

The Newsletter of the Southeastern Archaeological Conference

# Horizon & Tradition



Special Issue Regarding the  
**SEAC Image Policy**

Volume 65, Issue 2  
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## INFORMATION FOR CONTRIBUTORS

*Horizon & Tradition* publishes reports, opinions, current research, obituaries, and announcements of interest to members of the Conference. All materials should be submitted to the Associate Editor for the Newsletter. Deadlines are March 1 for the April issue and September 1 for the October issue. Submissions via e-mail are preferred. Style should conform to the detailed guidelines found on the SAA website.

## CREDITS

*Horizon & Tradition* is designed with Microsoft Publisher 2016 and exported to PDF using the same software.

Questions or comments about *Horizon & Tradition* should be directed to [mr096@uark.edu](mailto:mr096@uark.edu).



## Editor's Note



Welcome to a special summer issue of *Horizon & Tradition*, the newsletter of the Southeastern Archaeological Conference. This is my first issue as newsletter editor, and while it appears to be tradition that an incoming editor will introduce themselves by talking about their professional background and research, I want to hold off on doing so until our next regular issue in light of the nature of this special publication.

I will instead give a brief overview of how this issue came together with some notes about its organization and edits. If this is the first time you have heard about the Image Policy or the petition against it, this will be explained inside.

On June 30, 2023, SEAC President Kandi Hollenbach sent an email to the petitioners thanking them for their feedback regarding the SEAC Image Policy and informing them that we planned to put together a special newsletter, to be issued in August. She solicited the petitioners to submit statements about the petition that would be placed alongside those of Native Nations participants and others who were involved in crafting the policy. In this way multiple perspectives on the topic are now available for all to read ahead of the 2023 annual meeting, where a forum will be held ahead of a special referendum vote. All were asked to submit such statements to myself or to Hollenbach by July 28, 2023.

I start the issue with an introduction from Hollenbach as well as her history of how the policy came to fruition. This is followed by the actual policy text as well as the petition and the referendum draft. After these I have included all of the statements submitted to me, thirteen in all.

All of the statements that you will read in this special issue were written in response to the Image Policy text as well as the petitioner's referendum draft. None of the authors were able to read each other's statements, so no one is responding to any given statement you will find throughout.

The petitioners provided six essays that explain why they called a referendum as well as more detailed explanations of their perspectives. These are followed by a note from the current editor of *Southeastern Archaeology* regarding article submissions to the journal since the policy was put in place. After this, you will find three statements written by people associated with Native Nations and three statements written by SEAC members who were responsible for crafting the Image Policy.

I want to thank Kandi Hollenbach for selecting me to be the new newsletter editor as well as Emily Beahm who served as the newsletter editor for the past five years. I'm happy that I'm able to help facilitate an important debate that will impact the future of our discipline.

On editing: I only made very small corrections to spelling when I saw them, but I did not change anyone's use of capitalization or emphasis. What you see is what was provided to me. There may be instances where I failed to re-italicize text when combining all of the materials into one cohesive document. I take all blame for such errors.

Matthew P. Rooney  
Newsletter Editor

# Introduction from SEAC President Kandi Hollenbach

From the start, let me thank you for taking the time to read this special newsletter. There has been much discussion in many corners of the membership since the introduction of the new image policy during the Business Meeting at the 2022 annual meeting in Little Rock. Since that time, the Executive Board has revised the original policy (see pg. 8 in this newsletter). However, a subset of members have submitted a petition that calls for a referendum vote to rescind the policy and start from scratch (see pg. 9 in this newsletter). According to our bylaws, this referendum will go to the full membership for a vote.

The Executive Committee decided that the membership would benefit from having these discussions in a more public setting so that everyone can better understand the various processes and perspectives involved. We are implementing this public discussion through several vehicles. The first is this newsletter, in which we lay out the history of the new image policy and the process by which it was developed; provide a copy of the current version of the image policy; and present the petition, signed by 30 SEAC members. We have also invited interested individuals and parties to present their perspectives on the image policy and petition. These include signers of the petition, SEAC members who are Native, Tribal Historic Preservation Officers (THPOs), Tribal representatives, and members of the Task Force.

A second vehicle is an online portal, which will simply ask for your questions, comments, and suggestions. Your submission may remain entirely anonymous. You can access the Google Form here: <https://forms.gle/38PbUP8gU9pMTX2Y7>

Our third vehicle to bring this discussion to the greater membership will be a forum at the 2023 annual meeting in Chattanooga. The forum panel will include members of the Image Policy Task Force, the Executive Committee, the petitioners, and Tribal representatives, who will be directed by a moderator. We will distribute guidelines for conduct with the hope that everyone attending the forum will feel heard and respected. The forum speakers may field questions that were submitted through the online questionnaire, allowing for anonymity.

The intention of these three opportunities to discuss the image policy and petition more broadly among the membership is to provide as much information as possible to the members prior to the referendum vote, which will take place in November.

Regardless of the outcome of the referendum vote, the Executive Committee and the Task Force will take the comments, questions, and suggestions that develop from these opportunities, and use them to make our processes and policies better. We appreciate your participation in our efforts.

Kandi Hollenbach, SEAC President

## History of the Image Policy

By Kandi Hollenbach, Lindsay Bloch, LeeAnne Wendt, and Sarah Herr

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In 2020, one of the issues of *Southeastern Archaeology*, SEAC's journal, was published with a photograph of funerary objects as the cover image. Turner Hunt, member of the Muscogee Nation and then co-chair of the SEAC Native American Affairs Liaison Committee, brought attention to the ethics and implications of this editorial decision. Rob Beck, who took over the position of Editor in November 2020, requested that President Maureen Meyers appoint a task force to develop a policy for the journal regarding the use of photographs of funerary belongings. The purpose behind the policy was to make the journal, and therefore SEAC membership in general, more inclusive for our Native members, as well as to encourage collaborative discussions with Native Nations.

*Southeastern Archaeology* has long followed the Society for American Archaeology's style guide. For at least two decades, photographs of human remains have not been permissible. The current SAA style guide, revised in July 2021, states that "Authors should also be mindful of the wishes of descendant communities as they relate to publishing photographs of funerary objects and belongings" (pg. 7). No additional guidance for authors or editors is provided.

In early 2022, Meyers asked Kandi Hollenbach, then President-Elect, to head up the task force. With suggestions from Meyers and Beck, Hollenbach assembled the following task force: Rob Beck, Editor; Lindsay Bloch, Editor-Elect; Beau Carroll, archaeologist for and member of the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians; Sarah Herr, editor of SAA's *Advances in Archaeological Practice*; Edward Gonzalez-Tennant, former SEAC webmaster; and LeeAnne Wendt, archaeologist for the Muscogee Nation. The task force, its members, and their aim "to develop a policy for the conference journal, *Southeastern Archaeology*, related to the use of sensitive images, including human remains and

funerary objects" were announced in the April 2022 newsletter (pg. 6).

The task force began by collating and reviewing image policies of other journals and institutions in the United States and Canada. There are already several museums and universities in the eastern US that have placed a moratorium on the use of photographs of funerary belongings without consultation with affiliated Native Nations, including the National Museum of the American Indian, Peabody Museum, Illinois State Museum, University of Georgia, University of Tennessee-Knoxville, and the Valentine Museum.

Sarah Herr shared her perspective of working in the Southwest. In Arizona, researchers rely on Burial Discovery Agreements developed by the State Museum and Native American groups to provide guidance about the publication of images.

Beau Carroll and LeeAnne Wendt presented the perspectives of the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians and Muscogee Nation, noting that for some Native peoples, viewing photographs of funerary belongings carries the same weight and harm to the individual as viewing ancestral remains, requiring the viewer to perform purification rites afterwards. Furthermore, the handling of funerary belongings to obtain new photographs and to conduct research subjects these items to further distress. They did not object to the use of line drawings, particularly if the funerary object was not handled again to create the drawing, but instead an existing photograph was used. They also expressed the importance of having researchers consult with the THPOs of geographically affiliated Native Nations prior to use of the images. But they both noted that they could only speak to the perspectives of their affiliated Native Nations. Every federally-recognized Tribe is a sovereign nation and carries their own opinions. One Tribe cannot speak for another.

## HISTORY OF THE IMAGE POLICY

Members of the task force sketched the outline of the policy then, with use of line drawings or other images in lieu of photographs, and requiring documentation that the authors had reached out to the THPOs of geographically affiliated Native Nations about use of the image in their article. There was some concern that this might create an additional burden for THPOs, but Lindsay and Rob noted that few articles include images of funerary belongings, and that these would most likely be spread among geographic areas, hopefully leading to relatively few requests to be handled by any particular THPO. LeeAnne and Beau indicated that it would be viewed as a burden worth taking on.

To gain additional Native perspectives, we developed a brief questionnaire which we distributed to approximately 33 Tribal Historic Preservation Officers associated with the Southeast, broadly perceived. Kandi Hollenbach obtained the list from the National Park Service's THPO directory. The questionnaire explained that the SEAC task force was working to develop an image policy, and asked whether their Tribe/Native Nation would support the publication of images of funerary belongings under specific conditions, or whether they do not support the publication of any images (photographs, line drawings, artistic renderings, 3D scans, etc.) under any circumstances. If they answered in support of some images, we had follow-up questions related to the process of authors providing information about how the images would be created, as well as whether these consultative discussions would create an undue burden for their offices.

After three email invitations for participation in June-August 2022, we received six responses (18% participation). Three of these stated that they did NOT support the publication of any images under any circumstances. The remaining three noted that support of descendant Tribes was key; that time should be allowed for responses as well as potential inter-Tribal consultation; and that a form might be created to aid the process.

With 50% of respondents fully against use of any images, and the remaining 50% requiring support of descendant Native Nations, the task force felt that the outcome clearly called for a policy that ended the publication of photographs and required authors to demonstrate that they had reached out to geographically affiliated Native Nations for support of use of non-photographic images.

