



THE MOKI MESSENGER

September-October 2026
San Juan Basin Archaeological Society
sjbas.org

SJBAS Monthly Meeting: September 9

SJBAS Meeting – Our next meeting will be held in person and on Zoom on Wednesday, September 9th, at 7:00 p.m. in the Lyceum at the Fort Lewis College Center of Southwest Studies. After a brief business meeting, Katie Williams, PhD, will present “The Organization of Labor at *Betatakin* and *Keet Seel*.”



A reception will start things off at 6:30 p.m. in the CSWS foyer. Or you may click the Zoom link on our home page at SJBAS.ORG

Presidents Message

Dear SJBAS Members:

I hope you are enjoying the summer season and finding time to get out into the remarkable landscapes that make the Four Corners such a special place. Your Board has been busy, and I want to share a brief update on several current activities.

We continue to work on filling key Board and volunteer positions for 2026–2027, including Webmaster, Programs, Vice President, Secretary, and Publicity. Thank you to everyone who responded to our recent call for volunteers. Member participation is essential to keeping SJBAS active, healthy, and effective.

Our outreach efforts have also been very encouraging. The Saturday Farmers' Market booth has been widely successful, helping us connect with the community, share our mission, and welcome new interest in SJBAS. The June picnic was another highlight, bringing members together with the enthusiasm and fellowship that make this organization so special.

The Board is also continuing work on our strategic goals, including increasing membership, expanding lecture attendance, supporting field trips, and improving communications. We are reviewing options for future programs, mini-courses, workshops, speaker honorariums and educational opportunities.

Advocacy and cooperative efforts remain important priorities. We are exploring ways to strengthen our role in protecting archaeological resources, including a possible advocacy group, public lands response network, and partnerships with organizations working on preservation projects.

Field trips, monthly programs, Education/PAAC activities, communications, website updates, and publicity all remain active areas of Board attention. We are also continuing our relationship with Fort Lewis College, the Center of Southwest Studies, and related internship and scholarship opportunities.

Thank you for your continued support, curiosity, and commitment to SJBAS. Whether you attend lectures, join field trips, volunteer at events, or simply help spread the word, you are part of what keeps our Society strong.

Warmly,

Thomas Polich
President, San Juan Basin Archaeological Society

San Juan Basin Archaeological Society

August 13, 2026 Board Meeting Highlights

We met candidates for the Publicity and Vice-President Board positions and will know more soon.

We are continuing to work on finding a Secretary beginning January 1, 2027. Familiarity with Word Processing and Spreadsheet programs are helpful. Please contact Susan Hicks, sjbashicks@gmail.com if you would like to find out more about this position.

The Board approved a \$600 2027 budget item to cover the cost of a one-day mini-course on Southwestern Indian Rock Art and Time Reckoning. This course will be taught by dynamic speaker Allen Dart from Old Pueblo Archaeology Center. We will provide more details in early 2027.

Our finances are in good shape. If you would like to see the SJBAS bank records and/or financial statements, please contact SJBAS Treasurer Mary Moorehead at marymoorehead15@gmail.com.

Our Public Lands, which contain many archaeological sites, are being threatened. The mission of SJBAS is to “advocate for and promote public awareness and preservation of archaeological, cultural, and historical resources, primarily of the Four Corners region area of the American Southwest (Four Corners).” We are considering forming a SJBAS Public Lands Response Network to communicate with members about threats to archaeological sites and possible actions. If you are interested, please contact Thom Polich at thomas.polich@gmail.com.

The 2027 Field Trip Planning meeting will be held on October 10th or 11th. Rusty will send out an announcement once the date is finalized. If you have ideas for Fields Trips, please bring them to this meeting.

Trip Report: 2026 Pecos Conference, 6-9 August, Mancos, Colo.

Eleven members of the San Juan Basin Archaeological Society traveled to Mancos, Colorado in early August for the 2026 Pecos Conference, the annual gathering that attracts archaeologists and other researchers from across the Southwest and northern Mexico. The tradition dates back to 1927, when A.V. Kidder organized the very first meeting at Pecos Pueblo, an event that gave rise to the Pecos classification system still used to describe Ancestral Puebloan cultural periods. Nearly a century later, the conference keeps much of that original spirit: a shared tent, several days of talks under the open sky, and a chance for people working across the region to compare notes on new research and the state of the field.



This year's four-day conference opened on Thursday evening with a welcome reception at Millie's in Mancos, where attendees picked up their credentials and reconnected with colleagues before the work began. The main sessions took place Friday and Saturday up on Doc Lowell Flat in the mountains above town, where a large presentation tent hosted roughly thirty talks over the two days. Topics ranged from Chaco rock art, the ritual role of the Chacoan road system, evidence for Ancestral Puebloan astronomy, and how archaeological field training has evolved at Fort Lewis College.



A parallel program showcased posters describing ongoing research projects, giving attendees a more informal way to dig into current work. A third large tent housed around sixteen vendors selling books, crafts, and other materials, with items for a silent auction displayed along the walls to help raise scholarship funds. Joel and Rusty each bid on and won large chunks of obsidian for use in future flint knapping demonstrations.

The social side of the conference was just as memorable. Friday evening featured an open mic night that, by all accounts, was a lot of fun. On

Saturday, once the vendors had packed up their wares, the same tent was reconfigured for a catered dinner. A happy hour with beer from a local brewery kicked things off around 5:15, and the evening closed out with a lively performance from the band *Innastate*, whose blend of roots-rock reggae had the crowd dancing away.

Sunday was set aside for field trips and the group split up to explore different sites. Joel and Tammie Barger toured Jackson's Castle, while a group including Thom Polich, Peter Jamieson, Betsy Moore, Phil Bruckbauer, and Mario Borrero joined a tour of a Pueblo I/II great house community in Morefield Canyon within Mesa Verde National Park — a site not normally open to visitors. Meanwhile, Lynn Hughes and Jim Horn opted for a tour of Oak Tree House and Fire Temple, also in Mesa Verde. Between the talks, the posters, the vendors, and the Sunday excursions, the 2026 Pecos Conference offered the group a full and rewarding few days in the field. *Submitted by Rusty Chamberlain*

SJBAS Hosts a Social Event for Members at 11th Street Station in Durango

On August 19th SJBAS hosted a social for about 20 members at the 11th Street Station in Durango. The event included board members, “regulars” and a couple of new members. The event was organized by Susan Hicks.



SJBAS Educational Outreach Goes Main Street: Mid-Summer Edition

Dozens of Durango Farmers Market wanderers stopped at the third edition of our main street information booth, held in early August. A few even took our Archaeology Quiz.



Thanks again to Tammie and Joel Barger for organizing these events. They have been so successful that the consensus is we should repeat this next year.



Staffing the booth this month were Elena, Tish, Thomas, Susan and Hunter.

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]**

September POSTPONED Until Next Year	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 POSTPONED
September 9	SJBAS Meeting —“The Organization of Labor at <i>Betatakin</i> and <i>Keet Seel</i> ,” a presentation by Katie Williams, Crow Canyon. 7:00 PM Lyceum at Center of Southwest Studies.
September 12	Aztec Ruins National Monument Indigenous Arts 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. Trip participation is set but feel free to contact trip organizer Hunter McCleary at hunter.mccleary@gmail.com to see if anyone has canceled.
November 11	SJBAS Meeting —"The Peopling of the Americas," presented by Tom Dalton Dillehay, emeritus professor of Anthropology, Vanderbilt University. 7:00 PM Lyceum at Center of Southwest Studies.

Educational Opportunities on Southwest Archaeology

September–October 2026

[If not offered nearby they can be seen on Zoom.

Prepared by Betsy Moore, Education/PAAC Coordinator]

September 9 – December 16, 2026	The Hohokam Culture of Southern Arizona (14-session online class) Wednesdays, 6:30–8:30 PM (skipping October 21). Online adult education class with archaeologist Allen Dart. Fee: \$109. Registration and information: Old Pueblo Archaeology Center — Hohokam course
Thursday, September 10 12 PM Ariz time	Tradition, Innovation, and Technology: Living Legacies of Juan Quezada and the Mata Ortiz Ceramic Community Maren P. Hopkins and Kelsey E. Hanson. Free online presentation sponsored by the Amerind Museum. Registration: Zoom registration
Wednesday, September 16 6:00–7:30 PM	The Falls Creek Rock Shelters: Reanalysis, Repatriation, and Reconciliation Mona Charles and Dawn Mulhearn. Durango Public Library.
Thursday, September 17 7:00–8:30 PM	Third Thursday Food for Thought: The Legacy of the Buffalo Soldiers: Courage, Service, and Impact on American History Charles W. Young. Sponsored by Old Pueblo Archaeology Center. Registration: Register for the September 17 presentation
Thursday, September 24 4:00 PM	Montezuma Castle National Monument Dr. Matt Guebard. Crow Canyon Archaeological Center. Information and registration: Crow Canyon Archaeological Center webinar series
Tuesday, September 29 6:00 PM	Weaving a Partnership: The Cedar Mesa Perishables Project Dr. Laurie Webster and Christopher J. Lewis. Center for Southwest Studies Lyceum, Room 120, Fort Lewis College.
Wednesday,	Tools for Exploring the Past

September 30 6:00–7:00 PM	Presented by the Durango Public Library and the Center of Southwest Studies. Durango Public Library.
October 2-5	2026 Colorado Archaeological Society Conference: A Four Corners Heritage Confluence, Cortez, Colo. You may glean more information or register here .
Tuesday, October 6 6:00 PM	The Dating Game: Archaeological Dating Methods Dr. John Kappelman. Pagosa Springs Community Methodist Church. A recording will be available later through the Chimney Rock YouTube channel. Information: Chimney Rock Lecture Series
October 14–17	PaleoAmerican Odyssey: International Conference on First Americans Santa Fe, New Mexico. Fee: \$200. Registration and conference information: Paleoamerican Odyssey 2026
Thursday, October 15 7:00–8:30 PM MST	Third Thursday Food for Thought: Defining the Main Plaza and Ritual Use of Space in the Ceremonial Precinct at Paquimé Michael D. Mathiowetz. Sponsored by Old Pueblo Archaeology Center. Information: info@oldpueblo.org or 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.