

# NEWSLETTER

December 2024

## Doña Ana County Historical Society

### Members And Guests Invited To The Awards Banquet Show Your Support For Our Heritage By Attending

The Doña Ana County Historical Society will hold its annual awards luncheon on January 25 at noon in La Posta restaurant in La Mesilla. Members, guests and the public are invited.

The banquet has been held annually for decades to honor individuals who have made a difference in protecting our historical heritage and educating us about it. Also, DACHS identifies properties that are historically significant or that are in danger of disappearing without a fair discussion about their value.

The board of directors has been reviewing potential awards and has already decided on most. However, it is not too late to nominate a person, place or thing. One item already approved for the "Old Timer's Award" is the slot canyon just north of Radium Springs - pictured here. The canyon is an easy family hike in the Cedar Hills west of the Rio Grande.

It might sound like this award should be for some person with a long association with southern New Mexico. However, the society's award definitions say this award "recognizes a cherished object, natural phenomenon, or cultural tradition prominent in Mesilla Valley heritage." The slot canyon has become a very popular natural phenomenon with dozens of hikers going through it most days.

In addition to the Old Timer's Award there will be awards for authors and

buildings in the Las Cruces area.

The cost of the Mexican buffet luncheon is \$25. **RESERVATIONS ARE REQUIRED** for the event. Last year we ended up with many people showing up to eat and not paying their way. This year we'd like you to prepay by making your reservation and paying from the DACHS website.

Prepaying is easy. Go to the DACHS website at: [donaanacountyhistsoc.org/](http://donaanacountyhistsoc.org/) From there, go down the page about halfway to a yellow button on the left that is labeled "DONATE." Click on it.

This will take you to our PayPal page. At the top is the window to enter the amount for the luncheon. If there are two of you coming, it would be \$50 instead of \$25 and so on. Once that is filled in, select your PayPal account or pay with your regular credit card.

You will then fill in the information that the forms require. **HERE'S THE IMPOR-**

**TANT PART** - there will be a "write a note" window for you to enter the names of the people attending. We need that information to create a list for check-in and to make name tags.

If you have a question, email Jim at [nebraska1950@comcast.net](mailto:nebraska1950@comcast.net).

**BONUS:** Members attending will be able to pick up their copies of the *Southern New Mexico Historical Review* and have it in hand weeks before those who will have it mailed to their homes.



## DACHS Elections Were Held Nov. 21 And Bylaws OKed

The November 21 presentation at the Good Samaritan auditorium was preceded with a couple of historical society business matters.

First of all, the DACHS bylaws had been updated by the board of directors. Those changes were put to a vote of the membership as required by the bylaws and they passed without dissent.

Second, President Dennis Daily announced the candidates for at-large board members and officers. All were approved in a single vote after a member moved that the group be voted on as a single block. There was no dissent.

## NMSU Display Of Ballard Photos Still At Old Branigan

The exhibit "The Ballard Photo Studio: A Portrait of Community," featuring more than 200 portraits and other photographic works by Las Cruces photographer Jim Ballard, is still up at the Branigan Cultural Center. These works offer a snapshot of the Mesilla Valley community between 1930 and 1950. The images are from the Ballard Photo Studio collection at the NMSU Library Archives. The exhibit runs through Saturday, February 15, 2025.

Jim Ballard operated his photo studio on Main Street, where he created portraits of more than 5,000 Mesilla Valley residents.

These two photos are from the exhibit and feature two military men. On the left is Lt. Col. Harold Turner, the first commander of what was then White Sands Proving Ground. Turner was commander from 1945 to 1947.

Ballard's 5x7 negatives offer great detail. On

The new at-large members of the board are:  
Leah Tookey  
Christopher Schurtz  
Nathan Japel

The officer positions were simply re-elected:  
Jerry Wallace as vice president  
Garland Courts as treasurer

There were no candidates for the vacant secretary's position which means a volunteer is still needed. If a candidate comes forward, the president can appoint that person to the job until the next election cycle at the end of 2025.

Turner's coat lapels is the Odnance Corps insignia. White Sands was an Odnance Corps facility for a long time. On his left breast, above the rows of ribbons, is an aviation badge. It is difficult to see all of the detail but it looks like an observer's badge. It means he wasn't a pilot but once had the job of being an observer on Army Air Force aircraft.

The young man on the right is Eugene A. Baird in a different Army uniform that was worn by ROTC students at NMSU. On Baird's lapels, instead of the Ordnance Corps ball and flame, he is wearing the crossed rifles of the Infantry Branch. Above that insignia is "ROTC." On his shoulder there is the backwards swastika of NMSU and two diamonds designating his cadet rank of lieutenant colonel. Such a rank was given to seniors who were outstanding cadets. When he graduated from NMSU, he would have had the rank of a second lieutenant.



# Farm And Ranch Museum To Host "Farm La-La" On Dec. 17

The New Mexico Farm & Ranch Heritage Museum's third-annual Farm La-La, featuring Christmas lights, trolley rides, s'mores, hot chocolate, and craft activities is going to be December 17 from 5 to 8 p.m. - just in time to get you, the kids and the grandchildren in the mood for Christmas. Admission is only \$5 *per family* and includes access to all of the museum's exhibits.

