



San Diego Rock Art Association

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Photography 101

SDRAA member and photographer extraordinaire Jim Respass takes aim at fellow SDRAA members for a group shot.

SDRAA IN ACTION



Photo by Amy Marymor

SDRAA Members in Action

The second edition of our SDRAA newsletter still finds us under the cloud of the COVID-19 pandemic. Apparently, that reality has not extinguished SDRAA member's interest in enjoying action in the field—at least virtually. Over 60% of our extended SDRAA membership clicked on the inaugural newsletter's link. Your subsequent responses were terrific and we have several new individuals sharing their rock art adventures in this issue.

Confab in Nipton, CA

The MORAW gang—a large subset of whom are SDRAA members—got together one last time in the desert town of Nipton to catch up on all things rock art.

We are adding a couple of new wrinkles to this edition. First, there is a “SDRAA Mysteries” section where we invite you to guess what is going on. We have added two mini-articles focused on specific rock art topics by our members. Lawrence Baca delves into his fascination with visiting and photographing the extraordinary rock art at Hueco Tanks, Texas. Further afield, Ken Hedges shares his interest in cupule phenomena around the world. We hope you enjoy all these new additions along with the wonderful photo gallery submitted by our SDRAA family. Thank you one and all.

We still need your participation

Please send your photos and accompanying information to SDRAA Program Coordinator Steve Freers, newsletter@sdraa.org

Remember to add your name to the subject bar of your e-mail “SDRAA Member in Action from: [your name]” (don’t forget, that helps him a lot).

Things we noticed along on the ol’ rock art trail



SDRAA and Socializing

Above: Rich Braun, Steve Waller, Carroll and Sandy Zahn enjoying pizza and a little local wine in Valcamonica, Italy, during the 2018 IFRAO meeting.

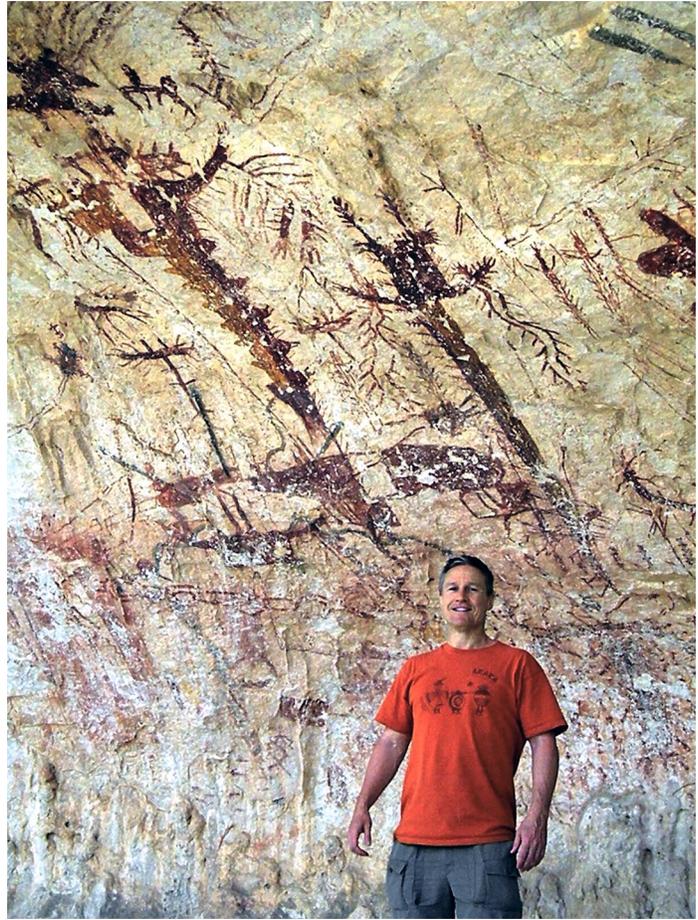
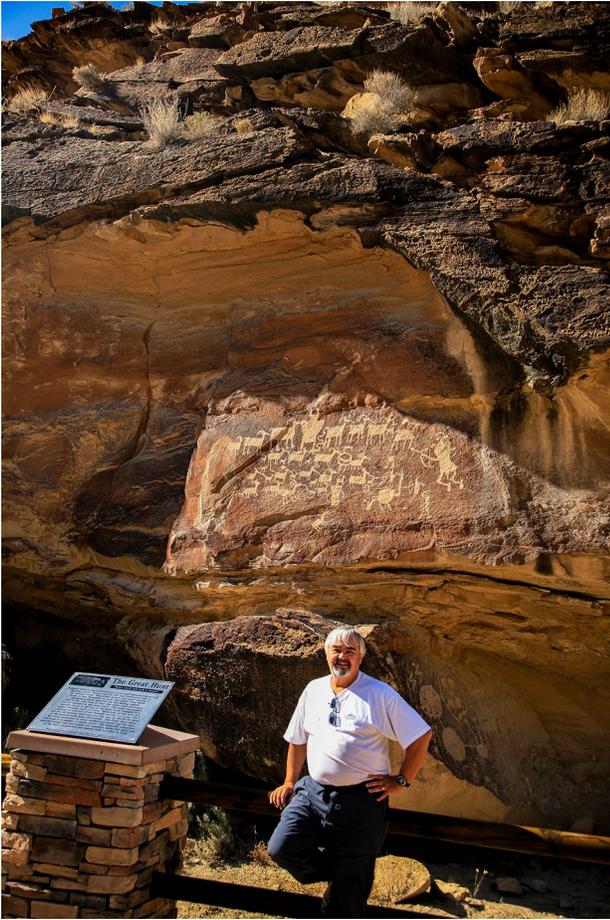
Right: SDRAA Sunday meeting socializing in 2010.



