

EL PUENTE DE GALISTEO

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THEY HAVE LANDED!



Recently six air quality monitors were installed in Galisteo by the NM Department of the Environment. Three record fine particulate matter (aka dust) in the air, and three analyze the dust's composition. Study results will be forwarded to "interested parties and stakeholders," according to Brent Ellington, project supervisor.

If anyone is a stakeholder in this, it's John Benjamin. Since the late 1990s, Benjamin has traced his health problems to the road by his house. He learned Via La Puente had been topped with a sub-par base course, a material only to be used under paving and never alone as a road surface. The road was producing clouds of microscopic dust which could drift through doors and windows no matter how tightly sealed, he believed.

Benjamin researched and wrote letters. In 2001 *El Puente* reported that he and other residents had the Via La Puente material tested and found it was composed of particles smaller than industry standards and carried a high lead content. They petitioned the County to fix the problem. Nothing happened. In 2010 the state ran a monitor on Benjamin's property which confirmed the original finding. Again, nothing happened.

Twenty-seven years later, the airborne risk of gravel roads

is accepted fact, with the finest dust particles known to cause lung, heart, and brain damage over time. Maybe that's why Benjamin finally found a receptive ear in Commissioner Camilla Bustamante, who is also a bio-epidemiologist. Coincidentally, in April, State Representative and Galisteo resident Matthew McQueen wrote his own letter about Galisteo roads to officials, citing cancers and breathing problems among residents.

The wheels seem to be turning. Benjamin is disappointed that the study lasted only a month and tested only one size of particulate matter: "I wish I had been involved in the planning." Still, he looks forward to the results, as he looks forward to his new land outside Pecos, which is not on a gravel road.

WATER, WATER...



Water is a public good and a public right, not a commodity to be bought and sold for profit. – Camilla Bustamante, our County Commissioner

Like all New Mexicans, Galisteo villagers keep a close eye on our lazy little (and periodically huge) stream -- the mighty Rio Galisteo, along with all precipitation... and lack thereof. Three water meetings just took place: On Oct. 30th, Rich Schrader's RiverSource class with kids from El Dorado, on Nov. 11, a community meeting with several speakers at which a number of detailed info sheets were handed out, and Nov. 12, the GMDWCA Board met. (Cont.p.2)

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On a golden fall day, Galisteo Creek was flooded with some 38 eighth graders from Eldorado Community School. The annual (since c. 1999) Bosque workshop led by Rich Schrader of RiverSource and EDS science teacher Marion Markham, offers eighth graders a day of active lessons on river and land ecology at different stations along the creek.

RiverSource volunteers taught water chemistry and flow rate. Pat and Dan from Trout Unlimited provided trays of muddy water teeming with aquatic invertebrates for students to poke and observe. Invasive Russian Olives were identified, lopped, and doused with industrial strength vinegar to stop regrowth. (Jennifer Martin and Gwen Feisst assisted.) A drone flown by students recorded aerial images for comparing erosion, tree growth and vegetation changes with last year's data. This will be uploaded for ongoing monitoring, and Schrader uses the findings in his Galisteo community water presentations. The day even finds its way into several English Class writing assignments. Markham says that students refer to the field trip as "going to our Creek," which she believes shows how much they enjoy it, as well as their understanding of the watershed shared by Galisteo and Eldorado. (AF) **See p.3 for student response.**

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An extensive and informative meeting on local water, organized by the Santa Fe County Water Policy Advisory Committee, was held at the Galisteo Community Center on Nov. 11th, initiated by GCA President Jennifer Martin. Gregory Hart, President of the Galisteo Mutual Domestic Water Consumers Association (MDWCA) and still a contributor to the Eldorado Water Board, spoke first. He will be working with our water operators to assess the Non-Revenue Water (NRW) usage, which is crucial in small New Mexico utilities like ours.

The good news, he said, is that "the water level and purity of our system has not had any reportable contamination and has maintained an average depth of c. 20 feet for decades." The moratorium on new hookups continues "until a more accurate and proven understanding of regional effects are known."

