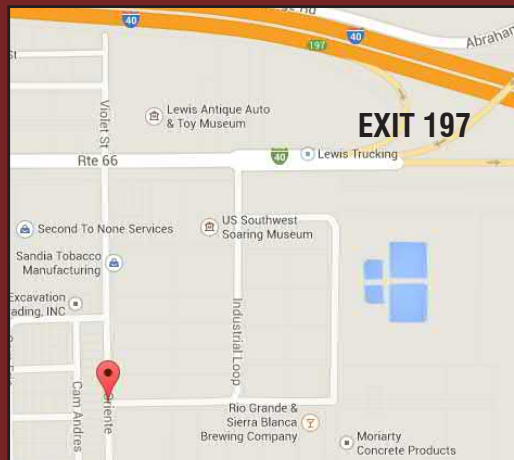
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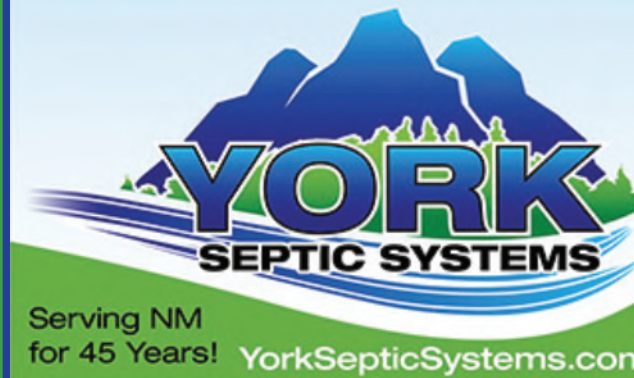
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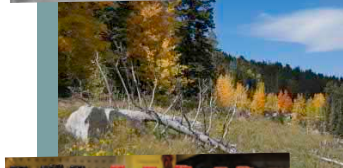
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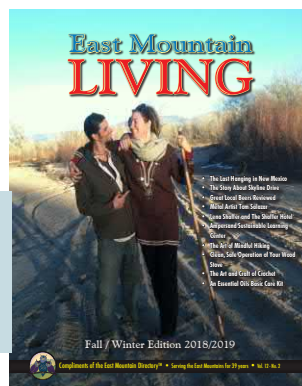
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## LETTER FROM THE EDITOR



Publishing industry pundits have long predicted the death of print. The internet, they claim, will eventually kill books and magazines as surely as video killed the radio star.

I've worked as a book and magazine editor for two decades now, and in my experience both are alive and kicking. Sure, many newspapers have failed, but I think that's because news has always been delivered in smaller, more easily digestible tidbits—and the internet is a more efficient way to deliver those bits of info.

Books and magazines, on the other hand, seem to still be going strong. I think that's because photos don't translate as well on the internet, and reading long blocks of type on the screen is hard on the eyes. Plus, books and magazines are way more satisfying to hold in one's hand than a reader or tablet. They are more portable, and they last longer, too.

When the founder of *East Mountain Living* first started publishing nearly a dozen years ago, no one thought it would last, either. But, here we are. Putting out a small magazine serving a rural community has been extremely fun and satisfying. We hope you think so, too.

Our goal has always been to include at least one or two stories covering some historical aspect of the region, and once again our longtime columnists Dixie Boyle and Mike Smith bring that history—of intrepid hoteliers, unlucky bandits, and bizarre development dreams—to vivid life.

We also appreciate people who key us into what's happening on the contemporary scene. Dawn-Marie Lopez, who last wrote for us on the annual religious fiestas held along the Turquoise Trail, shares her fascination with crochet and the local people and places who support the fiber arts. Beth Meyer, who writes for us on a variety of topics, but whose special forte is nature and the environment, recently journeyed up to Cerrillos to bring us the story of a couple who prove that it's possible to live well completely off the grid.

Since we're coming into the winter months, we thought we'd reprise an article that E.H. Hackney first wrote for us back at the end of 2011 on how to stay safe while burning wood for fuel. It contains some updates on new burn regulations, too, so be sure to give it a read. And if you find yourself suffering with dry skin and allergies this winter, check out Jeanne Drennan's comprehensive piece on essential oils.

It's also the holiday season, so once again we're featuring Brian Tillery's roundup on the best-priced "spirited" offerings available at the Triangle. If you're at a loss as to what to serve at or bring to your festivities this year, Brian's got you covered. Writer Maggie Grimason, new to these pages, wrote a profile of local metal artist Tom Salazar, whose work would make a unique and unexpected gift for that special someone. But this time of year can be stressful as well, which is why we've included a piece by another first-time EML writer, Cathy Weber, on how to reset yourself physically and spiritually with a mindful hiking practice.

While some people might consider print dead, we're happy to keep it alive in our own small way—and are thankful that you support us in that endeavor, whether as a reader or as an advertiser. For that, we wish you a Festive Season and all the best for a happy, healthy, and joyous 2019.

— Rena Distasio



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## About Our Contributors:

**Dixie Boyle** grew up on a ranch near Mountainair. A retired history teacher, she now works as a freelance writer, fire lookout, and park guide. Boyle recently published her ninth book, *A History of Highway 60 & the Railroad Towns on the Belen, New Mexico Cutoff*.

**Jeanne Drennan** 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. Visit her at [jeannedrennan.com](http://jeannedrennan.com)

**Maggie Grimason** is a writer living in Albuquerque. She is the arts and lit editor at the *Weekly Alibi* and contributes to many other independent publications covering arts, science, and travel. When she's not writing, she's watching the birds.

**Dawn-Marie Lopez** and photographer Raul P. Lopez published their first book, *Images of Modern America—The Turquoise Trail*, in 2015. They are currently working on their second book together, *Folkways of the Land of Enchantment*. Dawn-Marie hails from New York City and was formerly a professional actress, dancer, and choreographer. Raul is a transplant from Southern California and a proud Navy veteran.

**Beth Meyer** is a former teacher, private tutor, and certified Reading Specialist. She has taught creative and analytical writing in both public and private schools. She moved to the East Mountains in June of 2010 to join her husband, Mike Meyer, owner and publisher of the *East Mountain Directory* and *East Mountain Living* magazine.

**Mike Smith** 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.

**Brian Tillery** was born in Albuquerque in 1957 and has lived in New Mexico most of his life. He has been in the adult beverage industry for 39 years in many different capacities and now works at the Triangle Grocery, managing the liquor department.

**Cathy Weber** has worked in Albuquerque for 17 years in communications and management and is a freelance writer and voice-over artist. She hikes, raises great kids, and loves to cook and eat. She has an MBA from the Kellogg Graduate School of Management at Northwestern, and is writing and editing an essay compilation on thriving in the corporate world. You can follow her @WeberCathy on Twitter.

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HISTORICAL



The Coury's mercantile store as it looks today, in Duran, NM. Photo by Dixie Boyle

Justice on the Frontier

The last hanging in New Mexico

By Dixie Boyle

Shortly after dawn on April 6, 1923, a man named Francisco Vaiza was led out of his jail cell in Estancia, New Mexico, and walked under guard to the front of the town's courthouse. According to newspaper accounts at the time, over 200 people had pushed themselves into the area, with another 1,500 spectators perched on nearby rooftops, including the roof of the courthouse. They were there to see Vaiza hang for his part in the murder of popular Duran, New Mexico, merchant Anton Coury. After the crowd was silenced and the executioner given his orders, Vaiza's body would be the last to hang from the gallows in New Mexico.

Anton Coury and his wife, Raffna, had emigrated to the United States from Lebanon with the dream of owning a mercantile store. Duran, located about 50 miles southeast of Clines Corners on NM 54 between Corona and Vaughn, prospered during the first two decades of the 20th century. It is difficult to imagine this once-booming community when passing through the sleepy village of present-day Duran, but in the 1920s, it was a bustling railroad town that served as a division point on the Southern Pacific Railroad. There were four mercantile stores, a meat market, pool hall, barber shop, newspaper and post office, railroad section house, stock-yards, a round

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## HISTORICAL continued

house for building and storing locomotives, and more. It seemed to the Courys to be the perfect place to go into business.

In 1913, the Coury family purchased the Kilmer Mercantile Company and soon turned it into a thriving business. When their store was destroyed by fire four years later, Coury rebuilt and threw a community dance in celebration. He was a highly respected and well-liked member of the community, and his death was a huge shock to the town.

There are several versions of how the merchant was killed. The following account is the most consistent: Shortly

after dark on the evening of Saturday, September 2, 1921, Coury had just closed the store when he heard a knock at the door. Being a friendly and accommodating man, he unlocked the door, which was immediately shoved open by a large, mustached man, who was followed closely by three other men. One asked for a drink of water and another for 25 cent's worth of cheese. While Coury went to get the cheese, his wife and 12-year-old son Fred entered the store.

Coury cut and wrapped the piece of cheese, and the man placed a two-bit silver piece on the edge of the counter. When Coury reached for the money, he accidentally knocked it into a bin of potatoes on the floor. He knelt to retrieve the coin, and

when he stood up, the man shot him at point-blank range, killing Coury instantly.

Mrs. Coury tried to rush to her husband, but one of the robbers detained her, demanding to know where the money for the store was



The Coury's mercantile store as it looked when the crime was committed.

kept. When she didn't answer, he beat her over the head with the gun, causing it to explode. A bullet entered Mrs. Coury's left side but was luckily deflected by her corset, saving her life.

