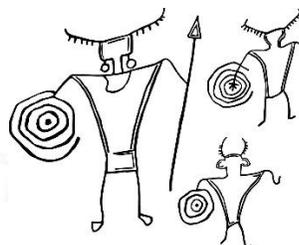


VESTIGES



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Monthly Newsletter of URARA, the Utah Rock Art Research Association

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From the Prez

Rick Mathews

The first year of my reign of terror has come to a close and now I'm on my second year.

I have enjoyed serving URARA this past year as president. I enjoyed getting to know some of you better as we hiked together and attended the Symposium. I have also loved serving on the board with my fellow board members. I appreciate their collective enthusiasm as we work together to plan events and keep things running smooth.

Normally, I'm not one for New Year's Resolutions, and if I am, I pick easy ones like "Drink more Water." This year I'm going to add get out and see more. There is so much to see and experience. Earlier in December a few of us gathered at the Smith Preserve to watch the moon rise in the middle of Provo Canyon. This won't happen for another 18 years. I missed the big show but it was still awesome to be with other URARA members and enjoy the spectacular scenery and discuss our plans for the Summer Solstice.

I am excited for 2026. The board is going to meet for its annual retreat in Moab again this year. If there is something you would like to see happen in 2026 with URARA, please let us know.

utahrockartresearchassoc@gmail.com

Happy New Year to you all!

January 2026

Field Trips

Tina Tan

I know it's only January but it is time for us to see what we can do to have some field trips on the calendar! March will be here before we know it.

Please reach out if you have any ideas for field trips you'd like to lead. Sites that you've been to before and can lead your fellow URARA members to. Let me know what your ideas are and when you'd like that scheduled. Tinatan07@gmail.com

Let's work together to make this a good field trip year! - Tina

Christmas Party Report

Susan McDowell

Attending, we had a total of 16 URARA members from far and wide. Farmington NM, Ridgeway, Delores, Montrose, Mancos, & Grand Junction in Colorado, Price, Bluff & Moab in Utah, were all represented as well as a few claiming multiple cities. Leigh Grench even got to take the ham bone home for her dog to enjoy some of the left-overs. The White Elephant Gift Exchange was entertaining. Dave Manley's black & white photo was the hot item coveted by many. Too bad he just went home with a pink pig phone holder. You never know. Everyone seemed to have a good time. We'll see them back next year, if not before.

Rock Imagery in the News

Unlocking the secrets of ancient Texas cave paintings Science 18Nov2025

<https://www.science.org> › *Science Advances* › *Focus*

Church Works with NWB of the Shoshone Nation to Preserve Sacred Petroglyphs 17 December 2025

<https://newsroom.churchofjesuschrist.org/article/church-works-with-shoshone-band-to-preserve-sacred-petroglyphs>

Church returns petroglyphs removed from Utah-Idaho ... KSL News 18 December 2025

<https://www.ksl.com> › *article* › *church-returns-petrogly...*

LDS Church returns sacred petroglyphs to Native tribe Salt Lake Tribune 30 December 2025

Outdoor Safety



Preventing Hypothermia

April Gray, M.D.

I was backcountry skiing with friends above Nederland. Beautiful day but cold, in the 20's. I came down a slope and went headfirst into a tree well. 90% of the time you cannot get out without help. Friends caught up with me and pulled me out. My struggles resulted in lots of snow down my clothing so I was totally wet. Getting back to the car was grueling. I had difficulty standing and coordinating my skis. I was shaking all over.

This is mild hypothermia. The treatment for this is to get out of the wet clothes and dry off. Heat packs will not help and may turn off the shivering response. Hot fluids with sugar will help the person's body to produce their own heat. It takes two quarts of hot fluids to raise the core temperature one degree though.

For more severe hypothermia see: Field Guide to Wilderness Medicine: Auerbach, Donner, and Weiss or Mountaineering by the Mountaineers.

So how do we prevent hypothermia. It is important to consider the materials you are wearing. For example "cotton kills". Why? The cotton fibers are hollow and carry a negative charge, they will absorb and retain positively charged water. Cotton fibers can hold up to 25 times their own weight in water; then they refuse to dry out.

Wool is much better. It only absorbs 30 % of its own weight. Down, even when treated to repel water, loses its ability to loft and keep you warm when wet. For safety, synthetic fabrics and insulations like polyester and nylon are best. They only absorb .4 to 4% of their weight in water. You can also wring them out to reduce water even more.

If you are trying to get back to the trailhead wet, and you have rain gear put this on. It will reduce the cooling effect of the wind.

