THE NEW GUY ON THE BLOCK

In June of 1976, The Historical Society of New Mexico distributed "ISSUE NO. 1" of an unnamed publication. The flag contained, in BOLD CAPS, the question, "WHAT SHALL WE NAME IT?" [sic] Readers were peremptorily and in a mimetic type face, instructed to turn to page 4, the last page of that particular edition, where context rules were provided, to wit: "The contest is open to all. We want the best name, the most appropriate title. Reach into your minds. Search the depths of your imagination. Look into the deepest recesses of your intellect. Name this newspaper, which is destined to be a vital, vibrant indispensable tool for history and preservation in New Mexico."

The prize offered for the winning entry was "fresh from the University of New Mexico Press. a copy of Acoma Pueblo. Pueblo in the Sky by Dr. Ward Alan Mingus."

The second edition of the publication was not issued until December of 1976. On the front page, above the fold, was a headline which read: "Pedro Ribera-Ortega Gives Us a Name—see above." The "see above" referred to the new flag, LA CRONICA DE NUEVO MEXICO, which remains with us to this day. The headline was accompanied by a photo of HSNM president Lorraine Lavender presenting a certificate and Dr. Mingus's book to Mr. Pedro Ribera-Ortega. See the box below for more about that esteemed gentleman, who was named a Santa Fe Living Treasure in 2001. He died in 2005.

Ribera-Ortega is proud of his Hispanic heritage. He lives in the house he was born in and can trace his family back 40 generations to Spain. "It represents much of what makes the city of holy faith unique," says friend Richard McCord.

Pedro Ribera-Ortega has been actively involved with city and religious interests since his junior-high days. "Santa Fe is unique," he said. "The old Spanish families have been involved in the church and state and in order for Santa Fe to continue its Hispanic style. It's automatic for us."

Few know more about Santa Fe's rich Hispanic heritage than Ribera-Ortega. As a writer, teacher, archivist, linguist and mentor, he has spent his 70 years fiercely protecting the city's cultural and religious traditions.

The masthead on the first edition showed the editors as Michael F. Weber, who served as chairman of the Publications Committee, along with John P. Conron and Paul Suazo. That arrangement seems to have continued until Conron became sole editor in August of 1977. Former HSNM President Mike Stevenson believes that Conron was the moving force behind LA CRONICA in terms of format, content and style from the beginning. Carleen Lazzell served as Associate Editor for many years. Conron continued as editor until his death in 1995 at which time Lazzell took over. Stevenson reported that Carleen had been doing most of the work for several years prior to that time and was reluctant to assume the role of editor even after Conron's death.

When Carleen Lazzell took the reins, she continued the basic publication as it had been done since 1976. For the last twenty years of her life, Carleen kept the publication alive almost singlehandedly. She deserves the gratitude of the entire Society. Over all of those years, too, Ron Hadad held the position of Associate Editor and did much of the work involved in layout, composition, publication, and distribution of LA CRONICA.

As the recently appointed editor of LA CRONICA, I am somewhat daunted by the fact that I assume the position as only the third editor in nearly 40 years. On the other hand, the publication is in great shape and requires of me only a continuation of what has gone before. Having said that, I would also note that there have been many suggestions as to ways in which LA CRONICA might be changed, and I am open any ideas HSNM members might have. A couple of changes will be noted in this edition. I would like to invite all Society members to contribute items for publication. My preference is articles ranging in length for as little as 500 words to 1,000 or 1,500. I am not enamored of items in the range of 4,000 to 6,000 words, although they will be considered. I also encourage news items regarding activities of local historical groups.

Please feel free to contract me at any time via email: donbullis@msn.com.

I appreciate the confidence in me the Society's board of directors has demonstrated and I look forward to the coming years.

