Greetings from the Head

Once again this academic year, there is a real atmosphere of achievement and much to celebrate in the department. As you can see above, graduate student Joe Lanning continues to win recognition for both his field work and the photography it inspires. The number of undergraduates choosing anthropology majors continues to rise, and their talents continue to amaze. Tracy Yang, mentored by Dr. Susan Tanner, is now both a 2011 Rhodes Scholar and a 2010 Truman Scholar. Other undergraduates of particular note include Mariam Abazeri and Terese Gagnon, who have both won competitive Gilman Scholarships for study abroad, and Sierra Casteradorodgers, who was invited to join Phi Beta Kappa.

Dr. René Bobe is back in Nature again. This time a team discovery is on the cover; evidence that hominins were using stone tools to butcher animal flesh around 3.4 million years ago—800,000 years before the previously accepted date. Dr. Stephen Kowalewski, with funding from the National Science Foundation (NSF), is conducting an extensive, multidisciplinary archaeological field project in Coixtlahuaca, Mexico. This area was a thriving, agriculturally important prehispanic kingdom, and Dr. Kowalewski and his team seek reasons for its cyclical collapses and current environmental degradation, as well as cultural information for current residents. Dr. Elizabeth Reitz and the Zooarchaeology Laboratory have teamed with four other institutions to investigate the effects of Woodland seasonality on the faunal remains found on the northern coast of the coast of Mexico, also through NSF funding.

Our graduate students have been just as active as the faculty in undertaking fascinating fieldwork. Michael Coughlan received three years of funding from the EPA-STAR program to examine pastoral fire ecology in the French Pyrenees. David Meek received an NSF award to investigate self-realized learning and landscape change in Brazil among the Landless Workers Movement. Victor Iminjili re-joins us with a Franklin Mosher Baldwin Memorial Fellowship from the Leakey Foundation. Kristine Skarbo, supported by the NSF, is working to preserve agricultural diversity amid climate change in the Andes. Victoria Ramenzoni received a NSF Doctoral Improvement grant to examine subsistence-related decision making among fishermen in Indonesia.

Conferences and meetings also abounded. At the American Anthropological Associations annual meeting, a memorial session gathered former and present colleagues and students to honor the late Dr. Robert Rhoades. Fourteen laudatory papers and much reminiscing ensued. In October, the Southeastern Archaeological Conference held its 67th meeting, where a special symposium celebrated the contributions to the field by Professor Emeritus David Hally—“Archaeologist, Mentor, Friend: Papers in honor of Dr. David J. Hally.” Dr. Bobe’s Paleoanthropology and Paleoecology Laboratory presented posters in October at the 70th annual meeting of the Society of Vertebrate Paleontology. David Patterson called the long trip in the departmental Suburban “a chance to bond as a lab.”

Wishing you all the best as we go forward into 2011.
Graduate student David Meek continues to do research abroad for his dissertation. David’s title is “Transforming Nature and Self: Informal Learning and Landscape Change within the Brazilian Landless Workers’ Movement.” In his research, he is focusing on the intersection of informal learning, formal education, and agrarian landscape change within the context of an Amazonian settlement of the Brazilian Landless Workers’ Movement (MST). The MST is the largest social movement in Latin America, with an estimated 1.5 million landless members organized in 23 out of Brazil’s 26 states. Their goal is to carry out land reform in a country deeply marked by inequitable land distribution, which the MST considers to be a civil rights issue supported by the country’s constitution. David’s studies concern the informal educational program of the MST, specifically its effect on reforestation within the Amazon—a region commonly characterized by peasant deforestation. His certificate program in GIS has given him the skills to gather and analyze spatial data on land cover change within the Amazon. Dr. Pete Brosius is David’s major professor.

Michael Coughlan has been awarded a three-year Environmental Protection Agency STAR (Science to Achieve Results) Fellowship totaling $111,000. This award assists U.S. graduate students in environmental studies, who undergo rigorous competition to win the fellowship. With the support of this prestigious grant, Michael will be continuing his dissertation research, “Shifting Household Economic Strategies and Pastoral Fire: Long-Term Human Fire Ecology in the French Western Pyrenees,” through May 2012. His work concerns the historical ecology of fire use in the western portion of the Pyrenees mountains of southern France. The project integrates ethnographic, geospatial, and paleoecological methods to understand how household economic strategies interact with fire ecology over the long term to help create the pastoral landscapes that have endured for centuries. Michael undertakes this research with the goal of contributing to conservation strategies that promote both cultural and ecological diversity and sustainability. Dr. Ted Gragson is Michael’s major professor.

