



# ASM Ink

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Newsletter of the Archeological Society of Maryland, Inc.

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

## Meeting to look at war over centuries

"Three Centuries of Conflict: The Archeology of War" is the theme of this year's Spring Symposium, to be held Saturday, April 21 in Crownsville.

In this bicentennial year, it is appropriate that the first speaker will talk about Maryland's role in the War of 1812. Ralph Eshelman will look at some of the archeological sites in the state associated with that conflict. Eshelman directs a CRM firm and was a founding director of the Calvert Marine Museum in Solomons.

Also dealing with that conflict will be Alexis Catsambis of the Navy Historical Center. The underwater archeologist will talk about the attempt to excavate Commodore Joshua Barney's USS Scorpion in the Patuxent River. The project is a joint enterprise of the Navy, the Maryland Historical Trust and the State Highway Administration.

The final morning speaker will be Michael Raphael, president of Direct Dimensions Inc., who will tell how his company uses 3D technology to aid in the quest for archeological information.

Not all conflicts revolve around war. University of Maryland student Michael Roller will look at the archeological evidence regarding the 1897 strike of mostly immigrant coal miners in Lattimore, Pa. Violence ensued and 19 people were killed before it ended.

Jumping back another 140 years to 1757, the siege and massacre at Fort William Henry figured large in the French and Indian War. The dramatic story gained a wide audience with "The Last of the Mohicans." Speaker David Starbuck, an archeologist at New Hampshire's Plymouth State University who specialties include military excavations, has written a book on the site.

Noel Broadbent of the Smithsonian will bring the subject back to Joshua Barney, but this time the commodore's exploits on land after his flotilla was scuttled. Broadbent will tell about the attempts to establish where the positions of Barney's artillery were at the Battle of Bladensburg.

From the War of 1812, the subject then moves to World War II. Matt Virga of the National Park Service will look at a top-secret intelligence operation for interrogating German prisoners at Fort Hunt, Va., just south of the Washington Beltway near Mt. Vernon.

Opening remarks begin at 9, with the speakers starting at 9:30. The cafeteria will be open for lunch. Cost for ASM members is \$5, for nonmembers \$7. The complete program is attached to this newsletter.

More than 100 people attended the annual Workshop March 10. Barbara Israel received her CAT certificate, becoming the 12<sup>th</sup> candidate to complete the program.

**Field session coming up May 25 – June 4**

Join in the dig at Elk Landing. Application form available at the ASM website

## Upcoming events

### APRIL IS MARYLAND ARCHEOLOGY MONTHS; EVENTS THROUGHOUT THE STATE

**March 31:** Symposium: Archeology of the Civil War. 8:30 - 3:30. James Lee Center Monroe Gymnasium, 2855 Annandale Road, Fall Church, Va.

**April 21:** ASM Spring Symposium, Crownsville.

**April 18-22:** Society for American Archaeology annual meeting. Memphis. <http://www.saa.org>

**May 25 - June 4:** ASM annual field session, Elk Landing.

**October 20:** ASM annual meeting. United Methodist Church, LaPlata.

## Volunteer opportunities

The following volunteer opportunities are open to CAT 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](mailto:heather.bouslog@mncppc-mc.org). CAT opportunity.

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

**The Lost Towns Project** of Anne Arundel County welcomes volunteers for its prolific Pig Point prehistoric site. Fridays. Call Jessie Grow 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](mailto: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/](http://www.archaeological.org/fieldwork/) to get started. Remember to add the extra A in archaeological.

## CAT corner

No new workshops scheduled. For information on the CAT program, and updates, visit the ASM website.



# Delmarva or Berengia? Who's on first?

By Brian Vastag

*Condensed from the Washington Post, February 29, 2012*

When the crew of the Virginia scallop trawler Cinmar hauled a mastodon tusk onto the deck in 1970, another oddity dropped out of the net: a dark, tapered stone blade, nearly eight inches long and still sharp.

