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Newsletter of the Archeological Society of Maryland, Inc.

www.marylandarcheology.org

Getting children interested in archeology

By S.C. Torrington

Northern Chesapeake chapter

Ask most kids what can you do with a turkey bone and they'll probably say, "Make a wish." But ask a kid who's just participated in a primitive technology workshop and he'll tell you how some turkey bones can be cut, polished and incised for decorative beads, that awls and needles can be made from the smaller bones after they're polished with sand and a hole drilled, and the sturdier bones are used for scrapers and as fore shafts of spears thrown with an atlatl. Then he'll play a tune on the turkey bone whistle he just made.

"Kids experience a level of excitement and interest in a subject that they may have a vague idea about, but have never had an up-close, hands-on experience that is re-enforced with explanations and stories," says Jack Davis, a longtime member of the Archeological Society of Northern Chesapeake (ASNC).

Very few children will have the opportunity to join in a dig. But kids across the country are finding easier access to the past by replicating the artifacts often found on those digs. Organizations like the Society of Primitive Technology and many state archeological societies are bringing the pinch pots and projectile points out from behind the glass of museums' dioramas and putting them into the hands of eager young students.

What child hasn't struck or "knapped" two stones together trying to knock off a sharp edge, woven vines into a rope or built a shelter of sticks? Maybe your family harvests edible plants or uses herbal medicines. Has your little one ever formed a cup from clay? We've all followed animal tracks in the snow, even if it's just a pesky squirrel's to the birdfeeder. These are all primitive skills.

"Primitive technology describes those survival skills that were once within the physical and mental abilities of all humans," says Dan Coates, ASNC president. "It involves those crafts that could be handed down from generation to generation and involves the manufacture of tools, utensils and art objects from natural materials."

Children also learn about the prehistoric cultures and people who produced those tools. At a recent American Indian Day in Waldorf, hundreds of children got to experience a day in the life of the Piscataway Indians through hands-on activities including atlatl throwing, soapstone bead-making and pottery-making.

"The kids learned that primitive technology is about what you can glean from what's around you: the earth and the landscape," says Annetta Schott, ASNC's membership secretary. "Walk into the woods and find food. You have to plan ahead for dinner. You can't buy it in the grocery store."

Over a dozen Indian festivals and powwows in Maryland bring tribal histories and skills to life. Before attending your first powwow, refer to the Pow Wow Etiquette tips at www.native.brokenclaw.net/articles.html.

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Upcoming events

September 9: ASM board meeting, Crownsville. 10 a.m. All ASM members are welcome to attend.

September 9: Luau benefit at JPPM. 5-8 p.m. \$60 a person before September 1, \$70 after. 410-586-8515.

October 14: ASM Annual Meeting. Oregon Ridge in Baltimore County. The theme will be: "The First European Settlements in Maryland - As Seen Through Archeological Research."

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 or 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 rakerson@comcast.net or Charlie Hall 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

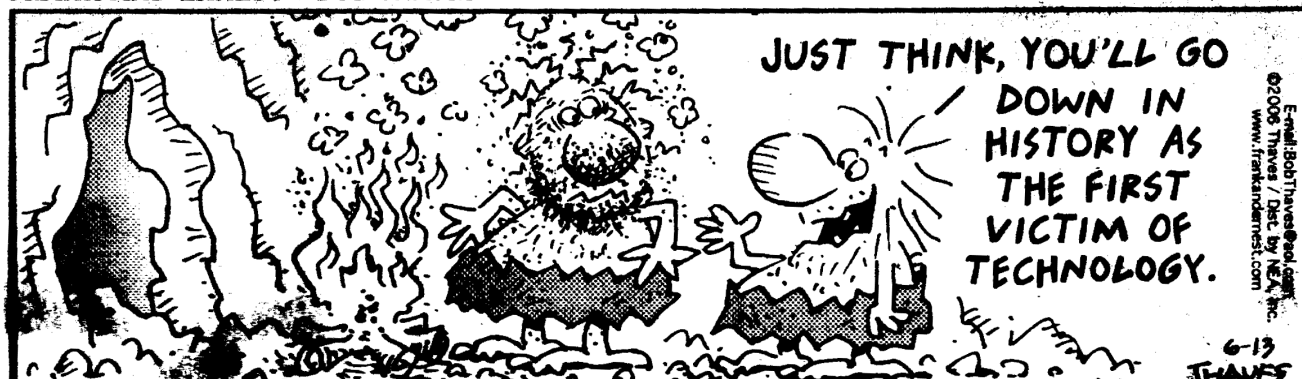
The Archaeological Institute of America provides an online listing of fieldwork opportunities worldwide, Call up www.archaeological.org/fieldwork/ to get started. Remember to add the extra A in archaeological.

