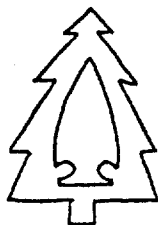


MAINE ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY



CONTENTS



FACT and FANTASY in AMERICAN PREHISTORY Dr. Deane Snow	1
DAMARISCOTTA OYSTER SHELL HEAPS Charles Bradford	8
MODDITIES Lloyd H. Varney	10
EDITORIAL	Back Cover

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MAINE ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

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SPRING MEETING

MAY 18, 1969

Wilson Museum, Castine

Business meeting at 2:00 p.m.

Robert MacKay will talk on the University of Maine's dig in Blue Hill during 1968, and have artifacts from the site.

An all day dig is planned (weather permitting) on the site of the John Perkins House, which was built about 1770. All materials found will belong to the Wilson Museum for its reconstruction of the Perkins House.

Bring a picnic lunch. Coffee will be served at the Museum. Also bring digging tools, etc.

In case of rain, the dig will be held the following weekend.

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SOCIETY DIG

June 22, 1969

9 - 9:30 a.m.

Marshall Rice has offered to provide water transportation to an island off Deer Isle, so that interested members and friends may spend a day "digging in a shell heap."

Directions: follow Route 15 from Blue Hill, through the town of Deer Isle, toward Stonington. At the Mobile Station (painted blue) turn left to Sunshine. Or, at the station, follow "Eugen Eaton & Sons" signs.

What to bring: food, drink, digging tools, clothing in case, etc.

If it rains or is extremely windy the dig will be held on the 29th.

Bob MacKay has requested that we allow the University of Maine to hold materials and artifacts found long enough to study, classify, and catalog them. They can then be returned to you if you wish.

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JUST IN CASE

If the News Letter has caught up with you, you will note the reminder of dues being due.

In case you haven't yet paid, please take the time to send your dues to:

Jean T. MacKay, Treasurer

P.O. Box 133

Stillwater, Maine 04489

Amount - Annual, \$2.00; Family, \$3.00; Institutional, \$3.00

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SINCE only one bulletin was issued in 1968, all 1967-68 members are receiving the 1969 spring bulletin. However, this is the last publication you will receive if you have not paid for 1968-69.

Your interest and membership will help our society to grow and prosper.

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NOTE - If you have already paid, ask a friend to join and share in your fun.

Dr. Dean Snow

During the last century and to a lesser extent this century, speculation regarding the origins of the American Indian and possible connections between them and the Old World has led to a long list of unsupported claims. Among those forming the long parade of supposed ancestors of the Indians and groups purported to have visited them before Columbus are those listed below.

Tyrian Phoenicians	Celts
Assyrians	Mandingoes
Egyptians	Madagascans
Greeks	Irish monks
Scythians	Welsh princes
Tartars	Norsemen
Chinese Buddhists	Basques
Hindus	Portuguese
Spaniards	French
Huns	Survivors of lost continents
	Lost tribes of Israel

With one exception, there is no evidence to confirm the supposed presence of any of these in the New World before 1492. The sole exception is the case of the Norsemen, long suspected of having spent a relatively short time somewhere on the north Atlantic coast. Recent careful excavation in New foundland has revealed a Viking settlement, and a prolonged and cautious study of an early Norse map by scholars at Yale has provided further support. Even this, however, does not mean that all the sites along the New England coast for which a Viking origin has been claimed are in fact Viking. If all of these claims were valid, the Norse population would have had to have been many times larger and widespread than was actually the case. In short, no verified Norse sites have been located outside Newfoundland, and there are no detectible Norse elements in American Indian cultures. We must assume that their presence here was short-lived and that their influence on Indian cultures of this region was minimal.

One proponent of close and lasting connections between the Vikings and the Indians of eastern Canada and United States has spent much of his life publishing lists of words from various Algonquian languages that are supposed to be equivalents

2.

of words in Old Norse. Reider Sherwin, the author, has published a set of seven volumes at his own expense in a futile and unconvincing effort to prove his point. Sherwin is not a trained linguist and his unscientific comparison of Eastern Algonquian with Old Norse but not with other Algonquian languages has yielded only unfortunate and absurd results. He notes, for example, that "Amek" ("fish") in one Algonquian language is equivalent to the Norse "mok" ("fish"). Most of the similarities he notes are even more obscure than this and are of a kind that must be "believed to be seen."

