

## The January Meeting Tuesday, January 26, 2016 3:00 p. m. The McMillan Museum



**The Republic of Macedonia is bordered by Kosovo to the northwest, Serbia to the north, Bulgaria to the east, Greece to the south, and Albania to the west. The Republic constitutes approximately the northwest-ern third of the larger geographical region of Macedonia, which also comprises the neighboring parts of northern Greece and a smaller portion in southwestern Bulgaria.**

**The capital is Skopje.**

### The Program: Macedonia

ECHS member Charlie Ware will present a program on Macedonia, giving a brief history from the days of Alexander the Great, Roman and Turkish occupation, its incorporation into Yugoslavia, and finally, its emergence as an independent nation. He will also talk briefly of how Macedonia avoided the recent wars that plagued all the other countries of the Balkans. In addition, Charlie plans to include some of his experiences while working for NATO in Macedonia.



**The Republic of Macedonia in Green, Europe in Dark Grey**

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**Macedonia, in Red, as a Part of Yugoslavia**

Volume 43 Number 1

January 2016

### The February Program Tuesday, February 23, 2016, 3:00 p. m., the McMillan Museum. The Program:

Darryl Searcy will present a slide show of the experiences he had while traveling to collect plants for pharmaceuticals, experiences he would never have had a chance to experience otherwise: “stand an egg on the head of a nail in the heart of the capital of Ecuador, swim in waters where pink dolphins play, ride the backs of elephants to harvest in the Isola District of India.” His answer to the question, Would he do it again is a resounding “Yes.” At the end he will discuss some of the medicinal plants he collected.

# The Republic of Macedonia

Located in the central Balkan Peninsula in Southeast Europe, Macedonia is perhaps best known as the birthplace of Alexander the Great as well as one of the republics in the former Yugoslavia. The Republic of Macedonia is known today as a destination for those who are seeking stunning scenery of lakes and mountains, perfect for boating and hiking. For the tourist, Macedonia also offers a variety of attractions representing a heritage that includes Greek, Roman, Byzantine, and Ottoman periods. There are mosaics and aqueducts from its ancient Greek and Roman heritage, towns and cities representing European and Ottoman architecture, beautiful Orthodox churches, monasteries with priceless mosaics and icons, and splendid Muslim mosques.

Macedonia declared its independence in 1991. The government is a parliamentary republic. It became a member of the United Nations in 1993, but, as a result of an ongoing dispute with Greece over use of the name Macedonia, it was admitted under the provisional description of “Поранешна Југословенска Република Македонија” (in the Cyrillic Alphabet), translation, “the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia,” with the acronym, “FYROM.”

Macedonian, its official language, is Slavic. Regional languages include Albanian, Romani, Turkish, and Serbian. These various languages give an idea of the ethnic mix of the population. The alphabet, as shown, is Cyrillic, the alphabet of Greece and Russia.

The major religious affiliation is Eastern Orthodox, practiced by most of the ethnic Macedonians. The second largest religious group, almost one third of the population, are Muslims, mainly from the country’s Albanian minority. There are other religious groups including Catholics, Protestants, and Jews.

Wikipedia says of Macedonia today, “While easily accessible from all points abroad, and boasting all the amenities of the Western world, the Republic of Macedonia remains one of Europe’s last undiscovered countries: a natural paradise of mountains, lakes and rivers, where life moves to a different rhythm, amidst the sprawling grandeur of rich historical ruins and idyllic villages that have remained practically unchanged for centuries. The country represents the Balkans in the truest sense, consisting of a fascinating mix of Macedonian, Albanian, Turkish, and Mediterranean influences” ([http://wikitravel.org/en/Republic\\_of\\_Macedonia](http://wikitravel.org/en/Republic_of_Macedonia)).

## Skopje, the Capital City



### Skopje City Centre

A view of the Stone Bridge which separates and joins the two parts of the city, the Vardar River, and in the background, on the left, the Main Square.

Photo by Marco Fieber at < <https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Skopje> >.



View of the Main Square of Skopje from Vapcarov Street. The statue of Alexander the Great dominates the square, which is at the end of the street.

Photo by RasoAn at < <https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Skopje> >.



## The Republic of Macedonia (Continued)

### Skopje, The Capital City (Continued)



**Mount Vodno from the Main Square**  
The Millennium Cross can be seen on top of Mount Vodno in the background.  
< <https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Skopje>>.



**A Street in the Old Bazaar of Skopje**  
Photo by Andrzej Wójtowicz  
< <https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Skopje>>.



