

VESTIGES

Monthly newsletter of URARA, Utah Rock Art Research Association



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President's Message



Things Are Looking Good!

The January rock art field trip into Sloan Canyon, Nevada, went well, with six URARA members and 9 SNRAE members participating. My slide presentation of the rock art in Hells Canyon, Id. and southwestern

Idaho

petroglyphs at a SNRAE meeting the same week-end was well received. There were about 30 members in attendance.

Our monthly URARA meeting on Jan. 24 was also very well received with 26 members in attendance. The speaker was Wayne Dance, ARPA violations prosecutor from the US

Attorney's office. He presented an excellent speech, which emphasized the importance of citizen reports of violations in investigating and prosecuting ARPA violation cases.

The URARA Executive Committee meeting that night also went well.

As of this time the field trip for February is still up in the air. The URARA Field Trip Committee (made up of Tami Barney and Nancy Mason) is trying to put together a very informal trip to Three Rivers in Arizona. More on that later if it comes together.

March will be a very busy month for members. A field trip to the Gila River area of New Mexico

Continued on Page 2



URARA and SNRAE members gather for a group picture during the Sloan Canyon field trip in January.

will be led by NAU professor Harold Widdison March 9-10 and Norma and Reed Lance, along with Dell Crandall will lead a trip to Montezuma Creek, Utah on the weekend of March 23-24. See individual stories in this issue of

Vestiges.

John

Macumber

URARA

president



One of the many rock art petroglyph panels visited during the Sloan Canyon field trip.

Letters To The Editor



Editor's note: The following is an email message I received in response to a posting I made about my experience the first time I saw the lovely pictograph at Hogs Springs. I was overwhelmed with the landscape, tremendous echo and the beauty of the painting, so impressed I naturally reached up and took off my hat. I later analyzed why that happened and determined it was my reaction to being in a church-like setting. The message stream surrounded the musical qualities of some rocks, especially some of those bearing rock art panels. It is an interesting idea I believe you will enjoy.

Congratulations for listening at a rock art site and reporting what you heard! Most of us are visually dominated and have unconsciously learned to disregard sound. That was not so in the ancient world. Before the noise of human habitations and industrialization blotted out the meanings of outdoor soundscape, listening was a more useful and informing sense.

Because we moderns generally do not listen, we have a very poor vocabulary for the subtle auditory phenomenon that occur around us. Even when we sense an unusual auditory phenomenon, we may not have learned a vocabulary to express what we experience.

Listening at Hog Springs may have enriched your experience of the pictograph. It is even possible, but by no means certain, that listening enabled you to experience the site much as the original artist did. If

so, you might be closer to a visceral understanding of what it meant to the artist. If not, you may have introduced a spurious subjective element that can confound your effort to understand the artist's intent. Which is it?

I don't know whether your experience is unique to you and your situation on that day, or if your experienced truly made you more empathetic with the artist. But I believe the question is worth exploring.

I'm inclined to believe in the possibility that sound at these sites was sometimes an important motivator for the artist. I'm also inclined to believe that it may sometimes be possible to identify aural motivation even centuries later. It may not always be easy but I think it may sometimes be possible.

You said it was instinctive for you to remove your hat as you approached the pictograph. Was it merely out of personal respect or awe for the pictograph? Or could you have had a perceptual experience that you forgot, or have not yet learned to recognize and articulate?

You said the pictograph was at the back of a deep alcove. The alcove is probably protected from the wind. The wind playing on our pinnae (outer portion of our ears) makes a rumbling noise that masks weaker sounds. As you entered the alcove, the wind noise may have suddenly disappeared and you may have been struck with sudden silence.

Your children were convenient sound sources to stimulate the aural environment. A solo artist may not have had that kind of opportunity. How would he know that voices or sounds carry? (See below).

Your ability to hear your children (who were present on the trip) from an unusual distance struck you as unusual, and it may have been. It is possible to test this objectively using acoustical instruments and recognized scientific methods.

