EXHIBITS AND EVENTS

We Who Are Clay

Working in clay is a long-standing tradition in New Mexico. In celebration of that heritage, the Los Alamos Historical Society is teaming with the Fuller Lodge Art Center, the Empty Bowls Project, and ten other partners for a series of exhibits, lectures, and programs entitled “We Who Are Clay,” which will look at clay as both an artistic and utilitarian medium. These events will take place over several weeks and at multiple locations.

Thursday, March 7
Dirt Cake activity by Assets in Action, after school at the Los Alamos Teen Center.

Tuesday, March 12
“From Clay to Bronze,” a talk by Santa Fe artist Monika Kaden, at the Fuller Lodge Art Center.

Friday, March 15
Joint exhibit openings: Adobe, featuring the photography of Jim Gautier of Cornerstones Community Partnerships, Los Alamos Historical Museum, 4 to 6 p.m., and The Art Center’s (Continued on Page 11)

FROM THE ARCHIVES

The Later Years of Maria Martinez

Frank Harlow, a laboratory scientist and leading expert on Pueblo pottery, became a frequent visitor to famed San Ildefonso potter Maria Martinez in her later years. From 1961-1975, Dr. Harlow met with Maria more than twenty times. After each meeting, he took meticulous notes, sharing not only technical information about the pottery Maria examined for him on nearly each visit but also her personal style and her personality.

When Maria (1881-1980) first started making pottery in the 1910s, she did not sign it, believing that all the pottery makers in the pueblo should be treated the same. At the urging of a Bureau of Indian Affairs superintendent, she started signing “Marie” to her pots around 1926. She changed the signature to “Maria” after Alice (Continued on Page 3)
Upcoming Lectures and Events

Los Alamos National Bank-sponsored Lecture Series. All lectures are at 7:30 p.m. in the Pajarito Room of Fuller Lodge.

March 12: John Anderson, “Hiroshima and Nagasaki 2010.” A docent at the Museum of Nuclear Science and History in Albuquerque, Anderson spent 52 years in the nuclear business. He will present an account of his visit to museums and memorials in Japan.

April 9: Dale Coker, “Bandelier Trails: Before and After.” A ranger at Bandelier since 1988, Coker will share a history of the monument’s trails, an update on their status, and what the back country has to offer.

May 14, 6 p.m.: The Annual Meeting featuring Robert Kuckuck, “On Being a LANL Director.” Celebrate a year of “Science and History” with pizza, ice cream, the annual Experience Auction,” and a great lecture by former Laboratory Director Robert Kuckuck.

Museum Exhibits

March 15-April 30: We Who Are Clay: An Exhibit from Cornerstones Community Partnerships on Adobe

Brown Bag with the Collection

May 7: 3rd Annual What’s In Your Historic Collection?

August 6: Welcome to the New Los Alamos Historical Society Archives (at the Municipal Building)

Atomic Film Festival

March 21: On the Beach, 1959 film starring Gregory Peck and Ava Gardner. The war is over. Nobody won. With the days and hours dwindling as a lethal radiation cloud approaches, each person confronts the grim situation in his or her own way. The final chapter of human history is coming to a close.

Join Us for a Grand Celebration!

Friday, April 5, 3 p.m.
Betty Ehart Senior Center

Celebrate the Laboratory’s 70th Anniversary in Los Alamos and the unveiling of the portrait of Gen. Leslie Groves, recently donated to the Los Alamos Historical Museum

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Dr. Harlow’s notes from his meetings with Maria, especially those that show the “humanity that lies behind the art” are excerpted below. The complete file is now in the collection of the Los Alamos Historical Society Archives.

**25 November 1961**

Whole family made trip to San Ildefonso with our three old jars from there. At the store, we met Popovi Da [Maria’s son, Adam] and his wife, who were very cordial and admired the jars much. Popovi Da particularly admired one (the one that turned out to be made by Maria) and said that one of them might even have been made by his mother. The black-on-red one was less familiar to him (turned out to be much older). Then he went to get his mother to bring to the store, and we met her in the little kitchenette behind the store. She is quite bright and alert and moves quickly in spite of her age. She talked mostly in Tewa with her son. [Details on the jars.]

