Greetings from the Executive Director

As the Director of the Department of Cultural Affairs, I think we should do things at your state agency. During the public input sessions, I listened to what New Mexicans think we should be doing at your state agency by reading the petitions and brochures. I want to track the impact of this program. To get a copy of the New Mexico Fiber Arts Trails guidebook and brochure, please call 1-800-879-505 or download it at www.nmarts.org. We want to hear from you, our constituents, as we update our strategic plan at New Mexico Arts and do our long application for funding to the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) this fall. The NEA is one of our major funders, paying for about 40 percent of our grants budget, as well as several staff positions.

I'm pleased to report that these pilot Arts Trails have been successful. We received wonderful press about our newly developed New Mexico Fiber Arts Trails in several publications including New Mexico Magazine, New Mexico Magazine story on the trails. And in June, we got a call from a contemporary artist who saw the artwork in the New Mexico Magazine story on the trails. In Washington DC, Lonjose, who just graduated from Zuni Pueblo, was among 12 high school students from across the country to advance to the national finals at the 2007 Poetry Out Loud National Recitation Contest. To preserve, enhance, and develop the arts in New Mexico, we applaud Governor Bill Richardson's recent approval of the budget for the 2008-2009 fiscal year. Governor's Awards for Excellence in the Arts were mandated by the state legislature in late August. We're installing our third T.I.M.E project in Installations Made for the Environment, which we've used to showcase traditional folk art and promote literacy, and we want to make sure we're serving all of you and meet our constituencies.

A division of the Department of Cultural Affairs

NEW MEXICO ARTS | A division of the Department of Cultural Affairs

Santa Fe, NM
87504-1450

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ARTS SPEAK

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Jackie Haff, Albuquerque
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Ann Silver, Santa Fe
Jonice Spence, Hobbs
Pat Wisentelner, Santa Fe

www.nmarts.org

July 2007

ARTSPEAK
Greetings from the Executive Director

New Mexico Arts is traveling around our state this summer, holding public input sessions, and listening to what New Mexicans think we should be doing at your state arts agency, a division of the Department of Cultural Affairs.

We want to hear from you, our constituents, as we update our strategic plan at New Mexico Arts and do our long application for funding to the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) this fall. The NEA is one of our major funders, paying for about 40 percent of our grants budget, as well as several staff positions.

We want to know what you think we’re doing well and what we could improve. This is an opportunity for us to take a hard look at our programs and priorities, and we want to make sure we’re serving all of you and meeting the arts needs of our state.

We’ve initiated several new programs since we did our last strategic plan in 2004. Some of these programs were mandated by the NEA, such as Poetry Out Loud, the national recitation contest for high school students to promote literacy, and American Masterpieces, which we’ve used to showcase traditional folk arts in New Mexico.

We’ve also begun an exciting new public art program called T.I.M.E.: Temporary Installations Made for the Environment. We’ve also begun an exciting new public art program called T.I.M.E.: Temporary Installations Made for the Environment.

We’ve created an important economic development and cultural tourism initiative with our ArtsTrails program by working with our governor, our legislature, and our many partners.

We’ve received wonderful press about our newly developed New Mexico Fiber Arts Trails in several publications including Fibersite, New Mexico Magazine, and American Home, the 2007 summer guide to New Mexico, an award-winning publication published this spring when sites along the trail began reporting exciting anecdotes of increased business, which we hope continues.

A group of fiber artists from El Paso arranged to take a silk painting class in Elephant Butte after picking up the guidebook at the Fiber Arts Fiesta in Albuquerque in May. A Silver City artist sold a basket to an Indiana customer who saw the artwork in the New Mexico Magazine story on the trails. And in June, we got a call from a contemporary paper sculptress in El Rito who had just had a carload of visitors from Illinois and Washington stop by. Please keep us informed of any success stories along the arts trails, as we want to track the impact of this program.

To get a copy of the New Mexico Fiber Arts Trails guidebook and brochure, please call our office at 505/827-6490 or 800/879-4278 (Instate). The publications can also be downloaded at www.nmferiarls.org.

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In this issue, we celebrate the recipients of the 2007 Governor’s Arts Awards, who will be honored on September 14 in ceremonies in Santa Fe. “This year’s recipients of the Governor’s Awards for Excellence in the Arts proudly reflect New Mexico’s reputation as the ‘State of the Arts,’” said Governor Bill Richardson in announcing this year’s awardees.

First Lady Barbara Richardson said, “Day in, day out, and year after year, these artists and supporters work to enrich our lives, our communities, and our spirit. We applaud their efforts and their achievements.”

I also want to congratulate Fantasia Lonjose for the second year in a row.

From Zuni Pueblo who was among 12 high school students from across the country to advance to the national finals at the 2007 Poetry Out Loud National Recitation Contest in Washington DC, Lonjose, who just graduated from Santa Fe Indian School, won the New Mexico State Finals of Poetry Out Loud for the second year in a row.

I’m pleased to report that these pilot Arts Trails, focused on rural fiber arts, including weaving, are already making a difference in the economic health and sustainability of our state. Our guidebook and brochure on the New Mexico Fiber Arts Trail had barely been published this spring when sites along the trail began reporting exciting anecdotes of increased business, which we hope continues.

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In the coming year, we want to begin to expand the ArtsTrails, which are designed to put New Mexico artists on the map and bring the market to them, especially in our rural areas. In September, we’re hosting a gathering in Truth or Consequences of local arts councilists from around New Mexico to discuss their involvement in the Arts Trails. The keynote speaker will be Michael Shuman, a national authority on growing local economies.

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2007 Governor’s Awards for Excellence in the Arts

Governor Bill Richardson and First Lady Barbara Richardson, and the New Mexico Arts Commission, have announced the recipients of the 2007 Governor’s Awards for Excellence in the Arts.

This year’s recipients are Bill Fegan of Raton - Performing Arts/Theater; William Field of Santa Fe – Major Contributor to the Arts; James Koehler of Santa Fe for Fiber Arts/Weaving; Tapetry; Verne L. Lucero of Quemado for Spanish Colonial Tinwork; Evelyn Rosenberg of Albuquerque for Sculpture/Dentography; Fred Robert Wilson of Albuquerque - Major Contributor to the Arts; and the New Mexico Symphony Orchestra – Major Contributor to the Arts.

Presented along with the Governor’s Arts Awards, the Allan Houser Memorial Award is given to an individual who has demonstrated artistic success and community involvement. This year’s recipient of the Houser Award is artist activist Ed Grothos of Los Alamos.

Established in 1974 by Governor Bruce King and First Lady Alice King, the Governor’s Arts Awards celebrate the role that artists, craftpeople, and arts supporters play in the economic and cultural life of New Mexico. During the awards 34-year existence, a diverse and prestigious list of painters, weavers, sculptors, dancers, musicians, storytellers, poets, actors, playwrights, and potters have been honored.

Nominations for the awards are invited each year from arts groups and individuals. The nominations are reviewed by a committee of the New Mexico Arts Commission, which sends its recommendations to the full commission and to the governor.

The Allan Houser Memorial Award was created in 1994 to pay tribute to the late Chiricahua Apache sculptor and former instructor at the Institute of American Indian Art (IAIA). The award is presented each year by the Allan Houser family and the IAIA Museum in conjunction with the Governor’s Awards for Excellence in the Arts.

This year’s Governor’s Arts Awards ceremonies will be held on Friday, September 14, 2007, 5:15 – 7:00 p.m. at the St. Francis Auditorium, Museum of Fine Arts, in Santa Fe. A public reception and exhibit opening will be held from 5:30 – 4:30 p.m., in the Governor’s Gallery, 4th Floor, State Capitol. Both events are free and open to the public.

Growing up in southern New Mexico, I remember summer trips to the Sacramento Mountains.

We would stop at a roadside stand selling fruits and vegetables, and buy some cherry ciders. When we reached Mescalero there would be stands offering Apache baskets, but we kept driving in search of more. We ordered baked bread and bought a few Mesqeralo baskets instead of cider because today they are highly valued by collectors.

The Apache people of the American Southwest were once famous for their exquisite baskets originally constructed for household or ceremonial use. Before the tourism boom in the 1980s, Apache made baskets for their own needs and uses. As a highly mobile society, they required baskets that were suited to travel and camp life. There were primarily three types of baskets that fit their lifestyle.

The first was a shallow coilware bowl or platter, sometimes called a winnowing bowl, that was used for food preparation and serving. The shallow winnowing bowl was (and still is) used for many ceremonial purposes. The second was the twined burden basket used to carry personal possessions and household items or for gathering food. The third was a twine wrapped water jug or canteen lined with piton proof for waterproofing.

With the advent of the tourist trade, several Apache groups began constructing large ollas or basket versions of the large Pueblo jars used for water and seed storage. These continue to be made by the Western Apache and, although sometimes constructed in New Mexico, are not common here. Western Apache bands in Arizona were the most prolific makers during this tourism boom, but the Mescalero were also well known for their finely crafted burden baskets.

Both the Jicarilla Apaches of northern and the Mescalero of southern New Mexico historically made these primary types of baskets. However, their baskets are markedly different from each other and from the Western Apache. In both cases, the baskets are similar to traditional Western Apache baskets, but often incorporate different plant materials that are readily available in New Mexico, such as yucca instead of willow, in their construction.

Jicarilla baskets have been influenced by Plains Indian and Pueblo patterns, techniques, and materials, but still retain distinctive Apache characteristics.

The heart of the traditional Apache basket is the sumac plant. The split twigs of the sumac constitute the foundation of the basket. For a coilware basket, the Western Apache use a three-rud triangular sumac base while the Jicarilla typically use a five-rud base. The Mescalero employ a vertically stacked three-rud base of two sumac rods and banded grasses or yucca fibers. There are different allowances for easy identification of finished baskets by these groups.

Traditional Mescalero coilware baskets are also identifiable by their woven patterns. The most obvious and distinctive Mescalero trademark is a base design metaphor incorporated in the number four. Whereas Jicarilla or Jicarilla Apache may have a star with five or six points in the design, the Mescalero star will have four points.

Today, few any coilware baskets are being constructed at Mescalero. The burden basket is still found and there are a few makers left, primarily in the Kayahahine family. The Apache burden basket is a twilled basket that is mainly constructed of sumac and yucca or grass fibers, although other plants may be incorporated if these are not available. The Western Apache burden basket usually has a buckskin bottom for added support and a buckskin fringe around the top on which the woman’s belt or jingles are attached. The San Carlos Apaches claim they were the tradition of the tin bells in the 1930s, but a Mescalero burden basket, from the 1980s, replete with buckskin and tin jingles, is part of the collection of the School of American Research.

Today, basketmaking is much more widespread on the Jicarilla Apache reservation than at Mescalero. The Jicarilla tribal government has been very supportive of the craft, offering classes since the 1960s, and there are many who practice basketmaking. One noted craftsman is Lydia Pineda, awarded the New Mexico Governor’s Award for Excellence in the Arts in 1993, who continues to teach basketmaking on the reservation.

Coilware bowls are the most common items woven at Jicarilla although some burden baskets are made as well.

Very few Apache basketmakers continue to make pitch resin canteens and water jugs. Barbara M Aulin identifies one Jicarilla maker in her 1984 book. I have also heard confirmed reports that there are still one or two makers among the western Apache. However, these Western Apache jugs are not constructed today to carry water but rather to ferment a traditional Apache corn beer called tulsip or tawo, which is still used by some groups for ceremonial purposes.

For more information on Apache baskets and their makers, read Indian Basketmakers of the Southwest by Larry Dalrymple, Museum of New Mexico Press, 2000; Santa Fe; Traditions in Transition: Contemporary BasketWeaving of the southwestern Indians, by Barbara M Aulin, Museum of New Mexico Press, 1984; Santa Fe; or visit the Museum of Indian Arts and Culture in Santa Fe.
Bill Fegan has played an important role in arts revitalization efforts in northeastern New Mexico for over three decades. He led the restoration of the historic Shuler Theater in Raton and helped launch several organizations, including the Raton Arts and Humanities Council, Raton Performing Arts Association, Raton Choral Society, and Raton Community Corporation. Fegan arrived in Raton in 1964 from Stillman College in Tuscaloosa, Alabama. The Raton Arts Council in 2001 recognized Fegan with their first Raton Treasure Award. The city will cast his name in bronze as the first honoree on the Raton Trail of Honor.

William Field is director of the Museum of Spanish Colonial Art in Santa Fe and a driving force behind the city’s annual Spanish Market. Field was raised in Santa Fe in a small 1870s adobe farmouse purchased in the 1920s by his mother, Lois Field, who was instrumental in the revival of the Spanish Colonial Arts Society in the 1950s. A graduate of Harvard University, Field established the design department at the Polaroid Corporation in 1957, and all Polaroid products continue to carry his prize-winning trademark. In 1976, he launched his own design firm, William Field Design, in Santa Fe, which has garnered more than 400 local, regional, and national design awards, including the New York Directors’ Gold Medal and the Water Paepcke Award of the Aspen Institute. Field has done pro bono work for many area nonprofits. In 1997, Field received the Mayor’s Recognition Award for Excellence in the Arts from the City of Santa Fe.

James Koehler of Santa Fe is a nationally acclaimed fiber artist, teacher, and mentor in his art form in New Mexico. In 1977, Koehler moved to New Mexico from Michigan where he joined the brothers of Christ in the Desert Monastery. With the vibrant colors of the Chama River canyon as inspiration, he began to weave, eventually leaving monastic life to focus exclusively on weaving. Last January, Koehler was among 12 artists selected by the U.S. Department of State to act as a cultural ambassador. Koehler sent to Iceland where he gave a series of lectures, demonstrations, and workshops about his work and life as an artist in New Mexico. His work is represented in museums including the Renwick Gallery of the Smithsonian American Art Museum in Washington DC, the Denver Art Museum, and the New Mexico Museum of Art in Santa Fe.

Fred Wilson of Albuquerque is the founder of the New Mexico African-American Artists’ Guild. Wilson is the founder and owner of the Muddy Wheel Gallery and School and is a noted artist, creating sculpture, pottery, mosaics, photographs, paintings, stone, and woodcarvings for nearly 40 years. Wilson also works with children, opening his studio to about 40 school tours each year. "These are not merely tours and demonstrations — each child is allowed to create two pieces of pottery, hand-built and one thrown on the wheel," stated Christine Snyder in her letter of support for Wilson’s nomination.

The New Mexico Symphony Orchestra, led by music director Guillermo Figueroa, is celebrating its 75th anniversary this year and is recognized for its contributions to the arts, tourism, cultural exchanges with Mexico, and diversity in New Mexico. The symphony is the largest year-round performing arts organization in New Mexico, employing more than 100 full and part-time musicians and staff, and reaching an audience of more than 130,000 each year. The symphony also provides educational programming for more than 50,000 children, youth, and adults each year and is the largest non-governmental provider of music education in New Mexico.
T.I.M.E. (Temporary Installations Made for the Environment) - Taces Projects

The Art in Public Places Program of New Mexico Arts has commissioned ten temporary, visually engaging, and conceptually rich environmental artworks to be exhibited in and around Taos. New Mexico Sites hosting artwork include Taos Center for the Arts, Harwood Museum of Art, University of New Mexico - Taos, KTAO (101.9FM) Solar Radio and Five Magazine, and Taos News. The artwork will relate to this year’s theme earth.

