

THE DEFENDER

*Newsletter of the
New Mexico Law Offices of the Public Defender*



Message from the Chief



We've made a lot of strides in 2019 in improving our services to our clients, something I talk a lot about. Each one of you has contributed to that. I am grateful for the opportunity to work with each of you.

I'm also grateful to be part of this community of public defenders.

Over this year, I've seen this community change. I've seen more connection among the offices, more awareness of the work we all are doing, more learning from each other and more learning *about* each other. I see us recognizing that the work of each one of us is valuable.

For the first time in many years, all staff is invited to attend the annual LOPD conference in June because secretaries and paralegals contribute every bit as much as attorneys do. Each of us is valuable whenever we touch the lives of a client or contribute to that.

I know that we have a long way to go, but thank you for all your work. You rock. (And speaking of rocks, check out the work that Lisa Robles has inspired.)

An image from U.S. Supreme Court Justice Sonia Sotomayor's children's book encouraging kids to ask and not assume when encountering differences.

Rockin' it

Las Cruces clerk spreads love, comfort with painted rocks

When Lisa Robles picks up a rock, she tries to see what it wants to become as she paints it. A fish? A bus? A shoe?

Whatever it is, the final answer is that it becomes a gift to herself, her friends and to strangers who find the rocks she strategically places across town.

“For me, painting rocks is very therapeutic. Especially after a stressful week at the LOPD,” Robles said.

“I paint some to give away to bored kids who are in the lobby with parents, waiting to apply for a public defender.”

The hobby brings people together and out of their homes as they hunt for rocks or paint them together, she said.

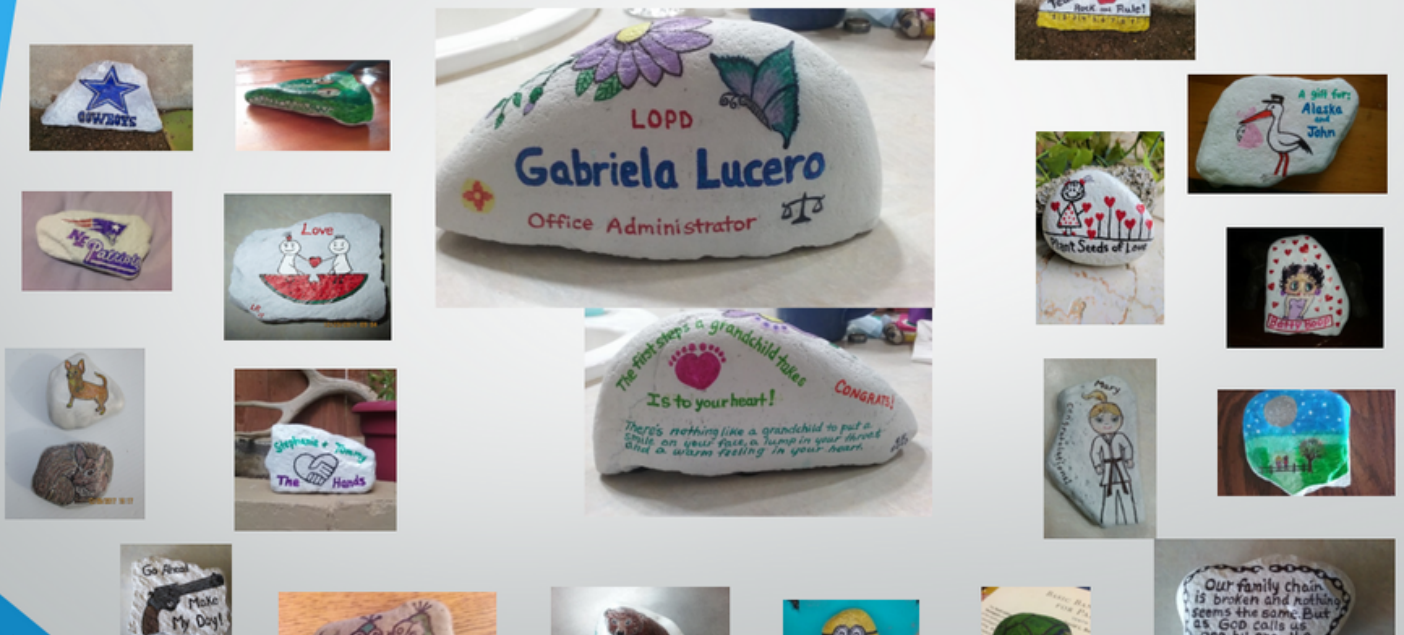
And finding a rock, either randomly or through websites dedicated to the activity, makes people smile. “I think the most important thing for me is that something so small, easy and



Lisa Robles

More on the next page

I like to paint gifts for people.





