Spring 2010

Fort St. Joseph Post - Spring 2010

Department of Anthropology

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Welcome to the first newsletter of the Fort St. Joseph Archaeological Project. As you may know, the Project was initiated in 1998 when Western Michigan University archaeologists, with the help of the local community, rediscovered the 18th century site of Fort St. Joseph in Niles. Since then we’ve been conducting regular excavations, and a multi-faceted program of public education and outreach. This newsletter is just one of the many ways we communicate—to our Fort followers—the exciting discoveries we are making and the new information we are learning about life and culture in the 18th century on the frontier of the French empire.

Last year we continued to unlock the secrets of this long-lost, but not forgotten, frontier outpost of New France. Archaeological evidence consists of small objects of everyday life that tell us about the daily activities of the French and Native American occupants of the Fort. Our finds indicate that the French were able to reproduce some aspects of their Old-World lives, even as they incorporated new dietary practices, technologies, games, and social relations into their culture. Native peoples, likewise, made valuable contributions to the new culture that emerged though their interactions with the French in the St. Joseph River Valley. Evidence of their presence is found in the archaeological record of the Fort in the form of stone pipes, various adornment objects such as tinkling cones, and the remains of smudge pits for tanning hides.

This summer the Project again will be the focus of the WMU Department of Anthropology's annual archaeological field school. Now in its 35th year, the program is one of the longest-running field schools in the country. There also will be opportunities for volunteers to experience the thrill of “doing” archaeology, through our summer camp program, for one of three weeks in July and August.

If you don’t want to get dirty, come and visit us during our annual open house that has attracted over 6,000 attendees in the past three years. On August 14 and 15, 2010, you’ll have the chance to interact with archaeologists, listen to period music, hear lectures, and witness professional historical re-enactors as they make the past come alive! There’s a lot to get excited about—archaeology is taking place right in your backyard! Become a Fort follower and join us in discovering the past!

Thank you for your interest and continuing support and I hope to see you in the field or at a future public venue.

Cordially,

Michael Nassaney, Ph.D.
Principal Investigator, Fort St. Joseph Archaeological Project
Professor of Anthropology
Western Michigan University
What we do in the “off” season

While we might be most visible in the community when we are in the field making discoveries, we do lots of work in the off-season that makes the fieldwork possible.

Professional Conferences

The Project was represented at the annual Midwest Historical Archaeology Conference held on Oct. 10 on the campus of the University of Notre Dame in South Bend, Indiana. Alumna LisaMarie Malischke’s poster summarizing her research on bead use at Fort St. Joseph was voted the best graduate student poster. Victoria Hawley also presented a poster on the Jesuit presence at Fort St. Joseph. The Project’s principal investigator, Dr. Michael Nassaney gave the opening remarks at the conference.

In January, 19 WMU students, faculty, and alumni made the trek to Amelia Island, Fla., the site of the 2010 Conference on Historical and Underwater Archaeology, sponsored by the Society for Historical Archaeology (SHA), the world’s largest professional organization dedicated to studying material culture of the recent past. WMU’s members of the Fort St. Joseph Archaeological Project team, as in past years, had one of the largest contingents there and made a substantial contribution to the conference and the academic discourse.

Two WMU graduate students conducting research related to the Project presented papers. Andrew Beaupré presented on his research into the economic underpinnings of Jesuits in New France and Erin Claussen presented a paper on collections management efforts she is undertaking relating to the Project’s documentation. Claussen said, “I was fortunate to have the opportunity to listen to presentations by others taking on issues similar to the ones that I am and to participate in discussions on how the discipline is working to solve these issues. This reinforced the relevance of my project to the larger archaeological community and made me excited to proceed with it.” The 2010 conference also played host to the premiere of a video documenting the ongoing public education and outreach efforts of the Fort St. Joseph Archaeological Project.

In addition two posters were presented, one on the 2009 Fort St. Joseph archaeological field season and the other on public archaeology, the Project’s hallmark. As part of the annual SHA conference, the Advisory Council on Underwater Archaeology (ACUA) sponsors and judges a photography competition. The images are judged within subcategories, including: artifacts, field work, laboratory work, and site. Photos may be either terrestrial or underwater and the winning photographs are featured in a calendar that is sold online and at the
At this year’s competition the Fort St. Joseph Archaeological Project entered three photographs, one in the color artifact category which placed third, one in the color fieldwork-in-progress category which placed third as well, and finally one in the color archaeological site category which placed second. All three entries were taken by Tori Hawley, the 2009 field season’s site photographer.

