



NEWSLETTER

March 2010

President's Comments

By: George Hackler

The office of Vice President remains vacant. The main ongoing duties of the office are those of Program Chairman, i.e. finding programs and arranging and scheduling the programs for our monthly membership meetings. The programs are the highlight of our meetings. Of course there are the normal duties, like filling in for the president. Most important however is the succession to the Presidents office at the end of the Presidents term. There needs to be some preparation for this elevation. I had a year to get ready and am overwhelmed as I find more and more things that the former President George Helfrich was and is still personally taking care of. The arrangements for 2010 programs are complete with the exception of one date. So most of the programs for this year, have been arranged, it remains only to maintain contact with the speakers to insure that all is well.

The future well being and continuance of the Society requires that we cannot long function with out a Vice President. And so we make this plea to the membership, if you feel that you can assume the responsibilities of the office or if you know of some one that you think could do so contact me or any member of the board of directors and continue to use your influence to convince qualified people to come forth. ■

March Program

Our monthly meeting for March will be Thursday, March 18, 2010 at 7:00pm at the Good Samaritan Auditorium, 3011 Buena Vida Circle, Las Cruces. Our speaker will be Karl Laumbach talking about the Battle at Round Mountain. ■



Archaeologist Karl W. Laumbach, with Round Mountain in the background

Raised on a northeastern New Mexico ranch, Karl Laumbach has pursued an archaeological career in southern New Mexico since 1974. A graduate of New Mexico State University, he spent nine years directing projects for the NMSU contract archaeology program before joining Human Systems Research, Inc. (HSR) in 1983. After serving as Executive Director of the organization for 10 years, he is now an Associate Director for HSR. His research interests are varied, including land grant research in his native northeastern New Mexico, the pueblo archaeology of southern New Mexico, and the history and archaeology of the Apache. Fascinated with the Sierra County area since a weekend field trip in 1971, Karl has been involved in recording sites and collecting local history in that area for the last 30 years. His interaction with private landowners has been integral in the preservation of several archaeological sites. He is currently in the tenth year of the Cañada Alamosa Project, a research effort that is exploring the last 2000 years of human occupation and environmental change in the Rio Alamosa drainage of Socorro and Sierra Counties. ■

Calendar - 2010

Thursday, March 18, 2010 @ 7:00pm
Karl Laumbach – **Battle at Round Mountain**

Thursday, April 15, 2010 @ 7:00pm
Lynda Sanchez – **Eve Ball**

Thursday, May 20, 2010 @ 7:00pm
Enrique Lamadrid – **Chautauqua - Rafael Chacon?
Uncertain at deadline**

June thru August - No Meeting

Thursday, September 16, 2010 @ 7:00pm
Mary Salopek - **History of Salopek family**

Thursday, October 21, 2010 @ 7:00pm
Martha Shipman Andrews – **Letters**

Thursday, November 18, 2010 @ 7:00pm
Ed Sweeny – **Apache Warfare**

December, 2010 @ 7:00pm
No Program

All meetings of the Society are normally at 7:00pm on the third Thursday of the months of Feb. - May and Sept - Nov. in the Good Samaritan Auditorium at 3011 Buena Vida Circle.

The Battle of Round Mountain

On April 17, 1868, five soldiers and twenty-six men from Tularosa, NM, participated in a six hour fight with the Mescalero Apaches. The Battle of Round Mountain, as it became known, is a celebrated event and a vital link to the past for the community of Tularosa, NM. Memories of the battle were also preserved in Mescalero oral traditions. Actual knowledge of the fort and the exact location of the battle were apparently forgotten with the passing of time.

Information concerning the Battle of Round Mountain was summarized by Joe Ben Sanders. Army reports, written days after the battle, were examined for details of the battle. Newspaper articles concerning the battle by Meadows and Blazer were especially useful as were Mescalero accounts compiled by Robinson. All of these accounts mention a “fort” or earthworks that the soldiers and citizens retreated to and defended against five separate attacks from Indians. Blazer refers to the fort as “earthworks” that soldiers had built years before the fight. Mescalero traditions relate to “trenches” that were used for the defense. ■

2010 Award Series

At the Annual Banquet held the 30th of January, the Society’s Awards Committee presented several awards. With this issue, we continue featuring some photos and the award story for various people and/or places honored with awards.



