



# Benchmark

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October 2020

## President's Message

### OCTOBER NTAS MEETING WILL BE VIRTUAL



*James Everett, President*

The **NORTH TEXAS ARCHEOLOGICAL SOCIETY (NTAS)** meeting for **October 8th** will be **held via Zoom** (see **Page 3** for instructions).

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

I am very happy to report that the NTAS September Zoom meeting was very successful. A total of 51 devices, representing at least 60 individuals, participated in the meeting. Just as in August, we had people from around the State join us for the meeting, including members from the Brownsville area, Austin, and Beaumont. Participants were treated to an outstanding presentation on tuberculosis and the Wari Empire in Peru by Betsy Nelson.

For our October 8 Zoom meeting, Marion Coe will discuss perishable artifacts in hunter/gatherer societies in the American Desert West. If you have not already joined us for one of our monthly Zoom meetings, this is the month to do so.

During the October meeting, the Nominating Committee will announce the candidates for NTAS officer positions for 2021-2022. There will also be an opportunity for nominations from the floor at the meeting. Nominees must be members in good standing and must agree to serve if elected. If there are no nominations from the floor, our Bylaws say that the Nominating Commit-

tee's list of candidates will be "considered to be elected by acclamation" at the October meeting. If there are nominations from the floor, we will vote by secret ballot at our November meeting.

Since there will be no TAS Annual Meeting this year, the TAS election of officers as well as the approval of the 2021 TAS budget and approval of the recent audit will be conducted through online voting beginning on October 24 and ending on October 30. There will also be several "Virtual Annual Meeting" activities on the TAS website, including the announcement of TAS award winners.

NTAS has been given 10 boxes containing artifacts and a number of related site reports from excavations

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#### Connect with NTAS:

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

[www.NTXAS.org](http://www.NTXAS.org)

[info@ntxas.org](mailto:info@ntxas.org)

## October Speaker: Marion Coe

### People and Plants in the American Desert West: The Role of Perishable Artifacts in Prehistoric Hunter-Gatherer Communities

Preservation is an unavoidable hindrance for archaeological studies, and as a result much of the archaeology of prehistoric cultures is dependent on durable artifacts like stone and bone tools. These materials, however, likely represent a minority of material culture used by hunter-gatherers, so prehistoric archaeology frequently overemphasizes the importance of large-game hunting by a subset of the community. Perishable artifacts were most important to hunter-gatherers, but they are largely absent from archaeological assemblages. When they are recovered from special contexts like dry caves and rockshelters, submerged anaerobic conditions, or in frozen caves and ice patches, archaeologists are presented with the unique opportunity to address a multitude of questions about the everyday practices of hunter-gatherer communities unavailable to stone-tool researchers. All aspects of perishable artifacts, from the way they were made to how they were used, can inform on the complex lives of hunter-gatherers. In the North American Desert West, including the Great Basin, Southwest, and Trans-Pecos regions, prehistoric people were dependent on organic clothing, like the sandals and moccasins they wore when traveling, hats that protected them from the sun, and robes they wore during cold, desert nights. Some baskets were used to carry water, to collect seeds and grasshoppers. Other baskets were used for roasting and boiling foods to preserve them for the winter, and to cook soft, nutritious foods for toddlers and the elderly. The presence of nets in an archaeological assemblage encapsulates a community hunting event likely seen as an opportunity to hold festivals, meet spouses, trade, and diverse other activities. On a larger scale, the traditions of plant collection to make perishable artifacts contributed to maintaining biodiversity in past environments, and prehistoric teachers of these crafts propagated a social environment reflective of community, gender, and kinship practices. My research focuses on basketry and cordage recovered from rockshelters in Nevada and Utah spanning ~13,000 years, particularly emphasizing the last 5000 years. Well-preserved assemblages from museum collections have allowed me to explore complex social and environmental influences on making and using basketry and cordage, and to reconstruct some of the dynamic social connections of people in the Desert West maintained through mobility, trade, and marriage. These observations can be compared with assemblages from caves and rockshelters from the Trans-Pecos region of west Texas to understand regional patterns of population interaction.

**Marion Coe** is a graduate student at Texas A&M University, where she received her M.A. in anthropology in 2012. She has taught anthropology at Texas A&M and Baylor University, and through her affiliation with the Center for the Study of the First Americans at Texas A&M University, she has excavated at the Debra L. Friedkin site in Texas, and other Paleoindian sites in Texas, Alaska, Idaho, and Nevada. She is an archaeologist whose research specializes in perishable artifacts, including basketry and cordage from Nevada and Utah, spanning 13,000 years. Her work focuses on paleoethnobotany, paleoenvironmental influences on human subsistence, perishable technological organization, and social identity in hunter-gatherer societies.