CAT corner

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

Special fieldwork opportunity: Richard Ervin of SHA is working on the Broad Creek Cemetery, a 17th through 19th 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

FRANK AND ERNEST BOB THAVES



Bill is planned to refine NAGPRA

From various reports

Ten years after the discovery of Kennewick Man, Congressman Doc Hastings, hoping to ensure that future archeological finds will be spared from years of courtroom tug of war, announced Wednesday that he has drafted a revision to the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act stating that ancient remains should be studied by scientists and not automatically turned over to tribes.

"The fact that it took nearly a decade to reach a decision about the fate of Kennewick Man is proof positive that the law needs clarification," Hastings (R-Wash.) said in a statement. "Scientific study of ancient remains is important to our understanding of early history and can be done while respecting today's tribes."

Hastings said his bill counters efforts in the Senate that would prevent ancient remains from being studied. He cited a case in Nevada in which tribal leaders have filed suit against the government to rebury the Spirit Cave Man remains, believed to be more than 10,000 years old.

Scientists and supporters say that concerns over the rights to ancient remains also have trumped scientists' efforts to study relics in Montana and Oregon.

"NAGPRA was written primarily to deal with remains from the 19th Century with clear tribal affiliations," a statement on Hastings' website says. "The wording of the law is vague on the subject of very ancient remains of unknown origin and was never meant to apply to remains as old as Kennewick Man."

Discovered along the banks of the Columbia River in 1996, Kennewick Man unearthed a heated debate about how scientists should deal with ancient remains that have no proven connection to present-day Native American tribes. The court battle that finally allowed scientists to examine the remains took nine years.

"My proposal protects the rights of present day Native Americans to claim the remains of their ancestors when found on federal lands," Hastings said. "At the same time, it reiterates that in cases of truly ancient human remains -- such as Kennewick Man -- Congress does not intend to block scientific study."

Hastings submitted a similar bill several years ago, but then withheld it pending a Kennewick legal decision. If this session of Congress, which is ending soon, fails to act on the bill, Hastings plans to introduce it again in the next session.

Cleone Hawkinson, president of the Oregon-based Friends of America's Past, said her organization has worked for years to keep Kennewick Man's legal struggles in the public eye.

"There have been a lot of lost items due to inappropriate implementation of NAGPRA," Hawkinson said. "Agencies have made some very arbitrary decisions. There's a lot of confusion about how to implement NAGPRA."

Hawkinson said NAGPRA needs to be revised in order to be applied and interpreted consistently across the country.

Hastings' bill is aimed at countering legislation that twice was introduced by the Senate Indian Affairs Committee, chaired by Sen. John McCain, R-Ariz. The legislation, which has not come up for a vote, has been bitterly protested by archeologists and scientists who fear that a two-word amendment to NAGPRA would allow ancient remains to be automatically turned over to Native American claimants even when a substantial relationship to present-day tribes is lacking.

SPEED BUMP DAVE COVERLY



Volunteers bolster area archeology

By Scott W. Berg

Condensed from the Washington Post, July 28, 2006

"We'd been looking through lots and lots of shale, and there it was," Vivian Eicke says, recalling an archeological dig at a prehistoric rock shelter in Montgomery County along the Potomac River, where she uncovered a nearly intact 3,000-year-old spear point. "I stared at it and I said, 'Is this what I think it is?' Talk about making my day."

