

# Member Update



Summer-Fall 2008

## East St. Louis Mound Group Update

Henry Brackenridge first reported the East St. Louis Mound Group in 1811. He documented 45 mounds sweeping in a large arc along the east bank of Cahokia Creek just east of the Mississippi River. Only remnants of nearly a dozen mounds remain today. That's more than the long lost St. Louis Mound Group, across the river, which appears to have completely fallen to city expansion.

Investigations by **P.A.R.C.** board member, Dr. John Kelly of Washington University have determined that numerous archaeological sites exist buried beneath the surface of modern day East St. Louis.

To that end, efforts have been made by a number of individuals and organizations to preserve areas of the East St. Louis mound center. The Archaeological Conservancy has ultimately purchased 10 residential lots setting them aside for preservation and future study. **P.A.R.C.** presently owns two adjacent lots in E. St. Louis. One had a brick hardware store that sat atop a portion of a mound.

This May, funds became available through a partnership of the East St. Louis Housing Authority and the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency for demolition of the hardware store. Geotechnology of St. Louis conducted the pre-demolition environmental impact study. **P.A.R.C.** members conducted an archaeological survey to identify the exact location of the mound. During May the hardware store was torn down by Ahrens with **P.A.R.C.** members present to monitor the

demolition and prevent inadvertent damage to the mound. **P.A.R.C.** has subsequently submitted a report to the Illinois Historic Preservation Agency addressing any concerns about the mound as prescribed by state law.

The clearing of this lot represents a significant step forward toward **P.A.R.C.'s** goal of establishing a large green-space in East St. Louis. It should be noted that **P.A.R.C.** works with the Archaeological Conservancy to help maintain and clean-up their properties in East St. Louis. Some are in great need of further work because of over-grown vegetation. Workdays have been organized and will continue to be held, where **P.A.R.C.** members are encouraged to participate in the clean-up effort.



John Kelly collecting a core sampling prior to demolition of the hardware store built atop a newly acquired mound site in East St. Louis. See page 6 for more photos of this site.

**Third Annual Trivia Night...** On April 26th **P.A.R.C.** held its third annual trivia night and silent auction in partnership with the Cahokia Mounds Museum Society. This fundraiser was held at the Cahokia Mounds Interpretive Center and was attended by approximately 140 people. Board member Bill Iseminger was our MC for the evening and asked 10 rounds of very tough but interesting questions. John Kelly, Lucretia Kelly, and Mark Esarey were again our judges. This year the trivia and silent auction fund raising efforts were very successful and nearly doubled our receipts from last year. Total receipts split between **P.A.R.C.** and the Cahokia Mounds Museum Society were \$6538. An ambitious goal would be to double this amount for next year. We would like to thank everyone for all their hard work in making this so successful and for donating silent auction items and especially for attending the event.



Third Annual Trivia Night

**P.A.R.C. partners with Triptone Productions** in the production of a television documentary, “*Uncovering Ancient Saint Louis.*” The video proclaims the greater St. Louis area as the very heart of pre-Columbian Native American archaeology. It also explores the mysteries of the long lost mounded city above the caves in downtown St. Louis. “*Uncovering Ancient St. Louis*” features many important sites, such as Cahokia, the East St. Louis and St. Louis mound groups, Mastodon State Historic Site, the Martens Site, the Blake Mound & Cave, and undisclosed rock art sites. Top experts tell the story, all set to the music of Native American master flutist, Ron Warren. The film is directed and narrated by Emmy Award winning director and local

PBS announcer, Christian Cudnik. “*Uncovering Ancient St. Louis*” will premier at the September 8, 2009, AIA Public Lecture at the Missouri History Museum in Forest Park. It will be available on the Internet via The Archaeology Channel. Airings on local PBS and the Higher Education Channel are anticipated. DVDs will be available at area retailers. Tax deductible donations to help fund this important film should be made out to **P.A.R.C.** and mailed to:

Mark Leach  
1608 Ansonborough Dr.  
Chesterfield, MO 63017

Questions about the film should be emailed to Mark at Leachmrk@charter.net.

**10% of every donation helps to fund the activities of the Powell Archaeological Research Center – P.A.R.C.!**

**P.A.R.C.'s Fingerhut House** serves as the anthropology lab for the archaeological teams conducting research at Cahokia. Students and volunteers process the archaeological materials from the excavations including washing, sorting, and inventorying. The materials are then stored here until analysis can take place and before being sent to the Illinois State Museum for permanent curation



The house sits across the street from the site where Powell Mound once stood before its destruction in 1930/1931.

**The furnace at P.A.R.C.'s Fingerhut House stopped functioning in October. We just spent nearly \$1000 on its repair. Due to its age, it will need to be replaced in the not too distant future but replacing the furnace will cost as much as \$5,000! Extra donations would be greatly appreciated to help us with this financial challenge!**



Volunteer cleaning artifacts inside the **P.A.R.C.'s** Fingerhut House lab.

