The Gwinnett Archaeological Research Society (GARS) will have its monthly meeting on Thursday, February 12 at the Gwinnnett Justice and Administration Center (75 Langley Drive, Lawrenceville). The guest speaker will be GARS member and archaeologist Justin Holcombe. He will give a presentation on his work at Tel Azekah (also Tell Zakariya) in Israel.

This site is located in the heart of the Judean Lowland and was once the control point of a strategic junction of roads—having played a central role in the ancient history of the region. The biblical text references the area around Azekah as the arena for the battle between boy David and Goliath (1 Samuel 17:1). The town was destroyed by the Assyrian King Sennacherib and is referenced in Assyrian texts as an “eagle’s nest . . . with towers that project to the sky like swords.” According to Jeremiah 34:7 over a 100 years later during the Babylonian siege against Jerusalem, Lachish and Azekah “were the only fortified cities of Judah that remained.” Azekah was destroyed by the Babylonian army in 586 B.C.E. Nevertheless, the history of the site continued during the Hasmonian, Hellenistic, Roman, and Byzantine periods—where it appears on the famous Madaba (mosaic) map as Beit Zechariah (pictured right).

A team of archaeologists led by Tel Aviv and Heidelberg University visited the site in 2012. As a student in archaeology at Tel Aviv, Justin was able to participate in this dig. He served as supervisor of a small test area on the supposed Assyrian siege ramp.

All meetings are opened to the public—gathering at 7 PM with meeting beginning at 7:30 PM.
The Georgia Historical Society is holding the Georgia History Festival from Monday, February 2 through Wednesday, February 18 at multiple locations across the state. The featured historical figure for the festival this year is Hernando de Soto in observance of the 475th anniversary of his journey in Georgia. The festival will kick off in Atlanta on Monday, February 2 in the south wing of the Capitol at 11AM with a James Edward Oglethorpe interpreter. Several events of interest will be held; highlighted below are some of these events:

- **The Keynote Address** will feature archaeologist Dr. Dennis Blanton of James Madison University (formerly of the Fernbank Museum). He will discuss his work over the past decade on the route of Hernando de Soto’s (pictured right) 1540 expedition through Georgia through excavations at the site of a possible encampment in Telfair County. The address, entitled *Hernando de Soto’s Legacy in Georgia, From Capachequi to Coosa*, will be on Thursday, February 5 at the Coastal Georgia Center in Savannah beginning at 6:30PM. The event is free and open to the public.

- **The Colonial Faire and Muster** will be held at Wormsloe State Historic Site in Savannah on February 6 –8 from 10AM to 4PM. Experience the everyday life of colonial times through historical re-enactments, cannon firings, demonstrations of cooking and craft techniques, music, and dance. The event is free and open to the public.

- **Shuman Cup Cricket Tournament** will be held on Thursday, February 12 at the Shuman Elementary School in Savannah beginning at 9:30AM. Come cheer for the teams of the annual colonial cricket tournament for Chatham County elementary schools!

- **As part of the annual commemoration of the founding of the Georgia colony by James Edward Oglethorpe, a tradition dating back to the earliest years of the colony’s founding, the Georgia Day Parade** is made up of students, musicians, local dignitaries, and costumed historical figures marching through Savannah’s historic squares. The 2015 Georgia Day Parade will be held on February 18. The event is free and open to the public.

The Georgia History Festival is the signature K–12 educational program of the Georgia Historical Society. Held annually around the anniversary of the founding of the Colony of Georgia on February 12, 1733, this commemoration brings history to life for students of all ages through a variety of programs—including a series of in-school events and educational resources. For more information about more events according during the Georgia History Festival visit the [Georgia Historical Society’s Web site](#).
**More Diggin’s**

- **Atlanta History Center** will be having “Struggles and Strides” on **Saturday, February 7 from 11AM to 4PM**. Commemorate Black History Month with a day of activities, special museum theatre performances, and guest lectures that explore the African American experience from the Great Migration to the Civil Rights Movement. This program is free to members; included in the cost of general admission for nonmembers. For more information visit the Atlanta History Center’s Web site.

- **Exploring the Gullah-Geechee Culture** at the **Gwinnett Environmental and Heritage Center (GEHC)** will be on **Saturday, February 7 at 1PM and 2PM**. Join Tiffany Young, of African and American Origins, as she shares her knowledge of the Gullah-Geechee Culture through song and dance. This program is in honor of Black History Month and features hands-on activities and crafts for children. View cultural artifacts and learn how these individuals brought their traditions from West Africa and impacted American history. For more information please visit the GEHC’s Web site.

- **Super Museum Day**, as part of the Georgia History Festival (See Page 2), will be held on **Sunday, February 8** with **multiple sites throughout Coastal Georgia**. From Statesboro to Darien over 40 cultural institutions, historic sites, house museums, art museums, and other points of interest in Savannah and coastal Georgia open their doors for free to the public for this Georgia Historical Society tradition. For a list of participating sites or more information visit the Georgia Historical Society’s Web site.

- The **GEHC** will be hosting **Centuries of Childhood: An American Story** exhibit (**pictured right**). Children will connect the stories of American history to their own experiences by learning about the lives of five historical children and their families. Each historical character will have its own distinct environment based on the time period and location in which they lived. By creating immersive environments with replicas of artifacts, home settings and traditional dress, children and families will feel like they are stepping into another time and place. For more information please visit the GEHC’s Web site.

**Fort Daniel Archaeological Lab**

John Hopkins and his team (Charles W., Mark Eastland, and Frank Perry) have been busy finishing up the archaeological lab area in the Grant House basement. Work has included installation and framing in of a toilet and sink and a large three-tub stainless steel sink as well a new lighting and rewiring (**pictured left**).

As soon as the final touches are completed and the lab is set up, work will resume on processing the Fort Daniel artifacts as well as the remaining work that needs to be done on the Fort Peachtree and Graves Soapstone artifacts.

The facility will also be ideal for training members in cleaning, curation and analysis of artifacts, and for introducing students to this important aspect archaeological research. Thanks to John and his team, especially Mark for his plumbing expertise, and to the George A. Ramlose Foundation whose grant made this possible. ■ JJD
The Fort Daniel Foundation (FDF) Officers and Board of the Foundation recently voted to contract with CAS Architecture of Lawrenceville to create concept design architectural plans for a possible Fort Daniel reconstruction project. Coffey Brothers Logging Company in Flowery Branch has offered to be our timber construction consultant. The concept design—be based on the Fort Daniel footprint and patterned after the reconstruction plans for a similar stockade fort in Florida (See GAB III/9 p. 8)—will be part of a feasibility study being conducted by a committee of members and interested citizens. Jim and members of the committee will meet at the site with the architect Chad Alexander Smith and David Coffey soon to begin the design process. Eventually, the Foundation will present its findings to the County without whose approval and participation a project of this magnitude will not be possible.

FDF Vice President Wayne Waldrip spoke at the January meeting of the Gwinnett Historical Society regarding the Old Peachtree Road (pictured right). Additionally, Wayne donated his speakers gratuity of $50 to the Foundation. Thank you, Wayne!

The FDF Officers and Board voted to contract with Accent Creative Group of Lawrenceville to design a logo for the Foundation and to create a new Web site. (Similarly, the GARS Web site is being redesigned.) Both projects are progressing well. A sample of the new logo is presented at the top of the page—although exact color scheme has yet to be finalized.