



THE DATUM POINT

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

Chapter Website – www.nvcasv.org

November 2011

FROM THE PRESIDENT – JOHN KELSEY

By the time you get this issue of the *Datum Point*, some eighteen to twenty of us will be at work at the Gault site near Austin, Texas. This is the largest group to go so far, and reflects two things: the site is one of the richest prehistoric sites in America and a gratifying place to work, and there has been talk that the site may close in the not-too-distant future. We hope this isn't our last chance to take advantage of this unique opportunity.

We have received an application from Chapter members of the Colchester crew for scholarship funding to attend and make presentations at the annual meeting of the Society for Historical Archaeology in Baltimore in January 2012. We will be voting on the application at our next meeting on November 9th.

In the spirit of reaching out and broadening Chapter members' opportunities, this issue contains discussions of Alexandria Archaeology and the Archaeological Institute of America and its local society in Washington, D.C. Both organizations sponsor events and activities that will be of interest to many of you.

Closer to home, we're still anticipating an announcement of the new hire in the Fairfax County archaeology office. Dr. Crowell says that a selection has been made, and it awaits approval at the upper levels of the Park Authority. Once that has happened, I'll provide details to all of you.

As usual, the Chapter was well represented at the ASV annual meeting. Our two newly certified avocational archaeologists – **Bill Cole** and **David Whitmire** – were recognized. Bill was there to receive his trowel carrying on the (cont'd pg 2)

NOVEMBER 9, 2011

APPLIED FORENSICS: ANTHROPOLOGY, ARCHAEOLOGY AND BEYOND

By Dr. Dave Clark



David Clark is a professional archaeologist, college educator and public-archaeology outreach specialist with **national** experience from Washington DC to Hawaii. He has worked in the Northern Virginia area for the past 32 years; the last 13 years as a resident of Loudoun County, Virginia. Dr. Clark has **international** archaeological experience from Africa to the South Pacific. His **Loudoun** area research and outreach programs engage **10 thousand+** area residents, yearly. He is a pre-collegiate science education specialist. **Dr. Clark will bring specimens for hands on after the presentation.**

(cont'd from page 1) good work at Westbrook that day. **Mike Johnson** received a special ASV award recognizing his 33 years of service as county archaeologist; the citation noted in particular his work with volunteers and his founding role in the certification program. **Patrick O'Neill** was recognized by Dan Kegley, the ASV President, for leading the ASV successfully through a period of considerable turmoil when he was president. Congratulations to all!

President Dan Kegley celebrated his 46th birthday during the Annual Meeting. Patrick O'Neill fashioned a Ho-Ho Henge (like stone henge) for the occasion.



Bill Cole and Bruce Baker



It's time to start thinking about the Chapter's annual holiday party. The party will be at the James Lee Center on Wednesday, December 14th, beginning at 6:30 instead of our normal 7:30 start time for meetings. For those of you who may be new to the Chapter, this is a potluck dinner. Everyone is asked to bring a dish to share; remember that you don't need to feed the entire group – there's always plenty of food. The Chapter will provide soft drinks, water, paper products, and utensils. We don't try to orchestrate what people bring, but last year we seemed to be heavy on desserts, so casseroles or other main dishes, side dishes, and salads are encouraged. I hope that all of you can come.



Mike Johnson and President Dan Kegley

One item of business at the party will be to elect officers for next year. It's not too late to volunteer. The December *Datum Point* will address the slate of officers explicitly. We are looking for candidates for president and vice president. Will has served successfully as vice president for three years, and has asked to be relieved as he enters a busy senior year. An option is to elect a vice president for 2012 who will transition to the presidency in 2013.



Past President O'Neill and President Kegley

NEW CHAPTER DUES STRUCTURE

As contained in the Chapter by-laws approved in February, 2011, the Chapter has gone to a January to December membership. To support this change, we now have the following dues rules:

- Most current members have an expiration date of 31 Jan 2012. Renewal will be for the next year at the same rates as before: \$15 Individual, \$17 Family, \$5 Student.
- Any member not renewing by 31 March will be disenrolled.
- New members will be at the same rates for members joining January through September. For members joining after October 1st, the annual dues will carry through December of the following year.

Pay attention to the back page of the Datum Point. We will be electing a new treasurer in December and that will mean, as of 1 January 2012, a change in the address to which you should send your dues.

