



# THE DATUM POINT

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

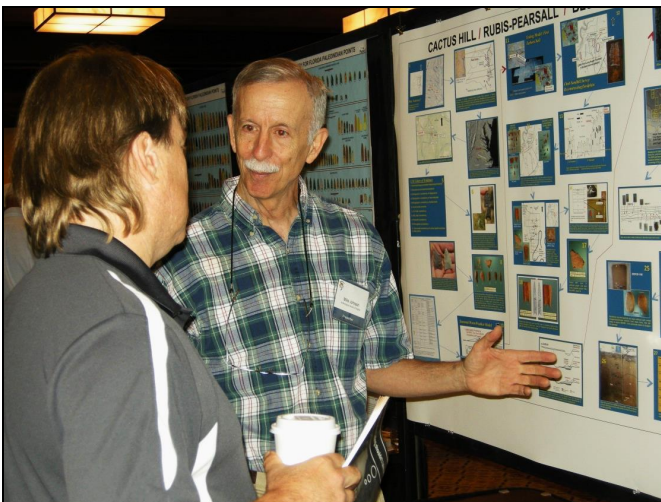
**Chapter Website – [www.nvcasv.org](http://www.nvcasv.org)**

**November 2013**

Chapter meets at the James Lee Center, 2855 Annandale Rd, Falls Church, 2<sup>nd</sup> Weds. of each month

## **FROM THE PRESIDENT –** **JACK HRANICKY**

The month of October was a busy one as we had several major archaeological activities. The largest Paleoamerican conference in many years was held in Santa Fe, New Mexico. With attendance over 1000, the Chapter had in attendance: Leigh Whatlington, Steve and CD Cox, Ann Wood, Mike Johnson, and Jack Hranicky. Also, Joey Moulderhauer from the Roanoke Chapter attended. Mike Johnson displayed his Clovis artifacts and had a poster session on Cactus Hill, etc. He probably explained the site(s) over and over, but from what I heard, he was well received. He also showed his poster at the ASV state meeting.



Mike Johnson talking about his work in Virginia at the Santa Fe meeting

The ASV state meeting was one of the biggest in recent years. Held in Virginia Beach, it had a full program of papers, including mine **cont'd page 2**

## **NOVEMBER 13<sup>TH</sup> MEETING**

## **2013 TIMBER CUT SURVEY** **KITTIEWAN PLANTATION**

**BY PATRICK O'NEILL**



From April to June, 2013, a Phase I archaeological survey was conducted at Kittiewan Plantation on 72 acre tract to be harvested for timber. Struggling to find volunteers to do the survey, two sites were recorded and several large features were found, including an ice pond, a fence line ditch, and a prehistoric site with ceramics.

And a beaver dam was reckoned with!

Just another dam project í ..

**cont'd from page 1** including mine on the Arkfeld site. We also presented state chapter reports. As all program papers indicated, there is a lot of great archaeology in Virginia going on. One of the highlights of the meeting was a tour of Ft. Monroe which was attended by 60+ ASVs. Of course, John Kelsey and I attended the ASV Board meeting held on Sunday. Only big note from the Board, if you are not a member of the ASV, please join at: [www.asv-archeology.org](http://www.asv-archeology.org).



Various ASV Members from around the Commonwealth on the tour at Ft Monroe w/ chapter members

**Next month (December) is our annual Christmas party at the time of our regular meeting. Hopefully, everyone will bring a dish (containing food) to the party. And, election of next year's officers. If you have any suggestions for next year's chapter activities, please let me know.**

### **CHAPTER OFFICERS FOR 2014**

At the request of the Chapter President, a nominating committee was formed to prepare a recommended slate of officers for 2014. The committee was chaired by John Kelsey, and members were Jackie Cuyler and Steve Kimbel. Its work was made easy, because all the 2013 officers expressed a willingness to continue to serve in their current positions in 2014. However, the position of Recording Secretary had not been filled for 2013. The committee asked Nancy Ehlke if she would be willing to serve in that capacity next year, and she agreed to do so. Therefore, the nominating committee recommends the following slate of

candidates for approval by the membership at the Chapter's Christmas party on December 11<sup>th</sup>:

- President ó Jack Hranicky
- Vice President ó Chris Havlicek
- Recording Secretary ó Nancy Ehlke
- Corresponding Secretary ó Maggie Johnson
- Treasurer ó Isabel Pease
- Webmaster ó Diane Schug-O'Neill
- Editor of the Datum Point ó Patrick O'Neill
- Certification Liaison ó Ann Wood

### **OLD COLCHESTER** **BY CART MEMBERS**

As fall moves upon us, the leaves are changing and CART is moving east along the Occoquan River, testing areas within the large prehistoric sites. The cool weather brought out the local deer, snakes and a fox which have kept us company in the woods. The test units across the site yielded artifacts ranging from quartz and quartzite to small jasper flakes.

George Mason University student interns are seeing the lessons learned in their archaeology class in action in the field. They are also contributing to an artifact glossary in order to formalize how we categorize artifact types. Helping these students understand stratigraphy and artifact identification is a great step for training of students in the fields of prehistoric and historic archaeology. With some of CART members on vacation or sick, more helping hands in the field is great for moving dirt.





## **HISTORIC BRENTSVILLE JAIL** **NEEDS YOUR HELP!**

Dear Preservation Partners,

On Saturday October 26th, the Prince William Historic Preservation Foundation held its 10th Annual Membership Meeting at the Brentsville Courthouse Historic Centre. At the meeting the Foundation's President, Mark Trbovich announced that we received a donation of up to \$15,000 for the Brentsville Jail restoration project. This wonderful donation comes with a challenge. We need to raise matching funds of \$15,000 to take advantage of the full donation.

We have already raised \$2,350 during the first week of the campaign! Please help us reach our goal by the November 30th deadline. Online donations can be made through our website [www.pwhpf.org](http://www.pwhpf.org) or by mailing a donation to the Prince William Historic Preservation Foundation, 17674 Main Street, Dumfries, VA 22026. We can be reached by calling 703.792.4754. Please help us to finish the restoration of this important historical building.

The Foundation is a Not for Profit 501c(3) Corporation and all donations are tax-deductible. Thank you for your interest and help to ensure our success in restoring and re-opening the Brentsville Jail. We have had many successes over the past decade, but the need for aggressive efforts to preserve our County's historic sites becomes more urgent with every year that passes. Again, thank you for your support of our shared past.

Brendon Hanafin, Division Chief  
Prince William Co. Historic Preservation Division



A few rain days have aided the lab to process the water screen picking and catalog the artifacts recovered from the Flood Plain Survey excavated last month. We are almost through the water screen pickings of the features from early this year. We are still finding small artifacts ranging from seeds to micro-flakes and glass.

The artifact database is still a work in progress, but is already going beyond meeting our needs. Our GIS specialist, Marion, is taking the information from the lab's database and creating distribution maps that allow us to know what happened, where and when. The database allows us to project concentrations based on time period, artifact type, as well as artifact functions such as toys. The information will be used partially to determine where to excavate further in the near future. As we refine the database, some more tedious aspects of the data entry will get easier.

The database upgrades includes standardizing and refining how we categorize lithics. Now that we are able to give more detailed descriptions on tools prehistoric tools recovered as well as incorporate older data into the new database, we are revisiting the artifacts from one of the prehistoric sites in the park. Not uncommon on a prehistoric site, but interesting none-the-less, many of the stone tools appear to have had multiple uses.

