BELIZE ROCKSHELTERS REVEAL HOLOCENE HUMAN ACTIVITY

by Keith Prufer, Associate Professor

After 10 years of excavations at the Classic Maya center of Uxbenká in Belize, Keith Prufer’s research is changing direction and focusing on the earliest inhabitants of the tropical Central America rainforests.

In Mesoamerica, despite a century of research very little is known about Paleoamericans and Archaic foragers. Most of what is known comes from isolated surface finds that lack detailed context or from poorly dated excavations dating to the 1940s through the 1970s. Since 2011 and with funding from the Alphawood Foundation Prufer’s team has been excavating at two rockshelters and along a river terrace that have revealed a continuous human presence from 12,400 to 3,000 years ago based on a series of more than 15 AMS 14C dates. Working with a team of paleoecologists, paleoclimatologists, and bioarchaeologists from Penn State University, Durham University, ETH Zurich, University of Mississippi, and Central Washington University they have been analyzing human, animal, and other organic remains as well as stone tools from across all preceramic time periods.

In February the UNM team consisting of Prufer and PhD students Christopher Merriman and Clayton Meredith, as well as partners from Texas A&M University, LSU, the Belize Institute of Archaeology, and the Yaxche Conservation Trust conducted excavations at Mayahak Cab Pek Rockshelter in the Bladen Nature Reserve, a remote and undisturbed site two days walk from the nearest road. Preliminary data suggests that the shelter was an early Holocene burial site also used for extensive tool making and animal processing.

Research plans for the coming year include refining the chronology of all three sites with an expanded suite of dates, beginning a stable isotope study of the faunal materials (which number in the 1000s of samples), initiating preliminary aDNA assessment of the human remains, and completing a detailed study of changes in stone tool technology across the early Holocene.
CHAIR’S CORNER

A Message from the Chair: Outgoing and Incoming

This will be my final Chair’s Corner. I step down in January 2015, after completing 8 years in this position. I will return to my fulltime faculty position. I want to express my appreciation to my colleagues and students in Anthropology as well as our friends on campus and around the country.

The support and encouragement I received as Chair has been gratifying. I also want to thank Ann Braswell who has edited the biannual newsletter since my arrival. This is one of the highlights of our Department, allowing us to stay in touch with alumni and supporters.

Please join me in welcoming Les Field, who will assume the position of Chair, January 1, 2015.

Michael W. Graves

Professor and Outgoing Chair Michael Graves

Just a few words from Les Field.

I have been a faculty member in the Ethnology sub-field since August 1994, and have on two occasions been the Associate Chair, most recently in the past several years. Since 2011, I have also been the Director of UNM’s Peace Studies Program. In my teaching career, I have been dedicated to undergraduate education, and continue to teach the introductory 101 class which enables me to reach the broadest possible cross-section of UNM’s undergraduates. I have also mentored graduate students through the PhD program, and am always particularly excited to work with students in geographical areas where I have also specialized: Nicaragua, Colombia, Native California, and Israel/Palestine.

As Chair, I intend to build on our departmental strengths in all three sub-fields, in both our research and teaching missions, and to support our faculty and students. Our department brings UNM to the world and the world to UNM; I look forward to the next three and half years as Chair of this historic and renowned department.

Les W. Field

Professor and Incoming Chair Les W. Field
By Marian Hamilton, PhD candidate, Evolutionary Anthropology

Since I was a kid, it has been my mission in life to spend as much of the summer as possible outside. Usually I managed to be pretty successful, but this summer took it to a new level. Along with my advisor, Sherry Nelson, Assistant Professor, and Associate Professor Martin Muller, I traveled to Kibale National Park, Uganda to collect pilot data for my dissertation. Kibale is an incredible place: almost 300 square miles of evergreen rainforest, home to flourishing communities of wild chimpanzees, red colobus monkeys, baboons, red river hogs, forest elephants, and some of the most spectacular birds imaginable.

