

ALL POINTS BULLETIN



Make friends with... ..the past, through the....

Colorado Archaeological Society - Denver Chapter

“...in the future, as in the past, the gathering of information will depend to a great extent on cooperation between avocational and professional archaeologists.” (H.M. Wormington, 1978)

Volume 53, No 11

November 2015

The Ceremonial Center of Canada de la Virgen (The ravine of the Virgin) San Miguel de Allende, Mexico by Rosalie Hewins

Thirty kilometers from the city of San Miguel de Allende in the mountainous region of Central Mexico lies a mesa surrounded by deep canyons. This is the site of Canada de la Virgen the northernmost pre-Columbian site. It was built by the Otomi people from AD 540-1050. Just recently the Mexican Department of Archaeology has given permission for it to be opened to the public and has built a very modern visitors center. For years locals have known about it and tried to view it, including myself, to no avail. Finally, last year during our visit to San Miguel our friends informed us that we could take a tour of the site with an excellent archaeologist from Louisiana named Albert Coffee.

Excavations had been conducted back in the late 1990s but then there was a dispute over who owned the land. For a long time we heard that a German lady owned it and would not allow it to be shown to the public. From 2002-2011 a team of archaeologists worked at the site and performed many tests. After the owner's death her family decided to let it be opened to the public. It is now owned by the Mexican Government, but to access it you still have to cross her land.

As you drive out to the site you see hills in the distance but mostly the landscape is flat. To approach the site you walk up a 17 meter wide, 1 kilometer long ceremonial causeway which runs east to west, thought to have been constructed by the Otomi. This causeway was the only access into the complex and was used primarily by people who lived nearby who came in processions and pilgrimages along this avenue to reach the temple located at the top of the pyramidal structure. As we approached, a pyramid came into view, then pyramidal platforms and another pyramid. At the end of the causeway there was a huge gate and an interesting garden where many medicinal plants and shrubs were being grown which would have been used in ancient times (see below). The property is now surrounded by a chain link fence. In former times it was surrounded by a huge wall and the only access was through a meter wide portal, allowing only one person at a time to enter or leave. Recent excavations and research have confirmed that the site was built on a plateau, oriented west, aligned with the rising and setting of the sun and the moon and that its location was strategic for defense, as well as offering a spectacular view of the central basin of the Laja River. The surrounding hills provided cosmic points of reference to regulate the agricultural year and there was plenty of water running through the canyons. The architects of this site intentionally incorporated astronomical alignments within their place of worship to serve a number of interrelated purposes: to satisfy practical needs; to reinforce their understanding of the universe; to corroborate different aspects of their religion; and to substantiate the ideology of the governing elite. For example the sun and the full moon set behind the pyramidal base rather than rise from behind it, as occurs in most Mesoamerican ceremonial centers. The month of March is when the sun and the full moon both enter the temple hill of the Ceremonial Center of Canada de la Virgen, marking the beginning of the Otomi year on March 4th.

The site consists of 4 patio and pyramid complexes, an artificial pond and an ancient causeway. La Casa de la Noche, so called because of its association with the winter solstice; House of the 13 heavens associated with the movement of the moon, including a horizon clock, a burial ground for the elite as well as an observatory; Complex B – the House of the Longest Night; and Complex D – the House of the Wind, which was built in a circular shape and was associated with Ursa Minor and the Pole Star in the north, and the Milky Way and the Southern Cross in the south.

The red temple at the top of Complex A pyramid offers one of the most interesting aspects of the site. A mummified body was found buried in the floor close to a wall together with a dog and 20 white ceramic vases. The burial took place in AD 700 approximately, but when the bones were sent for analysis it was revealed that the bones dated from 770-400BC, about a 1000 years before the construction of the site in AD 540. The tomb is called El Jerarca (the Hierarch), so named because he had been one of the most prominent forefathers of Canada de La Virgen's ruling caste. He was killed by axe wounds to the head and his legs had been amputated but at a later date prior to his reburial. It was proposed that he came from further

south in the area of the Toltecs near Oaxaca, whose burial practices were similar to this one. They were able to date his reburial at the site by dating the bones of the dog buried with him, which gave dates of AD 640-720. This puts it during the time of construction or thereafter, there being 3 construction phases. Experts believe that El Jerarca's remains were part of a "funerary bundle" which entailed wrapping the remains of a deified ancestor and protector of a group. This was a pre-Hispanic practice that has been extensively documented in Mesoamerican codices.

