



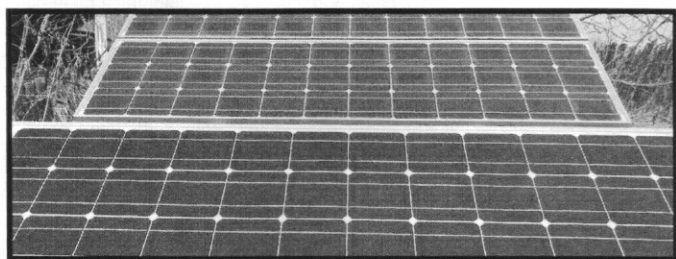
ISSUE #280

MARCH 2025

**THURS. 3/20, 6:30, COMMUNITY CENTER:  
ANNUAL WATER ASSOCIATION MEETING.**

**SAT. 3/29, 9:00, GCA ELECTION (2 BOARD  
MEMBERS), POTLUCK BREAKFAST  
PLEASE SHOW UP FOR QUORUMS!**

## EDITORIAL: SOLAR ARRAYS – YAY OR NAY?



Ever since the proposed AES /Rancho Viejo solar array -- a few miles from the west side of Eldorado and east of NM14 just north of the Turquoise Trail school -- was first announced in January 2023, pros and cons have raged in the pages of the New Mexican and local sites. The opposition has been represented by the Clean Energy Coalition (CEC), the supporters by knowledgeable or opinionated individuals. Some opponents are based in pure nimbyism and some present genuine concerns about zoning, property values, health, access, and especially fires caused by the lithium Battery Energy Storage Systems (BESS). Rancho Viejo would house 500,000 battery cells in 39 shipping containers.

AES (Applied Energy Services) was founded in 1981 and is based in Virginia. In 1989 it planted 52 million trees in Guatemala to offset carbon emissions in Connecticut. In 2017 it moved into solar and boasts of being "the first publicly traded US-backed energy company to publish its portfolio's resiliency to climate change... a strategy to reduce its carbon intensity by 70% by 2030." Good intentions? Or brilliant greenwashing?

For the time being, I (your editor) count myself in favor, though some are saying it's the right project in the wrong place. Unlike other forms of electricity generation, operating solar facilities do not produce greenhouse gas emissions, odors, smoke clouds, or vapor, and offer a stable source of revenue for localities, imposing few costs on public services, though there are unanswered questions about AES's safety record. (*Cont. p.2*)

## OUR COMMUNITY HEALTH WORKER

When the blitzkrieg out of Washington started, Corey McGillicuddy was probably the first of us to be hit. Two days after the inauguration she received an email from the CDC cancelling a webinar on long-term COVID she had planned to attend. As our certified New Mexico Community Health Worker (CHW), Corey is required to stay informed on public health issues, and the Centers of Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) was her go-to for updates and training. Alerts like the recent Norovirus bulletin on the community notice board are an important part of her job. (Who knew hand sanitizer is useless against some viruses?) The US Department of Labor recognizes CHW's as health care professionals vital to our medical system even though they are volunteers.

For Corey, a former First Responder, serving Galisteo as our CHW is just a different form of frontline response. Once the webinar was cancelled, all CDC emails stopped. Corey phoned her supervisor at the New Mexico Department of Health and was assured that the state will do its best to keep their health workers well-informed. But state resources pale beside the global scope of the CDC and National Institutes of Health (NIH), at least before they suffered catastrophic cuts. Corey is using social media to follow Canadian public health agencies and the American Medical Association, among other trusted sources. She monitors reports on flu, bird flu, COVID, and national outbreaks of tuberculosis and measles. New Mexico has just reported eight measles cases in Lea County across the border from Texas where a rapidly growing outbreak among unvaccinated persons has sent more than a dozen children to the hospital.

As more Executive Orders hurtle down, none of us is immune. US citizens carry their passports in fear of ICE raids. Galisteo parents learn their daughter was fired summarily from the Forest Service (*see p.2*). Retirees worry about the future of Social Security and Medicare. CHW Corey has a few prescriptions for us. Keep current on accurate public health information for yourself. Stay connected in the village and check on one another. Volunteer. Find things that comfort you emotionally and physically. Aside from her work as an Alzheimer's caregiver, caterer, GVFR volunteer, Democratic Ward chairperson, and Community Health Worker, Corey still makes time for her photography and artwork. Many of you will remember her joyful photographic series of quarantined villagers standing six feet apart during the COVID pandemic.

