

BOOK REVIEWS

The Archaeology Education Handbook: Sharing the Past with Kids

Edited by KAROLYN SMARDZ and SHELLEY J. SMITH

Altamira Press, 2000. 447 pp. illus., apps., refs. Price: ISBN 0-7425-0253-8, (Pb) \$34.95 US; ISBN 0-7425-0252-X, (Cloth) \$75.00 US

The editors of *The Archaeology Education Handbook: Sharing the Past with Kids*, Karolyn Smardz and Shelley J. Smith, view archaeological education as a means to increase cultural heritage stewardship within the general public. Therefore, the book focuses primarily on education of grades K-12, a large "captive" audience with great influence on public attitudes. The editors compiled this volume to address a perceived lack of reference materials for archaeological educators, be they archaeologists (in the field or academia), classroom teachers, museum educators, etc.

Smardz and Smith bring together the experience of 34 archaeological educators to explore topics related to public archaeology, which inherently includes archaeological education. Twenty of the 34 authors have been involved with the Society for American Archaeology's Public Education Committee. Each educator has contributed a chapter to the book with individual chapters ranging in format from editorials or theoretical discussions to practical approaches in archaeological education.

This review presents a few major themes in the book and some of the issues concerning archaeological education raised by the authors. One theme is that the archaeologist is responsible for incorporating archaeology into the classroom primarily by providing educators with relevant teaching materials. Part I of the text explores topics related to the development of teaching materials including learning styles, children's cognitive and moral development, administration and funding in public schools, and curriculum standards.

To the contributors' credit, the information provided acts more as a navigational device within Canada's and the United State's school systems versus being minutiae that may become obsolete.

Another theme is that archaeological education is targeted to a diverse audience. Two chapters deal specifically with the heterogeneity (e.g., learning styles, mental and physical aptitudes, languages, ethnicities, etc.) within K-12 classroom audiences. Part III, "The Danger Zones: Issues in Teaching Archaeology," is partially devoted to the presentation of concepts that may run counter to personal beliefs such as science v. religion or the archaeological record v. oral tradition. Some of the writings imply that archaeological education is taught within the context of cultural relativism in order to manage this aspect of archaeological education. Considering the many theoretical perspectives adhered to by archaeologists when interpreting the archaeological record, this viewpoint seems simplistic. K. Anne Pyburn has her own misgivings. In her chapter, she includes a brief discussion regarding the danger of not distinguishing between cultural relativism and "ethical relativism." Debate, such as Pyburn's, over the politics inherent in cultural relativism is not going to end. A weakness in the book is that only brief mention is made of programs that failed due to inclusion of controversial topics. Learning what has not worked is often more beneficial than learning what has.

The perception of archaeology from those outside the profession is another thread running through the book. Within the discourse on public perception lies the debate regarding public excavation and how archaeologists often assist in the portrayal of archaeology as a treasure hunt. Does public excavation serve only to ingrain the image of the archaeologist as a digger while putting our cultural resources at risk? Three chapters are allocated to this topic each presenting a different approach (no excavation, simulated excavation, public excavation) for teaching ar-

chaeology. Even though one of the editors wrote the chapter promoting public excavation, readers are left to form their own opinion. Chapters 7 and 8 address the influence the media have on public perception by focusing on where teachers obtain their information on archaeology.

Assessment is another major theme. The editors advocate that we begin to assess if archaeological education has impacted the public's perception of archaeology and cultural stewardship. Are we focusing our efforts effectively? Chapter 13 takes a more fundamental approach by providing practical advice on how to assess educational programs. The lack of assessment of archaeological education programs is noticeable in the text. Chapters making mention of specific programs are written by insiders, those that developed and implemented the program. It would be beneficial to include the perspective of external observers.

The book raises issues that are relevant to any archaeologist, as those that do archaeological education by default deliver a message to the public regarding the entire profession. Peter Stone, in his introduction to Part IV, asks questions the archaeological profession must contend with, such as: will a more informed public want greater control over how archaeology is done? And assuming the former is true, how should archaeologists ensure the correct messages are communicated via public archaeology? These issues are not central to developing educational materials but are a required component of this book because they highlight effects of public archaeology not necessarily apparent to the educator.

The Archaeology Education Handbook touches upon many more topics than this review has space to address. The topics of museum exhibits, archaeological parks, research/educational centres, computer-based learning, and environmental education each comprise a chapter. However, these subjects are fields of study in themselves; therefore, the information presented is not exhaustive. The book also contains bits of wisdom and practical ex-

ercises anyone doing public archaeology must use (e.g., permission to have a youth's picture or name publicized) or can easily adopt. The editors' choice to include annotated lists of related reading material at the end of most chapters makes this book an invaluable reference manual (as an aside, most Web sites noted are still functioning). After reading this book, a person delivering a one-time 45-minute presentation may not need to do further research; however, for those developing widely applicable programs, the text should be viewed as a foundation from which to begin their work.

Teresa Trost

Teresa Trost is in the MA program at Simon Fraser University. Her thesis research is the faunal analysis of a late prehistoric shell midden site in Burrard Inlet, BC. Her interests include zooarchaeology, spatial analysis, public archaeology, the Northwest Coast, and the Great Basin.



Fred and Helmi Braches at their home in Whonnock

SO LONG!

After 26 years on the executive, I have left active service in the ASBC, and I am grateful to Heather for giving me this space for a few parting words.

Looking back at more than a quarter century of working for the ASBC and at the free lectures we have offered to the public—perhaps the main tool to fulfil our objective to further knowledge about archaeology—I would like to recognize two groups.

We wouldn't have been able to offer these lectures without the continued support of especially the academic community who have provided the bulk of our speakers. It is to you that I am directing my thanks: our "godfather" Roy Carlson, Phil Hobler, Knut Fladmark, Jon Driver, Al McMillan, Cathy D'Andrea, Ross Jamieson, Catherine Carlson, Stan Copp, R.G. Matson, David Pokotylo, Richard Pearson, Mike Blake, Colin Grier, and from Classics: Jim Russell, Hector Williams, Lisa Cooper, and forgive me if I cannot name everyone here. Many of you gave more than one talk over the years and have supported the ASBC in other ways as well. Thank you to all of you!

The other "group" I want to mention are you, the members. Without your continued support, even if it is just by maintaining your membership, the ASBC wouldn't exist. Over the years I have come to know many of you personally: Bill Lane, one of our very early presidents, and his wife Betsy, Gladys Groves, Eileen and Ron Sutherland, Bill Paull, Reet Kana, Ian Paterson, Eileen Hertzman, Helen Smith, Vic Scott, Margo Kendall, Gary Holisko, Ruth Nesbitt, Glen Chan, Robin Hooper, Art Goyer, Ann Ferries, and again: I can't name you all. Every time I see one of you faithfully appearing at a meeting I am pleased. To you, too, I'm extending my thanks, and I look forward to seeing you at future meetings.

Helmi Braches

Helmi Braches was president of the ASBC from 1982 to 1984 and from 1998 to 2000. She also was treasurer, recording secretary, membership secretary, programs coordinator, chapter liaison, projects chair, assistant Midden aditor, and has been looking after coffee, Midden subscriptions, SocNotes...

DEBITAGE

Joshua Ryan Woiderski was the 2002 winner of the Richard Broly scholarship awarded at Simon Fraser University. His paper is entitled "Meadowcroft Rockshelter: The geological context of radiocarbon dates and possible sources of contamination based on sedimentary analysis."

Miriam Clavir's book *Preserving What is Valued: Museums, Conservation, and First Nations*, is now available in paperback for \$29.95 from UBC Press.

In the Archaeology Department at Simon Fraser University, **Rob Commisso** successfully defended his MA thesis on 8 July 2002. His thesis is entitled: "Foliar delta 15N as an Indicator of Anthropogenic Sediments."

At the Museum of Anthropology (MOA), Professor **Ruth Phillips**, Director of MOA since 1997, began a one-year sabbatical on 15 July 2002. Acting in her place is Professor Emeritus **Michael M. Ames**, MOA's former Director from 1974 to 1997.