On a balmy morning in early August, two dozen American and Romanian archaeologists efficiently backfilled the large excavation block at Pecica Șanțul Mare. As we hurled shovelfuls of earth over the ancient living floors, two realizations hit us: (1) we had moved a lot of dirt during the eight-week season; and (2) as a result, we had collected a significant amount of data, which would improve the archaeological understanding of this important site.

Pecica Șanțul Mare is a large Bronze Age tell in the Carpathian Basin of western Romania, which has been excavated by the Museum of Anthropology’s Dr. John O’Shea, Dr. Alex Barker, and a collaborative team of American and Romanian archaeologists for several seasons. Their work seeks to clarify the rise of trade and metallurgy in Bronze Age Eastern Europe, and the effects of those developments on social organization and evolution on local and regional scales. Such research goals will certainly be furthered by information generated from the ceramic, faunal, geologic, lithic, and metal material collected, and the structures and features excavated, during this most recent season.

In addition to pursuing this research agenda, the 2008 campaign also offered an invaluable learning experience for three graduate students, fresh from their first year at the University of Michigan, who had never excavated in Eastern Europe. We benefited greatly from the analytic expertise of several colleagues. Dr. Sarah Sherwood, geoarchaeologist at Sewanee: The University of the South, demonstrated myriad techniques for exploring the soils and stratigraphy of Pecica, encouraging us to approach the site’s matrix as an artifact, since “the dirt don’t lie.” The flotation work led by the Museum’s paleobotanist Laura Motta will likely yield valuable insight regarding (continued on page 10)
University Museums inhabit peculiar places in the academic landscape, and our students love them, especially curatorial places. We are an educational unit that does not offer formal courses; we have collections of more than three million objects and no exhibit space; and we are, as this newsletter shows, most certainly a center of research and knowledge production in our laboratories and field projects. Through all of these, the Museum of Anthropology plays an important role in the life of the University. Recently, that role has been acknowledged through our invitation to join the University’s Public Goods Council, a collaboration of University museums, libraries, and other cultural organizations that work together to “enrich the University’s teaching and research environment” and “promote the value and use of collections, performance, and concepts of the public good.” As part of the Council, we will be hosting a museum open house on November 14 and 15 to celebrate the finale of the University’s latest development campaign. I hope that you can join us, and if not, I hope that this newsletter will provide some information on the many things that our curators, staff, and students have accomplished over the last year.

We have our own thanks to extend as part of the campaign finale—to all of you who have supported and continue to support the Museum’s activities, and especially the research of our undergraduate and graduate students. On pages 10 and 11 we acknowledge the generous gifts of Wes Cowan and John and Linda Halsey, who continue to support the Museum’s activities, and especially the research of our undergraduate and graduate students. On pages 10 and 11 we acknowledge the generous gifts of Wes Cowan and John and Linda Halsey, as well as all of you who have so generously supported the Museum over the last year.

Thanks as always, and as always, I look forward to seeing you in Ann Arbor, at a professional meeting, or at my field site in rural South India.

Carla M. Sinopoli
October 20, 2008

Curators

Henry J. Wright was awarded the Gold Medal Award for Distinguished Achievement by the Archaeological Institute of America. The award recognizes Henry’s “distinguished contributions to archaeology through his fieldwork, publications, and/or teaching.” Henry will accept his award at the annual AIA meetings in Philadelphia in January 2009, where he will be honored by a Gold Medal Symposium: “Archaeological Approaches to the Study of Early States. Papers in Honor of Henry T. Wright,” co-organized by Sharon Herbert (UM Kelsey Museum) and Carla M. Sinopoli. Presenters include UM alumni Garth Berlinger, Zoe Crossland, and Jen Gates-Foster, in addition to Rita Wright (NYU), Nicola Terenuto (UM, Classical Studies), and Joshua Wright (Stanthorpe).

