



Friends of the Office of State Archaeology

**Member Newsletter
Fall 2002**

FOSA
P. O. Box 380845
East Hartford, CT 06138-0845
[Http://www.keegans.com/FOSA](http://www.keegans.com/FOSA)

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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President's Letter - Continued from Page 1

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 cataloguing
- Staffing events
- Field excavations

Contact OSA at Storrs (860) 486-5248 or e-mail nbell@uconnvm.uconn.edu

Nick's News - Continued from Page 1

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 Sheppard, 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

MEMBERS' APPRECIATION PICNIC OCTOBER 6, 2002

All FOSA members and family are cordially invited to a Members' Appreciation Picnic, beginning at noon on October 6, 2002 at the recently-refurbished Gillette Castle State Park in East Haddam. This event is to thank the many volunteers whose help keeps Nick Bellantoni's office running. There will be two main activities:

Beginning at noon, a picnic at the new "Grand Central" pavilion, followed at about 1:30 by a sincere but non-serious presentation of volunteer appreciation mementos. FOSA is providing the food, which will be served by about 12:45. Board member Roger Thompson is organizing the consumable part of this affair with a small committee of wily foragers. **TO HELP HIM ESTIMATE WHAT IS NEEDED, PLEASE RSVP ROGER BY OCTOBER 1 AT roger.thompson@wipaw.org.** If you don't have e-mail, you can call Roger at 860-644-3398. We also expect to unveil our new FOSA tee shirt, for sale *at this event only* at cost. Later shirt sales will be at higher prices to raise funds.

Following the picnic and presentations, we will stroll the Connecticut River shoreline at the ferry slip below the Castle to view the remains of William Gillette's yacht *Aunt Polly*, a 140-foot-long, 200-ton houseboat built in 1900 by F. W. Ofeldt & Sons. Gillette, who made his fortune in stage portrayals of Sherlock Holmes, spotted this picturesque site from his yacht in 1912. After an exploring trip ashore, he quickly purchased the hillock and began plans for the very eccentric castle which is now the park's centerpiece. The *Aunt Polly* became his home for the five years it took to build the castle, and was eventually refitted to match the castle's interior. The yacht and dock area were destroyed by fire on December 20, 1932. The stern section showing the propeller shaft and stuffing box with the keel can be seen forward to approximately 95 feet. The ribs, starboard and port gunnels and associated mechanical remains are also visible. FOSA members have been very active in documenting the remains with drawings and photographs for OSA, which in cooperation with the Connecticut Historical Commission, Historical Perspectives, Inc., and Mystic Seaport maritime historians will nominate *Aunt Polly* as one of Connecticut's first two maritime State Archaeological Preserves. Picnic attendees will receive some written and graphic information on the yacht.

Other activities can include self-guided but park-assisted tours of the castle (\$4.00), strolling through the 115-acre park's many trails, and bird watching. Eagles are commonly spotted throughout the year.

Rain date will be exactly one week later, on October 13. If we determine by 10 AM on the morning of Sunday, October 6 that the rain date is needed, we will e-mail a general announcement to all members (with e-mail). If you still have questions that morning, you can call Mike Raber at 860-633-9026 until 11 AM. Hope to see you there!

ANNUAL MEETING – FIRST ANNOUNCEMENT

Thanks to the efforts of June and Dave Cooke, our 2003 annual meeting will again feature a presentation on a nationally-significant archaeological site. Continuing last year's successful cooperation, the Archaeological Society of Connecticut will co-sponsor the event, with members of both groups invited at no charge. Mark your calendar. More details will appear in our final meeting announcement.

Date

Sat., Feb 1, 2003 with Sunday, Feb 2 as a storm date.

Place

Glastonbury High School, Glastonbury, CT – our thanks to school superintendent and FOSA member Jackie Jacoby for making this great venue possible again

Time

Annual meeting 1:00 PM; speaker 1:45.

Speaker

Eric Deetz, Senior Archaeologist, Jamestown Rediscovery.

Presentation

James Fort 1607: The Archaeology of the Early English Colonial Fort. This was the beginning of the earliest permanent English settlement in North America, at a site which for many years was believed lost to erosion. Rediscovered on Jamestown Island in 1994, James Fort is now a major center for information on 17th-century colonial lifeways and the colony's interactions with local Native Americans.

KEN'S OFFICE REPORT

With the arrival of Summer, also comes increased time in the field, leaving less time for the office. Nick's office has received a much needed new copying machine, purchased by the Museum. Although there continues to be limited ongoing cataloging of collections, we look forward to the onset of Winter, to begin the work brought in during the Summer digs.

However, the Big News from the office is that Nick is a Grandfather for the first time! So, Nick is now known around the office as "Poppy." We are all waiting to see if some of the Frank Sinatra posters and pictures are going to be replaced by baby pictures. Congratulations to Angela, Nick and "A.J."

- Ken Beatrice

BONNIE'S REPORT

June and August proved to be busy months for promoting FOSA as an organization. We were invited to set up an information booth at three events. The

first was the Bio Blitz, put on by the Connecticut Museum of Natural History, June 1, Mohegan Park, Norwich. The second was held June 8 at the Cheney Homestead in Manchester during their Heritage Day event.

FOSA's booth consisted of examples of early Native American artifacts along with historical artifacts, as well as a display showing Marine Archaeology and photos of FOSA members "at work" in the field and office. Throughout the day at the Cheney Homestead, we had an ongoing "dig" in which the public could take part. There we were able to show the tools and methods used at an archaeological excavation site. State Archaeologist Dr. Nick Bellantoni was on hand to meet with the public and answer questions. Finally, on August 18, we had similar involvement at the opening of the "Look Closer" exhibit at the State Museum of Natural History.

We are happy to report that all three days generated quite a lot of interest in both OSA and FOSA, as well as archaeology in Connecticut. A number of new members joined as a direct result of these events.

- Bonnie Beatrice

*FOSA Folks at the Cheney Homestead
for Manchester Heritage Day*



Photo by John Spaulding

BELOW GROUND

Field work this year has taken us to Manchester, Goshen, Old Lyme, Rocky Hill, Wolcott, Enfield and Colchester. Still coming up are projects in East Hartford, Torrington, Milford and East Hampton. The rust does not have time to build up on our trowels and shovels. We are on the go!

In Manchester, several digs were held at the Pitkin Glass Works. These involved two student groups from Manchester schools and one student group from a Coventry school. Excavation was carried out in an area pinpointed by GPR (ground penetrating radar) the year before as possibly containing subsurface foundation structures. Much glass debitage was recovered, but no foundation structures were found.

Also in Manchester, on Heritage Day, FOSA set up an exhibit and simulated dig at the Cheney Homestead collaborating with the Manchester Historical Society in the project. Ken and Bonnie Beatrice did a super job on the FOSA exhibit.

In Goshen some preliminary work was carried out at a one room school house dating back to the 1830s. The owners of the property want to restore it and have it placed on the National Register of Historic Places. Any archaeological evidence we uncover will be helpful to them.

Work at Old Lyme was concluded this year at a small subdivision project that we started last fall. Minimal quartz debitage was recovered with no feature evidence in any of the test pits. Future subdivisions of this person's property may be an entirely different story, as the project involves two hundred acres abutting the notable Ames Rock Shelter excavated by John Pfeiffer in the 1970s.

In Rocky Hill work was begun at the Butler and Sugden Shear Factory site which was established in 1854 and later burned to the ground in 1865. The initial emphasis is to establish the size and location of the buildings which made up this manufacturing business, and determine how waterpower from nearby Dividend Brook was used. On Sunday, August 11, FOSA hosted a dig, sponsored by the Connecticut Museum of Natural History, consisting of 60 men, women and children at this site. An interesting time was had by all.

The operation in Wolcott called for the removal of four individuals from an unmaintained, vandalized town cemetery for reinterment at another, better-kept town cemetery. These were all members of the Horton family who died between 1800 and 1837.

Enfield had us working at the Terry House which may be the oldest house in town still on its original location. Members of the Enfield Historical Society and other volunteers assisted in the project. The artifacts recovered will be studied and be used to aid us in future work there. The house is believed to have been built between 1790 and 1810.

In Colchester we are working on our largest and most complicated project of the year. This is the Gershom Bulkeley family tomb. Built in 1788, it was partially vandalized in the 1930s, at which time the entranceway was resealed and covered with dirt. A complete archaeological investigation of the tomb and its contents is being carried out at the request of Bulkeley family descendants. A thorough forensic analysis of human remains will be conducted this winter. A reburial ceremony is planned for the Spring of 2003.

Still coming up this year is the 1713 Thomas Wadsworth house located in East Hartford, the Torrington birthplace of radical abolitionist John Brown, the Peter Pond gravesite in Milford, and the Joseph Peters gravesite in East Hampton.

Nick constantly gets calls concerning new projects all across the state. There is no telling where our next path will lead.

Anyone who is interested in volunteering for field work, please contact Nick's office and let us know when you are available. We do not usually dig on weekends.

