

The

# ATLATL

“Too long have I hunted mammoth alone!” Rich McWhorter

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The Newsletter of the World Atlatl Association, Inc  
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October 2008

## Grinnell College Atlatl Team at Cahokia

With Coach John Whittaker kneeling in front



Also 2 former members who have branched out  
And formed the University of Iowa Atlatl Team  
**Late Summer ISAC results**  
By John Whittaker

As of September 3 there were 1191 ISAC scores recorded at 64 events in 18 states and 6 different nations. Wyoming, New York, Pennsylvania, and Ohio have the most frequent events. It is interesting to watch the changing geographical patterns. The east remains strong with lots of events (PA, NY, OH, NJ, MD) and well-organized groups in several states. Russell Richard in Wyoming has made an effort to encourage frequent events, but otherwise the west (WY, CA, NV, AZ) falls short. I know a lot of atlalists in the SW, but have little luck getting them interested in WAA or sporting events. Similarly, there are a lot of atlalists in the Midwest (MI, WI, MO, IA), but not that many events. And having just returned from Cahokia, where my students made up the majority of throwers, I feel that they are unjustly neglected. Why can't we get more folk to come to a well-organized and long-standing event near St. Louis, a centrally located interesting city with one of the world's most important archaeological sites, boasting a fine and hospitable interpretive center, nice event facilities, and nearby camping? Are other organizers experiencing spotty attendance? The European events are great fun from what we hear, and my own experience. They do not all include ISAC, but we need as much international exchange as possible. Europeans, come visit - the dollar is plunging just for you!

Scores are high, with 17 individuals scoring 90 or above. Doug Bassett currently leads the men with 96xxx, Lori Majorsky, with 91x is top woman, and Nate Miller (86) holds the best youth score. Of the 102 scores on this years' record lists (70 and above for men, 50 for women, 40 for youth), 18 come from European events.

And although the main summer action is over, we still have more events to come.

**Top Ten ISAC as of Oct 1st, 2008**

\* denotes tie

Score                      Name                      Home      Contest                      (youth) age

**MEN**

1	96xxx	Douglas Bassett	NY	Atlal-in-Action - Elmira NY	
2*	95xxx	Mike Waters	NY	Letchworth State Park - Castile, NY	
3*	95xxx	Gary Fogelman	PA	Echoes In Time - Salem, OR	
4*	94xx	Ray Strischek	OH	Flint Ridge, OH	
5*	94xx	Cyrille Huc	France	Courniou - FRANCE	
6	94	Doug Leeth	NC	Ochlocknee River Park, FL -	
7	93x	Marmerto Tindongan	OH	Flint Ridge, OH	
8	93	Mark Bracken	PA	North Georgia Knap-In, GA	
9	92x	Tom Mills	CA	Valley of Fire - NV	
10*	91x	Thomas Chauvaux	Belgium	Crepuy-En-Valois - France	
11*	91x	Jack Rowe	PA	Green Flats, Hancock, NY	
12*	91x	Doug Miller	WI	Wausau School Forest, Cascade, WI	

**WOMEN**

1	91x	Lori Majorsky	PA	Letchworth State Park - Castile, NY	
2	87	Melissa Dildine	PA	Chemung, NY	
3	84x	Maren Petersen	D	Colazza - ITALY	
4	84	Devin Johns	PA	Letchworth State Park - Castile, NY	
5	82	Joanne Fogelman	PA	Meadowcroft - Avella. PA	
6	73x	Margie Takoch	OH	Cahokia Mounds, IL	
7*	73	Bonnie Sortore	NY	The "R AT" West Almond Vigil West Almond NY	
8*	73	Linda Brundage	NY	Turbotville, PA	
9*	73	Shannon Santos	PA	Chemung, NY	
10*	73	Andy Wendt	WI	Smoky Hollow WI	

**YOUTH**

1	86	Nate Miller	WI	Wausau School Forest - Cascade, WI	14
2	81x	Jared Ariel	TN	Old Stone Fort - Manchester, TN	15
3	68x	Keagan Gerber	PA	Chemung, NY	12
4	62	Jeff Kingery	OH	Flint Ridge, OH	12
5	61	Hunter Miller	PA	Brookville, PA	9
6*	58	Jordan Ashley	TN	Old Stone Fort - Manchester, TN	9
7*	58	Harold Eyster	MI	Chelsea, MI	14
8	55	Levi Miller	PA	Brookville, PA	14

9\* 52  
10\* 52

Chris Aldrich  
Torin Tindongan

MI  
OH

Wilder Crk Conservation Club, Marshall, MI 15  
Albany Riding Club, Albany, OH 14



### From The President: Scott Van Arsdale

I hope you have managed to attend atlatl events this season. Attendance does seem to be down somewhat, which is no surprise given the economy and fuel prices. We are seeing some new faces on the Northeast US circuit this year, which bodes

well for the future.

At the Annual Members Meeting at Valley of Fire in April, Jim Ray talked about the accomplishments of Troy Helmick, a long-time WAA member and past President. He proposed that Troy be awarded a fellowship award. Members present overwhelmingly voted to approve. Troy is from Montana and I'm from New York. We had never met, but I spent the better part of Saturday at VOF with him, as teams of five people each completed the ISAC and all of the local competitions together, and Troy and I were on the

same team. It was a real pleasure to get to know Troy (and his wife, Shirley ) Troy also gave me a CD with an automated slide show and some video on his atlatl travels. I enjoyed viewing that when I got home. Thanks Troy, the Fellowship



Award is well deserved!

Dennis Lantz has donated five of his Lizzard atlatls to the WAA to do with as we see fit. These are quite sturdy and suitable for demos and new atlatlists. If anybody has a good idea for their use, please contact me. I'll bring them to the 2009 Annual Meeting in Chelsea, Michigan if they are still available.

As many of you know, a film crew was at the 2007 annual meeting at Letchworth, NY to film a segment for an atlatl program on the Discovery Channel. Unfortunately, it wasn't on the Discovery Channel itself. It aired on Discovery's MILITARY

Channel in the U.S. on 9/21 at 9 PM and Midnight, as well as later showings. Co-host Mike Loades told me to check the listings as episodes sometimes get switched- <http://military.discovery.com/tv-schedules/series.html?paid=52.14319.25466.32463.1>

If you type Weapon Masters in the site search bar above Military link, a video section with some shorts from the show will appear. You positively need high speed Internet to view the clips. I'm not sure if these clips are exactly as they will appear on the program. From these clips it is obvious this is jazzed-up TV entertainment, not documentary ala David Attenborough. Regardless, it should be some good exposure for the atlatl, even if only a fraction of what it could have been on the main Discovery Channel.

While there may or may not be much exposure for the WAA in particular, it looks like the atlatlists involved did a fine job. There are eccentricities for sure, but I'm guessing they make good TV without damaging our image.

Tune in if you can (I don't get any channels myself, let alone the MILITARY Channel!), and be prepared for some new interest in the atlatl. Tom Mills recently filmed a segment for a program on the History Channel too

Happy Atlatling!

### Early PA Event

Jan. 10, 2009 - PA - (17 as a snow date) – Fogelman's, Turbotville, Pa. ISAC, IASAC, local.

### Texas Atlatl Events by Robert Bogan

February 2009 brings two exciting atlatl events to Texas!!!

1. February 7 The second annual Archeolympics will be held at Seminole Canyon State Park, on the Rio Grande west of San Antonio. Once again the event is hosted by Jack Johnson, the Texas Department of Parks and Wildlife, and the Shumla School. Events include accuracy contests with the atlatl and the rabbit stick, plus a friction fire-starting race. Contact Jack Johnson at [jjohnson@shumla.org](mailto:jjohnson@shumla.org) or (432) 292-4848 for more information.

