

Preservation Archaeology NEWS

Preserving the Places of Our Shared Past

Winter 2009

Viewpoint

The Virtual Vault Advances

A joint project of the Center for Desert Archaeology and the Arizona State Museum (ASM), the **Virtual Vault** is a breakthrough interactive application that has the potential to transform museology and reinforce the preservation of heritage objects.

Based around a technologically innovative method for quickly and affordably producing photorealistic digital models of objects and structures, the Vault will “house,” or serve, digital representations of a significant portion of ASM’s whole vessel collection in an interactive exhibition setting and over the Internet. The Vault will go far beyond static electronic exhibit modules that depict a vessel and list its type and ware designation, description, dating, and function—instead, it is being developed as a fully interactive, layered information resource.

The project was introduced in the Spring 2008 issue of *Preservation Archaeology News*. Center Digital Media Specialist **Doug Gann** has these exciting updates to share.

(1) The initial test of the Virtual Vault program coding is nearly complete. One hundred and forty vessels have been digitized and loaded into the project database. All of the technical aspects of the website have been tested and found

compatible with most of the web browsers available over the Internet today.

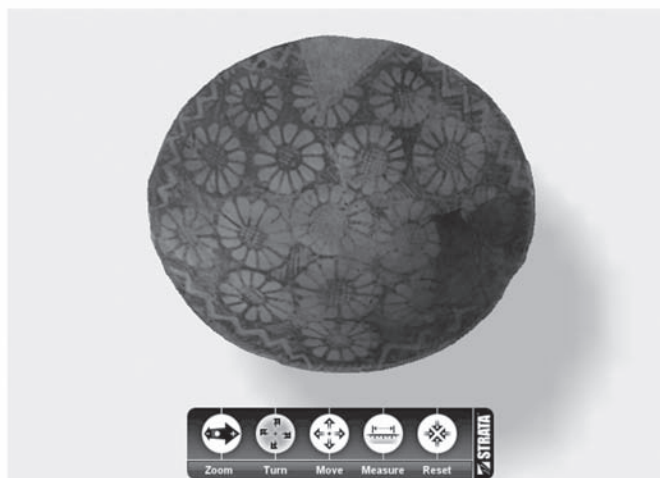
(2) One of the most exciting outcomes of this project is demonstrated in the PDF version of this newsletter. If you are reading the print version of this document, point your web browser to http://www.cdarc.org/virtual_vault to download an interactive example of one of the ancient ceramic models.

(3) The PDF file—which may be downloaded from the Virtual Vault server, as well—will allow the person

stage of the project, which should end with the public opening of the Vault in 2010. The team is submitting a report on this initial, alpha-level test of the Virtual Vault to the National Endowment for the Humanities in December 2009.

The Virtual Vault project was made possible by funding from the National Endowment for the Humanities and by Creative Dimension Ltd.’s gracious donation of the 3DSOM modeling system.

Gila Butte Red - on - Buff Bowl, Flower Motifs



Name: Gila Butte Red-on-Buff Bowl, Flower Motifs

ASM #: 77-320-331

Culture: Hohokam

Ceramic: Hohokam Red on Buff

Dates: AD 775 to 980

This vessel was collected from the Hardy Site, near Tucson, in Pima County, AZ.

The vessel is from the Arizona State Museum Archaeological Project (1976).

browsing the Virtual Vault to save a copy of any model to his or her own computer for viewing or research purposes. Our express intention is to implement open-source standards for sharing virtual representations of heritage objects. Although it remains to be seen if other institutions will adopt this open-source standard, ASM may be applauded for adopting this innovative means of sharing cultural heritage with a global audience.

(4) Now that initial programming is complete, we are in the process of grant-writing and fundraising for the next

Support Our Mission



Not yet a member of the Center for Desert Archaeology? Join today! Annual memberships begin at \$25.00. Benefits include our quarterly magazine, *Archaeology Southwest*. Current members, why not give a gift membership to someone who shares your interest in the past? More information is available at www.cdarc.org/how-to-help/become-a-member/.



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Become Acquainted

Elizabeth Burt

Elizabeth Burt has been a Center member and volunteer since 2005, logging more than 100 hours of volunteer time on a number of field and laboratory projects.

I understand that you are originally from the east. What drew you to Tucson?

