

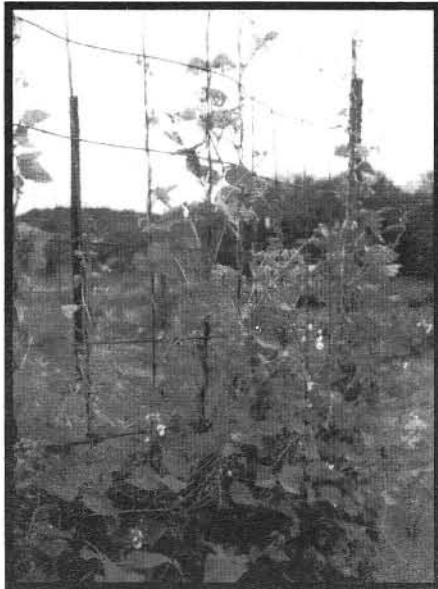


the Seedhead News

The Conservation Farm 2000: Fulfilling the Mission

by Suzanne Nelson, Director of Conservation and Seed Bank Curator

The new millennium brings the third growing season at the Conservation Farm. Each year we've tried something slightly different, building our base of knowledge about the weather, soil, insects and just how things work on that particular piece of land.



Scarlet runner beans thrive at the Patagonia farm. Photo by Suzanne Nelson.

We've discovered that the wind is a major nuisance during the spring months. Thus, we moved our landscaping plans up a few notches on our long list of things to do.

We've also discovered that grasshoppers will be a constant problem. This year we're hoping to stay ahead of the game with an aggressive program of mowing abandoned fields to reduce egg-hatching habitat combined with appropriately timed applications of grasshopper spore. We're building a chicken run between a major grasshopper staging ground and the fields—any hopper crossing that "road" will hopefully encounter a herd of voracious heirloom chickens! On top of all that, we're planting gourds—which last year's grasshoppers didn't seem to like—around the perimeter fence to act as ad-

ditional deterrent. Those grasshoppers will really have to want to get at our luscious fields this year!

Last year we conducted our first major growout of accessions that were at least ten years old. All seeds lose viability, even when stored frozen, and must periodically be grown out to regenerate healthy new seed. We planted nearly 150 different accessions of common beans, tepary bean, lima bean, and black-eyed peas from the collection last year, some of which were close to 17 years old! We harvested 84 accessions, though not always in sufficient quantity to replace the seed used to plant!

Not necessarily a great return on the investment, you say? Actually, we considered the 1999 season a success! We learned a lot, particularly about staying on top of the weeds and insects. We also learned that:

- only 17 accessions (out of 150) might need special care in order to successfully germinate
- we can replant any seed that need special care (except possibly the 17 no-shows)
- most of the 150 accessions would have produced pods if the insects hadn't eaten them, i.e., there doesn't appear to be day length requirements preventing them from maturing a crop
- tepary beans do great at the farm
- for the second year in a row, cowpea doesn't seem to produce much (perhaps not enough heat, too short a season?),
- scarlet runner beans LOVE it there
- trellises need to be put up soon after planting

We learned a few other lessons as well. A barn is a

continued on page 2

MUST this year, seed cleaning equipment is also a MUST this year, Sonoita Creek does flood (!) and, no, we can't get across while it's raging (last year a meeting was postponed a few hours while Matt was stuck on one side and Angelo and I were stuck on the other side of the creek!).

As historic as last year's huge regeneration was, this year looks to be equally remarkable! Of course, with such a backlog of crops to get planted, it won't be hard to continue making history for a few years. This spring we planted the entire pea, lentil and garbanzo collections. Interspersed among approximately one-half acre of Guatemalan purple favas are 22 pea, 3 lentil, and 6 garbanzo varieties. This is the first time NS/S has been able to plant the whole collection of any of the crop varieties in the seedbank at the same time. (Last year's common bean planting—97 bean varieties—was only

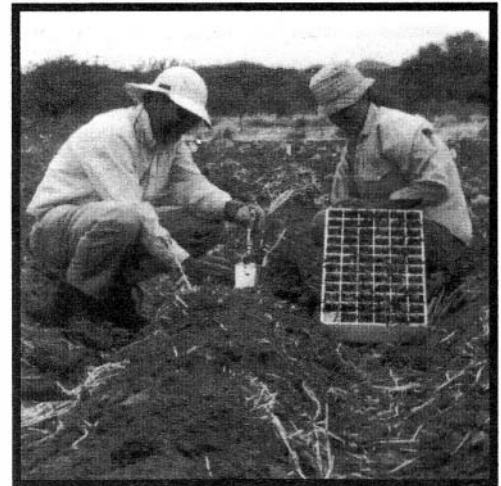
one-third of the entire bean collection of 281!)

Large-scale, simultaneous growout is extremely important because it's very difficult to compare varieties if they're grown under different environmental conditions, such as might be present in different years or places. Soil, rainfall, temperature, insects and disease can all affect yield, how quickly a plant matures, how large it gets, and how early it flowers. Only by exposing different varieties to the same environment can we make legitimate comparisons.