The task force developed the original image policy in the fall of 2022. The policy was shared with the Executive Committee prior to the October 2022 Board Meeting. The task force reported on their process and recommendation, and the Executive Committee voted to accept the policy during the October meeting. SEAC bylaws do not require a vote of the membership for changes to the journal policy. Membership voting has not been employed for previous editorial or publishing changes to *Southeastern Archaeology* (e.g., adoption of SAA Style Guide, publishing contracts, etc.). The possibility of putting the policy before the membership for a vote was discussed, but given that the publication of photographs of funerary belongings negatively impacts what is currently a small minority of SEAC membership, the majority rule of a full membership vote did not seem appropriate.

Rob Beck read the new image policy, as approved by the Executive Board, at the Business Meeting in Little Rock in November 2022.

By December 2022-January 2023, members of the Executive Committee were contacted by several members of SEAC with concerns about the policy and the process by which it was adopted. Concerns about the policy included the cost of making line drawings, which could be burdensome for graduate students. They also pointed out that some Native Nations may not have issues with use of photographs of funerary belongings and that this policy unfairly restricted them.

The task force took this information and developed an option to provide supplemental materials. With

## HISTORY OF THE IMAGE POLICY

demonstrated support from descendant Native Nations, authors could include a link to digital photographs of funerary belongings. To ensure that these links remain as permanent as possible, but also protected so that general internet searches would not bring them up, the task force explored the use of the Digital Archaeological Record (tDAR). Sarah Herr indicated that she had previously used tDAR to provide a secure link to supplemental materials with good success. Discussions with tDAR indicated that this would be a viable option. As such, the task force amended the image policy to include an option for supplemental materials. In February 2023, the Executive Committee voted to approve the revised policy.

In March 2023, the Executive Committee received a petition signed by 30 SEAC members, in compliance with our bylaws, which require signatures of 2% of the membership for a petition. Based on the reason that the membership was not given adequate opportunity to comment on the image policy before it was adopted, the petition requests a referendum vote to the entire membership to rescind the policy and begin again with a process that includes approval of the membership.

In April, the Executive Committee met with several of the petitioners to give them an opportunity to present their perspectives and allow for questions in both directions. It was clear from the meeting that the petitioners and Executive Committee would not be able to come to a compromise on adjustments to the policy, and the Executive Committee was unwilling to put the policy on hold and restart the process. So voting on whether to start from scratch

was the only viable outcome for them. The Executive Committee decided that it was important for these conversations to be held in venues where the broader membership could participate prior to a vote on the referendum put forward by the petitioners. The Executive Board invited THPOs to three additional listening sessions in May and June. These were offered to give THPOs an opportunity to present their perspectives and ask questions. Participants in these sessions noted that they appreciate the image policy and the opportunity it provides Native Nations to consult on publication of sensitive photographs. Not only does it prevent individuals from inadvertently viewing harmful photographs, it would also assuage the fears of Native authors who might not wish for their articles to be published in the same issue as photographs of funerary objects. They also stated that they respect the sovereignty of other Native Nations in deciding whether images of the funerary belongings of their ancestors are appropriate.

As noted in the introduction, the Executive Committee then developed a plan for this special newsletter, and invited the petitioners, THPOs, and Tribal representatives to submit statements that would present their various perspectives on the image policy. Further, we developed an online portal (<https://forms.gle/38PbUP8gU9pMTX2Y7>) so that members can submit questions and comments anonymously. We are also planning a special forum to be held at the October 2023 annual meeting in Chattanooga to again give petitioners and representatives of Native Nations opportunities to present their perspectives to the membership prior to a vote on the referendum in November.

## ***Southeastern Archaeology* Journal Image Policy**

(approved by the Executive Committee at the Business Meeting in November 2022;  
revised and approved by the Executive Committee in February 2023)

Moving forward, *Southeastern Archaeology*, the journal of the Southeastern Archaeological Conference, will no longer publish photographs of funerary objects/belongings, expanding our existing policy against the publication of photographs of human remains. Any new submissions that include photographs of funerary objects/belongings will not be considered for review. Due to the length of the process involved in reviewing submissions for publication and the lag between online and print publications, manuscripts already under review/accepted prior to this date will still be published as before. No photographs of this nature will appear in the journal after June 2023.

In lieu of photographs, authors may choose to include line drawings or other representations of funerary objects/belongings. Another option is to provide supplemental materials that could include photographs. These would be stored by SEAC with the Digital Archaeological Record (tDAR), which is a digital archive that can provide a persistent link and would limit access to SEAC members.

As of January 1, 2023, any such representations to be published within the body of the article or to be included as supplemental materials must be submitted with written evidence that the authors consulted with Native Nations having ancestral ties to the archaeological region in question, or with evidence of the authors' good faith effort to initiate such consultative discussions. This evidence must be included with the manuscript at the time of submission. Without associated support or evidence of good faith effort, the Editor will reject the manuscript without review.

We strongly encourage authors to reach out to associated Native Nations early in the development of their manuscripts. These should include all of the federally recognized Tribes that have an area of interest within the project area. To determine this list, we recommend reaching out to your SHPO,

THPO, NAGPRA coordinator, or federal agencies with jurisdiction in the region. The most current contact information for THPOs can be found at [https://grantsdev.cr.nps.gov/THPO\\_Review/index.cfm](https://grantsdev.cr.nps.gov/THPO_Review/index.cfm).

To aid the process, SEAC is developing a template for authors to use as they initiate consultative discussions with the Tribal Historic Preservation Offices (THPO) of associated Native Nations. Minimum information to be supplied to the THPOs includes: the graphic(s) in question; information about the creation/history\* of the graphic(s); and a copy of the manuscript for context. THPOs require 30 days to respond to the request. Out of respect for Native Nations, it is important to consider this timeline when planning your submission. If additional information is needed or consultation is requested, this could extend your timeline significantly. Notice of consultation with associated Native Nations for publication of the representations of funerary objects/belongings will be included in the Acknowledgments section of the printed article. A statement indicating that representations of funerary objects/belongings are included in the article will also be printed in the table of contents of the journal issue and on the first page of the article to inform readers.

At the Editor's discretion, the author(s) may be asked to document that they have consulted with other affiliated descendant groups for graphics that may be of a sensitive nature. These descendant groups might include African American communities or state-recognized Native entities for projects that deal specifically with these entities.

Lack of compliance with the image policy may result in a permanent loss of the privilege to publish in *Southeastern Archaeology*.

\*The creation/history of a particular graphic should include information about how and when it was created (from an existing photograph) and by whom,



## IMAGE POLICY

or information about its previous publication. Many Native Nations object to the creation of new line drawings directly from the funerary object/belonging itself, as it should be protected from additional

handling. Early communication with the associated Native Nations to prevent any missteps is strongly encouraged.

## PETITION

(Submitted March 27, 2023)

Dear Dr. Hollenbach,

Pursuant to Article VI, Section I of the Southeastern Archaeological Conference bylaws, we hereby petition the Executive Committee to hold a referendum on the attached resolution, entitled “On Transparency and Consultation in SEAC’s Governance.”

Yours truly,

*The 30 signatories*

## REFERENDUM DRAFT

### On Transparency and Consultation in SEAC’s Governance (Included with petition)

Whereas the Officers and Executive Committee of the Southeastern Archaeological Conference have an obligation to act in accordance with the wishes of the membership and the organization’s stated purposes;

Whereas our officers announced a new policy at the 2022 annual business meeting that prohibits, under any circumstances, publishing photographs of funerary objects in the pages of *Southeastern Archaeology*;

Whereas this policy will have a major impact on the practice of archaeology in our region by inhibiting the publication of important ongoing and future research — particularly in essential areas such as chronology, style, and iconography;

Whereas this policy was adopted with no opportunity for input from the membership; and

Whereas good governance requires transparency and consultation;

Therefore, be it resolved that the publication policy adopted by the Executive Committee and announced at the 2022 Annual Business Meeting is hereby rescinded and that the long-standing policy in effect prior to the new one is restored. Any major change to the publication policy in the future must be adopted by a vote of the full membership. Such policies must be developed in open consultation with the membership, with ample opportunities for comment on written drafts.

[Resolution to be submitted for a membership referendum, pursuant to a petition submitted to the Executive Committee under Article VI, Section I of SEAC’s bylaws.]

## THE PETITIONERS

We the petitioners would like to offer both our names and sentiments to this issue. Collectively, we have committed over twelve hundred years to SEAC. Most of us have served on the Executive Committee, as conference organizers, or in various other capacities and, thus, have had a lifelong commitment to the organization. We firmly believe that the Executive Committee exists as a representative body, created to advocate for the wishes of the membership, as with any democratic organization. We are as follows:

Sam Brookes  
James A. Brown  
Ian W. Brown  
Cheryl Claassen  
Jessica Fleming Crawford  
R. P. Stephen Davis Jr.  
Kathleen A. Deagan  
David H. Dye  
Thomas E. Emerson  
Robbie Ethridge  
Ned J. Jenkins  
John E. Kelly

Lucretia S. Kelly  
Vernon J. Knight  
Janet E. Levy  
Rochelle A. Marrinan  
Jeffrey M. Mitchem  
Lee A. Newsom  
John O'Hear  
Timothy R. Pauketat  
F. Kent Reilly III  
Robert Sharp  
Kevin Smith  
Vincas P. Steponaitis

Lynne Sullivan  
Patrick Trader \*  
Paul Welch  
John Worth  
Nancy Marie White

plus 2 petitioners who either  
desire to remain anonymous or  
who just didn't get the message  
on time.

\* Withdrawn: Oct. 8, 2023

## SIX ESSAYS FROM THE PETITIONERS

### Why We Called a Referendum

By Vernon James Knight, Lynne P. Sullivan, Vincas P. Steponaitis, and Jessica Fleming Crawford

The April, 2022 edition of SEAC's newsletter, *Horizon and Tradition*, contained a brief notice on page 6 stating that a "SEAC Journal Policy Taskforce" had been formed by President Maureen Myers. This task force, according to the notice, was to "develop recommendations to be submitted to the Executive Board for discussion at the 2022 meeting in November." The notice also said that "any comments, questions, or suggestions" could be submitted to the task force chair.

At the business meeting of the November, 2022 SEAC meeting in Little Rock, those in attendance learned that the Executive Committee had not merely discussed this task force's recommendations but, evidently, had already passed them. SEAC now had a policy on the matter of publishing funerary objects in our journal. There and then, we were told that photos of such objects would no longer appear

in the pages of our journal, under any circumstances. It would be another five months before the membership could see this new policy in print.

