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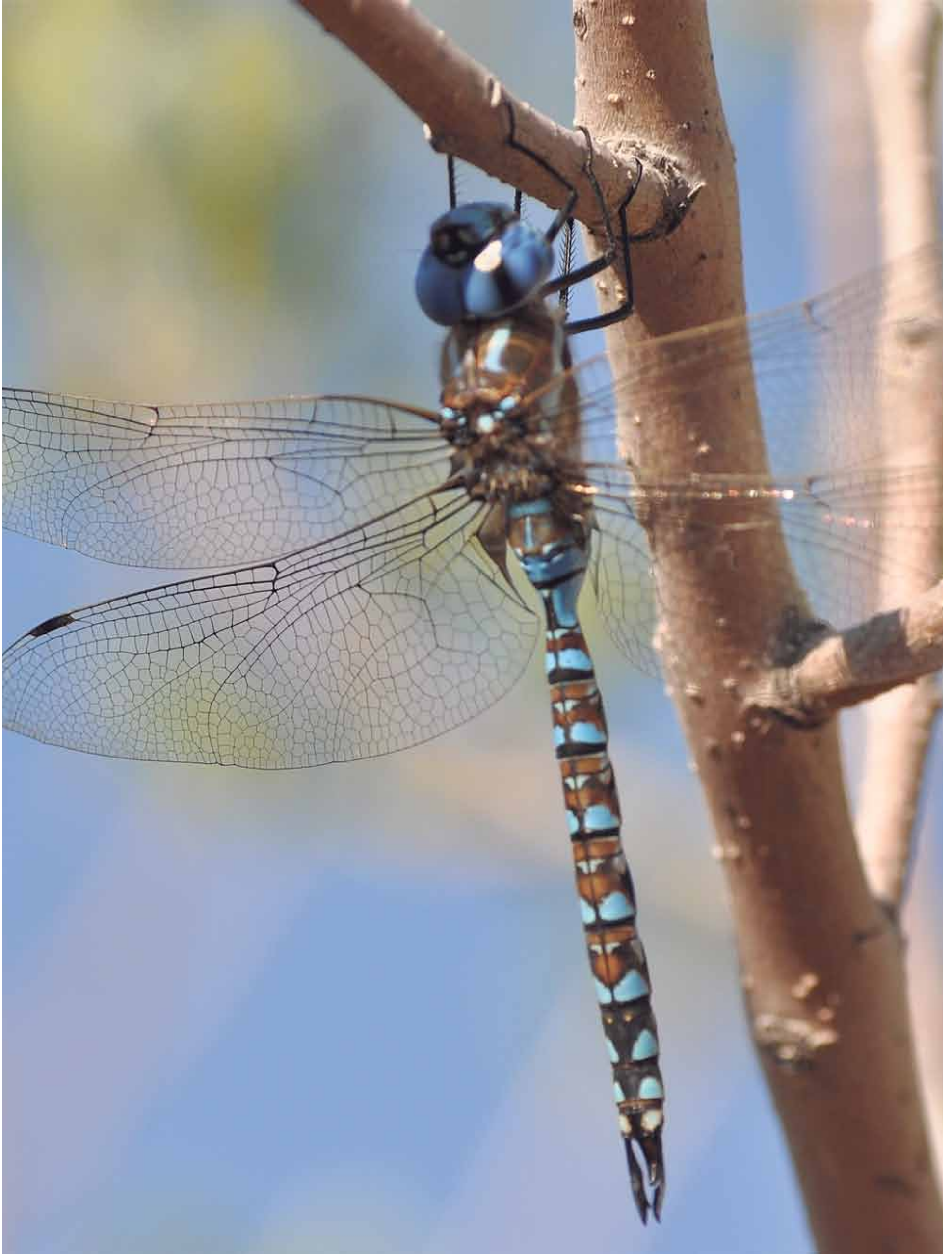


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**About the cover:** Blue-eyed Darner, photographed by **David B. Richman**. Read all about dragonflies and damselflies in this issue's feature on "Ancient Aviators."

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## Ad Values

Which Heather Wilson wants to be New Mexico's next US Senator?

We congratulate Martin Heinrich and Heather Wilson on their primary victories in the US Senate race, especially for the positive tenor of both campaigns. We hope that will continue into the general-election campaign, despite the onslaught of PAC money that will pour into New Mexico on both sides. (New Mexicans are about to experience first-hand the folly of the Supreme Court's Citizens United decision, which unfettered special interests to pollute our airwaves.)

The state's Republican Party voters are also to be congratulated for rejecting the "no compromises" partisan rancor that's infected other states—ousting, for example, Indiana Sen. Richard Lugar for inadequately demonizing the opposition. Heather Wilson has the potential, if elected, to follow the model of her mentor, former Sen. Pete Domenici, in reaching across the aisle. And during her own decade in Congress, she sometimes challenged the dogma of her own party, as in when she questioned warrantless surveillance by the NSA.

Wilson's pre-primary campaign commercials, however, suggest a candidate who is drinking the Kool-Aid of her party's extreme right. As the general election campaign begins, it seems only fair to examine the claims and promises she made to get on the November ballot.

"The same freedoms and liberties that made us great are under attack," Wilson endlessly warned in her TV ads. What freedoms and liberties is she talking about? To the extent Americans' basic freedoms have been eroded, that occurred primarily under the Bush administration—with Wilson's endorsement, notably voting for the Patriot Act. Perhaps she's referring to the "freedom and liberties" to drill for oil anyplace you want, a stance that helped earn Wilson a place on the League of Conservation Voters' "Dirty Dozen" list along with six-figure contributions from the energy lobby. (We must have missed the "drill, baby, drill" amendment to the Bill of Rights.)

When Wilson's ads did get specific (as much as campaign commercials ever do), they were similarly nonsensical. "Pay off the debt," Wilson urges. Exactly where are we supposed to find \$15.7 trillion, or more than \$50,000 per person—under the mattress? Even if such a sum could be raised, most economists would agree that suddenly paying off all the national debt would be a terrible idea. The fact is, despite chatter about mortgaging our future to China, most of the federal debt is money we owe ourselves; only about eight percent of those obligations are actually held by Chinese investors.

You could even argue that with interest rates at historic lows, the government ought to be borrowing *more*, not less—much as it makes sense to borrow now to buy a house or expand a business. The pitfall lies not in borrowing per se, but in what the borrowed money is used for. If Uncle Sam borrows to build bridges and create jobs that eventually increase tax revenues, that's a wise investment. Borrowing, even from ourselves, to finance tax cuts for millionaires and embark on needless military adventures, that's the red-ink legacy of the Bush years—with the full support of Rep. Heather Wilson, who served from 1998 through 2008.

"Balance the budget," Wilson's ads promise, overlooking the fact that the budget *was* balanced when Wilson arrived in Congress. Indeed, in the last year of the Clinton administration, the federal budget recorded a surplus of more than \$200 billion, with \$1 trillion surpluses projected for the coming decade.

Today, as tax cuts, unfunded wars and a recession have turned those rosy predictions into a sea of red ink, how exactly would Wilson balance the budget? She won't say whether she'd support the ruinous Ryan budget plan that would make the deficit worse while gutting Medicare for those not yet 55 (Editor's Notebook, May). If she supports

tax increases or letting the Bush tax cuts for the wealthiest expire, Wilson sure hasn't revealed that, either. But if she doesn't, then talk of balancing the budget is mathematical malarkey.

"Stop runaway spending," Wilson's third campaign-ad promise, rings similarly hollow. What "runaway spending," precisely? The bloated Pentagon budget? Not likely. Spending on food stamps, Medicaid and other programs for the neediest Americans, as her GOP colleagues in Congress

have already voted to cut? Unless Wilson provides different yet detailed answers in the coming campaign, New Mexico voters should assume the worst.

Heather Wilson has the résumé and toughness to stand up to the extremists in her party. Much as her mentor, Domenici, has teamed with ex-Clinton official Alice Rivlin,

Wilson could help bring about bipartisan compromises for sensible budget reforms and short-term economic stimulus coupled with long-term deficit reduction. But she can't expect voters to take it on faith that she won't wind up in lockstep with GOP fire-breathers. This isn't an election where we can rely on "trust me" and a few winks.

Her campaign ads ended with the reasonable-sounding pitch that "Washington politicians in both parties are driving us off a cliff." But where exactly would Wilson steer differently from the GOP agenda?

Moreover, it's a comfortable media fiction that "both parties" are equally to blame for partisan gridlock. In a new book, *It's Even Worse Than It Looks: How the American Constitutional System Collided With the New Politics of Extremism*, Thomas E. Mann and Norman J. Ornstein argue that "the core of the problem lies with the Republican Party." These are not two Democratic partisans: Mann is a senior fellow at the liberal-leaning Brookings Institution, but Ornstein is a resident scholar at the conservative American Enterprise Institute.

"The GOP has become an insurgent outlier in American politics," they go on. "It is ideologically extreme; scornful of compromise; unmoved by conventional understanding of facts, evidence and science; and dismissive of the legitimacy of its political opposition. When one party moves this far from the mainstream, it makes it nearly impossible for the political system to deal constructively with the country's challenges."

Yes, Mann and Ornstein concede, the Democratic Party has moved leftward. But "while the Democrats may have moved from their 40-yard line to their 25, the Republicans have gone from their 40 to somewhere behind their goal post."

Doubt it? Read *Rule and Ruin* by Geoffrey Kabaservice, a lecturer in American history at Yale. This thoughtful new political history traces "The Downfall of Moderation and the Destruction of the Republican Party, From Eisenhower to the Tea Party."

Or listen to former Florida Gov. Jeb Bush, who recently questioned his party's approach to immigration, deficit reduction and partisanship, saying that his father, former President George H. W. Bush, and President Reagan would have struggled with "an orthodoxy that doesn't allow for disagreement."

A Senator Heather Wilson could be just the thing her party needs to step back from the "cliff" she warns us of. But she'd first need to stop tossing out nonsense about paying off the debt and balancing the budget without tax increases. And she'd need to acknowledge that the fault in today's partisan dysfunction does not lie equally with "Washington politicians in both parties."

That's a "profile in courage," to borrow a phrase from another generation's promising politician, we'd like to see. ☘

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David A. Fryxell is editor of Desert Exposure.



LETTERS

# Parking, Pesticides & Fire

Our readers write.

## Parking Pros and Cons

I'm writing in response to your June editorial regarding downtown parking, which left me feeling a bit queasy. While I personally don't have an issue with parking in town, I've heard others speak of it as a "problem" also. I humbly question what people expect when living in a small town, especially in an "historic district." My understanding is that this is what small, old towns are about.

For myself, the beauty and attraction of Silver City is its historic aspects: the uniqueness of the old architecture, the narrow, hilly streets and high sidewalks, the hollyhocks busting through cracks in the asphalt in unexpected bursts of pink, the way every single place is not necessarily tidy. It is a reflection of those who live here. We are a motley crew.

I agree with you that there could be much better signage for existing parking areas, making it easier for our visitors, and would like to see tourist monies put there. I will add that I own a shop downtown, Guadalupe's (and yes, I park around the block). About one-third of my clientele are tourists. I have never heard one customer complain about parking! I think when visitors come here, they enjoy the experience of our small town, the uniqueness of what is here. They are looking for what they're missing in their urban/suburban homes, and don't mind a little "inconvenience" to experience that.

Regarding parking at the visitors center and the necessity of crossing the Ditch, "the people who hang around there" are residents of Silver City also. I have found that most of the street folks are polite, reserved, keep to themselves, and just get by how they can. If this makes some people uncomfortable, whether local or visitor, well, sorry, maybe it's not such a bad thing to be challenged by our fears from time to time.

I feel we have to use caution in catering to a tourist population. Many of us have seen beautiful places ruined by misguided priorities. It is a curious phenomenon that many people move to a town, excited by its culture, quaintness or uniqueness, then try to re-create the place they left behind in the name of "progress."

Silver City is an old town and has seen many ups and downs. I dread the thought that what has happened in many other towns, such as Taos and Santa Fe, could happen here. As the quest for tourist dollars shifts the balance of economic power, the tax base, land prices and cost of living rise to a degree that long-time, multi-generational residents can no longer afford to live here, or are moved to the periphery of town. These towns then become sanitized, Disney versions of

themselves and the initial energy and beauty that pulled people there is, ironically, lost.

Change is inevitable. Change keeps us alive and vital—both as individuals and as a town. Let's just remain mindful of long term repercussions to changes we make.

Nora Fiedler  
Gila

I have a response to the parking situation in downtown Silver City. Before I became a resident of downtown, I would park at the Visitors Center and walk across the bridge that comes out at the Hester House. This is a good halfway point to Bullard Street to access any business on it or up the side streets. The "appearance" of local individuals hanging around has never bothered me nor have "they" ever bothered me. People should not be intimidated by appearances of others.

People seem to get annoyed if they cannot park directly in front of the businesses they wish to patronize. Yet they seem to not have any qualms about walking a great distance from their vehicles to the entrance of their favorite stores in shopping centers. Or the miles they walk while they are in the shopping centers and malls. Maybe the parking complainers could pretend that downtown Silver City is their favorite mall?

Several of the health problems in our country could be solved by the mere act of walking. Doctors seem to freely hand out handicapped parking tags while telling the same patients that walking would improve their health. Walking is known to burn calories, improve joint health, lower cholesterol and lower blood pressure, but the best-known benefit is that walking makes people happier. So, if you can't find that perfect parking space, maybe you'll be happier if you have to walk farther.

I decided to do my own little experiment walking downtown vs. inside Wal-Mart just to see if there was much difference in the distances. Starting at the closest parking space from the Visitor Center, I took 298 steps to walk to the Silver City Food Co-op to the milk section. I did the same thing at Wal-Mart, starting at the closest parking space, and walked to the milk section taking 85 steps. But how many customers go just to buy milk at Wal-Mart? If you walk the whole inside perimeter of the store, it is 482 steps. I walked along Bullard Street starting at Broadway and ended at College for a total of 619 steps.

As far as leveling some buildings to facilitate



DESERT EXPOSURE PHOTO BY THE AUTHOR

LETTERS continued on next page

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## LETTERS continued

parking, I'm ever hopeful Silver City will attract more businesses downtown, utilizing our unique structures, and for people to park at the existing parking areas. Perhaps we will get some signage showing where the public parking is! I'd also like to see white lines designating the parallel spaces on the streets. We could probably fit more cars in if people parked correctly. Or perhaps soon we'll all be walking with smiles on our faces thinking of how good we are to our bodies by giving them some exercise.

Judy Wuthrich  
Silver City

**Editor's note:** We appreciate such thoughtful responses. Part of the point of the editorial, however, was the *perception* that parking-seeking tourists might take away. However healthier or happier visitors might actually be on foot, and regardless of the reality of distances downtown or the friendliness of street people once you get to know them, if arrivals by automobile *perceive* a problem they're less likely to discover the lovely reality of downtown Silver City.

## Stray Spray

EarthTalk in the latest edition (June) discusses pesticide drift. This is a vitally important bit of information about pesticide drift and it is heartening to learn that advocacy by PAN has finally yielded some results.

In 1995 I was caught in pesticide drift from a crop duster dusting the cotton field adjacent to where I rented a small trailer in San Miguel, about 13 miles south of Las Cruces. While I admire the skill of the pilots, it was a nightmare when that angry yellow plane trailed drift over the town of San Miguel, the acequia and, one morning as I walked to my car to go to work, me.

The plane trailed drift directly over me and my dog (she later developed cancer). Within days, my bronchia had ruptured and were bleeding—exit zone, my mouth. A cup and a half of blood collected sent me to the ER, who assured me there was “no pesticide problem” in Las Cruces: “Ulcers, it must be ulcers.” “Heart, it's her heart.” “Worst case of bronchial asthma I've ever seen.” It was like being caught in a very bad “M\*A\*S\*H” rerun. To make a long and nightmarish story short, I ended up with permanent scarred and pitted lungs, on oxygen 24/7. Many went to the hospital that year with “allergies” and respiratory problems.

Pesticides are not required to list inert ingredients that do NOT biodegrade quickly, such as silicates, so when pecan trees are shaken it isn't just “dust” that is irritating the lungs. Just consider: Roadsides are sprayed for weeds and/or mosquitoes. Homes are sprayed for insects. Gardens are sprayed for pests. Hospitals and other public buildings are regularly sprayed, and one sees huge tanks of pesticides being sprayed in pecans and cotton. Yet we “have no pesticide problems”?

Malathion and tribufose (the latter used to kill cotton for “ease of harvest”), are used, plus cyfluthrin in buildings. Our national obsession with bugs is destroying our health and our environment, and the bugs just get stronger. I had no recourse to legal action because the pesticide companies (also known as our giant pharmaceutical companies, who also make inhalants to spray for lung problems) are “too big to sue.”

While the article is encouraging in that pesticide

drift is being studied to “better understand how it works” (try standing near a field being sprayed some time for a first-hand experience), the problem is far from being solved or even from being adequately addressed.

Maya nolastname  
via email

## The Rest of the Story

In reading June's Wilderness Updates (Tumbleweeds), it seems your information on Fish and Wildlife's jaguar program, and also Gabe Holguin's unfortunately timed comments on burning in the Gila, are at best incomplete.

In a letter to *The New York Times*, the eminent jaguar biologist Alan Rabinowitz explains why the effort to establish jaguar habitat in this country is not only misguided, but also potentially harmful to the entire Endangered Species program. It's not often that someone whose life is dedicated to the preservation of an animal comes out against a program, but he states the American Southwest IS NOT jaguar habitat.

Even before the devastating destruction of the Whitewater-Baldy Complex fire, Holguin's comments about the Miller Fire mislead. This was not a harmless fire. The land just north of Little Creek burned so hot there is barely a live tree in thousands of acres. The earth was an awful pale orange/gray color. When the rains came last summer, of course we had a cloudburst right over this area and all the ash washed down into

Little Creek and the West Fork of the Gila. V-shaped canyons became wide-U canyons. The river itself was a blackish gray for days. This killed all the fish but a few suckers. I've finally seen a few tadpoles and schools of two-inch minnows in the last few weeks, but the herons who come back every spring now fish over on the East Fork, then fly back to their roost here in Gila Hot Springs.

Likewise, we're hearing the Whitewater-Baldy fire was

mostly moderate in burn severity (although 48,000-plus acres burned in one day and 40,000 another), that this sort of stand-reduction fire is necessary due to past suppressions. The new wilderness ranger, Ray Torres, stated at a meeting here in Gila Hot Springs, “Trees grow back.” He seemed to have no concern that this won't happen in our lifetimes, or for the destruction of several watersheds (the West and Middle Fork headwaters, Whitewater and probably many other creeks on the west side of the Gila Wilderness), or the economic impact of no tourism on our small rural communities. As someone at a meeting in Glenwood said, “We really appreciate the firefighters. We just don't like some of the Forest Service policies.”

Isn't it time that the Forest Service considers the FULL implications of its inaction?

Michele Connelly  
Gila Hot Springs

## Changing Your Tune

I enjoyed your Continental Divide article about choosing a song for the father/daughter dance at your daughter's wedding (June). Whenever you write about your daughter (your Father's Day article, for instance) it is obviously written from the heart. However, considering all the wildfires in Colorado near your daughter's wedding site, perhaps you should have chosen the song, “Smoke Gets in My Eyes.”

Pat Young  
San Lorenzo

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## DESERT DIARY

# The Butt of Our Jokes (or Vice Versa)

Plus young guns, nurses not to mess with and sectarian squirrels.

**L**osing the battle of the sexes... As so often happens, with this yarn from **GeeRich-Lard** we unwittingly introduce a theme of sorts that will, as astute readers will see, pop up throughout this month's Diary. Given the nature of the, er, theme, we apologize in advance to the easily offended and remind them that (to paraphrase a certain children's book) everybody has a butt:

"Fresh from her shower, the lady stands in front of the mirror, scowling. 'Why the frown?' her husband asks.

"I think my breasts are too small,' she replies.

"The guy offers a suggestion: 'If you want your breasts to grow, then every day, you take a piece of toilet paper and rub it between them for a few seconds.'

"Willing to try anything, the lady fetches a piece of toilet paper. As she rubs between her breasts, she asks, 'How long will this take to work?'

"Probably a few years,' he replies.

"She asks, 'What makes you think this will work?'

"Without missing a beat, he says, 'Worked for your butt, didn't it?'

"Unbelievably, the guy is still alive. With continued therapy, he may walk again, albeit still taking his meals through a straw."

**A**nnals of technology... Then there's this one from **Ned Ludd**, which we have presented as tastefully as possible, given the subject matter:

"I was in Starbucks recently when I suddenly realized I desperately needed to pass gas. The music was really loud so I timed my release with the beat of the music.

"After a couple of songs I started to feel better. I finished

my coffee and noticed that everyone was staring at me.

"And suddenly I remembered I was listening to my iPod!"

**Y**ou're only as old as you feel... Nothing rearward about this bittersweet little tale from the **Packrat Out Back**, thank goodness:

"A man was walking through a city park one day and came upon an upset older lady sitting on the park bench crying. Thinking perhaps he could help, he walked up to the lady and asked what was wrong and if there was anything he could do for her. Through sniffles, she replied, 'My son fixes me hotcakes or French toast and eggs in addition to fresh-squeezed orange juice every morning as soon as I get out of bed.' The man tried to interrupt, but the lady continued, 'And for lunch he makes me a delicious sandwich, potato salad and fresh brownies for dessert.'

"Still refusing to be interrupted, she added that for dinner her son always had a wonderful home-cooked meal on the table, plus a pie or cake that he had just made from scratch. 'Not only that, he does all the cleaning, laundry, grocery shopping and bill paying for me,' she sniffed.

"The lady paused to catch her breath, and the man quickly interjected, 'That's all wonderful! I can't understand why you are so distraught. It sounds to me that your son treats you like a queen.'

"The woman replied, 'Oh, he does, he does, but I can't remember where I live!'"

This one from **Farmor, the Swedish Grandma**, however... well, at least it offers a more upbeat view of aging:

"An old prospector shuffled into the town of El Indio, Texas, leading a tired old mule. The old man headed straight for the only saloon in town, to clear his parched throat. He walked up to the saloon and tied his old mule to the hitch rail.

"As he stood there, brushing some of the dust from his face and clothes, a young gunslinger stepped out of the saloon with a gun in one hand and a bottle of whiskey in the other. The young gunslinger looked at the old man and laughed, saying, 'Hey, old man, can you dance?'

"The old man looked up at the gunslinger and said, 'No, son, I don't dance. Never really wanted to.'

"A crowd had gathered as the gunslinger grinned and said, 'Well, you old fool, you're gonna dance now!' and started shooting at the old man's feet.

"The old prospector, not wanting to get a toe blown off, started hopping around like a flea on a hot skillet. Everybody standing around was laugh-

ing. When his last bullet had been fired, the young gunslinger, still laughing, holstered his gun and turned around to go back into the saloon.

"The old man turned to his pack mule, pulled out a double-barreled 12-gauge shotgun and cocked both hammers. The loud clicks carried clearly through the desert air. The crowd stopped laughing immediately.

"The young gunslinger heard the sounds, too, and he turned around very slowly. The silence was deafening. The crowd watched as the young gunman stared at the old timer and the large gaping holes of those twin 12-gauge barrels.

"The barrels of the shotgun never wavered in the old man's hands, as he quietly said, 'Son, have you ever kissed a mule's ass?'

"The gunslinger swallowed hard and said, 'No sir... but... I've always wanted to.'

"There are a few lessons for all of us here:

• Don't be arrogant.

• Don't waste ammunition.

• Whiskey makes you think you're smarter than you are.

• Always make sure you know who is in control.

• And finally, don't screw around with old folks; they didn't get old by being stupid."

**A**nnals of medicine... With a completely different, er, angle on this month's accidental leitmotif, here's the **Silver City Greek**:

"A big-shot attorney had to spend a couple of days in the hospital. He was a royal pain to the nurses because he bossed them around just like he did his staff. None of the hospital staff wanted to have anything to do with him. The head nurse was the only one who could stand up to him. She came into his room and announced, 'I have to take your temperature.'

"After complaining for several minutes, he finally settled down, crossed his arms and opened his mouth.

"No, I'm sorry,' the nurse stated, 'but for this reading, I can't use an oral thermometer.' This started another round of complaining, but eventually he rolled over and bared his behind.

"After feeling the nurse insert the thermometer, he heard her announce, 'I have to get something. Now you stay JUST LIKE THAT until I get back!'

"She left the door to his room open on her way out. He cursed under his breath as he heard people walking past his door, laughing.

"After about 20 minutes, the man's doctor came into the room. 'What's going on here?' asked the doctor.

"Angrily, the man answered, 'What's the matter, Doc? Haven't you ever seen someone having their temperature taken?'

"After a pause, the doctor confessed, 'Not with a daffodil.'"

*Laughter really is the best medicine, so send*



**Postcards from the edge...** We take a break from our usual presentation of photos sent in by readers on vacation posing with "the biggest little paper in the Southwest" to share two newsworthy submissions. First, sent in by **Teresa Manlowe**, here is "**Piper A.W. Campbell**, a visitor to Silver City and a regular reader of *Desert Exposure*. She is currently Consul General at the US Consulate in Basrah, Iraq, and is President Obama's nominee to be the next US Ambassador to Mongolia."

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In another newsworthy photo, **Cissy McAndrew** sent us this picture of more prominent folks with excellent taste in reading matter. Left to right are **Michelle Geels, Cissy McAndrew and Julie Minicucci** at the Silver City Tourism Booth for the 2012 Governor's Conference on Tourism held in Taos May 14-17.

Whether you're headed for Ulan Bator or Belen, snap a picture of yourself holding *Desert Exposure* and send it to PO Box 191, Silver City, NM 88062, or [diary@desertexposure.com](mailto:diary@desertexposure.com).

*your favorite jokes to [diary@desertexposure.com](mailto:diary@desertexposure.com).*

**Persons of the redneck persuasion...** Picking up where we left off last month in **GeraldH's** list of "You know you're a redneck when...":

"Your lifetime goal is to own a fireworks stand.

"You have a complete set of salad bowls and they all say 'Cool Whip' on the side.

"The biggest city you've ever been to is Wal-Mart.

"Your working TV sits on top of your non-working TV.

"You've used your ironing board as a buffet table.

"A tornado hits your neighborhood and does \$100,000 worth of improvements.

"You've used a toilet brush to scratch your back.

"You missed your fifth-grade graduation because you were on jury duty.

"You think fast food is hitting a deer at 65."

**Corporal pun-ishment...** By now, you should be ready for a little wordplay break. No buts about it, starting with this elaborate yarn from **MichaelH**:

"A man who despised his city's Building Department decided to re-roof his house. He knew he was supposed to get a building permit to do this, but didn't out of spite. He had completed most of his illegal repairs and was preparing to eliminate the sag in the eaves at the end of the house.

"As the man struggled to fix the sag in the eaves, some rotted wood gave way underneath him. He fell right through the hole in the roof, but managed to grab the edge of the eaves as he fell, catching himself.

"Unfortunately, the sudden weight of the falling man caused the edge of the roof to completely tear loose from the rest of the house, resulting in the man falling 20 feet to the ground and getting pummeled with debris from the collapsed eaves.

"A neighbor happened to witness this and hurried over to check on the man. He was alive, but badly hurt. The paramedics were called and he was taken to the hospital in agony.

"The man's injuries were serious enough that he spent six weeks in the hospital recovering. On his last day in the hospital, the police arrived and announced that he was under arrest for his activities six weeks earlier.

"What!?" exclaimed the man. "You're going to arrest me for falling off my own roof?"

"Oh, no," replied the policeman. "We're arresting you for tearing off the edge of your roof without a permit. That's a clear case of illegal eaves-dropping."

Then there's this bit of "barnyard humor" sent our way by new correspondent **Wes the Sooner**:

"There were two sows visiting in the barnyard. The first sow asked, 'Have you heard from your boar friend lately?' and the second sow said, 'Why, yes, I had a litter from him last week.'"

**E**cumenical humor... A little something for everybody in this one from **Old Grumps**. (Feel free to suggest your own additions about the atheists, Hindus, et al...)

"There were five houses of religion in a small town: the Presbyterian church, the Baptist church, the Methodist church, the Catholic Church and the Jewish synagogue. Each was overrun with pesky squirrels.

"One day, the Presbyterian Church called a meeting to decide what to do about the squirrels. After much prayer and consideration, they determined that the squirrels were predestined to be there and they shouldn't interfere with God's divine will.

"In the Baptist church the squirrels had taken up habitation in the baptistery. The deacons met and decided to put a cover on the baptistery and drown the squirrels in it. The squirrels escaped somehow and there were twice as many there

the next week.

"The Methodist church got together and decided that they were not in a position to harm any of God's creation. So, they humanely trapped the squirrels and set them free a few miles outside of town. Three days later, the squirrels were back.

"But the Catholic Church came up with the best and most effective solution. They baptized the squirrels and registered them as members of the church. Now they see them only on Christmas, Ash Wednesday, Palm Sunday and Easter.

"Not much was heard about the Jewish synagogue, but they took one squirrel and had a short service with him called circumcision and they haven't seen a squirrel on the property since."

**S**earch and rescue... This submission from **CharlesC** had us nodding our head, thinking, so true...

"Abe and Esther are flying to Australia for a two-week vacation to celebrate their 40th anniversary. Suddenly, over the public address system, the captain announces, 'Ladies and gentlemen, I am afraid I have some very bad news. Our engines have ceased functioning and we will attempt an emergency landing. Luckily, I see an uncharted island below us and we should be able to land on the beach. However, the odds are that we may never be rescued and will have to live on the island for the rest of our lives!'

"Thanks to the skill of the flight crew, the plane lands safely on the island. An hour later, Abe turns to his wife and asks, 'Esther, did we pay our \$5,000 PBS pledge yet?'

"No, sweetheart,' she responds.

"Abe, still shaken from the crash landing, then asks, 'Esther, did we pay our American Express card yet?'

"Oh, no! I'm sorry. I forgot to send the check,' she says.

"One last thing, Esther. Did you remember to send checks for the Visa and MasterCard this month?" he asks.

"Oh, forgive me, Abe,' Esther begs. 'I didn't send those, either.'

"Abe grabs her and gives her the biggest kiss in 40 years. Esther pulls away and asks him, 'What was that for?'

"Abe answers, 'They'll find us!'"

**K**ids say the darnedest things... We couldn't finish without one more backward glance, and The Santa Claran just happened to send in the perfect tale:

"A little three-year-old boy is sitting on the toilet. His mother thinks he has been in there too long, so she goes in to see what's up. The little boy is sitting on the toilet reading a book. But about every 15 seconds or so, he puts the book down, grips onto the toilet seat with his left hand and hits himself on top of his head with his right hand.

"His mother says, 'Billy, are you all right? You've been in here for a while.'

"Billy says, 'I'm fine, mommy. I just haven't gone potty yet.'

"Mother says, 'OK, you can stay here a few more minutes, but, Billy, why are you hitting yourself on the head?'

"Billy says, 'It works for ketchup.'"

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TUMBLEVEEDS • JEANIE McLERIE AND KEN KEPPELER

# Navigating by Heart

Silver City musicians Bayou Seco serve up "chilegumbo" on both sides of the English Channel.



Jeanie, Ken and godson Tomás in Ballingarry, County Tipperary, Ireland.

**Editor's note:** We're delighted to once again share a "rolling postcard" from the popular Silver City "chilegumbo" musical duo, Bayou Seco, this time on tour in the British Isles and France.

Steeping like a teabag in an ocean of tunes, the notes washing over us like a waterfall of bubbling Ballygowan water, we found ourselves once again enjoying the pleasures of Ireland as we went from gig to gig and session to session, hosted by our many generous friends. The weather this year was really cold—hovering near 34 degrees every night, rainy off and on, and windy. But the sun seemed to turn itself on at certain opportune moments, enhancing our photos of the local wonders and vistas. Hey, we didn't come here for the weather! The tea was always hot and steaming, the Guinness lovely and creamy, the soda bread chewy and sustaining, and most important, the people fantastic.

This time we were traveling with our 22-year-old godson Tomás Wentz—a great fiddler, singer and guitar player, he made a great bandmate and traveling companion. Good senses of humor and irony are always important on the road, and we did laugh a lot at the quirky things we saw and heard. For instance, this year we had a GPS—known as a SAT-NAV over here. It was included at no cost in the lovely leased Renault Kangoo we always get, a nice coppery brown color this time. We had never used a GPS before, and found it to be a strange way to get around when, before, maps were just fine. There were advantages, like navigating in cities, but in general we know how to get to where we are going.

We named the GPS voice (BBC accent, female) "Sativa," and we turned her off in disgust when she pleaded with us to take the third exit off the roundabout, when we knew that the little road that paralleled the big one was bound to be more fun and less busy. She sent us on some wild goose chases,

but we became aware of her wily ways, and knew when to entice her with an offer of a steamin' cuppa and a biscuit, or simply turn her OFF, the danger being that the next time she would be pouty and sulky. What will happen to this generation that knows only GPS? Map reading is a skill, and with it, the memory of the road is embedded in your mind. With GPS there is no retained knowledge of the road or landmarks—kind of like reading music as opposed to learning a tune by ear.

What I love most about traveling, about playing our music, is the unknown factor in each day. Yes, we get up, eat something, and pack the car and head for the next destination. When we arrive, we like to unload our stuff wherever we are staying (with friends or at a B&B or hotel). Sometimes we have to go straight to the venue to sound check. Then we usually find something to eat. A lot of times the venue provides us with a nice snack or meal; it is hard to find food between 2 and 6 p.m. in most towns. Then there is the concert, which is the best part of the day. We like to think we are getting paid for all the traveling and driving and schlepping our gear. The music part is the reward for the hard work.

