



EAST MOUNTAIN HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Newsletter

Third Quarter 2021



1st EMHS Public Zoom Event Is Scheduled To Launch!

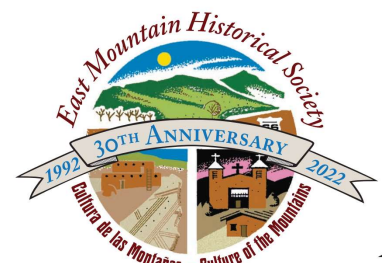
Historic 1909 Balloon Flight
Over the Manzanos Is Topic
Of Talk by our own Dick Brown
Sept. 19 at 2 p.m.
Details on page 3.

At left, professional aeronaut Joseph Blondin
and Roy Stamm, local merchant, posed before
their flight across the Manzano Mountains in
1909. *Photo Courtesy William F. Stamm*

TIMELINES of the East Mountains Book Addition: The Darrah Family, East Mountain Homesteaders.....Pages 5-7.

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Join Us at the East Mountain Celebration Sept. 26

After a year's hiatus, the East Mountain Celebration is back, scheduled to be held from noon to 5 p.m. Sunday, Sept. 26, on the Los Vecinos Community Center grounds in Tijeras. County Commissioner Charlene Pyskoty, who was our guest at the EMHS board meeting in July, welcomed our involvement in the celebration, themed "Fiestas for Life".

After the board meeting, the commissioner accompanied members to the historic church in Tijeras, where she and **Dick Brown** (see photo at right) checked out our own "Fiestas" panel that was created back in the 1990s. Commissioner Pyskoty said this year "we'll celebrate with dance, live music, vendors, a car show, food trucks, beer, wine and more."

EMHS plans to have a facsimile of the panel at the East Mountain Celebration, as well as our exhibit-size map of vanishing and historic East Mountain landmarks, which up until Sept. 19 is on display at the East Mountain Library in Tijeras.

During the celebration festivities, EMHS President **Robyn Hoffman** and *Timelines* editor **Kris Thacher** are scheduled to present Commissioner Pyskoty with a copy of our award-winning *Timelines of the East Mountains*, which will be sold during the event. **Kathy Rich** has designed a colorful banner for our sales table.

We also will unveil and sell our 2022 Calendar, *Every Picture Tells a Story*, created by **Rick Holben** and published by **Kathy**, which commemorates EMHS' upcoming 30th Anniversary year. Because it's our 30th anniversary, each month includes a fact about EMHS history, written by Historian **Denise Tessier**. Come visit as we share our knowledge and photographs of East Mountain fiestas and other history in the round building on the west side of the grounds, by the main parking lot (where we were during the [celebration in 2019](#)).



Photo by Debbie Post

Online Talk Sept. 19 via Zoom

Is First EMHS Virtual Program Open to the Public

“Balloonists Attempt Distance Record in 1909”