## President's Message

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done by Robert Tapscott, R.E. (Bob) Forrester, and a number of other Tarrant County Archeological Society members in the 1960s. We plan to invite NTAS members to help analyze the artifacts and draft new site reports using the unit level reports, the hand-drawn maps and the photographs we have been given. As we become engaged in this project, we should also be able to learn more about the history and some of the founding members of the Tarrant County Archeological Society, which of course became NTAS in 2019.

## Preparing to Zoom

If you do not already have Zoom, it will save time if – before you actually want to use it - you download the Zoom software or app by going to Zoom.us and, at the bottom of the Home Page, clicking on “Download”. This will allow you to download and install the software free, without actually having to set up a Zoom account (with email address and password). If you prefer to have a free Zoom account, click on the “Sign up, It’s free” button, provide your email address and a password, and you will have a free Zoom account (which allows you to host your own Zoom meetings if you want to).

Prior to each monthly meeting, you will receive a “Zoom invite” with the necessary link and other information regarding the meeting. **Keep the “invite”** to make it easier to join the meeting. (You will need the “invite” the night of the meeting.)

Each Zoom “invite” will also include such things as tips about what to expect as you join the meeting, “Zoom etiquette”, and other pertinent information.

The Zoom “invites” will list the names and phone numbers of several NTAS members who have agreed to be Zoom assistants, available to help anyone who encounters a problem joining the meeting or using any of the Zoom features (e.g., raising your hand to ask a question, using the “chat” feature).

At least for the first few meetings, please limit access for each household to one device per meeting. (After the first few meetings, hopefully we will have a better idea of how close we are to exceeding our 100-device limit.)

Using Zoom for our monthly meetings will be a learning experience for all of us. Please be patient and understanding.

## Welcome New NTAS Members:

Madison Carter

Lynn Sullivan

Cameron Ditore

## Update Your Calendar - NTAS Monthly Meeting Speakers

**November 12th (virtual): Dr. Thomas Guderjan**

**December: Annual Christmas Party (TBD)**

## NTAS - Preserving the Past for the Future

### NTAS Board

**James Everett**  
*President*

**Dana Ritchie**  
*Treasurer*

**Linda Lang**  
*Historian*

**Bryan Jameson**  
*Vice President*

**secretary@ntxas.org**  
*Secretary*

**Gen Freix**  
*Internet Chair*

**Catrina Banks Whitley**  
*Vice President—Projects*

**Chris Meis**  
*Immediate Past President*

**Molly Hall**  
*Newsletter Editor*

### Two easy and quick ways to pay your 2020 NTAS dues!

**By PayPal:** Complete the Application Form and pay online with PayPal at the NTAS website, [ntxas.org/membership](http://ntxas.org/membership) (**PLEASE NOTE:** The browser Chrome does not interface with PayPal through our website. Please use a different browser.)

**By mail:** Complete the application below and mail it with your check to:  
North Texas Arch Society, PO Box 24679, Fort Worth, TX 76124

October 2020      **NORTH TEXAS ARCHEOLOGICAL SOCIETY (NTAS) MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION FORM**

Name(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ Preferred Phone \_\_\_\_\_

City\State\Zip \_\_\_\_\_ Email Address \_\_\_\_\_

**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 \_\_\_\_\_ Alternate Contact Name \_\_\_\_\_

Relationship \_\_\_\_\_ Relationship \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number \_\_\_\_\_ Phone Number \_\_\_\_\_

I want my newsletter delivered by \_\_\_\_\_ email (\$0) or \_\_\_\_\_ by USPS mail. (\$10) **Thank you** for choosing delivery by email.

**Membership Type & Fees (Membership Term: January to December)**

\_\_\_\_\_ New      \_\_\_\_\_ Individual \$20      \_\_\_\_\_ USPS Mail Delivery \$10  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Renewal      \_\_\_\_\_ Family \$25      \_\_\_\_\_ Optional Memorial Fund Contribution  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Student \$10 (*enrolled in grade school through college/university whose coursework is considered to be half time or more*)  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Contributing \$30

**\*\*Please make checks payable to NTAS\*\***

**Code of Ethics (signature required):** I PLEDGE THAT I 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 UNDERSTAND THAT FAILURE TO FOLLOW THESE GUIDELINES WILL PROVIDE GROUNDS FOR EXPULSION FROM THE SOCIETY.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_