

ANCIENT ECHOES ANCIENT ECHOES ANCIENT ECHOES

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July, August, September, 2009

SWAT MEMBERSHIP MEETING

October 1, 2009, 7 p.m.

Guest Speaker: Hoski Schaafsma

**Theater of the Arizona Museum of Natural History,
53 N. Macdonald St., Mesa, AZ (enter on First Street)**

The speaker for the October meeting is Hoski Schaafsma, who will discuss “A Landscape Perspective on the Perry Mesa Tradition.” Schaafsma has conducted archaeological fieldwork in New Mexico, Guam, Northern Mariana Islands, Hawaii, California, Utah and Arizona. His research interests include human manipulation of landscapes and their role in plant community dynamics, and landscape ecology. Two other sites where he is conducting research on the legacy of prehistoric agriculture on modern plant communities are the Upper Sonoran Desert along Cave Creek and desert grasslands in Agua Fria National Monument.

Schaafsma holds a master’s degree in plant biology from ASU and is presently working on a doctorate at ASU’s School of Life Sciences. The National Science Foundation recently awarded him an Integrative Graduate Education and Research Trainee Fellowship. He is a member of the Society for American Archaeology, the Ecological Society of America and the International Association of Landscape Ecology.

You won’t want to miss this informative presentation.



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www.southwestarchaeologyteam.org

Chair Chatter

Donna Bengé
Chairperson



We're finished!

The stabilization on the schoolhouse at Verdugo Site has been completed. We recently applied the final coat of mud plaster on the walls and installed wood where it needed to be replaced. Our architect, Ron Peters, has inspected the work we've done. We hauled away the trash and will begin planning for an open house this fall.

Our fall meeting will be on October 1st with a special program, featuring Hoski Schaafsma, so mark your calendar.

Both the lab and exhibit crews have remained busy during the summer, as have the Schoolhouse workers. By fall we'll be working at Pueblo Grande again and probably Mesa Grande.



New Project Ahead For Lab

This summer we are analyzing Mesa Grande sherds but will soon be starting a challenging new project. Archival boxes and bags have been purchased by the museum, and we will be rebagging and boxing all of our archaeological artifacts. They will then be stored in a large repainted and remodeled area in the basement of the Federal Building across from the museum.

Exhibits Crew Stays Busy

We've been working on numerous projects: taking down the "Poop" exhibit, improving the shop space, making rock bases for the dinosaurs on Dinosaur Mountain, repairing the Mars exhibit and pit house floor, making hands-on items for the "Lights, Color, Action" exhibit which will open in November, working in the courtyard, and making more mega-puzzles for the kids. We're missing Susan Wolfe though, as she has recently moved to Prescott. However, we welcome Ruth Teller who recently started helping on Mondays.

Light! Color! Action!

A New Exhibition Opening November, 2009

This exciting hands-on exhibit will allow young and old to explore the relationships between light, color, and movement. Light, Color and Action will integrate the physical and natural history principals of Arizona Museum of Natural History.

We will explore the following concepts:

- Why is the sky blue?
- What are afterimages?
- How to make colored shadows.
- Animals in the desert.
- Light and prisms.
- Color mixing (primary and secondary colors)
- Diffraction grating.
- Explore the dark room for visual perception.

The outcomes for this exhibit include engaging the visitor in an inquiry based science exhibition that is dynamic and fun.

Here's How To Keep Up With SWAT!

Check In often

at:

www.southwestarchaeologyteam.org

... for current
information on:

- SWAT Projects
- Learning Opportunities
- Informative Meetings
- Volunteer Opportunities
- Much More!

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The Old Mesa Federal Building:

A Progress Report

By Dr. Jerry Howard

The old Mesa Federal Building, located on Pepper Street, just south of the museum's "research center," was originally built in the 1930s and served as the Mesa Post Office. In the early 1950s the building was dramatically expanded. When the new US Post Office was built on First Street the building became known as "the federal building," and served as offices for many different federal agencies including the Tonto Forest and the local branch of the Small Business Administration. With continued growth and demand for services, these agencies also moved to new quarters and the federal building was vacated.