We arrived in Paris in early April. The lovely spring flowers and blooming trees were in full swing as we drove three hours east to the Haute Marne in our Kangoo.

Our guitar and banjo and two accordions are stored at our friends Philippe and Francine Pierson's house, and that makes it possible to do this yearly tour, our 20th. We bring only three fiddles and the laptop as carry-on baggage on the plane.

A few days in Droyes got rid of jet lag. We visited old friends there, and slept at odd times, and were fed royally as the French know how to do. Then it was up to Calais, and we hopped on the ferry to England (no "Chunnel" for us) and went to Sheffield for the first gig, stopping in Canterbury and Whitteley for a few nights. We picked up Tomás at the Manchester airport on a Thursday and began the whirlwind of 24 concerts in about 35 days the very next day.

We then drove up to Galloway (southwest Scotland) to play at the Swallow Theatre in Withorn, and the next day in Dumfries at a pub. We were lucky to visit a stone circle near Withorn that dates back to 2000 BC and also Cairn Holy, a crossed line of standing stones and burial chamber not far from there. We happened upon an American there, Joseph, perched on the highest stone, kind of like a strange bird, taking time-lapse photos of the setting sun as it made shadows through the stones. Apparently he had been doing this for a few years and all the local people knew of him. We felt like intruders, but he welcomed us and explained a little about what he was doing. Ken sang to him what the stones were saying. He was mightily impressed.

The next day we took the short ferry ride from Cairnryan to Belfast, where we stayed for three days visiting our Las Cruces friends Rus Bradburd and Connie Voisine. Rus wrote the wonderful book *Paddy on the Hardwood* about coaching basketball for two years in County Kerry and learning Kerry-style fiddle from Paddy Jones. Connie was in Belfast on a Fulbright scholarship working with poet and novelist Ciaran Carson.

While in Belfast we went to some sessions at



Playing street music in Puy-Guillaume in France.

Madden's Bar in the heart of Belfast. It was very near the center of the city where many of the "Troubles" took place. Madden's opened in 1744 and has apparently always been a place where traditional music was played; it is still a meeting place for traditional musicians, poets and dancers. The history of the Troubles is apparent when you enter the bar and need to push a button to be checked on a camera before being let in. The camera shows the entrance and the whole street in the front of the bar. Regardless, the musicians are often a mix of Protestants and Catholics, Loyalists and Republicans, illustrating the power of music to overcome such obstacles.

While in Belfast we played on the BBC Ulster Radio, and also a concert at a bookstore called No Alibis. Tomás then headed to a Dublin hostel for a few days on his own, and Ken and I went west to County Leitrim to visit friends and do a bit of Ken's family heritage research.

Our 16 days in Ireland were dominated by the colors of green and gray. It was much colder than

normal for late April/early May, and very wet and rainy. But that made no difference to us when the main objective was to play music. And we actually really enjoy the rain, love getting rehydrated and seeing lushness everywhere.

We played in four pubs, a bookstore, an art center situated in an old church in Listowel, and the very old Crane Lane Theatre in Cork city. Each venue was different and delightful in its own way. The audiences were of all ages and styles but usually very enthusiastic about our offering of Southwestern Americana. We gave a good cross-section of songs in the evening, including the *O Brother Where Art Thou* hit "Man of Con-

stant Sorrow," Cajun two-steps and New Mexican songs about chile and quelites. Quite a few tunes were played on the three fiddles. Tomás endeared the crowd to "himself" with his great singing and fiddling. And I guess after all our years of performing, Ken and I just know how to get the crowd on our side with wacky, off-the-wall jokes and the pure love of what we are doing.

We had a super visit with Paddy Jones and his friend Rose in the small town of Brozna, County Kerry; a fine session with Vincent Griffin, the legendary Clare fiddler; and a good few days of rest in County Tipperary with a California friend on her Irish farm.

Pretty soon we found ourselves on the four-hour boat ride back to England, arriving in South Wales during one huge rainstorm that lasted the whole three hours as we drove to the Welsh border and the tiny Garway Village Hall where we played that night. The next morning we played in the local primary school, something we really enjoy. We got the kids broom dancing and singing in Spanish and French.

From there on out for the next two weeks we played almost every night, with a rare day off now

## The Tumbleweeds Top 10

Who and what's been making news from New Mexico this past month, as measured by mentions in Google News (news.google.com), which tracks worldwide news sources (trends noted are vs. last month's total hits; \* indicates new to the list). Number in parenthesis indicates last month's Top 10 rank. Nothing like having large swaths of the state ablaze to capture headlines. Plus our US Senate race is, if you'll pardon the expression, catching fire.

1. (4) **New Mexico wildfires**—25,300 hits (▲)
2. (8) **New Mexico Senate race**—7,620 hits (▲)
3. (1) **New Mexico drought**—6,450 hits (▲)
4. (7) **New Mexico wolves**—5,380 hits (▲)
5. (6) **Gov. Susana Martinez**—4,170 hits (▲)
6. (3) **New Mexico spaceport**—3,940 hits (▼)
7. (2) **Virgin Galactic**—2,600 hits (▼)
8. (5) **Ex-Gov. Gary Johnson + president**—2,280 hits (▼)
9. (-) **Rep. Steve Pearce**—1,780 hits (▲)
10. (9) **New Mexico illegal immigration**—1,220 hits (▲)



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and then. As we got into the flow and rhythm of the tour, every day was a new one with new places to see, new people to meet and more fun to be had. So it was never a grind.

In England the color we added to green and gray was yellow, thanks to the many fields of rapeseed (canola oil) that were everywhere, turning the rolling hills into a glorious patchwork quilt of greens, browns and neon yellows. And yes, there were blue skies now and then, and gorgeous roses, wisteria, lilacs and many wildflowers by the side of the road.

We were lucky to spend the last 10 days in France. Tomás had to return to his day job working as a solar electric/photovoltaic technician with Wentz Electric in Silver City. Ken and I went to Auvergne and relaxed with friends, enjoyed nicer weather, and ate multi-course meals outdoors. We even did a bit of busking in a small town near Thiers (where many of the French knives come from). We made some small change, amounting to about a quarter of a tank of gas, a bag of cherries and two fresh goat cheeses. But for us, playing music in the streets is about sharing our music with whoever walks by. Street music has been a part of

my life since I was 20 years old, and I still get a thrill out of it.

You might wonder why we do this. We do manage to pay for the trip and make a little bit extra as well, but most of all, it is an experience that cannot be equaled. I don't think that traveling as tourists is our cup of tea, not to mention we could not afford it. We come home with a treasure trove of CDs and books that are mostly traded or given to us as gifts. And the memories—ahhhh, that is the best part. The friendships we have developed over all these years are like gold. Quite a few of the friends and their relatives have come to visit us in Silver City. Music is the thread that leads us onward in life. And we look forward to visiting many of these friends next year.

So there it is, another fabulous trip into the wild unknown. I remember and savor all the moments. Luckily I take a lot of photos to imprint the visuals into my brain. I forgot to take a photo of Sativa, the SAT-NAV queen, in action, but that is perhaps because that kind of knowledge is not saved or remembered. It is just pixels on a small TV screen. Fortunately our brains and souls are better at holding on to the memories. 🌿



Silver City musicians Jeanie McLerie and Ken Keppeler are Bayou Seco, [www.bayouseco.com](http://www.bayouseco.com). They will be performing this month on Saturday, July 21, at the Silver City Farmers Market, 8:30-11:30 a.m., and on Thursday, July 26, at High Desert Brewing Company in Las Cruces, 8-11 p.m.

Jeanie (with Ken in the background) at Cairn Holy, Scotland.

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<p><b>Vicki's Eatery</b> 315 N. Texas 313-5890</p> <p>Breakfast M-Sa 7-10:30a • Su 8a-2p Lunch—M-Sa 11a-3p</p>	<p><b>Aro</b> spa salon art</p> <p>413 N. Arizona 575-534-1600</p>	<p><b>THUNDER CREEK</b> OFFICE SUPPLY &amp; QUILT COMPANY</p> <p>703 N. Bullard 538-2284 • 538-5324 9-5 M-F • 8:30-3 SAT</p>	<p><b>Dandelion Wish</b> Antiques and Consignments</p> <p>109 N. Bullard 534-0074 Tues - Sun • 11ish to 6ish</p>	
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## Thinking Big

From a 60-foot garden wall to a decoratively welded rainwater harvesting system, Silver City gardener and artist Patricia Pawlicki combines building with growing.

"Because artists see two and three-dimensionally, they often draw on nature for inspiration to create interesting gardens. Their intuitive ability to sculpt the earth comes from using their gut, energy flow and third eye. All of us can move earth to propagate plants that give back healthy food, colorful fragrant flowers and enjoyment. I believe that tending a garden is like tending your own organism."

—Patricia Pawlicki, sculptor, designer and gardener



Perhaps it was meant to be: Only a meadow separated Patricia Pawlicki's Chicago home from a steel mill, and the molten metal fascinated the youngster. Thirty years later, she was working as a welder in a foundry and also creating metal sculpture. Most recently in Hawaii—on the occasion of the winter solstice—she watched from a boat as the Kilauea volcano spewed molten lava into the ocean. The childhood thrill remained completely intact, and Pawlicki continues to marvel at things that emerge from the earth.

Back in her undergraduate days in Michigan, a former professor pronounced Pawlicki "a metal sculptor, not a painter." He suggested a program in foundry and sculpture at Arizona State University led by Mary Bates Neubauer.

"Although welding remains a man's field," Pawlicki says, "I think woman welders are often better than men. Their body strengths are different, but women have more stamina."

In Arizona, Pawlicki also visited Cosanti, the residence and studio of architect Paolo Soleri in Paradise Valley, now a state historic site. She was influenced by Soleri's "concept of community and sustainability."

In Phoenix, she served as an assistant to Ed Carpenter, an architectural sculptor, helping to install a major glass and metal piece at the Consolidated Car Rental Center serving the city's Sky Harbor International Airport.

During her career as a metal sculptor, Pawlicki has created several commissioned pieces, including a giant silver cross for a monastery in the Midwest.

Pawlicki counts her graduate degree in biological sciences, and living and traveling abroad, as other important influences on her art. Formerly married to a Peruvian jewelry artist, she was "in and out of Cuzco for over a dozen years."

In 2006, she purchased a home at "City of the Sun," adjacent to Columbus, NM (see "Finding Community," March 2011). Describing the community as "the cheapest place to live in the US, period," Pawlicki appreciated the sculptural nature



of the buildings there and novel ways that bottles were used in construction. In Silver City, she found a "derelict property on a large lot filled with gravel and rubble." Here she envisioned "a big space for a garden and a food corridor." There was also room to build an art studio adjacent to an existing cement structure—now her home. The first step in creating a sustainable garden was recycling dirt from the area where the straw-bale wall now stands. Participants in a Hi Desert Sustainable Living workshop that Pawlicki led helped complete the 60-foot wall or "canvas." It's

of the buildings there and novel ways that bottles were used in construction.

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Left: "Year of the Rabbit Water Wall" was undertaken to help teach students in Pawlicki's WNMU industrial welding course about metal cutting, fabrication and design. Below: *Arundo donax* or giant reed (right front) appears throughout the garden to serve as shade, wind break and a strong vertical accent.



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Top: Evening shadows appear to superimpose their own symbols over those designed by sculptor Patricia Pawlicki, who is especially fond of waves and seeds. Above: A close-up reveals the organic nature of the forms depicted on the wall.

constructed of straw-bale, earth-plastered clay, and sand and lime plaster. The four-year effort, which still awaits color, helps eliminate noise from Hwy. 180 and works to create a micro environment for the garden.

"I like to work big," Pawlicki says.

In 2008, Pawlicki began teaching welding at WNMU as an adjunct faculty in the Applied Technology Department—encompassing electrical and solar design as well as the digital arts. Now she teaches sustainable design within the Social and Natural Sciences Department.

"The opportunity to do pure art doesn't come along that often," says Pawlicki, who continues to support herself by teaching.

In her Decorative Cutting course, students worked on the "Year of the Rabbit Water Wall" that's now part of her garden, and learned to make an entire rain harvesting system. The two-year-old project was undertaken to help teach students in the industrial welding course about metal cutting, fabrication and design. Before the monsoons commence, the gutter is hooked to the roof. When it rains, water runs from the roof to an underground tube that "floods up" into the barrels.

Pawlicki designed, welded, painted and installed the four 55-gallon barrels herself. The students made the gate using a four-by-four-foot metal sheet—taking turns cutting and welding the piece. The rabbits cut out from the metal sheet

were placed on top of the gate. The rabbit design is reminiscent of those found in Mimbres pottery.

Behind the rabbit-adorned gate, a gravel courtyard leads to the main garden, where fruit trees and desert willows will soon provide more extensive shade cover. Plantings of drought-tolerant giant reed (*Arundo donax*), often referred to as the "bamboo of the New World," provide shade and wind breaks. Classified as an ornamental grass, both the bold-leaved foliage of *Arundo* and its height offer a distinctive architectural presence in the garden.

Native plantings include mountain mahogany and sand cherry. Lavender, calendula, wild rose and hollyhocks—planted among culinary and medicinal herbs—offer color and fragrance.

"I forage out of the garden every night," Pawlicki says, observing several varieties of ripening grapes. "My spirits are also fed by a deep and profound relationship with the birds here."

So it seems that gardens and birds are as stirring to Pawlicki as the golden glow and sparks of molten metal pouring off a steel-mill crucible. ❁

*Patricia Pawlicki's Sustainable Design course at WNMU will be taught again next year. She is available to consult on permaculture, design, water harvesting and the building of garden structures; call (575) 313-1201. Southwest Gardener columnist Vivian Savitt gardens at Ditch Cottage in Silver City.*



The scent of rosemary, lavender and other herbs offer aroma therapy to occupants of the studio (right) and guest house.

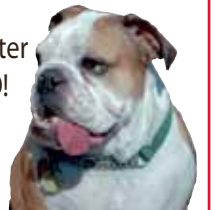
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ARTS EXPOSURE • HARRY WILLIAMSON

# Feats of Clay

At Syzygy Tile, next month's Silver City Clay Festival is only the latest hands-on creation.



As owners of Syzygy Tileworks, husband and wife Lee Gruber and David Del Junco combine Gruber's aesthetics and sense of color with Del Junco's skills as an inventor, scientist and designer. (All photos by Harry Williamson)

Lee Gruber is on the loose again. Watch out, Silver City. Another beautiful dream is about to be realized.

"I don't seem to be able to think in small bits and pieces, about little enterprises," Gruber says, talking about the first Silver City Clay Festival, set for August 3-5, which she is organizing into what will be an annual event. (See accompanying story for details.) The festival's website is at [www.clay-festival.com](http://www.clay-festival.com).

"If you examine the clay festival and what we're trying to do, it's really an attempt to create a collaborative effort that is linked through clay, and extends statewide—well beyond Silver City," she says.

Gruber envisions that one day people from Europe, New York City and everywhere else will spend two weeks in New Mexico traveling a "clay corridor" that might start, say, in Taos, then go to

Santa Fe, Albuquerque, Silver City and on to sites in northern Mexico. In each area, the pueblos, museums, archaeological sites, adobe building, potters, and tile and clay businesses will be featured and celebrated.

"I'm really passionate about cultural entrepreneurship, and the ability to make your living in a small community by bringing in a lot of outside dollars," she says.

All a wild fantasy, you say.

You obviously don't know Lee Gruber.

In 1993, Gruber and husband David Del Junco started Syzygy Tileworks, devoting three years to learning the ins and outs of making handmade tiles before their first customer. Now, Syzygy has 24 employees who produce approximately 25,000 square feet of distinctively artistic tile each year at a 10,000-square-foot art-factory in downtown Silver City. Through custom orders, Syzygy tile is sold at 130 high-end showrooms in North America.

"Syzygy" is a Greek word meaning an alignment of three celestial objects. Applied to their business, the word signifies the coming together of color, de-

sign and hand-craftsmanship.

The key word is *handmade*. Every single tile made at Syzygy over the past 19 years has been formed and finished entirely by hand.

Del Junco and Gruber concede that techniques and tools are readily available that could make the manufacturing process faster, easier and possibly more lucrative. "The arts and crafts movement was a revolt against everything being made by machines," she says. "We wanted to get back to the artisan and craftsmanship and using people's hands."

Over the years Del Junco has also developed more than 100 glazes that give the tiles a distinctively artistic look—and give their business a huge advantage in an increasingly competitive industry. Syzygy was the first to produce three-eighth-inch-square tiles, with each tiny tile—amazingly—fashioned completely by hand.

Production Manager Josh White recalls being hired 10 years ago when all of the 12 or so Syzygy employees were in a 1,000-square-foot space a block away from their current location at 106 N. Bullard St. "The thing that drew me to the company was walking in there and seeing this glorious product that was being produced, and knowing what it would take to do something that fabulous in such a small space," White says. "I knew then what they were up to was really special."

Building special and successful businesses is nothing new for Gruber. At age six, she organized a summer camp for children in her neighborhood in Mountandale, NY, in the Catskill Mountains.

"I asked myself: What were the parents going to do with their kids in the summer?" she recalls. "I charged a nickel a kid."

After attending the State University of New York in Albany, she married, and served in the Peace Corps for two years before moving to Florida, where her first husband started law school. For her part, Gruber made a list of the things she wanted to do with her life, first ticking off "horseback riding" and then "learning to sail."

"I thought: Wouldn't it be fun to work in an industry that you just love? So I became a sail maker and eventually ran big sail lofts for some very big companies," Gruber says. She adds that this is how her business life has always worked—develop a passion for something, learn the skills, and then run the business. She worked in the sailing industry for about 15 years, traveling to big sailing regattas around the world.

"It was all pretty exciting, but then I had two daughters and they finally said, 'Mom, enough is enough,'" Gruber recalls. "I quit and used my contacts in the sailing industry to start a business that made decor packages for luxury boats. It became quite sizable."

She named both her company and her first boat, "Intuition."

She explains, "I chose that because while I'm not schooled in business, I have a definite intuition, an instinct about how to do it, how to make a business grow."

Gruber's long involvement with the boating industry ended, however, when she met and married her second husband, Del Junco, who lived in Silver City—about as far as you can get from a big body of water.

She took a few years off. Then, during a visit to Philadelphia, they toured the Moravian Pottery and Tile Works, established in 1898 by Henry Chapman Mercer in Doylestown, Pa. Mercer was one of the principal stewards of a handmade tile revolution in the United States from 1876 to 1941, as recounted in the book *American Art Tile* by Norman Karlson.

Handmade tile had a resurgence, Karlson writes, because people had grown "disenchanted with vinyl, linoleum, formica and other plastic conglomerate materials. They want to see the mark of an artist's involvement. Handmade, hand molded, and hand painted ceramic tiles are inviting and tactile. They beg to be touched. The surface can be

magical from one glaze to another. The art can be as sublime as the artist and the artisan's ability."

Gruber says Mercer was a fascinating person who fell in love with tile and, being wealthy, traveled the world collecting tile. "He hated wallpaper, there was no paint at the time, so he covered the inside of his mansion, Fonthill, with decorative tile. We were standing there and David looked at me and we honestly looked at each other and said, 'We can do this!'"

And, even though they had no knowledge nor experience, they decided they could learn and do it together. They got the okay to observe the techniques used at the Moravian factory, taking photos of equipment that was built to make tile in the early 1900s.

"Of course, no one could do it here," she says. "No one in Silver City could re-create the cutters, the press and the other equipment, so we just started to figure out how we could do it on our own."

With local Kay Merritt as an early partner, they started in their garage with a small kiln and a clay press Del Junco devised from an old arbor press. They read extensively and talked to scores of people, traveling to other shops that were making handmade tile.

"Our timing couldn't have been better," Gruber says. "We entered the marketplace just as other small companies like ours were getting off the ground, beginning a new growth segment in the tile market."

She adds, "Everyone was really willing to share," including local potters and clay workers, such as Harry Bennett Benjamin, and others who provided advice and assistance—and equipment.

For example, Linda Brewer, "a wonderful potter and ceramist," had an extruder at her home shop off Hwy. 180. Del Junco made the dies, they would load their clay, drive out, extrude the pieces they needed, and place them on sheetrock for the return trip.



Brand new in the handmade tile industry are these raised tiles where four tiles are combined to form geometric patterns, displayed in Syzygy's large Silver City showroom.

"I was just thinking about that the other day," Gruber says. "About how we started and how many people helped us and advised us."

After three years of learning their craft, they had their first customer, the Pritikin family, whose residence was being built in the Burros. Two years later, they hired their first employee. The business relocated to a 1,000-square-foot room in the town's original power-generating plant.

Del Junco was the scientist, over the years creating more than 100 glazes after testing literally thousands of them. Syzygy is especially known for its matte glazes.

"We have some really beautiful glazes that are our trademark," he says. "It's important to have these glazes that no one else can use."

At Syzygy, as many as 10 employees can touch a tile as it's being made. The process starts with a big chunk of clay that is pounded, rolled, cut, formed and finished, fired in a kiln, and stored until an order is received for that exact size, shape and type of tile.

"We store the bisqueware so when customers place an order they are standing in line only to have their tile glazed, as opposed to having it



Above: Felisha Triviso studies a line of decorative tiles she has just glazed before being fired in a kiln. Below: Two of the supervisors at Syzygy's team of 24 employees are Addie Ryan, left, glaze lead, and Josh White, production manager.







Lori Reyes, samples lead, produces the tile configurations and the sample boards that go to the 130 showrooms that sell Syzygy Tile-works in North America.

the challenge for Syzygy.

“The really beautiful thing about our tiles is their range; they’re not all alike and that’s what makes them so vibrant and alive,” Del Junco says. “Some people really get that and love it, while other people are horrified.”

He explains that the flow, the variations, are caused by how a tile was glazed, the brushstrokes of who glazed it, by the heat of the kiln, and by the glaze itself.

“We have really good glazers who have been with us for years. They just do a wonderful job,” Del Junco says.

made from scratch,” Gruber says. “That is how, for a small handmade tile company, we have a relatively short delivery time.”

Once ordered, a specific color and type of glaze is brushed on the tile, usually from four to eight coats, producing the “layered glaze” that Syzygy is famous for. The tile is then fired a second time, at a higher temperature, inspected and, if accepted, carefully packaged for shipping. If one tile is rejected, the entire order is held until it can be redone.

Josh White, the production manager, says producing tile in this fashion is a completely dynamic process. “Our main strength here is the competence and experience of our team, our group of people. Each one of these departments is completely dependent on the step that came before,” he says. “We’re all responsible so that the workers before us didn’t waste their time.”

As opposed to machine-made tile, where someone presses a button and “ka-ching everything is uniform,” as Gruber says, with handmade tile there are beautiful variations, which often is what people are paying for.

But those variations can be both the charm and

Syzygy are producing are—in the best sense of the word—artistic creations. Every tile is not always going to look identical.

Consequently, White explains that since every order is done specifically for someone, it is sometimes wise to spend the time to determine exactly whom that someone is by calling the showroom and talking with the salesperson who took the order.

“Is the person an art historian or some fiber artistic, or are they an accountant or someone who has a very detailed, analytical, number-oriented mind?” he says. “Personally, I love the variations, how different this tile looks from that tile even though it’s the exact same glaze. When we hear a customer say that, we breathe a deep sigh of relief. We know we can make them happy.”

So how is business in the handmade tile biz these days? Gruber says many of the small businesses that started in the 1990s not only survived, but also grew, some of them becoming quite sizable.

CLAY continued on page 19

Clay Festival Tile Exhibit

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## ARTS EXPOSURE • HARRY WILLIAMSON

# Clay Days

The inaugural Silver City Clay Festival celebrates a humble medium with an ambitious program.

The 2012 Silver City Clay Festival, August 3-5, celebrates the humble material of clay, in all of its forms, showcasing tile, pottery and adobe. There will be three full days of workshops, demonstrations and lectures, featuring some of the nation's leading clay experts, along with sales and exhibits of clay art of all kinds, child-friendly activities, tours, films and receptions.

The website, [www.clayfestival.com](http://www.clayfestival.com), is continually being updated with new information and activities, according to the event director, Lee Gruber, who along with her husband David Del Junco, owns Syzygy Tileworks in downtown Silver City. (See accompanying story.)

The Clay Festival will feature two juried art shows:

- **Art Tile Show**, juried by Alfredo Ratinoff, faculty member of the ceramics department at the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, DC. The 130 tiles entered, from 52 artists, will be on display at five Silver City art galleries from August 3 until Sept. 3. An artists' reception is scheduled at Syzygy on August 2. The award for Best of Show is \$1,000.

- **Neo-Mimbrenño Exhibition**, juried by Harry Shafer, who holds a PhD in anthropology and is professor emeritus at Texas AandM University. His books include *Mimbres Archaeology at the NAN Ranch Ruin and Ancient Texas*. The exhibition will feature works in all media influenced by the painted pottery of the prehistoric Mimbres culture, and will be on display at the Western New Mexico University Museum from August 5 through Sept. 5. A WNMU Black-On-White Gala Opening Reception is planned for August 4.

All of the demonstrations and lectures will be free and open to the public.

**Demonstrations** include:

- Wren Nest Mural Installation, Bear Mountain Lodge, August 1 and 2, 9 a.m.-noon, each day: Linda Brewer. Those attending can help install this clay mural, depicting several species of wrens and hand-built by Brewer, onsite at the Bear Mountain Lodge.

- Clay Slip Decorating Techniques, Silver City Museum Annex, August 3, 1-4:30 p.m.: Kate Brown.

- Taos Pueblo Building Techniques, Murray Hotel, August 3 and 4, 2-4 p.m.: Pam Lujan-Hauer. A member of the Taos Pueblo Tribe, Lujan-Hauer will demonstrate the building of both traditional and contemporary Taos Pueblo clay pots.

- Clay Shaping Techniques, Murray Hotel, August 3 and 4, 2-4 p.m.: Dan Lauer.

- Sgraffito Design Techniques, Murray Hotel, August 4, 1:30-4 p.m.: Beth Menczer. In this technique, Menczer paints on unfired ceramic bowls using a layer of contrasting slip, then scratches through the clay slip to produce an outline drawing.

- Wheel Throwing Techniques and Altered Forms, Speedboat Center for the Arts, August 3, 9

a.m.-noon: Dave Roberts.

- Carved Tile Techniques, Speedboat Center for the Arts, August 3, 9 a.m.-noon: Marcia Smith. Slabs of red clay are laid onto cement forms; Smith carves designs into the clay, cuts them out, and returns them to the piece for finishing. A ceramic bench, created with this technique, will be displayed.

- Bas Relief Custom Window Surround Installation, Speedboat Center for the Arts, August 4, 9 a.m.-10:30 a.m. and again 10:30 a.m.-noon.

**Lectures**, all held at the Speedboat Center for the Arts, include:

- "Taos Pueblo Pottery" by Pam Lujan-Hauer, August 3, 9:30-10:30 a.m.

- "Why, Me? The Unexpected Sage of Mata Ortiz" by Spencer MacCallum, August 3, 11:30 a.m.-noon. MacCallum, noted author and social anthropologist, played a pivotal role in the economic development of the art-pottery village of Mata Ortiz, Chihuahua, Mexico.

- "Contrast Within Traditions, New Mexico's Pueblo Potters" by Claude W. Smith III, August 3, 1-2 p.m. Smith is a retired Western New Mexico University professor who led the ceramics program.

- "Classic Mimbres Pottery: Technology, Function and Symbolism" by Harry J. Shafer, August 4, 11 a.m.-noon and again 1-2 p.m.

- "Brick by Brick: How Silver City Was Built to Last" by Susan Barry, August 3, 2:30-3:30 p.m. Barry is the co-author of *Built to Last: An Architectural History of Silver City, New Mexico*, and longtime director of the Silver City Museum.

- "Using Clay in Construction" by Catherine Wanek, August 4, 2:30-3:30 p.m. Wanek has written numerous books on natural and straw bale building, and is developing the Black Range

Lodge in Kingston, NM, as a center for healthy living and summer workshops on natural building.

- "Tiles Out of the Blue" by Joseph A. Taylor, August 3 and 4, 4-5:30 p.m. each day. A writer and educator, Brown is the co-founder and current president of the Tile Heritage Foundation.

**Workshops**—Information (dates, times, locations and costs) and registration forms on the following workshops is available at [www.clayfestival.com](http://www.clayfestival.com) or by calling (575) 538-5560:

- Firing a Gas Kiln (three-day workshop)—Mariana Gasteyer-Roumell

- Clay Tiles for Mirrors—John McNulty

- Community Earth Oven Building—Sheila Menzies

- Fundamentals of Mata Ortiz Pottery—Edmundo Lopez and Luz Elva

- Design, Create, Install Ceramic Tile—Shel Neymark

- Relief Tile and Mold Workshop—Stephani Stephenson

- Create a "Found" Object d'Art Sculpture—Jean-Robert P. Be'ffort

- Sculpt a Ceramic Ocarina (Ancient Flute-like Instrument)—Zoe Wolfe

- Get Down... With Clay—Zoe Wolfe

- Surface! Think Beyond the Glaze—Zoe Wolfe

- Pinch Pots: Enclosed and Beyond—Zoe Wolfe

- Building Structures with Architectural Form—Cecelia Stanford

- Applying Mosaic to Foam/Concrete Sculptures—Cecelia Stanford

- Intensive Tile Making Workshop—Kate Brown. ❁



"Blue Dog" by Cecilia Stanford



Zoe Wolfe will present four workshops.

CLAY continued from page 17

Szygy moved into its current building, a nicely renovated former car dealership, eight years ago. At its peak it had more than 30 employees.

She adds, however, that the recession over the past four years has taken its toll. "But we are still standing, and so are maybe two-dozen others, but many have fallen by the wayside. There's still an art tile movement, but it's pretty small."

The company went to a four-day work week, recently increasing it to four and one-half days as orders have slowly begun to improve.

Europe now produces very little, if any, handmade tile, she adds. "The Spanish, the Italians, the Chinese and now India all have huge factories where they try to make something that looks handmade. They even come here and try to copy what we, the little guys, are doing," Gruber says.

Del Junco adds, "It's actually because we work so hard at it that makes our tile unique. The only way I can figure out how to make them look handmade is to make them by hand."

Gruber says the cost to consumers, always an issue, has perhaps become more of one in this down economy—at a big super-warehouse store, machine-made tile will cost as little as \$3 or \$4 a square foot.

"Around the country, a handmade, four-inch by four-inch, flat 'field' tile will retail for somewhere around \$35 to \$40 a square foot. Our three-eighth-inch tile sells for \$120 for each 4-inch by 12-inch pre-mounted piece. So if you wanted a square foot you would need three of these for \$360," Gruber says.

Nonetheless, she adds that she has seen homeowners in California do an entire kitchen ceiling in the tiny tiles. "You wouldn't believe how beautiful



All sizes and textures of brushes are used by the glaziers at Szygy Tileworks as they brush glaze onto the 25,000 square feet of tile produced annually. (Photos by Harry Williamson)

that is."

Besides the economic downturn, there's also an ever-increasing amount of product and alternatives out there, including machine-made tiles, a huge stone industry, along with glass and metal tiles. Gruber says she and her husband visit all of their showrooms, "and sometimes we're amazed there's still a market out there for us, but there must be because we're still in business."

She adds that the only way to stay in business is to be constantly reinventing yourself. "Every three or four years we introduce a new line. You can't just keep making the same old, same old."

After coming out with the three-eighth-inch tiles, which shocked the industry, Del Junco has now created a new line called Sigma in which four tiles with undulating surfaces are combined to form geometric patterns. He says, "For a handmade tile, this is something also shocking, slightly three-dimensional, a real departure from the flat tiles we've always made. I don't know if it will go or not, but it seems like the time is ripe for it."

Under Gruber and Del Junco's guidance, Szygy is also known for its extensive environmentally green practices, and for its support of downtown business and community projects, through participation, products and financial contributions.

And in years to come they may gain even greater fame for the Silver City Clay Festival and its statewide offshoot.

*Harry Williamson moved to Grant County more than three years ago after reporting and editing for newspapers in New York, Oklahoma, Colorado and Texas. Feel free to contact him at editorharrydad5@gmail.com or at (575) 534-9321.*



Clay worker Gene Bernier uses a compressed air cutter to cut out each tile by hand.

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Wednesday, August 1	4:00-6:00 pm
Saturday, August 4	1:00-3:00 pm

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ARTS EXPOSURE

# Arts Scene

The latest area art happenings.

### Silver City & Grant County

**S**eedboat Gallery this month is showing paintings by Paul Wilson. Call for July hours or an appointment, 534-1136. 214 W. Yankie St.

Copper Quail Gallery is spotlighting creations in juniper wood by Michael Boyle. 211A N. Texas, 388-2646.

In Hurley, **JW Art Gallery** is featuring works by Narrie Toole. 99 Cortez Ave., 537-0300, [jwartgallery.com](http://jwartgallery.com).

Members of the **Grant County Art Guild** are planning the first holiday party of the year at their gallery in the historic Hearst Church in Pinos Altos. The "Christmas in July" event will kick off on July 20 at 3 p.m. with an opening gala serving Christmas cookies, homemade stollen and liquid refreshments traditional for the season. Celebrations continue through July 22.

Featured artists at the Hearst Church gallery this month include: Jimmy Sowder, July 1; John O'Brien, July 6 and 20; Vicki Pelham, July 8; Marilyn Burbrink, July 14; Barbara Kejr, July 27; Carolyn Gray-Patty, July 28; and Mary Soulé, July 29.

