President’s Message: Winter 2012

Submitted by Tammy Herron (sgapresident@thesga.org)

I will start this President’s Message off apologetically—I should have had this message out at the beginning of January, but life has thrown some major curve balls my way as of late. I would like to say that I am looking forward to serving as President of the SGA for the next couple of years and will strive to get information out in a timelier manner.

For those of you who were not in attendance at the 2012 Fall Meeting, the new (and some not so new) officers for 2012-2014 are President Tammy Herron, Vice President Leslie Perry, Secretary Pam Baughman (thank you for your willingness to serve again), Treasurer Rick Sellers (thank you for your willingness to serve again), and Ex-Officio Catherine Long. Newly elected board members for 2012-2016 are Phillip T. Ashlock (aka PT), Tom Lewis, Amanda Morrow, and Joseph Roberts. Board members serving the 2010-2014 terms are Lyn Kirkland (who has stepped in to fill Leslie Perry’s unexpired term now that she is VP), Matthew Newberry, Don Thieme, and Inger Wood. Additional officers include Early Georgia Editor Jared Wood, Early Georgia Managing Editor Dr. David Hally, and The Profile Editor Ben Steere. I look forward to working with the SGA leadership and our members throughout the state as we strive to grow and strengthen the organization. On that note, I would like to mention that the officers and board members will be holding a Strategic Planning Meeting in February to reevaluate and prioritize the list of both short and long term goals for the organization, so look for an update on the website following that meeting.

I personally wish to thank everyone who worked to make the 2012 Fall Meeting a success in Columbus—especially, Matthew Newberry, Suzanne Newberry, Lynn Pietak, and Dean Wood. I hope that you read Past-President Catherine Long’s summary of the Fall Meeting, if not, perhaps this will prompt you to do so. Those of you who were unable to attend the meeting, tour, and social hour downtown afterwards missed a real treat! We received a warm welcome by our hosts at the Columbus Museum and gleaned much information from the interesting and informative papers presented during the morning session. Following lunch, we enjoyed a fantastic tour of the National Civil War Naval Museum at Port Columbus led by Mr. Jeffrey Seymour. If you find yourself traveling near or through Columbus, I encourage you to stop in and take a tour of both of these wonderful institutions that are working to preserve Georgia’s history. I think you will be glad you did! We had great food and fun during the social hour at The Cannon Brew Pub downtown and enjoyed people-watching during the city’s annual Spooktacular Halloween Celebration—some of the scenes were definitely quite spooky!

And speaking of meetings, please SAVE THE DATE and make plans to join us for the 2013 Spring Meeting on Saturday, May 18th in Macon! Preliminary plans include a morning session of presentations at the Georgia Sports Hall of Fame, boxed lunch, tour of Ocmulgee National Monument by Dan Bigman, and more presentations at Ocmulgee in the afternoon. I look forward to seeing you there! Please visit SGA’s website for continued updates regarding Georgia Archaeology Month and the Spring Meeting.

Now that Georgia Archaeology Month in on your mind, did you know this year marks the 20th year that SGA has hosted an annual archaeology awareness promotion? What began as GEORGIA ARCHAEOLOGY AWARENESS WEEK in May of 1994 has evolved into a month-long celebration and outreach effort to promote a better understanding of archaeology in general, how archaeology is conducted in Georgia, and the importance of site preservation. The theme for 2013 is “Digging and Diving into the Past: Celebrating 20 Years of Georgia Archaeology Awareness.” Again, please visit the website often for additional postings regarding this awesome celebration and the calendar of events that will be taking place around the state.

On another note, the SGA has joined The Coalition to Preserve the Georgia Archives and will be listed as a supporting organization in the Georgia Archives advocacy document. As many of you will remember, Catherine Long, the immediate past president of our organization, sent letters last September in support of the Georgia Archives to the Governor, Lt. Governor, and Secretary of State. “In
order to continue the preservation, study and education of all Georgia’s rich history,” Mrs. Long urged these officials to reconsider their decision to close the archives. Like-minded organizations around the state are working to ensure that legislators are aware that additional funding is needed “in the next state budget to restore the Georgia Archives to its ability to be open to the public for regular business hours and to have sufficient staff to provide the basic full range of services that a state archival institution should provide.” As such, the officers and board members felt that it was our duty to join with other supporting organizations throughout the state as a Coalition Partner.

One last note, please take time to renew your membership for 2013! If you have already done so, then I thank you immensely. And remember that you can join and/or renew even faster and easier now via credit card payment online by clicking SGA’s NEW payment link here.

Hope to see y’all at the Spring Meeting in Macon!

