Houston Archeological Society

THE PROFILE

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Houston Archeological Society Meeting, Thursday, November 19, 2026, at 6:00 p.m. Featuring Amanda Castenada, who will discuss the Rattlesnake Pictograph Preservation Project.

The November members' meeting of the Houston Archeological Society will be virtual only, as our speaker is working in the El Paso area. We are thrilled to have archeologist Amanda Castaneda of the Shumla Archeological Research and Education Center give us a presentation on the Rattlesnake Pictograph Preservation Project.

Based in Comstock, Texas, Shumla documents, studies, and preserves ancient pictographs in the Lower Pecos Canyonlands. In 2025, SHUMLA began working on a multi-year initiative, the Rattlesnake Canyon Pictograph Preservation Project, to document four highly threatened rock art sites in Val Verde County. The sites in this canyon are at severe risk of deterioration due to sporadic flooding events that have already impacted, and will continue to impact, the imagery. Flanking the well-known Rattlesnake Canyon Site are three additional pictograph sites that were undoubtedly part of a significant gallery running the length of the canyon. This presentation summarizes their recent work on this project and discusses various rock art recording methods that can be used depending on preservation level, research potential, and project goals.

Amanda's area of expertise is in the Lower Pecos Canyonlands of southwest Texas and the majority of her research has been on rock art and ground stone bedrock feature technology. She worked for the Ancient Southwest Texas project and Shumla Archaeological Research Center. She is currently a contract researcher for the Wyoming State Historic Preservation Office and Sacred Sites Research, Inc. Her recent focus has been on Plains rock art, working at several sites in Wyoming, Montana, and Utah.

Amanda is a native Texan and has worked primarily in west Texas with research focus on rock art and ground stone technology. She received her B.S. and M.A. from Texas State University in San Marcos and spent the first 10 years of her career working with both the Shumla Archaeological Research & Education Center and the Ancient Southwest Texas Project - Texas State University. She moved to Wyoming for a 4-year stint and worked at various rock art sites across the Rocky Mountains and Plains but is thrilled to be back in the Chihuahuan Desert of West Texas.

Frank Kozar, HAS Vice-President

Presidents Message

As you know, October is International Archeology Month, and that means several outreach activities for HAS. One that we always look forward to is at the Houston Museum of Natural Science and this year was no exception. So, on Saturday 17th October, 2026 several HAS members including Andrea Soemadi, Gali Rivera (and her partner Michael), Geoff Mills,

Andrea Soemadi and Gali Rivera welcome visitors

Geoff Mills and John Swann manage the artifact display.

John Swann, Frank Kozar, and Tom Williams headed to the museum to present displays of artifacts and discuss archeology with visitors.

Left: Visitors viewing artifacts with Don Keyes

Right: Visitors receiving their posters from Louis Hebert

Another activity that we first participated in last year was the Lake Creek Preservation Expo held at the Magnolia Event Center, and we got invited again this year. The event occurred on Saturday 24th October, 2026. This event showcases local activities including crafts, astronomy, wildlife and of course, archeology. Again, we brought our artifact displays to demonstrate to visitors. We had a superb setup right at the entrance, so we were very visible and therefore had a lot of interest from visitors to the main expo area.

As many of you know, our newsletter editor, Betsy Wittemmyer, has unfortunately decided to step down. She sent the following nice note to everyone.

> *"A Personal Note from Betsy Wittenmyer:*
> *Dear HAS friends, I am stepping down as Editor of The Profile newsletter, and I want to thank you for the privilege of serving in this role since 2022. As many of you know, our family has been supporting my husband, John, during the past six years as he underwent numerous cancer treatments. He finally succumbed to the disease a few weeks ago. We miss him, but we are so proud of his courageous battle. Enduring years of serious illness depletes both patient and loved ones on many levels, inspiring introspection about the most important elements and most treasured blessings of life, which include relationships.*
>
> *As I now reevaluate this next chapter of my life, I have decided to spend a great deal of my time with family members in North Carolina, where I was raised, and California, where two of my children live. I will remain a member of HAS, but I no longer am able to oversee the newsletter. I do plan to contribute newsworthy items and articles about interesting historical sites. I encourage all HAS members and friends to do the same, sending your submissions by the fifteenth of each month to newsletter@txhas.org. Profile provides a wonderful opportunity for our community to interact and share topics of interest, shaped and supported solely by your participation; so please think of how you can add to the conversation and send in photographs, links, or articles!*
>
> *I hope that each of you will continue to add your voice to the HAS and Texas archaeological community via The Profile, and I hope that each of you will focus anew on the joy that each day brings, and the friends, family, and pets who brighten your life."*
>
> *Best Regards,*
> *Betsy Wittenmyer*

Please wish Betsy well and hopefully we will see her again at some point.

