ASM Ink

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Newsletter of the Archeological Society of Maryland, Inc.

www.marylandarcheology.org

ASM's Annual Meeting set for Oct. 1

It's that time of the year again, time for ASM's Annual Meeting.

This year the gathering will take place at the Marshy Point Nature Center on the Middle River in Baltimore County on Saturday, October 1. The theme of the meeting is cemeteries with the major address being given by Howard Wellman, formerly a conservator at the MAC Lab.

The first part of the two-part program is the business meeting, which begins at 9:30. It will feature the awarding of the Society's highest honor, the William B. Marye Award; the naming of the winners of this year's ASM election, with the new officers immediately taking over, and the awarding of certificates to new graduates of the Certified Archeological Technician program.

The talks begin at 11, with Daniel Dean of the Marshy Point Nature Center Council talking about Cassandra Bond Hamilton. Dead 228 years now, her body lays in the woods of a Baltimore County park, but for a century she was listed in property deeds.

Jim Gibb will talk about the many facets of cemetery archeology. Drawing from a sample of 45 cemetery projects, examples will include the reuse of Colonial-era cemeteries, insights into the ebb and flow of the Spanish Influenza epidemic and the essential role of cemeteries in historic preservation.

After lunch it is Howard Wellman and the Frederick Stiner Memorial Lecture, He will look at the place of cemeteries in the context of historic preservation standards and state law tell and how he approachs the care of monuments under those standards, He also will include a brief discussion of disaster preparedness.

For the day's final offering, a trio of presenters will discuss "Learning and Teaching at the Mace Family Cemetery, Community College of Baltimore County, Essex." Nina Brown, a professor of social science at the college; Debra Sambuco, collection development librarian there, and Katharine Fernstrom, an adjunct at MICA and Towson, will describe their multi-year collaborative examination of the cemetery.

Doots open at 9 with the business age starting at 9:39. During the break for a bring-it-yourself lunch, a tour of Marshy Point and its many trails will be available. There is no admission fee. Remember to bring your election ballot if you haven't mailed it.

Instructions for getting to the park can be found at https://www.marshypoint.org/about/maps-directions/

Upcoming events

October 1: ASM annual meeting. Marshy Point nature center, Baltimore County

October 11: Aaron Levinthal of SHA will talk about the Bush tavern in Abington whose historic past includes the Revolutionary era. October 11 at 12:30 pm. Virtual. Register at www.harfordhistory.org

Nov. 4-6: ESAF annual meeting, Shippensburg, Pa.

Volunteer opportunities (non-covid)

The following volunteer opportunities are open to CAT participants and other ASM members:
Not Maiden's Choice: MHT and the Western Maryland Chapter are going to be returning to a historic site in Washington County discovered in November while looking for something else. April 7-10. If interested contact mathew.mcknight@maryland.gov
ASM Volunteer Lab, most Tuesdays: The lab in Crownsville. Contact Zachary Singer at Zachary.Singer@maryland.gov It is currently working on the Maiden's Choice collection, which is a late 18th to early 19th Century dwelling in Washington County
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
Charles County for lab and field work volunteers, contact Esther Read at ReadE@charlescountymd.gov
For more information, contact Carol Cowherd at ccasm2010@gmail.com.
The **Anne Arundel County** Archeology Lab in Edgewater, in conjunction with The Lost Towns Project, accepts volunteers and interns to help process artifacts, including washing, labeling, sorting and cataloging. No experience needed. Children under 16 must be accompanied by an adult. The lab is generally open 2-3 weekdays each week from 9:00-3:00. Volunteers must sign up in advance. There are occasional opportunities for fieldwork as well. For more information, the current lab or field schedule, or to sign up, email Drew Webster at volunteers@losttownsproject.org.
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 your email address changes please remember to let Tom know. It's the only contact we have for many of you. For more information on the CAT program contact Tom McLaughlin at mclaugh01@verizon.net

Short-lived shortcut aided pyramid builders

By Jack Tamisiea

Condensed from the New York Times, Aug. 30, 2022

For 4,500 years, the pyramids of Giza have loomed over the western bank of the Nile River as a geometric mountain chain. The Great Pyramid, built to commemorate the reign of Pharaoh Khufu, the second king of Egypt's fourth dynasty, covers 13 acres and stood more than 480 feet upon its completion around 2560 B.C.

Remarkably, ancient architects somehow transported 2.3 million limestone and granite blocks, each weighing an average of more than two tons, across miles of desert from the banks of the Nile to the pyramid site on the Giza Plateau.

Hauling these stones over land would have been grueling. Scientists have long believed that utilizing a river or channel made the process possible, but today the Nile is about four miles away from the pyramids. On Monday, however, a team of researchers reported evidence that a lost arm of the Nile once cut through this stretch of desert and would have greatly simplified transporting the giant slabs to the pyramid complex.

Using clues preserved in the desert soil, the scientists reconstructed the rise and fall of the Khufu Branch, a now defunct Nile tributary, over the past 8,000 years. Their findings, published in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences, propose that the Khufu Branch, which dried up completely around 600 B.C., played a critical role in the construction of the ancient wonders.

"It was impossible to build the pyramids here without this branch of the Nile," said Hader Sheisha, an environmental geographer at the European Center for Research and Teaching in Environmental Geoscience, and an author of the new study.

The project was stirred by the unearthing of a trove of papyrus fragments at the site of an ancient harbor near the Red Sea in 2013. Some of the scrolls date back to Khufu's reign and recount the efforts of an official named Merer and his men to transport limestone up the Nile to Giza, where it was fashioned into the Great Pyramid's outer layer.

Transporting goods on the Nile was nothing new, said Joseph Manning, a classicist at Yale University who was not involved in the new research. "We know that water was up close to the Giza pyramids — that's how stone was transported," he said.

According to Manning, researchers have theorized that ancient engineers could have carved channels through the desert or used an offshoot of the Nile to transport the pyramid's materials, but evidence of these lost waterways remained scarce.

Seeking evidence of an ancient water route, the researchers drilled more than 30 feet down into the desert near the Giza harbor site and along the Khufu Branch's hypothesized route, where they collected five sediment cores.

At a lab in France, Sheisha and her colleagues sifted through the cores for pollen grains, tiny yet durable environmental clues that help researchers identify past plant life. They discovered 61 species of plants that were concentrated in different parts of the core, providing a window into how the local ecosystem had changed, Christophe Morhange, a geomorphologist at Aix-Marseille University in France and an author of the new study, said.

Pollen from plants like cattails and papyrus attested to an aquatic, marsh-like environment, while pollen from drought-resistant plants like grasses helped to pinpoint "when the Nile was further away from the pyramids" during dry spells, said Morhange.

The researchers used the data gleaned from the pollen grains to estimate past river levels and recreate Giza's waterlogged past. About 8,000 years ago, during a damp era known as the African Humid Period, during which much of the Sahara was covered in lakes and grasslands, the region around Giza was underwater.

Over the next few thousand years, as northern Africa dried out, the Khufu Branch retained around 40 percent of its water. This made it a perfect asset for pyramid-building, Sheisha said: The waterway remained deep enough to easily navigate but not so high as to pose a major flooding risk.

This shortcut to the pyramids was short-lived. As Egypt became even drier, the water level in the Khufu Branch dropped beyond usability, and pyramid construction ended. By the time Alexander the Great conquered Egypt in 332 B.C., the area around the parched Khufu branch had been converted to a cemetery.

Covid hits Indian community especially hard

Condensed from the New York Times Aug. 31, 2022

The average life expectancy of Americans fell precipitously in 2020 and 2021, the sharpest two-year decline in nearly 100 years and a stark reminder of the toll exacted by the continuing coronavirus pandemic.

In 2021, the average American could expect to live until the age of 76, federal health researchers reported on Wednesday. The figure represents a loss of almost three years since 2019.

The reduction has been particularly steep among Native Americans and Alaska Natives, the National Center for Health Statistics reported. Average life expectancy in those groups was shortened by four years in 2020 alone.

The cumulative decline since the pandemic started, more than six and a half years on average, has brought life expectancy to 65 among Native Americans and Alaska Natives — the figure for all Americans in 1944.

But the coronavirus was not solely to blame. Longstanding health problems — rooted in poverty, discrimination and poor access to health care — left Native Americans and Alaska Natives particularly vulnerable to the virus, said Dr. Ann Bullock, former director of diabetes treatment and prevention at the federal Indian Health Service agency and a member of the Minnesota Chippewa Tribe.

One in seven Native Americans and Alaska Natives has diabetes, the highest rate among racial or ethnic groups in the United States, and many struggle with obesity or excess weight. Both conditions make people more susceptible to severe covid-19, and crowded multigenerational housing adds to the risk.

"There is no doubt covid was a contributor to the increase in mortality during the last couple of years, but it didn't start these problems — it made everything that much worse," Bullock said.

Average life expectancy in these populations is now "lower than that of every country in the Americas except Haiti, which is astounding," said Noreen Goldman, professor of demography and public affairs at the Princeton School of Public and International Affairs.

At least one in four Native Americans lives in poverty, the highest rate of any racial or ethnic group in the United States, according to the Department of Health and Human Services. Discrimination and racism have been linked to the erosion of mental and physical health, as has exposure to polluted air and water, studies have found.

If researchers were surprised by the findings, many who live and work in Indigenous communities were not. "There is nothing weird or unusual about our population," said Bullock.

"This is simply what happens biologically to populations that are chronically and profoundly stressed and deprived of resources."

Nonetheless, federal researchers were slow to comprehend the outlines of the disaster. After a yearlong delay, officials announced in early August that Native Americans and Alaska Natives have seen a four-year drop in life expectancy in 2020 alone.

The additional two-and-a-half year reduction in 2021 that was reported on Tuesday brought the total to more than six years, meaning that life expectancy had shortened to 65 years during the first two years of the pandemic.

"We had the death rates and knew they were high, but it hadn't been translated into life expectancy," said Dr. Noreen Goldman, a professor of demography and public affairs at the Princeton School of Public and International Affairs.

Given that life expectancy in parts of the developing world is roughly the same, "it's easy to understand how drastic it is," she added.

But while excess deaths — those greater than would be expected in a normal year — during the first year of the pandemic were primarily a result of viral infections in these communities, drug overdoses and chronic liver disease played a comparable role to covid's in driving up deaths in 2021.

Another challenge has been the woefully underfunded Indian Health Service, a government program that provides health care to the 2.2 million members of the nation's tribal communities.

Re-examing Heinrich Schliemann

By Andrew Pulver

Condensed from The Art Newspaper, 9 May 2022

Merchant, adventurer, linguist and spinner of tall tales, banker in the California gold rush and military contractor to the Russian army during the Crimean War—by any measure, Heinrich Schliemann lived an extraordinary life.

And that was even before Schliemann, in his late 40s, embarked on the endeavor that was to make him world famous: the excavation of Hisarlik, an ancient settlement in Turkey now accepted as the site of Homer's legendary city of Troy.

