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# Anthropology Department

The Anthropology Department's 2007-2008 Newsletter, Issue No.3

## A New Human Species?

By Wes Niewoehner

The discovery of human bones on Flores Island, Indonesia, has caused a stir among paleoanthropologists.

The specimen, called LB1, consists of the partial remains of an adult female. She was bipedal but only one meter tall, and she possessed a chimpanzee-sized 380 cc brain. The Liang Bua site dates to 38,000 to 18,000 years ago, a time when only modern humans were thought to exist throughout the world (with the exception of Neandertals who survived until 28,000 years ago). The archaeological evidence indicates that these individuals used fire, had stone tools, and hunted juvenile pygmy elephants and Komodo dragons.

When the analysis of the remains was published in 2004, LB1 was classified as *Homo floresiensis* and was regarded as a dwarfed descendant of *Homo erectus*. The popular press, however, called LB1 "the Hobbit."



Recently, I contacted a friend of mine who has primary access to the LB1 hand bones and asked if he could send me a cast of one of the wrist bones, the capitate. This bone was described as being similar to that of a chimpanzee, so I was excited to have a look at it myself.

The capitate turned out to be



shockingly small. I have seen capitates from modern human adults that are similar in size to the LB1 capitate, but they are rare. The LB1 capitate did have a somewhat unusual shape but it was clearly not from a chimpanzee.

One factor that researchers have to be concerned about is allometry, shape

differences that are due to size differences, and I thought that allometry could explain the capitate's odd shape. I analyzed the LB1 capitate by comparing it to modern human, Upper Paleolithic human and Neandertal capitates.

In my analysis, the LB1 capitate fell outside the range of the shape variation present in my sample. However, because I have so few small capitates in my sample, it is difficult to rule out allometric effects. (I guess that I will now have to find some more small capitates to add to my comparative sample!) The analysis raised a lot

of questions about the interpretation of the LB1 wrist remains, and I plan to present my findings at the Paleoanthropology Society meetings in March of this year.

Not all scientists accept that flore-

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## EXHIBIT ON 'HANDWRITING' AT THE ANTHROPOLOGY MUSEUM

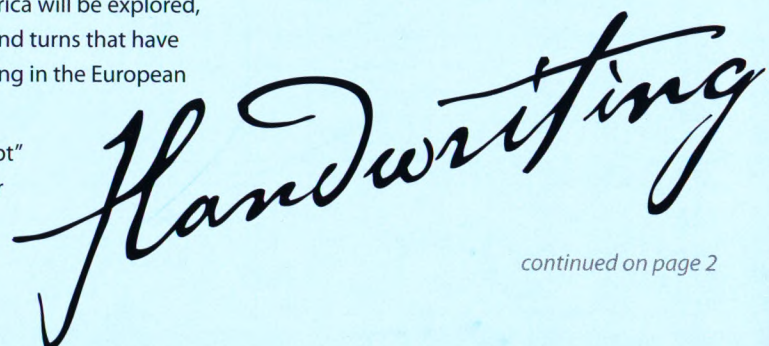
The Anthropology Museum opened its new exhibit with a reception on Wednesday, Feb. 27, 2008.

The previous exhibit, "Celebrations of Death," will be replaced with "Handwriting." This new exhibit will attempt to treat the breadth of writing and its implications.

The earliest writing from the Middle East,

China, and Mesoamerica will be explored, as will be the twists and turns that have created modern writing in the European tradition.

The "politics of script" – the use of particular forms of writing to enhance the im-



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## A New Human Species? cont...

siensis is a descendent of an earlier Homo erectus-like population. The primary counter-argument is that the LB1 skull is similar to that of a microcephalic modern human (microcephaly is a disease that causes small brain size). This viewpoint takes into account the fact that the skull is too small to be explained by dwarfism alone. Curiously though, the LB1 skull retains ancestral features not found in modern humans, such as the lack of a distinct chin. This counter-argument was further weakened by the discovery of the partial remains of five to six other individuals from Liang Bua that are similar to LB1 (but none had a skull preserved). In fact, one individual is thought to be even smaller than LB1.