Forty years later, this rediscovered prehistoric slasher has reopened debate on a radical theory about who the first Americans were and when they got here.

Archeologists have long held that North America remained unpopulated until about 15,000 years ago, when Siberian people walked or boated into Alaska and then moved down the West Coast.

But the mastodon relic found near the mouth of the Chesapeake Bay turned out to be 22,000 years old, suggesting that the blade was just as ancient.

Whoever fashioned that blade was not supposed to be here.

Its makers probably paddled from Europe and arrived in America thousands of years ahead of the western migration, making them the first Americans, argues Smithsonian Institution anthropologist Dennis Stanford.

"I think it's feasible," said Tom Dillehay, a prominent archeologist at Vanderbilt University. "The evidence is building up, and it certainly warrants discussion."

At the height of the last ice age, Stanford says, mysterious Stone Age European people known as the Solutreans paddled along an ice cap jutting into the North Atlantic. They lived like Inuits, harvesting seals and seabirds.

The Solutreans eventually spread across North America, Stanford says, hauling their distinctive blades with them and giving birth to the later Clovis culture, which emerged some 13,000 years ago.

When Stanford proposed this "Solutrean hypothesis" in 1999, colleagues roundly rejected it. One prominent archeologist suggested that Stanford was throwing his career away.

But now, 13 years later, Stanford and Bruce Bradley, an archeologist at England's University of Exeter, lay out a detailed case — bolstered by the curious blade and other stone tools recently found in the mid-Atlantic — in a new book, "Across Atlantic Ice."

"I drank the Solutrean Kool-Aid," said Steve Black, an archeologist at Texas State University in San Marcos. "I had been very dubious. It's something a lot of [archeologists] have dismissed out of hand. But I came away from the book feeling like it's an extremely credible idea that needs to be taken seriously."

Other experts remain unconvinced. "Anyone advancing a radically different hypothesis must be willing to take his licks from skeptics," said Gary Haynes, an archeologist at the University of Nevada-Reno.

At the core of Stanford's case are stone tools recovered from five mid-Atlantic sites. Two sites lie on Chesapeake Bay islands, suggesting that the Solutreans settled Delmarva early on. Smithsonian research associate Darrin Lowery found blades, anvils and other tools found stuck in soil at least 20,000 years old.

Displaying the tools in his office at the National Museum of Natural History, Stanford handles a milky chert blade and says, "This stuff is beginning to give us a real nice picture of occupation of the Eastern Shore around 20,000 years ago."

Further, the Eastern Shore blades strongly resemble those found at dozens of Solutrean sites from the Stone Age in Spain and France, Stanford says. "We can match each one of 18 styles up to the sites in Europe."

In 2007, Lowery, who also teaches at the University of Delaware, was hired by a landowner to survey property on Tilghman Island, at a place called Miles Point. Almost immediately, Lowery saw a chunk of quartzite jutting out of a shore bank. It was an anvil, heavily marked from repeated beatings, a clear sign that it was used to make stone tools. Lowery dated the soil layer holding the anvil and other stone tools with two methods, radiocarbon dating and a newer technique, optical stimulated luminescence. Both returned an age of at least 21,000 years.

"We were like, geez . . . what the hell is going on here?" Lowery said.

Another site, 10 miles south, Oyster Cove, yielded more Stone Age artifacts. Those too, came out of soil more than 21,000 years old.

**Continued on next page**

Lowery published the finds in 2010 in *Quaternary Science Reviews*, but the report made nary a ripple in the conservative world of archeology, where new ideas tend to progress at a glacial pace. "People are going to think we've clearly gone off our rocker here," Lowery remembers musing.

One problem: The ancient dates came from the soil, not the artifacts themselves.

"It's an indirect date," Dillehay said. "You need a feature like a hearth or something that's clearly human. But it's still suggestive."

In 2008, Lowery toured a tiny museum on Gwynn's Island, Va., at the southern end of the Chesapeake. He asked the curator if the museum had any stone tools. They did: The eight-inch blade, displayed next to a bit of mastodon tusk and a molar, recovered by the Cinmar.

