

ASM Ink

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Newsletter of the Archeological Society of Maryland, Inc.



www.marylandarcheology.org

It's time to sharpen your trowels and skills

By Jim Gibb

Principal Investigator

A different type of field experience awaits ASM members at the Smithsonian Environmental Research Center (SERC) campus near Annapolis from October 10 to 20. It won't be a field *session* but a field *school*.

The object isn't to move dirt, the spring program does that very nicely. It is to teach the best techniques of field and laboratory -- appropriate to the kinds of deposits with which we will deal -- and to learn something of the substantive, theoretical and ethical issues of Maryland archeology.

Participants will experience the rich material culture of 17th-Century colonialism. The focus will be on learning field and laboratory skills and CAT candidates will be able to fulfill a number of their requirements, including completion of several workshops.

A plantation house site that appears to date between the 1650s and 1680 will be the principal excavation area, the work focusing primarily on investigation of features exposed last summer. A large field below the nearby Java ruin (1820s-20th Century) will be the second focus, with team members leading a magnetometry survey followed by shovel testing in search of additional aboriginal and historic era sites.

A small team will experiment with magnetometry on several aboriginal and historic-era oyster shell middens to determine if this technology reveals anything of midden structure that will aid in the excavation and interpretation of shell middens.

Test excavations east of the Java ruin will serve as a backup project if circumstances limit our ability to pursue any of the three main projects.

All laboratory work will occur at the Sellman House, a mid-19th-Century farmhouse with 18th-Century components and terraced garden, located at the entrance to the SERC campus. The lab includes a kitchen, toilet and shower.

Skill development will include: labwork and some basic artifact conservation practices; feature excavation and documentation, including water-screening and flotation; magnetometry survey; shovel testing, and instrument mapping. CAT workshops, open to all, will include Archeological Law and Ethics, Historic Overview and Native American Overview.

We probably will hold some context-specific short workshops around lunch hour; e.g., trowel sharpening and care (the best way, you might be surprised) at the main excavation, proper shovel test digging in the Java field. Some other workshops will be held in the evening.

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ESAF update, housing information. Page 3

Upcoming events

September 6: ASM board meeting, Miller Branch, Howard County Library. 10 a.m. All are welcome.

September 20: Pre-Columbian Society annual symposium, "Land Without Borders: Cultural Interaction between the Pre-Hispanic Southwest and Mesoamerica." The U.S. Navy Memorial and Naval Heritage Center in Washington. 9 - 5:30. For details and registration, see the Pre-Columbian Society website www.pcswdc.org or contact Rosemary Lyon at 301/320-4391.

October 10 - 20: Fall field school. Including 17th Century historical site, Anne Arundel County.

October 18: ASM Annual Meeting, the Schmidt Center, Smithsonian Environmental Research Center, Edgewater.

October 30 - November 2: ESAF meeting, Solomons Island, Maryland.

Volunteer opportunities

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

ASM Tuesday Volunteer Lab: The lab in Crownsville will be open Tuesdays from 9:30 until 3. Contact Louise Akerson at lakerson1@verizon.net or Charlie Hall at charles.hall@maryland.gov

A volunteer opportunity is available at a 17th 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.

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

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

Jefferson Patterson Park invites volunteers to take part in its activities, including archeology, historical research and conservation. Contact Ed Chaney at echaney@mdp.state.md.us 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

Several CAT workshops are planned for the October field school. See website for details. For more information on the CAT program, and updates, visit the ASM website.

ESAF update: volunteer and hotel info

ASM has been chosen to host the annual meeting of the Eastern States Archaeological Federation this year. The event will take place October 30 through November 2 at the Holiday Inn in Solomons, Calvert County.

A full program of speeches, trips and social activities is planned, but to help run the event, volunteers are needed. While volunteers don't get paid, they do get free admission if they work more than four hours.