In conversations at Little Rock after the business meeting, we heard a variety of reactions. There was puzzlement that such a profoundly consequential policy would be enacted by the Executive Committee behind closed doors, without any serious opportunity for members to comment. There was also dismay regarding the chilling effect on research that this policy obviously would have. One young scholar was clearly saddened, saying "I guess I won't be able to publish my thesis." And another common reaction we heard was, "shouldn't we be voting on this?" Yes, we should have been, and that was the basis for the actions we subsequently took.

## WHY WE CALLED A REFERENDUM

It is important to understand that SEAC is a member-driven organization. The Executive Committee is elected not to pursue its own agendas, but to work on behalf of the membership. Our bylaws make this crystal clear: Article III, Section 5 states that the Executive Committee exercises its powers “subject to the general directives imposed by the membership”; Article V, Section 6 says that “all matters of business related to the conference may be decided by means of a referendum”; and Article VI, Section I lays out the simple procedure by which such a referendum may be called, requiring a petition signed by two percent of the individual membership.

Our initial efforts involved conversations with President Hollenbach and other members of the Executive Committee in which we expressed our concerns about both the policy itself and the process that led to it. The Committee reacted by proposing that photographs of funerary objects could be posted on the Digital Archaeological Record (tDAR), hidden behind a password and only under certain stringent conditions. But they refused to put the policy on hold while members had a chance to weigh in. Obviously, this response did not seriously address any of our concerns, particularly the ones about process. So we reluctantly decided to invoke the bylaws and to petition the Executive Committee to hold a referendum on a resolution that, if passed, would hit the reset button on this new policy and to require that any new policy be developed in full and transparent consultation with the membership.

In February, we and a few others began reaching out to our colleagues by telephone to ask if they were interested in signing such a petition. Given SEAC’s total membership, we needed about twenty signatures. We stopped asking at thirty, although we have since learned of many others who would have participated, had they known. The organizers spent some time drafting and refining the language of the resolution, and then emailed that draft to those who had responded positively in our earlier telephone conversations. Just about everyone agreed to sign, and we sent the signed petition along with a resolution to the Executive Committee, via

President Hollenbach, on March 27, 2023. The resolution is entitled “On Transparency and Consultation in SEAC’s Governance.” The signatories to the petition include five former presidents of SEAC, four former editors of *Southeastern Archaeology*, and seven recipients of SEAC’s Lifetime Achievement award.

While gathering the signatures, we spoke with a number of people who agreed with our petition but were reluctant to sign because they worried about reprisals or verbal abuse should their views become known. Sadly, we work today in a politicized environment of fear and recrimination, particularly on social media. In a few cases, we advised younger scholars not to sign the petition for this reason, as they might be exposed to recriminations that could affect their academic careers.

We now direct the reader’s attention to the text of our resolution as given in the President’s introduction to this newsletter issue (see pg. 9). The resolution calls for two things, and two things only. First, it calls for rescinding the newly announced publication policy. Second, it calls for any new publication policy replacing that one to be “developed in open consultation with the membership, with ample opportunities for comment on written drafts.” We want to emphasize that the referendum addresses only the process issue, that of how any major publication policy needs to be discussed by the full membership as a matter of good governance. We have heard many reasons why members think the current publication policy is not a good idea; indeed, many of these reasons are discussed in the articles that accompany this one. But those substantive reasons are not part of what is to be voted on. We have been assured by President Hollenbach that our resolution will be offered to the SEAC membership for a vote at some point after the October SEAC meeting in Chattanooga, where the leadership is planning a public forum on the issue. While having a public forum before the vote is contrary to the logic of our resolution, we welcome the opportunity to vote. As of now, the Executive Committee stands by their publication policy as

## WHY WE CALLED A REFERENDUM

given in the April, 2023 edition of our newsletter (SEAC Journal Image Policy Task Force 2023).

SEAC is a scholarly community, self-organized to facilitate and promote a few key functions including arranging for an annual meeting and publishing members' research. Our elected leadership, in the form of an Executive Committee, volunteers their valuable time to manage these functions for us, to keep us on budget, and to keep everything vibrant and enjoyable. As a democratic community, issues of larger importance are brought to the membership for consideration, discussion, and a vote. That is why our bylaws include a section on referendums, a mechanism by which either the Executive Committee or the members can initiate a vote on the larger issues of the day. The current Executive Committee will insist that nothing they did in establishing the new publication policy was contrary to the bylaws. They are correct, but only in the narrow sense that the bylaws do not require that every policy be adopted by a referendum. This was a consequential issue, and, in a membership-driven

organization like ours, it should have been brought to the members before being adopted. The lack of full transparency in the process (which seems to have been deliberate), and the failure to bring the matter forward for discussion and a vote by the full membership does not, in our opinion, constitute good governance.

We encourage members to do two things. First, consider letting your personal perspective on this issue be known to the SEAC Executive Committee. Second, when the time comes, we urge you to vote in favor of the resolution, that is, to call for re-setting the process of discussion and debate on this issue. We trust the membership to improve this outcome.

### *Reference Cited*

SEAC Journal Image Policy Task Force  
2023 Southeastern Archaeology Journal Image  
Policy. *Horizon and Tradition* 65(1):14.

## On the Importance of Academic Freedom

By Vin Steponaitis

As anyone who follows the news is aware, academic freedom these days is under attack, more so than at any time in the last half century. Unlike in the 1950s, when such attacks came exclusively from the right (in the form of various anti-Communist crusades, Senator McCarthy's being the best known), these days the threats come from both ends of the political spectrum. On the right, we have seen persistent attempts to curtail research on climate change, as well as to prevent the teaching of any topic related to a nebulously defined "critical race theory." On the left, these efforts have generally invoked the equally nebulous concept of "harm," portraying words as "violence" in an attempt to justify their censorship. Both of these trends have been exacerbated and accelerated in

recent years by social media. Both are equal threats, not only to academic freedom, but also to our democracy (Lukianoff and Haidt 2015; Haidt and Lukianoff 2017; Haidt 2022a).

Academic freedom is, at its core, the right to pursue research and teaching without undue interference or intimidation by governments, institutional structures, or public pressure. It protects the ability of scholars to seek the truth wherever it may lead, to teach that truth, and to speak truth to power. Restrictions on academic freedom are common under authoritarian regimes, and for good reason, as freedom to seek the truth gives one the ability to see and understand the world based on evidence, rather than ideology. Evidence-based academic research is just as essential



## ON THE IMPORTANCE OF ACADEMIC FREEDOM

to a democratic society as a free press. It gives our society a view of the world (including the past world) that allows us to better comprehend the present and to make good decisions for the future. If we believe that archaeology is a public good, as I suspect most SEAC members do, then we must defend the intellectual freedom to pursue it effectively. Indeed, SEAC's Articles of Incorporation say that our organization's purpose is "to promote and to stimulate interest in the archaeology of the southeastern United States," as well as "to publish and to encourage publication." We are obligated by our own constitution to take these imperatives seriously.

It is against this backdrop that any SEAC endeavor, including the recently imposed publication policy, must be evaluated. So it is useful at this point to review the two major pillars on which academic freedom rests — freedom of expression and institutional neutrality — and to consider how they relate to the issues that SEAC now faces.

### *Freedom of Expression*

The first and most fundamental aspect of academic freedom is the ability to speak one's mind and to publish one's research without fear of censorship or retribution. Perhaps the clearest statement of this tenet appears in a policy adopted by the faculty at the University of Chicago in 2014, and which has since been adopted by faculties at many major universities, including my own. Commonly called the "Chicago Principles," this policy reads (in part) as follows:

Of course, the ideas of different members of the University community will often and quite naturally conflict. But it is not the proper role of the University to attempt to shield individuals from ideas and opinions they find unwelcome, disagreeable, or even deeply offensive. Although the University greatly values civility, and although all members of the University community share in the responsibility for maintaining a climate of

mutual respect, concerns about civility and mutual respect can never be used as a justification for closing off discussion of ideas, however offensive or disagreeable those ideas may be to some members of our community [Stone et al. 2014].

Substitute SEAC for "the University," and this policy would apply equally well to our scholarly conference. And the implications of this passage for SEAC are clear: The notion that "harm" caused by words or images should be used as a reason to restrict the publication of legitimate research in a scholarly journal is fundamentally at odds with academic freedom.

Of course, civility and mutual respect are important and cannot be ignored. Members of the general public should not be involuntarily subjected to images that they find offensive. Yet in my experience, most Americans, including many Native Americans, do not object to seeing images of funerary objects. And it is important to remember that SEAC's publications are not sold on newsstands; they are technical publications read by professional archaeologists and their students. Becoming an archaeologist is a choice. No one is forced to read our journal, and anyone who signs up to be a scholar must be willing to adhere to, or at least tolerate, the standards of their discipline. Yes, SEAC should strive to be inclusive, but inclusiveness means everyone — including many members whose research depends on the ability to use images of funerary objects. The religious strictures of what President Hollenbach (2023:13) admits is "a small minority" of our members can be reasonably accommodated without resorting to extreme measures that shut down major areas of basic research. (See, for example, "It Can Be Done Better," pg. 22 in this issue.)

### *Institutional Neutrality*

The second key principle, that of institutional neutrality, was also well articulated at the University of Chicago in a policy document

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commonly called the “Kalven Report” (Kalven et al. 1967). It, too, has been widely adopted by academic institutions across the U.S. It addresses the question of whether universities, as institutions, should take public stands on contentious political issues, and it concludes that in most cases (with the exception of matters like defending academic freedom) such stands are detrimental to the free expression of ideas by members of an academic community:

The instrument of dissent and criticism is the individual faculty member or the individual student. The university is the home and sponsor of critics; it is not itself the critic. It is, to go back once again to the classic phrase, a community of scholars. To perform its mission in the society, a university must sustain an extraordinary environment of freedom of inquiry and maintain an independence from political fashions, passions, and pressures. A university, if it is to be true to its faith in intellectual inquiry, must embrace, be hospitable to, and encourage the widest diversity of views within its own community. It is a community but only for the limited, albeit great, purposes of teaching and research. ...

