Fort St. Joseph Archaeological Project

Spring 2012

Fort St. Joseph Post - Spring 2012

Department of Anthropology

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I’m so pleased to welcome you to another issue of the Fort St. Joseph Post and the flurry of activity that surrounds the Fort St. Joseph Archaeological Project, including its faculty, staff, students, alumni, and supporters. It’s hard to believe that 2012 marks the 10th year since we first dewatered the site, identified undisturbed artifact deposits and features, and declared that Fort St. Joseph had been found! Eight field seasons later, we’ve recovered hundreds of thousands of artifacts, evidence for 5 buildings, and a much better sense of what the site looked like in all its complexity in the eighteenth century.

Since 2002, our summer camp program has grown to three weeks and was completely filled (actually overfilled) last year with some 35 participants from all walks of life (teachers, middle school students, graduate students, lifelong learners, and historical interpreters) and from as far away as Missouri. The Open House continues to be a big hit, again drawing record numbers that filled the site area and crowded around public scholars, and living history re-enactors, to learn about the fur trade at Fort St. Joseph. Our lecture series was equally well attended with standing-room-only crowds in the community room of the Niles District Library where distinguished speakers discussed the archaeology and history of the fur trade from various perspectives.

As always, the fieldwork produced a number of surprises including a new fireplace feature and a complete iron ax lacking only its handle. After all, archaeology, to paraphrase Forrest Gump, is like a box of chocolates—you never know what you’re gonna get! We do know that no fewer than 5 buildings were once arranged along the riverbank. Work by current and former students, particularly Susan Benston, Cezar Cavalhaes, and Ian Kerr, is helping us to identify the contents of these buildings and relate them to their occupants. From their studies, it appears that these were domestic structures occupied by French fur traders, their Native wives, and métis offspring—not soldiers, priests, or the commandant. Armed with this information we intend to expand out from this area in 2012 and attempt to define the site perimeter to gain a better understanding of the extent of the archaeological materials that we call Fort St. Joseph.

Be sure to visit us this summer! Stop by the site during visiting hours, join in learning archaeology through a summer camp, link to our blog to follow our discoveries, or participate in the 2012 Open House, which will showcase “A Colonial Militia Muster on the Eve of Revolution.” In partnership with the Northwest Territory Alliance, the site will be packed with over 100 re-enactors sharing their knowledge and complementing our understanding as derived from the evidence immediately beneath our feet. It’s a summer not to be missed!

Of course, all of our discoveries, educational programs, and outreach are dependent on your unwavering support. We never forget that the project began when the people of Niles, particularly Support the Fort, invited WMU to help in rediscovering their French heritage. We have been committed to that goal since day one and we certainly hope it shows. As always, we welcome your financial contributions and encourage you to become a member. I hope to see you in the field or at a future public outreach event. Tell me who you are and what excites you about Fort St. Joseph!

Cordially,

Michael S. Nassaney, Ph.D
Principal Investigator
Fort St. Joseph Archaeological Project
Professor of Anthropology
Western Michigan University
Archaeologists at Fort St Joseph understand the importance of sharing their findings with the public of southwest Michigan. Also essential is sharing information with other archaeologists in the field. To facilitate this undertaking, we attend conferences every year so that the archaeology community at large can learn about the complex colonial history of our region. One such conference is the Society for Historical Archaeology (SHA), the largest international meeting devoted to the material culture of the recent past. Held in Baltimore, Maryland this year at the beautiful downtown Marriott Waterfront Hotel, the SHA welcomed over 1300 historical and underwater archaeologists from around the world to share their work, engage in current debates, and tour the sights and sounds of this thriving waterfront city. Fort St Joseph archaeologists were on hand, along with some of our alumni, to take part in this annual event.

One of the sessions at the SHA was entitled “Archaeology of Michigan: Papers in Memoriam of Charles Rinehart” organized by former FSJ archaeology graduate students Andrew Beaupré and Andrew Robinson. Graduate student Ian Kerr prepared a paper for this session, which I then presented, about the recent notable finds of this year’s FSJ field school. The conference attendees were just as excited about our newly discovered post hole and foundation wall as we were! This paper also discussed the new lead seal and triangle drop ear bob found this past field season. Other French colonial archaeologists pay particular attention to what happens every year with the work conducted at Fort St. Joseph to better understand what may have taken place at their own sites.

