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Archaeological Practice on Reality Television

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In the Acknowledgements section of “Ho'eexokre 'Eyookuuka'ro 'We're Working with Each Other': The Pimu Catalina Island Project” Vol. 15(1):28, an important supporter was left out and should be disclosed.

Acknowledgments. The 2012 Pimu Catalina Island Archaeology Field School was also supported by the Institute for Field Research (IFR).



On the cover: Time Team America camera-man filming excavations for the episode “The Search for Josiah Henson.” Image courtesy of Oregon Public Broadcasting.



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EDITOR'S CORNER

Anna Marie Prentiss

Anna Marie Prentiss is Professor in the Department of Anthropology at The University of Montana.

The March issue of *The SAA Archaeological Record* draws us into perhaps that most public of archaeologies, archaeological practice on reality television. This special issue had its germination with Sarah Herr's submission of Eduardo Pagán's article (this issue) nearly a year ago. My initial reaction was that it had too much television and not enough archaeology for a stand-alone contribution. But she argued for its importance, and it eventually struck me that this would actually make a great contribution within a wider discussion of the complexities of archaeology as portrayed and practiced in front of television cameras. Herr subsequently agreed to guest edit the special issue and I think it has led to publication of a very thought-provoking set of articles.

Eduardo Pagán provides context for this discussion with a highly informative review of the practical issues associated with the rapidly changing world of cable and reality television programming. Pagán draws upon his extensive experience in television (TV) production to not just inform us of its "realities," but to offer critique and recommendations for scholarly participation in the future. Sarah Herr follows with an interview of John Francis, Vice President for Research, Conservation, and Exploration at the National Geographic Society. This interview provides us with a fascinating insider's perspective on the evolution of some archaeology programming within the National Geographic Channel. Meg Watters provides us with a look at *Time Team America*, a reality show actually designed to depict archaeologists conducting authentic field research. Jeffrey Hanson reviews ethical issues associated with reality TV programming that promotes digging in absence of actual archaeological research. Hanson follows with a chronicle of the discussions surrounding the *Diggers* show aired by the National Geographic Channel. Giovanna Peebles introduces the challenge of working with metal detectorists, illustrating both problematic aspects and significant opportunities for cooperation and collaboration. Matthew Reeves continues this discussion with an example of metal detector programs at the Montpelier Archaeology Department. Richard Pettigrew concludes with a short discussion that highlights the importance of working with media to develop public understanding and appreciation of the many great things underway in our discipline.

Open Access (OA) publishing is another critical facet of public archaeology. Sarah Kansa and Carrie Dennett present a very informative overview of alternative strategies under consideration by the SAA.

Finally, we have begun planning for September through May 2015–2016, and I want to encourage the membership to consider submitting stand-alone articles and ideas for interesting special issues. We look forward to receiving your submissions.



FROM THE PRESIDENT

Jeffrey H. Altschul, RPA

It is hard for me to believe that my term as SAA president is nearly complete. With so many issues on so many different topics coming at you all at once, time just seems to blur. As we approach the annual meeting, I remain hard at work trying to finish or to pass on initiatives that began under my watch. Now, then, is not the time to reflect on the experience. I can say without hesitation, however, that it has been a great honor to serve as SAA president. I have learned a lot about the breadth of our discipline and the passion, thoughtfulness, and resolve that our members bring to their work.



Upon becoming SAA president-elect, one of the first tasks then-president Fred Limp asked me to do was attend a meeting at the National Geographic Society (NGS) in Washington, D.C., to discuss a reality TV show called *Diggers*. My qualifications for this role were impeccable: I had never heard of the show, did not watch reality TV, never held a metal detector, and was not trained as a historical archaeologist. However, as I was to learn over the next three years, this situation is the norm for the SAA president, not the exception. Like on so many other issues, I would learn to be a quick study.

I came away from the Washington meeting with three impressions. First, many archaeologists wanted to help NGS because it has been an important part of American archaeology. NGS awards about \$15 million a year in research grants, a significant proportion of which go to anthropology and archaeology. As important, *National Geographic* magazine and NGS-sponsored television shows, such as *NOVA* and *Cosmos*, are viewed as positive means of communicating science, and particularly archaeology, to the public. Second, many archaeologists hated *Diggers*. To some, it was no more than glorified looting; to others, the main characters made everyone associated with archaeology look silly; still others simply had a visceral reaction of horror. Third, I came away with the distinct feeling that there were those at NGS that really wanted to do the right thing. *Diggers* was not what they had signed up for; they were embarrassed.

Yet, they knew that without shows like *Diggers*, NGS could not survive. Of the nearly half-billion dollars it takes to keep NGS running, a significant portion comes from the National Geographic Channel, which relies heavily on programs like *Diggers*.

After a year of exchanging volleys, SAA decided to work with NGS to improve *Diggers*. Along with the Society for Historical Archaeology (SHA), we pre-conditioned our involvement on the following: (1) no monetary value of artifacts would be shown or discussed; (2) the show's protagonists would work under the direction of an on-screen archaeologist; (3) the show in no way would glorify or encourage looting of archaeological sites. In addition, we asked that each show focus on a research question, include discussions of heritage values, incorporate descendant and local communities, and promote conservation of the archaeological record. For season three of *Diggers*, SAA's elected officers (president, president-elect, treasurer, secretary, and secretary-elect) have commented on the rough cut, second cut, and fine cut of each 30-minute episode, submitted comments to the producers, and responded to producer's notes. It has been a big commitment of time and effort by the SAA leadership.

Diggers is still a work in progress. We get frustrated with the producers and we have at times threatened to pull our support. But, thus far, we have persevered. The show is certainly better than it was, and it is my hope that it will get even better.

While negotiating with *Diggers*, SAA was approached by another reality TV show: *Time Team America (TTA)*. Produced and distributed by Oregon Public Broadcasting, *TTA* is supported wholly by grants. SAA has supplied several letters of support for grants to the National Science Foundation. We have also appointed an SAA representative (Richard Pettigrew) to the show's advisory board. No member has ever objected to SAA's support of *TTA*, although, as Meg Watters notes in her article in

this issue, it too is reality TV. *TTA* has some of the same struggles as *Diggers*. It must have viewers or it will not be funded. To have viewers, it must make compromises in how archaeology and archaeologists are portrayed.

Why have I invested so much time in these TV shows? In my four decades as a professional archaeologist, there has been one recurrent theme: we need to communicate better with the public. As archaeologists, we have an ethical obligation to tell the public what we have learned (SAA Ethical Principle No. 4). If that is not enough, we have our own self-interest. Most of us, whether in academia or CRM, are supported either directly by public funding or by laws and regulations. Unless we communicate why what we do is in the public interest, we run the real risk of having these funds shut off and the regulations protecting archaeological resources lifted or eviscerated. Of course, there are lots of ways to communicate. Some people will read our technical reports; others will read newspaper and magazine accounts; others will come to lectures, site tours, and archaeology week/month exhibitions. Increasingly, people learn about archaeology on Facebook, Twitter, blogs, and other social media.

Most of these venues reach a relatively small number of people. Reality TV, in contrast, has a huge following.

Between June and September 2014, more than 9.5 million viewers tuned in to an episode of *TTA*. Between February and June 2014, 30.9 million viewers tuned in to *Diggers* at least once. In eight months in 2014, then, more than 40 million viewers watched a reality TV show about archaeology. Not counted are the millions more that watched reality TV shows such as *American Digger* or *Dig Wars*, which truly are no more than glorified looting. Why such huge audiences? Because the public really likes and is interested in archaeology and history. Don't we have an obligation to the people who watch reality TV, as well as to the viewers of *NOVA*? I think we do. But we also have an obligation to ensure that these shows portray archaeology in a way that meets our standards of ethical conduct and scientific practice. Having watched these shows, I understand why some SAA members are so adamant in their view that we oppose them. In this issue of *The SAA Archaeological Record*, we give voice to those on various sides of the issues surrounding the portrayal of archaeology on television. I hope you tune in.

MONEY MATTERS: SAA AND OPEN ACCESS— THE FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Jim Bruseth

Jim Bruseth is SAA Treasurer.

In the January issue of *The Archaeological Record*, SAA's President-elect Diane Gifford-Gonzalez summarized government mandates and publishing trends, leading the Board to consider moving SAA journals to open access (OA). OA offers important benefits: our journals would be widely accessible, readership would increase, authors required to publish OA could submit articles, and journal impact numbers would improve. But such benefits come at a cost, and in the remainder of this column, I discuss the potential financial challenges facing SAA as we move into this new publishing environment.

First, let's look at where SAA stands today financially. After years of earlier boards working assiduously to build a reserve equal to our annual operating budget, this goal was achieved in 2013. We can now withstand a serious financial challenge, such as a major

decline in the economy that results in lost membership or a very poorly attended annual meeting. In essence, the reserve enables us to continue essential functions in case of a significant reduction in revenues. However, building the reserve has had hidden costs. Several SAA scholarships, especially those for Native Americans and other historically underrepresented groups, remain significantly underfunded, inhibiting our ability to build diversity in our profession. Our business office staff, lean compared to comparably sized organizations, needs to grow to expand SAA programs and offer additional member benefits.

Moving to OA potentially challenges SAA's ability to continue these programs or develop new ones. To appreciate the potential

➤ MONEY MATTERS, continued on page 39



EXPLORING OPEN ACCESS FOR SAA PUBLICATIONS

Sarah Witcher Kansa and Carrie Dennett, on behalf of the SAA Publications Committee

In the January 2015 issue of *The SAA Archaeological Record*, president-elect Diane Gifford-Gonzalez discussed the changing landscape of scholarly communications and the recent efforts of the Society for American Archaeology (SAA) Board to explore implementation models for open access (OA) publishing. Gifford-Gonzalez emphasized that the Board is taking a careful, step-by-step approach, which involves learning from other societies, assessing the needs of the membership, considering issues of financing and author equity, and ensuring continuity of SAA's programs. As the Board considers OA and its impacts on the Society and its membership, and as part of their commitment to transparency, they have solicited this article to provide members with some background on developments in OA and current publishing models.

In early 2013, the White House Office of Science and Technology announced a new mandate for OA to publications and data resulting from federally funded research. Other nonfederal granting bodies are adopting similar policies. The state of California also recently passed legislation mandating OA to some research it sponsors.¹ Researchers in other countries, such as the United Kingdom specifically, and the whole European Union, already or will soon have OA mandates. In addition, many universities, including the University of California² system and Harvard University³ have strong OA policies for their faculty.⁴

Why Open Access?

Open access refers to publications and data that are “digital, online, free of charge, and free of most copyright and licensing restrictions” (Suber 2012). (An informative and accessible discussion of OA can be found in Peter Suber’s [2012] handbook *Open Access*.)⁵ Reasons for moving toward OA range from ethical considerations to cost issues and technical and research opportunities. Publication costs have exploded over the past few decades as commercial publishers, especially in science, technology, engineering, and medicine (STEM) have consolidated into large international conglomerates. At the same time, computer networking laws and intellectual property regulations

have grown more complex and involve high-stake civil and even criminal risks, further driving up system costs in scholarly communications and instruction (Kansa et al. 2013). Open access represents a desire for research to impact a much broader audience via the Internet, as well as a response to the growing costs and risks of conventional publishing.

While OA advocates seek to broaden the communication of research and make research faster and more efficient, there are deeper and more fundamental goals. Open access not only means free-of-charge access, but also freedom of expression, with legal guarantees to access, critique, reuse, and combine research, including text, data or other media, without threat of legal reprisal. That is, as we consider various funding models in developing OA to SAA publications (and increasingly research data), we also need to keep in mind our scholarly values and obligations to the public.

OA is not simply an accounting matter, a business model shift, or a strategy to increase impact and reach. Instead, SAA open access policies need to be considered in light of the SAA’s *Principles of Archaeological Ethics*, specifically with regard to dissemination, preservation, and outreach. The ethical and moral dimensions of the debate need to guide changes to our publication practices and finance models.

The SAA’s Role in the Future of Scholarly Publishing

The SAA is concerned about the future of archaeological publishing, as highlighted by the Presidential Forum at last year’s SAA Annual Meeting, which featured various perspectives on this topic (President’s Forum on Publishing 2014), as well as a session on this topic at the previous year’s meeting (see Herr [2013] for a summary of that session). As government mandates, institutional policies, and community expectations take hold, OA is clearly poised to play a significant and possibly dominant role in the dissemination of research in the near future. To adapt to these changes, the SAA needs to support archaeologists in OA publication and self-archiving (depositing copies of their

publications in university and/or other OA digital repositories). In doing so, the SAA has the opportunity to forge new partnerships. Shifting toward OA will help highlight the SAA's commitment to promoting archaeology for its members, the broader research community, and other stakeholder communities, particularly journalists, educators, libraries (and other "memory institutions"), as well as the public and private sponsors of our research. But most importantly, OA can represent an important step toward building new bonds with the broader public, including indigenous and disadvantaged communities. While our ethical and professional responsibilities go far beyond publication practices, OA can nevertheless play an important role in promoting greater public accountability and help improve the practice of our discipline.

Self Archiving: A First Step toward Open Access

The Budapest Open Access Initiative of 2001⁶ recommends two complementary approaches to enabling OA: self-archiving ("Green OA") and the development of OA journals ("Gold OA"). The SAA has already implemented the first recommendation by allowing authors to self-archive their publications.⁷ Self-archiving involves depositing a free copy of an electronic document on the Web, in order to provide open access to it. Typically occurring through a university repository, disciplinary repository, or an authors' institutional or individual website, self-archiving can enhance the accessibility, use, and impact of research. An increasing number of institutions and funding agencies have implemented policies requiring scholars to self-archive their research outcomes. A late-2011 report by the SHERPA/RoMEO project, tracking publisher copyright and self-archiving policies,⁸ showed that over 70 percent of the sample of ca. 20,000 journals allow authors to self-archive some version of their papers. Even so, self-archiving requires extra effort by authors, including the sometimes difficult task of figuring out what a journal's self-archiving policy may be. Also, many researchers lack access to institutional repositories that support self-archiving. As a result, as little as 12 percent of authors actually take steps to self-archive, even if policies are in place.⁹ Thus, while self-archiving has allowed the SAA to take a relatively low-risk approach in promoting OA without threatening existing subscription revenue streams, making OA standard practice would require much more than occasional voluntary self-archiving by individual authors.

