

The Datum Point

Newsletter of the
**NORTHERN VIRGINIA CHAPTER OF THE
ARCHEOLOGICAL SOCIETY OF VIRGINIA**

Website – www.nvcasv.org

July 2006

From the President – Patrick O'Neill

The Chapter voted to have the Summer Picnic on Saturday **August 5th, 2006**, at **Cox Farms** at the southwest corner of Braddock and Pleasant Valley Roads, 5 miles west of Centreville (15621 Braddock Road, Centreville, VA 20120 (703) 830-4121)). C.D. Cox has graciously volunteered a spot next to a pond and barn on the site with picnic tables etc.! The Chapter will provide the meats, buns, and condiments, so bring something like a salad, chips, veggies, deserts, and sodas or other fun things! In case of extreme heat or more wet weather, we may have it at the O'Neill house in Burke. To make sure, call Patrick O'Neill at 703-244-6275 when the time comes!

July 12, 2006 Chapter Meeting

Speaker –. Stuart J. Fiedel,
Senior Archaeologist, The Louis Berger Group, Inc.

Topic - Climate Change and Point Style Shifts: A Tentative Correlation

Radiocarbon dates associated with Middle Atlantic/Northeast projectile point types were collected and calibrated. Initiation or expansion dates for several types appear to correlate with cold events marked by ice-rafted debris deposits in the North Atlantic. These cold events often correspond to synchronous changes in North American vegetation. The 4200 cal BP event that precedes BROADSPEAR expansion is synchronous with a "megadrought." Did abrupt climate changes cause the observed style changes? If so, what socio-cultural dynamics were involved?

Dr. Fiedel received his B.A. in Anthropology from Columbia University in 1973, and his Ph.D. in Anthropology from the University of Pennsylvania in 1979. Fiedel is the author of "Prehistory of the Americas" (Cambridge University Press 1987, revised 1992) as well as numerous articles on diverse topics including Paleoindian origins, radiocarbon dating, Neolithic Europe, migration theory, Pleistocene and Holocene climate change, Algonquian languages, and residue analysis. He currently earns his daily bread supervising archaeological research projects and historic preservation studies as Senior Archaeologist for The Louis Berger Group in Washington, D.C.

Chapter News –

**Mike Johnson and C.K. Gailey participate in
Massachusetts reburial ceremony of Centreville Civil
War Union Soldiers.**



**Reinactors serving as pall bearers at the 2006 Bourne
National Cemetery ceremony**

In 1997 the Fairfax County Park Authority, with the assistance of Dr. Doug Owsly excavated six Civil War soldiers at the current MacDonald's Restaurant site along Rt. 28 just south of Centreville. Volunteers from the Northern Virginia Chapter-ASV and the Northern Virginia Relic Hunters Association (NVRHA) provided the crew.

One of the soldiers was discovered by a relic hunter named, Kevin Ambrose, who reported the discovery to MacDonald's which was planning to build its restaurant on the site. The County agreed to organize the removal. However, in the process of relocating the grave, Owsly, his assistant and Chapter member, Rich Richardson and County staff were able to locate five additional graves. Under an expedited permit from the Virginia Department of Historic Resources (VDHR) the six soldiers were excavated in February of 1997.

County volunteers cleaned and catalogued the skeletons and associated artifacts, which included coffin wood and nails, uniform cloth, a pair of shoes, military and underwear buttons, one musket ball and a quartzite American Indian arrow point. The only useful artifacts were the military buttons which included "eagle I" and "eagle shield" styles. These strongly suggested militia uniforms, which would place the soldiers early in the war.

The skeletal remains were sent to the Smithsonian where Dr. Owsly conducted a forensic evaluation. He was also authorized to do stable isotope analysis to determine diet and possible areas where the soldiers had grown up. It was hoped this would help narrow what military units they were from.

C.K Gailey, Pat Gallagher and Ed Hon from the Chapter conducted extensive archival research to identify Confederate and Union soldiers who might have died at Centreville. They were able to narrow the list down to either early Massachusetts and New York or later New York units. Dalton Rector of the NVRHA conducted an independent study that was critical in narrowing the lists down to about 13 soldiers of the 1st Massachusetts, who died at the Battle of Blackburn's Ford, three day before the First Battle of Manassas/Bull Run. This process took several years.

Reburial was delayed for the remainder of the time to identify potential next-of-kin donors and arrange for DNA testing to hone down the identities further. This effort was not successful. So, when the offer came from Frank Haley of the Massachusetts Sons of Union Veterans to arrange for a proper reburial, the Park Authority accepted the offer.