The excavation's leader, county archeologist Jim Sorensen, was duly impressed. So was Eicke. She'd been involved in Montgomery County digs for seven years before making the discovery; it was and is the highlight of her archeological career to date, and she good-naturedly reminds Sorensen about her bounty nearly every time she sees him.

"Every now and then you find something that says 'pick me up,' " Eicke says. "The point was large and in good shape, and I knew I had a really good find."

Eicke is just one of hundreds of archeology volunteers in the Washington area, a dedicated band of sleuths working side by side with professional archeologists to assist counties, parks and sites such as Mount Vernon and Gunston Hall Plantation as they examine thousands of years' worth of physical history. Eicke's own foray into the past began in 1997 with a little case of familial envy when her son Steven, 9 at the time, was attending archeology camp at Needwood Mansion in Derwood. As Eicke explains it, just a few minutes into a "bring your parents to dig day," she found a new and unexpected avocation.

"I was hooked," she says. "I started begging and pleading with them to have an archeology camp for adults, and when they did that, I started begging and pleading with them to take on volunteers. I don't know what kind of part I played in getting their program started, but I'm happy they started it."

Amateur archeologists like Eicke aren't just hobbyists tagging along to indulge a curiosity; rather, they've become crucial to the work of many of the region's professionals. Fairfax County archeologist Mike Johnson explains that the considerable excavation and interpretation work required would be impossible without volunteers, thanks to the enormous number of identified sites of historical importance and the severely limited resources available to recruit and hire salaried archeologists to explore them.

"In this area, we do a lot of what we call 'running in front of bulldozers,'" Johnson says, "but there's also an enormous collection of recognized, historically important sites."

Pamela Cressey, who runs Alexandria's volunteer program out of the Alexandria Archaeology Museum in the Torpedo Factory Art Center, is impressed by the variety of age, experience and motivation she encounters in the people who contact her. "They really do volunteer for all kinds of reasons," she says. "They may be looking to explore a possible career change or they may simply be curious about the work that historians or museum curators do. They may have an expertise in lab work or database management that they want to apply in a different way or they may be interested in learning more about the history of the place where they grew up."

The work done by Eicke and other volunteers in Montgomery County is typical of the area in its scope and diversity. Sorensen says that the list of archeologically important locations he has put together for the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission includes more than 700 identified sites, which means that much of what he and his volunteers do is a matter of prioritizing.

The plot currently occupying the greater part of the M-NCPPC's attention is a sprawling patch of wooded land along the eastern shore of the Potomac River between Muddy Branch and Seneca Creek called Blockhouse Point. Here, thousands of Union soldiers kept watch for Confederates invading the capital as part of defenses hastily created along the river in the wake of the early debacle at Bull Run.

The work at Blockhouse Point is a classic illustration of the eclectic nature of archeology and the pressing need for volunteers with a wide variety of backgrounds. As Sorensen says, "It's not all digging in the ground," and many volunteers find other ways to bring hobbies, avocations or a career's worth of experience to the tasks at hand, making them as important to the archeology as any salaried professional. Don Housley is one such asset, an M-NCPPC volunteer who for 25 years was chair of the history department at Wheaton High School. Housley had worked a few summers in the archeology programs of Colonial Williamsburg and knew when he retired last year that he wanted to find a way to apply that experience, knowledge and interest.

He found the ideal opportunity when he showed up to work on the Blockhouse Point site and realized that all the previous research into the site -- decades' worth -- was stored piecemeal in several places. "I saw the situation, and I thought, 'I'll try to put all of this material together into one very large research report,'" Housley explains.

The work on that report, now more than 100 pages and still under construction, led Housley not to a local excavation site but to the U.S. Army War College Library in Carlisle, Pa., where he began to pore through the letters of the regimental groups known to occupy Blockhouse Point. What he found was useful and intriguing enough that he'll be leading a new group of interested amateurs back to the library next month as part of a two-week adult archeology camp centered on the Blockhouse Point site and conducted by the M-NCPPC in connection with the mid-Potomac chapter of the Archeological Society of Maryland.

Housley, who had never considered himself a military historian, can now snap off regimental names and the dates of important battles. He is eager to expose new volunteers to the fascinating personal histories contained in the Carlisle letters, while at the same time he hopes to uncover enough specific mentions of the Blockhouse Point site to allow him to paint an accurate verbal picture of life there to go along with the artifacts being taken out of the ground.

To expand the scope of her own detective work, Eicke has committed to a 240-hour training program run by the Archeological Society of Maryland that will qualify her as a certified archeological technician, or CAT, with expertise in the fields of laboratory techniques, field surveys and excavation. "It's like going to college," she says, and the curriculum has provided her with the opportunity to get an overview of the prehistory and history of Montgomery County. It's a mark of the level of involvement of many volunteers that she doesn't plan on using her certification to do anything except deepen her experience on the sites she's already working.

"The CAT training means that I can do other things, participate in more ways," she says. Like many volunteers, she says her ties to the area are the real attraction. "I've lived in Montgomery County my whole life. It's nice to know that I've had a part in preserving something of the history of the place," she says.

Hughes Site impressions: passion and the point

By Michael Lynch

Columbia high school student and multi-year field school participant

1 An archeological dig is undoubtedly one of the greatest events one can experience. It's something you don't easily forget, for better or for worse (remember rainy Winslow '03). For amateurs, it's a time to meet the professionals, to see how they work, to learn from their experiences and mistakes. You learn to take life at a slower, more precise pace, two centimeters at a time, to be exact.

For me, the Hughes field session offered a chance to ask much needed questions concerning all areas relating to archeology, ranging from ceramic properties to the topology of soils. Asking around offers an excellent opportunity for young amateurs like myself to make contacts with archeologists, which can be a godsend when applying for colleges.

Which is another one of the great things about ASM field sessions, the fact that they are run by archeologists who come from a variety universities and who can give advice to those looking and applying for schools. I was advised that the University of Michigan was one of the top schools in the nation for anthropology, something I never would have suspected.

Winslow '03 showed how a lot of rain can ruin a field school. Hughes '06 showed how a "little" rain can turn a dig upside down. As much as I'd have liked to keep digging, I suppose there's really only so much you can do without doing more harm than good.

But you do what you can. All was not lost as there was a fair amount of artifacts in the lab and I was given the opportunity to examine some of the better finds the site had produced, including an elusive Susquehanna broadspear point, produced out of an even more elusive area called an "irregular depression/irregular feature/enigma." I'm not sure if it still has the same identity crisis. This was the topic of many a discussion. Unfortunately I wasn't there to find out how it ended.

It's all about dirt, volunteers discover

By Susan Kinzie

Condensed from the Washington Post, July 30, 2006

Two Boy Scouts jumped onto hay bales next to Brian Eckerle at an archeological dig in Southern Maryland yesterday and grabbed fistfuls of soil. "Hey," one said, frowning. "This is just dirt."

Brian, who is 7 and nicknamed B2, held up a clod. "This one is charcoal," he said; it was a little chunk left from some long-ago fire. And he hoped to find a mummy.

B2 had dirt on his face, his arms, his T-shirt. So did everyone else yesterday at Historic St. Mary's City. During Tidewater Archeology Weekend, held yesterday and today, hundreds of people will search through piles of dirt, square by square, looking for artifacts, a sense of history, an answer to a mystery -- or just a sense of serendipity.

Most people miss an awful lot, said Linda Howe and her mother, Pauline Garone. Over the years, they have found fossils, animal teeth and ancient tools. "Once you start finding things," Garone said, "you see things."

Tim Riordan, an archeologist at St. Mary's City "since they invented dirt," said that nine times out of 10, it's just a bottle cap, and then -- well, you never know.

Yesterday, students shoveled dirt out of a grid marked with twine -- a mysterious area on the site, a place where some kind of 17th-Century building once stood -- and dumped it into wooden trays. Visitors picked through the dirt for bits of brick, glass, nails, pottery, pipes -- anything that might help researchers understand what life was like hundreds of years ago.

