The Society for Georgia Archaeology at CoastFest
by Kevin Kiernan

Founded by laymen during the Great Depression in 1933, the Society for Georgia Archaeology is the oldest archaeological society in the State. It inspired the Ocmulgee National Monument, helped establish a Department of Archaeology at the University of Georgia, and initiated work on a statewide archaeological survey. Today the SGA is an active group of professional and avocational archaeologists whose goal is to "identify, study, interpret, and preserve Georgia’s rich historic and prehistoric archaeological heritage" (http://thesga.org).

Each year volunteers from the SGA carry this message to CoastFest, the ever-expanding fair the Department of Natural Resources sponsors on the first Saturday in October in Brunswick to celebrate the history, archaeology, and ecology of the state's incomparable seacoast. This year well over 9000 visitors arrived from across Georgia and the surrounding states to enjoy the scores of exhibits, games, performances, and refreshments at the daylong event.
For the 2011 event the SGA tent covered eight long tables of interactive displays that always attract hundreds of children, eager to show off what they have learned in the Glynn County Archaeology Program that Ellen Provenzano has directed for the past eighteen years. With their training in fourth grade the children are adept at identifying and sorting artifacts from Fort Frederica.

Tammy Herron from the Savannah River Archaeological Research Program in South Carolina and Rita Elliott of the LAMAR Institute in Savannah brought other educational displays and engaging games to test the skills and intelligence of all participants.
For the third year Rita also brought Abby the Able ArchaeoBus. The DNR has each year provided extra space and electricity beside the SGA tent and tables to accommodate the ArchaeoBus, with its rich and absorbing introduction to Georgia archaeology.

As they leave the ArchaeoBus, young visitors are always delighted to find tables with PlayDoh and instructions on how to make coiled pottery and decorate it with complicated stamps or cord marks, as the prehistoric and protohistoric Indians once did on Georgia's Coast.
These popular tables provide a smooth transition from the ArchaeoBus back to the main tables under the tent.

Although they can encounter the educational games and displays in any order, many folks head for the ArchaeoBus first, where they learn some fundamentals about Georgia archaeology in a structured way. When they come out, children typically are ready to get their hands working in clay or reassembling broken artifacts. From there they and their parents return to the many interactive exhibits on the tables under the tent.

While CoastFest 2011 was smashing all previous attendance records, the SGA was breaking some records of its own, too, with 18 volunteers (nine from the Golden Isles Archaeological Society, the newest chapter of SGA) from Georgia, South Carolina, Florida, and the United Kingdom, manning the ten tables and the
ArchaeoBus.

Shortly after we had set up our tables this year, a South African flying a 9-foot kite came over to chat. Peter Boyton explained that a camera, hanging from the kite, was busily capturing digital images of our tent and ArchaeoBus from high above by a method called "autoKAP" (automated Kite Aerial Photography).

[Bird's eye view of the SGA installation at CoastFest]

Peter explained that the camera was mounted on a tilt in a rig that pans 360 degrees with the shutter clicking every five seconds. His autoKAP produced a wealth of wondrous images, including a spectacular picture of the kite itself flying high over
the beautiful Sidney Lanier Bridge.

[Camera snapping its Kite over the Sidney Lanier Bridge]

For more information about the Society for Georgia Archaeology, please visit our website at http://thesga.org.

For a superb, entertaining, and highly accessible introduction to the fascinating field of Archaeology in Georgia, the Society for Georgia Archaeology warmly recommends *Frontiers in the Soil: The Archaeology of Georgia*, by Roy S. Dickens, Jr. and James L.
McKinley, in collaboration with James H. Chapman and Leland G. Ferguson. Written by professional archaeologists and intended as a reliable resource for avocational archaeologists, educators, students, and the general public, *Frontiers in the Soil* has established itself since its first publication in 1979 as a classic in archaeological literature on the prehistory, history, and archaeological heritage of our State and region.

Through authoritative text and amusing illustrations, Dickens and McKinley interpret Georgia’s past with humor and intelligence and describe scientific archaeological investigations and the ethics that guide the discipline.

Acknowledgments:

The SGA is much indebted to the 18 volunteers who made our installation at CoastFest this year a success: Jack Caldwell, Cay Ellis, George Ellis, Aidine Kiernan, Kevin Kiernan, Sonja Olsen Kinard, Ellen Provenzano, Carolyn Rock, and Bill Weaver, all members of the Golden Isles Archaeological Society, the newest chapter of the SGA. We had nine additional volunteers from as far away as Florida, South Carolina, and England: Connie Fonseca of St. Simons Island; Troup Nightingale of Southeastern Photography and Hofwyl-Broadfield State Park, Brunswick; P.T. Ashlock, an archaeologist based in Savannah; Jennifer Nusbaum, president of the Armstrong Anthropology Club, and Jennifer Marler from the Department of Anthropology, at Armstrong Atlantic State University, Savannah; Dawn Chapman Guest, Department of Archaeology, University of York, England; Peter Kiernan, Jacksonville, Florida; Rita Elliott of the LAMAR Institute in Savannah; and Tammy Herron from the Savannah River Archaeological Research Program in South Carolina.

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