Students returned to campus from the conference rejuvenated by the excitement of the event. WMU graduate student and poster presenter Emily Powell can attest to the importance of being involved with the SHA network. “Learning how to disseminate information to the public is a crucial aspect of our work as archaeologists. Attending this conference and reporting on our own projects allows us to do that.”

“It’s gratifying to see students growing professionally in the nurturing and intellectually challenging environment of the SHA,” remarked Professor Michael Nassaney who also serves as the secretary of the 2,500-member organization.
Laboratory Updates

The archaeology laboratory at WMU is continuing to process the archaeological materials recovered during the 2009 field school at Fort St. Joseph. University students taking independent study credits during both the fall and spring semesters have been involved in several vital parts of the archaeological process including artifact inventory, material analysis, and collections management.

One of the primary tasks undertaken during the academic year is processing and analyzing soil samples taken from excavation units during the field season. These samples are taken in order to recover ecofacts (such as plant seeds) that would be missed during normal excavation and wet screening processes because of their size, and which provide information about subsistence practices (and thereby the diets) of past peoples, how they used the land, and more general information about the environment in which they lived.

The Fort St. Joseph Archaeological Project currently is undergoing a revamping of its collections management procedures. Second year Anthropology graduate student, Amanda Brooks, as part of her M.A. internship, is conducting a reorganization of the entirety of the Fort St. Joseph artifact collection. Previously, all artifacts were stored by provenience, or the order in which they were recovered from the site. In order to facilitate research on the collection, they are being reorganized by artifact raw material (such as glass or iron) and within raw material function (such as beads or nails), while still remaining in provenience-order within each category.

In addition, a desktop computer, printer and scanner along with PastPerfect collections management software were acquired for the lab. As part of her thesis project on archaeological collections management, Anthropology graduate student Erin Claussen is working to create an artifact database utilizing PastPerfect and to organize all of the documentation generated by the project over the course of the last eleven years. This includes both digital and hardcopy documentation such as field notes, artifact inventories, photographs, maps, field season summaries, published articles, and conference papers. Eventually part of the artifact database as well as select documentation will be available online and therefore more readily accessible to those interested in conducting research on the project.
Last summer, I had the opportunity to participate in the 2009 Archaeological Field School at Fort St. Joseph. As an undergraduate, being able to participate in the field school allowed me to experience field archaeology, as well as learn fundamental skills that will be a great asset to me as I pursue a career in archaeology. In addition, the Project allowed university students to participate in community service learning, not only allowing us to showcase our work to the public during the Open House, but also giving them the opportunity to dig alongside us during the three summer camps. Being able to teach what I had just learned not only gave me a better grasp of the techniques, it also made me feel like the work we were doing was worth so much more.

As well as gaining field experience during the summer, I am on my second semester of taking independent study credits to continue to participate in the project by processing the artifacts recovered during the field season in the lab. Working in the lab has not only allowed me to refine the skills I learned during the field school, it has also allowed me to learn many more valuable skills associated with processing artifacts in an archaeology lab. In addition, being able to handle the artifacts on a weekly basis has allowed me to expand upon the knowledge of the Fort St. Joseph artifacts I gained during the field season.

“Being able to teach what I had just learned not only gave me a better grasp of the techniques, it also made me feel like the work we were doing was worth so much more.”

- David Lang

I feel very privileged and thankful to be a part of this great project, and I believe the lessons and techniques that I have learned during my time in the field and in the lab will be extremely valuable to me as I continue in the field of archaeology.

In 2007, as an undergraduate at Olivet College, I participated in the Fort St. Joseph Archaeological Field School. An advisor recommended the field school to me after a discussion of field experience requirements for graduate programs in archaeology. By participating in the program, I gained experience in archaeological field methodology and in archaeology as a public service. The project also gave me the opportunity to learn about processing artifacts after they are excavated. It was really exciting to learn about the different facets of an archaeological dig.

