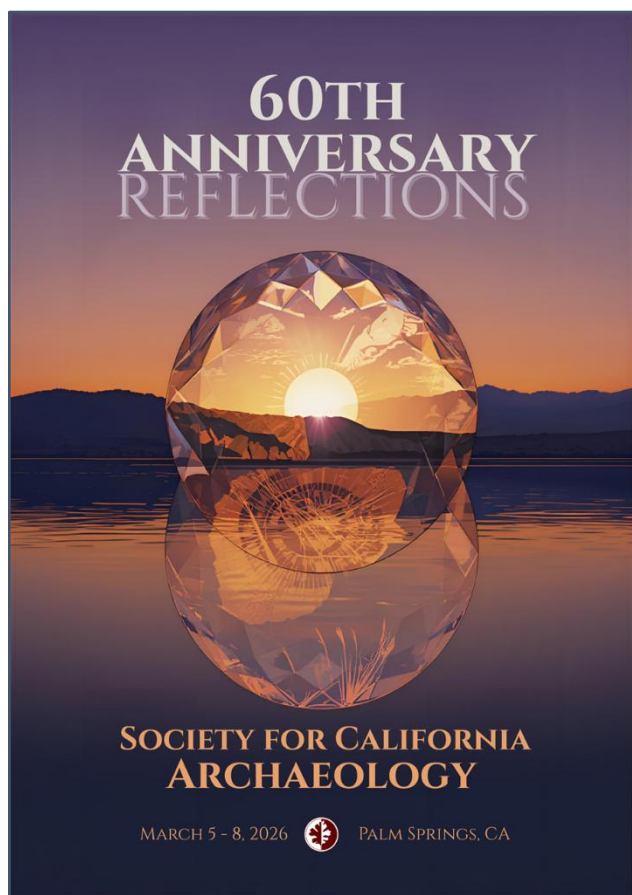




The Santa Cruz Archaeological Society Newsletter— Spring 2026

The UCSC Archaeology Club at the Society for California Archaeology Conference,

March 5-8, 2026 by Phoenix Rumbaugh



Our trip to the SCA started with a 7-hour drive to Palm Springs. Seven members of the Archaeology Club attended the conference this year, and it was the first time for five of our members. Phoenix Rumbaugh and Leo Ramirez presented a poster for the first time on their project digitizing the personal notebooks of Frank Latta.

Each student had a different reason for attending the conference; several were interested in careers focused on CRM work, so those students spent much of their time at the job fair and in the book room, making connections with various CRM companies and archaeologists. Other students were more focused on active research; most of us attended several presentations throughout the conference. One of the most popular among

students was the cadaver dog workshop, where a presentation was held on using cadaver dogs to detect human remains and how they can still find remains thousands of years later.



UCSC Students enjoying a meal at the SCA Conference in Palm Springs.
Photo by Todd Rumbaugh

Phoenix and Leo to experience presenting archaeological work to the California archaeological community.

The conference was very inclusive for new students, and this year, the entry fee covered access to the silent auction, allowing all students to wander around poolside, jump in the water if they wished, and meet archaeologists in a less formal setting. The conference was



The bookroom at the conference. Photo by Phoenix Rumbaugh.

One of the most interesting presentations to me was a discussion section on how repatriation efforts are making their way into different museums through volunteer work and listening to updated NAGPRA legislation. The conference was a fantastic opportunity for many students; several have already applied for jobs with various CRM companies, and it provided a wonderful chance for

held at the Riviera Hotel, which is a beautiful historic luxury resort in Palm Springs, which left the location with a beautiful atmosphere and a relaxing feel that allowed all the students to get very comfortable and really get to know the CRM representatives much better, along with having conversations with people about their research, careers, and listening to any advice they have about their educational journey going forward.

Unfortunately, none of us had the

opportunity to attend workshops this year because of scheduling issues, but we each attended quite a few talks and enjoyed making new connections in the field.



Phoenix Rumbaugh and Leonardo Ramirez with their poster featuring the UCSC Archaeology Club's work with Frank Latta's journals. Photo by Todd Rumbaugh

In case you missed this historic event,



The Wélmelti Preserve, Photo: Elizabeth Carmel

Excerpted from **The Guardian, February 11, 2026, by Dani Anguiano**

The Washoe Tribe has purchased more than 10,000 acres of land near Lake Tahoe for conservation in one of the largest tribal land returns in California history.