Mike Dyer, President of the Ranchitos Water Users Association, was unable to attend but told *El Puente* that their current focus is real time monitoring of usage to address leaks and other problems with the Badger system -- a new digital meter conversion system targeted for completion in December.

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Chip Conley of Modern Elders Academy reported that there are 13 historic wells on his Rising Circle (Saddleback) Ranch. Two deeper wells named Juniper and Cottonwood are allocated 6 af (acre feet) using 80% in 2024 and more in 2025 now that the two retreat centers are activated. MEA reports to the Office of State Engineer (OSE). Chip introduced hydrogeologist Jason Hall and Maintenance Manager Adam Copeland.

The ranch was overgrazed, causing water to run off. Regenerative ranching is in the process of producing better soil. MEA trucks in drinking water weekly, turns off irrigation after a heavy rainfall, has a leak detection system on well and hot water heaters that shuts them down when a leak is detected, and reminds all guests about water in the desert as "a precious resource."

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Next up was Jan Willem Jansens. He has been involved in Galisteo waters for 27 years, first with Earth Works Institute and then with his own Ecotone Landscape Planning. Among his contributions was the Galisteo Watershed Partnership, work on the 2010 Wetlands Action Plan across the Galisteo Basin covering nearly half a million acres, as well as collaborations with Eldorado, several private landowners, and Santa Fe County Open Space. He also directed the Galisteo bosque restoration project between 2015 and 2019. He presently works a lot in the Lower Embudo Watershed around Dixon and Las Trampas, and in the southern Jemez Plateau where Ecotone collaborates with Pueblos and the indigenous forestry organization Trees Water and People.

Jansens noted that RiverSource's October tests turned up nothing bad and that there is still biological life in our cool waters! Galisteo Creek water quality has been stable over the years, an important resource for fish and wildlife. The Galisteo Basin is a part of a major (inter)national wildlife linkage or "wildway" from Alaska to Mexico. Our Bosque is a critical element, one of twenty major landscape-scale wildlife linkages along the continental spine. It includes more than 130,000 acres of protected and well-managed land between the Sangres and the Ortiz Mountains, supported over the years by landowners.

The lower strands of some fences are now reset so pronghorns, which can't jump, can crawl under them. The NM41 highway bridge was constructed wide so water flows more freely and wildlife can easily pass beneath it.

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Andrew Harnden, a recent hire as the Senior Water Planner for Santa Fe County, New Mexico, initiated the meeting after creating a committee with our two water board presidents, MEA, the Chi Center, and 2 GCA Board members. He talked about a collaboration between the County's small water systems -- the Rural Community Assistance Association, a whole new well-staffed organization. Voluntary discussions are taking place; a meeting was held recently in Eldorado.

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And on Nov. 12th the Galisteo MDWCA Board met. The good news is that there are no delinquent accounts and billing issues. The bad news is the cost of the recent repairs near the tank.

Alex Finlayson reports that swift action resolved a major water leak on Oct 31 (all trick, no treats). Before dawn, water cascaded down Camino Los Abuelos, pooling at the church. GMDWCA management was alerted, and a broken pipe was found just south of the water tank and pump house. Villagers went the day without water, but the repair crew had the system up and running again by day's end.

Bookkeeper Ana Berry prepared an extensive report showing repair expenses totaling \$29,032.43. Foreman Ron C de Baca and Operator Rudy Martinez answered questions about the individual repairs and what caused them: The prior repairs and installations were not done correctly, fittings were not properly aligned, incorrect and inadequate materials were used with poor workmanship in general. Ron and Rudy replaced broken fittings with the correct items and worked on weekends and a holiday which raised the expenses for delivered materials.

If you're not on the community water robocall system for leaks etc., contact john.watsonjones@gmail.com

For those of you interested in the bigger picture, see the Sunday (11/16) *New Mexican's* feature "Running Dry."

PEDACITOS/BITS AND PIECES

Matthew McQueen, our long-term State Rep, who has announced he will give up his seat and run for State Land Commissioner in 2026, held a meeting/fundraiser at the Legal Tender on Nov. 10th with **Sarah Boses**, another Galisteo and two-term Santa Fe School Board member, who has announced a run for his seat. She worked as his district legislative aide for nine months. McQueen told *Source NM* that she "would be great for the position... I'm delighted that she's running." Villagers who attended report that questions to the candidates involved everything from state land royalty rates to education funding and medical malpractice insurance reform.

