



NEWSLETTER

March 2009

Doña Ana County Historical Society

President's Comments

By: George Helfirch

We are back into our regular program/meeting cycle and the portrayal of Octavia Magoffin by Susan Cowell at the February meeting was both entertaining and informative. We are working on a field trip to the Magoffin House State Historic Site in El Paso in the near future.

Joyce Macrorie informs me that the City of Las Cruces is considering what to do with the old hospital building on Alameda and the City Hall building that will be vacated later this year. If you have any thoughts or concerns related to the preservation or destruction of these buildings, please contact your City Councilor.

It is that time of year when your newsletter will have a red dot on it by the address label if we have not yet received your annual dues. DACHS is a 501(c)(3) organization, therefore your dues are tax deductible.

Also concerning the newsletter, since postage rates are being increased again, if you are not already doing so, please consider receiving the newsletter by email and remember to let us know if you change your address.

If you have not yet picked up your copy of the latest *Review*, Volume XVI, be sure to come to the next meeting where they are being distributed.

The Society had a laptop used for email, board minutes and Power-Point presentations that no longer is operating and has been determined to be not worth repairing. If you are replacing your laptop with a newer model and your old one is capable of supporting our rather limited needs, please consider donating it to your Society. ■

Following the regular monthly meeting of the Doña Ana County Historical Society

ROSALIA de ARAGON

Actress and Musician

Presents a Chautauqua

LA LLORONA – THE WAILING WOMAN

La Llorona, a famous ghost from Spanish folklore, is known throughout the world for her eerie spine chilling cries as she searches for her loved ones. Her story was ancient in European mythology, but in New Mexico it is said that she lived next door or that an ancestor actually knew her.



This Chautauqua is made possible by the New Mexico Humanities Council, which is supported by grants from National Endowment for the Humanities and the Department of Cultural Affairs.

March 19, 2009, at 7:00 p.m.

Good Samaritan Village - Stucky Auditorium
3011 Buena Vida Circle

The meeting and program are open to the public, free of charge, and also to all who share an interest in the history of this area. ■

Calendar

Thursday, March 19, 2009

Chautauqua Program La Llorona

Thursday, April 16, 2009

Lydia Sanchez - *History of Fort Stanton*

Thursday, May 21, 2009

Bob Alexander - *Deming Train Robbery*

The Fall program will be announced when the speakers and dates have been finalized. 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.

Can You Help?

A group of researchers are in the process of locating and documenting all the US Air Force radar stations that ringed the country during much of the Cold War. One such facility is what was the Las Cruces Air Force Station, located where the Southern New Mexico State Fairgrounds is now located. This Air Force Station operated two radars. One was what is known as an "Acquisition Radar" inside a dome on top of a tower and the other was a "Height Finder" radar. They already have a lot of information, but as yet have not located any photos of the site when it was operational.

If you have, or know of anyone who has, photos of the Radars at the site, we would like to borrow them for a few minutes to scan them. Or if you have the ability to scan them at 300 Dots Per Inch, that would be good too.

If you can help, please contact Doyle Piland at e-mail dpiland@zianet.com or call 575-523-7034. ■

Special Announcement

RED DOT ALERT – It is time to renew your annual dues if you have not already done so. If you have questions about your membership, please contact Xandy Church at 526-9774. ■

Award Series - This second in a series of articles from the Banquet Program features one of the awards presented at the 2009 Banquet.



Tony Pennock at work in his studio.

The Heritage Award for 2009 Anthony (Tony) Pennock

Born in Las Cruces, New Mexico, Anthony has left his artistic mark on the community. The summer after his graduation from High School, he convinced the city administration that he could design and paint a large Historical mural on an area water tank. The resulting mural eventually led to 4 more water tank commissions as well as several others in surrounding communities. These murals have been written up in numerous publications on a worldwide basis. He was commissioned by the city of Neinburg, Germany to paint a large mural on the walls of a city park.

Recently, he developed a technique for painted tile mosaics which can range from several square feet in size to smaller versions. These mosaics incorporate mythical themes worked out in an intricate pattern of colors and shapes. His mosaic wall pieces are on display in several public buildings.

Anthony graduated from New Mexico State University, and did graduate work at Yale and the University of New Mexico. ■



Jim Eckles briefing while on a trip to the Pat Garrett ranch.

Board Member Profile – Jim Eckles

Jim Eckles grew up in Nebraska and attended the University of Nebraska. He majored in psychology and English lit. A masters in literature followed at the University of Washington but he was saved from a life in academia when, in 1977, he was offered a job in the White Sands Public Affairs Office. He worked there until 2007 when he retired.

During his time at the range —

- *he saw the Space Shuttle Columbia land,
- *he followed the Noss treasure hunters into Victorio Peak,
- *he escorted dozens of ranch families to visit their old homesteads,
- *he got to see lots of cool explosions and missile launches,

*and he has probably been to Trinity Site more than any other human being.

He rides a bicycle, hikes and backpacks, plays golf, is on the White Sands Missile Range Historical Foundation board of directors and, if you'll fly him there, would love to take photos of Britain for you. He and his wife live in Las Cruces. ■

Scholarship Endowment Donors

The Society and the Education Committee wish to thank the following donors to the *Mary and J. Paul Taylor Scholarship Endowment Fund*. This scholarship, for \$1,200, is given annually to a NMSU History student.

- Lee Aguilar
- Chris Buethe
- Robert & Xandra Church
- Gary & Nancy Goodger
- George & Alice Helfrich
- Alex Keatts
- Roger & Celine Rothenmaier
- Morris & Lorraine Southward
- J. Paul Taylor
- The Johnson Controls Foundation.
- DACHS

Call for Volunteers

Our Society always needs volunteers. If you are interested in helping with any of the following: arranging field trips, managing the emailing of the newsletters, setting up the sound system for presentations, serving on the awards committee, helping with the silent auction, or helping prepare the banquet program. Please contact George Helfrich, at 522-3477. ■

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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 Helfrich, at 522-3477.

Annual Membership/Sponsorship Rates

Individual \$20 Family \$25 Student \$8 Contributor \$40 Benefactor \$150 Life \$300
Southern New Mexico Historical Review Sponsorship \$50

This is a change of information Yes No A check for \$ _____ is enclosed. Date _____
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Name(s) _____ Phone # _____

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E-mail address _____ Newsletter via E-mail Yes No

Call For *Southern New Mexico
Historical Review* Articles

Now is the time to be working on that article about your favorite Southern New Mexico character, place or family member. Or maybe you have been meaning to record your memories of growing up in the Mesilla Valley or a particular event that you participated in that would be of interest to someone fifty or a hundred years from now. If any of this caused you to think "I should do that", then contact Rick Hendricks our Editor at (575) 650-3205 or email him at rhend03@comcast.net. For more information concerning the Review go to our Web site at www.donaanacountyhistsoc.org. ■

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We wish to thank our
Corporate Sponsors

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February Program

At our February meeting, Ms. Sharon Cowell (upper right) presented a very exciting, entertaining, and informative insight into the life of Octavia Magoffin, the matriarch of the Magoffin family who was so instrumental in the forming and growth of El Paso. Sharon took the role of Octavia and walked us through the highlights of her very eventful life. The Magoffin Home Texas State Historic site tells the story of frontier trade by wagon train, American expan-



Ms Sharon Cowell as Octavia Magoffin

sion, Historic ties with Mexico and the advance of refinement on the Southwestern Frontier. Through the Magoffin Family and Home, visitors can glimpse 19th Century adventures and conflicts. Judging by the ovations she received, the audience thoroughly enjoyed Sharon's presentation. ■

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