When Brian and Susan Eckerle, B2's parents, took him to Alaska on vacation recently, they happened upon an excavation. "They were digging up things from the Gold Rush times there," Brian Eckerle said. "That really caught his attention."

And they had been to Jamestown. Yesterday, they came from their home in Pomfret to St. Mary's to dig.

Susan Eckerle held up a little brown something. "Rock?" she asked Laura Gilpin, a senior at St. Mary's College of Maryland doing field work this summer. "Rock," Gilpin said.

B2 offered another one up. "You found a lithic!" Gilpin said, a chip of quartz splintered off when someone made a tool, long ago. He looked more closely.

"Anything we find is really important to tell us about the site," Gilpin said. "We'll take anything we can get!"

She showed him a piece of a bottle, dark green glinting through the brown dust, and told him to hold it toward the sun to see that it was glass.

Gilpin and B2 shook out the last of the dirt, one at each end of the tray, pushing it back and forth on a metal track. "Yaaaah!" B2 said, laughing as it clattered and sent brown puffs flying.

Another student wiped her face against her tank top, then dumped another bucket of soil into the tray.

There have been significant discoveries in the nearly 20 years that the public has, uh, dug in. Last year someone found a piece of an elegant dragon-stem wineglass -- so intricate and delicate, research director Henry Miller said, that it was hard to imagine how it survived a trip across the ocean to the colonies long ago. One year, someone found a religious medal.

Each item is a clue to what was once the state capital, which bustled with farms, a chapel, the first Maryland state house, a printing house and one of the colonies' first coffeehouses (where coffee was much less popular than stronger brews).

Letting visitors help gives them a chance to learn about archeology firsthand, Riordan said. They can climb onto a reconstructed 17th-Century ship, wander through an Indian village and imagine people cutting pelts, roasting oysters and rolling hogsheads of tobacco to the river.

The area that people are working on this weekend is just a little chunk of land that researchers can't quite figure out, Miller said. Gilpin is hoping it is the house of Garrett Van Sweringen, the town leader and entrepreneur of St. Mary's City in the 17th Century. But Riordan said it is more likely to be servants' quarters or some other type of workaday structure. Visitors yesterday found old nails, chunks of pottery glazed black and a musket ball as they sifted through buckets.

A girl stepped onto a hay bale next to B2. "You finding anything here except for roots?" she asked.

He looked up from the clod he was grating. "Dirt!"

Archeological Society of Maryland, Inc. Minutes of Annual Meeting, October 15, 2005

The 42nd Annual Meeting of the Archeological Society of Maryland, Inc. was hosted by the Western Chapter of ASM, Inc. Ed Hanna, President of the Western Chapter, gave welcoming remarks. Carol Ebright, President of ASM, thanked the Western Chapter for hosting the meeting and called the business meeting to order at 9:10 a.m.

President's Report - Oral and written report by Carol Ebright. The ASM had another successful year. The 14th Annual Workshop in Archeology on March 19, 2005, was well attended. April's Archeology Month was different this year because the activity information was distributed over the internet instead of through a printed calendar. John Fiveash did a fantastic job developing the web page to accomplish this. The Spring Symposium, "Cyber-Archeology: High-Tech Help for the Past" was ably organized by Beth Ragan. We returned to the Swan Cove Site in September for the Tyler Bastian Field Session, hosted once more by the Lost Towns Project. Due to a true grass-roots effort driven by Jack Lynch, Nancy and Spencer Geasey, Andy Stout, Jim Gibb and members of the Monocacy Chapter, the City of Frederick now has an ordinance to protect archeological resources. Kathy Steuer became the fifth CAT candidate to graduate in 2005. Chris Davenport stepped down as the chair of the CAT committee, and Beth Ragan has agreed to lead the CAT program in the future. The ASM continues to put out a great newsletter edited by Myron Beckenstein. John Fiveash is the webmaster of ASM's web page, and it is an exceptional one. Dennis Curry continues to edit Maryland Archeology. We have secured grant funding for Maryland Archeology Month and the Field Session for 2006. Veronica Lathroum was the winner of the MD History Day contest.