Do I accept that the Flores remains are indeed a new species of human? Not yet. The pronouncement that the Flores remains are beyond the range of modern human variation is predicated on comparisons to minute samples from mostly European populations. We need to collect and analyze more comparative data before we can be sure what the Flores remains represent.

Even if the Flores remains turn out not to be from a new human species, they will remain important because they show that we paleo-anthropologists have become too certain that we know everything about human evolution and biological variation in this part of the world.

## Anthropology Museum cont...

age of a government or individual – will be discussed through a diorama of the Al-Hakim mosque and accompanying text, and various little-known and unusual scripts like Ogham will be shown and explicated.

The significance of handwriting to other social science disciplines also will be examined, as stations consider whether graphology (the use of handwriting to assess personality characteristics) really provides insights, how forensic handwriting examination can aid in crime investigations, and how calligraphy has been raised to an art comparable to painting in China, Japan, and the Arab world.

The exhibit will be accompanied by an exhibit guide, "Handwriting," which is the first publication of The Anthropology Museum.

On other fronts, early planning for the next exhibit has begun. It will present the Stuart El-lins Collection of Contemporary Native American Art, the first collection to be acquired by The Anthropology Museum and a substantial collection specializing in 20th century Native American art in various media from the Southwest.

Also, the museum currently is negotiating for the possible donation of a collection of ethnographic and archaeological materials from Mexico.

## FACULTY AWARDS

**Wes Niewoehner** received the College of Social and Behavioral Sciences' Annual Award for Outstanding Teaching and Instruction in 2006-07.

He is the fifth faculty member in our department to receive this award. Wes was cited for not only his wonderful teaching in the classroom, but also his development of our new curriculum in biological anthropology.

In addition he has created sophisticated, information-rich Web sites for his courses and he has built an impressive hands-on teaching collection of fossil and osteological materials.

**Kathy Nadeau** was named AFSSA Faculty Member of the Year in 2007 by the Asian Faculty, Staff and Student Association in recognition of her work, particularly her role in helping to develop the new Asian Studies minor and her support of the Filipino students, whose cultural performances are highlighted elsewhere in our newsletter.

This is the second time that Kathy has received this award.

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For advising in the major, please contact any full-time faculty member during their office hours (preferably in person) or by phone or e-mail.

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Anne Bennett  
Joel Beukelman  
Alan Llavore  
Patricia Massei  
Peter Robertshaw



# Student News

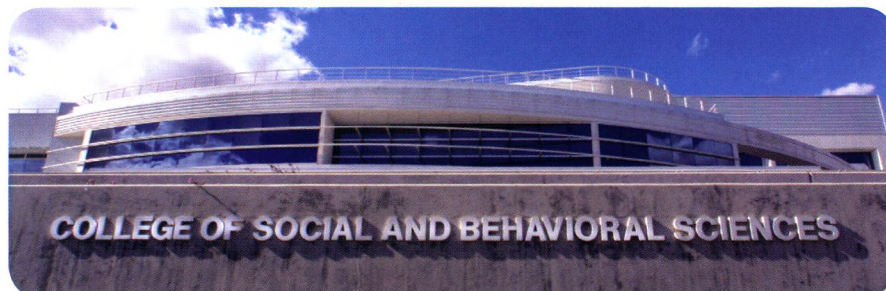
**Ashley O'Neill**, biology and anthropology major, is a student intern for the Green Campus Program at CSUSB. Ashley was also a semi-finalist in a student green campus competition, part of which she participated in a CSU Facilities Management Conference in Sacramento, presenting her work to almost 500 conference attendees.

**Bryan Gorrie**, anthropology major who is also an artist, was part of a group who had an exhibition entitled "Multi-Point US 2007" that ran at the Small Won-

der Foundation in Riverside, Calif., from Sept. 29 through Oct. 21, 2007.

