Fall 2017

Anthropology Newsletter

Department of Anthropology

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Greetings from the Chair

Welcome to the 2017 issue of the Anthropology Department’s newsletter. The past year has been a busy one, filled with both joy and sorrow. We said goodbye to a dear colleague and friend in Brian Robinson, who passed away in October 2016 after a long battle with illness. Brian was a beloved teacher, scholar, and mentor to so many folks around South Stevens. It came as no surprise that he remained working to finalize research projects and secure the academic futures of his students right through his illness. Brian will be missed.

The department also saw two of its long-time faculty move into retirement. Jim Acheson, an award-winning scholar and educator in the fields of environmental anthropology and the marine sciences, transitioned to the title of Research Professor several years ago and has now moved to full retirement. Henry Munson, a specialist in the cultures and societies of the Middle East and religious studies, also transitioned to retirement. However, the department is grateful that Henry will continue to teach for the foreseeable future through the Division of Lifelong Learning, offering some of his most popular courses like Religions of the World.

The new academic year also brings exciting new additions to South Stevens. Dr. Bonnie Newsom, an archaeologist with a specialization in Maine’s native cultures and peoples, steps into the department to carry on the legacy of northeastern prehistory established in years past. Bonnie recently earned her Ph.D. in anthropology from the University of Massachusetts-Amherst, and she is a proud alum of UMaine, having earned her B.A. (anthropology) and M.S. (quaternary studies) degrees from the University.

Finally, we welcome three new graduate students to the department. Chelsea Fairbank and Alexander Rzek are the newest members of the Ph.D. program in anthropology and environmental policy, while Dominic Piacentini is our pioneering student in our newly-launched M.A. program in anthropology and environmental policy.

Gregory Zaro, Associate Professor and Chair of Anthropology
Anthropology welcomes new members

Bonnie Newsom joins the Anthropology Department faculty as a Northeast archaeologist. Bonnie is a member of the Penobscot Nation and brings extensive archaeological experience to the University, having served as both an archaeologist for a private cultural resources management company as well as Tribal Historic Preservation Officer for the Penobscot Nation. She is eager to incorporate these experiences into her course offerings, including North American Prehistory and Introduction to Historic Preservation. Bonnie is an alum of the University of Maine, having earned her B.A. degree in Anthropology and M.S. in Quaternary Studies from the University. She recently completed her Ph.D. in Anthropology from the University of Massachusetts – Amherst, where her dissertation focused on the intersection of identity and technological choice among pre-contact potters living in the Penobscot River Valley. This study is part of a rich legacy of UMaine archaeology focused on Native American socio-spatial organization in the region. Bonnie is planning a research agenda that continues this legacy and incorporates a strong stakeholder engagement component. Her primary focus will be on Maine's coastal shell middens, which are among the state's most fragile cultural resources.

Kendra Bird successfully defended her MS thesis, "Spatial Organization and Erosion at the Holmes Point West Archaeological Site, Machiasport, Maine" in April, and received her graduate degree in Quaternary and Climate Studies over the summer. In July, she joined the department staff full-time as the manager of the Northeastern Prehistory Lab (a position that she has held part-time since the summer of 2013), and was appointed as a Faculty Associate in September. Kendra looks forward to future collaboration with the Department of Anthropology, and plans to continue work on her interests in the archaeology of eastern Maine and the application of emerging technologies in the preservation and dissemination of archaeological information.
In Memory of Brian Robinson

**Professor Brian Robinson** died Oct. 27 at his home in Orono after a long illness. Brian came to the University of Maine in 1997 and held joint appointments in the Department of Anthropology and the Climate Change Institute. In addition to his research contributions that brought Northeast archaeology into the national spotlight, Brian helped lead the development of a coastal archaeology program that emphasized education, scholarship and collaboration between UMaine and Maine’s Native communities, funded by the Maine Academic Prominence Initiative (MAPI). The hands-on archaeological training and engagement with Native peoples of Maine was the centerpiece of his educational and student-centered accomplishments. In partnership with Native American Studies, it shaped his instructional, intellectual and community engagement activities. The data produced through the coastal archaeology program over the years allowed the integration of excavated archaeological materials into a variety of Brian’s course offerings. Brian was known for his passionate teaching style and ability to seamlessly incorporate active research and community engagement into the student learning experience. He was a tremendous colleague, mentor, and person whose legacy will be felt across the university and state for many years to come.