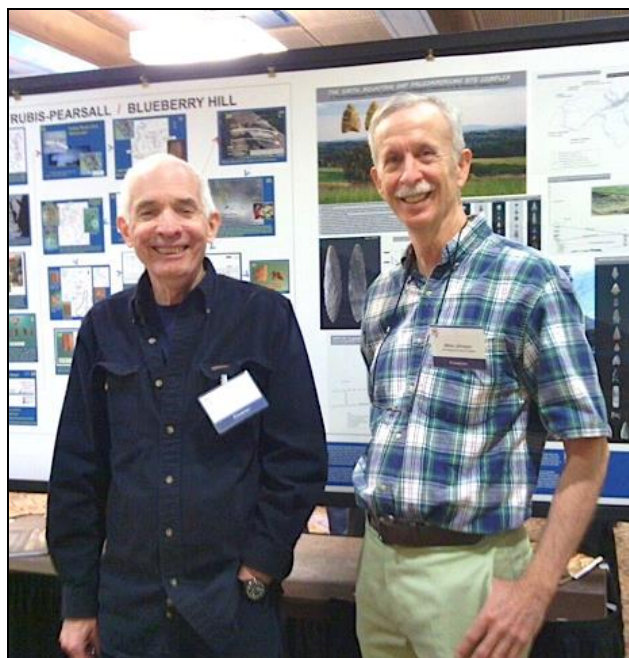


## PALEOAMERICAN ODYSSEY CONFERENCE IN SANTA FE

Photos submitted by Ann Wood



Conferees crowd around Mike Johnson for discussion on the theme of "Beyond Cactus Hill"



Dr. Michael Johnson (right) and William A. Childress presented a well-attended poster on Cactus Hill/ Rubis-Pearsall/ Blueberry Hill



Conferees crowd around Mike Johnson for discussion on the theme of "Beyond Cactus Hill"



The "Gault-Virginia Connection" enjoyed getting together at a banquet table anchored by Dr. Mike Collins of Gault and Dr. Mike Johnson of Virginia. Also present: Celia Isbrecht, Jill Patton, CD Cox, Steve Cox, Ann Wood and Leigh Watlington



Poster session on Cactus Hill/ Rubis-Pearsall/ Blueberry Hill and Smith Mountain Lake



## RELIC HUNTING/LOOTING

**Submitted by John Kelsey**

As you may have heard in the presentation at the annual meeting, some months ago a professional relic hunter ran a contest at Flowerdew Hundred to see who could dig up the coolest (most commercially valuable) artifact on a pay-as-you-go basis ó commercial relic hunting ó and hundreds of people participated. Flowerdew Hundred is a priceless early Virginia settlement along the James which has now been thoroughly trashed. Because the site is in private hands, there is no legal recourse or punishment for what many have called "time crime." Mike Barber, the state archaeologist, is formulating a strategy to try to head off similar events in the future.

Joyce Pearsall, a member of the Chapter who now lives in North Carolina, sent along a link below to an article about looting in North Carolina. Unfortunately, this practice is all too common.

[http://www.citizen-times.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/201310270015/NEWS/310270083&nclink\\_check=1](http://www.citizen-times.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/201310270015/NEWS/310270083&nclink_check=1)

## **Looters destroying history in WNC forests**

### **Looters plunder WNC forests**

**Asheville Citizen-Times**

**October 26, 2013**

**ASHEVILLE** ó Clues to ages gone by are scattered in forested coves across Western North Carolina. Often they are stone tools, shards of pottery and other remnants of the lives of Native Americans buried in spots where they gathered.

Some thousands of years old, the items are important to archaeologists who work to piece together the region's history.

"They tell us about who used to live here and how they lived," said Rodney Snedeker, forest

archaeologist and tribal liaison with the National Forests in North Carolina. "That tells us about human behavior. They also contain a lot of data about environmental changes over time."



This Cherokee pottery shard was found on national forest land in Western North Carolina. /US forest Service/Special to *Citizen-Times*

But Snedeker and other archaeologists say these historical treasures are increasingly being looted by amateur relic hunters who dig up sites in the national forests, looking for arrowheads and other artifacts.

The arrowheads can sell for as little as \$5 apiece. Other items can fetch thousands of dollars. A search on eBay for "Indian artifacts for sale" results in a list of more than 3,000 items.

The looting of important historical sites is a felony crime under the federal Archaeological Resources Protection Act. First-time offenders can be fined up to \$20,000 and imprisoned for up to a year, while second-time offenders face fines up to \$100,000 and up to five years in prison.

Even with heavy potential sentences, the number of documented violations of the Archaeological Resources Protection Act in North Carolina's national forests has nearly doubled in recent years to about 20-25 a year.

A federal grand jury in Asheville recently indicted two men on charges of violating the act. According to court records, Michael E. Ballew and Kelly



Daniel Robinson damaged archaeological resources in the Upper Curtis Creek area of Pisgah National Forest in McDowell County. The violations occurred in July and August 2011 and the summer of 2012, the indictment states.

Assistant U.S. Attorney Richard Edwards said he couldn't provide details about damage done at the site because the case is pending.