An even better parallel comes from the American Southwest. "Nass" means "wet" in both Zuni Indian language and in German. Are we to believe, therefore, that the Zuni pueblo was founded by a band of lost Germans? If we employ Sherwin's selective use of "evidence" we can easily be lead to such a ridiculous conclusion. In 1492 there were about 2000 distinct and separate languages in the New World. Combine this with the relatively few combinations of sounds the human mouth can produce and you have a high probability that there will be words with similarities of pronunciation and meaning shared by historically unrelated languages. A few dozen such similarities can be found between any two languages selected at random from anywhere in the world. Only when whole vocabularies and complete grammatical structures are compared can we achieve an accurate measure of similarity between languages.

In the October 1967 issue of the Maine Archaeological Society Bulletin, Dr. Manuel Luciano da Silva offers for our consideration an hypothesis suggesting that Portugese explorers reached North America before 1492. Such an hypothesis is an attempt to offer an alternative to current opinion. As such, it must be tested if it is to be of further use. If it is erroneous and left untested, serious popular misconceptions could result.

As a source for this idea, Dr. da Silva revives a paper written by a minister in the last century called "The Portugese on the North Coast of America, and the First European Attempt at Colonization There, A Lost Chapter in History." In order

to evaluate the hypothesis we will have to examine each of its major points in detail.

Dr. da Silva first makes reference to inscriptions in Portuguese and Portuguese loanwords in Indian languages. Early Portuguese inscriptions in North America, if indeed they exist, would be of immense importance to his argument, but unfortunately no further mention is made of them in the article. Linguistic similarities, however, are examined in some detail. The first word mentioned is "quina," and it is noted that it is an extract of cinchona (not "cinchoma") bark found in highland Peru, but not until after 1638. But, it is not true that this word was not known in Peru before this date. It was in use before the conquest, but with somewhat different meanings. "Quina" was originally a Quechua Indian word that was borrowed by Spanish and subsequently borrowed from them by Portuguese and several other languages. In any case, mention of it is irrelevant to the present hypothesis. No linguist would suggest that an Algonquian speaking people would borrow a word from a language several thousand miles distant, radically alter both its pronunciation and meaning, and incorporate it into their own language.

After correctly (but for the wrong reasons) asserting that the word "quina" could not have been transferred from Peru to northeastern North America, the author goes on to assume that it follows that wherever the word occurs it must be of Portuguese origin. Unfortunately, this conclusion does not follow from the premise. Moreover, we are not told that in Portuguese, "quina" can mean "corner," "edge," or the five-spot sides of dice, presumably because these meanings would not fit the definition that he has decided the word must have had in "Algonquin." We are told instead that it is a fragment somehow separated from "hosanaquina," a word of limited usage that I have been unable to find in either of two Portuguese dictionaries. In any case, a search through Portuguese or any other language for the meanings of Algonquian root forms can only lead to erroneous conclusions. There is no more reason to assume that "Algonquin" has been derived from the English "all-gone-kin." We must first seek Indian definitions for Indian words. Looking

4.

for a cognate among Algonquian languages we find that the Micmac called the Algonquin tribe "alگوomeaking" or "alگوomaking" meaning "at-the-fish-spearing-place." This is a descriptive term having no European language roots. It was taken from the Micmac by early explorers along with many other words to identify interior tribes.

Some clarification of the two terms "Algonquin" and "Algonquian" is required at this point. "Algonquin" was originally applied only to the Weskarini tribe of Quebec. It was later extended to include several other ethnically-related small tribes of the same area. Still later, the name was adopted with modification to serve as a linguistic classification lumping a large number of prehistorically related Indian languages. The "Algonquian" language family thus includes the following languages.

