

The ATLATL

OCTOBER 1993

"Too long have I hunted mammoth alone!"

Rich McWhorter

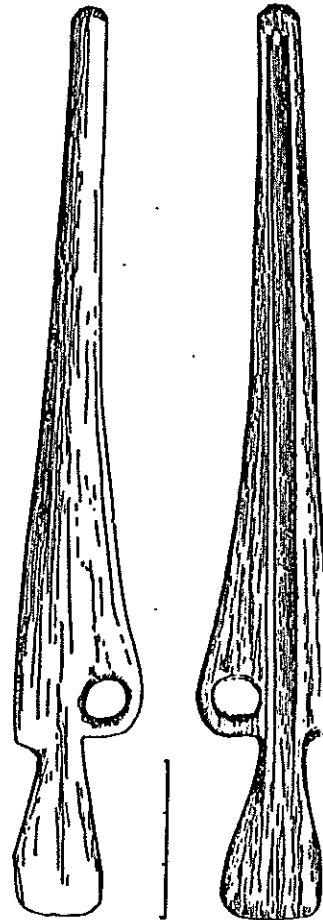
VOL. 6, N. 4

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE WORLD ATLATL ASSOCIATION, INC.
1390 SOUTH PARIS COURT, AURORA, COLORADO 80012, USA

EDITOR: BILL TATE



Anderson River throwing-stick, (back and front)
Anderson River type. The specific marks are the extreme plainness of form, the lack of accommodations for the thumb and fingers, excepting the eccentric index-finger hole, the poor groove for the harpoon-shaft, and the absence of a hook or spur at the bottom of this groove. The accidental marks are cuts running diagonally across the back. In another specimen seen from the same locality the shaft groove is squared after the manner of the Cumberland Gulf type. Collected at the mouth of Anderson River, by R. Kennicott, in 1866. Museum number 2267.



Point Barrow throwing-stick (back and front)
Point Barrow type. The specific marks are the distinct handle without finger grooves, the very eccentric index-finger hole, the method of inserting the spur for the shaft, and the harpoon-shaft groove very shallow above and deep below. In the specimens shown by Mr. Murdoch there is great uniformity of shape. Collected at Point Barrow, by Lieut. P. H. Ray, in 1883. Museum number 89902.

A few months ago we ran excerpts from a report titled: "Throwing Sticks In The National Museum, 1884. I promised then that we would continue this series at a later date. The following is

from that hundred-plus year old document. It is necessary to repeat certain identifying "marks" referenced in the text as follows:

1. SHAPE, OR GENERAL OUTLINE IN FACE AND SIDE VIEW, AND SIZE.
2. HANDLE, THE PART GRASPED IN THE HAND.
3. THUMB-GROOVE OR THUMB-LOCK, PROVISION FOR THE FIRM AND COMFORTABLE INSERTION OF THE PHALANX AND BALL OF THE THUMB.
4. FINGER-GROOVES, PROVISION FOR EACH FINGER ACCORDING TO ITS USE IN THE MANIPULATION OF THE IMPLEMENT.
5. FINGER-PEGS, LITTLE PLUGS OF WOOD OR IVORY TO GIVE MORE CERTAIN GRIP FOR THE FINGERS AND TO PREVENT THEIR SLIPPING. THE DEVICES FOR THE FINGERS ARE THE MORE NECESSARY WHERE THE HANDS ARE COLD AND EVERYTHING IS COVERED WITH GREASE.
6. FINGER-TIP CAVITIES, EXCAVATIONS ON THE FRONT FACE OF THE IMPLEMENT INTO WHICH THE TIPS OF THE THREE LAST FINGERS DESCEND TO ASSIST IN GRASPING AND TO AFFORD A REST ON THE BACK OF THESE FINGERS FOR THE WEAPON SHAFT.
7. INDEX-FINGER CAVITY OR HOLE, PROVISION FOR THE INSERTION OF THE INDEX FINGER, WHICH PLAYS A VERY IMPORTANT PART IN THE USE OF THE THROWING-STICK.
8. SPEAR SHAFT GROOVE, IN WHICH THE SHAFT OF THE WEAPON LIES, AS AN ARROW OR BOLT IN THE GROOVE OF A BOW-GUN.
9. HOOK OR SPUR, PROVISION FOR SEIZING THE BUTT END OF THE WEAPON WHILE IT IS BEING LAUNCHED. THESE MAY BE RIDGES LEFT IN THE WOOD BY EXCAVATION, OR PIECES OF WOOD, BONE, IVORY, ETC., INSERTED. THE SIZE AND SHAPE OF THIS PART, AND THE MANNER OF INSERTION, ARE ALSO WORTHY OF NOTICE.
10. EDGES: THIS FEATURE IS ALLIED TO THE FORM AND NOT THE FUNCTION OF THE IMPLEMENT.
11. FACES: UPPER, ON WHICH THE WEAPON RESTS; LOWER, INTO WHICH THE INDEX FINGER IS INSERTED. (THE FIGURES ILLUSTRATING THIS ARTICLE ARE DRAWN TO A SCALE INDICATED BY INCH MARKS IN THE MARGIN, EVERY DOT ON THE LINE STANDING FOR AN INCH.)

