

Dialogues With Dirt

Hill Country Archeological Association
Newsletter
April – May, 2023

HCAA General Meeting Saturday, May 20, 2023 12Noon

Riverside Nature Center 150 Francisco Lemos, Kerrville
The meeting is free and open to the public



The Nighthawk Bison Jump (41BI564/41BI565): Initial results from the 2022 Texas Tech Test Excavations in Caprock Canyon State Park

Dr. Gus Costa

In 2021, THC Steward Rick Day and Susan Day located bison bones eroding out of a slope below the Caprock escarpment on the western border of Caprock Canyon State Park in Briscoe County. TAS fellow Chris Lintz in coordination with Tony Lyle, (regional TPWD archaeologist) launched a follow up reconnaissance and documented extensive bison bones in two locations. These sites were inferred to represent a Late Archaic to Late Prehistoric bison jump kill site and an adjacent processing site. Aside from Bonfire Shelter (41VV218, Val Verde county), this discovery represents the only bison jump in Texas and the broader southern plains. TPWD collaborated with Drs. Brett Houk and Tamra Walter at Texas Tech University to organize a field school to test and salvage a sample from the sites in the Fall of 2022. This talk will review the initial results of those field investigations and ongoing conservation and analysis of the bison remains.

Our Guest Speaker, Dr. August “Gus” Costa is an independent consulting archaeologist that provides specialist support in geoarchaeology, artifact and faunal analysis. Gus earned a doctorate focusing on paleoanthropology at Indiana University.

Gus is an adjunct lecturer at Rice University where he has taught courses in geoarchaeology, paleontology, paleotechnology and Asian Prehistory, and an independent consultant primarily in Geoarchaeology working for a variety of CRM firms in Texas and across the south.

To become a HCAA Member, please visit our web site at www.hcarcheology.org



HCAA General Meeting – Raffle!



Replica GOLONDRINA Point
Paleoindian Period: 7,000 – 6,000BC
Edwards "Root Beer" Chert : Gillespie Co. TX
Mike McBride : April, 2023

As part of our General Meeting fundraiser, one of our raffle items will be this replica Golondrina point. Mike made it from local "Root Beer" flint, and this point is a copy of Golondrina points recovered from the CWR project (below). Recovery of Golondrina points helps us date parts of CWR to 9,000 years ago!



Alice Seely Vintage Pin with Anasazi Petroglyph Designs

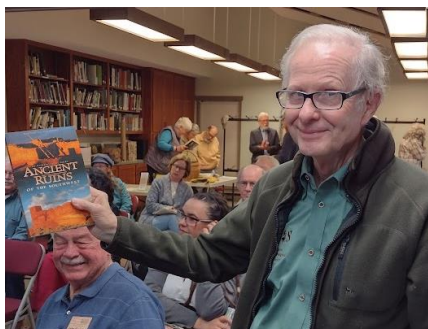


Pin with Anasazi Petroglyph designs

The raffle will also include this piece of vintage Pueblo design jewelry by well-known New Mexico artist Alice Seely. She is best known for her wearable art, featuring designs inspired by the petroglyph images found throughout the American West; her designs are featured on earrings, bracelets, pendants and brooches, cast in pewter and hand finished by the artist.

All Raffle donations go toward HCAA's mission of Education, Conservation, and Research!

March Meeting Raffle Winners!



The Texas Archeological Society will be heading to Nacogdoches County for the 2023 Field School!

JUNE 10-17, 2023

TAS is excited to work with Dr. Tamra Walter and regional experts on Spanish Colonial Mission-related sites in the Caddo region.



Registration for this year's TAS Field School is now open! This year's field school will be held in Nacogdoches County from June 10th - June 17th. This year, TAS is fortunate to conduct excavations at the Gallant Falls Site (41NA344), an important contact period Mission Concepcion site, and two nearby and associated Hainai Caddo structures at 41NA338 (the Ben Gallant site) and 41NA346 (the Belle Gallant site). More information is at:

<https://www.txarch.org/Field-School>

HCAA Fieldwork Committee Report

HCAA Research at Crying Woman Ranch 41KR754 Continues

In the last Newsletter, I gave an overview of the Crying Woman Ranch Project (CWR) that HCAA has been conducting for the past 4 years. The CWR site has 2 very unique areas that we have been excavating with many new discoveries in both the Archaic/Late Prehistoric Periods, as well as the much earlier Paleoindian Period. We have designated them as the “Archaic Area” and the “Paleo Area”.

