



Sacramento Archeological Society, Inc. Newsletter

www.sacarcheology.org

May/June - 2017

UPCOMING EVENTS

(SAS-sponsored events highlighted in blue)

May 1, 2017 - Scholarship Applications due

May 8, 2017, Monday, 9:00 a.m. - 1:30 p.m. - Vasco Caves Rock Art Tour, led by Naturalist Virginia Delgado

May 8, 2017, Monday 3:00 p.m. – Board Meeting following Vasco Caves Rock Art Tour

June 10, 2017, Saturday - Eclectic Archeological Exchange, Jan and Tom Johansen, “Aboriginal Dream Time Rock Art and Australian Early Homo Sapiens (Mungo Lady and Man)”

Vasco Caves Rock Art Day Tour

Monday, May 8, 2017

9:30 a.m. – 1:30 p.m.

Naturalist, Virginia Delgado will lead a private visit to Vasco Caves Rock Art in East Bay. This Regional Preserve contains Indian rock art, part of a complex that reaches back nearly 10,000 years.

From the East Bay Regional Parks website, <http://www.ebparks.org/parks/vasco> “Vasco Caves Regional Preserve is home to a stunning and unique combination of resources. Spectacular rock outcrops break suddenly from the rolling eastern foothills of Mount Diablo, providing magnificent scenery for hikers and geologists alike. Though ancient, the Preserve's resources are extraordinarily fragile, and exist today because of the land's isolation and past efforts to keep it secret.

The Preserve is home to endangered red-legged frogs, tiger salamanders, and fairy shrimp, and is habitat for kit foxes, eagles, and a variety of nesting raptors. Its robust grasslands are a successful demonstration of native bunchgrass restoration using sheep grazing. **The archaeological sites of Vasco Caves Regional Preserve contain Indian rock art, part of a complex that reaches back nearly 10,000 years.**”

The guided tour is over a mile round trip. There are some up portions where hiking poles are recommended. Bring water, layered clothing, sun screen and a camera, Stretch D may be helpful. We will have a lunch break on the trail; hence, bring a brown bag lunch.

This is a Members only event and attendance is limited. The tour is fully booked. The names of additional interested individuals will be put on a waiting list. Contact Tom Johansen at av8r@cloudbear.com for reservations.

Eclectic Archeological Exchange

“Aboriginal Dream Time Rock Art and Australian Early Homo Sapiens
(Mungo Lady and Man)”

Saturday, June 10, 2017

12:00 p.m. at

**Carolyn & Gordon McGregor's
1334 Mission Ave. Carmichael, CA 95608**

Please note that the Eclectic Archeological Exchange that had been previously scheduled for June 24th has been rescheduled to **June 10, 2017**.

Tom and Jan Johansen visited Australia in November 2016. They focused on rock art and early Homo Sapiens in Australia. On June 10th they will share photos and stories from their exploration. The rock art sites visited included: Split Rock near Cooktown, Ubirr in Kakadu near Darwin, Anbangbang, Burrungui and Nanguluwurin in Kakadu, Uluru near Alice Springs, Bunjil, Billimina and Manja near Grampians, and Ku-ring-gai near Sydney.

The main early Home Sapien archaeological site visited was Mungo Lake. At this site Mungo Lady (dated to 40,000 BP) and Mungo Man (dated to 34,000 BP) were excavated.

Program

12:00 p.m. Meet and greet followed by lunch catered by Carolyn McGregor

1:30 p.m. – 3:30 p.m. Jan Johansen, "Australian Dream Rock Art" and Tom Johansen, "Australian Early Homo Sapiens (Mungo Lady and Man)"

Please RSVP by June 1 to Carolyn McGregor at sabrina53@earthlink.net. Guests are welcome.

14th Annual Archaeology Weekend

Anza-Borrego Desert State Park Visitor Center

The annual archaeology weekend that was scheduled for March 25-26, 2017 has been rescheduled for October 28-29, 2017. The overwhelming number of visitors to the Anza-Borrego Desert State Park to view the beautiful wild flowers interfered with the hosting of the event at the visitor center.

