Sandoval County
Commission hikes landfill rates, hears of Census plans

**SIGNPOST STAFF**

Rates for commercial dumping at the Sandoval County Landfill are going up, but how that might trickle down to rates that haulers charge residential customers is not yet known.

The per-ton tipping fee, as landfill rates are known, rises on July 1 to thirty dollars per ton, up from the current $29 under a fee scheduled approved by the Sandoval County Commission on February 20. While one dollar per ton sounds small, Universal Waste Systems (UWS) currently is paying $14.50 per ton, basically a volume discount, under a contract with the county for trash pickup and other services.

“I know we have to negotiate, and we’re going to talk,” said Matt Blackburn of UWS. “But we’re talking about doubling the rate in some cases, which is a cost of almost $1 million a year to our business without even being reached out to have a serious conversation about how this affects not only the residential contracts, our convenience center contracts, and two or three other contracts we have with you.”

Commissioners voted to go ahead with the rate increases to trigger negotiation clauses in existing contracts. Rates affecting residents who haul their own refuse—or dispose of separately priced items like mattresses, tires, and appliances—remain unchanged.

Raising the rates is largely driven by the county planning, and setting aside money for the next ten-to-twelve years, to close the existing landfill and develop a new one, commission Chair David Heil said.

“If we fill the landfill up too fast at cheap rates, the only people we have to look to for solving this problem are the taxpayers,” Heil said. “I don’t want to leave this seat without setting some pattern in place that establishes how we’re going to fix this problem.”

The motion to approve the rate increases passed 3-2, with Heil and Commissioners Jay Block and Michael Meek voting in favor and Commissioners Katherine Bruch and Kenneth Eichwald voting no.

In other action during their February 6 and 20 meetings, commissioners:

• Heard plans for advertising, and other outreach, to boost residents’ participation in the 2020 Census above the 74.4 percent response rate in 2010. The Census opens March 15. While one dollar per ton sounds small, Universal Waste Systems (UWS) currently is paying $14.50 per ton, basically a volume discount, under a contract with the county for trash pickup and other services.

• Approved the hiring of an in-house investigator assigned to the Sheriff’s Office who would handle charge residential customers is not yet known.

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• Accepted into the county road-maintenance inventory five roads in Placitas: Calle Contento, Camino del Carrisito, Tierra Antigua, Tres Primas, and Valle Tranquillo.

Legislative session ends with Sapien bowing out of Senate

**BILL DIVEN**

As the 2020 Legislature wound down, political calculators whirled as Democrats and Republicans gauged the odds of their winning the state Senate seat representing south-eastern Sandoval County.

When candidate-filing day rolls around this month, District 9 Sen. John Sapien, D-Corrales, won’t be there. Shortly before the thirty-day session ended, and after 12 years representing Placitas, Algodones, and most of Bernalillo, Corrales, and Sandia Pueblo, Sapien announced he wouldn’t seek a fourth term.

“It’s not just one thing,” Sapien told the Signpost. “Kind of a multitude of things that came to a crescendo during the session made me realize it was the right time to call it a career.”

“From the standpoint there was nobody in the primary, and the Republicans only declared after I said I wasn’t running, I’ve spoken well for District 9 and my constituents.”

The decision to leave was personal, professional, and political, the owner of an insurance agency said. While he has no plans to run for office again, he said he’ll be an advocate working from the sidelines.

“I’ll still be around,” he added. Sapien, who describes himself as a moderate Democrat who leans conservative on fiscal issues, is a past chair of the Senate Education Committee. He recently served on the Finance Committee where he helped hold off attempts to increase payouts from the $19.7 billion Land Grant Permanent Fund to support early childhood education and programs.

Keeping a commitment made to Gov. Michelle Lujan Grisham during the 2019 session, the committee approved a new Early Childhood Trust Fund for that purpose, seeded with $320 million from the surge in state revenue from oil and gas taxes and fees.

While a number of potential candidates have expressed interest in the District 9 Senate seat, who actually steps up will become clear on March 10—filing day for the June 2 primary for major-party candidates (Democrat, Republican, Libertarian) for legislative and most other offices. Election Day, when all House and Senate seats are on the ballot, is November 3.

With the 2020 session ending on February 20, the governor has twenty days to sign or veto bills or “pocket vetoes” by doing nothing. She also can use a line-item veto to strike parts of bills.

By Signpost deadline, Lujan Grisham had signed bills establishing the Early Childhood Trust Fund, appropriating $8 million for the...
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from page 1—Legislature

2020 Census count in the state and closing a loophole that allowed out-of-state residents to qualify as patients under the state medical-cannabis law. She also signed the so-called Red Flag law, allowing firearms to be taken by court order from someone believed to be a danger to themselves or others. Among the bills still awaiting action were:

• The state budget set at $7.6 billion—an increase of nearly eight percent from the 2019-20 budget
• A bill to boost the long-term solvency of the Public Employees Retirement Association, which will affect government budgets, employee take-home pay, and retirees' cost-of-living increases
• Increased penalties for using firearms during crimes and/or for felons possessing firearms
• The extensive capital-outlay bill funding projects large and small across the state. Among the bills that failed this session were a bill for legalizing recreational marijuana and another aimed towards reducing or eliminating the state income tax on Social Security payments.

Bernalillo to host a year of events

The town of Bernalillo—under the banner of “Small Town | Big Events”—has released a list of major happenings already scheduled for this year. Topping this list are the fourth annual Bernalillo Indian Arts Festival and the Rio Grande Valley Celtic Festival, now in its 32nd year but only its second since relocating to Bernalillo from Albuquerque. Both are scheduled for the weekend of May 2-3 but at opposite ends of downtown Bernalillo. The Indian arts event will be at Loretto Park west of Camino del Pueblo, the town’s main north-south street, and just south of U.S. Highway 550. The Celtic gathering is at Rotary Park, about two blocks west of Camino del Pueblo, at the intersection of Camino Don Tomas and Calle San Francisco. The list, with appropriate links for tickets if needed and other information, will be posted on the town website: TownOfBernalillo.org.

• May 2-3: Bernalillo Indian Arts Festival, 9:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m., Loretto Park.
• May 2-3: Rio Grande Valley Celtic Festival, 9:00 a.m.-6:00 p.m., Rotary Park.
• May 25: Memorial Day, 11:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m., Rotary Park.
• June 13: Farm House Ale Event, 11:00 a.m.-6:00 p.m., Loretto Park.
• July 4: 4th of July Celebration, 11:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m., Rotary Park.
• Aug. 9-11: 327th Annual Fiestas De San Antonio, Time TBA, Rotary Park.
• Aug. 15-16: 51st Annual Sheriff’s Posse Rodeo, 6:00-9:00 p.m., Sheriff’s Posse Rodeo Grounds.
• Aug. 29: 7th Annual Mountain West Brew Fest, 11:00 a.m.-6:30 p.m., Loretto Park.
• Oct. 30-Nov. 1: Sandia Cluster/AKC Sporting Dogs Show, 8 a.m.-5 p.m., Rotary Park.
• Dec. 4: 36th Annual Christmas Tree Lighting, 6 p.m., Bernalillo Town Hall.
• Dec. 5: 36th Annual Nighttime Christmas Parade, 6:30-8 p.m., Camino del Pueblo.
Help coming for Bernalillo businesses squeezed by highway rebuild

BILL DIVEN

A marketing program aimed at boosting Bernalillo businesses suffering from the U.S. Highway 550 reconstruction project is expected to launch this month.

An ongoing series of meetings among business owners, town officials, and others involved in the nearly two-year New Mexico Department of Transportation project has developed a plan, although details were not ready for public release by Signpost deadline.

“I can say we’re looking at a variety of media right now,” said Patti Watson of CWA Strategic Communications, the contract company handling public and media outreach for the project. “We’ll be working with businesses on their promotions, offering help with their marketing.”

The campaign will include advertising and a dedicated website and social-media platform, she added. “People forget how important it is to help these local businesses during construction,” Watson said.

It didn’t help that the start of construction in late October collided with multiple regional events, including the state high school soccer tournament at Santa Ana Pueblo. That generated gridlock crossing the Rio Grande and extensive news coverage spreading the message to stay away from Bernalillo.

