The Institute for Mesoamerican Studies (IMS) is a nonprofit scholarly research center dedicated to the study and dissemination of knowledge about the ancient and modern peoples and cultures of Mesoamerica (Mexico and northern Central America). IMS helps coordinate the work of the Mesoamericanist faculty at the University at Albany – SUNY. We have the largest number of full-time Mesoamericanists of any institution north of Mexico, and our members are among the most active and prominent scholars in the field of Mesoamerican anthropology. The primary activities of IMS are research and publication. This report summarizes our recent activities.

Letter from the Director

Dear colleagues, supporters, alumni, and friends,

Greetings from IMS! I hope that you had a wonderful holiday season. As you make your plans for the new year, please mark your calendars for our 30th Anniversary celebration of the Christopher DeCormier Scholarship Program on May 9 and 10, 2008). Join us for presentations of papers, posters, and photos on Friday and Saturday morning by some of our former faculty and distinguished graduates, attend the DeCormier Awards Banquet on Saturday, and come to the benefit concert, “A Folk Song Celebration” with Peter Yarrow of Peter, Paul, and Mary and Counterpoint at Page Hall on Saturday May 10 at 7:30. Details on these events are available in this issue of the IMS newsletter and on our website. You will also find updates on current UAlbany faculty and student activities and news from some of our graduates.

Best Wishes,

Marilyn Masson

Check out our website at: www.albany.edu/ims
Faculty Activity Updates

Professors Jennifer Burrell, and Jim Collins (our current Anthropology Department Chair), Dept. of Anthropology, received a grant from the Programa de Migracion y Salud (PIMSA) to begin research on new flows of Mexican and Central American migrants to the New York State Capital region and access to healthcare. Burrell and Collins are initially concentrating on three regional employment sectors: agriculture, the restaurant and service industry and Saratoga track workers. Preliminary fieldwork commenced in Spring, 2007. Burrell recently traveled to Los Angeles to participate in Binational Health Week and to present preliminary research results.

L-R: Fernando Ocampo, Jennifer Burrell, and James Collins (Mexican & Central American Migrant Health Needs Research Team members).

Jennifer Burrell and colleague Ellen Moodie (UIUC, specialist in El Salvador) received a Wenner-Gren Foundation for Anthropological Research award to hold a workshop entitled: "After the Handshakes: Rethinking Democracy and Living Paradox in Central America." The workshop will take place at UAlbany in Fall 2008 and will bring together approximately twenty scholars from the US, Europe, Latin America and Canada, as well as a number of IMS participants for two days of intensive reflection on the region.

Jennifer Burrell and family spent two weeks in Guatemala in June 2007. Jennifer and partner Alex Dupuy traveled to Todos Santos Cuchumatán, (where they lived between 1996-2000 while Jennifer conducted fieldwork for 36 months) to introduce their baby, Lila Jill Jenova Dupuy, then five months, to their many long-time friends in the community. People were thrilled to meet her. Jennifer and Alex are happy to report that Lila is an intrepid traveler and remained calm and happy on the long journey from Antigua to Todos Santos.

Jennifer Burrell and Lila in Todos Santos Cuchumatán, June 2007
The past summer, nine undergraduate and graduate students accompanied Professor Walter Little to Guatemala. Albany graduate students, Dustin Knepp, Alanna Murphy-Hoffman and Erin Slinker studied intensive Kaqchikel Maya, as part of Tulane University’s Oxlajuj Aj Kaqchikel Maya and Culture Course, which Little co-directs with Professor Judith Maxwell of Tulane. They also worked on their individual research projects with Kaqchikel collaborators. Knepp studied Kaqchikel popular food traditions and is currently developing an web-based databank. Murphy-Hoffman studied an aid-base NGO and helped develop materials in Kaqchikel Maya for it. Slinker continued her research on transnational adoptions and what it means to Mayas.

Graduate student, Katherine Platt, conducted a pilot study on the growing community of US retirees living in Guatemala. She will continue this research for her dissertation. Senior Ariel Zach researched Latin American dance, visiting several schools, where she focused on both what styles of dance were taught and how the businesses were run. Students from three other schools also attended.

