

# The Uncompahgre Journal

June 2021    CHIPETA CHAPTER OF THE COLORADO ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY    Volume 38 Issue 6

**Editor's note:** the following is the second part of Bill Harris's reflections on his 37 years as a member of the Chipeta Chapter of CAS. The first part was published in the June 2020 issue of this journal, which can be found on the chapter website at [chipetachaptercas.org](http://chipetachaptercas.org).



**By Bill Harris**

## Part II

The late 1980's – early 1990's time frame was especially busy. The Chipeta Chapter recorded the Escalante Game Drive site with the help of Ron Rood, Jon

Horn, and other folks from Alpine Archaeological Consultants. Alan Reed wrapped up that initial work at the site with an article in the 1997 edition of "Utah Archaeology". In his report Alan makes a strong argument that the game drive system functioned by driving game animals up the slope rather than down, as assumed by the early-day discoverers of the site.

Just a few years ago Alpine returned to the site and did some high tech modeling, using a drone. The line-of-sight modeling showed that many of the hunting blinds were in optimum positions for monitoring and dispatching large game coming up the slope.

In 1989 and 1990 I joined the Grand Gulch/Wetherill Research Project. The project focused on locating the archaeological sites visited by the early explorers into the canyons of S.E. Utah. We recorded the sites and specifically looked for inscriptions left by members of those early digs.

Those inscriptions and the dates that accompanied them turned out to be the key to pinpointing the provenience of artifacts that are housed in museums back east. The details of our efforts can be found in "Cowboys and Cavedwellers" written by Ray Williamson and Fred Blackburn. Some of my most memorable outdoor escapades have been with Fred.



L-R – Chuck Cole, Bill Harris, Katie Steele, Kathy Harris, Jon Horn, Sally Cole and Zeb Miracle near Blue Creek panel.

*(continued next page)*



Over the years I've led dozens of field trips to archaeological sites. My favorites, hands down, have been to the West End of Montrose County. The combination of rock art, architectural features, and rock shelters on a remote, scenic landscape is just the best.

My favorite West End site is the Blue Creek rock art panel. It took me years to find it, but thanks to the efforts

of Dave Gann and Zeb Miracle I found it in 2012. The rock art is Ute, depicting a battle scene among other elements. The multi-colored shield figure is amazing. We last visited the site in October 2019 with rock art guru, Sally Cole.

Another fun project was the re-location and recording of a Betty and Harold Huscher site. With the help of Steve Baker, Russ Barr, Mike Ward, Joe Oglesby, Rand Greubel, Brian Haas, Leigh Ann Hunt and Sonny Shelton we relocated and recorded Huschers' HMF site in 2017.

It took some sleuthing and luck to find the site in the Middle Fork of Escalante Creek. Baker's copy of Huschers' 1939 field notes was the critical link to finding the site. Details of the project can be found in the Winter 2019 issue of *Southwestern Lore*.

I've been extremely fortunate to work with archaeologists who are not only knowledgeable, but supportive of the efforts of avocationalists. To contribute to our understanding of those who came before us is a real privilege. Sure, field trips are fun and interesting, but for me, the ultimate thrill is doing archaeology – that sense of discovery is what it's all about.



Jon Horn, Sally Cole, Katie Steele, Doug Steele and Zeb Miracle viewing the Blue Creek panel.



### **The Squint and Juanita Moore Scholarship for 2021 Congratulations to Zach Vincent!**

The 2021 recipient of the Squint and Juanita Moore Scholarship is Zach Vincent. Zach is a 2021 graduate of Montrose High School where he took many advanced placement courses and was highly active including being a member of the marching band. He served a 9-week internship at History Colorado and plans to attend St. Andrews University in Scotland. His goal is to be a historian.

Created in honor of Chipeta Chapter founding member Carlyle "Squint" Moore and his wife, the scholarship is awarded each year to a deserving high school senior or college student intending to enroll or already enrolled in an Anthropology or Archaeology program. Students can apply online at collegeXpress—and note that the deadline is April 1.

The scholarship is managed by the Montrose Community Foundation. If you wish to donate, please send your tax deductible donations to the Montrose Community Foundation, PO Box 3020, Montrose, CO 81402.

## President's Corner

by Sally Johnson

*Photo by Sally Johnson*

Well, summer will be here soon, which means that we will be having our annual picnic. Please save the date from the poster and note that it is at Cerise Park, off of Chipeta Road. News alert: we can have beer or wine at the picnic!!

