



THE
Albuquerque Archaeological Society
Newsletter

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December 2020

VIRTUAL HOLIDAY PROGRAM WITH YOUR OWN HOME POTLUCK

7:30 pm Tuesday, December 15, 2020

Via Zoom

At Your Computer or Smart Phone

Among the season's celebrations we'll all be missing this year is the AAS annual Holiday Potluck Party, our chief social gathering of the year. But we will be able to enjoy via Zoom the usual program of four short slide presentations by our members about archaeological sites they have visited in past years:

Ann Carson – Never Say No in Thailand

Jo Lynne Fenger – Eight Kachina/Katsina Tithu: Collaboration Conservation

Carol Chamberland – Hidden Treasures of Petroglyph National Monument

Tom Windes – Beautiful Things, Hugs, and Soot

The program will follow a brief business meeting, where members will vote to approve the slate of officers and directors presented at the October meeting and which had no additional nominations from the floor at the November meeting. The nominees are the present officers and directors, who have all agreed to serve for another year: Evan Kay, President; Gretchen Obenauf, First Vice President; Ann Braswell, Second Vice President; Susan King, Secretary; Tom Obenauf, Treasurer; John Guth and Cindy Carson, Directors at Large.

A day or so prior to the meeting, an email message will be sent to members with the link for the Zoom meeting. If you haven't joined us before – or even if you have – plan to join the meeting 10–15 minutes before the 7:30 start time to get familiar with Zoom (some procedures may have changed or differ from other Zoom productions) and say "Hi" to friends already in the meeting. All the participants except the speakers will be muted by host Evan Kay when the presentations begin and until the question-and-answer session following the program.

AAS DUES FOR 2021 ARE NOW PAYABLE

If you have not already done so, please fill out the attached membership renewal form and mail it with your check to Treasurer, Albuquerque Archaeological Society, PO Box 4029, Albuquerque NM 87196. Don't be shy about showing interest in working with a committee or serving on the Board. Wider membership participation is needed and encouraged.

ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM PRESIDENT EVAN KAY AT THE NOVEMBER 17 VIRTUAL MEETING

The meeting was convened at 7:30 by president Evan Kay, who relayed the following reports.

From Treasurer Tom Obenauf: Little has changed since last month. Our CDs that matured late October were deposited in our money market account. There is \$3904 in the checking account. We got the refund from the Albuquerque Museum for the meeting room we didn't use for the month of September.

Membership dues for 2021 are beginning to come in. There are five renewals and one new member. The goal is to encourage early renewals to spread out the workload for the Membership Chair and the Treasurer. Please send in your dues sooner rather than later.

Students are asked to complete and send in a membership form even though they don't need to pay dues. After the first of the year those who were student members this past year will be contacted individually.

Election of officers: There's a full slate of candidates for next year. Everyone who served last year is willing to fill those positions for the coming year, and no members came forward to run for any position. It was moved and seconded that nominations be closed and that the vote occur at December's meeting, and the motion passed.

From Rock Art Recording Team Chair Carol Chamberland: Fieldwork has been put on hold since the Governor's new stay-at-home order. Prior to that several people had been going out three times a week.

From Vice President Gretchen Obenauf: Volunteers are still needed to give a short slide show for the December meeting.

Ann Braswell has enlisted UNM Anthropology professor Frances Hayashida to speak at the January meeting.

SPEAKER

Vice President Gretchen Obenauf introduced our speaker, Steve Lekson, who received his PhD degree from the University of New Mexico in 1988 and is the author of numerous books, chapters, and articles on Southwestern archaeology. His most recent post before retirement was as Curator of Archaeology at the Museum of Natural History, University of Colorado-Boulder. Dr. Lekson provided the following synopsis of his presentation.

Respectfully submitted by Susan King, Secretary.