2007 Summer Ethnographic field school members in front of the Ixel Cooperative, located in San Antonio Aguas Calientes. (L to R: Walter Little, Tom Keegan, Mabel Sabogal, Ariel Zach, Paul Kadetz, Katherine Platt, Sergio Garcia (guest lecturer), Lauren Remson.)

Six other students focused on urban anthropology projects in the city of Antigua, Guatemala. For four weeks they studied a diverse range of topics and improved their Spanish skills. Recent graduate, Tom Keegan, researched backpacker tourists, interviewing them about the informal networks they establish and how much they learn about Guatemalan culture.

Along with Professors Patricia McAnany, Marilyn Masson, and Charles Stanish, Walter Little is co-organizing the 2009 Society for Economic Anthropology annual meeting, “Weaving Across Time and Space: The Political Economy of Textiles. The meeting's theme is the political economic use of textiles and it will draw scholars from archaeology, cultural anthropology, ethnohistory and other disciplines.
Dr. Robert Carmack attended the Congreso No. IV sobre el Popol Wuj en Quetzaltenango, from the 10th -14th of December 2007. He was the original organizer of the Congreso, which is now totally in the hands of the K’iche’ Mayas of that region. Besides academic and local presentations, they sponsor theater, food marts, dances, debates, and other exciting activities.

Dr. Marilyn Masson has been busy since last Spring planning the DeCormier 30th Anniversary Events. Four requests for support of these events have been successful and we are grateful to the Anthropology Department, the College of Arts and Sciences, the Vice President for Research Office, and the University Auxiliary Services for helping to underwrite the costs of event promotion, facilities, and transporting and housing our speakers. She, along with all of the board members of IMS, is extremely grateful to the members of the choral group, Counterpoint, and to Peter Yarrow, for donating their performance next May to benefit the DeCormier Scholarship fund. Louise and Robert DeCormier have been instrumental to the conceptualization and planning of this landmark event in IMS’s history.

During the Fall 2007 semester, Dr. Masson has been working on a time-consuming, but rewarding committee assignment for the Society for American Archaeology – she is the Program Chair for the 2008 Annual Meeting to be held in Vancouver, British Columbia, March 26-30. Thanks to an international committee of twelve colleagues and tremendous assistance from UAlbany graduate students Justin Lowry, Elizabeth France, Elizabeth Paris, and Jared Latimer, the program was submitted on time (in November). There were 2,765 abstracts submitted – which we placed into the five day meeting schedule!

Dr. Masson is also awaiting news of two grants submitted to the National Science Foundation and the National Endowment for the Humanities for research planned at the Postclassic Maya city of Mayapán, Yucatan, Mexico. If we receive grant support, the project will intensify its investigations of a full range of occupational specialists at the city (slaves, farmers, craftspeople, neighborhood overseers, priests, and merchants). Our past work at the city focused primarily on diverse economic activities of the commoner class, and work planned for 2008-2009 will expand this study to loci of elite activities, including elaborate noble dwellings, the site’s largest outlying temple and colonnaded hall group (Itzmal Ch’en), a marketplace building that may have served as a House of Commerce, and a possible school for children of the nobility. Dr. Masson is also working with Ricardo Vazquez Leiva and UAlbany’s Robert Rosenswig to initiate a collaborative archaeological research project in Costa Rica that will be the base for a new UAlbany graduate and undergraduate field school.

Plans for UAlbany’s Costa Rica Archaeological Field School are underway...

Spring or Summer 2009

For more information Contact Marilyn Masson massonma@albany.edu
The field school will be conducted in collaboration with UAlbany’s own doctoral candidate, Ricardo Vazquez Leiva
Nahuatl Theater Volume 3: Spanish Golden Age Drama in Mexican Translation, edited by Barry D. Sell, IMS’s Dr. Louise M. Burkhart, and Elizabeth R. Wright, with contributions by Daniel Mosquera and John Bierhorst, will appear early in 2008 from the University of Oklahoma Press. The volume presents the complete dramatic works of don Bartolomé de Alva, a Catholic priest and native speaker of Nahuatl, who was descended on his mother’s side from the famed Tetzocan rulers Nezahualcoyotl and Nezahualpilli. Don Bartolomé was the younger brother of the historian don Fernando de Alva Ixtlilxochitl, whose works are key sources for pre-Columbian and conquest-era history.