We had two working projects, both using isotopic signatures from plants and animal tissues to make inferences about how animals function in their ecosystem. Models based on living primates in Kibale help us reconstruct ecologies of fossil species. For the first project, we wanted to use isotopes to track animal movement. To do this, we had to collect plant samples from as much of those 300 square miles as possible and build an isotopic “map” of the park. In a place with few roads, this was no easy task! We had two wonderful field assistants to help guide us on our many day-long treks through the forest, sometimes without a trail. For the areas very far away from camp, we took some bone-rattling drives along paths that the GPS told us should be roads. We managed to sample a large proportion of the park by the end of the summer, despite some close encounters with not-so-friendly elephants and green mambas.

For the second project, we wanted to see if isotopic signatures in animal tissues varied based on how high in the canopy the animal foraged. Of course, to estimate the isotopic signature for a monkey who feeds on the highest leaves in the trees, we needed to get to those highest leaves ourselves. In Kibale, the top canopy layer is between 20–50 meters high. This conundrum found us at a 3-day tree climbing school in Denver, Colorado, where we learned how to launch ropes over branches with a 6-foot-tall slingshot, tie (very) secure knots, and hoist ourselves hand-over-foot up the rope and into the trees.

Climbing was not something I took to naturally. The first dozen or so times, about fifteen feet off the ground my stomach would drop and I would be sure that my rope was about to give out on me. Of course it never did, and eventually the feeling of dangling nearly 70 feet in the air was exhilarating! You certainly couldn’t beat the view. We collected over 100 samples of fruits and leaves from the ground up in 20 of Kibale’s most beautiful trees. This summer was a success by all metrics, academic and personal. Based on the results from the pilot data, I hope to be back swinging through trees again next summer.

Project funding: National Science Foundation Graduate Research Fellowship (Grant #DGE-0903444) and the University of New Mexico, Office of Graduate Studies.

Photo Voices at Ysleta del Sur Pueblo
Beverly R. Singer, Director, Alfonso Ortiz Center for Intercultural Studies

In 2012, just as UNM anthropology graduate Sean Bruna (PhD 2013) was completing his dissertation about Ysleta del Sur Pueblo (YDSP) and diabetes, he submitted a proposal on behalf of the YDSP Community Programs to the Ortiz Center for an after school Youth Photo Voice Project. Bruna coordinated the project with Ariel Carrillo and Angel Montoya and worked with twelve youth actively teaching them more about their community history and participating in documentary photography workshops. The youth produced hundreds of photos and 25 photographs were selected for a permanent exhibit at the YDSP Community Health Clinic. The photo voices of the students focus primarily on places and locations that represent their awareness of their community. Special thanks to Dr. Sean Bruna who helped organize the project and to Blaire Topash Caldwell, current Hibben Fellow working with the Ortiz Center as a graduate student community liaison for completing the project and getting the photos delivered.

The Tigua of Ysleta del Sur Pueblo are a federally recognized Indian tribe situated in close proximity to the cities of El Paso and Socorro, Texas just north of Mexico along the Rio Grande. Tigua history began further north in their ancestral homelands of Abo, Gran Quivira, and Quarai. The result of the 1680 Pueblo Revolt forced a group of Tigua south and those that survived settled Ysleta where they built the Mission of Corpus Christi. Forced negotiations with the state of Texas resulted in their lands becoming a checkerboard configuration with their primary reservation located a mile northeast of the Zaragoza International border between the U.S. and Mexico. A majority of their population of 1,728 members reside on 2,698 acres of trust lands but the tribe also owns the Chilocote Ranch in Presidio and Jeff Davis County, Texas.
Presentations and Publications


Pruf, Keith M. and **Amy E. Thompson.** *Evaluating airborne LiDAR for detecting settlements and modified landscapes in disturbed environments at Uxbenká, Belize.* 79th Annual Society for American Archaeology Meeting, Austin, Texas, April 23–26, 2014.

