

# Rock circles linked to ancient site

BLUEMONT, Va. (AP) — Rock circles on a spit of mountain land along Spout Run may be the oldest above-ground Paleoindian site in North America, according to Alexandria archaeologist Jack Hranicky.

He will deliver an address about the site — which he dates to 10,000 B.C. — to the Society for American Archaeology next April in Memphis, Tenn.

The site could put Clarke County “on the Paleo map,” Hranicky said.

The set of concentric circles drew the attention of landowners Chris and Rene White as they were planning to create a medicine wheel on their 20 acres south of Va. 7 on Blue Ridge Mountain.

After talks with his spiritual elder in Utah, Chris, a descendant of the Cherokee people, and his wife, from the Lumbee tribe of North Carolina, decided to open their property to spiritual leaders of Native American peoples who have business in the Washington area.

The area including the rock circles was the location that drew Chris White in.

When he was building his house, White said, he would often walk by the creek to take a break.

There, “a still, small voice said, ‘This land is important.’ I didn’t know what it meant, but I took it to heart,” he said.

As White prepared to put his medicine wheel on the site, he

realized that a circle of stones was there — actually, several concentric circles.

“From my experience as a contractor, I knew that was not natural,” he said. “I realized something was already here.”

Someone suggested that White contact Hranicky, who had studied five other Paleoindian sites in Virginia.

He said he saw the pattern in the rocks as soon as he arrived at the site, noting three concentric circles at the western edge, which he believes was a ceremonial area. The inner circle could outline a bonfire space, he said, while the outer ring may have been an area for participants in the ritual to sit or stand.

To the east, touching this area, is another circle that Hranicky calls the observatory.

Here, rocks on the edge of the circle align with features on Blue Ridge Mountain to the east.

From a center rock, over a boundary rock, a line would intersect the feature called Bears Den Rocks on the mountain. Standing on that center rock, looking toward Bears Den, a viewer can see the sun rise on the day of the summer solstice, Hranicky said.

To prove that point, White and his wife took pictures of the sunrise last June 21, he said.

To the right of this rock around the circle, another line up to Eagle Rock on the Blue

*The Thunderbird site is dated to 10,000 B.C.*

Ridge, and with sunrise at the fall equinox (around Sept. 22-23), he said.

Yet a third points to a saddle on the mountain where the sun makes its appearance at the winter solstice (around Dec. 21-22). “These are true solar positions,” he said.

A dozen feet east of the summer solstice rock is a mound of boulders, piled up, which Hranicky designates as “the altar.”

Hranicky, 69, a registered professional archaeologist who taught anthropology at Northern Virginia community college and St. Johns High School College, has been working in the field of archaeology, for 40 years. “I had to wait 70 years to find a site like this,” he said.

Dating the site took some digging.

Hranicky was convinced that it was a Paleoindian site, based on the configuration of the concentric circles, the solstice alignment and the altar he has seen at other such sites. But he wanted an artifact.

He picked a five-foot-square area to dig, carefully numbering every rock and setting it aside, to be replaced later.

The reason for that, Hranicky said, is that in the fu-

ture better methods may be available for dating sites, and he wanted to disturb as little as possible.

His test pit turned up three artifacts. One was a thin blade of quartzite. The second was a small piece of jasper, a type of quartz rock and an important find, Hranicky said.

Jasper was prized by Paleoindians for making tools. It was hard and durable, but could still be worked by Stone Age methods. They traveled miles to find sites where jasper nodules protruded from native rock, and quarried the stone to make projectile points and tools.

The third artifact was the most important. It was a tiny piece of jasper, no bigger than the end of a thumb, but this rock had been worked, Hranicky said. It was a tool, a mini-scraper.

“You don’t know how thrilled I was when we found that little bitty tool,” he said.

Jasper on the site ties what Hranicky believes was a ceremonial and heavenly observation site to another proven Paleoindian site just to the south of Clarke County in Warren County — the Thunderbird site.

William Gardiner of Catholic University excavated that site for several years. Indians camped on the east bank of the South Fork of the Shenandoah River and quarried jasper for tool making from bluffs on the west bank. The Thunderbird site is dated to 10,000 B.C.