2. February 15 Everyone is invited to the first annual Texas Atlatl Championship, hosted by the Austin Archery Club at Emma Long Park in Austin, Texas. The competitors will stalk 30 3-D targets

hidden among scenic juniper and live oak hills. The event begins at 8:30 AM, entry fee is \$12. Visit the Austin Archery Club website for more information (<http://www.austinarcheryclub.com/>).



# Atlatl Hunting with the Basketmakers

John Whittaker, Byl Bryce, and Chuck LaRue

September, 2008

Among the mesas and canyons of the northern Southwest, a prehistoric people hunted and fought with our favorite weapon (Figure 1). The Basketmaker culture is the early part of the Anasazi



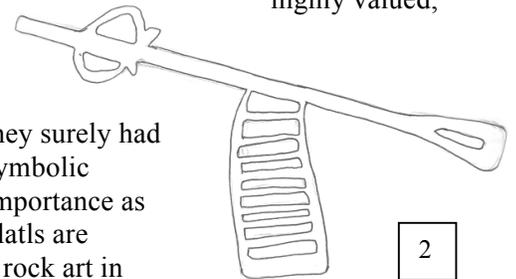
sequence, ancestral to the puebloan cultures that in turn are ancestors of most modern southwestern tribes. The Basketmakers lived in pithouse villages and grew early corn and other crops. They often lived in dry rock shelters in canyons, or buried their dead there, where the arid southwestern climate has preserved basketry, sandals, cordage, and wooden artifacts. Atlatls are one of the characteristic artifacts of the Basketmakers and related cultures of the American Southwest. They were replaced by bows and arrows in the late part of the Basketmaker sequence, around 700 AD according to most accounts. Basketmaker atlatls were the first archaeological atlatls recognized in this country. Early explorations and modern archaeology have produced extensive Basketmaker collections, and we have more archaeological atlatls from the southwest than from any other part of the world. There are at least 70 documented specimens in various states of preservation, plus an unknown number unavailable for study in private hands.

Although details vary, the basic form of the Basketmaker atlatl is quite consistent (Figure 2). They are thin, flat strips of hardwood, with a hook carved at the end of a groove. They are notched for a split-finger grip, and on many specimens, elaborate finger loops of hide survive. Often there is a small

stone weight or fetish, or other decoration such as feathers bound to the shaft just distal to the finger loops. We know less about the darts, of which only fragments usually survive. They were usually compound shafts of willow or other light wood, fletched in a variety of arrangements, and armed with a hardwood foreshaft holding a moderate sized stone point. They tended to be short by modern standards, around 150 cm (5 ft).

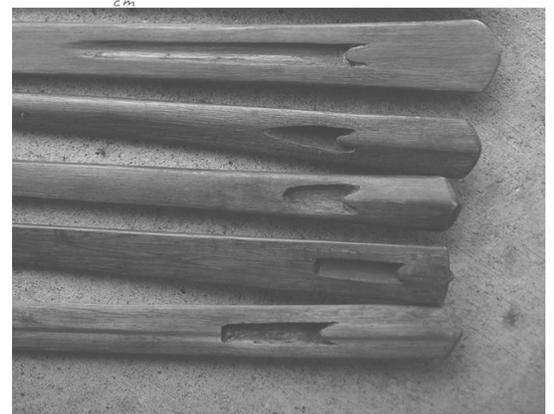
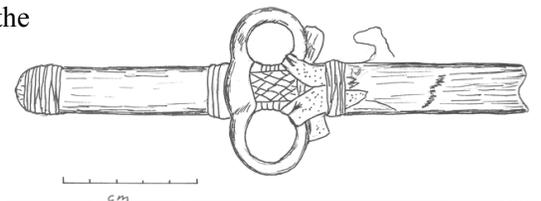
The surviving atlatls are usually beautifully made. The wood is accurately worked, finished to remove traces of manufacture, and polished from use. The finger loops are much more complex than seems necessary to us, and a number of specimens are decorated or carefully repaired. Atlatls were occasionally buried with the dead, and as important weapons that were highly valued,

they surely had symbolic importance as



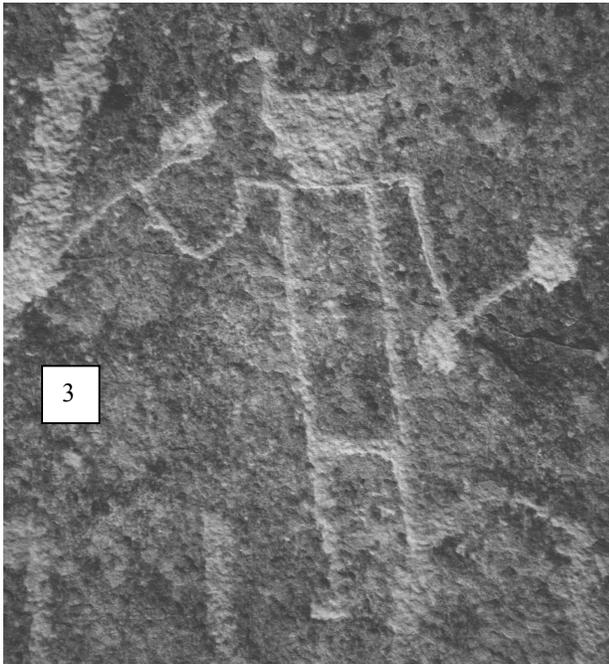
well. In fact, atlatls are common in the rock art in some parts of the southwest.

The Atlatl Rock at Valley of Fire, familiar to many WAA members, is one example. During our recent expedition, we decided to focus on depictions from the canyons and mesas of southeast Utah. This is the source area for several archaeological atlatls, and Basketmaker rock art is also common.



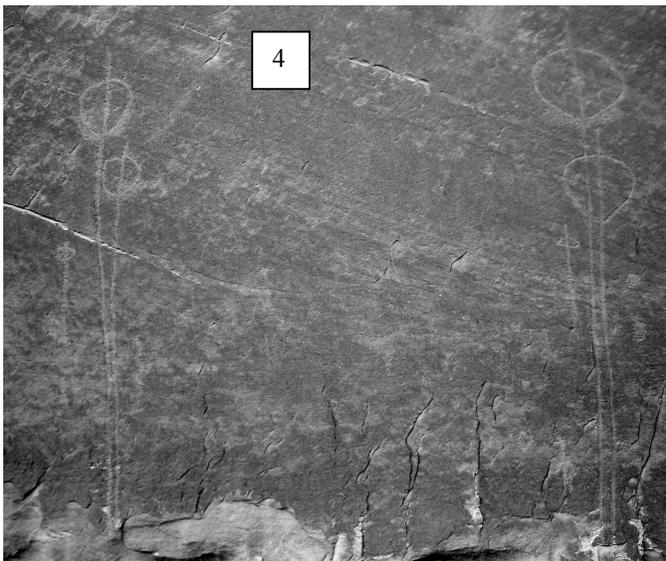
Identifying atlatls in southwestern rock art is not as easy as it should be. The rather common straight line with an oval at one end could depict either the Basketmaker looped atlatl, or a fletched dart. Sticking

out of an animal, this is presumably a dart, but by itself or in the hands of an “anthropomorph” it is



ambiguous (Figure 3). Rock art is not usually full of details or photographically faithful to reality, and images of atlatlists in action are surprisingly rare. As it turned out, we found some interesting patterns.

