



# ASM Ink

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Newsletter of the Archeological Society of Maryland, Inc.

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

## The search for Calvin Swomley

By Antonella Bassani

Until the 2007 ASM Field Session at the Claggett Retreat Site in Frederick County, Calvin Swomley had just been a name mentioned in some archeological circles. Little was known of his work and findings. At lunch on the field session's second day, it was Charlie Hall, Maryland's terrestrial archeologist, who said: "It sure would be great if we could find him" because it was believed that he may still be living in nearby Buckeystown. Previous attempts to contact him by telephone or internet had been futile.

Alex McPhail and I, two ASM members participating in the field session, suggested we go into town and knock on doors to find him. We quickly finished our lunch and set off.

The quest started out at Buckeystown's general store and gas station. After several further attempts, Alex and I arrived at the Bodmers Stoves and Pottery store. There, finally somebody knew Calvin and knew where he lived.

A few minutes later we were knocking on his door. After some convincing, not to mention a little downright begging, an initially reluctant Calvin agreed to come to the site near the Monocacy River in Frederick County.

About an hour later, Calvin, his wife and small dog appeared at Claggett with a detailed large map of his excavations done more than 40 years earlier. It showed 28 pits and features he had excavated, well-documented as to location and content, along a 75-meter line.

His first reaction on seeing the site, as the car was descending the overlook, was, "You guys are digging in the wrong place!" Even though he is about 80 years old, Calvin remembers when he had walked the broad fields in the early 1960s as an avocational archeologist. For many years, he had spent his afternoons there, excavating the Late Woodland village of the Mason Island Complex.

Considering what little he had been finding at the place where ASM had been digging, an area later archeologists had reported, principal investigator Joe Dent moved the field session to where Calvin had recovered the village remnants and artifacts.

It was clear to everyone that Calvin still had a passion for artifact hunting as he again walked and carefully scanned the field he had so painstakingly excavated 40 years before. Later, as he left the site, Calvin told us that he had kept all the artifacts he had found. As I asked whether his collection could be seen, Calvin smiled, but did not answer.

However, at Calvin's invitation the next day, Charlie Hall, Joe Dent, John Fiveash, Alex and I went to his house where we saw more than 30 carefully labeled plastic storage boxes, filled with an impressive artifact collection from the Claggett site consisting of over 1,000 artifacts, including large pot sherds, bones, charcoal and stone projectile points.

Also on display was a large pot partially pieced together and showing typical Mason Island Complex ceramic

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## Upcoming events

**August 4-5:** Patuxent Encounters weekend at Jefferson Patterson Park and Museum.

**August 10-12:** National Powwow of the Smithsonian. Verizon Center.

**August 24-26:** 33d annual Powwow, Baltimore Indian Center. Patterson Park. 410-675-3535.

**October 13:** Annual meeting of ASM. Millersville.

**October 31-November 3:** SEAC conference, Knoxville, Tennessee.

**November 8-11:** ESAF conference, Burlington, Vermont.

## Volunteer opportunities

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

**Montgomery County lab, field work** Wednesdays, 9:30 to 2:30. Call 301-840-5848 or contact [james.sorensen@mncppc-mc.org](mailto:james.sorensen@mncppc-mc.org) or [heather.bouslog@mncppc-mc.org](mailto:heather.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, the collection from the Rosenstock Site, a key Late Woodland Montgomery Complex area, is being upgraded. The lab in Crownsville is open Tuesdays from 9:30 until 4. For additional information contact Louise Akerson [lakerson1@verizon.net](mailto:lakerson1@verizon.net) or Charlie Hall [hall@mdp.state.md.us](mailto:hall@mdp.state.md.us).

**The Lost Towns Project** of Anne Arundel County. 410-222-7441.

**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. This year's public archeology program runs until July 8, with digging on Fridays and Saturdays and lab work Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays. Contact Ed Chaney at 410-586-8554 or [echaney@mdp.state.md.us](mailto:echaney@mdp.state.md.us)

