From the Director

The past year has been one of change and exciting developments at MVAC and also in UW-L’s Archaeology Program. We have several new MVAC Research Associates among the Archaeology faculty, and these dynamic scholars have been sharing their fascinating research in our ongoing lecture series. MVAC continues to be a leader in preserving and protecting the region’s rich archaeological heritage, and as always we are engaged in important archaeological research throughout the Upper Mississippi Valley. We continue to reach thousands of people of all ages through high-quality educational activities in the community, at K-12 schools, at UW-L, and in numerous other venues. The Bollmans, MVAC supporters, have even funded a paid internship for UW-L students.

I would like to highlight two programs that illustrate the close integration between MVAC and the UW-L Archaeology Program as well as MVAC’s dedication to professional research and public outreach. In February 2014, MVAC and UW-L hosted the third-ever Lithic Materials Workshop, with over 120 people from several states braving cold and snow for the chance to talk about rocks—specifically, local and imported stone used for toolmaking by the region’s prehistoric inhabitants. The workshop attracted professional archaeologists, students, flintknappers, avocational archaeologists, and interested members of the public. MVAC’s Kathy Stevenson and UW-L Archaeology instructor Connie Arzigian co-organized the workshop, and UW-L Assistant Professor Jessi Halligan gave a fascinating talk on the peopling of the New World.

The second example is the 2014 Summer Institute for Teachers, funded by the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH). MVAC was chosen to run this three-week institute for a fifth time through a highly competitive selection process (only 12 NEH Institutes were funded nationwide). Twenty-five outstanding teachers selected through a rigorous nationwide application process spent three exciting weeks exploring the concepts of culture and how humans adapt to changing environments—and they are already applying their new knowledge in classrooms all across the country. This highly successful project was a team effort between MVAC staff (Institute Director Bonnie Jancik and Kathy Stevenson) and Archaeology Professor Emeritus Jim Theler, with Connie Arzigian joining in.

After my first year as MVAC Director, I am more optimistic than ever about MVAC’s future. A university administrator recently told me that MVAC and the Archaeology Program are considered a “gem” within the university and the broader community. I couldn’t agree more. This is an exciting time to be a part of MVAC, and I will work to ensure that we continue to advance MVAC’s important mission—researching, preserving, and teaching the public about archaeology and the rich archaeological resources of the Upper Mississippi River region.

Although MVAC is a research and education unit of UW-L, we are responsible for supporting our activities through grants, contracts, and donations. MVAC’s stellar national reputation and record of accomplishment are due to our dedicated professional staff and the support of people like you. We thank you for your interest!

**MVAC Staff:**

Tim McAndrews, Director  
Mike Bednarchuk, Laboratory Supervisor  
Jean Dowiasch, Education Coordinator/Research Archaeologist  
Wendy Holtz-Leith, Research Archaeologist  
Bonnie Jancik, Director of Public Education  
Marcie H. Peplinski, Business Manager/Development Director  
Katherine Stevenson, Operations Manager  
Vicki L. Twinde-Javner, Senior Research Archaeologist

**Research Associates:**

David Anderson  
Constance Arzigian  
Kate Grillo  
Jessi Halligan  
Suzanne Harris  
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On the cover: Morning fog lifting at the Norskedalen Heritage Site.
2014 Award Recipients

James P. Gallagher Award for Archaeological Excellence: Ruthann Benson
The James P. Gallagher Award this year appropriately goes to Ruthann Benson, Dean of the College of Liberal Studies. Jim Gallagher, for whom the award is named, founded MVAC and was a long-time professor in the Archaeology Program. He understood the great potential of the articulation of a research institute dedicated to public outreach and an academic program in archaeology. As Dean and a member of MVAC’s Board of Directors, Ruthann also understands this partnership, and under her leadership MVAC and the Archaeology Program have been extremely successful in advancing our shared mission. Ruthann appreciates the tremendously important role MVAC plays as one of the most active units of UW-L engaged in public and community service, and she has always supported us in our efforts. Her leadership has allowed MVAC to continue to be a regional force in archaeological research and heritage preservation in the Upper Mississippi Valley, and a national leader in public outreach. Ruthann’s support has also had a great impact on the Archaeology Program and our students. The undergraduate program has grown under Ruthann’s leadership to include scholars conducting research on four continents, and our students have gone on to graduate study in top archaeology programs and have conducted research in every continent with the exception of Antarctica. The strong partnership between MVAC and the Archaeology Program is the key to our collective success, and Dean Ruthann Benson has been a generous advocate for this partnership.

