

Corrales MainStreet News

Winter 2024

A partnership between Corrales MainStreet and the Rio Rancho Observer

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LISA SPARKS/COURTESY OF CORRALES HISTORICAL SOCIETY

On the cover: The Old San Ysidro Church during Las Posadas.

First responders
great during early
winter storm

Technically, it’s fall, but we have already been touched by some winter weather. The early November snow-storm brought some serious beauty and left many without power for an extended period. PNM worked hard to get service restored in the days that followed. The week after the outage, many trees were “trimmed” around existing power lines to prevent similar issues in the future. Thankfully, the fires started by the severed lines didn’t travel far because of the heavy moisture level.



ANGELA GUTIERREZ

During this event, and more than normal, Corrales first responders went above and beyond to assure residents were accounted for and safe. As mentioned in the draft of the Comprehensive Plan, these essential services are supported by gross receipts taxes collected by our unique and vibrant businesses. Thank you to everyone who shops locally and recognizes that it truly “takes a Village” to be a thriving and safe place to live. Please take the opportunity to do as much holiday shopping as possible locally. Cheers!

Celebrating
local businesses

We welcome you to our celebration of small business, with the holiday shopping season in full swing. This edition features Corrales establishments, both new and old, with unique stories to share.



WENDY HOFFMAN

We are privileged to offer accounts of exciting paths traveled by friends and neighbors to revitalize iconic village enterprises, thus preserving valuable pieces of our heritage. We also get to further introduce community residents to a new business that is taking creative approaches to some significant societal issues.

Finally, we can report good news about events that have already happened and a major project that has the potential to help every Corraleño, slated for implementation in the new year.

Grab some hot chocolate and a plate of biscochitos — or whatever your favorite holiday treat is — and sit back to enjoy your read. Then go shop locally!

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MI CASITA INSTAGRAM PHOTOS

Mi Casita under the best of Corrales' skies.

Business highlights

MAINSTREET NEWS STAFF REPORT

Business: The driving force behind the Village of Corrales' ability to sustain its infrastructure and pay the salaries of vital personnel like first responders. Some businesses are big, well-known and easily recognizable (think Frontier Market). Others are smaller, maybe in a more hidden location, or share space with several other enterprises. Getting acquainted with all that's available in the village helps residents take advantage of the convenience of shopping or obtaining services locally.

One such example is located directly east of the Sandia Bar at 4436 Corrales Road — a bustling plaza with an incredible variety of shops and businesses. Some, like Corrales Chiropractic, have been there for many years, while others are quite new. In the very back of Del Rio Plaza sits a newly renovated building that houses Mi Casita Home Decor. Opening their doors in September, Mi Casita offers a carefully curated collection of authentic Mexican décor, featuring pieces crafted by artisans from various regions and reflecting the beauty and cultural richness of Mexico.

The Del Rio Plaza is also home to Indigo House, Em2 Clinic, and Heartshrine, all very unique businesses offering something special.

Down the road a little way at 3650 Corrales Road, BeST Salon opened its doors in September, as well. Offering hair services, esthetics and medical spa services, it offers great potential for anyone who wants to make an appointment.

Last but not least, Terra Vera/Api Verra officially hosted its launch in October. This very special and environmentally impactful business right here in Corrales is worth researching and supporting. They are working every day to save our precious bees. Check them out!

For more information on village businesses, visit the MainStreet website, visitcorrales.com.

Keeping the ag tradition alive in Corrales

MAINSTREET STAFF REPORT

Agriculture is alive and well in Corrales, keeping time-honored traditions and businesses at the forefront of village culture. A new organization has been formed to assist local farmers, and The Growers' Market is flourishing with new reporting on an important fundraiser and on its seasonal hours. Additionally, one of the most recognizable Corrales farm families has been chosen for a coveted title.

Agriculture is a deeply rooted and time-honored tradition in the Village. The year of 2024 proved to be a difficult season because of a water delivery crisis that likely won't be solved in the foreseeable future. In an effort to assist local growers and farmers, a new 501c3, "Corrales Farmers' Cooperative," (CFC) has been formed. The CFC has been registered with the state of New Mexico as a nonprofit corporation. Stated strategy and objectives of the Corrales Farmers' Cooperative are:

Assure the viability and sustainability of farming in Corrales and assist farmers with best practices for water management, including but not limited to:

- Advocate and educate the public and governmental agencies about the needs and challenges faced by Corrales farmers;
- Create a network of Corrales farmers to share best practices for overcoming challenges posed by soil, climate, water shortages and other obstacles to crop production;
- Solicit funding and grants from private sources as well as local, state and federal agencies;
- Award grants to Corrales farmers and the farming community that help them overcome challenges of sustainable farming in Corrales.

The Corrales Growers' Market is another critical platform facilitating an opportunity for local farmers



MAINSTREET PHOTO

Chef Jon Young prepares the dinner won as part of the Growers' Market fundraiser.

to sell crops and for Corralesños to conveniently purchase products made with New Mexico-sourced foods. Heading into the winter season, a few Holiday Markets are hosted, offering an opportunity to buy food and gifts.