Working in collaboration with the Jesuit grammarian Father Horacio Carocho, in 1640-1641 Alva adapted into the Nahuatl language three masterworks of Spain’s theatrical Golden Age: Pedro Calderón de la Barca’s auto sacramental “El Gran Teatro del Mundo,” Antonio Mira de Amescua’s cloak-and-dagger saint’s play “The Animal Prophet and the Fortunate Patricide,” and Lope de Vega’s Marian nativity drama “The Mother of the Best.” The Calderón play is accompanied by a comic farce, the only thing of its kind in Nahuatl. Alva’s “The Great Theater of the World” is of particular interest because it is the earliest extant version of this famous eucharistic drama; it reveals that Calderón revised his original version by adding a rustic character not found in the lost Spanish original that Alva used. Drawing on his own bicultural and bilingual background and his experience as a parish priest in Nahuatl communities, Alva reworked the plays to suit the particular religious, moral, and social sensibilities of colonial Nahuas and the conventions of Nahuatl theater. He ably invoked complex Nahuatl religious symbols, drawing particularly on the sacred associations of certain birds and flowers, and manipulated sociolinguistic registers to characterize men and women, servants and masters, piety and foolery, propriety and outrageous aggression. He made some of the characters overtly into Nahuas, resetting the action in his own social milieu and placing these personages into different social strata and different levels of Hispanicization. These works are the only examples of Spanish drama from this era adapted into any Native American language.

Scene from "The Great Theater of the World" (http://www.totentanz-online.de/images/literatur/koenig.jpg)

Early publication of “The Great Theater of the World” (http://www.spanisharts.com/books/literature/imagenes/caldtemu.jpg)
After essays by each of the editors, the volume presents the dramas in a four-column format, with English translations running alongside the original Spanish and Alva's Nahuatl. This format is designed to facilitate easy comparison of the Nahuatl plays with their Spanish models. The editors look forward to many new interpretations of these works.

The research for this book was supported by a Grant for Collaborative Research from the National Endowment for the Humanities, an independent federal agency. The volume received a substantial publication subvention from the Center for Cooperation between Spain’s Ministry of Culture and U.S. Universities.

The fall 2007 semester is Dr. Robert Rosenswig’s third in the Department of Anthropology. In addition to developing a new seminar on Olmec Archaeology he has also just submitted his first book to the University of Texas Press. As the semester winds down, Dr. Rosenswig is gearing up for a busy winter and spring. He will launch the second San Estevan Archaeological Project in northern Belize as a UAlbany field school from January 6th through February 17th. He will be leading this expedition of 23 undergraduate and 7 graduate students to investigate the rise of early state-level society among the Maya. UAlbany graduate student Jason Paling will be basing his PhD dissertation on lithic material from the site and Sean Higgins will write his master's thesis on the faunal remains. In addition, Dan Seinfeld, a former UAlbany undergrad and current PhD student at Florida State University, will be analyzing the botanical remains for his dissertation. All three students will combine data collected from the previous 2005 field season with what we will collect this winter to examine changes that occurred at the site between 800 BC and AD 200. Together they will provide an important perspective on the economic base upon which newly emerging Maya rulers built their elevated social status and were able to consolidate political power in the course of this millennia.

Upon his return from Belize, Dr. Rosenswig will be participating in a working group sponsored by the Cotsen Institution at UCLA. This will bring a dozen scholars together for a 4 days of discussion and debate on the Archaic through Middle Formative (3000 – 500 BC) subsistence patterns of the Soconusco region on the Pacific Coast of Chiapas. Then, at the end of March it’s off to Vancouver for the Society of American Archaeology Meeting in Vancouver British Columbia. In addition to giving a paper in a session on Olmec interaction across Mesoamerica, Dr. Rosenswig will be returning to Vancouver for the first time since he lived there for two years while earning his master’s degree at the University of British Columbia.

