



ISSUE #95

MAY 2006

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

SMOKE AND MIRRORS

Many thanks to El Puente for presenting the "Land Grab" folly and absurd rationale of "Robin Hood and Little John." These two men (one a resident of twenty years and one a resident of Eldorado – both of whom have never contributed a whit to this community, for which we may be better off) have decided to "help" the community by taking approximately seventeen acres off our hands for their own personal control and use.

Morgan Gafford and Peirce Clayton have decided to try their hand at stealing land from forty defendants and the community at large. Their sad saga has resulted in legal fees to land owners, the involvement of over 20 title insurance companies and law offices, 300 pages of depositions, endless meetings and wasted time, not to mention the concern brought to all residents, especially older ones who do not have title insurance and therefore legal representation. The GCA has acted to (*Cont., p.2*)

MAY 20th IS GALISTEO'S ANNUAL SPRING CLEAN-UP DAY. We will meet at 9AM behind the church near the mailboxes. Trash bags will be provided. Please come and visit with friends and neighbors while you help keep our village free of litter and trash.

DEAR EL PUENTE,

Thank you for being there so we can express our opinion on a dire community matter. Last evening we received a phone call from a dear neighbor reluctantly asking us for donations for the Gafford/Clayton Legal Defense Fund. This is not meant to defend these two individuals in any way, but to defend *ourselves* as residents of Galisteo and our beautiful bosque and assorted other lands from theft. After agreeing to help out with a relatively small amount of cash, we hung up the phone and began feeling the outrage of the entire predicament.

We work hard for our money. This is NOT the way we wish to spend any extra that may be left over after the rigors (*Cont. p.2*)



Vultures at Home. Not, it turns out, a last view, given construction on Matthew McQueen's land right next to their favorite dead tree; workmen say the big birds aren't fazed and appear quite entertained. (Photo: Richard Shuff)

(*Smoke and Mirrors, cont.*) provide anyone with legal representation who is in need of it. This has been an expensive but necessary decision. This legal process has been going on for nine months. The forty four defendants are not just fighting this action for their own benefit, but for the preservation of community rights to lands along the river, which is a historical fixture in this village and belongs to every resident—not just one or two individuals. The Quiet Title suit plaintiffs (Gafford and Clayton) have no legal representation and no costs to date.

We believe these actions fall under the heading of “harassment” and wish to encourage the community at large to send contributions to the Legal Defense Fund, making checks out to the GCA and noting the fund in the memo space. The defendants have carried the burden of extensive legal fees to date along with the additional support of a few community-minded angels. We now need more help. Please give what you can. We will soon be making our case before the courts.

Mail your tax deductible contributions to the GCA, 35 Avenida Vieja, Galisteo, NM 87540. Thank You!

-- Tom Morin and Isabella Gonzales

WATER BOARD MEETS

Richard Griscom

The Board of Directors of the Galisteo Water Users Association met on April 12th at the Fire Station. One of the principle discussions was about the \$150,000 appropriated by the State Legislature for Galisteo water system improvements. This money, which is being channeled through the NM Environment Department, will be available in May or June. It will be used for such things as improving the storage tank, replacing one of the water lines, and eventually, installing meters at member households. The Association’s own funds will cover the new well about to be drilled.

The annual membership meeting was held on Wednesday May 3. All those whose terms were expiring were re-elected: Vice President Scott Diffrient, Secretary Ted Fleming, Treasurer Richard Griscom, Board Members Freddie Cárdenas and Steve Moya. Rod Hall remains President.

GCA REPORT

Linda Braun, Secretary, with Rob Civitello

The Galisteo Community Association met April 17th. Frank Hirsch and Sam Medford came to the Open Forum to inform the Board about a group of concerned village residents who have been meeting to monitor the County’s and State’s plans for road improvements on CR 42 and NM 41, in order to make sure that the improvements are consistent with the “rural aspect of our historic village.” In order to maintain awareness of the plans and to affect their design and outcome, the Board established an “official” Galisteo Road Committee.

Former Treasurer Frank Hirsch, handing over his responsibilities to Corinne Anaya, reported that the GCA has c. \$13,250 in the bank; \$10,000 in CDs; \$1,100 in a fund in memory of Linda McKee; \$732 in the Legal Defense Fund (administered by Richard Griscom). The balance is in the General Fund from which the operation and maintenance of GCA facilities are paid.

(*Dear El Puente, cont.*) of life. Not that this is not a valid cause. It

very much is and we will help defend our wonderful community from these encroachers, but the outrage remains. Who are these people? Are they neighbors? Is this the way neighbors behave? After all this is put to rest, will we pass on the road and exchange pleasantries? We have lived in Galisteo for 32 years. I (Barbara) would not know these people if I fell on them. Do they serve on any of our volunteer organizations? Do they give to causes that benefit the entire village? If we dialed 911, would they come to our aid?

The purpose of this letter is to let our community know that we are very fed up with these two thieves who are stealing our money, time, and possibly our community lands. We are grateful to those who are spending their precious time and money to pursue this fight. To paraphrase the old movie *Network*, “We’re mad as hell and we’re not going to take it any more.”

We implore Morgan Gafford and Peirce Clayton to behave like good neighbors, rethink their positions, and withdraw their claims. This is all a huge waste of everyone’s time, energy, resources and money. Please stop this foolishness and leave our bosque alone.

Your neighbors, Barb and Charlie Holloway

(*GCA cont.*) The Board discussed prevention and removal of what seems to be an **increase in graffiti** in the village – on the old bridge, the central telephone boxes on NM 41, and elsewhere. The source of the problem is believed to be outside the village. With the police and sheriff’s departments’ limited resources, the Board asks everyone in the village to be aware of suspicious activity and report it to the authorities and to the GCA Board. It was also suggested that local youths could be involved in clean-up as a way to educate and inform them, beginning perhaps on May 20th.

On April 12th a small group of Board members reviewed the **GCA Archives** at the Community Center. They reported that not much of substance was found. Documentation of the village cemeteries was reviewed and the idea arose of a living historical archive -- recording the remembrances of village elders. At the next meeting it will be discussed as “Cemetery Tour” and a subcommittee may be formed.

GCA President Freddie Cárdenas met with County Commissioner Mike Anaya regarding funds for **Community Center maintenance**. The Board is also seeking to clarify the relationship between the GCA, its facilities, and the County. Highlights included: * Sources of funds for community buildings and playgrounds and possibility of County assistance for Community Center repairs.* The County leases the Community Center for a polling location, but has no interest in owning or controlling community facilities.* Precedent for County financial involvement in original playground construction. The Board is considering a public meeting on County participation in GCA facilities maintenance.



PEDACITOS (BITS AND PIECES)

Richard Shuff’s soulful photograph of a cow was on the cover of the *March Sun*. **Sam Sloan’s** full-page “Cottonwood” was in the January issue.

Denise Lynch and **Candice Garrett** joined other notables such as Jane Fonda, Shirley MacLaine and Ali McGraw on the benefit committee for Las Cumbres Learning Services in May.

The *Lonesome Dove* prequel, *Comanche Moon*, was shooting on San Cristobal Ranch for two days. *Used Guys*, starring Ben Stiller and Jim Carey, will continue at the **Silverado Set** on the Cerro Pelon Ranch for most of the summer. The **Galisteo Inn** is feeding the crew.

Cynthia and Frank Lux and **Barbara Seiler** took part in the Contemporary Clay Fair on April 22-23.

The **County Development Review Committee** meets on May 18th at 4PM in the County Courthouse to discuss the Master Plan for Commonweal Conservancy’s village at the Galisteo Basin Preserve (Thornton Ranch). **Ted Fleming** made the tall stone sculpture that stands at the entrance to the West Basin Preserve, another Commonweal project south of CR 42.

FIRE DEPARTMENT NEWS

FIRE DANGER STILL EXTREME: BE CAREFUL!

The GVFR will be in attendance on May 21st for the Century Bike Race through Galisteo, but two members will be among the riders: **Chief Jean Moya** will ride 25 miles and **Steve Moya** will tackle 100 miles.

Bill Mitchell received his Firefighter One certificate, as did **Enrique Guerrero**. He and **Frank Croft** were certified for Basic Wildland Fire Fighting, crucial these days. One local fire danger is sparks from trains running through our district.

Wayne and Barbara King have joined the Department and are working on their Firefighter One certifications.

