

A Legacy Local Monthly Publication

February 2025

The Historic

Mesilla Valley



OPINION SUBMISSION

Corruption or Chaos?

Calendar

The Emporium

Recipe: Corn Chowder



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Submissions

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. The publisher reserves the right to edit, cut or publish any submissions.

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The Historic Mesilla Valley Magazine
Economic Equilibrium of New Mexico
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FROM THE

publisher's desk



Here we are again old friends and new readers enjoying another issue of The Historic in 2025. Our local economy continues to change and evolve, while our great city is in the midst of severe growing pains. Now, more than ever, our local businesses need your patronage. We have spread throughout our city an array of small businesses from dining excursions, clothing stores, music shops, art galleries, jewelry galleries and salsa-sauce companies.



We get a bit sedentary in the winter months as winds, cold temperatures, and the financial recovery of the holidays overcome us. A great way for you to change those routines is by hosting a casual evening amidst those close to you with locally curated food. This is a phenomenal way to save a few bucks and stay close to home within the warmth. Try having someone grab a bundle of salas or sauces, you or a guest bring a vat of shrimp or a roasted chicken, something carby to dip with, and an assortment of veggies, and grab a bottle or

two of wine from a local winery and enjoy.

In our February issue you will find a spotlight on our current city changes and how a store on Water Street continues to support our aging population.

We'd also like to invite you to an open house being hosted by Estate Sale Discoveries and a myriad of art of varying mediums on display at the home of Janet Mattheson. One can browse and purchase as prices are very low because the owner wants the art to be transitioned from her home to be enjoyed by possible buyers. Light hors d'oeuvres and aperitifs will be provided. For more details, please send me an email at daniel@thehistoricmagazine.com or call me directly at (575)332-1219. Join us for a wonderful evening in Mesilla Park.



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Calendar OF EVENTS

Every Saturday

– Story time: Free story time at Books Are Gems for children. Enjoy engaging story time with tales that will ignite your children's imagination. First 15 families get two free story time books to take home. Can't make it in person? Story time is also available on Facebook Live. Free, 11 a.m.-12 p.m., 7744 N. Loop Suite B., El Paso, Texas.

Feb. 13

– Paint and Sip: Wine Down Socorro is hosting a wine glass paint and sip. Four designs will be on display: Two seasonal designs, Valentine's Love Potion or Valentine's Flaming Heart or two classic designs, bright floral or El Paso Star Starry Night. Each design comes with step-by-step instructions, a box to safely take the glass home and instructions on how to heat-set it at home. This class is perfect

for beginners. Cost is \$28 per seat, 6:30-8:30 p.m., 10245 Socorro Rd., Socorro, Texas.

Feb. 15

– Fiesta: We Hike Community Fiesta is a free event with a 3K walk/run, yoga giveaways, loteria, dancing and more. Yoga and 3K walk/run is for all ages. Interactive displays and activities are inclusive and ADA-friendly. Free, 8 a.m.-12 p.m., 11055 Loma Del Norte Dr., El Paso, Texas.

– Plutomania: Learn about space and celebrate the birthday of Clyde Tombaugh, who discovered Pluto, at the Las Cruces Museum of Nature and Science. To kick off the event, FLARE Rocketry will provide a special rocket launch. This event will have demonstrations and activities. Free, 9 a.m.-1 p.m., 411 N. Main St., Las Cruces, NM.

– Cafe truck: The Hello Kitty Cafe Truck returns to El Paso. The themed truck will be at the Cielo Vista Mall and features Hello Kitty treats and merch while supplies last. The event is from 10 a.m.-7 p.m. at 8401 Gateway Blvd. W., El Paso, Texas.

– Yoga: Zin Valle Vineyard presents Yoga & Wine in the Barrel Room. This event is a one-hour yoga session led by certified instructor, Lindley Folkerson. Guests receive a choice of a glass of wine from the vineyard, a complimentary wine tasting of any three wines. Cost is \$25 per person, 11 a.m.-12 p.m., 7315 Canutillo-La Union Rd., Canutillo, Texas.

