ASM Ink

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Newsletter of the Archeological Society of Maryland, Inc.

www.marylandarcheology.org

It's a busy October for ASM this year 1. Field school runs October 9 - 20

By Jim Gibb

Principle Investigator

The Smithsonian Environmental Research Center (SERC) is hosting the second annual Fall Classic field school in archeology, again at its Edgewater, Anne Arundel County, campus, October 9 through 20

This year we have three sites to which we have turned our attention. On the east side of the Java House (1747) ruin, just a couple of hundred feet from Sparrow's Rest, Laura Cripps identified a foundation with a magnetometer. It does not align with the 18th Century ruin and we are trying to determine if it represents an occupation between that of the Sparrows family in the 17th Century and Nicholas Macubbin in the mid-18th Century.

We also will conduct small-scale testing at a possible 18th Century slave site down the hill from the Java ruin and at a Woodland shell midden that magnetometry suggests has some interesting features. All three sites have great views of the Rhode River and surrounding countryside.

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2. Annual Meeting on October 24

ASM's annual meeting will be held Saturday, October 24, at the Oregon Ridge Nature Center in Baltimore County. Welcoming remarks begin at 9, the business meeting at 9:15 and the talks at 10:40.

The highlight of the business meeting is the presentation of the Society's highest honor, the William B. Marye Award for outstanding contributions to Maryland archeology.

The program begin with Stephanie Sperling of Anne Arundel's Lost Towns Project talking about the threat sea-level rise and coastal erosion pose to the archeological heritage. The county has hundreds of sites along its 500 miles of shoreline that are potentially threatened. She will tell what plans are under way for trying to deal with the situation.

Another Lost Towns associate, Erin Edwards, will talk about what can be learned about the dental health of the residents of the Pig Point Site from remains found there and looking for reasons for differences that showed up.

Bill Dickinson Jr. will lead off the after-lunch portion of the program with a primer on basic GIS technologies and how they can help archeologists. He will be followed by Charlie Hall and Becca

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Inside: Becca aids major South Africa find. Page 3

Upcoming events

October 9 - 19: Fall field school. Smithsonian Environmental Research Center, Edgewater.

October 10: Nanticoke River Jamboree. Dorchester County, northeast of Vienna on Indiantown Road. For details nanticokeriverjamboree.com

October 24: Annual meeting, Oregon Ridge Nature Center, 9 a.m.

October 31: Natural History Society of Maryland book sale. 6908 Belair Road, Baltimore. Books, journals, etc. from 1800s onward. Bargain prices for most items. 10 - 1, general sale; 2 - 3, pay by the box.

December 5: ASM board meeting. Heritage House, Ellicott City. 10 a.m. All members welcome.

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 and is now sorting, labeling, packaging and cataloging prehistoric material from the Willin Site. There are a number of other projects waiting to be worked on. Contact Louis 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 <u>jamesggibb@verizon.net</u> and Laura Cripps <u>lcripps@howardcc.edu</u> 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 jamesqqibb@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 30 1 563 7531 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.

 ${\rm CAT\ corner}$: One or more workshops will be offered at the Fall Classic Field School in Edgewater this month. Historic ceramics is one. Contact Jim Gibb to tell him what others might be of interest.

For more information on the CAT program, visit the ASM website.

ASM member helps find new species

By Becca Peixotto

If you were at Biggs Ford in the last two years, where I was working as lab director, you probably heard me mention the dig in South Africa. Now that the discovery has been made public, I can finally share details

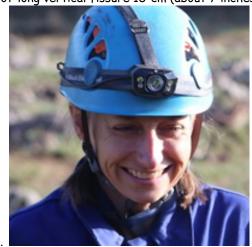
In November 2013 and March 2014, I traveled to the Cradle of Humankind World Heritage Site near Johannesburg, South Africa, with a National Geographic team to excavate fossils deep in a cave called Rising Star. The beautiful cave is named after the starburst-looking calcite formations covering the ceiling of one chamber. Past the dusty, rubble-strewn entrance, amazing speleothems-stalactites and stalagmites, soda straws, etc.- are in almost every chamber.

Getting into the cave was tricky. After a ladder, a belly crawl, a climb up a step fin of rock and a large step over an abyss, we descended through a 36-foot-long vertical fissure 18-cm (about 7 inches)

wide and lined with jagged teeth of rock. In the Dinaledi ("of the stars" in the local Sesotho language) chamber, we expected to find a few bones from a known species of early human ancestor.

What we encountered was mind-blowing: thousands of fossils representing at least 15 individuals from an unknown species.

It was clear within the first few days we were dealing with something extraordinary. One of my most memorable experiences came while uncovering a nearly complete articulated hand. As it came into focus bone by bone, we could see part of how this creature interacted with the environment. I say "we" because the



whole expedition was truly a collaborative effort, in the cave and on the surface.

Excavating hominid fossils in a dark cave chamber 100 feet below the surface of the earth is a far cry from the comfort and sunshine of working in the field at Biggs Ford: Easy access to a porta-loo and the option to stand up straight at any moment are distinct advantages of Biggs Ford.

The principles of archeological fieldwork hold just as true in both places. Careful excavation (we used toothpicks instead of trowels), detailed documentation (a 3D scanner supplemented hand-drawn maps), communication of ideas and information (via an intercom to the surface) and dedicated volunteers and professionals working together for a common purpose are the keys to uncovering our distant (and more recent) history.

The Cradle of Humankind includes famous fossil sites like Sterkfontein (home of "Mrs. Ples" and "Little Foot," Australopithecus africanus), Malapa (A. sediba) an Svartkrans (Homo habilis) not far from the Rising Star site.

Even in such a rich fossil region, the Homo naledi find is huge. The University of Witwatersrand, which curates the fossils had to build a bigger vault to just accommodate its existing collection and the 1,500-plus fossils we excavated from the Rising Star cave.

More than 50 scientists from around the world analyzed the fossils, comparing them with other known species. Homo naledi has a mosaic of traits resembling both Australopithecines and early Homo. H. naledi's feet are virtually indistinguishable from our own. Their wrist bones indicate possible tool use but the curved fingers suggest they were also good climbers. The core of naledi - shoulders and torso, for example --- are more australopith-like.

H. naledi has been difficult to date because it was found in unconsolidated soil (instead of encased in rock as one might expect) and no fossils from other animals have been found in the same chamber.

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A number of dating methods (and DNA analysis) will be tried as the study continues.

The lack of other animals in the Dinaledi chamber raises important questions. Geologic and taphonomic evidence both support the hypothesis that H. naledi deliberately disposed of the bodies. We do not say they "buried" them because we don't know why the bodies were put there.

The original articles, data and 3D images of the fossils are available online for free from <u>elifesciences.orq</u> and <u>morphosource.orq</u> (search for "Homo naledi").

or ...15 die as rescue effort comes a wee bit too late

Condensed from The Onion, September 10, 2015

JOHANNESBURG-Lamenting that there was nothing they could possibly do, tearful anthropologists announced at a press conference that they had discovered the bodies of 15 deceased human ancestors 100,000 years too late.

"Not too long ago, these early people were alive and going about their normal daily lives, but sadly, by the time we scaled down the narrow 90-meter chute leading into the cave, they'd already been dead for at least 10,000 decades," said visibly upset University of the Witwatersrand paleoanthropologist Lee R. Berger, bemoaning the fact that they could have saved the group of human predecessors if they had just reached the Rising Star cave system during the Pleistocene epoch.

"We briefly considered resuscitation when we found their bodies, but after a cursory examination we knew that they were already gone. If we found them a hundred millennia sooner, this tragedy might have been prevented."

At press time, Berger reportedly slammed his fist on the lectern and began to sob.

Archeologist finds her own family's past

By Moriah Balingit

Condensed from the Washington Post, September 26, 2015

Michelle Taylor has had a peculiar fascination with dead people for most of her life. As a young girl, she wanted to be a mortician. The obsession ultimately turned from the recently dead to the long dead and a fixation with her own family's genealogy. She began tracing her family's roots from Detroit, where she grew up, to Henderson, Ky., where her slave ancestors worked on a plantation and where her great-grandmother was born.

