



The Datum Point

NORTHERN VIRGINIA CHAPTER OF THE
ARCHEOLOGICAL SOCIETY OF VIRGINIA

April 2005

From the President – Patrick O’Neill

Spring, sunshine, longer daylight hours, volunteering!! It's that time of the year where we can get out and enjoy the world around us. Look in this issue for volunteer opportunities and upcoming events! There are also announcements on awards, gifts, website links and many more items of interest! Get Involved!!!!

This Month Really is SHOW & TELL

Next meeting: 7:30 p.m., Wednesday April 13

This month we want to try something new for the monthly meeting - a Show and Tell!!! Bring anything you want to show, share, learn about, or tell about to the meeting. For example, I will bring some sharks teeth from Kansas and an alibates projectile point from Texas! It can be an antique, artifact, article, you name it!! Let's spice this night up!!!

Volunteer Opportunities!

Bristoe Station - Prince William County

Red Barbour has asked me to see about doing some more work at the Bristoe Station Battlefield site, in particular, to look for additional gravesites as well as do more probing in the 10th Alabama Confederate Cemetery. He has promised me that there will be no bulldozer this time, only our unobtrusive probing and possibly some ground penetrating radar (GPR).

Mount Vernon Talk

Patrick O'Neill will give a talk on Mount Vernon at the City of Fairfax Museum, Sunday April 10, 2005. The talk begins at 2 pm and refreshments will be served (probably no beer, sorry!).

Chapter Awards

It was astonishing to find out that Edith Sprouse was not a member of the Archeological Society of Virginia, and therefore, cannot be nominated for the

5-year posthumous lifetime achievement award. As a result, though, maybe the Northern Virginia Chapter should have an annual award for best volunteer and one every two or three years for lifetime award for those whose have passed away, such as Dave Rubis, Edith Sprouse, and Pat Gallagher, to name a few. What do you think? Let us know at the meeting or email an officer!

County Happenings in Archaeology Mike Johnson

Land Bay A (44FX2327) - The developer gave us three more weeks of field work on the site before it was developed. We were able to excavate almost 500 square feet more and investigate the possibility of additional features.

The crew identified two Early Archaic components: one during clean up excavations in Block J in the east center of the site and another along the eastern edge near the spring head (Block M). We also got a possible Early Archaic Palmer point fragment from four small clean up squares in Block K. That square had produced a quartz, ramped endscraper, which is either Paleoindian or Early Archaic. The point fragment helps tie down the chronology of the block.

New Blocks M, N, O and P were designed to fill in areas that had not been tested in 2003 and 2004. Blocks M and N were productive with moderate artifact and fire cracked rock concentrations, both indicating that the site has numerous isolated activity areas.

Block O proved to have little promise and was abandoned after being tested with two trenches. The results from Block P are pending.

Scholarship Fund-C.K. Gailey

The Chapter has scholarships available through the Julian Williams and Eleanor Mullen Memorial Field Study Scholarship Fund. The Scholarship can cover tuition, fees, travel, lodging, equipment,

supplies and other expenses to attend any field school. Applications are available from the Vice-President (see him at the meeting on Wed.) Since no Chapter member has applied this year, the scholarships are open to all ASV members (of at least one year.) Deadline for applications is May 15, 2005; applications can be returned to any Chapter officer, or addressed to the Chapter at the Archeology Lab address.

ASV Awards

The Archeological Society of Virginia (ASV) may give two awards each year to individuals who have demonstrated outstanding performance in Virginia archeology - one to an amateur archeologist and one to a professional archeologist. The awards cannot be made without your help. Think about people that you know who have contributed to Virginia archeology and nominate them. Ballots and further information can be obtained from Patrick O'Neill (see contact info on the back of the Datum Point).

New Chapter Gifts

George Monken, Diane Schug-O'Neill

It's time to reconsider new gifts. We're running out of our coolers and we have a long-standing tradition of giving a speaker's gift. At our last meeting (March) it was decided that we NOT continue with the coolers.

At the April meeting there will be a call to vote on the item(s) we want to sell and give as gifts to speakers. Additionally, the vote will give permission to George and Diane to purchase item(s) with Chapter funds to be sold and given as gifts.

The vote will be:

- A) Should the Chapter approve the purchase of adjustable **baseball caps** (with stitched Chapter logo) for resale and gifts to speakers?
- B) Should the Chapter approve the purchase of **fanny packs** with a water bottle (with stenciled logo) for resale and gifts to speakers?
- C) Should the Chapter investigate other items for resale and as gifts to speakers instead of the fanny packs and/or hats?

Prices for said item(s) will not exceed \$1500 -- \$1700. If initial cost exceeds this amount, a chapter member will provide a "no-cost" loan to make up the difference.

