

# The Uncompahgre Journal

April 2026 CHIPETA CHAPTER OF THE COLORADO ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY Volume 43 Issue 4

## Our April Presentation

### Mark Your Calendar

**Apr 1:** [Montrose Historical Society](#) monthly meeting with Elaine Hale Jones on the Gunnison Tunnel. Pioneer Room, Friendship Hall, 7:00 pm.

**Apr 8:** [San Juan Basin Archaeological Society](#) monthly meeting with Angela Huster on cotton and specialization among the Hohokam. Lyceum, Fort Lewis College Center of Southwest Studies, 7:00 pm.

**Apr 15:** [Chipeta Chapter](#) monthly meeting with Bruce Bradley on lithic manufacture. Montrose United Methodist Church, 19 S. Park Avenue, 7:00 pm.

**Apr 22:** [CAS-GJ](#) monthly meeting with Jody Patterson on Aerial Archaeology on the Colorado Plateau. Redlands United Methodist Church, 527 Village Way, GJ, 7:00 pm.

### Knapping Stone—a Demonstration and Discussion

by Bruce Bradley

The fundamentals of controlled flaking of stone will be demonstrated and discussed. Ancient artifacts, casts and replicas will be available to examine and handle, demonstrating not only the evolution of these technologies but also the skill and symbolic meanings they represent through time and space.



Photo courtesy of Bruce Bradley



## Our April Speaker

**Bruce Bradley** is Emeritus Professor at the University of Exeter, UK. He has extensive experience with Stone Age technologies and experimental archaeology, received a BA in anthropology at the University of Arizona and PhD in archaeology at Cambridge University, UK. His early research was focused on the North American Southwest and Great Plains Paleoamerican.

Since then, his research has included the Upper Palaeolithic of Russia and France, horse domestication in Central Asia, the Mesolithic of Polar Siberia, Early Bronze Age in Ireland and Wales, and the Lower Palaeolithic of India and South Africa. His current areas of research deal with prehistoric Pueblo archaeology of the American Southwest and the early peopling of the Americas. He is internationally known for his knapping skills. He lives near Cortez, Colorado.



At our March meeting I enjoyed a brief visit with Linda Manske, our very own Chipeta Chapter Librarian. Our chapter library is kept at the office of Alpine Archaeology. Ask Linda for details if you ever wish to look back at past issues of our newsletter in the hard copy! Keeping a printed history of our chapter is an important thing to have, tho it be often overlooked.

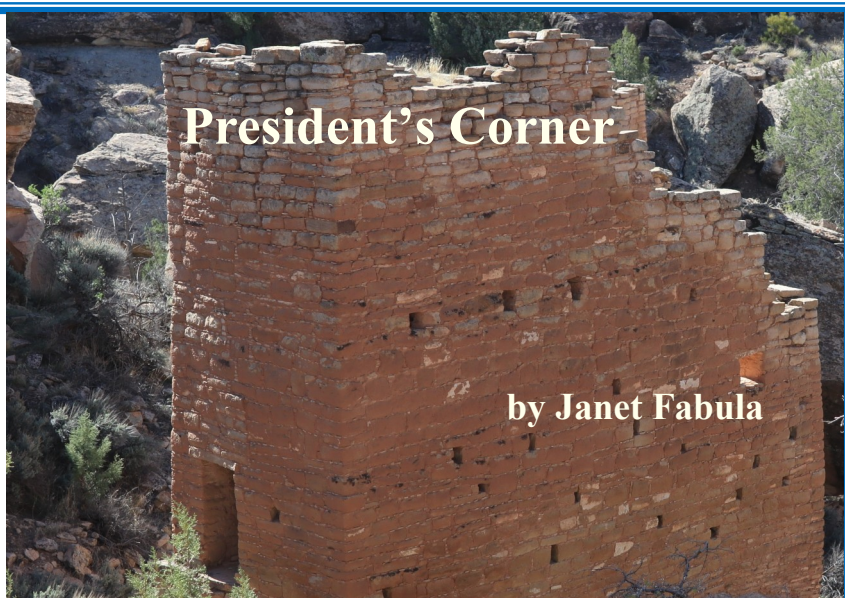
On the subject of library, let me share a quote I like - "Each of us is a living library, full of experiences, which, through conversation, can be read, understood and learned from." Rene Gothoni, *The Unknown Pilgrim*.

Some business items for your perusal: Remember that our April 15 speaker is lithics expert Bruce Bradley, and at 6:30 we will provide light refreshments with a time to visit together before the meeting.

Sally is offering an overnight Green River Utah field trip on April 21. She is also hoping to add to this field trip a visit to 9 Mile Canyon on the 22nd or 23rd while we are already in the basic area. Call Sally with questions.

As always, if you enjoyed our speakers, remember to contribute to the cash midden, when you see the box, at our meetings.

Our next meeting will be Wednesday April 15. Third Wednesday of the month.



## March 24 Chipeta Field Trip

by Leigh Ann Hunt

A good group of members toured three local archaeological sites on March 24. Two of these locations were the

subject of important archaeological excavations in the past, and both are located very near our hometown. The two rock shelters contained evidence of habitation either from the Ute period or from a much earlier Formative period, as well as incised petroglyphs or "sharpening grooves" arranged in patterns such as turkey tracks, chevrons, trees, etc.

The Metate Draw site also contains two boulders that exhibit bedrock grinding features, which are a little rare in this area. Both rock shelters were previously vandalized by pot hunters prior to their scientific investigations. The final site has a small but captivating image of a person wearing a top hat and a circle on their chest, very reminiscent of a peace medal from the 1800s.

After the bumpy ride into each of the sites, and the unseasonably warm walk, the trip ended up at the Rocking W cheese and ice cream shop on Highway 348, which we now highly recommend!



*Photo by Valerie Drake*

**Trip guide Leigh Ann Hunt shares a story with the group**

### **A Late style quartzite arrowhead**

Leigh Ann found this in the area of the Top Hat panel near Big Sandy Wash. It was admired -- and then respectfully left in place.



*Photo by Leigh Ann Hunt*

*Continued next page*



*Photo by Leigh Ann Hunt*

**Incised rock art on the cliff: was it purely utilitarian or symbolic? We don't really know**

**And more, from Janet Fabula**

13 people went on the March 24 field trip. This photo is in Metate Draw. The weather was fine. The views were peaceful and the hikes were just right. Afterwards we sat around and visited at Rockin W Dairy while enjoying ice cream. Perfect end to a perfect day.



*photo by Janet Fabula*

## From the Editor

Potatoes. For a long time I considered them one of mother nature's most perfect foods, along with bananas (and of course, ice cream). They're easy: just wash one and put it in the oven for an hour. With butter, salt, and pepper you have a plateful of delicious carbohydrates.

More recently, I've discovered that—like the banana—nature doesn't get to take all the credit for the potato. Like with most things, humans poked and prodded potatoes to be what they are now; wild potatoes species are not nearly so bountiful. The wild Four Corners potato tubers are quite small, topping out at about an inch in diameter, with the majority being about half that. Still, they're quite nutritious: for the same amount of weight, the Four Corners potato contains twice as much protein and three times as much calcium and iron than modern spuds, among other nutrients.

*Solanum jamesii* is the scientific name of this southwest species, and it is one of only two potato species that are native to the United States. Its center of distribution is in the Mogollon country in southwestern New Mexico and southeastern Arizona, and it's partial to pinyon-juniper and ponderosa pine woodlands. Yet it is found now in isolated populations in many locations around the Four Corners area, including Pueblo Bonito in Chaco Canyon, and in environments that differ considerably from the P-J woodlands. Researchers suggest that the spread of this tuber was facilitated by Native American groups including Puebloans, Apache, and Navajo, all of whom still make use of the species.

Louderback et al. sought evidence of the use of these little potatoes in ground stone tools, such as manos and metates. Starch grains are microscopic in size, but they preserve very well. They are apparently unique to the plants in which they grew, and they can remain recognizable after many centuries, caught in the cranies of these ground stone tools. The team examined 401 tools from 14 sites in the area from southern NM and Arizona up to the four corners area into Colorado and Utah. They identified *S. jamesii* starch grains in 61 of those tools from nine sites, ranging in age from 10,900 years ago to as recent as 600 years ago. Four

of those sites had populations of *S. jamesii* still growing very close to the sites, of which three are far from the center of distribution of the wild plants. This suggests to the authors that the tubers had originally been cultivated by native people.

The authors argue that manipulation by humans influences the genetic diversity of plants in different locations. When humans take a set of tubers from one location and plant them in another location, they effectively narrow the genetic diversity of the new stands of potatoes. Neighboring local populations exhibiting remarkable differences in genetic characteristics probably are due to the transport of tubers from different parts of their native range. Interestingly, some of the isolated stands of *S. Jamesii* have lost the ability to flower and reproduce sexually, a change the authors attribute to likely human interference. The authors conclude that the Four Corners potato was moved often and over great distances by people, and should be included in the ranks of plants that were in the process of being domesticated.



### References

- Louderback LA, Wilson C, Wilks SL, Joyce K, Rickett S, Bamberg J, et al. 2026 Ancient use and long-distance transport of the Four Corners Potato (*Solanum jamesii*) across the Colorado Plateau: Implications for early stages of domestication. *PLoS One* 21(1): e0335671. <https://journals.plos.org/plosone/article?id=10.1371/journal.pone.0335671>

Note: the raffle deadline is midnight on May 15, 2026

## **ALICE HAMILTON SCHOLARSHIP ONLINE SWEEPSTAKES**

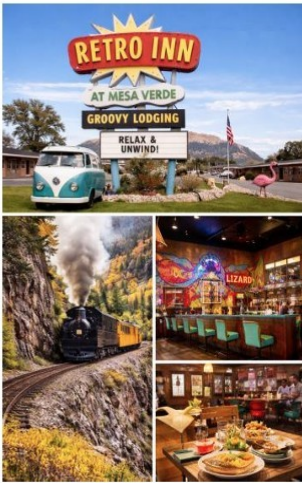
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### **Questions?**

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Submissions for publication may be emailed to Dave Batten, [david.batten@enmu.edu](mailto:david.batten@enmu.edu)

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### Membership Application

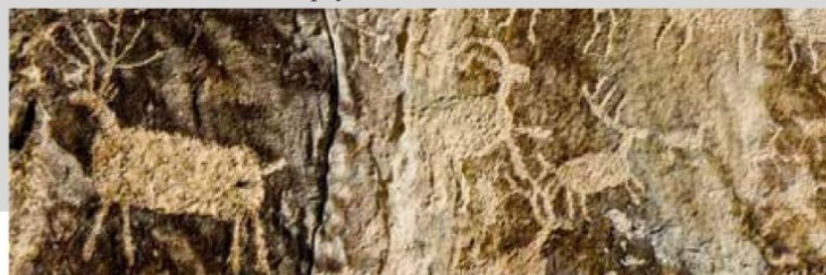
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(email required to receive Chipeta Chapter newsletters & field trip info)

Photos by Dennis DeVore



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### 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:

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- **Library:** Linda Manske, [library@chipetachaptercas.org](mailto:library@chipetachaptercas.org)

## CHIPETA CHAPTER WEBSITE

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

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

## Program for Avocational Archaeological Certification (PAAC)

For information, visit:

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## Next Month's Speaker

**May: Ellsworth LeBeau**

## 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 Bill Harris. All other unattributed photos are by the editor.*