

Anasazi Ridge Solstice

Gary Smith, at the DAS June meeting, enhanced our knowledge of Anasazi Ridge with his summer and winter solstice pictures.

A Short Biography of the Presenter

Gary started his life journey in Cincinnati, Ohio. He obtained a college degree in biology and education. He worked four years at the Museum of Natural History in Dallas, Texas. After his Texas experience for the next sixteen years, Gary worked at the Museum of Natural History in Utah. His duties included guiding tours. School children were among the people who learned about natural history from Gary, as education is such an important part of his life.

This talented man moved to Utah in 1987, and then he moved to St. George just a few years ago. Beyond just a hobby, his passion is photography. Whenever he goes on walks or hikes, his most important companion is his camera. While he was living in northern Utah, he fell in love with the pictographs, capturing those figures with his camera. His world opened up to the petroglyphs when he moved south. With the discovery of calendar markers, solstice, and equinox; he found new figures, shadows, and light rays for the eye of his camera.

Anasazi Ridge

Anasazi Ridge or Land Hill, the official name, was the focus of Gary's presentation. Most of the members of the Archeology Club are quite familiar with this location, which is famous for its petroglyphs. For those of you not acquainted with this site, it is an easy 1 1/4 mile climb up a gently sloping hill.

The pictures were taken mainly during the summer solstice when Gary made the trek last summer. He arrived at 7 A.M. in June during the solstice and was able to take pictures as the sun daggers moved over the petroglyphs, illuminating different parts of the figures. This is how the natives were able to illustrate and tell their stories.

The Bird-man Shaman Panel was the first panel he explained. The sun daggers first appeared in the hand of the three-fingered Bird-man. The three digits on his hands and feet confirm that the Bird-man is a deity, a powerful, spiritual guide. Then the light goes through the body upward. The light continues up to a serpent which is the connector between the underworld, the earth world, and the sky world. The Thunderbird on this panel is the messenger from earth to the sky world.

The next panel was the Teacher Shaman Panel. This is a complicated petroglyph with several figures. One figure appears to be male; another is female as an umbilical cord is connected from her to a child shaman.

The Bear Claw Shaman Panel depicts the Rain God with a serpent. The shadow moves across a spiral, telling a story. This panel and the others were fascinating. Feather Robinson and Boma Johnson helped fill in some of the stories in Gary's presentation.