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FREE

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ALBUQUERQUE'S INDEPENDENT COMMUNITY NEWS

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of Juneteenth p.10





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ALBUQUERQUE'S INDEPENDENT COMMUNITY NEWS



## Man Who Alerted FBI to Possible Corruption in APD's DWI Unit Speaks Out

*'It was kind of reminding me of the show Better Call Saul'*



This story was originally published at City Desk ABQ, a local nonprofit daily newsroom covering local government, politics and more. If you like this story, please support local, independent journalists like these by reading more and donating today at [citydesk.org](http://citydesk.org)

By Elise Kaplan, City Desk ABQ

In the early morning hours of April 22, 2022, Jaden Brown was driving home from Bar Uno in Downtown Albuquerque — 100 mph on Interstate 25 — when he was pulled over.

The Albuquerque police officer, Joshua Montañó, gave the 21-year-old University of New Mexico student a field sobriety test and then took him to the prisoner transport center where he blew a .16, according to a criminal complaint filed in Metropolitan Court. That's twice the legal limit.

Over the course of the next couple of hours, Brown said Montañó told him he wasn't going to charge him for having a bag of mushrooms in his car and that a friend who was a lawyer would call him. Then days later, he said, that friend — Thomas Clear III's paralegal Rick Mendez — did call and ended up telling him he could pay \$10,000 to guarantee the charges would go away and if he didn't pay he could be charged with having a controlled substance, a fourth-degree felony in addition to the DWI.

Brown, along with attorney Daymon Ely, reported the encounter to the FBI that same week.

It is unclear whether the FBI had already heard about the scheme, but Brown's tip appears to be the first to make it from the federal agency to APD. The investigation burst into public view in January 2024 when agents raided Montañó's home — along with the homes of his colleagues Harvey Johnson and Honorio Alba, and Clear's office. The men are at the center of a federal investigation into allegations that they were working together to make DWI cases disappear if the defendant paid a hefty fee.

For Brown, news of the raids was vindication that he had been right to feel suspicious of his interactions with the officer, lawyer and paralegal. He had met with FBI agents to tell his story in late summer of 2023.

"When I was telling people that this was happening, I had nothing to show for it," Brown told *City Desk ABQ* in his first interview with the media. "It was just kind of like it was validating, to show I wasn't making this up."

No charges have been filed in connection with the investigation. The three officers whose homes were raided, along with Lt. Justin Hunt and Officer Nelson Ortiz, have resigned while under internal investigation. Daren DeAgüero, a former DWI officer, has also resigned while under internal investigation. Three others who are still with the department are also being investigated internally.

Emails obtained by *City Desk ABQ*, meanwhile, show that Brown's tip to the FBI made its way to Cmdr. Mark Landavazo in the Internal Affairs Department about two months after he reported it. Landavazo suggested the special agent contact the Civilian Police Oversight Agency.

It's unclear if Landavazo investigated the complaint, but APD spokesperson Gilbert Gallegos said the "information was not shared with Chief [Harold] Medina."

"Chief's Office learned details of the initial tip to the FBI sometime after the FBI executed search warrants in January 2024," Gallegos said. "Those details are being scrutinized as part of APD's ongoing, internal investigation."

Landavazo has been on administrative leave and under internal investigation since Feb. 13.

In December 2022 — six months after APD received Brown's tip from the FBI — APD got a tip about another officer in the DWI unit getting paid "to get a case dismissed." The investigation into that tip did not turn up any evidence of wrongdoing.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 4

## Weak in Review: June 19

Quick hits on this week's news bits

The City of Albuquerque will be running sprinklers at a handful of parks when temps go above 100 degrees as part of "Operation Cooldown."

What's the over/under on people getting down to their skivvies and ruining this for everyone?



Robert F. Kennedy Jr. came through Albuquerque to make his presidential pitch.

We're still waiting for someone's promise to "Make election season a season again."

Police say a Delaware man stole \$11,000 worth of cigarettes from Walgreens.

So, like a carton?

Donald Trump and President Joe Biden are slated for a debate next week.

Coincidentally, *A Quiet Place: Day One* also premieres that day.

The Duke City Comic-Con went down over the weekend at the Albuquerque Marriott Pyramid Hotel.

The combination of our summer weather and the elaborate rubber costumes probably made it one of the stinkiest comic conventions to date.



The Public Service Company of New Mexico (PNM) says it needs to raise rates in order to "keep pace with the cost of providing reliable service."

When they put it that way...

U.S. Surgeon General Vivek Murthy is calling for a warning label for social media apps.

Because we all know how well warnings have worked for booze, cigarettes and gambling.

Montana and Idaho both saw winter storm warnings this week.

But climate change is a hoax, right? Cool, cool, cool.

The City of Albuquerque announced the start of renovations at the Balloon Fiesta Park, which include new bathrooms.

We fully expected the city to sneak a new soccer stadium into that list of renovations.

The city's oldest McDonald's just reopened after being closed for weeks due to renovations.

Fantastic, now how about those ice cream machines?





CONTINUED FROM PAGE 4

Montaño declined to comment and Clear did not respond to a request for comment.

A spokesperson for the FBI said the agency receives many complaints of criminal activity and “how we handle them is a confidential process.”

“Similarly, to protect the privacy of people who contact the FBI, we cannot confirm or deny any particular contact,” said spokesperson Margot Cravens in an email. “As a general matter, allegations of criminal conduct are reviewed by the FBI for their merit, with consideration of any applicable federal laws. As this is still an ongoing investigation, we cannot comment further.”

#### ‘Someone’s gonna call you’

Brown remembers being quite drunk when he was taken to APD’s prisoner transport center on that April night. He had a bag of mushrooms — which he swears were not actually his — in his car.

At the prisoner transport center, Brown said Montaño took his driver’s license and followed him into the bathroom, telling him that he was not going to be charged for having mushrooms.

“Then he said, basically, ‘I’m sympathetic to your cause. You’ll probably get out tomorrow, I have a lawyer or a friend’ — I don’t exactly know how he said it — but it was like ‘someone’s gonna call you,’” Brown said.

A couple days later, Clear’s paralegal Mendez called him.

Brown said his dad drove him to Clear’s office — a house in a quiet residential Northeast Albuquerque neighborhood that had a “big old truck in his front yard with big nuts hanging from a chain on the back.” As he entered, a young man of about 19 was on his way out, looking upset. He thinks he was probably a client.

Brown said Mendez — who was “casual looking” wearing a button up instead of a suit — did most of the talking while Clear — a “stuffy older white dude with a big ring on his finger” — hung back.

“It was really simple. I screwed up, I got caught red handed, I’m gonna get in trouble. It is what it is,” Brown said he remembered thinking. “But he tells me ‘no, this is going to go away and you’re not

gonna deal with it. It’s going to completely disappear.”

Brown said Mendez then pulled out the driver’s license that had been confiscated by Montaño and said he could pay \$10,000 or \$5,000 up front with a monthly payment plan.

Then, Brown said, Mendez and Clear brought up the fact that he hadn’t been charged for having mushrooms in his car.

“He basically was like, ‘you have to do this because you don’t want to get charged with the mushrooms found in your car,’” Brown said. “That’s when Tom Clear’s the one that points out to me that ‘you haven’t been charged with it yet — but you can be. It’s a fourth-degree felony to have mushrooms in New Mexico.’”

Brown told the men he would think about it and then he left. After discussing the encounter with his father and his sister — who reached out to a retired officer she knew — Brown decided to go with another lawyer. He paid \$5,000.

“It was kind of reminding me of the show *Better Call Saul* — crooked lawyers and stuff,” he said. “There was a part of me that was kind of like, this is

probably just how it is. Like, it’s a crooked business.”

#### A dismissal and then charges refiled

Brown’s new lawyer referred him to Ely, a legal malpractice lawyer, and the two made the report to the FBI’s National Threat Operations Center that same week.

Two months later, emails show the complaint was sent from an FBI special agent to Landavazo, with APD’s Internal Affairs Professional Standards Division.

As for Brown, he graduated from UNM with a bachelor’s degree in business and got a paid internship with Sandia National Laboratories. He stopped drinking and is hoping to move to Colorado. His probation is up at the end of the month.

Coincidentally, Brown’s DWI charge did end up getting dismissed because Montaño wasn’t able to testify after he was seriously injured in a crash with a drunken driver while heading home from his shift.

Then, in May 2023, the

charges against Brown were refiled. He pleaded guilty to driving while intoxicated, a misdemeanor, and received a deferred sentence. The case kicked off a cascade of setbacks, including an arrest for having a revoked license and the denial of a security clearance for a job at the labs.

Brown said after initially hearing nothing from the FBI for over a year, he and Ely assumed the tip wasn’t going to go anywhere. Then in late summer 2023, Ely called with an update and the two met with agents and the agency’s lawyers.

“I was in a room full of people with pencils and papers and notepads and everything I’m saying is being written down,” Brown said. “I didn’t want to get in trouble for saying the wrong thing, or remembering something wrong.”

He said over the course of three hours he could tell they were taking it seriously as they asked questions and wrote down names and dates.

“I was like ‘I’m gonna see this in the news. It’s gonna happen,’” Brown recalled. “And then I did.”



Jaden Brown reported allegations of corruption regarding APD’s DWI unit and a local defense attorney to the FBI in April 2022. (Roberto E. Rosales / City Desk ABQ)





## Festival Flamenco 37

It seems appropriate that a city named after a Spanish duke should, over the decades, grow into a world-renowned flamenco destination, with traditional Spanish dance performances, classes and concerts filling the event schedule nearly every week. The National Institute of Flamenco is even located here in the Duke City. Every year around this time, the institute produces and presents Festival Flamenco. The year 2024 marks the 37th annual outing for this celebration of the vibrant art and culture of flamenco. From June 21 through 29, there will be a host of performances, workshops, events and experiences all around town for dancers and aficionados alike. Kicking things off in grand style on Friday, June 21, at 8 p.m. is María Moreno y Compañía at UNM's Rodey Theatre. Having burned up shoe leather on stages from London to Paris to Russia, the Spanish-born Moreno is coming to Albuquerque to lead a traditional soleá performance of singing, dancing and guitar that "leads back to the origin of time." Tickets run \$48 to \$108 and can be purchased through unmtickets.com. For a complete festival schedule, go to ffabq.org.

