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DECEMBER 20 2023
VOLUME 04 | ISSUE 51

The Paper.

ALBUQUERQUE'S INDEPENDENT COMMUNITY NEWS

Cover by Rachel Mills



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The Paper. is published by Good Trouble, LLLP.
The Paper. is printed by the Santa Fe New Mexican in Santa Fe, NM.
Our mailing address is:
317 Commercial St NE #201 ABQ, 87102

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ALBUQUERQUE'S INDEPENDENT COMMUNITY NEWS

More Common Scents

A recognized name in New Mexico cannabis is set to breath new life into an iconic Albuquerque building



By Andy Lyman, The Paper.

The Model Pharmacy for decades had a sign that read, “We have no common scents,” referring to the store’s variety of perfumes and topicals. The store closed a few years ago after more than three decades of offering drinks, snacks and a variety of medicines. Now, after the space sitting mostly empty since the pharmacy’s closure, a new type of medicine will be sold from behind the counter.

Verdes Cannabis plans to open the doors once again, but this time it will be a “modern day pharmacy,” says Verdes’ marketing manager Celeste Melchor.

“Given the rich history that this building has—and we know how much it means to the community—we felt that we were best equipped to take on this location and serve this community, given that we really value giving back to our community and providing a space for people to come to get safe access to medicine,” Melchor tells *The Paper*.

About the clever phrase that the classic marquee donned, Melchor says the company hasn’t nailed down exactly what will replace it, but that they want to continue that theme and “have some fun, cheeky sayings on the board.”

Verdes, which had been around years before recreational-use cannabis was legalized in New Mexico, has long prided itself for staying grounded in its business model of prioritizing the therapeutic uses of cannabis over its potential to be overused as a vice. Melchor

says a majority of Verdes’ customers keep coming back for a “medicinal, natural remedy,” instead of seeking the highest octane products that many new dispensaries push these days.

“Our goal is to help people get the most out of life naturally, not to just check out of life and get so stoned they can’t do anything,” she says.

Verdes plans to open the doors of its latest location by Dec. 22, assuming all of the city zoning requirements are met by then.

In an age where new dispensaries are popping up, seemingly by the minute, and established companies are rapidly expanding, this will be the third Verdes store in Albuquerque since before recreational-use cannabis sales began in 2022.

Melchor says prior to Verdes buying the building and after the previous business closed, the space was owned by Skarsgard Farms, a local food delivery company. Skarsgard had plans to use the building for a retail spot where customers could come in and buy items similar to a farmer’s market. After scrapping that idea, Skarsgard Farms—which has an offshoot cannabis delivery company that primarily sells Verdes products—offered to sell the building to the long-time cannabis company.

“As time went on, we started thinking, “Oh, Model Pharmacy turns modern-day pharmacy,” she says. “Because that’s how we view ourselves. We’re providing medicine to people, whether they’re a medical patient, or they’re a recreational user, everyone goes to cannabis for a reason.”

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Ugly Sweater Party

Fighting with classic-traditional stagings of The Nutcracker Ballet for Christmas supremacy each and every year is the nouvelle-traditional Ugly Sweater Party. At least half a dozen of these sartorial soirees await overheated bar patrons between now and Christmas Day. **Canteen Brewhouse (2381 Aztec Rd. NE)**, for example, is hosting its usual **Music on the Patio** concert on **Saturday, Dec. 23**. The band this week is "filthy, mangy" jazz favorites **Le Chat Lunatique**. They'll be stomping out some danceable swing-style music from **2 to 4pm**. But it's also an **Ugly Sweater Party**, so patrons are encouraged to wear the loudest, funkiest holiday sweaters they've managed to rescue from area Goodwills. Admission is **free**, but you gotta buy your own food and drinks, pal!

Thursday, December 21

Class / Workshop

Beginning Square Dance Classes
(18 weeks) \$120 All Day 4915
Hawkins St NE 4915 Hawkins
Street Northeast

Comedy

Trivia Mafia 7-9 pm Lizard Tail
Industrial 3351 Columbia Dr. NE

Community

Winter Wonderland NM \$49 6-9
pm EXPO New Mexico 300 San
Pedro Dr NE

Dance

Friday Night Square Dancing
7 - 9 PM Fridays Albuquerque
Square Dance Center 4915
Hawkins St NE

Drink

Geeks Who Drink Trivia Night
at Boese Brothers Brewpub (NE
Heights) 7-9 pm Boese Brothers
Brewpub NE Heights 7849
Tramway Blvd, Suite C

Geeks Who Drink Trivia Night at
Sunday Service Motor Company
7-9 pm Sunday Service Motor
Company 2701 4th Street NW

Sparkling & Champagne Wine Tasting \$24 5-8 pm Slate Street Cafe 515 Slate Ave. NW

Festival
Pueblo Gingerbread Experience All Day Indian Pueblo Cultural Center 2401 12th St. NW

Miscellaneous
River of Lights \$7-\$17 5-10 pm ABQ BioPark Botanic Garden 2601 Central Ave NW

Trivia Night 7-9 pm Lizard Tail Brewing Nob Hill 3417 Central Ave. NE Suite C

Music
Felix Gato Trio 7-9 pm Hollow Spirits 1324 1st ST NW

Live Mic Karaoke 7:30-11:30 pm Lizard Tail Brewing 9800 Montgomery Blvd NE STE 7

Music on the Patio: The Fabulous Martini-Tones 6-9 pm Canteen Brewhouse 2381 Aztec Road Northeast

Open Mic Karaoke 7-10 pm on Wednesdays Lizard Tail Brewing Nob Hill 3417 Central Ave. NE Suite C

Selena Night: A Cumbia Christmas 9 pm-2 am Effex NightClub 420 Central Avenue Southwest

The Emo Night Before Christmas 9 pm-2 am Effex NightClub 420 Central Avenue Southwest

Third Thursday Music w/ David Garcia 7-9 pm Tractor Brewing Nob Hill 118 Tulane SE

Performance
Miss Bennet: Christmas at Pemberley \$20-\$24 7:30 pm Adobe Theater 9813 4th St NW