The robber tried to shoot again, but the gun jammed. This gave Mrs. Coury time to grab the gun by the barrel, preventing the robber from taking a second shot. Fred began shouting and throwing cans of food at the robbers. When he knocked the hat off one of the men, they all ran for the door. By this time, the gun shots and commotion had alerted the neighbors. They tried to follow the gang, but to no avail.

Torrance County Sheriff John Block of Estancia and three of his deputies soon arrived on the scene

in a Model T Ford. Fred gave Block a detailed description of the murderers, and Block alerted all county sheriffs in southeastern New Mexico, as he suspected that the group was heading to the Mexican border in order to escape prosecution. Poses from Torrance, Eddy, Chavez, and Lincoln Counties were organized to intercept the men.

Block then took stock of the evidence, which included the gun and one of the men's hats. In addition, one of Coury's daughters insisted that a fifth man had stood guard outside the store. Later, the deputies found the tracks of someone who had not only likely stood guard but had also walked around a small nearby tree. When the Torrance

County bloodhounds arrived, the deputies discovered that someone had crashed into a stand of cactus, an incident that would later help identify the gang.

Over in Roswell, authorities were alerted to two local men that fit the descriptions of the murderers. Both denied their part in the crime, stating that they had been working at the time and had never been to Duran. But when a doctor was asked to examine the men, it was found that one of them had cactus thorns embedded in his lower leg—and there was evidence that many more thorns had been pulled out. The men's names were Francisco Vaiza and Carlos Renteria, and Sheriff Block soon extracted a confession out of them. They also disclosed

the names of the three remaining men: Ysidro Miranda, Luis Medrano, and Esequel Pachuca. Miranda, they said, was the leader of the gang.

According to the two men's confessions, they left Roswell on August 31 to look for work in Duran. Upon arriving in town, Miranda suggested they get something to eat before finding a place to bed down for the evening. While exploring the town, Miranda decided that the Coury Store would be easy to rob. The other men agreed. They approached the store, leaving Vaiza on watch. After the attempted robbery and murder, Vaiza and Renteria returned to Roswell. The three remaining members of the gang headed for the Mexican border.

Vaiza and Renteria were scheduled to be housed at the Torrance County jail. During their trip over, they were approached by more than one vigilante group who wanted to lynch the men. Block, fearing that one of these groups would overpower him and his deputies, decided to take the men directly to the state penitentiary in Santa Fe instead, where the facilities were more secure.

In the meantime, the Chavez County Sheriff's Department in Roswell received word that a man was driving erratically near Artesia. After making a fruitless search, deputies were just about to give up and head back to Roswell when they noticed a car speeding along near the Pecos River. They caught up with the car, pulled it over, and apprehended Ysidro Miranda. He confessed to his identity and to his crime and was taken into custody and jailed in Roswell. As soon as he could, Block arrived and took Miranda straight to the penitentiary, where he too would remain until the trial.

A few days later, another tip came in, alerting authorities to the location

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of Luis Medrano, who was easily apprehended at a friend's house in Hagerman. Esequel Pachuca, unfortunately, had already made it across the Mexican border. On the day of the trial, the men were taken to Estancia under heavy guard. A jury found them guilty of first-degree murder after less than two hours of deliberation. The sentence was death by hanging for all four men.

There were many who felt Francisco Vaiza should not have received the same sentence as the rest of the gang, since he only stood guard and never killed or threatened anyone. Some members of the community even raised funds to hire a lawyer to defend him. In the end, however, Vaiza would receive the same fate as his partners in crime—plus the distinction of being the last person to be executed by hanging in the state of New Mexico.



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## Road Warriors

The drive to stop the passage in the sky

by Michael Farrell Smith

The Sandia Mountains are, of course, important to the people who live on them—on the mountains' wooded eastern slopes, in communities from Placitas to Carnuel, and from Sandia Park to Tijeras—but they're important as well to the people of Albuquerque, New Mexico's largest city, the valley-filling mid-sized metropolis whose eastern perimeter, or much of it, is this striking 17-mile-long range.

These mountains also matter in ways not so easily quantifiable. Many residents hike or bike or rock-climb or ski or sled or pursue other outdoor recreations in the Sandias; many ride the aerial tram, or drive the scenic, winding road through the Cibola National Forest up to Sandia Peak, the range's highest point, 10,678 gray-granite feet above sea level. Most probably listen to or watch or talk on something that receives signals from the Antenna Farm—the fence-encircled cluster of broadcast and cell phone towers on Sandia Peak—and every Albuquerque resident benefits from the weather the mountains help shape, and from the mountains simply *being*.

Every sighted Albuquerque resident benefits from being able to look up and see these beautiful mountains and the clouds that move around them, and any Middle Rio Grande Valley resident might experience the Sandia Mountains' presence as a daily reminder of the natural world, and of the ancientness of this land. I live in Albuquerque these days, and have, many times, been silenced into



A view along Ellis Trail that was excavated for Skyline Drive. Photo by Michael Meyer

reverence and awe by light on these shining high-desert mountains, by a profound experience of real nature, even though I may have been, at the time, standing in some trash-strewn gas station or grocery store parking lot, encircled by plastic signs and traffic.

These mountains are not a perfect wilderness, although they do have wilderness areas. The Sandias have roads and communities and trails and the tram and a ski resort and those antennae—but even so, I'm grateful they're not more developed than they already are. I'm grateful there's not a road cutting from Sandia Peak, across the top of the northeastern portion of the range, north and down toward Placitas. I, for one, am grateful Skyline Drive does not exist.

An article in the November 25, 1962 *Albuquerque Journal* describes how Skyline Drive was first envisioned, along with a number of other would-be developments proposed by a development-obsessed "regional forester" named Fred H. Kennedy.

*Kennedy, in charge of national forests in New Mexico and Arizona, also revealed . . . a recreation use plan for [the]*

*Sandia Mountains, an area used more than any other because of its proximity to Albuquerque. Highlight of the Sandia plan is a proposed "Skyline Drive" to run about two miles south of the Sandia [C]rest to connect with La Madera Ski [A]rea and north from the Crest for about eight miles to hook up with [the highway] west of Placitas. This, Kennedy pointed out, fits hand-in-glove with the public desire for sightseeing in national forests.*

A number of recreation areas along the new road, along with two additional trams, were also included in Kennedy's plan. A dotted line on a visual accompanying the article shows where the road would have gone: seemingly right along the edge of Sandia Crest, all the way down.

Opposition to the plan sprung up almost immediately. In a brief-but-detailed history section, Cibola National Forest's 1975 Sandia Mountains Land Use Plan, available online, recounts that in 1965 the Albuquerque Wildlife and Conservation Association, the New Mexico Department of Game and Fish, and the New Mexico Mountain Club all registered their opposition. As the history recounts, "These organizations

felt that the road might have a detrimental effect on the habitat of the Rocky Mountain bighorn sheep. As a result, the project was postponed."

But not stopped. After an August 8, 1966 public meeting, the route was adjusted, twice, and five miles of the road were cleared by sometime in the fall of 1969, after which an inspiring—and effective—local campaign of petitions and postcards and letters managed to get construction halted. James A. Morris, in the invaluable 1980 book *Oku Pin: The Sandia Mountains of New Mexico*, writes:

*The road clearing, though scarring the mountainside, had its greatest impact upon the minds and sensibilities of many people . . . the ragged swath, nearly two hundred feet wide, zigzagged among the trees down the eastern slope. The soil was exposed, rocks were tumbled about, and stumps with their roots upturned appeared to beseech the Sandia deities for mercy. The mountains themselves would eventually reclaim the land and mend the wound in their flank, but the road would not survive the aroused reaction that opposed the construction of any skyline drive.*

Financial considerations and political obstacles also played a part in killing the project, Morris writes, as did the bursting of the decade's-long gasoline bubble. "Ironically, the road issue was put to rest with the dramatic events precipitated by oil-producing nations and the subsequent energy crisis that temporarily ensued. The original plan had been . . . a product of times when Sunday drivers cruised with little thought given . . . to the availability or cost of fuel."

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Change is, perhaps, inevitable. But isn't it wonderful, sometimes, when it's not? When a beautiful place stays beautiful? When something in need of protection *actually gets it*? In Skyline Drive's case, that change came too late for five miles of trees and their animal inhabitants—one can still see evidence of the damage from a number of trails, including South Crest and Ellis—but

it didn't come too late for the people living below it and turning their faces upward. The mountains had given the people of the valley so much, as they had for so long, and some of those people gave something back—their time, their voices—and then the mountains had kept giving and kept giving, and they keep giving and keep giving and keep giving still.





# Beers to You

Enjoy some great local suds this Holiday Season

By Brian Tillery • Photos by Michael Meyer

This year I will share a little information about three New Mexican breweries and one from Colorado. I say "a little," because really diving in to these would take a whole book. As would any summary of the many different kinds of beers brewed in the world today.

The national scene alone is filled with exceptional breweries, and the ones in our backyard are in my opinion some of the standouts. Many of them regularly win awards against

some very stout competition, including the best breweries in the nation, who compete annually at the Great American Beer Festival held in Denver, Colorado.

Of all the beers brewed in New Mexico, India pale ales (IPAs) are by far the bestsellers. As a rule they are hoppy, which can make them bitter. IPAs are considered the cilantro of beer—many drinkers who enjoy numerous styles of this beverage nonetheless do not like IPAs.

