



glyphs

The Monthly Newsletter of the
Arizona Archaeological and Historical Society

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June 2025



Next General Meeting:

Zoom Only

June 16, 2025

7:00 pm (MST)

AAHS@Home (Zoom webinar)

aahs1916.org

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President's Message

by Rich Lange, President



TIME + PLACE

As I started to compose this statement, I have realized that this will be my next-to-last or last contribution of this sort of writing for AAHS. It couldn't come soon enough! (On the other hand, in a perverse way, I have sort of enjoyed doing these—sorta). A couple of years ago now, when I started on this venture, I had made a list of possible topics with great intentions of sitting down over a short span of time and getting these all written so that the monthly deadline did not have to be confronted each time... Well, the list was never really completed, and never mind that even those on the list never really got written that far in advance. Most were completed at the deadline and sometimes a few hours or days past with the grace and understanding of our great *Glyphs* editor, Emilee Mead. Thanks for putting all of those together, fixing a few awkward phrases, and often finding little graphics to spice up the presentation.

I have been thinking a lot lately about places and time. Like most things we confront as archaeologists, anthropologists, or historians, these topics have been widely and thoroughly discussed by many others, but over the past year or so, they have taken up more bandwidth in my brain. I'm not totally sure why that is. Many trips to new locations or back to known locations have happened, sometimes with the same people, sometimes with new people.

In these various experiences, I am aware of the tension between new places, new people, and new experiences and familiar places at a new time and with new or familiar people, or both. There is an excitement in the opportunity to encounter new places and new people. What is over that hill? What is in the next valley? What are the places like where there are new things to see and the people speak a different language or with a different accent? There is also a special feeling to showing new people a place you are familiar with or experiencing that place again with familiar people. Underlying that is your own memory and experiences with that place at another time—the temperature, the season, the smells... and... the changes, or something that is different.

Change happens, and it seems we should be glad that those changes occur and acknowledge that they occur. We spend much of our “professional” time trying to document and understand those changes. On the personal level, sometimes those changes seem for the better and sometimes they distort the memory of that place and other times, even leading to those places dropping off the list of favorite places to which to return. It may be in each person’s own DNA that pushes a person to be more of an explorer and risk taker or to be more comfortable revisiting previous places and experiences. I think most of us have a little bit of both.

History is important—it is a memory of places, people, and times that have gone before and from which we can learn, if we care to. Sometimes it seems crazy that we are repeating mistakes or actions from the past that we should have learned from. It is certainly important on a personal level, but there is a social or group memory and history as well that may need to be shared or negotiated or re-negotiated for the lessons of the past to be learned and appreciated. AAHS is a good example of a group created to share and experience the places and times of our close friends and associates, as well as the experiences and history of others in other places and times. I think that is a good thing, and hope that many of you do, too. So, grab your friends, neighbors, and colleagues to join with us in this adventure!



AAHS Lecture Series

NOTE: Lectures are all now via Zoom only.

- June 16, 2025: Angela Huster, *Aztec Conquest of the Toluca Valley*
- July 21, 2025: Marion Forest, *Recent Research on the Decline of Mesoamerican Teotihuacan: Reconfiguring a City from the Margins*
- Aug. 2025: No lecture: Pecos Conference
- Sept. 15, 2025: Gary Huckleberry, *Decline of Hohokam Culture Based on Soil Degradation*
- Oct. 20, 2025: Andrea Torvinen, *Research at the Site of La Quemada in Zacatecas, Mexico*

June 16: Topic of the General Meeting

Aztec Conquest of the Toluca Valley

Angela Huster

When the Spanish collected Native historical accounts of the preconquest Toluca Valley for a series of sixteenth century court cases, the Triple Alliance-Aztec conquest of the region, a generation earlier, featured prominently in local narratives. The Toluca Valley, immediately west of the Aztec heartland in central Mexico, was not one of the growing empire's first conquests, but it was one of the first times the state needed to incorporate an ethnically and linguistically different population. This presentation gives an overview of the region's archaeology and looks at the effects of Aztec rule on the commoner majority of the population—all based on the results of two recent projects in the area.