The summer 2000 plantings will follow closely in the footsteps of the spring planting. Being the chileheads we are, this year's main event will involve the entire chile collection. Not only will we regenerate new seed—enabling us to replenish aging samples with healthy, viable ones—we'll also be growing chiles for sale. Because chiles are easily crossed by insects carrying pollen between plants (which is counter to our maintaining the genetic integrity of each collection), each chile variety will be caged in its own 6' X 6' X 6' screen cage—all 50 varieties! Again, this presents us with the historic possibility of documenting what each variety looks like—the flowers, fruits, leaves, and overall height and size. "Range-pollinated" chiles will be grown without the protection of cages and will be sold fresh or dried. And of course, we'll have to taste test EVERY chile variety to compare cooking qualities! Should be a great summer!

For collections containing relatively few varieties, such as peas and chiles, it won't be long before we can grow out and regenerate new seed for each collection. Complete growout is the primary goal of the Seedbank over the next few years and the main reason for acquiring the Conservation Farm. For other collections, such as our maize (corn) collection, it will take several years and a lot of hand pollinating. To practice our technique and work out the bugs, this year we'll plant 6-8 different varieties of corn, each to be

hand pollinated. We'll also plant an acre of tepary beans to sell through the retail store and two acres of the normal contingent of squash, watermelon, melon, amaranth, beans, lima beans,



Spring 2000 planting at the Conservation Farm—come to a summer work party to see the results!

lemon basil, tobacco, oregano, tomato, tomatillo, devil's claw, gourds, and a few other specialty crops that haven't seen the light of day in a long time!



Every year since we purchased the Conservation Farm we have doubled the acreage under cultivation. This year is no exception. Every year since the first has been a challenge, and I suspect this year will be no different. But faced with the exciting reality of being able to get crops into the ground that have never been grown by us, we are anxious to get started and hopeful for a bountiful season. More than ever, the Conservation Farm represents progress toward fulfilling our mission: conserving the crop genetic legacy of the many cultures who have walked before us in the arid southwestern U.S. and northwestern Mexico and helping these ancient seeds come to life again in the hands of current and future agriculturists.

Summer Work Hours at the NS/S Conservation Farm

From now through the rest of the summer, we're hosting a **Volunteer Work Day** every Saturday, 9 a.m. until 3 p.m.

If you live in southern Arizona and would like to become more involved, contact Mary Sarvak, Volunteer Coordinator, at 622-5561.



We'll let you know when you can visit our chickens.

Flavors of the Desert 2000

by Shannon Scott, Events & Membership Coordinator

On Sunday March 19th, eight Tucson restaurants proved that the fruits of the southwest desert are definitely edible and incredibly tasty.

Nearly 100 people spent the afternoon in the courtyard at St. Philip's Plaza sampling delicious desert foods. The San Xavier Fiddle Band, a Tohono O'odham Waila band, serenaded the diners. The guests were also able to purchase native food products and cookbooks from our friendly staff. The Tohono O'odham Basketweavers Association was represented by Gloria Raymond and her eight-year old daughter Virginia. Big surprise—according to all who attended, the highlight of the day was the food.

Jonathan's Tucson Cork presented Scarlet Calabacitas, a blend of squash and giant purple scarlet runner beans. **Magpies Gourmet Pizza** topped a

basic cheese pizza with nopalitos (prickly pear cactus strips) and smoky chipotle chile flakes. Prickly pear syrup sweetened a BBQ glazed Ruby trout created by **Fuego!** Chef, Alan Zeman. The succulent pieces of trout were topped with a smoked tomato and tepary bean salsa.

Tohono Chul Tearoom also used the tepary bean to create a spicy white tepary chile salsa. The tepary beans are grown right here in Arizona and have been a staple of the native diet for centuries.

Pastiche used corn, squash and chiles to create one of the show-stopping entrees: Hopi white corn encrusted salmon marinated in orange juice and chile flakes. The succulent fish was topped with an orange and fig salsa and pumpkin chardonnay syrup.

Native Seeds/SEARCH staffers agreed their favorite dish was **Capriccio's** Southwestern Pork and Beans—Tommy's Way. This recipe included scarlet runner beans, red beauty beans, chihuacle negro chiles, Hatch chile powder, ancho chile powder and Hopi white cornmeal.

Other hits were the white pozole soup and red corn bread with green chiles from **Café Terra Cotta**. Chef Emili-



"Flavors" aficionados enjoy the multi-faceted event. Photo by Matt Nelson.

ano of **Daniel's** swirled red and blue polenta and topped it with an Italian sausage sauce. Daniel's also mixed delicious prickly pear lemonade and could not keep the jug full!!!

If you didn't have a chance to attend the event and want to try some of these amazing foods, the event's recipe booklet is available at our retail store for just \$2.00. All of the native food products used in the recipes are also available at the store and in our catalogs.

Hope to see all of you at Flavors of the Desert 2001!!



Virginia Raymond helps demonstrate traditional weaving techniques. Photo by Matt Nelson.



The birds, bees, bats, moths, and butterflies thank the generous donors to our Conservation Farm landscaping project! We're almost done installing the irrigation system that will allow us to get drip to the landscape plants. We'll let you know soon what we actually got planted! In the meantime, thanks to the following folks for helping to get us started:

Donna Cloud · Coronado Heights Nursery (thanks Bernie!) · Mary Peace Douglas · Darline Martin · Herman and Bea Quiroga · Florence Schmidt · Nina Woessner

Evolution and Growing Pains for Native Seeds/SEARCH

Dear Members & Friends:

I hope spring has been good to you. The Tucson area is well below its average rainfall to date but we look forward to the summer rains just around the corner. Life, however, goes on in the *tohono* with the fruiting of desert plants including cholla, prickly pear, and saguaro cacti. One can feel, as well as see, that change is in the air.

