

BENCHMARK



October, 2013

Volume 27, Issue 9



Katrina Nuncio
TCAS President

President's Message

As I mentioned last month, NOW is the time to register for the 2013 Texas Archeological Society's 84th Annual Meeting that is being hosted by SHUMLA October 25-27, in Del Rio. If you have not yet registered, please do so at your earliest convenience. It would be a real shame to miss the special tours of Lower Pecos rock art sites that are offered on Friday and Sunday. Remember some of these sites are on private land and not open to the public so this will be your last opportunity to view these ancient rock art sites. You can link to the online or PDF registration pages if you will go to the TAS Home Page (<http://www.txarch.org/index.php>). This will also give you all the other details you will need to know about the Annual Meeting. You can complete your registration electronically or print and fill in the registration PDF to mail in with a check. Early Registration fees will be good through October 7.

Please don't forget to bring your items to donate for the Silent Auction when you go to the TAS Annual Meeting. Remember that your discards may just be something somebody else might want to buy. If you have something to donate and aren't able to attend Annual Meeting, bring your donation to this month's meeting and hopefully one of our TCAS members that will be attending will take it with them.

The refreshments at our September meeting were supplied by Bill Stallings and Wendy Lockwood. Thank you both for the treats, as they were gratefully consumed! Did you all miss not having coffee at our September meeting? Sharon Beck who faithfully supplies us with coffee was out of town and when that happens we don't have coffee. I have repeatedly asked for someone to step up and assume this monthly task but, alas, no takers. It sure would be nice if we had someone who could at least fill in when Sharon can't make monthly meetings, not assume the whole job, just every once in awhile. Please think about it!

Katrina Nuncio
President

Calendar

10/10/2013 Monthly Meeting

Speaker: Tiffany Osburn

11/14/13 Monthly Meeting

Speaker: Lia Tsesmeli

TCAS & 9/28 Front Street Festival

Thanks to all of our volunteers!

Photos and the info will be in the November issue.

BENCHMARK

Monthly Newsletter
of the
Tarrant County
Archeological Society (TCAS)
Serving North Central Texas

Visit TCAS online at
<http://www.tarrantarch.org>

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October Speaker: Tiffany Osburn

Tiffany Osburn, Regional Archeologist, Texas Historical Commission, will be the speaker for the October 10th meeting of the Tarrant County Archeological Society (TCAS). Tiffany is well known to TCAS (her parents are Sandy and Glynn Osburn) and she has spoken to us before. We are delighted that she has made this time available and we look forward to her presentation. Plan now to bring a friend and join us.

Since Tiffany is one of only three terrestrial staff archeologists for all of Texas, it is understood that her days are full and the work itself is very demanding. Perhaps this information from the Texas Historical Commission website that describes her responsibilities will help us all to understand more about the unique role that she plays on a daily basis:

The State Archeologist oversees the Regional Archeology Program, the [Texas Archeological Stewardship Network](#), [Texas Archeology Month](#), [Historic Texas Lands Plaque program](#), and special projects.

The Archeology Division (AD) divides the state into three terrestrial regions and a marine region that includes all of coasts, rivers, and lakes. A staff archeologist is assigned to each region to provide assistance to stewards, landowners, and communities when needed. AD staff archeologists respond to thousands of public inquiries regarding prehistoric and historic archeological sites in Texas. They offer archeological consultation to state agencies, professional and avocational archeologists, landowners, teachers, heritage groups, and interested individuals. They investigate important endangered sites dating from prehistoric times to the 20th century. They record new archeological sites and monitor previously recorded sites to ensure their protection. The AD staff also engages in significant projects related to African American, Hispanic, and Native American cultural resources.



