

# PASTIMES

The Newsletter of the Panhandle Archaeological Society

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We have recently heard of an important find —  
a cache of hitherto unknown

## Curmudgeons



Curmudgeon

ORIGIN: Unknown —OED

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## Upcoming Events

- December 13 - Annual Floyd Studer Banquet (PAS December Meeting), Hazelwood Hall, PPHM, 5:00 p.m.  
January 6-11, 2015 - Society for Historical Archaeology Annual Meeting, Seattle, WA
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## Notes From the Editor's Desk

This issue has been a lot of fun to put together. As a long-standing member (and the first woman) I can say the Curmudgeon meeting brightens my whole week.

When my late husband, Jack T. Hughes, first suggested I attend with him, I felt I was on pretty shaky ground. I remember saying to the mildly surprised men, "I don't want to interfere with any male bonding ceremonies here. I hope you're not planning to beat bongo drums and recite poetry....." They assured me that they weren't going to do anything like that, and, as Texans do, made me welcome. Later, when Jack's health began to fail, he couldn't attend any more, so he told me, "You'll have to go to represent the firm."

You can see from the list of subjects given by Joe D. Rogers that the conversation ranges from one improbable subject to another, possibly even less probable. History and PreHistory are the mainstays, but there are other, sometimes more personal, topics. People get jobs somewhere and move away, illness may strike us, even death in our families. That's when you can tell: A deep friendship has grown up among us.

So that's why we have this Newsletter devoted entirely to this important sub-group of PAS.

We want you to know what we do and to invite you to come and have lunch with us anytime you are in or can come to Canyon. There is no formal "joining," no dues to pay or anything else. Just drop in at noon on Fridays.

And be prepared to buy pie on your birthday!



Selfie



# PANHANDLE ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

Minutes November 19, 2014

The meeting was called to order by President Donna Otto shortly after 7:10 p.m. at the Downtown Amarillo Library second floor Board Room. There were 20 members in attendance.

The following upcoming meetings and events were announced:

December 13 - Annual Floyd Studer Banquet (PAS December Meeting), PPHM, 5:00 p.m.

January 6-11, 2015 - Society for Historical Archaeology Annual Meeting, Seattle, WA

PROGRAM: The speaker had made a mistake in scheduling and did not come. The meeting continued with the business part.

MINUTES: Minutes of the October meeting were approved as printed in the Newsletter.

TREASURER'S REPORT: Treasurer Pam Allison reported a beginning balance of \$3,423.41. After expenditures of \$15.00 room rent to the Library, \$10.86 to for printing and mailing the Newsletter, \$62.00 yearly box rent to the Post Office, and \$21.40 for supplies for the Fannin History Fair, The new balance is \$3,314.15 The report was approved.

PUBLICATIONS COMMITTEE REPORT: Rolla Shaller reported a balance of \$1,416.17 in the money market account and \$5,034.62 in the CD. The report was approved.

OLD BUSINESS: Veronica Arias reported that the Caprock Canyons State Park Archaeology Fair was well organized and may be the first of an annual affair. Rolla Shaller reported on the Fannin History Fair; PAS provided corn grinding opportunities for the fairgoers. The fair will continue next year. Rolla also reported Lots of good papers at the TAS Annual Meeting; Doug Owlsley was the main speaker. Alvin Lynn reported that the West Texas Trail Meeting at Quitaque was very good. James Coverdale and Scott Brosowske attended the Plains Anthropological Society Conference in Fayetteville, AK., along with 250 others and participated in field trips to Spiro and several Civil War sites. They also saw Meeks Etchison, former PAS member.

Rolla announced a change in plans for the Studer Banquet. It will be held December 13 at the Museum in the Hazelwood Room beginning with silent auction at 5p.m., dinner at 6p.m. and speaker at 7p.m. Food will be brought in from Belmar Bakery by members. Menus were discussed. Cost will be \$25.00 and reservations need to be in by December 3. Pam Allison will take reservations. Banquet speaker will be Reggie Wiseman from New Mexico. Donna Otto will print the programs. Members were reminded to bring items for the silent auction and the raffle.

