

ASM Ink

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Newsletter of the Archeological Society of Maryland, Inc.



www.marylandarcheology.org

Symposium: New looks at some old sites

This year's ASM Spring Symposium will present a series of talks under the general heading of "A Retrospective Overview of Classic Sites in the Middle Atlantic Region and Beyond." (That "beyond" will take us quite a way beyond our usual focus on Maryland and the last few thousand years.)

The session takes place Saturday, April 9, once again at the Crownsville headquarters of the MHT.

The first talk, beginning at 9:15, immediately broadens our scope quite a bit. Cheryl Claassen of Appalachian State University in North Carolina will look at Archaic rituals in a geographic area bounded by the edge of the Great Plains, Newfoundland and southern Florida. She will posit how existing data, besides having an economic or environmental interpretation, may also show a spiritual element.

The second talk focuses on home waters. Rebecca Webster, who is about to graduate from St. Mary's College and who already has a wide variety of archeological experiences in her backpack, will take a closer look at 17th Century beads from the Chesapeake, analyzing data collected from 22 sites in Maryland and Virginia.

Jay Custer of the University of Delaware will re-examine four large sites in that state that not only produced artifacts but also 2,100 Late Archaic to Late Woodland features. The distribution indicated a dispersed settlement pattern for that time period.

In the final presentation of the morning, Stephanie Sperling of the Lost Towns Project will look at the River Farm Site in Anne Arundel County, probably a part of the fertile Pig Point complex. This site is of special interest to ASM members as it will be the location of this year's field session, starting next month.

The first of three afternoon sessions is the session really pushing the boundaries. Becca Peixotto, who was lab director at ASM's recent field sessions at Biggs Ford, will describe one of the most important recent archeological finds worldwide. Deep underground in a South African cave she helped find remains of a previously unknown early human relative, *Homo naledi*.

Next, Julia King of Saint Mary's College will talk about the Colonial Potomac Project. Through re-examining assemblages, this cooperative effort is finding new truths about Native American and Colonial sites in the colonial Potomac valley.

The day ends with noted archeologist R. Michael Stewart looking at the long prehistory of the Abbott Farm Historic Landmark in New Jersey. The complex of prehistoric and historic sites covers some 2,000 acres.

And don't forget there is a silent auction. Among items donated are tickets to a play, books, a sheet set, a drummer figurine, travel bag, cake stand, travel bag, scrapbook materials and more books?

Doors open at 8:30, the welcomes begin at 9. Admission is \$5 for ASM members, \$7 for nonmembers, free for students. The cafeteria will *not* be open; a bag lunch is recommended although there are some restaurants a little distance away.

Welcome to Archeology Month: Make good use of it
Some details on this year's ASM field school: Page 3

Upcoming events

April: Archeology Month. Special events throughout the state.

April 6 – 10: Society for American Archaeology annual meeting, Orlando, Florida.

April 9: Spring Symposium, Crownsville.

April 16: Discover Archeology Day, Jefferson-Patterson Park, 10 – 5. Call 410 586 8501 by April 1 to register. Visit jef-pat@maryland.gov for information. Also contact if you wish to volunteer to help.

May 23-7: Flintknapping workshop. Center for American Archeology, Kampsville, Ill. Fee. Limited enrollment. www.caa-archeology.org

May 27 – June 4: ASM field session. River Farm Site, Anne Arundel County.

October 27: ASM Annual Meeting. Catoctin Furnace Historic District, Frederick County.

Volunteer opportunities

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

ASM Tuesday Volunteer Lab: The lab in Crownsville is open Tuesdays from 9:30 until 3 and is now cataloging Mason Island II (18MO13) material. Anyone interested (especially CAT candidates) is welcome. Contact Louis Akerson at lakerson1@verizon.net or Charlie Hall at charles.hall@maryland.gov

A volunteer opportunity is available at a 17 Century site in Edgewater in Anne Arundel County, on Mondays, Tuesdays and Fridays, with Jim Gibb jamesggibb@verizon.net and Laura Cripps lcripps@howardcc.edu under the auspices of the Smithsonian. Contact either one to participate. There will be magnetometer training.