On the other hand, for those who love them, the hoppier and more bitter the better. Also, some IPAs are well balanced and are smoother tasting than their IBU, or indication of bitterness, would indicate. The thing to do is experiment. If it turns out you buy a beer you don't like, there's a good chance you know someone who does.

Here are some of the offerings available from our local breweries. Consider giving them a try for your next get-together.

**A note on terms:** The AVB number refers to the beer's percentage of alcohol by volume, and the IBU number refers to international bitterness units, which measures on a scale of 0 to 100 how hoppy, or "bitter," a beer is.

## Sierra Blanca Brewing Company



**Bone Chiller**—This brown ale tastes almost exactly like Montana's venerable Moose Drool, brewed by Big Sky. Both are excellent beers, but Bone Chiller is usually less expensive. AVB: 5 • IBU: 16

**Cherry Wheat**—Sweet and wheat-ey, with tart cherry fruitiness. AVB: 4.8 • IBU: 12

**Chile Beer**—Where else but New Mexico will you find a beer with Hatch Green Chile steeped right in? AVB: 4.6 • IBU: 15

**Alien Amber Ale**—Our best-selling Sierra Blanca brew here at the Triangle. A malty amber ale with a caramel finish. AVB: 5.2 • IBU: 15

**De La Vega's Pecan Beer**—An American brown ale that features the flavors of the nuts grown around Las Cruces, the pecan capital of New Mexico. Like IPAs, there are not a lot of people on the fence about this beverage. AVB: 5.4 • IBU: N/A

## La Cumbre Brewing



**Elevated IPA**—More units of this beer are sold at the Triangle than any of our approximately 400 beers. The Hop Heads have spoken! AVB: 7.2 • IBU: a whopping 100

**Malpais Stout**—Brewed with eight different malts, this is an intensely creamy extra stout. AVB: 7.5 • IBU: 60

**Slice of Hefen**—A traditional Bavarian classic. Not that there is a lot of competition in this category, but this is by far the best-selling wheat beer at the Triangle. AVB: 5.4 • IBU: 15

**BEER**—Of all the imaginative names La Cumbre comes up with I guess this one sums it up. This pilsner is what aficionados like to call a "yard beer."

AVB: 4.7 • IBU: 23

**Project Dank**—It's not just a beer, it's an adventure, as it changes every time they make it. One thing you can count on is "hop insanity."

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Santa Fe Brewing

**Happy Camper IPA**—Drinkers will be “happy campers” no matter where they are drinking this. Featuring seven different kinds of hops, this is one of New Mexico’s most popular beers. ABV: 6.6 • IBU: 70

**7K IPA**—A less hoppy IPA, a fairly new addition to their portfolio, and quickly becoming their bestseller. ABV: 7 • IBU: 70

**Freestyle Pilsner**—A crisp, refreshing German-style pilsner. Light and clean. ABV: 5.5 •IBU: 55

**Imperial Java Stout**—An ale brewed with organic coffee beans. Very full bodied, described in the literature as being akin to chocolate bread pudding. ABV: 8 • IBU: 50

**State Pen Porter**—A rich, malty ale with a thick cream-colored head. ABV: 6.4 • IBU:50



New Belgium Brewing

This brewery is true to their name, as they produce many Belgian-style beers that are of very high quality.

**Trippel**—A classically smooth and complex golden ale that is among the best-selling Belgian-style tripels in the US. ABV: 8.5

**Abbey**—One of the brewery’s first releases, in 1991. An award-winning Belgian-style dubbel. ABV: 7.0

**1554 Black Lager**—This is a style of beer that was enjoyed in Belgian taverns 500 years ago. It’s not a porter or a stout but a

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lager brewed with black malt. ABV: 5.6 • IBU: 21

**Sour Saison**—A French style saison (pale ale), highly carbonated and fruity, blended with a sour golden ale. Unique and delicious. ABV: 7.0

**Glütiny**—The only gluten-reduced option from among these four breweries. ABV: 6.0

This extensive list makes it easy for beer drinkers to support local. As always, have a safe and happy Holiday Season. Cheers!



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Triangle Grocery’s vast selection of domestic, craft beers (left), and ciders (right)





Salazar at work (left); with his creations (above)

## Precious Metal

Tom Salazar's large-scale sculptures reveal a love of material and place

By Maggie Grimason • Photos courtesy of Tom Salazar

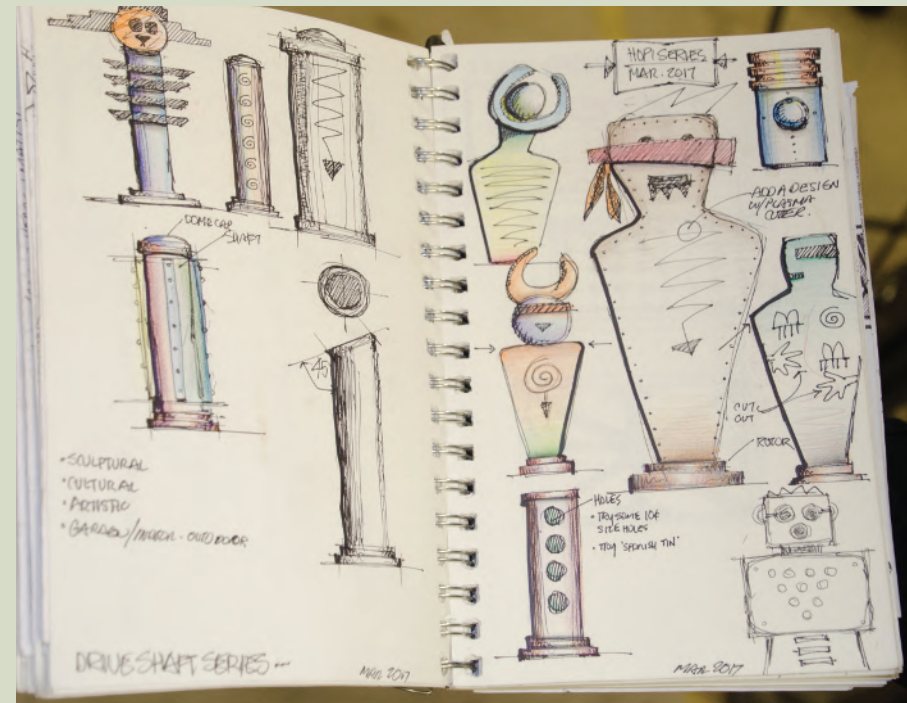
The dirt road that leads to artist Tom Salazar's home in Edgewood ends at an expansive 3.25-acre property. Here, landscaped nooks with benches, flowers, and yard art spread across a large plot that also is home to Salazar's studio.

Outside, its doors are flung open to let in the mid-day breeze, while large house spiders, left undisturbed, spin their intricate webs in the corners. Inside, Salazar's world is well-ordered chaos. Packed with washers, screws, scrap metal, and works in progress, as well as the tools of his trade—saws, a plasma cutter, welder, and large utilitarian tables—the space might appear congested, but Salazar knows exactly where everything he needs is located. Since 1998, he has been making

large-scale metal sculpture in this space, work that reflects his deep roots in New Mexico, illustrating a strong sense of place as well as a dedication to craft.

Born and raised in Bernalillo, Salazar says that he was always creative, even if he didn't always consider himself an artist. "I thought of myself more as a 'drawer,'" he says. His mother took great care to provide him with cultural experiences that shaped his outlook on the world, and he developed a way of learning about and interpreting the world through visuals, filling endless notebooks with doodles—a habit that he continues to practice to this day.

Salazar majored in biology at the University of New Mexico, though in spare hours his friends found the introverted young man in the library, or even in an empty stairwell, sketching away. Soon, he was drafted as a political cartoonist for the university's newspaper. His work continued to evolve post-graduation. He designed an exhibition at the National Museum of Nuclear Science and History (known at the time as the National Atomic Museum), and he later headed up the graphic design team at Sandia Labs. Yet, when he cut out of the office on Friday afternoon, he found that all he wanted to do "was work with my hands—to work on the land, put



Salazar's sketch book of designs



Salazar's creations lined up in his work shop



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## ARTIST continued

rocks in the ground. I wanted to get dirty and to feel sore in the evening."

He spent those weekends landscaping. Eventually, he parlayed his artistic talent into yard art, and, later, turned that practice into more refined sculptural works for display both indoors and out. Today, he is known for large-scale sculptural pieces that stand over five feet tall, built out of metal, often reclaimed. These interpretive figural pieces incorporate geometry and classic Southwestern aesthetics into varnished pieces that are ultimately something all their own.

"So many things influence me," he explains during our visit, "and I do a lot of research, but I always make sure I'm not copying anybody. I want to make sure there isn't the essence of someone else in my work."

That is a process that is at times all-consuming, that fills the hours of his day as well as the moments in between. "When I'm at Blake's," he describes, by way of example, "they take a long time to make their burritos, so I get some of my best work there done while waiting." He points to a few sketches laid across one of his work tables. The lines are so sharp



One of Salazar's recent works that will be shown at Weems gallery.

and the image so well realized, I assume they are finished designs. Salazar lifts one off the table, and

I realize it's scrawled on the back of a napkin.

That's how his process works, as a constant engagement with design that is then executed over the course of weeks. While each piece takes around six to eight hours to evolve, Salazar describes how "one idea is the parent of several . . . You're in the middle of something and three more form and take root." That flow of ideas can last for weeks, during which he "can't wait to get up in the morning and pound out those pieces."

