

A Legacy Local Monthly Publication

February 2026

The Historic

Mesilla Valley

From the
Publisher's Desk

Calendar of Events

The expansion of La
Posta de Mesilla

Recipe: Duck Liver Pâté

Tips from a Socialite:
Serving Duck Liver Pâté

On the Cover:

2026

New Mexico Voter Guide



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Featured on the Cover:
L.M. Montoya, Jr.
Commissioner of Public Lands candidate

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“ FROM THE *publisher's desk* ”

Welcome to The Historic Mesilla Valley's February issue! Enjoy this month's voter guide and get informed before exercising your right to build a better future. Educate others you may know who aren't registered and explain how critical their vote is.

You may have noticed La Posta has had a recent facelift with a wonderful water feature installed in the courtyard entrance. Check it out in person and in our feature.

Enjoy one of our recipes as we approach the hurdles of spring and the windy season in our beloved valley.



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Calendar of events

EVERY TUESDAY

- Group run: Bluebird Running Company presents a weekly, all-levels group run. This downtown run begins at Bluebird Running Company; the group then runs down Water Street, to Bowman, to Church Street, through the roundabout, and back down to Water Street. Runners can run as many loops as they want and at their own pace. Water is provided. Free. 6-7 p.m. 136 S Main St., Las Cruces.

FEB. 11

- Exhibit: Join guest curator Ana Gabriela Becerra and senior curator Andres Payan Estrada as they lead a walkthrough of the exhibition, "The Edge is a Center". The curators will share their insights on the works. The group exhibit highlights the wide-ranged expressions of graphic design through the work of University of Texas at El Paso alumni. The mediums in the exhibition include murals, branding, stationery, and more. Free. 12-1 p.m. 720 Dawson Rd., El Paso, Texas.

FEB. 12

- Dance: Soul Studio presents the Roadrunner Westies' west coast swing night.

The Roadrunner Westies is a group of dancers who dance to west coast swing and teach others in the Las Cruces and El Paso area. The evening will begin with a warmup and will be followed by a 20-25 minute lesson. \$5 cash or \$5.33 with card. 7:45-9:15 p.m. 128 S Main St., Las Cruces.

FEB. 14

- Plutomania: Celebrate Clyde W. Tombaugh's birthday at the Museum of Nature and Science at "Plutomania!". The event will consist of hands-on activities, special guests from the New Mexico Museum of Space History, and more. Free. 9 a.m.-1 p.m. 411 N Main St., Las Cruces.

- Mystery dinner: Up for a unique way to celebrate Valentine's Day? The VFW Post 6917 is hosting "Fatal Affair: A Valentine's Day Murder Mystery Dinner". Grab your detective hats while you navigate mystery, suspense, and laughs and enjoy a meal. Registration is required. \$35 per person or \$60 per couple. 6 p.m. 5845 Bataan Memorial W, Las Cruces.

FEB. 22

- Workshop: Assembly Craft Studio is hosting a Mosaic Workshop. This is a hands-on

beginner level workshop where you will design a mosaic piece on a 6-inch tile. The class will begin with an introduction to mosaic basics, including planning a simple pattern and arranging pre-cut square ceramic pieces. You'll leave with a finished and functional piece. Registration is required; please visit assemblycreate.com. \$39 per person. 1-3 p.m. 1730 Tierra de Mesilla, Suite 6, Las Cruces.

MARCH 6

- Trolley rides: Enjoy horse trolley rides throughout Historic Mesquite Street during First Friday Art Ramble. Rides are free, but feel free to bring cash to tip. Boarding is along Mesquite Street at Trails End Gallery. Free. 4-8 p.m. 1732 N Mesquite St., Las Cruces.



- Paint party: Sunset Parlor is hosting a paint party focused on spiritual alignment to help connect you to your inner child. The class is led by a doctor of spiritual science to aid you on your artistic spiritual journey to become one with your higher self. Materials included with admission include a small canvas, acrylic markers, clay, and light snacks. All ages welcome. \$35 per person. 6-8 p.m. 1307 N Organ St., El Paso, Texas.

MARCH 8

- Trivia: Do you love a themed trivia night? Lost Hiker Brewing Midtown Taproom celebrates National Cheese Doodle Day with "Thirstday Night Trivia". Bring a team or join one to test your cheesy trivia. Free. 6:30-8 p.m. 2536 Sudderth Dr., Ruidoso, New Mexico.