The Smithsonian Environmental Research Center seeks participants in its Citizen-Scientist Program in archeology and other environmental research programs in Edgewater. Field and lab work are conducted Wednesdays and on occasional Saturdays. Contact Jim Gibb at jamesggibb@verizon.net

Montgomery County offers opportunities for lab and field work. Lab is at Needwood Mansion in Derwood on Mondays and Wednesdays, 9:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m., and the first Tuesday evening of each month (except July and August). 301 563 7531 or contact heather.bouslog@montgomeryparks.org CAT opportunity. It also is doing fieldwork at the Josiah Henson site at various times. For information contact Cassandra Michaud at 301 563 7532 or cassandra.michaud@montgomeryparks.org

The Anne Arundel County Archaeology Program and the Lost Towns Project welcome volunteers in both field and lab at numerous sites throughout Anne Arundel County. Weekdays only. Email Jasmine Gollup at volunteers@losttownsproject.org or call the lab at 410 222 1318.

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

Jefferson Patterson Park invites volunteers to take part in its activities, including archeology, historical research and conservation. Contact Ed Chaney at ed.chaney@maryland.gov 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.

CAT corner:

For information and the latest news on the CAT program, visit the ASM website.

Field session to be near the Pig Point Site

The dates and the location of the 2016 ASM field session have been chosen. When a National Park Service grant finally came through, the ASM board was able to say the outing will be held at the prehistoric River Farm Site (18AN881/504) in Anne Arundel County.

Located a mile south of the prolific Pig Point Site, it is believed to be related to that site. River Farm extends for 1,300 feet along the Patuxent River floodplain and already has produced more than 10,000 artifacts as well as features.

Stephanie Sperling of the Lost Towns Project will describe the site in a talk at the Spring Symposium.

For the latest information on accommodations and speakers, check the ASM website or wait for next month's newsletter but make your plans to attend now.

Grant to fund field session, 3 other projects

By Claude Bowen

A \$32,000 "Hurricane Sandy" grant has been awarded to ASM and three partnering organizations for a project that would serve as a model to allow meaningful planning for understanding the impact of future storms on prehistoric and historic archeological sites in Maryland.

The National Park Service grant, through the Maryland Historical Trust, will allow ASM and its partners -- Anne Arundel County, Calvert County and St. Mary's College of Maryland -- to check four sites threatened by storms and tidal erosion as well as sea-level and ground-water rise.

The funds are available through September 30, 2017.

ASM, the MHT, and Anne Arundel County will work together to carry out The 2016 Tyler Bastian Field Session at the River Farm Site (18AN881/504) on Jug Bay near the Pig Point Site (near Upper Marlboro). Anne Arundel County archeologist C. Jane Cox will be the principal investigator.

At each site funds will be used to gather information regarding the vertical and horizontal limits of the site as well as sampling the contents (artifactual, geological and otherwise) of each to determine its overall importance and to facilitate planning for future natural site depredations. In addition, information will be gathered to see if a nomination as a National Register of Historic Places location is warranted.

Elsewhere, St. Mary's College of Maryland will head the investigation (at dates yet to be determined) at the Lower Brambly I site (18ST51) in St. Mary's County on the Potomac River. The site is believed to be the northernmost spot on the river visited by Captain John Smith and is thought to be shown on his map of 1608. An Indian village shown on an early 18th Century Colonial map is at the same site.

It is possible that the site was continuously occupied by native peoples during the first century of colonization and may offer an important opportunity to study changes in material culture during this period, if the site remains substantially intact. Julia King will be the principal investigator.

A third partner in this grant is the government of Calvert County. Archeologist Kirsti Uunilla has been conducting a survey by water of sites along the drainage of Battle Creek, a tributary of the Patuxent River north of Solomons Island. The area is rich in middens and other prehistoric sites as well as important and very early colonial sites. She will select two threatened sites and negotiate with the landowners for the right to perform the surveying, testing, remote sensing and sampling.

