



# The Datum Point

NORTHERN VIRGINIA CHAPTER OF THE  
ARCHEOLOGICAL SOCIETY OF VIRGINIA

October 2004

## From the Veep – C.K. Gailey

First, thanks to Charles Cheek for a fascinating discussion on Copan, on his four years on the plaza reconstructing one of the step pyramids. His insights and photos were the next best thing to being there, without the bugs.

Our business meeting consisted of a discussion about the presence of a relic hunter gathering in Virginia advertised on the web. ASV sent a letter to VDHR decrying the situation.

**Remember the Chapter elections are at the December meeting/party. Anyone wanting to run for any office should let me know at the October meeting, or send me an e-mail.**



**The next meeting is at 7:30 p.m.  
Wednesday OCT. 13<sup>th</sup>,  
not Thursday, because of the  
availability of a meeting room.**



**One of the topics to be voted on will be the permanent fix to the meeting night situation. The two options are Second Wednesday or Third Wednesday. Tuesday and Thursday are not options. Monday and Friday got no support at all at the last meeting. Come on out and vote!**

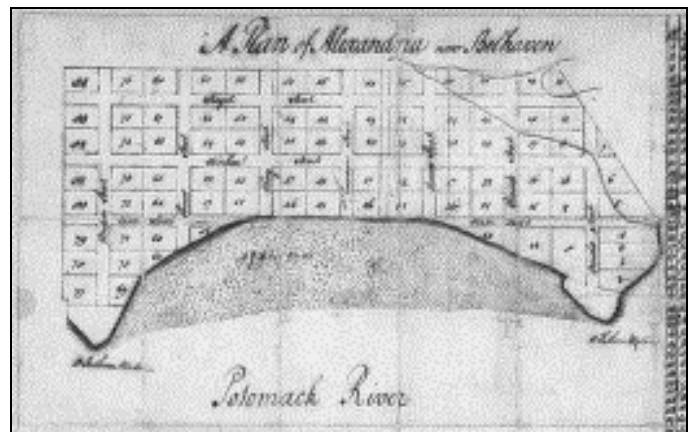
**Directions for the meeting:** East on Rte 50 from the west side of the Beltway and go west of Rte 50 from Seven Corners. When you come to Annandale Rd, turn north, there is a Chili's on the west side of the road after you turn. At the first light about 1/4 to the north, the James Lee Center will be on your right. Turn right into the parking lot and go in the main entrance on the east side of the building.

## "Reaching for the Channel: Some Documentary and Archaeological Evidence of Extending the Alexandria Waterfront"

Dr. Steven Shephard, Assistant City Archaeologist, Alexandria Archaeology

Steve Shephard's Power Point talk will present some of the intriguing documentary and archaeological findings relating to the "banking out" process with the hope of offering a better understanding of this 18th-century transformation of the Alexandria waterfront.

Dr. Shephard has been Assistant City Archaeologist with the City of Alexandria since 1980. He received his undergraduate degrees from the University of Florida and Florida State University, and his doctorate from Southern Illinois University. In Alexandria, he has directed excavation of over 40 sites and manages the preservation arm of Alexandria Archaeology. His publications include site reports, contributions to four books, as well as articles on working with volunteers, urban development, the study of class differences through artifacts, and the presentation of archaeological research results to the public. In 1999 he was named Professional Archaeologist of the Year by the Archaeological Society of Virginia.



**Alexandria in the mid-1700s**

## **More on Dr. Shepherd's talk on the Alexandria Waterfront!**

When Alexandria was founded in 1749, the town was laid out on a crescent bay between West's Point and Point Lumley. There were sandy flats along the shore behind which rose banks, or bluffs, probably 15 to 20 ft in height. The street that intersected the shoreline was called Water Street (later renamed Lee Street) and did not connect through at the center. The owner's of waterfront lots could fill in the water along their shoreline, thus expanding their property, and this was undertaken from the 1750s to the present day.