Borrego Springs, California
Sponsored by



Colorado Desert Archaeology Society

Ancient Pueblo and Rock Art Tour

SAS is looking at May 2018 for an Ancient Pueblo and Rock Art Tour for the New Mexico area. Stay tuned.

PAST ARCHAEOLOGICAL ACTIVITIES

Eclectic Archeological Exchange

On Saturday, March 4 we were honored with two excellent presentations. After a delicious lunch catered by Carolyn McGregor, Paul K. Davis reviewed current archaeological techniques and practices for dating artifacts. He contrasted relative, digital and analog methods of dating and provided a survey and comparison of many dating methods including tree rings (dendrochronology), carbon 14, luminescence, geomagnetic, potassium argon and fluorine with a chart comparing their applicability to different materials and age ranges. It was a very informative presentation.

Gerrit Fenenga followed Paul with an informative talk on the SAS 2016 Tour of Oregon He discussed the archaeological significance of the Paleo-Indian and geological sites visited. The reviewed sites included Church Rock, Salt Creek, Favell Museum, Newberry National Volcanic Monument, Connley Caves, Fort Rock, Picture Pass, Paisley Cave, Hunter's Hotsprings Geyser, Sage Hen Gap, Rim Rock Draw Rock Shelter, Blackwater Draw, and Glass Butte. Several of the sites have produced artifacts greater than 14,000 years old. Gerrit's archaeological experience and incite allowed him to create a captivating presentation

We wish to thank Carolyn and Gordon McGregor for hosting the splendid event.

Mexico/Anza-Borrego Archaeology Weekend

Twelve SAS Members were delighted by a **Rock Art and Cultural Tour in Mexico** on Friday, March 24. Corredor Histórico CAREM, A.C. sponsored a tour of Kuminai/Tecante Community Museum, Vallecitos Rock Art and Campo Alaska Museum. The guided tour offered insight into Native American and after European contact life in Baja California. In addition the rock art at Vallecitos was intriguing. Too bad it wasn't the winter solstice when we could have observed the shadow on the red figure. Without that event we still enjoyed the numerous rock art in various shelters.



Group at Tecate Museum



El diablito in Mexico



La cueva del Indio in Mexico

On March 25 and 26 instead of attending the 14th Annual Archaeological Weekend at Anza-Borrego Desert State Park, Borrego Springs which was rescheduled, Lisa Pridmore and Randy Redfern led a two day tour in Anza-Borrego. We hiked to rock art sites in Blair Valley, visited Vallicito- Butterfield Stage Station, enjoyed the beauty of the spring wildflowers, and explored Native American habitation sites.



Blair Valley Rock Art Anza Borrego



Anza Borrego Wild Flowers

MEMBER'S CORNER

Members

We welcome two new recent members to Sacramento Archeological Society, Inc.: Luis Reinoso and Denise Ruzicka. We were happy to meet Luis at the Eclectic Exchange and Denise at the Rock Art and Cultural Tour in Mexico. We also thank supporting members for your renewals. Your support allows us to award scholarships.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL REFERENCES

"The evolutionary path of least resistance"

Evolution favored teeth with thicker enamel over sharply crested teeth in hominins confronted with tough diets

"In the eastern and South African fossil record of human evolution during the Plio-Pleistocene (about 2.7 to 1.2 million years ago), there is a group of species with remarkable specialized craniodental anatomy. Exemplified by *Australopithecus/Parathropus boisei*, these hominins evince large, flat, thickly enameled teeth, heavily buttressed jaw and face, and attachment sites indicating massive chewing muscles. These characteristics are often interpreted as adaptive for crushing hard foods. But recent studies call into question a simple form-function relationship between masticatory morphology and diet...Had the A./P. persisted for longer than ~2 million years, perhaps their descendant might have eventually wound up with spiky, crested cusps more like those of gorilla. Sharp shearing crests may be better for fracturing tough plant parts, but evolution tends to follow the path of least resistance. Over the shorter time frame of hominin evolution, highly variable, highly heritable molar enamel thickness, with its simple genetic architecture, was probably the phenotypic response that came first when these creatures were confronted with a mechanically challenging diet. " (P.S. Ungar and L. J. Hlusko, *Science*, V. 353, 2016-6-1, pp. 29-30)

"Permanent human occupation of the central Tibetan Plateau in the early Holocene"

"Current models of the peopling of the higher-elevation zones of the Tibetan Plateau postulate that permanent occupation could only have been facilitated by an agricultural lifeway at ~3.6 thousand calibrated carbon-14 years before present. Reanalysis of the chronology of the Chusang site, located on the central Tibetan Plateau at an elevation of ~4270 meters above sea level fix the minimum age of the site to ~7.3 thousand years (thorium-230/uranium dating), with maximum age between ~8.20 and 12.67 thousand calibrated carbon-14 years before present...The data from Chusang support the presence of an early, pre-agropastoral population on the high-elevation step of the Tibetan Plateau ~7.4 to 8.4 thousand years ago, although an earlier presence ~12 to 13 thousand years ago cannot be fully discounted. These dates are consistent with what is known of the ancestral genetics of modern Tibetans and coincide with wet and humid climate conditions on the Tibetan Plateau that lasted from ~11.5 until 4.2 thousand years ago because of an enhanced Indian summer monsoon. Although an agropastoral lifeway may have enabled substantial population growth after 5 thousand years B.P., it was not required for the early, likely permanent, occupation of the high central valleys of the Tibetan Plateau." (*Science*, V. 355, 2017-01-06, pp. 64-67)

"Researchers close in on ancient dinosaur proteins"

"Two new studies suggest that it is possible to isolate protein fragments from dinosaurs much further back in time than ever thought possible. One study, led by Mary Schweitzer, paleontologist from North Carolina State University in Raleigh who has chased dinosaur proteins from decades, confirms her highly controversial claim to have recovered 80-million-year-old dinosaur collagen. The other paper suggests that protein may be even have survived in a 195-million-year-old in a fossil." (Service, Robert F., *Science*, V. 355, 2017-02-03, pp. 441-442)

"Interglacial Neanderthal habits"

"*Benito et al.* studied how climate and topography shaped Neanderthal distribution in Europe during the Last Interglacial optimum around 129 thousand years ago when the climate was warmer than it is

today. Archaeological records and paleoclimatic data indicate that Mediterranean coastal regions with locally varied topography and mild summers were the most favored habitat, not the mountains that were previously thought to be the core of Neanderthal's habitat." (*Science*, V. 355, 2017-02-03, p. 491)

"Close relative of Neandertals unearthed in China and Late Pleistocene archaic human crania from Xuchang, China"

Partial skulls may belong to elusive Denisovans, who are known almost exclusively by their DNA
"Two early Late Pleistocene (~105,000 to 125,000 year-old) crania from Lingjing, Xuchang, China exhibit a morphological mosaic with differences from and similarities to their western contemporaries. They share pan-Old World trends in encephalization and in supraorbital, neurocranial vault, and nuchal gracilization. They reflect eastern Eurasian ancestry in having low, sagittally flat, and inferiorly broad neurocrania. They share occipital (suprainiac and nuchal torus) and temporal labyrinthine (semicircular canal) morphology with the Neandertals. This morphological combination reflects Pleistocene human evolutionary patterns in general biology, as well as both regional continuity and interregional population dynamics." 1 and 2 crania were excavated in situ between 2007 and 2014 and were dated to between 105,000 and 125,000 from a consistent series of optically stimulated luminescence ages." (*Science*, V. 355, 2017-03-03, pp. 899, 969-972)