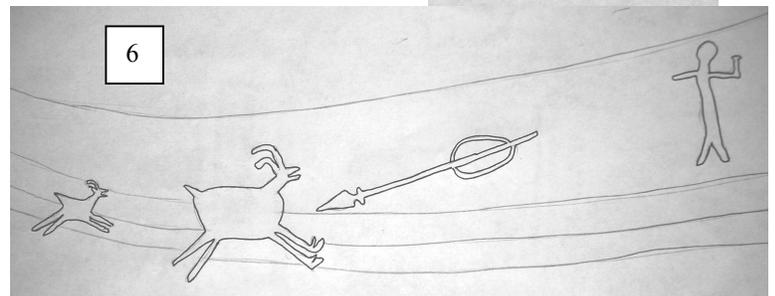
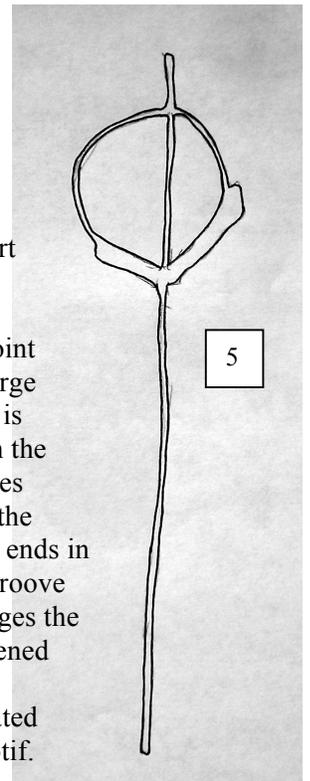
A panel we called the Long Dart Panel in a canyon on Cedar Mesa is a good example of one repeated type of atlatl image. At this site, all the



images are petroglyphs (pecked into) the sandstone wall. Figure 4 shows two sets of paired darts with atlatls, drawn about life size (atlatl 39 cm long). Because atlatls are shown with darts, it is possible to see how at least some artists distinguished them. Here the pair to the right are 172 and 133 cm long,

with fletchings 20 and 15 cm long. At the base of both fletchings the line is thick and diffusely pecked, apparently to represent the downy part of the feather (Figure 5). Only one dart of the other pair shows this, but we see the same convention at other sites. Neither dart has a point shown. At some other sites, a large triangular or barbed stone point is clearly depicted, consistent with the points found in Basketmaker sites (Figure 6). At Long Dart Panel the atlatl with the right pair of darts ends in a vague blob, with no hook or groove visible. In some other atlatl images the artist has tried to indicate a widened end or a hook and groove.

The most common atlatl-related image is the impaled animal motif.



Most often these are bighorn sheep. The Basketmaker folk must have hunted deer as often as sheep, and some images show them, but bighorn sheep were evidently more important symbols, although they were probably also more common then than now. Such images are often interpreted as hunting magic: an impaled sheep led to a successful hunt. They could equally well be the record of a kill, or refer to a well-known mythological story. Sometimes they may relate to fertility and increase of game as well, since they are often accompanied by images of the flute player, with or without erect penis, corn and other plant images, and occasionally human or animal copulation scenes.

Sometimes the impaled animal is part of a more elaborate scene. The images at another Cedar Mesa site we call the Hunt Panel are a good example (Figures 1, 7). Two scenes on the same panel show lines of sheep with successful hunters. The bottom hunter is making a throw, with two darts (although short and no different from the atlatl depiction) in his other hand. The atlatl in his hand appears to be launching a long line, partly natural in the rock and

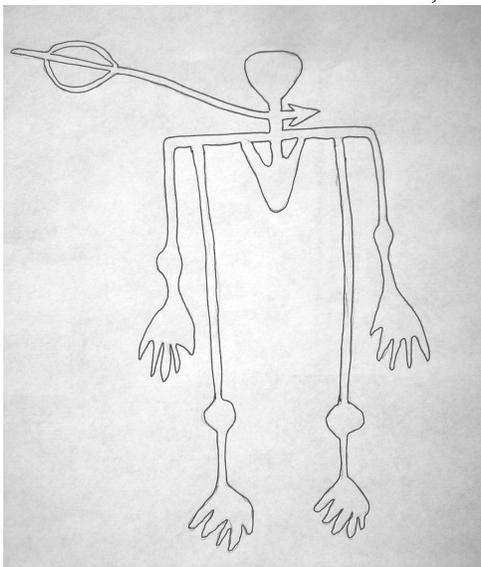
partly enhanced by pecking, that runs through the



whole panel and is probably intended to be a symbolic dart, although the artist did not add feathers.

Animals were not the only targets. One Basketmaker site, excavated in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, contained about 70 bodies of a group who died violently, some with stone points embedded in them. There are also rock art depictions of trophy heads. Figures 8 and 9 shows crude but graphic examples of atlatl violence.

We intend to continue this research. In the patterns of atlatl and dart depictions in Basketmaker rock art, and the other kinds of images found with them, we can begin to tease out some of the symbolic uses and feelings that Basketmakers had about this important technology. We will post this paper on the WAA webpage with additional images, and we would like to start a portfolio of rock art atlatls on the page. We encourage anyone with images to send them. We intend to focus on the southwest, but would like



to showcase atlatl rock art from anywhere.

Figure 1. The Hunt Panel, typical Basketmaker rock art on a boulder overlooking a canyon mouth in southeast Utah.

Figure 2. Basketmaker type atlatls. At top is a petroglyph depiction. The archaeological specimen center shows typical complex finger loops made of leather folded around a fiber core and fastened to the atlatl with lashings of leather and sinew. Bottom photograph shows variation in the distal hook and groove (replicas by LaRue of several archaeological specimens).

Figure 3. A Basketmaker anthropomorph petroglyph with dart and atlatl. The bird head or headdress is not uncommon.

Figure 4. Paired darts and atlatls at Long Dart Panel.



Long dart to right is 172 cm long.

Figure 5. Typical dart petroglyph showing treatment of feathers.

Figure 6. Atlatlist hunting mountain sheep. The dart in flight has a side-notched point consistent with some Basketmaker specimens.

Figure 7. Hunt Panel main scene. Note the association with a flute player and a pregnant woman, although these may be later additions.

Figure 8. Two duck-headed Basketmakers engaging in atlatl battle. (Courtesy Jon Till).

Figure 9. The painful results of atlatl violence.



Go with the flow

## Atlatls Used at San Ygnacio Archaeology Program 2008

By Cesario Guerra

The second annual San Ygnacio Archaeology Program, sponsored by the River Pierce Foundation and funded by the Martinez Foundation, was a great success, especially in regards to instilling the fascination with the



atlatl in the youth of the community. San Ygnacio is a small border community of less than 1000 individuals in Deep South Texas. This town is best known for its historic district, including Fort Treviño, which was built in 1830. A few miles away, stands San José de



Corralitos, a Spanish Colonial Ranch with a fortaleza, or fort, which was built in 1786 and is one of the oldest, still standing, ranch buildings in Texas. In 1972, the town of San Ygnacio was listed in the National Registrar of Historic Places. This year's archaeology program included activities and lectures pertaining to rock art, stone tools, the atlatl, South Texas prehistory and history, and a mock dig. Participants included middle and high school students from Zapata County, TX. The program was created and taught by experimental archaeologist and WAA member, Cesario Guerra from Roma, TX.

On the second day of the program and after a lecture on the history and mechanics of the atlatl, students

gathered at a secure location to get a hands-on approach in atlatl education. Using 5 foot heavy darts made of ash lumber, students had the opportunity to utilize this hunting implement, first on a burlap mule deer target backed by hay bales, and then on a watermelon. At the end of the day, students put together their own atlatls made from pre-cut parts; some even painted their atlatls with natural pigment paints the following day.

Needless to say that the atlatl portion of the San Ygnacio Archaeology program was, and is, the most popular part of the week's lessons. As the program and experimentation with the atlatl develops so will the instruction on this ancient weapon system. It was my pleasure to be involved with and to foster the expansion of knowledge pertaining to the atlatl in this community.

## Atlatl Event at Fair Grounds

By George Miller

The North Fork Archeology Chapter 29 sponsored an Atlatl competition.