The sprawling property, located 20 miles north of Reno, Nevada, stretches from the Great Basin through the Sierra Nevada and encompasses sagebrush scrublands and juniper and pine forests.

It marks a key development for the tribe, which was forcibly removed from its lands and saw its individual allotments stolen, said the tribe’s chairperson, Serrell Smokey.

“We were told we could no longer use the land for resources or ceremony. Since that time, the land has been calling us back, and we are answering that call,” Smokey said in a statement. “This land purchase is good medicine for our people. This is a small start to healing from generations of historical trauma, and the benefits will go on for many generations to come.”

Today there are about 1,500 enrolled members of the Washoe, largely split between California and Nevada. The tribe has named the property, previously known as Loyaltan Ranch, the Wélmelti Preserve.

The Tribe worked with the Northern Sierra Partnership and the Feather River Land Trust on the project and ultimately used a \$5.5m grant from the California Wildlife Conservation Board as well as private donations to support the purchase, according to a statement.

The property cost \$6m, and additional funding was set aside for planning and assessments and to start an endowment to support the tribe in its long-term management of the land.

The sale of the property is another milestone for the Land Back movement in California, which has seen tens of thousands of acres returned to tribes that occupied the land for millennia before European colonization. Last June, the Yurok Tribe acquired about 47,000 acres near the lower Klamath River as part of the largest such deal in state history. The Tule River Tribe regained 14,672 acres of its ancestral land in Tulare County in 2024.

The Washoe's recent acquisition will triple the tribe's current land holdings, Smokey said on Wednesday. It will also support the return of traditional cultural practices and foster greater connection with the land among youth. "Now we actually have something to call ours," he said.

The preserve is an important habitat for wildlife, including pronghorn, mule deer and gray wolves, and has springs and key water resources. The tribe is focused on conservation, but will also use the land to house some tribal members. Parts of the property have been used as a dumping ground, Smokey said, and clean-up is needed.

The tribe hopes to purchase other properties across its homelands in the Sierra Nevada.

"It is exciting to know that the Washoe people will be caring for this spectacular landscape going forward," Lucy Blake, the president of the Northern Sierra Partnership, said in a statement.



Upcoming events in Santa Cruz County

- *The Santa Cruz County History Fair - London Nelson Center, Santa Cruz, May 11, 2026 from noon to 4 p.m.*
- *Visit the Castro Adobe - The next adobe tour dates are May 3, and June 14. See <https://thatsmypark.org/events/castro-events/>*
- *At the MAH Feb 13 - June 7, 2026 Honoring our Relatives: Amah Mutsun Botanical Illustrations*
- *The Art of Nature: An exhibition of scientific illustration at the Santa Cruz Museum of Natural History through May 31, 2026.*

Report: SCAS Board Meeting Minutes Summary

January-March 2026
By Mary Gerbic, SCAS Secretary

January 2026

Financial Reports: Cathy Phipps

- Cathy Phipps presented the amended Treasurer's Report for December 2025, as well as this month's report. There was a minor discrepancy in donations (\$2.00).
- Our bank accounts remain stable and the only transaction was a deduction for our Liability Insurance.

Membership Report: Branden Melendez

- We had no new members or renewals this month. Our membership stands at 84.

Professional Advisor: Ben Curry

- Ben reported on the Google Drive cleanup. We have 15G and have used up most of it with speaker event recordings. We can add another 100G of space for \$9.95 a year, and if we continue to record our events, it might be a good idea to get more space as well as clean up.
- Branden said we also need to consolidate recordings of our speaker events, just to a couple places. He and Ben will work on this.
- Ben said he is also cleaning up the Professional Advisor email account.

Speakers: Pat Paramoure

- Pat was unable to attend the meeting. She said in email on 1/7/26 that she had arranged a speaker for June 4.

SCAN: Mary Gerbic

- Mary said the winter SCAN has been mailed.
- Mary has the document scanner which was stored in our warehouse, and she has been scanning old issues of the SCAN, back to the 1970s. Where should we store the digital archive?

UCSC Archaeology Club update report: Phoenix Rumbaugh

- Phoenix (President) and Leo Ramirez (Vice-President) are founders of the UCSC Archaeology Club. They just founded it last quarter. They are looking for projects of interest to archaeology students.
- Their current project is to scan the personal journals of anthropologist Frank Latta, who moved to Santa Cruz in 1956. There are about 20 years of handwritten journals. (See Frank Latta's Wikipedia page) The club is about half-way through the project.