Salazar admits it's difficult to keep up the pace for long. "You get spent after a while." To recharge, he returns to the land, admiring the high-desert stretches of Edgewood from the sanctuary he has created at the home where he and his wife have lived for the last 24 years. Though he was reluctant to make the move from Albuquerque, where he was living at the time, he loves the solitude he has discovered in the East Mountains. "I would never go back," he says. In addition, the surrounding natural environment is as practical as it is inspirational. "This is noisy art," Salazar says. "You're grinding metal in the

odd hours—you can't do that in a big city. No one comes here unless

we invite them to, and I'm able to work six or seven hours a day."

The relative isolation also offers the quiet that Salazar needs to work, not so that he can concentrate so much as he can "listen" to the raw material. "When this piece of metal is just sitting there in its rectangular form, it really speaks to me. I have to stare at it. I just look and look and then all of a sudden it tells me to divide it into three pieces here, four pieces there, add a fifth piece here, and all of a sudden, I'm working."

The fruits of Salazar's practice are popping up at more and more places in the region. Madrid's 10pm Studio recently started showing his work in their steam-and-diesel-punk-centric gallery, and he also shows at Weems Gallery in Albuquerque. Additionally, he travels to arts fairs and takes on commissions when he is able to, but lately he has been following his own inspiration, starting to tend toward "more sculptural, more human-esque [figures] versus the recycled stuff." Salazar describes this shift as a real renaissance for his design process.

Yet, he remains open. "I can't wait to see what I'm doing in three weeks, or four weeks—that's not from an egotistical place, it's just that I'm growing so fast. I'm on a path right now and it feels good. There's momentum."

That forward motion is apparent in everything about Salazar—the particular way he runs his work space, his stacks of sketches, and the way he talks about his work, with infectious energy that underlines his genuine love of what he does. That's foundational to his craft, too, it turns out. With a shrug, he says, "I do this because I just want to enjoy myself." In turn, he hopes to share his joy with others.



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# Lena Shaffer

## The inspiration, and force behind Mountainair's landmark hotel

By Dixie Boyle • Black and white photos courtesy of Dorothy Cole Collection

Countless stories have been written about Pop Shaffer, the Shaffer Hotel, and Rancho Bonito, Shaffer's art-deco-style guest ranch south of Mountainair. Yet, the contributions of his wife, Lena Shaffer, have been largely overlooked or briefly mentioned. She not only suggested the construction of the hotel but volunteered to run it as well. It was largely due to Lena Shaffer's innovative ideas, friendly personality, and hard work that the Shaffer Hotel and its dining room became a popular destination for those looking for food and lodging during Mountainair's early years.

Lena Shaffer was born Lena Imboden in Missouri in 1892, but her family moved soon afterward to a homestead near Bloom, Kansas, where she spent her childhood. By 1900, the Imbodens had filed on a homestead claim six miles north of Mountainair, where they settled into a life of pinto bean farming during the boom years when Mountainair was known as the Pinto Bean Capital of the World. Lena would later settle on her own homestead, where she lived alone for part of the year in order to receive legal claim to the land.

Lena's future husband, Clem Shaffer, left Lawton, Oklahoma, in 1903, citing one too many tornadoes as the reason for the move. He had a friend in Mountainair who wanted to sell his blacksmith shop, and Shaffer decided to travel to New



Lena Shaffer in the dining room of the Shaffer Hotel, sometime in the early 1920s.

Mexico Territory and look over the town and business. He later sent for his first wife, Pearl, and their two children, Mildred and Donald, who had stayed behind in Oklahoma. Three years later, Pearl became ill with pneumonia and passed away.

When she was young, Lena was known as a "country belle" and had

more than one young man interested in marrying her. She had accepted the proposal of a local boy, but he passed away during an influenza epidemic. A year later, she and Clem Shaffer were courting. At first, they would meet at one of the local dances held each week in Mountainair or at one of the surrounding

towns. Later, the couple was seen taking buggy rides on Sunday afternoons. In the beginning, Lena, still in mourning over her deceased fiancé, was not overly interested in starting a relationship with Shaffer, but he eventually won her affections. The couple was married in July 1912 and had a son named Martin the following year. Martin would go on to become a well-known professional artist, who settled in Taos and opened Shaffer Studios there in the 1940s. Clem Shaffer was often heard saying that Lena was the best mother he could have ever found for his children.

As was the case with many frontier communities, Mountainair had more than its share of fires, and Clem Shaffer's Blacksmith Shop burned to the ground in 1922. He decided to rebuild in the same location and add a hardware store and implement house to the property. Lena Shaffer suggested he also open a hotel on the second floor and add a dining room on the ground floor to accommodate their guests. The hotel was completed in 1923 and the dining room in 1929. It quickly became one of the most popular locations to dine and stay the night in Torrance County.

Lena Shaffer was described by those who knew her as a friendly, outgoing woman who made everyone feel comfortable and welcome. When she was not working at the hotel or café she tended a vast flower garden she had planted on the west side of the hotel. She took friends and neighbors bouquets of flowers when they were not feeling well or had lost a loved one.

She was an energetic person who turned the hotel and restaurant into a thriving business. She did all the cleaning and cooking, and sold T-bone steaks for 50 cents and two

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The Shaffer Hotel, shortly after it was constructed in 1923. Before the Nazis turned the swastika into a symbol of hate, it was a popular Native American symbol for peace and goodwill.



The Shaffer Hotel today. Photo by Michael Meyer

eggs cooked any way for 15 cents. All types of bean dishes were found on the menu, including bean pie and bean casserole. The dining room also offered a family-style special at 65 cents for adults and 40 cents for children. The establishment became so popular at times that if guests did

not arrive early, they had to find lodging elsewhere.

To make extra money after dinner had been served, Lena Shaffer rented out the dining room, including the piano and phonograph, for \$2 a night. Many times, musicians staying at the hotel played for guests.



The Shaffer Hotel lobby today.  
Photo by Michael Meyer

The most famous musician to play for the group was Harmon Nelson, Jr., actress Bette Davis's first husband and high school sweetheart. He stopped at the hotel in 1930 while on his way to Boston to marry Davis. Lena Shaffer prepared breakfast for his group in the wee hours of the morning. Eventually, the hotel started holding Saturday evening dances, which were popular and well attended.

Clem Shaffer might have been the life of those parties, but he was not the easiest man to live with. He enjoyed drinking whiskey, carousing with his friends, and even going on drinking sprees to distant cities for weeks at a time, leaving Lena behind to run the business. More than

once, she locked him into a downstairs room until he sobered up and stopped disturbing the guests. One story tells of an intoxicated Shaffer shooting a bullet into the roof of the hotel lobby before Lena could wrestle the gun from him.

After Shaffer built his colorful guest ranch, which he named Rancho Bonito, he spent most of his time there, greeting tourists and creating his unique style of animal artwork, which he made from found wood. He vowed he would create at least 1,000 pieces before his death. Reportedly, Lena didn't appreciate her husband's talent and sold most of his collection to a roadside attraction in southern Arizona after his death.

Lena Shaffer has never received the credit and appreciation she deserves for the development, success, and management of Mountainair's Shaffer Hotel. Not only was she loyal to her wandering husband in spite of his vices, she was also dedicated to running a top-notch hotel and ensuring the satisfaction of her guests. She was always busy and was fondly remembered and loved by those who knew her. She was not one to complain and was always willing to lend a hand or make the hotel and café more inviting for guests.

Lena passed away in 1978 in Mountainair, at the age of 86. She is buried in the Mountainair Cemetery next to Clem. That the hotel remains a beloved piece of both local and national history is due in large part to her efforts, as well as to the love and devotion of the people of Mountainair and Torrance County.



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# Stewards of the Earth

Ampersand Sustainable Learning Center proves it's possible to survive—and thrive—completely off the grid

by Beth Meyer • Photos by Michael Meyer



Amanda Bramble (left). The home she and Andy share is up on the hill, with the guest house shown in the foreground.

Amanda Bramble has felt the allure of the high desert for most of her life. So much so that she, along with her husband, Andy, didn't hesitate to purchase 37 undeveloped acres near Cerrillos 14 years ago. Even if, at the time, it meant camping out in order to enjoy it.

They named their spot in the desert Ampersand, the Latin word for the "&" symbol that also happens to contain the first several letters of each of their first names—a poetic blend of "Amanda & Andy." Ampersand is not only their home but also a completely off-the-grid

demonstration site for sustainable living and an ongoing experimental center to develop a cooperative relationship with the surrounding natural resources. The couple has also put out a welcome sign to others who want to learn about a variety of sustainable systems, including per-



The solar wall oven used by the Brambles.

maculture, water harvesting, land restoration, passive solar design, and organic gardening.

The Brambles say that Ampersand is a reflection of their conscious decision to "re-imagine their relationship with the Earth." The idea that nature's resources are free and limitless is no longer true, according to the couple, and they are committed to being good stewards of the land that extends well beyond their own property. They believe that sustainability means "meeting their own needs without compromising the needs of future generations or other populations who share our planet."

An important component of this commitment is sharing their

knowledge and experience with others. Even early on, the Brambles knew that their dream of sustainability must be a collaborative effort. Mentors, students, residents, and neighbors have all contributed their own resources and expertise as Ampersand has evolved into the multi-faceted learning center that it is today. Ampersand now hosts workshops, internships, residencies, work-trade positions, retreats, and volunteer opportunities. The goal is to offer and maintain a space where like-minded people can connect with each other, learn or share a new skill, and find inspiration for their own projects. Their hope is that their commitment to Earth stewardship will continue to spread and grow.