WESTBROOK UPDATE

By Mike Johnson

As we enter possibly the last month (November) of systematic testing and data recovery on Westbrook, a few numbers may be appropriate. We have completed excavating approximately 1,600 square feet of horizontal site area. Although that may seem to be a lot, when we compare that with more than 500 positive, 1x1-foot, shovel tests on a ten foot grid (more than 50,000 square feet of total site area), we realize that we have excavated slightly more than 3% of the site's horizontal extent.

Although the recovered area is relatively small, it was not randomly determined. The selection of various areas to test was based on research questions that were generated by the transect interval sample (TIS) at ten foot interval with a one-foot square sample. Because of the time constraints and large number of questions to be answered, the research had to be prioritized. The initial priorities

were directed at cultural resource management (CRM) in which all questions start out equal and are then prioritized according to recognized gaps in the archeological record. Many of the major chronological gaps were first formally identified in the County's 1986 Heritage Resource Management Plan (HRMP), which earned an Outstanding Achievement Award from the Washington Area Chapter of the American Planning Association. The HRMP planning team was headed by Sue Henry, who was the County's Historical Archeologist in the late 1980s. Much has happened since 1986, including the addition of almost 3,000 more sites to the Fairfax County site registry with the State. The HRMP baseline was based on 713 sites and is in serious need of revision.

The four primary CRM questions are;

1. What is the size of the site;
2. What is the age of the site;
3. What is the function of the site; and
4. What is its horizontal and vertical integrity?

A number of questions were research-related and derived from impressions of what has been learned from the additional 3,000 sites. The list of research questions generated from the TIS include:

1. Does the site have a Paleoamerican component as possibly indicated by the base of a fluted quartz biface and prismatic blade-like flakes made of pitted hornfels?
2. What is the nature of the Culpeper ceramic component, which was not even known to exist in 1986, to include the age, rim design, and vessel form of the pots?
3. What is the nature of the satellite occupation area (discovered during Thunderbird Archeology's Phase I survey) located to the northwest of the main site area?
4. What is the nature of the rare pitted hornfels concentration?
5. What is the nature of the main quartz concentration?

6. What is the nature of the five distinct quartzite occupation areas running down the spine of the ridge line in the center of the site?
7. What are the five oval depressions in the northern edge of the site grid?
8. What is the nature of the Early Archaic component recently identified in Block B?

Westbrook also offered an opportunity to conduct an audit of commonly used CRM methods. We were able to address the issues of sample size. That involved shovel test pit size and interval between STP samples. This kind of test has been done elsewhere in the county, most notably at the Turtle Hill site between Fair Oaks and Vienna. The other part of the audit involved comparing dry screen field and wet screen lab sorting of various artifact raw material classes. That kind of audit has also been done before, most notably at the Lee Road 2 site near Chantilly.

Remaining CRM related questions to be answered in the time remaining include the northern boundary of the site, testing for which was abandoned in favor of other research priorities. The data from the initial testing of the site identified the most common cultural components, but it has taken systematic recovery of large blocks to locate more ephemeral occupations. The data recovery has added large numbers of a wide range of tool types, many of which have not been analyzed yet. The TIS demonstrated that the site has horizontal integrity, which is manifested in the five quartzite activity areas. We have two possible features that will be tested in November.

Hopefully more of the research questions will be answered by the projected construction date in December and in time for the December DP.

COLCHESTER UPDATE

Despite the frequently inclement weather, the CART team has managed to get into the field and has some interesting finds to report.

The historic crew suspended volunteers for several weeks while we began testing at 44FX0704, also known as the “Cemetery Site.” Although there are burials known on the site, the team is focusing excavations in an area with a moderate to dense surface scatter of architectural debris. Initial reconnaissance identified an STP from an earlier survey that was suspected to contain a feature. We placed a unit adjacent to the Phase I test and exposed a feature edge. Excavation within this feature suggests it is architectural with a late-eighteenth century terminal date. Nearby excavations exposed additional features indicative of a separate, but contemporary structure.

After a review of the work previous done at 44FX0704 and having excavated within the site, we feel that we have a grip on the types of materials and deposits on this site and can again take volunteer help. So, we will resume our regular volunteer schedule starting on Thursday, November 3. [Just drop us a message](#) to let us know that you are coming out. Make sure to pack a lunch and be prepared to go *au naturel*.

