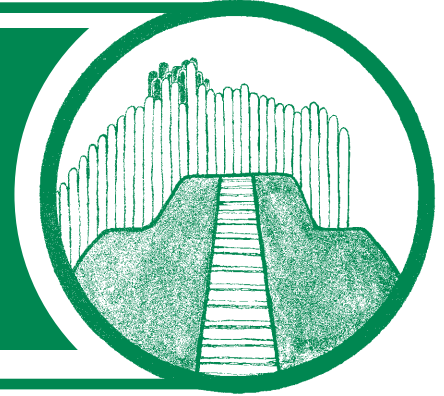


# The Friends of Aztalan State Park

## Ancient Times

Winter 2008, Newsletter



### Five Simple Things You Can Do in 2008 to Support Aztalan State Park.

As members of the Friends of Aztalan State Park, you appreciate the importance of the site and its archaeological value. But, as a Friend, what else can you do to show your concern and support? Well, here are five simple things you can try to help the Friends of Aztalan in the quest to increase awareness of the site and promote a true interpretive center for the park.

**1. Get involved in Friends activities.** By attending educational events, picnics, lectures, and celebrations at Aztalan and in the vicinity you are demonstrating to the community, local officials, and others that there is real interest in the history, preservation, and exploration of the site.

**2. Invite others to the park.** If you have friends, relatives, neighbors or children who have not been to Aztalan, invite them to come out. Any day is a great day for a picnic in the park. A stroll around the perimeter, a visit to the interpretive kiosks, or a climb up the ceremonial mounds is often all it takes to turn a newcomer into a true Friend of Aztalan.

**3. Learn more about Aztalan, the Mississipians and other Midwestern cultures.** The more you know, the more you'll appreciate the rich history and value of the area. You can start with Bob Birmingham's books on Aztalan and Indian mounds, or pick up any of dozens of other books and articles on Cahokia, the mound builders, the Mississipians or even the Adena or the Hopewell.

**4. Talk it up. Let people know you're a Friend of Aztalan and why.** You can mention as you go throughout the community how important the site is archaeologically and commercially. Remember to point out that people visiting Aztalan and a future interpretive center may need places to stay, buy gasoline, or go out to eat. Anything that attracts sightseers, vacationers, or educational groups is good for the business of the community.

**5. Visit other sites.** A three-day weekend road trip can get you to Cahokia, Dickson Mounds, or Effigy Mounds National Monument. Stretch the trip a little more and you can visit Angel Mounds in Indiana, or Fort Ancient, Sunwatch Village, or the Great Serpent mound in Ohio. The story of pre-historic cultures in the Midwest is rich and fascinating. And you'll have a chance to see what other states are doing with their interpretive centers honoring pre-contact Native American cultures.

You can do any one of these activities or do them all. The important point is that you make a point of supporting the mission of The Friends of Aztalan State Park.



*Bob Birmingham explains the archaeological significance of Nitschke Mounds near horicon.*

# Expedition

## The Autumn Expedition

This fall, the Friends of Aztalan went on an expedition ( a day-long bus trip) to view numerous important mound sites in central Wisconsin.

Blessed by particularly beautiful autumn sunshine, the group boarded a bus at the park headquarters and headed up Route 26 to the Nitschke Mounds County Park near Horicon. Though investigated as long ago as 1892, 54-acre park is a relatively new development featuring 62 identified mounds, believed to have been constructed between 800 A.D. and 1200 A.D.



*Jay Toth explains why the Kingsley mound group is so important to the Ho-Chunk people.*

From there the group travelled to Wisconsin Dells where they viewed the Kingsley Bend Mound Group. There, the group met with Ho-Chunk Nation archaeologist Jay Toth who explained the history of the mound group and the efforts made by the Ho-Chunk Nation to preserve this valuable site.

At Baraboo the Friends viewed the rare Man Mound. In a stroke of serendipity they met up with a group featuring some of the state's best known archaeologists who were in the area for a conference.

## DNR Report from Tom Davies

So far December has been a quiet month at the park. Cold weather and successive snowstorms appear to be keeping people inside. Keeping the road open in the snowy weather has been a real challenge.

One question that always comes up is "Where are we on the visitor center?" Here's how it works in the DNR. Since property budgets are never adequate to fund major improvements, it is all done through project requests. There are many projects in the works to help build a quality interpretive center. State budget deficits have slowed the process in past years, and of course the DNR competes with other agencies for needed funds. Everything is done by biennium.