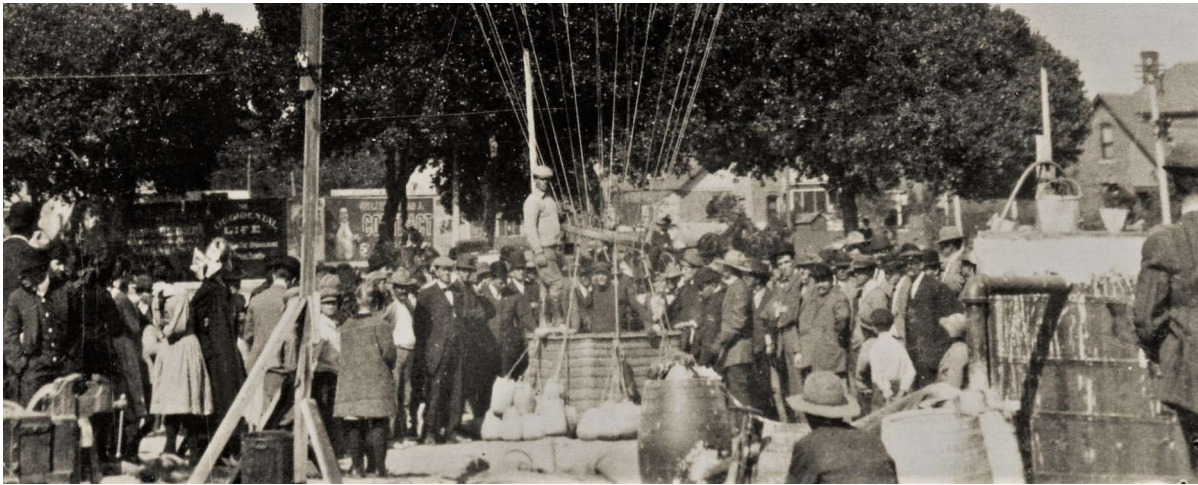


Photo Courtesy William F. Stamm

On Sept. 19, EMHS Secretary **Dick Brown** will deliver our first public talk via Zoom, detailing a historic distance balloon flight record attempt made in October of 1909. During that attempt, two balloonists flew from Albuquerque’s downtown all the way across and over the Manzano Mountains, landing on the MacGillivray Ranch east of Estancia.

The talk will begin at 2 p.m. Sunday, Sept. 19, via Zoom. EMHS has purchased a Zoom package that enables us to handle enough viewers to make this presentation available to the public.

Brown, who wrote an article about this flight for *Timelines of the East Mountains*, will show 44 slides during his presentation, including historic photographs. The flight took place on the last day of the New Mexico Territorial Fair. The day before the distance record attempt, President Taft congratulated the aeronauts on their aerial exhibitions – all of which took place at the time of year when Albuquerque holds its annual Balloon Fiesta in modern times.

Dick Brown has been a licensed balloon pilot since 1973 and has served as editor of the BFA Ballooning Journal. He is a 1979 FAI Mongolfier Diplome recipient, a member of the Albuquerque International Balloon Fiesta Heritage Committee and he has been inducted into the Balloon Fiesta Hall of Fame. A 36-year resident of the East Mountains, he is the author/co-author of four ballooning books. He’s also a retired submariner, engineer and aeronaut, and president of the Grand Canyon Historical Society. Below is the link to view this program.

Join Zoom Meeting from computer, laptop, tablet, iPad:

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/86047567754?pwd=cExGU3RLMWxUZ2N6RlhZQmkzZlZOUT09>

OR, Join from a smart phone:

+16699006833,,86047567754#,,, *978129#

OR, Join audio-only from a regular phone:

+1 669 900 6833

Meeting ID: 860 4756 7754

Passcode: 978129

Living in the East Mountains in the Time of Covid



Robyn in the Prayer Garden of St. Joseph's Church, taken during our last in-person outing at the invitation of the Cerrillos Historical Society in July 2019.

Photo by Denise Tessier

Having lived in Tablazon for more than 30 years, my family and I have seen many changes in our neighborhood and in our East Mountain community of Tijeras, Cedar Crest, Sandia Park, Carnuel and Edgewood. Our favorite family restaurants have closed (Pete's—Home of the Half Breed, Aunt Bea's, The Feedbag) and even disappeared (Bella Vista). Our dirt road was paved; our neighborhood association installed security cameras. Neighbors' private domestic wells have run dry. The wonderful East Mountain Library was built. A traffic light was installed at the junction of Route 66 (now NM-333) and North 14. East Mountain High School was established. Triangle Grocery built a new, well-stocked store. Development of

Paako subdivision brought hundreds of new residents here. However, the essential character of the beautiful area we live in has remained the same.

We still have hummingbirds every summer, sunflowers every August, coyotes howling at night, fiestas at the village churches, chile roasting every fall, snow on Sandia Peak in winter and beautiful sunrises and sunsets over the mountains. So many of us have spent the last 17 months staying put here in the mountains, rather than commuting to Albuquerque, Santa Fe or places in between. The pandemic requirements of lockdowns and social distancing have required a change of pace and a change of motion. Even the native fauna have adapted to the changed pace; our neighbors have recorded badgers, ferrets and bobcats on their outdoor cameras, besides the usual deer, rabbits, squirrels, lizards, snakes, coyotes, turkeys and bears.

