

ISSUE #85

MAY 2005

**18TH ANNUAL GALISTEO STUDIO TOUR
ORGANIZATIONAL MEETING**

Wed., May 18th, 7PM, Galisteo Community Center.
All interested participants PLEASE be there, or send
a representative. Any questions? Call Barb Holloway,
466- 2118 or Cindy and Frank Lux, 466-2121.

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FIRE DEPARTMENT OPEN HOUSE
Saturday, June 4, noon-3

REPTILES AND AMPHIBIANS OF THE GALISTEO

Toby Herbst

As the weather warms up in New Mexico one sees more and more of the "cold-blooded" inhabitants of Galisteo. I am not referring to the two-legged variety, but to reptiles and amphibians. We are located in the Upper Sonoran Desert ecosystem, characterized by limited rainfall. It is an arid environment made up of grasses, cacti, juniper and piñon, among other vegetation. The Galisteo Basin is blessed with a relatively large amount of surface water. The San Cristobal, Jaspe, and La Jara Arroyos and the Galisteo Creek greatly increase the productivity of the ecosystem.

This two-part article will briefly survey the reptiles and amphibians I have observed here over the past nineteen years.

First, the amphibians: by far the most common in our neighborhood is the Spadefoot Toad. It is a burrower, using its hind feet as "spades" to dig. This toad is able to encase itself underground, shutting down its body functions until moisture returns. It lays its eggs in pools of water, usually during the monsoons of July and August. The Spadefoot Toad grows from egg to tadpole to land toad in less than two weeks.

The other amphibian I have observed in the Galisteo is the Tiger Salamander. It too is a burrower, digging deep in moist soil or utilizing other animals' burrows. The Tiger is a member of the

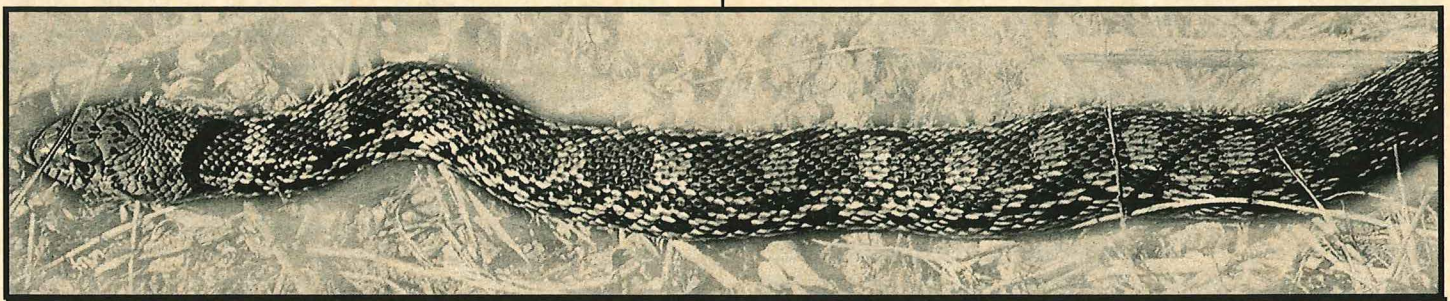
Tana Cárdenas, a junior at Santa Fe High, has competed and won the State Skills USA Competition for Related Technical Math. Now she has the opportunity to compete at the national level in Kansas City, Missouri, June 18th-25th. She needs help raising money for her trip. Your generous contributions will allow this outstanding student to compete with the best from across the nation, and to represent Galisteo, Santa Fe, and all of New Mexico.

Please make contributions out to SFHS, Building Trades Advisory Corp., and send to Cárdenas, 897 Camino Los Abuelos, Galisteo.

family of mole salamanders, living much of its life underground. My neighbor has a Tiger living in her water meter, where it hunts insects, worms, and even small mammals. Quite possibly there are also Canyon Tree Frogs in the Basin, but I have not personally observed them.