Atlatl contests took place at the Jefferson County



Fairgrounds in Brookville, PA on Aug 16<sup>th</sup>, 2008. There was competition in ISAC and ISAC.

More than 175 new people had the opportunity of throwing the dart with the atlatl.



## 20<sup>th</sup> Annual Eastern Seaboard Atlatl Competition

by Douglas Bassett

This event was again held at the Letchworth State Park Stone Tool Show and included four days of throwing August 21-24, 2008. Next year will be August 27-30. There were nine shooting ranges (the Demo range; an ISAC range; an ISAC and IASAC warm-up range; an IASAC range, the State Round range, the Closest-to-Pin range; the Handicapped Mammoth Hunt range; the Distance range; and the wooded Animal Round range). These ranges were shut down for the opening ceremony of the Hoop Toss each day and culminated with the closing ceremony of the Atlatl Battle. There was also an attempt of a "Toss Across the Gorge Qualifier" each day on the Distance Range and a distance accuracy contest at an ISAC target from 35m and 50m.

More than two hundred fifty spectators and two hundred fifty atlatlists that included 43 competitors from 7 states were attracted to the South Field in the various following ways:

### Opening Ceremony –

#### The Hoop Toss with Tiggy Winkle

Two hoops were placed on the ground and thrown at to open the competition each day. A larger hoop was thrown at from 20+ meters and 30+ meters and a smaller hoop was attempted from 40+ meters. All throwers lined up and shot their single dart simultaneously to the hoop of their chosen ability. This was repeated for a total of five attempts. Once a hoop was entered by a dart...that hoop was no longer available for a prize but the throwers could continue for the fun of it (the medium and distant hoops were both entered a second time on Sunday by Melissa Dildine and Gary Fogelman respectively). A stuffed toy hedgehog "Tiggy Winkle" was placed next to the small hoop with the understanding that the throwers would pay a \$5 penalty if their dart accidentally touched the toy to add a sense of tension and desire for accuracy. Two penalties were levied but the identity of the offenders were only noted at the time and not repeated here in print. Winners got to pick out Letchworth memento prizes that were donated by the park's concessionaire, John Marino of J-Con Parks.

<u>Day</u>	<u>Close Hp</u>	<u>Medium Hp</u>	<u>Distant Hp</u>
Thurs	none	none	D Bassett
Fri	none	M Dildine	D Bassett
Sat	none	none	M Waters
Sun	none	G Maurer	D Bassett

### Demonstration Range

This range had three stations from 10 meters at three separate targets and was entered by more than 200 people. Each target consisted of a single hay bale with a balloon tacked to a 12 x 15" cardboard. Many balloons were popped to the squeals of success. In addition this year, there was a Harpoon the Balloon Contest at 15m where the dart had to be tossed upward to pop the balloon on the way down and into the cardboard placed on top of the bale. The one winner had the choice of a donated dart or atlatl (thanks to Dennis Lantz and Jack Rowe). Many thanks to all that helped our first time throwers, especially Jack Rowe who again was range master for a Lion's share of time.

### ISAC

Forty-three people made 107 entries in twenty-six flights (3 flights – Thur; 8 flights – Fri; 8 flights – Sat; 7 flights – Sun).

### IASAC

Seventeen people made 26 entries.

### The Eastern Seaboard Atlatl Competition

We had the largest competitive field to date with 24 people vying for division winners. As originally constructed the Eastern Seaboard Atlatl Competition is composed of three parts: Accuracy, Closest-to-Pin and Distance. For the event this year five divisions were created based on each competitor's best ISAC score thrown this year or last. Colors for each division were chosen from the concentric bands of color on the standard archery target. White = ISAC < 26; Black = ISAC 26-49; Blue = ISAC 50-74; Red = ISAC 75-87; Yellow = ISAC 88+. This handicapping was also applied to the Animal Round and Mammoth Hunt. Award certificates were given to the top three finishers in each event and for each division as well as top ten for the Mammoth Hunt and the Grand Champion Trophy and throw-off certificates.

### The State Round

This accuracy contest consisted of three shots from each of five distances with each succeeding distance being three meters farther from the ISAC target. The starting distances were White- 5m, Black- 8m, Blue- 11m, Red- 14m, and Yellow- 17m. Three entries per day were allowed. Twenty-four people made 33 entries

### Closest-to-Pin

Three darts thrown just once a day were thrown from the following distances: White- 17m, Black- 23m, Blue- 29m, Red- 35m, and Yellow- 41m. Twenty-two people turned in scores.

### Distance

Each contestant was allowed five darts daily with any combination of atlatl and dart they pleased, but to count had to land in the designated throwing lane which was about 40 degrees of arc. The longest shot was measured perpendicular to the center of the lane. Twenty-one people turned in scores.

### Grand Champion Throw-off

Each Division Champion was determined by adding their ranking for each of the three parts of the contest with the lowest score winning in each division. Any ties within a division were settled with a throw off at their respective distances. The five winners were positioned at five different distances and shot five flights of one dart starting each time with the farthest distance. Contestants were voted on whether to move back after the first and fourth rounds although the ranking did not change after the third round.

<u>PL</u>	<u>Division</u>	<u>Distance</u>	<u>Name</u>	<u>Score</u>
1	White	5m	Marlin Bassett	50-X
2	Red	14/17m	Ryan Grohsmeyer	46
3	Yellow	17/20/23m	Douglas Bassett	39
4	Blue	11/14m	Linda Brundage	29
5	Black	8/11m	Sue Mercer	21

### Animal Round

Ten life-sized black animal silhouettes were created with realistically sized colored killing zones [heart (yellow) – 12 points, lung/liver/spleen (orange) – 8 points, brain/spinal cord (red) – 5 points] Body hits scored 1 point, while outside the marked body line such as hair/feathers, ears, tail/beard scored 0 points. Negative scores were also assessed such as -1 for lower legs, -2 for nose/jaw/beak, and -3 for entrails. Hunters were allowed to go around the course twice with one shot at each animal and only one entry per day. The maximum score of twenty heart shots would be 240 points. Each of the ten animals were shot in realistic settings at realistic distances with animals with larger killing zones being shot at from farther distances. Targets:(grouse- 7m (25%), squirrel- 8m (33%), rabbit- 9m (54%), opossum- 10m (46%), woodchuck-11m (46%), fox- 12 m (29%), turkey- 13m (29%), raccoon- 14m (42%), bobcat-15m (50%), coyote- 16m (46%) – See % note below). Red division shot at 2-4 meters closer, Blue from 3-7 meters closer, Black from 4-8.5 meters closer and White from 5-9.5 meters closer (each larger animal was shot from 0.5 meters farther in the White Division, i.e. the ten animals ranged from 2 to 6.5 meters from the White Thrower). Twenty-seven

people made 31 entries and 24 people made their entries by the cut-off time on Saturday.

**% note:** After examining the score sheets and tallying the hits in the heart (12 points) or lungs (8 points) or spine (5 points) and counting them as all kills a percent (%) kill after each animal is listed above for the top ten hunters. In the top ten hunter tally, the percentages for each kill zone are as follows: hearts (2 %), lungs or better (27 %) and spine or better (38 %).

### State vs. State

The overall rankings in the State Round, Closest-to-Pin, and Animal Round were added together to give a raw score for the top three throwers in each state, lowest combined score wins. A hypothetical five member team is also noted for the “what if” category. Winners got to pick out Letchworth memento hat and cup prizes that were donated by the park’s concessionaire, John Marino of J-Con Parks.

