

# Newsletter

August 2007



## Dona Ana Historical Society

### **See You at Our 2007 Picnic!**

Our annual DACHS picnic will be held at the historic Rodey Church, just south of Hatch. It is a beautiful site and we are certain that DACHS members will enjoy this annual event where we can congregate with old friends and welcome the new members to our Society who joined since last year. On page three you will find more information about this venue.

#### **Rodey church directions**

If you take Valley Road (Hwy 185) you continue until you spot the sign 'Rodey' and the church steeple, which you can see for several miles as you are looking for it on the left, heading north. If you prefer to go via I-25, exit at Rincon and travel West, staying on road 154 until you come to Hwy 185, turn right and go about three miles to the entrance to Rodey. *(More information on page 3)*

#### **THE CHURCH AT RODEY**

(Formerly St. Francis de Sales Catholic Church)

DACHS Picnic – Saturday, September 8, 2007 2pm until ?

DACHS Board will provide:

Ice Chests, Drinks, Ice, Silverware, Plates, Wine, Plastic Cups, Napkins, Garbage Bags, and extra tables and chairs.

Dessert: Roger Rothenmaier

Ice Tea: Mary Lou Pendergrass, Donna Eichstaedt

Attendees: Please bring your "own picnic."

Ice Chest & Ice – Richard Majestic

Members may bring their own camping chairs if THEY will be more comfortable.

#### **A short note from our president:**

Planning for the city anniversary celebration seems to be going fine, per Bob Pick.

Some fellow named Dominic Metta has volunteered his time and effort to do decorating along main street etc. Dominic is a home planner. So really per Bob it seems we are off the hook pretty much with the centennial.

Bob is also working with Will Tichnor on the project.

The more important, information on the street seems that the Citizens Bank wants to unload the Armijo building and is putting out feelers. Bob more or less inferred that Heather Pollard has heard this and contacted Bob and possibly talked to David Ikard from the Bank. Problem is that I am leaving town Sunday AM for 7 weeks. I am going to talk to George Helfrich after I Email this letter.

Seems like DACHS is in a tough position as about all we can do is offer verbal support to all these projects. We really need to talk to someone as high up the bank ladder as we can and see what gives.

See you at the picnic.

*Roger*

Jeff Berg from the Mesilla Valley Film Society submitted the following material:

**September 15- Requiem for Billy the Kid (2006, 81 Minutes, US Premiere! Made in NM!) PLEASE NOTE...THERE WILL BE TWO SCREENINGS OF THIS FILM, at 1:30 AND at 3:30 PM.**

**Special guest- Tom Sullivan, former sheriff of Lincoln County and one of the narrators of the film.**

French director Anne Feinsilber chose the legend of Billy the Kid for this, her first film. Following the efforts of Tom Sullivan (who will be present for the screenings) and Steve Sedarwall, the former Sheriff and Deputy Sheriff of Lincoln County, New Mexico, **Requiem for Billy the Kid** is an homage to the past set in the present.

When the film begins, Sullivan and Sedarwall have recently discovered that a town in Texas is claiming to have the remains of the "real" Billy the Kid. Lincoln County is rich in Old West history

and has been renowned as the site of Billy the Kid's death. Not only does Billy's life and death provide tourism dollars for the small county, it is also a great source of pride and debate for the locals. The Sheriff wants to exhume both bodies, along with the body of Billy's mother, for DNA testing. He is convinced this will prove, once and for all, that



Lincoln County is Billy's true resting place.

In addition to interviewing local people, the director sets up a sort of faux-interview with Billy the Kid himself. Using the voice of Kris Kristofferson, she directs questions to Kristofferson as if she were talking to Billy in the present, allowing him to reflect on his life.

Requiem is so not an ordinary documentary. It is not filled with talking heads and maps. Rather, it utilizes poetry, music, live action, old film clips, and historical commentary to achieve its goal.

In the last scene, after being denied his request to exhume the bodies in question, Sheriff Sullivan reveals he is on his way out of office. His term is up and he is being replaced. In a line that sums up not only his term, but also the life of Billy the Kid, he says, "I'll be history." Won't we all!-

### **DACHS Fall Programs**

DACHS next Regular Meeting to be held on Thursday, September 20, 2007 at 7:00pm at the Stucky Auditorium, University Terrace Good Samaritan Village, 3011 Buena Vida Circle. The speakers will be Mr. Michael Taylor of the National Park Service and Dr. Sarah Schlanger of the Bureau of Land Management. They will discuss the history and significance of the Camino Real in the vicinity of the Spaceport.

Michael Romero Taylor has been working the last thirty years in historic preservation. His experience includes historic site management, architectural conservation, restoration of historic structures, museum/visitor center management and archaeological site preservation. He has worked in the Division of Conservation with the National Park Service, served as the New Mexico State Historic Preservation Officer in 1994-95, and was the Deputy Director of New Mexico State Monuments from 1995 to 2001. He

currently is the Manager for the Route 66 Corridor Preservation Program and co-lead for El Camino Real de Tierra Adentro National Historic Trail, National Trails System Office - Santa Fe.

Sarah Schlanger is Associate State Archaeologist for the New Mexico Bureau of Land Management (BLM), BLM's Trail Administrator for El Camino Real de Tierra Adentro National Historic Trail and the Bureau's Lead for the Old Spanish National Historic Trail planning effort. An archaeologist and former museum curator and administrator, Dr. Schlanger has extensive experience in directing a variety of programs, including field research, exhibitions, and resource management, and is known in the field and to the public for her engaging, accessible publications and talks. In her seven years with the Bureau, Dr. Schlanger has focused on site protection and preservation, public outreach, and education, and has contributed to program and policy guidance.