The board actually met in person this month, which was great—and we accomplished a lot on the agenda. The biggest decision was the choice of meals for the State Annual Meeting. We still do not have a tech person to help with the online meeting aspect. The state feels that we should have a hybrid type meeting (most attending in person, with some attending in a zoom-like meeting room). Another item up in the air is whether to have a social hour on

Friday: we have discovered that there is not a traveling bar for the Ute Museum. So we are looking at other options or none at all. The biggest “to do” item on the list is to find a deal for “Swag” bags. These bags would have the meeting sponsors along with great goodies, and a place to put all the items you have received at the meeting. Would someone be willing to google or chat with a local person for a deal on Swag bags? (We are trying to keep the cost down for registration, and everyone likes a deal). Please let me know.

On the membership note, an email was sent for overdue membership dues. So if you have not renewed I would be glad to meet with you at the picnic or renew online (much easier).

It was great to get to the west end of Montrose—Bedrock/Paradox area—for a field trip. The wind was blowing, but it did stop just in time for the talk around the campfire. I want to thank Leigh Ann for a great trip, and of course, the great food shared. One important thing to mention was our chapter is great at picking up the trash that someone has left at these sites. I learned a walking stick is great to stack cans on the pole and the treasures that are found. There was a nice knife left behind on the trail, but most surprising was the Bluetooth speaker that was still charged. Thank you members for making this a great group and for the stories/knowledge shared by all.

Sally



The Uncompahgre Journal  
Published 9 times annually by the  
Chipeta Chapter  
of the

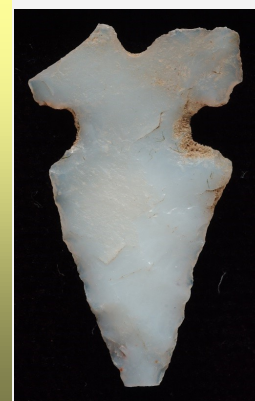
Colorado Archaeological Society.

P.O. Box 593

Montrose, CO 81402

Submissions for publication may be emailed to:

Dave Batten, david.batten@enmu.edu





## Gilsonite Mining near Dragon, Utah, Field Trip

by Leigh Ann Hunt

*Photos by Leigh Ann Hunt*



On May 27 George Decker led a field trip following the Uinta Railway road over Baxter Pass to see the gilsonite mining areas near the ghost town of Dragon, Utah, south of the Ouray Wildlife Refuge. Although a long drive, it was a fascinating glimpse at the effort made to mine and ship the oily black rock for use in insulation, varnish, and gasoline from 1905 to about 1939. Then the train was discontinued, and the mine towns and facilities quickly faded away. We visited concrete foundations, mine dumps, stone basements, an intact root cellar near log cabins, and remnants of the railroad features. As a bonus, along the way we also found a prehistoric Fremont pictograph panel and rockshelter site. Many thanks to George for organizing this adventure.

Steve Slade and Frank Howell assess the gilsonite vein (*left*).

Jim Schultz checking out a root cellar in the Dragon townsite (*right*).