Upcoming events at the Growers' Market include:

- The Growers' Market Holiday Market from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. Dec. 22 and Winter Market Days, per their website, from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. Sundays, Jan. 5, Feb. 2, March 2

and April 6, 2025.

Corrales MainStreet staff is also happy to report that the fundraiser supported throughout the summer totaled \$1,700. All funds will cover the cost of running the market in the 2025 season.

Congratulations to the winner of the dinner, Mel Knight. She won dinner for 10 cooked and served by Chef Jon Young. Thank you again to all who bought a ticket and supported this initiative, and especially to Chef Young for donating his time and expertise.

Finally, one of the most recognizable Corrales farm families has been chosen for a coveted title, "Farm Family of the Year." The Wagner family, long established in Corrales, has been named Farm Family of the Year. Augustin Wagner Sr. started farming in Corrales in 1910, with 55 acres of farmland for growing green chile, alfalfa and a small variety of fruits and vegetables. The Wagner family, which today is led by Augustin's grandchildren and great-grandchildren, now farms more than 300 acres in Corrales and Socorro, plus runs a farm store, restaurant, corn maze and hay rides, and hosts an annual apple festival.

Congratulations to this beloved local family that provides fresh produce to our Village.

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A look back at 2024 in Corrales

MAINSTREET STAFF REPORT

Excitement is in the air – and not just because of the holidays, although a lot is happening in that arena, too. Corrales MainStreet (CMS) is looking forward to being part of a very important village-wide effort coming up while board, staff, and volunteers are reflecting on some great events from the year that's coming to a close.

First, please be on the lookout and share posts and information pertaining to a new safety project that will kick off in 2025. Education about how to be a good and safety-minded resident or visitor will be at the heart of the initiative. This collaborative effort among the Village, commissions, local organizations and our residents will benefit everyone, and your help is

needed to spread the message.

After a serious bicycle/horse accident last summer, residents recognized a need for dissemination of concentrated information related to safety for all road/trail users — vehicle drivers, pedestrians, bicycle riders and equestrians. Additional needs identified include safety and proper usage protocols regarding hitching posts — which visitors and maybe even some newer Corrales dwellers consider tourist attractions rather than functional posts used actively every day.

Various groups, including nonprofits, equestrian organizations, Village commissions and other interested parties have been meeting and planning the safety information campaign, seeking funding from various sources and already using the newly adopted Village motto

in print and social media materials: “Be courteous, drive slowly, and yield to equestrians, pedestrians, and bicyclists.” They have outlined measurable goal outcomes and set a target for rolling out the bulk of their materials before the next ¡Viva Corrales!

Watch the Mayor's Message, Corrales MainStreet News, the Corrales Comment and your favorite social media platforms for more information after New Year's Day.

Meanwhile, looking back, Starry Night, CMS' annual fundraiser, was hosted at Trees of Corrales, located at the north end of the Village. TOC's view of the Sandia Mountains is a special one and remains a primary benefit of attending Starry Night. A ticket to the event costs \$150, with sales raising more than \$20,000 for Corrales MainStreet to



MAINSTREET PHOTO

Gift baskets packed with local goodies.

reinvest in the community through events, programming and the ability to support our partner organizations.

A few exciting examples of CMS' impact are The Galloping Goats Fundraiser, financial and promotional support behind the Corrales Historical Society's and CSA's annual Fine Arts Show, Corrales PTA's annual Jog-a-Thon, CHAMP' & CEAC's Christmas de Caballos parade and more! CMS sends special thanks to Trees of Corrales, along with deep appreciation to all our sponsors, providers and attendees that support Starry Night: Your

contribution makes an impact and a difference.

Galloping Goats raised more than \$5,000. A portion of the funds will be used for expenses for the safety project. In more fall fun, seeing scarecrows during the harvest season is nothing new for Corrales, but this year, CMS hosted a friendly contest to encourage more participation in this well-loved village tradition. Winners included: first place: Demeter, Mother of the Harvest, Cottonwood Montessori; second place: Minions to the Rescue, Corrales Fire Department; third place: Spa Crow, Em2 Clinic; Mayor's Choice:

“Cat Lady,” Desert Bird Mercantile.

Finally, thank you to all who supported Small Business Saturday by shopping at our local businesses. Three lucky winners went home from the annual Christmas tree lighting after entering the drawing for prize baskets containing local goodies. Baskets were packed full with items from the Corrales Growers' Market, Corrales Chile Co., The Village Mercantile, Sage Valley Pottery, & Sandia Bar.

To learn more about the work of CMS and our mission, please visit our website: visitcorrales.com.



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Bernalillo resident Maria R had been experiencing the debilitating side effects of Peripheral Neuropathy. **"I was beginning to have other health issues due to the lack of sleep. I needed help just standing up and when I was standing I was afraid I would fall because I had no feeling in my feet.**

My life felt like a nightmare."

Then she met Albuquerque's very own Dr. Andrea Brogdon

"I was so desperate to the point of giving up" exclaimed Maria R. from Bernalillo. "I was in so much discomfort due to the numbness, tingling, and burning on the back of both legs and in my feet."