A special price is being offered for rooms at the hotel for those who call before September 30. The ESAF nightly rate is \$119 for a single, \$124 for a double. Contact the hotel at 410-326-6311 or www.holidayinn.com/solomons

Stephen Israel, who is co-ordinating ASM's involvement, says volunteers are needed in several areas:

"Help is especially needed for the meeting registration/information desk on Friday and Saturday and on Wednesday evening for early arrivals and on Thursday before and after the tours.

Registration desk responsibilities include checking in pre-registered arrivals, assisting others in completing registration forms, handing out name badges and information packets, and collecting appropriate registration and special event fees.

"Volunteers helping with the book room will assist vendors with check-in Thursday evening and early Friday morning.

"Audio/visual volunteers will operate a digital projector, other equipment as needed, and the meeting room lights.

"Other opportunities for ASM members at the ESAF meeting are helping host the Thursday tours and evening receptions being held at the Holiday Inn Hospitality Suite, Thursday, Friday and Saturday evenings."

To facilitate planning, Stephen would appreciate hearing from interested persons as soon as possible. You can reach him at 410-945-5514 or ssisrael@verizon.net

Registration for the conference is \$40 in advance or \$50 at the registration desk. Those who pre-register are eligible for a discount for the Saturday evening banquet as well as for rooms at the Holiday Inn. The dynamic Henry Miller of St. Mary's City will be the banquet speaker.

Up-to-date program information can be found at <http://esaf-archeology.org/meetings.htm>

The ESAF conference also will be the site of this year's ASM silent auction. Valerie Hall is waiting to hear from you about what you have to offer. She can be reached at valeriehall@gmail

What can you donate? Items of interest to archeologists - archeology related or not - are welcome, objects as well as events. Get a business to offer something, a restaurant, a theater, whatever. Valerie has open arms. An application form is either with this newsletter or on the website.

Looking for one good (wo)man for Marye award

Time is almost up for nominating someone for this year's William B. Marye Award. ASM's highest honor will be presented at the Annual Meeting October 18 to someone for outstanding contributions to Maryland archeology. But a person can't win the award unless he or she has been nominated.

Do you know someone who should be nominated? Past nominees are not carried over so their name must be submitted again.

The recipient need not be a member of ASM, a resident of Maryland or even an archeologist, but must have made a significant contribution to archeology in this state. A list of past winners is on the application form either with this newsletter or on the ASM website.

Nominations must be received by September 8, so don't delay.

ASM stalwart Don Seitz dies at 88

Donald H. Seitz, who was quite active in ASM until sidelined by illness and who established the Society's Teacher of the Year Award, died August 3 in Westminster of heart failure at age 88.

"Don brought the precision of his engineering background to ASM archeological digs, and participated in many volunteer archeological activities with his wife Pat," said former ASM president Carol Ebright. "Don was always a consummate gentleman and a pleasure to work with."

"He was a real asset to ASM...especially the field session...and especially at Rosenstock (both he and Pat helped us immeasurably)," recalled State Archeologist Dennis Curry. "And his 'adjustable height' sifting screen was a real tribute to his engineering skill."

Donald Henry Seitz was born in Baltimore and raised in the city's Gwynns Falls neighborhood, The Sun reported. During the waning days of World War II, he served in the Pacific. After being discharged, he earned a bachelor's degree in 1949 in civil engineering from the University of Pennsylvania. He was recalled to active duty during the Korean War and was assigned to a Seabees unit stationed in Japan.

Pat taught archeology at Lansdowne High School in Catonsville. She retired in 1996 and died the next year. As a memorial to her he endowed ASM's Teacher of the Year Award. In 1999 he moved from Catonsville to the Fairhaven retirement community in Sykesville.

Some of the couple's archeological discoveries are part of the permanent collection of the Catonsville Historical Society.

It doesn't take an ice age to force changes

By Bradley T. Lepper

Condensed from the Columbus Dispatch, June 15, 2014

Climate change must have presented challenges as well as opportunities for ancient cultures, but can episodes of changing climate contribute to the rise and fall of civilizations?

