

Editorial

## "The End!" (A Personal Statement)

I have had the extreme good fortune during the majority of my adult years to simultaneously have three professional careers. In 1967 I began a yet ongoing, fulltime career as a college then university professor where my awards, rewards, and personal accomplishments have exceeded that which any person deserves. Being a successful educator completely fulfilled my personal life goals. The education career I have experienced should have satiated my appetite or anybody's appetite for success. Instead, it seemed too easy, and after a time the challenge diminished, although my success as an educator has steadily risen. I still enjoy the students and the classroom and really appreciate the new technology available to educators!

When the field of contract archaeology, better known today as cultural resource management, opened in the mid 1970s, I established National Pike West Associates (June 1977). A few months later, in November 1977, I incorporated the business as NPW Consultants, Inc. The business was an immediate success, to my great surprise. I had never had any business training and had never enrolled in a single business-related course. Faculty colleagues from the Economics, Business, and Management Department at the university, whom I had enlisted to help me develop the business because of their experience in operating successful businesses, quickly let me know that I no longer needed their help. These colleagues along with friends in the business community and upper management personnel I began to work with as corporate clients continuously praised the work and professional ethics of the company and complimented us as to our understanding of business protocol, sound business practices, and dedication to meeting client needs. The gracious words even came from state review agencies. At one point I was asked by the chair of the University Economics, Business, and Management Department

to teach first-year accounting courses. At first I thought he was joking, but he was not. (I never attempted to teach the courses.) Several large national corporate clients requested that I teach cultural resource seminars to their middle and upper management. Jealousy also sometimes existed within the CRM community because NPW received many sole-source contracts from large corporations.

Finally, in 1998, I closed the business, not because of declining revenue or loss of clients but because of too much success. I will never forget the first year that our gross receipts topped \$500,000. The corporation was closed so I could "recover my life" and have time to sleep. Owning and managing NPW Consultants was initially a challenge and great fun, but by the late 1980s running the business had become dull and the work repetitive. "Hands on" operating the company, from keeping the books, processing payroll, making Internal Revenue Service deposits to partly preparing the corporate taxes, immensely broadened my understanding of management practices. Almost everything about owning the business was rewarding, but one of the greatest joys was being able, nearly exclusively, to employ California University students and graduates as field archaeologists, crew leaders, and project supervisors.

My editing career began in 1972 when my then university department chair talked me into allowing him to place my name in nomination for the vacant editorship of the prestigious state journal of the Society for Pennsylvania Archaeology—*Pennsylvania Archaeologist*. Much to my surprise and near embarrassment, the society board of directors selected me editor from a list of several persons. Why I still do not know, although I suspect my department chair was effective at lobbying the directors. I did not have the slightest idea what an archaeology journal editor did! Fortunately, a former editor for the society was nearby, in Pittsburgh, and he was willing to help the neophyte. P. Schuyler Miller was professionally responsible for preparing a two-inch-thick catalog for a scientific company, and his help saved my hide. Shortly after accepting the editing duty, I received a manuscript from a "regional giant" in eastern North

American archaeology. I was flattered, but the paper was an editorial nightmare. I was petrified at the idea of telling the author what I thought of his writing and remember calling historical archaeologist Jim Fitting, who was still working in Michigan. I asked Jim, from his editorial experience, how he would suggest I handle the situation. His response was that there was only one choice. Use my heavy, but shaky, editorial hand and copyedit the paper. I followed his advice and prepared the most humble letter I could write to the author. Shortly, I received a revised manuscript and a return letter profusely thanking me for my editorial effort. The author noted that writing was not his strength and that he really appreciated the time I had spent improving on his prose.

What a relief! So began my editing career. I made many trips to the California University print shop to talk to the resident printer, John Cumashot, who became a great friend and taught me much of what I know about layout and printing, but I had confidence I could be an editor. I remained editor for the Society for Pennsylvania Archaeology for slightly more than 20 years, through 1992.

A few years after I became editor for *Pennsylvania Archaeologist*, representatives from two other organizations approached me, inviting me to be their editor. I was editor of *Northeast Historical Archaeology* from 1976–1979 and the *Eastern States Archeological Federation Bulletin* from 1976–1978. I do not know if I was invited to be their editors because they were pleased with my work or they were desperate to find an editor. About all I remember about editing those publications was that they were each behind schedule in publishing, and I worked to setting an on-time publication schedule. In each instance, when I resigned as editor, the journals were being published on schedule.---

By the late 1970s I realized that I likely could have a greater impact on my profession as an editor than I would as a researcher and writer. Further, editing was absorbing so much of my time that my research efforts were suffering. In very early 1978 I learned that the office of editor for The Society for Historical Archaeology was vacant. Again with the encouragement of my university department chair, who was extremely supportive of my editing effort through setting my teaching schedules and

assigning me university duties, I applied for the position. Jim Ayres, who has since for many years been a good friend, was the past president of the society and Kathleen Gilmore was the president. Jim was chairing the Editor Search Committee. I gathered together examples of my editing and penned a letter indicating my interest in the post and brashly why I thought I would make a good editor. Apparently, Jim and the committee took my letter and work at face value and did not realize how naïve I was about how I was thoroughly prepared and skilled to be the SHA editor.

