

## Court Archaeological Research Facility Opens



Within three years, the department will have an exciting new archaeological research facility thanks to a generous donation of \$500,000 from John and Georgia Court and the Court Family Foundation. The Court Archaeological Research Facility (CARF) will be part of the recently dedicated Cincinnati Center for Field Studies (CCFS) at the South Shaker Farm in

Miami Whitewater Park, a new joint venture between the University of Cincinnati and Hamilton County Parks. CARF will include a field classroom, wet laboratory, office space and a temperature- and humidity-controlled curation space. CARF will be open year-round for student training and public programming on the archaeology of the Ohio River valley. Like the summer field school, CARF will provide students with hands-on, learn-by-doing activities and state-of-the-art archaeological research. Because CARF is part of the new CCFS, students will also engage in interdisciplinary research between the departments of anthropology, biology, environmental science, geography and geology. In addition to funding CARF, the Court Family Foundation has also generously donated an additional \$50,000 of matching funds for student research in Ohio Valley archaeology.

## Interested in supporting the Court Archaeological Research Facility or another area of the department?

Thanks to your generous contributions, anthropology students and faculty are able to conduct field research, engage in stimulating field experiences and strengthen our community through shared events. We are grateful for your support of the department.

If you would like to donate to the department, you may mail a check to the following address:

**McMicken College of Arts & Sciences  
University of Cincinnati  
Development & Alumni Relations  
PO Box 210367  
Cincinnati, OH 45221-0367**

You may also give online at [giveto.uc.edu](http://giveto.uc.edu).

Please specify one of the following funds to which you would like to direct your gift:

**Anthropology Discretionary Fund;  
Court Archaeological Research Fund;  
Medical Anthropology Travel and  
Research Fund.**

If you have any questions, contact Mike Volan, Sr. Director of Development, at 513.556.0862 or at [mike.volan@uc.edu](mailto:mike.volan@uc.edu).

## Investigating Taste in Nicaragua

Do hunters care about the taste of the meat they harvest? That question motivated Assistant Professor Jeremy Koster and graduate student Maria Venegas to visit the Nicaraguan rain forest this summer, where Mayangna and Miskito

Indians continue to rely on hunted game to meet their nutritional needs. Funding for the research came in part from the Taft Foundation and the University Research Council. Ecological anthropologists have traditionally disregarded taste as an explanatory variable, primarily because it could be considered irrational for nutritionally-challenged tribal societies to forego a chance to eat a large quantity of meat. During his dissertation research, however, Koster observed that hunters would regularly bypass opportunities to pursue howler monkeys, preferring to take similarly-sized spider monkeys. When asked, the hunters simply explained that howlers are not particularly appetizing.



Anthropology graduate student Maria Venegas poses with two Mayangna boys, Bernaldo and Simon, who assisted the project by informing participants of the time for their interviews.

of terrestrial wildlife. With the help of a local interpreter, Venegas first used laminated drawings of wildlife to conduct pile sorts. Informants were asked to divide the species into piles based on similarities, and then they were asked what the species in a pile have in common. Taste was rarely mentioned at this stage.

To investigate taste more directly, Venegas asked informants to rank the species from the best-tasting to the least-appealing. A statistical procedure known as cultural consensus analysis indicates that there is a very strong consensus on the rankings, which suggests that informants have similar opinions on the most desirable meat. As expected, the average rank of howler monkeys was low.

The next step in this investigation is to replicate the study in other

Central and South American societies. If informants in varying cultural and ecological settings rank the same prey species in similar ways, then there would be evidence that taste is not solely a cultural construction.

Koster spent much of his time during the trip obtaining observational data of hunting expeditions.

Working in the community, Venegas used cognitive anthropological methods to explore the cultural domain

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# Cultura

A publication of the Department of Anthropology

## New Research at Shawnee Lookout

The Department of Anthropology held its annual Summer Archaeological Field School at Shawnee Lookout Park, located at the confluence of the Great Miami and Ohio rivers in extreme western Hamilton County, Ohio. Under the direction of Assistant Professor Kenneth B. Tankersley and graduate assistants Marianne Ballantyne and Brian Lane, participating students set up a field laboratory at the new Cincinnati Center for Field Studies (CCFS) at nearby Miami Whitewater Park. They excavated a deep, artifact-rich midden deposit at the Twin Mounds Village East site, which spans more than 13,000 years of prehistory, and also surveyed, mapped and tested an extensive ancient water management system known as Miami Fort. In addition to basic excavation techniques, students learned how to use a transit, GPS, flotation system, a variety of drill rigs and state-of-the-art geophysical techniques including ground-penetrating radar and magnetic susceptibility.