Nineteen burials were carried out in total during the life of the complex. They have been well documented and show in some cases that the burials were carried out as part of rituals linked to the founding of new construction phases. The burials also show the importance of the cardinal points in the placement of the dead and possibly the collective sacrifice and interment of a defeated family lineage that once was the ruling caste. One burial was Burial 18 – a decapitated man (post mortem) who was a founder or ancestor in the social hierarchy. This was deduced based on the location where he was found in the ceiling of a construction stage. He was 20-30 years old, 1.73 meters tall which was tall for those days and had arthritis.

Many of the burials were part of a ritual sacrifice as suggested by the abundance of "killed" ceramics. Killing ceramics implied purposefully shattering them as part of a ritual and as a form of elimination or desanctification.

Canada de la Virgen was a ceremonial and spiritual center and an astronomical observatory. It was inhabited only by soldiers and priests who specialized in the measurement of time and the movement of the stars. The pyramidal bases and sunken patios were oriented in such a way as to promote fertility across the earth's surface and to unleash the valuable resources harnessed in the sun and the moon's annual journeys across the sky. The surrounding valleys were fertile areas containing over 90 settlements and it was important to know when to plant. For example on March 4th the sun hits the top of the pyramid throwing its shadow out into the center of the entrance way. The Otomis believed that when the sun and the full moon aligned above the center of the main pyramid, they represented a seed descending to earth and thus the moment to start planting. Their knowledge was passed on for over 1000 years. They believed that the universe consisted of 7 levels, where there were 3 upper heavens that reflected into 3 lower heavens, in between was the world of man.

Canada de la Virgen was a sanctuary between AD 540 and 1050. It was the seat of religious and political power and its rulers used calendars as a guide to develop and manage their agricultural systems and to consecrate the ruling elite. Canada de la Virgen is now known to have been the City State of San Miguel *Viejo* and was the religious and political capital of the region. It was consecrated to the primitive gods and goddesses and to the earliest forefathers, the ancestors of the ruling elite (according to radio carbon dates). It was a religious center and place of refuge for the ruling caste.

It is believed that there is a geographical relationship between Canada de la Virgen and the Xuchiles festival which is celebrated in San Miguel de Allende every year. The Xuchile flower has been used for centuries to build the massive crosses used in the festival. Canada de la Virgen - a holy place of pilgrimage and a portal to the underworld through which the sun and moon set – may have played an important role in pre-Hispanic times because it is believed to have been the place where people originally gathered for this festival.

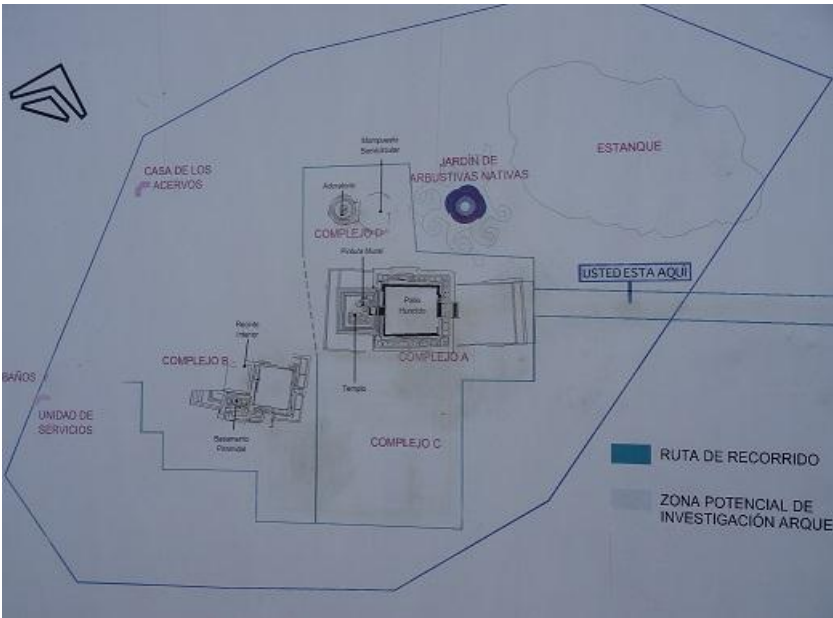
San Miguel de Allende is full of wonderful festivals. What is not so well known is that so many of them are linked to the ancient Otomi festivals that took place at La Canada de la Virgen. Researchers were able to establish a symbolic relationship between Mexican festivals and the position of the sun. The festivals took place on the equinoxes, in the "months" or veintenas (made up of 20 days), on the solstices and when the sun passed through its zenith on May 24 and July 19. Two of the researchers, Rossana Quiroz and Geraldine Patrick were the first to establish the link between the old and modern festivals. March 4th in San Miguel is the date when kernels are removed from the cob. Many of the pilgrimage routes used today are the same ones used thousands of years ago and pass through many of the areas which today are archaeological sites.

