



SDCAS Newsletter

November/December 2008 ISSN 0897-2478 Volume 36, Number 6

The mission of the San Diego County Archaeological Society is to promote public understanding and appreciation of archaeology in general and to encourage the preservation of the cultural resources of San Diego County.

Calendar

Support your Society! Items in boxes are SDCAS-organized or sponsored events

Every Saturday & Sunday — Los Peñasquitos
Docent tours: Los Peñasquitos Adobe Ranch House
11 a.m. on Saturday and 1:00 p.m. on Sunday

November 13 (6 – 8 p.m.) Museum of San Diego
History

Lecture & Book Signing:
Japanese Americans in San Diego
See announcement inside (Pg. 3)

November 13 (7:30 p.m.) Irvine
PCAS Lecture:

Santa Catalina Island: Perspectives on Pimu
See announcement inside (Pg. 3)

November 15 & 16 (10:30 a.m.) Palm Springs
Living Traditions Class: Coil Juncus Basket Making
See announcement inside (Pg. 7)

November 20 (6 – 7:30 p.m.) SDAC
SOHO Lecture: Aviation in San Diego
See announcement inside (Pg. 3)

November 22 (10 a.m.) Barona Cultural Center
Tortilla Making Class
See announcement inside (Pg. 7)

November 25 (7:30 p.m.) Los Peñasquitos
SDCAS Fourth Tuesday Lecture
Speaker: Joan Schneider
"Current Trends in Ground Stone Research"
See announcement inside (Pg. 6)

November 29 (7:30 p.m.) Borrego Springs
Film: "The Ghost Mountain Experiment"
See announcement inside (Pg. 3)

November 30 (9 a.m. – Noon) Anza-Borrego Desert
State Park
Hike to Marshall South Homesite with filmmaker John
McDonald
See announcement inside (Pg. 3)

December 5 & 6 — Balboa Park
Balboa Park December Nights
many museums will be open free to the public from
5 – 9 p.m. each evening

December 6 (10 a.m.) Barona Cultural Center
Holiday Kids Craft Class
See announcement inside (Pg. 7)

December 6 (10:30 a.m.) Palm Springs
Living Traditions Class: Fire by Friction
See announcement inside (Pg. 7)

December 13 (10 a.m.) San Diego Archaeological
Center
Children's Holiday Workshop
See announcement inside (Pg. 3)

December 20 (11 a.m. – 8 p.m.) Palm Springs
Bird Song and Dance Festival
See announcement inside (Pg. 7)

Happy Holidays!

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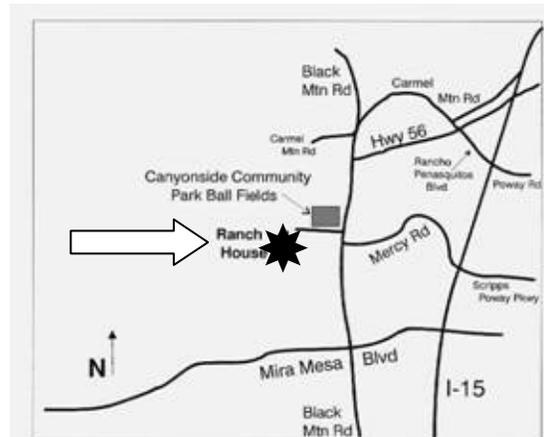
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DISCLAIMER: Articles printed in this newsletter are for the information of the members of the Society and do not necessarily represent the views or beliefs of the board members or the Society in general.

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MEETING INFO: The SDCAS Office is located at Los Peñasquitos Ranch House. During the Fall, Winter, and Spring General Meetings are held on the Fourth Tuesday of each month except December. During the Summer months (June, July, August) General Meetings are held on Saturday evenings, in the courtyard at the Ranch House (see pg. 6 for details of upcoming meetings).



Los Peñasquitos Ranch House

Directions: From I-15 take Mercy Rd. west, turn right (north) onto Black Mountain Rd. and then take the first left into Los Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve. Follow the road all the way to the back (past Canyonside Community Park ball fields), and park either in the small parking area by the barn or along the edge of the dirt road.

