

DRAFT - SHA Annual Conference Public Outreach Guidelines

Submitted for Public Education Committee and Conference Organizer review, 11/29/00,
by Mark Wilde-Ramsing based on the David Clark's original draft.

MISSION STATEMENT: An SHA Public Outreach Program at annual conferences held by the Society for Historical Archaeology conveys a willingness of members to engage the community in the field of historical archaeology. The public is drawn into the excitement of archaeological discovery and enlightened on the importance of protecting, preserving, and conserving our historical archaeological resources, now and for the future. Community members are brought to realize that their rich historic past surrounds them. From family histories to national treasures, their archaeological and historic heritage is part of our everyday life. Yet these valuable cultural resources are constantly endangered. This program explores the historic past through historical archaeology, encourages the community to understand, value, and participate in preserving our historic past, and exemplifies how we can build community support and promote historic preservation and archaeological research. The underlying theme, is "a knowledgeable public is a supportive public".

PROGRAM GOALS: Considering the program mission, a number of important goals are implicit:

1. To demonstrate how Historical Archaeology is used to study and help preserve our historic heritage by answering the basic questions of how archaeology is done, what is found, how remains are studied/nterpreted, and how the community may participate in this work and become involved in preservation efforts. The SHA Community Open House is designed to accomplished these goals using a wide variety interactive exhibits and displays, speaker-slide presentations, and information about volunteer opportunities in research and preservation.
2. To design specific programs for educators, especially teachers since they reach a large number of students (and Parents), maximizing our efforts in public outreach. Instructional information is provided for teaching historical archaeology at the precollegiate level, which is meshed with pre-existing curricula. SHA Teacher Workshops and the SHA Community Open House are used for this purpose.
3. To initiate communication between community members and professional archaeologist's through workshops, school programs, public archaeology projects, and, the annual SHA outreach program. With increased interest, individuals will be encouraged to join professional organizations (SHA, SAA, etc.) and/or archaeological societies, participate in cultural resource preservation efforts, etc.
4. To encourage community members, schools, civic groups, organizations, etc., to participate in volunteer programs associated with archaeology and/or preservation projects.

5. To encourage SHA members to visit and participate in the SHA Community Open House to promote historical archaeology with the community, share ideas about public outreach and provide feedback to the Public Education Committee.

PLANNING AND PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION: Valuable experience has been derived from annual public programs held at each of the five annual conferences since 1996 (Cincinnati). Because conference members represent some of the most exciting research being conducted in archaeology, SHA Public Outreach Programs are able to attract and reach thousands of people from conference host communities. This exposure can greatly benefit the local preservation efforts, provide exposure for SHA, and in general, promote historic archaeology. To be most affective planning is vital for a successful public outreach program and should be closely coordinated between the conference organizers and members of the SHA Public Education Committee. The SHA Public Outreach Program is a major program of the Committee and members take an active role in organizing and presenting the SHA Community Open House and SHA Teacher Workshop. To facilitate the planning and completion of a successful annual program between conference organizers and the committee, the following steps are recommended:

1. A person should be designated as public (popular) session chair to coordinate conference public outreach activities.
2. Conference organizers should observe public session activities as they take place at the conference prior to theirs to determine what kind of format best fits their area.
3. SHA Public Education Committee members and conference organizers should develop a proposed public outreach program and implementation strategy for SHA board approval during the spring meeting.
4. Implementation should begin early and be comprehensive.

PUBLIC OUTREACH PROGRAM PROCEDURES: While public outreach should be flexible to meet the needs of each region these procedures will provide a framework from which each conference's Public Outreach Program can be developed. These SHA outreach programs should consist of two parts: a SHA Community Open House for the general public and a SHA Teacher Workshop.

SHA Community Open-House Overview

The SHA Community Open House should present a variety of exhibits and displays, speaker presentations and augmented activities. The archaeological activities give participants hands-on opportunities to examine archaeological materials commonly found at historical sites, view excavation/analytical techniques, hear professional archaeologist's discuss their research projects and learn about participation in cultural resource preservation efforts. The presentations are short highlights of historical archaeology projects of local, national and educational interest, while presentations (generally in the form of slide programs) exemplify community volunteer and

educational projects "in action". They also show the wide age-range of individuals from senior citizens to elementary school students that can participate in Historical Archaeology. The session promotes interaction between professionals and community members, stimulating interest and generating volunteer opportunities on archaeological projects, as well as creating a core of preservation minded individuals.