Botanic research at Canada de la Virgen yielded an interesting variety of trees, shrubs, cacti, herbs and fungi, all of which were used over many generations for multiple purpose and are still used in many rural communities today. Some of the plants still used today are Thistle (for arthritis, blood clots); Mexican Arnica (sprains, wound healing); Dahlia (edible and coloring agent); Cudweed (respiratory tract infections, bronchitis, pneumonia); Brickellbush (menstrual and stomach pain); Huizache (used in essential oils and edible flowers); and Kidneywood (gastrointestinal problems and diabetes, parasites).

By AD 900 the Otomi civilization began to decline. By AD 1050 the site was abandoned. Unfortunately in the 1940s a local priest in San Miguel de Allende sent someone to blow up the top of the pyramid with dynamite.

Please visit www.coyotecanyonadventures.com for some great celestial photos. One was taken by one of the guides using an app and his smartphone. It shows a perfect alignment of the sun, moon and all of the planets except Saturn at sunset on March 4, 2011. Saturn was located exactly 180 degrees from the setting sun at the start of the ritual causeway of the site.

References: Canada de la Virgen : Refugio de los Muertos y los Ancestros – Gabriela Zepeda Garcia Moreno



Plan of Canada de la Virgen



Complex A with the Red Temple on top of the pyramid and sunken patio in the foreground (R. Hewins)



Killed Pottery (R. Hewins)



View from top of pyramid, Complex A and Red Temple towards causeway and sunken patio bordered by 4 platforms. (R. Hewins). The causeway is in the distance.



Complex B pyramid or House of the Longest Night. On the right a sunken patio surrounded by rooms and platforms. (R. Hewins)



Sunrise over Complex A pyramid (R. Hewins)

November General Meeting: Monday, November 9th, 2015 at DMNS in the Planetarium at 7 PM.

Dr. Richard Wilshusen
PaleoCultural Research Group

Title: Lessons Learned at Chaco: Contract Archaeology, Culture History, and Heritage Management (1969-2015)

Abstract: The Chaco Project (1969-1985) was one of the largest archaeological projects undertaken by the National Park Service. Before 1970 the Park Service was the foremost funder and practitioner of American archaeology, yet with the Chaco Project the agency encountered inherent fiscal and administrative limitations that would ultimately deny it a role in the “big archaeology” of the following decades. The “young Turks” of the project thereafter played key roles in offering a more historical

view of the past, and this fundamentally changed the picture of Chaco presented to the public. Chaco Canyon is no longer seen as just a locale with big sites, but as the center of a much larger cultural phenomenon. The fact that we increasingly consider Chaco within the context of a larger cultural landscape has profound consequences for how we manage this heritage resource in the midst of an oil and gas boom.