In addition to routine reports on the archeological activities and nomination forms for registration on the National Register of Historic Places, ASM will produce a case study for each site. The studies will discuss the challenges and opportunities inherent in each, considerations used in determining their relative importance, decisions that were made to determine the site's vulnerabilities and how the site may be monitored for damage from natural events.

ASM will be providing information for each activity as dates and arrangements are finalized. Public participation will be encouraged and each site will be available to ASM volunteers.

Help lead ASM into the future, run for office

This is an election year for ASM - all offices are up for grabs. The offices are president, vice president, secretary, membership secretary, treasurer and six board of trustees positions. If you would like to try for a spot in the Society's leadership, let the elections committee know about it. Send your name and the position to myronbeck@verizon.net or Myron Beckenstein, 6817 Pineway, University Park, MD 20782.

Book review: A data-rich look at the Transitional

The Nature and Pace of Change in American Indian Cultures: Pennsylvania, 4000 to 3000 BP, by R. Michael Stewart, Kurt W. Carr and Paul A. Raber. Penn State University Press, 2016. 152 pp., b/w illustrations, \$25 paper.

For my taste, nothing makes for juicier technical reading than a monograph or edited volume on the archeology of a particular period and place. Stewart, Carr and Raber, aided by five contributors, do this admirably. The title notwithstanding, this thin, data-rich volume examines just the Transitional Period (2550 to 750 BC), that era of accelerated technological and social change between the hunting and gathering cultures of the Archaic and the increasingly settled and horticulturally dependent cultures of the Woodland periods.

It does so largely from the perspective of the Susquehanna and Delaware river basins of east-central Pennsylvania. Vantage points closely align around climate change (nearly two millennia of warm, dry conditions) and population growth, prompting expansive trade networks, technological innovations and shifts in settlement and subsistence patterns.

There are several points of agreement, implicit for the most part, among the eight papers. First, "periods" are heuristics: tools to aid scientists in the organization of data. We segmented aboriginal history into three epochs and each epoch into three periods. Having done so, we need to explain how aboriginal cultures crossed the artificial boundaries that we created. Put another way, how did one period arise from another?

The authors also share in the understanding that an outside force — climate change — exerted an out-sized influence on cultural development. An internal force — population growth — posed conditions with which Native Americans contended in an environment with varying limits on the necessities of human life that might be procured from any one ecosystem. And, finally, innovations in technology and social organization enabled groups to adapt to diminished or less widely distributed plant, animal and water resources.

Principal among the technological innovations are large, fire-cracked rock features, broad-bladed projectile points often made from non-local tool stones and preference for streamside sites. Robert Wall suggests that these innovations can be found in the Late Archaic small-stemmed point tradition and Kurt Carr echoes this opinion, seeing more intensive engagement in those innovations during the Transitional Period leading to successful adaptation (i.e., survival).

Patricia Miller, drawing on a wealth of compliance archeology data from the Susquehanna drainage, reports expansive trade networks and more catholic choices in plant and animal foods as hunter/gatherers adapted to population growth. In her view, broadspears made from imported metarhyolite represent something other than a technological adaptation.

Michael Stewart summarizes and connects these and the other contributions in his introductory chapter, including the functions of projectile point types and distributions of those points as proxies for population densities and varying social organization (Heather Wholley) and as evidence of multiple ecosystem exploitation (Joseph Blondino).

I find geoarcheologist Frank Vento's discussion of the geology of the period particularly interesting. He focuses on shifts in waterways caused by episodic storms releasing large quantities of water on thinly vegetated, droughty soils and consequent lateral movement of streams and rapid stacking of weakly weathered soils. He briefly discusses palynological evidence for the Sub-Boreal period (a shift from hemlock to pine dominated forests), but pollen data from as far afield as Georgia and all but absent from the Chesapeake and Delaware basins reveal a significant gap in what we know of this region for any period.

Our understanding of Late Archaic and Transitional settlement and subsistence practices also might gain by an explicit discussion of relict stream channels and the importance of understanding surface geology in seeking

and interpreting sites. Locational data developed by Wholley and Blondino, for example, might be refined if the components they address are related to the landforms that existed at the time of occupation.

