

# The Datum Point

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

Chapter Website – [www.nvcasv.org](http://www.nvcasv.org)

August 2008

## **FROM THE PRESIDENT – ANN WOOD**

Our chapter has voted to hold our annual picnic on Saturday, October 25, as the culmination of a daylong celebration of 30 years of archaeology in Fairfax County.

Liz Crowell has been planning a symposium on Fairfax County archaeology in her role as Cultural Resource Management and Protection Section Manager for the Fairfax County Park Authority. She asks that you give her contact information about any former volunteers that you know of so that they can receive “save the date” announcement

## **More from FCPA Archeology Manager** **Dr. Elizabeth Crowell:**

Come help us celebrate 30 Years of County-Sponsored Archaeology in Fairfax County, Virginia. We have a great deal to celebrate. As a result of the dedication of paid and volunteer staff, interns, other archaeologists working in the county, and the support of the Northern Virginia Chapter of the Archeological Society of Virginia, we have registered more than 3,350 archaeological sites and curate a collection of more than 3 million artifacts from the county.

On October 25, we will be holding a symposium in the theatre at the James Lee Center at 2855 Annandale Road to celebrate the accomplishments of our program and put forth our goals for the next 30 years. Participants in the symposium will include present and former staff, volunteers and interns, many of whom are Chapter members, as well as other supporters.

We are inviting all who are interested in the county archaeology program, past, present and future, to

attend. Among other things you will be seeing as part of our celebration will be exhibits (in the Government Center, in James Lee, and the new Regional Library in Fairfax City), newspaper articles, posters, bookmarks, T-shirts, web pages and more. We will be publishing the proceedings of our symposium, and, as part of this effort, will be conducting oral history interviews that will be included in the proceedings.

## **AUGUST 13, 2008 MEETING** **SHOW & TELL**

This month, bring in an artifact(s) or historical item to share with the Chapter!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

## **FORMER NVC/ASV MEMBER BECOMES** **VICE PRESIDENT OF NEW ASV CHAPTER!**

At an organizational meeting held on March 20, 2008, at the Banshee Reeks Nature Preserve in Loudoun County, Virginia, the Banshee Reeks Chapter of the Archeological Society of Virginia was formed. Officers elected were:

President –	Michael Clem
Vice President –	Bob Shuey
Secretary-	Dale DeCarlo
Treasurer –	Frank McLaughlin

### **Banshee Reeks Charter Chapter Members:**

Ron Circe, Frank Good, Robin Stack, Bob Shuey, Gary Giuffrida, Jan Fleming, Gail Adams, Frank McLaughlin, David McCarthy, Whitney McKim, Jean Thomey, Karen Quanbeck, Bret Dezarn, Mackenzie Rohm, Mary Novotny, Joe McDonald, Tracey Schneider, Dale Decarlo Ellie Florance, Joe Sarsfield, Michael Clem

## **ASV THANK YOU!**

*Our chapter received the following letter from Joey Moldenhauer, chair of the ASV-VARC Fundraising Committee:*

On behalf of the Archeological Society of Virginia (ASV), I would like to acknowledge the recent memorial donations by your chapter to the Society in memories of the late Ed Hon and Rick Koestline. These were two great members of the ASV who demonstrated what our organization is all about. Two dedicated volunteers who gave numerous hours of work to the ASV helping to evaluate and preserve Virginia's archeological record. Your chapter continues to be outstanding in recognizing past members through memorial contributions.

Also, to date, we have received seventeen memorial donations from different individuals for Rick. This has been an ASV record. Please thank your members for these donations to the ASV-VARC Project and invite them to visit our new home at the Kittiewan Plantation in Charles City County, Virginia.

As a result of these generous donations, Ed and Rick will have their names entered on the memory board at Kittiewan. They will be missed by the many people who knew them and all the great work they did.