**Darlene Harr**, anthropology major, is currently working as collections care assistant at the Western Center Museum in

Hemet, and loving every minute of it. She is hoping to work out the logistics of possibly working on the Madaba Plains Project in the Southern Levant, or elsewhere in Israel, during the summer



## ALUMNI NEWS

**Laura Chatterton, B.A. 2007**, and Eric Chaffin welcomed the birth of their baby boy, Bryce, on Dec. 5, 2007. He was 7 pounds, 6 ounces. Laura and Eric report that they are "completely enjoying parenthood." They are now married to each other, too!

**Bill Duncan, B.A. 2007**, won the award for best undergraduate presentation in the College of Social and Behavioral Sciences in the CSUSB student research conference in spring 2007. Bill is now enrolled in the Ph.D. program in anthropology at UC Santa Cruz.

**Niki Virga (formerly Gilman), B.A. 2007**, has recently enrolled in the M.A. program in anthropology at Cal State Fullerton. Niki hopes to pursue a career in underwater archaeology.

**Eric Chaffin, B.A. 2006**, now holds the position of technology enabled classroom consultant at the University of Redlands, where his duties include the maintenance of smart classrooms, staff training, management of student workers, the development of an upgrade plan and designing future smart classrooms for both the main campus and its off-site locations.

**Jessica Porter-Rodriguez, B.A. 2005**, is working for CH2MHill, one of the world's leading full-service engineering firms.

**Jacque Swartout, B.A. 2003**, has been teaching a variety of anthropology courses at Cal Poly Pomona, Riverside Community College-Norco, and Cypress College. She is also expecting her first child.

**Irene Armenta, B.A. 2002**, works for a

company in Las Vegas that coordinates traveling museum exhibitions.

**Dennise Manning, B.A. 2002**, is a volunteer with the Perris Valley Historical and Museum Association. Dennise and her husband, Steve Mogan, traveled to Africa in November 2007. In addition to the usual tourist activities and animal safaris, they visited Olduvai Gorge in Tanzania, where Mary Leakey found the famous "Zinjanthropus" skull in 1959.

**Colin Tansey, B.A. 2001**, and his wife, Leann, welcomed their second son, Donovan Demetrio Tansey, to the world on Dec. 26, 2007. He weighed 8 pounds 4.3 ounces and was 21 inches long at birth. Parents and child are doing well. Colin is studying national security affairs with an emphasis on Europe and Eurasia at the Naval Postgraduate School in Monterey.

**Lesley R. (Dwight) Cochran, B.A. 2000**, is now married and expecting her first child in July. She is a community service officer with the Riverside County Sheriff's Department, a job she has held for two years.

**Christine (Cobos) Vargas, B.A. 2000**, recently added another component to her anthropology background. She graduated with a second bachelor's in nursing in August and just passed her state boards in November, which makes her a registered nurse. She hopes to pursue a career that allows her to marry cultural anthropology with nursing.

**Darla Dale, B.A. 1994**, recently completed her Ph.D. at Washington University. Her dissertation title is "An Archaeologi-

cal Investigation of the Kanyore, Later Stone Age Hunter-Gatherers in East Africa." Darla has been working for the past six years while finishing her dissertation, at Washington University as an assistant dean in the College of Arts and Sciences, with a joint appointment in anthropology as a lecturer, where she teaches Introduction to Archaeology each fall to 300 plus students.

**Scott (Steven) Miller, B.A. 1984**, spent part of last summer as a volunteer on an excavation of a Roman fort at South Shields in England, an experience he thoroughly enjoyed. The highlight of the trip was walking along Hadrian's Wall between the fort at Housesteads and Peel Gap.

**Linda Stockham, B.A. 1975 and M.A. special major 1987**, had her play, "Divorce Sale," produced by the Perry Stagecoach Community Theatre in Perry, Okla., and by the Freeport Players in Freeport, Bahamas, in November 2007. Linda has moved home to Lewisburg, West Virginia, a town that she says has lots of art, culture, and history.