Board Meetings take place on the 3rd Tuesday of each month at 7 p.m. They are held at California State Parks, Southern Service Center offices located in Mission Valley at 8885 Rio San Diego Drive, Suite 201.

Editor's Message

Well, here we are at the close of another year. Time does fly by, doesn't it? I was looking back at some of the old newsletters recently and realized that 2008 is the 35th year that SDCAS has been around, and my 12th year as newsletter editor. Only Jim Royle has been on the board of directors longer than I have (he's been doing Environmental Review for SDCAS since 1978! Everyone be sure to thank him for all his hard work and dedication).

2008 has been a good year, we had a highly successful Arch in the Park (see article and photos on page 4) and a great selection of speakers at our Monthly Meetings this year (thanks to Erin Smith, our First VP). I would personally like to thank everyone on the board of directors for their commitment to keeping this society running and functioning smoothly. We have a new slate of candidates for the elected positions for next year's board, so watch the mail for your ballot and remember to vote in the SDCAS election. Also, please note that we have some vacancies in our non-elected positions. We are still looking for someone to take over sales and the legal research positions. Remember, it is volunteers who keep the society going.

SUBMISSIONS: Please send articles, stories, poems, or other archaeology-, anthropology-, or history-related items to me at the address below (email works best). Digital documents (word or text files) are preferred, but others will be considered for inclusion. Hard copy photos of your archaeological experiences (fieldwork, vacations, etc.), a cartoon from the newspaper, etc. should be sent as-is (slides, prints, or clippings); or if you have scanning capability or a digital camera, please email them in JPG, TIF, or GIF format. Any hard-copy item you wish returned (such as photos or slides) should be accompanied by a self-addressed, stamped envelope, or arrangements can be made to pick up said items.

The submission deadline for the next issue is **December 26**. Please send all items to:

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Members' News Corner

San Diego Archaeological Center Holiday Workshop

December 13, 2008, Saturday, 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

Is your family looking for a fun and educational way to spend a few hours on a beautiful December day? Discover the San Diego Archaeological Center's Culture Classroom as it is transformed into a "Children's Holiday Workshop".

Young participants ages four and up will learn about the archaeology, history, and natural environment of San Diego with hands-on lessons on pottery, cordage making and Victorian era activities. Combining both imagination and science will engage the youngest person in using critical thinking skills while enjoying a hands-on experience.

Each child will have the opportunity to discover a new ability while replicating essential life skills of people in the past. Young artisans will create unique items such as friendship bracelets, clay vases and sculptures, and picture frames. Perfect keepsakes for holiday gifts. Favorite teachers, friends and family will delight in receiving a one of a kind present created by a child's hand.

Center staff and volunteers will be on hand to guide the participants with their projects, while accompanying adults enjoy the Center's award winning exhibits, research station and hands-on archaeology lessons located in the newly expanded Museum.

All visitors to the Center Museum on Saturday, December 13 are invited to enjoy a mug of hot cocoa or cider and cookies provided by Center Board of Trustees.

The San Diego Archaeological Center is located at 16666 San Pasqual Valley Road, Escondido, CA 92027.

The Ghost Mountain Experiment

On November 29, the Anza-Borrego Foundation and Institute will present a special screening of John McDonald's full-length documentary chronicling the Marshal South family's experiment in primitive living in the desert in the 1930s. The film will begin at 7:30 pm in the Borrego Springs Performing Arts Center, Suggested Donation \$10

On November 30 there will be a hike to the Marshal South Homesite from 9 a.m. to noon. The hike will be led by filmmaker John McDonald. Meet at entrance to Blair Valley on Highway S-22 Fee: Anza-Borrego Foundation & Institute Members \$25, Non-Members \$35. Learn about one family's experiment in primitive desert living on this one-mile hike to the top of Ghost Mountain. Filmmaker John McDonald will share stories of the Souths as well as his experiences producing the documentary. For more information see http://www.theabf.org/programsfield_programs.htm