In a forthcoming issue of the *Journal of Archaeological Science*, Cornell University archeologist Sturt Manning and a team of scientists show how tree rings in ancient Egyptian wooden artifacts have opened a window into how the climate influenced cultural developments in the ancient Near East.

The tree rings in the ancient Egyptian wood revealed that around 2200 B.C., there was a relatively brief but intense episode of drought, which Manning and his team say could have caused disruptions in the civilizations of Egypt and Mesopotamia.

In a Cornell University news release, Manning said, "This record shows that climate change doesn't have to be as catastrophic as an Ice Age to wreak havoc."

Ohio doesn't have a comprehensive record of ancient tree rings to tell how the climate has changed over time, but there are other ways of getting at that information. Every spring, for example, pollen fills the air. Some of it settles to the bottom of ponds, where it can accumulate in layers of muck. These layers are like pages in a book, recording the plants growing near the pond from one year to the next.

Ohio University archeologist Elliot Abrams and his colleagues say that farming began in southern Ohio partly as a result of this climate change. A drier climate reduced the availability of nuts, and people adapted by shifting their attention to a variety of seed-bearing plants, such as sunflower and goosefoot.

At first, they just gathered the seeds. Later, they began to plant their favorite varieties and weed out others. Within a few centuries, they had become part-time farmers. By A.D. 1, they were deliberately setting fires to clear the land for more-extensive gardens. Charcoal from these fires shows up in layers dating to this period.

Climate change is going to be a big factor in our future. Learning the lessons of the past might help us respond appropriately to the challenges and opportunities we will face in the coming decades. And archeology has an important contribution to make in recovering those unwritten lessons.

With drones: faster, cheaper, clearer

By William Neuman and Ralph Blumenthal

Condensed from the New York Times, August 14, 2014

CHEPÉN, Peru — A small remote-controlled helicopter buzzed over ancient hilltop ruins here, snapping hundreds of photographs. Below, stone walls built more than a thousand years ago by the Moche civilization gave way to a grid of adobe walls put up only recently by what officials said were land speculators.

"This site is threatened on every side," said Luis Jaime Castillo Butters, Peru's vice minister of cultural heritage as he piloted the drone aircraft.

Archeologists around the world are now turning to the modern technology of drones to defend and explore endangered sites. And perhaps nowhere is the shift happening as swiftly as in Peru, where Castillo has created a drone air force to map, monitor and safeguard his country's ancient treasures.

Drones mark "a before and after in archeology," said Castillo, a prominent archeologist and one of a dozen experts who will outline the use of drones at a conference in San Francisco next year.

Aerial survey at the site is allowing for the identification of new looting pits and determinations of whether any of the looters' holes had been revisited," said Morag Kersel, an archeologist from DePaul University in Chicago who is part of a team using drones in Jordan and Israel.

Peru is suddenly fertile ground to try out this new technology. The country is becoming a research hot spot as archeologists in the Middle East and elsewhere find their work interrupted by unrest.

But in Peru they encounter another kind of conflict. Here they struggle to protect the country's archeological heritage from squatters and land traffickers, who often secure property through fraud or political connections to profit from rising land values.

Experts say hundreds, perhaps thousands of ancient sites are endangered by such encroachment. Many Peruvians were shocked last year when workers using heavy machinery illegally demolished a 4,000-year-old pyramid in Lima to make way for possible development.

The drones can address the problem, quickly and cheaply, by providing bird's-eye views of ruins that can be converted into 3-D images and highly detailed maps.

Castillo began experimenting with drones about two years ago, buying a \$100 one from the Sharper Image. Now he has a squadron of eight, all miniature helicopters that cost about \$1,500 to \$20,000. He hopes to soon add 20 more.

"Finally you can fly whenever you want to, wherever you want to, in any angle, for anything you want and get the great picture you always thought you should take," he said.