State(s)Three-member team score if a five-member team score  
NY Douglas (3), Marlin(3),Sue (4) 10 Danny (9), Ciaran (9) 28  
PA JoAnne (6), Devin (7), Todd (8) 21 Jack (10), Gary (12) 43  
MD/VT/NJ Ryan (9), Greg (19), Erich (21) 49

### Handicapped Mammoth Hunt

Following the Grand Champion throw-off, the handicapped Mammoth Hunt was conducted in the heat of the afternoon. The five color divisions started their throws from the following distances White- 8m, Black- 11m, Blue- 14m, Red- 17m, and Yellow- 20m. Each thrower had three attempts to hit a circular cardboard representing the kill zone on a life-sized Woolly Mammoth constructed of plywood-backed foam covered in burlap fur. (This creature was created by Rodger Klindt in 1996 and was kindly donated to me for use at the Letchworth event after a decade of use up on the Tug Hill Plateau.) If the hunter hit the red center of the cardboard representing the heart, an extra throw was awarded when needed in the future. Those successful hunters continued to the next round and retreated another 3 meters. All registered atlatlists were automatically entered in this event and their starting positions were based on their highest ISAC score within each division. The order of dropping out determined your rank. Twenty-seven throwers and a couple dozen spectators showed up at hunt time. Twenty-two were left standing after the first round. 21 after the 2<sup>nd</sup>, 16 after the 3<sup>rd</sup>, 10 after the 4<sup>th</sup>, 7 after the 5<sup>th</sup>, 4 after the 6<sup>th</sup> and 3 after the 7<sup>th</sup> (one each from the three farthest divisions), none of which were able to complete the 8<sup>th</sup> round at 41m, 38m and 35m respectively.

### Toss Across the Gorge Qualifier

A distance of 150 meters (164 yards) was located to be a potential area for an actual future

attempt downstream from the Middle Falls and in the meantime this qualifying distance was laid out on the Distance Range. As an extra step for safety the park road and nearby Highbanks Trail were monitored and shut down if any traffic occurred during the qualifiers to safeguard against that wild aberrant possibility that is always present during efforts of throwing pointed, lightweight, sailing objects with maximum force. Nearly fifty people assembled on the three days that there was adequate traffic control to listen about the history of the atlatl and the pursuit of long distant throws. Douglas Bassett was the only capable atlatlist that showed up and he was able to qualify with the single throw on Friday - 164m (179 yards) and Saturday 159m (173 yards).

**Distance Accuracy**

An impromptu event was set up before the closing ceremony which drew a couple dozen spectators to watch seven competitors attempt to hit the ISAC target at 35 and 50 meters. Competitors alternated first throws as is done in regular competition. Due to the tie though...a volley of darts were thrown by everyone until Gary or Ryan could gain another score, which Ryan did on the first volley. Next year we will include this in the schedule along with a 75/100m demonstration.

- Gold** Douglas Bassett (“Tree Walker”)
- Silver** Ryan Grohsmeyer (“Crooked Walker”)
- Bronze** Gary Fogelman (“Needs a Walker” who unsuccessfully petitioned to change his name to “Rapid Walker”)
- 4<sup>th</sup>** Andy Majorsky (“Spear Killer”)
- 5<sup>th</sup>** Brian Manning (“Snow Walker”)
- tie for 6<sup>th</sup>** Greg Bessette (“Sleep Walker”)
- tie for 6<sup>th</sup>** Gary Sipila (“Mammoth Killer”)

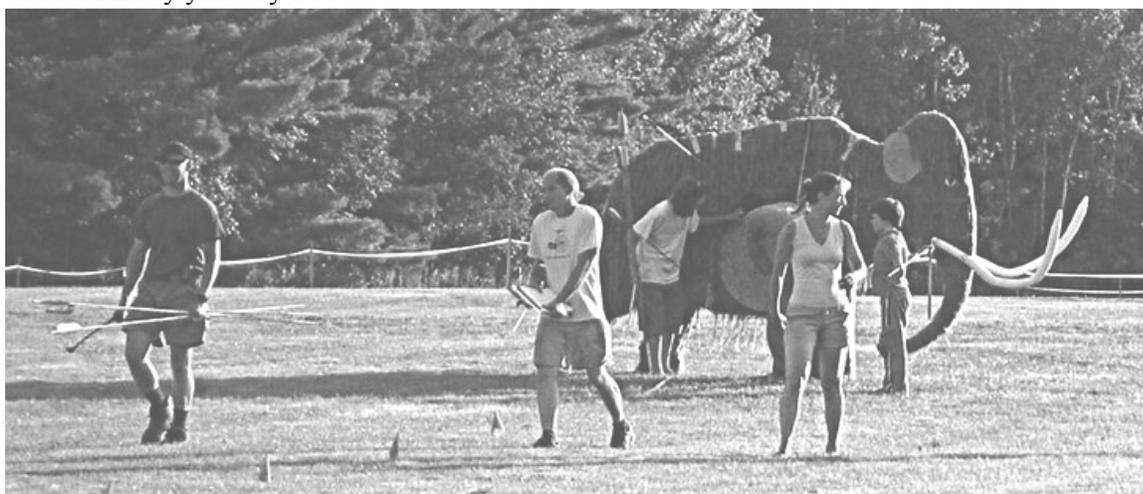
**Closing Ceremony - Atlatl Battle**

This was a modified version of the ancient battle between Smoke Monkey and his rebellious son, Macaw as devised for many years by Bob Berg. Twenty Warriors and twice the number of spectators assembled on the “killing fields” on Sunday afternoon. Two women selected their chief and the chief selected his shaman and

the rest were divided between the two sides. A bale of hay placed on its side at one of three distances, near, medium and farther represented each Warrior. The four bales representing the chiefs and shamans were placed in a row behind the front three lines. The bales in each row were separated by a bale width and alternated with each warring faction. Hung on the top string of each bale was a colored 81/2 x 14” folded paper representing the kill zone. Sticking up from each bale was one of the warrior’s darts identifying his bale. Each warrior had three remaining darts, but had to surrender to the bale one dart for each time his bale was struck by a dart, regardless of friend or foe...yes even one of the chiefs shot himself. All warriors shot in synchrony from the same line for up to three times in each round. A shot to the paper or the loss of three darts resulted in the bale being turned down and the darts being removed from the field. Warriors could only shoot at bales in their row until only one bale was left standing and then the surviving warrior of that row was free to throw at any remaining enemy. The war is ended if both the chief and shaman are killed as no motive would be left for the “headless” remains. In the first battle, as in ancient history, Macaw led a successful rebellion. By an outcry of desire a second battle ensued and was ended when Macaw pierced the heart of his father.

*The Atlatl portion of the Annual Stone Tool Show at Letchworth State Park continues to grow (500 people). We also had a record number of throwers participating in the Eastern Seaboard and local contests and games. See you next year, and bring a friend...Nayweh*

Mammoth Hunt winner Gary Sipila, “Mammoth Killer” on left



## Wahkpa Chu'gn Buffalo Jump

John and Anna Brumley were once again the successful organizers and hosts of the annual atlatl competition at the Wahkpa Chu'gn Buffalo Jump in Montana



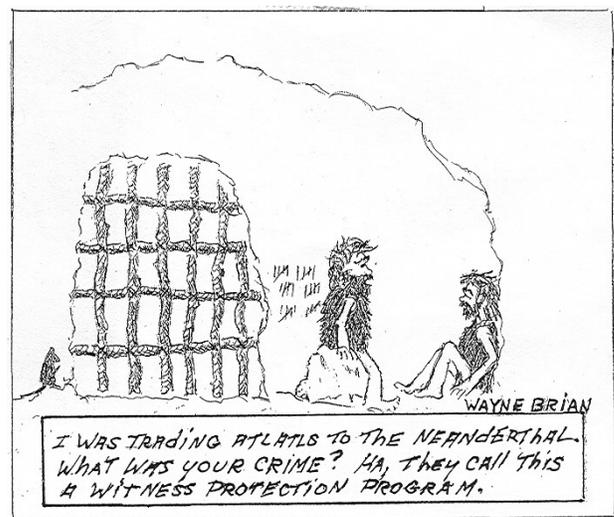
already one being held at another location in Montana the same weekend

There was however a good turnout despite the inclement weather on Saturday. There were 47 competitors and 80 people visited the site. Many of the competitors threw more than once. The game was a local game based on standard fita archery targets. The response to the game was positive and a good time was had by all.

Helping with the event were Ralph and David Heydlauff, representing both the WAA and the Bulhook Bottoms Black powder club. Ty and Gina Williams representing the Black powder club and a new instructor Kimberly Turner who did a great job. Ty, who helped with the instructions is also a great instructor He has a way with the younger people.

Ralph and David supplied Equipment and instructions.

It was decided not to have an ISAC as there was



**Cahokia 2008**  
**September 12-14**

By: Ron Mertz

Along with some other “old timers,” including Ray Madden, Margie & Frank Takoch, John Whittaker, and Richard Lyons, Alex and Tamara Woods (representing the University of Iowa Team), several new throwers from Illinois – Phil Nebergall, Michael Klein, and Christine Breen- and a contingent of John’s Grinnell College students participated in this year’s event. Competitions on Saturday included a modified European throw (1<sup>st</sup> five targets and 30 throws), which served as the basis of awards; Hunter’s Challenge, Rabbit Hunt, and our opening event, a hoop toss. Though it was windy, everyone had a great time throwing.

In the evening, after pizza and awards, Bill Iseminger, Assistant Site Director at Cahokia presented an intriguing program on human images in Woodland and Mississippian artifacts. John and I tied on the European Round (51.6) and he then took the Grand Champion Award in a three-person throw-off with first place winner among women, Margie, and me.

Congratulations to Alex Woods who obtained the highest ISAC score (83), his personal best. And Congratulations to Frank Takoch for the highest score in the Missouri Rabbit Hunt. This contest was in honor of the Missouri law to allow hunters to capture small animals with the atlatl.

While we planned to throw the ISAC on Sunday morning, an early morning deluge from the remnants of Hurricane Ike put a serious damper on our intentions. Ike did provide John’s students a “memorable” camping experience at Horseshoe Lake. Within a few minutes early Sunday morning, some tents were blown over and they found themselves in several inches of water. After hastily retrieving their gear and retreating to their bus, they made the tactical decision to start back home to Grinnell. What a great memory they will have of Cahokia and their camping adventure.

On a more serious note, because of State budget problems, many sites in Illinois are being closed and, while Cahokia Mounds will remain open, it is experiencing severe budget and staffing cuts. Those of you who are

familiar with Cahokia recognize its importance in America’s prehistory. Please take a few minutes to contact the governor’s office in Springfield to express your support for the site.

Finally, thanks to Linda Krieg , Museum Shop Manager and to Richard Lyons for donating prizes.

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**Wintercount BC 12000**

By Wayne Brian

On windswept ice he traveled on.  
There seems no day or night.  
Through the pass twixt  
mountains cold  
Near Cliffs of withered height.

A broke twig, a tuft of hair,  
The beast had left a trail.  
The sun’s dim light counts  
thrice he’d trod  
And now he must not fail.

The clan went forth to find  
old Brune  
At thirty he was old.  
Their hopes grew dim, their hearts were grim  
For Brune ‘twas much too cold.

Then all about snow was red  
A strange and eerie sight.  
The moonlit glade a crimson shad  
Attests a mighty fight.

The beast was dead,  
from dart he bled,  
Yet stood he froze upright.  
And there stood Brune with  
mortal wound  
Both statues cold and white.

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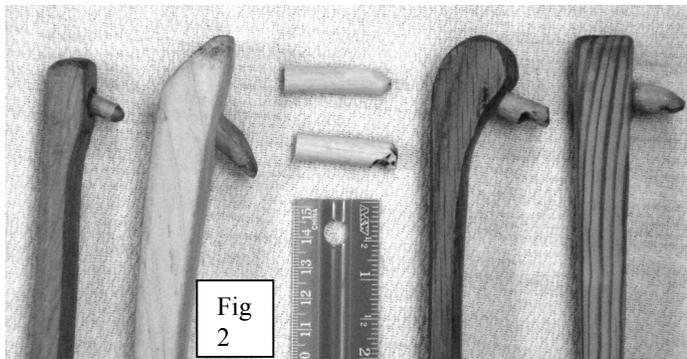
## The “Ten-Minute” Atlatl

By John Whittaker

An atlatl is just a stick with a hook. I make a lot of simple atlatls with my students. Many students have little experience in woodworking, and these atlatls are intended to be easy to make and cheap. “Ten-minutes” may be a slight exaggeration, but not much when I use power tools, and even with hand tools these simple atlatls don’t take too long. They are durable, they work well, and if you spend a bit of extra time and add a nice finish or some decoration, they are even pretty handsome.

1. Basic stock is scrap wood about 1 inch square. I have used oak, fir, pine, cherry - anything I get for free. I like to have students try throwing with several atlatls first to see what length they like, but a good rule for length is from armpit to palm or finger tips.

2. Shape the shaft of the atlatl by thinning most of it with a bandsaw, hand saw, draw knife, or whatever.

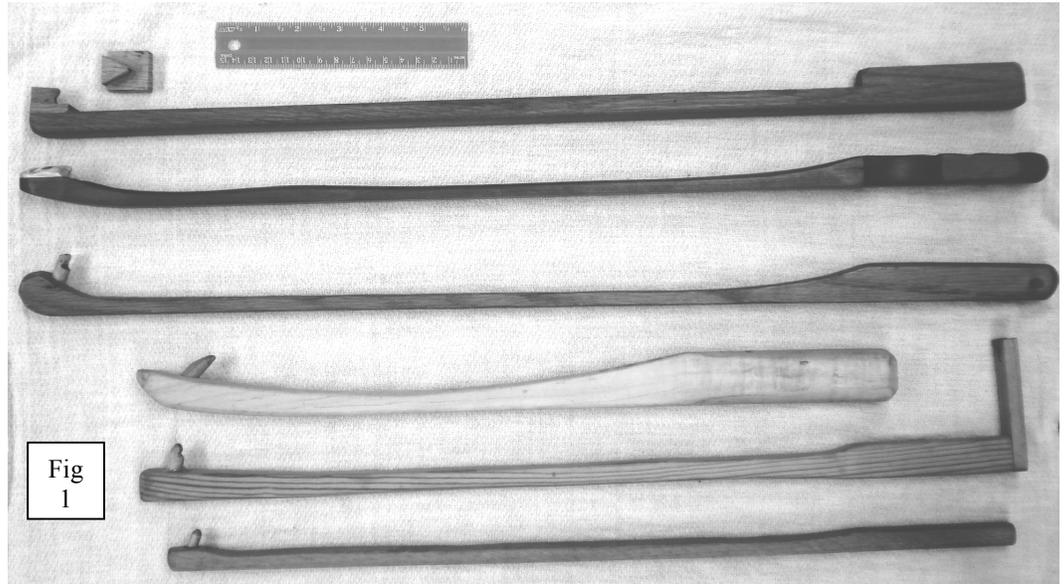


Leave a thicker grip at one end, and I like a smaller thick spot at the hook end if I am going to drill it for a peg hook. Round off square edges to suit, and fit the grip comfortably to your hand. A belt sander makes this real fast. Figure 1 shows a group of atlatls made by students and myself.

3. Add the hook. I use two types of hook on my “ten-minute” atlatls. In Figure 1, the top two atlatls have block hooks, the bottom 4 have peg hooks.

