



THE MOKI MESSENGER

July-August 2026

San Juan Basin Archaeological Society

sjbas.org

SJBAS Monthly Meeting: July 8

SJBAS Meeting – After a brief business meeting, we will have a presentation on “Chaco and Beyond: Overall History of the People who created Chaco” presented by GB Cornucopia, former NPS ranger. The meeting is available on zoom at this [link](#). Or you may click the Zoom link on our home page at SJBAS.ORG

A reception starts things off at 6:30 p.m. in the Center of Southwest Studies foyer and the presentation begins at 7 PM in the Lyceum.



President's Message

Dear Fellow Members,

As we move into the heart of summer in the Four Corners, I am reminded how fortunate we are to live in a landscape so rich with history and beauty. This season has already proven to be productive and inspiring for the San Juan Basin Archaeological Society.

Growth and Engagement

One of our primary goals for 2026 is to strengthen and grow our Society. We aim to increase membership, boost lecture attendance, and expand opportunities for meaningful involvement.

Growth is not just about numbers—it is about participation. When members attend events, volunteer, serve on committees, and share their enthusiasm, SJBAS thrives.

We will soon be seeking volunteers for several Board and committee positions for 2026–2027. If you have considered becoming more involved, this is an excellent time to step forward.

Field School and Collaboration

Our partnership with Fort Lewis College continues to be a highlight. The Southwest Archaeology & Curation Field School has provided students with hands-on experience in survey, mapping, collections work, and professional practice. Supporting student engagement is an investment in the future of archaeology, and we are proud to contribute.

Outreach and Community Spirit

Our Saturday Farmers' Market booth has been wildly successful this season, generating strong community interest and welcoming new members. Thank you to everyone who volunteered your time and energy.

As usual, the Summer Picnic brought enthusiasm, laughter, and strong attendance. It was a wonderful reminder that SJBAS is not only about archaeology—it is also about community.

Stewardship and Looking Ahead

Advocacy and preservation remain central to our mission. Building relationships with local organizations, tribal partners, and educational institutions strengthens our ability to protect cultural resources throughout the region.

The Board continues refining our three-year plan, and we welcome your ideas and input. SJBAS exists because of members like you who value learning, stewardship, and shared discovery.

Thank you for your continued support. I look forward to seeing you at an upcoming lecture or field trip.

With appreciation,

Thomas Polich
President
San Juan Basin Archaeological Society

Trip Report: Zuni Pueblo, April 24-26

Susan Hicks led 17 members on a SJBAS Corps of Discovery to the Zuni Pueblo. Zuni Pueblo is the largest of the nineteen New Mexican Pueblos, covering more than 400,000 total combined acreages (not including other sites) and with an enrolled population of over 20,000 members.





The Corps learned that the Zuni are considered the most traditional of all the New Mexico Pueblos, with a unique language, culture, and history that resulted in part from its geographic isolation. With perhaps 80% of their workforce making art, they are indeed an "artist colony." Their main "industry" is the production of inlay silverwork, stone "fetish" carving, pottery, and others of which they are world famous.

Most of Zuni's residents live in the main village of Zuni and the nearby "suburb" community of Blackrock and Bluebird. Zuni is a sovereign, self-governed nation with their own constitutional government, courts, police force, school system, and economic base. Their year is marked by a cycle of traditional ceremonial activities; the most sacred and perhaps the most recognized is the annual Shalako Ceremony, according to the Zuni Visitor Center website.

On the first day of exploration, the group met at the Pueblo of Zuni Visitor Center where they met Marla Lallo, Visitor Center Director, and Kenny Bowekaty. Kenny is a tribal member and shaman who studied archaeology and anthropology at Stanford. He explained the A:Shiwi (Zuni) World View. They learned about the history, culture and religion of the A:shiwi through the Migration Story; impacts of the Spanish; how the Zuni community is organized and what role traditional religion plays in the daily life.



Kenny then took the group to Badger Springs, "a remote backcountry rock art and great house to experience a rich variety of ancestral images that come alive through cultural stories and interpretation." He shared many stories about the possible meanings and context of the hundreds of petroglyphs.



After the tour, members shared a dinner that was catered by the Halona Inn. The meal featured the Halona Restaurant's famous

Halona chicken. A special treat was Blue Corn Chocolate Chip and Cherry cookies made by Roger's wife, Ann.