**"I slept and dreamt that life was joy. I awoke and saw that life was service. I acted and behold, service was joy."**  
(*Rabindranath Tagore, from Corey.*)

And now another vast local solar project has reared its head even closer to the village of Galisteo. The adjacent (and prettily named) Penstemon and Globemallow are just south of us -- c. 3.75 miles northeast of Stanley, off NM 41, which is becoming an industrial hub.

On February 4th, the SF County Planning Commission approved (6-1) a conditional-use permit to Rancho Viejo. The Sierra Club, Santa Fe Green Chamber of Commerce, and 350.org all voiced support. In March, the County Board of Commissioners will vote on full permitting. The debate is not over; the loser will likely appeal to district court. However not a single fire has spread beyond BESS containers worldwide and "there has been no property damage or loss of life"; water usage is minimal, and there are no banned "forever chemicals" (PFAS) in current improved systems, according to Daniel Baker (New Mexican 12/22/24) who writes that new technology for BESS safety features can "quickly and completely extinguish a fire in a battery cell" preventing spread.

If a battery is going to catch fire, the likely cause is thermal runaway -- when an increase in temperature in the battery leads to cell short-circuiting or disintegration. Damage can often be reversed if caught quickly, according to Kelly Pickerel of Solar Power World. Sigmund Silber, a management consultant specializing in Weather, Climate Change, Agriculture and Energy who lives in San Marcos, notes that while the choice of batteries is important, "it may be the design that is key."

Linea Energy's Globemallow and Penstemon, respectively, plan lease boundaries of 960 and 1,936 acres on currently open grazing land. (Another sell-off by the King Ranch?) The sites are currently in the permitting phase, with approvals anticipated this year. Construction would begin in 2026, with commercial operations anticipated in 2028. Both facilities feature "crystalline-silicon solar modules, identical to those found on residential rooftops, mounted above the ground on steel racking." They will convert solar energy to electricity delivered to the PNM transmission system for use in local and regional electric grids. The company states that it is collaborating with environmental consultants to explore implementing wildlife-friendly fencing, agrivoltaics, and a wildlife corridor. A pre-permitting neighborhood meeting was held on Jan. 9th. I, for one, never heard about this and only found out about the project when Ed Epping happened to have a chance conversation with someone who knew about it and sent him the information.

The prime question is who do we believe on safety issues? Battery alternatives must be weighed against our desperate need for sustainable energy projects, which are now all in danger of being shot down by the new U.S. administration. On Jan. 20, Trump paused billions of dollars of federal grant funding for clean energy and other projects around the country initiated by the Biden administration's Green New Deal.

Yet another major project, Diamond Tail, is further southwest, accessed by Puertocito Road off NM 14 in Sandoval County (though partial construction access is from SF County). It was just conditionally permitted too. (This will be covered in April.)

If all three of these projects go through, Galisteo will be neighbored to the south, north, and west. So it behooves us to know as much as we can as the processes proceed, or not. I wonder if we should look into independent community solar? Many of us have solar panels linked to PNM. I believe mine is the only solar home totally off the grid. (If not, let me know!) Comments and corrections welcome.

## JOSÉ ORTIZ Y PINO IV (1952-2024)



José Ortiz y Pino, of Burlington Vermont, passed away peacefully on December 1, 2024. He was born on August 7, 1952, in Santa Fe. In his younger years in Galisteo, he assisted his family with the family ranch, restaurant operations and played an active role in legislative activities. José lived a life filled with laughter, music and kindness. His passion for radio led him to a long and fulfilling career, where he touched the lives of many through his work as a DJ, beginning when he was just sixteen years old. He is most fondly remembered for his many years at KLUC in Las Vegas, Nevada, where he entertained millions as "Julio the Gardener" with his humor and engaging personality. He went to the east coast to help establish Talk America Radio Network. He loved New England, and eventually settled in Vermont to be closer to his grandchildren.

Beyond his professional career, José had a deep love for his family, friends and music. He found joy in the simple pleasures of life, such as spending time with his cats, tending to his yard and relaxing with his favorite TV shows. José treated everyone with respect and warmth. He had a remarkable ability to connect with people of all ages and backgrounds, always eager to engage in friendly conversation, always looking out for those he cared about.

