



# THE COUNCIL OF AFFILIATED SOCIETIES

## PAST, PRESENT, AND FUTURE

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The Council of Affiliated Societies (CoAS) joins avocational and amateur archaeology groups to the SAA for the common goal of enhancing the study of archaeology. In existence since 1991, the Council holds annual meetings, edits a newsletter, cosponsors the poster competition, provides visibility for its members at the annual SAA meetings, and sponsors meeting sessions. The purpose of this exposé is to enhance awareness of CoAS throughout the archaeological community. In that vein, we present the history, current programs, and future visions for the Council.

### History

Earl Lubensky is the father of CoAS. His background itself is important to an understanding of his efforts, because he has been both an amateur and a professional archaeologist. He has recently received his Ph.D. in anthropology at the University of Missouri after a long career in the Foreign Service.

At the 1985 SAA meeting, Earl asked to meet with the Executive Board and raised questions about participation of amateurs and about the SAA objective to foster the formation and welfare of the state and local archaeological societies. The Board expressed an interest in the issues and asked Earl to pursue them. Earl was also appointed to the SAA Membership Committee. In 1986, he had accumulated the names and addresses of about 160 local/regional archaeological societies and sent a letter to them asking for a reaction to the idea of an association of some kind of state, provincial, and local archaeological societies in the US and Canada. Response over the next two years was essentially favorable, with the main problem being the statement in the SAA Bylaws Section 2 that declared (at the time) that the SAA was opposed to the practice of collecting archaeological materials for the sole purpose of personal satisfaction.

In 1987, the SAA Board approved a motion to send the *SAA Bulletin* (as *The SAA Archaeological Record* was called at the time) to one person in state and local societies in North America for a year on a trial basis. A successful gathering was held at the 1988 SAA meeting in Phoenix for a discussion between all interested

parties. In 1989, the SAA revised its Bylaws to provide for affiliation of local, state, and regional organizations with similar goals (See Article XIV—Affiliated Units of the SAA Bylaws) and to establish a new affiliate membership in the SAA (Individual Affiliate members currently pay \$40 and receive *The SAA Archaeological Record*). Earl continued his memos to the 160 organizations on his list and received official documents from 21 societies interested in affiliation. He was appointed by the SAA to chair a Task Force to draw up bylaws for CoAS; the first meeting of this Task Force was in 1990 at the SAA Las Vegas meeting. The first formal meeting of CoAS was at the 1991 SAA annual meeting in New Orleans. As of 2006, we are 15 years old.

At the 1991 SAA meeting, Jerry Sabloff, then the President of the SAA, presented Earl a Presidential Recognition Award for the persistence and success of his efforts. This recognition was certainly appropriate, and it was, indeed, Earl who persisted in this goal to bring amateurs and professionals into a closer working relationship.

### Current Status, Programs, and Membership

Currently 24 societies are members of CoAS. Most have been steady members for some time, but there have been some losses. The representation is from across the US and Canada, but it is clear that too many state and local societies are not members.

The SAA currently supports CoAS by keeping the membership list, billing the societies for annual fees, providing booths at the SAA annual meetings, and printing and distributing the newsletter. The most successful and visible programs of the Council are the booth, the newsletter, cosponsorship of archaeology month/week poster contests, and most recently the CoAS-sponsored symposium. The SAA-provided booth offers a prominent place to member societies to display materials contributed by them, including brochures with membership information, posters, newsletters, or other promotional material for free distribution. Member societies can also send copies of their journal and other promotional material, such as mugs or t-shirts, as well as ordering information for such material.

The CoAS Newsletter is a biannual publication that reports on member society activities and volunteer efforts. The purpose of the newsletter is to enhance communication, interaction, and cooperation between member societies as well as between the society and the SAA. It is distributed to one officer of each member society, and because these usually change yearly, we often get little to no response from member societies. Since state society activity is often at the chapter level, most chapters do not see the CoAS newsletter itself. However, the newsletter has recently been posted on the SAA website and should be available to all members in affiliated societies. Additionally, each individual member of an affiliated society can have access to the SAA Member's Only website section. Difficulties with the new SAA computer system as well as with password distribution currently are being worked out by CoAS officers.