NEW BUSINESS: Rolla presented membership certificates from TAS to: Audrey Taylor, 30 years; Paul Katz, 25 years; Alvin Lynn, 25 years; Donna Otto, 20 years.

Scott proposed a field trip for February, perhaps to Antelope Creek.

Since we had no speaker, James Coverdale, whose great great grand uncle was one of the Kiowas at Abode Walls, discussed symbols of the deer skin ledger art he had made for the Adobe Walls Centennial.

Veronica Arias said volunteers are always welcome at the Museum, and that the annual Christmas Open House will be Friday and Saturday, December 5 & 6. Admission is a can of food which will be donated to the Food Bank.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:00 p.m. by Donna Otto.

Respectfully Submitted,

Mary Ruthe Carter, Secretary

**Studer Banquet**  
**Saturday December 13**  
**Panhandle-Plains Historical Museum**  
**Notice New Time! 5:00 p.m.**

**Excavations at a Late Prehistoric Hunter-Gatherer Pithouse Village in the Roswell Oasis and Their Bearing on Southeastern New Mexico Prehistory**

Regge N. Wiseman



***Abstract***

*This slide-illustrated talk will present an overview of the results of excavations at the Fox Place site which was inhabited between about A.D. 1250 and the early 1400s. The habitations are small, oval pithouses. A Glencoe phase-like large pit-structure with remnants of a serpent painting on the walls evidently served as a socio-religious structure. Its presence at the site is interpreted as an attempt at proselytization of the local people by farming peoples from the Ruidoso country to the west. The Roswell Oasis offered copious quantities of surface water, a high water table, plenty of arable land, and endless sunshine for growing crops. Its location at the edge of the Southern Plains presented opportunities for contact and trade with nomadic groups from the region and the plains. Not surprisingly, like many oases throughout the world, the locality attracted a variety of peoples for settlement and interaction.*

**Biography**

Regge N. Wiseman was born and raised in Roswell. His formal education in anthropology and archaeology was gained at the University of New Mexico and Arizona State University under mentors Florence Hawley Ellis and A.E. Dittert, Jr. He joined the staff of the Laboratory of Anthropology, Museum of New Mexico in 1971, from which he retired in January 2000. He is currently an emeritus and research associate at the Office of Archaeological Studies, Center of New Mexico Archaeology in Santa Fe where he is happily ensconced in research and writing on a variety of subjects in New Mexico prehistory and history.

## A Tale of Curmudgeons



Cur-mud-geon *n.* A person (often an old man) who is easily annoyed or angered and who often complains.

Okay, so why should we discuss curmudgeons in an archaeological publication? The answer may not be as easy to find as one might expect. There is a group of folks (see above definition) who meet at a predetermined eatery in Randall County for weekly discussions. Why do they do this? Ah, a bit of history. Could it be because they always have? This is not necessarily true, for the origins and membership of the group is shrouded in hints of mystery, or possibly forgetfulness. The details of those origins, while very vague, will have to be the subject for someone with more personal knowledge of the beginnings. Suffice it to say that the group has connections with the former West Texas State University Archaeology department and the Panhandle Plains Historical Museum. These bodies have provided both the previous and current memberships.

