

TCAS BENCHMARK



JULY, 2007

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MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT



In keeping with tradition, TCAS had an extremely good presence at the TAS Field School in Menard last month. My last count had over thirty TCAS members working during the week doing either excavation, lab work, survey, helping with children's group at the Presidio; or excavation at the Janee site a few miles down the road. As always, I really enjoyed Field School this year. The weather was excellent (until the last day), the evening programs were informative, the archeology very interesting, and the socializing with fellow TAS members as much fun as always.

Being that this event is considered a Field School I always expect to learn something, and this year was no exception. I learned that the difficulty of excavating a pile of medium to large sized rocks is inversely proportional to the quantity of rocks. Also, that the number of theories on how the rocks became arranged the way they did is simply a factor of the number of levels dug, multiplied by the number of units opened, squared by the number of crew chiefs with an opinion. All kidding aside, speaking for everyone I spoke with, we all enjoyed FS this year and we are all already thinking about the next one. I also became aware that a lot of TCAS members enjoy canoeing and kayaking, evidenced by the number times we enjoyed some boat trips on the beautiful San Saba River.

A few of us were lucky enough to have some of the Baylor students, who had just previously worked at the Sprague site, work with us at TAS Field School. Working side by side with them and seeing their energy and enthusiasm for archeology was very refreshing and reassuring. Thanks to them, Bryan Jameson and Carol Macaulay, TCAS sort of has a new focus on the significance and importance of our work and exactly what we should be doing at the Sprague site. I'll have more info on our future work there very soon.

Jay Hornsby

Jay Hornsby

Calendar of Activities

JULY

- 9-13** UTSA Center for Archeological Research Camp
~ages 13 and up
- 9-27** National Endowment for the Humanities Summer
Institute for School Teachers
Archeology of the Upper Mississippi River Valley
University of Wisconsin La Crosse
- 12** TCAS Meeting 7:30pm UNT-HSC
- 14-21** Rock Art recording in Painted Canyon ~ Lower
Pecos region (see June newsletter)
- 23-27** UTSA Center for Archeological Research Camp
~ages 10-12
- 24-25** Window on the Past Archaeology Workshop
Nightengale Archaeological Center
Kingsland ~ see page 5

AUGUST

- 9** TCAS Meeting 7:30pm UNT-HSC
- 9-12** 2007 Pecos Conference
Pecos National Historical Park, New Mexico

SEPTEMBER

- 28-30** 2007 Arkansas Archeological Society
Annual Meeting
Ozark Folk Center Mountain View, Arkansas

COMING UP

- Oct.
26-28** TAS Annual Meeting ~ Menger Hotel,
San Antonio ~ see page 4

WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU!

First time at Field School? Got an interesting Field School story, gossip, pictures, or observation? Let us all know what Field School meant to you. Just jot down a few paragraphs and send it in. We'll do the editing, picture cropping, and spelling corrections. And you'll get to see your article in an upcoming

TCAS Benchmark .

Impress your friends! Send your article to david.opper@tccd.edu.

TCAS BENCHMARK

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JULY PROGRAM

MICKEY MILLER

Did the Late Holocene Transition to the Bow and Arrow in North-Central Texas Increase Foraging Efficiency?



Born in Pampa TX, Mickey has had a lifelong passion for prehistoric cultures. He graduated from W. T. White high school in Dallas, received an Associates Degree in Science from Brookhaven College and received his B. A. in Anthropology from the University of North Texas. He is currently working on his thesis to complete an M.S. in Geography with a specialization in archaeology at the University of North Texas while working as a research assistant at the University of North Texas. Mickey is a lifelong archer and has been researching and making prehistoric style bows and arrows for twelve years.

Most researchers agree that there was an uninterrupted transition in the subsistence economy between the Late Archaic (3500-1250 bp.) and the Late Prehistoric (1250-250 bp.) periods in north-central Texas. The nomadic hunter/gatherers of both periods practiced a broad-spectrum subsistence economy focused on white-tailed deer, rabbit and turtle. However, faunal data from the Upper Trinity River at Lake Lewisville and Lake Ray Roberts indicate an increase in high-rank resources in the Late Prehistoric in terms of both costs and benefits. Essentially these people were taking wild game more efficiently than people in the Late Archaic. This could be due to the technological advent of the bow and arrow in the Late Prehistoric period.



NAME THAT POINT

This point was found alongside Perdiz points during studies at the site of what would become Joe Pool Lake.

Can you name it?

Average size:	20mm-35mm
Morphology:	Triangular and unnotched
Description:	Straight or slightly convex edges Straight, slightly convex, or slightly concave base
Distribution:	Central, South and East Texas
Age:	Late Prehistoric (800AD—1750AD)

2007 TAS FIELD SCHOOL

CONFESSIONS OF A FIRST TIME CREW CHIEF

When I was asked to act as a Crew Chief at the Janee Site during this 2007 Field School I was startled. All I knew about “crew chiefting” was it was a sit-around-doing-paperwork-kind-of-job. Were they just trying to get me away from digging? Were they that tired of me that they were trying to phase me out? Figuring that my excavating days were numbered anyway, I reluctantly agreed. I bought a couple of yellow pads and mechanical pencils and soberly turned up in Menard.

If they were trying to get rid of me they did a really bad job. I was given a top-notch crew: Ned Woodall (a professional archaeologist) and his wife Julia (who had surprisingly never dug before), David Goss from Dallas, and our own Gen Freix. When Ned and Julia had to leave early they were replaced by, again our own, Royce Baker. Who could ask for a better crew?

True to Murphy’s Laws of Archaeology the only finds until Ned and Julia had to leave were by the uninitiated Julia. When they left, their unit was taken over by Royce; immediately turning it sterile.

As will probably be discussed much more in the future, this block of units remained mostly sterile until my last day on site when, at 65cm, it revealed an apparent new cultural level. The highlight of findings was Gen casually mentioning, “I’ve got a hearth here.”

So here’s the important stuff I learned as a crew chief (you might want to keep a copy of this for when your turn comes up):



GEN'S HEARTH

Always keep your trowel handy because the PI won't be able to find their's

Be prepared “donate” your trowel to the PI in return for years of telling stories about the PI and your trowel (This also applies to tape measures, line levels, pencils, etc.)

No matter how many times you check the line level the Total Data Station will prove you wrong

If you measure your unit after the TDS (total data station) has defined it, it will range from .9 meters to 1.2 meters on a side and will be obviously, visually not square

Words like “unit,” “level,” “datum,” “flat” and “elevation” are defined differently by whether you are standing in the pit or out of it

Crew Chiefing is paperwork: Learn to use “tiny,” “small,” “medium,” “large,” and “gigantic” interchangeably to describe the same object

Learn and frequently use the Prewitt “Quote of the Site”: Negative information is still information

Your photos or article could be here...send it today...david.opper@tccd.edu

2007 TAS ANNUAL CONFERENCE

SET FOR SAN ANTONIO

NOW THAT FIELD SCHOOL IS OVER IT'S TIME TO START THINKING ABOUT THE TAS ANNUAL CONFERENCE. HERE ARE SOME SPECIFICS:

The Texas Archeological Society (TAS) meets October 26-28, 2007 at the Menger Hotel, 204 Alamo Plaza, San Antonio. Join archeologists to relate the results of your recent archeological investigations. Short talks, poster displays, and exhibits will relate intriguing details of the archeological work.

Professionals from around the state will meet on Friday at the Council for Texas Archeologists.



Kathleen Deagan

At 7 PM on Friday night archeologists, Kathleen Deagan and Mike Collins, will be featured at the free public forum. Dr. Deagan will speak on the Spanish Colonial Era and Dr. Collins will address the search for the first Americans. Identification of artifacts will be lead by Tom Hester, Harry Shafer and Sue Turner.

Following the forum, professionals representing archeological consulting firms, agencies, and universities will provide career information and job opportunities.



Mike Collins

On Saturday, October 27, papers and posters will be presented. Short talks on current work are encouraged. Presenters are invited to submit abstracts for consideration by September 1. Symposia titles and abstracts are due August 15. Presentation rooms will be equipped with PowerPoint projectors and laptop computers. Slide projectors will be made available upon request. Submit proposals to Harry Shafer, 212 Madison #5, San Antonio, Texas 78204, hshafer@satx.rr.com

The Saturday evening banquet speaker will be Dr. Doug Owsley, Curator and Division Head for Physical Anthropology at the Smithsonian Institution's National Museum of Natural History in Washington, D.C. Dr. Owsley will speak on life in Jamestown, Virginia which is celebrating it's 400th anniversary in 2007. You definitely don't want to miss this presentation!

Student attendance is at a discount rate and we hope that with so many universities and colleges in San Antonio, and just up the road in San Marcos and Austin, students from these universities will be encouraged to participate. Students are also invited to attend the CTA meeting as well as the Friday evening function, the latter designed to help them with their career planning.

Student scholarships are available. View www.txarch.org for more information on scholarships.

An exhibit/book room will be open during the meeting. At Saturday evening banquet, Doug Owsley, physical anthropologist from the Smithsonian Institution, will talk about recent investigations at Jamestown.

Learn more about the conference at www.txarch.org.

Meeting coordinator is Kay Hinds kay.hinds@sanantonio.gov (830) 570-0138. Local hosts are the Southern Texas Archaeological Association and the Center for Archaeological Research at UTSA.

TAS Contact: Pam Wheat, Executive Director pwheat@vplus.com (800) 377-7240.

We encourage everyone to turn in their Registration Forms and fees before October 5; that saves you money and helps your hosts with their planning

Event: Annual Meeting of Texas Archeological Society (TAS)

Dates: Friday, October 26 through Sunday, October 28, 2007

Location: The Menger Hotel, San Antonio, TX



Featured speaker
Dr. Doug Owsley

WINDOW ON THE PAST ARCHAEOLOGY WORKSHOP

AUSTIN — Teachers, history buffs and the general public are invited to a two-day "summer camp" on Lake LBJ July 24 and 25 to learn about archaeology as part of the Lower Colorado River Authority's (LCRA's) 14th annual teacher workshop.

The workshop is designed to show educators how to use archaeology in the classroom, but people interested in learning more about archaeology also are invited. Those attending the workshop will enjoy the surroundings at LCRA's [Nightengale Archaeological Center at Kingsland](#) on Lake LBJ.

Among the activities planned:

- Archaeologists and educators will make presentations about the prehistoric archaeology of Central Texas, with an emphasis on the connections between humans and the environment.
- Hands-on activities include:
 - using stone tools;
 - learning hunting techniques;
 - exploring archaeological field methods;
 - participating in excavations at an actual archaeological site.

Archaeology provides a unique forum for teachers, who can use the lessons to explore all sorts of subjects in social studies, language arts, mathematics, geography and other sciences.

"For example, students interested in prehistoric American Indians can study how they adapted to the geology and the natural processes that shaped their environment," said Andy Malof, LCRA staff archaeologist.

The cost is \$35 per day. Participants are not required to attend both days, but the first day is a prerequisite for the second.

The center is on a Colorado River site where more than 100,000 artifacts have been excavated since artifacts were discovered there by LCRA personnel in 1988.

Educators can earn up to 12 hours from the State Board of Education Certification, the Texas Environmental Education Advisory Committee, and the Texas Association for the Gifted and Talented.

For more information, e-mail [Andy Malof](#) or call 1-800-776-5272, Ext. 2753. or visit www.lcra.org



Not enough dig time? Looking for ways to be outdoors working on a project for the public good? Have you been to:

ONLINE RESOURCES
Passportintime.com

Passport In Time (PIT) is a volunteer archaeology and historic preservation program of the [USDA Forest Service](#). PIT volunteers work with Forest Service professionals on national forests throughout the U.S. on such diverse activities as archaeological survey and excavation, rock art restoration, survey, archival research, historic structure restoration, oral history gathering, and analysis and curation of artifacts.

The PIT site offers listings of projects by state so you can tailor your plans to available projects or pick projects in areas you wish to visit. As noted above, projects are varied as are locals. Some projects take place in or near large cities; others are wilderness adventures requiring primitive camping skills.

Pit volunteers are a wonderful group of folks and the Forest Service archeologists, historians, guides and co-workers are knowledgeable and likeable. Check out the PIT site. It may be just what you're looking for.



GROUND PENETRATING RADAR IN THE NEWS

THANKS TO TIFFANY OSBURN WE HAD A FIRST HAND GLIMPSE OF GPR AT FIELD SCHOOL THIS YEAR.