The seasonal gallery is open 10 a.m.-5 p.m. on Friday, Saturday, Sunday and major holidays through Oct. 7.

The Grant County Art Guild is also putting out a call for entries for its 27th Annual Purchase Prize Award Juried Exhibit, with a \$1,500 purchase price for the Best of Show winner and other cash awards. Entry forms are due August 6; the show will open with a reception on Sept. 25. See the guild's website at [www.gcag.org](http://www.gcag.org) for more information and entry forms.

In conjunction with next month's Clay Festival (see story in this section), **Art & Conversation** will feature a "Whimsical Animals" tile exhibit, opening August 3. 614 N. Bullard, 388-3350.

The fourth biennial **Tapestry of Talent** fundraising fashion show, Sept. 29, is looking for handmade fashions and accessories. The juried show features garments as wearable art. Entry forms



Judy Bess is among this month's featured artists at the Mesilla Valley Fine Arts Gallery.

and details are available at [www.fiberartscollective.org](http://www.fiberartscollective.org). Deadline to submit is August 25. This year's show will be at the WNMU Global Resource Auditorium, to accommodate the growing number of attendees, and the ticket price includes a coupon that can be used at the show or The Common Thread. For more information, visit The Common Thread gallery at 107 W. Broadway or call 538-5733.

### Las Cruces & Mesilla

**T**he **Branigan Cultural Center** presents "beautiful," an exhibition of the works of Michael Ponce, opening on Friday, July 6, with a reception 5-7 p.m., and running through August 25.



"Bella," featured in "beautiful," an exhibition of the works of Michael Ponce, opening July 6 at the Branigan Cultural Center in Las Cruces.

A native of Las Cruces, Ponce studied at New York's Art Students' League and at the Fashion Institute of Technology, where he received his BFA and began a career in commercial fashion art. But he soon became more interested in fine art and resumed his studies at the New York Academy of Art and at Oxford University. As he progressed, he incorporated his study of anatomy and the understanding of the human

body into his work. In 2004, he was awarded the Bruce Stevenson Memorial Award for Portrait by The National Arts Club of New York City.

His thirst for knowledge of classical painting was so strong, Ponce says, that he "didn't stop until I could do it." Today he paints "right on the canvas, going back and forth between foreground, middle-ground and background so they are seamless."

He blends his knowledge of classicism with modernism. 501 N. Main St., 541-2154, [las-cruces.org/museums](http://las-cruces.org/museums).

**Nopalito's Galeria** will be featuring Joe Hidalgo, with an opening reception July 6, 5-7 p.m. A teacher for 37 years, Hidalgo produces art work in various mediums and subjects with an emphasis on local culture and heritage. 326 S. Mesquite St., 650-5690.

The **Mesilla Valley Fine Arts Gallery** will feature Judy Bess and Mary Zawacki this month. Bess is a Las Cruces acrylic artist who has been called a "colorist" because her work shows the vibrant palette of the desert Southwest. Zawacki recently moved to Las Cruces from Los Angeles, where she had

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"The Struggle" by Ted Egri, part of the "Thinking New Mexico" exhibit continuing at the NMSU Art Gallery.

7591, www.celestial-creations-nm.com.

July 14 is also the Second Saturday Art Hop in T or C, from 6-9 p.m. Many downtown shops and galleries stay open late with specials, live music and food. See [www.sierracountyevents.com](http://www.sierracountyevents.com) for details.

All phone numbers are area code 575 except as noted. Send arts information to [events@desert-exposure.com](mailto:events@desert-exposure.com).

a long career as an advertising art director and graphic designer working for major movie studios; she works primarily in oil, watercolor and pastel. 2470-A Calle de Guadalupe, 522-2933, [www.mesillavalleyfinearts.com](http://www.mesillavalleyfinearts.com).

"Thinking New Mexico," a celebration of 100 years of New Mexico art, continues at the **NMSU Art Gallery** through Sept. 1. 1390 E. University Ave., 646-2545, [www.nmsu.edu/artgal](http://www.nmsu.edu/artgal).

The **Tombaugh Gallery** is calling for regional artists within a 250-mile radius of Las Cruces to submit proposals for exhibitions for 2013. Submissions should be postmarked no later than Oct. 1, 2012. Address submissions to: Peggy Brown, 2000 S. Solano, Las Cruces, NM 88001. For details call 522-7821.

**Catron County**

**R**unning Horse Gallery in Pleasanton, near Glenwood, is closing, a victim of the area's recent fires and subsequent flooding fears.

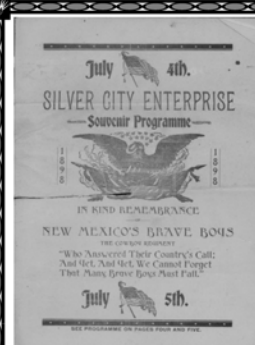
**Sierra County**

**T**o celebrate Independent Retailers Month, **Celestial Creations Enchanted Gifts of New Mexico** in Truth or Consequences is hosting a special reception on Saturday, July 14, from 5-8 p.m. Boutique/gallery owner Celeste Rich will be presenting for the first time the art of L. Heath, a Placitas artist specializing in the relatively new genre of fusionism. Heath says, "The hallmark of fusionism is the creation of a new wholeness that blurs the lines among different cultures, old versus new media, different time periods, and human versus machine-generated work."

Also featured will be weaver Shirley Russo of Las Cruces, creator of "Weave Me Alone" one-of-a-kind tapestries, scarves and shawls. Music will be provided by guitarist Mark Humble, who will be releasing a new CD at the event. 220 N. Date St., 894-



"In Step with the Galaxy," fusionism art by L. Heath incorporating images from the Hubble Space Telescope. Heath's work will be featured at Celestial Creations in Truth or Consequences.



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**Save The Dates!**

**Aug. 3 – 5, 2012 - Clay Festival**  
Silver City Clay Festival juried tiles on exhibit at Lois Duffy Art through Sept. 3.

**Sept. 16, 2012 – Gila River Festival**  
Gallery exhibit at Lois Duffy Art of Gila River Photography through Sept. 30.

**Oct. 5 – 8, 2012 - RED DOT Tour**  
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ARTS EXPOSURE

Gallery Guide

**Silver City**  
**ANN SIMONSEN STUDIO-GALLERY**, 104 W. Yankee St., 654-5727.  
**ART + CONVERSATION**, 614 N. Bullard, 388-3350. Mon.-Sat. 10 a.m.-6 p.m., Sundays 12 a.m.-6 p.m. Gallery and gathering space. www.artandconversation.com.  
**ARTESANOS**, 211-B N. Texas St., 519-0804. Mon.-Sat. 10 a.m.-5 p.m., Sun. 12-6 p.m.  
**[A]SP."A"®E**, 110 W. 7th St., 538-3333, aspace.studiogallery@gmail.com.  
**AZURITE GALLERY**, 110 W. Broadway, 538-9048, Wed.-Sat. 10 a.m.-5 p.m. www.azuritegallery.com.  
**BLUE DOME GALLERY**, 60 Bear Mountain Ranch Road (Bear Mountain Lodge, 2251 Cottage San Road), 534-8671. Mon.-Sat. 11 a.m.-5 p.m., Sun. 11 a.m.-3 p.m. www.bluedomegallery.com.  
**CLAYFUL HANDS**, 622 N. California, 534-0180. By appointment. Phoebe Lawrence.  
**CLAYMOON STUDIO**, 13 Jade Dr., 313-6959. Marcia Smith. By appointment.  
**COMMON THREAD**, 107 W. Broadway, 538-5733. Mon., Thurs, Fri. and Sat. 10 a.m.-5 p.m. Retail and gallery space for fiber arts. www.fiberartscollective.org.  
**COPPER QUAIL GALLERY**, 211-A Texas St., corner of Yankee and Texas, 388-2646. Tue.-Sun. 11 a.m.-4 p.m. Fine arts and crafts.  
**COW TRAIL ART STUDIO**, 119 Cow Trail in Arenas Valley. Mon., Thurs.-Sat., 12-3 p.m. www.victoriachick.com.

**CREATIONS & ADORNMENTS**, 108 N. Bullard, 534-4269. Mon.-Sat. 9 a.m.-5 p.m. Work by Diane Reid.  
**DRAGONFLY STUDIO**, 508 W 6th St., 388-8646. By appointment.  
**FRANCIS McCRAY GALLERY**, 1000 College Ave., WNMU, 538-6517.  
**GALLERY 400**, Gila House, 400 N. Arizona, 313-7015. Tues.-Sat., 1-6 p.m. www.gilahouse.com.  
**GINNY WOLF STUDIO & GALLERY**, 108 W. Yankee St., 313-5709, ginnywolf.wordpress.com.  
**HOWELL DESIGN & GALLERY**, 200 W. Market St., 388.2993. www.anthonhowell.com.  
**JEFF KUHN'S POTTERY**, 3029 Pinos Altos Road, 534-9389. By appointment.  
**LEYBA & INGALLS ARTS**, 315 N. Bullard St., 388-5725. Mon.-Sat. 10 a.m.-6 p.m. Contemporary art ranging from realism to abstraction in a variety of media featuring artists Crystal Foreman Brown, Romaine Begay, Christana Brown, Susan Brinkley, Gorde Headlee, Diana Ingalls Leyba, Dayna Griego, Constance Knuppel, Mary Alice Murphy, Phillip Parotti, Betsy Resnick, Teri Matelson, Joe Theiman, Zoe Wolfe, Melanie Zipin. www.LeybalngallsARTS.com, LeybalngallsART@zianet.com.

**LOIS DeLONG STUDIO**, 2309 Paul Place, 388-4759. By appointment.  
**LOIS DUFFY**, 211C N. Texas, 534-0822. Fri.-Sat. 10 a.m.-4 p.m. The studio and gallery of Lois Duffy presents a unique and thought-provoking view of the world through the eyes of an artist. Imaginative portraits, surreal places and realistic scenes of life. Original paintings, cards and prints. www.loisduffy.com, loisduffy@signalpeak.net.  
**MARY'S FINE ART**, 414 E. 21st St., 956-7315. Mary A. Gravelle.  
**MIMBRES REGION ARTS COUNCIL GALLERY**, Wells Fargo Bank Bldg., 1201 N. Pope St. www.mimbresarts.org.  
**MOLLY RAMOLLA GALLERY & FRAMING**, 307 N. Texas, 538-5538. www.ramollaart.com.  
**OFF BEAD GALLERY**, 701 N. Bullard, 388-8973. Mon-Fri 9 a.m.-5 p.m., Sat. 9 a.m.-4 p.m.

**OL' WEST GALLERY & MERCANTILE**, 104 W. Broadway, 388-1811/313-2595. Daily 11 a.m.-6 p.m.  
**SEEDBOAT CENTER FOR THE ARTS**, 214 W. Yankee St., 534-1136. Mon.-Sat. 10 a.m.-5 p.m. info@seedboatgallery.com.  
**SILVER SPIRIT GALLERY**, 215 W. Broadway, 388-2079.  
**STONEWALKER STUDIO**, 105 Country Road, 534-0530. By appointment. Barbara Jorgen Nance.  
**THE STUDIOSPACE**, 109 N. Bullard St., 534-9291. www.jessgorell.com.  
**STUDIO UPSTAIRS**, 109 N. Bullard St., 574-2493. By appointment.  
**SUSAN SZAJER STUDIO**, Sanctuary Road, 313-7197 By appointment.  
**TATIANA MARIA GALLERY**, 305 & 307 N. Bullard St., 388-4426.  
**TOP HAT ART**, 115 N. Bayard.  
**TUNDAR GALLERY & STUDIO**, 110 Yankee, 597-0011.  
**21 LATIGO TRAIL**, 388-4557. Works by Barbara Harrison and others.  
**TWIN SISTERS CYCLING**, 303 N. Bullard St., 538-3388. Mini-gallery. Tues.-Sat., 9 a.m.-6 p.m.  
**TWO SPIRIT GALLERY**, 313 N. Bullard, Suite B, 534-4563. Mon.-Sat. 11 a.m.-4 p.m.  
**WILD WEST WEAVING**, 211-D N. Texas, 313-1032, www.hosanaeilert.com. Mon.-Thurs. 9 a.m.-5 p.m., Fri.-Sat. 9 a.m.-6 p.m.  
**YANKIE ST. ARTIST STUDIOS**, 103 W. Yankee St., 313-1032. By appointment.  
**ZOE'S GALLERY**, 305 N. Cooper St., 654-4910.

**Tyrone**  
**MOONSTRUCK ART STUDIO**, 501 Covellite Dr., 956-5346, 654-5316. By appointment.  
**SUN DAWG STUDIO**, 501 Malachite Ave., 388-3551. By appointment.

**Pinos Altos**  
**HEARST CHURCH GALLERY**, Gold St., 574-2831. Open late-April to early-October. Fri., Sat., Sun. and holidays, 10 a.m.-5 p.m.

**Mimbres**  
**KATE BROWN POTTERY AND TILE**, HC 15 Box 1335, San Lorenzo, 536-9935, katebrown@gilnet.com, www.katebrownpottery.com. By appointment.  
**NARRIE TOOLE**, Estudio de La Montura, 313-2565, www.narrietoole.com. Contemporary western oils, giclées and art prints. By appointment.  
**Bayard**  
**T. ALI STUDIO**, 421 E. Elm St., 537-3470. By appointment.  
**Hanover**  
**LA GARITA**, 13 Humboldt, 537-6624. By appointment.  
**Hurley**  
**JW ART GALLERY**, Old Hurley Store, 99 Cortez Ave., 537-0300. Weds.-Fri. 9 a.m.-5 p.m., Sat.-Sun. 10 a.m.-5 p.m., www.jwartgallery.com.

**Northern Grant County & Catron County**  
**CASITAS DE GILA**, 50 Casita Flats Road, Gila, 535-4455. Sat.-Sun. 10 a.m.-6 p.m. or by appointment. gallery@casitasdegila.com, www.galleryatthecasitas.com.  
**WILLOW GALLERY**, Hwy. 15, Gila Hot Springs, 536-3021. By appointment.  
**Mesilla**  
**GALERI AZUL**, Old Mesilla Plaza, 523-8783. Mon.-Sat. 10 a.m.-6 p.m., Sun. 11 a.m.-6 p.m.  
**GALERIA ON THE PLAZA**, 2310 Calle de Principal, 526-9771. Daily 10 am.-6 p.m.  
**GALERIA TEPIN**, 2220 Calle de Parian, 523-3988. Thurs.-Sun., 11 a.m.-5 p.m.  
**MESILLA VALLEY FINE ARTS GALLERY**, 2470 Calle de Guadalupe, 522-

2933. Mon.-Sat. 10 a.m.-5:30 p.m., Sun. 12-5:30 p.m.  
**THE POTTERIES**, 2260 Calle de Santiago, 524-0538.  
**ROKOKO**, 1785 Avenida de Mercado, 405-8877.  
**Las Cruces**  
**ALEGRE GALLERY**, 920 N Alameda Blvd., 523-0685.  
**BLUE GATE GALLERY**, 311 Old Downtown Mall, 523-2950. Tue.-Fri. 10 a.m.-5 p.m., Sat. 9 a.m.-noon.  
**CHARLES INC.**, 1885 W Boutz Rd, 523-1888, Mon.-Fri. 9 a.m.-5 p.m.  
**COTTONWOOD GALLERY**, 275 N. Downtown Mall (Southwest Environmental Center), 522-5552. Mon.-Fri. 9 a.m.-5 p.m.  
**CRUZ NOPAL**, 1175 W. Picacho, 635-7899. Thurs.-Sat. 10 a.m.-6 p.m. or by appointment. ouida@ouida-touchon.com, www.ouidatouchon.com.  
**CUTTER GALLERY**, 2640 El Paseo, 541-0658. Tues.-Fri. 10 a.m.-5 p.m., Sat. 10 a.m.-3 p.m.  
**GRIGGS & REYMOND**, 504 W. Griggs Ave., 524-8450, Tue.-Sat. 10 a.m.-5 p.m.  
**JUSTUS WRIGHT GALERIA**, 266 W. Court Ave., 526-6101, jud@delvalleprinting.com.  
**LAS CRUCES MUSEUM OF ART**, 491 N. Main St., 541-2137. Tues.-Fri. 9 a.m.-4:30 p.m., Sat. 9 a.m.-4:30 p.m.  
**LUNDEEN INN OF THE ARTS**, 618 S. Alameda Blvd., 526-3326. Daily 8 a.m.-6 p.m.  
**MAIN STREET GALLERY**, 311 N. Downtown Mall, 647-0508. Tues.-Fri. 10 a.m.-5 p.m., Sat. 9:30 a.m.-1 p.m.  
**MESQUITE ART GALLERY**, 340 N. Mesquite St., 640-3502. Thurs.-Sat. 11 a.m.-5 p.m.  
**MOUNTAIN GALLERY AND STUDIOS**, 138 W. Mountain St. Thurs.-Sun., 10 a.m.-4 p.m.  
**M. PHILLIP'S FINE ART GALLERY**, 221 N. Main St., 525-1367.  
**MVS STUDIOS**, 535 N. Main, Stull Bldg., 635-5015, www.mvsstudios.com.

**NEW DIMENSION ART WORKS**, 615 E. Piñon, 373-0043.  
**NEW MEXICO ART**, 121 Wyatt Dr., Suite 1, 525-8292/649-4876. Weds. 1-6 p.m., Thurs.-Sat. 10 a.m.-6 p.m.  
**NMSU ART GALLERY**, Williams Hall, University Ave. east of Solano, 646-2545. Tues.-Sun.  
**NOPALITO'S GALERIA**, 326 S. Mesquite. Fri.-Sun., 8 a.m.-8:30 p.m.  
**QUILLIN STUDIO AND GALLERY**, behind Downtown COAS Books, 312-1064. Mon.-Thurs., Sat.  
**TERRA MONTANA GALLERY**, 535 N. Main St., 635-2891. Tues.-Sat., 11 a.m.-5 p.m.  
**TOMBAUGH GALLERY**, Unitarian Universalist Church, 2000 S. Solano, 522-7281. Weds.-Fri. 10 a.m.-2 p.m. or by appointment.  
**UNSETTLED GALLERY & STUDIO**, 905 N. Mesquite, 635-2285.  
**VIRGINIA MARIA ROMERO STUDIO**, 4636 Maxim Court, 644-0214. By appointment. agzromero@zianet.com, www.virginiamariaromero.com.

**La Mesa**  
**LA MESA STATION GALLERY**, 16205 S. Hwy. 28, 233-3037. Fri.-Sat. 11 a.m.-5 p.m., Sun. 1-4 pm.  
**Deming**  
**ART SPACE GALLERY**, 601 S. Silver, 546-0673. Mon., Fri. 12-6 p.m., Sat. 10 a.m.-5 p.m., donni@chris-donni.com.  
**DEMING ARTS CENTER**, 100 S. Gold St., 546-3663. Tues.-Sat. 10 a.m.-4 p.m.  
**GOLD STREET GALLERY**, 112-116 S. Gold St., 546-8200.  
**ROOM WITH A VIEW**, 108 E. Pine St., 546-5777.

**Rodeo**  
**CHIRICAHUA GALLERY**, 5 Pine St., 557-2225.  
**Hillsboro**  
**PERCHA CREEK TRADERS**, 895-5116, Weds.-Sun. 10 a.m.-4 p.m.  
**Chloride**  
**MONTE CRISTO**, Wall St., 743-0190. Daily 10 a.m.-4 p.m.  
**Truth or Consequences**  
**CELESTIAL CREATIONS**, 220 N. Date St., 894-7591, www.celestial-creations-nm.com. Hours vary. ☼  
**SUBMIT GALLERY INFORMATION TO—Desert Exposure**, PO Box 191, Silver City, NM 88062, fax 534-4134, email editor@desertexposure.com.

**CALL FOR ARTISTS**  
San Vicente Artist of Silver City, NM  
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SOUTHWEST WILDLIFE • JAY W. SHARP

# Pretty Foxy

The gray fox can be an elegant and resourceful neighbor.



Gray fox strolling along the sidewalk across the street from the author's home in Las Cruces. (Photo by David Noble, a neighbor.)

Sometimes, the gray fox can be a "right neighborly sort," as we would have said up in my old hometown in the Rolling Plains of Texas. In 1981, right after we moved to El Paso from the Texas Gulf Coast, we had a pair that came for dinner every evening, feeding on the dog food my wife Martha left for them at the edge of the arroyo just behind our home. Another pair took dinner at a neighbor's home, delighting, like connoisseurs, in the hard-boiled eggs she prepared for them.

Since we moved to Las Cruces in 1996, buying a home at the southern edge of the city near a small desert park, gray foxes have been periodic visitors. They sometimes stroll across the street and along the sidewalks through our neighborhood. They sometimes take shade in the shrubs near our neighborhood pool. Late one night one jumped atop our front fence to stalk a mockingbird, which he caught. (We found the bird's feathers the following morning.)

Recently, another joined our yellow lab, Angie, and me during our evening walk through the park, pausing when we paused, stretching and lounging. It finally disappeared, quite casually, back into the park mesquites, creosote and cholla.

Late one evening several years ago, a gray fox stopped over for a visit in a nearby neighbor's back yard. The two met almost nose to nose when our

neighbor opened her back door unexpectedly. The fox cleared the backyard fence, headed for the desert and safety. The neighbor cleared her doorstep, headed for the indoors and safety. "I don't know which of us was more startled," the neighbor told me.

## Distinguishing Features

Dressed in its full-length coarse fur coat, the gray fox (*Urocyon cinereoargenteus*) brings a sense of high fashion to the northern Chihuahuan Desert. Its coat features a predominantly ashen or peppery gray color along the back and upper sides; cinnamon to rufous color along its lower sides, legs and neck; and buff to

white along its belly and throat. Its face has an ashen gray forehead, rufous cheeks, black maxilla (upper jaw) patches, a white chin and a black nose. Its back has a telltale dark stripe, and its full tail, a dark mane and, often, a black tip.

Typically the adult measures about 2 1/2 to 3 1/2 feet in length, including its 1- to 1 1/2-foot-long tail. It stands some 12 to 15 inches at the shoulder. It weighs about 7 to 15 pounds. Usually the male is slightly larger than the female. Distinctively, its forelegs have extended rotational mobility, and its feet, semi-retractile hooked claws, giving the gray fox the ability—unique among the canines—to climb trees, even those with straight, vertical trunks. It has scent glands on its face, tail and paws.

Compared with a human, the gray fox has extraordinarily sharp vision, especially in the starlit hours of the night, but it has less ability to distinguish color. It can hear both lower and higher frequencies than can a human, helping it sense both prey and predators. It can detect scents tens of times more faint than a human can detect. Like a cat, the gray fox has long, sensitive tactile bristles on its muzzle, giving it a highly efficient means of feeling its way around in the total darkness of nighttime shadows or a den or burrow.

## Range, Habitat and Diet

The gray fox, with 16 subspecies, according to Erik K. Fritzell and Kurt J. Haroldson in *Mammalian Species*, inhabits a wide range, which extends from southeastern Canada across the eastern and southwestern United States southward through Mexico and Central America into northern Colombia and Venezuela. Clever and highly adaptable, it makes itself at home in a variety of habitats at elevations ranging from about 3,500 to 9,000 feet.

In the United States, it seems to prefer the forests and woodlands of lower mountain slopes, the shrublands of hills and plains, and the thicker scrublands and stream bottoms of the Southwest deserts. In any of the areas, it seems perfectly at home near any agricultural lands as well as urban margins. Typically, in the Southwest, according to Fritzell and Haroldson, the gray fox claims a territory ranging from a quarter to half a square mile in area.

The most omnivorous of the canine family, it tailors its appetite to the wildlife and plant

life most abundant during a season. It may forage either on the ground or in trees and shrubs. "Although they prey on small vertebrates," note Vu Long and Long Vu, writing for the Animal Diversity website, "fruit and invertebrates also form a substantial part of their diet."

The fox feeds largely on the small vertebrates, including rodents and birds, during the winter; fruits during the spring and fall; and invertebrates, fruits, nuts and grain during the late spring and summer months. Of the invertebrates on its menu, it seems to prefer grasshoppers, beetles, butterflies and moths, according to Long and Vu. An opportunist, it may also feed on fresh carrion, if available. It caches surplus food in a hole, burying it and marking the location with urine or scat or with its scent gland chemicals.

## Behavior and Life Cycle

The gray fox leads a largely solitary and nocturnal life, except during the season of mating and whelping. It forages through the night, especially at sunset and sunrise. It rests during the day, sometimes taking refuge in a den sequestered in the hollow of a rotting log, a crevice in a rock outcrop, the abandoned burrow of another



Gray fox paying a visit to a Silver City backyard. (Photo by David A. Fryxell)

animal, the vacancy of an abandoned building, or even the crown of a tree.

Come fall, the fox feels drawn by the lure of family life, probably relying on scent glands to find or attract a mate. It may reunite with a previous mate or seek out a new one. The male becomes more aggressive, competing for the female of his dreams. He may groom her. He may lift his hind leg to display his genitalia, hoping to make a big impression. Typically, the two breed during the late winter or early spring.

Preparing for her young, the female—called a "vixen"—establishes her den. If she enlarges the burrow of another animal, she may extend it to 75 feet in length and excavate several emergency exits and numerous side living and food storage chambers, according to the DesertUSA website. Roughly two months after mating, the vixen delivers one to seven—usually four—dark brown pups, or "kits," each weighing a few ounces. During the first few weeks, the father fox hunts and provides for his family. The mother nurtures and nurses the young. In at least one instance, note Fritzell and Haroldson, an adult gray fox tried to protect its whelping den by

feigning a limp, hoping to lure a potential predator away from the site. The mother starts the weaning process after about three weeks, when the kits begin to eat solid food provided by the father and offered by the mother.

"Parents teach pups how to hunt at around four months old," write Long and Vu. "Until then, both parents prey for food separately, and pups practice their hunting skills by

pouncing and stalking, which is taught primarily by the father. Pups depend on their parents for defense until about 10 months old, at which point they become sexually mature and disperse." (A pup may disperse from only a few miles to as many as 50 miles from its birthing den, say Fritzell and Haroldson.)

The animal then takes up the solitary and nocturnal life again, awaiting a new breeding and whelping season to begin its own family life. If it can avoid the many hazards it faces growing up, the gray fox may live some 6 to 10 years in the wild and perhaps longer in captivity.

## Life's Perils

The International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources lists the gray fox as one of the species of "least concern." It says, "There is no good evidence that gray fox numbers are increasing or decreasing in any part of their range. The species is not considered threatened at present." In fact, it appears to be expanding its range in some areas.

Even as the animal manages to sustain its population, thousands still fall to the traps of commercial hunters each year in some areas. ("Un-



A gray fox at night, photographed at the San Andres National Wildlife Refuge near Las Cruces. (USFWS photo)

A New Mexican gray fox at rest. (Photo by Gary M. Stolz, USFWS)





doubtedly the most important predator of the gray fox is man," note Fritzell and Haroldson.) Local populations have declined as a result of habitat loss and degradation as well as diseases and parasites. The young, especially, may fall to predators such as coyotes, wolves, bobcats or golden eagles. The gray fox leads a perilous life. In some areas, nearly half the pups and nearly two thirds of the adults perish annually, according to Fritzell and Haroldson.

**Legend and Folklore**

Smart and charismatic, the gray fox has become a part—sometimes for good, sometimes for evil—of the legend and folklore of prehistoric peoples and even modern military forces.

In a folktale of the Achomawis, a Native American tribe of California, Gray Fox was the Creator, and it brought spring sunshine and the first rainbow to save earth's creatures from the snows of winter.

In a legend of the Chiricahua Apaches, "Gray Fox... is connected with death," Morris E. Opler's informant told him in *An Apache Life-way*. "If at dark Fox goes near some camps, that means that someone in that group is going to die."

In stories from Frank Russell's *Myths of the Jicarilla Apaches, 1898*, Fox played the role of earnest but gullible companion of many animals and birds. Following one encounter, Fox had its body and tail lengthened and its ears straightened by Wildcat, leaving Fox as we see it today.

In modern times, according to William M. Arkin in the *Los Angeles Times*, the US Army created an intelligence unit code named the Gray Fox. Working with Special Forces, the Central Intelligence Agency and other intelligence organizations, the unit provided high-tech clandestine information on terrorist operations, international criminal activities and drug cartels, often in hostile regions. It helped, for instance, bring down Colombian drug lord Pablo Escobar. This Gray Fox has garnered a reputation for resourcefulness and daring much like its namesake.



Gray fox in a cottonwood tree near the Rio Grande. (Photo by Frank H. Parrish)

"The Fox," says Spirit Walk Ministry, A Shamanic Studies Ministry, "is seen as a sacred animal throughout the world. The fox is the cunning and stealthy messenger of the gods and the magical guide to the world between time and space, often shape-shifting on the journey, (sometimes into human form)." ❁

*Jay W. Sharp is a Las Cruces author who is a regular contributor to DesertUSA, an Internet magazine, and who is the author of Texas Unexplained, now available as an e-book from Amazon or iTunes. To read all his guides to wildlife of the Southwest, see [www.desertexposure.com/wildlife](http://www.desertexposure.com/wildlife).*

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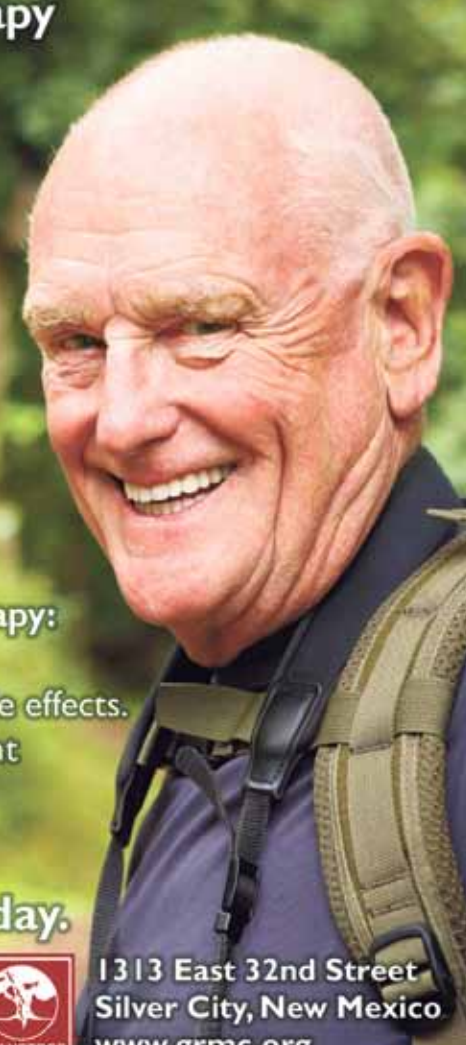
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HUMANS &amp; NATURE • KATHY WHITEMAN

# Eco Smarts

New Mexico works to boost environmental literacy.



Carolyn Kourey, Gila National Forest Hydrologist, with fifth-grade students on the Gila River during the Gila Conservation Education Center's 8th Annual Children's Water Festival.

In 2005, the National Environmental Education and Training Foundation (NEETF) estimated that fewer than two percent of American adults were environmentally literate. This study showed that regardless of age, income or education, most people are unable to think critically about important aspects of environmental science including basic concepts like pollution, energy generation and the water cycle: 73% of Americans incorrectly stated that their electricity came from "clean" energy sources (hydro, nuclear or solar), while in reality, most electricity in the US is produced by burning coal—a very "unclean" process that lowers air quality and contributes to atmospheric warming. In the same study, another 45 million Americans incorrectly indicated that the ocean is a source of America's drinking water.

I found the 2005 study so alarming that in 2010, I developed a small-scale survey using many of the same questions. My sample size was only 100 Grant County adults, but happily, two-thirds of respondents correctly identified surface runoff as the primary cause of water contamination in local streams and 79% understood that trees are responsible for producing oxygen—an important environmental concept! But 80% of respondents incorrectly stated that Silver City was located in the Chihuahuan or Sonoran Desert. Silver City is actually located in piñon-juniper-oak woodlands between the Chihuahuan Desert and higher elevation ponderosa pine forests.

True, there are species that can be found in both the Chihuahuan Desert and Silver City, but, strictly speaking, junipers, piñons and oaks don't grow in the desert. Perhaps this is a case of what's been called "plant blindness," but my guess is that most people think that because it's hot in Silver City and it doesn't rain much, Silver City must be in a desert. Unfortunately, the location of Silver City in the world is much more complex than how hot and dry it is.

But why does it even matter?

Because every place on the planet is situated within an *ecoregion*, a large area of land defined by temperature, geology, topography, precipitation and a distinct assemblage of communities and species. The biodiversity of plants, animals and ecosystems that characterize one ecoregion is different from that of any other ecoregion in the world. Human activities impact ecoregions and the way these

regions and their associated ecosystems function. This, in turn, affects the capacity of nature to support human livelihoods and provide critical *ecosystem services* on which all life is dependent.

Consider a story many Silver City residents know well: "The Big Ditch." Back in 1871, silver was discovered in the area and the town of Silver City sprang to life. In a 13-year period between about 1871 and 1884, seven different mills and their associated infrastructure operated along San Vicente Creek, which flowed directly through town. These mills obtained water from San Vicente Creek and processed the ore via steam-fired engines. To extract the silver, the machines crushed and pulverized raw ore, mixed it with other substances, and added heat from timber harvested in the Silver City watershed. Within a short period of time, much of the vegetation in the watershed had been removed to fuel not only the milling operations, but also to build railroads and the town's infrastructure, and to feed a growing number of residents.

