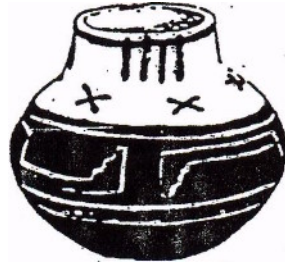


# THE MOKI MESSENGER

NEWSLETTER OF THE SAN JUAN BASIN ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

Chapter of Colorado Archaeological Society



JULY 2008

The next meeting of the San Juan Basin Archaeological Society, our chapter of the Colorado Archaeological Society, will be on Thursday, July 10th, commencing at 7:00 PM; as usual, this will be held in the Lyceum, in Fort Lewis College's Center of Southwest Studies. This gathering will feature a lecture by Ronnie Egan concerning "Archaeological Issues in San Juan County, Utah: Motorized Recreation and Mitigation". Ms Egan is a member of the Great Old Broads for Wilderness organization, and her talk will concern a subject of much interest to many of us, particularly those members who have opposed the highly organized "Jeep Safaris" during which large groups, sometimes many dozens, of heavy duty 4WD vehicles cruise such archaeologically fragile areas as Arch Canyon.

We had a fine turnout and beautiful weather for our chapter's June wiener roast at the historic Fort Lewis military post site – thanks to all of you good people vrho organized this annual picnic, cooked the tasty food, and set up all of the chairs and tables!

We have two outings scheduled for this month, the first of which will be a tour of the Raven Ridge area near Bayfield on Friday, July 11th. Bruce Boursi, San Juan Public Lands archaeologist, assisted by trip organizers Gail and Marlo Schulz, will take our people on a two-mile hike to see a series of Pueblo I sites and some splendid scenery in an area unfamiliar to most of our members. Participants will depart from the Bayfield City Park on Mill Street at 8:00 AM, and should be prepared for some steep hiking; they should bring their lunches, water, sun screen and bug dope, and may just possibly wish to bring ponchos or rain jackets. For more information concerning this excursion you may call Gail or Marlo at 970-259-3249 or [mschulz@frontier.net](mailto:mschulz@frontier.net).

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Our chapter's second July excursion, also a day trip, will be on the 31st, a Thursday. Dr Charles Riggs, who is currently working with Fort Lewis College field school students in the Lowry area, will be our guide -to recent excavations near Lowry Pueblo. Our SJBAS participants will meet and depart from Durango's Santa Rita Park at 7:30 AM, carpooling so as to minimize gasoline use. The Anasazi Heritage Center, near Dolores, may be visited on the return trip home. Trippers should, bring their lunches, drinks and sunscreen; the rainy season is approaching, and they may also wish to bring rain gear. Beverly and Bob Danielson, the trip organizers, can provide more information about the trip plans; their telephone number is 970-385-1058.

Here's some added information for those of you who may be unfamiliar with the Lowry Ruins. This extensive archaeological complex consists of a varied assembly of prehistoric structures now found on both private and Federal property that was

originally homesteaded by George Lowry. The most conspicuous of the ancient buildings is the Lowry Pueblo, a three-story dwelling with some forty rooms and a number of small kivas, that was constructed about AD 1090 over the remains of some 8th Century pithouses. The pueblo was abandoned in the mid-12th Century, and is now a National Historic Landmark, along with its associated Great Kiva. A number of adjacent smaller buildings known collectively as the Pigg Site, and a further element, the so-called Puzzle House, were most probably components of the Lowry Community. This large and varied architectural cluster, considered by some to be a Chacoan outlier, has been the intermittent locus of a series of investigations by Fort Lewis College students and instructors Jim Judge, Phil Duke and Charles Riggs. We will find out more about their work and conclusions during our July 31<sup>st</sup> visit.

