



THE DATUM POINT

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

Chapter Website – www.nvcasv.org

December 2010

FROM THE PRESIDENT – JOHN KELSEY

With Thanksgiving behind us, it's time to get ready for the Chapter's annual holiday party. **The party will be at the James Lee Center on Wednesday, December 8th, 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. Even though we don't try to orchestrate what people bring, it seems to work out fine anyhow. I hope that all of you can come.

We will be voting on Chapter officers for 2011 at the Chapter Christmas party on December 8th, and our by-laws require that the slate of officer candidates be published in the preceding month's Datum Point. Your officers for 2010 have agreed to continue to serve next year in their current capacities but do not wish to discourage others from getting involved. If you would like to run for one of the officers' positions or nominate someone else, please let me know this month. Failing that, we will be voting in December on the following slate:

President – **John Kelsey**
Vice-President – **Will Nelson**
Recording Secretary – **Felicia Glapion**
Corresponding Secretary – **Maggie Johnson**
Treasurer – **CK Gailey**
Editor – **Patrick O'Neill**

November highlights included the third annual field trip to the Gault site in Texas; Mike Johnson led a dedicated crew of volunteers from the Chapter and elsewhere within the ASV. In addition to digging at one of the earliest and richest prehistoric sites in

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NVC CHRISTMAS PARTY



**Don't be a mean one,
Mr. Grinch!**

Come to the NVC's 2009 Christmas Party
at the lab at the James Lee Center!
Starts at **6:30 pm** on **December 8th.**

North America, the group visited the Bell County Museum. The museum includes a Gault exhibit featuring a number of Chapter members who were photographed working at the site two years ago.

Interpretive signage has been a hot topic recently. Following the acceptance of the interpretive signs at the David Site in October, the County celebrated the acceptance of interpretive signs for the Washington – Rochembeau Revolutionary Trail at a ceremony at Mason Neck West Park on November 13th. The signs are situated at the entrance to the park just off Old Colchester Road and within a mile or two of the historic ferry site over the Occoquan River. They are well worth a visit. They were designed *pro*

page 1

bono by our own **Jerry Lyons**, who has once again outdone himself. Great job, Jerry!

Last but not least, November was notable as the volunteer effort at historic Colchester started in earnest. The CART (Colchester Archaeological Research Team) will provide an update later in this edition. It is gratifying to see the interest the project is stirring up among old hands and prospective new volunteers alike. The team has gone out of its way to welcome volunteers and put them to good use. Remember the Open House at Colchester this Saturday, December 4th from 1 to 4 PM.

Please join me in welcoming new Chapter members **Beth Larsen, Kathleen Lowe, Megan Veness, Charlie Balch** and **Alan Kayn**.

The end of the year is a good time to take stock of what we've been doing and think about ways to make the Chapter even more successful. I would love to get your thoughts on speakers, trips, and other activities. Please call me at 703-922-8107 or email at jkelsey@cox.net. Best wishes to all for a happy and safe holiday season.

John Kelsey

CHANGES TO ANNUAL DUES
(NO INCREASE!)

As your officers were reviewing an earlier set of Chapter by-laws (historic, not prehistoric), we noticed that membership used to be on an annual cycle with renewals coming due effective the first of the year. This is also how the state organization works. For some reason lost in the mists of time, we have deviated from that: renewals are scattered throughout the year. My membership, for example, expires in September. We want to change back to an annual system whereby dues are payable in January and must be paid by March 1st to avoid disenrollment, but we don't want to penalize people in the process whose memberships extend into next year, as most probably do. To do this, we propose a pro-rated scheme that, I hope, will mitigate this problem without being too confusing.

The table below shows how we propose to prorate membership dues for 2011 for individual members based on the current annual rate of \$15.

Current Expiration Dates	Individual Membership Dues for 2011
January – March 2011	\$15.00
April – June 2011	\$10.00
July – September 2011	\$5.00
October – December 2011	\$0.00

Family memberships will be the cost of an individual membership plus \$2. For example, my family membership for 2011, based on a September expiration date, will be \$7. Student renewals will continue to be \$5 for the year.

For those of you who get your *Datum Point* in the mail, the mailing label shows your current expiration date. We will email a list of expiration dates for those of you who get the *Datum Point* by email. If this is all still too confusing, you can phone CK Gailey at 703-534-3881, ext. 404. CK has also kindly agreed to accept checks for the full annual amount of \$15 for individual memberships for those who want to avoid the whole issue.

COLCHESTER UPDATE

By the Colchester Archaeological Research Team

The Colchester Archaeological Research Team (CART) is proud to announce that our investigations are progressing at a steady pace. In addition to the commencement of excavations within the platted portion of the historical town, our crew has been working on several other aspects of the program. Our public outreach has gotten off to an encouraging start, outside experts have been consulted, historical research into the history of the property is coming together, our technological equipment is up and running, and excavations on the prehistoric site should begin within a few weeks.

The main event at the historical site is currently Feature 9. It is a stone and brick filled hole,

generally rectangular in shape, and about 8 x 5 feet in dimension. It is preliminarily interpreted as a possible cellar feature, which either collapsed or was filled with rubble after it became obsolete.



we encourage them to join the ASV's certification program.



The CART public outreach program strives to be comprehensive in nature. On Saturday the 20th of November, we welcomed Holly Hobbs and Shamus Ian Fatzinger from *The Fairfax Journal*. Their article was published on November 24. Our Open House is scheduled for Saturday, December 4th, from 1 to 4pm. We accept volunteers three days each week, communicate through a centralized email address, and work in conjunction with the Friends of Fairfax Archaeology and Cultural Resources (FOFA) and the Northern Virginia Chapter of the Archaeological Society of Virginia (NVC ASV). We've had up to eleven volunteers in a single day, and seventeen people attended our first orientation session! When volunteers come to us,

The CART team has already consulted with several experts. First, Dan Hayes, a geomorphologist, came for an initial assessment of soils and stratigraphy on the prehistoric site. He will return once excavations have begun, and will conduct a more thorough evaluation.

Second, our new friends from Below the Turf, Co. provided a ground penetrating radar demonstration on a small portion of the historic site. The results guided Christopher Sperling's placement of several units. Future collaboration is a distinct possibility, especially on the cemetery site. Most recently, GMU professor Dr. Ann Palkovich stopped by to provide additional detail as to where her field schools discovered buried cultural features inside Colchester's town limits.



known to comprise the estate of George Mason V. This property is now primarily on land that is part of Mason Neck State Park. The survey being conducted has, in large part, been funded by grants from the Commonwealth of Virginia.

George Mason V is the son of the more famous colonial patriot George Mason IV of Gunston Hall. In 1774 George Mason V acquired from his father title to an estate which he chose to name Lexington after the battle of the same name that was the scene of the start of the Revolutionary War. On his property George Mason V built an expansive brick and wood home on a hillside from which one could see much of the then de-forested Mason Neck. This home was subsequently burned, and only the brick foundation of this and associated out-buildings remain.



And finally, we wanted to assure everyone that excavations will soon begin on the prehistoric site! The delay stemmed from a comprehensive array of technology and equipment issues. However, they have all been resolved, and we will be laying in units as soon as the Thanksgiving holiday is over. We may not be ready for volunteer involvement the first week in December, but surely will the week after.

MASON NECK SURVEY

By Paul Antsen

During the past several years, Archeologist Paul Inashima has been systematically exploring for evidence of historic and pre-historic activity on selected parts of the Mason Neck Peninsula. Mr. Inashima was recently recognized for his efforts as the lead archeologist in the development of the site excavation on Mason Neck later to be known as the "David Site". In his most recent efforts, Mr. Inashima has been assisted by volunteers Paul Antsen and John Kelsey as he continues exploring for other signs of improvement on the property

Mr. Inashima's mandate has been to conduct a general survey of the entire property to determine the location of all out-buildings associated with Lexington. Paul has only recently been joined in his efforts by the two volunteers; together, they have conducted Phase I and II archeological digs to assist in providing further documentation for his survey. Among the properties tentatively identified are a blacksmith working area, the home of a possible overseer for a portion of the estate, the location of the brick-making facility for many of the more substantial buildings on the property, and several yet unknown features. In addition, Paul has discovered evidence of occupation on the property by unidentified Civil War units.

In the course of these excavations, the group has found several pre-historic points from the Early Woodland period. Colonial period artifacts have included multiple types of glazed pottery, several types of everyday dishware, wine bottle glass, pieces of broken pipestems, and multiple hand-cut nails. The most interesting find so far was a key to some type of chest. Since the survey has only been to identify locations of additional structures on the property, there are no doubt future opportunities for more detailed excavations.



Piscataway (left) and Susquehanna Broad (right)

WESTBROOK SITE (44FX2660)

By Mike Johnson

We have almost completed the first, 100 square foot, test block. Thanks to Chris Ramey, John Kelsey, Ann Wood and CD Cox much of it was done while our crew was in Texas working on the Gault site. Prior to leaving for Gault we completed the first 25 sq. ft. That produced some startling results. We recovered a cross mended point, possibly a Late Archaic-Early Woodland transitional Hellgrammite and several thin-walled soapstone bowl fragments (see below).



We also recovered a chalcedony endscraper (see below) and a quartz endscraper among several points and other tools. They are possibly early but probably not Paleoamerican. One of the square foot units produced 107 artifacts. Chris reported recovering eight points in seven test units in one field session.



After returning we also recovered a rim section of the thin-walled soapstone bowl. John Kelsey found it in the field screen, which is a sign that he is rapidly becoming a prehistoric specialist.

Seven sherds of Culpeper ware were from the same one-foot square and one netmarked Culpeper ware sherd (see below). These were not included in earlier schedules because of computer problems. We also recovered a possible anvil stone and a probably pestle, the latter from the surface. These indicate more sedentary activities, possibly not during the winter.



NVC/ASV CHAPTER OFFICERS

President	John Kelsey	jkelsey@cox.net 703-922-8107
Vice-Presidents	Will and Wilke Nelson	wilkenelson@gmail.com
Treasurer	C.K. Gailey	treas@nvcasv.org
Corresponding Sec.	Maggie Johnson	stillmaggie@cox.net 703-455-6902
Recording Sec.	Felicia Glapion	glapfk11@yahoo.com
Editor	Patrick O'Neill	patrickloneill@verizon.net 703-249-9593

Fairfax County Archaeologists (FCPA)

Chapter Sponsors call 703-534-3881

Elizabeth Crowell	elizabeth.crowell@fairfaxcounty.gov
Mike Johnson	michael.Johnson@fairfaxcounty.gov

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

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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Northern Virginia Chapter
Archeological Society of Virginia
2855 Annandale Rd.
Falls Church, VA 22042

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