

Archaeotext

*The Newsletter of the Norwalk Community College
Archaeology Club and
The Archaeology As An Avocation Program*



Club Meetings – Fall Academic Semester

Save These Dates! -

Sept 11 - Thurs 8:00 pm

Local Excavation Update
Professor Ernie Wiegand

Oct 9 - Thurs 8:00 pm

Fall Film Night!

Easter Island
From Paradise to Calamity

Nov 13 - Thurs 8:00 pm

Paleoindian Occupations
on the Mashantucket Pequot
Reservation



September 11 - Thursday - 8:00 pm
GenRe Forum - East Campus
Local Excavation Update
Prof. Ernie Wiegand
Norwalk Community College



October 9 - Thursday - 8:00 pm
GenRe Forum - East Campus
Easter Island -
From Paradise to Calamity

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Cover Photo: Lions in Motion - Grotte de Chauvet, France. 36,000 ybp

Our opening meeting of the fall semester will feature updates on the investigations at two sites conducted over the summer by the Archaeology Club.

Our first dig was in the basement of the Daniel and Esther Bartlett house. The house, which serves as the headquarters of the Redding Historical Society, was built in the 1780s for Daniel and Esther Bartlett. Flooding of the cellar, which has a dirt floor, prompted the Redding Historical Society to raise funds for the installation of a concrete floor. Mr. Leon Korvelis, a board member of the society and one of Redding's selectmen, was concerned that important archaeological materials might be present in the dirt floor and would be impacted by the new floor. He inquired if the NCC Archaeology Club would be interested in

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Our October meeting will feature our previously-scheduled (and snowed-out!) film about the history of "the loneliest place on earth" – Easter Island. Since its discovery in the early 1700's by a Dutch fleet that was blown off-course, the island has captured the fascination of the entire world. Who were these people? Why (and how?) did they erect the giant statues for which the island is most famously known? What can be learned about, and from, its history?

"Easter Island – from Paradise to Calamity" tells the story of the history of the island's inhabitants from its initial settling through its ascendancy as the apex of artistic expression of ancient Polynesia to its civil war, collapse and subsequent cultural rebirth to its first contacts with the outside world – a world not believed to exist by the Easter Islanders. A variety of Easter Island specialists address

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Local Summer Dig Report

conducting a dig prior to the floor's construction, and we accepted the invitation. Weekend dig sessions were conducted throughout June, resulting in the recovery of a wide variety of artifacts related to virtually all periods of the house's history. Ernie Wiegand will present the results of the dig.



Rob Wallace and Candace Meador at the AM site with an unearthed musket ball

The second dig took place at the AM site in Wilton. First discovered in 1981, the site was the focus of both surface collection and excavation of a large block during the 1980s. This multicomponent site is best known for its Paleoindian component and was, at the time of its discovery, one of the few Paleoindian sites known in the state. While the limited formal excavation of the site produced evidence of a Late Archaic period occupation, it more importantly demonstrated that intact cultural features existed below the plowzone.

This summer NCC archaeologists began a test survey in areas adjacent to those that had produced artifacts in the past. The purpose of the survey was to establish the size of the site and its future research potential. Ernie Wiegand will present a summary of previous investigations and the interim results of

our survey, which has already produced prehistoric artifacts. Please join us. The meeting will be held at the East Campus GenRe Forum at 8 pm, with refreshments at 7:30 pm in the Atrium.



Excavating the basement of the Bartlett House

(Continued from page 1)

Easter Island Film - October 9th

these matters through history, archaeology, bioanthropology and cultural ecology to bring us up-to-date on this still-mysterious place.

The story also highlights the fragility of the island's environment and the



consequences of the misuse of its resources by man. As such, it holds many lessons for the rest of the world.

Come join us for this exciting and most informative presentation! The meeting will be held in the East Campus GenRe Forum on Thursday, October 9 at 8 pm., with refreshments at 7:30 pm in the Atrium. Please call Ernie Wiegand at 203-857-7377 for further information.



