



# VERMONT ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

November 2009

Issue: 8

## The Vermont Archaeological Society Electronic Newsletter

Greetings!

### The Missisquoi Jar

In July of 2009 a 1700 year old intact ceramic vessel was recovered during an archeological investigation triggered by the Town of Swanton's Monument Road Unmarked Burial zoning. This zoning law is designed to identify and protect unmarked burials from destruction during house development along Monument Road where many Abenaki burial grounds have been disturbed over the last 30+ years. Staff from the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service and Scott Dillon of the VT Division for Historic Preservation worked in collaboration with Chief April St. Francis-Merrill of the St. Francis/Sokoki Band of the Abenaki Nation at Missisquoi, the Town of Swanton and the landowners to conduct this investigation. This project is located at the edge of the significant 2,000+ year old Boucher Cemetery site VT-FR-26. Shovel test pits were excavated at 5 meter intervals within the project area. The ceramic pot was encountered at 34 cm below surface and was lying on its side facing westerly wedged in that position with one and perhaps two stones. The absence of habitation remains on the site suggests that this isolated vessel was placed on an Abenaki burial and either the bones have completely dissolved in the acidic soils or the vessel contains a cremation burial. The pot was successfully extracted from the ground in one piece and brought to tribal headquarters in Swanton for safe keeping and analysis. John Crock and Jess Robinson of the UVM Consulting Archeology Program assisted Scott Dillon and myself to document the vessel.

### To All VAS Members

The VAS is looking for new Board members for the 2009 through 2011 tenure

Areas of possible involvement:

- Education: helping to provide material for the website, newsletter, Journal, programs, outreach to the public, help in developing programs for VAM.
- Collections: getting involved in cataloging various artifact collections in museums and private collections around the state

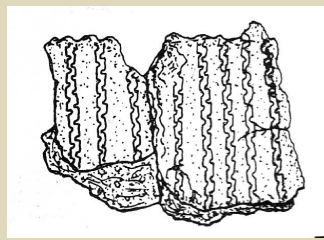
Board Meetings are held in various places around the State approximately every 2 months. Much of the business is done through emails.

The requirements are:

- An interest in archaeology
- A VAS member in good standing
- A willingness to discuss ideas and bring them to fruition.

**If interested please contact**

The pot's pseudo scallop shell decorative style (right) dated the Missisquoi Jar to Petersen's Ceramic Period 2 at approximately AD 300. As the jar slowly dried several cracks formed on the exterior making the vessel extremely fragile.



Under the direction of Steve Shapiro, the State Medical Examiner, we conducted a CT scan of the vessel to determine the stability of the pot, produce a three dimensional image of the vessel and more importantly to analyze the contents to determine if any burned bone or other evidence of human remains were contained within the jar. The results of the CT scan are phenomenal and more analysis is planned. This imaging technology allows us to examine the jar without having to remove the contents that would destabilize the vessel.

Unfortunately the housing project was allowed to proceed with an approved zoning permit because only one burial was encountered. The Swanton Unmarked Burial zoning that is limited to Monument Road requires that more than three graves must be found within a 1,000 square foot area before a project can be stopped. I did monitor the excavation of the house foundation, utility lines and septic area but no other graves or artifacts were observed. Because the Missisquoi Jar may be associated with a burial it is against the Abenaki belief system to display such sacred objects. We hope to provide the VAS membership with the images of the CT scan in the near future.

David Skinas  
USDA NRCS

Chief April St. Francis-Merrill  
St. Francis/Sokoki Band  
Abenaki Nation at Missisquoi

## Recent Discoveries

[A recurring feature]

As part of the Hartford Wastewater Treatment Facility expansion, the UVM CAP identified a multi-component site in the Connecticut River floodplain.

Material recovered includes local and non-local cherts and felsites, dating to at least the Late Archaic period.

## Officers and Board

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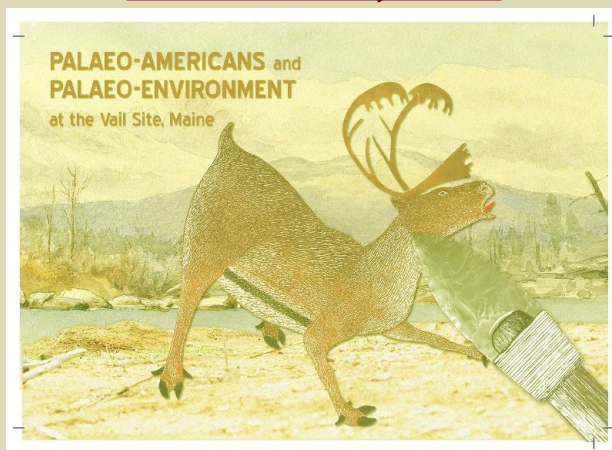
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## PALAEO-AMERICANS and PALAEO-ENVIRONMENT at the Vail site, Maine



*A new and Updated Study of a Fluted Point-Using Culture in New England*

FOREWARD by J.C. Lothrop, PhD and CHAPTERS by K.A. Puryear, MS and R.M. Gramly, PhD

- Ch I - The Late Pleistocene/Early Holocene Vegetational History of the Vail Site

- Ch II - Corpus of Fluted and Unfluted Bifaces, Vail Site
- Ch III - Radiocarbon Dates from the Vail Site
- Ch IV - Gallery of Magalloway Valley Site Photos, 1980-2006

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## **Please renew your membership today**

All VAS memberships are renewable as of January 1st.

### Membership Application/Renewal

New    Renewal    Address Change

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**Category (please circle one):**

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**F** Family-\$25

**SE** Senior-\$10 (65 or over)

**ST** Student-\$10 (must be full-time; include photocopy of student ID)

**C** Contributing-\$50

**L** Life-\$250

**P** Philanthropic-\$1,000

**IN** Non-profit Institutional-\$25

**IP** For-profit Institutional-\$50

Make check (US Funds) payable to The Vermont Archæological Society

Mail to PO Box 663, Burlington, VT 05402-0663

*NOTE:* The VAS does not sell the use of its membership list. However, we occasionally allow its free use by select organizations with announcements of specific interest to VAS members.

Do you authorize us to share your mailing address with such organizations?

YES    NO

Anyone wishing a membership card, please include a stamped, self-addressed envelope.

Georgeana Little  
Vermont Archaeological Society