



A.S.C. NEWS

Issue No. 258

Newsletter of the Archaeological Society of Connecticut

January 2022

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

January 16, 2022

Dear Members,

I hope that you have all been able to stay healthy and well during the New Year, particularly during the past few months of the current Omicron surge. While winter may inhibit some of the more familiar field activities we are used to, I hope you have been able to take advantage of some of the excellent archaeology virtual programming available or spend some time in the lab washing, inventorying, and cataloging your summer and fall activities. The Board of Directors had hoped to have an in-person meeting this spring, but the Omicron variant may make that impossible. We have not made a final decision about the Spring Meeting, as the pandemic has taught us to be flexible with our plans, but we will do so in time for our April Newsletter. If we opt out of an in-person meeting, we will, as in previous pandemic years, hold the meeting virtually, with a different speaker each week.

I'm happy to report that our joint Fall Lecture Series (Oct.-Nov.

2021) with the Friends of the Office of State Archaeology was a great success. If you missed any of the lectures, please visit the society's website (www.ctarchaeology.org) to see a virtual recording of individual lectures by Drs. Gabe Hrynick, Anthony Martin, and Sarah Sportman. Topics included archaeology in Downeast Maine, Black Governors of Connecticut and the Quash Freeman Site in Derby, and ongoing excavations at the Lt. John Hollister Site in Glastonbury. Speaking of 2021, please keep a lookout for the 2021 issue of the *Bulletin of the Archaeological Society of Connecticut*. The upcoming issue has a great mix of articles written by student, professional, and avocational archaeologists, with topics ranging from ground penetrating radar, lithic usewear, indigenous pottery analysis, historical archaeology, colonial cemetery analyses, and Paleoindian site modeling. It will be worth the wait!

We also have some exciting news to report to members. The ASC has received a \$5,300 grant from the Connecticut Humanities, CT Cultural Fund Operating Support Programs, for the fiscal year

2022! The Board of Directors are all very excited about the opportunities this grant presents to the ASC as we plan new activities for members this coming year. Please look for a special announcement about our exciting slate of activities for the 2022 year in a separate announcement in this newsletter.

I am also happy to announce the winner of the 2021 Brian D. Jones research grant from ASC. Emma Wink received a grant to support her research on Indigenous pottery in Connecticut based on her proposal, *Ceramic Analysis of the Nature Conservancy Site*. Be sure to keep a lookout for her article in the 2021 *Bulletin*!

IN THIS ISSUE

<i>President's Message</i>	1
<i>State Archaeologist Report</i>	2
<i>FOSA</i>	3
<i>ASC Receives Grant</i>	4
<i>Archaeology Circuit Rider</i>	4
<i>CT Magazine Article</i>	5
<i>AIA</i>	5
<i>Avon Library Talk Series</i>	6
<i>Current Research, Another Look at 1620</i>	7
<i>Ridgefield Battlefield Study</i>	9
<i>Calendar/ASC</i>	11
<i>Officers/Membership Form</i>	

The ASC is also happy to announce that Lee West (Membership Coordinator, Newsletter Editor, and ASC Representative to FOSA, among his many other ASC duties!) is the winner of the 2021 Russell Award, for his tireless service to the ASC. If you see Lee or Emma out and about, please be sure to congratulate them.

ASC members who have been conducting archaeological research should consider submitting an article to the Editor of the *Bulletin*, Sarah Sportman, electronically at sarah.sportman@uconn.edu.

While the 2021 issue is full, now is a good time to be planning your 2022 submissions.

On behalf of the ASC Board of Directors, we hope that you enjoy this newsletter. Hopefully, we will all be able to meet again in person in the Spring of 2022, if the current surge subsides.

David Leslie
President

NEWS FROM THE OFFICE OF STATE ARCHAEOLOGY

Happy New Year!