Remote rural sites tend to be much quieter than those experienced in urban and suburban life. Lower ambient noise allows us to hear voices at much greater distances. For example, if the noise level is lowered by only 12-15 decibels, voices can be heard about four times the normal listening range. This would not be at all unusual. Does that explain why you thought the site has unusual acoustical properties? Or is there something more?

Supplementing the quiet of a wind free alcove, there could be a natural whispering gallery at the site. The alcove, for example, could conceivably act as an aural waveguide to reinforce distant sounds. That would be "something more". Natural whispering galleries do not seem to be a rare phenomenon. If extant, it could have been noticed by the artist and could have motivated the artist's presence. Hunters would have reason to remain quietly in the alcove, out of site of game, to exploit this hunting advantage. (Think of a hunting blind) That could even provide a credible motivation for a hunter to decorate the site with a pictograph.

In summary:

- 1- Layne has set a good example by listening and reporting. Rock art people should listen and report unusual acoustical experiences at rock art sites. We also need to become more objective and articulate in describing those experiences so we can recognize when acoustics may be an important interpretive element.
- 2- It's possible to test site sound properties objectively. I'm developing methods and getting experience with this at Mayan sites in Mexico and American Indian sites in the USA.
- 3- Wherever acoustics has motivated rock art, we see that the art does not exist apart from its setting, but the setting is organic to the art.
- 4- Reinforcing Steve Waller's words (one the rock art discussion list) about acoustical conservation, it should be clear that we must not allow noise levels to rise at rock art sites for reasons of discovery and enjoyment. We can't expect to discover subtle acoustical properties at noisy sites. Nor can we expect to enjoy and experience acoustically motivated sites as the original artists did.

David Lubman
 Accoustical Scientist
 Westminster, California

Continued on Page 4

Gila River, Arizona Field Trip Slated For March 9-10

By Harold A. Widdison

Participants will meet at the Painted Rocks State Park located off I-8 east of Yuma, Arizona. Take exit 102 which is signed Painted Rocks Road. Go north until you come to a road branching off to your left. It is signed Rocky Point Road. Take that road until you come to the park on your left. If you leave the pavement, you have gone too far. The park has restroom facilities and charges a nominal fee for camping. If you don't want to pay the fee, there are places before you get to the park where camping is permitted.

Our first stop is the park itself as the rocks there are covered with rock art. We will meet at the Park by 8:00 A.M., spend an hour examining the rock art and leave at 9:00 A.M. for the next site.

There is considerable rock art along the Gila River and, after consultation with the group, we'll determine which sites to visit. At present, due primarily to its proximity, I plan to visit two sites at Rocky Point (both have ascension trails), and Hummingbird Point (a.k.a. Rattle Snake Point) where the rock art is concentrated. Then to the Oatman Massacre site and two smaller sites, Sentinel Dam, and Little Rocky Draw.

Two quite large sites, Sears Point and Quail Point, are sites that will take considerable time, especially Quail Point, which has rock art scattered for well over a mile along cliff faces and boulders, from near the river to the cliffs near the top.

Two days is definitely not time enough to

see all the rock art. I'll provide detailed maps to sites for those who wish to take more time, or return at a later date.

Four-wheel-drive and high clearance are needed to get into most sites. The longest hike is about a half mile and is not strenuous. Some rock art is on the face of cliffs, but to see it all necessitates climbing down or up over basalt boulders. The temperature can get quite cool at night and then up into the 70s and 80s during the day. Some sites have catclaw and cactus, and I would not recommend shorts or short-sleeved shirts.

As to accommodations, there are lots of sand and desert pavement, coyote serenades, and even bird songs to lull you to sleep. The closest motels are located in Gila Bend. From the outside appearance they don't look like they would fall into the luxury category. The next closest would be at Yuma some 90 miles to the west. As the days are short and the nights long, I anticipate we will have considerable time for socialization. Make sure you have a full tank of gas when you head in. We will probably want to car pool into some sites.

For planning purposes, I need to know who is coming and the number of vehicles I can expect, so please register for this trip. If you have questions feel free to call, write, or e-mail. My phone is 928-779-1585, e-mail harold.widdison@nau.edu, and my snail mail address is 3445 North 4th Street, Flagstaff AZ 86004.

[Ed. Note: For those who don't know him, Harold is a professor of Medical Sociology at Northern Arizona University.]

*Send your comments and Vestiges news items
to Layne Miller, layne@afnetinc.com*

Continued on Page 5

Field Trip heads into Montezuma Creek near Blanding March 28-29

Montezuma Canyon, cut by Montezuma Creek, runs north and south with its beginning at Monticello, Utah and extends to the San Juan River. The canyon system has numerous branch canyons that drain into Montezuma Creek from both sides with occupation in most of them, suggesting interaction with nearby Hovenweep settlements.

A field trip into Montezuma Creek scheduled March 28-29 will be led by Norma and Reed Lance and Dell Crandall, who have vast knowledge of the area. Contact the Lances by calling 435-587-2894, or Dell at 435-259-0598 or dglyphs@citlink.net.

From the upper end to the lower end near Hatch Trading Post, there are over 150 recorded archaeology sites with many of them being rock art sites, representing culture from Anazasi through Navajo and Ute, with a few historic signatures. Some of the pictograph sites are polychrome with as many as six colors used on some panels.

The trip will begin each day with a meeting at 9 a.m. at Hatch Trading Post, which is east of Highway 191 on State Route 262, on the way to Hovenweep.

Accommodations can be found in Blanding or Bluff. Public campgrounds are found at Sand Island (a great rock art site, too) just west of

Bluff or at Hovenweep National Monument to the east of Hatch. Those wishing to rough it can camp in the canyon on Bureau of Land Management lands. No water or restrooms are available. The BLM suggests all campers without self-contained units should bring portable toilets and dispose of wastes at approved locations.



Two Ute or possibly Paiute panels found in Montezuma Creek.

Continued on page 7

April Field Trip To Cedar Point

By John Remakel

In the **Editor's Notes** you requested trip leaders provide you with more details on the trips at least one month prior to the event. For the April 27th & 28th trip, I'm asking attendees to **meet on Saturday morning at 8:30 at the junction of Utah Highways 261 and 316**. Utah Highway 316 is a few miles north of Mexican Hat, and is the highway leading to the Goosenecks State Park. We will be camping in John's Canyon. If more information is needed, you and any interested people can contact me at: 461 Marcus Ct., Moab UT 84532-2138. Phone 435 259-6228, or e-mail at jremakel@moci.net

On Saturday, first I plan to take people to sites on the way to John's Canyon, reference: Castleton's Vol. 2., to the following: sites on pages 238 & 239, which is below Muley Point. John's Canyon is next, and then we will drive out of John's Canyon and walk or drive the road south and then west for a few miles. This is easy walking on an "unused" road.

Then we'll camp in John's Canyon, and drive to the sites below Cedar Point on Sunday morning. From Cedar Point, we will hike down Butler Wash, west of Bluff, to its confluence with the San Juan, an easy hike, about 1½ mile each way. In Castleton's Vol. 2., in Butler Wash we will see page 218 and pages 224-5, plus many not illustrated in Castleton's book.

If there's time and people willing, I know of a really nice panel east of Sand Island. It's a 10-15 minute walk with some bushwacking! Any more details needed? Contact me. I would like to restrict the number of people to ten. First come, first served!



Petroglyph panel from John's Canyon.

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Continued on Page 7

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Could This Be A Rare Depiction Of a Dinosaur Print?

A Rare Dinosaur Track Pictograph near Kanab

By Mary Allen

I just visited a fascinating pictograph site, and wanted to share it with URARA readers and possibly get their feedback. The site is in the Vermillion Cliffs east of Kanab. It's a dinosaur trackway with about 20 well-preserved prints.

On the cliff just below the tracks is a pictograph panel. One of the pictographs illustrates a dinosaur track surrounded by stick figure "dancers". This dinosaur track and rock art connection is unique in my experience, but perhaps we haven't focused on this possibility at other locations?

The tracks are basically two sizes. The smallest average 30 cm long, the largest tracks are 41 cm long. We guessed the stride of the large tracks to be about 173 cm.

As for the pictographs, there may be two cultures. The dino track pictograph does seem to be superimposed over the

Anasazi dancers, though it's the same color with the same amount of weathering. Several of the pictographs appear to be "cancelled" with wide chisel marks. If you look on my web site, <http://www.xmission.com/~mkallen/dino%20tracks/dino.html>

where I posted several of the photos, you'll see the full panel (about 18 feet long) with all the figures.

My friends and I already discussed the site with Alan Titus, paleontologist for the Grand Staircase-Escalante Monument. He says they are *Eubrontes* (*Dilophosaurus*?) and *Grallator* (*Coelophysis*) tracks, dating from early Jurassic period, about 190 million years ago.

Editor's note: A paleontologist from the College of Eastern Utah Prehistoric Museum substantiated the dinosaur information.



The possible dinosaur track is highlighted in the center of the photo.

Editor's Notes

A Prehistoric Dot-To-Dot In Nine Mile

Rock art can be a fun pastime, or it can become a vocation. Many URARA members fall somewhere in between, while I seem to have flashes of both. But recently I discovered another reason for

becoming passionate about it- you never know what you might discover.

During a recent trip to Nine Mile to photograph a Ute panel that shows a traditional Ute elk hunting with horses I found a petroglyph panel that was started but not finished. The panel I was looking for illustrates the period of time after the Utes were confined to reservations when they were allowed to leave to hunt elk the traditional way - from horseback. Ethnographic accounts indicate each rider went horseback, while keeping another horse on a tether to use as a packhorse to transport the elk meat back to camp. The petroglyph illustrates the story beautifully. I have had a difficult time getting a decent photo of the panel because the center of it is badly eroded and each time I visited there the panel was partially covered with shade.

Fortunately we were enjoying a day with high clouds, perfect for taking rock art photos and manipulating them with Photoshop. After taking several photos and telling the elk hunt story to my traveling companion we moved to another nearby Ute panel. I have been to the site nearly a dozen times but part of the panel never made sense. As we stood there discussing the panel and talking about the rather unusual shield figure in it, I explained that the upper portion of the panel did not make sense to me, although I noticed portions of it were similar to the shield figure. As I was explaining the panel to him, it dawned on me that the figures I couldn't make sense were very similar to the inside portion of the shield. As I looked and spoke I noticed the outside of the uncompleted shield was visible if you looked closely. It was very faint, but a single line had been drawn around the edge of the shield's innards. Looking closer, I could see individual dots chiseled into the cliff that the scratched line had followed. I was sort of a sandstone dot-to-dot.

Rock art, in my opinion, is more important than most artifacts because it is the only one allowing us to actually get into the mind of its creator. This panel is an excellent example of that and it opens a narrow door into the process used by some modern rock art creators.

One does wonder why the artist failed to finish the panel. Could he not return to the canyon, did he die, or maybe he just lost interest? We will never know, but we do now have a glimpse into the act of creating rock art, something we usually find hard to come by.



A finished Ute shield in Nine Mile Canyon.



A prehistoric dot-to-dot. Note dots and scratched line for outer edge of shield figure.

Nine Mile contains a plethora of Ute and other types of panels, but my interest of late has been the many beautiful Ute panels. This panel contains a Ute shield with interior decoration composed of two water sprinkler-like icons. Ute shields are quite common in Nine Mile, appearing in several different locations. Dot fields, like those included in the shield are very common, appearing in Ute and Fremont style panels.

A close examination of the icons located adjacent to the Ute shield shows they are uncompleted representations of the icons located inside the shield. The “sprinkler” figure is complete, along with the “water” dots. Also present is the lobed line icon, but the surrounded dots are not present. Also not included is the outer edge of the shield. Close examination, however, shows the outside edge has been drawn in very lightly using a scratched line. Also, and most importantly, the scratched line is drawn through a series of peck marks that were used like a sandstone dot-to-dot.