The majority of the bay was filled from the 1760s through the 1780s; unfortunately, during this time, we have only one scale map, dating to 1763, the next map dating to 1798. Much of the fill soil was taken from the banks and so eventually the land along the waterfront lost elevation, but extended out into the bay and toward the ship channel. Various methods were used in creating this land including sinking of old ship's hulls, building cribbed wharfs or depositing fill behind bulkheads.

Although there are few records documenting this process, deeds indicating the creation of waterfront lots, visitors accounts of the banks and the bay, various tidbits in newspapers, testimony in court cases and a few accounts in the City Council Minutes give some insight into this significant change in land form.

Glimpses into the methods used in creating land along the waterfront have also resulted from archaeological investigations. Buried remnants of 18th-century stone and wooden wharf structures, debris-covered surfaces of wharves, and artifacts included in fill have been uncovered. Even evidence of the prehistoric sites that once existed on the banks has been found.

## **CULTURAL RESOURCE PROTECTION GROUP**

LBA (44FX2723) – Berno and the crew have uncovered what appears to be a charcoal lined pit feature under the northern edge of feature 12. It appears to be globular and extends two feet below the surface. He has also detected what appears to be another soil feature with charcoal near the first. Half of the charcoal lined feature will be removed intact so it can be excavated in the lab. The other will be removed in the traditional way.

These new features are “really, really, really important” (to quote Bob Wharton) because of what they reveal about the potential for deeply buried features in upland contexts. That includes plowed contexts, because the tops of both features start below what would be the bottom of most plowzones. Field work on the site ended on October 9. We will need a lot of help in the lab over the next month to finish the artifact and feature processing.

## **Cox-Johnson Odyssey**

By Mike Johnson

CD Cox and I just completed a two-week, 6,000 mile car trip out west, visiting archeologists and seeing the archeological sites and other interesting places. We were accompanied by George and Vicky Monken on the first leg of the trip.

Our first stop was the University of Arkansas, where we picked up the probable pre-Clovis artifacts from Area A at Cactus Hill. They were there being studied by Dr. Marvin Kay, who is an expert on microscopic analysis of use wear on stone tools. Although he found no conclusive wear patterns he did show us some fascinating examples of use wear and residues on Folsom age artifacts.

Our next stop was Clovis, New Mexico and Blackwater Draw, which is the type site for the Clovis period. The staff of Southeast New Mexico State University gave us a “cook’s tour” of the site and current excavations. Needless to say we saw a lot of mammoth, horse and bison bones. We followed that with a tour of the very fine Blackwater Draw Museum in Portales, NM. near the site. To repay SENMS Univ. for their hospitality, I gave a talk to their archeology graduate students and faculty on Cactus Hill and the site prediction work we are doing in the Nottoway River Valley. Vicky and George left us after the museum tour to visit their son in Arizona.

The next stop for CD and me was Albuquerque, where we visited Sally and Bob Grindle. Sally was the County Archeology secretary for 18 years before retiring and moving out west. There we visited a bcal pictograph park. We then re-visited the mammoth skeleton and Clovis artifacts in the St. Johns museum in eastern Arizona. While traveling the back roads of eastern Arizona we noticed all of the dried up lake beds and how they resembled the Blackwater Draw context.

The next stop was Tucson where we stayed with Ann (Cherryman) and John McClelland. They both volunteered for Fairfax County Archeology in the early to mid-1990s, got married, earned degrees in

anthropology (archeology), and also moved out west where John got a PhD from the Univ. of Arizona. While here, Ann directed two archeological field schools at George Mason Univ. They were on the underwater archeology of Belmont Bay at the mouth of the Occoquan River in southern Fairfax County. The result was her thesis. She also supervised the excavations at the Bacardi site (44FX6) at the intersection of Prosperity Ave. and Route 50 near Merrifield.

We attended the Archeological Sciences of the Americas conference at the University of Arizona, where I also gave the same talk I gave at Southeast New Mexico State. This was the main purpose for the trip.

After some local site seeing and visiting relatives, including a side trip by me to Santa Barbara, California to visit my daughter, we headed home. We visited CD's daughter in Las Cruces, New Mexico, where we got the rare and unexpected treat of having to keep our heads low during a tornado warning.