(Thanks to former President Mike Stevenson for his institutional memory of the Society)

Don Bullis, Editor
The Heart of Las Cruces: History of St. Genevieve's Church

By Father Ricardo Bauza, et al
Published by St. Genevieve's Parish
Review by John Taylor

In 1849, a company of U.S. Army Dragoons first laid out El Pueblo del Jardín de Las Cruces (The City of the Garden of the Crosses) at the foot of the Organ Mountains. Folklore has it that the settlement was named for crosses that had been erected at the location to memorialize a bishop, a priest, three choir boys, four trap­pers, a Spanish army officer, and a captain who had been ambushed and killed there sometime in the 17th century. Although the vili­lage layout, one block was set aside for a Roman Catholic Church. In 1858, Jean Baptiste Lam, the newly appointed bishop of the Diocese of Santa Fe, assigned Father Manuel Chavez as a priest for the new parish of Las Cruces, and Chavez immediately set about building a permanent church for his flock. Because construction began on January 3, 1859, the new parish was dedicated to St. Genevieve, the patron saint of Paris, whose feast day is January 3.

There can be no greater gift that parishioners can give to their parish than the knowledge of the history of their church. Its fixtures, in families, its traditions, and its religious and secular leaders. The new book, 'The Heart of Las Cruces: History of St. Genevieve's Church' is just such a gift. Father Ricardo Bauza and his team have produced a remarkable biography of the church from its earliest con­ception to the present day. The richly illustrated and carefully refer­enced text integrates the history of St. Genevieve's with that of southern New Mexico and Las Cruces. The book also chronicles such as the construction of the beautiful new church building in 1887 and challenges such as the demolition of the much-beloved structure in 1967 when laws in the original construction forced the condemnation of the structure. The text is highly readable. The book was published in 2014 by St. Genevieve's parish and is available either directly from the parish (100 S. Espina, Las Cruces, NM 88001) or on Amazon.com.

Left to right: Pat D. Cahill, Brad Whipple, and John Deason were south of Magdalena, the equivalent as part of their Peace Corps training at UNM.

Nearly every American alive in the early 1960s remembers the 17 most stirring words in John F. Kennedy's inaugural address: "Ask not what your country can do for you. Ask what you can do for your country.

Based on this historic chal­lenge, President Kennedy issued Executive Order #10924, creating the Peace Corps on March 1, 1961. Well received across the nation, the Peace Corps became a centerpiece of Kennedy's New Frontier.

 Thousands of young Americans volunteered for the exciting chance to serve their country by assisting underdeveloped commu­nities in Latin America and Africa. The application process was extremely competitive: only one in five applicants were accepted. Commences, "beards," and dandruff were automatically rejected, according to Peace Corps regula­tions.

TRAVELS WITH THE HSNM PRESIDENT

Janet Salas Visits Western Socorro County

I had the opportunity to spend August 3-5, 2015, in the Magdalena area at the Concho Hills guest ranch. Historical Society of New Mexico member, and an award­winning author/historian, Sherry Robinson was my travel partner. Because of recent rain, the grass and ground cover from Socorro to Magdalena is literally bright green and beautiful. Highlights of the trip included visiting the Kelly ghost town and abandoned mine just south of Magdalena, the public Library housed in their 1915 train depot, and the boxcar Magdalena "Museum," and touring the 1913 Iffeld Warehouse across the street from the Depot. I made some inter­esting contacts for HSNM and I could write much more but I'll start with some high lights.

THE IFFLED WAREHOUSE

This building is very similar to the Iffeld Warehouse in Santa Rosa, which some of us visited after the February 2014 Board meeting. The Iffeld warehouse was bought by the Brown family in 1970. Mr. Brown was a salesman for the Iffeld Company and covered eastern New Mexico. Clark Brown, his son, has maintained the building in very good condition, using it for storage and appliance repair. The open elevator still operates from basement to the second floor with ropes. Clark Brown's office had all kinds of Iffeld memorabilia and a set of New Mexico Historical Reviews going back to issue # 5 in 1930. I told Clark he had a lot of valuable historic items and I will stay in touch with him.

THE TRAIN DEPOT

This structure is in excellent condition. Part of one wall has the New Mexico southwest collection. It included David Caffey's Santa Fe Ring book, B.G. Burr's Socorro book, Sherry Robinson's Apache book and several Bulls and Melzer books. I met the head of their Library Committee and they are interested in forming a Magdalena Historical Society or Friends of Magdalena History. I told her I could help and HSNM would be supportive and encouraging. I gave her some copies of the La Crónica which were in my car.

