



MVAC at the University  
of Wisconsin-La Crosse

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La Crosse, WI 54601-3788

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[mvac.uwlax.edu](http://mvac.uwlax.edu)  
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## Upcoming Events

Contact MVAC at (608) 785-8454 for more information or visit our web site: [mvac.uwlax.edu](http://mvac.uwlax.edu)

### Heard But No Longer Seen: Epitaphs as a Window into the Lives of Roman Children

Understanding the daily lives of ordinary people in ancient times is a challenge for historians and archaeologists—especially when the subject is infants and children. The Romans opened a special window into the lives of these little ones by leaving information literally chiseled in stone. Ironically, most of what we know about the lives of Roman children—especially those of the lower classes—comes from funerary engravings, or epitaphs. Dr. Gresens will discuss the fascinating world of Roman epitaphs, comparing those of children and adults, and those of lower-class children and their wealthier peers, to explore how childhood was constructed and perceived in ancient times.

Date: Thursday, November 17, 2016  
Time: Social 6 PM, Awards 6:30 PM, Lecture 7 PM  
Location: Port O'Call, Cartwright Center, UWL  
Speaker: Dr. Nicholas Gresens, Senior Lecturer in Classics, University of Rochester-New York

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### Artifact Show

Come to Valley View Mall and see artifacts representing the area's long history. Local collectors will display their personal collections, and MVAC staff will bring artifacts recovered from local excavations.

Date: Saturday, March 4, 2017  
Time: 10 AM–5 PM  
Location: Valley View Mall, La Crosse

### Volunteer Field Survey Opportunity for MVAC Members

MVAC will celebrate Wisconsin Archaeology Month by involving volunteers in surveys of local fields to find unreported archaeological sites. The day will include an introduction at the archaeology laboratory, helping with an actual field survey, and washing the artifacts recovered at the end of the day. The number of participants is limited, so register early. Children may participate if accompanied by an adult. Call or e-mail MVAC at (608) 785-8454 or [jdowiasch@uwlax.edu](mailto:jdowiasch@uwlax.edu) to register.

#### Advance registration required!

Date: Saturday, May 6, 2017 (rain date: Sat. May 13)  
Time: 8:30 AM–4 PM  
Location: Archaeology Center & Laboratory, UWL  
Fee: Free admission for MVAC members

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# Archaeology News

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## 2016 Public Field School

Constance Arzigian, MVAC Research Associate

The 2016 MVAC public field school survived very hot and humid conditions to bring together middle school, high school, college undergraduate and graduate students, and adults to explore another portion of the Norskedalen Heritage site property just west of Coon Valley, WI. Surface collections from agricultural fields on the property indicated that occupations may extend back for thousands of years, into the Archaic and/or Woodland periods. Our goal was to see if there were any in situ deposits below the plow zone. We worked in two different areas this year. The first was a pumpkin patch where we opened eight 2x2 meter units, but found very few artifacts, and nothing below the plow zone.

However, on Friday, by concentrating all of our efforts we were able to get three units into the subsoil. We found a few small flakes down over 15 cm below the base of the plow zone, with the largest piece, a small core, found right at the top of the subsoil. This suggests that there is at least some material below the plow zone, although the density is low. We look forward to 2017 field season to continue exploring adjacent areas and see what else is out there. In particular, we would like to look at more areas closer to the creek to see what might be there, and whether there might be other buried deposits.

To survive the heat, and hopefully find more artifacts, we opened nine 2x2 meter units beneath the shade of pine trees in the grassy lawn just north of the classroom building on the property. Here we found many more artifacts, including flakes, some biface fragments, an end scraper, and a drill fragment. Several of the stone raw materials (such as beautiful examples of translucent Cedar Valley chert) may have come from southeastern Minnesota or further north in Wisconsin, rather than from the immediate local area, suggesting the presence of trade and communication routes in the past. The heavy silt loam soil was very challenging to screen, and two rainstorms did not help the process.



Norskedalen board member Jack Larson, aka "Blueberry Jack" (right), shared his flintknapping knowledge with the Public Field School participants and members of the general public during Thursday's Open House.



2016 Public Field School crew

Thanks to everyone who helped with this year's field school, including our Open House visitors who cheered us on and brought watermelon! Thanks to those who provided funds for student scholarships! Thanks to Norskedalen for hosting the field school at their Norskedalen Heritage Site, providing an air-conditioned break room, and tolerating our (many) muddy footprints!

## Jim Theler honored at the Midwest Archaeological Conference\*

In October, Dr. James L. Theler received the Distinguished Career Award at the 2016 MAC, held in Iowa City, IA. Jim was nominated for the award by former UWL student Matt Hill, Associate Professor and Director at the Iowa State Archaeological Laboratory; and former MVAC Executive Director Joe Tiffany.

After serving in the United States Air Force, Jim received his B.A. from the University of Cincinnati, Ohio. He continued his education at UW-Madison, earning his M.A. in 1978 and his Ph.D. in 1983. Jim spent one year working at the Office of the State Archaeologist in Iowa before beginning his teaching career at UW-La Crosse from 1984-2010, when he retired with Professor *emeritus* status.

