

Sharp trowel key to successful archeology dig

By Tom Betz
The Goodland Star-News
A trowel — used mainly for smoothing concrete — seemed like an unusual tool to dig for ancient artifacts, and having to sharpen it seemed more unusual.

Arriving at the Kanorado dig site the first Saturday afternoon, June 4, the first comment heard was, “You have a dull trowel.”

This was not the best way to start what was to be a week of vacation. Pledging to sharpen the trowels on our return to town, Rob Quick, my future son-in-law, and I were directed to head for a dig site.

There are three sites, designated SN14-101, 105 and 106. The site farthest to the east is 101 while site 105 is close to the westbound lanes of I-70 and site 106 is south of I-70 and a bit east of County Road 3. Sites 105 and 106 can be seen from I-70, and some people honk as they drive by. Site 101 is less visible from the freeway, but the portable potty near the highway fence marks it for passersby.

The first two days, because of muddy condition, all the volunteers got off the bus near site 105 and had to walk to the other work sites, about three-eighths of a mile away for 101 and 106. Later, the bus was able to get closer to the two outlying sites and there was less walking. For those assigned to site 106, the bus stops at a gate along County Road 3.

At the beginning of each shift in the morning and afternoon, the site supervisor would explain what had been found so far and what the plan was for that day. New volunteers were paired with an experienced person to help get them started.

Before the volunteers arrive, the archeologists flagged specific sites where they felt the digging would be good, and places where bones or other artifacts were present on the surface. The areas to be dug had been surveyed and staked out with long spikes, with string strung around the spikes to define the squares or “units” to be excavated.

Scraping the surface of the 1-meter-by-1-meter unit and trying to keep it level as layers of dirt were sliced off made the sharpness of the trowel question clear. A dull trowel tends to dig less and take more elbow strength than a sharp one.

Before the trowels can be used, the excess soil — overburden — has to be removed with a shovel. Sometimes the overburden can be less than a foot or closer to three feet, depending on where the archeologist believes the buried ground starts.

Along the sections of Middle Beaver Creek, the excavation sites are all on the south banks, and the buried strata is about five feet from the top of the bank.

Gym owner regrets delay

GYM, from Page 1

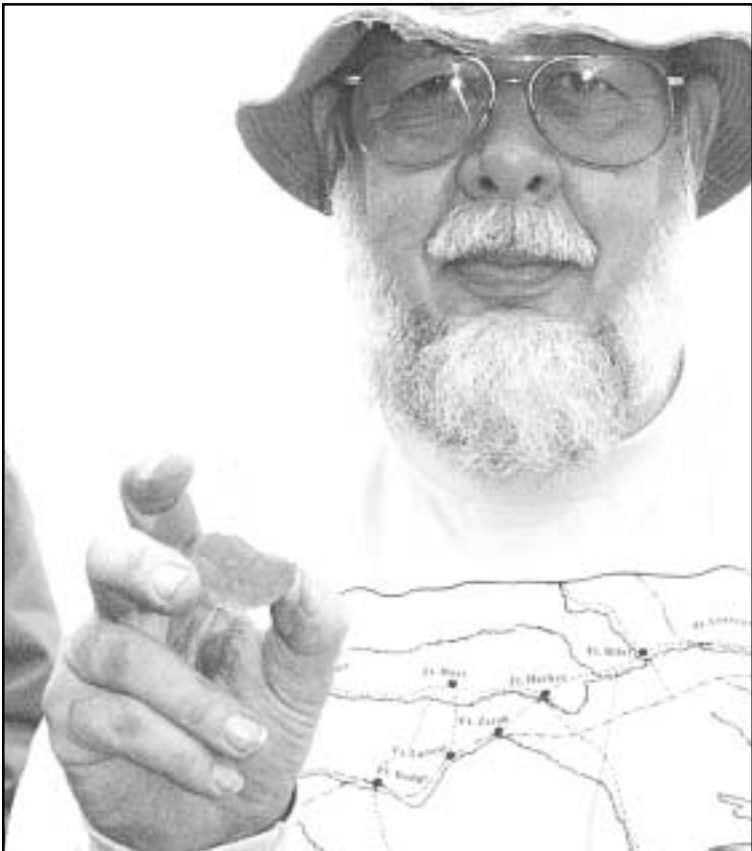
said, he'll go back for another load.

The merchandise, he said will arrive in boxes. He doesn't sort the stuff or price it, but encourages customers to make him a deal.

“I'm a wholesaler,” he said, adding that he wouldn't mind if people buy his merchandise and resell it for more on the Internet. “You can make money off of me.”

He plans to teach customers how to use the Internet for selling items on auction sites like eBay.

Last week, Soper set up liability insurance on the building. He said



Jerry Finke of Kansas City, Mo., holds a Hartville chert scraper found Friday afternoon at the dig site south of Kanorado. The dig continues this week and wraps up with an ice-cream social and resume at 6:30 p.m. on Saturday at Goodland High School.

Being inexperienced diggers, Quick and I were assigned to two units next to each other under the eye of Sharon Sage, a vice president of the Kansas Archeological Association who has been a regular on the digs for a decade.

Opening unit No. 652 took about an hour as the overburden was removed, and the base level reached. Once we leveled out where Steve Holen, an archeologist from the Denver Museum of Science and Nature, felt the starting strata was, the corners and center elevations were shot with a survey system, called a Total Station, using a built-in GPS to verify the elevations.

“I am sure something is buried in this unit,” Holen said to Rob and I last Saturday as the work began. “You have dull trowels,” Sage said as we began slicing away at the dirt of the small areas we had been assigned. She tried to show us how to keep the floor of the site level as we scraped the dirt into buckets to be screened.

Using a sharp trowel, thin layers of dirt were scraped off and swept up in a scoop to be sifted for evidence of flakes created when the ancient people chipped at larger rocks to make stone tools or points.

Everything is measured in centimeters, and after each unit is lowered by 5 centimeters — about two inches — new GPS shots are taken and paperwork is filled out saying that nothing was found in this level.

The insurance should cover anyone who sells items in the gym market. “I'm running a legitimate business,” he said, adding that he wants to make sure everyone is comfortable selling in the gym.

Superintendent Marvin Selby said Soper sent an additional \$15,000 which along with his previous \$10,000 is half of the gym price. Soper said he will bring the remaining \$25,000 in August.

Soper said he will be here, but just later than planned. “Nothing's really going to change,” he said, except the flea and farmer's market will start later.



Terry Rombeck of *The Lawrence Journal-World* spent Friday visiting the sites and taking photos of the workers at the archeology dig sites near Kanorado. Photos by Tom Betz/The Goodland Star-News

across and up the wall into a hole several inches above where she was digging.

Friday morning we again lowered unit No. 652 another level, but nothing was found.

Having spent the whole week on site 106, we decided to take the afternoon off to check out progress at the other two sites. After lunch we hiked to site 105. We found they were not finding much since the first bones, and were using shovels to move through the levels faster to get down to what Holen called the “mammoth” level.

At site 101, there was excitement because Brenda Culbertson of Mayetta had found a piece of what appeared to be a scapula, part of a shoulder bone, in the unit she was excavating. The bone was the 14th specimen taken from that unit, including an incised hematite, which is an ancient painting implement, found by Kim Kilmartin of Topeka, a student from Baker University.

Culbertson has been digging for several years, and has been a paid staffer for the state. An astronomer, she now operates the Washburn University observatory.

This site has many flags beyond where the volunteers are digging. Attached to some of the flags are specimen bags with bits of bone or other artifacts found on the surface.

The volunteers take 15-minute breaks at 10 a.m. and 3 p.m. Lunch is from noon to 1 p.m. We returned to site 106 in time for the afternoon break and were told that Norman Dye of Meade had found his ninth flake.

While talking to the volunteers,

there was a shout from the hillside: “Jerry has found a tool.” Everybody gathered around to see

Sure enough, Jerry Finke of Kansas City, Mo., had found a Hartville chert scraper in unit No. 652, more than an inch or more below where we had left it that morning.

Holen said the Hartville rock is found near Guernsey, Wyo. He was pleased with the find, which was the first tool excavated from any of the sites. Another scraper had been found on the surface near the same location in May when Holen and Dr. Rolfe Mandel of the Kansas Geological Survey were walking the area.

“I kept saying there was some-

thing in that unit,” Holen said.

Specimens gathered from the three sites is being cataloged and taken to Denver for testing and examination.

“We want to be sure we do this right,” Holen said. “We know trying to push the date of human habitation back beyond 12,000 years will be controversial. We are trying to be extra careful and preserve the evidence to be able to present a well-documented analysis.”

The week came to an end. We were pleased to be there for the discovery of the tool, and happy it came from the unit we scraped on. We plan to go back Saturday to see how far down the work has gone.

Crossword Puzzle

1	2	3	4		5	6	7	8	9		10	11	12	13
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17					18						19			
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56	57					58	59	60		61		62	63	64
65						66				67				
68						69					70			
71						72					73			

CLUES ACROSS

1. Basics

5. Honeys

10. Press

14. Kick

15. Infuse

16. Opposed

17. Capital of Gabon

19. Section

20. Nudge

21. Grain

22. Pull____, sweaters

23. Type of rally

25. Peak

26. Commercials

29. Rock group

31. Concord e.g.

32. Brew

35. Summon

37. Vigil

39. Parent Teacher Associations

40. Healing plant

41. Vehicle

42. Ventilates

43. Drink quickly

44. Chocolate substitute

46. Star

47. Cousin

48. Compass point

49. Swab

51. No

52. Liability

54. Male cat

56. Drinking aid

58. Legume

61. Eastern religion

65. Level

66. Massive force

68. Women's magazine

69. Love

70. Belief

71. Stress disorder, abbr.

72. Microwave laser

73. School subject
1. Apt

2. Seethe

3. Ty _____, Hall of Famer

4. Sharpen

5. Division, abbr.

6. Ruler

7. Skillfully

8. Directions, related to game or sport

9. Behold

10. Shade of pink

11. Incorporation

12. Toss

13. Swats

18. Vase-shaped jug

22. Choose

24. Bench

25. Remains

26. Taken ____, (shocked)

27. City in India

28. Villains

30. Popinjay

31. Young Atlantic cod

33. Insect in wormlike form

34. Analytic literary composition

36. Small cask

38. Pave

39. Shallow container

44. Time zone

45. Cave dweller

48. Compass point

50. Danish physicist

53. Worn

55. Very small

56. Tier

57. Careen

58. Cougar

59. Freudian selves

60. Malaria

62. Zilch

63. Pair

64. Beehive state

66. Block

67. Goof

CLUES DOWN



dine-in
carry-out
delivery

1803 Cherry
Goodland, Kan.
67735
899-3661

Sunflower Contest

RULES

- Write down as many words (at least 3 letters) that you can think of using the word “Sunshine”
 - Do not use proper names
- Bring your completed list to The Goodland Star- News office at 1205 Main or at our booth at the Fair

by 12:00 p.m. by Monday, August 8th

Winners will be announced in the Friday, August 12th edition

1. _____

2. _____

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49. _____

50. _____

(If you have more than 50, please attach an additional sheet)

Name _____

Address _____

Phone _____ Age _____

Winner of the Sunflower Contest will receive a FREE 1 year subscription to:

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