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PCAS Newsletter

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November PCAS Speaker

Dr. Tom D. Dillehay

The Archaeology, Genetics and Environments of the First South Americans

Zoom Meeting
November 13, 7:30 pm. See p. 5.

This presentation will discuss new archaeological, genetic, and paleo-ecological findings in South America that clarify the chronology, diverse cultural features, and the origin of the first peoples on the continent, with special focus on new results from the Monte Verde site in Chile and other localities. The discussion also relates the first peopling of South America to that in North America.

Dr. Tom Dillehay.

Monte Verde II.

Dr. Tom D. Dillehay is the Rebecca Webb Wilson University Distinguished Professor of Anthropology, Religion, and Culture and Professor of Anthropology and Latin American Studies, Emeritus, at Vanderbilt University; a Senior Scholar at the School for Advanced Research in Santa Fe; s Senior Fellow at Dumbarton Oaks, Harvard University; and Profesor Titular at the Universidad Austral de Chile. He has carried out numerous archaeological and anthropological projects in Peru, Chile, Argentina, other South American countries, and in the United States, England, and India. His main interests are migration, the long-term transformative processes leading to political and economic change, and the interdisciplinary and historical methodologies designed to study those processes.

(Continued on p. 3)

Board of Directors Election

All PCAS members should have received their ballots for the November Directors election**. If you did not receive a ballot, please email membership@pcas.org and request one.** All ballots must be returned by November 13. We need a quorum for the election. **Please return your ballot today!**

October Speaker Notes

Fire, Salt, Ceramics, and Commerce on the Pacific Coast of Southern Mesoamerica

By Albert Knight

The PCAS guest speaker on October 9, 2025, was Dr. Hector Neff. The subject of his very interesting and well-illustrated ZOOM presentation was "Fire, Salt, Ceramics, and Commerce on the Pacific Coast of Southern Mesoamerica." In 1984 Dr. Neff received his PhD in Anthropology from the University of California, Santa Barbara (Dissertation title: "Developmental History of the Plumbate Pottery Industry in the Eastern Soconusco Region, A.D. 600–A.D. 1250"). Dr. Neff is currently Professor Emeritus of Anthropology at California State University, Long Beach. His research interests include archaeological method and theory, Mesoamerican archaeology, the origins of agriculture, paleoenvironmental reconstruction, quantitative methods, ceramic analysis, and instrumental chemical analysis.

Dr. Neff has directed and/or participated in many archaeological projects. He is the author of numerous papers on Mesoamerican pottery, and his work has been published in the *Journal of Archaeological Science; Latin American Antiquity; Geoarchaeology*; *Journal of Archaeological Science: Reports, Archaeological; Papers of the American Anthropological Association; Ancient Mesoamerica; Journal of Radioanalytical and Nuclear Chemistry;* and *Revista Pueblos y fronteras digital*. In addition to his Mesoamerican studies, Dr. Neff has worked on many archaeological projects in the Santa Barbara County area and in the American Southwest. He has also contributed to research on places farther afield, such as Ghana, Okinawa, Eastern Anatolia, and Virginia. The October 9 presentation focused on a little-known aspect of southern Mesoamerican archaeology: precolumbian salt production by brine boiling. The discussion was focused on two geographic areas: 1) the southwest corner of Mexico and the adjacent part of Guatemala, and 2) the northwest corner of Nicaragua, close by the border with Honduras.

As we all know, everyone needs to consume no less than about 3 grams and not much more than 5 grams of salt every day to remain healthy. In the modern world, we do not give salt a lot of thought, because it is readily available; in short, we take salt for granted. But since we cannot live healthy lives without salt, sources of salt and the production of salt products have historically been very important. Cities have been named for important deposits (e.g., Salzberg in Austria), and salt is referenced in our daily language. The Romans, for example, used measured amounts of salt as money. When we say that someone "is not worth his salt," we are using an ancient way of saying someone is not worth their pay. Salt is also important for the preservation of many foodstuffs. "Corned beef" refers to salted (preserved) beef, for example, and it does not mean that cows had been fed with corn. Salt was so important that it has been, and is, traded over long distances, as Dr. Neff describes for southern Mesoamerica.

PCAS October speaker, Dr. Hector Neff.

