

**MISSISSIPPI  
VALLEY  
ARCHAEOLOGY  
CENTER**

**2011**  
ANNUAL REPORT





*Joseph A. Tiffany*

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*Cover Design: The cover combines a photograph of a small sandstone face effigy from site 47Lc45 in La Crosse County with portions of a map of Swatek Ridge Mound Group (47Cr19) in Crawford County. Designed by Mike Bednarchuk.*

# *From the Executive Director*

MVAC was busy again last year with projects in Minnesota and Wisconsin. Last summer MVAC again hosted a prestigious National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) Summer Institute for teachers from around the country. Project Directors Bonnie Jancik, Kathy Stevenson and Jim Theler were successful in obtaining funding from NEH for another Summer Institute in 2012 and will be joined by Dr. Jonathan Baker, a new Archaeological Studies Program faculty member and MVAC Research Associate. MVAC Board Member Dr. David Anderson conducted the University field school on an Oneota site near Holmen, and Connie Arzigian directed MVAC's public field school at another site north of Holmen. MVAC staff and Jim Theler worked with the Mississippi Valley Conservancy and the Archaeological Conservancy in the creation of the Eagle Eye State Natural Area, located within the Cade Archaeological District in Vernon County. Our thanks to Loren Cade and Jim for their continued preservation efforts.

This fall MVAC hosted the 57th annual Midwest Archaeological Conference. This is MVAC's third time hosting this important conference. Over 400 archaeologists from throughout the upper Midwest attended. A conference highlight was a symposium in honor of Dr. James L. Theler.

It is with sadness that we note the passing of Otto Swennes this fall. Otto and his brother John, who passed away last fall, participated for many years in the Annual Artifact Show. John and Otto graciously allowed MVAC to conduct our public field school on their farm near Holmen for several years, and worked with MVAC and the Mississippi Valley Conservancy in establishing a land covenant to protect the natural and cultural resources on their farm. They will be missed by all of us.

MVAC is a sponsored research and education unit of the Sociology and Archaeology Department of the UW-La Crosse. We are a nationally recognized resource in public education, research, curation and site preservation. We receive minimal direct university support, however, and to survive, MVAC must generate its own income. MVAC's long-standing record of achievement is due to our dedicated, hard working professional staff and to your help. Our thanks for your continued contributions of time, energy, and financial support that helps to make MVAC a success.



*John (left) and Otto Swennes holding the mastodon ulna they recovered from their farm.*

# 2011 Award Recipients



***Connie Arzigian (left), Suzanne Harris, and Kathy Stevenson at the Signal Hill Mound Group Rededication at Wyalusing State Park, 2011.***

## ***James P. Gallagher Award: Constance M. Arzigian***

This year's James P. Gallagher Award is being given to MVAC's own Connie Arzigian. Connie is being recognized for her many, many contributions to MVAC through the years. This year's most notable contribution included Connie serving as Conference Chair for the Midwest Archaeological Conference, co-hosted by MVAC in October, 2011. Connie was involved in every step of the planning and implementation of the event, and it was one of the most successful conferences on record. Connie is on Wisconsin's list of archaeologists qualified to work with human burial sites, and spent much of the past summer working on recorded burial sites in Rice Lake, Dickeyville, and the King Veterans Home, contracting with a variety of agencies to ensure protection of these sensitive sites. From directing and supervising field schools, giving archaeology presentations throughout the Midwest, research, and working with all levels of students, Connie's wealth of knowledge and experience continues to be an extremely valuable asset to MVAC.

## ***Regional Archaeology Award: Mississippi Valley Conservancy (MVC)***

The MVC works to conserve native and working landscapes in the Coulee Region. Several properties MVC has worked on in recent years have not only preserved important farmland and habitats, but have also protected archaeological sites from development. The Eagle Eye State Natural Area in Vernon County is located within the larger Cade Archaeological District, which is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Seven effigy mounds are located on the property, and will now be preserved for future generations. In 2009, the MVC worked with Otto and John Swennes of Holmen to place a permanent conservation agreement on their land to protect the farmland, the woods, and the creek. That protection extends to the archaeological sites on the farm as well, which are unique in that they include artifacts from 12,000 year old mastodon bones to late Native American winter camps. In working with MVAC to help preserve sites, the Conservancy's work definitely benefits the archaeology of the Coulee Region.