As in Nature, change is constant in an organization in an attempt to stay balanced. Evolution "happens," and forces an organization to make conscious adjustments in its best interests. Native Seeds/SEARCH is no longer a "grass roots" organization. It has become, using a term recently introduced to me by a dear friend, a "grass tops" organization. The job of staff and board is to ensure that the systems of NS/S reflect this evolution.

Native Seeds/SEARCH is currently developing its Strategic Plan for a three-year period. We are examining our programs and activities closely. The challenges brought about by growth have spurred us towards continual improvement—that search to more effectively and efficiently accomplish our work—in a manner that we could not have imagined a few years ago. Indeed, the mission of the organization has to be

fine-tuned to properly guide us in putting our energies, skills and resources to the best possible use.

On March 31, our New Mexico program was suspended to help halt a two-year fiscal shortfall for the organization as a whole. Support from our membership has been fantastic—we thank you immensely—but competition for what appears to be dwindling grant funds has had a negative impact on our ability to maintain operations at recent levels. Yet, we have been growing tremendously as demonstrated by both the opening of a new retail store and the purchase of the Conservation Farm in 1997. While it is evident that the beneficial effects of these outlets have allowed us to reach more people and to plant more seed, they have also stretched our limited resources to the maximum.

Two staff members are departing after many years of service. Junie Hostetler, our Distribution Manager, is leaving the organization after bringing the mail order and retail operations to their present levels of excellence. During her 13-year stint, Junie contributed to the organization in many ways, including serving as a member of the Management Team and serving as second-in-command during the past five years. She will be missed.

Brett Bakker has left NS/S due to the closing of our New Mexico office. He was hired as a contract grow-out gardener in 1991 and, a year later, as manager of the NS/S office in Albuquerque. Brett has served as a valuable resource for the organization and as a crucial liaison with the community. His departure is, hopefully, only until funding has been secured and a new set of goals developed for our activities in New Mexico as well as other parts of the region.

All this change, coupled with the examination of the organization's activities, has resulted in an introspective journey for me. It has become clearer to me why I work for the organization. First is the commitment to accuracy in the collection of cultural and genetic information pertaining to the plants. The stewardship aspect, knowledge that I am helping to keep the seeds alive, is vital to me. I also regard the cultural knowledge we collect as highly as the scientific knowledge. Finally, the attention given to maintaining the integrity of the seed varieties makes this work thrilling.

The rewards include working with people—staff, board, members and volunteers—who share the same values. The paths taken by people to this organization are fascinating and varied, yet I find the common feel-

ing is that the NS/S mission is important and fulfilling. Our participation makes a difference.

My dream is that within ten years Native Seeds/SEARCH will be the organization best recognized for conserving regional, traditional, and heirloom crop seeds for cultural and genetic uses. To reach that pinnacle, we *will* meet our many responsibilities. We will maintain the integrity of the seed collections. We will have a supply of seed to provide to gardeners who wish to grow them. We will collect the associated cultural information for each crop.

We will also provide future scientists with genetic information for the betterment of human life. We will assist people in achieving a healthier life by giving them options to genetically-modified, processed foods. We will have honored the farming efforts of "those who have gone before." We will be able to look future gardeners in the eye and humbly proclaim, "These seeds are gifts from your ancestors." We will have provided our staff, board, and members with the opportunity to play a role in the accomplishment of all these points. Thank you all for your support.

Respectfully,
Angelo J. Joaquin, Jr.
Executive Director

A Week in the Life of a Native Seeds/SEARCH Intern by Kim Dominick

In March I began an internship with NS/S to complete a Master's Degree in Sustainable Agriculture from Slippery Rock University in Pennsylvania. I have been helping out in the Seed Bank (headquartered at Sylvester House) and at the Conservation Farm in Patagonia (about an hour's drive from Tucson).

In addition to cleaning seeds and weeding, I have been conducting an experiment to test the effects of different seed treatments on the germination of chiltepinos. While browsing through an old newsletter, we discovered an article by an interested gardener who had written to suggest treating chiltepinos with meat tenderizer in order to mimic travel through the gut of birds (a sure-fire method for improving chiltepine germination, but difficult to do for the whole chiltepine collection!). Apparently, the meat tenderizer includes papain, an enzyme found in papaya. A trial was set up to test the effectiveness of various treatments—meat tenderizer, dilute vinegar (also purported to improve germination), and a control—on chiltepine germination.

The project is still underway, though more seeds appear to germinate when treated with the meat tenderizer, and dilute vinegar appears to inhibit germination. I will also be performing tests on cilantro and gourds. Besides germination testing, I will make a weed herbarium to help volunteers at the farm identify which plants are weeds and which are not.

Finally, I am searching through the photograph archives at the Arizona State Museum for appropriate examples of Navajo crops and agriculture that may be included in the Cultural Memory Bank.

I have thoroughly enjoyed working for NS/S and participating in events such as Flavors of the Desert and the Desert Walk for Diabetes. It will be hard to leave when my internship is over, but I will always be glad for having the experience.

Kim Dominick is interning with NS/S for a semester while enrolled at Slippery Rock University. She will receive class credit through her university and expects to graduate this fall. We have enjoyed having Kim with us (she makes a VERY potent black olive and garlic spread!) and will miss her when she returns to the greenery of Pennsylvania.