Since the university is a community only for these limited and distinctive purposes, it is a community which cannot take collective action on the issues of the day without endangering the conditions for its existence and effectiveness. There is no mechanism by which it can reach a collective position without inhibiting that full freedom of dissent on which it thrives. ...

The neutrality of the university as an institution arises then not from a lack of courage nor out of indifference and insensitivity. It arises out of respect for free inquiry and the obligation to cherish a diversity of viewpoints [Kalven et al. 1967:1-2].

Again, if we substitute SEAC for “the university,” a clear mandate appears. First, SEAC should not, as a matter of policy, take public stands on contentious political issues or disputes involving other organizations. That’s up to individual members, who in the age of social media all have tools they need for making their views widely known. And second, by the same logic, SEAC should not insert itself into the sensitive and complicated relationships that can exist among individual researchers, museums, and tribes. SEAC’s editor is neither elected nor equipped to be a judge or a jury in these matters. Such relationships should be left up to individual researchers. And the idea that basic research must be vetted and approved, often retroactively, by multiple political officials (and yes, that’s what THPOs are) before being published in *Southeastern Archaeology* is about as far from academic freedom as one can get. Institutional neutrality neither precludes nor discourages archaeologists from working with tribes. Such relationships are best developed organically, and will undoubtedly become commonplace as the field moves in that direction. There is no need for SEAC to dictate what these relationships should look like.

### *Closing Thoughts*

It is important to stress that nothing in SEAC’s current publication policy, or in any future policy that may be developed, is mandated by Federal law. Under NAGPRA, tribes have the right to reclaim funerary objects and human remains — the tangible things — and that is as it should be. I was heavily involved in the passage of that law and have always supported it. NAGPRA by itself does not infringe on freedom of expression, because it has nothing to say about the way basic research is carried out, the topics that can be considered, or what can be published. It leaves scholars free to pursue their research, using whatever data are available. But SEAC’s policy operates in a different realm, that of ideas — preemptively shutting down important areas of research by making it impossible to adequately publish them. That is a problem that must be addressed.

## ON THE IMPORTANCE OF ACADEMIC FREEDOM

Of course, ethical considerations are also important, but ethics involve balancing competing imperatives. If one believes that the knowledge gained through archaeology is a public good, then one has to balance other concerns against that. The policy matter at hand is whether and under what circumstances scholars can use photographs of objects to learn about the past. Many of these photos have been in the public domain for more than a century. It is not about the objects themselves, or about peoples' health or physical safety. Rather, the question at hand is about the circumstances under which ideas and research about the past can be suppressed. And the bar for doing that, in my opinion, should be extremely high. When not constrained by law, these decisions should be made by individual researchers, without interference from SEAC.

I do not mean to imply that academic freedom and the pursuit of social justice are intrinsically incompatible. Individual scholars can express their opinions, work to achieve their social and political priorities, and pursue research in close collaboration with communities — all of which is good. The problem arises when an organization like SEAC mandates which topics can be studied, and how that research must be done. Jonathan Haidt, a social psychologist who has written extensively about current issues pertaining to academic freedom, points out that every organization has a fundamental purpose, what he calls a *telos*. The *telos* of universities and scholarly societies is the pursuit of knowledge. Other organizations may have a different *telos*. But, in any given organization, when a *telos* conflicts with other imperatives, it is the *telos* that must win (Haidt 2022b). If an organization like SEAC does not defend the value of archaeological research and the academic freedom of its members, then who will?

I recognize that neither the Chicago Principles nor the Kalven Report have ever been formally adopted as SEAC policies. But these principles did not originate at the University of Chicago. They were widely understood and practiced across the American academy for decades, long before the

faculty at Chicago codified them. In a sense, they were so ingrained in the fabric of the academy that they didn't need to be codified. This is why SEAC's board never took political stands or tried to dictate to its members how research was to be done. Everyone involved understood that SEAC's mission was to promote and disseminate archaeological research, and, as our Articles of Incorporation state, "to serve as a bond" among its members. They organized an annual meeting, published a newsletter, and eventually started a journal — on a shoestring budget and with an enormous amount of hard work on the part of its early editors. The organization faithfully stuck to this mission, becoming one of the best and most collegial regional societies in the U.S. In recent years it has strayed from this mission in ways that threaten to split the membership and close off many important avenues of research. Our hope is that the discussions prompted by the referendum, and the vote on the referendum itself, will help SEAC get back on a more productive and collegial course.

Recently, I had the privilege of visiting the new Choctaw Cultural Center in Durant, Oklahoma, which features a wonderful exhibit about Moundville — a site I know well, and one to which I have devoted much of my professional career. As I went through the exhibit, I could see how many of the stories being told were ultimately based on research I had published 40 years ago, laying out the ceramic chronology on which the site's timeline depends. Indeed, I felt enormous pride in seeing how my research had informed this exhibit, and how it was now making a difference to the Choctaw people. Yet I was also aware that this chronology depended largely on a seriation of whole pots, mostly funerary objects, publication of which would now be prohibited under SEAC's policy. If that policy had been in place then, my research would never have happened. And it saddens me to think about how many future breakthroughs in knowledge, ones that could make a real difference to Native communities, will never happen unless the current policy is changed.

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## On Looking at Pictures of Funerary Objects By Vernon James Knight

Three observations:

1. In 2019, I was invited to speak at a symposium at the Montgomery Museum of Fine Arts. The other speakers were professional art historians, and the audience was the museum-going general public. My presentation made two main points. The first point was that significant, internationally important art has been produced in our region over many centuries, by Native Americans. The second point was that, technically and aesthetically, this Southeastern art rivals that of ancient Mesoamerica and South America. The Director of the MMFA praised the talk, as "exactly what this audience needed to hear." I was not aware of any potential objection to

showing such pictures in that setting. Had there been any prohibition on showing pictures of funerary objects, there is simply no way I could have made the points that I did.

2. I was a founding member of the Mississippian Iconographic Workshop (1993-present), a small group that met annually in Austin and San Marcos, Texas. From the mid-1990s we worked on iconographic problems together with Tribal friends; Muscogee, Seminole, Choctaw, and Chickasaw. These were neither members of the political class, nor were they cultural resource functionaries. They were traditionalists, elders, medicine-persons, and storytellers, male and female. In small groups, over days and across years, archaeologists labored



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shoulder to shoulder with these friends, working specifically with large numbers of photographs and drawings of funerary objects. Much information was exchanged, and I know that much made its way back to Tribal communities. We learned from one another. During those days and years of productive discussions, not a word was spoken about any discomfort from looking at pictures.

3. A fine volume on ancient Indigenous art was published as *Hero, Hawk, and Open Hand: American Indian Art of the Ancient Midwest and South*, the catalog of a spectacular exhibit organized by the Art Institute of Chicago (Townsend and Sharp 2004). The exhibit contained many dozens of funerary objects, and the book illustrates them with excellent color photographs. Of interest here is the overwhelming amount of support for the exhibit and catalog received from the Tribes. The Inter-Tribal Council of the Five Civilized Tribes wrote officially to praise the “consultation with and the active participation of American Indian descendants” in the effort, and cited the “best interest of our member tribes to be involved in the presentation of our arts and cultural histories” (ICTFCT Resolution No. 2002-16, signed by Chad Smith, Principal Chief, Cherokee Nation; Gregory Pyle, Chief, Choctaw Nation; Perry Beaver, Principal Chief, Muscogee (Creek) Nation; Jerry Haney, Chief, Seminole Nation; and Bill Anoatubby, Governor, Chickasaw Nation). In all, thirty tribal consultants representing eleven Federally recognized tribes contributed to the project; their names and affiliations are listed in the acknowledgments to the *Hero, Hawk, and Open Hand* volume. Many of them were on hand to celebrate the opening of the exhibit in Chicago. Tim Thompson, a Muscogee traditional religious leader, said an opening prayer in the Creek language. I was there.

A primary reason cited for SEAC’s recent prohibition of images of Native American funerary objects in its journal is because Native American readers of our journal deserve protections against inadvertent exposure to images which might harm them. There is another point of view among our

Native American friends, one that we have heard again and again over many years. As long as we are prioritizing Native voices, perhaps this view deserves equal consideration. It is aptly summed up by a Cree elder, cited in a book review by Alice Kehoe (2002) concerning the publication, with photographs, of the burial accompaniments of a Nagami Bay woman. “Everything happens for a reason. These are gifts from the ancestors to today’s generation. They are to be used by our youth to learn about the old ways and gain respect for the past.” Comparable views on the educational value of ancient art are expressed in published interviews in the *Hero, Hawk, and Open Hand* volume, of Tim Thompson, Joyce Bear, and Turner Bear (Muscogee Nation). In the same volume, Stacey Halfmoon (Caddo) writes, “When honored with the opportunity to hold and see my ancestors’ work, I feel reverence for the piece and am humbled by the vast cultural and environmental knowledge of my ancestors to understand how to make such artwork” (Townsend and Sharp, eds. 2004:39-41, 187-189, 249). These Native views bear no hallmark of a political posture. They do not invoke harm. They speak of education, reverence, respect, and inspiration, illustrated by art including funerary objects.

In my opinion, it is not within the scope of purpose of SEAC’s Executive Committee to interfere with connections such as these.

[I acknowledge, and appreciate, Alice Kehoe’s, Cheryl Claassen’s, and Ian Brown’s contributions to this piece.]

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### A Forgotten History

By Lynne P. Sullivan and R. P. Stephen Davis, Jr.

Modern technology has revolutionized our ability to communicate with each other like never before, with Zoom meetings, internet, and cell phones. Even a mere 10 years ago, communication among people living in far-flung places was much more difficult. Nonetheless, consultation and collaboration among Tribes and archaeologists in the Southeast has a far longer history that spans more than seven decades.

One well-documented collaboration is the Tsali Institute for Cherokee Research, Inc. (Holland 2006). This Institute was initiated in 1951 by the Cherokee Historical Association, a non-profit corporation of the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians (EBCI) and local community leaders dedicated to preserving the history and traditions of the Cherokee, as well as providing assistance for the EBCI (Appalachian State University; University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill [UNC]).