Letter from the Director

Staff Spotlight

Joyce Marcus is busy analyzing an important faunal collection from the period before, during, and after the creation of Mesoamerica’s first state. This collection includes refuse from Mesoamerica’s first known palace. Joyce Marcus was a member of the American Philosophical Society this year, and now holds the “triple crown” with her memberships in the National Academy of Sciences and the American Academy of Arts and Sciences. She was awarded the Cotsen Book Prize, awarded for Excavations at Cerro Anil, Peru: The Archaeology and Pottery (Monograph 62, Cotsen Institute of Archaeological Monographs, UCLA). In addition, Joyce has been working hard on the archaological and photographic collections of the Museum’s Latin American Division—expanding and connecting the new collections to published materials and photos of objects that so much of our own collections speak to. She is working with Greg Howard Tsui and several UROP (Undergraduate Research Opportunity Program) students on a range of activities—including library research, updating catalog descriptions, relabeling drawings, and digitizing photographs.

Richard Redding was appointed the Director of Research of the Ancient Egypt Research Associates.

Curator C. Loriing Brice celebrated with his PhD students at his April 2008 retirement party.

In the Zooarchaeological Laboratory, Kent Ranneny is busy analyzing an important faunal collection from the period before, during, and after the creation of Mesoamerica’s first state. This collection includes refuse from Mesoamerica’s first known palace. Joyce Marcus was a member of the American Philosophical Society this year, and now holds the “triple crown” with her memberships in the National Academy of Sciences and the American Academy of Arts and Sciences. She was awarded the Cotsen Book Prize, awarded for Excavations at Cerro Anil, Peru: The Archaeology and Pottery (Monograph 62, Cotsen Institute of Archaeological Monographs, UCLA). In addition, Joyce has been working hard on the arachnological and photographic collections of the Museum’s Latin American Division—expanding and connecting the new collections to published materials and photos of objects that so much of our own collections speak to. She is working with Greg Howard Tsui and several UROP (Undergraduate Research Opportunity Program) students on a range of activities—including library research, updating catalog descriptions, relabeling drawings, and digitizing photographs.

John Speth and doctoral student Khol Newlander are using ultraviolet fluorescence to identify projectile points at Bloom and Henderson pueblo sites that they believe were made by the villagers, using chalk from several sources in Texas, while on the plains hunting. The abundance of points made on different types of “non-local” chalk provides clues to where in the Southern Plains the Roosevelt villagers did most of their bison hunting. John plans to return to Roosevelt this summer with the UMMA archaeological field school to continue to explore an early stage in the development of plains-pueblo interaction, and the cost that the Roosevelt villagers paid for their participation after relations with communities of the Southern Plains deteriorated. John is completing a book manuscript on the role of big-game hunting in human evolution, which looks at hunting and meat-eating from many different perspectives. It surveys the energetic and opportunistic costs to foragers of hunting large mammals, the return rates that foragers get from their hunting large versus small game, the extent to which meat is the “high-quality” food that paleoanthropologists so often assume it to be; the importance of animal protein and the need for a dietary source of DHA (docosahexaenoic acid) in the evolution of our uniquely large brains; and the social, political, and reproductive benefits that accrue to men from their hunting activities. The somewhat counterintuitive conclusion of the book is that large-game hunting very likely has more to do with social and political forces than with nutrition. Nutritionally, foragers would generally do better pursuing resources other than large game.

Bob Whallon returned to Montenegro this summer with doctoral student Andy White to continue excavations at the Paleolithic site of Crvena Stijena, which contains one of the deepest stratified Middle Paleolithic sequences in Europe. Bob’s edited book Late Paleolithic Environments and Cultural Relations around the Adriatic (International Union for Prehistoric and Protohistoric Sciences, Proceedings of the XV World Congress [Lisbon, 4-9 September 2006], Volume 4) was published by the BAR International Series (No. 1716) in 2007. Over the last year, Henry Wright has conducted fieldwork in Syria, Madagascar, China, and Michigan. After a few false starts with the printers, Henry’s monograph on his Madagascar research finally came out in winter 2008 (see page 9).
The Museum sponsored three archaeological field schools in the summer of 2008, involving undergraduate and graduate students in field projects in Arizona, Michigan, and Senegal.

