



THE DATUM POINT

June 2017

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

Chapter Website – www.nvcasv.org



FROM THE PRESIDENT RICH EILERS

We are approaching mid-year with many of our members engaged in archaeological projects around the region. If any Chapter members are in search of projects to support, please contact Mike Johnson, Patrick O'Neill and use the URLs on the website volunteer page.

Starting the week of June 12th, Eric Larsen has invited Chapter members to participate in this year's survey at Ft Germanna in Orange County next to Germanna Junior College. I am planning to go both the 12th and 19th. My ArchaeoTundra can take 4 if anyone wants to carpool.

This year's ASV conference is scheduled for 26-29 Oct at the Natural Bridge Historic Hotel and Conference Center.

Many thanks to Joan Huber and her team at The Falls Church for an outstanding tour covering the architecture, history, and evolution of the church over the last 280 years. Over 25 Chapter members attended. Our June speaker is Mike Johnson on the status of our Smith Mountain Lake work including potential ties to Thoroughfare Gap. The meeting will be held on Wednesday, June 14th, at 7:30 pm in the James Lee Center on Annandale Rd in Falls Church. For those interested, we will meet at Anthony' at 6 pm to break bread and catch up before the meeting.

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**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**

JUNE 14TH 7:30PM

SMTH MOUNTAIN GAP UPDATE

BY MIKE JOHNSON

This presentation will cover the results, to date, of the excavations at Smith Mountain Gap including the model being tested. That model hypothesizes that watergaps served as transportation and communication funnels as well as trade centers or rendezvous locations during the earliest human occupations of the Middle Atlantic, adjacent regions and possibly regions located farther away. The presentation will discuss the relationship between the research at SMGA and Thoroughfare gap.

Mike Johnson: Retired Fairfax County Senior Archeologist after 32 years; BA (history) from George Mason College of the University of Virginia; MA (anthropology) from The American University; PhD (archeology) from University of Exeter (U.K.); senior author of the Dr. Ben C. McCary Virginia Fluted Point Survey (1990-2000); 42 years experience as a lithic technologist and author of two book articles on the Lithic Technology and Material Culture of the First Virginians (Paleo-Americans); Principle investigator for the ASV team at the Pre-Clovis and Clovis age Cactus Hill, Blueberry Hill and Rubis-Pearsall Paleo-American projects (dissertation); Principle investigator at the Chapman's Mill (Thoroughfare Gap) Paleo-American excavation, and co-principle investigator at the Smith Mountain Gap Archeology (SMGA) excavations focusing on Paleo-American uses of those two watergaps.

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Our participation at the Fairfax 275th is a go on Saturday, June 17th, with several interesting activities planned by our Chapter lead and certification program student, Yvonne French. Please contact Yvonne French if you want to assist. I plan on attending the celebration which runs from 10am to 4pm at the judiciary complex in Fairfax City adjacent to Ox Rd (123) and hope others will also.

Looks like one of our officers will be moving within the next 6 months. Isabel has done an exceptional job as our Treasurer and active field and lab teammate. We are looking for a volunteer to take on the role of Chapter Treasurer, over lapping Isabel to insure a smooth transition. Please contact Isabel or myself if interested.