Despite the continuing challenges of the pandemic, OSA had a very productive year in 2021. With the help of FOSA and other volunteers, we carried out several large field projects, which have been reported in previous newsletters, including the Freeman Houses in Bridgeport, the Cesar and Lewis Peters House Site in Hebron, and the Hollister Site in Glastonbury, where several ASC members

joined in the excavations this summer. In 2021, much of our work focused around the South Cellar, which we believe is part of one of the earliest houses at the site. We excavated a total of 28 square meters around the cellar to the base of the plowzone (~30-35cm below surface) to expose cultural features associated with the cellar. The work was incredibly successful and provides important new insights about the architecture of the house, shedding light on the range of construction strategies employed by English colonists in the earliest years of settlement in Connecticut. If you're interested in learning more about the excavations, a link to the virtual presentation I gave on the Hollister Site in November will soon be available on the ASC website.

OSA and FOSA were occupied with extended Hollister Site excavations for most of the fall, but we also did a few other interesting projects in the field. In November, we conducted archaeological testing at the Stanton-Davis Museum in Pawcatuck. We excavated a couple of test pits and a one-meter unit in and around the Cheese Room, which is slated for renovation. The structure is believed to date to the mid-18th-century, and is built off the keeping room of main house. Below the Cheese Room floor, we discovered a cobbled surface that likely predates the structure.

In December, working with Rob Greenberg of Lost in New Haven, historian Laura Macaluso, and Deb Surabian and Krista Dotzel

of the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), OSA organized a GPR survey of the lot where Benedict Arnold's house once stood. The structure was demolished in the early 20th century. The house site, which was identified through historic map research, is now under a parking lot on Water Street. The survey suggests that there are extant cellar wall features, and despite extensive modern disturbance due to utilities and other factors, the site retains archaeological potential. I look forward to continuing to work with Rob and Laura to investigate this significant site. It is especially relevant given the upcoming 250th anniversary of our nation's founding and Arnold's infamous role in the Revolutionary War.

In addition to our fieldwork this year, we've also had the OSA lab up and running for most of the fall and winter, with volunteers coming to UCONN for lab work on Mondays and Tuesdays. Even with restricted numbers, social distancing and masking, we've accomplished a great deal and have welcomed several new volunteers! We are on track to get most of the material excavated in the summer and fall of 2021 processed and inventoried this spring. When the lab work is complete, we plan to turn our attention to organizing the OSA collections. This fall, as we moved one set collections from the Depot Campus into our main storage space at UConn, we realized that many of the collections needed to be organized and repackaged in modern bags, trays, and boxes.

While this task will likely take a long time to complete, it should result in the consolidation of several collections and free up some of our limited collections space for future acquisitions.

In other OSA collections news, I'm happy to announce that the Connecticut Museum of Natural History approved the acquisition of the Ferry Road Site Collection from Old Saybrook. The collection is being donated by Richard and Cameron Bourne, and is the result of years of surface collection and excavation at the site. The Ferry Road site was discovered in 1971 when a tidal marsh was dredged to build a yacht basin and canal for the Chimney Point Marina. Numerous diagnostic artifacts related to the Late Archaic Narrow-Stem Tradition were recovered from the dredged soils. Following the site discovery, the Bournes carried out surface collection of exposed artifacts, documentation and investigation of exposed cultural features and excavation of an intact portion of the site. The majority of the diagnostic materials they recovered date to the Late Archaic period, but projectile points diagnostic of the Early, Middle, and Terminal Archaic periods were also collected. The Ferry Road Site is one of the larger and more thoroughly investigated Late Archaic sites in Connecticut, and it provides an important comparative context for current and future research. Richard Bourne published two articles on the Ferry Road Site in the *Bulletin of the Archaeological Society of Connecticut* (Bourne 1972, 1995).

Finally, I would like to welcome two new archaeologists to the professional archaeological community in Connecticut, Krista Dotzel and Stefon Danczuk. Krista is a doctoral candidate at UCONN and the first archaeologist hired for the Connecticut NRCS Office. OSA and NRCS have a long-standing relationship in cultural resources preservation on our state's farmland, and I am thrilled to have a dedicated new partner in that endeavor. Stefon, who holds an M.A. in Public History from CCSU, has been hired as Preservation Connecticut's first archaeology Circuit Rider. He will provide on-site technical assistance regarding archaeological issues, promote awareness, and advocate for archaeological preservation across the state. The addition of two new archaeologists working at the government level in Connecticut is a major coup for archaeological preservation in the state!