Anthropology undergraduate and graduate students excavating the Twin Mounds Village East site, located in Shawnee Lookout Park as part of the 2008 Summer Archaeological Field School. The field school was a true hands-on, learn-by-doing experience.



five meters in height. They also found a broad (about 12 meters in width) and deep (about 2.5 meters deep) ditch paralleling the earthworks. Apparently, the ditches acted as races or sluiceways that drained terraced, bowl-shaped, anthropogenic ponds. Evidence of oscillating periods of warm and moist and cold and dry climates were identified in the pond sediments.

Radiocarbon samples collected during the field school demonstrated that the earthworks in the park were built over considerable time, from BC 160 to AD 60, AD 620 to AD 690, and from AD 1500 to AD 1600. These exciting

discoveries will require archaeologists to rethink their current interpretations of Ohio Valley archaeology.

The field school was featured on the front page of the Cincinnati Enquirer and the story was picked

up by national and international newspapers and radio stations, from Canada to Australia to Russia. Field school students were also able to participate in the production of documentary films for the National Geographic, Discovery and History channels. One of these films, "How the Earth Was Made" will air this spring on the History Channel. Funding for the field school was made possible through a generous grant from the Court Family Foundation.

## What's new with you?

Please help us update our alumni files. Write your news in the space provided or on a separate sheet and attach it to this form. You can also go on-line and give us your news at [www.artsci.uc.edu/updates](http://www.artsci.uc.edu/updates).

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Name at graduation (if different) \_\_\_\_\_

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Address 2 \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Degree(s) \_\_\_\_\_ Year(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Spouse's Name \_\_\_\_\_ UC alum? yes  no

Phone (home) \_\_\_\_\_ (work) \_\_\_\_\_

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(work) \_\_\_\_\_

Your news (attach an additional page if needed)

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Vernon Scarborough

Welcome to our newly minted Newsletter—CULTURA. Because the program has had a strong orientation toward the New World, the title for this update is Spanish for “culture.” This inaugural issue is dedicated to reconnecting and giving you a rapid-fire introduction to all that we are doing. Our newest faculty member—Sarah Jackson—is the force behind this production, and we are so pleased to have her skills and intellect in our department.

The department has much to crow about these days, even with the economic downturn. Our faculty are as productive as ever with active projects in Brazil, Belize, Guatemala, Nicaragua, Honduras as well as Arizona and here in the Ohio Valley. Students continue to cultivate opportunities in all of those places as well as the Caribbean and even Malawi, Africa.

And though funding is tight, we are a creative bunch and short of printing funding dollars ourselves manage to direct it wisely. In fact, we anticipate two more faculty members onboard by this time next year, and thanks to a most generous gift from John and Georgia Court we will soon have a brand new field facility dedicated to Ohio Valley archaeology.

*Vern Scarborough*  
Vernon Scarborough  
Head

### Anthony Perzigian

Perzigian represents the Department of Anthropology on the wider stage of UC through his position as Provost of the university. He remains active in anthropological circles, and is currently promoting and underwriting the broad-based Darwin Sesquicentennial Celebrations at UC.

### Vernon Scarborough

Scarborough has begun a two-year term as Head of the Department of Anthropology. He recently presented his work at meetings of the School for Advanced Research, a UNESCO-sponsored seminar in Paris, an international workshop on sustainability in Sweden and a workshop on “Climate Crises in Human History” sponsored by the American Philosophical Society. Thanks to a National Science Foundation grant, he and colleagues from Biology and Geography will be going to Tikal, Guatemala, in April to examine ancient landscapes and water systems.

### Alan Sullivan

Professor Sullivan spent six weeks in the Autumn 2008 quarter conducting archaeological fieldwork in Grand Canyon National Park as part of his Upper Basin Archaeological Research Project. He was accompanied by two UC undergraduate students, Chris Olsen and Ben Metz, and two graduate students, Shelley Szeghi and Matt Preece. A UC Anthropology

alumnus Phil Mink, a doctoral student at the University of Kentucky, also joined the project. Back in Cincinnati, with Professor Foster’s retirement, Sullivan will now take on the position of Undergraduate Director in Anthropology.



Alan Sullivan (left) discusses the aftermath of re-burying Site MU 125 with Kaibab National Forest archaeologists.