FSJ principal investigator and former secretary for SHA Dr. Michael Nassaney presented a poster this year discussing racial issues within the organization and the field itself. Always aware of how his work affects the greater public, Dr. Nassaney strives at teaching students and colleagues alike how to be culturally sensitive and more inclusive when conducting the history and archaeology of others. Dr. Terrance Martin, Chair of Anthropology at the Illinois State Museum and our FSJ zooarchaeologist, was also present, contributing multiple papers on the usage of animal bones including one entitled “Fur Trapping and its Zooarchaeological Signature:

“The conference attendees were just as excited about our newly discovered post hole and foundation wall as we were!”

By Emily Powell, Graduate student at Western Michigan University and FSJ field school alumnus

View of Baltimore from the Hotel.
Photo by: J. Godfrey
An Example from the Midwest.”

An SHA conference would not be complete without tours of the host city. Archaeologists, given a backstage pass, visited numerous places around the state of Maryland with local researchers. Some tours included the capitol of Annapolis, historic Mary’s City, the Monocacy National Civil War Battlefield, Frederick Douglass’ boyhood home, and the Smithsonian Institution’s Natural History Museum. We made sure to attend the Public Archaeology Expo at Fort McHenry, the birthplace of our national anthem and a critical site during the War of 1812. The Expo featured a variety of displays on local community service learning endeavors, including posters and interactive activities.

The SHA in Baltimore did more than inform the field of current programs and digs. There was much networking for students, new technology to sample, and books on hand for sale. Also available for purchase was the newly printed ACUA/SHA calendar revealing award winning photos from last year. Gracing the month of March is a photo taken at FSJ by our previous award-winning site photographer, Jessica Hughes. Of course, pub-crawling through local watering holes was a must, especially Max’s Taphouse in the historic Fell’s Point neighborhood, with 140 rotating drafts, 5 hand-pumped cask ales, and a collection of 1200 bottled beers in stock! Past and present FSJ Public Archaeology Coordinators LisaMarie Malischke and Kelley Walter could be seen dancing to Lady Gaga at the end-of-conference hotel party with Prof. Nassaney trying to keep up, and former FSJ archaeologist Andrew Robinson could be seen up and down everywhere with his camera given his role as official SHA photographer.

Overall, these conferences are important in maintaining communication in the field of archaeology for students, professors, and professionals in this line of work. In the end, the SHA helps all of us at Fort St. Joseph get motivated to jump back into the Niles community with fresh ideas. Next year the SHA conference will be held in Leister, England, and you can bet we will be there to represent Fort St Joseph, our little four flags post in the corner of southwest Michigan!
Alexander Brand  
*2011 FSJ field school alumnus*

Since the end of the 2011 field season, I have stayed involved in the lab side of Fort St. Joseph. During the fall and spring semesters, I continued to work with the materials recovered, expanding my knowledge of the Fort and honing my abilities as an archaeologist. I also worked on a Logistics and Operations Manual, which will be a valuable tool for future field seasons. After this semester, I hope to continue my involvement with the Fort throughout my graduate studies and continue to sharpen my archaeological skills and knowledge. I plan to focus my master's thesis around the data from the Fort, and hope to work in the field during the 2012 season. I would highly encourage anyone interested in archaeology to apply to the field school or attend one of the summer camp programs. I have grown as both an archaeologist and a person throughout my time with the Project so far, and plan to continue my growth with Fort St. Joseph as we continue to investigate the site and recover the past. I hope to see you in the field! You will not regret participating!

Even though the field season ends in August, there is no stopping the work on the Project. In our new archaeology lab located on the main floor of Moore Hall, students are busy at work. Inventory is a huge component of the lab work done, and with it come some interesting finds. For example, items that were thought to be bone are actually discovered to be metal when given a closer examination by the hard working students. More beads and charred seeds are discovered through activities such as fine sorting, a process in which students use tweezers and magnifying lenses to determine if the tiny specks they are working with are bone fragments, seeds, or simply soil. Here are just a couple of the lab students’ summaries of their work over the school year.