June will see Dr. Rosenswig in Mexico preparing to launch a new phase of investigations in the Soconusco. This is where his dissertation research was undertaken to document the first 800 years of sedentary village life in the region and the nature of inter-regional interaction with the early Olmec civilization on Mexico Gulf Coast. The next stage of his research in the region will be a collaborative, multi-year, regional settlement survey project that will expand his previous work both temporally to document the rise of the Izapa state and spatially to encompass a survey area of 250 sq km. This project will provide demographic data on the evolution of prehispanic society from 1600 BC through to the Colonial era. Dr. Rosenswig will continue his work on the origins of agriculture and the development of cultural complexity. After completing this planning trip to Chiapas, Dr. Rosenswig will travel over
to Belize City the first week of July and present a paper in on the preliminary results from the San Estevan project at the 5th Annual Belize Archaeology Conference. Then it’s home to Albany for much needed break!

April 18, 2008 2pm, HU 354 Ethnohistory Symposium: Current Research in Colonial Nahuatl Studies

The Friday afternoon symposium will feature short presentations by Louise Burkhart (University at Albany), Caterina Pizzigoni (Columbia University), Barry Sell (John Carter Brown Library), John Frederick Schwaller (SUNY-Potsdam), and John Sullivan (Universidad Autónoma de Zacatecas). There will also be an informal workshop on Saturday (AS 104, time TBA), which students will be welcome to attend.

IMS is pleased to announce Two new Occasional Publications in Mesoamerican Archaeology by UAlbany graduate alumni Antonina Delu and Sheila Galup (formerly known by her maiden name as Sheila Sastry). Their titles are “The Ground Stone Tools of Caye Coco, Belize” and “Postclassic Maya Lithic Tool Maintenance, Recycling, and Consumption Patterns at Laguna de On Island.” To order copies email: ims@albany.edu
May 9-10, 2008
Christopher DeCormier
Scholarship – 30th Anniversary
Weekend Celebration 2008

Public Welcome – please join us for all or part of this exciting weekend!

- **Friday, May 9, 2008**
  Saturday am, May 10, 2008
  (Campus Center Assembly Hall)
  Legacy of Mesoamerican Studies Symposium –
  (featuring invited alumni speakers – former faculty and graduates) a research poster display, and a research photo exhibit (free and open to all)

- **Saturday, May 10, 2008**
  12-2pm (Patroom Room)
  DeCormier Awards Ceremony, Banquet Luncheon, Keynote Speaker
  (open to all, $19 fee for banquet lunch – must pre-pay/pre-register)

- **Saturday, May 10, 2008**
  7:30pm (Page Hall) “A Folk Song Celebration” Benefit Concert for DeCormier Scholarship Fund to be performed by Peter Yarrow (pictured above) of Peter, Paul & Mary, and Counterpoint Musical Group (pictured below), including Robert and Louise DeCormier

Concert tickets ($30) available directly from IMS (518-442-4722, ims@albany.edu, or use the order form provided with this newsletter! Also available online from www.ticketweb.com ($30,$32).
ALUMNI UPDATES

Dr. David Mora-Marín has been an Assistant Professor in the Linguistics Department at the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, for the past three years. His current research pertains to three major topics: the reconstruction of the morphology and morphosyntax of the common ancestor of the Ch'olan and Tzeltalan languages, Proto-Ch'olan-Tzeltalan; the origin and development of writing in Mesoamerica; the linguistic affiliation and historical sociolinguistic context of ancient Mayan writing; and the nature of the orthographic conventions of ancient Mayan writing. His paper on the reconstruction of Proto-Ch'olan-Tzeltalan demonstrative pronouns has been accepted for publication in the journal “Word.” Another paper on the linguistic affiliation and historical sociolinguistics of Mayan writing, challenging the so-called “Classic Ch’olti’an” proposal, is in press in the “International Journal of American Linguistics.” A third paper on the reading format and reading direction of the Olmec-style Cascajal Block is in press in “Latin American Antiquity.” Finally, a fourth paper, this time on the problematization of the nature of semantic signs in Mayan writing is accepted for publication in “Ancient Mesoamerica.” In July he presented a conference paper on the earliest Mayan inscriptions, including the San Bartolo murals, at the XXI Symposium of Archaeology of Guatemala. In October he presented a paper on the identification of an inchoative suffix and an inverse construction in ancient Mayan texts. And in November he presented a paper on the jade exchange network linking the Pre-Columbian Mayan and Costa Rican societies between ca. 500 B.C.-A.D. 900 at the Denver Art Museum. He has recently organized the founding of a new journal, the “Journal of Mesoamerican Languages and Linguistics,” which will soon be issued through the Linguistic Society of America’s Language initiative. David and his family—wife Heather Bruce, daughter Slubhan, and son Aodhfienn—are anxiously awaiting a newcomer to the family by late March.