No one realized that the vegetation provided important *ecosystem services*. Since so many of the people in the area had originated from other ecoregions where rains were more frequent and vegetation grew quickly, they had no reference for implementing sustainable land-use practices in New Mexico's semi-arid woodlands. By 1895, summer monsoons began to wreak havoc on Silver City. Rain no longer moved through the soil but instead ran off in sheet-flow, causing significant erosion and gulying. Wagon-wheel ruts funneled the runoff onto Main Street, and in 1902, the water hit town with such force that Main Street gave way to the impact. Buildings collapsed into the creek and Silver City's 54-foot gully, "The Big Ditch," was born. It took residents many years to connect watershed health to destructive flooding.

Today, flooding still occurs in San Vicente Creek, but watershed-restoration efforts during the 1930s have helped to slow the movement of water through the watershed. Still, human activities have continued to be important. As populations have grown, so have *point* and *nonpoint* pollution. Point pollution has a known source, such as the Superfund mill site on San Vicente Creek. Non-point pollution comes from a variety of sources: As rain falls on the ground and moves across the land, it collects and transports natural and human-made pollutants and deposits them into San Vicente Creek. Over time, some of the water will be used by plants and animals, some will evaporate, and some will make a slow journey deep into the ground to become groundwater. Pollutants follow water along the way.

Here in Grant County, we currently have enough water to meet municipal needs. But other places in the world are not so fortunate. The majority of the world's populations live in arid and semi-arid environments where water availability is limited. Although more than two-thirds of the planet is covered in water, less than one percent is available for direct human use. Grant County might have enough water, but do our citizens possess the awareness and concern to take the personal action needed to preserve the Gila and Mimbres Rivers, limit consumption, and keep our waters clean?

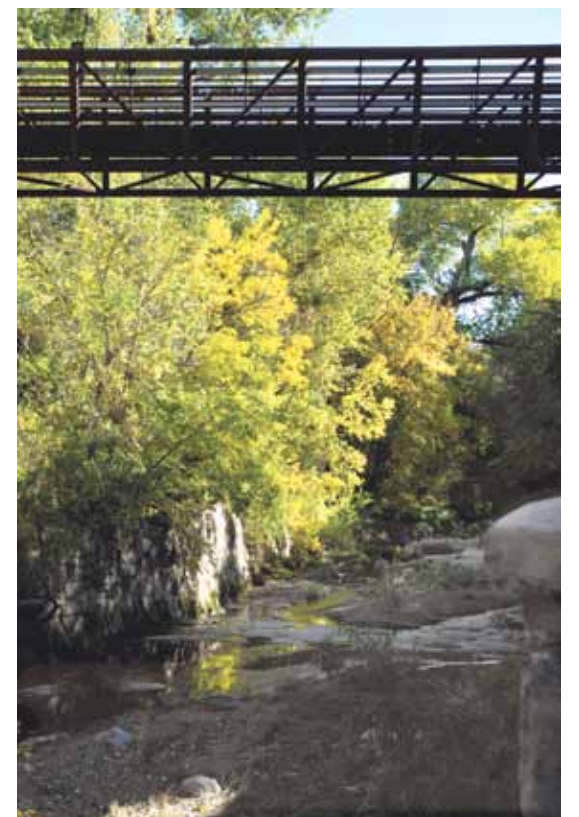
Education will help. Developing environmental literacy, though, requires more than collecting facts. We can be knowledgeable about an issue—for example, understanding the synergistic factors that promoted the formation of the Big Ditch—but knowledge alone does not offer the promise of someone becoming an environmental steward. Informational excursions do little to promote the development of applied skills or to create a sense of responsibility to care for the environment. Many of us are afraid to even use the word "environment" for fear of association with an advocacy-based agenda.

In Silver City, the Gila Conservation Education Center (GCEC) has been promoting excel-

lence in environmental education since 2004 (see "Teaching Moment," November 2006). This small non-profit maintains a strong collaborative relationship with area schools and the Gila National Forest, primarily serving the three rural counties encompassed by the 3.3 million acres of public forest land (Grant, Catron and Hidalgo). The GCEC provides classroom visits, field trips, student-centered restoration projects, teacher workshops and local presentations. Last year, the organization reached 5,214 K-12 and adult learners through its programs.

The work that GCEC does, particularly with young children, is important. In 2005, the term *nature deficit disorder* was coined by author Richard Louv in his book *Last Child in the Woods*. Louv's profound work provoked a rude awakening about our children and the symptoms associated with their alienation from the outdoor world. Today's children are obese, afraid, depressed, diabetic and stressed; attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) and asthma are on the rise. Inarguably, these same symptoms plague adults; after all, we are the role models.

Children who play outdoors are healthier and happier than kids who don't; kids who play outside are creative, confident, less stressed, and better able to communicate with their peers. They also perform better in school and on standardized tests; many of them even understand where their food comes from. At the college level, students who participate in outdoor programming tend to stay in school, perform well academically, and complete their programs of study.



Wagon-wheel ruts funneled runoff onto Main Street, and in 1902, the water hit town with such force that Main Street gave way to the impact. Buildings collapsed into the creek and Silver City's 54-foot gully, "The Big Ditch," was born. (Photo by David A. Fryxell)

In 2009, the No Child Left Inside Act (NCLI) was first introduced to Congress. In 2010, the bill passed the House, but this year, the NCLI Act has little chance of passing through Congress. Still, the NCLI Act has affected some change to the pre-K through 12 curricula, prompting the mark-up of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 to include environmental education as part of a "well-rounded education."

In our state, the Environmental Education Association of New Mexico (EEANM) has spearheaded a statewide effort to develop an environmental literacy plan (ELP) with the ambitious goal of having the plan adopted by the New Mexico Public Education Department. The plan will detail the environmental education inputs at each grade level, including learning standards and benchmarks, teacher preparation and support, and assessing students' environmental literacy. Public input meetings are being scheduled throughout the state this year. In Silver City, an Environmental Literacy Planning meeting has been scheduled for Oct. 19, to take place at Western New Mexico University. (Visit [eeanm.org](http://eeanm.org) and [gcecnm.org](http://gcecnm.org) for more information.)

Silver City's "Big Ditch": No one realized that the vegetation in the watershed provided important ecosystem services. (Photo by David A. Fryxell)



In 1949, former New Mexican Aldo Leopold advocated for a land ethic in *A Sand County Almanac*, describing the responsible manner in which people must live on the land that they inhabit. In 1962, Rachel Carson's book *Silent Spring* added fuel to the modern environmental movement by opening the world's eyes to the dangers of chemical pesticide use. Carson's work forced the banning of DDT and spurred revolutionary changes in numerous environmental laws affecting air, land and water.

By the end of the 1960s, the importance of protecting the health and well-being of Earth's ecosystems began to dawn on the world's collective consciousness, and the environmental movement had become a global phenomenon. The field of environmental science originated in the 1970s as it became clear that complex environmental problems would require the integration of scientific fields. In 1971, the National Science Board issued a report calling for a national research agenda to integrate the "study of the systems of air, land, water, energy and life that surround man, drawing on all the sciences directed to system-level understanding of the environment." The Board noted that specialized science fields had advanced human knowledge, but that the environment is a single entity, "a gigantic system," which required expertise from across scientific fields to achieve an understanding of how the elements interact and interrelate.

A few years later, the world's first intergovernmental conference on environmental education convened in Tbilisi, Georgia, USSR, resulting in the Tbilisi Declaration that laid the framework, principles and guidelines for environmental education. The 330 world delegates unanimously agreed that environmental education was important in the preservation and improvement of the global environment and the development of the world's communities.

Environmental education is a global agenda related directly to the sustainability of all life. It is a learning process that increases knowledge and awareness about the environment, builds the necessary skills to address environmental challenges, and fosters attitudes, motivations and commitments to make informed decisions and take personal action. Of course, it's not realistic that every person possesses a detailed knowledge about the content of every environmentally relevant discipline, but literate people should be able to ask: "What can happen? What are the odds?" and "How do we know?"

My hope is that humanity is currently in a deep learning phase, moving through the dissonance created by wanting "stuff" and knowing that "stuff" is not really what we need. As people begin to accept that they are part of nature, rather than separate from it, my optimistic hope is that *Homo sapiens* will begin to understand that we are only 1 of an estimated 8.7 million species that occupy the planet. To be sure, this recognition will require a

paradigm shift, but I believe it's a necessary precursor to solving our environmental problems. People must continue to grow food and use water, but must do so in a manner that protects the ecological integrity of Earth's ecosystems. This is why promoting and developing environmental literacy is so important.

Throughout our lives, we accumulate environmental knowledge by watching television, listening to the radio, reading, browsing the Internet, and talking with our friends. For a few of us, this collection of knowledge can eventually lead to environmental literacy, but for most of us this is not the case. Much of our knowledge is heavily influenced by incorrect or outdated environmental myths. Many of us still believe, for example, that the aerosol can propellants chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs), are responsible for depleting Earth's ozone layer; CFCs were banned globally in 1987.

The human population has exceeded 7 billion; environmental problems are vastly complex and beyond governmental regulation. It is important for kids and adults to go outside, go for a hike, look at the stars, play in the river, watch the clouds, and

slow down. At no other time in human history have *Homo sapiens* had a greater impact on Earth's life-support systems than today. Global issues, including climate change, water distribution and loss of biodiversity, transcend national boundaries and will not be resolved by any one country acting in a vacuum. For the first time in human history, more people live in urban than rural areas; we don't grow our food, don't know where our

water comes from, and we no longer understand the individual role each of us plays in our environment.

Humanity is past the time where a small cadre of professionals can fix complex issues. It will take many of us, becoming environmentally literate, to find practical, evidence-based solutions for dealing with environmental challenges at the local, regional and global scale.

Where is humanity going? Lewis Carroll offered this lesson:

"Would you tell me please which way I ought to go from here?" asked Alice.

"That depends a good deal on where you want to get to," said the Cat.

"I don't much care where," said Alice.

"Then it doesn't matter which way you go," said the Cat.

"—so long as I get somewhere," Alice added as an explanation.

"Oh, you're sure to do that," said the Cat, "if you only walk long enough." ❀

*Kathy Whiteman is currently the Director of Western New Mexico University's new Outdoor Program and a faculty member in the WNMU Natural Sciences Department.*

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THE LIVELY ARTS • KAREN RAY

## Fun with Footwork

In Mesilla, the old tradition of Contra dancing is drawing a new generation to the dance floor.



Dancers kicking up their heels at Contra dance: (left to right) Hillary Dalton, Micah Englehart, Ian Miller. (Photo by Merri Rudd, Albuquerque dance caller)

Every third Friday they gather at the Community Center in the old village of Mesilla. The monthly Contra Dance is about to begin. A nearby plaque proclaims that Billy the Kid was once tried and sentenced to hang in this town. It is something the locals are proud of. History runs deep here along the ancient Camino Real trail.

As much fun as the dance is, the real show takes place up on the stage. The same stage that has witnessed generations of valedictorians, productions of *Our Town* and grade-school talent shows now hosts the members of the Contra dance band. A young girl in a long cotton skirt and bright T-shirt tucks her violin against her smooth cheek and smiles through a toe-tapping piece straight from the folk music her grandmother danced to.

Bill Bussmann, a smiling man with a penchant for practical jokes, plays an orange and yellow bass made from a Pontiac gas tank. Really. His white beard shakes in time to the music. Turns out he is a luthier and the proprietor of Old Wave Mandolins, producing a variety of stringed instruments, some traditional and others not so (see "Strings Attached," July 2006).

Contra dance originated in the English country dances of the 17th century. It was quite popular in the northeastern United States back in the country's early days. Ralph Page's book, *A Guide to Contra Dance*, cites a 1651 book, *The English Dancing Master: Plaine and easie Rules for the Dancing of Country Dances*, as "the oldest reliable source for contra dancing. It contains dances in many different formations.... Country dance may be a generic term for all group dancing with a traditional flavor.... Dances in long lanes with minor groups within the lane became the rule in the following editions."

In Contra dance, the dance forms are repeated throughout the song, with the dancers changing partners at each repeat, proceeding together up and down the hall. Each dance is typically a 64-beat square tune and takes anywhere from 8 to 12 minutes to complete. Contra dances are truly community events; dancers interact with everyone on the dance floor during the evening.

The popularity of Contra dancing has ebbed and flowed over the decades, but enthusiasts have always managed to revitalize it for a new generation. In the 1920s automaker Henry Ford was a passionate catalyst for reviving Contra dancing. He even paid for dance instructors to travel around the country teaching the steps to any group that

wanted to learn. Although Contra dancing popularity has tended to be polarized to both coasts in the US, local dance coordinators note that it is spreading quickly into the interior.

Lonnie Ludeman and Julie Schmitt, two of the original members of the Southern New Mexico Music and Dance Society (SNMMDS) Contra dance group, maintain the group's website and are the primary organizers of the monthly dances. They are self-proclaimed "dance gypsies," participating in Contra dances wherever they travel around the country. They first danced together at Lake Valley back when what they refer to as "Generational Dances" were held in an old schoolhouse—live music followed by a midnight supper and more dancing.

Ludeman discovered Contra dancing over 25 years ago on vacation in Maine and was enthralled with the experience. Then, sometime in the early 1980s, a young woman named Becky McKenzie came to New Mexico State University for about a year from Tennessee. She "called" (the term for directing the dancers) for the fledgling dance group and taught the skill to a handful of others before she left. Ludeman, who teaches computer and electrical engineering at NMSU, and another engineer, Bill Cooper, designed and built an amplifier and speakers for the dances.

In 1988 the dancers began meeting in the Mesilla Community Center, two blocks off the plaza. The building is an old school built in 1934 by the WPA. It has wonderful wood floors, a stage and a low ceiling with good acoustics. Ludeman remembers, "I was there early one night to set up and an older couple in their eighties walked in. The man came up to me just beaming and said, 'When I was a little boy I went to school in this place.' They stayed around the whole evening listening to the music and just absorbing everything."

Bob Deitner, mandolin player with the Deming Fusiliers, was the primary catalyst for the local Contra dance group. In the early 1980s he started playing for the dances when the dance floors ran the gamut from gravel parking lots to tennis courts, churches and ballrooms. According to the Fusiliers' website, he continues to travel "the back roads of Texas and New Mexico looking for the old-time musicians and listening to their stories and playing their tunes with them." The Deming Fusiliers is one of the mainstay bands that regularly play for the Mesilla Contra dances. Other band members are Rus Bradburd, Bill Bussmann, Michel Robert, Marc Robert and Greg Gendall. The Fusiliers' music, says their site, "intertwines ancient fiddle melodies with gospel songs, dance tunes and songs that relate stories, tales and legends from early America."

Those involved with Contra dancing agree that the music is key to the experience. The Mesilla group has always danced to live music. Lonnie Ludeman grins as he relates how "some experienced bands play with the dancers, tweaking the music a bit or working in something unexpected." He describes the whole Contra dance experience as a joyful "trifecta of dancers, music and caller."

The main callers for the Mesilla dances are Ludeman and Lewis Land. Ludeman has a great interest in passing on the skill of calling the dances and recently held a callers workshop at his home. Land drives over from Carlsbad to call dances. There are also occasional guests such as Merri Rudd from Albuquerque, another talented caller with more than 20 years experience.



Brian and Amy Muise of the Muletones. (Photo by Stephanie Smith)

Traditional musicians have staunchly refused to let the wonderful music played at the dances die out. They've kept it alive like sourdough starter, spreading the tangy goodness around the country to all classes and regions. Many of the tunes are over 100 years old and originate in the music of England, Scotland and Ireland as well as other parts of Europe and even French Canada.

Musicians travel from all over to play at a Contra dance. In addition to two regular bands, the Deming Fusiliers and the Muletones, sometimes an open band of talented guest musicians will add their skills on fiddle, guitar, bass, mandolin and banjo. Dancers have also enjoyed the sounds of Bayou Seco from Silver City, The Virginia Creepers, and, with what has to be one of the most unusual band names, the Boiled Buzzards. The names incite almost as many grins as the irresistible beat of the music.

The Mullany family of Albuquerque—Marj, Jim, Riley and Maddy—played for a large gathering at the April dance. Three members of this talented family are also skilled dance callers. Song titles include classics such as "Black Eyed Susie," "Frosty Morning," "The Old Grey Cat" and "Nail that Catfish to a Tree." Now, doesn't that just make you smile?



Typical instruments for traditional dance music. (Photo by Brian Muise)

Brian and Amy Muise of the Muletones have been together since 2008, playing their old-time string music not only at the Contra dances, but entertaining audiences throughout the Southwest. Andrew

Stuart on guitar and Jim McNeil on bass and guitar complete the Muletones band. The Muises have two children who are growing up to the beat and rhythm of the dances. Amy has played her fiddle many times with one of her babies strapped to her back, swaying to the music. She smiles and says, "They both have spent hours that way. They find it soothing and they watch the dancers." The couple runs a cow/calf operation near Dell City when not on the road playing music. They are interested in grass-fed direct marketing of beef for the Carlsbad and Alamogordo markets.

Brian Muise has always been interested in old country music. When he moved out to the Otero Mesa area he became part of a strong musical tradition among the area ranchers.

Amy says, "I began playing the old-time music because I enjoyed Contra dancing so much. I lived in a little town and there was no band. So I took up the music to facilitate the dancing."

She started Contra dancing back in Massachusetts at the famous Greenfield dance. Later, during a stint as a field researcher in the Costa Rican rain forest, she began playing fiddle with other on-site musicians after a Contra-dancing friend bought her an \$80 instrument on eBay. When asked how the climate in Costa Rica affected the instruments at the research station, she laughs. "Well, wooden stringed instruments sound really good in a humid environment but you have to keep a careful watch over them. When they took down a fiddle that had been hung on the wall for six months or so, they found that the entire back of it was eaten by termites."

Members of the Deming Fusiliers: (left to right) Bob Deitner on mandolin, Bill Bussmann on gas tank upright bass, Marc Robert on banjo. (Photo by Julie Schmitt)



The Country Dance and Song Society (CDSS), a nationwide organization, has been intrigued by the success of the SNMMDS group in Mesilla. Julie Schmitt says that the society is quite interested in how the group gets new people involved. The primary reason for the success, according to Ludeman, has been the enthusiastic influx of new dancers. Schmitt agrees: "It's all about word of mouth. If you have fun, you will tell someone."

The monthly dances begin with a half-hour lesson to initiate newcomers into the rhythmic footwork and forms of the dance. The dress code is casual and folks are free to wear what is comfortable for them to dance in. On one dance floor everything from shorts to fancy dresses will be evident; during the themed dances held several times a year, costumes are encouraged and thoroughly enjoyed. When the August through May dances resume next month, the first dance will be a Hawaiian luau dress theme.

As the band warms up, "Dance Angels"—experienced dancers on an inspired mission—work the crowd, making sure all get a chance to dance. They won't stand for much shyness. The high-spirited music romps across the dance floor as girls in jeans and T-shirts and women in breezy skirts raise their arms to spin through the steps. Five minutes into the dance and the age barriers have dropped while everyone just has a laughing, rollicking good time. The sense of community and friendship is palpable. Squares of partners move through the intricate, repetitive steps. Partners change and recombine, whirling down the line in an ever-changing array of pattern and color. The dances are as enjoyable to watch as they are to dance.

There has been a great resurgence in this social dance form among the teenage and college set. In January 2009 a Facebook invite made the rounds, encouraging younger people to come and try out this new dance. Schmitt and Ludeman laugh at the memory of that night. They got a call from local student Samuel Wong that 40 young people had showed up in the parking lot hoping to join the dance, and was there room for them?

Schmitt recalls, "Forty young dancers was the



When Contra dances resume on August 17, the costume theme will be "Hawaiian luau." (Photo by Julie Schmitt)

most pleasant shock I've ever had! There was the excitement of all new dancers experiencing Contra for the first time."

The newcomers were enthusiastically welcomed into the dance with a quick lesson and patient guidance from the more experienced dancers they were paired up with. They were hooked and most of them still won't miss that monthly dance for anything.

Amy Muise adds, "The history of Mesilla Contra Dance is pretty interesting because it went through this generational shift.... That day was one of the most exciting days of my life! One day I'm sitting up on stage tuning my fiddle and all of these 16-year-olds start coming in. Not just 10 of them; they just kept coming. I thought it was wonderful! They took to it like fish to water." The Gallus and Wong families of Las Cruces have continued to be eager promoters of the Contra dances.

People interested in learning more about Contra dancing, calling or playing traditional music have a great number of workshops available at dance and music festivals around the country. The New Mexico Folk Music and Dance Society, FolkMADS, sponsors an annual music and dance camp in Socorro over Memorial Day weekend. Recently marking its 20th year, the three-day event is full of dancing, great music and a multitude of workshops on ev-

everything related to Contra dancing. This year there was even an improvisational comedy seminar.

Julie Schmitt says she heard once that "Contra is a case of lost and found. You start out with a new partner at each dance and you... always end up back with your partner, hopefully." She adds, "Once you get hooked, you're hooked for life." ❁

*Contra dances are held the third Friday of every month, August through May, except the second Friday in December, and will resume August 17 at the Mesilla Community Center at 2251 Calle de*

*Santiago, just two blocks off the plaza. Dances start with a half-hour lesson and run from 7:30 to 10:30 p.m. Price is \$6 for live music and an entire evening of family-friendly dancing; kids 17 and under are \$5. Sometime in the fall the dances will move to a temporary location while the Mesilla Community Center undergoes restoration. For more information check out the Southern New Mexico Music and Dance Society website at [www.snmmds.org](http://www.snmmds.org).*

*Karen Ray is a nearly lifelong resident of Las Cruces, who grew up here, attended NMSU, then returned 17 years ago to finish raising her family. She earned a degree in journalism from the University of Wisconsin.*



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TRENDS • LARRY LIGHTNER

# Apocalypse Now?

Doomsday “preppers” believe the end is near—they just can’t agree on the cause.



Mayan temple. (Photo by Lisa D. Fryxell)

The current virus of apocalyptic thinking began several years ago with stories about how the ancient Mayan calendar ends in December 2012, which some folks interpreted as predicting the end of the world. While many experts and contemporary Mayans themselves have debunked this interpretation, that hasn’t stopped the media and others from jumping on this doomsday bandwagon. If it’s not the Mayan calendar, then apocalypse is supposedly coming from mega-volcanoes or polar shifts or even UFOs.

Two new TV shows have already latched onto this trend: “Doomsday Preppers” on the National Geographic Channel and “Doomsday Bunkers” on the Discovery Channel. And this fall, the Spike television network will air a six-episode series called “Last Family on Earth” in which survivalists compete to win an underground bunker in an undisclosed location. One estimate puts the number of “preppers” nationwide at more than 2 million, folks who run the gamut from liberal to conservative, Democrat to Republican.

We even have “preppers” right here in Southwest New Mexico. I’ve had two folks come into the gun store where I work part-time and buy three firearms in preparation of a general apocalypse to come in 2012. Others are coming in to buy guns and ammo out of fear that the president will try to take guns away or outlaw them or put severe restrictions via executive order. Others fear that the government will forcibly come with troops and take their guns away. In any event, they believe that anarchy will be the rule and they want to be prepared! As a result, the gun industry has notified us that the shortage of guns and ammo nationally could go for 18 months.

Of course, we have experienced apocalyptic thinking in recent history before. (And happily these doomsday prophets were wrong, or we wouldn’t be here to write about it!) Back in the early 1980s, some predicted apocalypse in 1982 because of an alignment of the nine planets of our solar system (Pluto hadn’t yet been demoted), in a perfect line from the sun. This configuration would cause a huge magnetic field that would pull the earth apart from one pole to the other. As you all well know, nothing happened, not even a slight ripple upon the earth.

The second such recent prediction was more widely known and caused worldwide panic: On Jan. 1, 2000, the computer world would crash, taking all of society with it, because of the inability of computer code to handle years beginning in “20” rather than “19.” People began to store up foods, medicines and firearms, but especially generators for when the electric grid col-

lapsed.

The “Y2K” doomsday, too, never materialized. Go figure.

Most recently, a doomsday-like paranoia gripped some folks who feared that the election of Barack Obama would lead to guns being outlawed. Countless folks bought up guns and ammo and reloading supplies to build ammo, beginning in mid-2008 and continuing throughout 2009. We became the most armed nation in history.

Once again, nothing apocalyptic has happened in the three years-plus that the president has been in office.

Now, once again, apocalyptic thinking is rampant. It began with the Mayans, but has gone far beyond them and their little calendar.

Rather than being single-minded in focus, it is highly eclectic. There are many diverse opinions as to what the coming apocalypse will be and whether it will indeed be in 2012. Basically it boils down to two lines of thinking: The first involves those who believe the world will actually cease to exist, period. The second group consists of those who believe that the great apocalypse will alter the world drastically but not end it, at least not right away.

The followers of the Mayan prophecy fall into the first group, the end of the earth. But even though most of them are fatalistic, some are nonetheless preparing for survival by building underground bunkers, storing food, water and meds and, yes, buying guns.

It came as a surprise to me that the supposed Mayan prophecy isn’t alone in pointing to 2012; there are many others. I found that the ancient Aztecs and Incas had prophecies of the world’s end in 2012, too. They both predicted a massive solar explosion that would scorch the entire earth.

Here in the Southwest, the Hopi nation has its own apocalypse occurring in the same period. They predict a vast world war beginning with the nations of India, China, Africa and the Middle East.

The Hopis predict these apocalyptic events will be signaled by the appearance of a mysterious, hidden, blue planet or star in our solar system. (“You will hear of a dwelling-place in the heavens, above the earth, that shall fall with a great crash. It will appear as a blue star. Very soon after this, the ceremonies of my people will cease.”)

This astronomical prophecy has been conflated with a supposed “10th planet” named Neburu or Nibiru. According to Wikipedia, “The idea was first put forward in 1995 by Nancy Lieder, founder of the website ZetaTalk. Lieder describes herself as a contactee with the ability to receive messages from extra-terrestrials from the Zeta Reticuli star system through an implant in her brain.” Lieder claimed she was chosen to warn mankind that this 10th planet would sweep through the inner Solar system in May 2003, causing Earth to undergo a cataclysmic pole shift. When Neburu failed to appear on schedule, Internet doomsday groups linked it instead to the 2012 phenomenon.

Astronomers point out that if a hitherto invisible planet really existed and was headed our way, we would have noticed it by now and felt its effects. Believers, however, accuse NASA of a conspiracy to cover up the planet’s existence.

Another of the dozen or so 2012 apocalyptic predictions filling the Internet is “Sybil’s Doomsday Prediction.” Sybil was a young girl trained by the mathematician Pythagoras (of mathematical theory fame), who used her as a medium to contact the god Apollo. Following nine periods of 800 years (right about now, apparently), Sybil predicted a worldwide earthquake where great cities will be thrown into the oceans. Fire would fall from the sky and burn up the rest of



Earlier this year, NASA scientists put out a video debunking many of the prophecies that the world will end in 2012 as supposedly predicted by the Mayans.

the cities all across the face of the earth.

I even read about a group of 20,000-plus people in France who are gathering at the base of a weird mountain there. They come from all over the world, with more coming daily. This mountain is believed to have been a volcano that literally blew its top off and the top came down upside down, right on the very place it left. This makes it mystical.

These good folks believe the world is about to end, and that they will be rescued by UFOs. This is where I get confused. One theory is that the UFOs are below the mountain, and another theory is that they will come from the heavens to the mountain, just in the nick of time.

Before you and I scoff too harshly, remember that over 20,000 people have come to believe this and their numbers are growing! If the UFOs do rescue them and leave us to our fate, who’ll be laughing then?

Now we come to the second group of apocalyptic thinking—the folks who believe that while the world will not end in apocalypse, it will be altered severely. This will happen in 2012 or in a couple of years thereafter. These doomsday believers have different opinions as to what will trigger the collapse of society as we know it, but

all predict that following the cataclysm there will be utter anarchy.

They foresee a society without laws or order, where everyone is for themselves, seeking to exist any way that they can, without benefit of government. Violence and theft reign supreme.

It’s certainly true that when disaster

strikes urban areas, anarchy can follow. We saw this as recently as in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina.

What intrigues me about this whole, vast subject is that for the most part, highly articulate, intelligent, educated people are involved in these apocalyptic predictions and fear, not just the average redneck.

One such category of doomsdayers, which includes medical doctors and psychiatrists, believe that there is going to be a pandemic. That could mean a mutant avian flu, a new unknown flu, or some kind of plague. The movie *Contagion* recently told such a fictional story in scary detail. I’ve also seen on TV about schools teaching folks how to prepare for a pandemic.

There are also a group of folks who believe we will experience a biological cataclysm caused by pollution of our water or food supplies. To be truthful, one has to wonder about all these food contamination outbreaks in recent years that have their origins at farms. The doomsayers believe the disaster will come about through terrorists or a foreign nation about to invade us.

Others are preparing for an Electro-Magnetic-Pulse (EMP) occurrence caused by terrorists or a foreign attack. Military experts say it might be possible to explode nuclear devices in the atmosphere above the US in three strategic places and take out our entire electric system. Other say a huge solar

“Revolution,” a new fall TV series, imagines life without electricity, such as after an EMP—a popular apocalyptic scenario.



National Geographic Channel’s “Doomsday Preppers” features families preparing for the worst.

flare could cause a similar EMP disaster. As depicted in the novel *One Second After* by William R. Forstchen, such a cataclysm would set our society back 150 years and induce a die-off of 80% of the population, leading to anarchy. This fall, a new TV series from one of the creators of "Lost," entitled "Revolution," will depict a world in which all of our electronic technology has ceased to function.

There are also many, especially on the political right, who are predicting that there is shortly going to be an economic collapse worldwide that will begin in either Europe or the US.

I have read some of these websites and they have predicted specific times for nearly three years now. The trouble is none of their prophecies has come true, so they move them ahead some more; now it is the fall of 2012.

In any event, they predict anarchy, too. Time will tell!

The scientific community is not without its doomsayers. Geologists have identified four major geographic areas in the US that could possibly see a mega-earthquake and it could be any day or later. These four areas are the northwestern coast near Seattle, the San Andreas fault of California, the faultline from New York City down to Washington, DC, and the New Madrid fault of Missouri.

An interesting historical note about the New Madrid fault and the last earthquake there in 1812: It happened exactly 200 years ago and could be due again; it was so powerful that it caused the mighty Mississippi River to flow backwards! It moved the Mississippi permanently out of its channel in places, and it was felt as far away as here in New Mexico. Curiously, the Native American chief Tecumseh, accurately predicted it one year before it happened!

Speaking of earthquakes, did you know that during a 48-hour period in the end of April of this year, the earth experienced 39 strong earthquakes? Some scientists say that is unprecedented.

Others are predicting a possible, imminent eruption of Yellowstone, which doomsayers believe will create a super volcano. The dormant volcano has been rising at a rate of 1.5 inches per

year in the last decade and 40 inches since the 1920s, and that isn't good! When, not if, it erupts, it will virtually destroy the US, and the resultant ash cloud would cover the earth with a thick blanket and would blot out the sun and its warmth for years. No more growing season then.

Back in the winter of 1815, a volcano erupted in the south Pacific in what was then known as the Dutch East Indies (Indonesia), known as Mount Tambora. The enormous ash cloud the next year caused "the year without a summer" in the US, with snow in July and an abbreviated growing season. This was compounded by the eruption of four other major volcanoes during 1812-1814, which had already filled the atmosphere with ash residue. Imagine how that would affect our economy today!

And while the Tambora volcanic eruption was huge and devastating and the second largest in modern history, it would be nowhere near what some warn could happen at Yellowstone.

So rampant are these fears that the National Park Service has had to address them on its Yellowstone website: "There is no evidence that a catastrophic eruption at Yellowstone National Park (YNP) is imminent. Current geologic activity at Yellowstone has remained relatively constant since earth scientists first started monitoring some 30 years ago. Though another caldera-forming eruption is theoretically possible, it is very unlikely to occur in the next thousand or even 10,000 years."

The doomsday scenarios go on and on. The "Sleeping Prophet," Edgar Cayce, predicted that the north and south poles would soon change places with each other. He likened it to an orange with a hard surface and a fluid core that allows the surface to slip.

Interestingly, I've read scientific reports that support that the poles have switched several times in ancient history. There are many who subscribe to this apocalyptic prophecy. But Cayce also predicted that when dormant Mount Etna in Italy once again erupted, it would bring apocalypse. That was predicted in the early 1900s and Etna has erupted more than a half-dozen times since then;

happily, Cayce was wrong.

Other doomsayers believe we are due for a super giant tsunami that will devastate the coastal areas. They are preparing for that to happen possibly in 2012, or in the near future after that.

Climatologists have gotten into the act, too; they think we are due for super storms in the form of hurricanes and tornadoes. They have also said that the frequency of such will increase, and I must admit that we are experiencing a heck of a lot of killer tornadoes and they seem to be bigger.

Whether you share any of these fears or think it's all hokum and paranoia, the fact is many of your neighbors are getting ready for doomsday in one form or another. Next, we'll meet some of them right here in Southwest New Mexico. ☘

Larry Lightner writes the Ramblin' Outdoors column.



Artist's conception of the fortified bunker that's the prize in an upcoming Spike cable TV reality competition, "The Last Family on Earth."

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NATURE UP CLOSE • DAVID B. RICHMAN

# Ancient Aviators

As old as the dinosaurs, dragonflies and damselflies are gems in the Land of Enchantment.



