

MetroABQ Real Estate Newsletter

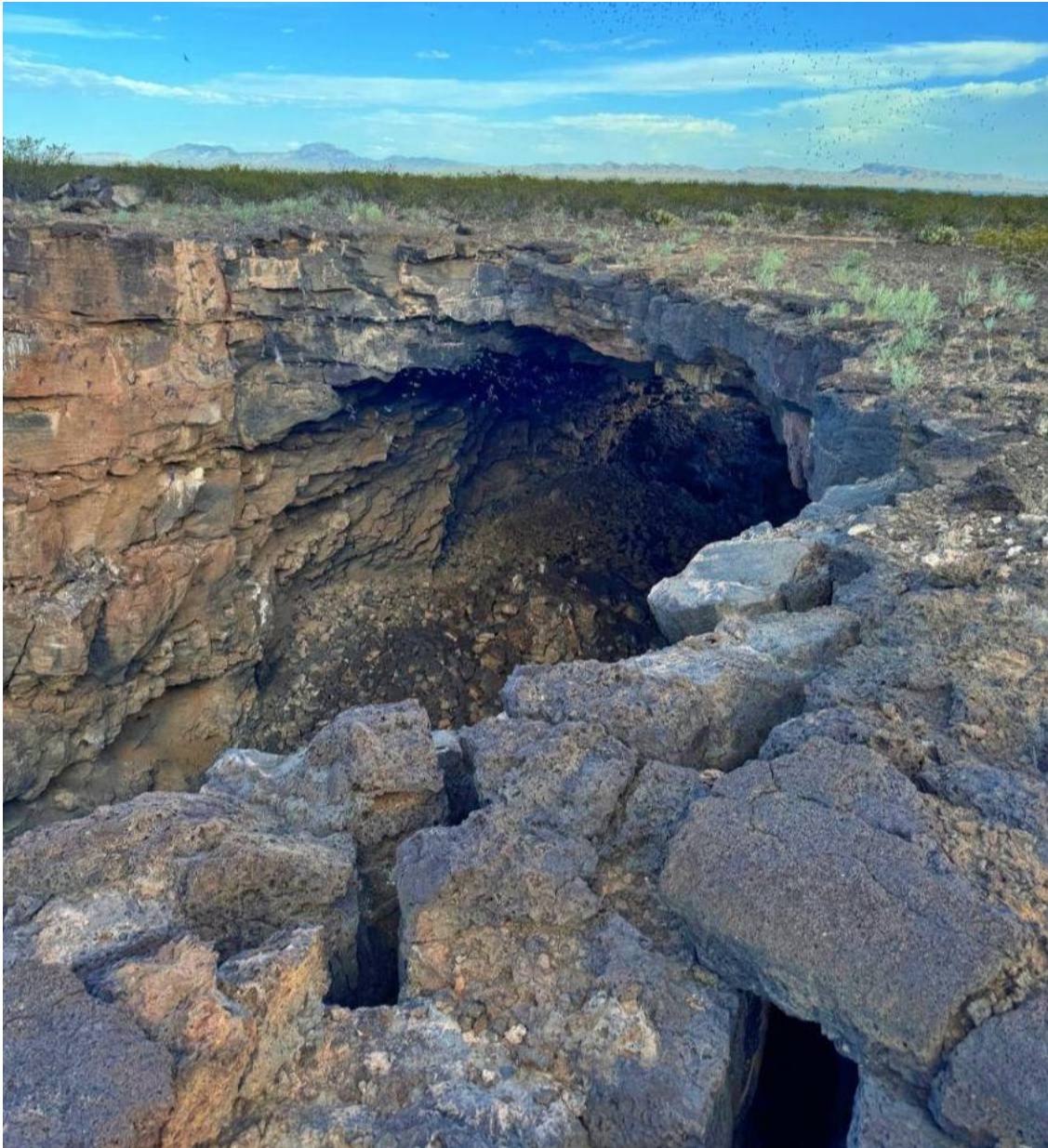
by Chris Lucas

Including Rio Rancho, Corrales, Placitas, Atrisco Valley, Los Lunas & the East Mountains.

August

MetroABQ, Mural Capital of the Greater Southwest

Bat Crazy: Watching a million bats swarm





Beyond the MetroABQ: Bat Crazy

Have you ever yearned to see a colony of bats take flight from their cave & disappear into the night? Me too. Luckily, you're in the right state, because New Mexico is home to one of the largest bat populations in North America. And it's not the famous bats at Carlsbad Caverns either, which number at most 500,000.

There's another--little-known--cave in southern NM, that is in one of the most remote areas of the state, existing in an area of "other-worldly isolation," according to the [NM Natural History Museum](#). It's also home to perhaps two million female Mexican Free-Tail bats & their young. Each summer they emerge nightly in two shifts, blanketing the sky above the cave entrances, forming nebulous bat clouds, like thousands of synchronized swimmers moving in unison. It's called a Bat Swarm, & these swarms exist in many other places in nature, in other species, & [especially under water](#).

Why swarm? There's safety in numbers--the bats group together to avoid predators, like [Swainson's Hawks](#), which are taking advantage of the plethora of possible bat prey. The two dark specks in the top/middle of the grainy image are Swainson's.

You can see the remnants of the Bat Swarm in the sky in the top-most photo; great swarm images are found in the image directly above & directly below. And the [26-second Bat Exodus video](#), two below, shows the bat swarm up-close.



Bat Cave Exodus. Northeast from Truth or Consequences, New Mexico, on a sprawling ranch called Armendaris, owned by Ted Turner, in a collapsed lava tube cave, almost two million female bats & their young pups emerge to feed at dusk in summer. Witnessing the exodus is an exceptional experience. See the video, above.