Maria R had been diagnosed with peripheral neuropathy and had seen a neurologist with no relief. To complicate things further, Maria had been diagnosed with two fractured discs in her back that were causing her severe pain. "I was no longer able to do surgery and all other treatments didn't work. I was starting to feel hopeless."

Maria is one of 3 million people in the United States suffering from peripheral neuropathy, a degenerative disease of the peripheral nervous system. "Those with peripheral neuropathy experience numbness, tingling, burning and even severe cramping due to the dying off of the peripheral nerves," explains Dr. Andrea Brogdon of Albuquerque Acupuncture & Integrative Medicine. "These nerves continue to die off until they have completely expired leaving sufferers with numbness and debilitating balance issues. Patients come to see me after having seen many other doctors with no relief. They have been told that there is nothing they can do or that they just have to live with it."

"I was beginning to have other health issues due to the lack of sleep. I

needed help just standing up and when I was standing I was afraid I would fall because I had no feeling in my feet. My life felt like a nightmare," says Maria.

"I learned about Dr. Andrea Brogdon from an article I read and learned that she helped others like me, experiencing the same symptoms. I made an appointment hoping she was going to be able to help me. It was my last resort."

Dr. Andrea Brogdon has helped thousands of patients get their life back after being diagnosed with peripheral neuropathy and living with the debilitating effects of the disease. How does she get such amazing results?

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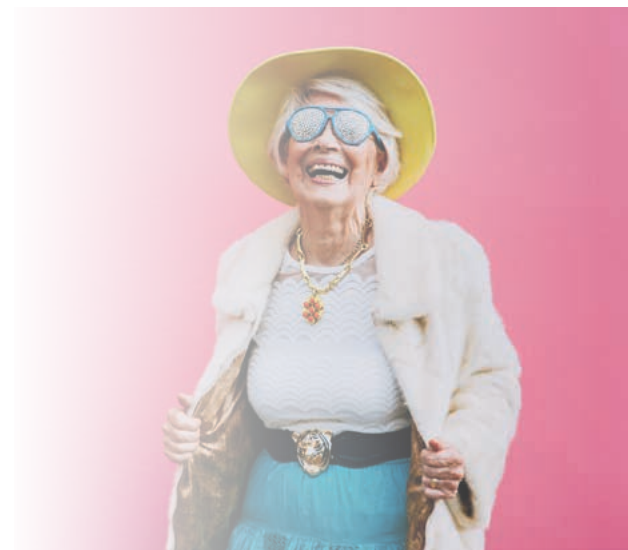
"Early detection is key when it comes to improving your chances of a full recovery," explains Dr. Brogdon. Which is why she starts every patient with an initial consultation during which a sensory exam is performed. "This helps to determine just how much nerve damage has occurred," tells the doctor. "This is important because if the patient has suffered more than 95%

sensory loss there is very little I can do at that point."

"After several treatments, I experienced tremendous relief. Life is good! I have seen a huge improvement in my walking, I sleep better, even my mood is better! I am so grateful I never stopped searching!" exclaims Maria.

If you or a loved one are living a life of suffering due to peripheral neuropathy and your pain has prevented you from doing the things you love with the people you love, it's time to call Dr. Brogdon and the staff at AAIM.

Call (505) 355-1984 today to schedule an initial consultation or visit AAIM-ABQ.com to read more incredible success stories.



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Passion keeps beloved Corrales business alive

BY WENDY HOFFMAN
MAINSTREET NEWS EDITOR

Editor's note: This is the second article in a two-part series on the rescue and revitalization of a community treasure. In our Corrales MainStreet News Winter edition, we take a deeper dive into this exciting and meaningful effort. In Part 1, you met Jessi Penrod, who is not only the new owner of Sage Valley Pottery but also the assistant director of Corrales MainStreet. As a small-business owner, artist and junior executive, she is uniquely qualified to offer valuable insights to anyone considering such a venture. In this part of the story, she shares her journey to this exciting place.

When the former Hanselmann's Pottery closed at the end of 2023, it left a big hole in the village. A time-honored, incredibly unique business, it was missed by many. Some of those who didn't want it to disappear forever contacted manager Jessi Penrod with suggestions about how to keep the venerable institution alive.

"So many people reached out to me with connections, ways to make this happen," she said. "I thought if so many people love it that much, it must be something worth keeping alive, worth bringing back. It left a big gap. Hanselmann's has been making pottery that meant something to a

number of people over the years."

And so those initial thoughts became reality, resulting in the gallery reopening in September under her ownership and the new name of Sage Valley Pottery.

Penrod's journey to business owner took her through various steps in college and in Corrales. She earned a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree from the University of New Mexico but didn't expect "to get a great job" right away. She says, however, that only six months after graduating, she saw an ad for a potter to join the Hanselmann team, and she responded. The rest, she says, is history — that felt like a master's program based on her



COURTESY SAGE VALLEY POTTERY

Jessi Penrod spins clay.

learning curve in both the worlds of art and business.

She originally planned to major in music, but part of that curriculum included fine arts. She tried oil painting, then shifted to pottery, which she hated. She said hurdles along the way included things like the awkwardness in clay spinning. "It's so hard," she said. "It's the most challenging skill I have ever learned, and it took months to learn just the basics." But she had to complete the course to get her degree, and the love came slowly. "By the end, I started really enjoying it. I liked learning the nuances in the spinning speed, what muscles I had to use." From then on, soaking up knowledge and honing her skills brought joy — which she discovered she loved to share. "I loved the materials, the firings, making useful things from what I liked doing."

