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SOUVENIR EDITION

The Great Fire of 2022

The Hermit's Peak
HOWLER

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May it
soon be
just a
memory!

The largest wildfire in New Mexico history is over -- thankfully, with no loss of human life-- but the recovery has only begun.

The Hermit's Peak-Calf Canyon fire caused massive suffering, displacement, and the loss of over 400 homes, but it revealed depths of kindness and cooperation for all the world to see.

This special issue of *The Hermit's Peak Howler* is intended to commemorate this tragic event and the monumental, heroic efforts to overcome it, and to highlight those efforts and the sense of "community" it engendered.

It would be impossible to list all the restaurants, stores, agencies, hotels, facilities, and individuals who went "above and beyond" to help evacuees and first responders, but we will never forget you.

-Jim Terr, editor & publisher, July 2022

Perhaps a silver lining?

The fire stimulated hundreds of reports in virtually all major news media in the US and many overseas, including reports by "locals" Simon Romero in the *New York Times* and Cedar Attanasio for The Associated Press.

Now is our chance to build on that awareness to increase tourism to our still-beautiful area.

One of the most comprehensive stories published was the one below, reprinted here by permission of the author and *The Guardian UK*:

'Nothing to go back to': the way of life lost to New Mexico's historic fire

The largest wildfire in state history has torn through centuries-old rural communities, displacing thousands by [Annette McGivney](#) in Las Vegas, New Mexico, photographs by Adria Malcolm

Annette McGivney is the author of *Pure Land: A True Story of Three Lives, Three Cultures, & the Search for Heaven on Earth*

For Kathryn Mahan and her husband, Jamie, the front steps of their home in the northern [New Mexico](#) village of Las Dispensas were a family touchstone.

The couple built the house themselves in 2015 and fashioned the steps out of concrete blocks. Every year they photographed their daughter, Rayyah, on them – as Rayyah grew, the steps stayed the same.

The largest wildfire in New Mexico history has suddenly changed all that.

The family evacuated on 11 April. Story continues at theguardian.com/us



NPR reporter Eric Westerveldt, downtown

These stories and dramatic images of beauty lost -- but beauty nonetheless -- no doubt elevated worldwide awareness of Las Vegas and northern New Mexico and their many gifts. Millions more now know that New Mexico is a U.S. state, and that the original Las Vegas is in it!

10+ surprising facts about the wildfire-ravaged "Vegas"

(From *The Houston Howler*)

Currently threatened by the largest forest fire in the US and the largest in New Mexico's history, Las Vegas, New Mexico is the "original" Las Vegas. Its history is surprising, and as a recent article in the *New York Times* pointed out, the local Hispanic culture is older than the United States itself!

Founded in 1835, more than a century before the other Vegas, the population of this Spanish-American town on the Santa Fe Trail suddenly boomed in 1879, when the Santa Fe Railroad came to town, bringing businessmen, lawyers, hoodlums, and gamblers with it from

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