SONO Arts Festival

On August 16, Archaeology as an Avocation founder Olivia Vlahos, accompanied by Professor Mary Frances Carmell, visited the Archaeology Club booth at the SONO Arts Festival. Club members and students welcomed the opportunity to meet Olivia. Olivia said "I'm thrilled to see our display and all that it says about archaeology at Norwalk Community College." Shortly after her arrival, the crowds began to grow and by noon we had people stopping by continuously. Several hundred people learned about NCC and its role in local archaeology, and dozens signed up for further information. A few even reported their own discoveries of prehistoric and historic artifacts from their own backyards - we hope to follow up and document the finds for our site files.



Ernie Wiegand and Olivia Vlahos greet visitors to the NCC Archaeology booth at the SONO Arts Festival

Thanks to club members Dawn Brown, Isabel Bullen, Petra Dobbs, Linda Fallon, Camille Garmirian, Sharon Giese, Anna May Jerusavage, Neal Konstantin, and Candace Meador for a job well-done!

Marilyn Corzo-Aroz receives Vlahos Scholarship

Marilyn Corzo-Aroz, who graduated NCC this past spring from the Archaeology as an Avocation certificate program, was selected as the recipient of the Olivia Vlahos Scholarship for 2014. A current board member of the Archaeology Club, she has been an active member of the club. In 2013, she won the "Outstanding Independent Research" award for her outstanding work in the archaeological survey of Laddin's Rock Park in Greenwich, where she discovered a small site of the late Terminal Archaic period.

We wish her continuing success as she begins her first semester at the University of Connecticut this fall!



The Caves of Bermuda

This May 2014, I graduated from the NCC Archaeology Program and also completed a degree in Math & Science. This coming fall, I'll be transferring to UConn, Storrs, as a geoscience major. But before embarking to UConn, I had to make a side trip.

The day after graduating NCC, I had the chance to study abroad in a 12-day Tropical Geology and Ecology course in Bermuda through Sacred Heart University. Dr. Joel Block of Sacred Heart led the program, which involved an intensive field study of the various biological and geological sites of Bermuda with a concentration on the evidence for global warming and cooling. More specifically, beach formation and karst topography was studied as forms of evidence of past climatic conditions. Only an hour fifty minute flight from New York, the island lies very close to home, but geologically speaking, it's a whole different world.

Bermuda is known for its turquoise water and pink sand beaches, but did you also know it's home to 150 caves? Its high concentration in caverns is due to the island's limestone composition that began taking form about 2 million years ago during the beginning of the Ice Age (Pleistocene) when sea levels were 400 ft lower than today. As rainwater made its way into the cracks in the ground, it dissolved the limestone making voids that eventually enlarged to create the extensive cave systems seen today. Dripping water on the cave ceilings created all sorts of speleo-



Marilyn Corzo in Cathedral Cave



Lithified Sandunes



Crystal Cave

thems (cave features) including stalactites and stalagmites. Some of the more interesting speleothems I saw include popcorn, straws, helictites,

flowstone, botryoids, moonmilk, inclined stalactites and chandeliers.

Our exploration of the island took us to Crystal Caves, Fantasy Cave, Blue Hole Caves, Prospero Cave, and Cathedral Cave. Crystal Cave was the first on the list and is located 150 ft below the ground. The cave was discovered in 1905 by two 12-year old boys who went searching for their lost cricket ball. At the bottom of the cave is a brackish "lake" of clear water and a floating pontoon bridge that rises and falls with the daily tides. Submerged stalagmites can be seen below the water at a depth of 95 ft. These features are evidence of lower sea levels during the Ice Age when the cave was dry, allowing these stalagmites to form.

Another notable observation was the presence of fossilized seashells on the walls of Fantasy Cave, which indicate the area was once an intertidal zone. Many of the stalactites and curtains that hang from the ceiling of Fantasy Cave display a reddish brown color known on the island as "paleosol" or an iron oxide sediment that is windblown from the Sahara and Mississippi Valley to Bermuda. This paleosol then mixes with groundwater and percolates through the cave ceiling giving speleothems their spectacular red color.

Other interesting cave features include faults and fissures on the walls, mis-aligned columns, and collapsed cave roofs. All of these indicate Bermuda used to be located in a tectonically active zone, but the true cause of these earthquakes remains unknown.

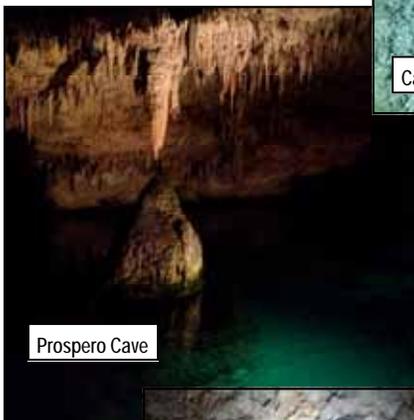
Although Bermuda did not turn up any evidence of paleo-archaeological remains, it did prove to be a fascinating and puzzling island to study geology. I wish to take my interest in caves and apply it to a career and geology and archaeology.



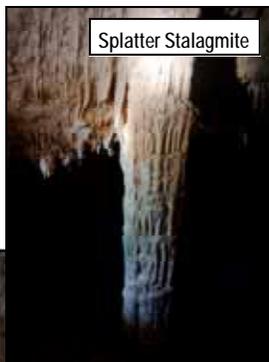
Crystal Cave



Cathedral Cave



Prospero Cave



Splatter Stalagmite



Blue Hole

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Norwalk Community College
 188 Richards Avenue, Norwalk, CT 06854

Phone: 203-857-7377

Editorial Staff: Ernie Wiegand - Faculty Advisor
 Neal Konstantin Bree Longcore

RESEARCH NEWS - FROM THE FIELD



Drake Clovis Cache – North Central Colorado

This fall, excavations will continue at the Gallows Hill site in Redding. During the spring semester, the excavations at Block G were completed and a new area, Block H, was started.

Block G was an area with more deeply buried artifacts and debitage than other areas investigated at the site. While it was hoped that this might be the location of a shelter, it now appears that the most likely explanation is that a tree-fall was responsible for the deeper distribution of materials.

Block H is centered on a small glacial erratic that rises about 50 cm. above the ground surface. The distribution of lithic debitage is greatest on one side, and it is likely that the flintknapper was using the erratic as "site furniture". Several tools have been found, including a possible Stark type projectile point. If it indeed is a Stark point, it would be indicative of a Middle Archaic occupation of the site. This fall's work at the site will expand Block H to determine if more evidence dating to the Middle Archaic is present.



Anthropology and Archaeology Courses this Fall at NCC

This Fall semester at NCC offers three classes, including a course in specific archaeological skills. Courses can be applied towards the "Archaeology as an Avocation" certificate program. Courses are described at the right, and registration information is available from the Records Office at 203-857-7035 or the Archaeology Office, 203-857-7377.

Introduction to Archaeology (ANT 121), will be held on Mondays and Wednesdays from 5:30-6:50 pm. This course, taught by Ernie Wiegand, provides an introduction to prehistoric archaeology and Northeastern prehistory, and will include weekend "dig" sessions at a prehistoric Native American site dating to over 4,000 years ago. Recovered artifacts will be studied at class lab sessions, with students interpreting their finds in a written site report.

Cultural Anthropology (ANT 105). This course is an introduction to Cultural Anthropology offered on Mondays and Wednesdays by Professor Mary Frances Carmell at two times (one section will be from 11:30-12:50 a.m. and the second will be from 1-2:20 p.m.

This course, which is part of the Archaeology as an Avocation curriculum, illuminates social systems and patterns of behavior the world over. From tribal societies to enclaves communities in our current times, under examination will be those beliefs, values, customs, rituals, laws and material culture - all those social structures that provide identity and that inform and explain a people's world view.

Physical Geology (GLG 121), will be taught by Ernie Wiegand on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 9:00-11:50 AM. The course offers an introduction to physical geology, and examines the composition of the earth, and the forces, both external (glaciers, rivers, oceans, wind and gravity) and internal (plate tectonics, volcanism, earthquakes),

Register Now!