



# THE DATUM POINT

July 2020

Newsletter of the  
NORTHERN VIRGINIA CHAPTER (NVC) OF THE  
ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY OF VIRGINIA

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



## FROM THE CHAPTER PRESIDENT PATRICK O'NEILL

## NO CHAPTER MEETING IN JULY!

What a difference a few weeks makes in our personal, professional, and national lives. I hope everyone is healthy and safe, and practicing social distancing. There will be no July 2020 in person chapter meeting, but we are working on getting a live stream meeting set up, but we are still working on the logistics. I want everybody to have access to any meeting whether it is in person or on line!

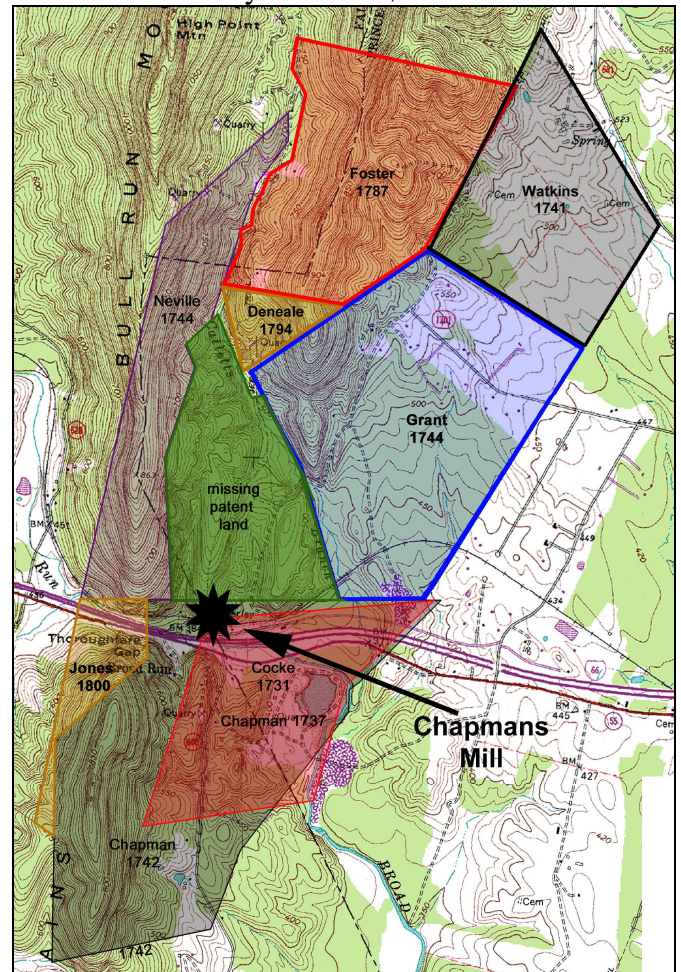
**We may try and set up a Zoom meeting, and will let you know when we get that organized!**

The ASV Board will meet this Saturday through ZOOM, an online chat program. If this is successful, the NVC might use it for chapter meetings. The ASV Board will discuss the potential for a virtual meeting this October, and how to handle elections and voting procedures. I will let you know more in August.

## THE PRESERVE

By Patrick O'Neill

I met with three people for the Vienna West End Cemetery Project. It was agreed that the project would not start until Fairfax County is in the all clear from the pandemic. Exactly when that will be, please tell me!!!!



Research at Bull Run Mountain on the Preserve with Joe Villari and his group is expanding by leaps and bounds as all sorts of new research subjects are coming into focus. As reported last month, I wrote a letter of support for the VOF in their efforts to raise funds to acquire a 10-acre tract of land on Catletts Branch to help the VOF acquire a 10 acre tract called the Corum Tract. Please see my article on the Preserve to see more on this subject.

Fig 1: Preserve's South Section part of 9 land grants  
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The Virginia Outdoor Foundation owns several thousand acres in the Bull Run Mountains, and nine 18<sup>th</sup> century land grants comprise the South Section. The South Section is split into two parts, but still contained within these nine land grants shown in Figure 1 (Figure 2).