**The Millennium Cross**  
The Cross, officially finished in 2011, was erected to commemorate 2,000 years of Christianity in Macedonia and the world. It is among the largest Christian monuments in the world and has not been without controversy. The Muslim population of Macedonia has protested the prominent placement on the mountain and the fact that the cross was partially paid for by the Macedonian government; other funds came from the Macedonian Orthodox Church and Macedonians from all over the world.  
Photo from <[http://macedonia.for91days.com/book/macedonia\\_ebook\\_sample1.pdf](http://macedonia.for91days.com/book/macedonia_ebook_sample1.pdf)>.



**The Stone Bridge: The Enduring Symbol of Skopje**  
Built during the first half of the 15th century in the reign of Sultan Murat II (1421-1455), the bridge has remained during every period of rulers and conquerors, Romans, Ottomans, Bulgarians, Serbs and Yugoslav Communists. It has been extended, repaired, damaged from floods and earthquakes, as well as normal wear and tear, but has retained its basic appearance  
Photo by Svilen Enev at < [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Stone\\_bridge\\_in\\_Skopje.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Stone_bridge_in_Skopje.jpg) >.

## The Republic of Macedonia (Continued)

### Skopje, The Capital City (Continued)



#### The Daut Pasha Hamam (Baths)

Now converted into Macedonia's national art gallery, the Daut Pasha Hamam was built in the 15th century, financed by the vizier Daut Pasha, a high ranking official in the Ottoman (Turkish) state. The building represents Ottoman non-religious architecture.

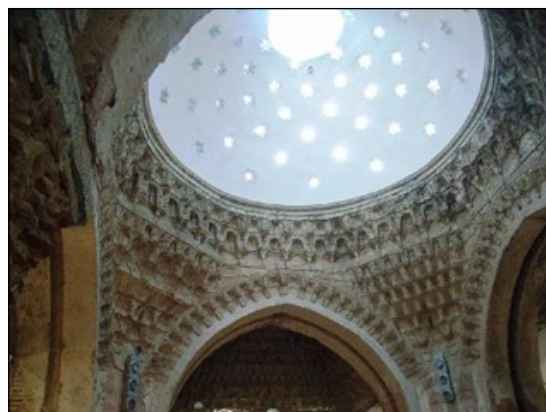
Photo at <<http://www.macedonia.co.uk/client/index1.aspx?page=261>>.



#### Daut Pasha Hamam Domes

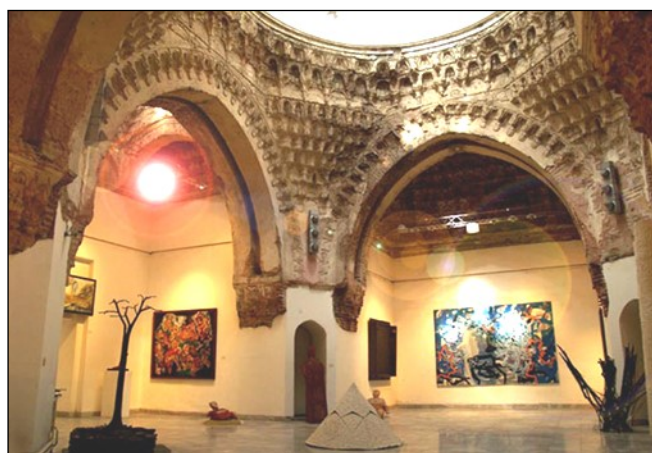
Of the thirteen domes, there are two large ones, as shown on the left, the other 11 vary in size and placement with those with glass roofs giving light to the interior

Photo from <<http://www.macedonia.co.uk/client/index1.aspx?page=261>>.



One of the Glass Domes illuminating the interior of the Daut Pasha Hamam.

Photo of Daut Pasha Hamam is courtesy of TripAdvisor and Google Images.



#### The Daut Pasha Hamam

Interior of Dash Pasha Amam which serves as a location for major events for the city as well as being an art gallery.

From <<http://whereismacedonia.org/where-to-go-in-macedonia/cultural-heritage-in-macedonia/158-daut-pasha-hamam-in-skopje>>.

Seemingly the baths were never used. One story as to why is that heating the baths required huge amounts of wood and the forests of Mountain Vodno were already gone.

Another story is that the daughter of the vizier Daut Pasha, before commissioning, visited the baths and a poisonous snake came from the walls and bit her. She died and Daut Pasha ordered the baths to be closed.

From <<http://macedoniaholiday.com/daut-pasha-hamam/>>.



## The Republic of Macedonia (Continued)

### Skopje, The Capital City (Continued)

**On the Right, View of Mustafa Pasha's Mosque - North-West Side.**  
The mosque stands on a plateau above the old bazaar and is one of the most beautiful Islamic buildings in Macedonia.

It was built in 1492 by Mustafa Pasha, vizier (high court official) of Sultan Selim I and the Ottoman commander of Skopje.

Photo by Rromir Imami at  
<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/>.



#### **Ishak Bey Mosque**

Also known as the Decorated (Aladža) Mosque because of the floral decorations, inscriptions and colored tiles found on its walls, the Ishak Bey Mosque was constructed in 1438 in the northern part of the Old Bazaar.

photo by de:Benutzer:Dominik.Tefert at  
<https://commons.wikimedia.org/>.



#### **Mustafa Pasha's Mosque**

The interior shows the five year restoration finished in 2011 which was paid for by the Turkish government.

[http://www.metaltraveller.com/en/trips/macedonia/old\\_skopje.html](http://www.metaltraveller.com/en/trips/macedonia/old_skopje.html)

## The Republic of Macedonia (Continued)

### Skopje, The Capital City (Continued)



#### St. Clement of Ohrid Church at Skopje

The construction of the Orthodox Cathedral church, designed by Slavko Brezovski, began in 1972 and was consecrated on 12 August 1990, on the 150th anniversary of the birth of the church patron, St. Clement of Ohrid.

This rotunda type church, composed only of domes and arches, is one of the most interesting architectural examples in recent Macedonian history

The fountain in front of the church was a gift from the Islamic religious community.

Photo by Yemc at <<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/>>.



American soldiers in Skopje after the 1963 Earthquake which damaged or destroyed 80% of the buildings in the city.



#### Interior of St. Clement of Ohrid Church

Photo from <<https://commons.wikimedia.org/>>

#### Agnesë Gonxhe Bojaxhiu



Better known as Mother Teresa, she was born on August 26, 1910 in a house that was later demolished to make way for the City

Shopping Center and where a small plaque marks the spot where the house stood. At the time, Skopje was part of the Ottoman Empire, the state of Macedonia didn't exist and Agnes' family was a Catholic ethnic Albanian. She spent 18 years in Skopje, vowing to go to India after hearing letters from missionaries read out during church meetings.

She joined the Sisters of Loretto in 1927 taking the name Teresa, and a year later started teaching geography in Calcutta (modern day Kolkata).

After becoming a nurse she took charge of a pilgrims' hostel, became an Indian citizen and founded her own order in 1948, dedicated to helping the poorest of the poor.

Most sources suggest she will be canonized in September of this year and become Saint Theresa.

<[http://www.inyourpocket.com/.skopje/Mother-Teresa-\\_56042f](http://www.inyourpocket.com/.skopje/Mother-Teresa-_56042f)>.



## The Republic of Macedonia (Continued)

### The Countryside



**Lake Mavrovo in Winter**  
Picture by Diego Delso.  
<https://commons.wikimedia.org/>



**Canyon Matka**  
Considered one of the world's most beautiful canyons, it is located near Skopje.  
From google images <<https://www.google.com>>.



**"Mavrovo-Lake-Autumn" by Sanja Nikolic**  
from Macedonia. Mavrovo National Park is  
near the capital, Skopje.  
From Wikipedia Commons  
[https://commons.wikimedia.org](https://commons.wikimedia.org/)



**Landscape of the Skopje valley, near  
Bardovci. A Field of Poppies**  
Photo by Prince Roy at <[https://commons.  
wikimedia.org/wiki/](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/)>.



**Pelister National Park, Macedonia.**

One visitor to Macedonia described a countryside filled with “rolling verdant hills and dotted with cherry-red poppy flowers and the minarets of mosques.”

One of the local customs is that rural dwellers still often welcome guests with a dollop of marmalade (made from figs and walnuts) and a glass of fresh spring water, a tradition that goes back centuries (<http://triciaannemitchell.com/2013/06/05/the-perfect-skopje-excursion-exploring-macedonias-matka-canyon/>).

## The Republic of Macedonia (Continued)

### Greek and Roman Past



#### **Ruins from the Greek Past**

Floor and Columns from the basilica at Heraclea Lyncestis, a city founded by Philip II of Macedon in the 4th century BC after he had conquered the surrounding region.

Philip was the father of Alexander the Great.

Photo and text from <[en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Heraclea\\_Lyncestis](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Heraclea_Lyncestis)>



Date of construction of this well preserved aqueduct near Skopje not clear. In use into the 18th century, could have been built in Roman, Byzantine, or Ottoman periods.

