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www.marylandarcheology.org

The latest on the oldest at Workshop

If spring is right around the corner, it must be time again for archeology gatherings. First up is the annual Workshop in Archeology, to be held in Crownsville Saturday, March 7. The focus of this year's meeting, the 18th, is pre-Clovis, but there will be sessions on historic and maritime archeology too.

As usual, the workshop will feature a group session to open the day, followed by three time slots each offering a choice of three talks. Two of the sessions are designed for CAT candidates, but others may sit in if there is room. The sessions this year are a prehistoric overview by Charlie Hall.

The workshop's leadoff speaker is Virginia archeologist Mike Johnson talking about the Cactus Hill site in his state and search it precipitated for similar sites in the area to substantiate their theories.

In the 11:15 time period Johnson will join fellow archeologists Stuart Fiedel and Joe Dent for a public chat about Pre-Clovis. Their informal discussion will look at some of the professional opinions and controversies relating to pre-Clovis sites. They will take questions, too.

Besides the first CAT session, the other morning offering will be Paul Jung, of the Northern Chesapeake chapter, talking about clay pipes and their manufacture. There will be a hands-on demonstration and he invites participants to bring in any clay pipes they have questions about.

Following a break for lunch, a session will look into the joint terrestrial-maritime search for the early 19th Century American privateer, the Lion of Baltimore. David Shaw and Steven Anthony of the Maritime Archaeological and Historical Society will tell of their work at Bodkin Creek, south of the Patapsco River. Their report also will describe three previously unknown shipwrecks discovered during the survey.

Also in this time slot, MAC Lab director Patricia Samford will provide an introduction to post-Colonial earthenwares. This workshop will look at some of the common diagnostic ceramics used in Maryland between the American Revolution and the mid 19th Century and provide basic identification and dating tools.

In the final period, another Maryland Archaeological Conservation Laboratory worker, Sara Rivers-Cofield, will talk about the miscellaneous artifacts found on historic sites, such as buckles, buttons, toys and jewelry. A hands-on session will follow, focusing on clothing-related artifacts from its collections.

Roy Brown will offer another of his popular experimental archeology demonstrations. This time he will talk about replicating a 17th Century Wampanoag bow using only stone tools. He will show the step-by-step process he went through.

The final talk of this final time period, Dave Howe of the Institute of Maritime History will discuss opportunities in fieldwork and training for volunteers to participate in underwater archeological reconnaissance for the Maryland Historical Trust and similar state offices elsewhere.

The program begins at 9:30 and costs $5 for ASM members and $7 for nonmembers.

Upcoming events

March 7: Annual Archeology Workshop, Crownsville.

March 19 – 22; MAAC conference, Ocean City.

April: MARYLAND ARCHEOLOGY MONTH. MANY EVENTS STATEWIDE.

April 4: Spring Symposium, St. Mary's City.

May 18-22: National Park Service archeological workshop in Natchitoches, Louisiana, for those interested in forensic and cemetery investigations. $475. For information, contact Steven L. DeVore 402- 437-5392, ext. 141 or steve_de_vore@nps.gov

May 22 – June 1: ASM field session, Port Tobacco.

October 17: Annual Meeting, Havre de Grace Maritime Museum.

Volunteer opportunities

The following volunteer opportunities are open to CAT program 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 contactjames.sorensen@mncppc-mc.org orheather.bouslog@mncppc-mc.org. CAT opportunity.

ASM field session collection: Volunteers are needed to work on up-grading collections associated with previous field sessions. Currently being curated is the collection from the Late Archaic Baldwin site collection. The lab in Crownsville is open Tuesdays from 9:30 until 4. For additional information contact Louise Akerson lakerson1@verizon.net or Charlie Hall chall@mdp.state.md.us.

The Lost Towns Project of Anne Arundel County. 410-222-7440.

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

Jefferson Patterson Park invites volunteers to take part in its various activities, including archeology, historical research and artifact conservation. Contact Ed Chaney at 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/ to get started. Remember to add the extra A in archaeological.

CAT corner

A CAT workshop, Prehistoric Overview, will be part of the Archeology Workshop March 7. See flier.

For updates and information on CAT activities check the ASM website.

A website has been set up for CAT candidates and graduates: http://tech.groups.yahoo.com/group/MDcat/ . To join the group email MDcat-subscribe@yahoogroups.com Members can choose to get emails or just use the website to send messages. Courtesy of CAT candidate Tom Forhan.

