



THE DATUM POINT

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

Chapter Website – www.nvcasv.org

January 2011

FROM THE PRESIDENT – JOHN KELSEY

As we go into 2011, let's look back on some of the highlights of 2010:

- Chapter membership continued to grow at an impressive rate.
- Field trips were conducted to Brentsville and the Hunter Mill Road corridor. More such activities are planned for 2011.
- We continued the tradition of excellent monthly speakers, thanks to the good work of Diane Schug-O'Neill.
- With the opening of the Colchester project, the prehistoric work at Westbrook and along the Nottoway, and the trip to Gault that Mike Johnson led, there were many opportunities for field and lab work, and quite a few of you took advantage of them.
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- The Chapter had six newly certified archaeological technicians at this year's Annual Meeting. More candidates are in the pipeline for future years. Thanks to Ann Wood for helping to make this happen.

Building on this record, prospects for the Chapter in 2011 are bright. Our holiday party was, as usual, a lot of fun. Before getting down to the business of the evening – eating and talking – we managed to hold an election for 2011 officers. The result was that the terms of all the 2010 officers were extended into 2011. I'm hopeful that we can bring in new blood for 2012, and will be actively seeking volunteers as we go through 2011.

Best wishes for a happy and prosperous 2011, John.

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JANUARY 12, 2011

PRESENTATION

HISTORICAL ARCHAEOLOGY AT COLCHESTER

By Chris Sperling, Field Director

Christopher Sperling is the Historical Field Director for the Colchester archaeological project in southern Fairfax County. He has an MA in American History from George Mason University. He has over 15 years experience including the direction of field and laboratory work for all levels of archaeological investigation, primarily in the Middle Atlantic Region. Research interests include the archaeology of slavery in the early colonial Chesapeake.



Christmas at Colchester wharf, by Gerald Lyons

CHANGES TO ANNUAL DUES

By John Kelsey

As I've written before, the Chapter is reverting to membership on a calendar year basis for 2012 and beyond. Dues themselves are not being raised. When your current membership expires, you will be asked to renew through the end of 2011. The dues for 2011 are prorated as shown below depending upon your expiration date to account for the fact that most memberships run into 2011. Those of you with expiration dates in October, November, or December of 2011 will not need to renew this year – your memberships will carry over until the end of the year.

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 an August expiration date, will be \$7. Student renewals will continue to be \$5 for the year.

For future years – 2012 and beyond – annual dues will be payable on January 1st and must be paid by March 1st to avoid disenrollment.

For those of you who get your *Datum Point* in the mail, the mailing label shows your current expiration date. I initially thought to email a list of expiration dates to the rest of you, but did not do so because I was concerned about sending this information out to everyone. If you have a question about your own status, you can phone CK Gailey at 703-534-3881, ext. 404 or email him at ckgailey@hotmail.com. 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.

FIELD SCHOOL SCHOLARSHIP ANNOUNCEMENT

By Will Nelson

Hello, everyone. I'm your vice-president, Will Nelson. I just wanted to remind everyone that funds are available to support attendance at field schools and for research projects. The Williams-Mullen Memorial Field Study Scholarship Fund's application deadline is April 1st. More information about it and the Rubis-Fuller Research Fund is available online at www.nvcasv.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.

On a side note, the Research Fund doesn't have a deadline, but there is a time period in which applications can be submitted, from January 2nd to September 15th. The exact words from the by-laws of the Research Fund said "*Applications will be received between **January 2 and September 15**. If no application is received by September 15th, no award will be given. Any applications received after the deadline will be returned to the applicant with a letter encouraging reapplication in the following January.*"

COLCHESTER UPDATE

By Colchester Archaeological Research Team

It has been a cold month for the Colchester Archaeological Research Team (CART) and some of our more stalwart volunteers. Nonetheless we have plowed forward on both the Historic and Prehistoric sites. Furthermore, at the beginning of the month, the Friends of Fairfax County Archaeology and Cultural Resources (FoFA) sponsored an open house to help draw attention to our project. We estimate that as many as 100 people attended the December 4 event including members of the press and Chairman of the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors, Sharon Bulova.



Several features of note have been uncovered at the historic site. We placed some tests on a suspicious mound with architectural stone and brick, located south of the excavations by the road. Expecting to come down on a brick and stone architectural feature, instead we identified at least two posts, evidence of a post-in-ground structure. Nearer the road, two test units exposed a stone masonry foundation wall. As if this was not exciting enough, excavation into the interior revealed a second, interior stone masonry division.

Oddly, the interior division extends diagonally from the outer foundation wall, rather than being oriented squarely. Additional excavations will be necessary to properly categorize this structure. The historic crew will fan out to the southern and western reaches of the site. Volunteer help is essential.

Meanwhile, the prehistoric crew has also been out testing. We began by testing the previously recorded site boundaries. Our work shows that this site is even larger than expected. As a result, efforts have necessarily shifted back to transit work. We have spent the past couple days laying in loads of new test excavation locations on this ever expanding archaeological site. Excavations will resume shortly. This site is an incredibly rich and expansive resource capable of telling us a lot about the prehistory of Mason Neck.

The December 4th open house was a resounding success, due in large part to the efforts of our supporters and volunteers. As visitors streamed in, they were treated to a host of energetic volunteers in

the field, exposing new finds and sharing their interests. FoFA prepared the excellent eats that included colonial appropriate sweets and hot mulled apple cider. Members of the Northern Virginia Chapter help our efforts by guiding the interested public through the site, informing them about opportunities, and introducing folks to the world of archaeology right here in their neck of the woods.

Moving forward, the historic crew will spend the next weeks in the same vicinity. We are placing more tests in locations considered likely to bear fruit. Units placed in this way have led to our most stunning discoveries. We will also continue working outward on this site, into what were some of the town back lots. We hope to learn more about the townspeople from the work along the road and more about folks often forgotten by history from excavations in the back. The prehistoric crew will continue trying to find the true boundaries of the site before moving into the core to better understand how large a site we are dealing with and then figure out what how the site was used and how that relates to the larger picture of Late Woodland prehistory.



We want to thank all the volunteers that have helped us on both the historic and prehistoric crew. The ASV has been the largest and most reliable source for volunteers, by far. We continue to need your assistance, so as always, when you want to come out and lend a hand, drop us a line at CART.volunteers@gmail.com; let us know if you are more historic or prehistorically inclined. Our volunteer days are every Thursday, Friday, and Saturday, except holidays. When weather sours, there is almost always lab work. If you just want to keep on events, check us out at <http://www.cartarchaeology.blogspot.com/>.

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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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Northern Virginia Chapter

Archeological Society of Virginia

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Falls Church, VA 22042

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