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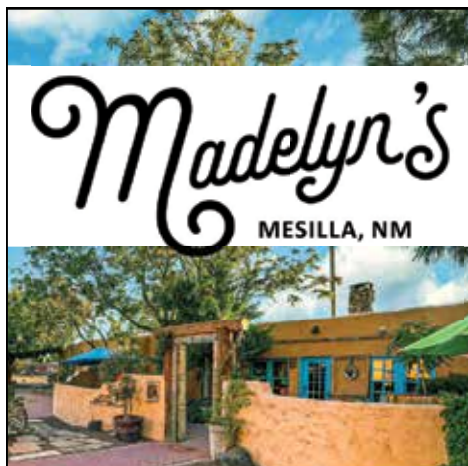
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The expansion of LA POSTA DE MESILLA

By Sylvia Quintanilla

La Posta de Mesilla has been a staple in the Mesilla Valley for generations. The restaurant, located at 2410 Calle de San Albino, is just off the Mesilla Plaza. Guests travel from Las Cruces, El Paso, and beyond to visit the historic establishment. This past December, the restaurant's iconic front entrance was transformed into a patio.

Tom Hutchinson, who owns La Posta de Mesilla alongside his wife Jerean and son Chris, explained the various reasons the expansion came to life.

In part, the creation of the patio/gathering area outside the front entrance should help patrons enter through the front door more safely. Guests also now have more space for framing the perfect photo of the historic La Posta signage.

In addition to better photo opportunities, their new hand-carved Cantera wall fountain is on the far left of the door entrance. In the early 2000s, the Cantera wall fountain was acquired by the restaurant during a trip to San Miguel de Allende in Mexico. Hutchinson noted

We believe these changes and improvements stayed true to the property's historical prominence and character

they've had plans for the wall fountain to find a home either inside the restaurant or at the front entrance.

Patrons of La Posta know that visiting the Mesilla eatery is an experience. Hutchinson shared that the feedback of the patio has overall been positive.

He mentioned that one customer said the visitor experience now begins even before you enter the front door.

"We wanted to 'architecturally' connect La Posta and our front parking lot with

Continued on Page 12 ►

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2026 New Mexico Voter Guide

The Historic Mesilla Valley Magazine has compiled a voter’s guide to best assist our readers in the 2026 New Mexico elections. General election will be held on **NOV. 3, 2026**, and primary election day is **JUNE 2, 2026**.



Gabriel Vasquez (D)

is the incumbent and was elected in 2022. Congressman Vasquez is a first-generation Mexican American who served as a City Councilor in Las Cruces, where he was elected in 2017. In his career, Vasquez served as the executive director of the Las Cruces Hispano Chamber of Commerce, worked in public lands conservation, and worked as a policy advocate promoting child welfare and family wellbeing at the federal level.



Tom Wakely (D)

is a Vietnam-era United States Air Force veteran. Wakely worked with César Chávez on the grape boycott campaign in Texas, New Mexico, and Colorado. Wakely has committed his life to serving the community he lives in. Wakely lived in Wisconsin working as a community organizer and was asked to move back to Texas to serve as the Executive Director of the Economic Justice Foundation in Austin. In this role, he earned a Community Service Award from the city’s NAACP chapter.



Eddy Aragon (R)

is a radio host and station owner of conservative talk radio KIVA (1600 AM) Albuquerque. He hosts the station’s “Rock of Talk” PM drive show. Aragon has never held public office, but this is not his first political campaign. He ran for the CD1 seat held by Rep. Melanie Stansbury (D-N.M.) in 2021 and has previously run for Albuquerque mayor. Aragon plans to focus his campaign on New Mexico’s crime, economy, and education.



Greg Cunningham (R)

is a lifelong New Mexican whose life has been defined by service, faith, and family. He served in the United States Marine Corps, where he distinguished himself as a combat veteran. After returning home, Cunningham continued his service to his community with the Albuquerque Police Department. On the front lines of public safety, he took on cartels, gangs, and violent crime, dedicating himself to protecting New Mexican families and ensuring safer neighborhoods.



Jose Orozco (R)

followed his mother’s lessons of faith, strength, and perseverance from an early age, which shaped him for life. He was determined to serve his country. While Orozco was enlisting in the Marines, he was selected into the Officers Training Program, but a training accident meant he could no longer serve. His determination shifted and he found another way to give back to his country – working as a contractor with the DEA, where he helped take down cartels, stop human traffickers, and keep drugs like fentanyl off our streets. He went on to fight for conservative policies and work to create jobs here in New Mexico. Orozco will work to lower taxes and tackle inflation, back law enforcement against gangs and traffickers, and protect oil and gas jobs that power our economy.

