



# **ASM Ink**

October, 2010, Vol. 36, No. 10

Newsletter of the Archeological Society of Maryland, Inc.

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

## Annual Meeting coming on Oct. 16

To get to Texas, take the Baltimore Beltway to I-83 and head north. It's only a few miles up the road. To hear about Texas, go a few miles farther on Saturday, Oct. 16 and head for Oregon Ridge park for this year's Annual Meeting where a collection of speakers will tell about archeological projects in various parts of the state, including Texas, a Baltimore County Irish immigrant village dating to 1847.

The talk will be presented by Stephen Brighton, of the anthropology department at the University of Maryland, as the annual Frederick L. Steiner memorial lecture, named in honor of the founding editor of the ASM journal, *Maryland Archeology*.

Also on the morning session, John Fiveash, the outgoing president of ASM, will recount some of the activities and issues which have occupied the Society recently.

The afternoon session consists of four speakers. First, Stephanie Taleff Sperling of the Lost Towns Project in Anne Arundel County will tell about the bountiful discoveries at the prehistoric Pig Point excavation. The Patuxent River site contains both Early Archaic and Late Woodland components.

More news from Anne Arundel County, this time dealing with historic material, will come from chapter president Michelle Kerns. She will talk about findings at two recent projects, Legg's Dependence and Robinson House.

Don Housley, president of the Mid-Potomac chapter, will then tell members about work on a site in Montgomery County, the Josiah Henson cabin. Henson, born into slavery, escaped and became a preacher and is credited with being the inspiration for Harriet Beecher Stowe's "Uncle Tom's Cabin."

Finally, Anne Hayward will describe work at Port Tobacco in Charles County, specifically work at the Burch House. Port Tobacco was the site of two recent ASM field schools.

NOTE: If he is available, Alex McPhail may give an update about the recent changes to the CAT program.

Doors will open at 9 and a business meeting will precede the talks, which are scheduled to begin at 10:45. Though no food will be available on site, a wide selection of restaurants is nearby or you can bring your lunch and eat in the park. The meeting has been put together by the Central chapter.

For those who have not mailed in their election ballots, be sure to bring them with you. Ballots will be counted, winners announced and new officers will take their posts immediately. The winner of this year's William B. Mayre Award for distinguished service to Maryland archeology also will be announced.

Admission for ASM members is \$5, for nonmembers \$7.

The complete program and directions for getting to the Oregon Ridge Nature Center are on a flier inside this newsletter.

## Upcoming events

**October 16:** Annual Meeting. Oregon Ridge Nature Center, Cockeysville.

**October 23:** Faunal analysis workshop, presented by Ed Otter, Zwaanendael Museum, Lewes, Del. 9 - 3. For information, call 610-891-7627. Preregistration requested.

**October 28 - 31:** ESAF meeting, Williamsburg, Va.

**November 6:** Seminar, "Longhouses to Lighthouses, Chesapeake Lifestyles. Featuring several archeological talks. Glen Burnie. 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Fee. For information: 410 437 8665.

## Volunteer opportunities

The following volunteer opportunities are open to CAT participants and other ASM members:

**Montgomery County** is offering opportunities for lab and field work Wednesdays, 9:30 to 2:30. Call 301-840-5848 or contact [heather.bouslog@mncppc-mc.org](mailto:heather.bouslog@mncppc-mc.org). CAT opportunity.

**ASM field session collection:** Volunteers have finished upgrading the ASM field school collection. They are working on the Rosenstock (Frederick County) material. The lab in Crownsville will be open Tuesdays from 9:30 until 4. Contact Louise Akerson at [lakerson1@verizon.net](mailto:lakerson1@verizon.net) or Charlie Hall [chall@mdp.state.md.us](mailto:chall@mdp.state.md.us).

**The Lost Towns Project** of Anne Arundel County welcomes volunteers for its prolific Pig Point prehistoric site. Fridays. Call Jessie Grow at 410-222-1318.

**Mount Calvert.** Lab work and field work. 301-627-1286.

**Jefferson Patterson Park** invites volunteers to take part in its activities, including archeology, historical research and conservation. Contact Ed Chaney at [echaney@mdp.state.md.us](mailto:echaney@mdp.state.md.us) or 410-586-8554.