In 2012, while teaching in Sweden, where researchers were working with a powerful Russian-made computer program that could meld hundreds of photographs into a 3-D composite image, Castillo realized that by feeding his drone photographs into the program he could produce incredibly detailed and clear 3-D images of ancient temples, fortifications and burial sites.

When asked last year to become a deputy culture minister with jurisdiction over archeology, he brought his fledgling air force with him, using the drones in the cities but also in more remote areas like this one, known as Cerro Chepén, a sprawling site on the northern coast of Peru.

Pointing to a nearby hillside, Castillo said that last year a survey team spent two months, at a cost of thousands of dollars, to map the area using conventional methods. Now, with a drone, he covers a similar area in less than 10 minutes. Once he loads the photos into a computer program, he can have a map the next day. "The faster we produce the maps, the more parts of the site we're going to be able to save," he said.

Drones do have some drawbacks. Their batteries last as little as six minutes. The dust common at archeological sites, especially in Peru's coastal desert, can foul the equipment. Castillo and his staff often must rely on their ingenuity, jury-rigging the drones to hold cameras in place.

The task before them is daunting. Peru has an estimated 100,000 sites of archeological importance, though experts acknowledge that is little more than a guess. Of those, only about 2,500 have been mapped in some way and only about 200 are fully inscribed in public registers.

Slave site in AA

Condensed from WJZ-TV report, August 3

CROWNSVILLE — Near General's Highway in Crownsville, archeologists were searching for a Revolutionary War campsite in Anne Arundel County when they discovered a 34-by-34 foot stone foundation with brick floors where slaves once walked more than 200 years ago. They also found thousands of artifacts, including dish fragments, beads and animal bones.

"The preservation is outstanding. This is a shell button sitting here for 200 years. Not only do we have brick floors and a foundation, we have artifacts that don't want to seem to decompose," said SHA chief archeologist Julie Schablitsky.

The find came during a survey of General's Highway as part of a federally funded transportation enhancement program. The plantation was home to Francis Scott Key's grandmother. Up to 35 enslaved African-Americans lived there.

"In here, we have a brick patio. This is an area where the African-American slaves would sit here and probably talk, spend time. Archeology will tell us what they did," Schablitsky said.

Nancy Matthew Daniels says her ancestors were enslaved there.

"Joseph and the whole family was here at one time," she said.

The discovery will influence transportation planning to preserve this precious piece of Maryland history.

"These are people that probably are not in the historic record. We have maybe a name if you're lucky. And now we have a slice of their life," said Schablitsky.

"It's an amazing site-amazing history and great preservation-full of interesting things we're pulling up."

The Maryland State Highway Administration and Anne Arundel County archeologists are partnering in the excavation of sites and historic along the highway.

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It's not the sites but the sights that irk us

Condensed from The Onion, January 16, 2002

HASAKE, SYRIA—When archeologist Edward Whitson joined a Penn State University dig in Hasake last year, he did so to participate in the excavation of a Late Bronze Age settlement rich in pottery shards and clay figurines. Whitson had hoped to determine whether the items contained within the site were primarily Persian or Assyrian in origin.

Instead, he found himself fleeing giant flying demon-cats as he ran through the temple's cavernous halls, jumping from ledge to ledge while locked in a desperate struggle for his life and soul for what seemed like the thousandth time in his 27-year career.

"All I wanted to do was study the settlement's remarkably well-preserved kiln," said the 58-year-old Whitson, carefully recoiling the rope he had just used to clamber out of a pit filled with giant rats. "I didn't want to be chased by yet another accursed manifestation of an ancient god-king's wrath."

Over the course of his career, Whitson has been frequently lauded by colleagues for his thorough, methodical examinations of ancient peoples. He has also been chased by the snake-bodied ophidian women of Al'lat in Israel, hunted down by Mayan coyote specters manifested out of lost time and shadow in the Yucatan and hounded by the Arctic-sky-filling Walrus Bone Woman of the early Inuits.