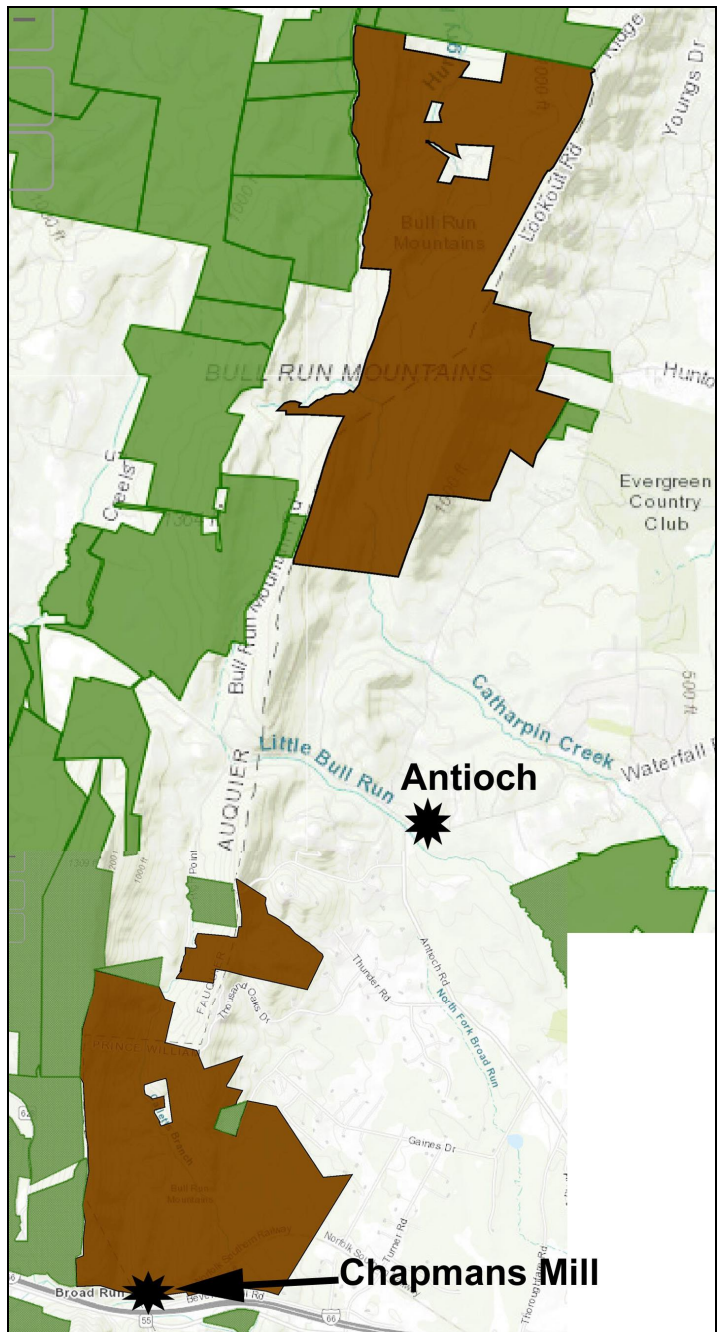


Figure 2: North and South sections of the Preserve

Research has uncovered a series of nine land parcels sold along the east side of Catletts Branch (Figure 3). These tracts were all carved out of the Mountain Farm tract that belonged to William Roach, then A.D. Smith and his daughter Mary Smith Edwards, Datum Point

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then Edgar W. Heflin. The Mountain Farm Tract is outlined in yellow on Figure 4.