The Archaeological Institute of America provides an online listing of fieldwork opportunities worldwide. Call up [www.archaeological.org/fieldwork/](http://www.archaeological.org/fieldwork/) to get started. Remember to add the extra A in archaeological.

## CAT corner

A CAT Weekend on November 13 will feature two required workshops, archeological ethics and Native American ceramics. For details, updates and information on other CAT activities check the ASM website.



## Profiles in Maryland archeology

# A look at ASM's next president

*Note: Mechelle Kerns is the candidate to take over as ASM president after this month's election.*

**By Chip Cassano**

*From the UMUC Achiever, Spring 2010*

For Mechelle Kerns—who has taught in UMUC's School of Undergraduate Studies since 2004—the study of history has always demanded more context than even the most detailed textbook could provide.

That was a lesson she learned firsthand as an undergraduate at UMUC's sister institution, the University of Maryland, Baltimore County (UMBC), where she majored in ancient studies.

"As an ancient studies major, I was really drawn to archeology, because that's where you do your research," said Kerns. "Outside of the classics, there really isn't as rich a body of historic documentation to draw from, and there aren't the same kinds of records available as there are for the historic period. So textbooks and lectures often focus on archeological sites from the ancient world."

When she landed a summer internship with Anne Arundel County, working on the county's Lost Towns Project, it only served to confirm her beliefs. The Lost Towns Project—founded by Dr. Al Luckenbach,



the county archeologist, and initiated in the early 1990s—teamed archeologists with volunteers who worked together to explore, document and preserve the history of the county's Colonial-era lost towns.

"That was kind of how I got the archeology bug," said Kerns. "I wanted to get involved in the hands-on, 'getting dirty' archeology and when that opportunity came, I found that I really liked the physical discovery as well as the search for historical records."

Her research and academic achievements – coupled with the fact that she was the first person in her family to attend college – helped

her land a coveted Ronald McNair scholarship that gave her the freedom to continue her research for the county. She focused on London Town, a tobacco town established by the Maryland legislature in 1683 as a place where farmers and plantation owners could bring tobacco for shipment to Great Britain. The town quickly grew to rival Annapolis in economic importance.

With the added support of the scholarship funds, Kerns was able to publish a booklet about London Town while she was still an undergraduate. Her colleagues took notice and when she completed her degree in ancient studies, Anne Arundel County and the London Town site hired her to continue her work while she returned to UMBC, this time to pursue a master's degree in historical studies.

"It turned out I had a knack for land records research and genealogy, because I can't stand not knowing an answer," said Kerns. "You tell me to find something and I'll work until it's found."

Kerns wrote her master's thesis on London Town and in the process settled on her next challenge—earning a PhD in maritime history and archeology.

"It was fascinating because London Town was a Colonial tobacco port, so there was a lot of maritime interest in it," said Kerns. "Maritime research involves a whole different set of records, so I benefited greatly from the experience I gained there."

Her academic advisors in the historical studies program saw the connection and allowed her to complete a 6-credit internship with the state of Maryland's underwater archeologist, Dr. Susan Langley, who became both a mentor and friend. When Kerns mentioned that she hoped to earn a PhD, Langley pointed her to

**Continued on next page**

some of the foremost academic programs in maritime archeology, including one at the University of St. Andrews in Scotland, where Kerns eventually enrolled. It didn't hurt that she had taken scuba diving for physical education credit at UMBC.

"When I took underwater archeology classes as an undergraduate in ancient studies, I met one professor at UMBC who teaches ancient Greek history and covers a lot of shipwrecks and she had gotten to dive with a man named George Bass, who is often referred to as the father of underwater archeology," said Kerns. "She had these fantastic slides from diving on all of these different shipwrecks in the Mediterranean, and I guess that's how I got the underwater archeology bug."

In a practicum for her PhD program, Kerns dove five days a week, exploring the wreck of a Spanish ship—which sank in a hurricane in 1704—while documenting the site and helping to sort the artifacts she and her colleagues recovered. When it came time to write her dissertation, though, Kerns returned to Maryland—literally and figuratively—to focus on London Town once again, drawing on her years of research there to discuss the site's history, British maritime connections, record of shipping and trade, and more.

It was a win-win arrangement, Kerns said, because it gave her the research subject that she needed while the county benefited as well.

