

# VESTIGES



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Monthly Newsletter of URARA, the Utah Rock Art Research Association

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## President's Letter

By Ben Everitt

One of the most rapidly developing fields of geology is geochronology – the age dating of surfaces or deposits. A couple of techniques currently under development may be applicable to rock art.

One such technique is Optical Stimulated Luminescence (OSL for short), which has been applied to dating quartz-rich alluvial deposits, such as are found in archaeological sites. See more about this in an article by Steve Manning in this issue. Information can also be found at Utah State University's OSL lab site: <http://www.usu.edu/geo/luminlab/>

Another technique, still experimental, is Varnish Micro-lamination (VML) dating. This is especially interesting to rock-arters, because it is a means of directly dating surface exposure rather than burial by sediment. As exposed rock surfaces age, especially in a desert acid-free environment, they may become coated with a patina called "desert varnish" or "rock varnish". The relative darkness of the repatination of petroglyphs has long been used as a rough estimate of relative age, but use of patination for determining absolute age has been elusive. You will remember that long-time URARA member Farrell Lytle experimented with using hand held x-ray fluorescence spectrometer to measure the mineral density of varnish on repatinated petroglyphs. It turned out that x-ray fluorescence didn't reveal much more than eye-balling the hue of the rock varnish. The x-ray analysis did turn up one very interesting item however: lead.

It turns out that rock varnish deposited during the last century, the age of the automobile, contains a strong signal for lead, whereas pre-20<sup>th</sup> century layers contain almost none. VML consists of microscopically analysing the individual layers of the varnish deposit, and chemically analyzing

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each layer with a microprobe. The visible layers of rock varnish appear to be due to changes in the environment (maybe climate) during deposition. The layers can be correlated from site to site, and individually dated by association with a known dated event <sup>1</sup>. This suggests the possibility of testing the age of petroglyphs that might date from the end of the last ice age. A recent paper details the technique as used to authenticate the recently identified Escalante inscription near Crossing of the Fathers, and to cast doubt on the authenticity of the Marcos de Niza inscription near Phoenix <sup>2</sup>.

(1) Millennial-scale varnish microlamination dating of late Pleistocene geomorphic features in the drylands of western USA, 2013, Tanzhuo Liu and Wallace Broecker, *Lamont-Doherty Earth Observatory, Columbia University. Geomorphology*, Volume 187, Pages 38–60.

(2) Assessing early Spanish explorer routes through authentication of rock inscriptions, 2012, Ronald I. Dorn, Gordon Moore, and Eduardo O. Pag'an, *Arizona State University*; Todd W. Bostwick, *PaleoWest Archaeology*; Max King, *Glen Canyon National Recreation Area*; Paul Ostapuk, *Old Spanish Trail Association*. The Professional Geographer, 64:3, Pages 415-429

## Calendar of Events

April 3 - 5	Sinaguan rock art & ruins near Sedona, AZ - Bonnie Moser
April 13	Rock Art Near Eureka, UT- Oscar Olson
April 18	Steve Simms Lecture on Fremont Rock Art, Springdale
Apr 27 - 28	San Rafael Swell & surrounding area near Price, UT - Layne Miller
April 27-May 6	Rock Art Recording-Cedar City-Nevada Rock Art Foundation
May 4 - 11	Utah Archaeology Week
May 6 - 10	Mansard Site Documentation, Kanab, UT - Paula Reynosa
May 26 - 31	2013 IFRAO Congress, Albuquerque, New Mexico
Jun 11 - 14	USAS Convention, Provo, UT
June 20	Leigh Grench. Upper Sand Island Project, Moab Information Center
July 11	Sally Cole, presentation on Rock Art, Moab Information Center
Aug 8 - 11	Pecos Conference, Flagstaff, AZ
Aug 23 - 26	Annual Picnic, Boulder Mountain, Singletree Group Campground
Oct 11 - 14	URARA Symposium, Moab, UT

## Upcoming Fieldtrip-Sedona

**Sinaguan rock art and ruins near Sedona, AZ – April 3 – 5, 2013**

**Leader: Bonnie Moser** [casaterra@ymail.com](mailto:casaterra@ymail.com) or [719-636-1874](tel:719-636-1874)

## Featured Article

### **A Major advance in Rock Art Dating An Analytical Date for the Barrier Canyon Style**

**An annotated news report by Steven Manning**

At the 2013 winter meeting of the Utah Professional Archaeological Council, which was held in Logan, Utah on February 8<sup>th</sup>, Dr. Joel Pederson, from the Department of Geology at Utah State University, gave a presentation titled: *How Old is the Barrier Canyon Style Rock Art? Solving a hot archaeological debate with cool geometric relations and new OSL dating techniques*. [The information that was presented is significant and it will certainly come as a surprise to many people. Please note that the presentation lasted for an hour, so this is only a brief synopsis.]