Thank You Peter Lawson

Many heartfelt thanks go to **Peter Lawson**, who has recently left the NS/S Board, for his many contributions to this organization. Peter is a busy farmer in southeastern Utah who helped guide us through the purchasing and early development of the Conservation Farm. Without Peter's dedication, the farm wouldn't be what it is today. We can't thank you enough!

Welcome New Staff

Development Director **Deron Beal** arrived at NS/S in March. He comes to us after eight years in Frankfurt, Germany where he worked for The American Chamber of Commerce and Proctor and Gamble. He first experienced desert living in Phoenix while attending the American Graduate School of International Management. He is doing his best to learn the names of all the chiles, and we are about to take up a collection to buy him shorts and sandals before it gets too hot!

Our new Distribution Manager, **Julie Kornmeyer**, brings a wide variety of talents to NS/S. Most recently she worked for an online retail company. She has worked at a local nursery and headed the Education Department at Tucson Botanical Gardens. She also holds a degree in plant sciences from the University of Arizona. She'll be ready to take your catalog orders and answer gardening questions this month.

Thanks to our new Administrative Assistant, **Todd**, who is very organized! Todd came on board in March and has done everything from cleaning out the old shed at TBG to ordering new business cards. Todd and his wife owned Whiz Kids bookstore here in Tucson for many years. He loves the desert, books, and cooking. We have already enjoyed some of his wonderful cooking at our potlucks.



For those of you as interested in food as we are, there's an organization you might want to know about. **The International Slow Food Movement** promotes a philosophy of pleasure and works toward safeguarding traditional food and wine heritage. The movement began in Italy as a protest against the opening of the first MacDonald's. Since then, local chapters (known as "convivia") organize programs to encourage the exchange and knowledge of different cultures and taste. For more information see the group's website at: www.slowfood.com.

Adiós Amiga: Junie Hostetler Departs after Thirteen Years

Junie Hostetler's pint size bears no relation to the impact she has had on Native Seeds/SEARCH as an organization and on all those who were lucky enough to work with her. Like many other NS/S staff, Junie started as a volunteer. She was officially hired early in 1988 to take over distribution responsibilities (Junie WAS the Distribution Department). In those days, her job consisted primarily of filling seed packets and sending out mail orders. She worked in a small, 10 ft. X 20 ft. cubicle (O.K., maybe it wasn't *that* big!) filled with shelves of seeds in jars. By the mid-90's, one could barely walk around in that room—it was filled to the rafters with all the distribution inventory (seeds, books, t-shirts) and shipping stuff. Every day, Junie and Betsy (who came on a few years after Junie) would have to take all the boxes and shipping materials out of the room just so they could get into it to work! And every night, they would have to put it all back in!

Little by little, catalog sales increased. Junie was great at finding new, appropriate items to include in the catalog and it wasn't long, what with her penchant for fine cookery, before she developed dry mixes and unique gift baskets for us. It was tough on the staff having to taste all the different culinary concoctions and baked goods she would bring in! And who knows how many of us have gotten her recipe for dishes she brought to potlucks. Of course, not many of us have dared request certain recipes, like her Aji chile cheese enchiladas that are SOOOO hot—even for respectable chileheads!

In 1997, the Distribution Department took a huge leap forward when it relocated to the Fourth Avenue store. Junie's vision has since flourished in the 1200 sq. ft. space devoted to distribution and retail. The store has helped spread our message to many more people than would ever have been possible at our previous location. Under Junie's direction, we have stopped requiring staff to dig for boxes from gro-

Junie's

Chile Chocolate Chip Cookies

1 cup softened butter
¾ cup packed brown sugar
½ cup white sugar
2 eggs
1 ½ t vanilla
2 T each green chile powder and aji chile powder
2 ½ cups flour
1 ½ t baking soda
2 cups semi-sweet chocolate chips



Cream butter and sugars until fluffy. Beat in eggs and vanilla. Stir in chile powders. Add flour and soda and mix well. Stir in chocolate chips. Drop by tablespoonfuls onto greased baking sheet. Bake 8-10 min. at 400 degrees. Cool on racks.

cery store dumpsters, painted our storage shelves and door (the back one) with Royal Bliss (a rather bright, pinky-purple color), entered the world of the web (managing not to get too entangled!), and increased the number of Native American crafts offered through the store. Junie also became the queen bee of desktop publishing for the catalog.

Through it all, Junie has maintained her unique sense of humor and style (see testimonials). She has truly been a giant at NS/S and we will all miss her (and her food!) very much. We've enlisted the help of a few staff members, current and former, to pay tribute to Junie.

Mary Sarvak—Assistant Retail Manager & Volunteer Coordinator

Junie's real name is Ellen. If you know Junie, you would know that she is not quite an Ellen nearly as much as she is a Junie. She hates olives and raisins and is one of those people who miraculously goes through life without chocolate or caffeine. She is a gifted genius with desert foods. Her mesquite almond cookies, cholla bud potato salad, aji chile enchiladas, and her exquisitely spicy chile chocolate chip cookies are only a fraction of her madness. She shares with me the love of potatoes in any form, fine cheese, the outdoors and the desert. She is bright and full and inspirational and cracks the whip with the gentlest touch as a supervisor and friend. She has been at NS/S for 13 of its 16 years, and for many obvious reasons is simply irreplaceable. NS/S will not be the same without you, Junie, and you will be sorely missed. However, as Volunteer Coordinator it is my duty to solicit you for at least some food once and again. You can't escape us that easily!! Thank you, thank you, thank you. There will never be thanks enough for what you've done and for how you have helped make NS/S what it is today. Love you chica, Mary

.....We'll Miss Our Distribution Dynamo & Executive Chef

Linda Parker—former Seed Bank Curator

Junie's contribution to NS/S began as a volunteer and we soon realized what a dedicated and hard worker she was. During the summer of 1988 we traveled weekends to Indian Hot Spring Ranch outside of Safford, Arizona, which was the site of a large growout of NS/S seeds. Many hands were needed to make the project a success, and Junie was someone we could always count on to help harvest.

