



The **NORTH TEXAS ARCHEOLOGICAL SOCIETY (NTAS)** meeting for **August** will be **on Zoom**.

NTAS meetings are **free** and visitors are always welcome.

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Benchmark

Volume 35, Issue 7

August 2021

President's Message

Hope you enjoy this month's newsletter which include submittals from some of the 50 NTAS members who attended the TAS Field School June 12-18th in Kerrville. For those who attended this year's Field School we can reminisce, and for those who are planning a future Field School these will provide some great insights for you to enjoy.

The NTAS Scholarship Committee is very proud of the scholarship recipients who submitted essays about their experiences attending TAS programs. We hope these experiences help their pursuit of learning more about archeology. And thank you to everyone who supports NTAS; without you we would not be able to award scholarships to deserving candidates like these folks!

We had a terrific June 8th NTAS meeting and program on Spanish Colonial archeology and architecture with guest speaker Dr. Tamra Walter of Texas Tech University. Dr. Walter presented on the research she has performed, which involved many NTAS and TAS members, at Mission San Lorenzo in Camp Wood and Presidio San Saba in Menard. Her presentation provided a fascinating story of mission life in Texas that only archeology can tell. The July 8th program was recorded and is available on the NTAS YouTube channel: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UChDKM9I3UdiYizPyG3duohQ/> featured.

In this month's newsletter you will see that NTAS has been working to de-



velop more field opportunities for the membership. Please contact us (info@ntxas.org) if you have potential opportunities for NTAS volunteers or would like assistance to develop opportunities for the membership.

TAS is now requesting presentation submittals for the TAS Annual Meeting which will be held virtually October 22-23, 2021. Please consider presenting at the Annual Meeting if you are working on any sort of archeological project, this is a friendly and fun presentation forum. Additional details including registration are available on the TAS website: <https://www.txarch.org/>.

NTAS plans a return to in-person meetings at the UNT Health Science Center campus to start with the Sep-

(Continued on page 2)

Connect with NTAS:

[facebook.com/NTXAS.org](https://www.facebook.com/NTXAS.org)

www.NTXAS.org

For general inquiries, please contact info@ntxas.org

North Texas Archeological Society

President's Message

(Continued from page 1)

tember 9th meeting. We hope that our in-person meetings will also be available via Zoom for those who are unable to attend in-person.

For August our guest speaker Dr. Ben Alexander will present via Zoom on the use of cadaver dogs in archeology. His presentation will focus on the development of detection dogs and how they are successfully used in archeology. Look forward to seeing you via Zoom on the 12th!

Jimmy Barrera

Upcoming NTAS Projects

Jimmy Barrera

Bret Williamson, Dana Ritchie, and I are looking for 10 volunteers to join us for recording archeological sites at the Fort Worth Nature Center & Refuge (FWNCR)! The date for this field opportunity is Friday August 27th. The first 10 folks to sign-up will participate in recording archeological sites at FWNCR. Please send an email to president@ntxas.org to join this team.

NTAS member Mr. Bill Perdue is the Chair of the Tarrant County Historical Commission and is soliciting input from NTAS to help develop displays on the prehistory and history of Tarrant County for the museum in the Tarrant County Courthouse. We are seeking interested folks to join an ad hoc committee that will work with Mr. Perdue to develop display content so the public can learn more about the prehistory and history of Tarrant County. If you have interest to participate on this ad hoc committee please contact president@ntxas.org.

From the Archives

Linda Lang

For August, we feature a special publication from the early days of the Tarrant County Archeological Society. In 1962, TCAS published *The Indians in the History of Tarrant County, Texas* by James H. Baker and Raymond E. Cage II. For many long-term members, this may be a familiar document. For those who are new to the society or others who have not had a chance to read it, the publication provides an interesting look at early Tarrant County history. Although there are some items that need to be updated, I think you will find this a good read. One feature I find especially notable is the bibliography of early 20th century books and periodicals used in the research of this special publication. If you wish to check this resource out, let me know! Email Linda Lang at historian@ntxas.org. Check back next month for what might come next...from the archives!



Special thanks to Christine Davis for our new "From the Archives" logo!

August Speaker: Dr. Michael "Ben" Alexander

The Use of Human Remains Detection Dogs in Archeologic Investigations

Dr. Michael "Ben" Alexander has been training cadaver dogs for search and rescue since 2000. He also has a Ph.D. in forensic soil science and researched the efficacy of cadaver dogs in differing soil conditions as well as the length of time cadaver dogs could detect residual in soils from under human remains at the Forensic Anthropology Center at Texas State (FACTS).