Having settled on pottery as her chosen medium, she

obtained her Corrales job and worked her way up to gallery manager, defying the predictions of her professors. "They all told me, 'Don't ever take a job in a production studio,'" she added, laughing, because here she was, doing a job that she loved in her chosen field so soon after receiving her degree.

But as she worked to further the interests of the gallery, she felt a kind of restlessness born from the idea that "we could do more." Community participation was a huge driver for her marketing plans because she perceived a gap between Hanselmann and the local arts contingent. She found herself asking, "Why aren't we participating in arts and community events? Why aren't we at Harvest Festival, and why don't we belong to CSA (the Corrales Society of Artists)? Why don't we get First Sunday going again?"

She started attending

meetings to see what was happening, and at which she thought she could facilitate collaboration among art community members, but she found it harder than she'd anticipated. She was younger then (she just celebrated her 30th birthday in July), and, she says, the perception was that Hanselmann's was "a factory," which didn't endear it to some artists. "It was not easy for me to get involved," she said. "It took a long time; it took me reaching out to a lot of people."

Finally, she said, she was invited to join CSA by the then-president, the late Ken Duckert. "He said, 'You should be in CSA; you should be on the studio tour,'" she recalled. And that broke the ice. She is excited to report that the organization is expanding its membership and inviting "people my age." And that means more opportunities to further fine art through social media audiences — Instagram, Facebook, Canva

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— whose skills Penrod had to develop on her own. Now she's happy to help others learn how to use various platforms.

She says while she received an excellent arts education in college, she did not get any classes or programs on how to run a business, how to market products, “no business education that would translate into my career.” At Hanselmann, she said, she learned so much in that “master’s program,” including the social media aspects and how to manage the gallery’s online presence, plus she got a peek at her future self as businesswoman.

“As I was growing there, I took all kinds of business workshops, and it got kind of exciting. We were experiencing a time of growth. I liked networking with all kinds of people. We partnered with chefs and designers, learning what they were doing, and we elevated our products. For example, they like white (dishes, bowls, etc.) because it doesn’t detract from their offerings. Our products are now in B&B casitas, in glamping (sites).” She found that growth, personal and business-wise, very encouraging.

Suddenly, it all came to an end. In December 2023, the time-honored gallery closed, and while the potters who worked and showed there knew the owner was considering the possibility, it happened more abruptly than they had anticipated. It was, Penrod said, “a traumatic experience” for them. “We were all passionate about what we were doing, about what the gallery was about. It was an opportunity to make a living doing what we love and sharing that with people.”

The people with whom they had shared their work heard what was happening and began showing support in big numbers. “I got so many messages, super heartfelt stories, about what it had meant to them,” she said. “Everyone approached me saying it was such a treasure to the community for so long. It had been so traumatic, and I didn’t know if I wanted to do it any longer, but people were connecting me to other resources.”

Slowly, the idea of bringing the unique shop back to life percolated through her mind and heart, and she acted.

“I reached out to MainStreet (CMS), and they helped. I talked to their board and staff. They helped me to see what the potential was for me to do anything. Jim (Kruger, current CMS board vice president) talked with me about how transitions work. Can we start a new business? Can we do similar things? Can we keep it for the community?” It was, after all, the same people working there sharing the same goal, she said.



COURTESY SAGE VALLEY POTTERY

Hand spotting.

Soon, potential investors reached out saying, “I’d be interested in helping you.” She retained an attorney, built a business plan and contacted the owner of the building, Fritz Allen. (Editor’s note: Read Allen’s history of Hanselmann’s in the MainStreet News Fall edition.) He had been hoping someone would rescue the gallery in which he had once been an owner, and he stepped up to help, Penrod said. “He’s been very patient while I figured all this stuff out. Everything we needed came to us through all those connections,” she added.

Also playing an integral role in the gallery resurgence, Penrod said, is her business partner, Trevor Wolfe. “His support has been a huge contributor to this being possible,” she said. “He has connected us to resources and has been assisting me getting the new brand together. He is also helping me with several tasks in getting the business side of things rolling so I can turn my focus to our work and transforming the studio into a safe and inviting workspace.”

That work, the complexity of pottery making, involves more than the average person might understand, Penrod said, but along with community interactions, some of the lesser-known aspects include, perhaps unexpectedly, chemistry. “Then there’s the chemistry side,” she said. Studio personnel pay attention to the safety of their products as well as design, color and visual appeal. “We use glazes that don’t have scarce minerals,” she said. “They are sustainable, last for years, and will help use less plastic. We’re concerned with not just food safety but also

not putting a strain on the environment.”

They have done their own research in house and make their own glazes, she added. “They are durable, safe, pretty, nontoxic to use, and have good weight and thickness. We

are happy to be making something of value.”

