

# The Uncompahgre Journal

May 2026

CHIPETA CHAPTER OF THE COLORADO ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

Volume 43 Issue 5

## Mark Your Calendar

**May 6:** [Montrose County Historical Society](#) monthly meeting with Dr. Brinnen Carter on Black Canyon recovery from last year's fire. Pioneer Room at Friendship Hall, Montrose County Fairgrounds, 7:00 pm.

**May 13:** [San Juan Basin Archaeological Society](#) monthly meeting with John Kappelman on continental collisions, climate change, and Africa's wildlife. Lyceum, Fort Lewis College Center of Southwest Studies, 7:00 pm. Also available on Zoom.

**May 20:** [Chipeta Chapter](#) monthly meeting with Ellsworth LeBeau on a Lakota perspective on geographical sites (*right*). Montrose United Methodist Church, 19 S. Park Avenue, 7:00 pm.

**May 27:** [CAS-GJ](#) monthly meeting with Joseph Weixelman on the Myth of the "Vanishing Anasazi." Redlands United Methodist Church, 527 Village Way, GJ, 7:00 pm.



## Our May Presentation

### Geographical Sites: A Lakota Perspective

by Ellsworth LeBeau

The purpose of this presentation is to provide to the listener, via oral tradition, geographical sites and their spiritual significance related to three questions Lakota have asked of themselves. Who am I, where did I come from and what is my purpose?

Ellsworth is a Lakota and member of the Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe in South Dakota and lives a semi-retired lifestyle in Grand Junction. He's doing things he always wanted to do including: travel, writing fiction, and poetry. Prior to coming to Grand Junction Ellsworth had served in a variety of positions: college president; professorships; a judgeship; grants administrator; law enforcement training officer; and, a K – 12

School Administrator. Ellsworth's early years at Catholic Indian boarding schools provided him with a strong educational curiosity, to ask questions and to log events that tweaked his personal curiosity. In exercising this curiosity Ellsworth added to his life learning experiences an enthusiastic study of the unusual, enigmas, and phenomena. Ellsworth has a Doctor of Education degree from the University of South Dakota.



Greetings to one and all in this beautiful transition Month of May. Some days are like winter! And some days are like summer, aren't they!

This newsletter will be the last until September. It is the custom of our Chipeta Chapter to take a summer vacation. Our last public meeting will be May 20, 2026. However, yes, we will still dutifully gather for our summer picnic.

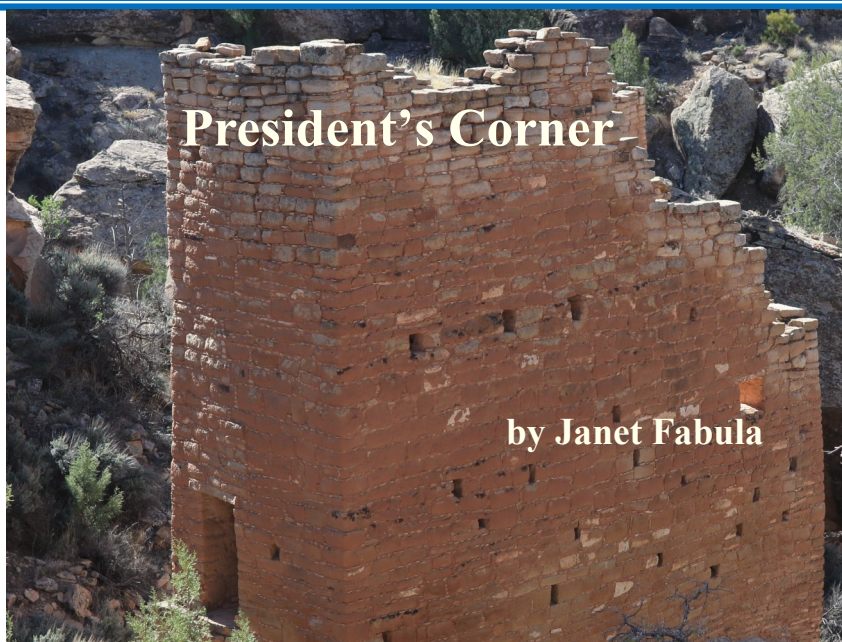
While I was surfing the net, I came across this advertisement on the website entitled Far Horizons Archaeological and Cultural Trips: "Tour the Four Corners of the American Southwest: Canyon de Chelly, Chaco Canyon, Mesa Verde, Acoma, Zuni, and Santa Fe. The Four Corners area of the American Southwest is one of the most breathtaking landscapes in the world. It is an enchanting land..." etc etc.

Just imagine! We live in an enchanting land; well, maybe we don't live *exactly* where the tour will go...never the less, I imagine quite some of our members have seen all these places! Just a little fun thought to ponder over, as you sit out in your enchanted back yard this spring. We are fortunate to live here, so close to such a rich archaeological area.

