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Historical society finishes Landgraf's dig

BARKHAMSTED — The Barkhamsted Historical Society welcomed 53 people the kickoff of its 2008 program series Friday night with a presentation on the Colebrook forge archaeological dig by Marc Banks.

The society has been involved with the dig through the fall and winter of 2007 and unearthed treasures from Colebrook's early history that tell about the residents and operations of the old forge.

The excavation project was largely the passion of the late Walt Landgraf, who died while vacationing in Canada prior to the start of the dig.

Society president Paul Hart says Landgraf was special and will be missed.

"He was a very knowledgeable person and had the ability to convey that knowledge in a special way," Hart said by phone Friday night. "Walt would've really enjoyed this."

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After Landgraf's death, the dig was completed by Banks and the society in association with the Colebrook Historical Society. The Farmington River Coordinating Committee contributed \$5,000 to the dig.

The Colebrook forge was built in 1771 to process pig iron from Salisbury and create items such as ship's anchors. The forge also was one of the first in the colonies to process steel.

The dig uncovered not only the forge, but a coal house for storing the large amount of charcoal used to fuel the forge, and artifacts hinting at residences near the forge.

Hart was unsure of the fate of the artifacts or who technically owned them. His hope is that they'll be given to the Colebrook Historical Society for display. They are now with Banks, who will repeat his presentation for the Colebrook Historical Society in April.

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