JefPat looking for displays for its April program

Jefferson Patterson Park & Museum will be holding a daylong public archeology event Saturday, April 18. "Discovering Archeology" hopes to feature archeologists from all across Maryland. Interested professional and avocational organizations can bring displays, presentations, artifacts, papers, publications and other materials about their current or past projects. Hands-on activities are also encouraged.

Anyone interested in participating should contact Kate Dinnel at JPPM by calling 410-586-8538 or by email at kdinnel@mdp.state.md.us.

Smithsonian exhibit tells it with bones

From newswire reports, February 2009

Did you know that bones can talk? So can burial sites.

Permanent clues about our lives are contained within our bones and teeth. Grave sites tell us about local customs, the social status of individuals and times of trouble in history.

"Written in Bone: Forensic Files of the 17th-Century Chesapeake," an exhibit has opened at the Smithsonian's National Museum of Natural History, focuses on bay communities, including Jamestown, Virginia (established in 1607), St. Mary's City, Maryland (1634), and Providence, Maryland (1649).

Displays of human bones and artifacts found there will show visitors how 21st Century forensic anthropologists, archeologists and osteologists (bone specialists) use observation and modern technology to unlock some mysteries of life and death from more than 400 years ago.

Some 340 objects, including artifacts and human bones, are on display for two years, with discussions of how cold cases from colonial times shed light on what life was like for some of the earliest English and Africans to settle in America.

The exhibit is "a fascinating window into the lives of our nation's earliest colonists," observed museum director Cristian Samper. See www.anthropology.si.edu/

Since 1992 researchers have unearthed the remains of hundreds of early settlers around Chesapeake Bay.

"Now we can get to know these individuals, learn about how they lived and sometimes how they died," said forensic anthropologist Douglas Owsley, curator of the exhibit.

Added co-curator Karin Bruwelheide: "Stories more amazing than you can ever imagine can be revealed by this type of investigation."

Skeletons can reveal sex, age, ethnicity, diet, amount of exercise and health. Even without written records, today's scientists can determine which early settlers carried heavy loads, rode horses frequently, suffered from disease and infections or were left-handed. The clues are in the bones.

Lacking the dental care we have today, many 17th-Century settlers had teeth that were broken or had holes. Holes called "pipe facets" were common in smokers who clenched hard clay pipe stems between their teeth. Women who sewed often had "tailor's notches": grooves in teeth caused by holding pins and needles in the mouth.

It's important for archeologists to work slowly when a skeleton or burial site is discovered. First, they gather as many clues as possible "in situ" -- at the scene -- before anything is touched. They take photographs and measurements.

They look for other signs that might help them piece together the puzzle. Are there tools nearby? Other bones? Household objects? Weapons? Clothing deteriorates over time, so it might not be found, but metal fasteners or buttons may remain. Soil samples help pinpoint the date of burial.

The bones are then carefully labeled to help re-create the skeleton in the lab, where more testing is done.

Sometimes grave sites don't fit with what we historically know about burial customs. For example, graves may not be where we expect them, or a body may be in an unusual position. In those cases, extra detective work is needed to solve the mystery. Consider these three stories that are part of the exhibition:

A number of disorganized grave sites found in Jamestown several years ago pointed to our historical knowledge of the winter of 1609. Colonists in the first permanent English settlement in America -- people who knew Pocahontas or worked with Captain John Smith -- were struggling to survive. The environment was harsh. Food was scarce and new supplies were delayed. Colonists resorted to eating leather, rodents and even their horses. The burial sites confirmed that deaths were so numerous that there was no time for proper funerals.

By contrast, 25 years ago in St. Mary's City, archeologists digging in a cornfield found three 17th-Century lead coffins neatly entombed beneath the floor of a long-forgotten chapel. The coffins' construction and placement indicated that the occupants were upper class, well-known and given an appropriate burial. Two of the skeletons were identified as members of Maryland's founding family: Philip Calvert and his wife, Anne, who died in the late 1600s. The third coffin contained an unidentified infant.

A far different story was revealed in Anne Arundel County. In 2003, while digging in a plowed field,

Continued on next page

archeologists found a human skeleton in the ruins of a 17th-Century house. Researchers could tell that this was a hastily dug grave. Had someone tried to hide the body?

