In this unseasonably spring-like weather, the bright activity associated with sunny days rather than dreary campus slogs is evident, here, too. Drs. Susan Tanner and Steve Kowealewski have brought in one fine speaker for our series and we look forward to another. In the meantime, we are exposed to the best work of younger biological anthropologists and southeastern archaeologists as we meet and hear talks by candidates for our two new tenure track faculty positions; eight fine talks in all.

No doubt happy to be on the other side of such a search herself, we welcome to campus Dr. Laura German, a conservation scholar of international profile. She’s not unfamiliar with Athens, having studied here in the 90s. Already enthralling students in Baldwin, we anticipate her experience informing our new doctoral program, Integrative Conservation and Anthropology.

Dr. Bram Tucker is out of the country; read about Dr. Tucker’s collegiate fellowship on page three. Dr. Julie Velásquez Runk continues her research in Panama; learn about one fruit of her scholarship on page nine. Dr. Don Nelson will also be leaving the U.S. soon to continue his collaborative research on multidimensional responses to climate change in Brazil; page eight.

Our graduate students are publishing at a great clip, and three of them have recent books. We look forward to slavering over Ted Maclin and Dr. Jim Veteto’s (Ph.D., 2010) *The Slaw and the Slow Cooked*, out now with Vanderbilt University Press, and are delighted with the cultural preservation and outreach realized by Kristin Skarbo and Kristine VanderMolen’s bilingual book of stories of the Andean Kichwa.

We are sad to hear of the passing of a long-time friend and adjunct faculty member, Dr. Karen Burns, who was an internationally known forensic anthropologist. Our sincerest condolences to her family and friends, both here and in Utah.

See you in Baldwin,
Jared Wood, Ph.D., ’09, has immersed himself in southeastern archaeology for over a decade. Since earning his degree, he’s served as manager of the archaeology lab while also teaching courses in the department and serving as a summer field school stalwart. In addition, he’s now faculty adviser of the Student Association for Archaeological Sciences. It’s an occasion to celebrate that Jared has attained the next step in his career, so we’ll enjoy the last few months he enriches the department. Jared has just accepted a tenure-track position as an assistant professor with the Department of Sociology and Anthropology at Georgia Southern University in Statesboro. He’ll be teaching anthropology classes, leading archaeology field schools and continuing his long term research of prehistoric peoples in the Savannah River valley and adjacent areas.

Nemer Narchi, Ph.D. ’11, continues his research as Postdoctoral Fellow at Universidad Autónoma Metropolitana - Unidad Xochimilco. In one of the most remarkable cultural landscapes in Mesoamerica he analyzes the relation between urbanization, poverty, and loss of ethnobiological knowledge. He says, “With three other Sonoran desert researchers we have managed to raise enough funding to get together the NEXTGEND2012 a three-day binational meeting set for April at the Arizona-Sonora Desert Museum. The workshop brings in transdisciplinary attendants from institutions along both sides of the Mexican border in an effort to build on the legacy of research and conservation in the Sonoran Desert.” Find details at http://nextgends.com/. Though event registration is now full, join the community through the Web site and be a part of ongoing networking and academic exchanges. In the midst of this, Nemer and his wife discuss names for the baby on the way.

Aaron Lampman, Ph.D. ’04, and Julie Markin, Ph.D. ’07 have two recent reasons for celebration in their household. The first, the arrival of young Sawyer (here training his dad on recreation duty) preceded the second by a year: Aaron has just earned tenure and been promoted to Associate Professor at Washington College, a liberal arts college in Chestertown, Maryland, where Julie also teaches in the anthropology department. This summer, Aaron will head back over to Tanzania, where he and other faculty lead a unique field school. See last year’s photos at http://news.washcoll.edu/events/2011/05/tanzania/

