



Friends of the Office of State Archaeology

**Member Newsletter
Fall 2002**

FOSA
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PRESIDENT'S LETTER

During the spring and summer of 2002, FOSA members have participated in a large number of projects and events, most of which are mentioned elsewhere in this newsletter. These efforts, and Nick Bellantoni's unearthly ability to appear simultaneously throughout the state, have generated considerable support for the Office of State Archaeology and many new FOSA members. We now have nearly 100 current members (this means people who have paid dues recently), a group which while still pretty small has the ability to reach out and touch legislators (long-distance! - we're not dangerous). Soon, and hopefully with support from the University of Connecticut, we will test that ability in our efforts to fund OSA operations through a minuscule addition to building permit fees statewide, an effort we have been working on for several years.

The last six months have been extremely frustrating on this score, as university officials would not discuss with us any possible means of handling the funds while the \$1.3 billion 21st Century UConn bonding package was unresolved in the legislature. For better or worse, we need their cooperation and assistance. I have, in fact, delayed writing this letter while hoping the issue would be settled and we could start meeting with university officials; getting the word out on our impending inaugural Members' Appreciation Picnic finally meant we could not hold up this newsletter any longer.

Now, the recent passage of the bond initiative has created two important opportunities for OSA: a bond package line item which includes construction of an OSA wing at the State Museum of Natural History with long-needed curatorial facilities; and a more

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**MEMBERS' APPRECIATION PICNIC
OCTOBER 6, 2002
See page 3 for details**

NICK'S NEWS

Our office, with volunteer assistance from FOSA, has had a very busy and productive field season, described in more detail in Dave Cooke's "Below Ground" column in this newsletter. We have conducted test excavations at the Pitkin Glass Factory in Manchester, the 19th-century Union School House in Goshen, and a prehistoric campsite in Old Lyme.

However, this appears to be the year for historic Euro-American cemetery projects. Already we have lent our expertise to restoration projects at the Old South Burying Ground in Hartford and the forensic identification of late 18th/early 19th-century burials in the Bulkeley family crypt in Colchester. The Bulkeley project has involved hundreds of volunteer hours identifying several dozen burials. In addition, working with the Natural Resources Conservation Service, we have conducted ground-penetrating radar studies of the Fanning Family Cemetery in Ledyard and the Mill Hill Historic Cemetery in Norwalk, attempting to locate unmarked graves for management purposes. This summer we were also involved with the disinterment of Colonial Period graves of the Peters and Horton families in East Hampton and Wolcott, respectively.

FOSA members also ran a one-day archaeological event in August for the State Museum of Natural History at the Butler and Sugden foundry site in Rocky Hill, which June and Dave Cooke have been investigating for some time. The short-lived 19th-century operation made shears, pistols, and iron toys, at a site which remains well preserved and rich in information on historic foundry practice.

In the office, FOSA volunteers led by Ken Beatrice and Paul Scannell have been cataloguing cultural materials from last summer and fall excavations. Miraculously, we are just about caught up in the lab. Research Assistants Tao Zhu and Luci Fernandes have been entering the cataloguing and field data into

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compelling reason to find an off-budget means of putting permanent staff in the wing - like our permit fee initiative. Nick and museum director Ellen Censky are sanguine about getting the wing built very early in the 21st Century UConn construction cycle, perhaps by 2005. We have finally scheduled a preliminary meeting at UConn for the end of August, and hope for positive news and subsequent work on a legislative initiative to create a staff-funding mechanism. I will send out a follow-up report on this meeting to all members with e-mail, and we will of course keep you posted on the status of the OSA wing.

After our last annual meeting, we knew Jon Leader's lively presentation on the Confederate submarine *Hunley* would be a hard act to follow in 2003. By careful application of Woody Allen's rule that 90 percent of life is showing up, we are giving it a shot. On a trip to Jamestown, VA last spring, June and Dave Cooke were impressed by the ongoing research and interpretation at the site of North America's first permanent English settlement. They got talking with senior archaeologist Eric Deetz - son of the late, great historical archaeologist James Deetz - and enticed him into being our next annual meeting speaker.

A bit later, Nick Bellantoni mentioned the event to the board of the Archaeological Society of Connecticut, which immediately wanted to repeat the joint sponsorship of the FOSA meeting. Good news all around, as we hope to have another large, happy audience while sharing the costs of having Eric come to Connecticut. ASC President Dan Cruson tells me Eric is a good speaker, and if you visit the websites covering Jamestown Rediscovery you will see that the finds and the topic are pretty remarkable. Woody's dictum makes my work a lot easier. Mark your calendars.

- Mike Raber

VOLUNTEER!

Members can help with:

Office work
Artifact cataloging
Staffing events
Field excavations

Contact OSA at Storrs (860) 486-5248 or e-mail
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our computer database. An enormous project, but well under control thanks to everyone's efforts.

The Connecticut State Museum of Natural History at UConn opened a new archaeology exhibit on August 18. "Look Closer" highlights many unique artifacts from our anthropological collections. A number of FOSA members turned out for the opening to help promote OSA and assist with a simulated dig, including Bonnie and Ken Beatrice, John Spaulding, June and Dave Cooke, Roger Thompson, and Glen Reem. The exhibit will run through the Fall season, and will be something worth the trip to Storrs to visit. FOSA members can count on a personal tour of the exhibits, if you let me know when you plan to attend.

Speaking of personal, many of you know that our family celebrated our first grandchild this spring, and Angela and I are doing our best to spend most of our time in South Carolina with the baby: Adam Shepard, Jr. (A.J.) was born April 22, 2002, 8 lbs 2 ozs, 20.5 inches long. (He will be taller than me by the 3rd grade!)

Thanks to all of you for your support, time and expertise. (I will try to refrain from showing baby pictures when we meet!)

- Nick Bellantoni

NEW MEMBERS

Michael & Tricia Cardin, Tolland
Stephen Graseck & family, Southington
Ann Horton, Madison
Walter & Marion Keisch, Windsor
George Kinsella, Hartford
Eileen Kostiner, Storrs
Dorothy Ann Millen, East Haddam
Edward & Shelley Pitcher, Goshen
Patricia Reardon, Windsor
Ruth Shapleigh-Brown, Manchester
Pamela Shelton, Avon
Dr. David R. and Bonnie Sherwood, Windsor
Janet Shimeld, Amston
Pamela Shine, Lebanon
David H. Thompson