I moved to Tucson a little over four years ago. There are several reasons why I moved here—the weather, job opportunities in archaeology, and cultural diversity. I grew up in central New York state, which is known for its snowfall (and rain when it isn't snowing), and then lived all over New York, including snowy Buffalo. I decided I needed less shoveling and more sunshine. I had visited my brother here in the 1970s, and realized that the year-round sunshine was something I could get used to. I'm still adjusting to working in the summer heat, though.

How did you first become involved with the Center?

I first became involved with the Center in 2005, after I arrived in Tucson. I had read about the Center on the Internet and was familiar with its newsletter. I began volunteering in 2006, when I worked with Anna Neuzil on a survey in the San Pedro Valley, and then in the lab, labeling artifacts. Now here I am, labeling artifacts again.

Your background in archaeology and as a museum professional is considerable. What were some of your favorite assignments?

It's hard to decide which were my favorites, because sometimes it was the site, and other times it was the people that made a project interesting. I worked on a Paleoindian site in southwestern New Hampshire, and excavated a unit that held a fluted point and large bifacial knives and scrapers. When we arrived at the site in the early morning, there was often a blue heron flying over the winding river that cut through the site, which seemed like a good way to start the day. The field personnel weren't bad sorts, either.

A contrast is work I did in lower Manhattan near Wall Street in the 1980s. One project area was within the Dutch settlement of New Amster-



Elizabeth Burt

dam, and I excavated an apothecary shop. Another project, a few blocks away, involved excavation of a grocer's basement. It held a burnt, but intact, wooden floor with burnt casks of coffee beans, tea, liquor, and wine bottles, as well as crates of clay pipes. I traveled to these projects on the subway or the Wall Street Express bus with everyone dressed in financial business attire, and there I was in my field clothes.

I also had the opportunity to work at several

museums. I first served as a research assistant at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in the Department of Objects Conservation and Research while I was a graduate student at Stony Brook University of Long Island. Later, I worked for the museum at Brookhaven National Laboratory as a technician analyzing Near and Far Eastern ceramics. I even worked on Rembrandt and Vermeer paintings. I subsequently volunteered as a research assistant at the American Museum of Natural History, where I was responsible for selecting artifacts and providing exhibit label copy for the new South American Exhibit Hall. I also researched hallucinogenic paraphernalia and iconography in various South American cultures.

Although most of my experiences prior to moving here were in the northeast, I have also undertaken fieldwork in Mexico, Puerto Rico, and St. Croix.

What are your current interests?

I'm looking forward to continued immersion in the archaeology of the southwestern United States and northern Mexico. I had previously viewed the borderlands from the Mexican side, and now it is interesting to get the Southwestern perspective. My interest in ceramic production and distribution continues, as well as my long-standing interest in historic archaeology.

Why do you support the Center?

I believe in the Center's mission to preserve the places of our shared past. I enjoy its diverse programs, and I attend Archaeology Café whenever possible. Volunteering at the Center lab enables me to keep "hands-on" the artifacts when I have a lull in fieldwork.

Celebrate!

News We're Proud to Share

■ We are pleased to announce the launch of our redesigned, updated website! Our web team adds new content every day, so check www.cdarc.org often, and let us know what you think. Members, we will contact you soon with new access codes for your discount in the online bookstore and for your free PDFs of recent *Archaeology Southwest* issues. In the meantime, contact Kate Sarther Gann at kate@cdarc.org for back issues, or if you need the "old" discount codes.

■ Former Center Preservation Fellow **Anna Neuzil**, husband Jeremy Doschka,

and big sister Gracie welcomed daughter Zella Jaymes in September. **Welcome, Zella!**

■ On November 8, 2009, we were honored to share **Tea and (Paleoindian) Archaeology** with **Dr. Vance Haynes** on another fine afternoon at the Arizona Inn. If you'd like to join us at these special gatherings with distinguished scholars and *Archaeology Southwest* authors, contact Linda Pierce at lpierce@cdarc.org. Information is also available at



Anna Neuzil at Bonita Creek, northeast of Safford, Arizona.

www.cdarc.org/what-we-do/eventspublic-programs/tea-and-archaeology/.

Participate

Events and Opportunities

■ *From Above: Images of a Storied Land* is on exhibit at the Centennial Museum, University of Texas at El Paso, through January 15, 2010. This traveling exhibit of Adriel Heisey's compelling aerial photography of ancient villages was designed by the Center and the Albuquerque Museum. Center President Bill Doelle spoke at the Centennial Museum on Saturday, December 12. Visit <http://museum.utep.edu/> for more information.