It’s not uncommon for an anthropology A.B. to spend some time with a guitar before starting grad school. Brigitte Herron, A.B. ’11, is playing angular guitar and singing and writing songs in a band receiving notice not only nationwide, but abroad. The band, Tunabunny, in their lackadaisically manic fashion stood out from Athenian posturers, as they played sheerly for their own entertainment. Eventually people kinda caught on. Following a spring 2011 tour, a fall jaunt through the northeast, and the Athens PopFest, the buzz seemed to crescendo with their set at New York’s College Music Journal 2011 showcase, where they were tagged as a band to watch by National Public Radio, the Village Voice, New York Magazine, altmusic, and the oddly influential Brooklyn Vegan. Excited reviews from San Francisco Weekly, the internationally followed critic Everett True, and countless blogs came next. Now? Rolling Stone magazine just gave them the nod and quoted Brigitte after Tunabunny opened for the B52s in Athens between a host of northeast shows. To cap a great month, Tunabunny is headed to the U.K. to play the London PopFest the end of February, and will also do a ten-date tour while over there. Find fun clips on YouTube and visit their label, http://hhbtm.com/.

Mike White: www.deadlydesigns.com

An early expedition in Xochimilco’s canals for the future Dr. Narchi, pointing out a discovery ahead.
I was invited to join the Fellows of Wissenschaftskolleg zu Berlin (WiKo) for the 2011 - 2012 term. WiKo is one of 13 members of the SIAS (Some Institutes for Advanced Studies) throughout the world. Funded by an endowment from Volkswagen, the city of Berlin, and the Federal Republic of Germany, WiKo hosts around 40 Fellows and their families each year, for the purposes of intensive research and study. The fellows share a daily meal together and on Tuesday one fellow presents his or her research to the community. Otherwise we are free to spend our time doing research.

This year’s fellows are an diverse group of scholars, musicians, theologians and writers. The objective of my research is to link subsistence decision-making to household livelihoods strategies, including households’ participation in markets and their degree of specialization versus diversification in different farming, herding, hunting, gathering, and fishing activities. While at WiKo I will pursue this research in two directions. First, in collaboration with Monique Borgerhoff Mulder and other WiKo Fellows, I will examine how subsistence decisions translate into behaviors that either favor or counter environmental conservation; and how conservation policies influence subsistence decisions. Second, I will write a book-length monograph summarizing a recent year-long field investigation of risk and time in the economic choices of Masikoro farmers, Mieke hunter-gatherers, and Vezo coastal fishermen of southwestern Madagascar. This research is significant for evolutionary anthropology’s interest in the origins of behavior and culture, for questions of human rationality in psychology and economics, and for the application of behavioral research to international conservation and development efforts.

In April WiKo will fly to Berlin my two long-term collaborators from Madagascar, Professors Tsiazonera and Jaovola Tombo, so that we may talk about future research.

—Bram Tucker

Stephen Merritt knows where the bones are buried

The blond guy in the Converse Chucks walks to the front of the classroom instead of peeling toward the seats. Stephen Merritt, a newly minted Ph.D. from Rutgers University is a temporary assistant professor here for the spring and both summer semesters. This term, he’s presenting a new course for us, the Evolution of Human Carnivory, as well as Human Origins and Paleoanthropology/The Fossil Record of Human Evolution.

His work encompasses many aspects of paleoanthropology, in particular the interactions between hominin and carnivore. “My research explores evidence of hominins’ dietary shift toward large mammal carcass consumption, an ecological transition that put our ancestors in direct competition with ancient carnivore guild members. As a zooarchaeologist and paleoanthropologist, I use information generated in ... modern-day experiments to reconstruct the role ancient humans and carnivores played in the formation of fragmentary bone assemblages.”

His own writing and research compliments his work as a taphonomist for the Koobi Fora Paleoanthropology Research Project, a recovery and investigation of new fossil material from deposits in northern Kenya. This continued research—35 years—in the Turkana Basin furthers the global understanding of human origins and their context. Stephen also is Field Director for the Koobi Fora Field School, so he knows his way around a trowel, too.
Donors spur our teaching, service, and outreach missions

At this time of year, when students plan field work and summer research, Department Head Ted Gragson is particularly grateful for the department’s alumni and friends. “The study of anthropology opens us to the ability to recognize and forge new relationships among people and our planet. It is awareness of these relationships that the study of anthropology enriches. Yet state funding cuts have made crucial the private gifts and legacies from friends and alumni who wish to extend opportunities to current students. I take this moment to remind you that through your support, the engaged minds of today can become those advocates addressing the challenges of tomorrow.”