The bone development of the skeleton indicated it was of a boy about 16 years old. Further testing revealed that he had a wheat-based diet, common to Europeans in the 1600s. Americans at that time ate corn-based diets, so the boy hadn't been in this country long.

The mysterious Boy from Leavy Neck

By Jane Cox
Lost Towns Project

The Leavy Neck excavations at Providence in 2003 uncovered a shocking find: A body – in the basement. Who was this person – and what stories might he tell us?

The tale of this 17th-Century burial comes to life in "Written in Bone" at the Smithsonian.

The indentured servant unceremoniously buried in the circa 1660s trash cellar tells a significant story – one of a nameless young man who came to the New World but soon perished in the harsh environment. His bones are all that survive to tell his story, as no written documentation about his life has been preserved. This forensic perspective on Anne Arundel County's early history emphasizes how important the archeological record is in gaining a better understanding of our past.

As this discovery is a key element of the exhibit, the Smithsonian and its partners have given the boy from Leavy Neck the royal treatment. Included in the exhibit are full facial and body reconstructions which will anchor the Leavy Neck gallery. There is an associated web comic, "The Secret in the Cellar," which shares the discovery and investigation process, which also serves as an educational web-based tool. View the webcomic at www.anthropology.si.edu/writteninbone/comic/

The exhibit will be covered in other media as well – including an exhibit companion book, a second book geared towards children and young adults titled "Written in Bone: Buried Lives of Jamestown and Colonial Maryland," by Sally Walker, as well as a show on the History Channel.

Later in 2009 the Smithsonian will host a scholarly conference. There's even a YouTube clip that introduces the exhibit: www.youtube.com/watch?v=So6L3s1tc2E

New online tools offered for archeologists

More and more resources are available online to aid archeologists in their efforts. For instance:

-- The Maryland State Highway Administration cultural resources department is producing a quarterly newsletter. It will be sent electronically and give updates on archeological projects throughout the state, community cultural events and fun facts. If you would like your email address added to the list, contact Nichole Sorensen-Mutchie at nsorensenmutchie@sha.state.md.us or 410-545-8793.

-- The MAC Lab at Jefferson Patterson is about to go on line with wood and charcoal identification: http:www.jefpat.org/Wood & Charcoal Identification/Wood and Charcoal ID Introduction.htm

TheMAC Lab effort is headed by Harry Alden, who has created a type collection of unburnt wood and charcoal samples for trees and woody shrubs found in the northern Chesapeake area. Identification tools for 25 of the most common area trees are included.

"High resolution photographs of magnified thin sections of wood and charcoal have been labeled to show key characteristics of cellular structure useful in identification," the MAC Lab says. "The webpage also contains a section on wood and charcoal identification basics, a glossary and a bibliography, as well as links to other websites containing additional information."

-- The Smithsonian's National Museum of the American Indian has begun putting its 800,000-object collection online.The first phase has 5,500 items and photographs. The project is part of the museum's regular Web site, www.nmai.si.eduThe museum can barely display 1 percent of its collection at its locations.

The web offering will let people living far from the museum's three locations in Washington and New York to view its archives, particularly, Indians who can't travel to the museum ,said museum director Kevin Gover.

Profiles in Maryland archeology

An interview with … Matt Paulus

Matt Paulus teaches at the College Park campus of the University of Maryland and helps run its yearly Archaeology in Annapolis program.

Q. How did you get started in archeology?

A. I did my undergraduate degree at the University of Maine in Orono. I finished a B.A. in zoology up there but at the end of four years I had no idea what I wanted to do with it and I actually saw my peers going to work in these big testing laboratories, running protocols for medical testing and things like that, working with critters, but basically sacrificing them, and so forth. I took a few classes in anthropology just to round out my credits and the very first one I took I got offered a job. It was the same thing we do here, recruit from the intro classes to take part in the field school. In that case they were looking for people to fill out a field crew. That summer, after I finished my B.A., I did a field school in historical archeology at Castine's Habitation in Castine, Maine. Alaric Faulkner was working the site and he gave me a job in his laboratory after the field school was over. I was around these graduate students in anthropology who were doing historical archeology, saying they couldn't imagine doing anything else and I thought, that must be a great feeling, and I decided pretty much over that period that this was going to be my career. I made a shift. I did another year at the University of Maine, earned a B.A. in anthropology and went to work doing contract.

