



NEWSLETTER

September 2024

Doña Ana County Historical Society

David Thomas To Start Fall Speaker Series

Kicking off the fall season of DACHS presentations will be local historian and author David Thomas. The title of his talk is: *Giovanni Maria de Agostini, Hermit of La Cueva, New Discoveries*. The presentation will be September 19 at 7 p.m. in the auditorium at the Good Samaritan Facility - 3011 Buena Vida Circle.



In 2014 David published a book on the hermit who died at his cave in the La Cueva rocks just east of Las Cruces. We'd all heard the story of

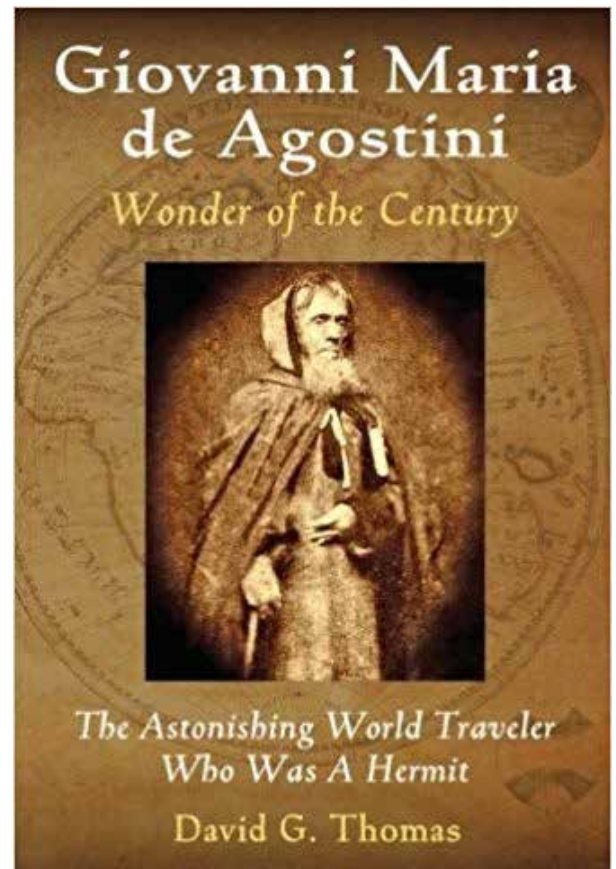
how the hermit would light a bonfire to let people know in Las Cruces that he was all right. When the fire didn't appear one time, residents rode to his cave and found him dead. David provides the complicated back story on the hermit with his origins in Europe and his extensive travels in South America.

About David's work, New Mexico historian Rick Hendricks wrote: "David G. Thomas has finally pulled back the veil of obscurity that long shrouded one of the most enduring mysteries in New Mexico's long history to reveal the true story of the Hermit, Giovanni Maria de Agostini. Tracking Agostini from Italy throughout South and North America to his final resting place in Mesilla, Thomas has once again proven himself a master history detective. Of particular interest is the information about the Hermit's life in Brazil, which closely parallels his remarkable experience in New Mexico, and required extensive research

in Portuguese sources. Thomas's efforts make it possible to understand this deeply religious man."

David G. Thomas has a BA and MS. He has authored 14 books on New Mexico history. He is a filmmaker, producer, playwright, and screenwriter. Also, he is a co-founder of the Pat Garrett Western Heritage Festival and co-founder of Friends of Pat Garrett. He is an associate producer of the 2019 documentary film "The Wonder of the Century," which is based on his book about the hermit.

He is the winner of the 2020 Will Rogers Medallion Award, Western Biography, and the 2022 Will Rogers Medallion Award, Western Maverick.



A Message From Dennis Daily, The DACHS President

My kids are back in school, parking spaces at NMSU are suddenly harder to find, and it may have been under 100 degrees today - so I guess summer is just about over. I don't know about you, but I'm ready to get back to our monthly meetings in a few weeks and to hear the great speakers VP Dr. Jerry Wallace has lined up for us.

DACHS has a long, long record of providing stimulating historical programs to our members and this fall will be no exception. We hope to see many of you at these monthly meetings, the third Thursday of each month, 7 p.m., at the Good Samaritan Center auditorium.