### THURSDAY, JUNE 20

Discussion / Lecture

Lecture on "Changing Perspectives: 66 Years in Spain" \$0-\$20 4 pm  
Special Collections Library 423  
Central Ave NE

Exhibit

Making a World of Difference: Stories About Global Health  
Traveling Exhibit 8 am-5 pm  
UNM Health Sciences Library & Informatics Center North Campus, Building 234, 2400 Marble NE

Pueblo Baseball: Stitching Our Community Together 9 am-5 pm  
Indian Pueblo Cultural Center 2401 12th Street NW

Reflective Presence: The Art of Jesse Littlebird & Jonathan Loretto 9 am-5 pm  
Indian Pueblo Cultural Center 2401 12th Street NW

Games

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

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

Geeks Who Drink 7-9 pm Outpost  
1706 301 Romero St NW

Music

2 Shadows - Whispers From the West Tour \$25 8-11:30 pm  
Launchpad 618 Central Ave SW

Felix Gato Peralta 5-7 pm South Valley Library 3904 Isleta SW , 87105

Garden Music - Reviva \$3-\$15 7-8:30 pm  
ABQ BioPark Botanic Garden 2601 Central Ave NW

Genevieve Leitner 6-8 pm Town & Ranch 1318 Fourth St. NW

Gral Brothers 6-9 pm Canteen  
Brewhouse 2381 Aztec Road Northeast

Karaoke w/ Swords Entertainment 7:30-11:30 pm  
Lizard Tail Brewing 9800 Montgomery Blvd NE STE 7

Japanese **BEIJING WATERMELON (1989)**  
Tue-Fri June 18-21 3:15, 7:45pm

Lost film restored: **TIME OF THE HEATHEN**  
Tue-Fri June 18-21 6:00pm

Luc Besson's **THE FIFTH ELEMENT (1997)**  
Friday June 21 10:30pm

**NAT'L FLAMENCO INSTITUTE FILM FEST**  
Saturday June 22 11:00am-5:00pm

ABQ Sister Bar tribute: **DEAR SWEET SISTER**  
Saturday June 22 8:00pm

Experimental ABQ documentary **THE BLUFFS**  
Saturday June 22 10:30pm

NM documentary **SUCCESSFUL OUTLAW**  
Sunday June 23 1:00pm

**2024 SUNDANCE FILM FESTIVAL SHORTS**  
Sun-Thu June 23-27 3:30, 8:15pm

Rachel Sennott in **I USED TO BE FUNNY**  
Sun-Thu June 23-27 6:00pm

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[EVENTS.]

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Karaoke with DJ Q 8-10 pm Luxe Lounge 303 Romero St NW N-117

New Mexico Control Voltage 5-8:30 pm Albuquerque Museum 2000 Mountain Road NW

That Mexican OT \$42-\$161 8-11 pm Revel Entertainment Center 4720 Alexander Blvd NE

Third Thursday: Summer in the City 5-8:30 pm Albuquerque Museum 2000 Mountain Road NW

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

iMAYDAY! & DJ Hoppa \$25 8 pm-12:30 am Launchpad 618 Central Ave SW

Performance

New Mexico Shakespeare Festival 6:45-10 pm New Mexico Veterans Memorial 1100 Louisiana Blvd SE #5009

The Outsider \$10-\$24 7:30-10 pm Adobe Theater 9813 4th St NW

FRIDAY, JUNE 21

Comedy

Comedy Roast Battles \$10-\$100 8-10 pm Revel Entertainment Center 4720 Alexander Blvd NE

The Show - Live Comedy Improv \$10-\$12 8-9 pm The Box Performance Space 114 Gold Ave SW

Dance

Casa Flamenca The Best Tablao Shows \$40 10:30-11:45 pm Casa Flamenca 401 Rio Grande Boulevard NW

Friday Night Square Dancing \$8-\$9 7-9 pm Albuquerque Square Dance Center 4915 Hawkins St NE

PRIDE! Burlesque, Magic, Variety \$10 8-11 pm Tractor Brewing Wells Park 1800 Fourth St. NW

The Pueblo Dance Group (Laguna, Acoma, Zuni, Hopi) 2-3 pm Indian Pueblo Cultural Center 2401 12th Street NW

Drink

Drafts for Giraffes 6-7 pm Albuquerque BioPark-Zoo 903 10th Street SW

Festival

Festival Flamenco Albuquerque 37 \$455 All Day Rodey Theatre 1 University of New Mexico

Film

2024 Albuquerque 48 Hour Film Project: Best of Screening & Awards Ceremony \$10 7-10 pm FUSION 700-708 First St. NW

Movies in the Park: Sonic the Hedgehog 2 7-10 pm Vista Grande Community Center 15 La Madera Rd, Sandia Park

Music

Big K at the Old Town Gazebo 7-9 pm Old Town Albuquerque 2005 N. Plaza St. NW Albuquerque

Bttr Bops \$10-\$12 9 pm-1 am Historic El Rey Theatre 622 Central Ave SW

Coffin Club w/ DJ Riff Rat 8-11 pm Tractor Brewing Nob Hill 118 Tulane SE

DCN Project 6-8:30 pm D.H. Lescombes Winery & Bistro 901 Rio Grande Blvd NW #B-100

DJ Pauly D \$55 9 pm-1:30 am Revel Entertainment Center 4720 Alexander Blvd NE

Jake Worthington \$12-\$79 7-10 pm The Dirty Bourbon Dance Hall & Saloon 9800 Montgomery Blvd NE

Keith Kavula & The Withdrawals 8-11 pm Marble Brewery 111 Marble Ave NW

Lenin & McCarthy 4-7 pm Canteen Brewhouse 2381 Aztec Road Northeast

Live Music In The Lobo Lounge Featuring Gabe Gambino 5 pm The Historic Lobo Theater - Lounge & Event Venue 3013 Central Ave NE

MisDemeaner 7-10 pm Flatiron Bites & Brews 6001 San Mateo Blvd NE

Nekromantix \$25 8 pm-12 am Launchpad 618 Central Ave SW

RJ Perez 6-9 pm Boxing Bear Brewing Co. (Firestone Taproom and Brewery) 8420 Firestone Lane NE



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Salsa Under the Stars ft. Baracutanga and Proyecto Cumbion \$17-\$20 7-10 pm Albuquerque Museum 2000 Mountain Road NW

Special Late Night Tablao Shows \$40 10:30-11:45 pm Casa Flamenca 401 Rio Grande Boulevard NW

Strange Mix \$10 8 pm-1 am Insideout 622 Central Ave SW

Tom Andes 6-9 pm Albuquerque Distilling 5001 Central Ave NE Suite A5

Vakenn 7-11 pm Skidmore's Holiday Bowl 7515 Lomas Blvd NE

We House Fridays ft. Sage Armstrong \$10 9 pm-2 am Effex NightClub 420 Central Avenue Southwest

Zoo Music - Clay Street Unit \$4-\$18 7-9 pm Albuquerque BioPark-Zoo 903 10th Street SW

Performance

Kinky Boots \$25-\$28 7:30-9:30 pm Musical Theatre Southwest 6320B Domingo NE

New Mexico Shakespeare Festival 6:45-10 pm New Mexico Veterans Memorial 1100 Louisiana Blvd SE #5009

Radiance: An MPX Jam 7-10 pm Sidetrack Brewing Co. 413 Second St. SW

The Outsider \$10-\$24 7:30-10 pm Adobe Theater 9813 4th St NW

SATURDAY, JUNE 22

Class / Workshop

IPEC Farmer Training 8-10 am Indigenous Farm Hub 6370 Corrales Rd, Corrales

Pour Your Own Candle Night \$40 6-8 pm Boxing Bear Bridges on Tramway 12501 Candelaria Rd NE

Comedy

Closetline \$10 7-8 pm The Box Performance Space 114 Gold Ave SW

Stand-up Comedy Open Mic 8 pm Kilt Check / BOSSFIGHT! Brewing Company 4814 Hardware Drive Northeast

The Show - Live Comedy Improv \$10-\$12 8-9 pm The Box Performance Space 114 Gold Ave SW

Community

Downtown Growers' Market 8 am-12 pm Robinson Park 810 Copper Ave NW Albuquerque

STEM in First Responders Day 10 am-2 pm Explora 1701 Mountain Rd NW

Summer at the Marketplace: a patio pop-up event 9 am-1 pm Poulin Marketplace 8600 Pan American Fwy NE

Dance

Burque BellyFest III Gala Show \$15-\$25 7:30-9:30 pm UNM Continuing Education 1634 University Blvd

Jesus Munoz Flamenco: Pies, ¿Para que los quiero? \$15-\$60 7:30-9:30 pm KiMo Theatre 423 Central Avenue NW

The Pueblo Dance Group (Laguna, Acoma, Zuni, Hopi) 11 am-12 pm Indian Pueblo Cultural Center 2401 12th Street NW

The Pueblo Dance Group (Laguna, Acoma, Zuni, Hopi) 2-3 pm Indian Pueblo Cultural Center 2401 12th Street NW

Discussion / Lecture

Opening Conversation: Exploring Intersections of Art, Storytelling, and the Resilience of the Living World 2-3 pm Albuquerque Museum 2000 Mountain Road NW

Drink

El Guapo Bitters Talk & Tasting \$15 12-1 pm Town & Ranch 1318 Fourth St. NW

The Great New Mexico Beer Festival \$10-\$65 12-6 pm Albuquerque Balloon Fiesta Park 9401 Balloon Museum Drive NE


Family/Kids

IPCC's Family Story Time: Sister Rabbit's Tricks 1-2 pm Indian Pueblo Cultural Center 2401 12th Street NW

Festival

Festival Flamenco Alburquerque 37 \$455 All Day Rodey Theatre 1 University of New Mexico

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**THE TEMPEST**  
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Saturday, July 6<sup>th</sup>, 3:45 pm (includes dinner)



**Mandy Carter (North Carolina)**  
National Black Justice Coalition  
Southerners On New Ground

Thursday, July 4<sup>th</sup>, 10:45 am (includes lunch)

**Zack Quintero National Hispanic Cultural Center**  
Thursday, July 4<sup>th</sup>, 12:30 (includes lunch)



**T. Michael Trimm, Transgender Resource Center of New Mexico**  
Friday, July 5<sup>th</sup>, 12:30 and 2:30 (includes lunch)



**Marshall Martinez, Equality New Mexico**  
Saturday, July 6<sup>th</sup>, 7:00 (includes dinner)



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National Association of Black and White Men Together (NABWMT) is a gay multicultural, anti-racism organization committed to fostering supportive environments wherein racial and cultural barriers can be overcome and the goal of human equality realized.