KELLY GHOST TOWN & MINE

This was an operating mine until the 1940s. Kelly was a larger town than Magdalena with a population of 2,700 in the 1920s. You can drive up the road to the Catholic Church which is the only building still standing. After that a 4-wheel-drive vehicle would be better. There are lots of rock and brick foundations still there along with the large tal­us metal structure which is over a mine shaft. The Kelly mines are also known as the source of Smithsonite, a beautiful aqua-green colored mineral.

CONCHO HILLS GUEST RANCH

The owners, Tim and Marilyn Norris, come from backgrounds as much different as can be. They were involved with the purchase of the hunting lodge and construction of a six-room guest building, which was opened in April, 2013. The Norri­s are interested in ranching and ranching skills culture which is part of their quest experience. They give horse riding lessons and trail rides. They are interested in HSNM and I gave them copies of La Crónica.
Peace Corps ... (continued from page 2)

Valencia County Volunteers

Several Valencia County, New Mexico, residents joined the Peace Corps in the 1960s. They included Jerry Jaramillo, Bill Kirby, Abe Petkin, Francisco Sisneros, and Ernie Orona. Each volunteer asserted that joining the Peace Corps was a major turning point in his life.

Bill Kirby called his work in Colombia a "tremendous experience." According to Jerry Jaramillo, his Peace Corps service in Costa Rica was "the best experience of my life." Francisco Sisneros, who worked in Honduras, wrote "As a result of my Peace Corps service, I learned a lot about myself, and I gained a more profound understanding and appreciation of how other people made do in their homes, and the world so little. Also, for many reasons my perspective of the United States changed to one of greater appreciation." By 1965, President Kennedy was so impressed by the volunteers' early work that he declared, "Nothing carries the spirit of American idealism and expresses the American perspective of the United States better and more effectively to the far corners of the earth than the Peace Corps.

A Training Center at UNM

But before Peace Corps volunteers could serve overseas, they had to be properly trained. Unless volunteers could serve overseas, they had to be properly trained. Unless volunteers had the opportunity to serve as Peace Corps training centers.

The University of New Mexico, with its already strong ties to Latin America, applied to be among the Peace Corps' first training centers in the Southwest. According to UNM President Tom Popejoy, "The university never had been so interested in a particular project." UNM was chosen as a short-term training center in 1960, and as a year-round training facility in November 1962. Dr. David Benedetti served as the project's first director. Dr. Marshall Nason also played a major leadership role. Hodgin Hall, the oldest building on campus, was chosen as the Peace Corps' headquarters on campus.

Who Volunteered?

Early volunteers in the UNM program fit a definite profile. Baldwin G. Burr, who wrote, "I could spot them a mile away," was student chauffeur for the volunteers. He could recognize a new volunteer from a far distance. Part of his job was to pick up new volunteers when they arrived at the Albuquerque Sunport.

"I stood with a sign that read, Peace Corps Volunteers," but I didn't need them to come to me," Burr recalls. "I could spot them a mile away. They were young, idealistic, opinionated, middle class and loud. All were working in the training for the work that lay ahead.

Some volunteers had very personal reasons for joining Peace Corps. Elena Sanchez and her husband, Bob, joined in September 1963 shortly after graduating from college because her brother, 22-year-old Larry Redley, had been one of the first to answer President Kennedy's call for volunteers. Tragically, Larry and a fellow American were the first volunteers to die while serving in the Peace Corps. Their plane crashed in Colombia on April 22, 1962. Elena joined the corps and trained at UNM to continue Larry's work and "as my way of honoring his life and death." Pityingly, Elena serred in Bogota, Colombia, from 1964 to 1965. Her brother. Gordon, served in Africa.

Rigorous Training

Once on campus, single volunteers were taken to live in student dorms, while married volunteers lived in married student housing. Groups of 35 to 80 trainees went through the program together to better prepare them for service in a specific host country. Most groups had about equal numbers of men and women, although one all-female contingency of 35 women trained for service in Brazil in 1963.

Peace Corps training was intentionally rigorous. Sometimes compared to an army boot camp, the training program was designed to prepare volunteers for the hard work that lay ahead. Poor, undeveloped countries that bore little resemblance to the efficient communities most volunteers had grown up in. The tough training program was also meant to weed out volunteers who also were physically or psychologically not prepared for the trials that awaited them in foreign lands.

