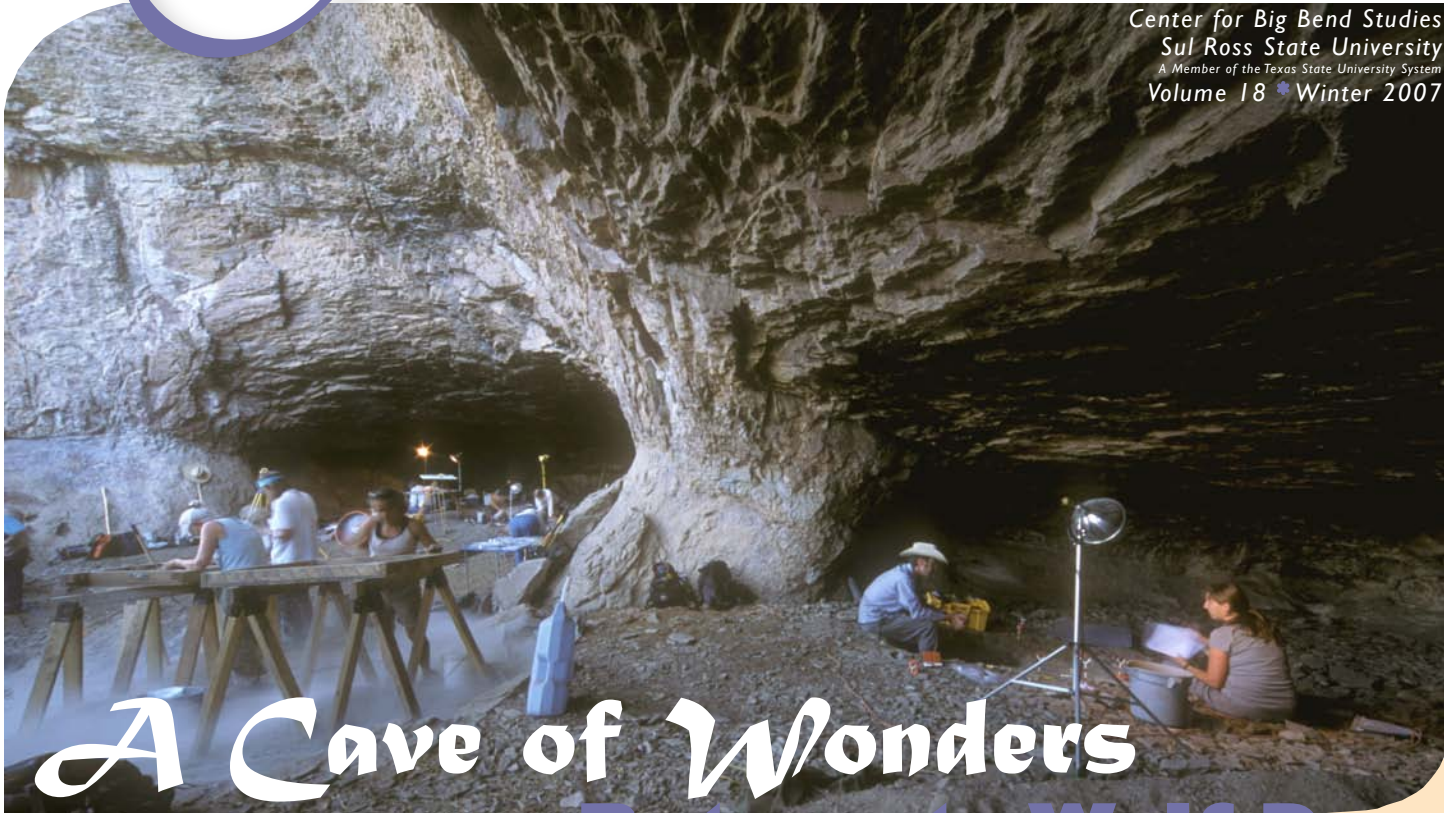


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Center for Big Bend Studies
Sul Ross State University
A Member of the Texas State University System
Volume 18 • Winter 2007



A Cave of Wonders Return to Wolf Den

By Robert J. Mallouf

After a five-year rest, the meandering foot trail to Wolf Den Cave was barely visible in the lush grasses and tree-clad slopes of the mountain. Faded pieces of flagging tape on branches were often the only clues to where the trail lay on a brisk June morning in 2006. Filled with both anticipation of returning, and apprehension for what we might find once there, silence reigned as we picked our way through the oak, juniper, and pine woodland. Arriving at a sheer cliff over the site, we gazed across the valley at Mt. Livermore, which loomed spectacularly on the horizon, then threaded our way down the bluff to the cave. To our relief, the cave was just as we had left it, years earlier! There was no evidence of recent relic hunting, animal

disturbances, or undue erosion.

Located high in the Davis Mountains of Jeff Davis County, Wolf Den Cave is perched on a sheer bluff in the shadow of Mount Livermore, the fifth highest mountain peak in Texas. Rather than being a true "cave," the site is actually comprised of two large contiguous rockshelters that can be approached only by a strenuous one mile hike after a bone-jarring, one-hour 4x4 trek across the slopes of Pine Mountain. Wolf Den is owned by the Texas Nature Conservancy (TNC), which has partnered with the Center for Big Bend Studies to conduct scientific study of this important archaeological resource.

Discovered in 1999 by volunteers of the TNC, and evaluated initially in 2000 by the CBBS in company with TNC personnel, scientific interest in the site was stimulated by the preservation and potential depth of shelter floor deposits, and by the discovery of

(below) Richard Walter takes notes while John Seebach and Steve Kennedy screen for artifacts from Wolf Den Cave, (bottom) archaeologists use generator-powered lighting to excavate in dark areas of the cave.

a prehistoric painted shrine in Mt. Livermore's likeness in the shelter's interior. This ritual aspect of the site was especially pertinent and timely for ongoing research being conducted by the CBBS with the Livermore phase (A.D. 700-1300), a Late Prehistoric hunting-gathering culture believed to be indigenous to the eastern Trans-Pecos, but only poorly defined by previous research. By 2000, rock art research being conducted by the CBBS at other regional sites provided a tentative stylistic linkage of the Wolf Den shrine to the Livermore phase.

The CBBS first began research at Wolf Den Cave in May 2001, when an eighteen-member team led by Center director Robert Mallouf and comprised of CBBS archaeological staff, SRSU Anthropology Club students, and staff

and volunteers of the TNC carried out detailed mapping and initial subsurface testing of the site. The operations were conducted out of a tent camp established as close to the cave as possible (within one mile), but which nonetheless posed difficult logistical considerations for the project. Findings from this investigation pointed to a deep, well-stratified archaeological deposit.

Suspected of being a ritual cave since its 2000 evaluation, this initial speculation concerning Wolf Den

appeared to be supported by the nature and content of cultural features and artifact assemblages recovered during 2001. Among the features encountered were thick, extensive ash deposits, superimposed layers of grass, and tiny hearths of unusual configuration and content. The 2001 investigation raised a number of significant questions that could only be addressed through additional work and funding.

