

# THE CURATOR

Official E-newsletter of the San Diego Archaeological Center

30  
YEARS

## Director's Message

BY STEPHANIE SANDOVAL, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

157,267

As we celebrate our 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, we reflect on how far we've come. Our story begins back in 1990 when the County penalized a developer for the destruction of archaeological sites. A fine of \$168,000 was levied and the funds were turned over to the San Diego County Archaeological Society. They were tasked to find a way to care for the many existing and uncurated archaeological collections. No agency with such a mission existed at the time, so they decided it was best to create one. Thus in 1993, SDAC was born, although under the name of the San Diego Repository Corporation (SDRC).

In 1998, SDRC changed its name to the San Diego Archaeological Center and opened in downtown San Diego, providing curation space for Federal and non-federal collections. This was the first nonprofit, private organization in the greater region dedicated to the care, management, and use of archaeological collections. In 2002, we moved out to the country and found a new home in the old San Pasqual Valley Union School building in Escondido.



Since opening our doors, the Center has served 157,267 people through museum visits and 2,418 educational programs. We share with the public the educational, scientific, and cultural use of the collections we preserve for future generations. Our hard-working volunteers and interns, who have donated 83,752 hours, along with dedicated members, passionate staff and board of trustees, and community support are the reasons we have made it so far.

Things are surely to look very different in the next 30 years as our field continues to evolve, but we are excited about what the future may bring.

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## Digging Deeper: Recent Discoveries in Archaeology

BY ADAM NIESLEY, PUBLIC ARCHAEOLOGY COORDINATOR

A recent 2023 radiocarbon dating analysis has shown that a team of archaeologists and students from the University of Oregon may be helping to rewrite our understanding of Pleistocene migrations in North America. Digging deep at their field school in Riley, Oregon, the excavations at Rimrock Draw have uncovered two distinct layers of tephra, or volcanic ash, since the site opened in 2011: Mount Mazama ash (dated 7,600 BP), and Mt. St. Helens (dated 15,300 BP). In 2012, the researchers dug below the Mt. St. Helens line and discovered a series of enamel platelets belonging to an extinct North American *Camelops*. Radiocarbon dating on the enamel in 2018 and 2023 places it at 18,250 BP.

Researchers continued excavation, and 10cm below the *Camelops* enamel they found a bright orange, flint-knapped agate tool covered in a strange substance. Residue protein analysis showed that it was blood from a Pleistocene *Bison antiquus* and dated to 18,000 BP. Additional items found below the Mt. St. Helens tephra were atlatl tips and spears, manos, and metates, indicating that humans were in the area 18,000 years ago.

Adding further evidence to a human presence, human coprolites were found at the archaeological site of Paisley Caves in Southwestern Oregon 90 miles away from Rimrock that were radiocarbon dated in 2008 to 14,300 BP.



Enamel belonging to North American *Camelops*

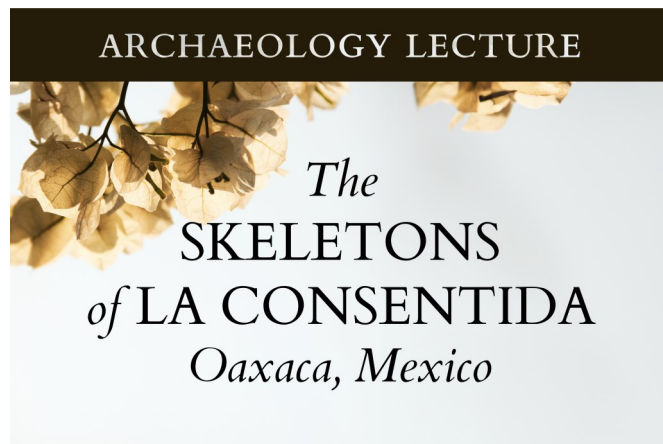
## Upcoming Events:

Dec 09 | [Sip & Sketch](#) with Donna Walker

Dec 16 | [Live In-Person Lecture](#) with José “Pepe” Aguilar—Link Below

Feb 17 | [Ancient Echoes: Pints & Pigments](#)

Mar 16 | [Ancient Echoes: Meading in the Holocene](#)



## About Adam



My name is Adam Niesley, and I am the new Public Archaeology Coordinator here at the SDAC. I got my start in archaeology doing educational outreach work for the Museum of Us while enrolled in the Palomar College Anthropology program.