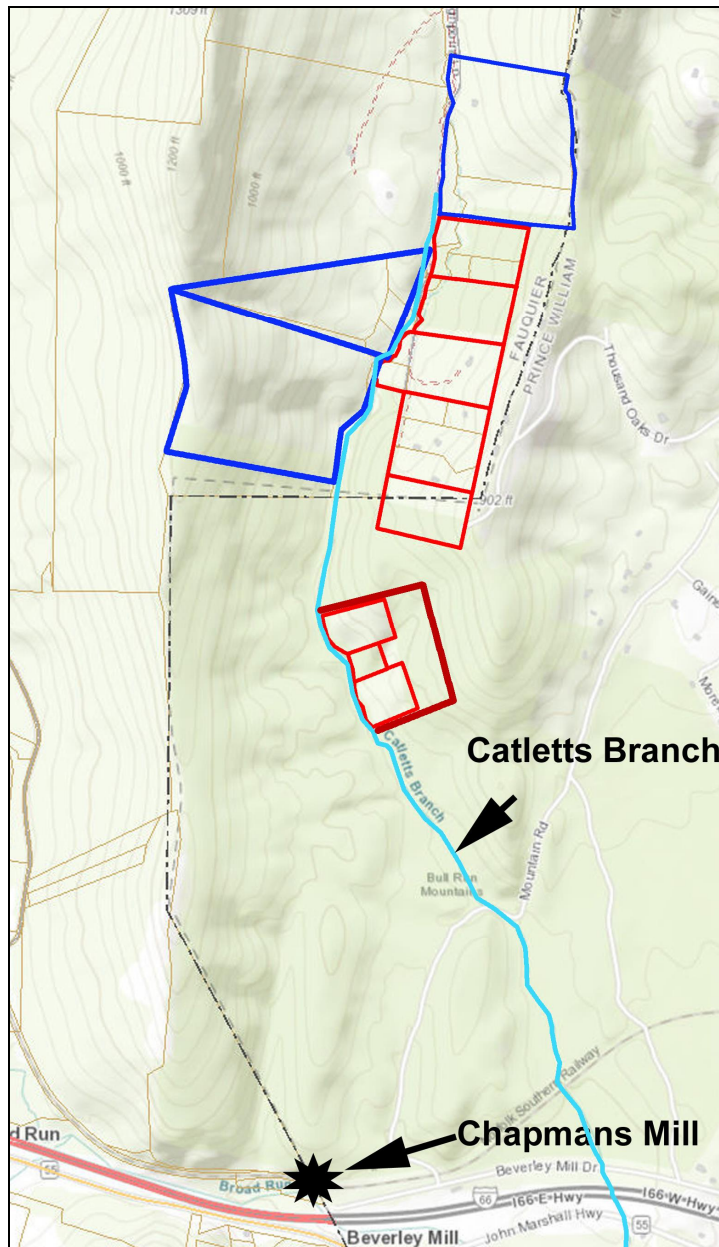


Figure 3: Catletts Branch quarry tracts

All of the tracts carved out of the Mountain Farm Tract from 1856 to 1924 (shown in black in Figure 4) were used in part as quarries along the rock ridge above Catletts Branch. This rock vein is the same rock vein as the rock quarries located above Chapmans Mill just to the south. Out of these Mountain Farm Tracts, all were African American except for Caroline Payne. VOF is compiling detailed information on these owners/families to fully understand the community that was present.