Penrod also loves the connecting, people-driven side. “With the present challenge of availability for space in the Village, I will be opening my doors to those who need it, with limits of course,” she said. “I will be welcoming artists, including other potters, to show at my gallery on First Sundays. CSA board meetings are now being held in my studio since getting the space at the community center is a challenge for them. I also look forward to partnering with CHAMP and CEAC and other organizations to open up the gallery space for meetings, tours and other private events that promote the arts.”

Bringing all the aspects of a pottery studio — technical, scientific, business, artistic, human — together has been at the least challenging and at times overwhelming, Penrod said. But it has also been totally worth all the effort. “We are all passionate about what we do,” she said. Penrod invites the community to the gallery for holiday shopping. Hours in the honor-checkout store are 24/7/365, so, she says, come on in at any time.

For information, contact Penrod at jessi@sagevalleypottery.com.

Happy Holidays

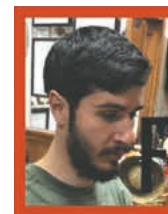
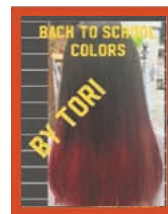
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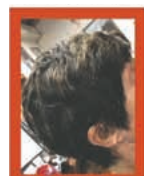
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New Sandia Bar a mix of tradition and looking forward

BY WENDY HOFFMAN
MAIN STREET NEWS EDITOR

Saving a piece of history can be as easy as turning over a family heirloom to the Corrales Historical Society or as hard as keeping a venerable old building alive and vibrant. The latter is the story of Corrales' much-loved Sandia Bar.

Located on Corrales Road, the bar was established in 1948 and had long been the locals' go-to place for libations, a friendly pool game, to listen to live music, and plenty of socialization, aka "sitting at the bar." But in recent years, it fell on some hard times.

Forced to close in March 2020 because of the COVID pandemic, the neighborhood institution was never far from the mind of one Corrales native. Owned and run continuously by the Chavez family, Sandia Bar had piqued the Corralesño's interest because he "wanted to be a part of the bar for many years." (Those interested in the history of the bar can find information in "Hometown Corrales, A Family Album," by Mary Pietsch Davis, Village of Corrales historian.)

With his fond memories, he said he had

kept his eyes open for any opportunity to explore purchasing the bar. It finally materialized when the Chavez family decided the time had come to part with their life's work. Finding a business partner to purchase the building and engaging an old childhood friend as another partner, they jumped at the chance, and the enterprise grew from there, he said. The new owner and his wife, both proud Corralesños, were off and running with the partners lending major support.

This businessman speaks with fondness for his birthright community and for the historical landmark he was challenged to bring back to life. When it closed during the pandemic, he said, it was in good enough shape to be operational. It had, he said, a good foundation, but it had been subjected to the ravages of time. The floor was actually 18 inches below street level, not because the building was sinking but because Corrales' unique soil had drifted and collected around the building and throughout the property, naturally raising the ground. Additionally, in the old territorial style, ceilings and doors were low, so some structural engineering got underway.

"We wanted to make it a structure that



COURTESY OF SANDIA BAR

Sandia Bar's main entrance and original preserved beer signs.

fit the Corrales style," he said, "and we wanted to retain the feel of the old bar." To that end, Sandia Bar still sports two pool tables in pretty much the same spots as in the past, and it has a juke box. The bar is also very close to its original location. Vigas (bigger than the early ones) and the ceiling's herringbone pattern enhance the nostalgia. In addition to upgraded furniture, including comfy sofas in front of a fireplace, the bar features colorful art by world-renowned Northern New Mexico artist Ed Samuels.

However, more was needed, so the partners decided to preserve but expand the original footprint. The size is now almost twice the space they purchased, and the new owner is quick to point out the outlines of the old long rectangular building so former patrons can orient themselves. In addition to adding rooms, a rooftop deck was included, affording customers a great view of the bar's namesake, the Sandia Mountains.

One partner's idea, he said, the deck represents something no other establishment in Corrales and few in Albuquerque offer. It is part and parcel of their desire to preserve the culture and historic feeling of the original hotspot while giving their patrons a unique bar experience.

Finally, he said, the lot next to the original Sandia property was a part of the parcel, and the partners soon realized it would give them room for an amazing patio. Like every other businessperson



COURTESY CORRALES HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Founder Vivian Chavez in the first Sandia Bar on West Ella, c. 1958.

in Corrales, the new owner is sensitive to the need to offer parking not only for

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the convenience of those visiting his establishment but as a service to the village. Parking issues are a part of most business-oriented conversations, so, after tearing down an existing house, they chose to divide the non-building parts of the two-lot property into an outdoor serving area and parking spaces. The bar has been successful enough that they've already seen overflow, so they are considering how to mitigate those issues, he said.

The bar re-opened in August 2024 after many months of construction that came with its standard stops and starts. For example, PNM needed to move a power line, which took approximately six months, during which other work had to stop. But, the new owner said, staff at the offices of the Village of Corrales were very helpful with routine matters like permitting. "The Village was really great," he said. "They and the state worked with us and were very helpful."

The bar is now available to host such private events as graduation and birthday parties, he said, although inside space is limited, especially during winter. Indoor capacity is approximately 50, but as soon as weather permits, the outdoor spaces on the patio and deck can be included in the planning, and capacity goes up, he added.

