

Interest in the history of archaeology is now being seen on the Internet in the form of various discussion groups known as "listserves". At the end of the current issue the BHA provides a listing of a number of listserves that interested readers may join. Frequently, each listserv has discussions relating to the history of archaeology. I encourage the readership to avail themselves of this important resources.

Douglas R. Givens, Editor

II. Discourse on the History of Archaeology

TEOCENTLI: AN ANTHROPOLOGICAL NEWSLETTER, EVER SINCE 1926

by

Richard B. Woodbury

An elitist anachronism (a semi-private old boys' and girls' network)? Or a unique window on the past (what archaeologists said informally, year by year, about what they were doing and thinking)? Or both? *The Teocentli* ("The" was later dropped) began in May 1926 when Carl E. Guthe, of the University of Michigan, sent a mimeographed letter to 45 friends and colleagues, proposing an informal newsletter or round-robin to provide periodic communication among archaeologists and others "who are working in various phases of those Indian cultures which came to owe their development to a knowledge of maize cultivation." He took the name "Teocentli" from the "native Mexican grass from which maize is supposed to have developed."

He began his letter by asking "How many of you can give the details of the work...[of] each of the forty-five men listed on the second sheet of this letter? I'll wager few of you can. Yet every one of them is working on archaeological problems which are related to those upon which you are working. Suppose we could get... together for a meeting.... Would you want to tell them of your work and listen to their reports?... Since such a meeting 'in the flesh' is out of the question, the next best thing would be a note from each one, wouldn't it?"

The list was lost, unfortunately, when Guthe's house in Ann Arbor burned to the ground in the 1950s. However, Charles R. McGimsey III (Bob) has reconstructed it from records compiled by Alfred K. Guthe, the second editor. The 39 contributors to the first two newsletters are probably close to the original list of 45.

Guthe said the idea had developed in informal discussion at the Christmas, 1925, meeting of the American Anthropological Association (AAA) in New Haven. He now asked each person