U.S. SENATE

Voters will elect one member to the U.S. Senate



Ben Ray Luján (D)

is the incumbent candidate and was first elected to the Senate in 2020. He previously served as U.S. Representative for New Mexico’s Third Congressional District and House Assistant Speaker in the 116th Congress. Senator Luján sits on the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation; the Committee on Finance; the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry; the Committee on Indian Affairs; and the Committee on the Budget. Senator Luján grew up in Nambé, a community north of Santa Fe, which is where he learned New Mexico values, including hard work, dedication, and perseverance, from his family and community.



Matt Dodson (D)

is a United State Air Force veteran. He has lived in New Mexico for 35 years and is a business owner and community organizer. He lists on his website that he is a Democratic Socialist. Dodson has run for office previously in a primarily conservative area. He noted he has registered over 1,000 people to vote, mostly under the age of 30.



Benjamin Luna (R)

is an entrepreneur and independent citizen journalist. He is running on a platform to safeguard American rights and freedoms.

U.S. HOUSE

Voters will elect three candidates to the U.S. House

U.S. HOUSE - DISTRICT 1



Melanie Ann Stansbury (D)

is the incumbent. Congresswoman Stansbury was born and raised in New Mexico. She has dedicated her career to finding solutions to water issues, poverty, and climate change. Stansbury worked in communities across the state as a STEM educator and a researcher on land and water issues, and served as a staffer in the U.S. Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources and the White House Office of Management and Budget. Congresswoman Stansbury serves New Mexicans on the House Committee on Natural Resources and the House Committee on Oversight and Accountability.



Steve Jones (R)

earned a Bachelor of Business Administration and a Master of Science in Accounting at the University of Houston. His commitment in the field is underscored by his certification as a Public Accountant. Jones proudly served as an Army medic. His service was honored with the Soldier’s Medal for Heroism. Achieving the rank of Staff Sergeant, he embraced the values of discipline, leadership, and resilience that continue to guide him.



Ndidiamake Okpareke (R)

was born from immigrants who came to the United States from Nigeria in search of the American Dream. Her parents instilled in her the values of hard work, family, community, and faith in God. New Mexico has been Okpareke’s home for almost 30 years – she’s lived in Albuquerque since 1997. Okpareke is a pharmacist and owns her own company, Olive Tree Compounding Pharmacy.

DON'T FORGET TO VOTE!





Teresa Leger Fernández (D) is the incumbent. She is a daughter of rural New Mexico and a 17th generation New Mexican. Born in Las Vegas, New Mexico, she was part of the state's first Head Start class. She went on to graduate from Yale and Stanford Law School. After law school, Leger Fernández worked as an attorney and advocate and won important legal battles to advance voting rights, promote tribal sovereignty, and protect our environment and acequia waters. She also served as an acequia commissioner. Congresswoman Leger Fernández serves on the House Rules Committee and the House Committee on Natural Resources as the Ranking Member of its Subcommittee on Indian and Insular Affairs. As Ranking Member, her focus is to promote tribal sovereignty and improve life for all Native Americans. She also serves as a member of the Congressional Hispanic Caucus.



Martin Ruden Zamora (R) was born and raised in Clovis, New Mexico. He currently serves as a member of the New Mexico House of Representatives. Prior to the election, he owned and operated several agriculture businesses.



Maggie Toulouse Oliver (D) has called New Mexico home from an early age. She is New Mexico's 26th Secretary of State. She has served the people of New Mexico in this role since first being elected in 2016. Toulouse Oliver was first appointed to public office in 2007 when she became County Clerk in Bernalillo County. Secretary Toulouse Oliver worked for U.S. Senator Jeff Bingaman in both his D.C. office and on his re-election campaign in 2000. She gained experience in activism and organizing through working with Native American tribes in New Mexico, fighting for reproductive justice, and protecting the environment as the New Mexico State Director for the League of Conservation Voters. Since becoming Secretary of State, she has implemented increased transparency rules for financial disclosure and campaign finance reporting, modernized the online campaign finance system, and helped craft and pass government legislation including same-day voter registration, automated voter registration, and the state's newly formed Ethics Commission.



Harold Pope Jr. (D) served his country in the Air Force. In 2020, he entered the world of politics and was elected to the New Mexico Legislature. Pope became the first African American ever elected to the New Mexico Senate. Since assuming office, he's served as the Vice Chair of the Senate Education Committee, a member of the Senate Conservation Committee, and Chair of the Interim Military & Veterans Affairs Committee. He's passed numerous bills, including those benefiting veterans and military families, education, reproductive rights, tax relief, renewable energy, and police reform. Pope has also introduced legislation focused on voting rights, civil rights, anti-hazing, consumer protections, child welfare, housing, and the environment.



David M. Gallegos (R) has served New Mexico in the State Senate since 2020. He is known for working respectfully, building relationships, and standing firm on principles that matter to families, communities, and taxpayers. He served his community for decades on the Eunice School Board. Before his time in office, Gallegos spent 30 years in the natural gas industry.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ GOVERNOR ★ ★ ★ ★ ★



Sam Bregman (D) is a proud graduate of the University of New Mexico School of Law. Bregman began his career as a prosecutor over 30 years ago to give back to his community. Bregman served as an Assistant District Attorney for the Second Judicial District early in his career, where he prosecuted a wide range of misdemeanor and felony drug cases, including domestic violence and DWIs. He also served on the Albuquerque City Council. In January 2023, Bregman was appointed Bernalillo County District Attorney by Governor Michelle Lujan Grisham and was later elected to the position in November 2024. During this time, he fought back against New Mexico's crime wave by putting violent gang members behind bars, investing in mental health programs, and establishing a zero-tolerance policy for guns in our schools.



Debra Haaland (D) is a 35th-generation New Mexican, a member of the Pueblo of Laguna, a small businesswoman, a working mother, a former congresswoman, and most recently, the United States Secretary of the Interior. As Secretary, she led nearly 70,000 federal employees. Haaland worked for New Mexicans by securing thousands of New Mexico jobs, advancing local clean energy development, and more. When Haaland was confirmed as Secretary of the Interior, she became the first Native American cabinet secretary in our nation's history.



Ken Miyagishima (D) served as the mayor of Las Cruces for 16 years. He was New Mexico's first mayor of Japanese descent. One of Miyagishima's primary goals would be retaining doctors in New Mexico.



Gregg Hull (R) the current mayor of Rio Rancho, has been a resident of New Mexico for over 35 years. His family has lived in the state for three generations. Hull started and operated two businesses in New Mexico before his call to public service, which led him to run for mayor. He was first elected in April 2014. He was re-elected twice in March 2018 and again in March 2022, making him Rio Rancho's longest-serving mayor. During his time as mayor, Hull has focused on infrastructure improvement, public safety, and economic development.



Steve D. Lanier (R) is a lifelong resident of Aztec, New Mexico. In Aztec, Lanier learned the values of hard work, faith, and community. Growing up, he developed a love for athletics and teamwork. In 2020, Lanier was elected to the San Juan County Commission, representing District 3. In his leadership, he demonstrated practical approaches to problem-solving and a commitment to transparency. In 2024, he was elected as a State Senator for New Mexico's 2nd District. Lanier believes that strong families, safe neighborhoods, and good jobs are the foundation of a thriving New Mexico.



Duke Rodriguez (R) came to Silver City, New Mexico in 1971. He learned about struggle at a young age and worked his way to the top by becoming the COO of one of the largest healthcare companies in New Mexico – Lovelace. Part of his platform as governor is healthcare. Rodriguez served as the Secretary of the New Mexico Human Services Department under Gary Johnson. This position aided him in understanding the government's role in healthcare.

★ ★ COMMISSIONER ★ ★ OF PUBLIC LANDS



Matthew McQueen (D) began his legal career as a judicial law clerk for the New Mexico Court of Appeals. Over his career, he has served important New Mexico agencies and organizations in roles such as Director of Conservation Programs for the Santa Fe Conservation Trust, Director of Land Conservation & General Counsel for the Taos Land Trust, and Attorney for the New Mexico Office of the State Engineer. In addition to serving in the New Mexico Legislature, McQueen operates his own law practice in land conservation, real property transactions, housing development, and business.



Jonas Moya (D) is a fourth-generation rancher. Moya grew up on his grandmother's farm in Tucumcari, New Mexico. He earned his degree in Agricultural Economics and Business from New Mexico State University. He has spent his career fighting for farmers, ranchers, and rural families – protecting what makes New Mexico special. Jonas has led statewide organizations, helped shape public policy, and achieved real results for New Mexico's farmers and ranchers. Under the Biden administration, Moya was appointed as New Mexico's State Director for the Farm Service Agency.



