



*Note from the editor: We apologize for the lateness of the Spring 2020 edition of our newsletter. As we began our preparations we soon found ourselves in the midst of the Covid-19 pandemic and the subsequent shut-down of all but essential activities. All of the material contained in the Spring Newsletter was written prior to the closing.*

# Member Newsletter



## President's Letter

### Greetings,

As I write this, we are on the verge of our next State Archaeologist coming on board, the official start date is February 14th. The final two candidates were both excellent, but I was thrilled to see Dr. Sarah Sportman has accepted the position. Sarah's presentation highlighted her extensive experience in Connecticut archaeology as well as a comprehensive plan for the OSA to improve on the services and high standards the office currently delivers in protecting our archaeological landscape. We look forward to working with Sarah to meet those objectives. FOSA volunteers have been working diligently in the OSA lab and have cleaned, sorted and tagged all the artifacts in need of processing. I can't remember a time when we fully completed this task. Great work and many thanks to our dedicated crew. We are currently setting up a cross-mending system to reassemble vessels from our archaeological sites and helping prepare the OSA for an impending move to a permanently assigned laboratory. We will also be processing soil flotation samples. The work never ends! We meet most Mondays on the UConn Storrs Campus from 10-3. Anyone interested in participating can contact me at [fosa.ct@gmail.com](mailto:fosa.ct@gmail.com).

The "Archaeology of Connecticut" stream/podcast featured on iCRV Radio (<http://icrvradio.com/programs/program/285>) has been incredibly successful. The growth rate has been phenomenal with over 10,000 listeners a month. Thanks for listening and stay tuned for another year of interesting topics and fascinating guests.

Unfortunately our annual meeting at Farmington High School scheduled for March 21st had to be cancelled because of the Covid-19 crisis.

Hopefully we will be starting our field season soon!

*Scott Brady, FOSA President*

### Inside this issue:

President's Letter	1
News From the Office of State Archaeology	2-3
FOSA Outreach in Boston	4
A Road Trip	5-6
Officers, Board and Committees Members	7
FOSA Website Updates	7
Membership Application and Renewal	8

## News from the Office of State Archaeology

### Greetings FOSA members:



I officially came on board as the new State Archaeologist on February 14, and the last few weeks have been a whirlwind of tours, meetings, and introductions! I have been so fortunate to have Nick Bellantoni to show me the ropes and introduce me to the many people and organizations across the state that he and Brian Jones worked with in the past. His advice and insights have been invaluable and I know that even as he rides off into the sunset (again!) he will continue to play an important role in Connecticut archaeology.

On a personal note, I am so excited to begin working with the Connecticut archaeological community in this new role! In the 15 years I've lived and worked in Connecticut I have had the privilege to work with many of the dedicated people who volunteer their time and resources to help research and preserve Connecticut's rich archaeological heritage, and I am consistently amazed at the time, effort, and dedication of this community!

I wanted to take this opportunity to briefly introduce myself to those of you who don't know me and provide an update on recent activities at OSA, especially in this time of uncertainty. I come to the position of State Archaeologist from a background in history, archaeology, and cultural resources management. As an archaeologist, my specialties are historical archaeology and zooarchaeology, the study of animal remains from archaeological sites.

My interest in archaeology started early. As a child, I spent a lot of time in the Adirondacks, where my mom grew up and my grandparents lived. My dad took me to the historic site at Fort Crown Point on Lake Champlain several times a summer and I loved to walk through the ruins and look at the artifacts in the little museum. As an undergraduate history major at Union College, in Schenectady, New York, I was again drawn to archaeology as a way to "fill in" the missing pieces in the documentary record and better understand the lives of ordinary people.

After graduating, I started the Master's program in Historical Archaeology at UMASS, Boston, where I had the opportunity to work on an incredible site on Shelter Island, New York called Sylvester Manor. In the 17<sup>th</sup> century, the Manor was a northern plantation, where English, Dutch, Native American, and captive African people all interacted. Later, in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, it functioned more as a large farm. I became interested in the study of food remains at the site, and I focused my Master's thesis research on a large assemblage of animal bones from the Manor to look at diet, foodways, animal husbandry strategies, and trade.