The image on the following page (Figure 1), from the 1950s, shows photos of the officers of the Tsali Institute and a list of the Board of Trustees, which included both EBCI officials and archaeologists. These individuals together signed the Certificate of Incorporation for the Tsali Institute.<sup>1</sup> SEAC members likely will recognize the names of notable archaeologists in the Southeast from the Works Progress Administration projects, and who also were early members of SEAC<sup>2</sup> (McNutt 2018). The Institute was charged to work with other organizations with similar objectives in the states of

North Carolina, Georgia, and Tennessee. The Certificate states this purpose for the Tsali Institute:

To engage in scientific research in early Cherokee Indian history, customs and modes of living. To study, collect data, publish information and in every way practicable to sponsor projects of investigation and education, including the excavation of archaeological sites of supposed Cherokee occupation, and anything calculated to inculcate a wider public understanding and appreciation of the early Cherokee Indian customs and traditions (UNC-RLA Archive, File Acc\_No-1).

In addition to sponsoring archaeological excavations (UNC-RLA Archive, File Acc\_No-2), a project of the Tsali Institute was to develop the Oconaluftee Indian Village in Cherokee, North Carolina, as an outdoor educational and interpretive museum of life in an eighteenth-century Cherokee community (Holland 2006; UNC-RLA Archive, Acc\_No-3). Other projects had a more humanitarian focus, as the Institute became involved in helping the EBCI with then-current issues. For example, language preservation, land tenure, and assistance for impoverished families all were projects in which the Tsali Institute participated and assisted in fundraising (UNC-RLA Archive, Acc\_No-2).<sup>3</sup> A description of the Tsali Institute, used in a grant application for assistance for the Tribe, stated this purpose:

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Figure 1: Photos of the officers of the Tsali Institute and a list of the Board of Trustees

## A FORGOTTEN HISTORY

The Tsali Institute for Cherokee Research is a non-profit corporation chartered under the laws of the State of North Carolina, to conduct research into problems relating to the Eastern Cherokees. These investigations may concern both the past and present, and are designed to be of service to this group of approximately 3,000 Indians living on the reservation in western North Carolina who constitute the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians (UNC-RLA Archive, Acc\_No-2).

The Tsali Institute is but one example of the collaboration and consultation of archaeologists and Indigenous peoples that began long before NAGPRA. We are confident that most archaeologists genuinely want to engage with descendant communities in a positive manner, where the results of their research have value to those communities. That certainly was the case with the Tsali Institute.

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File Acc\_No-1, Tsali Institute  
Correspondence, Information, and Minutes  
File Acc\_No-2, Tsali Institute Research Project  
File Acc\_No-3, Tsali Institute Village and Museum

### Notes

<sup>1</sup> At the time of the official signing of the Certificate, Henry Bradley was the Principal Chief of the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians (UNC-RLA Archive, Acc\_No-1).

<sup>2</sup> We would be remiss if we did not point out that Thomas Lewis earned a BA from Princeton and had taken some graduate anthropology classes at the University of Wisconsin, but he had no graduate degree. He is listed as “Dr.” while Madeline Kneberg, who was ABD from the University of Chicago, is listed as “Miss.”

<sup>3</sup> Madeline Kneberg Lewis’s papers on file at the McClung Museum of Natural History and Culture, University of Tennessee, also contain many documents related to the Tsali Institute.



## Effects of the SEAC Policy in Suppressing Archaeological Research

By Kevin Smith, David Dye, and Robert Sharp

The primary issue at hand is the process by which an excessively restrictive image policy for *Southeastern Archaeology* has been recently written, approved, and implemented without adequate input from the affected membership – including many who work in our area of late precontact Mississippian iconography and ritual. Here, we offer a few reasons why we think the policy should be rescinded – and then perhaps constructed anew as part of a broader discussion where the voices of members are all represented. The SEAC image policy obviously does not exist in a vacuum, and some broader contextual concerns are raised here as well.

The primary ethical principle of archaeology and museum work has taught us and made us cognizant of Stewardship (with a capital S), in which we recognize that we are all stakeholders in our interpretations, perceptions, and responsibilities of the archaeological record. While NAGPRA (and other laws that preceded it) provide a federal legal process for the return of physical human remains and associated mortuary objects by applicable agencies, the law does not extend to images of objects (although it has become a widely accepted practice to avoid images of human skeletal remains). Indeed, the Tennessee Attorney General explicitly stated that “the term ‘public exhibition or display’... applies to exhibits or displays of actual human remains rather than to photographs of human remains,” and further that “photographs of such [Native American Indian human] remains taken in the ordinary course of work done by the Division of Archaeology are ‘public records’” (Tennessee Attorney General, Opinion No. 05-005).

The expansion of the SEAC policy to preclude the use of photographs or even line drawings of mortuary objects is part and parcel of a larger pattern of abandoning our Stewardship of the past and the archaeological record. The collections that provide the basis of evidence-based iconographic research are being repatriated – without adequate

documentation. We accept the legal requirements of repatriation – but we argue that their return by public institutions without appropriate and proper documentation denies their usefulness for future research and violates that first principle of Stewardship. All of us, usually at our own expense, have volunteered our time and energy to document institutional collections to better understand the past and to make such images available to a wider range of people interested in the past. Our ability to use those images (even to create derivative line drawings of our own photographs) is inhibited by this new policy. And we realize that some might ask, “so what?”

There is a science-like method of conducting iconography of the recent and ancient past, one that appeals to common, established, and systematic procedures of data gathering, including methodological consistency and verification by well-formed argument (Knight 2013:xiv). A first principle of a rigorous approach to iconography is the accumulation of the largest assemblage or corpus as possible of relevant objects – as museum collections are repatriated and access even to images of these objects is closed off, that increasingly productive venue of research is also shut down. As Jim Knight (2013:xv) has noted, “iconographic interpretation of prehistoric images does not necessarily take us into unknowable domains of belief, religion, and worldview, as some seem to think.” To scientifically document the basis of arguments about visual images minimally requires the use of some images – ideally the illustration of the entire corpus. Our results and interpretations are debatable – but not if they cannot be presented in a fashion that allows adequate review and comment on the subject by peers (not politically motivated non-members). Already we see younger Southeastern scholars of iconography abandoning professional journals for the option of edited volumes. That is a sad loss of valuable contributions to our journal. Other significant areas of research that will also be affected

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by this ban include studies of style, chronology, and regional connections that depend critically on visual comparisons of form and design.

To close, we welcome more contributions from Native American scholars to the journal – but as additions to the discussions and debates about the past rather than exclusions of legitimate research. The links between images and referents can be imagined in innumerable ways, and there are legitimate places for those diverse views in

*Southeastern Archaeology*. If basic archaeological data that is the underpinning of scientific research is marginalized and restricted, then an entire field of study is denied, which will foreclose crucial insights into the past.

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## It Can Be Done Better

By Jessica Fleming Crawford, Lynne P. Sullivan, Nancy Marie White, and Cheryl Claassen

It has been explained to the petitioners that the voices claiming harm from viewing photographs of Indigenous funerary objects are “currently a very small number of [SEAC’s] membership” (Hollenbach to petitioners, 06/22/2023). Of the 28 Tribes asked for input by SEAC’s task force, eight responded wanting restrictions on images, of which four wanted full restrictions on all images, including photographs and line drawings (Hollenbach 2023:12). We were not told which Tribes wanted restrictions, even though the respondents presumably were writing in their capacity as representatives of their Tribal governments. If these numbers are correct, this is a response rate of some 29 percent.

The new image policy (SEAC Journal Image Policy Task Force 2023) says that “*Southeastern Archaeology*, the journal of the Southeastern Archaeological Conference, will no longer publish photographs of funerary objects/belongings,” and that “any new submissions that include photographs of funerary objects/belongings will not be considered for review.” But, “another option is to provide supplemental materials that could include photographs.” This is somewhat confusing, but if it means what we think it means, contrary to the initial sentence, the editors of *Southeastern Archaeology* will in fact continue to review submissions that include

photographs of funerary objects, and the organization will in fact continue to publish them—but only in password protected form.

According to the Society for American Archaeology’s Principles of Archaeological Ethics, we must share our research with the public to promote preservation, protection, and interpretation of the archaeological record. We are also responsible for the stewardship of the knowledge and documents created through the study of cultural resources. Presumably, we publish for posterity and our articles should outlive SEAC itself. But in this case, how? We believe the concept of treating images as supplementary material stored in a place separated from the text, in tDAR (the Digital Archaeological Record), is flawed. First, and perhaps most obviously, in an article on iconography, or style, or ritual practice, having the image at hand together with the text is often critical to understanding the piece. Second, it is not clear how a member might distribute a reprint of their article. Third, it has not been addressed or adequately explained how a non-member of SEAC can get access to an article and its password-protected images. Will it work in all environments in which future researchers (members or not) may want to consult our articles? And fourth, given that the integrity of an article would

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depend on an electronic link, what provisions have been made for the long-term preservation of that link?

Another set of problems has to do with the fact that the policy inserts SEAC and its editors into the business of policing research. In publishing either photographs or drawings, SEAC now requires that evidence of consultation be provided to the editor. Authors are to reach out to “all” Federally recognized Tribes in the research area. The SEAC Editor is tasked with judging the adequacy of the consultation and may require the author to do further consultation with additional groups. The new image policy designates the SEAC editor and the THPOs as judges of the worthiness of research based on arbitrarily rigid standards. This is much like the Tennessee legislature outlawing drag shows because they are “harmful.” According to these legislators, Tennesseans shouldn’t be allowed to choose for themselves if they want to see one or not.

We should not burden the editors of SEAC with being brokers of a consultation process. Their job is difficult enough as it is. Furthermore, this attempt at inclusiveness excludes those outside the government-defined framework. Many of us have, and will continue, collaborating with Indigenous persons who may or may not be a member of a Federally recognized tribe. Ancestral remains and associated objects are no longer being excavated, and those that were excavated in the past have been, and are being, repatriated. Few Southeastern archaeologists are even photographing funerary objects now, because access to them has been recently restricted. Of the last twelve issues of *Southeastern Archaeology* (2020-2022), eight of the articles included at least one photograph of a funerary object. Credit for the photographs are given, but the date the photo was taken isn’t always clear. Still, a quick scan of those articles suggests the most recent photograph was made in 2017. Some of the photographs are of well-known artifacts that have been previously published in publications with a larger audience than the *Southeastern Archaeology*, and are on the shelves of

libraries all over the country, including tribal libraries and cultural centers.