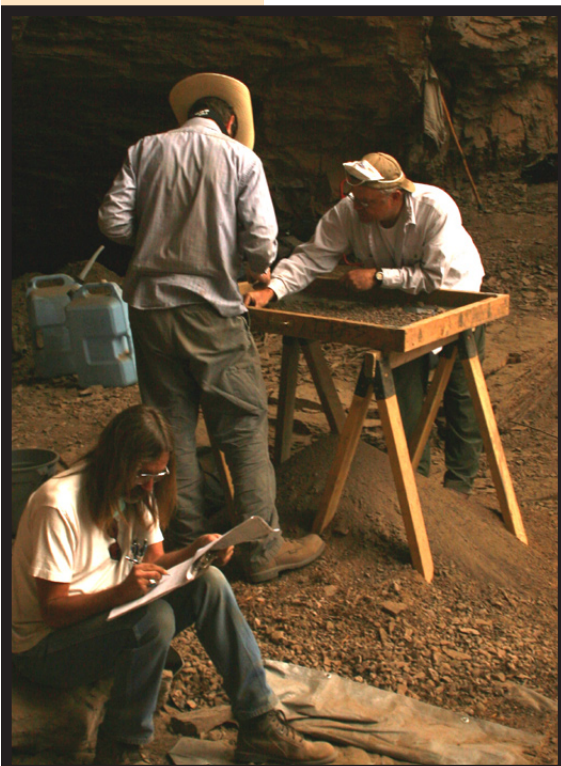
With the inception of the Center's Trans-Pecos Archaeological Program (TAP) it became possible to return to Wolf Den to address these interpretive issues, and CBBS did so in June and early July 2006. Again utilizing professional CBBS staff along with students and volunteers, we re-opened the 2001 excavation and continued where we had left off five years earlier.

Excavations in 2006 revealed that large, horizontal areas of the larger shelter contain substantive ash deposits resulting from the burning of muhly grasses in large, multiple, and sometimes superimposed pits. Although not yet demonstrated, it appears that such ash deposits extend across much of the floor of the shelter and are probably related to ritual activities at the site. Radiocarbon dating and stratigraphic position of these features suggest a linkage to Livermore phase occupations.

Layers of unburned grasses discovered across the shelter floor may have been used at times to renew the living surface. Sprinkled throughout the Livermore phase deposit at the site, and into underlying Late Archaic deposits as well, are a series of very small, shallow, basin-shaped "hearths" that evince the burning of grasses as well as woody plants. Interestingly, these unusual, possibly ritual-related features were at times "capped-off" with a final layer of unburned bark, prickly pear pads, or other plant material.

We excavated a series of small, compacted grass features having single artifacts, such as a stone tool, placed at their centers, indicating possible ritual activities at Wolf Den. Easily distinguishable from rodent nests or other natural disturbances in the deposit, these features will be of great interest as the analysis progresses. When combined with the painted Livermore phase shrine, these and other atypical cultural features point strongly to the site having a ritual function. This interpretation is supported by the presence of an uncharacteristic stone tool assemblage in association with the Livermore phase deposits.

The Wolf Den investigation is also providing some of our first hard data regarding the Late and Middle Archaic periods in the Davis Mountains. Directly below the Livermore com-

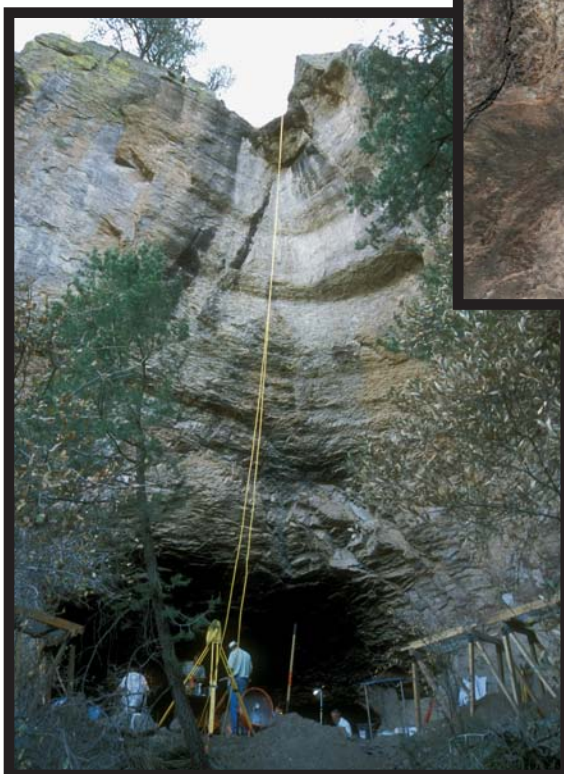


ponent is a Late Archaic (1000 B.C.-A.D. 700) deposit that has yielded a series of small hearth features, ash and grass lenses, and both stone and perishable artifacts, including a small, painted stone in a datable context. When combined with a data set from another Late Archaic deposit in the Davis Mountains, also explored by the CBBS (Tall Rockshelter), analyses are expected to yield a great deal of information about this poorly-known time period.

With regard to Middle Archaic (2500-1000 B.C.) evidence from Wolf Den, the 2006 investigation did little to resolve the issue of possible structural remains noted during earlier work at Shelter A. Excavation of the area believed to hold a Middle Archaic structure, while yielding what could be additional architectural elements, also yielded evidence of ancient, but severe flooding of the shelter floor. The flooding, probably related to a seep spring or vent that once existed along the back wall of the interior, was found to have obscured or removed evidence critical to such an interpretation—at least in the western half of Shelter A.

In sum, recovery from the 2001 and 2006 investigations at Wolf Den, along with data sets still being derived from several other sites in the Davis Mountains area, are greatly enhancing and refining our knowledge of the Livermore phase. For the first time, we now have a wide range of associated perishable fiber artifacts, such as sandals, matting, basketry, and cordage that can be linked with a measure of confidence to Livermore peoples. In addition, we have added greatly to our understanding of their stone technology as well as their subsistence and settlement systems.

As more data surfaces, exciting interpretive inroads are also being made into ritual and socio-religious practices manifested through rock imagery, mortuary practices, and caching behavior. We are refining the chronological and geographic parameters of this culture, and obtaining our first reliable data concerning their interaction sphere relative to other coeval cultures in the eastern Trans-Pecos and adjoining regions. Continuing TAP investigations are providing significant insights into the lifeways of this regionally important prehistoric culture, as well as into those of earlier Archaic inhabitants.



(left) CBBS crew lowered equipment to Wolf Den Cave with ropes, (above) the painted shrine inside the cave.
Photos by Jim Bones

The CBBS would like to extend its gratitude to the Brown Foundation, Inc. for making this research possible.

Just Another Day at Wolf Den

Hearing unfamiliar voices from the front of Wolf Den, my excavation partner lifted up his head and squinted toward the figures at the mouth of the cave. "Who are those guys?" he muttered. Looking up, I recognized the silhouettes. "Oh, they're just journalists—one from NPR and the other from the *New York Times*." Here we are, excavating portions of a cave hidden in the Davis Mountains Preserve, covered with cave dust, a two-hour trek away from hot showers, and the boss is chatting up reporters from national news outlets. Just another day at Wolf Den.

