

# ROLL @BamaAnthro!

## Fall 2013 Newsletter

**University of Alabama  
Department of Anthropology**

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## Encounter with Don Felipe: A Distinguished Bonesetter



During the summers of 2012 and 2013, [Dr. Kathryn Oths](#) led a team of anthropology graduates into the Andean highlands of Northern Peru, to investigate medical treatment choice in the peasant hamlet of Chugurpampa. Oths' initial relationship with this community began over 25 years earlier when it served as her dissertation research site. Back then, it was a highly productive agricultural zone of more than 900 individuals with good average health status. Since then, the once peasant community (*comunidad campesina*) has become private property and fissioned into two communities--Chugurpampa and Victor Julio (N=~600)--though most inhabitants live in Chugurpampa, where the school, church, medical post, soccer field, and stores are located. Climate change has affected the availability of herbs for traditional and home remedies and made it increasingly difficult to earn a living, and the incursion of mining and agriculture companies only adds to daily challenges. Amid these shifting political, economic, and social changes, conditions for maintaining health and treating sickness are transforming as well. The initial goal of research was to assess the link between traditional ecological knowledge and current medical practices. It was hypothesized that, given the tumultuous changes that have occurred in recent years, younger peasants would be less likely to know or put faith in traditional and home remedies for their illnesses.

For two weeks in August 2012, the team engaged in participant-observation and conducted formal and informal interviews with a convenience sample of adult peasant farmers currently residing in the hamlet. The survey included

questions about demographics, agricultural pursuits, recent income, and socioeconomic changes since the 1990s, and focused specifically on *knowledge, use, and availability* of various types of remedies and healers. Herbs are still unanimously preferred to biomedicine, and humoral theory remains the reigning etiological explanation. There is little perceived loss of herbal availability, and these treatments are seen as equally effective for young and old community members. Bonesetters are still sought for musculoskeletal problems, and people continue to put much faith in 'soul calling' for cultural syndromes like *susto*, or fright illness, and guinea pig rubdowns (*soba de cuy*) are common for diagnosis and treatment. As before, certain illnesses, such as severe respiratory ailments, are seen as better treated with biomedicine, though there is still little confidence in hospitals.

There are areas where change appears evident. Youth have less interest in learning home remedies, which is particularly distressing to Chugurpampans, considering that herbalists and healers are in shorter supply than in the past. A doctor is now preferred over a health sanitarian and over a midwife; however, this latter preference may be spurred in part by government incentives for biomedical prenatal care and delivery and by lack of options, since midwives no longer practice there.

What has eroded over time is much less highlanders' knowledge or beliefs than the availability of healers. People would like to seek traditional medicine in most cases, but there is hardly anyone left to go to for such care. While climate change has not affected the availability of herbs for treatment, it has damaged agricultural livelihoods, inciting an exodus of Chugurpampan youth to pursue opportunities in the coastal city of Trujillo. Amid this migration, children no longer aspire to become healers, whereas 20 years earlier, dozens of individuals fulfilled what was then a culturally-valued social role. The realization that traditional healing roles in Chugurpampa face serious threats to their continued existence, laid the foundation for subsequent investigations.



These Peruvian highlands are the site for Dr. Oths' current research project

In August 2013, Dr. Oths and her research team returned to the hamlet to host a medical conference and film a documentary centering on the life of Don Felipe Llaro, an 80-year old Chugurpampan bonesetter and one of the few remaining healers in the hamlet. The topic of the documentary was to not only highlight the still critical role traditional healers occupy, but also to recapture community interest and

find a protégé to learn from Don Llaro, whose extensive ethnomedical knowledge will one day be lost if not preserved.



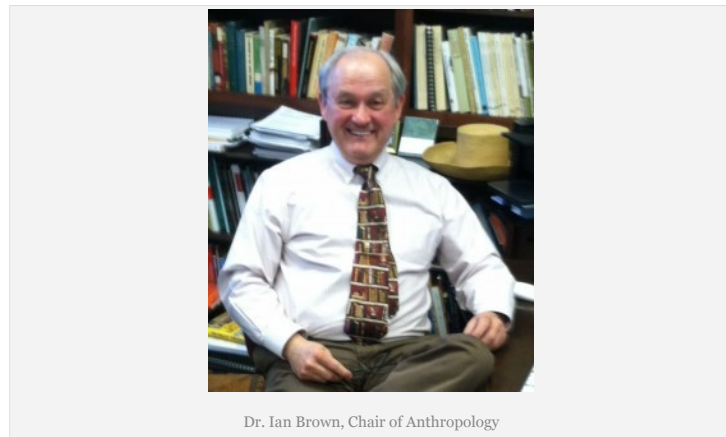
Dr. Oths attending Un Encuentro con Don Felipe: Un Huesero Distinguido, Un Tesoro Nacional Conference

The conference – entitled *Un Encuentro con Don Felipe: Un Huesero Distinguido, un Tesoro Nacional* (An Encounter with Don Felipe: A Distinguished Bonesetter, A National Treasure) – was held in the nearby district hospital, and was a rousing success, attracting biomedical and alternative healers from as far as Lima, to acknowledge the importance of traditional medical knowledge in Peru. For three days, Don Llaro welcomed patients to present their complaints, and shared with a fixated audience his breadth of musculoskeletal treatment knowledge. On an individual level, Don Llaro’s participation in the conference appeared to reinvigorate his passion for providing medical treatment, as he proudly demonstrated his life’s work to a room full of healers. More broadly, the conference will hopefully contribute to preserving Don Llaro’s traditional knowledge, in the form of a protégé. Specifically, his granddaughter, who lives in the city of Trujillo but often cares for her grandfather with her younger siblings, showed interest in continuing his legacy. Dr. Oths’ future research aims to follow this young girl’s journey to become enculturated in this traditional knowledge system, as well as document the continued impact of climate change on ethnomedical healing roles in highland Peru.

## DeCaro, Collaborators Receive Head Start Grant

[Dr. Jason DeCaro](#) is one of several recipients of a grant from the Administration of Children and Families who will implement and assess intervention programs to improve school readiness and child well-being among [Head Start](#) preschoolers in West Alabama. In partnership with the Community Service Programs of West Alabama, he and the other grantees ([Ansley Gilpin](#) and [John Lochman](#) from Psychology and [Caroline Boxmeyer](#) from Psychiatry and Behavioral Medicine) will follow children into 1st grade to assess the effectiveness of programs that teach children social and emotion regulation skills and support parents and teachers in fostering positive home and school environments. DeCaro and colleagues are receiving \$2.25 million over 5 years to assess these programs, which include classroom curricula and interventions to address broader challenges--such as parental mental health, job prospects, and financial obstacles--that influence family well-being. Dr. DeCaro’s involvement centers around assessing child stress to determine what difference stress responses at baseline make in the effectiveness of the intervention and how well the intervention does in mitigating stress over the long term.

## 10 Things You May Not Know About Dr. Ian W. Brown



Dr. Ian Brown, Chair of Anthropology

“10 Things You May Not Know About” is a new feature of our newsletter to highlight the personal sides of the Department of Anthropology. This issue, we begin with our new chair, [Dr. Ian Brown](#). Dr. Brown is an archaeologist who specializes in the Indians of the southeastern United States. Dr. Brown is widely published, including two books just this past year, *The Red Hills of Essex: Studying Salt in England* and *Above and Beyond the Pale: A Portrait of Life and Death in Ireland*. We are extraordinarily grateful to have such a capable, affable, and, as you will see, extraordinarily interesting colleague at our departmental helm. 10 things you may not know about Dr. Brown:

1. Margaret Mead spoke at his college graduation and repeatedly stuck her tongue out as she talked.
2. He once lived in the same house as the famous composer and maestro Leonard Bernstein (“West Side Story”), while Bernstein was actually living there.
3. He used to eat dinner with Benazir Bhutto, the assassinated Prime Minister of Pakistan, on a fairly regular basis. He called her Pinkie.
4. He accompanied Carroll O’Connor (Archie Bunker in “All in the Family”) to lunch, and O’Connor laughed at Dr. Brown’s jokes.
5. He used to date Marie Kohler, heir to the “toilet fortune.”
6. He turned 23 at Angola Prison Farm, Louisiana State Penitentiary
7. Bill Monroe, the creator of bluegrass music, once slept over in his dorm room.
8. His Chinese name is Ba Yin, which roughly translates as “Bama Salt Man.”
9. For 36 years, he has maintained a continuous daily journal...which is indexed.
10. He was once spat upon by Christopher Lloyd, famous actor (“Back to the Future” series; “One Flew Over the Cuckoo’s Nest,” “Cheers,” etc.).

## Brooke Persons Receives Ph.D.



Dr. Brooke Persons with her dissertation committee, (l-r) Dr. Blitz, Dr. Oths, Persons, Dr. Knight, Dr. Dressler

On October 11, 2013, Brooke Persons successfully defended her doctoral dissertation, "Pottery, People, and Place: Examining the Emergence of Political Authority in Late Ceramic Age Cuba." The Graduate School and Department of Anthropology awarded a doctoral degree to Brooke Persons in December 2013.

Dr. Persons is now employed as an Instructor at UA, where she is teaching Ancient Latin America and an online introductory course. She is also spearheading the spring [TMSE Partnership course](#), searching for an academic position, and focusing on turning her dissertation into a series of articles.

She is pursuing new research projects in the US Virgin Islands, including a project that focuses on the production of stone beads and shell pendants. Dr. Persons is looking forward to a collaborative project that will identify interaction between Cuba and the Turks and Caicos through compositional analyses of ceramics from both locales. We're very proud of Dr. Persons and look forward to continuing to work with her as a colleague and contributor to Anthropology.

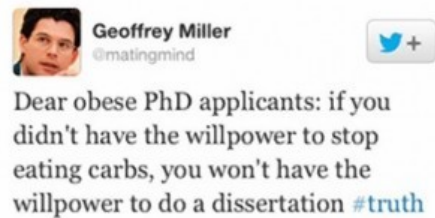
## Check out our New Video!

Red Forge Productions and the College of Arts & Sciences were kind enough to help us create a great new promotional video that highlights our department strengths! All true!! Please share far and wide!!!!



## Bama Anthropologists are in the News

In June 2013, [Dr. Jason DeCaro](#) got a chance to set the record straight when Evolutionary Psychologist Geoffrey Miller put his tweet in his mouth with the following:



Dr. DeCaro, who subsequently tweeted from his own account what a degrading and unwarranted claim Miller had made, was [contacted by The NY Daily News](#). Dr. DeCaro pointed out that "Current human biology and health psychology research show conclusively that a combination of genetics and social environment have far more to do with obesity than does 'willpower,' contrary to what people often assume."

In October, [Dr. Chris Lynn](#) was interviewed for [an article on glossolalia \(speaking in tongues among Charismatics and some other religious practitioners through the ages\) and stress reduction](#). [Dana Foundation](#) is a private philanthropic organization dedicated to brain research. The article discusses Dr. Lynn's dissertation fieldwork among Pentecostals in upstate New York, which compared rates of speaking in tongues to salivary biomarkers of stress and found some preliminary evidence for a relaxation effect.

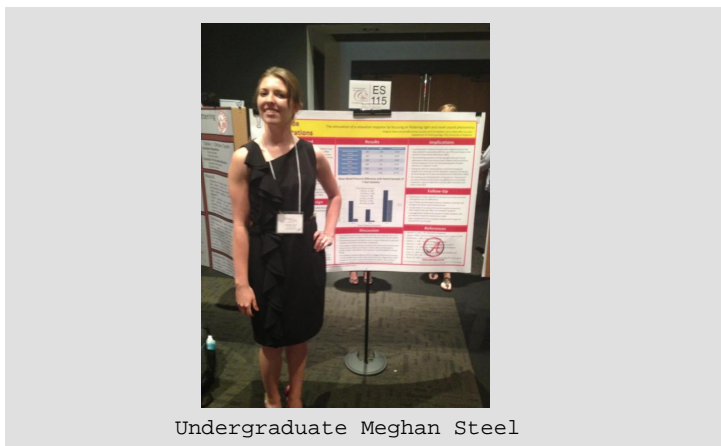
In November, Dr. Lynn was also interviewed about UA's [Evolutionary Studies](#) program, housed in the Department of Anthropology, for the newsletter [EvoS Illuminate](#), published by the EvoS Consortium. In it, Dr. Lynn highlights the program at Alabama, discusses his evolution blogging efforts, and background. Later that month, Dr. Lynn and [EvoS Club](#) President and Anthropology major Taylor Burbach were contacted by [The Crimson White for an article about the EvoS program](#). The article highlighted the importance of the program for UA students and the outreach efforts they're engaged in for the community.

In December, Ph.D. student [Tina Thomas](#) published a piece in [Anthropology News](#) entitled "[Multiple Worlds Theory and 'High Risk Girls' Versus Those that 'Stay Inside'](#)" about her research into risky behavior among teenage girls in Alabama and HIV risk. Alabama has one of the lowest rates of condom use among high school students in the United States, and Thomas' research has found that this may be due, in part, to girls' conceptualization of the protection afforded by condoms. According to Thomas, many of her participants believe that condoms have a high failure rate because of notions that they can slip off or break easily. Thomas' continuing research seeks to understand the cultural models underlying these beliefs in high- and low-risk groups in Alabama.

## Fall 2013 Student Awardees

Doctoral student [Paul Eubanks](#) received a National Science Foundation Doctoral Dissertation Improvement Grant for his project “Caddo Salt Production in Northwestern Louisiana.” Congratulations to Paul and his adviser, [Dr. Ian Brown](#). Paul is our seventh doctoral student to receive an NSF DDIG. This speaks, first and foremost, to Paul’s great promise as a scholar and also to the strength of our young doctoral program.

The Graduate School and Anthropology Department provide awards several times a year for meritorious research projects and for travel to present research at conferences. A total of seven proposals were submitted to the Anthropology Graduate Committee for the Fall 2013 round, all of which were subsequently forwarded to the Graduate School for consideration and received awards. The following students (in alphabetical order) received awards in the fall 2013: [Jolynn Amrine Goertz](#), to support travel to the American Anthropological Association (AAA) to present “Fragments and Field Notebooks: Franz Boas and the Chehalis Oral Tradition”; [Paul Eubanks](#), to support travel to the Southeastern Archaeological Conference (SEAC) to present “The Timing and Distribution of Caddo Salt Production in Northwestern Louisiana”; [Lynn Funkhouser](#), to support travel to SEAC to present “An Analysis of Near-Mound Cemeteries at Moundville”; [Kelsey Herndon](#) to support travel to the South-Central Conference on Mesoamerica to present “Structure from Motion Mapping and Remote Sensing at the Maya Site of Chan Chich, Belize”; [Jessica Kowalski](#), to support travel to SEAC to present “Mississippian Period Settlement Size and Soil Productivity in the Southern Yazoo Basin, Mississippi”; [LisaMarie Malischke](#), to support travel to the Annual Conference on Historical and Underwater Archaeology to present “The Heterogeneity of Early French Forts and Settlements. A Comparison to Fort St. Pierre (1719-1729) in French Colonial Louisiana”; [Ross Owens](#), to support thesis research on “How Smart Phones Affect Skin Conductance and Social Support Systems Among Students at the University of Alabama”; and [Max Stein](#), to support travel to AAA to present “Religion as Resilience: Evaluating the Intersections of Religious Collectivity and Disease in Limon Province, Costa Rica.”



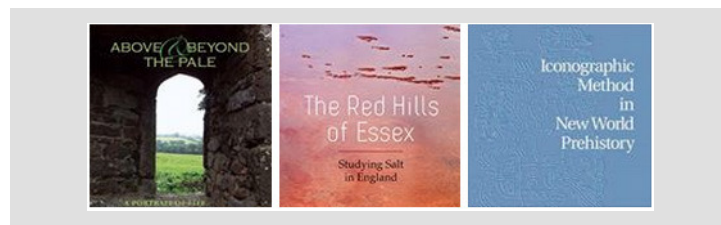
Undergraduate Meghan Steel

This year, the [C. Earle Smith Award](#) for the most outstanding senior goes to two students—Maryanne Mobley and [Meghan Steel](#). The Hughes Prize for a student who shows great

potential and perseverance goes to Katie Moss. They do our department proud with their excellent grades, drive and determination, and wonderful personalities.

## 2013 Faculty Publications

This newsletter highlights publications from throughout 2013, which was a banner year for all four anthropological subdisciplines in the department and the publication of three books.



Alibali, Martha W., Nathan, Mitchell J., Church, R. Breckie, [Wolfgram, Matthew S.](#), Kim, S., and Knuth, Eric J. (2013). Gesture and speech in mathematics lessons: Forging common ground by resolving trouble spots. *ZDM – International Journal on Mathematics Education*, 45, 425-440.

Bingham, Paul M., Joanne Souza, and [John H. Blitz](#) (2013) Introduction: Social Complexity and the Bow in the Prehistoric North American Record. *Evolutionary Anthropology* 22(3):81-88. DOI: [10.1002/evan.21353](#).

[Blitz, John H.](#), and Erik S. Porth (2013) Social Complexity and the Bow in the Eastern Woodlands. *Evolutionary Anthropology* 22(3):89-95. DOI: [10.1002/evan.21349](#).

[Blitz, John H.](#), and Lauren E. Downs (2013) An Integrated Geoarchaeology of a Late Woodland Sand Mound. *American Antiquity* 78(2):344-358. DOI: [10.7183/0002-7316.78.2.344](#)

[Brown, Ian W.](#) (2013) *Above and Beyond the Pale: A Portrait of Life and Death in Ireland*. Tuscaloosa, AL: Borgo.

[Brown, Ian W.](#) (2013) *The Red Hills of Essex: Studying Salt in England*. Tuscaloosa, AL: Borgo.

[Dengah II, H.J.François](#) (2013). The Contract with God: Patterns of Cultural Consensus across Two Brazilian Religious Communities. *Journal of Anthropological Research* 69(3):347-372.

[Dressler, William W.](#), [H.J. François Dengah II](#), Mauro C. Balieiro, and José Ernesto dos Santos. (2013) Cultural Consonance, Religion, and Psychological Distress in Urban Brazil. *Paidéia: Cadernos de Psicologia e Educação* 23: 151-160.

[Knight, Vernon James, Jr.](#) (2013) *Iconographic Method in New World Prehistory*. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, U.K.

[Knight, Vernon James, Jr.](#) (2013) Style and Configuration in Prehistoric Iconography. In *The Art of Anthropology/The Anthropology of Art*. Southern Anthropological Society Proceedings, No. 42, edited by Brandon D. Lundy, pp. 223-238. Newfound Press, Knoxville, TN. <http://newfoundpress.utk.edu//pubs/lundy/chp8.pdf>.

[Lynn, Christopher D.](#) (2013) "The Wrong Holy Ghost": Discerning the Apostolic Gift of Discernment. *Ethos* 41(2): 223-247 DOI: [10.1111/etho.12016](#)

Mixer, David W., Thomas R. Jamison, and [Lisa J. LeCount](#) (2013) Actuncan's Noble Court: New Insights into Political Strategies of an Enduring Center in the Upper Belize River Valley. *Research Reports in Belizean Archaeology* 10:91-104. [PDF](#).

[Murphy, Michael D.](#), and [J. Carlos González Faraco](#) (2013) Intensificación cultural en El Rocío: una breve aproximación comparada a la devoción rociera. *ExVoto* 3(2):99-119.

Nathan, Mitchell J. Srisurichan, R., Walkington, C., [Wolfgram, Matthew S.](#), Williams, C. and Alibali, Martha W. (2013) "Building Cohesion Across Representations: A Mechanism for STEM Integration." *Journal of Engineering Education* 102(1):77-116.

Shults, Sara C., and [Lisa J. LeCount](#) (2013) Obsidian Form and Distribution at Actuncan, Belize. *Research Reports in Belizean Archaeology* 10:115-126. [PDF](#).

Snodgrass, J.G., [H.J. François Dengah II](#), M.G. Lacy, and J. Fagan (2013). A Formal Anthropological View of "Motivation" Models of Problematic MMO Play: Achievement, Social, and Immersion Factors in the Context of Culture. *Transcultural Psychiatry* 50(2):235-262. DOI: [10.1177/1363461513487666](#)

## 2013 Field Season at Actuncan, Belize



Figure 1: The 2013 Crew of the Actuncan Archaeological Project

The Actuncan Archaeological Project directed by [Dr. Lisa LeCount](#) conducted summer excavations funded by the National Science Foundation and National Geographic Society Committee for Research and Exploration at the ancient Maya site of Actuncan in Belize, Central America. Using the corporate-network leadership model, the Project evaluated material and symbolic resources found in two elite households and an E-Group (a commemorative astronomical civic complex) to determine if corporate leadership persisted into the Classic period (AD 250 to 1000) at the site after network-based leadership arose in other polities, such as Tikal. The 2013 field season was one of the largest so far with six graduate students and four Ph.D. researchers supervising 26 Belizean men and women in the field and lab. University of Alabama personal included [Dr. John Blitz](#), [Luke Donohue](#), Borislava (Bobbie) Simova (now in the Ph.D. program at Tulane), and [Emma Koenig](#), as well as others from Washington University in St. Louis, University of South Florida, and University of Mississippi (Figure 1).



Figure 2: Emma Koenig and Amirto Uck excavating the apron molding of Str. 23-1st.

To test the nature of early Maya leadership, the Project conducted excavations at two elite households, Strs. 29 and 73 that, based on their size and location, are likely candidates for an early ruler's residence at Actuncan. Investigations at the site's E-Group also examined the nature of early Maya leadership. Studies have shown that the onset of dynastic kingship, and accompanying transition to network-based authority, was marked by a shift in caching and burial practices at civic monuments. Initially, ritual practices revolved around the placement of caches in sacred monuments, but later, rulers' ancestors were interred in them to fuse human and divine realms allowing living kings to claim descent from divine ancestors. However, the timing of these practices is site dependent, presumably tied to the timing of the shift from corporate to network-based authority.



Figure 3: Bobbie Simova excavating the apron molding of Str. 73a.

Excavations at the two elite structures found that occupants of these houses occupied a similar social status, conformed to an architectural style canon, and displayed a uniform identity. During the height of the center's authority, each house sported an apron molding (Figure 2). This façade style has pronounced top and bottom edges that frame a central register made by stacking and tenoning limestone blocks, which were ultimately covered in stucco and painted red. Apron moldings are not unusual in the Maya lowlands, but they have not been reported for this area. At Str. 73, the apron molding is substantially larger than that at Str. 29 or any other elite house at Actuncan, measuring at least 2 m high (Figure 3). The amount of labor required to build Str. 73 would have far exceeded that of other elite houses indicating its construction required extra-household labor. Structure 73 also is auspiciously located given that it is the closest house to the Triadic Temple Complex. For these reasons, Dr. LeCount suggests that Structure 73 is likely the early king's house. Nonetheless, this house does not display a significantly different layout nor does it appear to be substantially wealthier in material possessions than other elite households. These findings confirm that early leadership strategies at Actuncan were corporate in nature.



Figure 4: Four eccentrics from Structure 26.

E-Groups are monumental complexes containing an eastern platform and a western radial pyramid, which are thought to function as solar observatories and locations for Preclassic agricultural rituals. Excavations at Actuncan's E-Group, directed by Luke Donohue, began in front of the central pyramid on top of the eastern platform. After locating the central staircase, he discovered caches and artifacts associated with rituals performed on these stairs. Staircases were the location of many activities including feasting, dancing, performances, presentations, offerings and sacrifices. At Actuncan, Donohue found features associated with many of these, including a staircase cache, a termination deposit, a staircase block burial, and chert eccentrics. Eccentrics are large formally shaped lithics used as offerings to ancestors, deities and sacred places (Figure 4). Their position on top of the collapse suggests that they were placed there after the building had fallen apart. These practices are consistent with other instances of revisitation and veneration of sacred houses and monuments found at the site. On the summit of the pyramid, stacked stone represents the remains of a late altar. The pyramid itself was built of alternating cobble and sterile sand fill, and in one layer, many large bifaces interpreted as agricultural hoes were found. These ritually cached hoes indicate that the construction of this pyramid was tied to agriculture or annual cycles.

