

ROSE

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introduced before 1867). Many of the miniatures are grown in large, portable pots, allowing Jack Ortega to move the plants to sunnier or shadier areas as needed to speed up or slow down the bloom time to meet an exhibition date.

Lucy and Paul Roth are general chairpersons of this year's event, whose theme is *The 20th Century Rose*, honoring all the glorious roses of this century and the hybridizers who dedicated their lives to finding the perfect rose.

The arrangement division will feature artistic designs in which roses, grown in an outdoor garden, provide the dominant flower interest. Fresh roses are required for such arrangements, except for those classes which specify the use of dried roses. Other plant material — fresh, dried, or treated — may be used in the design as specified by the show schedule, but no artificial, painted or dyed plant material is allowed.

Prize-winning exhibition roses, whether used in arrangements or as horticultural specimens, are often achieved by a process called disbudding. Growers pinch out the side buds while they are small, leaving only the top bud. This concentrates the plant's energy into producing fewer, but larger, blooms.

Roses should be picked early in the morning just after sunrise, or at sunset, and their stems immediately plunged into water. Generally, roses with fewer petals should be cut at or just beyond the half-open stage. Cut the stem again under water to eliminate air bubbles and improve its ability to transport water to the blossom.

Entries in the horticultural division must have been grown in the exhibitor's outdoor private garden. These are judged according to the official American Rose Society's scale of points with relative values



Jack and Juanita Ortega

Craig Fritz/The New Mexican

assigned to each of six factors: form (25), color (20), substance (15), size (10), balance and

proportion (10) and stem and foliage (20). Form is the most important

factor in the judging of horticultural entries. An exhibition-form rose will have petals which unfurl in a perfect spiral from a point in the center, best exhibited when the rose is one-half to three-fourths open. A "blown" rose, one in which the center has opened up to show the stamens, is likely to be absent from the winners' circle.

Whether the color looks fresh and bright, rather than the actual color of the rose, is what's important in color considerations. Substance depends upon the amount of moisture in the petals. A rose with good substance looks and feels fresh, though judges are not allowed to touch the bloom. When it comes to the size factor, big blossoms need to be the biggest. Miniatures should be petite.

The balance-and-proportion factor basically means that a rose should be displayed on a stem which is proportionate to its blossom. Recommended stem length is generally three to five times the blossom's width.

Ten who make a difference

Each year, *The New Mexican* honors 10 Northern New Mexico residents whose volunteer efforts have made an extraordinary difference in the community.

We are seeking nominations of people you believe should be recognized as our area's top citizens.

To submit a candidate's name, write a brief letter describing how your nominee has contributed to the quality of life in Northern New Mexico. Tell us how we can get in touch with the candidate, and include your name and telephone number (not for publication).

Send your nominating letter to *The New Mexican*, 10 Who Made a Difference, 202 E. Marcy St., Santa Fe, N.M. 87501, or fax (505) 986-9147. The e-mail address is brucek@sfnewmexican.com

The deadline for receiving nominations is 5 p.m., June 30. A story featuring this year's 10 Who Made a Difference will appear in the *Focus* section of *The New Mexican*.

Assignment led journalist/activist into 'chemtrail' obsession

By STEVE TERRELL
The New Mexican

In the first week of January, Canadian-based journalist/activist William Thomas got an assignment that would consume most of his time for the past several months.

Thomas, an American who lives in British Columbia, was contacted by an editor of Environmental News Service to investigate a report that a Washington state man had become ill on New Year's Day after watching several jets make strange marks in the sky.

By the end of the week Thomas, would have the story. Four days later a follow-up would appear. By the end of the month, he would be making the first of several appearances on Art Bell's national radio show, warning late-night listeners of the danger from the sky. By now his name was virtually synonymous with "chemtrails."

On July 9, Thomas is scheduled to speak about "chemtrails" and related matters at Santa Fe's James Little Theater.

On his Web site, Thomas describes himself as a man with a mission: "I bring the truth. Or at least an extra ration of that rare and risky commodity," he says in an imaginary conversation with a "sentry."

He paints himself as a longtime activist and crusading outsider. Though he touts himself as "an award-winning journalist," he has little use for mainstream media.

"Today, no U.S. news organization wants to tackle the real issues behind the Gulf War illness. Even *Rolling Stone* and *Mother Jones* refused to touch

my fully documented, history of the Gulf War," he says on his Web site. "The potential pitfalls for publishers could be worse than the chemical-biological fallout from that war."