Training lasted four months. It included early morning calisthenics, followed by classes on world cultures, the dangers of communism, and especially foreign languages. With most volunteers destined for Latin American countries, volunteers were immersed in Spanish, studying the language for as many as four hours a day in the classroom. At meals, trainees sat with native speakers and conversed in Spanish only. Each day ended with briefings and group discussions.

Volunteers spent many additional hours training to assist their host countries in community development, public health, or education. Volunteers practiced their new skills in towns like Taos and Chama and at the D. H. Lawrence Ranch in the mountains of northern New Mexico.

Physical training was also important. In what was called "outward bound" exercises, male and female volunteers learned to read maps, remain safe in the wilderness, and climb cliffs, a skill they practiced by rappelling down the steep walls of Old Zimmerman Stadium. Off campus, they went on demanding hikes up trails in the Sandia Mountains, the Manzano Mountains, the Pecos Wilderness, and to the top of Wheeler Peak, the highest peak in New Mexico.

The seven Peace Corps volunteers who became lost in the Manzano Mountains were left to right top row, Bill Patriarch, Mike Mitchell, and Peace McCoolen. Left to right bottom row: Sue Selbin, Judy Johnson, Jane Whittmore, and Linda West.

At least five families in Belen graciously welcomed Peace Corps volunteers into their homes. Dr. and Mrs. Manuel Gallegos, Mr. and Mrs. Nestor Gallegos, Mr. and Mrs. Ernest Sanchez, Sr., and Mr. and Mrs. Aralisto Ulbarri opened their homes to the out-of-state youths. Each family had fond memories of the young men and women who stayed with them. practiced speaking Spanish, and sampled local Hispanic food and culture.

Ernest and Libby Sanchez had eight children of their own, but welcomed several volunteers, believing that their children would benefit from the experience as much as, if not more than, the volunteers themselves.

All of the Sanchez children liked their guests for one or more good reasons. Mike Sanchez remembered one volunteer because he knew how to fly kites. He also liked a female volunteer because she was so pretty. Albert Sanchez liked one volunteer so much that he cried when the volunteer left.

Bill Kirby called his training a "tremendous experience." The house was soon filled with friends and relatives who "ate and cried and comforted each other." Below a picture of President Kennedy that hung on the walls of so many Hispanic homes, they talked about JFK, and all he had done to give everyone hope for the great possibilities of America.

Elena and her fellow Peace

continued on page 4
Peace Corps... (continued from page 3)

Corps volunteers, fondly known as "Kennedy’s Kids," were ordered back to UNM where they huddled together in shock. "We could not believe that such a strong and powerful light had been extinguished... Our innocent faith in endless possibilities was shattered."

A Challenge in the Manzanos

The volunteers gathered in the nation—recovered from the president's assassination and carried on to face new, often unexpected challenges.

A group of nine Peace Corps volunteers faced one such challenge just two years after President Kennedy's death. The group included John Johnson, Bruce McCracken, Mike Mitchell, Bill Pastrech, Sue Selbin, Linda West, Jane Whitmore, and an unnamed fifth female trainee. By December of 1965 the volunteers had completed nine weeks of their training in preparation for service in Chile.

Accompanied by an instructor, the group was one of three teams that were given maps and directions to hike over the Manzano Mountains. Their objective was to make the search for theナツルなRTURJ "who he was..."

The story concerns a... 

The volunteers decided to send Bill Pastrech up a peak to see if he could determine their location. Disappointed, he returned. The group had to "talk" Pastrech back to their makeshift camp by yelling to him for two hours. Jane Whitmore later recalled that everyone was "a little scared" as the wind howled and the clouds made the search more difficult.

The volunteers returned to the safety of their campfire. The lost trainees continued to search for safety on Sunday, December 13. Later, as Linda West later explained, "We would go over one mountain and there would just be another one." The group, however, decided to turn back rather than go far into the Manzanos.

Search Party Organized

Meanwhile, Peace Corps volunteers, who had completed their trainee campfire, were made aware of the volunteers' resourcefulness and "outward bound" training would help them endure whatever calamity they faced.