## **2008 SUMMER DIGS AT CAHOKIA**

### **MOUND 34**

This was the 11th season of work in the Mound 34 area, just east of the Monks Mound. Sponsored by the CMMS and a grant from the NGS, several archaeological crews were involved in this project from late May through the end of July, coordinated by Dr. John Kelly through the Central Mississippi Valley Archaeological Research Institute. Field schools working on the site during this time were from the University of Missouri-St. Louis field school, under Dr. Lucretia Kelly; Washington University, under Dr. John Kelly; and the Cahokia Mounds Museum Society volunteers, supervised by Lori Belknap and Christa Wroblewski.



View of Mound 34 excavation area looking toward Monks Mound.

This summer they continued the process of reopening old excavations that were done in the 1950s by Gregory Perino, to better document and understand the construction, stratigraphy and function of this small platform mound.

This year's work expanded on a copper workshop relocated last summer. Perino had identified two "copper workshops" just off the north edge of the mound. He had found evidence of where large posts had been placed and copper staining in the soil around them, apparently from copper dust and residue. He interpreted this to mean that the posts served as anvils for the hammering of copper nuggets into flattened sheets and other forms for ceremonial ornaments.

Last summer, the crews uncovered several concentrations of small bits of copper in some of the units, so they believed they have located part of the workshop area, and this summer they expanded out from last summer's work area to expose the workshop within a large structure.

### **NORTHEAST PALISADE**

From the late 1960s through the mid-1980s, excavations in this area located evidence of four constructions of the defensive walls (palisades, or stockades) that once enclosed the central ceremonial precinct of Cahokia. Other excavations south of the Twin Mounds and along the west edge of the Grand Plaza have uncovered more segments of this wall, estimated to be nearly 2 miles long. What is not clear yet is where the northern limits of these walls are. For three seasons, field crews from the Earthwatch Institute expanded on the earlier excavations, following one wall trench to the west, heading behind Monks Mound.

This was the 2nd season of the current project, with Dr. Mary Vermilion directing a field school from Southern Illinois University-Edwardsville. They are attempting to follow more of the north wall to the west and trying to locate a bastion (guard tower) that will indicate which of the four constructions it represents. They are also attempting to better understand a series of curving trenches at the "corner" that may represent some type of entryway. During the excavations they revealed a number of residential features, such as house basins and storage and refuse pits, since the walls were built through former residential areas.

A generous, anonymous donation of \$5000 was given to PARC for Cahokia research. This will be applied to Dr. Vermilion's northeast palisade research. She will pull together and organize all previous data collected on this part of the palisade.

**CORING AROUND THE BASE OF MONKS MOUND**

Dr. T. R. Kidder and Tim Schilling, from Washington University, placed a series of soil cores around the base of Monks Mound this summer. They are archaeologists who specialize in the studies of soils and sediments and they hope to learn more about what the pre-mound landscape and ground surface was like prior to the construction of Monks Mound, and how it may have been modified by Cahokia's inhabitants. They also hope to learn more about the origins of the soils used to construct Monks Mound, much of which may have come from the nearby Cahokia Creek bottom lands.



**About the frog....** P.A.R.C. member Kathleen Stahlman's illustration of an effigy pipe thought to have been associated with a burial mound atop the bluffs overlooking the American Bottom serves as the P.A.R.C. logo. It is thought that Mississippians saw frogs, as messengers between the middle and under worlds. In fall, they traveled to the underworld, reappearing in spring. This symbol of renewal and rebirth serves as a perfect logo for P.A.R.C.



P.A.R.C.'s walking tour of the St. Louis Mound Group. The boulder marks the spot near the "Big Mound." location



Photo of caves under downtown St. Louis that will appear in the upcoming film, "Uncovering Ancient Saint Louis."

More P.A.R.C.  
photos Page 6

## FUTURE EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES

As mentioned, **P.A.R.C.** workdays will be held to continue the cleanup and maintenance of the East St. Louis properties as well as our Fingerhut property. Anyone is welcome to participate in these workdays.

We will organize another Trivia Night in April, 2009 with the Cahokia Mounds Museum Society and we plan to hold another **Walk through the P.A.R.C.** in the fall. We may hold the Walk near the site of another mound center, Pulcher, near Dupo, Illinois. We are also planning a geophysical workshop where participants can learn about the new, non-invasive archaeological technologies such as magnetometry, resistivity, and get hands-on experience with experts in the field. We may also have a bus tour of archaeological sites in the region.

We welcome any suggestions from members for activities or programs they would like to see **P.A.R.C.** host. Our email is at the end of the Update.

