

# Minnesota Archaeological Society

*The inscriptions below are from a 1,000 year old pot that was discovered in 1957 near Red Wing, Minnesota by an MAS member.  
The thunderbird motif is representative of Middle Mississippian iconography.*



## Summer 2011



### The Elliot Park Neighborhood Archaeology Project

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After a two-year hiatus, it looks like the Elliot Park Neighborhood Archaeology Project will be returning this summer for its sixth season. We are currently talking with City of Minneapolis staff about permission to excavate on a city-owned parcel in the southeastern corner of the Elliot Park neighborhood. Although it's not a done deal, chances look very good.

Work at the site is tentatively scheduled for the second half of August. As usual, the project would run from Wednesday to Sunday, 9:00 to 5:00 each day, and everyone is welcome to visit or participate -- no experience needed.

**Keep an eye on the newsletter and MAS website  
for further updates!**

## Letter From The President

I have recently started posting a Letter from the President on the Minnesota Archaeological Society's web page. The spring 2011 newsletter contained a reprint of my March letter. It was my feeling that although acceptable to do so, it would be far more appropriate to compose a letter covering the quarterly business events. It is my plan to make this a regular feature of the newsletter. I hope that you will find it informative.

In addition, I hope that this will provide an avenue of communication between to Members of the Minnesota Archaeological Society and its Board of Directors. I encourage M.A.S. members to submit comments or suggestions to the address listed at the foot of this letter.

### A Short Financial Note:

I am happy to report that The Minnesota Archaeological Society is in good financial health! Recently we received an annual endowment payment from The St. Paul Foundation, which we put to good use providing publication of The Minnesota Archaeologist and support for our outreach programs. A special thank you goes to our membership base, our primary source of support. We are most thankful.

### Sponsored Activities:

It has been the practice of the Minnesota Archaeological Society to sponsor or co-sponsor events. The majority of these are free and open to the public, the one exception being our Annual Dinner meeting. This year Ann Merriman and Christopher Olson of Maritime Heritage Minnesota presented a lively and informative report of their recent research of the Mississippi river in Aikin County. Visit, [www.maritimeheritagemn.org](http://www.maritimeheritagemn.org) for more information on our local maritime history.

Bad weather plagued most of the state for Minnesota Archaeological Week, (May 14-22, 2011), although a few intrepid souls did venture out to attend the Archaeology Fair at Ft. Snelling State Park. We greatly appreciate their enthusiasm. Since inclement weather has been the curse of Archaeology Week for the past three years there are currently discussions in progress proposing to move the event later in the year, with September as the proposed month. McLoed, Swift, and Wadena counties were spared from the storms and reported a successful attendance. If you have an opinion about this change, please me or another let a board member know.

The Elden Johnson Distinguished Lectures Series was held on May 11, 2011 at Carlton School of Management on the University of Minnesota west bank Campus. Dr. Scott Anfinson of The Office of the State Archaeologist gave a very entertaining biography and tribute to his advisor and mentor Elden Johnson. This event was attended mostly by members of the Minnesota professional archaeological community.

Lastly, as part of M.A.S. outreach program, to introduce and encourage archaeological interest, I have been doing a number of flint-knapping / primitive technology talks and demonstrations at various locations around the state. I have dubbed these events Catch Rod Knapping and have posted my schedule on the web page. Attendance varies with the weather and location. I have observed that people seem to be interested, and I hope that they walk away with a better understanding of what archaeology is and a higher respect of past cultures. I always have fun.

### The Minnesota Archaeologist:

The 2010 volume of The Minnesota Archaeologist is near completion, and we anticipate that it will be mailed out by the end of July. Work on the 2011 volume is getting underway, with the goal of having it done by the end of the year. The journal is mailed to current paid members. If you are not sure of your membership status you may email me at [rodjohn33@msn.com](mailto:rodjohn33@msn.com) or Anna Morrow at [anmorrow@q.com](mailto:anmorrow@q.com).

