



NEWSLETTER

of the
EAST MOUNTAIN HISTORICAL SOCIETY
P.O. Box 106, Tijeras, NM 87059

Fall 2006

October Annual Meeting Promises To Be Historic . . . *And Scary!*

We've all heard them. Now it's time to share them – those spine tingling stories about strange and hard-to-explain encounters, sounds and sightings we've had or heard in the mountains over the years. Are you among those who've met the gossamer-clothed girl who aids auto travelers stranded in Tijeras Canyon? Have you heard noises in a historic building? Been told a family tale that electrifies the hairs on your neck?

The East Mountain Historical Society will host this public storytelling event at **2 p.m. Saturday, Oct. 28** at the dance hall in Escobosa, just south of the church, about 15 miles south of Tijeras on South 337 (old south 14). Local musicians will play and refreshments will be served.

Members should come an hour earlier, at 1 p.m., to vote in our annual elections (candidate list is inside this issue). We will also be putting out a plea for area residents to bring in historic photos of family members and area landmarks, which will be copied for our archives.



“We Can Really Move Forward With Our Plans Now”

Co-president/treasurer Anabel Sanchez received notice Sept. 9 that our application for non-profit, tax-exempt status *has been approved!* This means donations to the organization now are tax exempt to the donor. “We can really move forward with our plans now,” Anabel said, referring to EMHS’ need for archival equipment and a place to store its historic photographs, files and recordings. Anabel filed all the paperwork leading to the new status as a 501(c) 7 and also handled all the applications that led to EMHS becoming a New Mexico corporation earlier this year. She thanked member/co-founder Joyce Mendel for recommending a book on setting up a non-profit corporation, which she said was “really helpful”.

Upcoming Events –

- Oct. 28:** **Saturday, 1 p.m.** *Annual meeting – Elections, music, scary stories.*
Nov. 18: **Saturday, 2 p.m.** *Author Mike Smith shows photos, tells tales from his new book, Towns of the Sandia Mountains, Sandia Ranger Station conference room.*
Dec. 10: **Sunday, 3 p.m.** *Holiday potluck for members, in San Antonito.*

--Details Inside This Issue

“Towns of the Sandia Mountains”

By Author Mike Smith

2 p.m. Nov. 18 – Sandia Ranger Station

You will not want to miss this one! Mike Smith will guide us on a tour of history through tales and photographs excerpted from his book, *Towns of the Sandia Mountains*, which will be out by the time we host this talk. Mike says he distilled the book from more than 1,100 photos gathered from about 100 separate collections, many of them provided by members of the East Mountain Historical Society. Mike will show us many of these photographs, tell the back stories of the real-life individuals who breathed life into the area’s history and will sign copies of his book. Where: the main conference room of the new Sandia Ranger Station in Tijeras, less than a mile south of Route 66 (NM 333) on south 14 (NM 337).

Towns of the Sandia Mountains is a milestone; it’s the first time this much information on the history of these East Mountain towns and villages has been published in one place. Even lifelong area residents are certain to see a new photograph, hear a new story, or, at the least, be vividly reminded of a character or place they’ve known. An example: The book has an extensive section on Hobbies, the community west of North NM 14 off Penny Lane (a road whose name, the book reveals, was not in reference to a Beatles song).

Towns of the Sandia Mountains will be released by Arcadia Publishing Oct. 30 and is already available for pre-order on amazon.com. Mike promises to bring copies for sale and will autograph them at the public talk, which is hosted by the East Mountain Historical Society.

Slate of Officers, Board Members Announced

The nominating committee -- Gus Winter and Marie Herrera Dresser – reported the following slate of officers and board members, to be considered by the membership during elections at the annual meeting Oct. 28.

Nominees for the executive board are: Anabel Sanchez, president; Denise Tessier, vice president; Pat Rich, treasurer; and Anne Dacey-Lucas, secretary. Nominees for board of directors are: Marie Herrera Dresser, Andre Larroque, Bay Stevens, Yolanda Stripling, Chuck Van Gelder, Louise Waldron, and Gus Winter.