The East Mountain Historical Society cannot stop change, but we can and do want to preserve important attributes of what makes our community special. We partnered with the Village of Tijeras to plan for the restoration of the crumbling 95-year-old Santo Niño church in Tijeras. The N.M. Economic Development Dept. awarded a grant to begin the restoration process. **We are awaiting word from the N.M. Humanities Council as to whether our recent grant request for archival assistance and equipment will be funded.**

We are doing our best to avoid the spread of Covid, and so have again scheduled our Board meetings and membership program on-line using Zoom, after having our last Board meeting in person in masks at the Tijeras Village Hall in August. At the time of this writing, the East Mountain Celebration is scheduled to be in person at Los Vecinos Community Center in Tijeras on the afternoon of Sept. 26. If it is safe to do so, we hope to see you there.

– Robyn Hoffman, EMHS President

The Darrah Family – East Mountain Homesteaders

– by Rick Holben



Photo Courtesy Craig Springer

Above: The John Darrah homestead house on Thanksgiving Day 1913. John Darrah is believed to be the one with a hat on the right side – the rest likely include his wife and children Della and Dayton. In 1941, Tom Horton purchased the Darrah homestead property and the Horton family used the old Darrah house for storage. The old Darrah house is still largely intact and looks much as it did more than 100 years ago. A picture of the house as it has survived into the 21st Century appears in the 2022 Special “30th Anniversary Edition” of the EMHS Calendar, Every Picture Tells a Story.

In the early 20th century, four members of the Darrah family left Illinois and made three homestead claims at the base of South Mountain. They were John Darrah, wife Josephine and their children Della and Dayton, who married into local families after they arrived.

John Gordon Darrah was born in 1857 in Blandinsville, Ill., one of 13 children of Absalom and Minerva Darrah. In 1881, he married Josephine Andrews. The 1900 census shows the family living in Blandinsville running a “novelty store”, but the April 3, 1902 *Macomb Journal* reported that Darrah’s residence near Blandinsville was destroyed by fire and nothing could be saved from the home. This was perhaps a reason for the family to consider a fresh start in New Mexico.

Darrah likely arrived in the East Mountains in 1908, as that October, he applied for a Forest Re-Entry claim on 302 acres at the base of South Mountain against the San Pedro Land Grant, at the end of what is now Broken Arrow Trail Road. The Forest Re-Entry Act, passed in 1906, allowed claimants to receive 160 acres of land if they could prove having lived on and used it prior to 1906, when the Manzano Forest Reserve (later Manzano National Forest) was established.

It's a mystery why Darrah chose to make a claim under this act, as the land was not part of the Manzano Forest, the acreage exceeded 160 acres and he likely hadn't occupied it prior to 1906 – and his claim was ultimately denied. He did, however, in 1916 receive a patent for the same 302 acres under the Feb. 19, 1909 Enlarged Homestead Act, which allowed claimants to receive up to 320 acres if they were non-irrigable and without minerals or merchantable timber. Under this law, a patent could be obtained in three to five years with varying requirements of cultivation and length of occupancy. The shortest option required occupation by the claimant, with at least a quarter of it under cultivation in something other than native grass by the third year.

Darrah dug ditches to trap water running off nearby South Mountain to irrigate fruit trees, and his property became well known for both quality and production. In 1919, the *Estancia News Herald* reported Darrah had won a blue ribbon at the recent fair for peaches grown at his ranch at an altitude of 7,500 feet. In 1922, Fabian Garcia of the State College in Las Cruces used the Darrah ranch as an example of what can be accomplished in orchards growing at high altitudes under non-irrigation conditions in New Mexico, and several people from the area attended the demonstration.

Darrah died in 1928 and was buried at the Mountain Valley Cemetery in Barton. His wife Josephine left to live with her sister in Galena, Kansas, where she died in 1943.

