

SCAA Introduces New Programs:

Native Life & Colonial Life Drop Box

SCAA has developed new Native Life & Colonial Life Programs for use in schools since the Covid-19 lockdown has prevented schools from visiting our onsite programs or hosting our in-school programs. The new programs offer a hands-on approach to educating children and adults about archaeology and Long Island's rich history. (visit our website www.scaa-ny.org or see us on Facebook)

The new programs consist of a Power Point presentation that covers the curriculum being studied by the students about Native Life or Colonial Life. Along with the Power Point is a "Drop Box". The Drop Box contains artifacts and objects the students can view and/or handle. Also included are worksheets and a guide book for the teachers. These items are delivered to and picked up at the school by SCAA.

Contact Diane Fish (salmon381@aol.com or 631-645-2206) to book the Drop Box programs. Contact Laurie Billadello to book the library presentation "Long Island's Archaeology" scaalaurie@yahoo.com or (631-590-0128).

In December 2020, the Avenues School's 4th grade participated in SCAA's Native Life Drop Box Program containing a Power Point presentation and artifacts. It covers the curriculum being studied by the students required by NYS Education. The students had a great time discovering Native life and archaeology.



Collectors Petition to Preserve 1950s Household Trash at Marine Park's Bottle Beach

Antique collectors of a trash-ridden Brooklyn beach are petitioning the National Park Service for the preservation of its junk.

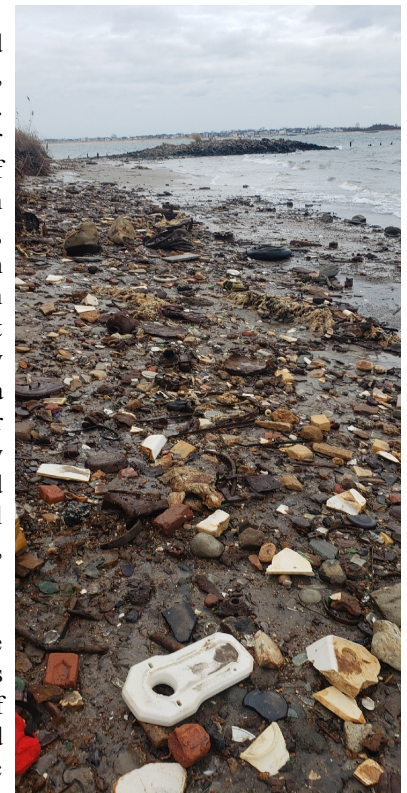
According to the scavengers, Glass Bottle Beach in Marine Park provides an "accidental time capsule" into domestic NYC life in the 1950s when the landfill underneath it was created by Robert Moses. The landfill's cap burst in the '50s, and bottles, bricks, and household trash have been unearthed on the beach ever since.

Scavengers regularly searched the toxic beach for exciting, sand-and-rust-covered finds. Miriam Sicherman, 48, author of a book on the history of the beach, Brooklyn's Barren Island: A Forgotten History, has found a newspaper from January 1953 when Winston Churchill visited President Dwight Eisenhower in New York. Howard Warren, a retired Bottle Beach tour guide and retired elementary school teacher, has found pieces of the 1950s Mattel toy called the Tricky Trolley, a wobbly red train.

The discovery of treasure amongst the trash heap has given rise to the idea of "crowd-sourced archaeology." This tactic involves beachcombers collecting and protecting "resources that can be used in the future to interpret and represent the historical significance of the site," according to Mary McCarthy, executive director at the Beachcombing Center, an organization dedicated to discovering sea glass.

Sicherman is leading a movement to preserve the relics covering the beach. She is getting signatures for a petition to the National Park Service that requests that the beach's debris be collected, decontaminated, conserved, and catalogued.

Her petition emphasizes that "there is much we can learn from those artifacts about midcentury New Yorkers—everything from their



makeup, fashion, and cleaning regimens, to their drinking habits, to the news they read.”



Ideally, the petitioners want relics from the beach featured in a public exhibit. Warren says, “my hope and dream is that the National Park Service decides to create a museum to showcase what life was like in New York City based on the discards of its citizens from the 1950s. I would love to see that area made into a modern resort for everybody to enjoy, which would mean a capping and no accessibility to any of the artifacts.”

A beach-wide shutdown might be beneficial to their cause, preventing further pilfering while Parks considers the petition. The beach was closed in August because radium, a radioactive contaminant, was detected among the beach’s wreckage.

Moving forward on a cleanup of the contamination, the Park Service will evaluate “the nature and extent of contamination at a site and assess potential threats to human health and the environment.” They will also evaluate the potential costs for the cleanup.

However, the COVID-19 pandemic is slowing their process down. The Park Service needs to hire contractors who will go to the beach, test, and collect samples. “The contractors may be held up due to restrictions,” said Daphne Yun, Public Affairs Specialist for the Park Service, adding that the pandemic will make that a long process.

The National Park Service could consider the conservation of the 1950s trash. “If deemed appropriate ... measures will be taken to ensure that potential archaeological resources will be identified and as necessary, preserved,” says a Park Service FAQ.



In fact, the pandemic has already had an effect on closing of the beach. The Park Service had plans to close Bottle Beach in March, but the pandemic forced the closing to be delayed until August.

Recreational traffic comes to the nearby Floyd Bennett Field all the time, but the nearby Bottle Beach is overlooked. The Floyd Bennett Garden Association, a non-profit community garden with close to 600 members, had not even heard of the Bottle Beach closure.

The Park Service said it will “develop a Proposed Plan for public review and comment, which will outline the preferred cleanup option identified for the Site. Public feedback will be sought and considered prior to finalization of the Proposed Plan.” (BrooklynEagle.com, 12/30/2020)

World News

A new theory has been proposed by Peter James, a structural engineer whose company **Cintec** has been preserving historic buildings in Egypt for 14 years.

His book “*Saving the Pyramids Twenty First Century Engineering and Egypt’s Ancient Monuments*” makes a new assessment of Egypt’s Great Pyramid’s construction. Past theory states that approximately 2.3 million limestone blocks were used to construct the massive structure, using a large external ramp to raise the blocks up.

Peter James’ theory is that interior ramps were used and that “to construct the inner fill initially with large blocks to consolidate the foundation area.”

Internal ramps would be used to build the walls while filling the interior of the wall with “small stones and any rubbish the builders wanted to hide that could be used effectively.

“These would have been built concurrently with the inner core,” writes James, “but slightly lower to facilitate the placement of the larger blocks.”

“Small palm trees embedded into the surface (of the ramps) to provide a sliding mechanism to assist the craftsmen transporting and placing the stones.”

As a mason and stone worker myself (Long Island Brickworks, Inc.), I can understand the logic of his theory as I have often constructed entryway steps using a similar method of putting fill in between masonry walls. This is done as there is no need to use solid stone or concrete throughout the structure. I have read of other examples of this practice and this may be a technique that should be explored further.

Thousands of years later, The Great Pyramid still fascinates us. Douglas DeRenzo

Krasnoyarsk, Russia

In early 2000, archaeologist Dr. Evgeny Artemyer found several figurines that appear to be made from softened mammoth bone, and ivory. There are some elongated cylindrical shaped objects as well, of the same material, that when seen from different angles the figurines resemble a mammoth and a bear. Both animals would have been in the area 12,000 years ago. Some see a sleeping human in the figurine. Whatever the artist was designing, the mystery is how and why was the bone softened to create the artifacts.

The ivory bars appeared to be created by a technique that made them almost “fluid-like.”

“The mammoth tusk was softened to the extent that it resembled modern-day play dough. We don’t know yet how ancient people achieved that,” Dr. Artemyer said.



“One of the items we can see traces of stone implements and the flows of the substance before it stiffened. This means that the

tusk was softened significantly, the consistency was viscous.” “Most likely it was not the entire tusk, but its upper part which was processed.” according to Dr. Artemyer. Not finding any similar finds or other Paleolithic site, Dr. Artemyer speculates that scientists often don’t publish artifacts that they can’t identify.

So, the technique and the reason remain a mystery, for now. Perhaps accidental heating near fire, or wrapped in skins that produce tannins led to their initial technique of softening (my theory). What do you think?

Local Archaeology

Back in November SCAA received a call from Mary Stack of Long Beach, LI, NY. She had found an object on Point Lookout Beach. Not knowing what it was, she took it to the Dept. Of Conservation and Waterways, where a marine expert thought it could be a clay dinner plate from a shipwreck.



Disk Mary Stack & Laurie Billadello

It is approximately a 9 inch diameter circle, 1-1/2 inches thick and light in weight.

She then contacted SCAA and the call was passed on to Douglas DeRenzo, Director of SCAA. Mary agreed to bring the object out for us to see and try to identify it. Laurie Billadello, resident Archaeologist for SCAA and Diane Fish, Colonial LI expert, were called in to assist in the identification of the object. Once they saw the object, it was dismissed as a

clay plate. “The porous texture of the surface and the weight indicate bone” but what type of bone is the size and shape.”

Laurie did some online research and determined the object to be a vertebral disc from a whale. Mystery solved!

Archeological Dig On Long Island An Effort To Preserve History Of Freed Slave Peter Crippen, Huntington’s First Black Land Owner.

A centuries-old home cannot be saved, but artifacts buried on the property help tell the story of one of the community’s founding Black families.



This old house – with parts dating back to the 1600s – could have ended up in the junk heap of history, CBS2’s Carolyn Gusoff reported.

But not anymore. Archeologists are spending a week digging for treasures around its perimeter. Fragments of everyday life tell a forgotten history of Huntington’s first Black landowners.

“It was purchased by Peter Crippen in 1864, which is early for an African-American to purchase land anywhere. It stayed in his family for well over 150 years,” said Huntington Town Historian Robert Hughes.

Crippen, a brick laborer, became a leader and activist, founding Huntington’s first Black church.

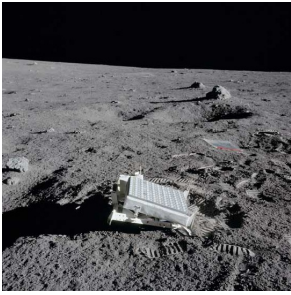
”The location will get a historical marker as the house of a man who escaped slavery to become one of the founders of Huntington’s Black community.- CBS2

Space Archaeology

Not having enough sites and artifacts here on earth to keep them busy for many life times, scientists and archaeologists will now be venturing outward into space.

A bill designed to protect artifacts where Apollo astronauts and spacecraft explored the surface of the moon has been signed into law by President Donald Trump.

The *One Small Step to Protect Human Heritage in Space Act* requires parties seeking a license to conduct activities on the moon to abide by recommendations, guidelines and principles issued by NASA to protect U.S. government artifacts.



“As we look forward to new expeditions to the moon and placing American boots where they have never gone before on Mars, it is crucial to safeguard the history of American exceptionalism and ingenuity in space, from Apollo 11 to the upcoming Artemis program missions,” said Sen. Ted Cruz (R-Texas), who introduced the bill.

“As we go forward to the Moon with the Artemis Program, NASA has been clear that we must do so sustainably,” said NASA Administrator Jim Bridenstine. “As part of the Artemis Accords agreements signed with partner nations, NASA has emphasized that protecting historically significant sites is critical, and I applaud the leaders of this legislation for their commitment to ensuring that future lunar science and exploration is done in a safe and transparent manner.” - Parabolic ARC

<https://www.govtrack.us/congress/bills/116/s1694/text>

Other News

According to an article in Sapiens Anthropology Magazine, it has been discovered that dogs, those trained to search for cadavers, have helped to locate ancient grave sites.

In 2014, Archaeologist Vedrana Glavas, Univ. Of Zadar, Croatia, was working at a site on Velebit mountain, a 3,000 year old fort and necropolis (cemetery). Needing help to explore further, she thought of using cadaver dogs to help locate the graves. Her intuitive idea payed off and the dogs were able to locate remains buried in the 8th century BC (2900 years ago).

Six graves were found, one was 50 meters (150 ft.) away from others. Bones and other artifacts were found. Other archaeologists are now employing canines for the same purpose.

It is amazing that the dogs can still pick up the scent of decaying bodies, thousands of years old..

Attention Libraries

SCAA’s new program “Long Island’s Archaeology” is available to Libraries on zoom. It is a power point presentation narrated by Laurie Billadello, SCAA Archaeology Consultant. Our Long Island neighbors have used this program and found it interesting and informative. If you are interested please email SCArchaeology@gmail.com or scaalaurie@yahoo.com.



Archeological discovery in Switzerland

Publications of the Suffolk County Archaeological Association

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Membership in SCAA includes 3 Newsletters per year and a 10% reduction in workshop and publication costs. All contributions are tax deductible.

Student (to 18)	\$15.	Individual	\$25.
Family	35.	Sustaining	50.
Contributing	100.	Patron	100.
Life Member	400.		

Date:.....

Name:.....

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Phone No.

Willing to volunteer?

Occupation:

Send check to: Suffolk County Archaeological Association,
P.O. Box 532, Wading River, NY 11792

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Douglas DeRenzo, President; Dave Thompson, Vice-President; Diane Fish, Corresponding Secretary, Deanna Nelson, Recording Sec., Laurie Billadello, Archaeology Consultant; Randi Vogt, Treasurer.

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