Brian had one of the most unique minds I’ve ever encountered. It was always amazing to watch him work through an idea; he was thinking in curves while everyone else was on a grid. I consider my time working with him to be some of the toughest and most valuable of my life.

– Sky Heller, Ph.D. student in Anthropology and Environmental Policy; M.S. in Quaternary and Climate Studies (2011)

Brian was a wonderful mentor and an exceptional archaeologist, researcher, and educator. His passion and drive were truly infectious, and made every moment working with him a memorable one. He had an undeniable impact on both my professional and personal development, for which I will forever be grateful. Since his passing, not a day goes by during which I do not think of him--he is truly missed.

– Kendra Bird, M.S. in Quaternary and Climate Studies (2017); B.A. in Anthropology (2013)

A professor who truly cares about your personal life is a rare thing, and Brian was certainly one of those few. He was someone who would always be willing to listen, or simply someone to share many laughs with. His ability to connect with his students and friends (often one in the same) is something we should all remember about Brian, and strive for in our own lives.

– Sam Hatch, B.A. in Anthropology (2015)

I can’t remember Brian without thinking about the way he would answer questions about anything archaeological. He would start at his desk with pictures and maps, move to his bookcase to point out some key literature, and then into the basement for artifacts or slides or more books, before looping back upstairs. It was impossible not to learn something, or to avoid being infected with his enthusiasm. I’ll be forever grateful for how generous he was with those answers and that, sometimes, when my students ask me a question, the answer includes, “Brian told me about….”

– Gabe Hrynick, B.A. in Anthropology (2009)

One of my favorite memories of Brian was watching him excavate in Machias. He trained me in the art of excavation. He taught me how to level a transit and read from a datum, to set up a grid, measure out units, identify artifacts, recognize features, and to consider more than one possibility before arriving at a conclusion. I learned an incredible amount of information from Brian, perhaps the most important being how to gently educate my fellow academics and the public on the importance of the discipline. I also learned to develop the necessary patience required by the discipline and the ability to be okay with becoming obsessed with one’s work. I’ve spent countless hours in the lab thinking I was the only one left in the building only to have Brian wander down and check in. I am forever grateful to have shared many conversations with Brian, to have been his student, and to hold the honor of having him as my undergraduate and graduate advisor.

– Emily Blackwood, M.S. student in Quaternary and Climate Studies; B.A. in Anthropology (2015)

Brian Robinson is an individual I hold in great esteem and is amongst the most intelligent people from whom I have ever had the privilege of learning. He taught me to value non-linear thinking, to allow thought to flow, unhindered, and to understand that there are always multiple starting points from which logic can arrive upon something truly unique and special. He was a friend and remains a great mentor and tremendous inspiration.

– Walter Beckwith, M.S. in Quaternary and Climate Studies (2013); B.A. in Anthropology (2011)
Welcome New Graduate Students

Chelsea Fairbank (Ph.D. program in Anthropology and Environmental Policy) has a bachelors degree in Cultural Anthropology with a concentration in Human Rights from Columbia University in the city of New York. She also holds a masters degree in Education, concentrating in Special Education, from Western New Mexico University, which she received as a Teach for America corps member. Chelsea's interest in the Anthropology and Environmental Policy program at the University of Maine emerged from a desire to apply anthropological research, specifically embodied historical and contemporary human knowledge, directly toward environmental decision-making, policy, and ultimately human behavior concerned with climate change.

Dominic Piacentini (M.A. program in Anthropology and Environmental Policy) earned a B.A. degree in Anthropology from the College of Wooster in Ohio in 2015 and recently finished up his second term as an AmeriCorps volunteer with the Appalachian Forest Heritage Area (AFHA) in West Virginia. The organizations he served with work to foster arts, culture, and history as an economic driver in (mostly) post-coal regions of North Central West Virginia. Some of the projects he worked on while serving with AFHA included training artists and cultural entrepreneurs in digital marketing strategies, creating an interactive asset map of cultural resources, and drafting a performance agenda for a county-wide cultural district.

Alexander Rezk (Ph.D. program in Anthropology and Environmental Policy) is originally from Brooklyn, New York. He received a B.S. in Sociology from Worcester State University with a focus on Environmental Sociology. He obtained his M.A. in International Development and Social Change from Clark University this May, having focused on the human dimensions of global climate change, particularly concerning coastal adaptation and resilience. Some broad professional interests in the program include but are not limited to: continuing to build upon his foundational research interests while working towards a PhD, participating and/or attending conferences, collaborating with new colleagues, and engaging in research/field work that can help inform how adaptation and resilience initiatives regarding environmental catastrophe require a keen understanding of stakeholder-based and equitable policy crafting. Before leaving Clark, Alex traveled to Haiti as part of an ongoing research project examining the impact of Hurricane Matthew on rural agricultural communities east of Port Au Prince whose environmental realities have been reshaped by a combination of shifting storms and a changing climate. He also completed work on his M.A. research, "Capturing the Resilience Dividend: Post Hurricane Sandy Insights from Brooklyn’s Sea Gate Community."

Anthropology alum lands museum internship in New York City

Kathryn Baurhenn (B.A. in Anthropology; minors in Religious Studies and Philosophy, 2016) currently works in the American Museum of Natural History’s Anthropology Division as the Asian Ethnology Intern. She is working under Dr. Laurel Kendall to assist with research regarding Bali masks and their sacred meaning. Kathryn is helping Dr. Kendall take a comparative approach to this subject by preparing materials that reflect Western perceptions of sacred objects since they differ from those in the East. This includes researching horror films to better understand these distinctions as well and keeping a bibliographic record of works found. Kathryn attends Seton Hall University and is scheduled to finish her Master of Arts in Museum Professions in May 2018.
**Graduate Student Updates**

**Brie Berry** spent her first year as a graduate student in the Anthropology and Environmental Policy program focused on waste prevention. She collaborated with the University of Maine’s Senator George J. Mitchell Center for Sustainability Solutions and the Margaret Chase Smith Policy Center to conduct research on the policy barriers to food redistribution in Maine’s K-12 school system. She also presented her research at the Maine Sustainability and Water Conference in March. Finally, Brie worked with Cindy Isenhour, Andrew Crawley, and Jennifer Bonnet to explore the relative strength and characteristics of Maine’s reuse economy, presenting preliminary results in a poster at the Annual Meeting of the Society for Economic Anthropology in April.

**Emily Blackwood** has spent the past 12 months collecting data for her thesis research in order to assess the seasonality of several archaeological sites along the coast of Maine. This has entailed collecting monthly samples of the soft-shell clam *Mya arenaria* from the mudflats of these archaeological sites. Analyses of modern shell samples will show how seasons are recorded in the target species in Maine; analyses of the archaeological shells will provide a proxy for season of occupation at these archaeological sites. This past fall Emily participated in a Phase 1 survey on Treat Island in Maine, and this summer she spent a day in the field with Alice Kelley and several grad students learning the techniques of GPR.

**Sky Heller** saw big changes over the past year. She passed her comprehensive exams just before her advisor, mentor, and friend, Dr. Brian Robinson, passed away. A few months later, she became a new mother. She is now working on how to merge motherhood with her academic life.

**Kirsten Kling** continued to work out the connections between climate change and sense of place in her research. She also finished up her last year as the Education Outreach Coordinator at the Hudson Museum but will continue on as a Student Project Supervisor. Kirsten will be the GSG senator for the Anthropology and Environmental Policy graduate program, as well as an officer of the UMaine Student Organization for Society and Natural Resources.

**Sara Lowden** completed her second year of coursework and presented her research on the social-ecological impacts of industrial mining in Ecuador at the American Association of Geographers annual conference. This summer, she shifted her focus to the borderlands region of southern Arizona where she conducted preliminary fieldwork on bi-national conservation and community watershed restoration. She spent the first half of the summer working with the Mandela Washington Fellows, assisting the 25 young African leaders during their six-week program at UMaine.
Graduate Student Updates  continued from page 5

Kate Pontbriand spent the summer working at the University of Maine at Machias GIS Lab researching the current system for constructing shellfish closure maps and its impacts on the industry. She also spent time working on her thesis where she is studying how soft-shell clam shells collected from archaeological sites can be used to reconstruct water temperature and peoples’ seasonal occupation movement. And for fun, she took a road/camping trip around Maritime Canada.

Ani St. Amand was awarded a National Science Foundation Graduate Research Fellowship, and was accepted into the Interdisciplinary Ph.D. program at the University of Maine beginning fall 2017. She will be researching human adaptations to climate change in Peru using geoarchaeological and remote sensing methods. Also this fall, Ani will be defending her thesis for a master’s degree through the Climate change Institute’s Quaternary and Climate Studies program.

Anthropology Brings Home Top Awards

Professor Dan Sandweiss
2017 Presidential Research and Creative Achievement Award;
2016 Rip Rapp Archaeological Geology Award

Research Professor Marci Sorg
2017 Presidential Public Service Achievement Award

Professor Stephen Hornsby
2017 College of Liberal Arts and Sciences Research and Creative Achievement Award

Adeline Schneider
(B.A. in Human Dimensions of Climate Change, 2017)
2017 College of Liberal Arts and Sciences Outstanding Graduating Senior Award

Sarah Ebel
(Ph.D. candidate, Anthropology and Environmental Policy)
Chase Distinguished Research Assistantship; Susan J. Hunter Teaching Fellowship; Wenner Gren Fellowship

Jamie Haverkamp
(Ph.D. candidate, Anthropology and Environmental Policy)
Susan J. Hunter Teaching Fellowship
Faculty in the Spotlight

As Chair of Native American Programs, Darren Ranco helped establish the Wabanaki Youth in Science Program (WaYS), which creates a pipeline for Native American students in the sciences. Darren also does a number of outreach activities with Native American youth through the Wabanaki Truth and Reconciliation Commission and a host of other events. As part of WaYS, Darren and colleagues regularly work with teachers in the K-8 American Indian schools in the State, as well as with University Faculty mentoring Native American Students, especially in STEM fields. As principal investigator, Darren was recently awarded a grant from the National Science Foundation’s INCLUDES program (Inclusion across the Nation of Communities of Learners of Underrepresented Discoverers in Engineering Science) for his project Wabanaki Youth in Science (WaYS) Program to Bridge inclusion in Post-Secondary Education through the Sciences.

Students in the Spotlight

Sarah Ebel was recently awarded several highly competitive fellowships and research grants. She was awarded a Susan J. Hunter Teaching Fellowship for the Fall 2017 term, which she is using to teach ANT250-Conservation Anthropology. She is currently teaching a similar course at the University of Maine-Farmington as well. Sarah was also awarded a Chase Distinguished Research Assistantship from UMaine for the Spring 2018 term, and a prestigious Wenner Gren Foundation grant to support her dissertation research in Chile, where she will spend six months in the Puerto Montt region beginning late December 2017. Her research focuses on how fishermen act collectively at local, regional, and national scales to contest the constraints of fisheries policy to redefine power and regain access to resources in Chile’s Territorial User Rights in Fisheries management system. Sarah is currently working on a manuscript (with Dr. Christine Beitl) concerning cooperative fisheries research in the Maine lobster industry, and a book chapter on livelihood resilience of fishers in Chile for an edited volume on the Ethnobiology of Chiloé and its surrounding area. Sarah advanced to Ph.D. Candidacy this past year.

Adeline Schneider was named the 2017 College of Liberal Arts and Sciences Outstanding Graduating Senior. As an Honors student, she completed her thesis titled Mass-Producing Indigeneity: State and NGO Discourse and Action Around Indigenous Knowledge in Bolivia while earning a double major in Human Dimensions of Climate Change and Philosophy, with a minor in Mathematics. Her numerous academic awards include the Roger B. Hill Humanities Scholarship, and the George and Helen Weston Scholarship for Excellence in Mathematics. In the Spring 2016 term, she studied abroad at the University of Birmingham (emphasizing curriculum in Philosophy and Human Geographies in England). Addie interned with Environment Maine and has been a research assistant, collaborating with professor Cindy Isenhour on a study of the reuse economy in Maine. On campus, she also has been involved with the Green Team, the Student Alliance for Sexual Health, the Student Women’s Association, and the Philosophy Club. She spent this past summer in Nicaragua, collaborating with graduate student Anna McGinn on a climate adaptation research project.
Anthropology sees two long-time faculty members move to retirement

Professor Jim Acheson (UMaine 1968-2017) recently retired after a 49-year career at the University of Maine. Jim’s primary field of study is economic anthropology, with substantial field research in the Purepecha speaking area of the State of Michoacan, Mexico, and in fishing communities along the coast of Maine. His Maine fisheries research was focused on social science aspects of fisheries management. Jim has done considerable work on the common property problem and on applying the principles of institutional economics to a variety of problems in anthropology, including the organization of household farms, fish markets in New England, and the development of local level institutions to manage resources and promote economic change.

Professor Henry Munson (UMaine 1982-2016) recently retired after 34 years of service to the University but continues to offer courses through the Division of Lifelong Learning. Henry’s primary interests include religion and violence, religion and politics, religion and nationalism, Islamic fundamentalism, and theories of religion. In the past, Henry focused on Islam with field research grounded largely in the Middle East, especially in Morocco. More recently, his work involved the comparative study of the late twentieth-century revivalist movements often called “fundamentalist.”

Professor Christine Beitl has been working with an interdisciplinary team of researchers from UMaine’s School of Forestry and Ecuador’s Escuela Superior Politécnica del Litoral (ESPOL) to explore landscape-livelihood linkages in Ecuador’s in-shore artisanal fisheries. The research combines remote sensing with ethnographic data to better understand the causes and consequences of mangrove forest change and its effects on fishing-based livelihoods. Christine also collaborated with researchers from the School of Marine Sciences on a project exploring fishermen’s local knowledge about the marine environment, species interactions, and ecological change in Maine’s fisheries.

Professor Sam Hanes has spent this past year working on his book on the modernization of the U.S. oyster fishery for UMass Press’s Environmental History of the Northeast series. He also continued research with SEANET on how social and demographic change on Maine’s coast impacts aquaculture. Sam also continues his relatively new research on Virginia’s fishery history and on the history of Maine’s blueberry industry.

Professor Stephen Hornsby’s new book Picturing America: The Golden Age of Pictorial Maps (Chicago UP with the Library of Congress) was published in the Spring and has attracted more popular attention than his other academic books! Stephen has also nearly completed research for his next book, which looks at the impact of the trans-Atlantic cotton trade on antebellum coastal Maine.

Professor Cindy Isenhour continues to work with several other faculty and graduate students to explore Maine’s culture of reuse and its potential to advance multiple policy objectives (waste reduction, economic development, community resilience, climate mitigation). The team’s first paper was recently published in the Maine Policy Review. In related work, Cindy also worked with the Maine Legislature’s Environment and Natural Resources Committee this summer to convene a stakeholder working group with the purpose of exploring policy options to reduce food waste and hunger in Maine.
Professors Alice Kelley, Joseph Kelley, and Daniel Belknap are working with graduate student Jacque Miller (pictured) on the Maine Sea Grant funded project "Lost to the Sea: Maine’s Ancient Coastal Heritage". This study combines geophysics and citizen science to address the loss of important cultural and paleoenvironmental information from Maine’s eroding coastal shell middens. The group completed ground-penetrating radar survey evaluation at 6 coastal shell middens and has hosted a stakeholders meeting to develop strategies for monitoring and data rescue.

As of July 1, Professor Lisa Neuman took over from George Markowsky as President of the UMaine chapter of AFUM. She is also developing a paper (with co-authors Kendra Bird, Donald Soctomah, Natalie Dana, Cassandra Dana, and Dierdre Whitehead) on partnerships between the MAPI archaeological field school, the Passamaquoddy Tribe, and the Maine Coast Heritage Trust. MAPI was an important part of the work of our late colleague Dr. Brian Robinson.