Ballew and Robinson were released on \$25,000 unsecured bonds following a hearing in U.S. District Court in Asheville. Trial dates have not been scheduled, according to court records. Neither man could be reached for comment.

### **Thousands of acres, little oversight**

Archaeological resources are vulnerable because they usually are in places where people believe they can do something illicit without being observed.

Looters know to look by targeting rock overhangs that were used by Native Americans for shelter, said David Moore, who runs the archaeology program at Warren Wilson College.

Moore said he witnessed damage to sites in the Upper Curtis Creek area from people digging around the rock outcroppings.

"It was clear that people were vandalizing them, people digging in the soil in the shelter, very intentionally looking for artifacts," he said. "We have many examples of these kinds of sites that have been destroyed by looting."

"They just dig holes and sift the soil," he said. "Usually they are looking for stone tools, arrowheads and spear points and things like that. And by definition, when you dig into an archaeological site you destroy it, because the context of that soil is what makes the site important."

The Forest Service has documented about 3,000 archaeological sites across Pisgah and Nantahala national forests, which cover more than a million acres in Western North Carolina, Snedeker said.

But only about 20 percent of the forests has been inventoried, meaning there are many more sites yet to be found.

"These would be primarily prehistoric American Indian sites — hunting camps, areas where stone was quarried to make stone tools, village sites where groups of Indians lived," he said. "We have sites that are 10,000 to 12,000 years old, and we have American Indian sites that date all the way up to European contact."

Databases are maintained that contain information about the sites and their locations, but they aren't available to the public.

"There are unscrupulous people who would use them to find the sites and destroy them," Moore said. Many sites on private land are vulnerable and have been impacted by development. That's why laws were enacted to protect archaeological resources on public lands, Snedeker said.

"The amount of damage has increased dramatically," he said. "People are digging a lot more at these sites and causing a lot more damage." Snedeker cited the example of an area in Transylvania County that was discovered to have been looted in the late 1990s.

"It had artifacts that were at least 6,000 years old," he said. "It was a large cove where people had lived for thousands of years. People found all these holes in the ground and broken artifacts on the surface. It was heavily damaged."

No one was ever caught.

### **From historians to thieves**

Snedeker believes the increase in looting is because of a greater interest in history and a desire by many to make money.

"They may do that for their own collections, or they may do it to sell the artifacts," Moore said. "There is a market. Today, it's often driven by these reality shows on television."

A show on cable network Spike TV called "American Digger" features a former professional wrestler who digs up artifacts and sells them. The

National Geographic Channel also has a version called *oDiggers.o*

Moore said the shows have been widely protested by professional archaeologists for the damage they promote.

Arrowheads and projectile points from Western North Carolina can sell anywhere from around \$5 to as much as \$100, depending on how old they are and where they were found, Snedeker said.

*o*Whole vessels can sell for much more. They can sell for hundreds of dollars, possibly thousands,*o* he said. *o*The more rare an item is and the more location information you have on it makes it worth more.

*o*There's an international market for American Indian artifacts. Some pottery items in the Southwest have sold for hundreds of thousands of dollars.*o*

It's not illegal to sell artifacts, but it's illegal to dig them up on federal land, Snedeker said.

Forest Service rangers patrol and sometimes use surveillance in areas prone to looting in an attempt to catch violators, Snedeker said. They also get tips from the public about such damage.

The agency also conducts demonstrations to educate the public about why it's important to protect archaeological resources.

*o*Archaeological sites are public property,*o* he said. *o*They belong to everyone. They're the history of everyone who lived here, everyone who might have done something here.*o*

### **WESTON TOUR** By Patrick O'Neill

The NVC had a wonderful tour of the Weston Farm in mid-October. Our own chapter member Anne Van Ryzin was the tour guide, along with other members of the historical group that manages the site. The main attraction was a slave quarters they hope to restore and the exterior kitchen.



Anne Van Ryzin, tour guide/NVC member



NVC members in front of slave quarters at Weston



Interior of log slave quarters at Weston showing stairs on left

## NVC/ASV CHAPTER OFFICERS

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### 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
Alexandria Museum	Francine Bromberg	<a href="mailto:Francine.bromberg@alexandriava.gov">Francine.bromberg@alexandriava.gov</a> 703-838-4399 (information)

## NVC/ASV MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

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