Asked about those rejections, Thomas replied, "No response from (*Mother Jones*) — whose editors know my work from the Gulf War. No response from (*Rolling Stone*). Despite more than 700 detailed reports from eye-witnesses including cops, pilots and military personnel — and continuing spraying over dozens of U.S. and Canadian cities — it's easier to sell UFOs to major media than a phenomenon as close in many cities as the nearest window."

Mother Jones editor Tim Dickinson said in a recent telephone interview that he was not familiar with Thomas or his work and knew nothing about the submission. "We've published several pieces on Gulf War illness," he said.

One news organization that has published Thomas' recent work is Environmental News Service, an Internet news service, which assigned Thomas his first "chemtrail" story, publishing it on Jan. 8 under the headline "Contrails Mystify, Sicken Americans." The story told how a man named William Wallace — who had watched planes making strange "grid-like" contrails since the summer of 1998 — and a neighbor both experienced severe diarrhea and fatigue.

"I came to no 'conclusions,'" Thomas wrote in response to a number of questions by a reporter. "(I) simply reported William Wallace's experience and others, along with their suppositions."

Although he said he "came to

no conclusions," in his first story, by the second article — four days later — Thomas refers matter-of-factly to "aircraft spraying that has sickened Americans across the country."

The first story had quoted an Oklahoma man who reported "cobwebbing stuff coming down" from planes making tick-tack-toe contrails. This man pondered whether the contrails or the "cobwebs" were responsible for several cases of lupus in the area.

In later interviews Thomas would matter-of-factly mention an Oklahoma lupus epidemic and its implied connection to "chemtrails."

Asked whether there is documented verifiable link between any case of lupus and contrails, Thomas wrote, "I am tracking outbreaks of lupus, meningitis, mycoplasmas and even more exotic diseases throughout the U.S. The toxic molds and pathogens found in our lab samples can lead to lupus, meningitis and pneumonia in susceptible individuals."

But, he admitted, "There is no proven link."

In his second article, "Mystery Contrails May Be Modifying Weather," Thomas quoted an engineer who was "fairly certain the contrail phenomena is one part of a military weather modification weapons system."

Tommy Farmer — who Thomas identified as a former engineering technician with Raytheon Missile Systems — speculated that the contrails are linked to the High Altitude Auroral Research Project (HAARP), an Alaskan-based U.S. Navy project some say is connected to weather-control

experiments.

Farmer, who Thomas said had observed jet contrails for more than a year, had "positively identified" two of the aircraft spraying unusual contrails as a Boeing KC-135 and Boeing KC-10, both used by the US Air Force for air to air refueling.

Farmer, Thomas' story said, had collected samples of "angel hair" or "spider web" sprayed by the planes.

Asked whether there is any documented — not just anecdotal — evidence that the mystery goop is directly connected to contrails, Thomas replied, "The goop and angel hair are connected directly to aircraft. Not to 'chemtrail' fallout." He did not offer any documentation.

In a subsequent E-mail, Thomas wrote, "Actually, my colleague journalist Erminia Cassani, twice had gel fall into her hair while observing chemtrails. She has been extremely ill off and on since then, with severe upper respiratory problems requiring two courses of antibiotics. I just spoke with her — she can hardly talk. Though she did collect our first lab sample, Cassani feels that 'vertical curtains' of the chemtrail fallout are to blame for her illness."

In an April article published by ENS, Thomas wrote, "two samples were taken from aluminum-sided structures in separate states nearly a year apart after their respective owners went outside in the wake of low-flying aircraft to find dwellings and outbuildings splattered with a brown, gel-like substance."

One was from a property near Harrisburg, Pa., on which the goo reportedly was dropped on

Nov. 17, 1998. The woman who owned the property later suffered a heart attack, Thomas said.

The other sample was from a house from an unspecified location on the Eastern Seaboard. The property owner was a woman whose house, barn, cars, lawn and driveway were covered by a brown gel on Jan. 17, 1998. This homeowner noticed planes making "tic-tac-toe clouds" before the gunk was dropped, Thomas said.

The samples were taken to an "EPA-licensed" laboratory, which Thomas refuses to name. "My colleague and I will release the name of our lab and detailed lab test results as soon as we find a publisher willing to pay us for many months of research — and reimburse those lab tests," Thomas said.