Q. In Maine?

A. Actually, I ended up out in Arizona. I sent applications all over the country. I got these lists of contract companies and I sent applications to different companies in Arizona, and Arizona State University called me up, maybe a few months after I'd moved home to Pittsburgh from Maine, with no employment. Arizona State University called me and hired me for eight bucks an hour to move out to Payson, Arizona, to work on a big Forest Service land exchange project, testing and doing data recovery on a number of prehistoric sites out that way. So I got a taste in undergraduate and then went to work in CRM (Cultural Resources Management) and that sealed it for me.

Q. And you went back to school?

A. Yeh, at some point I was out in Arizona for just about three and a half years and I did sort of real shovel-bumming for a while, where I would work for a few weeks, temp for a few weeks, work for a few weeks and I got a fulltime job with a company called Archaeological Research Services. ARS, Lyle Stone ran it until a few years ago. That was the first fulltime archeology employment that I had had and the first time I experienced sort of being groomed to accept greater and greater responsibility. What ARS seemed to do was train people up until they could run one-person projects or two-person projects by themselves and then send them out. At some point everyone just started buying houses. One person bought a house and then everyone started buying houses in Tempe, in the early 1990s. Another thing that happened: One person went away to graduate school to get more training and then suddenly everyone in that cohort was applying to graduate schools, and that's what I did. I came to the University of Maryland and started in the applied anthropology

master's program in '98, planning to finish in two years and zip right back to Arizona and go back into contract work, because I really loved it. But over that period of time I became convinced that I wanted to continue and

earn a PhD in anthropology, so that's what I'm working on now, and have been working on since 2000.

Q. But not here in Maryland.

A. No. At the time Maryland had just a terminal master's. I liked that program, and still have a lot of faith in the idea of a professional archeologist with a master's degree. I think that's a good fit with archeology and it serves a need within the industry. Mark Leone, who's on the faculty, he was my advisor, and he convinced me that if was going to raise a family I either had to be a partner in a contract archeology firm or I had to get tenure as a professor. Both of those required a PhD degree so I went back for more education.

Q. This was at?

A. I finished at Maryland in 2000. That fall I started at Columbia University.

Q. What brought you back to Maryland?

A. I went up to Columbia with a bunch of Maryland data in my back pocket. I'd been working in Annapolis with Mark Leone and I'd pretty much planned all along to my dissertation research in Annapolis, so that kept me coming back in the summers. Then, when nothing was keeping me living in New York I moved down here full time. I should say throughout this my girlfriend – and now wife – was living in Maryland so when I was up in New York she was still in Maryland and kept me anchored to this state. In 2000 I moved back. I go back to New York once or twice a year or as my adviser and committee demand.

Q. What is the topic of your dissertation?

A. I wanted to work with infrastructure and public utilities. From 2001 to 2004, over four summers, the University of Maryland's field school excavated in the Eastport neighborhood of Annapolis. I can't say that I went looking for public utilities in Eastport. I found them because every archeologist working in urban contexts finds these things. My idea was to take this data that most archeologists just set aside as disturbances and do something creative with it. What I have been working to do is address the connection between Eastport being annexed into the city of Annapolis. Annapolis becomes a metropolitan area in the first half of the 20th Century and it annexes all of its neighbors in 1951. Public utilities, I think, played a role in that. The city of Annapolis was providing services to its neighbors, to its suburbs, to the beginning of the 20th Century and in particular there was a large sewer-building project from 1933 to '37 and the Annapolis metropolitan sewerage district, that was drawn up in the '30s, encompassed all the land that Annapolis eventually annexed in the '50s. Essentially what I'm doing is an archeology of these utilities as a material culture trace of those annexations. So utilities have Annapolis extending its government, not into its hinterland but into its surrounding communities.