After I finished the M.A. program, I spent a couple of years working as a field archaeologist for a small cultural resource management firm in upstate New York. There, I gained a great deal of field experience and had the opportunity to work on a range of Native American and historic-period Euro-American sites. In 2004, I started the PhD program at the University of Connecticut (UConn), and since then, Connecticut has been my home. Over the seven years I was in school at UConn, I had the opportunity to work on several Connecticut projects. Each summer I worked in the field with the archaeological crew at the Mashantucket Pequot Museum, and I co-taught the UConn summer archaeological field schools, and worked one summer for AHS/PAST.

My dissertation research brought me back to the Adirondacks. I conducted archaeological work and intensive historical research into Hammondville, an abandoned, 19<sup>th</sup>-century iron mining settlement outside of Crown Point. Hammondville was a company town and was home to a diverse work force that included Americans, English, Irish, Swedish, and French Canadians. I led three summers of fieldwork at the site and my work focused on social interactions, labor relations, cultural landscape, and foodways to explore the experiences of the people who lived in the village.

I completed my PhD in 2011 and then I spent a couple of years working for the Public Archaeology Lab, Inc. in Rhode Island, and then for the last six years I worked for AHS/PAST, Inc. in Connecticut. In those positions, I had the opportunity to work on several important Connecticut sites like Old New-Gate Prison, the Prudence Crandall House, the Webb-Deane-Stevens Museum, and the recently discovered Paleoindian site in Avon. I also worked with Brian Jones to study food remains from the Hollister Site and had the opportunity to spend some time volunteering in the field with Brian and FOSA.

**News from the Office of State Archaeology** *(Continued from page 2)*

In terms of news from OSA, I am just starting to get a handle on what the coronavirus situation means for our projects and other work. Unfortunately, some of our planned programs and events are now on hold or cancelled due to the virus. We had planned to do a one-week field program at a Revolutionary War battlefield site for French students as part of the exchange program that Brian worked on last year, but their trip to the U.S. has now been postponed until next year. As of right now (but depending on how the virus situation unfolds), we are planning a one-day dig at the Lee House in Old Lyme in July and two weeks of field schools at the Hollister Site in Glastonbury in August.

On a more positive note, work is nearly complete on the new (and hopefully permanent!) lab and office space at UConn. The new space includes an OSA lab and office, and a separate lab space for Jackie Veninger-Robert, our NAGPRA (Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act) coordinator. Nick played an important role in the acquisition of our new space along with Janine Caira, Director of Connecticut Museum of Natural History and Natalie Munro from the UConn Anthropology Department. This is a major victory for OSA, as Brian had to move his lab and office nearly every year he held the position. Several FOSA members helped us start packing up the lab in the hopes of moving into the new space the week of March 16, but that is currently on hold as UConn has asked employees to telecommute for the next several weeks.

Given that there will be limited time in the office over the next few weeks, I plan to take home a bunch of files and use the time to get up to speed on the collections and several of OSA’s ongoing projects, like the Hollister Site. I hope that when all this settles down we can again begin to plan and schedule events and programs. I look forward to working closely with FOSA over the coming and years and I am excited to see what the future holds for Connecticut archaeology. I wish you all the best!

*Sarah Sportman, Connecticut State Archaeologist*

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Pictured left to right - Gary Nolf and Don Rankin at the First Day event (1/1/2020) at Hammonasset Beach State Park. *Photo by Bonnie Beatrice*

## FOSA Outreach in Boston

A Public Archaeology Day at the Boston Public Library was held on January 11, 2020, in association with The Society for Historical Archaeology conference.

The Friends of the Office of State Archaeology (FOSA) were asked to participate as the “free, open-house style archaeology fair would focus on the unique and local history of the Boston area and New England at large.”

Bonnie Beatrice accompanied me to Boston, and we setup the FOSA Outreach table in the library’s central building not far from Copley Square. The fair was held from 10:00 am to 2:00 pm, and not a second of the time we were there did we run out of people to educate and inform about FOSA and the wonderful work that the Office of State Archaeology (OSA) does in identifying, managing and preserving Connecticut’s archaeology resources.

Our table materials included FOSA information, artifacts, games and photographs from Connecticut’s recent archaeological finds from Glastonbury and Windsor. Many Massachusetts organizations thanked us for being present, and especially thanked FOSA for the work it does in aiding the state archaeologist. It seems FOSA is serving as a basis for other New England groups to emulate, as they look to support their own state archaeological programs. It is nice to be recognized and imitated for a great cause. It is a joy to bring experiences of learning through Connecticut’s history and heritage in archaeology.

*Kathy Walburn*



Pictured left to right at the FOSA Outreach table: Bonnie Beatrice, Mandy Ranslow and Kathy Walburn

**Road Trip Introduction:** I drove about the country last year, making time to visit several significant archaeological sites and museums. It was an opportunity to enhance my general archaeological knowledge. Further, my book learning gained relevance through first hand experience of the physical site settings. You gain insights by walking in the footsteps of the past, gazing on the same hills and waters viewed by those who lived in the past. I love to stand at a site and try to image it in earlier times. What is the same, and what has changed?

The intent is to present brief articles in this and future FOSA Newsletters to introduce membership to several of the locales visited. This first Road Trip Observation begins with Blackwater Draw, the multi-component and Clovis Type site near Portales NM. Future discussions will introduce the impressive Early and Middle Archaic research conducted by the University of Tennessee and displayed at UT's McClung Museum in Knoxville, TN; the complex Late Archaic Poverty Point component and site in Louisiana (not your typical archaic lithic scatter!); the impressive Mississippian site of Moundville, AL.; and the sacred quarries at Pipestone National Monument in MN.

### Road Trip Observations: Blackwater Draw National Historic Site, Portales New Mexico

Blackwater Draw, in the semi-arid upland plains of E. New Mexico, is where conclusive associations between Paleo Indian tools and extinct fauna were initially identified and the Clovis type assemblage defined.

Blackwater Draw cuts through the high plains for more than 80 miles. A designated National Historic Landmark, the preserved property of 157+ acres is owned and managed by Eastern New Mexico University (ENMU). The



small welcome center is staffed by a resident archaeologist and enthusiastic and knowledgeable ENMU students. The center presents wonderful, albeit informal, exhibits of extinct bison skulls, mammoth remains and other extinct fauna. Examples of paleo and archaic lithics are exhibited and samples or reproductions are there to be handled. One the walls, captioned photographs provide a glimpse into the archaeological research performed here since 1932. I was thrilled to see pictures of John Cotter with whom I had crossed paths back in the day when he was the National Park Service Mid-Atlantic regional archaeologist. He was active in the initial excavations here in the mid-1930s and more recently in preservation of the property. Gravel quarrying initially exposed the occupation strata which led to the initial archaeological discoveries. Unfortunately, it continued for years destroying much of the archaeological deposits. The welcome center attendant remarked that paleolithics are scattered in the compacted fill of many local ranch driveways!

Behind the welcome center stretches 1.7 miles of trail that takes you through the draw and past the locations of many significant excavations and finds. This tour is self-guided, so be mindful of the heat and keep an eye out for rattlers. Take water, a hat, and a hiking stick. Along the trails are interpretive signs, however many are faded so it is advisable to carry informative literature obtainable from the welcome center. On your walkabout you gain a "feel" for the harsh conditions faced by past occupants. Terrain is rugged, ground vegetation dense and coarse, and water is generally at a premium. The vertical walls of the draw reveal stratigraphy representing hundreds of thousands of years of deposition and erosional cycles. Late Pleistocene and Holocene lacustrine bluish-gray silt/sand deposits, relatively high in the stratigraphic column, yield assemblages of faunal remains and paleo Indian cultural materials. A large metal shed structure serves as an interpretive center enclosing on-going excavations. The visitor is afforded the opportunity to study the many stratigraphic levels and *in situ* deposits of hundreds of extinct fauna remains and lithic materials.

Blackwater draw evidences cultural occupation from circa 13,000 BP to historic times. Animals and man were drawn to this location by the presence of seasonal surface water in an otherwise arid high plain. Camp sites, kill sites and lithic scatter abound. Dated stratified components distinguish the defining Clovis type assemblage, the later Folsom component, late Paleo / Early Archaic unfluted parallel biface points and even later archaic and protohistoric components.

Locality No. 1 is the Clovis type site. Importantly, many of the lithics were carried from sources hundreds of miles away. Noteworthy is the fine bone preservation in the older strata: providing evidence of Paleo-Indian bone and ivory implements in addition to the thousands of lithics recovered. I am intrigued by the bone spear or dart shafts to which lithic points may have been attached. I also ponder why clay cooking balls were used in an area where stone was abundant (yes fire cracked rock is common here but so are the clay balls presumably used similarly). Significantly, tools and evidence of butchering have been found in association with the faunal remains. Mammoth remains, representing a minimum of 20+ individuals have been recovered so far. Extinct animals including camel, sloths, Pleistocene cats, bison and wolf.



