

A Legacy Local Monthly Publication

March 2024

# The Historic

Mesilla Valley



Female Owned  
Equestrian Center

The Cat's Meow:  
All Things Cat

The Resilient  
Anji Thornton

Family Affair at  
Flexi-Hauler LLC

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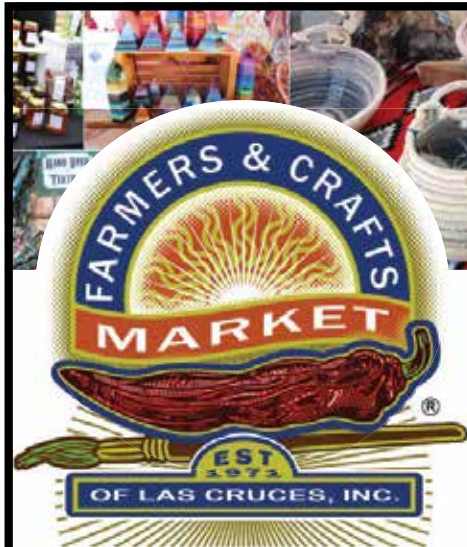
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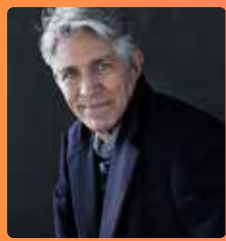
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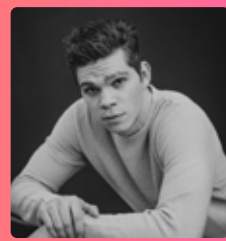
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on the  
Cover:  
Susie  
Ouderirk,  
Owner and  
Operator  
of Red Sky  
Farm Hunter/  
Jumpers



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We welcome your letters and other queries for this magazine. If you would like to submit or respond to an opinion, send your submission of no more than 600 words to [editorial@thehistoricmagazine.com](mailto:editorial@thehistoricmagazine.com). The publisher reserves the right to edit, cut or publish any submissions.

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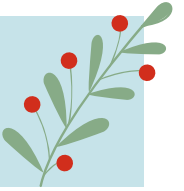
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# A NOTE FROM THE

# publisher



We here at The Historic Mesilla Valley are extremely excited to celebrate Women's History Month and conclude our trilogy of female focused content with a series of interviews, each carrying a voice of confidence and empowerment. We would like to extend a reminder about First Fridays in the Mesquite Historic District in which gallerists



and artists showcase their finely tuned skills. While perusing you can enjoy adult beverages and hors d'oeuvres.

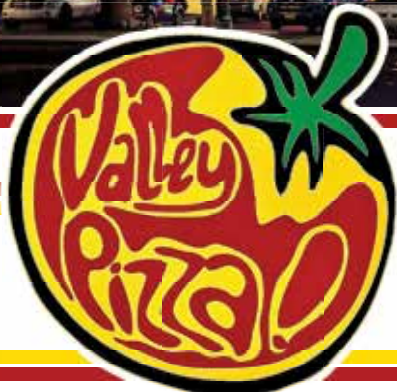
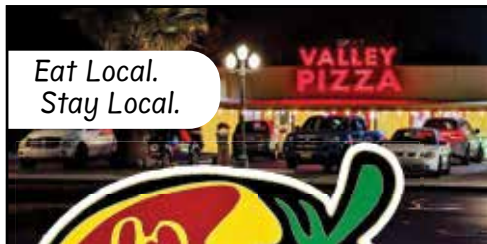
On March 20, 2024, starting at 5:30 p.m., guests will enjoy Camino De Los Artistas which supports arts and culture within the original townsite. Endowment sponsors Max and Kristi Bower have opened The Amador for the Wednesday evening soiree where guests can enjoy hors d'oeuvres and wine. The ticket sale proceeds go back to the Historic District and benefit community art and awareness. We look forward to

seeing you.

The Historic Mesilla Valley Magazine is happy to be extending their special with Mesa Vista Winery for a free wine tasting and raffle ticket which could get you a set of two glasses, a bottle of wine, and a glass holder. Be our guest and pay Dawn and her team a visit out on Highway 28 in Anthony, New Mexico as you enjoy their ambrosial wines; I might add their Muscat and Rosé are delicate and refreshing with a great profile.

We shined a spotlight on a new business downtown and a Main Street anchor which has changed hands is now expanding their offerings. Get to know our community and visit these community partners for a bite to eat, a piece of furniture, or some specialty sauces. Check out C&G's, who is featured in our female leadership story, for some of their Bacon Ketchup. We appreciate your support and so do our community partners. Welcome to our March Issue.