Jim's scholarly interests and lasting contributions fall into three broad areas: the prehistory of the Upper Midwest, Great Plains, and Ohio River Valley; prehistoric diet and subsistence behavior; and construction of past environments using molluscan remains, primarily land snails. As a result of his varied interests, Jim has worked with specialists in geoarchaeology, invertebrate and vertebrate paleontology, and paleo-botany, to list a few.

Highlights of Jim's research include *Twelve Millennia: Archaeology of the Upper Mississippi River Valley* (with Ernie Boszhardt) (2003) and *Woodland Tradition Economic Strategies: Animal Resource Utilization in Southwestern Wisconsin*

and *Northeastern Iowa* (1987). In addition, Jim has contributed to numerous unpublished technical reports of investigations, and produced a steady stream of original research on aspects of Midwest prehistory.

Jim is widely acknowledged as one of the premiere faunal analysts in the Eastern Woodlands, an interest that is rooted in his teenage years as a trapper, fishman, hunter, and artifact collector in rural southern Ohio. His specialty is fish remains and mussel shells. He is also one of a handful of



Jim and colleagues after the awards ceremony at MAC- From left: Joe Tiffany, Matt Hill, Terry Martin, Jim Theler, Bob Sasso, Bonnie Styles.

### Thanks

Special thanks to the Schoen Family Charitable Trust, Camille A. Lonstorf Trust, and an anonymous donor for their generation donations to MVAC's Education Endowment.

### MVAC now on Tumblr

MVAC now has a presence on Tumblr, the microblogging and social networking website. You do not need to sign up for or log in to Tumblr to view MVAC's posts. Visit MVAC on Tumblr at: <https://uwlmvac.tumblr.com/>

Sign up to receive MVAC's e-News at:  
<http://mvac.uwlax.edu/mvac-e-news/>

### Alzheimer's, Archaeology, and the Armed Forces:

#### The Story of a Family, by Susan Steele

Gary Steele was a meticulous collector who assembled an amazing collection of artifacts from around Silver Mound. The book is now available on Amazon and at MVAC.

## Theler (continued from p. 2)

scholars who uses subfossil terrestrial (primarily) and aquatic gastropods as proxy indicators of past environmental conditions. The ultimate goal of this research is to create an environmental backdrop to better understand human response to environmental change as well as human impacts on the environment.

Jim's greatest legacy is as a teacher, mentor, and steward of archaeology and science. Former students are scattered throughout the country and abroad in private consulting firms, government positions, and in academia. Jim routinely mentored students in developing expertise in zooarchaeology and gastropod analysis by encouraging them to work with him as junior colleagues on his projects. It is also noteworthy that in 1999, UWL became one of only a few universities in the country to offer a degree in archaeology, and Jim served as the program coordinator until 2009.

Jim worked closely with MVAC staff on many projects over the years, and although he has retired from teaching, continues active research with MVAC, and with students.

\*Excerpts from the MAC nomination letter by Hill and Tiffany.

### Recognition of Archaeological Contributions:

- 1987 Publishes *Woodland Tradition Economic Strategies*
- 1991 Best Professional Paper from the Midwest Archaeological Conference (MAC)
- 1992 UW System Teaching Excellence Award
- 1992-96 Distinguished Speaker for the Wisconsin Humanities Council
- 2000 Outstanding Professor of the Year (at UWL)
- 2003 Publishes *Twelve Millennia* (with Robert Boszhardt)
- 2007 Lapham Research Medal received from the Wisconsin Archeological Society
- 2008 Archaeology Education Award from MVAC
- 2009 James P. Gallagher Award in Archaeology Excellence from MVAC
- 2016 Distinguished Career Award from the MAC

## Education News

### La Crosse School District:

Funds are available from the La Crosse School District for their elementary and middle school teachers to use MVAC presentations and resources in their classrooms. Thanks to the District for providing funds for this program.

### Matching Funds Grant:

Teachers interested in using MVAC's Archaeology Education Program resources in their classrooms can get financial help with our Matching Funds Grant. The grant matches a teacher or school's cost dollar for dollar. Thanks to the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse Foundation and the College of Liberal Studies for providing funds for this program.

## MVAC Staff Contacts

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### Research Associates

David Anderson  
Constance Arzigian  
Kate Grillo  
Suzanne Harris  
Amy Nicodemus  
James Theler  
Heather Walder

## MVAC MEMBERSHIP FORM

### 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.

**Membership Categories**  
**Patron: \$1000 and above**  
**Benefactor: \$500 - 999**  
**Supporting: \$100 - 499**  
**Contributing: \$50 - 99**  
**Active: \$35 - 49**  
**Students: \$10**

Yes! I want to support the Mississippi Valley Archaeology Center Programs!  
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Make your donation online at: [foundation.uwlax.edu/mvac](http://foundation.uwlax.edu/mvac)

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.