



ASM Ink

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Newsletter of the Archeological Society of Maryland, Inc.

www.marylandarcheology.org

From the Trust: A look back, a look ahead

By Maureen Kavanagh

Maryland Historical Trust

2009 was a busy but rewarding year at the Trust. Here are some of the highlights:

- We continued work on the Archeological Synthesis Project, compiling and organizing information from unpublished archeology literature. We brought on a new staff member, Tiffany Raszik, to work with Matt McKnight on this project. We have finished work on 11 counties to date.
- Field work projects included partnering with ASM on the field session at Port Tobacco, conducting a surface collection at Biggs Ford that helped define site limits and components, and testing at the Willin Site, 18DO1, along the scenic Marshyhope Creek.
- The Crownsville lab volunteers, under the direction of Louise Akerson, began cataloguing material from the Rosenstock site.
- Maryland Archeology Month featured St. Mary's City with its new archeology exhibit at the St. John's site.
- Grants supported archeological survey and testing on the upper Eastern Shore, Tilghman Island, the Potomac River, Bodkin Creek, western Maryland and at the extraordinary Pig Point site in Anne Arundel County.
- The underwater program reached an important milestone as it completed the ocean waters survey for the state.
- The U-1105 site became a charter member of the National System of Marine Protected Areas.

At the MAC lab

- A research database on paleobotany was posted on the web site.
- The staff designed and opened an archeological exhibit of local artifacts in Charles County.
- The staff continued to expand the popular diagnostics web site.
- The park opened the new archeology exhibit "FAQs of Archaeology" in April.
- The staff sponsored the first Discovering Archeology Day in April.

In this new year we will continue to build on the large projects under way. The Archeological Synthesis Project will move into planning for publications on Maryland archeology. The award of a National Park Service American Battlefield Protection grant will support underwater survey work on a half dozen sites in the Chesapeake and its tributaries, focusing on Revolutionary War and War of 1812 targets.

JPPM State Museum of Archaeology will be the focus of Maryland Archeology Month 2010. The lab staff also plans to mount exhibits of local artifacts in St. Mary's and Washington counties, with the eventual goal

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Upcoming events

January 6 - 9: Society for Historical Archaeology annual meeting, Amelia Island Plantation, near Jacksonville, Florida.

March: Archeology Workshop. Crownsville

April 10: Spring Symposium.

April 14 - 18: Society for American Archeology annual meeting, St. Louis.

May 24 - 28: National Park Service is sponsoring archeological workshop at the Knife River Indian Villages National Historic Site near Stanton, North Dakota. The workshop is open to all archeologists and students interested in forensic and cemetery investigations. \$475. Application forms on the Midwest Archeological Center's web page at www.nps.gov/history/mwac/ For further information, contact Steven L. DeVore at 402-437-5392, ext. 141 or steve_de_vore@nps.gov

June 12 - 20: Barton field session.

Volunteer opportunities

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

Montgomery County is offering opportunities for lab and field work Wednesdays, 9:30 to 2:30. Call 301-840-5848 or contact heather.bouslog@mncppc-mc.org. CAT opportunity.

ASM field session collection: Volunteers have finished upgrading the ASM field school collection. They will soon start work on the Rosenstock (Frederick County) plow zone material. The lab in Crownsville will be open Tuesdays from 9:30 until 4. Contact Louise Akerson at lakerson1@verizon.net or Charlie Hall chall@mdp.state.md.us.

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

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

Jefferson Patterson Park invites volunteers to take part in its various activities, including archeology, historical research and artifact conservation. Contact Ed Chaney at echaney@mdp.state.md.us or 410-586-8554.

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

CAT corner

The next offering, a **Lithic Technology Workshop**, will be Saturday, January 23. The workshop will be presented by Carol Ebright and will be held at the Oregon Ridge Nature Center, 13555 Beaver Dam Road, Cockeysville, 410 887-1815. The workshop will start at 9:30 a.m. and should end around 2:30 p.m. The workshop is fully booked, but people interested in being on the waiting list should e-mail Alex McPhail, CAT Committee Chair, at amcphail@worldbank.org, or call 202 413-7584. **For earliest notice of CAT events, it is important that Alex have your email address. If you didn't get an advance notice of this workshop, he needs your address.**

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

A website is available to candidates and graduates: <http://tech.groups.yahoo.com/group/MDcat/> . To join the group email MDcat-subscribe@yahoogroups.com

MAC Lab opens archeobotanical website

A webpage and database devoted to the climate-induced environmental changes in the Chesapeake Bay region over the last 20,000 years has been set up by the MAC Lab at Jefferson Patterson. This project uses botanical data available from archeological evidence to track how plant communities have evolved and changed.