I enjoyed the field school so much I returned in 2008 as a volunteer and took an independent study the following fall semester to continue lab work. In the lab, I was able to see the different stages of an artifacts’ life and it steered me towards graduate programs in archaeological conservation. The experience and knowledge I gained participating in the FSJ project was extremely helpful to my acceptance into graduate school at University College London. The Project has been so valuable to my future—what started out as a way to fulfill application requirements has turned into a genuine interest and the start of a career path.
WMU offers both a B.A. and an M.A. in Anthropology and many students involved in the Project are working towards degrees in the discipline, however the nature of anthropology (the study of humans and their origins), and more specifically archaeology, invites research that is rooted in other disciplines as well. Here, the efforts of both undergraduate and graduate students from anthropology, history, and geography to contribute to our understanding of Fort St. Joseph are highlighted.

**Graduate Research**

**Religious Artifacts—Andrew Beaupré**

WMU anthropology graduate student Andrew Beaupré is hoping to provide a better understanding of religious artifacts in the 18th century Great Lakes region by analyzing their distribution in the archaeological record on a regional scale. By comparing locations where religious objects have been recovered archaeologically to the known locations of Jesuit missions, he is attempting to examine the relationship between places where Jesuits lived and worked and the frequency of religious material in the archaeological record. This research, the subject of his master’s thesis, gave rise to a paper entitled “The High Cost of Souls: Economic Practices of Jesuit Missionaries in the Pays d’en Haut”, presented at the 2010 Society for Historical Archaeology meeting in January.

Andrew, who currently holds a position as adjunct instructor at The University of Vermont, Burlington, is also utilizing experience gained as the project’s 2010 Public Education Coordinator to assist a grass roots organization to protect archaeological sites in Vermont.

**Wampum—Meghan Cook**

As the subject of her master’s thesis, WMU anthropology graduate student Meghan Cook is undertaking a study of the spatial and temporal distribution of wampum using data from more than two dozen archaeological sites (including Fort St. Joseph) in order to further understand its role in the globally-connected western Great Lakes fur trade. Wampum had multiple meanings and uses that Meghan is seeking to shed light on by exploring various aspects of its production and consumption in addition to its distribution.

Meghan is currently working for TRC Companies in Nashville, TN as a cultural resource management archaeologist as she completes her thesis.

**Undergraduate Research**

**Women of New France—Peggy Brumbaugh**

As a public history major, I am required to take 18 credits in a subject other than history. I chose anthropology and came to be involved with the Fort St. Joseph Archaeological Project by enrolling in the 2009 WMU Archaeological Field School. During the field school I was approached by Dr. Michael Nassaney about conducting research on the women of New France. Having been involved with genealogical research for over 30 years, I immediately jumped at the chance to take names...
and tell stories. I began analyzing known research, but the real surprises came when I searched “Le Programme de Recherche en Démographie Historique” (The Research Program in Historical Demography or PRDH), a database of French-Canadian vital records at the University of Montreal.

My research confirmed that the women who occupied Fort St. Joseph were of French, Native American, and mixed descent. In addition, most all of the known inhabitants were closely related by marriage. These relationships reveal many family connections within the fort’s business network. For example, the LeDuc family (merchants) married into the Couc LaFleur family (voyageurs), who married into the Menard family (interpreters), who married into the Bolon family (soldiers).

The women of Fort St. Joseph also share common provincial geographic origins. The known occupants were, for the most part, the grandchildren of French immigrants and possibly the first generation in New France to consider themselves North Americans as opposed to Europeans. Geographically, their grandparents came from three main provinces of the old country: Normandie, Poitou, and Aunis. Probably not coincidentally, Champlain, La Salle, many of the first Jesuits, and the first Ursulines were also from these provinces. They likely recruited family, friends, and associates to settle in the New World, including the forbears of those who eventually settled at Fort St. Joseph.

As you can see, studying the genealogy of the women of Fort St. Joseph can reveal fascinating cultural information and life circumstances that help us to understand them much more completely.