Friday, December 22

Comedy
The Show - Live Comedy Improv \$12 8-9 pm The Box Performance Space 114 Gold Ave SW

Community
Winter Wonderland NM \$49 6:00pm to 10:00pm EXPO New

Mexico 300 San Pedro Dr NE
Dance
Charles Dickens Winter Ball \$50-\$70 6-10 pm Holiday Dance Studio 5200 Eubank Blvd. NE Suite D

The Nutcracker \$22-\$30 2-4 pm KiMo Theatre 423 Central Avenue NW

The Nutcracker \$22-\$30 7-9 pm KiMo Theatre 423 Central Avenue NW

Drink
Luna De Los Muertos Russian Imperial Stout Release 2-10 pm Tractor Brewing Wells Park 1800 Fourth St. NW

Film
NMARB Presents the Youth Arts Ambassadors Film Review \$10 5-9 pm FUSION Theater 708 1st St. NW

Miscellaneous
River of Lights \$7-\$17 5-10 pm ABQ BioPark Botanic Garden 2601 Central Ave NW

Music
A Very Wae Fonkey Christmas 8-11 pm Tractor Brewing Nob Hill 118 Tulane SE

AOR 9 pm-1 am Sandia Resort and Casino 30 Rainbow Road

Gin & Jazz: Winter Cocktail Edition 5-10 pm Tractor Brewing Wells Park 1800 Fourth St. NW
Iron Chihuahua 8-11 pm Uptown Sports Bar 6601 Uptown Blvd. NE

Keith Sanchez and the Moon Thieves Special Holiday Show \$10 7-9 pm FUSION 700-708 1st St NW

NEW MEXmasICO Bollywood \$10-\$400 9 pm-2 am Club Rio 10205 Central Ave NW

Second Annual Apparition: Krampus Night \$8-\$15 9 pm-1 am Launchpad 618 Central Avenue Southwest

Sgt Splendor featuring Eric McFadden & Kate Vargas \$17 8-11 pm Echoes 313 Gold Ave SW

Performance
Miss Bennet: Christmas at Pemberley \$20-\$24 7:30 pm Adobe Theater 9813 4th St NW

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The Best Christmas Pageant Ever \$20-\$25 7:30-9:30 pm
Albuquerque Little Theatre 224 San Pasquale Ave SW

The Clairvoyants \$40-\$50 8-9:30 pm
Isleta Resort and Casino 11000 Broadway Blvd SE

The Outlaw, Lawman and Ghost Magic Show \$25 7-8 pm
Painted Lady Bed & Brew 1100 Bellamah Ave. NW

Saturday, December 23

- Dance
- The Nutcracker & Tea \$27-\$35 1-3 pm
KiMo Theatre 423 Central Avenue NW
- Family
- IPCC’s Family Story Time: Christmas 1-2 pm
Indian Pueblo Cultural Center 2401 12th Street NW
- Food
- Festivus Fiesta and Food Pop-Up 11 am-4 pm
Boofy’s Best For Pets 4610 Cutler Ave NE Suite A

Special Holiday Cocktail/ Beer Pairing Menu \$90 6-8:30 pm
The Taproom at Old Town 524 Romero St. NW

Literature/Poetry

J.L. Geger Book Signing 12-3 pm
Treasure House Books & Gifts 2012 S Plaza St NW A

Markets

Cool-astic Bookfair & Last Minute Market 6-9 pm
Tractor Brewing Wells Park 1800 Fourth St. NW

Miscellaneous

River of Lights \$7-\$17 5-10 pm
ABQ BioPark Botanic Garden 2601 Central Ave NW

Music

Alex McCue Christmas Set 7-9 pm
Tractor Brewing Nob Hill 118 Tulane SE

Big Lebowski Robe and Beard Party w/ The Ross Brothers Band 8-11 pm
Gecko’s Bar & Tapas Nob Hill 3500 Central Ave. SE

Mark Farina \$24-\$30 9:30 pm-2 am
Electric Playhouse 5201 Ouray Rd. NW

Music on the Patio: Le Chat Lunatique and Ugly Sweater Party 2-5 pm
Canteen Brewhouse 2381 Aztec Road Northeast

Saturday Night Techno Affair \$10 9 pm-2 am
FUSION 700-708 1st St NW

The Emo Nite Before Christmas II \$8 7 pm
Launchpad 618 Central Avenue Southwest

Performance

Ahhlmaa’s Lipsync Smackdown \$8 10-11 pm
The Box Performance Space 114 Gold Ave SW

All is Calm: The Christmas Truce of 1914 \$24-\$30 7:30-9:30 pm
North Fourth Art Center 4904 4th St NW

Miss Bennet: Christmas at Pemberley \$20-\$24 7:30 pm
Adobe Theater 9813 4th St NW

The Best Christmas Pageant Ever \$20-\$25 7:30-9:30 pm
Albuquerque Little Theatre 224 San Pasquale Ave SW

The Best Christmas Pageant Ever \$20-\$25 2-4 pm
Albuquerque Little Theatre 224 San Pasquale Ave SW

Yule Tide Strip 3-6 pm
Sidewinders Bar and Grill 4200 Central Avenue NE

Sunday, December 24

- Drink
- Geeks Who Drink Trivia Night at Tractor Brewing Wells Park 7-9 pm
Tractor Brewing Wells Park 1800 Fourth St. NW
- Miscellaneous
- River of Lights \$7-\$17 5-10 pm
ABQ BioPark Botanic Garden 2601 Central Ave NW
- Performance
- The Best Christmas Pageant Ever \$20-\$25 1-3 pm
Albuquerque Little Theatre 224 San Pasquale Ave SW