One polychrome jar was made by Maria and decorated by Ana (Maximilliana) in about 1910 at which time she probably sold it for 25 cents. Maria said she would sign it. (I had asked Popovi Da if she would.) He got a sharp scratching tool, but the surface was too hard. He got a pen and she tried the bottom and

**(Continued on next page)**
(Continued from Page 3) then the side but the surface was too smooth. Then he got a “flow master” marker and this worked fine on the bottom . . . We thanked Maria and I quietly asked her son if we should pay her. He said no. He gave her a melon as she left, and I asked him again what we could do. He suggested sending her some nice material for a scarf.

29 December 1962
Visit with Maria Martinez at San Ildefonso. She says that several features distinguish the old B/W San Ildefonso jars from those at Cochiti. San Ildefonso uses a stone-polished slip (white)* while at Cochiti this was not done; the slip was rubbed for polishing. Also, San Ildefonso solid-black design areas are thin and watery-black, while those from Cochiti are dark-black black.

[*Slip is a liquefied suspension of clay particles in water. It differs from its very close relative, slurry, in that it is generally thinner. It is usually the consistency of heavy cream and is often used in decoration.]

6 July 1963
Maria Martinez, in an interview at her home on 6 July 1963, told me that in the later part of the 1800s, the pottery making families had surnames Montoya, Vigil, Pena, and Sanchez, at San Ildefonso.

Mended for the Laboratory of Anthropology [left], June 1963. The large jar was made approximately 1900 by Martina Vigil Montoya and painted by Florentino Montoya, Julian Martinez’s uncle. (This info. From Maria Martinez at her home, 30 November 1963.)

February 1966: Several visits to Maria Martinez, famous San Ildefonso potter.

On Saturday morning, Mrs. Martinez was at her little home. She was charming. She identified 5 or 6 of Alma Wright’s San Ildefonso pots for me. Different forms are characteristic of the various patterns; one potter made a big mid-body bulge, another a globular form. Maria’s form appears to have usually had a full underbody and relatively tall shape. She says that her old (pre-1915) polychromes are extremely rarely encountered, in almost no collections she knows about. Maria confided that her son Po chided her about fooling people about the knowledge of old-time pots. (I think Maria is usually pretty accurate and told her so.) She asked me not to let Po hear this, however. But she often frankly says when she does not recognize the maker of a pot. Maria’s mother never made pots, but her grandmother did. Maria easily recognizes style and design difference, paint texture, slip polishing method, etc. I am convinced that Maria is a very kind, lovely, genuinely friendly (when she gets to know a person well) person, who lives a relatively typical and genuine Indian life. She is modest, frank, dedicated to her position in the Pueblo. I come from interviews filled with renewed respect and admiration for her.

A few days later we saw a half-hour TV program (educational TV station) showing her and Popovi Da. Po made the pottery in the demonstration. The announcer said that Maria makes no more pottery. Maria said only one sentence, that being in Tewa to Po, who answered briefly in Tewa.

I visited Maria again with a little stone-strokes black/red globular jar, which she said was made at San Ildefonso. I asked if it could be from Tesuque, and she said no B/R was
made at Tesuque. (I think that in this she is mistaken; black on red was rarely made at Tesuque.) She said the jar was much older than from any date she could recognize. I asked Maria about the TV show. She said that the only thing that she had said during the show was to tell Po to use a little more water to keep the clay from drying out. He then told her not to talk at all during the show. I asked her about the statement concerning no more pottery making, and she said she had not heard it said. This visit was on Saturday afternoon, and four seven-inch jars were drying in the warm sun in front of the house. She said it was such an unexpectedly nice day that she should make some pots, even though it was winter. As soon as the air got cold, she would take them in, even though not dry yet.

29 June 1971

I have visited Maria Martinez at San Ildefonso three times this spring and summer, including today. The first time, I took my Tunyo Pueblo pot, which she and Adam definitely identified as made by Maria and Julian. The second time, Larry Frank and I took 30 or so pots of which Maria claimed to have made four . . . Today I visited her, and she seems quite tired and frail after her eye operation. (Also the day is hot!) Today she claims, for the first time, that she made a very small number of stone-polished polychrome vessels, in addition to the Cochiti slip jars that she usually made. She wished to sign my stone-polished jar as her own, even though I insisted she not do so unless she felt sure she made it; at the same time she rejected a beautifully formed Cochiti-slip jar as not having been made by her because it was too heavy and because she does not recognize who painted the designs on it.

Although her one-eyed sight is weak, she recognized the polished vs. Cochiti slip and admired the design on the former. Her hands seem frail and her hearing is weak, but her humor is fine and she seems to be as alert and intelligent as ever.

I returned to Maria with the heavier Cochiti-slip pot that she yesterday said she might have made, but also thought might have been made by Marianita Aguilar. Today she confirmed her thought that it was made by Marianita; there was no hesitancy or inconsistency. I am reassured to the viewpoint that she would not sign a pot as her own made unless there was no reasonable doubt.

Today Adam reiterated his admiration of other pot I took yesterday (my #641) that Maria signed and Alfredo Montoya (who was Maria’s cousin) had painted. He asked if they could come to our house to see it and I assured him this would be fine! (Aside: I gave Adam and Santana a painting today, which they seemed to sincerely admire. It is of a Sikyathi bowl, an ancient B/R pitcher and a candle.) Maria says that one thing that helps her recognize her own pots is to see and recognize designs painted by people that she would get to do painting for her when Julian was away. Alfredo Montoya (who did not live to be very old) was one of these that Maria often got. Lightness of weight is another feature that makes her recognize her own work. Maximilliana also sometimes painted pots for Maria.

It seems that the people Maria got to do her painting were people who put on neat designs with some degree of imagination, often with lightness of line work and grace, usually somewhat dynamic, rather than stolid and heavy and static.

1 October 1971

I went to see Maria and Adam and Santana at their home this evening. She volunteered

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the memory of the jar #641 “that I made,” reiterating her joy at seeing it. She also identified pots made by Martina and Florentino Montoya, which she much admired...

805 – I took this jar to show Maria and Adam and Santana, who especially admired it. (They don’t necessarily admire all the pots I show them.) This one they say is made by Martina Montoya and painted by her husband Florentino Montoya. Maria seems much stronger than a few months ago. Her eye bandages are off and she is wearing very thick glasses so she does not see well and uses a support stand for walking. Her humor was excellent tonight and she talked a lot to me in English about all sorts of things, including her two doctor’s degrees and various non-Indian potters she has recently met...

23 October 1972

I visited Maria at Santana Martinez’s home. Maria seems fine, in good health, good spirits, and very alert and talkative. She talked about her great-great grandchildren, her Ph.D. degrees from Las Cruces, and even was willing to mention Po’s death. Her eyesight is improved by the cataract surgery, but they (the eyes) tire easily and she gets dizzy when trying to walk. I got her to resign some pots (two of mine and one of Larry Frank’s) that had been signed before with a non-permanent ink. The ones with bird designs that she previously said were painted by Alfredo Montoya, she now attributes to Julian. I took 5 pots, three by her and two not by her, and consistent with a previous diagnosis by her many years ago she disclaimed having made my nice pot with people designs on it. She also disclaimed making the other that I knew was not hers. In contrast, she reaffirmed having made the other three, with the same confidence as before, lending added credence to the identities. She signed with a firm hand, and I later applied acrylic medium over the signatures for presentation. Santana especially admired the bird design pot of mine, and sketched a copy of the design.

11 May 1973

Visit with Maria Martinez at San Ildefonso

Maria seems to be getting around better. She has thick glasses that give her good vision. She uses a wooden cane when walking and not the aluminum-frame walker any more. She seems as alert and full of humor as ever. I took the large pitcher that she and Julian made for the Ranch School at Los Alamos. She and Adam and Santana all agreed at once on Maria and Julian having made the vessel.

She and Santana looked at a black-on-black small jar sherd from Quintana’s 1.3 miles east of the Pueblo. They agreed it was not a Maria-Julian piece because the awanyu faces right (Julian’s always face left) and the stalk is fatter than Julian would paint.

Adam again reiterated that my “tennis-racket” tailed bird jar was painted by Julian. I asked him if it could have been painted by Alfredo Montoya, and he said no, it was surely by Julian.

I took our two Maria-Julian pots along (the tennis-racket bird and the geometrical one) along with the big “cowboy” pitcher from the L.A. Historical Museum, and got photos of all three with Maria. Also got photos of Adam with Maria and the pots. And then a younger Martinez boy (perhaps Maria’s grandson or great-grandson) took pictures of me with Maria, holding the pots.

I have a feeling that they enjoyed the visit as much as I. Maria always seems to enjoy
Maria is well, sees well, and gets around well. They showed me that some of the smallest pots they had fired were, in fact, some that Maria had just recently made. Santana, as usual, had of course polished them. They were quite plain, no decoration, and the polish was very nice. Santana had made a bowl for her own use, rather shallow with flat bottom, polished in and out, which she said would hold water very nicely.

**4 November and 5 December 1974**

Two visits with Maria Martinez at San Ildefonso, in both cases to take pots to show her that I thought she might have made.

**4 November:** Polychrome jar with “Domingo slip” as she calls it, made by her and painted by Afredo Montoya; pot now belonging to Nicholas W. of Santa Fe Village. Maria was in very good spirits and wanted to chat for 45 minutes. She uses her walker around the house to avoid falling, and led me around to see some pots and awards she’d received. Says she plans to make pots (little ones) next spring. Grasped my hand with a strong, firm grip.

**5 December:** Polychrome jar “Domingo slip” made by her and painted by Maximilliana, her sister, owned by John K. who works at Fenn Gallery, Santa Fe. Again Maria seems quite well. Santana told me Maria gets $3 for signing the book about her [book title here]. I gave her $10 for signing the pot, which she thought was fine. I took pictures of her with and without the pot, for which they wanted no further money. Charged John R. $100 for the whole service and have decided this will be my flat fee for taking a pot to Maria for indentification, as it makes me very nervous to be in charge of the valuable vessel, even if the requestor.

(Continued on next page)
(Continued from page 7)

signs a written release of responsibility . . .

**Wednesday, 23 April 195**

Visit with Maria at the home of Adam and Santana. Clara [one of Maria’s sisters] was there part of the time, but otherwise Maria and I were alone from 1:00 until 1:30, when Al Packard came with 7 pots of San Ildefonso polychrome. Maria giggled with delight to see the jars, which she called beautiful. She was in tremendously fine spirits. Clara talks very little, apparently never in English. She polishes a lot of the pottery for Santana and Maria but never makes pots or paints designs. Maria says Clara is very hard of hearing.

Before Al came, Maria and I talked about people who decorated her polychrome pots. I showed her a picture of my tennis-racket-tailed bird, and she immediately exclaimed that it’s a pot she made. She says it was painted by Crescencio, her brother-in-law, Maximilliana’s husband, rather than Julian.

Maria says, quite consistently, that Alfredo Montoya’s designs almost invariably have flowers. When Alfredo painted birds, they were always very fancy, and had flowers in association with them. Alfredo’s Indian name was Huan Tsire (Pine Bird). Crescencio Martinez also painted fancy birds during his active period of pottery decoration, 1910-1918 (his death, according to San Ildefonso’s Pottery book).

Thus, Crescencio and Alfredo painted fancy birds. In contrast, Julian (and Florentino Montoya, who never painted Maria’s pottery) always painted much more simple birds, and never showed flowers with the bird. Maria says Julian’s birds were much like Florentino’s.

I asked Maria how she identifies her pots. She said there are two main things. 1. Her jar rims are much more outflaring than those of other potters (but she later said she did not make one of the jars that Al Packard brought, despite its strong rim outflare).

2. She must recognize that design style as that of someone who did painting for her. She seemed to emphasize this as a crucial criterion.

Maria did not mention the criteria of lightness and thinness, nor did she emphasize the use of Cochiti slip on her pots. Of the 7 pots Al Packard brought, six have native slip and 1, which had the form she used but an unfamiliar design, was Cochiti slip. Not recognizing the design style on this last, she says she surely did not make it. She claims to have made three of the native-slip pots, which were decorated by Crescencio, Alfred, and Julian, one each . . . Maria says she changed her pot-signing signature from “Marie” to “Maria,” because of the book. She
did this “after the book came out.” (i.e. Marriott’s Maria book, 1948).

Maria was very talkative and informative. We looked together through Chapman and my San Ildefonso Pottery book, and she volunteered a variety of comments on the bird drawings . . . Just as we left, Adam came home. He had been helping someone fire pottery. It was a warm and beautiful day, and Adam said the firing went very well. I paid Maria $10 for each pot she signed (she signed them “Maria Povika”) and $10 for posing for photos. $40 in all. She also put Maximilliana’s name on a pot that she thinks her sister made and painted . . . I didn’t pay her for that signature. She seemed delighted to get the $40. She told me, as she has often said before, that she loves to have visitors and feels that it is very important to be nice to them, not shy or withdrawn like most of the old Indian ladies. She says she has often told this to Santana but that it doesn’t do much good. (Actually, Santana is very nice to me, but much more reserved and a bit withdrawn, to be sure. Adam is a bit more outgoing, especially since we have known each other for a long time.) . . .

Altogether the visit was very enjoyable. I felt one shadow of misgiving, however. I now suspect that Maria is claiming to have made pots that she may (?) not have really made. She certainly loves to please people, and knows that people like to have pots that she made. (I am sure she does not even remotely appreciate the monetary value imparted by her attribution of a pot to herself.) Her attribution of the decoration on one of the pots to Julian seems quite wrong to me, as the painting is sloppier and in a different style from what I have come to believe is typical of Julian . . . (Anita Da has claimed to me that Maria’s attribution of pots to herself is sometimes done more to please others than as a fully honest evaluation). As a result, I find my attempts to devise an unambiguous scheme of identification for Maria’s pots somewhat frustrating. Nevertheless, piecing together all the available information over the years, it seems that some rather clear-cut criteria have emerged. If I am ever called upon to decide the attributions of San Ildefonso vessels to Maria, I shall wish to be strict and as rigorous as possible, and not act in haste in each individual case.

At left, Maria poses in 1975 with a pot she says was decorated by Alfred Montoya, while the pot on the right was decorated by her husband, Julian. (Photos from the Los Alamos Historical Society Archives)
Los Alamos County Budget Cuts Will Hit Society

A drop in gross receipts tax revenue in Los Alamos County is creating a budget crunch that will affect the Los Alamos Historical Society and Museum. About forty percent of the Society’s operating budget comes from a contract with Los Alamos County to manage the Historical Museum and Archives and to provide museum education services. The county is proposing a ten percent cut to its budget, creating a potential shortfall of about $9,800 for the Society and Museum.

At this time, it is not clear how these cuts will change the services provided by the Society. The board of directors is looking at cost savings and cutbacks for the 2013-2014 fiscal year, which begins in July.

In the meantime, when the yearly mailing goes out for the Annual Campaign and Membership in May, we will be asking our membership to step in and help fill the gap.

One of the Society’s long-term goals is to be less dependent on funding from Los Alamos County as we preserve, promote, and communicate the remarkable stories of Los Alamos and its people. We know these stories are important to you and appreciate your support.

New Archives Space Coming Together

The new Los Alamos Historical Society Archives in the Los Alamos Municipal Building is almost ready for move in!

The order for mobile storage units, which are intended to allow for 20 years of archives growth, was placed Feb. 5. Los Alamos County, which owns the building space and contracts with the Historical Society to manage the archives, bought the units as part of the Municipal Building infrastructure.

Los Alamos County will also contract with a professional moving company to transport more than 20,000 items from where they are stored in the Community Building, the west wing of Fuller Lodge, and the third floor of Fuller Lodge. The move is expected to take place in early April.

Even though the county is hiring a moving company, the Society will still need volunteers to help oversee the project to ensure that items are properly handled and to see that items are put in the proper place in the new facility. We will be holding a training session for volunteers in March. Watch your e-mail inbox for the date, time, and place.

Something historic happens when you visit the Los Alamos Historical Museum Shop. Stop by today. Purchases are tax free and benefit the Los Alamos Historical Society.
We Who Are Clay Events

(Continued from Page 1)
We Who Are Clay, 5 to 7 p.m., with Maria Martinez video from Bandelier National Monument, hands-on demonstration of ancient pottery decorating techniques by Chris Judson, and Themed Cupcake Sale by GSA.

Saturday, March 16
Empty Bowl Project by Self Help, sponsored by KRSN, 11 am to 2 pm at the Senior Center.

Thursday, March 21
Soil-Testing hands-on activity to decipher clay, silt, and sand at the Los Alamos Middle School garden site from 3:30 to 4:30 p.m., sponsored by Los Alamos Youth Food Project. Open to all ages.

Tuesday, March 26
Presentation on the 27-year history and accomplishments of Cornerstones by Jake Barrow, Program Director for Cornerstones Community Partnerships, in the Historical Museum, 7:30 p.m. Cornerstones has played an integral part in saving many adobe churches and used historic buildings throughout New Mexico and the Southwest. Barrow has also worked on historic preservation with the Romero Cabin and Fuller Lodge. He will discuss current work that emphasizes youth training.

Thursday, March 28
“Sun, Sticks, and Mud,” an Authors Speak event on earthen architecture in the Southwest at Mesa Public Library, 7 p.m.

Wednesday, April 3
Worms & Dirt activities! Join iCARE and the Pajarito Environmental Education Center for fun facts, experiments, games, and activities that explore worms and composting at PEEC, 1 to 3 p.m.

Friday, April 5
Joint exhibit opening for Lechuguilla Cave, the Jewel of the Underground at Carlsbad Caverns National Park at Mesa Public Library, 4-5:30 p.m., and at PEEC at 5-6:30 p.m. John Lyles will talk at 6:30 at PEEC on his 20 years of involvement in mapping “the most beautiful cave on earth.” See PEEC website for more information.

Saturday, April 6
Hike to historic Burnt Mesa Pueblo, an Ancestral Puebloan plaza site dating to the 1290s. See PEEC website for details.

Monday, April 8
Dirt Cake Activity by Assets in Action at 1:30 p.m. at the Youth Activity Center in Los Alamos.

Thursday, April 18
Traditional Green Building sponsored by Los Alamos Co-Op and PEEC. Jason Gedmin and Steve Watts will speak on the environmental advantages of building with local historic materials. Time and location TBD.

Saturday, April 20
Grand Opening of PEEC’s Mud Pie Factory on Earth Day. See PEEC website for more information on Earth Day Festival.

Sunday, April 21
PEEC’s free Earth Day film, Dirt! The Movie, at 6 pm at the Reel Deal Theater. See the environmental, economic, social, and political impact that soil has!

April 22-26
Artist demonstrators for National Park Week at Bandelier National Monument.

Saturday, April 27
Seedball-making, an activity of the YMCA’s Healthy Kids Day. Contact Sylvan Argo at sargo@laymca.org or 505-662-3100.

Fuller Lodge Art Center Classes
For Adults:
Mar 16—Beyond the Basics of Base Metal Clay
Mar 23—Torso Sculpting Workshop
For Children:
Starting Mar 6—Clay Creations for grades 1-3
Starting Apr 3—Clay Creations grades 4-6
Starting May 15—Play with Clay grades 1-6

Also Coming Soon:
Potsherd Walk by Bandelier National Monument
Los Alamos Historical Society 2013 Membership

Name: ______________________________________________________

Address: _____________________________________________________

City: __________________________ State: ______ Zip: ________________

Email (optional): ________________________________________________

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