

**The Society for Pennsylvania
Archaeology, Inc.
SPA Newsletter
Winter 2003-2004**

James G. Luhman Memorial Fund

Hope E. Luhman, PH.D, has established a new memorial fund to honor her late father, James G. Luhman. Income from this restricted fund will be “used solely for Pennsylvania Archaeology Month activities and/or any other educational or outreach initiative deemed especially worthy by all the Society’s Officers”. The initial donations will establish an investment account that will remain untouched for five years. The income generated from this initial investment will be available on a yearly basis for the purposes indicated. Donations may be addressed to: The James G. Luhman Memorial Fund, c/o Treasurer, SPA, P.O. Box 10287, Pittsburgh, PA 15232-0287.

SPA Receives Organizational Grant

The Society received a \$5,000 organizational grant from the Pennsylvania Historical and Museums Commission for 2004. The grant proposal includes \$2,000 for a National Register project that would undertake a pilot project to complete and submit nomination forms to name archaeological sites in Pennsylvania to the National Register. A committee of volunteer SPA members will prepare one or more site applications. Nomination forms and instructions are available on the BHP’s website, www.phmc.state.pa.us for SPA members interested in helping with this project.

ESAF on the Web
<http://esaf-archeology.org>

CALL FOR PAPERS

75th Annual Meeting of the Society for Pennsylvania Archaeology. “Celebrating 75 Years of Pennsylvania Archaeology” will be the theme for this year’s Annual Meeting. There will be three open sessions. All papers will be limited to 20 minutes. If you would like to participate, please submit an abstract by March 1, 2004. Abstracts should be limited to 150 words or less and sent to Amanda Valko. Please note that all presenters must be both current members of the SPA and pre-registered for the meeting, since SPA membership does not include meeting registration. For further information, contact either program co-chairs:

Amanda Valko
116 E. Englewood Ave.
New Castle, PA 16105-2129
avalko@mbakercorp.com

Or
Mary Miles
191 Thorn Run Road
Butler, PA 16001
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The SPA 75th Annual Meeting will be held at the Clarion Holiday Inn in Clarion, PA, April 23-25, 2004. Complete registration information and a downloadable form will be available at www.Pennsylvaniaarchaeology.com

Look for the SPA 75th Annual Meeting Registration form and Abstracts in the March 2004 SPA Newsletter.

**Pennsylvania Historical and Museum
Commission
Bureau for Historic Preservation
The Commonwealth's Archaeology
Program**

Submitted by Doug McLearen

Over the past few months, the CAP program of BHP has focused its efforts on a project titled "The Stabler Tract", in Lancaster County near Millersville. The project tract is the location of archaeological site 36LA1100, an important Shenks Ferry culture village of the so-called "Funk Phase". The site is palisaded and shows remains of structures as well as pits, hearths, and other typical Shenks Ferry village features.

The site sits in an upland saddle that is elevated high above Conestoga Creek. Topographic high points and discontinuous rock outcrops sit above the site to the north and the south. The bedrock of the area is interbedded limestone and calcareous schist, and the soil is relatively neutral and appears to be quite fertile.

On the west side of the site is a small tributary which, in spite of surrounding development, is still a viable stream. On the opposite or east side of the site is a swale and a former pond that has since become a boggy wetland. This area has been severely modified, but we suspect that it once held a spring that could have served as a water source for the site's inhabitants. Just below this apparent former spring is a steep ravine that would have provided easy direct access to Conestoga Creek.

Last summer, the site was plowed and disked, and a surface collection was made over the entire site. The collection was gridded into 3-meter squares, and artifacts were recovered in over 1,500 of these collection units. Artifacts included ceramic sherds, projectile points, golf-ball-size quartz cores, and debitage of high quality local

quartz. When the recovered artifacts were plotted on site maps by categories, a repeated pattern of the village placement emerged among all types, regardless of numbers of artifacts within each category. Of the numerous diagnostic projectile points, all but a few were distinctive small, thin triangular arrow points of the Late Woodland period. Potsherds large enough to confidently identify were all of the Shenks Ferry type, with rims indicating a Funk Phase time period, probably in the mid-1400s.

Following the collection, narrow trenches were stripped, and the subsoil was cleaned to look for features. During this time, hearths, pits, and post molds were defined. However, the most dramatic feature—or set of features—found was the remains of a palisade that would have encircled the village. This palisade appears to have been plowed away in more eroded areas but has a very strong presence on the west side of the site where, in some places, the post mold pattern is double-rowed. Whether or not this is a result of rebuilding, repair, or the like, is not yet determined. The area enclosed by the palisade is probably between 2.5 and 3 acres.