From <[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Skopje\\_Aqueduct](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Skopje_Aqueduct)>.

The Hellenistic town of Lychnidos, located near what is now the city of Ohrid which is in the southwestern part of Macedodnia on Lake Orhis, on the border of Albania. Lychnidos was comprised of an agora (an open place for assembly), a gymnasium, a civic basilica (a large oblong hall or building with double colonnades and a semicircular apse, used in ancient Rome as a court of law or for public assemblies), and a few temples.

Much of the remains of Lychnidos are under the present city of Ohrid and cannot be excavated.

<[http://www.metaltraveller.com/en/trips/macedonia/lake\\_ohrid.html](http://www.metaltraveller.com/en/trips/macedonia/lake_ohrid.html)>.



#### **The Antique Theatre at Ohrid**

Discovered in 1935, this Greek theatre (Амфитеатар) was built in 200 B.C., when the settlement at Ohrid was called Lychnidos. It is the only Hellenistic Theatre found in Macedonia. Although there are other theatres in the country, they're Roman.

Some seats have a name inscription, which probably means that some people had reserved seats or subscriptions.

<[http://www.metaltraveller.com/en/trips/macedonia/lake\\_ohrid.html](http://www.metaltraveller.com/en/trips/macedonia/lake_ohrid.html)>.



# The Republic of Macedonia (Continued)

## The City of Ohrid, Pearl of the Balkans



Ohrid, to the left, is the most popular tourist attraction in Macedonia and a favorite vacation spot for citizens of the region.

It is notable for once having had 365 churches, one for each day of the year, and has been referred to as a "Jerusalem (of the Balkans)."

The city is rich in picturesque houses and monuments, and tourism is predominant. Ohrid and Lake Ohrid Have been accepted as Cultural and Natural World Heritage Sites by UNESCO.

[<a href="https://commons.wikimedia.org/">>](https://commons.wikimedia.org/).



**Home in Ohrid  
Showing the Turkish  
Home Architecture.**  
[<https://commons.wikimedia.org/>](https://commons.wikimedia.org/).



**Robevi Family Home in Ohrid**  
Built in 1863-6, the historic home shows typical Turkish style.

Now a museum, one visitor on "tripadvisor" remarked on the preserved barn which had a large cross on it to prevent the Turkish army from destroying it during an event at the beginning of the 20th century.

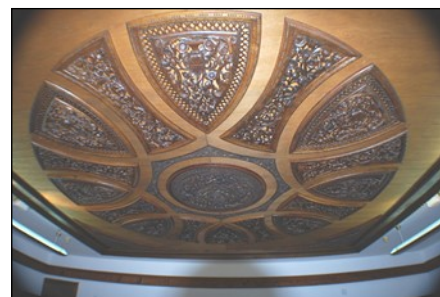
On the left is the closely adjoining home of brother of Robovi.

Photo by MacedonianBoy at [<https://commons.wikimedia.org/>](https://commons.wikimedia.org/).



**Street in Ohrid**  
The houses and shops in the picture illustrate the typical Turkish, Ottoman, architecture of Macedonia.

[http://www.metaltraveller.com/en/trips/macedonia/lake\\_ohrid.html](http://www.metaltraveller.com/en/trips/macedonia/lake_ohrid.html).



**Carved Ceiling In Robevi Home**

Photo by Raso at [<https://commons.wikimedia.org/>](https://commons.wikimedia.org/).

## The Republic of Macedonia (Continued)

### Churches and Frescoes



#### St. Sophia Church, Ohrid

The church is one of the most important monuments of Macedonia, housing architecture and art from the Middle Ages.

In fact, it contains the largest collection of 11th Century frescoes in Europe, along with St Sophia cathedral in Kiev, Ukraine.

One of the frescoes is to the right.

[http://www.metaltraveller.com/en/trips/macedonia/ohrid\\_churches.html](http://www.metaltraveller.com/en/trips/macedonia/ohrid_churches.html).

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Church\\_of\\_St.\\_Sophia,\\_Ohrid](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Church_of_St._Sophia,_Ohrid).



Fresco from St. Sophia Church, Ohrid



At Left, the Church of St. Panteleimon at Nereze

#### Fresco at Right from

#### St. Panteleimon at Nereze

Comment on the Fresco from an art critic:

“The frescoes contained within St. Panteleimon at Nerezi are not seen as static; they had the capacity to change into something more obviously human and realistic, anticipating the West's emphasis on depicting Christ as a man of flesh and blood by some 150 years.