Even businesses not in the construction corridor continue to report significant losses in revenue. Since then, NMDOT has added an engineering contractor to time, monitor, and tweak traffic signals in real time to speed morning and evening commuter traffic. Traffic flows have since improved for commuters and midday shoppers, although the concentration on through-traffic continues to fuel complaints about difficult access from side streets.

A campaign by the Bernalillo Police Department to reduce bad behavior—from running red lights to blocking intersections—has led to hundreds of citations since early January.

CWA publishes weekly email updates on the project, with bulletins as needed on lane closures and other activities. To sign up for those or to view live traffic cameras and learn more about what the upgraded highway will look like, visit the project website KeepMoving550.com.

The $23.8 million overhaul is widening about two miles of four-lane US 550 to six lanes from Camino del Pueblo, Bernalillo’s Main Street, west across the Rio Grande to just beyond State Road 528 in Rio Rancho.

In 2018, FNF Construction, the prime contractor on the current project, widened the river crossing and added a third westbound lane.

—continued next page

Time short to vote in town elections

SIGNPOST STAFF

As this edition of the Signpost went to press, only a few days remained to vote in municipal elections around the county.

Early voting wrapped up on February 29, at 6:00 p.m. And on Election Day, March 3, the polls are to be open from 7:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m.

In Bernalillo, voting takes place at Town Hall, 829 S. Camino del Pueblo. Two Town Council seats are up for election with incumbent Councilor Marian Jaramillo, Alonzo Lucero, Sharon Torres-Quintana, and Phillip Valverde running at-large.

Alternate Municipal Judge Geoffrey Rinaldi is running unopposed for the judgeship vacated by Torres-Quintana.

Elections also are being held in Corrales, Cuba, San Ysidro, and Rio Rancho.
FNF also rebuilt the U.S. 550/Interstate 25 interchange, which widened the highway from there to Camino del Pueblo.

For now, construction is focused on the south side of US 550, between Camino del Pueblo and the river. Relocating utilities there has, until recently, held up FNF, adding more crew to work on the road structure itself, Watson said.

“Now that they are relocated, we can go at full force,” she said, adding the current schedule calls for shifting work to the north side of the highway in mid-April.

Once that portion is done, the project moves west of the river to include a major redesign of the intersection at NM 528, the commuter connection to Rio Rancho. The target for completing the overall project is the summer of 2021.

Another change has been replacing generic Business Access signs with signage naming the accessible businesses. That has been on the south side where construction limits access points, although signs were added west of the Rio Grande to clarify access to the plaza housing Big O Tires, Bad Ass Coffee, and other businesses.

from page 6—Rebuild

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Chickens and sheriff in, goats out as town councilors handle zoning issues

Not long before Bernalillo grew by ten acres, town councilors also took a stand in support of backyard chickens.

The ten acres annexed into the town is to become home to the Sandoval County Sheriff’s Office and Sandoval County Fire and Rescue. The project is still in the design phase with eventual construction taking a year to 18 months to complete, said architect Don May of RMKM Architecture P.C. during the February 10 Bernalillo Town Council meeting. The Sandoval County Public Safety Complex, off Idalia Road and State Road 528, will bring together the sheriff’s department, currently occupying one end of the nearby Judicial Complex, and the fire and EMS administration, now in cramped quarters at the end of the nearby Judicial Complex, and the fire and EMS administration, now in cramped quarters at

One important change governs commercial and non-commercial signs, which had become difficult to enforce across the county after a 2015 U.S. Supreme Court decision. The court had found the Gilbert, Arizona, zoning ordinance and all those similar were unconstitutional if rules separated some signs by their content rather than where and how they were used.

Mayor Jack Torres, who allowed he wasn’t a great fan of backyard chickens, said that during the 18 months in which the regulations were being drafted and discussed in public meetings, a lot of people spoke in support of fresh eggs and kids raising the compro mise being seven hens to be kept on single-family residential properties.

Concerns ranged from noise and poultry diseases to attracting coyotes and diminishing property values. “With all the issues, the idea of backyard poultry is ridiculous,” said Carol Ross-Gill.

If you want chickens, you should live in an agricultural zone, added Oscar George.

Mayor Jack Torres, who allowed he wasn’t a great fan of backyard chickens, said that during the 18 months in which the regulations were being drafted and discussed in public meetings, a lot of people spoke in support of fresh eggs and kids raising the hens. Councilor Tina Dominguez noted the original push was for up to 15 chickens with the compromise being seven hens and no roosters.

“Goats didn’t make the cut,” Torres added.

Ultimately, all four councilors voted in favor of the 53-page update. Under the new rules, hens must be kept in a secure enclosure or pen at least ten feet from property lines.

The zoning regulations, replacing codes. The variance cut the setback of twenty feet that needs an upgrade to comply with building codes. The variance cut the setback of twenty feet from the property line by six-to-eight feet and added several conditions.

Heard a report on new water lines being tied in successfully to several businesses as part of the U.S. Highway 550 reconstruction project. The town is paying to relocate utilities in the way of the highway widening.

---continued next page
from page 8—zoning

• Accepted from Library Board members Susan Rinaldi and Orlando Lucero the latest English and Spanish library literacy calendar with daily ideas for parents and children to work on reading together.
• Learned of two complimentary letters from town residents. One thanked four police officers for their professionalism and courtesy during a family’s medical emergency, and the other thanked Clerk/Administrator Ida Fierro for the town’s prompt response to concerns about pedestrian safety in the Main Street Streetscape project underway on Camino del Pueblo.

P&Z delays decision on Placitas townhome zoning

—SIGNPOST STAFF

A recommendation on whether a cluster of townhomes is right for a piece of commercial land in Placitas will have to wait another month.

After more than an hour of discussion and public comment, the Sandoval County Planning and Zoning (P&Z) Commission on February 25 tabled a zoning amendment affecting vacant land adjacent to the Homestead Village Shopping Center. The P&Z Commission is next scheduled to meet on March 24 at 4:30 p.m.

The county P&Z staff has recommended the amendment be denied as being inconsistent with the Placitas Area Plan approved by the county in 2009. That plan included the Homestead commercial district and only designated land across Interstate 25 from the town of Bernalillo for multifamily residential development.

One question leading to tabling the proposal was how long it might take the County Commission to amend the Placitas Area Plan to add multifamily housing to the Homestead site.

The change would amend the current Special Use zoning, which includes dozens of potential commercial uses, to include multifamily structures. While that speaks only to the zoning, Ovville McCallister, an owner of the property and Homestead Village, said 4.3 acres is under contract for developing townhomes.

If the zoning amendment is approved, the townhome project would require approval for a subdivision, which is a separate multistep process including public hearings. For the zoning change, the P&Z Commission would make a recommendation to the County Commission, which has the final say, unless its decision is challenged in court.

Discussion at the P&Z Commission meeting swirled around competing views on the value of a townhome development. Some Placitas residents spoke of the community needing places for older residents wanting to downsize.

—continued next page
After the previous discussion, the residents of Placitas, New Mexico, have expressed their concerns about the proposed zoning change to allow single-family townhomes on a 4.3-acre site between the shopping center and Tierra Madre Road. The residents have divided opinions on the matter, with some advocating for high-density development to attract more residents, while others are concerned about the potential disruption to the area’s rural character.

Marc Snow, a horse owner whose property borders the McCallister property, said, “Placitas has a reputation and a plan, and I think we should stick with it.” He believes that the proposed project would not be suitable for the area.

Homebuilder Deborah “Deb” Short, who identified herself as the developer purchasing the land, assured the residents that her contract with the McCallisters limits her to 14 townhomes, all of which would be one-bedroom, 1.75-bath units, built for low water consumption and with native landscaping and walking trails, designed for young couples or aging residents.

“Placitas has a reputation for being a great place to live,” Short said, “and I believe that this project will enhance that reputation.”

The proposed project involves 4.3 acres between the shopping center and Tierra Madre Road. The zone amendment would apply to the rest of the vacant land on either side of the shopping center. The project is expected to create a community that values both rural and urban characteristics. The residents are hopeful that the project will bring new life to the area without compromising the unique character of Placitas.
Landscaper dies after gas explosion inside vehicle

Investigators remain puzzled about what caused a propane tank to explode inside an SUV, sending the driver to his death and awakening a shortcutting a tight curve on Agua Sarca Road. Maestas apparently was working late on a landscaping project, according to incident reports released to the Signpost under the state public-records law. According to an online obituary, “He had a gift to turn empty lots into the most beautiful of landscapes, over-flowing with flowers, trees, fishponds, and fountains. His legacy of landscaping will live on throughout Albuquerque,” the obituary states. 