An 85-100 man search party was organized. The group included Forest Service rangers, New Mexico state police and many local men who often hunted in the mountains and knew the area well. Ann McCracken, Bruce McCracken's bride of four months and a fellow trainee, joined the search team after her husband had completed the mountain trip on schedule. Search planes and a helicopter flew overhead.

Hazards and conditions... 

Found at Last

The group's luck changed on Monday, December 14, when Joe Perea and three other new searchers on route to the mountains passed by the Sedillo ranch house and found the volunteers at last. They were said to be "hungry, cold and wet, but their spirits were high." Suffering only minor cuts and bruises, the eight young men and women were taken to the health center at UNM where they were examined, cared for, and soon released. The trainees had eaten their first full meal in days. Said to include lots of hamburbers and apples.

Explaining how they had escaped their herroing situation, Jane Whitmore told reporters. "We had good morale and everyone worked well together. When we had differences of opinion, we squared up and sometimes our Kelie with do what the majority thought best."

The trainees' Peace Corps preparations had clearly paid off in this emergency. Not requiring additional rest or medical attention, all eight returned to their regular training schedule on Tuesday, December 15. The day after they had been discovered, they were sent by the President to UNM where they had helped him get some Indian indentments. Also, he'd taken a personal liking to popular "T. R." when he met him, presumably at San Antonio [Texas] where the saddle\['s colonel went to train the "Rough Riders."

Pablo invited him to visit his home on the river [Rio Grande]. The pressure of war was too great for T. R., but Roosevelt promised that he'd go to Isleta on some trip to New Mexico in the future.

Victory at San Juan Hill, election as Vice-President, and an assassination attempt in 1912... Roosevelt to the White House in Washington. A few years later he spent some time in Albuquerque and went on to the West Coast, cae ded by a train-load of top-rank- ing government advisers and secret service [sic!] men. The country had just lost one President by foul play [William McKinley was assassinated on September 6, 1901], and no risks involving unnecessary exposure were being taken.

But the nation's Chief Executive [sic!], in his position as President of the United States. Instead he said, "Tell him to wait. I'll be there," and then hitched up a team of horses to a dilapidated wagon and set out on the tortuous chuck-hole trail to Albuquerque.

With an official escort, he fairly waded through a hotel lobby spilling over with secret service men and local constables, none of whom knew who he was. He finally reached the...
President's suite upstairs, only to be told that Roosevelt was busy and couldn't see him. He was still agitating for the Tularosa Basin Historical Society museum on this corner also melded with the idea of a civic-minded organization to which runs the rhythm of commerce and social life revolved around the railroad and its supporting services. To accomplish this, the men and other partners formed the Tularosa Basin Historical Society.

In designing the towns, the founders placed a mile-long beautiful buidling to the west and the town to the east. Today's Alameda Park which runs north from 10th Street. At the intersection of 10th Street and White Sands Boulevard (originally named by the railroad's depot, headquarters offices, and shops lay on the southwest corner, but today these buildings are gone, replaced by a retail shop).

Teddy the best.

The idea of a museum that would be supported by the town, the most large funds to which was limited to a small narrow fund to which runs the rhythm of commerce and social life revolved around the railroad and its supporting services. To accomplish this, the men and other partners formed the Tularosa Basin Historical Society.

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building once stood, is the City of Alamogordo's Founder's Park that is decorated with brass busts and plaques portraying the contributions of key persons throughout the city's history.

In drawing up the plat map for the townsite in 1887, Arthur Eddy, representing the Alamogordo Improvement Company, included a "temperance feature" involving a landing strip for the northeast corner of the 10th Street and White Sands Boulevard intersection. This feature confined the sale of liquor to Lots 1, 2, 3, and 4 of the plat map (now the northeast corner of the block) for "medicinal purposes" only, and in a "place of public resort." Rather than being prohibitions, the Eddy brothers were just being practical and did not want a work force of drunks and lay-abouts. Alamogordo folklore also relates that the lawyer William Ashtron Hawkins suggested placing it across the street from the headquarters' offices so the bosses couldn't have an eye on who visited the saloon.

The Alamogordo Improvement Company retained ownership of the lots and in 1899 built the first building on the lot to the north of the building with a pitch roof. The building was 18 feet by 48 feet, and the southern portion contained the saloon on the first floor and the billiard's parlor. There were two outbuildings for beer storage and coal storage. The Company did not operate the business, but franchised it, receiving the rent and a portion of the saloon's profits. However, the business was never very successful as the workers did not want to drink and play billiards under the watchful eye of their bosses just across the street. Instead, they went to the drinking establishments still existing on the south of the town's boundaries that the Company could not control.

The Block 50 saloon limped along for almost twenty years when it was acquired by William E. Buhl, owner of Buhl's parlor after New Mexico banned liquor sales in 1918, followed by the federal Volstead Act which ushered in Prohibition in 1920. With the repeal of Eighteenth Amendment in 1933, the Alamogordo Improvement Company leased to Buhl and I. N. Wesley of Las Cruces, but the business still did not bring in enough money as Alamogordo was in the depths of the Great Depression.

By 1937 the Alamogordo Improvement Company needed money to survive and with a new generation of owners, the Imperio to keep Lots 1-4 of Block 50 for liquor sales had waned. Consequently, that year they sold the lots to G. E. Gordon and Thompson,Work and three businessmen who owned the Buck auto dealership. Under the name of Plaza Oil Company, Gordon and Shelton built a gas station and garage on the northeast corner of 10th Street and White Sands Boulevard.

The two men also worked with Historic Beautification to build an "L-shaped adobe structure on the space behind the gas station. Although strictly a private place, the building, the Plaza Revival/New Mexico Vernacular-style building is architecturally similar to local Works Projects Administration/plaza buildings, and is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The north wing of the new Plaza Building became the bar while the east wing became a restaurant owned and operated by Beacham himself.

In December 1946, Leroy Highwater purchased the Plaza Cafe from Beacham. He closed the restaurant briefly for remodeling, opening again in January of 1947. To help the restaurant stand out on the busy Highway 54, Highwater added exterior lighting and neon lighting to outline the building. After purchasing the old motor inn next door to the east of Plaza Cafe, he cut a door to have access between the two and enclosed an area between the two wings of the Plaza Building, creating an entrance between the Plaza Bar and the cafe. As the town grew rapidly in the 1950s to a population around 25,000, the Plaza Bar and Cafe became the hub of Alamogordo, where the business and political leaders gathered for a good meal or a quick drink at the bar.

For the next thirty years, the Plaza Building became a landmark of Alamogordo's downtown. Nevertheless, Alamogordo was changing. The town's economy had always mainly revolved around farming, ranching, and the railroad. Then, in 1944 the U.S. military opened Alamogordo Army Air Field, which became Holloman Air Force Base in 1946. Alamogordo grew rapidly over the next several decades. However, after World War II ended, the recession and rough economic times nationally adversely affected the town's economy. As a result of these harder times, combined with the death of Leroy Highwater in 1988, the Plaza Cafe closed. The Plaza Bar remained open while the old cafe area was leased out to a variety of businesses.

The building itself had also changed hands over the years. At some point a Herbert White owned it. In 1960, Guy and Velma Inks and her father Earl Creighton purchased the Plaza Building. Then in 1997, Billy G. Weiman received a quiet title to Lots 1-4 of Block 50. With his death in 2005, the opportunity arose for the Plaza Building to fall to the Alamosa Improvement Company. The Alamogordo Museum of History operated by the Tularosa Basin Historical Society.

Seizing this chance, the board of directors of the City of Alamogordo to see if the two entities could come to an agreement for the city to buy the Plaza Building for TBHS to operate a larger museum. The location of 10th Street and White Sands Boulevard had been designated entry into the historic district of Alamogordo during the city's centennial in 1998. Two of the corners, the southeast and northwest, already contained buildings, among them, the Alamogordo Women's Club, the United States Post Office (now Otero County offices), and the headquarters offices of the White Sands National Monument. The north wing of the new Plaza Building became the bar while the east wing became a restaurant owned and operated by Beacham himself.

Working with then State Senator Diana Duran and State Representative Gloria Vaughn, TBHS was successful in receiving $305,000 for the city to purchase the property. At that time, TBHS formally leased the building from the city and began making plans to restore and renovate the structure to become a museum. Architect Charles Norwood, who worked on the New Mexico Museum of Space History in Alamogordo, offered his service pro bono, drawing on his experience in projects in Santa Fe and other places, not pertinently the Plaza Buildings. With an initial assessment in hand of what work was required, the TBHS board, on behalf of the City of Alamogordo, once again petitioned the state legislature for capital outlay money, receiving a total of $847,000.

In the spring of 2006, Dr. David Townsend and TBHS Executive Director officials made a presentation to the Southeast Regional Planning Organization (SERPO) to request funds to improve and enhance the exterior of the building, signage, and its parking lot, as well as make the sidewalks ADA compliant. His presentation was well received and as a result, the project was put on the list for FY2010, in which SERPO would provide $150,000 and the City of Alamogordo would contribute $50,000.

With plans and money in hand, TBHS started to prepare for renovations. Since having formally taken over the building in 2006, the TBHS had allowed the current businesses, the Plaza Bar and Cafe, to continue leasing their respective spaces. In the spring of 2008, TBHS and the City terminated the leases, vacating the building. Then, the City of Alamogordo put out a request for bids so regularity could be done. However, the bids received were much higher than what funds were available. After prioritizing the work needed to be done, a second request for bid was sent out, but once again the bids were too high.

Months passed as the city officials and the TBHS board talked to TBHS discussed how to proceed. In the spring of 2009, TBHS and the City looked to make the building secure, but the roof appeared to be in need of major repair. They had an asbestos study done, resulting in the discovery that there was potentially asbestos in the roof, adding another major expense that had not been included in the other renovation expenses.

With this news, the TBHS board analyzed their current position. Due to the uncertainty of the situation, it was difficult for them to secure funding from local sources with the brick-and-mortar renovations. But they could easily conduct their own fundraiser. In the mean time, TBHS had been paying the insurance on the building, as per their lease. However, this expense was putting a strain on their overall budget. In the end, TBHS chose to show for it. Therefore, reluctantly the board voted on June 10, 2009, to approach the City Commission at their June 22nd meeting to formally ask for the lease to be let out of the building. The city commissioners reluctantly agreed, but also directed city staff to look into all options and stay committed to the project of converting the Plaza Building into a museum.

Then in the fall of 2009, the price of an interest rate on bonds was hit a low that would help alleviate the budget shortfall due to the economic recession led the New Mexico state government to take back any unspent capital outlay money and put it back into the general fund instead of the money earmarked for the restoration of the Plaza Building. For now, the renovation of the Plaza Building was dead in the water.

But the TBHS board would not give up on the dream of moving their museum, and they quietly went about securing funds to rewrite the project. One idea put forward was for a General Obligation Bond to be placed on the city ballot where the resulting revenues could be used for the renovations. Then in late 2011, the City of Alamogordo refinanced the old Plaza Bar and Cafe to receive tax bonds, generating $4.2 million to be used on quality of life projects. Ultimately, the city included $600,000 earmarked for the Plaza Building.

In late 2011, but a threat of storm clouds were on the horizon. News was floating around Alamogordo that CVS Pharmacy was looking at purchasing the northeast corner of 10th Street and White Sands Blvd., not only the Plaza Building, but also the entire historic Block 50 of Alamogordo. Their plans were to raze the existing buildings to construct a CVS Pharmacy to fit their business model of being located on a highway or an interchange, in the southwest corner of the same intersection. At a City Commission in mid September 2011 the information was confirmed. TBHS board members addressed the commissioners asking for them to remember that state capital outlay money that was earmarked for the Plaza Building, with the purpose of creating a museum. However, the commission and audience was informed that CVS Pharmacy was looking at purchasing the northeast corner of 10th Street and White Sands Blvd. and that the building would become a museum. However, the commission and audience was informed that CVS was looking at purchasing the northeast corner of 10th Street and White Sands Blvd. and that the building would become a museum.
Tularosa ...

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to sell, stating the Plaza Building was not available.
TBHS now worked even more fervently on plans to not just remove the barrier to restoration, but to get it from the wrecking ball. In January of 2012, Elizabeth Padilla, president of TBHS, made a presenta­
tion to the commissioners thanking them for putting the muse­
um on the list of quality of life proj­ects to be paid for by the bond reli­
sancing. She also wanted to apprise them that the Society was planning on trying to get the Plaza Building listed on the New Mexico State Register of Cultural Properties, a move that would open up oppor­tunities for some grants.