The prehistoric crew has nearly completed the units that parallel the river. The stratigraphy varies from unit to unit, and has raised some new questions relating to the landform’s dynamic nature. In particular, several of the units display subsoil containing a high percentage of rounded and sub-rounded gravels and cobbles, resembling an ancient stream bed. The most recent units have also yielded a higher percentage of larger sherds of pottery, as well as an interesting variety of lithic materials.

Soon, we will return to the Finger Ridges to finish delineating several sites discovered this past April. The hike out to those sites is significantly longer over varied terrain. We still welcome volunteer involvement every Thursday and Friday, and hope to see some of you out there.

Of course, all the bad weather has been good for helping us to catch up on some of our lab backlog. If you prefer to say dry and inside we always have the usual range of washing, sorting, and rebagging at the Colchester lab. Additionally we are looking to expand volunteer opportunities at the JLC lab.

Anyone interested should contact us to let us about availability.

We remain grateful for all the assistance we have received from ASV. Anyone interested in coming out to play with us need only attend a brief orientation. These can be conducted on site, Thursdays through Saturdays. To schedule an orientation or, for the oriented to let us know you would like to lend a hand, send an email to us at CART.volunteers@gmail.com so we can put you on the calendar. As usual, you can follow our will follow our progress on our blog, <http://cartarchaeology.blogspot.com/>. Thanks for the help and support!

ALEXANDRIA ARCHAEOLOGY

Dr. Liz Crowell and I recently took part in Archaeology Day at Shuter's Hill, sponsored by Alexandria Archaeology, along with a team from Mount Vernon. It was a good opportunity to talk to people about on-going archaeology in the County, and we appreciated the invitation. Several of the people we spoke to have already signed up to participate in Colchester and Westbrook, or were interested in doing so. The Shuter's Hill site is now closed for the season, so our work in field and lab provides further opportunities for those who've been digging with Alexandria.

Alexandria Archaeology has recently hired Dr. Garrett Fesler as City Archaeologist and Paul Nasca as Collections Manager. Both are experienced and enthusiastic professionals who have worked locally at Jamestown, Williamsburg, and Ferry Farm, as well as farther afield. I hope that we can involve them over time in Chapter activities such as certification classes and as speakers at our meetings.

FROM THE CITY OF ALEXANDRIA ARCHAEOLOGY COLLECTIONS: CIVIL WAR SOLDIER LIFE

Minié balls were found at the site of a Civil War Union encampment and hospital in Alexandria's West End. Archaeologists identified it as the New

York militia camp of autumn of 1861, potentially that of the 38th New York infantry regiment.

In 1849, French military officer Claude Minié developed the Minié ball—probably the most common artifact of the Civil War. These balls were used in the rifle-musket, a highly-accurate 56-inch-long shoulder arm. Excavations at the site also revealed a brick Crimean oven (shown below), which probably would have heated the camp hospital tents. It was preserved, making it one of only two features of its kind ever discovered. (The other oven was also recovered in Alexandria.)



The knapsack hardware belongs to a standard-issue canvas pack used between 1853 and 1872. It would have included buckles, hooks, studs, and triangular fittings. Enlisted men found the knapsacks of limited use, often discarding them, preferring to store items in blanket rolls.



The looped horn insignia was the symbol for Civil War Union Army infantry and was intended to be worn on the hat issued with the full dress uniform. Soldiers often removed the horns from their dress hats and put them on their forager hats, known as kepis.

The U.S. plate, which matches one dug at Fort Ward Historical Park in 2010–2011, would have attached to the cover of a leather ammunition box worn at a soldier’s waist. The box’s strap, which was slung over the shoulder and across the chest, would have borne a decorative eagle plate, too. Soldiers often removed these accoutrements, as the shiny brass plates provided targets for enemy sharpshooters.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL INSTITUTE OF AMERICA

By John Kelsey

Steve Kimbel recently sent me the 2011-2012 lecture program for the AIA and its local chapter, the Washington Society. Because many of these events looked interesting, I got in touch with Lucinda Conger, the Secretary of the Washington Society, to find out more about the organization. Here is what she had to say:

The best place to look for information on membership is online at www.archaeological.org. This is where your members can sign up to become members in the AIA. As you probably know, the AIA is the professional organization for professional archaeologists. On the other hand, it encourages membership by non-professionals and students who are interested in archaeology.

