

## VOCAL WONDERS Bringing the world of 'ROAMERS' to life

DAVID SALCIDO  
Las Cruces Bulletin

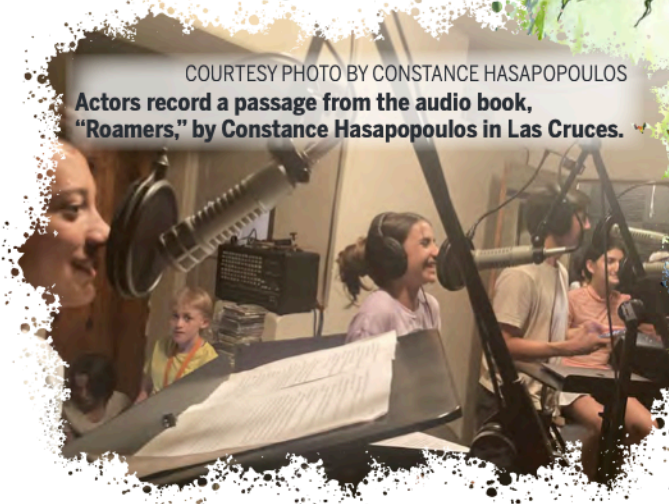
Creating imaginative worlds is nothing new to Constance Hasapopoulos. An award-winning screenwriter and actress who makes her home in Las Cruces, Hasapopoulos has made a career of bringing projects from a child's perspective to life. In addition to founding ACT Children's Theatre, she also wrote and starred in the Cannes Film Festival showcase film, "Eyes of a Child." Now she's written and directed a children's audiobook, featuring a full cast of local luminaries and produced right here in Las Cruces.

The audiobook, titled "Roamers," follows the story of

12-year-old Beatrice, who in addition to being bullied by classmates and family members alike, is thrown into a strange "Tim Burtonesque" world where she must save her brother from a murderous sea witch. Running three hours and 16 minutes, the target audience is between the ages of 9 and 14, but Hasapopoulos is quick to add, "I've had several adults tell me they really enjoyed it. It has so many life-affirming messages for young and old people alike."

Produced at Studio 603 by local sound guru Dave Wheeler, the recording also includes

COURTESY PHOTO BY CONSTANCE HASAPOPOULOS  
Actors record a passage from the audio book, "Roamers," by Constance Hasapopoulos in Las Cruces.



music by Albuquerque composer David Kelly, and final touches by CMI student Jeret Gladstone.

For her part, Hasapopoulos is proud of the work that went into the project, adding that she believes it to be the first of its kind for the area, since it utilized only regional talent.



In fact, many of the voices will be recognizable to anybody

who attends theater in Las Cruces. Among them are Norman Duttweiler, Teddy Aspen Sanchez, Janet Beatty-Cold, Melissa Muñoz, Darin Robert Cabot, Gail Wheeler, Dave Edwards, Ed Montez and many more. All of the young actors called upon to play the kids in the production were culled from area schools.

"We have so much talent here, it's just amazing," Hasapopoulos said. "It was a lot of work, with many challenges, but there were also times when I just couldn't stop laughing. It was an absolute joy."

Actor Norman Duttweiler, who plays the evil Thin Man,

SEE **ROAMERS**, PAGE 15

### MOONBOW ALTERATIONS • SEWING

Tuesday & Friday ~ 1 to 6pm  
Saturday ~ 10am to 2pm  
Other times by appointment

225 E. Idaho #32  
Las Cruces  
(By Oriental Palace)

Alice B. Davenport  
June Robinson  
(575) 527-1411

### The Paint Kings

Stucco/Paint & Roof Coating Contractor

575-652-0874 NM  
915-301-3232 TX  
ELPasoPaintKings.com



### THE EMPORIUM

Antiques, Collectibles, Furniture, Jewelry, Gifts

New Arrivals Daily

DONATE SHOP SUPPORT

### Mesilla Valley Hospice

106 S. Water St. • 575-523-8078 • emporiumlc.com  
Tues-Fri 10am-4pm, Sat 10am-2pm

# Departing Desert Exposure editor reflects on two decades of news

JUSTIN GARCIA  
Las Cruces Bulletin

It's going to be hard, acknowledged long-time reporter, photographer and editor Elva Österreich, to simply move on from journalism after more than two decades in the craft.