***Speaker Angela Huster** is a senior archaeologist at Chronicle Heritage and a visiting researcher at Arizona State University. She has worked across multiple periods in central Mexico, including at Classic period Teotihuacan and several Epiclassic and Postclassic sites. Her research interests focus on people's strategies at the temporal and spatial margins of political changes, through household archaeology and ceramic analysis. Ms. Huster's most recent articles appear in the Journal of Arizona Archaeology (forthcoming), Ancient Mesoamerica, and the Journal of Anthropological Archaeology.*



***This free lecture is offered via Zoom only. However, you must pre-register.
Pre-registration link: <https://bit.ly/43e84D0>.***

Cornerstone

*Darlene Lizarraga, Director of Marketing
Arizona State Museum*

Sharing ASM Collections for Half a Century

by Darlene Lizarraga

Diane Dittmore, associate curator of ethnology, is retiring after 46 years of service.

In my meager 26 years at the Arizona State Museum (ASM), I can honestly say that I've never heard Diane say no to any event, exhibit, class, tour, or presentation that was aimed at sharing ASM's collections with the public. No viable opportunity is ever willingly declined. Weekdays, weekends, in-house, off-site, in-person, on video, or through social media — the answer has always been yes.

Since 1979, Diane's purview has been the ethnological collections — objects dating from 1540 to today. While her focus is Southwest Native cultural arts, "her" collections include thousands of objects from around the globe. Nevertheless, whether it's a Yavapai basket or a Chinese silk robe, her mission has always been the same — she has wanted you to see it and learn about it.

Diane is herself as accessible as she wishes the collections to be. Her office door is never closed. It's ajar just enough to give her some privacy, but also enough to say, "I'm here and I'm available."

It All Started with a Fiddle

In 1978, Diane received a Master's degree in anthropology from the University of Denver with a focus on Native American material culture and museum studies. As part of her graduate thesis research

Diane's history at ASM, specifically as related to basketry and basketry-related research, is captured nicely in the 2024 publicity piece by the University of Arizona Press, in advance of the publication of her book, *Woven from the Center*, available at <https://uapress.arizona.edu/2024/01/field-notes-woven-from-the-center-native-basketry-southwest>.

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on Western Apache one-stringed fiddles, she came to Tucson to examine the instruments at ASM where she learned that the Comcaac (Seri) made comparable fiddles. A year later, she conducted fieldwork among the Seri of coastal Sonora with her future husband,

Seth Schindler, who was a curator at ASM just finishing his Ph.D. In 1979, she landed her first post-graduate job as an acting curator at ASM when Seth took a leave of absence for a year's residency at the School of American Research (now the School for Advanced Research). It turned out to be the only job she would ever apply for, as ASM offered her a permanent position when Seth resigned to pursue other opportunities. "It was the Apache fiddles that brought me here and almost 50 years later, I'm still here."



Dittemore first held curatorial positions as a member of the classified staff before becoming a member of the faculty in 2008, receiving tenure in 2014.

"From the very beginning my career has paralleled the trends, theory, and practice in the field of museology. Better storage and collections management were a strong push in the 80s, so I worked on several major grants to rehouse collections into proper cabinetry. Also, between 1979 and 1982, ASM accessioned more than 5,000 new ethnological objects that were the result of a number of significant purchases on behalf of ASM by the University of Arizona Foundation, at the direction of University of Arizona president John Schaefer. My first 15 years were therefore mostly spent on cataloging and putting objects in upgraded storage.

