

THE EDITORS SPEAK: REMINISCENCES OF THE EDITORS OF THE JOURNAL *SOUTHEASTERN ARCHAEOLOGY* ON THE OCCASION OF ITS TWENTIETH ANNIVERSARY

Compiled by Vincas P. Steponaitis

At the Chattanooga meetings in 2001, a reunion organized by Vin Steponaitis and Lynne Sullivan brought together the past and present editors of the Southeastern Archaeological Conference's flagship journal, Southeastern Archaeology. Each editor took a few minutes to relate some of the history and development of the journal. After the meeting, current editor Lynne Sullivan and SEAC Newsletter editor Jane Eastman invited the past editors to write down their recollections for a wider audience. Here is the result.

William H. Marquardt (1981–1984)

SEAC has always been a great organization, but it was not always as well organized as it is today. In the 1960s, fewer than 100 people attended SEAC, we could still meet in one room, and there was only one session at a time. SEAC meetings began to grow steadily, but in the late 1960s and early 1970s, delivery of the *Newsletter* and the annual *Bulletin* bogged down. Theoretically, the *Bulletin* consisted of the papers presented at the preceding annual conference, but there was a considerable backlog in their preparation and delivery. In the late 1970s and early 1980s, concerted action set SEAC on a stronger, healthier course. I played a small part in this, but there were many others who should be mentioned.

One of these was David Dye, who became *Newsletter* editor in 1976. David made a commitment to timely publication and worked very hard to make the *Newsletter* attractive and informative. He expanded the outreach of the *Newsletter*, actively soliciting research news from the many individuals involved in contract archaeology. Unfortunately, no comparable success was attained by the *Bulletin* editor, at least in part a problem of insufficient budget. Dues were not coming in. SEAC needed to become better organized.

Under President Berle Clay, the officers drafted articles of incorporation and bylaws, which were approved in 1978 under the presidency of Charles McNutt. Jerry Milanich became editor of the *Bulletin* that year, and assisted by then-graduate assistant Jim Knight, he began to work on getting some of the old back issues typed up. This was a great step in the right direction, but there was still no money to print them. Jerry ultimately

raised the money, and by the time he left office he had distributed *Bulletins* 17, 22, 23, and 24.

In the late 1970s, we all started noticing that many more people were attending SEAC meetings. This became particularly evident at the 1978 meeting in Knoxville and the 1979 meeting in Atlanta (remember that the Moss-Bennett bill had passed, and contract archaeology was beginning to boom). We realized that hundreds, not dozens, of people were attending the conference, but unfortunately many of these people were not joining the organization. SEAC began requiring that one be a dues-paying member in order to present a paper at the annual meeting, and this led to increased membership.

When I became editor-elect in 1980, I began to advocate for a regular, refereed journal. I argued that we could achieve financial stability by producing a peer-reviewed journal and sending it out on a timely basis. This would produce more members, because they would have a reason to join SEAC other than coming to the meetings and getting the *Newsletter*. At first, James B. Griffin, then president of SEAC, was dead set against the idea and told me, point blank, "It will never work." The financial stability of the organization could not be risked on a new venture. The annual dues of SEAC at the time were \$10 per year, and there were fewer than 150 members.

Somehow, I convinced most of the executive board that it was an idea worth trying, and in September 1981, I was given permission to solicit papers for the first volume of *Southeastern Archaeology*. Although Griffin remained dubious, the journal had good support among the board members (Judy Bense, Kathy Deagan, Rochelle Marrinan, Jerry Milanich, and Chris Peebles) and from president-elect Bruce Smith.

I made a complete nuisance of myself at meetings, soliciting papers for the journal. I produced the first issue of *Southeastern Archaeology* at the Institute of Archaeology in South Carolina on a DEC WT/78 word processor equipped with a daisy-wheel printer. I designed the cover, which was drafted by institute artist Darby Erd. I adopted the logo from one that had appeared on a t-shirt sold at a recent SEAC meeting. Jim Knight had designed the logo, based on a pottery decoration on a Marksville Incised pot. I don't know if the design had any particular significance to Jim, but I liked it because it represented five directions, which to me appropriately stood for the five prominent subregions of the Southeast: the Lower Valley and its tributaries; the Deep South; the Midsouth;

the Atlantic Piedmont and Coastal Plain; and the Florida peninsula.