I have identified eight species of snakes in the vicinity of Galisteo. The most common sighting is of the Great Basin Gopher Snake (locally called a Bull Snake), which can range up to eight feet in length, though three to five feet is common here. It has a blotched black to brown pattern on a pinkish cream background. These snakes are usually seen on the roads in the cool of the morning and in the evening. They are absorbing heat in order to hunt. Gopher snakes are our first line of defense against rodents. Unfortunately, they are often mistaken for rattlesnakes and killed, because when threatened they will sometimes put on a bluff, loudly hissing and vibrating their tail in imitation of the rattlesnake. This response is meant for animals. They tend to be gentle to humans, whom they do not perceive as a threat. Do not kill this beautiful and gentle snake. It only does good. (cont.p.2)

Below: Six-foot Bull Snake (Photo: Richard Shuff).



I have seen a number of Western Coachwhip snakes (locally called Red Racers) in the Basin. Our local variety can be a brilliant pink to red sometimes with blotched patterns on its back. This snake is long, thin, and fast, eating insects, lizards, snakes and small rodents. It is harmless, but unlike the Gopher, can be very aggressive if handled. It often hunts during the heat of the day.

I have also seen one Western Hog Nose snake, so-named because of its prominent upturned sharp snout. Its highly developed sense of smell/taste allows it to find buried toads, lizards, rodents and eggs. This is a gentle snake, under three feet in length. When threatened, it rolls on its back and plays dead.

The Western Plains Garter Snake is quite common, often found near water, especially along the creeks. Some of the local varieties are quite brilliant in their red and yellow coloring. They eat insects, amphibians, lizards and small rodents.

I have found a number of Prairie Ringneck snakes in our yard. They are small, blackish gray, with a brilliant orange-to-red ring behind the head. They thrive in the leafy mulch of forest floors or gardens, where they hunt insects, worms, small amphibians and lizards. With the water restrictions recently imposed in Ranchitos, this habitat will be lost to them.

A number of years ago, a backhoe operator working in the Galisteo Basin uncovered a hibernating cache of Night Snakes. These small snakes, one to two feet in length, are nocturnal, as their name implies. Because of this they are rarely seen. They eat small amphibeans and lizards. As members of the *Colubrid* family, like Cobras, they are rear-fanged, with a mild toxin which they use to subdue their prey. They are harmless to humans and pets.

Last but not least, we have two types of rattlesnake in the Basin. Rattlesnakes are pit vipers, so called because they have a set of "pits," or holes, between their eyes and nostrils. These are heat receptors, used at night to detect rodents, their main diet. As vipers, they have large retractable fangs in the fronts of their mouths that they use to inject poison to subdue their prey. Their venom is highly toxic, primarily acting on the circulatory system. Bites to humans and pets are rarely fatal, but if bitten, seek a doctor's care immediately.

The most prominent and unusual features of these snakes is, of course, their rattles, made up of horned segments that vibrate against each other. They get a new segment each time they shed their skins -- on average two to four times a year.

We have two species of rattlesnake here in the Basin. From my observation, *Crotalus Viridis*, or the Prairie Rattler, is slightly more common. It ranges from one foot to a little over five feet in length. Its body color is yellowish brown with a series of darker brown blotches running down the back. Our second species is *Crotalus Atrox* or the Western Diamondback. As the name implies, it has a series of diamond patterns running down its back, highlighted with white or yellow scales. The overall pattern can be quite stunning. These are the largest of the western rattlesnakes, reaching a maximum length of seven feet. The ones I have seen here in the Basin have been three to five and a half feet.

Rattlesnakes are wonderful in that they almost always give a warning that says, "Don't Tread on Me." They would much rather avoid you than bite you. Because humans are way too

big to eat, rattlesnake bites are purely defensive. Most reported bites happen when individuals try to catch the snakes. However, climbing around on rocky ledges and outcrops can be very dangerous in the Basin.