- Phoenix became acquainted with Latta's grandson, Atticus, through another project, and that's how he learned about the journals, which have been sitting in storage since Latta's death. The family gave permission for the journals to be scanned, and then returned to them. They want the information in them to be available to researchers. This is the Club's plan.
- Mary was interested in their scanning method, so Phoenix turned his laptop around so we could see his setup. He has a dedicated laptop attached to a Czur book scanner, which operates two pages at a time using a foot pedal. They wear gloves while handling the journals. The Club has learned of an AI OCR tool which will help them transcribe the scanned documents into something more easily readable, as most of the students never studied cursive handwriting in school and can't read it. The documents will also be searchable.
- The UCSC Club will be presenting a poster on their work at the SCA Conference in Palm Springs in March.
- Phoenix also said that Frank Latta had a museum near Pescadero, which contained Native American basketry among other things. When he died, the material went to multiple locations, and they are trying to track it down.
- We asked them to come speak for SCAS at a later date. We would like to collaborate on other projects in the future.

Outreach:

- The outreach event at the Cabrillo Farmers Market was successful, so we are scheduling another for this spring.

Scotts Valley Display Project Committee: Mary, Pat and Kevin

- We have not yet had any communication from the Amah Mutsun or Scotts Valley.
- On Saturday, Dec 27th, committee members (the above and also Julie Edwards) met with Gary Patton, a local attorney who has been advising us.
- Gary's take on our situation is that we need to speak with Scotts Valley leaders. Since what we have done so far has yielded no results, we should change tactics.
- Phoenix and Leo said that they were interested in SCR-177 also, and was there any way they could help? Mary said that if they want to learn more about the site, visit the Wikipedia page, and look at the materials we have on our website. New Business:
- Ben brought up an important matter affecting local tribal groups who are not federally recognized (all of them in the Bay Area – Amah Mutsun, Tamien, Rumsen, Muwekma), the CRM firms and others that consult with them, and regulations which may be put in place by the California Native American Heritage Commission. Would we be interested in commenting on the latest draft of changes to California AB 52(2025)? Yes. The bill, as currently written would disenfranchise all unrecognized tribes.

February 2026

Financial Reports: Cathy Phipps and Kevin Hildreth

- Kevin said that our taxes for 2025 were higher than recent years because we made some big sales and we also paid the “use tax” for the artifact replicas from Al Schwitalla. Even though the artifact replicas are not yet on display, we are confident that they will be
- We received a large donation from a donor who also donated last year, and his company matched his donation.

Membership Report: Branden Melendez

- There was no membership activity this month and we have 84 members. He wondered why this had happened two months in a row, and discovered that the PayPal link on our website is broken. This is the second time this has happened. Branden said he would work on this. We are frustrated that PayPal is so difficult to work with when we find problems. We will investigate other payment platforms like Zeffy, which charges no fees.

Professional Advisor: Ben Curry

- Ben said that he paid for the 100G extra space on the Google Drive. We thanked him and said to submit a receipt for reimbursement.
- Should he remove the clot of LinkedIn notifications? Yes. Delete the account.

Speakers: Pat Paramoure

- Pat has arranged speakers through June. Leo and Phoenix will be presenting in March.

SCAN: Mary Gerbic

- Mary is still scanning old SCANS.
- She will be preparing the spring SCAN by around late March. She would welcome something from Phoenix and Leo about their poster and experiences at the SCA Conference.

UCSC Archaeology Club update: Phoenix Rumbaugh

- The UCSC Archaeology Club is working on background research for a documentary on the Redman-Hirahara house. Pat and Mary were participants in the CCATP field school there in 2005. Pat and Mary offered to find material or participants for an oral history.

Outreach: Everyone

- Pat will contact the Cabrillo Farmers Market to set up an outreach event in April.
- The Santa Cruz County History Fair will be held on May 16th at the London Nelson Center.
- We would like to set up a relationship with the Cabrillo College Dig-It club like the one we now have with UCSC.

Scotts Valley Display Project: Mary, Pat, Kevin

- The SVDP met over Zoom on January 31. There was a larger turnout for this meeting.

- The donor letter written by Julie Edwards has been sent.
- The meeting was very optimistic and productive.
- Julie and Pat are preparing letters to go to the Amah Mutsun and Scotts Valley.
- Ben and Annamarie Leon Guerrero shared their experiences working with local tribes.
- We plan to set up a meeting with UCSC to share viewpoints. We intend to ask permission from UCSC to take the five pieces of groundstone to make replicas of them for the exhibit.