Bio: Richard Wilshusen has 35 years of experience as a field archaeologist, professor, curator, and contractor. He has worked with universities, CRM firms, state and federal government, and tribes. Wilshusen is best known for his research on early Pueblo village formation, demography, and migration pathways. His more recent work focuses on the earliest great house communities of the Chaco region, Navajo ethnogenesis in the Dinétah region, and current issues in public archaeology. Wilshusen is the senior editor of *Crucible of Pueblos* (2012), co-editor (with Mark Varien) of *Seeking the Center Place* (2002), and author or co-author of more than 30 book chapters or juried journal articles. He served as the State Archaeologist/Deputy SHPO of Colorado for five years. Throughout his career Wilshusen has had the good fortune to work with a number of cross-disciplinary teams on a wide range of fundamental archaeological issues. He counts his lucky stars that he has made a living doing archaeology.

Minutes of the DC-CAS Board Meeting, October 6, 2015

The DC-CAS Board Meeting was held at Sturm Hall at Denver University on October 6th, 2015. The meeting was called to order at 7:11 PM by Linda Sand.

Attending were Linda Sand, Reid Farmer, Jon Kent, Teresa Weedon, Craig Banister, Ken Andresen, Anne Winslow, Catherine Griffin, Rosalie Hewins, Betsy Weitkamp and Cashel McGloin.

Speaker-Catherine reported that the speakers are lined up through February 2016. October is Doug Bamforth, November is Richard Wilshusen, December is members night, Kevin Black is speaking in January and Rood is speaking in February. Catherine was advised to solicit chapter members to speak in the December general meeting. At the moment, it is unclear where the December meeting will be.

Science-Neil could not attend. Jack said all the data from Blackfoot Cave has now been entered into the database. Analysis will be complete in the next few months.

Membership-Rosalie reported that we have lost some members, possibly due to the change from rolling renewals to the March 1 date for everyone. We have 110 memberships, which cover a total of 145 members. We only gained one new member, but lost about 15.

CAS-The weekend of October 9th-11th is the annual meeting in Durango.

PAAC-Anne said there is no news for PAAC, other than her trying to find a new person to take over.

Treasury-Preston was not present, but he emailed a report.

Trips/Events- Neil led the second field trip to Montrose. Craig attended and reported the group saw the Hauser site, the petroglyphs in Dry Creek canyon, the Christmas Rock site, and the excavation at the Eagle Rock site.

APB-APB was delayed, so it was not released by the time of the meeting.

Website-Craig created and printed beautiful new brochures for CAS entirely from scratch.

Old Business- The past minutes were not available for a vote because the APB had not been released, will be voted on in the next board meeting.

Nominating. Linda will remain president, Catherine has agreed to stay on as the vice president, Michele Giometti will be the treasurer.

Library-There are classes in the library room until 2 PM on Saturdays, which has delayed some of the cataloging. Teresa released a new schedule with that in mind. There are also quite a few maps, including topographical, trail maps, National Geographic, etc. Denver Public Library may take some of the content, but we need to go through the archives to see what is in there first.

Bill Hammond is handling the metal cabinets and nothing has been moved to History Colorado yet. Jack is handling the Swallow Site materials. Catherine is handling CAS equipment.

Board Meeting-The December meeting at the Hacienda Colorado will change from previous years. The price for the room has increased substantially, so the meeting will be in the main room of the restaurant.

New Business- Reid will report on Ken Caryl in the next month. He raised concerns that site locations are not redacted from Colorado state documents under Colorado's open records law. It is not an issue for Blackfoot cave, since there will be plaques and tours. The board discussed changes to the legislature that would match other states and federal law, allowing for the site location redacting. As a non-profit, there was concern as to what we are allowed to do as a group in advocating for a change in the law. It was going to be discussed at the quarterly CAS meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 8:14.