A reminder: this year we will gather August 19 at Cerise Park for our Chipeta Chapter picnic. Due to conflicting summer travel plans, the board thought it best to move the date to the 3rd Wednesday of August.

See you at our May 20 meeting. Don't miss it; our last speaker for the season is Ellsworth LeBeau. He will have some insights to share with us, that won't disappoint.

Janet



## President's Corner

by Janet Fabula



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



2130 East Main Street, Montrose, CO 81401  
(970) 249-6761  
Visit us at [www.alpinearchaeology.com](http://www.alpinearchaeology.com)

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](mailto:david.batten@enmu.edu)

## Report on the April Meeting



About 70 people turned out at the April Chipeta Chapter meeting to watch Dr. Bruce Bradley demonstrating stone tool knapping technology and to view the many examples of tools he brought from all over the world.



*Words and photos by Leigh Ann Hunt*

## Green River Trip

by Sally Johnson

Whew! What an exciting time we had in Green River for two days plus a bonus day to Nine-Mile Canyon on the third day. This trip filled up quickly with members new and old. The first day we visited some very well-known sites: Head of Sinbad, the lone warrior that I called Batman, and then on to the Black Dragon. We also stopped on the side of the interstate to view the tree of life. It always brings up how many panels we pass, going 80 miles an hour down the highway. The wind started picking up towards the end of the day, but otherwise it was wonderful and it ended with a great dinner at Ray's iconic restaurant in Green River.

The second day we started out with another great day of weather. On we went to go find what they called the Grassy Trails site, but we turned left toward a dead end sign, instead of right (which should've given the trip leader a hint that was not the place to go, but she didn't listen to her copilot and decided to keep going). Oh what an adventure we had for this group: we had to ford the Price river, and got up to some heavy duty four wheeling. Thank goodness for the big bad truck and its wonderful driver and copilot. They finally decided that we were lost or misdirected as some would say and we headed back. As we were eating lunch, someone pointed out "oh there's some ruins up there," and sure enough it was the site that we were looking for. We really found out the site was only about 500 yards from our lunch stop. So with those keen eyes that saw the ruin on the hill and some new mapping skills for Sally, we found out that the dead end was the right place to be.

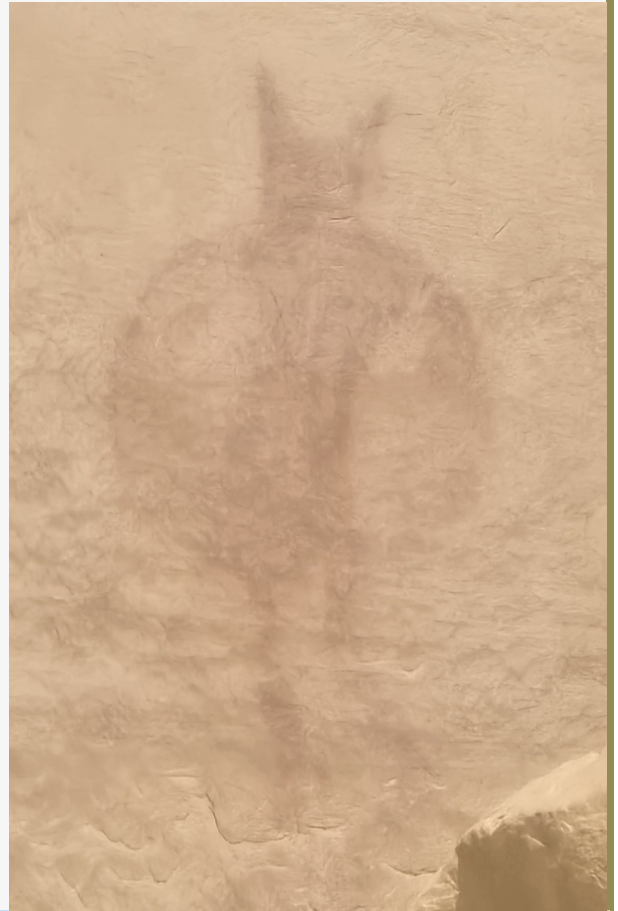
Once we got to that site, it was new to everyone. As our president put it this site was really unique, because we passed a farm or a ranch site along with railroad ties and there was evidence of where kids have been partying in the area. The insight was how we can go from ancient ancestor to the local youth along with some in between history all in one site; it was definitely a unique adventure. We did not make it to the other site because it was getting late, and a lot of us went to the John Wesley Powell Museum, and saw the special exhibit "Glen Canyon Exposed: Now and Then," which was quite remarkable.



Of course, the wind did pick up a little bit more at the end of the day. We met and had another great dinner at a local restaurant. The next day, many people went on to other trips or home, but I had a small group that wanted to visit Nine-Mile canyon. If you ever get to Nine-Mile and you have not been there, download the travel story app on Nine-Mile. It's great with a little bit of history, it is GPS enabled, and it tells you all the highlighted places to stop. I had not been there for probably about 10 years when the last time Chipeta went out and it snowed on us, but it has definitely changed, as I feel, to the better with all the signage and the pavement all the way through the canyon. It did turn chilly but our small group had another great day again. I always enjoy showing sites that I have been to but would like to revisit, to the newcomers. Yes, there has been talk of a couple other trips planned with this leader, so be sure to look out for those notices maybe in the fall.

*continued*

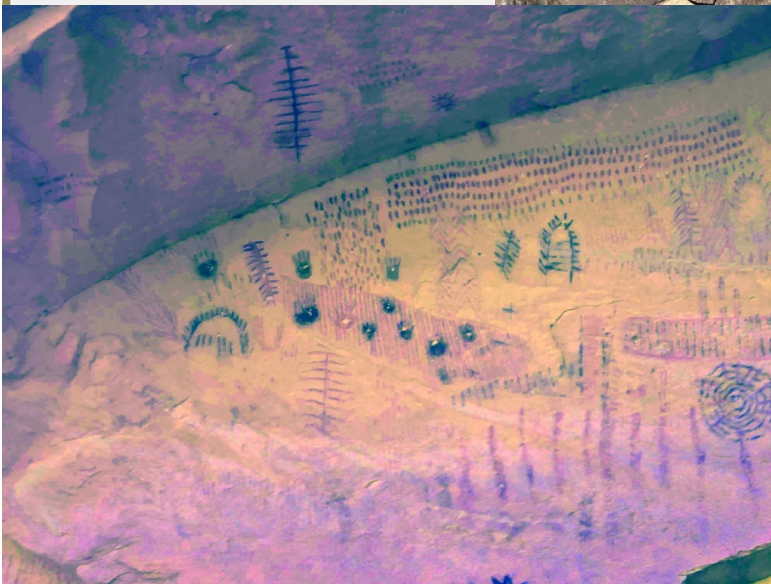
**If you didn't go on Sally's field trip, here's what you missed!**



Photos courtesy of:  
Sally Johnson  
Leigh Ann Hunt



*continued*



*continued*



*The End*

# SUMMER GATHERING for Chipeta CAS

*August 19th*

**Cerise Park Under the Shelter  
Shanes Way**

**We will supply the Chicken so please let us know if you will be attending. Please bring your favorite beverage (alcohol too), a side dish and your own plate and utensils.**

## NEW DATE

**Contact us at  
[sjjcas1@gmail.com](mailto:sjjcas1@gmail.com)  
to reserve your  
chicken piece or  
questions**

*Note: the picnic was moved to August because most of the board members would be gone in July and nobody would be able to pick up the chicken*

## From the Editor

What's a die? Okay, it's the singular form of dice. Very good. Now define what it looks like. It's a cube with from one to six pips on each side, right? Well, apparently there is a broader definition.

I read an article this week that discusses Native American dice in archaeological contexts. Cultural anthropologists have described dice and dice games among historic or contemporary Native Americans starting shortly after 1900. These were two-sided dice, made of bone, wood, sometimes stone, and in one case, a peach or plum pit. The use of these two-sided dice in various forms seems to have been ubiquitous among Native Americans and seems to have been a standard element whenever neighboring groups (be they families, clans, or tribes) met.

There were, however, no serious studies of the time depth of this practice in the Americas. With a 1907 ethnographic account as a starting point, Robert J. Madden, from CSU, derived a set of conditions that would allow identification of dice in the archaeological record: they must be small enough to hold in one hand and throw, unperforated (to distinguish them from pendants), flat or concave/convex on one or both sides, made of wood or bone, and their two sides must be marked and unmarked, or otherwise distinguishable from each other. Using these criteria to study previously published records and some museum collections, Madden was able to identify dice in archaeological contexts as far back as Folsom times, nearly 13,000 years ago. In all, he identified 659 dice from 57 archaeological sites in North America, dating from the Late Pleistocene through the Early and Middle Holocene to the end of the Late Holocene.

So what? Isn't this a rather inconsequential detail of early human life? It seems not. Madden cites the work of mathematicians and ethnographers who argue that dice games represent an important milestone in human intellectual and social development. Many of us think of gambling as a social ill and potential addiction. We might win big, or more likely, we might lose everything. But then, in my case at least, when I think of gambling I'm thinking of casino gambling, which definitely, and legally, favors the casinos.

In contrast, anthropologists view the development of dice games in prehistory as a social lubricant that allows people of different societies with different languages to meet and transcend their language differences by engaging in an activity with simple rules and outcomes, and at the same time carry out social and economic interactions. These dice games would have reinforced friendly relationships among disparate groups that interacted with one another only rarely.

The appearance of dice in the archaeological record is also thought to be among the earliest evidence of people recognizing and utilizing the regularities of probability and randomness in their social interactions.

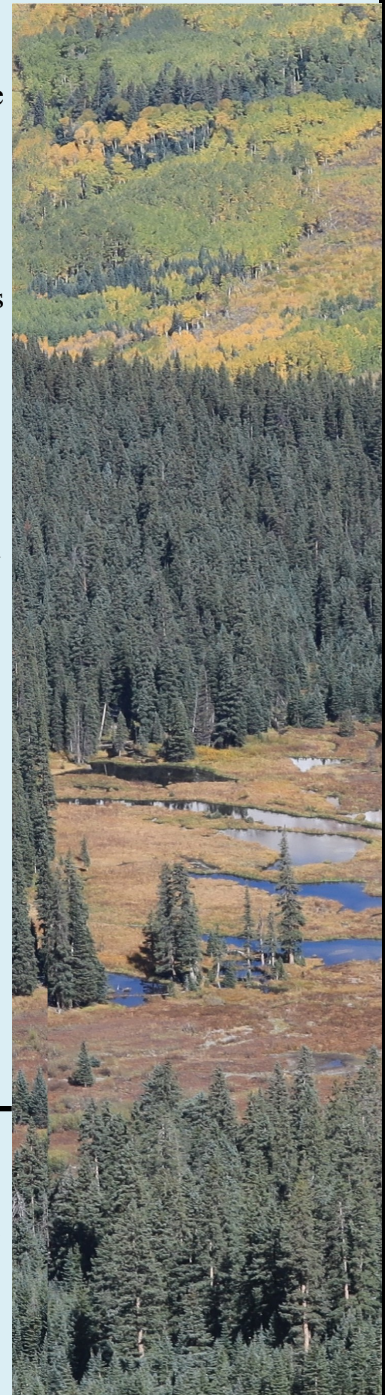
Madden suggests that dice games are among the first "archaeologically known efforts to intentionally generate, observe, and record streams of controlled, random events ... to power games of chance."

Finally, the presence of dice at archaeological sites may indicate a location where bands and tribes come together at intervals to trade and find mates, as for example, the Lindenmeier site in Larimer County in eastern Colorado. The dice games would have provided a relaxed social venue where people could interact with and relate to foreign trading partners and smooth the progress of trade.

One final question. Why is the singular of dice not douse?

### References

Madden, Robert J.  
2026 Probability in the Pleistocene: Origins and Antiquity of Native American Dice, Games of Chance, and Gambling. *American Antiquity*. <https://doi.org/10.1017/aaq.2025.10158>



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)

Photos by Dennis DeVore



Check One: Annual Dues\* (includes state CAS dues): Check one  
 New  Family (2 or more members same household) .....\$50  
 Renewal  Individual .....\$40  
 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: a .pdf is posted to Member365 for download. Effective soon, if you want a print copy, you will have to go to the state CAS website and pay an additional fee.



### 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:** Janet Fabula, [president@chipetachaptercas.org](mailto:president@chipetachaptercas.org)
- **Vice Pres:** Leigh Ann Hunt, [vp@chipetachaptercas.org](mailto:vp@chipetachaptercas.org)
- **Secretary:** Elizabeth Binder, [secretary@chipetachaptercas.org](mailto:secretary@chipetachaptercas.org)
- **Treasurer:** Jim Douras, [treasurer@chipetachaptercas.org](mailto:treasurer@chipetachaptercas.org)
- **CAS Rep:** Nick Ard, [casrep@chipetachaptercas.org](mailto:casrep@chipetachaptercas.org)

## STANDING COMMITTEES

- **Speaker:** Dan Elsner, [speaker@chipetachaptercas.org](mailto:speaker@chipetachaptercas.org)
- **Newsletter:** Dave Batten, [editor@chipetachaptercas.org](mailto:editor@chipetachaptercas.org)
- **Membership:** Sally Johnson, [membership@chipetachaptercas.org](mailto:membership@chipetachaptercas.org)
- **Site Steward Coordinator:** Leigh Ann Hunt, [sitestewards@chipetachaptercas.org](mailto:sitestewards@chipetachaptercas.org)
- **Library:** Linda Manske, [library@chipetachaptercas.org](mailto:library@chipetachaptercas.org)

## 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)

For information, visit:

<https://www.historycolorado/paac>

#### PAAC Contacts

**Sarah A. Allaun**

Assistant State Archaeologist  
[sarah.allaun@state.co.us](mailto:sarah.allaun@state.co.us)  
303-866-5746

**Leigh Ann Hunt**

Chipeta Chapter PAAC Coordinator  
[vp@chipetachaptercas.org](mailto:vp@chipetachaptercas.org)

*Don't forget the chapter picnic August 19, 2026*

### 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.*