Funding Open Access Journals

The second ("gold") route toward open access is through the development of new OA journals and the transition of extant journals to OA models. This more formalized approach, however, requires more funding than self-archiving because publishing (including OA publishing) has many costly steps. Initially,

conducting research can require years of training and access to remote sites and collections. Authors then must devote great effort in collaborating with colleagues and drafting manuscripts. Running a publication venue also involves substantial costs, including editorial selection, peer review, editing, production, and distribution. While publication costs represent only a fraction of the larger costs of conducting research, they still need to be financed.

The SAA has a current workflow and funding stream that supports its journals. Adapting funding models to support OA production costs represents a key challenge. Apprehension regarding ethics, peer review, content quality, content permission barriers, metrics, and author access to OA funding must all be addressed. These complex and interrelated issues require wide debate, business planning, and probably some experimentation. Nevertheless, the SAA is well positioned to make a successful transition to OA. The SAA's current titles already have well-established reputations and social capital, thanks to decades of dedication by generations of scholars. Rather than facing the uphill battle of launching a new OA journal and building prestige around it, the SAA can leverage the prestige of its current titles to succeed in publishing OA research already recognized for professionalism and quality.

Below, we describe several funding models currently in use among other journals and publishing houses dealing with our discipline. Producer-side funding includes journals that assess Article Processing Charges (APCs) and journals funded through various types of subsidies. Broadly speaking, subsidies that finance OA production costs use similar institutional financial mechanisms that support the conduct of research in the first place. In other words, subsidizing OA often means considering dissemination as just another aspect of overall research costs.

Models with Article Processing Charges

Many archaeologists are familiar with "author-pays" models that charge a flat fee per article or page. Negative views toward OA in our discipline generally focus on this specific approach, particularly because archaeologists typically lack resources to cover the article fees charged by some OA venues. Furthermore, there are important equity issues to consider with regard to author-side fees, since the ability to pay such charges can vary widely.

The conflation of OA with "author-pays" is understandable, given that the most prominent example of a successful peer-review OA publication venue is *PLOS ONE*, which charges fees (ca. \$1,350/article), paid by the author, the author's institution, or through a grant. However, the term "author-pays" (as opposed to "reader-pays" for traditional publishing) accurately

describes only one of a subset of OA sustainability models. Ubiquity Press,¹⁰ for example, illustrates a somewhat different model. Ubiquity Press, though it does run author-pays publishing on its own, also provides support services on behalf of other society and university presses. For such support services, Ubiquity Press levies charges of approximately \$500/article, paid by the contracting press (not the author directly) to cover the technical and production aspects of journal publishing.

Implementation of these APCs varies. Most OA journals waive or decrease APCs for authors that cannot afford to pay them, and the editorial decision to accept an article is made before the author's request for a waiver. However, flat-rate or per-page APCs finance open access in only a minority of cases.¹¹ Approximately 75 percent of OA journals and 60 percent of OA articles are now published in no-fee, OA venues (Laakso and Björk 2012). Vastly more common among commercial publishers, APCs are levied by very few society and nonprofit publishers (Morrison et al. 2015). Those that do rely on APCs follow many different approaches, making the current landscape of OA publishing with respect to APCs difficult to assess (Morrison et al. 2015).

Hybrid Models

A majority of journals and publishing houses are choosing to follow some form of a “hybrid” model (Morrison et al. 2015), where authors may pay a fee to make their article open access, while other articles are available only to subscribers. This approach provides options for authors who are required to openly share their research or who have funding to publish through OA, while still allowing for conventional publication. The journal *Radiocarbon*, for example, has a \$50/page flat rate charge for all articles and makes all articles OA after one year. Those authors desiring or requiring immediate OA pay an additional \$25/page.

Large commercial publishing houses offer OA options for substantially higher fees, the exact basis for which are not typically disclosed. Elsevier is one example that currently offers OA as an *option* to its contributors for a flat fee in many of their journals (note that many of their more science-based journals are now completely OA). The *Journal of Archaeological Science* and the *Journal of Anthropological Archaeology* both charge \$1,800 for a peer-reviewed OA article, while the *Journal of Archaeological Science: Reports* charges \$1,100/article.¹²

Fully-Subsidized Open Access

Most OA journals are sustained by funding models where *all* publication costs are fully subsidized through other sources, and neither readers nor authors finance the journal (Morrison

et al. 2015). While commercial publishers dominate fee-based OA, the majority of no-fee journals are published by nonprofit entities, such as professional societies, research institutions, or even individual departments. Sustaining a no-fee model would require exploring subsidies, sponsorships, a long-term capital campaign, and/or the development of a consortium of institutions (universities, museums, libraries) to underwrite publications.

Looking Forward: Data and Other Innovations in Publishing

In some ways, OA represents only the tip of the iceberg of exciting new developments and innovations in publishing. The OA debate has presented new opportunities to explore ways to make peer review more fair and effective, enhance the “reproducibility” of findings, and accommodate diverse forms of digital media, especially research data. Along with requiring OA to research publications, the 2013 White House mandate also called for OA to *data* resulting from federally funded research.

Data are extremely valuable research resources, the dissemination of which can be essential in advancing and accelerating research. However, data preservation and access also involve a host of concerns, including legal and technical interoperability, formats and standards, documentation, and preservation processes. Formalized data sharing is a relatively new practice. On the negative side, the professional reward and incentive structures often still neglect and undervalue contributions in the form of research data. On the positive side, data involves less institutional inertia than conventional publishing, allowing more room for innovation. New nonprofit (Astrophysics Data System, the Digital Archaeological Record, and Open Context) and commercial (Figshare) platforms all provide different kinds of research data dissemination and archiving services. rOpen-Science provides related services to disseminate software, computational models, and statistical analyses.

These examples illustrate how no single group has a monopoly of expertise in all issues “digital.” The SAA needs to look broadly to build collaborations with these and other efforts. In considering new forms of OA publishing, the SAA must consider data requirements and other computational needs. As computational approaches improve, especially with regard to text mining and natural language processing, the lines between computational data and narrative texts (meant for human reading) start to blur. In permitting access and free reuse, OA facilitates the integration of data and text. Thus, the SAA's open access discussions will continue to consider the broader digital information ecosystem—a landscape with multiple models for sharing digital data, multiple digital repositories, and rapidly evolving needs and expectations.

Conclusions

We are experiencing a period of great and rapid change in publishing and information access, and the SAA, by moving toward OA, is playing a leading role in opening up scholarship for unprecedented access. The SAA's transition to OA will take some time, as the Society builds experience and understanding about how to make the move in a sustainable way. Of particular interest is recognizing equity concerns with regard to author-side fees, especially considering graduate students, adjunct researchers, postdocs, CRM professionals, and many others who may not have access to granting or institutional funding for publication. However, as discussed above, the SAA, its members, and its public stakeholders will all reap considerable rewards for negotiating these challenges and creating a more effective and equitable model for sharing of the archaeological past.

Acknowledgments. This work began as a set of considerations on open access publishing, which the authors developed on behalf of the Publications Committee in 2014, at the request of the SAA Board. We would like to thank several people who provided thoughtful feedback on various drafts of this piece, including Deborah Nichols, members of the SAA Publications Committee, Eric Kansa, and Raym Crow.

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Notes

1. California: <http://www.sparc.arl.org/blog/california-passes-open-access-legislation>
2. UC system: <http://osc.universityofcalifornia.edu/open-access-policy/>
3. Harvard: <http://isites.harvard.edu/icb/icb.do?keyword=k77982&tabgroupid=icb.tabgroup143448>
4. See this report with a summary of OA open archiving mandates and policies: http://www.bioone.org/userimages/ContentEditor/1398107322685/Assessing_OA_Mandates_Report.pdf
5. Available for free online or for purchase in print: <http://mitpress.mit.edu/books/open-access>
6. See the full text of the Initiative here: <http://www.soros.org/open-access/read.shtml>
7. The SAA's policy, which is undergoing expansion and clarification, currently allows authors the right to post a copy of the article on the author's personal website.
8. <http://romeo.jiscinvolve.org/wp/2011/11/24/60-of-journals-allow-immediate-archiving-of-peer-reviewed-articles-but-it-gets-much-better/comment-page-1/>
9. See discussion here: <http://www.openaccesspublishing.org/apc8/Personal%20VersionGreenOa.pdf>
10. See: <http://www.ubiquitypress.com/site/about/>
11. See discussion: <http://legacy.earlham.edu/~peters/fos/overview.htm>
12. These hybrid models receive criticism, however, because potentially they allow publishing houses to charge OA APC fees without reducing subscription prices commensurately (see, for example, <http://thedisorderofthings.com/2014/10/12/the-wages-of-sin/>).



VOLUNTEER PROFILE

Kirk French

My first experience with the Society for American Archaeology (SAA) was at the 2001 Annual Meeting in New Orleans. Three thousand archaeologists in the French Quarter! I can't for the life of me figure out why we haven't been invited back. But seriously, aside from the oyster po'boys, bowls of gumbo, and shrimp étouffée (OK, I had one hurricane), the conference was a major milestone for me. I had been invited by Barbara Fash and Lisa Lucero to write a paper with David Stuart and Alfonso Morales on archaeological and epigraphic evidence for water management and ritual at Palenque. As a first-year graduate student at the University of Cincinnati, I was both ecstatic and insanely nervous. I think the presentation went fine (i.e., I didn't collapse). After five days of listening to presentations and mixing it up with fellow archaeologists, I was hooked.

As the years passed, my roles as a member of the SAA slowly increased. In 2002, I co-organized a session with Ed Barnhart on Palenque. One of our presenters, Damien Marken, cobbled the papers together to produce a wonderful edited volume, *Palenque: Recent Investigations at the Classic Maya Center*. While in graduate school at Penn State from 2003–2009, I attended the SAA annual meetings—presenting papers, organizing and/or chairing sessions, making new friends (and foes), and just simply growing as an archaeologist.

In 2009, I began a film project that documented the folks that call up archaeologists, asking us to come out and investigate their amazing discovery (think...a Bigfoot footprint, a meteorite with an image of God burned into it, or the Knights Templar treasure buried in a backyard in Pennsylvania). Most of us ignore these claims, often for good reason: these investigations are time consuming, and often go nowhere. But I wanted to investigate their claims, conduct interviews, and explain why this coffee mug was not the Holy Grail. To me, this was a great opportunity to create a collection of stories over the years to use as a teaching tool in my Introduction to Archaeology course.

The following year, the concept was morphed into a television show by Discovery Channel and given the unfortunate and unethical title of *American Treasures* (later renamed *Artifact or Fiction*). The production of the show was a constant uphill battle

of trying to persuade the network to adhere to the Principles of Archaeological Ethics defined by the SAA. Luckily, I got to share this bittersweet experience with my good friend and colleague, Jason De Leon. After six months of filming and fighting with Discovery, ten 30-minute episodes were completed. If you want to know what happened next, you'll have to buy me a hurricane in San Francisco.

In 2011, I was asked to join the SAA Media Committee. My experience with the television show left me well prepared for this position as almost immediately a plethora of reality-based archaeology shows began airing. With the help of Jon Czaplicki, A'ndrea Messer, Mindy Zeder, Fred Limp, and others, we began drafting responses to National Geographic's *Diggers*, Spike TV's *American Digger*, Travel Channel's *Diggin' History*, and several production companies that were in the early stages of filming illegal excavations in the United States. The SAA won a few of these battles, especially in regards to *Diggers*—production was immediately halted and an archaeologist was hired to consult alongside the metal detecting duo.

Currently, there is a lull in archeology shows, but they come in waves, so be ready. More ridiculousness is on the horizon and in a few years, three or four new shows will appear all at once on the major cable networks, and we will again have to make a stand. The public absolutely adores archaeology. They love watching us discover the past. It's just too bad that even our profession has been "Honey-boo-boo-afied" on television. Although, there is one diamond in the rough: PBS's *Time Team America*. Their second season recently aired, and simply put, it is well done. If you haven't seen it, check it out.

I am still a member of the Media Committee, as well as Chair of the Gene S. Stuart Award Committee, which recognizes an author for their story about archaeology that appears in popular press. Time spent on both committees has been very rewarding. My involvement with the SAA is continuing to evolve. For example, I am more interested in public outreach than I ever thought possible. This persistent transition as an archaeologist is due largely in part to the support, networking, and camaraderie that our organization supplies. I'm still hooked.

REALITY TELEVISION AND THE PORTRAYAL OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL PRACTICE: CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

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Hearing Eduardo Pagán speak for the second time at the annual Arizona Preservation Conference was an “A-ha!” moment for me. The first time I heard Dr. Pagan speak was in 2009 shortly after he joined the cast of PBS’s *History Detectives*. The second time, in 2013, was shortly after the program went off the air. This second talk explained why his popular series—which sometimes featured archaeologists—was no longer on the air and was perhaps no longer a viable model for television, and why watching cable in hotel rooms on long field projects was no longer fun. As Spike TV’s *American Digger* and the National Geographic Channel’s *Diggers* seemingly simultaneously flashed onto screens across the United States and protest letters appeared on listservs and on social media, Pagán’s talk resonated. So, I asked him to share his thoughts with archaeological audiences in this magazine. His article sets the stage for the following articles that examine the depiction of archaeological practice on reality television and the goals, audiences, educational objectives, ethical challenges, and funding considerations that shape this programming. The authors in this issue speak from a number of perspectives, but all see both the challenges and the opportunities of archaeological programming for us as the Society for American Archaeology (SAA) and for us as professional archaeologists.