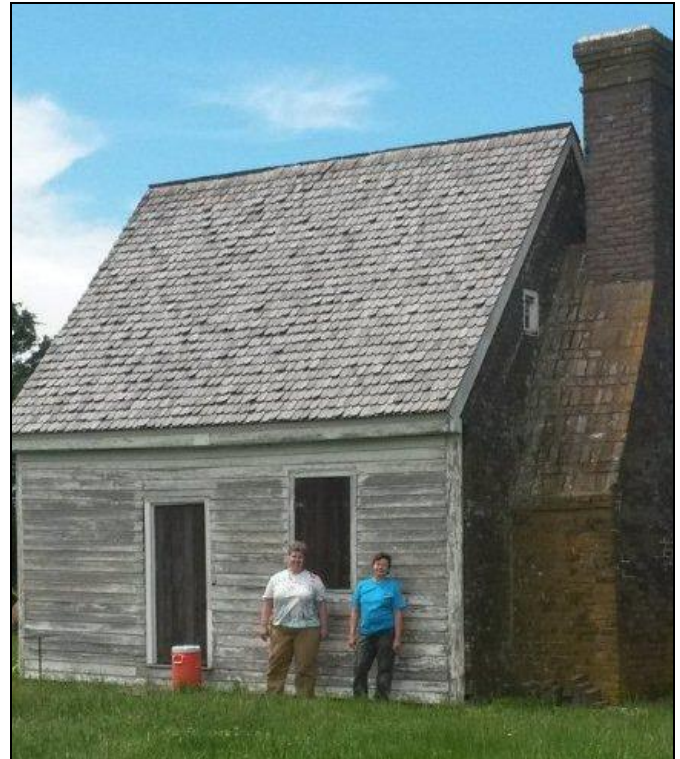
I wish everyone a safe, prosperous, and productive June. Until next month!

EYREVILLE & PEAR VALLEY FIELD SCHOOL

By Jackie Cuyler

Three chapter members, Diane Schug-O'Neil, Jackie Cuyler and Yvonne French, recently attended the Eyreville and Pear Valley field school located in Northampton County on the beautiful Eastern Shore of Virginia. The Eyreville site is on the grounds of a late 17th to 19th century plantation house, although there may be evidence that there is more than one structure. Pear Valley is the location of the earliest surviving single-room plan house in Virginia with a portion of the chimney dating to the mid-17th century.

There were volunteers from the ASV, those who travelled across country with Passport in Time and local residents. Still extant on the grounds is a mid-18th century home, an early 19th century residence, and buildings from the early 20th century. We were treated to a tour of these buildings by two architectural historians and blessed with constant breezes off the Chesapeake Bay which kept insects away.



Our testing revealed two brick corners of a structure, a possible basement location, a shell midden, trash pits and numerous artifacts from the 17th and 18th centuries. And talk about artifacts ó this area is steeped in history. I won't go into details here, as Yvonne will be making a presentation to the Chapter on our excavations and discoveries at a later date ó stay tuned!



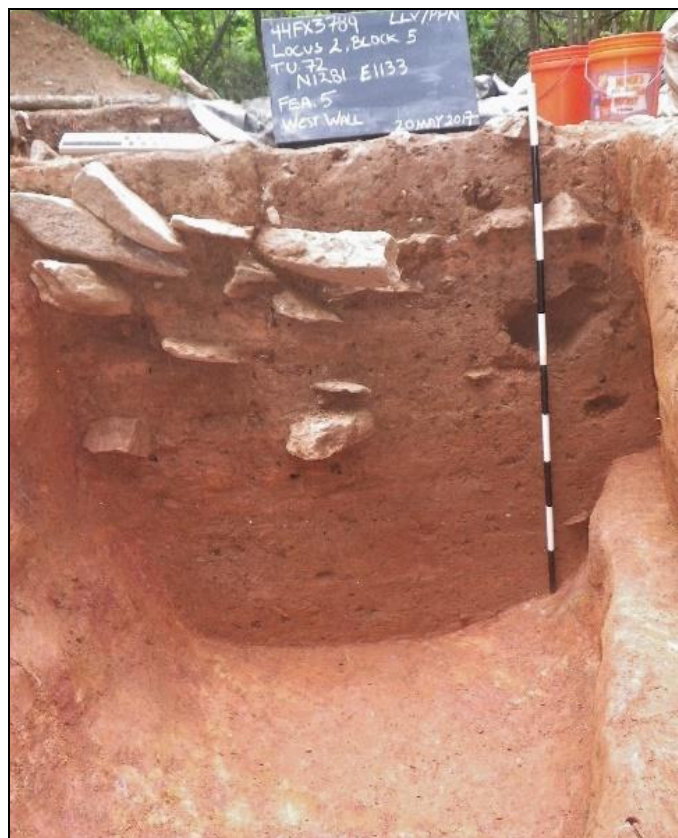
For a wonderful article, please read:

http://pilotonline.com/news/local/history/toppled-tree-and-archaeological-dig-unearth-mystery-of-early-s/article_c05265de-8c44-55b1-9124-dbb822941af2.html