But the anthropology student's move to Virginia Commonwealth University put her closer to her own roots than she could have imagined. Taylor found herself inside the home of a distant ancestor, George Gilmore, who had been enslaved by James Madison at Montpelier.

"I knew after that, archeology and anthropology was what I needed to do," said Taylor, a 24-year-old resent graduate of VCU.

At the Montpelier Foundation, which manages the Madison home and surrounding property, leaders want to make the legacy of the region's African Americans prominent. Gilmore's restored cabin is an important centerpiece of the initiative, but work also is underway to reconstruct slave quarters.

"They had their own independent economy and, in many ways, this is what allowed them to survive after slavery," said Matthew Reeves, Montpelier's director of archeology.

Bringing descendants to the site and asking for their input has been a critical part of the effort. The organization also has assembled groups of descendants to help unearth artifacts there.

"Her story helps inform the interpretation of that site. It makes people realize that the past is still alive for people," said Bernard Means, an archeologist who taught Taylor. "There has been a shift at a lot of these sites to focus more on what are sometimes known as sort of the hidden history - the invisible people who don't make it into the history books."

"It was a great experience," Taylor said. "I was very happy knowing that an ancestor of mine was responsible for building this home for his family."

October dig choice: 2 historic sites, 1 pre

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Last year, participants exposed and sampled a 1660s-1670s trash midden that remains intact below plowed soils at the Shaw's Folly site, recovering lots of animal bones, marked window leads (or cames) dated 1671, a Spanish maravedí (a small denomination copper coin minted for use in the New World), tin-glazed earthenware that probably derives from the Mediterranean region, pieces of what appears to have been a vesicular basalt quern for grinding corn and a bone handle with *Thos. Sparows* inscribed upon it. Thomas Sparrow patented Sparrow's Rest, just east of Shaw's Folly, in the 1660s.

SERC citizen scientists Sarah Grady, George Riseling, and Kiley Gilbert have presented some of the results of that work at regional and national conferences, and Sarah is completing the technical report.

Field days run from 8:30 to 4 with a lunch break around noon. The lab will run all day every day. Workshops will be offered on the weekends for CAT candidates and others. One is on historic ceramics, the others are to be decided depending on interest and lecturer availability.

Both historic sites are in open fields and accessible by automobile; the aboriginal site is in a wooded area already largely cleared and just a short walk down a path from the education center. Sturdy footwear and clothes are recommended. Sanitary facilities are available at the lab and at the education center, minutes from each of the sites.

We have dormitory space available for five people, double-occupancy, at \$30/day or \$145 for a week. The dormitory has a large, fully equipped kitchen that opens onto a public space with free WiFi and television. Canoes and kayaks are freely available. Security guards are on duty at all times. Grocery stores, restaurants and other commercial establishments are a 10-minute drive from the campus.

The national board of trustees for the Smithsonian Institution will join us on the last day of the field school, so here's a chance to rub elbows with the folks who guide our nation's preeminent research and educational institution.

Contact Jim Gibb at 443-482-9593 or <u>JamesGGibb@verizon.net</u> with questions and for instructions on reserving dormitory space. Advance registration is open – a form with this newsletter and on the ASM website lists the cost. Walk-ins also are welcome, but we prefer prior notice of participation to insure maximum efficiency.

Variety of speakers set for Annual Meeting

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Peixotto who will update the results of the ASM field sessions at Biggs Ford.

Next, Jeanne Ward will look at the multi-faceted Concord historic site in Prince George's County. The property's 30 acres contain a manor house, family cemetery, agricultural outbuildings and two collapsed tenant cabins.

Some interesting features have been found through remote sensing at another Prince George's site, the Compton Bassett plantation in Upper Marlboro. Representatives of the Ottery Group will detail what has been learned.

The final presentation will be by Stephen Israel and Wayne Clark. The work at the Kirby Farm Site in the Piedmont showed what can be learned from smaller sites to fill out the big picture.

Admission is \$5 for ASM members, \$7 for nonmembers. A list of area restaurants will be available at the registration table.

