



Tracy Rozelle is using his retirement to pursue his archeological interests, including time spent as a volunteer lecturer at Cranbrook Institute of Science.

By Dianne Blasucci
special writer

When it comes to dinosaur bones and ancient fossils, one would have to dig mighty deep to find someone more knowledgeable than Oakland Township's Tracy Rozelle.

This semi-professional archeologist can be found three or four days a week at the Cranbrook Institute of Science in Bloomfield Hills reconstructing parts of a triceratops or lecturing to young curious minds about fossils. When he isn't there, you can be quite certain he's at a site somewhere unearthing more of nature's history.

Since his retirement last year from General Dynamics, this former logistics engineer has been enthusiastically pursuing his hobby and sharing it with numerous elementary school children who visit the museum daily.

As a volunteer lecturer, Rozelle guides the children through mini fossil hunts with hands-on experiments and cultivates their curiosity about sea, animal and plant fossils.

Rozelle recalls his own interest and natural tendency toward archeology and paleontology. "When I was growing up, my folks moved all over the United States and Canada. My father was vice president of sales development for one of the first radio manufacturing companies in New York.

"WE WOULD VISIT all the historical and geology sites along the way. That interest then lay dormant for a while until I started digging in New York state." His family eventually settled in Toronto, Canada, where the elder Rozelle opened a radio manufacturing facility.

"From an archeological standpoint, I began digging all over Michigan when we moved back to the

states," said Rozelle. That was in 1955 when he moved to the Rochester area with his wife and three daughters. He then joined the Michigan Archeological Association, of which he is past president.

One of Rozelle's most treasured finds is coincidentally his first here in Michigan. He was at the Pine Knob site, a designated North American Indian camp in northern Oakland County, when he came upon an "old-timer," he recalls the details.

"A 90-year-old man, who knew the location of the actual camp, took me for a walk. As we wandered through the woods, I poked around and uncovered the remains of a pot. After putting the pieces together, I realized that what I had was a genuine Bennington pot. Its hallmark bears the identifiable throw mark that enables one to trace this pot back to its original maker at the Bennington Pot Co. in Vermont."

The pots, or water jugs, were used by the pioneers in the covered wagons while trekking west. He added, smiling, that the pot is now proudly displayed in his home.

THOUGH 70 YEARS may have

aged his ruddy complexion somewhat, the eyes of the handsome gentleman reveal an exciting child-like curiosity when it comes to discovering ancient civilizations.

He is currently involved in the research and development of the historic Van Hoesen Museum Farm project.

The farm, part of the original 400 acres settled by the Taylor family of New York in 1823, is now a public museum and represents the heritage of five generations. It has been designated as a national archeological site by the National Archeological Association of America.

Digging for the original Taylor log cabin begins this summer. "We really don't know what we will hump into," said Rozelle. As a preamble to the dig he will be conducting five classes dealing with the ethics of historical archeology.

Retirement for Tracy Rozelle has been "great fun." He totally enjoys what he does and encourages other seniors to use this time of their lives as wisely. He adds, "There's so much to do and it's great to have the time to pass on what we have learned over the years."

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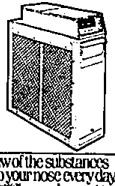
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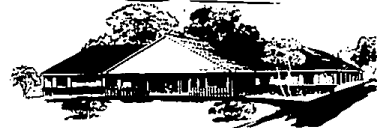
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