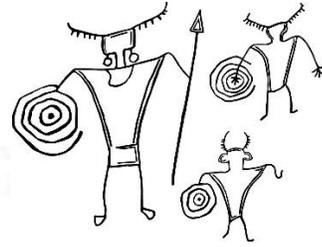


# VESTIGES



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## Table of Contents

From the Prez .....	1	Some On-line References for Shut-ins ..	7
8th Grader Examines Potential Fremont		Calendar and URARA Events.....	9
Calendar Panel.....	2	URARA Board and Contacts.....	10
Rock Art Do's and Don'ts.....	6		

## From the Prez

Werner Duecker

Well, another year draws to a close and it has certainly been an unusual one for URARA; we were unable to hold field trips but the popular Zoom presentations allowed us to stay in touch and learn more about rock art. If you missed the recent URARA symposium presentations, or any of our previous presentations, links to them on Youtube are provided on this page of our website: <https://urara.wildapricot.org/YouTube-Presentations/> This is a member only page, so you need to log into the website in order to see it.

And don't forget the Member's Forum. It is a good way to ask questions and post photos of your personal rock art trips.

In early November the Board met to elect officers for 2021. Nina Bowen and Carol Duecker were confirmed in their roles as secretary and treasurer, respectively. Connie Bridge was reelected to continue as vice-president. And Kent Williams graciously allowed the Board to elect him president. We also welcomed two new board members, Wanda Gayle and John McHugh. Congratulations to them all. I know that they will do a great job leading URARA in the coming year!

The annual January Board meeting is coming up next month on the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> via Zoom. This is the meeting where the Board lays out our goals and tasks for the coming year. If you have ideas for what you would like to see URARA do in the coming year, contact Kent or myself. If you wish to attend the meeting, email me and I will send a link. Contact information can be found in the URARA Board Contacts at the end of Vestiges.

December 2020

I have been honored to serve as president for the past two years. Thanks to all that participated in our events and thanks, especially, to the Board and others who have volunteered their time to make this the great organization that it is. I look forward to seeing you all on field trips and at the symposium when the time comes when we can again gather in person.

Best wishes to all of you for a happy solstice holiday season, and safe travels in the new year.

## 8th Grader Examines Potential Fremont Calendar Panel

John McHugh

Eighth grader Alison Green has a passion for Native American culture. At the 2018 URARA Symposium in Bluff she discussed the intrinsic value of preserving and studying the rock writing of indigenous peoples. And for the past three years now she has gone into the field to find, identify, and catalogue prehistoric Native American rock art with the Blessed Sacrament School “Shovel Bums” archaeology club, mostly at the Smith Archaeological Conservancy on the western shore of Utah Lake. Now she is taking the next step: doing bona-fide research on a petroglyph at Fremont Indian State Park that appears to have served as a solar calendar site. How this bright Middle Schooler from Draper came to become immersed in the analysis of a unique Fremont petroglyph says a lot about URARA’s groundbreaking past, its frenetic present, and its optimistic future.

At the 1987 Symposium at Fremont Indian State Park, URARA member Jesse Warner described numerous potentially calendrical rock art sites in Clear Creek Canyon. At one of these, catalogued by the Office of Public Archaeology as 42SV1928, Area B, Panel 41, Warner sketched an alignment he had witnessed during the Fall Equinox. Building off this finding, URARA members John Lundwall (archaeoastronomer) and John McHugh (archaeologist), photographed a unique alignment at the same panel on the Summer Solstice of 2018; a site they have informally dubbed the “Sheep Spiral” glyph.



**Alison Green as a 6<sup>th</sup> grader (right) before co-presenting with 7<sup>th</sup> grader Isabella Pickers at the 2018 URARA Symposium in Bluff, Utah.**

Because Alison is only 14 years old, the logistics of this science project depend heavily on the support of her parents. Alison’s mother, Christine, possess a degree in Anthropology from the University of Utah, and she is co-supervisor of the Blessed Sacrament “Shovel Bums” archaeology club with McHugh.

Alison's father, Dan, is just as supportive, and the whole Green family participated in the "Shovel Bums" excavation at the Cottonwood Pithouse Village at Nine Mile Canyon back in September 2018, which took place under the supervision of the BLM and Montgomery Archaeological Consultants. The Greens are to be admired for including their children in these expeditions, in spite of the inconvenience and time consumed.



Summer Solstice alignment at the "Sheep Spiral" panel 2018. Note that the central spiral on the Sheep's back is bifurcated by a sun-shadow line that continues along the left side of the concentric circles.



First Grader Emmeline Green holds worked stone that had been retrieved during excavation at the Cottonwood Pithouse excavation.

On the weekend of the 2020 autumnal equinox, the Green family loaded up the camper and came storming down to Fremont Indian State Park so Alison could engage in her unique science project: assessing if the “Sheep Spiral” petroglyph demonstrates an equinoctial alignment as Jesse Warner had asserted at the 1987 URARA Symposium. After a 25-minute, bouldering hike up the side of a talus slope near Fremont Indian State Park Museum, the Green family joined McHugh at the base of a cliff 350-feet above the canyon floor. From there they hiked along some precarious ledges until reaching the “Sheep Spiral” panel. Even Alison’s eight-year-old sister, Emmeline, traversed the vertigo-inducing ledges en route to this elusive site. Despite all their hard work Alison’s objective was thwarted, as clouds hung on the eastern horizon on Saturday September 19<sup>th</sup>, obfuscating all observations.