ANNOUNCEMENTS • ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES TO VISIT • ARCHAEOLOGY 101 • MUSEUMS AND HISTORICAL CENTERS

Preserving our past for our future: The Chesser-Williams House

Submitted by Catherine Long

You may know or have wondered about the wooden house that sits along the side of Braselton Highway between Old Peachtree Road and Gravel Springs Road. This structure is the Chesser–Williams House, which has been moved to the campus of the Gwinnett Environmental & Heritage Center. The house will be part of a group of buildings associated with Gwinnett County agriculture from the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The preservation of this distinctive house began in 2008 with its donation to the Gwinnett Environmental & Heritage Center Foundation by Jerald and Sue Williams of Buford, Georgia.

The Chesser–Williams House has exquisite art work placed on the exterior and interior of the house. The parlor features beautiful stencil painting that has a magnificent medallion motif on the ceiling and the room is outlined with an apple pattern. Over the mantle is a free hand painted landscape portrait that shows a pastoral scene. Additional painting was placed in the hallway of the home and features the same apple pattern. Research by independent scholar Maryellen Higginbotham has revealed that this house is one of seven structures from Texas to North Carolina that may have been painted by the same German itinerant painter. Similarities in the colors and artistic patterns have been noticed in these paintings. It is the hope to be able to provide an identity to this talented individual. With any luck the name may be discovered during the restoration process.

Through the creation of a living history site, representative of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, history will be explored through period gardens, a Monitor-style barn, spring house and other outbuildings, the Chesser–Williams House will be used as an exhibit piece that highlights the agricultural and industrial history of Gwinnett County. Several of the topics to be explored are art, agriculture, textiles, food ways, recreation, and southern culture. In addition to educational and exhibit programming, visitors will take guided tours by docents in period costume. The Chesser–Williams House will provide an opportunity to engage students in
analyzing, researching and participating in hands-on educational programming that increases their appreciation, knowledge, and preservation of our cultural heritage. This treasure of Gwinnett County will serve as the epicenter of the Center’s cultural and heritage education program.

With the efforts of several public and private organizations this project has continued to move forward and get closer to its goal—to educate Gwinnett County students on the importance of its agricultural history and how it continues to evolve in today’s world. Part of the mission of the Gwinnett Environmental & Heritage Center seeks to present the interaction and interrelationships of lifestyles and cultures, past, present, and future and how they relate to the living world around us. Collaborations with others will allow for the creation of the Heritage Keepers Club for students who can help preserve Gwinnett’s heritage through several projects including the gathering of oral histories, organizing an Adopt-A-Site program and additional ideas. This initiative will assist in the education of the next generation of leadership for the field of historic preservation.

During the research portion of this project, students from the University of Georgia and Georgia State University conducted historic structures reports and interpretive plans for staff to utilize in the program planning of this resource. History and Culture Program staff also works with local high school students, as part of the QUEST Internship Program, to teach about the work of museums and Gwinnett County’s rich history. Additional opportunities are forthcoming and will continue to grow as the message of heritage education is shared with students of all ages.

The project has received recognition from the National Trust for Historic Preservation as one of 22 projects in the United States that received a Cynthia Woods Mitchell grant in 2010. This prestigious award allowed further analysis to be conducted on the beautiful artistic painting in the house. The significance of the painting to this vernacular structure has been commented on by noted expert Frank Welsh that “The decorations on the exterior (of the Chesser–Williams House) are so unique that they may be the only surviving example of exterior painted decorations in the state of Georgia and possibly the South.” A second grant was awarded by the Watson–Brown Foundation (2010) to assist in the preservation of this structure. What an exciting opportunity to support the preservation of one of Gwinnett County’s most exceptional historic structures and share it with the community!

The Gwinnett Environmental & Heritage Center offers educational programming at several other historic sites throughout the county including the Lawrenceville Female Seminary, Isaac Adair House, McDaniel Farm, Freeman’s Mill, the Yellow River Post Office at the Hudson–Nash Farm and in the future the Chesser–Williams House. If you would like to see a short video on its movement on Thursday, November 29 please click here.

SGA NOTICES ONLINE

Remember SGA in year-end giving

As the end of 2012 approaches, the SGA Officers and Board Members encourage and invite you to support the SGA through a financial contribution to the SGA’s Endowment Fund. The Endowment Fund is used to support educational outreach and the preservation of archaeological sites. Your donation to the fund will help support these ongoing initiatives, and if you have already contributed for the 2012 calendar year, we sincerely thank you for your generosity. Please note that your donation is tax-deductible and must be postmarked December 31st. Or, if you prefer, you may click on the NEW online donation link here and submit your donation this way. Regardless of how you contribute, the Society for Georgia Archaeology is grateful for any financial contributions.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Lewis Larson passes

The archaeological community mourns the loss of Lewis H. Larson, Jr. who passed away on Sunday, November 25, 2012. In the Winter 2004 thematic issue of Southeastern Archaeology, published in honor of Lew Larson’s contributions to the field of archaeology in the Southeast, David J. Hally penned the following:

Lew earned his BA degree in Anthropology from the University of Minnesota in 1949, his MA from the University of Michigan in 1952, and his PhD from the University of Michigan in 1969. At various times during those years, he held teaching positions at the Georgia Institute of Technology, Georgia State University, and Eastern Kentucky University and directed the archaeological program of the Georgia Historical Commission. At the time of his retirement, Lew was professor of anthropology at the University of West Georgia and state archaeologist for Georgia.

