

HISTORIC SANTA FE

MONTHLY E-MAGAZINE OF THE HISTORIC SANTA FE FOUNDATION OCT. 2015



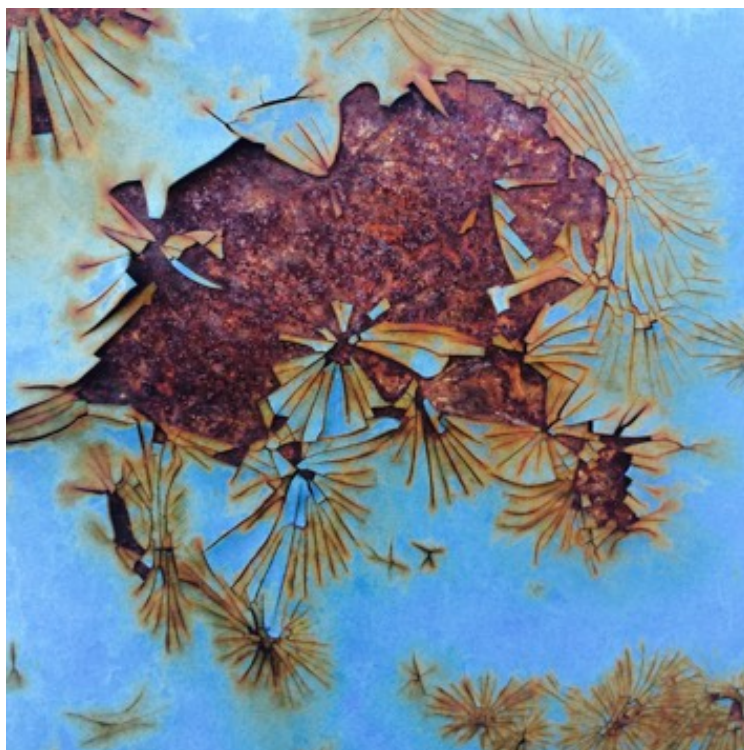
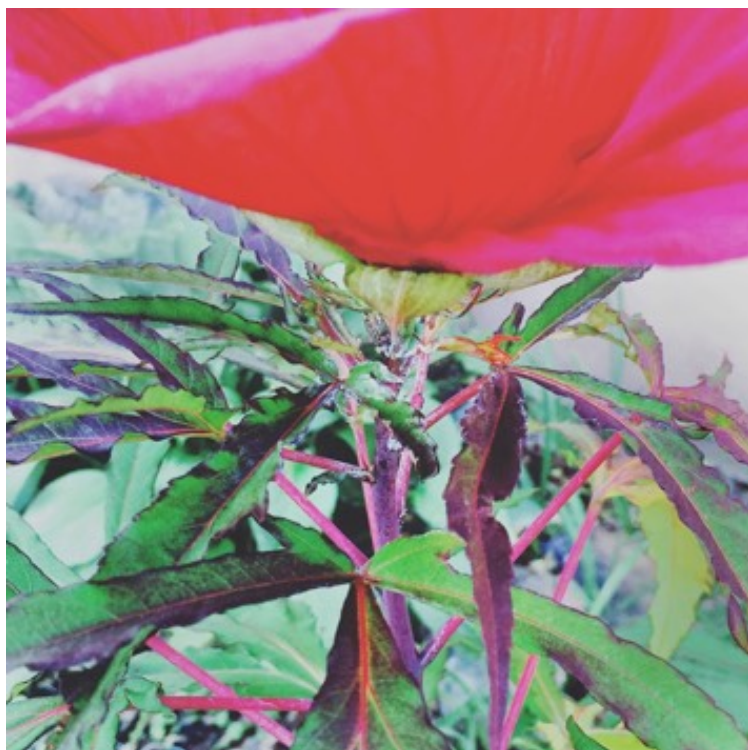
INSIDE HISTORIC SANTA FE

