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**JAMESTOWN MYSTERY ARTIFACT CONTEST  
INSPIRES WINNING IDEAS FROM STUDENTS**

**Media Only**

Paula Neely

TEL (804) 781-0116

EML [PNeely@erols.com](mailto:PNeely@erols.com)

**Virginia Tourism Corporation**

901 East Byrd Street

Richmond, VA 23219-4048 USA

TEL (804) 786-2051

FAX (804) 786-1919

[www.virginia.org](http://www.virginia.org) (consumer)

[www.vatc.org](http://www.vatc.org) (industry)

**RICHMOND, Va.** – Suggesting everything from a beer dispenser to a lunch box to a soap dish, students throughout the U.S. offered innovative explanations, grounded in historical accuracy, to win a contest about how early colonists might have used a mystery artifact unearthed by archaeologists at Historic Jamestowne, the first permanent English settlement in America and the birthplace of the United States.

Featured in DIG magazine, the contest was sponsored by the Virginia Tourism Corporation to help increase awareness of America's 400th Anniversary and the founding of Jamestown which will be commemorated in 2007 with festivals, new exhibits, educational programs, music and live performances throughout Virginia.

Contest participants were asked to describe how a double-walled, oval ceramic bowl, unearthed by archaeologists at the James Fort archaeological site, might have been used during the late-16th and early-17th centuries. Creative thinking and reference to history and accuracy were important. Students also had to submit a drawing that illustrated their ideas. Winners were chosen by the APVA archaeological staff at Historic Jamestowne.

In the K-3 category, Allie Dominicali, a second-grader from Athens, Ga., won with an idea for a Colonial lunch box with a cooling system. Tom Quimby, a fourth-grader from Mechanicsville, Va., won for grades 4 -5 with a paint dish, and Harmony Arendt, a sixth-grader from South Charleston, Ohio, won for grades 6-8 with a hanging soap pot .

Winners will receive free admission for their parents and siblings to Historic Jamestowne, Jamestown Settlement museum, Yorktown Battlefield, Yorktown Victory Center, Colonial Williamsburg, Busch Gardens and Water Country USA, plus two-night accommodations at the Great Wolf Lodge in Williamsburg, Va. They also win a mystery package for their classmates from Historic Jamestowne.

Judges awarded honorable mentions to: Chad Malinowski, a fifth-grader from Cortlandt Manor, N.Y., for a beer dispenser that fills four glasses at one time; Moll Nemer, a fifth-grader from Mendota Heights, Minn., for a pot used to extract healing oils from bark and plants; Emilie Fortman, a sixth-grader from Leesburg, Va., for a chafing dish; Katrina Jacobs, a seventh-grader from Amherst, N.H., for a container used to separate milk and cream; Tess Beltz, a seventh-grader from Alzada Mont. for a container that separates corn hulls from corn meal; Robert Marquis, a fourth-grader from Fredericksburg, Va., for a soap dish; Gemma Arendt, a fourth-grader from S.Charleston, Ohio, for a bean pot; and Sarah Liles, a fifth-grader from Knightdale, N.C., for a colander.

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## NEWS

“Some of the ideas suggested by the students may be right. We don’t know how the pot was actually used,” said Bly Straube, APVA curator at Historic Jamestowne. Although it is unique in America, the double dish form is known through at least twenty-two vessels that have been excavated in England from late 16th and early 17th-century contexts. Straube said the Medieval Pottery Research Group documents the form as “a rare ceramic form, presumably with a specific function which remains unknown.”

In anticipation of the 400th anniversary of the founding of Jamestown, the APVA Preservation Virginia launched the archaeological project at Historic Jamestowne to identify and interpret the remains of the 1607 James Fort and town site. When archaeologists found the footprint of the triangular wooden fort in 1996, they dispelled the long-held belief that the fort was lost to the James River.

Since the project began in 1994, archaeologists have found the outline of James Fort including the remains of portions of the palisade walls and two bulwarks, as well as several buildings, pits and wells. Nearly one million objects reflective of life at James Fort have been unearthed so far, as well as the skeletons of a man and woman believed to have been among the early settlers and the remains of a high-ranking colonist, possibly Captain Bartholomew Gosnold, the principal organizer and administrator of the early Jamestown effort.

Visitors to Historic Jamestowne can share the moment of discovery with archaeologists and witness archaeology in action at the 1607 James Fort excavation, tour the original 17th-century church tower and reconstructed 17th-century Jamestown Memorial Church, take a walking tour with a park ranger through the original settlement along the scenic James River, "meet" a 17th-century personality, and watch costumed glassblowers at the Glasshouse. Driving tours explore the lush natural setting where exhibits explain how the settlers harnessed that wilderness for their needs. Visitors regularly see bald eagles, heron, osprey, deer and other wildlife.

New facilities and interpretive programs under development for 2007 include a new visitor center with an immersion theater experience, and the Archaearium, a new facility that will showcase the archaeological discoveries and artifacts, last touched by the men, women, children, Virginia Indians, Europeans and Africans that came together at Jamestown to perhaps unknowingly create a new and unique American culture.

The Jamestown Settlement museum located nearby, offers a film, museum exhibits, and outdoor re-creations of a Colonial fort, a Powhatan Indian village, and three ships like those that brought the settlers to Jamestown. New exhibition galleries will open by 2007, and a major exhibit “The World of 1607” will open in the spring of 2007.

For more information about Jamestown, America’s 400th Anniversary and traveling in Virginia visit [www.jamestown1607.org](http://www.jamestown1607.org). For more information about the excavation at Historic Jamestowne, visit [www.historicjamestowne.org](http://www.historicjamestowne.org).

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