



MVAC at the University
of Wisconsin - La Crosse
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Electronic

Archaeology News

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Lab Report: Busy Winter Ahead

Kathleen Brosius, Research Archaeologist/Laboratory Supervisor

With the 2004 summer excavation season soon ending, we in the MVAC laboratory would like to report that we have had a very busy summer processing artifacts. The main area of excavation has been just north of Gundersen/Lutheran Medical Institution within the Sanford Archaeological District. There lies the remains of a portion of a 650 - 450 year old Oneota village.

As expected, many stone tools, shell tempered pottery fragments, and lots of faunal and floral remains have been recovered. Decorated shell tempered pottery sherds have been carefully cleaned. We have been able to glue many of the sherds together, thus giving us an idea of the age, decoration, size, and use of certain vessels.

In addition to lithic tools such as hide scrapers, projectile points, knives, and other stone implements, a number of engraved sandstone artifacts have been recovered. Some appear to have geometric designs or unusual patterns that sends one scrambling for assistance to learn what might have been going on so long ago to encourage such work. Pipestone is occasionally found. A pipe bowl fragment and other small pieces of this coveted exotic red stone have also been found.

A number of copper artifacts have also been recovered. Originating in northern parts of Wisconsin and the Upper Peninsula of Michigan, copper was used in ornament manufacture. Several small rolled copper beads have been catalogued. Of particular interest is a mace, a thin strip of copper measuring about an inch in length, in the shape of a lightning bolt.

A large amount of faunal remains have been cleaned, catalogued and are now being analyzed by faunal expert Ed Swanson. The animals that are represented in this year's collection include a variety of land and aquatic animals as well as birds. Snapping, soft shell, and painted turtle; catfish, drumfish, bullhead, gar, bow fin, northern pike, bass, and suckers; white tail deer, beaver,



UWL students Erin Weidner and Lindsey Maass wash artifacts from the Sanford Archaeology District.

elk, raccoon, bear, dog, and muskrat; Canadian geese, duck, red wing black bird, and passenger pigeons are among the faunal identified. A large number of bone tools have been discovered this summer. Many bone needles and awls have been identified and many are yet to be analyzed.

The Public Field School excavated in Holmen this summer. An Oneota site produced lithic tools, shell tempered pottery, faunal and floral remains. Students are processing these artifacts as well.

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Students have kept busy with individual projects. A collection donated to MVAC is being catalogued and analyzed by Monty Rogers, a UW-L senior. A wide variety of lithic tools, pottery and copper are being analyzed by Mr. Rogers. Historic artifacts, some from the early 19th century have also been catalogued from this collection. Quin Stefaniak, a recent UW-L graduate, has been analyzing charred plant remains from the site in the Sanford Archaeological District. Eric Gilmore, also a recent graduate, is re-curating historical artifacts. When

not in the field, the students have been processing soil samples, cleaning and cataloguing artifacts, entering data in the computer and doing miscellaneous chores.

Our field crew has traveled to Iowa and Minnesota as well as many counties in Wisconsin. With the fall semester beginning, the lab crew will continue to process artifacts from this summer's excavations.

Youth Camps

Jean Dowiasch, Education Coordinator

MVAC held four youth camps during the summer of 2004. Thirty-six students, mainly from western Wisconsin, participated in washing artifacts, hiking the trails in Perrot State Park, and helping with Phase II testing in Long Coulee, near Holmen.

Introduction to Archaeology, grades 1-4

Participants in this class learn the basics of archaeology: how do archaeologists know where to dig, and what are they looking for? Students washed artifacts at the MVAC lab, visited the dig sites in the Sanford Archaeological District and Long Coulee, and hiked up Brady's Bluff in Perrot State Park.



Students in the Introduction to Archaeology class, grades 1-4, wash artifacts at the MVAC lab.

Introduction to Archaeology, grades 5-9

Students in this class washed artifacts, toured two archaeological sites and learned the fundamentals of archaeology: mapping, artifact analysis and how the early Native Americans of Wisconsin lived.

Middle School Field School

Students in this class joined the UW-L College Field School in Long Coulee. Partnered with the college students, these students did an excellent job shoveling, screening, mapping and troweling alongside them. LeVern DeVries also came out to the site and introduced the students to atlatl throwing and copper manufacturing.