Dr. Bradley Tatar and Dr. Jinsook Choi

On July 1, 2003, we walked together into the UAlbany Office of Graduate Studies, with our dissertations in hand. Jinsook studied K’iche’ Spanish bilingualism in Guatemala, Bradley’s work was on post-revolutionary politics in Nicaragua. Soon after finishing our dissertations, we were married in Seoul, Korea on August 16, 2003, and then settled in Washington, D.C., where Jinsook had a postdoc position with SCALEUP, an education research project. In 2004, we moved to North Carolina, where Bradley took a teaching position at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro. Our daughter, Yujin, was born in Greensboro that year.

While in North Carolina, Bradley volunteered for Crianza con Cariño, an NGO that provides parenting classes in Spanish. He published two articles, one about Mexican corridos [ballads] about...
immigration, and another which compares insurgent militias in Iraq and Nicaragua. When his teaching contract with UNCG expired, he decided to take a teaching position at the Catholic University of Korea, in Bucheon, South Korea. There, he currently teaches English composition, as well as courses on American culture. Jinsook currently has a grant for postdoctoral work, and she has been teaching cultural anthropology, Latin American studies and field linguistics at Seoul National University, Korea Advanced Institute of Science and Technology, and the Hankuk University of Foreign Studies. She’s also contributing an article about language use in Momostenango for Bob Carmack’s upcoming edited volume.

Antonina “Nina” Delu, RPA
(Class of 2003)

After receiving her MA from UAlbany in 2003, Nina put her archaeological skills to work in Upstate NY, leading CRM projects for local Altamont company, Landmark Archaeology. When the ground froze for the winter Nina moved to West Dover, Vermont where she happily made a living as a snowboard instructor. In 2005, she and her partner Rachel “Ryo” Braco (also an archaeologist and graduate of UAlbany) were lured to southern California, where they now reside in Orange County. Nina is currently a Principal Investigator for LSA Associates, Inc., an environmental company in Irvine, CA. Her current project for LSA is a large and complex 32-mile road-building endeavor crossing Riverside County (www.midcountyparkway.org). Approximately 600 archaeological sites were recorded within the project area during the initial survey, of which nine are currently being further evaluated.

In April of 2007, Nina published an edited version of her Master’s Thesis in the Institute for Mesoamerican Studies Occasional Publication Series. “The Ground Stone Tools of Caye Coco, Belize” is Occasional Publication Number 12, and the paper presents a contextual and descriptive analysis of the ground stone tools recovered from the surveys and excavations undertaken at the island site of Caye Coco, Belize. Topics such as the economic practices, the ritual behavior, and the social status of members of the Postclassical period Caye Coco community are addressed in this work. The goal of the paper is to demonstrate that ground stone tool studies can go beyond the reporting of simple metric attributes and the resolving of questions about subsistence practices. The study of the ground stone assemblage of Caye Coco mirrors the artifact analysis of other classes of artifacts conducted at the site, lending credence to the concept that the site was a prospering community of households with a continuum of wealth in the family groups that once inhabited the island. In addition, the data presented in the paper offers further evidence for the participation of the site of Caye Coco in the local and long-distance commerce system of the Postclassical period.
**Dr. Brent Metz (PhD 1995)**, currently at U-Kansas, published Ch'orti' Maya Survival: Indigeneity in Transition in 2006 (U New Mexico Press), which is based mostly on his doctoral research under co-Chairs Drs. Robert Carmack and Gary Gossen and funded in part by an IMS Christopher Decormier grant. He recently received acceptance from the University of Florida Press for his edited volume The Ch'orti' Maya Area, Past and Present. This volume has 19 authors from archeology, linguistics (including alumna David Mora-Marin), history (including SUNYA alumna Stewart Brewer), sociocultural anthropology, ethnobotany, and sociology who work in the Ch'orti’ area of Honduras, Guatemala, and El Salvador. He’s also working on an ethnography of Ch'orti’ shifting identity in Guatemala, Honduras, and El Salvador.

**Dr. Jan Olson (Class of 2001)** has been working at the University of Alberta in Edmonton Canada for the past 9 years. She teaches courses on South and Central America in the Anthropology and Latin American departments. She is also working part time at Macewan College where she teaches a variety of archaeology and anthropology introduction classes.

In coordination with Florencio Delgado of the University de San Francisco del Quito, Jan has been running archaeology field schools in coastal Ecuador. While this is outside of her dissertation research area, the questions of socioeconomic relationships among households remain her main fascination. Part of her teaching includes development; for example, Canadian students taught English to people in small villages and stocked 3 community schools with supplies each year.

Jan also spent time in Guatemala working for a development agency where she assessed the economic and cultural needs of internal refugees from the 1980s civil war. There she visited remote villages where much of the heavy losses occurred. She is in the process of editing a documentary on the experiences of the Maya refugees she interviewed. She has also produced a film on cloth dying using natural dyes in highland Guatemala particularly noting the symbolism on the weavings. This film has been used in rural Nicaragua to reintroduce the practice of dying and weaving.

Jan Olson (back row, 1st on right), her collaborator Florencio Delgado (back, 2nd from left) and field school students in Ecuador.

Her article “A Socioeconomic Interpretation of Figurine Assemblages from Late Postclassic Morelos, Mexico” was recently published in the volume “Commoner Ritual and Ideology in Ancient Mesoamerica.” Jan is currently taking a breather from research as she is raising her daughters: 6 year old Kate and 8 day old Ella.

**Dr. Jamie MacKenzie** is an Assistant Professor in Anthropology at the University of Lethbridge, where he has worked since graduating from Albany in 2005. He has taught courses on religion, linguistic anthropology, social organization, popular culture, methods and ethics, and a range of special topics (e.g. indigenous rights, transnationalism, Mesoamerican
anthropology). He is currently working on publications derived from his doctoral fieldwork in San Andrés Xecul, Guatemala, including an article on the tradition of San Simón, currently under review by the “Journal for Latin American and Caribbean Anthropology.” He is close to submitting drafts of two additional articles: one on ethnicity and politics and one on religious identities in Guatemala. He made a return trip to Xecul for six weeks last summer, updating research from his doctoral work on religious, ethnic and political processes. He is working on expanding Jamie MacKenzie helping friends celebrate a birthday party in Xecul.

his research to include a focus on transnational migration and the experience of Xeculense migrants in San Diego, California, with a preliminary research trip planned for May 2008. He is also working on editing his doctoral dissertation, and hopes to have a book prospectus complete by September of next year. He is recently married, and supremely content.

ALUMNI UPDATES WANTED!
PLEASE SEND YOUR NEWS TO MARILYN MASSON FOR THE NEXT IMS NEWSLETTER ISSUE

STUDENT UPDATES

Nadia Marín Guadarrama
Since August 13th, 2007 Nadia is living and doing her doctoral research in México. She is visiting Mexican archives and libraries and writing her dissertation. The Christopher DeCormier Scholarship, which was granted to her on May 2007, and a scholarship from CONACYT (Consejo Nacional para la Ciencia y la Tecnología), are funding her research project titled Childrearing in the Discourse of Friars and Nahua in Early Colonial Central Mexico. Before moving to Mexico, she visited the John Carter Brown Library in Providence, where she had the opportunity to work with the Huehuetlatolli of Friar Juan Bautista. On September 10, 2007 she started a research post (estancia de investigación) in El Colegio Mexiquense (http://www.cmq.edu.mx/), a research center for the Social Sciences located in Zinacantepec, Estado de México. During the academic year 2007-2008, she will be participating in the seminar History of Mexico and the State of Mexico coordinated by Dr. Xavier Noguez, a researcher of El Colegio very well known for his studies on colonial and prehispanic codices from Central Mexico, among other topics. The location of El Colegio makes easy to access the libraries and archives from the Toluca and Mexico Valleys. In the Mexican National Library Nadia found another copy of her main source written in Nahuatl by Friar Juan de Mijangos. Its short title is Espejo Divino and Nadia is in the process of translating it with Dr. Louise Burkhart, her doctoral advisor. This book is an important ethnohistorical source for understanding the discourse on childrearing between Nahua and friars. In the near future, she will present a paper in the American Society for Ethnohistory Conference in Tulsa, Oregon. The title of her paper is “And it is Very True that Mothers and Fathers Love their Children”: the Cultural Confrontation of Nahua and Friars in Early Colonial Mexico. In a related matter, she continues studying theories of childhood and childrearing, as well as
masculinities, reproduction and gender in history and anthropology.

**Fall 2007 Ancient Technology Class**

(Summary by Elizabeth Paris)

In a Fall 2007 Ancient Technology class, taught by Dr. Sean Rafferty, students have been engaged in projects that replicate various types of ancient technology, including ceramics, dyes, lithic tools, food processing, fishing and woodworking. Of these projects, several replicate ancient Mesoamerican tools and technologies. Jeanette Carioto carved an atlatl out of wood using lithic tools, and tested it with great success. Justin Lowry, Jason Paling, and Marx Navarro-Castillo are manufacturing a dugout canoe out of a large log supplied by classmate John Doran. They produced shell celts, a greenstone axe, and chert axes and adzes, which they will analyze for use-wear after the canoe is completed. To hollow out the interior of the canoe, they also used corn oil, which was lit in a carefully controlled burn to carbonize the wood for easy removal with the stone tools. Once the canoe is completed, they hope to test its seaworthiness in Rensselaer Lake Park.

Elizabeth France is testing the efficacy of various methods of drilling, abrading, and cutting tools to make Mesoamerican-style shell ornaments. These methods include the use of a bow drill and a spindle drill, which proved very effective. Other methods include abrasion with sand and limestone, cutting with lithic tools, boiling in water, and boiling in cyanide derived from maize. Elizabeth Paris has been testing ancient metallurgy techniques from the site of Mayapán, with reference to Aztec methods mentioned in the Florentine Codex. These included the construction of a furnace and bellows, the manufacture of pottery crucibles, and the manufacture of molds out of beeswax, copal, clay and charcoal to produce bells and ornaments from lost-wax casting. Experiments with the furnace produced temperatures over 1000 °C, but were just short of temperatures needed to melt metal.

All class projects were displayed in an open house held on December 3, at 5:45 pm, in Arts and Sciences B11.

**Justin Lowry**

In the summer of 2007 I was able to participate in a very interesting project in the northern Yucatan peninsula. Projecto Arqueologico Xuenkal (PAX) is a project interested in understanding the regional political influence of Chichen Itza. The 2007 season of mapping, surveying, and documentation focused upon better defining the western and southern limits of the settlement and mapping important regional centers within a 15 km radius of Xuenkal. Excavations in one residential
Justin Lowry

group that pre-dates the rise of the Chichen Itza polity (FN-565 in Group BB), a residential group associated with rejollada or intensive agricultural production (FN-494 and -496 in Group CC), and a third residential platform that dates to the Sotuta or Chichen polity related period (FN-129 in Group Q) were all carried out in the 2007 season. I was able to begin my dissertation research as part of the excavations at the pre-Chichen Itza household (FN-565). In the winter term I look forward to being a staff member on the San Estevan archaeological field school in Belize. There I will help train undergraduate archaeology students in field methods and techniques of excavation. I will also return to the field in the spring to continue my dissertation field work.

Fernando Ocampo

I took a break from Mesoamerican research and spent the summer working on an ethnographic project with anthropology faculty at the University at Albany investigating the health needs of Central American migrants in Upstate New York. However, I independently continued to practice Nahuatl translations in preparation for a Nahuatl theater project with Louise Burkhart. We’ve just begun preliminary translation and analysis on a newly discovered late Colonial Nahuatl Passion play manuscript from Axochiapan, Morelos. Upon initial inspection we notice that it is a cognate to other contemporary Passion plays but includes some distinct variations. I am exploring the possibility of developing this project into my dissertation.

Erin T. Slinker

During the summer of 2007, Erin Slinker participated for a second time in the Oxlajuj Aj Kaqchikel program directed by Judy Maxwell (Tulane University) and by Walter Little (University at Albany, SUNY). As part of the course, Erin conducted an individual research project using language skills acquired during the course. With the help of a Kaqchikel research collaborator, she conducted interviews in the town of San Juan Comalapa focusing on perceptions of transnational adoption in Guatemala. After the Kaqchikel course, Erin continued research in Guatemala focusing on the political and social effects of transnational adoption. This research was facilitated by her May 2007 DeCormier Award.