The most memorable was the large melon patch which included O'odham watermelons that had been sampled by the coyotes (we heard many stories of Coyote rolling the melons out of the fields) or javelinas. The large fruits would have small open areas, but under the Arizona sun would begin to ferment. Most of the seed inside the fruit were still viable, but it was a messy and smelly job to scoop out the flesh and seeds in the field. Only when we sampled a good, chilled watermelon after a long day did we learn that Junie didn't even like watermelon!

NS/S has been fortunate to have Junie devote her talents and time toward the development and growth that has occurred over the past 12 years. Her energy and cooking will be missed!

Jan Waterman—former NS/S Administrative Assistant (& Everything Else)

I always looked forward to our potlucks, but especially if Junie was coming. Junie always brought wonderful goodies to share. Typically she had just made up the recipes.

However, when I think of her, the picture that forms in my mind (before the baked masterpieces) is one of laughter—eyes flashing and wild hair tossing. With her wry, buoyant humor and skill in the culinary corner, you'd think that's enough. But the importance of having Junie on staff went much deeper. Her concern for people she worked with and for the whole organization has been awesome. And she's always performed superbly at her incredibly multi-faceted job. She's been a rock and a treasure.

My favorite memory is of the time when all staff were taking the Toastmasters course. Not everyone could at-



Ever-smiling Junie Hostetler.

tend, but despite her huge responsibilities. Junie came faithfully. As we neared "graduation," we were each supposed to pick a topic and speak for 5 minutes or so, in a motivational and inspiring manner. Junie chose to speak about "Change." She urged us to regard change without fear, to embrace it as a good and vital part of life. She was passionate and convincing. And at the end, she exhorted us to "change your life, cut your hair, take a vacation—" and here she lifted her blouse just a bit to reveal her latest embrace of change: "Pierce your navel!" She left us roaring with surprise and laughter. Thank you Junie, queen of munchies and mischief. Blessings.

Betsy Armstrong—Distribution Assistant

I first met Junie in August of 1970, when she was Ellen Rhine and I was Booper Buss. We were 19- and 20-year-olds transferring to the U of A from smaller schools—she from DePauw in Indiana and I from Pine Manor in Massachusetts. We had both grown up in the Midwest and ended up living next door to one another in Arizona Hall. I have many fond memories of hilarious times with Ellen, her roommate, and my roommate. I'll not go into details...



Junie in her 4th Avenue Store habitat.

After graduation, life and families intervened, and we lost touch with one another. Then one Monday in 1989, Ellen, by then Junie Hostetler, came into the UN Center where I, now Betsy Armstrong, was working. We chatted about lost years and she suggested that I come over to TBG to volunteer at Native Seeds/SEARCH. My only knowledge of NS/S at that time was a group (specifically Kevin Dahl) selling seeds at TBG plant sales. I did become a volunteer at NS/S and the rest, as

they say, is history. I credit Junie for helping me find the best job I've had. Thank you, Junie for your support and guidance over the years. I wish you all the best in whatever you choose to do, and, if I might make one suggestion, we need help on Thursdays, and PLEASE bring food.

Stories from the Road....

The Desert Walk to Promote Native Foods and Community Health took place between March 10–21, 2000. Gary Nabhan, a co-founder of NS/S and Director of Science and Research at the Arizona-Sonora Desert Museum, organized the walk to emphasize how combining traditional knowledge of desert foods and medicines can directly benefit contemporary Native American communities and to heighten awareness about the high incidence of diabetes among native people. In addition, the walk was used to raise money to fund four internships for Native

American students who will learn about native foods and take this knowledge back to their villages. This walk spanned 250 miles across international borders, beginning in Desemboque, Sonora, Mexico, and ending at the Arizona-Sonora Desert Museum just outside Tucson.

To find out more about the walk, native foods and the indigenous people involved, visit the Desert Walk website at www.desertmuseum.org. Donations are still encouraged. NS/S will benefit directly from the internship program. If enough funding is received, we will host an intern for the summer at our Conservation Farm. You can donate directly on the website or call Gary Nabhan or Yajaira Gray at 520-883-3007.

