



MVAC at the University  
of Wisconsin-La Crosse

Archaeology News  
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Archaeology Center

[www.uwlax.edu/mvac](http://www.uwlax.edu/mvac)

1725 State Street  
La Crosse, WI 54601-3788

# Archaeology News

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## 2005 Field Schools at 47 Lc 333

Amy Aurit and Connie Arzigian

This past spring and summer, 38 middle school teachers had a chance to participate in a 12 credit series of graduate classes in Archaeology. MVAC (Bonnie Christensen and Connie Arzigian) received a Wisconsin ESEA Improving Teacher Quality grant entitled *Inquiry Based, Technology-Mediated Teacher Professional Development & Application* which brought teachers together from all across Wisconsin to learn how to create an inquiry based integrated curriculum; using archaeology as a vehicle to teach science, math, language arts, and social studies. The teachers met several times during the spring semester and took a web class in Wisconsin's Pre-European Peoples. This summer, they came to La Crosse for two weeks to participate in the excavation of 47Lc333, a small Oneota site in Holmen.

Although the four weeks that the teachers were out saw record high temperatures, the teachers opened up two new areas of the site, located and identified 9 new features, and completed the excavation of four other features that had been started in 2004.

The teachers also worked with LeVern DeVries on a variety of experimental projects including flintknapping, drilling pipestone, making clay beads, hammering copper, and throwing the atlatl. The teachers spent more time this summer preparing lesson plans and curriculum for their classrooms, as

well as scrapbooks (digital or paper) documenting their experiences. They will take their lessons into their classrooms this fall as part of the final course of the program, Classroom Implementation.

This summer, particularly in the field program, the teachers learned that archaeology incorporates many different disciplines, including math, language arts, geology, geography, as well as social studies. Their lessons aim to teach a wide range of topics using archaeology as a vehicle for real-world application of tasks. For example, several teachers created an adaptation of the site mapping activities to bring into their classroom. Despite the heat, the teachers reported that they had a great time this summer.



Teachers opening up a unit at 47Lc333.

MVAC also integrated archaeology into three weeks of mathematics education as part of *Investigations in Mathematics*, funded by a DPI Mathematics Science Partnership grant. The teachers visited the Holmen site and conducted a series of mapping activities, including applying the Pythagorean theorem to the construction of a true right angle, and expanding that into the creation of a true square grid unit. They did other exercises in the classroom, learning mathematics through investigation of questions such as peopling of the New World, and the time and effort involved in constructing a mound. The teachers were very enthusiastic about the chance to see real-world applications.

Finally, the Public Field School also returned to the site in Holmen and 14 people continued excavation on the features identified by the teachers field school, opened more of the site, and identified and began excavation on one additional feature.



## From The Director: Joseph A Tiffany



**Joseph A. Tiffany**

Hello everyone! MVAC had a very busy and productive summer. Here are some highlights. Ernie directed Phase III excavations for Schneider Engineering of Wausau of a quartz workshop complex in the Village of Rothschild, near Wausau prior to construction of a bridge. Ernie and his crew determined that the main quartz processing activities were associated with a Late Woodland occupation dating to ca. A.D. 1000. Ernie will be writing up the report this winter and developing an exhibit for the local tourism center. Ernie is also finishing a report on excavations at the Meier Farm Site in Onalaska from the 2003 and 2004 UW-L field schools. Elmwood Partners supported this work in advance of a residential subdivision development.

An MVAC crew under Ernie's direction also conducted Phase II test excavations on Rosebud Island in Lake Onalaska for the Corps of Engineers in advance of a shoreline stabilization project. They studied a National Register eligible stratified site containing 1,000 - 2,000 year old Woodland artifacts in a 3-foot thick prairie soil; with 3,000-year-old Archaic pit features below.

Vicki Twinde-Javner has completed a major report for WisDOT on the Second Fort Crawford excavations, and Wendy Holtz-Leith is finalizing a major report for WisDOT on excavations along South Avenue, near the Gundersen Lutheran Medical Center in La Crosse. She is also overseeing analysis of materials from more recent excavations along South Avenue toward downtown.