Elizabeth Paris

spent the summer in Tuxtla-Gutierrez as a volunteer at INAH-Chiapas. In addition to getting to know the director and staff, she designed and conducted the analysis of obsidian, chert and groundstone artifacts from recent excavations at Palenque directed by Dr. Roberto López Bravo. She also prepared illustrations of these artifacts for publication, illustrated ceramics from the site of Lacanhà, Chiapas, aided with the translation of museum signs and
literature from Spanish to English, and
moonlighted as a tour guide for English-
speaking visitors at the Museo Regional
de Chiapas. Over the course of several
visits, she developed a collaborative
relationship with the Museo Na Bolom in
San Cristobal de las Casas, and helped
them to digitalize their site records and
photographs from the site of Moxviquil.
She also helped to renovate several of
the archaeological displays at the
museum, and authored explanatory
literature on the collection for display
alongside the artifacts. She hopes to
return to the field next summer to
conduct excavations at the site of
Moxviquil in collaboration with the
Museo Na Bolom and INAH-Chiapas.

Elizabeth Paris

Jason Paling
This summer Jason Paling spent two
months working for John Tomasic, a
doctoral candidate in the Department of
Anthropology at Vanderbilt University.
Jason was one of two excavation
supervisors for Tomasic at K’o, a Late
Formative, Early Classic, and
Late/Terminal Classic Period Mayan
civic-ceremonial center in the northeast
Peten. The site is within an hour’s walk
from Holmul, another important, larger
center that was occupied around the
same time as K’o and is under the
direction of Dr. Francisco Estrada-Belli
of Vanderbilt University. Jason is
planning on studying the Late Formative
lithic assemblage collected this season
and comparing it to assemblages in
northern Belize, particularly at the site of
San Estevan (where he plans to work in
2008). Jason plans to study the origins
of complexity by examining the
emergence of Late Formative economic
interactions. His dissertation will
examine the production, exchange of
lithic tools from the Middle to the Late
Formative period and how the change in
lithic technology is associated with the
emergence of social complexity.

Coming in Fall 2008:

After the Handshakes:
Rethinking Democracy and
Living Paradox in Central
America – workshop (supported
by the Wenner-Gren foundation,
organized by Jennifer Burrell
and colleague Ellen Moodie).
Please check the IMS website
for scheduling details.

Speakers – Fall 2007
IMS was pleased to host Dr.
Christopher Pool on Nov. 9, 2007, the
title of his presentation was “Polity
and Placemaking at Tres Zapotes
Professor John Justeson hosted a Nutmeg workshop at UAlbany on Nov. 10 on Olmec writing – the day after Christopher Pool’s talk – so it was a full Olmec weekend.

**University of Colorado Press New Distributor Arrangement**

The University of Colorado Press will become the new distributor for IMS books beginning October 2008. Although our current distributor, David Brown Book Company/Oxbow has done a very good job, we felt that the University of Colorado Press represents a highly appropriate permanent home for IMS publications. Like IMS, UC Press occupies a special niche in publishing its own works that reflect interdisciplinary Mesoamerican studies.

**Coming Soon: Tlahuica Ceramics**

The next IMS publication, “Tlahuica Ceramics: The Aztec-Period Ceramics of Morelos, Mexico” by Michael E. Smith, is planned for publication in 2008.

The Tlahuica were an Aztec ethnic group who lived just south of the Valley of Mexico in what is now the Mexican state of Morelos. Tlahuica Ceramics summarizes ceramic artifacts from numerous Tlahuica sites, including sherds from domestic contexts and whole vessels from burials and offerings. This heavily illustrated monograph is the first published description of a regional variant of the central Mexican Aztec ceramic style. It includes discussion of the roles of commercial exchange and ethnicity in shaping the distribution of ceramics throughout Morelos.

Michael E. Smith is an archaeologist with over 25 years of experience doing fieldwork at Tlahuica sites in Morelos. He has written six books on the Aztecs. He is Professor in the School of Human Evolution and Social Change at Arizona State University.