Film

Movies in the Park: Detective Pikachu 6-10:30 pm West Bluff Park 2408 Alamogordo Dr NW

Health & Wellness

Mindful Movement - Power Yoga in the Park 9-10 am Academy Hills Park 9709 Layton Ave. NE

Music

'90s Country Cover Night w/ Back in the Saddle 7:30-9:30 pm Tractor Brewing Wells Park 1800 Fourth St. NW

25th Anniversary Party 10 am-6 pm Music Go Round 7116 Menaul Blvd NE

An Evening With The Deal - Grateful Dead Tribute \$10 5 pm The Historic Lobo Theater - Lounge & Event Venue 3013 Central Ave NE

Apparition Goth Night \$10 9 pm-1:30 am Moonlight Lounge 120 Central Ave SW

Free Flamenco Fashion Show 5-7 pm Casa Flamenca 401 Rio Grande Blvd. NW

Hobo Johnson & the Lovemakers \$30 8 pm-12 am Historic El Rey Theatre 622 Central Ave SW

Hondo Coyote Duo 8-11 pm Tractor Brewing Nob Hill 118 Tulane SE

Jazz Under the Stars: EQNX Jazztet \$22-\$25 7-10 pm Albuquerque Museum 2000 Mountain Road NW

Jer Killinger at Brewhouse Summer Music Saturdays 1-4 pm Canteen Brewhouse 2381 Aztec Road Northeast

Left Unsaid \$20 8 pm-12 am Launchpad 618 Central Ave SW

Luvbyrd 6-9 pm Flatiron Bites & Brews 6001 San Mateo Blvd NE

Lyle Lovett and His Large Band \$44-\$84 7:30-9:30 pm Kiva Auditorium 2nd St & Marquette Northeast

NM Gay Men's Chorus: ¡Orgullo! A Latinx Pride Celebration \$18-\$60 7:30-9:30 pm National Hispanic Cultural Center 1701 4th Street Southwest

Restorative Gong Bath \$25 11 am-12 pm The Remedy Day Spa & Wellness Center 113 Vassar Dr SE

Secret 7 Acoustic Duo 1-3 pm Old Town Albuquerque 2005 N. Plaza St. NW Albuquerque

Unity in Rhythm: A Drum Circle Event 2-3:30 pm FUSION 700-708 First St. NW

Vampa - Bad Bodies Tour \$22 9 pm-2 am Revel Entertainment Center 4720 Alexander Blvd NE

Voyage \$25-\$50 8-9:30 pm Isleta Resort & Casino 11000 Broadway Blvd SE

Willajay Album Release \$10 7-10 pm Sister 407 Central Ave. NW

Performance

Kinky Boots \$25-\$28 7:30-9:30 pm Musical Theatre Southwest 6320B Domingo NE

New Mexico Shakespeare Festival 6:45-10 pm New Mexico Veterans Memorial 1100 Louisiana Blvd SE #5009

Stand-up Comedy 7-10 pm Kilt Check / BOSSFIGHT! Brewing Company 4814 Hardware Drive Northeast

The Outsider \$10-\$24 7:30-10 pm Adobe Theater 9813 4th St NW

Sports

Duke City Gladiators vs. Bay Area Panthers \$18-\$53 6-8:30 pm Rio Rancho Events Center 3001 Civic Center Cir NE, Rio Rancho

New Mexico United vs. Colorado Springs Switchbacks \$19-\$47 7-10 pm Isotopes Park

SUNDAY, JUNE 23

Art Openings

Odd Dog 3-6 pm Rio Bravo Brewing Company 1912 Second St NW

Class / Workshop

Ayurvedic Yoga in the Park \$6-\$15 8:30-9:30 am Wildflower Park San Mateo & Eagle Rock NE

Yoga for Addiction Recovery 6:30-7:45 pm Yogasaar Studio 2205 Silver Ave. SE

Dance

Casa Flamenca The Best Tablao Shows \$40 10:30-11:45 pm Casa Flamenca 401 Rio Grande Boulevard NW

The Pueblo Dance Group (Laguna, Acoma, Zuni, Hopi) 2-3 pm Indian Pueblo Cultural Center 2401 12th Street NW

The Pueblo Dance Group (Laguna, Acoma, Zuni, Hopi) 11 am-12 pm Indian Pueblo Cultural Center 2401 12th Street NW

Festival

Festival Flamenco Alburquerque 37 \$455 All Day Rodey Theatre 1 University of New Mexico

Film

Successful Outlaw \$10 1-2:30 pm Guild Cinema 3405 Central Ave NE

Games

Brain Gang Trivia 2-4 pm Lizard Tail Brewing 9800 Montgomery Blvd NE STE 7

Brain Gang Trivia 5-7 pm Lizard Tail Brewing Nob Hill 3417 Central Ave. NE Suite C

Literature/Poetry

Zelda Leah Gatuskin Reading & Book Signing 1:30-3:30 pm Treasure House Books & Gifts 2012 S Plaza St NW A

Markets

Bubble Hearts Summer Lovin' Craft Fair 10 am-3 pm Bataan Memorial Park 748 Tulane Dr. NE

Rail Yard Market: Pride Day 10 am-2 pm Albuquerque Rail Yards 722 3rd St SW

Music

Burque Jazz Bandits \$5 3-5 pm JUNO brewery + cafe + art 1501 First St. NW

Canyon Blues & Jazz Sandia Chill Sunday Concert: Mama Sang the Blues \$0-\$20 7-8:30 pm Homestead Village Shopping Center 221 NM-165, Placitas

Keith Kavula & The Withdrawls 4-7 pm Canteen Brewhouse 2381 Aztec Road Northeast

NM Gay Men's Chorus: ¡Orgullo! A Latinx Pride Celebration \$18-\$60 3-5 pm National Hispanic Cultural Center 1701 4th Street Southwest

Special Late Night Tablao Shows \$40 10:30-11:45 pm Casa Flamenca 401 Rio Grande Boulevard NW

Sunday Jazz Jam 5-7:30 pm Flatiron Bites & Brews 6001 San Mateo Blvd NE

of Montreal \$25-\$30 7-11 pm Sister 407 Central Ave. NW

Performance

New Mexico Shakespeare Festival 6:45-10 pm New Mexico Veterans Memorial 1100 Louisiana Blvd SE #5009

Ol' Dirty Rio Grande Valley \$10-\$15 7-9 pm Tractor Brewing Wells Park 1800 Fourth St. NW

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## 37th Year of Flamenco Festival Features 126 Artists and 23 Shows

(Marcos G Punto / National Institute of Flamenco)

By The Paper. Staff

**M**arisol Encinias has been performing flamenco her whole life.

"I'm 53 now, and I began dancing with my grandmother when I was 5," Encinias said.

Encinias' mother started the Festival Flamenco de Albuquerque in 1987. It's since grown to be the country's largest flamenco festival and the largest international festival outside of Spain.

This year, festival organizers from the National Institute of Flamenco are celebrating 37 years with 126 artists — 37 of whom are from New Mexico — and 23 live performances from June 21-29.

"For us this year, the festival is huge," said Encinias, who is now the festival's executive director. She sees the festival as an opportunity to engage with people outside of New Mexico via flamenco performances. "We are bringing in 82 performers

from Spain this year. (Eighty-two) visas have been granted, and that's pretty incredible."

Encinias says this year, the performances will range from traditional flamenco to experimental and avant-garde musical theater.

"It energizes me when someone says, 'That is not at all what I expected.' As with any art form, it varies based on the interpretation or the message of the creator. It can take many forms," she said.

The festival will include over 60 free and paid workshops, 13 internationally based performance companies, one New Mexican company and two world premiere shows. Performances and workshops are scheduled in various locations around the state.

"The arts are medicine," Encinias said. "Our community needs that."

Ticket packages and workshop information are available at [www.ffabq.org](http://www.ffabq.org).

## Trail Mix: Adventure to Cabezon Peak

*Ghost towns and open wilderness  
near greater Mount Taylor*



Cabezon Peak. (Justin Schatz / Sandoval Signpost)

By Justin Schatz, Sandoval Signpost

**R**ising over 1,100 feet from the Rio Puerco Valley, Cabezon Peak dominates this remote and rugged valley just west of Albuquerque. Despite its relative isolation, it's just over an hour's drive from Albuquerque and an easy stop to cooler temperatures in the higher elevations of the Jemez and offers plenty of recreation opportunities for just about any adventure.

The towering plug is part of the greater Mount Taylor volcanic field that was active between 1.5 and 4 million years ago. The plug itself rises 1,100 feet from its base and 2,000 feet from the Rio Puerco Valley floor to an elevation of 7,785 feet. The neck of the plug is composed of highly resilient fine-grained porphyritic basalts offering trad climbing opportunities and a notable class 3 scramble opportunity to the summit.

