



ANCIENT ECHOES ANCIENT ECHOES ANCIENT ECHOES

Volume No. 22 Issue No. 2

April, May, June, 2012

Attention! NEW MEETING DATE!

Membership Meeting, Wednesday, May 2nd, 7 p.m.

**Speakers: Dr. Tom Wilson and Dr. Jerry Howard
MESA GRANDE; PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE**

AzMNH Theatre, 53 N. Macdonald (Enter from First Street)

Due to circumstances beyond our control we have had to change our meeting night to Wednesday instead of Thursday! Join us to learn about the new discoveries, and latest plans for the Mesa Grande site! There will also be an update on current archaeology work being done at the new Chicago Cubs spring training facility at Riverview Park.



**Toltec School at Centennial
Grand Opening — Page 4**

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Chair Chatter

Donna Bengé
Chairperson



The Southwest Archaeology Team celebrated Arizona's Centennial in several ways. For one the Toltec School for Colored Students was dedicated on February 14. We also had the Arizona Archaeology and Heritage Expo at the state capitol on March 3.

A dozen SWAT members attended the dedication of the Toltec School in spite of pouring rain and many big puddles of water. The one room school was now completely furnished with student chairs from when it was used by the students. Other appropriate furnishing had been put in place. Dick Myers had also added an authentic outhouse complete with a catalog for toilet paper. The ceremonies were held in the larger school located north of the one room schoolhouse. We still have some work to do on the schoolhouse and will now also help with the restoration of the larger school.

The Expo was held at the state capitol this year in commemoration of statehood. The setting was quite pleasant on the lawn under the many trees. At our location, we told about SWAT and helped children learn how to use pump drills. Though there was not a really big crowd, those who came were able to learn a number of things about archaeology and conservation of our heritage.

The signage that will be placed at Mesa Grande after the visitor center is built will soon be on display at the Arizona Museum of Natural History. You can presently see the information on the AzMNH website. At our May meeting, Tom Wilson and Jerry Howard will be telling us about the very interesting history of Mesa Grande. Jerry Howard's MCC students are presently excavating where the footings for the center will be placed, and another crew is monitoring trenches at the Riverview golf course where the Cub's spring training stadium will be built.

On April 7th, we will be going to the Verdugo stage stop and schoolhouse to make some repairs and on May 5th, we will again be working at the Toltec school site. We are also continuing to work at Pueblo Grande until it becomes too hot this summer.



SWAT Donation To Diving Lady

By Jim Britton

The historic Diving Lady sign at the Starlite Motel on Main in east Mesa welcomed travelers coming to the Phoenix area. Before valley freeways one of the main highways into "the valley of the sun" was by Mesa's Main Street which was also U.S. Highway 60-70 and 80-89. The 70 foot high sign, which was constructed in 1958, was blown over on October 5, 2010 during a powerful wind storm.

The Mesa Preservation Foundation took up the challenge to have it repaired and put back in place. The SWAT Board of Directors voted to help cover some of the remaining cost with a donation. On April 9, Donna and Jim presented a SWAT check for \$1000.00 to Vic Linoff, the Foundation President. The letters "MOTEL" have been installed but they still need over \$20,000 in donations to cover the cost of putting up the three body figures of the sign. The Foundation is a 501(c) (3) entity, so if you would like to make a tax deductible donation, please send it to: Mesa Preservation Foundation, P.O. Box 539, Mesa, AZ 85211-0539.



SWAT Project Updates

Pueblo Grande Stabilization

By Jim Britton

To do stabilization at prehistoric sites can be challenging in many ways. There is more involved than just throwing mud on a wall or relaying loose stones. There is a lot of preliminary work required. Prior to the actual workday at Pueblo Grande several things are done. First, it is necessary to do a condition assessment to determine where and what type of repairs are needed. Then it is necessary to estimate the amount of dirt and sand that will be required and transport it in five-gallon buckets to a place near where the majority of work will be done. On workday, the equipment is hauled to the work area, the water hose is attached to a nearby faucet, and the crew begin mixing the mud and applying it to the walls.