Autumn is officially and meteorologically here. The light and temperature drop quickly late in the day, and the chestnuts are dropping from our grand horse chestnut tree at El Zaguán. We are headed to the end of 2016 with much still to do at the Foundation: finishing the extensive repair work at the Garcia House, bringing on board Melanie McWhorter to help us with our new donor database and to design programs and outreach that can better serve our members. We are also awaiting the arrival of Mara Saxer, our new Preservation Specialist, who will come back to Santa Fe after living and working in Massachusetts where she was caretaker of a house associated with the Salem Witch Trials and worked in preservation and restoration, specializing in windows. Big things going on. And with that the need for your membership renewals and donations, always. And as always sincerely appreciated.

In this issue we offer a book review of a novel by Pam Christie, New Mexico author, and interview John Muller, resident at El Zaguán, writer, grad student at St. John's, and volunteer in helping to edit these monthly eZines. John has also offered a brief excerpt of a novel in progress here. We hope you enjoy it all.

As always, we look forward to hearing from you.

—Pete Warzel, Executive Director, HSFF



UPDATES+NEWS

ADIOS + THANK YOU

Charles Coffman has decided to hang up his spurs—though that is not quite right, as most likely he will be taking down his spurs and spending more time with horses—as he retires from caring for, making sound, creating and problem solving at HSFF.

This is a bit frightening as Charles has been the steady hand here for many

years, and has left his elegant mark on each of our buildings, the signature being the exquisite wall finish at El Zaguán. I have heard people call him Charley. Not us. He is Charles and not being one for speeches we will just thank him, profusely, for all he has done for us institutionally and personally.

We all will miss him, but I suspect will see him and maybe, finally, get out a day to do some fishing with him soon.



BOOK REVIEW

FOCUS ON CULTURE+HISTORY

Lizard's Kill

By Pam Christie

Lulu Publishing, 2015

326 pages, paperback, \$18.98

Reviewed by Alan Peters

Lizard's Kill, the third of a series of mysteries set in 18th-century New Mexico, begins and ends with a map. At the novel's starting point, retired Governor Juan Bautista Anza gives Nando, the illegitimate son of a Spanish Don and his Ute slave, a dangerous assignment: to take a map from Sonora to Santa Fe where a contact will take it off his hands. But it is no ordinary map. Although attempts at mining in northern New Mexico have so far proved unsuccessful, that may be about to change, as Anza's map depicts the locations of New Mexico's mineral deposits never assembled until now.

The cost of defending an empire was straining Spain's coffers. To keep the empire fiscally sound, King Carlos III took

an active role in controlling the economies of his colonies. Thus far, New Mexico's apparent lack of resources had not allowed it to evolve into a financial asset for Spain. Anza fears that if his map finds its way to the king, New Mexico's mineral wealth will be used for Spain's benefit and not for the general welfare of the people in New Spain's northern frontier. Consequently the map that Nando carries has no place names, legend or indication of scale. It is inscrutable. Regardless, the map can't be allowed to get in the wrong hands, and Nando's mission, therefore, is of the utmost secrecy.

Nando, whom Anza calls his "scroungy lizard," leaves Sonora in sober spirits and begins his perilous journey up the Camino Real, attempting to fulfill the governor's request. Although he is extremely skilled, adept at languages, and able to move through all layers of colonial society, he needs assistance.

Once in Santa Fe, he goes to the Parroquia, where he confides in an aged priest. He is helped by Pueblo servants,

an aged woman of the gentry, escaped Navajo slaves, and his French-Comanche wife, Marisol. Despite the assistance, Nando suffers a myriad of calamities, but obstacles only make him resolute. He is determined to fulfill Anza's request, and his selfless devotion to his task is matched only by the goodness of his heart.

Those who have read John Kessell's biography *Miera Y Pacheco: A Renaissance Spaniard in Eighteenth-Century New Mexico* or Josef Diaz's *The Art & Legacy of Bernardo Miera y Pacheco: New Spain's Explorer, Cartographer, and Artist* are sure to be delighted that the map that Nando carries involves the gifted cartographer Bernardo de Miera y Pacheco.