Our last official stop was in Brevard, North Carolina, where Joyce and Frank Pearsall have retired. There we did very little archeology other than look at an exhibit in the Cradle of Forestry Visitor Center, and visit the Jim Bob Tinsley Museum and Research Center, where they exhibited some American Indian and historic Old West artifacts. Most of the time was spent learning about mountain culture at the Forestry Festival at the Cradle of Forestry and listen to true native, non-commercial, Bluegrass music. It was a great treat and the music was as good as it gets.

The final leg home included our only lack of success. We stopped by Washington County Park to re-visit a black chert outcrop I have known about for 20 years. We wanted to replenish our flint knapping supplies. However, we found that the park was closed, probably a regular Monday schedule.

Otherwise the trip was truly memorable.

**Congratulations to C.K. Gailey for his Elly Doyle award from the Fairfax County Park Authority.**

**The ASV ANNUAL MEETING is on October 29-31<sup>st</sup> 2004 in Lexington, Virginia!**

## **Alexandria Archaeology Celebrates Virginia Archaeology Month**

During October, the Alexandria Archaeology Museum is celebrating Virginia Archaeology Month with the following special events designed to teach visitors of all ages about archaeology in Alexandria:

### **Saturday, October 2**

Alexandria Heritage Trail Bike Ride (10 a.m.) - A 15-mile, three- to four-hour bike tour celebrating the Alexandria Heritage Trail and the Walk and Bike the Alexandria Heritage Trail Guide Book. Some hills. Free; reservations and helmets are required.

Art Safari Museum Open House (1 to 4 p.m.) - Hands-On Family Fun! Free and open to the public.

Site Tour of the Shuter's Hill Excavation Site (1:30 to 3 p.m.) - Join City archaeologists for an in-depth site tour of the Shuter's Hill excavation site, located at the George Washington Masonic National Memorial, 101 Callahan Drive. Tour begins promptly at 1:30 p.m.

### **Monday thru Friday, October 4 - 8**

Archaeological Curation, Conservation, and Collection Management. See [www.npi.org](http://www.npi.org) for details and fees.

### **Saturday, October 23**

What Lies Beneath Our Feet (10 a.m. to Noon) - Guided walking tour of Old Town with City Archaeologist Dr. Pamela Cressey. Meets at the Alexandria Archaeology Museum. Free; reservations required.

### **Saturday, October 30**

Historic Alexandria Hauntings: Night of Lost Souls (7 to 10 p.m.) - A spine-tingling but family-friendly Halloween celebration. Historic Hauntings invites visitors to investigate so-called unexplained occurrences, peculiar tales, and persistent legends surrounding Alexandria's Market Square, Carlyle House -- complete with a spooky excavation site -- and Gadsby's Tavern Museum. Costumes encouraged. Admission: \$10/adults, \$5/12 years and under. Call 703.549.2997. [www.HistoricAlexandria.org](http://www.HistoricAlexandria.org)

The Alexandria Archaeology Museum is located in the Torpedo Factory Art Center, 105 N. Union Street, Studio #327. For more information, call 703.838.4399.

## NVC/ASV CHAPTER OFFICERS

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## NVC/ASV MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone (H): \_\_\_\_\_  
(W): \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

EMAIL: \_\_\_\_\_

Individual (\$15) \_\_\_\_\_  
Student (\$5) \_\_\_\_\_  
Family (\$17) \_\_\_\_\_

New \_\_\_\_\_

Renewal \_\_\_\_\_

Return to:  
NVC/Archeological Society of Virginia  
2855 Annandale Rd.  
Falls Church, VA 22042

*Chapter members are encouraged to join our parent organization, the Archeological Society of Virginia.*

**The Chapter meets at 7:30p.m. on the second Thursday of each month at the James Lee Center at the above address.**

**EVERYONE IS WELCOME!!!!**

### **The Datum Point**

Northern Virginia Chapter  
Archeological Society of Virginia  
2855 Annandale Rd.  
Falls Church, VA 22042

ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED