

Nevada Archaeological Association

Summer

NEWSLETTER

1995

ANNUAL MEETING



From out of the east, west, north and south, with tire rubber meeting pavement on the "Loneliest Highway", crossing snow covered ranges and sun-soaked basins, NAA members traveled to Eureka eager to share a common experience; no not a harmonic convergence but the annual NAA conference. And when the dust settled after two days of camaraderie and despite intermittent snow showers, an enjoyable time was

shared by all. Much, if not most, of the credit for a successful meeting goes to **Wally Cuchine** of the recently restored 1880 Eureka Opera House, a fantastic facility; the **Moody Family** for the delicious catered meals; **Mark Henderson**, Chairperson for the meeting's activities; and **Yolanda Henderson** and **Skip Scroggins** for Registration: truly a dynamic and adaptable team.

Meeting activities began at the Eureka County Fairgrounds on Friday evening with a barbecue of steaks over mesquite embers. The threat of snow greeted the attendees Saturday morning, but hot coffee and sweet treats dissipated the early morning chill. Fourteen papers were presented on topics ranging from historical (ceramic analysis, central Nevada mining camps, features associated with early Nevada air travel, charcoal technology, and B.M. Bower's writing cabin) and prehistoric archeology (a Clovis point and subsistence strategies at the Nevada Test Site, a Southern Paiute camp, Easter and Hickinson petroglyph sites, and a monitoring project) to the volunteer's role in archeology, making tourism work in historic preservation, and a practical computer demonstration on archeological applications in GIS (Geographic Information System). The presentations were video recorded for future viewing. The lecture hall was decorated with vibrant textiles, garments, quilts, and sculptures associated with a traveling art show entitled "A Common Thread" sponsored by the Nevada Historical Society. During the lunch break, attendees were treated to a tour of the historic Eureka County Court House built in 1879.

Prior to dinner, during the no-host bar, an NAA fund-raising auction was held with unexpected success. The donated items included three water color paintings, two black/white framed photographs, Split-twig Figurine ear rings, a needle-point depicting the NAA logo, numerous

books, a t-shirt stenciled with a petroglyph element, a Eureka Opera House sweatshirt, and a refrigerator magnet embossed with a petroglyph element. Bidding competition for some items was heated and fierce, but all had a great time. The auctioneer, **William White**, was assisted by **Sally White** and **Tina Reuwsaat**. In addition to the auction, a used book table was made available with the proceeds going to NAA. A hearty thank you goes to those who donated auction and used book items and to those who bought the items. **Trish Hadsall**, Great Basin Natural History Association, was also present throughout the meeting selling books, cards, and rubber stamps featuring petroglyph elements.

Following a savory meal upon which we shamelessly gorged ourselves, **Dr. Donald Grayson**, University of Washington and author of *The Desert's Past*, presented a lively oration entitled "Sex and Death on the Immigrant Trail." Speaking on mortality as a matter of human biology and natural selection vs. chance, Dr. Grayson compared the survivorability of various members, age and gender groups, of the Donner Party of the infamous California tragedy and the Willie Hand Cart Company which nearly perished in harsh conditions while migrating to Utah. After extensive comparative research, Dr. Grayson determined that it was better to be young, but not too young, and part of a large family support group when it came to surviving extreme environmental stress and starvation conditions in the historic past. Thanks go to **Dr. Donald Hardesty** for delivering Dr. Grayson to the conference and to the Ely BLM District for providing additional support funding for the banquet speaker.

Speaking of survivorability and throwing fate to the wind, the banquet crowd helped themselves to numerous sweet treats and spirits following the guest speaker, including a birthday cake in celebration of **Bill Johnson's**, the atomic archeologist, birthday. Entertainment didn't stop there as **Pat Hicks** serenaded the group with guitar and voice. Conference activities concluded Sunday morning with breakfast at the Opera House and a field trip to nearby sites associated with Nevada's charcoal



industry in and around Eureka. If you missed this year's activities, well, we hope to see you in 1996 at a Nevada location yet to be determined. Stay tuned. ♦

CONGRESSIONAL ALERT

Submitted by Colleen Beck. This year and into the future, Congress will be considering legislation to reduce, change or eliminate programs and laws that are related to archeological and historic preservation. The current issue is the elimination of funding for the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation which was established by the National Historic Preservation Act. The Advisory Council reviews work on federal lands to ensure that all archeological and historic sites are located, inventoried and properly documented. This work is accomplished in conjunction with the State Historic Preservation Office. The House of Representatives has voted to provide only enough money for the Advisory Council to close itself down in the next federal fiscal year. The Senate vote has not yet occurred. This funding is part of the Department of Interior's budget.

If you want archeological and historic preservation to continue in the United States, please write to your representatives in Congress and express your support for these programs and urge them to vote in a manner which represents your interests. As the newly elected President of NAA (see below), I have done so on behalf of NAA. However, it takes phone calls and letters from everyone to make our lawmakers realize what is important to their constituents. Any Congressional office can be reached through the Capitol Switchboard at (202) 224-3121.