– Wine festival: Enjoy a glass or two at the Vines in the Pines festival presented by the Ruidoso Valley Chamber of Commerce.



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March 7

– First Friday at Trails End Gallery. Open from 4-8 p.m. at Trails End Gallery, 1732 N. Mesquite St., Las Cruces, NM.

March 7-8

– Cowboy Days: The 25th annual Cowboy Days will be held at the New Mexico Farm and Ranch Heritage Museum. Enjoy cowboy demonstrations, music, food trucks and activities. Other events include the Parade of Breeds cattle program. Cost is \$20 per vehicle. Event is from 10 a.m.-1 p.m. on Friday (School Day) and 10 a.m.-4 p.m. on Saturday at 4100 Dripping Springs Rd., Las Cruces, NM.

This weekend festival is for all ages with more than 40 merchants with jewelry, clothing and more. Ticket entry for guests 21+ comes with a complimentary wine glass and tastings at each winery. Cost is \$25 for general admission or \$40 for a weekend pass, 12-6 p.m. on Saturday and 12-5 p.m. on Sunday, 111 Sierra Blanca Dr., Ruidoso, N.M.

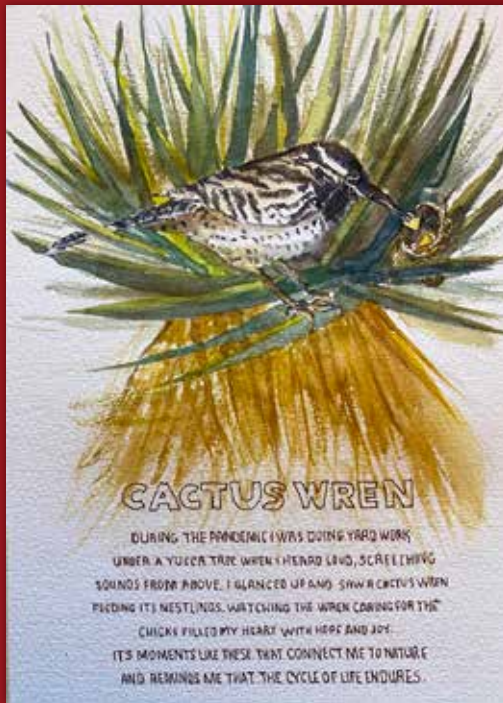
Feb. 22

– Gem show: The eighth annual Museum Rocks! Gem and Mineral Show will be held at the New Mexico Farm and Ranch Heritage Museum and is hosted by the Friends of the Museum. The event will feature more than 60 vendors who are wholesale and resale dealers of both cut

and uncut gemstones, rocks, minerals, fossils, meteorites, jewelry and more. There will also be geology discussions, films and children's activities. Cost is \$7 for adults, \$6 for seniors, \$5 for children 4-17 years old and \$4 for military. Event will be held from 9 a.m.-5 p.m. at 4100 Dripping Springs Rd., Las Cruces, NM.

March 6

– Walking Tour: Join the Taylor-Mesilla Historic Site Rangers for the bi-monthly walking tour of the Town of Mesilla. Rangers Sage and Daniel will meet their guests at the Reynold Store Visitor Center to begin the tour. Tours are free, but space is limited. Free, 10-11 a.m., 2350 Calle Principal, Mesilla, NM.



Wildlife of the Mesilla Valley

Friday, Feb. 7 • 5 - 7 p.m.

Opening Reception • Awards Ceremony • Meet Featured Artists • "The Value of Observation in Wildlife Sculpture" talk by artist Brian Falstead at 6 p.m.

This unique exhibition blends creative expression with environmental education. It features intricate sculptures of local wildlife from a wide range of local artists, and observations on our area and its animals through the practice of nature journaling. This exhibition not only showcases the artistry of our region, but also inspires a deeper connection to the wildlife that makes the Mesilla Valley such a remarkable place.