Changes and Challenges for the coming year - As of October 1, 2005, the MHT has moved to the Department of Planning. The archeology offices will remain in Crownsville for the foreseeable future. Maryland's Commission on Indian Affairs moved to the Department of Human Resources where we hope it can be re-established as an effective organization. We will continue to work with Maryland Indian communities. Lastly, several Chapters have gone dormant. We need people willing to take leadership roles in Southern Maryland, Anne Arundel County and on the Eastern Shore.

Secretary's Report - A motion was made to accept the 2004 Annual Meeting minutes as published in the September 2005 Newsletter. The motion was seconded and unanimously approved.

Treasure's Report - Written report by Sean Sweeney. The status of the treasury is as follows: Checking account \$4,876.62; Dawson CD 11 - \$15,391.26; Money Market (discretionary) \$2,727.43; Field Session fund \$33,007.79; total checking/savings \$77,882.75; current liabilities (checking) \$1,665.00; Active Grants \$19,817.02; other liabilities \$24.65.

Membership - Oral report by Belinda Urquiza. There are 429 members on the mailing list of which 14 are provisional. Sixty-two members were dropped from the list.

Newsletter - Oral report by Myron Beckenstein. More articles of interest are needed for future newsletters.

Webmaster - Oral report by John Fiveash. John reported the website continues to grow and has many hits each day. He also requested articles of interest for the website.

Field Session - Oral report by John Newton. John reported a successful field session at Swan Cove this past September. There were 61 participants at Swan Cove. Roy Brown designed another beautiful T-shirt for the field school. A short article on Swan Cove and accomplishments has been promised for the November issue of INK and a full report will be completed and put on the ASM web page in early spring of 2006.

Grants Administrator - Carol Ebright reported there are several grants opened and are proceeding on schedule.

Chapter Reports:

Anne Arundel - No report. Michelle Kerns will try and activate the chapter.

Central Chapter - Oral and written report by Stephen Israel. Stephen reported that the Central Chapter has five members. The Chapter and MHT sponsored two CAT Instrument Survey workshops in April 2005. In July the Central Chapter met with Nelson Dorsey, a former collector, to share their surface collections from

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the Clarke Farm. Also discussed were the Bevard Farm prehistoric and soapstone quarry sites. These were previously reported by R. Christopher Goodwin and Associates in 1991. MHT site survey forms will be completed on the Nelson Dorsey and Clarke Farm prehistoric sites. The MAC Lab decided not to accept the Morris Meadows Rock Shelter artifacts or Robert Kapp's large prehistoric ceramic rimsherds from a rock shelter in the Prettyboy Reservoir. The chapter is collecting maps and information on Captain John Smith's 1608 voyage in the upper western shore of the Chesapeake Bay shoreline for a possible Late Woodland village site. In April and May of this year several members of the chapter participated in the Bond Site Quarry excavation. In June, August and September they participated in the Barton Site excavation. Charlene Pietra suggested the chapter purchase a plaque as a tribute to Bill Lynch's many years of excavation at the Robert Long House in Baltimore City. The chapter and MHT are planning three workshops for CAT candidates to compile the survey data for drawing a site map.

Mid-Potomac Chapter - Oral and written report by Vivian Eicke. Vivian reported that the chapter has grown and has 40 members. The chapter is very active. The first Thursday of the month is Lab Night and artifacts are washed and cataloged. The third Thursday of the month is the regular meeting. Several speakers at the meetings included Dr. Eugina Robinson, who spoke about her study of painted rock art in Guatemala, and Mike Dwyer, a historian for Montgomery County, who spoke about the lost buildings of Montgomery County. Wednesday is volunteer day with M-NCPPC. The chapter has its own website developed by two of its members, Georgia Nasios and Mike Perrino. Kathy Steuer was the first member of the chapter to receive her CAT certification, at the Spring Symposium. Some of this year's activities included tours of the Enoch George Howard site and the Button Farm by Tony Cohen; survey and excavation of the Brookeville Methodist Church foundation and Oakley Cabin; public dig day at Dowden's Ordinary; tour of the gold mines of Montgomery County; adult mini-field school and primitive technology day, and a behind the scenes tour of the Smithsonian anthropology department.

