The Uncompahgre Journal

November 2026 CHIPETA CHAPTER OF THE COLORADO ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY Volume 43 Issue 8

Mark Your Calendar

Nov 4: Montrose Historical Society monthly meeting. Pioneer Room, Friendship Hall, 7:00 pm.

Nov 11: San Juan Basin Archaeological Society monthly meeting with Tom Dillehay on the peopling of the Americas. Lyceum, Fort Lewis College, Center of Southwest Studies, 7:00 pm.

Nov 18: Chipeta Chapter monthly meeting with Carol Patterson on Pueblo myths and climate (***right***). United Methodist Church, 19 S. Park Avenue, 7:00 pm.

Our November Presentation

Pueblo Myths Correlate to Climate Shifts Represented in Basketmaker II-Pueblo III Petroglyphs of the Four Corners Region

by Carol Patterson

Climate change is represented in metaphoric rock imagery of the late Archaic through the Formative eras within the Four Corners region of the Colorado Plateau, USA. Three angles of investigation are presented: recent studies of the paleoclimatic data during the Medieval Warm Period drought cycles; the iconography of the Basketmaker II to Pueblo III era petroglyphs in the Four Corners region; and the mythic text of Keresan and Zuni cultures that describes the droughts and famine brought about by the failure of the Katsinas (rain bringers) to bring clouds to water the earth. I argue that petroglyphs depicting conflicts between the duck-head Katsinas serve as metaphors for prolonged droughts that lead to crop failure and famine. I propose that multiple events of conflict described in the mythic text coincide with epic droughts of the Medieval Warm Period.

The rock images of the Pueblo III-IV era may be symbolic representations of the return of rains that occurred at the onset of the Little Ice Age. The masked dances performed today at Hopi, Zuni and Acoma have indigenous origins in the Four Corners region.

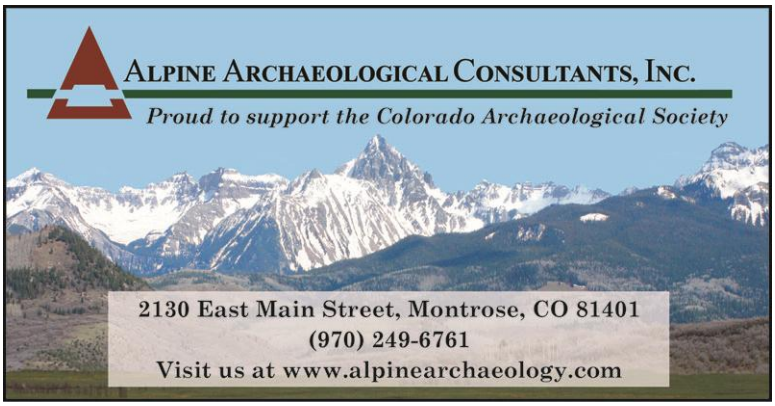


Our November Speaker

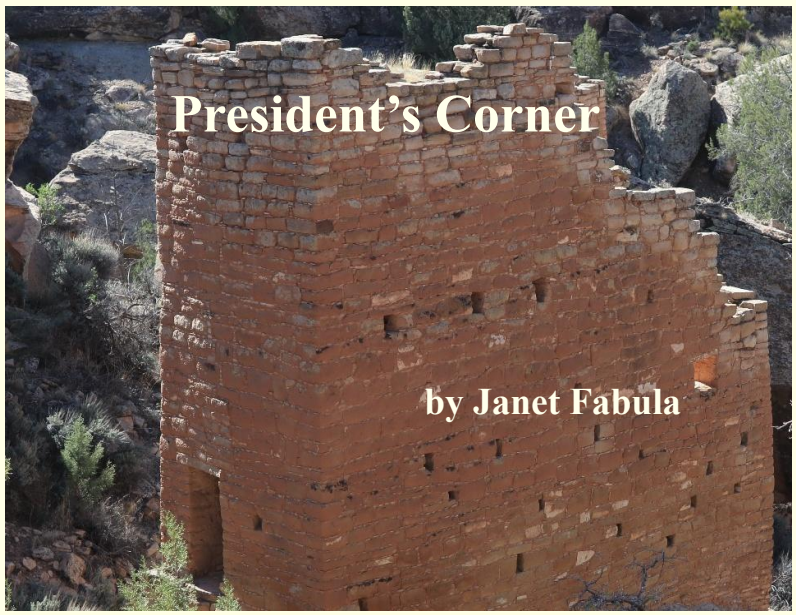


Carol B. Patterson, PhD, a Colorado native, is retired and living in Bluff, Utah. She has a BA from the University of New Mexico, MA from Columbia Pacific University, and her PhD in rock art from James Cook University, Australia. She was an adjunct professor of cultural anthropology at Metropolitan State College in Denver, Mesa State University in Montrose and Grand Junction campuses. Her company Urraca Archaeological Services, of 15 years, was a contractor for the BLM specializing in rock art documentation and reevaluation projects. She was hired as a G11 field archaeologist for the Uncompahgre Field Office for 5 years.
She has published "*On the Trail of Spider Woman*," Ancient City Press, Santa Fe, 1997. Most Recently is the *Petroglyphs of Western Colorado and the Northern Ute Indian Reservation as Interpreted by Clifford Duncan,* American Philosophical Society Press, 2016.

Her research in the Four Corners Region has produced 15 articles on the Keres, Zuni, Hopi, Tewa, Western Apache, Navajo, and Ute petroglyphs, of the Basketmaker II – Pueblo V eras and are published in *Expression E-journal* from 2018-2026. She has given many webinars and presentations to archaeological societies in New Mexico, Utah, Colorado, California and Italy. They include "*The Runners*, depicted in rock images of Utah," and "*Clouds* in prehistoric art of the Southwest" that are posted on YouTube.



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During our October public meeting, guest speaker John Horn introduced us to the Old Spanish Trail. How amazing those men were, taking up those far travels. The maps reminded me of a wonderful little bit from JRR Tolkien's The Fellowship of the Ring…
"Its a dangerous business, Frodo, going out of your door," He (Bilbo) used to say. "You step into the Road, and if you don't keep your feet, there is no knowing where you might be swept off to."

November marks the time we elect new officers for the board. For this upcoming 2027 all of the board members have agreed to serve again. It takes more than just President, Vice President, Treasurer and Secretary, however, to keep things running smoothly. To give you an idea of behind the scenes, we have members keeping an eye on our website, editing our newsletter, members sending out the newsletter, arranging field trips, keeping the library, organizing and reserving a space for our Summer and Christmas parties, updating the membership list, handing out the name tags, securing guest speakers each month, and, like an auctioneer says, "items too numerous to mention". Volunteer for helping out. Pair up with someone already doing a job. Many hands make light the work.

Looking ahead a little bit, mark your calendar for our Christmas Party potluck at the Association in Montrose on December 9, 2026. We'll get details out to you as the date gets closer.

See you at our November 18, 2026 meeting.

From the Editor

For many years, in the early stages of disciplines like anthropology and archaeology, it was more or less accepted that past human societies lived lives that were "nasty, brutish, and short." In the sixties, a backlash began to look for and find evidence that this was not always true, and that in fact hunters and gatherers were the "original affluent society," in which people worked only a few hours per day and a few days per week, and lived to a ripe old age. Both of these are, of course, exaggerations, and us modern folk think we know these days, that most societies fall between these two extremes. I read an article this week that profiles some people in medieval England whose lives were indeed nasty, short, and probably brutish: lead workers.

In the 600s and 700s on into the 1100s and 1200s, the Peak District in central England produced lead, apparently in demand for the construction of churches, which were being built all over the place, presumably so that each local nobleman would be seen as being more pious than the neighboring one. Apparently, since lead contamination can blow in the wind, most populations in medieval England were subject to lead levels that exceeded the modern standards of safety (0.7 parts per million).

The authors evaluated exposure to lead by analyzing tooth enamel in one of the three molar teeth. Since the molars are pretty much formed by the age of 12 years or so, the measure indicates lead exposure in the first 12 years of life, and presumably remains the same until death.

Five individuals were selected from each of two burial locations in Castleton, a major center of lead production: one location (Joule Yard) was from the early medieval period between about AD 600 and 800, and one (Spital Field) from the late Middle Ages from 1050 to 1550 or so. For controls, they used two individuals from the same region, but from the period between 400 BC and AD 50, well before lead mining began. Another five individuals (at Wigber Low) lived during the early medieval period, but came from a peripheral area about 30 km from the lead-mining center.

The results show that all but one of these individuals had lead levels in their teeth that were well above the modern standards of 0.7 ppm. That one individual was one of the control subjects, who had lived around 100 BC. Among the two samples from Castleton, the early medieval individuals ranged from about 25 to 54 ppm, while those from the late medieval period had values of 25 to 68 ppm. The values from the peripheral area burials ranged from 2.0 to 69 ppm.

These numbers are rather shocking. Two individuals had lead concentrations of one hundred times the safe level according to modern standards, and all but one of the medieval individuals were more than ten times over the modern safe limit. Although only three of the samples were positively identified as women, the average lead burden in women was 35.67 ppm, while for men (with a sample size of eight), it was 26.94 ppm.

The sample sizes are pitifully small, which is unfortunate but understandable, given the limited nature of the resource: well preserved human jawbones. Still, the results are eye-opening and tell us much about the difficulty of life at least among some subpopulations in the Middle Ages. Even among the individuals living 30 km distant from the mines the lead contamination was substantial. It is not surprising that at least three of the 15 people died young, between the ages of 17 and 25. These lives must truly have been nasty, brutish, and short!

References

Loveluck, Christopher P., Hannah J. O'Regan, Anna Bloxam, Catrin Fear, Jane Evans, Simon Chenery, Carolyn Chenery, Colin Merrony, Fiona E. Moore, and Angela Darlington
2026 Social dynamics of toxic metal industry in medieval Europe: Peak District lead production, AD 600–1500. *Antiquity*. https://doi.org/10.15184/aqy.2026.10416



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Membership Application

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City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

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

Photos by Dennis DeVore



Check One:
_____ New

_____ Renewal

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

_____ Family (2 or more members same household) $50
_____ 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
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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

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Our November Speaker: Carol Patterson

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.