In the Paleo Area, one of the most important discoveries over the past year has been the excavation of an undisturbed flat limestone cooking hearth that looks like a stone barbeque griddle (Figure 1). This is named Unit 14 Feature 1. The cooking stone arrangement is unlike any other that we have seen at CWR. After careful excavation of the griddle, we sequentially recorded and removed each flat stone, and recovered very good samples of charcoal from under several of them.

In our excavations in Unit 14 and the adjacent Units 9 and 11 (Designated Block 1), we have recovered extinct *Bison antiquus* bone fragments (Figure 2) and over a dozen specimens of St. Mary’s Hall (SMH) projectile points (figure 3). These recoveries have been extremely important when combined with the discovery of the *in situ* cooking hearth due to the Paleoindian Period age that we proposed for this Block. (continues next page)...

Figure 1.



Unit 14 Feature 1: Limestone cooking griddle, 10,250 years old.

Figure 2. *Bison Antiquus* bones.
Radiocarbon dated to 10,400 years ago.



HCAA Fieldwork Committee Report, cont..

HCAA Research at Crying Woman Ranch (cont...)

To confirm our theories, the Bison bone and the charcoal were sent to the Penn State University AMS Lab for radiocarbon dating. Over the summer, we received very good reports that the Bison bone dated to approximately 10,400 years before present (BP), and the charcoal dated to approximately 10,250 year BP.

These results added 2 new important sets of data to the Central Texas archeological record.

1. The direct dating of an intact Paleoindian cooking feature is exceedingly rare, especially one over 10,000 years old. So, this discovery is among very few others that have been reported.
2. Since over 6 of the SMH points we found in direct association with both the cooking feature and the Bison bone, we have the most secure dating of the SMH point type ever reported. That is, a range of approximately 10,400-10,250 years ago.

Last fall, in the 9th volume of *Ancient Echoes*, HCAA's journal, we published a full report of this information, as well as all excavations done in the Paleo Area. On the HCAA website at:

<https://hcarcheology.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/ae-final-complete-vol-9-2022-from-john.pdf>

Figure 3.



Assemblage of CWR St. Mary's Hall points, 10,400-10,250 years old: Some found in Block 1.



Figures 4 & 5. Recovering charcoal from Feature 1. Radiocarbon dates to 10,250 years ago.

Member Articles

Bunkhouse Archeological Site, Kendall County, Texas - Paul Unger

For the last three years members of the Hill Country Archeological Association (HCAA) have been excavating a midden near Old Tunnel State Park in Kendall County in the Alamo Springs Ranch (ASR) subdivision. This is the first of a series of newsletter articles updating the HCAA membership on past excavation activities, the current status of site investigation, and future plans to complete the excavation and write a report.

Early History

Native Americans have used this area for at least 10,000 years and probably longer. They were drawn here due to the large quantity of easily obtainable tool stone, the abundance of game, and especially to the numerous year-round springs in the area, especially useful in times of drought. Additionally, because of the reliable springs, the ancient Indian Pinta Trail from San Antonio to San Saba ran through ASR. The exact location of the Pinta Trail cannot be confirmed, but there are numerous accounts detailing early European explorers following the braided trail through this area as they progressed up north. We have been unable to obtain the earliest Kendall County deed records, as the deed office has been closed for several years because of COVID concerns. Hopefully in the near future further research of the Pinta Trail history and also of ASR history can be more thoroughly researched. For now, the following account is from testimonies and other accounts from individuals in the area.

ASR was originally established by a German stone mason who built a magnificent example of cut stone masonry 1/2 mile from Old Tunnel State Park on Old San Antonio Road. It is unknown at this time if there were prior owners of the property. In any event, he established a ranch of some 4300 acres and set about to raise Angora goats. For a long time, the ranch was very successful with its wool production. But by the early 1960s the demand for Angora wool (actually called "mohair") collapsed and the owner tried raising beef cattle instead. The reason it was unsuccessful is a story in its own.

An elderly gentleman recounted to Jan and Paul Unger, the current landowners, that when he was six years old, he had the task of sowing the entire ranch with KR bluestem grass. After the goats emerged from the dip tank and dripped most of the oil off, they were run by this gentleman through a shoot and he would sprinkle KR bluestem seed on their backs. As the goats walked all over the ranch those seeds would drop off and the ranch eventually became dominated with KR bluestem, and that caused the ultimate demise of ranching operations. Beef cattle do not like KR bluestem and only eat it as a last resort.