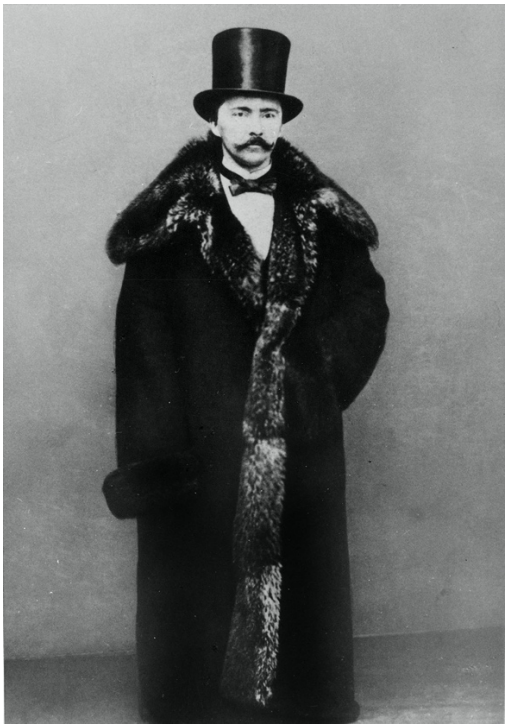
To mark the 200th anniversary of Schliemann's birth in 1822 in the north German state of Mecklenburg, Berlin's Museum of Prehistory and Early History, which holds a considerable amount of Schliemann's collection, is mounting an exhibition dedicated to him.

Matthias Wemhoff, the director of the museum and project manager of "Schliemann's Worlds," is clear that the show's intention is to restore Schliemann's reputation, not only as a pioneering archeologist but as an exceptional figure in his own right.

"We want to show his whole life, not just look at the archeology. If you understand the first half of his life you understand much better how he is as an archeologist," Wemhoff says.

"He was a tradesman, a self-made man, and a person who used all possibilities of the 19th Century. He travelled across so much of the world, in a way that was possible for the first time in history. He had no fear. That's the important characteristic."

Since his death, Schliemann's reputation has suffered considerably, partly from his reputation for embellishing many of the stories about himself, his lack of academic rigor and his rudimentary archeological techniques—most notoriously the giant trench he dug in his first Hisarlik excavation in the 1870s, which is now thought to have obliterated much of the Trojan archeology he was looking for.



Heinrich Schliemann in 1860

But Wemhoff defends his man, suggesting that Schliemann pioneered the use of stratigraphy was not simple vandalism but was in fact due to the type of archeology that Schliemann encountered in northern Germany, where large barrows were excavated by tunnelling through to locate a grave.

Schliemann famously found a collection of gold artifacts—called Priam's Treasure, after the mythical king of Troy—which will not be on show in Berlin. The hoard was removed by the Soviet army from its hiding place in Berlin in 1945, secretly taken to Moscow and only in 1994 did the Pushkin Museum admit to its whereabouts.

In the end, though, the show is about showing off Schliemann's scientific commitment. Wemhoff points out that, after finding the Priam artifacts, Schliemann persisted in working at Hisarlik for two decades, refining and improving his practice, Wemhoff adds: "He's much more than a digger after gold."

ASM presence, Dan Sappington, dies at 69

ASNC's Dan Coates reflects on the many interests of ASM enthusiast Dan Sappington, who died August 24 at the age of 69.

I have to note the passing of a good friend, Dan Sappington. Although Dan wasn't a member of ASNC, he was active in all ASM events and the Society for Primitive Technology. I was very fortunate to kick around some subjects of common interest with him, that besides archeology, Native American tools and geology, included such things as U.S. Army aviation, British motorcycle mechanics and rifle marksmanship. He spent the Vietnam War years in Korea and with the 101st Airborne at Ft. Campbell as a turbine engine mechanic.

Until his unexpected heart attack two weeks ago, he worked for Coleman's Speed Shop restoring high performance engines. He was a member of the International Norton Motorcycle Assn. and the Garrison Rifle Club, where he regularly competed in long range rifle marksmanship.

