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WESTERN MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY

Participant/Observer

WMU DEPARTMENT OF ANTHROPOLOGY

A Newsletter for Friends of the Western Michigan University Department of Anthropology

Christine Cronk named 2007 Distinguished Alumna



Christine Cronk

During 2007 Homecoming week, **Dr. Christine Cronk** was honored with the Department of Anthropology's distinguished alumnae award. Dr. Cronk received her M.A. from WMU's Department of Anthropology in 1976. She went on to complete a Doctorate of Science

in Maternal and Child Health at the Harvard University's School of Public Health in 1980.

Dr. Cronk is a very talented and innovative researcher. She has worked, for example, at Children's Hospital of Boston as a medical anthropologist assessing growth and phenotype of children with suspected developmental problems and later with human biologists at the Fels Research Institute that would lead to the first set of published standards for body mass index. While at Drexel University and then Children's Hospital of Philadelphia, she continued work on body composition in relation to adult health, but also began work investigating the relationship between prenatal and postnatal growth trajectories as measured by ultrasound.

From Philadelphia she moved on to Southern Illinois University where she continued to work

on growth assessment of children with cerebral palsy, but also taught courses in Anthropology at SIU and at Southeast Missouri State University. Before assuming her present position, Dr. Cronk worked as a child health analyst and Director of Birth Defects Surveillance for the State of Wisconsin. She was instrumental in writing and successfully advocating for legislation that redesigned the system for tracking birth defects in the state.

Dr. Cronk assumed her present position at the Medical College of Wisconsin in 2001. Her research there has focused on documenting clusters of congenital heart defects in the state, and on health beliefs of Latinos concerning genetics and birth defects. She is also the co-principal investigator of a \$16.5 million grant to establish one of seven Vanguard Centers for the National Children's Study, a study of environmental effects on children's health. In this capacity, she oversees community and medical outreach as well as protocol development in the areas of child growth, body composition and infant phenotypic assessment.

During her visit to campus, Dr. Cronk gave one public presentation to our students and met with our graduate and undergraduate students for lunch. Our students were very impressed by Dr. Cronk's distinguished career and learned a great deal about interesting options for anthropologists outside of the traditional professoriate.

Letter from the Chair

*Ann
Miles*



The past year was a busy one for the Department and also one with significant changes. **Dr. Jackie Eng** who earned her Ph.D. from UC Santa Barbara joined our biological faculty. Jackie's interests are in osteology, human evolution and bioarchaeology. She conducts research in China, an exciting new area of interest for our students.

Dr. Timothy Ready, who has a long record in applied and advocacy settings started last January as Director of the Walker Institute for Race and Ethnic Relations and he holds a joint appointment in Anthropology.

Britt Hartenberger, (Ph.D. Boston University) an archaeologist will be joining us for a second year as a visiting professor. Finally, **Robert Ulin** who chaired the department for nine years left WMU to take a dean's position at Rochester Institute of Technology. We all wish Robert well and thank him for his contributions to the department. I am filling in this year as Interim Chair while we conduct a national level search for Robert's replacement.

Faculty Activities

As always, our faculty have been very busy this year:

- **Bilinda Straight** is continuing her research with the Samburu in Kenya and was recently awarded an NSF grant to study violence and health in Kenya.
- **Laurie Spielvogel** spent her sabbatical developing role-play simulation software to enhance her undergraduate and graduate teaching on Japan.
- **Jon Holtzman** was awarded a Fellowship with



Jon Holtzman

the American Council of Learned Societies to work on interethnic violence in Kenya.

- **Allen Zagarell** continues his work on establishing a network of scholars interested in Central Asia studies. He brought Tajik scholars and businessmen from to campus this year.
- **Michael Nassaney's** project in Fort St. Joseph continues to expand. The Fort St. Joseph project received a grant from the Michigan Humanities Council and an award from the Historical Society of Michigan.
- **Sarah Hill** continues her work with Bronco Biodeisel which has been awarded a nearly \$1 million Department of Energy Grant to design conversion of two liquid waste streams from Kalamazoo into transportation fuels.
- **Kristina Wirtz**, celebrated the publication of her new book "Ritual, Discourse, and Community in Cuban Santeria: Speaking a Sacred World," and she continues work to bring the RACE exhibit to Kalamazoo in 2010.
- **Vin Lyon-Callo** edited two special journal issues this year, *Rethinking Marxism* and *Urban Anthropology*. Lyon-Callo also is organizing *Rethinking Marxism's* next international conference
- **Bob Anemone** continues his research in Wyoming and has expanded the use of technology by incorporating GIS and Google Earth into his work.
- **Lauretta Eisenbach** continues to hold down the fort in the main office and we would be lost without her.