The future holds more fun, he said, because they will open a kitchen in a small, casita-like structure that is separate from the bar. "We want to offer 'unique, elevated bar food,'" he said. The menu isn't fully developed yet, so its evolution will be a surprise for customers to enjoy. They hope to have the kitchen up and running early in the new year. Built with a pickup window, the kitchen will serve inside and patio customers, he added. Currently, a food truck sells standard bar food — burgers, fries, tacos and shareable snacks seven days a week,

with Sunday's special being a pizza truck.

The new owner's ability to revitalize a piece of Corrales' history is an outgrowth of his construction business, Synergy Builders, which he has run with his brother since 2001. They do house remodels and additions, and some — but "not a lot" — of new construction. "You find your niche," he said, and for them it's remodels of just the kind for which Sandia Bar was prime.

Their father was a surveyor, he explained, as was his dad (the boys' grandpa), while their mom's brothers were all builders. So, from the paternal surveyors and maternal uncles, construction and excellent use of land was in their blood, he added. Clearly, family plays a large role in the entire Sandia Bar revitalization. The owner summed up, "If it weren't for the support of my wife, this would not have happened."

The partners are optimistic that Sandia Bar, because of its thoughtful preservation aspects integrated with creative offerings, will be serving Corralesños for another 76 years. Again emphasizing their desire to retain the historic culture of the original Sandia Bar, he said, "We want it to be known as a bar with food and not a restaurant with a bar. The kitchen will be a food truck on a foundation,"



COURTESY CORRALES HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Vivian and Lillian Chavez at Vivian's 80th birthday party, Dec. 26, 2002.



COURTESY OF SANDIA BAR

Sandia Bar's exterior patio and deck.

which customers can enjoy along with their signature cocktails such as the Corrales Cowgirl, the Wagner or the Spicy Sandia. It all adds up to the realization of this native Corralesño's goals — preserving an amazing and well-loved piece of village history while bringing orderly progress through innovation.

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Refillery offers local shopping with environmental benefits

BY LAUREN WENDEROTH

Editor's note: Corrales resident Lauren Wenderoth is a mother, self-identified Earth-lover and proud New Mexican. In 2024, she left behind her career in dietetics for a new entrepreneurial venture and opened The Village Refillery, a bulk refill shop located at East Meadowlark and Corrales roads, in the building that previously housed The Darling Tribes School. MainStreet News invited Wenderoth to relate some frequently asked questions, along with her own answers about her unique business and to share more about her vision.

Question: First and foremost, what exactly is a refillery?

Answer: A refillery is a store where customers can bring their own reusable containers to fill with product from bulk dispensers. They can fill as much or as little as they like and pay by the ounce at checkout. The Village Refillery stocks household cleaners (like laundry detergent, dish soap) and personal care items (shampoo, lotion, deodorant, etc.). It's all refillable! Shopping this way significantly

reduces the amount of plastic sent to landfills. Additionally, it ensures 100% of customer dollars go toward high-quality, environmentally safe products rather than packaging they don't need and won't keep.

Q: So, a customer can bring any container to this store and fill it with anything they want?

A: Yes! Any clean container. We also have free containers that have been donated and sanitized (think mason jars). Some people opt to buy a new, branded container from us to start and then refill that each time they need more product. Lots of options!

Q: Wow, that seems like a very sensible system. What inspired you to start this business?

A: I started The Village Refillery not only as a creative outlet but also as a way to channel my climate anxiety into actionable change. I want more than anything to leave my children with the biggest inheritance imaginable: a healthy planet. Leaving them with financial wealth or physical assets won't matter one bit if they don't have a healthy planet to call

home.

Q: True. What's been the community response so far to having a refill shop in Corrales?

A: It's been extremely positive! We're seeing that consumers are disillusioned by the concept of recycling and are hungry for a more sustainable way to shop. I anticipated that Corrales would embrace having a place to buy nontoxic, sustainable products over the alternative. We rely on wells and septic tanks so if we put toxic chemicals or microplastics down our drains, they get into our soil and our acequias. That means they get into our drinking water and the food that our farmers grow.

But what I didn't anticipate was how much the community would really love the refill aspect! We keep setting new monthly records for refills. And in just seven months, our customers have refilled more than 600 times, meaning we've diverted 600-plus containers from landfills.

Q: That's an incredible number. You also make quite a few of the products yourself, is that right?

A: Yes, I formulate and make our soaps, lotions and the majority of our skin care products. I make them in our Corrales solar-powered workshop, all in small batches from locally sourced ingredients.



COURTESY OF VILLAGE REFILLERY

Corrales Refillery owner Lauren Wenderoth.

Q: The Village Refillery is also making a name for itself in the hospitality sector. Tell us more about that side of the business.

A: The travel and hospitality industries are enormous creators of plastic waste, and we're on a mission to change that. We love assisting the owners of cafes, vacation rentals and bed-and-breakfasts in New Mexico in creating unforgettable, authentic guest experiences by providing them with luxurious, sustainably made amenities (like our hand soap, lotion, body wash and room sprays). And the best part — they're all refillable! No more single-use plastic bottles for guest toiletries!

