January 22, 2019

Itsmonilansentlalyolt Nauatl: Lessons Learned from a Language Maintenance and Development Effort in Guerrero, Mexico

Speaker: Velma Calvario, San Diego State University

Velma Calvario will present her Master’s Thesis on the study of Nahuatl, the indigenous Aztec language. She studied language reclamation and maintenance in Guerrero, Mexico.

February 26, 2019

Kumeyaay Land Essence

Speaker: Ral Christman, M.A.

About the Presenter: Ral Christman Sr is a member of the Viejas Band of Kumeyaay, and a traditional Kumeyaay Oral Historian. Trained by his father, Ral is a Bird Singer and Kumeyaay Creation story teller. Ral has instructed courses in Kumeyaay History, Humanities and language at various educational institutions such as SDSU, Cuyamaca College, and Kumeyaay Community College.

Abstract:

This presentation will give an overview of the Traditional Kumeyaay Creation Story, precise locations, and its transformations into the present. Special attention will be provided to better understand Oral tradition versus the written word and the impact of a non linear understanding of the human record. The lecture will also focus on methods of traditional knowledge retention amongst the Kumeyaay, and its practical use in modern society and archeology. Symbolic designs, numerology, and cosmology will be discussed. Kumeyaay Bird Songs will accompany this presentation.

March 26, 2019

Using Earth’s Magnetic Field to Determine the Age of Heat-Treated Archaeological Materials

Speaker: Shelby Jones-Cervantes

Shelby Jones-Cervantes will give a presentation on her current archaeomagnetic dating research and the methods behind this mode of dating heat treated archaeological material. She studies pottery types from the 4 Corners area and does experimental archaeology to replicate ancient pottery-making techniques so they can determine cooling time (this effects how much of the magnetic signature is retained in the material). Shelby is using archaeological pottery sherds to study the earth’s past magnetic field, and while she’s at it, getting a more accurate calibration for dating artifacts using this method.
Shelby Jones-Cervantes is a PhD candidate at Scripps Institute of Oceanography studying earth’s magnetic field. She is expected to finish her dissertation in August 2019.

April 23, 2019

Ashes from Ashes: Archaeologists and Forensic Dogs Recovering Lost Human Remains

Speaker: Natalie Brodie

In this lecture, archaeologist Natalie Brodie will discuss current efforts to recover cremated human remains following a massive wild fire in Butte County. Volunteer archaeologists have been paired with trained forensic dogs and handlers to search for cremated remains in the wreckage. Ms. Brodie will discuss the process used by the archaeologists, the remarkable results of the effort, and the value of the archaeological process for remains recovery. **Note this presentation will show photographs of cremated human remains.**

Natalie Brodie is a professional archaeologist here in San Diego. She is the current Second Vice President for the San Diego County Archaeological Society and is also a past-President of the Society. Ms. Brodie’s interests include historical archaeology, the history of water development, and GIS applications.

May 28, 2019

Watchtowers and Computers

Speaker: Alberto B. Foglia

Alberto B. Foglia will present his Master's thesis on the possible functions of the turret structures on Hadrian's Wall. In the 2nd century, Roman Emperor Hadrian constructed a series of frontier works across northern Britain to consolidate this northern corner of the Roman Empire. However, how the frontier, and the component structures of the wall, operated is still debated. Alberto created a GIS to perform a viewshed analysis of the smallest structures on the Wall, the so-called 'turrets', to see how well they performed as watch towers.

He will also present on some work he has been doing on making 3D reconstructions of parts of Hadrian's Wall.

Alberto is an archaeologist and GIS specialist at PanGIS. His graduate studies involved using GIS to assess the surveillance capabilities of the towers built into Hadrian’s Wall in Northern England. His extensive skill set includes ArcGIS Online Web App development, photogrammetry, and 3D modeling. He has been working with PanGIS’ Remote Sensing team, using his skills to enhance the 3D models derived from sUAS (drone) and fixed-wing flights.
June 22, 2019

Journey through the Kumeyaay Cosmos

Speaker: Ral Christman, Sr.

Since time and memorial, The original people of the San Diego region, The Kumeyaay, have used the Cosmos to navigate their existence. While the physical world is ever evolving and dynamic, the constellations have remained. The Kumeyaay have used the cosmos as a constant reminder and diagram of the Kumeyaay collective of generational knowledge. Kumeyaay traditional Bird Songs and Oral Tradition have embedded these understandings of the physical, intellectual and spiritual world. This lecture will explain those relationships as well as shine further light on the totality of what is The Kumeyaay Journey.

July 27, 2019

Geomicrobiology Experiments on Desert Varnish, Rubification, and Encrusting Caliche in the Anza Borrego Desert

Speaker: Eleanora (Norrie) Robbins

A trio of substances is found on rocks and artifacts in the Anza-Borrego Desert. Black/brown desert varnish composed primarily of manganese oxides is the best known. But the undersides of artifacts often have red iron oxide which is called rubification (see photo). Furthermore, some artifacts have a rim of white calcium carbonate that is otherwise called caliche.