As *American Digger* and *Diggers* caught the country’s attention, state, national, and international archaeological organizations were called upon by their memberships to respond. The SAA has responded in words and in actions, although not all of those actions have been visible to the membership. SAA was one of several organizations and institutions who called for a meeting with the National Geographic Channel in 2013 to discuss metal detecting best practices. Where other television producers, such as those at Spike TV, were not responsive, the National Geographic Society (NGS), through Vice President John Francis and his colleagues at the National Geographic Channel, entered into a dialogue with the SAA. SAA’s decision to engage with a show that, in its first season,

breached our organization’s ethical principles of stewardship and commercialism, was a step taken with careful consideration. But Francis and the NGS were earnest in their commitment to improvements. After hearing the SAA’s concerns, and those of many other professional archaeological organizations, particularly the Society for Historical Archaeology (SHA), NGS requested that SAA and SHA help to improve the shows being prepared for the third season. As President Altschul has described (in this issue), the responsibility of the SAA to engage in public outreach and education prevailed, as the executive board entered into the current arrangement. Our ethical lines have been clearly communicated, and the Society’s officers are currently reviewing each show multiple times, from rough cut to penultimate product.

Even as these dialogues continue, SAA membership remains concerned. Those concerns have been expressed through emails and petitions, such as the petition (Change.org 2013) authored and promoted by Jeff Hanson, the Council for Texas Archaeologists, and other concerned archaeologists. So, in late 2013, the board invited Giovanna Peebles, the former Vermont State Archaeologist and State Preservation Officer, known for her effective public engagement, to lead a task force. Their charge was to assess current reality TV shows that use metal detectors to find archaeological objects, against SAA’s Principles of Archaeological Ethics, and to prepare a statement for the board’s consideration reflecting the Society’s position on the shows. The statement (sidebar) was approved by the Board at its November 2014 meeting.

The reality of reality television challenges each archaeologist, both as a professional and as an individual. The foremost of these challenges is to take ownership of our stories. For example, we can become the television producers ourselves. *Time Team America* has taken on just this challenge, and Meg Watters describes an approach to producing, funding, and distributing a reality television program and developing an

Society for American Archaeology Position Statement on the Portrayal Of Metal Detectorists on Reality TV (approved 4/23/14)

Reality shows, such as the National Geographic Channel's (NGC) *Diggers*, the Travel Channel's *Dig Wars*, and Spike's *Savage Family Diggers*, form a growing part of television (TV) programming. These programs are impacting archaeological sites by promoting object-oriented metal detecting, but viewer comments on the NGC website indicate that many people watch the shows simply for entertainment with no intention of metal detecting. Many viewers share archaeologists' interests in the past and in furthering our understanding of history through many methods, including metal detecting. Although the SAA and the profession cannot control nor easily change the dig-based TV shows, they can control and change the way they communicate with the public and with responsible metal detectorists. Greater efforts to share our interesting and often remarkable stories, and to find common ground in working with responsible metal detectorists, may be the most effective responses to the digger programs. Ongoing respectful and collaborative engagement with TV executives and producers will create better programming over time. The SAA will energetically oppose and protest any program, however, that violates SAA Principles of Archaeological Ethics or gratuitously displays human remains under the pretense of unearthing history.

accompanying website that is quite different from the National Geographic Channel's approach. The cast and crew of the program include many SAA members, and the SAA has provided letters in support of grant applications. If *Time Team America* receives funding for a third season, Rick Pettigrew will become the SAA representative to the show's advisory panel. Rick was a natural choice. While not involved with reality television per se, Rick Pettigrew and the non-profit Archaeological Legacy Institute (ALI) have, for more than 15 years, been finding creative ways to use new media to share archaeology with the public. Today, ALI both distributes programming developed by others and produces its own.

I think, too, that on our standard field and laboratory projects we typically hire specialists to do the jobs that we cannot. Many of us don't maneuver our own front-end loaders, polish our own thin sections, or run our own archaeomagnetic dates. If there are people more skilled in education and outreach, then why don't we make use of their talents to repackage our stories with (as Pagán says,) "structure, theme, character, tension, and conflict?" (New York University Film Academy 2014) And, here, the National Geographic Channel has offered us an opportunity. Their producers seek stories, and we want a say in how they share those stories. So, can we connect them with worthwhile projects? What if 30 million viewers were interested in the stories we've devoted our careers to telling? (That is mindbogglingly more than the three people—including the editor, possibly not including the client—who probably read my standard technical report!) ALI has also been trying to do this for us for years.

Our second challenge and opportunity is to educate. Because the stars of these shows are successful metal detectorists ("diggers"), the characteristics of this community are central to our concern. What kinds of actions will result from watch-

ing these shows? While the NGS shows have followed appropriate legal guidelines, are the legal and ethical aspects of the work communicated clearly? Can we explain that public land is not a commons? Neither diggers nor archaeologists should be exploiting the past motivated by self-interest; we all need to serve the public trust. In the best case scenarios, we might be able to work side by side with those detectorists who are skilled with a relatively non-destructive exploratory tool. Matt Reeves and his colleagues provide opportunities for diggers to use their tools and talents while working toward a common history-revealing goal that is greatly valued by the Montpelier research team. Are there other "citizen science" ways to work together? And, when we cannot make that personal connection, how can we compellingly convey, in new ways, that the fundamental premise of historical understanding is that the whole is greater than the sum of the parts, and so refocus diggers' values on a gain greater than the single object and its monetary worth?

Reality television shows about archaeological topics have rocketed into our world and, as long as they remain financially viable, are unlikely to go away. How do we manage this interest in the stories of the past in ways that can serve us all?

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DIGGING FOR RATINGS GOLD

AMERICAN DIGGER AND THE CHALLENGE OF SUSTAINABILITY FOR CABLE TV

Eduardo Pagán

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Reality television is the television of television.
Kelefa Sanneh (2011)

It might surprise some to learn that even though I was on a nationally televised show for four seasons as a cohost of *History Detectives* on the Public Broadcasting Service (PBS), I am often frustrated by the medium. As a historian and an academic, I am especially irked by talking heads who are dubbed as “historians” when, in fact, they are not credentialed through degrees, have never published in peer-reviewed journals, or who seem to have no understanding of professional research standards. I suspect that I am hardly alone.

While there have been many television shows of good quality that employ credible scholars as researchers and as onscreen experts, there are many more shows that never bother to consider whether their content could be enhanced by including scholars or be better conceptualized by following established research practices. Why? The answer is complex. The content of television shows in general, but especially on cable, is shaped in large part by market forces, the imperatives of the industry, and the nature of production.

Men in Dirt

American Digger is no stranger to members of the Society for American Archaeology (SAA). This “reality television” series on Spike TV follows the exploits of former professional wrestler Frank Huguélet (popularly known as “Ric Savage”) and his company as they search for buried artifacts suitable for profit. The second season of the show was retitled *Savage Family Diggers*, as Huguélet’s wife and son joined the cast.

Huguélet actually came to the show with some credentials in popular history. His father, a professor of English at Western Carolina University (WCU), was an amateur collector who encouraged his son’s fascination with the Civil War. Thus,

Huguélet considers himself to have grown up “ensconced in the world of academia” (Brenton 2013). After retiring from the professional wrestling ring in 1997, Huguélet earned a degree in criminal justice from WCU and worked for a time with the Haunted Gettysburg tour (Haunted Gettysburg 2014). He honed his skills as a collector of Civil War artifacts, gave presentations at collectors’ conferences on detecting historical forgeries, and was a featured columnist for *American Digger* magazine. By the time that Spike TV bought the reality show *American Digger* (which was not affiliated with the magazine of the same name), Huguélet was considered by some to be an authority in artifact authentication.

Yet what earned him a place in television was not his credentials, but his “big character” and the ability of the show’s “innovative format” to connect with Spike TV’s target audience (Real Screen, 2013). Huguélet’s physically-imposing size as a former pro-wrestler and his larger than life personality, the clips showing the team running away from an enormous fireball as they carry their metal detecting gear, and his trademark “Boom, baby!” exclamation shouted to the heavens are all part of the package aimed at lowbrow entertainment for a particular kind of male audience.

American Digger hit its mark and delivered solid ratings. The show debuted with 1.2 million viewers, which improved the timeslot for Spike TV among male viewers 35-49 by 36 percent, and by 11 percent with men between 18 and 49. Spike TV was thrilled by the results and ordered more episodes. Speaking of *American Digger*, as well as another popular show, Spike TV’s executive vice president Sharon Levy said: “We are thrilled to bring back new episodes of two of our most popular shows that speak to the network’s mission of delivering bold, non-scripted entertainment with real stakes” (Andreeva 2012).

As members of the SAA well know, the show quickly courted controversy for the aggressive methods used in artifact

recovery. Every episode moves towards a finale of selling the artifacts found, the archeological record be damned. The North Carolina Archaeological Association, which included faculty members from Huguette's alma mater, WCU, petitioned the show's producers to reconsider how artifact recovery is presented on the show. "Excavating in the way 'American Digger' suggests is destructive and unethical, but moreover is unnecessary" (Brenton 2013). The American Anthropological Association protested how the search for buried artifacts is portrayed, as an endeavor that has value only because an artifact can be sold for profit, and as a hunt for such treasure with the same complete disregard for setting, context, and significance seen in the *Indiana Jones* franchise (Carter 2012; Kenneally, 2012).

While Gurney Productions has yet to reveal whether substantive changes will occur on the second season of *American Digger*, scholars have successfully rallied to change the course of another show. In March 2014, National Geographic announced the production of *Nazi War Diggers*. It was to be based on a format similar to *American Digger*, where four researchers set out to locate buried artifacts, although the focus was to be on digging in the battlefields of the Eastern Front, telling little-known stories of the soldiers who fought and died there. Like *American Digger*, none of the show's hosts had academic credentials in any field associated with the recovery of historical materials or historical interpretation. Rather, the most notable cast member was Craig Gottlieb, a retired US Marine turned military memorabilia collector and regular on *Pawn Stars* (History Hunter for Sale, 2014). "*Nazi War Diggers* is a race against time to uncover lost combat relics to be meticulously preserved," the National Geographic Channel International announced upon the release of the show's preview. The featured clip showed the hosts unearthing a human femur, as well as other skeletal remains (Munn 2014; Clearstory 2014).

Outrage from viewers about the show's focus and lack of professionalism was almost instantaneous. "This is not an archaeological series as is claimed," wrote one viewer, "It is a grave-robbing series." Another viewer commented: "Speaking as an archaeologist, I can say that there is nothing archaeological about what these people do what-so-ever. Absolutely disgusted, and even more so at Nat Geo for showcasing it." So blistering was the criticism that after executives at the National Geographic Channel International consulted with their counterparts at the National Geographic Society, they reversed course within days and announced that the show would be suspended indefinitely (Mashberg 2014; Munn 2014).

While the National Geographic deserves praise for responding to the concerns of professionals and their societies, other channels are less responsive and far more resistant. *American Digger* has changed cast members for the second season and the show has been renamed, but it is doubtful that Gurney Productions will modify the essential content of the show. Given that it attracts over a million male viewers in that coveted demographic profile, producers tend to be quite wary of changing what to them is a winning formula. If a show on squirrels eating nuts pulled in over a million viewers in that age range, there would be more shows on cable television of squirrels eating nuts.

Cable Television: Sliding from Mission Creep to Mission Overhaul

There were many in the heady days of early cable television who believed that cable could fulfill the promise of television that Edward R. Murrow foresaw in 1958. "This instrument can teach, it can illuminate; yes, and it can even inspire," he said before a meeting of the Radio-Television News Directors Association in Chicago, "But it can do so only to the extent that humans are determined to use it to those ends...There is a great and perhaps decisive battle to be fought against ignorance, intolerance and indifference."

In the subsequent years, several cable channels were launched in that spirit. The Learning Channel was founded in 1972 by the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare and NASA with the intent of using television to teach skills (Acuna 2012; France 2010). In 1980, Bravo began with the promise of commercial-free content focused on film and the performing arts (NBC Universal 2014). The Arts and Entertainment (A&E) Network followed in 1984, envisioned at its inception as a provider of high-quality content along the lines of PBS, but with shows that had more commercial appeal. Discovery, supported in part by the BBC, was founded the following year with the mission of exposing viewers to diverse cultures around the world (Zad 1988, Scheider 1985). The History Channel was launched in 1995, dedicated to the broadcast of documentary programs (Lockwood 2011).

Ratings for cable television in this early period of the industry were very modest by network television standards, but in time the potential of cable television attracted serious interest from major investors. And with major investors came significant changes in programming in an effort to increase ratings. In 2002, NBC bought Bravo and ordered the production of a new kind of show, *Queer Eye for the Straight Guy* (Giltz 2003). The show ran for five seasons and was one of the first cable channel hits, drawing at its high point 3.5 mil-

lion viewers. The ratings were below the average for network television, but it was clearly a runaway hit by cable television standards (Vary 2004). After the ratings success of *Queer Eye*, Bravo increasingly moved away from the arts towards featuring entertaining personalities and situations.

It would be easy to simply blame network executives for the dramatic change in Bravo's programming. Yet Bravo was simply following a trend in cable television that was already underway as channels struggled to find a sustainable economic model. In addition to showing reruns of television classics, A&E commissioned a number of original, award-winning dramas such as *Horatio Hornblower*, *Dash and Lilly*, *The Crossing*, and *Nero Wolfe*. But in 2003, the same year that Bravo launched *Queer Eye*, A&E began retiring several long-running dramas in favor of fare such as *Dog the Bounty Hunter*, *Gene Simmons Family Jewels*, *Growing Up Gotti*, *Inked*, and *Criss Angel Mindfreak*. The History Channel followed with a major programming shift, broadening its content to include non-history related shows (Laurence 2005).