José is survived by his wife, Lori Ortiz y Pino, his son Ted Ortiz y Pino, his step son Adam (Jessica), step daughter Kendra (Sean) and their children, his mother Yolanda Ortiz y Pino, sister Maria Ortiz y Pino, and his nephews, Miguel Padilla and Estevan Padilla (Cynthia). He was predeceased by his father, Jose Ortiz y Pino III. Services will be held on Saturday March 29th at Nuestra Señora de Los Remedios in Galisteo, 10:00 AM. Burial will follow at the Catholic Cemetery in Galisteo.

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### Mo'jas in Cuba ... as promised





On Feb. 16th twelve Galisteo writers read their work at the GCC, organized by Julie Deery and Ann Nye with Paul Davis as MC. The story below was the one about Galisteo.

## THE INFINITE GRADATION OF BLUE

Michael Dyer

In the late Bernard Pomerance's story, "The Dream Shouter," a visionary sage woman walks to where the two roads meet in Galisteo and climbs an adobe brick tower each morning to announce the comings. The coterie of viking-strong village walkers pause for a moment, hatted pickup drivers stop and hold coffee. Residents of all ages casually gather to smirk the wisdom. Sparky dogs chase their friends and celebrate.

On this November morning, an oil tanker blasted by the tower with total irreverence. Even the stalwart Community Director's dozen eggs to the windshield did not slow down the meth-fueled teenage driver road-rocketing to collect his six figures. Highway 41 was now an \$11 million shortcut. Town communications at the crossroads were being rumbled over.

This triggered the dream shouter to fly into a combination of rage and sadness. She jumped from the tower and scrambled up the rocks to the top of the hogback overseeing the town, overseeing the magnificent Galisteo Basin, and with a cry that pierced the fall morning, declared that "Galisteo is the most difficult village in the world to live in!!"

The crowds below erupted in shards of light and laughter. Of course it is. They all knew being the center of the universe is hard. An unexpected furious wind rattled the figure standing atop the narrow ridge. She was holding her arms out catching the spirits of pasta-eating parrots and funky rodeos of the past and masters of artists' souls skyriding like ravens. The sky on this piece of the planet presented a heavenly playground, a massive universal joy just hanging over the neighborhood, once an ocean, now a desert.

The dreamer peeked over the hogback from behind a giant petroglyphed rock and saw that things seemed bad in the outside world. It looked revoltingly ugly that November day. So she turned to the Ortiz mountains and lined up the gradations of blues. The mesmerizing infinite layers of changing softness of the color blue replaced her brain. She returned to the tower and spoke confidently of good blue.

The gradations had reflected tones of villagers creating good for others, a small community with existing solutions. The subtle tones of change were endless against the sky, yet gratitude flowed amongst those who recognized the world they wished for was already here. One neighbor expressed she was "standing my ground with my neighbors to express better human values through art and the day to day."

The infinite gradation of blue was evident in paintings, sketches, photography, pottery, fibers, weavings, crafted jewelry, writings, and folk art. The infinite gradation of blue was evident in the uniforms of courageous firefighters. We are safe here.

Thanks to Bernard for loaning his mythical dream shouter to remind us at this moment to scale steep slopes and let our most difficult selves immerse in our created community.

## PEDACITOS/BITS AND PIECES

GCA President Jennifer Martin announces that the community center is in the process of getting some much needed updates: plaster cracks fixed, Bluetooth speakers installed in the stage area, women's bathroom floor leveled, plus soap dispensers, towel dispenser, and grab bars installed, everything repainted, kitchen cabinets repainted with a nice blue to match the interior doors and the outdoor sign. The shed is also being repainted with a stucco color matching the GCC exterior, thanks to Jerry Kruse. Also a leak at the front hydrant is being fixed.

In April **Julia Cairns** is flying to Washington DC for a book launch at the Kenya Embassy for her illustrations of the children's book *The Boy Who Read Newspapers* by Kenyan writer James Musyoka -- a true story about a boy's love of reading and the challenges he faces when few books are available. Attention parents and grandparents! Information on how to order is forthcoming. Julia has also illustrated *We All Went on Safari* and *Momma Panya's Pancakes*, available online at Barefoot Books.