*We are excited to take you along.*



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# Calendar of events

## Every Thursday

- Amador Standards Thursday Night Jazz. 7 p.m. Hosted by Robert Ojinaga. No cover. Amador Patio Bar Grill, 302 S. Main St., Suite B, Las Cruces.

## Every Saturday

- STEAM Saturdays: What happens when...? Experiments with the Railroad Museum. Plan for a 30 minute program with 15 minutes for questions if needed. 2:15 p.m.-3 p.m. Ages 13-17. Free. Railroad Museum, 351 N. Mesilla St., Las Cruces.

## Mar. 10-31

- Art on display: "The Birds and The Bees" Acrylic paintings by Alyssa Trujillo. 4 p.m.-7 p.m. MAS Art Gallery, 144 Wyatt Dr., Las Cruces.

## Mar. 16

- St. Patty's Day Party: Family friendly St. Patrick's Day event by Kaleidoscope Art Market. Food trucks, music, vendors, Leprechaun cosplay contest, craft beer and more. 4 p.m.-10 p.m., Free. Craft Rhythm & Brews, 1301 Texas Ave., El Paso.

- Amador Live 5 Year Anniversary Brunch Bash - Market 11 a.m.-3 p.m. Music starts at 12 p.m., Brunch, Vendors, Mimosa buckets, Live Jazz by The Juicy Jazz Trio. No cover. Amador Patio Bar Grill, 302 S. Main St., Suite B, Las Cruces.

## Mar. 20

- Camino de Los Artistas: Southwest art expo featuring local art galleries Trails End Gallery, Redd's, 925 Gallery, and Las



## AMADOR LIVE 5 YEAR ANNIVERSARY BRUNCH BASH

### MARCH 16TH

### 11 A.M.-3 P.M.

Brunch • Vendors • Mimosa buckets  
Live Jazz by The Juicy Jazz Trio.

NO COVER CHARGE

Muchachas de Las Cruces Creativity Studio. Wine tasting and Hors D'oeuvres. Doors open at 5:30 p.m., \$10 entry with portion of proceeds to benefit the Mesquite Historic District Art Ramble. Amador Patio Bar Grill, 302 S. Main St., Suite B, Las Cruces.

## Mar. 23

- Taylor Nation: Tribute to Taylor Swift. Enjoy classic songs throughout the different eras. Doors open at 7 p.m., local band at 7:30 p.m., main show at 9 p.m. 21 and over event. Free. Speaking Rock, 122 S. Old Pueblo Rd, El Paso.

- The Emo Night Tour: DJ will be playing emo music in a dance club atmosphere. 8 p.m.-10 p.m., 18 and over event. General admission \$20. Tickets available on lowbrowpalace.com. Lowbrow Palace, 1006 Texas Ave., El Paso.

## Mar. 29

- The Elevation Fashion Show: First annual event will feature the original designs of Nanka Clothing, LLC. All white attire only. 7 p.m. General admission \$35, Runway Seating \$45. Tickets available on eventbrite.com. The Garden Venue, 12400 Montwood Dr., El Paso.

## April First Friday

- First Friday Art Ramble Downtown. Two new exhibits: "2024 All City High School Art Show" at the Museum of Art on display until May 4. Roberto

A Legacy Local Monthly Publication

# The Historic

Mesilla Valley



Camino de Los Artistas:

## SOUTHWEST ART EXPO

### March 20th • 5:30 p.m.

### FEATURING LOCAL ART GALLERIES

Trails End Gallery, Redd's, 925 Gallery and Las Muchachas de Las Cruces Creativity Studio.

Wine tasting • Hors D'oeuvres

### \$10 Entry

portion of proceeds to benefit  
the Mesquite Historic District Art Ramble

Salas will have a collection of art inspired by his grandmother's house in New Mexico and old Mexico. Salas' work will be on display through June 22. 4 p.m.-7 p.m. Branigan Cultural Center, 501 N. Main St. Las Cruces, 575-541-2154.



- First Friday at Trails End Gallery. 4 p.m.-8 p.m. Trails End Gallery, 1732 N. Mesquite St., Las Cruces. Painting Party: Party is led by one of the instructors with Studio Programs. No previous painting experience required. Register online (<https://bit.ly/LCMuseumsRegistration>) or in person.

## Apr. 2 and 9

- Swing on the Plaza. Free swing dance lessons from 7 p.m.-8 p.m. Open swing dancing 8 p.m.-11 p.m. Plaza de Las Cruces, 100 N. Main St., Las Cruces. Snacks and drinks provided. \$20/person. 6 p.m.-8 p.m. Las Cruces Museum of Art, 491 N. Main St., Las Cruces.

