NOVEMBER PCAS SPEAKER

Dr. Brian Dervin Dillon

AQUÍ NACIÓ EL MUNDO:  
Takalik Abaj, Guatemala, and Early Mesoamerican Civilization

The questions of where and when the earliest Mesoamerican civilization appeared continue to stimulate fieldwork and discussion more than 80 years after the first archaeologists began to address them. Over the past half century a debate between scholars favoring either an Olmec (cultura madre), or a Maya (cultura hermana), primacy has dominated most interpretations about the birth of Mesoamerican civilization.

Takalik Abaj, on the Pacific Slope of Guatemala, was the first major ancient Mesoamerican city where Olmec and Maya sculptures were found literally side-by-side in abundance.  (Continued on p. 3)

Dr. Dillon (left) after clearing Stela 5 and Altar 8 at Abaj Takalik, Guatemala. UC Berkeley-National Geographic Society Project, 1976.

PCAS MEETINGS CALENDAR

ANNUAL AND ELECTION MEETING

Free and Open to the Public
November 14 - 7:30 pm
Speaker: Dr. Brian Dervin Dillon
Topic: AQUÍ NACIÓ EL MUNDO:  
Takalik Abaj, Guatemala, and Early Mesoamerican Civilization
Location: IRWD Community Room
15500 Sand Canyon Ave, Irvine

The Irvine Ranch Water District neither supports nor endorses the causes or activities of organizations that use the District’s meeting rooms which are made available for public use.

BOARD MEETING

All Members Welcome
November 21 - 7:00 pm
Location: Old Orange County Courthouse
PCAS Library, Ground Floor
211 W. Santa Ana Blvd., Santa Ana

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DINNER WITH THE SPEAKER

Please join this month’s speaker, Dr. Brian Dillon, and PCAS members for dinner before the November 14th General Meeting. We will meet at 6 pm at Mimi’s Café, 4030 Barranca Parkway, Irvine.

Please attend the November 14th PCAS Annual and Election Meeting.
We need a quorum!
OCTOBER SPEAKER NOTES

On the Dark Side of the Cosmos: Witchcraft, Sorcery, and Religion in the Mesoamerican World

Submitted by Megan Galway

Jeremy Colton discussed Mesoamerican witchcraft, sorcery, and religion and their related iconography. He noted that witchcraft and sorcery, along with shamanism, are loaded terms with generally negative connotations, but that they can be used for both good and evil. Yet, maleficent magic was a significant component of the ideologies of complex Mesoamerican societies. Assault sorcery was known to have been practiced and was used by the Aztec leader, Moctezuma, against the Spanish.

Fiction with a supernatural theme has experienced a huge resurgence in popular culture with many million books being sold. Individuals identified as witches have long been persecuted. In 1484, Pope Innocent VIII issued a papal bull, described as a guide to destroying magicians and witches. The Salem witch trials of 1692–93, strongly influenced by Cotton Mather, continued this persecution and in many cases it still continues.

Colton noted that the early Mesoamerican cultures had no concept of good versus evil as we understand it, but rather believed in an orderly cosmos surrounded by chaos. The Spanish conquest became a holy war against the established indigenous religions, and knowledge of these religions may have been lost if not for the efforts of Friar Bernardino de Sahagún, who wrote what is now known as the Florentine Codex. This is a 2,400 page detailed ethnography of the Aztecan people and includes descriptions and illustrations of their religious practices.

Many Aztec and Maya gods have been identified, and their names and abilities are known. The Codex Borgia—now held by the Vatican—is one document that pre-dates and survived the Spanish conquest. It illustrates and identifies much of this iconography. Common threads are seen in the iconography—hearts, skulls, and hands are common, along with a skull and crossed bone image, which we connect today with a traditional pirate flag. These images are seen on paintings and sculptures and also appear (sometimes stylized) on altars and textiles. One deity is depicted with his hand over his mouth, and this has been illustrated on objects such as pottery. Today many of these images are seen in intricate cut-paper figures used in Mesoamerican ceremonies.

HELEN C. SMITH DEDICATION

The Costa Mesa Historical Society dedicated a plaque in memory of Helen C. Smith at Estancia Park, Costa Mesa, on October 13. Helen Smith, one of the historical society’s founding members, was also a guiding light to the Pacific Coast Archaeological Society and a first editor of the PCAS Quarterly in 1965.

