



# The Slip Trail

The Newsletter of New Mexico Potters & Clay Artists | www.nmpotters.org | P.O. Box 26811 Albuquerque, NM 87125

**September 2009**

## New Mexico Potters & Clay Artists

*"...to promote excellence and creativity in the clay arts, and to further their understanding and appreciation throughout New Mexico...."*

### *In this issue:*

- ◆ Ghost Ranch Workshop Review
- ◆ Electronic Communication
- ◆ Shows, Announcements, Workshops
- ◆ Classifieds
- ◆ Welcome New Members

### ***Worth the Wait!!***

***The September issue of the Slip Trail was intentionally delayed in order to include a full report from the Ghost Ranch Workshop held the last weekend in August. The workshop was well attended and the participants have all reported how thrilling it was to do such satisfying hands-on work. Theresa Tunick is our NMPCA workshop coordinator and she is due a great round of thanks for organizing such a splendid workshop. I'm sure you will enjoy this review and we hope all are inspired to try to include our annual end-of-August workshop in their plans for next year.***

***Thanks Theresa!***

***Phil Green, Editor***

### ***Mata Ortiz Secrets Shared at Ghost Ranch Workshop***

***Tomas Wolff & Deb Jones***

Approximately 18 workshop participants convened at Ghost Ranch in Abiquiu for three days in August to learn about the pottery of Mata Ortiz, in the Mexican state of Chihuahua—and to try their hands with the same materials and techniques used by the region's world-class ceramicists. Pabla Talavera Quezada and her father Rito Talavera live in a village where one third of the population (about 500 people) is engaged in the art of making pottery.



New Mexico pueblo people, and long-ago contact between the villages has been well documented.

Their hand-coiled and intricately decorated pots—first made famous by Juan Quezada—are fired with cow dung or wood, and rival the best pottery of the North American pueblo tradition. In fact, the origins of the pottery of Mata Ortiz—also known as Casas Grandes pottery—can be traced to people living in a settlement known as Paquime. These early pottery makers were related to the

Workshop participants barely had time to settle into their rustic accommodations at Ghost Ranch on Friday, August 28, before it was time to gather at "Pot Hollow" for the first session of the weekend—learning to make a hand-built pot in the Casas Grandes tradition.



The process is as follows: First, a flattened "tortilla" of clay is placed on the inside of a pre-made concave plaster mold. Pabla made it look easy, her hands whirling around the rim of the wet pot with determined and measured pinches, using her thumb against her other four fingers. Then several thick clay "chorizos" (sausages) are hand rolled and the group with her gentle and skillful touch. And why wouldn't she be skillful, and attached one by one to the base of the pot. Pabla smoothed and shaped the clay as she worked it into a nearly foot tall egg-shaped vessel.



Participants were in awe of this young woman—still in her 20s—who mesmerizes since Juan Quezada is in fact her uncle! Juan has taught many members of the Quezada family and others in Mata Ortiz the techniques he developed after years of studying the ancient pottery shards he found at Paquime. ....continued on page 4

# Electronic Communication and the NMPCA

Judy Nelson-Moore, [jnm@nmpotters.org](mailto:jnm@nmpotters.org)

In common with most of the world, the advent of personal computers and the flowering of the Internet has changed the NMPCA. The number of members, our reputation in the state, and the sense of NMPCA as a community have all increased due to the communication methods of email, our website ([www.nmpotters.org](http://www.nmpotters.org)), our on-line virtual studio tour ([www.claystudiotour.com](http://www.claystudiotour.com)), and the quality newsletter, now optionally delivered electronically. The value members receive from their membership dues has increased greatly with the use of these methods.

All of this has been served up as a menu by dedicated people for other members to pick and choose from to suit their tastes. Some of us have come to rely on electronic communication as our daily "bread" while others view electronic news as something out of reach or a source of irritation. But, as with everything in life, the situation progresses.

