

October 9, 2013

A Letter from the Chair:

As you will see from the accompanying report, recent events at Flowerdew Hundred could not better illustrate the preservation challenges we face and the related difficulties of communication and public outreach. These events were brought to CNEHA's attention by our Virginia state newsletter editor, David Brown, who asked if we could reprint Taft Kaiser's *New York Times* article describing the terrible losses that were sustained at this National Register site as the result of an organized metal detecting hunt (for a link to this article, go to <http://www.cneha.org/news.html>). Given Flowerdew's archaeological and historical significance, and parallel concerns about programming on National Geographic, Spike TV, and the Travel Channel that continues to glamorize and promote practices that are potentially harmful to archaeological resources, it seemed appropriate to ask the archaeologists closest to this story to write a companion piece for our fall newsletter that would provide more information on recent events. The report printed in this issue is the result. It was written by Charley Hodges, one of four archaeologists who uncovered the story. I would like to extend my deepest thanks to Charley for accepting my invitation and for writing with such passion about events that had both personal and professional significance for him.

Charley shared this article with the Society for Archaeology, as well, and because of our tremendous concern over the broader ramifications of these events for archaeology and preservation, CNEHA and SHA agreed to jointly publish Charley's article. SHA's newsletter editor Alasdair Brooks took on the task of editing Charley's submission, and the article appears in both the SHA and CNEHA newsletters.

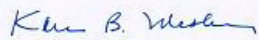
While these events are tragic, our intention is to stress the importance of addressing the larger issue of education and preservation. As Charley points out, the internet has significantly changed the landscape—while it can be used as a tool for public outreach, it can also dramatically increase the impact of destructive behaviors such as this metal-detecting hunt.

I believe our role as a regional organization is to report on events but also to provide our members with a venue to discuss responses and proactive measures that can increase public awareness and help to bridge the interests of metal detecting enthusiasts and those of archaeologists and preservationists. It is a terribly important discussion to have. This discussion has begun among the national organizations, but it is imperative that archaeologists across the Northeast also meet to discuss specific educational initiatives and public outreach at the local and regional level.

I encourage our members to participate in the upcoming roundtable discussion in Newark. The roundtable is the second in a series of talks and brainstorming sessions sponsored by the Subcommittee on Collaborative Preservation. Look for updates in the newsletter and on the website. Participate in the survey

(found in the bookroom of our upcoming conference and in the “News” area of the CNEHA website). Contact our subcommittee chairs, Christina Hodge and Patricia Samford, with concerns, ideas, and stories from the field. Your participation is key to meeting the challenges ahead.

Best wishes,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Karen B. Metheny". The signature is written in a cursive style and is placed on a light blue rectangular background.

Karen Metheny  
Chair, Council for Northeast Historical Archaeology