Fourteen gung-ho SJBAS members participated in our early June outing, a five day (and 2000 mile round trip!) tour of the border country in southern New Mexico and the westernmost corner of the Lone Star State. This is a region replete with sites and museums of both archaeological and historical interest, especially those relating to the Mexican War, the Civil War, and the many battles, ambushes and skirmishes between the Apaches and US troops, including the famed "Buffalo Soldiers" of the 10th Cavalry. Indian War sites visited included the Rattlesnake Springs and Indian Hot Springs sites, where there were bloody encounters between Colonel Grierson's 10th Cavalry troopers and Victorio and other Apaches; the Cushing Fight site near the Guadalupe Mountains; and the Van Horn Wells site. Our people also visited Fort Stanton, on the Mescalero Apache Reservation; Fort Davis, in the Guadalupe area; and the adobe ruins of the Warm Springs Agency, where both Geronimo and Victorio surrendered. Places of somewhat greater antiquity that were seen or inspected by the group included the Brazito Battlefield where, in 1846, a small unit of US dragoons vanquished a much larger but poorly organized body of Mexican infantry and lancers; and Civil War sites visited included Fort Craig, a Union stronghold pivotal during the conflict with Confederate invaders, and a view of the nearby Val Verde Battlefield. A better appreciation of the regional past was also gained by visits to such local institutions as the Mescalero Apache Visitor Center and Cemetery and the Fort Davis Visitor Center. And our gang learned quite a bit about the days of the aptly-named Wild West when they toured the town of Lincoln, New Mexico, with its museum and monuments commemorating such truly rough-and-tough characters as Billy the Kid, Dick Brewer, Buckshot Roberts, and other gunslingers of the Lincoln County War. This epic SJBAS outing also included visits to a mixed bag of places of some cultural interest: the Roswell Art Center, the Peter Hurd "La Rinconada" Gallery, and the enigmatic Prada Monument (we don't know how to explain this last one). All things considered, this was a most splendid excursion – much to see and do, good weather, comfortable accommodations, congenial people, and an extremely knowledgeable and articulate guide, career historian Neil Mangum, a master story teller and well-known authority on the Indian Wars. This trip, which was organized by Paul and Beverly Dittmer, was one of our chapter's finest and most informative outings. Thanks, Paul and Bev, for your good work!

A small but hardy group of chapter members journeyed to Utah's Cedar Mesa area in mid-June, where they searched for, and found, Anasazi ruins in the upper reaches of Johns Canyon. This was a weekend excursion, with a Saturday evening campsite on the mesa rim near Muley Point, where our people had a fantastic view of miles and miles of high desert country illuminated by a full moon. The trip was quite pleasant, despite the unusually high daytime temperatures – so very hot that survival would have been difficult had not Gail and Marlo Schulz provided the hikers with a plentiful supply of ice cream bars, the cool and tasty things that, we understand, sustained famed archaeologist Indiana Jones during his adventures into the past! Our trip leaders were John Sanders and Bill Cagle – Bill actually did most of the leading,, and John contributed the usual superfluous advice. The Johns Canyon complex is a fascinating place to explore, but future trips to the area might be more enjoyable if scheduled for the cooler months of the year.

Irene Wanner, one of our chapter's esteemed Jemez members, arranged a trip to Chaco Canyon for fourteen of our people in late June, a visit that focused upon the summer solstice ceremony at Casa Rinconada. This sunrise affair, a demonstration of Anasazi astronomical sophistication, included prayers and a colorful dance performance by the Cyrus Concho family team from Acoma. Our members were fortunate in finding camping spaces at the park's campground and, after the sunrise celebration, they were able to take advantage of other activities and events at Chaco – during the next couple of days they attended other dance performances, a talk concerning the Chacoan community by archaeologist Shellea Conitchan, an evening star-viewing program at the Chaco Sky Center, an evening lecture by astronomer G. B. Cornucopia, and hikes to Pueblo Alto and the Wijiji Ruin. We appreciate your good work as an outings organizer, Irene, and hope that a similar trip can be scheduled for future solstice dates.

Looking ahead: our chapter's annual visit to the San Juan Mountains mining country, to be arranged by Bruce Howard, is scheduled for August 21st and 22nd, and will focus upon sites near Creede and Summitville. We'll tell you more about the plans for this high country excursion in the next issue of the Moki Messenger, but do post the above dates on your calendar – you'll surely wish to go on this scenic and exciting visit to the past!

The Museum of Northern Arizona, in Flagstaff, is now featuring (through July only) a new exhibition: "Grand Archaeology: New Excavations Along the Colorado River". This consists of photographs by Dawn Kish, which document recent archaeological research conducted in Grand Canyon National Park by the museum since 2005, an ongoing project with the goal of recording and studying sites along the river corridor before they are further damaged or destroyed by erosion and other factors. You may call 928-774-5213 for further information about this exhibit and other MNA activities and affairs.

As listed on our chapter's 2008 outings schedule, we had planned a trip to the Ute Mountain Tribal Park for the last weekend of May. This excursion, a service project that was to include a guided tour of off-the-beaten-track archaeological sites on the reservation, was a no-go; only four of our members agreed to participate, insufficient to make it worthwhile to our Indian friends. What a bummer!

