

MEL FISHER MARITIME HERITAGE SOCIETY

# Young Navigator

A PRODUCTION OF MFMHS MER ACADEMY



MEL FISHER MARITIME MUSEUM  
Education Department

## MER ACADEMY 2007



**FLORIDA State Parks**  
*...the Real Florida*

FLORIDA PARK SERVICE  
ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

MEL FISHER MARITIME HERITAGE SOCIETY

# THEME FOR THE WEEK

## *Unlocking the Mysteries of the Atocha Shipwreck*



Eliot works to design and build his sailboat to be used in the mock hurricane and underwater excavation.



Students practice using their archeology skills by using metal detectors and carefully recording their finds.



We created a repository with artifacts found on our mystery ship site; here, students sort the artifacts by function.

What do found artifacts convey about people and culture? This week Mer Academy students experienced the work of underwater archeologists through their study of the *Atocha* shipwreck.

We began the week by reading stories about the *Atocha* and working together to recreate an outline of the *Atocha*. Using the measurements of the Spanish galleon, students measured and constructed a life-size outline of the ship.

Students utilized their problem-solving abilities to design and build a small sailboat for our mock hurricane and underwater excavation. Following specific criteria, they built boats to carry a cargo of ten pennies. At the beach we created a mock hurricane and then, using underwater grids and tablets, excavated the site and recorded our findings.

Wednesday, students traveled to the Mel Fisher Maritime Museum for a behind

the scenes look at the museum. They were able to work in the conservation lab with the conservator, Ms. Monica, and speak with the museum's archeologist, Mr. Corey.

Later in the week students excavated a mystery ship site. Each student worked to excavate their portion of the grid, being careful to record, measure, and sketch each of their findings. They made a prediction regarding the type of vessel using only the information from their grid. Next, we created a repository with all of the found objects and the students made another prediction using the information found by all of the archeologists.

We ended the week with a sailing trip aboard the *Liberty Clipper*; it was an excellent way to experience a bit of life at sea.



Monica Brook, the Mel Fisher Museum's conservator, shows the students a conservation tank.



William works to conserve an artifact found on the *Atocha*.



Max displays part of a sword recovered from the *Atocha*.





**Students work together to excavate the mystery ship site.**



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HERITAGE SOCIETY**

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The Mel Fisher Maritime Heritage Society is a 501(c) 3 not-for-profit organization existing for the purpose of accumulating and disseminating information by providing educational services to the public on maritime and colonial activity in the New World and preserving maritime cultural resources. It fulfills its mission through study, education, exhibition and publication.