All sorts of visitors chose to hike down [and back up!] the mountainside on a hot summer afternoon with threatening thunderclouds to visit this unusual site. They came to see a major site and excavation that's important in understanding the ritual aspects of life for the Livermore peoples. Today, Tom Michael, general manager of KRTS-Marfa Public Radio, joined by another KRTS worker, Pete Szilagyi of Fort Davis, hauled his recording equipment from Marfa down the steep slope to interview Bob Mallouf and Andy Cloud on-site.

Barbara Novovitch, *New York Times* reporter based in Marathon, had a lighter load, carrying only her notebook and her lunch. Dave Hedges guided the party which also included Kate McKenna, Linda Hedges (Texas Parks and Wildlife), James King and Crawford Marginot from the Nature Conservancy of Texas. On other days during the month-long project, Tom and Carol Hobby, Kay Pogue, and State Representative Byron Cook and his wife Kay from Corsicana came to have a look and join us for lunch.

Other folks can be better described as temporary workers than visitors. Elbert Bassham and Nancy Blanton of Sul Ross State University put in their time in the dirt, bending, straining, leaning, brushing, screening, and measuring, as did Marni Francell, Sherida Tripp, Steve Kennedy, Julie Green, Mike Mullican, Tom Crum, Parker Mallouf, Hunter Hunt, and Rachel Freer.

—Melissa Williams



Cave dust smudges the happy face of Shari Tripp, worker at Wolf Den, June 2006.

Photo by Tom Crum

In the Field

A sampling of CBBS projects

Field School Students Uncover Valuable Lessons

Contributing author Nancy Blanton

Breath-taking views, hiking in the mountains and working side by side with professional archaeologists may sound like an article out of *The National Geographic*, but for the three students of the 2006 Sul Ross State University/CBBS Field School, it was a reality. The field school is a field training class held every other year for aspiring archaeologists and anthropologists. This year, it was held at the Wolf Den Cave research excavation, a site high in the Davis Mountains. William "Andy" Cloud taught three students: Dawnella Petrey, Jesse Nowak, and Ashley Baker, beginning in early June.

The students were assigned to work with the oversight of the scientists and to excavate and document their excavation as a part of the overall study. Half-meter deep, square-shaped excavations in the cave floor were used to study artifacts and remains left by the ancient peoples who occupied the caves.

The experience went beyond the daily tasks of excavation, though; friendships were forged between the crew and the field school. "We've gotten to where we sing songs as a distraction on the hike. We've bonded, and for all of us, this has been a once-in-a-lifetime experience. It has reinforced my decision to become an archaeologist," said Petrey. Ashley Baker said, "This was the best site I've worked on, and being able to work with people I already knew and meeting new people made it an enjoyable experience."

Petrey, Nowak, Baker, and Cloud.



Black Hills Research Reveals New Art Sites

Working around late summer thunderstorms, occasional bees, and rattlesnakes, five CBBS archaeologists surveyed 2,300 acres of ranch land in south Brewster County during September and October 2006. Earlier in the year, the ranch owner had reported the spectacular rock art he and his ranch manager had discovered in the Black Hills. A particularly rich site, Bee Cave, is adjacent to a permanent source of water, and housed many generations of prehistoric people. These findings prompted the CBBS to undertake a large survey of the area's rock art.

There were two goals of the survey. The first was to pinpoint the rock art recognized by the land owner, and to search out additional locations. The second was to identify and record other evidences of human habitation, such as campsites and lithic scatters.

The intensive pedestrian survey ranged from the valley floor to the flat hilltops. The CBBS field crew identified and recorded twenty-one campsites, a site density within the expected range based on earlier surveys of Big Bend National Park. All appear to have been temporary, open campsites with hearths, metates, and lithic scatters. Collections were made of diagnostic artifacts, and it is anticipated that laboratory analysis and identification will provide chronological data.

Rock art was identified in twenty-eight locations, an extraordinary density compared to the one or two rock art sites encountered by similar surveys. Most rock art sites were situated in the upper reaches of the hillsides, and five seem to be in association with campsites. There is a striking diversity of techniques and motifs in the art, from simple abraded lines and smears of red paint to extensive panels of intricate petroglyphs. The majority of the work was done by pecking, scratching and abrading the rock to produce petroglyphs; painted pictographs represent only a small portion of the art.

The splendor of the rock art lies not just in its density and diversity, but in its out-of-the-ordinary setting. A few installations hide in out-of-the-way spots, but most are highly visible carvings on massive pink boulders prominent on the hillsides.

Over the winter and into the spring of 2007, the CBBS will compare field drawings and photographs from this survey to those from earlier investigations in the Big Bend to look for similarities and differences in technique and style. At this early point in analysis, the rock art from the Black Hills represents a collection unique in the Big Bend.

Groundbreaking Discoveries by CBBS in Big Bend National Park



The Big Bend National Park survey crew was busy this past fall documenting some of the most exciting discoveries ever made in the region. Now in its seventh year, this major research project recently shifted focus to a couple of large blocks along the Rio Grande—an area that has proven unusually rich in both prehistoric as well as historic material culture.

Since starting work in this southern-most portion of the park one year ago, nearly 10,000 acres have been surveyed resulting in the discovery of over 250 new sites. Among the most interesting are two multi-component sites that contain both prehistoric ceramics (one of the rarest artifact types to be found in the park) as well as charred Indian corncocks in direct association with eroding hearths—findings that provide the best evidence yet for Indian agriculture far beyond the famed La Junta district. One of these sites also contains five separate stratified cultural deposits that range from the Late Prehistoric to at least the Late Archaic period, and possibly earlier. Based on

these deposits (in addition to the corncocks), this site may be one of the best candidates yet for excavations that could provide an untold wealth of data about our prehistoric past.

The crew also discovered an unprecedented number of sites containing dart points from the Middle Archaic period (3,000-4,500 years ago), including one of the most important finds from the region, with significance that reaches far beyond the Big Bend: a Middle Archaic dart point cache!

Because of the magnitude of the find, an excavation crew was quickly assembled to investigate. By carefully searching through the surface gravels, a total of nine contracting stem dart points were found on the surface. As the crew proceeded with the actual excavation, it began to appear that the cache was completely surficial, as no other artifacts, or recognizable soil changes were observed.

Then, at fourteen centimeters below the surface, and just as the crew was about to

(Center) The subsurface portion of the Lizard Hill Dart Point Cache, (clockwise from top left) crew members recording a site, one of several "Medicine Wheels" discovered in BBNP, BBNP crew members intensively surveying a burned rock midden that produced over 50 projectile points, a drilled and incised river pebble pendant found by the BBNP crew.