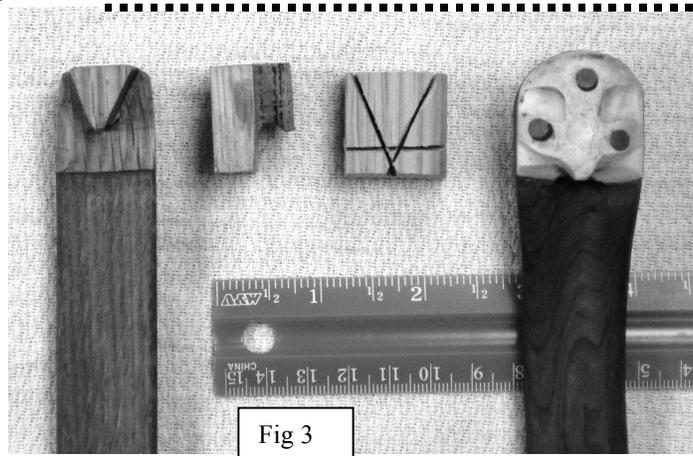
A) Hardwood dowel peg hooks are simplest (Figure 2). If you use a simple sharpened tip on the hook, it should be inserted at a fairly low angle into the end of the atlatl, which makes drilling the hole a bit more difficult. I prefer a hook that stands nearly straight up, and has a point and notch as shown. (This idea is from some Australian spear throwers).

B) The flat block hook (Figure 3) is easy to glue on (use epoxy or other strong glue), but it requires more precise cutting, and then a chisel to break out the excess wood and leave the triangular hook. The point of the hook must be undercut with a file or dremel tool.



4. Add elaborations to suit the maker. Many beginners like a dart rest, which can be easily attached to the end of the grip. Linseed oil is my preferred finish, but others like varnish, or paint the atlatl with wild colors or appropriate designs. Grips can be customized with leather wraps or finger grooves, and hooks can be shaped as animal heads or made of exotic and tougher materials like antler. Even a beginner can produce a personal atlatl that works well and looks good.

NOTICE: One of the most common questions asked by a new atlatlist is “How do I make an atlatl, and where do I find designs?” I am starting an album on the WAA webpage for atlatl designs. Send me and/or Margie pictures of your favorite atlatl, your new invention, a cool ethnographic one or whatever, (and instructions for making them if you wish), at [whittake@grinnell.edu](mailto:whittake@grinnell.edu) and [margieandfrank@1st.net](mailto:margieandfrank@1st.net).



## North American Atlatl Competition Events for 2008

THE WORLD ATLATL ASSOCIATION SANCTIONS NO CONTESTS,  
BUT ENCOURAGES MEMBERS TO ATTEND LOCAL CONTESTS.

- Oct. 3-5 Lake Atwood, **Ohio**, Ohio Atlatl Association, contact: [ohioatlatl@hotmail.com](mailto:ohioatlatl@hotmail.com)
- Oct. 4-5 Falling Blanket atlatl throw & ISAC. Cheyenne, **Wyoming**. Open to all, equipment and instruction cheerfully provided. Sponsored by the Wyoming Atlatl and Social Club. Contact: Gary/Regina Dodson [wyowinds@aol.com](mailto:wyowinds@aol.com) (307-632-0766) or Russell Richard [coyoteclown@aol.com](mailto:coyoteclown@aol.com) (307-772-0550) for location and time.
- Oct. 4-5 Richard's Back Acres Throw. Jeffersonville, **Indiana**. ISAC and Indiana State Championship throws each day. For information contact Richard B. Lyons (812) 246-9987 or [atlatlin@gmail.com](mailto:atlatlin@gmail.com)
- Oct. 5 Duncan Park, Austin, **Texas**, ISAC Sunday 11 AM. Contact [roywenmo2000@yahoo.com](mailto:roywenmo2000@yahoo.com)
- Oct. 11 New England Atlatl Day, Hammonasset State Park, Madison, **Connecticut**. 10:00-4:00. ISAC and Local competitions Co-Sponsored by the Friends of Hammonasset and the CT State Museum of Natural History/CT Archaeology Center. Camping Available. For information contact Gary Nolf at [gnolf@comcast.net](mailto:gnolf@comcast.net)
- Oct. 11 **Wisconsin**. ISAC Contact Doug Miller (715) 571-1882
- Oct. 11-12 Annual Candor Fall Festival Atlatl Contests and Demonstrations at Side Hill Acres Goat Farm, Route 96, Candor, **New York**. 9 a.m. to 4 both days. ISAC, IASAC and local contests and demonstrations. For further information contact Bob or Cheryl Berg at 1-800-836-4520 or [Thunderbirdatlatl@gmail.com](mailto:Thunderbirdatlatl@gmail.com)
- Oct. 17-19 9th Annual Clinch River Primitive Skills Knap-in & Atlatl mLenoir City, **Tennessee**. IAS and ISAC all three days. Come join the fun. For more information visit website-[www.clinchrivernapin.org](http://www.clinchrivernapin.org) Or contact-James Gibson-(865)577-4430 or Philip Davis-(865)988-8064 For atlatl info contact Doug Leeth-(704)538-0541
- Oct. 18 Eighth Annual Blackwater Draw Atlatl Throw, Blackwater Draw Site, **New Mexico**. Eastern New Mexico University's Department of Anthropology and Applied Archaeology, Blackwater Draw Archaeological Site, and Mu Alpha Nu Anthropology Club are pleased to announce the Eighth Annual Blackwater Draw Atlatl Throw. The competition will include a Target Round and an ISAC (International Standard Accuracy Contest). The site is located along the road to Cannon Air Force Base (State Highway 467), about 6 miles north of Portales and 1 mile north of the turn to Oasis State Park. Registration and practice will start at 9:00 AM, with the Target Round beginning at 10:00. The ISAC round will take place in the afternoon. There will be categories for men, women, and children, and prizes for the top finishers in each category. Don't worry if you haven't done it before. It's the process, not the prize. Bring atlatls and darts if you have them. There will be some available for loan and sharing if you don't. This competition is NOT restricted to primitive technology. Atlatls and darts may be made of traditional or modern materials. For more information, contact Dave Batten, Department of Anthropology and Applied Archaeology, Station 3, Eastern New Mexico University, Portales, NM 88130. Phone 505 562-2750. email [david.batten@enmu.edu](mailto:david.batten@enmu.edu)
- Oct. 19 Pasadena, **California**. In conjunction with a monthly Bowmaking/Flintknapping/Atlatl Gathering, ISAC Contest (only), Atlatl & Dart making and throwing clinics, Check the atlatl discussion forums at [www.PaleoPlanet.net](http://www.PaleoPlanet.net) for further information, or contact Tom Mills at (626) 794-9158 or [paleoaleo@yahoo.com](mailto:paleoaleo@yahoo.com)
- Oct. 24-25 Zaleski State Forest, Lake Hope Park **Ohio** ROAR days, ISAC, IASAC and Ohio Atlatl Association local events. Contact Steve Barnett [barnz@juno.com](mailto:barnz@juno.com) (740) 698-6553 or Ray Strischek [ohioatlatl@hotmail.com](mailto:ohioatlatl@hotmail.com) (740) 593-2365
- Oct. 25 Dundee Sportsman Club, **Wisconsin**, ISAC and various Atlatl events starting at noon. For more information contact: Leonard Riemersma (920) 528-7454 email: [lenmaryr@dotnet.com](mailto:lenmaryr@dotnet.com)
- Oct. 26 Monticello, **Wisconsin**. Coinciding with the Badger State Archeological Show. ISAC. Contact Doug Miller (715) 571-1882
- Nov. 1 Fall Event, Gilligan residence, Brighton, **Michigan**. 3-D, ISAC, 12 - 5 p.m., Potlatch. Contact Jim Gilligan at [primitive1@chartermi.net](mailto:primitive1@chartermi.net) or (810) 599-6881. For updated information check [www.michiganatlatl.org](http://www.michiganatlatl.org)
- Nov. 1-2 Frosty Blanket atlatl throw & ISAC. Cheyenne, **Wyoming**. Open to all, equipment and instruction cheerfully provided. Sponsored by the Wyoming Atlatl and Social Club. Contact: Gary/Regina Dodson [wyowinds@aol.com](mailto:wyowinds@aol.com) (307-632-0766) or Russell Richard [coyoteclown@aol.com](mailto:coyoteclown@aol.com) (307-772-0550) for location and time.
- Nov. 2 Duncan Park, Austin, **Texas** ISAC Sunday 11 AM Contact [roywenmo2000@yahoo.com](mailto:roywenmo2000@yahoo.com)
- Nov. 7-9 Horse Arena Atlatl Shoot .Sortore Farm - Friendship, **New York**. ISAC, IASAC, European Round and locals (4 pm Fri – noon Sun). One mile south of Interstate I-86 (Southern Tier Expressway, Route 17), Friendship Exit (29) on the east side of Route 275 (on your left coming from the expressway). The site has heated kitchen, shower, toilet, running water, electric outlets and plenty of camping room. Note this is an active horse farm - no dogs please. For more information contact Bonnie Sortore (716) 307-4449 or Douglas Bassett (585) 493-3625.