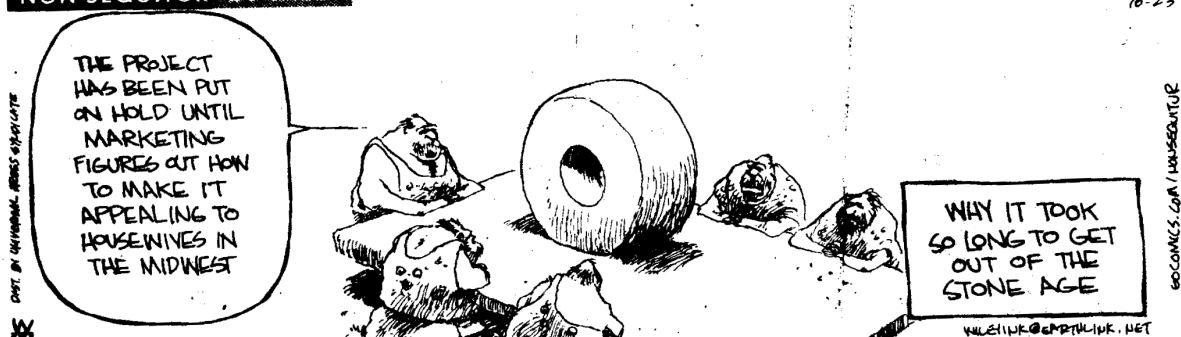
The Archaeological Institute of America provides an online listing of fieldwork opportunities worldwide, Call up [www.archaeological.org/fieldwork/](http://www.archaeological.org/fieldwork/) to get started. Remember to add the extra A in archaeological.

## CAT corner

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

**Special fieldwork opportunity:** Richard Ervin of SHA is working on the Broad Creek Cemetery, a 17<sup>th</sup> through 19<sup>th</sup> Century cemetery on Kent Island. On occasion and on very short notice, it is necessary for him to conduct emergency excavations in preparation for new interments. Contact him at 410-545-2878 (days), 410-643-7128 (evenings) or by email at [rervin@sha.state.md.us](mailto:rervin@sha.state.md.us)

## NON SEQUITUR BY WILEY



## Time for your nomination for the Marye Award

The William B. Marye Award is the highest honor the Archeological Society of Maryland bestows. Each year a committee meets to consider candidates nominated by ASM members for their outstanding contribution to Maryland archeology. Nominees do not have to be members of ASM or even Marylanders, but their contribution has to have influenced Maryland archeology.

The process starts with the nominations. Any ASM member can nominate someone. Specific reasons the candidate is worthy of the award are more helpful to the committee in making its choice than general statements. Nominations do not carry over from one year to the next; if you feel someone has been overlooked in the past, nominate that person again.

Some recent past winners of the award are Jim Gibb, Bob Bantz, Howard MacCord and Louis Akerson. A complete list of past winners is on the nomination form included with this newsletter. Submissions must be received by August 21.

Don't count on someone else submitting the name of someone you think deserving of the Marye Award, do it yourself and do it now.

## Bullets tell the Antietam battle story

*Condensed from the Washington Times, May 14, 2007*

SHARPSBURG, MD. (AP) -- Buried beneath a cornfield in Western Maryland lies detritus from the millions of rounds of ammunition fired during the battle of Antietam, the single bloodiest day in U.S. history.

For an archeology team from the National Park Service that surveyed a part of the field with metal detectors recently, every spent round unearthed tells the story of the men who died and of the ebb and flow of the two vast armies that fought each other Sept. 17, 1862.

"I think about who was out here... and their proximity to each other," archeologist Bob Sonderman said. "This wasn't [soldiers] shooting at each other at 250 yards. This was 70 yards. You could see the faces of your enemy. It must have been terrifying."

Team member Karen Orrence said more than 400 objects -- mostly bullets and shrapnel -- have been recovered. For each hour in the field, the archeologists likely will spend about three hours in the lab analyzing the evidence they discovered, she said.

The locations of shrapnel and spent and unfired bullets help the team determine troop movements, such as the retreat line of the fleeing 7th Maine, which was ordered to attack a Confederate unit near Piper Farm in the late afternoon, said Stephen R. Potter, head of the team.

Potter said it was a stupid order because the Union troops were in the Confederate artillery sights.

By looking at the marks on bullets, Potter determined whether bullets found on the field had been fired. Deformities at the bullets' tips indicate they hit something, though there is no way to know what they hit.

More than 20,000 Union and Confederate troops were killed, captured or injured, or simply disappeared during the 12-hour battle, which aborted Confederate Gen. Robert E. Lee's attempt to invade the North.

The area will be planted with apple trees to re-create the appearance of the landscape.