"It's true, I've got to stop reading the inscriptions on ancient door seals out loud," Whitson said. "I also need to quit dusting off medallions set into strange sarcophagi, allowing the light to hit them for the first time in centuries. And replacing the jewels that have fallen from the foreheads of ancient frog-deity statues—that's just bad archeological practice."

"I realize I'm entering grounds that are considered sacred to these people," Whitson said. "But that doesn't mean I deserve to be pelted with poison-tipped darts shot from cavern walls. A simple 'Do Not Enter' sign in hieroglyphics would suffice."

Turning to the subject of his latest incident at a dig site in Peru, Whitson maintains he was not at fault for summoning the forces of evil.

"I was just idly rearranging flint sickle blades that had already been catalogued. Apparently, I spelled out the true name of a long-dead god-priest," Whitson said. "Can't a man even clean up his work area without inadvertently conjuring up a pack of lightning-breathing ocelots?"

Making matters worse, such encounters have had little to no scientific value.

"It's always, 'I will drink your soul' or 'I will chew the flesh from your bones' with these hellish apparitions," Whitson said. "When I ask them if that means the ancient Etruscans did, in fact, add copper to their mixing clay to make their urns more sturdy, they don't even seem to hear me."

Worn down by nearly three decades of peril, Whitson said he plans to move off the front lines to become a museum curator or in-office researcher.

"It's unfortunate," Whitson said. "Nothing quite compares to being out in the field on an actual dig. But the reality is, I'm really starting to hate almost getting killed all the time."

It's time to sharpen your trowels and skills

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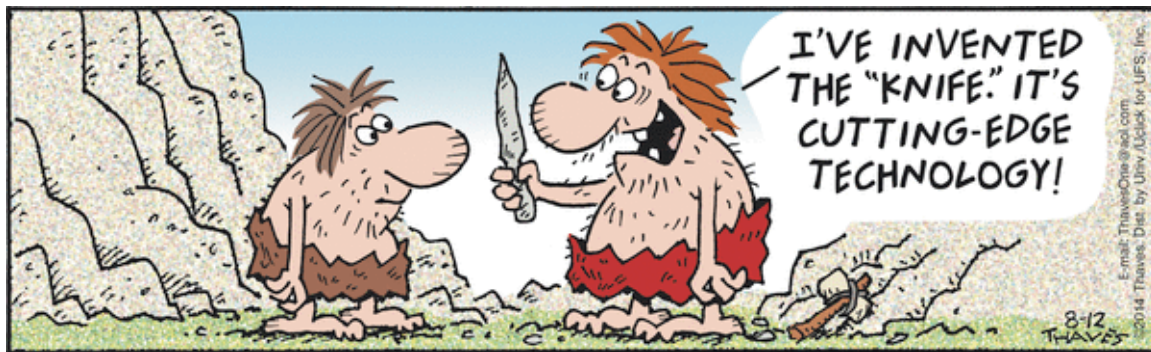
SERC offers limited on-site accommodations in the form of four single (\$35/night) and eight double (\$30/night each person) rooms with a kitchen, WiFi and clothes washer and dryer. Stores, restaurants, and other commercial conveniences are a 10-minute drive. Participants should register and, if desirous of on-site housing, reserve a room by October 1.

Apart from its rich archeological resources SERC is in a beautiful rural setting. There is waterfront and easy access for canoes and kayaks. Miles of well-kept trails crisscross campus.

ASM's annual meeting at which we elect officers, approve the annual budget and generally catch up on the activities of member chapters will be held on the morning of October 18 on the SERC campus. Fieldwork will not occur during the meeting, but will begin immediately after it ends.

We are calling this dig the ASM Fall Classic and hope it will be the first of many.

A registration form is with this newsletter.



