



THE DATUM POINT

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

Chapter Website – www.nvcasv.org

February 2011

FROM THE PRESIDENT – JOHN KELSEY

Good work goes on at Colchester despite the weather. And also despite the weather, a hard core of volunteers has been out there helping. As the weather warms up (if the weather warms up . . . ?), there will be great opportunities for field work. See the update from the CART later in this issue.

Mike Johnson and I have been working with Dr. Dennis Stanford, senior archaeologist at the Smithsonian's National Museum of Nature History, to set up a talk about the paleo work going on in the Chesapeake region, to include the Miles Point site. We thought he'd be able to talk to the Chapter in February but that date fell through. Mike has kindly offered to fill the gap. Meanwhile, I'm continuing to stay in touch with Dennis and will do my best to set up a talk later in the year. Those of you who have heard him know that he is a very engaging and provocative speaker, and he's involved in a lot of really interesting work.

I hope you've seen my email about shifting the date for the St. Mary's City field trip to April 30th. A good number of you expressed interest in the trip, and I know that some are looking into overnight accommodations in the area.

The 2011 Annual Meeting will be in Staunton at the Frontier Culture Museum on 14-16 October. It looks like we will be able to get hotel accommodations in Staunton for \$89 per night. The Museum itself is worth a visit. An added attraction is that a primitive technology demonstration is also scheduled at the Museum that weekend. By the way, it looks like 25 or so Chapter members haven't joined or renewed their membership in the state organization. I'd like to encourage you to do that.

There's a lot of archaeology going on state-wide, and the ASV plays an important role in supporting that.

Please join me in welcoming new Chapter members – Rebecca Siegal, Greg Lockhard, Don Williams, Rich Eilers, and David John Whitmire. Rich has already enlisted in the certification program. He found a USDA-approved soil analysis flow chart on the web; Mike looked at it and suggested including it with the Datum Point. It's attached to this edition. John

FEBRUARY 9, 2011 PRESENTATION

UNDERSTANDING STONE TOOL TECHNOLOGY: A COGNITIVE APPROACH

By Mike Johnson, Fairfax County Archaeologist



CHAPTER BY-LAWS

By John Kelsey

Attached to this issue of the *Datum Point* is a proposed set of by-laws that I will bring up for approval at our February Chapter meeting. It has the unanimous support of your officers. Please review it and be prepared to vote on it at the meeting.

Why are we voting on the by-laws? For the last several years, the Chapter has essentially been operating without by-laws, since no one could put their hands on a set of by-laws with an audit trail showing that it was current and had been approved by the membership. We went back into the records and found an early- to mid-90s version that differed in some respects from current practice. Your officers and I went over this version carefully. Where current practice differed but seemed preferable to what was in the earlier by-laws, we included those changes in the draft. Most of what was in the earlier version was still good and was retained.

What's significant or new about the proposed set of by-laws?

- It includes a statement of the ASV mission in Section II.
- Membership is on a calendar year basis (Section III.) This is as it was in the original version, and we are shifting back to this over the course of 2011.
- The Datum Point Editor, the Chapter Webmaster, and the Chapter Certification Liaison are added as officers (Section IV.) They are critical to the success of the Chapter and put in a lot of work for it. This addition recognizes that. Duties of some officers are shifted or expanded to align with current practice.
- It increases expenditures that the officers can approve without a vote of the Chapter from \$50 to \$100. (Section IV and Section V)
- In the late 80s, the Chapter approved paying ASV dues for Chapter officers. The current officers did not feel this was appropriate or necessary, and this was not included in the version that is proposed for approval.

FIELD SCHOOL SCHOLARSHIP ANNOUNCEMENT

By Will Nelson

Everyone is reminded that funds are available to support attendance at field schools and for research projects. The Williams-Mullen Memorial Field Study Scholarship

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Fund's application deadline is April 1st. More information about it and the Rubis-Fuller Research Fund is available online at www.nvcaasv.org. To apply for support from either of these funds, you have to fill out an application and send it to me for presentation to the Chapter. I can be contacted at: wnelson095@gmail.com. Both application forms are on the Chapter website. Please allow time to receive, publish, and vote on applications at a Chapter meeting.

COLCHESTER UPDATE

By the Colchester Archaeological Research Team

The Colchester Archaeological Research Team (CART) with volunteer assistance continues to make progress on both the historic and prehistoric sites. Highlights from the field include getting set up on a new historic site that will be run simultaneously with the town site and further delineating the horizontal and vertical boundaries of the prehistoric site, better understanding site formation. Also in January, CART spoke to the monthly meeting of the ASV. The talk drummed up even more interest in our project and in ASV.



The town site continues to slowly reveal its mysteries. This past month we relocated the foundation first identified in the 1980s by George Mason University. This dry-lain, stone masonry foundation is attributed to the Morris Pound occupation during the town phase. Initial excavations are beginning to confirm a colonial context. Additionally, we have moved further south on the same site, down slope and onto another site locus. Finally, the historic team has laid out survey points at the next site to be tested.

Work on the prehistoric site progresses as fast as conditions allow. Testing along the boundaries has

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identified some very deep deposits, increasing our confidence for intact cultural horizons. In one area, the depth of historic soils is such that we must auger to find prehistoric strata. Moving forward, the prehistoric team is going to expand outward, demonstrating the true extent of this resource.



Historic Field Director Christopher Sperling spoke at the January meeting of the ASV/NVC. He provided an update of the historic excavations to date. The talk attracted a number of not-as-yet ASV affiliated folk and we have already seen new volunteers as a result. Furthermore, the Mayor of Occoquan was at the talk and has invited CART to speak at town hall. We will keep you informed when a date has been set. Similarly, keep your calendar open for the June ASV meeting when Kathleen Lowe will be giving a update about what we have learned at the prehistoric site.



ALEXANDRIA ARCHAEOLOGY

By Ruth Reeder

SIGN UP FOR A FAMILY DIG DAY and help City Archaeologists screen soil for artifacts from a real dig! Saturday, July 16, August 20, September 17, or October 15 from 1:30 to 3 p.m. at the Shuter's Hill excavation site on the grounds of the George Washington Masonic Memorial.

\$5/person. Reservations required. Children under sixteen years of age must be accompanied by a participating adult. Reservations are secured upon receipt of full payment, payable to the City of Alexandria. If not received within 7 working days, reservations may be reassigned. Only one Dig Day per family.

Participants will meet the City Archaeologists and volunteers working on the dig and view recently excavated artifacts. Program includes a short history of the site as well as a tour of the excavation site.

The Shuter's Hill site has a long and varied history. The oldest artifacts found relate to early Native American occupation and include a quartzite hand axe, quartzite projectile points, and pottery fragments.

Other artifacts found include bottles, rusted cans, broken china, car parts, and a 1920 Mercury dime. The remnants of several buildings have also been uncovered. These structures date before, during, and after the Civil War.

A field orientation for all new volunteers wishing to excavate with Alexandria Archaeology has been scheduled for Saturday, June 25 from 10 AM to noon at the George Washington Masonic Memorial.

The orientation is free, but reservations are required. The session is also required for all new field volunteers.

Volunteers **MUST** be at least 16 years of age.

Please email me for reservations and include a home phone number.

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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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Falls Church, VA 22042

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