Miera had begun work on a version of the map, but he had died before getting very far. A cartographer who had had some training from Miera completed the map and the legend, which had been separated from the map, was created by Miera's son Cleto. As the plot thickens, Nando too becomes a mapmaker, attempting to accurately render its details in case something happens to the original.

Sabra Moore's illustrations are not mere decoration to the text. Moore's drawings and Christie's well-researched text provide readers with a glimpse of a wrenching period of New Mexico's history too often forgotten. *Lizard's Kill* is certain to delight as Pamela Christie tells a very good story.

SPONSOR

The Historic Santa Fe Foundation sincerely thanks **Kolbe Windows and Doors**, for their support in making this month's edition of *Historic Santa Fe* e-zine possible.

E-ZINE CREDITS

Cover and interior photography by Anna Yarrow and "Flower" page 2 by Max Carlos-Martinez; edited by John Muller and designed by Dominic Cappello—El Zaguán residents.

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INTERVIEW: JOHN MULLER, RESIDENT WRITER AT EL ZAGUAN

Interviewed by Pete Warzel

Q: You've been at El Zaguán a little over a year now. What have you been working on?



A novel. Well, scraps of one. The truth is that the project exists in a kind of quantum haze: I can know the position or momentum of whatever section I'm working on at the moment, but never both. For that reason I've pretty much given up trying to describe the whole to people except to say that it's about El Paso and Ciudad Juárez, which I think have always been sort of a dark smudge on most people's mental map of the

Southwest. Together the two sides of the river make up the largest international conurbation in the world, a place that was once simply El Paso del Norte, but which these days is known even to residents in opposite halves mostly by way of malformed and mistrustful stereotypes. It's a city at odds with itself. And internal struggle is what literature's all about, right?

Q: You moved here from Juárez?

Right, and before that El Paso, although there was a stint in Brazil in between. All told I spent about three years on the border researching and writing what I hope will become this book. While I was happy to find that I liked living in El Paso, it was Juárez that really blew me away. Click as deep as you want in that city's Google listings and you'll find little to recommend it—murder stats, drug cartels, the femicide narrative, maybe some nostalgic reference to the Mariscal, a downtown red light district that was razed a few years back to make way for more medical tourism. What you're not likely to see, and what I didn't fully understand until I'd been there a month or two, is just how fun and egalitarian and almost unnervingly openhearted Juárez is. That plus \$75-a-month rent made it a perfect

place to dig in and get down to the business of learning to write.

Q: So what brought you to Santa Fe?

You mean besides inadvertently stalking Cormac McCarthy from one hometown to the next? St. John's College. I was an Army infantry officer for a while and figured it would be a waste not to let the government pay me, in all its Post-9/11 GI Bill largesse, to go read books somewhere whenever writing left me totally broke. The western classics master's program at St. John's offered the best reading list and most beautiful setting I could find—on a campus which our very own Historic Santa Fe Foundation just added to its historic register, as you know.

Q: In addition to fiction, you also write journalism. I'll stop pretending these are questions rather than declarative prompts for you to respond to.

Yep, I'm a contributor to *New Mexico Magazine*, which has been a pretty immersive way to get to know the state. In the last few months I've written a profile of the Romero family of contemporary Native artists (a couple of whom show down the street at Robert Nichols Gallery), a roundup of this year's Governor's Arts Awardees, and an article on land art in New Mexico. So okay, maybe working

for the magazine has mostly been an immersive way to get to know the state's art scene. But keep an eye out in the December issue for a story about Madrid Christmas and a personal essay on the smells of Santa Fe. That second one talks a lot about El Zaguán. Hard not to think about olfaction when my writing desk faces our wonderful garden—in the summer all those Master Gardener-tended flowers are right under my nose.

Q: What do you do when you're not writing or reading?