ASM hosted major displays of these new acquisitions, including an exhibit of Tarahumara culture, *Los de la Sierra: Tarahumara Indians of Chihuahua* (1977–1983), and a 1982 exhibit of Mexican masks and costumes from the Donald and Dorothy Cordry Collection, guest curated by James S. Griffith and Laurel Cooper. My curatorial contributions to these exhibits were in support capacities. By the late 1980s, my time was increasingly devoted to curating exhibits. Yet I continued to collaborate on significant storage upgrades, most notably of pottery and basketry collections led by our then-conservator Dr. Nancy Odegard.”

Diane has had a phenomenal impact on ASM during her tenure. Her passionate drive to share ASM’s collections with researchers, students, and the general public has resulted in an impressive list of contributions in the areas of research and creative activities, service, and public outreach but nothing so impactful as her co-creation of the Friends of the ASM Collections and her stewardship of this group over the past 20 years.

— Patrick D. Lyons
ASM Director

Exhibits and Teamwork

Diane was lead curator or co-curator of many, many more exhibits, large and small, permanent and temporary, including *Paths of Life: American Indians of the Southwest*, *The Pottery Project*, *Basketry Treasured*, and *Woven Through Time: Native Treasures of Basketry and Fiber Arts*.

Retired archivist Alan Ferg recalls of Diane that, “Diane was one of a stable and long-lived Collections Division crew that worked together on whatever exhibit was going up or project that needed doing. People who all knew their collections and their jobs inside and out, cross-trained, and willing to help with whatever needed doing and all happy to do public outreach. It was a great group to work with.”

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Always eager to capitalize on new ways to share collections, Diane worked with colleagues to produce ASM's first online exhibit, *A Nampeyo Showcase*, which went live in the year 2000, the same year that ASM launched its first website. She updated the content and

photographs in 2024, and it continues to be one of ASM's most popular online offerings.



Publications for the Public

Diane's publications also strongly reflect her desire to reach a broad audience with information about the artistic and technological traditions of our region's Native peoples. This is especially evident in her commitment to publishing as the sole author, lead co-author, or junior author of nine articles in *American Indian Art Magazine*, a peer-reviewed journal created with the goal of being accessible to the general public. Her most

recent major publication, *Woven from the Center: Native Basketry in the Southwest* (published in 2024 by the University of Arizona Press), follows this same theme in her work. *Woven from the Center*, which serves as a catalog for the *Woven Through Time* permanent installation, is also a comprehensive guide to ASM's world-class basketry collections and an authoritative treatment of the basketmaking traditions of the Indigenous communities of the U.S. Southwest and northwestern Mexico. The 400-page book has garnered abundant praise from academics as well as collectors and Native artists. It was one of three finalists for the 2024 New Mexico-Arizona Book Award in the category of anthropology and archaeology.

Defining a Legacy

As an archaeological repository, ASM's collections are about 7/8 archaeological and 1/8 ethnological. Diane made it her personal mission to strengthen the ethnological collections by pursuing strategic purchases. Faced with the reality of no budget for acquisitions, she worked with colleagues to establish the Friends of the ASM Collections, which began formally in July of 2005. Since then, the group, which is specifically dedicated to strengthening, sharing, and promoting ASM's ethnological collections, has raised hundreds of thousands of dollars for acquisitions, exhibits, events, and publications. In 2017, an endowment fund was created to ensure that the group's mission would continue to be met. The work of the Friends will indeed continue, due to the solid foundation Diane's vision has laid.

"Of all my contributions to ASM throughout the last four decades, co-founding the Friends of the ASM Collections is the one of which I am most proud. It all started on a snowy day in Denver, when I flew in to give a talk about Apache basketry to a support group of the Native Arts Department at the Denver Art Museum

(DAM). DAM had been among the first art museums in the country to create a separate department devoted to Native arts. Chief Curator of Native Arts Nancy Blomberg was able to purchase new works and bring in guest lecturers like me due to the efforts of a support group, the Douglas Society, named for the inaugural curator of Native Arts, Frederic Douglas, hired in 1929.