The Darrah homestead was purchased by Tom Horton in 1941. The Horton's first residence was a wood homestead house they had moved from the nearby John Kays homestead, which they also had purchased. They set the house in front of the old Darrah house, and over the years it was remodeled, rebuilt and expanded. The Hortons used the old Darrah house behind their home for storage. Except for a small section that was taken off and used as a chicken coop, the home today remains largely as it was more than 100 years ago. Near it is an old peach tree, believed to be one of Darrah's original trees. Rita Loy Horton-Simmons, daughter of Tom Horton, says the tree has been there since she was a little girl in the early 1940s and that it has bloomed every year. In April 2021, the tree showed signs it would bloom again.

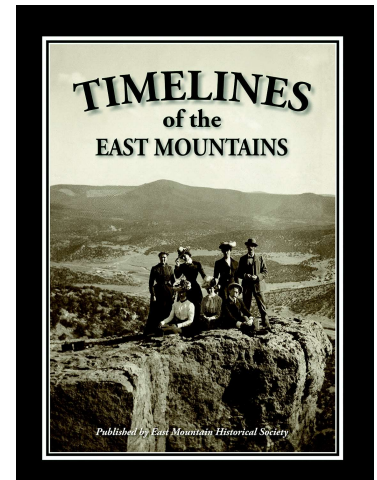
Daughter Della A. Darrah, born in 1882 in Blandinsville, received a homestead for 160 acres in 1911 at what is now the southeast corner of Frost Road and Broken Arrow Trail. She received her patent under the April 24, 1820 Cash Sale Entry Act, which allowed a claimant to purchase government lands at \$1.25 an acre after only a six-month occupancy, with no proof of improvement. Della had graduated and worked as a teacher before coming to New Mexico, after which she graduated from the Santa Fe County Teachers Institute and in 1910 received a state certificate to teach second grade. Classmate Mae Madole, also from the Venus, N.M. area (now Edgewood) also received a teaching certificate that year. In 1911 and 1912, Della taught at the San Pedro School. In late 1912, she was postmistress at San Pedro and held that position until 1916; she then was postmaster's assistant until at least 1920.

In 1915, Della married Roman Aranda, a miner in Golden, who was born in 1888 in Dolores to Eulogio and Maria Armijo Aranda. The Aranda families were involved with mining in the Tuerto and San Pedro Mountains in the 19th century. In 1917, Roman worked for the Santa Fe Gold & Copper Company at San Pedro. In 1930, Della and Roman were living in Denver with four children, with census records listing Della as “Housekeeper” and Roman as “Marble Quarryman”. In 1932, at the age of only 44, Roman died, perhaps in a mining accident. His body was returned to New Mexico and buried at the cemetery at Golden. Della remained in Denver until her death in 1964.

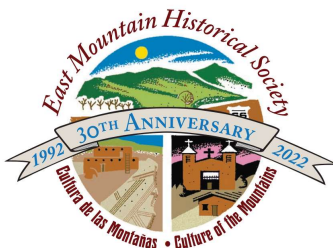
The Darrah son, Dayton G. Darrah, born in 1884 in Blandinsville, received a homestead patent on 160 acres directly north of Della’s claim. He received his patent through the May 20, 1862 Homestead Entry Act; it required the claimant to make improvements, live on the land for five years and pay a \$10 fee for the patent – which was a common way that homesteads were obtained in New Mexico.

In 1912, Dayton married Anna Myrtle Kays, daughter of John H. Kays, whose homestead was at what is now the northeast corner of Entranosa Road and Broken Arrow Trail. A 1919 newspaper reported that Dayton Darrah of Venus was involved in the dairy business, and had fruit and walnut trees successfully growing on 15 acres without irrigation.

By 1920, Dayton and Anna had three children and were living on their homestead property. In the early 1920s, the family moved to South Walter Street in Albuquerque, where Dayton worked as a machinist for the Santa Fe Railway. In 1941, Dayton died of stomach cancer complications – a diagnosis similar to that of his father – and was buried in Albuquerque. Anna lived in Albuquerque until her death in 1970.