Mid-Shore Chapter - No report.

Monocacy Chapter - Oral report by Nancy Geasey. Nancy noted the chapter has not been very active this year. Most of the time was spent getting the archeology laws passed in Frederick County. Many members volunteer at the Monocacy Battlefield.

Northern Chesapeake Chapter - Oral report by Dan Coates. Dan reported the chapter has over 100 members, mainly due to its outreach program that meets weekly. Monthly meetings are the second Wednesday of the month.

Southern Chapter - No report.

U.P.A.G. Chapter - No report.

Western Chapter - Oral and written report by Ed Hanna. Ed reported a successful 2005 Barton site field session. Other programs this year included Show and Tell; Containers by Roy Brown; Cumberland Pictorial History; Underwater Archeology and Barton Site Overview and Results. The Chapter probed Little Meadows for a French and Indian War era corduroy road and walked on Braddock's Road. The chapter normally meets on the 4th Friday of the month. Dues are \$10 per family. Membership fluctuates between 60 and 70 families and meeting attendance averages around 40.

CAT Program - Chris Davenport resigned as chairman of the CAT program. Beth Ragan is now the new CAT chairperson.

William B. Marye Award - Tyler Bastion presented this award to Robert L. Bantz, Senior for his extensive research and preservation of Braddock's Road.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:50 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kathy Steuer
Secretary, A.S.M., Inc.

Getting children interested in archeology

Continued from Page One

Coates believes demonstrations of primitive technology skills, showing the process from beginning to end and physically handling the materials involved, increases the understanding by children.

"I routinely hear parents say 'don't touch' out of a fear of damaging something or voice a concern about the safety of handling natural materials," says Coates. "Parents should ask if things can be handled or encourage children to ask; and then do so. The sense of touch often connects the eye to the brain."

In Maryland, the Society for Primitive Technology meets at the Oregon Ridge Nature Center in Baltimore County the first weekend in May. Experts in various fields demonstrate their skills.

"Primitive Tech allows children a hands-on opportunity to understand how people all over the earth came up with similar solutions to the same problems of food, water and shelter under varying environmental conditions," says Kirk Dreier of Oregon Ridge. "It's one thing to read and hear about making friction fire and another thing to help spin a drill and see a wisp of smoke and then see a hot coal form and then blowing it into flame."

Suggested Websites

Archeological Society of Maryland (ASM) www.marylandarcheology.org

Broken Claw's Native American Website, includes links to Maryland area powwows
www.native.brokenclaw.net

Mid-Atlantic Primitive Skills Group (MAPS) www.mapsgroup.org

Society of Primitive Technology (SPT) www.primitive.org

Finding the past in old schoolhouses

By Jamie Stiehm

Condensed from the Baltimore Sun, August 13, 2006

The myth of the little red schoolhouse has only a kernel of truth, says James G. Gibb, an Annapolis-based archeologist. From town to town, they varied in size, shape and stature. In a sense, each early school building was a measure, along with teacher pay, attendance rates and textbooks, of how high a community aimed in educating the next generation.

"Schoolhouses were the most common public buildings on the landscape," Gibb says. "They are a great place to look at a community, since so much of our lives are spent in school. The differences tell a lot. You get a view of a community's ambition, or lack thereof."

Gibb has photographed, excavated artifacts and compiled data on hundreds of the state's schoolhouses -- some still standing, many gone -- from the post-Civil War period, 1865 to 1920.

His latest project, funded by a Historical Society of Talbot County grant, involves analyzing that county's school board reports to the state for all four seasonal school terms.

The Talbot survey is just the kind of project that has fascinated Gibb, 48, for 15 years. The archeologist, a native New Yorker who keeps artifacts of old school desks in his living room, holds a doctorate from Binghamton University. He previously worked as a consultant archeologist for the city of Annapolis.