### Barry Isaac

Professor Emeritus Isaac is enjoying retirement but is also keeping busy. He has a new book, co-authored with Hugo G. Nutini of the University of Pittsburgh, to be published in Spring 2009 at the University of Texas Press; it is titled “Social Stratification in Central Mexico, 1500-2000.”

### Picnic Celebration



Ken Tankersley leads a tour of the Miami Fort Earthworks for students, faculty, family, alumni and friends. Ken is pointing out nearby archaeological sites in the Great Miami-Ohio River confluence area.

Department students, faculty, staff and families gathered at Shawnee Lookout Park in early October to celebrate the beginning of the 2008-09 academic year with a picnic. In addition to an amazing spread of food contributed by all, the Anthropology community enjoyed an afternoon of volleyball, horseshoes and hiking in the park to see the excavations carried out by Ken Tankersley and his students as part of the summer Archaeological Field School. The picnic also provided a chance to renew friendships with colleagues in other departments, including Classics and Geography.

### Meet Our New Faculty Members

The Department of Anthropology is delighted to welcome **Montserrat Soler** as assistant professor. Soler received her PhD from Rutgers University in 2008. Her dissertation, “The Faith of Sacrifice: Commitment and Cooperation in Candomblé, an Afro-Brazilian Religion,” explored ideas of cooperation within a particular religious community through the framework of an evolutionary perspective on religion.

Soler is interested in investigating how human beliefs and practices evolve as adaptive mechanisms, providing a way of understanding religiously-motivated choices as rational decisions from an evolutionary point of view.

She recently contributed a chapter on “Commitment Costs and Cooperation: Evidence from Candomblé, an Afro-Brazilian Religion” to the edited volume, *The Evolution of Religion: Studies, Theories, and Critiques* (Collins Foundation Press, 2008). She plans to return to her field site for future research, where she will explore factors affecting decisions in this

community to switch from Candomblé to a Pentecostal religion.

In the mean time, Soler taught a course on the History and Theory of Anthropology at UC in the fall. She notes that she is particularly enjoying the juxtaposition of UC’s great resources with the friendly and welcoming community she has encountered here.



**Sarah Jackson** has joined the Department of Anthropology as a visiting assistant professor. Jackson received her PhD from Harvard in 2005 with a dissertation titled “Deciphering Classic Maya Political Hierarchy: Epigraphic, Archaeological, and Ethnohistoric Perspectives on the Courtly Elite.”

Jackson spent a year teaching at the University of New Hampshire and, most recently, two years as a Mellon Postdoctoral

Fellow in the Department of Anthropology at the University of Toronto.

Her research focuses on issues of political organization, hierarchy and the construction of difference in Classic-era Maya contexts, examining both the material record and texts (hieroglyphic and ethnohistoric), and focusing on the institution of the royal court. She has turned her dissertation work into a book, “Identity Politics in the Court: Hierarchy and Change among the Late Classic Maya,” which is currently under review at the University of Oklahoma Press.

At UC, Jackson is teaching courses on Maya Archaeology, Royal Courts of the Ancient New World, Identities and Material Culture and Linguistic Anthropology during the 2008-09 school year.

A native Cincinnati, Jackson is delighted to be back in the Queen City and is enjoying getting to know the department’s faculty and students.

### Professor Foster Retires

Joseph Foster retired at the end of Autumn Quarter 2008 after 40 years of service to the department and university, including 20 years as undergraduate director.

Foster received his PhD in Linguistics and Cultural Anthropology from the University of Illinois (Urbana-Champaign) in 1969, and he has taught both fields in our department ever since. He’s been invaluable not only to our department’s curriculum but also to the A&S linguistics program, from 1974 onward, together with Bill Lasher and the late Carl Mills, both of English.

He was honored at a reception for retiring faculty on November 24, where Barry Isaac offered a tribute in his honor. The following remarks are drawn from Isaac’s tribute:

“Joe Foster and I came to UC at the same time, in autumn 1969. The university had undergone rapid expansion of faculty and programs during that decade, and office space was scarce. As the result, our new department was crammed into the southeast corner of Floor 6 of the Main Library—now Blegen Library—and Joe and I shared a tiny office. That was a time of student protests across the country, and arsonists had set fires in the library stacks at some universities. With that in mind, Joe bought a couple of very long ropes, which he spliced together and anchored to the



Joseph Foster retired at the end of the Autumn term. His dedication and humor will be greatly missed. (He wanted to caption this photo, “So that’s how Kiowa gender works!?”)

base of the heat radiator in our office; together, the ropes reached from our window nearly to the ground. Joe checked the knots every day and muttered that he wasn’t sure they would support our weight. Fortunately, we never had to put them to the test.” Foster retired from full-time service to the university at the end of fall quarter but he will remain in a part-time capacity until the end of spring quarter. “His energy and dry wit will be greatly missed, and we wish him happiness and continued productivity in his many endeavors,” said Isaac.