*Editor’s Note: **Rick Holben** wrote many of the stories in the EMHS book, TIMELINES OF THE EAST MOUNTAINS, and has continued to conduct research since its 2020 publication. Those who have purchased the book are invited to clip this 2021 article and add it to the book’s **Places** section.*

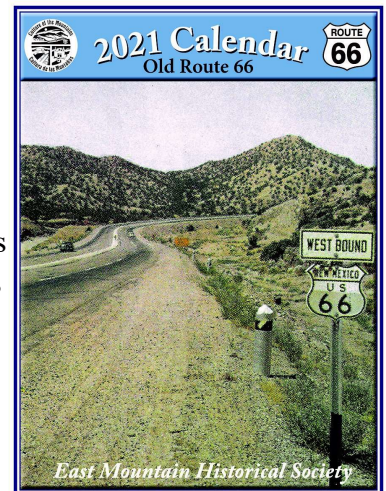


For more on the Darrah house, be sure to purchase the East Mountain Historical Society’s **30th Anniversary** calendar for 2022. In this special *Every Picture Tells a Story* edition, you will see how the house looks today and how well it has survived into the 21st century. Calendars are expected to be available by the end of September, in time for the East Mountain Celebration, and it features the beautiful 30th Anniversary logo, designed by **Kathy Rich**.

More EMHS Program News

Our First Zoom Program – *Route 66 and Historic N.M. License Plates* – Can Be Viewed Any Time on Our Website

EMHS presented its first-ever virtual program: *Old Route 66 and Historic New Mexico License Plates* on March 21. Thanks to Webmaster **Kathy Rich**, assisted by Zoom master **Debbie Post**, that program is now available for viewing anytime on the EMHS website on the [Recorded Programs Archive page](#). **Rick Holben**, EMHS vice president and license plate collector, shared his knowledge of New Mexico license plates, going back to the first plates in 1912, with some fun facts about Route 66 that were part of the 2021 EMHS calendar, *Old Route 66*. The presentation includes photos of historic license plates and by-gone East Mountain views of Route 66. Go to the [Recorded Programs Archive page](#) at eastmountainhistory.org and start at about the 7-minute mark to bypass introductions and Zoom instructions.



Because we have been unable to host events at the church, we are creating two virtual programs showing our 12 exhibit panels of historic photographs. EMHS Historian **Denise Tessier** came up with the idea to film long-time board members acting as docents of the panels, which were created by several EMHS members under the guidance of founder **Joyce Mendel** in the 1990s. **Rick Holben** has reviewed all the text for accuracy and will be one of the presenters, along with **Joyce**, **Anabel Sanchez** and **Maria Herrera Dresser**. **Debbie Post** will do the filming and production work.



Debbie Post, our Zoom master, has enthusiastically agreed to serve as our Program Director. Debbie made it possible for the board to meet by Zoom throughout the pandemic. She helped us put together and record the March license plate program via Zoom; she is working with **Dick Brown** to host our Sept. 19 balloon virtual presentation and she is part of the team working on the exhibit panel presentations. With Debbie's help, the board again will meet virtually in September in observance of Covid-variant protocols, after holding three in-person meetings – one at the historic church and two in the Tijeras Village council chambers.



The Zoom package that enables us to host a public program also will enable us to hold our Annual Membership Meeting with member participation via Zoom. All members with internet will be able to attend the virtual meeting, at which we will vote on new bylaws proposals and elect our board of directors and Executive Committee for 2022, our 30th anniversary year. Details will be sent to members in the next Newsletter.

East Mountain Historical Society Initiates Project To Again Restore Santo Niño Church in Tijeras

– *By Robyn Hoffman*

As long-time EMHS members know, the old church next to the East Mountain Library in Tijeras has served as our meeting and events location for many years. In fact, EMHS members led by **Kathy Hanlon** obtained a grant in the late 1990s that led to stabilization of the building. But in the more than 20 years since that work on the historic church was completed, the terrone building has shown signs of settling. Deterioration both inside and out has progressed to the extent that rodents and bindweed find the inside quite hospitable – more so than do our Board Members, who have held our most recent two meetings at the Tijeras Village Council Chambers.

On March 11, 2020, at the very start of public health orders limiting public meetings due to the pandemic, the Board held its last meeting in the church. All of the members expressed concern with the condition of the building at that time. The church is owned by the Village of Tijeras, and village facilities were then shut down in compliance with public health mandates.