Consider enhancing the possibilities for Department of Anthropology students today by making a secure gift on our website, anthropology.uga.edu, at the Giving Opportunities link at the upper right of the homepage. You may donate to our general fund, or select one of several targeted awards. To learn more about how to support the department, contact Jennifer Messer, Director of Development, at (706)542-0068.

Spring Speaker Series

William Parkinson, Ph.D., Associate Curator of Eurasian Anthropology and archaeologist from Chicago’s renowned Field Museum was our first guest speaker in the Department of Anthropology’s Spring Speaker Series, on Friday, January 13. His topic, “Early Village Social Dynamics in Southeastern Europe,” explored the different long-term trajectories of social change from the Neolithic to the Copper Age in farming and herding communities established during the seventh millennium. Five hundred years on, the Aegean had developed complex, bureaucratic states, but such systems did not develop in the Carpathian Basin until the Roman period. William Parkinson specifically related his insights to his fieldwork in both Hungary and Greece.

Xavier Basurto, Ph.D., is Assistant Professor of Sustainability Science, working with marine science and conservation under the aegis of Duke University’s Nicholas School of the Environment. Dr. Basurto’s experience lies in the governance and theory of common-pool resources, community-based management and institutional analysis of social-ecological systems, especially in the context of coastal marine environments and protected areas in rural Latin America. While he considers his primary area of expertise to be environmental policy, he also works in conservation biology, fisheries policy and management, and marine science. Xavier Basurto will be sharing his work with us on Friday, April 13, at 2:30.

Christine Beitl wins Charles Hudson Excellence in Teaching Award

Though Christine Beitl says she spends her time “harassing marine life,” evidently she takes a break from bothering the water beasts long enough to rack up some teaching assistant hours, too. Christine, nominated by Dr. Derrick Lemons, is this year’s winner of our Charles Hudson Excellence in Teaching Award. This distinction puts her forward as the department’s nominee for the Center for Teaching and Learning’s teaching awards.

Christine’s general interests are extensive—sustainability science, economic anthropology, coastal and marine resources, resource management and fisheries. Collective action and the problem of the commons involve her as well.

She came to UGA to build upon her a Master’s degree in Latin American/Environmental Studies by studying human-environmental interactions within coastal areas. Her dissertation examines the role collective action has played in sustainable fisheries in Ecuadorian coastal mangrove wetlands after several decades of shrimp aquaculture expansion.

Julie Velázquez Runk and Bram Tucker are Christine’s major professors.
Publications and Presentations

PUBLICATIONS


PRESENTATIONS


Likely not. However, Jessie Fly, who on January 30 defended her dissertation, Coping with Golden Forests and Blue Revolutions: Livelihoods Vulnerability in the Mekong Delta, Vietnam, will always cheerfully pass along a tradition or a story. When asked for a photo to celebrate her success, she sent this image and note, “Here is a picture of me, rubbing the head of one of the turtle stelae at the Temple of Literature in Hanoi for good luck. These are stelae of doctor laureates and they commemorate people who passed their royal examinations between 1142 and 1778. Seems the most appropriate picture!” It is, and evidently they still favor certain scholars. It’s rare that a committee accepts a dissertation without requests for revision, as Jessie’s did. “Now they want me to jump right on publication!” Evidently her turtle goes by the venerable name Speedy. Congratulations to Dr. Fly and her major professor, Ted Gragson.

PRESENTATIONS continued from page 5


Lemons, Derrick, Mark Farmer and Paula Lemons. 2011. Scientific faith? Panel presentation at Division of Biological Sciences, University of Georgia, Athens, Georgia.


