

# PASTIMES



The Newsletter of the Panhandle Archaeological Society

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Wildcat Bluff Nature Center, 2301 N. Soncy, Amarillo, TX

**James Coverdale on Dragonfly artifact...**

***The Dragonfly had a spiritual connection for Southern Plains warriors.***



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**Dark Canyon Petroglyphs Rapidly Dimming...**

An archaeological treasure is rapidly eroding into oblivion in Briscoe County.



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**Upcoming Events...**

Plan your work and work your plan. Many thanks to Rolla Shaller for keeping up with things of interest to PAS members.

**Cover photo by Jerry Leatherman**

Petroglyphs in Briscoe County's Dark Valley. Weathering is having a devastating effect on the carvings in recent years .

See story in pictures on Pages 5-8.



# A Native American Dragonfly Effigy

*By James Coverdale*

Recently, a Courson Archaeological Research volunteer recovered a rare and unique example of Native American metalworking at a Native American camp along Wolf Creek. What he had unearthed was a dragonfly effigy made from sheet brass (Figure 1). In a handful of plains tribes, specifically among the Cheyenne, Arapaho, and Kiowa, dragonfly symbols were frequently used by warriors to signify their spiritual connection to this animal. To anyone who has ever watched a dragonfly as it hovers and darts around erratically can imagine why native warriors chose to have a mystical connection with this particular animal. Those who used this effigy on their regalia believed that it would protect them from being struck during battle.

**The Dragonfly had a spiritual connection for Southern Plains warriors.**

As a part of our ongoing replication experiments, I decided to make a reproduction of this ornament for our collection. Using a full-sized pattern of the ornament, I cut out the outline from a thin piece of brass using



*Figure 1 Photo by James Coverdale*

a scissors and a small chisel made from a broken tang of a file. The final shaping was accomplished using various sized and shaped files. The four holes were punched out using a small nail and small piece of steel rod. The rough edges on the backside of the holes were smoothed with a file. Finally, any scratches and dents were removed using different grades of sandpaper. The final product (Figure 2) represents a dragonfly effigy that could have adorned a war bonnet, pipe bag, shield, lance, bow case, horse or numerous other objects used by a Southern Plains warrior.

*(Reproduction on Page 4)*

## A Native American Dragonfly Effigy (*Continued from Page 3*)



**Figure 2** Photo by James Coverdale.

## ***Weathering Rock Art Treasures in Briscoe County's Dark Valley***

Rock Art such as found in Dark Valley (41BI530) in Briscoe County is losing a battle with nature and other formidable foes such as the upright walking, two legged Homo sapien species. The often well intentioned but uninformed use of chalk, soap stone, paint or some other substance to highlight petroglyphs for photography can jeopardize these valuable historical records.



## Dark Valley Petroglyphs continued...



Barely discernible trails sometimes lead to hidden treasures.



**“Red Bull” type symbol taken from two angles  
Similar to one seen in Motley County.**

## Dark Valley Petroglyphs continued...



**Above: Looking down at the rock overhang shelter (bottom left in shadows) with an extension ladder to the right of the shelter reaching up to allow photographing some of the elevated petroglyphs. The canyon floor is far below.**



**The area is rugged and isolated even today. Note ladder bottom left.**

## Dark Valley Petroglyphs continued...



**Looking at the inside of the rock overhang shelter. The sandy floor is in sharp contrast to the weathered back wall.**



## PANHANDLE ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

### Minutes of the September, 19, 2012 Meeting

-President Donna Otto called the meeting to order at 7:10 p.m. at the Wildcat Bluff Nature Center. 26 members and one guest were in attendance.

**-The next meeting of the PAS will be October 17th, 2012 at 7:00 p.m. at the Wildcat Bluff Nature Center.  
PROGRAM**

-Donna introduced the evening speakers, Dr. Paul Katz and Joe D. Rogers. Both members gave presentations on the 2012 TAS field school held on the Devil's River in South Texas. The TAS field school focused primarily on site and rock shelter surveys, but there was some limited excavations completed as well.

### BUSINESS MEETING

-The business meeting began at the conclusion of Paul and Joe's lecture.

-Lisa gave the treasurer's report. The current operating balance is \$2,234.22. Lisa will be providing an expense report for the year. The treasurer's report was accepted.

-Rolla submitted the Publication Committee report. The current balance is \$844.96 after ordering 50 reprints of Baker Volume No. 8. The cost of printing was \$1,050.00. The CD account has \$5324.77. The publication report was accepted.

### OLD BUSINESS

-Donna presented a first review of the updated Constitution and Bylaws for PAS. This was compiled from previous editions as well as updates from past minutes.

-Alvin Lynn is working with local landowners to schedule a PAS field trip, probably in November.

-The PAS Website has been updated with new pictures, publications, and upcoming events.