Also surprising to me was the archaeological identification of many dug wells – the oldest dated to the Clovis occupation and proclaimed by an interpretive sign as the “Oldest Well in the New World.” These wells may have been dug during drought episodes when surface water sources had dried up, or perhaps they were a means to obtain clean water filtered by the sands instead of drawing water from the nearby mucky edge of surface water.

**To get there:** The site is situated on the New Mexico – Texas border, and reached by taking a 100 mile detour south from Interstate 40 on US-60 / US-84 to the town of Clovis, and then south on NM-467 for 12 miles. The site is situated between Clovis and Portales, NM.

I also recommend a side trip to the little museum at Eastern New Mexico University in Portales. It is delightful.

#### **Further recommended reading:**

Anthony T. Boldurian, “Clovis Type-Site, Blackwater Draw, New Mexico: A History, 1929-2009,” *North American Archaeologist*, Volume: 29 issue: 1, page(s): 65-89, Article first published online: October 3, 2008; Issue published: January 1, 2008.

*Thomas Ford*

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## FOSA Committees and Committee Members

**Archaeology Awareness Month:** TBD (Chair), Jim Hall, Dick Hughes, Elliot Schawm, Kathy Walburn

**Excavation Committee:** Jeremy Pilver (Chair), Scott Brady, Mike Cahill, Marlo Del Chiaro, Brian Meyer, Dick Hughes, Elizabeth Mark, Cynthia Redman, Frederick Rivard, Zachary Singer, Jim Trocchi, Kathy Walburn

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**Nominations:** Cynthia Redman (Chair)

**Outreach:** Kathy Walburn (Chair), Bonnie Beatrice, Ken Beatrice

**Volunteer Coordinator:** Scott Brady (Chair)

**Website:** Jim Hall (Chair), Martha Davidson

### What's New on the FOSA Website?

1. This past October, Nick Bellantoni gave a talk on "New England Vampire Folk Belief: The Archaeological Evidence." This was the latest version of this talk, in which he describes how the "vampire" at the heart of his talk was recently identified. This time we recorded his talk, and merged it with his PowerPoint displays. You can listen to the talk ,and navigate backwards and forwards through it as you wish, by clicking [http://www.fosa-ct.org/SpecialFeatures/VMPPR\\_Slideshow\\_1.htm](http://www.fosa-ct.org/SpecialFeatures/VMPPR_Slideshow_1.htm).

2. We've continued to record the "Archaeology of Connecticut" interviews given at iCRV radio, and incorporate them and a brief overview of each, at [http://www.fosa-ct.org/iCRV\\_Slideshow\\_1.htm](http://www.fosa-ct.org/iCRV_Slideshow_1.htm). At this writing we are at show 13, out of a possible 17 that were initially anticipated.

3. Added a new series of "Outreach" photos beginning in 2020, in a new section which is accessible at [http://www.fosa-ct.org/FOSA\\_Outreach.htm](http://www.fosa-ct.org/FOSA_Outreach.htm).

4. The Interest Inventory list, on the "Join Us" page ([https://www.fosa-ct.org/FOSA\\_JoinUs.htm](https://www.fosa-ct.org/FOSA_JoinUs.htm)) and the associated Volunteer Opportunities page ([https://www.fosa-ct.org/FOSA\\_VolOpps.htm](https://www.fosa-ct.org/FOSA_VolOpps.htm)) definitions of the "interests" have been upgraded. Not major, but a bit more up-to-date.

5. In response to questions about the practicability of adding online Registration and Donation processing to FOSA, we've modified the "Join Us" page to now allow users to join FOSA, identify their interests and donation amounts, and pay using a new PayPal interface. This will be a 2-step process, where you first fill out the "Join Us" form and automatically send heads-up messages to Membership and Treasurer personnel; and then, if there are monies involved, you go to PayPal to actually transfer the funds. You can still use the manual approach if you like, of course. This, however, should be more convenient for most people nowadays.

**Note:** If items 4 and 5 haven't been activated by the time you read this, be patient: They'll be available shortly, and will be preceded by a message from Scott Brady letting you know of them in advance.

6. **SUGGESTIONS REQUESTED:** To reiterate from above and from previous "What's New..." articles: While the web site has many things on it, it's very possible that there are dozens of possible things which haven't crossed either my mind or that of the Board which might be included. SO: If you have ideas or suggestions for layout changes, or new features, or changes to existing ones, or things we should drop, please let me know! Please email me at [jamesh52@comcast.net](mailto:jamesh52@comcast.net) with your suggestions.

Jim Hall