I bang on the other residents' doors and demand that they entertain me. Or I spend all weekend hanging around the office watching Spanish soccer on the internet, to the point that the neighbors start to worry. Every once in a while I'll remember that we live in a pretty cool little city and I'll go scope out some festival or see what's playing at the art house cinemas or head to the mountains for a hike. But it doesn't get much better than just sitting out on the porch, listening to the cathedral bells and admiring the garden, with or without a book.

Thanks you for time, John. We're lucky to have you here at El Zaguán.

Excerpt from novel-in-progress:

Once, on his late-night grocery store rounds, he had seen an abuelita snailing up the aisle with a sheaf of coupons which she consulted with the diligence of an attorney. Every few steps she would stop her cart, retrieve her reading glasses from her bosom, where they hung from a neon green neckstrap, and leaf with infinite patience through a month of Sunday inserts until she had fingered the relevant offers one by one. Nothing unusual about it except for the hour, and who knew what circumstances at home might have determined that. But as he angled himself to squeeze around her careless parking job, he saw something that stopped him. In front of a wall of peanut butter, the woman picked out two large-print coupons, for Skippy and JIF. She checked each twice, bringing the paper to chin height to read and holding it out next to the labels for comparison. Then she squatted to retrieve a jar of creamy Peter Pan from the bottom shelf, placed it in her cart, and moved down the aisle to the mayonnaise. He lingered behind, watching. Again she pored over a bright quilt of newsprint until she found a two-for-one deal, on Hellman's. Again she checked the label,

then collected not one but two jars of an off brand at full price and rattled on to her next stop.

For two interminable aisles he tracked the pattern, wondering if it would change, wanting it to. The illogic of the thing made his neck hot. Finally the woman became aware of her audience and moved her cart aside, gesturing for him to make his way around. He stood looking at her. She could be anyone's grandma in El Paso: squat and soft, her brown cheeks flecked with freckles and folded at the corners of her lipstick, but with sharp eyes that showed none of the milkiness of age. She should be at home watching bad television and lecturing her daughter-in-law about the Virgin. Instead she smiled at him in a way that betrayed a hint of impatience.

He couldn't pass. He had to know. With gestures and a few unhelpful words of Spanish he started trying to interrogate her, then switched to English when she informed him that might be easier. Several times he knifed his hand toward the coupons. He grabbed some sheets out of the baby seat and riffled through for specific examples, supporting evidence. When he was done she smoothed her stack and turned to him with patient authority.

"Because, you understand," she said, "those are the ones they want you to take. And you have to ask yourself, mijo, why do you think that is?"

HSSF MISSION

Our mission is to preserve, protect, and promote the historic properties and diverse cultural heritage of the Santa Fe area, and to educate the public about Santa Fe's history and the importance of preservation.

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OCT/NOV 2015 **EVENTS CALENDAR**

Santa Fe Independent Film Festival, Thursday, Oct. 15 through Sunday, Oct 18. Information and ticket at <http://santafeindependentfilmfestival.com>

Educate your Ear Friday, Friday, Oct. 16, 7pm. Talk and musical illustrations of Gershwin's *Rhapsody in Blue*. St. Francis Auditorium. Free.

El Zaguán Salons Exhibition, Friday, Oct. 23 through Monday, Nov. 2. **Gala Reception Fri., Oct 30 from 5pm.** El Zaguán Salons formed from a ritual Friday night meeting at artist-in-residence

Max-Carlos Martinez' apartment. An out-growth of the salon occurred in order to create a formal dialogue between artists, writers, musicians and their supporters. This show celebrates their work.

Spirit+Bone: Women in Nature. Photography by Anna Yarrow. Nov. 6. Exhibition opens at El Zaguán Gallery.

SHARE WITH US

Please send us information about Foundation-related events in Santa Fe: info@historicsantafe.org.

SPIRIT+BONE: WOMEN IN NATURE BY EL ZAGUAN ARTIST RESIDENT ANNA YARROW