Best wishes for a safe and happy 2022,

Sarah Sportman
State Archaeologist



Greeting ASC Friends,
I hope the New Year finds you well and hopeful for what's to come in 2022.

I'm happy to report that even with the complications of the continuing COVID pandemic, the 2021 field season was busy

and productive with multiple excavations, ground penetrating radar surveys and other field activities. With winter weather upon us, FOSA volunteers are currently working in the lab on the UConn campus processing the numerous artifacts recovered this past summer. This is the final step of the process before artifacts are cataloged and entered into the database. Once in the database, there are myriad analyses that can be run to assist in interpreting the site.

Unfortunately, there is still disruption being caused by the COVID-19 outbreak and FOSA is not exempt. Due to current COVID conditions, the Executive Board voted to cancel the 2022 in person FOSA annual meeting and has opted for a virtual meeting to be held via Zoom. We appreciate your understanding regarding this decision and thank the ASC for continuing its co-sponsorship of the meeting. The meeting will be held on Wednesday, March 9th at 7 p.m. There will be a short business meeting but, of course, the attraction of the meeting is the guest speaker.

The speaker for the 2022 FOSA annual meeting will be Maisa L. Tisdale, President & CEO of the Mary & Eliza Freeman Center for History and Community in Bridgeport. One of the Center's missions is saving and restoring the Mary and Eliza Freeman houses – the last two surviving houses from the City's Little Liberia community. Little Liberia was a seafaring community of free people of color that existed on the outskirts of Bridgeport proper prior to the abolition of slavery in Connecticut and the United States. Maisa is a wonderful

storyteller and is incredibly passionate about the history and people of Little Liberia and I look forward to her sharing the story with us. We will be providing more details as well as the meeting registration link in the near future.

Be safe and see you soon,

*Scott Brady
President-FOSA*

ASC RECEIVES \$5,300 GRANT FROM CONNECTICUT HUMANITIES!

The ASC Board of Directors are happy to report that the ASC received a generous grant from the Connecticut Humanities, CT Cultural Fund Operating Support Programs, to support our activities for the 2022 fiscal year. We are very excited about the grant, and incredibly grateful to CT Humanities for this opportunity. While our plans are necessarily still in flux for the coming year due to the ongoing pandemic, one definite plan is two separate week-long **ASC members-only** Archaeology Field Schools this summer. We will provide more details about these field schools and how to sign up in the April newsletter. These field schools will be conducted at two very exciting archaeological sites, located in the central and western portions of the state to improve accessibility for members from different parts of CT.

One of the field schools will be held at the Templeton Site, a Paleoindian (~12,000 yrs. old) site in Washington. The site has been the focus of years of archaeological investigation, most recently under the direction of Dr. Zachary Singer, and we

continue to learn much about the site inhabitants, some of the earliest peoples to have lived in Connecticut. Field school students during the 2022 field season will work to uncover potential Early Archaic (~9,500 yrs. old), as well as Paleoindian occupations.

The other field school will be conducted at the Lt. John Hollister Site, a 17th-century colonial period farm complex site in Glastonbury. First occupied around 1650, the site is the focus of a long-term OSA research project. This site represents one of the earliest and best-preserved colonial English sites in southern New England. In 2022, field school participants will continue to expand the excavations surrounding the South cellar, an earth-fast structure that may represent the oldest architectural feature at the site.

Be sure to stay tuned for other exciting activities the ASC is planning during 2022, including an in-person catered guest lecture, possibly in the summer (so we can socially distance outdoors), place and topic still to be determined.

*David Leslie
President*

NEWS FROM OTHER ORGANIZATIONS

Introducing Connecticut's New Archaeology Circuit Rider

Hello! My name is Stefon Danczuk and I am the new Archaeology Circuit Rider with Preservation Connecticut. I have two years of experience as a field

archaeologist working for a cultural resource management firm, am working on a Master's in Public History from Central Connecticut State University, and hold a Bachelor's degree in History from the University of Connecticut. All this coupled with a love for the past help make me uniquely qualified to take on this new role.