Several PCAS members, including Stephen O’Neil and Mark Roeder, had spent time with Helen at her home in Costa Mesa. They spoke at the ceremony on Helen’s contributions to local history and the preservation of prehistoric resources. Helen’s daughter, Cory Smith, and her grandson talked about Helen’s interests. PCAS had tables at the event with PCAS Quarterly issues and artifacts on display, and Megan Galway and Joe Hodulik answered questions about our society.

For further information on Helen Smith, see the PCAS history in PCAS Quarterly, Volume 40, Nos. 3 and 4, and her memorial published in Volume 20, No. 3.

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Stephen O’Neil at PCAS table, Estancia Park, Costa Mesa. Photo courtesy Ron Fernandez.
October Board Meeting

Summary

Submitted by Brian Steffensen

President Megan Galway called the meeting to order at 7:05 pm at the Old Orange County Courthouse in Santa Ana, California. Board members present: Gail Cochlin, Sherri Gust, Joe Hodulik, Hank Koerper, Steve O’Neil, and Brian Steffensen. Members present: Scott Findlay.

The Board approved the minutes of the September 2013 meeting. The Treasurer’s report was approved.

Old Business:

Prehistoric OC sponsored by the Cooper Center and OC Parks, held on October 12, was well attended by the public and PCAS members. PCAS would like more room for tables and activities at next year’s event. The dedication of a plaque honoring early PCAS member Helen Smith was held October 13 at Estancia Park in Costa Mesa. She was honored for her contributions to Orange County history and archaeology; she was a driving force behind the PCAS Quarterly. PCAS had tables displaying artifacts and the PCAS Quarterly. Thanks to PCAS members attending: Steve O’Neil, Mark Roeder, Megan Galway, Joe Hodulik, Hank Koerper, and Ron Fernandez.

New Business:

An Election Committee composed of Brian Steffensen, Dorothy DeGennaro, and Kathleen Shada was appointed to hand out ballots to members at the November meeting. Bob Brace, Joe Hodulik, and Hank Koerper will have completed their three-year terms as Board members. The Holiday Dinner will be at the IRWD Sand Canyon Meeting Room. Megan Galway will be contact person for RSVP’s.

Committee Reports:

The November curation workday is tentative because of construction around the Red Car Building. Joe Hodulik’s Award-Donation table raised $139 at the October meeting for the scholarship fund! Field Trip Chair Scott Findlay reported that an October 19 field trip is planned to the Mojave Desert and PCAS members will attend the Rock Art Conference on November 2. Editor Hank Koerper stated that a PCAS Quarterly double-issue on coggd stones will be published next year.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:00 pm.

November Speaker (continued from p. 1)

Takalik Abaj is a gigantic Olmec site with all the hallmarks of Olmec civilization most often associated with the Mexican Gulf Coast. But it is also an early Maya site with Preclassic and Protohistoric Maya hallmarks dating much earlier than sites in the Petén farther to the north where the Classic Maya civilization later reached fluorescence.

Dr. Brian Dervin Dillon, who made many of the important discoveries at Takalik Abaj in 1976 and 1977, has been associated with ongoing research at the site over the past 37 years. He believes that there may have been an unique source of Mesoamerican civilization traceable to only a single archaeological site. Rather, like every other example known from the ancient world, Mesoamerican civilization was more likely the product of many different early cities and many different cultural and linguistic groups and traditions cross-fertilizing each other. This multilingual, multicultural experimentation and interchange climaxed at only a few prehistoric cosmopolitan centers within what we now call Mesoamerica. One of the most important, yet still least known, of these is Takalik Abaj, Guatemala. In a recent (2012) publication Dr. Dillon argued that this site is critical to our understanding of the birth and expansion of two of the earliest Mesoamerican civilizations, both Olmec and Maya. His November 2013 illustrated talk will familiarize PCAS members with the site and with the evidence supporting this conclusion.