Above: A male *Symptetrum corruptum* dragonfly. (Photo by David B. Richman)

As I walked along the edge of a deep sinkhole, the large numbers of dark-colored dragonflies astonished me. Their old skins, where the adults had emerged from their seemingly alien immature stage, were scattered on almost every shrub and clump of grass. The adults swarmed among the grasses and shrubs that studded the strange landscape of gypsum-loving plants, deep sinkholes, and the one large playa, called Bitter Lake, that parallels the Pecos River at this point in its winding journey to meet the Rio Grande at the Texas-Mexico border, hundreds of miles to the south.

I was at Bitter Lake National Wildlife Refuge near Roswell, NM, and the swarming dragonflies were Seaside Dragonlets (*Erythrodiplax berenice*), a species found commonly along the Atlantic Coast. I found the sheer numbers of both dragonflies and damselflies at Bitter Lake astounding (they have a yearly dragonfly festival—see box), both in species and individuals. Two other normally eastern species found at Bitter Lake that I found commonly



Above: Flame Skimmer dragonfly. (Photo by Jay W. Sharp)

in Florida, the Banded Pennant (*Celithemis fasciata*) and the closely related Halloween Pennant (*Celithemis eponina*), have been recorded here.

But you don't have to travel to Bitter Lake to see a number of species of these beautiful insects. I have found numbers of individuals and species at a temporary pond near a city well west of Las Cruces and at Broad Canyon near Radium Springs, as well as at the Mesilla Valley Bosque State Park along the Rio Grande near Mesilla. In fact, I have seen at least a half-dozen species in my own neighborhood in Mesilla Park.

A visit to any marshy area, lake, pond, stream or river will usually turn up two forms of elongated and colorful gauzy-winged insects: dragonflies, which are by far the most agile flyers, and damsel-



Below: *Enallagma civile*. (Photo by David B. Richman)

flies, appearing as rather more dainty and weak-flying of the two. These make up most of the species in the insect order Odonata. Dragonflies and damselflies can be found almost anywhere, even far away from obvious sources of water.

## Classification

The Odonata order is divided into three suborders, of which two are found in New Mexico. The Anisoptera are the dragonflies and the Zygoptera are the damselflies. True dragonflies hold their wings at right angles lateral to the main axis of their bodies, while damselflies hold their wings together over their backs, with some slanting the wings (the spreadwings). The third suborder, the Anisozygoptera, consists of two Asiatic species and is intermediate between dragonflies and damselflies in anatomy, but is more ancient than either.

Each of the two common suborders has three common families in the Southwest. Of these the commonest are the skimmers (Libellulidae), the darners (Aeshnidae) and the pond damselflies (Coeagrionidae). The spreadwing damselflies (Lestidae) can be fairly abundant, as can the few species of the broad-winged damselflies (Calopterygidae) and the clubtail dragonflies (Gomphidae).

Most dragonflies seen in our area, however, will be either skimmers or darners (very large) and most damselflies will be pond damselflies. The common skimmers are numerous in species and vary greatly in color and in whether the wings are banded, colored or clear, while the large darners are almost always some combination of blue, green and occasionally black. The clubtails usually have swollen terminal segments to the abdomen, making them look like clubs, especially in the males. Both darners and clubtails have transparent wings, without color or bands.

The broad-winged damselflies in our area consist of two or so species of rubyspot (*Hataerina* spp.) and thus the males are easily identified by the bright red bases to their wings (the females have amber bases). In the eastern and northwestern parts of the United States are several species of the related genus *Calypteryx* that have black or black-marked wings.

Spreadwing damselflies can be easily identified to family by their habit of holding their wings somewhat at an angle above the body. Both pond damselflies and broad-wing damselflies hold their wings rigidly perpendicular to the dorsal surface of their bodies. Most pond damselflies are blue, green or blue and green (males) or brownish, gray or greenish (females), usually marked with black. None of the damselflies is as excellent at flying as the dragonflies and they are easily caught with an aerial net.

## Evolutionary History

Dragonflies and damselflies are very ancient insects, with Jurassic Solnhofen lithographic shales containing fossils of dragonflies that are almost indistinguishable from some modern species. They were flying around while dinosaurs roamed the landscape, over 150 million years ago. Relatives of the Odonata in the order Protodonata date back to the Carboniferous in the Paleozoic, over 300 million years ago, and some of these were giants with bodies over a foot long and wingspans of up to 28 inches. These have been named griffenflies with good reason. Still, not all prehistoric dragonfly or dragonfly-like insects were large: *Parahemiphysia mickoleiti* from the Cretaceous of Brazil is the smallest dragonfly known to have existed, with a wingspan of less than three-quarter inch!

Dragonflies are so ancient that their distribu-



Whitetail dragonfly. (Photo by Jay W. Sharp)

tions reflect the movement of the continents over millions of years. One Jurassic family that continued into modern times are the petaltails (Petaluridae). These are found around the rim of the Pacific Ocean, except for one species found along the Atlantic Coast of North America; their distribution indicates a very ancient lineage that predates the Atlantic Ocean. These are the most primitive of modern dragonflies, but they unfortunately are not found in New Mexico.

Both the Aeshnidae and the Gomphidae, however, which are found in our state, are nearly as old as the Petaluridae, and originate in the Jurassic as well. Thus the darners and clubtails were flying around when dinosaurs ruled the land and pterosaurs, like *Pteranodon*, ruled the skies. Such venerable creatures deserve some respect, as they and their ancestors survived huge changes in the earth, including the asteroid strike at the end of the Cretaceous that apparently wiped out the dinosaurs (except for one line that led to the birds).

But the most ancient of the odonates still living are in the strange suborder Anisozygoptera, which originated in the Triassic—that strange, desert-filled earliest period within the Mesozoic era. Only two species of these odd half-damselfly, half-dragonfly insects have survived to the present day, one in Japan and one in Nepal in the Himalayas.

## Habitat and Lifecycle

You might think that such a relatively waterless place as New Mexico would not have very many species of Odonata. With few exceptions, after all, their immature stages (called naiads, nymphs or larvae, depending on the authority, although the term larvae is coming more into favor these days) are totally aquatic. Such is not the case, however!

Bitter Lake National Wildlife Refuge boasts a list of over 100 species, including some that are more commonly found along the East Coast. New records have been turning up regularly in New Mexico for years. In fact I have added several county records from Doña Ana County myself for the Eastern Amberwing (*Perithemis tenera*), the Brimstone Clubtail (*Stylurus intricatus*) and the Common Whitetail (*Platthemis lydia*), all of which are dragonflies.

Dragonflies especially will often be found far from water, sometimes as swarms. I have seen small feeding swarms of Spot-winged Gliders (*Pantala hymenaea*) in my back yard, skimming insects off the grasses. It is easy to observe male dragonflies patrolling and occasionally diving at other males, over canals, ponds and streams. Mating pairs flying in tandem are also easy to observe: Males have claspers on the tip of their abdomens that are used to hold females at the back of their heads. Many continue to hold the female as she lays her eggs.

Dragonflies and damselflies lay their eggs on the surface of the water, on aquatic plants (above or below the water line), inside aquatic plants, and in some tropical species, inside the water "tanks" of epiphytic bromeliads (these are plants growing on trees, but not parasites, relatives of the pine-



Damselfly naiad. (Photo by David B. Richman)



apple). Occasionally a female odonate mistakes a shiny surface, such as a new automobile, for a water surface and lays its eggs in a very inappropriate place indeed!

I really prefer the term "naiads" over the other terms for the strange immature stages that hatch from these eggs. For one thing, the name comes from the Greek for a water sprite (often very dangerous to humans), a very appropriate name for these mysterious critters, which are often lying in wait for careless prey such as small fish, other aquatic insects or tadpoles. These they catch with an extension of their lower lip, or labium, which has barbed lateral claws for grabbing prey.

These little monsters usually live in streams, lakes, ponds, swamps, rivers and, rarely, in non-aquatic damp habitats. They are found on aquatic vegetation, burrowing in mud (including sand), on the undersides of rocks, and on the bottom surface.

Naiads' enemies include amphibians and fish, as well as other predatory aquatic insects and each other.

Immature dragonflies and damselflies sometimes can become pests in fish hatcheries,

but this is probably more than made up for by the mosquito-catching abilities of the adults and by the beauty that the adults add to the environment. Like butterflies, dragonflies and damselflies can often be almost indescribably beautiful, with iridescent reds, blues and greens, bands and colorful spots on the wings and their often graceful flight.

**Dragonfly Folklore**

Folklore associated with odonates seems to concentrate on the more impressive dragonflies, rather than the dainty damselflies. Usually these folk tales involved the strange appearance



Male and female *Sympetrum corruptum* dragonflies. (Photo by David B. Richman)

of these insects and their long, tooth-like or needle-like bodies (the name Odonata implies something that is tooth-like). They are said to sew up mouths of young people or possibly cause blindness. Because of the latter idea, in Sweden the dragonflies are called *Blindsticka* (blind stinger). They were often associated with the Devil, being called the Devil's darning needle (hence the name "darnier" for the large dragonflies in the family Aeshnidae) or the Devil's horse. They were occasionally also associated with snakes, as the name "snake doctor."

Interestingly, in some societies damselflies and even dragonflies had more pleasant associations, with the Japanese especially revering them as symbols of strength. (Oddly, the Chinese often thought of them as a symbol of weakness!) Some Scandinavians considered dragonflies as symbolic of their love goddess Freya.

Whether symbols of the Devil or of a love goddess, dragonflies have left their mark in world folklore, although there is evidence that many of the old stories have been lost in the mist of time. Whatever the associations, adult dragonflies are popular insects in some art traditions and they often appear as motifs, especially for prints and decorative borders. One of the prints I have in my living room is of dragonflies and other insects from a painting from the Yuan Dynasty (around 1300 BCE) in China—despite the Chinese' apparent general distain for these insects! A very beautiful treatment of these creatures indeed! Kites are sometimes produced in their image, too, especially in Japan where dragonfly motifs in art are very common and sought after.

**DRAGONFLIES** continued on next page

The **2012 Bitter Lake Dragonfly Festival**, near Roswell, will also celebrate the 75th anniversary of Bitter Lake National Wildlife Refuge, Sept. 7-9. Tour reservations will begin August 1. For information, email [bitterlakesrefuge@gmail.com](mailto:bitterlakesrefuge@gmail.com) or call the Refuge at (575) 625-4011, or visit [www.friendsofbitterlake.com](http://www.friendsofbitterlake.com),

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DRAGONFLIES continued

**How to be an Odonatologist**

The beauty and interesting habits of odonates have in recent times gained them a following among amateur naturalists, as binocular guides to the various species have been published. With the invention of close-focus binoculars and digital cameras, it has become quite easy to observe and record these fascinating creatures. Thus any body of water, from puddles and irrigated fields to lakes, rivers, ponds and streams, offers some interest for the naturalist.

I have also known several professional odonate specialists during my career as an entomologist. One of these was Minter J. Westfall, coauthor with James George Needham and Michael L. May of



Male Brimstone Clubtail (*Stylurus intricatus*) at Mesilla Valley Bosque State Park, the first recorded in Doña Ana County. (Photo by David B. Richman)

*Dragonflies of North America*. Professor Westfall maintained an extensive collection of dead specimens at the University of Florida. Unlike those of other adult insects, these specimens were not pinned with special "Japanned" insect pins, but instead kept in glassine envelopes with a card in back containing the data. They were usually soaked in acetone to maintain the colors.

For amateurs these days, a good digital camera preserves the colors very well and it does not require killing the insects. It is still necessary to occasionally take specimens to document new species or distributional records, but photos will suffice for most purposes; photos also have the advantage of not requiring a permit and thus can be taken in national parks and monuments or on other protected land.

To really appreciate odonates, one should acquire a



*Pachydiplax longipennis* male. (Photo by David B. Richman)

short-focus pair of binoculars (several models are on the market), a good digital camera (one with telephoto capabilities—again, several are available) and at least one good guide. Several such guides are available, but lately Dennis Paulson's *Dragonflies and Damselflies of the West* (\$29.95, Princeton University Press, 2009) has become almost standard for western species. These tools, along with a notebook and pencil or pen, are all you need to pursue a quite fascinating hobby—dragonfly watching.

In fact, there can be few activities, aside from bird watching or butterfly watching, that can offer outdoor activity, intellectual development, discovery and contemplative association with ponds, streams, lakes and rivers, as much as dragonfly watching can. You may be the first to document a species previously unknown for a county or state, or to see behavior previously unrecorded. In any case, observation of the wonders of the biological world is a very worthwhile way to spend a few hours. A naturalist is never really bored!

*David B. Richman is emeritus college professor of entomology at New Mexico State University and former curator of its Arthropod Museum.*



Male Rubyspot (*Hataerina americana*) and a male Dancer (*Argia* sp.). (Photo by Jay W. Sharp)



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# Halfway to Nowhere

A melodrama fundraiser is the latest effort by people in Columbus to keep their town afloat.

A combination of experienced and inexperienced actors spreads across one side of the Columbus community center that serves as a stage. They muffle their lines, laugh out loud, and then try again.

Their costumes make them into charming caricatures. The stout female saloon owner has orange corkscrew curls, a thin female extra wears a plain apron and a very large puffy white dust cap, and the playwright himself, Tim McAndrews (see "Observer of Life," August 2008), is long and lean as a cowboy with a 10-gallon hat on top. They all look like McAndrews' own cartoon drawings.

I'm looking in on the second-to-last dress rehearsal of *Halfway to Nowhere*. It's a cowboy melodrama written by McAndrews in 2002 and now being used to raise funds for the Emergency Medical Service in the town that has gone nearly broke due to mismanagement and possibly malfeasance by former officials. Performances ran through July 1.

They're calling themselves the Columbus Recovery Theater Company, and they may produce more plays further along.

Two days earlier, former mayor Eddie Espinoza had just been sentenced to a 51-month prison term for his role in the gun-smuggling ring that included the police chief, a trustee and eight other Columbus residents. They were arrested in March 2011 in a dramatic raid. Espinoza's sentence was much lower than the possible 60 years that had been projected in news reports.

The land-grabbing, thieving villain of *Halfway to Nowhere*, unambiguously named Mr. Blackguard, wears his summer khaki shorts under his cape and black top hat because costume designer Barbara Agte hadn't finished his pants yet.

He sings, "Everything they have will soon be mine," which could be a faint allusion to the apparent misuse of funds by some officials. "My tender juicy little chickens/just waiting to be plucked," he warbles ominously.

The players and over a dozen technical support staff (including cooks for the meals at this dinner theater) have thrown themselves into this cowboy romp to help pay for the maintenance of the town's ambulance and the drivers after the state of New Mexico decided to cut off their financial support by July 1 this year.

Townpeople tended to be shocked by the sentencing of Espinoza. "I was floored," said Deborah Olliver, assistant pastor at the Song in the Night church in Columbus. "I thought he didn't get enough." She is tonight accompanying the actors on her guitar along with local musician July McClure, who plays a mean bass and does verbal sound effects, too.

"I think however long he lives would be fitting," says Sally Farber, who obligingly plays a man in the show. "This town is in a mess. They cleaned out the town." (One of the arguments for Espinoza's short sentencing is that he is on dialysis treatment.)

During these final rehearsal days Operation Fast and Furious made national news again, because Attorney General Eric Holder was being held in contempt of Congress by a House committee for allegedly withholding documents relating to the program. Fast and Furious was the federal gun-smuggling surveillance operation by the US Department of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF) that let guns "walk" across the border for the purpose of tracking Mexican gun-smuggling kingpins.

NarcoNews reported on June 19, 2011, that 15 firearms linked to the "Columbus 11" were recovered in Mexico, six of which were discovered at murder scenes, involving five murders in Palomas and three in Juarez.

Columbus is still in a scrambling mode as it tries to get back to normal a year and a quarter after the arrests.

Nicole Lawson is the appointed mayor. In a small, almost inaudible voice, she says modestly

that she had finished last in the mayoral race between Espinoza, Martha Skinner and herself. In response to some rumors that the election was fixed, she says, "I find that unlikely."

She adds, "We have fewer volunteers than six months ago. Two people come in on a weekly basis, maybe one to three days a week. We had as many as eight in here at the time I first took office."

But she acknowledges that a few people in town think Columbus should be unincorporated. "The coming fiscal year will be very tight," she states firmly. "Whether we can sustain ourselves remains to be seen."

The library was also slated to be closed by state authorities. But townspeople immediately rallied to save it.

"I was really amazed to see the town pull together," says library director Linda Werner. "It was heartwarming to see how much they cared about the library. I had people coming in here every week and giving me \$20 when they hardly have even money to live. No one wanted to close the library."

"Eddie [Espinoza] always loved the library," she adds. "He brought people from out of town and showed it to them." The library includes a large computer room very popular with town kids.

The Friends of the Library has been very active in the past year with bake sales, book sales, car washes, plant sales and a dinner-and-movie night.

The public pool has shortened its hours since the arrests, but rancher wife Connie Johnson "has offered to keep the pool open until mid-August," Mayor Lawson says.

The state shut down the local police department, but that doesn't seem to matter to many people. The sheriff's office is adequate to handle the town's security problems.

Turmoil about the arrests still exists beneath the surface in Columbus. Three people I tried to interview on two different days refused to talk to me, I imagine because of family relations with the accused.

There are many intermarried families in Columbus and Palomas, and Eddie Espinoza (known by the nickname "Bully") grew up mostly in Columbus. His wife is a long-time teacher in the Columbus schools. It's not obvious when or how these tensions will be healed.

Costume designer Barbara Agte, who is a retired social worker in the public schools, thinks the whole affair is particularly sad for youth in Columbus.

"I have seen how young people in the village looked up to him," she says. "He was a judge at science fairs. He was at every occasion we had at the school. That's why I'm extra-sad."

"All kids need someone to look up to, and not everyone has a father figure in their family. The kids really, really liked Eddie. It's not good for the kids."

It's not the least bit clear where Columbus will be in a year or two, whether the town will win or falter. The town will not be able to subsist for long on bake sales and theater productions.

But through their remarkably strong efforts the townspeople may craft a stable future for themselves. ❦

Columnist Marjorie Lilly lives in Deming.





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## THE STARRY DOME • BERT STEVENS

## Scales and Scares

Plus the planets for July.

About halfway up in our southern sky is the constellation Libra, the Balance (or scales). Unlike the technological devices we find in the southern hemisphere of the sky, the result of their more recent charting, Libra is an ancient constellation. It goes back to Babylonian times when it was known as *MUL Zibanu* ("the scales"). These scales were sacred to the sun god Shamash, the patron of truth and justice, and weighed good versus evil or truth versus lies. Libra is associated with law, fairness and civility. To the Romans, these scales belonged to Astraea (identified as the constellation Virgo), goddess of justice. Ptolemy included Libra among his 48 constellations. It is the only constellation in the Zodiac that's not a living creature.

The stars in Libra are on the fainter side, with the brightest being Beta Librae, also known as Zubeneschamali (magnitude 2.6). Alpha Librae is a common navigation star named Zubenelgenubi (magnitude 2.7). Libra is also home to Gliese 581, a magnitude 10.6 red dwarf that has six planets orbiting it. One of these planets is a low-mass (very roughly Earth-sized) and in the middle of the habitable zone. Planets in the habitable zone do not get too much energy from their central star, which would make them too hot, or too little energy, which would make them too cold for life as we know it. There is no evidence of any life on Gliese 581, but the possibility exists.

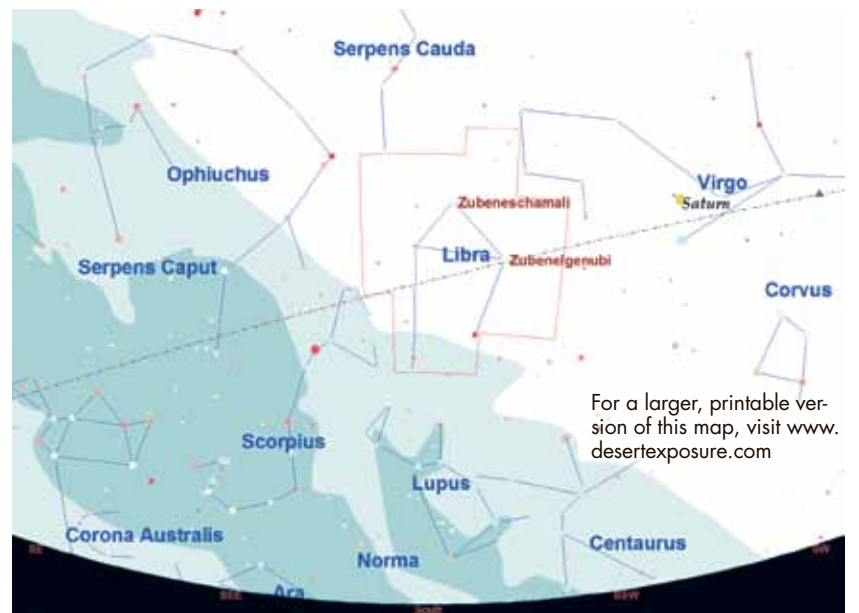
As one of the constellations of the Zodiac, the ecliptic passes through Libra. The ecliptic is the projection of the Earth's orbit into the sky as seen from the Sun. It also represents the plane of our Solar System. All eight planets (remember Pluto has been demoted) stay within seven degrees of the ecliptic, with Mercury traveling the farthest above or below it.

Also hugging the ecliptic are the asteroids. Residing mainly between Mars and Jupiter, this band of planetary rubble is nothing like you see in the movies. Asteroids (or what astronomers call "minor planets") are nowhere close to each other. Even those that make close approaches are still separated by thousands of miles. The distances between them are so large that spacecraft, such as the New Horizons on its way to Pluto, sail through the asteroid belt with impunity. If asteroids were as close together as depicted by Hollywood, their own gravity would have pulled them together by now to form a lump, clumpy planet.

Each asteroid follows its own path around the Sun, and while most stay between Mars and Jupiter, they can be found anywhere in our Solar System. Those that come within 30 million miles of us are called Near Earth Asteroids. Including comets, collectively they are grouped as Near Earth Objects or NEOs.

A number of telescopic surveys are looking for NEOs, since if one actually hit the Earth, it would cause a major disruption to modern life. If a large enough one hit us, it would wipe out all the higher life forms in an extinction-level event. (For more disaster scenarios, see "Apocalypse Now?" in this issue.) Amateur astronomers also help keep an eye out for NEOs by measuring their positions, allowing astronomers to compute more precise orbits.

Even though a few NEOs come close to the Earth, they are still hundreds of thousands of miles away. Right now, no known objects are a threat to



For a larger, printable version of this map, visit [www.desertexposure.com](http://www.desertexposure.com)

the Earth. What astronomers are concerned about is not the NEOs they are tracking, but the ones that they have not discovered that might sneak up on us from the direction of the Sun—which we wouldn't see until it was too late.

## The Planets for July

**M**ercury starts July in our evening sky. Looping around in southern Cancer all month, Mercury will start the month some 12 degrees above the western horizon as it gets dark. On July 1, Mercury sets about 10 p.m. It shines at magnitude +0.6, its disc 39% illuminated and 8.3 seconds-of-arc across and increasing as it swings out from around the Sun. By midmonth Mercury will be too close to the Sun to be visible.

Mars is moving eastward in Virgo toward the bright star Spica. The God of War's disc is 6.1 seconds-of-arc across and magnitude +1.0 at midmonth. You can find it 37 degrees up in the southwest as it gets dark; it sets just before midnight.

Also in the same constellation is Saturn, almost stationary, but moving slowly eastward; it will speed up as the month ends. At midmonth, Saturn is 43 degrees up in the southwest as it gets dark and sets around 12:45 a.m. Through the telescope, Saturn's disc is 17.0 seconds-of-arc across. Its Rings are 38.7 seconds-of-arc across and tilted down 12.8 degrees with the northern face showing. Jupiter has finally

climbed far enough away from the Sun in the morning sky to be seen. Moving slowly eastward in Taurus, Jupiter's disc is 32.5 seconds-of-arc across at magnitude -2.1. The King of the Gods rises around 3 a.m. and is visible for the rest of the night.

After having crossed the face of the Sun last month, Venus is now in the morning sky shining at magnitude -4.5. Like Jupiter, Venus is in Taurus, but Venus is moving eastward much more rapidly, separating from Jupiter. The Goddess of Love rises around 3:30 a.m. Her disc is 35.5 seconds-of-arc across and 29% illuminated, becoming less of a crescent as the month progresses.

Earth is at its greatest distance from the Sun (94.5 million miles) on July 4. But the June solstice was just last month, so the tilt of the Earth's axis putting the Sun high in our sky far outweighs our extra distance from the Sun. So enjoy the short summer nights and "keep watching the sky!" ☼

An amateur astronomer for more than 40 years, Bert Stevens is co-director of Desert Moon Observatory in Las Cruces.



BODY, MIND & SPIRIT • BINA BREITNER

# Hubris and Trauma

Looking into the abyss of our fragility.

If your culture recognizes human fragility, you have a context for terrible events. You knew things could suddenly go bad, and everyone else knows it, too, so you're not alone with your suffering and horror. When I lived in Bolivia, people would shrug ruefully and say, "El mundo da vueltas," the world turns. They weren't talking about the Earth's revolutions. They were talking about the wheel of Fate. You're down; you're up. The choice isn't yours.

On my refrigerator door I have advice from soprano Birgit Nilsson's mother: "Stay close to the earth. Then when you fall down it won't hurt so much." Not *if* you fall down; *when* you fall down.

Such cultures also recognize that we simply cannot cope with some things: we can't fix, integrate or "digest" them. If we're exposed too long or too violently to them, we can be overwhelmed and "lose our minds." When something traumatic happens, those cultures make allowances for the (temporary?) disintegration of that person's psyche.

The ancient Greeks knew that looking at the sun god, Apollo, would make you blind. Even though Oedipus was ignorant of the Delphic oracle's prediction, he killed his father and married his mother anyway. What did he know? It had been decreed on high. Icarus, a human who did manage to fly, crashed when he flew too close to the sun, which melted his wings off. If you looked at Medusa and her head full of snakes, you instantly turned to stone. The point was, many things are greater than mere humans can know or tolerate. If we indulge in the arrogance of *hubris*, if we don't know our limits, the result is tragic.

We, on the other hand, could use Robert Browning's lines (in "Andrea del Sarto") as our motto: "Ah, but a man's reach should exceed his grasp, / or what's a heaven for?" We want to do more, do better, admit no limits. We love the power, the challenge, the game of it. We don't know what to make of our limitations and failures, so we deny them, or flounder around in distractions, compensations, bluster, ambitions, constant noise or addictions.

Since our culture doesn't give us much context for uncertainties, trauma hurts a lot (of course) and we don't know what to do with the pain. We want to believe we are the captains of our fates, or that the universe (or God) makes the kind of sense we could understand. We struggle to explain *why* "bad things happen to good people" (as Rabbi Harold Kushner's book puts it). My friend's daughter did everything right, and now she's paralyzed by a drunk driver? That's so unfair! Well, yes.

A lot of what we dislike in trauma is the helplessness. Whether in a war zone, in your family, in a car accident, because of an illness, a loved one's sudden death, or a date that turns into a rape, something *happens to you*. You don't choose it. It's abrupt. It's frightening. You're taken out of your safe zone and forced into vulnerability. You can't avoid noticing how fragile you are, how tiny and temporary. Just ask someone who's been shocked by events, and they'll tell you personal power vanishes in a nanosecond. The one thing you absolutely are *not* in control.

We don't like that part—I don't imagine anyone does. But, rather than accept our limits, we cling to optimism. We're the can-do folks, the little engine that could. Tomorrow's another day, and we don't take no for an answer, because where there's a will there's a way, right?

And if things don't turn out right, maybe it's *our* fault. If we don't have enough money, or we're too fat, or we're deeply sad, or anxious,



Hubris: Icarus crashed when he flew too close to the sun, which melted his wings off.

or ill... some little corner of us blames ourselves. If only we'd done, been, thought, anticipated, realized, etc., etc., we could have had a different outcome. But maybe the universe is trying to teach us something. When one door closes, another one opens.... All of these beliefs give us a sense of control, an antidote to helplessness.

Of course taking responsibility for our actions and their consequences is a good thing. Without determination, the pioneers and other early settlers couldn't have survived. It's made us hardy and hard-working, willing to take chances, inventive and independent. We pick ourselves up after falling down. We learn to think positively. We shop for a new relationship. We work two jobs (and ignore our fatigue). We take a chance on a business venture. We try another diet or a new exercise plan. We are energized by challenge. We have the confidence, the trust in ourselves, to *try*. We benefit from the energy and resilience of our optimism.

But somewhere along the way, we slid into believing we had more control than we actually have. We struggle with difficulties bigger than we are, including death, susceptibility to illness, unexpected events or despair. So we cross our fantasy-fingers and act as if those afflictions couldn't lay siege to us (maybe to others, but not to us). Every day we believe *we* have managed to evade them is a day that confirms our belief we have control.

The moment we hit a serious trauma we run into the cruel side effects of our optimism and the *extra* suffering it imposes. You survive years of being beaten by your stepfather. Your mother kills herself. You come back from battle or from being raped, from the sudden death of your child. And you realize people want you to go back to participating, enjoying life, taking on projects, being "normal" (as if horrible events weren't normal).

BODY, MIND & SPIRIT continued on next page

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**BODY, MIND & SPIRIT** continued

That's where the cruelty—however unintentional—begins. Traumatized people often feel they no longer belong. They have looked into the abyss of human fragility, and others want to pretend that's nowhere nearby, or maybe doesn't exist at all. The trauma victim feels not only overwhelmed by events (unavoidable), but also socially contaminated and marginalized. He's not following the rules: *no death, no illness, no powerlessness or despair, remember?*—and if those show up, you get over them. He feels like Cassandra, daughter of the Trojan King Priam, whose curse was to see the future but never be believed. Seeing the future was bad enough; realizing no one believed her was tragic.

You can describe the effects of trauma neurologically, as is currently fashionable and fascinating, and notice the symptoms (hyper-vigilance, anxiety and difficulty relaxing, a sense of anomie and the futility of daily engagements, terrible dreams and flashbacks, etc.). But however you want to define it, the underlying reality is that you are altered. And you're altered forever. You cannot un-know what you've been through. You've had a brush with your own vulnerability; daily life will never be innocent again. You will always know it can vanish or be transformed at any moment.

That doesn't mean we should give up being engaged in our lives. It just means we should recognize our limits—and protect ourselves and those we love accordingly. If you think you can fly, like Icarus, you will crash. If you know there are drug addicts waiting to mug you, lock the doors and don't walk down dark alleys. Notice how much you're drinking or smoking. Don't buy the house that sits on an earthquake fault (or that you can't afford). Do what you can to stay safe. Balance the risks with your enjoyment of the world.

If our culture had less hubris, we'd weep and groan in the presence of trauma, but we wouldn't keep wondering Why It Happened.

Have you noticed how good parents and teachers and friends encourage us? “You can do it! Well done!” You stood up and walked! You tied your shoelaces! You graduated from high school! You had a baby! You got the job! You lost two pounds! Whatever it is, we need support. We need people to believe in us, because we know, deep down, that we're a dust mote. We come and go in a brief lifetime; the world doesn't really care about us, and we certainly don't have lasting power.

The people who walk into my office with low self-esteem are just as worthy as the ones who think well enough of themselves. The difference is in how much support and recognition they've received.

When we feel all right, we create little worlds in which we do have control. We decide our schedules. We develop a career or a family. We have projects, hopes, goals and people whom we love and who love us. As long as we stay within that

little world, we're steady. It's a healthy way to live, it helps us and others, and it recognizes our limits. It's Voltaire's advice to “Candide, or The Optimist,” after he's roamed the world insisting “everything is for the best in this best of all possible worlds,” while cities burn and people ravage each other: “Cultivate your garden.” Keep it simple.

If our culture had less hubris, we'd weep and groan in the presence of trauma, but we wouldn't keep wondering Why It Happened. That usually isn't ours to know. When we insist on having a rational explanation, we make things harder. We should be able to understand things to our own satisfaction. We should be able to put things in context and take control. With that approach, we blindly brutalize an already traumatized person, who might be ourselves.

The trauma victim is made to feel *guilty*, because being overwhelmed by events is an infraction of the rules. “I mean, that happened two years ago—are you still moping? Get hold of yourself!”

He feels *stigmatized*. He's no longer like other people. He's different, an outsider. He's met the existential void, some version of death or helplessness, and the others haven't. He can never again truly believe the latest movie star is a big deal. He doesn't belong, because he's no longer aligned with the shared beliefs of his culture.

He or she is *lonely*. Living with post-traumatic symptoms is a bit like carrying psychological anthrax. People avoid him, or they'd like to, as if the distress were contagious. What they're running from is the reality of their own vulnerability, their own potential despair. Who wants to look in that mirror?

And he's *lost*. The usual narrative doesn't apply. We don't offer a context for his suffering. Life isn't supposed to happen like that, and he has no explanation. Maybe he

did something wrong. Maybe he's weak. Maybe he should just have another drink or another joint.

So long as we're unwilling to admit the external power of events, we can't help the traumatized person very much. Oh, he can go get some pills, or join a group of similarly distressed people, or go to counseling (which can feel like a failure just by itself, because a “normal” person, a “healthy” person, manages life on his own, right?). But the culture at large winces at his struggle.

After trauma, the single most healing power lies with the community, be it family, friends or anything larger. That solace involves listening, making room for how it really felt, honoring the tragedy, “holding” the person while he grieves his terror and his loss of innocence.