Tiffany at Field School 2011
Photo by Cindy Smyers
TAS 2011 Archival Photos

Topic

New Investigations at the Old Socorro Mission

The Old Socorro Mission in Socorro, TX was established in 1684 and is now a State Archeological Landmark. Following several flood events, the mission was likely moved around the 1760s. Previous investigations of the old mission by Rex Gerald in the 1980s and 90s identified many of the adobe wall alignments composing the mission complex. Recent efforts seeking long term preservation of the site have prompted a geophysical investigation to reestablish the location of previous excavations and prospect for the *campo santo*. In addition, the location of the Piro Pueblo associated with the mission has never been identified with any certainty. Current efforts also focus on locating the Piro Pueblo in the adjacent cotton field where oral tradition suggests it was located.

TCAS By-Law Change Recommendation

The Board of the Tarrant County Archeological Society (TCAS) submits for consideration by the membership the following recommendation for a change to the TCAS By-Laws :

Article II, Section 3. The annual business meeting of the Society shall take place at the regular meeting in January of each year.

Recommendation: Eliminate this section and renumber.

October: Texas Celebrates Archeology Month

Following text quoted from the THC website:

If the history of human experience in Texas were a book, most of the pages would be blank. For all we know about human cultures, lives, and activities in Texas, many more stories of Texas' past remain unknown and await discovery.

Each October, Texas Archeology Month (TAM) celebrates this spirit of discovery. It's an opportunity for Texans to understand the:

Depth and richness of our heritage, from the former dwelling sites of prehistoric hunters and gatherers to historic shipwrecks and military sites

- Historical significance of the state's archeological sites
- Importance of proper archeological practices
- Contributions made by professional and avocational archeologists to our understanding of Texas' ancient and recent past

The Texas Historical Commission (THC) is proud to sponsor TAM in association with the [Texas Archeological Society](#) and the [Council of Texas Archeologists](#).

See more at: <http://www.thc.state.tx.us/preserve/projects-and-programs/texas-archeology-month>

Go, Visit, Enjoy! Just a sampling of special events in October

Bell County Museum

201 N. Main Street, Belton, TX 76513

<http://www.bellcountymuseum.org>

October 2013

Texas Archeology Month. Archeology pits will be open every Saturday; Curtis Carter, living history interpreter will be visiting on Saturday, October 19th.

Saturday, October 12, 2013, 8:30 a.m.

Gault Site Tour. Join us for a tour of the Gault Site, located in southwestern Bell County. The Gault Site is recognized as one of the most important archeological sites in America. The 2.5 hour tour covers about one mile of gentle terrain. Space is limited to 30 persons. Participants will meet at the museum at 8:30 a.m. Fee is \$10 per person.

Bosque County Museum

301 S. Ave Q, Clifton, TX 76634

<http://www.bosquemuseum.org/newsletters.htm>

Archeology Family Day, Sunday, October 27 2-4 pm

PLANNED ACTIVITIES FOR ADULTS:

- Identification of Native American artifacts by **Archeologist, Bryan Jameson**.
- Exhibition of **Arrowheads and Spear points** from the museum's collection as well as private collections.
- Demonstration of **Flint Knapping, John Sitler and Fred Spanabel**.
- Exhibition of authentic **Native American clothing** constructed by contemporary artist, **David Vardeman**.

PLANNED ACTIVITIES FOR CHILDREN

- Demonstration of preparation of various **Native American Foods**
- Native American **Face Painting**
- Grinding of corn using a **metate**
- Native American **Instruments**
- Visit a **Teepee**

George Washington's Incredible Garbage Dump



Archaeologists struck the motherlode of artifacts over two decades ago near George Washington's Mount Vernon mansion house. Now the treasures are online for all to see.

Most people wouldn't even think about an 18th century refuse pit. But for archaeologists, it can be a veritable goldmine of information about the past. And for archaeological investigators at George Washington's Mount Vernon home and estate near the Virginia banks of the Potomac river in 1990, no pile of garbage was as precious as the one located just south of the famous restored mansion house in the area historically known as the south grove.