ANDERSON RIVER TYPE

The Anderson River throwing-stick (and we should include the Mackenzie River district) is a very primitive affair in the National Museum, being only a tapering flat stick of hard wood. Marks 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6 are wanting. The index-finger cavity is large and eccentric and furnishes a firm hold. The shaft-groove is a rambling shallow slit, not over half an inch wide. There is no hook or spur of foreign material inserted for the spear end; but simply an excavation of the hard wood which furnishes an edge to catch a notch in the end of the dart. Only one specimen has been collected from this area for the National Museum; therefore it is unsafe to make it typical, but the form is so unique that it is well to notice that the throwing-stick in Eskimoland has its simplest form in the center and not in the extremities of its whole area. It is as yet unsafe to speculate concerning the origin of this implement. A rude form is as likely to be a degenerate son as to be the relic of a barbaric ancestry. Among the theories of origin respecting the Eskimo, that which claims for them a more southern habitat long ago is of great force. If, following retreating ice, they first struck the frozen ocean at the mouth of Mackenzie's River and then invented the kyak and the throwing-stick, thence we may follow both of these in two directions as they depart from a single source.

POINT BARROW TYPE

Through the kindness of Mr. John Murdoch, I have examined a number from this locality, all alike, collected in the expedition of Lieutenant Ray, U.S.A. They are all of soft wood, and in general outline they resemble a tall amphora, bisected, or with a slice cut out of the middle longitudinally. There is a distinct "razor-strop" handle, while in those previously described the handle is scarcely distinct from the body. Marks 3, 4, 5, and 6

are wanting. The index-finger hole is very large and eccentric, forming the handle of the "amphora." The groove for the harpoon or spear-shaft commences opposite the index-finger cavity as a shallow depression, and deepens gradually to its other extremity, where the hook for the spear-shaft is formed by an ivory peg. This form is structurally almost the same as the Anderson River type, only it is much better finished.

.....



Champion, Lou Becker.

EASTERN SEABOARD ATLATL CHAMPIONSHIPS By Lou Becker

This was it. I was standing at the fifteen yard mark, preparing for my last three throws at the bullseye on a prehistoric wide-horned bison target. I knew that in order to win the contest, I would have to make three perfect throws. To my amazement, all that practice paid off. I succeeded in making those three final perfect throws and won the Eastern Seaboard Atlatl Championships.

To the uninitiated, the atlatl, which means spear thrower in the Aztec language, predates the bow and arrow by

many thousands of years. The first prehistoric Indians that came into Michigan over twelve thousand years ago used the weapon to hunt mastodons and other long gone prehistoric animals. Mexican Indians and some Arctic Eskimos still use the weapon to harvest game.

Atlatl competitions are nothing new. The northwestern states have had them for years, however in the East, atlatl championships have been held for only the past four years. With the help of Gary Fogelman, Editor of Indian Artifacts Magazine, and Bob Burg of the New York Archaeological Association, the Eastern Seaboard Atlatl Champion-

ship was born. The contest which previously was held in Pennsylvania, was held this year at Apalachin, New York.

