

ASM Ink

December 2021, Vol. 48, No. 12

Newsletter of the Archeological Society of Maryland, Inc.



www.marylandarcheology.org

A brief window to the past opens

By Franz Lidz

Condensed from the New York Times, Nov. 2, 2021

As global temperatures gather pace, permafrost and glaciers are thawing and eroding rapidly across vast areas of Earth, releasing many of the objects that they had absorbed and revealing aspects of life in a once inaccessible past.

"The circumpolar world is, or was, full of miraculously preserved sites like Nunalleq," Knecht said. "They offer a window into the unexpectedly rich lives of prehistoric hunters and foragers like no other."

For the past few centuries, the Yup'ik peoples of Alaska have told gruesome tales of a massacre that occurred during the Bow and Arrow War Days, a series of long and often brutal battles across the Bering Sea coast and the Yukon. According to one account, the carnage started when one village sent a war party to raid another. But the residents had been tipped off and set an ambush, wiping out the marauders. The victors then attacked the undefended town, torching it and slaughtering its inhabitants. No one was spared.

For the last 12 years, Rick Knecht has led an excavation at a site called Nunalleq, about 400 miles west of Anchorage. "When we began, the hope was to learn something about Yup'ik prehistory by digging in an average village," said Knecht, an archeologist at the University of Aberdeen in Scotland. "Little did we know that we were digging in something approaching the Yup'ik equivalent of Troy."

In all, the researchers and native Yup'ik people who live in the area unearthed more than 100,000 well-preserved artifacts, as well as the singed carrion of two dogs and the scattered bones of at least 28 people, almost all women, children and elders. Knecht said, "It is also a rare and detailed archeological example of indigenous warfare."

Glacial archeology is a relatively new discipline. The ice was literally broken during the summer of 1991 when German hikers in the Ötztal Alps spotted Ötzi the Iceman, shown through carbon-dating to have died about 5,300 years ago.

Six years later, in the Yukon's snow fields, hunting tools dating back thousands of years appeared from the melting ice. Soon, similar finds were reported in Western Canada, the Rockies and the Swiss Alps.

The discovery of a Bronze Age shoe signified the beginning of glacial surveying in the peaks of Innlandet County, Norway, where the state-funded Glacier Archaeology Program (GAP) was started in 2011. Outside of the Yukon, it is the only permanent rescue project for discoveries in ice.

Glacial archeology differs from its lowland cousin in critical ways. GAP researchers usually conduct fieldwork only from mid-August to mid-September, between the thaw of old snow and the arrival of new.

When the program started, the finds were mainly Iron Age and medieval, from 500 to 1,500 years ago. But as the melting widens, ever older periods of history are being exposed. "We have now melted back to the Stone Age in some places, with pieces as old as six millenniums said Lars Holger Pilo, GAP co-director." "We are speeding back in time."

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Have you renewed membership? Do it: www.marylandarcheology.org

Upcoming events

December 4: ASM board meeting. Zoom.

Volunteer opportunities (non-covid)

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

ASM Volunteer Lab, most Tuesdays: The lab in Crownsville. Contact Charlie Hall at charles.hall@maryland.gov or Louise Akerson at lakerson1@verizon.net It is currently working on cataloging artifacts from the Levering Coffee House Site, Baltimore (a mostly late 18th/early 19th Century site).

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

The Charles County chapter will process artifacts recovered from STP excavations at Dielman Inn in New Windsor (Carroll County). The lab will be at Burch House in Port Tobacco on Mondays November 1, 8 and 15. For more information, contact Carol Cowherd at ccasm2010@gmail.com.

The Anne Arundel County Archaeology Program and the Lost Towns Project welcome volunteers in both field and lab at numerous sites. For diggers, the Linniston site on Gibson Island Fridays from 8 to 3. The lab will be open some weekdays at the Anne Arundel collection facility at 7409 Baltimore-Annapolis Blvd. in Glen Burnie. For more information email Drew Webster at volunteers@losttownsproject.org or call 410 222 1318.

UPAG/Howard County Recs and Parks invites volunteers interested in processing collections and conducting historical research to contact Kelly Palich at Kpalich@howardcountymd.gov or 410-313-0423.