The soldiers were buried with full military honors at the Bourne National Cemetery at Cape Cod on June 10, 2006. The ceremony included Civil War Reinactors and modern service men and women from the local Air Force Base. One of the most moving parts of the ceremony was the transfer of each soldier's flag draped coffin from a group of four pall bearers dressed in Civil War era Union uniforms to the modern military honor guard. This was done to the beat of a Civil War period funeral march played by reinactors on fife and drum. Taps was played on a real bugle. CK Gailey and Mike Johnson accompanied the remains to Massachusetts. More than 200 people attended in a cold rain. **Mike Johnson**

(Editors note: Both Mike and CK appeared both locally on Massachusetts TV and nationally on CNN in news stories about the burial ceremony. As the great grandson of three Union Veterans and a member of the Sons of Union Veterans, I want to personally thank Mike and CK for their efforts to give these soldiers an honorable burial.)

Langert 06 - Surprisingly, no effort has been made yet by the property owner to develop the site. As a result, the Park Authority and volunteers have been able to excavate more than 600 square feet and started two 6x6-foot excavation squares to detect possible deeper archeological remains.

The latest block (H) has proven to be one of the most productive. It provided the earliest and the latest evidence for occupation. Early on it produced several Middle Archaic Lobate points and later it produced four Late Woodland triangular points. Several probable Late Woodland pottery fragments also have been recovered from the wet screening. The two excavation squares also have produced artifacts in the second level at 6-8 inches deep. One of the squares also produced a scatter of charcoal in the second level. Work will continue on the site as long as possible.



(44FX3176-Overview Crew 1) Chris Ramey (standing) and Tom Hutchison examine dry screen residue.

Lexington Plantation - The long anticipated research assessment on George Mason V's Lexington Plantation began in mid-June. Since only a couple of days have been spent on the site, nothing is available yet to report on.

Archaeological News

Arlington County to Hire Archeological Consultant

Arlington County has appropriated money to retain an archaeological consultant. Evidently the Board of Supervisors was surprised to learn that they are the only local jurisdiction that doesn't specifically fund archaeology. So beginning July 1 there is a modest amount of money for archaeology which may be used first to research the known archaeology of Arlington County. It's a start. **Mary Green**

Archeological Lectures & Events

Pre-Columbian Society of Washington, DC annual symposium "Adventures in Pre-Columbian Studies: Illuminating the Past and Glimpsing the Future"

Location: U.S. Navy Memorial, 701 Pennsylvania Ave., Washington, DC

Time: Saturday, September 16, 2006, at the Registration: 8:30, Opening remarks: 9:10.

Cost: \$70 members; \$85 nonmembers

The symposium is a "one-day journey into the field of pre-Columbian studies as told through the career of Elizabeth P. Benson, a remarkable scholar whose achievements span the many distinct disciplines and rich cultural diversity that defines this fascinating subject. Elizabeth Benson not only created the Pre-Columbian Studies Program at the Dumbarton Oaks in Washington, D.C., she organized the first Maya hieroglyphic study group in the U.S." For additional information visit www.pscwdc.org. **Mary Green**

Archeological Travel

Have you visited an archeological site recently that you think might be of interest to chapter members? Send your information to the DP editor. Pictures are welcome, but not required. There is no length requirement--a sentence or two or a paragraph is fine.

Have you ever seen a Datum Point in the wild? Well they do exit.



A Datum Point stake located at the Aztec Ruins National Monument, Aztec, New Mexico.

Professional archeologists get very irritated when these markers are removed by tourists and are known to make nasty remarks about the perpetrators family lineage. National Park Rangers will impose even harsher penalties upon tourists poaching wild Datum Points and native artifacts from these sites. Joking aside, pot hunters looting sites is a major problem, especially on Bureau of Land Management property, as these areas are rarely patrolled by BLM law officers.

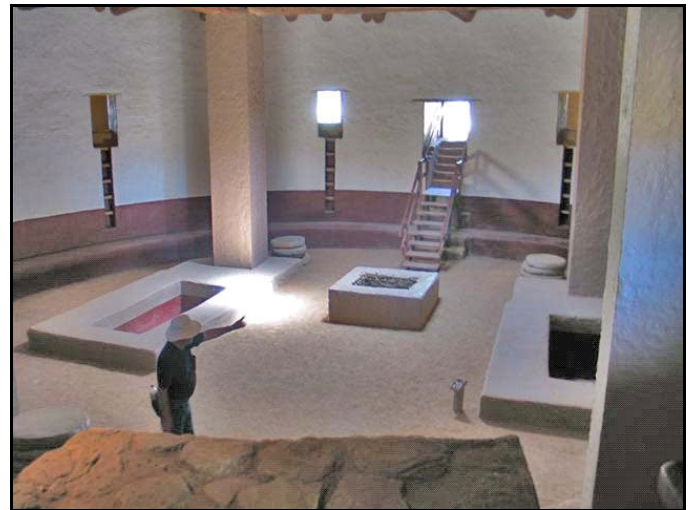
The DP editor and his wife visited these and many other Anasazi sites in Colorado, Utah, Arizona, and New Mexico in May. These pictures were taken by his wife, Jean Boltz, who is also a chapter member.