In addition to the programs, we take care of society business at these meetings. In November, there are a couple items on the agenda that we will rely upon all our members to help us with. First, during the summer the DACHS Board met to discuss some much-needed changes to the society's by-laws. These changes reflect updates in the ways we have been carrying out business in recent years, some due to technological transformations, some to evolving committee structures, and some to organizational priorities. Soon, we will send to you, the membership, the recommended by-laws updates for your

Jim Eckles Says He Is Leaving The Board After 15 years

This seemed like the perfect spot to place this article, with Dennis commenting on the need for new people and new ideas. I've been on the board for over 15 years now and really need to be replaced by someone who sees the world differently. Over the years I have picked up a number of jobs and I plan to leave them as well. What this means is that there are lots of opportunities to help support DACHS.

1) I started as an at-large board member which means you help where you feel comfortable and do what you can. At first I performed publicity tasks for our activities. That evolved into becoming secretary. So those two jobs will be open in 2025. The basic secretary duties are to take minutes during all board meetings, monitor the society's mail, both snail and email, and respond, email information to the membership. DACHS has a handbook outlining jobs.

2) Somehow I picked up the job of webmaster. This means posting the calendar information, updates to other pages as required and making sure we pay the bill for our service provider.

consideration, then in November we will put them to a vote.

As most of you are aware, in November the membership also votes on board elections. Keeping an involved and active board is always a challenge to organizations such as ours. We currently have a dedicated group of creative individuals on the board, but we do have some vacancies for at-large board members and we always need new recruits with new ideas. This is your chance to become more involved in DACHS activities. We will be announcing at the upcoming meetings the opportunities that will be available. Please consider volunteering for a board position.

Recently we've been out in the community recruiting new DACHS members. We set up tables at the Saturday downtown farmers' market and at the dedication event for the new Taylor-Mesilla Historic Site, with the result of signing on several new members. If you are one of those, welcome! We look forward to seeing you at our monthly meetings and other society activities. We all share a love of our region's unique history and the incredible stories of the people who have called this area home. Nos vemos pronto.

3) Editor of the kind-of-monthly newsletter. This job requires a 4-page newsletter at the beginning of some months with two PDF versions - one for print by Insta-Copy and one for the webmaster to post. For this job you really need to be on the board so you know what is going on.

4) Coordinator for the annual Southern New Mexico Historical Review. This entails seeking articles, dealing with authors, collecting the articles and passing them to the editor, then putting everything together in the Review package you've seen the past few years. There is a PDF version to be printed by ABC Printing and a low-rez version for the website. Also you get to mail them out to the membership.

5) Audio-visual support at monthly meetings. Straight forward with getting the key to the auditorium sound room on the day of each event and then setting up the facility and the computer/projector.

6) I guess because I can do traditional print layout, I was also creating the programs for the annual awards banquets. You can see them online.

Taylor-Mesilla Historic Site Family Day, Aug. 24 - We Were There

DACHS was on hand to celebrate J. Paul Taylor's birthday and the grand opening of the new historic site's visitors center in the old Reynolds store. We got four new memberships. Welcome aboard Norma Garrett, Sid and Raf Chavez, Felix and Beatrice Chavez and Emily Guerra. Photos by Dennis Daily and Jim Eckles.



Top left going clockwise: La Marcha with kindergarten, first and second graders from J. Paul Taylor Academy. Interior of the new Visitors Center in the Reynolds Store Bldg. Danza Prehispanica - Mexican native dance prior to Spanish arrival. The Boot Boogie Babes. DACHS board member Susan Krueger, right, talks to a potential member.



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Fort Selden Historic Site offers weekly walking tours that are guided by a ranger. These are an opportunity to learn about the history of the site.

You can join a Fort Selden Historic Site ranger for a guided tour of the fort ruins in the morning. Participants will explore 1400 years of history from the Native American farmers, or Mogollon, who lived on this land as early as 400 A.D. to the Spanish in the late 1500s to the American military in the

mid-1800s. The tour is included as part of general admission of \$5 per adult. Children 16 years old and younger are free. NM residents over the age of 60 are free on Wednesdays.

Upcoming tours are on September 4, 11, 18, & 25, from 9 - 10 a.m. Fort Selden is at 1280 Fort Selden Road, Radium Springs, NM. Take I-25, Exit 19, Radium Springs – Follow the signs.

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