Lecture and Booksigning: Japanese Americans in San Diego by Susan Hasegawa

Author Susan Hasegawa discusses her latest work on the Japanese American experience in San Diego. A Professor of History at San Diego Community College and the chair of the History and Political Science Department at City College, Ms. Hasegawa has spent over a decade researching and writing on the San Diego Japanese American experience as well as co-curating the exhibition *Nikkei Youth Culture: Past, Present, Future* on view at

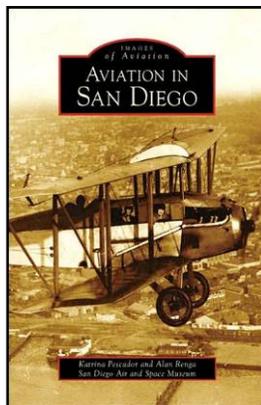
the San Diego Historical Society's Museum of San Diego History in 2007.

Light refreshments served.
Booksigning following lecture.

Thursday November 13, 2008, 6-8pm at the Museum of San Diego History. Admission: Lecture only \$6 SDHS members, \$10 non-members; Pre-purchase book & lecture \$23.00 SDHS members, \$25.00 non-members. To RSVP or place a book order, call 619-232-6203, ext. 129

SOHO's Third Thursday Lecture Series: Aviation in San Diego

On November 20 Archivists for the San Diego Air and Space Museum Katrina Pescador and Alan Renga will share some of the amazing photographs in the museum's collection and describe how for nearly a century, San Diego has been a hub of aviation development, air power, and flying adventure.



San Diego's aviation history is unrivaled, from the pioneering days of Glenn Curtiss and naval aviation at North Island to the present cutting-edge aerospace technology, Aviation.

Their book and lecture documents the people and events that made San Diego's aviation heritage unique. From Ryan to Consolidated, Curtiss to Lindbergh, and everything in between, *Aviation in San Diego* is the preeminent photographic record of flight in "America's Finest City."

Lectures are from 6-7:30pm at the SOHO-operated city museum, the Adobe Chapel, located at 3950 Conde Street in historic Old Town San Diego. The one-hour lectures include a 15-minute question and answer period followed by a book signing session and light refreshments. Ticket Prices: \$25 includes Lecture & Book, \$35 at the door includes Lecture & Book; or \$15 Lecture only at the door or in advance. For tickets call (619) 297-9327.

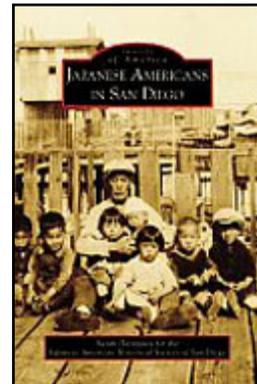
PCAS General Meetings

Monthly lecture meetings feature noted archaeologists and anthropologists who provide insight into a variety of topics. Lecture meetings are held at the Irvine Ranch Water District, 15600 Sand Canyon Avenue (between the I-5 and I-405, next to the Post Office) in Irvine, on the second Thursday of each month, at 7:30 pm. They are free and open to the public.

• November 13: Santa Catalina Island: Perspectives on Pimu by Ivan Strudwick

Southern California Edison (SCE) recently commissioned a cultural resource survey of the approximately 51-mile electrical distribution system on Santa Catalina Island. The presentation will review the results of that survey and present information on the development of utilities on Catalina, including efforts to preserve resources while maintaining the integrity of the utility system. This lecture will consist of four of seven papers originally presented at

(Continued on page 7)



2008 ‘Arch in the Park’ a Success

By Marla Mealey
Photos by Janelle Harrison



October 18 was a beautiful day in Los Peñasquitos Canyon. We couldn't have asked for better weather for SDCAS's annual "Arch in the Park". This year's event was a huge success, thanks to the efforts of organizer, Trish Mitchell, and other SDCAS board members including Susan Walter, Patty McFarland, Kristin Tennesen, Nick Doose, Carol Serr, and Tim Gross.

