



# NEWSLETTER

## October 2021

Doña Ana County Historical Society

### NMSU Archivists To Speak On Urban Renewal Plus We Will Resume Meeting At The Good Sam

The "Urban Renewal" that transformed downtown Las Cruces in the 1960s and 70s is still a sore subject for many. Jennifer Olguin and Dylan McDonald, archivists at the New Mexico State University Library, will examine how it happened when they talk about their exhibit, *Place and Re-Place: Las Cruces Urban Renewal, 1960-1975* on October 21, at 7 p.m. in the Good Samaritan auditorium. The special photographic exhibit was produced in partnership with the Las Cruces Branigan Cultural Center (BCC) and runs from October 23, thru January 15, 2022 at the BCC and features images and archival material from NMSU Library Archives and Special Collections. This will be a preview of the exhibit and an opportunity to ask questions about it.

In addition to returning to meeting in-person at Good Sam, your DACHS board is going to try and ZOOM the presentation in real-time. So, if you cannot attend or do not feel safe yet, you can attend via the Zoom platform. We will send out the Zoom invite the day before by email. The only requirement for those attending at Good Sam is that you must wear a mask inside their facility.

According to Dylan and Jennifer, urban renewal efforts in Las Cruces during the 1960s and 1970s saw civic officials and business leaders dramatically change the nature of the city's downtown. Like many U.S. cities of the time, Las Cruces attempted to revive the fading economic welfare and the deteriorating

structures of its urban core, particularly Main Street. However, this redevelopment effort forced many businesses and families out of downtown and came at the cost of the city's culture and cherished historic landmarks.

The idea was to lure shoppers and businesses back downtown. City leaders proposed a radical plan to "renew" the area in the name of the public good. Financed by federal funds and backed by new building and zoning codes, the area bounded by Lohman, Campo, Picacho, and Water streets was redeveloped to meet the needs of shoppers who favored the "new and the convenient." If a building could not be repurposed or rehabilitated to meet this economic goal, it faced demolition regardless of its significance.

Jennifer Olguin is the Rio Grande Historical Collections Archivist at the NMSU Library Archives and Special Collections. Jennifer was born and raised in New Mexico and enjoys working with archival material which allows her the opportunity to make the rich and unique history of New Mexico and the Spanish Borderlands accessible to researchers.

Dylan McDonald has served as the Political Collections Archivist and Special Collections Librarian at NMSU since February 2019. Prior to his appointment at NMSU, he worked for 14 years as the Deputy City Historian and Manuscripts Archivist at the Center for Sacramento History where he curated several exhibitions.



## Final Call For *Southern New Mexico Historical Review* Articles

The deadline for final submission of articles for the *Southern New Mexico Historical Review* is rapidly approaching. However, there is still time to submit an item about some aspect of history in the southern half of the state.

Jim Eckles points out that an item does not have to be a 15-page article with another page of footnotes and references. It can also be a short biography, a local or family history, a collection of histori-

cal photographs, an oral history, a student paper or a book review or museum review.

If you have an idea, please contact Jim Eckles at [nebraska1950@comcast.net](mailto:nebraska1950@comcast.net) and propose it. Small monetary awards are available for some pieces.

The *Review* will be put together in December, printed in January and distributed at the end of January. DACHS member Jim Eckman has volunteered to edit the *Review* this year.

## New Mexico/Arizona History Conference Seeking Papers & Talks

**EDITOR'S NOTE: There will be a large conference in Las Cruces next year and you have a chance to participate. The DACHS is supporting the Historical Society of New Mexico in this effort. This is from the organizers.**

The Historical Society of New Mexico and the Arizona Historical Society are asking for proposed papers and presentations to be given at the 2022 New Mexico/Arizona Joint History Convention which will be held at the New Mexico Farm & Ranch Museum, here in Las Cruces, April 7-9.

Papers on any aspect of New Mexico or Arizona history are welcome. These may include archeology, anthropology, biography, and other topics related to pre-colonial Native Americans, Spanish, Mexican, Territorial, Statehood, or other contemporary historical issues or topics.

Conference sessions are ninety minutes in length and usually consist of oral delivery of two or three papers or presentations, each 20-30 minutes in length, allowing time for a moderator's introduction and questions from the audience. Proposals for individual presentations should be limited to one page in length, and must include presenter contact information (email, mailing address, and phone), presentation title, a brief synopsis, a brief biography and any technical support needed. Proposals for

single presentations are matched with similar topics to constitute a full session.

The program committee encourages proposals for topical sessions occupying the full ninety-minute period. These should include a proposed title for the session, names and brief bios of presenters, title of each presentation, a moderator, and contact information for all panel members.

Presenters must register as conference participants. Arrangements will be made for a laptop, digital projector and screen in each presentation room. Presenters should bring their presentation on a thumb drive and may want to bring their own laptop in the event of equipment incompatibility.

Deadline for submissions is Wednesday October 30, 2021. The preferred method of submission is by email attachment to Robert J. Torrez, program chair, at [robertjtorrez@gmail.com](mailto:robertjtorrez@gmail.com) but can also be mailed to HSNM Program Committee, 8109 Corte del Viento NW, Albuquerque, NM 87120. Notification of acceptance and scheduling will be sent as soon as the program is set (hopefully by January 1, 2022). Visit the Historical Society of New Mexico web site at [www.hsnm.org](http://www.hsnm.org) for updates or contact the program chair at [robertjtorrez@gmail.com](mailto:robertjtorrez@gmail.com) or (505) 836-9699 if you have questions.