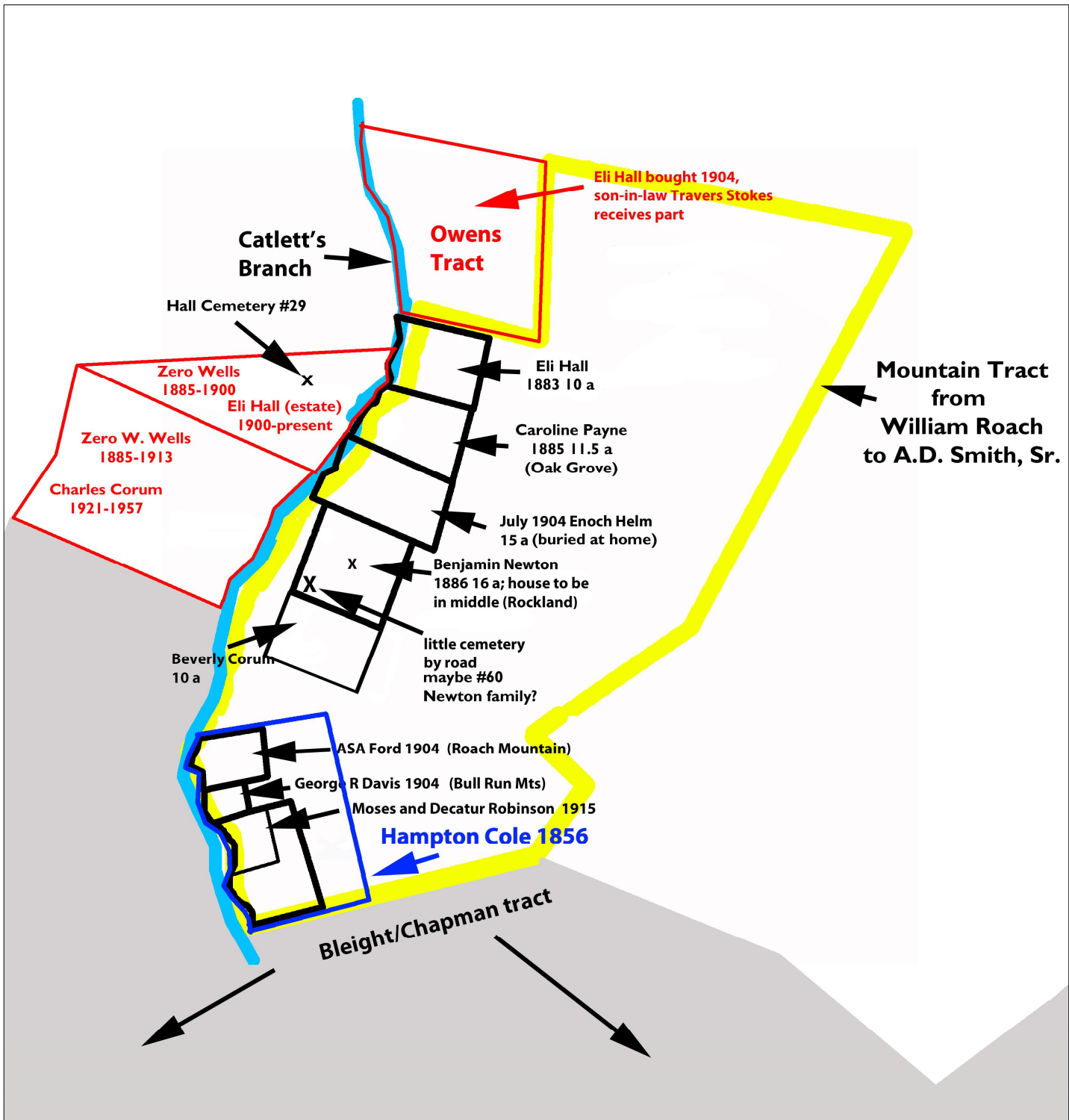


Figure 4: Mountain Farm Tract from William Roach (ca. 1840-1877), outlined in yellow

A great-granddaughter of Moses Robinson gave me an oral interview over the phone in 2019 connecting the Beverly Corum tract to the Moses Robinson tract. Recently, the VOF realized an opportunity to acquire the 10 acres that Beverly Corum bought in 1924 (see Figure 4). Beverly Corum was the son-in-law of Moses Robinson who bought 4 acres in 1915.

A letter of support to the VOF was sent from the Northern Virginia Chapter as well as the Archeological Society of Virginia to acquire the land. As such, the effort now has realized the VOF allotting \$100,000 for the acquisition of the Corum tract. See the next article to read more! BTW, yes, I am the person in the photo!

## **VOF ALLOCATES \$750,000 FOR PUBLIC OPEN-SPACE PROJECTS IN 8 COUNTIES**

**Jason McGarvey**  
**June 29, 2020**



A VOF grant will add land to the Corum homestead area at Bull Run Mountains Natural Area Preserve

The Virginia Outdoors Foundation has allocated \$750,000 from its Open-Space Lands Preservation Trust Fund (PTF) for nine conservation projects that will increase public access to open space for communities in Albemarle, Fauquier, Halifax, Middlesex, Orange, Prince William, Pulaski, and Rockbridge counties.

The projects were approved by the VOF Board of Trustees at its June 25th meeting.

### **Project Summaries**

#### **Project name: Ragged Mountain Connector**

Locality: Albemarle County

Grant amount: \$65,000

**Description:** The City of Charlottesville is seeking to acquire land that would complete a connection and trail access improvement between the city, the 142-acre Heyward Community Forest, and the 975-acre [Ragged Mountain Natural Area](#). The project is also supported by a Community Forest Grant from the U.S. Forest Service. Ragged Mountain Natural Area is a drinking-water and recreational resource for the city.

#### **Project name: Bull Run Mountains, Corum Tract**

Locality: Prince William & Fauquier counties

Grant amount: \$100,000

**Description:** Bounded by the [Bull Run Mountains Natural Area Preserve](#) on the south and the west, the Corum tract is a long-standing priority acquisition parcel for the Virginia Outdoors Foundation. The tract includes an historic African American homestead that is closely related to other cultural resources within the preserve boundaries.

#### **Project name: Banister River Canoe Launch**

Locality: Halifax County

Grant amount: \$50,000

**Description:** The Town of Halifax wishes to purchase 16 acres in Meadeville for a potential canoe/kayak launch on the Banister River as part of the [Southern Virginia Wild Blueway](#) effort—a joint tourism marketing initiative of Halifax and Mecklenburg counties promoting the region's waterways.

**Project name: Urbanna Oyster Festival Site**

Locality: Middlesex County

Grant amount: \$140,000

**Description:** The [Urbanna Oyster Festival](#) has been held in the Town of Urbanna annually for 63 years and is the largest-income generating event for many nonprofits in the Middle Peninsula region. A large portion of the festival has been held on private land thanks to an agreement with the family who owns it. The land's future availability is now in question. The grant would allow the Town of Urbanna and the Urbanna Oyster Festival Foundation to acquire the parcel to secure its use for future festivals and make the space available to the public year-round.

**Project name: Gordonsville Park Connector**

Locality: Orange County

Grant amount: \$100,000

**Description:** A partner project with the [Piedmont Environmental Council](#) with significant matching funds, this project would fund the purchase of two parcels to be donated to the Town of Gordonsville, connecting Verling Park and the Fireman's Fairgrounds. The connection of the two public open spaces is part of a larger plan to improve the existing parks.

**Project name: Calfee Training School**

Locality: Pulaski County

Grant amount: \$80,000



Calfee Training School in Pulaski, built for African American students in the late 1800s.

**Description:** Established in the Town of Pulaski in the late 1800s to educate African American children, the [Calfee Training School](#) is the centerpiece of a potential future African American historic district. The grant will be used to plan and conduct renovation of the historic school into a

community and cultural center. It will also address the need for a daycare facility and programs in the area.

**Project name: T.G. Howard Community Center**

Locality: Pulaski County

Grant amount: \$80,000

**Description:** The [T.G. Howard Community Center](#) in the Town of Pulaski is the only African American community center of its kind in the New River Valley. Built in 1965, the center was the focal point for African American recreation, political events, education, and job training for more than 30 years. The grant will be used to restore the community center and surrounding land. Once restored, the site will be utilized to support school programs, health awareness, veteran awareness, cultural awareness, and recreational activities.

**Project name: House Mountain Addition**

Locality: Rockbridge County

Grant amount: \$85,000

**Description:** The funds will be used by the Virginia Outdoors Foundation to acquire land adjacent to [House Mountain Reserve](#) near Lexington. This property is located just below Little House Mountain's ridgeline trail and fills a gap between the reserve and an existing VOF easement. The land will become part of the reserve and protect the trail's viewshed.

**Project name: Pultz Property**

Locality: Rockbridge County

Grant amount: \$50,000



The Clark Family Cemetery on the Pultz property in Rockbridge.

**Description:** The grant supports an open-space easement on private land that is adjacent to George Washington National Forest and provides access from the Blue Ridge Parkway to an active historic cemetery with 300-plus marked graves, many of which are from Monacan tribe families.

## CART

### **Fairfax County Archaeological Research Team**

Fairfax County has entered phase II of the Covid-19 reopening plan. CART archaeologists have been working hard these past few weeks on developing procedures for the field crew to safely work. The team is taking care to wear masks and social distance while in the field, as well as ensuring there is enough equipment for everyone on the crew to have their own set of tools. This past month CART archaeologists have been able to complete multiple small projects for the county with a limited crew and soon CART will resume work at Old Colchester Park and Preserve.

