



NEWSLETTER

December 2020

Doña Ana County Historical Society

A Year-End Message From The DACHS President

By Dennis Daily
DACHS President

I was looking back at some of the DACHS newsletters from earlier this year. It's hard to believe how normal things were back in January and February. We held our annual awards banquet in January, started up our monthly speaker series in February, enjoyed the DACHS Friends of Pat Garrett group's second Pat Garrett Western Heritage Festival, and were all set for our March speaker. The newsletter said, "As usual, the meeting will be at the Good Samaritan auditorium at 7 p.m." That's about the time everything went south. The virus hit New Mexico and as we know, nearly everything that was normal just kind of disappeared.

Without a doubt, 2020 has been a challenging year for everyone. Despite the challenges, as individuals we've all adjusted. And as an organization DACHS has also had to reorient itself in order to carry on. But we have, and in the end I think we can be happy with our accomplishments this year.

One of our great successes has been the clean-up and memorialization of the old Picacho Cemetery, under the incredible guidance of DACHS members Sally Kading and Bob Gamboa. The change, as you have seen in the pages of these newsletters, has been dramatic. Once an abandoned lot, overgrown with weeds, the cemetery now boasts an attractive rock-pillar and chain fence, and a beautiful plaque honoring residents buried there. DACHS purchased the cemetery in 2017 in order to rescue, preserve and protect it. With the work of re-establishing the cemetery complete, the society will soon be turning the property over to Picacho residents who have ancestors buried there. Sally and Bob carried out a very successful GoFundMe campaign to

raise money for the cemetery project.

We also were successful in moving our monthly speaker series from an in-person to an online event. Our first virtual meeting was held in September, with our own Jim Eckles volunteering himself for the trial run. The meeting came off without a hitch and actually had attendance that rivaled our face-to-face meetings. Bud Russo and David Thomas rounded out the virtual speaker series in October and November and we realized that, under the circumstances, this was certainly an adequate means of keeping the monthly speaker series going. One advantage is that the presentations are recorded and can be watched later via the DACHS YouTube channel or Facebook page. Of course we look forward to the time when we can resume in-person meetings, but in the meantime we will continue "Zooming" history.

Jim Eckles has done a great job keeping the newsletter going and he even put out a couple extra summer editions, something we usually don't do, in order to keep members in the loop about activities. Jim has also managed our online presence through our website and our social media outlets – Facebook and YouTube.

Thanks to the work of treasurer Dennis Fuller, we also made the transition this year to accepting online payments for membership renewals and donations through a Paypal account. It's easy, convenient and just takes a minute to renew your membership this way. Which reminds me to tell you that it is time for membership renewals!

So we've done good work this year moving the society into the "digital age" and staying active. Now we're ready for 2021 and

See Awards Banquet on Jan. 28, next page

Southern New Mexico Historical Review Coming In Jan.



The *Southern New Mexico Historical Review* looks like it will be a great eclectic mix of articles for 2021. The photos above are from a piece by John Buescher on Sister Onfa, pictured on the left. Sister Onfa was a mystic who led a group of "Uranians" in the Mesilla Valley at the beginning of the 20th century. The other photo is taken from the top of Mt. Aden about 20 miles southwest of Las Cruces. It is looking south. In 1908, Sister Onfa filed a homestead claim for 160 acres which took up all of Mt. Aden. It was to be part of her "Mount Aden on the Heights" spiritual retreat. In November, Dennis Daily and Jim Eckles went out to see if they could find any remains of the retreat. They found some intriguing rock walls at the peak's base.

If you would like to donate to help DACHS defray the printing costs of the *Review*, please consider a donation. The total cost will probably be around \$500. The easiest way to donate is from the DACHS website at <http://www.donaanacountyhistsoc.org>. Just scroll down past the calendar to Quick Links and find the "donate" button. You select your credit card or your PayPal account. Once you are in the system, make sure you use the message line to tell us what your donation is for - just a few words.

Of course, you can also just put a check in the mail. Make sure to attach a note about what the donation is for.

Make your donation by Jan. 8 and your name will appear in the *Review* on the donors page.

Awards Banquet On Jan. 28 — CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

hopefully some new beginnings. For the immediate future we will be operating much the same as we have in 2020. Be on the lookout for more information about our virtual awards banquet, scheduled for 7p.m. Thursday, January 28. Also, we will be announcing our virtual spring speaker series soon. We

do hope that sometime in 2021 we are able to move back to in-person meetings, going on history field trips together (without masks!), and enjoying one another's personal company with an occasional hug. In the meantime, stay safe, stay healthy, and we'll see you on the infobahn.

Board Election Results Have Been Tabulated From Nov. Monthly Meeting

As part of the November monthly meeting and presentation via Zoom, DACHS held its annual election for board members and officer positions. Members present were able to vote electronically with their choices being registered with President Dennis Daily, through the Zoom interface. It was very slick.

The following individuals were voted in:

Garland Courts, vice president;
Dennis Fuller, treasurer;
Jim Eckles, secretary;
Buddy Ritter, member-at-large.

There have been no protests concerning the election, so these individuals will be installed during the Jan. 28 virtual Awards Banquet.

DACHS Dues Are Due.....

If you haven't already renewed your membership in the DACHS, please take some time, clip this form and mail it to our P.O. Box along with your check. If you wish an easier way, you can go to the DACHS website at <http://www.donaanacountyhistsoc.org> and pay online with your credit card or PayPal account.

It is easy and dozens of members have already done so. On the DACHS homepage, access the renewal page by clicking on the "Membership" link near the top of the page or scroll down to "Quick Links" under the calendar and use the "Join Us" link. Please fill in your personal data so we know who you are. If you have questions, contact Susan at the phone number below or Jim at nebraska1950@comcast.net.



Doña Ana County Historical Society, P. O. Box 16045, Las Cruces, NM 88004-6045



DACHS Membership Form

Please renew/enroll my/our membership in the Doña Ana County Historical Society. Memberships are active for the calendar year of enrollment and fees are deductible within legal limits for Federal and State income tax purposes. If you are unsure of your status or have questions regarding membership, please contact Susan Krueger, at 575 525-0654.

Annual Membership/Sponsorship Rates

Individual \$25 Family \$30 Student \$10 Contributor \$40
Benefactor \$150 Life \$300

Is this a change of information? Yes No A check for \$ _____ is enclosed.
Date _____ Check # _____

Name(s) _____

Address _____

Email Address _____

Phone # _____

You will automatically receive the Monthly Newsletter in your email as a PDF. Would you also like a paper, printed copy mailed later to the above postal address? Yes No

Your membership includes a copy of the annual *Southern New Mexico Historical Review*(SNMHR). Are you willing to download the version on the DACHS website or would you like to receive a printed copy?

We will announce in January how to pick up your Review copy - we mail to non-locals

Back Page Notes -----

SPEAKERS.....DACHS vice-president Garland Courts is busy putting together a speaker's schedule for 2021. We've received one suggestion and Jim Eckles has volunteered to do a talk on the history of wildlife at White Sands Missile Range - why are there African oryx on a military post? What happened to the horses? How bighorn sheep disappeared and are now back and much more. If you have someone to suggest, please let Garland know. He can be reached by email at: gcourts@las-cruces.org.

JANUARY NEWSLETTER.....In the next newsletter we will have more details about the virtual awards banquet - like who will be recognized. If you have some tidbit of historical information or a photo that the membership might be interested in, please send it along to the editor at: 19dachs63@gmail.com.

DACHS LOGO.....Because the title of the Pasa-jero del Camino Award implicated the Old Camino Real, then DACHS vice-president Paxton Price turned to his friend, Jose Cisneros, for permission to use some of his drawings as illustrations during the Annual Banquet on January 31, 1990.

The writer's award was created in 1988 and Ira Clark and Opal Priestly were the the first recipients, in 1989, for their books. In 1990, the two recipients were Darlis Miller and Jose Cisneros for their books.

Cisneros responded, not only by displaying some of his drawings, but also by giving the Society a drawing of a typical character from the 1880s and 1890s in our Southwestern history. See the front page of this newsletter and the cover of past copies of the *Southern New Mexico Historical Review*. The drawing, which has since been adopted as the DACHS logo, was framed and displayed in the Branigan Cultural Center

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