



NEWSLETTER

October 2013

City Museum System Liaison Michael Walczak



Michael was born 9/28/1971 in Detroit, Michigan. He grew up in Riverview, MI, about fifteen minutes south of Tiger Stadium in Detroit. He graduated from the University of Michigan-Dearborn in 1995 with a degree in History and Political Science. Within days of graduating, Mike was hired as a movie theatre manager, first as an assistant at the Main Art Theatre in Royal Oak, MI before being promoted to General Manager of the Livonia Mall Cinema in Livonia, MI. While he enjoyed what he did, he started to realize that it wasn't something he wanted to do as a career. He went back to school at U of M-D to raise his minor in Anthropology to a major in an attempt to get into grad school. Almost by accident, he saw a flyer for the internship program and one of the openings listed was for the Detroit Historical Museum. While interning at the DHM, he had the opportunity to work in the exhibit, education and collections departments. He also completed their docent training program and gave tours when needed.

In May of 1998, he graduated with his BA in Anthropology and that summer he was accepted into the Museum Studies Graduate Program at George Washington University in Washington, DC

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Our October Program

Our October 17th meeting will begin at 7:00 PM at the Good Samaritan Auditorium, 3011 Buena Vida Circle. The program will feature our own Jim Eckles. Jim's topic will be "The Golden Years of White Sands" when stars like Jack Benny and Debbie Reynolds visited, when network television broadcast live missile launches from the range on a Sunday afternoon, when Clyde Tombaugh ran optics and when the football team couldn't win on the field but won big off of it.



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

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where he studied collections management and museum administration.

During the summer of 1999, he interned at the Smithsonian Museum of Natural History in the paleobiology department where he worked on updating their disaster plan. The next summer, he did a foreign internship at the Museum of Ethnography in Osaka, Japan where he studied Japanese museum practices.

After graduating with a Master's Degree in Museum Studies with a concentration in Anthropology, he was hired as the Executive Director of the Howard County Historical Society in Ellicott City, MD. For the next six years, he helped the public with genealogical and property research in the archives and library while developing exhibits on 19th century clothing and furniture, a display of Ellicott family artifacts and a history of the Boy Scouts of America in Maryland in the museum.

Then in 2006, he was hired by the City of Las Cruces to be the manager of the Las Cruces Museum of Natural History. Finally, last year, they relocated the museum from the Mesilla Valley Mall to their new home downtown next door to the Museum of Art and the Branigan Cultural Center.

As for Mike, he is a big fan of the Detroit Tigers, Lions and Red Wings and University of Michigan, and he has three big dogs, a Great Dane named Pandora, a St. Bernard named Priscilla and a Great Pyrenees/Boxer mix named Jimmy, all three rescues from the Great Dane Rescue of El Paso. ■

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visit their old homes,

*he got to experience many ear splitting 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. His book, "*Pocketful Of Rockets*," on the history of White Sands Missile Range should be out soon.

He and his wife Debbie live in Las Cruces. ■

Southern New Mexico Historical Review

Call To Writers. The Dona Ana Historical Society is looking for articles and book reviews for its next annual review - scheduled to be published in January 2014. Articles should focus on the history of Dona Ana County or some interesting aspect of southern New Mexico.

For inquiries or more information, contact Jim Eckles at: nebraska1950@comcast.net ■

Annual General Membership Meeting and Awards Luncheon

Among the agenda items for the Historical Society's first Board meeting of the fall was consideration of the awards to be given at the Annual Awards Banquet. Pause here for a moment and be sure that you have marked the Banquet event on your calendar: Saturday, January 25, 2014, noon to 2:30 at the Double Eagle. Back to the agenda, the awards item was assigned to the chair of the Awards Committee, Susan Krueger. Susan asked the Board to consider giving the award to an exciting project that began to take shape during the celebration of Mesilla Park's 125th anniversary in September of 2012, and has moved forward this summer with workshops and meetings: the nomination of Mesilla Park, established in 1887, as an historic district to the state and national historic registers of historic places. The Board voted unanimously to accept Susan's recommendation.