Not everyone decried the change from highbrow to lowbrow content. Brad Lockwood's (2011) observation in *Forbes Magazine* about the History Channel's makeover could be said of the general shift in cable programming: "Serious dramas spiced with reality shows and conspiratorial rants, History [Channel] is no longer hindered by the dusty and drab—scholars seated before bookshelves, lame black and white reenactments—and realizing impressive results: total viewership is up... This is no anomaly... If anything, History is proving the vast potential in stretching a niche for the sake of ratings."

The Nature of Television Production

What happened to the promise of cable television? The simple answer is that all enterprises, whether for profit or not for profit, must be sustainable. For television, the central question of how to engage viewers and keep them coming back looms over everything. In responding to this challenge, cable channels have slid from mission creep to mission overhaul, so much so that cable television programming is dramatically different now than it was twenty years ago, and what was once a very distinct set of programming options has turned into a muddle of reality shows that are pretty much the same.

But the problem runs much deeper than succumbing to the imperative to create profit. While Murrow saw the potential of television to uplift and educate society, he was also a realist about the business of television. "We are in the same tent as

the clowns and the freaks," he observed. "That's show business" (Moyers 1986).

Indeed, television production is a creative endeavor not too dissimilar from stage productions. As a consequence, the vast majority of the behind-the-scenes army employed in the production of a television show comes from the creative arts world. Their attention is on lighting and camera angle, sound and storyline, drama and viewer engagement, and on a production that comes in under budget. And television producers themselves, the ones who are largely responsible for a show's content, are trained in the art of visual storytelling. Their focus is on "story structure, theme, character, tension, and conflict," and their skillsets are far more closely aligned to creative writing than to the social sciences (New York University Film Academy 2014). So when television shows feature content that intersects with the scholarly world, producers are more focused on creating a product with compelling characters and story lines than on the presentation of established research standards. They are simply not trained to think about the same issues that shape the scholarly world.

Even the length of traditional television shows constrain what is presented. As scholars, we have articles or books with which to make our case. For television, an hour-long television show does not even run an hour. The actual run time is about 43 minutes in order to allow time for commercials. Therefore, complex stories must sometimes be simplified to fit that allocated time. Or that some stories are deemed too complex and producers fear that there are too many elements for the viewer to remember.

As a business, television does not exist to advance complex ideas or to encourage more sophisticated thinking. To be sure, there have been many powerful documentaries and in-depth analyses of complex issues aired in the history of American television. But in truth, those types of shows are relatively rare in comparison to the overabundance of situation comedies, game shows, soap operas, and so-called reality television shows that fill the airwaves.

This is not to say that television is in itself inherently anti-intellectual, only that in the pursuit of attracting viewers, television executives and producers seek to shape their products in ways that are as widely appealing to viewers as possible. To put this another way, television producers want to create a product that the viewer will not turn away from, and that fundamental motivation shapes how information is formulated, arranged, packaged, and conveyed. One producer confided in me that his greatest enemy was the television remote, because with a simple touch of a button, a viewer

could switch to another show, or simply turn the television off entirely. So programs cannot afford to be seen as being tedious, too complex, or boring. Thus, American television tends to eschew complexity in favor of a streamlined narrative, and this is one of the great challenges in working with television: how do you keep the viewer watching?

Why Reality Television Struggles with Reality

Run through the program rosters of cable television and the preponderance of reality television—if not its dominance—will be apparent. TLC's *Here Comes Honey Boo Boo*, History Channel's *Pawn Stars*, A&E's *Duck Dynasty*, MTV's *Buckwild*, AMC's *Immortalized* (the list can go on), all revolve around colorful people in peculiar circumstances. This is how the industry has largely attempted to answer that fundamental question.

Reality television itself is not new to television. Ever since Allan Funt's *You're on Candid Camera*, American audiences have been tuning in to watch themselves reflected on the small screen. But the truth is (and it still surprises me how many viewers do not seem to understand this): reality television is not "real."

Reality television gives the appearance of life unscripted, as if the viewer were there in that very moment watching a slice of life as it unfolds in all its whimsy and chaos. But nothing about a television program is unplanned, largely because the cost for such a production would be astronomical. Directors, directors of photography, audio, production assistants, and others on the crew needed for a high-quality product need to be paid, and actually following someone around for hours on end in the hope of finding useable footage, let alone having to then pay an editor to sit for hours wading through mind-numbing footage, is more than what most networks want to pay. Instead, it is far more cost effective to have a well-planned production, even though a show revolves around non-actors (or non-professional actors). Thus, reality television is not reality. It is carefully planned, scripted to greater and lesser extents, and carefully edited.

Some shows within this genre attempt to combine both the qualities of entertaining personalities with a modicum of education, to varying degrees of success. Shows such as Discovery's *MythBusters*, *Dirty Jobs*, and *Deadliest Catch*, History's *American Pickers*, or Spike TV's *American Digger* do not so much revolve around the lives and antics of a colorful cast, but instead focus more on the peculiarities of particular occupations that cast members (who are often colorful) are engaged in. It is this thin overlap of entertainment and edu-

cation that sometimes includes academic scholars and scholarship. When that collaboration was carefully cultivated, it produced a quality product such as my show, *History Detectives*, on PBS. But *History Detectives* was unique in seeking to both entertain and inform, and there has not been any further effort on network or cable television to build off of its approach. Most productions err on the side of entertainment at the expense of scholarship, and, the results are disappointing for discerning audiences.

While some in the scholarly world might look down their noses at work such as this, it is worth remembering that the present-day television industry exists with a different set of imperatives than what we enjoy in the scholarly world. If television is going to remain economically viable, it must attract viewers, and the sad fact of the matter is that American viewers tend to crave voyeuristic content and tune in to watch demanding brides before their wedding day, or hirsute country dwellers pursue game. In the television world, a show like *Duck Dynasty* that can attract 9 million viewers is money in the bank (Kissell 2014).

Promises and Challenges in Working with Television

Can *American Digger* be saved from itself? The very conceptualization of the show is about reaping profit from lost treasure. Although Huguelet at times speaks of recovering and preserving artifacts when challenged about the ethics of his activities, "how much is it worth?" is the question his team always asks following a find, and the narrative flow of each episode builds up to how much Huguelet can negotiate for his artifacts from pawn shops. Nothing in the backgrounds of the show's cast suggests that anyone has even a rudimentary knowledge of, or concern for, professional standards of research. The cast invokes historical, anthropological, or archeological knowledge only to the extent that such information can help them locate buried artifacts or price their value on the market.

Frankly, it is hard to imagine how a show so conceived and constructed could suddenly break character and pay respect to, much less incorporate, professional standards in the recovery of the buried past. The very DNA of *American Digger* is so attuned to appeal to a particular subset of the male viewing audience, that to introduce anything more sophisticated than watching guys hunting for buried treasure with metal detectors would not only shift the essence of the show, but quite possibly its market share of viewers.

Tampering with a winning formula is something that producers are loathe to do. Television is a capricious industry,

and far more shows fail than succeed. So when a channel or a network finds a show that brings in solid ratings, they run it to the ground.

Given my observations above, it may seem that I am cynical about the potential of television to rise to a higher level of content, given the many pressures that push it in the opposite direction. Actually, I am not. About a decade ago, I worked for two years with *The American Experience* as a historical consultant in the development of an episode on the Zoot-Suit Riot in Los Angeles during World War II. On the night that the episode aired, I realized that more people tuned in to watch it—about two million viewers—than would ever read my book on that subject.

While my focus here has been on the cable television industry and the pressures that shape the content of many shows on both network and cable television, I am buoyed by the fact that the airwaves are not all filled with former pro-wrestlers playing in the dirt. There is at least one other show that offers a counterpoint to *American Digger* and other shows of that character. Oregon Public Broadcasting has been working to build an audience for *Time Team America* since it debuted on PBS in 2009. The cast of *Time Team America* is comprised of archeologists and geophysicists, and the focus of each episode is as much on accepted scholarly methods as it is on the findings of the digs at key archeological sites (PBS 2014). The challenge that the production has run into, however, is one that all shows face: building momentum. Although *Time Team America* debuted in 2009, PBS did not pick it up for a second season until 2011, and that season did not air until 2014. The market share of the PBS audience is skewed towards an older, more educated demographic, and it is unlikely that those who would tune in to be entertained by Huguélet will also want to tune in to learn from *Time Team America* (Chozik 2012).

No television episode or show will ever replace the ability of scholarly publications to provide breadth, depth, and context. At the same time, however, television remains one of the most powerful ways of engaging a large audience—certainly much larger than the reach of our classroom lectures and publications. By its very nature it molds perceptions about the world to the degree that for many viewers, especially to the impressionable and undiscerning, television is a window to “the truth.” When television is utilized effectively, it can serve as a gateway to more sophisticated forms of analysis and understanding. And indeed, here and there, against what can look like a tsunami of market-driven Pablum, a show will arise that provides quality food for the mind. I am proud to have been associated with one of those shows, espe-

cially one that strove to feature research methods as well as scholarly analysis.

Thus, I remain hopeful that scholars and professionals in the field can discover ways of harnessing the power of television. We must reach beyond our classrooms and find effective ways of demonstrating and sharing what we do as scholars and professionals, especially at a time when the value of higher education is under attack from so many quarters. Until then, when the medium is utilized ineffectively, as so much of it currently is, it will never rise above being a tent for clowns and freaks.

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INTERVIEW WITH JOHN FRANCIS ON NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC AND ARCHAEOLOGY PROGRAMMING

Sarah A. Herr

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Introductory Note

John Francis is Vice President for Research Conservation and Exploration at National Geographic Society. Following a Ph.D. and postdoctoral research in behavioral ecology, he spent six years producing films for National Geographic Television. For the last 17 years he has been Executive Director of the Committee for Research and Exploration and has managed several other grantmaking programs at the Society, including the effective promotion of funded projects worldwide. John has also represented the Society through various national and international organizations (e.g., the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization [UNESCO], the International Union for Conservation of Nature [IUCN], and the National Park Service), offering a unique perspective on the effective communication of science to the public. He was interviewed by Sarah Herr, guest editor of this issue.

SH: What is the historic relationship between National Geographic and the archaeological community?

JF: National Geographic Society believes in the power of science, exploration, and storytelling to change the world, and a core tenet of that belief is the importance of finding innovative ways to make science accessible and engaging to general audiences. We have provided more than 10,000 grants for research, exploration, and conservation to improve understanding and stewardship of the planet since 1890. The archaeological community has received approximately one quarter of these grants, from our first to Hiram Bingham in 1913 exploring Machu Picchu to our most recent funding of Matthew Piscatelli to study the late Archaic at Cabrete, Peru, using the latest in multisensory systems. Many of these grants have helped scientists test first concepts and explore new sites, a niche few funding agencies are prepared to fill. Our storytelling capacity, which includes print, digital, and television platforms, partners with scientists and explorers to

create popular vehicles illuminating and summarizing this work for the global public.

SH: What is the history of coverage of archaeology in National Geographic media?

JF: What began with lectures in 1888 has grown to include our magazines, books, television, radio, exhibitions, travel, and, most recently, a broad and complementary offering of digital media. National Geographic now reaches an estimated 600 million people a month and archaeology is a key discipline associated with our institution.

Over 375 articles in National Geographic Magazine, 75 books, and 65 television productions have featured archaeology. Some of the most noteworthy programs include Emmy-award-winning *Dawn of the Maya*, as well as the giant screen film *Mysteries of Egypt*. Breaking findings from our television programs recently include the work of Geoff Emberling, Tim Kendall, and their colleagues in ancient Nubia last year, and we're excited to be working on a new program about the Hoyo Negro project in Mexico that was just featured on our the January 2015 cover of *National Geographic Magazine*.

SH: How does the National Geographic Channel fit into the Society, and what are its programming objectives?

JF: The National Geographic Channel is a partly owned by the National Geographic Society and Fox Cable Networks, and its editorial content and governance is overseen by a board on which National Geographic executives sit. As part of the relationship, the Channel is expected to represent and expand the Society's mission to global audiences. The goal of all programming is to maximize viewership while maintaining the highest integrity in the accuracy of the presentation on subjects portrayed. As a majority of the viewing audience is not trained in archaeology, there is an opportunity to introduce them to process and deeper understanding, but it can

be challenging to create programs that are both entertaining and substantive.

SH: How did the *Diggers* program arise, and what was done to address the concerns raised with respect to this program?

JF: As with many programs, an external production company presented a series concept, which was commissioned and in the course of actual production further evolved. The idea of following two charismatic metal detectorists, King George (or KG) Wyant and Tim “The Ringmaster” Saylor (or Ringy), on surveys of historically rich land was deemed an appealing topic that would celebrate history and heritage and highlight the excitement of related discoveries (Figures 1 and 2). The program underwent National Geographic’s usual editorial review for factual accuracy and other concerns. However, the full extent of the sensitivities regarding the employment of metal detecting and the conflicts with standard archaeological values and practices were not anticipated.

The Society was approached by a number of critics from the archaeological community after the first season began airing, who expressed concerns about the *Diggers* series. Primary issues raised included failure of the *Diggers* series to show collection information on provenance; failure to communicate context and question; and particularly the measurement of success by financial rather than historical value of the found artifacts. They were also critical of the style of the protagonists and their lexicon, as well as the lack of discussion of the laws pertaining to removal of material on public lands. Some believed the show could encourage or inspire amateurs to start “looting” historical heritage, unaware of the laws and sensitivities that surround such work. In aggregate, the community wanted to ensure that National Geographic, with its deep history of supporting archaeological heritage, did not encourage the irresponsible actions and rather had programming more reflective of the science and related values.