The first journal issue came in under budget, so I decided to improve the quality by going to metal plates for the halftone and using professional typesetting. By then, I had moved to Gainesville, Florida, where department chair and erstwhile SEAC editor Milanich gave me an office to work in at the Florida State Museum. Mindful of the limited budget, I located a cheap typesetter in Tallahassee and a cheap printer in Ocala, and saved money by shipping the edited manuscripts and proofs back and forth via Trailways bus. After papers passed reviewers' muster, I edited the typescripts, then these went to Tallahassee to be transformed into galley proofs. I got these back, proofread and corrected them, and then sent them back to Tallahassee. They sent back corrected wax-backed proofs, which I then cut out with scissors and laid out by hand, including cutting out and placing rubylith where the half-tones were to go and hand-pasting the running headings and page numbers. Finally, the camera-ready books went off to Ocala to be printed, and then I mailed them out to the members. (In those days the editor also handled delivery of all publications, including back issues, sold advertisements, and solicited book reviews.)

With all my economizing, the costs of the journal still inched up over budget, even after I switched to an even cheaper printer in Michigan. Mercifully, the executive board approved an increase in dues to \$15 per year, which gave me the margin I needed to produce a quality product on time. In spite of the dues hike, membership continued to increase. I think that our new journal had something to do with that, but several factors were important: good leadership, well-organized meetings, and a livelier and more timely *Newsletter*.

Another thing that helped our financial stability was a new category of life memberships, which began in the mid-1980s. Jim Price, who had been treasurer in 1977-79, turned out to be astute about investing money. Most archaeologists at the time knew little about money or how to invest it, because we had never had any. But Jim took the life membership fund and invested it, earning well over 10 percent interest. A big push was made for life memberships in the mid-1980s under the presidency of Jeff Chapman. That, plus continually increasing attendance at conferences and a stable publications program, led to the financial comfort that SEAC enjoys today.

From the very beginning, I purposefully encouraged historical archaeology submissions because of an unfortunate rift that had occurred in the mid-1970s between the Historic Sites Conference and SEAC, which had formerly met together. Although various logistical reasons had been cited for splitting SEAC from HSC, the truth was that some southeastern archaeologists simply did not believe that historical archaeology had a place in SEAC. I thought this was wrong, so I used

my editor's prerogative to welcome historical archaeological and ethnohistorical contributions into our new refereed journal, a practice that has continued to this day. I also required authors to supply a "Note on Curation," telling readers where their collections were archived, to encourage and facilitate continuing evaluation and re-evaluation of the findings. I included a few old photographs of noteworthy people and places in a feature I called "Archives Corner."

By the time I left office, the first six issues of *Southeastern Archaeology* had included 526 pages, 37 articles, 10 commentaries, 10 book reviews, and 5 features. Articles on archaeology (including contract archaeology), lithics, ceramics, archaeobotany, geoarchaeology, zooarchaeology, paleoecology, ethnohistory, and historical archaeology had been published, representing 15 states (Tennessee, Missouri, Kentucky, Texas, Alabama, Louisiana, Mississippi, Illinois, Georgia, Florida, South Carolina, North Carolina, Arkansas, Maryland, and Virginia). None of this would have been possible without the cooperation of peer reviewers, who responded to review requests at a return rate of more than 90 percent. We also managed to print and distribute *Bulletins* 20 and 21, from 1976 and 1977, with a lot of help from Janet Levy (UNC-Charlotte) and the support of the Florida Museum of Natural History (then known as the Florida State Museum).