The 2008 Summer Presentation Series at the Aztec Ruins National Monument is now under way, with five lectures of archaeological interest scheduled for this month. All will be given in the auditorium at the Visitor Center, at 7:00 p.m., and admission is free. On Thursday evening, July 3rd, National Park Service archaeologists Shanna Diedrichs, of Aztec Ruins, and Joanne Young, of Mesa Verde, will tell us about "Three Clan Dwelling: Architecture and History of a Little Known Pueblo". On Thursday, July 10th, Dr. Paul Fish, of Arizona State University, will give a talk concerning "Large Scale Irrigation and Organizational Complexity during Hohokam Millenium." Jim Trett, National Park Service archaeologist will talk about "The 1984 Archaeological Excavations at Aztec West's Ruins" on Thursday, July 17th.

The Thursday, July 24th program

will concern a more light-hearted theme, "Aztec Ruins in the Movies: 1950's Western Sets in the Animas River Valley", which includes a scene at Aztec Ruins.

And on the last Thursday of the month, July 31st, archaeologist Gary Brown, of Aztec Ruins National Monument, will discuss "The Protohistoric Navajo Occupation of the Totah." As most of you probably know, "Totah" refers to the region where three rivers, the San Juan, Animas, and La Plata, merge together. Perhaps we can organize carpools for those wishing to attend these lectures; you may call Rich Robinson (970-259-1943) if you are interested in this.

HERE ARE SOME UNSOLICITED AND POSSIBLY  
INAPPROPRIATE COMMENTS FROM YOUR EDITOR

For many years our chapter was one of the most – perhaps the most – active affiliates of the Colorado Archaeological Society, with a steadily increasing, membership and an extensive and varied program of activities – not just the usual series of lectures, but also volunteer projects, site surveys and monitoring, excursions, and other archaeology-oriented affairs. Your Moki Messenger editor has noted that in recent years the nature of our membership and of our activities has changed to a considerable degree. There has been a significant loss of SJBAS members, and those who remain appear to consist largely of retirees, older people who seem primarily interested in attending our lectures, whereas a substantial number of our members in past years were students and other younger people, with many archaeology enthusiasts who also found time to become involved with a wide range of SJBAS affairs. Are we, as CAS chapter, facing a problem here? And if so, what can we do about it?

Frankly, your editor (and of course this may be just one man's opinion) does think that we are in trouble. We need, in addition to our present core contingent of older people, more younger members, and we particularly need active people who are willing to serve as chapter officers, to initiate worthwhile projects, and to support such volunteer endeavors as the currently moribund Ute Tribal Park service weekends.

One recent change for the worse has been the arbitrary move to turn our monthly meetings into lecture sessions and nothing else – sessions which in many cases are not of our own choosing, but which are dictated by other organizations. Should we function as a discrete group, as we did for many years, rather than as **an** adjunct of such organizations as the Fort Lewis Professional Associates and the Life Long Learning group? These are splendid organizations, but might we be better off continuing alone, a practice that was quite successful in the past, and that didn't tie us down with schedules and procedures determined by others?

And here's another problem, at least as seen by your editor. In the early days of our chapter's history it was agreed, after some debate, that a meeting time of 7:00 PM was simply a bit too early for students or people who were not retired but had jobs or classes and who wished to have time to eat prior to attending our meetings. This is why that, until recently, our meetings commenced at 7:30 PM. Although a 7:00 commencement may be the choice of our more elderly members who may have an early bedtime, and may be advantageous to the staff of the Center of Southwest Studies, it also may help account for our present lack of younger people who have jobs with a restrictive work schedule.

Your editor believes that a final, and quite serious, problem concerns the sizeable number of our members who are entertained, and perhaps educated, by our monthly lectures but who are unwilling to serve as chapter officers or on committees. Again, this may relate to the changing nature of our membership. The trend to emphasize our lecture schedules at the expense of other and somewhat more vigorous activities may be another indication that we are now appealing to a much more passive, apathetic class of people. Surely not – but perhaps?

Do note: the above comments simply reflect the thoughts of your Moki Messenger editor, and it may be that he is overly distressed about non-existent or relatively minor problems. But what do you think?

Annie Levine, one of our chapter's older and most cherished members, succumbed to Alzheimer's disease last June 2nd. Your editor particularly remembers how Annie enlivened our chapter's recent Colorado River rafting trip with her enthusiasm, her happy comments, and her smiles. We, and David, will miss her.