

EL PUENTE DE GALISTEO

ISSUE #282

MAY 2025

POLITICS GALISTEO STYLE: MUSIC & ICE CREAM

On May 4 a great turnout of local Democrats (sponsored by those from Galisteo and Eldorado) gathered to hear State Senator Liz Stefanics and State Rep (our own) Matthew McQueen on the ups and downs of the recent legislative session. Ward 3D Chair Corey McGillicuddy introduced her counterparts: Mary Jane Parks (1st Vice Chair of the Santa Fe County Democratic Party, who spoke), David Thompson (2nd Vice Chair, who didn't), and Cindy Pabst (Ward 4A Chair, who helped Corey start the program and introduce speakers). Chris Harrell and Randy Ranaudo provided "Songs of Democracy" (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3ks3D-PnVT8>). Help, guidance, and participation came from Alexa Maros (leader of the Eldorado Democrats,) and several Galisteans.

Both Stefanics and McQueen had their districts changed this round. Stefanics represents Senate District 39 which includes all or pieces of Torrance, San Miguel, Valencia and Santa Fe Counties. McQueen represents House District 50 which includes southern Santa Fe County and the Placitas area in Sandoval County.

Behavioral Health is one of Stefanics' major issues, as well as healthcare, seniors, veterans, and the threat of wildfires to home insurance, mortgages, and sales. McQueen was proud of the success of reforming the Department of Game and Fish (soon to be the "Department of Wildlife"), on which he has worked for years, but bemoaned a line-item veto from the Governor that removed political protections for the Game Commissioners. He also succeeded in increasing the royalty rate on the sale of oil and gas owned by the State of New Mexico, so that it now approximates fair market value. That change will add a billion dollars to the Land Grant Permanent Fund, which funds education in New Mexico. He reminded us that for years we have switched parties every gubernatorial elections; it could be the Republicans' turn?

Anna Cárdenas noted that some of her relatives were leaving the Democratic party and wondered how often legislators talk to people about their real lives. Stefanics replied that she sympathizes and holds values from the left, noting the effectiveness of coffees held in her neighborhood that included "not just Democrats." She also emphasized that while she owns a gun, firearms need to be safe and out of kids' hands.

McQueen was in favor of two 45-day legislative sessions (rather than the current 60/30 every-other-year cycle) and limiting the number of bills each legislator could present to five, rather

CORRECTION: The GVFR fall breakfast is Sat. Sept. 6th

than the common but unmanageable thirty or more. He has been outspoken for the elimination of pocket vetoes (where the governor kills bills that have passed the legislature simply by ignoring them). A constitutional amendment to do just that will appear on the ballot in November of 2026. Stefanics would like senators to meet with the governor for coffee or supper meetings.

And then the discussion turned to ICE, the balancing acts required by the impossibility of controlling the feds and the loss of State federal funds. A special session of the legislature may be called to deal with federal pressures on the State budget. Stefanics, noting all the arrests at recent protests, said "Put the safe people up front," so the endangered are not at risk.

Our County Commissioner Camilla Bustamante noted the Feds' push to take over public lands and gut the Antiquities Act. Federal Rep Melanie Stansbury and New Mexico Attorney General Raúl Torrez were praised for fighting back.

During the meeting it began to pour. The desperately needed rain pounding on the roof seemed a good omen.



Photo: Zenfolio: Roland Pabst.