## Apr. 7

- Booze Yoga: Beginner friendly yoga class on the first Sunday of each month. One hour class with two beers or mimosas included. \$20 per person. 9:45 a.m.-11 a.m. Las Cruces Little Toad Creek Brewery & Distillery, 119 N. Main St., Las Cruces.

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Presented By:



## March 20th 2024

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Portion of the Proceeds to benefit the Mesquite Historic District Art Ramble



# THE CAT'S MEOW

## All Things Cat

By Kim Jokinen

In 2014, a small group of like-minded feline advocates had a dream – to create a feline-only rescue facility for homeless (or soon-to-be homeless) cats who needed a safe place to reside until a “furrever” home could be found. In October of 2014, The Cat’s Meow Resource & Adoption Center (CMAC), an all-volunteer 501c3 organization, opened its doors. To date, CMAC has found homes for over 2,000 cats, has facilitated spay/neuter surgeries for over 4,000 cats, and has transported over 500 cats to other reputable rescues. This work is never-ending and is expensive, with vet-related and medical expenses generally exceeding \$15,000 monthly.



Fortunately, The Cat’s Meow has a large, dedicated group of volunteers. Many of the volunteers work on a weekly shift (or multiple shifts), ensuring that our feline residents are happy and healthy, living in a clean, restful environment. Without these hard-working individuals, CMAC could not exist or provide sanctuary for approximately 100 cats and kittens who are awaiting new homes.

Volunteers help with fundraising, which is a very important component of CMAC. We just finished an online Valentine’s fundraiser with See’s Candy. In March, in partnership with Mesilla Valley Estate Sales, CMAC will hold an online auction featuring approximately 300 items ranging from jewelry and artwork to appliances

and housewares. In May, a golf tournament will be taking place at Picacho Hills benefitting The Cat’s Meow. These events require a lot of planning and preparation. The Cat’s Meow is grateful to the volunteers who make these things happen.

*Our efforts are rewarded when these kitties find their “furrever” homes*

CMAC has other volunteers who assist visitors on the days we are open to the public (Tuesdays, Thursdays, Saturdays and Sundays from 1p.m. - 4p.m.). Visitors are welcome to stop by and meet some of the amazing felines. There are “regulars” who drop by to say hello on a consistent basis, showering the kitties with love and attention, which they adore!

Many visitors come in with the intent to add a new furry companion to their home. Often, this requires more than a single visit, as folks are sometimes overwhelmed by the number of adoptable felines at CMAC and have trouble making a decision on the initial visit. We encourage multiple visits, as we want a good outcome for both the adopter and the kitty they choose to adopt. We believe that the connection must be mutual, between human and feline, to ensure a successful adoption. This philosophy has served us well, as evidenced by the very low number of returned kitties.

We understand that life can change suddenly and unexpectedly and sometimes it is no longer possible for a cat to remain in a home. When these situations occur, CMAC requires that a cat adopted from us be returned to us. In fact, this requirement is included in our adoption contract, and it is a promise that we make to each cat who comes through our doors – that they will always have a safe and loving home. Many of the cats who find their way to CMAC have been traumatized and must learn to

trust again. This process can take months but we never give up on a cat. Our efforts are rewarded when these kitties find their “furrever” homes. We believe that there is a home out there for each and every one of our adoptable cats.

For every cat who finds a home, two more kitties are waiting for space in our facility. Why so many cats? In our mild climate, a prolific female cat can produce four litters of kittens per year, and those kittens can begin reproducing at 6-7 months of age! For this reason, it is incredibly important for residents to spay or neuter their felines and, ideally, to ensure that any “community cats” (free roaming stray or feral cats) also are spayed or neutered. In support of this effort, The Cat’s Meow offers low-cost spay/neuter services. We refer low-income residents to the Spay Neuter Action Program and folks doing Trap-Neuter-Return of community cats can utilize the Animal Service Center of the Mesilla Valley. For more information about these spay/neuter options, please give us a call at 575-639-3036 or 575-202-1674.



If you would like to support our efforts, The Cat’s Meow accepts donations of cat supplies (food, beds, toys, etc.). They can be dropped off on any day between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m. Financial donations are always welcomed. Checks can be mailed to PO Box 3166, LCNM 88003 or dropped off at our facility. Secure on-line donations can be made via our website: [www.thecatmeowlascruces.com](http://www.thecatmeowlascruces.com).

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# Main Street Marketplace TAKES ON NEW LIFE

By Sylvia Quintanilla

This month, Main Street Marketplace, formally known as Sage Spices, came under new ownership. Jeremiah and Lisa Richardson are no strangers to having a business in Downtown Las Cruces. They are the co-owners of Proofed Bread Co. and Uncle Banjo's Kettle Corn, frequent vendors at the Farmer's and Crafts Market of Las Cruces.