During Dr. Alexander's work in human remains detection he has been on missions for natural disasters, homicides, suicides, and drownings in a variety of environments, including buried human remains. He has previously partnered with four border collies, each of which achieved national certifications and multiple finds for law enforcement.

In January 2019, with his 5th nationally certified border collie Rip, he was asked to attempt searches at historic sites in the coastal region south of Corpus Christi and in west Texas south of Odessa. Rip was unique to his previous partners in that Rip had been started on human remains odor on whole bodies at FACTS in San Marcos, TX. Rip had also been started on actual whole body burials, unlike what the majority of cadaver dogs are trained on for burials.

Rip's initial training in addition to being a third-generation cadaver dog with intense drive and stamina has been an asset on missions for law enforcement and shows great promise for archeologic investigations as well. Dr. Alexander will present some information on how cadaver dogs are trained in general, how Rip has been trained, and review some of the results yielded from her work.

Dr. Michael "Ben" Alexander began dog training in 1972, training his parents' GSDs for confirmation, obedience and later Schutzhund. Ben has continued training dogs for a variety of venues over the years, settling with search and rescue dogs in 2000 and has dedicated his life to furthering the science behind the dogs' capabilities to locate human remains since 2010.

In 2013, through his research at the Forensic Anthropology Center at Texas State (FACTS), he began a pilot seminar program which developed into the robust K9 training program that now exists at Texas State. Ben is the FACTS K9 training coordinator. While he still continues to do seminars and certifications across the country he has focused his efforts on providing one of the best learning environments in the United States for cadaver dog teams at FACTS. However he is always available for consultation and strongly believes in the service cadaver dog teams provide to their community.

In 2019, he and his 5th nationally certified cadaver K9, "Rip" began working some archeologic missions that turned out to be prehistoric remains. Ben continues to train Rip for all stages/ages of human remains detection as well as starting his 6th partner, K9 Jake. Both Rip and Jake were started on whole bodies at FACTS and real burials.



Update Your Calendar - NTAS Monthly Meeting Speakers

September 9th: Dr. Ashley Lemke (Great Lakes Underwater Archeology)

October 14th: Allen Rutherford (Bois D'Arc Reservoir)

November 11th: Marybeth Tomka (Artifacts & Records in a Repository)

2021 NTAS Scholarship Recipients Attend TAS Academies

Vicenzo (Vinnie) Ramos

2021 TAS Ceramics Academy (March 6-7, 2021)

I am very grateful that I was able to participate in the ceramics academy offered by the Texas Archaeological Society. NTAS has offered me many opportunities within the field and the ceramics academy was by far the most interesting opportunity I have been able to be a part of. The most fascinating aspect of the academy in my opinion was the inclusions added to the pottery, small material included in the clay to help bind and make the clay stronger once heated. We were able to observe inclusions within many different fragments of pottery. Also allowing the members of the academy to create their own pottery and walking us through the process step by step was amazing as well. The whole experience was an opportunity I really appreciate and am grateful to be a part of.

Erin Kielty

2021 TAS Archeology 101 Academy (March 13-14 & 20-21, 2021)

The Archaeology academy in San Felipe, was a great experience for my first time doing field work. I was able to learn basics of working a site and ask questions from various professionals on how to excavate and collect artifacts. Being able to work with people from TAS and the THC and learn about both societies more and where the work they do is going. The hybrid format was really great and ran very well for being in a time of COVID and felt as I still got all the information with being online for the class section. I hope to be able to do more work with TAS in the future and attend many more amazing events!

Special Feature — 2021 TAS Field School

A Note from the Editor

We have received numerous contributions (photos and text) to the newsletter recounting times from this year's TAS Field School. I am truly grateful for the members who opted to share their experiences and am pleased to be able to share them with the greater membership. Please keep the *Benchmark* in mind as you are out there recording sites, creating art with ancient technologies, or sharing your expertise with the public. We'd love to show off our members' accomplishments, talents, and outreach efforts. Please continue to share with us!

Molly Hall

Field School Photo — Survey Crew



Left to right: Royce Baker, Morgan Beck, John Forister, Ashley Green, Melissa Lesack, and Phillip Darce.
Photo courtesy of Chris Meis.

NTAS Scholarship Recipients Attend TAS Field School

Three students received the NTAS scholarship to attend the TAS Field School. See pages 6–7 for Ashley Green’s account of her time there (and note a few familiar NTAS faces on her crew!)



Left to right: Garrett Powell, Paula Vastine, Ashley Green, and Morgan Beck. Garrett, Ashley, and Morgan Beck were scholarship recipients and Paula is the Chair of the NTAS Scholarship committee. Photo courtesy of Paula Vastine.