Anthropology graduate students Kristin VanderMolen and Kristine Skarbø, together with the Union of Peasant and Indigenous Organizations of Cotacachi, Ecuador, have been awarded two grants supporting the publication of a children’s book, “The Creation of Our Nature.” Their book will contain legends they’ve collected explaining how the local landscape was shaped, as told by elders in Cotacachi, Ecuador. It will be published in a bilingual (Kichwa/Spanish) and illustrated format, and distributed in the area’s schools in an effort to stimulate learning of the native language, Kichwa, as well as of traditional environmental knowledge. The granting agencies are the Anthropology and Environment Section of the American Anthropological Association, for $2,000, and the non-profit Society for Endangered Languages, for the same amount. Kristin’s major professor is Dr. Don Nelson; Kristine’s is Dr. Virginia Nazarea.

Two out of five winners of the competitive Gilman International study-abroad scholarship are anthropology majors. Undergraduate Mariam Abazeri, with Anthropology and International Affairs majors, will use her $4000 award to study in France. Terese Gagnon, an anthropology major, will travel to Lima, Peru for her studies, with an award of $4,500. Congratulations to our exceptional undergraduates!
Dr. René Bobe Co-Authors Nature Cover Story—Again

René Bobe, once again, is co-author of an exciting story featured on the cover of the prestigious journal Nature. He’s part of a global team of scientists who have discovered evidence that hominins were using stone tools to butcher animal flesh around 3.4 million years ago, 800,000 years before the accepted date. As part of the Dikika Research Project (DRP), Dr. Bobe works in Ethiopia to discover the environmental and ecological context of human evolution.

The 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. In 2001, the DRP discovered the near-complete fossilized remains of a 3.7-million-year-old A. afarensis three-year old girl. This is an even earlier example of the species than “Lucy,” the specimen found in 1974.

Dr. Bobe is a biological anthropologist interested in the relationship between climatic change and evolutionary processes. He specializes in the study of fossil mammals that provide a long-term record of environmental change that he may apply in the context of human evolution in Africa. In January 2009, during the team’s thorough process of examining fossils from a nearby site, the mammal bones revealed, through many types of testing, markings consistent with hominin use of stone tools—for cutting and stripping flesh, and for breaking bones to remove the marrow. Unless more discoveries are revealed, the only hominin species present in the lower Awash Valley during the appropriate time period is A. afarensis. Did these hominins produce their own stone tools as well as use them?

It is not inconceivable, although no tools, nor stones large enough to create them, were found in the appropriate geologic strata. Still, the hominin use of such tools has been advanced from the previously known 2.6 Myr ago, in Kenya and Ethiopia, to the DRP-discovered 3.39 Myr ago evidence for stone tool use.

Major Caps Her Many Awards with Rhodes Scholarship

UGA anthropology major Tracy Yang, 21, has won a Rhodes Scholarship at Oxford University, England. Tracy plans to use her scholarship to pursue her master’s degree in global health science while enjoying the two or three years of Oxford graduate study that comprise her award. Ms. Yang, who is a 2010 Truman Scholar and a UGA Foundation Fellow, is excited by the possibilities the award provides “It’s definitely something you can barely let yourself dream about. It’s thrilling. I’m just excited to begin this new journey in my life.”

Tracy has taken two courses with biological anthropology faculty member Dr. Susan Tanner: Human Adaptation and Medical Anthropology. Dr. Tanner has been Tracy’s faculty mentor since she was a freshman. “Both her classes and our conversations sparked my passion for medical anthropology,” says Tracy; “I am actually working with her on a directed research project this semester.” Tracy will graduate from UGA in May and begin her studies at Oxford in fall 2011. She is working toward a career as a physician and policy analyst, aiming to reduce health disparities and improve access to health care. The fact that she speaks three languages will certainly enhance her rapport with people she encounters in a medical role, but such communication skills will also help her as she works to analyze policies that affect peoples’ health. “I guess it’s kind of an interdisciplinary borderland,” she said of her career goals.

Even as an undergraduate, Tracy has worked to ameliorate health disparities among marginalized and poor populations in Nicaragua, New York, and here in Athens. She has also, under the guidance of Rick Tarleton, Distinguished Research Professor in Cellular Biology, researched Trypanosoma cruzi, a parasite that causes Chagas disease. This disease, spread by native insect vectors, infects nearly 18 million people in Latin America and often affects the nervous system, digestive system, and heart.

Just 32 U.S. students were eligible for the Rhodes in 2011.
Recent Donors

**Department Head Ted Gragson**, on behalf of the department, thanks those who have contributed to the Robert E. Rhoades Predissertation Travel Award. These gifts in memory of Distinguished Research Professor Robert Rhoades will make a difference for future generations of students engaged in environmental research. If you would like to designate a gift, you may do so.

We also appreciate those who have donated to the department itself. To donate please visit our Web site, anthropology.uga.edu, and select the link for giving opportunities. Or, if you’d like to learn more about the department and how you may contribute, please see the development section on this page, or contact **Director of Development Jennifer Messer** at 706-542-0068.

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**Fund Endowed in Honor of Dr. Rhoades**

Through the wishes of the late **Robert Rhoades**, and the dedicated support of his partner both in life and in research, **Professor Virginia Nazarea**, the department may now confer the Robert E. Rhoades Pre-Dissertation Travel Award. This award provides support for graduate students to visit prospective sites for their field research with the goal of enhancing their research and external funding proposals.

A Distinguished Research Professor, Dr. Rhoades knew well the necessity of traveling for research, and the difficulties graduate students encounter getting funding to do so. At the time of his death, Dr. Rhoades had active research programs and projects spanning many countries and ethnic groups. He was working in Peru, Ecuador, Nepal and the United States, and served on the boards of several international research organizations. Throughout this research, Dr. Rhoades worked with indigenous groups to understand underlying sociocultural and demographic pressures influencing people’s decision-making toward the environment and agriculture. He left the world he strove to protect too soon, but his work will live on in future generations of students engaged in environmental research, assisted by the award in his name.

**Jennifer Messer**, Social Sciences Director of Development

Please consider supporting the UGA Department of Anthropology with a gift. Your gift provides scholarships for our undergraduate and graduate students, funding for research and field studies, and opportunities for students to attend scholarly conferences. Perhaps you received one of these scholarships/awards while you attended UGA. If so, you know how much financial support can mean to a student. Please consider contributing so we can continue to give our anthropology students the resources they need to thrive. For more information on ways to give, please go to anthropology.uga.edu/giving or call me at 706-542-0068.

There are many worthy ways to contribute. The **Anthropology Development Fund**: Unrestricted donations to this fund give the department flexibility to pursue promising opportunities and meet pressing needs. Your support helps bring in speakers, provides research dollars for students, promotes student travel, and creates new resources. The **Rhoades Pre-Dissertation Research Award**: Our newest endowed fund was created through the generosity of the family and friends of Dr. Robert Rhoades; this fund may be read about above. The **Melissa Hague Field Study Award**: Thanks to the generous contributions of Roger and Laree Hague, the Melissa Hague Memorial Scholarship Fund and the Melissa Hague Field Study Award were endowed in 1999. Both funds are in memory of their daughter who was an anthropology major when she died. The scholarship fund awards to outstanding students majoring in anthropology who also have a demonstrated need for financial aid. The **Brian Daniel Gumbert Memorial Fund in Archaeological Field Studies**: The Brian Daniel Gumbert Memorial Fund in Archaeological Field Studies, through the generosity of his parents, supports undergraduate students enrolled in the archaeology field school and individual undergraduate student field research projects. The **Janis Faith Steingruber Student Travel Award**: This award provides financial assistance for anthropology student travel, and is possible through the remembrance of her mother, Winifred Lefstead, and her brothers, Mark and David Steingruber.
In the fall, Derrick Lemons began teaching in the anthropology department. He has been teaching in the religion department at UGA since 2009. Currently, he teaches courses in Applied Anthropology, Introduction to Anthropology, Anthropology and American Religion, and Introduction to Religion. Dr. Lemons earned his doctorate from Asbury Theological Seminary in 2008 where he researched cultural change within a rural church in North Carolina. His teaching and research interests were outlined in December in a departmental talk entitled “Religious Leader as Change Agent: An Applied Anthropological Model for Cultural Change in a Religious Communitas.” Over the past year, Dr. Lemons has given talks at The Boston Theological Institute and The American Society of Missiology discussing his research in cultural changes within evangelical denominations. He also had the privilege of serving on a panel at UGA which discussed the interaction of religion and science in America. Another highlight for Dr. Lemons was a trip to Petite Goâve, Haiti, to assist doctors in a medical clinic, helping Haitians clean up rubble. He also spoke in various venues and conducted research on how the earthquake has affected the religious beliefs of Haitians. — Dr. Derrick Lemons

Four Students Win Graduate School Dean’s Award

This year, the department can be quite proud—all four graduate students nominated by Graduate Coordinator Elizabeth Reitz and Graduate Advisor Margie Floyd won the 2010-2011 Graduate School Dean’s Award in the Arts and Humanities, a special feat indeed. Susannah Chapman, Daniel Bigman, Carla Hadden and Rocio Rodriguez Granados were notified in December they’d been awarded the honor—and $1,000 to defray the cost of doing research for their dissertations. The money can be used for any aspect of research or data collection.

Carla Hadden and Rocio Rodriguez Granados are in the preliminary phase of their research. Daniel Bigman and Susannah Chapman have moved on to their dissertation research. Susannah’s prospectus is called “Significance, Exchange and Access: Mandinka seed systems and concepts of intellectual property.” Daniel’s is titled “Macon Plateau: Community and Politics at an Early Mississippian Mound Center.” Susannah’s major professor is Dr. Virginia Nazarea; Carla’s major professor is Dr. Elizabeth Reitz; Daniel’s major professor is Dr. Steve Kowalewski, and Rocio’s major professor is Dr. Pete Brosius.

On January 8, a group of French students from The University of Pau and Pays de l’Adour (L’Université de Pau et des Pays de l’Adour or UPPA) came to UGA for an interdisciplinary course of study, focusing on historical ecology. Dr. Ted Gragson is their advisor; the students will also collaborate with the ecology and forestry departments. (Left to right: Lucile Deprez, Anaïs Bonello, Laura Pujol, Lou Vergez).
Publications and Presentations

BOOKS AND BOOK CHAPTERS


PUBLICATIONS


In the Field in Madagascar

Laura Tilghman’s research concerns migration, city growth, and economic change in Africa, and she examines rural to urban migration in the east coast region of Madagascar, focusing on the growing city of Tamatave (also called Toamasina). She investigates what forces prompt such migration, and what ties migrants maintain with their homeland. Laura considers what economic and social strengths these rural ties contribute to urban migrant households and their livelihood strategies in the city. She’s lived and worked in Madagascar since 2002, and is part of Dr. Bram Tucker’s Behavioral Ecology and Economic Decisions Laboratory (BEEDL). Laura has sent us a photo from the field, that we print with her caption. We look forward to running more of her lovely photos in coming issues of this newsletter.

In the Field—Tad Brown

Tad Brown leaves this summer for the Gambia, pursuing his long-held interest in livestock and farming; his research into these areas will be funded by a $20,000 NSF Doctoral Dissertation Grant. (Those of you who have eaten the meat he farmed at Full Moon Farm here may be torn—It’s great to see Tad win grants and go in search of greater knowledge, but his academic travel is denying us amazing pork chops.) Tad will investigate “Farmers’ Knowledge of Selection and Economic Objectives for Small Stock-Keeping in the Gambia.” His projected work centers upon the Mandinka farmers in the Lower River Region. Currently in this region of West Africa, farmed livestock are undergoing an introduction of genetic material not native to the area. The process is slow, often by backcrosses over several generations. Several diseases threaten livestock in the area, most notably trypanosomiasis, spread by the tsetse fly. However, endemic breeds have an inherited resistance to this disease, while the stock carrying the new genetic information do not.

Once he’s there, Tad will explore the Mandinkas’ animal selection practices in relation to their economic objectives. He’ll perform ethnographic investigation of farming practices while also framing experiments to ascertain how farmers perceive trait transmission and meet economic goals with their livestock herds over time.

His research will combine several strands of immediate interest. It broadens work done on crop varietals by now including livestock types; Tad’s proposed approach is usually classed with the rising interest in ethnogenetics. Further, his approach links this field to the now vital area of research on farmer decision making. Uniquely, Tad’s project will consider farmers’ livestock trait preferences in relation to farmers’ knowledge of, as well as their goals for, trait selection. This type of research may potentially influence both rural development and conservation of animal genetic resources in West Africa, where small stock-keeping is important to people’s livelihoods.

Alumni Update—Kevin Gibbons

2009 anthropology graduate Kevin Gibbons went on to spend a year in England completing a M.Sc. in environmental archaeology at the University of Sheffield. This November, he returned to his alma mater to join the crew at the zooarchaeology lab, run by Elizabeth Reitz. Kevin is currently working on two projects: On the vertebrate side, he’s identifying remains from the La Pointe-Krebs House/Old Spanish Fort in coastal Mississippi. This is an early colonial site with French, British, and Native American components that was excavated by the University of South Alabama’s Center for Archaeological Studies. They’ve contracted with the UGA zooarchaeology lab to produce a report on the animal remains. Second, he’s working with Dr. Reitz, Dr. Gregory Waselkov of the University of South Alabama, and Dr. Fred Andrus of the University of Alabama on a National Science Foundation-granted project on north Gulf Coast seasonality in the Woodland period. For this project, Kevin deals primarily with invertebrates, including clams, oysters, etc. We welcome him, and his experience, back to the department.
Publications and Presentations, Continued


CONFERENCES PRESENTATIONS


Brosius, P. 2010. Keynote Address: “Conservation and the Global Search for Sustainability.” Talk presented at the University of Georgia. Organized by the Center for Undergraduate Research, Athens, GA.


Hakala, Sarah, and René Bobe. Lateral and temporal distribution of mammalian fauna from early Pleistocene Koobe For a Forma tion, East Turkana. 70th Annual Meeting of the Society of Vertebrate Paleontology.


Carolyn O’Meara y Nemer E. Narchi. 2010. “Compartición y distribución de recursos en una comunidad seri: Ventajas ecológicas
y económicas IV Coloquio Leonardo Manrique.” Museo Nacional de Antropología e Historia, Mexico.

Narchi, Nemer E. 2010. “We use marine medicines.” Paper presented at the 2nd Annual Scientific Research Day, Coverdell Center for Biomedical and Health Sciences, the University of Georgia.


Patterson, David, Mead, A. “New Skeletal remains of Mammuthus columbi from Coastal Georgia.” 70th Annual Meeting of the Society of Vertebrate Paleontology.


Velázquez Runk, Julie. 2010. Consultative Meeting on the Wounaan oral traditions project, Panama City, Panama.


Williams, Mark with Jared Wood. 2010. “Geochemical Analysis of the Copeland Site (9Ge18), Greene County, Georgia.” Paper presented at the 87th Annual meeting of the Georgia Academy of Science, Columbus, Georgia.

Down in bluegrass country, the University of Kentucky Department of Anthropology hosted over 700 archaeologists and students for the 67th meeting of the Southeastern Archaeological Conference (SEAC), held from October 28-30. Many students from our department attended, where they were able to join a special symposium honoring Professor Emeritus David Hally and his many improvements to archaeologists’ understanding of the Mississippian period—“Archaeologist, Mentor, Friend: Papers in honor of Dr. David J. Hally.” The Thursday session was organized by former colleagues from Florida, South Carolina and Kentucky. Two former students presented papers among the seven included. John Chamblee, Information Manager with Coweeta LTER spoke, as did Jared Wood, Manager, UGA Laboratory of Archaeology and an instructor within the department. Throughout, Dr. Hally’s colleagues from across the southeast and past students spoke glowingly of his intensity in the field, his dedication to teaching, and especially praised his masterwork, the nearly 900-page King: The Social Archaeology of a Late Mississippian Town in Northwestern Georgia. Dr. Hally retired with Emeritus status in June. Although he wasn’t teaching this fall, undergraduate and graduate students were able to enjoy the symposium in his honor: attending from UGA were Vanessa Hanvey, Gretchen Eggiman, Melissa McKay, Kristin Basile, Dylan Woodliff, and Gail Tarver.

Jennifer Birch is here as a post-doctoral researcher working with Steve Kowalewski. While it’s true that Dr. Kowalewski is in Mexico working on his NSF-funded Oaxaca archaeology project, Jennifer is here to explore other areas of Dr. Kowalewski’s research. Jennifer is intrigued by processes of community coalescence. The same phenomenon is called settlement aggregation, as people who previously lived in small villages come together into very large settlements, thus creating an early urbanism. Jennifer notes that “Dr. Kowalewski’s work on coalescent societies underpinned aspects of my Ph.D. research (the most significant paper published in a 2006 volume called ‘Light on the Path’ which honored Charles Hudson, Franklin Professor Emeritus in the department).”

Jennifer will be staying in Athens for the next two years, with occasional forays back to Toronto and Ontario, Canada; her home ground. She’s from a small town called Courtice, Ontario, and completed her Ph.D. in Anthropology at McMaster University in Hamilton, Ontario. Her post-doc is being funded by SSHRC (the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada). Her primary area of research is Northeastern North America and the archaeology of the Huron-Wendat, the people who lived in southern Ontario prior to the arrival of Europeans. She works primarily with settlement patterns at multiple scales, using regional site distributions as well as the spatial arrangement of villages in order to understand changes in the social and political organization of societies and communities over time and space.

As noted above, Jennifer is interested in why and how people come together into much larger settlements than experienced by previous generations. When she looks at these events she tends to frame them as gradual processes on the scale of lived experiences. At UGA she’ll be expanding her research to look at cases of community coalescence cross-culturally in the Southeast, Southwest, the Near East and Neolithic Europe.

She also has nearly a decade of experience working in Cultural Resource Management. Most of the data Jennifer uses in her research on Ontario comes from CRM excavations. She did her M.A. on the relationship between CRM and public archaeology and hopes to bring this background into play here; perhaps having a chance to work with people in UGA’s M.S. in Archaeological Resource Management program. In the meantime, she has the able assistance of Fred, the dog who came with the place she’s housesitting, to show her around Athens.
Victor Iminjilli, a graduate student and member of René Bobe’s Paleoanthropology and Paleocology Laboratory, has been awarded funding from the prestigious Leakey Foundation for his studies. Though Victor began the Ph.D. program here several semesters ago, last term he did research in Kenya, his home country, with the Turkana Basin Institute (TBI), working with Professors Meave Leakey and Richard Leaky to develop the TBI fossil field guide. Prior to Victor’s arrival at UGA in 2007, he worked as an Assistant Research Scientist (2005-2007) at the National Museums of Kenya, Paleontology Section, Earth Sciences Department. Victor was the collection manager in charge of paleoanthropological collections, including the famous “Turkana Boy,” a 1.6 Mya nearly complete skeleton of a 12-year-old boy, classed as either Homo erectus or Homa ergaster. Victor’s work at TBI and the museums fulfilled part of the requirements for his award, the Franklin Mosher Baldwin Memorial Fellowship, that the winner be attached to African institutions. Mr. Baldwin’s widow and friends created this opportunity to train African researchers interested in paleontology to enable these students to assume leadership roles in future research into human origins. The award is $12,000 per year, with a two-year limit. One stipulation, which Victor welcomes, is that the Baldwin Fellow return and work in his native land. He’s done preliminary fieldwork in the southeastern region of Kenya already; his recent fieldwork was funded by the British Institute in Eastern Africa. In months to come, Victor will be both in the Bobe lab and back in the field, as he completes his research for his dissertation, “Characterizing the Stable Carbon and Oxygen Isotopes of Modern African Cercopithecoids: A Template to Decode Hominin Paleoenvironments.”

Kristine Skarbo is currently doing dissertation research high up in the Ecuadorian Andes, in a village called Cotacachi. (Though one might think brrrrrrrrrr when thinking of a mountain-top village, Cotacachi is right on the equator.) She is living with and learning from Kichwa people about their creation and cultivation of crops, food, and tradition, as well as their direct experience on climate change. Fields are planted on the slopes of Mount Cotacachi, which last erupted 3,100 years ago. Its volcanic activity, along with that of other nearby mountains, has made the soil of Cotacachi exceptionally fertile. These fields reflect that the Andes are one of agriculture’s centers of origin—dozens of different crops and hundreds of varieties are grown along an elevation gradient spanning 3300 feet. Even though several present-day pressures contribute to reduce the numbers of crops and varieties that each farmer grows (a process called genetic erosion), Kristine’s research shows that the process of decline is not uniform across crops and farms. The cultivation of some native crops and varieties has actually increased over the past few years. This rise can partly be linked to a greater pride in indigenous identity, sparking more interest in heritage species. However, local agricultural harvests and the genetic diversity they contain are currently threatened by a warmer and more unstable climate. Perhaps the crop diversity present in the area may become an important instrument when dealing with future changes in climate patterns; for example, through transfer of planting material between agricultural zones of different elevation. Kristine will continue to examine these possibilities.
Since this summer, Elizabeth Reitz, professor of zooarchaeology, has been working on an National Science Foundation-funded project investigating the effects of Woodland (1000 BCE – 1000 CE) seasonality on the faunal remains found on the Northern Coast of Mexico. The NSF awarded Dr. Reitz $34,500 to pursue this collaborative research.

While the remains are being identified and analyzed, they will be divided amongst researchers such as the staff and students of the UGA Zooarchaeology Laboratory, Georgia Museum of Natural History, and in collaboration with staff at the University of Georgia Center or Applied Isotope studies, the University Alabama Stable Isotope Laboratory and the University of Southern Alabama. Their work should answer questions about how, and by whom, animals were eating and being eaten in the era.

Depending on the nature of the samples being studied, standard zooarchaeological identification will be applied, followed by analysis ultimately resulting in a report. This is a daunting series of tasks, especially considering that not only measurements, but modification examinations (bone gnawing, butchering, weathering) and carbon, oxygen and nitrogen analysis will be made. Perhaps deer bones and mollusks are relatively easy to spot, but so much of this work occurs on a very small scale—try measuring fish otoliths and atlases; they can be tiny. An otolith is any calcareous particle found in the inner ear of fish (and others) that allows them to hear; it can be a large, well-developed body with a pattern of growth rings by which the fish can be aged. The exotic-sounding fish atlas? The first vertebrae in the spinal cord. (We have one, too.)

As an example of the often interdisciplinary nature of studies in our department, Alice Fazlollah’s program stands out. She is enrolled in our Master of Science in Archaeological Resource Management (M.S. ARM) track, but rather than preparing a publishable report in archaeology, she is writing a thesis in forensic anthropology. Alice is being mentored by MariaTeresa Tersigni-Tarrant, who is both Adjunct Assistant Professor of Anthropology and Assistant Professor of Cellular Biology and Anatomy with the Medical College of Georgia/UGA Medical Partnership. Dr. Tersigni-Tarrant serves as both advisor and “boss,” since Alice has an assistantship with the MCG/UGA Medical Partnership, where she is a teaching assistant for the gross anatomy lab. In the photo, Alice (at right) points out how human ribs are oriented to medical students looking on in the anatomy lab.

Extensive Archaeological Survey in Mexico Funded by NSF

Professor Stephen Kowalewski is currently in Coixtlahuaca, Mexico, conducting a 14-month archaeological field project funded by a $195,000 grant from the National Science Foundation. Dr. Kowalewski explains that the “area of Coixtlahuaca is crucial because it was a major prehispanic kingdom, an agricultural breadbasket, and a trading center of Mesoamerica-wide renown.” He and a field crew did pilot explorations of the site in 2008 and 2009, but the archaeology of the area is still relatively unexplored. However, surveys of nearby terrain reveal three cycles of population peaks and collapses throughout the first and 16th centuries AD, the final collapse occurring after the Spanish conquest in 1521.

It’s possible, hypothesizes Dr. Kowalewski, that Coixtlahuaca went through similar peaks and collapses. His project will study demographic growth, collapse, and environmental degradation (mainly through soil erosion) in Coixtlahuaca. He will investigate these cycles to learn whether population growth leads to environmental decline, or the reverse—The land may have been stable despite the community’s size, and subsequent deterioration could have followed through lack of resource maintenance.

The study is a collaboration of both techniques and institutions. For the first time, the area will be studied by a diverse crew integrating archaeology, geophysics, geochemistry and topography, with knowledge of regional and macroregional settlement systems. Mexico’s major university UNAM, is working in cooperation with the project, so young participating archaeologists are exposed to current standards of research. UGA anthropology student John Turck, who will earn his Ph.D. this spring, is currently serving as the assistant director of this project.

The project is significant beyond the immediate work. Its resultant data will be useful for a long time and in many ways. Such expansion of the previously surveyed area in highland Oaxaca will create a view of continuity and change throughout centuries, while contributing to the dynamics of human-environmental relationships. The findings will “address the extent to which society can control its critical resources, and produce and reproduce in a sustained manner,” writes Dr. Kowalewski. The information will benefit planners in the region (the Mixteca Alta, Oaxaca), as well as local citizens who are eager to learn the history of the people and environment.
Through Symposium Presentation, Student Will Publish Paper

With the support of a UGA foreign travel award, graduate student Mark Wiest traveled to the annual Oxford Symposium on Food and Cookery held at St. Catherine’s College, Oxford, UK in July. This year’s proceedings centered upon cured, fermented and smoked foods. Mark presented a paper he co-authored with Dr. Bill Schindler entitled “Remembering Lessons from the Past: Fermentation and the Restructuring of Our Food System.” The paper, which will be published in the forthcoming Proceedings of the Oxford Symposium on Food and Cookery, explored some of the simple lessons learned by participating in home fermentation projects and the importance that these lessons hold for creating sustainable food systems of the future. The conference drew a wide array of participants, from the anthropologist Sidney Mintz to the food activist and fermentation guru Sandor Katz. Attendees took part in stimulating conversation inspired by the weekend’s talks while dining on delicious meals prepared by world famous chefs. Mark’s attending the conference reflects his interest in natural resource use and “re-localizing” our food supply. His major professor is Dr. Ted Gragson.

NSF Dissertation Grant Funds Research on Indonesian Fishing

Graduate student Victoria Ramenzoni has won a doctoral dissertation research grant for $20,000 from the National Science Foundation to assist her work, titled “Subjective estimations, probabilities, and subsistence decision-making in Endeh, Flores Island, Indonesia. Is more information better?” With the guidance of Dr. Bram Tucker, Victoria will undertake research on the effects of increased access to information on subsistence-related decision making. Her research will address the question of how forecasts and estimations of uncertainty in terms of probabilities and covariation rules explain economic behavior including production activities and resource use in artisanal fishing communities. In Victoria’s Indonesian research, she will collect data to determine the extent to which subjective estimations about uncertainty (covariation inferences and probabilistic representations) explain economic behavior including production activities and resource use. The research is important in a broad sense, because it will increase modeling predictability and theoretical power for understanding subsistence behavior. Study findings will illuminate the effects that everyday subsistence decision-making has on economic transitions and conservation initiatives. The research also will provide human behavioral evidence for conservation as well as governmental programs concerned with managing endangered fisheries and preventing overfishing by conceptualizing people’s needs and realities through a culturally sensitive lens. The NSF award also supports the education of a graduate student and the training of two undergraduate students from the University of Gadjah Mada, Yogyakarta, Indonesia, as they work on Victoria’s research, fostering international research communication and collaboration.

Bobe Lab Presents at the Society of Vertebrate Paleontology

Members of René Bobe’s Paleoanthropology and Paleoecology Laboratory presented posters at the 70th annual meeting of the Society of Vertebrate Paleontology in Pittsburgh, from October 10-13, 2010. David Patterson, Sarah Hakala and Amelia Villaseñor made the trek up north via the department’s vehicle; Dr. Bobe met them up there, where he and colleagues presented two posters of their own for a total of five from the lab. David tells us: “Our trip to the meeting was both fun and valuable for our future as paleontologists. We had the opportunity to present our research and attend symposiums ranging from African mammal ecology and evolution to isotope and microwear analyses. During the poster sessions, we received valuable feedback from other graduate students and experts in the field. The sessions also provided the opportunity to make numerous contacts at other institutions and universities that will benefit us. We also had the chance to bond as a lab and to learn crucial lessons about the gas gauge of the department Suburban. It proved to be a great trip.”
The Center for Integrative Conservation Research (CICR), directed by Pete Brosius, a professor in the department, has created a new Ph.D. program that begins in Fall, 2011. This doctoral program in Integrative Conservation is designed to ensure that students gain disciplinary depth in one of four fields—Anthropology, Geography, Ecology or Forestry—while also collaborating across disciplines and fields of practice to seek integrative solutions to complex conservation challenges.

At the beginning of the 21st century, as global environmental change proceeds at an unprecedented pace, the practice of conservation is adapting to a complex set of new challenges. The conservation community has increasingly recognized that responding effectively to these challenges will require that the next generation of practitioners and scholars not only develop expertise in specific fields but also have the conceptual tools to work across disciplines. The University of Georgia’s Integrative Conservation Ph.D. program is designed to meet that need by ensuring that students gain disciplinary depth while also learning to collaborate across disciplines and fields of practice to seek integrative solutions to complex conservation challenges.

Students in this program will choose one of four disciplinary foci: Integrative Conservation and Anthropology; Integrative Conservation and Ecology; Integrative Conservation and Forestry and Natural Resources; or Integrative Conservation and Geography. Each will ensure that students receive rigorous theoretical and methodological training in a traditional discipline, while also working integratively at the intersections of multiple disciplines.

This program strives to move beyond the paradigm of interdisciplinarity by reaching outside of academia to bring together academics and practitioners. Through mechanisms such as internships, collaborative research, and a practitioner-in-residence program, students will work with conservation practitioners as partners and colleagues. These experiences, along with training modules led by communications experts, will ensure that students learn to communicate effectively and strategically with those from other backgrounds and disciplines as well as with lay audiences.

Other department of Anthropology faculty affiliated with this new program are René Bobe, Ted Gragson, Virginia Nazarea, Don Nelson, and Julie Velásquez Runk. For more information, e-mail Meredith Welch-Devine (mwdevine@uga.edu).

Seminar Promotes Environmental Work Among Schools

During the fall semester six UGA anthropology graduate students participated in a distributed learning seminar with students from the School of Sustainability at Arizona State University and the Department of Geography from Penn State University. The graduate seminar entitled “Adaptation, Resilience, and Transformation,” explored emerging interdisciplinary frameworks for understanding and managing socio-ecological change. The course provided space to learn with students and professors from different disciplinary backgrounds and to engage in experimental collective learning activities. The weekly meetings were organized around EarthTalks from the Earth and Environmental Systems Institute (EESI) at PSU. The lecture series featured international researchers and practitioners involved with Global Environmental Change.

A primary objective of the course was to expose students to the benefits and challenges of interdisciplinary research and to gain experience working on research teams. Interdisciplinary research provides new perspectives on research problems and often requires the development of innovative methods. Students worked in teams throughout the semester, both for leading class discussions and for developing joint research papers and were required to work in collaboration with colleagues from other universities. At the end of the semester, with financial support from the President’s Venture Fund and the Department of Anthropology, six students from ASU and UGA made a trip with their professors to Penn State to participate in a two day workshop. The format was a mixture of short presentations, experimental learning activities and critical discussions and reflection.

A panel organized for the second ICARUS (Initiative on Climate Adaptation Research and Understanding through the Social Sciences) Conference is to be held at the University of Michigan in May 2011. Our panel, “Methodological Challenges for Vulnerability Reduction: Research and Practice,” is based on the learning that occurred throughout the seminar. Students will co-author the lead paper for the panel and others have submitted their term papers for acceptance in additional conference panels.

— Dr. Don Nelson