Participating artists:
1. Kendra Grace Brock
2. Joe Barzen
3. Steve Storz
4. Sabra Sowell-Lovejoy
5. Zoe Wolfe and Steven Shenklinch
6. Ely Krzyzka
7. Harlan Emil Gruber
8. Jana Greiner
9. Christa Orr
10. Richard Lowenberg

Light passing through the glass panels will cast patterns and pools of colored light on the walls and floor. Upon closer inspection, the movement of the artwork gives way to the colorful imagery of the panels, as each panel is a translucent painting. Eight of the panels feature detailed images and symbols of knowledge, quotations from scientists and philosophers, mathematical equations, chemistry formulas, and computer code.

Kim Crowley Artwork Commissioned for Lea County Cowboy Hall of Fame
Santa Fe sculptor Kim Crowley has been commissioned to create an artwork for the Western Heritage Museum and Lea County Cowboy Hall of Fame at New Mexico Junior College in Hobbs. Crowley will construct a bronzee relief sculpture of a cowboy riding a horse to be displayed on the museum’s exterior stone wall. The piece will appear to be an integral part of the original building design to attract visitors to the museum. The image of an archetypal cowboy will provide viewers with a reference point from which to enjoy the exhibitions housed within the institution. Anticipated installation is fall 2008.

Additional Resources:
American Society of Media Photographers: http://www.asmp.org
Western States Arts Federation: https://www.caiforenty.org/imaging_tips.php

New Artwork Installed at New Mexico Tech
Internationally recognized San Francisco-based artist Shan Shan Sheng completed the installation of Rhythms in Growth and Learning in the Joseph A. Fidel Student Services Center at New Mexico Tech in Socorro in May. The 38-feet high, 25-feet diameter cold-cast glass sculpture consists of 46 suspended panels.

The artwork embodies the two main aspects of a student’s life, the academic and personal, whose constant interaction is reflected by the two twisting elements of the sculpture. One strand represents the growth of the student’s personal life as it spirals upward. The other strand speaks of their academic life as it interacts with their personal life.
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Macter folk artist Vernes L. Lucero of Quemado first became interested in metalwork in 1994, after retiring from the Española Hospital as a maintenance supervisor. He quickly achieved fame through his work in this medium. Lucero was accepted into the annual Spanish Market on his second try and won the Bienvensos Award for Most Promising New Artist in 1996. In 1998, he received Best of Show for Crafts at the New Mexico Arts and Crafts Show in Albuquerque and has repeatedly taken first place awards for his tinwork at Summer Spanish Market. Lucero’s work is represented at the Museum of International Folk Art and the Museum of Spanish Colonial Art. Major projects have included extensive tinwork décor for the restoration of the old Fred Harvey La Posada Hotel in Winslow, Arizona; new chandeliers for the Spanish Market. Lucero’s work has been featured in national publications, and several organizations, including the New Mexico Museum of International Folk Art and the Museum of Spanish Colonial Art.

Evelyn Rosenberg of Albuquerque is world-renowned for her explosive art form called Detonography. Rosenberg began experimenting with the use of explosives at the New Mexico Institute of Mining and Technology as a new way to make lightweight, bas-relief sculpture. In detonography, a flat sheet explosive is laid over metal layers that rest on a mold. The resulting explosion causes the metal to take on the shape of the mold. Her work has been described as giant primitivism, but with a richness and color closer to that of jewelry. Rosenberg and her art have been featured on the Today Show, Nightline, NPR, BBC, and Japanese and Russian television. She has completed numerous public art commissions in New Mexico, including several projects in Albuquerque and at New Mexico State University in Las Cruces.

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Art in Public Places

Digital Submission Requirements for Art in Public Places Projects

Since many artists now submit digital images, the Art in Public Places Program (AIPP) will now only accept digital images as part of artist submissions for public art projects. The new required format for digital images is based on the standard format size used by many public art programs across the country. This will assist artists who apply to multiple public art projects.

AIPP will no longer accept slide images or digital images that do not comply with these digital image requirements:

Size:  No more than 3200 pixels in either height or width.
File Format: Baseline.jpg
Compression: Files should not be larger than 1.8 MB.
File Names: Each jpg must be titled with the artist’s name and number that corresponds to the annotated image list. For example, artist1.jpg, artist2.jpg

If you are using a Mac, please note that New Mexico computers may have trouble identifying images with names that include spaces. You should use underscores instead of spaces.

