

## EDITOR'S CORNER

In recent years, both anthropology and archaeology have tried to turn attention to the disciplines' obligations to public education. The SAA not only has an active, enthusiastic, and successful Public Education Committee, SAA President Vin Steponaitis wrote a letter to every department of anthropology in the United States, requesting that faculty members' archaeological contributions to public education be included and seriously considered in evaluations for tenure and promotion. American Anthropological Association (AAA) presidents also have called for serious consideration of such contributions. As editor of *American Antiquity*, I have an obligation to try to envision how the journal might help effect such a change in perspective and thinking. Toward that end, I have developed an idea that might contribute to the resolution of the problem. However, because it is not something that I can implement alone, I am asking for your help.

I am not suggesting that every archaeologist in the United States should focus their energies on educating the public. To put it bluntly, it is not a task to which all of us are well-suited. However, there should be a way for the profession to highlight the work done by archaeologists who undertake such activities and to consider such work an important and serious part of the literature—after all, public perceptions of archaeology largely determine the future success of much of the profession.

What can *American Antiquity* do? I do not recommend that the journal become an outlet for public education, nor do I necessarily think that articles on successful public education efforts are the method of choice. These types of articles and reports are better suited to the *SAA Bulletin*. This is not to say that there is no place for public archaeology in the journal, but, rather, the journal's focus is different, with a more scholarly orientation. Given this context, I believe there are several approaches which would be extremely helpful and enlightening to the profession and would at the same time focus serious scholarly discussion on public education and archaeology. My two strategies are (1) the simple one of regularly reviewing books and monographs targeted to the public (which we already do with some frequency) and (2) focusing articles on an occasional but regular basis on the nature of specific publications targeted to the general public.

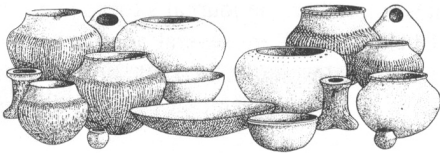
I would like to see a series of articles focused on the theoretical and intellectual contributions of those who write for the general or specific publics. For example, one article might look at a series of local or regional archaeology books written for the general public and evaluate them in terms of what we are teaching people about the nature and practice of archaeology. Another article might review children's books. I am proposing not to do a series of book review articles but rather a series of critical reviews and evaluations of the public education and archaeology literature. I think the key is, however, that these reviews and evaluations should be done *not* by those who "do" public education but rather by more traditional, archaeological scholars, well-known within the discipline. If *American Antiquity* began to publish such reviews and analyses on a semi-regular basis, the journal could incorporate the public education literature into a serious scholarly discussion and also provide a way for some of this literature to be evaluated in tenure and promotion considerations. I am in no way suggesting that this strategy will resolve the problems, but I am suggesting that unless the discipline begins to consider these contributions as important and serious contributions to knowledge, such work will never be taken seriously by the profession. I also think it is entirely appropriate that we begin to follow such a direction. After all, these public education publications and exhibits will frame how our future students see

archaeology and how they learn about it. By treating this work as a subject worthy of serious scholarly analysis, we provide a mechanism to include the work in the literature and also may provide a mechanism for those less gifted in public education and archaeology to make a contribution in this area.

It was my original intention to compile an issue of *American Antiquity* which included a number of such articles. I found, however, that the task would require time and energy far beyond my capacity and I needed the help of the readership of *American Antiquity*. Some of you may have already thought about this problem and may have already developed some analyses and critiques. My purpose is not to encourage anyone to attack public education and archaeology works, but rather to incorporate discussion of such works in the broader discussions of archaeology and archaeological theory today. I hope that these ideas will stimulate some of you to develop an article to submit. I will be more than happy to talk in greater detail to anyone who wishes to criticize this idea, adapt it, or suggest a different direction. I do think, however, that those of us in academia owe it to our colleagues to develop ways in which public education materials can be seriously considered and evaluated in promotion and tenure decisions, as well as in general professional evaluations.

I look forward to hearing from you and hope you will elaborate and improve on the ideas I have outlined here.

—LYNNE GOLDSTEIN



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