Tuesday January 28th 2014 @7:30 p.m.

A Visit to the British Museum

Presented by Ken Hedges
On a recent trip to England, Ken Hedges, San Diego archaeologist and former museum curator, was able to tour the galleries of the British Museum. With the January lecture, Hedges will discuss the wide ranging collections he encountered and tour you through the archaeological galleries of one of the world’s most fascinating museums.

Tuesday February 25th 2014 @ 7:30 p.m.

Wisdom in the Waste: Obsidian Studies and Late Prehistoric Social Systems

Presented by Nikki Falvey
Perfect for flint-knapping and beautiful to behold, obsidian is always an exciting find at an archaeological site. However, as an exchange item with at least 80km between its quarry sources and San Diego County, its discovery also provides valuable information about exchange networks during the last period of our local prehistory. This presentation will outline how social organization and settlement patterns can be investigated through the examination of obsidian artifact distribution and frequency.

Tuesday March 25th 2014 @ 7:30 p.m.

Ritual Symbols in Rock Art: Cupules and Incised Grooves in the Lower Pecos Canyonlands, Texas

Presented by Cara Ratner
Rock art at archaeological sites are often dismissed as a culturally symbolic representation that cannot be objectively or scientifically analyzed or interpreted adequately. Such dismissals are detrimental to understanding all aspects of a given culture. Although uninformed interpretations of rock art panels are counterproductive, systematic recording and the testing of different hypotheses is a valid way to begin to better understand the possible range of social functions of rock art. This research examines whether indigenous women’s fertility is represented in rock art depictions, known as cupules and groove marks, in the archaeological record. Cupules are defined as a boulder or rock slab covered with small rounded depressions (cupules), usually four to six centimeters in diameter and two to three centimeters in depth. Groove marks are deeply and narrowly incised lines rarely more than two centimeters in depth. In this research, I systematically document and contextualize the pit and groove rock art style in the Lower Pecos, Texas. I also test whether cupules and groove marks are tied to a functional purpose with an experimental project.
Tuesday April 22nd 2014 @7:30 p.m.

The Wantok System, Scale and Vulnerability: Shaping Disaster Recovery in an Immigrant Community of the Western Solomon Islands

Presented by Savanna Schuermann

On April 2, 2007, a 6m tsunami struck Ghizo Island, Western Province, Solomon Islands. One of the most severe impacts was in Titiana, a distinct Micronesian community, where 13 villagers were killed. Despite the similar impact in a nearby Melanesian village, Pailongge, no deaths occurred. Moreover, the villages experienced a differential recovery. Social vulnerability largely determines a hazard’s impact and the ability to recover, a process influenced by broader socio-political dynamics, like politics, regional exchange, and marginalization. This thesis examines how the Solomon Island government, wantok system, and immigrant status dynamically shaped vulnerability in Titiana and Pailongge and how this underlies their differential recovery. Results show the Solomon Island wantok system, a pre-capitalist Melanesian exchange pattern in which people favor their wantok – individuals united through shared kinship, language and place – heavily influenced recovery. Specifically, post-disaster aid distribution at multiple organizational scales flowed primarily along wantok networks, creating a biased allocation. Titiana and Pailongge households’ disparate connections to these networks strongly influenced the aid they received and their overall vulnerability to the tsunami’s impact. Importantly, this process was highly scale-dependent. While Titiana’s immigrant status largely excluded them from these wantok networks, increasing their vulnerability, Pailongge was not necessarily resilient at all organizational scales (e.g. community, regional, national). Therefore, this thesis also explores how the wantok system and vulnerability are dynamic, inherently contradictory processes, both dependent upon and transformative across scales. The analysis challenges more static approaches to vulnerability. Understanding the shifting articulation of the wantok system, vulnerability, and resilience has implications for the future vulnerability and resiliency of Melanesian societies.

Tuesday May 27th 2014 @ 7:30 p.m.

The Warner-Carrillo Ranch House Part II

Presented by Susan Walter

Susan Walter will describe her experiences while excavating at the Warner’s Trading Post. The actual site’s location had been lost for years. This is surprising, considering the extreme importance it played to Southern Overland Trail immigrants, and the dramatic incident that ended its use after a mere 2 year existence. Confusing, ambiguous findings were a prelude to the discovery of another period of habitation. Compounding the fieldworker’s experiences were extreme weather conditions. The upcoming field trip on May 31, will give you the rare opportunity to visit this site, access to which is restricted.
Saturday June 28th 2014 @8:00 p.m.

Stories in their Bones

Presented by Dr. Tori Randall
Information pertaining to human biology, nutrition, and paleopathology can be gained from the study of human bones. Paleopathology is the study of ancient diseases and trauma which leave evidence in skeletal remains. Human skeletal remains can record stress reaction to a variety of biological insults, and therefore, the skeleton can display information about an individual’s life history. Skeletal indicators of non-specific stress, dental disease, interpersonal violence, osteoarthritis, and behavioral markers can be observed, and this information contributes to our knowledge of the past by illuminating the general health and behavior of the population.

