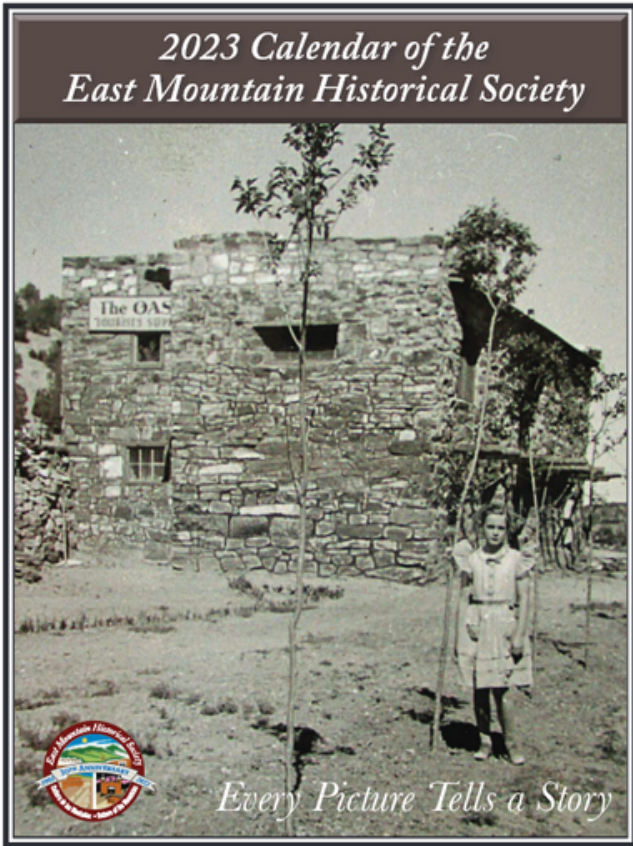


# EAST MOUNTAIN HISTORICAL SOCIETY



## *EMHS To Be Honored as Outstanding Organization at East Mountain Celebration*

BY DENISE TESSIER

Our all-volunteer East Mountain Historical Society, now in its 30th anniversary year, will be honored as an “Outstanding Organization” when Bernalillo County holds its annual East Mountain Celebration in Tijeras Sunday, Sept. 25. Bernalillo County Commissioner Charlene Pyskoty revealed the EMHS honor in announcing the county event, which will feature food, music, children’s activities and numerous vendors and information booths from noon to 5 p.m. on the Los Vecinos grounds in Tijeras. EMHS will have a tent/booth and circulate among the public wearing historic period costumes. All members are invited to attend this free event and join the fun.

***As a special way to commemorate the honor and our 30th anniversary, EMHS for one day only will be selling at a 30 percent discount our award-winning history book, Timelines of the East Mountains. Normally priced at \$55, the 700-plus-page book will cost \$39 at the EMHS booth at the event.***

EMHS also will unveil and sell our newest calendar of story-captioned photos related to East Mountain history, *2023: Every Picture Tells a Story*. The 2023 calendar’s photos and stories are all new and different from previous historical photo calendars, which have been produced by the EMHS every year since 2014. See Rick Holben’s story about the cover photo in this Newsletter on Page 3. Calendars will sell for \$15.

Another milestone for EMHS was reached when the 1,000th copy of *Timelines* was recently sold. *Timelines* is now in its third printing, having sold out twice since it debuted in April 2020. As members know by now, the book contains hundreds of photos, maps and stories about East Mountain landmarks, natural features, people and traditions, covering about 400 square miles. Its inspiration, the popular map created by EMHS, “Mapping Our Vanishing Past,” also has sold more than 1,000 copies and is now out of print.

EMHS President Robyn Hoffman will accept on EMHS’ behalf the 2022 Outstanding Organization award, EMHS’ second major honor this year. At its state conference in April, the Historical Society of New Mexico awarded EMHS its prestigious Lansing B. Bloom outstanding publications award for EMHS’ Quarterly Newsletter. Last year, EMHS won the Lansing Bloom for *Timelines*, making EMHS the first New Mexico historical society to win the award two years in a row.

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# President's Message: Change and Constancy

BY ROBYN HOFFMAN

Here we are, two and a half years into the Covid 19 pandemic, awaiting the availability of a third booster shot, having lost almost 8,500 of our fellow New Mexicans. The enforced isolation is now ended, businesses and schools have reopened, and many folks are traveling and socializing after the hiatus. However, time and loved ones are now gone and are not replaceable. For many, if not most of us, the pandemic has changed the trajectory of our lives. It is difficult to take stock of all its effects, but the abruptness of the changes necessitated by the pandemic gave an opportunity to evaluate how the lifestyles we have been following may need adjustment. Some of our activities may not be sustainable or may not retain value for us. But the East Mountain Historical Society is committed to preserving important cultural and historic knowledge and being a positive impetus for community well-being.