SHA Community Open-House Organization

The SHA Community Open House traditionally includes periods for both public interaction with activities/exhibits and speaker presentations.

Activities/Exhibits - The exhibits are presented on a series of tables showing artifact types (pottery, metalwares, faunal remains), analytical techniques (flotation, microscope), educational activities (artifact games, teaching aids), educational materials (art, letters) showing examples of student classwork, and displays of archaeological/preservation organizations. Professionals should man the exhibit booths to encourage public interaction and answer questions.

To emphasize the use of historic documents in historical archaeological research, a gallery exhibit of historic photos/documents using conference themes has been displayed with great success. Local historical societies, museums and archaeologists have been very cooperative in providing archive materials for this display.

Art and writings from elementary school archaeological programs have been exhibited on walls and tables during the Community Open House as examples of student interpretations of classroom archaeology programs and give the conference room an archaeological "atmosphere". Door prizes and raffles can heighten the enjoyment for the public participants.

Speaker Presentations - Speakers presenting 15-20 minute, non-technical programs covering the site history, excavation, artifacts, and community participation. A six-speaker format has been most successful providing the audience a range of local and national projects and a cross-section of educational/ teaching initiatives in Historical Archaeology. Program activities can also include very popular re-enactor presentations and mini-sessions focusing on specific subjects such as underwater scuba equipment, analytical techniques (flotation, etc.), and specific archaeological excavations. While public presentations are not considered formal papers and thus do not require registration fees, in the past speakers have been asked to submit abstracts to be printed in the SHA conference bulletin.

Community Open-House Schedule and Needs

1. A block of time should be scheduled for the SHA Community Open House segment of the program. Based on past response, Saturday afternoon (12-4 PM), as a non-work day, is the most convenient for parents, senior citizens, and the general public.
2. Two alternative exhibit/speaker formats have been employed: Exhibit activities, speakers (3), intermission/activities, speakers (3); or exhibit activities and speaker program conducted simultaneously in separate, but adjoining rooms.

3. A large room or two small, partitioned, adjoining rooms with 150+ seating capacity.
4. The rooms must be available prior to the start of the SHA Community Open House to prepare/assemble exhibits, etc. This usually takes 2 to 3 hours.
5. The usual audio-visual equipment is needed for the speaker area (slide projector).
6. A concluding reception, recognizing all participants, has been part of the public session in the past. However, due to cost factors, this segment has necessarily become optional.

SHA Community Open House Pre-program Outreach

Outreach for the SHA Community Open House should focus on the general public, educators (especially teachers), and organized groups. The media (newspapers, radio, TV) can successfully attract members of the community. Outreach has been aimed at a variety of avocational, youth and service groups. The most common are:

1. Archaeological Societies- These are state-organized groups with large memberships and annual newsletters, and are very active in volunteerism at many SHA conferences. Each chapter is contacted by flyer and Public Session information is distributed in periodic newsletters. Local chapters usually set-up tables at the session with information about membership, activities, volunteerism, and cultural resource preservation projects.
2. Boy/Girl Scouts and 4-H Clubs- These groups represent large numbers of young community members interested in history and preservation. The scouts have initiated merit badges in archaeology. Administrators and troop leaders are usually contacted, but scouts are also encouraged to attend- The groups are solicited through their statewide organizations and announcements are published periodically in newsletters.
3. Historic preservation groups- These private or government historic/preservation minded agencies often attend SHA conferences. They are solicited by phone/flyer and session information is often distributed in their newsletters.
4. Historical and Genealogical Societies- Efforts to invite these groups is important because of shared interests with archaeologists: material culture, historical architecture, cultural resource preservation, work with archival documents, and archival repositories.

SHA Teacher Workshops Overview

The involvement of educators (administrators, teachers, staff) in the SHA Public Outreach Program is a major priority. Teachers (public and private school) are a special focus because they interact directly with large segments of the community (students, parents) and they are organized

in large numbers, statewide. During the SHA Teacher Workshops, educators learn the importance of preserving our historic heritage, how historical archaeologists* s unlock and study the past and how they can integrate this information with their school curricula. Their students represent the future as a powerful group of voters and supporters of Historical Archaeology programs. Weekday workshops provide the details of historical archaeology and heritage preservation. Teachers have an opportunity to apply this information during the SHA Community Open-House session. Workshops, usually held on a weekday (Wednesday), should be advertised in school system Staff/Professional Development Bulletins and have been designed for staff development or college credit.