Preservation Connecticut stays on the "front lines" of preservation around the State, thanks to their popular Circuit Rider program. Circuit Riders provide immediate, on-site assistance to historical societies, property owners, developers, elected officials, and local preservation commissions across Connecticut. In providing these services, Circuit Riders aim both to ensure that historic places are repaired, rehabilitated, and reused, and to increase local capacity for stewardship and good policymaking. Over the last few years, they have made hundreds of visits to communities all over the state. Now, with a new Archaeology Circuit Rider on the team, they can provide assistance with cultural resources found in the ground in addition to those that stand above it. The addition of this position is

intended to further promote archaeology throughout the state. As a program funded by the State Historic Preservation Office, it demonstrates the state's commitment to archaeology.

In this position I hope to work with anyone in possession of or responsible for an archaeological resource to best preserve the site and maintain proper stewardship. Additionally, I hope to bridge the gap between professional and academic archaeologists, helping new graduates understand the field of cultural resource management and make lasting connections. I will also be working with Catherine Labadia at the State Historic Preservation Office to help facilitate a number of projects including a reconciliation of archaeological site forms between her office and the Office of State Archaeology. I cannot wait to get more ingrained in this field and meet everyone. Until then!

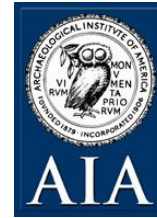
*Stefon Danczuk
Archaeology Circuit Rider
Preservation Connecticut*

CT Archaeology in the News

The work of Connecticut archaeologists is drawing more attention in-state and beyond. In case you missed it, the January 2022 issue of Connecticut Magazine featured an 8-page article, *Unearthing the Past*, by Janet Reynolds. As summarized on the website version of the article: "Studying an epoch that has long been shrouded in mystery, archaeologists are piecing together a view of humans who lived 12,000 years ago in what is today Connecticut." With a focus on discoveries at the Brian Jones site in Avon and the Templeton site in Washington, the article includes conversations with ASC members David Leslie, Cathy Labadia, Zach Singer, Mary Harper, Nick Bellantoni, Paul Wegner and Sarah Sportman.

If you don't have a copy of the magazine, be sure to check this article out online at:

https://www.connecticutmag.com/issues/features/new-discoveries-are-changing-what-we-know-of-the-first-people-and-their-world/article_18fe6cf6-5de9-11ec-8c77-5b6fb2f95d2f.html



American
Institute of
Archaeology

New Haven Society Contact

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UPCOMING SOCIETY EVENTS:

April 5, 2022

Block by Block: Piecing
Together Athenian Democracy,
Jessica Paga

Unearthing History: The Discovery of a 12,500 year old Paleo-Indian Site Along the Farmington River in Avon, CT

This 2022 series will cover the archaeology, genetics, Ice Age mammals, trade routes and foodways of early life along the Farmington River including the Brian D. Jones Paleo-Indian discovery in Avon.



MARCH 10

What Genetics Teaches Us About the Peopling of North America
Presented by Dr. Jennifer Raff, anthropological geneticist at the University of Kansas. Presentation is based on her May 2021 Scientific American cover story "Journey into the Americas" and her new book, *Origin: A Genetic History of the Americas* being released Feb. 2022.

APRIL 7

Ice Age Animals of New England
Presented by Dr. Sarah Sportman, CT State Archaeologist & Dr. Nathaniel Kitchel, Dept. of Anthropology, Dartmouth College. They will present the Pope Mastodon (found in Farmington, CT on the grounds of Hill-Stead Museum) and the Mount Holly (VT) Mammoth, among other animals of the Ice Age.

MAY 12

Paleo-Indian Foodways with Trade & Network Exchange
Presented by Dr. Jonathan Lothrop, Curator of Archaeology, The New York State Museum. His focus is on the Pleistocene (Ice Age) into the Holocene period where Natives colonized 11,000-8,000BC. His research is on their technology, settlement and subsistence. He is a consultant on the Brian D. Jones site analysis.

SEPT. (TBD)

aDNA - Ancient DNA
Presented by Christina Balentine and Samantha Archer, PhD candidates & research scholars at University of Connecticut Dept. of Anthropology. They will present a broad spectrum overview on how & where aDNA is found and how it is analyzed.

OCT. 13

Update on the Scientific Analysis of the Brian D. Jones Site in Avon, CT Since its Discovery in 2019
Presented by David Leslie, PhD, Senior Prehistoric Archaeologist, Archaeological and Historical Services, Storrs, CT. He will present new findings based on artifacts and new analysis techniques. October is Connecticut Archaeology Month!

Spear point, broken during manufacture, recovered at the Brian P. Jones site



Photo provided by Archaeological and Historical Services, Storrs CT

7:00 pm EST via Zoom. Free to attend.

Register at www.avonctlibrary.info

Webinar series created by : Avon Historical Society, Avon Free Public Library, Avon Senior Center

In partnership with



CURRENT RESEARCH
Another Look at 1620

By Elic Weitzel



The First Thanksgiving, original painting by Jennie Augusta Brownscombe, 1914

This past autumn marked the four hundredth anniversary of the harvest feast we now commemorate as the “First Thanksgiving.” In the autumn of 1621, the Pilgrims of Plymouth Colony held a three-day feast with ninety of their Wampanoag neighbors to celebrate a successful harvest. Much ink has been spilled over the centuries concerning the historicity of this event, with scholars debating whether the Wampanoag were actually invited to the feast, whether this was the first feast of thanksgiving in the colonies, and what exactly the attendees ate.

We know that with this thanksgiving feast, the Pilgrims were celebrating their delivery by God to a place where they had “all things in good plenty,” to quote Governor William Bradford. The colonists’ health had improved since the previous winter, their maize crop was good, and game animals such as waterfowl, turkey, and deer were abundant in the areas surrounding Plymouth. But one must then wonder – why exactly was the environment around the newly founded colony so productive? Why was the soil so fertile? Why was game so plentiful?

I recently explored answers to these questions in an article published this past November by *Scientific American* titled [The Ecology of the First Thanksgiving](#). In this article, I describe the ecological context of this 1621 feast to begin to understand what might have led to the environmental productivity enjoyed by the Pilgrims in the early years of Plymouth Colony. It seems that there are two likely reasons for this productivity described by William Bradford and others.

The first – and in my opinion, most likely – explanation is ecosystem engineering by Native Americans. North America was inhabited by Native peoples for many millennia prior to the arrival of Europeans. Across the continent, ecosystem modifications by Indigenous peoples have been recorded and remembered. Burning was likely the most widespread and impactful form of ecosystem engineering. Today, much of the discussion of controlled burns by indigenous forest managers comes to us from the western United States (or even Australia), but here in southern New England, Native peoples are known to have burned the landscape too. The scale and intensity of this burning has [recently been questioned](#), but the evidence does support at least localized burning.

It is therefore possible that fire was used to create the productive ecosystem that the Pilgrims encountered. Since the Pilgrims were living on the Native village of Patuxet, which had recently been depopulated by epidemic disease, this area would have still retained the signatures of Native American landscape management.

The second possible explanation for ecological abundance in 1621 is the very epidemic disease outbreak that killed all the residents of Patuxet (save for the famous Squanto). It is not known what specific disease led to the epidemic that swept along the coast of New England between 1616 and 1618, but it is known that the effects were disastrous for Native peoples. Bones and skulls were described by colonist Thomas Morton as laying unburied on the ground.

Epidemic disease such as this can have downstream ecological effects. By reducing the Native American population, the epidemic likely also reduced their impacts on the environment. Many species that can commonly be overexploited by human hunters are known to recover under such conditions, and this sort of environmental rebound may explain the ecological abundance that was celebrated at the First Thanksgiving. Perhaps animal populations were increasing in 1621 because fewer people were around to hunt them.