# Chipeta Annual Summer Picnic



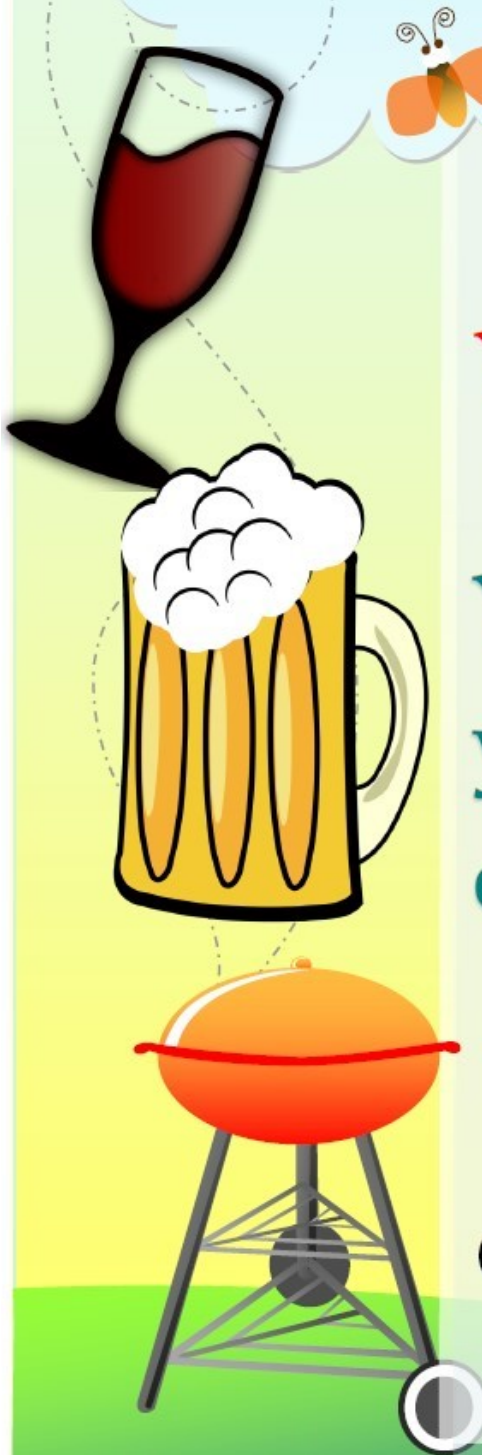
**Bring a side dish  
Meat to grill and  
Your own plate/fork**

**Yes you can bring  
your favorite wine  
or beer**

July 21st at 5pm -????

Cerise Park (Shanes Way)

From Townsend, turn west on Main Street, cross the river, take a left turn (S) on Chipeta Road and then another left on Shanes Way





## Paradox Field Trip by Leigh Ann Hunt

*Photos by Leigh Ann Hunt, except where noted*

Chipeta Chapter hosted an overnight field trip to the West End this month for Chipeta and Grand Junction members, which included about 15 people and visited 7 or 8 sites. The trip was organized by Leigh Ann Hunt and Jim Liewer, and the first day was led by our old pals Glade Hadden of Paradox and Pete Davis. Included was the Sleeping Buffalo and Shaman petroglyph sites in Paradox Valley, and Basketmaker petroglyphs at Hamm Canyon in Big Gypsum canyon.



Approaching the Shaman panel area in Paradox Valley



A canyon pour-off in Big Gypsum Valley. Basketmaker petroglyphs are found there.



We also saw an unusual petroglyph boulder on the Dolores River that features several large figures bearing two "antennae" on their heads, a fascinating style of our area (**above left**).

*(continued next page)*





Rand Greubel was also on hand to help explain the huge and mysterious piled-rock fort site known as the Maze (**left**). Here, people built a complex of massive stacked walls with no apparent habitation, on a mesa near Basin, Colorado. It probably dates from PII times around 1000 A.D.


We were glad to meet the new BLM archaeologist from the Uncompahgre Field Office, Collin Price, who joined us on Saturday. Our thanks to all who brought food to the campout potluck, and to the Rimrockers Historical Society for use of

the Uravan campground and for holding special hours for our group to tour the museum in Naturita.

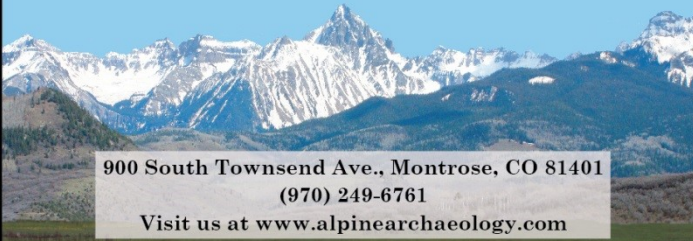
In short, it was a great weekend with a very high proportion of local archaeologists to provide background at all the sites.



Glade Hadden brings the past to life in the Paradox Valley (photo by Rand Greubel)



**ALPINE ARCHAEOLOGICAL CONSULTANTS, INC.**  
*Proud to support the Colorado Archaeological Society*



900 South Townsend Ave., Montrose, CO 81401  
 (970) 249-6761  
 Visit us at [www.alpinearchaeology.com](http://www.alpinearchaeology.com)



## Western Swell Rock Art

by Susan Thiele and James Cates

*Photos by the authors*

The Rock Art in the Western San Rafael Swell continues to surprise me! In particular, I had been fascinated by pictures of sites in the Ferron area and was determined to find at least some of them in April. Since we didn't have an ATV to drive up the very steep road to the mesa top, we decided to see what we could locate in two dayhikes.