"They didn't have the staff or resources to do it, so I was able to mesh my professional employment and my academic pursuits around the same site, which isn't something most people have an opportunity to do," she said. "I was very fortunate."

Later, she felt equally fortunate when a colleague told her about a teaching opportunity in UMUC's undergraduate history program.

"My husband was in the Army - he actually just retired after 20 years of service - so when it came to our location, we've kind of been at the mercy of the military for the past 10 years," said Kerns. That, together with the birth of the couple's second child, made UMUC's online teaching format especially attractive, and after first teaching face-to-face classes full-time, Kerns switched to part-time status, teaching online. "It's been a great opportunity to keep my foot in the academic world," she said.

Two years ago, she accepted a position as a senior archeologist with the URS Corporation, a large, California-based multinational earth sciences company, which has offered her new opportunities to learn and explore.

"Before coming to URS, I spent about eight years on the same site and I became very familiar with it, which was great," said Kerns. "But at URS I've been able to work on different kinds of sites from different time periods—I've done projects in Wisconsin, Mississippi, Massachusetts and of course Virginia, Maryland and Washington, D.C.—and I'm also part of URS's scientific diver team, something we've been working to get off the ground for the past year or so. So I'm enjoying the variety."

She shares that variety and richness of experience with her students (most recently, she's been teaching HIST 157, "History of the United States since 1865"), who soon discover that her online lectures are punctuated with PowerPoint presentations and maps, illustrating everything from the country's westward expansion to the growing reach of railroads, steamships and the telegraph.

"I like to give students a connection to a more tangible reality," said Kerns, "so I also include links to ongoing research. I want them to understand that archeology and historic research are not static things, and as more archeology is done, bolstered by historic research, the stories we have heard about American history that have come to sound canned and repetitive start to evolve and become more rich."

It comes as no surprise, then, to learn that Kerns—who currently serves as president of the Anne Arundel County chapter of the Archeology society of Maryland— is also an admitted cheerleader when it comes to archeological and historic research in the state.

"One of my passions is to promote and help people understand archeology in Maryland," said Kerns. "As a whole, our membership [in ASM] is quite advanced in age, so I'm trying my best to bring in some younger people. It's my new mission in life."

# New finds bolster 1607 Maine site

By Seth Koenig

*Condensed from the (Brunswick, Maine) Times Record, August 13, 2010*

PHIPPSBURG — New excavation of the 1607 Popham Colony site reveals that English settlers there were mining and smelting iron ore. Signs of the industrial metal work further suggest the colonists were high-level specialists with plans for a permanent presence, not a ragtag band of misfits, the site's top expert said.

A June dig at the Phippsburg location also turned up what could be the second oldest coin ever found in Maine.

"The historical tradition has been that the Popham colonists were the riffraff of England — vagabonds and thieves who were coerced into coming over here," said Jeffrey Brain, who discovered the location of the colony on Sabino Head during the 1990s and who led the recent June dig as well.

"This just shows the opposite, that they were craftsmen and specialists," he said.

Previously, archeological work to study the short-lived colony at the mouth of the Kennebec River was restricted to publicly owned land on the peninsula overlooking Atkins Bay. A map of the settlement suggested the colonists occupied more space, but much of the additional area is now privately owned.

In May, Sam White of Auburn bought a dilapidated waterfront home just east of where the earlier digs took place. White said he agreed to let Brain and his team of researchers excavate the property before he rebuilt there. "I thought about it a little bit and I thought it was probably a good idea," White said. "It's just a very unique place."

Brain said the previous landowners, like most of the private landowners in the area, didn't allow the archeologists to dig on their property. But he said White's lot intrigued researchers because — unlike the state land where the earlier work took place — the grounds didn't appear to have been as disturbed by the construction of nearby Fort Baldwin in 1905.

Using colonist John Hunt's 17th Century map, Brain expected to find the colony's blacksmith shop on White's property. As the map suggested, Brain and a team of about 10 daily volunteers found "hearth-shaped features full of charcoal and metal, the remains of artifacts in the process of being forged when the site was abandoned."

The English settlers arrived here in 1607 to establish a sister colony to Jamestown. Unlike the colonists who landed in what is today Virginia, though, the northern group left in 1608. Brain said the newly discovered evidence supports his theory that the brevity of the Popham Colony was not what the settlers originally had in mind.

Brain's team found the remains of smelters, used to process raw iron ore into material that can be forged into nails or tools. That means the colonists were engaged in advanced metallurgy, which is not the type of industrial process undertaken in temporary encampments.

Another significant find is a Queen Elizabeth I silver shilling minted between 1592 and 1595. Other than a Norwegian silver penny dated just earlier than 1100 A.D. allegedly found near Penobscot Bay in 1957, Brain said, the Popham Colony coin probably is the oldest ever found in Maine.

"That coin was an exciting recovery," he said. "Of course, coins always are. Even though we're not treasure hunters, coins give us a lot of information. There was absolutely no need for money here, this was just someone who had a coin or two in his pocket and lost it here."

Brain said no other period coin has been found in all of the digging that's been done at the Popham Colony site, but he said in the same living area where the coin was located, diggers unearthed high end ceramics. Pottery of similar quality has been found in other residential areas in the colony as well.

"It's an extra little bit of evidence that, indeed, these people were above the average run," he said. "The majority of colonists would have been soldiers. This was a fort, after all. But mixed in with them ... would have been very competent and socially respectable tradesmen and craftsmen, as well as the leaders of the colony."

## Arundel couple aided chapter with its effort

The Anne Arundel Chapter wishes to thank and acknowledge the contributions of Dr. Stephen Hittle and his wife, Pat, for offering their historic property for study and for their donation of \$600 for the purchase of an LCD Projector for the chapter. The couple also donated \$400 to ASM/MHT toward a new tarp for one of the archeological field tents used during the field session and by chapters for fieldwork.

The Hittles are owners of Robinson House (18AN1458 or Historic Property AA-130), an 18<sup>th</sup> Century National Register property in Severna Park. They recently hosted the Anne Arundel Chapter for a weekend archeology session during which chapter members, CAT program participants and volunteer documented the foundation remains of an addition that stood adjacent to the main house until the 1880s.

The chapter mapped the foundation, excavated test units and washed artifacts in July and cataloged the artifacts in August. A summary and a site report are forthcoming.

## Chapter notes

### Anne Arundel

Meets five times a year in February, April, June, September and November at the Severna Park Branch of the County Public Library, 45 McKinsey Road. 7:30 p.m. Contact Mechelle Kerns at

[AAChapASM@hotmail.com](mailto:AAChapASM@hotmail.com) or the chapter website [www.marylandarcheology.org/aacashome.php](http://www.marylandarcheology.org/aacashome.php)

**November 6:** Conrad Bladey on "30 years of Archeology: London, England to Laurel to Linthicum and Celebrations in the Archeological Record - Wassail Bowls and Bonfires."

### Central

Central Chapter has no formal meetings planned, but it does engage in field work and related activities.

Contact chapter President Stephen Israel, 410-945-5514 or [ssisrael@verizon.net](mailto:ssisrael@verizon.net)

### Charles County

Meetings are held 7 on the first Wednesday (September-May) at Historic LaPlata Train Station. Contact President Carol Cowherd at [cowherdcl@gmail.com](mailto:cowherdcl@gmail.com) or 301-375-9489.

**October 6:** Michael Lucas, Maryland National Capital Parks and Planning Commission, will discuss ongoing archeological and historical research At Mount Calvert.

**November 3:** Julie King, of St. Mary's College, will speak about her continuing work in Charles County.

### Mid-Potomac

The chapter meets the third Thursday of the month at 7:30 p.m. Dinner at a local restaurant at 5:45 p.m. Contact [heather.bouslog@mncppc-mc.org](mailto:heather.bouslog@mncppc-mc.org) or call 301-8405848 or Don Housley at [donhou704@earthlink.net](mailto:donhou704@earthlink.net) or 301-424-8526. Chapter website: [www.asmmidpotomac.wordpress.com](http://www.asmmidpotomac.wordpress.com) Facebook page: [www.facebook.com/pages/Mid-Potomac-Archaeology/182856471768](https://www.facebook.com/pages/Mid-Potomac-Archaeology/182856471768) Email: [asmmidpotomac@gmail.com](mailto:asmmidpotomac@gmail.com)

**October 21:** Meeting at Needwood Mansion, Derwood. Alexandra Jones will talk on the "Gibson Grove African-American Burial Ground Project."

