Underwater Archaeology in the Great Lakes

Below the sparkling water of Lake Huron, far below the University of Michigan survey vessel Blue Traveler, lies the Alpena-Amberley ridge, a feature that stretches from today’s Presque Isle, Michigan, area to Ontario’s Point Clark. Sophisticated surface-towed side scan sonar and remote-operated vehicles (ROVs), equipped with video cameras, are launched, and the ridge begins to yield intriguing evidence of early hunters—the first confirmation of human activity found beneath the Great Lakes—and raises the exciting possibility of discovering intact settlements and ancient landscapes preserved in the frigid lake.

Modern Lake Huron covers archaeological sites from the terminal Paleoindian and Archaic periods associated with the Lake Stanley low water stage (10,000–7,500 BP). The Museum of Anthropology’s Dr. John O’Shea, with Professor Guy Meadows (Director of the U-M Marine Hydrodynamics Labs), Professor Bob Reynolds (Wayne State University), and Assistant Professor Ryan Eustice (Department of Naval Architecture and Marine Engineering), first used bathometry (above) and 3-D surface...
This year’s newsletter contains a lot of good news about the Museum. Most important is the imminent arrival of our newest curator, Robin Beck (see page 3), who will join us this January as Assistant Curator of Eastern North American Archaeology, and Assistant Professor in the Department of Anthropology. Robin’s arrival adds a talented teacher and researcher to our Museum community and a renewed attention to our important Eastern North American archaeological collections. We also welcome another new faculty member, Jamie Merkel, who will oversee our NSF-funded three-year project to rehouse the ethnobotanical collections in new archival storage and make the collections more accessible both physically and virtually. The Museum has mounted a major new exhibit highlighting our research and collections (page 9) in the Exhibit Museum of Natural History, and is a key participant in the LSA 2009-2010 Theme Year “Meaningful Objects: Museums in the Academy,” celebrating the important contributions of U-M museums.

Our graduate student community is dynamic and creative—maintaining old traditions and creating new. The photos on the rear of the newsletter were taken at the student-run “Curators Ball” in Spring 2009, celebrating the 30th year since the first ball was conceived, and this fall, our students, working with students in the Interdisciplinary Program in Classical Art and Archaeology (IPCAA), organized the first graduate student conference on Material Culture and Archaeology. Now for the bad news. Not surprisingly, this is our grim Michigan economy and the toll that it continues to take on the state and university. We are now working to figure out how to trim our very tight operating budget by an additional six percent over the next three years. This may not seem onerous compared to recent news from other universities, but we are now entering our 8th year of recession and budget tightness, and all the easy cuts have been made. It is increasingly difficult to identify areas to trim that won’t severely hurt our graduate students (our mandated cut is the equivalent of three GSRA positions), our important publications program, or other essential museum activities. We will certainly be leaner at the end of this period, but with your support and the talents of our curators, staff, and, especially, students, I am confident the Museum of Anthropology will continue to thrive.

Carla M. Sinopoli
November 5, 2009

We are delighted to welcome Dr. Robin A. Beck, who in January 2010 will join the Museum of Anthropology as Assistant Curator and the Department of Anthropology as Assistant Professor. After earning his PhD at Northwestern University in 2004, Dr. Beck held academic positions at Southern University and Northwestern University, and, currently, is an Assistant Professor of Anthropology at the University of Oklahoma.

Rob’s archaeological research focuses on social change among horticultural societies of the New World. His research spans from the study of the foundations of inequality, which he examined in his doctoral work in the Bolivian Andes and in his M.A. work on the Mississippian frontier of the Upper Catawba Valley (W. North Carolina), to his current project examining the cultural transformations that followed European contact in the Southern United States.