Working with lab staff, archeobotanist Justine McKnight and Martin Gallivan, archeologist and professor of anthropology at the College of William and Mary, created a database of microscopic pollen, phytoliths, seeds, nuts and other charred plant remains from 90 archeological sites spanning 12,000 years of Maryland history.

The new webpage has a searchable online database of paleobotanical data from Maryland sites and descriptions of the 90 sites. It also includes an extensive narrative summary of environmental change in Maryland, beginning 20,000 years ago, before human settlement in the region.

"This research tool will be of great use to scholars trying to develop a context for interpreting the plant remains found on newly excavated archeological sites and will also be invaluable to researchers interested in environmental changes," said Patricia Samford, the MAC Lab director.

The site, Maryland Archeobotany, can be accessed at www.jefpat.org/archeobotany/Home.aspx. Contact Ms. Samford at psamford@mdp.state.md.us for more information.

History found under a kitchen floor

By Theresa Winslow

Condensed from the Annapolis Capital, December 6, 2009

Brian Lees and Gay Carter Lees are dealing with a lot of leftovers - and their kitchen isn't even built yet. The Kent Island couple began unearthing artifacts almost as soon as a construction company tore out their old kitchen a month ago. In the dirt under the floor were parts of old shoes, part of a pipe, bones from a wild boar and other animals, oyster shells, bells, bottles and many pieces of pottery.

For now, the artifacts, most still covered in a thin layer of dirt, are being held in bins.

The Leeses knew their home was historic, dating back to the mid-18th Century and featuring the same kind of brickwork common at London Town in Edgewater, but just how historic remains to be seen. An archeologist and a team of volunteers have begun an extensive examination of the site.

After that, the space will be sealed off and the kitchen renovation will resume. Meanwhile, experts will start to catalog the findings, date them and put the information into a database.

The hope is that some of the artifacts might be from the earliest settlements on Kent Island in the 17th Century, said archeologist Mechelle Kerns-Nocerito of Severna Park.

"There's so little known about the early history of Kent Island," said Kerns-Nocerito, who serves as president of the Anne Arundel County chapter of the Archeological Society of Maryland. "It would be awesome (to find that). That's why we do this, to find the answers."

"We're going to produce thousands of artifacts," said an excited Kerns-Nocerito, who compared the site to the cellar of Rumney's Tavern unearthed at London Town.

The Leeses moved to the home, once called Legg's Dependence, in 2001.

"If you're going to buy an old house, you should care enough to think (this is) fun," he said.

The Leeses said they knew the kitchen had to be renovated when they purchased the home and also knew they might uncover artifacts. After all, the home is on the National Register of Historic Places.

"We thought there was very little, if anything left," Gay said. "It took me days to get my jaw off the floor. We had no idea what was under there. The more we took down, the more we found."

The Leeses added that they're honored to be part of an archeological investigation and hope their involvement serves as an example to others.

"It's an honor to be surrounded by this much history," Gay said. "This is all of our history. It's wonderful to see. I hope (other people) preserve it if they have historic homes."

Md. running out of storage space

By Nancy Bromley McConaty

Condensed from Southern Maryland Newspapers, Dec. 11, 2009

Southern Maryland is steeped in history, so much so that local archeologists, curators and researchers say they are rapidly running out of room to preserve and store the millions of artifacts that have been unearthed over the last several decades.

There's no place to store or display the thousands of artifacts that archeologists are uncovering during digs in the Village of Port Tobacco. The Maryland Archaeological Conservation Laboratory in Calvert, as well as Anne Arundel Hall at St. Mary's College of Maryland, are overflowing with millions of artifacts that require the expansion of both facilities.

Local archeologists and historians insist it's a race against time to preserve, document and store these treasures for future generations to study and enjoy.

Charles County has awakened from a long sleep when it comes to archeology. The first major archeological project began a couple of years ago in Port Tobacco, a once thriving seaport town that was the county seat until the late 19th Century.

So far, about 125,000 prehistoric American Indian and Colonial artifacts, including the foundations of structures, bricks, nails, bottles, window glass, bones and fish scales have been unearthed during the project, said James Gibb of Gibb Archaeological Consulting in Annapolis. The Port Tobacco project, launched in 2007 with a \$9,270 Maryland Historical Trust grant, is sponsored by the Archeological Society of Maryland and the Society for the Restoration of Port Tobacco.

Right now, Gibb is storing the artifacts in boxes stacked in the historic Burch House in the village — not an ideal environment for fragile treasures that were buried for centuries, Gibb said.

"The artifacts don't have a home, a museum dedicated to the history and prehistory of Charles County," he said. "Artifacts are used to tell people about our history. A lot of important issues today can be discussed using parallels from the past. A museum could be very helpful in doing that."