- Dave Cooke

**PLEASE RSVP FOR
MEMBERS' APPRECIATION PICNIC
WITH ROGER THOMPSON AT
Roger.thompson@wipaw.org or 860-644-3398**

**BY OCTOBER 1, 2002
THANK YOU!**

ANOTHER COUNTRY: Some of our members really get around, and on occasion we will share their adventures with you. Here is a trip to a pretty unusual place.

THE REDISCOVERY OF XANADU

By Thomas R. Atkinson

Shortly after retiring as a corporate economist, my wife (also an economist at a local college) and I applied to teach at a Chinese University. There we met another Connecticut teacher who was a member of the Morgan Group and introduced us to archaeology in Connecticut at the Rocky Hill dig. Two years later, again back in China but without my wife, I persuaded our Connecticut friend Andre Salsedo, to join me in searching for Xanadu, the site of Kubla Khan's summer palace where the 13th-century emperor met Marco Polo. Polo's account of his trip to China was an inspiration to Christopher Columbus, and the palace was immortalized in a poem by Samuel Taylor Coleridge beginning, "In Xanadu did Kubla Khan a stately pleasure dome decree..."

The general location of Xanadu was fairly well known, 200 or so miles north of Beijing in Inner Mongolia, a province of the People's Republic of China. A physician attached to the British Embassy casually mentioned it in the middle of his 1872 report on a biology field trip. The palace had been torn up and a lamasery containing 108 temples and some 3,000 monks occupied the site for several hundred years.

The site was further damaged after the Boxer Rebellion in 1901 and by the Japanese who camped within the palace during World War II. We found out about it in William Dalrymple's *In Xanadu* (Vintage Departures, Random House 1990). As an honors project Dalrymple, a Cambridge student, had researched Marco Polo's trip and found the way there, only to be arrested by the Chinese police and evicted with only a brief tantalizing sight of the place.

With the help of one of Andre's students as translator and negotiator we discovered we had to go to Hohohot, the capital of the Province of Inner Mongolia, for permission, even though it was several hundred miles out of our way. We needed the approval of five government agencies before we could take the trip; in many cases foreigners were not allowed to

enter the agency offices and we relied on Maria, our interpreter.

After several days in Hohohot negotiating we paid the equivalent of \$91 for permission to go to Xanadu and take pictures - but no digging or removing artifacts. An hour's plane trip north to the local capital of Xilinghot got us to the shoving-off place, then proceeding by minibus to the small town of Zheng Lan Qi about five hours away through part of the Gobi Desert. After a night in a crude but comfortable guest house (it was April and still cold) we were off again to Shandu (Xanadu) about 20 miles away.

Little remains other than the outer wall of Xanadu. There is a central "statue," probably from the time of the monks, and some shallow holes in the wall undoubtedly used by shepherds. There are a few foundations of the temples and a large sundial of stone. The ground is littered with pottery fragments from roof tiles and a few pieces of iridescent glass suggesting there may have been some luxury in the royal court of Kubla Khan. After encounters with the local police and the provincial government - which extorted an additional \$91 from us before allowing to leave - we were able to fly back to civilization.

Although the site had been trashed many times, the only real archaeology at Xanadu was done by Japanese scholars who followed their military in the takeover of China before World War II. The Mongolians made it clear they did not want excavation, so only the surface features were explored by the Japanese in 1937. A few artifacts were taken back to Tokyo and buried in storage, to which Andre later got access to produce some pictures. Occasional stories of excavations at Xanadu appear in western papers, but the site is far from most tourist ways and far down the list of likely spots for Chinese archaeology.

Our trip was interesting not for what we found, but for the adventure of getting there and realizing we had seen a little part of the history of civilization. It is quite a distance from my first archaeology experience in Rocky Hill to the sparse plains of Inner Mongolia but it left me very enthusiastic.

Tom Atkinson is currently helping at the Sun Tavern dig in Fairfield.

ANNUAL MEETING - FEBRUARY 1, 2003

CONNECTICUT'S FIRST UNDERWATER ARCHAEOLOGICAL PRESERVES

By Cece Saunders

The Department of Environmental Protection's Long Island Sound License Plate Fund has awarded a grant to establish and publicize Connecticut's first maritime-related State Archaeological Preserves. The official designation through the Connecticut Historical Commission for two shipwrecks in the waters of Connecticut will celebrate the historical interaction between Connecticut's people, rivers, and shoreline. Documentation and graphics prepared for the Preserve nomination will be the basis for 20-page educational booklets prepared on each shipwreck site.

The two shipwrecks are: the Lightship 51, located in 190 feet of water in Long Island Sound under the administrative custody of the U. S. Coast Guard, and William Gillette's yacht, "Aunt Polly," located on the Connecticut River shore below Gillette Castle State Park. FOSA members can visit the yacht site during our October 6th picnic.

Shipwrecks and other submerged sites are historic entities to be protected and, when necessary, investigated as part of the public trust. Each shipwreck is a frozen snapshot of a particular time in history. As Daniel Lenihan, head of the U. S. government's only underwater archaeology team, states "shipwrecks are powerful archaeological sites." The lines of the ship, the equipment and features of a ship, the artifacts on a ship – all combine to tell us of the interplay between man and vessel of a bygone era.

Maritime archaeological sites, finite and irreplaceable, are being disturbed and, in some cases, destroyed, at an increasing rate. Shipwrecks can be lost to natural action and vandalism because their fragility and import are not understood. When the wrecks lie deep enough to avoid ice, collisions and wave damage, they remain remarkably intact with hulls, superstructures and cargoes free from the depredations of marine organisms.

Management through *in situ* preservation is paramount. In the past decade, technological advances have allowed archaeologists and deep-sea explor-

discoveries were possible because of new tools, such as high-resolution sonar, sub-bottom profilers, and agile robotic vehicles. If shipwrecks are not left undisturbed, then the opportunity to apply future, ever more advanced technology is lost. Recognizing underwater sites as archaeological preserves increases the opportunities to use the best available methods.

The mission of the DEP Long Island Sound fund grant is to educate and excite the public through creation of underwater archaeological preserves, and respectful preservation of submerged resources. The LIS-FUND booklet will serve as an invitation to the public to take an active role in the discovery, interpretation and management of underwater resources.

Historically, the creation of preserves has engendered a high degree of local protectiveness. Although there will be thousands of copies of the Preserve booklets printed, the entire booklet will also be electronically transferred to the State Parks Department and OSA for posting on UCONN's Museum of Natural History underwater archaeology website. This website, established through previous LIS FUND assistance, is:

www.mnh.uconn.edu/underwater/index.html.

Cece Saunders is President of Historical Perspectives, Inc., a Westport consulting firm.

NEW PUBLICATIONS

The Journal of GEORGE ATTWATER. Edited with an introduction by Kevin S. Reilly. The Whale Ship "Henry" sailed from New Haven in 1820. On board was George Attwater, who kept a daily journal of his experiences. This is a 492-page book with an introduction and annotations. Cost \$22.95 + \$7.00 shipping/handling. Mail to: New Haven Colony Historical Society, 114 Whitney Avenue, New Haven, CT.

Reprint of a Sell-out. The Cornwall (CT) Historical Society announces the 2nd printing of *Cornwall in Pictures - A Visual Reminiscence 1868-1941*, with text by Jeremy Brecher, life-long Cornwall resident and Connecticut historian. The book, with a hard-cover cloth binding and 224 pages, contains more than 400 images.

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New Publications - Continued from Page 7

Cost \$25.00 + \$6.00 shipping/handling. Make checks payable to: Cornwall Historical Society, P. O. Box 115, Cornwall, CT 06753. For more information contact Charles Osborne – Publishing Committee 860-672-6296 or osbec@discovernet.net.

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

- Individual \$25
- Family \$35
- Student \$15
- Classroom \$20
- Affiliated Non-Profit \$100
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 Dues & donations are fully tax deductible.*

INTEREST INVENTORY

Please check areas of interest for volunteering:

- Work with OSA Art Work
- Committee and Board of Directors Work
- Computers Education
- Exhibit Planning Fund Raising
- Grant Writing Newsletter
- Office / Field Work Photography
- Typing/Word Processing Writing

SPECIAL THANKS

A special thank you to **John Spaulding** for his fantastic photography in documenting this season's digs, especially the Gershom Bulkeley tomb, where he has put together a photographic documentary along with accompanying genealogies. These books can be seen at our picnic in October. Don't miss them.

NEWSLETTER PRODUCTION

*Editors: Mae Johnson, June Cooke,
 and Mike Raber*

Kristen N. Keegan - Layout

**FIRST ANNUAL
 MEMBERS' APPRECIATION PICNIC
 AT GILLETTE CASTLE STATE PARK**

OCTOBER 6, 2002

RSVP BY OCTOBER 1, 2002

See Page 3 for details

FOSA ANNUAL MEETING

FEBRUARY 1, 2003

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