In the end, and at the end of the volume, I find Roger Moeller's contribution the most thought-provoking. He questions the monolithic approach to the Transitional period in New England and the Middle Atlantic and particularly the reputed association of broadspear points with large fire-cracked rock features. He raises the specter of functionally distinctive sites at which groups undertook different tasks.

He seems to skirt what may be the most interesting aspect of the Transitional period and perhaps of all pre-Columbian periods. The variation among sites and assemblages may reflect culturally distinct groups, different groups of people identifying themselves as different, with similar cultural practices, interacting with one another and making choices that ramify through subsequent generations. Broadspear and fishtail projectile points frequently co-occur, sometimes with soapstone and early pottery. Large fire-cracked rock features occur on floodplains and low terraces, but not always with associated broadspear points.

This may be the stuff of history. The stacking of chronological periods conveniently organizes archeological data, but it imposes uniformity and stasis on a region that undoubtedly was rich in cultural diversity.

I have a few editorial quibbles with the volume. Michael Stewart might have divided his introduction into a brief description of the book's genesis and its contents and a longer discussion as the final chapter, summarizing and connecting the other contributions. Some of the lengthy in-text citations and lists of sites disrupt the flow of some of the writing. Although widely resisted in archeological publishing, footnotes and endnotes can be handy devices that support an argument without impeding the reader's progress.

I also would like to have seen each of the authors provide clear, well-developed hypotheses, based on their findings, that might guide future work on Transitional sites, as well as on investigations of Late Archaic and Early Woodland sites.

But these are minor issues with an interesting book and a must read for anybody interested in the aboriginal history of the Eastern United States. We should strive for more such scholarly products.

-James G. Gibb

EDITOR'S NOTE: Stewart will be speaking at the Spring Symposium April 9 in Crownsville.

April digging available in Baltimore; presidential trip

Baltimore Heritage is going back to Herring Run Park for another week of excavation. The April 23-30 dig will again be led by Jason Shellenhamer and Lisa Kraus. The object is to find out more about Eutaw Manor, which was also the focus of last year's dig. Potential volunteers should look at the group's website, www.baltimoreheritage.org

The Society for Pennsylvania Archaeology is conducting a tour of sites associated with three presidents from June 2 to 5. The tour gathers at Bedford, Pa., and then heads to the first stop, Mt. Vernon. Another Washington-related site and ones connected to James Madison and Thomas Jefferson also will be visited.

The tour costs \$225 for SPA members, \$250 for nonmembers. Hotel reservations must be made individually, but group rates have been obtained. For more information and to sign up, contact the SPA via Sarah Neusius at sawn@iup.edu (724 357-2133) or John Nass at nass@calu.edu

By THAMES



Showing your ASM affiliation is tax-deductible

Sixty members already are showing their interest in archeology with an ASM license plate. The plates are available for all ASM members and obtaining them is easy and only 10 tax-deductible dollars.

To begin you need an MVA form VR-124. You can get one from an MVA office or from ASM's license plate co-ordinator, Ilka Knuppel Gray, at 667-308- 2650, or knuppelgray@gmail.com Send the completed form to her at 4 Mullingar Court, Unit 201, Lutherville-Timonium, MD 21093. Enclose two checks, one made out to the MVA for \$25 and one to ASM for \$10. She then will send the form to the MVA. Plates will be ready in a few weeks.

When you pick up your new plates, turn in your current set, if you have one. The ASM plates will have the old expiration date. MVA handles renewals in the same way and at the same cost as standard plates.

If you have questions, contact Ilka or Larue Sauer, MVA Title Correspondence Unit, 410-768- 7222, or <http://www.mva.maryland.gov/vehicles/specialty-plates/organizational-sp.htm>.

Chapter notes

In addition to the listed chapters, ASM's efforts to reach out to younger audiences has resulted, so far, in a chapter at the Community College of Baltimore County, led by Nina Brown, and a club at Huntingtown High School in Calvert County, run by Jeff Cunningham.

