

SKETCHES IN THE SAND



Although I could write at length about the many factors that have gone into this special issue, I'll confine my comments largely to one aspect—networking—to use a trendy concept. It is because of networking, I should imagine, that Steve Weber and Steve Emslie, conceived the idea of an issue of the *Journal* devoted to “new directions in ethnobiology”, and no one knows better than Karen Adams and I that several of the papers in this issue would not have been submitted for inclusion if we had not had numerous suggestions and much interest from various ethnobiologists—some members of the Society, some not. It is a pleasure to acknowledge your splendid participation.

Society officers Weber and Emslie drafted the initial letter explaining their conception of the special issue and inviting scholars to participate through preparing a “state of the art” paper in their individual areas of ethnobiological involvement. When they submitted this draft, to be sent under my signature, they included a list of scholars they wished to invite. I added a number of names and sent out invitations. Some failed to respond, others offered encouragement but were overly committed to other projects and so declined, and a very few accepted. I next sent a letter to the 15 or so scholars on my list of “Tucson ethnobiologists”, informing them of the special issue and requesting their help in assembling a cadre of authors. The response, although not overwhelming, was more than adequate to kindle the next stage.

One of the Tucson ethnobiologists, Joe Laferriere, suggested Stephen Brush and Ben Orlove from Davis, California and they, in turn, recommended Constance McCorkle, so it was through this piece of networking that we have a paper on ethnoveterinary medicine—an area of study about which I had been abysmally ignorant, my only previous contact with it having been a number of anecdotes of practices in Saudi Arabia related by my friend and colleague, Ted Downing. I trust you will find, as I have, this contribution on ethnoveterinary medicine as fascinating as it is unusual.

Here's an example of networking operating in a different way. Over the years Bob Bye and I have noted (as, most likely, have all of you) that from time to time, all ethnobiologists work in areas where they have had little training. We have discussed the need for ethnobiologists, not trained in biology, to know the value of voucher specimens. Bob wrote such a paper and although it had been planned for Volume 5, Number 2, unanticipated delays prevented its appearance, fortunately, until this issue—exactly where it should be published. Amadeo Rea and Harriet Kuhnlein were then inspired to write somewhat similar articles in their individual areas of ethnobiological study, so now we have three educationally oriented papers.

Through networking we found scholars with interesting ideas about “new directions in ethnobiology” who, at the time the invitation was issued, were not already so overly committed but that they could share these views with us. It will be interesting to see what networking will produce in the second special issue of the *Journal*, at some indefinite future time.

—W.V.