T-Doors, Sub-Floors, and Tri-Walls: Clunky Evidence in the Age of Big Data

By Steve Lekson, University of Colorado-Boulder

Southwestern archaeology has entered the world of Big Data. Projects such as Village Ecodynamics, Southwest Social Networks, and Cyber Southwest marshal masses of data so large that a computer is mandatory. Millions of pot sherds from thousands of sites go into the machine, and out pop maps showing various aspects of prehistory. It's really impressive and exciting!

There's still a role, however, for lower-quantity, high-quality evidence: for example, Chaco Great Houses, which number around 200. It is conceivable that an archaeologist could visit every one of them, to know them personally (I've probably seen about half of them). They define a "landscape" – Chaco's region – in ways that potsherds may or may not duplicate. In fact, most of the pottery we see at far-flung Great Houses is "local," which shouldn't surprise us. Masses of pottery tell us about one aspect of human dynamics; monumental architecture tells us about another layer of social behaviors.

Tri-walled structures, T-shaped doors, and sub-floor burials are three examples of clunky evidence that are potentially useful – even critical – for understanding the ancient Southwest. They complement Big Data approaches, even if sometimes contradicting Big Data in constructive ways.

Tri-walled structures have been known from the Four Corners since the earliest explorations. Multi-walled structures can also be bi-walled, or, more rarely, quadri-walled. The first excavated example was at Pueblo del Arroyo in Chaco Canyon, dubbed by Neil Judd the "McElmo Tower." Over the years, more bi- and tri-walls have been identified, most impressively at Aztec Ruins. At Aztec Ruins, John Stein and Peter McKenna determined that tri-walled and quadri-walled structures defined the basic cityscape of that regional center. Aztec was all about tri-walls.

Perhaps two dozen bi- and tri-walls are known, from Aztec on the east to Aneth, Utah on the west, and south to Gallup and Ganado, Arizona. Examples recorded in the late nineteenth century along the San Juan River were interpreted as multi-storied round towers (Judd's "McElmo Tower") surrounded by concentric rings of single-story rooms. And that proved to be the case later in Crow Canyon's excavations of the "Great Tower" at Yellow Jacket, Colorado.

If we take bi- and tri-walled structures as emblematic of Aztec Ruins – a reasonable assumption – their distribution probably "maps" Aztec's effective region. That distribution contrasts intriguingly with the social/economic geography of Aztec's area as defined by a remarkable Big Data project, the Southwest Social Network project (Archaeology Southwest, University of Arizona, and Arizona State University). While Social Networks based on potsherds divide into northern and southern clusters, the distribution of bi- and tri-walls overlaps both. This conflict does not negate Social Networks, but probably shows us social/economic dynamics overlain by Aztec's political region. Clunky evidence and Big Data, together, may give us richer understandings of the ancient Southwest.

Iconic T-doors, numbering many hundreds in the Four Corners, similarly map the political history of the Southwest across large "Culture Areas" (pre-computer Big Data), specifically, Anasazi/Pueblo and Mogollon. T-doors originate at Chaco (850-1125), where they were limited to Great Houses. They continue at Aztec Ruins (1110-1280), where they were democratized, appearing at non-Great-House sites throughout Aztec's region. After the exodus of tens of thousands of people from the Four Corners (1250-1300), T-doors vanish from the Pueblo region. Claims of T-doors at several post-1300 sites disappear under close scrutiny as do reports of isolated T-doors at one or two modern Pueblos. Effectively, there were no T-doors above the Mogollon Rim after 1300. About 1250/1300, T-doors reappear, in quantity, in the Casas Grandes region, at its center at Paquimé and famously in cliff dwellings of the Sierra Madre.

The "T" shape was freighted with symbolism – a fact attested by two remarkable stone T-shaped altars discovered at Paquimé, and by the fact that large T-doors were used in exterior walls, that is, in situations where the door would be readily visible. The "T" form identified the building and presumably its occupants. The "migration" of T-doors from Chaco, to Aztec, and then to Paquimé is strong evidence for political and historical continuity of these three regional capitals ("Chaco Meridian") – a continuity also demonstrated in other low-number, high-significance features, but less in conventional archaeological fodder, such as pottery.