Exhibition runs February 7 - May 24, 2025

Tuesday - Friday • 10 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.
Saturday • 9 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.



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THE EMPORIUM

By Sylvia Quintanilla

Since 2015, The Emporium and Mesilla Valley Hospice and Palliative Care have been partners in being a source of comfort to the Las Cruces community in the most sensitive of times. The Emporium, 106 S. Water St., is an antique and vintage shop. All of its proceeds fund the programs and services of Mesilla Valley Hospice.

From its inception, The Emporium has been in downtown Las Cruces. Heather Pollard, volunteer, is one of the four founding members of the shop and had served as the executive director of the organization. She recalled the time when the downtown area had been closed off in its entirety and then reopened, the revitalization of the area began to progress and she could see the Emporium's potential resurgence.

"The location is great. I really wanted to be downtown and as it turned out, it was a really good move," Pollard explained. "I think having downtown continue to bustle, having additions, and having the Farmers Market, I don't see any reason why the store shouldn't just be a permanent stop for people downtown."

Part of the unique quality of the shop is the dedication of an all-volunteer staff since its opening in June 2015.

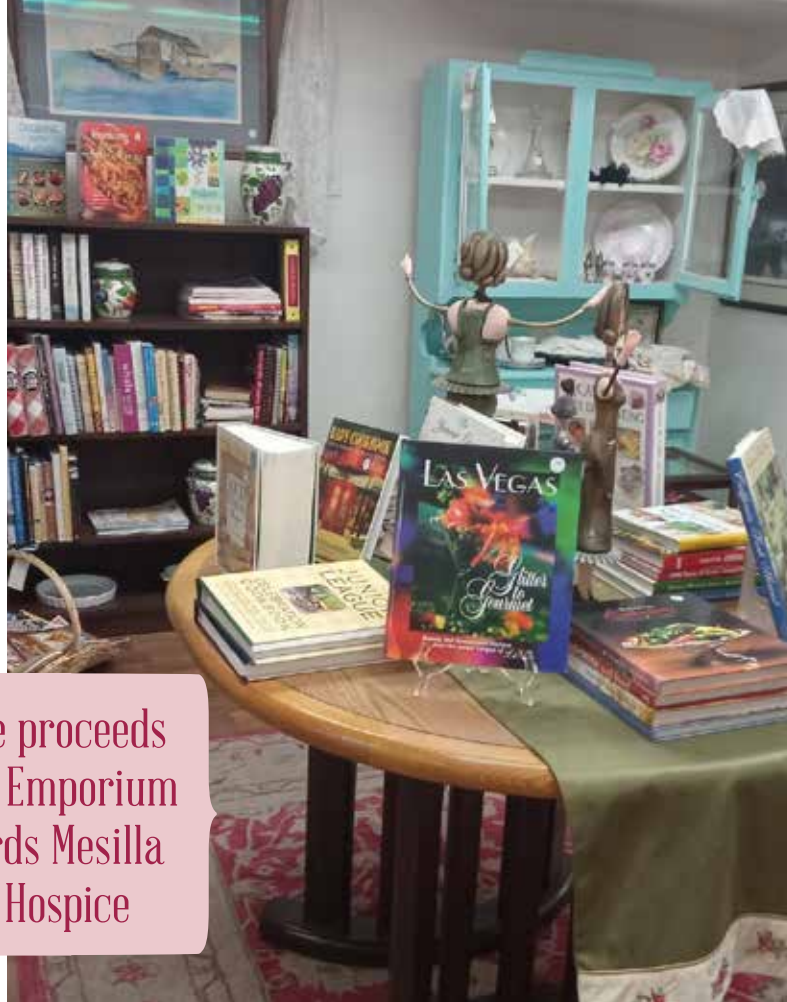
"The four of us liked antiques and knew quite a bit about antique and collectibles," Pollard said. "We all were very aware of what Mesilla Valley Hospice does for our community. Some of us served on the board of MVH and others had friends who had passed with hospice."