Richardson was a chef by trade for 15 years. He attended Dona Ana Community College to study Culinary Arts and then went to New Mexico State University to study Hotel, Restaurant and Tourism Management. Richardson said he has been between Las Cruces and Colorado for 20 years, but for the last five years he has called Las Cruces home. Between various restaurant jobs here and in Colorado, Richardson opened Firehouse Wood Fired Pizza food truck. During the early days of the COVID-19 pandemic, Richardson sold kettle corn through his Uncle Banjo Kettle Corn stand in the parking lot of a local restaurant.

Last January, he used the time while recovering from COVID-19 to add a new skill to his repertoire.

"While I was sick with COVID, my wife had told me, 'Hey, breakout that starter you have and you should start trying to make bread.' It's funny because then I started getting all these YouTube videos on sourdough bread suddenly I was like okay I'll watch a couple of them," Richardson explained. "So I was like okay I'm gonna go ahead and try to make a batch of bread. I did a batch and thought this is actually pretty cool, but I didn't think much of it more than that."

A few days later, a friend informed him that the Farmer's Market lost a few bakers. His friend encouraged him to sell bread. Richardson contacted the market and got to work. Within a month, he honed his baking skills and was ready for Proofed Bread Co. to debut at the market.

"The first Farmer's Market we were at we sold 50 loaves, sold out in an hour. I said, well, I'm going to scale up to 75 loaves next week. Did that, those sold out in an hour

and a half," he said.

Proofed Bread continued to grow in the following months and Richardson found new equipment to meet the demand. Currently, Proofed Bread Co. has a store on Picacho. Recently, they won the Las Cruces Bulletin's Best of the Mesilla Valley 2024 Best Bakery. One of the loaves they make is a Green Chili Cheddar Jack Bread. It is nicknamed the Unofficial Bread of New Mexico, however it's going to go before the New Mexico Legislature next session in January 2025 to be introduced as the State Bread of New Mexico.

{ Main Street Marketplace  
is known for its  
customer service. }

During their time selling at the market, the Richardsons became friends with Kelly and Dave Sontheimer of Sage Spices. Casually, Richardson commented to Dave



that if they ever thought about selling Sage Spice, the Richardsons would be interested in buying. The timing could not have been better, as the Sontheimers were thinking of returning to St. Louis, M.O. Towards the end of 2023, the Richardsons purchased Sage Spices.

“My wife has always wanted to do an oil and vinegar store. We’ve always talked about doing it,” Richardson began. “We

found out our bread really complements a lot of what they sell such as the vinegars, the oils, the jellies and jams. It’s just kind of a perfect marriage, if you will, bringing all of it together with our bread.”

Main Street Marketplace carries tea, spices, oils, vinegar and more. A few of the loose leaf teas they carry include Earl Grey cream tea, honey tea and black currant. Their selection of oils include infused balsamic vinegars like espresso, dark chocolate, green chili lime, and ginger and infused olive oils like basil garlic, lavender, thai chili, and cold pressed lemon.

Richardson mentioned that the feedback they have received so far is concern that Sage Spices store will change.

“We’re not taking away anything other than just a few small things like some of the pasta, but for the most part we’re keeping everything they currently have in place and just introducing the bread and bringing the kettle corn in. We plan on bringing a lot more variety in, as well,” Richardson noted.

Richardson envisions having cooking and baking classes for all age groups and skill levels. He also wants to incorporate primitive cooking with the pizza oven, teaching people how to cook with fire, open fire and Dutch oven cooking. Focusing on putting local businesses first, they plan to become a specialized marketplace and a place for tourists and locals to come and get their New Mexico food items.

“We’re gonna go really strong on New Mexico made products. We’re gonna start trying to reach out to vendors around town and see what we can bring in. We wanna keep it as close to food related as we



# Sage Spices MAIN STREET MARKETPLACE

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can,” he said.

Main Street Marketplace is known for its customer service. The Richardsons will continue to uphold the standard the customers have enjoyed. He noted with his culinary background, he can aid in suggesting spices for recipes.

Main Street Marketplace is located on 126 Main Street. They are open Mon.-Tues. and Thurs.-Fri. from 10 a.m.-5 p.m. On market days, Wed. and Sat. they will be open from 8 a.m.-5 p.m.

