



San Diego Rock Art Association Meeting

**Sunday, February 21, 2016**

Kumeyaay-Ipai Interpretive Center • 13104 Ipai Waaypuk Trail (formerly Silver Lake Drive) • Poway, CA 92064

## **Mexico's Caves and Rock Art — A Native Explorer's View**

Carlos Lazcano Sahagún

We are honored to announce that Carlos Lazcano Sahagún will be our featured speaker for our next SDRAA general meeting on February 21, 2016. Carlos is a renowned Mexican explorer and historian who has led numerous expeditions into remote cave and canyon systems throughout Mexico. He is a founding member of the Mexican Society of Subterranean Exploration (SMES) and the Speleological Federation of Latin America and the Caribbean (CONFINES). Among the remarkable archaeological finds he has participated in include the discovery of Casas Grandes cultural remnants within the cave systems of Chihuahua; several new species of fauna in collaboration with the Faculty of Sciences at UNAM; and, of course, many impressive rock art sites in the State of Baja California. Recently he has reported on new extensions of the Great Mural style northward into the state of Baja California.

Carlos is an accomplished photographer and author of several books, including *The Caverns of the Cerro Grande* (Universidad de Guadalajara, 1989), *Privileges of the Light* (Grupo Cementos de Chihuahua, 2008), and *Return to the World Forgot* (AMSC, 2010). He has given numerous presentations, both in Spanish and English. We are certainly in for a treat as Carlos guides us into a world few of us will ever have the privilege to visit in person. Be sure to mark your calendars for this special event.

Here is an excerpt from the online publication *México Desconocido* reporting on the discovery of a Great Mural site in the state of Baja California that he calls La Soledad (not to be confused with the site of La Soledad in Baja California Sur):



After walking on the wide bed of a dry stream, between large boulders and amid bare stone walls, we began to climb a slope of volcanic rock. We climbed almost all the slope, up to the edge of the volcanic mesa, just in front as on a stone terrace, where there were a series of caves and shelters originating in volcanic tuffs and conglomerates. Finally, after several hours, we reached our goal: the Cueva de la Soledad, which lived up to its name because of its isolation.

Actually there are several cavities found in the rock face, and the largest is La Soledad. The main cavity is 39 meters long and 12 in depth. The ceiling height varies between 7 meters and 70 centimeters.

I remember I slowly approached this vast haven and my surprise was great when I saw before me, on the roof of the cavity, one of the most beautiful cave paintings I have seen. There could be seen deer running or about to jump, bighorn sheep, and magical ceremonies celebrating shamans. I wondered at this unusual encounter. Notable deer with antlers deployed, sheep with twisted horns, shamans with arms open to the universe. There are so many figures on top of each other. They are also enormous, greater than life-size; I figured that the shamans are at least 2 to 2.5 meters high. There is an abundance of red ocher and black, with some white contours. What is most striking is the life of the colors, the plasticity of the figures that appear to have life, the realism of their representation, and the beauty of the strokes. The mural is 4.5 meters high at the ceiling, with a total length of 8 meters and a maximum width of 3 meters.

• **4:00 Potluck: Bring food of your choice to share** • **5:00 Meeting and Presentations**

Meetings are included in your SDRAA Membership. Suggested Donation for Guests is \$5.00