



The Datum Point

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

Website – www.nvcasv.org

May 2007

May 9th, 2007 Chapter Meeting

Topic – Archaeology at Brentmoor:
The Spilman-Mosby House: Current
Projects and Future Plans

Speaker – Kay McCarron

Dr. Kay McCarron is currently the Executive Director of the John Singleton Mosby Museum and Education Center. Dr. McCarron received her BA degree in history and political science from Agnes Scott College in Decatur, Georgia. She received her MA in Anthropology and her Ph.D. in Education from the University of Virginia. Dr. McCarron has been a professional archaeologist for the past 30 years and has worked in the fields of archaeology, historic preservation and museum studies in the Colorado Preservation Office, the Charleston Museum, the Manassas Museum and the Fairfax County Heritage Resources Branch.

Dr. McCarron is currently researching the women who lived at Brentmoor: The Spilman-Mosby House in the last half of the nineteenth century. In addition, she is developing educational programming through partnerships with the Mosby Heritage Area, the Warrenton Antiquarian Society and the Afro-American Historical Society of Fauquier County. Dr. McCarron is a member of the Council of Virginia Archaeologists, the Archeological Society of Virginia, the Virginia Association of Museums, the Society for Historical Archaeology, the Fauquier County Historical Society and the International Society for Technology in Education. She serves on the Advisory Boards of Weston, The Warrenton Antiquarian Society historic site, and the Historic Preservation Certificate Program of the Northern Virginia Community College, Loudoun Campus.

From the President – Patrick O'Neill

Summer is here with several chances to get out and enjoy archaeology!!! Diane and I, with Bridget, enjoyed a two-week stay in Mecklenburg, Germany, and Tyrol, Italy, and will probably give a talk later this year on the archaeology we observed in Europe! The Silent Auction was a huge success in April, raising more than the amount we pledged to the VARC. A special thank you goes to those that came and spent! Northern Virginia Chapter rules!!!!!!!

June's Speaker will be Dr. Barbara Heath

John Singleton Mosby

March 1865



Volunteering

RIVERBEND, FROM A VOLUNTEER'S POINT OF VIEW

By Gene Silva
(Certification Student)

Mike Johnson is conducting a survey a Riverbend County Park property and is using volunteers to help get the area covered. The site is a very nice one and the time of year is super for working in the field. Lots of trees and varying

terrain make the prowling very interesting, and it's coupled with weather meaning comfort while walking the ground and a bit too cold for the bugs to be out in force. Also, the new low growth hasn't come in, so it's easy to walk in the woods. It's a nice area to wander and a nice time of year to be in the field.

The parkland borders on the Potomac, so people have been in the area for a long time. The result: prehistoric and historic sites. This also allows for discussion of where or why the people of a given time period might have occupied a site. This has ranged from talk of rock raw material sources for prehistoric folk, to historic quarry operations in the area, and whether an area that has a lot of rusted metal might have been the site of an illegal whiskey still. Also, a point has been found each day we have been out. This is a very good omen and incentive for persons interested in prehistoric folk. Interesting observations on the plants in the area have been made ranging from what the local flora are to the identification of areas with foreign plants and trees. There are a lot of vestigial roads and paths in the region adding complexity to trying to interpret the past.

Surveys are fun because there is no drudge work in the field. We are on the move and looking for prizes and, when the mood strikes, you can do a STP just to make sure that what is on the surface is representative of the area. There is a lot of freedom to explore what you think might be fruitful under the overall mandate of surveying thoroughly.

An important factor for volunteers is always lunch. Riverbend offers some very nice sites for lunch eating. This includes areas with lovely views of the Potomac and sheltered areas that are comfortable and promote discussion of the area and archaeology in general. Also, there are whitetail deer, some very healthy and colorful cardinals, and various other critters to see as you drive in and out of the area. All in all, the Riverbend survey is a great way to start the field year.

THREE CHAPTER MEMBERS HONORED BY VOLUNTEER FAIRFAX

Chapter members were recognized on April 24th by Volunteer Fairfax, the umbrella volunteer organization for the county. **Bill Brickhill**, **C.K. Gailey** and **Chris Ramey** were presented with Volunteer Benchmark Awards, Bill and Chris for having more than 250 hours of service in 2006 and C.K. for having more than 500 hours. Obviously, being able to give that much time is a combination of personal circumstances among many other factors, and anyone who volunteers any time at all is making a valuable contribution to the people of the county.