These programs have been very successful in the past. Teachers have been overwhelmed by the wide variety of available information that could be integrated with their school curricula. Since the Atlanta conference, questionnaires' have been distributed to attendees and the response has been excellent. Teachers have almost unanimously agreed on the programs tremendous success and all would support the following programs:

- Archaeologists visiting their schools
- Field trips to on-going archaeology projects or exhibits
- Archaeology workshops
- Volunteer opportunities
- Participation in historic preservation projects

SHA Teacher Workshop Outreach

SHA Teacher Workshops should be organized through local museums in conjunction with their educational outreach personnel. Their staff is generally eager to help as long as programs are planned in advance. Developing contacts with local museums and their program/educational specialists are invaluable when compiling initial school/teacher invitation lists. Most have lists of educators and other frequent visitors that might be interested in archaeology. Museums also have public relations specialists that might lend assistance or at least have advice on advertising. They are usually happy to include program announcements in their newsletters and often encourage decent/staff personnel to attend. Museums also conduct many types of workshops and may assist in organizing SHA Teacher Workshop for conferences. The ways and means of contacting/inviting teachers include the following:

1. Requesting school lists from local superintendent's office. Program announcement flyers are sent to select schools addressed to principals and/or specialty teachers: science, social studies, history, etc.
2. Local museums, etc. have lists of schools commonly using their facilities.
3. Session announcements are listed in school system Staff/Professional Development Bulletins.
4. Teacher/school lists are gathered from local archaeologist's conducting public education programs.

5. Announcements are published in the newsletters of special educator organizations: Federation of Principals, Association of Elementary (High/Middle) School Teachers, Association of Social Studies (Science, History) Teachers, etc. There are also many associations for retired educators. All have large memberships from the local area,

SHA PUBLIC SESSION PUBLICITY: Advertising the annual SHA Public Outreach Programs is a major element of the program success. Outreach program organizers should use local media including newspapers, radio, and TV. The SHA usually advertises just prior to the conference, but contacts for the SHA Public Outreach Program session should be initiated weeks or sometimes months in advance. Newspaper announcements should appear in educational, special events, history and "weekend" news sections. Special city entertainment guides (lively arts) are an excellent source of advertising, publishing both announcements of the impending SHA Public Outreach Program and SHA Teacher Workshop. Many counties/townships have special regional newspapers that publish announcements. Radio "Public Service Announcements" have also been successful in the past. Some newspapers and radio stations are willing to run segments during which archaeologists are interviewed prior to the conference to heighten public interest. TV newspaper reporters should be encouraged to visit the Community Open House to interview attendees, archaeologists and organizers and therefore, present post-event coverage. As noted, museum staffs are usually willing to assist with advertising and will publish information in their newsletters. Various professional organizations will also include announcements in their periodic newsletters.

SHA CONFERENCE ARCHAEOLOGISTS: The participation of SHA archaeologists plays a vital role in supporting the Society's educational outreach efforts. Members should be encouraged to visit the SHA Community Open House, interact with the public, provide feedback on the program and perhaps, share some of their successes with public education/outreach.

The conference luncheons are another means for archaeologists to share their ideas and experiences about public education and outreach, and should a part of each conference.

SHA WEB SITE: Announcements for the SHA Community Open House and SHA Teacher Workshop on the SHA Web page are an important way for members and the public to learn about the events. If possible, the SHA conference organizing committee should include details of the annual SHA Public Outreach Program on the conference Web page.

SHA PUBLIC OUTREACH PROGRAM SUPPORT: SHA conference organizers are in the best position to solicit funding and in-kind support from the local community. Since these outreach efforts involve education of the local public and are highly visible, raising funds to sponsor the event can be attractive to community organizations and businesses. Funding costs are needed to provide the room and equipment to conduct the SHA Community Open House and SHA Teacher Workshop, and whenever possible, beverages and light foods for program participants. There is a need for volunteers, who can play an important role in nearly all aspects of planning and implementing the SHA Public Outreach Program.