## It Is Time For Annual Board Elections For DACHS - Time To Step Up

Every fall, we have elections for some of the DACHS officers and some of the at-large board members. Terms are for two years and are staggered so not every position needs to be filled annually.

Terms for the following positions are expiring:

President - Dennis Daily

Historian - Sally Kading

At-Large Members-Luis Rios, Jose Aranda, Bob Gamboa and Sim Middleton.

Dennis and Sally have both served for a few terms. If no one steps up and volunteers to run for one of those positions, both have said they will stay on, as they don't want to see the DACHS tank. If you are interested, maybe you could run for a board position first, get your feet wet, and then move up in the next cycle. Contact Jim Eckles for info.

Elections will take place at our November presentation/meeting. Slate in next Newsletter.

# DACHS Board Is Looking For Annual Awards Suggestions

Every year, at our annual awards banquet in January, the DACHS presents numerous awards and acknowledgements. We recognize individuals, groups, organizations and efforts made to preserve, protect and promote our local history. Susan Krueger and her committee are busy putting together a slate of possible awardees for this coming event. If you have a suggestion, please contact Susan at: [skrueger575@msn.com](mailto:skrueger575@msn.com)

The various awards we present are on the DACHS website. You can go there to see past honorees and more details on the awards themselves.

[Here are the various awards we give.](#)

**Hall of Fame:** *The Hall of Fame Award recognizes an individual who is known for exceptional contributions to the preservation of the history and culture of the Mesilla Valley. The contribution should be of a substantial nature and be evidenced by enduring and observable worth to the Doña Ana County Historical Society and the community at large.*

**Heritage Award:** *The Heritage Award is given to a person or persons whose actions or deeds have contributed to the historical or cultural heritage of Doña Ana County and who is (are) not professional or avocational historians.*

**Old Timer's Award:** *The Old Timer's Award recognizes a cherished object, natural phenomenon, or cultural tradition prominent in Mesilla Valley heritage that would otherwise escape recognition as an important part of the character of this region and that deserves public attention.*

**The Gemoets Prize:** *The \$100 Gemoets Prize is*

*awarded to the author of the "Outstanding Article" in the current issue of the Southern New Mexico Historical Review as determined by the Editor.*

**Hiram Hadley Prize:** *The \$100 Hadley Prize recognizes the best article on pioneer history (1840-1900) in the current issue of the Southern New Mexico Historical Review.*

**Pasajero del Camino Real :** *This award is given to an author or authors of a significant historical publication about events, persons, places or issues in Doña Ana County or the nearby area.*

**Buildings Worthy of Preservation:** *The award is given to encourage an owner to preserve the uniqueness of a building in Doña Ana County that is distinguished by its age and historical character, its historical significance, or that represents historical architectural character.*

**Bldgs & Properties w/ Historical Significance:** *This designation can be applied to a property, including a district, a building, structure, or object, which is at least fifty years old.*

**Endangered Historic Property:** *This designation is used to identify a historic building or structure, a site, or landscape that is endangered because of a threat to its continuing historic significance.*

**Noteworthy Renovation/Restoration:** *This award recognizes the renovation/restoration of an historic building in Doña Ana County, not necessarily adhering to strict preservation standards.*

**Bldg Adhering to Regional Architecture:** *This award recognizes a building in Doña Ana County built in recent times following the historical architectural style characteristic of New Mexico and the Southwest.*

## Some DACHS Ideas That Didn't Work Out - From Madeleine Vessel

In October 1967, the Society planned to create a file of 35 mm slides of local scenes and events. It was expected to form the slide collection by accepting donations of slides and by duplicating slides loaned to the DACHS by local citizens.

The slide collection would be loaned to other groups for a small fee, and in some instances, slides would be accompanied by a DACHS member to give a talk on the material illustrated by the slides. A committee was formed to manage the slide project, but, meeting with very little success, it was soon discontinued.

In 1990, DACHS prepared several historical vignettes for TV Channel 22 (Public Television at New

Mexico State University). Each vignette was written according to a sample script for a sixty-second broadcasting spot. Each was introduced with a credit line for the Society.

Among the authors who participated were Ira Clark, Joe Allen, Jim Powell, Opal Lee Priestley, Paxton Price, and Calvin L. Traylor.

Subjects included Shalam Colony, Pat Garrett, Jornada del Muerto, Rincon, the First Train Through Las Cruces, Outlaw Jesse Evans, Leasburg Canal, and old Hillsboro.

Though TV Channel 22 produced several of the vignettes, they were never aired. Photos to illustrate the spots were apparently too hard to come by.



*This photo is from Dylan McDonald and Jennifer Olguin. It shows some of the renewal downtown. It is the corner of Main Street at Griggs Avenue looking east with the demolished ruins of the Las Cruces Rexall Drugs (103 Main Street) in the foreground, and the U.S. Post Office and the Masonic Temple in the background, c.1971. NMSU Library Archives & Special Collections, Ms0478 Las Cruces Urban Renewal Agency*

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