A number of years ago I was hiking, looking for petroglyphs, in late April or early May; the temperature was in the 70s or low 80s. I was checking out a small escarpment when I noticed a movement in a narrow slit on the ledge at eye level. A particularly aggressive Diamondback lunged at me. I jumped back and heard rattles behind me to left and right. I turned and found I was surrounded by eight or nine small Prairie Rattlers out sunning. I looked up at the ledge and there were about twenty more. I had found a hibernation den.

Luckily, I had my trusty "walking/snake stick," and with as much calm as I could muster, I gently moved the little rattlers aside and got out of there. I saw five more snakes that day and figured there were better times for hiking. Remember: rocks equal Rattlesnakes!

Part II of this report will appear in June.

GCA REPORT

Linda Braun, Secretary

Thanks to everyone who came out on April 30th and made out **Community Clean Up Day** such a great success! And thanks to those who have sent contributions to the GCA's **fundraising drive**. We're now up to \$5,250.

The Board is waiting for a response from the County as to whether the speed limit can be lowered within the village to 30mph, extending the 40mph signs farther out, to create an incremental slowing process.

The Board has voted unanimously to re-institute the Flea Market as a fun and flavorful way for all of us to enhance our connections as a community. The first **Galisteo Community Flea Market** will be held rain or shine on **Saturday, June 11**, 9AM to 1PM, outdoors at the Community Center. Everyone is invited to come with treasure to sell and/or to hunt for treasures to buy. The GCA will have its own booth and accept donated items to generate income for the GCA. The Board will also post flyers and advertise to promote the event.

A group called the 285 South Trails Committee has formed to develop a **system of public-use trails for walkers, runners, bicyclists and horseback riders**. It would connect all of the communities along 285 South (from I-25 to Lamy) and out to Galisteo. Meetings will be held monthly, with representatives from each of the towns or sub-divisions participating, to map out already existing trails and consider possibilities for new ones.

The **Vista Grande Library**, located in Eldorado, would like to post flyers regarding its events and activities on the bulletin board by the new mailboxes. All residents are welcome to use and enjoy this library... [and the **bulletin board!**] It was agreed to change the **GCA Board meetings** to the **third Monday of every month**. The next one will be on May 16th, 7PM, at the Community Center.

The Santa Fe Century Bike Race will take place on May 15th and bikes will be coming through town until around 4PM.

PEDACITOS/BITS AND PIECES

Craig Moya is graduating from Santa Fe High and will attend New Mexico State University next year. **Ben Merrick** is graduating from Santa Fe Prep and will attend Stanford. **Estevan Padilla** is graduating from Capital High and will apply to the Santa Fe Fire Department.

Vicki Snyder has work appearing all over the world in juried exhibitions: National Council on Education for the Ceramic Arts, *2005 International Juried Teapot Exhibition* in Yixing, China; *Objects of Virtue* at the Dean Leshner Regional Center for the Arts, Walnut Creek, CA.; *Ceramics 2005*, Guilford Handcraft Center, Guilford, CT; and at the Gallery at the University of Rochester.

The New Mexican (3/21) showed **Linda Durham** sending portraits (by artists Carol Mothner and Daniel Morper) of servicemen killed in Iraq to the "Faces of the Fallen" exhibition at the Arlington National Cemetery in Washington D.C. As Mothner said, "Because you're against the war, people think you're against the troops. This was an opportunity to say, hey, I might not be for our involvement in this war, but I certainly support our troops. I really respect what they've done."

Chef Eddie Lyons of the Galisteo Inn's La Mancha Restaurant was profiled in the *New Mexican's* Eldorado section April 13th. His serendipitous path to executive chefdom has led to "an original mixture of New Mexican and Southwestern influence in my menus to complement the nature of the Galisteo Inn."

Munson Hunt's haunting installations of sculpture, sound and video open at Chiaroscuro in Santa Fe on May 27th (5-7PM) under the umbrella title "Free From Fear."

