



Friends of the Office of State Archaeology

*Member Newsletter
Spring 2000*

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PRESIDENT'S LETTER

FOSA's paramount objective for 2000 is to secure adequate, permanent state funding and facilities for the OSA and some of its most important programs. As I write this letter in mid-March 2000, a serendipitous combination of events and initiative may finally help achieve at least some of this goal. Shortly before I took the chair as president at the January 30, 2000 Annual Meeting, FOSA became involved in the first of two current campaigns to secure funding from the Connecticut General Assembly.

Despite clear mandates in state legislation creating the office, OSA has never had the staff or facilities needed to do its work -- which is the principal reason FOSA was created. The FOSA board learned late in 1999 that several assembly members wanted to correct the past decade of fiscal inattention, and made some informal presentations of OSA needs with figures compiled by Nick Bellantoni and the Connecticut State Museum of Natural History. FOSA treasurer Dreda Hendsey then worked closely with one of the assembly members who led an effort to add funds to the museum budget for immediate OSA staffing needs. This effort has apparently been successful, though the final result and figures will not be known until later in the spring.

Early in March 2000, FOSA and other members of Connecticut's archaeological community were alerted to a legislative effort in the General Assembly's Commerce Committee to provide significant funding for cultural heritage and tourism efforts without any recognition of OSA or archaeology. Funding was to be recommended by a Heritage Advisory Committee of preservationist professionals who evidently forgot, or never knew, what archaeology is or how archaeology can contribute to state tourism.

The FOSA board took the lead in coordinating a rapid response to the Commerce Committee. I drafted a letter which, with FOSA board input, became the basis for a statewide e-mail campaign from FOSA members and others. Board members Ken Beatrice, Chris Noble, and Gary Nolf testified at a public hearing, along with University of Connecticut representatives for the state museum.

The Commerce Committee re-drafted the bill to include the OSA on the Heritage Advisory Committee, and to provide the OSA with \$100,000! While we will not know the final fate of the legislation until later in the spring, it is certain that if the Heritage Advisory Com-

mittee continues, the OSA will be on it. With some luck and further work with legislators, there is now a good chance that the OSA will for the first time have funds for the professional assistance it needs to begin pursuing the legislated OSA mandates. While not enough to do the whole job, these funds will be a huge first step for OSA!

FOSA will also continue its efforts in 2000 to develop K-12 lesson plans in Connecticut archaeology, covering a range of topics and designed to promote a cross-cultural sharing of the past. The lessons would be provided free of charge. As chair of the grants committee, I completed development of a detailed grant proposal with FOSA Educational Coordinator Chuck Blanchard in the Fall of 1999, and am re-working it for submission to a number of Connecticut-based foundations. Our approach is to secure funding to develop one to five of the thirteen possible lesson plans. We hope to have some of these lessons completed this year.

Other FOSA 2000 goals include continued and improved coordination of volunteer work for OSA, and planning with the OSA and the Connecticut Historical Commission on completing a comprehensive, current file of Connecticut archaeological sites. The state files are extremely incomplete, with much information buried in contract archaeology reports. FOSA volunteers may become involved in this effort.

A final, personal objective is getting more professional archaeologists involved in, or at least members of, FOSA. Very few are currently members. I will help find the wallets of those in this category who know me and are solvent.

Mike Raber

NICK'S NEWS

To say that this is a very busy and exciting time for the Office of State Archaeology would be an understatement! The state's economy appears healthy and the result is a major increase in the number of proposed development projects. There is a lot of building going on and our role in assisting municipalities in their land use decision-making capabilities has increased accordingly. In addition, the archaeological collections and library continue to grow.

Our office and the Connecticut Historical Commission are moving forward in developing a preservation program for underwater archaeological resources. We are finishing a new web page site for information on the state's submerged cultural heritage, as well as a traveling

exhibit. This public educational program will assist us in reaching wreck divers around the state. Our hopes are that they will join us in a preservation effort to protect shipwrecks and other underwater sites.

The most exciting things are happening on the legislative front. Thanks to the efforts of FOSA, two initiatives are occurring in the General Assembly that can have a positive effect on our office. First, a bill to support economic development and tourism within the state through the promotion of history and cultural heritage has passed the Commerce Committee. Enactment of this bill will provide needed funds for archaeological collections and tourism, such as Archaeology Awareness Week.

Second, a direct appropriation to our office for an operating budget is also being considered. As of this writing we are uncertain if these initiatives will go through, but it is all very exciting and the Friends organization is making it happen.

Thanks to all of you for your continued support in the office, laboratory, field and through your membership.

ANNUAL MEETING

FOSA's annual meeting was held on January 30, 2000 at the Wood Memorial Library in South Windsor. Nick spoke briefly about the activities of his office over the past year and thanked volunteers. He then introduced Billy Anthony, teacher, and her students from Arace Middle School in Bloomfield, who presented a 15-minute slide show "Science in Archaeology." This presentation was the winning entry in the "Connecticut History Day" competition.

Mike Raber, FOSA Vice President, introduced Dr. Kathy Abbass, Rhode Island Marine Archaeology Project, who spoke on underwater archaeology. Both presentations were very well received.

Following the programs, the business meeting and elections were held. Chris Noble presented the new directors and slate of officers. *Board of Directors:* Kathie Kelleher and Bonnie Beatrice. *New Officers:* Mike Raber, President; Ken Beatrice, Vice President; Dreda Hendsey, Treasurer; Kathie Kelleher, Recording Secretary; and Mae Johnson, Corresponding Secretary. No candidates were nominated from the floor. A motion was made and passed unanimously to approve the slate of officers and directors as read. The remaining Board Members are June Cooke, Bruce Greene, Chris Noble and Gary Nolf.

Following the meeting, members and guests were able to enjoy the collections at Wood Memorial Library which included Chapin furniture, an extensive mounted bird collection, and a room exhibiting prehistoric artifacts.

Ken and Bonnie Beatrice provided a wonderful array of refreshments including cold meats, cheese, pastry,

snacks and assorted beverages.

Members also received a free bulletin published by ASC at this meeting.

KUDOS TO VOLUNTEERS

We value your assistance

Volunteers have been busy in Nick's office cataloging collections, library material, entering information on the computer, and various other duties.

Volunteers were also active in the field last year excavating various sites as well as helping out with 116 school children from Glastonbury who came in three waves to excavate and process their finds at the Morgan Site.

A special thank you to members of the Arthur Basto Society who not only helped faithfully at site excavations but processed all the material from several sites and returned all of it to Nick's office.

Many thanks to Bonnie Beatrice who made and donated 200 arrowhead tie tacks and pendants, to be offered by FOSA as a possible fundraiser or membership incentive.

A special thank you to those who gave additional donations in addition to their memberships, totaling \$400 to date this year.

NICK'S OFFICE EQUIPMENT

FOSA was able to obtain a copier and a new tape recorder for Nick's office this past year.

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

Roger Kindschi
Douglas Jordan
Barbara Urban
Meredith Vasta
Jim Walters
"Purple Core Students" of Gideon Welles School,
Glastonbury (classroom)

FOSA has added a classroom membership category. Membership dues for the classroom are \$20 annually.

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

More Are Needed

Since last September (when we started trying to keep track), more than 39 different people have volunteered to work with the state archaeologist, Nick Bellantoni. Several of those people have only come once but 15 to 20 volunteer frequently. Most people work in the field on digs (they think that is where the real fun is) but two to four people have discovered that Nick's office is where it's at and contribute as many as three days a week.