Lowery immediately called Stanford. "He got real excited," Lowery said.

Lowery also contacted the Cinmar's captain, Thurston Shawn. The tusk and blade were so unusual that Shawn had made a point of marking the spot on his charts. It was 60 miles east of the Virginia cape, in 240 feet of water. At the end of the last ice age, when the oceans were low, that spot was land, on the coast.

Stanford carbon-dated the mastodon to 22,760 years old. He and Bradley — two of the world's foremost stone tool experts — also scrutinized the blade. It had not been smoothed by wave action or tumbling. They concluded the blade had not been pushed out to sea but had been buried where the Cinmar found it.

"My guess is the blade was used to butcher the mastodon," Stanford said. "I'm almost positive."

But some question the meaning of the find.

"I'm not going to hang a completely novel interpretation of the peopling of the Americas from something dredged off the sea bottom 40 years ago and not properly documented," said David Meltzer, an archeologist at Southern Methodist University.

Stone tools recovered from two other mid-Atlantic sites — Cactus Hills, Va., 45 miles south of Richmond, and Meadowcroft Rockshelter, in southern Pennsylvania — date to at least 16,000 years ago. Those tools, too, strongly resemble blades found in Europe.

Little is known about the Solutrean people. They lived in Spain, Portugal and southern France beginning about 25,000 years ago. No skeletons have been found, so no DNA is available to study.

But the Solutreans did leave behind rock art, which showed a diamond-shaped flat fish in delicate black etchings. It looks like a halibut. A seal also appears, an arrow-headed line stabbing through it.

Stanford contends that the art proves that the Solutreans built boats — halibut are deep-sea fish — and knew how to survive at the edge of an ice cap that drooped deep into Europe.

"The reason people don't like the Solutrean idea is the ocean," he said. No Solutrean boats have been found. But given that people arrived in Australia some 60,000 years ago — and they didn't walk there — wood-frame and seal-skin boats were clearly possible, Stanford argues.

His idea faces another challenge: At the end of the last ice age, the polar ice cap may not have extended all the way across the Atlantic, leaving iceberg-strewn gaps of open water for the Solutreans to navigate as they headed West for unknown reasons.

Meltzer is among those still skeptical of the Solutrean hypothesis, citing the scant evidence. "If Solutrean boat people washed up on our shores, they suffered cultural amnesia, genetic amnesia, dental amnesia, linguistic amnesia and skeletal amnesia. Basically, all of the signals are pointing to Asia" as the origin of the first Americans.

However, Stanford acknowledges that his evidence is scant. He calls the Solutrean hypothesis "a skeletal idea." And he worries that a rising sea might have washed away compelling evidence.

Later this spring, Stanford plans to take a boat to the Cinmar site, where he will dredge for more clues to an ice-age journey that just might have been the first voyage to America.

# Two new TV series 'glorify looting'

By Keith Kloor

*Condensed from ScienceInsider, March 1, 2012*

Archeologists are mounting a campaign against two new cable TV shows that they say encourage and glamorize looting of American archeological sites.

On 20 March, Spike TV will premiere a new show called *American Digger*, while a show called *Diggers* on the National Geographic Channel made its debut 28 February. Both shows "promote and glorify the looting and destruction of archaeological sites," Society for American Archaeology President William F. Limp wrote in a message posted this week to the SAA listserv.

The premise of *American Digger*, which is being hosted by a former professional wrestler, was laid out in a recent announcement by Spike TV. A team of "diggers" will "scour target-rich areas, such as battlefields and historic sites, in hopes of striking it rich by unearthing and selling rare pieces of American history." Similar locales are featured in National Geographic's *Diggers*. In the second episode, set in South Carolina, Revolutionary War and War of 1812 buttons, bullets and coins were recovered at a former plantation.

After viewing the first two episodes of *Diggers*, Iowa's State archeologist John Doershuk posted a review to the American Cultural Resources Association listserv, in which he lamented: "The most damaging thing, I think, about this show is that no effort was made to document where anything came from or discussion of associations—each discovered item was handled piecemeal."

