



# THE DATUM POINT

April 2017

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

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



## FROM THE PRESIDENT

**RICH EILERS**

It must be Spring; temps are above 60 degrees, it's raining almost every Friday, my gold panning partner came home with his first chiggers of the year, and Festivals are in bloom.

Several Chapter members attended the 2017 Middle Atlantic Archaeology Conference held in Virginia Beach from March 16th through the 19th. The presentations included a wide range of pre and post contact period papers including several discussing the spatial dispersion of a specific material type over time. Lithic Material dispersion and its potential trade linkage applied to Clovis and Paleolithic populations in Virginia has been a factor motivating our Chapter's work at Thoroughfare and Smith Mountain Gaps under Dr Mike Johnson.

The Chapter completed the capital acquisition of its video projector and support equipment in late March. This assemblage includes a Viewsonic WXGA projector, HDMI and VGA/SVGA cables, projector and computer Office Suite remotes, and a hard case. I thank Patrick and Diane for the years of providing their personal video equipment for Chapter use.

This Chapter picnic is now scheduled for August 19th at Cox Farms thanks to CD Cox and our gracious host Eric Cox. It is possible that "Foamhenge" installation will be complete and available for our viewing pleasure.

See President cont'd on page 2

**Join Chapter members at Anthony's  
Restaurant at 6 pm before the meeting!  
Located at 3000 Annandale Rd, Falls  
Church, VA 22042 - (703) 532-0100**

**Weds, April 12<sup>th</sup>, 7:30PM**

## GERMANNA ARCHAEOLOGY: OUTSIDE THE ENCHANTED CASTLE, ORANGE COUNTY, VIRGINIA

**BY DR. ERIC L. LARSEN**



Eric L. Larsen, archaeologist for the Germanna Foundation, will discuss excavations of a colonial fort located on a horseshoe peninsula of the Rapidan River east of Culpeper, Va., at a meeting of the Northern Virginia Chapter of the Archeological Society of Virginia at 7:30 p.m. on Wednesday, April 12.

Excavations took place last summer at the fort, which is on a 62-acre archaeological site that includes the mansion remains of former Virginia lieutenant governor Alexander Spotswood, in what is now Orange County. It was the first time in 20 years that excavation took place on the property. See Speaker cont'd on page 2

### **President cont'd from page 1**

Our speaker this month, Dr Eric Larsen, will join us at Anthony's at 6 pm proceeding the monthly meeting. His talk will address the Germanna, an early 18th century German mining colony near Culpepper, VA in Spotsylvania County. Eric is the Germanna Foundation director.

Several business items will be presented to the Chapter membership for vote at the April 12th meeting. These include a free Chapter membership for Mount Vernon's Director of Archaeology, Chapter participation at the June 10th Old Colchester Open House, Chapter participation at the 275th Fairfax County Anniversary on the grounds of the Old Courthouse, and Chapter contribution towards the Virginia Archaeology Charitable Trust IRS non-profit licensing fee of \$850 (see this month's ASV bulletin for further details).

Our ASV 2nd Qtr 2017 Board Meeting is scheduled for April 29th at Kittiewan. I am looking forward to my first visit to our state organization's "headquarters".

Field season is here and I encourage all our members to look at participation opportunities using the Organizational linkages on our website's Volunteer page.

### **Speaker cont'd from page 1**

"The goal was to find more of a linear feature first identified in 1993. The feature, known as the palisade trench, is believed to have been part of the wooden palisade wall for the 1714 structure known as Fort Germanna," said Larsen.

Spotswood had Fort Germanna built to protect the Virginia colony's north and west flanks from uprisings of Indians, the French and enslaved people, Larsen said.

"We have begun efforts to better define this feature on the greater landscape. In the process, we are expanding the story of Germanna beyond the story of the Enchanted Castle," so named by bibliophile William Byrd II, who visited to learn about Spotswood's productive ironworks and in 1732 described the Piedmont mansion as an "enchanted Castle".

"The name stuck," said Larsen, who will reveal more about the fort and its artifacts as well as the mansion and a nearby settlement that included German immigrants, and what this tells us about colonial history. The 45-minute talk will be followed by a 15-min question-and-answer session.

Dr. Larsen has more than 25 years of archaeological experience. He has worked with the National Park Service at Harpers Ferry National Historical Park and for the University of Maryland on sites in Annapolis, Maryland. He directed fieldwork at the Freedmen's and Contraband Cemetery for the City of Alexandria, Va., and recently assisted with excavations at George Washington's Boyhood Home at Ferry Farm near Fredericksburg, Va. for the George Washington Foundation. He has taught introductory archaeology classes and trained numerous students at field schools throughout the mid-Atlantic region.



### **PRESQU'ISLE TOUR**

By Jackie Cuyler

Two of our chapter members, Sharon Butler and Jackie Cuyler, had the opportunity last summer to attend an open house and garden party at Presqu'isle, French for "almost an island", located near Remington, Virginia at the confluence of the Rappahannock and Hazel rivers.

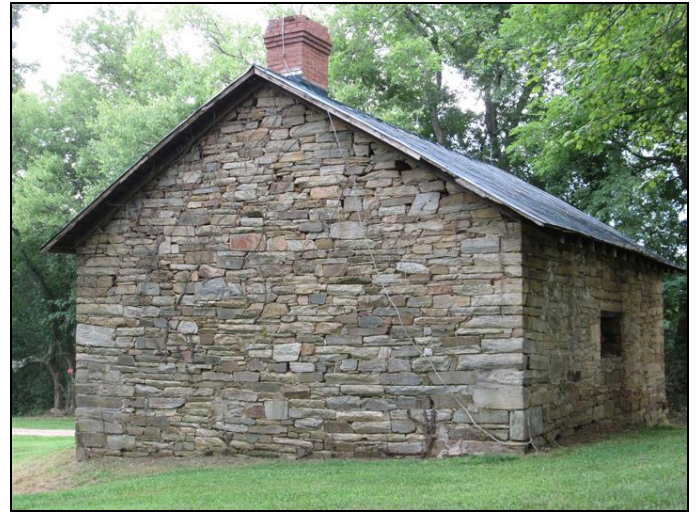
The land was originally a 16,000 acre grant from King George III to Robert Beverly. We drove to the house along a two mile gravel lane through acres of corn and soybean fields.





The house and existing dependencies, now on 130 acres, was completed by Fredericksburg Judge Daniel Grinnan in 1815. Brick houses, especially in this remote location, were rare at the time and it is said that people from all over came to study the construction of the 4500 square foot dwelling.

There are two rare brick slave quarters still standing, remnants of the ice house, and a stone blacksmith shop which contains the chimney of the original brick forge.



When Judge Grinnan died in 1845 the plantation was sold to the Major family who protected it during the Civil War. The house served as headquarters for Union General Emory Upton during the winter of 1863/1864 and is adjacent to the Brandy Station Battlefield.

The property passed from the Major family in 1909, but fortunately none of the owners disturbed the integrity of the house or outbuildings. The current owners purchased Presquæ Isle in 2015 and it is used as a venue for weddings and special events.

Note: Much of the information here taken from the Presquæ Isle website [www.presquisle.com](http://www.presquisle.com) and from an article in the Culpeper Star Exponent dated August 8, 2016.





## **CART**

### **County Archaeological Research Team**

The Middle Atlantic Archaeological Conference (MAAC) in Virginia Beach was a great conference filled with interesting papers and grand awards. Dr. Elizabeth Crowell, the manager of the Archaeology and Collections Branch of the FCPA, received the Lifetime Achievement Award, honoring her vast career across the Middle Atlantic and American Southwest.

The CART field team continues work at the current site on the western side of the county. Volunteers and staff have discovered interesting artifacts ranging from Staffordshire slip coarse earthenware to brass buckle fragments, and a brass furniture tack. Once the weather is dry for a few days, excavation into the features will begin. CART is doing the final measuring and mapping of the features, preparing these features for excavation. The feature soil will be saved for waterscreen window screen samples, which will then have to be picked through in the lab.

CART will also save soil from the features for flotation samples. The flotation process separates out the lighter organic items such as seeds. These seeds could be from food products used by the inhabitants of the structure, or from plants which were growing in the area over 200 years ago. We send the samples for analysis to determine what was once in the region.

Our New Volunteer Orientations have been filling quickly. The orientation introduces new volunteers to our department as well as some basics of archaeological procedure. The most exciting portion of the orientation includes washing artifacts that are either from recent field work or from our collections.

The field crew is currently bringing in artifacts from our most recent project that date from Colonial to Early National. Artifacts include a range of ceramics, almost exclusively wrought nails, hand blown glass as well as a variety of other items such as cuff links. Between our volunteers and staff, items are being processed quickly through the lab with very little delay before it is cataloged and in our database.

Datum Point

Please email CART staff to volunteer in the field at [cart.volunteers@live.com](mailto:cart.volunteers@live.com), volunteer days in the field are Thursdays through Saturdays. Email the lab at [cartarchlab@live.com](mailto:cartarchlab@live.com). Volunteer days in the lab are Wednesday through Friday.

Keep an eye on our blog: [cartarchaeology.wordpress.com](http://cartarchaeology.wordpress.com) for information on local events and recent finds by CART.



## 2017 NVC/ASV CHAPTER OFFICERS

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

<b>Fairfax Co. Archaeology (FCPA)</b>	Dr. Elizabeth Crowell	<a href="mailto:elizabeth.crowell@fairfaxcounty.gov">elizabeth.crowell@fairfaxcounty.gov</a> 703-534-3881
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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>Chapmans Mill</b>	Frances Allshouse	<a href="mailto:chapmanmill@gmail.com">chapmanmill@gmail.com</a> 540-253-5888
<b>DC City Archaeologist</b>	Dr. Ruth Troccoli	<a href="mailto:Ruth.Troccoli@dc.gov">Ruth.Troccoli@dc.gov</a> 202-442-8836

### NVC/ASV MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

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

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

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

\_\_\_\_\_

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

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

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

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

**Return to:**  
Isabella Tonkavitch, Treasurer, NVC/ASV  
8304 Graceway Drive  
Lorton, VA 22079

**Chapter members must join our parent organization, the Archeological Society of Virginia at [asv-archeology.org](http://asv-archeology.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!!!!**