The Department Celebrates 45 Years of Anthropology at Texas A&M University

In October 2016, the department held a series of events to celebrate 45 years of anthropology at Texas A&M University. The event also marked 40 years of Nautical Archaeology Program and 30 years of the Anthropology PhD degree.

On the evening of Thursday, October 20th, the department held a reception at the Aloft Hotel, to welcome former graduate students who were invited to participate in a symposium event.

On the morning of Friday, October 21st, the department held an Open House Event. This provided members of the public with a unique opportunity to visit archaeological labs, see artifacts up close, and interact with faculty and graduate students who are conducting research around the world. Over 200 people attended the Open House.

The Open House was followed by a luncheon where Dr. Vaughn Bryant shared his comical stories about the early history of the department, including how he was hired as the first anthropologist at Texas A&M.

The final event was a symposium featuring five of the department’s successful graduates: Karl Reinhard, John Bratten, Andy Scherer, Margie Serrato, and Roxani Margariti.

Audience members were captivated by Dr. Bryant’s keynote lecture which included stories about the challenges of transporting bags of coprolites through customs after a research trip in South America to College Station, and adventures involving a dead orangutan that was buried (and misplaced) somewhere on the Texas A&M University campus.

HEADLINE NEWS:

- Dr. Michael Waters selected as a University Distinguished Professor
- Dr. Vaughn Bryant received the AASP Medal for Scientific Excellence
- Dr. Kelly Graf received NSF Grant to support archaeological research in Alaska
- PhD Student, Kristin Hoffmeister, received NSF Dissertation Improvement Grant
- Dr. Michael Waters’ discovery at Page-Ladson in Florida named by BBC as a Top Ten Discovery in 2016

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

45th Anniversary Celebration 1-7
Graf’s Research in Alaska 8
Water’s Top 10 Discovery 9
Awards 10
Graduates 11-12
Publications and News 13-14
Clockwise from the top: Chris Dostal explains the use of digital technology for archaeological projects; Morgan Smith provides a flintnapping demonstration; former student Lynn Hagan examines lithic assemblage; and the Biological Anthropology Program display included casts of hominid cranial specimens (from Australopithecines to Homo).
Visitors to the Open House had the opportunity to learn about faculty and graduate student research firsthand by visiting all of the labs in the Anthropology Building.

Clockwise (from top left): Ted Goebel explains how lithic artifacts can be used to understand prehistory; lithic artifacts in the department’s Research Collections; pieces of prehistoric baskets on display in the department’s Research Collections; casts of hominid fossil specimens, including homo naledi, in Darryl de Ruiter’s lab.
Left: Dr. Allison Hopkins sharing her research on medical anthropology with a future anthropologist.

Below: Dr. Cemal Pulak and Dr. Roxani Margariti describing their research projects in nautical archaeology to Open House attendees.

Dr. John Bratten (University of West Florida), Dr. Roxani Margariti (Emory University), and Professor Emeritus George Bass catching up during one of the symposium breaks.
Dr. Donny Hamilton, Director of the Conservation Research Laboratory and the Center for Maritime Archaeology and Conservation, presented Dr. Vaughn Bryant with an Outstanding Service Award after the keynote lecture. Dr. Hamilton served as the Head of the Department from 2007 to 2011.

Dr. Harry Shafer, Professor Emeritus of Anthropology, shared his stories of the department before introducing the keynote speaker, Dr. Vaughn Bryant. Dr. Shafer, well known for his research on the American Southwest, was the second faculty member hired to teach courses in anthropology and archaeology at Texas A&M University.

Dr. Vaughn Bryant first started teaching anthropology courses at Texas A&M in 1971. He served as the Head of the Anthropology Department from 1980 to 1999.

Dr. George Bass, Professor Emeritus of Anthropology, shared his memories of the department. Dr. Bass is responsible for bringing the Institute of Nautical Archaeology (INA) to Texas A&M in 1975. The Nautical Archaeology Program (NAP) at Texas A&M remains one of the leading programs for training graduate students in maritime archaeology and conservation.
Anthropology News

Dalisa and Greg Owens, recent graduates of the Anthropology Department, along with their daughter Delilah, attended the 45th Anniversary events.

