

# Morehead offers interactive archaeology

## Free family day's focus: Ancient Carolinians exhibit

BY REBECCA BAILEY

chh@heraldsun.com; 918-1035

**CHAPEL HILL** — Before the grandeur of ancient Greece and Rome, before the Egyptian pyramids and the Great Wall of China were built, the ancient Carolinians thrived in North Carolina's piedmont on the banks of the Yadkin river, near the present-day town of Badin. Their way of life depended on the valuable rhyolite stone they found on Morrow Mountain, and the tools they shaped, as early as 12,000 years ago, remain to tell their stories.

Today from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m., the Morehead Planetarium and Science Center, in collaboration with UNC's Research Laboratories of Archaeology, will host a free "Anthropology Family Science Day" to enhance the current interactive exhibit "The Ancient Carolinians." Kids and adults can get a taste of an archaeologist's work through activities that include tours of the working Research Labs, pottery making and reconstruction, various demonstrations and a paleoethnobotany activity. Younger children will enjoy mask making, cave painting, storytelling and other games.

Stone artifacts, excavated from the Hardaway site between 1954 and 1980, were donated to UNC by the Alcoa Foundation along with grant money to create a moveable exhibit and develop educational programs for teachers. The planetarium's exhibit developer, Shelley Rogers, and UNC doctoral student Theresa McReynolds, with the help of UNC professors, worked for more than a year to mount The Ancient Carolinians, which will travel across the state beginning January 2009.

"People are still studying these [Hardaway site] artifacts," said McReynolds, whose own work in archaeology — a subfield of anthropology — involves chemical analyses of soils to discover how past peoples lived.

The ancient Carolinians were migratory hunters and gatherers; but year after year they returned to the source of their livelihood, the Morrow Mountain rhyolite stone, which breaks in a predictable way and so is ideal for making the hammers, adzes, scrapers, knives, hand drills and spear



SUBMITTED

Visitors to UNC's Morehead Planetarium peruse the Ancient Carolinians exhibit. The planetarium will host a free Anthropology Family Science Day today to enhance the current interactive exhibit.



**What:** Anthropology Family Science Day

**When:** Today, 10 a.m.-3 p.m.

**Where:** The Morehead Planetarium and Science Center, UNC campus

Free to the public

points used in daily life.

Lightweight and versatile, this hard and fine-grained stone was "the Swiss army knife of its day," according to doctoral student David Cranford. The rhyolite is literally at the center of the exhibit, surrounded by numerous display cases and video stations that represent and describe how various tools were formed and used. Also on display are pebbles, dating back 10,000 years, engraved with geometric designs: these stones represent the oldest surviving artwork in North Carolina.

"We tend to think of ancient cultures as deprived," said the planetarium's Educational Program Developer, Michele Kloda. "But the ancient Carolinians actually had plenty of food. They followed the cycles of the seasons, and they had a great deal of leisure time, a real luxury. Given their location and resources, we can safely say they had abundance."

### Do-it-yourself searching

Because everything known about the ancient Carolinians is based on remaining artifacts, the exhibit also emphasizes stewardship of

sites and discoveries. The Alcoa foundation protects the Hardaway site; but artifacts can still be found around places like Jordan Lake, said Kloda, "especially in a time of drought when new surfaces are exposed." Visitors will find pamphlets advising them what to do if they uncover a find.

And those who don't regularly hike riverbanks can still put themselves in the roles of discoverers on Anthropology Science Day. Activities taking place in the Research Labs adjacent to the planetarium include pottery reconstruction: Visitors will be given clay pieces to puzzle together, while around them they can see ancient pottery in various stages of repair, said McReynolds. Another activity involves sifting through gravel and roots to find and identify various types of seeds.

Rogers said that many people don't consider archaeology or anthropology to be sciences.

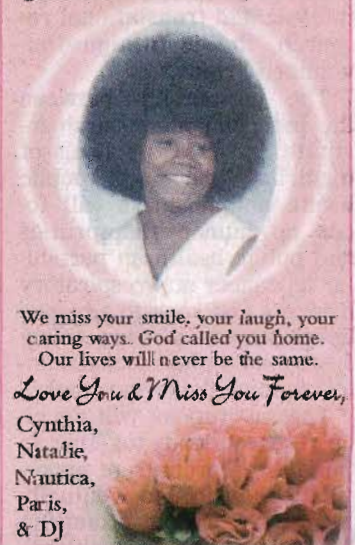
"People are surprised to find out that a Science Center is doing a program or exhibit on these areas of study. However, both fields employ the scientific method to gath-

er and analyze data—qualitative and quantitative—about the cultures they study."

In fact, Rogers' own work with UNC professors and graduate students on this exhibit surprised her. "At first I wasn't as excited. I saw the subject as a series of velvet cases with projectile points in them," she admitted. "But the more I worked on the project, the more excited I became. These artifacts tell the story of ancient North Carolinians not yet told in textbooks."

And Saturday's Science Day, promised McReynolds, "has a little something for everyone — adults as well as children."

*Happy Birthday to a  
Loving Mother,  
Grandmother, & Friend*



We miss your smile, your laugh, your caring ways. God called you home. Our lives will never be the same.

*Love You & Miss You Forever,*  
Cynthia,  
Natalie,  
Nautica,  
Paris,  
& DJ