March 2026

Financial Reports: Cathy Phipps

- Cathy reported that we paid our business insurance this month.
- Do we want to switch from using PayPal to Zeffy? Cathy presented information about Zeffy's business model. Before the meeting, she sent us information on Zeffy. They do not charge fees. Their income is from donations. We could set up a store as well.
- We decided to try Zeffy. Our PayPal link is still broken. What would we need to change on our website and membership materials? The changes are minor.
- Cathy has set up a new account for SCAS Treasurer and all email for her should go to this account so it doesn't get lost in her personal email. **Scastreasurer2026@gmail.com.**
- Another possible change: Kevin presented on Business Liability Insurance. A couple years ago, due to large wildfires in California, some insurance companies decided not to do business here. That insurance was considerably more than we had been paying.
- Cathy suggested we get the liability insurance we need and not cover field trips and other events except on an as-needed basis, like travel insurance. We agreed.

Membership Report: Branden Melendez

- Branden said that there had been no membership activity this month. We have 83 members.
- PayPal link is still broken. Someone contacted him to say they had been unable to renew.

Professional Advisor: Ben Curry

- Ben has placed our Board agenda on the Google Drive where we can all edit it.
- Our LinkedIn account has been closed.
- Branden and Ben are consolidating recordings and removing duplicates.

Speakers: Pat Paramoure

- Pat now has speakers for early fall as well. (see "Speaker Events", this issue)

SCAN: Mary Gerbic

- Mary has completed scanning all the old SCANS in the warehouse, but there are gaps between 2000 and 2009. Mary will start digitizing documents from the 1980s associated with the Scotts Valley Site.

UCSC Archaeology Club: Phoenix Rumbaugh

- Phoenix had suggested that the Club would be willing to produce oral histories for the Scotts Valley Site.
- Phoenix spoke with Charlene Duval (who was there at the beginning) and they are going to meet up at the SCA Conference this week. Charlene was enthusiastic about an oral history and said she would speak to people about it at the conference.
- Mary found some old recordings associated with the Scotts Valley “Dig” and gave them to Phoenix, who has access to lots of old recording equipment. He and his father will try to recover the information from these old VCR tapes for us.
- The Club has also developed an agreement with Friends of State Parks for the Pigeon Point Lighthouse. The Club will be digitizing material for them as well.

Website Committee: Branden, Robbie

- Kevin learned that Cruzio, our ISP, has increased our rates. We were supposedly notified in October, but Kevin never received anything. So, for now, we are paying a little more for 6 months and then our rates will double. Look for a new provider.

SVDP: Mary Gerbic, Pat Paramoure and Kevin Hildreth

- Mary is trying to set up another committee meeting for the end of March.
- Pat reported on her talks with the Amah Mutsun, and it is good news. They are supportive of the SVDP, and approve the display of replicas in the display case. Pat gave them a digital copy of the Carter 1993 monograph.

Outreach: Everyone

- We will have a table at the Cabrillo Farmers Market on April 11 (moved to 25th).
- SC Co. History Fair – we have not received the email about reserving tables. When we do, we will be reserving a couple and sending the sign up to the UCSC Archaeology Club. They want to bring their poster on Frank Latta to the public.

New, Past and Continued Business: All

- Pat said that the Amah Mutsun, who will be doing NAGPRA consultation with Cabrillo College, have no issues with SCAS (Pat) having a key to the warehouse while they are working on the consultation. We will be able to continue to visit the warehouse provided that Pat is present.

2025 Speaker Lineup

We meet on the **FIRST THURSDAY** of the month, at 7:30, “hybrid”, with in-person and Zoom attendance possible. For more information, and directions for how to RSVP for meetings, visit the SCAS website:

<http://www.santacruzarch society.org/calendar>

- May 7, 2026 – Cameron Garcia – Amah Mutsun Land Trust
- June 4, 2026 – Reuben Mendoza – CAUMB, retired. Teotihuacan, Mexico
- Sept 3, 2026 – TBD
- Oct 1, 2026 – Emily Smith, UCSC Lab Operations Manger
- Nov 5, 2026 – Ryan Brady, Dudek
- Jan 7, 2027 – Alexis Boutin, Sonoma State

Archaeological Society Business

SCAS Officers and Contact Info

<i>Position</i>	<i>Name</i>	<i>Email</i>	<i>Phone</i>
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