We had a number of great booths from agencies, museums, CRM companies, and other organizations, as well as some wonderful presenters. The crowd certainly enjoyed Abel Silvas' "Running Grunion" presentation.

No final tally on how many people came to the event, but we ran out of the rubber stamping game sheets and Kristin had to rush out to get more made up. SDCAS made over \$250 from sales, both from our sales table and from the hotdogs, chips, and soda booth that Trish managed to pull together at the last minute (with Nick's excellent BBQ-ing assistance) after the fry bread booth cancelled.

So, I'd like to send a great big **Thank You** out to all the SDCAS volunteers who helped with "Arch in the Park" and kept everything running smoothly.



Monthly Meeting Synopses

By Michael Sampson

September 23, 2008 Meeting

Mark R. Faull: "Black Mountain: Kern County's Forgotten Archaeological Paradigm."

During the 1960s UCLA based archaeologist Alex Apostolides conducted extensive surveys in the El Paso Mountains of eastern Kern County, California, mostly centering on a prominent rise known as Black Mountain. These surveys documented numerous "house" or rock ring clusters, food preparation loci, rock art sites, and lithic workshops that stretch from the base to the crest of Black Mountain. Apostolides described the abundant assemblage as "one of the richest and most diverse" in the Mojave Desert and able to provide "an archaeological picture probably unmatched in all of California." By 1972 his archaeological survey efforts resulted in the creation of the Last Chance Canyon Archaeological District and its placement on the National Register of Historic Places. Since Apostolides' initial documentation, the important Black Mountain assemblage had remained virtually ignored by the archaeological community, and had not been properly incorporated into both local and regional prehistoric models of the Mojave Desert or western Great Basin. Mark Faull indicated that he hoped his current investigations on Black Mountain would reawaken interest in this forgotten, but intrinsically important, prehistoric landscape – and to initiate a preliminary effort towards integrating this important terrain into the surrounding prehistoric framework.

The precipitous rise of Black Mountain towers 3000 feet over the surrounding Mojave Desert terrain. Composed primarily of Miocene volcanics, the slopes and crest consist of extensive rhyolitic tuffs overlaid by thick basaltic flows. These Miocene age [ca. 24 million YBP to 5.5 million YBP] deposits were heavily eroded during the subsequent Pleistocene Epoch into a mature landform consisting of a series of long sloping basalt strewn terraces. These erosional terraces are important to the patterning of the archaeological remains.

Since Apostolides' period of work (1960s through the early 1970s), only a handful of scattered reports have been written concerning this area, mostly along the fringes of Black Mountain itself. The inception of this project necessitated the collection of these reports combined with archival research at Kern County Information Center, where 140 prehistoric sites were discovered. This initial archival work documented a multi-component archaeological picture, portraying varying levels of prehistoric activity initiated during the Lake Mojave period [ca. 10000 YBP- 8000 YBP] and continuing unabated through Late Prehistoric times.

Intensive and extensive lithic procurement sites are omnipresent along the western and southwestern flanks of Black Mountain proper. These widespread quarry sites and secondary reduction loci involve the exploitation of local microcrystalline cherts and chalcedonies, which originally formed within a Miocene age freshwater lake. These microcrystalline silicates were used both locally and transported within a regional context.

While not as impressive as the famed Coso Rock Art, less than 40 miles distant, Black Mountain and its surrounding environment yield an impressive collection of glyphs and images. Al Knight has a publication near fruition listing the known rock art sites within the El Paso Mountains. Suffice it here to say, that much of the art is curvilinear to rectilinear abstract and heavily patinated; younger less patinated glyphs are also present that tend towards more representational elements and sometimes include classic Coso motifs.

The primary focus of the presentation consisted of the extent and character of the numerous rock rings and concentrations of rings on and about Black Mountain. Articles written for popular magazines such as *Touring Topics* and *Desert Magazine* appeared in 1931 and 1950 commenting the extensive rings, which stretch to the apex of Black Mountain itself. Archival surveys found a total of 126 documented rings located within 30 recorded sites, at project inception. Apostolides felt that hundreds of rings were actually present stretching from the peak of Black Mountain for up to 5 miles north. Apostolides documented 17 additional rock ring locations upon his maps, involving an unknown number of additional rings.