Middle school students excavating in Long Coulee, near Holmen.

Arrowheads, Rocks and Dinosaurs

Archaeologists, Geologists and Paleontologists are scientists who may study different things, but use similar tools, techniques and knowledge. Students toured the archaeology lab, examined rocks and minerals, and made a model dinosaur.

Public Outreach: 2003 - 2004 Year End Report

Bonnie Christensen, Director of Public Education

Mississippi Valley Archaeology Center's Archaeology Education Program has completed its fourteenth year. The program is continuing its mission of providing educational opportunities for the general public in all age groups along with training, resources, and an informational support staff for precollegiate instructors. This year end report reflects relative stability and balance between the public and educator components of the program. It also reflects continued cost saving strategies while maintaining baseline services. Additionally, more educational staff time has been committed to special projects related to grants and contracts. Following are some of the ways we've involved people in archaeological activities and brought the results of the center's research to the public.

- a minimum of 260 presentations were given, reaching 11,387 people
- 3,500 people attended the annual Artifact Identification Day at Valley View Mall and 20 collectors displayed their collections
- 53 people helped to discover new archaeological sites at the two-day spring volunteer survey offered in celebration of Wisconsin's Archaeology Week 2004
- 12 people participated in the lab work day
- 21 people participated in the Public, Teacher, Middle School and High School Field School in Onalaska & 3 youth classes were offered during summer 2003
- *Archaeology News* and the *Archaeology Education Program Newsletter* were converted to a predominately digital format. A reduced version of *Archaeology News* was sent out three times directing people to visit MVAC's web site which contained PDF files with a more extensive version of *Archaeology News* and the complete *Archaeology Education Program Newsletter*. Members also received flyers and the 2004 activity brochure.
- the web site had 7,452 hits. The site was updated throughout the year and a new Native Voices section was added containing fourteen MP3 files of excerpts from interviews with Ho Chunk tribal members. The Educators sections received ten new lesson plans in an easy to use PDF format. Reviews of videos and magazines were new for this year and additional resources were added to the Web links for teachers and Book reviews.
- Riverside Museum was visited by over 6,241 people and over 276 people visited the UW-L Archaeology Center and Laboratory
- educational staff presented at educational conferences
- MVAC classes & field schools and 5 area schools involved in the Junior Archaeology Program helped at a number of area sites
- survey respondents rated MVAC staff and resources as excellent and 100% said they would use MVAC's services again
- 6 grants were received to do special educational projects

The Archaeology Education Program staff is grateful for the continuing generous support of fellow colleagues, staff and the Board of Directors of Mississippi Valley Archaeology Center, the assistance of numerous faculty and staff members of the University of Wisconsin - La Crosse, and students in the UW-L Archaeological Studies Program, without whose encouragement and involvement, the Program could not achieve its goals.

Enhancing Math Skills

Dr. Connie Arzigian, Laboratory Director

This past summer nine public and private middle and high school math teachers attended summer meetings designed to increase their math content knowledge related to statistics, probability and sampling. During the school year the teachers will implement what they've learned while they use technology to stay in touch with the project staff and each other. The participating teachers will also receive release time during the school year to look for ways to supplement/enhancing their teaching. The project provides the opportunity for teachers to learn by using a problem/inquiry based approach and to apply the knowledge to their own teaching situation.

To apply what they were learning to a specific problem, the teachers undertook a study of Oak Grove cemetery. They identified questions to be answered from a study of the information contained on the headstones, created a sampling design, collected data, entered it into an Excel spreadsheet, compiled the results, and conducted analysis on the data. The class started with some initial ideas on what might be expected from the study, but encountered some interesting results contrary to their initial expectations. For example, the month with the highest number of deaths was not in the winter, as expected, but in August. Further, although the class anticipated a number of deaths reflecting the 1918 flu epidemic, there

were no deaths from 1918 in the sample. Further study will be needed to see if this result was a reflection of the sample studied, or if those who died during that time were buried elsewhere. The data collected from the project will be made available to the teachers to use in their classrooms. Some of the teachers will try a comparable study with their own classes and local cemetery. We hope to start building a database of information that can be used by a variety of classes and for a number of different studies.