My final category is sub-floor burials. In some Southwestern societies, the dead were buried, tightly flexed, in pits dug in the corners or along the wall-foundations of rooms, often with a pot near the head. The floor was re-plastered over the grave and the room continued in use. This is a very unusual method of dealing with the dead. Elsewhere in the Southwest, burials occurred in middens, in cemeteries, in extra-mural tombs, and – rarely – on the floors of rooms that were then sealed and converted to mausoleums. Only two well-studied ancient societies practiced sub-floor burials: Mimbres (950-1125) and Casas Grandes (1250-1450). At the Mimbres site of Swartz Ruin, about 90 percent of the 1000

burials were sub-floor, with most of the remainder being similarly interred below plazas. At Paquimé, over 60 percent of about 450 burials were sub-floor, with the remainder beneath plazas.

There are many reasons to think that Mimbres constituted a significant part of the base population of Casas Grandes. There were about 6,000 Mimbres people, almost all of whom left their towns and villages about 1125. The Casas Grandes region at its height numbered in the many tens of thousands, so it seems likely Mimbres would have been only one of several groups involved. But there is a century-plus gap between the end of Mimbres and the rise of Casas Grandes. The answer might lie within little-known Black Mountain phase, intermediate in both time and space between Mimbres and Casas Grandes. Few of the Black Mountain phase adobe pueblos – some of which are very large – have been excavated, but those few reveal that Black Mountain burials were sub-floor. QED?

LATEST ISSUE OF *POTTERY SOUTHWEST* NOW AVAILABLE ONLINE

Pottery Southwest, Fall-Winter edition, is now available at potterysouthwest.unm.edu/, click on "Current Issue." This issue includes major articles on Mimbres Pottery iconography by Marc Thompson, ceramics at Chaco Canyon Talus Unit No. 1 by Joan Mathien and Thomas Windes, and on the typology and sourcing of San Juan Redwares by William Lucius. Additional short contributions include book reviews and comments on digital microscopes. The editors appreciate the many excellent articles submitted to PSW, and thank the Albuquerque Archaeological Society for its sponsorship.

ALBUQUERQUE ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY PO Box 4029, Albuquerque, NM 87196 www.abqarchaeology.org and www.facebook.com/abqarchsoc

Annual Dues: For emailed Newsletter: Student, no charge (provide copy of current ID); Basic Individual \$25; Basic Family \$30. Print Newsletter by First Class Mail: Basic Individual \$30; Basic Family \$35; Institutions/Libraries: \$10 for print Newsletter by First Class Mail, emailed Newsletter at no charge.

2020 OFFICERS, DIRECTORS, AND COMMITTEE CHAIRS

To contact officers or committee chairs, or to change mailing or email address, email info@abqarchaeology.org or consult Membership Directory. Current members can sign up for field trips at meetings or by emailing trips@abqarchaeology.org.

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2021

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I/We would be interested in working with the following committees:

- ☐ Greeters (name tags & guest signup at meetings);
☐ Membership (keep track of membership lists and send renewal notices);
☐ Assist Membership chair with display and signups at archaeological events;
☐ Field Trips (arrange for trip or assist chair with signups and follow up);
☐ Laboratory (assist with Hibben Center archival work);
☐ AAS Newsletter editorial assistant/trainee;
☐ AAS 50th Anniversary Volume Editor, assistant, researcher;
☐ Board of Directors (and position desired);
☐ Other (describe on back).

Mail the completed form and your membership dues check (payable to Albuquerque Archaeological Society or AAS) to:
Treasurer, Albuquerque Archaeological Society, P.O. Box 4029, Albuquerque, NM 87196-4029

Questions about Membership? (address, email changes, current dues verification, etc.): Email info@abqarchaeology.org.

AAS is a 501(c)(3) non-profit corporation and your Sustaining contributions are tax deductible

COVID-19 notice: During the pandemic we must limit print copies of the Newsletter to institutions and members who do not have Internet access at home. Please check here to confirm you do not have internet access at home: ☐