**November 18:** Meeting at the Agricultural History Farm Park Activity Center in Derwood from 6 to 10 p.m. Jeff Geyer will offer a workshop on Lithics Identification. Bring your own dinner or \$5 for pizza and salad.

### Monocacy

The chapter meets in the C. Burr Artz Library in Frederick on the second Wednesday of the month at 7 p.m. Contact Jeremy Lazelle at 301-845-9855 or [jlazelle@msn.com](mailto:jlazelle@msn.com) or Nancy Geasey at 301-378-0212.

## Northern Chesapeake

Meetings are the second Wednesday of the month. Members and guests assemble at 6:30 p.m. for light refreshments. A business meeting at 7 is followed by the presentation at 7:30. Contact Ann Persson at 410-272-3425 or [aspst20@yahoo.com](mailto:aspst20@yahoo.com) Website: <http://sites.google.com/site/northernchesapeake>

**October 13:** Troy Novak: "Four Maritime Sites in the Elk and Sassafras Rivers," Havre de Grace City Hall.

**November 10:** Henry Ward: "Native American Soapstone Technology in Cecil County," Perryville Town Hall.

**December 6:** Jay Custer: "Delaware's Island Field Site, Reflections and New Interpretations," Harford Glen Dining Hall.

**January 12:** Jerry Warner: "The 2010 Field School at St. Mary's City, Maryland," I-95 Maryland House Meeting Room.

**February 9:** Jim Gibb: "Moving the 19th Century Cole Family Cemetery at Aberdeen, Maryland," Historical Society of Harford County.

**March 9:** Allen Shapiro: "Excavations at *Ramat Rahel*, Jerusalem, Israel," Harford Jewish Community Center.

**April 8:** Julia King: "Analysis of 17th and 18th Century Burials in St. Mary's and Charles Counties," Harford Community College.

**May 15:** Member and Guest Picnic, and Tour of the Exhibit: "Prehistoric Culture of the Northern Chesapeake," Liriodendron Mansion.

## Upper Patuxent

Programs are the second Monday of every other month at 7:30 p.m. at Mt. Ida in Ellicott City. Potluck suppers are held at 6:15 in September and March. Otherwise, dinner is available at the Diamondback restaurant in Ellicott City at 6 p.m. Contact Lee Preston at 443-745-1202 or [leeprestonjr@comcast.net](mailto:leeprestonjr@comcast.net)

**November 8:** Jaimie Wilder, "Before Howard Community College : The History and Research of the Bassler Farmhouse."

**Jan. 10:** (Snow Date Jan. 17) Jim Gibb, "Two African American Households in Port Tobacco, 1846-1900."

**March 14:** Anne Hayward, "Textiles in the Tidewater: How Textiles of the Colonial Chesapeake Are Represented in the Archival Record Versus the Archaeological Record."

**May 9:** Lee Preston, "Made in China : Silk, Porcelain and Terra Cotta Soldiers."

## Western Maryland

Programs are the fourth Friday of the month, at 7:30 p.m. in the LaVale Library, unless noted. Contact Roy Brown, 301-724-7769. Chapter email: [wmdasm@yahoo.com](mailto:wmdasm@yahoo.com) Website: <http://sites.google.com/site/wmdasm>

**October 22:** Patricia and Charles Bonar, "Sacagawea & Charbonneau," a narrative of the Lewis and Clark epic journey from Ft. Mandan, ND to Ft. Clapsop, OR and their return, as seen through Native American eyes.

**November** date TBA: Field trip to tour the new location of the Allegany County Museum.

**December:** No chapter meeting due to the holidays.



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ASM, Inc members receive the monthly newsletter ASM Ink, the biannual journal MARYLAND ARCHEOLOGY, reduced admission to ASM events and a 10% discount on items sold by the Society. Contact Membership Secretary Belinda Urquiza for membership rates. For publication sales, contact Dan Coates at ASM Publications, 716 Country Club Rd., Havre de Grace, MD 21078-2104 or 410-273-9619 or [dancoates@comcast.net](mailto:dancoates@comcast.net).

**Submissions welcome.** Please send to Myron Beckenstein, 6817 Pineway, University Park, MD 20782, 301-864-5289 or [myronbeck@verizon.net](mailto:myronbeck@verizon.net)

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