Saturday July 26th 2014 @8:00 p.m.

Archaeology to Forensic Settings: An MIA Recovery Mission in Vietnam

Presented by Mr. Roderic McLean
Thousands of American military personnel are missing for wars overseas. Approximately 78,000 are missing from World War II, 8,000 are missing in North Korea and the Korean War, and 2,000 in Vietnam. The Joint POW/MIA Accounting Command (JPAC) is a joint task force within the United States Department of Defense (DOD) whose mission is to account for all United States prisoners of war (POW) and missing in action (MIA) from all past wars. In the 1970s the DOD established the Central Identification Laboratory (Lab) at Hickam Air Force Base in Hawaii. It is the world’s largest forensic lab. Joint Task Force Full Accounting was established in 1997 to focus on the identification and recovery of remains in Vietnam. At that time, all archaeologists working for the federal government could apply to work on the program and direct recovery missions. While forensic science addresses legal issues, including forensic settings such as crime scenes, archaeological methodologies are employed in the identification and recovery of physical evidence and human remains. This presentation will discuss the search for a Navy pilot shot down over North Vietnam in 1967.

Saturday August 23rd 2014 @8:00 p.m.

The Archaeology of Childbirth

Presented by Cara Ratner, M.A.
Childbirth is an exciting time for new parents. The process of giving birth is filled with cultural traditions. The majority of parents in the United States prepare for childbirth by choosing an obstetrician and hospital, preparing a nursery, and visualizing the woman giving birth lying on her back. These present-day cultural traditions tied to childbirth are
not world-wide nor are they the same practices used in our recent or distant past. While
childbirth is biologically universal, it is always culturally constructed.

This presentation will discuss the biology and evolution of humans in relation to childbirth,
as well as different cultural practices tied to childbirth. We will examine how
archaeologists can identify childbirth in the archaeological record, and how this
archaeological knowledge applies to our contemporary society.

Saturday September 27, 2014 @ 7:30pm
Climate Change and the San Diego Coast presented by Sandra Pentney
In 2011 the Society for California Archaeology established a goal to investigate the impacts
of climate change along the entire span of the California coastline. The purpose of this
project is to assist agencies in preparing for the effects of climate change on archaeological
resources. This effort will involve coordination with federal, state and local agencies, tribal
governments, and a large group of volunteers. This presentation will explain the project,
it’s scope, and the path forward to accomplishing a volunteer survey effort of
approximately 10,000 acres across the coastal region of San Diego County. This
presentation will discuss the hurdles we have overcome to date and where the project sits
in relation to getting boots on the ground.

Sandra is a consulting archaeologist who works in the Western states primarily in
California. She sits as the current President of the SDCAS and as the San Diego Regional
Coordinator for the Society for California Archaeology's Climate Change and California
Archaeology research project.

October 28, 2014 at 7:30pm
Dr. G. Timothy Gross

A Tale of Two Battlefields: How National Geographic Lost Its Way

National Geographic Channel’s Diggers shows metal detector-wielding people working at
historic sites looking for relics and passing themselves off as legitimate investigators of the
past. For them, finding relics is a competition in which the finds are judged at the end of
each episode to determine which person found the best goodie. Some of the episodes have
focused on historic battlefields. Recent work at the Little Big Horn Battlefield National
Monument by real archaeologists, with the help of metal detector enthusiasts, allows for
sharp contrasts to be drawn between the destruction of the past shown on Diggers (and
Spike TV’s American Digger) and how archaeologists use the artifacts they find, along with
the context of these artifacts, to learn about the past.
November 25, 2014 at 7:30 p.m. (Fourth Tuesday Program)

Speaker: Max Jewett
“Climate Change and the San Diego Coast”

It’s a bird! It’s a Plane! Well...It’s sort of a plane
Developments in Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAVs) over the past few years have allowed
for their use among non-experts and the rapid development, at relatively low cost, of
Unmanned Aerial Systems (UASs) or drones. UASs use the UAV platform to carry a variety
of sensors and payloads. One of the most important developments coming from this
technology is the ability to collect aerial photos for photogrammetry at relatively low cost.
The survey area on the San Diego coast is part of a much larger effort by the Society for
California Archaeology in conjunction with the San Diego County Archaeology Society to
map cultural resources at risk of damage by climate change. Mapping these areas will aid in
the identification and evaluation of at risk sites. This paper explores the uses of the UASs
during the project and the data that they will contribute to the overall project. Max Jewett, a
recent graduate of the University of Denver (BA), is currently an archaeologist at Burns &
McDonnell and is based in Denver, Colorado. He has participated in projects in Arizona,
California, Colorado, Louisiana, Nevada, North Dakota, and Texas. Max is currently working
to bring Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAV), or drones, into American Archaeology.