Gibb says he concentrates his studies on the post-Civil War era because of the clear demarcation: "1865 was when slavery goes out and public education comes in."

"Jim does tend to concentrate on things historians and archeologists have overlooked. Most of them look at the grander things that have survived, not the humbler ones made of collective sweat, labor and material," says Gregory A. Stiverson, director of the Historic Annapolis Foundation, which recently heard Gibb talk.

Gibb's travels have taken him close to home, to the old Anne Arrundel Free School in Davidsonville, which Johns Hopkins attended before he quit to work in his family farm fields when his Quaker parents sold their slaves. All told, Gibb said, he has taken pictures of about 200 Maryland schoolhouses.

Drop-ins uncovered in Jamestowne well

Condensed from the Baltimore Sun, July 28, 2006

RICHMOND, Va. (AP) -- Sometime around 1610, archeologists figure, a thirsty colonist in Jamestown set his brass pistol on the side of a well as he pulled up some water and accidentally knocked the weapon in.

It's one explanation for a cache of rare finds the archeologists fished up this week from the bottom of a 400-year-old well at an overlooked corner of Historic Jamestowne, a national park.

The items found at the site of America's first permanent English settlement included the Scottish pistol, a man's leather shoe and a small lead plaque reading "James Towne" - the equivalent of a Colonial luggage tag. Besides Indian artifacts, the items are among the oldest ever unearthed in America.

"They're the earliest you could find in what is now the United States," said William Kelso, director of archeology for the Association for the Preservation of Virginia Antiquities.

Finds included a halberd, a 17th-Century ceremonial staff often carried by military sergeants, a hammer and an intact ceramic bottle that was made in Germany and could date to 1590, Kelso said.

Insects, plant life and even the white oak timber used to line the 15 1/2-foot-deep well will offer

further clues to the environment in the colonists' day, Kelso said.

Wells like this one would have been used until the water ran dry -- likely because of muddy marsh water seeping in -- then converted to dumps, Kelso said.

So how did someone's shoe end up at the bottom?

"By accident," he said. "That's how you get such interesting things."



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

September 19: Archeologist Don Creveling will discuss his work at the Mount Calvert Historical & Archaeological Park and the new exhibit at the Charles Town Site in Prince George's County. <http://www.pg parks.com/places/parks/mtcalvert.html>

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

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 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 at 7 p.m. Contact Jeremy Lazelle at 301-845-9855 or jlazelle@msn.com. Chapter website: www.digfrederick.bravehost.com.

Northern Chesapeake

Meetings are the second Wednesday of the month. Contact Dan Coates at dancoates@comcast.net

Southern

Contact Kate Dinnel for information at 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. Either car pool from Mt. Ida at 5:55 or meet at the tavern. For information on the chapter, contact Lee Preston at 443-745-1202 or roseannlee@earthlink.com

September 11: The Vaughan Brown Memorial Lecture, by Lee Preston, "Beaches, Bars, Bowls and Bifaces: A Look at Florida's 12,000 Year Human History, with Emphasis on the First 95%."

October 9: Lee Preston, "The Patapsco Female Institute: The School, the Staff, the Students and the 19th Century Values Found Therein."

November 13: Bob Wall, "The Barton Site." (Pot Luck Supper)

December (No Meeting)

January 8, 2007: "Archeology Lab: Mt. Pleasant" (there are many artifacts from Mt. Pleasant that need to be cleaned and articulated. There will be plenty of bottles, plates etc. to piece together.

February 12: Matt Croson on "Archeology and CSI: Time is the Only Difference."

March 12: Michael Olmert, University of Maryland, "Outbuildings: Architecture and Culture in the 18th Century Anglo-Tidewater Backyard." (Pot Luck Supper)

April 9: Bob O'Brien, "A Travelogue of Hawaii".

May 14: Program to be announced. (Pot Luck Supper)

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 Website: www.geocities.com/wmdasm

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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