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**Exterior view of our new lab space. The extensive mural was painted by WMU alum Conrad Kaufman.**

Photo Courtesy of the Association of University Interior Designers.

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**Alex hard at work fine sorting.**

Photo by C. Davis
The Fort St. Joseph Archaeological Project is pleased to announce the publication of *The Fur Trade*, the second issue in the Fort St. Joseph Archaeological Project Booklet Series. *The Fur Trade* is a valuable resource about the history and archaeology of the fur trade in our local region and in North America. The richly illustrated text traces broad outlines in the North American fur trade, and focuses in on specific examples from the Great Lakes region and the archaeology of Fort St. Joseph.

*Women of New France* was the first issue in the Fort St. Joseph Archaeological Project Booklet Series and was published last year. It looked at the roles, legal status, and everyday lives of women who lived in seventeenth and eighteenth-century New France. You can view *Women of New France* online by visiting: http://www.wmich.edu/fortstjoseph/docs/women-of-newfrance.pdf.

Both booklets were made possible by grants from the Michigan Humanities Council, an affiliate of the National Endowment for the Humanities. The booklets will be available free of charge at our annual open house in August, and will be distributed to local libraries, schools, and community colleges, as well as public universities across Michigan this spring. PDF versions of both booklets will also be available on our website.

Contact Rachel Juen for more information at rachel.b.juen@gmail.com.

Fur Trade Booklet Now Available!

I spent the fall semester in the lab organizing photos from this summer’s field school and continued photo work for the Project. In addition to assisting with the selection and editing of photos for use in the upcoming fur trade booklet, I also helped take photos of artifacts for various research and publication projects. Photography tasks aside, I spent some time learning to create artifact sketches. It’s amazing what you are able to notice when you sit down and stare at an artifact for 30 minutes or more—attributes that you’d just never noticed before. I almost think that the potential for discovery is much higher in the lab carrying out this sort of work than when you are performing an excavation in the field. I particularly enjoyed sketching the beautifully preserved lead cloth seal we discovered this past season that adorns the cover of our annual report. I was particularly excited when I noticed parts of the lettering that I did not see until closer examination.
A Report on the 2011 Field Season

By Erica A. D’Elia, M.A. student at Western Michigan University and 2011 FSJ field school staff

This past summer, the ninth season of investigations was conducted at Fort St. Joseph; a mission, garrison and trading post established by the French in the 1680s in southwest Michigan. A diverse, multi-ethnic community of French fur traders, priests, militia, Native women, and their métis children inhabited the fort for nearly a century. The fort played a major role in the eighteenth-century fur trade by serving as a local distribution center where goods such as cloth, guns, metal tools, and kettles were exchanged with the local Potawatomi and Miami groups. It eventually fell into the hands of the British, and briefly the Spanish, before its abandonment in 1781.

As many of you know, the Fort St. Joseph Archaeological Project was established in 1998 and works in conjunction with Western Michigan University’s annual archaeological field school, the City of Niles, and the Fort St. Joseph Museum in order to excavate and interpret the remains of the fort as well as educate and engage the public about its place within the context of French colonialism and the history of the western Great Lakes. Since 2002, public outreach has been a major goal of the project. Project Director Dr. Michael Nassaney of Western Michigan University led the 2011 archaeological field school students in the excavation of artifacts and features associated with the eighteenth-century fort. Ongoing investigation and research focuses on how social identities were actively created and negotiated and how the process of colonialism impacted the identities of both the Native Americans and the French.

Each year, the Project seeks to expand on previous investigations toward understanding how the diverse people who lived and worked at Fort St. Joseph actively negotiated their lives within the context of colonial encounters and how they expressed new cultural identities in a vastly changing world. Archaeologists work to situate the history of the fort within the larger contexts of the fur trade and cultural encounters on the colonial frontier.