Sierraceratops. Philanthropist Ted Turner is one of the largest private landowners in the country, & more than half of the lands he stewards are in New Mexico. Vermejo Ranch is the largest, which sits north & east of Taos, straddling the Colorado border. The Ladder Ranch is in the southwest quadrant of the state & includes some of the mountains of the Black Range. The Armendaris Ranch encompasses all of the land east of Elephant Butte, & continues east through the [Jornada del Muerto](#), to the White Sands Missile Range; to the north, it borders the [Bosque del Apache National Wildlife Refuge](#).

Sierra Grande is the Turner-owned resort in Truth or Consequences, & is an anchor in T or C's Hot Springs District. Sierra Grande is also one of the jumping off points for the [Ted Turner Reserves eco tours](#), which explore over one million acres in New Mexico. The tour we took was called the Bats & Brews Tour, which started at the T or C Brewery for a pint, then the tour guide drove us two hours into the ranch. Our tour included the guide & four participants. I considered this as we watched the amazing

event of the bats taking flight in the evening: the five of us were lucky to be the only humans witnessing the spectacle.

A new species of dinosaur was recently discovered on the Armendaris. The [Sierraceratops turneri](#), an earlier cousin to the Triceratops, was named for the NM county in which it was found, & to honor Mr. Turner.

Also on the ranch is the lava tube cave that houses all those bats, & the reason behind the adventure.



Above & below:

Around 750,000 years ago, to the east of Elephant Butte Lake, [a volcanic eruption \(map\)](#) created a large lava flow field, with gigantic lava tendrils stretching out like fingers across the mesa. The outside of the tubes cooled & solidified, while the inside kept flowing. When it was all over, an underground lava tunnel had been created, called a vent. Imagine a gigantic straw, 50 feet wide & a quarter of a mile long--not sticking out of the ground, but laying on the volcanic rock horizontally.

Eventually a section of the roof of the vent collapsed, creating the opening for the cave. Above is the collapsed vent, with the mouth of the cave in the top middle. The collapsed vent formed a trough, through which the bats fly before heading out, as seen below. Here's a [great scene showing the trough](#).

At dusk the bats slowly emerged from the cave. One at a time came out, often then flying back into the cave. More joined in from below & flew in small then larger circles around the mouth of the cave, until one of them finally got up the nerve to head straight out along the trough like a runway, & then up toward the sky. Hundreds of thousands of bats soon followed the intrepid first bat.

Before they return each dawn, they will have eaten their body weight in mosquitos & other insects. The shadowy beginnings of their nightly adventures can be seen below.



More to see. The Armendaris Reserve consists of wildlife research conducted on the 360,000+ acre ranch, including



Notice the thin wire protruding from the back of the tortoise, which tracks it's location & movements. [These two](#)

studying quails, bobcats, kit foxes, badgers, bison, prairie dogs & bats. The Chihuahuan Desert Tortoise is in one of the endangered species breeding projects on the ranch. They live in large, acre or so, fenced-in grasslands in groups of 100 tortoises.

were nudging each other as we passed on the way to the bat cave.

Above, found outside the bat cave, a generally harmless millipede, which is clearly a work of natural art, is already in a defensive curl.





MetroABQ Wall Art

As the Mural Capital of the Southwest, Albuquerque has to continue producing unique & diverse murals to keep the title. And it does.

Need proof? Go here--[MurosABQ Gallery](#), the preeminent MetroABQ mural website--for a city-wide map of all variety of street art creations.

From [MurosABQ](#): Many cities worldwide realize the importance & value of their public art. Murals are an integral & traditional part of the arts scene in Albuquerque & the Southwest. Globally, & across many cultures, mural-making & street art have become accepted forms of community & self-expression. Murals are a valuable way to enhance the built environment, often providing a significant, positive impact with modest public investment.

In 2023, the City of Albuquerque Public Art Program adopted the [MurosABQ.com](#) site to continue connecting artists with mural making opportunities & providing information about Albuquerque's murals, including public & private murals, beyond just those in the [ABQ Public Art Collection](#).

I come across these distinctive murals daily during my real estate forays into all areas of the city. Many stand out & leave quite an impression. This photo montage captures only a few of the more than 200 murals stashed away in our city, from

alleyways to large multi-floor installations; some are newer but not necessarily.
Discover some for yourself--they're not hard to find.









Where are these?

- *The top mural, in the Reynolds neighborhood, sits across the parking lot from Downtown Java Joes.
- *The Larry Bob Phillips "Thunderhead" mural is in Wells Park at Mountain Rd.
- *The bicyclist is part of the Constitution Mural Project, adjacent to the Twin & Hidden Parks neighborhoods.
- *Gravity Bound Brewing Co is on 3rd St north of Lomas Blvd.
- *The smiling face mural is also part of the Constitution Mural Project.
- *The three desert animal scenes can be found on Paseo del Norte NW, west of Golf Course.
- *The vintage car mural adorns the old Downtown Hotel Blue, being reimagined as ABQ Arrive.
- *Finally, the serene mountain/mesa-scape sits on Menaul Blvd in the Embudo Canyon neighborhood, on the edge of the Sandia Foothills Open Space.



Thx for reading & for making it this far.

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As interest rates fluctuate, many people are seeking mid-to-long-term rental solutions. Good property management--**for both tenants & owners**--is more essential than ever. Going on a year-long sabbatical? Call me--I quickly find good, temporary & long-term tenants for all the properties I manage.



I am a dedicated seven-days-a-week real estate professional, representing clients for over 17 years--
I love this city!

I continuously seek out the hidden gems at any price-point for my Buyers, & am a tireless promoter for all of my Sellers' listings. I love talking real estate.

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