1. Delaware
2. Penobscot-Abnaki-Pennacook
3. Malecite-Passamaquoddy
4. Micmac
5. Nipmuk-Pocumtuck
6. Massachuset-Nauset-Wampanoag-Cowesit
7. Narragansett-Niantic
8. Mohegan-Pequot-Montauk-Quinnipac-Unqwachog-Nangatuck
9. Mahican
10. Nanticoke-Conoy
11. Powhatan
12. Pamlico (Pamticough)
13. Blackfoot (Siksika)
14. Cheyenne
15. Arapaho-Atsina-Nawathinehena
16. Cree-Montagnais-Naskapi
17. Ojibwa-Ottawa-Salteaux-Algonkin
18. Sauk-Fox-Kickapoo
19. Miami-Wea-Piakeshaw-Peoria-Illinois
20. Menomini
21. Potawatomi
22. Shawnee

Each of these 22 languages of the Algonquian Family is distinct enough from the others to prevent mutual intelligibility. There is at least as much difference between any two of them as there is between Spanish and Italian. In many cases the differences are as pronounced as the difference between French and Russian (these last two are also of the same family, in this case Indoeuropean). I have

counted 107 dialects within these 22 languages. We must not allow the linguists use of "Algonquian" to lead us to believe that this was an aboriginal term used by the Indians to refer to themselves. It is a classificatory device made up within the last century.

We must also not be confused by the present form of "Algonquin", the word to which Dr. da Silva refers in his article. This word is the end result of much modification by French and English speakers that were unfamiliar with its correct pronunciation. Their inability to pronounce and write the word in its correct form is reflected in the wide variety of forms in which it appears in historical literature. A few of these variations are listed below.

- | | |
|----------------|-------------------|
| 1. Alagonkins | 11. Algonmequin |
| 2. Algokin | 12. Algonovins |
| 3. Algomeequin | 13. Algoomenquini |
| 4. Algomequins | 14. Algoquois |
| 5. Algommequin | 15. Algoumekins |
| 6. Algomquins | 16. Algoumequini |
| 7. Algoncains | 17. Alincongains |
| 8. Algongins | 18. Alquequin |
| 9. Algonquin | 19. Altenkins |
| 10. Algonic | 20. Attenkins |

There are several additional proper names purported to be cognates of Portuguese words. As in the case of the words discussed above, there are several synonyms for each of these, and the forms chosen are far from the original pronunciations. All of them contain syllables roughly similar to the mysterious and undefined "quina." The Massachuset meanings for these Massachuset words are ignored, but in some cases parts of the words are given additional Portuguese meanings. A Portuguese translation of such constructions as Quinachquck and Quoquinaposskessananog is not attempted, however, even though these words are presented as evidence.

The word "canada" was derived from "kanada," which means "village" or "settlement" in the Huron language. There is no need to resort as da Silva does to a Portuguese homonym meaning "narrow passage" for an explanation. Moreover, Huron is not an Algonquian language, but rather an Iroquoian language. The early explorers used this word to refer to all the Indians of what is now Canada, having taken the word and its meaning from the Huron.

Dr. da Silva provides us with a listing of nine "Indian" words that are supposed to have the same meanings as nine Portuguese words of similar pronunciation. On close examination, however, I have found that both the pronunciation of the "Indian" words and the meanings that they are supposed to have had have been altered. For example, "machias," in the Algonquian languages having this word, consistently means "bad little falls" and not "wild field." We are not told from what Indian language these words are supposed to have been taken but careful examination of Mohegan, Pequot, Natick and Penobscot vocabularies fails to yield words that are similar in pronunciation and meaning to the "indian" words provided by Dr. da Silva. All four of these tribes are coastal Algonquian speakers with whom explorers would have had first contact.

Dr. da Silva's comparison of Canadian place names with their equivalents does not require much comment. Basic similarities here result from two factors. (1) French and Portuguese are closely-related Romance languages, and close similarities exist throughout their vocabularies. It should be no surprise that French place names in Canada have cognates in Portuguese. (2) Portuguese map makers naturally borrowed existing place names to identify geographical localities and features. I have no doubt that the word "Maine" appears on Portuguese maps of the United States. But are we to assume that "Maine" is thereby a Portuguese word? The word also appears in German and Spanish maps and publications, but to my knowledge, no one has suggested that it was borrowed from either of these languages.