Several NS/S staff members joined the pilgrims for a day's walk crossing the Tohono O'odham Reservation. Here are some of their memories:

Mary Sarvak

On Monday March 20, I walked about 25 miles through the Tohono O'odham reservation with fellow staff members as well as about 50 other walkers from vari-

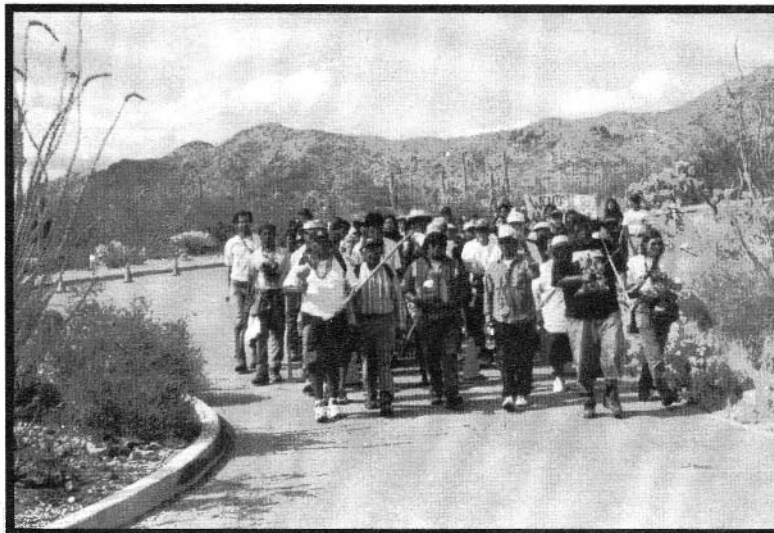
ous tribes to help promote the awareness of diabetes throughout our region of the Southwest. Even though I participated in the walk for only one day, I will never forget my experience. I came in on the second-to-last day of the walk. I walked with several people who had been walking an average of 20–25 miles per day for 8 days. It was amazing to be with these people, to hear their stories and to share their deep sense of community. These people had all been effected directly or indirectly by diabetes—many had lost family members to the disease. This walk changed both their lives and mine. The native food we ate was delicious as well as nutritious. The walk through the desert was refreshing and grueling, inspiring and challenging. I only hope that this walk will become an annual tradition, self-

ishly because I want to do the

entire walk from start to finish, but also because I saw that it really helped people and brought people closer together. Great job all of you who walked. Keep up the good work!

Amy Schwemm

When we turned off the highway to walk to San Pedro and saw the sign welcoming us, we had no idea of the welcome to come. As Edith, my new walking partner and I got close to the church, a line of people sang in O'odham. They threw confetti and crossed us with holy water. They thanked us one by one, some of them crying. I was crying too. After one of the best meals of our lives, there were unforgettable speeches, songs and dances. Our hosts invited everyone to dance late into the night, while some kept warm by the fire or in the church. On the way home, Angelo and I reflected on the day. Ruben and I communicated in a common second language, as we mispronounced words in each other's first languages. As Michael explained the significance of his pilgrimage, I realized I was representing people that couldn't walk, my family members with diabetes, and people who aren't with us anymore were walking quietly with me.



Walkers return to the Arizona-Sonora Desert Museum.
Photo by Matt Nelson.

Kathy Oldman, Diné (Navajo) Nation

On March 19, 2000, the sun rising above the Baboquivari Peak (the sacred mountain to the Tohono O'odham people) shone its first daylight on San Miguel Village. My family (sisters, Claudia and Charmaine and 4-year-old nephew, Jeremy) felt the blessings of the sun as we prepared our thoughts for the day ahead. Unknowingly, this day was going to be a memorable one in our lives as we began our 22 mile journey to Little Tucson. The heat of the sun was already intense and the silence of the desert waited for our footsteps.

The purpose of my walk was for Native American people who are diabetic. How this disease, diabetes, had affected many families. It changed many lifestyles, spiritually, emotionally, physically and mentally. Yet, at the same time I felt encouraged by the Desert Walk by heightening awareness to return to eating traditional food. The closer we got to the village each step got harder. My sisters and I kept saying "should we keep walking or get a ride back to the next village?" Silently we have to stay focused for the purpose of the walk. Our only strength was to drink water and to pray hard that we would have the strength to walk to the next village.

As we entered Little Tucson village, the community (elders, traditional singers, children) welcomed us into the circle. Songs by the O'odham were sung; hugs and handshakes were exchanged. As the sun set into the dusk, we stood to the east and prayed to the moon for the good day we endured. Afterward we feasted on many traditional foods that were cooked by the Tohono O'odham people. We bid our new friend, Lillie from Nolic village, farewell. The generosity and prayers of all the people we have walked and talked with on March 19, will always be with us. Thank you.



Angelo Joaquin, Jr.

I walked 10 miles of the 24-mile leg from Little Tucson to San Pedro. This was a personal victory for me because three years ago, I would not have even considered attempting this feat. Per doctor's orders, I have lost and kept off 45 pounds since December 1997 when I was hospitalized for a heart complication.

There is a special feeling that comes from walking in the *tohono* among the other residents of the community—the plants and animals. I felt it was a time for the strengthening of old relationships and the formation of new ones. The opportunity to talk to so many relatives, friends and colleagues in this setting was invaluable.

The greeting given to all walkers by residents of San Pedro was exhilarating and moving. The feast that followed was wonderfully tasty and healthy. *Nothing* beats Tohono O'odham cooking and hospitality. Celebrating inside the feast house was great and round dancing outside in the cold air under the stars was the perfect way to end the evening. It was deeply satisfying to look around the circle of dancers and see the diverse mix—young and elder, O'odham and non-O'odham.

Overall, I feel the walk accomplished its primary mission and more. It certainly raised the awareness of people outside of the region on the challenge of diabetes for indigenous groups in the Sonoran Desert. It was an opportunity for O'odham to see that support is available if we ask for it.

