



NEWSLETTER

February 2014

Doña Ana County Historical Society, 2014, is Off to a Great Start

By Susan Krueger, President

We began the year with our Annual Awards Luncheon at the Double Eagle Restaurant on the Mesilla Plaza, dining in the ballroom under an exquisite, gold leaf ceiling. This grand, 150 year old territorial style building, along with the neighboring buildings facing the Plaza, are a National Historic Landmark. Our host, C. W. "Buddy" Ritter, and the meal matched the graciousness and elegance of the historic setting.

The first program item was the installation of the 2014-2016 Board. Then Dr. Jon Hunner and his NMSU students walked us through their project to obtain a historic district nomination for the Mesilla Park neighborhood. Next we had the pleasure of meeting Janet and Dave Clements, who were the recipients of the Heritage Award in honor of their contribution to the success of the district nomination project. Other honorees were Dr. Tracey Carrillo, who accepted an Old Timers Award on behalf of the Fabian Garcia Science Center and Jim Eckles, who was presented an award for his book: *Pocket full of Rockets: History and Stories Behind White Sands Missile Range*. It was also a pleasure to meet Karl and Toni Laumbach our guest speakers for the February 20, Good Samaritan program.

In the coming year, we look forward to becoming a part of local, historic projects, whenever possible, by, for example, meeting the people who are making history, the Laumbachs; by keeping up to date with the students and the Clements on the progress of the Mesilla Park project; and by engaging Richard Sims, Director of the NM Department of Cultural Affairs, in a

dialogue about what part the DACHS can play in "Saving Fort Seldon."

Finally, our many thanks go out to those who put this Awards Program together: Xandy and Bob Church and Rebecca Slaughter for the reception table; Doyle Piland, Typographer, and Rick Hendricks and Robert D. Martinez, Co-editors for the *Southern NM Historical Review*; and Mary Kay Shannon for the outstanding program booklet and the Year in Review Power Point presentation.

Our February Program

Our February 20th meeting will begin at 7:00 PM at the Good Samaritan Auditorium, 3011 Buena Vida Circle. The program will feature Karl and Toni Laumbach presenting The Cañada Alamosa Project and Museum Exhibition.

Since 1999 archaeologists and historians have been unlocking the secrets of the Rio Alamosa, one of New Mexico's most spectacular drainages. Located in Socorro and Sierra Counties, the Rio Alamosa is fueled by the Ojo Caliente, the spring that gave the Warm Springs Apaches their name. The permanent water was an attraction to earlier inhabitants as well and the canyon boasts pit house and pueblo villages spanning the years from A.D. 200 to A.D. 1400. Also present are the Southern Apache Indian Reservation, Apache camps and historic farms and ranches.

The Cañada Alamosa Project is a cooperative venture by two non-profit organizations, Human Systems Research, Inc. of Las Cruces and the Cañada Alamosa Institute initiated by Dr. Dennis and Trudy O'Toole, owners of the Monticello Box Ranch. Research has included archaeological excavations at four key pit house and pueblo

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sites, the collection of oral histories, and development of a homestead data base for the watershed.

Karl and Toni Laumbach will present a program that outlines the scope of the project, including a discussion of the exhibit “Cañada Alamosa Project: 4000 Years of Agricultural History” now open at the New Mexico Farm and Ranch Heritage Museum. ■



Karl W. Laumbach

Karl Laumbach was raised on a northeastern New Mexico ranch. Karl has pursued an archaeological career in southern New Mexico since 1974. A Principal Investigator for Human Systems Research, Inc. since 1984, his research interests are varied,

including historical research in his native northeastern New Mexico, the pueblo archaeology of southern New Mexico, and the history and archaeology of the Apache. Karl served on the Cultural Properties Review Committee for the State of New Mexico from 1997 to 2003. Active in the history of Sierra County, he has been affiliated with the board of directors for the Sierra County Historical Society and Geronimo Springs Museum since 1992. In January of 2002, he was inducted into the Doña Ana County Historical Society’s Hall of Fame “for his outstanding contributions to the history and culture of the Mesilla Valley.” ■