## **HISTORIC MARYLAND MANOR'S DETERIORATING SITUATION**

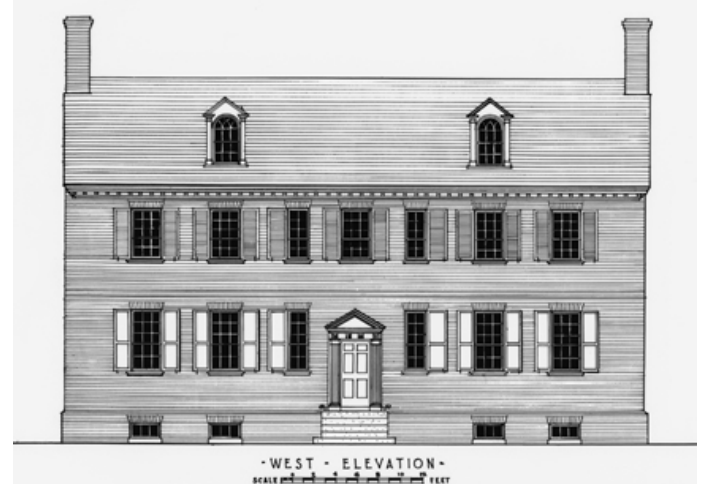
By Marc Fisher, Washington Post  
June 22, 2008

The setting high above the Potomac River is nothing short of spectacular: a long, elegant drive, a grand Colonial manor house and then a wide, rolling lawn descending to the water. Here, just half an hour's drive from the White House, George Washington and his friends fished and dined together.

But we are not at Mount Vernon, not even in Virginia. No, this majestic manse, now sagging and empty, sits in Prince George's County, across the Potomac from the exquisitely rehabilitated historic houses of Virginia. No one lives here, and it's closed to the public. Once the site of magnificent parties and centuries of tobacco farming,

this is a 65-acre estate that got caught up in a fantastic (or foolish) highway scheme -- and lost.

Harmony Hall dates to the 1730s, but since 1966, when its last private owner sold the house to the National Park Service for construction of the Maryland branch of the George Washington Memorial Parkway, the house has fallen into ever-harder times.



The parkway was not built in Maryland; residents of riverside communities such as Oxon Hill and Silesia managed to beat back plans for the road. The government had bought up a fair amount of land, including some gorgeous riverfront estates, and although the Park Service did open a couple of historic sites to the public at Fort Foote and Fort Washington, for example, well, there just isn't enough money to take care of everything.

One Saturday in 1985, Frank Calhoun, a lawyer who retired after 38 years of federal service, saw an ad in The Washington Post offering a chance to lease a historic mansion and live in it. Calhoun, who bred horses, sent a bid to the Park Service and won. He sold his cottage in Rehoboth Beach, Del., his townhouses on Capitol Hill

and two old houses he owned in Delaware and moved with his partner into Harmony Hall.

"I put every dollar I had into that project," says Calhoun, now 72.

Fourteen years later, after he had poured more than \$1 million into the house, putting up an addition, clearing the grounds, improving the systems, Calhoun fell behind on renovations. The Park Service asked him to leave.

That was in 1999. Harmony Hall has been empty -- and in accelerating decline -- since.

"We are grossly unhappy and concerned about what will happen to Harmony Hall because of the Park Service's inability to maintain it," says Dick Krueger, chairman of the Broad Creek Historic District, which includes the house.