This summer's excavations lend evidence to suggest that early kingship at Actuncan was more corporate than exclusive in nature. Research in the summer 2014 will continue excavating the earliest levels of the E-Group and also be directed at completing two Ph.D. research projects.

## Extemporaneous Talks and Other Guest Lectures

On September 24, 2013, we inaugurated a new departmental lecture series entitled "Extemporaneous Talks." The ET series consists of "spur-of-the-moment" talks designed to take advantage of visiting scholars.

Our first presenter (ET #1) was [Melissa Rosenzweig](#), a Ph.D. candidate in Anthropology at the University of Chicago. The title of her presentation was "Excavations and Research at Ziyaret Tepe, the late Assyrian Capital of Tushan in Southeastern Turkey." Ziyaret Tepe is a Late (Neo-) Assyrian provincial center in the present-day region of southeastern Turkey. Between 900 and 600 BCE Ziyaret Tepe was the site of Tushan, a regional capital of the Assyrian empire that housed provincial governors and garrisoned military units headed north and west into contested territories. The 32 hectare settlement included a city fortification wall, upper and lower towns, and a large administrative complex and granary, which stockpiled and redistributed agricultural produce generated by Assyrian subjects living in the fertile Trigris River Valley. Rosenzweig discussed her research at Ziyaret Tepe, an archaeobotanic study of the social and environmental impact of Assyrian imperialism on the people and lands of Tushan.



Dr. Gad Saad meeting with Biology, Culture & Evolution students

Our second ET was by [Dr. Chris Kyle](#), Professor and Chair of [Anthropology at UAB](#). He held an informal discussion on the subject of violence in contemporary Guerrero, Mexico.

In addition to the Extemporaneous Talks, we had several other auspicious visitors to the department this past fall, including Drs. Lori Cormier and Gad Saad. [Dr. Cormier](#) is an Associate Professor of Anthropology at UAB and was kind enough to drive to Tuscaloosa during her sabbatical to give a guest lecture in ethnoprimateology for students in the [Non-Human Primates \(ANT 312\) course](#). [Dr. Saad](#) is a Professor of Marketing and Concordia University Research Chair in Evolutionary Behavioral Sciences and Darwinian Consumption in Montreal, Canada, who was visiting UA as part of the [ALLELE \(Alabama Lectures on Life's Evolution\) series hosted by the Evolution Working Group](#). ALLELE guests frequently visit courses in UA's Evolutionary Studies minor, which is housed in Anthropology, and Dr. Saad met with students in the "Biology, Culture and Evolution" (ANT 475/575) course to discuss his book, [The Consuming Instinct](#).

## Graduate News from Fall 2013

Dr. François Dengah, who received his Ph.D. from our department in May 2013, has had a banner year in exemplifying the scholarship and accomplishment our department strives for. In the fall, his article, "[The Contract with God: Patterns of Cultural Consensus across Two Brazilian Religious Communities](#)," was published in the esteemed *Journal for Anthropological Research*. Subsequently, he received the Best Dissertation Award of the year in the College of Arts & Sciences. In February 2014, it was also named Best Dissertation at the University level. And to cap it off, Dr. Dengah has accepted a tenure-track position as Assistant Professor of Anthropology at Utah State beginning in the fall of 2014.