When I first took over the email list from Gary Carlsen over 6 years ago, the list comprised about 40 percent of the members and had a message maybe once a month. Now, the list comprises over 90% of the members and we share communications somewhere around 5-15 messages a month. Our organization has come to rely on the electronic communication method: Some kinds of communication are ONLY sent via email, as being the most cost effective and timely way to get the word out. People participating in the green initiative of the electronic newsletter will probably never read this on paper (hopefully you ARE reading this on the screen).

While our organization has been coming to this reliance on electronic communication, the use of the internet has been mushrooming, and along with that abuses have multiplied. To everyone's extreme frustration and economic cost, criminal elements have turned the use of email from a valuable and fun action into a headache that has no end. I'm talking about SPAM (unwanted and sometimes malicious email sent to defraud you, get you to buy something, or other even worse intents). This has resulted in defensive actions that are costly, awkward, and of varying effectiveness.

So, what does this have to do with the NMPCA? Those of you who do participate in the electronic news exchange may have noticed some changes and frustrations over the last few months. This is because the anti-spam programs on the NMPCA side and your side have been changing in efforts by the internet community to deal with the problem. The result is that we have had to try different alternatives of delivering email to your personal computer. These alternatives are not always successful. The email message may be stopped and fall through the cracks in any of these ways:

1. The message may never get sent if we have an error in our email list or you have changed your email address and we didn't get notice. If you have more than one email address, make sure you always use the same one for NMPCA communications. Check the membership roster to make sure your email is correct and notify Lesley at [sws@mountaincomm.us](mailto:sws@mountaincomm.us) if it changes, or if you suspect you are not getting messages and have checked into items 3 and 4 below.
2. The message may get stopped by our outgoing service. At one point, the services we were using were limiting us to a small number of messages to be sent at a time, the number varying according to the whim of the service, what we had been able to negotiate, or the aura of the message, we couldn't always tell what. This necessitated us switching from a personal account to the [nmpotters.org](http://nmpotters.org) webmail account and then to the current google group. They all had their pitfalls. We may be changing to some other method in the future, so don't be alarmed and please be patient.

3. The message may be stopped by YOUR email provider before it ever gets sent to your email programs. In this case, you may never know that the message was sent. The only way to check on this is to contact support people with your email service, who are sometimes difficult to find.
4. The message may be stopped by your email programs which may have spam or malicious email features that channel the messages into a special place or even delete the email. There may be several layers of these programs. To combat this, you must know your system and how it works, and be vigilant to check your "junk" or "spam" email filters, folders, or whatever term your system calls them. Learn how to designate a sender as "safe" and do so for [nmpca@googlegroups.com](mailto:nmpca@googlegroups.com). However, this doesn't always work...you have to check to see if something has caused the messages to be misdirected despite your instructions.

Another problem with email is the varied and sometimes poor quality of emails being sent. Have you ever received an email that was so large as to take an hour (or longer) for your machine to receive it...or an email with some mysterious attachment that you couldn't see, even after you found it. Have you been put off by emails that were misspelled, bad grammar, poor language or capitalization and punctuation, making it appear that the sender doesn't respect you, the communication or themselves? Or, have you ever received an email that was missing obvious important information, such as who to contact or the location of the event? Well, we've gotten them all. Trying to reformat and "fix up" emails is time consuming and causes delays or inconsistencies in the email you receive from NMPCA. If you want to communicate with the group, PLEASE DO, as we want to hear from you. Please follow these simple rules:

1. Address the message to [nmpca@googlegroups.com](mailto:nmpca@googlegroups.com). To do this, you must get a google account, which is free, easy, and has no known side effects. If you absolutely can't do this, send the message to Lesley Mausolf at [sws@mountaincomm.us](mailto:sws@mountaincomm.us) and in the first line of the message ask her to forward to the NMPCA group.
2. Format the message for NMPCA: Make a clear subject to the email that relates to the content...don't just reply or forward some other irrelevant message and leave the subject as it was. Put the main message in the body of your email as text...plain text, no fancy fonts, colors, backgrounds, etc, with complete information including, what it is, who is doing it, why the NMPCA might be interested, where it is, and when. Be sure to include contact information, at least an email, and telephone or address if relevant. If you want to include an image or document, realize that not every recipient will open the attachment, so make sure that you have enough in the text to stand alone. Make sure your attachment (picture of file) is appropriately sized (not too large) and of a type that can be read by everyone. If you don't know what we mean by size and type, contact Lesley at [sws@mountaincomm.us](mailto:sws@mountaincomm.us) or myself at [jnm@nmpotters.org](mailto:jnm@nmpotters.org) to find out BEFORE you send the message.

Special note: When you make a personal reply to an NMPCA message, you most likely do NOT want to hit "reply" as that will go back to the google group. Look for the contact information in the message and send your message to that address.

So, in summary, to navigate the electronic news seas with NMPCA, follow these simple guidelines. I'm sorry, but the days of sitting back and being fed the information. Times are changing and we don't have any choice but to change with them.

- Know how your own spam programs work.
- Format your messages to the group properly.
- Don't ever report NMPCA as spam...just ask us politely and we'll take you off the list!
- Give us frequent feedback, and freely ask for our assistance, but be courteous as this is not a trivial effort by Lesley Mausolf and myself. Contact Lesley at [sws@mountaincomm.us](mailto:sws@mountaincomm.us) or me at [jnm@nmpotters.org](mailto:jnm@nmpotters.org)
- Be patient and flexible as we adapt to changing internet realities.



Despite the multitude of ceramic talents among the participants—as was evident during Friday night’s “show and tell”—it seems safe to say that everyone came away with a genuine appreciation for the perfectly formed pots Pabla creates by hand.

On day two, everyone returned to Pot Hollow after breakfast to learn the next steps in the process—sanding and polishing (burnishing) the pots.

To begin, the dry pot is sanded with three different grades of sandpaper (coarse, medium, fine), making it smooth and ready for burnishing. Next, Pabla described two different burnishing techniques, depending on whether the desired end result was a black pot from a reduction firing or a white oxidation-fired pot.

Pabla demonstrated how to achieve three levels of burnishing for the reduction-fired pot: a highly polished area, a matte area and a “ghost” area that shadows the design. For these she used a multi-step process of painting the design, then applying many coats of vegetable oil and a bit of water, and finally burnishing with a stone.



made of long, fine human hair. Pabla not only provided each of the participants with one of her pots to use for practice, but had also made brushes from the fine hair of a young girl in her village.



Clay and colored slips for this workshop were brought from Mexico by Rito, who collects the materials from the mountains near their home and does the processing himself. Five kinds of clay are used to create a dense tan-colored clay, which burnishes well, but has less flexibility than the typical commercial low-fire clays available here in the U.S. It took about three days for the clay pots made during the workshop to dry, and still many of them cracked during the process.

On the final day of the workshop, Rito fired the decorated pots in three separate wood-fired kilns. Each one was basically an inverted wash tub placed over the pots, which themselves were positioned on metal tripods (inverted pot stands) to keep them off the ground, where dried, crushed cow dung was placed. The two reduction kilns were completely covered at the bottom with moist soil to keep out air, while the oxidation kiln was positioned over bricks with a couple of inches open at the bottom.

Rito carefully stacked juniper wood around the sides and top of the tub-kilns and wired everything to keep it in place. (At home, they typically use mostly dung for firing, explained Pabla, translating for her father.) Once lit, the fire burned for about an hour.



Oxidation-fired pots are first coated with multiple applications of “liquid Vaseline” (participants speculated this may be similar to mineral oil) and water. Typically, they are then painted with black (manganese) and red (iron oxide) slips.

To paint the extremely fine and intricate traditional designs, Mata Ortiz potters use brushes

After giving the kilns a chance to cool, Rito lifted the kiln lids to reveal the treasures beneath. Despite the intense, fast heat on the greenware, only



one of about two dozen pots cracked during the firing. “Oohs” and “ahhs” filled the air as each participant sought out the egg-shaped pot he or she had polished and decorated.