Visitors venturing into this remote corner of the state will be greeted by empty roads, public lands stretching as far as the eye can see, ghost towns and several adjacent wilderness study areas that include Chamisa and Ojito Wilderness study areas that are also rugged geological gems.

The easiest route to access the remote and rugged peak is from U.S. 550 between Cuba and San Ysidro. Take Old State Highway 279 south. A small parking lot is located at its base. An off-roading vehicle is recommended but not necessary.

The trail to the base of Cabezon is 1.9 miles out and back

from the small dirt parking lot located at the end of BLM 1114. From the parking lot, a well-marked trail — follow the cairns — will lead to the east side of the neck. Even at the base of the neck, the views of the valley are nothing short of breathtaking. Mount Taylor towers to the west. The Jemez lies to the north, and dozens of smaller plugs dot the Rio Puerco to the south. Vast mesas, most notably Mesa Prieta, tower above the valley floor and the smaller volcanic plugs.

For those desiring a little more adventure, the scramble to the summit of Cabezon Peak is not for the faint of heart. Despite its resilient nature, some of the organic material from the original scoria cone remains near the summit and offers a much less reliable hold than the basalt spires. The trail is only distinguished by cairns that wind their way through questionably navigable cracks in the neck. The summit is worth the sometimes painful climb, offering an unparalleled view of the valley and the Rio Grande rift to the west.

Cabezon Peak and the surrounding Rio Puerco Valley have no shortage of recreational opportunities for those seeking a weekend off the beaten path. Hikers and climbers will revel at what Cabezon Peak holds. Endless and often forgotten BLM roads are a mountain biker's delight. Those with high-clearance vehicles can even spend a weekend exploring the ghost towns that dot the arid valley. Just don't forget to bring plenty of water.



# BLACK SABBATH

12 Hours with  
Dr. Opal Lee,  
The Grandmother  
of Juneteenth

By Hakim Bellamy, The Paper.

I promise it was no hyperbole when I said to Dr. Opal Lee, in the presence of her granddaughter Dione Sims: “I hope it doesn’t make you blush when we rightfully call you a living, breathing national treasure.” Roughly 12 hours later, I would be on stage with Sims and Lee in front of a packed house at St. Francis Auditorium in Santa Fe, thanking the Grandmother of Juneteenth for her undaunted quest to save the soul of America. No hyperbole. No cap.

If you’ve never heard of Lee, here’s the least you need to know: In 2016, at 89 years of age, she set out on a plan to walk 1,400 miles from Fort Worth, Texas — roughly four hours from Galveston, Texas, (significant for reasons I will share in a bit) to Washington, D.C., in order to convince Congress to make Juneteenth the 11th national holiday. Ever heard the term “voting with your feet?” Well, this was lobbying by foot. In fact, it was quite the feat (sorry, I couldn’t resist). With an initial goal of securing 100,000 petition signatures along her journey to our nation’s capital, she collected 1.5 million signatures in support of a national observance of Juneteenth.

So what’s Juneteenth, you ask? It is soon to be a 4-year-old national holiday thanks to the 117th Congress, President Joe Biden and Lee. Unironically, the last holiday to achieve federal observance status prior to Juneteenth was Martin Luther King Jr. Day in 1983 (courtesy of the 98th Congress and President Ronald Reagan). But why though? Well, consistent with this same spirit of emancipatory chivalry, by the time Union Major Gen. Gordon Granger and his escort rolled into Galveston to compel adherence to General Order No. 3 on June 19th, 1865 — it was more than two-and-a-half years after President Abraham Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation. General Order No. 3 was a “courtesy” reminder to Texas that all slaves were to be freed — like yesterday.

At least Granger’s cavalry strode in on horseback, presumably. Lee on the other hand — never one to send a man to do a woman’s job — took her campaign for the emancipation of America’s soul to Washington, D.C., on foot. During my time with her — at the dinner the night before our event and during — she shared the story about how the trek to D.C. was *supposed* to be accompanied by a climate controlled RV that was being donated to “the cause.” It would have been a comfortable place for a then-89-year-old to stay overnight after a day of walking and collecting signatures. However, the donor ultimately decided that Lee was “too political” for their generosity. That proved no more than a speed bump to the determined efforts of Lee and her team at Unity Unlimited, Inc.

On June 19, 1939, when Opal Lee was a mere 12 years old, a mob of angry white rioters showed up at her parents’ home on the southside of Fort Worth, Texas.



Dr. Opal Lee and Hakim Bellamy. (Source: Hakim Bellamy)

The Lee family became an instantly known entity upon moving into the predominantly white neighborhood a few years earlier. I’m sure the annual Juneteenth gatherings at the Lee home did not go unnoticed among the neighbors, so the neighbors organized a little gathering of their own. The house was burned to the point where it was uninhabitable. According to Lee in the Fort Worth Star Telegram, “It was Juneteenth, which is a day in Texas which we knew we were all free. It had significance that people were storming and burning our place down.”

Now, at 97 years of age, Lee is being re-gifted the land upon which her family’s terrorized home once stood. Trinity Habitat for Humanity recently acquired the land and constructed a new home on the land that it awarded to Lee last week. We call that karmic reparations. Not only does she have a national holiday to her credit, she was also shortlisted as a finalist for the 2022 Nobel Peace Prize. Coincidentally, the namesake for the tenth federally recognized holiday was *also* a finalist for the Nobel Peace Prize in 1964. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. won the prize that year. Apparently, King — like Lee — was also well known for his marches.

I’ve gone on record in the past referring to MLK Day as America’s lone “holiday honoring the patron saint of Black America.” After spending 12 hours in the physical presence of Lee, I am obliged to revise the hyperbolic nature of that statement. There’s a new saint in town, sans canonization. A new holiday amongst the sacrosanct 11, which now make two national holidays that command recognition and observance of what has been called our country’s “original sin.” And in that regard, I humbly submit Lee as a fast-track candidate for *living* sainthood. I’m aware that there are some standard criteria out there, but sometimes the situation demands an exception. She checks a number of sainthood boxes already. Belief in God? Check. She told me she is a deaconess in her church. Verifiable miracle? Raise your hand if you ever thought you’d see the day that America made a holiday out of its mistakes. And if that’s not enough of a miracle, at 97, she still walks 2.5 miles every Juneteenth to commemorate how long it took slaves in Galveston to get word that they were officially free. And now it is a national holiday where *we* don’t have to go to work.

You’re welcome, America.

**Author’s Note:** I’d like to express extreme gratitude to Empower! Black Futures Community Fund who hosted Dr. Lee’s first ever visit to New Mexico and, of course, Dr. Opal Lee and Dione Sims for their fearless advocacy and time.





Cloud Eagle, pictured left to right: Glendon Toya, Delvin Toya, Lawrence Toya and Riley Toya. (Source: Cloud Eagle)

By Michael Hodock, The Paper.

A music and dance group from the Pueblo of Jemez has partnered with a Los Angeles-based music company in an effort to bring Indigenous music to a worldwide audience. The artistic endeavors of the music group Cloud Eagle is now available through ALIBI Music, a company that showcases artists' work in television, film, commercials and other multimedia formats.

Cloud Eagle is from the Pueblo of Jemez and is composed of Lawrence Toya, his two sons Glendon and Delvin as well as Glendon's nephew Riley. Lawrence's wife Ruby, the matriarch of the Toya family, is Zuni, so the family group has connections to both pueblos. Glendon Toya says the group evolved from a project started in the early 1980s.

At that time, Glendon says, "Our singing group went

by the name Seasonal Dance Group. It wasn't until 2014 that we released our first album of traditional pueblo music titled Cloud Eagle after a song on the album composed by our father, Lawrence Toya."

Toya says that when Native music is incorporated into modern forms of media like film and television, Cloud Eagle feels a sense of pride regardless of which Indigenous community the music comes from. He says, "It gives us hope that the generations will carry on our songs and languages."

ALIBI Music is a production music library with more than 15,000 songs recorded by more than 400 artists from 21 countries. The company was founded by Jonathan Parks in 2011, but it was Jonathan's father Jeff who made the collaboration with Cloud Eagle happen. It happened by chance while Parks was visiting pueblos throughout New Mexico searching for visual artists to perform at a Philadelphia music festival.

"We happened upon the Jemez Pueblo and they had a visitor center that was just about to close by the time we got there, but it had a beautiful burro painted on the wall," Parks says.

"I asked who painted it and they said the gentleman's name was John Toya."

It was the beginning of a long friendship. Parks says they bonded over art, music and Philadelphia Eagles fandom.

Parks says that although ALIBI Music aims to help Indigenous artists showcase their work and tell their stories through music, they are mindful of the fact that music is sacred to many of the communities that created it.

"We did not want to get music that is religiously oriented. In other words, historic music that might be celebrated in the kiva or might be part of the religious heritage of the community because once the music comes into ALIBI, it's available worldwide," Parks says. "It could be used for a toothpaste commercial."

"We are more so humbled by this opportunity to have our music out on these platforms to inspire and heal all walks of life. Our only expectation is to keep the music coming," Glendon says. "We are currently in the works to create more music with a contemporary instrumental flare... melodies of peace, joy and happiness."





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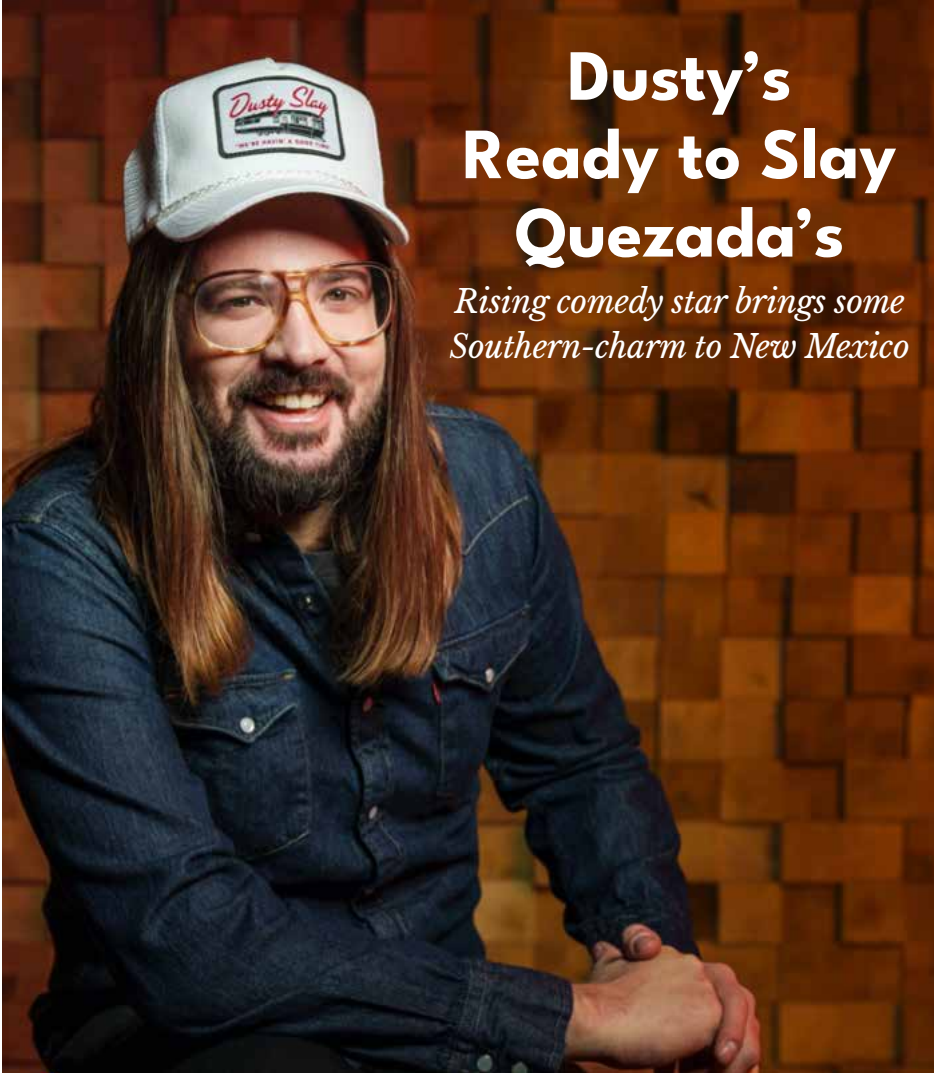
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## Dusty's Ready to Slay Quezada's

*Rising comedy star brings some Southern-charm to New Mexico*

*Dusty Slay is bringing his clean-ish humor to Quezada's Comedy Club and Cantina. (Source: Dusty Slay)*

By Michael Hodock, The Paper.

Dusty Slay may be popular with blue-collar audiences because of his Southern drawl, his relatively clean comedy act or his every-day-guy appearance — long hair, trucker hat, big beard, even bigger glasses — but he doesn't just play the part. He grew up in an Alabama trailer park and worked as a pesticide salesman before trying his hand at standup. Slay also paid his dues in the comedy scene, working his way through the ranks from Tennessee to New York, telling jokes anywhere he had an audience. Slay can also be found hosting popular podcasts, chopping it up with Jimmy Fallon on the *Tonight Show* or performing at the legendary Grand Ole Opry (he has had that honor about 30 times now) but he has never lost touch with his trailer park roots, or his love for the smaller venues. Slay will bring his witty humor to Quezada's Comedy Club and Cantina June 28-29.

*This interview was edited for length and clarity.*

**The Paper.: You have been called, and have been billed as, a clean comedian. What does "clean comedy" mean to you?**

**Dusty Slay:** I'm an adult and I do adult-themed comedy, but I just do it without being graphic and without cussing. I guess cussing is a southern word that people have been making fun of me for using. I'm not trying to change the world, I'm just trying to point out things that we're all experiencing. I talk about songs that we've all heard and I just try to do it in a fun way, [but] also still have a little edge to it.

**Are there any topics or subject matter you would not use in your act?**

Well, yeah. There's so much stuff. I just mainly try to stay away from anything controversial or anything divisive. I want the whole audience to have a good time. I don't want anybody to be taken out of the moment because I'm trashing their belief system in any way, whether it be political

**CONTINUED ON PAGE 13**



## Summer Session of the New Mexico Course for Exploring the Jewish Experience (EJE)

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The EJE Course is a joint program of Shabbat with Friends NM, HaMakom, Santa Fe, Los Alamos Jewish Center. It is an affiliate of the National Miller Introduction to Judaism Program. Supported by a grant from the National Center to Encourage Judaism.

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CONTINUED FROM PAGE 12

or religious. I like to do regular comedy that I think we're all experiencing regardless of what our belief system is.

**You obviously have a stage persona. How would you describe the evolution or development of that persona?**

I'm an ever changing person in general. I grew up in Alabama. I grew up in a trailer park and I moved to Charleston, South Carolina, which is this very nice, classy kind of city. I started to become a little bit more of a Charleston-type dude. When I started doing comedy, I started channeling my old trailer park stuff. I was suddenly telling my stories from my childhood and it helped me overcome any kind of self consciousness I had about growing up in a trailer park. I look at it now and I think, "Wow, I had a great time growing up in a trailer." I had so much fun. I was playing in the woods and I had a bunch of friends in the trailer park. But growing up, you're like, "Ah, I feel poor," you know? Nobody wants to feel poor.

When I moved to Tennessee after doing comedy for a little while, I felt like I was almost back in Alabama. I felt like I was back to who I was ten years ago and I felt good. My evolution as a person has also been that [evolution] of me on stage.

**Do you have a funny story about being a pesticide salesman?**

There were four different pesticide companies and we were all going to Lowe's and Home Depot and we would compete with each other. So you go in and the competition has a display built of their product and you just break their display down. Take their shelf and throw it in the dumpster in the back, or the trash compactor, so that it can't even be retrieved. And then you put all their stuff up in the overhead and build your display. And that's basically what we would do all day. Just go around really trying to outwork the competition. You just want a picture, you build your display and then you take a picture and you send it to your boss.

**Have you been to New Mexico before?**

Yeah, years ago I did a casino in Mescalero, New Mexico called the Inn of the Mountain Gods. I believe I came to the [Santa Ana] Star Casino and I did the very same room that I'm about to do, even though it was a different name. I opened for a couple of the guys from Broken Lizard who did *Super Troopers* and *Beerfest*. That was probably 2016.

**You've performed at some large, high-profile venues. You've been on television, big specials. How do you feel about performing at smaller, more intimate venues like Quezada's?**

What I've been doing for the last 10 years is [performing at] clubs where people are really right up on you, and that's really where I feel the most comfortable. I've been getting into theaters now. I gotta say it's pretty great to do theaters, but clubs are what I've been doing for a long time and I like them. As long as there's a group of people in a room that are ready to listen to some comedy, it doesn't really matter what it is.

**Which do you like better?**

I'm in the middle of this transition, right? I have been known to say that I don't want to move to theaters because I really like doing clubs. But once you get into theaters you're like, "I'm doing 1,000 seat theaters." Once you get in there, you're like, "Oh, this is really nice. I could really get into this."

I think there is something nice about the intimacy of a smaller comedy club. But there also is something to be said for being in a theater where you have no table service and servers aren't going around the room talking to people trying to listen to you do comedy.

**Dusty Slay**  
Quezada's Comedy Club and Cantina  
54 Jemez Canyon Dam Road,  
Santa Ana Pueblo  
7 p.m. and 9:30 p.m., June 28  
7 p.m. and 9:30 p.m., June 29  
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# The Paper.

Dear Editor

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## Letter to the Editor: Welcome to Reality

On June 5, 2024, KOB “reported” that the Jackson Wink MMA Academy was flying the United States flag upside down — because of “Crime, drugs coming over the border and human trafficking.” KRQE reported that Jackson Wink Academy was hoping to shed light on national issues like “inflation, immigration, and homelessness.” Local journalists should not be in the business of broadcasting misinformation! This is not #Standing4NM or #LocalReportingYouCanTrust.

On June 2, 2024, Fox “News” reported that Trump supporters were flying the U.S. flag upside down to protest the former POTUS being convicted of a plethora of felony crimes. Other posts on social media referred to the jury verdict as a declaration of war, or a sign of a coming civil war. The Associated Press reported “RIP America” was trending after the verdict.

Here in reality — you don’t see President Biden attacking



law enforcement or calling a jury trial a fake hoax. Stable democracies that take the rule of law seriously hold criminal suspects accountable — even if the defendants are wealthy, even if they’re politically powerful, even if they served in government at the highest levels. Rule of law is a principle under which all persons, institutions and entities are accountable to laws that are: Publicly promulgated. Equally enforced. Independently adjudicated. #LetsGoAmerica

-Brian Fejer

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## Ask the Experts: Upgrading Your Swamp Cooler to Cool A/C For Hotter Summers

Sponsored by Kidzz Mechanical

It is the time of year when many Albuquerque homeowners begin the arduous task of opening up their swamp cooler and wondering if this is the year they should finally convert to A/C.

To learn what the process really looks like, and how new financing options help homeowners manage, we asked Chad Redford, CEO at Kidzz Mechanical, an Albuquerque-based HVAC firm with more than 200 5-Star reviews on Google about today’s conversion process.

**Chad, a lot of homes around Albuquerque were built with swamp coolers, but those don’t seem to work as well as they used to. Why is that?**

The biggest issue with swamp coolers in our climate is that 10 or 20 years ago our monsoon season occurred in late August/early September. Now in recent years we get our monsoon season in early/mid July.

When the rains come the relative humidity increases from our usual 5-10% humidity to 25-35% relative humidity. When the relative humidity increases to over

20% a swamp cooler only has the ability to change the temperature or air by 6-7°.

This change in climate has encouraged many people to convert to refrigerated air so that they have the ability to stay comfortable during the hottest days of the year.

And, we all know that swamp coolers can lower inside temperatures by up to 20-degrees. On our hottest days, inside temps can still be unbearable. The National Weather Service shows us that ABQ is seeing more high temperature days each year.

**How long does it take to upgrade or install a new air conditioner?**

In most cases we can install a new air conditioning system in one day.

**Many people think they can’t afford an upgrade, but you have lots of reviews online from customers who did. What financing is available now?**

At one time, homeowners had to pay the full cost before installing or upgrading to a new unit. But we’ve made upgrading more accessible.

We have worked with Wells Fargo to provide hundreds of our



customers with many different rate plans that accommodate their budget. Wells Fargo offers many different options based on your credit.

**• If I’m not ready for an upgrade yet, do you handle smaller jobs like opening my swamp cooler?**

If you’re not ready to upgrade your system yet, we have some of the best service technicians in the state. Sometimes your system just needs a tune up and some maintenance to get it operating properly

and heating or cooling your house like it should. We offer very affordable maintenance packages and repair options.

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## What's Next for Spaceport America?

It was glamour and glitz again as Virgin Galactic sent its last space tourists into the heavens this month. Now the company will fade away for two years to build the next generation ship – not here but in Mesa, Arizona.

What's next for Spaceport America? Maybe it's time to go back to Plan A. In case you're wondering, Virgin Galactic was Plan B.

"Spaceport America began as New Mexico's dream to integrate and promote its space industry to grow the state's economy," wrote space economist Thomas Matula in *The Space Review*. "Instead, it got lost in this detour into suborbital space tourism."

Matula has history with New Mexico's spaceport. Beginning with his MBA and Ph.D. in business administration from New Mexico State University, Matula became an expert on spaceports. He's a professor of business administration at Sul Ross State University in Alpine, Texas.

As a Ph.D. candidate he worked on the initial feasibility study for a spaceport.

"That study envisioned a very different spaceport from the one operating today," he

wrote. "Instead of a facility built around an anchor client, Virgin Galactic, whose business is based on the transport of tourists into suborbital space, back in 1991 (the proposed spaceport) was supposed to be the flagship of New Mexico's space industry."

It all started in 1930 with Dr. Robert Goddard's research near Roswell. That led to White Sands Missile Range, where the army during World War II tested German V-2 rockets. To support those tests, NMSU created the Physical Science Laboratory in 1946. "PSL's ground-breaking research has shaped the nation's space and rocket programs for more than three quarters of a century," Matula wrote.

In this period Los Alamos National Laboratory spun off Sandia National Laboratories and the Air Force Research Laboratory, which soon expanded their work to include rockets and space technology. With New Mexico's research universities – University of New Mexico, New Mexico Tech and NMSU – New Mexico had "substantial

capability for space research and development."

Matula wonders how the founders' vision pivoted to space tourists.

I know because I was covering it. (My first story about the proposed spaceport was in 1995.) As the idea was taking off, Gov. Bill Richardson, his economic development people and Richard

Branson found each other. The charismatic Branson had grand plans. State officials followed a shiny object. Besides, space tourism was easier to explain (and sell) to legislators than space research and development. And the state had money that year.

Branson didn't deceive anybody, but his flights took far longer than anyone expected, which "put another kink in the economic development New Mexico once planned for the spaceport, a dream of revenue that would rescue this depressed pocket of the Chihuahua Desert," Matula wrote. And now Sir Richard has waved goodbye for two more years.

Spaceport America has four

other tenants, but they "bear little evidence of any strategic integration with New Mexico's space industry," Matula wrote. Maybe so, but they have invested substantially in their facilities here, they've notched successes, and together they could be the foundation of the spaceport's next chapter.

Spaceport spokesman Charlie Hurley said "Spaceport America takes a proactive approach to identifying and communicating with aerospace and space companies" and the conversations are "frequent and ongoing in nature."

This month a consultant is expected to deliver a master plan to the New Mexico Spaceport Authority that examines growth opportunities for the state's aerospace industry and identifies strengths and challenges for the facility.

"I am not holding my breath that it will be any better than studies in the past," wrote Matula. He sees a return to the original vision as the best way forward.

If the consultants are thorough they will look at the industry history here and not be distracted by shiny objects.

### All She Wrote



Sherry Robinson

## Who Wins, Who Loses

It's hard to know who the biggest loser in the Hunter Biden trial might be. Hunter Biden, of course, who was convicted on three felony counts on June 11 by a jury of his Delaware peers, lost the legal case.

Donald Trump lost something bigger; his complaints about two-tiered justice were stopped cold.

During the Biden trial, only snippets of the courtroom drama were reported: who was testifying and to what they were testifying. As with most news, it was hard to get the full context of courtroom action.

What is clear to voters is the split screen of approaches by the former president and Hunter Biden and his family.

A jury of their peers convicted both men. Both trials had competent judges who followed best practices for courtroom procedure.

The former president and presumptive GOP nominee was unanimously convicted by a New York jury of 34 counts of fraud and falsifying documents.

During the trial he spent time attacking the judge and witnesses and trying to uncover names and information about jurors. His allies were not family but GOP politicians, traveling to New York, conducting press conferences, trashing the judicial system.

Contrast that to President Biden's son (who is not running for president) who stood trial on charges of lying on federal forms while buying a firearm and owning a firearm while using drugs. From day one, his dad expressed both his love for Hunter and his faith in the judicial system. Neither Hunter Biden nor the president whined or criticized the jurors or the judge. Someone in Hunter Biden's family walked into the courtroom with him, supporting him with their presence every day. They hoped for a different outcome but didn't get it.

The prosecutor emphasized the trial was not about addiction but about illegal choices while addicted. Millions of parents and

families can relate to a family whose son, now a father himself, has struggled with addiction for years. Many families have experienced the damage

caused by addiction and understand it. Prisons are full of those who committed crimes because of their addictions.

In my own family, my younger brother fought addiction from the time he was a teenager. I bailed him out of jail, had to go searching for him when he didn't show up for family dinners. My mom denied his addiction. It frustrated my dad. Both loved him regardless.

All of those emotions have no doubt been on display for the Biden family this week. But what the trial really offered us was a contrast of two powerful men and their families and contrasts in accountability.

In the Biden family, we see a loving, supportive family showing us how love can be so important. Hunter Biden was

remorseful. He refused to blame "a rigged system," "unfairness" or "a corrupt judge." Hunter Biden's father expressed his love for his son throughout as well as his belief in a fair judicial system.

Trump's family rarely showed up to support him. Trump and his allies were camera hogs, constantly trashing the third branch of government, complaining about a two-tiered system of justice. There were threats to prosecutors, the judge and his family and a lack of remorse that continues today.

But it's clear the verdict discredited Republican claims of a two-tiered justice system.

Through the Biden family reaction, we were reminded what respect for the law looks like even when you lose.

Finally, it reinforced our faith in the justice system. In spite of recent attacks and accusations and a four-year campaign to destroy the institution, justice prevailed.

We are in the end, a nation of laws, not men.

### Corner to Corner



Diane Denish



# The Green Rush Is Over

*Mature weed markets are crashing*

By Josh Lee, The Paper.

Cannabis businesses are having a rough year in more mature markets such as Colorado and California. States are making less money, dispensaries are shutting their doors and workers are being laid off as doom-and-gloomers herald the end of the Green Rush. As marijuana sales continue to bloom in the Land of Enchantment, New Mexico is uniquely positioned to take notes on the misfortunes of other states and avoid their mistakes.

In Colorado, dispensaries that have held their place for more than a decade are closing their doors and shuttering their windows, leaving business owners and advocates scratching their heads. In California, dispensaries are shutting down with debts intact, leaving distributors empty-handed and in a hole.

In 2020, Colorado dispensaries raked in a whopping \$2.2 billion. But by 2023, sales had plummeted to \$1.5 billion. The state received \$274 million in marijuana taxes in 2023 — down more than 15% from 2022 and more than 35% from 2021.

Towns along Colorado's southern border have lost as much as 50% of their cannabis revenue after New Mexico legalized weed. Not only did they lose their New Mexican

customers, they also lost out-of-state customers who were attracted to the higher personal possession and THC limits found in New Mexico.

In California, recreational pot sales started in 2018 and steadily rose for three years before peaking in 2021 with around \$482 million in sales in April 2024. They've been following a downward trend since then, and now thousands of weed businesses have shut their doors for good. In December 2023, the state made \$420.9 million in weed sales.

According to *The Mercury News*, the number of licensed producers and brands has dropped by 70% since 2018. Green Market Report found that the state of California is still owed \$732 million in back taxes that will never be paid because the companies that owe have gone under.

"We should be learning, from what's happening around us more than anything at this point," says Matt Kennicott, CEO and co-founder of cannabis industry association The Plug. "We're still a pretty new market. We're maturing quickly, but there's still a lot of growing up to do. We are starting to see some of the bad getting sorted out from the good, so that's helping."

Kennicott says there are a number of lessons to be learned from the unfortunate

crashes that our neighbors are experiencing. He says that legislating a cap on the state's cannabis excise tax — which is set to rise from 12% to 18% by 2030 — would be one way of ensuring that consumers don't go back to buying weed from black market sources and maintain purchasing power.

"I really think we need to nip the illicit market in the bud as fast as possible," Kennicott says.

He says legislators need to give the state's Cannabis Control Division more authority to punish bad actors while balancing regulations with the needs of business owners.

"Striking a balance in the regulatory environment is very important," he says. "That's one area where California has really, quite frankly, done a very poor job. They over-regulate their industry immensely."

But Kennicott says the most important thing that retailers can learn from the misfortunes of Colorado and California is to pause before declaring a price war.

"The big one is trying to avoid a race to the bottom," he says. "You have everybody trying to compete with each other and dropping their prices as low as possible. That really deteriorates the entire market — from retail all the way down the chain — because at some point the farms and the growers won't be able to

make any money based on what the retail prices are doing."

It's also possible that some of the problems in the other markets had to do with the way businesses responded to the windfall provided by COVID-19 lockdowns. In both Colorado and California (and most of the other legal states in the U.S.), cannabis dispensaries were deemed "essential businesses" and were allowed to stay open while many others were forced to close when states began shutting down in 2020.

While consumer spending in nearly every sector dropped during lockdowns, spending on cannabis went through the roof. This sudden money injection in the industry spurred an increase in business spending and hiring. It also increased the attention that weed companies were getting from private investors.

Kennicott says there's actually a silver lining to the fact that companies are folding in more mature markets.

"We've got a real shortage of labor in just about every industry in New Mexico — especially trained and educated workforce," he says. "We could potentially see an influx of workers into the cannabis industry that have years of experience and can plug a lot of holes — all the way from cultivation up to retail."





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

## Texas AG Suit Over Weed Dismissed

By Josh Lee, The Paper.

A state judge dismissed a lawsuit recently filed by Texas Attorney General Ken Paxton's office against the city of Austin. The suit claimed an ordinance that deprioritizes low-level marijuana arrests goes against the state's constitution and could cause chaos.

Travis County Judge Jan Soifer dismissed the suit last week, ruling that the ordinance was not unconstitutional and didn't stop police from making drug arrests.

The suit was filed in response to the Austin Freedom Act, a voter-approved ordinance that bars police from issuing citations or arresting individuals for Class A or Class B marijuana offenses, except when the

violation is connected to a more serious charge.

Assistant Attorney General Ryan Kercher told reporters that the Texas Constitution leaves drug criminalization up to the state's legislature, and that decriminalizing marijuana at the city level illegally circumvents the rules. Special Counsel Jacob Przada told reporters that inconsistency in rules will be confusing and cause chaos.

### Emails Reveal NY Gov. Was Warned of Bad Deal

A batch of leaked emails obtained by *The City*, revealed that New York cannabis officials repeatedly voiced concerns over numerous policy decisions that negatively impacted the rollout of the state's marijuana program.

One such decision was a \$150

million deal with investment firm Chicago Atlantic Group to finance a cannabis business loan program. A number of officials were concerned that the contract included provisions that purportedly benefited the company at the expense of the state.

The contract reportedly contained steep lending costs and strict repayment terms for dispensary loans and the state was required to back a guaranteed 15% investment on every loan to Chicago Atlantic even if they defaulted.

New York Gov. Kathy Hochul earlier this year publicly chastised the state's regulators for the failed rollout of the state's cannabis program. But according to the unearthed emails, the governor's office received repeated warnings from cannabis officials, but still went through with the deal.

### CA Looks to Legalize Psychedelic Therapy

California lawmakers have introduced a new bill that would legalize psilocybin therapy for veterans and first responders.

Earlier this month, California state Sens. Brian Jones (R) and Josh Becker (D) introduced the Heal Our Heroes Act, which

would create a pilot program for military veterans and first responders to access psilocybin treatments for mental health issues in a regulated setting.

"To be clear, I'm not calling for the widespread legalization of psychedelic drugs," Jones said in a news release. "Rather, I'm championing a targeted medical treatment aimed specifically at aiding veterans and first responders in their recovery."

Jones said the bill is meant to give experts a chance to study the effectiveness of psychedelic treatments while hopefully providing relief to patients.

If passed, the bill would authorize San Francisco, Santa Cruz and San Diego counties to run the pilot program. The counties would be responsible for authorizing licensed physicians or surgeons, clinical psychologists, licensed clinical social workers, nurse practitioners, physician assistants, licensed professional clinical counselors or naturopathic doctors to be facilitators.

The pilot program would only run for three years and counties would be expected to collect data and produce a report at the two-year mark. Participants would be screened for suitability before being allowed into the program.

July 4th marks the 20 year anniversary that Andrew and Erika, owners of Carver Family Farm, attended the "Smoke In" protest at the Lincoln Memorial in Washington, DC.

"Never did I imagine that 20 years later I would own a legal cannabis grow and shop AND be able to sponsor The Anderson Abruzzo International Balloon Museum Foundation's "Red, White and Balloons at the Balloon Museum! Find us at the Carver Family Farm cabana"  
- Erika

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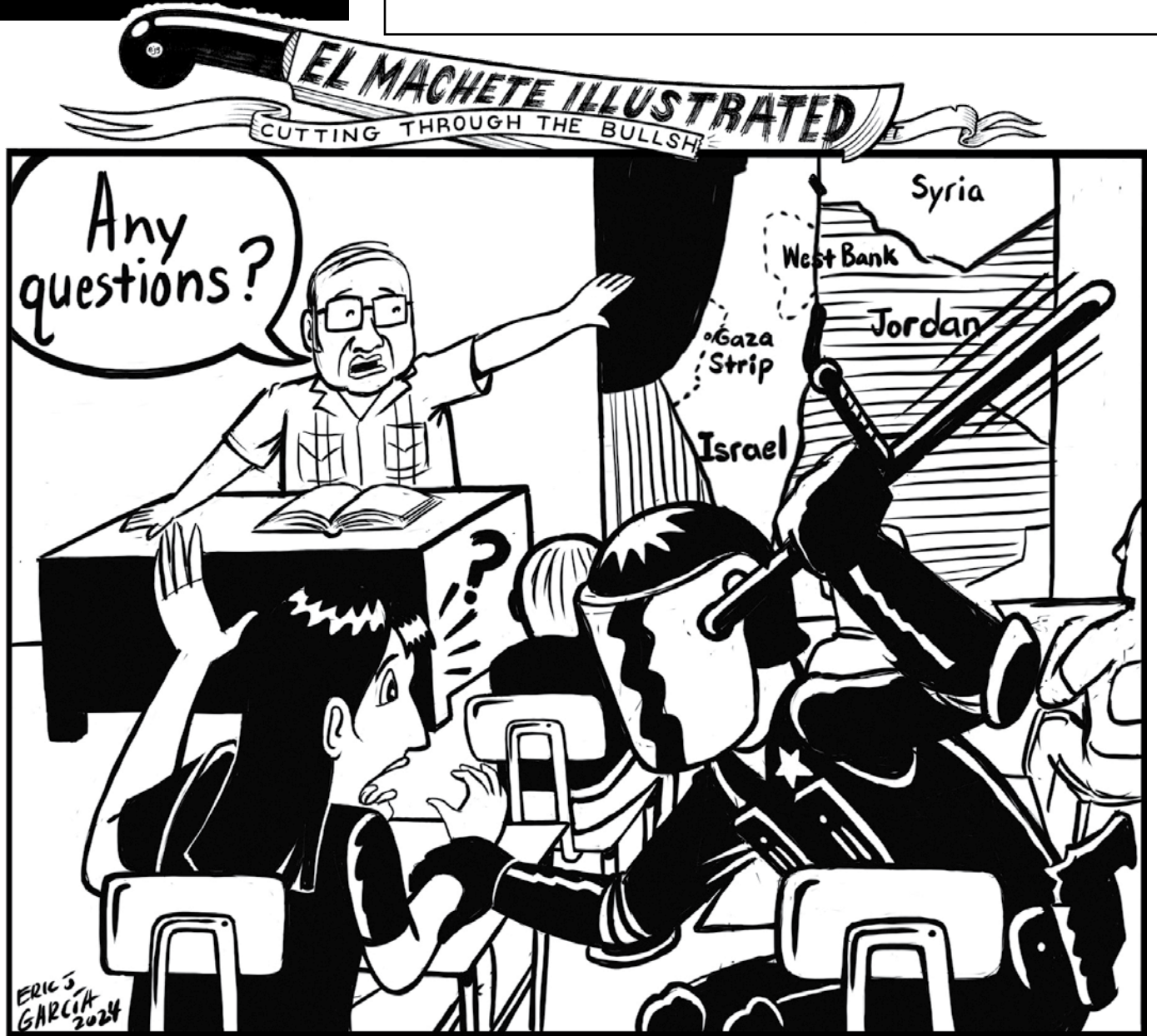
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FREE WILL ASTROLOGY

Week of June 19

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**ARIES (March 21-April 19):** I love being logical and reasonable! The scientific method is one of my favorite ways to understand how the world works. I am a big fan of trying to ascertain the objective facts about any situation I am in. However, I also love being intuitive and open to mystical perceptions. I don't trust every one of my feelings as an infallible source of truth, but I rely on them a lot to guide my decisions. And I also believe that it's sometimes impossible to figure out the objective facts. In the coming weeks, Aries, I suggest you give more weight than usual to the second set of perspectives I described. Don't be crazily illogical, but proceed as if logic alone won't provide the insights you need most.

**TAURUS (April 20-May 20):** In their book *Your Symphony of Selves*, Jordan Gruber and James Fadiman propose a refreshing theory about human nature. They say that each of us is a community of multiple selves. It's perfectly natural and healthy for us to be an amalgam of various voices, each with distinctive needs and forms of expression. We should celebrate our multifaceted identity and honor the richness it affords us. According to my analysis of astrological omens, the coming weeks will be an excellent time for you to exult in your own symphony of selves and make it a central feature of your self-understanding.

**GEMINI (May 21-June 20):** In the second half of 2012 and the first half of 2013, you launched a journey that will finally culminate soon. What a long, strange, and interesting trip it has been! The innovations you activated during that time have mostly ripened, though not entirely. The hopes that arose in you have brought mixed results, but the predominant themes have been *entertaining lessons* and *soulful success*. I hope you will give yourself a congratulatory gift, dear Gemini. I hope you will luxuriate in a ritual celebration to commemorate your epic journey. The process hasn't been perfect, but even the imperfections have been magical additions to your life story.

**CANCER (June 21-July 22):** I suspect you may have metaphorical resemblances to a lightning rod in the coming weeks. Just in case I'm right, I urge you not to stroll across open fields during thunderstorms. On the other hand, I recommend that you be fully available to receive bolts of inspiration and insight. Put yourself in the presence of fascinating events, intriguing people, and stirring art. Make yourself ready and eager for the marvelous.

**LEO (July 23-Aug. 22):** "It's hard to get lost if you don't know where you're going," said experimental filmmaker Jim Jarmusch. He's implying that there's potential value in getting lost. Unexpected discoveries might arrive that contribute to the creative process. But that will only happen if you first have a clear vision of where you're headed. Jarmusch's movies benefit from this approach. They're fun for me to watch because he knows exactly what he wants to create but is also willing to get lost and wander around in search of serendipitous inspirations. This is the approach I recommend for you in the coming weeks, dear Leo.

**VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22):** Does any person or institution own a part of you? Has anyone stolen some of your power? Does anyone insist that only they can give you what you need? If there are people who fit those descriptions, Virgo, the coming weeks will be an excellent time to fix the problems. According to my understanding of life's rhythms, you can summon the ingenuity and strength to reclaim what rightfully belongs to you. You can recover any sovereignty and authority you may have surrendered or lost.

**LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22):** In ancient Greek myth, Sisyphus was a forlorn character punished by the gods. He was required to push a boulder from the bottom to

the top of a hill. But each time he neared the peak, the big rock, which had been enchanted by the crabby god Zeus, slipped away and rolled back down the hill. The story says that Sisyphus had to do this for all eternity. If there have been even minor similarities between you and him, Libra, that will change in the coming months. I predict you will finally succeed—is this your fifth attempt?—in finishing a task or project that has, up until now, been frustrating.

**SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21):** Is it possible to reap spiritual epiphanies while having sex? Can intense physical pleasure be a meditation that provokes enlightened awareness? Can joy and bliss bring learning experiences as valuable as teachings that arise from suffering? Here are my answers to those three questions, Scorpio, especially for you during the next four weeks: yes, yes, and yes. My astrological ruminations tell me that you are primed to harvest divine favors as you quest for delight.

**SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21):** Your animal magnetism and charisma could be wildly potent in the coming weeks. I'm worried that as a result, you may be susceptible to narcissistic feelings of entitlement. You will be extra attractive, maybe even irresistible! But now that you have received my little warning, I hope you will avoid that fate. Instead, you will harness your personal charm to spread blessings everywhere you go. You will activate a generosity of spirit in yourself that awakens and inspires others. Do not underestimate the electrifying energy pouring out of you, Sagittarius. Vow to make it a healing medicine and not a chaotic disruptor.

**CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19):** I've had thousands of crucial teachers. There would be no such thing as me without their life-changing influences. Among that vast array have been 28 teachers whose wisdom has been especially riveting. I feel gratitude for them every day. And among those 28 have been five geniuses who taught me so much so fast in a short period of time that I am still integrating their lessons. One of those is Capricorn storyteller and mythologist Michael Meade. I offer you these thoughts because I suspect you are close to getting a major download from a guide who can be for you what Meade has been for me. At the very least, you will engage with an educational source akin to my top 28.

**AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18):** In one of my previous lifetimes, I was a bricoleur—a collector and seller of junk who re-used the castaway stuff in new ways. That's one reason why, during my current destiny, I am a passionate advocate for recycling, renewal, and redemption—both in the literal and metaphorical senses. I am tuned in to splendor that might be hidden within decay, treasures that are embedded in trash, and bliss that can be retrieved from pain. So I'm excited about your prospects in the coming weeks, Aquarius. If you so desire, you can specialize in my specialties.

**PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20):** Some people imagine that being creative means having nonstop spontaneous fun. They think it's primarily exuberant, adventurous, and liberating. As a person who prizes imaginative artistry, I can testify that this description is accurate some of the time. But more often, the creative process involves meticulous organization and discipline, periods of trial-and-error experimentation, and plenty of doubt and uncertainty. It's hard work that requires persistence and faith. Having said that, Pisces, I am happy to say you are now in a phase when the freewheeling aspects of creativity will be extra available. You're more likely than usual to enjoy spontaneous fun while dreaming up novel ideas and fresh approaches. Channel this energy into an art form or simply into the way you live your life.

The Weekly Crossword

by Margie E. Burke

ACROSS

- 1 Calcutta attire  
5 Single-celled organism (var.)  
10 Booze it up  
14 Washerful  
15 Poe's bird  
16 Like some columns  
17 Hard to follow  
19 Lima's locale  
20 Sunburn aftermath  
21 Lego line with gears  
23 Over  
25 Oscar-winning Berry  
26 "The Bell Jar" writer  
29 Fertilizer type  
32 RCA or EMI  
33 More than dislike  
34 Schedule abbr.  
37 In general  
39 Nuclear plant feature  
41 Card game for two  
42 Static  
44 Palm an ace, say  
45 Bureaucratic tangle  
47 Fruity desserts  
48 Yucca's kin  
50 Colorado ski resort  
52 Took in, in a way  
55 Pipe type  
59 April forecast  
60 Young lady, in Lyon

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62					63						64			
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- 62 Cavern, to a poet  
63 They may be stripped  
64 Hangout  
65 Coop group  
66 Banquet host  
67 Parking place

- 8 Like a kneeler's knee  
9 Neat anagram  
10 Astaire  
11 Post for all to read  
12 Grave danger  
13 Draw forth  
18 Toyota model  
22 People in a novel  
24 Pen point  
26 Farm implement  
27 Volcano output  
28 Irregularity  
30 Sixty, in old times  
31 \_\_\_ v. Wade  
35 Dinghy or dory

- 36 Sciences' partner  
38 Piece of land  
40 ABC and ESPN  
43 Place to be pampered  
46 Doings  
48 Frustrated cry  
49 Driving hazard  
51 Model's asset  
53 Chrome competitor  
54 Judge  
56 Thunder sound  
57 This and that  
58 "Sesame Street" regular  
61 Apple product

DOWN

- 1 Yacht spot  
2 Best of the best  
3 Preakness, for one  
4 Worshiper of a statue  
5 Sports facility  
6 Reader's notes  
7 Arden or Plumb

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Solution to Crossword:





# "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."

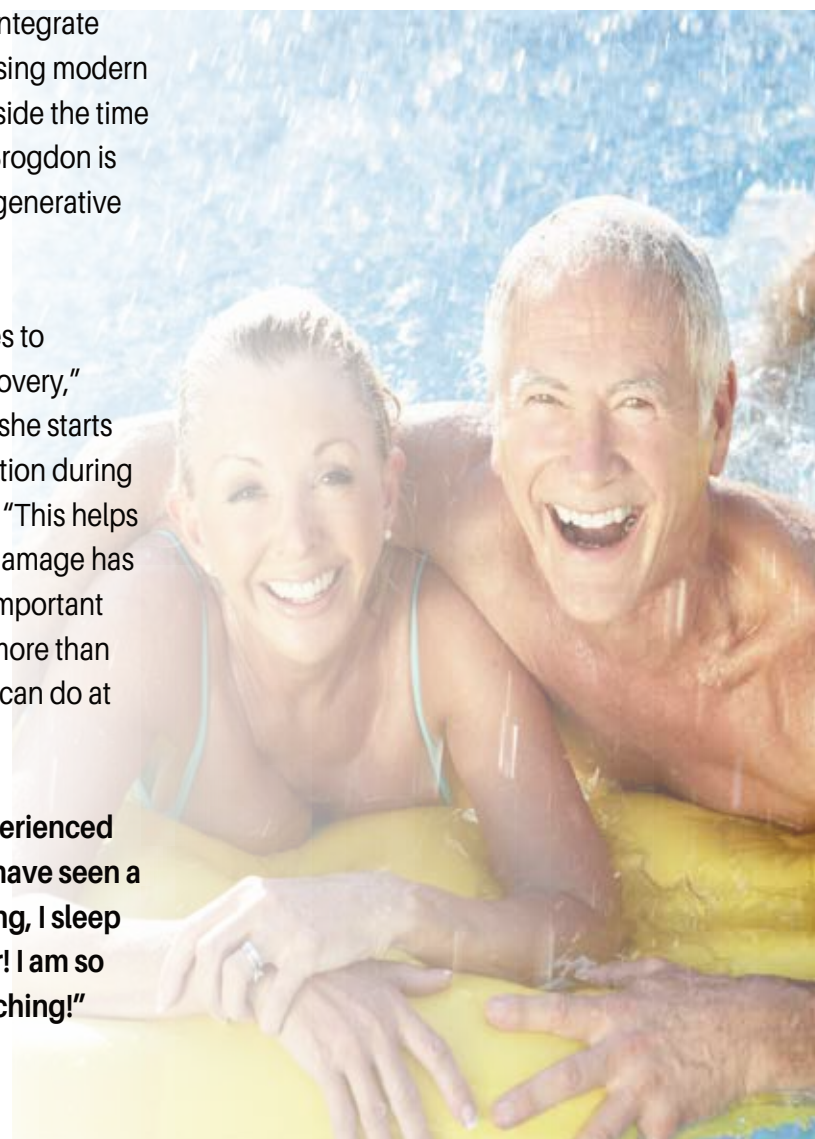
Dr. Andrea Brogdon has helped thousands of patients get their life back after being diagnosed with peripheral neuropathy and living with the debilitating effects of the disease. How does she get such amazing results? "Acupuncture has been used for centuries to improve circulation but the real magic happens 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](http://AAIM-ABQ.com) to read more incredible success stories.



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