Q. What interesting projects have you worked on?

A. Boy. I've enjoyed all of it. I miss Arizona, that was really the last time I've gotten to do any amount of prehistoric archeology and I had a great appreciation for it. And certainly that was the last time I've worked on any projects that had big budgets, that were really sort of massive undertakings, dozens of sites being excavated over a period of months and things like that. It was almost the last time I got to work around heavy equipment. CRM really excited me and still excites me. Some of my colleagues here, people I work with on the project in Annapolis, have gone to work on CRM in Maryland and I envy them, in part. But interesting projects: In Arizona, while I was out there, there's a road called the Beeline Highway that runs from Phoenix almost to Flagstaff. It stops short of Flagstaff in a town called Payson. In the mid and late '90s, every archeologist in Arizona worked on some segment of that highway project, either doing advanced survey testing or what I worked on, which was data recovery. This was just as a field tech, but it was the last time I lived in a hotel for week after week after week. That was always exciting. Then working with Archaeology in Annapolis has been very exciting and pretty much every summer season has brought interesting sites, interesting work. Last spring in particular I was project manager on a testing project that was completed for the Department of Public Works in Annapolis. It was right downtown on Fleet and Cornhill Streets, the streets that run from the City Dock almost to the State House. The archeology was remarkably intact, it was the earliest stuff I've ever seen in the city and there were some unique finds. The corduroy road, the rest of it. It was urban archeology of a kind I've never really done before. Because Eastport isn't like that. In Eastport the archeology is fairly

shallow and you have to struggle with it a little bit more to find the important discoveries, the key discoveries. Whereas in the historic district of Annapolis it jumps right out. Now I know why Mark's been digging there for 25 or more years.

Q. How has archeology changed since you've been involved in it?

A. The biggest thing – and I'm a youngling really, I'm 38, and I've only been doing archeology since '94, '95 – that I've seen come on the scene and in some ways pass me by is the use of GIS and total stations and the integration of spatial data using those technologies. When I did contract in Arizona there was one guy who had a total station and it was him and his assistant and they got all the mapping work in the state. If you were working for the state highway, whoever you were working for, you would get this one guy to come shoot your points. And now everybody does it. And now everyone integrates that sort of technology into every level of the research. I shouldn't say everybody, but it's available more widely and people use it. I still use the transit and I still think like I'm working with a plane table and alidade, which is going to get me into trouble sooner or later.

Q. Is archeology practiced differently in Maryland than elsewhere where you've worked?

A. Since I've been doing archeology in Maryland I've really only worked with the University of Maryland's field school. These are almost the only excavations that I've done, so it's hard for me to compare the way the work was in Arizona and the way the work is here. A change that I've noticed is that people have given up on, or at least it seems like, a lot of contract work doesn't take the survey testing and data recovery – the three-phase sort of approach – to McManaging archeological resources. There seems to be, if not step-skipping, some rushing through those steps. The demand is to exhaust resources and testing and that's new to me and sort of frustrating. Part of this is when I worked in Arizona I was almost always working for the state highway administration and you could take your time and get the work done at a somewhat slower pace. I see people in Maryland rushing through these projects and part of that is the times, its the DC area and the post-9/11 era, everyone's hysterical and there's no patience about getting projects done, particularly defense projects or any sort of infrastructure or public works projects. I see people sort of screaming through the work because they are being asked to. I guess that's something to compare notes with other archeologists who do contract in this area.

Q. You have a lot of contact with young people. Do you find them good candidates for going into archeology?

A. Absolutely. To me the greatest pleasure of working with the field school is that in every group one or two or three would go into archeology. They wouldn't all last. Some would try it out and decide it wasn't for them, but there were a few people in every group who became professionals. Training them to think like professionals and to do professional work was always terrific and I love giving references for people who've worked with the field school. I love writing letters of recommendation, all those kinds of things. I love supporting people who are just discovering archeology, trying to break into it, either academic or professional. That's my favorite part of being at the university here.

Q. What do you think is the future of Maryland archeology?

A. Throughout the state and at different levels of government, giving care and attention to historic resources relevant to African-Americans in Maryland is being routinized. This is shown in Prince George's County's efforts to identify African-American cemeteries and in part it's a consequence of the discovery of the African Burial Ground in New York City. That was a watershed event almost equal to NAGPRA and it marked a shift in Maryland archeology. Archeologists, especially those working for state and local governments, are working to engage African-American constituencies. African-Americans in Maryland are succeeding to be recognized as stakeholders in Maryland's archeological heritage in a way that Native people in Maryland have yet to be fully recognized. I see this process continuing. The partnership will grow stronger, so long as the responsible agencies and organizations continue to receive the support they need. Maryland archeology will be better for it.