Designated the *South Grove Midden* (a "midden" in archaeological parlance is another name for a trash dump), clues of its existence actually first emerged in 1948, when members of the Mount Vernon grounds crew excavated a hole in the area to plant a holly tree. A number of artifacts dating to the eighteenth century were recovered, telltale clues that the south grove area could be the location of midden deposits formed during George Washington's lifetime. This would be no surprise, as the area was near the Washington household kitchen and it was common in the 18th century to dispose of household refuse near where it was generated. Spots not far from the back doors of kitchens were considered prime dumping grounds back then.

But it wasn't until 1990 when archaeologists began to seriously focus on the spot, after a grounds crew again encountered historic deposits while constructing an irrigation system. From 1990 through 1994, full-scale excavations (see image above) recovered nearly 300,000 artifacts, an unprece-

dent array of household items deposited by the Washington family and enslaved families over several decades in the 18th century.

"The South Grove Midden collection represents the largest and most significant collection of artifacts excavated to date associated with the domestic lives of the Washington households," says Eleanor Breen, Deputy Director of Archaeology at Mount Vernon. "One evocative artifact after another – from the unique to the prosaic – tells the interconnected stories of Mount Vernon plantation's earliest residents: Lawrence and Anne Fairfax Washington; George Washington in his bachelorhood and as a newlywed; and the enslaved Africans and African Americans who labored in the mansion and outbuildings."

Thus as any archaeologist would say, the artifacts in themselves are not the real treasure. It is the information that can be gleaned from them. The South Grove Midden artifacts have afforded scholars and the public alike with a remarkable window on life on George Washington's estate during the

(Continued on page 5)

George Washington's Incredible Garbage Dump

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period of its occupation by the Washington family from about 1735 to 1858, and evidence of activities there before and after that period.

Nothing spoke to this more when, in January 2013, the most significant finds were highlighted in a searchable online database of no less than 711 key objects, including photographs, detailed summaries, and catalogue information, all interfaced with documentary and thematic material information that in essence makes them accessible to any visitor. But, says Breen, "the Mount Vernon Midden website is more than an e-museum, it's a digital humanities effort to present the individual artifacts in layers of both archaeological and historical context."

"In envisioning and designing the website with Mark Freeman of Stories Past, our goal was to reach a broad audience – from the archaeology enthusiast to the scholar of material culture. The website is structured like a pyramid with the individual object catalogue records at the top (with professional quality photographs that can be zoomed in on for greater detail and unique narrative text explaining the significance of the artifact), more extensive content in the middle (in the form of summaries of artifact sub-assemblages and thematic essays on groupings of artifacts), and the complete artifact catalogue at the base (accessed via www.daacs.org)."

The database contains much more than objects excavated from the Mid-

den. Also documented are 3,839 invoices and orders, described through both picture and narrative. They constitute the record of his economic life before the Revolutionary War, from 1754 to 1773, including items such as fabrics, seeds, medicines, shoes, foodstuffs, and plantation tools shipped to him on a total of 26 vessels during that time period. Along with the other objects, Mount Vernon archaeologists say that these invoices and orders have helped, and will continue to be a key, to improving our understanding of material culture, consumerism, and economics during 18th century colonial America.

"The South Grove Midden and associated documentary evidence in the form of George Washington's orders for goods from England and inventories of a local store in the town of Colchester provides the opportunity to study a dynamic period in American history," says Breen. "What makes the 40-year period before the American Revolution unique is that access to consumer goods appears to have opened up for larger segments of the colonial population through a more sophisticated and far-reaching system of distribution for imported items – an event described as the consumer revolution. The artifacts and documents associated with the site offer an opportunity to explore this transformation through material culture."

Anyone can access and explore the database by going to mountvernonmidden.org.

Read the entire article <http://popular-archaeology.com/issue/june-2013/article/george-washington-s-incredible-garbage-dump>

International Archeology Day, October 19th



International Archaeology Day is a celebration of archaeology and the thrill of discovery. Every October the AIA and archaeological organizations across the United States, Canada, and abroad present archaeological programs and activities for people of all ages and interests. Whether it is a family-friendly archaeology fair, a guided tour of a local archaeological site, a simulated dig, a lecture or a classroom visit from an archaeologist, the interactive, hands-on International Archaeology Day programs provide the chance to indulge your inner Indiana Jones.

For the first year as *International Archaeology Day* about a dozen countries will also participate. In the United States alone, organizations from 45 states plus Washington, D.C. are hosting more than hundreds of events during the month of October to celebrate archaeology. Events held across Canada include those in the provinces of British Columbia, Manitoba, New Brunswick, Newfoundland, the Northwest Territories, Ontario, Quebec, and Saskatchewan. Other countries supporting IAD are Australia, Belize, Cambodia, Egypt, Ecuador, Germany, Iran, Jordan, New Zealand, South Africa, and the United Kingdom.

www.archaeological.org/news/

Kudos to the Archaeological Institute of America for its work in raising awareness of the importance of archaeology on a world-wide scale. According to the AIA website, over 300 organizations have signed on to celebrate in their communities throughout the month of October. Check out the searchable event calendar at <http://www.archaeological.org/archaeologyday/events>.

Here's an event planned for the Dallas area :

Cops and Robbers, Egyptian Style: Police Work in Ptolemaic Egypt

Sponsored by Archaeological Institute of America

AIA Society Event: Dallas-Fort Worth
Thursday, October 24, 2013 - 6:00pm

Lecturer: [John Bauschatz](#)

Abstract: [Cops and Robbers, Egyptian Style: Police Work in Ptolemaic Egypt](#)

Location:

The Meadows Museum
 5900 Bishop Blvd.
 Dallas, TX 75205

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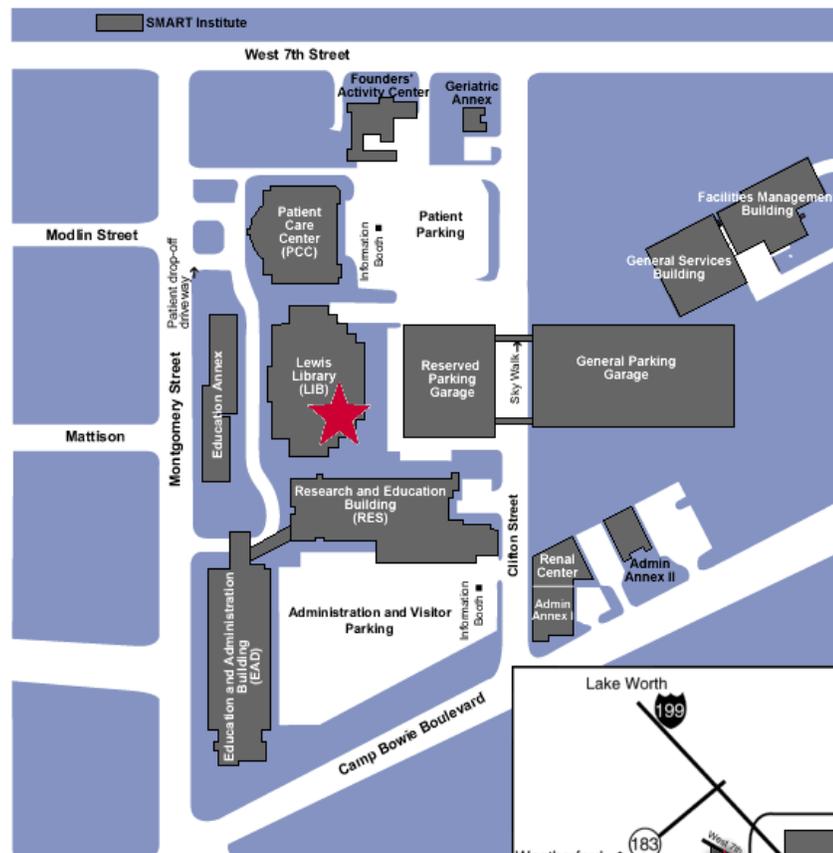
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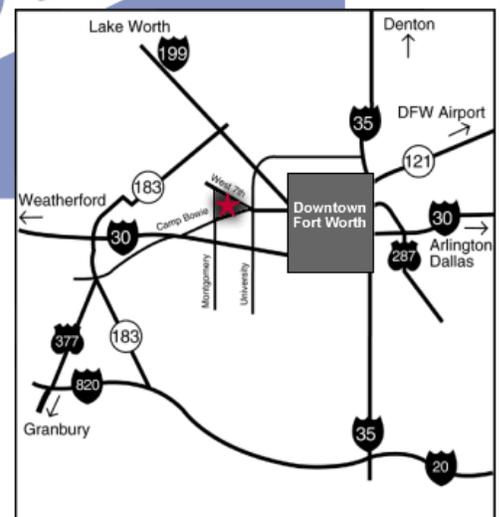
Fort Worth TX 76124

The **TARRANT COUNTY ARCHEOLOGICAL SOCIETY (TCAS)** meets at 7:30 pm on the second Thursday of each month (except June and December) at the University of North Texas Health Science Center (UNTHSC), 3500 Camp Bowie Blvd., in Fort Worth.

The location is centrally located in Tarrant County near the intersection of Camp Bowie and Montgomery Street; about two miles west of downtown. Traveling west on I30 from downtown, take the Montgomery Street exit. Turn right on Montgomery and continue to the five-way intersection at Camp Bowie. Turn right onto Camp Bowie, followed by an immediate left onto Clifton Street. Continue on Clifton to Parking Lot "C" on your left (past the Parking Garage and Sky bridge). Although Lot C is marked as Reserved Parking it is open parking in the evenings. Park in the patient spaces (after 5PM) and go past the information booth into the underground parking garage. Turn left down the corridor at the double doors in the center. Proceed down the hallway until you come to Room 110.



UNIVERSITY of NORTH TEXAS
HEALTH SCIENCE CENTER at Fort Worth
3500 Camp Bowie Boulevard, Fort Worth, Texas 76107
Education, Research, Patient Care and Service



TARRANT COUNTY ARCHEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION FORM

Name(s) _____

Address _____

City\State\Zip _____

Preferred Phone _____

Email Address _____

I want my newsletter delivered by _____ email or _____ by USPS mail.

Thank you for choosing delivery by email –it helps to keep our costs down.

Type of Membership and Fee

New _____ Renewal _____

_____ Individual \$20

_____ Family \$25

_____ Student \$10 (**enrolled in grade school through college/university whose coursework is considered to be half time or more**)

_____ Contributing \$30

Membership Term: January to December

Code of Ethics (signature required): I PLEDGE THAT I WILL NOT INTENTIONALLY VIOLATE THE TERMS AND CONDITIONS OF ANY FEDERAL, STATE, OR LOCAL ANTIQUITIES STATUTES CONCERNING CULTURAL RESOURCES OR ENGAGE IN THE PRACTICES OF BUYING OR SELLING ARTIFACTS FOR COMMERCIAL PURPOSES OR ENGAGE IN THE WILLFUL DESTRUCTION OR DISTORTION OF ARCHEOLOGICAL DATA OR DISREGARD PROPER ARCHEOLOGICAL FIELD TECHNIQUES. I UNDERSTAND THAT FAILURE TO FOLLOW THESE GUIDELINES WILL PROVIDE GROUNDS FOR EXPULSION FROM THE SOCIETY.

Signature _____

Date _____

Tarrant County Archeological Society
PO Box 24679
Fort Worth, TX 76124