We took these concerns very seriously. In response, National Geographic convened a meeting of more than 20 representatives of the community, including leading archaeological associations (Society for American Archaeology [SAA], Society for Historical Archaeology [SHA], Archaeological Institute of America), academics and representatives of metal detector manufacturing and hobbyist communities. The discussions, summarized online by then SHA president Charlie Ewen of SHA (<http://www.sha.org/blog/index.php/author/charles-ewen/>) led to commitments for new practices in the *Diggers* production, most notably a supplemental website detailing values pertinent to metal detecting, the inclu-



Figure 1. Willow Creek, Wyoming: Archaeologist Dr. Marc Henshaw, local historical expert Clay Gibbons, Ringy, and KG assess all the artifacts found during their time in Wyoming (National Geographic Channels/Peter Takacs).

sion of comments regarding legal requirements for removal of artifacts from public and private lands, and a diminished focus on monetary value of the artifacts.

National Geographic also met with the Council of Councils and the Presidents of Archaeological Societies at the April 2014 SAA meeting in Austin to hear from leaders of the domestic and international archaeological institutions, respectively, about their concerns regarding archaeology programming. The dialogue was a frank airing of concerns about *Diggers* and the challenges of making engaging programming that is factually accurate but also watchable. We invited the leaders and their institutions to contribute ideas



Figure 2. Lexington, Kentucky: Kentucky archaeologist Kim McBride looks over a map of the Henry Clay Estate with KG and Ringy.

and characters for upcoming programs and to be constructive participants in creation of improved programming.

SHA and SAA representatives saw positive changes in the *Diggers* series in season two, though they expressed ongoing concerns about continued focus on monetary rather than historical value of artifacts. As a consequence, new leadership at the National Geographic Channel met with Charlie and Jeff Altschul of the SAA to formulate additional guidelines calling for greater focus on the archaeological process, plus more on-screen involvement of archaeologists in discovery, as well as more focus on mapping and analysis, historical significance, and elimination of monetary value of artifacts. It was also agreed that more on-screen information could and should be supplied regarding pertinent laws that apply to metal detecting. Additionally, the Channel committed to featuring projects where detectorists assisted archaeological digs and thus were imbedded into the scientific process. NGC also received regular input from the SHA and SAA as the production process moved.

As a result of this collaborative process, National Geographic believes season three of *Diggers* will be even more improved in terms of treating the subject fairly and may ultimately bring more people, who may not necessarily be interested in the discipline of archaeology, a step closer to understanding the importance of context and process in the field of scientific discovery. All in all, the process seemed to be a positive one for those involved. Producers learned a great deal from the scientific community, and the scientific community's willingness to engage in a creative and productive way created what we believe to be a better—and unique—program.

SH: What are the challenges, generally, when it comes to coverage of science for mass media consumption on television?

JF: For science to be watchable, the topic and story need to be accessible and engaging. From a business perspective, a commercial television channel can only succeed if there is an audience. There is a saying that “you can't save souls in an empty church.” Having colorful characters who are able to carry a message forward with enthusiasm, emotion, and substance further creates the alchemy that can make science in mass media great.

SH: How can archaeologists help in insuring that the best television programming be made available for large audiences, and why should they so engage?

JF: Scientists are trained to be unemotional, overly cautious, wedded to detail and removed as reporters of their work. While these values are important in scientific inquiry, none of this helps in good storytelling, central to effective communication of scientific topics. Those who want their disciplines appreciated (and funded by the public) need to take a bold step toward melding their concern for precision with an eye toward accessibility, passion and the excitement of discovery.

Archaeologists can take a step closer to the process, learning what it takes to hold audiences, providing story ideas that arrest the imagination and giving thoughtful feedback for improvements that take into account the challenges of storytelling. At National Geographic we aspire to be proactive in identifying potential concerns, as well as possible new directions, with our archaeological colleagues. Television is still one of the most powerful media platforms. By offering their time, archaeologists might better use this medium to gain more audience for their considerable efforts.

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TIME TEAM AMERICA: ARCHAEOLOGY AS A GATEWAY TO SCIENCE

ENGAGING AND EDUCATING THE PUBLIC

Meg Watters

Meg Watters is President at Visual Environmental Solutions, LLC.

Since first dipping my toes into the pool of TV and archaeology in the early 2000s, I have worked with channels such as National Geographic, Discovery, BBC, Channel 4 (UK), and PBS, and have had a variety of experiences. I work mainly with geophysical surveys and 3-D visualization in archaeology. My rather enthusiastic attitude toward science and archaeology seems to translate well through the camera lens to help tell the stories of our past to the viewing public. I was hopeful that each program would showcase great archaeology, but always disappointed (and in one particular instance, horrified) with the final products from filming. I finally realized that TV production companies were not interested in portraying “archaeology,” but were focused on the drama, story line, and artifacts. I decided not to do any more television programs.

After a hiatus of a couple of years, I was contacted by Tim Taylor, the creator and producer of *Time Team* in the UK who was interested in taking his program to the United States. Having done my doctoral work in the UK, I was familiar with the program and got to know many of the archaeologists that worked on the show. While living in the UK, I experienced the engagement of the public in archaeology, and the increased enrollment in university archaeology degrees as a result of the program. Knowing first-hand the quality work of *Time Team* and the impact they had on the public, I figured getting involved in *Time Team America* would be a great way to engage with the US public.

The driving force behind my personal and professional involvement with *Time Team America* is to get the public interested in archaeology, to get them excited about the amazing history, culture, and events that we explore through the program, what we do as archaeologists, and the many varieties in which we come. If people have a fundamental understanding of archaeology and its role in exploring and

preserving the cultural history of the United States, they have a significant influence on local, state, and federal legislation and funding.

So I asked myself, what could we do with TV programming that would influence the public and get them excited about archaeology? How about a program that combines history, storytelling, archaeology, and the underlying scientific methods, portraying what we study, how we study it and its relevance to the world today? This is the idea (and idealism) that underlies *Time Team America*.

Eduardo Pagán does an excellent job in “Digging for Ratings Gold” in this issue, discussing the evolution and variety of “reality television” type programs on cable channels and other channels such as PBS. His article pulls me abruptly from the idyllic TV program structure I’ve just outlined. As I look at other programs offered on TV today, I realize people are into the big personalities, into the moment of pulling an object out of the ground and being told how much it is worth. I agree that an interesting story line and TV personality dynamics are important components of a program; but how do we compete with unethical practices of “artifact retrieval” when the general public does not understand what archaeology is and why it is important?

I cannot help thinking about rants by reporter Carl Bernstein and CBS anchor Walter Cronkite expressing their opinions on the “Idiot Culture” where Bernstein states: “...we have been moving away from real journalism toward the creation of a sleazoid info-tainment culture...In this new culture of journalistic titillation, we teach our readers and our viewers that the trivial is significant, that the lurid and loopy are more important than the real news” (McManus 1994:1). In reference to the shift in newspapers competing with television, Cronkite states, “We are producing a population of

political, economic, scientific ignoramus at a point in time when a lot more knowledge rather than less is needed for the survival of democracy" (McManus 1994:2).

Mick Aston was the lead archaeologist on *Time Team* (UK) and a professor at Bristol University. He quit in 2012 after 18 years of the show, citing a change in the program format where there was "a lot less archaeological content and a lot more prattling about..." He believed the program had been "dumbed down" with a number of the archaeological team being cut, production at Channel 4 citing "television reasons" and a decrease in viewing figures for changes. Aston, who taught extra-mural classes, believed that a TV program that could reach millions of viewers versus the 20 or 30 people attending a course was a very good thing. He also believed that a relatively educated public wants to be spoken to at a level that they are familiar with in their own experience and does not believe that content should be simplified because there may be difficult issues and concepts (*Western Daily Press* 2013).

Julie Shablitsky (2007:12) elegantly states in *Box Office Archaeology* that: "Our duty, as archaeologists, is to bring the past alive and create a tangible link between us and those who lived before, resurrecting the past and reconnecting us on a personal level and human level. The way of the archaeologist can confirm documented history, add new information and complexity to well-known stories, and contradict previously held popular myths." One of the original team members of *Time Team America*, Shablitsky defines one of the main roles and responsibilities that we possess as archaeologists, whether in Hollywood blockbusters or on television.

The combination of professional archaeological work and the complexities of television production requires a special dedication on the part of both participants. As production and broadcast companies, Oregon Public Broadcasting (OPB) and PBS are committed to the ethical portrayal of a topic and dedicated to education. A production challenge for *Time Team America* is to create a program that will attract the existing PBS audience and try to cross over to the more mainstream cable-watching demographic in order to rank in viewing numbers. How do we strike off in a new direction consciously moving away from a patronizing "talking heads" documentary style, but at the same time be mindful of the boundaries of ethics and avoid descent into the more crass antics of some cable TV programs on air today?

The TV Show

Essentially, *Time Team America* is a reality TV show. As Tim

Taylor puts it, "*Time Team* lets viewers eavesdrop on archaeology as it happens, dealing with the uncertainty of it, the trying out of different theories." Our program is probably more "real" than many "reality" shows in that our script is more of a general daily outline of the archaeological research plan to help place the camera crews strategically and incorporate the additional filming of the narrative content, helping bring the past to life (Figure 1).

The on-camera archaeologists and specialists have no script, we just do our work. We are "directed" upon occasion, helping us—the archaeologists, academics, scientists—learn the skills we need to communicate with the public through the camera. What I value about the format of the program is that the cameras follow the archaeologists and record our conversations; we plan and adapt our actions to best achieve project goals, integrate new information, and interpret the site. Dave Davis of OPB, executive producer of *Time Team America*, says that, "It has a much different feel than a typical PBS documentary on science or history. There's a feeling as if you're standing in the trench alongside them."

Funding

Without funding, we do not have a program. Again, this is where the delicate balance and communication between the television production and archaeological communities is so important. The first season of *Time Team America* was funded through PBS and Channel 4 International (UK based program distributor and home of *Time Team*, UK). Unfortunately, PBS did not feel the results of the first broadcast season were sufficient to make *Time Team America* a priority for continued financial support.



Figure 1. Filming excavations searching for stockade at The Lost Civil War Prison Camp Lawton. Image courtesy of Oregon Public Broadcasting.

Time Team America was revived for a second season, thanks to a large grant from the National Science Foundation (NSF Grant number 1114113). The NSF Informal Science Education Program enabled the production team to focus on developing effective and impactful educational experiences and web-based materials for informal learning environments. We used archaeology as a gateway to science where “the scientific study of the cultural and physical past of humans is used as an effective vehicle to deliver STEM content and foster widespread knowledge and engagement with science” (Rockman 2013). We hosted field schools for middle and high school students at our sites that explored locally and culturally relevant stories from the past that integrated the high-tech and scientific tools of the archaeological trade. The companion web site on PBS.org (<http://www.pbs.org/time-team/home/>) was developed to provide a robust resource for the viewing public as well as a valuable introductory educational tool for use at any level, from primary education to university teaching.

Sites and Program Format

Site selection is one of the most important first steps in each season. *Time Team America's* goal is to represent the diverse archaeological resources in the United States and to address global issues such as climate change or the movement of people. The site selection process begins with a committee that consists of people from television production, a board of advisors, and the *Time Team America* archaeologists. The process includes consideration of relevant issues to the population of the United States today, the diversity of races and ethnicities that make up the American population, and the breadth and depth of the United States, both geographically and socially. From this, we develop themes and begin to identify strategic archaeological sites that will open a window into an interesting facet of history, promise interesting “finds,” and allow us to answer big overarching questions related to that site. This is television, after all, so we have to tell a compelling story that will hold the attention of the viewer.

The basic format of the first two seasons of *Time Team America* is a 3–5 day investigation of an archaeological site. We work closely with the host archaeologists, developing research designs and bringing many resources that contribute to the ongoing research at each site. This includes site survey and mapping techniques such as geophysical surveys (Figure 2), airborne and terrestrial LiDAR, as well as soil and materials specialists and analysis techniques.

As *Time Team America* co-PI and the director of remote sensing and visualization for the team, I visit sites prior to filming



Figure 2. Team Geophysics member Duncan McKinnon collects magnetic gradient data at the Dillard Site, Crow Canyon Archaeological Center, Colorado. Image courtesy of Oregon Public Broadcasting.

and work closely with project directors to develop a strategic plan for site surveys and sampling strategies that will not only contribute to the filming of the television program (i.e., provide a broad scale site context for excavations and “dig here I can see what looks like an interesting anomaly”) but that will also contribute significant information for their on-going investigations (Figure 3). All data collected as part of the program are made available to project archaeologists once they are fully processed. Nearly every site we have worked with has responded that this would help guide their research and excavations into the future. In-depth information on the work and methods we engaged at each site can be found on the *Time Team America* web site (<http://www.pbs.org/time-team/home/>).

While as archaeologists we like to let the artifacts tell the story, the finesse, artistic talent, and experience of OPB bring the past to life. When you watch, you will see emotionally charged scenes with descendants of the people we are investigating, or the team eating a typical slave dinner prepared by culinary historian Michael Twitty, or dissecting a bison with stone tools using archaeological evidence from Badger Hole, the 10,000 year old bison kill site we worked with in Oklahoma. Lead archaeologist Joe Watkins demonstrated what it was like to be locked into a slave collar at the Button Farm in Maryland; it was a visceral moment. While we may not be the best actors, we do the work, get excited, and develop relationships with site archaeologists. Our passion for the work we do at each site is real. We, as the “reality TV archaeologists,” are learning to communicate in a new way, through our passion and the camera lens, in an attempt to inspire and engage the viewing public.