Fortunately, Kathy Jacobs has agreed to step up to the plate and take on the role of our newsletter editor, so please give her all your support and welcome her to the HAS Team.

Bob Sewell, President

HAS Monthly Meeting
October 15, 2026

Meeting minutes

Meeting started at 6:00pm with social time, then at 6:30pm with the business meeting, then at 7pm with the speaker.

1) **Welcome to new and existing members from the president, Robert Sewell:**

) Membership is 181, including 16 professionals. 2 new members present at today's meeting: Jalayne Allison and Ryan Cotton.
) Treasury: funds are good, all documents and cards transferred over to John Swann as new Treasurer.

2) **Newsletter**
) Betsy Wittenmyer has stepped down as newsletter editor. Going to NC and Cal to spend time with her parents and children.
) Interested parties can email president@txhas.org if they would like to take over the job.

3) **Projects**

) Lone Oak
) Fieldwork over the last couple weeks. Nails for the units were relaid by Tom Williams because they had been displaced. Also, the screening overburden is in the way of the direction we want to excavate, and will need to be moved. Could ask the landowner if we can use the front end loader to move the piles.
) Walnut Tree Hill
) Last visit a month ago. Access will depend on hunting season.
) Need to open the two units again, perhaps have Gus Costa look at them.
) Goloby
) Leave on back burner until weather improves.
) Bob might go out there the week before and check on the status of the site before excavations continue.

4) **Outreach**
) Very busy lately. Two more until the end of the year. Any further requests will be declined until next year.
) International Archaeology Day at HMNS Saturday, October 17
) Lake Creek Partnership, October 24. HAS participated last year.
) 2027 (February) at the Arboretum—Family Archaeology Day

5) **Tonight's speaker:**
) Geoff on the latest results from the Lone Oak Site.

John Gorczyk, HAS Secretary

The Alamo's post

The Alamo
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Alamo Archaeology Church Preservation update!

Archaeologists completed excavations in EUs 74, 82, and 83. Excavations started in EU-86. On the east side of EU-82, the concrete footer seen in several previously excavated units was present. This footer is likely related to the Catholic Women's Association Building, which was built behind the Alamo Church in the early 1900s.

A musket ball, a historic Listerine bottle, and a ceramic pipe were found in EU-82. Read more here: https://bit.ly/4B7NeVU

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The Alamo's post

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Houston Archeological Society - Monthly Meeting Program Schedule

Please note that meetings will vary between in-person, hybrid, or virtual (via Zoom). The meeting format may change; be sure to double-check the HAS website and your emails for updates prior to each meeting.

November 19 – 6:00 p.m. Monthly meeting featuring Amanda Castaneda from Shumla, via Zoom only.
December 17 – 6:00 p.m. Come enjoy the annual HAS Christmas party, holiday treats, and year-end recap. Trini Mendenhall Community Center, 1414 Wirt Road, with a Zoom link available to members.

Houston Archeological Society monthly meetings are ordinarily free and open to the public. Many previous HAS presentations are archived on our YouTube Site, where they are available for public viewing. For more information about HAS, visit www.txhas.org, email us at president@txhas.org, or join our Facebook Page.

We want to hear from YOU! As always, we welcome your comments and contributions via email to newsletter@txhas.org. Let us know about topics you'd like to see in the future and offer suggestions about how we can improve. We invite and encourage all HAS members and friends to consider submitting content. Report on academies, field school, site work, lectures, cultural heritage, accomplishments, favorite podcasts, reading links, recommended books, academic endeavors, or public outreach. Send photos from an HAS or TAS adventure! What archeological artifact or historical events have you been researching? What interesting trips or explorations have you experienced recently? We hope that you will add your voice to our community's conversation, because a variety of articles makes our newsletter more interesting. Your contributions may be any length: long, brief, a couple of paragraphs, or photographs with text. We can help with editing. Submissions for upcoming issues are requested by the fifteenth of each month.

Source: www.webweaver.nu/unclesam.jpg.

FOR MORE INFORMATION ON ARCHEOLOGY IN THIS AREA, CONTACT THE FOLLOWING

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