The Lewis H. Larson, Jr. Anthropology Volunteer Program at the University of West Georgia’s Antonio J. Waring, Jr. Archaeological Laboratory (aka Waring Lab) in Carrollton, Georgia was named in his honor.

Dr. Larson conducted fieldwork throughout the state of Georgia during his career; however, he is best known for his excavations at Etowah in northwest Georgia and sites along the coast of Georgia. While touring the museum at Etowah, thousands of visitors have marveled at the sight of the painted marble effigies of a seated man and woman discovered during Larson’s excavation at Etowah in the 1950s. His work along the coast resulted in a number of articles and the 1980 publication of Aboriginal Subsistence Technology on the Southeastern Coastal Plain during the Late Prehistoric Period.
In 1972, when Lewis H. Larson, Jr. was appointed Georgia’s first State Archaeologist, State Historic Preservation programs were struggling to combine state duties with the new mandates of the National Historic Preservation Act. As state archaeologist, Larson was the senior advisor in matters involving archaeology in state government. Only one year after Larson’s appointment, Governor Jimmy Carter reorganized state government and followed Larson’s advice to transfer the Historical Commission’s functions to the new Department of Natural Resources. Lewis H. Larson, Jr. retired on 1 September 1998, bringing to a close more than fifty years of involvement in Georgia and Southeastern archaeology.

2012 Fall • Events Information • SGA Notices Online

2012 Fall Meeting wrap-up

Submitted by Catherine Long

For all of you who attended SGA’s annual Fall Meeting—you experienced a great treat! SGA was hosted by the Columbus Museum and received a very warm welcome. After an afternoon of meetings on Friday, Board Members and Officers enjoyed Deorio’s local pizza place and catching up with colleagues and friends. The next morning the annual Fall Meeting began with a great series of presentations—which included an update on the Singer-Moye site, an examination of Swift Creek pottery, quartz lithic pieces, a tribute to early archaeologists associated with the Columbus Museum and a video that featured the Avondale burial place. All attendees thoroughly enjoyed these presentations—thank you to all who shared their work.

An annual Business Meeting was conducted in which the latest updates and news of the organization was shared (see President’s Message for details) and Board Members were recognized for their service to the organization. The leadership and efforts of this particular group have continued to move the organization forward. New Board Members were introduced and recognized during this meeting as well. Boxed lunches were available through Subway and were eaten in the Wright Room on the Columbus Museum campus. Following lunch everyone had the opportunity to explore the exhibits—of special interest with the group was the archaeology exhibit. A special thank you to Rebecca Bush and Wren Gilliam for assistance with the logistics of the meetings at the museum. Next, the group traveled a short distance away to the National Civil War Naval Museum and enjoyed a guided tour of the facility’s awesome exhibit and collections. Participants saw recovered vessels and viewed exhibit pieces that tell the story of combat on the sea. The flag collection was impressive and the tour guide’s vast knowledge made for an outstanding tour. His generosity to continue the guided tour up to the closing of the museum was a special treat to guests.

The group later met at The Cannon and enjoyed not only food but football (Georgia vs. Florida) and of course each other’s company. According to some colleagues the day would not be complete without a bulldog victory. For others, a hamburger and brownie sundae were the talk of the evening.

We certainly hope that you will make plans to attend the Spring Meeting as a May date will shortly be announced. The location will be
Macon and we look forward to celebrating 20 years of the Archaeology Month public outreach program. We hope to see you there!

“Alligators, Mosquitoes and Shovel Tests: Archaeology in and Around Savannah”—Ellen Harris of the Chatham County Metropolitan Planning Commission will talk about recent digs and a proposed new archaeological ordinance for Chatham County on Saturday November 10, 2012 at 2:00PM at the Savannah-Ogeechee Canal Museum, 681 Fort Argyle Road (Rte. 204), 2.3 miles northwest of I-95.

Sponsored by the Coastal Georgia Archaeological Society. Free and open to the public. For more information at (912) 920-2299 or click here to write an email.
Avondale Burial Place video
Submitted by J.W. Joseph (jwjoseph@newsouthassoc.com)

The Avondale Burial Place is an unmarked and unrecorded African American burial place in southern Bibb County that Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT) encountered during the Sardis Church Road expansion project.

New South Associates was contracted to recover, analyze, and relocate the burial ground, which resulted in the excavation of 101 individuals.

Archaeological analysis indicates the burial ground was most heavily used in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, although there are indicators that this location began as a slave cemetery and was subsequently used by African American tenant farmers. Through census and genealogical research, GDOT and New South were able to identify descendants of the burial community, whose families left the region in the early 20th century in what is known as the Great Migration, when millions of African Americans left the South for jobs in industrial cities of the Northeast and Midwest.

The project website—www.avondaleburialplace.org—contains more information on the project and African American burial customs, and also contains PDFs of the project reports.

GDOT and the FHWA also sponsored a video documentary on the project, prepared by Georgia Public Broadcasting, which can be viewed right here on this website.

Dr. Joseph is an archaeologist at New South Associates in Stone Mountain. Visit his company’s website online here.

The SGA at CoastFest 2012
Submitted by Kevin Kiernan (kevin.kiernan@gmail.com)

Over 8000 people from across Georgia and neighboring states crowded onto the grounds of the DNR’s Coastal Regional Headquarters near the beautiful Sidney Lanier Bridge in Brunswick for the 18th annual CoastFest on Saturday, October 6, 2012.

Eleven of the fifteen volunteers (Fred, George, Kevin, Peter, Leslie, Ellen, Cay and, not pictured, John, Charlotte, Dawn and Rita) arrived early to set up the tables, hang the banners, and wait for the onslaught! We were ready for action by 10.
As she has for the past several years, Archaeologist Rita Elliott of the LAMAR Institute near Savannah drove down the very popular ArchaeoBus, which has become a main attraction of the SGA at CoastFest and around the State.

This year CoastFest allotted more space for the ArchaeoBus, which allowed us to park it right next the SGA tent.

Their proximity beautifully integrated the activities under the tent with the exhibits in the ArchaeoBus, as many visitors observed with approval.

The tables held the usual educational displays and interactive games, testing the skills of young and old visitors. Until this year, when the budget axe fell, the Glynn County Board of Education had for eighteen years sponsored an award-winning fourth-grade archaeology program to teach children critical skills through the study of Archaeology.
Aidine draws an enthusiastic group of kids around the ever-popular sorting of artifacts from Fort Frederica, which had participated in the Glynn County Archaeology program by allowing children to participate in mock excavations at the site. Nearby Oglethorpe Elementary provided a laboratory, where students analyzed their finds.

Dawn looks for reinforcements as a crowded begins to form around her station. Children always show a fascination with the interactive archaeological games. This year we heard frequent laments from parents and children that they were not able to study Archaeology this year.
Cay and Leslie take a time-out to examine Fred's exhibit, here displaying the wide range of shells, representing both food and tools, which he excavated from a prehistoric Indian home on St. Simons Island.
There was never a dull moment for any of the volunteers over the six hours.

Kevin explains how Native Americans used carved paddles to stamp their clay pottery with simple, complex, and cord decorations before firing them.
Archaeologist Carolyn Rock of Brockington Cultural Resources Consulting distributes SGA posters to teachers.

This year, to teach some of the key principles of archaeology to the general public, we invited archaeologist Fred Cook to take over a table to present some results of his recent excavation of a Kelvin culture home site on St. Simons Island.

Fred gets the full attention of a spell-bound boy, who touches some of the labeled plastic bags containing the shellfish and faunal remains the prehistoric occupants consumed at the home.
Fred's display presented a piece of the house, consumed shellfish remains, faunal remains, pottery used to cook the food, decorative artifacts, tools made from bone and shell, a written analysis of faunal remains, and a field map of the house.

The teaching exhibit drew the attention of both young and older visitors. The 50-lb square hunk on the right is from the ash-packed floor of the home site, helping to illustrate the importance of stratigraphic excavation, which preserves the vital cultural context of artifacts.

Fifteen volunteers, including three professional archaeologists and eleven members of the Golden Isles Archaeological Society, held sway under the SGA tent and in the ArchaeoBus.

After four years with Kevin Kiernan coordinating the event, Susan Shakleford of the Golden Isles Archaeological Society has handsomely agreed to take over as coordinator for CoastFest.

Acknowledgments: Jack Caldwell, Leslie Carlton, Fred Cook, George and Cay Ellis, Rita Elliott, Dawn Chapman Guest, Aidine, Kevin and Peter Kiernan, John and Charlotte Morin, Ellen Provenzano, Carolyn Rock, and Susan Shackelford for keeping things hopping from 10-4; and Rita Elliott, Aidine Kiernan and Peter Kiernan for contributing photographs for this article.