Write your Nevada representatives at:

- Senators Harry Reid/Richard Bryan
U.S. Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510; and
- Representatives Barbara Vucanovich/John Ensign
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20510

The introduction of bills affecting archeological and historical preservation can occur on any day. It has been suggested that the NAA set up a phone tree in order to distribute this information as quickly as possible. If you are interested in participating and calling members in your local area, please contact NAA or call Colleen Beck at 895-0418 in Las Vegas. ♦

NAA BOARD of DIRECTORS

An NAA general membership meeting was held during the 1995 annual conference in which nominations were sought for the Board of Directors. Out-going directors included Chet Bate, President; Dianne Jennings, Treasurer; Doug Dashiell, Secretary; and Jim Rigby, member. Despite the loss of these hard working individuals there is a lot of continuity and corporate memory in the new board. Newly elected board members and positions include:

Dr. Colleen Beck, President (Las Vegas)
Susan Murphy, Executive Secretary (Las Vegas)
Pat Hicks, Secretary & 1994 Journal Editor (Tonopah)
Robin McMullen, Treasurer (Las Vegas)
Bill Johnson, Membership (Henderson)
William White, Newsletter Editor (Henderson)
Chet Bate, Member (Ely)
Skip Scroggins, Member (Eureka)
Oyvind Frock, Member (Reno)
Alice Baldrice, SHPO Representative (Carson City)
Dr. Jim Wilde, 1995 Journal Editor
Mark Henderson, 1996 Journal Editor (Ely)

The NAA mailing address is: Nevada Archaeological Association, c/o Susan Murphy, 9785 Tropical Parkway, Las Vegas, NV., 89129. ♦

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Submitted by Colleen Beck. During the annual meeting held in Eureka, there was discussion from the membership regarding the role and activities of the NAA. Comments indicated an interest in increasing the public awareness of the organization, promoting more interaction between the professional and avocational archeologists, and, in general, more effective dissemination of information concerning on-going archeological activities within the state. It was acknowledged that more involvement from the membership would facilitate making changes that could address these concerns. A sign-up sheet was distributed at the meeting to allow people to volunteer to work on the various topics. The NAA Board will be addressing these items at future meetings. As a follow-up and to continue the dialogue, I intend to meet with the NAA Chapters this year in order to learn firsthand how you see the function of NAA and what suggestions you have for improving the organization. I look forward to the coming year and to meeting all of you. ♦

NAA GENERAL MEMBERSHIP

In opening remarks at the annual conference, Mark Henderson stated that Nevada's population has doubled (Las Vegas alone had a population of 1,020,000 as of May) since the beginning of NAA close to 25 years ago. Despite the rapid growth, NAA membership has remained relatively constant and has not kept pace with the state's growth. Mark continued by saying that "each and everyone of us (membership) is an emissary for organizational growth." Chet Bate later urged active membership participation in NAA and local chapter sponsored activities. Nevada's cultural resources are suffering from a constant threat of destruction as a result of population, tourist, and industry growth as it is throughout the West. A method to combat the threat of resource loss is through public awareness and education. This objective is best achieved through a strong organization with an active and vocal membership. Each

and everyone of us should not only "uphold the purpose and intent of NAA" but we should go forth and encourage our colleagues, friends and persons with kindred interests to join and support the organization. Remember, we are the emissaries of organizational growth; the organization is only as strong as we care to make it.

And speaking of membership, **Bill Johnson**, determined that as of the annual meeting there were 145 registered members for the 1995 membership year. The membership was broken down into the following categories: 82 Regular; 36 Family, 7 Support; 8 Student; 5 Sponsor; and 2 Patron paid memberships plus 5 Honorary (selected elected officials). ♦

TING-PERKINS AWARD

The Ting-Perkins Award has been bestowed upon **Grace Burkholder** for her uncounted hours and endless efforts at identifying, recording, and photographing petroglyph sites in southern Nevada. As a dedicated avocationalist some of her photographs have been used to establish a base line of comparison to monitor vandalism at petroglyph sites subject to high visitation. Grace recently published a compilation of her work in a publication entitled *Perceptions of the Past: Solar Phenomena in Southern Nevada*. Grace's other works include research published in various volumes of *Rock Art Papers*, San Diego Museum. Congratulations Grace.