April's Meeting / Auction – Great Success!!

The meeting was a great success. Members brought many items to show & tell, CD Cox shared his usual *unusual* stories to go along with the items he brought. The auction was a success – we surpassed the Challenge from the New River Valley Chapter! Total amount raised will not be released as

there is still one item up for sale – tickets to the Alexandria Archaeology Walk (July 14th - \$20).

We owe hearty thanks to the following donors of items for the auction:

Barbara Welch
Paul Inashima
Ann Wood
Justin Patton
Pat O'Neill
C.D. Cox
John Singleton Mosby Museum
Alexandria Archeology
Friends of Gunston Hall
Mt. Vernon Archeology
Prince William Archaeology

Please note that one item is still available for purchase. The archeological tour of Alexandria, on July 14th, is available for \$20 per person. See or call *C.K. Gailey* at the James Lee Lab.

Funds were also raised for the Dave Rubis Research Fund.

April also brought the Chapter a wonderful donation of \$589.21 from an extremely generous benefactor. This donation has allowed the Chapter to pay off the remaining amount from the purchase of hats and packs. *Many thanks to this person.*

Fairfax County

RIVERBEND PARK SURVEY

By Mike Johnson

During April, Park Authority Archeology staff and volunteers started work on a reconnaissance level survey of Fairfax County's Riverbend Park along the Potomac River above Great Falls National Park. Field sessions start at the Park Visitor's Center on Tuesdays at 9:30 a.m., where the crew meets before heading off to the day's survey area. Currently, the crew is working in the southern end of the park. The plan is to proceed northward along the Potomac until the Park is completely surveyed.

The process involves a thorough pedestrian reconnaissance in which all areas of the Park are walked. Any observed exposed ground is carefully inspected and selectively trowel scraped. Since the Park is largely forest covered eroded uplands, potential stratigraphic sites are confined to the floodplains and the bases of slopes. Selected areas are also subjected to selective shovel/trowel testing. All artifacts are recorded and left in the field.

Three days of surveying were completed in April. They resulted in 12 new prehistoric and historic archeological sites being discovered. To the pleasure of everyone one prehistoric stone point has been found each day. They include two quartz Selby Bay-like points, one apparently being a drill bit, and one rhyolite Piscataway point base discovered in a shovel test by Gene Silva. All appear to date to the Middle Woodland (ca. 500 BC-AD 500).

Historic finds include an apparent 19th century stone quarry, possibly associate with the Great Falls aqueduct. Several more recent historic occupations were found on the quarry floor. One of those occupations appears to be a 1960s fishing park visited by volunteer Scott Silsby when he was a teenager.



Riverbend Quartz Point



Riverbend Quartz Point



Riverbend Rhyolite Point

Field Study Scholarship

The Julian Williams and Eleanor Mullen Memorial Field Study Scholarship is now available to any ASV member in good standing for at least one year, prior to *May 15th*. To apply, please see the form at:

<http://www.nvcasv.org/scholform.html>

and the by-laws at:

<http://www.nvcasv.org/scholarship.html>.

In the past, the scholarship has been given to a group of applicants who presented a joint presentation to meet the requirements. Please do not think you must be in the *Certification Program* to participate – it's a wonderful assistance to anyone participating in a field school.

Datum Point Notes

Just as a reminder, If you are getting this in “hard copy” (via snail mail, US Post) you are welcome to contact the Treasurer, CK Gailey or the *Datum Point* Editor, Diane Schug-O'Neill to make any changes. Because we email our Datum Points to so many members, we are saving enough money to pay for our website. Another bonus to electronic receipt is – color! We still print the *Datum Point* in black & white, but folks on the e-mail list get pictures in color.

Think it over, CK & Diane have contact information on the back cover of the *Datum Point*.

The *Datum Point* Editor will soon be saddled with new, extra responsibilities – please consider article suggestions (web site or book reviews, photos identifying site finds, and the like).

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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