“The Lamentation of Christ fresco is described as being a fusion of life and death in a single image as Mary movingly mourns Jesus, cradling him between her legs.”

[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Meister\\_von\\_Nerezi](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Meister_von_Nerezi).





## The Republic of Macedonia (Continued)

### Saint Panteleimon Monastery



**Saint Panteleimon Monastery**  
For many, this is the holiest site in Macedonia. It is believed that this is the site where the Cyrillic alphabet was first taught.

The monastery stands on a hill, now known as Plaošnik, overlooking Lake Ohrid. The restored monastery/church is part of a large archaeological site.

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Saint\\_Panteleimon,\\_Ohrid](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Saint_Panteleimon,_Ohrid).

“As the monastery is the most sacred of all the churches in the Republic of Macedonia, thousands of Macedonian Orthodox Christians gather at Plaošnik during large religious holidays such as Easter and Christmas to celebrate and take part in the liturgies.”

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/>.



#### Entrance

Judging by the architectural style and design of the monastery, researchers say that Saint Clement intended for his building to be a literary school for disciples, thus it is believed to be the first and oldest discontinued university in Europe.

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Saint\\_Panteleimon,\\_Ohrid](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Saint_Panteleimon,_Ohrid).



#### Showing the Detailed Style of the Monastery

The architectural style of the monastery is middle-Byzantine. All the restoration work was done by hand.



**Night View**  
Google Images

## News and Announcements



### **Clay Lisenby of ECHS New President of Brewton Chamber of Commerce**

Clay, who prints and puts online the ECHS newsletter, is not only busy with his photography and framing business; as of November, he is also President of the Brewton Chamber of Commerce. Clay's contributions to the community don't stop there, for he is also President of the Brewton Arts Council and plays for two churches.

\*\*\*\*\*



### **Bob Martin, Husband of ECHS Member June Mar- tin, Passed Away this Jan- uary**

Bob hosted an ECHS field trip at Keego a number of years ago. Field trip members visited the site of the old Herrington Hotel and springs. It was a wonderful trip and Bob and June were gracious host and hostess.

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### **Aids for Research**

Church of Latter Day Saints representatives are available in the Alabama Room on Thursdays from 11:00 on to help visitors and researchers.

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### **A Belated Happy Birthday to Escambia County**

On Dec. 10 in 1868, Escambia County was created out of portions of Conecuh and Baldwin Counties.

\*\*\*\*\*

### **West Florida Genealogical Society Meeting Saturday, February 6, 2016**

**Place:** West Florida Genealogy Library. 5740 N. 9th Ave, Pensacola, FL, **Phone:** 850-494-7373;  
**Time:** 10:00 AM. **Topic:** Genetic Genealogy: Using DNA Testing for Family Research;  
**Speaker:** Mary Eberle

On February 6, Mary Eberle will present information about how to use DNA testing for your

family research, covering DNA basics, available tests, and how to develop your DNA testing plan.

Mary Eberle owns DNA Hunters, LLC. She's a former DNA scientist and patent lawyer. She now specializes in genetic genealogy, that is, using DNA for family research. Mary helps people use DNA for their genealogy. She also helps adoptees and others with unknown parents use DNA to find their birth families.

Members and guests are welcome to attend. Refreshments will be available at 9:45. Meeting begins at 10:00. For more information, Contact: Charlotte Schipman, at [850-477-7166](tel:850-477-7166) or <[cschipman@mac.com](mailto:cschipman@mac.com)>

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### **Monday, January 25, 2016, 2:00 p. m., the Florida Panhandle Historic Preservation Alliance Will Sponsor**

### **A Discussion on the Recent Discovery of the de Luna Site.**

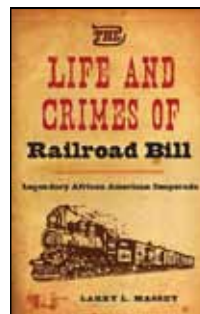
Dr. John Worth, shown left at the bottom, associate professor of historical archaeology at the University of West Florida and Dr. Judy Benchley, shown left at the top, president of the University and founder of its archaeology program, will discuss the recent discovery of the settlement site of the 1559-61 Luna expedition, the oldest multi-year settlement in the US.

The program will be at 207 E Main St, Pensacola, location of the Florida Public Archaeology Network, FPAN Northwest. FPAN building is located just north of the Fish House Restaurant.