During the first year, the shop was successful. As years two and three came and went, they enlarged and eventually fully took over the space they are in now.

Walking into The Emporium, patrons are greeted by dainty and vintage items. From crystal pieces to a beautifully crafted piano. Pollard explained they started with four volunteers and now have a team of 16. Staff members are friendly, engaging and happy to welcome their customers.

Four rooms filled with items. Waking through the shop, you will notice high-end items, such as designer handbags, which are reasonably priced. All items are inspected and categorized by volunteers. Pollard expressed how grateful she is to the staff who work to make sure items are ready for purchase.

All of the proceeds from The Emporium go towards Mesilla Valley Hospice



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Relying solely on donations, The Emporium accepts a wide range of items including antique or vintage furniture, including sofas, dressers, tables, lamps, vintage jewelry and accessories, collectible china and silver, decorative household items such as art and mirrors, vintage linens, figurines, paintings, photography and sculptures. No consignment items or large electronics are accepted.

Pollard explained her relationship with MVH has been long standing. She noted she and her husband had been originally one of the donors.

"There were several families that got together and helped build the hospice. We were always aware of the magnitude of what Mesilla Valley Hospice does for our community," Pollard stated. "I had been over in Scottsdale, Arizona and they had a wonderful store called the Little White Dove of the Desert. It was pretty high-

end antiques. My friends and I had been helping hospice at a time when they were having financial issues. We got that straightened out and then we decided to have an antique store downtown."

All of the proceeds from The Emporium go towards MVH. Last year, 2024 was its highest year to date, with proceeds surpassing \$100,000. In the nine years it has been open, the store has made more than \$600,000.

Through those nine years, Pollard reflected on the impact this business has had on Las Cruces.

"Of course, making such a large amount of money for hospice (is important), but having family members or friends come in and tell us their story," she began. "Quite often, people will come and tell us a story about being at Mesilla Valley Hospice or having a hospice nurse come to their home. And, in some way, we're

the face of hospice. We don't like to get into details about the medical part, but it's very rewarding to be able to give people the information which we carry at the front desk about who to call, what different programs that hospice provides. We have a new palliative care program. We also have the indigent fund. Hospice will take you and if you do not have insurance, the indigent fund can become extremely important. That's just really gratifying to be face-to-face with people who need us. It's always good for people to know that they are buying something that is going to a really terrific cause."

Weekly, new items are donated and out on display. If you are on the hunt for unique finds for your home, The Emporium is open Tuesday-Friday from 10 a.m.- 4 p.m. and Saturday from 10 a.m.-2 p.m. For more information or to make a donation, please contact them at 575-523-8078.



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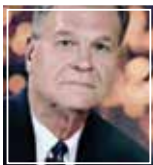
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Corruption or Chaos?

By G. Buck



What do you see when you stare at the future of our city in the eyes? Do you see 4,000 new homes on the East Mesa, corporations investing in availing wages, or complacency while the very soul of what makes us unique fades away. It goes without saying Las Cruces has been traded for pennies over the last 60-plus years, much in part due to corruption and politicians who play in that murky water. The past two years of 2023 and 2024 were election years, from municipal to national, with 2025 seeing the closure of a Main Street anchor, which thins away at the hope of a vibrant downtown. Our city is guided by the inability of our leaders to execute a plan that raises our quality of life, improves aging infrastructure, and strategically growing our demographic for a sustainable future.