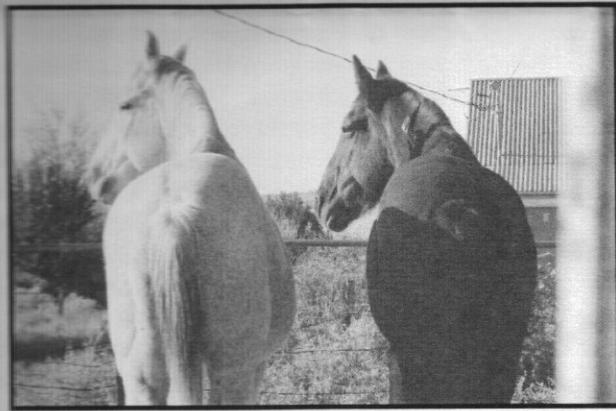
RIP: THE LAST HORSES EAST OF 41

Only a few years ago there were six or eight horses east of the creek. Now there are none. Last month, within six weeks, Antonio Chavez lost both Cody and Chivo. Thanks to his father Luis and his grandfather Felipe, both impressive horsemen, he started riding around five years old. As a little kid, he and his Sena cousins would all pile on to a patient steed and when they inevitably fell off, landed laughing. At fifteen he had his own horse, King. (Cont. p.2)

Seven or eight equines later, Antonio was given Cody, a bay BLM mustang from Nevada, who was on his way to the “killers,” thanks to the bad habit of taking off when mounting riders were halfway up to the saddle. A one-man horse, his previous owner had messed him up but he began to respect Antonio when he didn’t get away with his trick the first (and last) time he tried it. Cody came with the warning never to use a bit on him. So Antonio used a *bosal*, a rawhide noseband often confused with a hackamore.

A year or so later, Bruce Nauman sold Antonio a young grey gelding, a well-bred quarterhorse called Chivo, who happily cohabited with Cody, sometimes pastured in the “OK Corral” across La Otra Vanda, and sometimes enjoying summer vacations on your editor’s field. Antonio on Chivo, leading Cody, were a welcome sight around the village and the bosque. Chivo passed first, at age 35. Cody followed at age 27 after painful bouts of colic.

So now, on the village’s east side, there are no horses -- a sad absence felt by all of us who walk Avenida Vieja daily. On some dark nights, the ghosts of Cody and Chivo can be heard galloping down the road. Luckily Antonio is still with us.



BEAKS AND FEET

Jan Saunders with drawings by Catherine Ferguson

There’s more to birds than their enviable flight, enticing song, and eye-catching flashes of color. While their wings carry them to appropriate habitat, it is both their beaks and feet that provide the means to their survival and offer insight into their daily habits. Birds don’t only fly, they also walk, run, perch, dig, and grasp with specialized toes. For a deeper understanding into how birds survive and flourish in the world we inhabit together, I invite you to pay attention to the shape and size of their “*beaks and feet*.” From tiny song birds to woodpeckers, raptors, and scavengers, their feeding and hunting skills depend on the shape, size, and function of the set of specialized tools they carry with them in their beaks and feet. Focusing on a few of our everyday Galisteo avian companions will expand our understanding.

Song/Perching Bird: Ever wonder why tiny song birds like chickadees, wrens, and warblers don’t fall off their perches when they fall asleep? Their feet are equipped with an automatic locking system that kicks in when they grasp a perch so they sleep tight through the night. Their tiny toes, standard issue of three in front and one in back, are perfect for hopping about, clinging, and perching on small branches, twigs, and leaves in their high-energy search for food. Their diverse bill shapes provide clues to how and what they eat: Wren and Warbler needle-nosed bills are perfect for gleaning small insects hidden in leaves, needles, bark, and flowers,

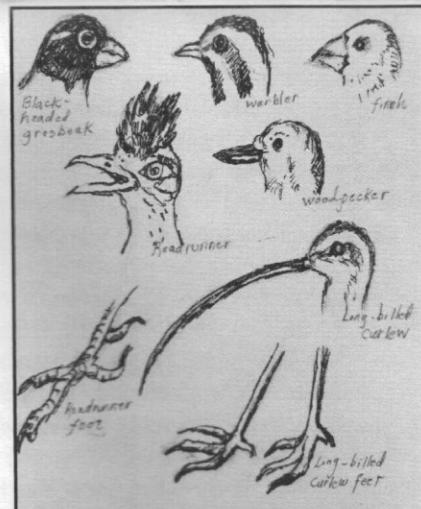
while a Black-headed Grosbeak’s thick parrot-like beak is strong enough to crack open their favorite black-oiled sunflower seeds.

Woodpecker: Our Red-shafted Flicker, a member of the woodpecker family, can drive you to distraction as he hammers his industrial strength bill into your roof or gutter in a seasonal urge to establish territory and attract a mate. This handsome beak, armed with a long retractable tongue, penetrates deep into soil or tree bark in search of ants. Flicker’s typical woodpecker- designed feet with two toes in front and two behind are perfect for climbing and clinging when they feed on tree-dwelling and wood-boring insects. His two rear toes offer support when he bangs away at your portal beam.

Raptor: The Cooper’s Hawk that stakes out your birdfeeder is equipped with strong grasping toes armed with sharp talons, again three front and one back, that are perfect for grasping and killing smaller prey. Raptors like hawks and eagles also come equipped with strong hooked beaks, perfect for tearing off chunks of their prey to eat or feed to their chicks. The Great Horned Owl that was calling last night just outside my window has the ability to move one of his toes from rear to front that helps the owl hold both his prey and his perching position.

Scavenger: Vulture wings achieve flying skills matched only by some sea birds. Our Galisteo vultures leave the roost to soar in warm air currents, spending their days searching for a bit of luck found in another animal’s misfortune. Their small head and large hooked beak are just the tools needed to rip into the tough outer skin of carrion. Large holes in the beak allow their acute sense of smell to locate carrion from long distances. With their funny flat-footed gait and their weak blunted talons, Turkey Vultures barely manage to waddle and hop along the ground to reach their not-so-fresh roadkill. Vulture beaks and feet do not need raptor-like strength to subdue their already-dead and no longer struggling meal.

Roadrunner: Our iconic bird of the Southwest, classified as both a raptor and a scavenger, is also an omnivore. It will eat anything (snakes, lizards, fledgling birds and eggs). It can kill while also munching on seeds, plants, and carrion. Flying is a distant third to the strength of an oversized bill, muscular legs, and the fleet and fancy footwork of unique anatomy. Running is his game as he dashes after lizards and dances around a Western diamondback rattlesnake, closing the deal with his strong, oversized bill. The unique toe shape of two toes forward and two backwards that leaves a perfect X-shaped footprint holds a special place in Native American belief. The X-shape is thought to disguise (Cont. p.3)



the direction the bird is traveling and prevent evil spirits from following. Spoiler alert: A roadrunner's amazing 20mph racing speed cannot outpace Wiley Coyote.

Long-billed Curlew: The hands-down winner in the beak and feet category is the Long-billed Curlew, North America's largest shorebird. Catherine and I recently spotted a pair moving in graceful, long-legged strides across the dry grasslands south of Stanley. Standing over two feet tall with a three-foot wingspan, this long-necked, cinnamon spotted member of the Sandpiper family quickly brings your binoculars into focus. A thin, 4-8 inch, down-curved bill (female bills are longer) with a specialized sensitive tip working together with large, flat, padded feet, enable this bird to exploit a variety of food sources in widely differing habitats. Summers breeding in the Great Basin, agricultural fields, and short-grass prairies balanced with winters feeding on both coasts of North America and the interior of Mexico, Long-billed Curlews probe their specialized bills deep into mud-flats, grasslands, and seashores to feed on insects and worms as well as aquatic invertebrates.

This writing touches on a small sample of birds that call the Galisteo Basin home. Observing the different species that share your world and paying attention to their *beaks and feets* (*titled to the rhyme*) will help you puzzle out their life habits and habitats. You will, no doubt, discover several surprises and even some exceptions to what is written here.

Ed note: This, alas, is Jan Saunders' last *El Puente* article as she is moving to Green Valley, AZ, where she is active with the Border Community Alliance. We say goodbye with much gratitude for years of contributions to *El Puente*. Read more of Jan Saundar's seasonal nature writing for *El Puente* online at GalisteoCommunity.org.

NEEDLE-AND-THREAD GRASS

Alex Finlayson

Instructions for living a life:

Pay attention.

Be astonished.

Tell about it.

(Sometimes by Mary Oliver)

On a recent dog walk, I came upon something astonishing. The simple clump of green grass in itself was intriguing, but even cooler, I recognized it even though I'd never seen it before. Jan Saunders wrote about Needle-and-Thread grass in *El Puente*, Summer 2023, and I had read her story when I came upon a stack of old newsletters left by our previous homeowner. Jan's piece and Catherine Ferguson's illustration made such an impression on me that when I spotted Needle-and-Thread, I knew it.

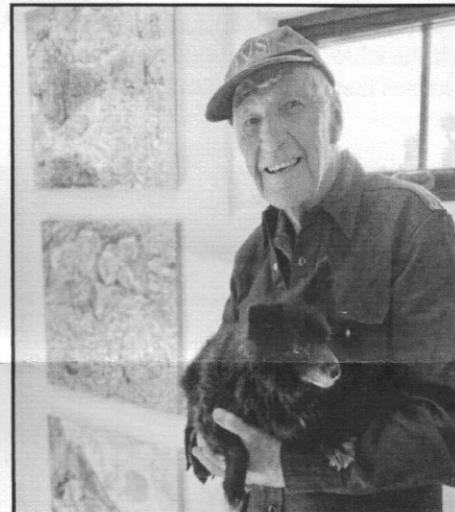
In early May most of our native grasses are just waking up, but Needle-and-Thread was deeply green and well into production of its eponymous seed heads. What caught my eye was the halo of long curly filaments crowning the clump. I pulled apart a stalk and could see that each filament was attached to a needle-like seed pod. The set-up is exactly like a threaded needle. Jan writes, "The main shaft of the sharp 3-inch seed grows an equally long feathery fiber attached to one end that catches the wind ... the long fiber twirls in graceful circles as it twists and turns the seed shaft

to auger deep into the ground." These seeds are notorious for also augering their way into socks, jeans, and dogs' ears.

But for every person who finds Needle-and-Thread a nuisance, another finds poetry. Jan loves the way the grass "undulates in waves under the morning sun" and says it's her favorite. Laura Ingalls Wilder includes a passage on Needle-and-Thread in *Little House on the Prairie*. I've read that children once played a game throwing the seed heads at each other to see who could make them stick to clothing. Needle-and-Thread is excellent for erosion control and because of its well-engineered seeds, is useful in the reclamation of scarred prairie land. Needle-and-Thread is a welcome spring salad for pasture animals and wildlife, especially rabbits and prairie dogs. (Although as the grass matures, the developed seed heads can injure grazers, spearing tongues and eyes.) Jan writes that the Blackfeet Indians used the time of its appearance as a sign to begin the buffalo hunt. Henceforth, Needle-and-Thread grass will be my sign that spring has come to the Galisteo Basin—although now it will be fun to watch its summer transformation into a Frankensteinian seed machine.

PEDACITOS/BITS AND PIECES

A show of **Jim Sloan's** paintings, "Vibrant Matter," is at H&H Arts (662 ½ Canyon Road) a project space run by former Galisteoan Heather Frazar-Smith. Curator Dennison Smith (another Galisteoan) writes, "Jim's work is a rare vitality of expression in which beginning and end, animal and mineral, intimate and cosmic, are equivalent forces." The community opening took place on May 13th and the next chance to see the beautiful show (and acquire a work) will be the closing on June 24th (4-6), as there are no regular gallery hours.



(Photo: Lesley Dyer)

Joanna Keane Lopez, a New Mexico native who has bought and is renovating Bill Huckaby's house on the village east side, and will move here in the fall, is presenting *Batter my Heart, three person'd Go* at SITE Santa Fe's International, opening in late June. Her installation reflects the bedroom of the adobe house on the McDonald Ranch, where the plutonium core of the Trinity Test was assembled. The Atomic Age was thus born within a familial site of intimacy and domesticity.