In southern Mexico salt production was concentrated in the coastal mangrove swamps in the State of Chiapas. In Preclassic Mesoamerica salt was produced via *sal solar* (solar evaporators), a system which still works fine if one has plenty of space and time. By 1,000 BC to 900 BC, Mesoamericans had invented a better method—"brine boiling"—where ceramic jars were filled with brine and then placed into racks and other holders, fired with wood, and the liquid cooked away. This system was widespread by the Middle Classic, as seen in the Las Beisas complex. Dr. Neff noted that sites from this complex are rich in pottery sherds, but almost lack lithic and ground stone artifacts. This demonstrates that the brine/salt works were in essence industrial sites and not urban or residential areas. The salt itself does not, of course, survive well in the archaeological record in tropical areas. The production areas are evidence themselves, as well as the many thousands of ceramic sherds, all that is left of the boiling vessels, This pattern is also seen in the subsequent Late Classic La Gloria complex, and it continues into and after the Spanish entrada. Numerous colonial records document the Central American salt trade. For example, there are no sources of salt in interior Nicaragua, and historical records show that the salt production areas in the Estero Real River area of northwest Nicaragua were the source of the salt used in the highland areas. *(Continued on p. 3)*

Speaker Notes *(continued from p. 2)*

Salt boiling feature, Chinandega, Nicaragua.

Dr. Neff's talk included a wealth of additional information. For those who are interested in finding out more about this subject, he discusses his research in detail in his recently published *Fire and Salt: Human Niche Construction and Holocene Landscape Evolution of the Pacific Coast of Southern Mesoamerica* (University of New Mexico Press, 2024).

This and other past lectures are available on the PCAS YouTube channel: www.youtube.com/@pcas-pacificcoastarchaeolo9403.

November Speaker *(continued from p. 1)*

Dr. Dillehay has been a visiting professor at several universities in the United States and around the world and a Fulbright Scholar in Peru, Chile, Argentina, and Uruguay. He has published 32 books and more than 250 refereed journal articles and book chapters. He currently directs interdisciplinary projects focused on long-term human and environmental interaction on the north coast of Peru and on the political identity and cultural patrimony of the Mapuche in Chile. Dr. Dillehay has received numerous international and national awards for his research, books, and teaching. He is a member of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences.

Welcome New *PCAS Quarterly* Editors

We are pleased to announce the appointment of our new *PCAS Quarterly* Editor, **Dr. Mark Sutton,** and our new Assistant Editor, **Dr. Jill Gardner**. Both come with a wealth of knowledge and experience.

Dr. Sutton has worked as an archaeologist for the US Air Force, the US Bureau of Land Management, consulting firms, and taught at a number of community colleges and universities. He retired from CSU Bakersfield as Emeritus Professor of Anthropology. From 1986 to 2000 he served as the editor of *Journal of California and Great Basin Anthropology* and has published more than 200 books, monographs, articles, and reviews on archaeology and anthropology.

Dr. Gardner received her Ph.D. in Anthropology in 2006 from the University of Nevada, Las Vegas (UNLV). For the past 30 years, she has served a number of roles related to archaeology, including adjunct professor at CSU Bakersfield and UNLV, as well as principal investigator for many cultural resource management projects. She has also been appointed editor (or co-editor) for various publications, including the *Journal of California* and *Great Basin Anthropology* and *California Archaeology*, and is the current editor for the *Society for California Archaeology Newsletter*. She has also authored numerous agency reports, peer-reviewed articles, and specialty reports.

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Lectures

Underwater Archaeology: Voices from Coaybay, by John W. Foster (retired California State Parks Senior State Archaeologist). A lecture of the Santa Barbara County Archaeological Society, Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History, November 3, 7 pm. Free. Information: www.sbnature.org/visit/calendar.

Rethinking the Ancient Egyptian Afterlife, by Dr. Rune Nyord (Emory University). An ARCE/Bowers Museum onsite lecture, November 8, 1:30 pm. Fee: $15, Bowers and ARCE members free. Recorded lecture available one week after onsite event: $10, Bowers and ARCE members free. Ticket purchase and information: www.bowers.org/index.php/programs.

Developing World of the Terracotta Warriors, by Dr. Tianlong Jiao (Bowers Chief Curator) and Mark Bustamante (Bowers Director of Exhibitions). Bowers Museum, November 9, 1:30 pm. Ticketed event, free with museum admission. Information and tickets: www.bowers.org/index.php/programs.

Merchants and Mercenaries: The Archaeology of Greeks in Egypt, by Camille Reiko Acosta (UC Irvine). An in-person or Zoom event, Getty Villa, November 9, 2 pm. Free. Information and registration: www.getty.edu/calendar/merchants-mercenaries.

Judah Under Assyrian Rule: The Beginning of the 600 Years of 'The Age of Empires," by Dr. Oded Lipschits (Tel Aviv University). Bowers Museum, November 16, 1:30 pm. Fee: $20, members $15. Ticket purchase and information: www.bowers.org/index.php/programs.