If looking into the abyss of our fragility could be understood as normal—something we'd all like to avoid, but not our fault if it happens—recovery from trauma would be easier. We'd never forget what we've been through. We'll always know we almost lost our mind when we were in its grip.

But others would accept the reality of our experience, which would help us accept it. We could

relate to *them* instead of staying alone with our memories and zapped neural pathways. We wouldn't feel marginalized, weird, guilty, lost or stigmatized. We'd still belong. *El mundo da vueltas*. For that moment, we were down. It could occur to any of us, any time.

So find people with whom you can share whatever happens, or happened. Take care of yourself in accordance with your limits. And enjoy the days when fate doesn't notice you. ☘

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*Bina Breitner is a licensed marriage and family therapist (LMFT) in private practice at 808 W. 8th St. in Silver City. She can be reached at (575) 538-4380.*

BODY, MIND & SPIRIT • CINDY DONATELLI

# Commitment to Children

A talk with Silver Health CARE pediatrician Dr. Brian Etheridge.

Children depend upon their parents to bring them to a doctor when they fall sick or when they are due for a well-child visit. Where should they go, when there are so many alternatives in our healthcare system? Many health professionals are kind, caring and committed to the health of their patients. But, as many pediatricians point out, children are not simply little adults.

Pediatricians have undergone years of training to care specifically for the health of infants, children and adolescents. With their unique expertise in child development and behavior, preventative medicine, and the diagnosis and management of acute and chronic illnesses in children, pediatricians are dedicated to helping families understand the many changes that come with growing up.

Dr. Brian Etheridge, a board-certified pediatrician who joined Silver Health CARE in 2009, is a member of a pediatrics team with Dr. Laura Davenport-Reed and Dr. Barbara Mora. Dr. Etheridge knows New Mexico well since he is originally from Alamogordo, attended NMSU as an undergraduate, and went to medical school at the University of New Mexico.



Dr. Brian Etheridge with a young patient at Silver Health CARE.

have the right to quality healthcare. As a pediatrician, I have an opportunity to make a difference in a child's well-being—not just now, but for the rest of their lives.”



Pediatricians are dedicated to helping families understand the many changes that come with growing up. (Photo: Shutterstock)

What makes someone going through medical school decide to be a pediatrician? You need to enjoy working with children and their families, and making a difference in their lives, says Dr. Etheridge. “I very much enjoy kids and working with parents as a partner in their care,” he adds. “Anyone who spends time with kids knows they're energetic, funny and surprising. I've also found them to be brave even in the most dire circumstances.”

Dr. Etheridge's commitment to pediatrics is also driven by his keen sense of what is at stake for children, who may need advocates to make sure that their health and social well-being are being looked after. “Social justice bothers me, and it troubles me to see how the needs of children are discounted or overlooked in our society,” he says. “Children don't vote, nor do they have the resources to influence decisions affecting their own interests. I believe all children

and pediatricians are trained to provide guidance and act as counselors. Verbal advice and patient-friendly handouts (in English and Spanish) can teach “health literacy” about many subjects at all stages of a child's development—ranging from the care of a newborn to adolescent issues. Parents will have many questions, especially when they are taking care of a newborn for the first time, and a pediatrician is not only there to examine the child,

BODY, MIND & SPIRIT continued on next page

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BODY, MIND & SPIRIT continued

but to guide and reassure parents about the new responsibilities that they feel.

"I've come to appreciate the challenges of parenthood more since having my own children," Dr. Etheridge says. "I try to remember now to ask new parents if they are sleeping and understand the temptations of fast food when I'm low on energy and time is short."

As adolescents transition to taking care of their own health, visiting a pediatrician they have come to know as they have been growing up gives them the opportunity to bring up sensitive or difficult subjects in confidence. Continuity results in the best pediatric care because both child and family have a "medical home," where the child's health and development over the years can be monitored by a practitioner (or a team of practitioners) who gets to know them well.

From a medical standpoint, the field of pediatrics has undergone dramatic and rapid change in the past 30 years. Diseases that once claimed the lives of children have been checked, if not eradicated, through a combination of immunization, technology and advanced medical research. Stunning gains have been made in the areas of neonatology, childhood cancer, congenital heart disease, vaccine-preventable medicine and other fields.

Pediatricians stay abreast of the professional literature so they can keep as up-to-date as possible on emerging practices. Pediatricians are also on-call at hospitals, and can expect to be summoned at any time, whether it is 2 a.m. or on a Sunday afternoon, if a child needs immediate attention or a newborn is in distress. This is surely a measure of their commitment to their practice.

Advances in pediatric care have also come with challenges, especially for children who live in Grant, Luna, Hidalgo and Catron counties. The dramatic advances in pediatrics have resulted in the "regionalization" of care for those children whose health problems require special medical attention. Pediatricians are extremely knowledgeable about the resources network, and in our area they routinely work with subspecialists at the Children's Hospital of New Mexico and Children's Center Hospital at Presbyterian, both in Albuquerque, and at Phoenix Children's Hospital. Obviously, this creates major challenges for patients, their families, and even practitioners in a rural location like Silver City when such services are five hours away by car and an hour by air.

As pediatricians who have practiced in New Mexico and Grant County for a long time, Drs. Davenport-Reed, Etheridge and Mora are well aware of the social and economic contexts that affect children and their parents. When these factors are taken into account, a child's "wellness" takes on a much broader definition. For example, pediatricians are committed to promoting literacy; through programs such as "Reach Out and Read," they will give children books when they come for their wellness visit as a token in this on-



Dr. Brian Etheridge: "Anyone who spends time with kids knows they're energetic, funny and surprising. I've also found them to be brave even in the most dire circumstances."

going effort to help each child reach his/her potential. With 2011 statistics reporting that fewer than half of parents read to their young children on a daily basis, and with more than a third of children lacking basic language skills by the time they enter kindergarten, there is a lot at stake in a child's early adjustment to school.

Other issues, such as poverty, can adversely affect a child's health. One 2011 study observed that the recent recession has wiped out the economic gains children and their families had been making, with the result that more children have been put at risk of living in poverty. In Grant County, 29.5% of children were living in poverty in 2010.

Because a child's welfare is heavily dependent on the home and family, pediatricians support ways to create a nurturing environment. Given the still grim statistics for child abuse, pediatricians are finding ways to work for change, whether by providing workshops for El Refugio, a shelter for domestic violence victims in Silver City, or building family support systems to reduce stressors.

Poor eating habits, epidemic in a society that eats way too much fast food and snacks, also create unhealthy nutritional choices for children, and can have an impact on their health, both now and in the future. Lack of physical activity at home and at school, combined with poor diet, contributes to rampant rates of childhood obesity and associated comorbidities. To cite just a few of the alarming statistics: One-third of all pediatric patients are obese, 14% have prehypertension/hypertension, 23% of adolescents have prediabetes/diabetes. When a child is diagnosed with these issues, pediatricians promote healthy living habits by providing handouts on exercise and nutrition and by having conversations to encourage families who are struggling to make changes and adopt a healthier lifestyle.

Joan Ganz Cooney, chair of the Children's Television Workshop, once said, "Cherishing children is the mark of a civilized society." In light of all their roles, pediatricians actively promote the interests of children in society at large, and make the world a better, healthier place for them. Parents know their children best, but the pediatrician offers a powerfully ally in making sure that their children are living healthy, well-adjusted and happy lives. 🌟

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BODY, MIND &amp; SPIRIT • EARTHTALK

# Decontaminating Your Life

Avoiding supermarket pesticides, plus chemicals in newborns.

**Dear EarthTalk:** How do I learn about what pesticides may be on the food I eat?

Along with the rise in the popularity of organic food has come an increased awareness about the dangers lurking on so-called “conventionally produced” (that is, with chemical pesticides and fertilizers) foods.

“There is a growing consensus in the scientific community that small doses of pesticides and other chemicals can have adverse effects on health, especially during vulnerable periods such as fetal development and childhood,” reports author and physician Andrew Weil, a leading voice for so-called integrative medicine combining conventional and alternative medical practices. He adds that keeping one’s family healthy isn’t the only reason to avoid foods produced using chemical inputs: “Pesticide and herbicide use contaminates groundwater, ruins soil structures and promotes erosion, and may be a contributor to ‘colony collapse disorder,’ the sudden and mysterious die-off of pollinating honeybees that threatens the American food supply.”

In general, fruits and vegetables with an outer layer of skin or rind that can be peeled and discarded are the safest in terms of pesticide residues. Most pesticides are sprayed on the outside of produce. So if you are going to toss the rind of that cantaloupe, you might as well save money and buy a conventional version. But a red pepper would be a different story: For those items, consider it money well spent to go organic.

The non-profit Environmental Working Group (EWG) lists a “dirty dozen” of fruits and vegetables with the highest pesticide load so that consumers know to look for organic varieties of them when possible. The dirty dozen are: apples, celery, strawberries, peaches, spinach, nectarines, grapes, sweet bell peppers, potatoes, blueberries, lettuce and kale/collard greens.

Another non-profit working hard to raise awareness about pesticide residues on foods is the Pesticide Action Network (PAN). The group’s recently launched website and accompanying iPhone app called “What’s On My Food” helps consumers know specifically which pesticide residues are likely ending up on their foods (and in their bloodstreams). In creating the database, PAN linked pesticide food residue data with the toxicology for each chemical and made the combined information easily searchable. “Pesticides are a public health problem requiring public engagement to solve,” the group reports, adding that “What’s On My Food” can be an important tool in raising awareness.

While the website version of “What’s On My Food” is helpful for advance planning, the iPhone app is handy while plying the supermarket produce aisles to help decide whether to go for organic vegetables or stick with the cheaper conventional ones. For instance, the database shows that conventionally grown collard greens likely contain residues of some 46 different chemicals including nine known/probable carcinogens, 25 suspected hormone disruptors, 10 neurotoxins and eight developmental/reproductive toxins—not to mention 25 different compounds known to be harmful to honeybees. Spending a little quality time on the website or app is enough to drive anyone to more organic food purchasing.

**CONTACTS:** Andrew Weil, [www.drweil.com](http://www.drweil.com); PAN, [www.whatsonmyfood.org](http://www.whatsonmyfood.org); EWG, [www.ewg.org](http://www.ewg.org).

**Dear EarthTalk:** A few years back a study found over 200 chemicals in the umbilical cords of newborns, particularly African-American, Asian and Hispanic babies. What are the causes of this phenomenon and what can be done about it?



A 2009 study sponsored by the Environmental Working Group and Rachel’s Network found traces of 232 synthetic chemicals in umbilical cord blood samples from 10 different babies of African-American, Asian and Hispanic descent born in 2009 in different parts of the US. (Image: StockByte)

The study referenced found traces of some 232 synthetic chemicals in cord blood samples from 10 different babies of African-American, Asian and Hispanic descent born in 2009 in different parts of the US. Study sponsors Environmental Working Group (EWG) and Rachel’s Network were looking to find out if the hormone-disrupting chemical bisphenol A (BPA), a plasticizer widely used in food and drink storage containers, is present in the cord blood of minority babies in the US. Sadly and not surprisingly, BPA turned up in nine of the 10 cord blood samples tested.

But perhaps even worse is the study’s detection of whole new raft of chemicals showing up in babies’ cord blood for the first time. Some of these newer offenders include tetrabromobisphenol A (TBBPA) from computer circuit boards, synthetic fragrances used in common cosmetics and detergents, and Teflon-relative perfluorobutanoic acid.

The 2009 study was a follow-up to an earlier analysis of chemicals in cord blood in the mainstream US population during 2004 births. That earlier study found some 287 different industrial chemicals and pollutants in babies’ cord blood, although BPA was not yet on EWG’s watch list at the time. The more recent study focused on minority babies because minority communities in the US tend to bear a disproportionate pollution burden given their closer proximity to busy roads, industrial sites and older housing. But EWG points out that it tested for chemicals that are likely found in virtually every American household, so none of us is immune to exposure. EWG hopes that by continuing to monitor the chemicals we are born with it can hold corporate polluters’ and government regulators’ feet to the fire in regard to waste outputs and pollution mitigation.

EWG did not look for chemicals associated with smoking or alcohol consumption on the part of mothers, instead focusing on contaminants from exposures to consumer products and commercial chemicals omnipresent on supermarket shelves. To EWG, the presence of these chemicals in umbilical cord blood represents “a significant failure on the part of the Congress and government agencies” charged with protecting human health: “Our results strongly suggest that the health of all children is threatened by trace amounts of hundreds

**BODY, MIND & SPIRIT** continued on next page

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**BODY, MIND & SPIRIT** continued

of synthetic chemicals coursing through their bodies from the earliest stages of life."

Part of the problem is outdated laws governing the handling and use of toxic chemicals. Currently 1976's Toxic Substances Control Act is the law of the land in regard to controlling the distribution, use and disposal of toxic chemicals nationwide. But EWG and other groups complain that hundreds of thousands of new chemical formulations are unleashed on an unwitting public every year via America's store shelves because the federal government assumes new products and ingredients to be innocent until proven guilty. These critics would like to see the federal government take a more proactive role in approving new substances for use in consumer products, not to mention residential and workplace environments.

On the legislative front, green groups are pinning their hopes for a reformed Toxic Substances Control Act on New Jersey Democratic Sen. Frank Lautenberg's Safe Chemicals Act (S. 847), introduced last fall. The bill is currently spinning its wheels in committee hearings, but its 17 bi-partisan co-sponsors are optimistic that it will come up for a floor vote before the 112th Congress wraps up the end of this year.

**CONTACT:** EWG's "Pollution in Minority Newborns," [www.ewg.org/minoritycordblood](http://www.ewg.org/minoritycordblood).

*EarthTalk is written and edited by Roddy Scheer and Doug Moss and is a registered trademark of E-The Environmental Magazine (www.emagazine.com). Send questions to: earthtalk@emagazine.com. Subscribe: www.emagazine.com/subscribe. Free trial issue: www.emagazine.com/trial.*

BODY, MIND & SPIRIT

# Grant County Weekly Events

Support groups, classes and more.

**Sundays**  
**ARCHAEOLOGY SOCIETY**—First Sun. of every month, field trip. 536-3092, whudson43@yahoo.com.  
**BEAD SOCIETY**—1 p.m. Alotta Gelato 388-1362.  
**BINGO**—1st and 2d Sun. Doors open 12:30 p.m., games start 1:35 p.m. Benefits Salvation Army and Post 18 charities. American Legion Post 18, 409 W. College Ave. 534-0780  
**GENTLE YOGA**—5:30-7 p.m. A Daily Practice, 104 N. Texas, 388-2425.  
**HOLISTIC PRESENTATIONS**—11 a.m. PeaceMeal Coop Deli. 534-9703  
**PRAYER AND STUDY IN THE EASTERN ORTHODOX TRADITION**—Sunset. Theotokos Retreat Center, 5202 Hwy. 152, Santa Clara. 537-4839, theotokos@zianet.com.  
**RESTORATIVE YOGA**—4-5:30 p.m. A Daily Practice, 104 N. Texas, 388-2425.

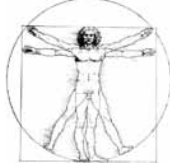
**Mondays**  
**A COURSE IN MIRACLES**—6:30 p.m., 600 N. Hudson. Information, 534-9172 or 534-1869.  
**AARP CHAPTER #1496**—Third Monday. 12:30 p.m. Senior Center, 205 W. Victoria. Contact Marcia Fisch, 388-1298  
**AARP WIDOWED PERSONS**—Second Mondays. 11 a.m. Glad Tidings Church. Contact Donna, 538-9344.  
**AL-ANON**—12:05 p.m. First Presbyterian Church, 1915 Swan, Silver City. Contact Valerie, 313-2561.  
**ART CLASS**—9-10:45 a.m. Silver City Senior Citizen Center. Beginners to advanced. Contact Jean 519-2977.  
**KUNDALINI YOGA**—Noon. A Daily Practice, 104 N. Texas St.  
**PING PONG**—5:30-7 p.m. Grant County Convention Center. Beginners 7-8 p.m.  
**SILVER CITY SQUARES**—Dancing 7-9 p.m. Presbyterian Church, 1915 N. Swan St. Kay, 388-4227, or Linda, 534-4523.

**Tuesdays**  
**ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS**—Men's group, 7 a.m. Unitarian Fellowship Hall. 3845 N. Swan. Jerry, 534-4866.  
**BAYARD HISTORIC MINE TOUR**—2nd Tuesday. Meet at Bayard City Hall, 800 Central Ave., by 9:30 a.m. \$5 fee covers two-hour bus tour of historic mines plus literature and map; call 537-3327 for reservation.  
**COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS**—4th Tuesday. 6:30 p.m. Support for those who've lost a child. Episcopal Church, Parish Hall, 7th and Texas St. Charlene Mitchell, 313-7362.  
**FIGURE/MODEL DRAWING**—4-6 p.m. Contact Sam, 388-5583.  
**GILA WRITERS**—6:30 p.m. Gila Regional Medical Center Conference Room, 1313 E. 32nd St. Trish Heck, pheck@grmc.org, 538-4072.  
**INTERBODY YOGA**—5:30-6:30 p.m., 315 N. Bullard, 2d fl. 519-8948.  
**KIWANIS CLUB**—Noon. Red Barn, 708 Silver Heights Blvd., 590-0540.  
**LOS COMADRES CANCER SUPPORT GROUP**—1st Tues. 6 p.m. Business and Conference Center, 3031 Hwy. 180 E. (next to Ace). 388-1198 ext. 10.  
**REIKI CIRCLE**—First Tuesday of the month, 6:30 p.m. 2035 Little Walnut. Treatment for those in need of healing. Vicki, 388-8114, or Virginia, 388-4870.

**RESTORATIVE YOGA**—10-11:30 a.m., 5:30-7 p.m. A Daily Practice, 104 N. Texas, 388-2425.  
**SLOW FLOW YOGA**—11:30 a.m. 315 N. Bullard, 2d fl. 519-8948.  
**SOCIAL SERVICES**—Noon. Red Barn, 707 Silver Heights Blvd. 538-5666.  
**TEA PARTY PATRIOTS**—2nd and 4th Thur. 6 p.m. Red Barn Steakhouse, 708 Silver Heights Blvd. 388-4143.  
**Wednesdays**  
**ARCHAEOLOGY SOCIETY**—Third Weds. of every month. Oct.-Nov., Jan.-April 7 p.m. Silver City Women's Club. Summers 6 p.m. location TBA. 536-3092, whudson43@yahoo.com.  
**BACK COUNTRY HORSEMEN**—2nd Weds. 6 p.m. Gila Regional Medical Center Conference Room. Subject to change. 536-2953.  
**FOOD ADDICTS ANONYMOUS WOMEN'S GROUP**—6:30 p.m. 1000 N Hudson St., 519-1070.  
**GRANT COUNTY DEMOCRATIC PARTY**—2nd Weds. Potluck at 5:30 p.m., meeting at 6:30 p.m. Sen. Howie Morales' building, 3060 E. Hwy. 180.  
**GROUP MEDITATION**—5:30 p.m., A Daily Practice, 104 N. Texas St. 388-2425.  
**LADIES GOLF ASSOCIATION**—8 a.m. tee time. Silver City Golf Course.  
**PFLAG**—(Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays) 1st Weds. 5:30 p.m. Wellness Coalition, 509 N. Bullard. 590-8797.  
**PING PONG**—5:30-7 p.m. Grant County Convention Center. Beginners 7-8 p.m.  
**PROSTATE CANCER SUPPORT GROUP**—3rd Weds. 6:30 p.m. Gila Regional Medical Center Conference Room. 388-1198 ext. 10.  
**REPUBLICAN PARTY OF GRANT COUNTY**—Third Weds. 6 p.m. Red Barn.  
**TRAUMATIC BRAIN INJURY SUPPORT GROUP**—3:30-5 p.m. All-Purpose Room, Billy Casper Wellness Center, Hudson St. & Hwy. 180. James, 537-2429, or Danita, 534-9057.  
**BAYARD AL-ANON**—6:30 p.m. Bayard Community Center. 575-537-3141.

**Thursdays**  
**CANCER SUPPORT GROUP**—2nd Thurs. 6 p.m. Gila Regional Medical Center Board Room. 388-1198 ext. 10.  
**CARDIAC SUPPORT GROUP**—3rd Thurs. 4 p.m. Grant County Business and Conference Center, 3031 Hwy 180E, 590-2578.  
**CITIZEN CORPS COUNCIL**—First Thurs. 5:30 p.m. Grant County Admin Bldg.  
**DE-STRESSING MEDITATIONS**—12-12:45 p.m. New Church of the SW Desert, 1302 Bennett St. 313-4087.  
**GRANT COUNTY ROLLING STONES GEM AND MINERAL SOCIETY**—2nd Thurs. 6 p.m. Senior Center, 204 W. Victoria St. Kyle, 538-5706.  
**HISTORIC MINING DISTRICT & TOURISM MEETING**—Second Thurs. 10 a.m. Bayard Community Center, 290 Hurley Ave., Bayard. 537-3327.  
**KUNDALINI YOGA**—5:30 p.m. A Daily Practice, 104 N. Texas, 388-2425.  
**MOUNTAIN DULCIMER JAM**—6:15 p.m., Public Library.  
**PROGRESSIVE PILATES**—5:30-6:30

p.m., 315 N. Bullard, 2d fl. 519-8948.  
**TOPS**—5 p.m. 1st Presbyterian Church, 1915 Swan, 538-9447.  
**VINYASA YOGA**—5:30-6:30 p.m., 315 N. Bullard, 2d fl. 519-8948.  
**YOGA CLASS**—Free class taught by Colleen Stinar. 1-2 p.m. Episcopal Church fellowship hall, 7th and Texas.  
**Fridays**  
**KUNDALINI YOGA**—Noon. A Daily Practice, 104 N. Texas St.  
**OVEREATERS ANONYMOUS**—6 p.m. Gila Regional Medical Center conference room. 313-9400.  
**SILVER CITY WOMAN'S CLUB**—2d Fri., 10 a.m. 411 Silver Heights Blvd. 538-9326.  
**TAIZÉ**—2d Friday. Service of prayer, songs, scripture readings and quiet contemplation. 6:30 p.m. Episcopal Church of the Good Shepherd, 538-2015.  
**WOODCARVING CLUB**—2d and 4th Fridays except holidays. 1 p.m. Senior Center. 313-1518.  
**YOUTH SPACE**—5:30-10 p.m. Loud music, video games, chill out. Satellite/Wellness Coalition.  
**Saturdays**  
**ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS BEGINNERS**—6 p.m. Lions Club, 8th & Bullard (entrance at Big Ditch behind Domino's). Newcomers and seasoned members welcome.  
**BEGINNING SALSA**—7-8 p.m. Javalina's. Instructor Gail Willow, 388-3332.  
**DOUBLE FEATURE BLOCKBUSTER MEGA HIT MOVIE NIGHT**—5:30-11 p.m. Satellite/Wellness Coalition.  
**EVENING PRAYER IN THE EASTERN ORTHODOX TRADITION**—5 p.m. Theotokos Retreat Center, 5202 Hwy. 152, Santa Clara. 537-4839, theotokos@zianet.com.  
**KIDS BIKE RIDE**—10 a.m., Bike-works, 815 E. 10th St. Dave Baker, 590-2166.  
**NARCOTICS ANONYMOUS**—6 p.m. New 180 Club, 1661 Hwy. 180 E.  
**SADHANA MORNING PRAYER, MEDITATION, YOGA**—Last Sat. 5-7 a.m. A Daily Practice, 104 N. Texas, 388-2425.  
**SPINNING GROUP**—1st Sat., 1-3 p.m. Yada Yada Yarn, 614 N. Bullard, 388-3350.  
**VINYASA FLOW YOGA**—10 a.m. All levels. A Daily Practice, 104 N. Texas, 388-2425.



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TALKING HORSES • SCOTT THOMSON

# The Animal Knows Best

Programming versus going in the "psychological door."

If you work with animals, and respect them as more than ornaments or recreational vehicles, I believe there are really just two ways to develop the animal to be the friend and partner you want. You can choose to go in the "psychological door" to reach the animal, or you can choose to try to create the desired responses and behavior by "programming" the animal. Both these techniques can merge at some point, and the best "behaved" or trained animals are those that have experienced each in the right place and order.

I'm a big fan of Caesar Milan, the "dog whisperer," because of his philosophies of working with a predator. He also grew up with horses, so also has a good feel for prey animals. I saw him on a show once, working with Pat Parelli on California ranch, dealing with horse and dog issues, and was fascinated by how similar their approaches were, even with such different species. Both of these gifted teachers focus on the psychological needs of the animal first, and direct most of their initial training at the human, not the animal.

Milan says to become a "pack leader" first based on the needs of the dog as predator; then you "train." With horses, any good horseman will tell you to become the herd leader first, then train based on those principles. Where so many people get into trouble with their animals is trying to get the desired behavior first using treats, raised voices, clickers, shock collars, etc., ignoring or forgetting the basic instincts of the animal. They try to "program" the response they want. Without the connection at the psychological level, the animal will not perform or stay with you under pressure (like walking off leash or getting spooked by a plastic bag) because your bond is based on bribery, coercion or rewards that don't touch his psychological needs. If you put that foundation in place first, then the strategic and correct use of treats or similar techniques may work wonders for specific training.

The reason I believe natural horsemanship should be the foundation for all development and training of horses (and even a donkey or mule) is that you focus entirely on the animal's psychological needs without projecting human values on the relationship. The horse needs herd companionship, clear leadership, defined boundaries, and a precise language based on interpretation of body language and intent. In his natural state, "good" behavior doesn't lead to a treat. It leads to a feeling of safety and security, a clear understanding of the "rules," a reduction of any pressure—and a relaxed mind for learning.

My most challenging horse case offers a good illustration of the potential conflict between these two approaches. Teddy was a beautiful thoroughbred who had won a few dollars early in life but really wasn't cut out for the track. He'd been purchased by a family with a daughter interested in dressage. They went the traditional route, boarding the horse and turning over training to the resident trainer. The daughter would come as often as possible, taking riding lessons and starting on the junior show circuit. Teddy did OK but didn't win many ribbons. Then, as often happens in the horse world, the daughter grew up, discovered boys, and now Teddy was of no value to her or the family.

I met Teddy after a wonderful couple had bought him. The couple had a little early riding experience and couldn't wait for the day they could own their own horse. Both were interested in arena work and wanted to learn basic dressage, but had no interest in showing or competing. They just loved going to the barn, being with their horse and taking riding lessons. Teddy seemed a good fit.

Unfortunately, they quickly discovered Teddy had a few "holes." He was pretty spooky. They'd been sold on the theory that ex-racehorses are good to buy because they have been exposed to so much. Plus Teddy had been to a lot of shows, which should make him pretty calm, too. Wrong. Then they found out Teddy had a dangerous biting problem. After a quick sniff and investigation, he would bite like a stallion. If another person were

nearby, he might swing his head around and take a shot at that person as well. They called me after the wife had been sent to the hospital with a concussion from a meeting with Teddy's head, and the husband had needed stitches for a bite right through a jacket.

This was the worse case of biting I'd seen. The spookiness was bad but predictable, so I knew what had to be done there. Since the biting seemed so out of context given Teddy's otherwise nice personality, I asked the couple to contact the former owners: Did they have this problem, and did Teddy come that way from the track or did it start while they owned him? (Of course, none of this was mentioned during the sale. As House always says, "Everybody lies," and this is especially true when selling horses.)

The truth surfaced quickly. Their dressage trainer liked to use treats to "train" the horses and suggested to the girl that she always have treats to reward Teddy. When the girl took the horse to a show, she noticed other girls constantly giving their horses treats to "control" them, so she started to carry a little bag of licorice (Teddy's favorite) on her belt. She'd give Teddy a treat whenever he showed any signs of acting up about anything. He never bit her because she always had something for him. The new owners didn't, and paid a heavy price for a behavior a previous owner had created.

To help Teddy, we focused on techniques based on his needs, not trying to program new behavior. I had the couple wear heavy clothing and helmets at all times. I taught them how to use their tools to create a safe space and to teach Teddy how to yield to pressure. We worked on using their body parts as "blocks" and to practice good, safe habits around the horse. We didn't muzzle him or hit him if he tried to bite, but we made sure he understood such actions had consequences—a lot of work, backing around the arena, etc. No anger, just the clarity that happens in the herd.

We stopped the dressage work temporarily and focused on natural riding and challenging play. We took away the bit and rode only in a halter or even just a string (only in the arena). We set up obstacles for groundwork and riding. I taught the owners how to ground-drive Teddy so they could "ride him from the ground" from a safe distance. We left the arena, hand-walking Teddy and just hanging out. We started ground-driving him around the property. We changed his feeding pattern—more frequent, more chewing. We changed his stall so no one would be tempted to slip him a treat. He got more turnout time. Everything used the psychology of the horse and the power of the herd: clear body language, an escalation of pressure with each request, and a release of pressure to teach and reward the desired response. During this time he never saw a treat from the hand.

It probably took close to a year for Teddy to fully accept his position and the rules in this new three-"horse" herd. But he was being handled and treated in ways that only he understood. No one had to bribe or program him to behave—he knew what was expected. The owners were able to go back to their dressage lessons and even some trail riding. They gave him a carrot from time to time without consequence. He never bit anybody again, his spookiness decreased, and they had eight wonderful years before retiring him due to an old racing injury.

Bless these owners. They took their ownership responsibilities seriously. It would have been easier to get rid of Teddy and get another horse, or to resort to some cruel "training" techniques to "fix" him. Instead, they started over, going in the psychological door to give him what he needed as a horse first. He repaid them in kind, with interest. 🌟

Scott Thomson lives in Silver City and teaches natural horsemanship and riding. He can be reached at [hsthomson@msn.com](mailto:hsthomson@msn.com) or (575) 388-1830.



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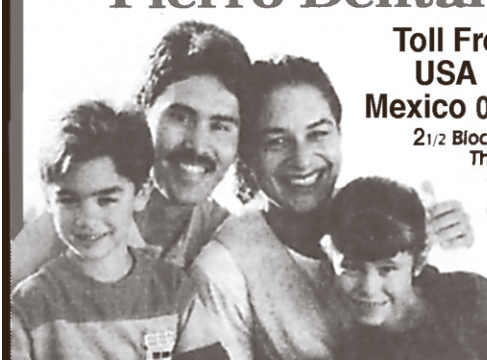


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## Backyard Baddies

Top 10 summertime pests to watch out for.

It's full-blown summer, and with the hot weather, attendant humidity and hoped-for monsoons, the top backyard bad critters are out and about and most likely they are grouchy and defensive!

**Rattlesnakes** top my list of undesirables; around here that means western diamondbacks, prairie and blacktails. All three species can range in size from one foot to six feet in length. Just remember, the bigger the snake, the more venom it can inject, and they can strike about one-third their length!

A good friend just related to me this tale: He had his house stained and oiled this past May and in the process, the workers removed all of the accessories and piled them on the carport. Two days later they picked up the stuff and were greeted with a four-foot diamondback that had relaxed under the pile!

If you encounter a rattler, the best option is to call the animal control or the police and let them handle it. You can't let him alone or he might very well stay permanently!

Second on my list is the **Africanized honey bee**. A hive of these critters can and will kill anything that disturbs them. If you see evidence of bees living on your property, call an exterminator. And don't go near them! Absolutely don't spray them with water; that pisses them off! If anything, spray with smoke to calm them or spray them with dish detergent in water; the soapy suds smother them.

I remember an old Forest Service worker tell me that he quit cutting firewood in the warm months because the Africans were prevalent in these neck of woods. 'Nuff said.

Number three on the list is the **imported fire ant**. I remember cleaning the carpets in a house in Lordsburg and I had put my equipment on the carport. When I went to clean it, I was at once covered in fiery bites! I looked in horror at my equipment and it was covered with red ants and so was I! The bites felt like white-hot miniature poker. The ants were a total copper red over their bodies, which are somewhat smaller than that of the domestic fire ant. Actually brown and red, the domestic fire ant builds the big, dome hills that can be seen in backyards.

Number four on the list is the **Apache violin spider**, a close cousin to the notorious brown recluse and just as nasty. This tiny beastie's bite will atrophy your flesh and turn it putrid in a matter of days, and it is very hard to rectify once the flesh rots! From first-hand experience I can tell you that it is important not to scratch the bite, which looks like a tiny red dome with a white spot on top and is extremely itchy. Once you scratch it, the bite site develops a crater and spreads out. Go immediately to the emergency ward!

Violins like dark, cool places like closets, under sheds, dark corners and under campers, where I encountered mine. They don't like heat and light.

Number five is the good ol' **black widow**—a shiny black spider with a red hourglass on its body. It builds a fine, silky, highly sticky web in woodpiles, old tires, the insides of cinder blocks, etc. The web is scattered and has no pattern to it, so beware.

The black widow that bit my thumb was under a shed that I put my hand into, in a dumb moment not knowing what was under there. That too

meant a quick trip to the hospital when my entire left hand became numb!

Next is the **scorpion**; most that I have encountered are translucent and about an inch long. They usually aren't deadly but they can cause a huge amount of white-hot pain and discomfort for weeks. I knew a lady who got stung on the hand, developed loss of muscle control and weakness after a month and died within the year; she had a rare allergic reaction.

Number seven is the inevitable **centipede**—ugly, yes, and it can leave you with a nasty, festering bite from venom that it injects by mouth or pincers on its first pair of legs. Don't leave your clothes on the floor if you want to keep this beast away! They also like dark corners, under carpets, closet floors and floor vents. Refrigerator bottoms hide them, too. Outside they prefer leaf litter, under rocks and wood or any place damp.

The good news is that they eat spiders and cockroaches!