Juan De Jesus Sanchez III (D) is a proud 13th-generation New Mexican with deep roots in the Land of Enchantment. He was raised in a ranching family in Valencia County and Socorro County. De Jesus Sanchez understands firsthand the importance of responsible land and water stewardship. As an heir to the historic Tomé Land Grant, his family's history in New Mexico dates to the 1730s. His upbringing, including working on his family's fifth-generation ranch, hauling hay, cleaning acequias, and herding cattle, instilled in him a lifelong respect for the land and a commitment to protecting it for future generations.



Michael Perry (R) is a lifelong steward of New Mexico's land, water, and wildlife. He has over two decades of experience as a game warden for the New Mexico Department of Game and Fish and later as Assistant Commissioner over state lands at the New Mexico State Land Office. Though he is retired from state service, Michael owns and operates Wildlife and Habitat Prescriptions, working together with ranch owners across New Mexico to develop responsible and science-based land and habitat solutions.



PRIMARY ELECTION - JUNE 2ND
GENERAL ELECTION - NOVEMBER 3RD



◀ **Continued from Page 8**

our large lot across the street,” Hutchinson expressed. “Although we had a diagonal crosswalk connecting the two corners, it was not customer or pedestrian friendly, with many uneven surfaces to navigate, particularly for our handicapped visitors. Now we have a very level and even surface for our handicapped visitors from the parking area in front of the restaurant and the large parking lot across the street, all the way to the front door.”

On Feb. 27, La Posta will be hosting a dedication ceremony for one of the corners of the patio, honoring Katy Griggs Camunez, the founder of the La Posta. They will be referring to this corner as “Katy’s Korner”. Be on the lookout for the installation of a bronze plaque recognizing her achievements.

“We were keenly aware, sensitive, and mindful to making improvements to a historical property of such significance,” Hutchinson said. “We believe these changes and improvements stayed true to

Patrons of La Posta know that visiting the Mesilla eatery is an experience.

the property’s historical prominence and character while serving our visitors well for many years to come. And we thank Mayor [Russell] Hernandez, the Trustees, members of the P & Z, and staff – particularly Eddie Salazar – for their assistance through the process.”



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Recipe

By G. Buck

Sponsored by Distinction Realty, Inc.

Duck Liver Pâté

INGREDIENTS:

- 1 duck liver
- 1 tbsp butter
- ½ shallot
- 1 clove garlic
- 1 sprig fresh thyme or ¼ tsp dried thyme
- 1 tbsp sweet, fortified wine (e.g. vermouth, sweet sherry, Port, or Madeira)
- 2 tbsp heavy cream or double cream

Salt and pepper

FOR CLARIFIED BUTTER:

- 3 tbsp unsalted butter with high-fat content

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Check the duck liver for any sinews and trim them out with a small, sharp knife if needed. Dice the shallot and garlic.
2. Place a small saucepan over medium heat and add the butter. Once it is melted and bubbling, add the shallot, garlic, thyme, and a pinch of salt, and sauté until translucent.
3. Add the duck liver to the pan and sear on either side for

- 20 seconds. Add the wine and allow it to simmer down to a syrup.
 4. Stir in the cream and remove from heat. If using fresh thyme, remove the thyme sprig.
 5. Allow to cool slightly before transferring to a mini food processor. Blend until smooth. Taste and season with salt and pepper, if needed.
 6. Transfer the duck liver pâté into a shallow dish and smooth off the surface so it is completely flat.
 7. Heat the remaining butter in a small saucepan until it melts, with the butter solids separating and sinking to the bottom. Working very carefully to not disturb/include the butter solids, pour or spoon the clarified butter onto the pâté to form a seal. Refrigerate to allow it to set.
- Tip: Once cooled and sealed with butter, sprinkle with granulated salt before serving. Serve with mustard.



TIPS FROM A SOCIALITE

By G. Buck

Serving Duck Liver Pâté

Place the pâté in a large mouth stem glass to set up for an elegant service. Make some of our Parker House Rolls, which can be found in our November 2025 cookbook. Otherwise, warm a similar type of bread in the oven. Utilize silver or high-

quality wooden boards to arrange bread and pickled vegetables (bell peppers, beets, sauerkraut, etc.). Place the stem glass on the platter/board and serve to guests for a delicious meal. The pâté also makes for a splendid sandwich.

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