He said another lab that tested alleged "chemtrail"-related substance was harassed after the lab's name was published. He said once he publishes the name of the lab he used, "we will lose the services of that lab forever."

His mystery laboratory found *Pseudomonas fluorescens* in the Pennsylvania sample, Thomas said. This, he said, is a bacteria sometimes employed against oil spills and which can consume jet fuel as a primary food source. This bacteria can cause upper respiratory illness and serious blood infections in humans, he said.

Also found in this sample was *streptomyces*, a fungus Thomas said is used to make antibiotics and which can cause "severe infections" in humans.

However one of Thomas' chief critics, Jay Reynolds, an Arkansas engineer who has written several articles

challenging and debunking the "chemtrails" phenomenon, points out that *Pseudomonas fluorescens* is a common soil bacteria found in many common Septic Helper additives.

Of the streptomyces fungus, Reynolds wrote that it's "a very common fungi found in soil."

Reynolds concludes, "All information Thomas relates about his alleged samples is totally undocumented, unverified, and therefore unverifiable. Of the organisms he claims to have identified, the majority are purposefully not identified by name."

Reynolds has written that every organism named by Thomas is common in soil.

Besides questioning Thomas' methods and conclusions, Reynolds also questioned his motives — noting a possible conflict of interest in the fact that on his Web page, Thomas, who has spent much of his career writing about chemical and biological warfare, sells vitamins and herbal supplements aimed at relieving chemically-induced illnesses.

Questioned by a reporter, Thomas defended this practice.

"This journalist offers solutions and alternatives to the problems he reports. I've been offering high-quality vitamins to sick Gulf War vets and anyone else who needs them — at cost, zero markup — for years. Because most people have not included postage, I've lost money offering this service."

"I've also forfeited almost all other income while working on the chemtrails story for the past six months, and am having trouble paying my phone bills," he said. "So if you can tell me how I'm 'profiting' from all this work, I'd love to hear it."

LOOK

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spirituality is okay. But stay inside!"

Some Skywatchers have speculated that Hantavirus might have come from the chemtrails or the deadly goo. One woman told a reporter she suspected the tornadoes that devastated central Oklahoma might be connected to government weather-control experiments and perhaps related to the "chemtrails."

"The best thing going (for the argument of the reality of 'chemtrails') is that a lot of people who are getting sick unexplained," said Alan Hutner, who chaired the Skywatchers meeting.

Hutner is the long-time host of *Transitions Radio Magazine*, a popular local New Age-oriented radio show broadcast Sunday mornings on KBAC FM. In late April and early May Hutner aired a lengthy interview with William Thomas, author of *Bringing the War Home*, a recent book about chemical warfare and Gulf War syndrome. Since early January Thomas has been the Paul Revere — or, his critics would say, the Chicken Little — of the "chemtrail" phenomenon.

Several Skywatchers said they first became aware of "chemtrails" thanks to Hutner's show.

Hutner is not the only radio personality to immediately endorse Thomas and his theories. In March, Art Bell, whose nationally broadcast late-night radio shows explore the supernatural, UFOs and alleged

government conspiracies, declared himself a believer at the outset of a Thomas interview.

Thomas — who has published several articles about "chemtrails" on internet publications such as the Environmental News Service, is scheduled to speak in Santa Fe on July 9 at James Little Theater at the New Mexico School for the Deaf.

During his time in Santa Fe, Hutner said, Thomas has scheduled meetings with U.S. Rep. Tom Udall and Santa Fe City Councilor Cris Moore. (Moore acknowledged the scheduled meeting. "I'm doing my best to keep my mind open, but basically I am skeptical. Our government has done some pretty strange things, but I don't understand why they'd do this.")

One of the Skywatchers, Clifford Carnicom, created a Web site on the subject of "chemtrails."

The site contains several photos of airplanes emitting parallel lines of smoke, seemingly coming from the plane's tail assembly. "These photographs document the crimes that are being committed against the citizens of the United States," the text says.

The site lists several government agencies, aircraft manufacturers, defense contractors and health-care entities Carnicom says have visited his site.

In running the meeting, Hutner frequently interrupted, saying, "People, let's stay focused," when the discussion began creeping toward the deep end.

A Tesuque woman, who said "chemtrail" spraying has been going on for 20 years, said, "There's so many Congressmen and none of them are getting sick. Are Congressmen getting inoculated?" This prompted Hutner to argue that it might not be a good idea to accuse national leaders of taking an antidote.