First, what is OSL? It is an acronym for Optically Stimulated Luminescence. It works like this. As mineral grains, principally quartz or feldspar, are transported through the environment by wind and water, they are exposed to sunlight and they lose all of their native luminescence. Once these mineral grains are deposited and subsequently buried, they are removed from light and are then exposed to low levels of natural radiation from the surrounding environment, such as naturally occurring radioactive decay and cosmic rays. Through geologic time, these minerals regain luminescence, which is stored when the ionizing radiation excites electrons within nuclei in the crystal lattice. When these crystal grains are collected in total darkness, brought into the laboratory and stimulated with an energy source, such as a laser, they emit the collected energy as light, which can be measured to determine the length of time the mineral was buried (M. J. Aitken, 1998). [For additional information search the internet for; optically stimulated luminescence dating.]

Dr. Pederson and his associates have been conducting research at the Great Gallery (42WN418) in Horseshoe Canyon or Barrier Canyon. Both names have been used historically (Schaffsma 1970:73). [The canyon was originally called Horseshoe Canyon by the local ranchers because of the massive horseshoe-shaped Rincon at its mouth. The name Barrier Canyon did not exist until Standard Oil attempted to find a route for a road from the west side to the east side to reach an area where they desired to drill an oil well, which they succeeded in doing in 1929. Standard Oil used the name Barrier Canyon because of the difficulty in finding a vehicle route across it. Back in the 70's we (my family and I) drove down this road into the canyon on a number of occasions and we camped beneath the Cottonwoods while we explored the canyon. Now you have to hike in (and back out) on a steep road, and camping is banned. The USGS resolved the name conflict by placing the names Horseshoe Canyon and Barrier Creek on new topographic maps. That certainly cleared up the confusion.]

There are major disagreements on the age of the Great Gallery. Some people believe that the, "Barrier Canyon Style rock art is the oldest pictography on the Colorado Plateau.", which would date them to the Paleo-Indian period, making them over about 9,000 years old. Others believe that they date to the mid-Archaic Period (~4000 B.C. to 2000 B.C.). This classification is based principally on the similarity of clay figures that date to this period that were excavated from nearby Cowboy Cave by Dr. Jesse Jennings. Still others believe that the images are more recent, because the paintings would not survive that long since they have only moderate protection from the elements.

Using OSL the geologists first determined the date at which various alluvial terraces formed in the canyon. They found that an alluvial terrace existed at the Great Gallery around 14,000 to

13,000 years ago and that it covered the cliff face where the images exist today. They also learned from a radiocarbon date, taken from a charcoal layer on the opposite side of the canyon, that the cliff face was partly uncovered around 9,000 to 8,000 years ago. It then took thousands of years more for the sediment to erode enough to uncover the cliff face.

Concerning the date when the pictographs were created, Dr. Pederson remarked: "There is no way that these images could be 9,000 years old ... and it is improbable that they would even be 7,000 years old". Consequently, these geological studies have shown that the Barrier Canyon Style images in the Great Gallery cannot be older than about 5,000 B.C., because the face of the cliff that they are on would have been buried beneath the stream bed or eroded by stream action.

[The geological environment in Horseshoe Canyon is typical of most, if not all of southeastern Utah's canyons. For example, remnants of ancient alluvial terraces were discovered in Glen Canyon in the 1960's during geological studies of the Dam. It was the positioning of what Christy Turner named Glen Canyon Style 5 above ancient stream terraces that led him to eventually date the petroglyphs to "...between 4000 to 8000 years ago (or more)..." (Turner 1970). It is not surprising that there are alluvial terraces in both Horseshoe and Glen Canyon that are the same age, since they are not far apart.]

The most interesting analysis conducted by the geologists took place near a group of pictographs often called "The Holy Ghost and Attendants". [Resident rancher Art (Arthur) Eckker, who passed away in 1978, told me that this figure is called "The Great Ghost". This is most likely the original name and it is, I believe, a more appropriate designation.]

At the Great Gallery there is a large roughly broken-out arc in the sandstone cliff (see photograph). The Great Ghost Panel is in the center of the arc and on both sides of it there are Barrier Canyon Style painted anthropomorphs. Note that on the left side there are several anthropomorphs whose lower bodies are broken off.

At this point it gets a little complex. It is easier to explain the dating results if the circumstances that created the environmental situation are discussed first. This is what happened. Picture a long cliff face buried beneath sediment about 14,000 years ago. As the sediment slowly erodes out of the canyon, the cliff face is exposed and smoothed by erosion. Over time cracks appear in one area, probably due to water seepage, and slowly various sandstone slabs break off from the cliff face, thus creating a rough arc. Some of the rubble from these rock falls is visible in the photograph. The cliff now has newly-exposed smooth surfaces that are ideal canvases for painted images.

The Barrier Canyon Style artisans then arrive. They paint images on the exposed surfaces. The similarity in form and consistency of pigments used suggests that all the images in the panel were created at about the same time. Sometime later, the lower part of several of the images on the left side of the arc are lost when another crack forms and a slab breaks off. Apparently when the slab falls it breaks into several pieces.

Now the Geologists enter the scene. Dr. Pederson's group hiked into the site in the dark to avoid sunlight interfering with the OSL dating. Near midnight they turned over one of the pieces that appeared to have broken off when the lower parts of the painted figures were lost. On the surface that was facedown and buried in the sediment was pigment from one of the figures. They collected samples of the rock for analysis.

The date sunlight ceased to shine on the rock's surface (i.e., when it broke off) was obtained. The date was about 820 years ago, or about A.D. 1100\*. For comparison, a sample of the surface of the sandy sediment that the rock fell onto was also collected. It dated to about 890 years ago. The similarity of the date is remarkable considering that it was obtained by collecting a consistent 1 mm thick layer of the sediment.

When the rock was turned over an additional discovery was made, which was totally unexpected and quite amazing. Plastered to the underside were several Cottonwood leaves. Cottonwoods were apparently growing along the streamside then as they are today. The leaves

were radiocarbon dated to about 930 years old. All three of these dates fall within experimental error to about A.D. 1100. It is important to emphasize that the radiocarbon date verifies that the OSL dates are accurate. Dr. Pederson additionally noted that this is the first time the date of a rock fall has been determined so accurately.

The significance of these dates is that they demonstrate that these Barrier Canyon Style figures were painted before about A.D. 1100, since they were on the surface of the rock before it fell from the cliff. The images, therefore, cannot be newer than this date. If they were painted shortly before the rock fell, the date would have some exceptional significance. It would have fallen at the time when the Fremont Culture was about at its apex. Perhaps it is not a coincidence that the images at this site are also advanced artistically, as David Sucec has pointed out on many occasions.

Now it gets even more interesting. Random rock falls have been occurring at this site for a long time, as is evident from the photograph. Dr. Pederson's group wondered if the rock surface from which the rock fell was itself created when a section of the cliff broke off that was in front of it. So they took additional samples from the buried surface of the fallen slab and they obtained a date for the length of time the surface was exposed to sunlight while it was part of the cliff. That period of time was determined to be about 700 years. Therefore, since the rock surface was exposed to sunlight for 700 years before it fell to the ground, and it laid there for an additional 900 years, the images had to have been painted **after** about 1,600 years ago, which is after about A.D. 400. Consequently the Barrier Canyon Style images in the Great Gallery were created between about A.D. 400 and A.D. 1100. [Are you surprised?] These Barrier Canyon Style images, then, are not Paleo-Indian; they are also not Archaic; and they may partially parallel the existence of the Fremont; in fact, they may even be Fremont.

[Now, a brief note of caution. When these dates are published, the tendency will be for people to believe that they apply to all Barrier Canyon Style images. This may appear logical, since everyone who is knowledgeable about rock art recognizes these images as Barrier Canyon Style. Furthermore, the panel is also acknowledged as the type site for the Barrier Canyon Style. However, the belief that these dates apply to all Barrier Canyon Style images is not necessarily correct. These dates come from only one site. It is entirely possible, given the variations in Barrier Canyon Style imagery from the many sites that are known to exist (Manning 1984), that some Barrier Canyon Style images were created before this period and likely there are others that were created after it (Manning 1982, 1990), which is what repatination levels on Barrier Canyon Style petroglyphs suggest (Manning 1997, 2001).

Another significant problem in arriving at a concise date for the existence of the Barrier Canyon Style is the determination of exactly what is (or is not) Barrier Canyon Style. It is actually not well defined and the question is constantly debated. Pinning down an exact date is nearly impossible because the dates for Barrier Canyon Style are dependent on the definition, and everyone has their own definition. For example, if a panel of what is actually Glen Canyon Style 5 is included in the definition, then the style, when dated, will indeed be 8,000 years old. Similarly if Fremont images are included, then the date could be as late as A.D. 1250. The broader the definition of Barrier Canyon Style, the broader will be the period of time it covers. Furthermore, the distinct regional differences and the extremely different figure types complicate dating conclusions. Regardless of the limitations, these new analytical dates are extremely exciting and enormously informative. If additional OSL dating can be done at other sites, the dates will prove equally as enlightening. One of the best things about these dates is that they substantiate what I have been saying for many years.]

\*The dates quoted here do not have  $\pm$  values since I do not have access to the data tables. Dr. Pederson's presentation is currently being prepared for publication and the values will be available there.

P. S. If you are interested in more detail, some of the data discussed above has recently been published; see: M.S. Chapot, et al., Constraining the Age of Rock Art by Dating a Rockfall Event Using Sediment and Rock-Surface Luminescence Dating Techniques. *Quaternary Geochronology*, Volume 13, December 2012, Pages 18-25. Additionally, another article currently In Press will soon appear in the *Journal of Geophysical Research*. It will be titled, *Optically Stimulated Luminescence (OSL) as a Chronometer for Surface Exposure Dating*.

#### References:

- Aitken, M. J., 1998. *An Introduction to Optical Dating: The Dating of Quaternary Sediments by the Use of Photon-Stimulated Luminescence*, Oxford University Press.
- Manning, S. J., 1982. A Hypothesis for a Pueblo IV Date for the Barrier Canyon Style. *Utah Rock Art*, Vol. 1:28-35. Papers Presented at the First Annual Symposium of the Utah Rock Art Research Association, Price, Utah, May, 1981.
- Manning, S. J., 1985. Expanding the Distribution of the Barrier Canyon Style. *Utah Rock Art*, Vol. 4:12-20. Papers Presented at the Fourth Annual Symposium of the Utah Rock Art Research Association, Salt Lake City, Utah, October, 1984.

## Upcoming Fieldtrip-Eureka, UT

**Rock art near Eureka, UT - April 13, 2013. (If raining, we will try again on April 20)**

**Leader: Oscar Olson** [801-485-0862](tel:801-485-0862)

Meet at 9 A.M. at the downtown Sinclair station in Eureka, UT or, if coming from the south, at 9:30 A.M. on US 6 at Jericho Junction, about 20 miles south of Eureka. On this one-day field trip we will visit sites near Desert Mountain and Judd Creek in Juab County. The sites near Desert Mountain are drive up sites with a little walking and the sites near Judd Creek may require a little rock scrambling. High clearance is recommended, but 4-wheel drive is not required. I have a truck seating 4 for those needing a ride. Those traveling from Salt Lake City may wish to carpool from my place in Salt Lake City.

People are welcome to call me for further information. Please leave a message if I am not available. Be prepared with appropriate footwear, sunscreen, camera, lunch, and plenty of water. Group size will be limited to 15.

## Upcoming Fieldtrip-San Rafael Swell

**San Rafael Swell & surrounding area near Price, UT - April 27 - 28, 2013**

**Leader: Layne Miller** [laynemiller@yahoo.com](mailto:laynemiller@yahoo.com) or [435-820-4326](tel:435-820-4326)

**Saturday:** Meet at 8 A.M. in the parking area on the north side of the Utah State University Eastern Prehistoric Museum, 155 East Main Street, Price, Utah. We will visit sites along the west side of the San Rafael Swell, including sites along Muddy Creek.

**Sunday:** We will visit sites along the east side of the San Rafael Swell and along Interstate 70.

Camping is available at Price Recreation (alpine) area, about 20 minutes north, and I will arrange for self-contained units to park in the museum parking lot.

People are welcome to call me for further information. Bring appropriate footwear, sunscreen, camera, lunch, and plenty of water. Group size will be limited to 12.

## Mansard Site Documentation

Vermillion Cliffs near Kanab, UT - May 6 - 9, 2013

**Leader:** Paula Reynosa [paulareynosa@sbcglobal.net](mailto:paulareynosa@sbcglobal.net) or 818-256-4824.

The Field Manager in the Kanab BLM office has set a date to remove the sand and dirt from the floor of the Mansard site. We are returning to record currently buried under the sand at this site. Paula Reynosa described this site in the February/March *Vestiges*. Paula needs team members to help her record the balance of the soon-to-be exposed petroglyphs. The sand will be removed in advance under the supervision of the BLM. The BLM will transport the URARA recording team and gear by truck and ATV to the site. Team members will camp at this remote site for three nights (one day traveling up, two days recording, one day going down). Bare feet will be needed for walking on the floor to measure, draw and/or photograph. You supply your own food and equipment. Limit 6 persons. Contact Paula for details.

## Steve Simms Lecture

Submitted by Ben Everitt

**When and Where:** April 18 at 7:30 pm in the Canyon Community Center, 126 Lion Blvd., Springdale, UT. Archaeologist Steven R. Simms won the 2010 Utah Book Award for nonfiction for *Traces of Fremont: Society and Rock Art in Ancient Utah*. The book explores new theories of the Fremont—an indigenous group who lived along the Fremont River in Utah—using artifacts they left behind. Simms, a professor of anthropology, partnered with wildlife photographer Francois Gohier to examine new evidence about the Fremont people that points to greater cultural complexity than previously acknowledged by scholars. Simms and Gohier traveled across Utah investigating artifacts and rock art left behind by this group no longer able to tell their own story. However, the book is not about the rock art. “It’s about the people behind the rock art,” Simms said. “We need a different perception of the Fremont. Rock art is an interesting vehicle to open up discussions.” He also won the Society of American Archaeology’s 2011 Public Audience Book Award for writing *Traces of Fremont*. See [http://www.zionpark.org/zcfi\\_lectureseries\\_2012\\_2013](http://www.zionpark.org/zcfi_lectureseries_2012_2013).

## Upper Sand Island Exhibit

By Pamela Baker

**Sand Island Rock Art Recording Project Exhibit Opens**

**Where:** Edge of Cedars Museum, Blanding, Utah

**When:** January 26, 2013 through December 30, 2013.

## Rock Art Recording-Cedar City Area

**April 27-May 6, 2013 (URARA members welcome to attend)**

The Nevada rock Art Foundation will be doing fieldwork at a rock art site in the vicinity of Cedar City, UT over the period April 27-May 6. This project is supported by a grant from the BLM Cedar City BLM. The purpose of this project is to promote the protection of sensitive archaeological resources on public lands through a program of volunteer-based rock art recordation.

Project volunteers will assist in collecting data, making field drawings, identifying rock art panels and design types, and mapping. Training in recordation methods and orientation in Great Basin prehistory and rock art will be provided at two one-day workshops for those new to rock art recordation.

Volunteers should be in good physical condition and able to work under strenuous conditions. The crew size will be limited, so not all the days you wish to volunteer may be available. Volunteers are responsible for their own accommodations and food, but lunch and water will be provided. The project will be based in Cedar City, UT; suggested lodgings and camping information will be provided in a confirmation email.

Workshop Dates available: April 27 and May 4, 2013

Fieldwork Dates available: April 28-May 3, and May 5-6, 2013.

To register for this project or for more information please email [info@nvrockart.org](mailto:info@nvrockart.org). When registering, please mention: the dates you would like to volunteer in the field; whether you wish to attend the Workshop on April 27 or May 4; your contact information (phone number and email)

Angus R. Quinlan, PhD  
Executive Director  
Nevada Rock Art Foundation  
[info@nvrockart.org](mailto:info@nvrockart.org) or [www.nvrockart.org](http://www.nvrockart.org)

## Section 106 Training

At symposium many members expressed interest in receiving training in the Section 106 process. This refers to Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act which requires the federal government to have a public process to review undertakings on federal lands. When URARA gets involved in oil and gas development in Nine Mile Canyon or reviewing the location of a new electricity line or gas pipeline it is through the section 106 process.