**Thompson, Amy E., Eric C. Fries, and Keith M. Pruf.** *Local Variation of Settlement Patterns at Uxbenká and Ix Kuku’il, Toledo District, Belize.* 79th Annual Society for American Archaeology Meeting, Austin, Texas, April 23–26, 2014 (poster).

External & Department Graduate Awards

**Holly Brause** received a LAII Field Research Grant (June/July 2014) for preliminary research on a project entitled *Norteña Music and Transnational Life;* **Cyler Conrad** received a 14CHRONO Centre Radiocarbon Dating Award from the Quaternary Research Association (Summer 2014) for *Chronological, Zooarchaeological and Paleoenvironmental Reinvestigation of Banyan Valley Cave, Mae Hong Son Province, Northwest Thailand,* a UNM Graduate Research Project and Travel Grant (Fall 2014), a UNM Student Conference Award (Fall 2014), and most recently a National Geographic Young Explorers Grant for his project *A Biogeographic and Isotopic Investigation of Modern and Ancient Mollusks on the Thai-Malay Peninsula* (Summer 2015); **Jill Jordan** was awarded a Wenner Gren grant to support her dissertation research *Investigating Intracommunity Interaction at the Ancient Maya Sites of Baking Pot and Uxbenká, Belize;* **Corey Ragsdale** received a Student Research Grant from the Graduate Professional Student Association for *Research of Human Skeletal Remains in Merida, Yucatan,* (June 2014), and a Field Research Grant from LAII to further fund that project; **Amy E. Thompson** was the 2014 Rocky Mountain-URISA GIS Scholarship winner for her project *Remote Sensing, Exploration, and Terrain Modeling of Archaeological and Ecological Landscapes in Southern Belize;* **Elise Trott** was awarded the 2015 Student Water Research Grant, by New Mexico Water Resources Research Institute; **Marnie Watson** (Ethnology), **James Davenport** (Archaeology), and **Corey Ragsdale** (Evolutionary Anthropology), received Departmental Travel Grants Fall 2014.

**PhD Recipients Fall/Winter 2014**

**Helen E. Davis** *Variable Education Exposure and Cognitive Task Performance among the Tsimane Forager-Horticulturalists,* (Hillard Kaplan and Jane Lancaster, Co-chairs)

**Andrea M. Lopez** (With Distinction) *The Paradoxes of Poverty: Gendered Ideologies of Intervention in the “Compassionate City” of San Francisco,* (Les Field and Louise Lamphere, Co-chairs)

**Masters of Science Summer/Fall 2014**

Drew Enigk and Marian Hamilton
Jennifer Cardinal New Alfonso Ortiz Public Policy Fellow

Jennifer Cardinal is a PhD Candidate in Ethnology. She has a BA in Anthropology from the University of Kansas (2003), and MA in Anthropology from the University of New Mexico (2009). Jennifer’s areas of investigation include anthropology of place, mobilities, community development, tourism, and lifestyle migration. Her dissertation research considers community development in the context of the shifting social and physical landscape of the southern Jalisco coast. She has conducted ethnographic research in the coastal Mexican community of La Manzanilla investigating the relationships between lifestyle migrant participation in community development, and how young Mexican entrepreneurs are positioning themselves as agents of tourism and community development. Her research has been supported by research grants from the UNM Anthropology Department, UNM Office of Graduate Studies, UNM Graduate Professional Student Association, the Tinker Foundation and UNM Latin American and Iberian Institute. As the Ortiz Fellow, she will be assisting with selecting a theme for the Alfonso Ortiz Center Graduate Research Paper Awards a section of the spring 2015 AGSU Meeting and organizing a community event to bring anthropology to the public.

MAXWELL PRESENTS ARCHEOLOGY ON ICE

Ancient ice is melting throughout the world. In the Arctic annual average temperature has increased at almost twice the rate as that of the rest of the earth. Artifacts that have been frozen in ice for thousands of years are emerging. A team of researchers from the University of New Mexico led by James Dixon, Director of the Maxwell Museum of Anthropology, investigated ice patches in Alaska’s Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve. The results of more than a decade of research are the subject of a new exhibition at the Maxwell Museum of Anthropology.