The excavated Anasazi Indian ruins found at Aztec National Monument.



Archeologists reconstructed the large Kiva at Aztec Ruins National Monument.



View inside the great Kiva showing the main entrance, fireplace, and two pits, whose exact function is unknown.

Volunteer Opportunities

Rippon Lodge, Site 44PW1250, Archaeology Volunteer Opportunity

Excavation continues at the Rippon Lodge Garage Extension, site 44PW1250. So far we have opened seven 1 by 1 meter test units. Test units 50 and 55 found 18th and 19th century domestic and architectural artifacts within a mixed plowzone context. Test units 51, 53, 54, and 56 identified several yet to be excavated features. Test unit 52 is still in the plowzone stratum. I hope to be in the field every Friday during the month of July and in the field Saturday July 15 and July 22. The normal field hours will be 9 a.m. through 3:30 p.m.

Call or e-mail Justin Patton, County Archaeologist, Prince William County Planning Office to confirm the field work
County Archaeologist, Prince William County Planning Office
Direct: 703.792.5729, jspatton@pwcgov.org, Metro: 703.631.1703, ex 5729, Fax: 703.792.4758

Volunteering at Rippon Lodge, Prince William County

NVC members went to Rippon Lodge in June to see the excavations conducted by Prince William County Archaeologist Justin Patton. Signage showing the previous investigations and site layout were very helpful in letting visitors know where and why the excavations were being conducted. NVC officers George and Vicki Monken have participated in the digs on several occasions, and there were several volunteers on hand to sift the dirt and collect the artifacts. Mr. Patton has indicated that future excavation days are in the planning after a small feature was discovered.



Justin Patton (left) overseeing George Monken excavating!



Volunteers sifting the soil

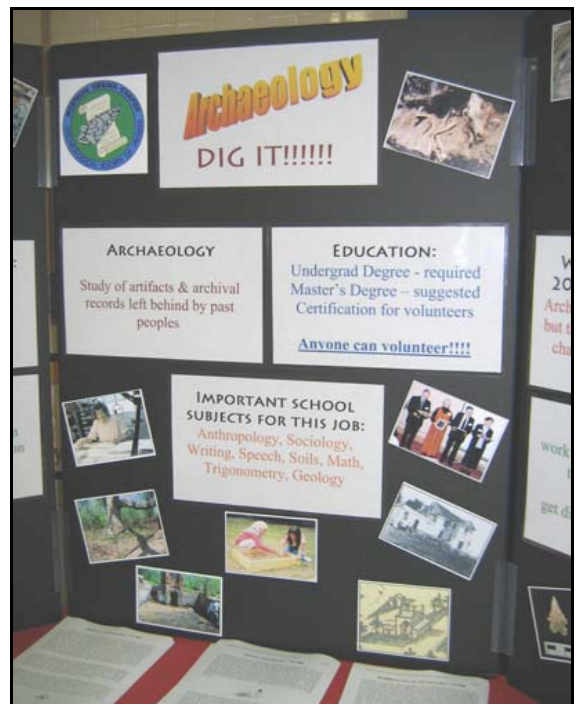
Career Day, Bren Mar Elementary, Alexandria City

Patrick O'Neill

I gave 8 short presentations to small groups of 3rd, 4th, 5th, and 6th graders at the Bren Mar Elementary School off Edsall Road in Alexandria. Over two dozen professionals set up booths in the school gym, including pipe fitters, scientist, dental hygienist, police, military, interpreters, soil person, and me. We were given 8 minutes for short presentations our career and then a 2-minute question and answer session. Then, a bell rang to have the students rotate to another career booth. Questions ranged from the perennial "have you found any dinosaur bones" to "is this career going to be around in 20 years?" It was fun and I hope to be involved next year, maybe with some help from NVC members! I have kept the exhibit intact in case anyone wants to use it.



Archaeology booth



Complete with NVC Chapter logo (top left)!

Excavation of the Centreville Soldiers' Gravesites



Chapter member, Joyce Pearsall begins excavation of one of the six graves in 1997. Four of the six grave shafts are marked with pink flagging tape.



The Smithsonian Institution's Dr. Doug Owsly displays an underwear button recovered during screening the burial fill in 1997.

Burial of the Centreville Civil War Soldiers



Union Reinactors Honor Guard and Massachusetts Army National Guardsmen



The moving transfer of one flag draped coffin of a Massachusetts militia soldier from the past as represented by Civil War reenactors to the present as represented by a modern Army National Guard honor detail.

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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!!!!

The Datum Point

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

ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED