TABLE OF CONTENTS

Letter from the Chair

Letter from the President

Highlighting Student Research: The Maintenance of the Hmong Language in Milwaukee

Forensic Anthropology: A Day at the Medical Examiners Office

The SAA Conference, Puerto Rico, April 2006 Photojournal

Kent Hovind; the Creator of his own Creationism.

Faculty Bios

Museum Studies News

Anthropology News
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Museum Studies News
Seth Schneider - sethas@uwm.edu
Dear ASU:
Happy end of the year! This is a special, rushed version of the chair’s letter. I’m out in the wilds of south-central Wisconsin with 22 students and three graduate TAs, excavating at two fantastic Oneota sites. I hope you’re having as much fun and excitement as I am!

We have had another very busy year in the department—since the Fall of 2005 we produced 3 Ph.D.s, 11 master’s students, and 21 bachelor’s students (exact numbers may vary due to submission deadlines). In addition, thirteen graduate students completed the Museum Studies certificate. Congratulations to all.

The breakdown was:

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Please take a look at the dissertation and theses titles on the department’s web page. It is truly great to see the imaginative and creative approaches people have taken to their work.

I’d like to single out some of our students with special accomplishments this year. Ph.D. student Mary Roffers was awarded a UWM Dissertator Fellowship. Ph.D. student Matt Robinson was awarded a UWM Graduate School Fellowship, and senior Leila Mousai was elected to Phi Beta Kappa.

If I missed people who should be singled out for their accomplishments, please let me know and I’ll add them next fall.

Once again, our students were very active at professional meetings such as the American Anthropological Association, the Society for American Archaeology, the American Association of Physical Anthropology, the Midwest Archaeological Conference, the Chacmool Conference, the Central States Anthropological Society, and Wisconsin Archaeological Survey. Special notice goes to Jim Johnson, who was co-organizer of a symposium at the SAAs in San Juan entitled Twenty-Five Years After: In the Wake of the Archaeology of Death. The mortuary studies symposium drew an international set of presenters and was a very popular session.

The faculty were also busy. Congratulations to Jean Hudson for her promotion to Associate Professor with tenure. Paul Brodwin and Thomas Malaby continued to work on their NSF grants, and Michael Muehlenbein was awarded a UWM RGI grant. Trudy Turner spent the year at NSF; we look forward to her return this fall. John and Pat Richards continued to fund students through Historic Resources Management Services. The rest of us were busy too, but I will just say that you should check out the web site to see how much Celtic Studies, Forensic Sciences, and other research and teaching projects are contributing to our department. This summer we have faculty working all around the world—Borneo, Europe, Africa, and the U.S.—many with students as integral members of their research teams.

Finally, I would like to give a special thanks to all of the ASU officers who served this year and congratulations to all the new officers for next year.
See you on September 9, 2006 for the graduate orientation and welcome. Please put the date on your calendar now, since important information such as requirements and financial aid will be covered.

All the best,
Robert J. Jeske

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**Letter from the ASU President**
*By: Ethan Epstein*

I would like to thank all UW-Milwaukee ASU members for allowing me the privilege of serving as the Anthropology Student Union (ASU) President for the 2005-2006 term. Additionally, I would like to thank all the members, faculty and administrators who graciously invested their time and efforts with ASU throughout the year.

Having served a full term, I feel it is still imperative that some of the issues brought to the forefront of ASU meeting discussions in both the Fall and Spring continue to be addressed.

Perhaps the most significant issue that ASU members need to resolve is the determination of the appropriate mix for ASU pursuits between academics, practice, philanthropy and social organization, especially in light of ASU’s limited resources and members’ limited available time. Given that members derive a sense of purpose from ASU, participation in meetings and activities will follow. Only after ASU is able to articulate its main purpose can a serious attempt at recruiting new members and re-recruiting past members be undertaken regardless of their graduate, undergraduate or professional standing.

Furthermore, while it is important that ASU follow its bylaws and adhere to Roberts Rules of Order, we are a small organization and cannot afford to stand too much upon protocol other than politeness, especially since, as we have all seen, this can result in the suppression of the very ideas and urgency of mission that ASU is seeking.

I sincerely hope that the 2006 – 2007 Elected Officers Appointed Officials, and general membership find success in all their endeavors and that ASU can overcome the growing dichotomy of purpose posed by the merits of both social organization and academic endeavor.

Thank you,
Ethan A. Epstein
President

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**Highlighting Student Research: The Maintenance of the Hmong Language in Milwaukee**
*By: Alyson Carr*

For my master’s thesis I am researching the role of bilingual Hmong- and English-speaking Hmong professionals in the maintenance of the Hmong language in Milwaukee.

As American allies in the Viet Nam War, many Hmong faced persecution in Laos after the Conflict ended. They fled to Thailand, where they awaited either
relocation to a third country or the ability to safely return to their own countries. Since 1975 thousands of Hmong have been relocated to the United States and 50,000 Hmong reside in Wisconsin today. The last group of refugees arrived in 2005 (with about 3,200 coming to Wisconsin). Milwaukee County has the highest concentration of Hmong in Wisconsin, with about 10,000 Hmong residents.

Most refugees arrive illiterate in the Hmong language and with minimal English language skills. The Hmong and English languages use very different syntaxes, spelling rules, and phonemes, making it difficult for adults to learn each other’s languages. As a result, many Hmong who come to the United States as adults do not achieve fluency in English. Children, however, who grow up in the American school system become fluent in English, often times more fluent than in Hmong.

Over the past 30 years the Hmong language has undergone changes due to influence from English. Younger people especially those who may not have strong Hmong skills, or have skills equally strong in Hmong and English, may begin a sentence in one language and end it in another, or substitute English words in an otherwise Hmong conversation when the Hmong words don’t come to mind readily. Some people also complain that Hmong youth pronounce Hmong with American accents. As a result, many grandparents and grandchildren have difficulties communicating with each other.

Adaptations to and changes made in a minority group’s original language may signal a language shift in process, or they may simply occur as a result of the language’s adaptation to a new environment without signifying any impending language loss. Changes in the Hmong language such as those mentioned above prompt some Hmong to wonder whether the use of the language will discontinue in the US within 100 years. However, others believe the language will remain viable here, citing the production of music videos and films in Hmong: Hmong language church services; communication with other Hmong speakers through the telephone, email, and postal mail; and other activities that continue to promote the use of the Hmong language.

I’ve decided to concentrate on the role of the bilingual Hmong professionals and their role in the maintenance of the Hmong language in Milwaukee for a few reasons. With the last group of new monolingual Hmong-speakers coming to Milwaukee in 2005, no more new non-English speakers will be arriving, thus requiring Hmong Americans to maintain or brush up on their Hmong language skills. This milestone means that in another thirty years, barring unforeseen circumstances, very few non-English speaking Hmong will remain in Milwaukee. Today many professional Hmong rely on their bilingual skills to work with non-English-speaking clients, helping them navigate legal matters, the public school system, healthcare facilities, government bureaucracy, the real estate market, and many other activities of American life. Their knowledge of not only both languages, but both societies’ norms, beliefs, and perceptions of the “other” make these bilingual professionals valuable resources to their communities as translators of words and cultures. However, without people to translate for in the future when the Hmong in Milwaukee all speak English, these bilingual professionals will need to find new careers or adapt their current jobs to the changing circumstances. The perceived usefulness of the Hmong language may also be questioned, even more so than it is
already. I am interested in taking this unique opportunity to study how the bilingual professionals use the Hmong language in their personal and professional lives today, how others are impacted by their skills, and how their unique skills build relationships of power within the Hmong community as well as within the wider Milwaukee community. Through bringing recognition of the importance of bilingual professionals to the Hmong language, I hope to also recognize the importance of the language for the bilingual professionals in their professional as well as personal lives.

Through bringing recognition of the importance of bilingual professionals to the Hmong language, I hope to also recognize the importance of the language for the bilingual professionals in their professional as well as personal lives.

It is always exciting when something we do in our coursework or various university positions leads to new opportunities, stimulates new interests or reinvigorates old pursuits in our academic and professional fields. Many of us have watched an episode of CSI, but most have not experienced what it is like outside of a Hollywood studio, what the real thing is right here in Milwaukee. This past semester I was fortunate to TA the course Medicolegal Death Investigation, taught by the Milwaukee County Medical Examiner. The course is part of one of the three certificates offered through the Center for Forensic Science in the Anthropology Department. They offer a Certificate in Death Investigation, a Certificate in Forensic Science, and a Certificate in Forensic Toxicology.

Osteology and mortuary analysis are my main area of study within Anthropology and over the last several years I have also developed an interest in Forensic Anthropology, although it was something I had not explored in any great depth beyond a couple of courses. So when I expressed my interest in this field to the instructor he suggested that I spend a day at the medical examiner’s office. I was expecting a short tour but instead I got an in-depth look at all aspects of the work, from the medical examiners to the forensic toxicologists to the death investigators.

The first half of the day was spent with the medical examiner. I observed several autopsies, and although we had discussed this during the course, it was a much different experience being there. A medical student who was doing one of his clinical rotations at the office was my guide for the day and described to me the investigation and analysis. In this way I understood the process and what information could be learned. I was also able to tour the laboratory where the forensic toxicologist and other technicians perform their analyses.

The second half of the day consisted of job shadowing and interviewing one of the Death Investigators. Investigators for the medical examiners office perform separate investigations from those conducted by the police. There are essentially two aspects to the investigation. The first is the collection of records and other demographic information including medical histories and interviewing the necessary people. The second aspect is the scene investigation, where evidence is collected and the scene is documented. One aspect we talked about in detail was the type of questions asked during the investigation, and how to ask them. The investigators are often immersed in difficult
and emotional situations and the process of interviewing people must take a lot of skill, patience, professionalism and empathy. Then we went on to discuss scene investigation, the procedures that are followed at a scene and how to collect evidence, what kind of evidence to collect, and how to document everything both in photographs and written notes. Although I did not go into the field with the investigators, it was extremely helpful to hear their first hand accounts, giving a more realistic picture of what the job entails. Lastly I was able to review several older cases in order to learn how the final reports are created, combining the investigative information, forensic and medical information.

Although the medicolegal death investigation course covered many of these aspects, interviewing, scene investigation, and forensic analysis, it was a great opportunity to discuss in greater depth and see first hand all the aspects of medicolegal death investigation. This experience reinvigorated my interest in forensic anthropology and I am excited about the possibility to pursue the professional certification in death investigation while finishing my other coursework at UWM.

I attended the 71st annual Society for American Archaeology meetings a few weeks ago in San Juan, Puerto Rico. My boyfriend, Steve, and I decided to stay an extra few days after the conference was over in order to explore the eastern half of the island. When I arrived, the weather in San Juan was perfect, the beaches were beautiful, and the rum drinks strong and refreshing. The conference was well attended (I believe UWM had a particularly strong showing), and although I mostly attended the sessions that focused on Midwestern or Southeastern archaeology and symbolism, there was certainly something there of interest for everyone. In the evenings, we ventured out to see the sights in Old San Juan. We walked through the narrow, cobble-stoned streets and European-style plazas built in the early 1500’s, and examined many statues and fountains along the way. We visited the site of El Morro, a massive, oceanfront fort with 18-ft thick walls, built by the Spanish in 1540. Later, we ate dinner at a charming restaurant that billed itself as the oldest, continually run restaurant in the New World. Even the conference hotel was steeped in history, as the Fuerte San Gerónimo, which was built in 1587, was located on its grounds.

Once the conference was over, we headed southeast into El Yunque, the rainforest. We stayed at a small guesthouse on the northern outskirts of the rainforest, only 3 miles from Luquillo Beach. Our room had a beautiful view of the lushly forested valleys, and we could see the ocean shimmering in the distance. Our deck was host to many different lizards and iguanas, and although we rarely saw the coquí, a small frog with a loud call, we could certainly hear them! We hiked several trails through the rainforest, and although the trails were steep, muddy and challenging, the views and hidden waterfalls were worth it. After three days of enjoying the peace and quiet of the rainforest, we made our way back to San Juan, and home.
Fuerte San Gerónimo

El Morro

Inside El Morro
Evolutionary theory binds all life sciences from geology to medicine. I teach anthropology and biology students that evolution is descent from a common ancestor with modification via the mechanism of natural selection. Changes in populations’ allele frequencies as a result of DNA replication, allele recombination during meiosis, and expression of these alleles show how evolution happens.

In an effort to expand our knowledge, I invited my evolution students and ASU members to attend a lecture on creationism. I felt that it was necessary to see the other side of this debate. Kent Hovind, or Dr. Dino as many people call him¹ spoke to a full house in the Union Ballroom on Tuesday, December 6, 2005 at 6:00 pm. The Apologetics Association, a group whose purpose is “to promote the Bible and Christianity as a sound and logical belief system based on facts and evidences; rather than solely on blind faith,”² organized the event.

The audience was filled with people who worship his ministry, and they clapped and cheered. Hovind accepts the Bible as literal truth and that the Earth is only 6,000-10,000 years old. He legitimizes his ability to discuss the evolution debate based on his work history, as a “science and math teacher for 15 years,” which provided him the credentials to discuss this subject unequivocally.

¹ http://www.drdino.com/
² http://www.asap.uwm.edu/
Throughout his lecture, Hovind discussed and attempted to debunk scientific theories such as the Big Bang, age of the earth, the ‘caveman,’ the formation of the Grand Canyon, lobe finned fish, fossils, petrified trees, the geologic column, peppered moths, ontogeny versus phylogeny and many others. He jumped from slide to slide to show how scientists have lied because they doubted and hated the Bible’s version of creation. Lyell, Hutton, and Darwin are the biggest offenders. He stated that evolution (and the primordial soup that we come from) is “magic...nothing but a religion...[and]...a fairy tale...If you believe in evolution you have been deceived.” Hovind continues, “We’re here to help” the willingly ignorant people who follow the false gods of evolution.

Hovind contends that the way scientists’ “prove” evolution is simply a form of circular reasoning: Fossils date rocks. Rocks date fossils. Presentation is everything. However, the argument is not as circular as it seems. Darwin used the principles of geologic strata and the fossils in them to explain his theory of evolution. Fossil and stratigraphic dating was established long before Darwin published The Origin of Species. One way to falsify fossil and stratigraphic data is to consistently find descendant organisms in earlier strata than their proposed ancestors — something that has never happened.³ Hovind also says that carbon dating is wrong because multiple dates have been found for the same specimen. He makes it look as though carbon dating is the only method we use for chronometric dating of fossils and strata. In Hovind’s haste, he does not mention how scientists currently date fossils, for example, dendrochronology, potassium-argon, argon-argon, and uranium dating, electromagnetic-spin resonance, fission tracks, thermoluminescence, amino acid racemization, and archeomagnetism.⁴ Chronometric dating methods establish independent dates outside of fossils and strata and are used to add to the knowledge we have. They have been developed and improved over the last century, with consistent data showing that they are reliable.

Further into his lecture he addresses the teaching of science in the school system. Hovind stated that although he does not have a problem with teaching evolution in school, he pointed out the falsehoods in textbooks by highlighting the evolution sections. At one point he excited the audience by asking them to rip pages out of science textbooks from the university science curricula. “Demand that your school board tear the pages with the lies out of the books...to protect our lives from this form of Soviet style brain washing and conversion to communism...to protect our children from abortion.” Book burning, the Cold War, and abortion politics have nothing to do with evolution education other than furthering a right-winged fundamentalist Christian agenda.

The issue here is larger than most people consider. It is not simply about finding the evidence to show that evolution happens, but rather educating people properly about the process of evolution, its history, mechanisms, and overall importance to all of the sciences. Scientists use empirical evidence to provide information about human origins using the laws of nature, regardless of faith. It is also important to emphasize that faith and science are not as incompatible as Hovind would like to

³ Andrew J. Petto, Ph.D., personal communication, January 8, 2006.

suggest. Many religious people and clergy do in fact feel that science and faith are compatible. To quote a petition that over 10,000 Christian clergy signed in December 2005, showing that faith and science are compatible, “We believe that the theory of evolution is a foundational scientific truth, one that has stood up to rigorous scrutiny and upon which much of human knowledge and achievement rests. To reject this truth or to treat it as “one theory among others” is to deliberately embrace scientific ignorance and transmit such ignorance to our children.”

The mission of the UW-System states that “basic to every purpose of the system is the search for truth.”

Yet, Kent Hovind’s speech and the mission of the Apologetics Association made me reevaluate what the university is trying to teach their students and the kind of students the university wants to attract. It is not in the best interest of the university to support speakers that preach that faith is empirical evidence in the sciences. Faith is not science. We cannot advance if our “search for truth” is subject to this ad hominem debate about creating our own creationism.

**This work was graciously edited by Andrew J. Petto, Ph.D., Lecturer in Anatomy and Physiology in the Department of Biological Sciences at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee and editor for Reports of the National Center for Science Education.**

http://www.uwosh.edu/colleges/cols/religion_science_collaboration.htm

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In Absentia- Treasurer  
Kevin Cullen- Faculty representative  
Liz Handwerk- Newsletter co-editor  
Ricky Kubicek- Newsletter co-editor  
Seth Schneider- Museum studies newsletter editor  
Dr. Arnold- Faculty advisor  
Dr. Jeske- Faculty advisor
**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. General meetings are held monthly. For more information please write:

Anthropology Student Union  
Department of Anthropology  
Sabin Hall 290  
University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee  
P.O. Box 413  
Milwaukee, WI 53201

Or via email through our website at:  
[www.uwm.edu/StudentOrg/ASU](http://www.uwm.edu/StudentOrg/ASU)

Note: Student bios, achievements, and conference presentations will be included in the Fall 2006 newsletter. Thanks to all who submitted, and please consider writing for the Fall issue.

Disclaimer: Any mistakes in content and/or grievous errors of morality are solely the fault of the editorial staff, which is a non-elected body, appointed by the ASU president. Complaints can be sent to the ASU Newsletter Complaints Department, via the email of the editors-

rkubicek@uwm.edu /handwerk@uwm.edu

**ENJOY THE SUMMER!**

*Elizabeth J. Handwerk  
R.H. Kubicek*