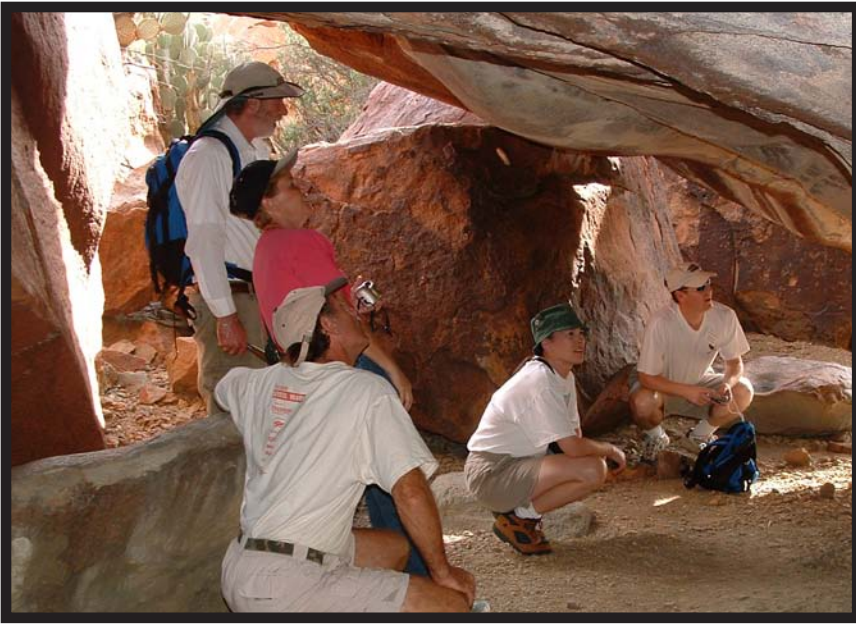
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Celebrating Nature and History of the Big Bend

Sponsored by the Big Bend Chamber of Commerce, the Big Bend Nature Festival took place on September 15 and 16, and CBBS archaeologist William “Andy” Cloud gave an archaeological tour each day to several sites in the Study Butte area.

The small groups, which had several Big Bend locals as well as visitors from Central Texas, were able to tour a number of sites. One site visited boasts a variety of rock art pictographs, where people have painted on boulders and caves, and petroglyphs, or rock carvings.

Cloud said, “I think everyone on the tours had a good learning experience. The small group size allowed for a lot of group participation, which meant that more in-depth questions could be asked.”



In the Community

CBBS staff go above and beyond



Genevieve Lykes Duncan, Dorothy Johnson, and Shirley Adams pose for a photograph at the Calendar Site on the 02 Ranch.

Lifelong Learning

Andrea Ohl from the Center for Big Bend Studies met with Genevieve Lykes Duncan, Dorothy Johnson, and Shirley Adams on a beautiful fall day for tea and a discussion about the archeological resources and the various research projects conducted by the CBBS on the 02 Ranch in Brewster County.

Genevieve is the daughter of James Lykes, who purchased the ranch in 1941, and the

widow of Cameron Duncan, manager of the ranch from 1941 to 1965 and overseer of its management into the 1980s. Dorothy Johnson is a long-time friend of Genevieve's, and a rancher from south of San Antonio. She was interested in seeing the ranch and area she has heard so much about. Shirley Adams and her husband, Carroll, oversaw the ranch operation during the 1980s and 1990s.

The women were spending a long weekend on the 02 Ranch south of Alpine, and they wanted to see an excavation. Ohl took them to the Calendar site in Davenport Draw, a 45-minute drive from ranch headquarters.

Genevieve, aged 92, and Dorothy, aged 86, climbed into the back of Ohl's two-door SUV without a pause, and they both scampered over the rocky volcanic formations in the draw in order to see the site.

The Center had excavated a 1x1 meter column through two cultural layers from which radiocarbon dates of 4800 and 6300 years before present were obtained. Fortunately, the site survived the summer's rains and they were still able to see in the wall of the excavated column the remnants of a hearth feature and the imprints from where pollen samples had been taken for paleoenvironmental data. This site was instructive in explaining TAP research methodology and goals.

Planning for the Future of our History

CBBS Project Archaeologist John Seebach took part in a planning meeting charting the future of Keystone Heritage Park, El Paso, Texas (www.keystonepark.com). Keystone Heritage Park, a non-profit organization, is dedicated to educating the citizenry of El Paso about the flora, fauna and cultural heritage of the El Paso area. To those ends, the Park contains the El Paso Desert Botanical Gardens, and is finishing construction of the "Chihuahuan Desert Experience," a walking tour through the major ecozones, primarily floral, contained within the larger desert. The Park is now interested in bringing attention to the importance of the archaeological site within its confines.

A major component of Keystone Park is the Keystone 33 site (41EP494), a Middle to Late Archaic village site excavated during the late 1970s. The site is a State Archaeological Landmark, has passed the eligibility requirements for placement on the National Register of Historic Places, and will be nominated for such placement during 2007.

The age of the Keystone site makes it significant. The village, dating from 2500 to 1500 BC, is the oldest of its kind in the greater southwest. It suggests that semi-sedentary lifeways were in existence, at least in this area of the Rio Grande Valley, much earlier than previously thought. At Keystone, it appears Middle to Late Archaic groups were using the site as a base camp—conducting foraging trips to procure foodstuffs, predominantly desert succulents, which were then brought back to the village for processing.

The park has formed an Archaeological Advisory Team, on which Seebach sits, to guide any future development. Other members of the team include officers from the El Paso Archaeological Society, archaeologists from Fort Bliss, archaeological professionals from the El Paso area, and staff from the El Paso Museum of Archaeology (sitting as representatives of the City of El Paso). All of the above mentioned parties (with the exception of Fort Bliss) were in attendance at the recent meeting. Jim Walker, southwest regional director of the Archaeological Conservancy, and Debra Beene, Texas Historical Commission, were also in attendance. The general public is also invited.

The meeting focused on updating the guidelines set by the THC and TAC to reflect changes in the management of Keystone 33 and the possibility of developing the site for education/heritage tourism. The primary issues discussed were public access to the site and steps to preserve the site itself. Comments

from the Archaeological Advisory Team and the Keystone board were noted by the THC and TAC representatives and will be reflected in an updated management plan. The updated plan will be reviewed and commented upon by all interested parties before it is formally signed. Lastly, a tour of the site was also conducted. TAC wanted to observe the overall condition of their portion of the site and walk its boundaries before they have it fenced.

For more information, contact:

Mary Haynes
Keystone Heritage Park Board and member
of Archaeological Advisory Team
mary_haynes@ml.com

Some of the many prehistoric pottery sherds recovered near the Rio Grande during the Big Bend National Park survey.