"It was ironic that they [the diggers] are destroying the entire basis of what they're interested in," Doershuk told *ScienceInsider* by phone. "These are nonrenewable sources."

In addition to Facebook petitions, professional societies such as SAA have sent letters of condemnation to Spike TV and National Geographic. (Copies of the SAA letters are on its Web site.) Limp said Tuesday on the SAA listserv that Spike TV had not yet responded to its concerns. He wrote that National Geographic indicated that it would place a disclaimer into its show that affirms there are laws in place protecting archeological and historic sites.

Despite the treasure-hunting theme of both shows, neither appears to be violating federal and state regulations against unlawful obtainment of antiquities. The on-air fortune seekers are not venturing into national parks or other federal lands, but dig on private property. If property owners sign off, then it is legal - landowners can do whatever they choose with artifacts found on their land.

That's the argument Shana Tepper, spokesperson for Spike TV, made to *ScienceInsider*. "Our show is shot on private property," she said. "They're getting artifacts that are otherwise rotting in the ground."

But archeologists remain concerned. "These programs encourage looting," University of Colorado, Boulder, archeologist Steve Lekson wrote in an e-mail to *ScienceInsider*. National Geographic's imprimatur also rankles some. "Its reputation as a credible scientific and educational institution" effectively "normalizes" the looting aspect of its show, says Washington State University archeologist William Lipe.

Lekson bemoans the yawning gap between the scientific approach to archeology and the popular notion that the discipline is basically organized treasure hunting.

"Two hundred years ago, archeology was a treasure hunt—finding fabulous things for museum collections," says Lekson. "But we learned long ago that archeological sites were really books to be read, pages of history. We can learn a great deal about pasts we would otherwise never know, by studying sites themselves and artifacts (simple or spectacular) in their original contexts at sites. When treasure hunters loot sites, ripping artifacts out of the ground, we lose any chance of understanding context—what was with what, its date, how it was used, what it can tell us about history—all so somebody can have a trinket on their mantelpiece."

## Needed: Candidates for ASM election

Don't look now but it is election time for ASM. Do you want to influence ASM policy or become more active in the organization? All offices are up for grabs. Voting will take place during the summer and the new officers will be announced and take office at the Annual Meeting in LaPlata October 20.

The offices are president, vice president, secretary, membership secretary, treasurer and six at-large Board of Trustee positions.

Don't be shy and don't delay. If you are interested, or know someone who is interested and would be good for the Society, send the name, and office, to the Nominations Committee, 6817 Pineway, University Park, MD 20782 or [myronbeck@verizon.net](mailto:myronbeck@verizon.net)

PS: You will not have to participate in any televised debates.

## Chapter notes

### Anne Arundel

Meets five times a year in February, April, June, September and November at the home of Pat and Stephen Hittle, 102 Evon Court, Severna Park. 7:30 p.m. Contact Mechelle Kerns at [AACHapASM@hotmail.com](mailto:AACHapASM@hotmail.com) or the chapter website [www.marylandarcheology.org/aacashome.php](http://www.marylandarcheology.org/aacashome.php) NOTE NEW LOCATION.

**April 17:** Carol Cowherd, president of Charles County Archeological Society, will speak on "Port Tobacco in the Eighteenth Century: Using Land Records and Plats to Look for the Original 1729 Layout of the town." RSVP to Conrad Bladey at [cbladey@verizon.net](mailto:cbladey@verizon.net)

**June 19:** Patricia Samford and Ed Cheney of the MHT will speak on "Archaeological and Slave Demographics in the Colonial Chesapeake."

### Central Maryland

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](mailto:ssisrael@verizon.net)

### Charles County

Meetings are held 7 on the second Thursday (September-May) in the community room of the LaPlata Police Department. Contact President Carol Cowherd at [cowherdcl@gmail.com](mailto:cowherdcl@gmail.com) or 301-375-9489. Chapter website is [charlescoasm.org](http://charlescoasm.org) and its blog is [ccarchsoc.blogspot.com](http://ccarchsoc.blogspot.com) NOTE NEW MEETING DAY AND LOCATION.