**Mary Sessom, B.A. 1974**, is still the mayor of Lemon Grove (a small city in San Diego County) and was recently elected chair of the San Diego Association of Governments. Mary reports that she has found "some of the information I learned while at CSUSB helpful in my travels around the world." In the last two years, she has traveled from Beijing to Paris and points in between. Mary now heads the Business and Professional Studies Department at Cuyamaca Community College.



## A Message from the Alpaca Club

Welcome back everyone to the 2008 winter quarter! ALPACA had a busy and exciting fall quarter with successful student turnouts at our meetings, two enjoyable dinner outings and elected all new officers for the school year.

The new officers for the 2007-2008 school year are President Aaron Castillo, Vice-President Consuelo Sanchez, Secretary Jessica Lieberman and Treasurer Bryan Gorrie.

We hope to have a great winter and spring term with many exciting activities scheduled to take place. We are planning trips to the San Diego Natural History Museum and the Museum of Man, as well as camping/hiking trips, and evening dinners at local ethnic restaurants.

If you have any questions regarding the ALPACA Club or wish to participate in any events, please e-mail Aaron Castillo at Castil10@csusb.edu.

## NEWS FROM THE LABORATORY FOR ANCIENT MATERIALS ANALYSIS

We continue to experiment with different combinations of ancient Mesoamerican glues; indeed perhaps our more odiferous concoctions can be smelled by people walking down the hall.

Some of our discoveries appear on the Web site of the Foundation for the Advancement of Mesoamerican Studies (famsi.org) – you may recognize some of your classmates in this illustrated article.

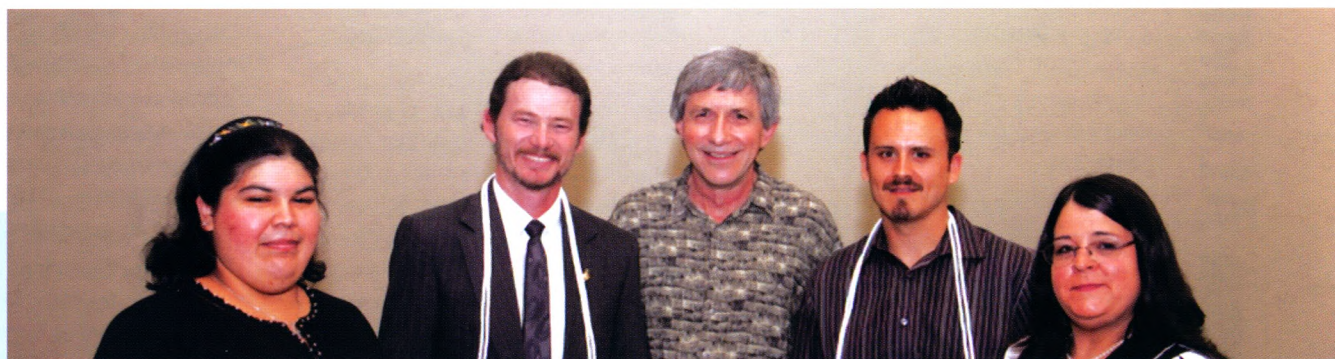
Drs. David Maynard and Frannie Berdan have been asked by their Mexican ar-

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## Presidential Scholar

Elisabeth Longshore-Cook, a freshman, is the first anthropology major to have been named a CSUSB Presidential Scholar. This prestigious scholarship is awarded to

only the top 1 percent of graduating high school seniors who enroll at CSUSB and is renewable for four years, provided that certain GPA requirements continue to be met.



*From left to right: Consuelo Sanchez, Gary Jones, Pete Robertshaw (department chair), Brandon Fryman, Lorrie Gassmeyer*

## Student Scholarships & Awards

Gary Jones received the Anna K.O. Sahagún Memorial Scholarship for 2007. This scholarship is given in memory of the mother of one of our alumni. After graduating in June 2007, Gary has enrolled in the master's program in anthropology at Cal State Fullerton. Gary plans to pursue a career in archaeology and cultural resources management in Southern California.

Brandon Fryman and Gary Jones were recognized at our college's awards night in June 2007 for their

successful completion of departmental honors. Brandon wrote his thesis on "Female Genital Modification: Beyond the Universalism versus Particularism Debate", while Gary wrote his thesis on "A Phase I Cultural Resources Inventory of San Timoteo Canyon State Park".

Lorrie Gassmeyer was recognized at our annual college's awards night for having the highest grade point average among our graduating majors.

Consuelo Sanchez was recognized

for outstanding service to our department at the college's awards night.

Alfred Alcaraz was awarded a \$1,000 scholarship, funded by the Archaeological Survey Foundation, to support his participation in the San Bernardino National Forest Archaeological Field School in summer 2007.



# Alpaca's 2006-2007 Efforts Recap

By Gary Jones, ALPACA President, 2006-2007

During the last year, and thanks largely to the Herculean efforts of William Duncan, ALPACA finally managed to gain official on-campus club status. Bill not only wrote the new club constitution, he also established and maintained the club Web site.

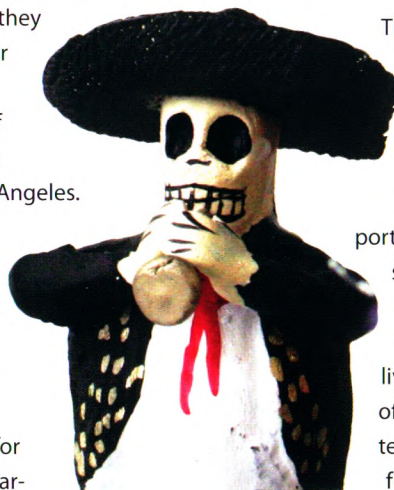
Thanks to some generous donations of time and materials from Elizabeth Scott-Jones, we kept ourselves solvent with a number of holiday theme craft sales and a particularly profitable raffle of a set of Aero-smith concert tickets. Consuelo Sanchez arranged a number of lunch time discussions with topics ranging from the history of flatbreads to the reading of Tarot cards.

Over the course of 2006-2007, ALPACA took advantage of the diverse multi-cultural

offerings of the Southern California region. In October, Dr. Frannie Berdan was kind enough to discuss with us the symbology and ceremonies surrounding the Dia de los Muertos celebrations as they are practiced in Mexico, after which we went to Olvera Street to see how the Day of the Dead is observed by the Hispanic community in Los Angeles.

Later in the year, we returned to Los Angeles to welcome in the Chinese New Year, and closed out the year with an overnight trip into the far reaches of the California desert to see for ourselves the controversial "ar-

chaeological" site at Calico. We then drove our erstwhile caravan 100 miles to spend the night at Mitchell Caverns near the town of Essex.



The officers and members of ALPACA would like to thank the faculty and staff of CSUSB for their unwavering support.

We have enjoyed the opportunity to meet our fellow students and develop networks of friendship that will last for the rest of our lives. I am sure that the new officers for the upcoming terms will have as much fun as we did.

## FACULTY NEWS

### Russell Barber

As has become typical, most of my professional activity over the last year has been directed to the Anthropology Museum and the opening of its new exhibit, titled "Handwriting." For the first time, an exhibit will have an accompanying publication, in this case an exhibit guide.

In other arenas, I have returned to some of my long-term interests. Prentice-Hall, the publishers of "Doing Historical Archaeology," have expressed interest in a second edition, so I've written a new exercise and drastically revised several others as part of the reworking of the book. I have at least one more exercise to write before the revised book is ready for submission.

I also returned to toponymy, the study of place names, completing a manuscript on California numerical place names, exploring why such places as



Twenty-nine Palms and Thirteen Curves were given these names (when neither place actually has ever contained that number of palms or curves). I will be submitting this manuscript to "Names: A Journal of Onomastics," the foremost (and practically only) journal devoted to this topic.