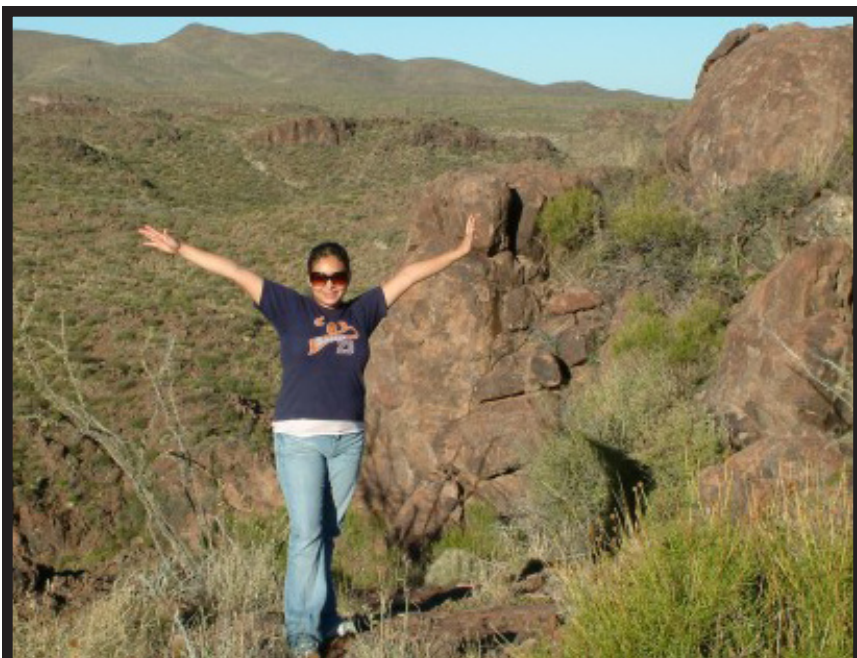


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close the excavation, the tip of another point began to appear. While exposing the point, four others were also revealed, bringing the total to thirteen. But these subsurface points were not alone. Just below the points were two halves of a drilled mussel shell and, beside them, a smooth river cobble, all of which suggests the cache may have been ritualistic in nature rather than utilitarian.

Supporting this theory are several unique rock features near the cache that could be associated, including a V-shaped rock alignment that appears to point directly to the cache itself. A number of other prehistoric rock alignments consisting of central hubs with radiating spokes commonly known as "medicine wheels" have also been recently discovered in the area—a feature type found nowhere else in Texas.

These new findings not only substantially increase the regional archeological database on settlement and subsistence patterns, but are also revising the way we conceptualize the prehistory of the Big Bend. These discoveries are literally rewriting the culture history of the region! The Big Bend National Park project will continue through 2010 with a target of 30,000 additional acres to be surveyed (out of a total of around 66,000 acres) in one of the largest archaeological surveys in the state's history.



(top to bottom) A student celebrates scaling Cerro Boludo, photographs at the Leyva Canyon Site, Korima vans heading home to Saucedo Ranch at the end of a full day.



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The CBBS, in addition to research findings of archaeology with the p tions with schoolchildren, the Cen neighbors.

As Dr. Seuss's Horton says, "a person who can see things as they really are" is the best person to teach Korima Foundation students at Big Bend Ranch State Park. The students are guided by the Korima Foundation. In addition to the Center for Big Bend Studies, the students study geology, and take field trips to Fort Leaton, McDonald Observatory, and the Sul Ross State University.

Founded ten years ago by friends Sylvan Rossi and Jim Carr, the non-profit Korima Foundation provides outdoor workshops in Big Bend Ranch State Park for economically disadvantaged Texas high school sophomores. Rossi and Carr's vision includes broadening participants' understanding of educational and career possibilities, and building confidence that they each can make a difference in their own lives through the choices they make. Donations from the Brown Foundation, Inc. and the Houston Endowment, coupled with many hours of donated volunteer time from group leaders, teachers, Texas Parks and Wildlife, Fort Davis National Historic Site, Border Patrol, UT McDonald Observatory, and Sul Ross State University faculty and staff have made their vision a reality for hundreds of participants since 1997.

For the past nine years, an archaeologist from the Center for Big Bend Studies has joined the Korima workshops to lead a daylong session at three Big Bend Ranch State Park archaeological sites. They guide the sophomores to make educated guesses about the activities that took place at each site, and to extrapolate an understanding of ancient lifeways from the archaeological evidence. During October 2007, I had the privilege of leading three workshops totaling about seventy-five students. What follows is an overview of my days with the students.

Walking in Their Shoes

The day begins in a classroom with a short introductory lecture. First, I challenge the students to

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utreach introduces students to man history

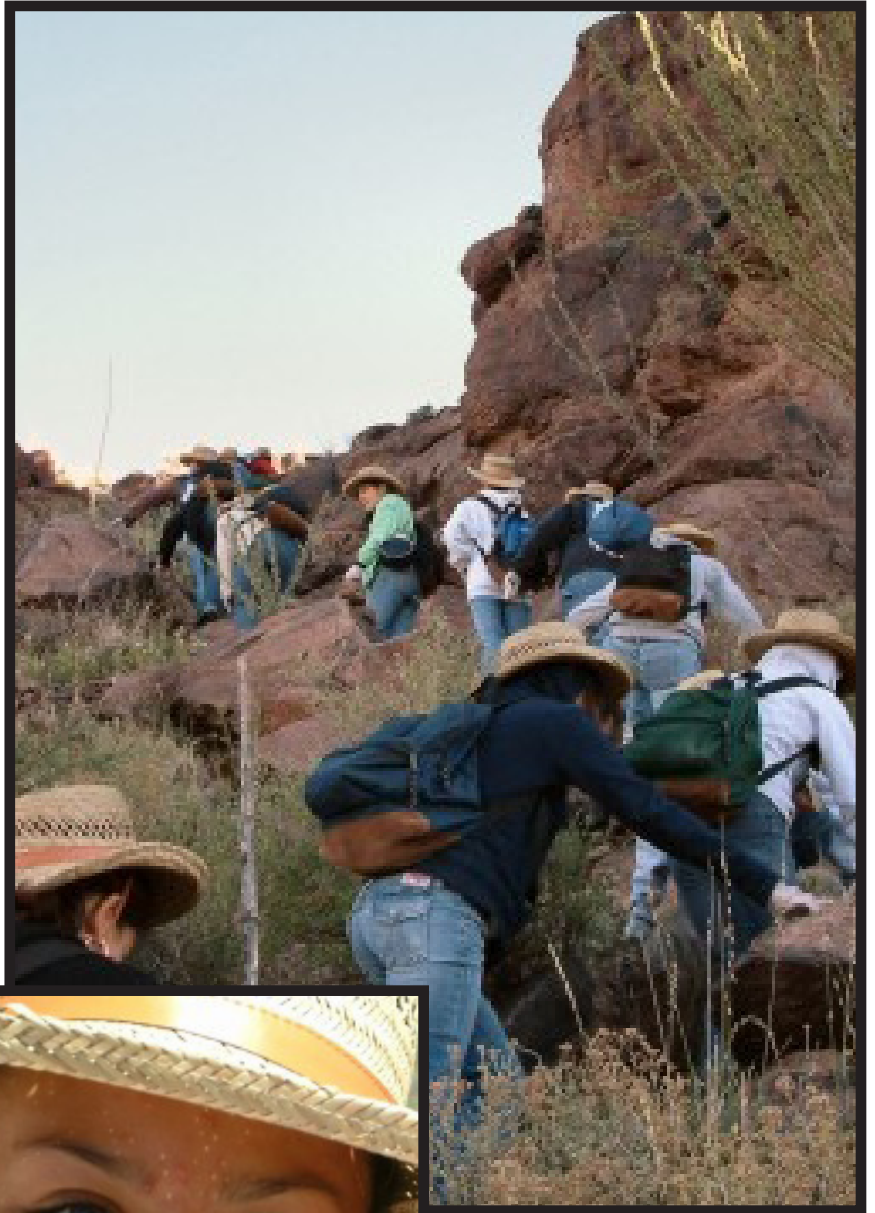
and publication, makes an effort to share the theories and public. From talks to the local Kiwanis club to site exploration attempts to share the excitement of discovery with our