Although a classic Colorado blizzard kept all but a few brave souls from attending my talk, I was inspired to learn about the Douglas Society and how ASM might emulate it. Blomberg generously gave of her time and advice as I collaborated with ASM's first director of development Miriam Nickerson and then-head of collections

Donate to the Friends
Endowment in honor of
Diane's retirement. Send
your check, payable to "UA
Foundation/ASM," to Arizona
State Museum's Development
Office at PO Box 210026,
Tucson, AZ 85721-0026.

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Dr. Suzanne Griset to create what became the Friends of the ASM Collections.

Since that time, we have, over the past two decades, traveled, brought in speakers, raised acquisition and program funds through memberships and our Benefit Sale, supported ASM exhibitions, and, speaking for myself, had a blast in so doing. The Friends of the ASM Collections Endowment will continue as a source of support for the ethnology section of the Collections Division.”

What’s Next?

While Diane may have run out of “official” tomorrows to share the collections, her work in and on the collections will continue in retirement, focusing on online exhibits, research on Yavapai baskets, and continuing to consult with the Friends’ acquisition committee.

Diane’s time will also be filled with continued service on the board of the Tucson Historical Preservation Foundation, serving as a judge at art fairs, running her Airbnb, and of course, increased time and travel with family and friends.

Diane’s presence will be missed within the museum and without. Her successors will be hard pressed to match her commitment to public service and her energy for public outreach.



Follow AAHS on Facebook at
www.facebook.com/archandhist



Arizona Archaeological and Historical Society Newsflash!

AAHS has a new web address.
Check out the newly designed site at AAHS1916.org.

glyphs: Information and articles to be included in *glyphs* must be received by the first of each month for inclusion in the next month’s issue. Contact me, Emilee Mead, at emilee@desert.com.

AAHS Membership Application

Membership is open to anyone interested in the prehistory and history of Arizona and the Southwest and who support the aims of the Society. Membership runs for a full year from the date of receipt and covers all individuals living in the same household. Monthly meetings are free and open to the public. Society field trips require membership.

Membership Categories

- ☐ \$60 **Kiva members** receive four issues of the Society's quarterly journal, *Kiva* and 12 issues of our newsletter, *Glyphs*
- ☐ \$45 **Glyphs members** receive *Glyphs*
- ☐ \$20 **Student Kiva members** receive both *Kiva* and *Glyphs*
- ☐ \$100 **Contributing members** receive both *Kiva* and *Glyphs*
- ☐ \$150 **Supporting members** receive both *Kiva* and *Glyphs*
- ☐ \$300 **Sponsoring members** receive both *Kiva* and *Glyphs*
- ☐ \$1,500 **Lifetime members** receive both *Kiva* and *Glyphs*

You can join online at www.az-arch-and-hist.org, or by mailing the form below to:

Emily Jonsson, Vice-President for Membership
Arizona Archaeological and Historical Society
Arizona State Museum, University of Arizona
Tucson, AZ 85721-0026

I wish to receive *Glyphs* (circle your choice): Digital Only Print and Digital

I wish to receive *Kiva* (circle your choice): Digital Only Print and Digital

I am interested in volunteering in AAHS activities: Yes Not at this time

Name: _____ Phone : _____

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The objectives of the Arizona Archaeological and Historical Society (AAHS) are to: encourage scholarly pursuits into the history and anthropology of the southwest United States and northwest Mexico; encourage the preservation of archaeological sites and historical properties; encourage the scientific and legal gathering of cultural information and materials; publish the results of these investigations; aid in the functions of the Arizona State Museum; and provide educational opportunities through lectures, field trips, and other activities.

AAHS considers the following to be contrary to the Society's objectives and enjoins its members, as a condition of membership, to abstain from the following: the practice of collecting and dealing in archaeological materials for personal gain; the excavation of archaeological sites or historic properties without permit or permission; and the unlawful or unethical acquisition of archaeological or ethnographic materials.

For your records, any portion of your payment over the basic \$60.00 membership may be tax deductible.

Officers

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