Top: Greg makes a joyous discovery, two pre-1903 wine bottles stashed at an archaeological site.

Middle: Sunrise greets *Datura innoxia*.

Bottom: Heading back to camp and a storm on Hwy. 89A, Arizona Strip.



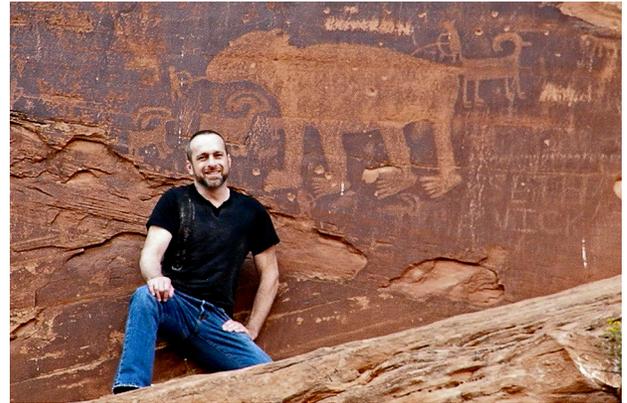
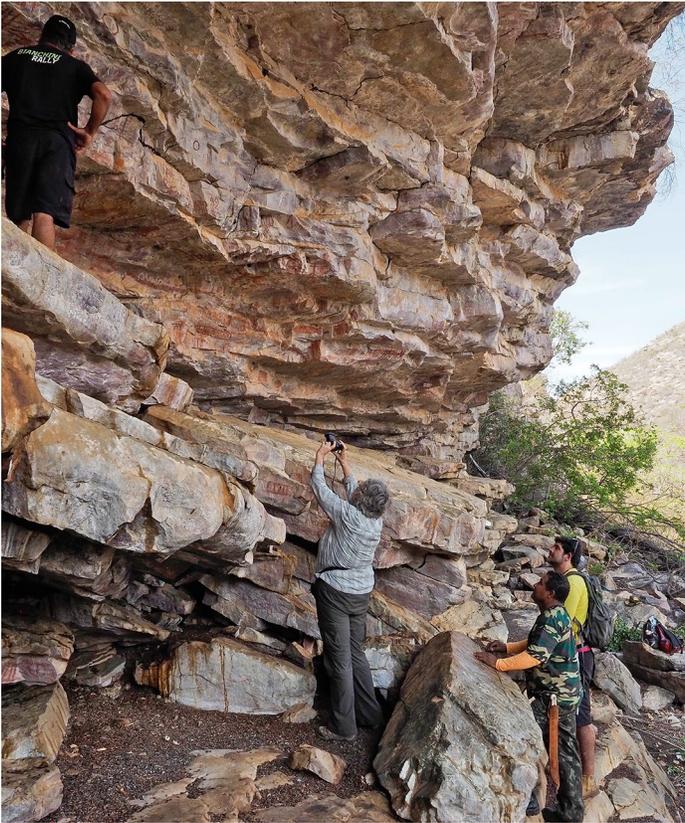
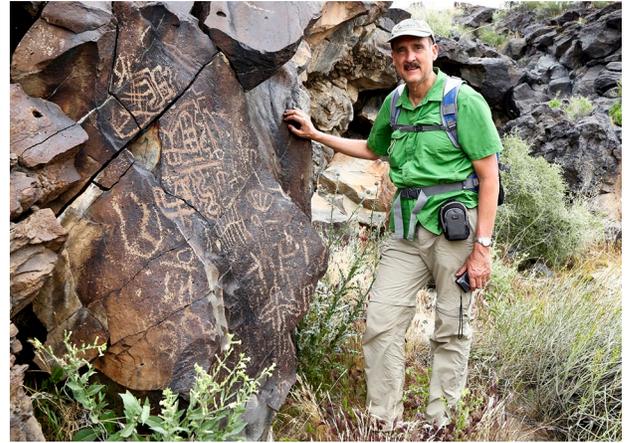
SDRAA in the Southwest

Top Left: Lawrence Baca at the “Hunting Scene” panel. Lawrence notes, “JoAnn and I had a chance to visit Nine Mile Canyon in Utah a couple years ago. We visited a couple dozen sites along the main road specifically, including the Hunting Scene and the Family Panel.”

Top Right: Steve Waller, SDRAA Vice President, in the Lower Pecos Canyonlands of Texas, at one of the many echoing rock art shelters shaped like a parabolic dish that serves to reflect and focus sound (photo from 2010).

Lower Left: Steve Freers waits patiently while the actual driver of this “4WD-Quad” gets a tow rope and his truck. Greg Erickson and Steve were on their way to the famous “Mansard Panel” when their driver miscalculated the mudflow depth from a recent flash flood in Kanab Creek, Utah.

Lower Right: JoAnn Baca points out an interesting petroglyph motif in Nine Mile Canyon.



SDRAA in the Field

Top Left: Sherry Mitchell, Ken Hedges, Sandy and Carroll Zahn, and Evelyn Billo, Sears Point recording project, 2009.

Top Right: Britt Wilson at an Aiken’s Arch petroglyph panel.

Middle Left: Anne Stoll is “stretching” to DStretch an exquisite rock art panel in 2018, known as Boqueirao da Fazendinha, located on private property in Brazil.

Middle Right: Rich Braun, SDRAA Secretary, at a spectacular Moab area petroglyph site in 2013, one of the first rock art trips he’d ever been on.

Lower Right: Jim Respass in 2013 photographing a Rancho Bernardo Style panel near Piedras Pintadas.

Lower Left: John Pitts trying to decide how best to photograph a La Rumorosa panel during an SDRAA field trip in February 2014.



SDRAA in the Field

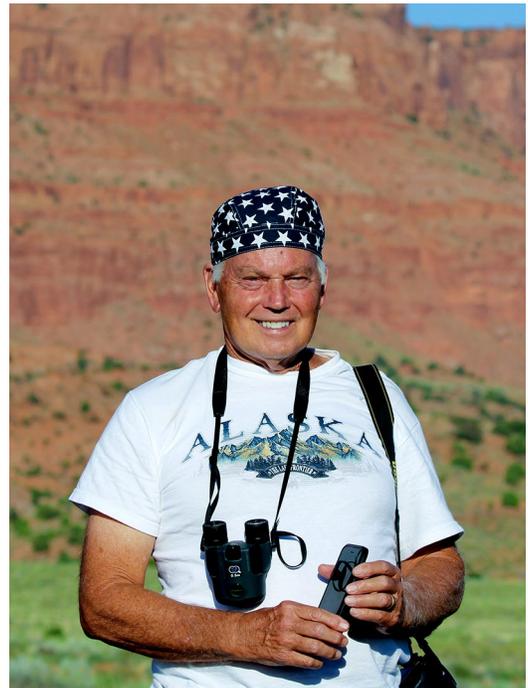
Top Left: Moe Gharib and Carroll Zahn at Parowan Gap, Utah.

Top Right: François Gohier getting a nice close-up of cupules, Rancho Bernardo, CA.

Lower Left: Greg Erickson and Steve Freers coordinate the operation of an ancient slide projector during "Nostalgia Night 2019."

Middle Right: Doug Brotherton captured the MORAW "Crew" embarking on a Wood's Wash field trip in the East Mojave Desert.

Lower Right: David Lee (center) shares his thoughts on Volcanic Tableland rock art.



SDRAA in the Field

Top Left: Sandy Zahn made the long trek up to the “Procession Panel” in the Comb Ridge, Utah.

Top Right: Elanie Moore shares photography tips with Jim Respass at CA-RIV-24, Idyllwild, CA.

Middle Right: Greg selflessly gave his hat to a young man unprepared for desert conditions. But Greg only had one hat, so he purchased a hip “Do-rag” to protect his dome. What do you think?

Lower Left: Jerry Dickey, following a long day in the field, is surprised to find a volume of the book he co-authored at the Willow Canyon Outdoor Company, Kanab, Utah.

Lower Right: Don Christensen and Steve Freers discuss with Jerry Dickey (sitting) the feasibility of bighorn sheep hunting at this site.





SDRAA Mysteries: “Who or What is That?”

If you'd like to take a stab at the questions presented here, please write your numbered answers and email them to Steve Freers: newsletter@sdraa.org. Winners & answers will appear in our next newsletter. By the way, send along an image or two for the next newsletter—thank you.



We need you to submit a guess regarding these mysteries:

- 1) Whose shadow is that?*
- 2) What is the genus and species of this rattlesnake (it nearly got one of our members).*
- 3) Whose shadow is casting a gaze at SAGINAW MICHIGAN vandalism?*
- 4) Who was this “Masked Man” on our Bishop Tablelands field trip?*

Visiting Hueco Tanks—by Lawrence Baca, SDRAA Treasurer

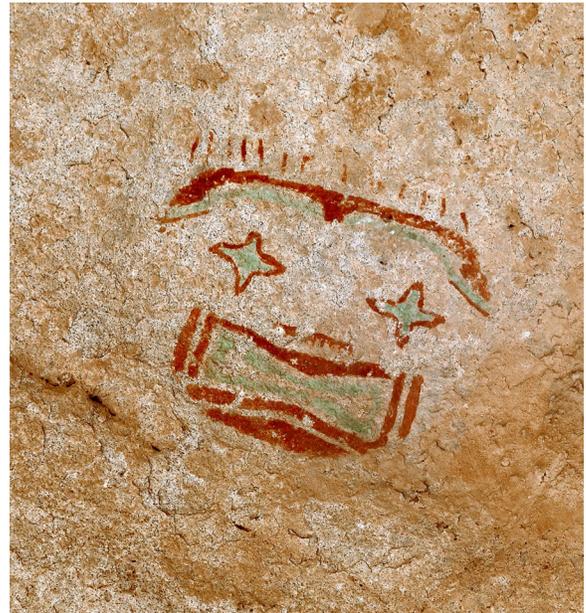
In February of this year my favorite hiking partner, Nelson, and I visited Hueco Tanks, Texas. Hueco Tanks is composed of North Mountain, East Mountain and West Mountain. Only North Mountain can be visited without a tour guide. So we hired a guide to have access to many rock art sites not open to the public. He led us to 19 sites on West Mountain as well as Cave Kiva on North Mountain. Cave Kiva has eight masks and is on North Mountain. There is a major half-mile climb to get to the cave. And then you crawl into the cave lying on your back, and you shouldn't have a wallet in your back pocket when doing this because it catches on the ripples and cracks in the rock floor. These two images are lit with the assistance of our guide's flashlight.



This horned mask had previously been desecrated with deep black marks of some kind between the horns.

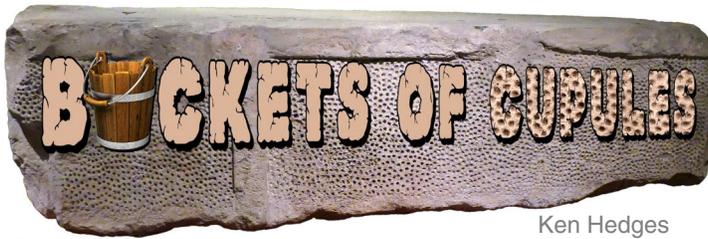


The precision of the art work in Cave Kiva is almost stencil-like. This image is known as Motorcycle Man.



Above Left: The famous Tlaloc figure. **Above Right:** Starry Eyed Man, famous because of its rare use of the color green.