Field School Recap 2021

Ashley Green

The 2021 TAS Field school was special for a number of reasons. A big one being that it occurred shortly after we had just started to see some sort of return to normalcy after the whirlwind year of 2020. After a year of keeping our distance from others this field school felt like a celebration of community and friendships. It had been over a year since I had seen many of our NTAS friends outside of a computer screen.

This year was also special because my best friend Morgan Beck and I were lucky enough to be awarded scholarships to attend field school together. We had signed up for survey crew with hopes that we would be able to apply some of the skills we had gained taking a mapping and field methods course at UNT last fall and boy did we get to apply them. Our first day out our crew needed someone to make a map and we jumped at the opportunity. We later gained the nicknames Lewis and Clark from the enthusiasm we exhibited in the mapping process, but with us as two geography majors what can you expect. Going into field school I had anticipated that I would learn a great deal. However, much like the past two field schools I have attended, I was once again amazed at all the knowledge I gained from the experience. Learning about a topic in a classroom can only teach you so much. The hands-on experience is really where you learn if you fully understand something or not. Getting the opportunity to work alongside the very experienced, kind, and patient individuals on our survey crew was truly a rewarding experience.

One day, when we were split up doing a line transect survey, I came across a bone. It caught my eye right off the bat because it had odd marks on it. The marks were almost ring like and the way they were cut looked too symmetrical to be natural, or even human made, but I was stumped as to what had caused such odd markings so, I flagged it. Later, I told Chris of my find and he joked that it sounded like I was





describing a bone from a honey baked ham. I decided to go back and find it. When I brought it back to him, he laughed, since he had just been joking, but sure enough the bone did indeed appear to be what he had originally suspected. Funny that a picture was taken of me with this find and not the point base I found in a wildflower laden fallow field later in the week.

Surveying truly is my favorite aspect of doing archeology. I really enjoy the outreach side of it. Getting the opportunity to meet landowners that are interested in the subject and curious to see what we can find on their properties is always rewarding, especially when they are so invested in it that they come out and survey alongside us. It is a great way to spread awareness and get communities excited and involved in local history. The work we got to do and the knowledge we gained was invaluable; however, it was the company and memories made with our team that will last a lifetime. I want to thank Chris Meis for being such a great crew chief and the rest of our team, Royce Baker, Phillip Darce, and John Forister for being the best crew we could have asked for.

All photos courtesy of Ashley Green



Field School Photos

Gen Freix



Kathleen Hughes at the TAS Field School



Carol Jameson helping in the kids' units



Glynn and Sandy Osburn deciding what to do next.



Mark Cohen finding wonderful things in the screen



Gena Roberts sharing cookies



Steve Lowe showing off the biface they found



Ewan Edwards working at the TAS Field School.



Tim Sullivan



Bryan Jameson figuring things out

Field School Photos

Tim Sullivan

“This was one of the best Field Schools I have attended.”



Ray Wallace and Casey Black

Casey Black, Linda Lang, & Jaime Reyna



Ruins in Parker County!

Jimmy Barrera

Long-time NTAS member Jerry Grubis contacted Bret Williamson and Jimmy Barrera about a historic archeological site in Parker County. On Saturday July 24 Bret and Jimmy met Jerry and the landowner (Joe Reed) to recon the site and determine if this is something NTAS can record. We cleared a little brush to access historic limestone features (Figure 1) and walked the area to determine the size and extent of the archeological site. Based on the recon we identified four limestone features, including a well, and surface artifacts that are probably 19th to early 20th century in age (Figure 2). Jerry mentioned that this site is near the historic community of Veal Station and possibly related. NTAS plans to record this archeological site that is possibly linked to the once thriving historic community of Veal Station.



Figure 1. Limestone structure at the historic archeological site, possible cellar. Photo by J. Barrera



Figure 2. Sample of surface artifacts from the historic archeological site. Top: solarized glass. Bottom: window glass. Photo by J. Barrera.

Archeological Events & Announcements

Compiled by Molly Hall

TAS 92nd Annual Meeting

Virtual

October 22-23, 2021

Abstracts may be submitted via email to am-papers@txarch.org

SAA 87th Annual Meeting

Chicago, IL

March 30-April 3, 2022

Submission Deadline: September 9, 2021 3pm EDT

June & July Donors

Ray Wallace (General Fund)

Welcome, New Members!

