



VERMONT ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

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The Vermont Archaeological Society Electronic Newsletter

Greetings!

VAS Spring Meeting

The VAS will hold its Spring Meeting at the President Calvin Coolidge State Historic Site in Plymouth Notch on June 6th.

The agenda has not yet been finalized, but presentations on South American Archaeology will be included. An afternoon tour of the site, led by Site Administrator William Jenney, will be offered for a small additional charge.

Cost for the meeting will be \$20 for members and \$25 for non-members. Lunch will be catered by The Wilder Restaurant. Prepayment is not required, but **pre-registration is strongly recommended.**

To register please contact Georgeana Little by [email](#) or phone (644-5675).

A complete agenda will be emailed to members as soon as it is available. Non-members may request a copy with their pre-registration.

We look forward to a strong turnout!

The Bixby Memorial Library

would like to extend a huge thank you to the Vermont Archaeological Society. Over the course of three weeks in April, members of the VAS generously volunteered their time to work on a large inventory project currently underway at the Bixby Memorial Library in Vergennes. This program was co-supervised by Kat Raynor, Manager of the Museum Room Inventory Project and Alden Oliver, Vice President of the VAS.

The Bixby houses a large collection of cultural and historic objects in a museum room located on the second floor. The inventory project, made possible by a grant from the Walter Cerf Fund and a dedicated team of volunteers, aims to catalog and photograph these objects in order to create a digital database documenting the full extent of the Bixby's collections. This is the first full inventory that has been attempted at the Bixby, and we seem to discover new objects almost as fast as we can catalog the known collections. Needless to say, this process has been incredibly exciting - if daunting - for the volunteers and library staff alike, and the contributions made by the VAS have been appreciated by everyone involved.

Volunteer Opportunity at the Old Stone House Museum

The Old Stone House Museum in Brownington is planning a major archaeological survey this summer, and would like to invite members of the Vermont Archaeological Society to participate in the dig on the weekend of June 6 and 7.

We are looking for the original site of the Orleans County Grammar School, which was built in 1823 at the base of Prospect Hill, and moved a third of a mile down the road in 1869. Since the early 1900s it has been used as the Brownington Grange Hall. The town owns it, but cannot afford to maintain it, and the insurance company through the Vermont League of Cities and Towns will no longer insure it, because of wood heat, old wiring, and no running water (but a perfectly clean attached outhouse.)



This was the first secondary school in Orleans County, where Alexander Twilight taught. He built the Old Stone House to serve as a dormitory for out of town students.

At town meeting Brownington residents voted unanimously to give the building to the Old Stone House Museum, and our plan is to move it back to its original site. We believe we know where it was, but are expecting an archaeology professor from Lehigh University, who has a home in Charlotte, to bring his ground penetrating radar to confirm it before we dig.

We have old town meeting reports that talk about building the two stone vaults for the "necessaries", which should still be there underground, and probably were at the back of the building. We also know there was a bell tower, and are hoping to find the foundation for that so we can rebuild it.

We need to do the archaeology because we are the museum, and we want to find out the history of the place, but also we need to meet Act 250 requirements. The intention is to move the building back to the same site, but we could put it just nearby so as not to destroy the original foundation.

Andy Beaupre is our lead archaeologist on this project, and will coordinate his

With the inventory project nearing completion, we are looking forward to moving onto the next phase of this project. Our plan includes further object research and coordinating public and educational access. In addition, we will spend the next year preparing to apply for a NAGPRA grant.

Again, on behalf of the Bixby Memorial Library, we would like to thank the VAS and our regular team of volunteers for their interest and efforts. If you would like to inquire about volunteer opportunities or other ways to get involved with this project, please feel free to contact Kat Raynor or Jane Spencer, Director.

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old professor with the ground penetrating radar and the dig which will begin on June 6. We will also get community members and students involved through summer workshops and our summer camp.

For the weekend of June 6 and 7, we can provide lodging and meals in our Samuel Read Hall House across the road from the site, as well as tent space on the back lawn.

Our goal is to do the archaeology and documentary research this year, as well as plan, write grants, do fundraising and apply for the Act 250 permit. If all goes well, we would move the building in 2016, but have until 2017 to do it.

Bringing the Grammar School back home is a long time dream of the Orleans County Historical Society, and the final piece in restoring the neighborhood to what it was like in Alexander Twilight's time.

If interested you may contact Peggy Day Gibson
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