Yvonne French sitting and Celia Isbrecht and Lynn Wilson

inform the archaeologists of the previous inhabitants of the structure. The deepest part of the cellar is now just over one meter below the current ground surface (see picture of profile).



CART

County Archaeological Research Team

Kayla and Elizabeth attended an exciting workshop at the Maryland Archaeological Conservation Lab at Jefferson Patterson Park. The workshop consisted of lectures and hands-on activities for identifying glass and stone tools, an X-Ray demonstration, collections management procedures, and metal conservation. We hope to apply what we learned to our own lab procedures.

Feature excavation continues at the current site. Large architectural stone discovered in each unit. These stones are likely from a dry-laid foundation or be components of the hearth or chimney that were pushed into the deep cellar when the structure was abandoned in the early 1800s. The deep cellar appears to have steps cut into subsoil along the eastern edge. The domestic artifacts that range from white salt glazed ceramics and hand painted pearlware, to large stoneware container ceramics



Each bucket of soil removed from the features is quarter-inch screened for artifacts over plastic then the remaining soil is scooped into sandbags and sent for waterscreening processing through window screen mesh. After drying for a day or two, the sample is bagged into plastic bags and sent to the lab. Many bags are now at the lab awaiting to be picked through for small artifacts such as straight pins, beads, fish scales and other small bones.

The lab has been busy processing this feature soil. Volunteers and staff have done an excellent job at keeping up with picking the feature artifacts!

Testing in areas to the south and east of the large cellar feature has not yielded anymore features, and most of the units had minimal artifacts recovered (Picture of Haley and Samantha excavating a unit in a wooded area).



A large metal item was recovered about 50 cm deep into the large cellar feature. Chris H. (ASV-NVC Vice President) assisted in the proper identification of the item, as a plow part manufactured in the late 1700s into the first quarter of the 1800s. Called a coulter, the artifact is part of a bar-share plow; it measures 2 feet in length, attached to a larger plow

at the bottom, and the holes were used to secure the coulter to the plow beam.

New Volunteers take an Archaeology New Volunteer Orientation. Please email the CART lab at cartarchlab@live.com for information about future orientations or lab opportunities.

For questions about volunteering in the field, email CART staff in the field at cart.volunteers@live.com. Volunteer days in the field are Thursdays through Saturdays. Volunteer days in the lab are Wednesdays through Fridays.

Keep an eye on our blog: cartarchaeology.wordpress.com for information on local events and recent finds by CART.

2017 NVC/ASV CHAPTER OFFICERS

President	Rich Eilers	eilersrl1@aol.com 703-440-3753
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Other Public Archaeological Programs in Northern Virginia/DC

Fairfax Co. Archaeology (FCPA)	Dr. Elizabeth Crowell	elizabeth.crowell@fairfaxcounty.gov 703-534-3881
Mount Vernon	Dr. Luke Pecoraro	LPecoraro@mountvernon.org 703.799.6831
Gunston Hall	Dave Shonyo	archaeology@gunstonhall.org 703-550-0441
Alexandria Museum	Dr. Eleanor Breen	Eleanor.Breen@alexandriava.gov 703-838-4399
Chapmans Mill	Frances Allshouse	chapmanmill@gmail.com 540-253-5888
DC City Archaeologist	Dr. Ruth Troccoli	Ruth.Troccoli@dc.gov 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

The Chapter meets at 7:30p.m. on the 2nd Wed. of each month at the James Lee Center, 2855-A Annandale Road, Falls Church, VA.

EVERYONE IS WELCOME!!!!