We are now in the process of reorganizing the laboratory and curation facilities at MVAC. The basement of the Archaeology Laboratory building looks a little rough; but excellent progress is being made with new repository shelving, re-boxing and storing our collections, and making the lab generally more user-friendly.

After finishing a monograph on a Plains Village site in South Dakota, I am now editing a long out-of-print report for publication on another important Plains Village excavation near Mobridge, South Dakota undertaken when Lake Oahe was built in the early 1950s. My colleague Steve Lensink of the Office of the State Archaeologist of Iowa and I have completed a book on excavations at the Cowan Great Oasis culture site in northwest Iowa and it is at the printers as I write. On May 28, I got married at the little country church that my great-great grandfather and his neighbors built. There are wedding pictures on my faculty web page <http://www.uwlax.edu/faculty/tiffany/>.

So, as you can see we all have been busy at MVAC this past summer! Upcoming MVAC events are highlighted on the last page of this newsletter. We hope to see you soon.

We enjoy sharing our research, education, and outreach activities with you. MVAC is unique because we provide many opportunities for active involvement in archaeology in the region. While part of the university, MVAC's public archaeology, research and education programs are not funded by the university. We cannot do the all the good things associated with MVAC and provide the services we do without your help and support. If you have not renewed your membership for this year or are thinking about gifting to MVAC in other ways, please take a moment and consider MVAC and the services we have provided for over a quarter century. Thank you for your continued support!

## Rare stone hoe donated to MVAC

*Robert "Ernie" Boszhardt, Associate Director*

Gary and Elizabeth Tischer of La Crosse donated artifacts that had been collected by Mr. Tischer's uncle several decades ago from a farm at the south end of La Crosse. In their collection was a chipped stone hoe made out of Burlington chert (see photo). Chipped stone hoes are extremely rare in the upper Mississippi Valley. They are a distinctly diagnostic Middle Mississippian culture (A.D. 1050-1200) artifact, which are relatively common at Mississippian farming sites in the American Bottom, including Cahokia near modern St. Louis. Chipped stone hoes have been found at the Mississippian out post site of Aztalan in eastern Wisconsin, along with pottery, shell, and other artifacts that indicate direct trade with Cahokia. Many Middle Mississippian stone hoes are made of Mill Creek chert, the source of which is near the American Bottom, as is Burlington chert.

Oneota sites (A.D. 1300-1625) in the La Crosse locality typically have hoes made of the shoulder blade (scapulae) of buffalo. The stone hoe donated by the Tischers is another recent indication of Middle Mississippian interaction in the La Crosse locality. Recent discoveries of Middle Mississippian camps near Stoddard (Fisher Mounds Site Complex) and Onalaska (Iva site) complement the long known Middle Mississippian platform mounds at Trempealeau (Green and Rodell 1994). Tantalizing clues of other Middle Mississippian activities in this region include mention of possible platform mounds at La Crosse by Zebulon Pike in 1805, and the finding of a tri-notched arrow tip from the Overhead site in south La Crosse.

(see Stone hoe page 3)

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## Stone hoe (continued from page 2)

Middle Mississippian interaction in the Upper Midwest is key to understanding the origins of the Oneota culture. The Mississippian culture formed in the American Bottom around A.D. 1000, and was based on intensive corn agriculture. Within a century, Cahokia became home to well over 10,000 people, and was only one of a series of Middle Mississippian communities in that core area. Middle Mississippian society was ranked, with elite status members ruling over commoners. At that time, southern Wisconsin and the Upper Mississippi valley was the home of Late Woodland Effigy Mound peoples, who are famous for having constructed thousands of animal-shaped mounds. Effigy Mound people were primarily hunters and gatherers, with no evidence of social stratification. Soon after the establishment of Middle Mississippian centers in the American Bottom, interaction and influences spread northward, and by A.D. 1050 several sites across southern Wisconsin and adjacent areas were inhabited by a mixture of Late Woodland and Middle Mississippian people. Many of these sites such as Aztalan, Fred Edwards in southwestern Wisconsin and Hartley Fort in northeast Iowa, were also palisaded indicating substantial threat of warfare. Between A.D. 1150-1200 Cahokia began to decline and the northern settlements were abandoned. Immediately thereafter, Effigy Mounds ceased to be constructed and the Oneota culture emerged in its place.

References for this article will be posted with the Fall 2005 digital newsletter at [www.uwlax.edu/mvac](http://www.uwlax.edu/mvac).



## Announcements

### La Crosse School District's Archaeology Funds

Funding is available for La Crosse School District teachers to use Archaeology and Native American resources from MVAC. Teachers interested in using the funds should contact Jean Dowiasch at 608-786-8454 to reserve materials.

### Read More In Our Digital Newsletters

There will be a link to the digital newsletters on the MVAC Home Page at [www.uwlax.edu/mvac](http://www.uwlax.edu/mvac)

#### In the Education Newsletter:

Our theme for 2005-2006 is Mounds. Information and lesson plans are available on the MVAC web site.

[www.uwlax.edu/mvac](http://www.uwlax.edu/mvac)

### Volunteers needed for Archaeology Day at Silver Mound

Volunteers are needed to help out with directing traffic, gate sales, and information booth at Archaeology Day. Please contact Jody Bruce at 608-785-8463 ([bruce.jody@uwlax.edu](mailto:bruce.jody@uwlax.edu)) or Jean Dowiasch at 785-8454 ([dowiasch.jean@uwlax.edu](mailto:dowiasch.jean@uwlax.edu)) for more information.

## Estate Planning

*Successful estate planning is a valuable way to continue your support for MVAC into the future. By giving a gift in your will or estate plan, you are providing for future programs in archaeological research, public education and site stewardship. Please consider MVAC when planning for trusts, gifts and bequests. Contact Marcee H. Peplinski, Development Director at the MVAC office for more information, (608)785-8463.*

## 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.

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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.





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## Upcoming Events

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

*[www.uwlax.edu/mvac](http://www.uwlax.edu/mvac)*

### **The earliest settled villages in the Andean Highlands of South America**

Tuesday, September 20, 2005

7 p.m.

Port O'Call, Cartwright Center, UW-La Crosse

Dr. Timothy McAndrews, UW-La Crosse Sociology/Archaeology Department, has spent the last ten years investigating the very earliest village settlements in the Peruvian and Bolivian Andes. The earliest village-based lifeways are a major point of interest for anthropologists because they represent one of the most fundamental developments in cultural evolution, the shift from a long established tradition of nomadic hunting and gathering to more sedentary adaptation involving animal husbandry and horticulture.

### **Lab work day for members**

Saturday, November 5; 10 a.m. - 4 p.m.

Call Jean Dowiasch at (608) 785-8454 to register.

### **Archaeology Day at Silver Mound**

Saturday, October 1, 2005

10 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.

KOA Hixton - Alma Center

Spend a day at one of Wisconsin's oldest and most important archaeological sites. MVAC archaeologists will provide tours of the quarry pits and rockshelters on the mound. The Wisconsin Dell Singers will perform Ho-Chunk Drumming. Other activities include spear throwing (atlatl), Native American games, artifact displays, arrow making and flint knapping (stone tool making) demonstrations and more. An Archaeology Day pass is \$4. Admission is free for children under six.

### **Annual Reception and Silent Auction, Highlights of MVAC's Summer Excavations**

Tuesday, November 15, 2005

6:00 p.m.

Port O'Call, Cartwright Center, UW-La Crosse

Join MVAC as we honor our 2005 award winners and hold our first annual Silent Auction. Also, at 7:00 pm. MVAC archaeologists will provide a program on the 2005 summer excavations around the state.

