



# Friends of the Office of State Archaeology

Member Newsletter  
Fall 2001

FOSA  
P. O. Box 380845  
East Hartford, CT 06138-0845  
<http://www.keegans.com/FOSA>

## PRESIDENT'S LETTER

As of this writing, short-term funding prospects for OSA remain at last year's status. Many of you know that the cultural heritage bill, which would have brought \$100,000 to OSA, died again in the legislature last spring. In the present economic and public funding climate, reviving such initiatives will be difficult. Thanks to the efforts of House Minority Leader Larry Cafero, UCONN has again provided OSA with \$15,000 for the current fiscal year. This amount, while very welcome, is a small percentage of what OSA needs to fulfill its various mandates. To secure adequate, permanent funding, FOSA is pursuing a possible link to building permits issued by the state's towns, as OSA devotes much time responding to threats to archaeological sites from new private development, and the permits have very limited ties to other state-funded programs. As our work on this effort evolves, we may call on members for assistance.

We try to combine education and entertainment at FOSA annual meetings, as those of you who attended the last one know. Thanks to quirks of fate, Nick Bellantoni, and our co-believers in the Archaeological Society of Connecticut, we hope to outdo ourselves next January 27, when the featured speaker at the annual meeting will be Jonathan Leader, the South Carolina State Archaeologist. Dr. Leader will tell us about current research on the recovery and study of the Confederate submarine *Hunley*, which has a link to Connecticut in the form of an identity tag from Union soldier Ezra Chamberlain found on one of the skeletons in the vessel. Nick has been involved in efforts to determine if the skeleton is Chamberlain, a native of Killingly. This will be an event sponsored jointly with the ASC, several of whose members have generously offered to cover travel and other expenses involved in bringing us this speaker. With topical hooks including the Civil War and dead people in submarines, we are expecting a large turnout at the Glastonbury High School auditorium. Details will be in the mail by early January, but mark your calendars now. See you there.

-- Mike Raber

## CHANGE OF ADDRESS

Friends of the Office of State Archaeology has a new postal address. All mail, including new memberships, renewals, donations and correspondence must now be sent to:

FOSA  
P. O. Box 380845  
East Hartford, CT 06138-0845

Be sure to let us know if you have moved or changed your phone or email address. Changes may be emailed to [mpjohnson@snet.net](mailto:mpjohnson@snet.net)

-- Mae Johnson, FOSA Secretary.

## THANK YOU, KATHIE

When people join a group like FOSA, they will sometimes question the contribution an individual volunteer can make. Well, Kathie Kelleher is the ultimate example of a volunteer who can make a major positive difference. She has been volunteering her time and energy (not to mention her expertise) at the OSA and in the field for over four years. When she saw how badly we needed volunteers, she left her job as school secretary in Winsted and started coming to our office.

Kathie's background in archaeology (we were both undergraduate students together at CCSU under Fred Warner, though I will not say how long ago!) and work experience allowed her to jump right in and help organize the cataloging of artifacts, updating the Connecticut Archaeology Library, and researching information requested by the public. She averaged 30 hours a week at the office and in the field! In addition, she served on the FOSA board of directors as recording secretary. To say she has made a huge difference would be an understatement.

Last year, Kathie and her husband, Dick, built a beautiful new house in Rhode Island. Although the drive was strenuous and long, Kathie continued to come to the office, especially through the summer when our students were unavailable. However, now that the students are back, she is establishing a life for herself in Rhode Island and will be spending the winter traveling and preparing for her daughter's wedding in the spring. As a result, to our great loss, she will be unable to continue her schedule at the OSA.

Kathie not only brought her skills and work ethic to the office, but also her wonderful sense of humor and spirited personality. She has made many friends here at UConn. The students always ask about her, and we already miss her presence greatly. She is a steadfast and loyal friend who has helped us through good and bad time -- a supreme volunteer who has made a difference that continues! Thank you, Kathie!

-- Nicholas Bellantoni

## NICK'S NEWS

Summer is over, and, the fall semester has begun at UConn. Fortunately, we have been given a break from our teaching responsibilities this year and will be able to catch up on the administrative duties of the OSA. Archaeological summer field investigations in which FOSA volunteers, under the direction of Dave Cooke, have participated include the Trueman's Meadow Site, Coventry; Cornwell Site, Portland; Owen Farm Site, Hebron; Two Rivers Site, New Milford; Underwater shipwreck, Connecticut River, and the Pitkin Glass Factory, Manchester. We appreciate

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*Nick's News - continued from Page 1*

ciate all the volunteers who gave of their time and energy to conduct the salvage and research excavations at these sites.