Kristina Wirtz

Ready takes helm at Walker Institute



Timothy Ready

I arrived on campus in January to become Director of the Lewis Walker Institute for the Study of Race and Ethnic Relations and also joined the faculty of the Department of Anthropology.

Having grown up in Michigan, I spent most of my career in Washington, D.C. before returning to the Midwest several years ago. Kalamazoo is a familiar and comfortable place for me, as my wife's family lived here for more than 25 years.

I was trained as a medical anthropologist at Michigan State University and my dissertation was about social and biological influences on the blood pressures of Mexican-American and Anglo (non-Latino white) adolescents in four South Texas high schools during the late 1970s. As the study progressed, I became increasingly interested in how schools functioned to differentially allocate educational and economic opportunities by race, ethnicity and class—in sharp contrast to their “official” egalitarian purposes. My interest in this topic continues.

After completing my dissertation, I moved to Washington, D.C. where my first job was to teach anthropology at Catholic University. While there, I wrote a book called *Latino Immigrant Youth: Passages from Adolescence to Adulthood*. This was a six-year study of 200 de facto refugee youth from El Salvador, and the unusually successful high school that they attended. My next stop was at the Association of American Medical Colleges where as assistant vice president for community and minority programs I designed and directed *Project 3000 by 2000*—the national diversity campaign for the nation's 126 medical schools. This was a rare opportunity to do applied anthropology on a national scale from a position of power. The campaign focused on developing

community partnerships to enable more black, Latino and Native American students to receive the mentoring and academic preparation they needed to enter and succeed in medical and other health professional schools. The *Project* increased minority enrollment by 36 percent and led to the creation of dozens of partnerships linking health professional schools with minority serving high schools and community organizations throughout the country. Many of these partnerships are still working today.

When *Project 3000 by 2000* ended, I moved on to the National Research Council. There, I directed three studies on the education of minority and economically disadvantaged students that resulted in books published by National Academies Press. My final stop before arriving at Western was at Notre Dame, my undergraduate alma mater.

There, I worked as research director for the Institute for Latino Studies and worked on

issues such as education, Mexican immigrants in Chicago, housing, and Border Kids Count, a project that examined the health and well-being of children along the U.S.-Mexico border.

I am excited by the opportunities that exist here at Western and look forward to developing the Walker Institute's programming related to race and ethnic relations and a research agenda that I hope will inform efforts to make our community and state more equitable, just and respectful of diversity.

Finally, I am starting to pursue new research questions on how racial and religious identities and identifications interact, using Cuba as a case study. I also hope to develop a comparative angle closer to home, by looking at discourses of race in southwest Michigan. I am always looking to mentor undergraduate and graduate students with overlapping interests!

“I am always looking to mentor undergraduate and graduate students with overlapping interests!”

Archaeology Field School Students Excavate at Fort St. Joseph

The Fort St. Joseph Archaeological Project continued investigations and public interpretation of one of the most important archaeological sites in the region—the 18th century French mission, garrison, and trading post complex known as Fort St. Joseph in Niles, Michigan. The fort was the site of the Department of Anthropology's 33rd annual field school, the longest running archaeological program in the state.

In partnership with the city of Niles and the Fort St. Joseph Museum, 17 graduate and undergraduate students lived in Niles while they learned basic field techniques and helped to publicize the archaeology of colonialism to the local community. Dr. Michael Nassaney directed the program with the help of graduate assistants Amanda Brooks and Emily Powell, public education coordinator Andrew Beaupré, and public outreach coordinator LisaMarie Malischke.

In addition to the students who earned University credit, 20 teachers, high school students, and continuing education adults also participated in the dig.

The annual open house event in late July attracted over 1,500 people to view ongoing excavations, an outdoor museum with recent finds, and see living history re-enactors who made the 18th century come alive for two days.



2007 field school participants wet screen collected sediments through 1/8 in. mesh to maximize the number of artifacts recovered from the site including small glass beads, lead shot, and seeds.

"The annual open house event in late July attracted over 1,500 people to view ongoing excavations, an outdoor museum with recent finds, and see living history re-enactors..."