Anne Arundel

Meets the second Tuesday of the month at the Severna Park Branch Library, 45 West McKinsey Road. 7:30 p.m. Contact AACHapASM@hotmail.com or the chapter website <http://www.aachapasm.org/calendar.html>

Central Maryland

For information contact centralchapterasm@yahoo.com or stephenisrael2701@comcast.net 410-945-5514. Or on Facebook, www.facebook.com/asmcentralchapter or <http://asmcentralchapter.weebly.com/>

Charles County

Meetings are held at 7 p.m. on the second Thursday (September-May) in the community room of the LaPlata Police Department. Contact President Sarah Grady at sarahgrady11@gmail.com or 410-533-1390. Chapter website is charlescoasm.org and its blog is ccarchsoc.blogspot.com

April 14: Stephen Potter and Katherine Birmingham on the Accokeek Creek Site.

May 12: Jim Gibb on TBD.

Mid-Potomac

The chapter meets the third Thursday of the month at 7:30 p.m. at Needwood Mansion in Derwood. Dinner at a local restaurant at 5:30 p.m. Contact heather.bouslog@mncppc-mc.org or 301-563-7530 or Don Housley at donhou704@earthlink.net or 301-424-8526. Chapter website: <http://www.asmmidpotomac.org> Email: asmmidpotomac@gmail.com Facebook page: <http://www.facebook.com/pages/Mid-Potomac-Archaeology/182856471768>

April 21: Rico Newman, member of the Piscataway Conoy Tribe and commissioner, Maryland Commission on Indian Affairs, will speak on the Native American struggles for tribal recognition in Maryland. **Location change.** This meeting will be at Brookside Nature Center, 1400 Glenallen Ave., Wheaton.

May 19: Nate Patch, of the National Archives in College Park, will discuss research techniques that can be used prior to doing archeology on a site.

Monocacy

The chapter meets in the C. Burr Artz Library in Frederick the second Wednesday of the month at 6 p.m. For more information, visit the chapter's web page at digfrederick.com or call 301-378-0212.

April 13: Chapter member Bill Dickinson will talk about ongoing research including modern mapping techniques and technologies to assist in finding the location of a 1743 church building.

Northern Chesapeake

Meetings are the second Wednesday of the month. Members and guests assemble at 6:30 for light refreshments. A business meeting at 7 is followed by the presentation at 7:30. Contact Dan Coates at 410-273-9619 or dancoates@comcast.net Website: <http://sites.google.com/site/northernchesapeake>

April 15: Cresthull Memorial Lecture. "Underwater Archeology - Monterrey: Investigation in the Gulf of Mexico" by Susan Langley, State Underwater Archeologist. Harford Community College, Bel Air.

June ??: Annual ASNC Picnic Meeting. TBA

St. Mary's County

Meetings are the third Monday of the month at St. Francis Xavier Church in Newtown or at St. Mary's College. For information contact Chris Coogan at Ccoogan@smcm.edu

Upper Patuxent

Meets the second Monday at 7 p.m. at 9944 Route 108 in Ellicott City. Labs are the second and fourth Saturdays. On Facebook, <https://www.facebook.com/pages/Upper-Patuxent-Archaeology-Group/464236446964358> or try UPArchaeologygroup@yahoo.com or <http://uparchaeologygroup.weebly.com/>

April 11: Barbara Israel will talk about Indian mounds in Ohio.

May 9: Jim Gibb on some recent research.

June 13: Annual potluck supper.

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. Email: wmdasm@yahoo.com Website: <http://sites.google.com/site/wmdasm>

April 22: Chapter member Joseph Weaver will give a presentation on Mesoamerican cultures.

May: No meeting.

June 24: Roy Brown on the building of an Eastern Woodland Wigwam last spring at Rocky Gap State Park, the wigwam was the focal point for summer youth-oriented programs on Native American culture.

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

ASM members receive the monthly newsletter, ASM Ink; the biannual journal, MARYLAND ARCHEOLOGY, reduced admission to ASM events and a 10 percent discount on items sold by the Society. Contact Membership Secretary Jo Boodon, PO Box 1584, Ellicott City, MD 21043 for membership rates. For publication sales, not including newsletter or Journal, 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. Please send to Myron Beckenstein, 6817 Pineway, University Park, MD. 20782, 301-864-5289 or myronbeck@verizon.net

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