There are whisperings that the group has bordered on conspiracy at times in its past, and due to the need for anonymity to be curmudgeonly, much of what has been said is lost to history. There are precious few, if any, primary documents of any agendas, minutes, or discussions; but a thorough search of the site of a recent conclave produced two paper napkins fragments used to record the major elements in their order of business. We are fortunate that one of the members neglected to burn these highly sensitive documents. A partial list of their discussion follows:

- Is fly ash a suitable substitute for concrete or other soil stabilization operations? How long does it take to set up and how much moisture is involved. I believe the Romans, no maybe the Mesopotamians. . .
- How many books has Eric Von Daniken published? How much influence does he have on prime time television today? Have you watched America Unearthed?
- What year did 'old main' burn? 1914 and was Georgia O'Keefe in the building at the time?
- Was Texas Women's College a haven for outcasts and why did Beryl Hughes go there?
- Did C. C. Slaughter (Early West Texas rancher) really donate so much money to the new Baptist hospital that they wanted to name it after him? And did he refuse because he knew that no one would go to a hospital named the "Slaughterhouse" . . . so let's just call it Baylor instead.
- Just what kind of insurance will be accepted at local Emergency Rooms and how much will it cost if your insurance isn't on the list?
- How much walking does it take to wear out a replacement joint?
- What are the origins and purposes of the Nazca lines (I don't know ask von Daniken)
- What is the Remnant Trust? Who is speaking and where?
- How does one subscribe to the "Friday Blast" from WT?
- How many buildings are there at the Ranching and Heritage Center in Lubbock?
- Have you been to the wind museum?
- How much walking is involved in getting to *Machu Picchu* ?
- What is the volume of soil and sediments included in the mound created by the landfill Northwest of Canyon? How does this volume compare to that of the Great Pyramid of Khufu or Monk's Mound at Cahokia? What will future archaeologists think about this society when they dig it up?

Suitable subjects all.  
JDR



# Curmudgeons

**Warning! May be dangerous — approach with caution.**

**Time Period:** Late Holocene. Known to exist for 25-30 years.

**Identifying Characteristic:** Raucous Laughter

**Generally Found:** Downtown Canyon, Friday at the noon hour. However individuals have supposedly been spotted at PAS or TAS meetings, digs, Fannin Middle School History Day, Caprock Canyons and diverse other places where historians and pre-historians are known to gather.

**Main Activity:** Closing down restaurants. After an initial visit, most eating places confine them to a sideroom of some kind to keep them from annoying ordinary customers, but an infestation may be seen as a harbinger of doom.

**Eccentricities:** Too many to list in the allotted space. Take for example, the standing rule that if one of the specimens has a birthday or other momentous occasion, he/she habitually buys dessert for the entire group.

It is thought by some that they can be trapped by throwing down a piece of bait, such as an artifact of some kind. The flock will excitedly gather around, pushing and shoving for a favorable spot for viewing, all the time making their distinctive shrieking cries: “Let me see it!” “Where did it come from?” “How did it get there?” “Are you writing a paper on it?” “This would make a good program!”

Then the question arises: if you were to succeed in catching one or more, what you do with it? As far as is known, none has ever been caged or penned up, and the chances for survival in captivity are slim. Taxidermists have so far shown no interest in preserving their hides.

**Origin:** Curmudgeons were first seen during the Presidency of Ed Roach at then-West Texas State University, 1984-1991. Four faculty members — Jack T. Hughes, Anthropologist; Bob Wright, Biologist; Joe Cepeda, Geologist; and Wayne Lambert, PhotoJournalism— began meeting informally for lunch at a downtown restaurant. After a while they named themselves the Friday Lunch Bunch.

Thus began the tradition of closing down restaurants. When the first one locked its doors for the final time, the group moved to the Chuckwagon Café on 23d St., and became the Chuckwagon Gang. Needless to say, the Chuckwagon soon threw in the towel, and the gang went through a series of eating spots. Chuckwagon-Gang-Without-a-Chuckwagon seemed unwieldy, and the name gradually evolved to Curmudgeons.

**Organization:** None visible. No officers, no dues, no rolls, no agendas.

**Dress Code:** Casual to Field Gear.

**Becoming a Curmudgeon:** No formal invitation is extended; you just show up for lunch at noon on Friday. Currently that’s at the Ranch House on 23rd St. in Canyon. But stay tuned: that could change!

Note: *You run the risk of hearing a lot of vintage, perhaps proto-historic, jokes.*