Sandia Vista Amateur Radio Club provides emergency help

You’ve probably heard about “Ham Radio Operators,” usually in the context of providing emergency communications during a natural disaster such as a hurricane, an earthquake, or a wide-area flood. Placitas residents, and some local amateur operators (or “Hams”), may not be aware that Placitas has its own club: the Sandia Vista Amateur Radio Club (SVARC) (call sign NMM5V).

The Club’s main purpose is to provide flexible, effective, emergency communications in the event of such a disaster, like a wildfire. Further, the Club provides programs and activities to advance the general interest of ham radio in the community and to help members get their Amateur Radio Operator’s License from the Federal Communications Commission (FCC), upgrade their license, or help plan and build their radio stations (called “Ham Shacks.”)

Police response blocks Placitas highway

A domestic dispute that escalated into a standoff with SWAT officers ended peacefully but not before shutting down State Road 165 for about five hours on February 11. Few details of the February 11 incident are available, as the Sandoval County Sheriff’s Department had not yet released investigative reports by the Signpost deadline. A brief email statement that day from the county public information officer described officers responding to a home on Vista Montana Loop in western Placitas at about 11:30 a.m. and encountering a person barricaded inside. Tactical officers from the state and Albuquerque police departments also responded and secured the area. After several hours of negotiations, two people came out of the house, according to the statement. 

No injuries were reported, and NM 165 reopened about 5:30 p.m. During the closure, traffic was detoured around the scene on Placitas Trails Road.

Records of the Sandoval County Detention Center identify a man booked into the jail that evening charged with a felony count of aggravated assault against a family member with the alleged threat involving a deadly weapon. However, Sandoval County Magistrate Court records available online do not list the man, the criminal charge, or details of his apparent release from custody.

A divorce petition filed the next day shows the wife, who filed the petition, living at the Placitas address and the husband, whose name matches the jail record, living in Corrales.
Initial policy ideas related to the horses freely roaming Placitas won’t be going to the Sandoval County Commission just yet.

Instead, the Free Roaming Horse Advisory Council at its February 25 meeting sent a proposed position statement back to a subcommittee for further work. While the council’s next quarterly meeting isn’t until May 26, a special meeting to address and vote on the document may be called in April.

The proposed statement from the long-term planning subcommittee recommends that the County Commission adopt general policies supporting adoptions and the formation of horse sanctuaries or preserves, continuing the population-control program already underway and allowing community members to feed and water horses since the range can’t support them.

The document comes after more than a year of council and subcommittee research, experts speaking at public meetings, comments from residents in public sessions, and meetings with council members, and via email.

During public comment on the position statement, Mike Neas of Placitas said the document needs more clarity by defining the terms sanctuary, movement, Mike Neas of Placitas said the document needs more clarity by defining the terms sanctuary, movement, and the community,” Herman said. The three main goals are reducing reproduction, improving horse and community safety while setting the highest possible quality of life for the horses, and implementing a science-based management plan for the life of the herd, she added.

Within those goals are multiple strategies, with options from a community herd or refuge of some size to relocating bands to permanent refuges elsewhere. An adoption program could include virtual adoptions to support community or outside refuges.

It also cites the need for a management plan to be evaluated regularly, updated as conditions change, include legal, policy, and financial commitments from state and local government, and enjoy enough community support to assure continuity as staffs and administrations change.

The drafts of the position paper and the management plan can be found on the county website SandovalCountyNM.gov by clicking on the homepage link Animal Welfare Programs and Services. From there, a link leads to a Free Roaming Horses of Placitas page with a further link to the Horse Advisory Council were documents and details of meetings can be found.

In addition to signing up for email notices about meetings, the public can contact the council directly to submit comments and questions. That email is: RoamingHorses@SandovalCountyNM.gov.

The Sandoval County Sheriff’s Office also is encouraging residents who see horses near roadways to report the time and location by email to SCSCrimeWatch@SandovalCountyNM.gov. (At Signpost deadline, the draft policy and management documents were only in the February 25 meeting agenda packet accessible from the homepage link Public County Meeting Agendas, but were to be added to the council web page.)
The Heat Island Effect and how to counter it

- Janet S. Tani

On Saturday March 7, from 10:00 to 11:30 a.m., the Xeric Garden Club will present Diane Stevenson speaking on Gardening Beyond the Gravel Pit Landscape: Creating Sustainably Cool Patches in our Gardens—and The Heat Island Effect And How to Counter It.

Even in the arid Southwest, gardeners can create microclimates at home that provide cooling using native and native-adapted plants, benefiting people and wildlife in the process. We have the ability to reduce heat islands and create sustainable landscapes by using trees and other vegetation, water harvesting and conservation, and more. She will address how science and her love of gardening creates sustainably cool patches in the landscape, benefiting all the populations in the neighborhood. The lecture will be in the Piñon Room at the Albuquerque Garden Center, 10120 Lomas Blvd NE. There is no charge. For further information, go to xericgardenclub.org or follow the group on Facebook.

Ben Rodefer grew up in the district and has raised his two wonderful daughters here. He is a former Member of the NM House of Representatives and two time past President of the Renewable Energy Industries Association of NM. The largest job growth in New Mexico since 2000 has come from the renewable energy industry.

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- Protect vital classroom funding for our teachers and kids
- Pass the Green Jobs Bill
- Ensure that big out-of-state corporations pay their fair share of NM taxes
- Reverse the huge tax breaks Governor Richardson gave the wealthy
- Had a perfect 100% voting record with Conservation Voters NM, the Sierra Club and Animal Protection Voters

Ben Rodefer Will Work to:
- Make New Mexico a national leader in Renewable Energy, with a vibrant, sustainable economy and good, new Green Jobs
- Fully fund Early Childhood Education
- Make sure more dollars and resources actually get into the classrooms where they belong, supporting our teachers and kids
- Protect every woman’s right to choose for herself if, when and with whom to start or grow a family
- Enact and enforce strong environmental regulations to protect NM’s clean air, water, and wildlife, and help fight climate change by reducing methane emissions

I greatly value your input and ideas. By working together we can all create a better future for our community and for our state. You can reach me directly on my cell at 505-688-9803 or from my website benrodefer.com. I hope to hear from you!

-Ben

“I was excited to hear that former State Representative Ben Rodefer has entered the race for the State Senate seat in District 9. That seat is now an open one. I’m sure many possible candidates will emerge before the June primary election, but I am supporting Ben Rodefer based on his demonstrated work ethic, progressive values and the collaborative spirit he showed when serving in the House of Representatives. I think our New Mexico Senate would find his energy and creativity a refreshing force.”

-State Senator Jerry Ortiz y Pino

Ben Rodefer with Senator Jeff Bingaman at the Taos solar array
Meditation and war as teachers, healers

Ralph Steele, a South Carolina native, was tempered by experiences in the Vietnam War. Trained as a psychotherapist, Ralph Steele decided midlife that “tending the fire” of his life needed to lead him to take robes as a forest monk in Thailand and then go to Myanmar, where he is the Director and lead meditation teacher. Their mission is to “Promote individual and social healing through meditation practice, education, and research.” Their motto: “Learn to get in touch with the silence within yourself and know that everything in this life has a purpose.”

On March 7, at 2:00 p.m., at the Placitas Community Library—453 Highway 165—Ralph Steele will share slides and tell of his experiences. His presentation will focus on topics such as bureaucratic hurdles entering a locked-down country, a variety of meditation skills and practices, healthcare in a very different culture, and military influence in everyday life. He will also explore how an economically disadvantaged country cultivates happiness, compassion, and peace of mind.

“Gentle giant” remembered for embrace of Placitas

“Bill Diven

Dick Ulmer dedicated his retirement to improving the quality of life and discourse in Placitas. “He was the consummate gentleman,” friend and golf partner Steve Vaughan said. “There was something extraordinary about Dick’s golf game: he never swore.”