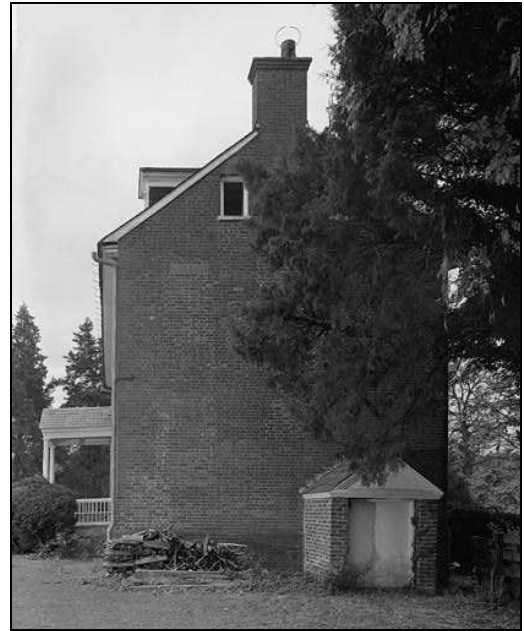
Gayle Hazelwood, superintendent of the Park Service's National Capital Parks-East, counters that "visitors can't appreciate the amount of time it takes us to do things. It's a question of setting priorities."

Parts of Harmony Hall are boarded up. A set of outdoor stairs is missing. There's a new roof, but it's a temporary fix, asphalt shingles where slate is warranted. The site manager for Park Service properties along the Prince George's waterfront, Bill Clark, says he's been trying to get the house up to code by sending in his own staff, enlisting students to clean up the grounds and seeking support from neighbors.

"I promised this community we're going to stabilize this place and give them a place to relax, hear music, just be in peace," Clark says. For now, however, he's one of the few who get to walk the hillside and happen upon hundreds of Canada geese lazing in the sun.

"It's just tragic to see the paint peeling and the plaster crumbling," Calhoun says. "It's sickening. It's as if they just want it to burn down."

The opening of National Harbor, the hotel and retail development along the Potomac just south of the Wilson Bridge and three miles north of Harmony Hall, creates a ready supply of tourists who might enjoy a chance to slip back in time and see what the riverfront was like long before the days of chain restaurants. "Hiding our riverfront sites just isn't working," says David Turner, chairman of the county's Historic Preservation Commission. "If we don't make this riverfront into a destination, we'll lose it to more developments" like National Harbor.



But there's little money for Harmony Hall, says Hazelwood. "It competes with the Frederick Douglass home, which we just put \$4 million into, and with parks such as Fort Washington," she said. "We'd love to do a water trail eventually, but it's probably not realistic. It's a slow process."

As a gesture of good faith, the Park Service is teaming with the Silesia Citizens Association to stage an outdoor concert July 19 at Harmony Hall, a chance for locals and visitors to glimpse the fallen splendor and imagine what might be once again.

"This is the Mount Vernon of the Maryland side of the river," says Carol Tilch, a leader of the Silesia group and a member of a family that lived and worked at the house for generations. "There's no way Harmony Hall is going to get the work it needs from the Park Service unless the house gets a lot of attention. I just believe that if you do things for the right reasons, somehow they will get done."

**CORRECTION FROM THE PRESIDENT: THE SCHOLARSHIP AMOUNT APPROVED FOR THE FALL TRIP TO THE GAULT SITE IN TEXAS WAS \$1,000, NOT \$750 AS REPORTED LAST MONTH.**



## **FIELD WORK OPPORTUNITY IN MARYLAND**

By Charlie Hall

In case you didn't get enough field work, I have great news for you! The Archeological Society of Maryland is gearing up to partner with the Maryland Historical Trust's Terrestrial Archeological Program to investigate the 17<sup>th</sup> century Grieb site (18KE83) in Kent County, and invites volunteers to join us between August 14<sup>th</sup> and August 18<sup>th</sup> (weekend included).

This testing project will involve formal unit excavation aimed at investigating at least four historic features known on the site, including the (presumed) earth-fast structure that surrounded the already excavated cellar feature, and three surface depressions that probably represent earlier unreported archeological efforts on the site. A field lab will be on-site during the week.

In addition to welcoming archeologists to their property, the Grieb family is inviting volunteers to pitch a tent on their grassy lawn adjacent to the lovely Chester River.

If all of the above isn't enticement enough, the project will be featuring a field mess that will provide three tasty meals a day for the staff and crew.