**Alison Green examines the “Sheep Spiral,” in hopes of photographing an equinoctial alignment described by URARA member Jesse Warner in 1987.**

It was therefore necessary to repeat the treacherous trek the following morning. The Green family again hiked up the talus incline that rises-up a soccer field into the air, and then hiked around sheer drop-offs to the “Sheep Spiral.” This time the Fremont weather gods showed benevolence, allowing Alison to digitally photograph what Warner had articulated at a URARA Symposium that had taken place two decades before her birth. The rising equinox sun casts a sun-shadow line that splits the spiral on the Sheep’s back while simultaneously bisecting the large, concentric circle below. This, coupled with the summer solstice alignment shown in the photograph above, intimates that the “Sheep-Spiral” glyph *may have* functioned as a solar calendar.

While any rock art panel that displays three, significant, solar alignments is intriguing, it remains to be seen if this panel comes full circle, with a fourth solar orientation occurring on the winter solstice. URARA members can rightly suspect that on one of those frigid solstice mornings Alison Green will be shivering before the “Sheep-Spiral” petroglyph, her devoted family in tow. Only then can we learn if this fourteen-year-old URARA youth has — over three decades later — corroborated a hypothesis made by a founding URARA member in 1987.



**The fall equinox sunlight casts a shadow that bisects the spiral on the Sheep's back while simultaneously halving the concentric circle positioned below it.**

# Rock Art Do's and Don'ts

Ekkehart Malotki and Ellen Dissanayake

20 Rock Art Do's and Don'ts, Distilled by Ekkehart Malotki and Ellen Dissanayake from Chapters in Their 2018 Work *Early Rock Art of the American West: The Geometric Enigma*

1. Ancestral rock markings (petroglyphs and pictographs) are best not characterized as “art,” a parochial and confusing term introduced in 18<sup>th</sup>-century Europe.
2. When dealing with ancient rock markings, replace the Western term “art” with “artification” (a new concept that signifies the activity of making, rather than the finished or made object), which describes the innate biological predisposition of humans to make ordinary things extraordinary.
3. Avoid applying criteria like beauty and pleasure, originality and creativity, harmony, decoration, and imagination to petroglyphs and pictographs; these terms are best reserved for the modern Western concept of art with its irrelevant corollary of *beaux arts* or *fine arts*.
4. Do not view ancestral rock markings as art for art's sake; rather they reflect a kind of behavior that helped people survive: they were art for *life's* sake.
5. Don't automatically assume that every (or any) mark by a prehistoric human on a rock surface is a symbol; the ability to make and use marks symbolically is a subset of the universal predisposition to artify.
6. Refrain from making unverifiable interpretive claims; we are not privy to the minds of paleoartists; rock art is fossil art.
7. Do not presume that the modern identifying *label* of a rock art motif (e.g., “bighorn sheep”) automatically specifies its *meaning*; without direct interpretation from the mark-maker or reliable ethnographic information, the cultural significance of an iconographic depiction is not recoverable.
8. Keep in mind that the minds of paleoartists were not, like ours, conditioned by reading, writing, and abstract analysis, so that modern interpretations of certain rock art motifs (e.g., as maps, directional markers, calendrical notations, and recordings of astronomical events) are likely to reflect the “rewiring” of our analytically oriented “left brain” and the relative neglect of the “right.”
9. Enigmatic graven or painted paleomarks should never be treated like inkblots in a Rorschach test; pareidolia, eye-balling, and mindsight are neither testable nor falsifiable.
10. Do not apply dismissive words like “doodles” or “graffiti” to indeterminate lines and nondescript markings on rock surfaces; the majority of surviving paleoart is non-figurative.
11. Focusing solely on representational rock art motifs is unwarranted; world-wide, simple non-iconic graphic primitives precede figurative markings.
12. The proposition that the abstract-geometric markings of preliterate humans represent some kind of proto-writing is unjustified; literacy is a recent cultural acquisition; early geometrics are by their very nature dead-end signs that cannot be decoded.

**Do's and don'ts (continued)**

13. Human-made cupules are an integral part of the inventory of surviving paleoart; omnipresent throughout time and space, they are a unique and archetypal example of artification.
14. To assume that shamanism (or any other monocausal explanation) is the sole motivation for the origin of rock art is misguided and reductive.
15. Never call the flute-playing anthropomorphic rock art motif "Kokopelli"; that name has been mistakenly derived (and anglicized) from the Hopi kachina, Kookopölö, who carries no flute.
16. Respect all forms of ancestral rock markings; they constitute humanity's artistic, intellectual, and cultural heritage and, like all the arts, are an evolved and indelible part of human nature.
17. Vandalizing or causing physical harm of any kind to rock art panels is inexcusable; unprotected in mostly open-air sites they deserve our committed protection and conservation.
18. Do not disseminate GPS coordinates of rock art sites that are not in the public domain.
19. Resist putting credence in the myths, fantastical claims, and fringe theories that surround rock art iconographies; they are not comparable to sign language, do not portray dinosaurs, and were not the work of intergalactic visitors.
20. Don't adhere to the fallacious claim of a "Big Bang" (or "Creative Explosion") origin for rock markings in the European Early Upper Paleolithic; an engraved zigzag on a fossilized shell at a *Homo erectus* site from Trinil, Indonesia indicates that at present the oldest example of mark-making dates to nearly a half million years ago, or even earlier if human skin is regarded as the "first canvas," no trace of which has survived.