Taos office manager Mabel Pacheco poses with the rock she painted in honor of her grandson Adonis, who passed away, and Julie Kitch from the Albuquerque office shows off her whale and pickle rocks.

therapeutic, for me, can change a person's total outlook – for an hour, a day, or even possibly their whole life,” she said.

“I like to just leave an ‘uplifting’ rock laying around at convenience stores, parks, neighborhood mailboxes, fast food places and when I could – High Schools!”

She's heard from people who have found her rocks and told her it turned a bad day brighter. She says that's so important considering the amount of mental strain and illness in young people, an issue close to her heart.

Julie Kitch, the programs administrator

in Albuquerque, recently painted rocks during an office manager training day.

Robles presented her rock painting to the manager's group, showing them examples of some of her work and encouraging them to have fun doing art together to share with others.

Kitch painted her rocks into a whale and pickle and gave the whale to her 8-year-old son.

“It's on top of his humidifier, his diffuser at home, and he placed it where the steam comes out so it looks like it's coming out of the whale's blowhole,” Kitch said, with a smile.

Recruitment excursions

Deputy Chief Cydni Sanchez and Training & Recruitment Director Patricia Anders interviewed candidates at the Equal Justice Works Career Fair in Arlington, VA in October. The EJW fair is the largest national public interest legal career fair, drawing more than 1,400 law students from over 150 schools.

At UNM School of Law, Chief Ben Baur along with attorneys Jeff Rein, Tonie Abeyta, Ben Smith, Simon Suzuki and Patricia Anders spoke with students about career and externship opportunities with LOPD over lunch and participated in the Association for Public Interest Law outreach day with Director of Student and Career Services Bonnie Stepelton.

And Sarah Field and 11th District Defender Matt Cockman went all out to showcase the activities abundant in their area during video interviews.

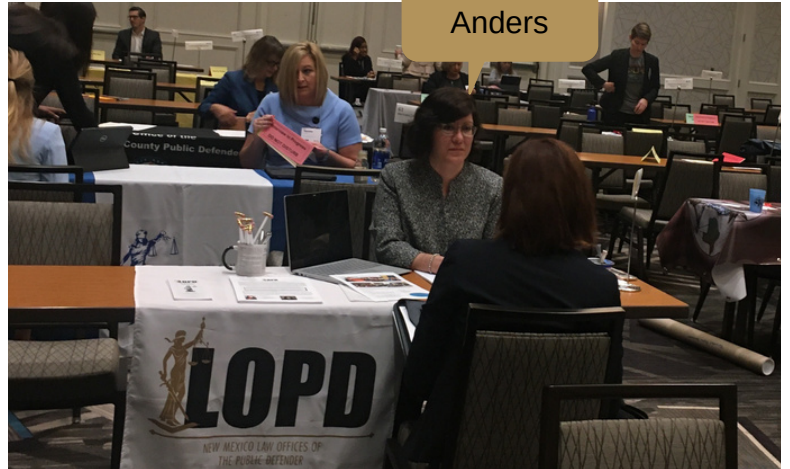


Cydni Sanchez

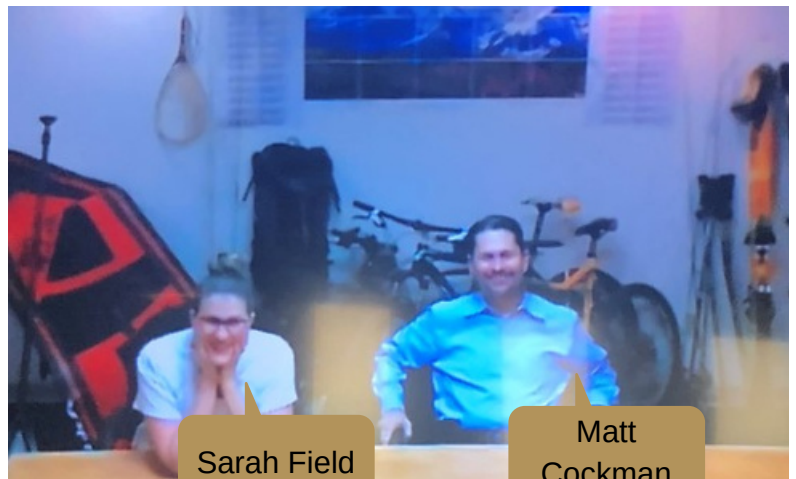


Chief Ben Baur

UNM SOL's Bonnie Stepelton



Patricia Anders



Sarah Field

Matt Cockman

Las Cruces crew helps Camp Hope



A team from the Las Cruces office helped build some walls, roofs and a few location pads on Nov. 2 at Community of Hope in Las Cruces.

"This is Camp Hope, also referred to as 'tent city', where the homeless and near homeless live, many of them our former and present clients," said Kris Knutson, district defender for Las Cruces.

Save the date

The 2020 LOPD Annual Conference has been set.

Save the date for Monday and Tuesday June 15-16 at the Albuquerque Pyramid North Marriott.

This year's conference will host attorneys, investigators, social workers —and staff.



LOPD acknowledged the state's first Indigenous People's Day in October, sharing in the movement to bring accuracy and awareness to our state's culture, history and geography.

Successful Warrant Resolution Day in Abq

Abq Metro Managing Attorney Kelly Villanueva reports that the Nov. 8 Bernalillo County Metro Court's Warrant Resolution served more than 500 people.

"Because of your help, 500 people will be able to get drivers licenses, get jobs and stop worrying about this. You are a wonderful group of people to work with," Villanueva said.

Use that personal day

Career track employees need to use their personal day before Dec. 31 or it will expire.

The 16 hours of personal leave Admin Comp Time recently awarded to every employee (those hired prior to Nov. 1, 2019) by Chief Ben Baur and the deputy chiefs does not expire.

IT keeps it green with recycle trip



Calvin Martinez

The good folks in IT gathered three van-loads of broken and outdated electronics, inventoried and tagged them all, then made a special trip on a weekend to recycle them. "We disposed of approximately ... 120 tower computers/laptops, 50 printers/scanners, and 120 mice and keyboards," IT's Calvin Martinez said.

Swearing-ins



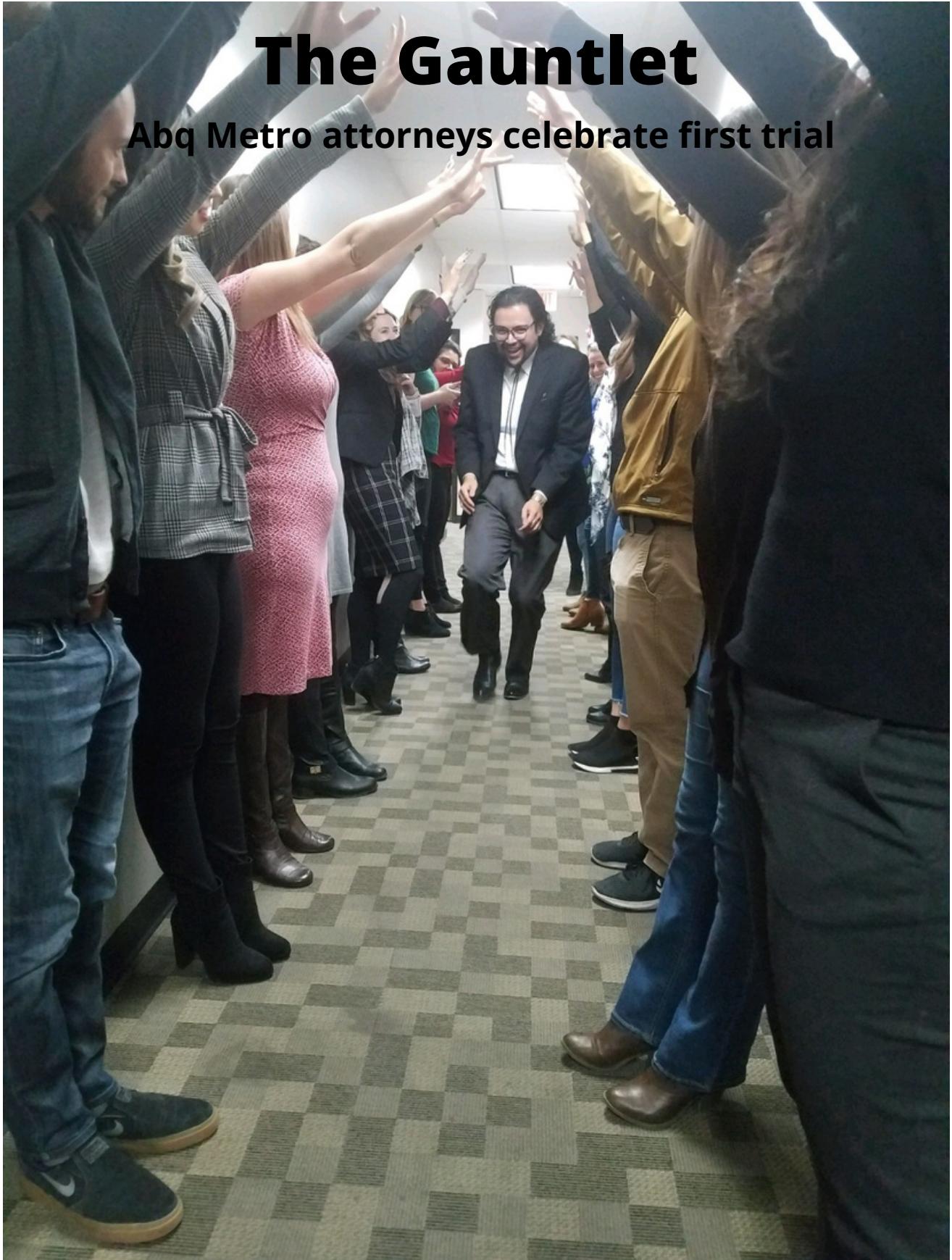
Brianna Argueta being sworn in Nov. 5 in Hobbs.



New LOPD commissioners being sworn in. At left is Hon. Richard Bosson, and at right is Michael Sanchez.

The Gauntlet

Abq Metro attorneys celebrate first trial



Isabella Pacheco

Cameron Payette



Lindsey Rosebrough

Simon Suzuki



Albuquerque's Metro Division carries on their fairly new tradition of celebrating each new attorney's first trial — no matter the outcome.

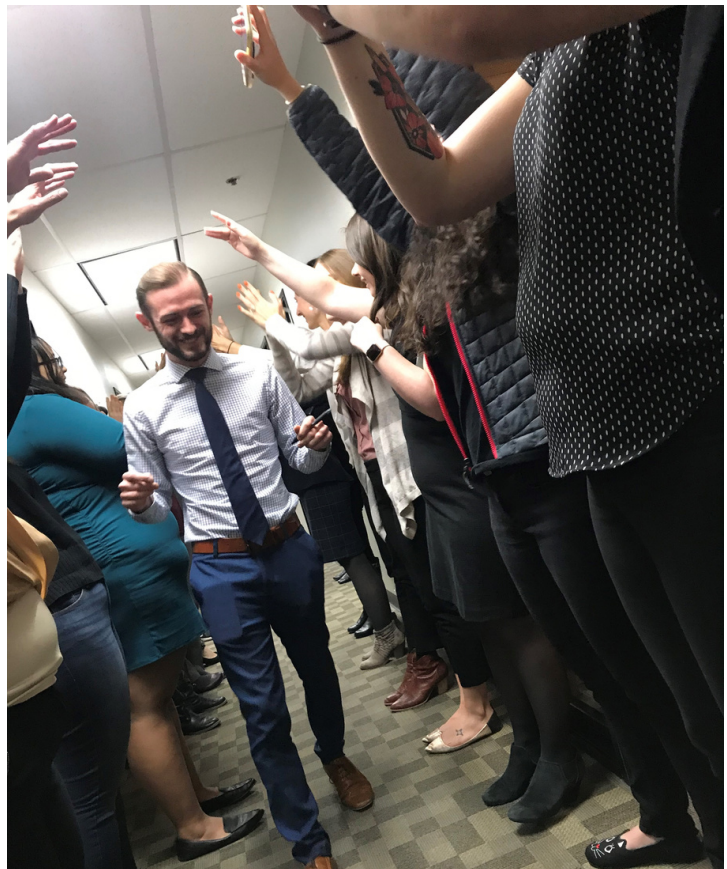
"It is an encouraging ceremony," Metro Managing Attorney Kelly Villanueva said.

The celebrating attorney picks a theme song, and it plays as they run a gauntlet of their peers.

Then, before metro attorneys and others, they are presented with a pin marking the occasion.

Then it's time for the attorney to tell the story of their trial.

"Whether they win or lose, it is an accomplishment to fight for the client's rights," Metro Managing Attorney Tonie Abeyta said.