Best of all – this awesome opportunity can be yours **FREE OF CHARGE!** All you have to do is contact Bruce Thompson at MHT (by phone, 410-514-7663, or email, [bthompson@mdp.state.md.us](mailto:bthompson@mdp.state.md.us)) and reserve a spot on the crew. Space is limited, so don't delay - call Bruce today!

See you in the field,  
Charlie Hall



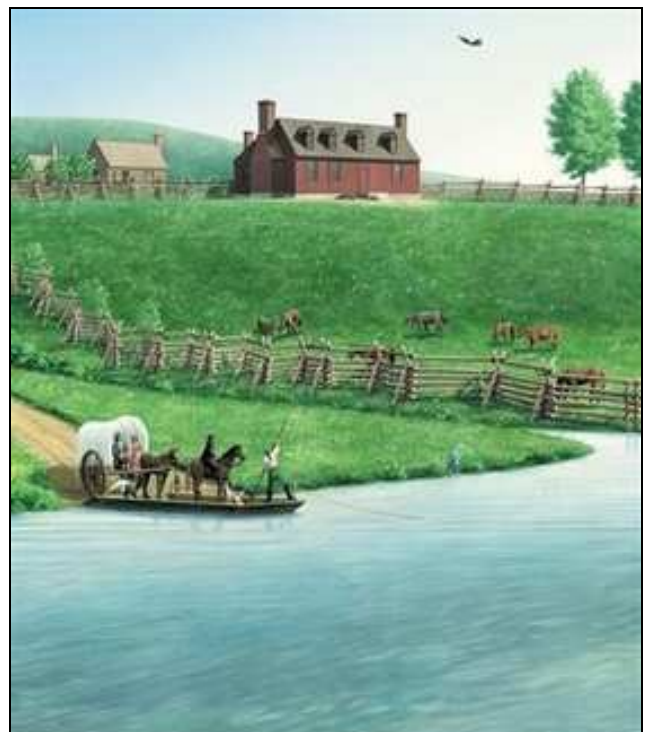
## **BY GEORGE!**

### **WASHINGTON'S ROOTS UNEARTHED, THANKS TO THOSE WHO FOUGHT THE BATTLE OF FERRY FARM.**

*Free-Lance Star* July 6, 2008

AND TO THINK, it could have been a Wal-Mart. News that the foundations of young George Washington's home at Ferry Farm have been unearthed by intrepid archaeologists should warrant a great cry of appreciation ("Huzzah!" seems appropriate) to all those responsible for saving the land in the great Battle of Ferry Farm, c. 1996.

The story, which drew national and even international attention, involved the classic conundrum: Which should prevail, historic preservation or economic development? Although the property in question along State Route 3 in southern Stafford County had long been known to be the location of Washington's home, it had never been sheltered from use or developed as a historic site. During the Civil War, Union troops camped there, stripped most of the trees off the land, and cannibalized the buildings for firewood or other uses. In more recent years, the land was used as a gravel pit.



By 1990, the Samuel Warren family, which then owned the land, had already donated 24 acres to Stafford County as a historic site. In exchange for 15 more acres, the Board of Supervisors, happy at the prospect of more tax revenue, rezoned the rest of the property for commercial use.

Enter Wal-Mart. The mega-retailer proposed building a "Colonial style" 93,000-square-foot store and an associated 30,000-square-foot shopping center on 25 acres adjacent to the historic site. Because of the rezoning, nothing stood between the retail giant and its plans except the county's architectural review board--and some intrepid citizens.

Cessie Howell, a member of the George Washington Boyhood Home Foundation, told The Free Lance-Star in February 1996 that "There's only one spot in the entire nation where George Washington spent his formative years." Mrs. Howell, along with Bill Beck, then president of the Historic Fredericksburg Foundation, rallied local residents to oppose any commercial development of Ferry Farm.