Joe Pachak, 1950-2025

Carol Patterson



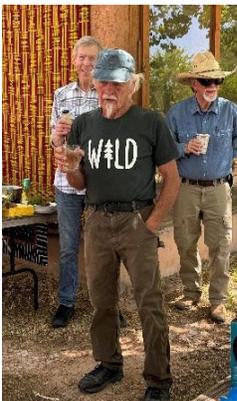
Joe Pachak, 1950-2025

I knew Joe as far back as the nineties when we would cross paths in the field looking at petroglyphs in Utah, Colorado, New Mexico, and Arizona. I cannot name a site he had not seen and vice versa. I admired his patience recreating petroglyph panels in exact replication that are painted on the walls at the Edge of the Cedars Museum in Blanding. I love his cast concrete sculptures of strange and wild anthropomorphs and quadrupeds. (ECSM)



He told me that the horned anthro was holding

a ring that holds a reflection of you! (photo CP)



His birthday party this summer, was attended by the whole town to celebrate the 'wild' man. (picture by CP)

His love for archaeoastronomy is encapsulated by his solar alignment sculpture depicting animals and humans carved out on the surface. The sun shone through their silhouettes during the solstices, and the animals danced across the adjacent wall as the sun moved toward the horizon. (pictures from the web)





The staff at the museum writes: "The late artist Joe Pachak gifted Edge of Cedars State Park Museum with an amazing piece of sculpture that recognizes the important solar events of the solstices and equinoxes. The "Sun Marker" sets off a number of beautiful "fireworks" on these occasions, but on the winter solstice a favorite involves "The Sentinel," a human form that captures the light of the setting sun on the image of a bighorn sheep. Edge of the Cedars offers "Happy Solstice" greetings as the days slowly grow longer and a bit brighter. Speaking of Pachak, Edge of the Cedars said, "His spirit lives on in Bluff through the burning, transforming art into a powerful moment of reflection and renewal. As we welcome the return of the light, we hold Joe in our hearts and give thanks for all he gave to this community." (photo and article from *San Juan Reporter*, vol 111 no. 13, December 24, 2025).

What I loved most about his work was his belief in its 'spirit.' Everything that he showed me came with a story about its personality, its spirit. He knew that I shared the same belief, that the artist expresses the spirit of an object. His fawn is so beautiful, I told him I could build a house around just that piece. His trout swimming through kelp carved out of a solid piece of solid wood just amazes me.



Fawn with Joe in the background. Swimming trout. (photo by CP)

He showed me his latest work creating a Meadowlark. But it was not the simple form that impressed me. He explained that each wire is placed in concert with concepts he understood about the entanglement of other universes, both cosmic and terrestrial. He made me look closely at the wire arrangements inside the chest and neck of the bird. "Within our lifeforms and throughout the universe, everything is perfectly connected."



Meadowlark on display for a day. (photo by CP)



Lin Ostler, son Raini, and Joe. (photo by Lin Ostler) Burial service with rising cloud. (photo by CP)



**Along with so many of his friends and the Town of Bluff, I will surely miss him,
Carol Patterson,
Bluff, Utah**

Remembering Joe Pachak

Carol Patterson and the people of Bluff

Bluff lost a truly beloved soul this week. Our friend and neighbor, Joe Pachak, was found on his property – his place of creation and solace – where he spent so much of his life making art and caring for the land he loved.

Joe wasn't just an artist; he was a keeper of traditions, a gentle teacher, and a constant presence in our community. His knowledge of the land and its stories grounded us. His kindness and quiet wisdom touched everyone who crossed his path.

The photo is of Joe at the opening of the Bluff River Trail in April 2025 as he explained his discovery of the mammoth/bison petroglyph.

His spirit is woven into this place – in the sandstone, in the river, in the sky, and in every person he inspired. Our thoughts are with his family, friends and all who loved him.

Thank you, Joe, for everything you gave to this community. 🧡 (Bluffutah.org)



Joe on the Sand Island Trail. Unenhanced image, from Malotki and Wallace 2011

In the early 1990s, after assisting Crow Canyon Archaeological Center researchers in recording the Sand Island rock art site near Bluff, Utah, local artist Joe Pachak spotted what he believed to be a petroglyph depicting a Columbian mammoth, one of two species of woolly mammoth formerly endemic to North America and arguably the older of the two, superimposed with what also appeared to be a Pleistocene bison.

The only other depiction of Pleistocene megafauna in the entire state of Utah is the so-called Moab Mastodon two hours to the north, and a lot of researchers view it with skepticism. Pachak contacted Northern Arizona University linguistic anthropologist and rock art specialist Ekkehart Malotki to come and investigate. In 2011, Malotki [published](#) his conclusions that the panel does indeed depict a Pleistocene mammoth and bison, dating to about 13,000–11,000 years ago.

In honor of both the supposed mammoth and bison images themselves, and the curious little controversy that came to swirl around them, the 2012 Bluff Arts Festival featured a workshop led by Pachak and some friends on how to construct a life-size mammoth out of natural building materials. On the night of the Winter Solstice, joined by an impressive crowd of revelers from the local and surrounding communities, they festively burned it to the ground.