Montgomery County for lab and field work volunteers, contact Heather Bouslog at 301 563 7530 or Heather.Bouslog@montgomeryparks.org

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 410 586 8554.

The Archaeological Institute of America provides an online listing of fieldwork opportunities worldwide. Call up www.archaeological.org/fieldwork to get started.

CAT corner:

If you have signed up for the CAT program and have not received an email from Tom McLaughlin contact him at mclaugh01@verizon.net



New Windsor dig produces artifacts

By Madison Bateman

Condensed from the Carroll County Times, November 21, 2021

An array of artifacts dating as far back as the 17th Century were uncovered over the past several weeks during an archeological survey at the Dielman Inn, in New Windsor, helping to build a picture of how the land was used in the past.

The history of the inn has been well documented, serving as a roadhouse for travelers in its earliest days, a health resort and tourist destination and, more recently, an antique shop and several other small businesses.

In the late 1700s, a portion of the building was originally the tavern of New Windsor's founder, Isaac Atlee. As the town became known for its sulphur springs, the building and its popularity grew and it became a tourist destination for those wanting to escape summer city living.

In 2011, the New Windsor Town Council voted to purchase and redevelop the property. Mayor Andrew Green said there are not yet definitive plans for the building other than the stabilization of the foundation, which will be paid for by a \$350,000 state neighborhood revitalization grant program.

Esther Read, a professor in the ancient studies department at the University of Maryland, Baltimore County and the principal investigator of the survey, said the town continues to apply for federal grants, some of which require an archeological survey.

Preservation Maryland, agreed to complete the investigation for free.

Read said public involvement in these projects is very important. Westminster and New Windsor residents volunteered to work the site, in addition to UMBC archeology students.

Read, an Eldersburg resident, said she was happy to be involved in the survey as well, since the site is close to home and she enjoys doing fieldwork.

After several digs, the survey was completed earlier this month.

Claude Bowen, president of the Archeological Society of Maryland, said the group's goal was to find out if anything was left underground from the site's past using shovel test pits.

"We're creating a historical timeline" based off the types and location of artifacts, Bowen said. "We call it earth truthing."

The Charles County Archeological Society will help clean a lot of the artifacts.

Thirsty fans found themselves trapped in the colosseum, archeologists allege

Condensed from The Onion, September 14, 2021

ROME—Unearthing the earliest known instance of fans being completely fleeced, archeologists from the University of Milan announced Tuesday that they had discovered a buried concession stand at the Colosseum that gouged ancient Romans 10 denarii for a small clay cup of wine.

"There were prices well beyond what your average Roman would pay at the market, which shows just how advanced the empire was when it came to wringing their people dry," said Professor Lambrugo Frederico, adding that the excavation team found the remnants of etched warning signs saying no outside food or beverage was allowed in the Colosseum.

"Our preliminary findings of the lower levels under the Colosseum show that not only did these stands charge an arm and a leg for some cheap swill wine, they also had the gall to think people would pay upwards of 20 denarii for some mediocre snails or a little bag of olives. It's an amazing insight into what greedy bastards the ancient Romans were."

Federico added that while the Romans were just starting to discover the power of concession gouging they were actually far more advanced than modern stadiums in the sanitation of bathrooms.

Book review: A fascinating look at points

Time, Typology, and Point Traditions in North Carolina Archaeology, Formative Cultures Reconsidered
By I. Randolph Daniel Jr., The University of Alabama Press, 2021, 232 pages, \$60

I. Randolph Daniel, Jr. is the chair of the anthropology department at East Carolina University and the author of *Hardaway Revisited: Early Archaic Settlement in the Southeast*. In this volume he dares what few before have dared. He attempts to update and revise Joffre Coe's 1964 classic *Formative Cultures of the Carolina Piedmont*. In that work, Joffre Coe developed a projectile point typology and (relative) chronology of sites and site components based on projectile points recovered there.

It should be noted that Coe was helped by two important avocational archeologists, the Rev. Douglas L. Rights (author of the first book on North Carolina prehistory entitled *The American Indian in North Carolina* in 1947) and Herbert M. Doerschuk, both of whom were among the founders of the Archaeological Society of North Carolina in 1933.