Submitted by Cashel McGloin

Minutes of the General Meeting, DC-CAS, October 12, 2015

Linda Sand called the meeting to order and thanked Cashel, Ken, and Catherine (article preparer) for their work on the October APB, which is now available on the website for anyone to access. Other announcements: The Blackfoot Cave curation information/data is all now in the database. Neil Hauser received the chapter award at the recent statewide annual meeting due his work on Blackfoot and other sites. He is moving to Montrose. There are currently 145 members of DC-CAS, there have been some non-renewals, maybe due to the change to renewals only being done in March. Craig Banister designed colorful new CAS brochures available to recruit new members; pick some up for your upcoming events. There will be no PAAC class in Denver this winter; maybe there will be one in the spring. Education: People are always needed to help with presentations in school classrooms (and for groups); contact Betsy Weitkamp, elaw@q.com. The November general meeting will be held in the planetarium. Preston stated that there is currently about \$20,000 in the chapter account. The nominating committee has come up with a partial slate of officers for 2016. A membership chairperson and a PAAC representative are still needed. Voting on the new officers will occur at the November meeting. December is the annual "members' night". Speakers are needed to give 10-15 minute talks; contact Catherine to sign up.

Dr. Douglas Bamforth was then introduced to give a talk entitled "Maize Horticulture Beyond the 100th Meridian". A short synopsis of his talk: All farmers have hunters and gatherers as their ancestors. "The invention of farming" happened many times, yet there are few hunter-gatherers any more. He showed two photos of a Comanche chief and his wife in both roles over a period of 20 years. Some people adopted agriculture as a choice. A field school of his worked in the NW corner of Nebraska (Pine Ridge). The speaker gave examples of finds of traces of corn, gardening tools, craftwork, a kiln, pit houses, as well as kill-related tools found in various areas to show both hunting-gathering and more "permanent" agriculturally-oriented communities. (See the talk abstract in the October APB.) It was found that even Canadians ate maize, was it traded from the south? Hunter-gatherers started moving east--maybe due to conscious choice, or relatives sharing information about those areas?

After the talk, the audience also wanted to hear about the new exhibit at the CU Museum of Natural History, which Dr. Bamforth had mentioned earlier in this talk. He went to his car to retrieve the talk while Linda Sand gave the following announcements: At the recent CAS Annual Meeting in Durango, the following officers were elected: President: Karen Kinnear (from Indian Peaks Chapter) Vice President: Bob Rushforth (Denver Chapter) Secretary: Kris Hollien Treasurer: Preston Niesen

Minutes in the October APB were approved. Teresa announced that the library (at Sturm Hall, DU) must be closed out by the end of November, all items (maps, books) are for sale at \$1 and bookcases are also for sale (7 foot high). There will be a work trip to Mesa Prieta near the Rio Grande Del Norte National Monument in N.M. November 7-8.

Dr. Bamforth then presented his second (by popular demand) talk of the evening, on the Mahaffy (name of the homeowner) Cache found in Boulder. In 2008 Dr. Bamforth received a phone call about a find while extensive landscaping was being done in a back yard in Boulder. Thinking this would just be another usual no big deal, he instead found over 83 lithic artifacts in a cache of Kremmling and Tiger chert. Even the workmen on the property were excited. Shown were photos of beautiful stones and patterns, blades (finely made), bifaces, and what could be a chopper or axe. The items could be from the Clovis or Paleo Indian period. No diagnostics were available (although the items looked similar to those in the Fenn Cache). A protein residue analysis was done, and found (on only a few artifacts) some from sheep, bear, horse and camel. Only one flake was found. It appeared, according to Dr. Bamforth, that someone cached this assembly for future use. It shows "a moment in time". Where did the cache come from? There could have been source locations from across Colorado (from the west); a possible path was shown. The Boulder area itself was not a good source of stone for tools. The CAS audience was encouraged to come to the museum to view these artifacts, which have been put on display in a way that shows their various faces in an interesting manner. The exhibit should be there at least a year. The museum is located on the CU Boulder Campus near Broadway and Euclid.

(Editorial note: When you miss a meeting/talk, you never know what other topics you might miss that aren't even listed in the APB!)

Linda S. adjourned the meeting at 8:45 PM.

Submitted by Linda Trzyna for Kendra Elrod

DENVER CHAPTER LIBRARY GARAGE SALE! ALL BOOKS AND AVAILABLE JOURNALS FOR MINIMUM OF \$1 DONATION PER BOOK/ITEM

Bring your own box(es) or bags for your books. No large bills, unless you are planning to buy many books! Checks also accepted! Call Teresa Weedon at 303/748-6705 before you come to see if room situation has changed.