Our office assisted Dr. Albert Harper, Director, Henry C. Lee Institute of Forensic Science, University of New Haven, in conducting a forensic anthropology/archaeology workshop for law enforcement officials. It was held from Oct. 18-20, 2001, and 22 police officers from as far away as New Orleans, LA came to learn about the discovery, recovery and identification of human skeletal remains from buried and surface contexts. Training included the survey of wooded areas for signs of disturbances and possible victim burial, archaeological excavation techniques to obtain better evidence documentation, and the forensic identification of skeletal remains. Police officials were required to locate hidden burials and conduct excavations according to archaeological standards. Three plastic skeletons were buried in various criminal activity positions. Inferences on the simulated criminal behavior were based on interpretations of the recovery process.

The OSA has been coordinating with Brooklyn College and the Society for American Archaeology to organize archaeologists and anthropologists to assist in the wake of the World Trade Center attack on September 11, 2001. The need is for archaeologists to work at the Staten Island's Freshkill Landfill to recover human remains, personal effects, and other materials that might be identified by family members. At this writing, we are unsure whether the FBI will be asking archaeologists for assistance. Nonetheless, we want to be prepared to respond when, and if, the need arises. Our office will be serving as a clearinghouse for all of you that may wish to volunteer through the winter months.

Connecticut Archaeology Awareness Week was held from October 6-14, 2001. Over 15 events were organized around the state, including lectures, exhibits, site tours, and Walking Weekend! We thank all of you that participated in these events.

The OSA will be conducting a Cultural Resources Training workshop for personnel from the United States Department of Agriculture's Natural Resource Conservation Service in November. NRCS has assisted our office in conducting ground-penetrating radar surveys at a number of potential burial sites, parks, and even a search for nude statues! The workshop will be conducted in two parts, including technical training on federal and state archaeological preservation policies, and a field visit to an archaeological excavation in eastern Connecticut.

Two years ago, OSA received a grant from the Department of Environmental Protection's Long Island License Plate Fund to promote underwater archaeology in Connecticut. Funding included the development of an Archaeology Week poster, traveling exhibit, and a web page. We are now in the last phases of the grant requirements. The traveling exhibit should be available and the web page up and running this winter. The web page is set up to interact with wreck divers to report shipwrecks and other cultural resources submerged beneath our coastal waters, rivers and lakes. We will provide FOSA members with the web address as soon as we have it on-line.

As always, a heartfelt thank you to all FOSA members!

- Nicholas Bellantoni, PhD.  
State Archaeologist

## WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

Sven Johnson  
Irene Lozyniak  
Sheryl Lussier  
Robert Martinchek

## KEN'S OFFICE REPORT

Several historic sites and one prehistoric site were excavated this past dig season. The Cornwell Site in Portland is still in progress and should be ongoing until the end of our dig season. Also in progress is cataloging of the "Andrew Kowalsky Collection," which is composed of one hundred Connecticut Sites, as well as the "Red Bank Site" from North Haven. These collections are prehistoric and have some very unique artifacts. Both of these collections were donated to the OSA.

The curating and cataloging of this season's artifacts has already begun with the assistance of Kathie Kelleher, Carol Hallis, Paul Scannell and Ken Beatrice. Also assisting in Nick's office are UCONN students Luci Fernandes (PhD candidate), Sheryl Scruggs (freshman) and our international star, Tao Zhu.

Any FOSA member who would like to volunteer for office or field work can contact the OSA, Dave Cooke (860-529-713) or Ken Beatrice (860-434-5114) for information and dig scheduling.

## DAVE COOKE - "OUR MENTOR"

Dave Cooke, an "Amateur Archaeologist," has been walking cornfields and poking dirt in all of our New England states and in many others, looking for artifacts, since the early sixties. His hobby in archaeology started as a collector. But, after meeting Andrew Kowalsky, Dave started taking field notes to keep a permanent record of the sites and his finds. Dave has equal interest in both historic and prehistoric finds and has an unbelievable amount of knowledge on both. Dave calls himself an amateur but, in all ways, is a "Professional." His experiences and knowledge have assisted many archaeologists and their projects. Dave has contributed with his writings, "An Adena-like Burial at East Windsor Hill" (*Bulletin of the Archaeological Society of Connecticut*, #37 Nov. 1972). This document describes in detail the Adena Burial with olivella shells and rolled copper beads.

Mr. Cooke and his wife June are the founders of FOSA and continue to play a very important role in the Office of State Archaeology.