In March 2021, Board President **Robyn Hoffman** contacted Mayor Jake Bruton to express concern about the deteriorated condition of the Santo Niño Church, and asked the village to address the deferred maintenance and to meet to discuss the possible restoration of this building, which is registered on both the National and State Registers of Historic Places.

Mayor Bruton immediately agreed, and met Robyn and Vice-President **Rick Holben** in April to walk the property to determine the extent of the problems. The mayor assigned Village Clerk/Manager Hallie Brown to research means of obtaining assistance for historic preservation, and she identified the N.M. Economic Development Department's Main Street Program as an option. Mayor Bruton asked East Mountain Historical Society to serve on a committee to work on historic preservation of the Santo Niño Church, and Robyn and Rick were nominated.

When Robyn reviewed the grant application the village prepared to submit to the Frontiers and Native American Communities Initiative, a subset of the NMEDD Main Street Program, she felt that the grant application would be strengthened by expanding the noted "stakeholders" beyond just the village and the Historical Society. Therefore, she contacted several other local organizations, and EMHS member **Carla Ward** of the Turquoise Trail Association and Moises Gonzales of the Cañon de Carnue Land grant agreed to participate.

Rick and board member **Kristin Thacher** were able to draw on their historical research and supplement the application with a full explanation of the rich history and significance of the Santa Niño Church to the East Mountain community.

On July 20 we were notified that the grant application was selected. Will Powell, an Architecture Design Revitalization Specialist, has been assigned to work with the committee to formulate a plan for restoration and maintenance of the historic property. After that phase is completed, the village will need to seek some of the funding to accomplish the work, as it is likely that not all of it is available in its municipal funds. EMHS membership will be called upon to help with this next chapter, so that the completion of the upgrade will occur by the church centennial in 2026.

East Mountain Historical Society
Newsletter
Published Quarterly

Denise Tessier.....Writer/Editor

The EMHS Newsletter aims to inform members and prospective members of EMHS events and endeavors, including committee work, and to serve as a record of society activities. It is also a forum for stories about the area. Please send ideas or stories for future Newsletters to the Editor, P.O. Box 379, Cedar Crest, NM 87008, or by email: newsletter@eastmountainhistory.org

All stories and photos by **Denise Tessier** unless noted otherwise. Thanks to **Anabel Sanchez** and **Dick Brown** for proofing, and to **Sandra Lee** for help in preparing for mailing.

Mission Statement

The Mission of the East Mountain Historical Society is to identify, preserve and present to the public the history and culture of the East Mountain area. EMHS will assist in protecting historical and landscapes, artifacts, records, or any item considered to be of historical significance. EMHS will also identify, collect and archive historical material of significance to the area.

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News and Notes . . . A big welcome to our newest members! Joining us with addresses in Sandia Park: **Ronald Greenwell, Barbara Davis, Carl Allen** and **Sandra Vieth, Judith Brazie** and family, **Pam Wiltshire, Dawn Lopez** and family, **Harriet** and **Stretch Cole**, and **Lorna** and **Paul Morrow**.

A hearty welcome, too, to **Tom and Amy Wander, Barry Schoeneman** and family, **David Blankinship**, and **Raymond Chevalier**, all of Tijeras; **Helen Tornatta** of Cedar Crest; **Amanda Moore** of Edgewood; and **Lorie Christian** and family of Rio Rancho. We welcome from Albuquerque **Phil Leckman, Keith Kofford, Sam Beard, Mo Palmer**, and **Arthur Ian Esquibel**. **Arthur Ian** joined us at the sponsor level – thank you!

We also welcome **Dolores Montaña**, of San Jose, Calif., a former resident who bought our book while visiting New Mexico and wrote: “To say that I’m thrilled with *Timelines of the East Mountains* would be no exaggeration.”

Plus, a super welcome to **A.J. Mirabedini** of Tijeras, our second lifetime member due to his generous donation to EMHS. **Rob Easterling** was our first lifetime member, which results in a waiver of dues. For information on how to become a lifetime member, please see the [EMHS website](#). The lifetime category was created by the Membership Committee (**Anabel Sanchez** and **Denise Tessier**) and approved by the board earlier this year.