The federal government soon issued an announcement; the building would be given to a local government agency or a non-profit group. Submitting formal proposals, many groups put in their bid to acquire this large complex but in the end, the Arizona Museum of Natural History had the winning proposal. The building was transferred to the city of Mesa for use as a museum facility.

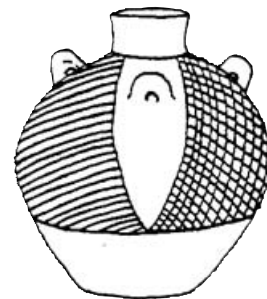
Unfortunately, the city of Mesa was already coming into hard times. Money could not be allocated even to keep the air conditioning systems running. Asbestos problems required an EXPENSIVE abatement program. The building lay still, being used only for temporary storage, until now.

Using cultural impact fees, the city was able to move forward with the asbestos abatement program at the end of June. Several SWAT members were involved, including Bert Strobl who was hired to organize and led the team that spent three weeks cleaning out the build-

ing. They filled several huge dumpsters before they were finished! The asbestos abatement team then tore the place up, removing walls, carpets and even in one case, parts of the concrete floor. Tim Walters followed up with a team that cleaned up in their wake.

At the same time, the museum found that a year of penny-pinching resulted in some money being available at the end of the year. Director Tom Wilson allocated some of the funds to purchase shelving, artifact boxes and artifact bags. This will allow us to put the Rowley Site collections in new containers and store them in the federal building.

The current plan is to use a large basement room as an archaeological storage area. In the next month, we will rally SWAT members and other volunteers to paint and repair the room and to place the material into new boxes and bags. This is an exciting time, getting a new storage area for the archaeological collections. In the future, we hope to build a new and bigger archaeological laboratory in the building.



Verdugo Stage Stop and Schoolhouse Project

Ron Peters and Jerry Howard making final inspection of the schoolhouse, one of two buildings at the Verdugo Homestead Historic Site.



By Jim Britton

Our involvement at the Verdugo Homestead Historic Site began on February 6, 2001. Several SWAT members met Bill and Ellie Strader at the McDonalds restaurant in Coolidge. They were Site Stewards for this site and had done extensive research on its history. They had been unsuccessful in trying to find anyone that would help stabilize and preserve the two deteriorating structures. Jim Garrison, State Historic Preservation Officer, suggested they contact SWAT. After our visit, the SWAT Board decided we would answer their call for help.

Our first workday was October 27, 2001. By April 29, 2006 we had replaced the roof and repaired the adobe walls of the stage stop. As we were finishing the work at the stage stop, we decided to take on the challenge of stabilizing the walls and replacing the roof on the Schoolhouse.

Our involvement in stabilizing the old schoolhouse began on February 14, 2005, when Ron Peters, a Preservation Architect, did a building condition assessment. Ron also prepared a report that was required for SWAT to apply for a Historic Preservation Heritage Fund Grant. On September 26, 2005, we received a letter stating that this project had been approved for a \$3000.00 grant. Since then we have replaced the roof with new lumber where needed, installed new corrugated tin roofing, repaired all eroded adobe walls, replaced window and door frames where needed, and applied a fine mud plaster to the interior walls.

A small area on the north wall of the small room was



Wall showing adobe brick construction has been left exposed. The dark portion of wall is wet mud plaster.

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At left, SWAT members unloading one of two trailers full of Verdugo trash at the Eloy landfill. Below, KJ documenting three historic box springs that were located and identified in the trash pile.



Verdugo Project

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left unplastered so that visitors could see and appreciate the adobe bricks that were used to construct the walls.

On June 13, 2009, the last wall was plastered with fine mud and we declared the project complete. On July 24, a crew went to the site to remove the remaining old wood, tin roofing, and trash that had been inside the structure. We made two trips to the Eloy landfill. Ron Peters came and inspected the completed stabilization and roof replacement. He will provide written documentation that we satisfactorily met the requirements of the Heritage Fund grant. We really appreciated Ron's help in meeting the grant requirements.

Even though we have declared the project complete, we will still be doing occasional work at the site. We have some touch up work to do at the stage stop, and we will monitor both structures in the future for problems such as wall erosion and loose roofing.



The stage stop, above, and the schoolhouse, at left, will continue to be monitored to correct any roof damage and wall erosion.



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