Amanda Bramble, the director of Ampersand, has a background in ecological restoration. Her love of the natural environment and her passion to learn about ecological systems began when she was a teenager. "I feel a dedication to healing the Earth," she says. Her background includes working with the Center for Biological Diversity and the San Francisco League of Urban Gardeners, among others. She designed and help build the couple's passive solar house at Ampersand, along with all of the other structures and sustainable systems on the property. She has been teaching about land restoration and organic agriculture for over 20 years and offers consulting on a long list of sustainable systems and designs. "I feel like I am living according to my purpose" she says.

Andy Bramble has a diverse background that includes photography, design, and management. In 2002, he found himself learning straw-bale construction at the Lama Foundation in Taos. He has found that to be a valuable skill at Ampersand as the



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couple began their own construction projects. Currently, his vision for Ampersand is to help others reach the same conclusion he has: “that we are all interconnected as part of a larger, complex ecology, especially those related to our core needs of water, food, and shelter.”



Living spaces for guests include a teepee and a strawbale cottage.

From the moment they first purchased the property, the mission of the Brambles was to support a sustainable way of life without the use of fossil fuels, so each structure and system has been designed to meet that goal. A small array of solar panels, combined with a converter, powers normal appliances for the



Interior of the strawbale cottage, the Brambles’ original residence, which is now used as a guest house.

earth-bermed house, which the couple has dubbed “The Mothership.” There is a cellar-like underground pantry built into the northern wall that keeps stored food cool. Their house and the surrounding structures, including a straw-bale cottage, a yurt, an outdoor kitchen, and a teepee, are all built with natural materials. All of the structures are heated with passive solar and are designed with natural cooling techniques. There is no well at Ampersand, and only extreme circumstances will force the Brambles to haul water in. “Most people are surprised that we can sustain ourselves with no well or imported water,” Amanda says. Instead, all their water needs are met by the rainwater that is collected

from the roof of the house and stored in the main 2,500-gallon cistern. A thermo-siphoning passive solar water heater supplies all of the hot water, including for an outdoor shower. With an average of only eight inches of rain per year, not a drop of water is wasted, so the greywater from the shower is used to water the Jerusalem artichoke bed. “Each use of water should serve at least two purposes,” Amanda says. In keeping with the principles of sustainability, it’s no surprise that all of the cooking is done with solar heat. After 20 years perfecting this technique, the couple now has it down to a science. Their solar wall oven works like a slow cooker, so dinner started in the morning will

be ready at the end of the day. The parabolic cooker, which resembles a satellite dish, heats food quickly since it can reach as high as 400° F. They also use a solar hot pot and cook-kit when they travel. “Sunlight is a gift in this agrarian oasis,” Amanda says. “It’s a natural resource that we use reverently.”

Even with such limited restrictions on water, the two are able to grow most of their own produce. There are several water-harvesting perennial beds, a terrace garden, and a cold



A canvas structure used as a library

frame. “Growing more perennial vegetables makes the work easier,” Amanda says. A sunken attached greenhouse sits along the south side of their house and is supplied with greywater from the kitchen and bathroom. It also acts as an additional solar heater for the rest of the house. They recently received a donation of a hoop-style greenhouse, and plans are under way to grow more produce, along with over-wintering a number of other plants. A solar dehydrator is used to preserve some of the produce for the colder months. The Brambles are dedicated to restoring the watershed functions on their property, and these projects have been sponsored by both the New Mexico Environment Department and Partners for Fish and



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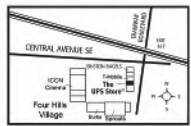
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Wildlife. They have also partnered with the Quivira Coalition, a non-profit organization based in Santa Fe, to design a demonstration site for watershed restoration. With the help of volunteers from Quivira, they have installed water harvesting and erosion control methods along a 100-year-old railroad bed that cuts through their land.

"There is evidence of ancient Puebloan use of the land," Amanda says, "and it is clear that this place was revered and held sacred. We honor that history and are eager to learn about connection to the Earth through our land's ancestral teachers." Instead of treating nature as simply a warehouse of resources to serve human needs, the Brambles believe that the ecosystem is a highly integrated, interdependent system that encompasses plants, animals, soil, and water. Since this system also includes humans, it is necessary for people to treat the natural environment with love and respect.

When asked if she ever becomes discouraged by recent scientific reports of climate change, extreme weather patterns, loss of fresh water, and other natural resources, Amanda responds that feeling like she is part of a larger movement gives her hope. "I feel joyous to be conscious of what the Earth provides," she says.

For more information on workshops, classes, tours, and events, log on to [ampersandproject.org](http://ampersandproject.org).



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Interior of the Bramble residence, which they named The Mothership.



Amanda pointing to their outdoor shower, which is located next to one of the water collection tanks. The black panel serves as a solar water heater.



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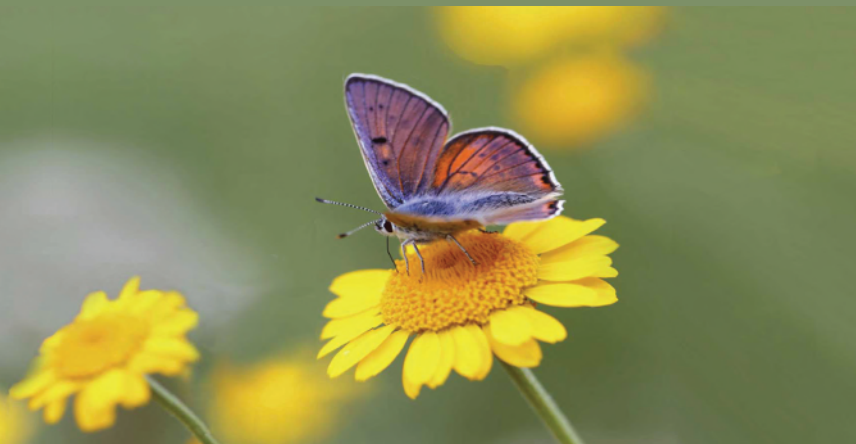


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to our wholeness"  
Jon Kabat-Zinn



## Sense and Sensibility

### The art of mindful hiking

By Cathy Weber

**I**t was as if the trail said, "follow me," as it led upward through the heavy air to a cooler, crisper climate. I knew by the time I got to the top, I would leave behind not only the hot city but also a ton of worries, thanks to my practice of mindful hiking.

Sometimes a hike is just a hike. You want to get some exercise, or bird watch, or otherwise enjoy the natural world. But if you find it hard to stop thinking all the time, like I do, a hike can also be a way to destress by turning off the constant chatter in your brain.

Mindfulness is one way to do that, a way to intentionally direct your thoughts rather than letting your thoughts direct you. It is a way of holding a place, like an open space, between the thoughts that normally seem endlessly connected. A thought stays in your head until another



one comes along, mindlessly, and pushes it away. This happens over and over all day without you really noticing it.

You may also find that those random thoughts are either about the past or the future. The new thought-free space you are creating is in the present moment. By intentionally focusing on something, like your senses, you will slow down those nagging thoughts to open up space or "thought-free time" in your head. Creating more space between your thoughts can have real benefits,

especially when those thoughts are negative or disruptive.

One way to make a hike more mindful is to practice what is known as the Five Senses Focus. Pick one of the five senses to start with and then focus on each for a few minutes, one at a time, while you move. You don't have to do them in any particular order, but try to make sure you do all five—and feel free to stop and close your eyes every now and then to really focus on each sense. Here is an exercise to get you started:

**Sight**—Take a minute or two and concentrate just on what you see. Try not to hear, feel, taste, or smell anything. Notice the colors, how many shades of green and brown there are, from the darkest to the lightest. Watch the movement of the leaves and spaces of light in between them. If a random thought pops up, just say "hi" to it, move it aside, and return to focusing on the color, light, and shapes around you.

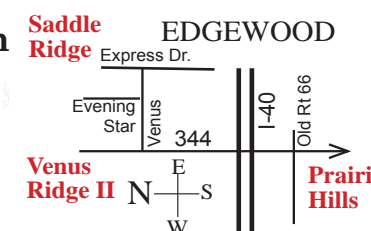
**Taste**—Focus on the taste of your water, that last salty bite of trail mix that is still hanging out on your tongue, the sweat on your lips, or the dust you've kicked up while walking on the trail. Again, if you find your mind wandering, move those thoughts aside and refocus on your sense.

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**Hearing**—Tune in to the sounds around you. Maybe you'll hear your dog's paws or that unmistakable sound of your hiking shoes as they crunch along the trail. You might also focus on the wind as it rushes through the trees, or even an airplane as it flies overhead.

**Smell**—Next, give your nose a workout. Can you identify the different trees by their smell? Can you distinguish juniper from piñon from spruce? How about the moisture from the previous evening's monsoon? Are there any flowers around that you can investigate? Does the air smell differently than it did at the beginning of your hike?

**Touch**—Finally, concentrate on those things that come in contact with your skin. It could be the wind or the rain, your hiking shorts rubbing your legs, the scrub brushing against your hands, the rocks felt through the soles of your shoes, your pack

bumping against your back. If the heat is uncomfortable, then don't focus on that for too long unless it helps clear other thoughts from your mind.

You might lose your focus at first. That's to be expected. When that happens, just pause and count each breath for 30 seconds and then try again. If you can only do a few minutes at a time, that's fine. Eventually you'll be able to work your way up to spending most of your hike in a mindful manner.