In the past the award has been presented to **Jean Miles**, 1982; **Norma and Herb Splatt**, 1992; **Steve Stoney**, 1993; and **Jean Stevens**, 1994. ♦

OUT AND ABOUT

Archaeo-Nevada Society, Las Vegas. ANS has temporarily suspended organizational functions from June to September; the society's normal practice of taking a break during southern Nevada's sizzling summer months. The society's 1994-1995 season was packed with numerous productive and interesting program activities. ANS members participated in two out-of-state field trips to the Phoenix and Los Angeles areas. On the LA trip members visited the LA County Museum of Natural History, Huntington Research Library and Botanical Gardens, Southwest Museum, and the San Bernardino County Museum all in one weekend. ANS, under BLM guidance, has initiated a monitoring program at Gypsum Cave. In recent years, ANS has participated with BLM in the clean up and graffiti removal at this significant archeological and culturally sensitive site. Perhaps ANS's greatest organizational success for the past season was its participation in volunteer activities in association with excavations at the Las Vegas Mormon Fort.

In General. A few Nevada archeologists have made inroads into Nevada's history community. **Alvin McLane**, Desert Research Institute, **Dr. Claude Warren**, **Dr. Richard Ropers**, and **Douglas Sims**, UNLV, **Paula DeLspinasse** and **Robin McMullen**, Dames & Moore,

and **Peter Mires**, Intermountain Research, presented singularly or jointly authored papers at the Fourth Biennial Conference on Nevada History recently held in Las Vegas. It is good to see that historical archeology is being considered as a valid method of data retrieval and a source of historical data which can contribute to Nevada's history. Some of us historical "arche-types" have been advocating this position for several years now. ♦

CLAYTON VALLEY FIELD SCHOOL

Submitted by **Bobbie McGonagle**. The cooperative project between California State University, Fresno, NAA and BLM at Big Spring in Clayton Valley, Esmeralda County, was conducted May 30 through June 16. Two sites were mapped and tested, one at the spring and a second about a half mile southeast of the spring.

Two test pits were excavated at the spring site. Test Pit 1 contained glass trade beads, Late Prehistoric Olivella shell beads and Desert Side-notched points in the upper levels; a second, deeper Elko (Middle Archaic) component was also identified. Test Pit 2 was similar but contained no beads.

The second site, an area sheltered by a cliff with petroglyphs, has been severely vandalized by artifact collectors. A trench was dug from undisturbed deposits



into the disturbed area to determine the extent of vandalism. A test pit was also placed within what appears to be an undisturbed house ring. The excavations yielded Late Prehistoric Olivella shell beads and Desert Side-

notched points in addition to Numic (Shoshone or Paiute) pottery in the upper levels. An Elko component was identified in the lower level as at the spring site. In addition to the excavations, the petroglyphs were mapped, drawn and photographed.

Conducted under an Assistance Agreement, a Group Volunteer Agreement and Individual Volunteer Agreements, 14 students, 3 faculty, 7 non-student volunteers and 4 BLMers (plus on 8 year old and 2 dogs) worked for varying lengths of time in wind, rain, snow and heat. Volunteers and students worked approximately 2,000 hours doing work that could not have been done without their dedicated assistance.

The cook, **Jerry O'Donnell**, all his equipment and a shower trailer were provided by the Ely District BLM. This made for a comfortable and pleasant field camp. The Battle Mountain District fire crew helped get equipment in and out of the field. Cadastral Survey

provided an EDM (electronic distance measurer) which was operated by **Pat Hicks** and **David Valentine**, Tonopah Resource Area archaeologists. **Bruce Piper** from the Nevada State Office gave a GPS (global positioning system) demonstration. **Valerie Metscher**, a Range Specialist for the Tonopah Resource Area, gave a talk on plants in the area.

Volunteers included the cook's wife, **Raynell**, David Valentine's parents and 4 people from Fresno, California.

The public was invited to visit on Saturday or Sunday, June 10 and 11. A total of 10 people came by to visit, look around, take pictures and talk about the project. One of these was a reporter from the Gateway Gazette; he has promised to send 50 copies of his article to BLM for distribution. (This is the first year of a multi-year project. NAA members are encouraged to participate in next year's efforts. Stay tuned to the *NEWSLETTER* for additional information. EDITOR) ♦

NAA NEWSLETTER

The NAA *NEWSLETTER* is about you, local chapter happenings, the organization in general, and archeological concerns within the great state of Nevada. If you have information that you think would be of interest to our readership, please send it to **William White**, NAA NEWSLETTER EDITOR, 919 Stetson Drive, Henderson,

NV., 89015 or call 702-293-8705 (W) or 702-566-1929 (H). Let's here from you. ♦

DATES TO REMEMBER

- NAA Board of Directors Meeting, Archaeological Research Services, Virginia City, NV., 1:30 P.M., August 5, 1995.
- Utah Rock Art Research Association Annual Meeting, Blanding, UT., September 1-4, 1995.
- Society for Historical Archaeology, Cincinnati, Ohio, January 2-7, 1996.
- Society for American Archaeology, New Orleans, Louisiana, April 10-14, 1996.

NAA BOARD MEETING

The next NAA Board of Directors meeting will be held on Saturday, August 5, 1995 at 1:30 P.M. Archaeological Research Services will provide the meeting facility at 287 South D Street, Virginia City, Nevada. The meeting is open to the public and membership. See you there. ♦

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