By Mary Melissa Williams
Photos courtesy of Linda Lalewicz

on's a person," which is what we work
ents during five workshops each year at
s come for a weeklong stay underwrit-
ion to an archaeology workshop led by
dents learn about desert survival and
ton, Fort Davis, the University of Texas
ss State University campus.

understand that archaeologists are not the same as
paleontologists (one hundred thousand-year old
artifacts vs. three hundred million-year old dino-
saur bones). Next, we build on their previous day's
desert survival experience to consider what ancient
peoples needed to survive in the Big Bend—water,
shelter, and food—and what clues to ancient lives
might remain on the land. The next question, "How
old is it?" leads to a quick sketch of the major eras
of prehistoric life, from Paleoindian to Historic.
Just before we pack up to head out into the field, I
answer the question, "Can I take it home
with me?" by stressing stewardship—
that the artifacts we will see during the
day ahead belong to the site, not to us.

Checking to make certain each student
is wearing the hat, gloves, and canteen
provided by the Korima Foundation,
we pack into vans to venture into the
"outdoor classroom." Cerro Boludo rises
about three hundred feet from the val-
ley floor, and the only way to reach the
archaeological site on top is to scramble
up the wall of the butte. Some are fright-
ened by the climb, but they all manage
to reach the summit. On top of the butte,
I encourage the students to notice the
features and artifacts scattered across
the top of the butte. The wonderful 360-
degree view facilitates understanding
of this location as a possible lookout for
ancient peoples.



Korima participants climb
Cerro Boludo en route to
the day's first archaeologi-
cal site (above), a student
enjoys the shade created by
her Korima hat (left).



Korima participants listen to Melissa as she describes the ancient hearths and campsites at Cuevas Amarillas, their last stop of the day.

Hiking back down Cerro Boludo to the vans, we head off to the second site in Leyva Canyon. As I point out the location of the site across the valley, the students' first reaction is, "We have to walk all the way over there?" Once again, their physical abilities outstrip their doubts, and we hike to the site in about twenty minutes.

The Leyva Canyon site encompasses a group of boulder shelters, bedrock metates, and striking pictographs. With a little persuasion, it is easy for the students to imagine living snug inside one of these shelters, building a

fire and painting on the walls.

Lunch at Cinco Tinajas rewards us for the arduous hike back up the valley. The five pools of semi-permanent water, and our sack lunches provided by Big Bend Ranch State Park, refresh us all. After preventing the boys and girls from tossing each other into the tinajas, we pile back into the vans for the trip to our third and last site.

Cuevas Amarillas encompasses a spring, and contains evidence of long-term occupation over centuries. After poking around through a large area of burned rock, I gather the students under an extraordinary rock overhang to talk about the sites we have seen through the day.

Dividing them into three teams, I ask each team to make an informal presentation to the group as a whole, "painting a picture" of one of the sites based on information in the class presentation, their observations, their innate knowledge of human behavior, and their imaginations. What I hope to accomplish is to have the students imagine themselves living and working in these spots, connecting with the ancient peoples who left their own marks on the land.

Discovery and Connections

That's the outline of the day, but of course, each of my three days with the Korima students this past October was a new experience. The first group, all boys from Houston, included a number of ROTC students, and I learned the

meaning of, "At ease, men!" which translates roughly to, "Sit down and be quiet!"

During that first session, one of the teachers accompanying the group found a beautiful scraper at the Leyva Canyon site, which we stashed on-site to show to future groups. More surprising was the almost-perfect Perdiz point one of the boys discovered during the lunch break at Cinco Tinajas, which is not known as an archaeological site.

The next Tuesday, I accompanied a group of girls from San Antonio, and their enthusiasm for charging up Cerro Boludo startled me, as did my discovery of an intact Caftan dart point (Late Archaic), at Cuevas Amarillas (also cached for future visits). That trip also yielded the most poignant quote from one of the participants; she told me wistfully, "I didn't know this was all out there—I thought all those pictures in the books were fake."

Boys from both San Antonio and Presidio made up the third group a week later. Their interest leaned toward the faunal rather than the archaeological, and the archaeology had to compete with a number of critters that caught their eye, from butterflies and grasshoppers to frogs and a very small, non-poisonous snake.

High school sophomores can be difficult to reach, but despite the distractions of hormones, peer pressure, physical exertion, unfamiliar surroundings, and the weather, I know that we have been able to give the Korima Foundation students a glimpse into ancient lifeways in the Big Bend, and the understanding that, "A person's a person," no matter how ancient.



Mary Melissa Williams prepares for a day in the field with students.

CBBS 13th Annual Conference a Success

A total of 150 people from all over Texas and as far away as Mississippi and Illinois came to Alpine to attend the 13th Annual Center for Big Bend Studies Conference. The event boasted thirty presenters in fields ranging from local history and biographies to archaeological and genetic research.

The Friday evening banquet was also well-attended, and featured Center director Robert J. Mallouf as its speaker. He spoke on "Doing Archaeology in West Texas," a humorous anecdotal review of his thirty-five years of experience exploring the Big Bend region of Texas.

The complete program is available on the CBBS website, www.sulross.edu/~cbbs.

(below) Presenters from the Saturday morning session on West Texas rock art. Session chair Travis Roberts, rock art specialist and CBBS associate Reeda Peel, Teddy Stickney, and CBBS Staff Archaeologist Mary Melissa Williams.

(bottom) CBBS Director Robert J. Mallouf greets attendees during his welcome speech. He was featured later that day as the speaker for the evening CBBS Banquet.



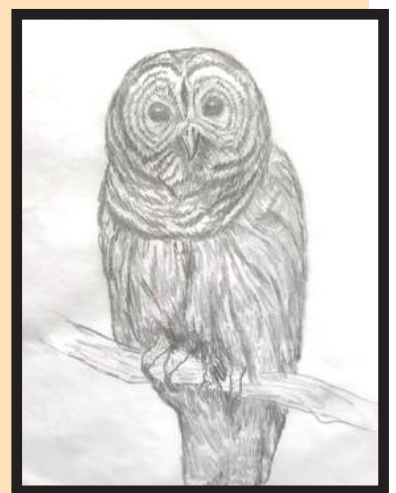
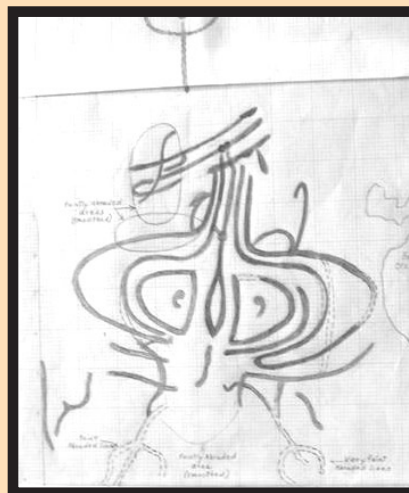
Presenters from Session 2 (below), on music and sound recording in West Texas. From left to right: Ashley Pettiet-Richey, Tom Crum (session chair), Curtis Peoples, and Paul Carlson.

(above) The conference was well-attended, with visitors enjoying a wide range of topics on the history, archaeology, and culture of the Big Bend.



Center Employees Present at the Texas Archeological Society Meeting

Three CBBS employees joined archaeologists from around Texas in San Angelo for the Texas Archeological Society's Annual Meeting from October 20 to 22. Robert Mallouf and Reeda Peel presented during a popular, well-attended session that Reeda organized around the topic of West Texas rock art. Their topics were "Dancing Rocks Petroglyphs: Horse Nomads in the Sierra Vieja Breaks" and "The Eyes Have it: Abstract Eyes and Owls' Faces. William "Andy" Cloud spoke on the topic of "Revisiting the Millington Site: Salvage Archaeology in the La Junta Archaeological District." Employees Becky Hart and Mary Melissa Williams attended the meeting as representatives of the Center.



Scaled drawing of motif at the Graef site (left) which resembles a Barred Owl (right).



Brief Encounters

Meeting W.D. Smithers

By James T. Bratcher

I began teaching at Sul Ross in 1967 or '68 under Elton Miles, head of the English Department. Miles was a fine fellow who investigated Big Bend folklore and history. My wife and I bought a two-story house on the Mexican side of Alpine, across the road from the rock Catholic church.

I got up early every morning in those days. One morning before daylight, driving along the main drag through town, I noticed a small frame house with the lights on. I had seen the man who lived there before, an old-timer who'd been digging holes and moving desert plants into his yard. They were larger plants that he had scattered helter-skelter over the property, apparently avoiding any semblance of formal landscaping. I surmised he was selling the plants, and hoped I might be able buy a few. I knocked at the door, was greeted and asked in, and was told that the plants were not for sale.

His name was W. D. Smithers. He led me to a large table where he'd been working. He was making a book, a photographic record of Big Bend plants and their uses, especially medicinal applications by desert dwellers. His main interest, or topic, was folk medicine.

During the visit, Mr. Smithers showed me parts of plants he had arranged on his table to photograph. For this, he placed a quarter

beside each specimen to show its relative size. He liked to stay busy and do something productive, he said. He had written articles on border life and was the inventor—and for a time the manufacturer—of a type of lampshade that featured translucent color photos of Southwestern scenes. I had seen these, and he pointed to an example in the room.

He handed me a picture that showed Will Rogers, who was the speaker at a meeting of the Old-Time Trail Drivers' Association in the 1920s. Smithers had attended and taken pictures. In the photo, an elderly woman was lecturing Rogers. She was angry because Rogers had joked that by the time the Texans got their herds to Indian Territory, they mysteriously had more cattle than they started with. "Take that back," the woman was complaining. "My husband was no cow thief!"

He'd lived on the border for many years, he said, and although a photographer by trade, he'd done a number of things to make a living. Once, south of San Antonio, he'd worked for a laboratory, catching and milking rattlesnakes to produce snakebite antidotes.

Once Smithers had been brought back from near-death, a victim of heatstroke, by a curandera. He showed me pictures of border matachines, the Indian dancers, and another photo of Indian signal mirrors in a bucket of water, absorbing full moonlight to increase their carrying power.

Smithers spoke Spanish and English interchangeably. He was a tobacco-chewer and kept a cardboard wastebasket on the floor beside him. This was covered by a small square of plywood with a grungy Folger's coffee can sitting on top, a good enough spittoon as spittoons go. After a while during our conversation, he removed the plywood and can, then lifted a bottle of bourbon out of the wastebasket. "Toma?" he asked me, offering the bottle. He took a healthy drink himself.

His throat cleared, he returned to the subject of photography. He'd been present during the Army's early use of airplanes on the border, and he spoke of the Johnson Ranch, the site of a landing strip associated with aerial photography. In the 1910–1930 period of border incidents, planes were used for reconnaissance, and Smithers had developed improvements to cameras and their mounting on planes. He'd assisted on flights more than once.

He showed me a framed letter on his wall, signed by a famous Air Force general. As I recall, this was Nathan F. Twining, a post-World War II chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. As I remember the letter, Twining and Mr. Smith-

Continued on page 14

First TAP Publication Wins Award of Merit

The Texas Historical Commission has selected the Center for Big Bend Studies' newly released publication, *The Rosillo Peak Site: A Prehistoric Mountaintop Campsite in Big Bend National Park, Texas*, to receive an Award of Merit in Archeology.

Written by Robert Mallouf, William Cloud, and Richard Walter, the book is the first publication in the new Papers of the Trans-Pecos Archaeological Program (TAP) series. TAP is a broad, five-year program initiated by the Center for Big Bend Studies to fill large gaps in the archaeological record of the Trans-Pecos region.

The Big Bend was included in large-scale Southwestern research projects in the 1920s and 1930s, but the programs were suspended during World War II, and were never resumed in the Trans-Pecos. Very little research was done in the region from 1940 to 1980.

While the creation of the Center for Big Bend Studies by Sul Ross State University in 1987 demonstrated renewed interest in the cultural and historical resources of the Trans-Pecos, the scope of investigations was limited until the inception in 2004 of TAP.

An archaeological report about an ancient, isolated campsite on a mountaintop, *The Rosillo Peak Site* details the research methods and discoveries of a crew of eight CBBS archaeologists who spent five days excavating on the summit of Rosillo Peak in Big Bend National Park.

While modern-day researchers and their equipment were flown in via helicopter to the isolated, rugged site, ancient hunter-gatherers arrived on foot to occupy a specific locale on the summit over several thousand years.

Potential reasons behind these repeated visits are explored in the book, as well as the possibility of a special use for the site. The spectacular setting, complete with physically daunting arrival, and the unusual assemblage of artifacts recovered during the excavation point to the possibility that people gathered here for ritual purposes now lost to time.

Submitted to the Texas Historical Commission for required review, the book was chosen for an Award of Merit in Archeology for being the first comprehensive study of a high elevation campsite in the state. The Commission recognizes the study for its "field work, analysis, and report production."

Co-author William "Andy" Cloud accepted the prize from Jim Bruseth and the Texas



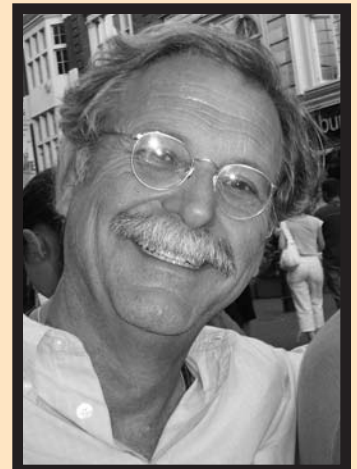
Historical Commission chairman at an award presentation in Austin on October 25, 2006.

To celebrate, the Center held a book signing and question and answer session at Front Street Books in Alpine on October 27. Standing room only, the successful event attracted community members interested in the Center's work for an informational, interactive lecture session.

William (Andy) Cloud receives the Texas Historical Commission's Award of Merit for Research from the Commission's Executive Director, F. Lawrence Oaks (left) and Chair John L. Nau, III (right) for The Rosillo Peak Site.

Passing of a Beloved Rock Art Specialist

Texas and the Big Bend lost a major friend of archaeology and an important rock art researcher with the passing of Charles Robert "Bob" Hext, 58, in Alpine, Texas on February 11, 2007. A native of Canadian, Texas, Bob was a dynamic and tireless proponent and professor of Fine Arts at Sul Ross State University, where he served as a faculty member for 32 years. A noted artist himself, Bob developed an interest in Big Bend rock art during the 1960s while assisting Miriam Lowrance, also an art professor at SRSU, with a region-wide rock art reconnaissance project. His initial interest turned into a passion that he shared with thousands of Fine Arts students in the ensuing years. Very few art majors at SRSU graduated without being exposed to his courses in rock art. And in fact, few would have wanted to miss courses taught by Bob, whose reputation as a master instructor extended far beyond the bounds of the Big Bend region.





La Vista de la Frontera is the semi-annual newsletter of the Center for Big Bend Studies at Sul Ross State University. Address correspondence to the Editor, Center for Big Bend Studies, Box C-72, Alpine, TX 79832, or ecaro@sulross.edu.

Editing and graphic design by Erin E. Caro.

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Mission

The Center for Big Bend Studies fosters interdisciplinary scholarship of the diverse prehistoric, historic, and modern cultures of the borderlands region of the United States and Mexico, with emphasis on the area encompassed by Trans-Pecos Texas and north-central Mexico. The Center is committed to the recovery, protection, and sharing of this region's rich cultural legacy through dynamic programs involving research, education, public outreach, and publication.

Volume 18, Winter 2007
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James T. Bratcher received a Ph.D. in English literature from UT Austin in 1974. After teaching for several years, he went into the livestock business near Fort Worth, from which he is now retired. He lives with his family in San Antonio.

(below) The author in 1968, around the time he met W.D. Smithers.



W.D. Smithers, continued from page 12

ers had had some prior correspondence. In this letter the general was reminiscing about the Johnson Ranch and Mr. Johnson, the rancher. The letter concluded with an anecdote that went something like this:

It seems that Twining, then an Army first sergeant, was at the ranch and asked Mr. Johnson if he'd like for an orderly to clean all his rifles. There was a rifle propped in every corner of the room. Mr. Johnson agreed that it would be all right, "But don't clean that one over there. That's the one I hunt with."

Mr. Smithers was born in Mexico in 1895 and died in El Paso in 1981. For thirty of his eighty-six years he lived in Alpine. The bulk of his papers are at the University of Texas, Austin. His best-known book is the one he was working on when I met him, *Chronicles of the Big Bend: A Photographic Memoir of Life on the Border* (1976).

New Staff: Dawnella Petrey

Dawnella earned her BA in anthropology with a focus in archaeology from the University of Texas at San Antonio, and plans to pursue an MA in archaeology in the future. She has volunteered with the CBBS at both the Millington and Double House sites, and participated in the 2006 field school at Wolf Den Cave. She has been hired as a Staff Archaeologist, and is working in the CBBS lab processing and analyzing artifacts from the Wolf Den Cave Project. She enjoys outdoor activities, especially camping, fishing, and hiking.



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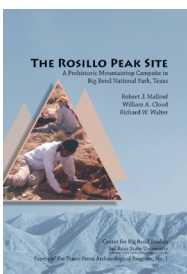
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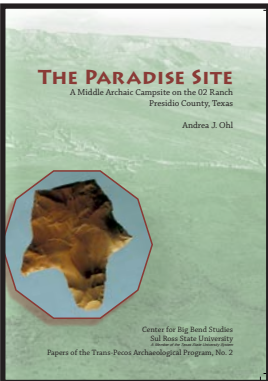


The first book in the *Papers of the Trans-Pecos Archaeological Program* series, *The Rosillo Peak Site*, is available for purchase from the CBBS. The book features the findings of a crew of eight archaeologists who worked in Big Bend National Park investigating a prehistoric campsite on the summit of Rosillo Peak.

\$20, \$15 Member Price

New TAP Publication: The Paradise Site

Papers of the Trans-Pecos Archaeological Program, Number 2, by Andrea J. Ohl



In 2004, CBBS staff investigated a 4,000-year-old living surface at the Paradise Site on the O2 Ranch. A buried open campsite dating to the Middle Archaic period, the site had features and artifacts representing both plant processing and stone tool manufacturing areas. This book explores how the discoveries from the Paradise Site provide new insights into plant gathering and processing strategies by prehistoric inhabitants of the Big Bend.

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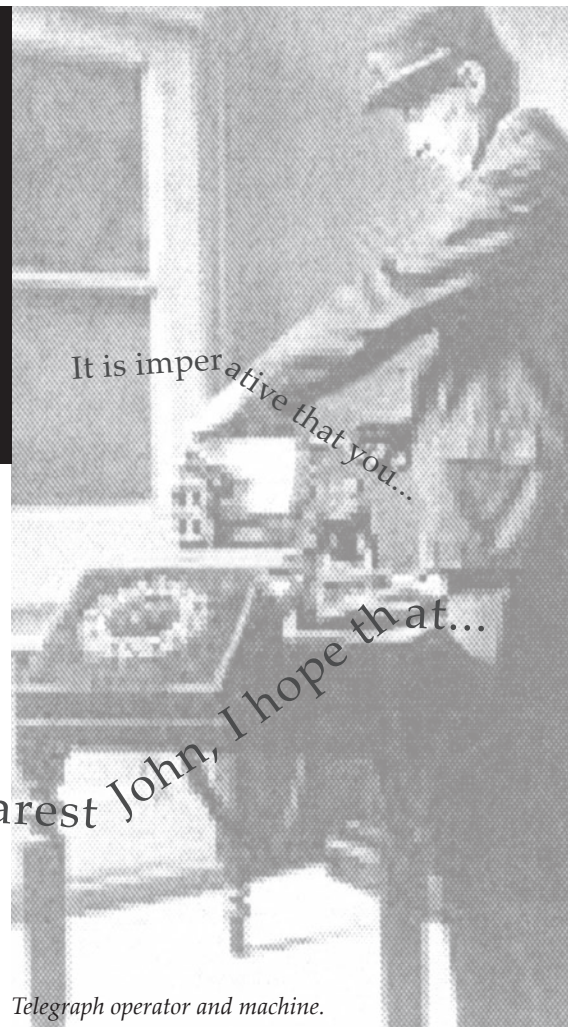
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