In addition to focusing on your five senses, there are other ways to be mindful. One simple way is to count your breathes as you sit quietly. You could also try eating slowly and thinking mindfully about each bite. As an added bonus, this actually makes you eat a little less! Additional expertly guided meditations on mindfulness are available on CD and online.

We are lucky to have access to such wonderful hiking in the Sandias and the surrounding National Forest, so get out there and start exploring. Take your backpack, water, and snacks—and all that junk that's been going on in your mind that you haven't been able to unload. Practice mindfulness and leave your worried thoughts up on the trail instead of in your head.

Whether you are taking a familiar route or exploring a brand-new trail, practicing the Five Senses Focus or any other mindful exercise will enhance your experience, giving your body and heart a workout while stopping the unproductive chatter in your brain.





# Burn, Baby, Burn

Ensure the clean, safe operation of your wood stove

By E. H. Hackney • Photos by Chris Mayo, Amrak Chimney Sweeping

Winter is here and it's time to get your wood stove ready for the heating season. According to current statistics compiled off city-data.com for Cedar Crest, Cedar Grove, Chilili, Edgewood, Moriarty, Tajique, Tijeras, and Torreon, nearly 20 percent of East Mountain homes are warmed by wood, and it can be a safe, reliable, and cost-effective heating source if handled with respect.

Two primary causes of home fires from wood stoves are the improper handling of ashes and chimney fires caused by excessive creosote deposits that form from burning wood. If the fire in your stove gets too hot, it can ignite the creosote, resulting in a chimney fire. The best way to avoid this is to clean your chimney once or twice a year. You can purchase the brushes and do it yourself, or hire one of several chimney sweeps in the East Mountains.

It used to be that one of the major causes of creosote build-up was closing down the air inlet to old spin-draft stoves, says John Smaniotto, who has nearly 40 years of experience in wood stove maintenance and cleaning through his business, the Canyon Chimney Sweep. "But stoves today now feature small holes drilled



Robert Chavez from Amrak Chimney Sweeping cleaning a stove.

in the sides, which allows you to burn wood more slowly, cleanly, and safely," he says. "Plus, new emissions requirements in 2020 mean that we won't be able to purchase any of the old junk stoves in the U.S. Only clean stoves will be available."

These new stoves are better insulated, collect less creosote, and, because they must burn cleaner than 2.5 grams of particulate an hour, are also less polluting. While the East Mountains are exempt from the regulations that govern air quality in Albuquerque, Smaniotto says that if you're in the market for a new stove, it only makes sense to buy a stove that meets the new regulations.

What if you have an old stove? "I would advise burning less wood at a time and letting it burn freely, rather than filling the stove with wood and throttling it down," Smaniotto says.

But don't burn just any wood, he cautions. "Try to avoid ponderosa pine. It burns like paper and only puts out heat for about 10 to 15 minutes." And if you try to burn it slowly, it builds up to dangerous levels of creosote.

Mixes of piñon, juniper, and cedar are popular because they are less expensive, but they make more ash and creosote and put out less heat per cord. Instead,

try to burn oak if you can afford it. It might be more expensive up front, but it burns hot and creates little ash and creosote. Best of all, you can burn it slowly and get more burn for your buck. Whichever wood you use, it should be well seasoned.

In addition, do not burn trash, cardboard, holiday wrappings, or your dried-out Christmas tree in your woodstove. They burn too hot and increase the risk of a chimney fire—plus, some papers contain unhealthy dyes and chemicals. Likewise, don't burn painted or treated wood, and never use liquid fuels, like gasoline or kerosene, in your stove.

The ashes in your stove may appear cold but can still contain hot embers capable of starting a fire. Use a covered metal container to hold ashes while they cool. Smaniotto advises using a double-bottom

ashcan. These are relatively expensive but are safer and more durable than a single-bottom container. Not all trash removal services accept cold ashes, so check with your carrier before you bag your ashes and put them in the trashcan. And remember that the transfer station does not accept ashes—hot or cold. If your removal service does not ac-



Robert Chavez from Amrak Chimney Sweeping cleaning a chimney in the East Mountains.

cept them, you can either bury or pile cold ashes on your property or sprinkle them over garden and compost beds.

If you are considering getting a wood stove or replacing your old one, have it installed properly. It is not recommended as a do-it-yourself project. There are a number of codes for stove installations, which vary with the type of stove and chimney being used. Newer stoves and chimneys can, in general, be located closer to

walls and combustibles than older ones.

You can take additional safety precautions by removing tree limbs from above your chimney and keeping your roof and gutters free of pine needles, which could ignite. Maintain a perimeter of at least 18 inches in front of your stove that is free of combustibles like wood or carpet. Three feet is ideal. Remember to have a fire extinguisher available

and to check the batteries in your smoke alarm yearly.

Wood is still a good way to warm your home, and by following a few simple rules it can be done safely. Plus, there is nothing like a wood stove for the simple pleasure of sitting and watching the flames dance.



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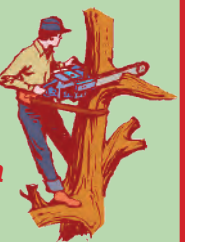
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## Scented Therapy

### An essential oils basic care kit

By Jeanne Drennan, OT/L

The sweet smell of lavender; the clean scent of lemon; the invigorating aroma of peppermint. These are just a few of my favorite essential oils. I was hooked on oils before they became trendy. In fact, at the time of my immersion into the amazing world of essential oils and aromatherapy, their therapeutic value was considered a little bit “out there.”

The year was 1998. I was visiting with a mom from my son’s kindergarten class, when he came in with a cut on his knee. Instead of reaching for an over-the-counter antibiotic cream, my friend brought out tea tree oil and tended to the wound.

To my amazement, the cut healed beautifully.

To say I was intrigued is an understatement. Growing up the daughter of a pharmacist, prescription medications were a mainstay in our home, so this new way of approaching health and wellness, albeit completely foreign, resonated with me deeply.

Fast forward to 2018: Essential oils and herbal remedies are now not only my first line of defense when illness strikes but they have become critical to my family’s good health and general well-being. I also substitute these oils for many household and beauty products.

According to Anandaapothecary.com, essential oils are, in the simplest of terms, “concentrated volatile aromatic compounds produced by plants—the easily evaporated essences that give plants their wonderful scents—more akin to an alcohol than what we commonly think of as oil.”

However, they are not all created equal, and one must take care when deciding which oils to use. That is because, as Ananda states, “Producing essential oils of the highest-grade is truly an art form. It takes a delicate balance of time, temperature, and pressure during the distillation process to ensure the complete range of molecular components is extracted.”

However, relatively few essential oils are produced in this manner. Neither are essential oils regulated by the FDA or subject to any other kind of oversight. As such, buyer education is a must. One of the best marks of a high-quality oil, one that is produced by a top-notch distillation process, is an aromatic bouquet. The oils sold on the Ananda website fall under that category. Other high-quality oils include those made by Mountain Rose Herbs and Edens Garden, which are available online. DoTerra and Young Living are good choices as well and are available through independent distributors.

The therapeutic properties of essential oils are seemingly endless. Here are just a few benefits:

- Anti-bacterial
- Anti-viral

- Anti-inflammatory
- Mentally stimulating
- Stimulate the regeneration of tissue
- Help cleanse and purify the body
- Reduce muscular and joint pain while increasing circulation
- Calm the body and the mind

Essential oils can be used topically, in a blend, mixed with a carrier oil, or diffused into the air. They can also be taken internally, but only the highest quality, purest oils should be ingested, so do your research.

My basic care kit includes about 12 essential oils. The following are my top six, with a brief summary of their uses.

**Tea Tree:** If I had to choose just one essential oil that I wouldn’t be without, it would definitely be tea tree oil. My go-to antiseptic, tea tree is said to be 100 times more powerful than carbolic acid. It’s an antiviral, antibacterial, and antifungal. It can be used to treat candida and other infections, such as ringworm and athlete’s foot, and it works great to mitigate the effects of sunburn and to calm acne. Tea Tree can be added to your household cleansers to increase their purifying action or used directly for a more powerful effect. A drop of tea tree mixed with a carrier oil such as coconut, almond, or vitamin E can be used to help clear general skin rash, eczema, athlete’s foot, or psoriasis. For canker sores or swollen gums, mix two drops in water and gargle/swish up to three times per day, being careful not to swallow.

**Lavender:** Most commonly used as a sleep aid because of its calming effect, lavender is also used for burns and scalds. It’s a natural antibiotic, antiseptic, antidepressant, sedative, and detoxifier. Lavender enhances

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**Peppermint:** Who doesn't love the crisp, clean scent of peppermint? Long known for easing digestive woes, it also has a healing effect on the respiratory and circulatory systems. Peppermint acts in anti-inflammatory and antiseptic capacities as well, aiding in indigestion, flatulence, halitosis, flu, varicose veins, headache, migraine, skin irritation, rheumatism, toothache, and fatigue. Some users also claim it helps keep mice, fleas, and ants away. Rubbing a drop or two on the back of your neck when working outside on a sunny day can not only keep you cool, it can also help keep the bugs away and stop allergic reactions. You can even add a drop of lemon for added protection.

**Chamomile:** Most people know that sipping a cup of this light and lovely tea will help calm the nervous system and promote healthy sleep, however, the essential oil does this and more. Chamomile is an anti-bacterial, antiseptic, disinfectant, and anti-inflammatory agent. It is widely used for rheumatism, teething, burns, sunburns, psoriasis, eczema, asthma, hay fever, diarrhea, sprains and strains, nausea, fever, and all nervous and depressive states. Put a drop or two on your palms, rub vigorously, and then inhale deeply three times to bring about calmness and clarity.