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# Female Owned Equestrian Center

# Gives Back

By Desiree Bustamantes



Seasoned horse trainer  
and riding instructor,  
Susie Ouderkirk

**S**usie Ouderkirk is the Owner and Operator of Red Sky Farm Hunter/Jumpers, on the scenic East Mesa of Las Cruces. She is a seasoned horse trainer and riding instructor and opened her business while simultaneously attending New Mexico State University in January of 1986. She was trained by master instructor Peggy Lenz and has had lessons, schooling, and clinics with dozens of trainers and instructors. Her right hand on Red Sky

Farm is assistant Lauren Meske who is described as a fun, energetic and a patient teacher who brings more than just hunt seat experience to the farm. Meske is mellow and has a wealth of knowledge about everything horse related. For those a little less savvy on this topic, a “hunter,” is where the horse and rider jump a course and the judging is based on accuracy, grace, and elegance. On the other hand, a “jumper,” also known as, “show jumping,”

is where the horse and rider team with the fastest time and fewest faults wins.

“Red Sky Farm is environmentally friendly and is outright therapeutic for the people who get to interact with and learn from our amazing horses. Horses are and always will be a symbol of the American West, and keep us connected to the Earth and all of the other elements,” says Susie. While making her dreams a reality for going on her 38th year, it has



your lessons for competition in hunters, jumpers or equitation classes.”

### Horse Riding Lesson Information:

- The best bargain is the Private Lesson Program which consists of six lessons over the course of 30 days. The total cost is \$300 which equates to a savings of \$150.
- Single Private Lessons are a duration of one hour, in which the participant is responsible to groom, tack up, ride, cool down, untack & clean equipment on a lesson-by-lesson basis. The cost for this option is \$75 per session.

• Single Private Lessons in which participants groom, tack up, ride, cool down, untack, and clean equipment on a weekly basis is \$65. If you elect for folks on the farm to groom, tack up, cool down, and clean the equipment, the price is \$100 a session.

• Another exciting option available is the opportunity for Group Lessons for riders who can tack up on their own. The cost for this option is \$65 per session.

If you are questioning whether or not your child is ready for lessons, the website contains a document that describes qualities necessary to be a successful student as well as answers to frequently asked questions. [https://www.redskyfarmnm.com/\\_files/ugd/91dfd8\\_aef43ae262f74583816fe5a21c3a81e1.pdf](https://www.redskyfarmnm.com/_files/ugd/91dfd8_aef43ae262f74583816fe5a21c3a81e1.pdf)

### Pony Party Information:

Red Sky Farm is now offering “Pony Parties” featuring fantastic horses Simon and Dunkin! As if these majestic creatures were not enthralling enough, even better, we can dress them up as superheroes or unicorns! Your child will have one hour of hands-on petting, grooming, and opportunities to ride with an experienced handler who is present at all times to

ensure the safety of all patrons. They will also handle all of the preparation including setting up a tent and table. You can bring your choice of food and drink. A party of four (two adults are included in the party of four) is \$100. Each additional child is \$10, and additional adults are free!

Susie concludes by sharing her appreciation of those around her by stating, “Of course I owe much to my family, my assistant Lauren, my clients and customers, and the wonderful horses who work for us.”

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<https://www.redskyfarmnm.com/>

always been equally important to her to have a positive impact on the community of Las Cruces. “We serve riders of all ages, backgrounds, and income levels, including a strong and popular working student program that allows young “Las Cruceans” the opportunity to experience horses affordably. We also do a fair amount of horse rescue and are currently bringing three horses back to good health after having been in neglectful situations,” Susie shares.

Although this facility is proudly woman-owned, there are a trio of gentlemen who work on the farm as well. Pippin, Dunkin, and Picasso (Pico) are the working lesson horses on the farm. Also noteworthy, Dunkin joined the cast of the feature film *Bad Hombres* back in 2021, with his on screen debut occurring in January of this year! Susie confirms, “We teach fun, stress-free lessons for Hunter Seat Equitation, Hunters, Jumpers, and Western Dressage on safe, experienced and kind school horses. We specialize in classical hunter seat equitation and jumping. We can tailor

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### Ingredients

- 1 jar (16 oz.) La Posta Hatch Green Chile Peach Salsa
- 2 teaspoon fresh lemon juice
- 1 tbsp. horseradish
- 3 to 4 dashes of La Posta Hatch Red Chile Hot Sauce (optional)

### Directions

- In a small bowl combine La Posta Hatch Green Chile Peach Salsa, lemon juice and horseradish. Blend well. Add La Posta Hatch Red Chile Hot Sauce for extra flavor & heat.
- Place in an airtight container and chill for 30 minutes or up to 2 days.

**Note:** For a classic shrimp cocktail to impress, simply layer a stemmed cocktail glass with specialty micro greens, 2 tbsp. of La Posta's Peach Cocktail Sauce, and hang 4-6 cooked, chilled, and tail on shrimp along the side of the glass. Garnish with a lemon wedge.



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# The Resilient

# ANJI THORNTON

By Sylvia Quintanilla



Anji Thornton is a virtuosa. Armed with a passion and skill for two impressive careers, Thornton has never let doubt, personal setbacks or a global pandemic hinder her goals in music and motorsport competition.

Born in El Paso, Texas, Thornton grew up in a family of musicians. Her parents are from Mississippi and Louisiana and she recalls spending her summers visiting. Her father played guitar and clarinet and both of Thornton's grandmothers played the organ in their churches. In her upbringing, she was classically trained in piano, organ and voice. She also has training in Cajun music, drawing from her Louisiana roots. While at Loretto Academy in El Paso, Texas, Thornton was given the opportunity to learn organ. This provided a chance that led to mentorship by music teachers who saw the talent she had and provided her time to study and cultivate her talent.

"I followed in my dad's footsteps, I played music too," Thornton said. Thornton has several degrees in music. She got her Bachelor of Music Education at New Mexico State University and Master in Music, Music Education, Ethnomusicology (Latin America) from NMSU. She has taught for 30 years at the collegiate level in traditional western and ethnic music. Growing up in El Paso, the influence of mariachi music

was strong. Thornton said she played keyboard in conjunto groups and they performed mariachi music, but to their instrumentation. Thornton's father continued his musical journey and played second trumpet in her mariachi group while she directed at El Paso Community College's mariachi program for 15 years before the program was cut. He also sat in her professional group Mariachi Real de El Paso.

"My family on both sides are very tenacious people. When we set our minds to do something, we figure it out. I am so grateful that the Lord has blessed me with my family and the means and the ways to foster and further develop and pass them onto the next generation," Thornton expressed.

In the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic, she was recovering from heart surgery and took the opportunity to get her Doctor of Music Education at Liberty University. Online education allowed her to transition to being a full time student while also being a part time professor. Thornton explained how it takes

*I love what I do.  
I love my community.*

all of us to help guide and mentor the next generation of musicians and athletes. She believes that supporting the arts in the community is instrumental in helping them continue to be taught in school.

"Go to local school districts and advocate very strongly," she began. "If you want to have strong professional music continue, it needs to start when they are young. Go to school board meetings and speak on how positive the arts are even if your students are not involved in them. Go to student concerts or to the university and support them. Go to local concerts and music in the park," she advised.

Thornton takes pride in being a positive advocate for the arts and also empowering women to go into non-traditional fields such as racing. Her introduction to the world of motorsports came from her late husband, Steve. He was working in Atlanta, Georgia for



YearOne, where he met a client by the name of Rex Porter. Porter invited them to a test and tune session where they would hot lab in his race truck. When the Thorntons moved back to New Mexico, they were introduced to circle dirt track drivers in several different classes such as trucks, street stocks, sprint cars and modifies.

“Rex has been an amazing mentor, friend and kind of like a godfather to us,” Thornton said. “We built the most solid relationship. You become friends when you spend so much time together,” she stated.

With their shared passion of racing, the Thorntons put together an enduro truck. The process includes taking out the glass, interior and installing a roll cage to make the vehicle race worthy. Steve’s rookie year of racing in the super truck class was in 2002. This was the first full season he competed and he won Rookie of the Year. Thornton’s first full season came in 2005. They shared the enduro truck, therefore several modifications had to be made for safety.

Unfortunately, in 2008, Steve passed away.

“Steve and I always had this dream of driving for ourselves, developing and building our own team at the grassroot level and moving into the bigger leagues of racing,” said Thornton. In 2012, Thornton was introduced to John Carney through

mutual friends. Carney became her crew chief for Anji Thornton Racing. John, his brother, Pat, and their father, Gus, assisted Thornton on her journey in racing.

“When classes were out of session, I spent a lot of my time in John and Pat’s shop in El Paso. It was worth it to me to make that 120 minute round trip to Central El Paso. I learned so much about the construction and design of my truck,” she noted.

She mentioned that aside from racing she enjoys being a spokesperson for the businesses she collaborates with. She brings her truck to her business partners’ events and also talks to students and community members.

“I love what I do. I love my community. I love my students. I love my family. I have a very deep love and passion for both music and motorsports. They complement each other,” she remarked.

“Being a female in a male dominated sport, I say I don’t let things like setbacks discourage me. I’m very adamant. I am very tenacious that when I set my mind to something, I do it. I run my own race,” Thornton said.



A chance to be the mariachi director for Viva! El Paso came in 2017. This was a true full circle moment for Thornton as she remembers going to the first Viva! El Paso show in 1976. This opportunity in conjunction with a necessary two year construction on her truck during this time led to a two year break from racing for Thornton. She is working towards the goal of returning to the track.

“If you love something enough, pursue that. Be very strategic on how you do it so you maintain a very healthy balance. Make sure you have time for your family, yourself and your pursuits. Never, ever, ever let anyone discourage you. You have to be very focused that you are not going to allow anyone or anything to deter you from what you truly love,” she proclaimed.

Currently, Thornton teaches online at Surry Community College in Dobson, North Carolina. In Las Cruces, she has a music coaching studio that offers services in music theory tutoring, ensemble clinics, staging techniques and more.



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# Family affair at Flexi-Hauler LLC

By Sylvia Quintanilla

Chelsea Kever has been a part of her family business since before she was born. When it came time for her father to choose a name for her, it was inspired by the company “Chelsea Dana PTOs.” Now, she manages Flexi-Hauler LLC with her family by her side. Three generations of the Melton family have served the Southwest. In 1990, Kever’s grandfather and father began B&D Fabricating which designed and built truck equipment until 2004. Her grandmother handled the bookkeeping for B&D in addition to working a full-time job.

“My dad then went on to open up truck equipment departments for a couple other companies until 2015 when my brother and I were old enough to decide that we wanted to get into the truck equipment industry as well,” Kever said.

In 2013 when Kever graduated from New Mexico State University with a Bachelor degree in Animal Science, she wanted to become a veterinarian.

“I could have ended up in the animal science industry, however, everything led me back to truck equipment,” she began. “I love learning about the new technology and developments in vehicles and equipment, all of which keeps my passion for truck equipment and accessories going. Then you factor in that we expanded into the cooking world and I get to research another passion of mine and learn different techniques, equipment, flavor combinations and more.”

Currently, Kever’s father, Bobby, her brother, Gary and her husband, Grant work together. Her grandparents, David and Linda, also come down to the shop everyday to see what projects they have

It is important to highlight women owned businesses

going on.

“I’m thankful to get to work with my family. Honestly, of course there are days where we are frustrated with each other, but all of the good days make up for it. This has allowed me to grow up seeing my grandparents almost every day and most people do not get that opportunity,” Kever reflected.

Being a female business owner, Kever commented that her experience is luckier than most since Flexi-Hauler is family owned and operated. They are all able to share the responsibilities.

“It is important to highlight women owned businesses because in some





CHELSEA KEEVER, HER BROTHER, GARY, ON THE LEFT AND HER HUSBAND, GRANT, ON THE RIGHT

industries, such as truck equipment, we are outnumbered in comparison to the amount of those in the industry who are male. Sometimes this means that as a women, we are constantly trying to prove ourselves and that we are just as knowledgeable in the areas of our industry as everyone else,” she said.

Flexi-Hauler LLC, located on 355 N. Archuleta Road, has four unique departments under one business. Their main department is C&G which offers truck equipment and vehicle accessories. Keever explained they build their own brand of flatbeds & headache racks and are distributors for many brands such as Venco Venturo, WeatherTech and B&W Trailer Hitches.

Their second department is the Service & Repair Department where they offer welding and repair services. Keever said the jobs for this department can be as simple as repairing a chair leg to something as complicated and detailed as a custom fabricated material rack. They also can repair and upgrade current equipment for customers.

The third department is the C&Gs Pitmaster’s Pitstop. This department has barbeque spices, sauces and equipment.



“This is our newest department and an exciting one because our community loves to cook and eat delicious food, so we have a wide range of spices and seasonings that range from flavorful to spicy to sweet to a combination of all of those,” Keever said.

The final department is the handmade division. This is where C&Gs Jalapeno Roasters, coasters, home decor and more fit in.

In 2023, a friend mentioned that Las Cruces did not have any barbeque spice and sauce options outside of commercial brands in stores. Keever said her friend brought in some spices and sauces to start with for the business and they have been adding to it ever since.

“We offer seasonings and sauces that work for a wide variety of meats and vegetables,” she explained. “We have everything from a well-rounded brisket seasoning (Grill Your Ass Off’s Gunpowder) to a sweet flavor (Butcher BBQ’s Maple Rub) to a spicy pair (Rib Ranger’s Spicy BBQ Seasoning and BBQ Sauce). We also offer lower salt options in some flavors and are working to expand into options that fit the low FODMAP scale so that everyone can enjoy food that tastes delicious. We always want people to let us know what flavors they want so we know what we should

bring in. Also, we encourage you to smell and try our sauces and seasonings before you buy them so that you know if the flavor is something that you will like.”

Supporting Las Cruces and the surrounding areas is important to Flexi-Hauler. To help the next generation, they work with Las Cruces Public Schools and their ACE Internship Program. This provides an opportunity for high school students to get a taste of this industry before they graduate.

“When a local business brings in their equipment and fleet or a Las Crucean brings in their truck for an upgrade, we make sure we make them feel like family. That is probably the best part of Las Cruces, that everyone feels like family and tries to help each other out when we can. We try to keep our labor rates and product prices as low as we can so we can make sure that every person and business has the ability to have a quality product and service locally,” she shared.