Jean Anaya Moya has work at the Red Aspen Gallery in Washington D.C., which specializes in traditional Hispanic art.

"Cowboy-hat-clad with a thumb hitched into his jean pocket," County Commissioner **Mike Anaya** is featured in a County-produced video for National County Government Week.

Connie Fisher, whose brother perished on 9/11, is a member of the New Mexico Chapter of Murder Victims' Families for Reconciliation, a national organization that stands in collective opposition to the death penalty. Death Penalty Repeal legislation made it through the NM House of Representatives in 2005, although lacking Governor Richardson's support; it died in its last committee before reaching the Senate Floor.

Deborah Madison's new book (her sixth), *Vegetarian Cooking from Deborah Madison's Kitchen*, has been described as "relaxed" and "unintimidating." She is soon to be inducted by the James Beard Foundation into the Who's Who of Food and Beverage in America for significant contributions to the culinary profession.

Cindy and Frank Lux and **Barbara Seiler** participated in the Spring Contemporary Clay Fair in Santa Fe in mid-April.

Tom Ford will be the chairman for Site Santa Fe's Tenth Anniversary Celebration on July 23rd, consisting in part of an Art Auction sponsored by Sotheby's.

Elaine and Richard Patton would like to thank everyone who helped them look for their little terrier, Frankie. She was found dead very close to home, cause unknown.

NEW WAY TO SANTA FE?

Richard Griscom

On March 19th the New Mexico Department of Transportation sponsored a meeting in Lamy to get public input on ways to increase mobility between Albuquerque and Santa Fe. Since one of the alternatives being considered would pass through Lamy, it has direct implications for those of us in Galisteo.

There are currently four alternatives being considered -- two involving rail transport and two involving transport by car.

One of the (environmentally-friendly) railroad alternatives would follow the existing BNSF/Amtrak line from Albuquerque north to Lamy, then the existing Santa Fe Southern Line from Lamy through Eldorado to Santa Fe. If this were chosen, people living in the Galisteo area would be able take the train from Lamy to Santa Fe and back. It would run approximately every two hours and would take about 25 minutes. The Department is working with the Santa Fe Trails bus system to ensure that there would be bus service available from the rail terminal in Santa Fe (probably somewhere in the railyard area) to the places most people would want to go in the city and back to the terminal.

The other rail alternative is much shorter but much more expensive, since it entails purchasing a long stretch of new right-of-way. It would follow the existing BNSF/Amtrak line from Albuquerque to a point approximately halfway between I-25 and Cerrillos and then turn northeast, passing northwest of Eldorado into Santa Fe.

The other two alternatives involve adding an additional lane to I-25. One would make the new lane an all-purpose lane; the other would limit the new lane to vehicles with one passenger.

The technical team will make its choice between these four alternatives by May of this year and then try to sell their choice to the political authorities -- the counties involved, the Pueblos through whose land the route would pass, etc.

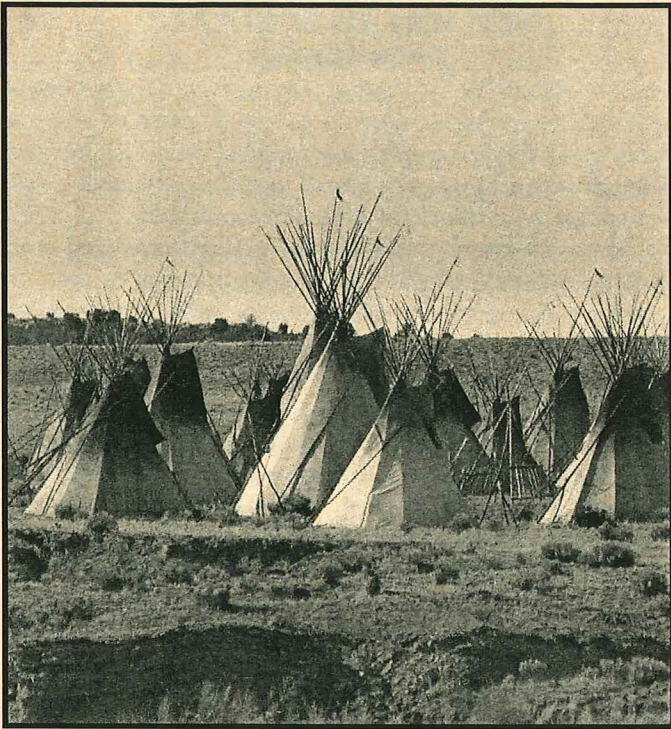
If you would like to express an opinion on any or all of these four options, call Debbie Bauman at the Dept. of Transportation, 827-0703, or e-mail: debra.bauman@nmshtd.state.nm.us.