Hutner became upset when a Las Vegas, N.M. man suggested getting the word about "chemtrails" out to the "patriot network," referring to the loose-knit national community of anti-government groups and individuals, militias, right-wing Christians and extreme libertarians.

"I don't think it's a good idea for this group to be connected publicly to militias now," the exasperated Hutner said. "We're trying to establish credibility. If you get too radical, you'll look more like a crackpot."

The Las Vegas man's wife said, "We're not saying to align ourselves with militias. We have to get the word out to everyone. We are dealing with a bunch of evil bastards."

Meanwhile, one Skywatcher read from a letter posted on some Internet bulletin board, purportedly written by a former member of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. The letter warned that the "chemtrails" are being sprayed by foreign troops training on American soil.

Other members cautioned that you can't believe everything you read on the worldwide Web.

One man suggested seeking out pilots not connected to the military or the government and

see what they think about the "chemtrails."

"I tried that," the Tesuque woman said. "And they all said it was only vapor trails."

Indeed an air traffic controller at Santa Fe Municipal Airport said last week, "I've gotten a lot of calls and heard all kinds of strange stories, but it's all scientific. It's just normal exhaust from airplanes." The controller, who declined to give his name, referred to Art Bell, saying "some radio talk show host who's on late at night is spreading these stories."

"Chemtrail" debunker Jay Reynolds, an Arkansas engineer who has written extensively about the topic, said he has looked at Carnicom's Web site. Reynolds said though it looks as if the white marks are coming from the tail of the plane, both lines are in line with the plane's engines.

But even if someone is spraying strange white marks in the sky above Santa Fe, there is no evidence that it is making people ill, local medical authorities say.

Dr. David Keller, director of the state Infectious Disease and Epidemiology Program, said in a recent interview that the past winter was a moderate year for influenza and that "it's been a real bad year for pollen."

But, Keller said, "We don't have any evidence of any illnesses of epidemic proportions."

Said Keller, "You don't have to go looking for contrails to find out what's making people sick. People make each other sick. We

don't need to go looking for conspiracies. If something really big happens, we'd hear about it."

Keller also questioned the probability of people directly beneath contrails being affected by anything coming out of the plane. "It would have to fall 20,000 feet," he said.

Ann Maxwell, spokeswoman for St. Vincent Hospital, said she checked with several sources in the hospital. She quoted Dr. Richard Lieberman of the hospital emergency room, who said, "Nothing has blipped our radar screen in terms of possible environment-caused conditions."

Asked about the lack of documented rise in respiratory illnesses in a city that has many reported "chemtrail" sprays, William Thomas said he did not believe local medical authorities were covering up anything. "No cover-up as it is impossible to keep unusually high hospital admissions secret," he said in an e-mail to a reporter. "Check with Alan Hutner. His Skywatchers group seems to include a high percentage of people who have taken sick from the chemtrails. That's why they formed an organization."

And the Skywatchers don't need no stinkin' documentation. Jewels Anderson, an artist and mother of four who lives outside of Las Vegas, N.M., said that about 11 a.m. the Friday before Mother's Day (May 7) she got a call from her friend and fellow Skywatcher Dorothy, who lives in nearby Romeroville who said, "Go outside and look."

Up in the sky, Anderson observed five planes overhead

flying in formation and creating a series of contrails making the classic Xs and checkerboards in the sky. She, called her. "She was seeing the same thing," Anderson said.

The planes remained in the sky from about 11 a.m. until 4 or 5 p.m., Anderson said.

"Twenty four hours later, two of my best friends were sick," she said. Her friends had symptoms that seemed like respiratory flu, diarrhea and headaches, Anderson said.

She said she too had been ill for about six weeks this year with something that affected her sinuses.

Jessica Lujan, who had been out that day making deliveries for the local nursery for whom she works, also said she became ill she observed "chemtrails" on the Friday before Mother's Day. "There were tons of chemicals in the sky," she said. Her symptoms, she said, were coughing and nasal problems.

Both Anderson and Lujan said they had not seen any "chemtrails" since May 7 — though Carnicom's Web site recently posted photos dated May 28. Some at the Skywatchers meeting said that since the group formed in early May and has begun getting public notice, the amount of "chemtrail" sightings has gone down.

But this doesn't mean they've stopped.

Some Skywatchers said the planes are now spraying their evil at night.