Over 30 individuals comprised the student, staff, and volunteer workforce who labored at Fort St. Joseph this summer. Seven 1 x 2 meter units were opened and excavated by groups of graduate and undergraduate students in the fields of archaeology and public history. Four additional 1 x 1 meter units were opened by middle school and adult summer campers working under the supervision of Public Education Coordinator Timothy Bober. Each unit was placed near known features in order to increase our understanding of construction techniques, site usage, and spatial arrangements. Three new features were identified during the 2011 season and the excavation of two previously excavated features was expanded. A fifth fireplace/hearth feature was found on the northwest portion of the site aligned with similar features, possibly representing row houses, which had been excavated in past seasons. A new pit feature was identified in an exploratory area on the eastern side of the site which expanded on the previously known boundaries. Finally, in-situ sherds of Native-made low-fired earthenware pottery were discovered associated with ash and charcoal deposits. Efforts were made to define the boundaries of a previous pit feature and excavations were expanded on the iron cache discovered in 2010 to...
explore its function. One of the most exciting finds of the season was a lead cloth seal. It was remarkably well preserved with “B” followed by a *fleur de lis* and letters spelling out “ORAINE DE LILLE” still visible on the front. This has been interpreted as “Bureau Foraine de Lille,” which was an eighteenth-century taxing authority in a region of France well-known for cloth production. Other excavation units yielded artifacts relating to subsistence, architecture, adornment, and religious activities that complement the previous collection and add to the ongoing analysis of cultural continuity and change on the colonial frontier.

Public outreach and education efforts serve to disseminate information about the Project and site history to the public, and to involve them in the excavations. Middle school students, adults, and educators were invited to participate in the program through week-long summer camps geared towards learning about French colonialism, Fort St. Joseph, excavation techniques, and material culture. These programs were widely successful, enrolling 35 students during the field season. Building on the success of previous years, a four-part lecture series was held at the Niles District Library, which brought together historians and archaeologists to present talks centered around the year’s theme of the fur trade. The season culminated in a two-day Open House event, also focused on the fur trade, held on site in Niles, which drew nearly 2,000 visitors. The event consisted of presentations, historical interpreters, historians, and archaeologists who gathered together to share their knowledge of Fort St. Joseph and the fur trade with visitors from the Niles community and beyond. The event also gave the public the opportunity to speak with student archaeologists who were eager to answer questions and share what they had learned about the fort through the summer’s excavation. The event continues to be a huge success and draws first time, as well as returning, visitors. The 2012 Open House will be held August 11-12 and will examine the military at Fort St. Joseph.

In February 2011, the Fort St. Joseph Archaeological Project entered the Archaeological Institute of America’s worldwide Online Excavation Outreach Contest. Fort St. Joseph took first place with over 3,000 votes beating similar outreach projects in the Mediterranean, South America, and the United States. The Project’s vast network of community support undoubtedly helped cement its victory. The 2011 season saw the inception of an online blog on which the student archaeologists shared their experiences with people around the world. Over 3,500 visitors have viewed the site (www.fortstjosepharchaeology.blogspot.com) to keep abreast of current developments.

In April 2011, the project received a grant from Digital Antiquity to upload site data to the Digital Archaeology Record (tDAR.) This will allow the artifact catalog and associated materials and publications to be stored in digital format and shared with members of the archaeological community. Data from the first decade of work at Fort St. Joseph is accessible at http://www.tdar.org/.

Archaeological investigations and analysis will be continued at Fort St. Joseph to increase our understanding of the site and its situation within colonial frontiers, and to continue to break down the colonialist paradigm that has informed interpretations in past decades. Events such as the lecture series, blog, summer camps, and Open House help the project reach its goals of community outreach and education and fulfill the desire of the public to be informed and involved in the unearthing of their history.

This newly discovered hearth feature (right) was found to line up with other previously discovered hearths at the site. The lead seal (left, just after discovery) was also found in this unit. Photos by C. Davis
French Cloth Seal Recovered at Fort St. Joseph, Michigan

By David MacDonald, Professor Emeritus, Illinois State University

A lead seal was recovered at Fort St. Joseph in Niles, MI this past field season. It is approximately 20 mm in diameter and somewhat deformed. The obverse reads: B (fleur de lis) / FORAINE / DE LILLE, whereas the reverse exhibits a fleur-de-lis, possibly surrounded by a beaded circle. It is secured by two rivets.

On the obverse, the first two letters of the second line are damaged, but upon close examination the reading given here seems certain. The “B” in the first line is an abbreviation of Bureau; the Bureau Foraine de Lille was one of the many French authorities that inspected cloth. Antoine Sabatier, the leading authority on French lead seals, indicates that Foraine seals were applied to cloths sent from their point of origin in one town to another town where they were to be sold. Local officials inspected the cloths upon their arrival and they applied the seals to cloths of correct quality and length.1 Lille, incorporated into France by Louis XIV in 1668, was a major center for both cloth production and trade, importing textiles from the surrounding region and nearby Flanders. The city was especially noted for laces, linen, and cotton. The cloth industry in and around Lille was one of the earliest in France to make use of the many of the technical innovations developed in England.

Two similar seals have been published by A. Sabatier,2 and another similar seal has been recovered in Illinois at the Ghost Horse site, a habitation in the village of Chartres close to Fort de Chartres.3 That seal differs in minor details. On the obverse, both seals bear the same inscription, but the Fort St. Joseph seal has one fleur de lis while the Ghost Horse seal has three.

On the reverse, the Fort St. Joseph seal bears a large fleur de lis, while the reverse of the Ghost Horse seal is the same of the obverse. Such differences are common; authorities changed seal designs frequently to combat counterfeiting. The style of the seals indicates an eighteenth-century date.

Endnotes
R. Mazrim, At Home in the Illinois Country: French Colonial Domestic Site Archaeology in the Midwest 1730-1800 (Studies in Archaeology No. 9, Illinois State Archaeological Survey; Urbana, 2011), pp. 210-211, Figure 11.5.
The Digital Archaeological Record

By Ian Kerr, former field school staff and 2010-11 Fort St. Joseph Museum Intern for the Project

In April, 2011 Dr. Nassaney, Erin Claussen (Fort St. Joseph alumnus and 2009-10 FSJ Museum intern), and I were awarded a grant from Digital Antiquity at Arizona State University to help take Fort St. Joseph to the next level of digital information management by making the data from FSJ widely accessible through the Digital Archaeological Record (tDAR), which is supported by the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, the National Science Foundation, and the National Endowment for the Humanities. This international digital archive and repository houses data about archaeological investigations, research, resources, and scholarship. It provides researchers with a platform to upload and integrate all kinds of information relating to all kinds of projects. Users can search tDAR for digital documents, data sets, images, GIS files, and other data resources from archaeological projects spanning the globe. They have collected over 360,000 documents, 7,026 images, and some 300 projects use the online database to post material. Perhaps most importantly users also can use tools in tDAR to simplify and illuminate comparative research.

The grant has allowed us to organize, digitize, and contribute a selection of unpublished literature and a comprehensive database of artifactual material. The goals of our initiative were to insure the long-term preservation of information and encourage further research on Fort St. Joseph and its collections. We started work in mid-June and completed it in December.

The first initiative was to contribute to tDAR a comprehensive selection of gray literature, namely unpublished documentation that was in limited circulation and was therefore difficult to access by interested parties. This included a litany of documents ranging from field season summaries, annual reports, conference papers and posters, Honor’s and M.A. theses relating to the Project, a selection of images illustrative of the Project’s efforts including field work, artifacts, public education and outreach, and a bibliography of primary documentary sources and Project outcomes. These materials were uploaded by Erin during the course of several months.

My work with tDAR was geared towards creating a new artifact database. Data on the excavated artifacts, such as provenience (which unit, level, and stratum the item came from), count, and weight, had been previously entered into inventories that were produced using Excel spreadsheets. Although useful, these spreadsheets were hard to search and were housed on only a few computers. With the resources from tDAR, Phase II of our grant project included manually entering artifact data from the older Fort St. Joseph Excel artifact files into the far superior, database program PastPerfect that we had been starting to use for about a year prior. PastPerfect is a popular program used by museums and other professionals in the field and allows for far more accessibility and convenience.

In our proposal we estimated that some 12,036 separate proveniences had been recorded for artifacts recovered from Fort St. Joseph through the 2010 field season. These proveniences contained roughly 150,000 object identification numbers, with many of these object identification numbers representing more than one, and sometimes hundreds, of individual objects. All of these separate entries, each containing any number of historical artifacts, were entered into the PastPerfect database. In total, some 12,257 distinct artifact proveniences were manually entered into the PastPerfect database. These entries were comprised of 152,012 different artifacts encompassing more than 50 discrete artifact categories. Eventually as part of the data collection and entry process, all the PastPerfect data was exported into the tDAR interface and is now online.

From our work we concluded that tDAR is an ideal data management and storage tool for large, multi-year endeavors like the Fort St. Joseph Archaeological Project. Paramount to this usefulness is that tDAR can assist in providing some standardization in the way data is collected and eventually stored. It also serves as a repository of data that future students can use to learn about the previous work conducted as a means of determining research possibilities. Furthermore, the global span of tDAR can be used to increase the visibility of the Project exposing a broader range of researchers to our collections.

“This international digital archive and repository houses data about archaeological investigations, research, resources, and scholarship.”
Greetings! This past summer I held the position of Public Outreach Coordinator of the Fort St. Joseph Archaeological Project. My main tasks were to continue and enhance the outreach component of the Project while acting as a liaison between Western Michigan University (WMU), Support the Fort, Inc., the City of Niles, and other groups and individuals. The culmination of these responsibilities was assisting in the planning and commencement of the annual Open House. If you attended last year’s Open House on August 13 and 14, you certainly realized how successful our outreach efforts were as we had almost 2,000 people in attendance! We received immensely positive feedback from our visitors, with interactions with students once again being the highest-rated activity of the Open House. Speaking with a knowledgeable and enthusiastic crew offered the public a fresh means for engaging with and understanding history in contrast to sometimes more static portrayals in museums or textbooks.

Last year, we added a new element to our public outreach activities. We took our work to the web with an online web-log (or blog) that was maintained by students and staff throughout the course of the field school. I implemented this project based on previous experience with blogs as a form of public outreach, and was pleased to hear positive feedback regarding our online presence. Students were granted permission to write freely about their experiences which resulted in a diverse collection of writing—some students highlighted particular findings while others took a narrative approach that delighted our readers with tales of the lives of archaeologists. We maintained a significant readership throughout the field school’s duration (close to 3,000 page loads) and were able to use this forum for updates, event advertising, and public education. The benefits from this form of outreach were mutual as the public learned about our findings and the archaeological process while students improved their abilities to interact with and speak to a general audience. I am pleased to say that this project has continued with updates from students as they handle some of our finds in the lab or pursue their own research. Please take a moment to check in with us at http://fortstjosepharchaeology.blogspot.com/, especially as we near the 2012 field season!

We also continued to receive positive feedback regarding our extremely well-attended summer lectures, presentations given to local community organizations, and our presence at the French Market. We did our best to stay attuned to the desires of the public, and we learned that the historical interpreters at the Open House were appreciated as much as the archaeology. As such, these people will continue to be a crucial part for bringing history to life in Niles alongside the dedicated members of Support the Fort and the community as a whole. I am very grateful to have had the opportunity to work on such a successful public archaeology project with so many wonderful and helpful volunteers and staff. Our active and supportive community promises a bright future for the Project if outreach, cooperation, and strong leadership continue. Honestly, it seems like just yesterday that I was checking blog updates and doing last-minute prep work for the Open House, but in reality, a fair bit of time has passed. After formally finishing my Master’s degree (focusing on public archaeology) at The College of William and Mary, I moved from Maryland to Montreal where I am immersing myself in the museum world. There are many exciting opportunities in a city with a mosaic of cultures, whether it is the First Peoples, the French, the Scots, or any of the other groups that have called Montreal
I became involved with the Fort St. Joseph Archaeological Project last summer as a student archaeologist from Western Michigan University. When I signed my name on the dotted line and embarked on that first car ride to the city of Niles, I had no way of knowing how much the Project would shape and change plans I had for my career and my future. As a public history major at WMU, I anticipated immediately enrolling in graduate school when my time here was finished. After my seven week experience digging on the banks of the St. Joseph River that plan went completely out the window. It was not the excitement of unearthing seventeenth century artifacts or discoveries in the lab that changed my mind, but my experiences working with the community of Niles. I was aware that projects like this involved a certain amount of community outreach but by getting to work on a project that is backed by such a strongly supportive and interested community I discovered my own passion for public outreach in historical projects. Without the unwavering support of the Niles Community, the Fort St. Joseph Archaeological Project would not be the acclaimed success that it is today. The project, in turn, has supported the community of Niles by bringing in tourists and people involved in the project every summer who help support the local economy. Every week during the field season, the archaeologists themselves can be seen at the French Market, interacting with interested community members and selling products to promote the Project. After seeing how rewarding community outreach for historical projects can be I have decided to make a career of it, hopefully starting this summer with the Fort St. Joseph Archaeological Project. Thank you for your support Niles, Michigan. Without you the Fort St. Joseph Archaeological Project could not reach its full potential and I would not have had the amazing life changing summer that I did last season.

Happy digging!

A Student’s Experience with Outreach

By Erika Mammen, 2011 FSJ field school alumnus
2011 was the Best Year Yet!

By Barb Cook, Chair, Fort St. Joseph Archaeology Advisory Committee

Each year the Fort St. Joseph Archaeology Advisory Committee strives to make more facilities and resources available to the WMU Archaeology Program and summer dig. However, last year's Open House will be a hard event to surpass. We had outstanding attendance, personable hard-working students, and great re-enactors for the Media Day and Open House events. The Fur Trade at FSJ was the theme last year and one that appealed to adults and children alike. Watching a voyageur’s canoe land at the fort site, identifying furs, writing with a quill pen, learning how to make a beaver hat, talking to voyageurs, and dressing up like a French Marine were a few of the highlights of the weekend. The displays were well done and students and guest lecturers explained the items in the cases and/or laid out for examination.

This year, a Militia Muster will include marching drills, firing of canon and small arms, military drills, music, dancing, lectures, and, of course, a chance to see and interact with the archaeology students. The archaeological plans for this year are to try and locate the boundaries of the fort's occupation area by moving beyond the area that has been excavated in the past several years. The students and staff will search for artifacts in test shovel pits in a trench that will extend parallel to the river roughly north, south, and east from the riverbank toward Bond Street.

The committee is also exploring the idea of creating/building an Interpretative center so the story of Fort St. Joseph can be shared with residents, visitors and students year round.

Comments from 2011 Open House Surveys

By Erica Stone, 2011 field school alumnus and 2011-12 Fort St. Joseph Museum Intern for the Project

As a testament to all the great things we heard about last year's open house, here are just some of the replies that we received when asking visitors what they liked most about the open house:

"The information the students gave from their own experiences."
"It was very interesting to see history right in front of us."
"The re-enactors were very knowledgeable and I learned some new things from them."
"Everything! Wonderful extensive variety of exhibits."
"The information and enthusiasm of all the participants –especially the students! They were great!"
"Seeing the real archaeological site and talking to the students was awesome!"
"Each year it's better, [there is] something for everyone. Thanks, keep it up please!"

The Fort St. Joseph Archaeological project would like to thank everyone who visited the open house, and especially those who completed the Survey for Fort St. Joseph Visitors. Your praise of the event and advice for future open houses means a great deal to us!

August 11 and 12, 2012, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

This year’s open house will feature a militia muster and 18th century encampment where visitors can see living history re-enactors demonstrate activities from life at the time of the American Revolution.

Activities available to all visitors include opportunities to:
- eat and shop in 18th century style
- join in historical dancing to the sounds of a Celtic trio
- take part in musket drills and march with the fife and drum corps
- participate in 18th century games and activities for children
- interact with over 100 living history re-enactors
- see an archaeological dig in progress
- meet and talk with the archaeologists
- hear presentations by public scholars about the dig and the Fort St. Joseph militia

2012 Fort St. Joseph Archaeological Open House is free and open to the public!

Fort St. Joseph is located near the intersection of Fort and Bond streets in Niles, Michigan.
Where Are They Now?