At this point, we have several projects on the roster for 2007-09 to begin the needed work for an interpretive center: \$25,000 for archaeological surveys of the area, \$60,000 for center layout and soil testing surveys, \$24,000 for a center design report, and \$6,000 to restore the unused south field to prairie. Once these projects are completed we will be in a position to start building. In the meantime I encourage the Friends of Aztalan to continue serious efforts at fundraising.

I wish to thank the Friends of Aztalan for all they have done for the park. The numerous programs the Friends have sponsored and have worked on had a tremendous impact in terms increasing the awareness of the uniqueness and value of the park, and have increased membership substantially. Please get active! Help is always needed, and we really need people for the fundraising committee with good ideas.



# Visitor's Center

## Donations

### Continue Come in for the Visitor Center

Since the last newsletter, we have received a number of very generous donations to the Aztalan visitor's center fund.

Donations were received from Phil Milhouse of Edgerton, long time Aztalan archaeologist Lynne Goldstein of Michigan State University, Kelly Hamilton of Madison, Sue Darsh of Lake Mills, Dorina Oliver of New York City, Steve Miller of Sun Prairie, Philip Sillman of Waterloo, park manager Tom Davies, and the Commonwealth Cultural Resources Group, a well

respected archaeological consulting firm based in Wisconsin and Michigan.

In giving \$1000, Phillip Sillman said that this would make his parents proud as they often visited Aztalan when he was young. He is still recovering from a serious farm accident and reports to us that he making good progress.

Outstanding photographer Dan Seurer of Lake Mills continues to sell his hauntingly beautiful photos of Aztalan, donating the profits to the Friends of Aztalan State Park.

To all our contributors we want to  
give a sincere thank you to all!!



*From left, Friends of Wisconsin State Park, Bill Lunney,  
Bob Birmingham, Friends webmaster Marifran Cataldi*

at the Friends annual meeting in October at Devil's Lake State Park.

In his remarks accepting the award, Bob attributed promotional success to the many contributions of the active Friends of Aztalan State Park board and membership and accepted the award only on behalf of the organization.

The Friends of Wisconsin State Parks selected Bob Birmingham, president of the Friends of Aztalan State Park for its 2007 Wisconsin State Park "Hero" award.

Bob's leadership in promoting the park was cited for the basis of selection. The award was given

Friends  
President  
Bob  
Birmingham  
Wins State  
Park Award



# Machu Picchu

## Friends of Aztalan Members Visit the Ruins of Machu Picchu

From October 11-18, 2007 Friends of Aztalan State Park members Christi Ward, Nona Christensen, Bob Persons, and Arlene Strunk spent a fascinating and extremely informative eight days visiting Lima Peru, Cuzco, the Sacred Valley, and Machu Picchu.



The enthralling train ride to Machu Picchu, a visit with the Peruvian archaeologist "Mummy Man", creating our own Andean art, and learning the history of Machu Picchu while experiencing the importance and serenity of the site were unforgettable experiences.

## Article Tells Story of Aztalan Discovery

Follow the story of Aztalan's discovery by American settlers in latest issue of the Wisconsin Magazine of History (Winter 2007-2008). UW-Milwaukee archaeologist John Richards wrote the beautifully illustrated article "Viewing the Ruins: The Early Documentary History of the Aztalan Site" that features information that never been published. The magazine is published by the Wisconsin Historical Society. This is available at most libraries and the issue can be obtained at [www.wisconsinhistory.org](http://www.wisconsinhistory.org). The article will eventually be on-line on the WHS website.

Native American organizers of the Indian Summer Festival in Milwaukee invited the Friends of Aztalan to have a booth at the festival Sept 7-9. They cited "your amazing mission" to raise funds for a

visitor center in inviting the Friends to attend.

## Aztalan Goes on the Road

Christie Ward, Carol Burrows, Bob Persons, Nona Christiansen, Bob Birmingham, Tom Davies and Mark Dudzik took turns at the booth selling

Friends merchandise and promoting the park. The Friends video, Aztalan: National Historic Landmark, was played continuously on a laptop for visitors to watch. Many Indian and other people stopped by to say that they appreciate the group's efforts to highlight Indian history.

Tom and Bob also set up an Aztalan booth at Notre Dame University in October to raise funds for the new visitor center among several hundred archaeologists at their annual Midwest Archaeological Conference. The archaeologists were generous in their support. Other Aztalan presentations and fund raising events were held this fall were at the Edgerton Book Festival, the Brookfield Historical Society, and in Sisters Bay in Door County.

## Thanks

### Thanks to...

president...Bob Birmingham 608-241-4958

dnr educational specialist...Tom Davies

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920-830-9403

Check our website for upcoming events at [www.aztalan.us](http://www.aztalan.us)

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