## Blockhouse Point and more, mini-field sessions

The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission is offering a series of field sessions in Montgomery County from July 30 to August 10.

Each of the two- or three-day sessions involves at least one day's excavation at Blockhouse Point, the only example of a Civil War campsite left undisturbed in the Washington area. Another day of each session is devoted to a field trip or to archival research. Cost is \$40 for a two-day session, \$60 for a three-day.

The field session registration is on-line, at [www.parkpass.org](http://www.parkpass.org) Go to that website for information on the sessions and on registering.

# Drought + Davenport = Florida finds

*From wire reports, June, 2007*

Drought has uncovered what some are calling the most significant archeological find in Palm Beach County's recent history. Now researchers are in a race against looters and the weather to preserve it.

Since March, state and local archeologists have been studying and collecting artifacts from various sites around Lake Okeechobee, where the drought has bared a rim up to a mile and a half wide at some points.

Researchers have found small pieces of human bone, tools, pottery fragments and pieces of ceremonial jewelry thought to have belonged to the natives who lived near the lake before the arrival of the Spanish in the 16th Century.

Some prehistoric relics are thought to be as much as 2,000 years old and could provide a better understanding of the complex communities and cultures that once thrived across South Florida, said Palm Beach County Archeologist Chris Davenport.

Looters are believed to have struck some areas, leaving behind deep holes in the muck where there might have been historic and valuable objects.

"I literally stay up at night wondering whether people are out on the lake looting it," said Davenport, a Maryland native and former director of ASM's CAT program. "As important as this find is, I almost would like to see the lake fill up because at least then these items will be protected again."

Lake Okeechobee, the second-largest freshwater lake in the continental U.S., behind Lake Michigan, is at its lowest level since record keeping began in 1932, at about 8.96 feet deep on June 4. That's about 4 to 5 feet below normal, exposing many areas for the first time in years.

Archeologists said there have been no large-scale digs in Lake Okeechobee; most of the finds have been easily spotted along the surface, some by passers-by who called in what they found.

Some of these historical sites were uncovered in 2001, the last time South Florida was in the throes of a drought as severe as this one. Before March, there were three submerged historic sites known to researchers but left largely unstudied. Now, Davenport said, they have identified more than 20 sites and it's believed that's only the beginning.

"The prehistory of Florida is largely unknown," said Harvey Oyer, chairman of the nonprofit Historical Society of Palm Beach County. "To find sites so rich in culture is immeasurable."

Davenport agrees, and last week he unveiled some of what he has recovered over the past three months, including a worn, pointed-tip shell that was bound with leather and tied to wood for use as an ancient hammer, and fractured bits of pottery that offer the most important insights.

One such type of pottery is what Davenport calls a "St. John's checker stamp" and looks like a piece of stone waffle cone. The find is significant, he said, because this variety was first discovered in native communities in northern states, suggesting that the local communities might have had more complex trading routes than previously thought. Or it's pottery that was made here based on what they saw or heard about in other communities. Similarly exotic shells and flint tools also have been found, rarities in South Florida sites.

The drought also has unearthed several shipwrecks and other 20th-Century relics such as glass soda bottles. Lake water not only protected these sites from thieves and development for hundreds of years, but it also kept relics intact and in good condition, officials said.

In addition to shedding light on the region's unrecorded history, the Lake Okeechobee finds have sparked tension in the local archeological community. Oyer, whose organization has been denied a chance to study material on site, accuses state and county officials of being too lax in recovering and researching relics. He says a find this important requires more exhaustive study than what's being done.

Davenport "has a minuscule percentage of what's out there," Oyer said. "You know it's old, but that's not enough. You have to understand the context, you have to study the soil, the skeletal remains. This is an opportunity that's being missed every day."

Davenport and state archeologist Ryan Wheeler say they're making do with what resources they have in the time that remains. "I'm under incredible pressure to document as much as I can while the lake is low," Davenport said.

## Book Review: Why the historic past matters

*"Historical Archaeology - Why the Past Matters," by Barbara J. Little, Left Coast Press, 205 pages, \$23*

My passion is prehistoric archeology with a passing interest in historic archeology and I thought reading Maryland archeologist Barbara Little's new book would give me a better appreciation and understanding of historic archeology.