Details emerge of old Shore shipwreck

By Julie Zauzmer

Condensed from the Washington Post, September 7, 2015

The wooden ship was built in Maryland before the American Revolution. It ended its life as a carrier of tobacco and foodstuffs on the Eastern Shore before the 19th Century. When it went under - possibly as a result of poor construction, possibly of battle - it sank to the bottom of the Nanticoke River. And then this spring, when no one expected it, it rose again recovered from the watery depths during the most prosaic of projects - a highway repair.

"The ocean, the bay, the rivers: You're so used to them taking people. They take ships. They take things. And then the time when all of a sudden, 200-something years later, all of a sudden it gives you something back," marveled Julie Schablitsky, chief archeologist for the Maryland State Highway Administration. "Shipwrecks, they're very romantic."

Schablitsky said the shipwreck was found when a highway repair crew was at work on what seemed to be an ordinary project. It happened near the Route 50 bridge, midway between Cambridge and Salisbury. After a barge crashed into a protective barrier, a crew went out on a boat to pull up pieces of the barrier that had been damaged.

But some of the wood that they dragged from the water in April seemed much older. The key clue: The logs were held together with wooden pegs. No one has used wooden pegs for well over a century.

That's when the crew members called Schablitsky. Her job often entails making sure highway crews don't pave over historically significant ground, or evaluating what they've uncovered if they do dig up artifacts while laying down roads.

"We hardly have the chance to do underwater sites," Schablitsky said.

Now she is working of a digital reconstruction that will let the public see the ship, both as it would have appeared before sinking and as it was found.

This shipwreck did not look like a movie-set image, a ghostly ship still holding its shape under the clear blue sea. First of all, the river bottom is dank: 30-feeet deep, low in oxygen, clouded by muddy sediment stirred up by the fast-moving current. No one saw this shipwreck. They brought it up piece by piece, by feel, with a crane.

Second, the boat probably did not retain its shape. Schablitsky said its top parts may have been swept away by the current soon after it sank. The rest may have survived by splaying out, its sides flattening into the mud.

"As an archeologist ... we see the shipwreck in our mind," she said. "We look at it, and we see the keel and where the planks would have gone, and it starts taking shape."

The highway crew kept the logs wet with hoses and a lawn sprinkler. "As soon as it hits air, it's going to start deteriorating," she said. "Once it dries out, it falls apart and you're left with toothpicks."

Spared from that fate, the ship traveled with Schablitsky to a Calvert County lab.

The research that Schablitsky and her co-workers have done indicates that less than half of the ship was recovered. It was 40 to 45 feet long, she said, and was meant to travel on the Bay, not on the ocean. The ship probably carried products from local plantations to ports and warehouses.

The archeologists speculate that the ship was built at a small local facility, not a major shipyard, because they can see some elementary mistakes in construction. An extra hole drilled in a log, a missing fastener that should have tightened the keel.

Most evocative of all are the logs themselves. Scientists can date and locate trees with remarkable precision. The pattern in the rings of the oaks that became the ship say they were chopped down in 1743, somewhere in Maryland between the Potomac River and Annapolis.

Schablitsky said it is clear that it went down before 1800. It may have been purposely scuttled because it was no longer seaworthy. But it may have met a more dramatic end. Documents from the time tell of a Revolutionary War skirmish in the town of Vienna, Md. - where the wreck was found - in which British sympathizers shelled the town and sank several boats.

The logs from the wreck were scorched, as if they had been burned just before sinking.

Was Stonehenge just a little cousin?

Condensed, September 7, 2015

LONDON (AP) — Researchers have discovered evidence of standing stones believed to be the remnants of a major prehistoric stone monument near the Stonehenge ruins.

University of Bradford researchers said Monday the monument is thought to have been built around 4,500 years ago.

The Stonehenge Hidden Landscapes Project used remote sensing technologies to discover evidence that up to 100 stones formed the monument about 2 miles from Stonehenge.

The evidence was found beneath three feet of earth near the Durrington Walls. No excavation was needed during the investigation and none of the stones have been uncovered and removed.

Some of the stones are thought to have stood 15 feet tall before they were toppled. Researcher Vince Gaffney said the immense scale of the monument is unique.