Carla Alexandra Rodriguez (aka Blkk Hand), a first-generation Venezuelan-American visual artist living and working in Saint Paul, Minnesota, set up her tintype photobooth at Rob King's **Duende Gallery** last month.

You'll find **Rochelle Becker** demonstrating for Peace and Love every Wednesday afternoon in the north village on Highway 41. An added benefit is that drivers who stop to look and honk generally slow down as they pull into the village.

*Left: Rochelle Demonstrating*

*Right: Beth Foote at Presidents Day Rally*

*Below: GVFR Stalwarts at annual awards dinner*



## INSTAGRAM FROM THE FRONT LINES

Robin Bulger

I'm not sure how well various news outlets are reporting on this, so I figured I'd post an update. I am not trying to garner sympathy -- I will be fine -- but my heart breaks for the lands I and many loved ones have devoted their lives to. On February 13th, I and 9,500 others (and counting), were terminated from our federal positions for the crime of being hired in the last year or two. I can only speak for my agency, the U.S. Forest Service, but here is what that means for our country.

As a forestry technician, I and my peers conducted wildlife, fish, and plant surveys on public lands. These surveys are necessary to implement prescribed burns, forest thinning, and other management practices that not only keep our forests healthy but protect communities from wildfire. If the past few years have taught us anything, it's that wildfire poses a very urgent threat to both rural and urban communities. That's to say nothing of the impact on endangered species and their habitat.

Public lands are yours, are mine, are one of the most unique and incredible features of our democracy. If you have visited a National Park, National Forest, State Park, campground, hiking trail, river, or beach lately, you have enjoyed our public lands. Public servants work to keep that land healthy and litter free, provide clean facilities, maintain trails, and much, much more. Take away our public land stewards and you're looking at a lot of closed, trashed, burning or flooded lands.

Expect a dramatic increase in fires that threaten human lives and important and beautiful habitat. Expect your local hiking trails and recreation opportunities to suffer. Expect campgrounds to close and air quality to worsen. All of this the fallout from cuts to a single agency. I cannot fathom the toll this will take on our country in terms of public health, safety, and happiness when we consider all of the agencies affected by these illegal terminations. My federal colleagues are some of the most dedicated and moral people I know. This administration is setting fire to the very fabric of our nation and it should sadden all of us. Thank you for reading and feel free to share. *(A longer version of this text appeared in The New Mexican (2/23)).*

### EL PUENTE SPONSOR: ANONYMOUS

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#### FOR SALE

**Corey McGillicuddy's Soup Season is upon us.** If you want my menus, please email me at [mcgillicuddycorey3@gmail.com](mailto:mcgillicuddycorey3@gmail.com).

**Amanecer Gallery offers oil paintings** by Freddie Cárdenas and micaceous pottery by Anna Cárdenas, 505-466-8967.

**Talus Wind Heritage Meats.** Local New Mexico lamb and pork. Contact [info@taluswindranch.com](mailto:info@taluswindranch.com).

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**Native Land Reparation Pledge Project:** give back 1% of the sale of your home to indigenous people. Contact Mare at [marenlrp@gmail.com](mailto:marenlrp@gmail.com)

**Radio Free Galisteo @** [www.radiofreegalisteo.com](http://www.radiofreegalisteo.com) Music and Information from the Galisteo Basin. Support the Station: <https://www.patreon.com/radiofreegalisteo>.

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Exciting **Adventure Travel** around the world with professional wildlife photographers Jami Tarris and Theo Allofs of Wild Focus Expeditions. For more information: 466-3640 or [www.wildfocusexpeditions.com](http://www.wildfocusexpeditions.com). Come with Us!

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**Meditation & Knowings** with Chris Griscom via video, the second Sunday of each month, free on YouTube; for info contact [thelight@lightinstitute.com](mailto:thelight@lightinstitute.com)



### +++ EL PUENTE DE GALISTEO+++

**Editor:** Lucy R. Lippard. **Stringer:** Alex Finlayson. **Logo:** Cara Lee. **Printer:** Allegra. **Changes, comments, suggestions, contributions to: El Puente, 14 Avenida Vieja, or [flip14@centurylink.net](mailto:flip14@centurylink.net). NEXT DEADLINE: April 5. TO SPONSOR: Check for \$100-\$150 (or more!) TO GCA, noting "for newsletter," to above.**