

Preservation Archaeology NEWS

Preserving the Places of Our Shared Past

Spring 2010

Viewpoint

No Place Like Home

We're home! After a month of unpacking and settling in, our enthusiasm only continues to grow as we turn our thoughts to the future. Here are some viewpoints on this new, permanent facility and the opportunities it affords us.

Programs Manager Linda Pierce: "Our mission is to preserve the places of our shared past, and we are actively preserving a place of Tucson's shared past by our presence here. That makes me very proud. Some of my favorite things about the space are the wonderful outdoor spaces and the possibilities they give us for working more creatively, coming together in small groups outside of our offices to collaborate on projects.

I would say that my hope for the space is that we make it a true center from which to practice and refine preservation archaeology. I'm also very happy that we have spaces, both inside and out, that allow us to host events and reach more people with stories about the Southwest's past and our preservation efforts.

"It's an important step for the organization—it's a place where we can put down roots and establish the organizational stability so vital to our long-term success."



Everyone appreciates the sunny warmth of our new laboratory.

Mat Devitt

Preservation Archaeologist Deb Huntley: "I'm glad that we are contributing to the revitalization of downtown. It is wonderful to have so much natural light in the lab and to have so much more room for all of us to work."

Digital Media Specialist Doug Gann: "Perhaps the best thing—in terms of our digital outreach program—is that we have moved into a space with enough room to set up a small sound stage and audio mixing booth. This facility will make projects such as web-based audio narratives, or 'podcasts,' much easier to produce. We are also excited about our ability to create narrated videos and slide shows that discuss and interpret specific topics in southwestern archaeology in even greater detail."

Preservation Archaeologist Jeff Clark: "The new building is 'a-mazing.' I still haven't explored all the nooks and

crannies of this architectural palimpsest. I enjoy the historic downtown setting, and I feel that my new office space will be more conducive to research."

President and CEO Bill Doelle: "The

search for a permanent home for the Center—preferably in a historic building in downtown Tucson—had been underway for more than a year by the time I crossed paths with Seth Schindler

at a pig roast. When we had a chance to tour the Bates Mansion and its accompa-

Mat Devitt



The Mediterranean feel of the property is enhanced by the new, low-water landscaping designed by Seth Schindler.

nying adobe casitas, it was easy to envision the space as the permanent home for the Center. And now, as I sit in my 'new' office or pull my chair up to our massive antique conference table, I can truly *feel* this special 'place of our shared past.' Our preservation mission and our home are fully coming together in this extraordinary place."

Support Our Mission



Not yet a member of the Center for Desert Archaeology? Join today! Annual memberships begin at \$25.00. Benefits include our quarterly magazine, *Archaeology Southwest*. Current members, why not give a gift membership to someone who shares your interest in the past? More information is available at www.cdarc.org/how-to-help/become-a-member/.



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a nonprofit corporation

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Become Acquainted

Prudent Preservation Partners, LLC

Long-time Tucsonans **Seth Schindler** and **Diane Dittimore** joined with the Center to form **Prudent Preservation Partners, LLC**, and purchase the **Bates Mansion and Ash Alley complex**. *Seth's diverse career includes doctoral research among the Seri, investment banking, sculpting, and creative writing. Diane has served as Curator of Ethnological Collections at the Arizona State Museum for more than thirty years. Seth and Diane graciously shared their plans for this distinctive property.*

Mat Devitt



Seth Schindler and Diane Dittimore

When and how did you become aware of the property's availability? What was your first thought upon viewing it?

Seth: In April of 2009, I was driving down Stone [Avenue] with my daughter and my real estate agent. We had been looking at commercial properties on Congress [Street]. I think the "for sale" sign had, literally, just gone up. I knew it had been occupied by the Mountain Oyster Club, which I'd never been in, so I made an appointment to see it—mostly out of curiosity.