I am also preparing for a field project bridging two interests: cemeteries and writing. I plan to visit a sample of New England cemeteries, investigating the forms of lettering used on grave markers in different periods. Because of historic associations and other factors, different forms of lettering convey different character to an inscription, some creating grandeur, others simplicity, still others power or even humor. Why have certain scripts been popular for graveyard inscriptions during some periods and virtually ignored during others? How have survivors manipulated the impressions created by gravestone inscriptions? So far as I know, only one study similar to this one has been conducted, that by Alan Bartram in Great Britain.

### Anne Bennett

In spring 2007 I received a Professional Development Grant for Probationary Fac-

ulty from our college. This grant supports a translation and transcription project based upon audio-recorded data collected during my fieldwork in Syria. I have hired two of our students who are native Arabic speakers to produce an Arabic-to-English transcription and translation of several hours of data.

Previous support from our department for this project aided in the writing and publication of an article titled "Reincarnation, Sect Unity, and Identity Among the Druze" that appeared in the journal *Ethnology* (winter 2006). This article analyzes the role that reincarnation plays in maintaining a sense of unity and identity among the Druze, an Islamic sect residing primarily in the Levantine Middle East.

Reincarnation is something that is quite rare in Islam, yet in the Druze sect stories about the phenomenon abound. Reincarnation is of great social signifi-





cance for the Druze and it affects family, village, and community relations in many ways.

In spring 2007 I team-taught a Teaching Resource Center-funded course titled "Muslim Women in Society and Media" with a colleague from the Communication Studies Department, Dr. Ahlam Muhtaseb. This course will continue to be offered in the future (and will be taught by Dr. Muhtaseb in spring 2008).

For most of the 2006-2007 year, however, I was on leave (fall and winter) as a result of a welcome addition to my family, my son Charles Josef.

Looking forward, my research plans are to complete two articles related to my fieldwork in Syria and then to shift field sites to focus on Arab-Americans in the Inland Empire, a project for which I will be seeking grant funds to support a pilot project in summer 2008.

### Frannie Berdan

I have been on leave during the 2007-2008 academic year, working on a book on "Aztec Archaeology and Ethnohistory" under contract to Cambridge University Press. The book is part of the World Archaeology Series, and is intended to be the latest word on the Aztecs!

Two articles have recently appeared in international journals. One, "En la periferia del imperio: provincias tributarias aztecas en la frontera imperial," appeared in the



"Revista Española de Antropología Americana," published in Madrid, Spain. The other, "Living on the Edge in an Ancient Imperial World: Aztec crime and deviance," appeared in "Global Crime," published

in England.

A co-authored book is scheduled to appear in January 2008. This book, "Ethnic Identity in Nahua Mesoamerica: the view

from archaeology, ethnohistory, and contemporary ethnography," is published by the University of Utah Press and has been many years in the making.

In the fall of 2007 I was invited to participate in a Santa Fe Institute workshop on "Cosmology and Society in the Ancient Amerindian World." The three-day workshop grappled with complex issues of the role of cosmologies in societies, and particularly comparisons and contrasts throughout the ancient Americas.

I "represented" the Aztec world and presented a paper on Aztec rituals. During the fall I also gave two invited presentations on Aztec culture at Indiana University-Purdue University at Fort Wayne.

In spring 2006, student Jeff Sahagún, former student Ed Stark, and I presented a paper at the annual meeting of the Society for American Archaeology in Austin, Texas. The paper, "Production and Use of Adhesives in Aztec Mexico: the domestic context," was presented by Jeff Sahagún.

### Jennifer Miller-Thayer

In addition to teaching here at CSUSB (and at UC Riverside and Chaffey Community College), I presented a paper entitled "Unsilenced Voices: The Political Economy of a Toxic River in a Border Community" at the 2007 American Anthropology Association conference in Washington, D.C.

I am continuing to write my dissertation on border health care at the U.S.-Mexican border and hope to finish in 2008. I am also working with my co-editor on the second edition of our introductory textbook for cultural anthropology, "Cultures in the United States" (Hayden-McNeil Publishers), which is due out in fall 2008.