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The church at Rodey is of massive adobe or stone construction. Locally available roofing timbers determined the width of the church nave, which measures about 30 feet. Windows in the nave are few, lighting the choir loft in the rear of the church. A window near the chancel creates a spectacular lighting effect focused on the altar. Under the altar, two former priests lie buried and in the corner of the garden there is a grave believed to be that of a gypsy boy.

Although first built in the 1860's, flooding by the Rio Grande caused damage that required the church to be rebuilt about 1870. The plaza surrounding the church became a meeting place and social center. The feast day of St. Francis de Sales was celebrated there with a fiesta each January 29th.

Father Klumbis was the last priest to say Mass in the church at Rodey. It was closed, and the building and land sold in 1963 to William H. and Jeri Mitchell from Denver, Colorado. They repaired the bell tower and had the two-foot thick adobe walls replastered.



The next owners, W.A. (Teako) and Josie Nunn, resided in the newly renovated rectory for 25 years. They took great pride in the restoration of the rectory and church, which contains many of the original religious artifacts. An adobe wall surrounding the entire church grounds was completed during their tenure as well.

Vincent and Mary Lou Chavez of California purchased the church recently and are continuing to

renovate the rectory for their home. The Church at Rodey (St. Francis de Sales Church,) was named to the State Historical Register, making it one of the most unique properties in New Mexico.

The Chavez' have graciously invited DACHS members to hold their annual picnic on the grounds and will provide tours of the entire facility and grounds during the afternoon.

### **HOPE TO SEE ALL OF YOU THERE!**

#### ***Who was St. Francis de Sales?***

The St. Francis de Sales Catholic Church in Rodey, New Mexico dates to the 1860's and represents a continuation of the tradition of Spanish church building in New Mexico—(New Spain) started in 1598. Churches of this type can be traced to Mexico during the 16th century and even earlier to fortified churches in southwestern France during the Middle Ages. Since so many churches and schools are named for St. Francis de Sales, including the one in Rodey, New Mexico, where DACHS will hold its 2007 annual picnic, it is fitting to know a little about this man. Born in Thorens, France to an aristocratic family, Francis, the eldest of six brothers, became a student of rhetoric, the humanities, theology and law. After being admitted as a lawyer before the senate of Chambery, and about to be appointed senator, Francis, declared his intention to live an ecclesiastical life. He rejected his father's wishes for him to marry a woman of noble birth and gave the rest of his life to the church.

His religious fervor brought him to the position of Provost of the Chapter of Geneva, the highest office in the diocese. In 1593, he received his Holy Orders and devoted himself to preaching, hearing confessions and evangelizing.

In 1602, Francis became Bishop

of Geneva, and in this position, he reformed the religious communities scattered throughout the rugged and mountainous region. He devoted much of his prayers and work to the poor. In so doing, he ate simple food, dressed in a plain manner, and lived frugally.

In 1607, with St. Jane Frances de Chantal, he founded the Institute of the Visitation of the Blessed Virgin, for young girls and widows who were called to religious life but lacked the strength to persevere by themselves. He was offered the Bishopric of Paris, by St. Vincent DePaul, but refused and returned to minister to the poor in his diocese in France. While serving in this capacity, he was stricken with apoplexy and died on December 27, 1622 at the age of 56. He was beatified in 1661, canonized by Pope Alexander VII in 1665, and proclaimed Doctor of the Universal Church by Pope Pious IX, in 1877.

#### **DACHS Fall Programs**

After the summer period of June thru August, when we do not have monthly meetings, we are ready to start meeting again and have an interesting agenda for the rest of 2007. In addition to the September 20th, Camino Real/Spaceport meeting covered already; on October 18th, Ms. Jean Fulton of Cornerstones will discuss the results of the Condition Assessment that she is performing on the Amador (public input regarding establishment of the history museum will also be sought); and on Nov. 15th, Mr. Mark Santiago will speak on Spanish and Apache relations in a talk titled "*A Mailed Fist In A Velvet Glove*". .

**Welcome New Members: :**

Edmund Saucedo  
Polly and John Weldon  
Joseph Solano  
John Hoffman  
Carol and Bob Grover  
Christine Ashley  
Mark and Georgia Anderson  
Betty Maluf-Tver  
Richard Baish

**Southern New Mexico Historical  
Review (SNMHR)**

Time is growing short to submit articles for the 2008 Volume XV of the SNMHR. If you have material or want to discuss submitting an article please contact the SNMHR Editor, Mr. Rick Hendricks at 505-521-0398 or by e-mail at [rhend03@comcast.net](mailto:rhend03@comcast.net). Additional information related to the Review and submission details can be found on the Society's web site at [www.donaanscountyhistsoc.org/](http://www.donaanscountyhistsoc.org/)

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Phone/Fax \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

**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  
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[www..zianet.com/dachs](http://www..zianet.com/dachs)**

**2007 Officers:**

President – Roger Rothenmaier  
Vice President – George Helfrich  
Secretary – Donna Eichstaedt  
Treasurer – Xandy Church  
Historian – Karen George  
Board Members-at-Large -  
Marcie Palmer  
Felix Pfaeffle  
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