The county has no plans to build a facility or rehabilitate a building to house the artifacts, Gibb said.

"Charles County is 50 years behind the times," he said. "It's embarrassing. I would like to see a commitment from the county to establish a Charles County museum that is professionally run and fully staffed."

But Donna Dudley, Charles County's chief of tourism, said funding for such a venture is just not available, especially during these rough economic times. "Money is always a problem," she said.

The future trend for heritage tourism is to provide history buffs with more interactive exhibits and displays rather than artifacts and documents lined up in rows behind glass, Dudley said.

"Young people learn differently now," she said. "They don't have an affinity for museums unless it's cutting edge. Kids learn fast and they're very visual. They're not going to stand still and read a sign on an exhibit. We've got to find new ways to educate people."

Dudley said displaying treasures from the past in places where the public normally goes to do business or seek entertainment is the way to teach them about local history. Currently, the county government building in La Plata has such a display that highlights artifacts found at the Moore's Lodge site near La Plata — the location of the county's first courthouse.

Gibb said the MAC lab is running out of room and an expansion of the facility is still years away. He said, "They've got to expand the facility or there will be no place to put additional artifacts."

The MAC lab, which opened in 1998 in the 560-acre Jefferson Patterson Park & Museum, stores an estimated 8 million to 10 million artifacts from 3,000 archeological sites in Maryland, said Patricia Samford, the lab's director. The lab serves as a clearinghouse for archeological collections and is used as the state facility for research, conservation and storage of artifacts, she said.

Samford said there are plans to expand. "We can count on getting about 300 boxes a year of new

artifacts," she said. "When we built the lab it had a 15-year capacity. We're going to reach that capacity by 2013."

The expansion project will add 3,100 square feet to the 38,000-square-foot lab, she said. The third floor of the building, which contains 2,500 square feet, will also be fixed up to provide more space.

"We started filling up right after we opened," said Rebecca Morehouse, the lab's curator for state collections. "Objects need to be kept in a climate-controlled environment to help slow down deterioration. ... We need to have enough space so the staff can get to the collections and enter them into a database so that researchers can use them. What's the point of digging all of this stuff up and putting it into a closet where people can't access it?"

"Archeology provides information about the kind of folks who are not mentioned in historical documents," she said, adding that written information about American Indians, African-Americans and women is in short supply. "One of the strengths of archeology is we can get to those folks. There are reasons to keep all of this stuff. We're always learning about the past."

"Archeological collections are really only as good as the records that go along with them," Morehouse said. "It's just as important to preserve paper records as it is to preserve the artifacts themselves. Those records are what really give us information about a site."

Calvert Marine Museum in Solomons is also in need of more storage space, said Stephen Godfrey, the facility's curator of paleontology. The museum, which opened in 1970, houses fossils mainly from Calvert Cliffs as well as a large collection of maritime artifacts.

"We're doing OK, but if we continue to collect at the rate that we're collecting, we'll run out of space eventually," Godfrey said. "Whenever you ask an institution if they need more space, the answer will always be yes."

Anne Arundel Hall, which contains an archeological lab in St. Mary's City — Maryland's first capital — is also cramped for space. Between 5 million and 7 million artifacts clog the facility's basement, said Silas Hurry, curator of collections and archeological lab director for the department of research and collections in the historic city.

An estimated \$33.8 million project is planned to solve the storage problem, Hurry said. He said the Maryland Heritage Project, a joint venture between St. Mary's College of Maryland and the city, includes the construction of a new visitors center and a facility that will replace Anne Arundel Hall. The facility will hold archeological curation facilities and academic space for the college's anthropology, museum studies and language and cultures programs, he said.

The lab will be connected with two college buildings on the second floor that will offer offices and classrooms, Hurry said. The three buildings will measure about 34,000 square feet.

"We definitely need more space," he said. "We're able to contain the artifacts in a good environment so far, but we keep digging up more stuff. Maintaining everything in good condition is an ongoing responsibility so that it will be there to study in the future. If we don't keep maintaining a good environment for the artifacts, we always risk the chance of losing information."

Hurry said a lack of space to store artifacts is not just a problem in Maryland.

"The collection, storage and study of artifacts [is] almost reaching a crisis situation in many states," he added. "Some states won't even accept collections because their facilities are filled up. It's a big challenge."

John K. Parlett Jr. can tell a tale or two about the difficulty of owning way too many historical artifacts. There's room to store the farm life collection at the Parlett family's 130-acre farm in New Market, but it's time to pass it along to a worthy organization or government entity to preserve and display it. So far that effort has been fruitless, he said.