The contest itself, is divided into three classes: Kids 16 years and under, Women's division, and Men's division. In the Men's division contestants are permitted three throws from fifty yards, three from forty yards, three from thirty yards, six throws from twenty yards, and six from fifteen. Scoring on the wide-horned bison target is divided into ten points for a bullseye, five points for the next ring and three points for the outer ring. Although the bullseye is about sixteen inches in diameter, it makes for quite a challenge at the longer ranges.



Lou and Adam Becker.

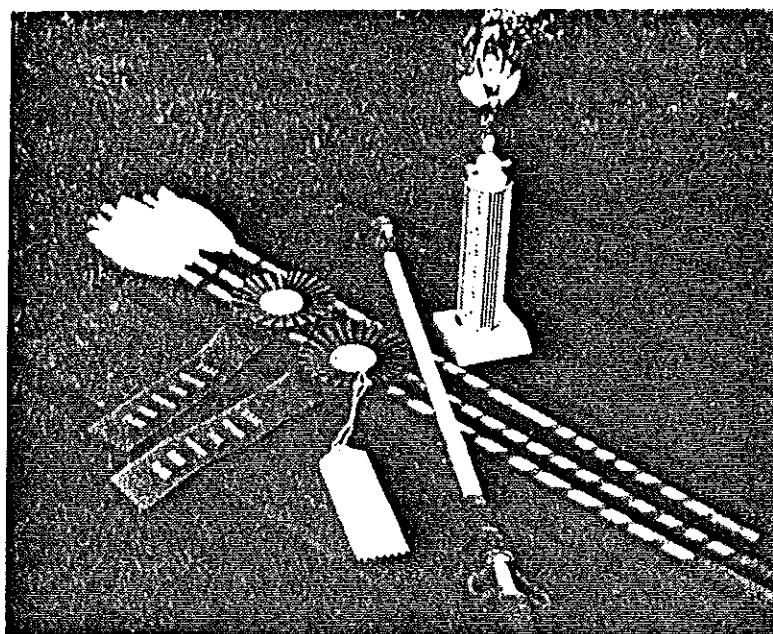
The adult competition was divided into three parts. The target portion, as outlined above; a distance throw, wherein everyone took three throws with only the longest counting; and a closest to the pin competition. For this, a pin was set out at about forty yards for the women and about ninety yards for the men. Each contestant made three

throws, with the closest to the pin winning. Trophies were awarded for each part.

My son Adam, age fifteen, won the overall championship in the sixteen and under class. All in all, it was a great weekend with enthusiastic and friendly people. I know that we will be back next year.

Anyone interested in information on the atlatl, contact: Lou Becker, Bowsport Archery, 5940 Urban Drive, East China, MI 48054, phone (313) 765-4717.

Ed. Note: Lou Becker was recently made a Director of The World Atlatl Association, and has been a successful participant in Steve Coleman's first couple of Atlatl Boar Hunts. (See next year's Boar Hunt mentioned elsewhere in this issue) Lou stated in his letter to me, his pleasure in the performance of his atlatl system, pictured below, and further, that he was the only contestant using wooden darts. He goes on to say that he hopes some of the other westerners can come to the 1994 Eastern Seaboard Tournament.



The winning equipment.

GREETINGS FROM THE IDAHO
ATLATL ASSOCIATION
from Patrick McShane,
President

Thought I should write to my WAA friends and let all of you know how and what we have been doing here in Idaho.

Presently we have over 500 members in our association and have sponsored three competitions thus far this year.

Our atlatl range continues to be a major attraction to the over 30,000 visitors that have spent time here at Celebration Park. Located on the Snake River, five miles south of Melba, Idaho, the park sits on an ancient Native American habitation site with over 3000 petroglyphs and about 300 geoglyphs within easy walking distance from the new visitor center. In addition to the rich archaeology, we provide boating for the public with docking facilities, rest rooms, picnic sites, 38 miles of rugged bike paths, exciting hiking and climbing locations, and plenty of peace and quiet. Our fenced atlatl range is situated adjacent to the Visitor Center and so far we have had over 330,000 darts thrown by people of all ages with NO accidents.

When I got the July issue of The Atlatl, I was stunned to read of the accident that nearly took the life of that young Crow Boy. Because of the accident and notice that WAA has wisely decided to create a group to advise on range safety, I am enclosing a copy of our Range Rules. I do hope that our safety and success will encourage others who host competitions and establish atlatl ranges. This is

the fastest growing sport in our area and we want to promote safety first and enjoyment second.

We now have a range established at the Fort Hall Reservation and will exchange competition groups as we each host our own competitions.

Most of us have gone into making our own "Class I" or "Class III" atlatls, some with weights, some not weighted. I designed our range darts and we have established a dart standard. Authentic wood and stone darts are allowed in special circumstances. If one of our range darts had struck that lad in Montana, he would not have survived the accident as we are using field tips. Our range has two throwing stations: ten and twenty meters, with six positions per station. We work at accuracy rather than distance throwing as we feel that this is more realistic when replicating Paleo-indian training and practice. We allow youngsters as young as five on our range and have made several "toy" atlatls for their use. Visitors who wish to try their hand at the atlatl are allowed to use our "Range" atlatls as those of us who have made and personalized our own do not allow others to use them.

I do hope that members of WAA can use the information that I am enclosing so that all of us who love the sport can keep it accident-free...

Celebration Recreation Park Ishi Atlatl Complex

Range Safety Rules

1. Use of the atlatl range is prohibited unless under the control of an authorized Range Safety Officer (RSO).
2. The atlatl range is limited to atlatl use only. No hand spears or archery (bow and arrow) will be allowed at any time.

3. Access and egress to and from the atlatl range is by the north entrance only.
4. No distance throwing is allowed at any time.
5. No running while on the range, especially while carrying darts.
6. The range is limited to 6 atlatlers at a time.
7. Atlatlers are limited to 5 regulation or authorized darts per round.
8. All atlatlers must throw from the same firing line during each round. Only the 10 and 20 meter lines are authorized. Atlatlers must start their throws with both feet well behind the firing line.
9. No atlatl darts will be thrown if spectators are down range of the throwers. The RSO will maintain range safety during competitions and will keep all spectators outside the range fences.
10. All darts are to be kept in the designated dart holder. Atlatlers are to draw 5 darts from the dart holder and replace them when they have been retrieved.
11. The retrieval of darts will take place on the command of the RSO only.
12. When removing darts from targets please remember to grasp the darts as close to the target as possible and slowly remove it. This will assure that no damage will result from improper handling of the darts.
13. Please do not put the "feathered" end of the dart in the dirt. This will keep the end from becoming clogged and protect the feathers.
14. Shots at the Bear may be taken from the 10 or 20 meter marks only.
15. Violators of these rules will be barred from the range and may be subject to criminal and/or civil prosecution.
16. Above all...Practice common sense range safety and have fun!!!

1994 Celebration park atlatl competitions planned or scheduled:

2nd Sunday in January:
Freezeout Atlatl Golf Tournament and Barbecue.

Equinox Invitational, IAA and WAA members only. (Vernal Equinox evening.)

Dates to be announced:

2nd Annual Idaho Archaeology Week Atlatl Open.

Quina Qualifier Atlatl Tournament.

Idaho State Atlatl Open.
To contact Patrick McShane,
Write: P. O. Box 61, Melba,
ID 83641

THIRD ANNUAL
ATLATL WILD BOAR
HUNT
Steve Coleman

The third annual wild boar hunt has been scheduled for Saturday, March 19 and Sunday, March 20, 1994. The boar hunt will be conducted on the property of Buckhorn Creek Ranch near Vidalia, Georgia. We will not be having an atlatl contest this time, so that we will have more time to devote to hunting. Atlatls and darts will be limited to materials available to stone age people. (Cotton string or other natural fiber allowed) If you are a novice atlatl hunter, we will be glad to help you set up your equipment. The hunt will be limited to 15 hunters. This hunt should be the best one yet, as we have a very good population of wild boar, including some very large ones. The price for the two day hunt will be \$150.00 If you want to discuss the details of this hunt or talk about equipment, please call me at (912) 583-2737, or write to Steve Coleman, Rt. 2, Box 312K, Vidalia, GA 30474.

The large print
giveth,
and the small print taketh away.

Only dead fish swim with the stream.

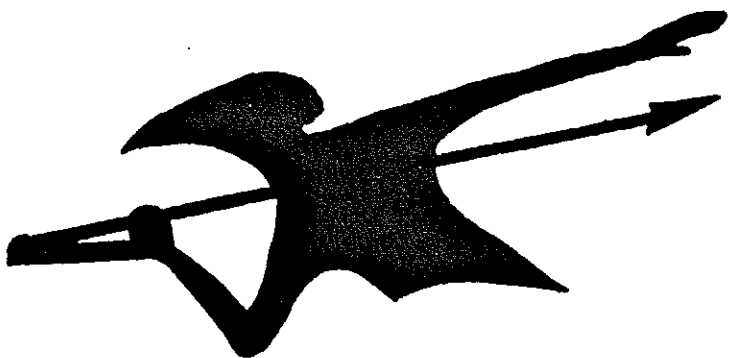
Why is it that reporters can never get a story straight?? The following is a reprint of a short article in The Denver Post from July 24, 1993.

**STEAMBOAT SPRINGS
ANCIENT POINT FOUND**

A 10-year old Texas girl hiking on Rabbit Ears Pass has found a Folsom point estimated to be 11,000 years old.

Amanda Kiouss turned over the 2-inch projectile of petrified wood to the U.S. Forest Service. The point is from either a spear or an atlatl dart. An atlatl is about 3 feet long and is flung using a special throwing board, said Sue Struthers, archaeologist for Routt National Forest.

Ed. note: Now, I know Sue Struthers, and she knows atlatls. She did not say that "an atlatl is about three feet long and is flung using a special throwing board." My advice to anyone giving information to the press is to ask that you be given a chance to proof it prior to publication.



**Southeastern Mound
Builders
Championship**
We just heard, as we were going to press, the results of the Southeastern Mound Builder's Championship Atlatl Contest held October 2. The

event was organized by Lloyd Pine of Baton Rouge, and Ward Zischke of Marksville, LA and was held at the Louisiana State Commemorative Area in Marksville.

On October 2, 1993, the first atlatl competition in about 2000 years took place at the Marksville Mound Site. The course and rules used were similar to those of the Colorado Archaeological Society. Fifteen people, mostly first timers, took part in the competition and about 20 others got to try out the equipment, but chose not to compete.

First place prizes were beautifully knapped points mounted on plaques. They went to:

Men Lloyd Olin
Women Sue Olin
Juniors Jonathon Comish

The event was considered successful enough that the Louisiana Parks Service is willing to sponsor a second contest next year.

By Lloyd A. Pine

**TROY HELMICK WINS
WEST VIRGINIA
ATLATL COMPETITION**

By William Good

The "Mountain State" hosted its 2nd annual atlatl competition at the 57th Mountain State Forest Festival. Thirteen competitors vied for the honor of State Champion. Dr. William Good, defending champion, stayed neck to neck with Montana's Troy Helmick until the last two throws of the event. The target was the Johnson Realty logo "JR." Johnson Realty also served as sponsor for the event. The scoring was such that a hit within the bales was 1 point,

within the blanket of the logo was 2 points, within the red of the logo was 3 points, and a hit within the center of the "R" scored 4. Two throws were taken from each distance of 10, 15, 20, 25, and 30 yards, for a total of 10 throws.

The standings were Troy Helmick with 24 points, Dr. William Good with 19 points, Lynn Helmick with 12 points, Terry Shimbo with 9 points, Ken Hass and Tom Regan scored 8 points, and Laura Marple made 7. Others competing were Daniel Hackett, Eric McGuire, Bev Johnson, Hugh Hitchcock, David Sims, and Frank Santmyer. The event was judged by Elkins Mayor, Jimmy Hammonds.