Saturday, October 31 2:00-5:00
Sunday, November 1 11:00-2:00
Tuesday, November 3 6:00-7:00
Saturday, November 7 2:00-5:00
Sunday, November 8 11:00-2:00
Saturday, November 21 2:00-5:00
Sunday, November 22 2:00-5:00

LAST WEEKEND TO GET YOUR BOOKS!

Directions to Room 154, Sturm Hall, University of

Denver: Exit I25 at S. University. Head South on University, turn West on Asbury Ave. Turn South on Race St. which takes you into the parking lot (it is paid parking; one can pay in half-hour increments). Sturm Hall is just East (across Race) of the parking lot. Enter the door directly across from the parking lot and continue to room 154, on the right across from the elevator.

Help Wanted

The Alice Hamilton Scholarship Fund Committee is looking for two new members who are willing to take on a lead role in our fund-raising activities. Terri Hoff has been fund-raising for many years, but she is now wanting to relinquish the duties to some "new blood". Terri will train/mentor the successful applicants by Terri this year, and take over in 2016 (with assistance if needed or desired).

Position One: Raffle/Games Manager. This individual will interact with the Colorado Gaming Commission, for reporting and compliance with State gaming rules and regulations. This certified position requires a one-day training class, taken either in classroom or online: http://www.sos.state.co.us/pubs/bingo_raffles/bingoHome.html

He or she will perform the following tasks:
 -Solicit donation of raffle items from the membership
 -License the upcoming raffle with the Colorado Gaming Commission
 -Prepare and distribute raffle flyers and other promotional/advertising materials.
 -Print raffle tickets and distribute to Chapters
 -Set up and conduct the raffle at the CAS Annual Meeting
 -File Quarterly reports with the Colorado Gaming Commission

-Participate in the Committee's annual scholarship application review and scholarship determination process
Position Two: Silent Auction Manager. He or she will perform the following tasks:
 -Promote and solicit donation of silent auction items from the membership
 -Arrange for Silent Auction display space at the CAS Annual Meeting
 -Conduct the Silent Auction, with assistants.
 -Participate in the Committee's annual scholarship application review and scholarship determination process

For questions and volunteering, please contact either Phil Williams (p2wms@comcast.net, 719-291-9298) or Terri Hoff (swedishgirl20@gmail.com, 720-384-3017)

**DC/CAS
September, 2015 Financial Report
Prepared by Preston Niesen, Treasurer**

Assets		
	August	September
Key Bank checking	\$3,992.90	\$3,465.91
TD 182 day to 01/04/16 @0.10%	\$5,692.36	\$5,692.36
TD 182 day to 10/23/15 @0.15%	\$4,806.97	\$4,806.97
TD 1 year to 02/17/15 @ 0.15%	\$4,993.10	\$4,993.10
Total checking/savings	\$19,485.33	\$18,958.34
Total Assets	\$19,485.33	\$18,958.34
Liabilities & Equity		
Current Liabilities		
	August	September
AH Scholarship Fund payable	\$ -	\$ -
State CAS Dues payable	\$ -	\$ -
Funds		
Scientific Applications	\$5,077.16	\$5,080.66
Swallow Report Project	\$2,671.81	\$2,671.81
D Bucknam Memorial Speaker Fund	\$1,747.10	\$1,747.10
Blackfoot Cave	\$70.00	\$70.00
Library	\$302.45	\$302.45
Education	\$182.00	\$182.00
Field Trips/Social	\$483.01	\$483.01
Student Membership	\$23.50	\$15.50
Speakers Meal Fund	\$772.38	\$801.62
Total Liabilities & Funds	\$11,329.41	\$11,364.15
General Fund	\$8,155.92	\$7,594.19
Total L E F's	\$19,485.33	\$18,958.34

The All Points Bulletin is published monthly by the Denver Chapter of the Colorado Archaeological Society, and is governed by the bylaws of the Denver Chapter. Articles appearing in the All Points Bulletin do not necessarily reflect the views of the officers or members of the Denver Chapter.

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Revised 08-05-2015