Sara C. Shults, who received her MA from our department in 2012, and [Dr. Lisa J. LeCount](#) have published a journal article entitled "Obsidian Form and Distribution at Actuncan, Belize" in the [2013 edition of Research Reports in Belizean Archaeology](#). The article presents Ms. Shults' thesis research on changing obsidian distributions at Preclassic and Classic households and what these shifts mean in terms of changing production and exchange relationships at the ancient Maya site of Actuncan. Shults found that while obsidian tools in the form of prismatic blades were used throughout Mesoamerica for thousands of years, the way this valuable resource was exchanged varied through time. Actuncan is located

hundreds of kilometers from the nearest obsidian sources in Guatemala and Honduras; therefore, obsidian travelled over long distances through numerous hands to reach the site. During the Preclassic period (800 BC to AD 250), all households had ready access to obsidian blades, but in the Classic period (AD 250 to 1000) exchange mechanisms changed. Although there is little evidence of obsidian blade production at Actuncan, data from other nearby Classic sites indicate that blades were produced in a few discrete workshops, possibly regulated by elites. Some obsidian merchants may also have produced blades from prismatic cores for consumers at marketplaces at Maya centers.

## Fall 2013 Student Publications

Blitz, John H., and [Erik S. Porth](#) (2013) Social Complexity and the Bow in the Eastern Woodlands. *Evolutionary Anthropology* 22(3):89-95. DOI: [10.1002/evan.21349](#).

Davis, C.B., K.A. Shuler, M.E. Danforth, and [K.E. Herndon](#) (2013) Patterns of Interobserver Error in the Scoring of Enteseal Changes. *International Journal of Osteoarchaeology* 23:147-151. DOI: [10.1002/oa.2277](#).

[Eubanks, Paul N.](#) (2013) Late Middle Woodland Settlement and Ritual at the Armory Site. In *Early and Middle Woodland Landscapes of the Southeast*, edited by Alice P. Wright and Edward R. Henry, pp.167-180. University of Florida Press, Gainesville.

[Herndon, K.E.](#), A. Booher, and B.A. Houk (2013) The 2013 Excavations of Structure A-5, Chan Chich, Belize. In *The 2013 Season of the Chan Chich Archaeological Project*, edited by Brett A. Houk. Papers of the Chan Chich Archaeological Project, Number 7. Department of Sociology, Anthropology, and Social Work, Texas Tech University, Lubbock.

Houk, B.A., C.P. Walker, M. Willis, and [K.E. Herndon](#) (2013) Structure from Motion Mapping and Remote Sensing at Structure A-5, Chan Chich, Belize. In *The 2013 Season of the Chan Chich Archaeological Project*, edited by Brett A. Houk. Papers of the Chan Chich Archaeological Project, Number 7. Department of Sociology, Anthropology, and Social Work, Texas Tech University, Lubbock.

## Thanks to Our Benefactors!

Gifts to the Department of Anthropology since May of 2013:

*\$10,000 and above:* Patricia DeCaro

*\$5,000 and above:* Elizabeth S. Mixter

*\$1,000 and above:* Avery Island, Inc., Vidal Davis, Good Hope, Inc., Lee and Sherry Jones, McIlhenny Co., Kathy and Robert Prospero, Charles and Mary Rodning

*\$500 and above:* Thomas L. McGehee, Allen Meyers, Henry Moreta, Anna Singer

*\$100 and above:* Sharon and Jim Barnett, Jessica Crawford, George B. Lowry, Jr., Shambie Singer

*\$50 and above:* Jessica Edwards

## Potlatch 2013

The UA Anthropology Department kicks off the academic year and welcomes new members to the department with an annual potlatch. A potlatch involves, ideally, the garnering of prestige thru the gifting of valued objects. These objects obtain their values through the histories of their transfers through the years. Following are some of the highlights of the 2013 potlatch, held in Smith Hall on Friday, August 30.



*Dr. John Blitz, Master of Ceremony*



*Our new meat-er, grad students! Welcome!*



*The old gang*



*Dr. Ian Brown, our fearless new leader*



*Front office goddess, Missy Sartain*



*Our new front office finance goddess, Teri Kirkendoll*



*Loretta Lynn passing the ritual armadillo*



*The valuable "shot-ski" relic enters the ring*



*Daniel LaDu: "This lunchbox is a very fine thing."*



*Dr. Kosiba passes on the ceremonial shin guards on to newly minted Dr. Francois Dengah*



*Dr. Dick Diehl passes on the booty of an exciting career!*

## Contact Information

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Chris Lynn, Newsletter Co-Editor, [cdlynn@ua.edu](mailto:cdlynn@ua.edu)

*ROLL TIDE!*