



# arrowheads

## Childhood hobby chips away time

By Staff Sgt. Kimberley Young  
 HQ AIA/PA  
 Kelly Air Force Base, Texas

What started out as a simple, childhood hobby has turned into much more for an Air Intelligence Agency member.

Dr. Paul Smith, chief of the 690th Information Operations Group Customer Advocacy Office, Kelly Air Force Base, Texas, is a member of the Texas Archaeological Society, and an avid collector and maker of arrowheads.

Smith, who has been collecting arrowheads since he was 9, remembers how he was first introduced to the art of arrowhead collecting.

"My family and I would go out on the weekends and look for arrowheads; irrigation ditches were the best places. It was an activity that all my family members could participate in, including the dog," said the Texas native. "It was not only good recreation, but it was something that was available and free."

As Smith grew older, he continued to collect arrowheads, but the lure of ancient history intrigued him more so than ever. He had no idea at the time that his family-oriented ac-

tivity would be the ever-expanding hobby that it is now.

Smith hasn't taken his hobby lightly. He's taken more than 30 hours of classes, but feels he still has a lot to learn.

"There's always ways to improve your skill and I've taken classes to learn how to make them (arrowheads) thinner," said Smith. "Finding arrowheads isn't difficult ... but making them is a different story."

Smith is not only fascinated by Indians and the art of arrowhead sculpting, but also with the idea that he too could be capable of replicating the tools used to make them.

"It's satisfying to know I have the knowledge to make my own tools and to see what tools were used in making arrowheads just by looking at the shape and texture of it. My skills improve with each arrowhead I make, but I still have a long way to go before they're perfect."

Practice makes perfect and in the seven years that he's been making arrowheads, practice is what he's getting.

About five years ago, Smith be-

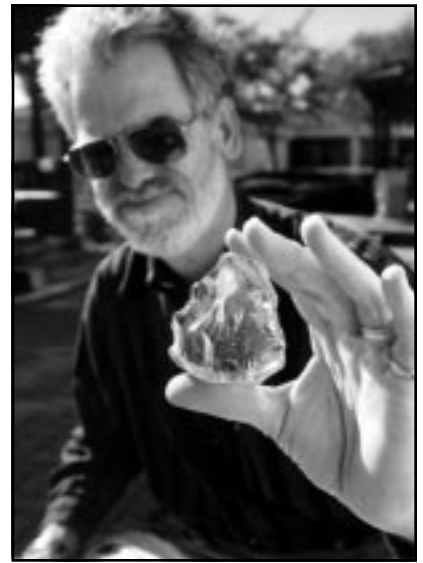
gan what is now a tradition during his stint as a Boy Scout leader.

"I make arrowheads and mount them on a PVC one-inch pipe and pass them out to the boys in the troop as a recognition tool. The arrowhead is used as a neckerchief slide and it's presented to Boy Scouts who demonstrate good leadership abilities," said Smith. "It's a big hit with the boys and I like being able to make something out of nothing and seeing how it is appreciated when it's passed out to the members in the troop."

Although his title has changed, the tradition hasn't. From Boy Scout leader to Boy Scout commissioner, Smith advises three different troop units, consisting of more than 120 boys.

Using deer antlers, wooden billets, and hammerstones, Smith said he will continue to chip away at creating the perfect arrowhead.

"It is a great avocation where skill and tenacity create motivation and recognition gifts," he said. ■



Photos by Boyd Belcher

Left, Smith searches for a piece of material to make an arrowhead. Center, he chips away at a piece of glass with the butt of a deer antler, and right, Smith shows the making of an arrowhead.