Melissa Alouf

Carlie Ascani

Madison Carter

Elizabeth Coon-Nguyen & Family

William Desrochers

Daniel Relotto

Micah Sladek & Family

Tamra Walter

NTAS Aims & Objectives

The purposes of the Society are

- (1) the promotion of scientific archeological exploration and research,
- (2) the preservation and conservation of archeological materials and sites,
- (3) the interpretation and publication of data pertaining thereto, and
- (4) education of the public to the aims of archeology.

We Need *YOUR* Help!

There are numerous ways we would love for our members to contribute to NTAS.

Just a few are noted here:

Involve NTAS in Your Field, Lab, or Reporting Project

Contact Catrina Whitley (vpofprojects@ntxas.org) if you would like to involve experienced, skilled, and knowledgeable NTAS members in your project.

Contribute Photos and Memories of NTAS Events

Photos are a great way to showcase what NTAS is all about. Please send your images and captions to Annaliese Sonntag (internetchair@ntxas.org). By providing these photos, please understand they can be used on the NTAS website and social media platforms such as Facebook.

Newsletter Content

Please contribute highlights from NTAS volunteer opportunities, summaries of archeological research and field projects, announcements and links to events, exhibits, media, and publications, etc. by sending them to Molly Hall (publicationseditor@ntxas.org).

Nominate a member for our new member spotlight feature!



North Texas Archeological Society (NTAS) Membership Application Form

Name(s) _____

Address _____ **Phone** _____

City\State\Zip _____ **Email** _____

Emergency Contact(s): Please provide the following information regarding the individual(s) from whom we can request or to whom we may provide information in the event of an emergency. Please consider listing at least one contact who does not live at your residence.

Primary Contact Name, Relationship, and Phone Number

Alternate Contact Name, Relationship, and Phone Number

Membership Type and Fees (Membership Term: January to December)

- New Family Membership - \$25
- Renewal Total Family Members _____
- Individual Membership - \$20
- Student Membership – \$10 (18 or older student with minimum half-time course load. Those under 18 must contact NTAS in advance of applying.)

Communication Preferences: I/WE want to be added to the following lists:

- General Announcements - *For Meetings, Events, Publications, Membership Dues and NTAS Updates*
- Personal Updates - *For personal updates on NTAS members such as illnesses, and obituaries*

Newsletter Delivery: By Email (free) By USPS mail (add \$10/yr)

Support: Contributing Donation amount: \$ _____ General Fund Memorial Scholarship Fund

Media Release: I/WE DO -or- DO NOT (circle as appropriate) give permission to NTAS to use my/our image (photographs and/or video) in any NTAS publications, website, or social media.

Online membership form and payment option available at ntxas.org/join-and-renew

Application form is continued on the next page

Mail your Membership Form with check or money order made payable to:
North Texas Archeological Society
P.O. Box 24679 Ft. Worth, TX 76124

Code of Ethics (signature required): I/WE PLEDGE THAT I/WE WILL NOT INTENTIONALLY VIOLATE THE TERMS AND CONDITIONS OF ANY FEDERAL, STATE, OR LOCAL ANTIQUITIES STATUTES CONCERNING CULTURAL RESOURCES OR ENGAGE IN THE PRACTICES OF BUYING OR SELLING ARTIFACTS FOR COMMERCIAL PURPOSES OR ENGAGE IN THE WILLFUL DESTRUCTION OR DISTORTION OF ARCHEOLOGICAL DATA OR DISREGARD PROPER ARCHEOLOGICAL FIELD TECHNIQUES. I/WE UNDERSTAND THAT FAILURE TO FOLLOW THESE GUIDELINES WILL PROVIDE GROUNDS FOR EXPULSION FROM THE SOCIETY.

Signature(s) _____

Date _____

Thank you for renewing or joining the North Texas Archeological Society! We will send an email to confirm your membership once your payment has been processed. We look forward to seeing you at our next event!

NTAS - Preserving the Past for the Future

Executive Committee

Jimmy Barrera
President

Gwen Durrant
Treasurer

Linda Lang
Historian

Bryan Jameson
Vice President

Tim Sullivan
Secretary

Annaliese Sonntag
Internet Chair

Catrina Banks Whitley
Vice President of Projects

James Everett
Immediate Past President

Molly Hall
Publications Editor

Newsletter Submission Deadlines

The newsletter submission deadlines are three weeks prior to the monthly meetings, and upcoming deadlines are listed below for 2021.

September Newsletter: August 19

November Newsletter: October 21

October Newsletter: September 23

December Newsletter: November 19

All material published in the newsletter or in Special Publications of the North Texas Archeological Society (NTAS), or on the NTAS website becomes the copyrighted property of NTAS.