A reenactor portraying a French voyager of the 18th century talks to attendees at the 2007 Fort St. Joseph Archaeology Open House. A Living History Village was one of the attractions at the Open House along with an Outdoor Museum, and the opportunity for the public to view ongoing excavations at the site.

Meet

Brit Hartenberger, Visiting Assistant Professor

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My research is concentrated on ancient craft production, social complexity, and early economies. I have excavated and worked as a ceramics and/or lithics specialist on sites in Greece, Cyprus, Syria, and Turkey, which date from the Neolithic to the Iron Age. My primary interest is in the spatial distribution of craft production and how production of various crafts develops in relation to the growth of complexity in early societies.

For my dissertation I focused on an Early Bronze Age site in Turkey, where many houses and a specialized lithic workshop have been discovered. I was able to study craft production spatially across the site, from unspecialized lithic production in most houses to specialized production of flint blades in one workshop. I analyzed the organization of the workshop, and interpreted it as a household-based shop where independent specialists worked part-time. The presence of the workshop appears to be linked to the site's growing size and complexity in this period, and I have suggested that the demands of a densely settled, growing population may have led to the establishment of this and other craft quarters.

Since completing my dissertation I have been active in lithics analysis at other sites in Turkey, most recently at the

site of Ziyaret Tepe. I plan to expand my study of crafts to ceramic production, since the site contains bronze kilns and unexcavated pottery kilns which date to the Middle Bronze or Iron Ages.

Broadly, it appears that specialization in utilitarian goods (like lithics) was not often controlled by an administration, but I am curious about what types of ceramic production are controlled by a state government, since ceramics can be either utilitarian or prestige items. In summer 2008, I will be joining the Ziyaret project to analyze its groundstone artifacts and begin research into the ceramic kilns at the site, in preparation for their excavation in 2009.

In my teaching experience so far, I have taught both graduate and undergraduate students, ranging from lecture-oriented to more laboratory-based classes. Last semester I taught the Lost Worlds overview and Introduction to Archaeology. I have enjoyed covering method and theory in the Introduction class, since it is smaller and I have the opportunity to engage students in more discussion and group activities.

In my teaching previously at Yale University, I taught two upper level laboratory courses which included lab

work in which we made our own ceramics and stone tools and examined artifacts from museum collections.



Hartenberger, collecting data from a Neolithic individual at the Research Center for Frontier Archaeology of Jilin University, China.

I have been bringing in examples from my work in the Mediterranean to all my classes, and so particularly enjoyed offering Rise of Civilization in spring 2008 with a focus on Mesopotamia, ancient Iraq/Syria. This fall I will offer another upper-level course, the Archaeology of Gender, since research into gender relations is a rapidly growing field of interest for both prehistoric and historic archaeologists. Next spring I am planning to offer a course on the Origins of Cities, again focusing on both early and historic examples.

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Alumni News

WMU's Presence Strong at Memphis Meetings

Four WMU M.A. alumni presented papers recently at the joint meeting of the Society for Applied Anthropology and the Society for Medical Anthropology in Memphis, Tenn.