Toni Laumbach is Chief Curator and Director of Museum Programs for the New Mexico Farm and Ranch Heritage Museum. Prior to coming to



Toni Laumbach in front of the Cañada Alamosa Exhibit at the Farm and Ranch Heritage Museum

the Museum, Toni was a Project Director and Collections Manager for Human Systems Research, Inc. Her field and laboratory experience as an archaeologist is extensive and includes work throughout much of New Mexico. Her primary research interests are prehistoric and early historic societies and ceramic technologies of the Southwest. As a museum professional, Toni has worked as both Registrar and Collections Manager at the Maxwell Museum of Anthropology at the University of New Mexico and as Curator of the New Mexico State University Museum. ■

Note: Previous Photos provided by Karl Laumbach

2014 Awards

At The Historical Society’s Annual Awards Luncheon on January 25, 2014, several awards were presented. This month we will feature the following two awards which this year were combined:

Buildings Worthy of Preservation and Buildings and Properties with Historical Significance: Mesilla Park Historic Properties

In August, 1887, the Rio Grande Land Company acting for the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railroad published a plat for a community to be called Mesilla Park. At the time it was three miles from Las Cruces. Mesilla Park was bounded on the east and south by the center of the old river bed and on the north and west by the property of George Bowman. Mesilla Park was enlarged in 1894 with the Bowman Addition.

Many of the older homes belonged to people whose names now grace academic halls at the university, such as George Gardiner, a physics professor who founded NMSU’s Physical Science Laboratory, and Goddard Hall.

One of the buildings of historical significance is the home owned by Ralph Willis Goddard, a pioneering engineering dean at NMSU who built the first student radio station in New Mexico. Another historic building is the Papen Community Center, formerly the Mesilla Park Elementary School designed by Trost & Trost Architects.

A group of New Mexico State University students led by Prof. Jon Hunner spent the 2013 fall semester researching the history of older buildings in the core of Mesilla Park. The goal of this project was to lay



Professor Hunner and Students receive award from Marcie Palmer. From left to right - Julie Wojtko, Jim Thumm, Frannie Cochran, Scott Foster, Marcie Palmer, Professor Jon Hunner, Alex Inshishian and David McIntosh. Photo by Jim Eckles

groundwork for a nomination for the neighborhood to the state and national registers of historic places. The students who participated in the survey included: Chantel Baker, Cassandra Canada, Frannie Cochran, Scott Foster, Mark Garnes, Josephine Ingle, Alex Inshishian, Whitney Jacobs, Henry Ludwig, David McIntosh, David Mercer, Steven Needle, Jackson Ocheltree, Kari Richards, Stephanie Stewart, James Thumm, Addison Warner, and Julie Wojtko.

The survey documented the properties and fam-

ilies who lived there. Any changes to the buildings over the years were also assessed. There are at least 35 properties that are over 100 years old. Another 120 structures are over 70 years old.

The survey of Mesilla Park has identified well over 150 structures, many of Historical Significance and Worthy of Preservation. ■

Editors Note: Adapted from the Awards Luncheon Program by Mary Kay Shannon

If you haven't already renewed your membership for 2014, Please renew your Membership Today. See form below.

-----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, 575-523-1845 (during business hours) or the President, Susan Krueger, at 575-525-0654.

Annual Membership/Sponsorship Rates

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How would you like to receive your copy of the *Southern New Mexico Historical Review* (SNMHR)?
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Member Notices

The 2014 issue of the *Southern New Mexico Historical Review* is now available.

If you were not able to pick up your copy at the Awards Luncheon, copies will be available at our regular monthly meetings on 20 February and 20 March.

The Historical Review is available in printed form or in "pdf" format on a CD for viewing on a computer. It will also be available on the Societies' website at URL <http://www.donaanacountyhistsoc.org/> shortly.

If after a period of time, those who have not picked up a copy, one will be mailed to your current postal address on file with our Treasurer. ■

Historic Home Tour

Mesilla Valley Preservation's Casas de Antaño, Historic Home Tour 2014 will be held on Saturday Feb. 15th from 1 – 5 p.m. Visit <http://www.mvpres.org/> for details. ■

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