

# SAS

VOLUME 2 NUMBER 1 SUMMER 1978

# NEWSLETTER

## SOCIETY FOR ARCHAEOLOGICAL SCIENCES

Archaeological Research Unit, Radiocarbon Laboratory, Department of Anthropology  
University of California, Riverside — Riverside, California 92512

## NEWS OF THE SOCIETY

### TUCSON MEETING

A general information session for current and prospective SAS members was held at the May meeting of the Society for American Archaeology in Tucson, Arizona. The meeting was well attended, and it provided an initial opportunity for members to meet one another and to voice individual interests and concerns. R.E. Taylor, Acting Secretary, reviewed the organization, purposes and goals of the SAS, and invited those present to raise questions and offer proposals for consideration by SAS members at future meetings. Some suggestions touched on the need to maintain contact and to co-ordinate future activities of the SAS with other societies such as AMQUA and the SAA, and the need to appoint regional representatives for the SAS to foster membership and gather information for the Newsletter.

The first formal meeting of the SAS Acting Executive Board was also held in Tucson to decide on a number of organizational items. Actions of the Board included: 1) acceptance of the final draft of the SAS by-laws subject to a few changes in wording; 2) the establishment of guidelines for the SAS Acting Secretary to set the initial elections of SAS officers and the date of the first formal meeting of the SAS; and 3) authorization to establish several standing committees, including a joint SAS/SOPA Committee to study the feasibility and problems in the creation of an Archaeometric/Archaeological Science specialty under SOPA guidelines.

### SAS ELECTIONS

Within the next two months, SAS members will receive information concerning the election process for the selection of the initial group of officers for the Society. For the initial election only, elections for the founding officers of the Society will be held on the following basis:

- 1) Elections for the offices of President and Secretary-Treasurer will be held with at least two candidates for each office;
- 2) The candidate receiving the highest number of votes for the office of President will become President, and the candidate receiving the next highest number of votes will become Vice-President;
- 3) The candidate receiving the highest number of votes for the office of Secretary-Treasurer will become Secretary-Treasurer and the candidate receiving the next highest number of votes will become Assistant Secretary-Treasurer;
- 4) The terms of office for the founding President and Secretary-Treasurer shall be one year, to be succeeded by the Vice-President and Assistant Secretary-Treasurer respectively; and,
- 5) At the end of one year, the founding President will succeed to the Office of Past President.

SAS members who would like to serve as officers should indicate their interest to the Acting Secretary, who will be co-ordinating the initial election processes. Contact R.E. Taylor in care of the Newsletter.

## EDITORIAL

With this issue of the Newsletter the Society for Archaeological Sciences begins its second year, and it seems appropriate to reflect briefly on accomplishments and goals. In retrospect, the first year was quite successful. The Acting Executive Board managed to implement the organization of the Society and to enlist the support of 100 charter members. Since that time the membership has increased to 367, and it continues to grow. In addition, the publication of the Newsletter was established on a regular, quarterly basis, supported by contributions from interested members.

It is hoped that the Society and the Newsletter will ultimately play valuable roles in coordinating the research efforts of those interested in archaeological sciences, and in promoting improved understanding and cooperation among members of different disciplines. The need for this was clearly reflected in comments made by members at the SAS meeting in Tucson. Although the group was very diverse in terms of backgrounds, several concerns were raised repeatedly.

The first issue was that of fragmentation: members questioned the utility of a society for archaeological sciences separate from those that already exist, such as the Archaeological Chemistry Section of the AAAS. The second concern commonly voiced was the problem of communication with archaeologists when cooperating on projects: many members felt that they were reduced to the role of uninformed technicians, thereby significantly reducing the contribution they were able and/or inclined to make. These issues are not unrelated.

Active participation by scientists in archaeometric analysis is definitely a welcome trend. However, the impact these scholars have on the development of archaeology is not entirely determined by the novelty of their techniques or the complexity of their equipment. Rather, it depends largely on the extent to which archaeologists and scientists can concur on what constitutes the most appropriate, efficient analysis to get results that make sense in *cultural* terms. In many of the societies that have grown up around scientific analysis of archaeological material, this is a peripheral problem. They are associations of scientists who are concerned with technical problems involved in performing similar types of analyses on similar types of materials. The participation of the archaeologist may be limited to providing a set of interesting artifacts.

On the other hand, SAS was instituted to promote interaction among individuals interested in complementary aspects of common research problems. The key to understanding the nature of man's adaptation to his physical and social environments lies in the articulation of cultural and natural factors. For example, as fundamental a question as why a group's subsistence strategy changed through time may involve the interrelationships between changes in floral or faunal populations, climatic shifts, technological innovations, demographic variation and changes in social structure. Any single study will provide only a partial answer which must be evaluated in terms of the other variables. Therefore, understanding the significance of the analytical results requires open communication among all the participants. It is important to remove barriers at the tentative boundaries of disciplines in order to pursue all the relevant fields of human knowledge that can contribute to understanding the processes involved in human development.

This type of cooperation has been retarded in the past by differences in research traditions, methodology and language. These problems are slowly being overcome, but it takes more than time to learn to phrase questions to one another in mutually intelligible and appropriate terms. If individuals from all groups are to work together productively, to avoid redundancy in research, and to maximize the resources, abilities and interests of all, some common ground is necessary for exchanging views on problem areas and common concerns in such *interdisciplinary* research. Without this, fragmentation will result, and tensions among archaeologists and scientists will continue.

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**SAS**

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With your participation, SAS and the Newsletter can serve as your forum. Accordingly, the editors would like to strongly encourage members to take advantage of the Newsletter by sharing up-to-date information and factual or controversial views and discussion pertinent to interdisciplinary work involving archaeological sciences. Your support and contributions are essential to the success of SAS, and we hope that the Newsletter can play an active part in facilitating communication and in making interdisciplinary archaeological research more satisfying and productive for all.

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## NEWS OF THE PROFESSION

### INTERDISCIPLINARY ARCHAEOLOGY AWARD

C. Vance Haynes, a University of Arizona geochronologist and SAS Board member, has recently become the first recipient of the Fryxell Award for interdisciplinary work in archaeology. The award honors Ronald Fryxell, a geologist with interests in archaeology, and is given by the Society for American Archaeology. Haynes earned his Ph.D. in geology at the University of Arizona in 1965 and taught there until 1968, when he joined the faculty of Southern Methodist University. He returned to Arizona in 1974, and is currently involved in research on the prehistory of dry lakes in Egypt and on mastodon bones in Missouri.

### PROMOTING CONSERVATION OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESOURCES

Recent action by President Carter to create a Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service has provided a unique opportunity for archaeology to achieve a more important role in national affairs. It now seems probable that in the administrative structure which will emerge, the concern for cultural and historical resources will receive an emphasis fully equal to that given to natural resources and recreation. The issue, however, is still in doubt, and all those interested in cultural and historical preservation are urgently requested to write immediately expressing their appreciation and support for the efforts. It is most important that those in the administration charged with these efforts realize that there is a large and articulate segment of our population concerned with the conservation of our cultural resources.

Letters of support should be sent to:

Mr. David F. Hales  
Deputy Assistant Secretary for Fish, Wildlife and Parks  
Office of the Secretary  
Department of the Interior  
Washington, D.C. 20240

and

Mr. Chris T. Delaporte, Director  
Heritage, Conservation and Recreation Service  
Department of the Interior  
Washington, D.C. 20240

Submitted by James E. King, Quaternary Studies Center, Illinois State Museum, Springfield, Illinois.

# MEETING NOTES

## **ARCHAEOOMETRY AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL PROSPECTION**

The 1979 symposium on Archaeometry and Archaeological Prospection will be held in London, 28-31 March, 1979. The meeting will be concerned with the application of the physical sciences to archaeology and the topics covered will include physico-chemical analysis, metallurgy, dating methods, prospection, numerical data analysis and allied techniques.

Further details may be obtained from: Symposium Secretary, British Museum Research Laboratory, London WC1B 3DG.



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