**UMMA Archaeological Field Schools**

2008 marked the third UMMA field school at the University of Michigan Biological Station (UMBS) on Douglas Lake in Michigan’s northern Lower Peninsula. We gratefully acknowledge the staff of the Biological Station for support and collaboration in this work. UMBS celebrated its 100th anniversary this summer and our seasons of archaeology have revealed that this lakeside location drew people together for many hundreds of miles away in northern Canada), which had hundreds of artifacts every day. Before I came to UMBS, I did not know about American Indian history, but now I appreciate it much more, thanks to Professor Howey. My time at the UM Biological Station Archaeological Field School was one of the most memorable experiences of my college life. When I arrived at UMBS for the first time, I felt about nature—huge needle-leaf trees enshrine beautiful Douglas Lake. When it rained on the roof of the tin shack, I felt very close to the storm. On clear nights, I saw the sky full of thousands of stars twinkling. Since this was the first field school for me, I was quite busy learning the basic skills of archaeology in the first week, but as time went by, I caught up fast. We each had our own 1 x 1 meter unit to dig. I also screened a lot of pottery, lithics, and fish bones. We started work at a 700-year-old site and then moved to one around 1000 years old. It was marvelous to think that people lived in this cold area so long ago. Later, we also found deer bone, a cat’s jaw, and bear teeth. We got very excited and found many more artifacts every day. Before I came to UMBS, I did not know about American Indian history in Michigan, but now I appreciate it much more, thanks to Professor Howey. However, the experiences of archaeology were not like Indiana Jones. The film missed lots of steps in actual archaeological work. In an archaeological project, we used tools such as trowels, shovels, and piers. For cutting the wall after we dug, I used the skills that I learned in art school, which worked quite well in making a neat and clean line. It rained for the entire last week of our season. As we backfilled, we were wet, muddy, and smelly, but filled with excitement and a sense of great achievement. Surely, the archaeological field school at UMBS will be one of my best memories of my time at the University of Michigan.

**Undergraduate Portfolios**

**Excavations in Belize ~ by Malo Dedrick**

This summer was my second season excavating at the site of Medicine Trail in northwestern Belize. Medicine Trail, a small Maya agricultural village located 2 km from the large site of La Milpa, is the focus of the Project for Belize Archaeological Project, directed by Professor Fred Valdez of the University of Texas at Austin. My project has focused on off-mound excavations of a small house lot from the Late Classic period that is associated with numerous agricultural and water-management features. I am interested in understanding the relationship between the household’s residents and agricultural decisions and practices at the site.

Over the six weeks spent excavating, I received assistance from field school students and junior staff. My excavations exposed a platform wall that formed the foundations for the main house structure. I excavated test pits around and behind the different structures to identify possible middens locations and other evidence of activity areas.

I was able to clarify household chronology as well as identify spaces available for outdoor activities. Besides finding distinct ritual deposits, I found a mano, indicating a residence space.

My research expanded on prior work at Medicine Trail in several ways. I took soil samples from almost every stratigraphic layer, floated them in the field, and analyzed them. I also washed the ground stone and chert tools that I found in the field with a sonicator, and brought the resulting washes back to Ann Arbor to test for phytoliths.

Ultimately, I believe this research will lead to a better understanding of how social and agricultural organization represent changes at the end of the Classic period in this region that led to large-scale population losses by A.D. 800.

**In the Wilds of Northern Michigan ~ by Hye-Jin Park**

The weather in northern Michigan in the late spring is unpredictable to say the least. 2008 marked the third UMMA field school at the University of Michigan Biological Station (UMBS) on Douglas Lake in Michigan’s northern Lower Peninsula. We gratefully acknowledge the staff of the Biological Station for support and collaboration in this work. UMBS celebrated its 100th anniversary this summer and our seasons of archaeology have revealed that this lakeside location drew people together for many hundreds of miles away in northern Canada), which had hundreds of artifacts every day. Before I came to UMBS, I did not know about American Indian history, but now I appreciate it much more, thanks to Professor Howey. My time at the UM Biological Station Archaeological Field School was one of the most memorable experiences of my college life. When I arrived at UMBS for the first time, I felt about nature—huge needle-leaf trees enshrine beautiful Douglas Lake. When it rained on the roof of the tin shack, I felt very close to the storm. On clear nights, I saw the sky full of thousands of stars twinkling. Since this was the first field school for me, I was quite busy learning the basic skills of archaeology in the first week, but as time went by, I caught up fast. We each had our own 1 x 1 meter unit to dig. I also screened a lot of pottery, lithics, and fish bones. We started work at a 700-year-old site and then moved to one around 1000 years old. It was marvelous to think that people lived in this cold area so long ago. Later, we also found deer bone, a cat’s jaw, and bear teeth. We got very excited and found many more artifacts every day. Before I came to UMBS, I did not know about American Indian history in Michigan, but now I appreciate it much more, thanks to Professor Howey. However, the experiences of archaeology were not like Indiana Jones. The film missed lots of steps in actual archaeological work. In an archaeological project, we used tools such as trowels, shovels, and piers. For cutting the wall after we dug, I used the skills that I learned in art school, which worked quite well in making a neat and clean line. It rained for the entire last week of our season. As we backfilled, we were wet, muddy, and smelly, but filled with excitement and a sense of great achievement. Surely, the archaeological field school at UMBS will be one of my best memories of my time at the University of Michigan.

**Undergraduate Students**

**Undergraduate Honors Students**


Christopher Jackson: Toward a Further Understanding of Late Archaic Settlement in the Saginaw Valley of Michigan, Perspectives from a Special Activity Site (Thesis Advisor: John O’Shea), Winter of 2008

Benjamin Shepard: Social Differentiation in Early Bronze Age Siberia (Thesis Advisor: John O’Shea), Winter of 2008

Jennifer Ramirez received support to travel to Senegal to join the Sine Ngayene Archaeological Project. Julie Chauvin and Dylan Imre received awards from the James B. Griffin Undergraduate Research Fund: Dylan Imre and Julie Chauvin for local archaeological fieldwork, and Sarah Slifkin from the Carl E. Guthe Endowment.

If you would like to know more about how to support undergraduate research, please visit http://www.lsa.umich.edu/umma/support/ or contact Carla M. Sinopoli at sinopoli@umich.edu
These objects have been on exhibit for so many years, and it was time to store them properly. The plan worked perfectly in the end, and the kayak crate needed to be cut into thirds to allow them to be assembled directly in the storage area. Although time-consuming and a little out of the norm, the work was completed.

The crates needed to be customized because of the difficulty in getting large objects into the Museum’s offsite storage area. Each canoe crate had to be cut in half, and the kayak crate needed to be cut into thirds, to allow them to be assembled directly in the storage area. Although time-consuming and a little out of the norm, the work was completed.

Overall, the project was a success and the Museum is delighted to finally have these objects stored properly after so many years on exhibit.

Two dugout canoes from Michigan, a kayak (right) from the 1925 MacMillan Expedition in Greenland, and a wooden coffin from the Philippines were packed out of Detroit. The job took several months of planning. Each object was first measured, and plans for crates were made. The kayak was the largest of the objects, measuring nearly 19 feet in length, with the crate being closer to 24 feet long to accommodate padding around the kayak.

The removal of the materials required that each object be carefully carried down the central staircase of the Museum and then readied for packing. With help from School of Information student Derek Spinei, the objects were vacuumed to remove the dust before packing. Each object was then wrapped in plastic sheeting and placed within the padded crate.

The crates needed to be customized because of the difficulty in getting large objects into the Museum’s offsite storage area. Each canoe crate had to be cut in half, and the kayak crate needed to be cut into thirds, to allow them to be assembled directly in the storage area. Although time-consuming and a little out of the norm, the plan worked perfectly in the end.

Overall, the project was a success and the Museum is delighted to finally have these objects stored properly after so many years on exhibit.

**2008 Accessions and Activities**

Since January 2008, the Museum has accessioned 21 collections. Dr. Paul Minnis has been a steady donor, sending comparative materials from various parts of the U.S. for the Ethnobotanical Lab. Other donors include Richard Redding and Kent Rannery with more comparative animal skeletons for the Zoarchaeology Lab, and Henry Wright, who gave another collection of iron tools from China. Following last year’s donation of Southwest U.S. pottery, Dr. Mark Warner donated the remaining pottery, Navajo blankets, and Great Lakes baskets from his parents’ collection. These have once again added immensely to our Ethnographic collections.

This summer’s field school at UM’s Biological Station on Douglas Lake, Michigan, also generated a large collection. The majority of these items were cataloged during the field season and are now on loan to Dr. Meghan Howey at the University of New Hampshire for further study.

The activities of the Collections Department over the last year have been varied. Work continues on inventorying the last of the Ethnographic Collections at our off-site storage area. We are down to the last cabinet and plan on finishing by December. The inventory of the Ethnobotanical Lab continues, through the dedication of graduate student Daphne Galagher. In July, the Museum resubmitted a grant to the National Science Foundation Biological Research Division for rehousing the Ethnobotanical Collections. If successful, a three-year project to rehouse materials will begin in August 2009.

Finally, the Museum will be working on creating a Finding Aid and inventory of the Frank Boos Oxnard UTM photographe file. The collection came to the Museum as a bequest in 1968 and became part of the Latin American Ethnography Library in the late 1970s. With help from the Bentley Historical Library, several graduate students and Collections Manager Karen O’Brien were trained in creating a Finding Aid for the collection, which will then be placed within the University’s Library Catalog (Melny) for access via the internet. A link will be established from the Museum’s website once completed, so check back in a few months!

**New in 2008 from Museum of Anthropology Publications**

**Early State Formation in Central Madagascar:**
An Archaeological Survey of Western Avaradrano
(Memoir 43)
edited by Henry T. Wright

**Imperial Transformations in Sixteenth-Century Yucatán, Peru**
(Memoir 44)
transcribed and edited by R. Alan Covey and Donato Amado González

**Prehispanic Settlement Patterns in the Northwestern Valley of Mexico:**
The Zumpango Region
(Memoir 45)
by Jeffrey R. Parsons—available early 2009-

The Museum of Anthropology Publications accepts manuscript submissions and queries from any scholar. Manuscripts are reviewed by a Publications Committee made up of several Museum curators and the editor. The committee selects manuscripts based on quality of scholarship and writing, as well as technical and economic feasibility. The Museum looks especially for manuscripts that complement our research interests and theoretical approaches.

Please contact the editor at umma-pubs@umich.edu for additional information or to submit your manuscript.

**New Survey Vessel**

Curator John O’Shea has been spending his fall sabbatical on the deck of the UM Survey Vessel Blue Traveler, shown here tied up at Harrisville, Michigan. John and colleagues have been traveling roughly 40 miles off shore to survey the Lake Stanley Causeway beneath Lake Huron, using side scan sonar and a “Min-Rover” remote operated vehicle. The boat is a 25-foot Parker, a hybrid work/fishing boat designed for use in the Atlantic, and is one of only a handful found on the Great Lakes. It was obtained through a shared major equipment grant from the UM Office of the Vice President for Research, with contributions from LSA, UMMA, the Engineering School, and the Marine Hydrodynamics Laboratory. The survey of the 10,000 n.c. causeway beneath Lake Huron is funded by NSF and is a collaboration between John, Professor Guy Meadows of the MHL, Professor Ryan Evans of the Department of Naval Architecture and Marine Engineering, and Professor Bob Reynolds of the Department of Computer Science at Wayne State University. In addition to the NSF-funded study, the boat is also used for our ongoing research on nineteenth-century Great Lakes Shipwrecks, both as a survey vessel and as a platform for scuba operations.
Notes from the Field cont.


We especially acknowledge generous gifts to two graduate student funds from the President’s Challenge. As part of this challenge, President Coleman pledges to provide a 1:2 match for every dollar given to support graduate student research, making your $30 gift worth $90, your $200 gift worth $600, and so on. This challenge is open until the end of December; please consider giving to support the Michigan Museum of Art and the University of Michigan Museum of Art in order to continue supporting our graduate student research.

We Thank Our 2007-2008 Donors

For information on giving opportunities and development priorities of the Museum of Anthropology please contact

Carla M. Sinopoli (sinopoli@umich.edu) or visit http://www.lsa.umich.edu/umma/support/
Lost wax brass figurines from our collections
Made by Yaw Amankwa of Ghana
Currently on display in the UM Exhibit Museum of Natural History in
“Casting Tradition: Contemporary Brassworking in Ghana”