Q: These days, people can buy anything they want on Amazon and get it delivered in two days. How do you compete with that?

A: People are sick of plastic and in our post-pandemic world, they're hungry for connection and transparency. Our customers are happy to have a different experience from what they're used to when shopping online or at a big-box store. I joke that the dictionary definition of a refillery should be: A place where everybody knows your name. We know our customers; they're our neighbors and our friends, they know each other. It's a community.

Q: You've explained the savings in discarded plastics, but can consumers



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expect to save money in either the short or long term?

A: The short answer is it depends. It's hard to price compare the items we stock to items at big-box stores. It's like comparing apples to oranges. On the one hand, many of our cleaning products are priced on par with the leading "green" brands sold at major shopping outlets. For example, the laundry detergent and dish powder we stock cost the same per load as many well-known, brand-name, eco-friendly products. So, in comparison to these products, consumers will save money by not re-buying the container each time. However, the cleaners we stock admittedly cost more than what we consider their low-quality, environmentally unsound counterparts.

A key difference to consider when shopping at refill stores like ours is that because we're sourcing from brands who care about their use of finite resources (e.g. water) and the emissions associated with shipping, most of the products we sell are highly concentrated. The chemists behind them have worked extremely hard to formulate using only a fraction of the water used in conventional big-brand products. So, while a shopper may pay more per ounce for a given product in our shop, that product is likely to last much longer. A little goes a long way.

Additionally, I have been very intentional about stocking products across price points to ensure that The Village Refillery is as accessible as possible to as many as possible. When it comes to the products I make myself, I price these as low as I possibly can while still covering fixed costs and paying my employees a fair living wage (which is different from minimum wage).

It is undeniable, however, that those who find themselves most challenged by economic inequality are likely not able to pay more up front for the higher-quality, concentrated products typically sold at refill stores. This is something many in the refill industry, me included, are working to change, but for sustainable living to be truly equitable and accessible to all, it will take major shifts at the state and federal level to defund the single-use plastic industry and invest in circular economic systems.

In addition to aiming for price variety, I seek to balance these inequities in a few other ways. On a quarterly basis, I give a portion of profit to climate justice organizations, or local nonprofit groups who support Indigenous food sovereignty and help fight local food insecurity. This

month we hosted a shopping event from which 10% of profit went to Corrales Elementary School (part of APS) as a way of investing in our local community's future generations.

So, while our shoppers may pay a little more up front for some items, there are absolutely long-term savings; they are just hard to measure concretely. For example, fewer microplastics in our water and soil is vital for our own long-term health and will result in lower health care costs down the road. Additionally, shopping locally is a vital form of community investment that pays dividends to Corrales residents in ways that shopping online or at big-box stores simply won't. From employing Corrales residents to paying state and county gross receipts tax that help fund our public libraries and parks and first responders, small businesses like us are a financial backbone for healthy communities.

I know that many Corrales residents are worried about more business coming to the Village. I share that concern. What I hope to shed light on is how small businesses like us, as well as the other locally owned businesses I share space with (Desert Bird Mercantile, Corrales Yoga Space and Belle's Urban Deli) are giving back to our community in ways that big businesses and chains never will. Keeping these small businesses here occupying space means: We keep large, foreign-owned corporations out; we generate revenue for



COURTESY OF VILLAGE REFILLERY

Castile soap.



COURTESY OF VILLAGE REFILLERY

Pump jugs.

local government that gets reinvested in maintaining public assets; we contribute to lower unemployment rates; and we are much more likely to give back to local nonprofits in the form of donations and partnerships.

Q: How can people get in touch or find more information?

A: They can visit our store at 3650 Corrales Road or our website, TheVillageRefillery.com. We're also on Instagram: @villagerefillery_corrales

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Merry Christmas

A makeover for the ages

Historic Old San Ysidro Church post renovation

BY CORRALES HISTORIC SOCIETY

One of the most recognizable images of Corrales is Historic Old San Ysidro Church. As the icon of the village, it is depicted on the village seal. Many of you have attended concerts in this building and marveled at the acoustics. Perhaps you were married here or have been to a wedding in the warmth of the adobe walls. Artists love the simple grace of the church as a backdrop to their creations. It is a gentle embrace for those coming to a memorial. It's also a place of fun and bustling activities during Harvest Festival, Heritage Day, Festival of the Nativities, art and craft Shows, Speaker Series that highlight fascinating aspects of New Mexico, and more — all of which are free and open to the public.



The Old Church wasn't always as you see it today: a prime example of a Colonial New Mexican mission church. Fifty years ago, it looked pitiful indeed and in great need of repair and a lot of TLC.

The Old Church wasn't always as you see it today: a prime example of a Colonial New Mexican mission church. Fifty years ago, it looked pitiful indeed and in great need of repair and a lot of TLC.

The Old San Ysidro Church, built in 1868, had been decommissioned/deconsecrated by the Archdiocese of Santa Fe when its congregation moved to a new building on Corrales Road — a new San Ysidro Church — in the early 1960s. The Adobe Theater leased the premises and held plays in the Old Church for nearly 25 years. The building was modified to create a theater with a stage, a slanted floor with theater seats and a light booth. (Black paint is still found on the posts and vigas by the stage.) Transept windows were used as stage exits/entries with stiles built outside the windows. The sacristy was used as a dressing room.