**April 12:** Scott Lawrence of Grave Concerns on "The Search for Newtowne Chapel, a 17<sup>th</sup> Century Jesuit Chapel in the cemetery of St Francis Xavier Church in Newtown, St Mary's County."

**May 10:** Tim Thoman, Manager of Indian village at Jefferson Patterson Park and Museum, will conduct a flint knapping demonstration.

### Mid-Potomac

The chapter meets the third Thursday of the month at 7:30 p.m. Dinner at a local restaurant at 5:45 p.m. Contact [heather.bouslog@mncppc-mc.org](mailto:heather.bouslog@mncppc-mc.org) or call 301-840-5848 or Don Housley at [donhou704@earthlink.net](mailto:donhou704@earthlink.net) or 301-424-8526. Chapter website: <http://www.asmmidpotomac.org> Email: [asmmidpotomac@gmail.com](mailto:asmmidpotomac@gmail.com) Facebook page: <http://www.facebook.com/pages/Mid-Potomac-Archaeology/182856471768>

**April 19:** Meeting at Needwood Mansion. Cindy Pfanstiehl, professor at Montgomery College-Rockville, will speak on her development and use of a prehistoric predictive model for Little Bennett Regional Park and its implications for use on other parks.

**May 17:** Meeting at Needwood Mansion. Lynne Bulhack, chapter member and noted prehistoric ceramic expert, will conduct a prehistoric ceramic workshop beginning at 6 p.m. Bring your own dinner or \$5 for pizza and salad dinner. NOTE EARLY START.

**June:** Chapter meeting and annual picnic at Needwood. Date to be determined.

## 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](http://digfrederick.com) or contact Nancy Geasey at 301-378-0212.

## 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](mailto:dancoates@comcast.net) Website: <http://sites.google.com/site/northernchesapeake>

**April 13:** Al Luckenback, Excavations at Pig Point. Annual Maryland Archeology Month Cresthull Lecture. Edgewood Hall, HCC

**May 27:** Annual Members and Guest Picnic, Hollingsworth House, Elk Landing

## Upper Patuxent

Programs are the second Monday of the month at 7:30 p.m. at Mt. Ida in Ellicott City. Potluck suppers are held at 6:15 in September and March. Otherwise, dinner is available at the Diamondback in Ellicott City at 6 p.m. Contact Lee Preston at 443-745-1202 or [leeprestonjr@comcast.net](mailto:leeprestonjr@comcast.net)

**April 9:** Lousie Akerson on "Late Eighteenth/early Nineteenth Century Ceramics." A workshop on the difference between porcelain, stoneware and redware, and some of the common decorations found on late 18th/early 19th Century ceramics. Visuals will include slides and reproduction ceramics.

**May 14:** Kathie Fernstrom on a subject TBD.

**June 11:** End of year potluck.

## 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](mailto:wmdasm@yahoo.com) Website: <http://sites.google.com/site/wmdasm>

**April 27:** Stephen R. Potter will give a report on the 2008 to 2010 archeological survey of the C&O Canal from Hancock to Cumberland.

**June 16:** Bob Wall will talk about the excavations of the 2011 ASM Field Session at the Barton Site and the plans for the upcoming June field session.

**June 14-16 and 22-24:** Barton field session.



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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 Belinda Urquiza for membership rates. For publication sales, contact Dan Coates at ASM Publications, 716 Country Club Rd., Havre de Grace, MD 21078-2104 or 410-273-9619 or [dancoates@comcast.net](mailto:dancoates@comcast.net)

**Submissions welcome.** Please send to Myron Beckenstein, 6817 Pineway, University Park, MD. 20782, 301-864-5289 or [myronbeck@verizon.net](mailto:myronbeck@verizon.net)

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