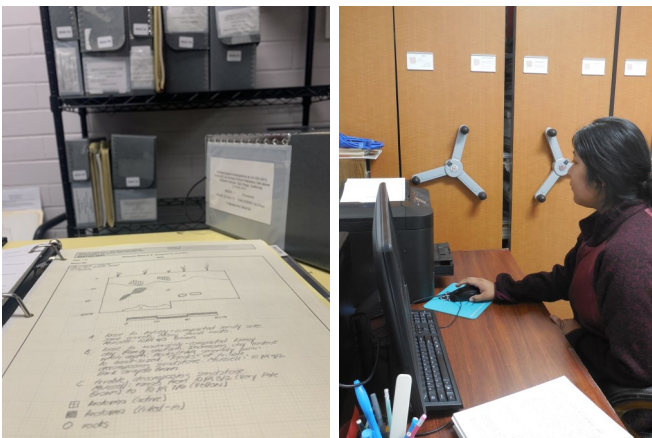
From there, I transferred to CSUSM in 2021, and earned my degree in Anthropology with a concentration in Archaeology in spring of 2023. I have done fieldwork in Belize with the Rio Frio Regional Archaeological Project and am a current site steward for multiple historic and prehistoric sites in the Anza Borrego region with the Colorado Desert Archaeological Society. My areas of interest are lithics, ethnocynology, health practices of the ancient world, and archaeoastronomy.

## From the Stacks

BY SUZANNE MORAMARCO,  
COLLECTIONS & LIBRARY TECHNICIAN

The SDAC Reference Library has embarked on a project to scan all the archaeological reports at the Center. Collections Intern Yesenia Garcia has been tasked with this project. We are starting with the reports for the SDAC collections. This project is giving us a chance to find reports for collections that did not come in with a report, and one could not be found at that time. Over 2600 reports are in the library catalog now, so we have been able to find some of the missing reports. We still have numerous reports waiting to be entered.

We have already hit a few road bumps. We have been using two printers for the scanning. One scans two sided documents, but they are not searchable. The other one yields searchable PDFs, but only scans one-sided documents. So, if you have a scanner with a document feeder that you no longer need that will scan two-sided documents as searchable PDF, please consider donating it to the Center for this project.



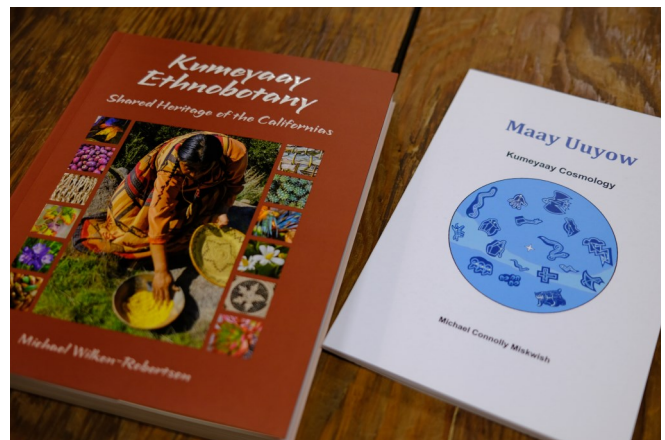
Speaking of outdated technology, you may have noticed that our online catalog search is down. We have been trying to get it fixed for the last several months. As with a lot of systems lately, the web search was using an outdated system that is no longer supported. We have the volunteer who created our website working on an alternative web search system. We will let everyone know when it is up and running.

Would you like to learn more about the archaeology of San Diego? A good way to do that would be to help with the scanning project or entering archaeological reports into the library catalog. We also could use help with the entering of monographs. If interested, contact SDAC Library Tech Suzanne at [library@sandiegoarchaeology.org](mailto:library@sandiegoarchaeology.org).

New & Noteworthy: We recently added these two beautiful new books to our bookshop, both by esteemed native authors:

- *Maay Uuyow: Kumeyaay Cosmology* by Michael Connolly Miskwish
- *Kumeyaay Ethnobotany* by Michael Wilken-Robertson

Come by to browse these and our other gems!



The SDAC Library contains over 10,000 books, journals, magazines, and monographs. You can search our [online catalog](#) to see which titles are on our shelves. All patrons are welcome to look at library items on the premises. SDAC members can check out items as a benefit of membership, although not all titles are able to be checked out. Appointments to view or check out library materials can be made by calling Center Library Tech Suzanne Moramarco at 760-291-0370 or emailing [library@sandiegoarchaeology.org](mailto:library@sandiegoarchaeology.org).

## New Acquisitions

BY JESSICA MCPHETERS, COLLECTIONS MANAGER

The San Diego Archaeological Center houses many prehistoric and historic collections from the San Diego County adjacent regions. The Center is equipped with over 5,000 square feet of vault space that allow us to provide long-term curation and care for a wide range of archaeological materials, including artifacts, ecofacts, maps, photographs, and site records. Partnering with local colleges and universities provides a setting for volunteers and students interested in archaeology to gain hands-on experience working with collections.



Catalog Number: SDI-22912-2018-756  
Object Type: Toy, doll  
Material: Porcelain  
Quantity: 1  
Weight: 66.72 grams

The monitoring program for a historic monitoring project in San Diego's East Village took place between 2018 and 2020, and archaeologists and monitors encountered two post-contact cisterns (or water collection features), one trash privy, and four post-contact historic (disturbed) artifacts.

It is known that people living during the Archaic and Late Prehistoric period used this area. A small wetland developed during the Late Prehistoric period, making this area a marine resource providing abundant food resources. Archaeological evidence suggests that even at the time of European colonization, this wetland was still used by the indigenous groups living here.

Of the features encountered during the project, the only one containing artifactual materials was the post-contact historic trash privy. Archaeologists working in the field first thought this privy was a well but after their research of the area, it became clear that no wells were known to exist there. Instead, after consulting a Sanborn map from 1888, this feature was labeled as a water closet, made of brick with a shingle roof. Before modern

or indoor plumbing was introduced, it was common for people to use their outdoor privies not only as toilets, but also for trash disposal. By examining the artifacts from the privy, archaeologists suggest that they were deposited by early residents between 1886 and 1910. They were dated between 1850s and 1900s. Records show that between 1886 and 1899, the property was owned by Adolphus Gustavus Gassen. The property was then traded in 1899 and converted into a building with rooms for rent.



Catalog Number: SDI-22912-2018-1118  
Object Type: Glass, wine  
Material: Glass  
Quantity: 1  
Weight: 45.68 grams



Catalog Number: SDI-22912-2018-165; 1445  
Object Type: Pipe, smoking  
Material: Clay  
Quantity: 1  
Weight: 8.03; 4.29 grams

In total, 1,833 artifacts were removed from the privy feature, most being glass, ceramic, and metal. These items were classified as consumer, household, kitchen, and garment items. Examining the household artifacts alone led archaeologists to infer that they were used by people with medium to high socioeconomic status, being that many of them "are specialized consumer items such as champagnes, wines, Guinness beer, pumpkin seed oil, olive oil, Worcestershire sauce, and Chow Chow relish," according to the project report.

To find out more, visit our virtual exhibit [New Acquisitions](#) and our blog [New Acquisitions: A Closer Look](#) now.

For questions regarding Center collections, please contact the Collections Department by email at [collections@sandiegoarchaeology.org](mailto:collections@sandiegoarchaeology.org).

# We Love Our Supporters

BY DANTÉ FARENGA,  
DEVELOPMENT & MARKETING DIRECTOR

The Staff of the SDAC would like to express our heartfelt thanks to our members, donors, and volunteers this holiday season. Over the past three decades, your generosity and dedication have helped transform the Center from an idea for an archaeological repository to the museum, education, and research facility we have today in San Pasqual Valley. As we look ahead to the next thirty years, one thing is certain – we would not have accomplished what we have without you.

Thank you for supporting special projects like our #GivingTuesday museum revitalization as well as on-going programs like the following:

- Preservation of over 1,000,000 artifacts across 1,394 collections, representing 3,083 archaeological sites from San Diego County and adjacent regions
- Museum-quality exhibits, where visitors can see tactile evidence of San Diego’s past 12,000 years of human history
- Keeping the museum accessible to more visitors through pay-what-you-wish admission
- Supplies and staffing for field trips and classroom programs to introduce children to archaeology and how we use archaeology to study the past
- Lectures and workshops, which provide a public platform for non-archaeologists to learn about current archaeological research
- Internship opportunities for college students, who gain valuable career experience identifying artifacts and learning archaeological laboratory procedures

Whether it’s through an annual membership, monthly donation, one-time gift, or hours of your time, we appreciate your efforts to preserve pieces of the past with us.

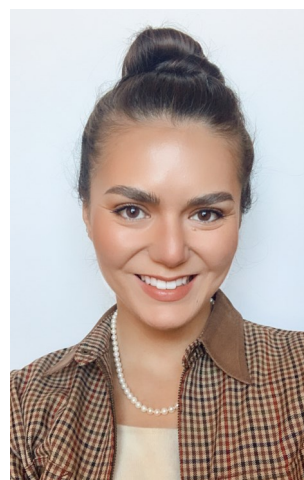
## #GivingTuesday Update



Thank you for helping us reach our goal! With your support, we were able to raise \$7,655 to enhance the signs, sights, and sounds of our museum.

## Welcoming New SDAC Staff

We are glad to welcome Linn Splane to SDAC’s Marketing team! Linn is our new Membership and Marketing Coordinator and will be managing our social media, helping out at events, and developing our growing membership programs.



Linn studied archaeology at UCLA and has worked on digs in California’s Central Valley and in Ireland. After working in environmental conservation and luxury travel, Linn is excited to be back in the field of archaeology.

## IN APPRECIATION

We are grateful for the time and talents, membership, donations, and in-kind support we received from 5/1/23 to 10/31/23.

### Thank You for Your Donations

**\$5,000+**

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**\$1,000+**

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Jim Bryant

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### Thank You for Your Membership

**\$1,000+**

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**\$150+**

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### Thank You to Our Monthly Donors, Purveyors of the Past

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### Thank You to Our Volunteers and Interns

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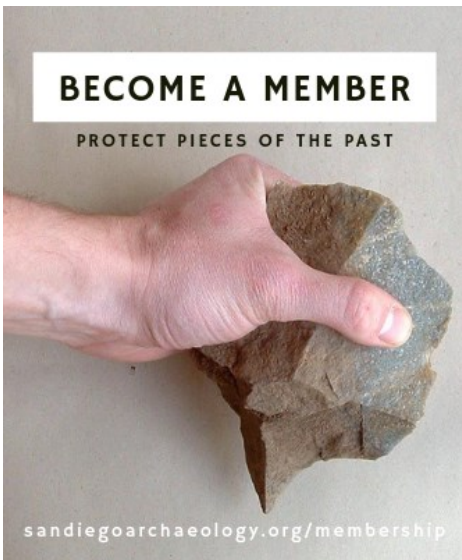
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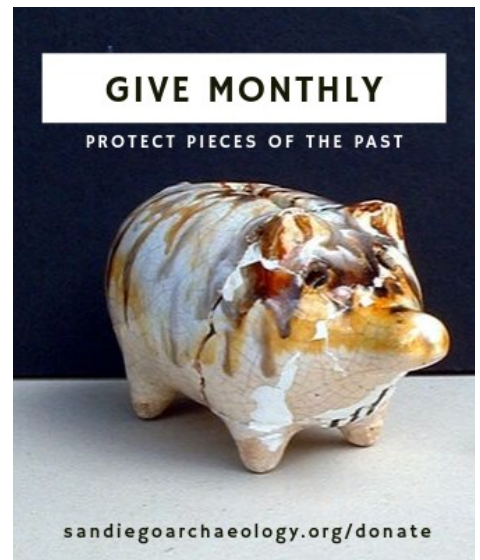