■ The 2010 season of **Archaeology Café** promises to be as engaging as ever! Upcoming speakers include Gene Caywood, Tom Sheridan, Steve Lekson, Ron Towner, and Suzanne Griset. Visit www.cdarc.org/what-we-do/eventspublic-programs/archaeology-cafe/ for more information. You can now access streaming footage of past

cafés at that address as well.

■ We need volunteer help in our laboratory and front office! Contact Kate Sarther Gann at kate@cdarc.org. Applications and FAQs are also available at www.cdarc.org/how-to-help/volunteer.

■ Our year-end fundraising campaign is in full swing. As you consider your sea-

sonal giving plans, **please take a moment to support the Center's long-term financial security and organizational viability.** Our new monthly giving option is a safe, easy way to enhance the effectiveness of your gift. At the Center, we never forget that **you are the most important partner in our mission to preserve the places of**

our shared past. Thank you! For more information, visit www.cdarc.org/how-to-help/, or contact Linda Pierce at 520-882-6946.

■ The **Arizona Preservation Conference** will be held in Flagstaff, Arizona, on May 13 and 14, 2010. The Center is very proud to sponsor featured speaker **Donovan Rypkema**, founder of PlaceEconomics and Heritage Strategies International. Mr. Rypkema is an industry leader in the economics of preserving historic structures. More information on Mr. Rypkema and the conference is available at www.azpreservation.com.



A view of our new headquarters at 300 N. Ash Alley, Tucson, Arizona, 85701. Stay tuned for details on the exciting transformation we have planned—and thank you for your support!



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Inside

Virtual Vault
Update

Bookshelf

The Archaeology of Environmental Change

Together with
**Christopher
Fisher and Gary
Feinman**, Center
Research Associ-
ate and Hendrix
College profes-
sor **Brett Hill** is
co-editor of a
new collection
published by the
University of Arizona Press.

Fisher, Hill, and Feinman argue that understanding and responding to environmental change requires a long view, one that takes into account how past societies grappled with these same challenges. In their view, more thorough

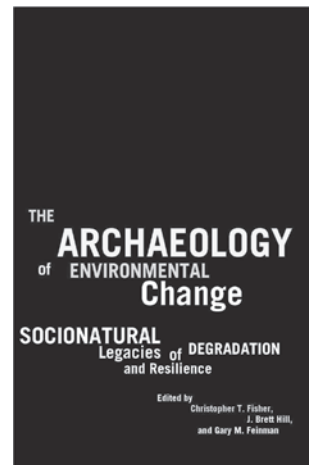
investigation of the long-term trajectories of human-environment relationships is necessary for refining overly simplistic views of those relationships today; for better defining terms and concepts such as *sustainability* across disciplines and audiences; and—ultimately—for creating sound policy.

From the millennial perspective of archaeology, episodes of collapse—settlement abandonment, dramatic regional shifts in power and population, and even cataclysmic events—are a regular feature of humankind’s global history.

—Introduction, p. 4

To this end, the editors present insights from archaeologists examining these relationships in the past in North America, Mesoamerica, Europe, Africa, and the Near East. Contributions are grouped according to three critical themes: New Frameworks for Interpretation, Multi-dimensional Explanations, and New Answers to Old Questions.

Contributors include the editors themselves, Ofer Bar-Yosef, Timothy



Beach, J. Andrew Darling, Nicholas Dunning, John G. Jones, Ann P. Kinzig, Chapurukha M. Kusimba, Sheryl Luzzadder-Beach, Center Advisory Board member Margaret C. Nelson, John C. Ravesloot, Charles L. Redman, Vernon L. Scarborough, Alan H. Simmons, Tina L.

Thurston, Sander E. van der Leeuw, and Michael R. Waters.

The Archaeology of Environmental Change: Socionatural Legacies of Degradation and Resilience, edited by Christopher T. Fisher, J. Brett Hill, and Gary M. Feinman. University of Arizona Press, 2009. 320 pp., 15 illus., 15 maps, 9 tables. ISBN 978-0-8165-2676-5. \$60.00 (cloth). www.uapress.arizona.edu/BOOKS/bid2162.htm.