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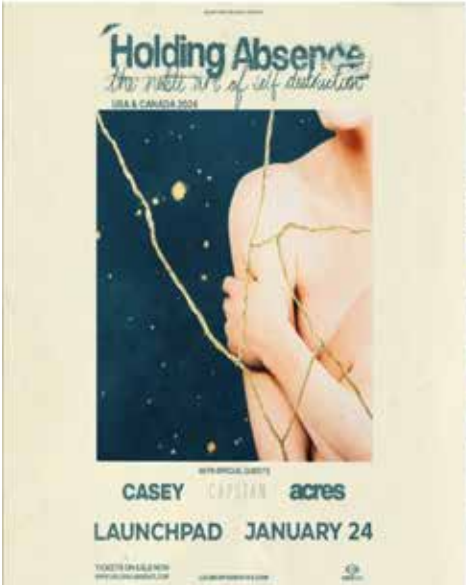
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Monday, December 25**Drink**

Geeks Who Drink Trivia Night at Santa Fe Brewing (Tin Can Alley) 7-9 pm Santa Fe Brewing (Tin Can Alley) 6110 Alameda Blvd NE Suite #1

Miscellaneous

Geeks Who Drink Trivia Night at Bow & Arrow Brewing 7-9 pm Bow & Arrow Brewing Co. 608 McKnight Ave NW

River of Lights \$7-\$17 5-10 pm ABQ BioPark Botanic Garden 2601 Central Ave NW

Tuesday, December 26**Drink**

Geeks Who Drink Trivia Night at 505 Central Food Hall 7-9 pm 505 Central Food Hall 505 Central Ave NW

Geeks Who Drink Trivia Night at Poki Poki Cevicheria (Wyoming Blvd) 7-9 pm Poki Poki Cevicheria (Wyoming Blvd) 3517 Wyoming Blvd NE

Games

Brain Gang Trivia 7-9 pm Lizard Tail Industrial 3351 Columbia Dr. NE

Miscellaneous

River of Lights \$7-\$17 5-10 pm ABQ BioPark Botanic Garden 2601 Central Ave NW



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Giving Guide

It's the time of giving, after all

It's all too easy this time of year to get wrapped up in consumerism. Yes, we did offer readers two different gift guides this year, but even *we* know the importance of taking a moment to give to charitable causes amid all the holiday shopping mumbo jumbo.

This, dear reader, is our last guide of the year, but this time we're asking you to consider giving whatever you can to some of our favorite non-profit organizations.

Agora Crisis Center

By Sara Atencio-Gonzales, The Paper.

We probably all know that feeling when it seems life could be easier with simply someone to talk to, or a moment to just get things off your chest. The Agora Crisis Center has been offering this very service to the Albuquerque community for over 50 years.

The Agora Crisis Center was started in 1970 by a group of students and professors at the University of New Mexico (UNM) after a fellow student died by suicide. The group of students and professors decided to start a crisis center where anyone could call to talk about whatever was on their mind.

They had a few requirements that were a must for this center. It had to be free, confidential and compassionate. Agora began as one of the first crisis centers of its kind in the United States.

The nonprofit, which is affiliated with UNM, is accredited by the International Council for Helplines (ICH). The crisis center stays open thanks to funding from the Associated Students of UNM and by private donations. Every donation received goes directly to the center to make sure it can keep the lines connected.

One of the biggest features keeping the Agora Crisis Center running smoothly is its volunteers..

"Usually we, on average, have about 120 [volunteers] at any given time. I guess it doesn't feel that way since we see a couple of them at a time," says Dasie Kent, Executive Director of the Agora Crisis Center.

Agora volunteers go through 40 hours of nationally accredited training to become Certified Crisis Hotline Specialists. Once

training is complete, all volunteers commit to one 4-hour shift per week.

Agora also offers suicide awareness and intervention lessons to anyone in the community who is interested in it.

If you or a loved one is struggling with depression, anxiety, or just needs someone to talk to, you can call the Agora Crisis Center at 505-277-3013. You can also learn more about the Agora Crisis Center, including volunteer opportunities and ways to donate by going to agoracares.org.

Albuquerque Indian Center

By Jonathan Sims, The Paper.

The Albuquerque Indian Center. Do you know this place? As much work as they have done and continue to do, it is one of those Albuquerque institutions that is slowly becoming forgotten as the world moves at a rapid pace. I think most Native people in Albuquerque know it is there, but unless you have sought services there, it isn't big on your radar.

Our Indian Center isn't as grand and fancy as others. Seattle, California, Chicago, and even Las Vegas all have places where Native people can gather and find resources if needed.

Not much has changed in the ten years since I visited last, which is both an issue and a blessing.

Let's start with the blessing. One of which is Mary Garcia, well into her golden years, she has run the show for over two decades. She has seen the good times and the bad times. As Mary explains, "When I first started here, we were more educational. We provided all kinds of different education, we did the workforce training. We had a lot. We had sweat lodges, we had talking circles. As time went on, the funding started to get slower and smaller and smaller so that we had to start changing our initial responsibilities that we had."

The grant systems really began to dictate the services she could provide.

"So from all that wonderful job training and everything else that we were doing, we had to start doing what money was telling us to do," she says. "If we got money for tobacco, we did tobacco. If we got money for behavioral health, we did behavioral health.

Whatever we got money for, that's what we were doing."

I have heard multiple stories of this being a place of solace and safety for our unhoused relatives living in Albuquerque. It's where many people receive mail and information. Various people shared how this became their meeting spot if separated on the streets.

But there's still room for improvement.

For the last five years, the center has had no heat or cooling. It wasn't until last year when Bernalillo County kicked in some money to fix that problem. Things such as computers for job hunts and checking email are not available. Nor is there a working restroom.

This December their big hurdle is to get enough donations for families to have a good holiday season. On Dec. 22, they will have a toy drive and feed a few hundred people. It takes an average of about 400 donated toys to make sure each child gets two items. This year, fewer than 100 have come in so far.

"If we don't have enough, we won't do it, because it's hard to turn people away," Garcia says.

I asked Mary what the Indian Center wants people to know.

"We are here, we still help people, although that has changed with what is happening in our city, and that we need help. We need funding and anyone that is willing to partner with us. That's my Christmas miracle."

You can donate to the Albuquerque Indian Center at abqindiancenter.org/donate

Crossroads for Women

By Gwynne Ann Unruh, The Paper.

Elizabeth Simpson found in the 1990's while working on improving jail conditions as a lawyer that women were being released from incarceration without the support they needed to break the cycle of working the streets and subsequently going to jail.

Simpson and Susan Tomita, her law partner, decided to create a program that cushioned and nurtured women coming out of jail so they had a better chance of staying out. They opened Crossroads for Women in 1997 as a way for women to get the support needed and to address the underlying trauma in their life. "Women coming out of incarceration were typically facing issues ranging from finding housing, work, and connecting with a support system and their families," Emily Cronin, Crossroad's community engagement and volunteer coordinator tells The Paper. "The jails were referring these women to services that either didn't exist or were ineffective and only addressed one issue."

Crossroads has had many success stories since its inception.

"Over the past 26 years we've had countless success stories and testimonials of how the support that we've provided has been integral in a person's development," Cronin says. "We've had people go through our program who start their own successful

business, or become bestselling authors. We've also had people turn around and become peer support workers themselves. They take their lived experience and use it to help others."

After receiving a prerelease referral, Crossroads conducts an interview with an intake worker to try and identify what their client's goals are. Typically, women are in the program for about nine to 18 months. Crossroads however will not close their doors to anyone who needs them, whether they've been in the program a day or five years.

"We really just try to make whatever their dream is, come true," says Cronin. "We try to empower them to take their own healing under their hands and run with the gifts that they have. Rather than living in desperation and just trying to survive, we support them in using the skills that they gain for the growth of themselves and the community."

Once enrolled in Crossroads' program, their case worker will help set expectations and determine the client's needs. Those needs can fall under legal assistance, independent living, medical, substance use, mental health, vocational, recreational activities and family reunification support.

"The caseworker's goal is to make sure that we're targeting at least three of these needs per quarter throughout the year or however long they are in the program," Cronin explains. "We try to come up with things that are measurable, achievable and relevant to what they need to be able to live independently and not relapse or go back into incarceration."

Crossroads also has a "drop-in program" for anybody that's precariously housed, has a dual diagnosis or needs some extra support, such as clothing and food. They can come in and see a case manager for about an hour and a half to assess what needs they have to determine how the program can help them.

"These women are just so inspiring to me. I just am so proud of everything that they are achieving and doing," Cronin says. "Just being here and participating is an amazing experience."

Those interested in referring someone to the Crossroads program, donating or volunteering can contact Cronin at 505-242-1010.

Mandy's Farm

By Gwynne Ann Unruh, The Paper.

Decades ago, people born with developmental disabilities in New Mexico would often be sent to state institutions or state hospitals for care and housing. In the 1990's the state shuttered these state hospitals and institutions, sending their residents back into the community, as neighbors, friends and family members. As they left these institutions, some found educational support, while others fell through the cracks, particularly as they became adults.

"There is early intervention throughout the school system, but oftentimes the support needs for people with disabilities are lacking when they turn into adults," Melissa McCue, director of Mandy's Farm, a nonprofit organization that assists individuals with developmental disabilities tells *The Paper*. "And that is one of the most crucial times that

support is needed."

The founders of Mandy's Farm, Ruthie and David Robbins had struggled to find support for their child Mandy, who has autism, is nonverbal and has a lot of sensory support needs. Autism wasn't well known and the services they felt Mandy would need as she became an adult were not available. The Robbins created Mandy's Farm, a nonprofit disability service provider to give their daughter the support she needed as she grew into adulthood.

Mandy is in her 40's now and Mandy's Farm has several programs that support individuals with intellectual or developmental disabilities. They have three locations in Albuquerque; two residential homes in the South Valley and one in the Northeast Heights.

McCue says they pride themselves in providing a place that feels and looks like a home and not a clinical setting. Everyone has their own bedroom and decorates it in a way that represents their personalities. They have family dinners and other activities together such as going out into the community having cookouts and picnics with each other.

"There's a tremendous need right now. We could triple the number of homes we have and still see a large demand for residential services for this population," McCue says.

In addition to Mandy's Farm's residential services, they offer an Adaptive Horsemanship program.

"Being around the animals provides therapeutic benefits not only for sensory support needs, but a lot of occupational therapy naturally occurs while preparing and caring for a horse as well as riding one," McCue explains.

Their Employment Program partners with over 30 local businesses in businesses Albuquerque that employ Mandy's Farm's residents. One of the businesses, Bricks and Minifigs, sells Lego and has partnered with them for over six years. Used Lego sets are brought in and traded for new ones.

"We found a perfect fit for a young man named Sean, who has autism, and for his whole life loved organizing, loved sorting. We are just so excited for him to have that opportunity to work and have meaningful and gainful employment. He is now one of their employees going on over five years."

Their VAMOS program, (Vocational Access and Meaningful Opportunities for Success) reaches out to youth, ages 14 through 21, with autism and similar challenges. The free program provides self-advocacy and pre-employment skills in the classroom, an after-school program and an intensive summer program. Their newest program, AgrAbility, partners with New Mexico State University. The program focuses on growing food. The two-year apprenticeship program covers regenerative and sustainable farming practices, the economic component of building a business and the different techniques and skills it takes to be an effective food grower in our geographic region.

Additional information about Mandy's Farm is available at mandysfarm.org

New Mexico Local News Fund

By Sara Atencio-Gonzales, The Paper.

Journalism is constantly growing and changing, so much so that getting a foot in the door is often a confusing and sometimes fruitless effort for new and upcoming journalists.. Things changed though after the New Mexico Local News Fund decided to step in and shake things up.

The New Mexico Local News Fund was started in 2018 by Sarah Gustavus, who has a long history of journalism in New Mexico. The non-profit aims to grow the local news ecosystem across our state to better inform, therefore serve, all New Mexicans.

The New Mexico News Fund has launched a multitude of programs since its inception with the aim of supporting local newsrooms. Those programs include the Accelerator, where numerous New Mexico newsrooms received \$6,000 in grants, and the Local News fellowships and internships, where journalism students from universities all across the state and country get the opportunity to work in a real newsroom.

"The vision for the program was that the newsrooms around the state told us that ultimately, what they needed is just more journalists on staff, they just didn't have the resources to do all the reporting," says Rashad Mahmood, Executive Director.

The fellows are paid a competitive salary and assigned a mentor. Candidates are selected by an independent committee led by faculty from University of New Mexico, New Mexico State University and Eastern New Mexico University.

Interns are expected to work 20-25 hours per week for eight weeks. Each host newsroom is provided funds to employ the intern, including a stipend for a bootcamp orientation week.

This year the New Mexico Local News Fund welcomed seven fellows and eight interns, who were paired with outlets such as KOB-TV, KUNM, *New Mexico Magazine*, *Deming Headlight*, and here at *The Paper*.

The fellowship and internship programs have been successful for the non-profit but also for the young journalists getting their start in the field.

"Over the years, I think over six, I think almost 70 percent of the fellows that have participated in that program are still working in journalism today," says Mahmood.

New Mexico Local News Fund's money comes primarily from grants but some also comes from individual donations. Mahmood says they're also taking part in a national initiative called Press Forward.

"A lot of national journalism funders have come together to pledge \$500 million to support local news throughout the United States over the next five years. We are in the process of forming a local New Mexico chapter," says Mahmood. Those interested in learning more about the New Mexico Local News Fund or donating to a local newsroom to help keep local journalism alive can go to nmlocalnews.org

Start Your Own ‘Say Hi’ Campaign

Diane Denish, Corner to Corner

Recently in talking with a friend, I mentioned I was mulling over topics for my regular column. I always have ideas about current events, and there is always lots to write about— children’s issues, women’s struggles, voter issues, for starters. And it’s easy to get mired in the heartbreak of two vicious wars, climate crisis, gun violence and more.

My friend had a better idea—more suited to the holiday season. He suggested I write about how people are being nicer to each other. I was intrigued and asked him to tell me more.

I listened as he told me about shopping recently in Home Depot. Surprisingly, he said, store personnel seemed friendlier. They were especially helpful and kind, so much so that he asked one person if there had been some kind of corporate memo about being more customer friendly.

The answer was, “No, everyone just feels better.” And

after that my friend felt better too.

And that’s the point. Feeling better as we come out of the pandemic and overcome its residual effect—the epidemic of isolation and loneliness. It’s an epidemic that has no vaccine, but it has a remedy: social interaction with people you know and sometimes with people you don’t know.

Dr. Vivek Murthy, U.S. Surgeon General, in his warning about isolation reminds us “social connection is essential to humanity... as essential as food, drink and shelter.” We are wired for it.

And the epidemic is not just in the U.S.

In Sweden a social strategist, Asa Koski, started the “say hi” (in Swedish it’s “sag heji”) campaign. It was an effort designed specifically to help combat social isolation. Engaging with strangers can be positive.

In the Netherlands, there is a national campaign to combat isolation.

To most of us, interacting with a stranger may not seem important, but studies show positive social interactions are good for our health – and our hearts.

I agree.

Since reading about Sweden, I asked others if they had stories of interacting with friends or

strangers. One couple delightedly told me their experience. They love to garden, and their garden reflects it. It was a story of strangers walking by and stopping to chat with them, attracted to their garden. The strangers are of all

ages.

Then, wandering through the bookstore this week while Christmas shopping, I had my own experience. I stopped next to the table featuring Barbara Streisand’s new memoir. “993 pages,” I said to the woman next to me. “Wow!” We had a short conversation, wondering if we wanted to know that much about Streisand. She asked me about

some books I was holding. Then, we parted ways.

But not for long. She tracked me down in the fiction aisle a few minutes later. This time she told me she was new to Albuquerque and looking for a book group to join. I couldn’t help her, but we continued to visit. After a few minutes, I knew her name, where she lived, and she took my email address. The conversation came full circle. It turned out she lives across the street from the friend who suggested I write about people being nicer.

Finding and engaging with strangers during this holiday season is easy. Go shopping, take a walk, stand in line at the post office, sit next to someone new at church, attend a lecture, volunteer. Strangers are everywhere.

Engage in your own “say hi” campaign. You might make someone’s day. And yours too.

I haven’t heard from the woman in the bookstore. I hope I do. But in the meantime, I think we both feel better.

Corner to Corner



Diane Denish

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Muhammed Abdel-Hack

Mention the term CD to a generation of day-traders and cryptocurrency enthusiasts, and you may invoke visions of their parents’ dusty 1990’s music collection. CDs (the financial kind, not the music kind), however, are still a worthwhile consideration for short and long-

term investment strategies.

CDs, or certificates of deposit, exist as an agreement between the depositor and the financial institution. In this agreement, the depositor agrees to give a certain amount of money to the bank or credit union which, in turn, agrees to pay back that amount after a fixed period of time, plus interest. CDs are considered safe

investments because they are FDIC-insured up to \$250,000 per depositor. However, unlike savings accounts, CDs are not liquid assets and the agreed upon interest rate is fixed, regardless of external market influences. Furthermore, the invested funds are not accessible to the depositor before the end of the investment timeline without incurring some hefty fees.

It’s not hard to see why CDs have fallen out of the periphery of today’s savvy investors. After the financial crisis of 2008, and even more recently post-pandemic, interest rates on investments of six-month, one-year and five-year CDs all fell below one percent, a far cry from the historic highs of the 1980s which saw peaks of over 11 percent, but also a much higher inflationary period. Since then, the annual percentage yield (APY) for CDs saw a steady decline as the Fed lowered interest rates at various points over the decades in order to stimulate the economy. Recently, we have seen a reverse of that

tactic. Between March of 2022 and July of 2023, the Fed has increased interest rates a record 11 times to combat inflation. While these interest rate increases meant that banks were charging more for loans, they also extended to interest rates for various investment vehicles and savings products which are now yielding slightly higher returns.

Since CDs are impacted by the movement of the federal fund rate, it is difficult to predict whether 2024 will see continued increases in the APY, or if they may have leveled out for now. The expectation is that rates will hover between five percent and 5.5 percent, to manage inflation. This is according to the September 2023 meeting minutes from The Federal Open Market Committee (FOMC), which helps to set monetary policy and influences the federal funds rate. As in the case with any investment considerations, it is always a best practice for the investor to do their own research and seek the advice of industry experts.

"I'M SO GRATEFUL I NEVER STOPPED SEARCHING!"

Bernalillo resident Maria R had been experiencing the debilitating side effects of Peripheral Neuropathy.

"I was beginning to have other health issues due to the lack of sleep. I needed help just standing up and when I was standing I was afraid I would fall because I had no feeling in my feet. My life felt like a nightmare."

Then she met Albuquerque's very own Dr. Andrea Brogdon

"I was so desperate to the point of giving up" exclaimed Maria R. from Bernalillo. "I was in so much discomfort due to the numbness, tingling, and burning on the back of both legs and in my feet."

Maria R had been diagnosed with peripheral neuropathy and had seen a neurologist with no relief. To complicate things further, Maria had been diagnosed with two fractured discs in her back that were causing her severe pain. "I was no longer able to do surgery and all other treatments didn't work. I was starting to feel hopeless."

Maria is one of 3 million people in the United States suffering from peripheral neuropathy, a degenerative disease of the peripheral nervous system. "Those with peripheral neuropathy experience numbness, tingling, burning and even severe cramping due to the dying off of the peripheral nerves," explains Dr. Andrea Brogdon of Albuquerque Acupuncture & Integrative Medicine. "These nerves continue to die off until they have completely expired leaving sufferers with numbness and debilitating balance issues. Patients come to see me after having seen many other doctors with no relief. They have been told that there is nothing they can do or that they just have to live with it."

"I was beginning to have other health issues due to the lack of sleep. I needed help just standing up and when I was standing I was afraid I would fall because I had no feeling in my feet. My life felt like a nightmare," says Maria.

"I learned about Dr. Andrea Brogdon from an article I read and learned that she helped others like me, experiencing the same symptoms.

I made an appointment hoping she was going to be able to help me. It was my last resort."

Dr. Andrea Brogdon has helped thousands of patients get their life back after being diagnosed with peripheral neuropathy and living with the debilitating effects of the disease. How does she get such amazing results? "Acupuncture has been used for centuries to improve circulation but the real magic happens when I integrate ATP Resonance BioTherapy™." By using modern technological advancements alongside the time tested science of acupuncture, Dr. Brogdon is able to reverse the effects of this degenerative disease, regardless of its origin.

"Early detection is key when it comes to improving your chances of a full recovery," explains Dr. Brogdon. Which is why she starts every patient with an initial consultation during which a sensory exam is performed. "This helps to determine just how much nerve damage has occurred," tells the doctor. "This is important because if the patient has suffered more than 95% sensory loss there is very little I can do at that point."

"After several treatments, I experienced tremendous relief. Life is good! I have seen a huge improvement in my walking, I sleep better, even my mood is better! I am so grateful I never stopped searching!"
exclaims Maria.

If you or a loved one are living a life of suffering due to peripheral neuropathy and your pain has prevented you from doing the things you love with the people you love, it's time to call Dr. Brogdon and the staff at AAIM.

Call (505) 355-1984 today to schedule an initial consultation or visit AAIM-ABQ.com to read more incredible success stories.



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cannabis news shorts

Every week, we round up our favorite cannabis-related news stories in bite sized edible pieces. Here's some of our favorites!

“Psychedelic Church” Defends Mushroom Sales

By Josh Lee, The Paper

A Detroit religious group that reveres the use of psychedelics is in a legal battle with the city over its attempts to sell the “sacrament” to church members.

Soul Tribes International Ministries, a so-called “psychedelic church,” has cited a 2006 case involving a Santa Fe, New Mexico, ayahuasca church in its defense against the city of Detroit.

In that case, U.S. Customs seized over 30 gallons of ayahuasca tea that had been shipped to a sect of the Brazilian União do Vegetal (UDV) church located in Santa Fe. The church filed a lawsuit against the agency, citing the Religious Freedom Restoration Act and won. The U.S. Supreme Court granted a preliminary injunction prohibiting the federal government from interfering with their religious use of ayahuasca.

Soul Tribes church was raided by Detroit police in September. Officers seized 99 pounds of psilocybin mushrooms and 120 pounds of what is believed to be marijuana. The City of Detroit brought a temporary restraining order and nuisance claim against

Soul Tribes church owner Shaman Shu in October.

Shu has announced that he plans to file a \$1 billion countersuit against the city citing racial and religious discrimination, citing the Supreme Court decision made in the Santa Fe case.

Lubbock Voters to Decide Decriminalization

The Lubbock City Council has ordered a special citywide election for May 4 to allow voters to decide whether the city should decriminalize marijuana.

“Freedom Act Lubbock” collected over 5,000 signatures on a petition in support of a measure that would decriminalize the possession of less than four ounces of marijuana within Lubbock, Texas. It would also prohibit law enforcement officers from using the odor of cannabis alone as probable cause for a search.

The petition was presented to the City Council, which unanimously rejected the ordinance. Some council members said they believed the ordinance violates the Texas constitution.

According to city laws, after rejecting the ordinance, the city has to put it to a vote.

If the ordinance passes, Lubbock will become the largest Texas city within driving distance of New Mexico dispensaries to decriminalize marijuana.

FDA Considers MDMA Treatment Application

A psychedelics research advocacy group has submitted a New Drug Application to the Food and Drug Administration (FDA), requesting that it expedite its review of MDMA as a treatment for PTSD.

A subsidiary of the Multidisciplinary Association for Psychedelic Studies (MAPS) filed the request last week. The FDA has designated MDMA—street name: “Molly”—as a “breakthrough therapy” in treating PTSD. If the agency decides to approve the New Drug Application, then the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) will have to reschedule the drug. In a news release, MAPS said it delivered a number of supporting scientific papers along with the application.