But she decided now was time to move on to a new chapter, leaving the Bulletin and its monthly magazine, Desert Exposure, on July 5.

Across a dozen newspapers and the shifting sands of southern New Mexico, perhaps no one in the industry has been as much of a consistent presence as Österreich. She's had bylines in just about every newspaper from Ruidoso to Las Cruces to Socorro and beyond since she began writing news in 1998.

Österreich even wrote a book chronicling one of the pivotal moments in local (and world) history – the testing and denotation of the atomic bomb – called “Manhattan Project Trinity Test: Witnessing the Bomb in New Mexico.”

On her last day, Österreich sat down for an interview, this time on the other side of the recorder,

to reflect on her time in the news.

## What drew you to arts and culture reporting?

“My degree is in creative writing. And so it's always something that I wanted to do. Then, I started writing for this little local newsletter in Alamogordo. I started doing a column before that called ‘About the Critters,’ which was about the animals, and that's how I ended up creating a feature on bugs.”

That bug feature, Österreich said, was one of her first plunges into journalism.

“When the job came open, it just sounded like it was my job because talking to people, assembling things, taking photos, that's what I do.”

## What is your favorite story you've told?

“I cannot think of any particular story, but there is the timeline (of stories) around Spaceport (America) because this whole space thing started in the first place at an event held at Holloman Air Force Base. I was there when they did that.”

When asked why the history of the spaceport



LAS CRUCES BULLETIN FILE PHOTO

Elva K. Österreich, editor of Desert Exposure and a staff writer for the Las Cruces Bulletin, departed for a career change on July 5.

was among her favorites, Österreich said, “Because I'm a science fiction nerd. ... The whole ‘new horizons, going into space, brand new world – it's all that.”

## You have been around the news in southern New Mexico for more than two decades. What kept you in the business?

“It's just been wonderful and fascinating. And there's the whole feeling of the newsroom trying to get things done. It's all been an exploration.

to stop. I gotta keep doing that. So, it's part of the learning journey.

“And (journalism is) the best way to just keep exploring the world. Every time we turn around, there's a new something. I guess that's why Desert Exposure was so well suited; I got to go to all the communities and learn things about everything.

“There are definitely some things that you just do it again and again over the years. Stuff like elections, that you have to do as a journalist – that becomes old.”

## The news industry contracted drastically during your career. How did that affect you?

“It's been interesting. It's, again, part of the journey, but I think it's also been sad for journalism. Things are getting more and more fragmented because of the in-

ternet and because people can put out whatever information they want to put out, whether it's real or not. And that erodes trust. It erodes confidence.

“When people go to look for information, they're more likely to go to information that they put out, which also creates more compartmentalization.”

What advice would you give newcomers to journalism?

“Always go out and learn things. Listen to everything. Don't be afraid to talk to us. To those of us who have been in the business, don't be afraid to walk into the building and say, ‘Hey, can I speak to the reporter.’ And don't be afraid to submit stuff.

“You don't have to be a graduate, or you can come in with a story idea. And somebody would likely say, go for it. Because we always need people to bring new information.”

## ROAMERS

CONTINUED FROM 13

refers to the project as a very happy and creative experience. “The quality of the material we were reading was really excellent – a great plot with great characters, so it was a lot of fun to work on.”

Janet Beatty-Cold, who voices the eccentric Dorothea, agrees. “Since I had never worked on voicing an audiobook before, this was a really interesting project. I'm glad I had the chance to be part of it!”

Finished in April of this year, the audiobook was uploaded to several platforms, including Spotify.com, BarnesAndNoble.com, Play.Google.com, Audiobooks.com and ChirpBooks.com. It can also be found in the Thomas Branigan Memorial Library's digital library. So far, the reception has been positive.

“I happened to check on Barnes and Noble a



CONSTANCE HASAPOPOULOS

couple of weeks after we posted it, and they had featured it as their Mother's Day promotion,” Hasapopoulos added. “It was our cover art and everything! I almost fell out of my chair.”

Hasapopoulos will present a “Roamers” meet and greet with the actors, from 2-4 p.m., Saturday, July 27, at Barnes and Noble in the Mesilla Valley Mall, 700 S. Telshor Boulevard.

EXPERIENCE SOUTHERN NEW MEXICO

Monthly in Southern New Mexico:  
“The biggest little newspaper  
in the Southwest”

www.desertexposure.com