The Bluff Mammoth of Winter 2012–2013. Image: R. E. Burrillo Archaic Bison

It was heralded as a lovely and lively event, so much so that Pachak and his artistic colleagues were compelled to do it again the following year. They did it yet again in December of 2014, this time deciding to shake things up a bit by erecting an enormous Pleistocene bison instead of a mammoth (*Bison antiquus* being the presumed second cast member in the controversial rock art).



Dancing Bears 2018 Wild Coyote 2017 (Blufffoto 2018)

“Our good friend Joe Pachak has once again elevated the unique art form of giant sculpture that's intended to be burned on the night of the Solstice. The longest night of the year has become Bluff's unofficial community holiday, with events (like the one [@cedarmesafriends](#) is having), parties amongst friends and resolutions for the year to come.” Josh Ewing. “ A most excellent capture of Joe and the Solstice sculpture. With the cirrus clouds wisping about its head, this animated cloud-breathing coyote of canyon country has no equal.” (Michael Edward Gerner. 2018)

His spirit lives on in Bluff through the many solstices he shared with us. For years, he generously offered his beautiful sculptures for burning, transforming art into a powerful moment of reflection and renewal. As we welcome the return of the light, we hold Joe in our hearts and give thanks for all he gave to this community. (*Town of Bluff*)

[#edgeofthecedars](#) [#science](#). 🌞🕒🌞🕒🌞🕒🌞

[#joepachak](#) [#sunmarker](#) [#outdoorart](#) [#utahscanyoncountry](#) [#utahmuseums](#) [#edgeofthecedars](#) [#edgeofthecedarsstatepark](#) [#desertart](#) [#utah](#) [#visitutah](#) [#yesvisitutah](#) [#cedarmesa](#) [#cedarmesautah](#) [#utahstateparks](#) [#utahdnr](#)

Calendar, URARA Events and Trips

2026	
January TBD	Annual board retreat Moab
June 25-29	ARARA Symposium Great Falls https://arara.wildapricot.org/Conference-General-Info-2026
Oct 8-12	URARA Symposium, Bluff, Utah

URARA symposia and field trips (FT) are available to members only. Members will be notified by email when a field trip opens for registration, usually about 3-4 weeks before a trip. If a trip is full when you try to register, your name is added to a wait list. You will get another notification if and when someone drops out and you can be added to the trip. <https://urara.wildapricot.org/>

CRAA and URARA are currently doing monthly ZOOM presentations on alternate months. CRAA will have January, March, and May (Summer months off), and October (December off).

URARA will have February, April, Sept, and November. <https://coloradorockart.org/>

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

Desert Archaeological Society (DAS), St George, meets on the second Wednesday of the month. Saturday field trips once a month. Accessible on-line via Utah Tech University ICL . <https://reg125.imperisoft.com/ICL/ProgramDetail/3837333038/Registration.aspx>

San Diego Rock Art Association (SDRAA) meets on line until further notice. <https://sandiegorockart.org/meetings>

The Utah State Historic Preservation Office has occasional events and tours. See <https://ushpo.utah.gov/the-events/>

URARA Board and Officers

Utah Rock Art Research Association: Box 511324, Salt Lake City, UT 84151-1324.

www.utahrockart.org . Contact information - utahrockartresearchassoc@gmail.com

2025 URARA Board and Officers

President	Rick Mathews
Vice President	Carol Patterson
Secretary	Nancy Lombardo
Treasurer	Carol Duecker
	John McHugh
	Darlene Koerner
	Tina Tan
	Margo Mahoney
	Rein van West

Committee Chairs and Appointees

Tribal Liaison	Carol Patterson
Historian/Archives	Keith Fessenden
Website/Board Advisor	Troy Scotter
Membership Coordinator	Deb Mitchell
Funds Manager	Pat Sullivan
Conservation/Preservation	Kent Williams
Education	John McHugh
Field Trip Coordinator	Tina Tan
Symposium Chair	Pat Sullivan
Publications Editor	Dennis DeVore
Vestiges Editor	Ben Everitt
Nominations/Governance	Diana Acerson

URARA Conservation Coordinators

<u>BLM District</u>	<u>Field Office</u>	<u>Coordinator</u>
Coordinator Lead		
Canyon Country	Moab	Pam & Quent Baker
Canyon Country	Monticello	Werner Duecker, Carol Duecker
Paria River	Kanab	Jeff Frey
Color Country	Cedar City	Diana Acerson
Color Country	St. George	Nina Bowen
Color Country	Richfield	Steve Acerson
Green River	Vernal	Tim Sweeney, Darlene Koerner
Green River	Price	Layne Miller
West Desert	Fillmore	Jeff Roberts
West Desert	Salt Lake	Don & Adele Leavitt