I attended my first board meeting as the SHA editor in Tucson, Arizona, in April 1978, a mid-year board meeting held in conjunction with the Society for American Archaeology annual meeting. Intimidation was what I can best remember of that experience. I was sitting in a room with many of the "name" players in historical archaeology. I knew who the people were, I had read material they had written, and I had met a few of them, but now I was stuck. I had to deliver! A month or two after that meeting a large box was delivered to my home. It was filled with yet to be reviewed manuscripts! The year was 1978 and the last published journal was for 1976. I had less than six months to prepare two journals for publication so I could appear at the next annual meeting of the society. Realizing the mess I was in, I quickly resigned my editorship with the Eastern States Archeological Federation and readied the last volume of *Northeast Historical Archaeology* that I would edit for printing.

I began my SHA editing work with Ron Carlisle as my associate editor. Together, we produced the required two journals before the end of 1978, and I was "allowed" to attend the January 1979 board meeting of the society. Ron and I worked together producing *Historical Archaeology* for eight years, until other commitments forced him to resign. Fortunately, Donna Seifert agreed to become my associate editor and together we worked hard to produce the journal and keep it published as scheduled. Through this experience we also developed a wonderful friendship. The long association began in 1986, with Donna continuing to work as an associate editor through 1999. By then the journal had been expanded, first, to a twice-yearly publication and, shortly thereafter, to a quarterly publication. When Donna resigned because of other profes-

sional obligations, including offices in SHA and SAA, the editorial staff of *Historical Archaeology* had grown to 13 persons.

The one constant for the first 19 years of my being society editor was Rick Sprague, my reviews editor. He had just become reviews editor when I was appointed editor, and the one smart thing I did was ask him to remain in the position. Through the years, Rick has been my mentor, peer, and great friend. I know of no other person who has given of himself so willingly to create, support, champion, and serve the society! To me, of all the persons who have freely given of themselves to the SHA, nobody has given more than Rick.

Editing for SHA would not have been possible without the dedicated help of my editorial staff. It has been an incredibly serious and resilient group of peers, who have volunteered untold hours of their life to help produce the premier scholarly journal in their professional field, historical archaeology. I fear that I may miss listing someone, but I want to thank Ron Carlisle, Donna Seifert, Rick Sprague, Vergil Noble, Kathleen Gilmore, Glenn Farris, Don Hardesty, Dan Roberts, Bill Turnbaugh, Jim Ayres, Barto Arnold, Bonnie McEwan, Judy Tordoff, Annalies Corbin, Mike Rodeffer, Sarah Turnbaugh, Julie King, Bill Lees, Denise Lakey, Rebecca Allen, Charlie Ewen, LouAnn Wurst, Rod Mather, Terry Majewski, Greg Waselkov, Audrey Horning, and Joe Joseph. Eventually, it became an impossible task for Donna Seifert and me to totally produce the journal, and the society contracted for the services of a professional copy editor. Each of these contractors worked hard for the society, and if not already a friend, they quickly assumed that status. I would like to thank Sarah Turnbaugh, Rick Sprague, and Marianne Brokaw for the great job they have done and their professionalism toward the society.

No list of acknowledgments would be complete without recognizing the long-standing and extensive support given me by California University of Pennsylvania. More than one-half of the years I had a quarter-time load reduction, and for another about five years I was allowed a one-eighth-time load reduction to aid in my being the society editor. Additionally, I have no idea as to the dollar figure for telephone calls, postage, secretarial support, etc. the university invested in the

SHA. I do know that their investment totals more than a quarter-million dollars.

In addition to my editorial staff and California University, I owe a big thank you to my family for tolerating my passion of editing. My wife, Diana, often tells friends that there are few days when she comes home when I am not talking on the telephone to someone concerning SHA business. Clearly, she will now expect to receive my undivided attention when she walks in the door!

I probably never will understand why or how I have been able to live three simultaneous professional careers. It has been fun, and I have no regrets. I have never forgotten the comment of one of my department chairpersons at California University, Phil R. Jack, who was a highly respected senior faculty member known for having a wide range of interests. I was probably 29 years of age when one afternoon he came into the archaeology laboratory and asked, "How can you know so much about so many things and be so young?" I shrugged off his question, although with the passage of time I have often thought about what he asked. About the time I closed NPW Consultants I was facing some emotional changes in my life, and it was then, for the first time, that I truly realized how blessed I am to have had the ability to have so successfully experienced three simultaneous careers. I now understand that at times some of my behavior may have seemed to others as cold, without compassion, and demanding. If I have seemed that way to you, I apologize— that is not how I meant my actions. It is sometimes difficult for me to accept why others are not constantly motivated to excel to a high level, and at times I have difficulty comprehending why things that I see as simple are so difficult for some people. What I know is that I have had a great professional life, and I would recommend it to others. If it is the life for you and you "want it," make the commitment.

It is now time for my tenure as the SHA editor to end. I leave a proud person, knowing that I have been able to serve and influence my profession in a way that I would never dreamed possible. I am able to leave a legacy of 27 years of *Historical Archaeology* and numerous other publications that I have edited for The Society for Historical Archaeology. I am able to call a large collection of wonderful people

my friends, and I have been able to provide many persons an opportunity to publish their research. What greater gift could I be given! I have been able to treat students, avocationalists, and professional archaeologists alike as authors, and that is an accomplishment for which I am pleased. Thank you, all members of the society, for giving me such a grand opportunity to serve you and my profession. It is a gift I will cherish forever.

I have edited, because of production schedules, the next several issues of *Historical Archaeology*, but as of early January 2005 Rebecca Allen will be the SHA editor. We have had 16 months to affect the transaction. Be assured that she has the required tools—capability, commitment, and desire—to be a fine editor. If you support her like you have supported me, I am confident you will be pleased with her decisions and actions.

THE END!

RONN MICHAEL, EDITOR  
THE SOCIETY FOR HISTORICAL ARCHAEOLOGY