Santa Fe County has bought from the **Rancho Viejo Partnership** 2,650 acres of undeveloped land (Cont. p.4)

at **Bobcat Crossing** between Eldorado and Santa Fe, for \$3.7 million, citing its sweeping views and sites for new trail systems, as well as a Galisteo Basin archaeological site called Chamisa Locita.

Rob King's *Holding Time* show at the CCA Cinema Gallery received local attention. A physician and member of the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma, Rob is a self-taught ceramic artist who primarily utilizes the natural resources found in the Galisteo landscape. He runs the Duende Gallery here in the village where the current show -- *Indigenization*, co-curated with Jamie Herrell -- was one of *Southwest Contemporary Art*'s top picks. It includes a number of well-known Native artists including locals Michael Namingha and David Bradley.

Joe Capello organized a Braver Angels workshop on May 17th at the Unitarian church on Barcelona St. in Santa Fe: "This may come as a shock, but we bring together Republicans and Democrats to talk about current issues in a calm and non-judgmental way, [with] the skills and techniques to deal with Uncle Frank at the next holiday dinner so that he doesn't wind up hurling his dessert at us for some political comment we made."

Ezra Sage, a firefighter 2 in the GVFR, has been accepted into the Santa Fe Fire Department, which of course is run by our chief's son. He will attend the academy for four months and can continue to volunteer with the GVFR on days off.

Renowned climate author and activist Bill McKibben stood up for the **AES Solar Array** (see March *El Puente*), contradicting the fearmongering of a local opposition group and reminding us that "we need to get over unfounded fears and false narratives, and get on with the job." (*New Mexican*, 5/11, 5/13.)

From your editor: A recent and very sweet **article about *El Puente*** (by Lucy Schiller, online from the *Columbia Journalism Review*) quoted several Galisteans as well as including a few errors which the editor refused to correct. Just so anyone who has seen it knows that the local mistakes are not mine!

EL PUENTE SPONSOR: JENNIFER MARTIN

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FOR SALE

From **Corey**: I have new soups changing with the seasons, plus the old favorites. Let me know if you would like to receive email updates on my menus. 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.

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SERVICES

Mare Tomaski, master bodyworker, biodynamic cranial sacral, KMI structural bodywork, trigger point work, Functional Medicine Certified Coach: profundus@aol.com. 508-788-0906.

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

Radio Free Galisteo @ www.radiofreegalisteo.com Music and Information from the Galisteo Basin. Support the Station: <https://www.patreon.com/radiofreegalisteo>.

Dave's Auto Repair: restoring, minor repairs, painting. Local references. Free estimates: David Montoya, 505-577-1720.

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Linda Vista Stables: I can take care of your local horses in the comfort of their own barn. Call Maria, 466-8930.

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JVS will remove (live) rattlesnakes. Call 466-1064.

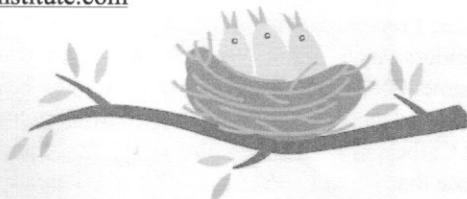
We build, repair coyote fences; haul trash; yard work, etc. Fair prices, local references, Michael Anaya, 660-2275.

Barbara Holloway Fine Handweaving: scarves, shawls, vests, jackets, handwoven of luxurious chenille. 466-2118.

Carpentry: Custom closets, hand-carved tables, benches, gates, doors; also electrical work. Ted Montoya, 505-470-0562; "text and I will call you back."

Passive Solar Builders: Locally owned general contractor since 1980. Home construction, renovations: 466-2118.

Meditation & Knowings with Chris Griscom via video, the second Sunday of each month, free on YouTube; for info contact thelight@lightinstitute.com



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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. **NEXT DEADLINE: June 10. TO SPONSOR**: Check for \$100-\$150 (or more!) TO GCA, noting "for newsletter," to above.