Recent surveys by Mark Faull have identified three prominent styles of rings: (1) lithic procurement rings, (2) ceremonial or spiritual rock structures, and (3) upland rock rings. The first are rings associated with several lithic procurement sites to the west and southwest of Black Mountain. These lithic production rings are limited in extent. Many bear the unique characteristic of being placed upon exposed bedrock. The rings are filled and surrounded with lithic detritus and bear no evidence of burning. The second type of prominent ring is also not very numerous, and involve what appear to be religious or spiritual practices. These rings normally consist of circles of cleared ground placed at strategic scenic overlooks and sometimes also involve the strategic placement of stones within the circle context. The third category and by far the most numerous are the upland rock rings, although their occurrence eventually was found to be more widespread than the term implies. These rock structures are normally multi-coursed, involved several hundred stones per ring, and were relatively uniform in dimensions. While some rings varied, the vast majority of rings were approximately 4 meters in exterior diameter. The inner surface of the rings was usually level, despite the surrounding terrain. Over two-thirds of all rings displayed one or more metates. Only a few rings were associated with mortars. The majority of the Upland-style rings bore visible lithic debitage inside and out, mostly from local microcrystalline sources, but not infrequently including imported obsidian.

Mark's field research found these rock ring sites in four distinct identifiable locales: (1) scattered somewhat indiscriminately along the upper western bajada or alluvial fan slopes of Black Mountain, (2) concentrated at the mouths of the prominent western canyons of Black Mountain, (3) along the lengthy Pleistocene [Ice Age] terraces eroded into Black Mountain, and (4) on the very peak of Black Mountain itself. During 11 recent survey dates, involving approximately 70 survey miles, a total of 70 primarily unrecorded sites were documented, containing 179 rings. The total of known rock rings, including, the recent work, reaches roughly 282 rock rings from approximately 95 locations. These concentrations primarily occur along the northwestern, western & southwestern perimeter and slopes of Black Mountain.

But what is the purpose of these structures? Why was such intense energy invested? And what do they represent? Their construction involves a significant investment of time and energy. Their association with both groundstone tools and lithic debitage appear to align them with residency. Rock rings in other regional terrains have been theorized to involve superstructures for living quarters. The preliminary evidence seems to counter this function. The upland terraces hold insufficient vegetation to create any reasonable enclosed shelter. In addition, flakes are often found within the crevices of the rocks walls, which seems a less likely occurrence if a structure existed. Metates, which are present at virtually all ring complexes, are often cached upon or within the rock wall, as well.

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Monthly Meeting Synopses

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Mark's surveys indicated a distinct pattern whereby the rock structures appeared closely aligned with potential seasonal vegetal harvesting. Within the desert environment, most seasons would present inhospitable fortunes for residency. The most logical and productive season to visit these terrains would be the spring through early summer period, when green seasonal growth abounds and valued seeds are maturing. The abundant presence of metates bolsters an argument for vegetable harvesting. But even more convincing are the apparent modifications observed within the local terrain.

Most rock ring complexes are located near open patches of the desert landscape, as opposed to rocky terrains, where less plant life flourishes. Many of these terrains resemble meadows, where an assortment of small herbs, bulbs and grasses flourish in times of sufficient rainfall. However, the most intriguing aspect of these sites is the apparent human modification, which seems to have intentionally enhanced the landscape's productivity. Many ring complexes were located adjacent to what appeared to be cleared patches, probably enhanced by human ingenuity and engineering. The appearance of cleared terrain adjacent to ring complexes was common, especially along the long upper terraces of the mountain. The margins of these cleared zones were defined by piles of transported rock, invariably moved down slope. Unmodified terrains with many cobbles, could be seen adjacent to cleared zones, fringed by accumulated disposal piles. Even more interesting were the apparently intentional cells or spaces created within the rock drop off zones themselves, providing additional potentially specialized habitats for plant growth. These cells sometimes were filled with abundant bulbs, such as desert mariposa lilies or blue dicks. Within the upland amphitheaters or along stretches of terrace, one could find rock rings adjacent to cleared terraces, giving way to apparently uncleared slopes, and then returning once more to cleared terrain associated with new rock ring complexes. If this perception is true, it appears that family or small extended units may have tended or maintained individual plots or patches of vegetal habitat. Thus, the issue of privatization versus community resources may be at play within some of these isolated protoagricultural enclaves.