John Watson-Jones and **Angie Heath** recently suffered the re-roofing of their 1875 Territorial Revival home, which had an 8-10" solid dirt underlay, as was common in those days. It took two weeks for workers to hand-chisel away the decades of packed earth and for two weeks dirt rained into the rooms below before the new roof could be laid. The roofing company said it was the hardest job they'd ever done.

The homepage on galisteocommunity.org sports a new photo by **Richard Fenker**. **Paul Davis** and **Ann Senuta** keep the village website and the community calendar accurate and up to date.

On Nov. 7th, the New Mexico Museum of Art hosted a conversation between long-time friends and agitators **Lucy Lippard** and California performance artist **Suzanne Lacy** in conjunction with the exhibition *Notes from the Radical Whirlwind* at the Vladek Contemporary, up until Aug. 9, 2026.

QUARTERMILL FARM; OVERHAUL THE OVERLAY?

The hullabaloo around Sean Sohn's proposed police/military/search and rescue dog training/boarding kennel has quieted down for the time being after he called a meeting to discuss his project on Nov. 13th at the GCC. He was disappointed at the moderate turnout and justly annoyed at the anonymous delivery of a list of his arrest records someone had acquired in a background check, some of which he disputes.

With the recording attendance of his friend, lawyer **Gina Schreyer** from Virginia, where Sean lived before coming home to Galisteo, he offered a detailed slide show of the County Overlay and the business regulations he would like to see overhauled, available at this link:

<https://photos.app.goo.gl/BQuVkbhVhDGm1WYG9A>

Mike Anaya said the community should review the plan, which is over ten years old. Several others, including Fire Chief **Jean Moya**, agreed. **Chris Watts** was concerned that the dogs involved were not community dogs but potentially dangerous. **Sandy Duran** hoped such a project would be "beneficial to all."

The next day, Sean communicated that "this is no longer about me and my wants. I want this village to be better. My kennel idea is shelved and it's prohibited. I had a business idea I wanted, and then discovered what is currently on the books unfortunately with business of any kind here. ... I think it is best from this point for the GCA ... to take the lead on this, as this is the process the County has requested... I will support in any way I can that is helpful."

So now the ball is in the GCA's court and Sean will certainly still be involved.

ZORRO RANCH – AN EXORCISM?

Jeffrey Epstein's New Mexico sin den has been rebranded. Sold in 2023 for an undisclosed but presumably cut-rate amount, the Stanley property is now known as Rancho de San Rafael. The new owners are rumored to be oil people, and a reliable but anonymous source says that a Dallas designer has been hired to overhaul (exorcise?) the interior of the 30,000 sq ft main residence, at one time touted as the biggest home in New Mexico.

Two state Democratic lawmakers -- Reps. **Andrea Romero** (Santa Fe) and **Marianna Anaya** (Albuquerque) -- announced that in next year's legislative session they would establish a "truth commission" to investigate Epstein's activities at his Zorro Ranch, six years after his death by apparent suicide. Romero said the commission would "put the story together for the public," while working around issues of statutes of limitations for certain crimes and the privacy of victims.

This at a moment when the whole nation is awaiting the release of the Epstein files suddenly okayed by the President, who figures in the emails.

REFLECTION ON THE BOSQUE*

AJ Bender

What impacted me most about the trip to the Bosque was getting to be in nature and being able to do hands-on activities. Being able to be out of a classroom and in nature made me feel lots of relief from being stuck in a classroom all day. The environment was beautiful and getting to see all the trees, the river, plants, and such made me feel more relaxed than being in a hot or cold classroom.

Another thing that impacted me was hands-on learning. It was much more fun being able to observe in real life than observing species and plants through a textbook or computer. Being able to see different specimens with my own eyes in front of me instead of looking through a screen or trying to observe through a book not only made it easier for me to observe and find out things about the different species, it also gave me a feeling of experience getting to do this in real life.

The last thing that impacted was the speakers. Getting to meet the speakers and learning about their land was wonderful. They were very nice and gave amazing directions on what to do and how to do it whether it was observing, cutting down invasive species. It was also very interesting to learn about invasive species and learn what kind of things they do, but it was also interesting to learn about the non-invasive species and what they do for the bosque.

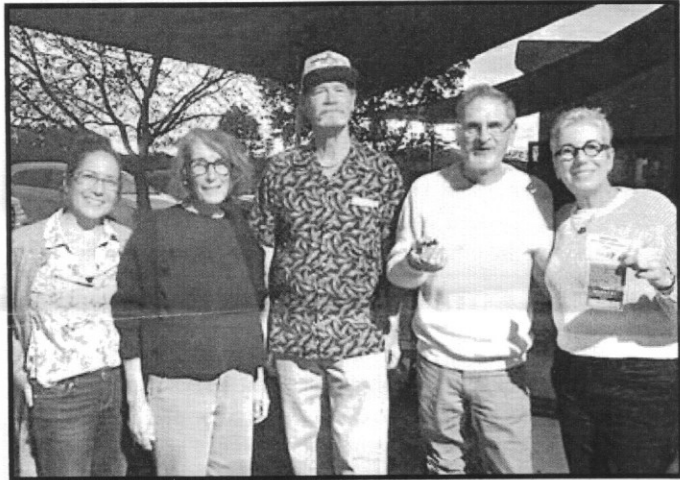
***This is one of many student essays on the Bosque sent to Alex Finlayson by Regan Tuttle, the Eldorado English teacher. Excerpts from others will appear in future issues.**



GVFR NEWS

Annual elections for GVFR officers were held at the last business meeting: GVFR Chief (no surprise!) Jean Anaya Moya; Assistant Chief Ken Frumin; EMS Captain Alice Kruse; Fire Captain Kevin Smith, Fire Lieutenant Paul Davis; Administrative Assistant Jessica Spring. And for the 501C3: President Ken Frumin; Treasurer Jerry Kruse.

And the GVFR welcomes a new member: Rachel Massey. The new phone directory will be out in December.



Nov. 8th Chile-Margarita Fest winners: (left to right)

May Yen, Vegetarian

Alex Finlayson, Traditional

Charlie Holloway (in his once-a-year chile shirt for the occasion),
best Margarita and 2nd Place Non-Traditional

Greg Salustro, 3rd Place Non-Traditional

Dawn Carter, 1st Place Non-Traditional



Neighbors: Chris Watts with Una, Antonio Chavez with Gemma

EL PUENTE SPONSORS: TANYA AND JOHN YOUNG

GALISTEO CLASSIFIED: ADS ARE FREE, AND FOR GALISTEO RESIDENTS ONLY. Next deadline, Dec. 10. PLEASE email flip14@centurylink.net TO UPDATE OR DELETE YOUR AD IN A TIMELY FASHION.

FOR SALE

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.

SERVICES

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.

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. Come with Us!

Orchard Full-Service Catering: Personal chef, experience with special needs and dietary issues. Corey McGillicuddy, 466-1831, mcgillicuddycorey3@gmail.com. New soups change with the seasons, plus the old favorites. Let me know if you would like to receive email updates on my menus. mcgillicuddycorey3@gmail.com

Welding, flagstone, moss rock, fountains, plumbing, sprinkler, drip systems, plus Gopher Control. David Maestas, 670-8608 or 660-9715.

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

Pet, House, and Garden Care: Janet Pfeiffer, 399-9238.

Yoga Zoom classes with Julia: Every Mon., Wed., and Fri. Gentle Yin, Vinyasa Flow and Yin Yang. Contact 505-670-5478 or julia.c.cairns@gmail.com for more information.

Grow Y'own hooped and covered raised beds for year-round gardening! Ken 490-1849.

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

+++ 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. **NEXT DEADLINE:** Dec. 10. **TO SPONSOR:** Check to GCA for \$100-\$150 (or more!) noting "for newsletter"; send to above address.