Dr. Dillon is a fifth-generation Californian, an archaeologist and historian who has done fieldwork in California and Central America for more than 40 years. He is experienced in all aspects of prehistoric and historic research, including pre-field literature review; map and archival research in Spanish and English; oral interviewing; site surveying by foot, mule, back, and small boat; site recording; field cartography; documentary photography; boundary testing and site volumetric estimation; stratigraphic excavation and interpretation; architectural reconstruction; post-excavation artifact analysis, including ceramic and lithic analysis; report writing and report editing. Dillon has built and maintained field camps and recruited, trained, and supervised multilingual crews in desert, tropical rain forest, maritime, and alpine environments in five different countries. He has lived with three different traditional American Indian groups for extended periods, and is experienced in Native American consultation. He has trained dozens of professional archaeologists in this country and abroad through university field classes, field research projects, and contract compliance work. He has completed archaeological inventories for more than 1.5 million acres of private lands in California, as well as California Environmental Quality Act and National Historic Preservation Act significance evaluations for nearly 300 private and public properties for a wide variety of federal, state, municipal and private clients. An accomplished field cartographer, scientific illustrator, photographer, writer, editor, and layout artist, Dillon is a prolific writer, the author of dozens of papers, monographs, and books, and hundreds of environmental reports on archaeology, ethnology, ethnohistory, ethnoarchaeology, and history, most of them illustrated with his own maps, drawings, and photos. Research interests include the genesis of civilization, prehistoric-historic cultural continuity, and cultural ecology.
**Utah Field Trip**

PCAS members enjoyed great weather and incredible rock art on the late October/early November field trip to the Kanab area of Utah. We thank Kathleen and Chris Edman for opening their home to us and allowing us to camp in their “backyard” below the vermillion cliffs. Richard Logsdon shared his knowledge of the area and led us to several sites (see bottom photo of Richard with Dorothy DeGennaro). We also visited several habitation sites. Members attending: Bob and Rene Brace, Beverly Carpenter, Gail Cochlin, Dorothy DeGennaro, Scott Findlay, Megan Galway, and Brian Steffensen.

**Mojave Field Trip**

Five PCAS Members participated in the October 19–21 field trip to the Old Woman Mountains section of the eastern Mojave Desert. The weather was perfect for camping and exploring. The area was an interesting one and contained historical evidence as well as a few scattered petroglyphs.

The group was fortunate to encounter Tom Askew of the Native American Conservancy (see http://nalc4all.org). Mr.,Askew’s family has lived in the area for many years, and because of his personal historical knowledge and experience, he was able to share a great deal of pertinent information with the PCAS group regarding the area and its inhabitants. He and his friend, Erick Clark, kindly consented to guide the five PCAS members to a remote portion of the site which contained many polychrome pictographs on a ledge about 50 feet up a cliff wall. The group would not have been able to access the site without their guidance.
PCAS HOLIDAY DINNER

Thursday, December 12TH
6:30 PM
IRWD Meeting Room
15500 Sand Canyon, Irvine

4th Annual Potluck (no additional cost)

Our dinner speaker is Don Christensen:
Rock Art and the Cultural Landscape: A Study in the East Mojave
Lecture at 7:30 pm - free and open to the public

1. Bring an appetizer, side dish, or dessert to serve 6 people.
2. This year’s dinner will be at the IRWD Community Room on Sand Canyon.
3. We will not be able to heat food.
4. No alcoholic beverages are allowed.

Sign up at the November meeting or by contacting Megan Galway, Membership@PCAS.org or 714-539-6354, and let us know what you are bringing.
Exhibits


Lectures


The Ramses II Temple at Abydos, Dr. Sameh Iskander (New York University, President of ARCE), an ARCE lecture. Bowers Museum, November 9, 1:30 pm. Free. Information: www.bowers.org or 714-567-3677.


Classes, Meetings, and Events

The 16th Annual CVAS Symposium will be held at the Pollock Theatre, College of the Desert, Palm Desert, November 9, 9 am. Information: Ellen Hardy, 760-776-7449 or ehardy@collegeofthedesert.edu; Leslie Mouriquand, lmouriquand@gmail.com.


Websites

Visit www.pcas.org for all the latest news.

Editor’s Note: Please confirm time and place of listing prior to the event. Submit items for Dig This to newsletter@pcas.org.
PCAS CODE OF ETHICS

The Pacific Coast Archaeological Society (PCAS) is a non-profit group of professional and avocational people dedicated to proper management of our cultural resources, public education, and the protection and preservation of archaeological materials and collections.