Coming: Howard Wellman's guide to field conservation

South Dakota unit faces budget wipeout

By Thom Gabrukiewicz

Condensed from the (Sioux Falls) ArgusLeader.com, February 9 2009

South Dakota's Archaeological Research Center (ARC) helps excavate, catalog and store artifacts from across the state, but Gov. Mike Rounds' budget proposal has the little-known agency on the brink of extinction.

Archeologists across South Dakota said closing the agency - it gets about $308,000 from the state - would present no savings and would jeopardize economic development while risking the care and protection of the state's archeological resources and research.

Rounds has proposed $46.181 million in budget cuts to counter a projected $134 million shortfall during the next 18 months. The governor deferred comment on the issue Thursday to Richard Benda, Tourism and State Development director, and state budget director Jason Dilges. The ARC is a program under the state Historical Society and part of the tourism department.

"Obviously, none of the cuts we've looked at are easy cuts, many aren't optimal," Dilges said. "We've had to make the least painful cuts we can, but that isn't to say there isn't going to be some pain involved."

Cutting money for the Rapid City-based Archaeological Research Center would do more than just affect the state's history, heritage and culture, archeologists said. While the agency's budget is only 0.024 percent of the state's general fund, more than $1.5 million is generated yearly from grant- and contract-funded projects. The center employs three people who are paid from state general fund money, as well as 22 people who are on the payroll as employees and subcontractors.

"We would just be gone," said state archeologist Jim Haug. "That $300,000 covers the statutory work that we do. And if we're not doing it, I'm not sure how things get done. It complicates the process."

The ARC is responsible for all compliance work for the state Department of Transportation to build roads. Most construction projects - from cellular telephone towers to wind farms - also require approval to ensure that the projects do not disturb important archeological sites or displace Native American gravesites.

"I think someone went down a list and said, 'Archaeological Research Center? That can go,' " said Adrien Hannus, director of Augustana College's archeology lab.

The center maintains 8,000 archeological collections and houses records on 19,500 archeological sites. Staff completed 322 record searches in 2008, with another 263 done by visiting consultants and scholars.

"Maybe they would be able to become self-sufficient, cover its own costs with payments from the state," Dilges said. "I don't think the book is closed on this, there is dialogue."

If the money isn't restored, the ARC would close June 30.

"What concerns me is that I just started a small business, I do cultural resource management work," said Troy Kogel of Sioux Falls, an archeologist who owns Kogel & Stanfill Associates. "A lot of that background comes from the Archaeological Research Center in the form of record searches. Without that information in our reports, power lines, water lines, sewer lines, roads, highways, they don't get built."

Jarring discovery: it was chocolate

By Michael Haederle

Condensed from the New York Times, February 4, 2009

ALBUQUERQUE — For years Patricia Crown puzzled over the cylindrical clay jars found in the ruins at Chaco Canyon, the great complex of multistory masonry dwellings set amid the arid mesas of northwestern New Mexico. They were utterly unlike other pots and pitchers she had seen.

Some scholars believed that Chaco's inhabitants, ancestors of the modern Pueblo people, had stretched skins across the cylinders and used them for drums, while others thought they held sacred objects.

But the answer is simpler, though no less intriguing, Crown asserts in a paper published Tuesday in The Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences: the jars were used for drinking liquid chocolate. Her

findings offer the first proof of chocolate use north of the Mexican border.

How did the ancient Pueblos come to have cacao beans in the desert, more than 1,200 miles from the nearest cacao trees? Crown, a University of New Mexico anthropologist, noted that maize, beans and corn spread to the Southwest after being domesticated in southern Mexico.

Dorie Reents-Budet, a Smithsonian associate specializing in Mayan cylinder vases, said that a sophisticated Mesoamerican trade network extended to Chaco in the north and as far south as Ecuador and Colombia.

The Mayan vessels, decorated with court scenes and hieroglyphics, were used to ceremonially consume chocolate at big feasts, Reents-Budet said. An expensive luxury, the cacao beans were fermented, roasted and ground up, then mixed with water and flavorings before being whipped into froth. It made sense to present the beverage in a special vessel, she said: "It's as if you were having a dinner party and serving champagne."

"It's likely that this was not something everybody consumed," she said. "It's likely it was intended for only this one segment of society."

After an exchange with Reents-Budet in October 2007 about the resemblances between the Chacoan and Mayan earthenware, Crown said she thought about having the Chacoan cylinders checked for cacao residue.