## ***Archaeology Education Award: John Morris***

John Morris has been working with MVAC since the 2000 Public Field School, when he joined us in excavating a house structure at the Krause site, learning to ignore the huge bulldozer that was removing the earth only a few feet away. Since then he has returned almost every summer, becoming one of the regular supervisors of the Public Field School. We can count on him to take responsibility for a complex feature or unit and teach students of all ages what to do and why. He helps them understand the full process of archaeology, including the ever-present paperwork. To facilitate this, John prepared a manual on the survey and excavation process, which we now distribute to every student. John's background in chemistry has led to several professional joint papers on the analysis of burned residues on prehistoric ceramics. He can always be counted on for a good joke, a ready trowel, a sharp pencil, or a creative solution to an archaeological problem. It is for this willingness and eagerness to share the excitement of archaeological discovery that John is being honored with the Archaeology Education Award.



***John Morris (left) and David Adam analyzing artifacts from the Sand Lake Archaeological District.***

# Contracts Program

MVAC's contracts staff had a busy and productive year working on a wide range of projects throughout the region. Much of our work focused on monitoring construction activities at areas previously identified as burial sites, to ensure that human remains were not inadvertently disturbed. MVAC also conducted surveys and site evaluations for federal agencies such as the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service and Natural Resources Conservation Service; state agencies including the Wisconsin Departments of Transportation, Military Affairs, Veterans Affairs, and Administration; corporate clients such as Dairyland Power Cooperative, the Wisconsin Valley Improvement Company, and numerous engineering firms; and private clients.



*Mike Straskowski takes a GPS coordinate of a recorded mound site.*



*Hannah Lingenfelter and Mike Straskowski shovel testing at the Spooner Armory for the Wisconsin Department of Military Affairs.*



*Phase II testing for the WisDOT STH 162 project near Coon Valley. MVAC field crew: (l-r) Mike Straskowski, Kassie Praska, and Miranda Alexander.*



*Kassie Praska shovel testing in the Necedah National Wildlife Refuge prior to timber harvest.*

# Archaeology Education Program



*UW-L student Spencer Kawell (center) supervises middle school students during the Public Field School.*

## 2010-2011 Highlights

- More than 145 presentations were given by MVAC staff this past year, reaching more than 7,100 people.
- The Artifact Show was attended by over 3,000 people who viewed artifact collections from MVAC and 14 area collectors.
- The Public Field School was attended by 11 adults and high school students.
- Four MVAC youth classes and several La Crosse School District Summer School classes were offered.
- Numerous archaeology-related lectures were offered throughout the year.
- MVAC's web site had 6,753 hits.
- Archaeological displays at Riverside Museum and the UW-L Archaeology Center and Laboratories were well attended this past year.
- Educational staff presented at the Wisconsin Education Association Council Conference.
- MVAC classes and field schools assisted at archaeological sites in the area.
- Survey respondents rated MVAC staff and resources as excellent and 100% said they would use MVAC's services again.
- Five grants were received for special educational projects.

## NEH Summer Institute

Teachers from across the nation came to La Crosse this summer to participate in a unique learning experience. Twenty-four K-12 teachers attended a three-week National Endowment for the Humanities Summer Institute for Teachers hosted by MVAC and UW-La Crosse, to explore how human cultures adapt to complex and ever-changing environments.



*NEH Summer Scholar Paul Eckheart tries out an atlatl.*



*NEH Summer Scholars (l-r) Jenny Jaeger, Catherine Tucker, and Chris Kemp learn how to process artifacts during the Institute's lab day.*

*The Public Outreach Program is grateful for the continuing generous support of MVAC members, the Board of Directors, the United Fund for the Arts & Humanities, fellow colleagues, and the assistance of faculty and students from the UW-L Archaeological Studies Program.*

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*Joe Tiffany addresses the crowd at the Signal Hill Mound Group Rededication at Wyalusing State Park, which was co-sponsored by MVAC.*

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Jean Dowiasch, *Education  
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Wendy Holtz-Leith,  
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Bonnie Jancik, *Director  
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James L. Theler, *Senior  
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Vicki L. Twinde-Javner, *Senior  
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*Reception at the MVAC lab for participants of the Midwest Archaeological Conference.*

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