Additional Resources:
American Society of Media Photographers: [http://www.asmp.org](http://www.asmp.org)
Western States Art Federation: [https://www.callforartists.org](https://www.callforartists.org)

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Balancing Act

ARTSpeak • JULY 2007 • www.nmarts.org

T.I.M.E. (Temporary Installations Made for the Environment) - Tacos

August 24, 2007 - October 26, 2007

The Art in Public Places Program of New Mexico Arts has commissioned ten temporary, visually engaging, and conceptually rich environmental artworks to be exhibited in and around Taos, New Mexico. Sites hosting the artwork include Taos Center for the Arts, Harwood Museum of Art, University of New Mexico - Taos, KTAO (101.9FM), Solar Radio and Five Magazine, and Taos News. The artwork will relate to this year’s theme earth.

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Anticipated installation is fall 2008.

Acclaimed Artist Purchase Initiative

Prospectus #189

Deadline: August 1, 2007

The Art in Public Places Program (AIPP) of New Mexico Arts announces the fourth biannual Acclaimed Artists Series. Renowned, established artists residing in Arizona, Colorado, New Mexico, Oklahoma, Texas, and Utah are invited to apply. The goal of the Acclaimed Artists Series is to diversify the state’s Public Art Collection by purchasing high caliber artwork from the region’s most distinguished artists.

Artwork must be durable, permanent, low-maintenance, and in compliance with ADA guidelines. All media will be considered. All work must be original or in editions of 50 or less. All prints must be hand-pulled, no offset lithography. Digital photographic prints must be in the standard format size used by many public art programs. The new required format size is based on the standard format size used by many public art programs across the country. This will assist artists who apply to multiple public art projects.

AIPP will now only accept digital images as part of artist submissions for public art projects. The new required format for digital images is based on the standard format size used by many public art programs across the country. This will assist artists who apply to multiple public art projects.

Artists must receive a prospectus to apply. For more information and to receive a prospectus, contact AIPP staff at 505/827-6490, 800/879-4278 (instate), or 505/826-7917 (out-of-state). A complete prospectus can be downloaded from the website at [www.nmarts.org](http://www.nmarts.org).

Memories in Stone, Gila Cliff Dwellings: J. Owen Smith, oil painting | 18” x 24” | Gila Regional Medical Center’s Cancer Center | Silver City

For more information, contact AIPP staff at 505/827-6490, 800/879-4278 (instate, or email [aipp@nmarts.org](mailto:aipp@nmarts.org)).
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This year’s recipients are Bill Fegan of Raton - Performing Arts Theater; William Field of Santa Fe - Major Contributor to the Arts; James Koehler of Santa Fe for Fiber Arts; Weaving Tapestry; Venise L. Lucero of Quebrada for Spanish Colonial Tinwork; Evelyn Rosenberg of Albuquerque for Sculpture; Dantoniography; Fred Robert Wilson of Albuquerque - Major Contributor to the Arts; and the New Mexico Symphony Orchestra – Major Contributor to the Arts.

Presented along with the Governor’s Art Awards, the Allan Houser Memorial Award is given to an individual who has demonstrated artistic success and community involvement. This year’s recipient of the Houser Award is artist activist Ed Grothus of Los Alamos.

Established in 1974 by Governor Bruce King and First Lady Alice King, the Governor’s Arts Awards recognize the role that artists, craftspersons, and arts supporters play in the economic and cultural life of New Mexico. During the awards 34-year existence, a diverse and prestigious list of painters, weavers, sculptors, dancers, musicians, storytellers, poets, actors, playwrights, and potters have been honored. Nominations for the awards are invited each year from arts groups and individuals. The nominations are reviewed by a committee of the New Mexico Arts Commission, which sends its recommendations to the full commission and to the governor.