I nominated as my successor a young professor at SUNY-Binghamton named Vin Steponaitis, not only because he seemed to be a good archaeologist and writer but also because I had heard that over the years he had accumulated a ball of string so large that it would no longer fit into his closet. So I figured, here is a guy who is both frugal and compulsive—two essential traits for a good editor. When editor-elect Steponaitis came to visit me in Gainesville, I showed him my setup and how I handled pasting up the waxed galleys, running heads, page numbers, and the like. I droned on about typesetters' rulers, the merits of bus freight, and where to find cheap rubylith. Vin listened politely, thanked me for my advice, and then informed me that he had no intention of pasting up the journal himself, and that in fact he was going to farm out the entire layout and printing operation to a professional producer of journals in Kansas. At first I was nonplused, but then I realized what it meant: we had made it! Vin could afford to *hire* these services because SEAC was solvent. The journal was going to survive! And survive it has, thriving in the hands of my many capable successors.

Finally, as lineage founder, it is my duty to pass on sacred knowledge. So I want to reveal the mystical significance of the great symbol of the SEAC editorship: the Ajax Force Automatic Numbering Machine. I first received it from Jerry Milanich, who preceded me as SEAC editor. Jerry had gotten it from Adelaide Bullen when he had taken over the *Florida Anthropologist*

after Ripley Bullen died. As I would later, Jerry sold back issues of *SEAC Newsletters* and other publications. When someone would ask for a receipt or an invoice, Jerry would spin the numbers to some random, preposterous figure and stamp it on the invoice to make it look official. When I came to the museum with the journal in 1982, he passed Ajax Force on to me, and I passed it on to Vin, and it has been handed down to each editor in turn. It says "Ajax Force" right on it, and it reminded me of a monolithic ax, a bilobed arrow, or some such symbol of mystical power. Ajax, of course, was a strong and brave warrior of the Trojan War who fell on his own sword rather than be dishonored. Strength and bravery are required of editors, who often incur the anger and dismay of contributors, who unjustly suspect them of laughing maniacally as they systematically change all whiches to thats and all thats to whiches. Vin succeeded me at a time when the first *Star Wars* movie had just come out and everyone was saying, "May the Force be with you." So that is how the Ajax Force Automatic Numbering Machine came to symbolize the Great Power of the SEAC Editor, a power that resides with the office, not with the Individual.

In conclusion, let me say that it was not easy to initiate this journal, but it was nonetheless a great pleasure and privilege. Throughout our lives, we are sometimes fortunate enough to accomplish a few things in which we can take pride. I am proud to have served as founding editor of *Southeastern Archaeology*, and I will always treasure the experience. But the journal, the *Newsletter*, the bylaws, the fund-raising, the investments, and the life memberships were all part and parcel of SEAC's profound organizational transformation between 1976 and 1984.

Vincas P. Steponaitis (1984–1987)

Bill Marquardt started *Southeastern Archaeology* on a shoestring. And he was able to pull off this remarkable feat by doing everything (except running the printing press) himself. He handled the review process, edited the manuscripts, printed the text with his computer, pasted up the pages using scissors and a waxing machine, delivered the pages to the printer, unpacked the printed issues, stuffed them into envelopes, and mailed them! Clearly this was a labor of love, and the journal would never have gotten off the ground without this Herculean effort. We all owe Bill a debt of gratitude for what he accomplished.

When I innocently agreed in 1983 to take over from Bill as editor, I was full of enthusiasm but had only the vaguest idea of what was to be involved. I soon found out. And I quickly realized that, as a mere mortal, I could not handle the enormous load that Bill had carried. I was willing to do the editorial tasks but had

to find a way to offload as much of the production and mailing process as possible.

Production, of course, was usually handled by the printer, but this cost money, and SEAC was still very poor. Out of desperation came a solution: electronic manuscript submission, which at the time was a very new idea. As editor, I would ask authors to provide a copy of their manuscript on disk. I would then edit the manuscript on a word processor, insert typesetting codes, and send the disk to the printer who would use it to generate galleys. Nowadays, it sounds very simple and straightforward, but remember that we embarked on this venture at a time when the IBM PC and the Apple II were state-of-the-art machines, floppy disks were more than five inches wide, and CP/M was still a commonly used operating system. Translating between different disk and file formats was a huge problem that often required Rube Goldberg solutions (like connecting incompatible computers with a serial cable and transferring files using KERMIT—a kind of primitive networking software). But it all somehow worked, and in so doing set a precedent. To the best of my knowledge, *Southeastern Archaeology* was the first peer-reviewed journal in archaeology to use electronic manuscript submission. It took *American Antiquity* more than a decade to catch up.