### Faculty and student research on religious organizations and HIV/AIDS

Under the supervision of Assistant Professor Jeffrey Jacobson, several graduate and undergraduate students have spent the last year collecting and entering data for an ongoing, federally-funded research project aimed at better understanding how religious organizations are addressing the HIV/AIDS epidemic. Headed by Joel Tsevat and Magda Szaflarski, and based in the new Department of Public Health Sciences (DPHS), this two-year study is funded by the National Institute of Child Health and Development (NICHD). During the first year, students Amanda Huber and Varun Pawar both participated in a telephone census of religious organizations in the tri-state, and Katie Hicks helped design and employ a scannable data entry form for the census questionnaires.



Jeff Jacobson

Now in its second year, the project is focused on conducting and completing face-to-face interviews with over 100 local clergy and over 50 persons with HIV/AIDS. Amanda Huber, Matthew Maroon and MaryLauren Malone are assisting with clergy interviews. In addition, Emily Balf, Sarah Barth and Amanda Huber are assisting with data entry and will be using data from the study for their masters’ theses work. Other current graduate students working on interview transcriptions and data entry include Dean Wells, Liz Wehri and Maria Venegas.

### Graduate students present on summer research

Students and faculty gathered in early October to hear from a selection of graduate students, who presented on their research results from their summer work. The range of topics was impressive: our students are undertaking exciting independent research across the globe! Marianne Ballantyne and Brian Lane (archaeology) presented on their involvement in the University of Cincinnati Archaeological Field School at Shawnee Lookout. Erin Gill (archaeology) discussed her excavations in Belize with a presentation entitled “Landscape Architecture: the Role of Berms as a Tool of Ancient Maya Water Management.” Katie Hicks (archaeology) spoke about excavating the slave village at Habitation Creve Coeur, an 18th century sugar plantation site in Martinique. Matt Maroon (cultural anthropology) talked about his work in the village of Karonga, Malawi. Maria Venegas (medical anthropology) shared her experiences in Nicaragua with a talk on “The Phenomenology of Grisi Sicknis: A Miskito/Mayagna Culture Bound Syndrome,” and Liz Wehri (physical anthropology) told us about her development of “A Classification System of Osteomyelitis for Historic Skeletal Remains: An Assessment of Civil War Soldier Amputees.”

### Undergraduates on the go

Anthropos, the undergraduate anthropology organization, has been active this year under the leadership of president Andras Nagy and Ken Tankersley, the faculty advisor. Students meet every two weeks to plan outings and events that allow them to explore their anthropological interests. In the fall, students took field trips to nearby archaeological sites. They will venture further afield in April to attend the Society for American Archaeology annual conference in Atlanta, Georgia. Anthropos members are also reaching out to students at local high schools in order to raise awareness about anthropology as an exciting and relevant college major.

### Journalist Charles Mann Visits Campus

In October, faculty and students were excited to meet journalist Charles Mann, author of the best-selling book “1491: A History of the Americas before Columbus.” Mann was on campus on Oct. 9 and 10, and gave a public lecture co-sponsored by the Department of Anthropology, the Taft Research Center and the Rieveschl Lectureship. Additionally, he met with anthropology students over lunch for a discussion of his work, how he got interested in the ancient New World, how he researched his book and the ways in which investigations of the past are relevant to the general public. Anthropology faculty also enjoyed meeting with Mann to discuss current research and the intersections of academic work and journalism.

The department also hosted Douglas Schwartz, former President of the School for Advanced Research and current SAR Senior Scholar, who spoke on “Evolving A Genius: The Extraordinary Early Life of Charles Darwin.” Bruce Winterhalder, a human behavioral ecologist at the University of California at Davis, will also be visiting the department this year.



Charles Mann (seated) signs a copy of his influential book “1491” for Anthony Perzigian. Ron Millard (standing, right) is chair of the Darwin Celebration Program on campus.