HERE IS AN EXAMPLE OF HOW THE NEW TECHNOLOGY IS BEING USED IN THE FIELD

Archaeologists work to dig up history without using a shovel

By [MIKE TONER](#) The Atlanta Journal-Constitution Published on: 07/01/07

Cartersville — From the visitors center at Etowah Mounds State Historic Site, the flat-topped pyramids of one of the Southeast's premier archaeological sites loom over the landscape — as imposing today as they were five centuries ago. At their base, the broad, grassy plain sloping toward the Etowah River gets scant attention from the 32,000 people who visit the park each year. Mounds, after all, are what Etowah is about.

"The focus of early archaeology was to get stuff — important, exciting stuff," says University of South Carolina archaeologist Adam King.

"Everyone knew they were going to find stuff in the mounds, so that's where they dug." And spectacular "stuff" it was — showy feathered headdresses, stone effigies, intricately carved shell ornaments and embossed copper plates that King says demonstrate that, in its day, Etowah was a veritable "Athens of the prehistoric South."

"The problem is that the mounds were where the important people lived and were buried," King says. "For a place that has been excavated on and off since 1884, we know very little about the rest of the people who lived here."

To remedy that, he and his team of archaeologists have focused on what other experts ignored — the grassy plain where the common people of Etowah lived and worked.

In the course of three surveys at Etowah since 2005 — the latest concluded last month — the team has not yet turned a shovelful of dirt or unearthed a single artifact.

But, with an assist from modern imaging technology that "sees" beneath the soil without disturbing it, they have found some intriguing new clues about the people who lived here long before white men set foot on the continent.

The ancient mounds — three large earthen pyramids and three smaller ones — were built along the Etowah River starting around A.D. 1000. The site was inhabited for nearly 500 years.

The clay daub and other materials used in dwellings and other buildings has different properties from the surrounding soil. A map of the difference in the magnetic properties shows the buried footprints of a thriving village that was dominated by Mound A, which towers more than 60 feet above the plain.

"There is a lot out there," says King. "To the north of Mound A and to the west, we see dense clusters of houses arranged around little plazas. I think what we are seeing are little neighborhoods within the larger Etowah — exactly what I would expect in terms of a village."

King says the smaller buildings are less than 30 feet across, but there are also a number of much larger structures.

"We see some monster buildings out there behind Mound A and a couple between A and C. There is at least one big one that may be 30 meters (100 feet) on a side," he says.

Estimates of Etowah's population have varied widely over the years, but King says the density of dwellings he has encountered so far suggest that, at its peak, there may have been 1,000 people or so.

There was never much doubt that there was a village or some sort at the foot of the massive mounds. Artist's conceptions — including those on display at the park — all show a community surrounded by a moat, a defensive palisade and the Etowah River.

Hard evidence and details of the village, however, have been more elusive. King was surprised to detect tangible traces of the village that survived 500 years of repeated flooding of the river plain and a century of plowing by people who farmed it before and after the Civil War.

"It may be that periodic flooding covered the area with enough sediment to protect the site," he says.

King estimates that it will take another year or two to completely map the entire 54-acre site, the first time that has ever been done. Using a variety of remote sensing techniques — ground-penetrating radar, magnetometers and electrical resistivity measurements — he hopes to develop an increasingly detailed view of what lies underground.

In a field where discovery and digging have long been synonymous, King wants to avoid the exuberant excavation — at times using a mule and a plow — that marked some of the earlier archaeology investigations at Etowah.

"We see how much information we can wring out of this place without ever putting a shovel in the ground," he says.

His cautious approach, however, stems from new cultural sensitivities as well. As the cultural descendants of the Muscogean-speaking people who once lived at Etowah, the Creek people have claimed Etowah as a sacred site and made it clear that they look with disfavor on any new excavation.

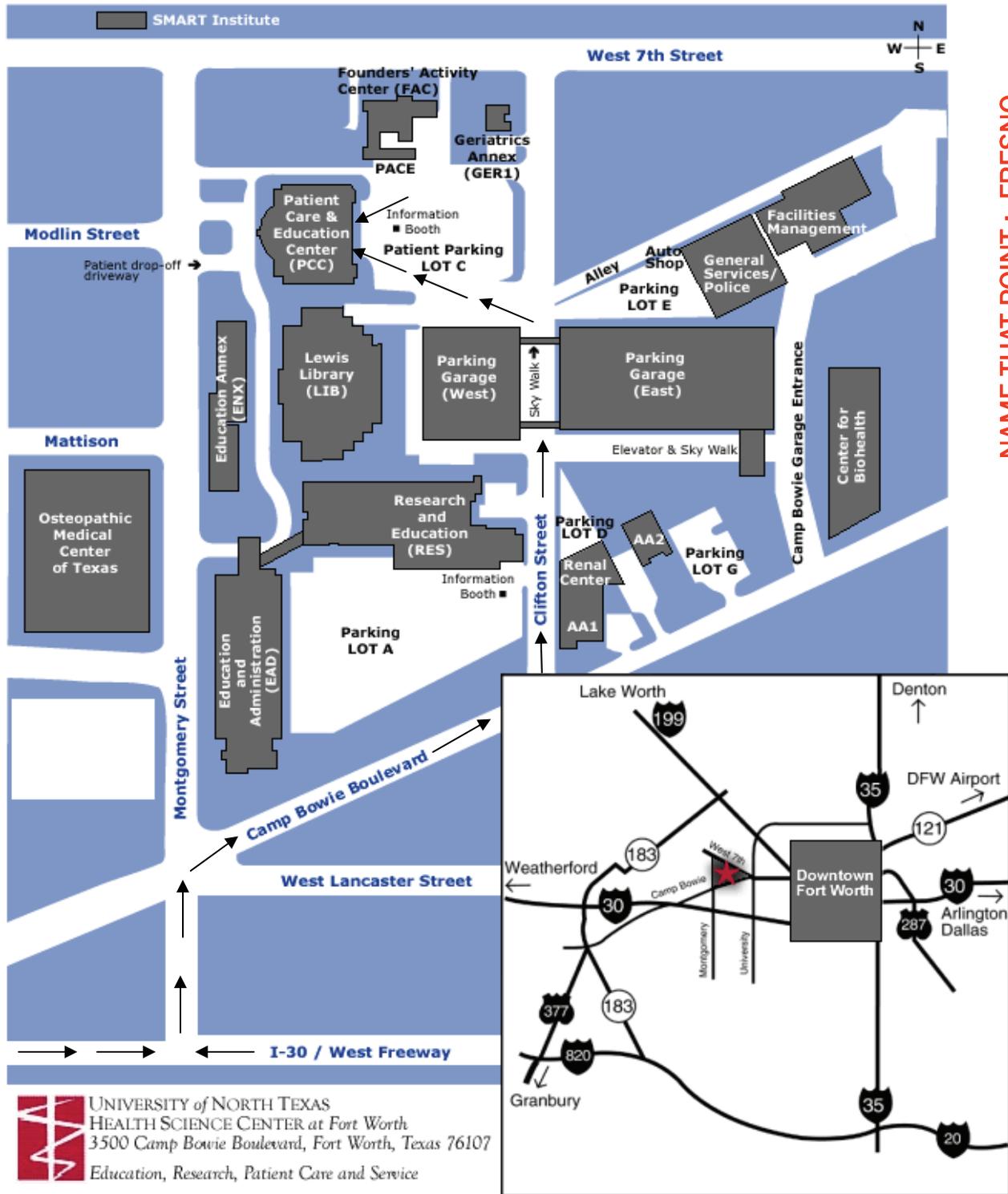
Despite the concerns, tribal cultural experts are working alongside the archaeologist in the efforts by King's team to use non-invasive methods — without excavation — to understand the "crown jewel" of Southeastern prehistory.

King — and the state of Georgia, which owns the site — hope the working alliance will pave the way for future cooperation if excavation is needed to resolve questions that remote sensing can't answer.

In the meantime, King plans to push the limits of new technology to "see" what, for now, he can't touch.

TCAS BENCHMARK

TCAS meets at 7:30PM, the 2nd Thursday of each month 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. Take Clifton Street off of Camp Bowie (one block east of the Montgomery intersection) to Parking Lot "C" on your left (west). 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.



TARRANT COUNTY ARCHEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

Membership / Renewal Form

Name(s) _____

Type of Membership:

Renewal ___ New Member ___

Address _____

___ Individual ___ \$20.00

City/State/Zip _____

___ Family ___ \$25.00

Home Phone _____

___ Student (H.S., active univ. degree candidate through age 25)

Employer _____

___ \$10.00

___ Contributing ___ \$30.00+

Email _____

___ Lifetime ___ \$250.00

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 practice 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 ground for expulsion from the Society.

Signature(s) _____ Date _____

TARRANT COUNTY ARCHEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

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