# Tribe requires tenants to prove immigration status

SANTA FE, N.M. (AP) — A New Mexico mobile home community operated by a Native American tribe is requiring that all residents show proof they are living in the United States legally.

Tesuque Pueblo notified residents of the Tesuque Trailer Village in a letter dated Oct. 17 that all tenants must sign new rental contracts and show officials U.S. birth certificates, passports or immigration documents.

Neither federal nor state law prohibits renting to illegal immigrants. However, Tesuque Pueblo is a sovereign nation and is entitled to change policies with the approval of its Tribal Council and governor, according to several city, state and federal officials.

Tesuque Pueblo officials did not immediately return a phone message from The Associated Press.

The tribe also is raising residents’ rent. For years, tenants of the Tesuque Trailer Village near Santa Fe paid \$300 a month to rent space. As of November, the rent will be \$400 plus \$26.50 of gross-receipts tax, an official notice showed.

The new rules present complications for some households, such as that of Alicia Olivas. She is in the process of obtaining her legal residency card, and her youngest daughter was born in the U.S. However, her husband and older daughter are

illegal immigrants.

At a meeting with nearly two dozen tenants Friday in a Santa Fe apartment complex, Olivas said property manager Dan Clavio told her the two illegal immigrants had to leave.

“If he doesn’t accept my husband and my daughter, I’m going to have to leave because I’m not splitting my family,” Olivas said.

Several residents said they are speaking with local lawyers to see what legal options they have.

Adonias Mendez, who has become the unofficial tenant leader, said he was collecting statements from residents and is hoping they can personally speak with Tesuque Pueblo Gov. Frederick Vigil.

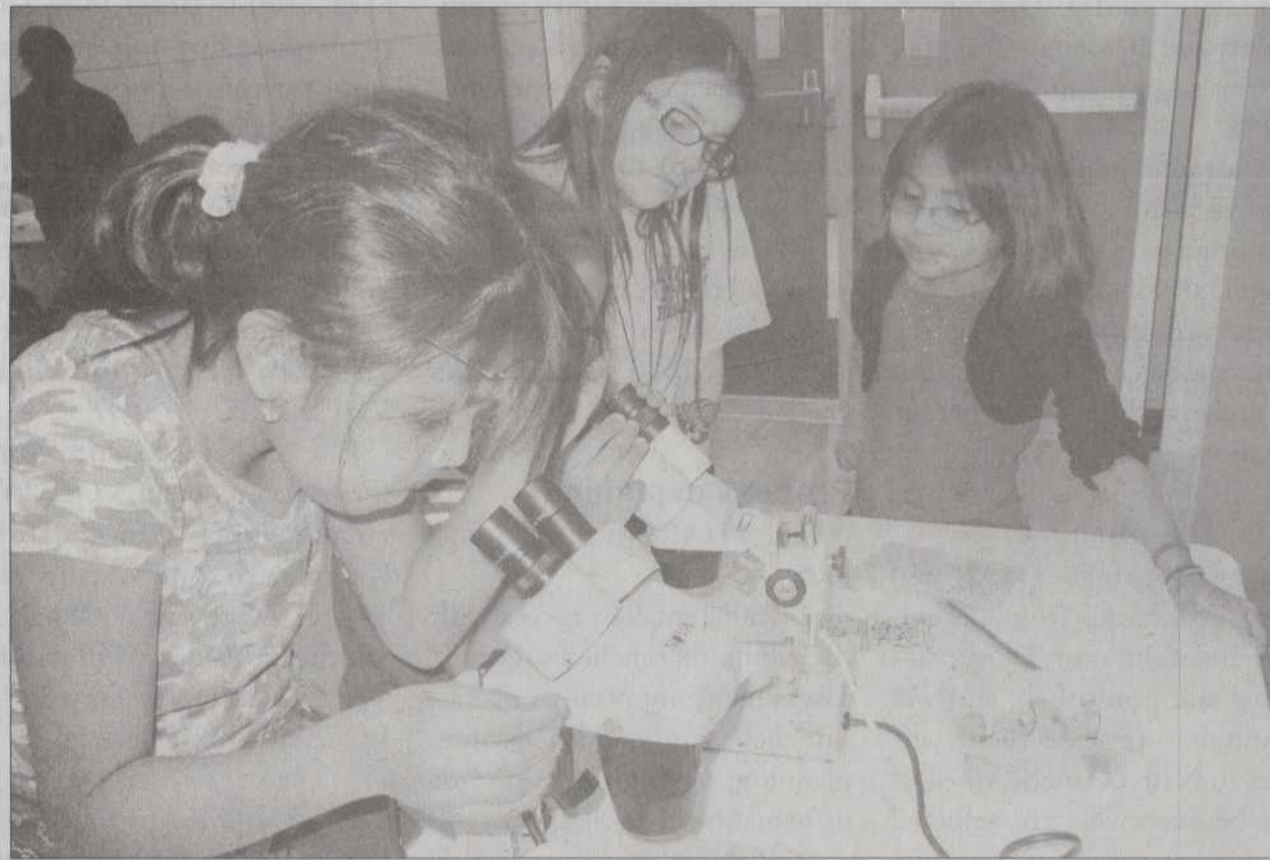
Many residents have lived in the community for five to 10 years, Mendez said, and they’ve never had such problems before.

Tesuque Pueblo receives money from several federal agencies, including a U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development grant program. But a HUD spokeswoman said the department does not ask that landlords verify residency documents.

Under New Mexico law, illegal immigrants do not have to show they are legally in the U.S. to rent housing — or attend public schools and get basic utilities such as water and sewer.

Tesuque Trailer Village is 10 miles north of Santa Fe.

## SMILE Club



Students enjoyed all of the experiment stations set up for the annual Family Math and Science Night at Warm Springs Elementary. Cara James examines a sponge through the microscope as Amaya Bisland and Atoria James patiently wait for their turn.

## Cherokee chief takes up ‘freedmen’ question

TULSA, Okla. (AP) — After a bitter, drawn-out election that lasted almost four months longer than it should have, new Cherokee Nation Chief Bill John Baker treads into yet another political minefield after his inauguration ceremony: squarely, should descendants of slaves some Cherokees once owned retain their tribal membership?

The protracted struggle of the 2,800 or so descendants, known as freedmen, became a major issue on the campaign trail. Baker’s opponent, former Cherokee Chief Chad Smith, was among the major supporters of a 2007 vote by tribal citizens to kick the freedmen out of the tribe and cut off benefits such as health care, grocery stipends and housing assistance. Baker, a longtime tribal councilman, also backed the measure, but appeared far less vocal about it while he was campaigning.

That strategy likely won the

support of untold hundreds of freedmen, who were allowed to vote in the Sept. 24 special election because of a last-minute deal brokered before a federal judge. Baker beat Smith by nearly 1,600 votes.

The citizenship issue has landed back in Tulsa federal court and the stakes couldn’t be higher for the 300,000-member tribe, which is based at Tahlequah. In the weeks leading up to a Sept. 24 special election, the government demonstrated what could happen if the freedmen are excluded from the tribe: nearly \$40 million in federal housing funds was frozen and the assistant secretary for Indian affairs warned that any election the Cherokees held without granting suffrage to the freedmen would be illegal.

“We’re going to have to do a balancing act,” Baker said as his ceremonial inauguration approached. “I’ve taken an oath to protect and defend the

Cherokee Nation, and we’re going to have to protect and defend the \$500 million we get in federal funding. It’s a tightrope,” he said.

Baker is keenly aware of the risk. About 12 years ago, when the Seminole Nation voted to oust freedmen descendants from its tribe, the government cut off federal programs and refused to recognize its elections. Their freedmen were later allowed back in, but the tribe is still paying the price for its decision.

“To this day, they still haven’t gotten all their funding back, some of it has been lost forever,” Baker said. “That’s why when we sit here and talk about if they cut our funding, that’s not just something we’re picking off a shelf. We’ve got a roadmap of what could happen in the Seminole case.”

“It’s no pie in the sky that could happen; we’re sitting there looking at what did,” he said.

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