Both explanations – Indigenous ecosystem engineering and rebound following epidemics – seem to be plausible. Support exists for both, and indeed both may have been driving causes of the “good plenty” described by Governor Bradford. More archaeological, historical, and paleoecological research is needed to continue to parse out these forces. But what we can take away from all of this is a lesson in sustainability. Waterfowl, deer, beaver, and other animals were hunted by Native peoples for generations. But within just a few years of Europeans arriving in New England, these species were nearly gone from the region. European colonization had massive ecological impacts

that reshaped New England, potentially masking more sustainable Indigenous environmental practices and attitudes. But it is possible for humans to engage in sustainable interactions with their ecosystem, and the more we learn about the past, the better informed we will be as to what these interactions may look like in the future.

Elic Weitzel is a human ecologist and archaeologist pursuing his PhD at the University of Connecticut. His research focuses on the population and behavioral ecology of humans - both past and present - with special emphasis on resource use and management and anthropogenic environmental modification. He also serves as a Director of the Archaeological Society of Connecticut.

Editor's note: For more information on Elic's research, listen to his virtual lecture delivered on May 12, 2021, [The Ecological Consequences of European Colonization in Southern New England](#), part of the ASC/FOSA 2021 Spring Virtual Lecture Series. Click on the link above or find the recording of this talk on the ASC website under Virtual Lectures.

Ridgefield: Two planning workshops will support Historical Society battleground studies

For Immediate Release: 1/3/2022

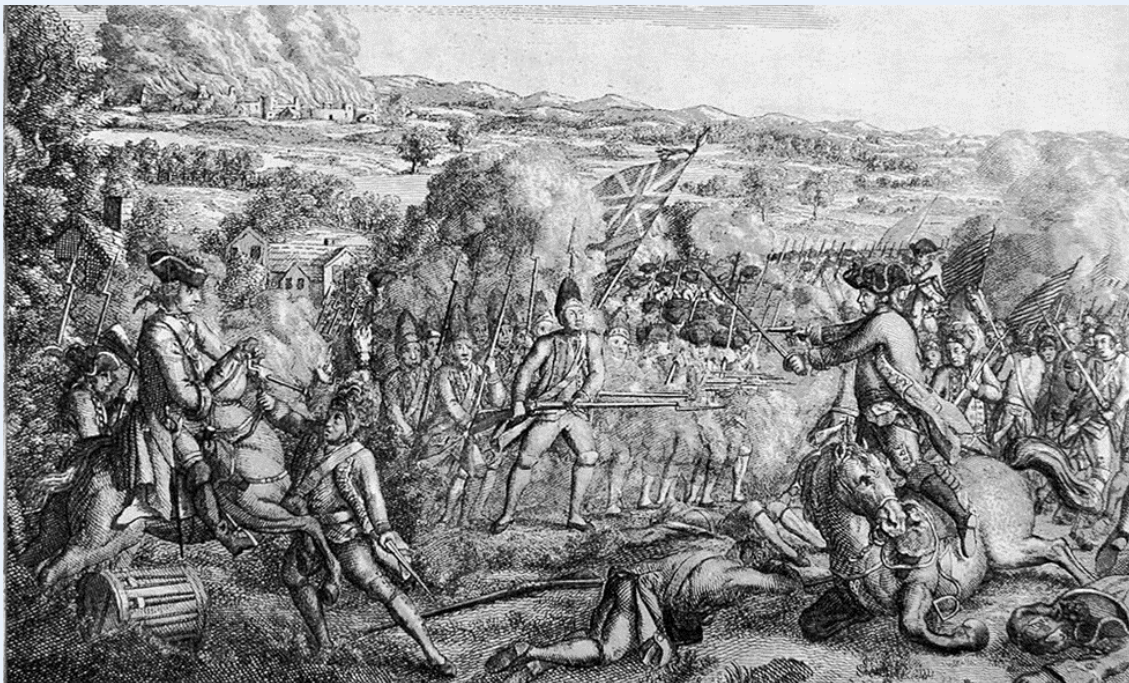
RIDGEFIELD, CT: The Ridgefield Historical Society has chosen FHI Studio of Hartford to conduct two large public planning workshops to engage Ridgefielders in the current and future efforts to document and preserve evidence of the 1777 Battle of Ridgefield. The only inland engagement of the Revolutionary War in Connecticut the Battle is notable for many reasons, with more details being discovered even now, nearly 250 years after the fighting ended.