Known for his intellect, friendly demeanor, and deep religious faith, Ulmer died in hospice care at home in Placitas on February 11, about nine months after being diagnosed with an incurable cancer. He was 76.

After decades as an executive in the computer industry, Dick Ulmer dedicated his retirement to improving the quality of life and discourse in Placitas.

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Known for his intellect, friendly demeanor, and deep religious faith, Ulmer died in hospice care at home in Placitas on February 11, about nine months after being diagnosed with an incurable cancer. He was 76.

After picking up math degrees and then studying computer science in graduate school at Oklahoma State University, Ulmer began his career with Sperry Rand Corporation, an early computer manufacturer. He stayed through the 1986 merger with Burroughs that created Unisys Corporation. By then, he was a California-based Unisys vice president and general manager for enterprise security, overseeing engineering teams at several U.S. locations and in Australia. A startup company then sought his help, and he spent another ten years as a data-security consultant before retiring again.

“He loved every day that he worked,” Diane Ulmer, his wife of 41 years, told the Signpost. “He loved his job. He loved the people he worked with.”

In addition to Diane, Ulmer is survived by four children, five grandchildren, and a great-grandchild. Before retiring, the Ulmers traveled, looking for a place to resettle. After a several visits to New Mexico, and one hot summer in Arizona, they built a home in Anasazi Meadows on the west side of Placitas in 2006. While they both loved Placitas and their view of the mountains at breakfast, looking west they saw one of the gravel mines lining the Interstate 25 frontage road. At the time it was expected to close in 2015.

“He got involved here because he was just that type of person,” Diane said. “He wanted to keep busy, and he wanted to help or do whatever he could.”

Ulmer was a director and past president of his homeowner’s association but became a public figure through the Eastern Sandoval Citizens Association (ES-CA) and its Land Use Protection Trust (LPT), which he chaired. There, he and others took on the gravel mining which, they argued, created health risks, depressed property values, and stifled economic development.

“I would call him a gentle giant,” ES-CA President George Franzen said. “He was always calm, approaching everyone in a professional manner… He was a spotlight for the community.”

In 2016, ES-CA, with Ulmer and Vaughan as individual plaintiffs, won court approval to join a zoning lawsuit that the county filed against LPA and ES-CA; it was also fun,” said Mary-Rose de Vallardes, who worked with him on bills now advancing through Congress to block mineral development on the Buffalo Tract. “Dick Ulmer was a first-rate thinker with keen strategic and tactical faculties, which he deployed skillfully for the benefit of the Placitas community, ever-guided by a well-honed moral compass.”

Tom Ashe, who was involved in developing Anasazi Meadows and other Placitas neighborhoods, had met the Ulmers about the time they decided to make Placitas their home. “He was an amazing guy, and he really pulled the community together in a way I’ve never seen before,” Ashe said. “He just got involved in everything… He had inexhaustible energy and just did everything to the nth degree.”

A memorial service for Ulmer was scheduled for February 29 at the Sandia Church of Christ, where he and Diane were active members.

The group also lobbied successfully to set a seven-year time limit for mining, plus two years to move stockpiles when the 43-acre Fisher Sand and Gravel quarry adjacent to Placitas was annexed into Bernalillo in 2015. More recently, and up to days before his death, Ulmer was a key player in trying to block the expansion of gravel mining onto federal land in northwest Placitas known as the Buffalo Tract. “Dick Ulmer was a first-rate thinker with keen strategic and tactical faculties, which he deployed skillfully for the benefit of the Placitas community, ever-guided by a well-honed moral compass.”

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“We ALL HAVE THE BLUES TODAY

To many of us, February 2nd wasn’t so super as KUPR radio lost a true soul. Wayne Rohar... our friend and fellow DJ lost his long battle with cancer Superbowl Sunday morning. We’re going to miss him terribly.

Wayne shined through in everything he did. An involved and active volunteer for the station, a talented musician and lover of the blues, a master craftsman and lover of old cars, a loving and supportive husband to Doreen Goodlin and weekly host of his own show “Blues From the Roadhouse” on KUPR 99.9 LFPM. The station and our intertwined lives won’t be the same.

A celebration of Wayne’s life is in the planning stages and will be happen sometime in April. Details to follow. Travel on, Wayne.

Dick Ulmer (left) of the Eastern Sandoval Citizens Association and Bob Gorrell, who was ESCA president at the time, spoke to the Sandoval County Commission in 2017 in opposition to expanding gravel mining in Placitas.

Ulmer, a leading advocate for Placitas, died on Feb. 11 at age 76.
Columbus draws tourists for warmth and history

-- KARL MOFFATT

When winter has its icy grip on northern New Mexico, it’s time to make a beeline for the border. A visit to Pancho Villa State Park in the warm, sunny border town of Columbus makes for a great winter getaway.

The park features plenty of roomy campsites and clean restrooms and a remarkable museum dedicated to the real Mexican invasion of the United States back in 1916.

During the early morning hours of that historic day, about five hundred of revolutionary leader Pancho Villa’s troops snuck across the U.S. border and attacked the sleepy town and Army garrison stationed at Columbus, New Mexico.

Historical accounts speculate as to the attack’s purpose ranging from Villa’s need for military and other supplies or in revenge for American meddling in Mexico’s revolution.

The attack was repulsed, though, leaving many of the invaders, a few villagers, and some soldiers dead. The U.S. Army then launched its own invasion into Mexico in search of Villa, but the Army expedition returned home empty-handed after a year.

The story is better told in viewing the documentary film and reading the interpretive displays within the park’s museum. Visitors will find a full-size replica of an early model biplane hanging in the spacious museum, a restored military truck, and display cases featuring firearms, uniforms, and other items from the era.

Outside of the museum, visitors will find the Army’s armored trucks on display and more interpretive signs along trails around the park—which was once known as Camp Furlong.

The park is popular with travelers, known locally as “snowbirds” and is reported to be busiest during the winter months. Unfortunately, several telephone calls to park management seeking further information about the park and its operations were not returned.

During a recent visit, plenty of spaces with hookups were still available, even on a Friday afternoon. A ten-dollar tent site came with a covered shelter, picnic table, and fire ring. It should be noted that the park’s proximity to the nearby highway and the ease with which sound travels across the desert could prove bothersome to some tent campers.

Columbus, a town of about 1,600, boasts a restored railroad station, U.S. Customs House, and several other historic buildings from its vibrant past. Visitors and residents can eat at several different, and very good, restaurants, shop at the grocery store and liquor store, and get gas at the town’s convenience store.

Tourism, agriculture, retail trade, and government employment account for much of the economy of the region. The city of Deming and Interstate 10 are about thirty miles north of Columbus, and the Mexican border town of Palomas is about three miles south on N.M. 11.

Visitors to the small, friendly Mexican town of Palomas will find an imposing statute of Villa astride a stallion, leading a charge with pistol in hand in front of the town’s municipal building.

Visitors also may encounter whistle-blowing adults in reflective vests bustling along busloads of children returning from school in Columbus. The kids were born in the United States but live in Mexico and attend school in Columbus as American citizens.

Many Americans frequent Palomas to get cheaper prescription drugs and dental work or shop at The Pink Store. The landmark corner store features a dizzying array of arts and crafts, tax-free liquor and great food and drinks. Visitors may even be handed a complimentary margarita upon entering.

After roaming the streets and shops of Palomas, Americans returning to the U.S. may need little more than a valid New Mexico driver’s license to get back into the country. However, custom checkpoint officers say publicly that they would rather see a passport or at the very least a birth certificate along with a driver’s license.

Columbus has a strong U.S. Border Patrol presence due to its proximity to Mexico. It is also home to part of the Trump administration’s controversial border wall. About 47 miles of thirty-foot tall, thick steel fence is being installed between the New Mexico border towns of Santa Teresa and Columbus, says Border Patrol Agent and Spokesperson, Ramiro Cordero.

Visitors to the area can easily find the border wall about 25 miles east of Columbus, off N.M. 9 at Dona Ana County Road A-1. The wall can be found a mile down the dirt road on public land administered by the U.S. Bureau of Land Management. Cordero acknowledged that the area is open to the public but recommended any one visiting to see the wall might want to let the local Border Patrol Office know just to avoid any potential problems.

Despite the daunting sea of vast desert here, the border is routinely crossed illegally because of its close proximity to highways running parallel on either side, Cordero says.

In the past, all that stood in the way was a four-strand barbed wire fence. In 2008, squat “Normandy” style vehicle barriers were installed. Now it’s thirty-feet tall “Bolland” fencing, spaced steel tubes filled with rebar and concrete and topped with a flat steel section.

The construction work also will include installation of an all-weather road along the wall, buried fiber optic cables, better sensors, and other surveillance equipment to help deter illegal border crossings, Cordero says.

During a recent visit to the area, the border wall could be seen towering in the distance as it rose from the desert. Standing right next to it revealed just how daunting a structure it is.

Those visiting the area to enjoy all the borderlands have to offer will find several other state parks nearby, including City of Rocks and Rockhound State Park. Visit New Mexico State Parks’ website for more information.

Karl Moffatt is a longtime New Mexico journalist and avid outdoorsman whose many stories and photos can be seen on his blog at www.outdoorsnm.com.
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Anasazi Meadows Trail – $99,000
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$565,000 – 7 Palomar Road
3 BD, 3 BA - 3,115 sf
Custom built beauty in the country with fruit and vegetable gardens, amazing views, an entertainers dream home. Light filled flowing open floor plan with family & formal dining a bar that will seat 10. Every kitchen option imaginable, 36" 6 burner range, 3 ovens including convection, warming drawer, micro-wave, prep sink, accent lighting and wormy maple cabinetry with crown molding and accent lighting. Huge closet + pantry. The master suite features a window seat with additional storage, double closets, vanity & shower heads. XXL laundry room with storage hanging & folding space plus a utility sink. Catch all & changing station upon entering from the garage. Office and guest wing has full bath & walk in closets. Plum, pear, fig, apricot, peach Fuji and Granny apples. Fireplace portal.

$575,000 – 281 Star Meadows
3 BD, 3 BA - 2,585 sf
Custom built authentic Santa Fe Style with Gold LEED certification. Avg $100 utility. Finely appointed: Oversized welcoming front door, Diamond plaster walls, hand carved beams, exquisite lighting, Travertine floors, Chefs kitchen, pantry, slide out fan/lighting gas range, solid maple cabinetry, high end granite, large island w/prep sink. Master bedroom wing opens to the portal. Luxury bath travertine tile & accents, block glass shower, large tub, walk in closet. Guest wing offers powder room with antique cabinets 2 guest rooms & full bath. Garage 3rd bay was converted to a heated/cooled finished studio/office/exercise or lockable storage space. Private courtyard is xeriscaped, Antique Sabino Wood doors.

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31 Apache Mesa
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$699,000 – 35 Anasazi Meadows – 3 BD. 3 BA – 2,540 sf
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Mark Parker
Associate Broker

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Many of my favorite recipes come from the kitchens of farmer friends. There is a pleasing elegance to farm cookery. It's a cuisine forged by the circumstances of a land-based lifestyle, yet makes total sense in the home kitchens of anyone who wants to serve healthy, plant-based food and lots of it. Farm cuisine is simple to prepare, able to tame the kind of hunger that follows a day of hard work, and heavy on seasonal veggies.

In the winter there is more time, but fewer fresh ingredients to work with, and a farm cook knows how to convert the contents of a root cellar, pantry and freezer into a parade of interesting, non-repetitive dishes. They can take a little longer to prepare, but nobody minds having the warm stove on. The result may not reflect the cornucopia of summertime, but hits the spot just the same.

Farmer cooks pass around recipes like heirloom seeds. Each new kitchen is a pristine habitat in which one recipe can evolve into another. Among farmers, the DNA of a recipe can be conveyed in broad strokes. But as in a game of telephone, missing information can be replaced by an entirely new version.

Among farmers, the DNA of a recipe can evolve into another. Among farmers, the DNA of a recipe can be conveyed in broad strokes. But as in a game of telephone, missing information can be replaced by an entirely new version. However, this is not always the case. Sometimes, the DNA of a recipe can be altered to fit the circumstances at hand.

For example, Josh, a farmer from Bernalillo, New Mexico, has a recipe for carrot pasta that is a bit different from the one I learned from Luci, a farmer from the same area. Josh's pasta is a bit more rustic, with a stronger flavor of the carrots. Luci's pasta is a bit more refined, with a smoother texture and a slight hint of sweetness.

Both Josh and Luci have their own unique tastes and cooking styles, which is why they are able to create such diverse recipes. However, they both share a love of fresh, seasonal produce and a commitment to healthy, plant-based cooking.

Luci is a master of improvisation in the kitchen. She is able to adapt to whatever ingredients she has on hand and create a delicious dish. Josh, on the other hand, is more of a by-the-book cook, but he is able to come up with creative twists on classic recipes.

In the end, whether you prefer a rustic or refined version of carrot pasta, you are sure to find something to love in these recipes. So get out your carrots and give them a try! You won't be disappointed.
County ramps up for early mosquito season

—SIGNPOST STAFF

The calendar may say winter, but mosquitoes, including a new invader, are already on the agenda for Sandoval County and its vector-control contractor.

“We are now in early mosquito season. Temperatures are rising,” said Paul Sandoval, Ph.D., of the county’s contractor Roadrunner Public Health, Inc. “We are working on the mosquitoes now before we start seeing the bites.”

That includes continuous surveillance, separate day and night traps to collect different species, larvaeicides in ponded water where mosquitoes can breed, and eventually targeted fogging where high mosquito counts are found. Sandoval made his remarks during a February 20 Sandoval County Commission presentation on this year’s vector-control program.

Commissioner Katherine Bruch of Placitas reminded Sandoval that the county’s emergency approach to the flare-up of a horse virus, beginning in late June last year, alarmed beekeepers and fruit growers over the potential effects of fogging chemicals. She said she would like assurances there will also be a focus on public education and eliminating mosquito breeding sources.

Sandoval agreed that there were problems when the outbreak of Vescicular Stomatitis virus (VSV) was made public. Fogging is only targeted on identified hotspots, and residents can opt out of the spraying, he added.

Where last year VSV made headlines, the presence of a new mosquito with different habits is adding yet another twist to heading off viruses affecting humans and animals.

“We just got the Aedes mosquito,” Sandoval said. “She’s new to the county. She came to visit, and like other viruses and insects, she’s here to stay.”

Aedes aegypti, a subtropical mosquito working its way north, can carry the Zika virus, among other viruses. The mosquito comes out during the day and is distinct in being black with white markings.

Sandoval said the mosquito was discovered here last year during the assault on VSV, which erupted in the county and affected horses and some cattle across the state. Whether VSV, also carried by biting flies, flares up again this year or not, mosquito control needs to be ongoing, Sandoval added.

“Just like handling West Nile virus, we don’t want to wait till the last minute,” he continued. “This isn’t going to ever go backwards. We’re not going to come ten years down the road and say all the viruses have now left… Ten years down the road we’ll probably have ten more new viruses we’re dealing with.”

In the past, West Nile virus was the main concern, spread by a mosquito that lingers on the body, biting one person until its belly is full or it’s swatted. Aedes, identified by being black and white, tends to bite below the waist, doesn’t like being disturbed, and can quietly flirt around biting multiple people before moving on.

To date, the only Zika cases in the state were 10 people who had traveled abroad in 2016 and weren’t diagnosed until they returned to New Mexico, according to the New Mexico Department of Health (NMDOH). While most people won’t know they’ve been infected with Zika, symptoms usually are mild lasting a few days to a week, although the disease has been linked to birth defects in women infected early in pregnancy.

NMDOH also is soliciting photos and reports with time and location of black-and-white day-biting mosquitoes.

West Nile virus was first reported in New Mexico in 2003, and forty cases, with four deaths were logged statewide in 2019. There were three cases in Sandoval County last year, and none the year before, with the highest counts being seven in 2004 and 19 in 2003, according to NMDOH data.

The department recommends as prevention methods: using insect repellants, limiting outdoor activity at dusk and dawn when mosquitoes are most active, screening doors and windows to keep mosquitoes out, and emptying or eliminating outdoor containers where water can collect and become a breeding source.

Placitas 2nd and 4th Saturday Market starts anew in May

—NANCY HOLLEY

The Placitas Community Flea Market has a new name: the Placitas 2nd and 4th Saturday Market. The market continues to give back to our amazing community by featuring a local nonprofit or organization that provides a community service to our community. The featured organization receives the vendor fees from the market in which they are featured. Whether it be Talavera pottery, antiques, books, furniture, jewelry, steel art, garden items, clothing, garage treasures, soaps, plants, you never know what you will find at the market! The market cannot sell food, beverages, or firearms.

The market is held at the open space in Homestead Village on Highway 165. Opening day is Saturday, May 23, and the Market continues the second and fourth Saturdays’ through October 24, from 7:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m., weather permitting.

Vendor spaces are first come basis and are only $10.00 for a 10x15 space. Come early for the best spot.

The Market has only three Saturdays left to be featured for the 2020 season. Contact Nancy at 515-4323 for more information on the Market or to sign up as the featured organization for the Placitas 2nd and 4th Saturday Market.
In a season featuring numerous return engagements of popular performers, the Placitas Artists Series is pleased to welcome back pianist Misuzu Tanaka, who concert regulars will remember from her well-received solo recital in April, 2017. For her upcoming encore Placitas appearance, she will be joined by virtuoso clarinetist Maksim Shtrykov, her long-time musical partner and, as of last year, her spouse.

Both Shtrykov, a native of Belarus, and London-born Tanaka are graduates of the Juilliard School. They enjoy extensive international solo careers in addition to their chamber music collaborations. They also recently founded the Trio Confero with Hungarian cellist Anita Balázs. Recent duo and trio performances have included venues in New York, New Jersey, California, and Oklahoma. One recent review declared the duo, “Yet another example of a new generation of exquisitely talented performers who elevate our understanding of the world’s music.” (John G. Miller, Shelter Island Reporter)

The Shtrykov-Tanaka Duo’s Placitas program features sonatas for clarinet and piano by Felix Mendelssohn and Polish-born twentieth-century composer Mieczysław Weinberg. Also on the program are fantasies based on operatic themes from Bizet’s Carmen and Verdi’s Rigoletto, composed by Alexander Rosenblatt and Luigi Bassi, respectively.

The concert, which begins at 3:00 p.m. on March 15, is sponsored by Sally and John Curro and the Firestone Family Foundation. At 2:00 p.m., immediately prior to the concert, a free visual artists reception will feature works by Katherine Irish, pastel; Meg Leonard, pastel and oil painting; Rebecca Nolda and P.K. Williams, mixed media; and Dana Roth, photography. Elizabeth Potter will present her jewelry at the reception as the month’s “table display” artist.

The concert and visual artist reception take place at Las Placitas Presbyterian Church in the village of Placitas, located six miles east of I-25 on NM 165 (Exit 242). The facility is completely accessible. For ticket information and further details, see page 2 of this Signpost.

Shtrykov-Tanaka Duo play piano and clarinet at Placitas Artists Series

Variation on a Theme of Cranes

Visions of cranes have inspired Judith Roderick’s artwork for decades. These ancient, elegant winter visitors to the Rio Grande Valley are symbols of hope, peace, longevity, and fidelity and have always been cause for her to celebrate with art-making. This show depicts how she has done so in a variety of media. This series, Variation on a Theme of Cranes, illustrates Roderick’s love for the beauty and diversity of the Earth and her longing to do all that she can to preserve it. Judith was a Painting and Design major at Carnegie Tech in the 1960s and has been making art ever since. Although many media have called to her in this lifetime, her longest and most consistent love has been working with fiber. Her work is shown locally and in national and international juried shows.

On March 14, from 1:00 to 4:00 p.m., there will be an artist reception for Roderick’s series at Wild Hearts Gallery—221-B Hwy 165, Placitas 87043 (in Homestead Village) wildheartsgallery-nm.com
Placitas Studio Tour chooses featured artist

-Nancy Holley

The Placitas Studio Tour (PST) is pleased to announce that the brochure image and posters for the 2020 tour will feature a work by Placitas artist Rebecca Nolda. Ms. Nolda’s piece, Mapping the Strata, #13, was selected from over fifty amazing submissions by Placitas artists participating in this year’s tour. Having lived in New Mexico for over 35 years, Rebecca is intrigued by the geologic formations and strata that surround us in Placitas. The chosen image is #13 in a series interpreting of what she sees when she walks the open spaces and arroyos around Placitas.

Join us on Mother’s Day weekend, May 9 and 10, from 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. both days, as sixty Placitas artists open their studio doors.

For more information, visit the PST website at www.PlacitasStudioTour.com to download the map and preview the artists so you can plan your free, self-guided tour.

“Verde: the Color of Life” at PCL

-Pam Troutman

According to Kermit, “It’s not easy being green.” But while it’s hard to argue with the world’s most famous frog, his plaint offered a welcome challenge to artists whose work appears in Verde: The Color of Life, the March/April exhibition at the Placitas Community Library (PCL). The exhibit features nearly twenty local ceramicists, photographers, quilters, and jewelers responding to “green” as both color and concept.

Coordinated by Placitas resident Linda Hughes, co-chair of the PCL’s Art Committee, this exhibit considers green as a symbol of nature, renewal, freshness, and our need to heal and save the environment, as well as its association with money, jealousy, and envy.

Carol Allen, Patti Farley, Pea S. Garr, Tricia George, Annie Gross, L. Heath, Beth Larsen, Lesley Long, Lavon Maestas, Pamela Neas, Linda Nisenbaum, Erica Wendel-Ojlesby, Stephen Palmer, Susan Pine, Judith Roderick, Margaret Shannon, Pam Troutman, and Fehrnuissa Willett use a plethora of techniques to explore the idea of “green.”

The exhibition runs from February 29 through April 30, with a public reception on March 13. Expect green edibles and an opportunity to meet the artists. A portion of each sale benefits the Placitas Community Library.

Richardo Caté of Santo Domingo Pueblo featured in anti-opioid addiction campaign

-Judi McGinnis Porter

State health officials are leveraging a prominent Native American cartoonist as part of a unique effort to reach Native Americans for New Mexico’s anti-opioid addiction campaign, “A Dose of Reality.”

New Mexico Human Services Department, Behavior Health Services Division (BHSD), Office of Substance Abuse Prevention (OSAP), commissioned Richardo Caté of Santo Domingo Pueblo to develop four cartoons that draw attention to anti-opioid addiction programs and services for New Mexico’s Native American populations. The cartoons began appearing in Native American communities on billboards and posters last week.

Cate is widely considered one of the most prominent Native American cartoonists working today and is the only Native American cartoonist carried in a daily mainstream newspaper. His cartoon, “Without Reservation” is published daily in the Santa Fe New Mexican and The Taos News. It explores the irony and poignant humor found in the Native American experience of living in dominant culture.

The effort is part of a larger campaign targeted for Native Americans based on the state’s successful “A Dose of Reality” campaign to ensure appropriate cultural sensitivity and sharing of information that is done with utmost respect to New Mexico’s distinct Pueblos, Tribes and Nations.

Cate believes that humor can be an effective way to introduce a serious topic like opioid addiction to Native American communities.

“Laughter has always been a part of being Indian, and Native humor is culturally unique and at the heart of our resilience and survivability,” said Richardo Caté. “Humor is a way to understand and heal from personal or historical trauma. I am trying to bring attention and focus to the serious opioid addiction issues in our communities as a way to help us foster understanding and change by making us see things about this in a new and relatable way.”

“Until recently, the dramatic opioid epidemic toll among Native American families has not been adequately addressed,” said Dr. Neal Bowen, division director for BHSD. “We will continue to bring forward and intensify our efforts to help those communities thrive. We should all be proud of the efforts made by OSAP Native American staff and consultants. They are leading the way, making a difference and sharing their Native American-specific programs with other states.”

A recent study from the New Mexico Youth Risk and Resiliency Survey (YRBS) which uses a tool to assess the health risk behaviors and resiliency (protective) factors of New Mexico high school and middle school students shows that 8.1 percent of Native American youth used painkillers to get high compared to the state rate of 6.9 percent, and that heroin and methamphetamine use is slightly higher among Native American youth as well.

As part of its overall effort to combat substance abuse, the state’s Native American Outreach Program offers behavioral health services across the continuum of care to New Mexico’s distinct Pueblos, Tribes and Nations while simultaneously addressing challenges and barriers specific to them. This includes working with members of each Pueblo, Tribe, or Nation to conduct outreach on opioid overdose prevention, treatment, harm reduction, and recovery services.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Day</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tuesdays</td>
<td>Third Tuesday: Haven House Domestic Violence Support Group. 6:30-8:00 p.m.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Saturdays</td>
<td>First and Fourth Saturdays: Placitas Saturday Market. 10 a.m.-15 space. Spaces are on a first come basis. We cannot sell food, beverages, or alcoholic drinks. Sponsored by the NM Arts and Crafts Guild.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Saturdays</td>
<td>Third Saturday: Placitas Saturday Market. 10 a.m.-15 space. Spaces are on a first come basis. We cannot sell food, beverages, or alcoholic drinks. Sponsored by the NM Arts and Crafts Guild.</td>
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<td>Saturdays</td>
<td>Fourth Saturday: Placitas Saturday Market. 10 a.m.-15 space. Spaces are on a first come basis. We cannot sell food, beverages, or alcoholic drinks. Sponsored by the NM Arts and Crafts Guild.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fridays</td>
<td>Placitas Artisans Guild (VAG). 10 a.m.-6 p.m. VAG is a group of 30 local artisans who market their works through VAG market days. The VAG has over 200 members. All handcrafted items. We ensure that all products meet our high standards. VAG products are proudly marketed as NM created.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fridays</td>
<td>Sangre de Cristo Artisans Market. Enter at Gate 3 at San Pedro and Copper. Fifty dealers, mineral speci- men, crafts, and jewelry. Music by local bands.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Saturdays</td>
<td>Placitas Saturday Market. 10 a.m.-15 space. Spaces are on a first come basis. We cannot sell food, beverages, or alcoholic drinks. Sponsored by the NM Arts and Crafts Guild.</td>
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<td>Saturdays</td>
<td>Second Saturday: Placitas Saturday Market. 10 a.m.-15 space. Spaces are on a first come basis. We cannot sell food, beverages, or alcoholic drinks. Sponsored by the NM Arts and Crafts Guild.</td>
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<td>Fridays</td>
<td>Ken’s Farm Market. 6 a.m.-6 p.m.</td>
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<td>Saturdays</td>
<td>Second and fourth Saturdays: Placitas Saturday Market. 10 a.m.-15 space. Spaces are on a first come basis. We cannot sell food, beverages, or alcoholic drinks. Sponsored by the NM Arts and Crafts Guild.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fridays</td>
<td>6th Friday night: Kaktus Brewery Bernalillo—471 South Hill Road. Free, pass the hat for benefit.</td>
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<td>Saturdays</td>
<td>First and Fourth Saturdays: Placitas Saturday Market. 10 a.m.-15 space. Spaces are on a first come basis. We cannot sell food, beverages, or alcoholic drinks. Sponsored by the NM Arts and Crafts Guild.</td>
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March 2020 Night Sky

- ANDREA JACQUIN

ENJOY THE STARRY NIGHT SKY • REDUCE NIGHTTIME GLARE
TURN OFF OR SHIELD YOUR OUTSIDE LIGHTS DOWNWARD

MARCH 2020 NIGHT SKY CALENDAR

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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Sun</th>
<th>Mercury</th>
<th>Venus</th>
<th>Mars</th>
<th>Jupiter</th>
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When Eta Carinae finally decides to blow, there are several possible outcomes. Based upon our lack of knowledge, it is not sure which path the larger star will take and how it might affect the smaller star. If Eta Carinae were one massive star with few metals, it would simply collapse into a black hole without a super nova explosion. More likely, though, astronomers expect a visible super nova about as bright as Venus is this month. However, with the dense dust and gas nebula surrounding the star, we might be treated to an even brighter super-luminous supernova, or hypernova, as the explosion excites the nebula's gas and dust to create a much brighter and longer lasting show.

A super nova could cause harm to any life living in nearby star systems as radiation rips at a planet's atmosphere and destroys any ultraviolet light-blocking ozone. When Eta Carinae does go, we should be safe, since we are about 7,500 light-years away. Any beams of energy emitted from the poles of the dying star as a gamma ray burst will be pointed away from us. To be dangerous to our planet, a super nova would need to be less than fifty light-years away. This super nova could be a slight danger to things above the atmosphere in orbit as the cosmic rays will increase, and there will be a slight rise in gamma ray radiation.

To see Eta Carinae, you will need to go south of thirty degrees north latitude, as it is actually in the southern constellation Carina. As of now, the race is on to see which star will go nova first: Betelgeuse or Eta Carinae. Astronomers are betting on Eta Carinae, but it may take several thousand years before either one decides to put on a show. Or, it could happen tonight.

2020 brings big changes to the NM Museum of Natural History and Science Planetarium

- CHARLIE CHRISTMANN

The New Mexico Museum of Natural History and Science Planetarium opened in December of 1999 and has brought the night sky and wonders of the universe to Albuquerque for over twenty years. Wear from hundreds of thousands of visitors has taken its toll, so the planetarium closed on February 17, 2020, for a renovation. The planetarium’s seats, carpet, and wall coverings will be replaced during the renovation. The unused pit in the center of the planetarium will be removed to make the planetarium more accessible at the top and improve overall safety. The renovation will also make room for performances as well.

“As seats have broken, our capacity has dropped. The entire front row has been closed for months,” said space science director Jim Greenhouse. “This renovation is badly needed and will make for a much more comfortable experience as we fly audiences through time and space. We also hope that a new plan for lighting the stairs will make moving around the planetarium safer.”

The planetarium is scheduled to reopen in April and will offer a schedule of the planetarium’s most popular astronomy programs. This renovation is made possible through capital funding from the State of New Mexico.

While the planetarium dome is closed, the Museum will operate a portable planetarium system, which will be projected across the five-story-tall Dynatheater at the Museum’s Multi-Purpose Room. Visitors may join school groups, as space allows, at 11 a.m. and 2 p.m. daily. The 2:00 p.m. showing will be a special version of the live, interactive show Enchanted Skies.

March 2020 brings major changes to the planetarium: admission to the portable planetarium is two dollars per person for all ages.

During the renovation, the ever-popular First Friday Fractals will move temporarily to the Museum’s Dynameater. Special fractal zooms, some of which have not yet been shown in the planetarium, will be projected across the five-story-tall screen. Each video explains a little bit about the math behind some of the most popular fractals, like the Mandelbrot set. This unique opportunity to see the Fractals will only occur on March 6 and April 3, from 6 to 7 p.m. Admission is $10 for adults, $7 for seniors and $5 for children. These shows may sell out, so please purchase tickets in advance from: fractalfoundation.org/fractals/shows.
Las Placitas Association (LPA) and Pathways

JOAN FENCE

Thank you LPA members for electing two new board members; Jade Leyva and Scott MacKenzie. Both will be real assets to our work on your behalf.

A meeting initiated by Vulcan representatives with the Placitas team leading the opposition to the proposed BLM gravel mine was held on February 13. Vulcan outlined their desire to migrate from the existing mine at its closure to a new mine the company intends to open to the east. Final work on Area 4, where the processing plant is located, would be the final mining area. Reclamation is continuing from the east to the south-west in that area. Officials, including operations manager Steve Redenbaugh, expect that operations on the south side of the mine to be completed by the end of 2021. A berm along the north side of the mine next to Sundance Subdivision will be completed by the end of 2021, while mining in that Area 3 of the mine is expected to begin in 2021 and continue until about 2026. Officials said that they will hold a community meeting before that work begins.

REPORT FROM THE SANDOVAL REGIONAL MEDICAL CENTER COMMUNITY ADVISORY BOARD: The SRMC was voluntarily surveyed by The Joint Commission (TJC), and ESACA’s Community Advisory Board representative, Erica Wendel-Oglesby, was invited to participate at the closeout session. The physician surveyor expressed positive thoughts on his findings at this closeout session, she reported, and was pleased with the engagement he received from all in attendance. Every 39 months accreditation is required in order for the organization to receive payment from federally funded Medicare and Medicaid programs.

Finally, ESACA expresses sadness and respect over the passing of ESCA’s vice president, Dick Ulmer. His work with ESCA and the Land Protection Trust were invaluable to Placitas and Sandoval County. Dick’s kind words, his leadership, his love of his state and his country, will always be remembered by the community he served. ESCA sends out its warmest thoughts and prayers to Dick Ulmer’s family and loved ones.

Next ES-CA Board Meeting will be held on March 9, from 4:00 to 6:00 p.m. The meeting is open to the public. Held at Placitas Community Library—NM Highway 165.

Las Placitas Association (LPA) and Pathways

We continue to work with our congressional delegation to move the Buffalo Tract Protection Legislation to each house for a final vote. LPA, like many in our community, mourn the loss of Dick Ulmer. Dick was the principle of the Land Preservation Trust, who teamed with both ESCA and LPA to take on the opposition to the BLM proposed eight hundred acre gravel mine in the Buffalo Tract. His death creates a big hole in our community. Our sympathy goes out to Diane and his family.

Our community suffered another immense loss recently with the death of Wayne Rohar. Wayne was a talented musician, master craftsman, loving husband to Doreen Goodlin, and weekly host of “Blues from the Roadhouse” on KUPR. We honor Wayne and all those who work in the same spirit.

The Signpost welcomes letters of opinion. Letters are subject to editing for length, clarity, libel, and other considerations.

Send to: Signpost, P. O. Box 889, Placitas, NM, 87043 or email@sandovalsingpost.com

The Signpost welcomes letters of opinion. Letters are subject to editing for length, clarity, libel, and other considerations.

The Genders of Language

ANTONIO PLANELLAS, JANUARY, 2020

The French philosopher Gaston Bachelard (1884-1962) pointed out numerous cosmological texts written in German where the sun and the moon intervene, which seemed to him personally impossible to conceive because of his extraordinary inversion which gives the sun (die sonne) the feminine gender, and the moon (der mond) the masculine one. In French, Spanish, and Italian, the sun is masculine and the moon feminine, and they lack the ‘neuter’ ‘it’.

When analyzing the phenomenon of poetic imagination, Bachelard asks this question: “Is it possible that there are language which put the noun ‘fountain’ in the masculine or ‘heaven’ in the feminine?” We share his astonishment at seeing so many linguists dispose of the problem by saying that masculine or feminine of nouns results from chance. On this question of gender of words, philosophers are still debating and the majority of the Hellenistic poets agreed on analyzing that the distribution of concrete words into genders is purely accidental. Yet in French, Spanish, and Italian, most of these entities belong to the feminine: beauty, grace, goodness, kindness, harmony, image, etc.

The woman is the ideal of human nature and the ideal which man posits opposite himself as the essential Other; and the Romance language speakers feminize it because the woman is the palpable figure of otherness ... and that is why nearly all allegories in language, as in iconography are women. The words for great things, like night and day, sleep and death, and sky and earth, take on their meaning only by designating themselves as couples. Every force has a sex; it can be even bisexual, but will never be neutral.

From the very moment it is understood that every force is accompanied by a harmonic of sexuality, it becomes natural to examine the weighted words; those words which have force (power, authority). Every language designates either through metaphorizing and the majority of the Hel lenistic poets agreed on analyzing that the distribution of concrete words into genders is purely accidental. Yet in French, Spanish, and Italian, most of these entities belong to the femi

Graffiti are often the ones who neither cry nor laugh, yet think they can express human emotions when confronted with the realities of gender and sex.

Continued next page.
March 11: 10:00 a.m. Country fried steak, mashed potatoes, garden salad, three bean salad, breadstick, peanut butter cookie
March 10: BBQ rib sandwich, baked beans, pea/carrots, garden salad, wheat roll, fruit cocktail
March 9: Frito pie, nachos and onion, fajitas and tortilla, pineapple sauce, pineapple sauce, peanut butter cookie
March 8: Meatloaf, mashed potato and gravy, mixed vegetables, garden salad, wheat roll, apple sauce
March 7: Lemon pepper tilapia, wild rice, cauliflower salad, celery, wheat roll, apple
March 6: Chicken Caesar wrap, broccoli and potato, pasta salad, apple
March 5: Quinoa Oil wrapping with lettuce, tomato, cheese, hard cheese, wheat roll
March 4: Fresh salad, roll, apple
March 3: Beef stew with veggies, potatoes, garden salad, wheat roll, fruit cocktail
March 2: Broiled pork sandwich, chili beans, steamed broccoli, cole slaw, and apple sauce
March 1: Broil beef, cabbage, potatoes, garden salad, mixed vegetables, garden salad, wheat roll, apple 

**Weekly Programs:**

**Monday:** Yoga 9:30 a.m., enhanced fitness 11:15 a.m., book- fit fitness class 10:00 a.m., enhanced fitness 11:15 a.m., coloring class 10:00 a.m., billiards 2:15 p.m. 
**Tuesday:** Bridge class 10:00 a.m., enhanced fitness 11:15 a.m., coloring class 10:00 a.m., billiards 2:15 p.m. 
**Wednesday:** Bridge class 10:00 a.m., enhanced fitness 11:15 a.m., coloring class 10:00 a.m., billiards 2:15 p.m. 
**Thursday:** Bridge class 10:00 a.m., enhanced fitness 11:15 a.m., coloring class 10:00 a.m., billiards 2:15 p.m.

**Special Events:**
March 3: Haunted Hayride appointment 10:00 a.m.
March 4: Food pantry 7:40 a.m., shopping trip to Walmart, Albertsons, Walgreens 1:00 p.m.
The January Pinewood Derby was a fun event for the cub scouts, with some excellent designs and very fast races. Each boy and girl received a certificate for his and her particular entry. The February event, our annual Blue and Gold Banquet, is under way for February 26, with invitations having gone out to some of our helpful community leaders and the officers of the Coronado Optimist Club—our sponsor. We will have a campfire program and cook-out on March 25. As a service project we are assisting folks from the Las Placitas Presbyterian Church in collecting games, sporting goods, and other items to help the children at the Mexican border keep active while awaiting completion of paperwork for legal entry into the United States.

The Boy Scout troop is also active with camp-outs and advancement skills each month. The fundraising project of posting flags at area residences on national holidays is underway to provide funds for summer camp. The troop has been adding more boys and leaders to its roster, and the boys recently elected new officers as they make their own plans and direct their own activities.

For information on attending any of the Pack or Troop events or on becoming a member or leader, call Amanda at 507-1305 or David at 867-4089.

The Kiwanis Club of Greater Bernalillo is out to help kids grow in school and graduate, but first there are frozen treats.

In partnership with The Paleta Bar, Kiwanis members will be hosting a monthly ice cream social starting March 3, at 6:00 p.m. It will continue on the first Tuesday of each month through the year.

The sweet shop is at 510 NM Highway 528, just south of the Bernalillo Walmart and accessible from Montoya Road on the north and Venada Plaza Drive on the south. Paleta translates to ice pops, a sweet fruit-based frozen treat on a stick, loosely akin to a Popsicle although with dips and toppings.

While the initial focus of the recently formed Kiwanis club is middle school students, kids of any age and their parents are welcome, said club president Dana Koller.

“We really want to pull in families,” Koller told the Signpost. “Any age group is welcome, but we’re really targeting middle school kids as the need in the community.... We’ll get to meet the parents and also hear from the kids about what might be of interest to them.”

The club is picking up the tab for first rounds of paletas, although fancy add-ons are extra. The store is preparing a special treat for the event, which it will continue to market during the year with $1 of each sale going the club projects. Koller is also an organizer of the annual Farm House Ale Event, which donates to Kiwanis. This year’s event is scheduled for June 13 at Loretto Park in Bernalillo.

Koller told the Signpost. “Any age group is welcome, but we’re really targeting middle school kids as the need in the community.... We’ll get to meet the parents and also hear from the kids about what might be of interest to them.”

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Hey Lalo, "Don Juan" decided to re-purpose my banjo case while I was practicing. —DAN WHITE, Placitas

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**SANDOVAL — “CLEANING,” continued next column**

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~ CONTINUED ~

FOR SALE: HOMES / LAND

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**Mysterious Eye**

—A stereogram by Gary Priester

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