The change in publishing arrangements created an opportunity that I still consider one of the highlights of my time as editor. In collaboration with the good people at Allen Press (our newly chosen production house) and borrowing ideas from many existing journals, I created a new page design that made its debut in volume 4, number 1. This design, with only minor modifications, is still in use today.

I also remember well how precarious the journal's existence remained during my term. *Southeastern Archaeology* was still very young, and there was no backlog of manuscripts. This meant rapid publication for authors (a good thing) but constant worry for the editor, wondering whether I'd have enough copy in time for the next issue. We always made it, but close calls were not uncommon. And then there were the financial worries. We were still running the journal on a very tight budget, and I remember long phone conversations with Mark Mathis, SEAC's treasurer, trying to figure out how we were going to scrape together the nickels and dimes to pay the bills. We were saved on more than one occasion by Bruce Smith, who worked for the Smithsonian Institution, one of the few places willing to pay "page charges" to cover the cost of publishing articles by its staff. Bruce submitted articles that not only were great scholarly contributions but also provided much-needed subvention that kept the journal afloat. (Now you know why, as editor, I took such an interest in *Chenopodium*.)

I enjoyed my time as editor and will always be grateful to SEAC's members for giving me the chance

to nurture our fledgling journal. Even so, I'll admit to feeling greatly relieved when I handed the staff of office, the Ajax Force Automatic Numbering Machine, to Jim Knight. I knew *Southeastern Archaeology* would thrive in his capable hands.

Vernon J. Knight, Jr. (1987–1990)

What moved the SEAC nominating committee to put up my name for editor is unknown to me. I assume that the advice of my predecessor carried some weight. It must have made sense to somebody. I knew just enough about desktop computing not to foul up the move toward electronic manuscript submission that my predecessor had the foresight to make. But perhaps just as important, I had some previous experience as an editor, having assisted Jerry Milanich in producing some of the *SEAC Bulletins* in Gainesville during the late 1970s. Having done so, I was even familiar with what later became the editor's mystic totem, the Ajax Force Automatic Numbering Machine. I can confirm that we did indeed stamp meaningless numbers therefrom on correspondence with the authors in those days. So my election as editor returned the journal to someone with Florida connections. Reading Bill Marquardt's piece reminds me of how prominent the Florida Mafia was in SEAC at the time *Southeastern Archaeology* was founded (look back at his list of executive committee members at the time). I hope that in saying so I will not require witness protection.

I want to underline how significant it was that we moved very early on to electronic submission of manuscripts. Competence with a desktop computer among scholars was pretty common but still hardly universal as late as 1987. Many indeed were those convinced in their hearts that the promotion of personal computing was a plot by administrators to make scholars do clerical work, and as a result they refused to have anything to do with desktop machines. Some of those who did have competence were still working on vintage hardware left over from that great period of experimentation in computer design of the late 1970s and early 1980s. These sometimes bizarre-looking relics made by KayPro, Jaccard, Commodore, Radio Shack, or Atari sadly lacked memory and storage capability. Lucky were they who had such new models as the IBM PS2, featuring an ultrafast 8088 microprocessor and the novel hard drive, a Cadillac internal storage device that held an inexhaustible 20 megabytes of programs and data. I had such a stallion of a machine, which I had to modify by adding an external disk drive so it could handle both the five-and-a-quarter- and the three-and-a-half-inch floppy diskettes that our authors were sending in. (There I drew the line, thank you. No eight-inch diskettes.)

Operating systems were beginning to settle down into the recognizable monopolies, but there was still

lots of variability in word processing software. Manuscripts were composed and submitted on Perfect Writer, WordStar, MultiMate, Scripsit, DisplayWrite, Leading Edge, MacWrite, Apple Writer, and other long-forgotten retro-code, all passionately defended by their champions. Most of these could be stripped down to DOS text pretty easily, but there were still stubborn cases of translation that required begging at the door of local gurus and cognoscenti. I personally used WordPerfect in composing the journal. All that was needed otherwise was a basic understanding of DOS command language to move files around and that sort of thing.