I was struck by the impressive, attractive facade on the Stone Avenue side. The large, walled courtyards and two parking lots seemed like comparatively rare assets downtown. Once I was inside, though, I felt that the space was very hard to grasp, in terms of its scale and theatricality—it's an eccentric mixture! I was also worried about the extent of the restoration that seemed to be required.

What were the most attractive aspects? What were the apparent challenges?

Diane: I was attracted by the puzzle the place presented. Right away, I viewed it from the standpoint of a historic building that was an important part of Tucson's distinctive western heritage, and I was definitely drawn in as I began researching the Bates family and the history of the Club. I knew of Salvador Corona, the muralist, and was entranced by the many examples of his work on the property. The fact that it is downtown was also important to us.

Seth: The place is truly unique, and it has great architectural "bones." Once we toured the adobe buildings on Ash Alley, I felt that these could be

the key to making the property work, economically—in the sense that those structures could be occupied fairly quickly and sustain the rest of the restoration project. The complexity of the property, its condition, and the fact that it

was sold "as is," which always presents unknown risks—those were very clear challenges.

How did the partnership with the Center come about?

Seth: We were guests at a pig roast in May, and Bill [Doelle] sat down next to me with his plate. Diane and I had been talking to a lot of people about the property, to get a better sense of its history and people's connections to it. So, I told Bill that I was considering buying the complex. He said that the Center was looking for a permanent home downtown. I described it to him, he gave me a general sense of the Center's needs, and we agreed that he'd come look at it. The first time that he and Linda [Pierce] came, I could tell that they were intrigued by the place, too, and could see its potential, even in its "raw" state. The actual partnership discussions came later, over a period of time, in conjunction with the Center's Board of Directors.

What would you like to see happen here, in both the short- and long-term? What possibilities are you most excited about or inspired by?

Seth: Our ideas of what it might become have been shaped as we brought contractors, architects, historians, restaurateurs, and others in to look at it. A common theme kept emerging: fascination with the Mountain Oyster Club, and its connections to so many families.

Diane: We've heard a lot of stories and legends! Some that probably shouldn't be printed in your newsletter.

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Become Acquainted

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Seth: Yes, and things like, “I’ve stood at that bus stop for *years* and wondered...” We realized that we had to retain it as a “place,” because there was something to preserve inside, even beyond physical things like the works of regional craftsmen. So, we are going to do our best to balance development as a multi-use facility with restoration and stabilization.

In order to make it economically viable, we need to have tenants in offices, and obviously, we have the Center as an anchor tenant and co-owner. But we are also planning a ground floor art gallery and a restaurant that will take advantage of some of the Club’s dining facilities and the incredible courtyard. That courtyard space could also serve as an entertainment venue. We also have

“The Corona Room,” a large space with a vaulted ceiling that features the most extensive Corona murals on the property. That will be a multi-purpose room perfect for conferences and special events.

Each of you has been involved in the local arts community and community activism for decades. How do you see this venture contributing to community life or downtown redevelopment?

Diane: I’m pleased that this restoration will contribute to improvement of that particular part of downtown. The publicly accessible spaces we plan will really add something vibrant to the mix on that north end of Stone. And Ash Alley has its own history as a bohemian arts district of mid-century Tucson; I’d hope that there

are special event-type opportunities to bring some of that back.

Seth: There is a need for more places like our Corona Room in downtown Tucson—and it will certainly have its own distinctive atmosphere. Creating these kinds of mixed-use developments in beautiful historic buildings is key to downtown’s revitalization.

Diane: We both really like the idea that this special, uniquely Tucson place—once so exclusive—will soon be more accessible to all Tucsonans.

The Arizona State Museum is highlighting Corona’s artistry in an upcoming exhibition, Salvador Corona: Matador to Muralist. For more information, visit the website of the Arizona State Museum: www.statemuseum.arizona.edu/exhibits/.

Celebrate!

