I’m pleased to share with you activities from our fall semester as your new department head. However, let me first acknowledge Dr. Ervan Garrison’s contributions to the department as head for the last six years. Dr. Garrison stepped down on June 30 to continue his research in archaeology, both underwater and on land, and work more closely with students. Erv headed the department through a period of retrenchment then growth during which we honed our teaching and research focus in ecological and environmental anthropology. Our graduate students excelled for the number of prestigious awards and fellowships they earned, and we hired several new faculty members. Despite our modest size as a department we continue to stand out nationally among our peers for the quality of our graduate education and the level of external funding in support for our research.

Becoming department head July 1 has given me new opportunities to interact with all members of the department. I can say that students, faculty and staff are all engaged in making UGA Anthropology a great place to be at this time in history. All are dedicated to creating and disseminating knowledge about past and present human relations to the natural world through their archaeological, cultural and biological investigations. Their enthusiasm and initiative is contagious.

We have several new members of the department since the last newsletter, which in our revised format we plan to issue regularly in the fall and spring of each year. Assistant Professor Don Nelson has adapted to the Georgia heat after a few years in chillier England and is enjoying teaching and climate research in Brazil and elsewhere. Cabe Mottley joined us as departmental accountant in October to cheers by the rest of the staff. Jennifer Messer, who coordinates social science development activities for Franklin College, now has her office in the department and we look forward to working with her to enhance our relationship with our alumni. Dr. John Chamblee joined the Coweeta Long-Term Ecological Research Project based out of our department as information manager, which is really a return for him as he is a department alum and a veteran southeastern archaeologist.
David Meek is a third-year Ph.D. student working with Dr. Peter Brosius. David will conduct his dissertation research in the state of Para, Brazil, examining the Landless Workers’ Movement. This summer he conducted pilot research, looking at the relationship between agroecological education and political resistance. His research title is: “Contesting Space, Creating Place: Mapping the Role of Agroecological Education In the Brazilian Landless Workers’ Movement.” His travels have been supported by both a LACSI Tinker Award and a 2009 Franklin College Dean’s Award.

Carol Colaninno is working on her dissertation, “Fish Remains from Four Archaic Sites of the Southeastern U.S.,” aided by a 2009 NSF grant. Her research aims to identify the impacts of human fishing activities on fish populations using archaeofaunal assemblages from four Archaic (4700-3500 BP) coastal sites. The fishing strategies at these sites represent the earliest known for this area and provide a critical historic baseline to evaluate the current status of these estuaries. Elizabeth Reitz is her major professor.

Victoria Ramenzoni studies the relation between cognitive skills and foraging behavior. “I am hoping to understand the various ways in which minds, culture, and environments interact in shaping subsistence strategies.” In preparation for her dissertation research, Victoria carried out preliminary field work in Indonesia over the summer. She was funded in part by a 2009 Graduate School Dean’s Award. Bram Tucker is her major professor.

Nemer Narchi has just returned to Athens from a year spent conducting research in Sonora, Mexico. He is now writing his dissertation, “Intra-cultural Variation of Marine versus Terrestrial Ethnopharmacological Knowledge among the Seri (Comáac) of Sonora, Mexico.” Nemer is intrigued by the perceived differences between terrestrial resource-based and marine resource-based pharmacopoeia of the Comcáac, and has collected many specimens of both types, particularly botanicals, for further study. Brent Berlin is his major professor.

Christine Beitl is studying the historical processes producing vulnerable conditions on the Ecuadorian coast for her dissertation research: “Collective Action and Social-ecological Resilience on the Ecuadorian Coast.” In recent decades, coastal mangrove wetlands that support several thousand artisanal fishers have experienced unprecedented alteration. Christine researches how coastal communities cope with environmental change. A 2009 Fulbright grant funds her research in the provinces of El Oro and Esmeraldas in Ecuador. Robert Rhoades is Christine’s major professor.

John Turck’s dissertation research is close to home: “Geoarchaeological Analysis of Two Back-Barrier Islands on the Coast of Georgia, U.S.A.” In his research he collects archaeological and paleo-environmental data from the coast. A 2009 Dean’s Award helps fund his research. Ervan Garrison is John’s major professor.
René Bobe spends months in Ethiopia each year, returning each year to a collaborative research project which has resulted in some spectacular finds—like Selam, the 3.3-million-year-old Dikika baby. “Selam” means ‘peace’ in many Ethiopian languages. Why peace? The answer is no farther than the firearms bristling from the backs of the project’s local workers each day.

On this side of the Awash River, in Dikika, the armed locals assisting the researchers are the Issa. Across the river are the Afar, who are equally equipped with firepower of their own. Bobe has worked on both sides of the river, with both Afar and Issa. Each morning an Ethiopian member of the team goes out from the camp to assess that day’s situation, says Bobe. “He goes out and talks to the people, to see if it is safe to work that day. Sometimes it isn’t, and we stay back.” The conflict between the peoples, a struggle for scarce resources lent hostility by ethnic tensions, is an everyday reality for the researchers. They are there to construct another everyday reality, that of 3-4 million years ago.

The Dikika Research Project (DRP), begun in 1999 and headed by Ethiopian paleoanthropologist Zeresenay Alemseged, uses a three-track approach—geological, anthropological and paleobiological—to reconstruct the environmental context for early hominin evolution. Dikika is in the valley south of the Awash River in the Afar region; team members do fieldwork where the Hadar Formation is exposed. This geological zone was laid down three-to-four million years ago and is known for its yield of early hominin fossils, particularly those of a species thought to be an early ancestor of our own, Australopithecus afarensis. Lucy, a 3.2-million-year-old A. afarensis skeleton found in the region in 1974, attained charismatic status even among non-scientists (being named for a Beatles song doesn’t hurt), and now Selam exerts the same fascination.

Lucy was an adult when she died. Selam predeceased her by many thousands of years, and is estimated to have been only three or so at the time of her death. Lucy’s discovery was an event—Even though her skeleton was just 40% complete, her fossil yielded important information on the hominin transition between movement through trees and bipedal walking. Selam’s fossil is considerably more complete (though still, nine years on, being released from sandstone), and her bones provide more detail concerning A. afarensis locomotion. Among anthropologists, the consensus is that A. afarensis walked upright, but retained features of tree-moving creatures. How much A. afarensis relied upon walking, or whether they continued to climb, move, or live in trees, is a question still much-debated among researchers. It’s a pivotal question, for walking upright is a hallmark of humanity. The DRP seeks to establish the ecological conditions that prompted or supported such an adaptation within the hominin family tree.

Bobe is a biological anthropologist who joined the DRP in 2000, though he has worked in the Afar region since 1994. “[I’m] interested in the relationship between climatic change and evolutionary processes,” he begins, and goes on to explain that his research focuses upon the environmental and ecological context of human evolution in Africa. To that end, he says, he specializes in the study of fossil mammals that provide a long-term record of environmental change. “In East Africa, there’s a deep time record spanning several million years. I look at how fauna change over time in relationship to climate.”

The Awash Valley area is sere and bare today except for at the river’s edge. During the time when Selam lived, the environment was very different, including lush forests interspersed with rivers and lakes. Bobe describes the landscape as a mosaic environment, an evolving forest-savanna mix where different habitats permitted a diversity of plant life, which in turn supported a broader array of fauna, including grazing animals. It is thought that this environment prompted adaptations to further A. afarensis’ success. Mosaic environments tend to resist disturbances such as climate change and disease, and permit only short migrations from one habitat to the next in times of stress. Bobe notes that from the time of A. afarensis through the emergence of the Homo genus, the ecosystem was changing.

In a sense, Bobe works both backward and forward. He has found an astounding variety of fossilized vertebrates around Selam’s remains. Alongside long-extinct creatures, among those he’s identified are antelopes, hippopotamuses, impalas, elephants, and monkeys. Drawing from his knowledge of the habitats required to sustain each of these animals, he is able to reconstruct the paleoenvironment. Comparing the fossil evidence contemporary with Selam to
other data surrounding the evolution of early humans, he observes the signs showing how one climate yielded to another. Climate variability and change drives such changes in ecosystems; thus Bobe is able to assess the impact of climate change upon hominin evolution.

In memoriam: Jamie Waggoner

This fall, we lost Dr. James Cowan Waggoner, Jr. to brain cancer, at the age of 38. Officially, Jamie Waggoner was a 1997 graduate of Georgia College, where he earned a B.A. in history. However, he took classes in our department and participated in Mark Williams’ field schools during the 1995 and 1996 field seasons. Jamie also worked in our Laboratory of Archaeology.

After his time at UGA, Jamie worked for two years at a Georgia cultural resource management firm run by UGA anthropology alumni, then earned an M.S from Florida State University. He completed his Ph.D. in anthropology at the University of Florida this year, not long before he died. Jamie’s M.S. and Ph.D. research were both rooted in a love for Archaic period archaeology of southwestern Georgia. Jamie recorded over 300 archaeological sites in his beloved region and left a legacy of greater understanding, especially concerning Archaic period human exploitation of upland southeastern U.S. ecosystems.

Jamie was also an infectiously cheerful and optimistic colleague and a generous and loyal friend. Over the years, he volunteered his time, energy and talent working repeatedly with Pluckhahn, Thompson, and Chamblee in many sites at Georgia and Mexico. Though Jamie was not technically a UGA alumnus, he was a great friend to many of us and to Georgia archaeology. In his professional life, he exemplified the place-based, ecological anthropology this department values. In his personal life, he represented the joyousness and collegiality for which we all strive. Like so many people across the southeastern archaeological community and beyond, we were happy to claim him as our own and we will miss him now that he is gone.

— John Chamblee (B.A. ’96), Victor Thompson (B.A. ’97) and Tom Pluckhahn (B.A. ’88, M.A., ’94, Ph.D. ’02)
In the Field—Southwestern Madagascar

by Amber Huff

Since I began the doctoral program in anthropology at UGA in 2005, professors and other graduate students have counseled that no matter how well one plans, one should always be prepared for contingencies when embarking upon that great and often frustrating adventure that we call dissertation fieldwork. The possibilities for trouble are endless. So, when I headed out for ten months of dissertation research studying social change, rural livelihoods and health in southwestern Madagascar in November of 2008 I brought along a mantra: be flexible; be adaptable; be willing to change. Unfortunately, flexibility and a willingness to adapt one’s research to the situation on the ground don’t always do much good in the face of political instability.

My experiences and opinions are informed and inspired by my experiences living in the southwestern provincial capital city of Toliara, living in the rural Mikea forest region of southwestern Madagascar, by my excellent research team, and by people who participated in my dissertation research—rural Mikea, Masikoro and Vezo villagers living in and near the Mikea Forest north of Toliara. When my Malagasy field team and I first heard of the blossoming conflict, we were living and collecting data in Andalambezo, a small fishing and farming community a few kilometers west of the Mozambique channel.

Marc Ravalomanana is the founder of the Tiako I Madagasikara (I Love Madagascar) party; a dairy tycoon and the elected (now deposed) president of Madagascar who for years controlled a near-monopoly over urban food distribution and sales in Madagascar. The President of the new High Authority for Transition (HAT) Andry Rajoelina is the head of the Tanora Malagasy Vonona (Determined Malagasy Youth) party, a young former disc jockey who became owner of major radio and television stations and a profitable advertising firm and was elected mayor of the country’s capital. Madagascar’s armed security forces have played a key role in the ongoing conflict and their support helped facilitated Rajoelina’s ascent to the presidency through coup d’etat. Although Ravalomanana was democratically elected, he has in recent years come under strong popular criticism for being a very undemocratic president who has abused political power, controlled the media and sold Madagascar’s resources for personal profit. As a result of the political turmoil many civilians are dead and many more wounded in clashes between demonstrators and security forces. Urban food insecurity has increased significantly. Since the HAT takeover in mid-March, Rajoelina has come under increased scrutiny and criticism in Madagascar and abroad. There is growing military repression, with politicians opposing the HAT at risk of arrest. A power-sharing agreement brokered in August was to provide for a stable transition period before nationwide elections but the opposing groups have not been able to come to terms.

I arrived in Madagascar in November of 2008 and was able to live and conduct research there until March of 2009 thanks to a Fulbright grant and a National Science Foundation doctoral dissertation improvement grant. Despite the political crisis that began full force in January 2009, my research team and I felt secure in the rural southwestern villages where we were collecting data. Oppressive heat, cyclones, mosquitoes and bouts of stomach upset were all more directly troubling to us than the political problems that seemed very far away. Early on, news of events in the capital and other urban areas would trickle in from villagers who had traveled to attend weekly markets in larger towns in the region. Rumors were plentiful and there emerged a heightened sense of paranoia and uncertainty. One symptom of this was a palpable suspicion of strange people and vehicles, especially as rumors emerged of mercenaries and illicit arms entering the region.

In mid-March, the US embassy in Madagascar declared a mandatory evacuation of Americans from the island, Peace Corps volunteers were pulled out, and the Madagascar Fulbright program was suspended shortly before Ravalomanana was forced from office and establishment of the HAT, led by Rajoelina. These unfortunate events strained diplomatic relations between the United States and Madagascar and I was compelled to choose between forfeiting my Fulbright grant, evacuating to mainland Africa, or returning to the United States and resuming my research with funding reinstated. It was very difficult to leave Madagascar on such short notice, leaving my research team, my friends, my project, unfulfilled commitments, and even my pet parrot, Peep-Peep, months ahead of schedule. It was especially difficult because I never felt that I was personally in danger in the south. I felt like I was breaking promises to people, made worse by the fact that I couldn’t give even an estimated date of when I would be able to return and resume my research.

On the upside, returning to Athens mid-project has given me a chance to really reflect on my research and to begin preliminary analysis of already collected data. I was able to return to Madagascar in late August, to ask new (and, I hope, important) questions considering the sweeping political, economic and social changes that have affected the island since the beginning of my project.
New Faculty

Dr. Don Nelson joined the department in January, and he brings with him several research projects with Brazilian and U.S. partners. Throughout both his past and current research, Dr. Nelson’s work has focused on climate variability and the effects of climate change, largely in Brazil. These projects include improving water-management tools and exploring adaptive strategies for groups ranging in scale from individual households to state and national governments.

A 2005 University of Arizona Ph.D., Dr. Nelson most recently served as Adjunct Professor at UA while also conducting climate change research research with the University of East Anglia, England. He lives close to campus with his wife, Anamaria, and daughter, Isabella.

New Fundraising Focus

Franklin College has assigned a new Director of Development for the Social Sciences, Jennifer Messer. Jennifer’s office is in our department. “Anthropology is one of the departments that have done the most work in keeping up with alumni, and maintaining relationships with donors—I am happy we can build on that.” Although she’ll be working for other departments and campus entities as well, she’s clear about her goals for our department: “I’m here to raise money for scholarships, graduate assistantships, travel and research for both students and faculty.”

Jennifer’s lived in Athens on and off since 1993, and comes to us from development work with the Lamar Dodd School of Art. Her interests include triathlon training and, in a less strenuous mode, eating and cooking with her husband, Scott. To discover ways to support UGA Anthropology, please contact her through either (706) 542-0068 or jlmesser@uga.edu.

In Peru

In July over 120 scientists, policy makers, and students met in Lima, Peru, for a nine-day conference, “Adapting to a World without Glaciers: Realities, Challenges, and Actions.” Among many international sponsors were P.I. Dr. Robert Rhoades and the University of Georgia. UGA was represented by former students of Dr. Rhoades (Drs. Jorge Recharte, Milan Shrestha, and Xavier Zapata), as well as current students Kate Dunbar, Cara Sipprelle, and Kristin VanderMolen. More on the conference can be found at http://www. mountain.org/press/events/glaciers.

Near Cusco, Peru, Dr. Robert Rhoades participates in Chukcha Rutukuy—A child’s first haircut ceremony. Dating back to the Inca, this ritual includes invocations to nature spirits and a festive celebration confirming the child’s status in her society. Dr. Rhoades has been given the honor of serving as the child’s Padrino; he will cut the first lock and thus assume kinship responsibilities as the little girl’s godfather.
Hank Davis (A.B. 1972) has been teaching for the last 35 years at Atlantic Community High School in Delray Beach, Florida. He’s taught cultural anthropology and psychology in the the school’s International Baccalaureate program for the last 20 of those years; he now works for the same program now as an international teacher trainer. He and his wife live in Delray Beach, Florida.

Purna C. Mohanty (Ph.D. 1977) currently serves as Professor and Coordinator of Sociology, Paine College in Augusta, GA, and also as Adjunct Faculty for the Medical College of Georgia Department of Health Informatics. His research includes issues of globalization, cultural diversity, India and South Asia, cultural values, and reflective teaching.

Ernie Seckinger (M.A. 1977) retired in 2007 from the US Army Corps of Engineers, Mobile District after a career as a district archeologist for 30 years. For the last four years of that position, he served as the nationwide cultural resources program manager for the Army BRAC (Base Closure and Realignment) NEPA Support Team. He is now Senior Program Analyst at Brockington Cultural Resources Consulting. He can be reached at erniesekinger@brockington.org or at cell phone 678-977-4426.

John Gilchrist (A.B. 1978) spent twenty years flying attack jets from the decks of various aircraft carriers for the U.S. Navy. He retired in 1998 with the rank of Commander. Upon retirement, he and his family divested themselves of all their land-bound possessions and have lived since on their boat, Free Bird, sailing between the Caribbean in the winter and New England in the summer.

Stan VanSant (A.B. 1982) followed his degree in anthropology with another UGA degree in computer science, and has been working in IT since then. He retains his interest in anthropology; he reads and learns more as he has time. VanSant also casts “extras” for movie productions, and invests in real estate.

Hugh Crumley (A.B. 1992) went on to earn an M.Ed. in Teaching of English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) from UGA in 1997 and a Ph.D. in instructional technology from the University of Virginia in 2006. He now teaches instructional technology and education at Duke University.

Linda Morse (A.B. 1995) is currently teaching high school U.S. History and anthropology at Foxborough Regional Charter School in Massachusetts. She graduated from Framingham State College in 2000 with an M.Ed. with a focus in history. She’s now working on an M.A. in history from Providence College. Linda and her husband Doug have been married for 33 years and have two “awesome” daughters.

Harrison Clay (A.B. 1996, in both anthropology and English) followed his 1996 graduation from UGA with a law degree from UVA. He now works as the general counsel at Clean Energy Fuels in California, a company that sells natural gas as a cheaper, cleaner vehicle fuel. His interest in energy, environmental affairs and sustainable development originated from his anthropology studies at UGA.

Caryn DesMarais Barman (A.B. 1998) is currently employed as a physical therapist at the Institute for Human Development at Northern Arizona University. Most of her time is spent on the Navajo and Havasupai reservations providing a combination of direct services for children and training/capacity building for local education and health service providers. Caryn’s happy to have proved her mother wrong: her anthropology background is useful every day in her work. Reach her at cbarman@mpgcable.com or caryn.barman@nau.edu.

Brent Buice (A.B. 1999) works at UGA with Franklin College as a business manager. Following graduation, he came back to UGA and earned an M.A. in Nonprofit Management from the School of Social Work in 2004. He also serves on the Board of BikeAthens, a local alternative transportation advocacy organization. His love of travel has sent him backpacking in a many places since graduating, including the Netherlands, Belgium, Guatemala, Jamaica, Spain, Morocco, and all around the U.S.

Brittain E. Lamoureux (A.B. 2000) received her M.A. in psychology from New York University in 2005, and is currently pursuing her doctorate in clinical psychology at Kent State University in Kent, Ohio. She is developing a clinical specialty in trauma and associated psychopathology. Her research concerns the impact of childhood sexual abuse on women’s relationships in adulthood.

Charmayne Tyson Nichols (A.B. 2003) has been a massage therapist for 14 years, and is now enrolled in the Medical College of Georgia’s new Clinical Nurse Leader’s program, an entry-level nursing program at the master’s level for those with a bachelors in another field.

Douglas Kaliher (A.B. 2005) enjoys his job working for Merial, a national company that makes vaccines for horses, cows, pigs, dogs and cats. Douglas works in the Athens location, as a freeze dryer specialist. Only two people throughout the nationwide company share his job description.

Julie Wieczkowski (Ph.D. 2003) has been named co-director of Rutgers University’s yearly primatological field school in Kenya. She is currently an assistant professor in anthropology at Buffalo State College.
Publications

BOOKS AND BOOK CHAPTERS


ARTICLES ACCEPTED


CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS


Veteto, James R. 2009. Seeds of persistence: Southern Appalachian heirloom vegetable and fruit cultivars. 10th annual Landscaping and Gardening with Native Plants Conference of the Highlands Biological Foundation, Sept. 11, in Highlands, NC.

Veteto, James R. 2009. Southern Appalachian heirloom vegetable history, seed saving techniques, and propagation fundamentals for home gardeners. 10th annual Landscaping and Gardening with Native Plants Conference of the Highlands Biological Foundation, Sept. 10, in Highlands, NC.


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