The formatting code we had to enter on each manuscript was another matter altogether. I recall a long tutoring session with Vin Steponaitis as he tried to explain it to me. Each paragraph indent, each instance of boldface or underline, each centered heading, each inserted space, et cetera, required a special series of keystrokes inserted by the editor. This code took some getting used to. Screwing it up had dire consequences. You ran the risk of having the proof copy returned from Allen Press looking like some maniacal ransom note.

I say all this not to gripe but merely to chronicle. Going the way of electronic submission was a smart move, and we were way ahead of the game as compared to our sister journals.

SEAC membership was growing by leaps and bounds in the late 1980s, but the rate of manuscript submission was still touch and go. Every annual report to the membership included a plea for more submissions. This disconnect between membership and rate of submission had to do mainly with our competition. For at that moment, publishing in the field of southeastern archaeology was undergoing a revolution. Scholarly presses were getting into the act in a big way. Competing with each other, they were publishing edited collections of symposium papers, festschrifts, and dissertations as fast as they could acquire them. This was a major change: Book publishing in southeastern archaeology had been infrequent, difficult, and beyond the imagining of most of our membership prior to the 1980s. In addition, research series were beginning to get their act together and were publishing even more collections of papers, a good example being the *Archaeological Report* series of the Mississippi Department of Archives and History. The result was the emergence of a trend that is still with us. Far more worthy papers in our field were being published in edited collections than were being submitted to peer-reviewed journals.

By the end of my tenure as editor, our journal was ten years old and was clearly one of the best regional journals in the United States. The reach of our subject matter extended as far north as Cahokia (why did they ever think Cahokia was midwestern?) and as far south as the Caribbean. In 1990, I was pleased to publish our

first thematic issue as volume 9, number 1—a 50th-anniversary issue on “History and Theory in Southeastern Archaeology.” In retrospect, my only regret as editor is that our treasurer told me we didn’t have enough money to restore the correct colors to the unofficial SEAC logo on the cover. In its original incarnation as a t-shirt design, the logo was red on cream with black lettering. Since that design is my only lasting contribution to the journal, I secretly hope that one day the true color scheme will be restored.

R. P. Stephen Davis, Jr. (1990–1993)

When I got the telephone call from David Hally, asking if I would agree to serve as SEAC editor, I definitely experienced mixed emotions. First and foremost, I felt greatly honored that SEAC, through its representatives on the nominations committee, was willing to place its journal in my hands. On the other hand, I was more than a little bit apprehensive at the thought of taking on what I perceived to be a monumental task. I had served as editor of the North Carolina Archaeological Society’s *Southern Indian Studies* and was quite confident in that role; however, *Southeastern Archaeology* had become by then one of the premier regional journals in American archaeology, thanks to the efforts of Bill, Vin, and Jim, and theirs would be pretty big shoes to fill. What finally convinced me to accept David’s offer was a strong desire to contribute to SEAC and the knowledge that my predecessors, particularly Vin and Jim, would offer sage advice when asked. It also helped that Vin’s office was a mere 60 feet from mine and he knew the typesetting code inside and out. Being his usual efficient self, Vin also had written down a step-by-step guide to editing the journal, an invaluable tool.

By the time I became editor, SEAC’s financial situation was fairly healthy and the flow of incoming manuscripts, while not overwhelming, was sufficient to meet the specified quota of about 160 pages per year. Thus, I did not have to be overly concerned about how I would fill the next issue or how to pay for it. Instead, I worked to get *Southeastern Archaeology* on a regular publication schedule, with issues being mailed to the membership in June and December. This sounds fairly simple, yet it required meeting a sequence of deadlines related to reviewing submitted manuscripts, making final edits, sending coded electronic files to Allen Press, perusing galley proofs, and so on. Also, there was still the nagging concern that the flow of submissions might fall below an acceptable level. Fortunately, this potential problem never materialized, and I was able to pass on to Ken enough accepted manuscripts for most of his first issue, just as Jim had gotten me started with my first issue.

