

Chimney Rock Interpretive Association  
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## November 2025 CRIA Newsletter

### From the President of the Board of Directors

#### A Note of Thanks and Exciting Changes

##### Reflecting on a Successful Season

As the 2025 season at Chimney Rock National Monument comes to a close, the Chimney Rock Interpretive Association (CRIA) extends a heartfelt thank you to all our incredible volunteers. Your dedication and hard work have made this year one of the most successful yet!

From leading tours and staffing the visitor center gift shop to assisting with special events, your commitment ensures that every visitor has an enriching and memorable experience. Your passion for Chimney Rock is truly the foundation of our success. Thank you for your tireless efforts and for sharing the wonder of this magnificent place with the world.



##### Welcoming a New Board Member

CRIA is excited to welcome **John Kappelman** to our Board of Directors. John brings a wealth of experience and a deep commitment to the preservation and interpretation of Chimney Rock. We look forward to his contributions and fresh perspectives as we continue our mission to support the monument.



##### Embracing a New Approach to Night Sky Programs

CRIA is announcing a new strategic direction for our highly successful night sky programs. To ensure these unique offerings continue to evolve and meet the growing interest in celestial events, CRIA will be integrating these programs more closely with our core interpretive planning. This new approach will allow us to leverage additional resources and partnerships, enhancing the educational and experiential value for all attendees.

##### Thank You, Joan Mieritz

This transition provides the perfect opportunity to recognize the exceptional service of **Joan Mieritz**, who has been instrumental in the success of our night sky programs. For many years, Joan has dedicated her time, knowledge, and enthusiasm to organizing and running these beloved events. Her commitment to sharing the wonders of the night sky above Chimney Rock has inspired countless visitors and left a lasting legacy.

We thank Joan profoundly for her dedication and passion. We hope she will continue to be a valued member of the CRIA family in other volunteer capacities.

### **Jill Sutton, CRIA Board President**

## **Office Notes**

### **Hi Volunteers,**

Thank you to all who attended our Annual Meeting on October 24<sup>th</sup>! We appreciate all the great potluck food, and the set up and clean up!



We want to welcome our new Board member, John Kappelman. We also want to shout out a big thank you to our exiting Vice President, Lace Stevens, who completed two terms and 6 years of dedicated service! Ernie O'Toole will be our new Vice President.

Our Special Program attendance was reported as 4,043 this year.... a 9% increase over last year! Total reported volunteer hours were 7,636, and reported miles were 43,030.

Congratulations to the 2025 Volunteer of the Year, Bernadette Sikes, who recorded 648.25 hours volunteering for CRIA!!! Our New Volunteer of the Year is Tara Keltner with 109.5 volunteer hours! Good job ladies!

We appreciate these hard workers, as well as all our Volunteers and new employees at the Monument who have helped make this year at Chimney Rock a success!

The CRIA office will be closed during Thanksgiving week from November 24<sup>th</sup> to November 28<sup>th</sup>.

We wish all of you a very blessed Thanksgiving!!!

### **Kelly Ball, Office Manager**

## **Full Moon**

The dates for the 2026 Full Moon are May 30<sup>th</sup>, June 28<sup>th</sup>, July 28<sup>th</sup>, August 27<sup>th</sup>, and September 26<sup>th</sup>.

I will be traveling next season, so I am stepping down from running the Full Moon Program. I know there are many experienced volunteers who can take over. For me, I think of the program in three parts. First is scheduling the volunteers, which I do a week or so ahead of the program. I have a tentative volunteer to do that





part. Next is checking on the equipment, lanterns and sound system, a day or so ahead of time. They are stored at the site. Last is supervising at the site during the program. The last part is easiest since there are many great volunteers who do the tasks for the program to run smoothly and safely.

I will give more detailed information to any volunteers willing to help run the program next season. I will also help as much as possible whenever I am in town during the full moon. So please consider helping with this. It can be a group effort to make it easier. This is an extremely popular event and provides funding for CRIA. I would hate for it to end. It has been a wonderful experience for me, for over 10 years, being in charge.

**Susan Yalom** [sueyal@yahoo.com](mailto:sueyal@yahoo.com) cell: 970-731-1091

## Did You Know?

Although wild turkeys are abundant today at Chimney Rock, there is no evidence of them in the analyses of animal bones that have been done there. This lack of turkeys (*Meleagris gallopavo*) was unexpected. Although the inhabitants of Chimney Rock may have traded for turkey and/or other feathers, it was unusual in the Southwest not to hunt or raise turkeys, especially since there is ample evidence at Salmon Ruin that turkeys were raised there, based on the presence of immature bones, healed wings and legs, and possibly turkey pens. It has been pointed out that in some locations an inverse relationship developed between the hunting of deer and elk and raising turkeys when a threshold of resource depletion occurs but a source of protein is still needed. It is thus very possible that at Chimney Rock area that there was no need to raise turkeys. In addition, domesticated turkeys had to be fed corn, which would have been a challenging proposition at Chimney Rock. Regardless of the situation at Chimney Rock, the relationship between turkeys and indigenous people in the Southwest is an interesting one. There is no archaeological evidence that wild



Merriam's turkeys were hunted in Archaic or early Basketmaker II times. Genetically distinct (mtDNA haplogroup H1) Southwestern domesticated birds appear in the archaeological record during the late Basketmaker II period. However, although the feathers were used for making blankets and the eggs for food and paint, they were initially not consumed. There was interbreeding between the domesticated H1 turkeys and the H2 haplogroup Merriam's turkeys such that following extinction of the domesticated turkey during or after Spanish contact, the genetics of domesticated turkeys survives in wild turkeys today.

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Looking for homemade treats for  
your Thanksgiving Table?

## Thanksgiving Bake Sale

November 25<sup>th</sup> ----- 10AM – 1PM  
In front of City Market

All proceeds support Chimney Rock Interpretive  
Association Educational Programs:

- ✓ Life at Chimney Rock Festival Dancers
- ✓ School Week for Area Schools
- ✓ Lecture Series
- ✓ Summer Youth Workshops