Rory Becker
Rory participated in the 2002 WMU archaeological field school at Fort St. Joseph and completed his Master’s thesis on identity and consumption patterns at the fort in 2004. He spent the next six years working for Cultural Resource Management firms and federal agencies in Wyoming while completing coursework and a dissertation on the use of remote sensing techniques to locate Rocky Mountain Rendezvous sites. Rory earned his Ph.D. from the University of Wyoming in 2010 and recently left federal employment, having accepted a tenure-track faculty position with Eastern Oregon University in La Grande. Rory’s research interests still include issues of identity and cultural change for protohistoric/contact period peoples.

Amanda Brooks
Amanda enrolled in the field school in 2008 and came back as a graduate teaching assistant in 2009. She completed her M.A. degree in 2010. We were very excited to hear her latest news this winter: “I wanted to let you all know that I have just accepted an Archaeologist 1 position at Grave Creek Mound Archaeological Complex in Moundsville, West Virginia. It is a state position and I will be helping initiate a collections management program for over 10 years of backlogged artifacts from the site. I just wanted to thank all of you for the help and guidance you’ve provided me throughout my schooling and job search. I will be relocating to Wheeling, WV in a few weeks… Thanks again for everything!” If you would like to learn more about the project Amanda is working with, go to http://www.wvculture.org/museum/GraveCreekmod.html.

James Webber
James was a member of the 2010 field school at the fort and is now studying Anthropology in the doctoral program at the University of Arizona. He recently brought us up to date on his progress: “My first semester went well as I quickly jumped into data collection for my masters thesis focusing on the big question of why we ever developed a heel. Last semester, as a research assistant, I started working on a research project which looks at the change in variability of gait in children as they mature. The ongoing research has allowed me to collect heel impact data on kids. This semester, as part of my advisor’s undergraduate biomechanics research methods course, I am in charge of a group of students which I am having collect similar data on heel strike impacts and walk-run transitions in adults. I also got sucker into leading a barefoot runners group here in Tucson where I try and teach newcomers how to run barefoot or minimalist without injury. Recently I have been recruiting the runners for a third project I am helping with in our lab, through the Psychology department, which is focusing on the mental effects of barefoot running.

So, all in all, I dove in head first and haven’t yet drowned. Of course, I’m part of these projects in concert with my course load, trying to teach myself the MatLab statistical program, and understand the inverse dynamics involved with human bipedal gait. As such it has been a load of fun and given me endless opportunities to learn and grow. I should say, as UA has a very large archaeology component, I am thankful I was part of the Fort St. Joseph field school, which has helped me relate to a large number of my cohort. They don’t often understand my biomechanical gibberish, but we can always talk about being out in the field.”
2011 Field Season Collage

Photos by C. Davis
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 this year’s WMU archaeological field school and public outreach activities. If you would like to support the project, please fill out the form below and send it to:

Western Michigan University, Gifting Processing
1903 W. Michigan Ave.
Kalamazoo, MI 49008-5403

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).

Signed, __________________________

Date: __________________________

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

—or–

___ I do not want my gift publicized.

My gift is to be paid via (please check one):

____ Check (payable to WMU FDN-Fort St. Joseph
____ Credit Card
     _____ MasterCard     ____ Visa     ____ Discover

Account #: __________________________

(Information will be shredded)

Expiration Date: _____________________ Verification #: _____________________

Signature (required): __________________________

Date: ______________ Name: __________________________

Phone #: (___) ___________ Email: __________________________

Address: ____________________________________________

City, State, & Zip: ____________________________________

Fort St. Joseph
Archaeological Project
Annual Membership

Levels of Membership and Benefits:

Friend ($1-$99)-
Receive e-newsletter

Voyager ($100-$249)-
Above, plus Media Day Invitation, a special tour of the site

Explorer ($250-$499)-
Above, plus invitations of activities exclusively for Explorer members

Commandant ($500-$9,999)-
Above, plus invitations to activities exclusively for Commandant members, 10% discount on FSJ Souvenirs.

Lifetime Member ($10,000+)-
Lifetime giving since January 1, 2009, same benefits as Commandant

- 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.