

President General's Dispatch November 2011

DRT's 120th Year Celebrations!

DRT is officially 120 years old and to celebrate, we had a birthday party on November 6, 2011 in Alamo Hall in San Antonio. The anniversary event was hosted by the **Alamo Couriers Chapter** under the very able leadership of Chapter President Mary Ann Oliver. The event was well attended and the food was wonderful. The chapter had printed ribbons that honored the history of DRT's historic presence in San Antonio by naming the chapters and when they were established. The DRT chapters: **De Zavala Chapter** established March 1893 (disbanded later), **Alamo Mission Chapter** established April 18, 1906, **Alamo Heroes Chapter** established April 20, 1993, and **Alamo Couriers Chapter** established April 30, 2000. The **William Barret Travis Chapter** in Austin celebrated the DRT 120th anniversary at the annual *Stephen F. Austin Birthday and Founders Day Luncheon* on November 4th at the historic Austin Women's Club. The BOM was meeting in Austin and was able to attend. The birthday cake was delicious. In San Saba the **San Saba River Chapter** celebrated the 120th anniversary with a tea on October 6th at the Rylander Memorial Library honoring the **Llano Pioneers Chapter** and the **Heart of Texas Chapter**, the newest chapters in that area. They are encouraging ladies to check with them to see if they are eligible for membership and the San Saba News & Star published almost a full page to help them get out the story of DRT. Good job ladies!



(photo includes Karen with Melinda & Larry Laine from GLO)



(photo includes Karen with Past President General Mary Kathryn Briggs)

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Meet Gerard Rickhoff – Bexar County Clerk!

Gerard Rickhoff, County Clerk of Bexar County has initiated a program to translate all the old Bexar County documents that are in Spanish into English. In addition he allowed the DBA (Doing Business As) for “The Alamo” to be assigned over to ***The Daughters of the Republic of Texas***. We did the official transfer on October 28, 2011 at the courthouse.



(photos of Karen and Gerard Rickhoff, county clerk, and photo of us signing the DBA)

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Willam Barret Travis' Letter Comes Back to The Alamo!

After 175 years a letter written by William Barret Travis was on display in the Alamo shrine where it was originally penned. The letter was written February 21, 1836, just three days before Travis wrote his famous "Victory or Death" letter. And of course the Alamo fell March 6, 1836 and Travis and 188 other defenders died.

Travis's letter was part of the Texana collection of Robert (Bob) E. Davis of Waco that is up for a once-in-a-generation auction. In the 1960s I met Bob through my friend and publisher Ed Eakin of Eakin Press. Davis owned Texian Press and in 1966 published the translated book *The Diary of William Barret Travis, August 30, 1833 – June 26, 1834*. My copy of that book was given to me by Guy Cade Jackson Jr., County Judge, of Houston.

The Texas & Western Autograph & Artifact Auction by RRAuction and in addition to two Travis letters, the auction includes General Santa Anna's "Field's Commands" notebook and his exceptional battlefield map. Bob Livingston, vice-president of marketing for RRAuction allowed the documents to be on display in the shrine November 5 & 6 in honor of DRT 120th anniversary and to recognize the fine care DRT has taken of the Alamo for 106 years. DRT director of marketing, Tony Caridi arranged this major display.



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The contract for preservation and stabilization of the historic French Legation Museum has been signed and work has begun. The French Legation house was built in the winter of 1840-41 and soon became the home of Dr. Joseph William Robertson, who was born in South Carolina in 1809 and came to Texas in 1836, settling in Bastrop. He was a medical doctor, educated at Transylvania University in Lexington, KY. He served in the Texas House of Representatives 4th Congress of the Republic of Texas as a legislator from Bastrop County and it was during his service in Austin when he purchased the Legation and 21 acres that had belonged to Alphonse Dubois de Saligny, the French Representative to the Republic.

In 1842 Dr. Robertson married Lydia and they raised their large family of eleven children in the house. Dr. Robertson was the mayor of Austin in 1843-44. The last remaining daughters were Miss Lillie Robertson who died in 1939 and Miss Sarah Robertson who died in 1940. The sisters were very interested in the

preservation of this oldest lumber house in Austin and in 1934 allowed the house to be surveyed for the Historic American Building Survey (HABS).

By 1950 the Legation had become property of the State of Texas with DRT as custodians in charge of restoration, which included the grounds. Locally the Violet Crown Garden Club that had been founded by Clara Driscoll was in charge of establishing formal gardens. The garden club spent more than \$5,000.00 on the grounds and the stonewalls. Gates to the grounds were placed through the generosity of Mrs. O. H. Davenport as a memorial to the late Mrs. George S. Nalle whose ardent dream for many years was the Legation restoration. This work was not finished until 1956 when the museum opened.