New World prehistory is an area of study that is constantly being presented

with both new and periodically revived hypotheses. Many of these propose cultural origins and/or contacts not traditionally accepted by archaeologists. There seems to be an innate tendency for us all to seize and embrace flamboyant and radically different explanations of prehistory simply because they are more colorful and interesting than the relatively dry explanations that result from careful research. If we are to avoid the perpetuation of misinformation that results from the alteration or misinterpretation of evidence, each of these hypotheses must be held up to the light and subjected to the most critical examination. Explanations that are based upon preconceptions and unsupported by evidence can only retard the growth of our knowledge of prehistory.

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DAMARISCOTTA OYSTER SHELL HEAPS

Charles Bradford

"As you know this land is transferred to the State as a gift from Mrs. Freeman and myself and the deed bears our signatures." So read a letter bearing date of October 11, 1968 to C. P. Bradford, Supervisor of Historic Sites from Mr. Edward W. Freeman.

The three and one third acres given to the State of Maine became the 25th Memorial under the administration of the State Park and Recreation Commission. For a quarter of a century the Commission has been interested in the preservation of a site where this interesting chapter in Maine history could be told.

While shell heaps, oyster and others, are no rarity, being found all over the world, the oyster shell heaps on the banks of the Damariscotta River are among the world's largest, estimated by one authority to contain over 5 million cubic feet.

Today there are few oysters in the State of Maine. They have, however, lived at one time or another in most of the world's oceans where and when conditions were favorable to their needs. Among these needs are a supply of salt and fresh water circulated by currents to bring food and remove wastes.

There is evidence that these conditions existed for about 2000 years. Climatic conditions changed so that it is about 350 years since oysters have lived (in quantity anyway) in the Salt Bay area of the Damariscotta River.

Some of the ecological factors affecting oyster growth include bottom and surface, water supply and circulation, salinity, temperature, food sedimentation, disease, predators and pollution.

Allen C. Meyers in his thesis on the Damariscotta Oyster Shell Heaps writes "One can say with some certainty that the heaps are at least 2100 years old; that they were occupied by two or perhaps three different peoples; and that each of these occupations was separated from the others by sufficient

time for the development of sizable trees and a forest floor - at least 100 years, and up to 500 or more years. Lack of contact between the last two groups indicate that one did not drive the other out of the area. The question arises, then, as to why the groups left the area."

We do not know the answer, but for the oysters another question is posed. What happened to them while they were not being harvested for food?

That the oysters were there in abundance each time homo sapiens returned to this area is evidenced by the shells left from the early shore dinners of those here before the arrival of the tourists from Europe.

The State Park and Recreation Commission will develop the area only to the extent that access will be easy and safe. Beyond this interpretation of the site will be the major intrusion.

The citizens and guests to the State of Maine will always be grateful to Mr. and Mrs. Freeman for permitting them to feel they are participating in one of the earliest chapters of Maine's fascinating history.

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ODDITIES

Lloyd H. Varney

During the past year, two of my sons and I made several one day trips to a site which produced a variety of shell heap type artifacts, and a number of interesting oddities.

Although the major portion of the shell deposit had been clam hoed and resembled a disaster area, patience produced some results.

After attempting "salvage" work in the disaster portion, we moved to a spot inland from the "dug" area and the water.