Glynna and Bob Leiper, former Texas A&M University students, participated in the full day of activities.

Dr. Pamela Matthews, Dean of the College of Liberal Arts, congratulated the department for all of its achievements.

To view more pictures from the event, go to:
bit.ly/ANTH45thAnniversary
Dr. Karl Reinhard (University of Nebraska) received the first PhD from the Department of Anthropology in 1988, under the supervision of Dr. Vaughn Bryant. During the symposium, he talked about his ongoing research on coprolites and pathoecology.

Lynn and Don Hagan, former Texas A&M University students, attended the full day of events. Lynn received her BA in Anthropology in 1977, shared fond memories of participating in field schools with Dr. Shafer and taking classes with Dr. Bryant.

Dean Pam Matthews with Department Head Cynthia Werner.

After weeks of preparing for the anniversary event, Cynthia Werner and Nicole Ellis (along with Rebekah Luza) take a moment to relax during the reception at the Aloft Hotel.
In 2016, Dr. Kelly Graf received an NSF grant in the amount of $332,568 to support her new research project, “New Horizons in Beringian Archaeology: Expanding Scientific Research at McDonald Creek, Alaska.” Dr. Graf is the lead PI, heading an interdisciplinary research team of archaeologists, dating specialists, paleoecologists, and geneticists from the US, Canada, Great Britain, and France to study the impact of climate change on small-scale society in the far north during the Ice Age. The team will investigate how northern hunter-gatherers settled and adapted to an ever-changing northern ecosystem, while addressing the timing and process of the initial dispersal of modern humans through the Bering Land Bridge and the Americas. The funds will be used to support ongoing research at the McDonald Creek archaeological site, located about 50 miles south of Fairbanks, Alaska. This well-preserved, multicomponent site contains a rich set of assemblages, including stone artifacts, faunal remains, plant remains for macroscopic, microscopic, and molecular archaeological analyses. The project will provide field and lab opportunities to both graduate and undergraduate students. Currently four students are working in Dr. Graf’s lab cataloging archaeological materials from the 2016 field season and preparing samples to distribute to specialists.
The BBC Names Texas A&M Project as a Top Ten Discovery in 2016

By Hyein Kim

Recently, the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) News identified ten exciting archaeological discoveries of the year in an article entitled “Big Digs: The Year 2016 in Archaeology.”

One of the discoveries is based on a project conducted by archaeologists affiliated with the department’s Center for the Study of the First Americans (CSFA). The project was co-directed by Dr. Michael Waters, the center’s director, and Dr. Jessi Halligan, one of Dr. Waters’ former PhD students. (Halligan is currently an assistant professor at Florida State University). Current CSFA graduate students Morgan Smith and Angelina Perrotti, also participated in archaeological excavations at the Page-Ladson site which is located 26 feet underwater in a sinkhole in the Aucilla River in Florida.

The research team discovered stone tool artifacts that were about 14,550 years old (B.P.), preceding Clovis culture in America. The findings also include a mastodon tusk that presented obvious signs of anthropogenic cut marks. These discoveries push back the estimated date of earliest human settlement in the Southeastern United States by more than a thousand years. The discovery also confirms that humans living in Florida co-existed with megafauna for at least two thousand years before they became extinct.

Other top BBC stories also covered “Britain’s Pompeii”, the history of cat domestication, and an engraved pendant at the site of Star Carr which is around 11,000 years old.

For more information, please visit:
bit.ly/BBC2016TopTen

The research team is working at the Page-Ladson site in the Aucilla River in Florida.
Dr. Vaughn Bryant Awarded the AASP Medal for Scientific Excellence

By Hyein Kim

The American Association of Stratigraphic Palynologists (AASP) recently awarded Dr. Vaughn Bryant the AASP Medal for Scientific Excellence for his outstanding years of dedication in teaching, scientific research, and service. The AASP, also known as “The Palynological Society,” previously awarded Dr. Bryant with the Outstanding Educator Award and Distinguished Service Award from the AASP.

The AASP was established in 1967 by a group of 31 founding members to promote the science of palynology. Today AASP has a world-wide membership of about 800 and is run by an executive comprising an elected Board of Directors and subsidiary boards and committees.

The AASP Medal for Scientific Excellence has only been awarded 5 times in 50 years, thus receiving the award indeed is a great honor, celebrating his great dedication and contribution to the study of palynology and teaching at Texas A&M since 1971.

Mike Waters Selected as a University Distinguished Professor

In January of 2017, we were delighted to learn that Dr. Michael Waters, director of the Center for the Study of the First Americans (CSFA), was selected as a University Distinguished Professor. “University Distinguished Professors represent the highest level of achievement for our faculty,” said Karan L. Watson, provost and executive vice president. “They are recognized as preeminent scholars in their fields and their accomplishments are exemplified by seminal contributions to their respective disciplines. They demonstrate to the world the high quality of scholarship underway at Texas A&M University.” This honor recognizes his accomplishment, as reviewed by a panel of Texas A&M’s previously recognized University Distinguished Professors. Not only will Dr. Waters keep his title as Professor of Anthropology, but will in perpetuity be titled University Distinguished Professor. Dr. Waters and the rest of the 2017 honorees join a select group of more than 90 current faculty members who hold the prestigious title.
Congratulations to our New PhD Graduates!

PhD Graduates

**Rachael C. Bible** was accepted as Research Associate of Biodiversity Institute at the University of Kansas.

Dissertation: *An Analysis of Late Pleistocene Hominin Population Dynamics in Europe Using Ecological Niche Modeling Methods* (Chair: Sheela Athreya)

**Joshua L. Keene** was appointed as Research Assistant of Center for the Study of the First Americans at Texas A&M University, and also as Adjunct Instructor for Department of Anthropology at Baylor University.

Dissertation: *Geoarchaeology, Paleoecology, and Holocene Subsistence Change on the Upper Snake River Plain, Idaho* (Chair: Ted Goebel)

**Larkin F. Kennedy** was accepted as Archaeology Technician for Gray and Pape.

Dissertation: *The Busy Cemeteries of Late Antique Corinth: Geographic Identification of Migrants vs Locals, and the Characterization of a 6th-8th Century City* (Chair: Lori Wright)

**Justin A. Parkoff** recently helped open a museum exhibit based on his dissertation (see below).

Dissertation: “A Formidable Looking Pile of Iron Boilers and Machinery”: Reconstructing the Civil War Gunboat USS Westfield (Chair: Donny Hamilton)

Former Student Helps Open New Museum Exhibit

On March 2, Justin Parkoff helped open the Texas City Museum’s new exhibit on the USS Westfield, a sidewheel steam ferryboat in the United States Navy during the Civil War. Westfield belonged to an unusual class of civilian vessels that the Navy converted during the American Civil War to serve in the Union’s blockade of Confederate southern ports. Westfield served as the flagship for the West Gulf Blockading Squadron’s operations along the Texas Gulf Coast. The vessel last saw action in 1863 at the Battle of Galveston where it ran aground and was blown up by its crew to keep the vessel out of Confederate hands. Justin was the Project Manager for the conservation of artifacts from the USS Westfield and worked closely with the U.S. Navy, the U.S. Corps of Engineers, and the Texas Historical Commission. Speaking at the event were numerous historians, members of the excavation team and an Admiral from the Navy.
Congratulations to our New Masters & Bachelors Graduates!

Master of Arts

Lauren N. Cook
Mara A. Deckinga
Megan L. Greenfelder
Kevin R. Melia-Teevan (continuing to PhD)

Bachelor of Arts

Cara A. Armstrong          Elisa M. Santiago
Matthew H. Beavers          Phoebe L. Stewart
Megan L. Becan              Katelyn M. Tigner
Justin W. Brown             David Tran
Jennifer I. Galvan          Ashely M. Waite
Kyle A. Kozelsky            Garrett C. Wheaton
Kacy C. Opdahl

From all of us in the Department of Anthropology,

Congratulations on graduating with your respective degrees!

We wish you the best of luck in the future.
Grants and Awards

Faculty

Dr. Jeff Winking and Dr. Allison Hopkins received a Diversity Matters Seed Grants in the amount of $1,800 to support their research project, “Gender Bias in the Production and Targets of Critical Questions at Academic Conferences.”

Dr. Catharina Laporte received a $5,000 Cultural Diversity Core Curriculum Development Grant to develop an online module on cultural diversity.