Two Department of Anthropology graduate students, at different points in their separate programs of study, found themselves both learning from and working with the Kichwa of Cotacachi, a village in Andean Ecuador, two hours north of Quito. Though it lies 8,000 feet above sea level, its location on the equator makes the climate temperate. As you might imagine, long-term immigration, cultural and even climate change have worked to distance the Kichwa from many elements of their former manner of living. Through their interactions with Kichwa families, Kristin VanderMolen and Kristine Skarbó particularly noted the fading of oral tradition in Cotacachi. Realizing this loss, in 2010 Kristin and Kristine began to record and restore some of the local legends that are still remembered by elders. Encouraged by local leaders and an indigenous NGO who are interested in the preservation of Kichwa culture, the idea emerged to publish the stories in a format that would be appealing and accessible to children in hopes of sparking their interest in these fading stories. In August 2011 Kristin, Kristine and their collaborator Rosa Ramos published a delightfully illustrated bilingual (Spanish-Kichwa) book of local legends of landscape formation and native crop origins from the oral tradition of the Kichwa of Cotacachi, Ecuador: La Creación de Nuestra Madre Naturaleza/ Nukanchik Pachamama Imashina Wiñarishkamanta. Rosa Ramos has collaborated with UGA anthropologists for many years, going back to the early work in Cotacachi by Robert Rhoades with the multi-national sustainable agriculture research SANREM project.

In September 2011 a reception was held in urban Cotacachi to formally present the book to school directors, teachers and the public. The reception revealed a community created by the book project, together for that day. The town elders who had told the old tales and ways, the children who might hear these for the first time, and the Ecuadorians and Americans who had worked to realize this resource. Copies of the book were then distributed to the area’s 19 bilingual community schools where teachers currently use it in lessons that span topics in environmental education, Spanish and Kichwa grammar, theater, art, and story-telling.

The project was made possible with generous support from the Firebird Foundation for Anthropological Research, the Gesellschaft für bedrohte Sprachen, and the Anthropology & Environment Section of the American Anthropological Association.

Kristin’s major professor is Don Nelson; Kristine’s major professor is Virginia Nazarea.

Adjoint faculty member Jennifer Jo Thompson earned her Ph.D. in medical and sociocultural anthropology from the University of Arizona in 2010. One focus of her inquiries concern health knowledges and practices as “local biocultural phenomena” that are mediated by oft-unseen economic and social forces that range from local to global.

Jennifer also examines the individual’s perception of healing, drawing from anthropology, neuroscience, evolutionary medicine, performance theory, and complex systems theory. With such research foci, it is not surprising that she is about to become a two-year post-doctoral associate in the Department of Biochemistry and Molecular Biology with Erin Dolan, an associate professor who is Senior Scholar in Biology Education.

While Jenn intends to continue her focus on health and anthropology, the post-doc will enhance her current goal: “[to] design ways to relate research to lay people in terms that resonate with their own experience. Translating science to share health information to best reach an audience is difficult; scientists need to learn how to communicate better with the public.”
Laura German joins faculty from multinational forestry NGO

Intending to build upon internationally relevant work conducted in Amazonian Brazil, several African regions, and Southeast Asia, Laura German has joined the Department of Anthropology faculty, where she’ll contribute her evolving research on natural resource governance and science-policy engagements to the new doctoral program in Integrative Conservation and Anthropology, as well as engage anthropology students with diverse interests. This semester, she is teaching a split-level course called Institutional Foundations of Sustainability, a new course exposing majors and grad students to the rules and governance instruments that humans devise at different levels to address environmental concerns, and challenging them to identify and devise creative solutions to address institutional gaps.

