



Sacramento Archeological Society, Inc. Newsletter

www.sacarcheology.org

January/February – 2026

UPCOMING EVENTS CALENDAR

January 2026

January 3, 2026- Saturday 2:00 – 3:30 PM PT- **SAS Meeting:** Scholar Presentation via Zoom
Allison Champ, “Archaeology in the American Southwest and Irish Midlands: An Educational Experience”

February 2026

February 7, 2026 – Saturday 2:00 – 3:30 PM PT - **SAS Meeting:** **David Stuart**, Anthropologist and former Museum Director, “Indigenous Peoples of California’s Bay-Delta Region” at Pena Archaeology Facility (607 Pena Dr. Suite 600; Davis, CA) and via Zoom

March 2026

March 7, 2026 – Saturday 2:00 – 4:00 PM PT **SAS Webinar** Scholar Presentations Zoom: **Bella Garcia**, Juvenile Osteology Workshop, **Janel Pleskac** and **David Nelson**, Castles in Communities Field School, Ireland

April 2026

April 4, 2026 - Saturday 2:00 – 4:00 PM PT - **SAS Webinar** Scholar presentation Zoom: **Daniel Goring**, Trou al’Wess Belgium and Tolbor Mongolia Explorations, and **Madison McCartin**, Proteomic Research at Pena Archaeology Facility (607 Pena Dr. Suite 600; Davis, CA) and via Zoom

April 7- 14, 2026 Jornada Region Tour (New Mexico)

April, 15 – 18, 2026 Paquimé Tour (Mexico)

April 30, 2026 – **Scholarship Applications due**

See announcements: <https://sacarcheology.org/announcements/> for **webinar access information** and calendar: <https://sacarcheology.org/archaeology-activities/calendar-of-events/> for the complete **set of events** in our website: www.sacarcheology.org. The seminars will start at 2:00 PM PT on the first Saturday of the month and generally formally conclude at 3:30 PM. All are provided via Zoom. Some will be held in Davis, CA at Pena Archaeology Facility (607 Pena Dr. Suite 600. Friends are welcome and also invited to join our organization. There is no participation fee. All are invited to attend the webinar before 2:00 PM PT 1:45) for chat time.

UPCOMING EVENTS

SAS Webinar

Saturday, January 3, 2026

2:00 – 3:30 PM PT

“Archaeology in the American Southwest and Irish Midlands: An Educational Experience”

By

Allison Champ

UC Berkeley Student

via

Zoom

Abstract: Exposures to various archaeological landscapes offer differing perspectives and the opportunity for unique skill development. Last summer, Allison attended two archaeological field schools: the Crow Canyon College Field School in Cortez, Colorado and the Monastic Midlands program in Birr, Ireland. At Crow Canyon, she collaborated with experts in Southwest archaeology and Indigenous scholars to learn the cultural history of the Mesa Verde region, research Ancestral Pueblo lifeways through excavation and survey, and conducted original experimental archaeological research on ground stones. During the Monastic Midlands program, she utilized geographical survey and excavation to study medieval Irish culture and lifestyles, used photogrammetry to document medieval gravestones and monastic artwork, and completed a community service project at a 6th century cemetery. During her presentation, Allison will provide a summary of the techniques and skills she learned at each field school, as well as an overview of the projects she undertook. She will also comment on the contrasting environments and time scales of each experience.



About the Speaker **Allison Champ** is a fourth year at the University of California, Berkeley double-majoring in anthropology and psychology. She is a research assistant at the Geoarchaeology and Southwest Asia Prehistory Lab, Bear Bones Lab, and East Asian Archaeology Lab (all at UC Berkeley). In the future, she hopes to become a professor of prehistory and archaeology, specializing in the social lives of Upper Paleolithic hunter-gatherers.

SAS Webinar

Saturday, February 7, 2026

2:00 – 3:30 PM PT

“Indigenous Peoples of California’s Bay-Delta Region”

By

David Stuart

Anthropologist and former Museum Director
at

Pena Archaeology Facility (607 Pena Dr. Suite 600; Davis, CA) and via Zoom

Abstract: **David Stuart** will touch on the Native languages of the San Francisco Bay Area, the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta, and the adjacent Central Valley heartland (“Bay-Delta”) region and will summarize the immigration and spread of the Indigenous ancestors throughout the area. He will describe the traditional lifeways of the California Indians from our region, including their care for local habitats to sustainably support a population that was among the highest in pre-colonial North America. Then he will discuss the colonial period and highlight the impact these regional Native people had on California’s colonial history.

Bay-Delta Native nations were disrupted by the missionaries and soldiers that invaded the Bay Area on behalf of the Spanish monarchy. The Delta was initially a barrier to Spanish incursions into the interior heartland, became a place of refuge that helped preserve Native cultures and autonomy, then became a base for Indigenous armed resistance. Diseases and depredations eroded the strength of heartland nations and many people went to Mission San Jose and other missions. Baptized Indians were turned out by the missions in the Mexican era to become “serfs” for the early settler/barons such as John Marsh, Johann Sutter, and Charles Weber. Indigenous people directly and indirectly assisted the USA victory over Mexico, only to suffer state- and federal-sponsored genocide during and after the Gold Rush. Nevertheless, California Indians survived and continue to be our neighbors.

About the Speaker: **David Stuart** began his career at Caswell State Park on the lower Stanislaus River, where he helped Indigenous women gather basketry materials. His interest stirred, Dave studied anthropology and biology at Modesto JC, Fresno State, and U Colorado. He did fieldwork—primarily CRM surveys—in the San Joaquin Valley and the Sierra Nevada from Tahoe to Tehachapi. Dave was the first Assistant State Archaeologist of Colorado. He was an archaeologist/cultural resources specialist/planner for the National Park Service, working primarily in Florida, Louisiana, and the Southwest. Dave returned to California and developed museums and programs for the City of Ventura, then he directed the Sacramento Science Center (now MoSAC), the Sacramento History Museum in Old Sacramento, and the San Joaquin County Historical Museum in Micke Grove Regional Park near Lodi. Since retiring 7 years ago, he has coauthored a book, assisted planning for the new Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta National Heritage Area, served on the boards of Exhibit Envoy and the Sacramento River Delta Historical Society, and written a series of articles on Native cultures and the history of the Bay-Delta region—the subject of the book he is now researching.

SAS Webinar

Saturday, March 7, 2026

2:00 – 3:30 PM PT

Scholar Presentations

“Juvenile Osteology Workshop”

by

Bella Garcia

and

“Archaeology Field Research School Ireland”

by

Janel Pleskac and David Nelson

Abstract: **Bella Garcia** who attended the Slavia Field School in 2024 continued her training in forensics by attending the Juvenile Osteology Research Laboratory Workshop in Romania. In this talk she will describe her experiences working with a set of 69 juvenile remains for the 17th century. Advanced technologies, such as histology and CT imaging are employed to advance this research.

About the speaker: **Bella Garcia** is a graduate student with a BA in Anthropology from CSUSB and is enrolled in the Anatomy & Forensic Anthropology MSc program at the University of Dundee. She was a recipient of SAS scholarship in both 2024 and 2025. In 2025 she gave SAS a presentation on her experiences at Želewo Bioarchaeology Field School in Poland.

Abstract: At the Castles in Communities, Irish Archaeology Field School at Ballintober Castle, Ireland, both **Janel Pleskac** and **David Nelson** lived and worked in a small Irish village while participating in a six-week research and excavation project at Ballintober Castle. The program blended archaeological training in surveying, geophysical techniques, and excavation with lab analysis, giving them real experience in uncovering and interpreting the past. Beyond the fieldwork, they connected with the local community and culture through shared meals, village life, and excursions, making the experience both academically enriching and personally meaningful.

About the speaker: **Janel Pleskac** is a graduate student in Cultural Heritage Resource Management at Sonoma State University, specializing in community-engaged archaeology and oral history. She conducted an independent oral history project in Ballintober, Ireland, during the Castles in Communities Archaeology Field School, documenting local musical life, memory, and place-based heritage alongside archaeological research. Her work integrates oral history, archival research, and landscape archaeology to examine how living communities produce and sustain cultural heritage. She has also worked on archaeological projects in California and Ireland and currently serves as a Museum Archives Assistant at Sonoma Historic Park.

Janel will present research in progress from "Listening to Roscommon", my community-based oral history project documenting the musical heritage of County Roscommon, Ireland, which was conducted in collaboration with the Castles in Communities Archaeology Field school. Through interviews with local musicians across multiple genres, the project treats oral histories as intangible artifacts, revealing how music, memory, and place function as layers of living cultural landscape. Her presentation will reflect on the methodological possibilities and challenges of integrating oral history into archaeological practice.

About the speaker: **David Nelson** is a student at Las Positas College. He is a retired electrician who is passionate about archaeology. He attended a field school through Las Positas College where he gained initial experience with excavation. In 2025 David attended the Irish Archaeology Field School at Ballintober Castle. He also attended the California Archaeology Field School at Foothill College where he participated in the excavation at Hidden Villa Farm in 2024.



Castles in Communities, Irish Archaeology Field School at Ballintober Castle, Ireland

SAS Tour

April 7 – 18, 2026

Combined Jornada Region Tour (April 7-14, 2026) and
Paquimé, Mata Ortiz and area surrounding Casas Grandes,
Chihuahua, Mexico (April 15-18, 2026)

This tour is offered Sacramento Archeological Society, Inc. and provided jointly by Jornada Research Institute and Fiesta Tours International. The Jornada Mogollon tour features

- White Sands exhibits, laboratory and dune field
- Jornada Mogollon culture: Creekside Village site
- Petroglyphs: Hueco Tanks, Alamo Mountain, Three Rivers, Willow Springs
- Pueblos: Gran Quivira, Abó, Quarai, Tenabo, Twin Serpents (time allowing), Pilabó
- Museums: El Paso Archaeological Museum, Geronimo Springs Museum, NM Museum of Space History
- Frontier Fort: Fort Craig



Photo: Stabilized Dune Segment at WSNP (David H Greenwald)

The Paquimé Tour goes south of the border to visit the Cueva de la Olla and other Mogollon culture cliff dwelling and Trincheras culture sites in the Sierra Madre and the renowned archaeological city of Paquimé, AKA Casas Grandes.



Photo: Adobe ruins of Paquimé (Fiesta Tours)

The per-person price depends on how many people register and whether participation is for full 12-day tour or just 8-day USA or 4-day Mexico tour.

Cost includes pickup at airport, all ground transportation via 12 person shuttle, 12 nights hotel, hotel breakfast each morning, 8 lunches (4 in USA, 4 in Mexico), 4 dinners (welcome & farewell in USA, 2 in Mexico, including tips; drinks excluded), entrance fees to all USA sites visited, all guiding services and tips including bilingual guides in Mexico, audio equipment on bus and at sites, and incidentals.

The spaces are limited. SAS membership is required. For more information and a flyer with color photos about the above-listed activity contact Sacramento Archeological Society, Inc. at sacarcheology@gmail.com.

PAST EVENTS

SAS Webinar “Culprits behind Plate of Brass: Dare Stones”

On Saturday, November 1, 2025 to an audience of 18 SAS members and friends Melissa Darby MA, Senior Archaeologist/Historian, Lower Columbia Research & Archaeology LLC gave a presentation on two hoaxes, Dare Stone and Drake Plate of Brass via Zoom. She told the story behind both. The Dare Stone supposedly was created by a survivor of a lost colony of Roanoke in North Carolina (1587). It was identified as a hoax. L. D. Hammond was associated with the hoax. On the Pacific Coast another hoax was created, Drake Plate of Brass. Herbert Boldon,

professor at Berkeley used this plate to promote the myth that Sir Francis Drake landed in 1579 at Drake's Bay in California. Since then, the landing of Drake in California has been contested and evidence points to his landing in Oregon.

SAS Webinar “Inuit History in Northern Greenland: Fragility and Resilience” by Christyann Darwent

On Saturday, December 6, 2025 at the SAS Annual Meeting Christyann Darwent, professor at University of California relayed Inuit history of Northern Greenland to an audience of over 20 SAS members and friends at Pena Archaeology Facility and via Zoom. After a brief introduction to Inuit languages in Greenland and Canada she described her experiences doing archaeological excavation on Little Cornwallis Island, Greenland and used her incites to relate the history of Northern Greenland. She contrasted the Late Dorset period and the Thule /Inuit Tradition in Greenland and explained the impacts of expeditions to the North Pole and the Cold War.

MEMBER'S CORNER

Membership

We are pleased to welcome new members: Inga Holmquist, Bruce Donelson, Elizabeth Metcalf, Sylvia Andrews, Anne Whitfield, and Julie Smith. Most of these new members will be attending the April tour.

Annual Memberships

All memberships are renewable on **January 1** annually except for those who joined recently (after September 1 of the previous year). Please support the society by promptly paying your **2026** dues. **Remember your dues help make scholarships possible.** We keep overhead low so that the funds can be used to support students. You may now use our web site <https://sacarcheology.org/society-membership/pay-dues/> to renew and make payment using a **credit card or Paypal.** Remember a membership benefit is email receipt of archaeological/anthropological articles and notices of related events.

The annual dues are:

Student/Limited Member	\$15
Individual Membership	\$30
Family Membership	\$40
Sponsor	\$100 – 999 (individual) \$500 – 999 (business)
Patron	\$1000

Alternatively, please make out your check to "**Sacramento Archeological Society, Inc.**" and mail it to:

Sacramento Archeological Society, Inc.

P.O. Box 163287

Sacramento, CA 95816-9287

We really appreciate your support.

Annual Dues for 2026

Name(s): _____ Email: _____ Phone: _____
_____ Email: _____ Phone: _____

Address:

Student/Limited Member	\$15	_____	\$_____
Individual Membership	\$30	_____	\$_____
Family Membership	\$40	_____	\$_____
Sponsor	\$100	_____	\$_____
Scholarship Donation		_____	\$_____

Total enclosed \$_____

Major Donors

We are pleased to acknowledge our major contributors for 2025. These donations support our scholarship program.

Patron (\$1000 or more, listed in alphabetical order)

Paul K. Davis and Knuti VanHoven
Jan and Tom Johansen
Dennis Fenwick and Martha Lewis
Ruth McElhinney
Carolyn and Gordon McGregor

Sponsor (\$100 - \$999)

OSISoft a division of AVEVA
Lynette Blumhardt
Larry Boerio
George W. Foxworth
Jeremy Johansen
Tori Lyon
Roger and Lydia Peake
Teresa Steele

2026 Board of Directors

During the Annual Meeting the following 2026 Board of Directors were elected.

Name	Office	Name	Office
Paul K. Davis	President	John Foster	Former Past President Member at Large
Jan Johansen	Vice-President/Past President	Kim Frasse	Member at Large
Lynette Blumhardt	Secretary	Jeremy Johansen	Member at Large
Tori Lyon	Treasurer	Tom Johansen, MD	Former Past President Member at Large
		Martie Lewis	Member at Large
		Ruth McElhinney	Member at Large
		Carolyn McGregor	Member at Large
		Lydia Peake	Member at Large
		Roger Peake	Member at Large
		Denise, Ruzicka	Member at Large
		Knuti VanHoven	Member at Large
		George Foxworth	Founding Member at Large

ARCHAEOLOGICAL REFERENCES

Recent Articles

The reviewed article(s) chronologically presented (oldest subject first) are:

- “Did lead poisoning help drive human evolution? ‘Bold’ hypothesis suggests tolerance for lead allowed *Homo sapiens* to outlive Neanderthals”
- “Cold Storage – On an Arctic archipelago, frozen soil may preserve a hidden history of viruses”
- “Communal Rituals go way back in the Middle East”
- “A Headless Mystery”
- “The dispersals of domestic cats from North Africa to Europe around 2000 years ago”

“Did lead poisoning help drive human evolution? ‘Bold’ hypothesis suggests tolerance for lead allowed *Homo sapiens* to outlive Neanderthals”

“A study in *Science Advances* suggests that *Homo sapiens*’ brains were better protected against the toxic effects of lead than our predecessors. This scenario draws on evidence from fossil teeth that lead poisoning was rampant in our ancestors as long as 2 million years ago. Researchers constructed an experiment with a gene called FOXP2 whose mutation has been implicated in several communication disorders. Alysson Muotri, a neuroscientist and organoid

expert at the University of California San Diego and colleagues engineered brain organoids to have the modern human version of NOVA1 or the Neanderthal and Denisovan variant. They exposed the organoids to “very small, realistic amounts of lead that ancient human might have encountered naturally”. They found that lead disrupted development in the two types of mini-brains differently. In the archaic organoids, it appeared to rattle neurons that express a gene called FOXP2. In modern human organoids, the neuron remained essentially unharmed. The results suggest that in modern humans, natural lead exposure selected for genetic variants including NOVA1 may have helped protect their brains from toxicity.” (Michael Price, *Science*, 2025-10-16 p. 225)

“Cold Storage – On an Arctic archipelago, frozen soil may preserve a hidden history of viruses”

“Ancient RNA has proved much harder to find and sequence than ancient DNA, which goes back hundreds of thousands of years. Most RNA studies have concentrated on well-preserved specimens in medical collections from 19th and 20th centuries; a few have salvaged RNA from samples. Sébastien Calvignac-Spencer, an evolutionary biologist at the Helmholtz Institute for Health interested in the evolution of viruses is looking for RNA in Svalbard. RNA generally degrades more rapidly than DNA. Sébastien has had a string of successes in recent years recovering old genomes of measles, influenza, and other viruses from formalin-fixed tissue samples in museums. On Svalbard he hopes to show that in the cold, dry permafrost RNA virus genomes can survive much longer. Stay tuned.” (Kai Kupferschmidt, *Science*, 2025-10-16 pp. 230-236)

“Communal Rituals go way back in the Middle East”

“*Homo sapiens* groups seemed to have assembled at Manot Cave to hold torchlight ceremonies as early as about 37,000 years ago. The discovery of the large cave by archaeologist Omry Barzilai of the University of Haifa in Israel and colleagues reported *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* suggests that a collective ritual was practiced in this space that some 100 individuals might have fit. Stone tools, butchered animal bones and other items excavated near Manot Cave’s entrance point to regular human occupations from about 46,000 to 33,000 years ago. A round boulder placed in a niche just inside the cave’s chamber displays engraved lines that create a 3-D representation of a tortoise shell. The spiritual meanings of tortoises to ancient Middle Easterners, who collected the creatures to supplement their diets, remain unknown. But tortoise shells increasingly appeared in the graves of prominent individuals in this region near the end of the Stone Age.” (Bruce Bower, *Science News*, 2025-2-2025 p. 29)

“A Headless Mystery”

“In a 7000-year-old mass grave belonging to some of Europe’s first farmers, dozens of bodies were buried without their heads. The site is near Vráble, a small village 100 kilometers east of Bratislava. In 2022 researchers found more than 30 in a space barely 10 meters square. Biological anthropologist Katharina Fuchs has also unearthed individuals buried nearby with

their heads attached. These finds may shed light on the history of the area around 5000 BCE. The Linear Pottery culture (LKB) people were direct descendants of the people who began to domesticate plants and animals in the hill of Anatolia around 9000 BCE. By 5500 BCE they had reached today's Hungary. Then they spread westward, farther into Europe. The LBK farmers flourished for more than 400 years, eventually occupying a 1500-kilometer belt of fertile land stretching as far west as the Paris Basin. Then around 5000 BCE hundreds of LBK settlements across the continent abruptly vanished. In the aftermath, parts of the continent remained empty for centuries. Other settlements transitioned peacefully into something else, with people living in the same place and continuing to farming, but building houses and decorating their ceramics in a different way. The finds at Vráble suggest that this transition was not peaceful." (Andrew Curry, *Science*, 2025-11-20 pp. 774-781)

"The dispersal of domestic cats from North Africa to Europe around 2000 years ago"

"The domestic cat (*Felis catus*) originated from the African wildcat (*Felis lybica lybia*), which is presently distributed across North Africa and the Near East. It has since rapidly expanded to achieve a global distribution. Archaeozoological and iconographic evidence points to two possible centers of domestication: Neolithic Levant ~9500 years ago and Pharaonic Egypt ~3500 years ago. Ancient mitochondrial DNA (mtDNA) data support a dual-origin model for cat dispersal, indicating an initial spread from Anatolia to Europe by Neolithic farmers ~6400 years ago, followed by a second wave from Egypt ~2000 years ago." (M. De Martin *et al*, *Science*, 2025-11-27 pp. 904 & 881-882)

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