### ACCOMPLISHMENT

One of our major accomplishments this past year besides the demolition of the building in East St. Louis is receiving a property tax exemption for the Fingerhut property. After about a year from our initial application with an intervening hearing in Springfield we were granted the exemption. We want to thank attorney Arlie Traugher who donated his time and effort to help us in this long process. Without the presence of an attorney at the hearing we doubt that the exemption would have been granted.



Volunteers working to maintain **P.A.R.C.'s** Fingerhut House.



Larry Kinsella, **P.A.R.C.** board member, conducts flotation of soil samples from the excavations at the Fingerhut house with this system he designed and built under the supervision of Dr. Gayle Fritz of Washington University. The flotation process results in the recovery of charred botanical remains, such as seeds and wood, and small faunal remains that are so important to the archaeological studies being conducted.



**P.A.R.C.** members Kathleen Stahlman, Larry Kinsella and Mark Leach are involved in the study and restoration of Blake Mound in West St. Louis County, Missouri.



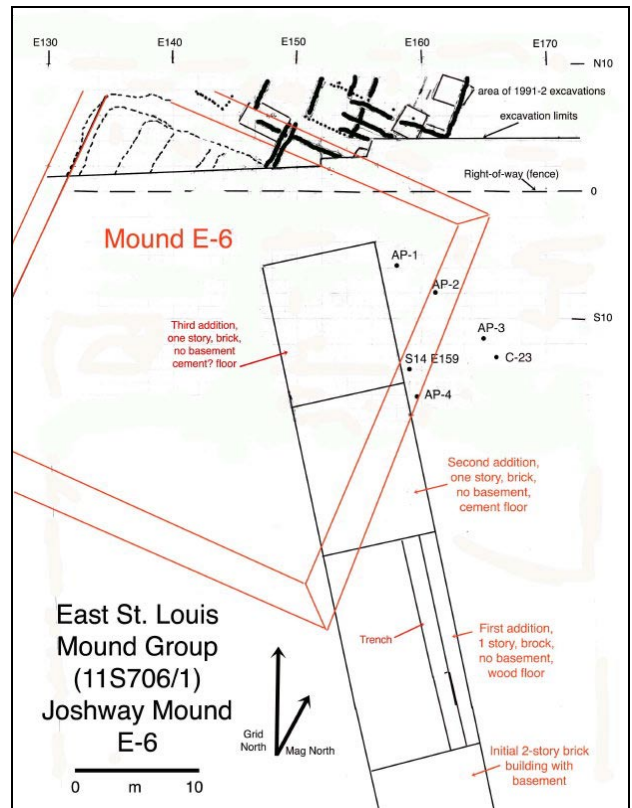
**Figure 7. Geofabric in Trench.**

**P.A.R.C.** members monitored the demolition of the hardware store to prevent unintentional damage to the mound.



**Figure 5. View to Northwest of Building at 505 Collinsville Ave**

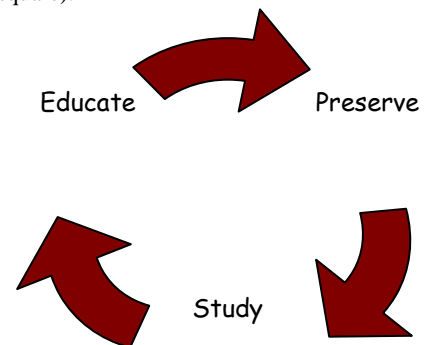
Initially a hardware store existed on the newly acquired mound site in East St. Louis.



Site map showing the hardware store (black rectangle) and the mound (red square).



Demolition underway at the hardware store in East St. Louis



# ***Tell a friend!***

Tax deductible P.A.R.C. memberships are available for 2009. Annual memberships are \$10 for Active Individuals, \$15 for Active Families, \$50 for Contributing Members, \$50 for Institutional Members, and \$150 for Life Members. Members are accorded a 10% discount on books and any events such as workshops.

**A membership application is on the last page of the Newsletter or available at the P.A.R.C. website.**

[www.powellarchaeology.org](http://www.powellarchaeology.org)



**Thank you all for your support and we look forward to seeing you at our various events and activities.**



**P.A.R.C.** Board of Directors (clockwise from front left): John Kelly, Cricket Kelly, Bill Iseminger, Kathleen Stahlman, Susanna Bailey, Larry Kinsella, Mark Leach.

## **Ideas...**

## **Questions...**

## **Comments...**

### **Contact Information**

Phone: (618) 271-4920

Email: [lkelly@powellarchaeology.org](mailto:lkelly@powellarchaeology.org)

Mail:

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## Membership Application

Tax-deductible memberships are available in PARC for 2009. Annual membership dues are \$10.00 for Active Individuals, \$15.00 for Active Families, \$50.00 for Contributing Members, \$50.00 for Institutional members, and \$150.00 and up for Life Members. Members are accorded a 10% discount on books and any events such as workshops.

Please Make Checks Payable to:  
PARC or Powell Arch. Research Center

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Membership Level: \_\_\_\_\_

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