Many past PCAS lectures are available on YouTube: youtube.com/@pcas-pacificcoastarchaeolo9403/videos.

Classes, Meetings, and Events

Rock Art 2025 Virtual Symposium sponsored by the San Diego Rock Art Association will be November 1. Free. Information and registration: www.sandiegorockart.org/symposium.

Kewet: Native American Learning Day & Market, sponsored by the Agua Caliente Band of Cahuilla Indians will share Agua Caliente culture and history. Palm Springs High School, 2401 E. Baristo Rd., Palm Springs, November 1, 9 am–2 pm. Free. Information: www.aguacaliente.org/kewet.

Field Trip: Ancient Lake Cahuilla, by John Peterson. An event of the Anza-Borrego Desert Natural History Association, November 8, 9:30 am–12:30 pm. Fee: $18, members $12. Information and ticket purchase: abdnha.org/activities.

Archaeology Day, presented by the Colorado Desert Archaeological Society, will include basketry, games, storytelling, speakers, and hands-on activities. Anza-Borrego Desert State Visitor Center, November 8, 9 am–3:30 pm. Free. Field trips: Mine Wash, November 8, 1 pm, adult $10, child under 12 $5; Morteros Prehistoric Village and Pictograph Trail, November 9, 8 am, adult $20, child under 12 $10. Advanced registration required for field trips: theabf.org/events/anza-borrego-desert-state-park-archaeology-day-field-trips. Information: www.anzaborregoarchaeo.org/archday2025.

2025 Archaeology Discovery Weekend—Alexander the Great & How He Changed the World, a combined in-person/online event. La Sierra University, November 15, 3–6 pm, and November 16, 1–4 pm. Kids' Dig (advanced registration required), November 16, 2–4 pm. Free. In-person and online. Program available online. Information and registration: lasierra.edu/cnea/discovery-weekend.

The First People and Traditional Games of San Diego Tribal Communities, Through a Payómkawichum Lens, by Ami Admire (Payómkawichum, Rincon Band). A program of the Anza Borrego Foundation, November 22, 1–4 pm. Fee: $40, members $34. Information and registration: theabf.org/events/the-first-people-and-traditional-games-of-san-diego-tribal-communities-through-a-payomkawichum-lens.

Sacred Lands: Indigenous Peoples of the Mojave Desert, by Elizabeth Paige (Torres Martinez Band of Cahuilla Indians). A program of the Desert Institute, Joshua Tree National Park Association, November 30, 10 am–1 pm. Fee: $60. Information and registration: events.humanitix.com/host/desert-institute.

Editor's Note*: Please confirm time and place of listing prior to the event.*

PCAS CODE OF ETHICS

The Pacific Coast Archaeological Society (PCAS) is a nonprofit 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 nonrenewable 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.

Zoom Meeting

- Email a **new** Zoom registration request by **noon on Thursday, November 13** to membership@pcas.org. You will receive an emailed link to the meeting.
- Guests (non-PCAS members) are welcome with registration.
- When the presentation starts, please **mute your microphone and turn off your webcam**.

PCAS host **Steve Dwyer** will open the Zoom meeting at 7 pm to allow time to resolve any technical problems prior to the beginning of the PCAS General Meeting and lecture at 7:30 pm.

No in-person meeting in November.

PCAS Speaker Calendar

December 11, 2025
Dr. Ulrike Matthies Green
Frontiers and Encounters: Wari and Tiwanaku in the Moquegua Valley, Peru, during the Middle Horizon (ca. AD 600–1000)

January 8, 2026
Dr. Carla Betancour
Biocultural Heritage and the Deep History of the Llanos de Moxos: Lessons from the Bolivian Amazon

February 12, 2026
Dr. Maren Pauly
Radiocarbon Dating & Stable Isotopes in Archaeology

March 12, 2026
Dr. Richard Scott

2025 PCAS Board Members and Committee Contacts

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*PCAS Board Member

PACIFIC COAST ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

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Newsletters will be sent by email unless a mailed copy is requested.

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

Membership (Includes Quarterly/Newsletter)

☐ Active Member – $45

☐ Family Membership – $50

☐ Supporting Member* – $55

☐ Donor Member* – $75

☐ Lifetime Member* – $1000

* May be individual or family membership

Subscription Only

☐ *Quarterly* – $50

☐ *Newsletter* – $20

www.pcas.org

Scholarship Fund

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www.pcas.org/membrs.html

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