***Mata Ortiz Secrets Shared at Ghost Ranch Workshop.....continued***

Although each pot was unique and beautiful in its own way, one pot stood out among the others—the one that had been decorated by Pabla herself during the demonstration. With great anticipation (and many crossed fingers), the group gathered 'round to see whose name would be drawn to receive the black burnished pot with its intricate design.

Appropriately, the lucky winner was Teresa Tunick, who had organized the workshop and had traveled to Casas Grandes to invite Pabla and Rito to come to Ghost Ranch. The crowd cheered its approval and expressed collective thanks to Teresa and also to Barbara Campbell for coordinating the program and providing the beautiful Pot Hollow work space.

At the dose of the workshop on Sunday, while everyone packed up their belongings beneath the yellow and white cliffs of Ghost Ranch's Kitchen Mesa, the conversation turned to the sense of exhilaration and inspiration all seemed to be feeling—resulting, no doubt, from the grandeur of the

environment, the camaraderie of fellow potters and not least of all, from the creative and sharing spirit of Pabla and Rito



*Mata Ortiz Secrets Shared at Ghost Ranch Workshop.....continued*



## Shows, Announcements, Classes, Workshops

### Call for Artists and Craftpersons

The first annual **High Desert Chile Fiesta**, a chili cook-off, featuring music, artists' booths, concessions, special cooking classes. The event will be sanctioned by the Chili Appreciation Society International Inc. (CASI), as one of more than 600 CASI cook-offs throughout the U.S. and neighboring countries.

Where: Haines Park in Rio Rancho, NM, outdoor spaces.

When: October 17, 2009

Entry Fee: \$75.00 per space

**Application Deadline – October 1**

More Info and application: Contact Valerie Fladager 505-867-9003, [hducchilefiesta@cableone.net](mailto:hducchilefiesta@cableone.net), or [www.HighDesertUMC.org](http://www.HighDesertUMC.org)

### Santa Fe Arts Commission Call for Artists

We at the Santa Fe Arts Commission are recruiting artists, craftsmen, and organizations to list your opportunities and workshops on our Creative Tourism website ([www.santafecreativetourism.org](http://www.santafecreativetourism.org)) FREE! These workshop experiences are meant to provide visitors with an up-close, hands-on, real experience, grounded in a community's people and culture. This website offers listings of creative tourism experiences in the Northern New Mexico area and allows you the chance to recruit visitors to your business.

Never done a workshop? The Santa Fe Arts Commission will be organizing a class about starting a professional workshop catered to visitors. Just email Brent to reserve a space: [SantaFeCreativeTourism@gmail.com](mailto:SantaFeCreativeTourism@gmail.com) or 505-955-6215.

### Gallery Exhibitions at Santa Fe Clay

**“Literally and Figuratively”**

**September 18 – October 24**

**Opening Reception: September 18, 5-7 pm.**

**Chuck Aydlett & Ted Saupe**

This show will introduce two wonderful established ceramic artists to the Santa Fe audience. Ted Saupe is a Professor at the University of Georgia in Athens, GA. Chuck Aydlett is the Manager of the Clay Business at the Archie Bray Foundation in Helena, MT.

These two artists are both obsessed with surface. Handbuilders of sculptural and functional ceramics, they

seem to need to cover their pieces with tattoo-like sketches and drawings. Ted Saupe's drawings become a stream of consciousness as he covers the surfaces of his work with people and events from his everyday life. These drawings have a sketchbook quality, sometimes right side up and at other times turned sideways or upside down. Chuck Aydlett's drawings have a surreal and dreamlike quality, and his complex sculptures of animal forms or human figures take on multiple meanings when viewed in varied positions.