Few temporally diagnostic artifacts were recorded during past or current fieldwork. Therefore, deductive reasoning must be deployed to help construct an initial working hypothesis regarding the timing of ring construction and the apparently associated proto-agricultural clearing. Within the western El Paso Mountains, a period of intense lithic procurement and rabbit processing activity centered on the Rose Spring period [ca. A.D. 200-1100], with some use in the earlier Gypsum Period [ca. 2000 B.C.-A.D. 200].

Fieldwork conducted at the Terese site, located northeast of Black Mountain proper, also contains evidence of a significant Rose Spring component. A review of the Ron Henry Collection, curated at the local Maturango Museum, demonstrated a more dominant presence on the western slope of Black Mountain during the Rose Spring era, followed by a more dominant presence on the eastern flank during the subsequent Late Prehistoric Period. Overall, the Ron Henry collection possesses a predominance of Rose Spring projectile points collected from sites with rock rings. Mark's review of other regional site information, e.g., between Owens Valley and Fremont Valley, shows strong evidence of Rose Spring use on the flanks of Black Mountain. According to Mark Faull, a reasonable initial hypothesis can align the rock ring complex primarily with the surge in Rose Spring

Period activity found within the adjoining and surrounding region.

Conclusions

The current research was designed to motivate additional focused efforts through the illumination of this highly significant, yet overlooked, archaeological complex. Towards this goal, Mark has developed a working hypothesis linking the extensive rock ring complexes to possible protoagricultural clearance and terracing, designed to enhance seasonal vegetal production. Under such a model, possible family or extended family units might construct ring complexes while tending or harvesting seasonal crops. The investment in constructing these rock complexes, though reused over many years, implies a certain seasonal length of residency.

Previous published articles in the Owens Valley have aligned smaller rock ring accumulations with regional intensification models. Clearly, the hundreds of rock rings concentrated upon Black Mountain are a manifestation of intensified efforts, which apparently are aligned with attempts to increase local food production and harvests. This effort appears best aligned with the Rose Spring Period, a time of increased activity in the western Mojave Desert. According to Mark, these rock ring complexes will add to regional prehistoric models that discuss the emergence of both intensification and privatization within western Great Basin cultures. If the current trend holds true, the emergence of both privatization and intensification may have occurred earlier in the Black Mountain region than current predictive models suggest.

Upcoming Speakers

**November 25 (4th Tuesday), 7:30 p.m.
Los Peñasquitos**

Presenter: Joan Schneider, Ph.D.

Title: "Current Trends in Ground Stone Research"

In the past, "ground stone" artifacts have not been a major focus of research endeavors. Stone implements and vessels used in everyday household processing tasks were not viewed as being able to provide data to answer questions about prehistoric technology, chronology, exchange, craft specialization, and other socio-economic activities. Large collections of "ground stone" often languished, stored and unstudied. Furthermore, sometimes these artifacts were not even collected during field projects because (1) they were not viewed as valuable for research and (2) they were both heavy and bulky. It probably did not help that these artifacts were most often used by women, were very common, and were used for mundane everyday tasks.

This picture has changed!! In the last 15-20 years, researchers in both the Old World and New World are using creative approaches (often with the help of laboratory scientists) and developing innovative research designs to study "ground stone." New research questions are being asked and new information has been forthcoming, especially in regard to household economics and social patterns. This talk will explore some of the current trends in "ground stone" research here and abroad. Hopefully, some new ideas and new questions will help us take a fresh look at our own "ground stone" collections here in southern California.

**There is no General Meeting in December.
Hope you all have a wonderful Holiday
Season!**

Membership News

By Carol Serr, Membership Chair

Welcome to new members: the *Westfall family*, *Heather Greenberg*, *Aggie Carter*, and *Steffi Bokser*. Please make sure to introduce yourselves to others when you attend our meetings, so we can get to know our newest members.

Membership renewal time began October 1st for the 2008-2009 year. So check your mailing label to see if your dues have *expired*, and renew soon. Thank you. We strongly encourage you to invite co-workers, friends, and relatives to *join* SDCAS so they can participate on outings along with you, and enjoy our informative monthly meetings.

Don't forget to send me your e-mail address (e-dress) if you haven't been getting notices via e-mail - or if you recently changed it (some have bounced back undeliverable). Sometimes this is the only way we can notify members of last minute changes. Your e-dress is not shared with the membership or other groups. If you included your e-mail on your application, but are not getting notices - that means the e-dress does not work (or was illegible on the application). Also, remember to let us know your *new address* when you move, so we can avoid the exorbitant forwarding fee the post office charges us.

To contact Carol please email: sdcas@email.com (please use "SDCAS" in the subject line)

Members' News Corner

PCAS General Meetings

(Continued from page 3)

the April 2008 Annual Meeting of the Society for California Archaeology in a symposium of the same title. Beginning with a review of the island's physiography, geology, and biology, this presentation offers a glimpse into the prehistory and history of the island once known to the Gabrielino as Pimu (Pemuu'nga).

- December 11, 2008 - PCAS Holiday Dinner*: *Time's Up! Pseudoscience of Correlations of Winter Solstice 2012 and Maya Calendar* by Dr. E.C. Krupp, Director Griffith Observatory

* Reservations required and will be available on the PCAS website (<http://www.pcas.org>).

- January 8, 2009: *Mineral Pigments of California Indians* by Paul Campbell

Barona Cultural Center & Museum Fall Classes 2008

- Tortilla Making with Caroline Mendoza

Saturday November 22nd we will be holding a tortilla making class given by Caroline Mendoza. Just in time for Thanksgiving dinner. This class will take place from 10:00am and run approximately 90 minutes. Please show up on time. Cost is \$10.00. Barona Tribal Members free. Please RSVP by November 15th, 2008.

- Holiday Kids Craft

(Youths Ages 7-12): On December 6th Barona Cultural Center and Museum will hold its annual Holiday Kids Craft class. Now is the chance to create a special decoration for your grandparent or your home this holiday season, but with a native twist. Class starts at 10am sharp and runs until 11:30am. Refreshments will be served. Ages 7-12 only. Cost is \$10. Barona Tribal Members free. Please RSVP by December 1st, 2008.

Due to the high interest in these classes we recommend that you call to RSVP as soon as possible! Any persons

that show up on the day of class without a RSVP may be turned away.

For more information on upcoming classes, call Richard Rodriguez at (619)443-7003 ext 229.

Living Traditions Class: Coil Juncus Basket Making

Lorene Sisquoc (*Cahuilla/Fort Sill Apache*), Curator of the Sherman Indian Museum at Sherman Indian High School and Board member of the California Indian Basket Weavers Association, leads a two-day introductory course in the traditional art of coil juncus basket making. This two-day workshop requires participation for both days.

Date: Saturday, November 15 & Sunday November 16

Time: Sat. 10:30 am - 5:00 pm; Sun. 11:00 am - 4:00 pm

Location: Agua Caliente Cultural Museum, 219 S. Palm Canyon Dr., Palm Springs

Fee: \$50 (includes materials)

Living Traditions Class: Fire by Friction

Create fire using the ancient method of fire-making by friction. In this hands-on workshop, Tony Soares, a local ceramist whose work is part of the Museum's permanent collections, will teach the many aspects of fire-making including material collection and the use of tinder and tools.