With the renewed interest in the Plaza Building, TBHS board members and city officials continued to have discussions on how to proceed. However, since a sale to CVS Pharmacy was still a possibili­
ty, the city offered to use the $600,000 and the would-be money to obtain other vacant buildings in the downtown area that TBHS could as a larger museum. TBHS board declined, seeing plenty of possibilities on that site on the state historic regis­
ter.

But, since the city owned the property before TBHS could move forward with its request permission. In the meantime, TBHS informed the city that if the building achieved historic status, then renovation construction would be under a different set of regulations; therefore, construction costs would be dramatically reduced. After a long discussion about what would happen to a vac­ant building, it was decided to act on their behalf when applying for such status and for any grants that would cover the costs of a feasibility and structural study. TBHS, on March 27, 2012, Elizabeth Padilla and Josette Herrell, vice-president of TBHS, went before the City Commission to formally request permission. In addition, TBHS informed the city that if the building achieved historic status, then renovation construction would be under a different set of regulations; therefore, construction costs would be dramatically reduced.

After ten years of ups and downs in the process of turning the Plaza Building into a grand opportunity as a museum, the Tularosa Basin Historical Society/Alamogordo Museum of History closed its doors on July 25, 2015. In anticipation of a grand reopening in the Plaza Building in September as the Tularosa Basin Historical Museum.

Although the dream of moving into a larger facility had been many years in the making, the vol­
teers and members of the Tularosa Basin Historical Society never gave up. Once the oppor­
tunity came up into the Plaza Building, one of the historic landmarks in downtown Alamogordo, the TBHS board jumped at the chance to fulfill their mission of preserving the history of Alamogordo and the Tularosa Basin while also meeting the necessity of finding larger quarters. After ten years of ups and downs in the process, the Tularosa Basin Historical Society's perseverance will have paid off as they debut the new enlarged Alamogordo Museum of History in the summer of 2015.

(Dawn Santiago is member of the Historical Society of New Mexico Board of Directors. She also serves on the Society's Publications Committee. She is a long-time resi­
dent of southern New Mexico, and she served as curator for TBHS from 2001 to 2008.)

Plenary Speaker 2015

Travis Suazo, Executive Director of the Indian Pueblo Cultural Center in Albuquerque, delivered the address at the Plaza Building of the Tularosa Basin Historical Society of New Mexico 2015 Conference in Albuquerque. His presentation regarding Pueblo Indian educational issues was informative and interesting.
2015 Award Winners

Photographs by Sherry Robinson

Award for outstanding publication by an individual for his book, Chasing the Santa Fe Ring: Power and Prejudice in Territorial New Mexico (University of New Mexico Press). Mr. Caffey is pictured above with HSNM President Janet Saiers.

Nasario Garcia was the winner of the 2015 Historical Society of New Mexico's Pablita Velarde Award for outstanding children's publication for his book, Grandma Lala's Tamales: A Christmas Story (Rio Grande Books). Mr. Garcia is pictured above with HSNM President Janet Saiers.

Cipriano Frederico Vigil was the winner of the 2015 Historical Society of New Mexico's Ralph Emerson Tarrant Award for significant contribution to the field of history by individuals in the area of fine arts, for his book New Mexico Folk Music: Treasures of a People (University of New Mexico Press). Mr. Vigil is pictured above with HSNM President Janet Saiers.

David L. Caffey was the winner of the 2015 Historical Society of New Mexico's Gaspar Pérez de Villagría Award for significant work in the field of historic preservation for many Albuquerque historic projects. She is pictured above with HSNM President Janet Saiers.

Former Historical Society of New Mexico President Michael Stevenson was the winner of the society's Paul A. F. Walter Award for His many services to HSNM over a period of many years. He is pictured above with current HSNM President Janet Saiers.

Mo Sue L. Palmer was the winner of the Historical Society of New Mexico's Dorothy Woodward Award for the advancement of education for her numerous lectures and publications about New Mexico history. Ms. Palmer is pictured above with HSNM President Janet Saiers.