**“Harmony and Dissonance, New Work”**

**October 30 – December 5**

**Opening Reception: October 30, 5-7 pm.**

**Chris Staley**

### Classes and Workshops at Santa Fe Clay

**SESSION 2 – October 26 – December 19**

No Classes Thanksgiving Week!

#### HANDBUILDING & SCULPTURE

All level classes

Mondays 9:30 am - 12:30 pm, STACEY GUINAN

Thursdays 9:30 am - 12:30 pm, SIDDIQ KHAN

Thursdays 6:00 - 9:00 pm, EDIE TSONG

#### WHEEL THROWING

All level classes

Wednesdays 9:30 am - 12:30 pm, MICHAEL

#### PROKOS

Wednesdays 6:00 - 9:00 pm, MIKE WALSH

Saturdays 9:30 am - 12:30 pm, JOHN REEVE

#### TILE MAKING

All level class Tuesdays 9:30 am - 12:30 pm

MAGGIE BEYELER

#### THE DESIGN ELEMENT

All level class, Tuesdays 1:00 - 4:00 pm,

BARRY SLAVIN

#### SANTA FE CLAY SAMPLER

All level handbuilding class

Fridays 9:30 am - 12:30 pm

Lee Akins, Maggie Beyeler, Michael Corney, Cheryl Crownover, Cindy Gutierrez, Elizabeth Hunt, & Edie Tsong

#### FUNCTIONAL HANDBUILDING

All level class, Saturdays 1:00 - 4:00 pm,

CHERYL CROWNCOVER

#### WOOD-FIRED POTS: INTEGRATING FORM & SURFACE

All level class

Mondays 6:00 - 9:00 pm, SEAN FAIRBRIDGE

**WEEKEND WORKSHOPS**

**THE PAINTED SURFACE**

MICHAEL CORNEY

Tuition: \$200, Lab Fee: \$35

Saturday & Sunday, October 10 & 11  
9:30 am - 4:30 pm

**MOLD-MAKING & SLIP CASTING**

ERICA BROWNE

Tuition: \$200, Lab Fee: \$35

Saturday & Sunday, October 24 & 25  
9:30 am - 4:30 pm

**CHILDREN & TEEN SCHEDULE**

Session 1: September 8 - October 24

Session 2: October 26 – December 19

No Classes Thanksgiving Week!

**CHILDREN'S CLAY CLASS**

Ages 6 - 10 years

Wednesdays 3:30 - 5:30 pm, Greta Ruiz

\$170 for 7-weeks - includes materials and firings

This class will cover handbuilding methods including coil, pinch and slab techniques. There are suggested projects each week, as well as time for independent exploration. Children will learn technical skills to realize their ideas, and just have fun with clay. All work will be glazed and fired.

**TEEN WHEEL CLASS**

Ages 10 and up

Mondays 3:30 - 5:30 pm, RACHEL PECK

Session 1: No class Labor Day, six-week session,  
\$145 includes materials/firings.

Session 2: \$170 for 7 weeks – includes materials/firings.

Our teen class provides instruction for both beginning and continuing students. The focus will be on developing skill on the potter's wheel. Students will learn decorating and glazing techniques and pieces will be fired in the gas kiln.

**PARENTS AND KIDS TOGETHER**

Children ages 7 & under with an adult

Fridays 12:45-2:45 pm, Greta Ruiz

\$235 for 1 parent and 1 child includes all materials and firings

Come work side by side with your child on projects designed to be fun for all ages. Grandparents, aunts, uncles, moms, or dads are welcome to bring a child. We will handbuild and construct a variety of projects, and all work will be glazed and fired.

**SPECIAL CHILDREN'S WORKSHOPS**

**MONSTERS, MONSTERS, MONSTERS!!!**

Ages 4 and up, Saturday, October 17, 1:30 - 3:30 pm,

GRETA RUIZ

\$55 includes all materials and firings

Come get in the Halloween spirit with a fun day of making fantastic dragons, magical wizards and other wild and wooly creatures from your imagination. There will be a variety of projects to select. All pieces will be glazed and fired.