Without a good source of good grass for beef, the ranching operation was not successful. In the 1960s the then-owner started selling off pieces of property and this continued piece by piece until the first part of 2017 when Jan and Paul, both active HCAA members, purchased the last remaining piece of property.

Needless to say, the buildings were a mess, but structurally sound. One picture of the Bunkhouse says it all:



Next up: Artifacts slowly reveal themselves. John Benedict makes a big Find!

HCAA Fieldwork Highlights



Behind the Scenes, Before and After – Susan Clark

If you watch any TV shows about archaeology you would think that the only jobs being done at a site are digging, sifting and documenting. But that would be short-sighted; there are many tasks that have to have been undertaken before the digging even begins. At HCAA's Crying Woman Ranch site, the first people to arrive are the set-up folks. Tables and chairs are placed strategically near the dig site, with canopies as needed for rain or sun. Shovels, trowels, buckets, knee pads, and other supplies have to be brought near the site for easy access. Tarps covering the site are removed, along with any water or debris on them. Line levels and tape measures are brought out to take beginning elevations; when depths go beyond a meter a laser line level supported on a tripod has proven to be very useful to get accurate measurements. Sometimes a weed eater is needed to remove grass and weeds.

Rick Barrier, Ed Rendon and Craig Mangham are our main set-up folks; thanks to Rick we also have "field facilities"! The field recorder prepares a table with clipboards, the numerous paper forms needed for recording, binders, pens, tags, bags and everything else anyone calls for, from bug spray to band aids. After all that, digging can begin! And, at the end of the day, when everyone is hot or cold, and definitely tired, it all has to be completed *in reverse*. When we leave the site, it will be pristine. Then we eagerly look forward to next week to do it all over again!

One of the benefits of HCAA Membership is participation in weekly fieldwork and lab. Contact us at Contact@hcarcheology.org for more info.

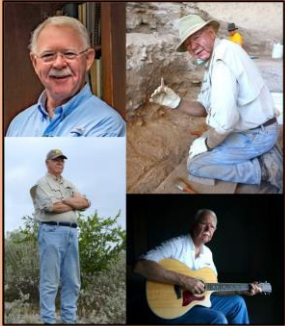


From the Board of Directors

HILL COUNTRY ARCHEOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION
Preserving the Past
www.HCArcheology.org

~ The Steve Stoutamire Memorial Fund ~

*HCAA President, Board Member, Fieldwork
Committee Chairman, Author, Researcher, Steward*



In order to create a lasting memorial to our dear friend and leader, the HCAA Board of Directors has established the **Steve Stoutamire Memorial Fund**. All donations will help advance HCAA's mission of outreach, education, and research that Steve was so passionate about.

All donation amounts are truly appreciated!

Premium Donation Levels
\$100 - \$499
~ Automatic Individual or Family HCAA Membership or Membership renewal for one year

\$500 and above
~ Automatic HCAA Life Membership
~ Invitation to a special guest lecture and reception (TBA)

Ways to donate
Website: www.hcarcheology.org
Check: made out to **HCAA** Please mail to HCAA,
PO Box 290393, Kerrville, TX 78029-0393

Thank You for Your Kind Remembrance & Support!

Dear Friends,

Last year, HCAA lost a dear friend and leader, Steve Stoutamire. During the past 10 years, he served as HCAA President, Board Member, Fieldwork Committee Chairman, Mentor, Author, Researcher, and Steward.

Remembering Steve's leadership and contributions to our organization and his warm friendship has left a great void in our hearts and thoughts.

Earlier this year, in order to create a lasting memorial to our dear friend and leader, the HCAA Board of Directors established the **Steve Stoutamire Memorial Fund**.

We are very glad to report that donations to Steve's Memorial Fund now exceed \$6,000! We are exceedingly grateful for your kind generosity and thoughtfulness.

We will continue to accept donations in any amount via our web site page: <https://hcarcheology.org/donations/> Please note that complimentary HCAA Memberships and renewals are included with Premium Level donations.

All donations are tax deductible, and will help advance HCAA's mission of outreach, education, and research that Steve was so passionate about.

Many Thanks!



Come Join Us! Lots going on!

<https://hcarcheology.org/join-hcaa/>



Who we are and what we do

The Hill Country Archeological Association is a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization whose mission is Education, Conservation, and Research of the rich history and cultural heritage of the Texas Hill Country. We are a group of avocational and professional archeologists working together to study, preserve, and educate the public about the Hill Country's prehistoric and historic heritage.

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