Through a two-year grant from the National Park Service American Battlefield Protection Program, [the Historical Society hired Heritage Consultants LLC](#) to begin a comprehensive assessment of the areas where fighting occurred. Mapping of the battlefield is an essential part of the work, which will include a final report this fall that brings together details and sources of information to guide researchers in the next phases of discovering the Battle of Ridgefield's place in history.

Looking ahead is what FHI Studio will help Ridgefielders to do, in the two "charrettes," or public planning workshops in late spring of 2022. Townspeople will be given information on what the researchers have discovered and will be asked to consider how Ridgefield can continue to

research and protect this important part of its history. In the current first grant period, the emphasis has been on gathering documentation and establishing battlefield parameters.

The Historical Society anticipates seeking further NPS support that will enable archaeological studies in areas of town known to have been part of the battleground. There has been a small amount of preliminary work already and property owner permissions are being solicited.



Battle of Ridgefield, Ridgefield Historical Society

For more information, email bor.grant@ridgefieldhistoricalsociety.org or call [203-438-5821](tel:203-438-5821).

About Ridgefield Historical Society: Located in the [1714 Scott House](#) on Sunset Lane in Ridgefield, CT, the Society's purpose is to preserve, interpret, and foster public knowledge of Ridgefield's historical, cultural, and architectural heritage. The Society encourages historic preservation, collects and catalogues documentary materials, provides a database of information about town history, creates exhibits and offers programs for all ages on local history.

CALENDAR

To help members plan their calendars, we post the dates of meetings of interest in Connecticut and neighboring states, not mentioned elsewhere in this newsletter. Please contact the editor with any meetings you are aware of which you feel would be of interest to the membership.

SAVE THE DATE!

March 9, 2022, (Wednesday)
7PM FOSA Virtual Annual Meeting, co-sponsored by ASC

March 24-27, [Middle Atlantic Archaeological Conference](#), (MAAC) Ocean City, MD

March 30-April 3, 2022, Society for American Archaeology (SAA) 87th Annual Meeting, Chicago, IL

January 5-8, 2023, Archaeological Institute of America Annual Meeting, New Orleans, LA

January 6-9, 2023, Society for Historical Archaeology (SHA) Conference on Historical and Underwater Archaeology, Lisbon, Portugal

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ASC ON-LINE RESOURCES

ASC Website

<https://www.ctarchaeology.org/>

ASC Bulletins & Newsletters

CT Digital Archive, UConn

<https://collections.ctdigitalarchive.org/islandora/object/20002%3AArchSocCT>

2022 DUES NOW PAYABLE

It's time to renew your membership for 2022. Check your mailing label if you are unsure if you are current. (The label may not reflect payments received in the last month.) If it reads 21 or earlier, please fill out the form below or the stand-alone form distributed with this issue or posted on the website and mail it back with your check or pay online. Thanks!

ASC Now Accepts Online Payments! Go to the website at www.ctarchaeology.org

I want to apply/renew membership in the Archaeological Society of Connecticut (ASC) to promote archaeological research, conservation and service. Enclosed are my dues for the membership category: (circle one)

<i>Individual</i>	\$25.00
<i>Student*</i>	\$10.00
<i>Institutional</i>	\$40.00
<i>Life</i>	\$300.00

Today's Date _____

Name:

Address:

E-Mail: _____

Affiliation:

(For students)

The newsletter will be sent to you electronically unless you indicate otherwise below:

I wish to receive ASC News by mail instead of electronic delivery

*Student Membership includes electronic newsletters, hard copy bulletins, and for each new member one back issue of the bulletin of your choice subject to availability.

Send payment to Lee West,
ASC Membership Chair, 366
Main St., Wethersfield, CT
06109 or online at ASC website

Editor's Note: ASC News is published three times a year, in September, January and April. Please address inquiries and contributions to future issues to *ASC News*, Lee West - Editor, 366 Main St., Wethersfield, CT 06109,
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