Nominations may also be made from the floor. In addition to the four executive positions, EMHS bylaws call for at least three board members. Any member may be nominated for any position; members are also invited to nominate themselves. *Please come to the annual meeting at 1 p.m. to participate and vote.*

Pictured at right is a Civil War cannonball held by EMHS archeology chairman Chuck Van Gelder, which was found in Piñon Ridge by a resident digging a trench in a driveway. According to “Rebels on the Rio Grande: The Civil War Journal of A.B. Peticolas,” edited by Don E. Alberts, 5,000 soldiers moved north from the Tijeras/San Antonio area to Santa Fe in 1862 along various routes, including spots in Piñon Ridge. Chuck and Andre Larroque, who led an EMHS members-only tour of the area Sept. 23, believe Peticolas’ own path was through Piñon Ridge and Gutierrez Canyon.

Photo by Becky Schnelker



Native plant expert Marie Herrera Dresser, left, and her sister, Elvira Nieto, show off two varieties of wild spinach – one with delicate leaves traditionally fed to chickens and other livestock, and the broadleaf variety her family has harvested and eaten for years. Marie’s talk was part of the member potluck held at EMHS Co-Chairman Louise Waldron’s home on Aug. 19.

Photo by Becky Schnelker



Old Ways Hint: Put an Egg Skin on That Cut

By Denise Tessier

You probably know that drinking mint tea is a traditional way to settle an upset stomach. But did you know an egg shell membrane can provide protection for a finger cut when no store-bought bandage is available?

That’s just one of the gems shared, at last month’s member potluck, by Marie Herrera Dresser, whose mother used just such a “bandage” when Marie and her siblings were growing up in Juan Tomás and Carnuel, a day’s ride from any Albuquerque drug store.

“This was our shampoo when we were little,” Marie said, pointing to a yucca plant behind Louise Waldron’s home in Tijeras Canyon. The root of the yucca – known as *mole* – was boiled to make a sudsy froth. Mixed with parts of globe mallow, the apricot-colored wildflower abundant in the mountains thanks to recent rains, her mother created a shampoo that gave hair a healthy shine, she said.

Another plant abundant this year, regarded by most as a ground-hugging weed, is the sprawling *verde lagas*, or purslane. Marie says it’s good eaten fresh, steamed or cooked with onions and chile and is “highly nutritious.” It was also found behind the Waldron house.

Other herbs and useful plants Marie talked about, not all of which were found or in season at the time of her talk, included: wild *cilantro*, or coriander, used in cooking and to reduce nervousness; prickly pear cactus, or *nopales*, and the tasty *tuna* flower pods on their tips; and *chimaja*, or wild parsley, whose carrot-like roots, or *camote*, taste like sweet potato. For stomach upset, she said a number of herbs were used in the mountains, including: *yerba de manzo* (also used for ulcers and cuts); *alegria* and *anil del muerto*. A number of plants were used in remedy baths for arthritis or rheumatism, including: *chamisa*, or black sage, which also was used to reduce fever; *hediondilla*, or chaparral, which also was used to reduce swelling and pain in joints; and *yerba de la vibora*, or snake broomweed, an alleviant to swelling and pain.

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Hints From the Old Ways . . .

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In the “old days,” Marie’s family also used the sap, or *trementina*, from the piñon tree on sores and cuts on both humans and animals, and the harder globs of pitch were chewed by children as gum. Marie said her mother and neighbors used plain white vinegar to eliminate head lice. Potatoes, sliced up and placed in a band around the head, sometimes soaked in vinegar, could cure a headache, she said. And snake rattles were ground up and given to women during labor to help deliver afterbirth.

Cowboys carried osha in their back pockets, she said, thinking its bad smell warded off spiders and rattlers. Made into a tea, osha was used to ease sore throats, reduce bronchial inflammation and salve sore gums as a mouth wash. The flower tops and stems of *cota*, or Indian tea, were roasted and boiled to make tea, and “we used to drink it as coffee.”