KNOCK KNOCK! WHO’S THERE?

Jan Saunders

Five species of Woodpeckers, that’s who. The Northern Flicker, Hairy, Downy, Ladder-backed and Lewis’s Woodpeckers are all here in Galisteo. The first four can be seen year-round in the Basin. All five are relatively easy to identify.

Woodpeckers in general have stiff tail feathers, strong claws and sharp padded bills that enable them to hammer out nest holes, peel away bark in search of insects, and drum out their own unique signals to mates and enemies alike. They can be lured to your feeders with suet.

The largest of our Woodpeckers is the Northern (Red-shafted) Flicker. This handsome brown bird is easily identified by his white butt patch, loud call, and the undulating flight pattern typical of most Woodpeckers. That’s a Flicker you hear drumming loudly on the wooden fencer boards under the roof of your house. The much smaller Downy, Hairy, and Ladder-backed are primarily black and white. The Hairy and Downy are most easily identified by their white backs. These two are nearly identical, but the Hairy is almost 3” larger and has a much longer bill. The Ladder-backed fits in between these two in size but has no white back patch.

The most unique of our Woodpeckers is the Lewis’s. He’s bigger than the three little black and white cuties, but not as large as the Flicker. The black back, greenish head, red face and pink belly tell you right off that he is something special. He flies with the slow steady wing beats of a crow and catches insects in the air like a flycatcher. I have seen this Woodpecker twice in Ranchitos, both times around Thanksgiving. For its size, Galisteo attracts more than its share of New Mexico Woodpeckers. Who knows, maybe one day we’ll get an Ivory-billed!

MEETINGS OVERVIEW

On March 22 a well-attended public meeting was held by the **State Parks** Department at the Galisteo Community Center to present proposals and gather input about State Parks in the Galisteo Basin. It followed a similar gathering in the San Marcos/Cerrillos area. State Parks Recreation Division Director Dave Simon presented five proposals: 1) The State taking over the existing County park at *Cerrillos Hills*. 2) The Cerrillos Hills Park plus a new one at County-owned *Petroglyph Hill* (site of a very large array of rock art on the south side of CR 42) 3) Both of the above plus another park at *Pueblo Blanco*, south of Galisteo, on State Trust Land. 4-5) No parks at all, or combinations of the above. One or more (Petroglyph Hill seemed the preference) might include a campground.

The notion of handing the Cerrillos Hills Park over to the State has been around for at least couple of years, and is mostly approved by Cerrillos residents. But the other two sites were a surprise, given their fragile archaeological resources.

County planner Beth Mills noted that the environmental impact of eco and cultural tourism has not yet been determined and that it would be premature to plan parks at Petroglyph Hill and Pueblo Blanco at this time. Most of those attending the Galisteo meeting agreed with her, although the very valid issue of elitism and NIMBY (Not in My Back Yard) was raised by those who felt we should share our publicly owned resources.

*

On May 1st a potluck information meeting on the **paving of CR 42** (Camino de los Abuelos) was held at the Turquoise Trail Fire Station, Gino De Angelis and John Jacquez from the County DOT presiding. Three people from Galisteo and seven from San Marcos attended. The plans now call for *two 10’ lanes and two 4’ bike lanes*, with minor straightening, and a cement pad but no bridge at Arroyo de Los Angeles. The few alterations will not change the right of way and general path of the road. No new land will be acquired. Construction will begin in late 2006.

*

On May 5 the **Galisteo Watershed Partnership** met at the Community College for a “Conservation Initiatives Dialogue.” Representatives from Earth Works Institute, County Planning and Open Space, Taos BLM, State Parks, State Forestry, National Parks, Santa Fe Conservation Trust, Commonweal Conservancy, Eldorado Improvement Association, and the Galisteo Planning Committee were present. A great many facets of the Galisteo Watershed’s health were discussed in this productive gathering. (*Cont. p.4*)