**Lemon:** When life gives you lemons...use them to purify your water! Lemon is an incredibly versatile essential oil. Not only is it antiseptic and antibacterial, it's a tonic to the lymphatic system and a stimulant to the digestive tract and liver. Lemon can be used to treat insect bites, tension headaches, verrucas and plantar warts, acne, and hemorrhoids. I use a few drops of



lemon essential oil in the washing machine to boost the detergent. It helps eliminate more stubborn odors and makes whites whiter. I also mix lemon with distilled water in a spray bottle to use as a kitchen counter disinfectant.

**Eucalyptus:** This amazing essential oil can be used as an anti-inflammatory, antibiotic, diuretic, analgesic, deodorizer, antiviral, and decongestant. It's effective in combating coughs, colds, cystitis, candida, diabetes, and sunburn, and it acts as an insect repellent. A drop of eucalyptus in a bowl of very hot and steamy water makes a great steam inhalation treatment to loosen nasal and sinus congestion—just

cover your head with a towel and breathe in through your nose.

Many people like to blend essential oils as well. Currently, I am diffusing a blend of lavender, peppermint, and lemon to lessen the symptoms of allergies and keep my mind sharp as I write this article.

Another favorite blend is known as the Four Thieves. This mix of clove, lemon, cinnamon, eucalyptus, and rosemary is a deodorizer and disinfectant, and it supports immune function. I mix the oils with distilled water and use it in a spray bottle as a room deodorizer. During cold and flu season I diffuse it, too. I also take it with me when we travel to spray on hotel beds, phones, remotes, etc. If anyone in the house is sick, out comes the Four Thieves!

Geranium and tea tree applied to a cold sore works as well as, if not better than, over-the-counter remedies. Begin applying as soon as you feel the tingling indicating a cold sore is coming.

For mature (wink) skin, my hands-down favorite blend is frankincense, tea tree, lavender, rose, and rosemary. And for inflamed, acne-prone skin, a mixture of tea tree, bergamot, and lavender works wonders.

This is just a peek into the world of essential oils. There is a plethora of information available on the subject. What is presented here is for informational purposes only and is not intended to be medical advice or prescriptive in any way. As with any medical or health intervention, please do your own due diligence and consult your healthcare professional if necessary.



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31. **Canyon Crossroads** 11804 Hwy 337
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# A Stitch in Time

The art and craft of crochet in the East Mountains

By Dawn-Marie Lopez  
Photos by Raul P. Lopez



A relatively new form of fiber art, crochet dates back to early 19th-century France. Stitches are made with a small hooked needle held in one hand, while thread is fed with the other.

Each of us takes a different journey on our path to our chosen art and craft. For many crochet enthusiasts, that journey began sitting on their grandmothers' or mothers' knees, watching them stitch beautiful doilies, table-runners, afghans, and baby booties. For me, it began when my



Tristan, a resident of Maple Winds Farm in Stanley, is just one of the sheep on this fiber farm whose wool is eventually turned into colorful and luxurious yarn.

husband, Raul, and I moved to our home along the Turquoise Trail 12 years ago. Awed by the beauty of the natural surroundings and inspired by the intrepid women who had settled in the East Mountains before me, I wanted to develop a whole new skill set. I set out to learn how to bake a loaf of bread, to can, to use a pressure cooker, to preserve jam, to cultivate a garden, and to sew and crochet. I confided this to my neighbor, and she arranged for her daughter to give me my first crochet lesson. All I needed was an inexpensive aluminum crochet hook and some yarn. I was, pardon the pun, *hooked*.

The origins of crochet are a bit of a mystery. While the oldest knitted artifact goes back to ancient Egypt, crochet seems to have originated in France starting in the very early 19th century.

In the 1830s, French-trained Irish nuns brought the technique back to their homeland, and soon Irish housewives, impoverished by the potato famine, labored at making what became known as "Irish Lace." Many of these artisans avoided starvation by paying for their passages to America on the money earned from these crocheted items.

Turns out I'm not the only East Mountain resident passionate about crochet. Brahna L. Wilczynski is fascinated by how crochet links the Old World with the New, and she has amassed a collection of fine vintage crochet pieces that she has framed behind glass. Included as part of her collection are a series of intricate doilies that her mother brought back from a trip to Palestine in the early 1930s. She considers crochet of this quality to be a fine art.

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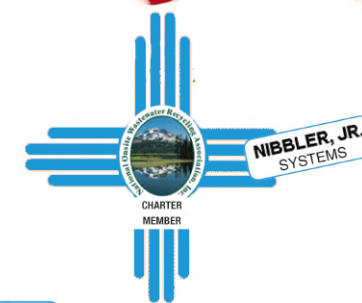
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Patsy Campbell, a master crochet artist, volunteers her time at the Village of Tijeras Senior Center by teaching a crocheting class that meets every Thursday morning. On the day Raul and I visited, she showed us one of her creations, a beautiful white skirt and blouse set with faux pearls crocheted into the fabric. It's a treasured family heirloom, first worn by Campbell's niece Demetria when she played Malinche, a religious character that figures prominently in the Los Matachines dance-dramas of central New Mexico. Twenty-five years later, in 1998, Demetria's daughter Savannah wore it when she took on the role in the Fiesta of San Antonio, which takes place every year in Tijeras. This is just one instance in which crochet is part of a tradition that reaches back centuries in the East Mountain communities.

Edgewood resident Robin Pascal is an award-winning crochet artist as

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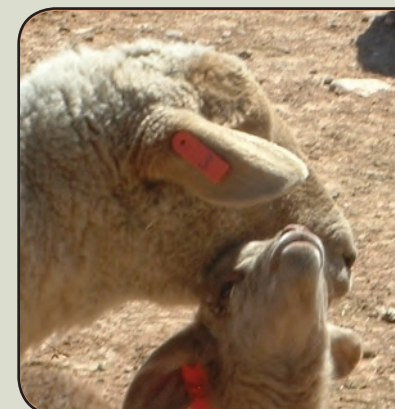
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well as a weaver and maker of glass buttons. She also spins and dyes her own wools, painting different sections of the hanks with different colors to give the yarn a variegated effect. As the last step in the process, she “cooks” the hand-painted yarn in the microwave.

Many types of yarn can be used in crochet, but the most common is wool, which has a long history in New Mexico. In the guidebook *New Mexico Fiber Arts Trails*, fiber artist Lisa Trujillo points out that, “. . . wool has been the predominant fiber in our artists’ hands for the last four hundred years . . .”

The process of creating yarn from wool begins when fibers are combed or carded to align them into a soft, untwisted rope called a rove. They’re then spun into a continuous twisted strand to create yarn. A single thread of yarn is called a strand or ply of yarn. This single ply is usually combined with other plies to form the final yarn. Yarn weight or size refers to the diameter of a strand of yarn and can range from very fine to very thick.

Some common wools used in crochet include lamb’s wool, also known as virgin wool, which comes from a young lamb’s first shearing. New Mexicans will be familiar with the wool from the Churro sheep raised by the Navajo, used for over a hundred years to make the tribe’s famous blankets and rugs. Merino wool, from the Spanish Merino sheep, and cashmere, which comes from the neck of a specific breed of goat, are very fine and highly prized. Alpacas are also a popular source. Sometimes wools are blended with other materials to lessen their expense and/or to increase their durability.



Crochet artist Robin Pascal holding a skein of her hand-dyed yarn. The final step in her process is to “set” the dye in the microwave.

In my search for wool for my crochet projects, I discovered that there are many artisans in the East Mountains who run fiber farms and who spin and dye their own yarns. Many of these can be visited during the annual East Mountain Fiber Farm & Studio Tour, which takes place every year in June. These are great places to pick up yarn and supplies for a crochet project and to touch base with people who are passionate advocates of the fiber arts.

One of those places is Hollywick Farms Alpacas, a working alpaca farm established by Bill and Kathy

Herman in Sandia Park in 2007. Native to the Andes and once owned exclusively by Incan royalty, alpacas have long been prized for their gentle nature and soft, durable fur. The traditional model for the alpaca business closely resembles that of the Arabian horse industry, in which the animals are bred and raised for the show ring. But the Hermans were more attracted to another growing trend in alpaca-raising, one that focuses on the luxurious products made from alpaca fleece. Visitors to the farm can not only purchase beautiful yarns that Kathy spins and

dyes herself but also a number of one-of-a-kind felted, knit, and crocheted items, made by Kathy and other artisans.

Victoria Collins is co-owner of the Wool Shed farm shop at Maple Winds Farm in Stanley, a New Mexico True Certified establishment. She sees fiber farms as a way of putting people back in touch with the beauty and durability of handcrafted items. “We have people come out to the farm that live right here in the East Mountains,” she says. “They’re giving up their plastic for paper, and they’re giving up a lot of ‘stuff’ for original fibers—cotton or wool, or whatever. They’re going back to those, and they’re going back to crocheting or knitting.” The farm raises Rambouillet and Tunis sheep, known for their fine wools. They sell clean and carded fiber in sheets, rounds, or rovings, handspun and hand dyed in a number of beautiful colors. Collins also sells her finished woven and knit items onsite at the Wool Shed.