In particular, it welcomes such members at its Annual Meeting. The next meeting will be held in Philadelphia in January. (More on that also at the website above). The AIA also publishes the Fieldwork Opportunities Bulletin, a guide to volunteer opportunities in archaeology worldwide.

The Washington Society is one of over 100 local societies in the US, Canada, and Europe. Every year, the national society sends out archaeologists to speak at local societies. Because of its membership size, the Washington Society gets 3 speakers a year. The others we select from the large pool of academics and museum personnel who happen to be in the Washington area. We often coordinate with other organizations like the Pre-Columbian Society, the Capital Archaeological Institute, Dumbarton Oaks, and the National Gallery.



Non-members are welcome to attend lectures, but their names are not added either to our mailing list or to our email list. So if changes are made in the schedule or some interesting program comes up, they may not hear about it.

The biggest reason to join is because you want to support the work of the national AIA, which works for preservation of archaeological sites and for protection of cultural materials; which supports archaeological research and multidisciplinary approaches to archaeology. The Washington Society also has a Student Travel Fellowship which provides the funds for a worthy undergrad or graduate student to attend the Annual Meeting. Our members support this fund through donations.

Membership in the AIA costs \$60 per year and includes its bimonthly magazine *Archaeology*; there is no additional charge to join the Washington Society. The schedule of lectures for 2011-2012 is posted to the side.

OTHER UPCOMING EVENTS:

- At the Crossroads of History: Bailey’s Through the Centuries, Friday, November 11th, 8:45 – 4 PM, Schlesinger Concert Hall and Arts Center, Northern Virginia Community College Alexandria Campus. (Information previously sent out by email.)
- The Civil War Comes to Fairfax County, Fairfax County History Conference, Saturday, November 12th, 8:30 – 4 PM, Stacy Sherwood Community Center, 3740 Old Lee Highway, Fairfax, Virginia. (Details also in earlier email.)

| Date of Event | Speaker | Title of Lecture |
|---|---|---|
| Tues. Oct 18, 2011 6:30 Reception 7:00 Presentation | William M. Kelso APVA Jamestown Rediscovery Project | James Fort, Lost and Found: Archaeological Discoveries at Jamestown, VA |
| Tues. Nov 8, 2011 6:30 Reception 7:00 Dinner 8:00 Presentation | Matthew J. Adams Bucknell University | Ancient Mendes: Reflections of Early Egypt in the Heart of the Delta |
| Dec 2011 TBA | Rick Potts Smithsonian NMNH | Early Humans in Kenya |
| Thurs. Jan 5 thru Sun. Jan 8, 2012 | To make reservations, go to AIA website or call 617-353-8704 | AIA Annual Meeting |
| Tues. Jan 24, 2012 6:30 Reception 7:00 Lecture | Steven Ellis University of Cincinnati | Digging Pompeii in the 21st Century |
| Tues. Mar 6, 2012 6:30 Reception 7:00 Annual Business Meeting 7:15 Presentation | James C. Wright Bryn Mawr College | A Death in the Village: Lessons from the Mycenaean chamber tombs of the Nemea Valley |
| Apr. 2012 TBA | S. Thomas Parker North Carolina State University | Excavations in Roman Port of Aqaba |

NVC/ASV CHAPTER OFFICERS

| | | |
|--------------------|-----------------------|--|
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Fairfax County Archaeology (FCPA)

Dr. Elizabeth Crowell elizabeth.crowell@fairfaxcounty.gov
703-534-3881

Other Public Archaeological Programs in N. Va.

| | | |
|-------------------|--------------|--|
| Mount Vernon | Esther White | ewhite@mountvernon.org |
| Gunston Hall | Dave Shonyo | archaeology@gunstonhall.org 703-550-0441 |
| Alexandria Museum | Pam Cressey | pamela.cressey@alexandriava.gov 703-838-4399 (information) |

NVC/ASV MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Name: _____

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ADDRESS: _____

EMAIL: _____

[] Please send *Datum Point* via e-mail

Individual (\$15) _____

New _____

Student (\$5) _____

Renewal _____

Family (\$17) _____

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

Chapter members should join our parent organization, the Archeological Society of Virginia.
asv-archeology.org

The Chapter meets at 7:30p.m. on the 2nd Wed. of each month at the James Lee Center at the above address.

EVERYONE IS WELCOME!!!!

THE DATUM POINT

**Northern Virginia Chapter
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