Of particular interest to Galisteo: * The BLM's work on the *Archaeological Protection Act*; possible designation of the Galisteo Basin as a "special area" for environmental and cultural resources. Visual resources (the views), oil/gas and gravel pits, and transportation access also to be considered. * The Forestry Dept.'s *Watershed Health Plan*, offering help to private landowners of over 10 acres for fuel reduction projects, clearing dead trees and replanting, as well as preparing for climate change (both the State Engineer and the Environment Dept. are doing reports). * State *Parks* in the Basin (see above.) *The San Marcos plan's *strategies for maintaining low residential density and monitoring the aquifer and Santa Fe's creep south*. They have no interest in a County-wide water system. * The Army Corps of Engineers' *salt cedar eradication plan* upstream of the Galisteo Dam, using mechanical extraction, then goats, and finally chemicals, if all else fails.* State *acquisition of the old DNSF Railway right of way* on the North Bank of the Galisteo Creek.* EWI's *Wetlands Project*, mapping all the watershed's wetlands and springs and relating them to alluvial storage and water-storing soils.* A much needed all-encompassing *layered GIS mapping program for the watershed*.

COMING NEXT MONTH: Update on the Galisteo Community Planning Committee's recent meetings.

EL PUENTE SPONSORS: SUSAN ROTHENBERG & BRUCE NAUMAN

GALISTEO CLASSIFIED

ADS ARE FREE, AND FOR GALISTEO RESIDENTS ONLY. Contact: 14 Avenida Vieja or call 466-1276 by June 5th for next issue. PLEASE CALL TO CONTINUE ADS.

FREE

Horse manure from Linda Vista Stables. Call Maria, 466-8930.

FOR RENT

Historic home in heart of old village, 2 BR, 1B, \$1500 mo. 466-2111.

WANTED

Space to rent for storage and light workshop, approx. 100-1200sq ft. Call Jim West, 818-209-8587.

FOR SALE

Kembucha—culture and method for making traditional Asian fermented tea. Tara, 466-2111. (For sale or trade.)

SERVICES

Saturday Art Classes for children and adults, Retablos and watercolors. 10-12AM or 2-4PM, weekdays or weekends, from May 20th. \$150 for 6 weeks. Catherine Ferguson. 466-2765.

Factotum: Can I help with something? Tara, 466-2111.

One Room at a Time, Organize, Clear Clutter. Redecorate, Archive Memorabilia. Call Pamela Markoya, 466-9191.

Barbara Holloway Fine Handweaving scarves, shawls, vests, jackets, handwoven of luxurious chenille. 466-2118.

Like things done right? Welding, flagstone, moss rock, fountains, plumbing, sprinkler, and drip systems plus Gopher Control. David Maestas, cell 670-8608 or 660-9715.

Photo & Design. www.richardshuff.com; 466-7723.

Tree Cutting & Trimming Service, Fence Building, Odd Jobs; E-Bay too! Call Mark, 466-1267.

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

Galisteo Caretaking Services. Richard, 466-7723.

Baby-sitting, petsitting and animal care, Mercedes, 466-7285. Need a permit? Computer Aided Drafting Support: for architects, engineers, contractors and homeowners. 4 yrs. experience/local references. Call Adan Cárdenas, 466-8967.

Dave's Auto Repair: tune-ups, oil change, restoring, minor repairs, restoring, painting. Local refs. Free estimates: David Montoya, 466-2097.

SB Lejo/Sina Brush is taking special orders for antique Mexican furniture. Call 577-4045.

Galisteo Woodworks: for your custom woodworking needs. Furniture and furniture repair. Antonio Chavez, 466-3601.

Carpentry: Custom closets, hand-carved tables, benches, gates, doors, 35 yrs. experience, local refs. Onesimo, 466-1430.

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Native Bloom, Landscape design/maintenance. Linda, 466-4658.

Restore your old photo: We copy, repair, and reprint your favorite damaged or fading photos. Richard/Cara, 466-7723.

Linda Vista Stables: Beginner western riding for children and adults; 1-2 hr. trail rides; short-term boarding. 466-8930.

Common sense, gentle dog-training: house manners, management problem-solving at your home; also limited boarding. Twenty years experience. Call Evelyn, 466-1875.

Acupuncture, herbal medicine, feng shui, nutritional counseling, massage. Dr. Connie Fisher, 470-9314.

Passive Solar Builders: Locally owned general contractor since 1980. Quality home construction, renovations: 466-2118.

Private Exercise Training and Power Circuit Classes with Ron Helman. Call 466-1919.

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

+++ EL PUENTE DE GALISTEO+++

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