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"NEARLY HALF THE STATES HAVE LEGALIZED MARIJUANA. SO, TO BE SAFE, DON'T EAT THE COOKIES + BROWNIES LEFT OUT FOR YOU... BRING THEM BACK FOR US!"

PAID ADVERTISEMENT

"A Day in the Life II"

Black and white photographs lay around the gallery floor like playing cards, grouped in unusual suits of wailing kittens, smiling seniors and an assortment of vintage toy trains. Staff are busy at work with tape measure and calculator, analyzing each photo - trying to figure out how to hang an exhibition that's equal parts art and math in a trapezoid-shaped gallery. Not only does each picture have to be spaced the right number of inches apart, each grouping of photos has to tell a story.

"A Day in the Life II" is an exhibit about Albuquerque workers, a follow-up to a 2009 public art photography project reflecting a day in the life of a city. Seven Albuquerque artists were selected to capture what happens during 24 hours for city employees, revealing the human side of government. It asks the question: What does it take to make life better for our community? So, it's no surprise "A Day in the Life II" is the premiere show for the new art space opening at City Hall. Gallery One is the intersection between public art, residents and the city's unique community of 5,500 people that make up Albuquerque's government.

Staff in the Public Art Urban Enhancement Division will tell you this is no pop-up gallery - it took more than five years and a few administrations for it to happen.

"There was sort of a collective interest in having a City Hall gallery because the idea



had been floating for many years," says Division Manager Sherri Brueggemann. "Mayor Keller picked up on that sentiment his first month in office and made it one of his priorities throughout the renovation process."

Gallery One became part of city hall's ongoing remodeling plan. With help from city IT and office development, local architects were able to create what's called an 'inspansion' - making a floor plan look bigger without expanding the space. By moving the Treasury Department to empty County offices and redesigning the department with new flooring and track lighting, Public Art got the gallery it had been wishing for, as well as new offices for its growing staff. Brueggemann says the

'experiential' gallery creates new audiences, gives local artists more opportunities to present their work and shows city employees and the public a new way to learn how messages in the artists' work connect to their lives.

"We're a bit more like a museum, as a non-commercial gallery. Our goals are to showcase primarily local artists who are looking to be part of a unique space. Not having art sales allows the entire Public Art team and guest curators to imagine and realize art exhibitions that are for and by our community," explains Brueggemann.

Gallery programming will also include lunch hour artists' talks, teen poetry summits, digital video art projections, performing arts and "The Vault" - turning one of City Hall's storage vaults into a 'speakeasy', featuring a special entry code for the tiny gallery within a gallery. Gallery One will also collaborate with the South Broadway Cultural Center on exhibits like the annual Guadalupe and Employee Art shows that connect South Broadway with downtown Albuquerque. "A Day in the Life II" opens at Albuquerque City Hall with an inaugural Gallery One exhibit January 5, featuring photographers Max Woltman, Sean Wright, Angel Gil Lopez, Jessica Lozoya, Adrian Martin, Jessica Roybal and Pico del Hierro-Villa. For more information: rrobinson@cabq.gov information: rrobinson@cabq.gov.

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CA

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VAN NUYS

City

Articles of Incorporation or Organization Number (If applicable): AI #ON 5216678

ZIP CODE:91406

City CA

If Corporation or LLC-Print State of Incorporation/Organization

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COUNTY

Rev. 2/2022

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12/13/2023

City

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If corporation, also print corporate title of officer. If LLC, also print title of officer or

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The date registrant commenced to transact business under the fictitious business name or

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mike k

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., Deputy

DEAN C. LOGAN, LOS ANGELES COUNTY CLERK

FREE WILL ASTROLOGY

Week of December 20

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ARIES (March 21-April 19): Aries educator Booker T. Washington advised us, "Do the common thing in an uncommon way." That's a useful motto for you in the coming months. If you carry out ordinary activities with flair, you will generate good fortune and attract excellent help. As you attend to details with conscientious enthusiasm, you will access your finest inner resources and exert constructive influences on the world around you. Be thorough and unique, persistent and imaginative, attentive and innovative. Adore your chores in 2024!

TAURUS (April 20-May 20): Taurus philosopher John Stuart Mill (1806–1873) was among the smartest people who ever lived. As is often the case with geniuses, he believed in the supreme value of liberty for all. He was a feminist long before that word existed. Like another genius, architect Frank Lloyd Wright, he thought that "individuality realized is the supreme attainment of the human soul, the master-master's work of art. Individuality is sacred." I nominate Mill to be a role model for you in 2024, Taurus. This could be a time when you reach unprecedented new heights and depths of unique self-expression and liberation. PS: Here's a quote from Mill: "Eccentricity has always abounded where strength of character has abounded; and the amount of eccentricity in a society has been proportional to the amount of genius, mental vigor, and moral courage which it contained."

GEMINI (May 21-June 20): Emotionally and spiritually, you will ripen at a robust rate in 2024. Your intelligence will mature into wisdom in surprising and gratifying ways. Harvesting rich lessons from long-smoldering confusions and long-simmering mysteries will be your specialty. PS: Some of you Geminis joke around and say you never want to grow up. But I hope you minimize that attitude in the coming months.