50 early medieval skeletons found at Westminster Abbey

Condensed from the Toronto Sun, September 23, 2015

Construction crews who demolished a washroom block at Westminster Abbey to make way for a new tower uncovered about 50 skeletons buried under Victorian drainage pipes.

Archeologists believe the skeletons date back to the 11th Century — a time of great intrigue and mystery in the landmark's history. (The Norman invasion of England came in mid-century, 1066.)

The remains include those of a three-year-old.

"What the child is doing there is one of the many unanswered questions," abbey archeologist Warwick Rodwell told The Guardian, "but it is a feature of many ecclesiastical sites that you find the remains of women and children in places where you might not quite expect them."

The child appears to be someone of status, since he or she was buried in a wooden coffin, unlike some of the monks buried nearby, The Guardian reports.

The remains also reportedly include those of a man buried in a fancy stone coffin whose skull seems to have been stolen by Victorian workmen.

The archeologist leading the project told the newspaper the bodies were likely moved and reburied with stone as construction fill when Henry III demolished Edward the Confessor's church and built his own in the 13th Century.

Victorian workers would have disturbed the remains further during restoration work, including installing the drainage pipes.

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. This year the 3-year-old Huntingtown club is focusing on working with the MAC Lab to curate artifacts found in Baltimore's Otterbein area.

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 <u>AAChapASM@hotmail.com</u> or the chapter website http://www.aachapasm.org/calendar.html

Central Maryland

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

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

October 8: Kirsti Uunila on "Tracing the Footsteps on Those Who Left Calvert County During the War of 1812."

November 12: Jen Sparenberg and Stephanie Sperling on "Protecting Historic Places, Archeological Sites and Cultural Landscapes from the Effects of Natural Hazards."

December 10: Troy Nowak and Matt McKnight on "Underwater Archeology and a Survey of the Wicomico River."

January 14: Sara Rivers-Cofield on 18th Century Maryland artifacts and the Outlander TV series.

February 11: Julie King, topic TBD.

March 10: TBD

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

May 12: TBD

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 5:30 p.m. Contact heather.bouslog@mncppc-mc.org or 301-563-7530 or Don Housley at donnou704@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

October 15: Virginia R. Busby will speak on the newly dedicated Sugarloaf Regional Native American Heritage Trail which runs from Point of Rocks to Seneca.

November 19: Valerie Hall will recount her Biggs Ford Field Session experiences.

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 <u>digfrederick.com</u> or call 301-378-0212.

ASM sets up a membership committee

At its September board meeting ASM established a membership committee under the leadership of Rachael Holmes to look into matters involving membership. These include exploring measures toward getting new members, especially younger ones, and measures toward retaining current members. If you have any suggestions or would like to assist in the effort, contact her at leahcar@hotmail.com

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

October 14: "William Brinton 1704 House & Department," by Robert and Ann Bennett, City Hall, Havre de Grace.

November 11: "Introduction to Prehistoric Ceramics," by Dan Coates. HCC Student Center, Bel Air.

December 11: "Pluckemin, N.J.: Site of the Continental Army Depot, 1778-1779," by John Seidel. I.O.O.F. Hall, Aberdeen.

January 13: "A Journey Through Ohio Indian Earthworks," by Barbara and Stephen Israel. City Hall, Havre de Grace.

February 10: TBA. Harford Community College, Bel Air.

March 9: "Recent Lenape Archeology," by Jay Custer. Cecil County Historical Society, Elkton.

April ??: - Cresthull Memorial Lecture. Speaker TBA. 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. For information contact Scott Lawrence at graveconcerns@md.metrocast.net

Upper Patuxent

Meets the second Monday at 7 p.m. at 9944 Route 108 in Ellicott City. Labs are the second and fourth Saturdays. For information contact Dave Cavey at 410-747-0093 or https://www.facebook.com/pages/Upper-Patuxent-Archaeology-Group/464236446964358 or try UPArchaeologygroup@yahoo.com or https://uparchaeologygroup.weebly.com/

October 11: Lee Preston on "Human Paleontology: What's Been Happening in Hominid Evolution."

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

October 23: "Hawaii, the Big Island" by Roy Brown. The geology and the first inhabitants of the island.

November 7: Field trip to Evergreen Heritage Center.

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 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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