Laura German received her Ph.D. from this department in 2001, following a B.Sc. in Agricultural Engineering from Cornell University. In the decade following her launch from Athens, her inquiries have taken her thousands of miles and her work has taken her in myriad directions. Sustainability, pragmatism and a focus on human institutions, though, have always underlain her research and its application to various natural resource management challenges. Her most recent position was as Senior Scientist with the Forests and Governance Program of the Center for International Forestry Research, an international research organization headquartered in Indonesia that conducts policy-oriented research to advancing human wellbeing, environmental conservation and equity. Laura German formed part of a small team of scientists and partners working on “Managing impacts of globalized trade and investment on forests and forest communities,” one of the core themes guiding CIFOR’s research. Under this theme, she examined the local social and environmental impacts associated with the expansion of biofuels, China’s growing influence in Africa, and the recent surge in transnational land acquisitions, and the institutional factors mediating these impacts at local, national and global levels. Her current work is enhanced by understandings concretized in her earlier postings. Work in eastern Africa inspired her interest in the methodological underpinnings of the livelihood-environment, research-development nexus. Her dissertation research in the Brazilian Amazon also continues to inspire her work, and she looks forward to integrating her findings on diverse factors shaping human ecosystem evolution into both her teaching and her research at UGA.

Laura is joined in Athens by her husband, Jeff Walker, and their young son, Eli.

Don Nelson and partners assess adaptive responses to drought

Don Nelson is PI on a new NSF-funded project: “The relative importance of generic vs. specific capacity in addressing drought vulnerability in NE Brazil.” This collaborative project partners colleagues from Arizona State University, the University of Michigan, and the Federal University of Ceará.

Prompted by growing vulnerability to climatic change, building the adaptive capacity of households and countries has become a policy priority. Defining and developing metrics for adaptive capacity is challenging on both theoretical and practical grounds. Work will center in Ceará, Brazil, a state marked by frequent droughts. For the past 140 years, the state and federal governments have implemented policies to mitigate drought impacts on the population.

Public investments fall into two main categories: those that are specific to reducing drought vulnerabilities and those that are directed towards more generic response capacities. The first category includes activities such as crop insurance and the provision of irrigation and drinking water through the development of hydrologic infrastructure. The second category includes investments in social and human development such as rural pension, famine prevention and education voucher programs.

The project team’s first object is to understand how the drought vulnerability of dryland farming households has changed through time as a function of both specific and generic government-led interventions. Second, they will explore how the two categories of interventions relate to each other in practice, whether they increase adaptive capacity, create synergies or are mutually conditioning. The team will use data collected in the 90s as a baseline while collecting new primary data through a survey of 500 farm households in six different agro-climatic zones in the state, as well as interviews with policy makers and other key informants involved in different aspects of public policy development and implementation.

The results of the analysis will contribute to regional development policy and to a greater theoretical understanding of how vulnerability reduction occurs over long time periods.
Velásquez Runk and colleagues preserve linguistic resources

Julie Velásquez Runk has co-authored with colleagues (Monica Martinez Mauri, Blas Quintero, and Jorge Sarsaneda), Pueblos Indígenas en Panamá: Una Bibliografía (Indigenous Peoples in Panama: A Bibliography). The book was officially presented at the National Library of Panamá in August together with the Web site Languages and Cultures of Panamá. To continue the important event, the next day, the University of Panamá held a colloquium on “indigenous peoples today.” Julie is Research Associate with the Smithsonian Tropical Research Institute (a bureau based in Panamá) and that organization supported the lively discussions following its presentation to the National Library. Speakers included all of the book’s co-authors as well as U.S. and Panamanian anthropologists.

The book was funded thanks to a grant from Panamá’s NSF, the Secretaría Nacional de Ciencia, Tecnología, e Innovacion (SENACYT). Julie Velásquez Runk was PI on the grant. The introductory chapter of the book is an up-to-date description of the indigenous groups in Panamá, as well as an overview of the bibliographic materials on each group. In the introductory chapter to the book the authors describe how the book resulted from the continuing presence of indigenous peoples, the need to distribute information about the many already published works, and the passion to preserve the languages and cultures which are facing even greater marginalization in the scrum of the global marketplace and resultant environmental changes. Indigenous Peoples in Panamá: A Bibliography compiles over 4,000 references and 537 pages on Panamá’s seven indigenous groups.