## Some On-line References for Shut-ins

### Joe Brame

**Take Free Photography Classes from Nikon Through the End of the Year**

[Take Free Nikon Photography Classes for the Rest of the Year \(lifelife.com\)](https://lifelife.com/take-free-nikon-photography-classes-for-the-rest-of-the-year)

**Discover What Indigenous Land You're on With This App**

<https://lifelife.com/discover-what-indigenous-land-you-re-on-with-this-app-1844750369>

**Field Guide to Rock Art Sites: from [gjhikes.com](https://www.gjhikes.com)**

<https://www.amazon.com/Field-Guide-Rock-Art-Sites/dp/B084DG8667/>

**Petroglyphs of the Kansas Smoky Hills**

<https://www.amazon.com/Petroglyphs-Kansas-Smoky-Hills-Buchanan/dp/0700628428/>

**References (continued)**

**Geoglyphs of the Desert Southwest: Earthen Art as Viewed from Above**

<https://www.amazon.com/Geoglyphs-Desert-Southwest-Earthen-Viewed/dp/1941384501>

**Stone by Stone: Exploring Ancient Sites on the Canadian Plains, Second Edition**

<https://www.amazon.com/dp/177203049X/>

**Hiking and Exploring the Paria River 6th Edition (April 20, 2017)**

<https://www.amazon.com/dp/0944510337/>

**Non-Technical Canyon Hiking Guide to the Colorado Plateau, 7th Edition (May 21, 2018)**

<https://www.amazon.com/dp/0944510345/>



**Dan, Emmeline, Alison, and Christine Green stand before the “Sun-Wheel” petroglyph at Fremont Indian State Park just as this suspected gnomon panel casts a shadow across a central, pecked hole at the Autumnal Equinox.**

## Calendar and URARA Events

January 16-17	URARA board meeting, Zoom
2021 Jun 11-14	ARARA Symposium Great Falls Montana
2021 July TBA	URARA Field Trip Dinwoody, Wyoming
2021 Aug 5-9	Pecos Conference, Mancos Colorado <a href="https://www.pecosconference.org">https://www.pecosconference.org</a>
2021 Oct 13-16	Great Basin Anthropological Conference Las Vegas <a href="https://greatbasinanthropologicalassociation.org">https://greatbasinanthropologicalassociation.org</a>

URARA field trips are available to members only. For information or sign-up, please go to <https://urara.wildapricot.org/events>, or contact Cheryl Ames at [cheryl\\_e\\_ames@msn.com](mailto:cheryl_e_ames@msn.com), 303-940-2043. Registration will open approximately 45 days prior to the start of the field trip. At that time you may register until the set number of participants is filled; then your name will be added to the waiting list.

Southern Nevada Rock Art Association (SNRAA), Las Vegas, meets on the 4<sup>th</sup> Monday of the month. <http://snraa.org/snraa.org/EVENTS.html>

Dixie Archaeological Society (DAS), St George, meets on the second Wednesday of the month, Saturday field trips once a month. <http://www.dixierockart.com/>

Colorado Archaeological Association, Grand Junction Chapter meets on the second Monday of the month. <https://www.meetup.com/CAS-GJ/>

San Diego Rock Art Association (SDRAA) meets at the Kumeyaay Center in Poway every other month, sometimes on the first Sunday, sometimes not. <https://sandiegorockart.org/meetings>

Utah Public Archaeology Network (UPAN). Calendar of events and monthly newsletter. <https://history.utah.gov/antiquities/upan>

American Rock Art Research Association (ARARA) is hosting on-line events. URARA members can access for free. Registration at: <https://arara.wildapricot.org/Lectures>

Don't forget to check the URARA FACEBOOK PAGE once in while

# URARA Board and Contacts

Utah Rock Art Research Association: Box 511324, Salt Lake City, UT 84151-1324. [www.utahrockart.org](http://www.utahrockart.org).

## 2020 URARA Board and Officers

Werner Duecker, President  
 Connie Bridge, Vice President  
 Carol Duecker, Treasurer  
 Nina Bowen, Secretary  
 Cheryl Ames, Field Trip Coordinator  
 Troy Scotter, Website Manager  
 Leigh Grench  
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Vestiges Editor	Ben Everitt	<a href="mailto:rockdoc@xmission.com">rockdoc@xmission.com</a>
Board Nominations	Steve Acerson	<a href="mailto:whiteh20rockart@gmail.com">whiteh20rockart@gmail.com</a>

## URARA Conservation Coordinators

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