L to R. Lynn Helmick, Buckhannon WV - 3rd place
Troy Helmick, Townsend, MT 1st place - WV State Champ.
Dr. William Good, Elkins, WV - 2nd place - 1992 State Champ.

Troy Helmick, Dr. Good, and Lynn Helmick all received plaques. The first seven competitors received a 10 pound turkey from Shop-N-Save, and everyone was rewarded a Johnson Realty baseball cap.

The event was limited to atlatls made from materials available to primitive man. Junior competitors were

exempted from this rule.

Plans are already being made for the 3rd annual WV Atlatl Competition, to take place at the 58th Mountain State Forest Festival the first week of October, 1994.

^^^^^^^^^^^^^^^^

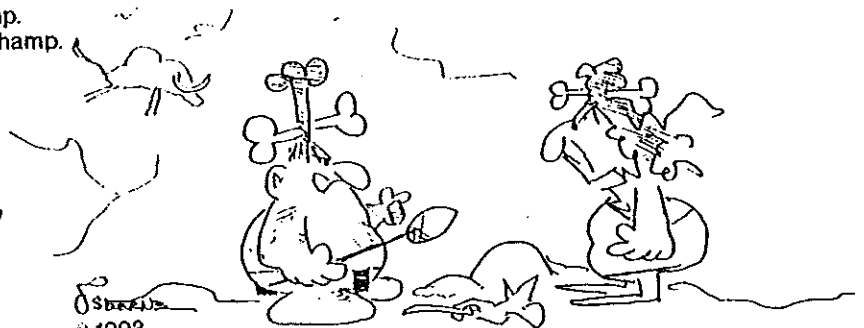
Troy Helmick adds the following comments:

The contest was well planned and conducted by Dr. Good, the sponsor, Johnson Realty, and the officials on the field.

Enthusiasm ran very high among the contestants and the many spectators. A boisterous, but jubilant crowd heralded the arrival of one contestant. She was ushered to the atlatl arena by a throng of fans carrying flags and banners.

The contest was held in the forested hills of West Virginia, with all the brilliant colors of Autumn making a spectacular ending for a season that began, for me, in the springtime beauty of the desert at Valley of Fire in Nevada.

I would expect a great increase in the atlatl competition in West Virginia by next October when the contest is again scheduled during the Forest Festival.



Woman, you expect much for someone who uses my Throwingboards for fire wood!

on target

BY: Leni Clubb



Please check the date shown on the mailing label on the newsletter envelope. That date next to your name will serve to remind you of the expiration date of your membership so you can send in your renewal check early to avoid getting a "Dues are Due" notice.

* * * * *

The word ATLATL, as used by the World Atlatl Association, is not a hyphenated word. It is pronounced "at-lat-l" (as in Atlantic) according to an authority on the Nahuatl (Aztec) language.

* * * * *

The logo with the ON TARGET column is a reproduction of a 6 inch (15 cm) pictograph on a wall of Little Box Elder Cave near Douglas, Wyoming. It was recorded by WAA member, Elizabeth English. Our Secretary, Leni Clubb has taken it as her personal logo. She interprets the figure as a thrower with an atlatl and dart in the right hand. Do you agree? Leni spent five weeks on a dig at Little Box Elder Cave, which had 10 to 15 small pictographs on facing walls of the cave.

FROM THE MAIL BAG

Dear Leni,

I am a flint knapper specializing in points for hunting maga-fauna. Since most of those animals went extinct a few thousand years ago, I have a very limited business. But, seriously, I am quite busy making paleo replicas and stone knives. Enclosed is a photograph of one of my points.

9



I heard about your organization from a good friend, and source for obsidian, Craig Ratzat of Springfield, Oregon. I was entertaining the thought of an atlatl only hunt on the ranch on which I live for "exotics." If you have any thoughts on this idea, please let me know.

Virgil J. Tonn
Rt. 2, Box 66
Georgetown, TX
78626

Dear Leni,

I would like to hear from persons who have hunting experience using the atlatl. I am presently doing research on the performance of stone dart points used on shafts thrown with an atlatl.