Our city had fallen under investigation through state jurisdiction by way our Attorney General for negligence during the hiring process of our current city manager. We've gained two new seats on our council, a new mayor, and the retention of another councilor during the election

cycle 15 months ago. The Attorney General found illegalities in the transparency and hiring procedure, or lack thereof, during the search for a new city manager. The options mandated a public meeting where each person recalled their "emotional" reasoning for the current selection and

several statements that contradicted herself while simultaneously admitting to not seeking guidance on procedure. This was followed by another councilor's verbal attacks on the public after commentary. What then followed was equally limp and filled with lies – our Mayor informed us all he chose an internal candidate, so our city didn't hit a lull because we're currently moving swiftly with economic and metropolitan growth. Why would Las Cruces pay a city manager \$216,000 in annual salary, a benefits package of more than \$50,000, and a car allowance of \$500 a month? The highest paid city manager is located in Albuquerque with a salary of \$106,000 and our



TOP ROW, LEFT TO RIGHT: JOHANA BENCOMO, DISTRICT 4; BECKY CORRAN, DISTRICT 5; CASSIE MCCLURE, DISTRICT 1; BECKI GRAHAM, DISTRICT 3. BOTTOM ROW, LEFT TO RIGHT: BILL MATTIACE, DISTRICT 2; YVONNE FLORES, DISTRICT 6; ERIC ENRIQUEZ, MAYOR.

why they opted for a closed meeting during the selection process during which they participated in a rolling quorum.

The next steps for the recalled position were to host an open dialogue on why this candidate was best and the selection to return to a vacant position while searching for a new candidate or the reason as to carry on the current path. One councilor failed to maintain any eye contact during her statements then made

neighboring metro El Paso pays its city manager \$350,000. For comparison, close to 700,000 people reside in El Paso and the manager must work with Mexico on the intricate international relations both regions face. Albuquerque's population is more than 550,000. The prosperity Las Cruces is so-called benefitting from has nothing to do with or a livable wage derived by industry jobs.

Continued on Page 12 ►

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MAIN STREET



AMADOR: NOW CLOSED



LEFT TO RIGHT: DOWNTOWN LAS CRUCES



◀ Continued from Page 10

Our community has just lost a downtown anchor, the only beacon of hope for our Main Street was Amador which is now shuttered. Main Street, while it does have its own collection of small shops, coffee spots, taco grab-and-go's, and drinking establishments, has yet to be governed by a strict colloquium that truly reshapes what it means to be a city of character. In lieu, much of downtown looks the same as it did 10 years ago with skeleton buildings and no true hospitality or residential development. The inability of our governing caucus and development departments to fully execute a project on hand has quilted a fragmented commercial corridor that includes El Paseo and Picacho.

The East Mesa continues to grow feverishly into a pattern of urban sprawl. Residents have convenience to a Wal-Mart and Neighborhood Market, a gym, strip centers, clinics, and chains with little character or local development, in all honesty, what is the lifestyle of Sonoma Ranch? Anyone who has traveled or lived elsewhere would see that the development of the East Mesa has not only left central city headed west in shambles, but the poor planning style and lack of diverse economic conveniences is a showcase of a concrete jungle with no true lifestyle for its buyers to enjoy.

The area East of Albertsons on Main is a suburbia for middle class who want new homes and care little for conveniences

outside of those previously mentioned and will soon feel the impacts of 4,000 additional homes and a road connecting Wal-Mart's Neighborhood Market at the top of Lohman to Mesa Grande. Anything West of Target will continue to feel the impacts of crumbling infrastructure, failing businesses, and stagnation that unfortunately impacts Mesilla as well. While housing is a need we are in desperate need of so is addressing those concerns of residents headed west of city center and if we hope to bring in a flourishing portfolio of investors, the retention of young people, and large companies, we must execute those very items which tear away at the enamel of our city's appeal.

I would like to point out to our community members whether you voted in the last cycle or for a different candidate the Mayor was an assistant city manager in Las Cruces and resigned a month or so before running. Four out the six councilors have had their seat for more than three years while also overseeing the dismissal and hiring processes of a new city manager previously. Utilizing closed meetings to execute the hiring of a city manager without public discussion, texting about benefits and salaries, while moving to hire from within without utilizing a competitive interview process and search showcases the lack of care for constituents. The city council and mayor given their commitment to public trust should never engage in confirming the

selection by text. All procedures should follow the governing laws of the state and city while maintaining all offers and selections via hardcopy documentation and a proper offer letter. Why would any of these officials opt for a strictly internal noncompetitive selection process that disbars public comment?