Chapter news

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

Mid-Potomac

The chapter meets the third Thursday of the month. In-person meetings begin at 7:30 p.m. at Needwood Mansion in Derwood. Dinner at a local restaurant at 5:30 p.m. Virtual meetings, if necessary, will be via Zoom with the business part starting at 7 p.m. and the presentation at 7:30 p.m. For up-to-date meeting information contact Don Housley at donhou704@earthlink.net or 301-424-8526 or check our chapter website: http://www.asmmidpotomac.org, or send an Email to: asmmidpotomac@gmail.com or view our Facebook page at www.facebook.com/pages/Mid-Potomac- Archaeology/182856471768

October 20: Zoom. Heather Bouslog, Montgomery County Parks senior archeologist, will discuss deaccessioning and disposition of collection objects.

zoo

November 17: Maybe Zoom. Recently certified CAT graduates Tom McLaughlin, Fran Kline and Paul Bollwerk will give a presentation about the journey to CAT certification.

Monocacy

Meetings are at 7 p.m. Community Room of the C. Burr Artz Library, 110 East Patrick Street, Frederick . For more information, visit the chapter's web page masarcheology.org or call 301-378-0212.

Northern Chesapeake

A business meeting at 7 is followed by the presentation at 7:30. Contact Dan Coates at 410- 808-2398 or dancoates@comcast.net

October 12; Bill McIntyre will examine the Concord Point lighthouse, its construction, history and restoration, 1827 – 2022. At the Havre de Grace City Hall.

December 9; Annual December dinner meeting. Aberdeen. IOOF hall in Aberdeen.

St. Mary's County

Meetings are at the Leonardtown Library in Leonard every second Tuesday night of the month at 6:30. For information contact Craig Lukezic at crlukezic@gmail.com

October 11: Craig Lukezic will present the basic concepts and methods of archeology to the public. Such as why do they dig square holes? and Why do they ignore dinosaurs?

November 8: The 75-plus sites identified near Jug Bay, from ancient camps and Indigenous villages, along with Colonial towns, antebellum plantations and underwater shipwrecks help paint a vibrant picture of life along the Patuxent river. By Stephanie Sperling.

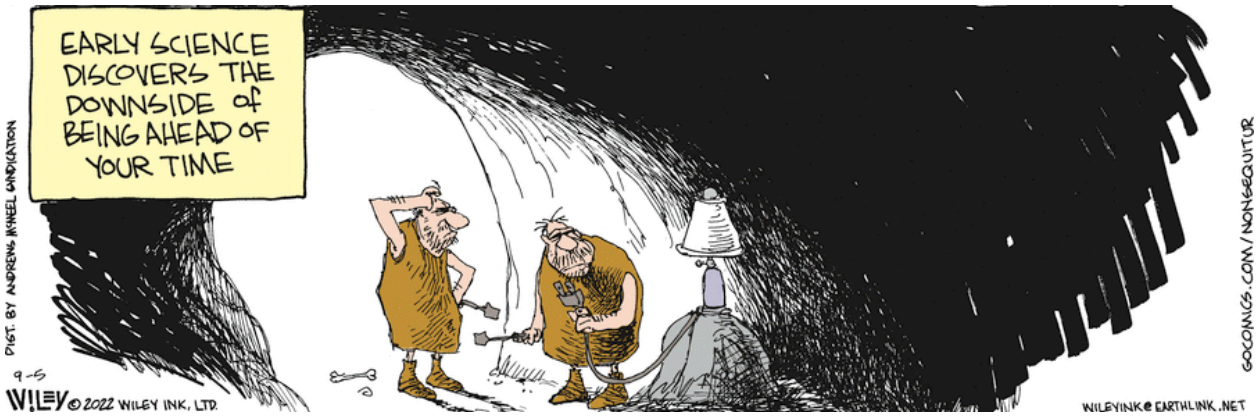
Upper Patuxent

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://tinyurl.com/wmdasm

October 28: Roy Brown will report on the excavations at Maiden's Choice in Washington County in search Evan Shelby's French & Indian War era fort in which a number of chapter members participated.



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.

Newsletter ubmissions: Send to Myron Beckenstein, 3126 Gracefield Rd., Apt 106, Silver Spring, MD. 20904 or 240-867-3662 or myronbeck@verizon.net