- Nov. 15-16 Wenmohs Ranch, Cypress Mill, **Texas**. Fall Art Show, <http://www.wenmohsranch.com/> ISAC Saturday and Sunday, 11 AM. Contact [roywenmo2000@yahoo.com](mailto:roywenmo2000@yahoo.com)
- Nov. 16 Pasadena, **California** In conjunction with a monthly Bowmaking/Flintknapping/Atlatl Gathering ISAC Contest (only) Atlatl & Dart making and throwing clinics Check the atlatl discussion forums at [www.PaleoPlanet.net](http://www.PaleoPlanet.net) for further information, or contact Tom Mills at (626) 794-9158 or [paleoaleo@yahoo.com](mailto:paleoaleo@yahoo.com)
- Nov. 21-23 Horse Arena Atlatl Shoot . Sortore Farm - Friendship, **New York** (ISAC, IASAC, European Round and locals (4 pm Fri – noon Sun). One mile south of Interstate I-86 (Southern Tier Expressway, Route 17), Friendship Exit (29) on the east side of Route 275 (on your left coming from the expressway). The site has heated kitchen, shower, toilet, running water, electric outlets and plenty of camping room. Note this is an active horse farm - no dogs please. For more information contact Bonnie Sortore (716) 307-4449 or Douglas Bassett (585) 493-3625.
- Nov. 28 Turkey Toss, Klimowicz residence, Fenton, **Michigan** 3-D, ISAC 12 - 5 p.m. Potlatch Contact Jim Gilligan at [primitive1@chartermi.net](mailto:primitive1@chartermi.net) or (810) 599-6881 For updated information check [www.michiganatlatl.org](http://www.michiganatlatl.org)
- Nov. 29 Duncan Park, Austin, **Texas** ISAC Saturday 11 AM. Contact [roywenmo2000@yahoo.com](mailto:roywenmo2000@yahoo.com)
- Nov. 30 Duncan Park, Austin, **Texas** ISAC Sunday 11 AM Contact [roywenmo2000@yahoo.com](mailto:roywenmo2000@yahoo.com)

### European Events for 2008

4-5/10/2008	Bougon (F)	ISAC	<a href="mailto:Rodolphe.aubugeau@cg79.fr">Rodolphe.aubugeau@cg79.fr</a>
11-12/10/2008	Pinar (E)		<a href="mailto:celemartinez68@hotmail.com">celemartinez68@hotmail.com</a>
18-19/10/2008	Sergeac (F)	ISAC	<a href="mailto:cyrille-huc@wanadoo.fr">cyrille-huc@wanadoo.fr</a>
8-9/11/2008	Tautavel (F) (66)		<a href="mailto:conservateur@tautavel.com">conservateur@tautavel.com</a>

### North American Atlatl Competition Events for 2009

- Jan 10 Fogelman's, Turbotville, **Pennsylvania** ISAC, IASAC, local. Contact Gary - 570-437-3698 or [iam@indian-artifacts.net](mailto:iam@indian-artifacts.net) (17<sup>th</sup> if 10<sup>th</sup> is snowed out)
- Jan. 11 Wenmohs Ranch, Cypress Mill, **Texas**, ISAC Sunday 11 AM. Contact [roywenmo2000@yahoo.com](mailto:roywenmo2000@yahoo.com)
- Feb. 7 2nd Annual Archeolympics, Seminole Canyon State Park, **Texas**. Contests include the atlatl and rabbit stick, plus a friction fire starting race. Contact Jack Johnson at [jjohnson@shumla.org](mailto:jjohnson@shumla.org) or (432) 292-4848.
- Feb. 15 Texas Atlatl Championship Tournament. Austin, **Texas** Hosted by the Austin Archery Club at Emma Long Park . Thirty 3-D targets in the Hill Country, contest fee = \$12. 8:30 AM - 1 PM. More information available on-line: <http://www.austinarcheryclub.com>
- March 15 Texas Atlatl Tournament. Austin, **Texas** Hosted by the Austin Archery Club at Emma Long Park Thirty 3-D targets in the Hill Country, contest fee = \$12. 8:30 AM - 1 PM  
More information available on-line: <http://www.austinarcheryclub.com>
- April 19 Texas Atlatl Tournament , in Austin, **Texas** Hosted by the Austin Archery Club at Emma Long Park , Thirty 3-D targets in the Hill Country, contest fee = \$12. 8:30 AM - 1 PM More information available on-line: <http://www.austinarcheryclub.com>
- June 19-21 Meadowcroft, Avella, **PA** Local contests and ISAC each day. Contact Margie Takoch, [theatlatl@1st.net](mailto:theatlatl@1st.net) 740.264.1755
- August 28-30 Stone Tool Craftsman Show, Highbanks Rcrtn Area, North end of Letchworth State Park - Castile, **New York** 10:00 am to 5:00 pm 20th Annual Eastern Seaboard Atlatl Competition (State Round, Closest-to-Pin, Distance) Aug 29 & 30. ISAC, IASAC, Hoop Toss, Throw Over the Gorge Qualifiers & wooded Animal Round every day. Handicapped Mammoth Hunt Saturday, and Atlatl Battle and Gorge Throw Sunday. New York Atlatl Association, Inc. insured event. Stone Tool Show contact: Dana & Kay Klein 585-365-8048. Atlatl Competition contact: Douglas Bassett 585-493-3625.

### Deadline for submissions to The Atlatl are:

- January newsletter deadline is December 15<sup>th</sup>  
 April newsletter deadline is March 15<sup>th</sup>  
 July newsletter deadline is June 15<sup>th</sup>  
 October newsletter is September 15th

Hello friends, at your earliest opportunity please update your links to our website to [www.michiganatlatl.org](http://www.michiganatlatl.org) and our email address to [primitive1@chartermi.net](mailto:primitive1@chartermi.net)

Thanks!

Jim Gilligan, Michigan Atlatl Association



1. Here are my first few atlatls.  
 Top to bottom: striped maple basketmaker, birch w/beef bone spur, Tom Mills style woomera/basketmaker hybrid in black cherry, walnut w/gemsbok horn spur, and walnut w/oak spur and dart rest  
 2. walnut woomera  
 3. It's maple, 24" long, and designed for a split fingered grip, with a dart rest



These are some atlatls made by jcougar from the Paleoplanet website.

**Richard Lyons, Treasurer**  
 5024 King Road  
 Jeffersonville, IN 47130  
 phone: (812) 246-9987 or email: [atlatlin@theremc.com](mailto:atlatlin@theremc.com)

First Class Mail



World Atlatl Association Web Site:  
[www.worldatlatl.org](http://www.worldatlatl.org)