- **Boone Shear** (M.A. '06) currently is a Ph.D. student in anthropology at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst, however, his interest in Kalamazoo lives on and his paper "Gentrification and Community" focused on community development in Kalamazoo.
- **Cassie Workman** (M.A. '03) who is pursuing her Ph.D. at the University of South Florida co-authored a paper on food security, and organized a session for students titled "How to Survive Graduate School."
- **Dr. Melissa (Missy) Cheyney** (M.A. '97) who, since leaving WMU, has become a licensed midwife and earned a Ph.D. in Anthropology, is now an assistant professor of anthropology at Oregon State University. In Memphis, Cheyney co-organized a panel on cultural competence for which she was also a discussant and delivered a paper on tracking the outcomes of home births. Cheyney also accompanied one of her own M.A. students as she gave her first professional paper.
- **Cleothia Gill** (M.A. '08) delivered a paper based on her original thesis research on African American women's narratives of breast cancer. **Dr. Ann Miles** (faculty) attended the meetings and was thrilled to catch up with so many of her students. **Dr. Timothy Ready** (Anthropology and the Lewis Walker Institute) also presented at the meetings.
- poster at the American Association of Physical Anthropologists annual meeting in Columbus, OH (April 2008) for her poster entitled "Walkers vs. Non-Walkers: A comparison of femoral neck cortical bone in humans."
- **Eric Drake** is a Ph.D. candidate in the Department of Anthropology at Binghamton University, conducting dissertation research on Anishinaabeg engagements with Industrial Capitalism on the logging frontier of Michigan's Upper Peninsula. Drake is enrolled in the Region 9 USDA-Forest Service Federal Student Career Employment Program and employed fulltime as an archaeologist for the Hiawatha National Forest.
- **Chris Sweetapple** recently passed his M.A. thesis defense with distinction at UMass/Amherst and is pursuing his Ph.D. He continues the work in Germany that he started as an undergraduate at WMU.
- **Juan Florencia** is pursuing his Ph.D. work at UMass/Amherst continuing the work began at WMU on autoethnography with a focus on whiteness and white privilege.
- Former undergraduate student, **Matt Bair** is also at UMass/Amherst, working towards an M.S. in Labor Studies. He began the program after working as a labor organizer following his graduation.
- **Tak Delisle** has just started the Ph.D. program in Anthropology at the University of Kentucky.
- **Mira Ptacin** is pursuing a graduate degree in Creative Non-Fiction writing at Sarah Lawrence College.
- **Jared Barrett** (M.A. '02) works for TRC in Nashville, Tenn. as an Historic Archaeologist, where he has conducted archeological surveys and excavations throughout the southeastern United States.
- **Brock Giordano** works as an archaeologist and principal investigator for the Cultural Resource Consulting Group, Highland Park, NJ. Giordano also is an adjunct professor of archaeology at Monmouth University, Long Branch, N.J.

In other alumni news...

- **Nelson Class Melendez** (M.A. '03) has been named Director of Gale Publications, Latin America. Nelson and Martha now have two children, Claudia Sofia and Fabián.
- **Dan Osborne** is now an Assistant professor (tenure track) at the University of Nebraska (Lincoln).
- **Meghan Moran** (Ph.D. student at Kent State) won the Ales Hrdlicka award for the best student

Department News

New faculty member Jacqueline Eng

I am a biological anthropologist who studies the health of ancient human populations as revealed by their skeletal remains in conjunction with associated archaeological, historical, and ecological data. Bones fascinate me because they represent physical evidence with clues about the individual and the population to which that individual belonged.

As a bioarchaeologist, I am especially interested in the ways in which skeletal data on diet, disease, and patterns of interpersonal violence can be used to illuminate the

processes shaping the development of ancient societies.

As a first generation Chinese American, I have long been fascinated by anthropological questions about how people adapt to dynamic processes such as migration, culture contact, and culture change. My experiences of early visits to China, listening to oral histories from my relatives and others within the SF Chinatown community, and curiosity about my own heritage sparked an early interest in Asian history.

I began research in China in 2003 when I traveled to the Autonomous Region of Inner Mongolia to collect data from a newly excavated pastoral population dating to the Bronze Age.

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Eng collecting data from a Neolithic individual at the Research Center for Frontier Archaeology of Jilin University, China, June 2008.

There I began to formulate my dissertation topic, which culminated in a study of the health-related consequences of the complex socioeconomic relationships that developed between ancient Chinese and pastoral societies from “beyond the Great Wall.” As we have a rich Chinese history, I hope to shed light from the pastoral perspective, as well as document the biological health effects of imperialism upon urban and frontier populations.

In addition to my ongoing projects with East Asian researchers, I am also a participant in the Global History of Health Project. This is a multi-national collaborative research project designed to explore, through comparative skeletal studies, the health consequences of human adaptation to shifting social and environmental conditions over the past 10,000 years. This project offers opportunities for the involvement of researchers across many disciplines and for students with varied interests from bioarchaeology, to GIS, demography, ethnography, and economic anthropology (to name a few).

Participants have access to a large, growing database and can use this to design their own research projects. I am excited about interacting with students and faculty here and look forward to learning more about your own research!



Eng at the Peking Man Museum in Zhoukoudian, China.

Yes, I want to support the WMU Department of Anthropology!

In a time when state funding is increasingly restricted, the support we receive from friends and alumni is vitally important. Such funds are used to take advantage of new or unbudgeted opportunities in order to enhance the teaching or the research of the department, or to assist students in achieving their educational and professional goals. *Thank you for considering a gift to the WMU Department of Anthropology.*

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