Although he emphasized projectile points as markers of culture type and change, Coe in *Formative Cultures* recognized that pottery (once either transmitted or self-developed) was a more sensitive marker of time and cultural change than stone projectile points. However, the deep time span before pottery was first used makes this kind of chronology important in understanding the cultural continuities and, perhaps more importantly, discontinuities in cultural change or development.

Coe's disciples (please note **not** Coe) "ordained" the Coe Axiom to summarize his findings. For those of us who forgot high school geometry (okay, me), an axiom is a proposition that is so obvious that no proofs are necessary. The Coe Axiom says that only one stone projectile point was in use at any one time.

In this volume, Daniel respectfully reexamines the point types used by Coe and provides a detailed catalog of known projectile point types described by Coe in 1964. It also includes types discovered since *Formative Cultures* was published and those known by Coe but not placed (or misplaced) chronologically by Coe.

Because "type" according to Daniel is determined by examining the proximal part and the basal portion of the proximal portion of a point, all other parts of the point can be identified by descriptors, e.g. blade either excurvate, incurvate or straight. This is important because the blade and tip of the blade are the most subject to being changed by resharpening and/or repurposing (think of the heavily resharpened and repurposed LeCroy point stubs that we find here in Maryland).

Daniel has the benefit of nearly 60 years of North Carolina archeology beyond that relied upon by Coe. In some cases, types known to Coe have been reexamined based on excavations of sites with sharply stratified levels. These have been used to "correct" Coe or to agree with his chronologies for point usage. There are point types recognizable to those of us in the mid-Atlantic that are identified differently in North Carolina.

Some of Coe's types have been split again. For instance, Daniel believes that Virginia's largest Morrow Mountain point (as found in Hranicky's and Painter's projectile point guide) would be identified as a "Mack" point in North Carolina. True Morrow Mountain I and 2 points must be smaller, although he admits that the Mack point is identical except for size with Morrow Mountain points. Daniel suggests that the Mack type might have been used to show status rather than having a practical use.

Based upon a theory concerning cultural continuity or at least the continuity of some cultural traits, Daniel attempts to show cultural evolutionary trails in projectile point traits and attributes. This is, of course, very interesting and not only when considering attributes of projectile points over time. Gaps in the archeological record could mean cultural discontinuity. Coe suggests one in North Carolina sometime after 500 BCE.

There are many other interesting things included in this book. There are many photographs. Most of these give a very generous view of the variability of each type. Figures and drawings, especially those dealing with revisions to Coe's original charts are very interesting. The numbers of type examples from each site throughout the book are sometimes surprising. The reader may rightly ask how such small samples can bear so heavy a burden of theory and putative facts. One also realizes how much work there still is to be done.

This is a fascinating book. If you have not finished your holiday wish list, inclusion of this book is highly recommended.

-- Claude Bowen

When did giants roam here? Never

By Brad Lepper

Condensed from the Columbus Dispatch, December 27, 2020

The thrilling notion that giant humans lived in Ohio during prehistoric times was popular in the 19th Century and reports of discoveries of giant skeletons in mounds frequently appeared in local newspapers. In the current issue of the West Virginia Archeologist, Donald Ball has compiled a selection of such articles dating from as early as 1845.

A "skeleton of enormous size" supposedly was found in a riverbank near Cincinnati in 1882 with thigh bones "as large as those of an ox." In 1885, five (or maybe four) "gigantic skeletons" were reported to have been found in a small mound in Homer in Licking County. Workers digging in gravel pits near Dayton in 1905 claimed to have uncovered "several giant skeletons" one of which had "a large tusk" protruding from the left side of his jawbone.

Ball accepts that these accounts are "imaginative journalistic fantasy," but there are self-proclaimed giantologists who take such reports seriously, even though no one can produce even a single human thigh bone anywhere near as big as an ox's.

One remarkable story that Ball includes sheds light on why such hard evidence is lacking. The Indianapolis Journal reported on August 29, 1883, that a farmhand digging in a gravel pit uncovered the skeleton of a man who was "not less than nine feet in height." Scientists found the discovery of great interest and the Indiana State Geologist asked a local physician, Dr. M. M. Adams, to investigate. The Indianapolis Journal published his findings on Sept. 5 of that year.

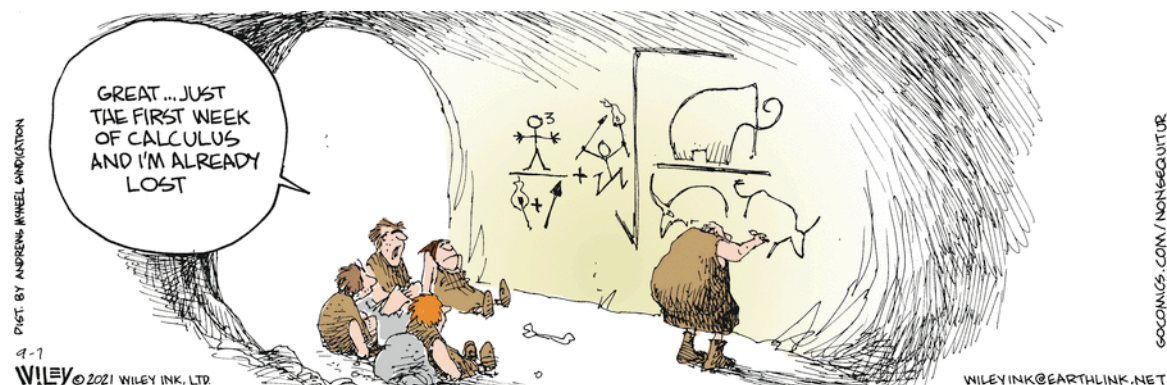
Adams confirmed that human remains had been recovered from the gravel pit, but they were "not of a giant, by any means." He determined that the individual was not "above five feet eight inches in height"; and concluded that "the whole thing is a giant fraud and an imposition on the credulity of the people."

The remarkable thing about this account is that the Indianapolis Journal showed commendable, but extraordinarily uncommon for the time, journalistic integrity by publishing a follow-up to the story. Newspapers in the 19th Century did not rigorously follow the ethical standards that we take for granted today. Contrary to recent politically motivated claims, modern news outlets, with certain notable exceptions, have professional standards that help to ensure that the stories they present are accurate.

In 1862, Mark Twain was so fed up with all the sensationalistic fake news circulating in newspapers at the time that he wrote a satirical article about the discovery of a petrified man in Nevada: "Every limb and feature of the stony mummy was perfect ... the right thumb resting against the side of the nose ... and the fingers of the right hand spread apart."

Newspapers around the world picked up the story and reported the farce as if it was actual news. And this fake news is just the sort of evidence that giantologists offer in support of their belief that once there were giants in the earth.

The reason we no longer read stories in responsible media outlets about discoveries of giant skeletons found in Indian mounds is not because of a conspiracy to hide such evidence as some giantologists would have you believe. It's because those stories simply aren't true.



A brief window to the past opens

Continued from Page 1

To date, the GAP has recovered about 3,500 artifacts, many preserved in extraordinary delicacy. Norway has more than half of the prehistoric and medieval finds from the ice globally.

In Russia, scientists have regenerated reproductive tissue from unripe fruits of a narrow-leafed campion freeze-dried under the tundra for 32,000 years. A farsighted squirrel had stored the fruit in its burrow.

Spectacular glacial finds invariably involve luck, as Craig Lee, an archeologist at the Institute of Arctic and Alpine Research, can attest. Fourteen years ago, in the mountain ice outside Yellowstone National Park, he spotted the foreshaft of an atlatl dart, carved from a birch sapling 10,300 years ago. The primitive hunting weapon is the earliest organic artifact ever to be retrieved from an ice patch.

"In the Yukon, ice patch discoveries have given us new insights into the pre-European tradition of copper-working by indigenous peoples," said William Taylor, an archeologist at the University of Colorado Museum of Natural History in Boulder. "In the Rockies, researchers have recovered everything from frozen trees that document important changes in climate and vegetation to the hunting implements of some of the first peoples of the continent."

Taylor's own work focuses on the relationship between climate and social change in early nomadic societies. His ongoing survey of melting ice margins in the Altai Mountains of western Mongolia has produced artifacts that upended some of the most basic archeological assumptions about the area's history.

Although people in the region have long been classified as herders, Taylor's team discovered an icy killing ground of argali sheep, along with the spears and arrows used to slay them. Laboratory analysis revealed that big-game hunting has been an essential part of pastoral subsistence and culture in the Eastern Steppes for more than 3,500 years.

About 10 percent of the planet's land mass is covered with glacial ice, and as the world defrosts, ancient creatures great and small are being unburied. In southern Chile, dozens of nearly complete skeletons of ichthyosaurs were disgorged near the Tyndall Glacier. The marine reptiles lived between the Triassic and Cretaceous periods, which extended from 66 million to 250 million years ago.

Three-million-year-old insect fossils have been recovered in eastern Alaska and western Yukon Territory.

The flashiest archeological finds in Yakutia, in northeastern Siberia, have been the carcasses of woolly mammoths, woolly rhinos, steppe bison and cave lions. The extinct beasts had lain suspended in their refrigerated graves for nine millennia or more, like grapes in Jell-O.

Ice patches turn out to be where most discoveries are made. The basic difference between a glacier and an ice patch is that a glacier moves. An ice patch does not move much, making it a more reliable preservationist.

"The constant movement inside glaciers damages both bodies and artifacts and eventually dumps the sad debris at the mouth of the ice floe," said Pilo, of GAP in Norway. "Due to the movement and the continuous renewal of the ice, glaciers rarely preserve objects more than 500 years."

It's a grim inside joke among glacial archeologists that their field of study has been one of the few beneficiaries of climate change. But while retreating ice and snow makes some prehistoric treasures briefly accessible, exposure to the elements threatens to swiftly destroy them.

Once soft organic materials — leather, textiles, arrow fletchings — surface, researchers have a year at most to rescue them for conservation before the items degrade and are lost forever.

E. James Dixon, former director of the Maxwell Museum of Anthropology at the University of New Mexico, agreed. "The sheer scale of the loss relative to the number of archeologists researching these sites is overwhelming," he said. "It's like an archeological mass extinction where certain types of sites are all disappearing at approximately the same time."

Climate change has brought with it a cascade of consequences. Oceanfront erosion has been devastating. In some parts of Alaska, as much as a mile of coastline has receded over the last 80 years, and with it the entire archeological and fossil record. "Sites are not just being washed away, but literally rotting in the ground," Knecht said.

Squanto, a Thanksgiving mystery

By Gillian Brockell

Condensed from the Washington Post, November 28, 2021

Most Americans have heard the somewhat true story of Tisquantum, popularly known as Squanto, and how he helped the Pilgrims at Plymouth Colony by teaching them how to plant and grow North American crops, thus saving them from starvation.

Some know he was motivated not so much by goodwill as desperation. His community had just been devastated by mass death while he was being held in England.

But almost no one knows that 399 years later, his remains may lie in a wealthy area of Cape Cod, underneath the green of one of the country's most picturesque golf clubs.

The majority of Tisquantum's life is a mystery. We know on March 22, 1621, he walked into the Plymouth Colony the Pilgrims were building on the land where his people used to live. Incredibly, to the Pilgrims at least, he spoke articulate English.

The Pilgrims had arrived the previous fall, too late to plant food, and half of them died that winter. Soon, Tisquantum brokered a peace treaty between the Pilgrims and Ousamequin, leader of the Wampanoag confederacy, who feared attack by the Narragansett tribe after his people had been so devastated by disease.

He and Gov. William Bradford became friends, and Tisquantum and other Wampanoags famously showed the Pilgrims how to plant crops, catch fish and survive in the "New World."

By November 1622, he Tisquantum went with Bradford on a trading mission to a nearby Wampanoag village. A few days into the trip, Tisquantum suddenly fell ill and began bleeding from his nose, a condition Bradford termed "Indian fever." He died a few days later on the Pilgrims' ship as it sat anchored near a beach not far from the Wampanoag village.

The beach he was buried near, now called Pleasant Bay, is nestled in an idyllic corner of Chatham, one of the tonier areas of Cape Cod. There's a plaque commemorating Squanto a quarter mile to the southeast, but at least one local historian, the late Warren Sears Nickerson, has suggested Squanto's remains were buried northeast of the beach. In about 1770, Nickerson wrote, "an Indian skeleton was washed out of a hill between the Head of the Bay and Crow's Pond." The manner of burial resembled that of the Pilgrims, suggesting it may have been Squanto.

The remains were reburied nearby, on land now occupied by the Eastward Ho golf club. The club, on its website, claims his body "almost certainly rests within the bounds of today's country club."

When asked Wednesday whether the club has ever made an effort to determine exactly where any remains might be, or to memorialize Tisquantum in any way, a representative declined to respond on the record. A historian for the club, Georgia Peirce, said she had heard this story since she was a child, when her grandfather told it to her, but that there was no definitive proof.

The club history on the website claiming the remains were "almost certainly" there, she said, was written 25 years ago by a local historian who is now deceased. Peirce was not aware of any attempts to search for possible remains using technology like ground-penetrating radar or core sampling.

As with so many stories about Squanto, the truth of this one remains a mystery.

Chapter News:

Check with your local chapter to see what and how activities will take place.

Central Chapter

All Meetings will be held on Zoom the third Tuesday of every second month. For more information and to be added to the Zoom list contact: Katharine Fernstrom at kwfappraising@gmail.com

Charles County

Meetings are held at 7 p.m. on the second Thursday (September-May). The next few will be virtual. Contact President Carol Cowherd at ccasm2010@gmail.com for Zoom access information. Website ccarchsoc.blogspot.com and Facebook [@ccasm2010](https://www.facebook.com/ccasm2010)

December 9: Some recent work at Historic St. Mary's City, by Travis Parno (Meeting via Zoom)

Mid-Potomac

Until further notice, all meetings will be by Zoom (unless Montgomery County regulations change) starting at 7 p.m., the talk at 7:30, the third Thursday of the month. For up-to-date information, including links to Zoom meetings, check Chapter website at www.asmmidpotomac.org or contact Don Housley at donhou704@earthlink.net or 301-424-8526.

Friday, December 17 (Zoom or in-person still to be decided): Holiday Party. NOTE DAY CHANGE

January 20, 2022: Matt Virta, cultural resource program manager/archeologist, National Park Service, George Washington Memorial Highway, will speak on the Arlington House Archaeology Project and the discovery in the slave quarters.

February 17: Beth Bollwerk, archeologist at Monticello, will give a talk on the Digital Archaeological Archive of Comparative Slavery and the Flowerdew Hundred Plantation (Virginia) legacy artifact collection.

Monocacy

The chapter meets in the C. Burr Artz Library in Frederick the second Wednesday of the month at 7 p.m. For more information, visit the chapter's web page at digfrederick.com or call 301-378-0212. **NOTE:** Because the library is closed for meetings, the chapter will not meet until further notice.

Northern Chesapeake

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 6:30 p.m. at the Joseph D. Carter State Office Building in the Russell Conference Room, Leonardtown. For information contact Chris Coogan at Ccoogan@smcm.edu

Upper Patuxent

Meetings the second Saturday or Sunday of the month, virtual or at the Heritage Program Office, 9944 Route 108, Ellicott City, unless otherwise noted. www.facebook.com/pages/Upper-Patuxent-Archaeology-Group/464236446964358 or www.upperpatuxentarchaeology.com or call Kelly Palich, 410 313 0423.

Western Maryland

Programs are the fourth Friday of the month, at 7:30 p.m. Unitarian Fellowship Hall, 211 S. Lee Street in Cumberland, unless noted. Contact Roy Brown, 301-724-7769. Email: wmdasm@yahoo.com Website: <http://sites.google.com/site/wmdasm>

No meeting in December due to the holidays. Our next meeting will be on January 28, our annual Show & Tell.

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

ASM members receive the monthly newsletter, ASM Ink, the biannual journal, MARYLAND ARCHEOLOGY, reduced admission to ASM events and a 10-percent discount on items sold by the Society. Contact Membership Secretary Ethan Bean, 765-716-5282 or beans32@comcast.net 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 20178-2104 or 410-273-9619 or dancoates@comcast.net

Submissions: Please send to Myron Beckenstein, 3126 Gracefield Rd., Apt 106, Silver Spring, MD. 20905 or 240-867-3662 or myronbeck@verizon.net

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