



*MVAC at the University  
of Wisconsin-La Crosse*

*Archaeology News  
is a publication of  
the Mississippi Valley  
Archaeology Center*

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# Archaeology News

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## University Supports Special Projects

MVAC/UWL archaeologists have received funds from the UWL College of Liberal Studies (CLS) and the Provost's Office to support special projects that go beyond MVAC's normal range of activities. The projects will help strengthen MVAC's mission to provide education to the general public, and undergraduate and precollegiate students; to conduct research and preserve archaeological artifacts; and to provide a regional center to promote an understanding of the prior inhabitants of this region. Staff members are excited to be working with students and research interns to complete these important projects.

Connie Arzigian received a CLS research grant to complete MVAC's portion of a major, multi-authored publication on the Sand Lake Archaeological District, focusing on UWL's 1982–1986 excavations of extensive, well preserved ridged fields. Native American occupants constructed the fields for growing corn, beans, and squash at about AD 1400. Associated Oneota villages have been studied and analyzed through Archaeology Senior Theses, grants, publications, and research, but only brief summary articles on the ridged fields have been published.

Publication has been a goal for decades, and archaeologists involved in the initial excavations have committed to publishing a comprehensive, detailed report in the fall 2019 issue of *The Wisconsin Archeologist*, a regional journal produced by an editorial team at MVAC/UWL. The project includes scanning almost three feet of paper records, entering the artifact collections into a database for analysis, and digitizing thousands of slides and negatives so full-color documentation can be published and the images preserved. Along with Connie Arzigian, three of the original authors are involved: James L. Theler, Professor Emeritus, UWL; Robert Sasso, University

of Wisconsin-Parkside; and Robert Boszhardt, Lodi, Wisconsin, retired from MVAC. The work will serve as a memorial to James C. Knox, Evjue-Bascom Professor of Geography at UW-Madison, whose contributions in sediment analysis were a vital part of the original project.

In a second project, funding from the Provost's Office is helping MVAC transport, stabilize, and evaluate State-owned collections of artifacts, documentation, library items, and educational collections from the University of Wisconsin–Stevens Point (UWSP). Changes at the UW System level have led to the termination of UWSP's longstanding archaeology program. The transfer means that UWSP's irreplaceable collections will be preserved and kept available at UWL for undergraduate education, regional research, and public outreach.

Special funding from CLS is also helping MVAC maintain its commitment to the appropriate and respectful treatment of



*Brett Meyer, Research Intern, analyzing  
animal bones from the Gundersen site.*

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## Projects -continued from p.1

human remains. In its early years, MVAC worked ahead of local development to conduct “salvage” excavations at a number of Oneota village sites, recovering large collections of artifacts and animal and plant remains before the sites were destroyed. At the time, it was not known that these village settings also had the potential to contain fragmentary human remains. The Dean’s funding is allowing us to revisit the collections to look for fragmentary remains that might not have been identified in the field.

### Outreach Program Grants

For over thirty-six years MVAC’s Public Outreach Program has been providing presentations and resources to area educators in both formal and informal settings. Educators involved in the 2018-2019 Matching Funds Program are able to use CLS funds to match funds provided by their school/district/organization to access the numerous presentations and resource materials available from MVAC’s Public Outreach Program.

A second CLS grant is being used to help support some of the key elements of the Public Outreach Program which would otherwise be unfunded. Funds provided by the CLS help support a broad range of educational programs and support services for a variety of audiences, including the general public (all ages) and K-12 educators and their students. MVAC’s services for K-12 students and teachers are designed to meet curriculum requirements while stimulating interest in a variety of subject areas. MVAC’s services

for the general public offer opportunities for people of all ages and levels of interest to get involved in discovering the past. Underlying and connecting all of these services are the ongoing baseline activities through which the Public Outreach Program maintains strong contact with the education community, provides continuity of services and ongoing assessment of needs, and develops and implements specific programs and activities.



*Funding from the UWL College of Liberal Studies helps support events like the Public Field School.*

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## Keith Searce

Keith Searce passed away on November 26, 2018. Keith was an avid artifact collector who enjoyed sharing his knowledge and collection at MVAC events and with schoolchildren and others in the Loyal, Wisconsin, area. Keith displayed his collection at several “Archaeology Day at Silver Mound” events in Hixton. Keith and his wife Sharon attended the MVAC Artifact Show for many years. Staff and collectors alike enjoyed seeing the latest additions to his collection. We are thankful for the time they spent with us, and Keith will be missed.



*Keith Searce (r), at Silver Mound in 2006.*

## MVAC Staff Contacts

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Vicki Twinde-Javner

### Research Associates

David Anderson  
Constance Arzigian  
Suzanne Harris  
Amy Nicodemus  
James Theler

# Spring & Summer Events

## Volunteer Field Survey Opportunity for MVAC Members

MVAC will celebrate Archaeology Month by involving volunteers in surveys of local fields to find unreported archaeological sites. The number of participants is limited, so register early. Children may participate if accompanied by an adult. Call (608) 785-8454 or e-mail [jdowiasch@uwlax.edu](mailto:jdowiasch@uwlax.edu) to register.

### Advance registration required!

Date: Saturday, May 4, 2019 (rain date: Sat. May 11)

Time: 8:30 AM-4 PM

Location: Archaeology Center & Laboratory, UWL

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## 2018 MVAC Awards

### James P. Gallagher Award in Archaeology Excellence

- Wisconsin Valley Improvement Company (WVIC)

### Special Recognition Award

- Cathy Wendt

More information and images are available at <https://mvac.uwlax.edu/aboutsupport/volunteer-recognition/>

## Public Archaeology Field Schools High School/Adult

3-day Experience

Dates: Mon.-Wed., July 15-17

5-day Experience

Dates: Mon.-Fri., July 15-19

## Egypt

Grades 4-6

Date: Monday, July 15

## Introduction to Archaeology

Grades: 5-9

Date: Tuesday, July 16

## Middle School Field Experience

Grades: 5-9

Dates: Wed.-Thurs., July 17-18

## Field School Open House

Date: Thursday, July 18

Time: 10 AM-2 PM

Location: Goose Island County Park, La Crosse

## MVAC Educational Programs are supported by

The United Fund for the Arts and Humanities

The National Endowment for the Humanities

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# 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:

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

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## 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!

Enclosed is my contribution of \$ \_\_\_\_\_

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**Make your donation online at: [foundation.uwlax.edu/mvac](http://foundation.uwlax.edu/mvac)**

Please make checks payable to UWL Foundation, Inc. for MVAC and send to MVAC, 1725 State St., La Crosse, WI 54601. Gifts to the UWL 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

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

### MVAC 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. Archaeologists will be on hand to identify artifacts for the public. Call or e-mail MVAC at (608) 785-8454 or [jdowiasch@uwlax.edu](mailto:jdowiasch@uwlax.edu) if you would like to display your artifacts.

Date: Saturday, March 2, 2019

Time: 10 AM–5 PM

Location: Valley View Mall, La Crosse

### Wisconsin Archaeology Month

A variety of activities will be offered throughout the state during May to introduce the public to Wisconsin's long and rich cultural past. For a complete list of activities check out the WHS web site at <http://www.wisconsinhistory.org/> and type "Archaeology Month" in search.

Dates: May 2019

### Effigy Mound Ceremonial Landscapes

Effigy mounds — mounds of earth sculpted in the shape of birds, bears, and other animals and figures — are concentrated in southern Wisconsin. Built between circa 700 and 1100 A.D., they were often burial places. While researchers have learned a lot about these mounds over the years, explanations of their meaning remain elusive.

Birmingham says these ceremonial landscapes reflected a religious movement in which key powerful spirits were periodically animated in places where the spirits dwell to bring blessings to humans by renewing the world and to carry the dead in cycle of death and rebirth. He will also share a hypothesis for why this might have been done in a specific geographic area in the Midwest. Now retired, Birmingham continues to write public-oriented books on various archaeological and historical topics.

Speaker: Robert A. Birmingham, former Wisconsin  
State Archaeologist

Date: Thursday, February 21

Time: 7:30 PM

Location: Student Union, room 3310, UWL

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