Their work paid off. Protesters by the hundreds filled county meetings, some bearing signs that read, "NO WAL-MART BY GEORGE." An 8-year-old Stafford County boy donated a jar of pennies to the cause. The county historical society got on board, and the message got through--the ARB turned down the plan unanimously.



Still, Wal-Mart, which vowed to appeal the ruling, wouldn't budge, and the landowners understandably pressed the county, saying it expected Stafford to abide by its 1990 agreement and allow commercial development. The breakthrough finally came when

the Kenmore Foundation offered to buy the land. Wal-Mart found another site down the road, and Ferry Farm was saved.

Now all that effort has paid off. After seven years of digging, archaeologists have found wonderful evidence of the Washington family's tenure at Ferry Farm: sewing scissors, figurines, a pipe bowl with a Masonic seal--500,000 artifacts in all. They've unearthed two stone-walled cellars, two root cellars, and the remains of two fireplaces, and they now think they know what the Washington house looked like.

Washington lived at Ferry Farm during his formative years, from age 6 until he was in his 20s. The farm put him on the cusp of the emerging American story: Oceangoing ships would dock across the river at Fredericksburg, while wagons heading west began their journey at the fall line city. How was his world view shaped by his time at Ferry Farm?

What's the big deal, some may ask? No other president, and no other Founding Father, is as iconic as George Washington. While others made important--even irreplaceable--contributions to birthing this nation, Washington's leadership, which was grounded in his character, brought it all together.

We can be proud that so much of Washington's story took root in our region--and give thanks that a group of history-minded individuals took the time to preserve them.

### **GLIMPSE OF PRINCE GEORGE'S PAST: COLONIAL-ERA ARTIFACTS OF EVERYDAY LIFE RETURN TO COUNTY AT ADDISON PLANTATION**

By Ovetta Wiggins

Washington Post Staff Writer  
Wednesday, July 30, 2008; Page B01

They are the everyday items of daily life, tossed off or abandoned by people long gone to their graves, that 300 years later have become the stuff of history.

A button, a bottle, a toothbrush and 300,000 other ordinary relics from colonial-era plantation life on the banks of the Potomac are now historical artifacts, to be examined, admired and cataloged by those who take stock of bygone days.

The items are coming home to the place where they were discovered more than two decades ago, the spot beside the river once known as Oxon Hill Manor or the Addison plantation.

Now it is the site of the glitzy new National Harbor mega-development in Prince George's County, and some of the best of the artifacts will be put on display there.

They reflect the wealth of that era's elite. Perhaps not the garden shears, but certainly the bottles emblazoned with the family name, Addison, and the fancy buttons, ornate furniture knobs and even the toothbrush.

"This is pretty high class," Patricia Samford, director of the Maryland Archeological Conservation Laboratory, said as she surveyed some of the pieces wrapped in sealed plastic bags. "A lot of people didn't have the money to adorn their clothing with these types of buttons, or furniture with these kinds of knobs."

Marveling at the preservation of some of the items, Samford held up an onion-shaped glass bottle, dating to the early 1700s. Next to it was a piece of a metal bottle cap inscribed with the letter "A." Another bottle seal plainly reads "Addison."

The Addisons, apparently wealthy English merchants, used slave labor to grow tobacco, oats and corn on property beside the Potomac that John Addison bought and began expanding in 1687. His descendants sold the land to Zahariah Berry in 1810, and it passed through various hands before the manor house burned down in 1895.

Over the centuries, many things appeared to have broken there. Archeologists recovered more than 5,000 tobacco pipe fragments, pieces of 56 wine bottles bearing the letter "A," and fragments of more than 2,000 bowls, pitchers, water glasses and pieces of stemware.