Perhaps my most positive recollection about my time as editor was the ample good advice and assistance that I received from colleagues. On Jim’s recommendation,

one of my first decisions as editor was to create the position of associate editor for book reviews. I asked Randy Daniel to fill this position, and he did a wonderful job. I looked to another friend, Cliff Boyd, to be associate editor for the *Newsletter*. He too did a superb job and must have enjoyed it, because he continued in that position through Ken’s editorship! Finally, I never had to worry about back issue sales with Eugene Futato serving as associate editor for sales. In fact, Eugene has served so very capably and faithfully in that position for so long now that SEAC owes him a deep debt of gratitude.

Aside from my associate editors, I relied heavily on the judgment of the many anonymous reviewers who willingly gave their time to evaluate the 71 manuscripts that I received. Their fair and balanced reviews greatly assisted me with my most important and most difficult task as editor: deciding which submissions to accept for publication and which to reject. The acceptance rate during my tenure was about 60 percent.

Finally, like all “good” archaeologists, I conceptualize my editorship as being composed of three phases: early, middle, and late. During the early phase, I was still learning the ropes and generally full of fear that I might screw up. During the middle phase, emboldened by knowledge and experience, I became cocky and confident that I could do this job forever. By the late phase, however, I was ready to step down, thankful that my term was coming to an end and looking forward to passing the sacred Ajax Force Automatic Numbering Machine to Ken Sassaman. While just one in an increasingly long line of editors, I am truly grateful that I had the opportunity to serve SEAC in such a meaningful way.

Kenneth Sassaman (1993–1996)

One day in early 1992, I read that SEAC was seeking nominees for various offices, like it does every year. I had just retired from a 12-year stint as graduate student and was lucky that the folks at the Savannah River Archaeological Research Program (SRARP) didn’t mind having me around. I was young, impetuous, and plenty stupid to volunteer for any assignment that might have even a remote chance of advancing my career. That’s how I had come to be editor of *South Carolina Antiquities* a couple years earlier. The Archaeological Society of South Carolina’s (ASSC) journal had fallen three years behind schedule when I took over. Needless to say, the line of would-be editors was rather short, and the ASSC board was happy to accept my offer to help. When I gave up the journal nine years later, it was still three years behind, but at least we did not lose additional ground. On balance, the experience was great: I learned how to copyedit manuscripts, paste-up copy, and negotiate with printers. I even got to throw in a few of my half-baked papers to fill out some thin issues.

Respectable though it was for a state journal, *South Carolina Antiquities* was no *Southeastern Archaeology*. In its first decade of life, SEAC's journal had gained the quality and respect of a national journal. Its editors were among the top scholars in the field, experienced and wise. What in the world made me think I could follow in their footsteps? The hubris of youth? Perhaps. More likely it was sheer ignorance. Whatever the reason, I remember sitting down one Monday morning in 1992 at my little Macintosh composing a letter to Bill Margardt, then chair of SEAC's Nominations Committee. In it I recounted my vast experience in editing and vowed to abide by exacting standards, timeliness, and professionalism. I may have even thrown in some window dressing about my Protestant work ethic. I was surprised when the committee put forward my nomination.

In point of fact, the committee was willing to entertain the self-nomination of a greenhorn because of the institutional support I enjoyed. Mark Brooks and Bruce Rippeteau were very generous bosses. I was given all the time I needed to work on the journal and had unlimited access to phones, postage, photocopying, and courier services. Mark even approved a budget request for a new computer, a 386 Windows machine. Because so many of the contributors and my editorial predecessors used Windows, our beloved Macintoshes wouldn't cut it. None of this cost SEAC a cent, enabling me to get all issues out under budget. These days, with deep financial reserves, SEAC is able to subsidize editorial efforts. Through my editorship, the journal and its editors had to count on the support of home institutions. I was fortunate to be employed by one that could afford to help.

