



NEWSLETTER

FEBRUARY 2012

DIXIE ARCHAEOLOGY SOCIETY

P.O. Box 611

Washington, Utah 84780

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| John Mangels - President & Newsletter Editor | Dave Evans - Treasurer |
| Barbara Bergman - Secretary | Susannah & Mark Nilsson, Board Members |
| John Macumber, Board Member | Kat and Boma Johnson - Board Members |
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February Meeting

When: February 8, 2012 @ 7 PM

Where: DSC, Udvar Hazy Bldg, Room 219

Why: Diana Hawks of the BLM will speak about "The Archaeology on the Arizona Strip".

Web Site

The Dixie Archaeology Society web site (www.dixierockart.webs.com) is up and running. Please consider signing up as a site member. Site members should receive email updates whenever anything on the site is updated.

Please post your comments on the blog that is part of the site. This site is for you, the members. We'd like to hear what you think.

Dues are Due

The dues for 2012 are due. The dues for 2012 remain unchanged from 2011. They are:

\$20 per person
\$25 per family

The dues include the opportunity to participate in monthly field trips, a summer social and a December holiday party. Your dues also go to room rent for the monthly meetings, liability insurance for the field trips and hosting of the web site.

Please bring you payment to the January meeting or go online and follow the directions on the our web site <http://dixierockart.webs.com/membershipinformation.htm>.

Meeting Report



Michael Plyler

Photographer and archaeologist, Michael Plyler gave a great presentation on “The Mayans of Guatemala”.

Michael began his presentation with a brief history of the Mayans. Their territory ranged from Southern Mexico, including the Yucatan, Belize, Guatemala and some of Honduras. He cited some of the major accomplishments attributed to the Mayan culture. These include:

- Calculating the path of Venus
- Defining the lunar cycle
- Defining a calendar system that goes 30,000 years into the future
- Developed the only writing system in the West
- Invented the concept of zero

- Invented the corbelled arch
- History dated back to at least 2500 BC
- Pottery dates back to 1700 BC
- Developed terraced farming methods necessary to utilize and save the jungle soil

Michael showed photographs of some of the ancient Mayan ruins, especially the pyramids at Tikal.

He discussed how the population moved from the jungle lowlands to the western mountains. This migration was due to deforestation caused in part by overpopulation and consequently erosion of the soil. He discussed the geology of the region, noting that the rivers have no natural outlets to the sea. The water is naturally absorbed by the porous limestone structure of the land. However the eroded soil was deposited in the lowlands and clogged the porous structure of the limestone resulting in the formation of lakes and wetlands.

Modern archaeology in Guatemala began in 1787. However things began to take off in 1960, when archaeologist Tatiana Proskouriakoff cracked the Mayan hieroglyphic code by interpreting the glyphs on the “stela” at Piedras Negras. This allowed researchers to read the codices remaining after the Spanish destruction of most of the Mayan writings and the various glyphs found on the structures and stone monuments.

Some other facts:

- Some of the ancient cities were home to over 100,000 people.
- Currently, Guatemala has over 12 million people having full or mixed Mayan ancestry. This represents over 45% of the population.
- There are currently 26 Mayan languages in Guatemala in addition to Spanish which is the main language.

Michael then showed images of the Mayan people as he saw them throughout his many trips to the region. He discussed the lifestyle of the natives in their towns. He talked about their work, their religious practices, and clothing and weaving.

Michael’s photos of the Mayans are displayed in permanent collections of various museums and galleries in the Southwest, Mexico and Guatemala.

Michael is currently the director of the Zion Field Institute. Information about the institute and its class offerings can be found at <http://www.zionpark.org/prod.php?id=30>.

Field Trip Report

The January field trip to Santa Clara canyon was cancelled due to rain. This trip will be rescheduled in the future.

Field Trip Info

The February 18th field trip will be to Kirk's Grotto in the Gold Butte area of Nevada. This will be an all day trip and will require a high clearance, four wheel drive vehicle. The hike is considered strenuous. There is a very large and relatively steep elevation change at the start of the hike (down at the start and up at the end). The hike is relatively flat after that. Bring lunch and lots of water.

Remember, you must be a member of DAS to participate in a field trip. You must be at the meeting in order to sign up for a field trip.

Thanks

Thanks to Michael Plyler for his presentation. Thanks also to the Utah Humanities Council who sponsored Michael's talk.

ARARA 2012 Annual Meeting

The American Rock Art Research Association (ARARA, www.arara.org) will be holding their 2012 annual meeting in St. Gorge from May 25-28, 2012 at the Lexington Hotel. We will need volunteers to help at this event:

- Thurs May 24
 - Registration, 2-3 people
 - Set up for Public Lecture, 2-3 people
- Fri May 25
 - Field trips ~15 people
 - Registration, 2-3 people
- Sat & Sun May 26-27

- Flute Players for AM & PM Breaks
 - Misc Assistance during the day, 1-2 people
 - Misc Assistance during the evening events, 1-2 people
- Mon May 28
- Field trips ~15 people

This is a big deal for the community and DAS. Your help is appreciated.

Final Thought

The good weather is beginning. It's a great time to go out into the desert on your own field trip. A walk through Santa Clara Canyon or to Anasazi Ridge is a good place to start. Both areas are wonderfully maintained by the BLM. Both areas have great examples of rock art representative of the area.

When visiting archaeological sites, remember to show respect to the sites - take only pictures and leave only with your memories.

Enjoy the experience but be careful. Always remember to take plenty of water, even in the cooler weather.

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