The project is remarkable for its scope and historical significance to the communities of Dona Ana County, City of Las Cruces and Town of Mesilla, all of which share a part of the proposed district. Dr. Jon Hunner, professor of history at NMSU, and a group of local residents, including City Councilor Greg Smith and retired executives Dave and Janet Clements organized the summer meetings and did extensive community outreach. At our September general meeting, Dr. Hunner and Dr. Peter Kopp were our guest speakers and their talk was on "Doing Public History at NMSU." As a part of this program, Dr. Hunner gave us a glimpse of the Mesilla Park project with a map of the area and examples of specific historic structures, including then and now photographs of the Mesilla Park railroad depot. This month students in Dr. Hunner's historic preservation course at NMSU have begun the surveying and photographing of buildings and the collection of historic information, which once it is all sorted and assembled will be used to prepare the two register nominations. The effort will take long hours of exhaustive research and writing with attention to detail, along with walking and talking throughout the neighborhood.

One purpose of the award for a Neighborhood Worthy of Preservation is to recognize an historically significant area in Dona Ana County that possess integrity and significance in its buildings and structures and in its past events and people that have made a significant contribution to local patterns of history. Another purpose of the award is to recognize the dedication and work of residents and students who are carrying out this task, the outcome of which will be a remarkable and lasting contribution to the historical and cultural heritage of Dona Ana County. We offer the award to them as well to cheer them onward to success.

Fall Programs Announced

Other fall programs include "Range Tales, 1945 to 1959" presented by Jim Eckles, a DACHS At-Large Board Member, describing the "golden" days of White Sands Missile Range.

Bill Cavaliere, who gave our April program on early border settlers, will return with a choice of programs, either on the history of the Sheriff's Department with emphasis on the US/Mexican Border region; or on the surrenders of Geronimo, first, in March 1886, to General George Crook in Mexico, and, finally, in September 1886, to General Nelson Miles in Skeleton Canyon, Arizona. The surrender negotiations are illustrated with a series of remarkable photographs. ■

The following Article is from the *Las Cruces Historic Cemetery Guide*

Produced by the Heritage Days Committee in 1999
Reprinted by the Doña Ana County Historical Society in 2001.

Carmen Kahn Freudenthal was born in Sedalia, Missouri, and graduated cum laude in Sociology and Economics from Smith College in Massachusetts in 1920. She was a successful encyclopedia salesperson in New York City, when she met Louis Freudenthal of Las Cruces. Louis had traveled to Washington, D.C. on business and then to New York City to visit family. They married in 1934, built a new home in Las Cru-

ces, and raised a son and daughter.

Louis Freudenthal was a member of a prosperous New Mexico family which owned businesses and farms in southern New Mexico and Arizona. Louis studied agriculture at Cornell University and returned to the Mesilla Valley to manage the family farms. He



established the Valley Insurance Agency, was president of the Farm Bureau, and co-founded the Doña Ana County Historical Society.

Carmen, following her mother-in-law's example of community service, became active in the Women's Improvement Association and, after serving as president, became chairwoman of the WIA legislative committee. This

committee was active in the first of many battles to reform New Mexico's community property laws. She was active in the Las Cruces branch of the American Association of University Women, working to end discrimination in the Las Cruces schools and pressing for recognition of the local college by the AAUW.

She died in 1991. ■

-----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 fees 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, Rebecca Slaughter, at 575-541-2154 (during business hours) or the President, Marcie Palmer, at 575-496-4736.

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Drs. Hunner & Kopp in discussion with audience member after their talk

Drs. Hunner and Kopp discussed some of the innovative ways Public History is being taught at NMSU. Most interesting among them is the "New Mexico Time Travel" program which selects a timeframe to research then develops and stages plays portraying that time in our history. Thus, giving a more realistic and enduring understanding of that part of our history.

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Another topic they discussed was "Bridging Ages," an international organization dedicated to using local places for teaching and exhibiting history. See URL <http://web.nmsu.edu/~publhist/bridging.pdf> for details.

They also discussed the nomination of Mesilla Park, established in 1887, as an historic district to the state and national historic registers of historic places. ■

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