

Archeology class digs Farmington Hills' past

A wooded field in Farmington Hills, slated to become a subdivision, has turned up evidence of prehistoric Indians, Charles M. Martinez, a researcher for the Michigan Archaeological Society will report in a forthcoming issue of the society's publication, "The Michigan Archaeologist."

The site was dug last spring by a team of 11 students from Lawrence Institute of Technology. The students were enrolled in Martinez' first class in archaeology at the Southfield college.

Analysis of the artifacts found continues this summer under Martinez' direction with two of the students — Paula Stofor of Southfield and Richard Crawford of Westland — participating in the project.

They also are assisting Martinez and Dr. Gordon Gruescop, anthropologist at Wayne State University, in Wayne State's continuing dig at Detroit's historic Fort Wayne.

"We were afraid that the Farmington evidence might be lost forever," Martinez said, noting that during a summer visit to the site he found the builder constructing street curbs.

"My first class at LIT was a perfect opportunity to give the students excellent training and to probe for the evidence which we believed might be there," he said.

He reported that farmers previously plowing the land had uncovered argillite projectile points (stone resembling shale used in tools and weapons, but also that the area had been badly disturbed by sand quarries.

"THE SITE HAD all the elements necessary to make it typical of inland Michigan, where Indian hunting parties were known to have camped during the autumn and winter months, away from the bitter cold along the Great Lakes, which were their spring and summer fishing grounds," said Martinez, a West Bloomfield resident.

"The location was on the downslope of a sandy bluff, offering good drainage and shelter from prevailing winds, and at an elevation that overlooked a small stream and pond necessary to sustain life."

Martinez took the students in his new course to the area to "learn the trade" of an archaeological dig. "To dig, is to look at your textbook with a new eye," he said. "It punctuates the care and deliberation needed in field work. It underscores interpretation of evidence in developing a true story. And it can also be an exercise in tedium and sometimes frustration."

In pursuing a dig from its beginnings, the students had to borrow an LIT construction engineer to survey the area in order to lay out the necessary network of squares to dig test units.

The student assigned to their project, Hernando Ullola, an international student from Ecuador, also is scheduled to do course maps of the area. His work convinced both Stofor and Crawford to enroll in a surveying class this fall at LIT so they can add to their knowledge.

WITH MARTINEZ' experience to guide them, the students dug in

selected areas. Each test area was carefully examined for evidence and, if found, the unit was enlarged to a five-by-five-foot square with digging, sifting and recording done in three-inch increments.

The students were able to work on weekends for the six weeks that good weather prevailed in the spring. They found four argillite projectiles that were spear points used in hunting, Martinez said. There were also flakes struck from core material suggesting that perhaps the site was a small workshop where prehistoric hunters made their tools and weapons.

From the evidence, Martinez believes that the area was inhabited by Indians from 3,000 to 1,000 B.C. Fragments of pottery also turned up that date to about 900 A.D.

"Later prehistoric Indians tended to be more sedentary," Martinez said. "They established camps for longer periods of time to farm and cultivate the land (as indicated by the pottery fragments). Such pottery was used for cooking and food storage. Analysis of soil samples from the site, which continues this summer in the laboratory, may tell of the types of trees, plants and ground cover that afforded an ecological base for these people. A study of animal bone fragments may reveal the type of game that was present."

"Less than 100 prehistoric sites in Oakland County have been reported to date," Martinez said. "And what the LIT students have uncovered locally will fit new pieces into the puzzle of prehistoric life in the area."



Paula Stofor of Southfield (foreground) and Carmine D'Agostino of Livonia sift through the site in search of Farmington Hills' early history.

Hills posts agenda

FARMINGTON HILLS

CITY COUNCIL

31555 Eleven Mile

7 p.m., Aug. 14

Public Hearing

•Continuation of the Community Development Block Grant program.

New business

•Report from the Commission on Aging concerning the nutrition program and other projects.

•Selection of an architect for a preliminary study of senior citizen housing.

•Consideration of variance from the city engineering design standards for Margiotta subdivision.

•Consideration of bid for the Nine Mile, Halsted paving project and for refuse pickup service.

•Consideration of entering a cost agreement with the Oakland County Road Commission for installation of traffic light systems at Thirteen Mile and Inkster and Twelve Mile and Drake.

•Consideration of opening position of greens' superintendent for San Marino golf course.

•Consideration of a one-year waiver for the Detroit Bible College sidewalk installation on Twelve Mile and Drake.

•Consideration of a special assessment district (SAD) for water improvement in Oakland Hills subdivision on rearing, Burbank and Barlow.

•Consideration of SAD for sewer improvement on Haggerty between Eight and Nine Mile.

•Consideration of SAD for water improvement on Haggerty between Eight and Nine Mile.

•Consideration of preliminary plat approval for Farmingtonbrook subdivision along Haggerty between Twelve and Thirteen Mile.

•Consideration of present plans and estimation of cost for a sanitary sewer on Linden and to set a date for an assessment hearing.

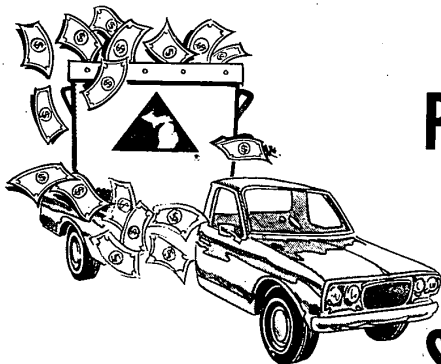
•Consideration of license application for adult foster care at 31450 Hall from the Michigan Department of Social Services.

•Consideration of engaging Plante Moran for local public works audit on Waldron Drain project.

•Consideration of amending the 1978-79 general fund to purchase equipment for sign truck.

•Request to adopt 1978 BOCA building code to the city's own building code.

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JOANN BLYTHE ECHLIN

Filed for by Joann Blythe Echlin
23440 Troop Road, Farmington Hills, 48024