"I've spend the last 14 months or so meeting and talking about it," he said. "There aren't any federal or state grants available to help someone acquire the collection and there's no private groups that can afford to purchase it. I anticipate that the collection will be dismantled and the farm will be sold."

There are at least 15,000 pieces in the collection that includes everything from dozens of vintage John Deere tractors, liquor stills and blacksmithing and tobacco production equipment to antique bathtubs, seed cleaners, tools, sleighs, sleds, buggies and horse-drawn road graders, Parlett said.

From the Trust: A look back, a look ahead

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of placing exhibits in every county in the state. And while the specific sites have yet to be determined, we expect that we will have several field and lab projects for which we will be seeking volunteers.

In reviewing the projects that are under way in Maryland, a notable element is the use of new technologies and how they are improving our ability to make much more targeted discoveries. The St. Mary's College survey of Zekiah Swamp headed up by Julie King, which our staff is collaborating on, is combining aerial photography, historical maps, reconstructed plats and archival references in a GIS system to reconstruct the landscape at different points in time.

In other projects, fine resolution magnetometry is producing incredibly detailed results, revealing features at sites without putting a shovel into the ground. These electronic signatures or targeted survey areas still need to be ground-truthed the old-fashioned way, but they are tools that have the potential to change the way we survey and test sites. The workshop in March will pick up on this theme to show some of these stunning possibilities.

Chapter notes

Anne Arundel

Meeting five times a year in February, April, June, September and November, the chapter has a new meeting location: Severna Park Branch of the Anne Arundel County Public Library, 45 McKinsey Road. 7:30 p.m. Contact Mechelle Kerns-Nocerito at AACHapASM@hotmail.com or visit the chapter website www.marylandarcheology.org/aacashome.php

Central

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

Charles County

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

Jan. 12: Peter Quantock will speak on "Clunia: Unearthing a Roman Theater in Spain."

Mid-Potomac

The chapter meets the third Thursday of the month at 7:30 p.m. at the Agricultural History Farm Park Activity Center in Derwood. Dinner at a local restaurant is at 6. Contact heather.bouslog@mncppc-mc.org, or call 301-840-5848 or Don Housley at donhou704@earthlink.net or 301-424-8526. Chapter website: www.asmmidpotomac.wordpress.com

Jan. 21: Cheryl LaRoche on using alternative resources for investigating archeological sites.

Feb. 18: Nichole Sorensen-Mutchie, from the State Highway Administration, on the archeology at a War of 1812 battlefield site in Bladensburg.

March 18: Bob Sonderman from the National Park Service will conduct a glass and bottle identification workshop from 6 to 10 p.m. Pizza and salad will be provided for dinner.

Monocacy

The chapter meets in the C. Burr Artz Library in Frederick on the second Wednesday of the month at 7 p.m. Contact Jeremy Lazelle at 301-845-9855 or jlazelle@msn.com or Nancy Geasey at 301-378-0212.

Jan. 13: TBA

Northern Chesapeake

Meetings are the second Wednesday of the month. Members and guests assemble at 6:30 p.m. for light refreshments. A business meeting at 7 is followed by the presentation at 7:30. Contact Ann Persson at 410-272-3425 or aspst20@yahoo.com Website: <http://sites.google.com/site/northernchesapeake>

Jan. 13: Richard Hughes on heritage areas, at the Historical Society of Harford County.

Feb. 10: Speaker TBA, subject biblical archeology, at the Jewish Center in Havre de Grace.

March 10: John Seidel with an Eastern Shore prehistoric survey, at the Perryville Library.

April 16: Tim Riordan will deliver the Paul Cresthull Memorial Lecture on the St. Mary's City chapel and cemetery, at Harford Community College.

Upper Patuxent

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

Jan. 11: Steve Israel, "Report on the Rockdale Road Rockshelter: A Late Woodland Campsite."

March 8: Laura Cripps, "Report on Bibracte, a Romano-Celtic Temple Site in France " (excavated in 2009).

May 17: "The Brown's of Mt. Pleasant : 307 Years of Ownership in Howard County " or the 3rd Annual J. Alfred Prufrock History/Archaeology Team Competition Game."

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>

Jan. 22: Show & Tell. Visitors are requested to bring items such as artifacts and books for display and discussion.

Feb. 26: James Hoey on "Early Settlers and History of the North Branch Potomac River."

March 26: Marilyn Moors on "People of the Longhouse: Settlement Patterns, Lifestyles and Social Structure, Then and Now."

April 23: George Evans on "Volunteering at the Jamestown Excavation."

May 28: Robert Wall on "The Barton Site 2009 and 2010."

June 12-20: Barton field session.

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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.

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