The Louisiana-Bayou-style Texian home known as the French Legation was added as a Recorded Texas Landmark in 1967, entered in the National Register of Historic Places in 1969 and in 1974 designated by the City of Austin as a Historic Landmark. The site was then designated as a Texas State Archeological Landmark in 1981.

Members of the Texas Historical Commission developed the French Legation's State Archeological Landmark Architectural and Archeological Preservation Plan in October 1985 and a Historic Structures Report was completed by Volz & Associates in August 1997.

And now after fifty-five years we are doing the necessary preservation work to allow this amazing historic house to stay in good shape for another five decades. This is a project of the DRT French Legation Committee under the leadership of Gayla Lawson, Acting Chairman.

It was nice to see the French Legation featured in the November-December issue of *Texas Journey* the magazine for AAA members of Texas. The "Sites Worth Seeing" page says "Austin – French Legation – When built in the 1840s, this stately diplomatic outpost stood out from the nearby log cabins in the recently incorporated Republic of Texas. Visit on December 3 to meet Pere Noel (a French version of Santa Claus). Candlelight tours of the property take place December 10.

www.frenchlegationmuseum.org."

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Pennies for Patriots!

In Paris Texas, the *Red River Valley Veterans Memorial* is being created to honor all veterans from that entire area of East Texas. About two years ago Pat Egert, an associate member of the Paris **George Washington Stell Chapter**, started a program called "Pennies for Patriots." Pat wanted school students to collect pennies to pay for memorial pavers to honor veterans of the Texas Revolution. The program grew from a couple of schools to about twenty-seven. Pat organized a huge *Veterans USA Show* complete with "Bob Hope" impersonator, Bill Johnson from Las Vegas, Nevada, and the "Victory Belles" from the World War II Museum in New Orleans.

See <http://www.nationalww2museum.org/learn/education/index.html>.



(photo of PG with Choctaw Native American)

When I was elected President General on May 14, 2011, Pat was the first person to call and invite me to participate in an event and to be able to honor soldiers of the Texas Revolution was an *honor* for me, even if it was in Paris, Texas. The show was outstanding, even if it turned cold and windy. Hundreds of students, teachers, families and most of all Veterans enjoyed the show. Bob Hope was outstanding, as were the girls of the Victory Belles, who were Broadway caliber.



(photo of PG with “Bob Hope” impersonator)

My family and I were houseguest of Pat & Bob Egert on their ranch for the weekend. Neither my cell phone nor iPad worked out at their “Crooked Creek Ranch.” Now Pat, who I think has an Alamo Defender in her line, will have time to work on her membership application papers.

In Paris, I also had lunch with members of the **George Washington Stell Chapter**. Chapter President Susan Kahn is doing a great job on rebuilding the Paris chapter. They are planning a “Lineage Research Day” soon.



(photo of PG and George Washington Stell Chapter members)

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GLO Update!

As members of our association you are well aware that this past Legislature passed HB3726 that placed the General Land Office (GLO) in charge of Alamo oversight, and further directed them to work with the Daughters of the Republic of Texas on a contract for management and operation of the shrine and complex. DRT and GLO have been meeting since June 1 to reach the necessary agreements.

On November 3, 2011 the BOM voted to accept two agreements (1) TRADEMARK AGREEMENT FOR THE ALAMO and (2) INTERIUM TRANSITION EXPENSE AGREEMENT.

We sent complete copies of these two agreements to all committee chairman and chapter presidents. They are too long to include in this newsletter, but if you need copies, e-mail me at presidentgeneral@drinfo.org and I will forward a copy to you.

We are working very hard with the GLO on the Management & Operation Agreement. We will have this agreement ready for the called BOM meeting on December 16th in Round Rock. The GLO officials will again be on hand to answer questions and discuss this partnership operation. The GLO has been on hand at the last two BOM meetings.

The December 16th meeting will be the 6th BOM meeting in six months! In my thirty-five years of DRT membership I know this is indeed a record. The 25 other ladies on this board have gone above and beyond the call of duty these past six months. They have traveled a great deal, spent a lot of money, and most of all studied the issues in order to vote for what is best for DRT. Serving on the BOM is hard work and this board has especially had a difficult job. DRT did not ask for these new laws, but we have to respond to them. Not to mention, these new issues are costing DRT a lot of money. Remember I am always available at 512-923-0010 to answer your questions.

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Web Liaison Needed for DRT!

Are webpages your bag? Do you have computer skills and training? If any member is computer literate, has WordPress, or any other web design or web hosting experience, and would like to help DRT, we need you! Our Web Liaison, Kim Zapalac, has resigned from the Headquarters and Museum Committee

and we need to replace her. Kim will stay around and help the new person. Please give me a call 512-923-0010 or e-mail presidentgeneral@drinfo.org.

HAVE A VERY MERRY CHRISTMAS!

Karen