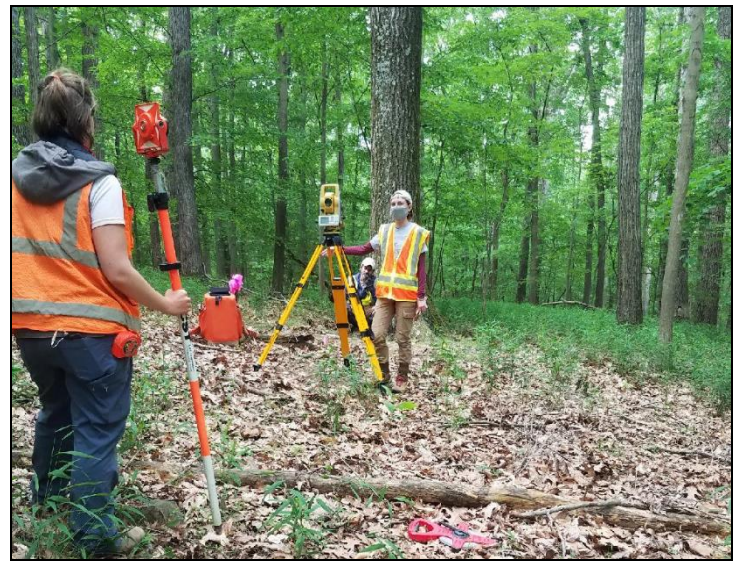
Many people within the Archaeology and Collections Branch (ACB) continue to work from home as much as possible, the lab remains closed; but, we are beginning to figure out the safest way possible to continuing processing artifacts and working with collections. We have been adapting to these unusual circumstances with creative solutions, like cataloging from home. Cataloging can be a lengthy process even in the Lab, but without the help of our volunteers the process can take even longer.

We miss our wonderful volunteers, not only do they help to keep the lab running smoothly but they are a very enthusiastic and skilled group. Recently we have been emailing some of our volunteers to ask how they have been coping with events surrounding COVID-19. Stephen Brooks, one of our Archaeology Volunteer Assistants was recently interviewed on our CART blog in a volunteer spotlight segment <https://cartarchaeology.wordpress.com/2020/06/03/getting-to-know-you-steve-brooks/>

Other tasks are keeping the ACB busy at home, reports are being written, research is being

completed, as well as working with FCPA social media on posting some of the more interesting artifacts within our collections. Regular Teams meetings have been, and continue to be, a good way to keep everyone organized and up to date on the many different tasks and projects that occupy our time.

Our volunteer program is currently suspended and our offices remain closed until further notice. If you would like to be notified when we can again accept volunteer assistance, please email [cartarchlab@live.com](mailto:cartarchlab@live.com).



## 2020 NVC/ASV CHAPTER OFFICERS

<b>President</b>	Patrick O'Neill	<a href="mailto:PATRICKLONEILL@VERIZON.NET">PATRICKLONEILL@VERIZON.NET</a> 703-244-6275
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<b>Certification Liaison</b>	Ann Wood	<a href="mailto:annpwood@gmail.com">annpwood@gmail.com</a>

### Other Public Archaeological Programs in Northern Virginia/DC

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<b>Alexandria Museum</b>	Dr. Eleanor Breen	<a href="mailto:Eleanor.Breen@alexandriava.gov">Eleanor.Breen@alexandriava.gov</a> 703-838-4399
<b>DC City Archaeologist</b>	Dr. Ruth Trocolli	<a href="mailto:Ruth.Trocolli@dc.gov">Ruth.Trocolli@dc.gov</a> 202-442-8836

### NVC/ASV MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Phone:** \_\_\_\_\_

**ADDRESS:** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**EMAIL:** \_\_\_\_\_

Individual (\$15) \_\_\_\_\_

Student (\$5) \_\_\_\_\_

Family (\$17) \_\_\_\_\_

**Return to:**

**Barbara Leven, Treasurer, NVC/ASV**

**9518 Liberty Tree Lane**

**Vienna VA 22182**

**Chapter members can join our parent organization, the Archeological Society of Virginia at [www.virginiaarcheology.org/](http://www.virginiaarcheology.org/)**

**The Chapter meets at 7:30p.m. on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Wed. of each month at the James Lee Center, 2855-A Annandale Road, Falls Church, VA.**

**EVERYONE IS WELCOME!!!!**