

PROFILE

Newsletter of the Toronto Chapter of the Ontario Archaeological Society

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A Backyard Excavation

Archaeologist Janice Teichroeb shares her experience in working with the public during a backyard excavation in the Rouge River Watershed

Also, upcoming events hosted by the Toronto Chapter of the Ontario Archaeological Society



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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Now that fall has arrived the holiday season is fast approaching. The annual Member's Party will be held on December 15 in our usual meeting place beginning at 6:30. Food, refreshments, and a festive atmosphere will be provided. As part of the evening's entertainment, a slide show of chapter members and events from the past will be on display. If you have any digital photos to share, please forward them to Marti Latta or bring copies to the party for insertion into the slide show. Mark the date on your calendar to join us for a casual, social evening!

Elections for the Toronto Chapter executive take place in January. All members of the current executive have agreed to stand for re-election but nominations for any of the positions are certainly welcomed. Refer to the notice in this issue for further information regarding the nomination procedure.

January is also Member's Night when chapter members present their archaeology related escapades from the past year. Contact Mima Kapches if you would like to speak at this meeting.

Upcoming events exclusively for Toronto Chapter members include the annual winter weekend at Limberlost Wilderness Reserve and a spring/summer bus trip that is currently in the planning stages. See the winter weekend notice from Christine Carropo in this issue for further details. Watch for details on the bus trip in the next issue of Profile.

Chapter meeting information continues to be posted on the chapter website at toronto.ontarioarchaeology.on.ca as well as on our Facebook page Toronto Chapter of the Ontario Archaeological Society.

Janice

Have you ever wondered what's buried in your back yard? This past summer several Scarborough families were surprised to learn that theirs held the remains of 5,000-year-old Aboriginal campsites, undisturbed beneath the layers of soil and sod.

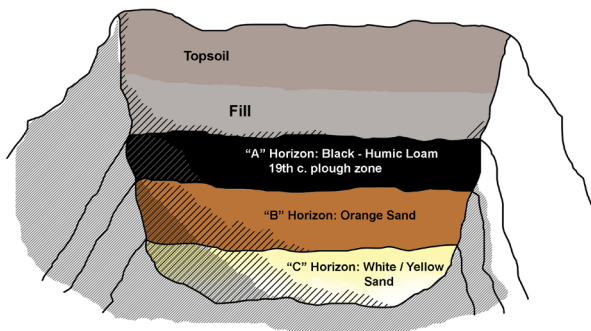
The Toronto and Region Conservation Authority (TRCA) completed an archaeological assessment on the private property of residences backing on to the Rouge River valley. The slopes at the backs of these properties were slated for extensive stabilization measures to preserve the banks from eroding into the valley below. It was anticipated that this housing subdivision, built in the 1980's, would prove to be highly disturbed making the potential for finding any archaeological sites very slim. However, it was crucial that the area be surveyed since it was within 500 metres of Bead Hill, a National Historic site and the location of Aboriginal burials and a 17th century Seneca village. The assessment identified what initially appeared to be three small Aboriginal sites.

It was anticipated that any archaeological sites within the boundaries of this subdivision, which was developed prior to legislated requirements for archaeological assessment, would have been destroyed through stripping of topsoil, construction and installation of utilities, roads, and houses. In reality the sites were remarkably intact to within five metres of the house foundations, capped by leveling fill and added topsoil. This particular area was once the shallows of Glacial Lake Iroquois, the predecessor of Lake Ontario, and as a result the entire neighbourhood is built on a deep sandy plain. Excavating within the sandy soils was like digging at the beach. At depths of 70 to 100 centimetres the smell of the seaside was particularly strong providing a sense of connection with the past beyond the usual visual and tactile cues that archaeologists rely on.

The anticipated three small sites turned in to three large sites across five neighbouring properties that likely represent repeated use of the area over thousands of years. Contrary to our expectation that sites in the area would be related to the nearby Seneca village, recovered artifacts date to the Archaic (ca. 5000 to 2800 BP) and Woodland (ca. 500 BCE to 900 CE) periods. In total, nearly 7,000 artifacts (mostly lithic flaking debris) were excavated from the three sites including more than 50 chipped stone tools (or fragments) and eight bodysherds from Woodland era (after 500 CE) ceramic pots. One exciting discovery was the excavation of a cache of three stone choppers.



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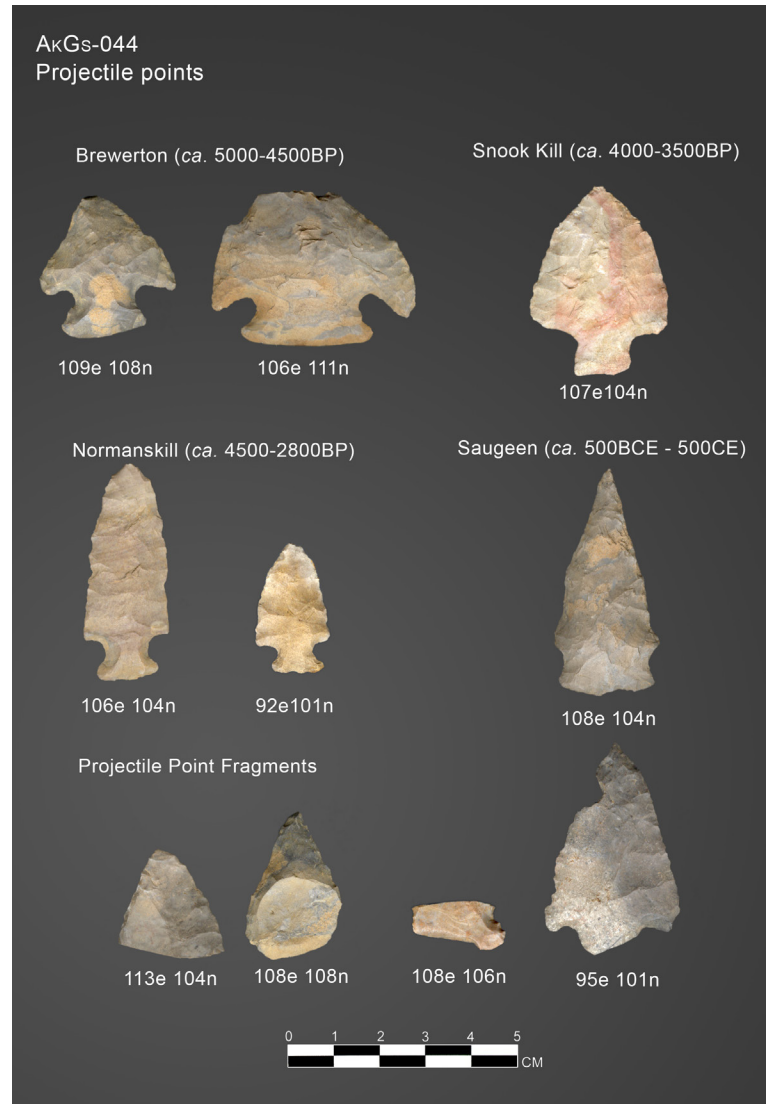


Prominent at Brewerton sites in New York State, these tools may have been utilized for the chopping of game and fish or alternatively to process hides. This find suggests that people were camping and hunting for prolonged periods of time at this spot, no doubt due to the abundant resources that would have been available including fish and wildlife, berries, sedges, and nuts. Nut trees commonly grow on sandy soils and it is quite possible that the high density of the artifacts encountered reflects the recurrent use of this area by Aboriginal peoples during the fall nut harvest.

One of the benefits of this particular excavation was the opportunity to share knowledge of the distant past with the homeowners, their kids, and the neighbourhood. Hom-

owners were invited to observe the process and even get their hands dirty if they wanted to. Most were content to chat a couple of times a day to get updates on the progress of the excavation and to see the artifacts recovered. During this project a First Nations monitor was employed who was not only a valuable team member, but also provided guidance to both the archaeologists and the homeowners. She provided helpful advice when one homeowner expressed concern that disruption of the site may cause spiritual unrest and was able to speak to their concerns and alleviate any fears. Another homeowner arranged for two of their elementary school kids to bring their classes to the site. Over 40 students not only observed the excavation first hand but also experienced the thrill of screening the soil and finding artifacts that have lain hidden in their classmates' back yard. They were shocked to learn that these artifacts were older than the pyramids in Egypt.

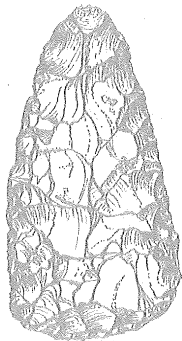
Now that the sites have been backfilled and the sod replaced there is little to remind the homeowners on Royal Rouge Trail of the people who camped in their backyards 5,000 years ago. Instead they have a story to tell of the artifacts found and the archaeologists who dug up their yards in the summer of 2010.



Janice Teichroeb is an archaeologist with the Archaeology Resource Management Services Department of the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority.

New and Recent Awards

The OAS 60th Anniversary Killarney Award for Outstanding Service



The OAS is a volunteer organization that depends in large part on the continuing long-term support and active participation of its members.

Quite often they are the public face of the OAS, doing yeoman's service in support of our commonly held goals and principles. The contributions of these members are seen especially in their service to the OAS through its chapters, events and activities, the publication of the society's newsletter and journal, and organization of the annual symposium. These individuals bring a wide range of skills and interests to the organization, and it is because of them that we now celebrate the 60th anniversary of the society.

To mark this milestone, the OAS is launching a new award - The Killarney Award for Outstanding Service.

Charles and Ella Garrad



Charles and Ella Garrad hardly need introduction to members of the OAS. Charles Garrad has held many roles within the OAS, and he has been a contributing and active member of the Toronto chapter from its inception to the present. Since the 1970's, Charles and Ella have worked together as a team, and it is with Ella's constant support, encouragement and participation that Charles led excavations and undertook publication of his findings on the Petun-Wyandot. A particularly important role that Charles and Ella undertook was as leaders of excavations at a number of Passport to the Past digs in the Collingwood area. These provided local people and others with the opportunity to excavate and this work moved the study of the history of the Petun-Wyandot people forward.

Charles has been an active avocational archaeologist since 1961, and indeed he is the longest serving licensed archaeologist in Ontario. He has an impressive list of publications and countless presentations to his name, and these have made him known, not only to members of the archaeological community, but to a wide appreciative public as well. Charles served as executive director of the OAS for many years, so at times it is difficult to separate his paid work from his volunteer work. However, it is evident that the time he invested and the passion that he brought to the study of Ontario archaeology far exceeded what the organization expected of a paid employee. His specialty in the Petun-Wyandot enabled him to advise and consult with various ministries of the Ontario government, the Royal Ontario Museum, the Niagara Escarpment Commission, Grey County Planning, Parks Canada, and numerous private property owners on archaeological and historic matters.

Ella has played an active role at many OAS symposia, particularly in the book room, the silent auction and in sales of OAS pins. She is an active promoter of the very successful OAS tours, both within Ontario and abroad. Ella assisted with the production of ArchNotes and was a leader in OAS fundraising initiatives. Ella also recruited and worked with numerous volunteer excavators in the arduous fieldwork on Petun sites directed by Charles; such as, the Haney-Cook villages, where summer heat and heavy soils took their tolls of the crews. While she was always there to support the OAS in countless logistical tasks during annual symposia, she was not deterred by the heavy work in the field. Ella's "behind the scene" contributions to the OAS have been substantial.

CONGRATULATIONS!

Upcoming Events

Wednesday December 15, 2010

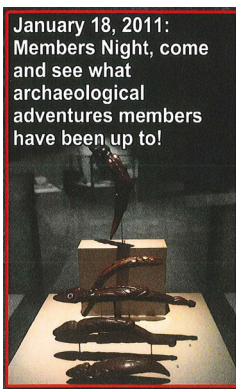
Members' Holiday Party



We are approaching the holiday season once again! The annual members' Holiday party is slated to be held at 6:30pm on Wednesday December 15, 2010, at 19 Russell Street, Room 246. Food, refreshments, and a festive atmosphere will be provided. As part of the evening's entertainment, a slide show of chapter members and events from the past will be on display. If you have any digital photos to share, please forward them to Marti Latta or bring copies to the party for insertion into the slide show. Mark the date on your calendar to join us for a casual, social evening!

Wednesday January 18, 2011

Members' Night



This is an annual opportunity for our members to share their archaeology related escapades. Attendance is open to all. Contact Mima Kapches if you would like to speak at this meeting.

February 11-14, 2011

Winter Weekend

The annual Winter Weekend at Limberlost Wilderness Reserve is fast approaching. Please check the website for upcoming details!

Wednesday February 16, 2011

Upcoming Lecture



The next lecture will be presented by Dr. James Conelly, titled "New Research on a Middle Woodland Mound Group in the Trent Valley." In spring 2010, the Cemeteries Regulation Unit (Ontario) invited Trent University to undertake an archaeological investigation of deposits associated with an earlier accidental discovery of human remains on Jacob's Island (Peterborough County). With the cooperation of the local First Nation, excavations began in May 2010 to determine the nature and extent of the interments. The investigation revealed a Middle Woodland mound group that had been destroyed by agricultural ploughing. The talk will introduce both the complexities of the investigation and provide preliminary results of the ongoing analysis that promises to shed additional light on a dynamic period of Ontario's past.

Contact Us!

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Come Visit Our Website

Website: <http://toronto.ontarioarchaeology.on.ca/>



Also, don't forget to join the Toronto Chapter of the Ontario Archaeological Society **Facebook Group** for all the up to date information about meetings and interesting links. Information is also posted on the Chapter's webpage.