For decades, Julie has worked closely with first the Emberá (a significantly larger group), then also with the Wounaan. Because these two groups share historical and geographic ties (particularly in the Darién provance), they are often confused, but are of discrete origin and cultures. Julie’s knowledge of and concern for such matters made her work on preserving the cultural and linguistic material for separate chapters on the Emberá and on the Wounaan particularly sensitive to the audience whose legacy and tool this book is now.

Two Students merit Graduate School Dean’s Awards

Asher Rosinger and Madalena Monteban have each been selected for the 2012 University of Georgia Graduate School Dean’s Award. This competitive program promotes work by graduate students in the arts, humanities and social science by helping to finance degree-driven research.

Asher is a bio-cultural anthropologist interested in how individuals meet their biological need for water culturally, by looking at the driving forces behind this behavior. His research currently involves studying how cultural and economic factors interact and compete to influence water consumption behaviors in Lowland Bolivia (where Asher was photographed, right) and, in turn, how variation in water source use affects short and long term health outcomes. He’s exploring how dietary water consumption affects body composition, hydration status, and risk of gastrointestinal disease in lowland Bolivia.

Also, Asher is in the final stages of completing a master’s degree in public health with a concentration in epidemiology. Susan Tanner is Asher’s major professor.

Madalena has long been interested in the biomedical health system in the Andean region. Her research experience in the region spans five years in Northern Argentina, Bolivia and Peru, where she has worked with local communities, NGOs and international institutions on issues related to conservation, local knowledge and biocultural diversity. Her current research focuses on the relationship between ethnoecological knowledge and health and studies the changes brought on by globalization and development on local maternal health practices. A specific interest is the use of animals and plants during human breastfeeding in the southern highlands of Peru. Both Susan Tanner and Virginia Nazarea are Madalena’s major professors.
Ben Steere, Ph.D. 2011, is Principal Investigator for two of the funding grants for the Western North Carolina Mounds and Towns Project. The project’s goal is to construct a database containing accurate location data, archaeological and historical documentation, preservation status, landowner information, and chronological information for prehistoric and historic Cherokee mound and town sites in western North Carolina. The database and accompanying maps and reports will provide important tools for archaeological research, public outreach, and the preservation of cultural resources in the Southern Appalachian region. With funding and logistical support from the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians Tribal Historic Preservation Office (EBCI THPO), the CWT LTER, Duke Energy, and archaeologists from research and preservation institutions across the Southeast. Understanding and protecting mounds and Cherokee towns in western North Carolina is a common goal for all of these parties.

Decades of archaeological and ethnohistorical research indicate that western North Carolina once contained many mounds and Cherokee towns. However, despite this rich history of research, information regarding Woodland, Mississippian, and Cherokee mounds and town sites has not been systematically compiled. The fragmented nature of this information puts archaeological resources at risk in the face of encroaching development.

This project will address these problems by compiling existing information and locating possible mound and town sites in western North Carolina. This will be accomplished through archival research, interviews with local landowners and historians, field inspections, and survey when possible. The study area encompasses the eleven counties west of Asheville. This area contains nearly all of the eighteenth-century Cherokee Valley, Middle, and Out Towns, and many significant Connestee, Pisgah, and Qualla phase mound and village sites.

The officers of the Anthropology Society were recently spotted around 9:00 p.m. in the hall at Baldwin, absconding with the leftover cookies following a brainstorming Executive Board meeting. The 2011 - 2012 officers are (L - R) Brittany Giles, Co-Graduate Mentor Coordinator, Michael Grimaldi, Co-Graduate Mentor Coordinator, Evan Conaway, PR/Advertising Chair (loyally represented by his compadres by the internship flyer Michael’s holding), Vivien Tsou, President, and Anna Jolly, Events Coordinator.

On Feb. 16, 7:00 p.m., the Anthropology Society presented a talk by graduate student Kristin VanderMolen, who described the shaping of a bilingual children’s book preserving stories and wisdom passed down by the Kichwa of Ecuador, whose language and lore is endangered.

The Society next hopes to bring Zöe Tryon, a global activist who seeks to instill a quest for “environmental sustainability, spiritual fulfillment and social justice” in those she encounters.

Consortium documents and protects ancestral sites

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