Figure 3. Chelsea Rose (left), Grant Coffey (center), and Meg Watters use a soil auger to ground-truth magnetic gradient survey pit anomalies at the Dillard Site, Crow Canyon Archaeological Center, Colorado. Image courtesy of Oregon Public Broadcasting.



Figure 4. Time Team America camera man filming excavations in the old kitchen, episode "In Search of Josiah Henson." Image courtesy of Oregon Public Broadcasting.

Impact on the Public and Archaeology in the United States

The Josiah Henson Special Park managed by the Montgomery County Parks in Bethesda, Maryland, is just one of the places that has benefited from the focus that *Time Team America* brought to their work and their park (Figure 4). Site archaeologist Cassandra Michaud says that "The *Time Team America* experience and program have been a very helpful piece of support for both the Park Foundation capital campaign and in plans for the museum; they [the filming and broadcast of the program] provide a clear way for people to understand the site and its importance in county and national history."

The program elevated the awareness of the site within the Montgomery County Parks System and is being used in strategic fund raising events. Geophysical surveys demonstrated the potential for Henson-era features in adjoining neighbors' properties. This presented a persuasive argument for the Parks to purchase these properties to protect the archaeological resources and provide a buffer zone for the museum environment; to date, one of the three properties has been purchased by the Parks.

Lance Greene from Southern Georgia University, director of excavations for the Civil War Prison Camp Lawton in Jenkins County, Georgia, reports numerous side effects from the filming and broadcast by *Time Team America* for public education, exposure, and research. He states that "*Time Team America* increased both political and volunteer support.

Immediately after airing, there was an increase in traffic on our Facebook page; it was overwhelmingly supportive of the show. At the same time there was also a large number of people asking about our public days and if they could get involved in work on site."

Geophysical surveys identified features that have anchored historic maps in place and will help guide research for years. The filming and excavations on site garnered significant local and regional attention while the publicity and broadcast of the Lost Civil War Prison episode brought national attention to the site.

Some of the most significant feedback I have received was from colleagues at an international conference in 2012. Attendees remarked that while their undergraduate students had the aptitude to learn the different scientific techniques we use for non-invasive site mapping and 3-D site visualization, none of the students had any idea that we actually used such a diverse array of science and technology. They were supportive and excited about the work we were doing to expose youth, and the public, to the scientific methods and technologies used in archaeology. One of the hopes of *Time Team America* is that with continued support, the program and educational resources will be a significant influence on youth and their choices toward future careers in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics disciplines, and that it will help bring diverse and fresh new talent into archaeology.

Where Do We Go From Here?

Can we find the right equation? *Time Team* ran for 20 years in the UK. Television is different now than it was then, and the US is a different place than the UK, where Roman villas, Saxon hoards, and easily understood (by the viewing audience) archaeological deposits seem to overlap one another across the country. We are a much larger country with a very different archaeological record and viewing public. Today, competition comes from mindless TV shows that cash in on the “romance” of archaeology, delivering fast action, large personalities, and monetary valuation of artifacts that misinform the public. These shows miss the mark, both ethically and in the narrative, and in no way contribute to communicating the importance and relevance of archaeology.

Moving forward, the program format continues to evolve. We need to have fun with archaeological TV programs, to teach and inspire the public. The importance in our message is the value of the process and what it reveals, not the value of the object. If archaeology reality programs are going to succeed, we, the archaeological community, need to be driving program content and format. Instead of filling a “role” or “consulting” in an already developed and contracted TV show, we should think about being part of the development of the TV shows themselves. With the support of the Archaeological Institute of America, Society for American Archaeology, Society for Historical Archaeology, and the Massachusetts Archaeology Education Consortium, *Time Team America* has begun this process. With my ear to the “TV” ground, I hear rumblings of exciting things to come. The potential for great programs is approaching; we have to engage in the development process to achieve them.

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Resources

- Time Team America* Web Resource, <http://www.pbs.org/time-team/home/>
- Time Team America* Watch On Line (Series 1 and 2 and short video resource), <http://video.pbs.org/program/time-team-america/>

BEYOND “NECTAR” AND “JUICE”

CREATING A PRESERVATION ETHIC THROUGH REALITY TV

Jeffery Hanson

Jeffery Hanson is Principal Investigator at DMG Four Corners Research, Inc., and Chair of the Anti-looting Committee, Council of Texas Archaeologists.

As a young graduate student, I encountered the destruction caused by looting on my first archaeological project, along the east shore of Lake Oahe in the summer of 1979. It was at the Mobridge site, a prehistoric earthlodge village built by the ancestors of the Arikara tribe. Looters had ravaged the site, leaving large potholes and back dirt as evidence of their work. Artifacts and human remains were strewn in their wake. I still recall the words of one of my crewmates, who said, “It looks like they threw hand grenades in here.”

The next time I confronted such wanton destruction of an archaeological site was in 2007, when I was an archaeologist for a federal agency in New Mexico. It stands even today as the most egregious example of looting I have ever seen. At the abandoned post cemetery of the historic Fort Craig site, a group of metal detector enthusiasts, some of them U.S. veterans, dug into the graves and collected the artifacts and human remains of Civil War-era soldiers who had died and been interred there. Those graves, some of which had not been exhumed by the U.S. Army when the fort closed in the 1880s, contained remains of soldiers, women, and children. The looters’ shovels spared none of them. Some of those remains ended up in a trophy room, and the complete, unformed skeleton of one soldier had been stuffed into a cardboard barrel. It’s a sad tale in some ways because no one was ever held accountable. Later, I recall talking to some of those looters, and the word “treasure” came up.

In Texas, a recent survey indicated that 98 percent of Texas archaeologists thought that looting and vandalism posed a significant threat (Hanson 2012). They also thought the best way to solve the looting problem was through public outreach and education. Thus archaeology-as-reality-TV can play an important part in heritage education. However, as they are currently produced, shows featuring enthusiastic treasure seekers removing artifacts from site contexts with no research justification, methodological rigor, proper analy-

sis, or reporting propel us backward, rather than moving us forward toward a more enlightened attitude to our finite archaeological and historical resources.

The Archaeological Backlash to Diggers-Type Programming

In the late summer of 2013 (and to some extent before this), people across the United States became concerned about the airing of reality digger programs, with their untrained hyper-enthusiastic treasure hunters on a never ending quest for relics. Concerned archaeologists created an online petition (Change.org 2013) raising concerns about the way archaeology was being portrayed by three reality television shows: the National Geographic Channel’s *Diggers*, the Travel Channel’s *Dig Wars*, and Spike TV’s *Savage Diggers*. This was not the first petition of this kind, simply the most recent. The goal was to have these shows either cancelled or revamped to air a more scientific and socially responsible product to the viewing audience. In tandem with this effort, letters and emails were sent to spokespersons of these channels. Among those organizations that sent letters of concern were the Society for American Archaeology (SAA), the National Council of State Historic Preservation Officers (NCSHPO), the International Scientific Committee on Archaeological Heritage Management, the Coalition of National Park Service Retirees, the Arizona Archaeological Council, the California-Oregon Trails Association, and the Council of Texas Archaeologists, and others. Over 4,500 archaeologists, preservationists, metal detectorists and concerned individuals from every state in the U.S. and over 20 foreign countries have signed the petition.

Most of the effort was directed at the National Geographic Channel. This was understandable because the National Geographic Society, which derives revenue from the Channel’s profits, had for decades been a champion of archaeological research and brought first rate archaeological results to

the public through its programming and its famous National Geographic Magazine. The predominant thrust of the correspondence and the petition comments board were that these programs: (1) created a climate that would encourage the looting of archaeological sites; (2) were a disservice to responsible and scientific archaeology through their amateurish field techniques and absence of proper reporting; (3) were a disservice to the resources in the commodification of artifacts recovered; and (4) justified their actions by capitalizing on the legality of digging on lands with less preservation protection.

Some of the text of these comments and letters illustrates the depth of concern. One petition commenter summed up the issues as follows:

This is not just important to me. It should be important to everyone anywhere in the world because history and prehistory belong to everyone. Legitimate excavation requires careful, painstaking recording of not just the vertical and horizontal location of artifacts, but also of the context in which the artifacts are embedded. Notes, maps, sketches, and photographs should be of such high quality that, in theory, the site can be reconstructed from the field notes. There is very good reason that disturbing sites on federal and state lands is forbidden. It's time national and local organizations stopped pretending that it's all great fun and that no one is injured. The entire world is injured when activities like these are encouraged.

The Executive Director of NCSHPO wrote:

National Geographic has always been seen as a supporter of the preservation of the past. Removing historically significant artifacts from historic context without research design or proper locational controls violates the central ethics of archaeology. Once an artifact has lost its relationship with other artifacts and cultural features, its research value is destroyed. Your program not only does not emphasize either research value or the reconstruction of the past, it is focused solely on monetary value. As the question becomes, "How much is it worth on the open market," the dollar, not the value of our history, becomes the primary benefit to the public. This anti-scientific message lies in stark contrast with the care you take with similar programs focused on the archaeological treasures of Egypt, Peru, or virtually any other country. Why are you selecting our own history for such disrespectful and anti-scientific treatment?

In response to an episode that took place on the Oregon Trail in Idaho, the President of the Oregon-California Trails Association wrote:

The mission of the National Geographic Society, as we understand it, is "to protect land and wildlife, teaching young people about geography and instilling in readers a respect for other cultures and nations of the world." The show *Diggers* certainly seems to run counter to this mission. We should think that an institution like the NGS and its broadcast subsidiary would be more interested in presenting the dramatic stories of the great westward emigration of the late nineteenth century and all the heritage tourism opportunities that part of our nation's history provides, than in encouraging the destruction of that very heritage.

Finally, the past president of the Council of Texas Archaeologists (CTA) also weighed in regarding the legal, as opposed to moral, emphasis of the Channel's defense of *Diggers*:

We realize that when private landowners give permission to dig up an archaeological site, your *Diggers* are not breaking any law. However, they are undermining the preservation ethics our discipline strives to promote for our nation's heritage. We believe that the National Geographic brand should not participate in making celebrities of individuals who have little respect for history beyond making money from its material remains.

While much of the opposition to *Diggers* and other reality programming has been negative in tone, there has also been constructive criticism. From NCSHPO came this comment:

There are better ways to engage Americans in their history—and there is no shortage of credible archaeologists and historians around our country who would be willing to help you. To that end, the NCSHPO, and our membership, who confront this problem on a daily basis, stand ready to consult and assist.

From the President of the SAA:

[W]e urge you to feature professional archaeologists more prominently in future programs. We believe this would help drive home the historical and archaeological questions that form the core of each program, which at present is not as clearly or as well-presented as might be desired. Improvements might also be made in explaining decisions of where the protago-

nists are allowed to dig for objects and where they are prohibited from doing so—examples that may help avocationalists watching the program with sorting out such issues in their own metal detection activities. It would strengthen the show if more attention was devoted to explaining how and why the information obtained by the “diggers” is useful not only to archaeologists, historians, and historical preservationists but primarily to the general public. All of these are core elements of archaeological practice and historical preservation. Finally, we hope that in future shows, more of your web content on archaeology and the ethical implications of archaeological material culture will become a central feature of the show.

Finally, from the owner of a cultural resources management firm:

Diggers (or perhaps a more suitable name) could capture the intrigue and excitement, and thereby the interest, of the public through redirecting its efforts toward sponsored public participation programs, wherein a project is undertaken by a professional organization with specific research interests and scientific approach, demonstrating the appropriate approach and application of scientific method. I would suggest partnering with such organizations. The outcome may not be as fast-paced as *Diggers*, but the excitement of discovery and interpretation value to the viewing audience would be equally thrilling while generating an atmosphere of professional inquiry.

Response to the legion of concerns expressed was mostly in the form of silence. One letter, from National Geographic Channel CEO David Lyle to the CTA, disagreed with the criticism. For example, in response to the criticism that *Diggers*, *Dig Wars*, and *Savage Diggers* “[promote] the idea that history was for sale to anybody with a shovel, backhoe or a metal detector,” Lyle wrote that:

There is another show that features backhoes. Our program features metal detectorists who working alongside two archaeologists curate what they find. No found objects are sold. In most cases, they are placed in museums, or donated to local historical societies.

To another assertion that *Diggers* “promotes the idea that artifacts are mere trinkets that have value as commodities that can be sold for profit,” Mr. Lyle responded:

Not so. We go to sites with some historical relevance,

usually at the invitation of some historian or archaeologist. We define the purpose of what we are searching for and at the end of each episode declare a winner (the two detectorists) to be the person who found the artifact that has the greatest HISTORICAL value.

Mr. Lyle stressed that they do not destroy sites, but they do record artifacts in place and try to preserve them. He admitted that the show conveys monetary value of artifacts, but dismissed this as inconsequential. He concluded with an appeal that one can produce a show that is at once fun and entertaining and also of sound archaeological science:

[We]try to make the program entertaining which perhaps is a departure from the science of archaeology. I hope they are not values at odds. I hope we can have entertainment, archaeology, and popular appeal.

In that last sentence lies the embryo for a common understanding between the archaeological/preservation community and the potentates of reality television. However, to see Mr. Lyle’s rejoinder side-by-side with the criticisms of the show, it is clear that much more needs to be done in how these shows present archaeological science and to curtail the potential for creating a “treasure hunting” climate that encourages looting.

To date, there has been one published attempt to take the archaeological material collected by the *Diggers* and produce a report that would pass archaeological muster. On October 9–10, 2012, the two metal detectorists from *Diggers* went to the Cedar Bridge Tavern in New Jersey, owned by the Ocean County Board of Chosen Freeholders. Additionally, the treasure hunters were granted a special use permit by Bass River State Forest to metal detect a section of state land in an attempt to locate the Battle of Cedar Bridge Tavern that took place in 1782. Thirteen artifacts were recovered and described by the show’s archaeologist, but no report was written. Daniel M. Silivich, President of the Battlefield Restoration and Archaeological Volunteer Organization, was allowed to study the materials and analyze the artifacts recovered. He then assessed the overall effort of the *Diggers* crew (Silivich 2013). Silivich noted the absence of any background research, research design, or survey plan. He found that some of the artifacts had been misidentified, perhaps because they had not been cleaned or washed. Silivich (2013:8) concluded that:

The work done by National Geographic *Diggers* staff does not represent an acceptable archaeological survey, but was instead a random metal detecting search

of Ocean County and New Jersey State property with an attempt to determine artifact locations with a hand-held GPS.

Regarding the aired episode itself, Silivich (2013:4) stated:

It should be noted that the quality of the program that aired was not acceptable to archaeological standards. No systematic format for detecting was followed. No mention or visible presence of the archaeologist was shown. No archaeological procedures were shown. Artifacts were given monetary values, which is totally contrary to archaeological standards and promotes site looting. The two “diggers” concluded the show in Barnegat Bay with one dressed as General George Washington in a canoe and the other as General Cornwallis on a jet ski with Cornwallis “attacking” Washington and attempting to swamp the canoe. This is simply a mockery of history.

What Silivich reported is consistent with the concerns expressed by the archaeological and preservation communities. Currently the SAA, in part due to the backlash reported here, has constituted a task force to address the concerns of archaeologists and make recommendations to the National Geographic Channel to improve its programming. We look forward to seeing the results of this effort. There is no reason why the Channel cannot meet its standards of producing “entertainment, archaeology, and popular appeal” while adhering to archaeological standards of background research, proper survey plans, and accurate historical interpretations.

Dumbing down science and history is not the legacy of the National Geographic Society, and it should not be its future. Rather, the Channel and the Society can help us double-

down on our efforts at public education at all levels and in all venues, from grade school to university and from civic organizations to local government, to instill in people a heritage ethic that sees value in the past and understands the importance of preserving and protecting our cultural resources. The Channel can also take the lead in setting an example for other reality-based shows. In the final analysis, it's not just about protecting archaeological resources; it's also about changing a certain attitude, particularly regarding public lands, that says, “I found it, so it's *mine*.” But it's not “mine.” It's *ours*. Every individual rationalization for looting, even if it comes from the airwaves, robs the rest of us of our collective heritage. And this is where reality shows like *Diggers* can help. They are the perfect vehicle for delivering penetrating, entertaining, thought-provoking, ethical, and scientifically justifiable productions to millions of viewers, and for inculcating a preservation ethic that serves the interests of our irreplaceable heritage resources.

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REALITY TELEVISION AND METAL DETECTING

LET'S BE PART OF THE SOLUTION AND NOT ADD TO THE PROBLEM

Giovanna M. Peebles

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Introducing the Topic and the Task Force

If every American archaeologist had a one hundred dollar bill for every time someone remarked, “Oh! I always wanted to be an archaeologist!” or, “You’re an archaeologist?? That is so cool,” we could readily fund our prized projects. We are the ultimately interesting people in the ultimately cool profession. We do interesting research in interesting places with interesting and often very fun colleagues, and we learn wonderfully interesting things. Many of us are colorful characters, and we may be the ultimate storytellers (just sit at any bar during Society for American Archaeology meetings). Millions of spellbound Americans could be watching us as we dig with passionate volunteers and other collaborators, discovering and piecing together ancient and more recent history. We can tell stories about amazing people we’ve known; elders and mentors who’ve taught us; discoveries on the last day of field season; wind storms that have destroyed our camps; sheep, cows, and snakes that have been trapped in our test units; love affairs; and all the extraordinary—or everyday—stories of humankind that we have experienced and knitted together using our extensive and ever-evolving toolkit. But millions of Americans are NOT watching us. Instead, they are watching some of the more than one thousand reality television programs now airing, and we’re not in them.

If you’re not a television watcher, you may not know that reality television has overwhelmed the medium. For various reasons (see Eduardo Pagán, this issue), it’s the predominant type of programming on television to which millions of Americans are addicted. I recently attempted to count the number of reality television programs one could select to watch, either airing on television or available via Internet. Last spring, I counted 1,200 programs on the *List of Reality Television Programs* and learned about the long and fascinating history of reality programming. More recently, I went to the TV.com website and browsed their seemingly comprehen-

sive list, counting from *19 Kids and Counting* at the beginning to the end of titles that start with “B.” I arrived at a tally of 442 shows before I ran out of patience.

Four reality programs in particular have outraged many archaeologists and historians: *American Digger* on Spike TV, *Dig Wars* on Time Warner Cable, *Digfellas* on Travel Channel, and National Geographic Channel’s (NGC) *Diggers*. These programs show energetic, exuberant, and loud actors (non-archaeologists) searching for artifacts with metal detectors, wantonly digging and recovering historic artifacts, generally from archaeological site contexts, and, in several of the shows, excitedly discussing their monetary value.

Reacting with intensely negative sentiments to these shows, a small chorus of activist archaeologists and historians urged the Society for American Archaeology (SAA) Board to take action: at best, get the shows off the air; at the least, convince sponsors and producers to change their content to de-commercialize artifacts and demonstrate professional standards of excavation.

One first, important step took place in May 2012. Senior staff from the National Geography Society, the NGC, and the *Diggers* production team met with the leadership of America’s archaeological organizations (the SAA, the Society for Historical Archaeology (SHA), the Register of Professional Archaeologists, the Archaeological Institute of America, and the National Association of Tribal Historic Preservation Officers) and over a dozen stakeholders to discuss various contentious issues raised by the *Diggers* show and to find common ground. Notes from this productive conversation are online (SHA 2012).

In late 2013, SAA President Jeff Altschul invited me to chair and assemble a Task Force on Metal Detecting of Archaeo-



Figure 1. Viewers either like or dislike National Geographic Channel's Diggers. A read through the "Digging 101" tab shows ongoing efforts by the NGC and archaeologists to work together. Courtesy of the National Geographic Channel.

logical Sites on Reality TV. The SAA Board directed the Task Force to

assess the current reality TV shows, which use metal detectors to find archaeological objects, against SAA's Principles of Archaeological Ethics. The task force will consider such topics as: (1) The use of metal detectors by non-professional archaeologists, (2) Proper ways for metal detector enthusiasts to engage with professional archaeologists, and (3) Ethical portrayals of such engagements on TV shows. The task force will prepare a one-page statement for the board's consideration that reflects SAA's position on these reality TV shows.

The Task Force members have extensive experience with public archaeology and working with the general public and a variety of public stakeholders, including metal detectorists and artifact collectors. The task force includes Lynn Alex, former director of the Iowa Office of the State Archaeologist

Education and Outreach Program and former member of the SAA's Public Education Committee (PEC); Loren Davis, Professor of Anthropology, Oregon State University, and leader of the SAA Geoarchaeology Interest Group; Linda Derry, Director, Old Cahawba Historic Site and member of the PEC; Richard Pettigrew, President, Archaeological Legacy Institute, and creator of the Archaeology Channel; Matt Reeves, Director of Archaeology, James Madison's Montpelier; Leith Smith, historic archaeologist, Maine Historic Preservation Commission; and Maureen Malloy, SAA Manager of Education and Outreach.

The Task Force quickly identified three distinctive, but related opportunities for the SAA to explore: improving communications and public education, enhancing our relationships with metal detectorists, and working together with the producers of reality television shows. Based on their discussions, the Task Force drafted a statement that became the basis for the SAA Position Statement on the Portrayal of Metal Detectorists on Reality TV (see sidebar page 11).

Most metal detecting shows totally destroy any favorable impression of the hobby. We are just interested in history. I think there are a few rogue detectorists in the hobby who have given us a bad name, but they are few and far between. If archaeologists could spend a day with the detectorists (and vice versa), to see what it is we are really doing, it might help to alleviate some of the poor impressions. We could learn a lot from each other.

Allyson Cohen, Vice President
Task Force for Metal Detecting Rights Foundation
<http://detectingrights.com/>

Communication and Public Education

Reality metal-detecting shows are extremely popular and make money for their respective networks. The Task Force recognized that both the SAA as an organization and individual professionals have limited power to affect changes in these programs. We concluded that, if our profession is going to significantly impact public attitudes towards archaeological values, we must change ourselves, with communication being the most significant arena that the SAA Board and individual archaeologists can influence and change. The Task Force concluded that communicating at the broadest, most interactive level with the public and with various “communities” with which our work intersects, using every tool in the media toolkit, is a professional imperative (see SAA Ethics Principles on Accountability and Public Education and Outreach).

Charles R. McGimsey’s (1972) *Public Archaeology* was the original playbook. Over the last 40 and more years, a choir of other archaeologists continue to passionately champion broad, inclusive, continual, and creative communication with the public as our most important defense against deliberate and accidental site destruction and loss of resources. The importance of communicating with the public has not changed. In fact, as evident from these television shows and other disturbing trends, it is more critical than ever. The urgency for more and accelerated public communication was reinforced yet again in a recent *Huffington Post* article on “The Common Core and the End of History” (Singer 2014). The story reports that the New York State Board of Regents “voted once again to de-emphasize the study of history in the [New York] state curriculum.” The Task Force concluded that, while many individual practitioners strive aggressively to reach out to and work with the public in multiple and inclusive ways (for some this has been their primary professional mission), overall as an organization and as a profession we have a long way to go.

Much of our outreach focuses on the process of archaeology. We recommend to our fellow archaeologists that we move away from process and instead focus on our stories. Speaking as scientists, we are hard to understand and to identify with. We have no shared language. However, talking about archaeology through stories makes us human. Vermont storyteller Tom Bodett recently made a comment about communication that caught my attention: “Our DNA just requires that we look each other in the eye and tell something about ourselves. That’s how we learn.” He further commented that storytelling “brings people’s humanity out of them in ways that maybe [in this digital world] we don’t get a chance to do anymore” (De Seife 2014).

Former biologist turned film-maker Randy Olson (2009) challenges us to transform how we communicate in his book “Don’t Be Such a Scientist.” In a TED talk on YouTube, Olson (2013) describes simple ways to turn a narrative into a compelling story and reiterates how storytelling “humanizes” what we have to say and how we say it. Our reality is every bit as interesting (or more!) than reality TV programs, but not if we never tell those stories to the many Americans who would love to hear them. We encourage archaeologists to use every possible medium and opportunity to tell our stories. We must also accelerate our use of social media to instantly get interesting and relevant stories and photos out there and to invite interactions with the public and stakeholders.

Enhancing Relationships with Metal Detectorists

The Task Force was deeply concerned about archaeologists and historians stereotyping metal detectorists as looters simply because they do not use our methods or view history in the way we do. Professionals can be quick to criticize those whose values and belief systems are different from ours. As anthropologists, our mandate is to understand, not criticize. Criticism is not constructive. Many metal detectorists (see sidebar) have a deep respect for and interest in history; many are extremely knowledgeable about local, regional, or national history and material culture; and many resent the reality shows’ substandard portrayal of their avocation. They are enthusiastic about the process of discovery and its association with the history of a particular place. Currently, metal detectorists remain another disenfranchised “public” to whom we must reach out; we need to leverage metal detectorists’ passion, enthusiasm, and knowledge as a bridge to shared values.

We noted the parallels between metal detectorists and “arrowhead collectors,” many of whom, over decades of collaboration, are now recognized as avocational archaeologists



Richard Darby Jr

Jul 8, 2014

You guys are a gas! Besides all the great history, and I love anything with history connected to it, it's fun watching you guys have a blast with your "friendly competitions". Keep up the good work. I particularly enjoyed the Deadwood, Tombstone, and Oregon trail episodes, but learned quite a bit in many of your east coast colonial digs. The Civil War shows of great interest as well.

Figure 2. One of many viewer comments on the National Geographic Channel's *Diggers* website that conveys an enthusiastic love of history. It also highlights another reason why the show is so popular: it's fun! Courtesy of the National Geographic Channel.

and form the core of local archaeological societies. Bonnie Pitblado's (2014) *American Antiquity* article, "An Argument for Ethical, Proactive, Archaeologist-Artifact Collector Collaboration," is perfectly timed to coincide with this discussion. She confronts us with the ethical imperative to work with artifact collectors of every type.

Leaders in metal detectorist organizations and individual metal detectorists are eager to work with archaeologists, although they are generally rebuffed. The Task Force sees a need for the collaborative development of metal detecting "best practices" and encourages creating opportunities in which metal detectorists and archaeologists can learn from each other (see Matt Reeves, this issue). Once we speak with, listen to, work with, and share a coffee with metal detectorists, we often learn that our values are not that different. Working together garners mutual respect and influences peoples' values and attitudes towards archaeology and, ultimately, the outcomes of reality TV shows.

Working with Reality Television and Metal Detecting Shows

The Task Force was unable to obtain demographic data about the people who watch *American Digger* (also known as *Savage Family Diggers*), *Dig Wars*, *Digfellas*, and *Diggers*. Further research may uncover data to help us as anthropologists better understand who watches, their ages, education, hobbies, interests, why they watch, and whether their watching is actually impacting archaeological and historic sites. Anecdotal evidence suggests that these programs may be impacting archaeological sites by promoting object-oriented metal detecting. However, also based on anecdotes, these shows are not resulting in a ground swell of metal-detecting. Viewer data would help us develop more targeted and effective communication strategies. People watch these shows for

many reasons. The *Diggers* website (NGC 2015) contains over 300 comments. Many commentators express their love of history and explain that they watch the *Diggers* show both to be entertained and to get a dose of history. Several comments capture these feelings: "Besides all the great history, and I love anything with history connected to it, it's fun watching you guys have a blast with your 'friendly competitions'" (posted July 8, 2014); "Awesome show. don't change a thing. you get excited finding History (AS U SHOULD) people writing mean things only wish they loved their Jobs as much as you both do. I love Gettysburg, old cemeteries and History. I have learned so much watching diggers, and loved watching every minute of it" [sic] (posted June 1, 2014); and "I love the show because I have always been interesting [sic] in history. That is what you guys do" (posted April 16, 2014).

While viewers generally like the *Diggers* show, some find parts of it intensely annoying, such as the silly overacting and the moronic phrases used by the two main actors. One commenter remarked that the "show is fun and interesting just stop acting like goofballs cause you found something. The only show I watch on mute" [sic] (posted June 1, 2014).

Many commentators do not metal detect but just enjoy watching the activity in the context of the show because it's fun. One viewer described the actors as "passionate and full of energy" (posted May 31, 2014). Here's an insightful comment that inadvertently pokes fun of archaeologists in their "talking head" mode: "I love it, they crack me up. I wouldn't watch it if it wasn't so funny; how boring would it be with two guys who only spouted facts and dug holes? I'll keep watching, and keep telling my friends how AWESOME it is" (posted June 12, 2014).

The NGC has made significant changes to the *Diggers* program and its website since 2012 as a result of the frequent



Mike Cope

Jun 10, 2014

For those that are annoyed with their antics I suggest you find another show to watch. I find what they do entertaining and brings levity to metal detecting. I think they are great at what they do!

2 👤 Like Reply

Figure 3. While many *Diggers* viewers find the main actors silly, or worse, many others appreciate and enjoy their skills as entertainers. Courtesy of the National Geographic Channel.

conversations with the SAA and SHA leadership and individual archaeologists who have been involved in some of the productions. This ongoing dialogue and efforts to work with the NGC are crucial, since *Diggers* can serve as a model for other dig shows as it continues to evolve. We encourage archaeological professionals to continue attempts to work with reality television producers by seeking face-to-face meetings, inviting them into the field and lab to illustrate various points, and going on-site to their productions. We can also create our own archaeology reality shows, based on storytelling principles, using new media for distribution, such as, for example, *The Archaeology Channel* and *YouTube* (see Rick Pettigrew, this issue).

In the final analysis, the Task Force on Reality Television and Metal Detecting concurs with Ken Sassaman's (2014:383) elegant editorial: "We would do well to define our profession not by how many degrees and publications we accumulate, but by how many citizens we recruit to ensure that future citizens can learn from and enjoy the past as much as we do today."

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METAL DETECTING AS A PRESERVATION AND COMMUNITY BUILDING TOOL

MONTPELIER'S METAL DETECTING PROGRAMS

Matthew Reeves

Matthew Reeves is Director of Archaeology in the Montpelier Archaeology Department.

With so many reality television shows focusing on metal detecting, there is considerable merit in archaeologists investing time and energy with this constituent group. Since 2012, the Montpelier Archaeology Department and Minelab Americas have been running a series of experiential programs to integrate metal detectorists into a team-based archaeological survey project (Figure 1). In these programs, gridded metal detector surveys and excavations of Montpelier's 2,700-acre property are used as a teaching tool for training metal detectorists about archaeology. Participants spend the majority of their time helping archaeology staff and, in the process, are taught larger concepts of site preservation, stratigraphy, standardized testing, and recordation of finds. While such concepts are also presented in readings and background lectures, the main thrust of the program is a hands-on workshop designed to have metal detector participants work one-on-one with our archaeological staff. Our goal is to help metal detector hobbyists transition from an artifact-based approach to a site-based approach.

Our methodology and training programs emphasize the use of metal detectors as a remote sensing device. The methodology for our gridded metal detector surveys is designed to have as little impact on site deposits as possible. Over the past two years, we have found that using metal detectors as a remote sensing device allows for more time-efficient survey coverage and the location of ephemeral sites otherwise invisible to standard archaeological testing techniques. The key to success is having skilled machine operators whose intuition provides a thorough read of the soils in each grid. Buy-in by participants is accomplished by showing metal detectorists how their skills and knowledge are essential for successful survey. At the same time, the importance of site preservation is reinforced by participants using their skills at

reading signals to ensure the least harm to the stratigraphic record—through defining signal scatter through auditory means, sampling only shallow hits (to avoid damage to potential features and deeper stratigraphy), and digging the smallest possible divot for the limited sampling that is conducted during survey (Figure 2). The importance of using their machines as remote sensing devices is emphasized to participants both in the background reading materials provided prior to arrival and through the lectures and field work conducted during the week. In addition, participants learn how the sites discovered during the program are protected and interpreted under our cultural resource inventory and interpretive plan.

To accomplish these goals, we structure the course curriculum into three different components. The first is lectures in which the concepts and the “why” and “how” of archaeology are discussed through examples of sites they would see and work at during the week-long program. An important part of the lectures is developing a sense of the different scales of survey (Phase I, II, and III) and of material culture—especially nails. The nail lecture has turned out to be, by far, the most popular, as nails are usually the bane of metal detectorists, yet these items are the most important and prevalent artifact encountered during metal detector surveys (Figure 3). Learning how this often dismissed set of artifacts can be used as a dating tool, and how their analysis can tell the history of a structure, gives metal detectorists a whole new sense of the importance of complete assemblage-based analysis. The second component is getting participants out on the landscape to tour the various sites we have interpreted and reconstructed based on archaeological data and study. Seeing the physical representation of these sites based on archaeological finds has the maximum impact for helping participants understand what proper excavation can reveal



Figure 1. Metal detector participant Charlie Gordy and archaeologist Sam Bourcy examine a nail while conducting metal detector survey for Madison Stable at Montpelier.



Figure 3. Metal detector participant Chuck Smalley and Montpelier archaeologist Jessica Rymer recording an excavated hit during metal detector survey on Montpelier property.

about a site. The third, and most important, component is spending time in the field working in a group-based environment. Fieldwork constitutes the majority of the time spent by metal detectorists during the week and is when they have the most interaction with Montpelier's archaeological staff.



Figure 2. Metal detector participant Frank Juarez and geophysicist Seth Van Dam conducting metal detector survey looking for the Madison stable at Montpelier.

For the field component, the main emphasis is on the application of metal detector surveys through grid-based surveys in a phase I and II environment (Reeves 2013). Phase I location of sites is accomplished using a 20-m grid. Prior to the program, the grid is established and, during survey, participants are paired with archaeological staff who guide the sweeping of grids, counting hits, selective sampling of a limited number of shallow hits, and recording of information. This same process is used for defining sites (phase II), but the grid is changed to a 10-ft interval on sites that have been located during earlier surveys (Figure 4). It is during survey that participants are able to engage their skills as metal detectorists to locate and excavate hits, see the process of recording finds, and witness the compilation of results to build a site history.

All participants are given half a day at one of the sites that we are actively excavating to spend in a 5-x-5-ft excavation unit, where the basics of stratigraphic recovery of artifacts and data are presented. The other half of the day is spent in the lab learning artifact conservation and processing of finds. These field experiences drive home the concepts talked about in lectures and readings by showing not only how they are applied, but also how metal detectorists can work as part of a research team. For participants, the team-based experience of discovery and detailed recovery of site information is the most rewarding part of the process.

For most metal detector participants in our programs, this is their first experience working with an archaeologist. In the two years of conducting these programs, what is the most satisfying is seeing how intrigued metal detectorists become



Figure 4. Montpelier archaeologist Kira Runkle and metal detector participant Ron Deghetto conduct a hit count on a 10-ft survey of a field slave quarter at Montpelier.

about recovery of everything, from dietary information to conservation of iron objects to the reburial of artifacts during survey to prevent corrosion. In 2014, we opened up participation to archaeologists who are interested in learning how to work with metal detectorists. The bonds created during these programs were even more inspiring. When the goals of our profession are shared in a way that makes them understandable and provides the chance for discussion, it is clear that our two communities have much to share with each other (Figure 5).



Figure 5. Montpelier archaeologist Eric Schweickart and metal detector participant Ron Guinazzo examine bridle hardware on a property survey at Montpelier.

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GOING AROUND (OR BEYOND) MAJOR TV

OTHER MEDIA OPTIONS TO REACH THE PUBLIC

Richard Pettigrew

Richard Pettigrew is President and Executive Director of the Archaeological Legacy Institute.

How do archaeologists make their voices heard? Of course, we should continue to lobby television networks about programming content, but to really get our message to the public, we need to take control of the media process ourselves. We can produce our own programming with the messages we want, assist those who produce quality programming, and create effective ways to deliver programming. Diverse avenues for delivering media programming are proliferating. Just check out what and how people are watching on their HD TVs, computer screens, tablets, and smartphones. This new environment removes many of the constraints imposed by old-style corporate media executives and their investors.

Delivering media is not part of a traditional archaeological job description, so how can we do this? My answer is simple: it's already being done. In 1999, Archaeological Legacy Institute (ALI) saw an opportunity in an onrushing digital media world that allowed the development of alternative forms of program delivery and viewing. ALI began to make its own way in 2000 with streaming-media webcasting of archaeology-related videos on our website The Archaeology Channel (TAC; archaeologychannel.org) (Figure 1). We added audio programming in 2001 and in 2003 began the only juried competition for archaeological film in the Western Hemisphere, The Archaeology Channel International Film and Video Festival. We began our monthly cable TV/Internet show, the *Video News from TAC* in 2010, followed in 2014 by its successor, *Strata: Portraits of Humanity*, now shown coast-to-coast on an expanding network of 27 cable stations (Figure 2). Our film production unit is growing and, increasingly, we are involved in TV content distribution for many production partners worldwide.

But here's a reality check: media impact requires financial resources. The for-profit business model of major TV needs an investment in the millions of dollars and demands the delivery of profits to owners and investors. Our nonprofit

business model relies on contributions, underwriting, grants, contracts, and programming rents and sales. Combined with the use of low-cost program delivery modes, including the Internet and free cable TV platforms, it requires far fewer dollars, but nevertheless needs financial support. Financial backing thus far has been fairly meager but has allowed us to demonstrate the viability of this approach.

The productivity and effectiveness of our work is a direct function of the financial resources applied to it. The enterprise depends on office and studio space, paid staff, equipment, publicity and promotion, recruitment of sponsors, and programming production and solicitation. If we had the funds, we could buy cable TV time and begin to build an endowment for long-term stability. As it is, we find other, slower, ways to grow, such as by finding partners to expand our nationwide station network and convincing cable networks to give us space in their local on-demand menus. We work to expand our audience along with sponsor support.



Figure 1. The Archaeology Channel homepage.



Figure 2. Richard Pettigrew hosting *Strata: Portraits of Humanity*.

We explore methods, such as marketing program titles to national TV systems around the world, to pass income through to partnering producers to encourage them to make archaeology-friendly programming. Among our many partners are other nonprofits, international film festivals, film producers everywhere, CRM firms, archaeological services companies, and hundreds of individual and organizational supporting members.

We invite our colleagues to work with us as we build a set of media tools that reach the public with messages and perspectives we feel are appropriate and valuable.

MONEY MATTERS, from page 3 ↻

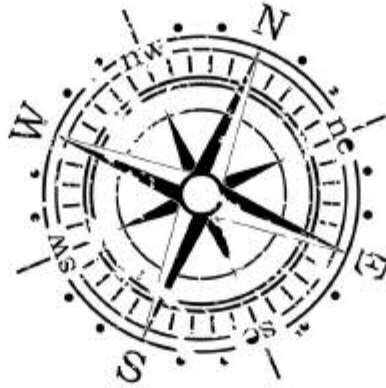
financial risks of OA, it is important to examine our current sources of income and how they may be impacted. Member dues account for 39 percent of SAA's budget, the annual meeting generates 30 percent, and publications earn 15 percent of our annual income. This current SAA business model enables us to build reserves and be poised to expand society programs and increase member benefits. The manner in which we transition to OA will doubtless affect our present business model: the question is how, and how much.

If SAA were to move our journals immediately to open access "gold," all articles would be available at no cost to members and nonmembers alike, immediately upon publication. Assuming no changes to the parameters of our existing business model and no new revenue sources, I estimate this scenario would cost SAA \$300,000 per year from loss of journal subscription income. This estimate takes into account the cost savings achieved by dropping print journals and includes some projected revenue from royalty payments. One must add to this the potential loss of members, as some may view their chosen SAA journal as the main reason to belong to SAA and may choose not to renew if the journal were freely accessible. As little as a 10 percent drop in membership would cost the society another \$75,000. Such reductions in revenues, without new income to offset them, would be catastrophic: important programs, such as Government Affairs, Public Education, and others, would have to be cut.

I present this extreme example only to illustrate how serious this issue could be for SAA and its traditional business model. Other forms of OA, including "OA green," in which the journals are fully accessible to the public only after one to two years, may sustain subscription numbers and lower financial impacts. The Board and Publications Committee are studying a range of options. An *Archaeological Record* article by the SAA Publications Committee outlines them.

The Board is united in its commitment to avoid untoward financial impacts to SAA by any transition to OA, and extensive discussions and consultations continue. To offset projected declines in publication revenue, we are looking at enhancing our current revenue streams, such as increasing attendance at our annual meeting and offering more online seminars. We are also examining the strategies other societies have used to address the challenges of OA. All of this will help develop a workable SAA plan.

As President-elect Diane Gifford-Gonzalez noted in her January column, more information on this topic will be communicated to members in an effort to be as transparent as possible. This is a transition that we have to get right, and we will need the input of an informed membership as we move forward.



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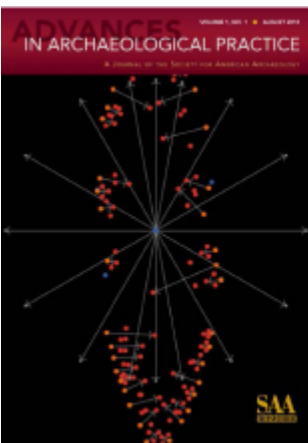


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An Open Access article from the February issue is also available.

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