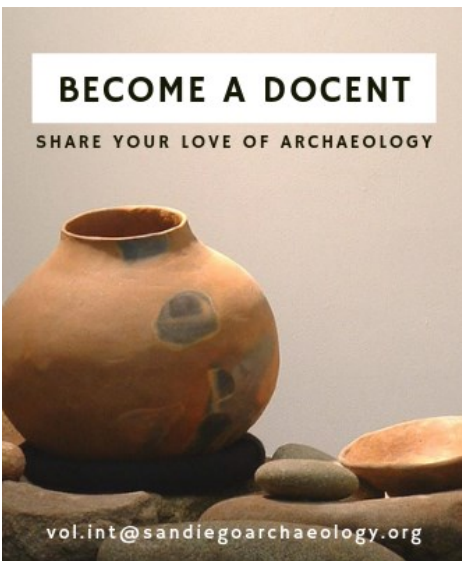
The Center is the only local organization dedicated to the collection, study, curation and exhibition of San Diego County’s archaeological artifacts. Your membership helps save our history and heritage. **Membership** can be purchased [online](#), over the phone, or by mail.



**Cash donations** may be made to the Center by visiting our [website](#), or with a check made to the San Diego Archaeological Center. **In-kind gifts** are contributions of goods or services to our organization. Please [contact us](#) if you would like to make this type of donation.



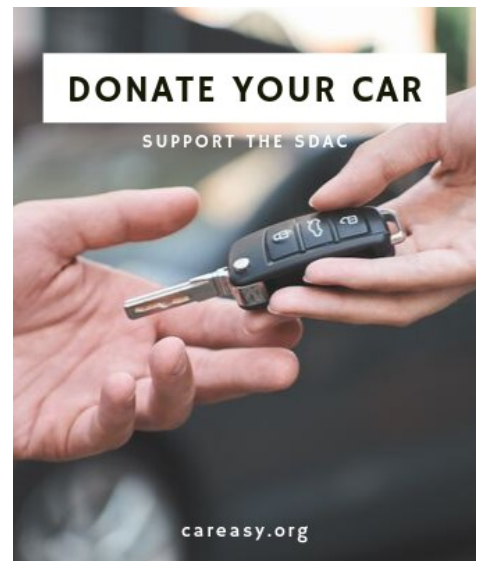
**Purveyors of the Past Monthly Donation Program** is an easy and convenient way of supporting the many important projects at the Center. You may determine the amount to donate per month and the specific campaign, project, or program to fund. Please [contact us](#) for more information.



**Docents** welcome visitors and answer general questions regarding the Center and exhibits. Hours are flexible. To apply for a volunteer position or for more information, please email [vol.intern@sandiegoarchaeology.org](mailto:vol.intern@sandiegoarchaeology.org).



Unfortunately, the **AmazonSmile** program has been discontinued. However, we would like to thank everyone who supported the San Diego Archaeological Center through their purchases over the past decade.



Purchasing a new car or truck this year? **Donate your old vehicle** to benefit the Center through the [C.A.R.S.](#) program. Your generous gift is tax-deductible and will support the Center’s exhibitions, programs, and curatorial efforts.



# San Diego Archaeological Center

MUSEUM • EDUCATION • RESEARCH

## CONTACT US

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YouTube: [San Diego Archaeological Center](https://www.youtube.com/San Diego Archaeological Center)



## MARKETING

Every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of the information in this e-newsletter. For corrections, please contact the editor, Linn Splane, at [lsplane@sandiegoarchaeology.org](mailto:lsplane@sandiegoarchaeology.org).



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