Another resource for buying yarns, needles, and threads is the Edgewood Yarn and Fiber Store in Edgewood. Owned by Virginia (‘Ginny’) Zvoch, it is truly a fiber paradise. They also offer classes in spinning, weaving, knitting, and needlepoint.

Whether you are a newcomer to the art of crochet or you have been working the hook for many years, you’ll find a wealth of support here in the East Mountains, from supplies to classes to like-minded stitchers. And, who knows, maybe one day one of your pieces will become a beloved family heirloom or a treasured collectible.





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### East Mountain Chamber of Commerce Meetings

#### Los Vecinos Community Center Tijeras

General meetings held the first Thursday of every month from 11:30am to 1pm, followed by

the board meeting from 1pm to 2pm. For more information, contact administrator Gail Rossi at 505-281-1999 or email her at [Info@EastMountainChamber.com](mailto:Info@EastMountainChamber.com)



### 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.

### East Mountain Toastmasters

#### Coldwell Bankers Conference Center (behind the realty office)

12042 Hwy 14 N • Cedar Crest

Meetings are held the 1st & 3rd Wednesday of each month from 6pm-7:15pm.

Drop by or call Mary Ellen Burns 862-216-5891.

[6765837.toastmastersclubs.org](http://6765837.toastmastersclubs.org)

### Saturdays at the Johnsons

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### Manzano Mountain Art Council

#### Mountainair

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[manzanomountainartcouncil.org](http://manzanomountainartcouncil.org)

### Vista Grande Community Center

#### Sandia Park

Work out in a gym with views, take a yoga or other exercise class, join a garden club, or sign your kids up for any number of after-school programs—everything from sports to drama. The community center's calendar is full of programs for adults, teens, and seniors. Check it out here: [bernco.gov/community-services/vista-grande-programs.aspx](http://bernco.gov/community-services/vista-grande-programs.aspx)



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## COMMUNITY DIRECTORY

### EMERGENCY Call 911

#### — Fire Departments —

Bernalillo .....	314-0100
Edgewood .....	281-4697
Estancia .....	384-4338
La Madera .....	286-5468
Mcintosh .....	384-2810
Moriarty .....	832-4301
Mountainair .....	847-2201
Stanley .....	832-2664
Tijeras .....	281-3511
Willard .....	384-0048

#### — Fire Alert Registration —

www.nixle.com/register.

#### — Police —

General Police Emergency .....	911
Bernalillo EM Area Cmd .....	281-3377
48 Public School Rd., Tijeras .....	468-7420
Dispatch .....	798-7000
Estancia Police Department .....	384-4282
Moriarty Police Department .....	832-6060
Mountainair Police Department .....	847-2806
Santa Fe Police Department .....	428-3710
Santa Fe County Sheriff .....	986-2455
Tijeras Sheriff Department .....	281-1400
Court House EST .....	246-4773
Road Advisory: .....	800-432-4269

#### — Health Services —

Care Net Pregnancy Center .....	281-5408
Catholic Health Initiative .....	286-8931
First Community Healthcare .....	281-3406
Moriarty Public Health Office .....	832-6782
NM Primary Care Midwife Services .....	286-3100
Torrance Domestic Violence .....	832-6567

#### — Senior Centers —

Edgewood .....	281-2515
Estancia .....	384-5010
Mcintosh .....	384-3064
Moriarty .....	832-4425
Mountainair .....	847-2885
Willard .....	384-4097

#### — Community Centers —

Edgewood .....	281-3921
Los Vecinos, Tijeras .....	314-0240
Moriarty Civic Center .....	832-1719
Tijeras Senior Center .....	286-4220
Torreon .....	384-2331
Town of Estancia Youth Center: .....	384-1092
Vista Grande: .....	468-7500

#### — Youth Services —

Child Care Food Program .....	384-3053
Edgewood Pediatric Clinic .....	281-4620
Estancia Youth Center .....	384-1092
Inlow Youth Camp .....	384-2410

EDGEWOOD, TOWN OF .....	286-4518
ESTANCIA, TOWN OF .....	384-2709
MORIARTY, CITY OF .....	832-4406
MOUNTAINAIR, TOWN OF ....	847-2321
TIJERAS, VILLAGE OF .....	281-1220

#### — Museums —

Lewis Antique Auto Toy .....	832-6131
Moriarty Historical Museum .....	832-2513
Moriarty Visitors Center .....	832-0839
Mountainair Heritage Center .....	847-0032
Museum Of Archeology .....	281-2005
Natural History Science .....	281-5259
Sandia Natural History Center .....	281-5259
Soaring Museum Inc .....	832-9222
Tijeras Historic Church .....	286-7222
Tinkertown Museum .....	281-5233

#### — Chambers of Commerce —

East Mountain .....	281-1999
Edgewood .....	286-2577

#### — Post Offices —

Cedar Crest .....	281-5668
Edgewood .....	281-3535
Estancia .....	384-2721
Mcintosh .....	384-2879
Moriarty .....	832-4914
Mountainair .....	847-2206
Sandia Park .....	281-5916
Stanley .....	832-4596
Tijeras .....	281-5656
Torreon .....	384-3122
Willard .....	384-3217

#### — Schools —

<b>Cedar Crest</b>	
Prince Of Peace Lutheran School ...	281-6833
<b>Edgewood</b>	
Edgewood Christian Preschool & K ..	281-5091
Edgewood Middle School .....	832-5880
Edgewood...577 Hwy 344 .....	832-5700
Loving Arms Day Care .....	281-8992
Route 66 Elementary .....	832-5760
Route 66 Elementary School .....	832-5760
Sky Dance Montessori .....	286-4077
South Mountain Elementary .....	832-5700
<b>Estancia</b>	
Estancia Elementary School .....	384-2004
Estancia High School .....	384-2002
Estancia Middle School .....	384-2003
Estancia School District .....	384-2001
<b>Moriarty</b>	
Calvary Estancia Christian School ..	832-6995
Early Childhood Center .....	832-6827
Estancia Valley Classical Academy ..	832-2223
Moriarty Elementary School .....	832-4927
Moriarty High School .....	832-4254
Moriarty Library Read-Write .....	832-9286
Moriarty Middle School .....	832-5900
Moriarty-Edgewood School District ..	832-4471

#### Mountainair

Mountainair - 903 W 3rd .....	847-2333
Mountainair Grade School .....	847-2231
Mountainair High School .....	847-2211
New Beginnings Christian Academy ..	847-2773

#### Sandia Park

East Mountain High School .....	281-7400
San Antonito Elementary School .....	281-3931

#### Tijeras

A. Montoya Elementary Tijeras .....	281-0880
A. Montoya Elementary .....	281-0880
East Mountain Christian Academy...	286-1482
Forgery School Of Blacksmithing ...	281-8080
Holy Child Children's School .....	281-3077
Roosevelt Middle Elementary .....	281-33162

#### — Libraries —

East Mountain .....	281-8508
Edgewood Community .....	281-0138
Estancia Town Public Library .....	384-9655
Moriarty .....	832-2513
Mountainair .....	847-9676

#### — Animal Services —

Animal Control .....	832-2043
Animal Kingdom Healthcare .....	281-2345
Dr. Carol Joyce-Loyd .....	286-2608
Canyon Crossroads .....	281-1515
East Mountain Equine .....	281-2368
High Plains Veterinary .....	281-9290
Mobil Veterinary Services .....	263-3555
Santa Sofia Equine LLC. ....	363-5063
Vista Larga Animal Hospital .....	281-7100
Western Trails Veterinary Hospital....	286-460

#### — Economic Associations —

Estancia Valley Eco. Dev. Assoc. ....	832-5428
Greater Moriarty Eco. Dev. Assoc....	832-4087
Torrance Works Career Center .....	832-9451

#### — Social Services 211 —

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#### Cedar Crest

Mountain Christian Church .....	281-3313
Prince Of Peace Lutheran Church ..	281-2430
Vista Grande Church .....	228-7890

#### Edgewood

Church Of Latter-Day Saints .....	281-5384
Church Of Latter-Day Saints .....	286-3197
Church Of Latter-Day Saints .....	281-3684
Covenant Of Grace Bible Church ..	281-3500
Edgewood Church Of Christ .....	281-3477
Good Shepherd Lutheran Church ..	281-2013
Mountain Valley Church .....	281-5566
Western Region Church Of God ...	286-0995
Woods End Church .....	286-2826
Woods End Church .....	286-8344

#### Estancia

Church Of Latter-Day Saints .....	384-5451
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
Liberty Ranch School & Church .....	384-2530
Valley View Christian Church .....	281-8373
<b>Moriarty</b>	
Bethel United Methodist Church ....	832-4200
Calvary Chapel Of The Estancia Val ..	832-6995
East Mountain Assembly Of God ..	832-6320
Estancia Valley Catholic Parish .....	832-6655
First Baptist Church Of Moriarty ....	832-6385
First Moriarty Baptist .....	832-4704
Jehovah's Witnesses .....	832-1377

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Moriarty Church Of The Nazarene ..	832-4390

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Assembly Of God Church .....	847-2498
Assembly Of God Church Parsonage ..	847-0616
Mountainair Christian Center .....	847-2773

#### Sandia Park

Community Church Of The Sandias ..	281-3833
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#### Stanley

Stanley Union Church .....	832-4325
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#### Tijeras

First Baptist Church .....	281-3342
Forest Meadow Baptist Church .....	281-4105
Holy Child Parish .....	281-2297
Village Of Tijeras Historic Church ..	286-7222



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