"The results were unequivocal," said W. Jeffrey Hurst, a senior bioanalytical chemist for the Hershey Company, whose bosses have been allowing him to test Mesoamerican ceramics for cacao for two decades. In 2002, he co-published a paper in Nature showing that early Maya were using cacao by 600 B.C., pushing back the earliest chemical evidence for their cacao use by 1,000 years. He wrote the new paper with Crown.

"Most of what we do in archeology is interpretive, and the interpretations can change," Crown said. "It's rare that you get to find anything this definite and answer a question. It felt great."

Finding neglected traces of field slaves

By Tara Bahrampour

Condensed from the Washington Post, February 5, 2009

The development boom in Loudoun County, Virginia, over the past decade has had obvious advantages for those in the real estate business, but it has also been a boon for a less obvious sector: archeologists.

For large developments, federal and county laws require builders to pay for archeological surveys before construction. The laws have helped archeologists learn more about areas they might not have been able to explore before.

Tammy Bryant, a senior archaeologist at Thunderbird Archeology, has had an opportunity to pursue her specialty: the dwelling places of 18th- and 19th-Century field slaves at the edges of plantations.

Using metal detectors and digging holes to sift through soil, she and her colleagues have found evidence of the field slaves' lives in several areas of Loudoun: the nails that held their houses together and shards of colon ware, an unglazed, reddish ceramic they ate and drank from. Older ceramic has shown up, too, most likely secondhand pieces that were passed on to the slaves.

Bryant said the field slaves tended to be pushed into the least desirable areas of a property.

Finding the slaves' dwellings can be hard because they were not exactly built for posterity. "These structures are not sturdy," Bryant said. "They're more ephemeral." Nor did the inhabitants have much to leave behind. Their possessions were paltry, so archeologists must rely on tiny clues to decipher their lives.

Although the existence of the sites doesn't usually change developers' plans, mapping out their presence has helped archeologists form a more comprehensive idea of how large plantations were tied together.

Bryant said she is drawn to the field slaves' quarters despite the scarcity of artifacts, in part because they were so marginalized.

"They were the most underprivileged," she said. "A lot of the big plantations have been studied," as have slave quarters that were more centrally located. But evidence of field slaves, tucked away in hardscrabble areas of the land, is more elusive.

"I used to feel bad about the setting they were in," Bryant said. But as she studied them, she said she learned that obscurity had certain advantages.

"They had a little more freedom than the house slaves," she said. "They had their own little paths, and some of them had their own little gardens, and they might have been making a little money for themselves, and it's

nice to think about that."

Some artifacts offer evidence of leisure activities. Smooth, worn, fingernail-size white objects in the soil might be ceramic pieces from mancala, a game that originated in Africa.

Virginia boys find history in a bottle

By Ann Cameron Siegal

Condensed from the Washington Post, December 2, 2008

Reading about history is nice, but finding ties to long-ago historical events in your own backyard is really exciting.

In their heavily populated Fairfax County subdivision, neighbors Adam Giles, 13, and Derek Hann, 12, uncovered pieces of glass that looked quite different from what's used today. "After digging about two feet down, I stumbled upon an interesting bottle," Derek said. The bottle had a "pontil scar" on the bottom, an indication that it was hand-blown rather than machine made. It also had the name "Fraser" on one side. Adam found remnants of a green bottle and some thick brown glass -- again, far different from today's glassware.

After doing research on the computer, the boys contacted Aimee Wells of the county's Cultural Resources office. She showed them a computer program that digitally puts old maps over modern satellite photographs.

Bingo! Their backyards were once part of a military encampment used by Ohio soldiers on their way to fight in the Spanish-American War in 1898. In fact, thousands of soldiers from many states occupied a huge, temporary tent camp called Camp Alger -- sprawling over 14,000 acres in the Vienna-Falls Church area.

So how do a few bottles get connected to a brief war that was more than a century ago? "We get there by good judgment," Wells said. "We know the time period of the bottles and what happened in that area."

When Derek and Adam realized that a soldier might have held that Fraser bottle 110 years ago, they wondered what he might have been thinking. What did he see as he looked around him? How did he pass the time waiting to go into battle?

Historical records show that while waiting for orders, the soldiers in and around Camp Alger played baseball, played harmonicas and walked seven miles to the Potomac Riveronce a week (!) for baths.