Next in line is another spider, the **wolf spider**. This is about the nastiest-looking of the arachnids. It can grow to the size of a silver dollar. It,

*Don't leave your clothes on the floor if you want to keep centipedes away! They also like dark corners, under carpets, closet floors and floor vents.*

too, can give a rather nasty bite, and the site will be red, swollen and extremely painful. This is a truly aggressive spider, not in the least afraid to attack you if it feels threatened. The venom may cause swollen lymph glands. Later the site will cause the skin to become black, but don't worry, most times it is not fatal!

These spiders like dirt. They can be found in holes in the ground, dark corners, rock piles and woodpiles. They especially like dirty, filthy work sheds and garages.

Number nine on my list is shared by the diminutive and harmless-looking **tiny black ant**, **brown ant** and the **chigger**. These are spiteful little critters; the ants are no longer than an eighth of an inch, while the chigger can hardly be seen at all. The ants leave a tiny, painful bite that doesn't last all that long, more annoying than anything, while the chigger (no-see-um) leaves a red welt with a white center very similar to a red ant bite. But when you scratch open a chigger bite it hurts like crazy for days along with the itching!

All three get you when you lie on the ground, especially on leaves in the shade. The ants will surely get you if you lean against a tree on which they have a trail. I know first hand about that, too. They made me strip naked in the middle of the woods as I flailed at their little bodies biting me all over!

Lastly I count the **bull snake**. Small snakes are no big deal, but one that is over five feet long has an attitude! They swell their heads and vibrate their tails to mimic a rattler, and they do bite. I knew one woman who picked one up and it gave her a painful bite to the hand. So watch your curious kids and dogs!

I had a dog bitten once after she pestered a six-footer. The bull snake bit her on the shoulder and it festered for days and the hair all fell out around it. The bite isn't fatal but it can be nasty due to rotten bacteria in its mouth and on the fangs that can cause infection. So be warned!

As always keep the sun forever at your back, the wind forever in your face, and may The Forever God bless you too! ☼

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*When not ramblin' outdoors, Larry Lightner lives in Silver City.*



HENRY LIGHTCAP'S JOURNAL • HENRY LIGHTCAP

# Jamaica, Mon

Lightcap goes on vacation and lives to tell about it—barely.

Taking a vacation is a wonderfully self-indulgent pleasure in these times of economic austerity, when conspicuous consumption is a social offense on the same level as stampeding nuns or smoking in the airplane bathroom. But as a self-professed fiscal conservative, a creature more rare than a magical unicorn wearing a Technicolor dream coat, I am not above squandering some hard-earned savings to visit foreign lands of splendor and magnificence in pursuit of cultural enlightenment and exotic vistas. Especially if the exchange rate is 80 to 1 like it is in Jamaica.

My lovely bride and I took a journey to this small island nation in late May, a cheerful island of 3 million people on a cozy 4,400 square-mile compound. That's 681 Jamaicans per square mile, and based on my observations, they all seem to be on the roads, a word I use in the most theoretical possible context.

Within minutes of landing at the airport, and after a complimentary drink was thrust into my hand (a common theme over the next week), we were hustled out to a shuttle bus that was in the parking lot. Over the next 45 miles, we never really left the parking lot, as all the towns are connected by a patchwork of macadam that had apparently suffered recent artillery fire. The roads were clogged with an amazing collection of post-modern Japanese sedans with goat-shaped dents on the fenders, which were near mirror-perfect impressions of all the goats still standing in the roads. Many Jamaicans forgo goat collisions by walking, which seems like a healthy alternative until you notice that sidewalk technology still eludes the islanders, who compete with goats—and shuttle buses full of terrified tourists—for the roadway.

Once we got to the hotel, a stranger put a glass of champagne in my hand, which wasn't nearly enough to calm my nerves, so I drank my wife's glass, too. This was an "all-inclusive" resort, which meant I never had to pay for my drinks. Fools. I spent the next day sacking the mini-bar and test-driving frozen umbrella drinks in preparation for our planned day trip.

As fat, lazy Americans, we take a lot of things for granted. Speaking for myself, I took our superior road system for granted, an oversight that was corrected every time the car caromed into a pothole the size of a Jacuzzi. The tour driver offered me a complimentary beer, which made it better although I had to be careful not to chip a tooth on the bottle when we crashed into the holes. Upon closer scrutiny, the road surface was actually made of a proprietary blend of beach sand, cream of wheat and hummingbird saliva, which is far less durable than a Jamaican civil engineer might hope.

Since there are no painted lines, road signs or laws of physics being observed, Jamaican drivers aren't hindered by quaint American driving traditions like not passing into oncoming traffic. All you need to pass another motorist is about six feet of clear roadway and a strong belief in immortality. A successful pass was measured by the thickness of the paint on the car's fender.

"Look at all the beautiful scenery," our guide coaxed us as we were selfishly absorbed in calculating where our bodies would likely wind up after the catastrophic fireball inevitably enveloped our car, ending our vacation. A quick roadside lunch of cow-skin soup (I am not making this up; we opted for the chicken instead) and a few more complimentary beers, and we made it back to our lodgings. Both of us felt like we'd been pummeled with nightsticks that night, and my wife's left eye developed an uncontrollable twitch. I emptied out the mini bar.

Two days later, lost in a blissful haze of non-stop, all-inclusive gluttony and rum drinks (still drinking my wife's share), we thought we'd go out again. The same tour guide picked us up, and we knew what to expect this time. Except there was a new twist: along with minuscule hobbit roads, gaping craters, kamikaze traffic and goats, there were now children on the road. Throngs of school kids, having just gotten out of class, seemingly oblivious to the carriages of death whizzing by their elbows at top speed. As the sun set, we remarked on how successfully dark-skinned school kids blended in with dark road surfaces in the dark.

Certain we would render some kid into road pizza at any moment, I stopped looking out the windshield and instead gazed up through the sunroof, hoping not to see any body parts tumbling over the top of the car. There was one complimentary beer left in the cooler, and I took it.

We had a fantastic time in Jamaica. We got to meet a lot of local people and were even invited into their homes, and we visited their schools, too. The poverty inherent in their society is depressing to our bourgeois tastes, but as in many so-called "third world" nations, the people are amazingly cheerful and open. Few things remind you of what you take for granted like a journey to a foreign land, and after a glorious week on the island, I came home wanting to kiss our Interstate highway system. However, I think we need to work on our national "complimentary drink" program.

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With each listing, we include a brief categorization of the type of cuisine plus what meals are served: B=Breakfast; L=Lunch; D=Dinner. Unless otherwise noted, restaurants are open seven days a week. Call for exact hours, which change frequently. All phone numbers are area code 575 except as specified. We also note with a star (\*) restaurants where you can pick up copies of *Desert Exposure*.

If we've recently reviewed a restaurant, you'll find a brief capsule of our review and a notation of which issue it originally appeared in. Stories from all back issues of *Desert Exposure* from January 2005 on are available on our Web site.

Though every effort has been made to make these listings complete and up-to-date, errors and omissions are inevitable and restaurants may make changes after this issue goes to press. That's why we urge you to help us make Red or Green? even better. Drop a note to Red or Green? c/o *Desert Exposure*, PO Box 191, Silver City, NM 88062, fax 534-4134, or email updates@red-or-green.com.

Remember, these print listings represent only highlights. You can always find the complete, updated Red or Green? guide online at www.desert-exposure.com. Bon appétit!

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**BRYAN'S PIT BARBECUE**, Mimbres Valley Self Storage and RV Park, (660) 247-3151 or (660) 247-3160. "Authentic Southern-style barbecue.... Brisket, pork ribs, chicken and sausage dinners, pulled pork and chopped brisket sandwiches." (August 2010). Now also BBQ tenderloin and smoked turkey. Barbecue: L D.

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**CAFÉ UN MUNDO**, 700 N. Bullard,

956-8752. Vegetarian and vegan dishes available. Mon.-Fri. L.\*

**COURTYARD CAFÉ**, Gila Regional Medical Center, 538-4094. American: B L, with special brunch Sundays.\*

**CURIOS KUMQUAT**, 111 E. College Ave., 534-0337. Contemporary: Mon. L, Tues.-Sat. L D.\*

**DIANE'S RESTAURANT**, 510 N. Bullard St., 538-8722. Homemade American, Euro and Pacific Rim: Tues.-Sat. L D, Sun. D only, weekend brunch, catering.

**DIANE'S BAKERY & DELI**, The Hub, Suite A, Bullard St., 534-9229. Artisan breads, sandwiches, deli, baked goods: B L D.\*

**EAT YOUR HEART OUT**, 800 W. Market, 313-9005. Catering. \*

**GALLO PINTO**, 901 N. Hudson St., 597-3663. Mexican: B L D.

**GIL-A BEANS**, 1304 N. Bennett St. Coffeshop.\*

**GOLDEN STAR**, 1602 Silver Heights Blvd., 388-2323. Chinese: L D.

**GRANDMA'S CAFÉ**, 900 Silver Heights Blvd., 388-2627. American, Mexican: B L.\*

**GRINDER MILL**, 403 W. College Ave., 538-3366. Mexican: B L D.\*

**ISAAC'S GRILL**, Bullard and Broadway, 388-4090. American, burgers, sandwiches: Fri.-Sun. L D, Sun. brunch, Mon.-Wed. D only.\*

**JALISCO CAFÉ**, 100 S. Bullard St., 388-2060. "The Mexican restaurant where you take out-of-town guests.... Jalisco's massive menu goes well beyond the traditional combination plates, though it has those, too." (December 2007) Mexican: Mon.-Sat. L D.

**JAVA THE HUT**, 611-A N. Bullard St., 534-4103. Espresso and coffeshop: Mon.-Sat.\*

**JAVALINA COFFEE HOUSE**, 201 N.

Bullard St., 388-1350. Coffeehouse.\*  
**KOUNTRY KITCHEN**, 1505 N. Hudson St., 388-4512. Mexican: Mon.-Sat. B L early D, Sun. B only.\*

**LA FAMILIA**, 503 N. Hudson St., 388-4600. Mexican: Tues.-Sun. B L D.\*

**MASA Y MAS TORTILLERIA**, Suite C-The Hub Plaza, (505) 670-8775. Tortillas, tacos, chimichangas, burritos, enchiladas, menudo, tamales and more. Mexican: Mon.-Sat. B L.\*

**MILLIE'S BAKE HOUSE**, 215 W. Yankie, 597-2253. Soup, salads, sandwiches, baked goods.

**NANCY'S SILVER CAFÉ**, 514 N. Bullard St., 388-3480. Mexican: Mon.-Sat. B L D.

**THE PARLOR AT DIANE'S**, 510 N. Bullard St., 538-8722. Beer and wine bar, sandwiches, light bites: Tues.-Sun. afternoons.

**PEACE MEAL DELI**, The Hub, 6th and Bullard, 388-0106. Vegetarian: Mon.-Sat. L.\*

**Q'S SOUTHERN BISTRO**, 101 E. College Ave., 534-4401. American, steaks, barbecue: Mon.-Sat. L D.

**RED BARN**, 708 Silver Heights Blvd., 538-5666. Steakhouse: L D.\*

**SHEVEK & CO.**, 602 N. Bullard St., 534-9168. "Shevek & Co. will take your taste buds on a culinary tour from Spain to Greece, with delicious destinations all along the Mediterranean in-between. The sheer ambition of the offerings is astonishing." (March 2009) Mediterranean: D, brunch on selected weekends.\*

**SILVER BOWLING CENTER CAFÉ**, 2020 Memory Lane, 538-3612. American, Mexican, hamburgers: L D.\*

**SUNRISE ESPRESSO**, 1530 N. Hudson, 388-2027. Coffeshop: Mon.-Sat. B L, early D.

**SUNRISE ESPRESSO**, 1212 E. 32nd St., 534-9565. Coffeshop, bakery: Mon.-Fri. B L, early D, Sat. B L only.\*

**3 DOGS COFFEEHOUSE**, 503 N. Bullard St. Coffeshop.\*

**TRE ROSAT CAFÉ**, 304 N. Bullard St.\*

**VICKI'S EATERY**, 315 N. Texas, 388-5430. "Serving hearty breakfasts, sandwiches both cold and grilled, wraps and salads that satisfy in a homey yet sophisticated way. Don't miss the German potato salad." (Dec. 2009) American: Mon.-Sat. B L Sun. B.\*

**WRANGLER'S BAR & GRILL**, 2005 Hwy. 180E, 538-4387. Steak, burgers, appetizers, salads: L D.\*  
**YANKIE CREEK COFFEE HOUSE**, 112 W. Yankie St. Coffeshop, coffee, home-made pastries and ice cream, fresh fruit smoothies.\*

**Bayard**

**LITTLE NISHA'S**, 1101 Tom Foy Blvd., 537-3526. Mexican: Wed.-Sun. B L D.

**LOS COMPAS**, 1203 Tom Foy Blvd, 654-4109. Sonoran-style Mexican, hot dogs, portos, menudo: L D.

**M & A BAYARD CAFÉ**, 1101 N. Central Ave., 537-2251. Mexican and American: Mon.-Fri. B L D.

**Cliff**

**PARKEY'S**, 8414 Hwy. 180W, 535-4000. Coffeshop: Mon.-Sat.

**Hurley**

**GATEWAY GRILL**, 2705 Hwy. 180E,

# Table Talk

**D**owntown Silver City's **3 Dogs Coffeehouse** is under new ownership. Mel Pearson, a familiar name to local food fans from the Curious Kumquat, has purchased the 503 N. Bullard St. coffeeshop and is adding lots of irresistible goodies to the java fare. We hear the banana cake is, as they say, to die for.

If you're curious about **Little Toad Creek Inn & Tavern** after last month's writeup in these pages, check out the special Fourth of July barbecue, with a concert by Brandon Perrault and Rhythm Mystic, plus games. Then July 21-22 it's a Hummingbird Celebration. 1122 Hwy. 35, 536-9649.

**Off the Hook**, which had been serving catfish and other country-style Southern cooking at 1700 Mountain View Road in Silver City, has closed its doors.

Margo Byrne, whose **Margo's Bakery Café** at 300 S. Bullard St. in Silver City we raved about back in November, has retired and closed her eatery.

On July 6, from 4-10 p.m., the **Curious Kumquat** will kick off its new Beer Garden. Featuring nearly 50 beers every day, the Kumquat will open up its expanded outdoor seating and new Beer Garden menu. 111 E. College Ave., 534-0337.

**Shevek & Co.** will host an Italian wine-tasting dinner, 6:30 p.m., July 27. 602 N. Bullard, 539-9168, silver-eats.com.

**I**n Las Cruces, **Lorenzo's de Mesilla** has closed after 16 years. In happier news, the Downtown Mall space recently vacated by **La Iguana** may get new life by fall with a restaurant from the owners of Zeffiro Pizzeria Napoletana and the Popular Artisan Bread Bakery.

Las Cruces also boasts a new Korean restaurant, **Kim-Chi House**, opened by chef-owner Emily Kim at 1605 S. Solano. Hours are Tuesday-Saturday 11 a.m.-8 p.m. and 12-6 p.m. on Sunday. 652-4745.

Send restaurant news to [updates@red-or-green.com](mailto:updates@red-or-green.com).

**& BREWERY**, 500 S. Telshor Blvd., 521-1099. Pecan-smoked meats, sandwiches, steaks, seafood, craft beers: L D.

**DG's UNIVERSITY DELI**, 1305 E. University Ave., 522-8409. Deli: B L D.\*

**DOUBLE EAGLE**, 2355 Calle De Guadalupe, 523-6700. Southwestern, steaks, seafood: L D, Sun. champagne brunch buffet. \*

**EDDIE'S BAR & GRILL**, 901 Avenida de Mesilla, 524-8603. Pub food, American, Southwestern: B L D.

**GUACAMOLE'S BAR AND GRILL**, 3995 W. Picacho Ave., 525-9115. Burgers, pizza, salads, sandwiches, Hawaiian appetizers: L D.

**HIGH DESERT BREWING COMPANY**, 1201 W. Hadley Ave., 525-6752. Brew pub: L D.\*

**HOTEL ENCANTO**, 705 S. Telshor, 532-4277. Southwestern, Continental: B L D.\*

**INTERNATIONAL DELIGHTS**, 1245 El Paseo Rd., 647-5956. Greek and International: B L D.

**JOSEPHINA'S OLD GATE CAFÉ**, 2261 Calle de Guadalupe, 525-2620. Pastries, soups, salads, sandwiches: Mon.-Thur. L, Fri.-Sun. B L.

**KATANA TEPPANYAKI GRILL**, 1001 E. University Ave., 522-0526. Japanese: Mon.-Fri. L D, Sat. D.

**KIM-CHI HOUSE**, 1605 S. Solano, 652-4745. Korean: Tues.-Sun. L D.

**KIVA PATIO CAFÉ**, 600 E. Amador Ave., 527-8206. Mexican, Southwestern, American: B L D.

**LA POSTA RESTAURANT DE MESILLA**, 2410 Calle De San Albino, 524-3524. Mexican, steakhouse: L D, Sat.-Sun. and holidays also B.

**LORENZO'S PAN AM**, 1753 E. University Ave., 521-3505. Italian, pizza: L D.

**LOS COMPAS**, 1120 Commerce Dr., 521-6228. Mexican: B L D.\*

**MESILLA VALLEY KITCHEN**, 2001 E. Lohman Ave. #103, 523-9311. American, Mexican: B L.\*

**MESON DE MESILLA**, 1803 Avenida de Mesilla, 652-4953. Steaks, barbecue, seafood, sandwiches, salads, pasta: L D.

**MILAGRO COFFEE Y ESPRESSO**, 1733 E. University Ave., 532-1042. Coffeehouse: B L D.\*

**MIX PACIFIC RIM CUISINE AND MIX EXPRESS**, 1001 E. University Ave. #D4, 532-2042. Asian, Pacific: Mon.-Sat. L D.

**NOPALITO RESTAURANT**, 310 S. Mesquite St., 524-0003. Mexican: Sun.-Tues., Thurs.-Sat. L D.\*

**OLD TOWN RESTAURANT**, 1155 S. Valley Dr., 523-4586. Mexican, American: B L.\*

**ONO GRINDZ**, 300 N. Downtown Mall, 541-7492. Hawaiian: B L D.

**PAISANO CAFÉ**, 1740 Calle de Mercado, 524-0211. Mexican: B L D.\*

**PEPPERS CAFÉ ON THE PLAZA (IN THE DOUBLE EAGLE RESTAURANT)**, 2355 Calle De Guadalupe, 523-6700. Southwestern: L D.\*

**ROBERTO'S MEXICAN FOOD**, 908 E. Amador Ave., 523-1851. Mexican: B L D.\*

**SANTORINI'S**, 1001 E. University Ave., 521-9270. Greek, Mediterranean: Mon.-Sat. L D.

**SB'S LATE-NIGHT LUNCHBOX**, 120 S. Water St. New American, vegetarian, vegan, wraps: L D.

**THE SHED**, 810 S. Valley Dr., 525-2636. American, pizza, Mexican, desserts: Wed.-Sun. B L.\*

**SI ITALIAN BISTRO**, 523 E. Idaho, DINING GUIDE continued on page 49

## DOÑA ANA COUNTY

**Las Cruces & Mesilla**  
**ABRAHAM'S BANK TOWER RESTAURANT**, 500 S. Main St. #434, 523-5911. American: Mon.-Fri. B L.

**ANDELE RESTAURANTE**, 1950 Calle del Norte, 526-9631. Mexican: Mon. B L, Tues.-Sun. B L D.

**AQUA REEF**, 900-B S. Telshor, 522-7333. Asian, sushi: D.

**BAAN THAI KITCHEN**, 1605 S. Solano Dr., 521-2630. Thai: Tues.-Sat. L D, Sun. L.

**BLUE AGAVE CAFÉ**, 1765 S. Main St. (inside Best Western Mission Inn), 524-8591. Southwestern: B.

**BLUE MOON**, 13060 N. Valley Dr., 647-9524. Bar, burgers: Sat.-Sun. L D.

**BOBA CAFÉ**, 1900 S. Espina, Ste. 8, 647-5900. Sandwiches, salads, casual fare, espresso: Mon.-Sat. L D.\*

**BRAVO'S CAFÉ**, 3205 S. Main St., 526-8604. Mexican: Tues.-Sun. B L.

**BREAK AN EGG**, 201 S. Solano Dr., 647-3000. Breakfasts, burgers, salads, sandwiches: B L.

**CAFÉ DE MESILLA EN LA PLAZA**, 2051 Calle de Santiago, 652-3019. Coffeehouse, deli, pastries, soups, sandwiches: B L early D.

**CATTLEMEN'S STEAKHOUSE**, 2375 Bataan Memorial Hwy., 382-9051. Steakhouse: D.

**DAY'S HAMBURGERS**, Water & Las Cruces St., 523-8665. Burgers: Mon.-Sat. L D.

**DE LA VEGA'S PECAN GRILL**



## Alotta Words about ALOTTA GELATO

Yikes, it's July! Everybody who comes in the store says the same thing: that the warm weather must do wonders for our business. Weeeeell, not exactly: daytime business can slack off somewhat in the warm weather as more people are reluctant to go out in the heat of the day (it's not just the possibility of melting gelato— I keep thinking of the Wicked Witch of the West and expect to find a puddle on the sidewalk someday when I step outside). Nighttime business, however, is making up for the daytime doldrums. But no matter when you arrive (during our business hours, anyway), you'll get a warm welcome!

When you visit **ALOTTA GELATO** at 619 N. Bullard St. in beautiful Downtown Silver City, you'll find a veritable oasis of refreshment in the desert (or desserts— it works either way). Of course, if you enjoy warm weather for picnics and other gatherings, we want to remind you that our delicious low-fat Italian ice cream is available in hand-packed pints and quarts in your choice of flavors (and yes, we can pack several flavors into each insulated container). Remember that we also carry delicious dessert items such as Key Lime bars, brownies, cheesecake, cookies, flourless Chocolate Raspberry Torte, and big honkin' slices of three-layer Carrot Cake— plus hot and cold drinks to go with them (yes, some folks still drink hot coffee and tea in the summer). **Remember: ALOTTA GELATO is open 7 (count 'em!) days a week, beginning at Noon every day until 9:00 PM (Sunday through Thursday) or 10:00 PM (Friday and Saturday)— sometimes even later.**

Assert your independence from ho-hum ice cream, bring your friends/family/neighbors/significant others (and anybody you really want to impress), and experience the best gelato anywhere, from the oldest gelato store in the Land of Enchantment! Thanks for reading; as a token of our appreciation for you, our valued customer, **bring this ad for 25¢ off any size gelato for each member of your party.**

Find us on Facebook Visit us online at: [www.alottagelato.com](http://www.alottagelato.com)  
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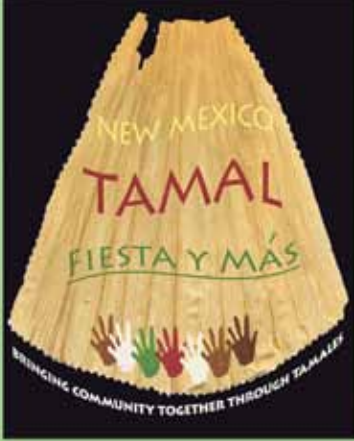
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Shevek's & Co.  
Silverado  
The Jalisco Cafe  
The Red Barn  
Vicki's Eatery  
Wrangler's Bar & Grill

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**-Hurley-**  
Gateway Grill

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Ramona's Café

**-Rodeo-**  
Rodeo Café

## RED OR GREEN? • PEGGY PLATONOS

## Making Wine Fun

St. Clair Winery & Bistro has a new Mesilla location,  
new menu, same outstanding wines.

If you are used to fine dining, you will feel right at home in the recently relocated St. Clair Winery & Bistro in Mesilla. If you are not used to fine dining, you will still feel comfortable there. The décor, atmosphere, menu, service style and wine-centered special touches are all upscale without being intimidating.

You may be taken by surprise when your waiter arrives at your table with a bottle of the "wine-of-the-month" and offers you a sample tasting. Don't worry, there's no charge. If you're considering ordering a wine but hesitating, you can sample that, too—an offer that, surprisingly, extends to the (as I discovered) delicious mimosa on the drinks menu. This wonderful arrangement assures you of ordering a wine you know you like. You also have the option of ordering a "flight" of six wine samples for tasting, at a cost of \$6 for "Signature" wines or \$12 for limited-release "Reserve" wines.

"We try to make wine fun," explains Zan Steinberg, general manager of the much-expanded bistro.

Wine is, after all, at the heart of the bistro venture. This is now one of three such bistros operated by St. Clair Winery in New Mexico, with others in Albuquerque and Farmington. They were established primarily to showcase and promote St. Clair wines.

The winery was founded by Hervé Lescombes and his wife, Danielle, who had successfully operated a winery in France (see "Time in a Bottle," November 2006). On a visit to the American Southwest, Hervé, a fifth-generation winemaker, recognized that the growing conditions here were ideal for grapes. The family emigrated to New Mexico and planted their first vineyard in 1981. The blue-winged teal that visited a nearby lake inspired the vineyard's name—Blue Teal, still one of the three labels under which they market their wines. The other two are D.H. Lescombes, which produces oak-aged traditional European-style wines and champagnes, and St. Clair, the name of their state-of-the-art winery in Deming. The winery now produces more than 85,000 cases of wine each year, and the wine is sold in 43 states.

The entire operation is still a Lescombes family business, carried on by Hervé and Danielle's two sons: Emmanuel, who is in charge of the vineyards, and Florent, who serves as winemaker. Florent's wife, Rebecca, is vice president of the corporation, and her two brothers, Rick and Rob Sharp, are also involved in the business. Rob handles publicity, while Rick, as St. Clair Hospitality Manager, oversees the operation of all three bistros.

"We are first a winery, second a restaurant," Zan quotes Rick Sharp as saying. Which is not to say that there is anything second-rate about the bistros. Judging by the one in Mesilla, the bistros are rooted in the same attention to detail, insistence on quality and customer-friendly attitude as the winery.

All the dishes my two friends and I selected were good, but the three of us agreed that two deserve special mention. The Spinach & Artichoke Dip (\$7.95) was simply outstanding as an appetizer, with a subtle Southwestern twist to it. And the Grilled Shrimp Dinner (\$16.95) was both dramatic in presentation and delicious in taste, with a generous number of teriyaki-glazed shrimp served on skewers stuck upright like rabbit ears on a base formed by a thick slab of fresh pineapple that had also been lightly grilled in teriyaki sauce. Once the tough outer skin and inner core had been cut away, the pineapple itself was as tasty a treat as the shrimp.

Prices are reasonable considering the quality of the food, and satisfying meals can be enjoyed for less than \$10, with options ranging from hearty



Events Manager Danielle Dollar shows off the Chocolate Port Brownie topped with vanilla bean ice cream, while General Manager Zan Steinberg holds the Grilled Shrimp Dinner.

salads to pastas, burgers and (at lunchtime only) sandwiches and paninis. Dinner entrées available after 4 p.m. range in price from \$12.95 for Country Pot Roast or St. Clair Chicken to \$18.95 for a wine-infused, garlic-rubbed prime rib. Other dinner-style options available all day cost anywhere from \$12.95 for fish and chips to \$18.95 for grilled ribeye steak.

The new location for the St. Clair Winery & Bistro at 1720 Avenida de Mesilla actually involves a kind of homecoming. Originally housing the restaurant known as Way Out West, the building also provided separate space for St. Clair Winery's Blue Teal Tasting Room, which moved down the road when the restaurant's owner died unexpectedly. In the course of that move, it morphed into St. Clair Winery & Bistro, adding food as part of the wine-tasting adventure.

The return to the building provides a great deal more space for the bistro. "The biggest room in the old location held 30," Zan says. "This building will



St. Clair Winery & Bistro now occupies the thoroughly renovated building that once housed the Way Out West restaurant at 1720 Avenida de Mesilla. (Photos by Peggy Platonos)

seat 320 people, inside and outside. This includes a covered patio that seats 80 people and can be closed off for private parties, and two meeting rooms—one of which seats 25 people, the other 40."

A huge expanse of well-manicured lawn provides the option of seating another 200 people. "We put up tents for special festivals, receptions, concerts," Zan

explains. "In April, we had a 'Barrels & Blues' music festival with contemporary and bluegrass music, as well as wine tastings from barrels. In May, we had a Cinco de Mayo festival, and our first wedding. In June, we had a 'Salsa & Sangria' festival."

Upcoming events include a "Grape American Music Celebration" on July 3 and 4, with local and national performers, including Josh Grider and Bri Bagwell; a best-dressed dog competition at the July 18 third-Wednesday "Yappy Hour" co-sponsored by the Humane Society and the two local animal hospitals; a Jazz Festival August 24-26; and a "Kegs & Corks" festival Oct. 19-21 featuring Texas two-step, as well as beer and wine. For more details and a complete menu, visit [www.stclairwinery.com](http://www.stclairwinery.com).

Obviously, St. Clair Winery & Bistro is already a happening place. "We opened Jan. 20, and we're still growing the business," Zan says. "That's what it's all about."

The restaurant is open Sunday through Thursday from 11 a.m. to 9 p.m., with the bar staying open to 10 p.m. Restaurant hours on Fridays and Saturdays are 11 a.m. to 10 p.m., with the bar remaining open until 11 p.m.

For more information or to make a reservation, call (575) 524-0390.

Send Mimbres freelance writer Peggy Platonos tips for restaurant reviews at [platonos@gilnet.com](mailto:platonos@gilnet.com) or call (575) 536-2997.



**DINING GUIDE** continued

523-1572. Italian: Mon.-Sat. L D.  
**SI SEÑOR**, 1551 E. Amador Ave., 527-0817. Mexican: L D.\*  
**SPANISH KITCHEN**, 2960 N. Main St., 526-4275. Mexican: Mon.-Sat. B L D.  
**SPIRIT WINDS COFFEE BAR**, 2260 S. Locust St., 521-1222. Sandwiches, coffee, bakery: B L D.\*  
**ST. CLAIR WINERY & BISTRO**, 1720 Avenida de Mesilla, 524-0390. Wine tasting, bistro: L D.  
**THAI DELIGHT DE MESILLA**, 2184 Avenida de Mesilla, 525-1900. Thai, salads, sandwiches, seafood, steaks, German: L D.\*  
**TIFFANY'S PIZZA & GREEK AMERICAN CUISINE**, 755 S. Telshor Blvd #G1, 532-5002. Pizza, Greek, deli: Tues.-Sat. B L D.\*  
**VINTAGE WINES**, 2461 Calle de Principal, 523-WINE. Wine and cigar bar, tapas: L D.  
**ZEFFIRO PIZZERIA NAPOLETANA**, 136 N. Water St., 525-6757. Pizza, pasta, also sandwiches at adjoining Popular Artisan Bakery: Mon.-Sat. L D.  
**ZEFFIRO NEW YORK PIZZERIA**, 101 E. University Ave., 525-6770. Pizza: L D.  
**LUNA COUNTY**  
**Deming**  
**ADOBE DELI**, 3970 Lewis Flats Road SE, 546-0361. "The lunch menu features traditional deli-style sandwiches... The dinner menu is much grander, though some sandwiches are available then, too. Dinner options include filet mignon, flat iron steak, T-bone, ribeye, New York strip, Porterhouse, barbecued pork ribs, Duck L'Orange, Alaska King Crab legs, broiled salmon steak, shrimp scampi, pork chops, osso buco, beef kabobs." (March 2010) Bar, deli, steaks: L D.\*  
**CAMPOS RESTAURANT**, 105 S. Silver, 546-0095. Mexican, American, Southwestern: L D.\*  
**ELISA'S HOUSE OF PIES AND RESTAURANT**, 208 1/2 S. Silver Alley, 494-4639. "The southern-style fare is a savory prelude to 35 flavors of pie." (April 2012) American, barbecue, sandwiches, pies: Mon.-Sat. L D.  
**LA FONDA**, 601 E. Pine St., 546-0465. Mexican: B L D.\*  
**LAS CAZUELAS**, 108 N. Platinum Ave. (inside El Rey meat market), 544-

8432. "This gem of a restaurant turns out perfectly cooked steaks and seafood, as well as a full line of Mexican fare." (June 2011) Steaks, seafood, Mexican: Tues.-Sat. L D.\*  
**MANOLO'S CAFÉ**, 120 N. Granite St., 546-0405. Mexican, American: Mon.-Sat. B L D, Sun. B L.  
**PALMA'S ITALIAN GRILL**, 110 S. Silver, 544-3100. Italian: L D. Sat. prime rib, Sun. buffet.\*  
**PATIO CAFÉ**, 1521 Columbus Road, 546-5990. Burgers, American: Mon.-Sat. L D.\*  
**RANCHER'S GRILL**, 316 E. Cedar St., 546-8883. Steakhouse, burgers: L D.\*  
**SUNRISE KITCHEN**, 1409 S. Columbus Road, 544-7795: American, Mexican, steaks: Mon.-Thur. B L, Fri. B L D.

**Akela**  
**APACHE HOMELANDS RESTAURANT**, I-10. Burgers, ribs, "casino-style" food: B L D.\*

**Columbus**  
**PATIO CAFÉ**, 23 Broadway, 531-2495. Burgers, American: B L.\*

**HIDALGO COUNTY**  
**Lordsburg**  
**EL CHARRO RESTAURANT**, 209 S. P Blvd., 542-3400. Mexican: B L D.  
**FIDENCIO'S**, 604 E. Motel Dr., 542-8989. Mexican: B L early D.  
**KRANBERRY'S FAMILY RESTAURANT**, 1405 Main St., 542-9400. Mexican, American: B L D.