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# press release

## Introducing Soul Studio: Elevating Mind, Body, and Soul Wellness

Downtown Las Cruces welcomes a transformative addition to its vibrant community with the grand opening of Soul Studio, a fitness and wellness haven dedicated to nurturing the complete well-being of individuals. Soul Studio's unique approach emphasizes the harmonious connection of mind, body, and soul through a diverse range of classes, fostering a dynamic and inclusive environment for everyone.

Soul Studio recognizes the importance of holistic wellness in our fast-paced lives. Our mission is to create a space where individuals can embark on a journey to rediscover and rejuvenate themselves. The studio offers an array of classes tailored to meet the varied needs and preferences of our community.

Embrace the tranquility of yoga, unleash your energy with dance, find joy in Zumba, and sculpt your body with full-body fitness classes. Find confidence in dance, burlesque, heels classes and more. Soul Studio is committed to providing a comprehensive fitness experience that goes beyond physical exercise, aiming to elevate your mental and spiritual well-being. Our expert instructors bring passion and expertise to each class, ensuring a supportive and empowering atmosphere for every participant. We

aim to empower individuals to find the experience that fits their desires and grows their love for overall wellness.

Soul Studio takes pride in its commitment to diversity and inclusivity. We believe that true wellness is attainable when individuals from all backgrounds come together to share their unique energy and experiences. Our classes are designed to accommodate various fitness levels, ensuring that everyone can find a class that resonates with their goals and preferences.

The studio's facilities are complemented by a warm and inviting atmosphere. Soul Studio is not just a fitness center; it's a community hub where individuals can connect, inspire, and support each other on their wellness journeys. Whether you're a seasoned fitness enthusiast or a beginner taking the first step towards a healthier lifestyle, Soul Studio welcomes you with open arms.

Soul Studio strives to become a beacon of wellness in Las Cruces, providing a sanctuary for those seeking balance and fulfillment. We invite you to be a part of this exciting journey toward holistic well-being—mind, body, and soul. Calm your Mind, Love your Body, Soothe your Soul.

## International Women's Day at Nopalito's Galeria

By Patricia Gallegos

You are called to unleash your support for International Women's Day at Nopalito's Galeria from 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. on Friday March 8. Weaving for Justice and A Still Small Voice present "Songs in Cello and Cajon," performed by cellist Emma Alvarez de la Rosa, and percussionist William Reeves at 7:00 p.m. Free. Refreshments to be served. Come and socialize with friends before the concert on the patio. Nopalito's Galeria is located at 326 S. Mesquite, Las Cruces, New Mexico.

Nopalito's Galeria will also open a Women's Market Store offering selling textiles, table runners, tote bags, huipils (women's blouses), pillowcases, and much more. This collaborative partnership with Weaving for Justice provides support to Maya weaving collectives in Chiapas, Mexico, and refugees and asylum seekers in our border region. March 9-10, 11:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

Activities are being conducted throughout the world on March 8th in recognition of International Women's Day.

For more information on this event call 860-604-2918 or email gallegospatricia0@gmail.com. For more information on organizations visit: Weaving for Justice www.weaving-for-justice.org and A Still Small Voice www.assv4u.com.

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# Pear FRENCH 77

By Melissa Serrano,  
Mixologist

## INGREDIENTS

- 1/2 Oz. Absolut Pear Vodka
- 1/2 Oz. Agave
- 1 Oz. Fresh lemon juice
- 3 Oz. Prosecco
- Pinch of cinnamon
- 3 Pear slices

## DIRECTIONS

Combine all ingredients in a pint glass with ice. Hold the Prosecco and cinnamon. Stir until cold. Pour into a wine glass with the ice. Top with Prosecco.

## GARNISH

Three skewered pear slices on top of the glass. Sprinkle cinnamon over pears and enjoy the bit that falls into the contents of the drink.

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# MEXICAN SHRIMP Cocktail

By John Hard, Owner,  
Zia Chile Traders

## INGREDIENTS

- 1 Bag of frozen cooked small shrimp
- 1 Jar of chunky salsa (your choice of heat)
- 1 Bottle of Bloody Mary mix (as spicy as you like)
- 1 Diced avocado
- Chopped cilantro to taste (optional)
- 2 Oz. of tequila (optional)

## DIRECTIONS

Place thawed shrimp in a bowl, cover with salsa and pour Bloody Mary mix to cover contents. Stir to mix ingredients well. Put in the refrigerator to chill. Before serving add avocado, tequila, cilantro and stir. Serve in clear glasses. Enjoy!

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