Jim Eckles, left presents the 2010 Heritage Award to Col. (Ret.) Gerald P. Schurtz on January 30, 2010

THE HERITAGE AWARD 2010

(Ret.) Col. Gerald P. Schurtz

The Heritage Award honors a person or persons whose actions or deeds have contributed to the historical or cultural heritage of Dona Ana County.

The Bataan Death March, a brutal forced march of thousands of Filipino and American prisoners of war in April 1942, is the most memorialized historical event in New Mexico. More than three-dozen memorials, from statues to public schools, are named in honor of the 1,800 New Mexicans who were POWs of the Japanese.

Helping to secure this legacy is retired U.S. Army Col. Gerald P. Schurtz, whose dad Paul W. Schurtz, a father of three from Deming, New Mexico, survived the death march but died as a prisoner of the Japanese in December 1944. His uncle, Gerald Greeman, also survived Bataan and returned home in 1945.

During his last years in the Army at White Sands

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Missile Range in the mid-1980s, Schurtz secured long overdue Bronze Star medals for more than 300 New Mexican ex-POWs of Bataan. Since the mid-1990s, he's helped organize the annual Bataan Memorial March at White Sands Missile Raange, which now draws more than 4,000 participants from all around the world. Schurtz instituted the seminars held the day before the march that offer sessions on the history of Bataan.

In 2002, he served on a committee that named Deming's newest elementary school in honor of the local Bataan veterans. With his wife Bonnie, Schurtz traveled the state taking casts of Bataan survivors' feet for use in the Bataan monument located at Veterans Park in Las Cruces. He has supported the new Bataan Descendents Organization, and in 1985 he donated his mother's Bataan related material, including a letter of condolence from Gen. Douglas MacArthur, to the New Mexico State University Library and Special Collections.

A graduate of Deming High School in 1953 and West Point in 1958, Schurtz served as an armor officer in Korea, Vietnam, and Germany before retiring at White Sands Missile Range in May 1986. He currently farms pecans. He and his wife of 46 years have three sons and four grandchildren. ■

Dona Ana County History 280 million years ago

A student at New Mexico State University, Jerry MacDonald, began to discern a pattern in his fossil collection from around the Robledo Mountains. He could see the pattern forming in the fossil collections of others also. It was not so much a pattern as it was an idea that there might be more to the fossilized tracks than was evident in the eroded scabble in washes. What if these fossil tracks were just broken pieces of larger, longer track ways? In June, 1987 Jerry MacDonald's trying and at times discouraging search came to a justified and rewarding end. He discovered and uncovered what would become one of the most significant trackway finds in the world. Scientific research has verified that animals left these tracks in the mud shoreline of an ancient sea 280 million years ago. This was 60 million years before the dinosaurs appeared.

This discovery was so important that The Prehistoric Trackways National Monument was established by Congress in 2009. The Monument covers 5,280 acres of the Robledo Mountains and was established to conserve, protect and enhance the unique and nationally important paleontological, scientific, educational, scenic, and recreational resources and values.

The Bureau of Land Management(BLM) has been given the task of developing a comprehensive plan for the management of the Monument. This task is now under way at the Las Cruces District office of the BLM. ■

-----Cut along dotted line-----

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 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 the Treasurer, Xandy Church, at 526-9774 (May-Sept. 575-536-9728) or the President, George Hackler, at 521-4458.

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**We Welcome These
New Members**

Oddino & Stan Chiocchio

Judge Roy Bean's Visit

At our February 18, 2010 meeting, Judge Roy Bean (Randy Milligan) gave us a very lively, informative glimpse into his life,

which began with his birth in Mason County, Kentucky about 1825. At age 15 he left home to follow two older brothers west seeking adventure.

After several years of travel and excitement/troubles, Roy came to New Mexico where his brother Sam had become Sheriff and also owned a saloon in Mesilla where Roy became a bartender.

This eventually would lead him to establish his own Jersey Lilly saloon in the small Texas town of Langtry. He was first appointed and then elected as Judge.

Judge Roy Bean remained in Langtry until March 1903 when Roy went on a drinking binge in Del Rio and simply died peacefully in his bed.



Judge Roy Bean (Randy Milligan) with his bartender's apron dispensing Bear, Whisky, and Justice from his saloon, the Jersey Lilly.

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