The new image policy has obvious ramifications beyond just the pages of future issues of *Southeastern Archaeology*. If it is “harmful” for readers to view images of funerary objects in the pages of future issues, why is it not harmful to view funerary objects in the back issues posted on our web site? If images of funerary objects are not allowed in our journal, why are they allowed in papers at our meetings? Rather clearly, these larger issues will be up for discussion soon, if they are not being discussed already. If past scholarship in the field of southeastern archaeology is censored, what does that look like? We already have an answer, in that the University of Georgia has decided to redact, on their website, images in back issues of their Laboratory of Archaeology series going back to the 1940s. We recommend scrolling through the posted text of William Sears’s classic 1956 *Excavations at Kolomoki: Final Report* to see firsthand how incomprehensible it becomes without the accompanying photographs and drawings. In this posting, original pages 106-114, which contain sherd and vessel drawings and photographs, are not merely redacted but are omitted entirely from the publication, without comment.

*Southeastern Archaeology* is a prestigious academic journal. Seeing our example may motivate other regional and state-level journals to follow suit. Academic presses, including university presses, will feel pressure not to include images of funerary objects. If authors have only limited say in how their work is presented, our journal will, of course, lose important papers to other journals.

We think there are better ways of mitigating “harm” from viewing images of funerary objects and encouraging inclusiveness. In her email to the petitioners dated June 20, 2023, SEAC President Hollenbach stated that after the April 2023 listening session (with Vin Steponaitis, Jim Knight, Carrie Wilson, and Jessica Crawford), the Executive Committee (EC) held “three listening sessions for

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THPOs with interests in our broader SEAC geography, to provide them a similar opportunity to express concerns." According to her summary, comments in the listening sessions concerned,

respect for the wishes and sovereignty of other Native Nations; acknowledging whether individuals were speaking on behalf of themselves, their office/institution, or their community; appreciation for an opportunity to "weigh in"; and support for the new policy, in that Native readers would not be inadvertently exposed to photographs of funerary belongings which might harm them, and Native archaeologists would not have to worry about their articles being published alongside another in the same issue that includes such photographs (Hollenbach to petitioners, 06/20/2023).

In the current image policy, seemingly the SEAC Executive Committee has confirmed that papers that include illustrations of funerary objects may continue to be reviewed and accepted, if warranted by peer review. In the preparation of any such paper for publication in *Southeastern Archaeology*, it is a simple matter to prepare two versions, both accessed by links on our website. One version would contain the images in their place within the body of the text. Another version would have those images redacted. Both would be accessed from the website in the same manner, by clicking on links in which the redacted version is clearly distinguished from the unredacted. No reader would be inadvertently exposed to "harm," and either version could be used as the basis for a distributed reprint. We envision that the print version will be phased out of existence, which is something we will all have to face soon anyway, as virtually all printed scholarly journals are headed in that direction.

The new policy has serious implications for academic freedom and the future of basic research. And for that very reason, it raises a question whose answer should be decided by a vote of the membership, not imposed by the board. The resolution we submitted

to the EC is designed to give SEAC's members a voice in how their own work is presented. And it is their work. It is often the result of years of research, working on shoestring budgets, hundreds of hours in the field, applying for grants, physical and mental exertion, traveling, negotiation, time away from family, and for women, it is twice as much. It is not done with the intent to colonize or harm anyone. In fact, just the opposite is true.

If the resolution fails, the newly announced SEAC image policy will remain in force. But if the resolution passes, then the EC will likely re-open the question and will be obliged to conduct a transparent process, one in which any new policy, "must be developed in open consultation with the membership" and "adopted by a vote of the full membership." Our leaders should not be afraid of transparency. We believe our membership can be trusted to carry out this process with wisdom and in good faith. And we also believe that the membership will likely support a new image policy that addresses the expressed concerns without compromising academic freedom or needlessly curtailing important avenues of archaeological research.

In recent years, SEAC leadership has made concerted efforts to address important issues such as sexual harassment, inclusiveness, and collaboration with descendant communities, by establishing new committees, increasing funds that provide SEAC memberships and grants, and encouraging outreach to underserved communities. Are photographs of funerary objects in a professional journal whose readership is largely confined to its members the primary reason why we don't have more Native archaeologists? Many of us have spent our careers working with Tribes, and our members are voluntarily collaborating with THPOs and tribal archaeologists now more than ever before. This outreach should continue, and it should continue beyond tribal employees to tribal members. That is inclusiveness, and that is what will encourage participation and interest in archaeology. We applaud and support these efforts.



## IT CAN BE DONE BETTER

Regarding tribal historic preservation officials and others who may feel discomfort in viewing photographs of funerary objects, we can easily accommodate their concerns by publishing a separate, redacted digital version of our journal. Perhaps the practice of Southeastern archaeology is evolving away from certain kinds of research and toward others. Such an evolution may well lessen the frequency of publishing illustrations of funerary objects. If so, let it evolve. An effort by SEAC's leadership to forcefully steer that evolution risks an organizational schism and a substantial loss of members.

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## Note from the Journal Editor

By Lindsay Bloch

I have received some questions regarding how the new image policy will affect the quantity of submissions to *Southeastern Archaeology*, or change the quality and breadth of the journal. I would like to address these and other concerns.

1. Since the introduction of the policy, there has been no decrease in submissions. The policy has been in place for approximately 9 months. During that same period in the immediately previous years, the number of article submissions has been within the same range (See below table).

Period	Article Submissions
November 2020—July 2021	16
November 2021—July 2022	18
November 2022—July 2023	18

2. None of the submissions received since November 2022 have included images subject to this policy. I do not have data on what is not submitted, but I suggest that a few factors are at play: a) authors are more carefully curating their figures, and find that they are able to convey their desired content without images of funerary belongings; b) research focusing on funerary objects makes up a small percentage of current research conducted by archaeologists in the Southeast; c) authors wishing to publish images

subject to our policy are choosing to publish elsewhere. I acknowledge that there may be members who have chosen or will choose not to publish with *Southeastern Archaeology* because of this policy. However, I have also heard from authors who plan to submit to the journal because they appreciate the policy, and see *Southeastern Archaeology* as a progressive venue for their research. There are many other publishing options available to archaeologists. While we value our member-authors, I note that Conference members who submit articles are not granted any special consideration or benefit over non-members.

3. Under the new policy, publication subject matter has remained diverse. Recently published articles and those still in the publishing pipeline include landscape studies, artifact analyses, and bioarchaeological research, among many other topics.

Speaking personally, I feel strongly that our journal has an ethical responsibility of respect for Native Nations and other descendant groups within the Southeast. I am troubled by the knowledge that a Native reader could be harmed by the content of our journal, when our content can be modified slightly to avoid that outcome. I see this policy as a small gesture of good faith to encourage broader participation within the Conference and to foster more authentic collaboration.

## Native American Affairs Liaison Committee Statement

By Karen Brunso and Isabelle Holland-Lulewicz

At the request of several of SEAC's Native Nation partners, SEAC organized a task force to evaluate our journal's image policy with the goal of increasing discretion regarding the inclusion of photographs of funerary objects and belongings. Many of our southeastern Native Nations believe viewing these objects, even in photographs, can cause great harm in a number of ways. The new image policy not only decreases this harm but provides agency to our Native Nations and members regarding how their ancestors and belongings are treated.

Anthropology is the study of humans, and as a subfield, so too is Archaeology. Unfortunately, the practice of Archaeology in many ways has strayed from this definition in the hyperfocus on artifacts, the symbols they carry, both literally and figuratively, and how those symbols change through time. This has occurred even to the point of using these artifacts to name and define people. We are all more than our objects. Archaeology is losing its humanity in more ways than one. In doing so, Archaeologists have disenfranchised the living cultures, through inadvertent and intentional exclusion and avoidance, whose ancestors created these artifacts and whose understandings of the sacredness of these artifacts remain today. Moving forward, Archaeologists, including SEAC, must provide agency to Native Nations regarding the treatment, research, display, curation, and publication of their ancestors and ancestral homelands.

Fortunately, the field of Archaeology is changing, albeit slowly. The Society of American Archaeology updated its *SAA Statement Concerning the Treatment of Human Remains* in 2021. The document states Descendant Communities (which include Native Nations) should have agency over how archaeologists research their ancestors. The new SEAC image policy is taking the recommendations in the *SAA Statement Concerning the Treatment of Human Remains* and expanding it, at the request of our Native Nations, to

the sacred objects that tribes do not see as separate items, but one and the same with the ancestors with which they were interred. The new SEAC image policy is an important first step in including Indigenous voices to facilitate a more ethical Archaeology.

The requirements put forth by the new SEAC imagery policy should not be seen as an extra burden. Nor should they be considered to hinder research or academic freedom. In fact, as we move forward as a discipline, consultation and collaboration with Native Nations should occur well prior to the publication stage, eliminating many, if not all, "publishing roadblocks." Consultation and collaboration not only improve our knowledge of the archaeological record, but also work to ensure the minimization of risk and harm to descendant communities. The new SEAC image policy only begins to address the ethical and moral obligations we have to the living descendants of our past interests. It does not automatically prohibit the publication of research on funerary objects/belongings but rather requires consultation and, where allowed, the substitution of line drawings for photographs. It is hard to imagine how one could view this shift in the discipline as anything other than an opportunity to be better and to do better.

Archaeology is at a crossroads. We have an opportunity to expand who we involve in our research, teaching, and outreach and to bring more people into Archaeology, enriching the discipline and providing an active role in the discipline and practice of Archaeology to Native Nations, partners, and members. While the new SEAC image policy is not perfect and does not account for all the wishes of the Native Nations surveyed, it is a first step in the right direction. We support the Task Force's decision to protect the minority that is our Native membership, as well as the broader Native community, in the implementation of this policy. We also acknowledge

## NATIVE AMERICAN AFFAIRS LIAISON COMMITTEE

that the Board has expressed continuing support for this image policy and urge them to continue to hold steadfast in their commitment to creating a more collaborative and inclusive archaeological community in the Southeast. It is time that SEAC, the Board, and its membership affirm that this organization is a future-forward organization, not one rooted in antiquated methods that invoke harm through the disregard of core principles and values of the peoples whose ancestors are at the heart of this organization.