The East Mountain Historical Society's mission is to identify, preserve and present the history and culture of the East Mountain area. We are doing so in several ways. We are collaborating with the multi-jurisdictional Tijeras Creek Cultural Corridor Project, which is developing a trail system curated with ecological and historic educational exhibits. We have completed the initial phases of establishing an archive for our library and collected materials at the Tijeras Senior Center, thanks to a grant from the New Mexico Humanities Council and our partner, the Village of Tijeras. We are hoping to continue the development of an accessible archive by a further grant we applied for from the New Mexico Historical Records Advisory Board. We are advising on the restoration of the historic village church in Tijeras. And we will be participating in the East Mountain Celebration at Los Vecinos Community Center in Tijeras on Sept. 25, where we will have our educational history materials for sale. The popular *Timelines of the East Mountains* book will be on sale there for one day only at a 30 percent discount, in honor of the Society's 30th Anniversary this year. The 2023 calendar is packed with delightful stories of the East Mountains, and historic photos accompany every story.

Our quarterly *Newsletter* for members always has historic information compiled by knowledgeable researchers, and information about cultural opportunities in our region. You will notice a new format in this *Newsletter*, because our EMHS Historian and newsletter editor of 24 years, **Denise Tessier**, has passed the baton on this activity. Congratulations and thanks to **Denise** for the many outstanding newsletters she has produced, acknowledged by the Historical Society of New Mexico with its 2022 Lansing B. Bloom award, and which received an honorable mention in this year's National Federation of Press Women communications contest after placing first in its category in New Mexico Press Women's competition earlier this year. Should you have the inclination to assist with our future newsletters, please let me or any Board Member know.

We invite all our members to celebrate the continued vitality of this organization when we hold our 30th Anniversary Party and program on October 22, and look forward to seeing you in person again.

## NEWS AND NOTES

A hearty welcome to our newest members: **Karen Kohler, Arnie Bosch** and **Paulette Miller**, all of Tijeras; **Diane Kirkendall** of Sahuarita, Arizona. (who joined as a sponsor); and **Valerie Bonsell** and family of Rio Rancho.

Board member **Jeannie Place** has been approved by the board as our new EMHS treasurer, replacing **Sandra Lee**. Sandra, who stepped down from that post, remains on the board as head of the Sales Committee. Jeannie handled accounting and advertising at the Wisconsin Crystal Cave attraction she and her husband operated for 26 years, and she has been putting that knowledge to work creating a working budget and fiscal reports for EMHS. Jeannie worked as an exploration geologist in the Rocky Mountains for 10 years, and gives talks about bats, with which she says she has "an ongoing love affair". (Crystal Cave had a resident population of more than 800.) She holds a master's degree in geology from UNM.

Board member **Lisa Darnold** is EMHS' new membership chairman, taking the position left with the passing of founding member **Anabel Sanchez**. Lisa created the impressive illustrated summary of the Stone House evaluation tour that was conducted earlier this year, which may be viewed under "Stone House Project" at [eastmountainhistory.org](http://eastmountainhistory.org). EMHS is now set up with MailChimp, thanks to Lisa, simplifying our outreach to members. She also has created fliers for EMHS and a new Membership Brochure. Lisa and her husband reside in the East Mountains, run a small business and previously lived in a 200-year-old adobe they restored in the South Valley.



# *Oasis Gas Station Once a Well-Known Landmark*

BY RICK HOLBEN

Elizabeth “Joann” Curtis was born in 1928 to Raymond and Vera Curtis, who opened the Oasis Gas Station in 1933.

The Oasis was located along the newly completed two-lane Highway 366 in a stone building leased from the Cañon de Carnué Land Grant. The Curtis family had previously lived in Craig, Colo., and since the late 1920s had a connection to the East Mountain area through Raymond’s sister Bess, who was married to Ralph Hill.

Ralph Hill owned the old Hodge-Tight resort, a 40-acre tract of land and cabins nestled in the hills north of the Oasis Gas Station. Earlier, in the 1920s, Raymond Curtis had worked as a bank clerk at the Craig Colorado National Bank and was elected County Treasurer in 1928. In 1932, a former cashier at the bank, J. J. Toole, was charged with manipulating the bank’s books for nearly 10 years in order to “save the failing bank,” according to Toole’s trial testimony. When charged, Toole drew his former friend and co-worker into the mess, indicating Raymond Curtis had helped him juggle the books and resulting in Curtis’ arrest on federal charges of violation of national banking laws.

Of the eight charges filed against Curtis, seven were ultimately dismissed; he was left with one count of “conspiracy” stemming from the fact that he was apparently aware of some of the false entries Toole had made. Otherwise, he reportedly had no actual participation in Toole’s schemes. Curtis was sentenced to 18 months at Leavenworth and only served 10 months due to good conduct.

More recent historical accounts regarding Curtis’ sentence unfortunately were overstated as 15 years, an inaccuracy that regrettably made its way into the EMHS book, *Timelines* of the East Mountains, as well. When the Oasis Gas Station opened in 1933, Curtis was in the midst of his court and appeals trials and was traveling back and forth between New Mexico and Colorado. In his 1934 Leavenworth intake interview, he noted that he was currently the owner of a service station that was “in his wife’s name,” so we know the business was being run by his wife Vera in his absence.