I thought, with historic archeology what could be easier than identifying by matching a piece of glass or ceramic to a picture in a book. But Barbara Little shows there is much more to historic artifacts than simple physical identification. With each artifact comes a cultural value in terms of social, political and economic information from that time period. Site significance and public involvement are what interests Little.

I particularly enjoyed her selection of historical sites around the world: the Spanish mission of San Luis de Talimali, the English countryside with its pasture enclosures, Australia's prison, South Carolina's African-American colonoware and the North American Garbage Project. At each archeology revealed new information.

What is done with that information is the essence of Little's book. She says that the past should not be used to support the status quo with its intolerance, injustice and inequality. To quote Little, "Prejudice and fears arise from lies, misperceptions and partial truths."

What do we do about a painful past? Maya Angelou said, "History, despite its wrenching pain, cannot be unlived, but if faced with courage, needs not be lived again." A case in point is the 1482 Elmina Castle on the coast of Ghana. This was one of the staging areas for the transatlantic slave trade. Ghanaians see this area as a tourist attraction and as a way of boosting their economy. They are not concerned with the history of slavery even though their ancestors provided captives to the Europeans. But many African-Americans see the dungeons as sacred ground, Little says, and do not want the castle to be "cleaned up." They want the horror that occurred there to be revealed.

Historic archeology provides us with a wealth of knowledge as well as the responsibility to protect it and share its truths with humanity. A visitor posted this comment at the Canadian War Museum, "History is not just the story you read. It is the one you write. It is the one you remember or denounce or relate to others. It is not predetermined. Every action, every decision, however small is relevant to its course. History is replete with horror, and replete with hope. You shape the balance."

Barbara Little's book is easy to read and raises the reader's consciousness about the value of historic archeology. It is a must read for both aspiring and experienced historic archeologists as well as archeologists passionate about their prehistoric archeology.

-- Kathy Steuer

## Scientists find the cause of the iceman's death

By Marc Kaufman

*From the Washington Post, June 11, 2007*

Otzi, the 5,000-year-old frozen hunter found in a melting glacier by hikers in the Italian Alps, died from blood loss, shock and a heart attack caused by an arrowhead that severed an artery beneath his left collarbone. The arrow was pulled out, causing additional internal bleeding.

European researchers, who used the kind of three-dimensional computer imaging common in hospitals to avoid invasive procedures, said they have settled the debate about whether Otzi died from a fall, from freezing in the high mountains or from a wound. According to the analysis published in the *Journal of Archaeological Science*, the chances of surviving an arrow wound like Otzi's would be only about 40 percent today.

The frozen remains were found in 1991 and quickly became an international sensation. The cold preserved the man's body and the clothing he was wearing, which was made of deer and goat hides and included a bearskin hat and boots stuffed with straw. He carried a copper ax and flints to make fire.

Otzi is believed to have been a hunter or warrior who was killed in a fight with rivals. An analysis of four blood samples found previously on his clothes and weapons established that the blood came from four other individuals, suggesting that Otzi may have been in a spirited fight.

The high-resolution computer tomography used to examine his internal wound is frequently used in hospitals, but is rarely used by archeologists.

# Maybe a comet wiped out the Clovis people

By Heather Pringle

*Condensed from the NewScientist.com news service*

The Clovis people of North America, flourishing some 13,000 years ago, had a mastery of stone weaponry that stood them in good stead against the constant threat of large carnivores, such as American lions and giant short-faced bears. It's unlikely, however, that they thought death would come from the sky.

According to results presented by a team of 25 researchers in May at the American Geophysical Union meeting in Acapulco, Mexico, that's where the Clovis people's doom came from. Citing several lines of evidence, the team suggests that a wayward comet hurtled into Earth's atmosphere around 12,900 years ago, fractured into pieces and exploded in giant fireballs. Debris seems to have settled as far afield as Europe.

Jim Kennett, an oceanographer at the University of California, Santa Barbara, and one of the team's three principal investigators, claims immense wildfires scorched North America in the aftermath, killing large populations of mammals and bringing an abrupt end to the Clovis culture. "The entire continent was on fire," he says.

Lead team member Richard Firestone, a nuclear analytical chemist at the Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory in California, says the evidence lies in a narrow 12,900-year-old carbon-rich layer of sediment found at eight well-dated Clovis-era sites and a peppering of sediment cores across North America, as well as one site in Belgium.