Day two began with a group breakfast which included blue corn pancakes. They then headed to the Zuni Visitor Center where they met Shaun Latone, the Visitor Center Cultural Interpreter and tour guide for the morning. He led a tour in the Middle Village and the Old Zuni Mission.

Shaun started the tour with some history and then members carpoled to the Middle Village (Halona:Idiwan'a) which is "the historic, central, and active residential heart of the Pueblo of Zuni in New Mexico, considered the "middle place" of the world." He took us into the historic Old Zuni Mission, also known as the Mission Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe church. The interior walls featured a magnificent kachina mural created by the late Alex Seowtewa in the 1970's. Shaun explained the stories behind the paintings which portrayed the four seasons and the annual ceremonies and dances. Pictures were not allowed inside the Mission.



After walking around the headed back to the Halona Inn for lunch where they were treated to a traditional Zuni meal of tamales, posole, salad, and bread baked in horno ovens. They served Zuni Bread Pudding for dessert which is "quite different from custard-based Southern bread puddings."

The afternoon included free time to visit artist co-ops where we were able to meet some of the artists. A surprise find was the Eagle Sanctuary which houses several bald and golden eagles that have been injured and are unable to survive in the wild.

Day 3 began with more tasty offerings from the Halona Inn for breakfast. Then it was back to the Visitor Center where we met again with Kenny. He took us to the Village of the Great Kivas, a Chacoan-outlier village site with two great kivas, numerous room blocks, and extensive pictographs and petroglyphs. The kivas and rooms were excavated in the 1930's and have since been back-filled. The pictographs and petroglyphs were beautiful and Kenny did a wonderful job explaining the context and meaning of many of the hundreds of petroglyphs.

The pictographs in the photo below were painted by Zuni people during their lunch breaks from their excavation work in the 1930's.

We then traveled to Hawikuh, founded around 1400 AD, is one of the fabled "Cities of Cibola" and was still inhabited "in 1540, the place of "first contact" between Europeans and Native peoples in the Southwest." We were taught about the history, the importance of the landscape,

and shown the entrance that Coronado used. Kenny showed us a collection of pottery sherds and taught us a historical pottery lesson.

Some members headed home after the Hawikuh tour. Others stayed one more night at the Inn. Those that stayed enjoyed a dinner at Chu Chu's Restaurant and then headed home the next morning.

Participants in the trip were Pamela and Quent Baker, Randy Graham, Dave Manley, Leigh Grench, Mary and Jack Irby, Chris Anderson, Betsy Moore, Phil Bruckbauer, Pete and Tish Varney, Elena Piazzisi, Rita Jo Anthony, Jill and Bill Tripp, and Jim Holoway.

The Inn at Holona - a "true, unexpected oasis". The Innkeeper, Roger, his wife, Ann, and the staff were very friendly and accommodating. Each room is unique, full of artwork. It began as a trading post in 1903 and has an interesting history. It was a perfect place for us to stay and have meals together. You may learn more about the Holona Inn [here](#). *Tour organized and report submitted by Susan Hicks*

SJBAS Annual Picnic: Great Food, Friends and Much Improved Atlatl Skills



Our annual picnic at Junction Creek Campground brought together about 40 members for food, fun and laughs. Highlights included the impressive BBQ skills of Bill Possler and a hand-made mammoth sketch by Joel Barger. With ammunition (atlatl darts) provided by Lisa XYZ and Joel's lifelike drawing, the mammoth never had a chance.

A huge thanks to Tammie and Joel Barger for a well-organized event.



SJBAS Educational Outreach Goes Main Street

Members Tammie and Joel Barger expanded their social chair duties to Main Street Durango where they created and staffed a booth for the monthly Durango Farmers



Market. One Saturday each month the City of Durango closes down a stretch of Main Street downtown to allow dozens of vendors to sell a wide range of wares. They also set aside a number of booth spaces for non-profits to share information about themselves. SJBAS



staffed a booth in May and June and will do so again in August and October. The big draw to our booth in May was FLC Professor Mario Barerra flint knapping projectile points. Many dozens of citizens passed by and stopped to watch. Tammie and Joel answered questions about Southwest Archaeology and what SJBAS does. In June we did an encore appearance but alas, Mario had a prior commitment. Still, the Bargers

plus Lynn Hughes and Hunter McCleary spent time chatting with the public. Elena Piazzisi will host the August booth but we can always use help from membership in getting the word out about what a worthy cause SJBAS is.