Another native resident, Margaret Garcia, noted that some native plants, if boiled or cooked too much, can be harmful. Marie agreed, noting that the wild spinach brought to the meeting, its seed tendrils drooping, was way past its prime and no longer good to eat.

News and Notes ... of the East Mountain Historical Society

Welcome new members! We are happy to be joined by Rebecca Spires, Sandra Stangel and Alice Weis. And by Edward C. Rhodes from Cedar Crest, who signed up at the Stanley Hordes talk, and Cheryl Rolland, who took part in the Piñon Ridge tour.



The village of Tijeras will hold an open house **Saturday, Oct. 21**, to show off its municipal renovations, and EMHS will be there with our History of the East Mountains photographic exhibit. The event starts at 1 p.m. with dedication of the new Village Hall, Motor Vehicle Division and fire engine. The Village Hall is located at 12 Camino Municipal.



EMHS will hold its annual holiday potluck at the home of Denise Tessier and David Goldfarb at 3 p.m. Sunday, Dec. 10. All members are invited.



The old stone schoolhouse in San Antonito, where children attended from the 1920s to 1950s, recently changed hands, but we hear that it will not be torn down. The building, within walking distance of the San Antonito Church, is depicted in its heyday in two pictures in Mike Smith’s upcoming Arcadia book on East Mountain history, *Towns of the Sandia Mountains*. The photos show local schoolchildren posing against the school’s stone buttresses.

More News and Notes ...

The American Society of Radiologic Technologists, whose shiny new headquarters is located at the mouth of Tijeras Canyon, has been honored by the state Historic Preservation Division for outstanding efforts to preserve the sanctity of human remains.

During construction and remodeling of its headquarters, the ASRT inadvertently discovered Native American remains on site and, according to EMHS archeology chairman Chuck Van Gelder, immediately contacted the state archeologist. Per her recommendation, ASRT then retained the services of a burial-permitted professional archeologist, Bradley Bowman of the Museum of Archeology and Material Culture in Cedar Crest, who nominated ASRT for the award. ASRT quietly reinterred the remains in cooperation with Isleta Pueblo leaders, and ensured the reburial site is away from parking and other ASRT activities. Chuck, Bowman and the Historic Preservation Division all lauded ASRT's response to the find.



About 30 people showed up to hear former state historian Stanley M. Hordes talk about the 500-year-old survival of Jewish traditions, practiced in secret by those who fled the Inquisitions of Mexico and Spain into New Mexico. The Aug. 12 talk about New Mexico's crypto-Jews was sponsored by the East Mountain Historical Society and the New Mexico Historical Society. Hordes began to research early crypto-Jewish settlers of Mexico and New Mexico in 1981, while he was state historian, after hearing stories of Hispanic New Mexicans who lit candles on Friday night and abstained from eating pork. The result was his book, "To the End of the Earth: A History of the Crypto-Jews of New Mexico."



Members of EMHS celebrated the 80th birthday of honorary member Adelina Griego by singing to her during the August meeting at Louise Waldron's home. Pictured from left are Marie Herrera Dresser and Gus Winter. Adelina is at right.

Photo by Becky Schnelker

“History of New Mexico’s Land Grants”

State Historian Robert M. Torres has graciously agreed to speak to us early next year about the history of New Mexico’s land grants. We plan to follow up Torres’ historical overview with a future public forum/talk specific to the three East Mountain area land grants – Chilili, Carnuel and San Pedro. Details to come in the winter newsletter.

When on member-only field trips, take only photographs and memories. Leave native plants and artifacts for others to discover and enjoy.

The newsletter of the East Mountain Historical Society, published quarterly, aims to inform members and prospective members of EMHS events and endeavors, including committee work, and to serve as a record of society activities. It is also a forum for stories about the area. Please send your ideas for future newsletter items to Denise Tessier at P.O. Box 379, Cedar Crest, NM 87008, or contact her by email at newsletter@eastmountainhistory.org.



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