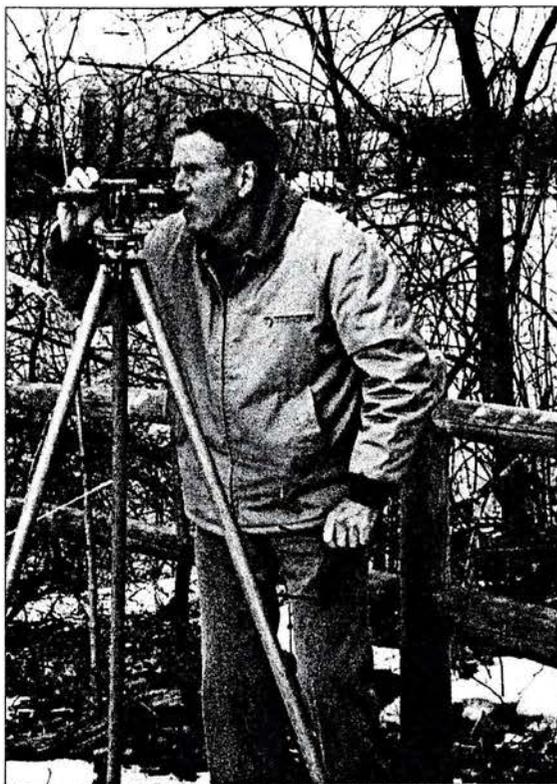
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We extend our deepest sympathy to all those who lost family and friends in the events of September 11, 2001.

*Ken's Office Report - continued from Page 2*

An enjoyable day is being on a dig site with Dave, "Our Mentor," listening to some good New England wit along with stories of his past experiences.

- Ken Beatrice



*Dave Cooke in the Field*

## BELOW GROUND

Projects in the field this year have leaned more towards historic sites than prehistoric, with the ratio being about four to one.

In Coventry, work was carried out on a prehistoric site adjacent to the Skungamaug River that produced quartz projectile points and debitage along with a flint Meadowood point.

At New Milford, a prehistoric site produced a variety of projectile points that even included a triangular copper point. Also uncovered at this site was an unusual amulet with incised striations along it.

In Glastonbury, a dig was conducted for the Smith Middle School involving approximately 130 students, one of whom uncovered a complete Brewerton Side-Notched point in her unit. The site is on land owned by the town near the Connecticut River. About 100 students went through stations including trowel excavation, artifact processing, and digital data entry. This will most likely be a yearly event.

A few of the comments made by the students are:

"There is a lot more to archaeology than just studying books."

"I learned that it takes a lot of patience to be an archaeologist."

You can check out the event and the comments on several websites: <http://members.aol/endeavordigs> or [edgate.com](http://edgate.com).

In Hebron, several digs were conducted at the site of the Owens Farm. The house was taken down and moved to make way for expansion of the regional high school. The site dates to the early eighteenth century and was occupied up to the time it was moved.

At Portland, excavations are still in progress at the William Cornwell House ca. 1689. This is believed to be one of the earliest house sites on the east side of the Connecticut River in the area. It remained in the same family until 1862. The house itself has been dismantled and is in storage waiting to be resurrected at a new location. Several early coins have been recovered along with fragments of two early flasks. One is a railroad flask and the other is a cornucopia. Some early culinary utensils were also recovered along with clay marbles, fragments of kaolin pipes and many fragments of ceramic material. We even found a few prehistoric Indian artifacts.

In Manchester, some work was conducted at Pitkin Glass Works. A number of Manchester High School students took part in a dig within the stone walls of the Pitkin Glass building. Fragments of flasks, snuff bottles and inkwells were recovered. We even found the articulated skeleton of a young pig. The Pitkin Glass Works is the earliest glass works in Connecticut dated to 1783. It ceased operations in 1830. On November 2, 2001, GPR (Ground Penetrating Radar) was conducted at the glass works, which will help facilitate future digs.

Some upcoming projects are slated for East Hartford, Goshen, Glastonbury and East Hampton. There is never a dull moment when you're below ground.

Join us in Subsurface Adventures!

Dirt archaeology is a wonderful adventure. You get dirt under your fingernails and all over your clothes; you are stung by yellowjackets and bitten by ticks and if you are really lucky you obtain a magnificent case of poison ivy that keeps you scratching for weeks. I won't mention the sunburn and the sardine and hard-boiled egg sandwiches.

