

SFR staffers hand out bests of their own.

Best candidate who didn't make the ballot

Tom Benavides



In an election year like 2008, when an unpopular president has termed out and the nation is almost universally calling for "change," when voter registration is breaking all-time records and the ethnic and gender barriers to public office have all but collapsed, the desire for citizens to make their mark on posterity is only natural.

For the über-ambitious few, that means running for office, whether they have a Popsicle's chance in hell or not.

Several hopefuls never saw their names offered up to citizens, in part because of their own inexperience but also because of internal party politics and New Mexico's restrictive ballot-access laws.

If SFR issued runners-up awards in this category, Mekah Gordon, the feisty transgender educator, would deserve fond acknowledgment for her brief bid for retiring state Sen. John Grubestic's, D-Santa Fe, seat. She tentatively switched her campaign to the House race when state Rep. Peter Wirth, D-Santa Fe, announced he was interested in succeeding Grubestic. But after discussions with party leaders, Gordon opted to let her opponent and fellow newcomer Brian Egolf run unchallenged.

Leland Lehrman, the grizzly bearded editor of The Sun News, also earns props for his failed bid for the US Senate. Lehrman announced his Democratic candidacy at the Roundhouse with a diatribe on 9.11 Truth. Lehrman tells SFR he dropped out due to family and personal conflicts, but he also faced challenging odds going up against US Rep. Tom Udall, D-NM, in the Democratic primary.

But in first place, SFR names Tom Benavides, the eye-patch-sporting Democrat-turned-Republican former state senator who aimed to rival Reps. Heather Wilson, R-NM, and Steve Pearce, R-NM, in the Republican race to replace conservative icon US Sen. Pete Domenici. Benavides allowed himself to be the subject of one of SFR's first YouTube experiments (sfreporter.tv), even deigning to reveal, on camera, the football-cleat injury behind his eye-patch.

In the end, Benavides tells SFR he came up 30 signatures short of the candidate requirement. That was a disappointment, he says, though he was glad to see Pearce win the nomination over Wilson, who he described as a "liberal" and a "carpetbagger" throughout his short-lived campaign.

Benavides says he'll be back in two years to run for governor and he won't repeat his mistakes. For the record, the mistake was his signature count, not his candidacy. (Dave Maass)

Best National News Story About Santa Fe

Wi-Fi Opposition

The drama began just more than a year ago when Arthur Firstenberg, author of *Microwaving Our Planet* and president of a national watchdog group called the Cellular Phone Task Force, showed up at a Santa Fe City Council meeting with a group of citizens concerned about the city's plans to provide free wireless hotspots around Santa Fe.

Since then, Firstenberg has been outspoken not just in the local media, but also has shown up on FOX News' Web site, the Associated Press' wire, Wired magazine's blog and even The Drudge Report. The anti-Wi-Fi folks say signals from wireless routers causes chest pains, high blood pressure, cancer and low sperm count, and that the city, by setting up wireless access in public buildings, violates their rights under the Americans With Disabilities Act. At a June 11 Council vote on expansion of wireless access in public buildings, Firstenberg and his associates were there—one carrying a Wi-Fi detector shaped like a futuristic cell phone. Ultimately, the city approved the plan. (Mark Sanders)

Best Place to Buy Bumper Stickers to Show Your Propensity for Road Rage

Santa Fe Hemp

105 E. Water St.
984-2599

santafehemp.com

It was recently hypothesized that drivers who embellish their cars with stickers, fuzzy dice, dancing hula ladies and the like are more likely than most to show road rage. By this definition (the accuracy of which is debatable), there are lots of cars in Santa Fe manned by very angry drivers. So, if you have to cover your car with stickers, at least make them good ones. Santa Fe Hemp, the Plaza's staple liberal, crunchy-hippie, peace-loving shop, has supplied Santa Fe with leftward-leaning bumper stickers (and T-shirts, postcards, prayer flags, so on and so forth) since 1997. Express your disdain for George W Bush, proclaim your love for Goddess or tell the world to "Change How You See, Not How You Look"—whatever suits your fancy. If you truly want to "Dance to the Beat of a Different Accordion," as your sticker may say, beat the stereotype by keeping car horns and middle fingers at bay. Maybe your car will even be plastered enough to get printed in SFR's Meme section! (Charlotte Jusinski)



Best Place to Mix Art and Science

Santa Fe Complex

624 Agua Fria St.
216-7562

sfcomplex.org



When most people think about science in New Mexico, Los Alamos National Laboratory is the first thing to pop into their brains. The Santa Fe Complex is working to change that by mixing together the aesthetically beautiful aspects of science with the complex, mind-bending ones. Through weekly discussions, a series of educational programs and the occasional special event—such as a late-August collaboration with Albuquerque's Museum of Natural History for "Friday Fractals"—the Complex, which officially opened on June 14, is already completing a mission that Managing Director Don Begley describes as "having a public space that could provide info to people of all interests." And with its focus on complexity science—which focuses on systems that are both interconnected and adaptive—the network that's already in place is sure to bring brilliant artists and scientists alike into a beautifully complex ecosystem. (Patricia Sauthoff)

Best ballot issue the city and county continue to ignore.

A Quality of Life Initiative

Only politicians with balls raise taxes. It takes bravado to stand up to the populace and explain that a few more dollars a year from each person will make life significantly better for everyone. A couple of years ago, the New Mexico Legislature put into place a mechanism that would allow municipalities or counties to tag up to one quarter of 1 percent of gross receipts tax toward quality-of-life expenditures. It's a miniscule tax hike, but one that would result in an estimated \$8 million to \$12 million annual boon, which could be spent on parks, libraries, trails, cultural initiatives, beautification programs and much more. Instituting the program would require a popular vote, but city and county officials have shied away from putting the measure on the ballot, especially after the initiative failed in Bernalillo County. Apparently, what happens in Bernalillo should guide the direction of the state's 400-year-old capital, national cultural center and top-ranking global destination. (Zane Fischer)

We Asked; You Answered

BEST OF SANTA FE '08

A representative sample from some very long lists.

Best Category We Forgot

Best Mountain Best Pet, Best Color Best Condo Complex Best fresh pasta Best Local Law Best Local ISP Best Teacher **best hiking trail** Best homemade chai Best Place to experience Santa Fe Pilates BEST EVENT ON THE PLAZA Best Local Gardener Best Events Planner Best cowboy boots **Best tapas** best radio station furnishings/accessories Best Female Singer!!! Best Dog Park **best sunday afternoon stroll** Best Local Free Paper.....it's you! **Best Free Event** best hotel/inn to send out of town guests **Best Place to Play in the Snow** Best Vocalists best skin care **best pot dealer best skatepark** Best Waxing (bikini) best place for nature lovers Best Ski Shop best healer Best park to enjoy lunch out. **Best place to people watch** Best pre-school Best Architect/Designer **Best excuse why America is still in Iraq Best Place to Walk** Best tellers in Santa Fe best vet Best new store **best gay bar Best Local Superstar** Best Continuing Education Best Wines by the Glass Best Daycare Best bicycle trail **Best non-car transportation option** best place to buy video GAMES Cowboy bootmaker/seller Best place to have a public argument Best new chef best homeless person **Best political event** Best radio station coffee roaster, best article in reporter, best music event Best library Best Dog Trainer The best and worst roads to drive on best pueblo **best eavesdropper** dance **Best piano player** best new intersection Best Motorcycle Shop **Best Actor** Musician **Best Toy Store** best motorcycle/scooter shop Best Waitstaff best soup, **best salad** Best places to walk your dog or your cat. **Best Escort Service** Best barbecue! best ice cream **best pueblo ceremonial dance** best new non profit best bagel! **Best Tapas** best guitar player Best Mortgage Company **Best Local Dive** or Hidden Treasure (hang-out, bar, restaurant, etc.) best ice cream **Best Dog Parks** Best Dog Trainer, Dog Day care, Greenest business best grocery bagger best children's footwear Best hiking/biking trails Best plan for a new america **Best cleaning service** outdoor activity **best ignition interlock company best postman best free event Best place to look at girl's feet** best romantic place to stay for the night Best place for sunset viewing **Best place for a first kiss** Best neighborhood **BEST VISUAL ARTIST** best ice cream Best Schools—public and private best spa Best Cabaret Best Bicycle (specific) Shop, **Best Bicycle Mechanic Best picnic spot** Best road to get your car trashed? BEST TOURIST TRAP **Best Hot Dogs!** Best Place for Cowboy Boots Best unique thing about Santa Fe **Best Local Fire Department** Best Pet Boutique, Groomer, Day Care, Trainer best liquor store **Best sidewalk** to

walk or shop Best Place to Eat Outdoors Best Information Place Best Pet-Friendly Businesses **best local artist** Best **Place to get Cheap Gas!** best weekly dj night Best Outdoor Patio Best Place to Buy a Used Car **best parking** Best (worst) Intersection for Left-hand Turns **best dancing lessons best place to play basketball** best place to make whoopee Web Design best massage best place to see a concert Best Nightscene **best raw food best celebrity Best Place to go on your day off!** Best Run at the Ski Area Best Indoor Cycling/Spinning **Best community service project** Best dog park, Best "sporting" event Best Grooming shop Best cake **Best Gun Store Best Alternative Healing Facility** Best DoorGuy BEST DRUG DEALER **best place to take your house guests** best service in a retail store best unrepresented artists Non-politician who gives back to the community **Best Street Performer** best musician Favorite Police Officer **Best boyfriend Best Local Record Label** Best Signage Best Gallery & Best new business Places to bring friends when visiting town Best place to bike or walk. Picnicing/Hiking favorites **Best Community minded business** most beautiful architecture or favorite building in Santa Fe most comfy seats in restaurant Best Realtor **Best Web design** Best Place to Get an Education best masseur/masseuse Best Architect Best Comic Books! Best Facial Best Dance Troupe Dog Groomers **Best place to rollerblade Best Pick-Up Joint** Best corner for a blowjob best hottiesighting spot best river best waiter best gefelta fish **best farmers market vendor best party girl** best sustainable business **best strip joint** best picnic bench best curio store

Best Thing About The Santa Fe Reporter

all of it **investigative reporting** Letters to the Editor speaks truth to power The Block Party **7 Days** Julia Goldberg Its sexy Classified Department Lets me know what's happening **Best of Santa Fe** It's free Goes down smooth. Yeah. The information Horoscopes "overheard" local **muckracking** lively, local, liberal dedicated staff reading the horiscope while in line at the coop Dave Maass **best news reporting in the state** Wide variety of articles/subjects Adds structure to my week the production dept. Variety and fun to read **Keeping us informed** about local environmental concerns! Leftist leanings and in depth articles **HOW LIBERAL IT IS! THANK YOU LORD!** It's Free! back page 7 Days **Everything....I love Wed.** Authentic! Fun local perspective variety of news and community events, and of course the ads everything Week schedule Front Page that gay guy who gives all the sex advice!! honest writing 7 days **it is free!** funny headlines "best of" gotta be run every year Dan Savage eavesdropper the articles Local indepen-

dant Unabashed honesty **Savage Love** informative Great news on the happenings savage love!! I read it first every time! I enjoy the SFR as a whole; **great articles** about music, food, and art! **COMPREHENSIVE REVIEWS ON ALL ARTS** It's Free Staff articles total local coverage weekly event listings **In depth reporting** Interviews The Best Of Issue every year variety ALL LOCAL It's the only paper in Santa Fe with its finger on the pulse of the community. great reading it's free this survey **Your summer block party!** Independent thinking Savage Love **Zane's column** Savage Love 7 days in santa fe Music Reviews Colorful pages!! You are free and have great columns **The ability to recognize all of the best of Santa Fe people.** the stories Best of CLEVER CLEVER very interesting articles it's the community Everything la gente **The Classifieds** Funny survey advertising They cover all most everything The interview with the person It's Free excellent stories Love it! Great ads! Savage Love Independent movie times **Eavesdroppers Letters to the editor** It's always new on Wednesdays **Your sarcasm Always a bit irrelevant** you find everything you need everything Best Thing Survey Free Lost and Found for Pets It never Kow Tows Dan Koffman music listings So much it is hard to say movie listings **Being an alternative to the other print media** Attitude The crossword puzzle Savage Love Things Heard Around Town local **political reporting** Tom Tomorrow THE EAVESDROPPER **local local local!** Emiliano! Yummy... and his film reviews are good too! Seth Biderman's column Andy **Coverage of local events DADDY NEEDS A DRINK!** Zane's World **great variety** of news, events, fun It is free and readily available political opinion Things overheard—I laugh every time! Unwavering support and advocacy for all (ok, most) things local Eavesdropper **Best written** Dan Savage, The Eavesdropper, **Seasonal Guides** local coverage Publicizing important unknown stories Your smokin hot Arts/Culture Editor Extraordinary articles **This Modern World NEVER BORING** The eavesdropper Letters to the editor keeping it real Gabe Gomez **Arts and Entertainment** Rob Wilder **The cover** honest stories **SFR Picks** it's free **music calendar** Best of SF event listings The "Best of Santa Fe" series you can read it every wed. always has the best info! daddy needs a drink Local political coverage Keeping up the best locally Eve's Dropper **Not the same old stuff.** Movie Review non-conforming opinions, and carefree attitude projected towards the people of Santa Fe Music and events info **That it exists** Community and event information **it's free** Weekly events and reviews Letter to the editor Marcia! it's for Locals SFR Talk **Great Parties** memes Full of great reviews and local inside info Doña Hatch!! Biased reporting (in a good way); **Just can't live in SF without it.**