Trip Report: Sand Canyon, Goodman Point, Lowry, June 2026

Six SJBAS members and 1 archaeologist visiting from California met at Santa Rita Park and drove out to the Great Sage Plain. The crew was Lisa Coash, Judy Fisher, Pattie Phillips, Ken Hilfiker, Professor Mario Borrero, Rusty Chamberlain plus a colleague of Mario's, Peter Phan.



Our first site was Goodman

Point Pueblo. We stopped at a bend where the trail goes through the pueblo to look at map of the Pueblo and discussed the idea of dual moiety. That term applies to the idea of a community divided into two or three groups with different responsibilities and perhaps different ethnicities or social class. Goodman and Sand Canyon show this by separate "neighborhoods." At Goodman Point the main neighborhood is on one side of the canyon with wall separating it from the other two neighborhoods. Walking

along the outer wall of the main neighborhood, we found many sherds and even some lithics. The neighborhood on the right canyon rim has a great kiva.

Our next stop was Sand Canyon Pueblo and lunch. It is another pueblo with what appears like neighborhoods opposite side of the canyon. And like Goodman Point, Sand Canyon has D-shaped bi-wall with several internal kivas and a great kiva. Sand Canyon Pueblo is very accessible with a trail leading through it and excellent informative signage. For lunch and conversation, we used Sand Canyon's large shaded picnic table.



After our lunch, we headed north to Lowry Pueblo National Historical Landmark. At last year's visit, we encountered an indigenous crew tuck pointing (a modest form of stabilizing) the east side of the building. Lowry has excellent interpretive signage. It offers a good example of kivas built within a room. In fact, a cool feature of the site is a passage into the building where one can see such a kiva. The great kiva is just east of and visible from the house. It has all the features of a great kiva such as stone pediments for posts to carry a roof, archaeologist believe it was never covered. One of the signs noted that stones within the kiva depict a two human figures. They may represent the Summer people and Winter people, perhaps a dual moiety as we discussed at Goodman Point.

Our thanks to Mario and Peter who were great and enthusiastic experts to have along.

–Submitted by Rusty Chamberlain

SJBAS Coming Attractions

Pecos Conference near Mancos – August 6-9, camping or take day trips. The site is only an hour from Durango. Each August, archaeologists gather under open skies, and a big tent, somewhere in the southwestern United States or northwestern Mexico. The Conference is open to all and is a great opportunity to hear from and meet a variety of professional archaeologists informally. Believe me, they love to talk about their work. On Saturday evening, stay for the dinner and dance. Sign up for one of the field trips led participating scholars. There will be vendors for meals and refreshments or pack a lunch. The conference website has limited info at this time. Here it is pecosconference.org. Contact Rusty Chamberlain for more info chambrke@aol.com. Difficulty: Easy

Upcoming SJBAS Events for 2026

[Contact trip organizers for details.
See sjbas.org for the latest version of the full-year calendar.
Dates and event descriptions may change]

July 8	SJBAS Meeting — “Overall history of the people who created Chaco: Where they came from, their ascendance into what has been called
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	<i>The Chaco Phenomenon</i> , the subsequent decline, and where they have gone.” A presentation by former NPS Ranger GB Cornucopia. 7:00 PM Lyceum at Center of Southwest Studies.
August 6-9	Pecos Conference , Mancos. Contact Rusty Chamberlain at chambrke@aol.com . SJBAS will also staff an informational table at this conference on August 8.
August 8	Durango Farmer’s Market on Main Street , SJBAS informational table, 8 AM – 1 PM. Contact Tammie at tab2105@comcast.net to sign up to help staff the table.
August 12	SJBAS Meeting — “Archaeology of Andean South America,” a presentation by James Davenport, University of Missouri Anthropology Department. 7:00 PM Lyceum at Center of Southwest Studies.
September 4-7	Nine Mile Canyon Tour , A 3-day, self-guided driving trip to Nine Mile Canyon, Utah,—often called the “World’s Longest Art Gallery”—home to one of the densest concentrations of Fremont and Ute rock art in the Southwest. The trip would involve roadside stops with short walks only—no strenuous hiking—and overnight lodging in or near Helper or Price, Utah (optional rustic in-canyon lodging) is being explored. The remote setting, with limited services and cell coverage, offers a quiet, accessible, and educational experience. Members will be assigned homework to gather information and present during their assigned site visit. Difficulty Rating: Easy. Contact Thomas Polich at thomas.polich@gmail.com
September 9	SJBAS Meeting —“The Organization of Labor at Betatakin and Keet Seel,” a presentation by Katie Williams, Crow Canyon. 7:00 PM Lyceum at Center of Southwest Studies.
September TBA	Aztec Ruins National Monument Cultural Day , Contact Susan Hicks at sjbashicks@gmail.com . SJBAS may also host an informational table at this event.
October 14	SJBAS Meeting — “Late Middle Archaic and Early Agricultural Period in Southern Arizona: Materials from McEuen Cave,” presented by Joseph Birkmann, University of New Mexico. This cave in Northeast Arizona has produced some of the oldest maize and squash in the region. 7:00 PM Lyceum at Center of Southwest Studies.
October 14-18	Guided Tour of Paquimé, Chihuahua, Mexico . Cost is about \$1,350. Contact trip organizer Hunter McCleary at hunter.mccleary@gmail.com for more information.
November 11	SJBAS Meeting—Speaker TBA . 7:00 PM Lyceum at Center of Southwest Studies.

Educational Opportunities on Southwest Archaeology

As Compiled by Betsy Moore, SJBAS PAAC Coordinator
[If not offered nearby they can be seen on Zoom]

July 2	“The Antiquities Act: The Rise of American Archaeology, Conservation Movements, and National Monuments” by Susan C.
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	Ryan, PhD of Crow Canyon Archaeological Center. Registration and zoom details are here . 4 PM MST
July 7	“Aztec: Center of the Mesa Verde World,” by Donna Glowacki. This meeting is not zoomed but is “local” at the United Methodist Church in Cortez. 7 PM
July 16	“Indigenous California: Then, Now, Always,” presented by Jackie Cope and Alicia Benally and hosted by Crow Canyon Archaeological Center. Registration and zoom details are here . 4 PM MST
July 16	“The History and Future of America's Public Land,” Presented by Walt Dabney of the Old Pueblo Archaeology Center. Register here . 7 PM Arizona time.
July 29 – August 6	“Grand [Bus] Tour of Colorado,” hosted by our very own Andy Gulliford. This tour is organized by Treasure Box Tours. More information is here .
July 30	“Excavating Querencia: Land Grant Archaeology in New Mexico,” by presenter Kelly Jenks, PhD. Sponsored by Crow Canyon Archaeological Center. More info and registration are here . 4 PM MST
August 20	“Indigenous Trail Networks and the Engineering of Cultural Landscapes of the Sonoran Desert,” presented by Aaron M. Wright, PhD and sponsored by Old Pueblo Archaeology Center. More info is here .
Sept 9 – December 16	“The Hohokam Culture of Southern Arizona (14-session online class),” presented by Allen Dart and sponsored by the Old Pueblo Archaeology Center. Contact info@oldpueblo.org or call 520-798-1201.

SJBAS Elected Officers and Board Members

President	Thomas Polich
Vice President	OPEN
Secretary	Susan Hicks
Treasurer	Mary Moorehead
Communications chair	Byron Kellogg
Membership chair	Elena Piazzisi
Field Trip Program coordinator	Rusty Chamberlain

Education/PAAC representative	Betsy Moore
<i>Moki Messenger</i> editor	Hunter McCleary
Programming chair	Janice Sheftel
Publicity chair	Rusty Chamberlain
Social chair	Tammie and Joel Barger
Webmaster	Lyle Hancock

SJBAS Membership renewals are due by January 31st each year. Individual dues drop to \$15 after June 30. To renew your membership, please complete the SJBAS Annual Membership Form, make your check for \$25 (\$50 family, \$10 student) payable to “SJBAS” and mail with the printed Annual Membership Form only to: SJBAS, Attn: Treasurer, P.O. Box 3153, Durango, CO 81302.

If you would like to join SJBAS or need to renew a lapsed membership, just print and complete the Annual Membership Form; sign the membership form, Liability Waiver and Proper Etiquette forms; write a check payable to “SJBAS” for the appropriate amount; and mail the Annual Membership Form, the signed liability form and your check to our Society Treasurer. Please keep your signed *Proper Etiquette forms* for your records.