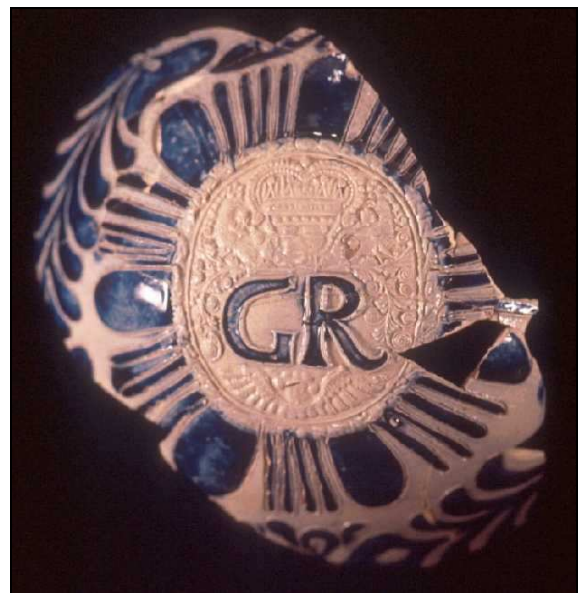
The archeologists and a representative for the National Harbor developers, the Peterson Cos., will

comb through the collection to decide which pieces best illustrate life on the Addison estate.

"We're in the process of making it happen," said Jennifer Stabler, an archeologist and planner coordinator with the Maryland National Park and Planning Commission. "We've met with the developer, and we have been out to the site."

Stabler said that in the next few years, some objects will probably be on display at the visitors center, and photographs of some artifacts might be displayed on panels throughout the development.

"It's an amazing collection to have something like this survive," said Rebecca J. Morehouse, the collections manager at the state laboratory. Morehouse said the artifacts include a brick with three indented paw prints, a mug probably used for coffee and two domino pieces made from bone, as well as the bone handle of a toothbrush.



**Rhenish blue and gray stoneware sherd with King George Medallion**

"It's pretty obvious that they were one of the state's wealthiest families," Morehouse said.

It has taken almost 20 years for the artifacts to make their way back to National Harbor because they were part of a custody battle between National Harbor developer Milton Peterson and John Milner Associates, a preservation firm hired by the property's former owner, John T. Lewis.

Before Peterson took possession of the land, Lewis, who also wanted to build a massive development on



the waterfront property, began excavation on the site. After Peterson bought the property, he was unable to proceed until he resolved a dispute with Milner, who wanted Peterson to pay \$1 million for work his company was supposed to do under an agreement with Lewis.

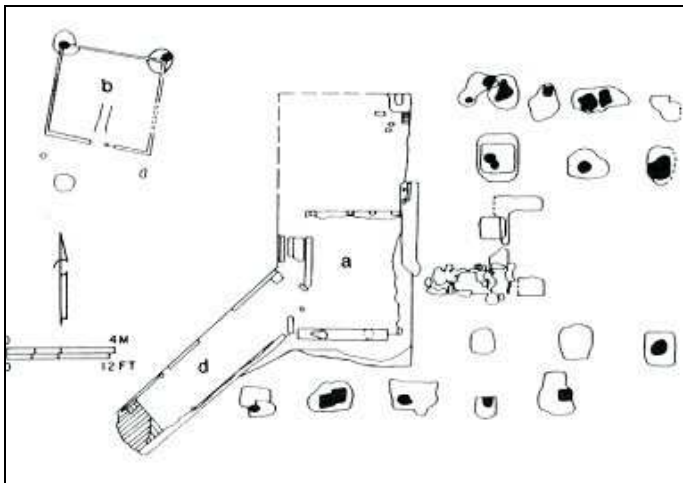
The state trust intervened, reaching an agreement in 2000 that allowed Peterson to pay \$300,000 over three years to the Maryland Historical Trust. The agreement also freed Peterson from any legal or financial obligation to Milner or any other third party for prior excavation work.

### **DP editor comments on Addison Plantation:**

In September 1987, I traveled from North Dakota to Maryland cross country in my 1968 Chevy Impala to work on the Addison Plantation in Oxen Hill as only a 2-year veteran of archaeology field work. Larry Moore, through me as a contact, came back east, too, to work at the Addison Plantation before taking a job with Fairfax County.