I was also fortunate that the journal was in such great shape when I took over. Steve Davis taught me the arcane language of text coding, and supplied me with a batch of papers, some ready for press and others still under review. After toiling over copy for days, I felt confident that my first issue (Volume 13, Number 1) was free of error. I was horrified to learn shortly after its release that I had somehow cut references from a paper by Paul Welch on the Bessemer site. Among them was the seminal work by DeJarnette and Wimberly, as well as one by James B. Griffin himself. I learned two lessons that first issue: (1) check the list of references not once but twice, and (2) if you are going to embarrass yourself, try not to involve Jimmy Griffin.

Certainly the great moments and rewards outweigh the mistakes. Far and away the top highlight of my three years as editor was the Archaic mounds volume. Until that time I had little knowledge of the burgeoning evidence for such early mound construction in Louisiana and Florida. Just before his term expired, Steve Davis had begun the peer review process on a set of papers submitted by Mike Russo and colleagues. It was left to me to complete the review process, copyedit the

papers, finalize the figures, and code the text. I had a ball with it. The papers were compelling and thought provoking, and I came to appreciate that this issue of the journal would literally redefine the Archaic Southeast. Since then the evidence for Archaic mounds has grown stronger, owing largely to the work of Joe Saunders and colleagues. We now see patterning in the placement of mounds that suggests the use of a sophisticated measurement and surveying calculus. There are also clues that mound complexes may be emblematic of social organization, encoding the cultural logic for hierarchy that would later become the rationale for institutions of the Southeast's great chiefdoms. Indeed, Archaic mounds in the Southeast inspired new ways of thinking about cultural complexity among nonagricultural societies, and their discovery was widely publicized first in the pages of *Southeastern Archaeology*. It was gratifying to have a small hand in that.

Robert C. Mainfort, Jr. (1996–1999)

Under Ken Sassaman's leadership, the average length of the journal increased from about 80 to well over 100 pages. Unfortunately, this growth trend did not continue during my term as editor. Despite a decrease in number of submissions, however, the average journal length remained about 100 pages, in no small part due to Lynne Sullivan's outstanding efforts as associate editor for book reviews.

Perhaps the most noteworthy development during my editorship was that we (my editorial assistant Lindi Holmes and I) began composing the journal in-house using PageMaker. Prior to this time, SEAC contracted with Allen Press to handle this. Handling composition ourselves provided an additional measure of control, as well as flexibility, over the appearance of the journal. Although some board members initially expressed concerns about this decision, publication of my first issue largely laid those to rest. Of course, it is not incumbent on the editor of *Southeastern Archaeology* to compose the journal in-house, but Greg Waselkov chose to do so with excellent results.

At the urging of Jim Knight, I spent a fair amount of time tracking down and requesting a number of index and abstract services to include *Southeastern Archaeology* in their listings. The results of this appear at the bottom of the inside front cover. Having the journal indexed or abstracted by a number of services increases the visibility of the journal and makes our research more easily accessible to a wider audience. An academic benchmark that the journal has yet to achieve is a listing in the *Social Science Citation Index*; articles listed in SSCI typically are given the greatest weight in the faculty review process.

I upgraded the manuscript evaluation form, eliminating the older carbon-copy version that had to be

completed on a typewriter. The current one is styled after the review form used by *American Antiquity* and ensures that all submitted papers are rated on a number of specific points.

What exactly does the editor do? Well, the editor edits the journal. But, in fact, the editor's responsibilities include keeping track of incoming manuscripts and outgoing and incoming copies from reviewers, as well as soliciting manuscripts, selecting reviewers, ensuring that reviews are completed in a timely manner, working with authors to produce a final draft, dealing with the unpleasantness of informing an author that her or his work has not been approved for publication, and working with Allen Press to produce the journal itself.

But what of actual editing? An overarching theme that emerges from the numerous published volumes on editing is that the primary responsibility of an editor is to help the author present her or his work to the intended audience in the best possible way. I took this philosophy very much to heart in preparing papers for publication. Good ideas may not be expressed clearly, and good writing does not always equate with attention to editorial details. Graphics, photos, and tables do not always convey the information intended. These are all areas in which an editor can make a difference. And, of course, there are such basic matters as ensuring that all cited works appear in the bibliography and that all items in the bibliography appear in the text.

I would like to extend my utmost gratitude to Ms. Lindi Holmes of the Arkansas Archeological Survey, who not only did an excellent job of composing the journal in PageMaker but also contributed her organizational skills to journal operations.