We continue to face issues with crime, gang violence, and homelessness often plaguing areas along Lohman and into the Mesilla Gateway which has affected consumer spending. In a time where inflation has impacted most Americans poor or wealthy, what I call the walkable dollar is already tight. Mix in concerns of crime and that potential buck spent locally is now shelved for something else. I urge our readers to study the city's operational code, familiarize yourself in economic matters, and be more proactive in those items that affect your quality of life now or later. We have a strong spirit in our community, and it needs a little help getting along. So, it's your turn – is it truly chaos or is it corruption, the tune of the "same ol' same ol'" trading us for pennies and helping our friends attain big payouts with low hanging fruit? Let's stop corruption, no longer play party politics, get to know thy neighbor regardless of beliefs, and reach across the aisle to work together to compel the city to create, fund and execute a strategic growth plan for the downtown district. All Las Cruces will benefit from the economic rewards it would definitely bring.



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Recipe **Chicken** By CaJohn Hard **CORN CHOWDER**

INGREDIENTS

½ gallon rich chicken stock
½ pint heavy cream
½ C. butter, melted
4 ozs. onions
2 ozs. celery
2 ozs. carrots
1 tsp. granulated garlic
1 tsp. thyme leaf or ground

DIRECTIONS

Mix butter, vegetables and spices (except salt), cook until softened. Add flour, cook for 2 minutes, then gradually add chicken stock. Add corn and potatoes, cook until soft, add pulsed cooked chicken.

Finish with heavy cream, check salt, bring to boil. If more thickness is desired, add a little corn starch

½ tsp. celery seed
½ tsp. sage
½ tsp. white pepper
2 C. corn
2 C. diced potatoes
2 6-oz. chicken breasts, pulsed cooked
1 tblsp. all-purpose flour for thickening
salt and pepper to taste

slurry. To make slurry, combine a tablespoon of cornstarch with a tablespoon of water and mix thoroughly. Stir into chowder and remove from heat until desired thickness is achieved.

OPTIONAL

½ C. roasted, peeled, and diced poblano chile



Cocktail **Wassail**

By G. Buck

INGREDIENTS

6 small Honeycrisp apples
6 tbsp. dark brown sugar, plus more to taste
1 tsp. ground cinnamon
½ tsp. ground ginger
¼ tsp. ground nutmeg
¼ tsp. ground allspice

1 gallon apple cider, divided
1 navel orange
10 whole cloves
2 lemons
2 cinnamon sticks, plus more for serving
3 star anise pods

1 C. cranberry juice cocktail
Bourbon or brandy, for serving (optional)
Fresh or frozen cranberries, thawed, for serving (optional)

1. Preheat the oven to 350°F.
2. Using a paring knife, cut out the core and stem of each apple, leaving about the bottom ½ inch of each apple intact. Using a small spoon or grapefruit spoon, scoop out any remaining core and seeds to form a cavity in each apple. In a small bowl, stir together the brown sugar, cinnamon, ginger, nutmeg, and allspice. Divide the brown sugar mixture among each apple cavity, firmly packing it as necessary.
3. In the bottom of a pie plate or baking

pan, pour 1 cup of the apple cider. Place the prepared apples in the pan. Bake until the apples are very tender and collapsing, 1 hour to 1 hour and 10 minutes.

4. Meanwhile, cut the orange in half crosswise and stick the whole cloves in the peel. Cut one lemon in half and thinly slice the second lemon.

5. In a large pot, add the prepared orange, cinnamon sticks, star anise pods, and the remaining apple cider. Squeeze the halved lemon into the pot and add the



sliced lemon. Over medium-high heat, bring the mixture to a boil and reduce heat to medium-low and simmer until aromatic, 1 hour.

6. Add the cranberry juice and the cooked apples with any of their juices to the pot and stir to combine. Taste for sweetness and add more brown sugar, if you like. Serve hot or warm, with alcohol of choice, cranberries, and a cinnamon stick, if you like.



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