Lorenz W. Bruechert
1986 West 11th Ave.
Vancouver, B. C.
Canada V6J 2C6

We urge members to correspond with either of the above inquiries... Ed.



WILL THE GREAT RABBIT HUNTER SPEAK TO HIS SON ABOUT BRINGING HOME THOSE STRAY PETS?



OWNSPORT ARCHERY, 5940 URBAN DR., EACH CHINA, MI 8039, (313)765-4717. LONG TIME ARROWSMITH, LOU BECKER MAKES FINE DARTS AND ATLATLS.

OB BEANE, OF BOWWOODS FIVE, 1821 REDWING ST., SAN ARCOS, CA 92069, (619)744-9797, MAKES REPLICAS FLAYLS, INCLUDING THE SAND DUNE CAVE ATLATL SET.

ILL TATE OF TATE ENTERPRISES, P O BOX 440003, JRORA, CO 80044, (303) 755-5591, MAKES THE ORIGINAL SPEARCHUCKER KIT AND BOOKS ON ATLATLS.

ORLD RECORD HOLDER, WAYNE BRIAN, 824 W. KIVA, SA, AZ 85210, (602) 491-8460 MAKES ATLATLS AND SETS PATTERNED AFTER HIS LONG DISTANCE EQUIPMENT.

Advertisers in THE ATLATL guarantee a minimum of 10% discount to WAA members. ADVERTISING INCLUDED ON A SPACE AVAILABLE BASIS AT NO CHARGE TO BUSINESSES. ADS MUST BE ATLATL RELATED.

Send atlatl related articles to Newsletter Editor, Bill Tate, 1390 S. Paris Ct. Aurora, CO 80012.



THE WORLD ATLATL ASSOCIATION, in cooperation with the VALLEY OF FIRE STATE PARK, announces it will conduct the FOURTH ANNUAL ATLATL CONTEST at ATLATL ROCK in the Valley of Fire State Park near Overton, Nevada

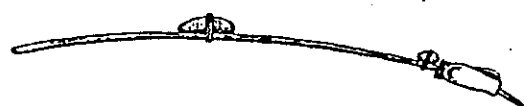
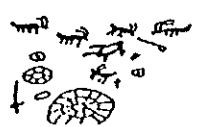
April 9, 1994

Set aside the dates of April 8, 9, 10, 1994 and join us for an exciting weekend. If you are a beginner, or want to polish up your throwing skills, WAA members will be on hand to help with suggestions. Even if you don't have your equipment yet, come anyway and look over atlatl and darts made by WAA members.

Awards will be presented in three categories: Men, Women, Youth (16 & Under). If there are throwers Under 10, special awards will be given by the World Atlatl Association. The WAA will also present a GRAND CHAMPION AWARD.

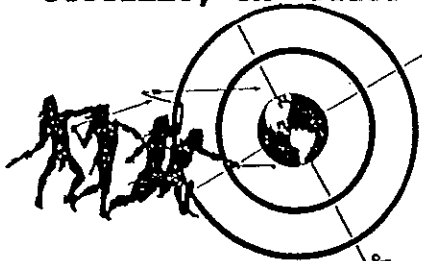
Camping for participants and their families has been reserved in the BEEHIVE GROUP CAMPING AREA for the three days. There are motels in Las Vegas and Overton.

Camping information, maps, registration forms will be published in the January newsletter, THE ATLATL. For additional information, contact: ATLATL CONTEST: Leni Clubb, WAA, P.O. Box 56, Ocotillo, CA 92259 (619)358-7835 PARK FACILITIES: Jim Hammons, V. of F. State Park, P.O. box 515, Overton, NV 89040 (702)397-2088



WAA MEMBERSHIP IS STILL JUST \$10.00 PER YEAR. SEND ALL INQUIRIES AND MEMBERSHIP DUES TO WORLD ATLATL ASSOCIATION SECRETARY:

LENI CLUBB
P. O. BOX 56
OCOTILLO, CA 92259 USA



The WORLD ATLATL ASSOCIATION, Inc.