Gregory A. Waselkov (1999–2002)

Before my editorship began, when I was still contemplating whether or not to take on this daunting service for SEAC, I called Bob Mainfort and asked him how much time his editorial duties required each week. He replied that he set aside every Friday afternoon for journal-related matters. That didn't seem too bad. Soon after my term as editor began, I realized that, of course, every previous editor must have spent many hundreds of hours on the journal beyond whatever schedules they might have hoped to maintain. But SEAC must find a new editor every three years, and full disclosure might unnecessarily discourage potential candidates, who will love the job once they immerse themselves in it. So I can't blame Bob for painting a rosy picture for me. In fact, I can't thank him and SEAC too much for the opportunity to edit our outstanding regional journal.

As I worked with authors, seeing their creations through the review process and in many cases on to revision and copyediting and proofs of layouts, I grappled with the several ways one could approach the role of

editor. Should I be a gatekeeper and demonstrate my concern for high standards of professional publishing with a correspondingly high rate of manuscript rejection? This is, after all, the guiding paradigm for national and international journals in our discipline. With fewer than 20 manuscript submissions in 1999, however, adopting such an approach for *Southeastern Archaeology* probably would have meant the end of our journal. Apart from such pragmatic considerations, though, I found that I disagreed with the basic premise: that rejection, frequently administered, is the best—maybe the only—way to maintain a high-quality journal.

Peer reviewers are remarkably effective, by and large, at identifying an author's evidentiary or logical failings and charting a course correction. In fact, few reviewers recommend outright rejection (though when they did, I rejected the submission rather than second-guess the reviewers). Just as there may be "no bad kids," SEAC peer reviewers seem to think there are few irreparable manuscripts. This was an editorial paradigm I could embrace, to work with authors to improve their articles when our colleagues deemed improvement possible. SEAC members have lots of great ideas, but they don't always express those ideas well, or as persuasively as they might. My editorial efforts have been aimed principally at improving each author's presentation of ideas, data, and inferences. Once excess verbiage is stripped away, unfortunate word choices are rectified, and a logical sequence of arguments is reestablished, an author's original accomplishments stand revealed for debate and discussion. While much of this could be considered copyediting, a wide range of archaeological experiences is essential, I think, to do it well. Contributions to *Southeastern Archaeology* get a lot of editorial attention—more, I suspect, than their counterparts at many other journals.

Submitted illustrations often need editorial assistance as well. Since financial constraints have never allowed for universal redrafting that would impose a single style for *Southeastern Archaeology*, this assistance has often been limited to corrections of outright errors. It isn't unusual to find a different style of scale or north arrow in each figure of a single article. One ill-conceived bar graph that leaps to mind required readers to discriminate between eight subtle variations of gray—several more than the eye can readily distinguish. The opportunities for improvement are endless, of course. Because I (like Bob Mainfort) did journal layout on a desktop computer, my considerable control over the outcome was constrained mostly by the time available between final submission from the author and the publication deadline.

At the end of my three-year editorship, I am pleased that the submission rate has increased to nearly 40 manuscripts in 2002, a jump apparently attributable to a renewed popularity of thematic collections. I wish

more graduate programs would emphasize proficiency in technical writing and illustrating. And I wish Lynne Sullivan great success with *Southeastern Archaeology*, keeping this excellent journal at the heart of SEAC.

Notes

Acknowledgements. We, the former journal editors, collectively wish to thank our associate editors for their invaluable help in

keeping SEAC's publications program healthy and strong. The *Newsletter* editors with whom we served were David H. Dye (1976–84), Gerald F. Schroedl (1984–87), Mary Lucas Powell (1987–90), C. Clifford Boyd (1990–96), Gregory A. Waselkov (1996–99), Jeffrey L. Hantman (1999–2000), and Jane M. Eastman (2000–present). Our associate editors for book reviews were I. Randolph Daniel (1991–93), Lynne P. Sullivan (1993–99), and Kristen Gremillion (1999–2002). And our associate editor for sales was, and still is, Eugene Futato (1986–present).