CANCER (June 21-July 22): Indigenous people study the intelligence of animals and incorporate it into their own lives. If you're game to do that in 2024, I suggest you choose elephants as a source of teaching and inspiration. Have fun studying and meditating on their ways! Here are a few facts to get you started. Problem-solving is one of their strengths. They are experts at learning how to get what they need and passing that knowledge on to their offspring. They seldom suffer from sickness, but if they do, they often self-medicate with plants in their environment. Elder females are the knowledge keepers, retaining inner maps of where food, drink, and other resources are located.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22): Writer Janet Champ speaks about the joy of locating "the big wow, the big yesyesyes." It happens when you find something or someone you regard as "better, greater, cuter, wiser, more wonderful than anything you have ever known." I'll be lavish and predict you will encounter a big wow and yesyesyes like this in 2024. Will you know what to do with it? Will you be able to keep it? Those possibilities are less certain, but I have high hopes for you. For best results, cultivate a vivid vision of how the big wow and big yesyesyes will benefit others as well as you.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22): In 1916, most women in the world could not vote. Many men considered women to be inferior—lacking in courage and initiative. It was the Dark Ages! That summer, two sisters named Augusta and Adeline Van Buren rebelled against the stereotypes by riding their motorcycles across America. Roads were poor, rains were frequent, and police arrested them frequently for wearing men's clothes. Male-dominated media derided them, with one newspaper criticizing their escape from "their proper roles as housewives." I nominate them to be your role models in 2024, no matter what gender you are. It will be a favorable time to transcend conventional wisdom, override decaying traditions, and be a cheerful rebel.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22): For hundreds of years, European nations stole land and resources from Indigenous people all over the world. Among the thefts were art, ritual objects, cultural treasures, and human skeletons. Museums in the West are still full of such plunder. But in recent years, some museums have begun to return the loot. Germany sent back hundreds of artifacts to Nigerian museums. France restored many objects to the African country of Benin. Let's apply this scenario as a useful metaphor for you in 2024, Libra. Is there a part of your past that was hijacked? Your memories appropriated or denied? Your rightful belongings poached, or your authentic feelings infringed upon? It's time for corrections and healing.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21): I suggest we choose the brilliant Scorpio physicist and chemist Marie Curie (1867–1934) as your role model in 2024. She is the only person to win a Nobel Prize in two different fields. She managed to pursue a rigorous scientific career while raising two children and having a fulfilling marriage. Being of service to humanity was a central life goal. She grew up in poverty and sometimes suffered from depression, but worked hard to become the genius she aspired to be. May the spirit of Marie Curie inspire you, dear Scorpio, as you make dramatic progress in expressing your unique soul's code.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21): In my fairy tale about your year ahead, I see you searching for treasure. It's not a wild and wandering exploration, but a diligent, disciplined quest. You are well-organized about it, carefully gathering research and asking incisive questions. You ruminate on the possibilities with both your logical and intuitive faculties. You meditate on how you might make adjustments in yourself so as to become fully available for the riches you seek. Your gradual, incremental approach gives you strength. You draw inspiration from your sheer persistence and relentless inquiry. And it all pays off by the second half of 2024.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19): "All the things I really like to do are either illegal, immoral, or fattening," quipped Capricorn author Alexander Woollcott (1887–1943). Since he was never arrested, I conclude he didn't get to enjoy some of the activities he relished. Was he immoral? Not exactly, though he could be caustic. Offering his opinion about a famous pianist, he said, "There is absolutely nothing wrong with Oscar Levant that a miracle couldn't fix." The good news for you, Capricorn, is that 2024 will be mostly free of the problems Woollcott experienced. You will be offered an abundance of perfectly legal and moral enjoyments. They may sometimes be fattening, but so what?

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18): Author Augusten Burroughs is a devoted urban dweller. He says, "When I get a craving for nature, I turn on TV's Discovery Channel and watch bear-attack survivors recount their horror." Martial arts master Morihei Ueshiba had a different perspective. "Mountains, rivers, plants, and trees should be your teachers," he advised. "Study how water flows in a valley stream, smoothly and freely between the rocks." I recommend Ueshiba's approach to you in 2024, Aquarius—not Burroughs'. Here are my predictions: 1. You will have no dangerous encounters with nature. 2. You will learn more than ever from the wild world. 3. To the degree that you wander in the outdoors, your spiritual life will thrive.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20): A study done at Union College in New York found that being fraternity members raised students' future income by 36 percent, but lowered their grade point average by 0.25 points. Would you make a similar trade-off, Pisces? Would you pursue a path that made you more successful in one way but less successful in another? I suspect you will encounter unusual decisions like this in 2024. My job is not to advise you what to do, but to make you alert for the provocative riddles.

The Weekly Crossword

by Margie E. Burke

ACROSS

- 1 Mouth, slangily
- 5 Course of study
- 10 Red ink amount
- 14 Jedi guru
- 15 Fluid accumulation
- 16 Feed the kitty
- 17 NFC West team
- 18 Type of test
- 20 Something left out
- 22 Romp about
- 23 Lowest pinochle cards
- 24 Soft drink
- 25 Big name in sci-fi books
- 27 Disregard
- 31 Peaks on a graph
- 32 Tend to the turkey
- 34 Luigi's twin
- 35 Prom partner
- 37 Deciduous conifer
- 39 Pie perch
- 40 They may be bright
- 42 Huron and Erie
- 44 Hair holder
- 45 Very or quite
- 47 Uncommon thing
- 49 Beseech
- 50 Athenian lawman
- 51 Yard's 36
- 54 Illegal pitch
- 57 Occasion fit for a king
- 59 Bummed out
- 60 Actress _____ Rachel Wood

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- 61 Starbucks offering
- 62 Site of Napoleon's exile
- 63 Title for Judi Dench
- 64 Head lock
- 65 Like Easter eggs

DOWN

- 1 Novice
- 2 Wander about
- 3 Give, as medicine
- 4 Footnote word
- 5 Like feudal times
- 6 Felipe's farewell
- 7 She played TV's Edith

- 8 Texter's "Wow!"
- 9 Resentment
- 10 "Ocean's Eleven" setting
- 11 Cognizant of
- 12 Recipe direction
- 13 Religious offshoot
- 19 Caulking fiber
- 21 Nose-in-the-air type
- 24 Restaurant bill
- 25 Taxpayer's fear
- 26 Digging tool
- 27 Dogcatcher's catch
- 28 In the first place
- 29 Choice beef cut
- 30 Misguided act
- 33 Astronaut Ride
- 36 Audio accessory
- 38 Leading ladies
- 41 Warning wail
- 43 Table staple
- 46 Volcanic rock
- 48 Charged too much, informally
- 50 Ladybug features
- 51 Kind of tea
- 52 Exploding star
- 53 Study hastily
- 54 Internet destination
- 55 Garage job
- 56 Coveted role
- 58 Black gunk

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