The Allan Houser Memorial Award was created in 1994 by the Allan Houser Family Trust to honor the late Chiricahua Apache sculptor and former instructor at the Institute of American Indian Art (IAIA). The award is presented by the Allan Houser Family Trust each year at the Governor’s Arts Awards ceremony. This year’s recipient of the Allan Houser Memorial Award is artist/activist Ed Grothus of Los Alamos.

This year’s Governor’s Arts Awards ceremony will be held on Friday, September 14, 2007,5:15 – 7:00 p.m. at The St. Francis Auditorium, Museum of Fine Arts, in Santa Fe. A public reception and exhibit opening will be held from 3:30 – 4:30 p.m., in the Governor’s Gallery, 4th Floor, State Capitol. Both events are free and open to the public.

APACHE BASKETMAKING IN NEW MEXICO

Growing up in southern New Mexico, I remember summer trips to the Sacramento Mountains. We would stop at a roadside stand selling fruits and vegetables, and buy some cherry cider. When we reached Mesilla there would be stands offering Apache baskets, but we kept driving in search of a suitable one. When we had stopped and bought a few Mesilla baskets instead of cider because today they are highly valued by collectors.

The Apache people of the American Southwest are among the most famous for their exquisite baskets originally constructed for household or ceremonial use. Before the tourism boom in the 1930s, Apache baskets were made for their own needs and uses. As a highly mobile society, they required baskets that were suited to travel and camp life. There were primarily three types of baskets that fit their lifestyle. The first was a shallow coiled bowl or plateau, sometimes called a winnowing basket, that was used for food preparation and serving. The shallow winnowing basket was (and still is) used for many ceremonial purposes. The second was the twilled burden basket used to carry personal possessions and household items or for gathering food. The third was a twilled water jar or canteen lined with pithon for waterproofing.

With the advent of the tourist trade, several groups such as the Jicarilla, the Mescalero and the Western Apache, began the tradition of the tin bells in the 1930s, and a Mesilla burden basket usually has a buckskin bottom for added support and a buckskin fringe around the top which is usually one for jingling as they are attached. The San Carlos Apaches claim they began the tradition of the tin bells in the 1930s, but a Mesilla burden basket, from the 1980s, replete with buckskin and tin jingles, is part of the collection of the School of American Research.

Today, baking is much more widespread on the Jicarilla Apaches reservation than at Mesilla. The Jicarilla tradition has been very supportive of the craft, offering classes since the 1960s, and there are many who practice baking. One noted craftsman is Lynda Paleta, awarded the New Mexico Governor’s Award for Excellence in the Arts in 1993, who continues to teach baking to reservation students.

Today, basketmaking is much more widespread and the Jicarilla Apaches reservation than at Mesilla. The Jicarilla tradition has been very supportive of the craft, offering classes since the 1960s, and there are many who practice baking. One noted craftsman is Lynda Paleta, awarded the New Mexico Governor’s Award for Excellence in the Arts in 1993, who continues to teach baking to reservation students.

The heart of the traditional Apache basket is the sumac plant. The split twig of the sumac constitutes the foundation of the basket. For a coiled basket, the Western Apache use a three-rood triangular sumac base while the Jicarilla typically use a five-rood base. Mescalero employ a vertically stacked three-rood bundle of two sumac rods and bundled grasses or yucca fibers. These differences allow for easy identification of finished baskets by these groups.

Traditional Mescalero coiled baskets are also identifiable by their woven patterns. The most obvious and distinctive Mescalero trademark is a base design metaphor incorporating the number four. Mescalero coiled baskets may have a star with five or six points in the design, the Mescalero star will have four points.

Today, few if any coiled baskets are being constructed at Mesilla. The burden basket is still found and there are a few makers left, primarily in the Kayahffine family. The Apache burden basket is a twilled basket that is mainly constructed of sumac and yucca grasses, although other plants may be incorporated if these are available. Western Apache baskets usually have a buckskin bottom for added support and a buckskin fringe around the top which is usually one for jingling. The JicarillaApache, on the other hand, usually have the bottom lined with buckskin and the jingles are attached.