Project staff are Dr. Connie Arzigian (MVAC), Dr. Helen Skala (UW-L Math Department) and Bonnie Christensen (MVAC). The following teachers are participating in the project:

Michelle Eswein	Tomah Middle School
Linda Frei	St. Patrick School (Sparta)
Walter Griffin	Westby Middle School
Joyce McCarthy	Logan Middle School
Robert McCarthy	Logan Middle School
Ruth Ann Schober	St. Mary's School (Tomah)
William Schuth	Galesville-Ettrick-Trempealeau High School
Sarah Spors	Holmen High School

This project is funded by a Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction Mathematics and Science Program Partnerships Grant.

Consider becoming a member of MVAC

MVAC's innovative public education Program brings the excitement of archaeology to children and adults throughout the area. Become a member of MVAC and receive our newsletters, which report on programs, current research, upcoming events, and volunteer opportunities. Also, as a member, you will receive reminders of special "members only" events. Please remember that your contribution is tax-deductible.

Yes! I want to support the Mississippi Valley Archaeology Center Programs!

Enclosed is my contribution of \$ _____

Name: _____
Address: _____
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Membership Categories

Patron.....\$1000 +
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Contributing.....\$50-99
Active.....\$25-49

Please make checks payable to UW-L Foundation, Inc. for MVAC and send to MVAC, 1725 State St., La Crosse, WI 54601. Gifts to the UW-L Foundation for MVAC qualify as charitable tax deductions to the full extent of the law as applied to the individual circumstances of each donor. You can increase your gift's value if your employer has a matching gift plan. Check with your human resources office.



Upcoming Events

Unless otherwise noted, events are free and open to the public. Contact MVAC at (608) 785-8454 for more information.

Laboratory Work Day

Saturday, November 6, 2004
9 a.m. - 4 p.m.
Archaeology Center and Laboratories,
UW-La Crosse

MVAC members and field survey participants are invited to join Connie Arzigian for a day in the lab, washing and sorting artifacts recovered during the Public Field Survey in May.

Registration **required** at
608-785-8454 or
dowiasch.jean@uwlax.edu

Highlights of MVAC's Summer Excavations

Tuesday, November 16, 2004
7 p.m., Port O'Call, Cartwright Center,
UW-La Crosse

Wendy Holtz-Leith will discuss MVAC's excavations of 3rd and 4th Streets in the city of La Crosse. The project is within the Sanford Archaeological District, a large Oneota village complex. A large number of artifacts were recovered, giving archaeologists further understanding of La Crosse's Oneota culture.

Dr. Jim Theler and Bob Cronk will present the UW-L College Field School's three weeks in the Bad Axe Valley of Vernon County. Evidence of both the Archaic and Woodland cultures have been recovered in the valley.

Dr. Connie Arzigian and Mandy Georgeff will discuss the College and Public Field School's findings at 47Lc333, an Oneota site in Long Coulee near Holmen.

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Watercolors of pictographs to be displayed

Painter Geri Schrab will be one of the featured artists at the La Crosse Art Works, exhibit and sale of fine art and craft, at the Pump House Regional Center for the Arts in La Crosse.

Geri uses Native American rock writing sites from across North America as her subject matter. She has personally visited all of the sites that she depicts in her paintings. Geri recently began selling her art on a full time basis. Show hours are 4 - 8 p.m. on Friday, October 29th and 10 a.m. - 5 p.m. on Saturday, October 30th. The Pump House is located at 119 King Street in downtown La Crosse. Admission is a suggested donation of \$2/person, with all proceeds benefitting the Pump House's educational programming.



Spring Preview - 2005

Archaeology in Fiction

Date: Wed. February 23, 2005
Time: 7 p.m.
Location: La Crosse Public Library,
Main Branch
Speaker: Bill Gresens

Minnesota Indian Mounds and Burial Sites

Date: Tues. March 22, 2005
Time: 7 p.m.
Location: Port O'Call, UW-L
Cartwright Center
Speaker: Dr. Connie Arzigian,
Dr. Kathy Stevenson

Artifact Show

Date: Saturday, April 9, 2005
Time: 10 a.m. - 5 p.m.
Location: Valley View Mall



Next issue:

Look for the following articles in the Winter 2005 Archaeology News newsletter:

- * Phase III Excavations in the Sanford Archaeological District, city of La Crosse
- * Summary of the Iowa Archaeological Society's meeting, co-sponsored by MVAC
- * The latest news on western Wisconsin Archaeology