Date: Saturday, December 6, 2008

Time: 10:30 am - 4:00 pm

Place: Agua Caliente Cultural Museum, 219 S. Palm Canyon Dr., Palm Springs

Fee: \$15

Bird Song and Dance Festival

Singing the Birds (*Wikitmallem Tahmuwphae*)
Bird Song and Dance Festival

Come celebrate traditional bird singing and dancing. Through the ages, bird singing and dancing have been an important part of Native culture for tribes in southern California and other regions of the Southwest. This day-long event features honored bird singing groups and dancers.

Date: Saturday, December 20, 2008

Time: 11:00 am - 8:00 pm

Place: The Pavilion Auditorium, 400 S. Pavilion Way (Sunrise Park), Palm Springs

Admission is Free

Skull Stories: The Art of Ancient Surgery

By Tori Heflin, Curator of Physical Anthropology, San Diego Museum of Man

The act and art of trephination have been practiced around the world for thousands of years. The Museum's upcoming exhibition *Skull Stories: The Art of Ancient Surgery* will focus on the universality of this practice, the various methods and tools used to perform trephinations, and why the surgery is carried out. This important new exhibit opens to the public on Saturday, November 22, 2008.

All peoples, both ancient and recent, have used natural and/or supernatural healing methods to deal with varied illnesses. Trephining, or removing a piece of bone from the skull, is the oldest surgical procedure known from antiquity.

The practice has garnered intense interest because it represents an early form of cranial surgery performed well before the advent of modern medicine. Many trephinations are associated with skull fractures, suggesting that the treatment of head injury and its

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Skull Stories...

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complications may have been a major motivation for the practice. Evidence also shows that ancient people may have believed trephination would cure various ailments such as epileptic seizures, migraines, and mental disorders. In addition to being used as a method to treat illnesses, trephination was practiced by some populations in order to let evil spirits escape from an individual. Furthermore, some individuals kept the bone that was trephined and wore it as a talisman or charm to keep evil spirits away.

Four basic trephination techniques were used by prehistoric surgeons: cutting, scraping, drilling, and grooving. The cutting technique usually consisted of four straight cuts at right angles (tic-tac-toe style) to remove a rectangular piece of bone. The cuts were made with a sharp stone knife and were deeper in the center than on either end. The scraping technique consisted of gradually scraping the bone with a sharp or abrasive stone until the outer, middle, and lower layers of the skull were worn away, exposing the membrane that covers the brain. The drilling technique required two steps. First, a circle of holes was drilled with a sharp instrument. Then the tiny bridges of bone between the holes were cut with a stone knife, and the disc of bone was pried out to expose the membrane covering the brain. The grooving technique was accomplished using a sharp stone point to carve a circular piece of bone from the skull. The groove was drawn and redrawn until the central piece was loose.

That the ancient surgeon enjoyed a considerable degree of success in trephination surgeries is proven by the fact that many of the skulls show some degree of healing in the wound. Trephined openings with no healing reveal a sharply cut edge or an abraded edge with no signs of change in the bone from such causes as inflammation or infection. Partial healing may show in bony changes such as new or fibrous bone. Scratch marks, probably from incising the scalp, may still be apparent, as well as fracture lines near the opening. In a well-healed trephination, the bone has consolidated and the diploe (the porous layer between the inner and outer layers) is no longer visible.



Copper and bronze tumi knives from prehistoric Peru.

Skulls exhibiting different degrees of healing after a trephination will be displayed, as well as skulls that have been trephined using different techniques. Peruvian skulls from the Museum of Man's premiere Hrdlicka Paleopathology Collection will be showcased, and people from various cultures around the world who perform trephinations will be highlighted. Trephination tools and instruments such as obsidian blades, tumis, and chisels will also be displayed. The curiosity surrounding this subject as well as its historic appeal are sure to attract

many visitors who are anxious to learn more about cranial surgery. Skull Stories: The Art of Ancient Surgery will be on display on the South Balcony of the Museum beginning November 22, 2008.



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