News We’re Proud to Share

■ We are honored to announce that **Dr. Jeffrey S. Dean has joined the Center’s Board of Directors**. Dr. Dean is Professor Emeritus at the University of Arizona. His best-known work uses dendrochronology to reconstruct paleoenvironmental conditions and, by extension, explain changes in past human behaviors in the Southwest. Center President Bill Doelle comments, “I am delighted to have a researcher of Jeff’s stature join our Board. He shares many common interests with us, so this should be both productive and enjoyable.” You can read more about Dr. Dean and his research at www.ltrr.arizona.edu/people/3.

■ The Center for Desert Archaeology and **The Archaeological Conservancy** recently completed a conservation easement comprising more than 160 acres in Cibola County, New Mexico. The easement includes a larger portion of the **Spier 142 site**, one of the largest Pueblo III-period communities in the El Morro Valley. The Center now holds the conservation easement, and the Conservancy has generously contributed to our **Site Protection Fund** in order to support long-term monitoring costs. We encourage anyone interested in understanding



Amy Espinoza of The Archaeological Conservancy walks a portion of the E-shaped room block at the Spier 142 site.

how conservation easements work to read the fact sheet at www.cdarc.org/pdf/conservation_easement_fact_sheet.pdf.

Participate

Events and Opportunities

■ ***Pieces of the Puzzle: New Perspectives on the Hohokam*** will open on **Saturday, March 27, 2010**, at the **Huhugam Ki**

Museum of the Salt River Pima-Maricopa Indian Community. Activities are scheduled from **11:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.** on the 27th. This thought-provoking exhibition was developed by the Center and Pueblo Grande Museum, where it was first exhibited in 2009. *Pieces of the Puzzle* incorporates museum collections, GIS data, and digital media to lead visitors through a research team’s investigative process.

For more information on the Huhugam Ki Museum, visit www.srpmic-nsn.gov/history_culture/museum.asp.

■ The Center will host its **Annual Members’ Meeting and Open House** on **Sunday, April 25, 2010**, from **2:30 p.m. until 5:00 p.m.** The gathering will be held in our grand courtyard at **300 N. Ash**

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Save the Date

**April 25, Annual
Members' Meeting**

Participate *continued from pg 3*

Alley, Tucson. Please join us for refreshments, fellowship, and informal tours of



Looking north in our new courtyard; an awning will shade this outdoor programming space.

our new home! More information will be sent in the mail and posted to our website, www.cdarc.org.

■ Regrettably, we have learned of a **new threat to the Middle San Pedro River Valley**—one of the places of our

shared past held closest in the Center's heart. Visit the web page of the **Casca-bel Working Group (CWG)**, <http://cas-cabelworkinggroup.org/>, to learn more about the proposed SunZia Transmission Line project and how you might help community efforts to oppose the plan. Center Preservation Archaeologist **Jacquie Dale** is a key member of the CWG.

■ The 2010 **Tea and Archaeology** series is off to a fine start! To participate in these special afternoons with distinguished scholars

at the **Arizona Inn**, contact Linda Pierce (lpierce@cdarc.org) about becoming a **Patron** of the Center. **Monthly giving plans** are a great way to reserve your place at our June, September, and November teas!

■ Don't forget about **Archaeology Café!** Our schedule for these lively, informal meetings is posted at www.cdarc.org/what-we-do/eventspublic-programs/archaeology-cafe/. Our final sessions before summer will be held on **March 16, April 6, and May 4, 2010**. The fall season kicks off with a panel discussion on **archaeology at Marsh Station** near Tucson on **September 7, 2010**. Contact Kate Sarther Gann (kate@cdarc.org) or Doug Gann (dgann@cdarc.org) to present a 2010–2011 café.

The Center has a "wish list" of new furnishings and equipment:

- ◆ Library/conference room chairs
- ◆ Programmable thermostats
- ◆ Flat-screen monitors
- ◆ Locking storage cabinets
- ◆ Weatherproof outdoor seating
- ◆ Weatherproof awning

Please contact Linda Pierce at lpierce@cdarc.org or 520.882.6946, ext. 23, if you can assist us in acquiring these or other items.