Still, as an O'odham, I have mixed feelings about focusing on diabetes. The rate of diabetes among our people is, I feel, a symptom of a greater problem. Elders have been telling us for a while now of the dangers of ignoring the teachings of the Tohono O'odham *Himdag* or "Way of Life." Diabetes is directly related to not gathering and eating the desert foods that were created for us. Having witnessed the success of the walk, it is now up to the O'odham community to see that the momentum is not lost.

After witnessing the effect of the journey on younger tribal members, perhaps, it is time for O'odham to consider planning a Salt Pilgrimage—the tradition marking the transition from boyhood to manhood. The 100-mile run from the *tohono* to the ocean to collect salt and the associated ceremonies may just be the solution to the confusion faced by O'odham boys in today's world. The *Himdag* contains the beginnings of solutions to other challenges faced by O'odham in general. It's time we made the connection to the wisdom of our ancestors again.

...NS/S staff join desert walkers to promote health



Brett Bakker makes another friend for NS/S.

Ode to Brett Bakker

Ns/s co-founder Barney Burns insists that New Mexico is the center of the world. Thus, it was only natural that NS/S would seek to work there, and the New Mexico program was duly established in April, 1992. Brett Bakker, an all-around superlative gardener and plant person, was perfect for the job of running the show there. Now, we're sad to have to say farewell to Brett, as we tighten our belt and close the New Mexico office.

Brett first grew out NS/S collections on a plot of land donated by a church. Eventually Brett ran a small office/store with limited hours. Over the years, Brett has been the NS/S ambassador to New Mexico, participating in countless workshops, festivals, and pow wows. He has written for the *Albuquerque Journal*, *Weekly Alibi*, *Seedhead News*, and the Itchy Green Thumb Column in La Montañita Co-op newsletter. He has sounded off on radio shows and regaled school groups, docents, wildflower societies, and garden parties with his horticultural wisdom! He is responsible for 229 seedbank accessions of traditional crops from the communities and pueblos of New Mexico, Colorado, Arizona, and Texas. His efforts let us offer more seeds for sale. He even found time once a year to deliver a truckload of squash, gourds, and other goodies to Tucson.

Brett's name is on almost two-thirds of the total collections from New Mexico! He has spent hours and hours traveling the byways of New Mexico, connecting with farmers, gardeners, and seed savers. He has helped conserve varieties that were collected from people no longer with us such as Wenk's Yellow hot chile. He has visited Abiquiu, Acoma, Acomita, Alcalde, Chamisal, Chimayo, Cochiti, Corrales, Escondido, Española, Garcia, El Guique, Hernandez, Isleta, Isleta del Sur, Jarales, Jemez, Jicarilla, Los Lunas, La Madera, Mesilla, Moriarty, Nambe, Ojito, La Puebla, Rio Lucio, Sabinal, San Felipe, San Juan, San Luis, Santo Domingo, Shiprock, Taos, Tesuque, Las Trampas, Truchas, Vadito, Velarde, and Zia. The man gets around!

Not only are his accomplishments a wonder, it's a wonder he did it all with that sense of humor! (Those of you who know Brett will understand!) His monthly reports have long been a spot of sunshine for us. As suggested by the signatures on his reports, he has been busy being other people, including, but not likely limited to: Reverend Norb, Captain America, Iggy Pop, Julie Ruin, Link Wray, Richard Hell, Joan Jett, Exene Cervenka, Ivy Rorshack, Pumpnick Egg-burger (I, II, and Esq.), and Charlemagne Xavier Ellsworth Tycowski III, Minister of Infotainment, Chairman of the Bored, President of the Chamber and Scared of the Dark! If any of you out there has a clue about finding Deeper Meaning in these names, let us know.

It's hard to think of a way to end our salute to Brett, but it's harder coming to grips with losing him and our New Mexico office. We can only hope it's a short-lived phenomenon. Many thanks to you, Brett, and to all of your alter egos. We wish you the best and consider ourselves richer for having shared stories, laughter, a few beers, and some good times with you. We hope you've gotten back as much as you've given. Nos vemos!

News & Notes

Thank you **Matt Nelson** and **Mike Wilson** of the Aconcagua Journey. This intrepid pair traveled again to Argentina to clean up trash along the route to Aconcagua, South America's loftiest peak. They gathered masses of garbage and carried the lot down the mountain. In addition to hiking and collecting trash, Matt and Mike also raised money for NS/S. They donated \$1,000 to the Desert Food for Diabetes Project. ¡Muchas gracias amigos!

Anita Williams de Alvarez finished her term on the NS/S Board of Directors and will be spending more time doing what she does best, working to foster better understanding among the people of the southwestern U.S. and northwestern Mexico.

Thanks also to **Stephen Thømmes** for donating a laser printer and to **Patty Perea Kane** for donating an Apple Powerbook laptop computer! Our repertoire of aging computer equipment thanks you both!

And finally, we wish **Doug Biggers**, the now former publisher and editor of the *Tucson Weekly*, good luck and happiness in his post-*Weekly* life. Over the years, Doug remained a faithful supporter of NS/S— as an individual member and on the Board. Under Doug's direction, the *Weekly* faithfully promoted and advertised our events and projects. He always gave more than was asked. Many thanks Doug, and hope to see you around.



