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Explorer of Ancient U.S. Sites to Present 'Art and Archaeoastronomy'

Feb-26-2009

Jim Krehbiel, a Charleston native who has spent decades exploring the backcountry of the Southwest, will present "Art and Archaeoastronomy: Anasazi Astronomical Shrine Sites" at 7 p.m. Monday, March 9, at Eastern Illinois University.

The illustrated presentation, which is part of International Year of Astronomy events at EIU, will take place in the Doudna Fine Arts Center's Lecture Hall (Room 1210). It is free, and the public is invited.

Krehbiel, chair of the fine arts department at Ohio Wesleyan University, will talk about his exploration, photography and subsequent artwork regarding architecture, art and astronomy of the Ancestral Pueblo People (Anasazi) in the canyons of Cedar Mesa, Utah.

Krehbiel will consider the historical archaeoastronomy work to date, talk about creating artwork to unravel anthropological and scientific puzzles, show many images of the remote sites and astronomical alignments, and discuss the archaeological implications of these findings.

He will also address the advantages of working collaboratively with Ohio Wesleyan University honors student Natalie Cunningham on this multidisciplinary project, which has included extensive work in the fields of anthropology, archaeology, history, art and art history, astronomy, physics, geographic information systems and surveying.

"We have tested more than 20 sites and have found a wide variety of ancient astronomical viewing shrines," Krehbiel reports on their first year of work together. "In all respects, our findings are quite significant. Still in the preliminary stage, there are several years of extensive field study remaining. In many respects, this truly represents the find of a lifetime."



Jim Krehbiel



Winter Solstice, Shrine #2, Bear Ladder Ruin
(By Jim Krehbiel)

He will discuss where the work is headed this coming season and in years to come.

As a seasoned backcountry explorer, Krehbiel has a strong awareness of "site etiquette" and has always exercised great care when visiting prehistoric sites.

"I have been exploring not only the rock art and ceremonial, living and storage sites, but have also investigated their trail routes, farming and resource locations, and I have worked toward an understanding of the interrelationships between these locations and their use in the context of the environment," he said.

Krehbiel, a 1974 graduate of Charleston High School, is the son of James and Barbara Krehbiel of Charleston.

He majored in studio art with interests in painting, sculpture and printmaking at Montana State University, where he earned a degree in 1978. Krehbiel received his master of fine arts degree in printmaking from Indiana University in 1984, and then briefly worked as the assistant director of EIU's Tarble Arts Center before accepting a printmaking, drawing and digital imaging position at Ohio Wesleyan University.

This event is sponsored by EIU's College of Sciences, College of Arts and Humanities, and Honors College, as well as the departments of physics, art, English, history, and sociology and anthropology.