A group of local community members interested in



COURTESY OF CHS

Historic Old San Ysidro Church post renovation.

forming a nonprofit organization to preserve the building contacted the Archdiocese about purchasing the Old Church.

The Archdiocese agreed that the building and land could be sold to a nonprofit organization. Community members began fundraising (bake sales, dinners, raffles and donations) to purchase the Old Church building and land. This group of heroes was the initial membership of Corrales Historical Society, which was incorporated in 1973. The Village of Corrales, incorporated in 1971, provided additional funds when the community was unable to raise the entire purchase price

(\$9,500) of the Old Church.

CHS to the rescue!

Soon after the Old Church was purchased, it was deeded to the Village of Corrales through agreement with the Archdiocese, Village of Corrales and the newly formed Corrales Historical Society. CHS agreed to manage the Old Church, focusing on fundraising and maintaining the premises. The restoration began with two-fold goals: to ensure that the Old Church's historic nature was protected and that the Old Church be a community resource

after restoration. Basic restoration was completed, removing theatre seats, risers and other remains of the theater, as well as the hard exterior stucco and replacing both the outside walls and interior with traditional adobe plaster. The church's adobe construction required (and continues to require) ongoing maintenance.

To accomplish its goals, CHS has an elected board: president, vice president, secretary and treasurer who each serve one-year terms, and two directors, who serve staggered two-year terms. Other voting members

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include the chairs of each standing committee. Nonvoting members of the board include the immediate past president, who serves for one year, and the chair of each special committee. The board meets monthly.

Groups within CHS include:

Archives is responsible for the collection, preservation and archiving of materials relating to the history of Old San Ysidro Church and the Corrales community. The committee displays selected materials at Heritage Day in May. Archival photos are available to view on the new Ideum Interactive Touch Table located in the sacristy of the Old Church, and on the University of New Mexico's website: econtent.unm.edu/digital/collection/chs.

Preservation and Maintenance is responsible for preservation of the church building in compliance with strict historic preservation requirements. (The Old Church was added to the National Register of Historic Places in 1980 and is also listed on the New Mexico Register of Cultural Properties.) P&M manages the ongoing maintenance of the church building, annex, and grounds — including everything from minor repairs to larger projects such as re-mudding and the work on our newly renovated annex. An annual workday is held in late April, originally called Mudding Day, because years ago Corrales families gathered that day to help re-mud the Old Church. Today, it is a general cleanup day where folks can still get their hands a little dirty mudding the front courtyard walls.

Docents is a volunteer group within Corrales Historical Society whose purpose is to support and carry out the educational mission of the society and provide educational tours of Historic Old San Ysidro Church. The Docent Program provides support for CHS special events and enjoys activities just for docents. If you haven't yet, come enjoy a docent-led tour of the Old Church.

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COURTESY OF CHS

Historic Old San Ysidro Church in need of repair.

arts and winter craft shows each year. In recent years CHS has co-sponsored these shows with Corrales Society of Artists. VAC also assists with other art shows that may occur.

Membership manages the annual renewal of memberships each year, maintains the database of members and promotes new membership.

Marketing represents the society by promoting events, programs, educational materials, fundraising efforts and rental opportunities to the public. It assists all committees by designing and preparing promotional materials for their events and preparing event information for dissemination through electronic

means, print, social media and TV/radio coverage. Marketing also prepares or assists in preparation of announcements, forms and the annual report for the CHS Board.

Ways & Means researches possible sources of funds from grants and corporate outreach programs, applies for grants and creates fundraising events to benefit CHS.

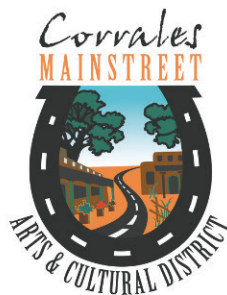
CHS Special Committees include a **Casa San Ysidro liaison** who maintains our relationship with our neighbor across the road and keeps us abreast of their activities. **Music in Corrales liaison** maintains our relationship and keeps us informed of their activities. Both look for areas where mutual events might be possible. Music in Corrales has rented the Old Church for its concerts for many years.

CHS is an all-volunteer organization, and everyone in Corrales benefits from their efforts. Volunteers work hard to provide entertaining and educational programs that enhance your knowledge of New Mexico history and its culture. Many of our events are family oriented. If you haven't been to our **Harvest Festival Fiesta** in September and participated in the Pie Walk, be sure to get it on your calendar. (It's just \$1 to walk the walk and try to win a fruit-of-the-harvest homemade pie, and it is so much fun.) All other events are free, but we appreciate donations that go right back into keeping the Old Church in great shape to be enjoyed by current and future Village residents and visitors. CHS generates funds by renting the Old Church for weddings, meetings, art shows, concerts, social gatherings, memorials, dinners, family reunions and much more.

You can help keep history alive in '25! Become a CHS member. It is a fun group with a very worthy cause. Find out more on the website **CorralesHistory.org** and click on Membership. Your help is welcome — and there's a niche waiting just for you.

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