Sincerely,

Karen Brunso (Chickasaw Nation)

Isabelle Holland-Lulewicz (Penn State University)

Co-Chairs for the SEAC Native American Affairs  
Liaison Committee

### Statement from RaeLynn A. Butler

Historic & Cultural Preservation Manager for the Muscogee (Creek) Nation

The love and respect I have for my Muscogee homelands in the southeast, which contains our cultural remains and legacy, runs very deep and goes beyond what anthropology and archaeology could hope to ever teach me. As a Muscogee Citizen, I have never needed academia or CRM folks to tell me who I am or what it means to be Mvskoke. I was born Mvskoke and I will die Mvskoke. My family and traditional elders have taught me who we are and who our people were and this cultural knowledge cannot be learned from a book.

However, I have a growing interest and appreciation for the field of archaeology, especially after reading hundreds, if not thousands, of archaeological reports doing Section 106 compliance work at my job with the Muscogee (Creek) Nation. Despite the dark past of classical archaeology, I have not written off the field or its practitioners quite yet, mainly because I still have hope for a better future. I enjoy learning and working with archaeologists and discussing archaeological research with my coworkers and family. I filter the archaeological findings through my Mvskoke brain, which has the traditional knowledge of why mound sites are sacred and how my people continue to take care of sacred spaces and grounds as part of our Mvskoke religion. I see holes in the interpretations and narratives from some archaeologists. It is very clear that our people have

not been consulted on most of the research coming out of the Southeast.

I agree that there are benefits to academic research. However, we need to learn from each other and build relationships that are equitable, so both sides benefit from the research. Also, I do not understand why practitioners in the field are so dedicated to studying the burial practices and belongings of our people. This sole focus makes working together very difficult. The Mvskoke have a deep reverence for our ancestors and their belongings. Our religion dictates that we do not exploit or harm them, because it can bring sickness onto ourselves. Our ancestors did not consent to their bodies and belongings being excavated or studied and it is time to let them finally rest. Even pictures of such sacred objects can cause harm. Federal law established more than 30 years ago mandates their repatriation to their descendants.

As a SEAC member, attendee to the conferences, previous co-author, and contributor to *Southeastern Archaeology*, I fully support the new image policy and feel it is respectful to tribal cultures and tribal sovereignty. This is a big step in the right direction, and I commend and thank the SEAC Executive Board and Image Policy Task Force for their work to develop the journal's image policy. This policy will help my tribe be more aware of ongoing research

## STATEMENT FROM RAELYNN A. BUTLER

that involves funerary objects and allow us the opportunity to meet and consult with researchers. This may not have happened otherwise. I have had the privilege of meeting and working with many great archaeologists and students over the years, and I hope this issue does not create further division in our communities. Please continue to work with tribes to build a more inclusive and respectful field of study. I

want our community participation to continue to grow, not be diminished.

Mvto

RaeLynn A. Butler, M.S.

Citizen of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation

SEAC Member

## Statement from Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians THPO

By Stephen Yerka, Johi Griffin, Beau Carroll, Miranda Panther,  
Steven Long, Brian Burgess, and Russell Townsend

**D**o no harm. This is--according to the AAA--the primary ethical imperative of anthropology followed closely by, "obtain informed consent and necessary permissions." (<https://americananthro.org/about/anthropological-ethics/>). The new image use policy for SEAC is an attempt to modernize Southeastern archaeology and to help southeastern archaeologists comply with the professional ethics of Anthropology. Archaeologists in North America are anthropologists and are therefore bound to the ethics of the field. If an archaeologist cannot comply with the professional ethics of their field, then they are no archaeologist at all, and should be stripped of their positions, tenure, and rank. The misguided petition put forward by a small number of conservative archaeologists hearkens back to the colonial origins of archaeology. Do these old archaeologists own the past? Are they the gate keepers? Have they created any useful knowledge? Have they been good anthropologists even throughout their careers? According to the professional ethics of the field it is easy to argue that they have not. So why at this moment, when many southeastern archaeologists are striving to fulfill their obligations and repair the damage caused by repeated disenfranchisement of Native peoples and the treatment of Native people as objects of "scientific study," why now should the overly entitled and historically privileged conservative archaeologists complain that their voices aren't being counted. The irony of Euro-American archaeologists

complaining about feeling like they have not been consulted about policy is not lost on Native people.

It seems that the underlying thesis presented in the petition against the image use policy is that Native people are objects for observation. This mindset continues to allow for the manipulation and ultimate extinction of Native people. This policy only mirrors more significant problems that have existed within archaeology since its inception. Who has the right to control how these images are used? The field of archaeology has created a distance between Indigenous people and their material culture and heritage. The use of these images continues to reduce Native peoples to only scientific specimens and not living people. Native cultural heritage is further reduced to an academic commodity, perpetuating the idea that Indigenous views of their past lack legitimacy. Native people's material heritage continues to be viewed as a "resource" used as symbolic capital within publications for the archaeologist's accumulation of status and power. Native people's religious views, lifeways, and beliefs are outweighed by the need to be successful and leave a mark within a field that continues to mirror its colonialist past. For Native people, our history, cultural heritage, and images form part of our present life, and it is ours to share on our terms with whomever we choose. The use of these images perpetuates the belief that graves and associated



## STATEMENT FROM EBCI THPO

grave goods are specimens, samples, and objects of scientific gaze through subjugation. The debate on who owns the past is not what we are concerned about in this instance but a small part of the research process. The petition for the image use policy is a continuation of archaeologist's view that they possess more ownership of the Tribe's ancestral past than the people who created it.

From a moral standpoint, Tribes are and continue to express concern over issues such as using images of grave goods within scholarly journals. Also, for many southeastern Tribes, replicating grave good images creates a real danger for the people and community. Allowing these images to be used publicly is believed to introduce sickness, ill health, and even death to anyone who views them. Tribes are often put into a predicament where they want to participate in the study of their ancestral past but are assaulted when doing research within publications and trying to attend conference presentations. Viewing these images even briefly requires tribal members to go through a process to rid themselves of the sickness they contracted by accidentally viewing an image. If the individual cannot engage in this process, they will carry that sickness and pass it on to everyone they encounter. Tribes are not asking archaeologists to have the same beliefs as they do, but we want to feel that our safety and concerns matter.

This policy isn't about the continued subjugation of Native people and archaeology's continued attack on tribal sovereignty. It's not about who owns these images and, ultimately, who controls their use. It's not about why archaeologists feel they own another's past and have the right to use it for academic gain. Tribes are requesting a conversation about which images may be used and why. This proposed image use policy protects Tribal communities from further exploitation and physical harm by allowing us to express our concerns in an ongoing dialogue. Many collaborative research instances have produced a complete and richer interpretation of the archaeological record. These successes were possible

because archaeologists included Native people in the research that they were producing. Tribes have had almost everything stolen from them, including their voice. Native people will continue to fight for the right to determine how their ancestral past is being used and studied, and it is wrong to keep taking from them.

The above stance reflects the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians Tribal Historic Preservation Office (EBCI THPO). The EBCI THPO was formalized in January of 2001. Since our inception, we have had a set of treatment guidelines for human remains and funerary objects that covers the following: survey, excavation, laboratory/analysis, and curation. These guidelines were created through consultation with Cherokee traditionalists and elders who were a part of our Elder's Advisory Board. The first sentence says, "the EBCI requests that in the event human remains, funerary objects, sacred objects, or objects of cultural patrimony are encountered, no photographs of such items be taken. Detailed drawings are permissible, however." This stance is repeated throughout the body of the document, under every category. It also addresses research requests and proposals, removing funerary objects, sacred objects, and objects of cultural patrimony from display /public view, and that researchers not automatically be granted access to such items. Tribes have developed policies and procedures for ancestors and their belongings decades ahead of anthropologists and professional organizations such as SEAC. We have widely disseminated these policies. It's disheartening that we must keep advocating for prior and informed consent and humane treatment in 2023 from a group of educated and often esteemed anthropologists. We take the role of protecting human rights seriously at the EBCI THPO. We are advocating daily for native ancestors and their belongings to be treated with the dignity and respect they deserve. We would request the members of SEAC to uphold the new image use policy that was developed with tribal input.

## Statement from LeeAnne Wendt

### Co-Chair of SEAC DEI Task Force and Member of Image Policy Task Force

I have always been interested in archaeology and history, even as a young girl exploring around central Alabama, where I was born and grew up. As a southeastern archaeologist, I obtained my undergraduate degree from the University of Alabama, have almost eight years of CRM work throughout the southeast, and acquired my graduate degree from the University of Mississippi. During my time in school, I had classes with professors who are well known in the archaeological community, who have written countless books and articles and have had numerous presentations on the work they have conducted throughout their careers. I learned many aspects of our discipline during these formative years. However, throughout all of my schooling at this time, descendant communities were rarely, if ever, mentioned. If these communities were mentioned, it was always in the past tense rather than making any connections to the Tribal Nations that are still thriving today and continue to care about their homelands.

For the last nine years, I have had the privilege to work for the Muscogee Nation as their archaeologist. I have been involved in numerous field projects, consultations, NAGPRA meetings, worked with students and archaeologists on their research, and have been a part of various presentations that have been given to the archaeological community and the public. Very early on in my time working with the Tribe, I found myself questioning what I had been taught and learned about our discipline and what archaeology should, or eventually could be. As a Euro-American archaeologist, I have been exceedingly fortunate to learn from many Mvskoke people. They have educated me on how important their culture, language, and history continues to be to them and why they work so hard to protect their homelands. I am thankful to have been given opportunities to work with and support traditional elders and leadership in identifying and protecting cultural sites. I am also grateful to have been invited to ceremonial grounds,

where I was able to see and hear the songs and dances that were brought over on the Trail of Tears (Nene Estemerkv-Road of Misery). The Mvskoke culture is still alive today and has been passed down for hundreds of generations.