\*\*\*\*\*

### **Larry Massey's Book on Railroad Bill Now on Sale in the Alabama Room**

The book, hardcover, is on sale for \$21.95





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# The ECHS *Journal* Section

## Get a Little Crazy-Try Canning and Preserving

**By Darryl Searcy**

The first time I really clued into the concept of what I am wanting to call “seasonality” was long before I was a teenager. We didn’t have vineyards and wheat fields, but our folks did keep a large garden in which corn, greens of all denominations, peas, beans, beets, rutabagas, potatoes, squash, okra, cucumbers and melons aplenty were the order of the day and everything had to be gathered on time or it ruined on the vine. Mom and dad made sure nothing was wasted and if it didn’t vanish at the family dining table it went into preserving jars and a boiling water bath for nourishment another day. There was nothing fancy about our garden, nor were there exotic vegetables like the fast and furious growing of asparagus during its prime season. That up-town commodity was best grown in the flower beds where it could be controlled and harvested daily. When mom had snipped off enough shoots to make a choice serving then we had an asparagus specialty at the Sunday dinner table.

I grew up thinking of certain food stuff as special-occasion vegetables; too pricy for anything other than birthday suppers and holiday meals. As I grew older and having seen these things going at low cost on the independent grocery store shelf in town, I began to realize that it wasn’t an inherently expensive vegetable after all. It was the travel and scarcity that made it so. I’ve carried that lesson around with me ever since and for several decades I have planted a few of these specialties in the flower beds.

Once you clue into the “seasonality” of food, there’s really no going back. Not only are things more affordable when they’re abundant, they also taste far better. The one question that comes up is what do you do when you have a hankering for asparagus in November or peaches in January? You can either squelch the urge or you can do a little work during their respective seasons; plan ahead and



Persimmon Butter - Pickled Beets - Fig Preserves - Peaches - Venison - Pears

take lessons from the squirrels.

I choose to do the work every time. I grow asparagus in the flower beds and I make asparagus pickles every spring. I’ve made vats of fruit jam in July and preserved every ounce of tomatoes I can get my hands on. As I eat through my stores, I think about the time I spent preserving and ap-

preciate the “seasonality” of food, even from half to a couple years past. The telephone, being the marvelous invention it is, kept me in touch with my sister, who is known throughout her neighborhood for canning and preserving foods, so if a question arises about “how to,” I simply give her a call and lay out my plans to replenish the food locker; putting my little 4-quart canner to good use.

Such was the case recently when a fellow collided with a deer on old County Road 17. The deer died, of course, and the unfortunate driver had to deal with his insurance company, as well as the game and fish folks to prove that it was indeed a road kill. Having said that, the deer was offered to anyone who cared to field dress it and prepare it for the freezer. My sis’s boys accepted the offer, so now it fell to us to pull out the old pressure canners and preserve the meat. We each have canners that accommodate 10 pint jars or eight quarts. We chose to preserve the meat in pint jars because that’s the right size for a small family meal. We canned meat packed in salted water, meat packed with peppers and onion, meat packed for soups and stews - 26 jars total of wholesome high-protein meat.

Once in my career I had a long term assignment in the Dallas/Fort Worth area. My good fortune was to find a modest house on Marquita Street near downtown Dallas with neighbors like McHugh on my left and Craig on my right. Both neighbors kept small gardens, as did I, so between us we had all the good varieties that equaled the local IGA store.

*(Continued on page 15)*



# The ECHS *Journal* Section

## Get a Little Crazy-Try Canning and Preserving

*(Continued from page 14)*

Mrs. McHugh grew up in Oregon, where she learned to “put up” local blueberries, blackberries and apples from her mother. When she married her military sweetheart, her new husband wasted no time whisking her off to Texas; a cross-country move that put distance between her and the canning pot she knew so well. However, good fortune came to her early on when a fortuitous berry picking expedition with a friend from Crocket reawakened her passion, and for the rest of her long life she canned and preserved everything. I gave these ladies my rapt attention as I also had a small garden in which I grew running beans (not to mention my asparagus and ginger) and we exchanged vegetable excesses. Twice a week I also visited the local curb market up on Greenville Avenue and bought up large baskets of throw-away tomatoes, peaches and other over-ripe, slightly bruised fruits and vegetables, for which the public had no interest. The green-grocer was happy to sell the produce at a reduced rate, thus avoiding tossing money into the trash. I shared the loot with my neighbors, a practice that yielded an abundance of homemade catsup, salsa, stewed tomatoes, juice and soup mixes with onion, carrots and potatoes. On any given Saturday the market was bound to be a mix of merriment and mayhem with crowds of “foodies” looking for fresh fruit bargains. In the midst of fruit vendors, fish throwers, and coffee roasters, our “seasonality” sprang forth, but we patiently waited our turn to jump in and buy up the slightly damaged goods. So pleased was the market proprietor that he began ordering canning jars with lids and rings, which he passed on to us at cost.

Among the crowds of elbowing shoppers, our lively team and the beautiful Texas weather, market days became jovial and informative experience. Thankfully technical difficulties were minimal, no fingers or eyebrows were lost, and through the noisy curtain that separated our foraged goods from the sideline, we each gained more knowledge about canning tech-



niques than we ever thought possible. I continue some of those techniques to this day, except I keep it to a more conservative scale.

The pilgrimages to market often ended with occasional displays whereby Mrs. McHugh whipped up a beautiful mixed berry jam that was served to other market-ers and neighbors on fresh baguettes. Along with those

delicious offerings, Mrs. Craig, our resident pastry lady, would swoop in like Lucille Ball meeting a Hell’s Angel to show how to use that jam to make a mixed berry torte with a flaky golden lattice that left us salivating. There were times when another shopper might volunteer to conduct a pickling tutorial. The cooked cubes were turned into dill pickle and cream cheese sandwiches, which generated much excitement from the crowd for the “how-to” of such a simple treat. Who knew that with the help of the a few canning tips, pickling was literally as easy as one, two, three? The next project might stay on the savory course with canned tomatoes, (courtesy of the green grocer), which transformed the menu into an aromatic seafood soup. With the help of a few additions including saffron, fresh scallops, and olive oil, we had heads turning and necks craning. “I thought this was a canning demo?” one man said out in the peanut gallery. “It is,” Mrs. Craig shouted back, “look what you can whip up with a dash of fish!”

Last but not least were the Chandler sisters, who kept energy high for the finale of pepper jelly, a spicy addition to large slices of garlic Texas toast. Several stragglers stopped by the prep station asking to buy a jar of the hot sweet treat. Although no products were up for auction or sale, the on-lookers never left empty handed either, as the curb market offered many blue-light specials, which brought in hefty profits for the proprietor and vendors alike. Although we did accept a few donations when offered, it was not necessary and all we asked was to have the canning jars returned to the market when emptied.

With rising trends in local home-growing, and

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# The ECHS *Journal* Section

## Get a Little Crazy-Try Canning and Preserving

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community gardens, it's no wonder that canning has stepped up as a serious new fixture in the food world. The concept has changed from a technique to survive winter into a wonderful way to enjoy seasonal flavors year round, while also getting really creative. Sorry jam, your glory days are over. Pickled vegetables, chutneys, jellies, syrups, and pie fillings have bumped up from their status as artisanal treats purchased in gourmet shops to the latest "do it yourself" projects.

Pickled lemon asparagus, ginger fig jelly, or spicy peach tomatillo (Mexican husk tomato) salsa anyone?

Not only is canning fun, but it's affordable. As a retiree, and like so many folks these days, we find ourselves on a tight budget but would rather cook than eat cheap processed foods. Making my own is a bit more laborious, but a labor of love that I find relaxing, educational, and comforting. I've loved canning ever since I started playing with the surplus from the family fig tree. It has been a hobby for many years and I hope will always be a seasonal ritual that allows me to indulge in nostalgia for other seasons and regional flavors. It's economical, especially if you grow your own produce, and it's fun to do with friends or family. It can also be hysterically messy, but all you need do is let laughter overtake the process. I still enjoy giving ½ pint jars of jelly and jam as gifts.

Last fall, I used my canning equipment for autumnal flavors. I went to the curb market in Flomaton and bought a few items which later became pumpkin butter, applesauce, and pickled cauliflower using the jars from the polished off strawberry and fig jams I had made in previous summers. More recently I learned that a friend had a wonderful old persimmon tree, which fruit was going to waste. Please, please, let me have it! I harvested a few of the heavy fruits and turned them to a tasty, honey-flavored persimmon butter. You don't always need to make an event out of it, sometimes it's nice to just experiment a little, especially if you're prone to stockpiling your cabinets with surplus goods. Take your time getting to the bottom of a jar. I also like to make one big batch of jam or fruit butter and add different spices to different jars at the end. That way I get to see which fla-

vor combinations I like best without making a dozen batches. Canning isn't only about tradition anymore -- it's also about freedom of expression. Work with what's in season with the help of local markets, reuse your jars, swap with friends, get crazy.

I go according to plan. For someone like me, who loves to plan the future, there is really nothing worse than periods of chaos and uncertainty. During an on-the-job expedition to the Isola District of India I read a small book called *Midnight's Children*, by Salman Rushdie. The main character of the book, Saleem, describes his relationship with chutney, that wonderful Indian canned delicacy. Towards the end of his life, Saleem spent his days making chutneys because preserving food, to him, was a form of preserving memories. In a jar of chutney, he included his favorite flavors and tastes, which as everybody knows, are connected to memories: "...Rising from my pages comes the unmistakable whiff of chutney. So let me obfuscate no further: I, Saleem Sinai, possessor of the most delicately-gifted olfactory organ in history, have dedicated my latter days to the large-scale preparation of condiments." "You are amazed," he wrote, "but I am not, you see one of your 200-rupee-a-month cookery johnnies, but my own master, working beneath the saffron and green winking of my personal neon goddess. And my chutneys and kasaundies are, after all, connected to my nocturnal scribbling – by day amongst the pickle-vats, by night within these sheets, I spend my time at the great work of preserving memory, as well as fruit, that is being saved from the corruption of the clocks."

Inspired by these writings, I decided to stop despondently looking ahead to the next step, and to do something productive. I decided to make chutney, or in our American terminology, jam. It was the best thing I could have done to get out of a funk. Jam making is an inherently productive task. You get your fruit and you create an interesting flavor profile, throwing in spices and liquors, and then, at the end of the process you have produced a bright, beautifully colored jar of something delicious. It gives you a few wonderful things to offer to your friends and the loved ones around you.

The task of jam making also gives you time to think. As you are chopping fruit and slowly stirring

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# The ECHS *Journal* Section

## Get a Little Crazy-Try Canning and Preserving

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your pot, so that the sugar does not burn, your mind can wander, or perhaps focus. So, while I am making jam, I stop thinking ahead to the next job assignment or the next state of my life. Instead, I remember the past and making strawberry jam. I think about all the delicious jams I had tasted while having tea during a brief stay in London. Like the character Saleem, preserving fruit allowed me to preserve memories. I think about the things in life that give me pleasure and happiness and I began to feel the glow of being a whole person again.

My inaugural journey into canning many years ago was not pretty. You might say the journey of a thousand tomatoes began with a single slice. In my case, I was about... oh... maybe, three tomatoes in when it happened. That's three tomatoes in -- to the five pounds of tomatoes my first canning recipe called for. When I sliced my finger, I sliced it well. A beautiful u-shaped cut that supplied copious blood. I contemplated a trip to the ER, weighing it against the loss of the produce and against the concept of a failed canning adventure. I recalled the time a nurse told me that 20 minutes is the point at which the bleeding should stop and if it hasn't by that time, you go get stitches. In that case, as I recall, it was more like 40 minutes and a roll and a half of paper towels...but

this time, I had a mission that included a bunch of fresh tomatoes from my own little garden.

So this, I tell myself, cannot be that time. It just can't. I've already got the ears of corn shucked, par-boiled, and cut from the cobs. I've already got the other ingredients diced, peeled and measured. I flush the finger with hydrogen peroxide and I press the wound closed, applied pressure and held it over my head.

Since that time I am grateful for clean, sharp knives. The cut doesn't hurt as much as it worries. It must be tonight! I ran out of cumin, but got some more. Eyeing the now-so-much-more-enormous looking bowl of tomatoes, I sensibly put on a pair of rubber gloves and I slice carefully and slowly. This is going to take a lot longer than I'd anticipated. The throbbing left middle finger complains as I make my way, gingerly, through the five pounds of tomatoes.

Who was it that recently advised me against starting a canning project after dinner? I often insist upon ignoring perfectly good advice, as I have done all my life, and forge ahead. This is the guy who refused to consider the Iowa Writers' Workshop simply because it was originated in a state other than Missouri or Alabama. Why start listening now?

Like I said, get all your stuff together, turn to some good music and get a little crazy.

### **This Picture with Its Explanation Was Glued to the Back of a Kitchen Cabinet as a Reminder that Once Canning and Preserving Were Necessities.**

In 1939, Franklin Delano Roosevelt's New Deal administration assigned photographer Dorothea Lange to travel around Oregon documenting agricultural communities in the depths of the Great Depression.

Here we see Mrs. Botner of Nyssa Heights in Eastern Oregon tidying her storage cellar, where she had placed 800 quarts of home canned food to sustain her family through the winter.

Thank you to the Oregon Cultural Commission and Portland State University Friends of History for permission to print this photograph from the U. S. Farm Security Administration collection. Prints and Photographs Division, Library of Congress. <<https://www.google.com/search?q=Historic+pictures+of+canning+and+preserving>>.



**ECHOES**  
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