Since 2001, he has co-directed the Exploring Jorua Archaeological Project in North Carolina with David Moore (Warren Wilson College) and Christopher Bodinig (Jalene University) in the Upper Catawba Valley of North Carolina. The central town in this area, the Berry Site, was one of the largest native towns in western North Carolina during the sixteenth century and was the native town of Joana, visited by the Hernando De Soto and Juan Pardo expeditions in the mid-sixteenth century. Dr. Beck and his colleagues first identified Spanish artifacts at the site in 1994 and since then have located Fort San Juan, built by Juan Pardo in 1567. The fort was destroyed by Native communities in 1588, and it is unclear whether the Native communities that were destroyed by colonial forces continued to live at the Berry Site or moved to the nearby town of the fort, which in turn collapsed. The Berry Site at the School of Advanced Research in Santa Fe. Rob’s future research in the area will continue to add temporal and theoretical depth to our understandings of the archaeology and history of the Southeastern United States, moving both backward and forward in time.


Along with working with U-M undergraduate and graduate students and continuing his research in the Upper Catawba Valley, Rob is looking forward to working with the rich Eastern North American archaeology collections in the Museum’s North American division, and to making these important collections more accessible to students and the larger scholarly community.

We look forward to welcoming Rob, Laoma, and Solead Beck to the U-M Museum community.

Joyce Marcus published The Ancient City, New Perspectives on Urbanism in the Old and New World (edited by Fernando Saavedra) in the National Academy of Sciences; published by School for Advanced Research Press), and Andean Civilization (with Patrick Ryan Williams) (Cotsen Institute of Archaeology, UCLA).

John O’Shea continued his underwater archeology projects in Lake Huron (see page 1), as well as his excavations of the Bronze Age tell of Pecka Gora (Poland) and the Copperband Basin of Romania. Jeffrey Pearson, a Benteneaux, published Prehispanic Settlement Patterns in the Northwestern Valley of Mexico: The Zapopango Region (see page 11), and “Reconstructions of My Life in Archaeology” (ancient Messowcar 2012(2009)1-14). Jeff participated in a symposium, focused on the conservation of archaeological resources in Mexico, at the meeting of the Congresso Internacional de Americanistas held in Mexico City. He also gave three lectures at the Escuela Nacional de Antropologia e Historia, as well as a keynote lecture, “Caribbean History—An Andean Conversation with Bill in the long of his decades, 1961-2008,” at a memorial for the late William T. Sanders.

Carla Sinopoli returned to South India in June 2009 to continue work on materials from her on-going excavations at the Late Prehistoric settlement of Kademalke. In October 2009, she delivered the keynote lecture, “The local and the global: Exploring deep South Asian histories through a fine lens’” at the 38th Annual Conference on South Asia in Madison, Wisconsin.

John Speth, together with Karen O’Brien, UMAA’s collections manager, and recent U-M Anthropology PhD Jamie Capobianco, completed the detailed analysis of the skeletal remains from the Henderson Site and Bloon Mound, two recently excavated sites in eastern New Mexico. They also finished cataloging and boxing up the many thousands of artifacts, animal bones, and botanical materials from the previous excavations at Bloon Mound. Analysis of the new collections from this past summer’s fieldschool at Bloon has progressed rapidly this fall thanks to the efforts of graduate student Los Anderson and undergraduates Marianna Spysma, Caroline Bradford, and Kafie Lacey. By January 2010, the artifacts and fauna will be coded and digitized, and much of the cataloging completed. With graduate student Khoril Howland and undergraduate Honors student Erin Gage, John also undertook an infrared, ultraviolet fluorescence (UVF) study of the flint artifacts from the Rosewell sites, finding that they could use the different UVF responses of debitage and projectile points to determine where in the Southern Plains the Rosewell sites were doing most of their bison hunting, and the degree to which village access to Southern Plains bison herds varied by competition and conflict escalated during the early part of the 15th century. John also increased the preparation of a temporary exhibit on Plains-Pueblo trade for the Exhibit Museum of Natural History. The exhibit, based largely on John’s field work in southeastern NM, is now on display at the Hubbard Museum of the American West in Ruidoso Downs, NM.

Harry Wight continues to work on the issues of developing civilizations in the Middle East, Madagascar, China, and elsewhere. In July, he taught for the Santa Fe Institute at a workshop in Beijing on approaches to complex systems, and participated in two archaeological programs—a visit to the steps of Inner Mongolia (continued on page 8)
The Museum sponsored two archaeological field schools in the summer of 2009, involving undergraduate and graduate students in field projects in Michigan and New Mexico.

Archaeology drew together a great group of students and specialists to beautiful, if sometimes un- forgiving, northern Michigan. For the fourth consecutive summer, archaeology was part of the U-M Biological Station’s summer research program. Field school students worked beside an NSF-funded research crew that included graduate students from U-M, Michigan State University, and Wayne State, and undergraduates from U-M, University of New Hampshire, and University of Delaware. Research focused on contextualizing the abundant clusters of cache (storage) pits spread across the inland lake landscape surrounding Douglas and Burt Lakes. Previous seasons had located habitation remains on low terraces near cache pit clusters; this summer’s group excavated more than 1800 shovel test pits in similar contexts to try to locate additional habitation sites. We also expanded excavations at a Late Prehistoric site on Burt Lake where we found evidence of a dense midden. Our excavations of a number of cache pits revealed that they were larger and more complicated than we expected and our research revealed evidence for buried pits with evidence of structures built on top of them—another new and surprising contribution to Michigan archaeology.

UMMA Archaeological Field Schools

This summer, Dr. Tim Horsey and Dr. Meghan Howey worked with the Burt Lake (Cheboygan) Band of Ottawa and Chippewa Indians to relocate unmarked graves in one of their historic cemeteries. Following their forced removal from Indian Point in 1900 (see http://www.burtlakeband.org), the Band moved to a new settlement along Indian Road (Cheboygan Co.) where they established a new church and community cemetery in 1909. Graves in this active cemetery are marked by wooden crosses, some of which appear to have become lost over time. During this year’s archaeolog- ical field school at the nearby U-M Biological Station, it was decided to try and relocate these lost burials using modern non-destructive geophysical techniques.

Aided by field school students and Band members, Tim—an experienced archaeological geophysicist—employed ground-penetrating radar (GPR) and earth resistance methods to detect anomalies associated with graves. These techniques have had little application in Michigan to date, so this presented an ex- citing opportunity to test out our effectiveness in this region. As the accompanying figure shows, the surveys were very successful and reveal the neat rows of individual burial- als. Comparison of the results with the locations of grave markers has allowed some 24 unmarked graves to be identi- fied, including those of five possible infants based on their smaller size. New markers were set in place to indicate the locations of these unmarked graves for the Band to commemorate in the future.

This event has strengthened a budding collaboration with the Band, one where archaeology exchanges, listens to, and gives back meaningful information to the community. The work also demonstrates the potential both for locating historic graves and for other archaeological applications in Michigan.

This survey was made possible due to the openness of the Burt Lake Band, and Band member Kay Trayle was instrumental in this collaboration between the tribe and archaeologists. Tim Horsey is a UMMA Assistant Research Scientist and Meghan Howey is an Assistant Professor in Archaeology, University of New Hampshire; and UMMA Adjunct Assistant Research Scientist. The work was conducted as part of the UMMA Field School and the NSF-funded Cultural Landscapes of Douglas Lake Archaeological Research team led by Dr. Howey.

Collaboration Reveals Unmarked Native American Graves

Field Schools continue...
**Doctoral student Alice Wright** worked in Pilagah National Forest in western North Carolina on a salvage excavation of a Beaked Root Shelter with occupation from the Middle Archaic through protohistoric periods. She will return next summer to conduct plant discrimination research on Middle Woodland homesteads and local and regional exchange.

**Doctoral student Colin Quinn’s** recent research has centered on Bronze Age Beeways in Ireland. The summer he went to Dublin to study museum collections from the county of the Holyhead and Tara (Co. Meath), and then headed west to County Galway to lead an excavation team investigating potential Bronze Age houses on the island of Inniscarrig.

**Doctoral student Emily Brill** spent the past year on a Fulbright Fellowship in the Medico-Companion region of Sardinia. Data from her excavations of two Middle Bronze Age sites will be used to study the development of social complexity on the island.

**Research scientist and archaeological geophysicist Dr. Tim Harlow** joined the Harvard University field project in Jiangsu Province, China, to conduct geophysical surveys to locate and map buried sites. He will work in Maryland, Michigan, and Indiana this year.

**Lori Young** returned to northeastern Arizona with four labs undergraduates to participate in the annual open house at Nocca Hills State Park, USA, and her team completed an experimental archaeology project begun in 2008 by excavating the remnants of the building and used kiln waste.

**Curator John O’Shea** continued his NSF-funded research under Lake Huron, where he is working to document Holocene and early Holocene subsistence and sites associated with ancient carbon hunting. See article on page 1.

**Curator John O’Shea and doctoral student Amy Northcutt** returned to the Carmel-barn Quinlan’s house of Rosana to continue their excavations at the Bronze Age fort of Pecota in central Romania. Also on the crew were students Katy Lacy, Ashley Lemke, Sarah Os, and Heather.

**Doctoral student Anna Compton** was in Johannesburg, South Africa, for a summer directing survey and excavation at the Klaarwater Cultural Center. The team included data for the previously research project.

**Doctoral student Ashley Lemke** again joined her from Michigan College of Western Texas, and Harvard University on an NSF-funded underwater project in the Gulf of Persia that is to locate Paleolithic-age hearth mantles and archaeological sites.

**Doctoral student Amanda Logan** and Andrew Wathen joined Dr. Amy Northcutt’s (of Victoria) project in Ambala, Ghana, excavating houses that span the period of the Atlantic slave trade. Amanda remained in Bando through the fall to conduct ethnographic research on food change.

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Hemanth Kadambi

Graduate Student Support
The James B. Griffin Scholarship Fund

Created by the Museum’s curators in 1975 on the occasion of James B. Griffin’s retirement from the University of Michigan, the James B. Griffin Scholarship Fund has provided small grants to up to 15 doctoral students in anthropological archaeology to support their dissertation fieldwork and related analyses. The first Griffin Scholarship award was given to Mary Hodge in April 1980 for her doctoral research on the Aztec empire; the most recent award went to Cameron Gokese for his work in West Africa (see below). Over the years, and thanks to donations from more than 100 individuals, many of them Griffin Scholarship awardees themselves, we have been able to increase the award amount from $500 to $2500.

Over the last year, the fieldwork of three doctoral students was partially supported by Griffin Scholarship funds:

Cameron Gokese used the Griffin Scholarship Fund to support his excavations at the middle Iron Age site (c. 1000–1000 B.C.) of Dodoboye on the Falaba River in eastern Senegal. Cameron’s work, also supported by the Rackham Graduate School and the Fulbright Foundation, examined social and economic practices at a village site located near important gold sources during the period of expanding West African trade networks and state formation.

Uthara Suvrahothen used support from the Griffin Fund and the Thelin Gift for South Asian Archaeology to conduct a preliminary season of archaeological surveys around the early historic urban center of Bauvasi (ca. 100 B.C.–c. 600 A.D.) in Kamatuka, India. Her research explores shifting settlement forms, elite strategies, and economic interactions as the city shifted in and out of positions of political centrality in the region—from a political capital to a periphery of more distant states and empires. Uthara is currently preparing grant proposals and plans to return to India this winter to complete her fieldwork.

Matthew Galton spent the winter of 2009 directing his first season of archaeological fieldwork at the first millennium CE town of Kaemphaen Suem, in the western Chaopraya River Valley of Central Thailand. Kaemphaen Suem, a 52-hectare settlement surrounded by a moat and earthen rampart, lay between two possible capitals of one of Thailand’s first kingdoms: the 7th-10th century CE Phrasutthiwatani. Matt’s research explores changes in the organization and functions of the town in the context of larger processes of state formation. The results of Matt’s Griffin Funded mapping and testing provided important background information to guide his current excavations at the site, funded by the National Science Foundation and a Luce Foundation/ACLS Fellowship for Southeast and East Asian Archaeology.

Other Griffin Scholarship Fund awardees currently in the field or completing their dissertations include Veronique Belisle, Howard Truf, and Allison Dorns (Peabody); Kholi Newlander (North America); Paul Duffy (Hungary); Daphne Gallagher (Burkina Faso); Amanda Logan (Ghana); and Elizabeth Bridges and Hemanth Kadambi (India).

In the face of increasing research costs and declining University resources, the Griffin Scholarship Fund remains an invaluable resource for supporting our students. Please consider making an additional gift to keep this resource available for future generations of UM graduate students.

Curator Notes and News cont.

to look over later historic sites recorded during the University of Pittsburgh’s collaborative Chilling Region Survey under Dick Drennan, and to help with the analysis of later ceramics; and the ceramics and site records from the 1999–2008 Y-Luo survey in the heartland of North Chinese state formation around the early capital of E’iliutu. During the fall, Henry was in Madagascar working on two field projects, both involving the training of Madagascans students. The major effort was the “Ethnography Project” of Robert Dewar and Chantal Radimilahy, funded by the British Institute in Eastern Africa. They finished their last major season around the old and modern port of Vohemar in the far northeast, completing the stratigraphic excavations necessary for the local chronology and completing their regional surveys. They found more evidence of early foragers and a evidence of a 15th–16th c. port deeply buried under the modern port of Vohemar, and a site of much good seaford. With his long-standing colleague Ramilison, Henry also conducted a brief but intense survey effort in the Central Highlands near the modern capital Antananarivo, where they are documenting a war, not mentioned in the historical traditions, between nascent 18th-century proto-states. Henry’s next monograph on Iran’s Dari Lutan Plan is in press in the Museum’s publication series and should appear in early 2010.

Jamie Clark defended her dissertation “Testing Models of the Emergence and Nature of Modern Human Behavior: Middle Stone Age Faunas from Sibudu Cave, South Africa” in January 2009. Jamie is currently a Visiting Assistant Professor in the Department of Anthropology at Southern Methodist University.

William Griffin defended his thesis “The Maritime Archaeological Project: Culture History and Social Complexity in the Seven Rivers Region of Southeastern Madagascar” in May 2009. Will is an Associate Professor of Anthropology at St. Charles Community College.

Grant Accomplishments
Kholi Newlander and Matthew Galton received NSF doctoral dissertation improvement grants; Matt also received a grant from the ACLS/Luce Foundation. Matthew Kroll was awarded grants from the Wenner Gren Foundation and from ACOR-CAORC to conduct doctoral research in Jordan. Amy Nicolemuss and Colin Quinn received an award from the Museum’s Linda Bilston and John K. Halsey Fund for Great Lakes Archaeology. Hemanth Kadambi, Elizabeth Bridges, and Uthara Suvrahothen received support from the International Institute’s Thelin Fund for South Asian Archaeology. Veronique Belisle has been awarded a Rackham Dissertation Fellowship for 2009–2010.

In 2009–2010, the U-M College of Literature, Science and the Arts Theme Year “Meaningful Objects: Museums in the Academy” celebrates university museums as sites of critical reflection, knowledge production, cultural engagement, teaching and learning, and personal fulfillment. Numerous special exhibitions, lectures, classes, “behind-the-scenes” tours, films, workshops, and other events are taking place throughout the year. Museum of Anthropology Director Carlo Sinopoli is coordinating the campus-wide theme year and the museum is involved in many theme year events. Our curators, research, and collections are featured in two new exhibitions in the Exhibit Museum of Natural History: “Archaeology!” (see below) and “Collecting for Science,” an exhibit highlighting the scholarly contributions of the four IAS research museums (Archaeology, Herbarium, Paleontology, Zoology). We are also hosting behind-the-scenes open houses and Collections Manager Karen O’Brien is working with Todd Gerring (Kelsey Museum) to coordinate the “Day at the Museum” lecture series for winter 2010, which features museum careers and museum professionals from around the campus.

John Speak presented a Saturday Morning Physics Lecture on big game hunting in human evolution to an audience of several hundred on October 24, and Carla Sinopoli and Research Scientist Lisa Young presented a workshop sponsored by the Center for Research on Learning and Teaching on “Teaching It, Web and About Museums” to a packed room of more than 60 attendees.

Throughout the year, other speakers and events will highlight the contributions, complexities, and challenges faced by university museums in the 21st century. For our museum, most of which lies behind closed doors posted with a sign that reads “Research Wing Not Open to the Public,” this theme year provides a wonderful opportunity to introduce ourselves to the public and in our larger University community about what we do and why we matter.

For a wonderful interactive map of our curators in the field and complete information about all theme year events, please visit:

http://lsa.umich.edu/museumtheme/

This new exhibition, a collaboration of the Exhibit Museum of Natural History and Museum of Anthropology, presents ongoing research by U-MMA archaeologists in displays that examine both the kinds of questions that contemporary archaeologists ask about the past and the techniques that they use to answer them. Museum research and collections are highlighted in each of the exhibition’s five sections: Doing Archaeology—Tools of the Trade; High Tech Archaeology; Archaeology All Around Us; Objects and What They Tell Us; and Archaeology and You. The exhibition was designed to be easily updated and modified and modules will change periodically. Please stop by and view it in the fourth floor gallery in the Rutherford Museums building the next time you are in Ann Arbor.
The Museum of Anthropology Publications program is actively seeking manuscript submissions and queries from authors. Complementing our research focus, the Museum publishes data-rich archaeological and ethnographic monographs in North American, Latin American, Near Eastern, European, African (especially Madagascar), and Asian archaeology and ethnology. Manuscripts are peer-reviewed by a Publications Committee made up of several curators and by the editor. The committee selects manuscripts based on quality of scholarship and writing. Please contact the editor Jill Rinecker (jrineck@umich.edu) for additional information or to submit your prospectus or manuscript.

To order publications, see www.lsa.umich.edu/umma/publications.

This fall, the museum welcomes Dr. Grace Barreto-Tesoro (PhD 2007, University of Cambridge), Associate Professor of Anthropology at the University of Puebla, Mexico. Grace is in Michigan as an ACLS/Luce Fellow in the Archaeology of Ancient Southeast and East Asia, and with photographer Archie Tesoro, is spending four months in Ann Arbor documenting and researching the earthenware ceramics and other materials in the Museum’s Philippine Expedition (Guhite) Collection. Grace’s research interests include mortuary analysis, ceramic analysis, and identity and status in Philippine prehistory.

The Museum also welcomes Dr. William Rendu from the University of Bourdeaux. Dr. Rendu is a specialist in archaeology of the Middle Paleolithic, with interests in hunter-gather mobility, seasonality, and zooarchaeology. Will spent spring 2009 in Ann Arbor before returning to France to direct excavations at the important Mousterian site of Chelle–Aux-Saints. He will be returning to U-M when winter sets in to continue his collaborative research with John Speth on seasonality and subsistence in the Middle Paleolithic Kebara Cave site in Israel.

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/
Curator's Ball 2009: With the theme "1979" UMMA celebrated the 30th Anniversary of the Curator's Ball in April 2009.