The State Historical Preservation Office and Utah State BLM and have offered to support this training for us. We will try to set up a web based component of the training that will explain the basics of the process. Then we would like to follow-up with an in-person training session in Cedar City on Friday June 21, 2013 at the Cedar City BLM office. We will combine our training with a field trip to Parowan Gap to see the work the BLM has being doing to preserve that area. This should be

an exciting time for a trip to Parowan Gap as we have planned the trip to be in conjunction with the solstice.

We believe this process will help you be effective consulting parties in areas in which you are concerned. We need at least eight people to justify the training.

Contact Troy Scotter at [troyscotter@gmail.com](mailto:troyscotter@gmail.com) or 801-377-6901 if you are interested in attending the training.

## Nostalgia Night-San Diego

Submitted by Don Liponi

The San Diego Rock Art Association's second annual "Nostalgia Night" will be held at the Kumeyaay-Ipai Interpretive Center on June 9, 2013 in Poway [near San Diego]. Presenters will be dusting off their old film transparencies, overheads, and other antiquated forms of media to enlighten and entertain attendees on all aspects of rock art studies. Please come and join us to help celebrate the adventure, discovery, and humorous anecdotes from the "pre-digital era." Based on previous years' presentations, this is a chance to see many of the "old timer" sites before manmade and natural disasters destroyed them for good. It's also a chance for some of us to share that special site never before seen in the annals of San Diego Rock Art. Visitors are welcome and membership is very reasonable. A friendly potluck with great desserts at 4PM with presentations beginning at 5 PM. Drinks provided. Please visit our site for details! <http://www.sandiegorockart.org/>

## Rock Art Talks – Moab

Submitted by Ben Everitt

The Moab Information Center has a monthly lecture series. Rock art is the subject of talks in June and July at the Moab Information Center. On June 20 Leigh Grench will discuss the report on the Sand island documentation project, and the subject of Sally Cole's talk on July 11 is "Rock Art". Check the schedule at: <http://www.cnha.org/mic.cfm>.

## Pecos Conference

Submitted by Ben Everitt

This year's Pecos Conference is in Flagstaff, August 8 - 11. Put it on your calendar. See [http://www.swanet.org/2013\\_pecos\\_conference/](http://www.swanet.org/2013_pecos_conference/). First inspired and organized by A.V. Kidder in 1927, the Pecos Conference has no formal organization or permanent leadership. It is run much like the mountain man rendezvous of old, for archaeologists to knock the dust off their fedoras at the end of the field season, sit around the campfire, review their work and swap stories.

## Summer Picnic and Fieldtrip

Submitted by Bob Reed

Leader: Bob Reed [bobreedclyartist@hotmail.com](mailto:bobreedclyartist@hotmail.com) or (801) 566-0741.

The annual URARA picnic will be held August 23-26, 2013 at Singletree campground off Hwy 12 on Boulder Mountain, near Torrey, Utah. We will arrive and set up on Friday night, do field trips Saturday and have a pot luck dinner that evening. We will have an opportunity for field trips Sunday. Some members plan to explore panels beyond what we did last year.

I will make up a batch of chili for Saturday night. Bring a salad or dessert, and whatever you like to imbibe. We should be able to get a break from the heat. Drop me an email or phone message so I will have a head count.

Be prepared with appropriate footwear, sunscreen, camera, lunch, and plenty of water.

## IFRAO Conference

By Jeff Allen

The American Rock Art Research Association will host the 2013 International Rock Art Congress in Albuquerque, New Mexico from May 26 through May 31, 2013. There will be four days of presentations and one day of field trips. The theme "Ancient Hands Around the World" is designed to bring together the diverse interests of the many people who study and work to conserve pictographs and petroglyphs throughout the world. About a thousand people are expected to attend. There will be special cultural events throughout the week including evening lectures, dances by Pueblo groups, and vendor offerings of rock art related merchandise.

[http://www.arara.org/2013\\_ifrao\\_conference.html](http://www.arara.org/2013_ifrao_conference.html)

## URARA Board Contacts

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