-The Studer Banquet will be held Dec. 15<sup>th</sup> at the Panhandle Plains Historical Museum.

### NEW BUSINESS

-The Fannin History Festival is coming up and volunteers are needed. It was also suggested that during the next PAS meeting, members could assist in repairing the atlatls and spears

-Alibates Flint Quarries National Monument will be hosting special Village and Petroglyph tours every Saturday and Sunday in October beginning at 11:00a.m.

-Alibates Flint Quarries National Monument will also be hosting Flint Fest September 29<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup>.

-The Hutchinson County Museum and Panhandle Plains Historical Museum will be giving a presentation and tour of Adobe Walls, September 29<sup>th</sup>.

-Museum of the Plains will be hosting a book signing by author S.C. Gwynne October 15<sup>th</sup>.

-Courson Archaeological Research will host Family Archaeology Day November 3<sup>rd</sup> at the Museum of the Plains.

-Calls were made out to the membership to assist the new editor of the newsletter, Jerry Leatherman, by providing articles and pictures for the upcoming newsletters. The membership was very impressed with the current issue and thankful to Jerry for volunteering and doing a great job.

-The meeting was adjourned at 8:30 p.m.

# Upcoming Events

## **2012 Texas Archaeology Month; Village and Petroglyph Tours at Alibates Flint Quarries National Monument**

Saturdays and Sundays in October at 11:00 am.

For Additional Information on these events Call NPS HQ at 806-857-3151

### **Mogollon Archaeological Conference**

October 4-6<sup>th</sup>, 2012, Silver City, NM

### **Panhandle Archaeological Society Monthly Meeting**

October 17, 2012 at 7:00 pm

Wildcat Bluff Nature Center

2301 N. Soncy, Amarillo, Texas

### **16th Annual Fannin History Festival**

October 20, 2012, Fannin Middle School , 9 A.M. to 3 P.M.

3627 S. Rusk, Amarillo, TX

### **83<sup>rd</sup> Annual Meeting of the Texas Archaeological Society**

October 26<sup>th</sup>-28<sup>th</sup>, 2012 at the University of Texas at Tyler, Tyler Texas

For more information visit the Conference website at:

<http://www.txarch.org/Activities/AnnualMeeting/am2012>

### **Museum of the Plains – Perryton**

October 15, 2012, 7:00 p.m.

Book Signing: S. C. Gwynne, author of Empire of the Summer Moon

### **Family Archaeology Day at Museum of the Plains - Perryton**

on Saturday, November 3, from 1:00 pm to 5:00 pm.

The goal of this event is to increase knowledge and appreciation of prehistoric and historic cultures that occupied the region prior to settlement through "hands on" activities and games. The field day is open to people of all ages and will include educational stations that examine indigenous artwork, games, contests, and traditional tool and technology demonstrations. Visitors and participants are encouraged to bring in personal prehistoric and historic artifact collections for identification by experts. Sponsored by Courson Archaeological Research and the Museum of the Plains. Admission is free, but donations are accepted.

Call Scott Brosowske at 806-434-0157 or the museum at 806-435-6400 for more information.

### **Panhandle Archaeological Society Monthly Meeting**

November 28, 2012 at 7:00 pm

Wildcat Bluff Nature Center

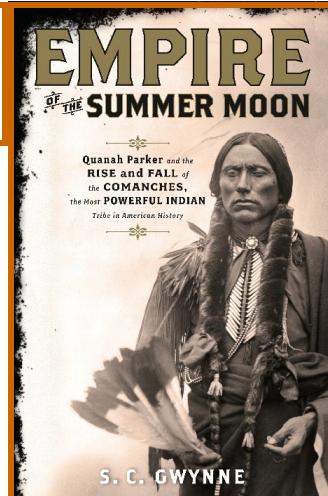
2301 N. Soncy, Amarillo, Texas

### **Panhandle Archaeological Society Annual Studer Lecture, Banquet and Silent Auction**

December 15, 2012 from 6:00-10:00pm

Hazlewood Lecture Hall, Panhandle Plains Historical Museum Canyon, Texas.

Contact Lisa Jackson, 806-651-5232\



**15 OCTOBER 2012  
7:00 PM**

NEW YORK TIMES BEST SELLING  
AUTHOR,

**S. C. GWYNNE**

WILL BE APPEARING AT THE

**MUSEUM OF THE  
PLAINS,  
PERRYTON, TEXAS**

THE EVENING WILL INCLUDE A  
QUESTION AND ANSWER PERIOD  
AND BOOK SIGNING.

THIS EVENT IS FREE TO THE PUBLIC  
FOR MORE INFO, CONTACT US AT:

(806) 435-6400 OR  
[WWW.MUSEUMOFTHEPLAINS.COM](http://WWW.MUSEUMOFTHEPLAINS.COM)