The following principles have been adopted by the PCAS:

1. Professional methods and forms will be used on all archaeological field surveys, excavations, and laboratory sessions.
2. A complete record of field and laboratory work will be filed with the PCAS Curator and stored at a facility approved by the Society’s Board of Directors.
3. No archaeological materials will be removed without proper permits, landowner permission, and a field research design.
4. Unless otherwise legally stipulated before activity commences, all materials collected will be deposited for further research with the Curator at a facility approved by the Society's Board of Directors.
5. All generated reports will be the property of the Society and distributed as deemed appropriate.
6. All Society field activities will be performed only under the direction of a qualified field archaeologist (Principal Investigator) and the supervision of field or site directors.
7. The above principles will be observed on both Society approved projects and projects performed under the direction of an authorized institution or organization.
8. The Society and its members will strive to educate the public of the importance and proper management of our non-renewable cultural resources and to discourage the collection and commercial exploitation of archaeological materials.
9. PCAS members shall not benefit from the acquisition, purchase, sale, or trade of archaeological artifacts, materials, or specimens.
10. All members shall adhere to City, County, State, and Federal antiquities laws.

PREHISTORIC OC

PCAS had a outreach table at Prehistoric OC, sponsored by the Cooper Center and OC Parks, at Ralph B. Clark Regional Park on October 12. We presented hands-on activities for children, artifact displays, and information about PCAS. Thanks to our volunteers: Bob and Rene Brace, Gail Cochlin, Scott Findlay, Megan Galway, Hank Koerper, and Kathleen Shada.

PCAS SPEAKER CALENDAR

December 12, 2013 (Holiday Dinner Meeting)
Don Christensen
Rock Art and the Cultural Landscape: A Study in the East Mojave

January 9, 2014
Steve Freers

February 13, 2014
Dr. Micah Hale

March 13, 2014
Dr. Todd Braje

April 10, 2014
John Rafter
2013 PCAS BOARD MEMBERS AND COMMITTEE CONTACTS

Office | Name | Email | Phone
--- | --- | --- | ---
*President | Megan Galway | president@pcas.org | 714-539-6354
*Vice-President | Joe Hodulik | vicepresident@pcas.org | 949-300-1864
*Secretary | Brian Steffensen | secretary@pcas.org | 714-348-9179
*Treasurer | Bob Brace | treasurer@pcas.org | 714-544-6282
*Native American Liaison | Steve O’Neil | nativeamericanliaison@pcas.org | 949-677-2391
*Newsletter Editor | Sherri Gust | newsletter@pcas.org | 714-245-0264
*Quarterly Editor | Hank Koerper | publications@pcas.org | 714-633-9287
*Refreshments | Gail Cochlin | refreshments@pcas.org | 714-745-0815
*Voting member | Linda Christison | lindachristison@pcas.org | 209-777-2613
Curator | Mark Roeder | curator@pcas.org | 714-299-4150
Donation-Awards Coordinator | Joe Hodulik | donation-awards@pcas.org | 949-300-1864
Field Trips | Scott Findlay | fieldtrips@pcas.org | 714-342-2534
Historian/Librarian/Archivist | Jane Gothold | librarian-archivist@pcas.org | 562-947-6506
Membership | Megan Galway | membership@pcas.org | 714-539-6354
Publicist | Joe Hodulik | publicity@pcas.org | 949-300-1864
Scholarship | Megan Galway | scholarship@pcas.org | 714-539-6354
Website | Rene Brace | info@pcas.org | 714-544-6282

*Denotes PCAS Board Member

PACIFIC COAST ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY
2013 Calendar Year Membership and Subscription Form

Name(s): ______________________________________________________________________________
Address: ______________________________________________________________________________
City: __________________________ State: _________ Zip Code ___________
Phone: __________________________ Email: ______________ __________________

☐ Yes, I would like to receive my Newsletter by email. Please be sure email above is legible.

I have read and agree to abide by the PCAS Code of Ethics ____________________________________

Signature

Membership (Includes Quarterly/Newsletter) | Subscription Only | Scholarship Fund
--- | --- | ---
☐ Active Member - $45 | ☐ Quarterly - $37 | ☐ Donation $________
☐ Family Membership - $50 | ☐ Newsletter - $18 |
☐ Supporting Member* - $55 | ☐ Student Associate - $10 (email Newsletter only)
☐ Donor Member* - $75 |
☐ Lifetime Member* - $1000 |
* May be individual or family membership

Return form with payment to:
PCAS Membership
PO Box 10926
Costa Mesa, CA 92627-0926

www.pcas.org