In Memoriam: The first program EMHS held after its founding in 1992 was delivered March 7, 1993 at Los Vecinos in Tijeras. The speaker, Dr. Ward Alan Minge, advised the fledgling EMHS with the topic, *Preserving East Mountain History: Getting Started*. An extraordinary ally of history, in the ‘50s and ‘60s, Dr. Minge supervised the move of three entire East Mountain buildings to Casa San Ysidro in Corrales, ensuring their preservation. Read more about this [on our website](#). [Dr. Minge passed away](#) in March at the age of 97.



Photo by Robyn Hoffman

Members of the **East Mountain Historical Society Book Committee**, who created and produced *Timelines of the East Mountains*, gathered after the July board meeting (in the Tijeras Village Council Chambers) to show off the Lansing B. Bloom Award medallion we received from the Historical Society of New Mexico for the book. The award is given annually to an institution affiliated with HSNM for producing an outstanding publication in New Mexico or Southwest Borderlands history. Book Committee members pictured are, from left, **Dick Brown**, **Beverly Neville**, **Anabel Maldonado Sanchez**, **Kris Thacher**, **Kathy Rich** (holding the medallion), **Rick Holben**, **Sandra Walton Lee** and **Denise Tessier**. Committee members not pictured: **Joyce Mendel**, **Maria Herrera Dresser** and **Susan Olsen**.

~::~ More News and Notes ~::~

EMHS has applied for an American Rescue Plan Grant to hire an archivist: **Robyn Hoffman** and **Kris Thacher** met with Hallie Brown and Nick Kennedy, Tijeras Village Manager and Deputy Manager, to prepare the joint application to the N.M. Humanities Council, and drafted the proposal that asks for \$25,000 to obtain professional assistance to retrieve, catalogue, store and digitize EMHS materials. Kris established contact with the archivist at the Indian Pueblo Cultural Center (Jonna Paden), and EMHS also contacted **Mo Palmer**, a new member of EMHS and a professional archivist, for guidance on the application. Robyn and Kris wrote the proposal in record time in order to meet the grant deadline.

Tijeras Creek Cultural Corridor Project: EMHS has joined several interested groups, including the Village of Tijeras and the Cañon de Carnué Land Grant, to provide input on a Tijeras Creek Cultural Corridor project proposed by Albuquerque's Open Space Division. Specifically, EMHS supports creation of a Cultural Crossroads Visitor Center that could house a museum and archives of EMHS, and serve as permanent location for information and cultural events for the Tijeras Corridor. EMHS board members **Robyn Hoffman**, **Dick Brown**, **Rick Holben** and **Denise Tessier** have met with some of these groups about the proposal, and we asked EMHS members to weigh in by filling out the city's survey about the project.

Coming in Our Next Newsletter . . . Comprehensive **bylaws changes** are being proposed by the board, including provisions that will bring us into the age where meetings are conducted remotely, among other updates. These will be explained fully in the next Newsletter. The entire membership then will be able to vote on these proposals at the virtual annual meeting in November. The next Newsletter also will detail the **slate of officers and directors up for election**, who will be voted on during the virtual annual meeting. Brief bios of the candidates will be included in the next issue, along with details on how to participate in the annual meeting via Zoom.

The Board of Directors meets monthly. Agendas for regular Board Meetings are published on the EMHS website. Members who would like to attend or present an item to the Board may do so by contacting any Board Member in advance of the meeting via the [Contact page](#) at eastmountainhistory.org.

Help Wanted: Do you have bookkeeping skills you would like to share? Sales of our book *Timelines* have increased interest in EMHS publications, and work for our Treasurer has increased. Can you spare a couple of hours per month to help with the financial record keeping of EMHS? Please contact president@eastmountainhistory.org.

Do you like to work with layout and design? Can you work with newsletter-style software? We would welcome help with production of our award-winning Newsletter, including layout, printing and mailing. Please contact newsletter@eastmountainhistory.org.