



Newsletter

December 2006

Dona Ana Historical Society

PRESIDENT'S STUFF

NEXT MEETING

ANNUAL DINNER MEETING: SATURDAY, JANUARY 27 5:30pm
HOTEL ENCANTO DE LAS CRUCES (HILTON)

No Meeting in December

I hope your Thanksgiving was good and the turkey or ham was up to expectations. We do have so much to be thankful for and also to be responsible for. Historical preservation and awareness are a major part of your Society's reason for being and I'm thankful for the support from you, the membership and board, in furthering those goals.

Please find the insert that allows you to do all your Historical Society shopping in one place. One check will be fine for the different items on the list. Memberships and the books and CDs will make great Christmas gifts and stocking stuffers!

It's time to talk about the Annual Dinner Meeting and to start the process toward a successful silent auction. **WE NEED YOUR HELP!!!** In past years many of you have donated items that range from books to antique furniture. Anything of value that isn't too heavy is greatly appreciated. We raised close to \$1,000 last year and hope to do as well this time also. It's great fun to see the items and find treasures that you can't live without. Call me (521-7833) or other Board members for pickup.

As a program for the Annual Meeting we will have a fairly short power point presentation on the historical buildings preservation projects and presentations on the awards for the year.

KING TUT --- KING TUT — KING TUT — KING TUT — KING TUT!!!

I worked as a museum docent the Friday after Thanksgiving and the attendance was great! The problem was that the volunteer docent staff was "thin" as one staff person put it and she wasn't talking about weight. With two months to go through Christmas and New Years, more concerned volunteers need to step up and get involved. The Board of Realtors gave \$10,000 to help pay for school children to attend the exhibits, so surely we can help cover the docent need for a two hour shift now and then. The next Historical Society docent day is December 14. There will be time for orientation if you call Holly Bethune now at 541-2322. If that date doesn't work there will be needs through January 31. THANKS!!!

ORAL HISTORY SOCIETY PROGRAMS

DECEMBER 7 Stan Kotovsky talks on the Pearl Harbor attack through the eyes of a survivor. *(Editor's note: See Mary Lou Pendergass's account on page 2)*

JANUARY 4 John Bigbee relates the Progression of Land Ownership in New Mexico.

FEBRUARY 1 Archie Beckett will reminisce on his experiences growing up in Las Cruces.

Reservations must be made for dinner with Charlotte Priestley at 523-1137 two days prior.



Hawaii, December 7, 1941: From the Perspective of My Baby Book
Recollections of the Beginning of World War II by Mary Lou Pendergrass

My baby book is a bit different than many, and it, coupled with the stories my father and mother told, give a peek into my family's personal account of the Pearl Harbor story. My father talked about it but once or twice in my recollection, but he did contribute his account once to the writing of a book.

I was a toddler on that day when my father, stationed with a PBY squadron at the Kaneohe Naval Air Base on the northeast side of Oahu, was sitting on our front porch early in the morning, having his cup of coffee and contemplating what to do for my mom for their anniversary that day. He said he heard those planes, couldn't see them because they were silhouetted directly into the sun, but they quickly came into view. Almost immediately he realized what those planes were, ran in, got my mom and me into a safe place under the stairwell, jumped into the car, picking up other men who lived in the base housing around us, and drove quickly to the flight line where their PBY's were parked, the men hanging on the running boards.



Those Japanese planes were on their way to Pearl Harbor where our great fleet was anchored. In order to minimize resistance, they struck at the auxiliary bases on the way in, Kaneohe Bay being one. By the time my dad and the men got there, the planes had been strafed and gasoline was everywhere.

Sometime during that day, my mom and other wives got supplies together and took themselves and all the kids into the cane fields nearby, hoping that would be a safe place. In the next day or so, the military found families for us to stay with in homes inland for a few days in fear there would be another attack or even an invasion.

My baby book says that I quickly learned, at 18 months of age, when the air raid sirens sounded, to race to the back door where my stroller, blankets and food waited, ready to go to the shelter.

My mom and I were evacuated in April. Having been told to be ready for the call at any time with no advance notice, suitcases stood open and mostly filled with the essentials for our turn. We would be given only an hour to minimize sabotage chances for the ship. The knock on the door came about midnight and we hastily were taken to the port, with no headlights to attract unwanted attention.

We came back to El Paso and lived with my grandparents for the duration of the war. My baby book recounts that, with Biggs Field being close by, I often ran to an adult as the planes flew over, asking in my baby way, "Theirs or ours?" Being reassured I went back to my play, but with an ear cocked to hear if they were coming closer. If there was no adult to reassure me, I ran and hid under a bed until an adult came to find me.

Fortunately, I have no real recollections of my own of that time, just these stories and perhaps a special understanding of what war must be like for children.... and a special thanks to the men and women fighting for our country and our freedom. I have a terribly sad feeling for the children of our world whose baby books will be filled with other, far worse stories of war in their lives.

NM HISTORY LECTURES

The Doña Ana County Historical Society, American Association of University Women, and the Farm and Ranch Heritage Museum are sponsoring a series of talks on New Mexico history by Dr. Jo Tice

Bloom, a member of DACHS. The lectures will be given in parallel sessions: Sunday afternoons January 14, 2007 and continuing to March 25, 2007; Tuesday afternoons starting January 16, 2007 and ending March 20, 2007. The series will be held at the Farm and Ranch Heritage Museum in the afternoons from 1:30 to 4:30 pm. The cost for the series is \$30 and includes reading lists and outlines. The format will be lecture/discussion with different aspect of New Mexico history. Beginning with the early Indian settlements and trade, the talks will follow a chronological sequence into the 21st century. Spanish friars and Mexican land



Conquistador español

grants, water laws and new foods, roles of the military and women, Spanish and American conquest, and arts and literature will be among the many subjects covered. Each week participants will receive a talk outline

and a reading list of fiction and non fiction. No papers to write, no exams to take, share facts and ideas about New Mexico's vibrant history!

