



THE DATUM POINT

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

Chapter Website – www.nvcasv.org

December 2014

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

FROM THE PRESIDENT – JACK HRANICKY

This is my last President's message, as we will have a new president for 2015. It has been my pleasure to have served as your president. We did a lot of great things, but my only regret is not getting the MOU signed, since I started the process it is too bad. I'm sure we will get one in 2015.

We want to thank Gunston Hall for the great tour. Dave Shonyo (left) was our tour guide, and Paul Inashima (in the square) showed us his work at Newtown on the Gunston property. All-in-all, Gunston is a major historic site in Northern Virginia.



Yes, I was worried about playing with this Clovis point. It was found in 1927 in Westmoreland County. I am going to see it gets a good home for Virginia. It will probably be the Virginia Historical Society.

NVC CHRISTMAS PARTY



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

Come to the NVC's 2014 Christmas Party
at the James Lee Center!
Starts at **6:30 pm** on **December 10th.**

Our annual Christmas party will be held on December 10, starting at 6:30 pm. You are asked to bring your favorite dish. The Chapter will provide the plates, forks/knives, and drinks. Bring your friends; **and your 2015 dues.**

I wish everyone a joyous holiday. Thanks for the two years....



OLD COLCHESTER

By CART

In November CART worked at the Ash Grove Historic Site in Tysons for about two weeks. This work was collaborated with FCPA Architectural Historians and Park Operations in an effort to change the soil grade around the Meat House which was rotting due to the moist soil touching the wooden structure. Initial testing around the outside of the structure revealed a shallow builders trench.

The inside brick floor was not original to the structure, which was probably built around ca. 1800. The brick was also touching the wood sill, causing rot and had to be removed. Under the brick floor was over a foot of sand which contained artifacts ranging from animal bones to historic ceramic and metal fragments. In the center of the floor was a small firebox which was also not original. This sand layer came down to subsoil with a lot of rodent disturbances, which is probably also why there was so much bone within the sand layer.

The photographs show just a few artifacts from the sand layer. There was little evidence of burning on the floor within the Meat House; however, original timbers inside the structure show soot accumulation. This led to a theory that the fire for smoking the meat had been contained, perhaps within a cauldron or similar device.



Datum Point

The cold winter weather finds CART returning to test the Ridges of the Old Colchester Park and Preserve. These areas were initially tested with a small survey in 2011, but now CART is opening full one meter by one meter test which shows the complex soil layers. Water-screen samples being retain from each 5cm level is yielding numerous small pressure flakes throughout the column.

CART won for "Best Use of GIS for Public Outreach" at the annual Fairfax County GIS Excellence Awards on 20 November 2014. The Web Map is an interactive story map which informs the public of the recent finding across Old Colchester Park and Preserve and also cultural history within the park boundaries. The Web Map can be found at: <http://bit.ly/1w2AA6J>.

Please email cart.volunteers@live.com to volunteer. Have a nice holiday season!

FAIRFAX COUNTY HISTORY CONFERENCE FOCUSES ON THE WAR OF 1812

The 10th Annual Fairfax County History Conference was held on Saturday, Nov. 8 at the Stacy C. Sherwood Community Center in the City of Fairfax. A record 120 participants were in attendance to enjoy the theme of "Fire, Flight & Fury: The War of 1812 in Fairfax County 200 Years Later." Over 15 authors and exhibitors attended and the day was filled with much living history, including the re-enactments of Dolley Madison by Carole Herrick, an 1812 Naval Commander by Michael Bosworth, an 1812 60th Virginia Militia Man by Richard Orli and a grand finale of Francis Scott Key by National Park Ranger, Alan Gephardt.

Guests included Virginia State Del. Ken Plum (D-36), U.S. Rep. Gerry Connolly (D-11) joined with Fairfax County Board of Supervisors Chairman Sharon Bulova to share comments and to present awards to local historians who had contributed to

document and preserve the history of Fairfax County during the recent past.

Conference Committee members, Mike Irwin and Esther McCullough produced War of 1812 Timeline which was included in the attendee packets. Michael Bosworth shared song and verse as a way to share both information and demonstrate how the naval armed service members attended to their tasks. He reminded us that the War of 1812 was really part of the larger war called the Napoleonic Wars.

A Trivia question for the audience was "Why was the War of 1812 Overture written & by whom?" Only a few attendees were aware that Peter Ilyich Tchaikovsky wrote the overture in 1880 to honor the Russian victory over the attempted invasion by Napoleon. Trivia prizes included CDs of Keynote presenter, Ron Maxwell from the county's first History Conference in 2004.

Richard Orli reminded the audience that in 1812 Fairfax County was a much smaller county than the state's largest county at the time, Loudoun county. He also shared that the militia men who served in the War of 1812 often provided their own uniforms & due to shortages of buttons, wool cloth and red cloth. He also stated that over 300 axes were ordered to slow down the British progress to capture the United States Capital, but they unfortunately never arrived.

Carole Herrick quietly shared the "post script" reflection of Dolley Madison's flight into Fairfax County while protecting George Washington's portrait & and saving the beautiful red velvet drapes from the White House.

Alexandria Carlyle House Curator, Helen Wirka, provided insight into the Battle of Bladensburg focusing on the key players including the brothers Winder: Levin who was the governor of Maryland and William who was the commander of the defenses of Washington and Baltimore during the War of 1812.

Patrick O'Neill provided an enthusiastic and fresh perspective on "The Battle of the White House" & which was actually a location near present-day Ft. Belvoir (not the Presidential mansion).

Alan Gephardt shared that the inspiration for the lyrics to "The Star Spangled Banner" was really the defenders of Ft. McHenry & the soldiers. His passionate rendition of all three verses of the original "Defence of Fort McHenry" brought the audience to tears.

It is the custom of the Fairfax County History Commission, to present Annual Awards to citizens who have given of their time and talents to create a document or media presentation that serves to preserve and protect the history of Fairfax County. Awards presented at the beginning of the conference and presented by U.S. Rep Connolly and chairman Bulova included:

- Lifetime Achievement Award: Irma Clifton -- for lifelong passion to preserve, protect and promote the history of the Lorton area of the county & culminating in the Lorton Arts Center and the Lorton Prison and Suffragist Museum on site.
- Distinguished Service Awards were presented to: Neil McBride & for his decades of service to also maintain and preserve the history of the Lorton and South County area; Win & David Meiselman - for protecting and caring for one of the last Civil War antebellum homes in Fairfax County and home to Confederate Spy, Laura Ratcliffe (credited with protecting the life of Colonel John Singleton Mosby) during the Civil War; L. Tony Bracken & for his thorough pictorial essay of the history of lake Barcroft in Falls Church.
- Fairfax Heritage Award - Patrick O'Neill for his 13 years in the writing treatise called "To Annoy or Destroy the Enemy" & the Battle of the White House and the Burning of Washington. With nearly 300 pages and over 900 footnotes of almost exclusive primary source information, O'Neill has shed new insights into the connection between what happened in Fairfax county and the writing of the "Star Spangled Banner" by Francis Scott Key. O'Neill received an award of \$1,000 for his efforts in preserving, promoting and protecting the history and heritage of Fairfax County.



U.S. Rep. Gerry Connolly (D-11) and Chairman of the Fairfax County board of Supervisors, Sharon Bulova present the Ross Netherton Award to Patrick O'Neill.

Committee members who coordinated efforts for the conference included, Barbara Naef, Dr. Liz Crowell, Susan Gray, Esther McCullough, Naomi Zeavin, Sallie Lyons, Carole Herrick, Mary Lipsey, Jenee Lindner, Phyllis Walker Ford, Rachel Rifkind, Mike Irwin. The Awards Committee included, Jack Hiller, Elise R. Murray and Naomi Zeavin. Fairfax County History Commissioner Lynne Garvey-Hodge chairs both the Conference Planning Committee and the Awards Committee. The 11th Annual Fairfax County History Conference is tentatively scheduled for Nov. 7, 2015 with a final location to be determined (at the time of this writing).



The Fairfax County History Conference Planning Committee with a 10th Anniversary Cake to celebrate 10 years, from left: Barbara Naef, Esther McCullough, Naomi Zeavin, Mary Lipsey, Anne Barnes, Lynne Garvey-Hodge, Rachel Rifkind, Dr. Liz Crowell, Carole Herrick, Susan Gray and Jenee Lindner. Not pictured: Mike Irwin and Phyllis Walker Ford. Photo courtesy of History Commissioner Jack L. Hiller

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Please send *Datum Point* via e-mail

Individual (\$15) _____

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