

ANTHROPOLOGY AT ALABAMA

Newsletter of the University of Alabama Department of Anthropology
College of Arts and Sciences

CUBAN ARCHAEOLOGISTS VISIT UA



During October 9-13, 2010 we enjoyed the company of three visiting archaeologists from Cuba. They were **Roberto Valcárcel Rojas**, **Lourdes Pérez Iglesias** (both of CISAT-Holguín), and **Marcos Rodríguez Matamoros** (of the University of Cienfuegos). These visits were made in conjunction with Alabama-Cuba Week. Each scholar gave a well-attended public presentation outlining the current status of Cuban archaeology, in which they all highlighted the role of our Department in cooperative research and teaching. Visits of Cuban scholars to the United States have been extraordinarily rare in recent years, making this event especially memorable.

Jim Knight and several of our graduate students have been involved in a collaboration involving research on late prehistoric and early historic Arawakan villages in the eastern part of the island.

CONTENTS

- 1 *Cuban Archaeologists Visit UA*
- 2 *Dick Diehl Named AAAS Fellow*
Bill Dressler Receives Senior NSF Grant
- 3 *Francois Dengah Awarded Dissertation Grant*
Where Are They Now? Robyn Astin Sarrat
Mel Konner Visits UA for ALLELE Lecture
- 4 *Davis, Porth, Mullins Receive Awards*
Students Recognized for Undergrad Research
- 5 *Potter, James, Lisenby Recognized*
Opportunities for Giving

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DICK DIEHL NAMED AAAS FELLOW



Dr. Richard Diehl, a University of Alabama Mesoamerican Archaeologist, has been awarded the distinction of AAAS Fellow. Election as a Fellow is an honor bestowed upon members of the American Association for the Advancement of Science by their peers.

“This is a tremendous accomplishment,” said Dr. Joe Benson, vice president for research at The University of Alabama, in congratulating Diehl on the award. “This certainly sets Dick Diehl apart, as he becomes one of only four AAAS Fellows at UA and one of only 22 statewide.”

Diehl, professor emeritus of anthropology, retired from UA in 2006, but remains active in teaching, research and other professional pursuits.

This year 503 members have been awarded this honor by AAAS because of their scientifically or socially distinguished efforts to advance science or its applications. As part of the Anthropology Section, Diehl was elected as an AAAS Fellow for his “distinguished contributions to Mesoamerican research in archaeology, particularly the Olmec and Toltec civilizations, and for public science communication in archaeology.”

The American Association for the Advancement of Science, or AAAS, is the world’s largest general scientific society, and publisher of the journal, *Science*. AAAS was founded in 1848, and fulfills its mission to “advance science and serve society” through initiatives in science policy, international programs, science education and more.

Profile courtesy Chris Bryant, UA Media Relations.

BILL DRESSLER RECEIVES SENIOR NSF GRANT

Dr. William W. Dressler, Professor of Anthropology, has received a three-year senior grant from the National Science Foundation for a project entitled “Cultural and Genetic Influences on Individual Well-Being in Urban Brazil.” The aim of this study is to examine the mental health effects of the interaction between genes influencing the action of serotonin, a neurotransmitter, and cultural consonance, a concept developed by Dressler for measuring how well individuals achieve cultural ideals. This is the fourth of a series of major projects spanning 25 years that Dressler has carried out in Ribeirão Preto, Brazil in collaboration with Dr. José Ernesto dos Santos of the Faculty of Medicine of the University of São Paulo and Dr. Mauro C. Balieiro of Paulista University.



FRANCOIS DENGHAH AWARDED DISSERTATION GRANT



Henri Francois Dengah, Jr., a doctoral candidate in the Department of Anthropology, has received a Doctoral Dissertation Improvement Grant from the National Science Foundation for research entitled “Finding Success and Health: Cultural Models and Health Among Brazilian Pentecostals.” Dengah will examine how cultural models that define being a success in life among Brazilians who have converted to Pentecostalism differ from those broadly shared in the general population, and how cultural consonance with those alternative models is related to physical and mental health. Dengah is a student of Dr. William Dressler and will do research in Ribeirão Preto,

Brazil, where Dressler has worked for 25 years. Dengah is also the first person to work in Brazil under the cooperative agreement between the Department of Anthropology at UA and the Department of Psychology and Education at the University of São Paulo-Ribeirão Preto.

WHERE ARE THEY NOW? ROBYN ASTIN SARRAT

Robyn Astin Sarrat (M.A. 1996) is a commercial real estate attorney in the Washington, D.C. area. She received her law degree from the University of Hawaii after the Navy moved her and her husband to the island of Oahu. She now works for Federal Realty Investment Trust in the suburbs of Maryland. She regularly takes her kids (Andy, age 6; Lauren, age 5; Abby, age 2) downtown to the Smithsonian museums; however, they are still too young to understand Mom’s fascination with the American Indian Museum.



MEL KONNER VISITS UA FOR ALLELE LECTURE

Dr. Melvin Konner, Samuel Candler Dobbs Professor of Anthropology at Emory University, visited on October 7 - 8, 2010, as part of the AL-LELE Lecture



Photo credit: Ann Cale Kruger

Series (Alabama Lectures on Life’s Evolution). Konner is an expert on how evolution, biology and culture shape child development and human nature. He presented on “Childhood Evolving: The Role of Development in the Evolution of Mind,” and “Hunter-Gatherer Childhoods: The !Kung and Others.”