Whatever option is chosen, it is expected to be operational by the end of 2008.

VIEWS DIFFER ON COMMUTER RAIL

The idea of a commuter rail was first floated by Governor Toney Anaya in 1982. Recently the *New Mexican* ran two opposing views on it. Frederick S. Friedman, former chief of the N. M. Dept. of Transportation, argued for it, though warning against "indifference and provincial New Mexico politics." However, "with a population growing more than 3 percent per year, steadily overused and deteriorating roads and bridges, plus rising highway casualties," its time has come. He praises Richardson for moving from a planning phase to a practical one.

W. John Swartz, former president of the Atchison, Topeka & Santa Fe Railway, opposes commuter rail, though agreeing that it is, "under the right circumstances...an efficient way to move large groups of people at relatively reasonable cost." But New Mexico's plan, he says, is too small; it won't run often enough or stop enough places to be convenient. Neither he nor Friedman mentioned the environmental benefits.



“Into the West” tipis on NM 41 (Photo: Richard Shuff)

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ADS ARE FREE, AND FOR GALISTEO RESIDENTS ONLY. Contact: Box 77 (Rte. 41 at Avenida Vieja) or call 466-1276 by **June 5th** for next issue. **PLEASE CALL TO CONTINUE ADS.**

FREE

Doublecast iron white enamel sink w. faucet; outside dimensions, 42 x 25". Harmony, 466-3932.

Horse manure from Linda Vista Stables. Call Maria, 466-8930. From Vista Clara: **Very nice Spa bathrobes.** Community members can stop by to pick one up at the Lodge, M-F, 8:30-5. **Worms** to start your worm farm! Call Liz, 466-6003.

WANTED

Cell phones for the Santa Fe Centro Rotary Club. They'll be put to valuable use and kept out of the Landfill. Call Kevan Saunders, 466-6620, for info or to donate.

FOR SALE

Anatolians: Turkish livestock guardian dogs. Born & raised with sheep, goats, horses, poultry. \$1000 + up, depending on level of livestock training. Buy the best to guard your valuable animals! Tim, 982-7782 or 577-6162; Wendy, 610-8326.

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SERVICES

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Looking for a new car or used vehicle? Our own Galisteo Native Adan Cárdenas is now a Sales Rep for Santa Fe Mazda Volvo Suzuki. Call him 471-6700 or at home at 466-8967.

Reliable Handyman, Call Kevin, 466-3559.

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Call **Beth** for **housesitting/ petcare/vet runs/odd jobs/studio assistance/party help/you name it...** in Galisteo, 470-7606.

Galisteo Caretaking Services: For the Chores You Ignore! short notice, small jobs, housesit, have truck. Richard, 466-7723. **For baby-sitting, petsitting and animal care,** call Mercedes, 466-7285.

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Ben Merrick (16 yrs old):occasional **babysitting** weekends and some evenings; 466-9040.

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Nick's Landscaping, Brush Removal, and Garbage Collection. Call 466-0530 or 470-5973.

+++ EL PUENTE DE GALISTEO+++

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