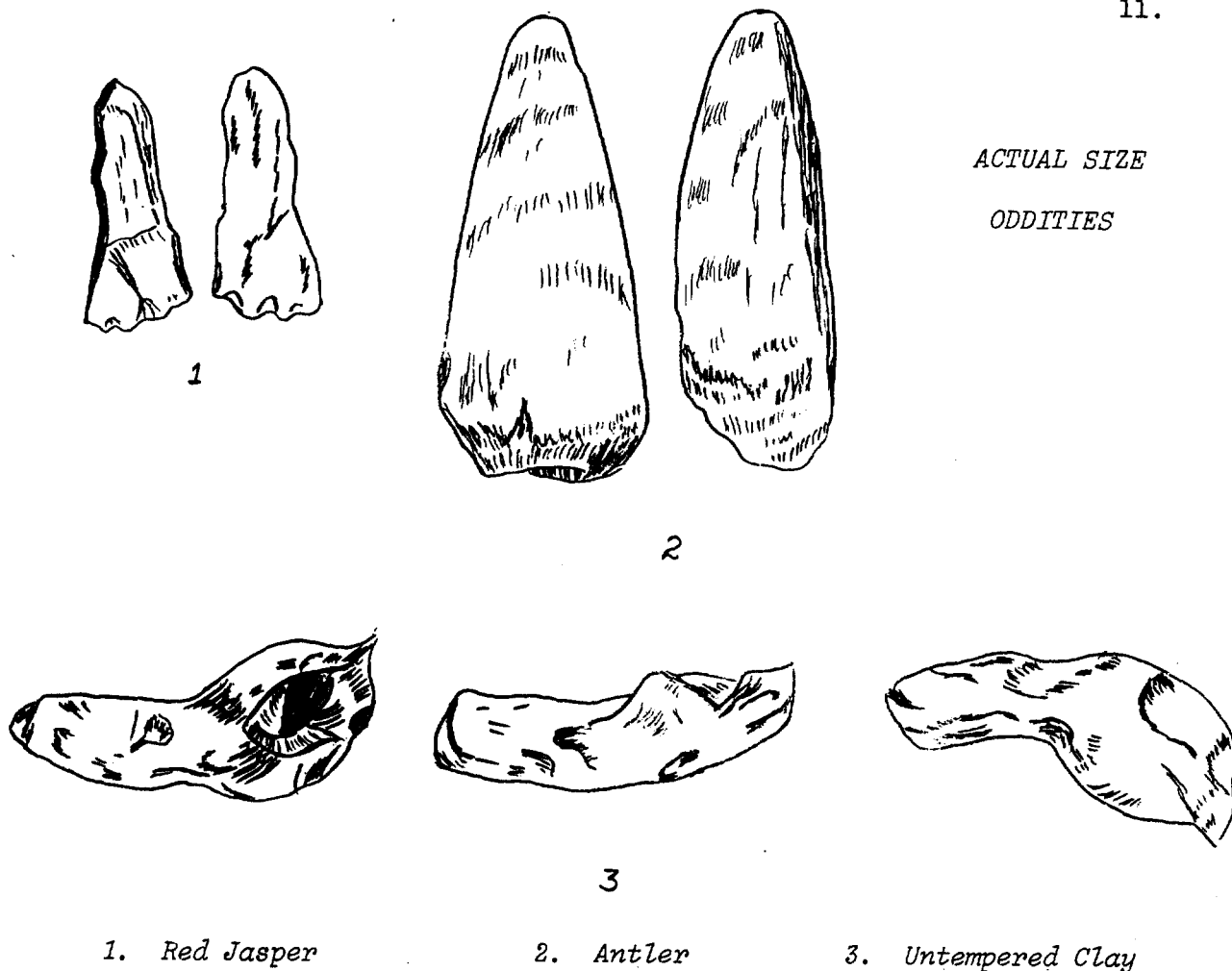
Total depth in this location seldom exceeded 6 to 8 inches from top of sod to mineral soil base. Most of the deposit was composed of black, charcoal stained earth, beach gravel, extensive areas of gray ash, and an occasional lense of decomposed shell.

Artifacts, in general, consisted of knives, projectile points, scrapers, hammerstones, pottery shreds, and various types of bone articles. No drills were recovered and only one bone artifact (a portion of a harpoon) had a hole drilled through it. The knives presented one of the greatest size variations yet observed, ranging from one extreme to the other and in between. There were small delicate knives, and there were some large enough to skin or cut up the biggest animal. Flakes, chips, and artifacts of jasper and agate indicated a degree of trading with western peoples.

Interesting though all of these items were, the small group of artifacts, which do not fit into any of the usual niches, stir the imagination and offer greater opportunity for speculation.