At the location of the most famous Tlaloc at Hueco Tanks you can take photographs without a flashlight but the ambient light is very low in February. The best angle to take photographs is to lie on a large rock on the floor of the cave and shoot straight up at the image. [In the next installment, I'll introduce you to the "White Horned Dancer," the most compelling image in the park—Lawrence Baca.](#)



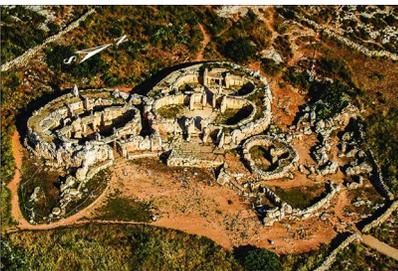
Ken Hedges

I'm sure most rock art enthusiasts have "bucket lists" of rock art sites they hope to visit someday. Over the years, I have had the privilege of visiting impressive and iconic sites on my bucket list, from the Great Gallery to the original Lascaux and the Lightning Brothers of Ingeladdi in Australia's Northern Territory. But my bucket list includes sites with those oft-maligned stepsisters of rock "art"—cupules...



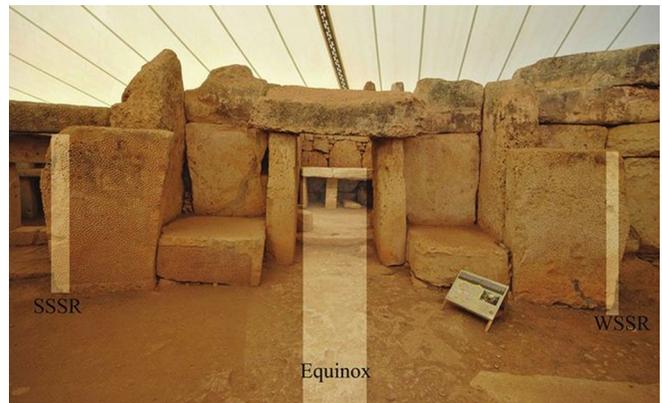
Enticed by dramatic photos in books and galleries on British rock art, in 2013 Diane and I made our way to High Banks Farm near Kircudbright in Scotland to see one of the most spectacular cup-and-ring sites in the British Isles. Sadly, our visit under the

harsh overhead light of midday was no match for the dramatic warm sidelight of a late afternoon sun, but more importantly, High Banks, like most British rock art sites, is on private land and lies open and unprotected, in this case subjected to the onslaughts of the hooves of the cattle and sheep who share this open field. Nevertheless, this classic site, with its multitude of cupules, is well worth the visit. But speaking of multitudes of cupules...



Perhaps the world record for multitudes of cupules lies with the early Neolithic temple complex of Mjandra in the Mediterranean island nation of Malta. Mjandra is a complex of three megalithic temples dating from 3600 to 2500 B.C. The south temple has a central chamber decorated with thousands of cupules ground or drilled into the soft limestone. We visited the site in 2018.

Two massive panels flank the entrance to an inner chamber illuminated by the equinox sunrise. At the solstices, winter solstice sunlight illuminates the outer edge of the massive cupule-covered monolith on the right, while summer solstice sunrise highlights the edge of the left-hand monolith.



The summer solstice monolith is shown here. By my rough estimate, accounting for the damage to the edges, the panel has approximately 3,480 cupules, and the lintel used as my title graphic (from the archaeological museum in Malta's capital of Valletta) has a whopping 4,650 cupules.

The limestone is porous and rather soft, so erosion has obscured details of cupule manufacture, but it appears that a shallow drilling tool was used, with some cupules having countersunk interiors, possibly indicating tools with rounded pilot points.



High Banks photo from the British Rock Art Collection online gallery (<http://ukra.jalbum.net/brac/>).

Mnajdra aerial and sunrise alignments photos from Tore Lomsdalen (2018), *Can Archaeoastronomy Inform Archaeology on the Building Chronology of the Mnajdra Neolithic Temple in Malta?* In *Skyscapes: The Role and Importance of the Sky in Archaeology*, edited by Fabio Silva and Nicholas Campion, pp. 59–75. Oxbow Books, Oxford.



Final Thoughts—As we move through springtime and into summer, let's all remain mindful of the lesson's we've learned through this COVID-19 crisis and conduct our adventures safely. We look forward to the day when we can gather again and share our experiences. In the meantime, we hope you enjoy our little newsletter.



SDRAA Members in Action

Left: Orah Hurst zeros in on a beautiful panel in Idyllwild, CA.

Above: Eve Ewing's little friend patrols the SDRAA potluck happenings looking to lend a little assistance with the clean-up.