Perhaps the most successful CoAS program has been the cosponsorship of the archaeology month/week poster competition. Each year, SAA holds the competition adjacent to the CoAS booth. The SAA Public Education Committee cosponsors the competition with the Council. The submitted posters are voted on by the membership, and three prizes are awarded annually; last year's prizes went to Wyoming (1st), Georgia (2nd), and California (3rd).

In 2005, CoAS sponsored its own symposium at the 70th Annual Meeting of the SAA on avocational-professional relations, titled "The Contributions of Amateurs/Avocationalists to Archaeology and the Purpose of the Council for Affiliated Societies." The session, organized and chaired by Hester A. Davis of the Arkansas Archaeological Survey, was a resounding success. Eight papers were presented at the session and included both avocational and professional authors. The papers generally focused on successes of specific programs or evaluation of past programs (see *CoAS Newsletter* v. 11 Spring 2005, or the SAA 70th Annual Meeting Program and Abstracts). Passport in Time, museum building, education, stewardship, and training were among the topics discussed by the individual papers. A number of issues were addressed in the ensuing discussion, but several stand out: (1) although there are a lot of interest groups in the SAA, avocationalists form a national base of 10,000s if not 100,000s of potential supporters; (2) most members of the SAA, including the board, do not have any idea what CoAS is or does; and (3) avocationalists are not regularly nominated to the SAA Executive Board, and perhaps there should be an avocational line on the Board, as now appears to be the case for some interest groups. Another result of the session was a decision to continue sponsoring paper or poster symposia concerned with avocational/professional relations and cooperation at future SAA annual meetings.

Representatives of member societies meet annually to conduct CoAS business and elect officers. Topics of discussion include problems faced by member societies (for example, membership loss and lack of professionals for guidance of specific projects), increasing membership, improvement in or sponsorship of new programs, and enhancing the visibility of the Council. Minutes of past meetings can be read in CoAS newsletters.

### The Future

Representatives of member societies who have been active in keeping CoAS viable want to see it continue as a communication mechanism but also would like to see more participation in CoAS by the SAA in some fashion. Currently, a member of the SAA Board of Directors meets with the CoAS officers and member representatives each year at the SAA meeting. This person usually changes every two years as the SAA Board of Directors members come and go. Presumably, this person also reports to the Board on the discussions at the CoAS meeting, and as a Standing Committee of the SAA, the CoAS president makes a written report to the Board each the spring. So we know that the Board, at least, knows that CoAS exists, but we have doubts that the rest of the SAA membership knows, much less knows why.

So, what can CoAS do for member societies? One very ambitious idea is to work with the SAA Board to create a Lectureship Program, similar in some ways to that of the Archaeological Institute of America. This would be a major undertaking and would have to be funded largely by member societies. For example, a Society would pay the visiting lecturers travel and per diem, but the SAA would have a fund (perhaps from donations) to pay a standard honorarium to each lecturer.

We feel that if the SAA is to fulfill its mission to foster the formation and welfare of state and local archaeological societies, it needs to have more involvement with the care and feeding of state and local societies, many of whom are losing members. A shot in the arm would be interesting programs by visiting lecturers, perhaps a half-day workshop/seminar at the SAA annual meeting on pros and cons of training programs and how they work, or about certification and stewardship programs. What about an SAA publication aimed at one or more of these topics that would be useful to both professionals and amateurs in cooperating on development of these (or other) kinds of state programs? And finally, as was discussed at the 2005 CoAS-sponsored session in Salt Lake City, what about changing the SAA By-Laws so that amateurs, through the CoAS, could have equal representation on the SAA Board of Directors? Now, *there's* a challenge!