**MAMA ROSA'S PIZZA**, 1312 Main St., 542-8400. Pizza, subs, calzones, salads, chicken wings, cheeseburgers, shrimp baskets: L D.  
**RAMONA'S CAFÉ**, 904 E. Motel Dr., 542-3030. Mexican, American: Tues.-Fri. B L D, Sun. B mid-day D.

**Rodeo**  
**RODEO STORE AND CAFÉ. 195 Hwy. 80**, 557-2295. Coffeshop food: Mon.-Sat. B L.  
**RODEO TAVERN**, 557-2229. Shrimp, fried chicken, steaks, burgers, seafood: Weds.-Sat. D.

**CATRON COUNTY**  
**Reserve**  
**ADOBE CAFÉ**, Hwy. 12 & Hwy. 180, 533-6146. Deli, American, Mon. pizza, Sunday BBQ ribs: Sun.-Mon. B L D, Wed.-Fri. B L.

**BLACK GOLD**, 98 Main St., 533-6538. Coffeeshop, pastries.  
**CARMEN'S**, 101 Main St., 533-6990. Mexican, American: B L D.  
**ELLA'S CAFÉ**, 533-6111. American: B L D.  
**UNCLE BILL'S BAR**, 230 N. Main St., 533-6369. Pizza: Mon.-Sat. L D.

**Glenwood**  
**ALMA GRILL**, Hwy. 180, 539-2233. Breakfast, sandwiches, burgers, Mexican: Sun.-Wed., Fri.-Sat. B L.  
**BLUE FRONT BAR AND CAFÉ**, Hwy. 180, 539-2561. Mexican, American, weekend barbecue, Friday catfish fry: L D.

**GOLDEN GIRLS CAFÉ**, Hwy. 180, 539-2457. Breakfast: B.  
**MARIO'S PIZZA**, Hwy. 180, 539-2316. "This unpretentious eatery serves up better pizza than you'll find in many a big city. But a recent visit to the tiny, scenic mountain town will forever be remembered as the time I had, absolutely, the best calzone of my life." (Nov. 2008) Italian: Mon.-Tues., Fri.-Sat. D.

**Other Catron County**  
**PURPLE ONION CAFÉ**, Mogollon, 539-2710. "Seasonal, quirky and way off the beaten path... serves eclectic fare and 'famous' pie." (August 2011) Breakfast, burgers, veggie melts, pita pockets, pies: Fri.-Sun., Mon. holidays, May-Oct.: B L.  
**SNUFFY'S STEAKHOUSE AND SALOON**, Quemado Lake, 773-4672. Steakhouse: D (Dec.-April: closed Mon.-Tues.)

**SIERRA COUNTY**  
**Hillsboro**  
**BARBER SHOP CAFÉ**, Main St., 895-5283. American, Mediterranean, sandwiches: Thurs.-Sat. L.  
**HILLSBORO GENERAL STORE & CAFÉ**, 100 Main St., 895-5306. American and Southwestern: Sun.-Wed., Fri.-Sat. B L.  
**LYNN NUSOM'S KITCHEN**, Main St., 896-5602. Soups, paninis, burritos, tacos, pies: Wed.-Sun. B L, early D.

**NOTE**—Restaurant hours and meals served vary by day of the week and change frequently; call ahead to make sure. Key to abbreviations: B=Breakfast; L=Lunch; D=Dinner.\*=Find copies of *Desert Exposure* here. Send updates, additions and corrections to: updates@red-or-green.com. ☼

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## JULY FILMS

July 6-12	<b>The Kid with a Bike</b> (2012, 87 minutes, in French, w/subtitles)
July 13-19	<b>Damsels in Distress</b> (2012, 99 minutes, in English)
July 20-26	<b>Darling Companion</b> (2012, 103 minutes, in English) Special admission screenings July 20 and July 22 matinee.
July 27- Aug 2	<b>I Wish</b> (2012, 128 minutes, in Japanese, w/ subtitles)

Mesilla Valley Film Society  
2469 Calle de Guadalupe, Mesilla • www.mesillavalleyfilm.org • (575) 524-8287  
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Sat 7/21	Stefan George (Tucson)
Thu 7/26	Bayou Seco (Tucson)
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# 40 DAYS & 40 NIGHTS

## What's Going on in July

Plus a look ahead into early August.

**JULY SUNDAY**  
**1 Las Cruces / Mesilla**  
**MONSIEUR LAZHAR**—Through July 5. Based on a one-person play by Quebec's Évelyne de la Chenelière, this film was one of the five contenders for Best Foreign-Language Film at the 2012 Academy Awards. In French and Arabic with subtitles. Nightly 7:30 p.m., Sun. 2:30 and 7:30 p.m. \$7 regular, \$6 seniors and students, \$5 MVFS members and children. Fountain Theatre, 2469 Calle de Guadalupe, 524-8287, mesillavalleyfilm.org.

**6TH ANNUAL BORDER BOOK FESTIVAL BOOK AND ART SALE**—Through July 4. 10 a.m.-5 p.m. Free. Cultural Center de Mesilla, 2231 Calle de Parian, 523-3988, borderbookfestival.com.

**LAS CRUCES VAQUEROS BASEBALL VS. TRINIDAD TRIGGERS**—1 p.m. \$6. Apodaca Park, 801 E. Madrid Ave., 680-2212, lascrucesvaqueros.com.

**RANGER LED NATURE HIKE**—Fridays and Sundays. 6 p.m. \$5 per vehicle. Mesilla Valley Bosque State Park, 5000 Calle de Norte, 523-4398.

**SUNDAY GROWERS' MARKET**—10 a.m.-2 p.m. Mountain View Market, 1300 El Paseo, 523-0436.

**Columbus**  
**HALFWAY TO NOWHERE**—Dinner theater benefit. 2 p.m. Columbus Community Center, 200 N. Boundary Rd., 494-0009.

**Deming**  
**DPAT JAM SESSIONS**—2-4 p.m. Free. Morgan Hall, 109 E. Pine.

**MONDAY**  
**2 Las Cruces / Mesilla**  
**LAS CRUCES VAQUEROS BASEBALL VS. TRINIDAD TRIGGERS**—7 p.m. \$6. Apodaca Park, 801 E. Madrid Ave., 680-2212, lascrucesvaqueros.com.

**TUESDAY**  
**3 Silver City/Grant County**  
**GILA FARMERS' MARKET**—3-6:30 p.m. 414 Hwy. 211, 535-2729.

**Las Cruces/Mesilla**  
**4TH OF JULY ELECTRIC LIGHT PARADE**—9 p.m. Free. Apodaca Park to Hadley Complex, 541-2000, las-cruces.org.

**GRAPE AMERICAN MUSIC CELEBRATION**—Through July 4. Live music both days, including country music favorites Josh Grider and Bri Bagwell. 4 p.m. \$15. St. Clair Winery & Bistro, 1720 Avenida de Mesilla, 524-0390, www.stclairwinery.com.

**TRAP, NEUTER AND RETURN: FERAL CAT CARE**—Joe Miele. 6-7:30 p.m. Mountain View Market, 1300 El Paseo, 523-0436.

**Deming St. Clair Winery Fireworks**—7 p.m. St. Clair Winery, 1325 De Baca Road SE, 546-1179, www.stclairwinery.com.

**WEDNESDAY INDEPENDENCE DAY**  
**4 Silver City/Grant County**  
**FOURTH OF JULY PARADE AND FESTIVITIES**—Parade downtown begins at 10 a.m., followed by a day-long arts/crafts festival at Gough Park until 5 p.m. Kiwanis Club annual cowboy breakfast, 7-10 a.m., also BBQ lunch. 538-3785.

**ANNUAL ICE CREAM SOCIAL**—A full slate of live entertainment, hot and cool treats, and old-fashioned fun. 11 a.m.-4 p.m. Silver City Museum, 312 W. Broadway, 538-5921, www.silvercitymuseum.org.

**TOM NAPLES**—Buckhorn Saloon, Pinos Altos, 538-9911, buckhornsaloonandoperahouse.com.

**Las Cruces/Mesilla**  
**4TH OF JULY CELEBRATION**—Entertainment, fireworks, vendors. Hadley Complex, 1801 E Hadley Ave., 541-2000, las-cruces.org.

**SELF MASTERY BOOK CLUB**—Sid-deeq Shabazz. 7:45-8:45 p.m. Free. Mountain View Market, 1300 El Paseo, 523-0436.

**GRAPE AMERICAN MUSIC CELEBRATION**—See July 3. 2 p.m. \$15. St. Clair Winery & Bistro, 1720 Avenida de Mesilla, 524-0390, www.stclairwinery.com.

**Deming**  
**FIREWORKS**—7 p.m. Southwestern New Mexico Fair Grounds, 4100 Raymond Reed Blvd.

**THURSDAY**  
**5 Silver City/Grant County**  
**CENTENNIAL BROWN BAG LUNCH**—Formation of the Normal School with Cynthia Ann Bettison and Phillip Cave.



12 p.m. Museum Annex, 302 W. Broadway.  
**JONO MANSON**—Buckhorn Saloon, Pinos Altos, 538-9911, buckhornsaloonandoperahouse.com.  
**MIMBRES FARMERS' MARKET**—3:30-5:30 p.m. La Tienda, Hwy. 35 and San Francisco St.

**Las Cruces/Mesilla**  
**BIG BAND DANCE CLUB**—Ron Theilman's High Society Orchestra. Patriot Ball. Root beer floats. 8-10 p.m. \$9, \$7 members. Court Youth Center, 402 W. Court St., 526-6504.

**EVERETT HOWL**—High Desert Brewing, 1201 W. Hadley, 525-6752.

**LAS CRUCES VAQUEROS BASEBALL VS. WHITE SANDS PUFFISH**—7 p.m. \$6. Apodaca Park, 801 E. Madrid Ave., 680-2212, lascrucesvaqueros.com.

**FRIDAY**  
**Silver City/Grant County**  
**FIRST FRIDAYS DOWNTOWN**—Dog Days of Summer. Street dance on South Bullard, pet parade, children's activities, more. Downtown Silver City, SilverCityMainStreet.com.

**FIRST FRIDAY AT THE MUSEUM**—Historic games for families in the courtyard. 4-6 p.m. Free. Silver City Museum, 312 W. Broadway, 538-5921, www.silvercitymuseum.org.

**JONO MANSON**—Buckhorn Saloon, Pinos Altos, 538-9911, buckhornsaloonandoperahouse.com.

**Las Cruces/Mesilla**  
**40 YEARS OF RETROSPECTION**—Joe Hidalgo. Artist's reception. 5-7 p.m. Nopalito's Galeria, 326 S. Mesquite, 524-0003, nopalitosgaleria.com.

**MICHAEL PONCE**—Exhibit through August 25. Paintings and drawings. Reception 5-7 p.m. Branigan Cultural Center, 501 N. Main St., 541-2154, www.las-cruces.org/museums.



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in Silver City-Grant County, NM

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# THE HISTORIC SILCO THEATER

- Fri, July 6** Hip Hop Concert. 7:30 pm. El Dreamer, Young Kane, and more.
- Wed, July 25** Progressive Voters Alliance monthly meeting. 7 pm.

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# THE TO DO LIST

Explosive events

keep the holiday spirit going.

What could be more all-American for **July 4** than ice cream? For more than a quarter-century, the Silver City Museum has celebrated the holiday with its **Fourth of July Ice Cream Social**. This year the fun also marks New Mexico's centennial, with free historic games including calf-roping, hot potato, graces, milk bottle clothespin drop, blanket toss, and bubblemania. Plus of course there's ice cream—in cones and root beer floats—along with popcorn and cold drinks, as well as a fresh fruit stand provided by the Silver City Food Co-op. Live music will be performed by the Gila Highlanders, Jessica Juarez, Rising River String Band, Concert Band of the Southwest and Gravel Road.

Also on **July 4**, Silver City's annual **parade** will march through downtown, ending at **Gough Park** where vendors and live music

But July's fun doesn't stop on the Fourth. **July 21** is **Big Ditch Day** in downtown Silver City, with music, guided hikes, water activities, vendors, living history and more marking the flooded fate of the town's Main Street. (Read more in this issue's "Eco Smarts" feature.) That evening, the New Mexico Music Series brings **Cathryn McGill** to the Buckhorn Opera House in Pinos Altos.

Also on **July 21**, in Las Cruces, **Steve Smith, Chris Sanders and Hard Road** perform a benefit for KRWG at the Rio Grande Theatre. Hard Road features Bill Evans on banjo and Nate Lee on fiddle. The concert also marks the local debut of the musicians' new album, "Monticello."

Adults who ushered in the month with ice cream might want to swig it out with beer at the **Las Cruces Tour de Beer** at the Southern New Mexico State Fairgrounds. The **July 28-29** event is sort of the beer-lovers' version of the annual wine festival, with a souvenir pilsner glass for your sampling instead. Music will accompany the suds, with The Liars on Saturday and Nosotros on Sunday.



Cathryn McGill performs in Pinos Altos on July 21.

## EVENTS continued

Downtown Mall, 523-1223, www.no-strings.org.

**NATURE TREK**—See July 11. 9-11 a.m. \$5 per vehicle. Mesilla Valley Bosque State Park, 5000 Calle de Norte, 523-4398.

**SEAN LUCY**—High Desert Brewing, 1201 W. Hadley, 525-6752.

**THE BORDER**—With special guest, film historian Jay Duncan, who worked on the set of this 1982 film, partially shot in El Paso. Inspired by a series of newspaper articles about illegal immigrants. Charlie (Jack Nicholson) is a member of the Border Patrol in Los Angeles whose social-climbing wife (Valerie Perrine) talks him into transferring to El Paso, where her high school friend (Shannon Wilcox) lives in a duplex. They move in next door. Her husband Cat (Harvey Keitel), a border guard, introduces Charlie to the daily roundup procedures. Charlie tries to save his soul by helping Maria (Elphidia Carrillo), a young Mexican mother, her child and younger brother. CineMatinee. Rated R. 1:30 p.m. \$5, \$2 MVFS members. Fountain Theatre, 2469 Calle de Guadalupe, 524-8287, mesillavalleyfilm.org.

**THE MIKADO PLAY**—See July 13. 1 and 7 p.m. \$4-\$6. NMSU Atkinson Hall, 1075 North Horseshoe, 646-2421.

**VOZ VAQUEROS**—Join storytellers from the 2012 National Story League Convention for an afternoon of songs and stories. 2 p.m. Farm & Ranch Heritage Museum, 4100 Dripping Springs Road, 522-4100, www.nmfarmandranchmuseum.org.

**WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF PEMFS**—Also July 16 and 18. A discussion on the use of Pulsed Electro Magnetic Frequencies led by Bonnie Crotsenburg. 1-3 p.m. Free. Mountain View Market, 1300 El Paseo, 523-0436.

**SUNDAY**

**15 Silver City/Grant County FOLDING SUMMER HAT**—Paint a folding summer hat using watercolor and salt technique with Blythe Whitely. 1-3 p.m. \$26, \$16 SWFAC members. The Common Thread, 107 W. Broadway, 538-5733, www.fiberartscollective.org.

**BINGO**—2-5 p.m. \$5 per card, \$10 for three cards. Mimbres Valley Roundup Lodge.

**Las Cruces/Mesilla**

**FAT CHANCE**—See July 6. Through July 22. 2:30 p.m. \$10, \$9 students and seniors. Black Box Theatre, 430 N. Downtown Mall, 523-1223, www.no-strings.org.

**ICE CREAM SUNDAY**—Homemade ice cream, demonstrations, living history and annual Ice Cream Sandwich Eating Contest. 12-4 p.m. \$5, \$3 senior citizens, \$2 children 5-17. Farm & Ranch Heritage Museum, 4100 Dripping Springs Road, 522-4100, www.nmfarmandranchmuseum.org.

**MUSIC IN NATURE**—East Mesa Band. 6-8 p.m. \$5 per vehicle. Mesilla Valley Bosque State Park, 5000 Calle de Norte, 523-4398.

**MUSIC IN THE PARK**—Rhythm City Dogs, Windy City. 7 p.m. Free. Young Park, 1905 E. Nevada Ave.

**SUNDAY GROWERS' MARKET**—10 a.m.-2 p.m. Mountain View Market, 1300 El Paseo, 523-0436.

**Deming**

**DPAT JAM SESSIONS**—2-4 p.m. Free. Morgan Hall, 109 E. Pine.

**MONDAY**

**16 Las Cruces / Mesilla**

**WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF PEMFS**—See July 14. 6-8 p.m. Free. Mountain View Market, 1300 El Paseo, 523-0436.

**TUESDAY**

**17 Silver City/Grant County GILA FARMERS' MARKET**—3-6:30 p.m. 414 Hwy. 211, 535-2729.

**Las Cruces/Mesilla**

**DOÑA ANA CAMERA CLUB**—How to make a video, by Ron Wolfe. Also "Ten Minutes with Clark Little," by Jim Rodgers. 7 p.m. Southwest Environmental Center, 275 N. Downtown Mall, 532-1919, dacameraclub.org.

**EVENING WITH A DOCTOR**—6-7 p.m. Free. Mountain View Market, 1300 El Paseo, 523-0436.

**WEDNESDAY**

**18 Silver City/Grant County PETER & MICHELE**—Buckhorn Saloon, Pinos Altos, 538-9911, buckhornsaloonandoperahouse.com.

**Las Cruces/Mesilla**

**NATURE TREK**—Also July 21. Kids are invited to come collect pond specimens with nets and observe what they collect through Magiscopes. 9-11 a.m. \$5 per vehicle. Mesilla Valley Bosque State Park, 5000 Calle de Norte, 523-4398.

**RAIL READERS BOOK CLUB**—11 a.m. Railroad Museum, 351 N. Mesilla Street, 647-4480, www.las-cruces.org/public-services/museums.

**WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF PEMFS**—See July 14. 12-2 p.m. Free. Mountain View Market, 1300 El Paseo, 523-0436.

**THURSDAY**

**19 Silver City/Grant County HEART-HEALTHY MEXICAN COOKING**—Chef Lyle Bolyard. Space limited; reserve your spot. 2-3 p.m. Free. GRMC Courtyard Café, 1313 E. 32nd St., 538-4870, www.grmc.org.

**MIMBRES FARMERS' MARKET**—3:30-5:30 p.m. La Tienda, Hwy. 35 and San Francisco St.

**Las Cruces/Mesilla**

**BIG BAND DANCE CLUB**—Ron Thielman's High Society Orchestra. 8-10 p.m. \$9, \$7 members. Court Youth Center, 402 W. Court St., 526-6504.

**FAT CHANCE**—See July 6. Through July 22. 7 p.m. \$7. Black Box Theatre, 430 N. Downtown Mall, 523-1223, www.no-strings.org.

**LAS CRUCES VAQUEROS BASEBALL VS. WHITE SANDS PUFFISH**—7 p.m. \$6. Apodaca Park, 801 E. Madrid Ave., 680-2212, lascrucesvaqueros.com.

**UN DIA DE OCTUBRE**—High Desert Brewing, 1201 W. Hadley, 525-6752.

**FRIDAY**

**20 Silver City/Grant County CHRISTMAS IN JULY**—Christmas cookies, homemade stollen and liquid refreshments traditional for the season, with handcrafted items and art pieces by Grant County Art Guild members. 3 p.m. Hearst Church Gallery, Pinos Altos.

**Las Cruces/Mesilla**

**DARLING COMPANION**—Through July 26. Directed by Lawrence Kasdan, a comedy about many varieties of companionship, starring Diane Keaton, Kevin Kline and Dianne Wiest. At the center of the movie is a marriage that has gone on for a long time and become frayed. Surrounding that union are young people falling in love, a brand-new marriage and the surprise of mid-life romance. The film is also about the connection that sometimes happens between a human being and a dog. Nightly 7:30 p.m., Sun. 2:30 and 7:30 p.m. \$7 regular, \$6 seniors and students, \$5 MVFS members and children. Fountain Theatre, 2469 Calle de Guadalupe, 524-8287, mesillavalleyfilm.org.

**FAT CHANCE**—See July 6. Through July 22. 8 p.m. \$10, \$9 students and seniors. Black Box Theatre, 430 N. Downtown Mall, 523-1223, www.no-strings.org.

**MAGIC CAMP PERFORMANCE**—Performance by young magicians attending week-long camp by Christopher Mitchell and Joseph Stringer. 7-9 p.m. \$3-\$7. Rio Grande Theatre, 211 N. Downtown Mall, 523-6403, www.riograndetheatre.com.

**Deming**

**RHYTHM MYSTIC**—5:30-8:30 p.m. St. Clair Winery, 1325 De Baca Road SE, 546-1179, www.stclairwinery.com.

**SATURDAY**

**21 Silver City/Grant County BIG DITCH DAY**—Music, guided hikes, water activities, vendors, living history, and more. 8:30 a.m.-2 p.m. Big Ditch Park, silvercitymainstreet.com.

**SILVER CITY FARMERS' MARKET**—Music by Bayou Seco. Kid's Squash Derby 8:30 a.m.-12 p.m. Mainstreet Plaza, N. Bullard at 7th St.



CONTINENTAL DIVIDE • DAVID A. FRYXELL

# Life in a State of Nature

Critter encounters—someplace else, for a change.

Readers sometimes describe this column as “stuff I saw in my backyard,” which is completely unfair. Some months, like this one, I write about stuff *other* people saw in *their* backyards. It’s completely different, so let’s clear that up right now.

Not only did this month’s animal adventures mostly happen to other folks, some of these critter encounters didn’t even occur in backyards at all (so there!), but around swimming pools and even on rooftops. With stories elsewhere in this issue about gray foxes (one of which, to be fair, was spotted in our much-celebrated backyard), dragonflies (which we also have, but we resisted the impulse to share one of our lovely photos—until this page) and summer pests, I figure I’m just rounding out an “all things wild” theme.

So there are these friends of ours in Tucson who have a pool. As the weather gets toasty, we start seeing a lot more lizards here in Silver City, but that’s nothing compared to the lizard invasion

His luck ran out, you might say, later that same scorching week when both our friends were cooling off at poolside. The wife—aren’t the wives always more eagle-eyed than the husbands?—spotted something odd by the pool gate. This would be the gate *between* them and their house. The something looked like a snake.

We’ve seen plenty of snakes here in Silver City, but they’ve always been bull snakes or even less dangerous gopher snakes. We know there are rattlers about, but we’ve yet to see, much less encounter, one. A few years ago, though, we published a hair-raising account by a Silver City physician who’d been bitten by a rattlesnake in—you guessed it—Tucson. Our friends are devoted *Desert Exposure* readers, of course, so that account of excruciating pain, risk of death or disfigurement, and zillions of dollars’ worth of antivenin popped to mind as they stared at the snake between them, clad only in swimsuits, and the safety of the house.

The snake raised up and curled menacingly, silhouetted against the gate. A forked tongue tasted the air. No need to listen for rattling to conclude that this was indeed a rather large rattlesnake.

Icily calm (or so they tell us), our swimsuited friends abandoned their lounge chairs and made determined strides for the gate on the street side. Which of course was locked. The wife clambered up over the fence at this point (we’ll charitably say he was too stunned to be chivalrous) and fetched the key from the lockbox at the front door used by the pool-cleaning service. (Said lockbox has since been moved to the gate, to minimize future clambering.) Escaping the pool enclosure and fleeing into the also-locked house via a garage-door keypad, husband and wife began frantically telephoning snake wranglers.

During the half-hour or so it took for help to arrive, they kept watch on the snake from a bathroom window with binoculars. While you might think they’d rather the rattler just vamoose, actually that would have been worse: The possibility of its return would always be in the back of their minds, making their lovely pool less an escape from Tucson’s heat than a potential deathtrap. And in this real-estate market...

When the wrangler finally showed up—a well-spoken older gent clad in shorts and sandals, not even wearing gloves—the job took no time at all. Reaching behind a piece of cement by the gate where the snake had slithered to nap, he snared it with a long metal grappler like you might use to reach cans from a top shelf. Into a bucket with the snake and on went the top. Now you could hear the rattling. Hissing, too.

The wrangler guessed the snake was 12 to 15 years old. Rattlers inhabit a rather small territory, so our friends’ neighbors had been hosting this venomous visitor for quite some time. Our friends, relatively new to the block, said they wouldn’t miss the rattler now that it’s been relocated farther from human habitation.

Apparently that was not a unanimous opinion, however. When they mentioned the incident to a next-door neighbor, thinking thoughtfully to alert her to such a future danger, the woman was downright distraught. The neighborhood rattlesnake had been keeping down the packrat population, she insisted. This was a tragedy!

Brushing aside the thought of “You knew a rattler was around and didn’t warn us?,” our friends pointed out that Robbie the Rattler had been doing a darn poor job of packrat control. Packrats had nested in and ruined a grill cover that didn’t get put back soon enough. Droppings were everywhere.

Indeed, the next day the wife was relating the rattler incident to the neighbor across the street—probing to see if they’d now be ostracized for removing everyone’s favorite venomous snake. That neighbor said packrats had eaten all the wiring of a car—a Jaguar, please note—parked in their driveway overnight. Packrats had also nibbled away the garage roof, leading to monsoon-season leaks. Mister Rattler, you’re fired!

Then the across-the-street neighbor went on to tell what the roofers found when commencing repairs. Apparently this Foothills neighborhood, not far from Target and Costco and other outposts of civilization, was not only HQ for a rattlesnake. The roofers reported that a bobcat had been nesting up on top of the garage.

This would explain why our friends had seen a bobcat up close and personal as they were moving in. It was living right across the street! Probably part of Welcome Wagon!

Whether in Tucson, Silver City or Las Cruces, where *Desert Exposure* contributor Jay W. Sharp tells of having a gray fox accompany him and his dog on their nightly walk, “Wild Kingdom” can be right outside the door. Yes, even in the backyard.

I know, we’re infringing on *their* turf, not the other way around. But short of packing up and everyone moving back across the Atlantic, it’s hard to see how that can be avoided. The critters were here first, but we’re not going away. All we can do is enjoy them when it’s safe and move them elsewhere when it’s not. (Note that the poolside rattler wasn’t executed, which the animal-control company made clear was all right with the homeowners before taking the job.)

I’d make an exception for packrats, and I completely understand people besieged by skunks wanting them permanently gone. The local skunk catcher once told me of a softhearted homeowner who insisted the trapped critters be released. After a few weeks during which the skunks kept returning, the homeowner relented: “Kill them! Kill them all and let God sort it out!”

We might disagree about where to draw that line when human habitation collides with the “Wild Kingdom.” I for one would side with our Tucson friends in wanting the rattlesnake relocated. Next time they might not have spotted it before, say, opening the gate and walking into the rattler wearing nothing but flip-flops and swim trunks. (The people, that is, not the snake.)

Life in a state of nature is nasty, brutal and short. But it can also be as amazing as it is sometimes scary.

So, if you’ll excuse me, I have hummingbird feeders to refill, and maybe that fox will be back. Yes, out in our backyard. 🐾

When he’s indoors, David A. Fryxell edits *Desert Exposure*.



Just because we’re not writing about our backyard this month is no reason to deprive readers of this picture of a dragonfly—photographed, yes, in our backyard. (Photo by Lisa D. Fryxell)

in Tucson, where the scaly critters grow twice as big and three times as common as here. (Or at least that’s what these friends boast.) Every time our friends go down to their swimming pool (which, please note, is off to *one side* of their house—not in the backyard!), lizards go scurrying at their approach. Finding themselves stuck between a metal, mesh fence and the oncoming humans, the lizards go berserk and attempt to squeeze through the tiniest of escape hatches.

Sometimes they even go swimming. In early summer, when Tucson was already sizzling at 100 degrees, the husband was going to grab some pool time. The pool gate clanged behind him and then he heard a splash at the far corner of the pool. An eyeblink later, a large collared lizard emerged from the opposite far corner of the pool, shook itself off and skittered to safety among the bushes.

All things considered, our friend was lucky not to find a lizard lounging in his poolside antigravity chair or sipping a margarita through a teensy straw while dangling its tail in the water.

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We want to wish everybody a safe and Happy 4th of July!



Thanks for giving us another terrific year!

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## Trust and Toys--Pediatrics at Silver Health CARE

In July of last year, Zelda Ballesteros was looking for a new doctor to care for her children. Daniella, Ariana, and Armando were sick on and off for years, coughing and sneezing and having a hard time breathing when they were physically active, especially Armando. At that point, Dr. Brian Etheridge, a pediatrician at Silver Health CARE, was recommended to her, and from the children's very first wellness visit with him, she knew they had found a physician who made the right diagnosis of the children's problems, treated them effectively, and made the children laugh and relax by playing games with them during their visits. Zelda was impressed by how he made the kids feel comfortable, and asked them questions about school and their activities. Daniella and Ariana giggled at his jokes, and Dr. Etheridge's playful use of flashlights was a big hit with all the children, especially Armando!

Dr. Etheridge, a board-certified pediatrician with Silver Health CARE since 2009, is recently trained and brings state-of-the-art clinical skills to his practice. Zelda thinks he is "awesome." He diagnosed all three children with asthma, and with the prescribed treatment, the children's symptoms have dramatically improved, leaving more time for fun and giving Zelda a chance to relax about their health. At their wellness visit, when

Dr. Etheridge invited Zelda to talk about any other issues that the children might be having, she brought up Armando's problems at school. Dr. Etheridge, in what Zelda considers to be excellent follow-up care, arranged for Armando to see a counselor so that his issues might be addressed. Zelda feels that she "is able to work hand in hand with Dr. Etheridge" on behalf of her children.

When Zelda visits Silver Health CARE with her children, she feels she is in excellent hands "from the moment you come in, to the time you see the practitioner." She enjoys being greeted by the friendly staff at the front desk and thinks the world of Dr. Etheridge's nurse, Lori Wallin, RN, and his MA, Lena Delgado. Zelda sums it all up by saying, "Thank you, Dr. Etheridge, for providing 'my babies' with the high quality care that all parents want for their children. Grant County is a better place for children with you practicing here."

Like Zelda Ballesteros, why not choose the very best for your children by bringing them to the skilled, friendly and compassionate pediatricians at Silver Health CARE? Dr. Brian Etheridge is joined by Dr. Barbara Mora and Dr. Laura Davenport-Reed, both of whom have years of experience serving children in our communities.



Ariana Duran, Daniella Ballesteros, Zelda Ballesteros, Armando Duran

For your convenience, appointments can be made at our Silver City, Deming, and Bayard locations.

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**Silver City's #1 Selling Office for 2011**



**MLS 29242 • \$72,000**

This property includes 4 lots, a 2008 Cavco manufactured home has 2 bedroom, 2 bath with large RV carport, storage container, chain link fencing, gate and a picnic table. All the appliances included. Gravel driveway, concrete steps to the upper portion of the property and security lighting. Moderate size trees offer shade and some privacy. Views are of mountains and the city. Close to downtown, schools, the post office and stores.



**MLS 29226 • \$354,000**

Santa Fe style in Wind Canyon on 10 acres is 4bd/3ba and has a welcoming private front courtyard and covered rear patio with dramatic, panoramic views. Great room with lots of windows, wood-burning fireplace, cork flooring, built-ins, efficient kitchen. Huge master suite with living area & office or dressing room attached. 1/8 acre of Gila/San Francisco water rights included.



**MLS 29221 • \$53,000**

Great investment property. This Hurley home has fireplace, large kitchen with high ceiling, lots of cabinets, separate laundry room and a separate dining room. Hardwood floors are a good bet. There is a one car garage and a one car carport along with a new storage building in back. Mostly fenced yard, large corner lot. New water pipes with manifold to control all water sources in the home has been installed.



**MLS 29173 • \$320,000**

Located under scenic bluffs in the Mimbres, this home has 3 bedrooms, 2 baths, open living and dining area and a large kitchen offer comfortable living space. The living room has a Vermont soapstone wood burning stove. Attached sun room and covered porch are great places to entertain. Detached garage consists of two sections with a separate finished office area. Property is fenced and gated. There are several fruit trees.



**MLS 29217 • \$233,000**

The spacious main home has a split floor plan with a gourmet kitchen, all stainless appliances include a gas/electric range w/2 ovens, warming drawer, lots of storage, trash compactor, and custom tile. Breakfast area overlooks backyard. 2 offices with networked computer usage, formal dining area & game room. Maple laminate flooring. Lifetime metal roof. Fully remodeled 940sq.ft., 2 bdrm/2bath guest house. Decks both sides of house, & lawn has watering system plus underground drainage for rain. 3 car garage, a detached carport, storage building, roomy dog runs with kennels and a paved driveway.



**MLS 29213 • \$199,900**

Historic home with many interior upgrades & nice finishes, but work remains to be done. Home has been divided into two functioning rentals. One vacant space remains and is unfinished. Detached garage & storage buildings.



**MLS 29205 • \$120,000**

3bd/1.75ba country home on 2.5 acres close to town. Horses ok, private well & city sewer, propane gas. RV hook-up, small fenced yard.



**MLS 29187 • \$425,000**

6 unit apartment complex near WNMU & downtown. Two triplexes, 2 - 3Bd, 2 - 2Bd, 2 - 1Bd units. Units have fireplaces, private patios, & storage. Double-pane windows, in-unit washer/dryer connections.



**MLS 29180 • \$29,500**

5+ acres south of town near the Burro Mountains/White Signal. Rough drive & building pad are in place with a storage shed. Power runs across the property. Views, oak & juniper trees, close to the National Forest.



**MLS 29214 • \$139,900**

Centrally located 2bd/2ba on oversized lot with a view from the back deck. Clean & ready to move-in.

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