### Kathy Nadeau

Winter quarter 2007, I had a wonderful opportunity to serve as panel chair and discussant at "The Filipino Diaspora in the 21st Century" session at the International Filipino Centennial Celebration conference held in Hawaii.

Last spring, three of our students, Liezl Macale, Lauren Bjornstad and Miles Salvador, presented their videos titled "Culture

of Homelessness" and "Azn or Asian?" at the Western Association for Schools and Colleges

Annual Meeting held in San Jose. They completed these projects for my Urban Anthropology and Asian American Cultures courses. At the conference, we all participated in a panel that



discussed the issue of how to promote effective student learning and creativity in the classroom.

In addition, students enrolled in the Filipino Cultural Expressions course successfully wrote, produced and directed "A Night at the Museum." This celebration of Filipino culture event was presented to a packed and enthusiastic house at the Sturges Theater in downtown San Bernardino last spring.

You are cordially invited to attend the upcoming 2008 class performance scheduled for Saturday, April 19 at 6:30 p.m. at the Sturges Theater. The show always sells out, so feel free to e-mail knadeau@csusb.edu starting in early April if you want to purchase your tickets in advance.

Last summer, I received a professional development grant from the university to work on my book project, "History of the Philippines," which is to be published by Greenwood Press this year. Fall quarter, I received a mini grant to design a new humanities course, Asian World Traditions, for the new Asian Studies Minor program.

Also, I was invited to serve as an editor of the new Asian American Folklore Encyclopedia project. Finally, my article, "Maid in Servitude: Filipino Domestic Workers in the Middle East," was published in "Migrant Letters" and can be read at [www.migrationletters.com](http://www.migrationletters.com).

### Wes Niewoehner

In 2007, I was promoted to associate professor and received tenure. In addition,

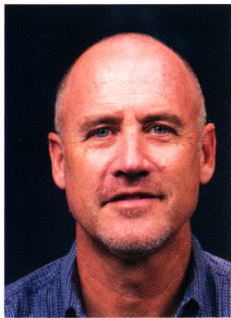


I received the 2007 College of Social and Behavioral Science's outstanding instructor award.

In the realm of improving instruction, a number of student volunteers have been helping me to produce "virtual reality" computer models of many of the specimens in our fossil cast and human osteology collection. The process involves using digital photographs of the specimens taken from numerous angles that are then "stitched" together in a computer program; this results in a single interactive image that can be rotated into the desired viewing angle on the computer. This will help students to study by allowing them to view and study specimens on their home computers.

The teaching award included some money for professional development. I used the funds to purchase a high-end digital camera that could accept the specialized lenses I have that are necessary for my research on wrist and hand anatomy.

The initial stage of data collection involves taking photographs of wrist and hand bones which are then imported for use in a computer program. The use of a traditional film camera makes data collection quite time consuming because the film negatives have to be developed and then



scanned in order to be imported into my computer program. Using purely digital images shaves off quite a bit of data collection time.

Not too long after I got my

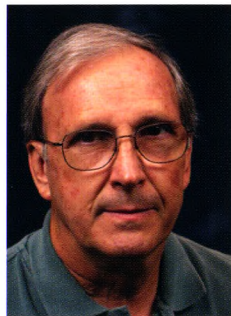
digital camera set up for use in my research, I had the opportunity to do an analysis of the Flores wrist bone (see my accompanying article "A New Human Species?"). I only had a few days available to accomplish the analysis, so I was relieved that my research data collection protocol was already fully digital.

Thankfully, gone are the days when I will have to bring film developing equipment

and chemicals with me when I travel to collect data. Now, I can use a digital camera and a notebook computer to collect data and even run an analysis on site and check for errors in my data while I still have access to the specimens.

### Jim Pierson

Jim Pierson continues to enjoy participating in the CSU system's Faculty Early Retirement Program. He is teaching three courses during the 2007-2008 academic year, as he did the previous two years.



The past year also included some travel, some writing, and loafing even more than he did while a full time faculty member. He and Grace spent 11 days in Russia in July 2007, traveling by boat from Mos-

cow to St. Petersburg. (Although he tried very hard, vodka did not replace Guinness as his favorite beverage.)

