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# THE MIDDEN

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# THE MIDDEN

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## Editorial Committee

**Acting Editor/  
Publications Editor:** Bill Angelbeck  
angelbec@interchange.ubc.ca

**Assistant Editor:** Patricia Ormerod  
pormerod@interchange.ubc.ca

**News Editor:** Sandy Grant  
anthropoid@telus.net

**Field Editor:** Rudy Reimer  
rudyreimer@telus.net

**Contributing Editors:** Nadine Gray  
ngray@interchange.ubc.ca  
Jack Fletcher  
TheMidden@asbc.bc.ca

**Subscriptions:** Andrea Onodi  
anonodi@sfu.ca

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## President

Sarah Ladd (604.737.7935)  
president@asbc.ca

## Membership

Jodie Anderson  
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## Branches

**Nanaimo** Contact: Mary Perdios-Vassilopoulos  
membership@asbcnanaimo.nisa.com  
Lectures on the second Friday of every month, 7:00 to 9:00  
P.M. at Malaspina University-College, Education/Social  
Sciences Bldg. (356), Room 111.  
Internet: [www.asbcnanaimo.nisa.com](http://www.asbcnanaimo.nisa.com)  
Contact: [mail@asbcnanaimo.nisa.com](mailto:mail@asbcnanaimo.nisa.com)  
Education Taskforce: [education@asbcnanaimo.nisa.com](mailto:education@asbcnanaimo.nisa.com)

**Victoria** Contact: Shirley Cuthbertson (250.382.0288)  
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members and visitors are welcome. Admission is free.



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## Cover

*Obsidian Microblade picture by Aubrey Canon*



# THE ASBC PAGE

## Letter from ASBC President

Dear Readers,

It has been a busy four months for the ASBC, with the B.C. Archaeology Forum, the second running of the Hilary Stewart Art and Archaeology Competition, and the great progress we've had with the proposed Heritage Watch Alliance, mentioned in my last letter.

Under the initiative of our Past-President, Patricia Ormerod, several members of our Executive are currently working with the Union of BC Indian Chiefs to develop a program similar to the volunteer archaeological warden program the ASBC first ran in partnership with the Archaeology Branch from 1976 to 1987. After several meetings, we began to put together a presentation for the Archaeology Forum and Patricia secured us a Panel at the Forum in Merritt on November 14<sup>th</sup>.

I am excited to say that the Heritage Watch Alliance was well received at the Forum, with good words from First Nations, Archaeological Consultants and from several of the academic representatives present from UBC and SFU. More meetings will be taking place in the next few months and any who are interested in joining the team, want to provide us with some input, or are just interested in learning more can contact me at [president@asbc.bc.ca](mailto:president@asbc.bc.ca).

On the "home front," I am pleased to announce we have a great set of speakers lined up for the 2005 spring series of lectures; let me tantalize you with Dr. Knut Fladmark in January and Dr. Dana Lepofsky in February. For the second year now, we will be hosting an Artifact ID night in April in place of a regular lecture. Keep your eyes peeled for information about this coming soon!

I encourage all of you to visit the ASBC web site [www.asbc.bc.ca](http://www.asbc.bc.ca) as we have posted the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> prize winning artwork from the Hilary Stewart Art and Archaeology Competition, as well as the 8 runner up entries.

My thanks go out to two of our volunteers who have recently left us to pursue greater things. We are looking to fill the spot of Recording Secretary on our Executive; Emily, I wish you the best with your studies and hope you will look us up again once you have completed your MA. Our Publicity person has also departed to begin her post-graduate career search; thank you Monet Taylor for your enthusiasm and efficiency.

I look forward to seeing the rest of you at our public meetings and hope you all are rested and relaxed after the Holiday Season.

**Sarah Ladd  
President**

## Nanaimo ASBC President's Letter

Welcome to a brand new season of the ASBC Nanaimo Branch. The ASBCNB has already hit the ground running this year after two very successful programs last summer.

We hosted the 3rd Annual Discover Archaeology Interactive Bones Display at the Nanaimo District Museum (NDM) in August, seeing over 170 people visit the display in five hours. It was truly amazing. Please see our website at [www.asbcnanaimo.nisa.com](http://www.asbcnanaimo.nisa.com) for details from this and past events at the NDM. Thanks again to all the volunteers who participated. We hope to offer this event in 2005.

Much of the success of our NDM event was due to the high community profile that the ASBCNB has been receiving through our "Hands On Heritage! Public Archaeology Project" located at 55 Haliburton Street in Nanaimo. This project focuses on the early history of Nanaimo through work at one of Nanaimo's earliest homes. Much credit must be given to our project archaeologist Colleen Parsley whose tireless effort on this project assured its success. Through her work, archaeology and conservation of Nanaimo's heritage resources was the talk of the town all summer. Hats off to her and all the volunteers who endured the heat of summer to bring knowledge and a sense of community pride to Nanaimo. Much thanks goes to the Petersons who hosted us at their home and to the numerous businesses and private donors who gave generously to this project. A "Thank You" evening took place in November to recognize those businesses and individuals who donated funds, in-kind donations, and their time to make this project such a success. Analysis is well underway and takes place ever other Sunday starting January 9, 2005 from 1 to 3pm. No experience is necessary, just enthusiasm! Please visit the HOH website ([www.asbcnanaimo.nisa.com/handsonheritage.html](http://www.asbcnanaimo.nisa.com/handsonheritage.html)) for more detailed scheduling information, as well as updates about the project and our partners.

One aspect of conservation that HOH has brought forth is the idea that historic sites in and around Nanaimo do not seem to have value to some individuals who live in the area. Pot hunting, such as bottle collecting and surface collecting from middens and beaches, seems to be a more than common occurrence. This is disheartening as heritage, regardless of its time period, is still a piece of our collective past and not to be treated lightly. The ASBC's role as advocates and watchdogs for local and provincial heritage is paramount in an age where heritage conservation is

becoming increasingly difficult. We encourage you all to speak out and be advocates for heritage in your community.

The Nanaimo Branch has a new website this year: [www.asbcnanaimo.nisa.com](http://www.asbcnanaimo.nisa.com). If you need information or have comments, please contact us through these e-mail below.

All agendas and minutes from the Executive meetings will be posted on the website for members to access. Executive meetings are on the first Friday of every month and all members of the ASBCNB are encouraged to attend. We have an open door policy as this is your society and you have a right to know what transpires outside the lectures.

We hope to see you all at our lectures and other public events planned for 2005!

**Julie Cowie  
ASBC Nanaimo**

### **New Website and e-mails for Nanaimo**

New Website: [www.asbcnanaimo.nisa.com](http://www.asbcnanaimo.nisa.com)

Main Branch e-mail: [mail@asbcnanaimo.nisa.com](mailto:mail@asbcnanaimo.nisa.com)

Membership e-mail: [membership@asbcnanaimo.nisa.com](mailto:membership@asbcnanaimo.nisa.com)

Education Taskforce e-mail:  
[taskforce@asbcnanaimo.nisa.com](mailto:taskforce@asbcnanaimo.nisa.com)

Hands On Heritage! e-mail:  
[handsonheritage@asbcnanaimo.nisa.com](mailto:handsonheritage@asbcnanaimo.nisa.com)

### **Northern Branch of the ASBC**

There has been some interest in forming a Northern Branch of the ASBC. To be incorporated as a new branch, you need 10 members plus a full branch executive (President, Vice President, Secretary, and Treasurer). If you live in Northern BC and are interested in forming a Northern Branch of the ASBC please contact: Rachael Sydenham ([xerxes72@telus.net](mailto:xerxes72@telus.net)) or Sarah Ladd ([president@asbc.bc.ca](mailto:president@asbc.bc.ca)).

## **TIME ON YOUR HANDS? WANT TO BE MORE INVOLVED?**

The ASBC in Vancouver needs additional volunteers to keep things running smoothly.

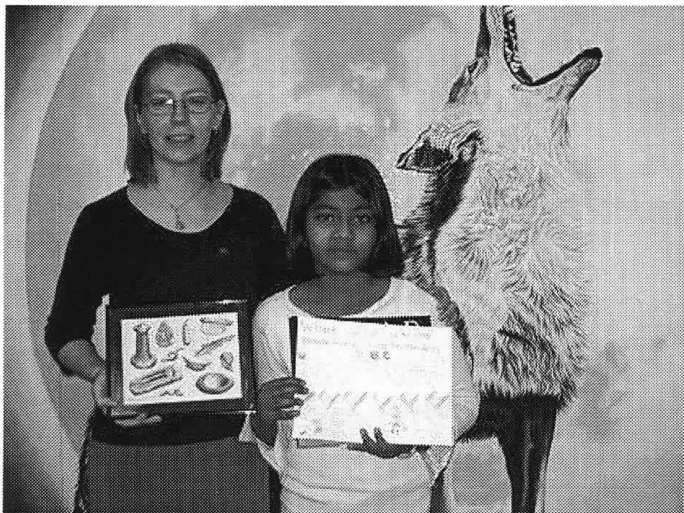
Currently available is the prestigious position of **Recording Secretary for the ASBC**. This position on the executive has become available with the resignation of Emily Wilkerson. Attendance at the monthly executive meetings is essential – because the recording Secretary prepare the minutes for each meeting. Meetings are held in the fourth week of the month. Working closely with the President, the Secretary has one of the most important positions in the ASBC. If you would like to make this kind of contribution – contact Sarah Ladd by email at [president@asbc.bc.ca](mailto:president@asbc.bc.ca) or by mail at our address on the inside cover.

The **Publicity** position is also available. Although this is not an executive position, the publicity *person's* task will be made easier if he/she can attend the monthly Executive meeting. Duties include making sure notices of our lectures get to all the media in a timely manner each month and working on the annual Hilary Stewart Art and Archaeology Competition. For more information, contact Sarah Ladd by email at [president@asbc.bc.ca](mailto:president@asbc.bc.ca) or by mail at our address on the inside cover.

Tea and crumpets, anyone? Or will it be tea and brownies, tea and cookies, tea and cake, or tea and ... That's up to the **Social Co-ordinator!** If such decision-making appeals to you – and you can boil water – you will make a perfect Social Co-ordinator for the monthly meetings of the ASBC at the Vancouver Museum/H.R. Macmillan Planetarium! This position could be just the assist you need if your new year's resolution was to learn more about archaeology because you will be on the scene for all of this season's talks. For more information, contact Sarah Ladd by email at [president@asbc.bc.ca](mailto:president@asbc.bc.ca) or by mail at our address on the inside cover.

# WINNER OF THE HILARY STEWART ART & ARCHAEOLOGY COMPETITION FALL 2004

On December 17th I was pleased to present several prizes to Shazeen Mahmood, (a grade 4 student from Surrey, BC), the winner of the Hilary Stewart Art & Archaeology Competition. The winning illustration by Shazeen will be featured on a cover of *The Midden* later this year – hopefully in colour. Because the winning student was from the Lower Mainland, I was able to go in person to Cindrich Elementary School in Surrey to meet Shazeen and two of the other students in Mrs. Corinne Rossi's grade 4 class whose artwork also made it into the top 10 entries we received this year. Special thanks to Corinne for all of the work she did in presenting our competition to her students!



*Sarah Ladd and Shazeen Mahmood*

This is the second time we have run the Hilary Stewart Art & Archaeology Competition, in honour of Hilary Stewart, a talented award-winning British Columbian author best known for the nine books she has written and illustrated on Northwest Coast First Nations cultures. The competition is designed to encourage the interest of young people in the Archaeology of British Columbia.

First prize includes a copy of one of Hilary Stewart's books, *Cedar*; a \$50.00 cash prize; the winning artwork featured on cover of the ASBC's publication, *The Midden*; and an original drawing of a suite of Northwest Coast First Nations artifacts, provided by Hilary Stewart.

Ms. Stewart has generously provided a drawing for the prize winner each time we've run the competition, and Shazeen was excited to receive hers, which included illustrations of a hand maul, slate knife, awl, beads, and stone bowl, and several other artifacts.

This year's Competition was such a success that the ASBC executive decided at the last minute to award a small second prize of a copy of Hilary Stewart's book *Indian Fishing: Early Methods on the Northwest Coast* to Victoria Brawn, a grade 7 student from Kamloops BC. You can see Victoria's artwork, as well as the other 8 entries that made it to our top 10, on our web site [www.asbc.bc.ca](http://www.asbc.bc.ca).



*Calvin, Sarah, Linda, Mrs. Corinne Rossi and Shazeen at Prize Presentation, Cindrich Elementary School, Surrey.*

Thanks to everyone who participated. The Competition will run again in Fall of 2005 and will be open to children and youth between grades 3-12.

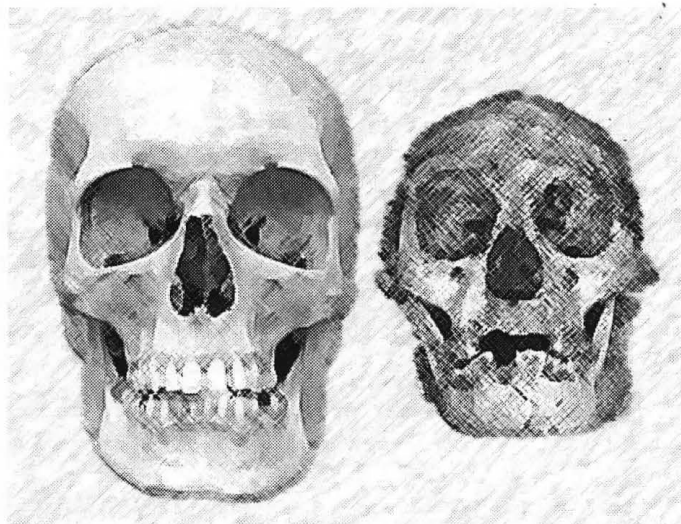
Congratulations Shazeen and Victoria and all of those of you who made it into the top 10 entries, on your fine illustrations! We at the ASBC wish you all the best in the future, and encourage you to continue to explore your interest in Archaeology.

**Sarah Ladd  
President, ASBC**

# ARCHAEOLOGY NEWS

## Another Human Species Discovered

It is widely believed that modern humans evolved during millions of years of trial and error. Some scientists speculate that during that time more than one species may have co-existed. There have been discoveries that lend support to this theory, the newest was recently found on the Indonesian island of Flores. A team of Australian/Indonesian scientists have made a discovery that has led to an addition in the human family tree. When archaeologists unearthed the first bones of this discovery, they marveled at a small skull that would have held a chimp-size brain. Thomas Sutikna of the Indonesian Centre for Archaeology told *NewScientist Weekly* that they "thought the skull and the mandible was from a child." After further study of the skull and teeth, it became evident that the skeleton they found was in fact an adult; a small adult. Standing only one meter tall, the tiny hominid has been named *Homo floresiensis*, and probably evolved from *Homo erectus* to such a small stature as a result of the limited resources on Flores Island. The remains, dubbed "the Hobbit," have been dated to 18,000 years old, with other fossils recovered from the site as old as 38,000 years. Other finds suggests that *Homo floresiensis* could have inhabited the island from 95,000 and 13,000 years ago. This means that the Hobbit race would have lived during the same time as Cro-Magnon. Peter Brown, a paleoanthropologist at the University of New England in New South Wales, Australia, told *National Geographic News* that "To find that as recently as perhaps 13,000 years ago, there was another upright, bipedal — although small-brained — creature walking the planet at the same time as modern humans is as exciting as it was unexpected." The current inhabitants of Flores Island, have old legends and folk stories of a race of little people called *Ebu Gogo*. They are described as one meter tall, hairy and used a murmuring type of language. Perhaps this discovery has brought some truth to the myths.



Modern human skull (left) compared to small *Homo erectus*-like skull of *Homo floresiensis* (right)

### Sources:

NewScientist.com news service, October 27, 2004  
<http://www.newscientist.com/article.ns?id=dn6588>

National Geographic News, October 27, 2004  
[http://news.nationalgeographic.com/news/2004/10/1027\\_041027\\_homo\\_floresiensis.html](http://news.nationalgeographic.com/news/2004/10/1027_041027_homo_floresiensis.html)

Fossil Hominids: The Evidence for Human Evolution  
<http://www.talkorigins.org/faqs/homs/index.html>

**Sandy Grant.**

# SEE YOU AT THE CAA CONFERENCE IN NANAIMO!

The 38th annual meeting of the Canadian Archaeological Association will take place in Nanaimo, British Columbia from May 11th through 15th. The conference is hosted by Malaspina University-College's Department of Anthropology with Imogene Lim as Conference Convener.

For registration form and a complete list of sessions, visit the conference web page <http://web.mala.bc.ca/caa2005/Registration.htm>. Pre-registration deadline is March 31, 2005.

Some of the additional activities have a number limit and you are advised to register early or be disappointed. For example, on Wednesday May 11 a 3 - 4 hour workshop "Basketry Technology: Methods of Analysis" with wet-site specialist Kathryn Bernick has room for only 20 archaeologists. Participants will become familiar with handling, measuring, and observing basic techno-stylistic attributes of artifacts, gain an appreciation of the vast range of attributes that could be documented and analyzed, and become aware of the interpretive capacity of plant-fibre artifacts. A waitlist will be kept for a possible afternoon session. Or take the field trip that afternoon to the Comox Bay Fish Weir Complex and walk the flats with Nancy Greene. Wear your rubber boots and, if the weather is poor, rain gear. Space is limited.

Be sure to check the conference web page for full details and listings of sessions planned for each day of the conference.

Here's a sample of sessions planned for Thursday, May 12th:

- Session 1: Archaeological Results from Coastal British Columbia (Chair: Jim Stafford)
- Session 3a: Projectile Point Sequences in Northwestern North America (Chairs: Roy Carlson & Martin Magne)
- Session 5: In Small Things Unseen: Revealing British Columbia's Archaeological History through Microscopy and Biomolecular Science (Chair: Aubrey Cannon)
- Session 7: New Directions in Rock Art: Research, Management, Conservation, and Interpretation (Chair: Brenda Gould)
- Session 2a: Cedar, Salmon and Slaves?: Local Perspectives on Long Term Adaptations on the Northwest Coast (Chairs: Trevor Orchard & Terrence Clark)
- Session 3b: Projectile Point Sequences in Northwestern North America (Chairs: Roy Carlson & Martin Magne)
- Session 4: From all points: Historic Archaeology in North America (Chair: Jean-Luc Pilon)
- Session 6: Community Archaeology: Issues Facing B.C. First Nations and the Implementation of Indigenous Archaeology (Chair: Rudy Reimer)
- Session 8: Gems 'n Nuggets (Chair: Margo Chapman-Kendall)
- Session 9: From the past to a vision of the future: Method and theory (Chair: Gerald Oetelaar)



# PRECISION MICROBLADE TECHNOLOGY FROM THE CENTRAL BC COAST

Aubrey Cannon

Microblade technology is widespread around the world and is a well-known component of early lithic assemblages on the Pacific Northwest Coast. It is recognized for its precision, the skilled craftsmanship it represents, and its efficient use of raw materials. Here I describe a single find of a complete obsidian microblade that demonstrates all of these qualities to perhaps the highest degree possible. Its find does not represent any new insights into regional archaeological history, but it does allow an appreciation of lithic technological skill that is rarely surpassed. I think it is also a thing of beauty that goes beyond its utilitarian or archaeological value. The photographs shown here are better viewed in the web-based version of this article at: <http://www.socsci.mcmaster.ca/anthro/emplibary/microblade.pdf>

The artifact was found during the microscopic analysis of matrix samples from the site of EISx-10, a coastal shell midden located in the traditional territory of the Heiltsuk First Nation on the central coast of British Columbia. The site is one of several shell midden sites on Fougner Bay, on the mainland just north of Namu. It, along with fifteen other sites in the area, was the subject of core and auger sampling I undertook in 1996 and 1997. Small diameter cores provided intact sections of deposits for radiocarbon dating, while larger matrix samples obtained with a larger diameter bucket-auger were used for the recovery and analysis of fish and shellfish remains. The results of site dating and



Figure 1: EISx-10 Microblade with a Penny for Scale.

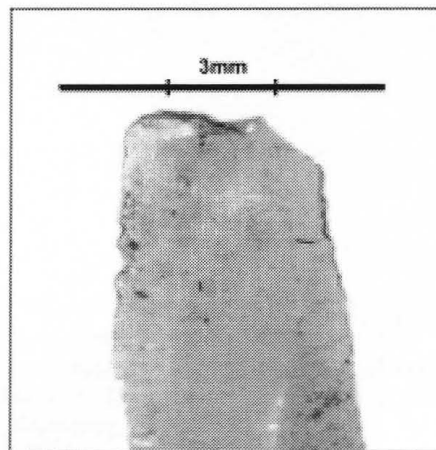


Figure 2: Ventral Surface Showing the Bulb of Percussion and Vertical Stress Lines.

faunal analysis are described elsewhere (Cannon 2000a, 2000b). The matrix recovered in the auger samples was sufficient to give a good indication of the variety and intensity of marine fishing and shellfish gathering.

The small volume of the samples resulted in the recovery of very few artifacts. One exception was the obsidian microblade shown here, which was recovered from near the back of the midden deposits at EISx-10, some 30 metres from the shore at a depth of 104-117 cm below the surface. A radiocarbon sample from the same level in the adjacent core section yielded a calibrated date of 4245-3965 BC, or around 6000 BP. This date fits within the range of microblade technology on this part of the coast. Microblades are found in deposits dating from 9000 to 5000 cal. BP at the nearby Namu site (Carlson 1996). What sets this particular example apart is not its presence in this location at this time, or its manufacture from obsidian, the material of choice for microblades at Namu (Hutchings 1996:170), or even the means by which the artifact was recovered and dated. What sets this particular example apart from the majority of microblades recovered from sites on the BC coast, and those found in most other parts of the world, is its very small size.

This artifact is nearly complete. Only the very tip of the distal end is missing. It measures a mere 2.2 mm in width and 5.8 mm in length (Fig. 1). It is so small, it can hardly be handled. Its form is typical, with a striking platform on

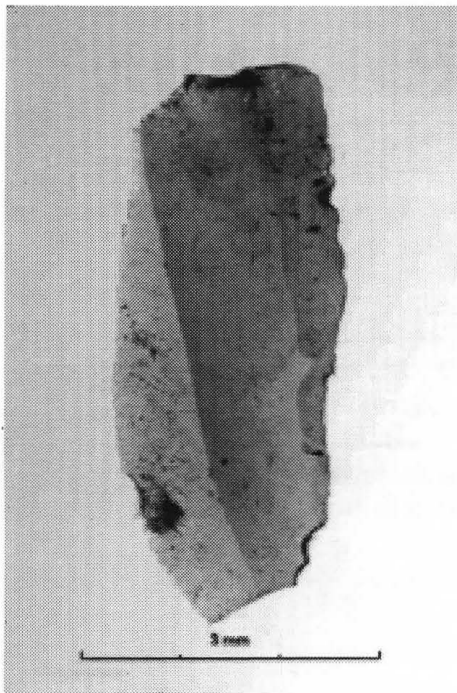


Figure 3: Dorsal Surface Showing Twin Arrises

the proximal end, a bulb of percussion on the ventral surface (Fig. 2), and a pair of ridges or arrises on the dorsal surface (Fig. 3). The ridges and resulting trapezoidal cross-section of the blade show that an even smaller triangular blade or narrow flake was struck from the dorsal surface. Its manufacture is clearly an indication of remarkable skill. What is even more remarkable is that it shows signs of use damage, primarily along one edge (Fig. 4). I initially saw this as an indication it may have been hafted along the opposite edge in some form of composite tool. In preparing the photographs for this article I noticed what appears to be fine retouch on both edges near the proximal end. This

suggests the blade was more likely end hafted. Experiments conducted by Karl Hutchings (1996) showed this to produce a more efficient and more precise cutting tool. In every respect, the EISx-10 microblade represents the epitome of precision technology on this part of the BC coast. It is, however, not unique for its small size, though it does lie at the very smallest end of microblades from archaeological sites worldwide.

Metric data are not always available for assemblages recovered from Pacific Northwest sites in BC and Alaska, and when provided do not always include the size range of individual blades. Sufficient examples are available to show that this particular example is at the smallest end of blade size distributions. The dimensions of the smallest microblades yielded from a sampling of sites in BC, Alaska, the Yukon, and Alberta are provided in Table 1. The EISx-10 example near or well below the size of the smallest examples reported from these sites, though there may be other examples not included in Table 1, or still others as yet unreported. The EISx-10 blade is also at or near the smallest extremes from sites reported worldwide. In a study of more than 9500 microblades from 60 sites from the North American Arctic and the European Upper Palaeolithic, Linda Owen reported an average smallest width of 3.8 mm. Only seven sites yielded blades as narrow as 2.5 mm, and only three sites produced blades as small or smaller than the EISx-10 example.

While it may not earn honours as the world's smallest, the EISx-10 blade is among the smallest examples recovered from archaeological sites of microblade using cultures worldwide. It shows the highly developed skills of its makers, and deserves some recognition for that reason alone. It may represent a level of precision that is even more common than we presently know. Only the finest recovery methods are likely to find such small tools, but the opportunity to further appreciate the skills of ancient lithic technologists may make finer scrutiny of excavated deposits worth the extra effort.

Table 1 - Dimensions of the Smallest Microblades reported from Selected Sites in BC, Alaska, the Yukon, and Alberta (length is for complete microblades only, number in brackets).

Site	Number of Blades	Smallest Width (mm)	Smallest Length (mm)	Reference
Lawn Point, BC	168	2.0	-	Fladmark (1986)
Kasta, BC	?	2.0	-	Fladmark (1986)
Paul Mason, BC	116 (16)	3.3	9.6	Coupland (1996)
Namu, BC	39 (6)	3.0	11.6	Luebbers (1978)
Shoemaker Bay, BC (1982)	91 (28)	3.5	10.0	McMillan and St. Claire
Whalen Farm, BC	17 (5)	4.0	25.8	Sanger (1968)
Lochnore-Nesikep Locality, BC	677	2.4	-	Sanger (1968)
Campus, Alaska	604 (39)	2.0	7.8	Mobley (1991)
KbTx-2, Yukon	137	1.8	-	Clark (1992)
Bezya, Alberta	105 (11)	2.5	8.1	Le Blanc and Ives (1986)

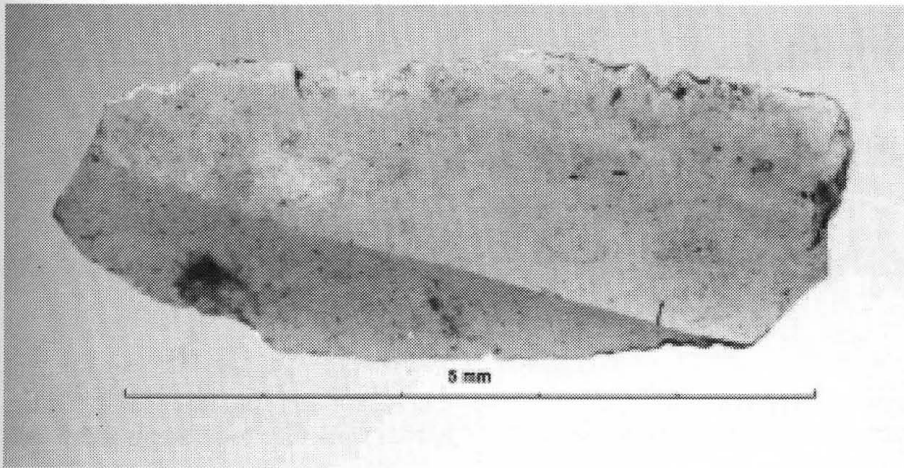


Figure 4: Use Damage on the Upper Edge

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**Aubrey Cannon is a Professor in Anthropology at McMaster University. He received his Ph.D. in anthropology from Cambridge in 1987.**

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# MARSHALL'S BEACH FISH TRAP, LASQUETI ISLAND

By Dana Lepofsky

When socially and economically complex peoples are described in introductory Anthropology textbooks, Northwest Coast peoples are always presented as the exception to the rule. Like most complex societies worldwide, they traditionally had hierarchical social systems, lived in large permanent villages for all or most of the year, and had high population densities. What is distinct about Northwest Coast societies, however, is that the economic basis for this complex social system did not involve full-scale agriculture. Northwest Coast peoples were hunter-gatherer-fisherfolk, who, through a well developed system of resource management and ownership, were able to harvest and process enough food to create surplus. This surplus was used in trade, to finance their elaborate ritual systems, and to feed the people throughout the year when fresh food was not available.

Elaborate fish traps, like the one at Marshall's Beach, were a central component of the social and economic system of Northwest Coast peoples. Archaeologists know little about the development of this amazing technology. The oldest recorded fish weir, dating to over 4000 years ago, is located in the mudflats of the Glenrose Cannery site. It was constructed of wooden stakes and nets of various size openings, which were used to catch a variety of fish species (and any other animals who were attracted to the fish). Sometime in the past 3000 years or so, stone fish traps show up on the coast, and probably become increasingly common after that. Based on the artifacts eroding out of the large midden at Marshall's Beach, the Marshall Beach fish trap also dates to sometime in the last 1-2000 years.

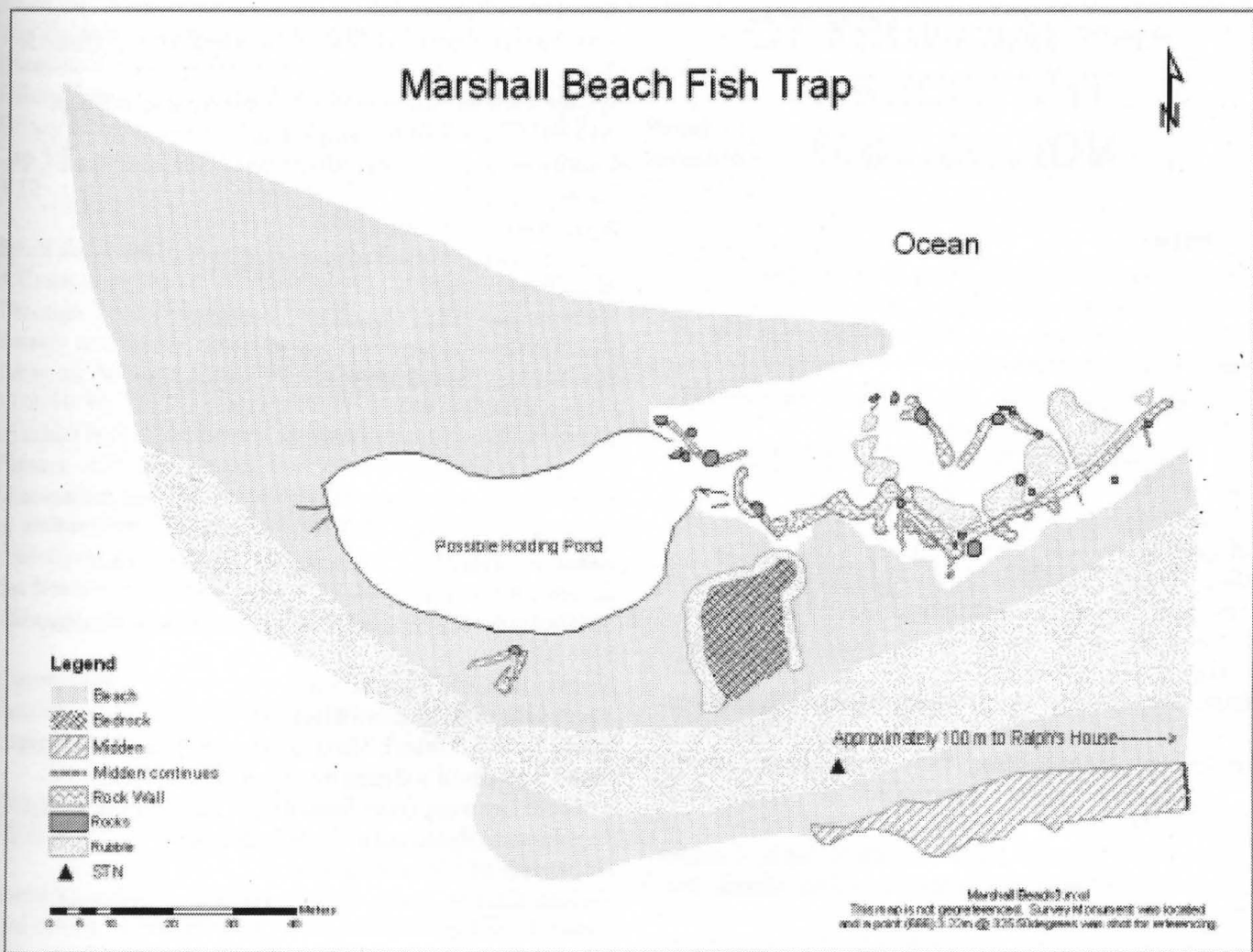
Archaeologists know even less about how the stone fish traps were used. In Bella Bella, where the highest density of fish traps on the coast has been recorded, researchers are working with Heiltsuk elders to find out details of how their traps worked. We do know that most fish traps were some combination of stakes, nets, baskets, and stone alignments. Some, like one located in near Lennie's Lagoon Bay, just to the east of Marshall's Beach, were composed of relatively simple linear arrangements of rocks and nets spanning a bay or a stream entrance. In the more complex systems of rock alignments, like the one at Marshall's Beach, we are probably looking at a system that has been added to and changed over time, so not all the alignments

we see would have been in use simultaneously. Other simpler and more complex stone fish traps and wooden fish weirs are located in other bays on Lasqueti and on the neighbouring small islands.

The map you see here of the Marshall's Beach Fish Trap, represents the basic features of this incredibly complex system. The data for the map were collected over two low-tides in September. Various friends and I, directed by my GIS-mapping friend extraordinaire, Susan Formosa, used a Leica total station to collect the hundreds of data points that defined the major outlines of the trap. We raced the tide to gather as many points as possible. At the end, we collected some of the points from a canoe and stripped off clothes to wade out to some rocks that were being fast covered by the incoming tide. When the tide is fully in, there is no sign of this amazing ancient system.

Once we started mapping, it didn't take us long to realize that most of the rocks on that very beautiful beach had been moved by people as part of this incredible engineering feat. There are several prominent features to the trap. A long, 3-5 course stone wall defines much of the eastern portion. To the south of this wall are various smaller walls coming off it at right angles. These presumably had nets across them, which may have formed small pens. On the opposite side of the wall are large clusters of rubble, which have been pushed together to create channels between them. In many cases these channels match up with the smaller walls. A major feature of the system is a large circular, rock-free depression at the western end of the beach that holds water even at low tide. Rocks surrounding the depression have been pushed up along the beach edge, forming an even larger, circular depression when the tide is higher. We think this was a large holding pond for trapped fish.

As in many traps on the coast, the main feature of the trap is a series of funnel-shaped alignments of rocks, with the small side of the funnel facing the in-coming tide. These funnels lead into areas we think are holding ponds. When the tide comes in at Marshall's Beach, the water flowing through these funnels is so strong that you literally cannot stand up in the flow near them. Don McDonald, a fisherman friend of mine, says that sockeye and pinks, on their way to the Fraser River, would have hung out in the calm waters in the bay, waiting for a favourable tide on which to move south.



When the tide was unfavourable (we're guessing on a flood tide), the fish would have come closer to shore, looking for back eddies. They then would have been drawn into the rush of water going through the funnels and would have experienced the holding pen as a back eddie. We suspect that one-way gates were placed across the openings of these funnels. Thus, with incoming tides, salmon would have been funneled in, and then trapped in the holding pens, where they could be processed for immediate and future consumption. These holding pens would have been an ingenious way of taking care of the "bottle-neck" that Northwest Coast peoples faced during peak salmon runs: how to process fish quickly enough before it rotted.

Building and maintaining a trap of this size and complexity, and managing the huge amount of fish that it was capable of catching, would have required a high level of community organization. The head, or heads, of the elite households likely managed the trap on behalf of the community members. I don't know how many people could have been supported by the trap, but judging from the size

of the nearby midden, the village was of substantial size. I love thinking of that beach so full of life—both human and otherwise.

Since we mapped the Marshall's Beach trap, several islanders have told me about other traps and weirs on or near Lasqueti. The community on Lasqueti has a strong sense of the importance of heritage. They are keen to continue to map these and other archaeological features on the island, both to find out more about the island's past, but also to preserve these resources for the future.

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**Dana Lepofsky is an Associate Professor in Archaeology at Simon Fraser University. She is interested in the social and ecological consequences of human interactions with their environment. Her current research is focused in the Fraser Valley, where she is part of a multi-disciplinary project to explore shifting interaction and identity among the Sto:lo.**

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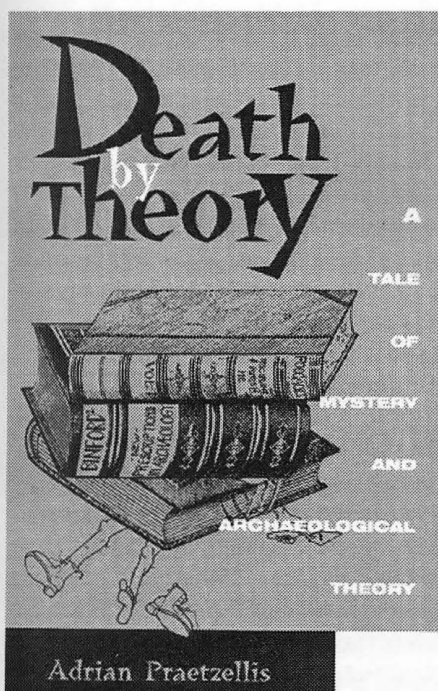
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# BOOK REVIEWS

## **Death By Theory. A Tale of Mystery and Archaeological Theory.**

by Adrian Praetzellis. AltaMira Press, Walnut Creek, CA, 2000. Vii + 174 pp., illus., index.



Adrian Praetzellis (1998) has previously urged archaeologists to adopt the role of storyteller. To use their imaginations to create more engaging stories for the sites they excavate, still based on the data, but in a less rigid format than a site report. In the present volume, *Death by Theory*, he reverses the roles slightly and weaves the history of archaeological theory within the structure of a mystery novel. Unlike

other novels that use archaeology as context or setting, such as those by Elizabeth Peters or Lyn Hamilton, the mystery in *Death by Theory* is entirely concerned with an archaeological site and its interpretation.

Without giving too much away, the story follows Dr. Hannah Green and her nephew Sean, a recent graduate and now shovelbum, as they are drawn into an excavation directed by one of Green's colleagues. At the heart of the mystery lies an unusual burial site on an island in the Pacific Northwest that promises to cause a sensation. Along the way they encounter a variety of archaeologists and students with varying and conflicting theoretical perspectives, a seemingly militant cult, and overly enthusiastic representatives of the media. Archaeologists reading this story will no doubt recognize situations familiar to their own experiences throughout the narrative.

As the story progresses readers are introduced to prominent theoretical perspectives by means of conversations between different characters. For the most part these discussions flow with the story, without a great stretch being made to include the topics. Points and concepts are illustrated with well known sites and debates in archaeology. The author uses the dialogue between characters to present a rounded discussion that includes different perspectives. Praetzellis presents clear and easily understood introductions to different theories in each chapter.

The story opens at a meeting of the Society for American Archaeology, where Hannah and Sean discuss

whether or not archaeology is a science, and the nephew receives a remedial lesson on scientific method. In Chapter Two, Sean meets a man who is convinced his bag of rocks are important artifacts, but he has been unable to convince any experts that the lines he sees were made by people. This leads to a discussion of how theory influences what we see. Chapter Three introduces the New Archaeology, and four continues with processualism, ethnoarchaeology, determinism and cultural ecology. Their first visit to the site leads to a discussion of diffusion and social structure. Materialism forms the basis of the theoretical discussions in Chapter 6 and gender is addressed in Chapter 7. Marxism is discussed in Chapter 8, complete with an illustration of "The Contents of Karl Marx's Brain (abridged version)" (p.122). The final chapter deals with post-modernism, bringing the mystery to its solution.

Although *Death by Theory* is aimed at those just starting out in archaeology, the volume will also be of interest to a general audience. It will be a welcome addition to the reading lists of introductory courses as it provides approachable introductions to complex theoretical issues. Praetzellis has included a list of additional readings, and a series of "Talking Points" for each chapter. These questions encourage readers to move beyond material presented in the text, and provide a good starting point for more involved discussions of archaeological theory. The glossary will also be a useful feature for readers

unfamiliar with terms used in archaeological theory (or that Hendrix recorded Purple Haze in 1967).

Praetzellis has succeeded in producing an entertaining story, and at the same time providing an accessible introduction to archaeological theory from the basis of scientific method through postmodernism. His writing is clear, and along with his illustrations has considerable wit, making the book an enjoyable way to spend an afternoon.

**Mike Brand**

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Introduction: Why Every Archaeologist  
Should Tell Stories Once in a While.  
*Historical Archaeology* 32(1):1-3.

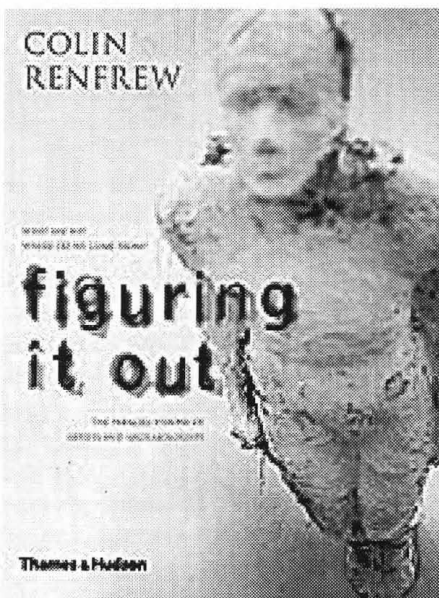
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**Mike Brand acquired his doctorate in archaeology from Simon Fraser University in 2003.**

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### Figuring it Out: The Parallel Visions of Artists and Archaeologists.

By Colin Renfrew. Thames & Hudson, Ltd., London, 2003. 224 p., illus., index



“Where do we come from? What are we? Where are we going?” Those famous questions posed by the post-impressionist painter Paul Gauguin articulate the point of departure for Renfrew’s latest book, *Figuring it Out*. An exploration of the idea that art can be viewed as archaeology and archaeology as art, the book illuminates the generous overlap between both disciplines: their approach towards material culture, interpretive meaning and, above all else, process.

Renfrew compares the art gallery viewer – the individual confronting a conceptual visual work – with the archaeologist who discovers a poorly understood object from the past. How is a relationship established between beholder and that which is beheld? What is the process whereby an individual determines the meaning or significance of a thing? What does an archaeologist do with an ancient symbol inscribed on clay? How about an inscrutable Marcel Duchamp ‘readymade’ or a Richard Long photograph of footprints left in tall grass? Renfrew considers how both disciplines “make sense” of material culture and human experience. In the process, he blurs disciplinary boundaries in an eye-opening and evocative way.

Don’t buy the book, however, to learn much about archaeology. Attempts to summarize human evolution and cognitive archaeology are rather weak, even rushed.

What does make the book worthwhile is Renfrew’s infectious enthusiasm, woven throughout the book, for contemporary artists and their work. Describing how “the visual arts have transformed themselves into what might be described as a vast, uncoordinated yet somehow enormously effective research program that looks critically at what we are and how we know what we are...,” Renfrew introduces his audience to a range of contemporary artists who experiment with notions of display, exhibition, collection and

classification. The works of Richard Long, Mark Dion, Barry Flanagan, Antony Gormely, Edwards Paolozzi and David Mach are illustrated and discussed, and yet, just as the book finds its greatest success within this very compilation of talent and ideas, it also finds – in my opinion – its most poignant flaw. For it is not the “human condition” that Renfrew is mulling over; rather, it might better be called the ‘white, Anglo male condition.’ His book is devoid of real inclusion of either female or minority artists and thus, his claims to addressing the human condition (if there is *one*), feels inflated and overdrawn.

Aside from that one scruple, however, any archaeologist will be enriched by exposure to so many vibrant and modern artists wrestling with issues familiar to them. Who knew that the Tate Gallery in London commissioned an artist to excavate the Thames River bank site and create innovative display cases to house the recovered artifacts? Or that certain artists devote their lives to exploring formation processes, the very crux of experimental archaeology? Indeed, the book feels like a breath of fresh air as it permits a detour into new disciplinary terrain and expands the relevance of archaeology in public life. Perhaps the most vital aspect of the book is Renfrew’s survey of artwork that employs found objects as their primary medium. For what are framed collections of pottery sherds; sculptures of frosted glass; free-standing hat racks; figures made of discarded blenders and plates, or life-size sheep made of plastic if not the indisputable ‘archaeology of now’ made explicit?

**Amanda Adams**

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**Amanda Adams conducted her graduate research on the petroglyphs of Gabriola Island, receiving her M.A. from the University of British Columbia. She currently lives in Minneapolis, where she works full-time as both an archaeologist and ethnographer.**

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# FROM THE LOWER STRATA OF THE MIDDEN

## 15 Years Ago

At the annual meeting of British Columbia archaeologists the provincial government archaeologist, Bjorn Simonsen described the new structure of the Heritage Conservation Branch and its plans to establish regional offices in the following few years. Brian Seymour described the Regional Advisors Programme that started in 1975 as the "Warden Programme" and that by 1990 had a co-ordinator and 30 volunteer advisors, nine in the northern half of the province. Main functions of the Programme were: (1) to advise the public on heritage matters and to help the Branch in contacting the public, (2) to monitor known sites, and (3) to publicize heritage conservation by presentations to the public, distribution of brochures and slide talks.

*Volume XII, No. 1, (1990).*

## 30 Years Ago

Charles Borden and David Archer reported on the results of excavation at Musqueam Northeast (DhRt 4) during 1973. With assistance from Kitty Bernick and Susan Nash, they led a team of 2 Musqueam Indian Band members and 11 students from UBC, VCC, and high schools. Six ASBC members participated on two weekends. The focus was on the recovery of perishable artifacts from waterlogged sediments beneath the shell midden deposits. Radiocarbon analysis provided an age estimate for the waterlogged zone of 1020 BC. Remarkable artifacts recovered included net fragments, sinker stones strapped with strips of cedar bark, parts of a canoe bailer and four almost complete baskets.

Erle Nelson reported that obsidian chemical composition was being used to show the degree of contact between pre-historic groups. Simon Fraser University had developed a technique using x-ray fluorescence analysis and was testing obsidian from sources in Oregon, Idaho, Wyoming, Alaska, BC and the Yukon for comparison with obsidian artifacts from British Columbia.

*Volume VII, No. 1 (1975).*

## 35 Years Ago

Roy Carlson of Simon Fraser University moderated a panel discussion entitled "The Future of Archaeology in BC" at the conclusion of a series of lectures by the UBC Extension Department. The panel included Charles Borden, UBC; Gay Calvert, Centennial Museum; Philip Hobler, SFU; and J. Baker, SFU graduate student. Borden, reporting that he was the only archaeologist at UBC, responded that "the greatest need is for trained people, and funds to give these people an opportunity to work in the field . . . long range research programmes - e.g. five years in the Fraser Canyon. . . . Good archaeologists are hard to come by and we must be prepared to pay them a good salary. This is where the public can come in and lend support by writing to the government, to the people who would do most good, to newspapers, letter columns. This would build up pressure which the politicians feel and to which they will yield if it is adequately applied."

*Volume II, No. 1 (1970).*

## CONFERENCES & EVENTS:

**March 10 -12, 2005**

**Alaska Anthropological Association Annual Meeting**

**Anchorage Hilton Hotel Anchorage Alaska**

Submission deadline is January 21, 2005.

For more information contact [aaa2005@uaa.alaska.edu](mailto:aaa2005@uaa.alaska.edu) or  
visit <http://www.alaska.net/~oha/aaa/2005meeting.html>

**March 30 - April 3, 2005**

**Society for American Archaeology 70th Annual Meeting**

**Salt Lake City, Utah**

For more information contact the SAA office at

[meetings@saa.org](mailto:meetings@saa.org) or visit [http://www.saa.org/meetings/  
submissions.html](http://www.saa.org/meetings/submissions.html)

**April 2, 2005**

**Underwater Archaeology Society of BC**

**Shipwrecks Conference 2005**

Best Western Chateau Granville Hotel in Vancouver

For tickets, or more information, call 604-591-7292 or visit  
[www.uasbc.com](http://www.uasbc.com)

**May 11 - 14, 2005**

**Canadian Archaeology Association 38th Annual**

**Conference: Archaeology At the Edge**

Best Western Dorchester Hotel and the Coast Bastion Inn

Nanaimo, BC

Deadline for Session Proposals is December 10, 2004 and  
for Paper/Poster Proposals is January 14, 2005.

For more information contact Dr. Imogene Lim at

[limi@mala.bc.ca](mailto:limi@mala.bc.ca) or visit [http://web.mala.bc.ca/caa2005/  
index.htm](http://web.mala.bc.ca/caa2005/index.htm)



**MIDDEN**

P.O.Box 520  
Bentall Station  
Vancouver BC  
V6C 2N3

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