Konner has published 10 books for academic and general audiences, including “The Evolution of Childhood: Relationships, Emotion, Mind” and “The Paleolithic Prescription: A Guide to Diet and Exercise and a Design for Living” with S.B. Eaton and M. Shostak.

DAVIS, PORTH, MULLINS RECEIVE AWARDS

Jeremy R. Davis, an archaeology doctoral student, has received several important recognitions for his work. From the Department of Anthropology he received the Bob Work Award, for the best paper submitted by an archaeology graduate student, and the Richard A. Krause Award for overall academic excellence. Jeremy also received the 2011 Steven and Christine Wimberly Scholarship from the Alabama Archaeological Society at the society's winter meeting. This award recognizes excellence in scholarship in archaeology.

Eric S. Porth, an MA student, received the 2011 Research Award from the Alabama Archaeological Society at the society's winter meeting. This award provides funds to assist an archaeological research project, in this case, Eric's thesis on Mound P at Moundville.

Dan Mullins, who recently completed his MA and is now pursuing a doctoral degree at Oxford University, has received the University of Alabama Excellence in Research by a Master's Student Award. Dan's thesis was titled "Problems and Prospects for a Cognitive Science of Religion: Minimal Counter-intuitiveness, Epistemic Congruency, Sex, and Context in the Epidemiology of Cultural Representations in South India." This exceptional honor is given only to a few students each year across the entire university. Since 1990 six of our students have won the Arts & Sciences level of this award, with five going on to win at the UA level.

Congratulations Jeremy, Eric and Dan!



Jeremy Davis



Eric Porth



Dan Mullins

STUDENTS RECOGNIZED FOR UNDERGRADUATE RESEARCH

We are thrilled to announce that anthropology majors Daniel Turner and Savannah Leach were recognized for their research at the 2010 Undergraduate Research and Creative Activity Conference.



Daniel Turner, advised by Dr. John Blitz, received 2nd place in the Arts & Sciences Division of Social Sciences for his poster, "Prehistoric Construction and Labor Costs in the Moundville Chiefdom." Daniel will complete his BA this spring, and has been admitted to Cambridge University (St. Catherine's College) for graduate study.

Savannah Leach, advised by Dr. Jason DeCaro, received 4th place in the same division for her poster entitled, "Physical Activity and the Architecture of Daily Life Among Alabama Mexican-Americans: A Bio-cultural Investigation." Savannah is a junior who plans to pursue a PhD in human osteology.



POTTER, JAMES, LISENBY RECOGNIZED

Thomas Potter, a McNair Scholar and anthropology major pursuing a career in archaeology, has received the 2011 Alabama Archaeological Society scholarship.

Carly James, a triple major in anthropology, international studies, and modern languages, received an C. Earle Smith award for undergraduate excellence. She is a member of the Alabama International Relations Club, Apownjo (African Relief Organization), Lambda Alpha, Pi Delta Phi (French Honor Society), and the Anthropology Club. She received the McWane Research Scholarship through the Honors College last summer, which she put towards fieldwork/travel expenses for her thesis on economic anthropology of West Africa, including microfinancial schemes and female livelihood. She plans to attend graduate school in anthropology with a focus in development studies.

Kayla Lisenby, a double major in law and anthropology, also received an C. Earle Smith award for undergraduate excellence in anthropology. Among other activities, she has been involved in Cultivate Peer Mentors and the UA Mentoring Connection, The Anderson Society, XXXI, Mortar Board, Blue Key, Alpha Omicron Pi sorority, and Phi Beta Kappa. After graduation Ms. Lisenby plans to attend graduate school to study either Student Affairs Administration or Law.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR GIVING

We humbly invite you to consider making a tax-free donation to one of the following initiatives:

The Anthropology Field School Gift Fund goes to the support of our undergraduate field schools in archaeology. Our field schools receive no budget from the University, and depend heavily on these gifts for supplies and operating expenses. Our most recent major purchase from this fund was a work truck that has proven invaluable to faculty and graduate student research. Our annual field schools for undergraduates date back to 1956. Traditionally they are among the most memorable experiences of our alumni.

The Anthropology Lectureship Fund goes to support distinguished guest speakers from outside the University. We try to have at least four guest speakers per year. These speakers greatly enrich our undergraduate and graduate programs by exposing our students to prominent ideas by the leading lights in our discipline.

The David and Elizabeth DeJarnette Endowed Scholarship in Anthropology is awarded to support graduate student research on Moundville or Moundville-related topics. Each spring, the award is made during the popular DeJarnette Barbecue, held at Moundville Archaeological Park during the Saturday of Honors Week. Since it was founded in 1993 by Sarah and James Caldwell, the endowment has steadily grown. In recent years our DeJarnette Scholars have received awards of as much as \$6,000.

The Richard A. Krause Award is given for academic excellence at the graduate level in anthropology. The recipient of this annual award is chosen by the Graduate Studies Committee of the Department based on classroom performance and the promise of the student's proposed thesis or dissertation research project.

The C. Earle Smith Award is given for academic excellence at the undergraduate level in anthropology. The annual award goes to the graduating senior in anthropology having the highest overall grade point average. Names of former "Smitty" award winners are prominently displayed on a plaque in the Department.

The Bob Work Award is a graduate student paper competition with a monetary prize of \$100. Each January, archaeology graduate students submit papers for review by a faculty committee. The winner receives recognition during Honors Week.

Checks directed to any of these initiatives should be made out to the UA College of Arts and Sciences and mailed to the Department at Box 870210, Tuscaloosa, AL 35487. If you would like to discuss a contribution, please contact Jim Knight, Director of Departmental Development.