Professor Dan Sandweiss spent the first part of his summer research trip to Peru with Kurt Rademaker’s (IPhD 2012) project re-excavating Quebrada Jaguay, an early fishing site Dan excavated in the 1990s. He spent the second part with colleagues Kirk Maasch (CCI, ERS), Cary James, and Jim Munch collecting fish and mollusks in northern Peru to improve our understanding of archaeological climate proxies. While in Peru, Dan spoke on El Niño and the Archaeology of the Peruvian Coast at the Universidad Nacional Pedro Ruiz Gallo in Lambayeque and at the Universidad Nacional Mayor de San Marcos in Lima.

Professor Gregory Zaro continued his collaborative research in Croatia this summer with the Nadin-Gradina Archaeological Project, now partially supported by the Croatian Science Foundation. The long-term project seeks to unravel 2,500 years of urban change near the coastal port city of Zadar, Croatia. In addition to fieldwork, Greg also took time to travel east with family to Sarajevo (Bosnia and Herzegovina) and visit the abandoned 1984 Olympic Bobsled run.

Professor Jim Roscoe is in his second year of phased retirement and spent a good part of the year in Germany, where he gave a keynote speech to the Demography and Society panel at the University of Kiel, and a Berlin University talk in Brandenburg on the social context that preceded construction of the great burial mound at Seddin (north Germany). He also spent quite a bit of time wandering the German countryside looking at ancient hill graves in between anthropological inspection of quaint German pubs. He moved a couple of journal articles and four edited-volume chapters into press, and, along with Cindy Isenhour, oversaw a Wenner-Gren funded workshop, Status Pursuits across Human Systems, held at the University of Maine last October.
Alice Kelley (Department of Anthropology, Climate Change Institute, and Earth and Climate Sciences) and her colleagues were recently profiled in the “Science Times” section of the New York Times (10/24/17).

Working with Joseph Kelley (Earth and Climate Sciences & Climate Change Institute, University of Maine), Arthur Spiess (Maine Historic Preservation Commission), Daniel Belknap (Earth and Climate Sciences & Climate Change Institute, University of Maine), and graduate student, Jacquelynn Miller (Earth and Climate Sciences), Dr. Kelley’s Maine Sea Grant-funded research is exploring a new geophysical approach to assessing Maine shell midden areal extant and thickness and developing a citizen science approach to monitoring erosion of these important cultural and paleoenvironmental resources.

Maine’s coast hosts over 2,000 shell middens. These accumulations of human-deposited shells, artifacts, and faunal remains record the past 4,000 years of Native occupation of the coast. Additionally, they preserve one of the only records of paleoenvironmental information on the western Gulf of Maine.

Virtually all are eroding in the face of sea level rise, and work conducted as part of this study indicates that some have already been lost to the sea.

The group is exploring the use of ground-penetrating radar (GPR) as a tool to evaluate existing shell middens. While GPR has been used as a stratigraphic tool at shell midden sites, it has not been used as a cultural management tool in the evaluation of such sites. The researchers hope that use of this noninvasive and rapid technique will provide data that will inform excavation and management decisions, and will be applied to archaeological sites beyond Maine.

Drs. Alice Kelley and Arthur Spiess are also developing a citizen science monitoring program based on recommendations resulting from a stake-holders meeting held as part of the project in summer 2017. Kelley and Spiess are working to devise a protocol that will allow year-round and summer residents of the state to collect data about erosion rates and disturbance at coastal shell middens, as well as recording artifacts that are found on adjacent beaches.

Photo credits: Holland Haverkamp
Recent Department Publications


The Annual Fund is an opportunity for Alumni, Parents, Friends, and Faculty/Staff to play an important role in UMaine’s present and in its future. Last year, with Department of Anthropology gift funds, we helped students travel abroad to participate in research projects. This hands-on experience is invaluable. Our main objective is to ensure there are funds available to allow us to respond quickly and appropriately to the areas of greatest need within the Department of Anthropology. Your donations, combined with those of others, make a significant and immediate impact on the quality of the “UMaine Experience” for our students.

You can make a gift online, our.umaine.edu/anthropology, or by contacting the University of Maine Foundation at 207.581.1148 or toll-free 866.578.2156.

Remember, it isn’t just about how much you give, but the fact that you give that makes a real difference.

Thank you for your consideration and support.

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