**Rod Johnson: President**

*For comments or suggestions, send a letter to President: Minnesota Archaeological Society, Ft. Snelling Center, St. Paul, Minnesota 55111 or email [rodjohn33@msn.com](mailto:rodjohn33@msn.com)*



# Historic Trade Route Celebration – Outing, MN

Sat - Aug 13, 2011 9AM–5PM



Jos. Nicollet  
(1836 Expdn)



Canoe Expedition w/  
authentic birch bark canoes

Historic Information / links

Archeologists

Local artifacts – 4,000+ years-old

Amazing Evidence from History

Book signing / sales

Silent auction; Kids activities

Barbeque (pork/turkey)

Demonstrations:

Native dances

Native drums (singing)

“Flint nappers”

Tools / navigation techniques

*Coordinated by Roosevelt And Lawrence Area Lakes Association (RALALA)*

*For more information call 651-503-8414*

Archeological displays made possible by the Arts and Cultural Heritage fund through the vote of Minnesotans on November 4, 2008; Administered by the MN Historical Society.

*Supported by:*

*Outing Area Businesses; Outing Chamber of Commerce; Crooked Lake Township Board of Supervisors; Emily Outing 50 Lakes Lions; Outing Library; MN Historical Society; MN Indian Affairs Council; The Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe; The Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe; The White Earth Band of Ojibwe; Cuyuna Iron Range Heritage Network; Kathio State Park, & Hamline University.*



## Dates To Remember

### Catch Rod Knapping

Experience the world oldest and most continually practiced craft as presented by Expert Flint-knapper, **Rod Johnson**.

- ▶ August 6, 2011 – Trail Day at Welch Station, Cannon Valley Trail, Welch, MN
- ▶ August 13, 2011 - Outing Minnesota History Festival, Outing, MN.
- ▶ October 1, 2011 – Archaeology Day, Kathio State Park, Onamia, MN



### Archaeological Institute of America (AIA) Lecture Program

The AIA will soon begin the 116th year of its Lecture Program! The season begins September 2011 and runs through the end of April 2012, and the schedule will be posted on our website later this summer. The lectures are free to the public, and all are welcome. Top scholars from North America and abroad will be presenting a wide range of current archaeological topics at Societies throughout the US and Canada.

- ▶ Fort St. Joseph Archaeology Project - Open House  
Western Michigan University and the City of Niles, MI  
August 13, 2011 & August 14, 2011

You can contact the AIA Lecture Coordinator at [lectures@aia.bu.edu](mailto:lectures@aia.bu.edu) or call 617-358-4184.


### The Minnesota Archaeologist: update and request for submissions

We're wrapping up editing on the 2010 volume of The Minnesota Archaeologist, and hope to have it in print and distributed by the end of July. That means, of course, that it's soon time to start work on the 2011 volume, with the goal of getting back on schedule.

We have a list of potential papers for 2011, but are looking for more. If you're interested in publishing a paper, by all means let me know -- not a commitment, just an expression of interest. I'd also be happy to hear your suggestions of projects that you know about, for example, and that you think might make for an interesting report. These might even include older, previously unpublished reports. I'd even be happy to receive your suggestions on papers that you'd like to see -- potential reference works, syntheses, etc.

And please remember that we're actively interested in Research Reports -- short papers on the order of two or three pages, with a general map and a photo or two. This can be a good way to announce preliminary and general results of a survey or excavation; to present results of a piece of work that you don't think merits a more extensive report; to present information on an interesting or unidentified artifact; or to report a new radiometric date. Just a few possible examples. It's a way to get information out there with a more manageable amount of work. We'd love to see several Research Reports in each volume.

**Kent Bakken • Managing Editor • Minnesota Archaeological Society • [bakk0029@umn.edu](mailto:bakk0029@umn.edu)**

 **The Mississippi Valley Archaeology Center**, the Archaeological Studies Program and the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse invite you to the 2011 Midwest Archaeological Conference (MAC), **October 13-15, 2011**, in La Crosse, Wisconsin.

The deadline for advance registration and for submitting a paper, poster, or symposium abstract is **Wednesday September 7, 2011**. There is a special student paper competition.



## Oheyawahi/Pilot Knob

MENDOTA HEIGHTS, MINNESOTA



*Seth Eastman's view of  
Pilot Knob, 1846, looking  
southeast from below  
Fort Snelling.  
Minnesota Historical Society*

Letters from members of the Minnesota Archaeological Society helped to achieve the preservation of Oheyawahi (A Place Much Visited), which was slated for development as a site for luxury condos. Now owned and protected as open space by the city of Mendota Heights, the 27 acres on the north slope of the river bluff that is also known as Pilot Knob has been dedicated as a place sacred to the Dakota people.

Its history, its present status, and plans for its future are described and pictured in a flyer that was produced last year by the Pilot Knob Preservation Association with a grant from state Legacy funds.

Copies of the attractive flyer are free and can be picked up from a box at the site, which is open every day during daylight hours. They are also available at the nearby historic sites of Fort Snelling and the Sibley House.

## The 2010 Minnesota Archaeologist Is Ready For Publication

It includes a tribute to Monroe Killy, one of the four original founders of The Minnesota Archaeological Society. (He died early in 2010 at the age of 99.) This volume 69 will very shortly be mailed to those members who were current in 2010. A note will be sent to you with the Summer Newsletter giving an update of your membership.

Volume 69 of MnArch will feature a paper by Michael Michlovic, Geology and the Age of the Kensington Inscription as well as a paper by Guy Gibbon and Katie Ann Wynia, A Fur Trade Era Row House at Big Sandy Lake, Minnesota. It will include a CD.

Other contributors in this journal are Ed Fleming, Jeremy Nienow, Katherine Hayes, David Tennesen, George Holley, Leroy Gonsior, David Radford, and David Mather.

There has been no change in our membership fees: Individuals, \$25.00; Seniors/Students, \$15.00; Household, \$30.00; all Institutions, \$40.00 US.

Our address is: Minnesota Archaeological Society Fort Snelling History Center St. Paul, MN 55111

# Archaeology Site At Pig Point Continues To Yield Ancient Treasures

Lothian site yields artifacts from 8 to 10,000 years ago.

By David Pecor

[edgewater.patch.com](http://edgewater.patch.com)

The archaeological dig site at Pig Point near the Jug Bay Wetlands Sanctuary in Maryland, has continued to yield incredible artifacts and other evidence of human activity since its initial discovery in 2009.

The dig began that same year and there have been a number of very interesting things found, including evidence of Algonquin wigwams, projectile points, ancient pottery and other artifacts dating back thousands of years further than anyone expected. Now that so many artifacts have been collected, archaeologists working the site are beginning to formulate theories about how people have lived here for thousands of years.

Volunteers, interns and archaeologists with The Lost Towns Project make up the work force excavating the site and processing the artifacts found. In addition to the dig site they also operate an archaeology lab at Historic Londontown and Gardens in Edgewater.



*Anne Arundel County Archeologist Dr. Al Luckenbach who also leads the dig at Pig Point said "This site may be the most significant archeological find in the state if it continues to yield artifacts as it has since digging began in 2009". Credit: David Pecor*

## The Dig Site

Anne Arundel County archaeologist and leader of the dig, Dr. Al Luckenbach described why the site was such a significant find and pointed out some of the most interesting artifacts found so far during a recent tour of the dig site. He said they have dug down to prehistoric bedrock in a few locations and have found artifacts nearly the entire way down.

"The oldest artifact we've found 'in situ,' the Latin word for 'in place,' was 10,000 years old," he said. "There have been Clovis points found in the field and that's the style that is 13,000 years old, the oldest accepted age, but we have not yet found 13,000 year old points in place."

He said typical archaeological sites often yield artifacts from deep within the soil with deep layers in between findings. Pig Point, on the other hand, has yielded artifacts from top to bedrock. The site gets its name from the colonial community here and, before that, the Algonquians. Before that, evidence of continuous human habitation continues. Luckenbach explained that winds and erosion of the sandy soil from a nearby hill has contributed greatly to how well the site is layered with artifacts.

"We're figuring a combination of those two things [wind and erosion] somehow set up this unique situation where we're getting the deepest intact stratigraphy ever found in the state." It's difficult to determine exactly why humans seem to have been drawn to this place for thousands of years but Luckenbach said he has a few theories. "It could be trading, feasting or finding a mate, all of those things can only be done where you have enough food," he said. "Here with this huge freshwater marsh, there's fish, shellfish, ducks, turtles, geese, plus there's woods to your back so there's acorns and deer and things. You couldn't have starved here if you tried."

## A Destructive Process

One of the archaeologists working the site is Stephanie Sperling. She was mapping evidence of wigwam post holes discovered the morning of our visit. The small brown stains in the soil prove where saplings were once

*Pig Point... continued on Page 7*



*Pig Point... continued from Page 6*

driven into the ground to support a shelter commonly associated with the Algonquin people who occupied this area before European settlement. She explained that the mapping and other data recording are extremely important to making sense of the many artifacts being found.