An epidemic of typhoid fever forced the closing of the camp and there are no buildings to study. "What's left is only what's in the ground," Wells said.

Derek's and Adam's backyards have joined the 3,400 places listed on the county's register of archeological sites. The boys were given tips on how to dig effectively and safely and on how to document the location of items found.

The official record of their finds serves as another piece of the puzzle for historians seeking to form a more complete story of what happened.

Monocacy Chapter asked to provide display

At the request of the Frederick County library, the Monocacy Chapter is having exhibits in both the Frederick and Thurmont branches during March and April. The exhibits include artifacts from Frederick County as well as replicas of Native American materials that do not preserve in the archeological record.

In another part of the chapter's Archeology Month activities and programs, Charlie Hall will talk on "History and Heritage: Celebrate Local Archeology" at 7 p.m. on April 16 at the Thurmont Regional Library, 76 East Moser Road, Thurmont.

Chapter notes

Anne Arundel

The Chapter meets five times a year in February, April, June, September, and November at the All Hallows Parish Brick Church at the Parish Hall near London Town, at 7 p.m. Contact Mechelle Kerns-Nocerito at AAChapASM@hotmail.com or visit the chapter website www.marylandarcheology.org/aacashome.php

April 21: Paul Nasca, staff archeologist at Ferry Farm will discuss "Recent Discoveries at Ferry Farm - George Washington's Boyhood Home." For more on Ferry Farm:www.kenmore.org/ferryfarm_homepage.html

Central

Central Chapter has no formal meetings planned, but it does engage in field work and related activities. If someone has a site he wants investigated, contact the Maryland Historical Trust or Central Chapter President Stephen Israel, 410-945-5514 or ssisrael@verizon.net

Charles County

Meetings are held 7:30 on the second Tuesday (September–May) at the Port Tobacco Court House. Contact President Paula Martino at paulamartino@hotmail.com or 301-752-2852.

Mid-Potomac

The chapter meets the third Thursday of the month at 7:30 p.m. at Needwood Mansion. Dinner at a local restaurant is at 6. Monthly lab nights are the first Thursday of the month, from 7 to 9 at Needwood Mansion. Contactjames.sorensen@mncppc-mc.org or heather.bouslog@mncppc-mc.org, or call 301-840-5848. Chapter website: www.mid-potomacarchaeology.org

Monocacy

The chapter meets in the Community Room of the C. Burr Artz Library, 110 East Patrick Street, Frederick on the second Wednesday of the month, except for July and August, at 7 p.m. Contact Jeremy Lazelle at 301-845-9855 orjlazelle@msn.com or Nancy Geaseyat 301-378-0212.

March 11: Carol Ebright will talk on Native Americans and archeologists.

April 8: Guy Neal will talk on "A Twenty Minute Arrow." The presentation is in connection with the PBS documentaries, "We Shall Remain," scheduled for showing in April, Maryland Archeology Month.

Northern Chesapeake

Meetings are the second Thursday of the month. Members and guests assemble at 6:30 p.m. for light refreshments. A short business meeting at 7 is followed by the featured presentation at 7:30.Contact Ann Persson at 410-272-3425 or aspst20@yahoo.com

Upper Patuxent

Programs are the second Monday of each month at 7:30 p.m. at Mt. Ida, near the court house in Ellicott City. Potluck suppers are held at 6:15 in September and March. Otherwise, dinner is available at an Ellicott City restaurant. For information, contact Lee Preston at 443-745-1202 or leeprestonjr@comcast.net

March9: The second annual, Alfred J. Prufrock: Oh, Do Ask What Is It? game.

May 11: Kathie Fernstron, "Pueblo, Mound-builders, Frogs and the White City."

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 Website:www.geocities.com/wmdasm

March 27: "Allegany County During the Civil War," talk by Allegany College history professor Joseph Weaver.

April 24: Stephen R. Potter discussed new evidence on the Civil War battle, "Antietam and the Archeology of Tactics."

May 22: Bob Wall speaks on what was found at the Barton Site in 2008 and on plans for 2009 excavations.

The Archeological Society of Maryland Inc.is a statewide nonprofit organization devoted to the study and conservation of Maryland archeology.

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.

Submissions welcome. Please send to Myron Beckenstein, 6817 Pineway, University Park, MD 20782, 301-864-5289 or myronbeck@verizon.net

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