In 1937, Highway 366 was designated as U.S. Highway 66 and the Oasis Gas Station became a well-known landmark in the East Mountains. The Curtis family ran the Oasis until 1955, when Raymond retired at the age of 69. The building was still owned by the Carnuel Grant and was rented as both a commercial and residential building until it was torn down in the early 1970s for construction of I-40.

*Note: Those who have purchased Timelines of the East Mountains are invited to clip this 2022 article and add it to the book’s Tijeras section.*



Elizabeth Joann Curtis, about 1935, behind the Oasis Gas Station in Tijeras.  
Photo Courtesy Raymond Curtis family.

# EMHS VISIT TO WHEELS MUSEUM VISIT ON JULY 23, 2022



BY DEBBIE POST

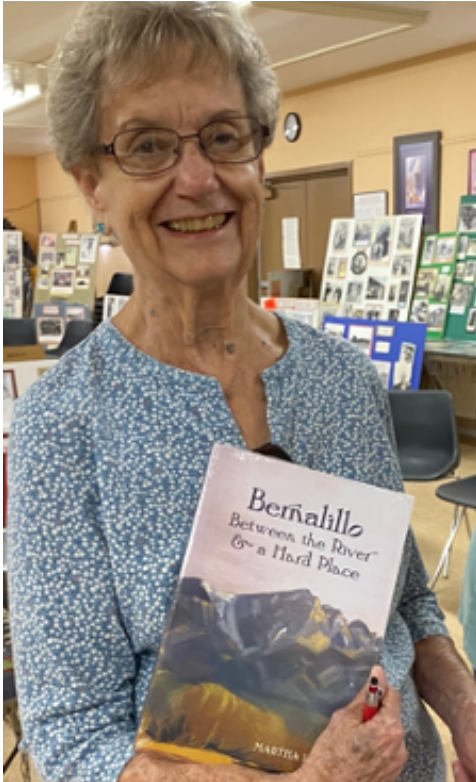
On Saturday, July 23, 10 EMHS members visited the WHEELS Museum in downtown Albuquerque at the old railyards of the Santa Fe Railroad for a private tour. The museum motto is “We Have Everything Everyone Loves Spinning” (WHEELS), and we certainly discovered this to be true! We saw model railroads and model cars, as well as antique wagons, bicycles and roller skates! Founder Leba Freed gave us a presentation on the history of the site, which was established in the 1880s to repair and refurbish steam locomotives for the Santa Fe Railroad. The site preserves the turntable and main building, which was closed in 1977 as steam locomotives had become replaced by diesel locomotives. Ms. Freed started work to acquire the site in 1994 given the historical value, and volunteers continue to support this historic site in conjunction with the mayor and State of New Mexico. EMHS members want to return to this family-friendly museum next year. Attending were board members Robyn Hoffman, Sandra Lee, Rick Holben and Debbie Post, and members Chuck Post, James Hickerson, Bill Suderman, Paulette Miller, Ronald Lah, and Evelyn McGarry. Thanks to Denise Tessier and Kathy Rich for publicizing the event. Thanks to Paulette Miller, Sandra Lee, Bill Suderman, and Chuck Post for taking photos.

# *EMHS Field Trip to Sandoval County Historical Society's Photography Show*

BY DEBBIE POST



Debbie Post, EMHS Program Chair, in the reference library of the DeLavy House, Photo courtesy of Sandra Lee



Sandra Lee with Martha Liebert's book, "Bernalillo: Between the River & a Hard Place" Photo courtesy of Debbie Post

On Sunday, September 4, 2022, seven EMHS members and three guests visited a photography show by the Sandoval County Historical Society (SCHS) at the historic DeLavy House in Bernalillo. Members also had a tour and historical talk by founder Martha Liebert. Martha told us tales of mining boom and bust in Bland Canyon, communities founded by land grants from the Spanish crown, and founding the historical society to tell the stories of regular people. Sandoval County is the heart of historic New Mexico, has been continuously occupied for over 1000 years, and is home to seven Pueblos.

A special boon to this all-volunteer society is the DeLavy House, left to SCHS by resident Edward DeLavy. Edward was born in Maine in 1916 of Swiss and German ancestry and served in WWII. Edward first visited New Mexico in 1947 and was fascinated by all things western. He came to live in Bernalillo in 1959 and was a long time member of SCHS.

Today, the DeLavy House hosts extensive photo and print archives and a library. Historical society members are encouraged to visit, by appointment only. Learn more at: <http://www.sandovalhistory.org> or call (505) 867-2755.



Amy Padilla, EMHS Archivist, and Robyn Hoffman, EMHS President at photo show. Photo courtesy of Debbie Post

## **UPCOMING IN OCTOBER AND NOVEMBER:**

Join us at the East Mountain Celebration on September 25 from 12-5pm!

Save the date for our 30th Anniversary Celebration!  
October 22, more details to come!

Look out for an announcement of our Annual Membership Meeting, which  
will be held in November