Archeology on Ice, tells the story of climate change in the Arctic through a unique collaboration between scientists, the Ahtna Heritage Foundation, and tribal members. Local knowledge and observations provide important insights about climate change and artifacts found at small glaciers, known as ice patches. The exceptional preservation of the organic tools (wood, antler, bone, and leather) found at ice patches has enabled researchers to make direct links between today and the past. Many local people have participated in the research to locate and preserve these rare artifacts, sharing knowledge about their customary and traditional use of the land and its resources.
UNM ANTHROPOLOGY NEWS / PAGE 6

Ronda Brulotte, Assistant Professor, has just released her new book *Edible Identities: Food as Cultural Heritage*, co-edited with Michael Di Giovine, West Chester University, PA. Food and its consumption has long been considered a form of cultural heritage. A dynamic, living product, food creates social bonds as it simultaneously marks off and maintains cultural difference. In bringing together anthropologists, historians, and other scholars of food and heritage, this volume closely examines the ways in which the cultivation, preparation, and consumption of food is used to create identity claims of “cultural heritage” on local, regional, national, and international scales. By effectively analyzing food and foodways through the perspectives of critical heritage studies, this collection productively brings two overlapping but frequently separate theoretical frameworks into conversation. Ashgate, 252 pp., ISBN 978-1-4094-4263-9. Also published as ebook PDF, ebook ePUB.

Erin Debenport, Assistant Professor, has received a grant from the New Mexico Water Resources Research Institute in support of her research on Water Politics and Cultural Difference.

Heather Edgar, Assistant Professor, Keith Hunley, Associate Professor, and anthropology graduate students Carmen Mosely and Meghan Healy have recently completed a web-based project (to go live soon), *Heritage New Mexico*, exploring identity, culture, and biology in the Land of Enchantment. Almost one half of all New Mexicans have Spanish-speaking ancestors. Some of these ancestors came to the region long before it became a US state. Others came more recently from Latin America and other places around the globe. Because of this rich history many New Mexicans, of Spanish-speaking descent, use terms such as Spanish, Hispanic, Chicano/a, Latino/a, and Mexican to describe themselves and others. This website presents results from a research project that looks at how genetic ancestry, health, education, and other social factors map onto these self-descriptions. Their findings might surprise you.

Les Field, Professor and incoming Chair, (currently Director of UNM Peace Studies), and Alex Lubin, Chair of UNM’s Department of American Studies, are co-organizing UNM’s second field-school in Israel/Palestine in spring of 2015. The Israel-Palestine field school will consist of two required spring courses: ANTH 340/530, “Anthropology of Occupation” and AMST 350/550, “The Israel Palestine Field School.” They will travel to the West Bank from May 11–22. These classes are open to both graduate students and undergraduates, contingent upon instructor approval. The 2011 field school resulted in a number of faculty and student presentations and publications.

Fluent Selves, an edited volume by Suzanne Oakdale, Associate Professor, and Magnus Course, Senior Lecturer at Edinburgh University, examines narrative practices throughout lowland South America focusing on indigenous communities in Brazil, Chile, Ecuador, and Peru, illuminating the local, national, and international scales. By effectively analyzing food and foodways through the perspectives of critical heritage studies, this collection productively brings two overlapping but frequently separate theoretical frameworks into conversation. University of Nebraska Press, 352 pp., ISBN 978-0-8032-4990-5.