One of the strange things noticed was the presence of numerous, thin, flat rocks. Most of these were found in or around the areas of gray ash. There was no standard shape or size, and the best description would be that they were of varying dimensions, somewhere between a small dinner plate and a platter.

The presence of these flat rocks seemed to have no bearing on the other artifacts. Since similar rocks do not occur along the beach, and are not found in nearby shell heaps, why were they present as an imported item at this one site, and to what use



might they have been put?

The first part of that question will remain unanswered for the present.

However, speculation may present a possible solution for the second portion.

Since this site was adjacent to a shell heap, the answer may be in the clam-shucking-smoking-drying process. Could these flat stones have been used to pile clam meats on prior to placement on the smoking stringers?

A real puzzler is composed of eleven ovoid, flat stones. These range from 1 3/4 to 2 7/8 inches in length, 1 1/4 to 2 inches in width and 1/2 to 3/4 inch in thickness. Material varies greatly, some being quite hard - other soft and much like sandstone in appearance. Degrees of hardness between the two extremes is also present. And, like the "clam shucking rocks" above these smaller oddities cannot be duplicated along the beach in either shape or material.

12.

The interesting part about these eleven stones is that they were all found at the same level and were layed out in a rough circle. No particular pattern was observed or orientation apparent. However, they were once important to someone.

One artifact (1), of dark red jasper, almost ended up in the chip discard box. Extremely thin, and only 1 1/4 inches long, it was taken home as a chip. Careful washing and examination revealed small, flat topped teeth. Too thin and small to have been used for most work, it remains an unexplained curiosity.

Pottery shreds, with sand as a tempering material, were present throughout our excavating at this site. Since the beach sand and gravel was not similar to the sand used as temper, and we could find no source of clay, the case for pottery making at another location is very strong.

Mixed in, with all of the shell, gravel, and charcoal, was a lumpy piece of fired, but completely untempered clay (3). It does not even have a smooth surface or esthetically pleasing shape.

Bone points and tools were not as numerous as in other shellheaps in the general area. Most such artifacts could be readily identified. However, a cone shaped piece of antler (2), which must have been very smooth and polished at one time, does not fit any of the regular catagories. Ovoid in cross section, with a remaining length of 2 inches, it bears no marks of use whatever.

A number of other oddities were found, and upon examination of materials collected previously we found several more. One such item does not defy descritpion, however.

While braving the "disaster area" on one trip, we proceeded to clean out a working area with a mineral soil base and a vertical working face.

Slowly forging ahead through a mess of "hoed" debris and a thin bottom layer of undisturbed shell, I came upon a round, heavy object with a whitish coating. About the diameter of a dime, this product of the white man had somehow found its way through over a foot of shell and debris to within an inch of the bottom of the shell heap.

As it was the only evidence of contact, we can merely speculate on how it came to its final resting place.

Oddities are certainly interesting. If you don't believe it, spread out your own unidentified items some time and try to determine their use.

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ARE YOU A "POT-HOLER" or an ARCHAEOLOGIST?

With many "digging" seasons already past, and another one coming, you and I will soon be taking every opportunity to search for that elusive site that will tell us more than any other we've excavated. But, before we check our tools, let's make a resolution.

RESOLVED: "Starting with 1969, I will keep as accurate a record as possible of where I excavate, the artifacts I locate, and their position in the site in regard to other items or stratigraphy, and that I will make this information available for publication so that others may profit from my experiences."

The margin between a "pot-holer" and an archaeologist, be he amateur or professional, is a very narrow one. Actually the purpose each serves differentiates between one and the other.

The "pot-holer" digs for personal gain alone - be it collection size increase or monetary. The archaeologist also digs for gain, but herein the difference lies. His efforts are directed toward a gain in knowledge which he shares with others through publication of his findings, - all taken from the records and field notes he keeps.

Before you start another season, resolve to do a better job than last year, keep records of your activity, and then write an account of your work and findings.

If you don't record, the detailed information and knowledge is lost. And, if you don't change your records into information which can be published, no one can benefit from your efforts.

The Editor