We have investigated costs of hats and fanny packs. Pre-orders will lessen the initial outlay by the Chapter. Prices will be listed in the May-August Datum Points.

	Pre-Order	Post-Order	Sweetheart deal (hat & pack)
Hats	\$12.00	\$15.00	\$20.00 (Pre-order)
Packs	\$10.50	\$12.50	\$23.00 (Post-order)

The hat and fanny packs will have the Chapter logo, as seen in the *Datum Point* masthead. The fanny packs will be in one color with the logo stenciled on in white. The adjustable hats will be available in 5 color options, with the logo stitched in black on a 6-panel cap.

Chapter members may vote on which object(s) is selected by attending the April meeting.

Underwater Archeology

The photo below is courtesy of Dennis Knepper, archaeologist for Parsons, Inc.



Here's what he said about the photo: I was in Barbados helping teach a class in underwater archaeology and maritime cultural resource management for an environmental conservation group. We conducted a field school on a wreck in shallow water (20 ft). The vessel was part of a shipwreck trail consisting of several ships and barges that were intentionally sunk as artificial reefs. The site is popular with snorkelers and SCUBA divers, both tourists and locals. A couple of glass-bottomed boats take people out to the site as well. Needless to say, we had a great time. The people in the class were very enthusiastic, and so, hopefully, we've helped plant the seed of a maritime heritage preservation program there.

Adventures in Arizona By Jackie Cuyler

Imagine my pleasant surprise that soon after moving to the desert southwest I met a fellow northern Virginian and former South Lakes High School graduate who had also emigrated to Arizona. Anna Neuzil is an archaeology Ph.D. student at the University of Arizona who is working on her dissertation under a Center for Desert Archaeology Preservation Fellowship. For those of you who worked on the Centreville tan yards with archaeologist Larry Moore, you may remember Anna. She volunteered with the Northern Virginia Chapter while in high school nearly ten years ago.

After completing my application to volunteer with the Center for Desert Archaeology, I was fortunate enough to receive a phone call from Anna asking if I would be interested in helping. Anna is working on a study of migrations of Native Americans across the southwest and specifically has inventoried Classic Period (1200-1450 AD) sites in the Safford, Arizona region. Safford is two hours northwest of Tucson. Soon after meeting Anna at the lab, I joined her on a long weekend recording sites, both on public and private lands (with permission from landowners). Although all of the sites had been vandalized we were able to collect a number of diagnostic artifacts, including potsherds and lithics, which looters left scattered on the ground.

Volunteers have also been assisting Dr. Jeff Clark to complete a survey of nearly 800 acres of Bureau of Land Management (BLM) land in Safford. In six days we climbed mesas and stumbled across rock-strewn dry washes. The best sites were located on the last day, no surprise to anyone involved in archaeology. On top of a mesa overlooking the Gila River Valley we found potsherds, stone tools and rock piles, evidence of several thousand years of occupation. Down below near a wash and along the sloping sides of a mesa were stone terraces designed to irrigate crops. Prehistoric farmers would have grown agave (high in protein and fiber), maize, beans, squash and cotton.

In the sandy soil we saw fresh mountain lion tracks-while we were watching the ground the big cats were watching us from on high. Warming in the hot sun on a cool windy day we encountered a rattlesnake-we backed away, leaving him a wide berth. Hawks soared overhead and we could hear no traffic, simply the roar of the Gila River. The

surrounding mountains were covered with Mexican poppies and glowed fiery gold in the late afternoon.

Lab projects I have assisted with include an analysis of obsidian artifacts temporarily on loan from museum collections statewide. Archaeologists believe that most obsidian used by Native Americans in this area originated from twenty specific sites in Arizona. In order to help decipher migration patterns the finest pieces of obsidian from the collection will be sent for scientific analysis to determine exact point of origin.

My husband, Chris, and I have also completed training as volunteer monitors for the Site Steward Program (thanks George and Vicki Monken for the tip). As stewards appointed by the State Historic Preservation Office we will be assigned either a prehistoric or historic site to monitor for the purpose of reporting any signs of vandalism. Generally the sites are on public lands (BLM, National Park Service, National Forest Service, etc.). Stewards can be involved in many other activities including training, assisting in surveys, serving as community liaison for archaeology and monitoring construction sites to see if burials are exposed.

The archaeology of this area of our country is a new experience for me. Although glad to be involved here, I miss Virginia and the south, so steeped in a history that cannot be erased by concrete land masses, housing developments and shopping malls. And of course, the Saturday crew, past and present. You know who you are.



This photo is of an abandoned adobe ranchhouse from the last quarter of the 19th century. They probably would have farmed cotton and irrigated their fields from the Gila River.

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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 Wednesday of each month at the James Lee Center at the above address.

EVERYONE IS WELCOME!!!!

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ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED