## He digs it

## OCC teacher leads excavation

The shard of blackened stone discovered stop a flat hill near a stream in Washtenaw County offers clues to the past.

After a successful day of hunting some 5,000 years ago, a Native American hunter returned to the hillion and prepared his game by roasting it in a stone oven dug deep into the earth.

The shard, one of thousands recently uncovered at the site, is part of the ancient reasting oven, according to Rick Zurel, a teacher of anthropology at Schoolcraft College in Auburn Hills.

Since May, Zurel, his students and others have been excavating the full-top, searching for clues to ancient

man.

In addition to shards, they have also uncovered dozens of stone fragments from tools and spears, indicating a stone-age community once flourished there during the Late Archaic era before man had discovered the how and arrow or pottery. the bow and arrow or pottery.

"AT ONE TIME, everybody in the world lived this literatyle." Zurel said of his hunter, adding the man might also have boiled game by heating a stone red bot and then dropping it into a bowl crafted from tree bark. "There is always a sense of mystery in finding things that are very ancient, in being able to say that right on this very spot 5,000 years ago, someone made a tool. Seeing a fiberglass or plastic replica is not the same thing."

during a drive in the countryside while earning a degree in anthropology from Oakland University in Rochester Hills. After graduate studies in Georgia, digs in Missouri and New Mextoe, and a brief career in banking, be has returned to the Milliop located in the center of a haylield.

To provide hands-on experience in outdoor classroom of sorts, Schoolcraft College has leased the field for use by students and others who are members of the Schoolcraft Anthropological Society.

Since May, they have gathered artifacts plowed to the surface by modern farmers and mapped distribution of the found objects in order to pinpoint areas called "features."

Archeological features include areas once used to make or sharpen tools, cooking and babitation areas and roasting or garbage pits, clues to life in an ancient stone-age community.

"There are definitely houses, but

life in an ancient stone-age commu-nity.
"There are definitely houses, but they might be tricky to find," Zurel said, because all that remains to be found are "stains" from decayed poles that once served as house beams.

"TT GIVES ME a chance to do more than read," said Rich Richards of Plymouth, an historian whose primary interest in the project is new insight into the people who first in-abited America.

Zurel said that the people who once inhabited the village were Native Americans but bear little re-

Marking off the dig site using the grid system is Rick Zurel, a teacher of anthropology at Oak-land Community College in Auburn Hills. Join-ing Zurel at the site are (from left) Corl Pitcher, Gary Blain of Clarkston Kristin Miller and Todd

semblance to today's Indians. Rita Brown, a Westland resident Rita Brown, a Westland resident who for two years has been president of the Schooleralt Anthropological Society, is most interested in cultural aspects the dig might uncover. "My favorite study is their life style, how they married, foods they are, that sort of thing." A new mother, she is unable to spend much

Miller and Todd chester Hills
time in the field.
"It's interesting," said Clody
McGowen of Livonia, "to find something that old that's still around." On
her first trip to the hillion last
month, she discovered a stone spear
head
Carl Wall, a rettree from Plymouth, has helped Zurel may the finds,
plotting their location on the hill for

Thein. Since May, Zurel, his students and others have been excavating the hilltop, searching for clues to ancient man. Zurel earned a degree in anthropology from Oakland University in Rochester Hills

clues to potentially promising future excavation.

The site was targeted for work partially due to its proximity to Schoolcraft College, Zurel said. While other sites are located closer, many have been built on.

For more information about the class or the dig, call 462-4435.

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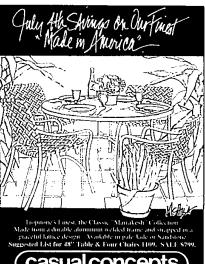
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