

# Water lovers, unite!

During the current city-election cycle, we've seen forums about crime, jobs, wages, housing, infill, annexation, keeping Santa Fe beautiful, and getting us back to the good old days. No, sorry, not those days of flood irrigation and apple orchards. You know — the more recent times when art galleries overflowed with compulsive tourists craving our blue-sky and green-chile hospitality.

All of these debate topics represent important subjects, but ultimately each is trumped by Maude Barlow's notion of a "water-secure future." Barlow, the senior adviser on water to the president of the UN General Assembly, will be speaking at the Lencic Performing Arts Center on Wednesday, Feb. 17. Especially since the implementation of NAFTA, people all over the world have had their water, their life blood, taken away from them by large corporations and their bought-off government agents. Along with Peter Gleik, Vandana Shiva, Oscar

Oliviera and 99 percent of the human race, Barlow aims to stop the handful of huge companies taking advantage of the pollution and scarcity that plague countless human communities.

Water security will also be the topic of a Santa Fe city-candidate forum on Tuesday, Feb. 9, from 7 to 9 p.m. Everyone running for mayor and city council is scheduled to answer questions about rainwater harvesting, greywater recycling, water conservation, and how to integrate these productive techniques in a way that promotes green-collar job growth.

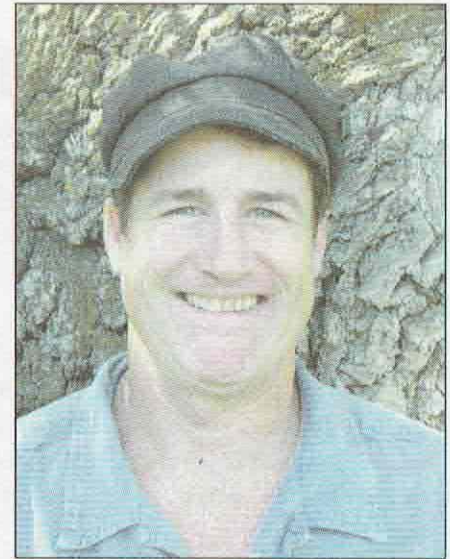
We, the people, of Santa Fe fortunately were smart enough to purchase the Sangre de Cristo Water Company from PNM (just before NAFTA was enacted). As a result, we don't face the danger that many places face, where water is blatantly auctioned off to the highest bidder. But anyone who has lived here for more than a week knows that our water supply is far from secure. The math is simple:

Our economy requires growth, and our aquifers and rivers can provide only a limited supply of water for this growth.

The organizers of the candidate forum, members of a relatively new, local group called the Semi-Arid Guild, understand that there is a solution to this worldwide dilemma where economies dry up watersheds and desiccated watersheds destroy economies. The answer is falling from the sky in the form of precipitation and being flushed down the drain in the form of "waste."

With the support of government at every level, we can create jobs in water harvesting and wastewater treatment/recycling. But political efforts still need to be made. Otherwise, at the very least, the inertia of bureaucracy will keep progress at too slow a pace, conventional resources will disappear, and we will be too late.

If you care about the future of Santa Fe, please attend either of these events. Thanks to the Lannan Foundation, seats



**NATE DOWNEY**

for the Barlow talk are only six bucks. Go to [www.lencic.com](http://www.lencic.com) or call 988-1234 for tix. The Semi-Arid Guild's forum at the Inn of the Governors is free. For more information, visit my new blog at <http://backyarddigest.blogspot.com>.

*Nate Downey is president of Santa Fe Permaculture, Inc., an ecological landscape-design firm. His book *Harvest the Rain* is in the advance-praise harvesting phase of the publication process. Please contact him via [www.sfpermaculture.com](http://www.sfpermaculture.com) or 505-424-4444.*