Exactly where the explosion might have occurred is uncertain, but several clues point to the north of the continent. Levels of the apparent extraterrestrial debris, for example, are highest at the Gainey archeological site in Michigan, just beyond the southern reach of North America's primary ice sheet 12,900 years ago. Moreover, levels decrease the further you go from Gainey, suggesting that the comet blew up largely over Canada -- perhaps over Ontario or the Hudson Bay region.

However, this cosmic wallop does not seem to have left behind any obvious crater. In all probability, says Arizona-based geophysicist and team member Allen West, "whatever hit us was a low-density object" that fragmented as it entered the atmosphere. The disintegrating pieces could then have blown up in a series of massive aerial explosions. Alternatively, some might have crashed into the 3-kilometre-thick ice sheet. West notes that such craters "would have been ice-walled and basically melted away at the end of the last ice age", leaving few traces.

If the team's impact theory holds up under scrutiny it could help explain three mysterious events that coincided around 12,900 years ago.

At this key time, the climate changed abruptly in the northern hemisphere, suddenly cooling in a period known as the Younger Dryas. In addition, the distinctive Clovis culture seems to have vanished in North America, while at least 35 genera of the continent's mammals went extinct -- including mammoths, mastodons, camels, ground sloths and horses.

## The search for Calvin Swomley

**Continued from Page One**

patterns (crushed limestone temper, everted and appliquéd rim and cord-marked decoration). Calvin showed everyone a detailed notebook recording findings and details of each feature he had excavated. The professional archeologists were thrilled to be able to look at the collection as it confirmed many of their theories about the little-known site.

At one point, Calvin asked: "What would happen to my collection if I decided to donate it?" The archeologists explained that it would be kept together, the collection named after him and that it would become a valuable instrument for further research into the Mason Island culture. Very much desiring to keep his collection intact after the many years of digging, Calvin decided on the spot to donate it. Joe Dent was happy to accept the collection on behalf of the American University, where he teaches.

After many thanks and handshakes, as the archeologists were leaving to return to the field school, Calvin whispered to Alex and me, "And I know an even better site."



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

**Final Dig Day at London Town** for 2007: September 15.

## Central

Central Chapter has no formal meetings planned. But if someone has a site he wants investigated, contact the Maryland Historical Trust or Central Chapter President Stephen Israel at 410-945-5514 or [ssisrael@abs.net](mailto:ssisrael@abs.net)

## 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. Contact [james.sorensen@mncppc-mc.org](mailto:james.sorensen@mncppc-mc.org) or [heather.bouslog@mncppc-mc.org](mailto:heather.bouslog@mncppc-mc.org), or call 301-840-5848. Chapter website: [www.mid-potomacarchaeology.org](http://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 at 7 p.m. Contact Jeremy Lazelle at 301-845-9855 or [jlazelle@msn.com](mailto:jlazelle@msn.com). Chapter website: [www.digfrederick.bravehost.com](http://www.digfrederick.bravehost.com).

## Northern Chesapeake

Meetings are the second Wednesday of the month. Contact Dan Coates at [dancoates@comcast.net](mailto:dancoates@comcast.net)

## Southern

Contact Kate Dinnel for information at [katesilas@chesapeake.net](mailto:katesilas@chesapeake.net) or 410-586-8538.

## 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. Some months, potluck suppers are held at 6:30. Otherwise, dinner is available at the Tiber River Tavern in Ellicott City. For information, contact Lee Preston at 443-745-1202 or [leeprestonjr@comcast.net](mailto:leeprestonjr@comcast.net)

## Western Maryland

Programs are the fourth Friday of the month, at 7:30 p.m. in the LaVale Library, unless noted. Contact Ed Hanna, 301-777-1380. Chapter email: [wmdasm@yahoo.com](mailto:wmdasm@yahoo.com) Website: [www.geocities.com/wmdasm](http://www.geocities.com/wmdasm)

## Do you have any surplus old ASM Journals?

Instead of throwing away any old ASM Journals that you have, you can send them back. The journals will be used to fill in blanks in the Society's collection or for answering requests for back issues.

Send the journals to Northern Chesapeake Chapter's Dan Coates at:

ASM Publications

716 Country Club Rd.

Havre de Grace, MD 21078-2104

Dan said it is less expensive to use the "book" or "media" rate and don't worry about insurance, delivery confirmation, etc.

**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](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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