On the first day, we needed both sources below to make the correct turns on unmarked roads, to locate the Sandal Tracks. These full-size petroglyphs lie on ground-level outcrops of the Molen Reef, carved into the heavy, dark desert varnish. We were surprised at the large number and variety of them in a small area (**right**). One panel showed a design reminiscent of glasses (**left**), and we pondered the resemblance to the actual Fremont eyepieces in the Museum of the San Rafael in Castle Dale (**below**). Making a loop hike



on the return, we located a low cliffside with some delightful petroglyphs.



Rare Fremont Goggles  
Woven reed and grass  
with leather strip.

The  
next  
day,

we headed straight towards the Ferron Box pictographs, having made sense of the unmarked roads the previous day. The pictographs could be seen from the Rim quite clearly with binoculars. We then easily found the cairned route down off the cliff to the creek, where



social trails helped us to find the main attraction, the Rainbow panel (**left**). I was amazed at the strength of color and intricacy of this panel as well as the adjacent one.

*(continued next page)*





A line of now-chalk-outlined figures tucked under an overhang has been given the name, Segregation panel (**left**). You can get closer to this panel by taking an upper spur trail. Since we had also found more Sandal Tracks on the cliff-top above, we pondered the possibility of a ceremonial connection between all the Sandal Tracks and this magnifi-

cent and very special site. Although we didn't find them, there are supposed to be several panels across the creek and also further along the cliff, if you have the additional time to explore. It would appear that lighting is best in the mornings.

We didn't have time this visit to visit the Kings Crown Panel and the many panels in the Molen Seep, but by process of elimination, found their access roads for next time!

On the way home, we explored another site in Ferron Canyon, not far from the Dry Wash pull-off. The juggler is a remarkable panel for its condition and access (**right**). "Why here?" we asked! As on every trip, we learned of yet another site for next time in this area: Short Canyon.



Resources:

Probasco, Christian

2019 *Backroads of Utah's San Rafael Swell*. Western Books Publishing, Salt Lake City.

GJ Hikes <http://www.gjhikes.com>





## From the editor: Taphonomy

Taphonomy is the study of what happens to living things after they die. Geologists, who originally coined the term, are most interested in the processes that result in eventual fossilization, or similar incorporation into rock. Archaeologists are most interested in what happens between death and the time we find the remains—and especially how those processes might act to confuse us about the meaning of the remains, and how we might use an enhanced knowledge of these processes to eliminate the misinterpretation of those remains. At the end of last month's column, I informally and rather inaccurately expanded the meaning of the term to include all artifacts, living and dead, that are used and eventually discarded by humans. I should have used the term "formation processes." This is a huge topic, so I'll restrict myself this month to taphonomy as properly defined.

Humans make use of lots of living things, and plenty of other living things associate themselves with humans. When we dig into an archaeological site, we face the sometimes difficult task of determining which objects are meaningful and which are not. We also need to be able to determine whether the absence of certain things might be meaningful. In short, we need to learn more about processes of decomposition and decay.

Here are some of the things we know. Some environments are better for preservation than others. Water-logged sites preserve organic matter really well. Extremely dry sites—think dry caves, like the ones in Utah that I wrote about in April—also preserve organic matter very well. The acidity of the soil affects preservation. Objects that have been burned, but not burned up, will survive quite well in otherwise unfavorable environments. Teeth, being already mostly mineral, will last a long time. Big and dense objects will generally last longer than small and delicate ones, although hair will last a long time in some situations. Remarkably, DNA will survive quite well in some soils. Microbiologists are now identifying human species from the sediments at Eurasian paleolithic sites.

For many years, accumulations of bone in African sites were attributed to the actions of the hominins that were also found there. Thus, hominins were credited with preying on and eating a wide variety of large mammals. It seemed rather remarkable that such small animals with small teeth and no claws, armed only with unhafted stone implements, could bring down such a menagerie of larger and dangerous animals. Taphonomy eventually provided a more realistic explanation: collections of bones result from a variety of natural processes, like water action. Rain, for example, washes bones from dry hillsides into ravines, and they stay afloat perhaps until the water slows down enough in a pond or eddy, where the bones will remain until the water evaporates. The association between hominins and large mammals is probably spurious. There are also agents that collect bones in caves, like hyaenas and porcupines.