Native Seeds/SEARCH works to conserve traditional crops, seeds and farming methods that have sustained native peoples throughout the southwestern U.S. and northern Mexico. We promote the use of these ancient crops and their wild relatives by gathering, safeguarding and distributing their seeds, while sharing benefits with traditional communities. We also work to preserve knowledge about their uses. Through research, training and community education, NS/S works to protect biodiversity and to celebrate cultural diversity.

Board of Directors: *Chair*, Mahina Drees; *Vice Chair*, Barney T. Burns; *Secretary*, Ed Hacskeylo; *Treasurer*, Don Falk; Bill Fowler, Dody Fugate, Phyllis Hogan, Angelo Joaquin, Jr., Hartman Lomawaima, Gary Nabhan, Roberta O'Key, Simon Ortiz, Mary Sarvak

Staff: *Executive Director and Native American Outreach*, Angelo Joaquin, Jr.; *Administrative Assistant*, Todd Horst; *Assistant Seed Bank Curator and Farm Gardener*, Amy Schwemm; *Bookkeeper*, Molly Bianculli; *Director of Conservation & Seed Bank Curator*, Suzanne Nelson; *Development Director*, Deron Beal; *Membership & Events Coordinator*, Shannon Scott; *Diabetes Project Coordinator*, Felipe Molina; *Distribution and Retail Manager*, Julie Kornmeyer; *Distribution Assistant*, Betsy Armstrong; *Retail Assistant*, Marilyn Klepinger; *Farm Manager*, Bill Fowler; *Newsletter Editor*, Brooke Gebow; *Office Assistant Retail Manager & Volunteer Coordinator*, Mary Sarvak

the Seedhead News

published quarterly by
Native Seeds/SEARCH
contents copyright 2000
ISSN 1083-8074

Mailing & Store Address:
526 N. 4th Avenue
Tucson, Arizona 85705-8450

Phone (520) 622-5561
Fax (520) 622-5591
website: www.nativeseeds.org
e-mail: info@nss.org

4th Avenue Store Hours:
Monday–Saturday
10 a.m.–5 p.m.
Sunday, noon–4 p.m.



Printed on recycled paper

Official Bean Counters' Club

Muchas gracias to our first-ever Official Bean Counters, **Mary Ann Clark** and **Marcella Theeman**, for helping with our germination testing! They're here every week to set up tests and count those that were set up the previous week. With their help, we're actually making a dent in the backlog!

Garlic Lovers Rejoice

Beautiful 20"-long garlic braids have arrived! Order yours today—\$16 each, including postage. Also available in the store.



www.nativeseeds.org

Save paper and a phone call—order seeds and gifts on our new secured site!

NS/S Membership Form

Check one: Renewal New member Gift
 Associate (\$25/year) Sustaining (\$100/year)*
 Family (\$45/year) Patron (\$250/year)*

Lifetime (\$500)*
 Low income/student (\$15/year)
 Native American outside Greater Southwest (\$20)
 Native American within Greater Southwest (free)

Please list tribal affiliation _____

*Sustaining members and above also receive a packet of 8 NS/S logo note cards. In addition, those who join as Patron and Lifetime members receive 25% off a one-time order from our 2000 Seedlisting.

Outside the U.S., please add \$10 to all levels.

Additional contribution (\$ _____)

Check here if you do not want your name exchanged with other groups.

Name(s) _____

Address _____

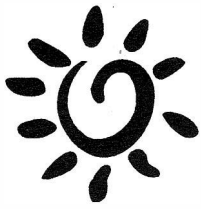
City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Payment method: check money order

credit card: Visa MasterCard Discover/Novus

Card No. _____ Exp. _____

Signature _____



San Juan's Day Celebration

June 24, 2000

At the Conservation Farm in Patagonia
Blessing at 9:00 a.m.

San Juan's Day is celebrated on June 24 and in the desert heralds the coming of the rainy season. In Tucson, the second half of June is hot and usually very dry—rain has been recorded on June 24 only 8 times in the past 127 years. Southwestern tribes have long anticipated and honored the life-giving summer storms on San Juan's Day. Rains tend to arrive during the first half of July.

Several stories account for the origin of the celebration. Many credit Francisco Vasquez de Coronado, who supposedly paused by a dry river with his troops while searching for the Seven Cities of Cibola and appealed for rain, which came in torrents. A slight variation on that theme has Coronado standing on the banks of a swollen river when he remembers that on this same date centuries before, St. John the Baptist (San Juan) baptized Christ. According to others, the day is linked to John the Baptist because he was born on June 24. Still others suggest it was on this day that he lost his head to Herod's wife.

San Juan's Day celebrations in Tucson used to be quite exciting. Beginning with mass and a fully-clothed bath in the river or "acequias"—irrigation ditches—running parallel to the Santa Cruz River, the celebration then turned "wild." Juego del Gallo (The Chicken Game) was the highlight of the day until the late 1800s. A live chicken was buried up to its neck in the ground, and riders on horseback raced to be the first to pull it out and continue across the finish line, using the chicken to beat away competitors!

This San Juan's Day we will gather at our Conservation Farm in Patagonia to celebrate (without Juego del Gallo) the coming of the summer rains with a morning blessing, work party, and pot-luck lunch. The blessing will take place at 9 a.m. Bring a hat, gloves, sturdy shoes, water, and some food to share. Call 622-5561 for directions.

Native Seeds/SEARCH
526 N. 4th Avenue
Tucson, Arizona 85705-8450

Non-profit Org. U.S. Postage PAID Tucson, AZ Permit #2157