Here are a few other thoughts. The uncompleted shield appears to be much fresher than the completed one. Stylistically, they are similar and both fall within the traditional Ute style so common in Nine Mile, but the copy appears to be much fresher and therefore much younger. Could the artist have been in the process of copying the completed shield, but never finished his project?

The history of the Ute culture shows they were among – if not the first – tribe to obtain the horse, sometime in the late 1500s. Its use spread quickly and widely in the late 1600s following the revolt by the Pueblo Indians in 1680. The Spanish invaders of the southwest taught Native Americans how to train and care for horses, but refused to allow them to ride the animals. Once the horse became widely available, it didn't take long for Native American groups to learn to become talented riders.

Once Ute groups adopted the horse, it allowed them to travel widely in search of the buffalo herds. That search took them onto the Great Plains where buffalo numbers existed in the millions. There the Ute travelers met members of the Plains tribes. It didn't take too long for the Utes to adopt the traditions and lifestyles of their flat-land neighbors.

Online Resources For Rock Art Researchers

Here are online services for rock art, Southwest archeology and Utah archeology. Some to many of our members are aware of these, or subscribers, some are not.

The Rock-Art Email Discussion List

Hosted by Arizona State University in Tempe. Enthusiasts from all over the world. Some postings in Spanish. You can review the list of members, and if you are active in rock art, you will know many of the names. Moderated by Peter Welsh, who is Associate Professor in the Department of Anthropology at ASU, and also Director of the Deer Valley Rock Art Center in Phoenix. The list is pretty laissez-faire except when it needs a little guidance. Recently Peter stepped in over a heated debate between the Yugoslavian Macedonians and the Greek Macedonians, saying “enough”. Zero to several postings a day. Standard Listserv® choices and commands. To join: <http://lists.asu.edu/cgi-bin/wa?SUBED1=rock-art&A=1>

Got Caliche

A free, online, almost-daily newsletter of southwest archeology and anthropology, broadly defined. A non-profit run by bright, quirky archeologist Brian Kenny, who works for MC (Maricopa County, Phoenix area) DOT. Brian defines (Got) Caliche: “. . . A gritty, powdery substance (not unlike industrial-gauge sandpaper) that shreds nasal mucous membranes and whipsaws and desiccates the exposed flesh of archaeologists. . . Keyword-filtered journalism, short-lived news blurbs and timely press releases — information about the archaeology, anthropology and history of the American Southwest — received from individual contributors, and from media wire feeds and search bots crawling the World-Wide Web.” Can be habit-forming — all kinds of serendipitous connections happen. Instructions on signing up and list of archives at: <http://www.swanet.org/news.html>

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Calendar Of Events



URARA Field Trips for 2002

March 9-10 Gila River, N.M. Trip leader Harold Widdison, 928-779-1585, e-mail harold.widdison@nau.edu

March 23-24 Montezuma Creek near Monticello, UT. Trip leader Dell Crandall. Phone 435-259-0598 and Norma Lance, phone 435-587-2894.

April 13-14 Sieber Canyon near Glade Park, Colorado. Trip leader Harold Snyder. Phone 970-242-5162. The monthly meeting will also be held at Glade Park Saturday evening.

April 27-28 Cane Wash and Virgin Springs in the San Rafael Swell. Trip leader Nancy Mason. Phone 303-459-3397.

UPAC email discussion group

Run by the Utah Professional Archaeologists Council but open to both professionals and avocationalists, members or non-members of UPAC. A Yahoo group, three to 30 postings per month. Some annoying ads since it is run by a commercial website, but you can click on by or ignore. Some interesting discussions, such as the recent one on pros and cons of wilderness designation for archeology. Also a way to ask a bunch of local archeologists questions. Archives are supposed to open to non-members of the group, but some documents may not be accessible for non-members. UPAC page at <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/UPAC/>

- Dorde Woodruff