Preregistration is required. For more information and reservations, call the Education Department at 522-4100.



Stocking Stuffers!

Remember to consider buying our various publications, such as Dr. Gordon Owen's book *Las Cruces-Multicultural Crossroads* or our various SNMHR reviews or our DVD *Early Days-The First 150 years of Las Cruces*. You can order them with the enclosed **Reservation Form** or by calling one of our board members who will make sure that you'll get your purchase pronto!

Needed : White Elephants

Our upcoming banquet with its ever-popular Silent Auction needs your donations. Please call Chuck Murrell or any of our Board Members if you have anything suitable (or unsuitable) for us to pick up.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS RECOMMENDED
BY-LAW CHANGES

The DACHS board recommends the following changes to the Society bylaws to improve operations of the Dona Ana County Historical Society:

- 1) Article I Section 3 - the change will give new members who join the Society after the first of November the option of having their dues applied to the next year. Those selecting this option would receive the newsletter and could attend the Banquet at the Member rate, but would not be eligible to vote until the next year and would not receive a free copy of the SNMHR until the next year.
- 2) Article II Section 1 – the change will eliminate a December meeting from the list of regularly scheduled meetings.
- 3) Article III Section 6 – the change will increase the number of elected At-Large Board Members from four to six.
- 4) Article III Section 7 – the change will provide for the City of Las Cruces ex-officio board member to be selected by the City of Las Cruces Museum Administrator subject to approval of the Board.
- 5) Article IV Section 3 – The change will provide for the term of office of the President and Vice-President to be two years rather than one year.
- 6) Article V Section 2 – the change allows the records of the Society to be kept at a place other than the Branigan Cultural Center.

Please renew/enroll my/our membership in the Doña Ana Historical Society. A check for \$ _____ is enclosed.

Name _____

Phone/Fax _____

Address _____

E-mail _____

We welcome new Members:

Rebecca Slaughter

Mary Alice Aylor has become a Life Member

The DACHS Board wishes to extend its deepest sympathy to the family of George Herman, a long time member whose death occurred last week.



Membership Fees:

Individual \$ 15 Student \$ 8 Benefactor \$ 150

Family \$ 20 Contributor \$ 40 Life \$ 300

Memberships are active for the calendar year of enrollment. Membership in the Society is deductible within legal limits for Federal and State income tax purposes. If you are unsure of your status, please call Membership Chairman, George Helfrich, at 522-3477.

Doña Ana County Historical Society

P.O.Box 16045

Las Cruces, NM 88004

www..zianet.com/dachs

2006 Officers:

President - Dr. Chuck Murrell

Past President – Austin Hoover

Vice President – Roger Rothenmaier

Secretary – Donna Eichstaedt

Treasurer – George Helfrich

Historian – Karen George

Board Members-at-Large -

Marcie Palmer

Felix Pfaeffle

Buddy Ritter

Wanda Tourney

Newsletter Editor – Felix Pfaeffle

Public Relations – Wanda Tourney

WebMaster- Mary Lou Pendergrass

We wish to thank

our Corporate Sponsors:

Steinborn Realty, Bank of the Rio Grande, Double Eagle Restaurant and Insta-Copy.

**DONA ANA COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY 40TH ANNUAL BANQUET
 JANUARY 27, 2007 * 5:30-9PM
 HOTEL ENCANTO DE LAS CRUCES
 (formerly the Las Cruces Hilton)**

BANQUET PROGRAM

The program this year will be a Power Point presentation featuring the history of each of our architectural award winners for 2007. Members of the community who are historically connected to these remarkable places will be present to share their memories.

AWARDS

Hall of Fame; Heritage Award; The Pasajero del Camino Real Award; Architectural Awards, Building Worthy of Preservation, Noteworthy Preservation, Building Adhering to Regional Architecture; The Old Timers Award, the Gemoets Prize, The Katherine B. Stoes Award and the Hiram Hadley Award.

SOCIAL HOUR

Join us from 5:30-6:30pm for the social hour. Enjoy new and old friendships, Meet special guests and make a bid on items in the silent auction.

SILENT AUCTION

During the social hour, bid on silent auction items, such as books (old & new); prints & paintings, antiques, pottery, textiles, glassware & collectables.

BANQUET MENU

Sesame Salmon or Chicken Cordon Bleu (Vegetable, a rice dish, salad, rolls, dessert, Ice Tea and Coffee).

DACHS PUBLICATIONS

Vol. XIV of *Southern New Mexico Historical Review* will be available. Copies are \$7.00 each or free with a DACHS membership.

OFFICIAL BALLOT FOR 2007 OFFICERS

President: Roger Rothenmaier	At-Large Board Members
Vice President: George Helfrich	Buddy Ritter (1 yr. remaining)
Secretary: Donna Eichstaedt	Marcie Palmer (2 yr. term)
Treasurer: Zandy Church	Felix Pfaeffle (2 yr. term)
Historian: Karen George	Leslie Bergloff (2 yr. term)
	Frank Parrish (2 yr. term)

Write-Ins: Name _____ Office _____
 Name _____ Office _____

*To endorse/not endorse the proposed slate of officers, circle: YES or NO
 **To endorse/not endorse the proposed changes to by-laws, circle: YES or NO
 (See proposed changes to by-laws in this & last month's newsletter)