Knowing this is only helpful if we can also learn to distinguish between the different agents and conditions that create the archaeological record, and that is a major focus of archaeological research that transcends the different categories of living things. Paleoethnobotanists, faunal analysts, biological anthropologists, and geologists, among others, are all actively involved in research to better understand the processes that biological materials endure on their way to incorporation in an archaeological site, and thus to understand their meaning to the humans involved.





**Chipeta Chapter**  
Colorado Archaeological Society  
P.O. Box 593  
Montrose, Colorado 81402



## Membership Application

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Street or RR Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

(email required to receive Chipeta Chapter newsletters & field trip info)

Check One:

\_\_\_\_\_ New

\_\_\_\_\_ Renewal

**Annual Dues\*** (includes state CAS dues): Check one

\_\_\_\_\_ Family (2 or more members same household) .....\$40

\_\_\_\_\_ Individual .....\$35

\_\_\_\_\_ Student (Circle if Individual or Family) .....\$25

\_\_\_\_\_ Secondary (Circle one) Individual (\$10) or Family... (\$15)

\_\_\_\_\_ Opt out of printed *Southwest Lore*

*\*Southwest Lore* is the journal of the Colorado Archaeological Society: print copies are mailed quarterly, and a .pdf is posted to Member365 for download.

Photos by Dennis DeVore



## Code of Ethics

As a member of the Colorado Archaeological Society, I pledge to:

- Uphold local, state, and federal antiquities laws.
- Respect the property rights of landowners.
- Report vandalism to appropriate authorities.
- Support only scientifically and legally conducted archaeological activities.
- Conduct field and/or laboratory activities using professionally accepted standards.
- Not condone the sale, exchange, or purchase of artifacts obtained from illegal activities.
- Be sensitive to the cultural histories and spiritual practices of groups that are the subject of archaeological investigation.
- Accept the responsibility, if serving as principal investigator, to publish the results and make the collection available for further study.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Other Family Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Make checks payable to "Colorado Archaeological Society" and mail the signed application to:

Chipeta Chapter  
P.O. Box 593, Montrose, CO 81402



## CHIPETA CHAPTER BOARD MEMBERS

- **President:** Sally Johnson, [sjcas1@gmail.com](mailto:sjcas1@gmail.com)
- **Vice Pres:** Leigh Ann Hunt, [lahunt970@gmail.com](mailto:lahunt970@gmail.com)
- **Secretary:** Annette Butts, [annettebutts63@gmail.com](mailto:annettebutts63@gmail.com)
- **Treasurer:** Jim Douras, [mtncpa@gmail.com](mailto:mtncpa@gmail.com)
- **CAS Rep:** Nick Ard, [nrard@bresnan.net](mailto:nrard@bresnan.net)

## STANDING COMMITTEES

- **Newsletter:** Dave Batten, [david.batten@enmu.edu](mailto:david.batten@enmu.edu)
- **Membership:** Sally Johnson, [sjcas1@gmail.com](mailto:sjcas1@gmail.com)
- **Site Steward Coordinator (acting):** Leigh Ann Hunt, [lahunt970@gmail.com](mailto:lahunt970@gmail.com)
- **Library:** Linda Manske, [manske46@gmail.com](mailto:manske46@gmail.com)

## OTHER COMMITTEES AND POSTS

- **Scholarship:** Jon Horn / Bill Harris / Fred Henderson, [trlgpa48@gmail.com](mailto:trlgpa48@gmail.com)

## CHIPETA CHAPTER WEBSITE

- <https://www.chipetachaptercas.org>

## TO JOIN OR RENEW:

- Go to the Chipeta Chapter website and follow the membership links.

### Program for Avocational Archaeological Certification (PAAC)

#### PAAC Contacts

##### Rebecca Simon

[rebecca.simon@state.co.us](mailto:rebecca.simon@state.co.us)  
Assistant State Archaeologist/  
303-866-4671

##### Dave Upchurch

PAAC Coordinator  
[uphill1354@gmail.com](mailto:uphill1354@gmail.com)

### Want More?

Archaeology Southwest is a great link to find out about current issues and events relating to Southwest Archaeology.

### Field Trip Committee

Leigh Ann Hunt, Joe Oglesby, and George Decker

For more information on upcoming field trips and to sign up, please contact the Field Trip Leader

*Masthead photo courtesy of Carol Patterson. All other unattributed photos are by the editor.*