Geographic Information Systems—Susan Benston

In this first application of computer mapping to the Fort St. Joseph Archaeological Project, WMU Geography graduate student Susan Benston is using ArcGIS software to record and quantify the spatial distribution of excavation results. GIS analysis is enabling calculation of densities of artifact types in relation to features, thereby enhancing the understanding of the relationship between the two. Several features, including structural remains and trash deposits, have been identified and described over the course of excavations and were mapped as part of Susan’s project along with artifact data from the corresponding excavation units. Defining the artifact and feature distributions may help uncover historic-use patterns in the landscape, such as the locations of activity areas and the functions of structures.

A geographic perspective contributes to the development of knowledge about the structures that made up Fort St. Joseph and the overall layout of the fort. The research project will be used to enhance community education about Fort St. Joseph and will also provide a foundation for future geography and archaeology students who may use or build upon this spatial database.
My Archaeological Experience

By: Kyle Woods

When I started camp I thought that it would be just digging up bones and other stuff. I was way wrong! The camp was totally different than I had thought because you get to dig up things, clean them, log data and learn about what happened at that very spot hundreds of years ago. It was really neat to think about what it was like to be alive back then.

What I learned at summer camp about archeology was that you don’t dig with big shovels; instead you dig with little pizza-shaped knives. Another thing I learned about Fort St. Joseph and its history was that it was a really big trading post and that it housed many soldiers and fur traders.

The most fun about the camp was having lunch. (Just kidding!) It was going into the field and excavating with my partners [who were both college students]. The least fun part about the camp was recording all the data and mapping the hole after every 3-5 centimeters.

I would love to be involved in archeology in the future, and I would like to participate in the Fort St. Joseph summer camp again. Thank you for the chance to be included last year. I think it is a really good idea to include younger kids. The picture above shows the people that I worked with during my time at the camp.

In Memoriam

The FSJAP lost a dear friend and supporter with the recent passing of Grafton (“Grif”) H. Cook, II. Grif, who grew up in Niles, had tremendous passion for history both on the world stage and in his own backyard. Fort St. Joseph was particularly dear to his heart.

He made every effort to attend the open house each year, even when his health began to fail. He could talk endlessly and knowledgeably about French and English armaments and the ways they were used on the frontier of the western Great Lakes. He was always generous with his time and resources, and loved to spark student interest in Colonial history.

He and his wife, Barb, enjoyed instructing students. They opened their home to the archaeological field school on multiple occasions providing students with delicious meals and the opportunity to see Grif’s world class collection of guns, pistols, daggers, and swords. Never one to back down from a debate, Grif taught me the joy of sharing knowledge about the past.

He is sorely missed but we take solace in the fact that we continue the work that he insisted must proceed—the investigation and interpretation of Fort St. Joseph. Thanks, Grif, for your confidence in us!

-Michael Nassaney
Introducing…
the Fort St. Joseph Archaeology Advisory Committee

The Fort St. Joseph Archaeological Project benefits from many components that have come together to make it a successful scholarly and community endeavor: dedicated professors, curious students, a committed university, a supportive city and county, a rich history and most recently the Fort St. Joseph Archaeology Advisory Committee. The efforts of many individuals are already generating results that allow us a glimpse back in time along the St. Joseph River.

This diversity of those contributing to the Project is evident in the makeup of the Advisory Committee chaired by Darlene Jackson, children’s librarian at the Niles District Library.

All of the Advisory Committee welcomes comments, suggestions and ideas. And would especially like to hear, “I’d like to volunteer.” Check out the Project’s website at www.wmich.edu/fortstjoseph and please give us your feedback. You can also find us on Facebook by searching “Fort St. Joseph Archaeological Project.”

Supporting the Advisory Committee and the Project

The Fort St. Joseph Advisory Committee has been working diligently to continue to facilitate discovery at the site and to raise the Project to the next level of visibility. Because of financial support from many individuals and companies, we have helped to provide students and researchers with better resources to carry out their investigations and have enhanced presentation of findings at public venues such as the annual Open House.

In 2009, we created an official website for the Project, where we keep everyone up to date on the work of the students and researchers. Current events are listed and the history of the fort and the project are discussed.

The students need our help to continue expanding their important work. A new membership program has been created and now is your chance to be one of the founding members.

Please review the membership information (on page 12) and consider becoming a financial partner in the project. We need everyone to be involved and help spread the word to others near and far.

Visit the website for more information and send your membership/donation to the WMU Foundation where 100 percent of your gift will benefit the Fort St. Joseph Archaeological Project.

With your partnership, the community and Fort St. Joseph will be on the minds of thousands across the nation and the world.

For more information, contact:
Dorilee J. Schieble, CLU, ChFC
Fort St. Joseph Archaeological Project, WMU Foundation
117 West Walwood Hall
Kalamazoo, MI 49008-5403
(269) 387-4399
dorilee.schieble@wmich.edu

Committee Members

- Robert Ahrens is president of the Fort St. Joseph Historical Association and serves on the education sub-committee.
- Carol Bainbridge is the director of the Fort St. Joseph Museum and is chairperson of the education sub-committee.
- David Bainbridge is a senior curator at the Northern Indiana Center for History and works on the archaeology sub-committee.
- Dr. Joe Brandao is a professor in the Department of History at WMU and is on the archaeology sub-committee. He also is director of the French Michilimackinac Research Project.
- Barbara Wood Cook is a local historian with many years experience in state and federal historical groups. She is the chairperson of the marketing sub-committee.
- Juan Ganum is the City of Niles Community Development director and works on the marketing sub-committee.
- Larry Horrigan is the president of Support the Fort, is an active re-enactor, and serves on the education sub-committee.
- Darlene Jackson is children’s librarian at the Niles District Library.
- John LaMore is a Berrien County Commissioner and chairs the finance sub-committee.
- Dr. Michael Nassaney is the director of the Fort St. Joseph Project in the Department of Anthropology at WMU. He also is chairperson of the archaeology sub-committee and a tireless promoter for this project.
- Dorilee Schieble is the director of development at WMU and serves on the marketing and finance sub-committees.
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- Dorilee Schieble is the director of development at WMU and serves on the marketing and finance sub-committees.
- Larry Sehy is past president of Fernwood Botanical Garden and is a member of the finance sub-committee.
- Candace Skalla is president of the Friends of Silverbrook Cemetery, an active community volunteer, and works on the marketing sub-committee.
- Roger Williams represents the Pokagon Band of the Potawatomi.
Fort St. Joseph Archaeology Open House

- Observe an archaeological dig in process
- Meet real archaeologists
- Crafts and activities for kids
- Watch re-enactors demonstrate activities that took place at the Fort
- Listen to historians and archaeologists present information about life at the Fort as well as the archaeology project
- 2010 Theme: Women of New France

August 14 and 15, 2010
10 a.m. to 3 p.m.
Free to the public!
Intersection Fort and Bond Streets, Niles, Michigan

Watch for these exciting events this summer!

The Fort St. Joseph Archaeological Project in conjunction with Western Michigan University and the Fort St. Joseph Museum presents:

One week Archaeological Summer Camps in Niles

- Campers will be trained in excavation and record-keeping techniques
- Learn the history of Fort St. Joseph and its role in the Great Lakes fur trade
- Excavate alongside Western Michigan University faculty, graduate, and undergraduate students

2010 Camp Dates

July 26-30 Adults (Ages 16+)
August 2-6 Jr. High School (Grades 6-9)
August 9-13 Adults (for Graduate/CEU Credit)

Thank You

Many thanks to the following individuals who contributed to the inaugural edition of the Post:


Photo Credits: Stephanie Barrante, Tori Hawley, John Lacko, Andrew Robinson, Kyle Woods.

Submit newsletter information to:
Dr. Michael Nassaney
Department of Anthropology
Western Michigan University
1005 Moore Hall
Kalamazoo, MI 49008-5306
Phone (269) 387-3981
michael.nassaney@wmich.edu

To apply for summer camps please visit:
www.fortstjosephmuseum.org
Click on “Archaeological Dig”

Or Contact:
Carol Bainbridge at: CBainBridge@nilesmi.org

WA T C H F O R T H E S E
E X C I T I N G E V E N T S T H I S S U M M E R!