On the February workday the challenges were complicated by the fact we were going to do work in the large "storage room" located in the southwest corner of the mound. The bottom of this room is between 10 and 14 feet below the mound top. We had to use a long extension ladder to get in and out. The dirt and sand formed two separate piles on the room floor having been dumped in from the top edge. All the equipment had to be carried by ladder to the room bottom. The mud was mixed there and applied to all four wall bases and to the erosion voids in the wall faces.

It had been four years since we had done repairs in this room. Seventeen people worked 56 man-hours to repair the damage done during the four years. If you would like to help the PGM Mudslingers, call Jim Britton (480)827-8070 for the work schedule and times.

Toltec School

By Donna Bengé

On February 4, the SWAT crew worked to prepare for the grand opening of the one room school for colored students. A blackboard had been installed and everyone then helped to get and scrub desks which were stored in the larger school. The original homemade chairs that had originally been used by the students were still available. A wooden teacher's desk from that period had been purchased by SWAT from the Mesa Public Schools warehouse. After sweeping the floor, we placed the furniture in the building then put up the alphabet posters including some of the original ones. Some pictures donated by Wilson and Judy Allen were placed around the room. Later a stove and bookcase were also added. Books appropriate to the time period were on the teacher's desk and bookcase. A jump rope was hung by the pencil sharpener, and a box of chalk and ink pens along with pencils were also in evidence as were some writing slates. We were ready for the grand opening!

However, one more item was placed beside the school – the outhouse built by Dick Myers. He used some of the old wood that had been removed from the schoolhouse. Though there were bathrooms in the larger school, the segregated students had to use an outhouse.

As a legacy project, the school house was dedicated on Statehood Day and was attended by 60 guests. Ironically the black mayor of Eloy and the black Superintendent of Schools, who would have been segregated at the school in the past, were the main speakers. Dick Myers told about the restoration of the schoolhouse citing the help of SWAT. An oil painting of children playing outside the school by SWAT member and artist Carla Keaton was presented. The dedication was followed by tours of the schoolhouse and a reception with Centennial birthday cakes.

Verdugo Stage Stop and Schoolhouse

By Jim Britton

After working at the Toltec schoolhouse in October, 2011, three of us drove to Verdugo to do a condition assessment. On April 7th, a crew of seven returned to this site to do some repair work. It had been two years since we last did work there. The crew consisted of Donna



Dick Myers and Dick Brown repair a screen

Benge, Dick Brown, Jim Britton, Ed Mack, Dick Myers, K. J. Schroeder, and Joyce Wahlquist. Repairs at the schoolhouse included: one window screen replaced and one repaired, and mud applied to repair the slight erosion below each of the windows. Wind blows the rain in and it runs down the interior of the walls.

At the Stage Stop we repaired areas in both rooms where the interior mud plaster had been damaged. The northeast corner of the front room has had an erosion issue since the new roof was installed. Water was poured and thrown on different spots and at different angles along the north parapet to determine where the rain was getting through the roof. Some caulking was applied and we hope the problem has been resolved. We will know after the next big rain.

Considering that we had not done worked there in two years, the problems were minor. The sign telling that this was a Heritage Fund project had several bullet holes in it. Since the buildings are located in a relatively isolated area, it is impossible to monitor who comes there; most are respectful, but a destructive few are not. We will continue to monitor the structures and make repairs as needed.

Thoughts of Ben Mixon

Ben Mixon, One of SWAT's founding members passed away January 13, 2010. The two articles that follow recall his contributions, Memorial services have been held. No flowers or remembrances should be sent at this time

My Memories of Ben Mixon

By Jerry Howard

I have many very fond memories of working with Ben in the field. Our friendship began in 1978, a few short months after I arrived in Arizona to work at ASU. The anthropology department was conducting a volunteer excavation at the Broadway and McClintock site, staffed by students and a few experienced field archaeologists like Ben and Sam Baar.

The first Hohokam house I ever worked on I was fortunate to have Ben as my "pit partner" as we use to say. Ben taught me to excavate this type of feature and gave me many lasting pointers – techniques that I teach my field school students today. The house was a Classic period structure and I have not excavated one quite like it since. The structure had burned and the entire roof had collapsed directly onto the floor, laid out in front of us and showing how it had been put together by the Hohokam. I still remember the gleam of delight in Ben's eyes as we uncovered this remarkable piece of the past. It was the thrill of discovery, a thrill that we shared and one which lead to a close and lasting friendship.

We excavated many sites after that, the Rowley Site which operated for 15 years and where a small group of us, including Ben, started the Southwest Archaeology Team. We also worked at Mesa Grande; Ben had been one of the three people to recover information from the southeast corner of the site prior to that area being destroyed by the construction of Date Street in 1971. Having Ben working beside us to preserve the ruin over three decades after his first work at the site was a great experience.

Ben was not just a brilliant field archaeologist, although I can honestly say he was the best person at reading the soil that I have ever worked with. He also had a very questioning scientific mind – making observations, testing ideas and formulating new interpretations as we worked in the field and later in the lab. Ben's ability to see what was happening in the excavation, to find features and evidence others did not see, was uncanny. It lead to a private joke between Ben and all of us that every time we thought we were finished Ben would find something else and we would have to keep working! Every time he would find a feature at the last minute, he would get a good natured ribbing from all of us. It was really our way of showing our respect for Ben's abilities in the field.

For all the great memories of working in the field my

most precious memory of Ben was something that had nothing to do with archaeology but something very personal. While I had no interest in smoking in high school, in college I was an anthropologist and as such, took the wrong turn and began smoking a pipe. This mistake got me hooked and I eventually began smoking cigarettes in the field, it was easier. One day Ben came up to me and we were discussing, as we often did, the strategy for the excavation and what work we would assign to the volunteers. As we talked, I lit a cigarette. Suddenly Ben stopped talking amid a thought and paused. He looked me in the eye and said, straightforward and simply, "That is going to kill you." After another brief pause, he said something like "I would hate to see that happen." It was not a nagging type of comment and it was, I am sure, a difficult thing for him to say. But it was clear that Ben cared for me as a close friend and was truly concerned about me. He did me a great favor.

The truth of Ben's statement struck me and I couldn't forget it. Within a short time I took a trip to California and was out of my normal environment for a couple of weeks. Thanks to Ben, I took that opportunity and quit smoking. He certainly saved my health from what could have been years of abuse and he may possibly have saved my life. Today at 60, I run for exercise having been freed of my (thankfully short) addiction.

Ben was a close colleague and fellow archaeologist, a close friend and a teacher, both to me and to our hundreds of volunteers. I will cherish his memory and his many contributions. This year Mesa Grande will be open to visitors for the first time. Thanks to Ben's work, and the work of many others, we can continue to teach the lessons, the excitement and the romance of archaeology. It is part of Ben's legacy.

More Memories of Ben

By Jim Britton

It was May 25, 1986 when I first met Ben. SWAT members were excavating at the Pew Site in Mesa.

From the Pew site, Ben and the other SWAT members returned to continue excavation at the Rowley Site in Mesa. It was at this site that I introduced Marie to the world of archaeology and she had the opportunity to meet Ben. We worked together at this site for several years. In 1990, Ben invited several SWAT members to help him excavate the Larson Site located about 15 miles north-east of Heber. In Oct 1998, Ben asked me to help do some reconstruction and stabilization at the Black Canyon rock Shelter near Heber for the National Forest Service. I also had the pleasure of doing excavation with Ben at the Mesa Grande. The City was going to construct a

Continued on next page

Thoughts of Ben Mixon

Continued from previous page

block fence around the site and was required to do archaeological investigation in the area to be impacted. The City under the supervision of Jerry Howard hired Ben, myself and a couple of the other SWAT members to do the excavation and documentation. Ben had a lot of experience and knew what to look for when excavating. It was always a pleasure to work with him.

He was what I call a real "researcher" in that he was always looking at archaeological evidence to find its real meaning to the prehistoric people who had lived hundreds of years ago. An example of this was his archaeoastronomy research. His findings regarding the "Hole in the Rock" at Papago Park in Phoenix was published in Volume 8, Number 4 of "The Astronomy Quarterly" in 1991. The article was entitled "Skywatchers of the Salt River Valley Hohokam." He worked with Native Americans to understand their culture. It seems he wanted the ability to look at rock art and possible solstice markers with the eyes of a Hohokam and understand their true meaning. He was an expert in analyzing prehistoric stone tools and how they were made. He was a great artist being able to sketch ground stone tools and projectile points, making them look real on paper.

Ben will be missed by everyone who knew him. Ben was a true "gentleman." It was always a pleasure to be with him and to work with him.

Milo Mendenhall Memorial

Milo passed away on February 28 from complications with kidney failure and cancer.

Milo was very active with the paleontology volunteers. He went on several expeditions including the Stegomastodon dig near Safford in eastern Arizona in 2007.

Gavin McCullough described Milo as always being a cheerful and mellow guy. He obviously liked digging in the dirt because in addition to digging up dinosaurs he got involved with SWAT. His work with SWAT included the Pecos Road excavation and stabilization at Verdugo schoolhouse. As his health worsened, K.J. Schroeder began bringing Milo to Verdugo where he helped mix mud with K.J.

He was a great guy that will be missed by all who knew him.



SWAT Study Group Focuses On 1940-1960 Period

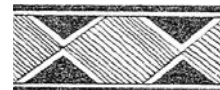
By Ellen Martin

The group has one more Saturday meeting; May 12th, at 1:30-3:30 pm in the Museum Annex. We'll also finish up our 1950s Southwestern Journal of Anthropology series of papers.

The focus is still the 1940-1960 Southwestern Archaeology time period, but we're moving in a new direction with a selection of books which should lend themselves to interesting reading and discussion. We welcome any SWAT member who's intrigued by the past...and loves to read...to attend our Spring meeting, or our November 10th session.

For November and December 2012: Lister, Florence C., and Robert H. Earl Morris & Southwestern Archaeology. University of New Mexico Press, 1968. This is a synopsis of Four Corners Area and Anasazi prehistory, especially Morris' work at Aztec Ruins, a Chacoan outlier in the San Juan Basin northeast of Farmington, NM. It's both a biography and an overview of the formative years of Southwestern archaeology.

I hope you'll consider joining us. Any questions? Contact Ellen Martin at 480-820-1474 or e13martin@hotmail.com



Lab Group Awaits New Storage Area

By Donna Bengge

The future storage area in the basement of the Federal Building across the street from the AzMNH is being remodeled with replastering and painting as well as installation of doors, etc. The Monday exhibit crew is now constructing rows of shelving that was received from the City of Mesa courts and libraries. Work tables will be placed along the walls where artifacts will be put into archival boxes. We are looking forward to having access to this space.

During lab meetings we are continuing to transfer artifacts to archival bags in preparation for moving them to the Federal building. We are also checking in Mesa Grande artifacts found during the MCC class excavations last year, and working on getting the notes in order and filed in notebooks.



New Membership Application Renewal

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Home Phone: _____ Work Phone: _____

Email: _____

Date: _____

Membership Type: Family (\$20) Individual (\$15) Student (\$10)
Family Member Names: _____

Areas Of Interest

I Want To Help With

- Calling Committee
- Education/Teaching Programs
- Excavation
- Lab Analysis
- Stabilization
- Survey

I Want To Learn More About

- Excavation Techniques
- Historic Preservation
- Stabilization Techniques
- Survey Techniques
- Other: _____

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