Chapter notes

Anne Arundel

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

Central Maryland

Central Chapter has no formal meetings planned, but it does engage in field work and related activities. www.marylandarcheology.org/chapters Contact Stephen Israel, 410-945-5514 or ssisrael@verizon.net

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

September 11: "War of 1812 Battle of the Potomac (August/September 1814)," by Patrick L. O'Neill.

October 9: Julia King on The 2014 Archaeological Season at Zekiah Fort."

November 13: TBD

December 11: Patricia Samford on "Tabletop Excavation -- Get a chance to be an archaeologist and excavate a site (without getting your hands dirty)."

Mid-Potomac

The chapter meets the third Thursday of the month at 7:30 p.m. at Needwood Mansion, 6700 Needwood Road, Derwood. Dinner at a local restaurant at 5:45 p.m. Contact heather.bouslog@mncppc-mc.org or 301-840-5848 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>

September 18: David Cohen, Montgomery Parks Park Police volunteer, will discuss his investigation of the site of a 1957 airplane crash in Clarksburg, the last registered and most contemporary archeology site in Montgomery County.

October 16: Dorothy Krass will talk of her visit to Mayan archeological sites in Honduras.

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.

September 10: Karen Mudar, The Archeometallurgy Project, "A Metalsome Problem: Tracing the Origins of Bronze Smelting in Southeast Asia."

October 8: Joy Beasley, National Park Service, "L'Hermitage Slave Village Archeology Study - Final Report and Next Steps."

November 12: Varna Boyd, URS Corporation, "Jackson Homestead: A Rural African-American Domestic Site in Rural Montgomery County."

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>

St. Mary's County

Meetings are the third Monday of the month at St. Francis Xavier Church in Newtown. For information contact Scott Lawrence at graveconcerns@md.metrocast.net

Upper Patuxent

Programs are the second Monday of the month at 7 p.m. at the Ellicott City Colored School. Labs are held the second and fourth Saturdays of the month. For chapter information contact Dave Cavey at 410-747-0093 or hoplite1@comcast.net On Facebook, <https://www.facebook.com/pages/Upper-Patuxent-Archaeology-Group/464236446964358> or try UPArchaeologygroup@yahoo.com or <http://uparchaeologygroup.weebly.com/>

September 8: Lee Preston on Native American hunting techniques from Alberta to Howard County.

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: <http://sites.google.com/site/wmdasm>

September 26: James M. Hoey, local historian, will speak on how the Mason-Dixon Line, the once-disputed border between Pennsylvania and Maryland, was surveyed from 1763 to 1768.

October 24: Dennis Curry, chief archeologist with the MHT, will present "The Piscataway Indian Fort on Heater's Island."

November: Field Trip TBA

Archeological Society of Maryland
ASM Ink
P.O. Box 1331
Huntingtown, MD 20639-1331

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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% discount on items sold by the Society.

Contact Membership Secretary Robin Martin 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 welcome. Please send to Myron Beckenstein, 6817 Pineway, University Park, MD. 20782,
301-864-5289 or myronbeck@verizon.net

President

Claude Bowen
301-953-1947
clauder.bowen@comcast.net

Vice President

Laura Cripps
443-518-4554
LCripps@howardcc.edu

Membership Secretary

Robin Martin
410-490-9104
rmartin5@umbc.edu

Treasurer

Jim Gibb
410-263-1102
jamesGGibb@verizon.net

Secretary

Belinda Urquiza
PO Box 1331
Huntingtown, MD 20639
410-535-2586
burquiza@comcast.net

At-Large Trustees

Lynne Bulhack
301-460-5356
lbulhack@aol.com

Elaine Hall
240-426-1298
elah1@umbc.edu

Valerie Hall
301-814-8028
valeriehall@gmail.com

Barbara Israel
410-945-5514
baisrael@verizon.net

Annetta Schott
443-949-4122
annettaschott@gmail.com

Jaimie Wilder
301-741-2869
jaimwilder@comcast.net