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Click on “Archaeological Dig”

Or Contact:
Carol Bainbridge at: CBainBridge@nilesmi.org
Fort St. Joseph Wish List*

- 20 Notebooks for Field School Students—$1 each
- Shovel—$20 each
- Archive boxes for storage of artifacts—$25 each
- Gas for student vehicles $25 per week
- Lunch for students at the site—$50 per day
- New informational panels—$100 each
- One-week Field School scholarship—middle school student $125 each
- One-week Field School scholarship, teacher—$140 each
- Supper for 20 WMU students during field school, need many—$150
- Vehicle rental to transport students—$250 per week
- Official project t-shirts for students and staff—$250
- Research supplies for field school—$250
- Household supplies for field school—$250
- Supplies for open house—$300
- New Display Case for Artifacts—$300 each
- Open house program printing—$400
- Advertising for Open House—$500
- Housing for all field school students—$500 per week
- Folding chairs for open house—$600
- Electric Cord for 3 pumps at dig site—$750 ($1 per foot)
- Reenactor fees for open House—$750 (1 per foot)
- Electric Pump purchase – need 3 at $1,300 each
- Teaching assistant for field school season—$3,000
- Photography Intern—$1,500
- Lab Coordinator—$2,000
- Public Education Coordinator—$2,000
- Public Outreach Coordinator—$3,000
- Dewatering installation & rental each season—$6,000

Your membership and contribution of any amount will support items like those listed above. *Contributions may be tax deductible.

For naming opportunities or in-kind gift options, contact Dorilee Schieble at (269) 387-4399.

Upcoming Events

- Archaeological Evidence of 18th Century Daily Life along the Banks of the St. Joseph River, a talk by Michael Nassaney, Ph.D.; July 20, 7 p.m., at the North Berrien Historical Museum, 300 Coloma Ave, Coloma Mich. Free and open to the public.
- Summer Archaeology Lecture Series: Women in New France; July 21, July 28, and Aug. 4 from 7 to 9 p.m. at the Niles District Library, 620 E. Main St., Niles, Mich. Free and open to the public.
  - Adults (including high school students grades 10-12)—July 26 to 30
  - Junior High School Students (grades 6-9)—August 2 to 6
  - Teachers (for graduate/CEU credit)—August 9 to 13

For more information on these and other events, please visit our website at: www.wmich.edu/fortstjoseph
Join our Membership...

Membership participation in the Project assists with transporting and housing students, maintaining field equipment, providing students with public outreach opportunities through the Project’s annual Open House event, and defraying the cost of the excavations. Preparations by both students and professionals are already under way for the 2010 WMU archaeological field school and public outreach activities.

My gift of $__________ and my check, payable to “WMU FDN- Fort St. Joseph,” is enclosed.

My pledge of $__________ will be made in ______ (number) payments and will be paid in full this calendar year with the first payment in _____________ (month).

I am making a pledge of $__________ (at least $10,000 for Lifetime Membership) which will be spread over ______ years with the first payment in ________________ (month/year).

Signature __________________________ Date __________________________

Gifts and pledges will be recognized publicly, where appropriate, the following calendar year.

__ I do not want my gift publicized.

My gift is to be paid via:

_____ Check (payable to WMU FDN: Fort St. Joseph)

_____ Credit card (check one)

____ Mastercard    ____ Visa    ____ Discover

Account #: __________________________________________ (information will be shredded)

Expiration Date: __________________________ Verifcation #: __________________________

Signature (required): __________________________ Date __________________________

Name: __________________________________________

Phone Number: (_____) ____________________ Email __________________________

Address: __________________________ State__________ Zip ________________

__ Please contact me about my giving plans.

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Fort St. Joseph Archaeological Project Annual Membership Form

Levels of annual membership:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Benefit</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Friend</td>
<td>Receive e-newsletter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$1 - $99</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Voyager</td>
<td>Above, plus Media Day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$100 - $249</td>
<td>Invitation—special tour of site</td>
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<tr>
<td>Explorer</td>
<td>Above, plus invitations to activities exclusively for Explorer members.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$250 - $499</td>
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<tr>
<td>Commandant</td>
<td>Above, plus invitations to activities exclusively for Commandant members, 10% discount on FSJ souvenirs.</td>
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<tr>
<td>$500 - $9,999</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lifetime Member</td>
<td>Life time giving since 01-01-2009, same benefits as Commandant.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$10,000+</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

- All membership levels include all members of the household or two representatives from corporate membership groups.
- Gifts In-Kind are applied dollar-for-dollar toward memberships.

Pledges are accepted. Donations may be spread out over one calendar year. Reminders will be sent by WMU Foundation.