

## President's Letter

**Susanne Friend**

Dear Members,

As you may recall from the last newsletter, WAAC is without a president this year, so the members-at-large are filling in to write the president's letter for each issue until Sue Ann Chui takes over. I am honored to be able to do so, having been a board member, past president, and WAAC member for many years.

Our current MAL's, Samantha Springer and Jennifer McGlinchey, will be writing the next letters and will bring you a fresh perspective on the ever-evolving face of WAAC. Our newest MAL's, Tish Brewer and Rowan Geiger, are stepping up to the plate in planning the next meeting. We will miss our outgoing MAL's, Seth Irwin and Christina O'Connell!

I would like to start by thanking last year's president Randy Silverman who made our annual meeting in Salt Lake City both successful and memorable. His blend of personal charm, composure, and acumen paved a smooth way for one of the most delightful WAAC meetings – affordable, seamless, and entertaining. We were very lucky to have him as president and value his future participation.

Last year's meeting was the first time we filmed live streaming video of all the speakers. I hope you had an opportunity to look at the talks at the University of Utah's Marriott Library: [epubs.utah.edu/index.php/waac](http://epubs.utah.edu/index.php/waac). And, as usual, abstracts of all the talks are included in this issue.

One of the best things about going to WAAC meetings is the opportunity to explore the surroundings. In Utah's cases the manifest charms of Salt Lake City (the reception at the Natural History Museum of Utah was one) were almost outdone by the utter gorgeousness of Utah's state parks. After the meeting was over, we drove through 800 miles of some of the most spectacular scenery and breathtaking vistas. How could we resist seeing Goblin Valley State Park where the rock monster scene in *Galaxy Quest* was filmed? Please.

We have another wonderful venue to look forward to for this year's meeting. Through the efforts of Susan Barger and other enterprising WAAC members in New Mexico, we will be convening at Ghost Ranch. Ghost Ranch is a 21,000-acre retreat and education center near Abiquiú in north central New Mexico. The name apparently arose from cattle rustlers spreading rumors that the land was haunted in order to discourage people from looking around for stolen goods. It was called "Rancho de los Brujos" or Ranch of the Witches, which evolved into Ghost Ranch. It was the home and studio of Georgia O'Keeffe, as well as the subject of many of her paintings and has been used in many film shoots.

The ranch is about an hour outside Santa Fe and is amidst a landscape emblematic of the Southwest: vast views, mesas, red and yellow cliffs, and the cottonwood studded Rio Chama. In addition to the manifest pleasures of hearing our colleagues speak, there will be many activities to be enjoyed, including hiking, kayaking, horseback riding, and massages.

We are also in the process of arranging an Angel's project – participants will make padded boxes for fossils from the late Triassic period digs at the Ranch – one of the most important dinosaur quarries in the Northern Hemisphere. The angels will be working with Gretchen Gurtler and Axel Hungerbeuhler from the Mesalands Dinosaur Museum in Tucumcari. The museum is home to the only 2-year paleontology degree where they train paleontology preparators.

The meeting will take place from Wednesday September 26<sup>th</sup> to Sunday, September 30<sup>th</sup>. More details to follow in the next newsletter!

It is an excellent time to start thinking about giving a paper...

Susi

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