- Dave Cooke

## MYSTERY SHIPWRECK

On a weekend in late July, local pilot Joe Roberts was about to make a landing at his airstrip in East Windsor along the banks of the Connecticut River. He and his wife, First Selectman Linda Roberts, noticed a symmetrical shape beneath the water, something they had never seen before. Mr. Roberts commented to his wife "Doesn't that look like the outline of a ship?" He had been flying over the Connecticut River for the past 20 years and this was the first time he had observed the object.

Intrigued by his finding, he notified local historian George Butenkoff and the author. Roberts provided a sketch of what he was seeing from the air, and armed with this information Butenkoff and myself journeyed about three miles down the Connecticut

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*"Mystery Shipwreck" continued from Page 3*

River in search of the vessel. The river was extremely low at this time of the year and navigating the river was a challenge to say the least.

We subsequently located the vessel, which was sitting in only four feet of water. We could observe the ribs of the ship as well as several large cuts of brownstone. A large portion of the ship was not visible, being embedded in silt and sand and located in the middle of the river. Our initial estimate of the length of the vessel was over 60 feet. Following this excursion the author met with Nick Bellantoni who agreed to an archaeological excavation and evaluation.

On Tuesday, August 7, 2001 a team of 11 "explorers" led by our intrepid leader Nick Bellantoni set out in three dinghies down river toward the site. The team included FOSA members Dave and June Cooke, Ken Beatrice and other volunteers as well as myself.

Nick was able to determine a GPS reading as well as identifying other coordinates to help determine the vessel's exact location. Several members of the team were equipped with snorkeling gear.

Due to the low water level it was possible to stand in the water while taking measurements and retrieving several artifacts found on or near the vessel.

The vessel was measured to be 22 feet at its widest part and tapered to 14 feet at its bow and stern. Its length was measured as over 90 feet with the possibility that part of the vessel had broken off at the stern, suggesting a ship of up to 130 feet in length. Many pieces of brownstone were observed. Bill Gleason, an underwater diver at the site commented, "Although some of the stone does show quarry marks, the majority of it is irregular in shape." Artifacts uncovered included what appeared to be a 19<sup>th</sup> century vase, pottery shards, pieces of coal, burned wood and several pieces of brownstone. Underwater photography by Bill Gleason, revealed a lateral weight-bearing beam which raised the question of an engine mount, and the possibility of a paddle wheeler.

Several working hypotheses were made following the excavation.

- Vessel was a barge dating back to 1870-1890 and was transporting brownstone from a local East Windsor quarry.
- Vessel was a steamship that caught fire and was salvaged and converted to a barge.
- Vessel was a steamboat constructed in a fashion to be able to navigate the shallow water found north of Hartford on the Connecticut River.
- It is unclear why the wreck became visible only recently. It is obviously related to the washing away of sand and silt.

Following the excavation, staff at the Connecticut Historical Society, Connecticut River Museum at Essex, Enfield Public Library and the Mystic Seaport Museum carried out extensive historic research. Local newspaper accounts were examined as well as archival material from the Hartford Courant. Results of the research have been disappointing. An exact identification of the vessel has been elusive.

A next step will be to revisit the site with special equipment to remove some of the sand and silt. The goal would be to uncover the

keel of the vessel, which may help to identify our mysterious shipwreck. Hopefully this can be done in the summer of 2002.

-- Paul M. Scannell

## HAPPY NEW YEAR!

### 2002 MEETING SCHEDULES

#### January 27, 2002

FOSA Annual Meeting will be held at Glastonbury High School, Glastonbury, CT. Featured speaker will be Jonathan Leader, South Carolina State Archaeologist. This event will be sponsored jointly with the Archaeological Society of Connecticut.

#### March 6-9, 2002

25<sup>th</sup> Annual Ethnobiology Conference will be held at the University of Connecticut, Storrs, CT. Theme: *Art & Soul: Celebrating Indigenous Artisans*. For information contact Luci Fernandes (860) 486-5248 or [Luci.Fernandes@uconn.edu](mailto:Luci.Fernandes@uconn.edu).

#### March 14-16, 2002

Northeastern Anthropological Association Annual Conference. Theme: *Anthropology: Building Bridges Across Disciplines*. Bridgewater State College, Bridgewater, MA.

#### March 20-24, 2002

Society for American Archaeology (SAA) Annual Meeting, Denver, Colorado.

#### April 27, 2002

Archaeological Society of Connecticut, Annual Spring Meeting. Theme: *Maritime Adaptation and Underwater Archaeology*. Essex Town Hall, Essex, CT. For information contact Dan Cruson, President, (203) 426-6021 or [danielcruson@earthlink.net](mailto:danielcruson@earthlink.net).

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