The site was truly amazing. The massive brick walls of the manor basement were still intact, as was the huge manor well. The cemetery where the Addisons were buried had not yet been fully interpreted, nestled in the deep woods.

One of the best excavation areas was a 1680s post in ground foundation structure with a cellar and passageway, apparently the Addison's magazine used to store the local militia's arms. The building had burned around 1730, which sealed the cellar in time and provided a closed date range for the debris in the cellar and passageway features.



**Cellar of possible magazine**

It was a travesty in that the regulations in place in 1987 could not stop the development from destroying Addison Plantation. More of a travesty is that the developer was able to get off easy by letting John Milner Assoc. foot the bill for storage and no analysis for over 20 years. But, time goes on, and people will see some of the artifacts on display. Hopefully the cemetery, which has been pedestalled for over 20 years, may find some peace as the last remaining intact portion of the site.

This site was my introduction into Eastern US archaeology and more importantly, to Virginia and Fairfax County! - Patrick O'Neill

### **NORTHERN VIRGINIA ASV CERTIFICATION CANDIDATES**

NVC President Ann Wood is happy to announce Mount Vernon Archaeologist Esther White will give two certification courses at Mount Vernon on Saturday September 6, starting at 9:30 a.m. The courses are: Glass Analysis, and Virginia Archaeology: Prehistoric and Historic Overviews.



To sign up for these courses, please email Ann Wood at [annpwood@comcast.net](mailto:annpwood@comcast.net) (Please note: I will not be replying to you until about mid-August).

Please bring your Blue Book and a lunch/snack to have between courses. The directions follow.

Ann Wood

## NVC/ASV CHAPTER OFFICERS

President	Ann Wood	<a href="mailto:annpwood@comcast.net">annpwood@comcast.net</a> 703-620-6098
Vice President	Patricia Fuller	<a href="mailto:pmfuller@juno.com">pmfuller@juno.com</a>
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Corresponding Sec.	Maggie Johnson	<a href="mailto:stillmaggie@cox.net">stillmaggie@cox.net</a> 703-455-6902
Recording Sec.	Felicia Glapion	<a href="mailto:glapfk11@yahoo.com">glapfk11@yahoo.com</a>
Editor	Patrick O'Neill	<a href="mailto:patrickloneill@verizon.net">patrickloneill@verizon.net</a> 703-244-6275

## Fairfax County Archaeologists (FCPA)

**Chapter Sponsors** call 703-534-3881

Elizabeth Crowell	<a href="mailto:elizabeth.crowell@fairfaxcounty.gov">elizabeth.crowell@fairfaxcounty.gov</a>
Mike Johnson	<a href="mailto:michael.johnson@fairfaxcounty.gov">michael.johnson@fairfaxcounty.gov</a>
Rich Sacchi	<a href="mailto:Richard.Sacchi@fairfaxcounty.gov">Richard.Sacchi@fairfaxcounty.gov</a>

## Other Public Archaeological Programs in N. Va.

Mount Vernon	Esther White	<a href="mailto:ewhite@mountvernon.org">ewhite@mountvernon.org</a>
Gunston Hall	Dave Shonyo	<a href="mailto:archaeology@gunstonhall.org">archaeology@gunstonhall.org</a> 703-550-0441
Loudoun Co. Archaeologist	Mike Clem	<a href="mailto:michael.clem@loudoun.gov">michael.clem@loudoun.gov</a> 703-737-8862
Alexandria Museum	Pam Cressey	<a href="mailto:pamela.cressey@alexandriava.gov">pamela.cressey@alexandriava.gov</a> 703-838-4399 (information)
Pr. William Co. Archaeologist	Justin Patton	<a href="mailto:jspatton@pwecgov.org">jspatton@pwecgov.org</a> 703-792-5729

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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

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