During this most recent season, additional strip trenches were cleared, and more features were revealed. In addition, a larger "block" excavation was opened on the western side of the site where preservation of features appeared greatest. Here, the entire area was carefully cleaned and mapped, and several features were either tested or excavated completely. Of note are two large features (Feature 3 and Feature 7) that were entirely excavated prior to the onset of the bad weather that ultimately put a quick end to this year's fieldwork on the site.

Feature 3 was a large refuse-filled pit measuring 2.5 meters by 1.5 meters in plan and 40 centimeters in depth. This pit was located just outside of the palisade and may have begun as a borrow pit or some other facility before it became a receptacle for hearth sweepings and other village refuse. Since the pit was strewn with pottery and

fragile organic remains, excavation proceeded slowly, using bamboo tools as well as trowels.

Contents included lithic debitage, triangular projectile points, refuse deer and other mammal bone, bird bone, shellfish remains, lithic projectile points and debitage, and the remains of a minimum of nine Funk Phase, Shenks Ferry ceramic vessels. Of special note, though not unexpected, were the remains of both charred corn and charred beans. In addition, a good sample of carbon was obtained for radiocarbon dating and wood identification. The vast majority of the excavated soil was floated rather than dry-screened, and pottery fragments, prepared pottery temper, microdebitage, floral remains, and small faunal remains such as fish bones, were revealed.

Feature 7 is one of four elongated features of unknown function on the site. This particular feature was over four meters long and about half a meter wide. The relatively shallow pit fill contained small numbers of ceramics, as well as quartz lithic artifacts, and some deer bone. Charcoal was present in small quantities. Most of the fill was saved for flotation, and we hope to have this flotation completed later this season.

Preservation is very good on this site and, so far, the samples from excavations and testing have revealed a notable amount of bone that is in excellent shape. In addition to abundant refuse bone, some of which shows clear butchering marks, items such as antler tine projectile points and other bone implements have also been found. At present, we are processing and examining our inventory of recovered materials, and our accounting of the types and quantities of the classes of different materials is preliminary.

The harsh, wet weather that has characterized much of this season has been a major hindrance to progress on the site, and conditions eventually necessitated shutting down the site for the winter. As a protection against wind and water damage and the

effects of freezing and thawing, the excavation was covered with a layer of black sheet plastic, then a thick layer of straw matting. This was followed, in turn, by a second layer of fresh black plastic that was then weighted down with numerous sand bags and a number of large, heavy, wooden pallets. A recent check showed that this covering is holding up very well.

We will be periodically checking on the site to guard against any unforeseen problems, and a local volunteer has offered to monitor the property on a regular basis. As soon as weather allows in the spring, we will return to this site, remove the protective covering, and, once again, resume excavations.

This site has much to offer in the way of information, and there is a lot to learn. Assumptions made about Shenks Ferry settlements in this area are based on only a few site excavations and interpretations, and this site can add considerably to our current body of knowledge. This is an important and intriguing site, and we look forward to unraveling the village and its component parts and trying to decipher what the artifacts, features, and structures have to tell us about the Shenks Ferry culture of southeast Pennsylvania.

We would like to thank the SPA members who have volunteered their time to help on this site. Special thanks are due to Conogahela Chapter members Charlie Hannon, Tom Fridy, Brian Sinclair, Bob Hershey, Mark Hershey, Vaso Passas, Marjorie Snyder, Kirk Groff, Bob Hershey, Mark Hershey, and Dennis Snyder. Dr. Barry Kent has also devoted his time to helping us with the fieldwork, and we are grateful for his aid and expertise. Dr. James Dell (Kutztown University) and his students visited the site, and Kutztown student Jason Pickin spent time volunteering both in the field and in the lab.

We would especially like to thank Charles Hannon who worked with us on the site nearly every day and has continued to help us

with the back load of lab work. Charlie has been volunteering with the BHP for about 10 years, and has made strong contributions to the City Island program and many other projects, including the extremely important King's Quarry Site.

Finally, we wish to extend a welcome to SPA members who would like to help us when we re-open the site this coming spring. Your contributions are appreciated, and they do make a difference. If interested, please contact Doug McLearn at (717) 772-0925.

In Memoriam

Helen Horst Wilson passed away Dec. 19, 2003 in Pittsburgh, PA. Helen was a Field Associate for the Section of Anthropology, The Carnegie, for many years and she and her husband Kirke made important contributions to Pennsylvania Archaeology including work at the Neil House and Settlers' log cabins and Hannah's Town. She was also very active as a librarian and genealogist at the Western Pennsylvania Historical and Genealogical Societies. She was of great assistance to Dr. Verna Cowin when Verna was doing her dissertation. Helen and Caroline Sutton wrote the catalog (as Carnegie volunteers) for the entire collection from the work at the PPG site in downtown Pittsburgh. Their catalog was one of the most descriptive ever written for historical artifacts because Helen was so knowledgeable about glass and china.