LOPD Anniversaries

Celebrating 1, 5, 10

15, 20+ years

** some anniversary dates include years at other state agencies. It's difficult to separate.

20 Years



Gabriela Lucero
office manager Las Cruces



Lawrence Neal,
legal associate Albuquerque

15 Years

Trina Gonzales
paralegal Carlsbad

10 Years

Tonie Abeyta, Managing Atty Abq
Jasmine Solomon, atty Santa Fe

5 Years

Freeman Faust, SVO atty
Martin Juarez, atty Abq
Max Pines, atty Abq
Claudette Tenorio, paralegal
Santa Fe
Penny Salimi, secretary Abq
Cynthia Cairns, paralegal
Alamogordo

1 Year

Celestino Romero, HR
Anna Armistead, atty Las Cruces
Michael Cesario, investigator Abq
Avalita Kaltenback, secretary Santa Fe
Natalie Zerwekh, atty Ruidoso
Miquella Lovato, secretary Santa Fe
Kasey Reed, secretary Alamogordo
Esther von Hoffmann, secretary Roswell
Cody Briggs, paralegal Aztec
Karri Cordova, paralegal Las Cruces
Keshav Deodhar, atty Roswell
Aubreigh Ford, secretary Abq

Sean Beherec, atty Albuquerque
Lindsey Goodwin, atty Albuquerque
Samuel Jay, atty Albuquerque
Margaret Kennedy, atty Albuquerque
Rebecca Mnuk, atty Santa Fe
Lucia Moran, atty Albuquerque
Karina Rocha, atty Albuquerque
Brittany Steudle, atty Albuquerque
Katina Lueras, paralegal Ruidoso
Jessica Martin, atty Abq
Wendy Munoz, legal associate
Ruidoso

Team changes

Hello and welcome to:

Dayna Jones, atty Alamogordo
Valerie Martinez, fiscal
Earl Rhoads, atty Gallup
Raul Villalobos, paralegal Abq
Edgar Yguado, IT
Shane Goranson, atty Aztec
Christina Keyes, fiscal

Farewell retirees!

Eileen Chavez
Rhonda Sanchez
Jeri Barros-Vera

Thank you to Cassandra Montoya for compiling these lists.

If your name was somehow left off a list, please know it was not on purpose. Just let Maggie Shepard know and she'll make it right in the next newsletter.

IT makes training stop in Gallup



As part of the traveling IT training on defenderData and other programs, IT administrator Jaime Flores visited the Gallup office.

**NEW LEGAL PROFESSIONALS SUPPORT GROUP FOCUSED ON DEPRESSION/ANXIETY
5:30-7 p.m. First and third Wednesday of every month. Dec. meetings: Dec. 4 and Dec. 18.**

At: UNM School of Law, King Room. (Law Library, upstairs and to immediate left) Group Description: Address the negative impact anxiety and depression can have in people's lives and to develop the skills on how to regulate these symptoms through learning and developing several different strategies and techniques that can be applied to their life. The process will help the individual to understand and manage cognitive, behavior, and physiological components of anxiety and depression. The group will incorporate cognitive behavioral, psycho educational, and stress reduction techniques that are considered a practical and structured form of psychotherapy.

To participate in the Legal Professionals Support Group, or for questions regarding the group, call Tenessa Eakins, NMJLAP Clinical Coordinator, at 797-6093.

All participants MUST SIGN UP before their first attendance ONLY.

Participation
is confidential!



Felony team fellowship



The Abq felony secretaries opened up their monthly lunch to felony paralegals for the first time — joining forces with food.

"What we have in common — we love our jobs and we all love food!" secretary Martha Brownlee said.

Each month's lunch has a theme. Next month: ugly sweaters.

Free wellness classes

December - Examining Relationships: Healthy vs. Unhealthy. Opens Dec. 17
Provided by your Employee Support Program through The Solutions Group
Access at www.solutionsbiz.com with password: phs

Newsletter and news news



- 🔨 Communication Specialist Maggie Shepard (aka the newsletter and media contact) now works full time. That means more availability for brainstorming media and communication projects. She can be reached at (505) 690-4529.
- 🔨 Plans are in the works to launch department social media. Stay tuned for an LOPD Twitter account and more.
- 🔨 Starting in 2020, **The Defender** newsletter will be delivered every two months. Please keep contributing pictures of your office potlucks, staff happenings, court victories, recognitions and other important news *from and for* the LOPD community.

Las Cruces Halloween



Breaking (lots of) bread together



Annual Albuquerque staff gratitude potluck



To contribute, correct, compliment or criticize newsletter content or to talk to LOPD Communication Specialist Maggie Shepard, contact her at maggie.shepard@lopdnm.us or (505) 690-4529. All newsletter content is compiled by Maggie Shepard and approved by LOPD leadership.