**HOLIDAY GIFT MAKING**

Ages 4 and up

2 Saturdays: Dec. 5 & Dec. 19, 1:30 - 3:30 pm,

GRETA RUIZ

\$80 for 2 Saturdays includes materials and firings

Moms & dads, and grandparents, all love receiving handmade gifts from the children in their lives. Here's an opportunity for your children to make special gifts for friends or family members all by themselves. There will be a variety of projects to choose from and all pieces will be glazed and fired.

**Fall Fiesta Fund Raiser - Donate Salad Bowls**

Fall Fiesta, the annual fund-raising event for the Santa Fe Farmers Market Institute, will take place on October 3. The Institute is a nonprofit organization whose purpose is 1) to provide and manage a permanent home where farmers in New Mexico can sell their products 2) to provide programs for farmers; e.g. provision of micro loans to farmers, enabling them to stay on their land and build their businesses; 3) to educate the community about sustaining practices and buying local.

For more information, contact Joanne Smogor

Phone: 505 983 7726

Email: [joanne@farmersmarketinstitute.org](mailto:joanne@farmersmarketinstitute.org)

**Classifieds**

**Studio Space for rent – East Mountains**

Studio Space Available to Rent, East Mountains east of Sandia Park about 6 miles near Mountain Valley Road and Frost Road, brand new Building, very light and clean, great views of the mountains, south facing windows for great light, nice quiet space. Not open to the public.. Have your own key and access to equipment. \$100 per month. Call Irene @ 286-1145

**Studio/Workshop/House for sale near Ribera**

Great studio/workshop and house in Pecos River Valley (Ribera), between Santa Fe and Las Vegas, New Mexico. 2,000 sq.ft. old stone building, 1,100 sq.ft. adobe house, 900 sq.ft. stone fixer-upper. .8 acre. \$249,000 - Langelier Real Estate 505.670-6264

Polly Whitcomb - 575.421.3260 - [polly@plateautel.net](mailto:polly@plateautel.net)



## WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

**Joy Coffino** of Coffino Studio in Albuquerque specializes in one-of-a-kind pieces. She also is an oil painter and practices Asian calligraphy and Zen Buddhism.

**Adele Devalcourt** of Hand Star Studio lives within walking distance of the Santa Fe Plaza. She brings a global perspective to her contemporary sculptures and utilitarian products, using symbols or texts from ancient and present-day civilizations as embellishment.

**Valerie Fladager** of Rio Rancho makes high-fire functional pieces, both slab and thrown. She uses color slip and clear glazes for decoration. She also paints with watercolors and colored pencils and does photography.

**Gloria Gilmore-House** got hooked on clay when she was director of the Art Center at Fuller Lodge in Los Alamos in 1999. She enrolled in the "Mud in the Morning" class. Living again in Los Alamos, she will be teaching ceramics at the Art Center this fall. She throws and handbuilds functional pots.

**Rod Lambert**, a member of Santa Fe's clay community for years, is the first manager of the successful City of Santa Fe Arts Commission's Community Gallery. It is located in the Santa Fe Convention Community Center, at the intersection of Marcy and Sheridan. The gallery features artists and artisans of all media, with the emphasis on Santa Fe and New Mexico. In addition to exhibits, the gallery displays "small-scale works" priced at \$500 or less by 20-40 artists. The exhibit openings are always jam-packed.

**Iva O'Connor**'s studio in Veguita, a village in Socorro County, is named Blue Door. An art teacher of K-12 students, she is a painter as well as a potter. She loves whimsical designs.

**John Staple** of Taos has been a potter for 40 years, using B-mix and English porcelain for his one-of-a-kind functional pots. He uses underglaze, stain and slip decorations featuring symbols and designs from diverse historical and cultural realms. His studio name is Tribal Threads.

*Layne Vickers-Smith, Membership Coordinator - [santafepotter@comcast.net](mailto:santafepotter@comcast.net)*

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