They also spent two weeks in August in Southwestern Colorado, where they were joined by their children and their spouses for fishing and relaxing.

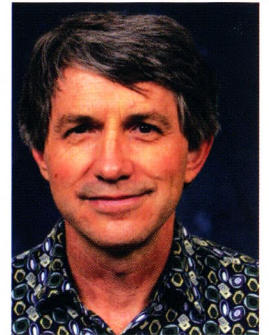
Another highlight was the opportunity in May to briefly host some long-time Australian friends and catch up on some gossip and anthropological truths from Borroloola. He has reviewed several manuscripts on Australian topics during the past few years for "The Journal of Cross-Cultural Gerontology" but is unsure if he has been asked because of his knowledge of Australia or because of his age.

### Peter Robertshaw

I have continued work on various projects during the last year but I have probably spent most of my research time on the African glass bead project. I have several papers on this research that are close to being submitted to academic journals.

Perhaps the most interesting of these is one reporting chemical and lead isotope analyses of beads from a late first millen-

nium AD site in the forests of West Africa. It seems that most of the glass from which the beads at this site were made was manufactured in Iran. Iranian glass appears to have been traded widely across sub-Saharan Africa at this time.



In addition to the bead project, I wrote a long paper with Bill Duncan, one of our majors, on the archaeology of slavery in decentralized societies in Africa that I presented at a special symposium on captives in prehistory that was held at a ski resort in Utah.

The proceedings of this symposium will be published later this year by the University of Utah Press, which sponsored the symposium.

I also completed my second children's book, "Archaeology in 3-D," which I wrote with Jill Rubalcaba. Jill and I also wrote "The Early Human World" a few years ago. The book should appear in print in the next year.

A paper on the beginnings of farming in East Africa that I wrote many years ago was reprinted in 2007 with an update in a new book, "The Emergence of Agriculture: A Global View."

## ANCIENT MATERIALS ANALYSIS CONT...

chaeology colleagues to join them in a symposium at the March 2008 meeting of the Society for American Archaeology in Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada. They will present their findings on the adhesives used in the manufacture of the death mask of the famous seventh-century lord of Palenque, Pakal.



# Gustatory Corner: The Artichoke

By Russell Barber

There is a strange and bristly vegetable you see in the supermarket, looking for all the world like a leafy green pine cone with stickers.

This is the artichoke, originally domesticated in North Africa and transported throughout the Mediterranean and ultimately beyond. It has a long and varied history.

The artichoke and cardoon are closely related, both members of the genus *Cynara*, which in turn is from the family embracing thistles. The flowering head of the artichoke is usually eaten by pulling petals from it after boiling, dipping their stem ends into melted butter, and nipping off the pulp at its base; the more solid base of the flower also is cut up and eaten. (The fibrous interior – the choke – is inedible, as its name implies.)

For the cardoon, however, the pithy stem is the edible part, eaten boiled then sliced. While these two are the only thistles do-

mesticated for eating, all thistles actually are edible, though pickings are slender on most wild species.

Alas, Latin made no distinction between these artichokes and cardoons, so modern food historians get to argue over whether one or the other was known in ancient Rome.

Apicius, the Roman cookbook writer of the second century, tells us that sophisticated Romans ate both stems and flower bases, usually cooked then sliced and put into salads. This suggests that perhaps both were cultivated in his time. Artichokes and cardoons fell along with the Roman Empire, and their cultivation was maintained for several centuries only by Moors in Spain and Arabs in Sicily.

The heyday of artichokes, however, began in the 15th century, when it becomes linguistically clear that artichokes and

cardoons were both part of Italian cuisine.

Probably because of phallic parallels in the stout and upright stalks, artichokes were believed to be aphrodisiacs that raised the odds of conception resulting in a boy child. Catherine de' Medici scandalized her native Tuscany and later her adopted Paris by her inordinate fondness for artichokes, which she ate in such quantities that commoners wrote songs about it.



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