Dr. Donny Hamilton received contracts, totaling over $1 million dollars, for three new conservation projects. This includes $798,948 from the Lower Manhattan Development Corporation to conserve materials related to the World Trade Center shipwreck, $472,733 from the City of Alexandria to conserve an 18th century ship; and $377,612 from the Army Corps of Engineers to conserve more artifacts from the CSS Georgia.

The Conservation Research Laboratory (CRL) at Texas A&M recently received contract funds to conserve materials from the World Trade Center shipwreck. Crews discovered the 18th century shipwreck seven feet below the foundation of the WTC site, while cleaning up after the tragic destruction of the Twin Towers. The ship dates back to 1773, and was likely used as construction fill material to extend the boundaries of New York City.

Graduate Students

Angela Achorn received a $500 Fasken Research Award for her project studying the effect of sociality on parasite loads in Orangutans.

Katie Bailey received $1000 Fasken Research Award for her study exploring why Duc Langurs brachiate. She is currently in Vietnam and will be there through summer 2017.

Nick Budsberg received a $25,000 grant from the National Geographic Society’s Conservation Trust to cover expenses related to the excavation and study of the Highbourne Cay Shipwreck in the Bahamas. Nick also received a $3,000 Mamont Scholar Award from the Explorer’s Club, and $8,700 from the College of Liberal Arts Research Equipment Fund (REEF) in support of this project.

Crystal Dozier received a $2,000 Diversity Matters Seed Grant from the Texas A&M Office of the Vice President and Associate Provost for Diversity in support of her project, “Teaching Diversity Matters in Anthropology Classroom: Impact for TAMU and Beyond.”

Crystal Dozier and Laura Short were awarded a Research Equipment Fund (REEF) grant amounting to $5,262.40 from the College of Liberal Arts to enhance dissertation research. The funds were used to purchase new equipment, including the extractor (shown on the next page) used to extricate residues into a chemical solvent for analysis, and chemicals solvent for analysis.
Grants and Awards (continued)

Crystal Dozier received one of the 2017 Fasken Distinguished Graduate Student Teaching Awards.

Kristin Hoffmeister received an NSF Dissertation Improvement Grant of $18,095 for her dissertation project "The Relationship Between Emerging Sociopolitical Complexity and Mortuary Behavior Among the Preclassic Maya in Northern Belize."

Cody Moser received an L.T. Jordan Fellowship for his pilot dissertation research studying the effect of habitat type and predator load on the Bornean tarsiers in Indonesia. Cody also received a $500 Fasken Research Award to support this project.

Jordan Pratt received the Student Poster Award at the 35th Great Basin Anthropological Conference for her poster entitled, "Investigation of Potential Pre-Clovis Archaeological Sites in the Winnemucca Lake Basin, Nevada."

New Publications


The Department of Anthropology at Texas A&M University offers BA, MA, MS, and PhD degrees in Anthropology. The department has 25 faculty members in four different programs—Archaeology, Biological Anthropology, Cultural Anthropology, and Nautical Archaeology. The department has over 200 undergraduate students and 90 graduate students.

For questions about the department, please contact our Department Head, Dr. Cynthia Werner (werner@tamu.edu).

The department would like to thank Hyein Kim and Clint Hamden for their hard work on this edition of the newsletter. If you have information for upcoming issues of our newsletter, please contact Hyein Kim (hyeinkim@tamu.edu).

Gifts to the Department of Anthropology

The Department of Anthropology benefits from the generosity of friends, alumni, and patrons who share in our commitment to excellence in educating the next generation of anthropologists. Please consider a gift to the Department of Anthropology today. With your support, we will continue to transform the lives of our students. Donations can be made online at, bit.ly/ANTHGifs.

Tax-deductible contributions to the “Department of Anthropology Excellence Fund” are used to support recurrent research-related experiences, including undergraduate research, graduate student research and conference travel, the department’s lecture series, faculty conference travel, and other things that contribute to the scholarly mission of the department.
The Ships
That Changed History

SAVE-THE-DATE
April 5-6, 2017
Reed Arena
Texas A&M University

For more information about this event, please visit bit.ly/ANTHShips.