Archaeology Education Award: Norskedalen Nature & Heritage Center
Norskedalen was established as an outdoor laboratory and arboretum in 1977. The Thrune family, which once owned a portion of the Center, left to Norskedalen a large collection of Native American artifacts found on their land and the Skumsrud Heritage site, to give visitors a glimpse of what precontact life was like in the valley. Thanks to the support of Norskedalen’s Executive Directors, both past and present, MVAC was able to conduct a Teacher’s Field School at the Skumsrud Heritage Site in 1994, and a Public Field School in 2014, and is planning its 2015 Public Field School there as well. Several MVAC staff members have presented at Norskedalen’s “Always on a Sunday” lecture series and participated in their 2012 Archaeology Day. MVAC is looking forward to continued collaboration in future ventures with Norskedalen.

Regional Archaeology Award: Jay Bittner
Jay Bittner is a Buffalo County artifact collector who has worked with MVAC for nearly 10 years. Jay started working with MVAC in 2005 to identify and document his collection. Since 2010, Jay has been displaying his artifacts and sharing his knowledge of sites around southeast Buffalo County at MVAC’s annual Artifact Show, held at Valley View Mall. Among other finds, Jay has an amazing collection of axes, which he and Jim Theler are documenting. He keeps excellent records of finds, all carefully mapped, and has begun reporting his sites with the Wisconsin Historical Society. Jay knows his local area very well and has a sharp eye for anomalies. Thus, this past summer, he told MVAC about an unusual mound he had found on his father’s property. The mound was approximately 50 feet in diameter and 30-50 cm high. Unlike most mounds known from western Wisconsin, which were made with soil, this mound was covered with large and small fragments of limestone placed in a circle. MVAC and Jay have now documented the site and reported it to the Wisconsin Historical Society. We know Jay and his family will be good stewards of this and all their sites.
Archaeology Education Program

2013-2014 Highlights

• More than 168 presentations were given by MVAC staff this past year, reaching more than 9,384 people.
• The Artifact Show was attended by over 5,000 people who viewed artifacts from MVAC and 13 area collectors.
• The 2014 Public Field School was attended by 14 adults and high school students.
• Three MVAC youth classes and two La Crosse School District Summer School classes were offered.
• Numerous archaeology-related events and lectures were offered throughout the year.
• MVAC’s web site had 6,200 hits.
• MVAC’s new Facebook page received 196 new “likes” this past year.
• Fourteen grants were received for special educational projects.
• Archaeological displays at Riverside Museum and the UW-L Archaeology Center & Laboratories were well attended this past year.
• The spring Volunteer Field Survey offered in celebration of Wisconsin’s Archaeology Month 2014 was attended by 20 people.
• Fifty people attended the Open House held during MVAC’s Public/High School Field School at the Norskedalen Heritage Site.

Clockwise from top left: Volunteer Tim Dahlen (left) assists members of the Public Field School. Shovel testing was a new activity at this year’s Public Field Survey. Max Pschorr (right) supervises an excavation by students from La Crosse’s Lincoln Middle School. Below: Excavations at the Norskedalen Heritage Site.

The Public Outreach Program is grateful for the continuing generous support of MVAC members and staff, and the assistance of faculty and students from the UW-L Archaeological Studies Program.
Lithic Materials Workshop

Over 120 people attended the third-ever regional Lithic Materials Workshop hosted by MVAC and UW-La Crosse in 2014. Participants shared their knowledge about raw materials and the technologies used by Native Americans in making stone tools. The event featured discussions, papers, posters, flintknapping demonstrations, a “lithic materials exchange,” and a thought-provoking presentation on the peopling of the Americas by UW-L Assistant Professor of Archaeology Jessi Halligan.

NEH Institute

Twenty-five outstanding teachers chosen through a rigorous nationwide application process spent three exciting weeks exploring the concepts of culture and how humans adapt to changing environments. The three-week Summer Institute for Teachers was funded by the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH).

Poster sessions (top left) and a reception at the MVAC lab (bottom left) were well-attended by archaeologists, collectors, and students from four states. Robert Keiper (above) demonstrates flintknapping.

Summer Institute participants (left) at Effigy Mounds National Monument and (right) with Professor Emeritus Jim Theler at the Archaeology Lab.
MVAC Contract Services

MVAC staff had a busy contracts season, ably assisted by our excellent field crew of recent UW-L graduates. Field projects included initial surveys and test excavations for highway work, other construction projects, transmission lines, sand mines, and other activities. Staff also monitored construction activities at a number of recorded burial sites. MVAC’s clients ranged from state and federal agencies to engineering firms, power companies, other companies, municipalities, and private individuals. As always, these projects provided on-the-job training for students as well as an important service for the business community.

Special thanks to field supervisors Max Pschorr and Mitch Running, along with summer field crew Erik Anderson and Casey Hintz, for all their hard work in 2014!

Clockwise from top left: Research Associate Suzanne Harris and UW-L Archaeology student Eric Nordstrom discussing research methods; Erik Anderson shovel testing for WI River Power Company in Stevens Point; Max Pschorr shovel testing for a highway project in New Lisbon; Mitch Running shovel testing at the Hayward Armory for the WI Department of Military Affairs. Background: Max Pschorr shovel testing in the Necedah National Wildlife Refuge.
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