

# ANTHROPOLOGY NEWS

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Death in Malta

Letter from the ASU President

A Field School at Crescent Bay

Becoming a “Lithics Expert”

Innovative, Interdisciplinary,  
Illinois Archaeology

Field Notes: A Journal of  
Collegiate Anthropology

Abstracts of Papers and Posters  
Presented Fall 2009

UWM Archaeological Field  
School Summer 2010

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## **Death in Malta**

*By: Jessica Hopper*

The Maltese archipelago lies approximately 90 miles south of Sicily and 180 miles from North Africa. The population of the main island of Malta is roughly 400,000, Gozo has roughly 30,000 people and Comino, the smallest of the three, is virtually uninhabited apart from the tourists that invade every season. Tourists have not been the first to realize Malta's worth and for centuries it has hosted a number of invaders. Sparing the history lesson I'll just say that after **the** Roman occupation in the third century B.C. it seems as if everyone dropped by for a little visit, including most notably the Knights of St. John in the 1500s and Napoleon in 1798. More recently, Malta was a British colony until 1964 when it declared its independence, entering the community of nations as an independent state for the very first time. In 2004 Malta joined the European Union.

I spent three weeks in Gozo in the summer of 2008 with Expeditions, a cultural field school organized by the University of Leuven. It was a great opportunity to conduct preliminary fieldwork and collaborate with other socio-cultural anthropologists from around the world.

I have returned to Gozo on my own for the fall semester to conduct my thesis fieldwork. I chose to live in Victoria, the largest city on the island, and have made my home in Pjazza San Gorg. My apartment boasts an amazing balcony view and a close proximity to the bells of St. George which vie between holding a place in my heart and slowly driving me insane depending on the day. Thankfully I'm not in the apartment much,

as life on this Mediterranean island happens on the streets. Though I'm actually not here for the Mediterranean "life" either...I'm here for the death.

My objective is to look at the mortuary practices and death rituals of Gozo in terms of identity creation with regard to practice and meaning. I'm attempting to explore local notions of status, the codification of ritual, consumer choice and mastery of performance. I am also looking at death in terms of space, visibility and access, relationships within the community, points of controversy and pressures of modernity.

In terms of fieldwork, this translates primarily to days spent interviewing locals, including undertakers, florists, printers, cemetery caretakers and members of the general public. It also means skulking around cemeteries and pretty much waiting for news of a death and attending funerals whenever I can. If someone dies in Gozo, they are usually buried within the next 24 – 48 hours. The Maltese do not embalm their dead, instead placing the bodies in a simple wooden coffin and then in a sealed tomb that is reopened two years later. The bones are then gathered into a smaller container for secondary burial, leaving room for other members of the family to be buried in the same tomb.

Owing to the quick turn-around time, obituaries are not the way most Maltese find out about funerals. Rather, loved ones make announcements on local radio stations and pay to have the church bells rung to let the community know someone has died. The bells that ring for a death are the same bells that ring at the time of Festa, each church's celebration of their patron saint, and therefore afford the deceased an even greater level of respect. Mourners will sometimes clap as the pallbearers return the coffin to

the hearse before burial. This too is similar to Festa when the statue of the patron saint is hoisted over the shoulder of four men and taken through the square to the claps of the on-lookers.

Gozo is 98% Catholic with over 30 churches in the 13 communities on the island. The Catholic celebrations of All Saints Day and All Souls Day usher in November as a special month in Gozo, and it is known as the month of the dead. Many Gozitans will go to the cemetery daily during this month to commemorate their departed loved ones by cleaning their tombstones and leaving fresh flowers and candles.



Photo of a portion of the Rabat Cemetery on All Souls Day

As hoped, I am learning a lot about death practices in Gozo but more importantly I'm spending time with some really amazing people here. I have met many who were part of the great migration of the 1960s, spending ten years or more in Australia, Canada, or the U.S. before returning to Gozo to raise their families. Their narratives are fascinating and their exposure to other cultures gives them a unique perspective on their own practices. In some respects their experiences have **affected** changes in their insular world, and in others the long-

standing traditions of the island still hold sway.

I have come to appreciate the slower pace of life in Gozo, not to mention the fabulous weather, as the average temperature is still 65 - 70. As the end of the semester approaches I can almost feel the time begin to tick faster again. It is hard to believe my fieldwork is almost over and I will be returning to the hurried frenzy that is thesis writing and the cold of winter in Milwaukee. Hopefully I will get through both thesis and cold, as the Maltese would say, "bis saha" – with strength.

#### FAQ's

Q: Have you seen any Maltese falcons?

A: No. There haven't been any sightings of a Maltese falcon, a subspecies of the peregrine, since the mid-1980s. And they have nothing to do with the book/movie.

Q: What do you wear to a Maltese funeral?

A: Black. In fact, it's better to be dressed in all black even if you're dressed casually than to dress professionally with colors. I saw a man attend a funeral with black cowboy boots, black shiny track pants, and a black polo shirt. No one (but me) batted an eye.

Q: What are the most popular names in Malta?

A: Joseph and Mary. No joke.

Q: I heard they eat rabbit?

A: Yes, they do. They either fry it in olive oil, roast it, stew it, serve it with spaghetti, or bake it in a pie. It's yummy.

Q: Do you laugh at the locals wearing Speedos?

A: Only when they are tiger print.

## Letter from the ASU President

*By: Rick Edwards*

Hello ASU!

It's hard to believe that this semester is already coming to an end and it is once again time for me to write my semi-annual letter. First off I would like to **welcome** all of the department's incoming graduate students and I hope that they are now feeling at home here at UWM. I would also like to congratulate all of **those** students **poised** to graduate this December.

ASU has had a busy semester, starting with our annual Back to School Bowling Bash, our Meet and Greet Potluck, and our Chili Cook Off. We're also gearing up for our annual ASU Colloquium, the next issue of Field Notes, a trip to the Kenosha Public Museums, and many more exciting, entertaining, and/or educational extravaganzas. As always I'd love to hear any and all ideas for events so please email me if there is anything you would like to see ASU do. This is your organization so please feel free to help make it something everyone in the department can enjoy being a part of. Thank you **to** everyone **who** has helped **to** make this a great semester for ASU.

Sincerely,  
Rick Edwards  
ASU President



### ASU Staff for 2009-2010

Rick Edwards – President  
Liz Spott – Vice President  
Karen Esche-Eiff – Secretary  
Jen Danzy – Treasurer  
Bill Balco and Katie Ross – Faculty  
Representatives

## A Field School at Crescent Bay

*By: Courtney Fields*

In pursuing my archaeology certificate during my undergraduate years, I was obligated to attend an archaeological field school. To be honest, I was dreading the time I would have to spend shoveling and breaking my back for someone else's research. True manual labor, to me, has never held any appeal. Fortunately, I enrolled in the field school at the Crescent Bay Hunt Club led by Dr. Robert Jeske here at UWM. My experience over the summer of 2008 changed my opinion on field research.

The 2008 season began with an introduction to survey. Several, but not all, of the students were taken to a site not far from the Crescent Bay Hunt Club to complete a walk-over of two corn fields. Our intent was to mark (and eventually collect) objects on the surface and use them to map the site by concentrations. Such surface collections gave most of us the opportunity to learn how to train our eyes to pick out pottery and flakes. The field school students managed to come up with rough maps of the site and found some interesting objects. Pottery sherds, flakes, and points were prevalent,

but the prize was a bronze axe discovered by one student.

Once the survey was complete, we moved on to digging shovel probes. We began by probing in a rather swampy area near the lake. Due to the saturation of the ground, we quickly moved to another area along the lane that runs north of the cabin on the Hunt Club property. There was not much to find that was not historical, but the experience of digging shovel probes was interesting. Dr. Jeske informed us that it has been proven that a shovel probe can be completed in six minutes. Obviously, and I say this from experience, no new student can perform quite to that level. ☺

We moved on to the Crescent Bay Hunt Club site to begin our squares after the shovel probes. Students were paired and assigned a square under their specific TA, Seth, Kate, or Dan. It soon became apparent that this particular site is fruitful. It usually did not take long for students to begin finding flakes or points in their squares. Pottery sherds were routinely discovered as well. Some of the more unusual finds included an articulated fish taken out of a midden and a cube of galena.

It was not only the finds that I remember clearly. The rain stands out as well. The summer of 2008 was extremely wet; flooding was happening all over the Midwest. Flooding at the Hunt Club became an issue. The pond located on the property overflowed, which resulted in the quick evacuation of several tents to higher ground. Days in the field had to be canceled because the students that did not camp at the Hunt Club could not safely drive through the flooding. Lightning storms prevented us from leaving the cabin, so long hours were spent in the stifling cabin listening to lectures. Even the path leading to the site

seemed to be against us, miring people over their ankles in mud as we tried to climb the slippery slope. The rain did not triumph, though. We may not have gotten as far in the excavations as Dr. Jeske would have liked, but we did uncover quite a bit.

Even through the storms and hard labor, I loved the time spent in the field. It was exhilarating every time someone pulled an object out of the ground. Even when it is just another random pottery sherd, the excitement and anticipation of more is still there. For anyone interested in Oneota or even just Midwest archaeology, I highly recommend the field school at the Crescent Bay Hunt Club.



## Becoming a “Lithics Expert”

*By: Spencer LeDoux*

To state that the questions we ask drive our research model may seem nearly axiomatic. However, there is a significant difference between knowing this concept and grasping its significance. This past year, I had the full impact of this lesson driven home. For more than a year before coming to Milwaukee, I was a student employee at the Center for Archaeological Studies (CAS), a cultural resource management firm sponsored by Texas State University. I was hired about the time that CAS was finishing excavations on a data recovery project. Since CAS is a small organization, few of its employees are specialists. Jobs are assigned

on a need basis so I found myself thrust into the role of “lithics expert.” My “expertise” developed as a mixture of on the job training and feverish reading of source material, since I could not even identify a complete flake when I was hired.

I was given the task of analyzing projectile points, unifacial tools, expedient tools, and debitage in that order. As I grew more comfortable with lithic analysis, I began to discuss theoretical rather than methodological approaches. However, I hit the proverbial wall when I started the debitage analysis. Our primary responsibility was the publication of a site report for our client, and so several types of measurements and counts had to be included in the report for it to be considered professional. I ranted about measuring and weighing debitage because I did not feel that anything could be gained from analyzing the debris that prehistoric people had not looked at twice.

This disdain was furthered by reading previous debitage analyses done in Texas. Most researchers used debitage to determine three things: lithic sources by visual inspection (Central Texas has abundant chert with distinctive regional characteristics), site formation by looking at patination, and technological methods such as *chaîne opératoire*. The first two analyses seemed a superfluous way to include debitage since all types of lithic artifacts could be used to determine sourcing and patina. The use of debitage to determine technology seemed very inaccurate. One major report claimed that technology had not changed significantly for 11,000 years and another categorically stated that 95% of all flakes at a site were produced by billets. The more site reports I read the more convinced I became that debitage “analysis”

was a pointless exercise based more on tradition than on the search for knowledge.

My boss was surprisingly patient with my point of view and spent many hours working with me. Together we reviewed the research questions that were included in our bid to our client, and we discussed ways in which we could answer those questions by looking at the debitage. At the same time, I was continuing my research into technology types and methods of debitage analysis. After several months, we had developed some possible methods of analysis that could be applied to our research questions. Incidentally, we determined that the makers of expedient tools were distinguishable from the makers of formal tools.

Now the point of this ramble is not to delve into our findings (though if interested come talk to me). Instead, I hope I have shown that it really is our questions that need to determine both what we should research and how we research. As I concluded the year-long lithic analysis, I realized that I had completely reversed my previous beliefs about debitage. I now feel that debitage is much more important than formal tool types in helping us recover past life-ways. I would not have reached this conclusion if I had stuck with performing analysis for its own sake. The questions I asked about all of our artifact categories determined the information that we were able to extract from each one. I am hoping that this lesson will prove invaluable as I embark on my graduate research career.

1990 Chipped Stone Schema and Documentation. In *At the Edge of Prehistory: Huber Phase Archaeology in the Chicago Area*, edited by J. A. Brown and P. J. O'Brien, pp. 284-294. Center for American Archeology Press, Kampsville.

**Innovative,  
Interdisciplinary  
Illinois Archaeology**  
*By Katie Rudolph*

Admittedly, Illinois is not the most exotic place for an archaeology field school. However, almost anyone who has spent a summer in the Lower Illinois Valley will tell you that the experience supersedes the perceived pedestrian location.

The Center for American Archeology (CAA), based in Kampsville, Illinois, boasts a long tradition of archaeological method and theoretical development. Some of the greatest and/or most recognized minds in archaeology, James Brown, Jane Buikstra, Chris Carr, Della Cook and many others, have spent time in Kampsville and the Lower Illinois River Valley.

Today, the University Field School is run through Arizona State University's School of Human Evolution and Social Change-Center for Bioarchaeological Research and in conjunction with the Center for American Archaeology. It is a six-week field archaeology program that instructs students in basic excavation techniques, material culture identification, lab analysis and curation. Students are also taught about the deep history of research in the Lower Illinois Valley and the methods and theory that have resulted from that work. Finally, students are given the opportunity to create and execute an independent research project using the plethora of resources available at the CAA.

In addition to archaeological excavation techniques, students are instructed in the use

and analysis of remote sensing techniques. Past research has involved the use of ground penetrating radar, magnetometry and electrical resistivity. Students have also worked with historic resources to examine land use of the site area. By using GIS software and area maps students have made significant contributions to the present understanding of mound placement at the Mound House archaeological site.

Current field school excavation takes place at the Mound House Site in Green County, Illinois. Mound House was occupied primarily during the Middle Woodland period as evidenced by a minimum of two conical mounds and extensive Havana Hopewell style material culture. Past research at this site has focused on mound structure; however, the research focus has moved off the mounds to the occupational area of the site. In 2009, students created maps using remote sensing techniques. Ground truthing of an anomaly present on the maps revealed it to be a large refuse pit. In an approximately 1mx1mx40cm section over 1300 objects were plotted and mapped. Material remains included a variety of ceramics, lithics and faunal material. Another anomaly, also identified through the remote sensing data, was found to be a circular pit lined with large sherds from three different types of pots. Within the pit were modified bone tools, sandstone abraders, a turtle shell, a Woodland hoe with polish, and a unique cobble of extra local chert. The 2010 field season will continue to examine the occupational area at the Mound House site.

The field program offered at Kampsville is interdisciplinary in its method and interpretation, innovative in its use of the newest technology and grounded in instruction of archeological tradition. Even today, the work being conducted at

Kampsville builds on its embedded history of excellence. So while Kampsville may not give you the opportunity to walk through the Valley of the Kings, it does allow you to stand on the shoulders of past archaeological giants and become a part of a long tradition of progressive archaeological thought.

**Field Notes: A Journal  
of Collegiate  
Anthropology**  
*By: Liz Spott*

**What is ASU?**

The UWM Anthropology Student Union is a student-run, non-profit organization designed to serve the needs and interests of undergraduate and graduate students. Membership is open to all registered UWM students and alumni.

All ASU meetings are open to attendance by anyone. Please visit our website for more information. Sign up to be put on the ASU email list-serve, which is critical to receiving departmental updates and information.

[www.uwm.edu/StudentOrg/ASU](http://www.uwm.edu/StudentOrg/ASU)

The editors of *Field Notes* are starting up the process of compiling submissions for their annual issue again this fall. I would like to thank all of the authors of the previous volume's papers and encourage any and all members of the department to submit papers for the next issue. If you are interested in doing so, please send your submissions to [fieldnotesjournal@gmail.com](mailto:fieldnotesjournal@gmail.com). The next volume of *Field Notes* will likely be published in May 2010.

The first volume of *Field Notes* was completed last May and is currently available for purchase. Paid ASU members may purchase journals from ASU for \$8, while faculty, non-paid members and those who are not members of ASU may purchase a journal for \$10. Copies of the journal will also be available on CD-ROM for \$5. If you are interested in purchasing a copy of the journal contact Rick Edwards at [wedwards@uwm.edu](mailto:wedwards@uwm.edu) or Liz Spott at [ekspott@uwm.edu](mailto:ekspott@uwm.edu)

**UWM Anthropology Graduate  
Students by Sub-Field  
(as of Fall 2009)**

**Masters Students**

Archaeology	17
Archaeology/Museum Studies	15
Biological Anthropology	9
Bio Anth/Library Science	1
Cultural Anthropology	9
Cultural Anth/Museum Studies	9
Cultural Anth/Library Science	1
Linguistics/Museum Studies	1

**Doctoral Students**

Archaeology	20
Biological Anthropology	4
Cultural Anthropology	19

**Center for Women's  
Studies Scholarship  
Recipient**

Congratulations are in order for one of UWM's cultural anthropology doctoral students! Anika Jones is this year's recipient of the Center for Women's Studies' Florence L. Healy scholarship, to be awarded for the spring 2010 semester.

## Abstracts of Papers and Posters Presented Fall 2009

Dalstrom, Matthew

### **The Mexican Solution: Healthcare Opportunities for Winter Texans.**

*American Anthropological Association Annual Meeting. Philadelphia, PA.*

Rising health care costs coupled with a drastic increase of uninsured and underinsured patients has fueled the health care crisis in the US. Patients are often forced to make tough decisions about whether to forgo care or risk bankruptcy. This conundrum has encouraged some patients to look outside of this country for access to less expensive medical treatment. While medical migration of this sort allows patients to access affordable care, some people do not perceive it as a viable option. Based upon ten months of fieldwork along the US/Mexico border, this paper examines the effects of Winter Texan stereotypes about Mexico on (a) their willingness to utilize health care options in Mexico and (b) their broader imaginary construction of the Mexican "Other".

Winter Texans cross into Mexico for various types of medical care ranging from prescriptions and dental work to plastic and Lasik eye surgery. Underlying their actions are the beliefs that Mexico is dangerous, unregulated, unsanitary, and premodern. To reconcile these beliefs with the need for quality medical care, those patients frame their healthcare encounters as being apart from the "authentic" Mexican experience. Thus, Mexican medicine is safe because it is manufactured by US companies; health care providers are qualified because they studied abroad or currently live in the US; and

medical procedures are acceptable because they were developed outside of Mexico. Consequently, the medical care that Winter Texans utilize in Mexico is predicated upon their ability to reconceptualize Mexican health care as apart from their negative stereotypes.

Edwards, Richard W. IV, and Marcus Schulenburg

### **GIS Catchment Analysis of Three Red Ochre Burial Sites in Southeastern Wisconsin.** *Midwest Archaeological Conference. Iowa City, IA.*

This poster will examine three sites in Southeastern Wisconsin which are classified as part of the Red Ochre/Glacial Kame cultural complex. By utilizing a catchment analysis this poster will attempt to determine the environmental consistency of three sites (Convent Knoll, Jaco, and Theel) attributed to this culture. Through examination of various attributes, such as surrounding environmental zones, distance to water, topography, and soil types, in comparison with internal factors, i.e., time period and site function, this poster should determine what degree of homogeneity exists among the sites.

Moss, James.

### **Shifts in Residential Patterns at the Crescent Bay Hunt Club Site.** *Midwest Archaeological Conference. Iowa City, IA.*

The Crescent Bay Hunt Club site is an Oneota site occupied between AD 1200-1400, located on Lake Koshkonong in Southeast Wisconsin. This poster is an examination of the structures found at the CBHC and their placement within the wider Oneota pattern of southeast Wisconsin, using a Geographic Information System database. I test the hypothesis that the different structures represent changing post-marital residential patterns through time.

Rudolph, Katie Z.

**Intergroup Hostility at Aztalan: A View from the East Bank.** *Midwest*

*Archaeological Conference. Iowa City, IA.*

Intergroup hostility at the Late Woodland/Middle Mississippian Aztalan site in southeast Wisconsin is evidenced through perimortem fractures, cutmarks and chopmarks on human remains recovered from the habitation area. Skeletal trauma at Aztalan has not been reported outside of the palisade suggesting that deposition of processed remains was fairly restricted. Additional evidence of hostility has been identified on human remains from a Middle/Late Woodland site directly across the river. This suggests that hostile interactions at Aztalan may have extended further than originally thought and that the two sites may have been associated during the primary occupation of Aztalan.



## **UWM Archaeological Field School Summer 2010**

This year the UWM Archaeological Field School will once again be held at the Crescent Bay Hunt Club near Fort Atkinson, Wisconsin. The site was occupied from A.D. 1200-1400 and yielded a variety of artifacts, including ceramics, stone tools, copper implements and structures evidencing the agricultural lifestyle of the village's inhabitants. The excavations and survey being undertaken at the site will continue to aid in long-term research of Oneota agricultural villages.

If you would like to be involved in this year's field school, here is some basic information:

***Who May Enroll:*** Open to any student who has completed one archaeology course and is approved by the instructor

***Course Title:*** ANTHRO 576-6, Fieldwork in Archaeology, worth 6.0 credits

***Time Frame:*** June 1 – July 10, 2010,  
Monday – Friday, 8:00 am – 4:00 pm

***Lodging:*** Students may commute to the site near Fort Atkinson, WI or may stay at primitive campsites at the site free of charge

For more information, contact Dr. Robert Jeske at 290 Sabin Hall, 414-229-2424, [jeske@uwm.edu](mailto:jeske@uwm.edu)