Over the years, having learned from Mvskoke people, I have found my viewpoints on archaeology have drastically changed. I also see some of the challenges that tribal people face, including the publication of numerous books, articles, and presentations by individuals about Muscogee Nation, but never reaching out to the Tribe regarding them, or only reaching out once or twice in their career. Collaboration is not new, but it definitely needs to be revived and incorporated more into archaeological work. We need to put more of an emphasis on the descendant communities and their involvement and perspectives on the field when they have the traditional knowledge to make our work more detailed and thorough.

I was given the opportunity to be on the image policy task force and have been a part of the conversations that led to where the image policy now stands. I was also a part of the meeting where the petitioners spoke about how this policy will affect them and the discipline at large. To be honest, it was quite disappointing perhaps even laughable when you get past being dumbfounded, that the petitioners were upset that they were not “consulted” regarding this image policy when consultation is exactly what Tribes have been asking for from archaeologists all these years, to be consulted on their ancestors, their objects, their culture, and their history. Opinions that have been brought up against the image policy include: how it will affect future research, how students will not be able to do their work, that line drawings are expensive, etc. In actuality, what the image policy is asking, is for archaeologists to consult and work with Tribes regarding their ancestors’ funerary objects. That’s it. The policy is not a

## STATEMENT FROM LEEANNE WENDT

hindrance and should not be viewed as such. The policy does not stop research on cultural sites. Overall, this should be seen as an opportunity for archaeologists to speak with and learn from the Tribes and to gain a fuller understanding of these cultural sites and objects.

Unfortunately, there are always going to be individuals who will balk at any type of change or fear that their 'rights' or their academic freedoms are being taken away. It is beyond disappointing that a petition has even been raised against the image policy and that the petitioners want the policy rescinded. As archaeologists, we have to remember that our

discipline is very colonized and that we need to strive for better, not just for archaeology, but for ourselves as well. Archaeology can be so much more, we just have to have the courage to make those changes to becoming more equitable.

I applaud the Executive Board for their enduring support for the image policy and for wanting our field to be more inclusive.

LeeAnne Wendt, M.A., RPA  
SEAC member, Co-Chair SEAC DEI Task Force,  
Member of Image Policy Task Force

## Statement from Rob Beck Former Editor of *Southeastern Archaeology*

Later this year, SEAC will ask us to vote on a petition that seeks to revoke the new image policy for *Southeastern Archaeology*. To be clear: 1) a task force appointed by the former SEAC president and chaired by the current president developed this policy over months of research and deliberation, having also solicited suggestions from the membership through an announcement in the conference newsletter, *Horizon and Tradition*, that went unanswered; 2) the elected officers of the SEAC Executive Committee voted to approve the policy on the recommendation of the task force; 3) following the policy's announcement at the 2022 Annual Meeting in Little Rock, both the task force and the Executive Committee agreed in good faith to revise it on the basis of concerns raised by several members of the conference; and 4) those members still chose to join with others (amounting to 2% of the total membership, in accordance with SEAC bylaws) to prepare a petition insisting that the entire policy be revoked by a vote of the conference. Among the petitioners are some of our most senior and respected scholars, a number of whom have received the conference's highest awards. Like many of us, I count several of the petitioners among my own

mentors. Others are close friends. Yet I believe that in this matter they are wrong.

I have little more to say on the history of either the policy or the petition--Kandi Hollenbach does an admirable job of that in this newsletter issue. I will only state that both the policy and the petition were accomplished in full accordance with SEAC bylaws. What I hope to do instead is to focus on a question: why has the journal image policy drawn such a strong reaction, whether from those like me who support it or from those who urge us to revoke it and presumably to begin again from scratch, if at all? First, a pertinent fact: no other SEAC policy in living memory--not in association with the journal, with finances, with venues, elections, or bylaws--has ever been met with a petition to revoke it by a referendum of the full membership. Granted, the right to petition exists as Article VI, Section I of the SEAC bylaws, but it seems never to have been invoked. Why this policy? Perhaps most importantly, this policy places a limit on academic freedom. **It is among the first policies adopted by an American archaeological conference that recognizes the need to balance our academic**

## STATEMENT FROM ROB BECK

### **freedom with our responsibility to Tribal nations.**

The new policy requires that authors intending to publish photographic images of funerary belongings must include written evidence of consultation with Native nations having ancestral ties to the region in question, or else evidence of the authors' effort to initiate such discussions. This means that authors seeking to publish in the journal will no longer enjoy absolute freedom to use any image they unilaterally choose to illustrate their research. Moreover, the policy stipulates that the journal will publish such images, after consultation, as supplemental online materials. Readers of the journal in digital format will be able to link directly to images of funerary objects referenced in articles or reports. But viewing the images will be a choice--it will require readers to take the active step of clicking a link. We acknowledge that some readers might consider this extra step to be an inconvenience, but I believe that the policy more than balances such concerns by protecting those readers who might be harmed by undesired exposure to such materials.

By any standard, this does indeed limit our academic freedom. Elsewhere, a reader of these essays is likely to encounter arguments that academic freedom is sacrosanct, that any imposed limits are a threat to all academic freedoms anywhere. Or maybe not. I might be overstating the fervor of my colleagues. Yet I would argue that academic ethics lay as squarely at the heart of this matter as academic freedom. And these ethics, our collective sense of what is right and what is wrong (or at least what constitutes best practice), are more prone to change than abstract absolutes like academic freedom. Once upon a time, consultation was all but unheard of in the practice of southeastern archaeology. We need not use this fact to speak or think ill of our predecessors--after all, presentism is bad ethics now--but it is worth asking why consultation remained unusual for so long. Why did southeastern archaeologists enjoy such

extraordinary freedom in choosing where to dig, what questions to ask, which remains to collect and analyze, all without need to consult or even inform descendent communities about the work that they were undertaking? It was a different time, of course. Travel was more difficult. Communication across large distances was less timely and reliable. It was more of a burden to locate Tribal representatives who lived hundreds of miles from the most significant archaeological sites. Unlike in the Southwest, after all, few descendent communities remained in the places where their ancestors lived. Whether we acknowledge it or not, that extraordinary freedom was rooted in the ground of Removal.

Today we can do better. We must. And this image policy is a good step for SEAC. It asks that we consult, that we listen. It urges us to acknowledge the rights of descendent communities in shaping how, when, and even whether we disseminate images of their ancestors and the things that accompanied them in death. By publishing such images online as supplemental materials--in the context of consultation--it recognizes that some Tribal nations might welcome readers to view images of funerary objects. It protects, without excluding, members of our community who wish to read the journal but might suffer harm from unwanted exposure to such images. And it enables authors to share images with those readers who choose to view them. Perhaps we can improve the policy, and the conference should be open to suggestions for doing just that. But to revoke it now and begin from scratch, particularly given the range of Native voices involved in all steps of its development, would be a profound mistake and a stain on the conference. We have taken strides in recent years to make SEAC a more diverse, equitable, and inclusive community, words that are vapid when matched by good intentions alone but powerful when met with real action. It is not enough, though, to invite people in but insist that they leave everything as it was. SEAC has long been a home for many of us. Looking forward, it should be a home for us all.

## Statement from Kandi Hollenbach

### President of SEAC and Chair of Image Policy Task Force

As head of the Image Policy Task Force, I am in full support of the current image policy. As we listened to the perspectives of several Tribal representatives during our development of the policy, with their strong opposition to the publication of photographs, and of further handling, of funerary belongings based on spiritual beliefs, it was clear to me that we needed to end the publication of photographs of funerary belongings in *Southeastern Archaeology*.

Much of my stance on the policy also stems from several years of reading, listening, and thinking. In the summer of 2020, while the SEAC Executive Board was developing a statement after the murder of George Floyd, Turner Hunt (Muscogee Nation) commented that southeastern archaeology has its own racist practices. He noted that to work in any other country, American archaeologists are required to collaborate with local researchers. And in many parts of the US, archaeological projects are required to have a Native monitor. Not so in the Southeast. While some southeastern archaeologists do enter into discussions with descendant communities early in their research projects, most do not.

I've also read a number of articles and books on Indigenous archaeology and collaborative archaeology, which highlight mutual respect and reciprocity between descendant communities and researchers. With as much as I have taken from the ground and used for my own archaeological career, what have I offered in reciprocation to the descendants of those whom I have studied and written about?

And I've been reading Robin Wall Kimmerer's *Braiding Sweetgrass*. She not only talks about reciprocity but also about the potential of a mutually beneficial relationship between Indigenous knowledge and Western scientific knowledge from her perspective as a botanist and a member of the Citizen Potawatomi Nation. She relates the relationship to

the Three Sisters garden, with Western science playing the role of corn, and Traditional Ecological Knowledge as bean, winding around corn stalks and feeding nitrogen to their roots. The squash sister is represented by ethics, shading out weeds and keeping moisture at the feet of corn and bean. But note that Kimmerer is referencing biology and botany for Western science. American archaeology is even more entwined with (and indebted to) Native communities: our subjects are not just the ecological landscapes that settlers forced Native peoples off of, but also the ancestors and histories of Native peoples themselves.

Ethics change over time, as our social perspectives change. These have changed significantly over the past five years, and drastically over the past 30 years. If SEAC is serious about increasing diversity in our membership, then we must act on the reasonable requests of our Native partners. These include leaving out photographs of funerary belongings from the journal so that Native readers are not inadvertently exposed as they flip through the pages, so that Native authors do not have to be concerned that their articles would appear in the same issue as a sensitive photograph, and so that funerary belongings are not handled more than necessary. Just as important, and hopefully as generative, is a commitment to consultative discussions with descendant communities. If these discussions can lead to mutually beneficial relationships, then southeastern archaeology may have a bounty of research and projects that support the desires and needs of descendant communities as least as much as the careers of archaeologists. I sincerely hope that the SEAC community grows (or continues to grow) into such relationships of reciprocity and respect. This image policy moves us in that direction.

Kimmerer, Robin Wall (2013) *Braiding Sweetgrass: Indigenous Wisdom, Scientific Knowledge and the Teachings of Plants*. Milkweed Editions, Minneapolis, Minnesota.