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# La Pintura

The Official Newsletter of the American Rock Art Research Association  
Member of the International Federation of Rock Art Organizations

[www.arara.org](http://www.arara.org)

## Presidential Message

Evelyn Billo



WELCOME TO THE future, from your new president. As I listened to the founding members' forum at the Farmington Conference recalling ARARA's roots, I looked around the room at the collective experiences, knowledge, and friendships among those who had gathered to celebrate ARARA's first 35 years. It caused me to reflect on our future and the personal and organizational goals we can set now to assure a strong and active membership in these challenging times.

We currently have a wonderful structure of active and dedicated committees where members share interest in Awards, Conference Planning, Conservation and Preservation, Education, Publications, and the Web. All committees are seeking new members! Please make a personal commitment to at least one of the above and also consider how you can help ARARA through:

1) *Outreach*: Donate a membership to a student with an interest in archae-

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## Rock Art at the World Archaeological Congress in Dublin, Ireland

Mavis Greer

**THIS SUMMER FOUND SEVERAL** ARARA members in Ireland to participate in the sixth World Archaeological Congress (WAC) from June 29 to July 4, 2008.

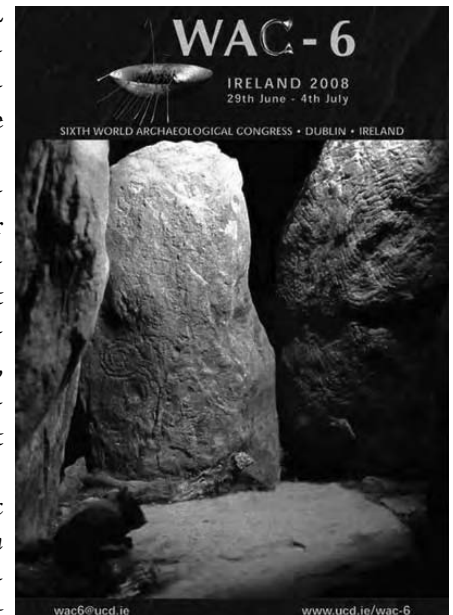
For four of us, planning for the congress began almost a year earlier. After the 2007 Society for American Archaeology meeting, Donna Gillette set in motion the process that brought together W. Breen Murray, Mavis Greer, and Michele Hayward under her leadership to chair the first of nine rock art sessions of the congress.

Our symposium entitled *Prehistoric Concepts of Spirituality as Reflected in Rock Art* was interested in presentations that used rock art as an artifact

class to examine past spirituality, religion, or ideology. The popularity of the topic was surprising, and with more than double the number of abstracts received than could be scheduled within the allotted two-hour time frame, an additional two-hour session was requested and granted. Thus, 15 papers were accepted, and 11 researchers attended the conference and presented their research. Many countries were represented, and the international researchers presented a variety of approaches to the topic.

Margaret Bullen from Australia opened the session with her presentation on *The Knowable and the Unknowable in Rock Art*. She examined whether or not we think about spirituality the same as those who came before us. She discussed how, by examining rock art, we can suggest what might have been

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## Presidential Message

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ology and art. Give a presentation on rock art at a local public venue (library, museum, park, travel store, etc.). Share information on ARARA ONLINE.

2) **Endowment:** Ask your financial advisor how to add ARARA to your trust or will and consider the tax benefits of annual charitable giving. Find out if your employer offers matching funds for your donations.

3) **Research:** Join a rock art recording field school, volunteer on a recording project, help a local archaeologist or become a site steward. Consider joining the rock art list where rock art topics are discussed. Point your web browser to <https://lists.asu.edu/cgi-bin/wa?A0=ROCK-ART>.

4) **Archive:** Scan those slides and negatives before it is too late! Annotate them with date, site, and people's names. Consider donating your collections (books and images) to the ARARA archive at the Deer Valley Rock Art Center in Phoenix, Arizona. We have hired a new student intern to inventory and scan the collections already there. The first report on this project is in this issue of *La Pintura* (page 4).

If you are not already getting ARARA ONLINE—our monthly rock art news source where we share information about discoveries, lectures, tours, etc.—send your e-mail address to: [ARARABoard@gmail.com](mailto:ARARABoard@gmail.com).

The above goals are only a few suggestions designed to encourage you to consider what part you can play on our team. We can all be proud of ARARA's first 35 years, now let's pledge to make the next 35 years even better! ☀

### *The Editor's Corner*

## Farmington: Then and Now

I **MUST ADMIT FIRST OFF** that although I do go back a ways in ARARA, I am not a founding member. Farmington, New Mexico, was all new to me, but for those who were there when ARARA was founded—our specially honored guests at this memorable occasion—it must have been a very different experience. Glimpses of then and now peered out around the corners of their banquet memories, illuminating changes which had taken place in the local context during the intervening years.

It was no accident that ARARA was born in Farmington 35 years ago. In 1974, eighty-five people attended, and the meeting took place there because local people made the invitation. They were members of a local archaeological society who had become involved in documenting and protecting the rock art around their own community.

Then as now, Farmington was the gateway to Navajo country, but it was a farming community most famous for its San Juan Valley apples, as the old photos displayed in the hotel lobby showed. Main Street today still tries to preserve something of this rural aspect, but in 1974, it was the real thing. The memories of our founding members harked back to that earlier context. Rather than staying at a five-star national motel chain, they included some happy campers who stayed in farmer's backyards, and the meetings were held in a newly-built community center. The rock art in the area was already famous and was found just down the road and all through the network of canyons surrounding the valley.

How times have changed! Farmington today is a Western boom town surrounded by gas well pads, as we discovered on our Friday rock art field trips. That was a day which will long be remembered in the annals of ARARA field-tripping! A passing cold front reminded everyone of winter recently departed, unleashing rain, hail and even snow on the hearty participants who ventured into the muddy canyons of the upper San Juan valley. Certainly a boon for the local farmers and ranchers, but a bit of a surprise after the 90° temperatures the week before, and hardly a good day for taking pictures.

A state-of-the-art library which we visited has now replaced the modest community center, but the echoes of our ARARA founders are there too. The building's design is developed around Navajo concepts of the cardinal directions, and inside, the central atrium of the building is decorated with rock art motifs.

The 35th annual ARARA conference at Farmington was a big success! Attendance this year set a record, and once again, the quality of the papers and posters presented was very high. The vendors spilled over into the adjoining hotel rooms, and the ample atrium of our host hotel provided a comfortable space for encounters.

All who attended owe a special thanks to the ARARA and local volunteers who donated literally thousands of hours of their time to make it all happen. And as always, there's a 36th coming up next year!

*See you in Bakersfield!*







