Having a geomicrobiology background, I tend to focus on supposedly abiotic chemical reactions that, instead, are catalyzed by bacteria. Elusive timing for these reactions in the desert makes it a challenge to run microbial experiments. For example, research is suggesting that desert varnish may be related to ice-age climatic regimes when the desert was subjected to way more rainfall and colder weather. The closest we can come to this ancient regime is to run experiments over very long time scales that include many rainy seasons and winters.

With that caveat, I used a microbial ecology technique of putting out microscope slides on boulders and rocks in the desert. I put them out in 2002 and studied the microbial populations that colonized them since then. Mn-oxidizing Leptothrix discophora is present on several sets I pulled in 2016. So Mn-oxidizing bacteria do participate in Mn fixation in desert varnish.

Rubification experiments started in 2019 haven’t yielded any results yet. But my hypothesis is that water standing under rocks and artifacts during the rainy season supports iron oxidizing bacteria that are reacting to reduced iron minerals in the sediment. Calcification experiments started in 2019 haven’t yielded any results yet either. But my hypothesis is that water standing around the rims of rocks and artifacts is ideal habitat for photosynthetic cyanobacteria that precipitate CaCO3. An interesting observation is that white quartz and feldspar pebbles and artifacts have green rims from colonizing cyanobacteria. It will be interesting to compare species entombed by caliche with those forming dark green rims.
August 24, 2019

Title: Gone but not Forgotten: Biocultural Approach to Understanding Lived Experiences through Skeletal Trauma

Speaker: Sydney Garcia

Ms. Garcia’s research is based on people that lived in St. Louis and New York City between 1898 and 1925.

September 24, 2019

Back to Africa Again: More thoughts on the Archaeology of the Forgotten Continent.

Speaker: Dr. Tim Gross

In July of 2017, I was lucky enough to return to Uganda for a second time, this time assisting Dr. Jennifer Parkins with her research on taphonomy. She was examining the bones of the animals killed by lions to see how they compare to damage found on bones scavenged from by early human ancestors from lion kill sites. Much of our time was spent following lions around and examining their kills. On the way we saw some beautiful country and amazing wildlife. We also encountered a few archaeological sites along the way, and I was able to see the results of some of the work I did in 2013 dealing with development in the Lake Albert region of Uganda. The talk will conclude with some observations on African archaeology today.

Author’s Biography

Tim Gross is a San Diego area archaeologist who earned his BA in Anthropology from San Diego State University and his MA and PhD from Washington State University. His masters research was in the archaeology of northwestern Egypt, and he has worked in Uganda both as a consulting archaeologist (2013) and as a research assistant (2017). His archaeological career started over 50 years ago volunteering on projects with the San Diego Museum of Man and San Diego State University. Most of his research has been in southern California, although he has also worked in Washington State, Colorado, and Arizona. He was taught at a number of schools over the years, and he is currently an Assistant Professor at San Diego City College. At City College he is involved with the Certificate program in Archaeology, teaching both the Archaeological Field Methods course at the Peñasquito Adobe and the Artifact Analysis class.

October 22, 2019

Has Jack the Ripper Finally been found? Using DNA on old and new crimes.

Presenters: Karen Lacy and Sandra Pentney
Karen and Sandra talk about forensic techniques, DNA, Genetic Ancestry, Jack the Ripper, the Golden State Killer and more. Go undercover with Karen and Sandra as they look at some old cases with new twists, of DNA that is...

Please note: This presentation contains discussions of murder and serial killers. While we will not show photos of any human remains, the discussion may be disturbing to some. Karen Lacy has over 18 years of museum and writing experience as well as a Master’s degree in Museum Science and a Bachelor’s in History with minors in Art History and Anthropology. Karen co-founded Muse Curatorial Consulting Group, a company that specializes in collections care, training, grant writing, and exhibit development of archaeological, historic, library and archive materials. Previously, Karen was the Collections Manager of the San Diego Museum of Man for seven years and the Curator of Exhibits of the San Diego Air & Space Museum for five years.

Sandra Pentney has called herself an archaeologist for 20 years. Born, raised and educated in Canada, she moved to the US after said education showed her that choosing a career based mostly on being out of doors in a climate where the out of doors was frozen and under two feet of snow for 5 months of the year wasn’t the best choice. She spent the first five years in the U.S. enjoying fieldwork in the very temperate climate of California, and now is firmly planted indoors at a desk for 49 weeks out of the year. Sandra received her Bachelor of Arts degree from Lakehead University in Thunder Bay, Ontario, and her Master of Arts in Archaeology from the University of Saskatchewan, Saskatoon, which no one outside of Canada seems to be able to pronounce.

November 26, 2019
TBD