“The thing you have to understand is that archaeology is a destructive process,” she said. “We are destroying this site with every shovel full and trowel scrape, and that’s just the nature of archaeology. In an effort to mitigate that that’s why we take all these pictures and make sure to map everything we can.”

Archaeologist and Lost Towns Project education and volunteer coordinator, Jessie Grow agreed and said that artifacts are interesting themselves but without knowing where they were found it’s difficult to learn much from the discovery. “It’s important to me to get people to understand why archaeology is necessary and how to be a better steward,” she said. “You don’t want to just take a shovel to a field because you’re removing the objects from their context and were not going to be able to learn as much as we could.”



*A view from the dig site at Pig Point where thousands of artifacts have already been discovered. Credit David Pecor*

### Getting Others Involved

Grow also said they teach the volunteers and interns at the site to be mindful of things like that so that more people can learn about archaeology. “That’s part of our mission at Lost Towns Project is to be a community outreach for archaeology,” she said. “You also don’t have to have any previous experience, its sort of up to you and your comfort level and how much time you’re willing to give us,” she said. Volunteers make up a good majority of the crew working the dig site alongside the archaeologists making discoveries. Pat Melville has been a volunteer at the site for over a year. She said as a history buff, its very interesting to be able to be a part of making new discoveries. “But the most significant thing I have found was a gorget [prehistoric decorative necklace]. I found one of those last year and it was a fairly large one.” Steve Tourville is an archaeologist working at the site and said that getting volunteers like Mellville involved is an important element to the project. “As far as out here goes our main goal is to not only excavate right but we like to get people involved,” he said. “It’s not like we want to do less work, we want to teach people about the site.”

He said it’s particularly important at the Pig Point site because there is so much to learn here. “A site like this has just an overabundance of unlearned knowledge that’s waiting to be absorbed,” he said. “It’s like finding a tomb that hasn’t been robbed, it needs to be shared.

## Minnesota Archaeological Society Membership

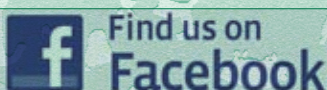
*Those who receive this newsletter by snail mail can check their label, which has their latest update.*

*Everyone else can check with me if there are questions.*

*Anna Morrow, [anmorrow@q.com](mailto:anmorrow@q.com) or 612-922-7006*

*Costs are Individual \$25.00, Senior or Student: \$15.00, Household: \$30.00, All Institutions: \$40.00 US*

**Newsletter:** Send your MAS news & notices to the Editor: Michael Brey, [mike\\_2@mkbrey.com](mailto:mike_2@mkbrey.com)



[www.mnarchsociety.org](http://www.mnarchsociety.org)



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Minnesota Archaeological Society  
Fort Snelling History Center  
St. Paul MN 55111

- *MAS members who would like to put in some hands-on time have several opportunities.*
- *To get more information about these current projects, please contact the individuals listed.*

**Become a fan of MAS by joining us on Facebook.** You can submit photos of your collections, ask questions, or leave comments. This is a place to connect with others interested in Minnesota Archaeology. We hope to see you there! If you have questions please contact: Debbie Pommer at 651-430-0137 or [pomme001@umn.edu](mailto:pomme001@umn.edu)

**The Town of Outing** (on Highway 6 south of Grand Rapids) is holding a summer festival on Saturday, August 13, from 9 AM to 5 PM. The theme of the festival is the 175th anniversary of Joseph Nicollet's trip to the Mississippi headwaters. Nicollet passed through the location of Outing on August 15, 1836. Recent archaeological work in the area has shown that the canoe route Nicollet followed had been in use for centuries, possibly as long as 4,000 years ago. The festival will include historic re-enactors, a birch bark canoe brigade, artifact displays, flintknappers (including our own Rod Johnson), kids' activities, a barbeque, and more.

**The Minnesota Archaeologist is available on CD.** These include Volumes 1-48 (1935-1989) & Occasional Publications. You will want to add this to your library. The cost is \$100.00, which includes postage.

**Check the label on the outer envelope of this mailing** to find the year of your membership status. Please update your membership if it is not current. All the details can be found at [www.mnarchsociety.org](http://www.mnarchsociety.org) or contact Anna Morrow [anmorrow@q.com](mailto:anmorrow@q.com) 612-922 -7006.