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All Fired Up! The Tucson Society Kiln Project

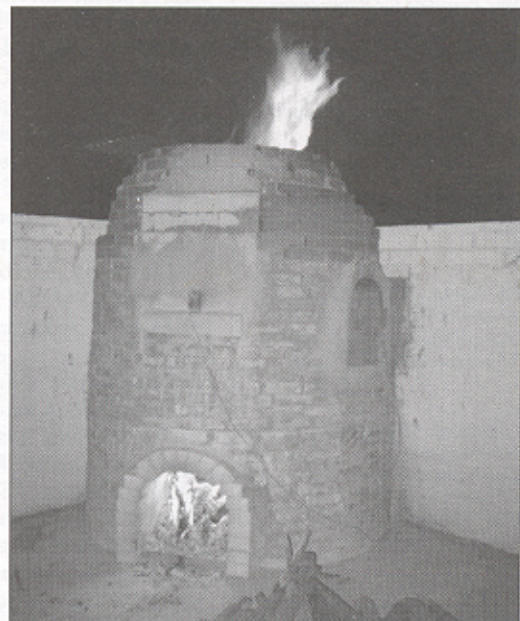
ELENI HASAKI, VICE PRESIDENT, AIA TUCSON SOCIETY

Almost a year after its dedication on May 21, 2005, our Greek Kiln continues to fire up interest in the community. The construction of this kiln was an integral part of the first Local Society Incentive Grant, which was awarded to the Tucson Society in 2004. Students at St. Augustine Catholic High School in Tucson attended a series of demonstrations, workshops, and lectures on pottery throwing and the production of Greek ceramics. Inspired by Greek myths and patterns, and energized by their art teachers J. Valandry and K. Delgado, the students produced a variety of plaques and masks which were fired in the kiln along with pieces from local (A. Chabot), national (T. Schreiber, CA) and international artists (Y. Horikoshi, Japan).

The project has been embraced by local ceramic artists through the efforts of the Southern Arizona Clay Association. Many have committed to fire their ware in the fifth firing, to take place on May 19, 2006. The traditional design of the kiln (a two-chambered, updraft, circular kiln with a central support for the internal perforated floor) and its operation (wood-fired) conveys a nostalgic feeling for studio artists. Local companies and foundations have generously contributed to the success of this project through donations of fuel and construction materials.

The most effective tool to interact with different audiences and sustain their interest is the partnership of outreach with research. At the University of Arizona, graduate students J. Benton and J. Kendall from the Classics Department, in collaboration with faculty, presented a poster describing the project at the 2006 Annual Meeting in Montréal. The kiln will also be featured in an educational documentary on ancient Greek pottery and will be included in a colloquium on attempts to replicate ancient kilns. Tucson Society's webmaster, J. Williams, provides a valuable interface for all interested parties through an up-to-date website (<http://aiatucson.org>). Many pictures of the project at its various stages and descriptions of the process can be found here.

This continuing research on ancient Greek kilns and the enthusiastic response of the wider community to the project have convinced us that our endeavor in ancient technology and modern interaction has been a rewarding enterprise. The first phase of planning and construction involved more than 100 volunteers, 1,500 bricks, and 200 hours. The momentum is remarkable, and we will strive to keep everyone all fired up! ■



Photos by R. Lyng

Get Involved In Outreach

The Local Society Incentive Grant is one way for us to help societies develop and carry out projects that would otherwise require more money than a society is able to spend. The type of project is up to you, but it must at its heart have the goal of bringing a greater knowledge of archaeology to the community and ideally to draw in new members. Funds may be used for mailings, advertisements, supplies, brochures, handouts, or honoraria and travel expenses.

We award \$1,500 to a society for a program to be executed within the calendar year. The winner is announced in November, and the award is presented to the winning society at the Council meeting during the Annual Meeting. To apply, download an application from the AIA website under the Local Societies section, or call 617-353-8705 with any questions.

Even if your society does not win this year, we are always happy to help you plan events and give you ideas to increase membership. See page 3 for a report on the Society Workshop held at the last Annual Meeting.

Applications are due October 1, 2006. Start planning your project now! ■