Her contributions to the SPA consisted on years of work with Allegheny Chapter and Caroline Sutton in writing and distributing the SWAAP Newsletter. Together they also packed and mailed *The Pennsylvania Archaeologist* journal for many years.

Remembrances may be made to the Historical Society of Western Pennsylvania, Library and Archives Division, 1212 Smallman Street, Pittsburgh, PA 15219.

Attention Field School Directors

The SPA is planning to publish a journal edition dedicated to reports from Field Schools. This is an opportunity for your students to get published. It is a valuable and rewarding experience for young people to see the culmination of their efforts in print. Coordinating the effort is Dr. Edmund Dlutowski. Contact Ed for guidelines and information at 105 Woodlawn Road, Butler, PA 16001 or email at Edmund@zoominternet.net.

Jacob L. Grimm IV C14 Award

The Society's C14 program was designed to help chapters and individual members with the cost of C14 dating. Individual applying must be a member in good standing to qualify for the funding. Applications will be reviewed and awards made at the SPA Annual Meeting if applications are received before the meeting date or April 22, 2004. Please address all requests for matching C14 dating funds to: James Herbstritt, BHP, Commonwealth Keystone Building, 400 North St. 2nd Floor, Harrisburg, PA 17120-0093 or e-mail: jherbstrit@state.pa.us

ATTENTION CHAPTER OFFICERS

Donna George, Awards Chairman, announces that SPA chapter presidents and secretaries will soon be receiving forms for the nominations of members for the Archey, J. Alden Mason, John Witthoft, Francis Dorrance and Shrader/George awards. The awards are for the following: **Archey** – for significant contributions by an advocational archaeologist; **J. Alden Mason** – for outstanding contributions by a professional archaeologist; **John Witthoft** - the SPA chapter that recruited the most new state members; **Francis Dorrance** – to the chapter that recorded the most sites; and **Shrader/George** – to any young person, 18 years or younger, who's accomplishments

significantly furthered the cause of Pennsylvania archaeology.

Additional forms can be obtained from: Donna George, Awards Chairman, 370 McDonald Drive, North Huntingdon, PA 15642 dlgeorge00@earthlink.net.

An official nominating form is not necessary to submit a nomination.

Annual Chapter Reporting Requirements

Annual Chapter report forms have been mailed or emailed to the individual chapters. This report details chapter activities for the previous year (2003). This report is a chapter obligation under the SPA constitution. Forms are available to download from the SPA website. If you have questions, please contact the Secretary.

All SPA chapters are required to report **chapter officers** to the Secretary annually. This report is necessary for maintaining current contact information for all chapters. Please report officers even if there has not been an election or change of positions in your chapter. Please include addresses, phone numbers and email addresses if possible.

Membership Requirements

All Chapter officers are required to be members in good standing with the SPA. All state officers, board of directors and Elmer Erb Permanent Fund trustees are required to be current members of SPA.

Please look for the new brightly colored membership brochure in this mailing.

Discover and Preserve Brochure

Steve Warfel has completed the "Discover and Preserve" brochure to promote proper recording of artifacts and collections and to encourage donations of collections to proper repositories. Copies of the brochure are available to chapters. A supply will be housed at the State Museum and may be obtained by contacting Steve Warfel at 717-783-2887 or email at swarfel@state.pa.us.

**Pennsylvania Archaeologist Correction
Correction labels for Volume 72 (1)
page 16 are included in this mailing.
Please affix the correct author
information to the Coverts Crossing
and Coverts Bridge article.**

SAA Meeting

The Society for American Archaeology will hold its 68th Annual Meeting on March 31-April 4, 2004 in Montreal, Canada. For registration information and meeting program go to: www.saa.org.

New Book Release

Picking the Lock of Time, Developing Chronology in American Archaeology, edited by James Truncer is available from the University Press of Florida, new in January 2004 at www.upf.com. This volume will address the "issue of chronology—the crucial determination of the age of an artifact or site—these essays document the contributions of early American archaeologists, both well known and obscure, who helped crack the *chronology problem*".

Pennsylvania Farms Show

The SPA supported the Pennsylvania Heritage Society's Farm show exhibit with a monetary donation. The booth will be distributing SPA membership forms and Pennsylvania Archaeology Month information.