The event is hosted by the Farm & Ranch Heritage Museum and the Friends of the Museum.

The museum is located at 4100 Dripping Springs Road in Las Cruces.

This is a family-oriented Holiday celebration. Kids will have chances to decorate cookies and holiday ornaments, hear stories, make s'mores over a campfire, and take trolley rides around the livestock areas of the Museum grounds. Santa and the Grinch may make appearances, especially in the evening.



## It Is That Time Of Year Again - Dues Are Due - Still A Great Bargain

Members are reminded that dues for the upcoming year of 2025 are due at the end of the calendar year. The easiest way to renew or join, is through the DACHS website. Just go to the homepage, click on the "membership" link in the top menu or scroll down to "quick links" where there are buttons for membership and donations.

Once "membership" is selected you'll go to a Paypal page where you can select your membership

level, enter your contact information (a good email address, physical address and phone number are essential), and then pay using your regular credit card or your Paypal account, if you have one.

Or you can also print out the full membership form available as a PDF, fill it out and mail it with your check. Finally, you can fill out the short form below and mail it with your check to the DACHS PO Box shown below. THANKS for your support.

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

**Annual Membership/Sponsorship Rates - attach your payment and mail to the above P.O. Box**

Individual \$25       Family \$30       Student \$10       Contributor \$40

Benefactor \$150       Life \$300

NAME (S): \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

EMAIL ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

PHONE NUMBER: \_\_\_\_\_

If you are unsure of your status or have questions regarding membership, please contact Susan Krueger at 575 525-0654.

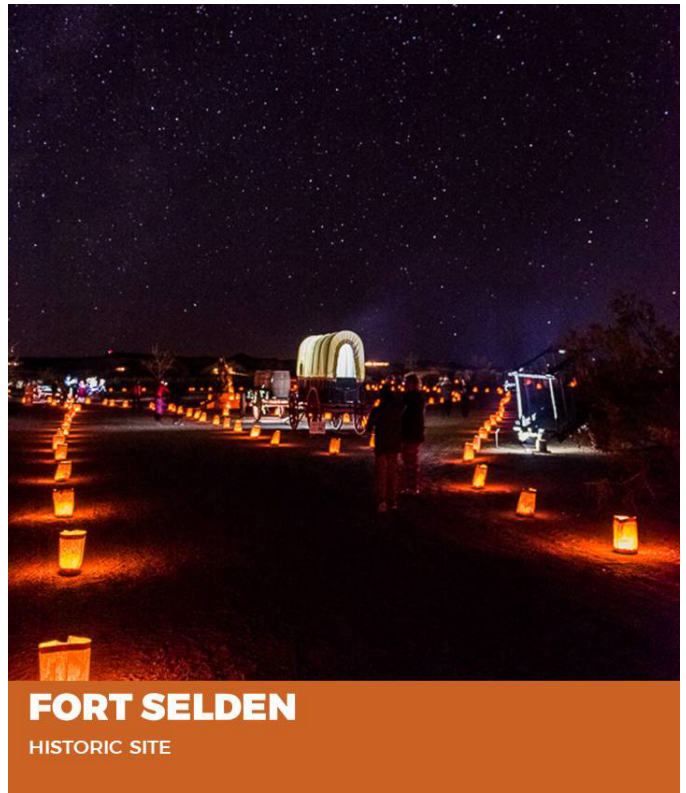


## Noche de Las Luminarias

See the lights at Fort Selden Historic Site on Saturday, Dec. 21 from 5 to 9 p.m. To control the number of people, tickets are available for TIMED ENTRY. See the website URL below to buy tickets.

Embrace the warmth of the season at Fort Selden Historic Site for this annual holiday event, Noche de Las Luminarias. Enjoy the sights of the holidays as more than 900 luminarias dot Fort Selden, offering a special celebration on the longest night of the year. Walk the luminarias-lined pathways and illuminated ruins (but please be mindful not to enter or touch the ruins). They'll offer a warm campfire to sit by and make a wish for 2025. Participate in family-friendly activities like a holiday ornament-making craft. Listen to live music by Enchantment Historical Productions Carolers and grab a warm drink or dessert from Munchie Monster food truck. **Activities are outdoors, so dress for the weather.**

Tickets for timed entry are \$7/adults and free for children 16 years and younger. Purchase tickets online at: [my.nmculture.org/33082/41940](https://my.nmculture.org/33082/41940).



[www.donaanacountyhistsoc.org](http://www.donaanacountyhistsoc.org)

President: Dennis Daily  
Vice President: Dr. Jerry Wallace  
Secretary, Newsletter, Review & Website: Jim Eckles  
Treasurer: Garland Courts  
Historian: Faith Hutson  
Past President: vacant  
At-Large Board Members:  
George Helfrich  
David Brown  
Heather Reed  
Dr. Susan Krueger  
Sal Patricolo  
Jim Eckman, SNMHR Editor  
Vacant, Farm&Ranch Heritage Museum Liaison  
Sean Shifano, MMSU Student Liaison

2024 Board of Directors

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