Lindsay Smith, Assistant Professor, and Dr. Vivette Gracia Deister (UNAM) were awarded a Wenner-Gren International Collaborative Research Grant, January 2015 - May 2016, for an ethnographic study of the use of forensic DNA to address migrant disappearances and death in Central America, Mexico, and the U.S. Migrant DNA: The Science of Disappearance and Death across the Mexican Borderlands will examine the emergence and consolidation of forensic genetics at the intersection of state-based and grass-roots responses to migration and migrant death. Focusing on scientists, the project will elucidate the knowledge practices that shape death and identification, particularly the way that genetics has emerged as a contested paradigm for making sense of the crisis of migration and human rights. This ethnography of forensic science in Mexico adds a new dimension to the theorization of the border, bringing critical attention to the role of forensic science as a knowledge-making borderland straddling justice and research, humanitarian identification and state obfuscation, and the consolidation and contestation of Mexican state power.

Lawrence G. Straus, Leslie Spier Distinguished Professor, presented three papers at the XVII World Congress of the International Union of Prehistoric and Protohistoric Sciences (UISPP) in Burgos, Spain, in September. Straus also organized two symposia, Human Adaptations to the Last Glacial Maximum in SW Europe and Origins of the Magdalenian as U.S. representative on the UISPP Commission on the Upper Paleolithic of Eurasia. During the congress, Straus revisited the Acheulean sites of Torralba and Ambrona. Straus was also honored with a Lifetime Achievement Award (“homenaje”) from the Sociedad de Amigos de las Cuevas del Castillo” in Cantabria in July.

Cristobal Valencia, Assistant Professor, was recently elected Secretary of the Association of Latina/o Anthropologists, a section within the AAA organization and of the U.S.-Mexico Border Research Working Group, a national organization supported by the Inter-University Program for Latino Research.
Congratulate alums on their new positions!

Abigail Adams (Assistant Professor, Dept. of Anthropology, Indiana University of Pennsylvania); Kaila Cogdill (Assistant Curator at the Hibulb Cultural Center & Natural History Preserve, Tulalip Tribal Museum); Helen E. Davis (Postdoctoral Fellow, University of Utah); Sean E. Gant (Postdoctoral Fellow, Center for Research on Race & Ethnicity in Society, Indiana University-Bloomington); Marcus Hamilton (Postdoctoral Fellow, Santa Fe Institute/University of Arizona); Shirley Heying (Visiting Assistant Professor, Environmental and Radiologic Sciences at Clemson University); Christy Mello (Research Assistant Professor, Anthropology & Sociology, University of Southern Mississippi); Lavinia Nicolae (Visiting Assistant Professor, Anthropology & Sociology, Colgate University); Lara K. Noldner (Bioarchaeology Director, Office of the State Archaeologist, Iowa City, IA); Lisa G. Rapaport (Research Assistant Professor, Sustainability Studies, Colorado Mountain College); Amanda Veile (Visiting Assistant Professor, Dept. of Anthropology, Dartmouth College); Bonnie Young (Postdoctoral Fellow, Environmental and Radiologic Health Sciences, Colorado State University).

MORE FIELD WORK cont'd

In Spain

Lisa Fontes (pictured below) is currently in Spain analyzing Lower Magdalenian (ca.19,000 years old) stone artifact collections from El Mirón Cave and other sites in Cantabria and the Basque Country for her PhD thesis.

SUPPORT OUR NEWSLETTER

To support the Anthropology Newsletter, the department has designed the bag and mug pictured to the right. The 12 oz. mug is black and red, and the shopping bag, made of 100% recyclable materials and has been manufactured to reduce the use of plastic bags. It is available in five colors: red, forest green, black, chocolate, and navy blue, and is machine washable (do not put in dryer). You can receive either item for a donation of the following amount (prices include shipping within United States):

Embosed Mug: $15 Embossed Recyclable Bag: $12.50

How to Purchase Gift Items

Please make your donations by check or credit card payable to UNM Foundation (be sure to indicate the fund you wish to support).

Please send to Jennifer George, Department of Anthropology, MSC01 1040, 1 University of New Mexico, Albuquerque, NM 87131-0001.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Ancestor's Lecture

XXXXth JAR Distinguished Lecture