Greetings from the Director!

If there is anything we’ve learned from our work on the Fort St. Joseph Archaeological Project, it’s that our activities never end. While we are most visible in July and August when we’re in the field, we have plenty to do the rest of the year as we analyze our findings, disseminate our results, and plan for future fieldwork that will help us to uncover the past for the future. Each step in the process involves exciting new discoveries that bring us closer to understanding life at the old French fort.

In April I was invited to a conference on “The War Called Pontiac’s” on the occasion of the 250th anniversary of the uprisings instigated by the famous Odawa leader, Chief Pontiac. In 1763, Native peoples in the western Great Lakes made a gallant effort to restore the French as their allies in the region after the French were defeated in the Seven Years War, which saw the English come to occupy places like Fort St. Joseph. In a period of months, the Indians attacked Fort Michilimackinac, Fort Ouiatenon, Fort Pontchartrain (Detroit), and Fort St. Joseph, among others, and dozens of English soldiers were killed or taken hostage. No French were harmed.

Scholars from around the world attended the conference, hosted by the McNeil Center for Early American Studies on the campus of the University of Pennsylvania, to discuss the regional, national, and international significance of this event. The participants, most of whom were historians who study the past through written documents, were riveted by the actual material evidence that we recovered from Fort St. Joseph from the eve of the attack. I was able to explain to them how the archaeological remains from the fort inform us about the close relationships between the Indians and the French. This helps to explain why the Indians were willing to risk their lives to welcome back the French and reinstate the relations they once enjoyed.

The conference highlighted for me once again that while Fort St. Joseph is tucked away in a little corner of the City of Niles, the whole world is watching our every action at the site because this place benefits from a shared sense of heritage ownership. In other words, the academic, scholarly, and public appeal extends well beyond Niles, Mich. I welcome you in joining me as we celebrate all that the site has to offer in telling the story about life on the frontier of colonial New France. It is a story to which many people can relate—be they students, visitors, scholars, local residents or the general public.

This year the focus of our work will be a continuation of our efforts to relocate and interpret the buildings we have identified at the site and examine the foods that the people of Fort St. Joseph ate to sustain themselves before and after Pontiac’s War. It proves to be a most exciting season! I invite your participation in our membership program and hope to see you at our annual open house on Aug. 10-11. Also, be sure to follow the dig this season through our blog that will detail every rusty nail and water snake we encounter in the field. The past belongs to all of us.

Cordially,

Michael S. Nassaney, Ph.D.
Principal Investigator of Fort St. Joseph Archaeological Project
Professor of Anthropology,
Western Michigan University

Dr. Michael Nassaney explains the importance and demonstrates the proper technique of core sampling. Photo by Susan Reichert.
The 2012 Field Season: Exploring Structures and Exciting Finds!

In 2012, a research team of 21 students, staff and faculty spent 6 weeks in the field beginning with the investigation of the nearby Lyne site (20BE10). The 15 1x1 meter units excavated at this site in 2012 were placed in an area that had yielded cultural materials during the 1998 investigations. Although this site was plowed in the 19th century, it continues to yield a variety of cultural material from ancient, colonial and modern eras.

Recent finds from the Lyne site include: lead shot, glass seed beads, scattered chert flakes and shatter, a musket ball and a copper alloy thimble. The thimble was of particular interest because it was intentionally perforated, suggesting a decorative use. The presence of European items on the terrace adjacent to Fort St. Joseph suggests an occupation contemporary with occupation at the fort and holds significant potential for future archaeological investigation.

Research at the fort (20BE23) this season focused on a number of features with the aim of learning more about the size, location and content of buildings at the site. Excavation began by re-excavating previous units in the vicinity of two large fireplaces associated with domestic buildings. Six 1x2 meter units were placed adjacent to these features. The plow zone was shovel skimmed in 10 cm. levels and shifted to hand excavation when undisturbed deposits were encountered. Due to the construction of the new dewatering system, time did not permit the team to expose structural features, although a large sample of artifacts were recovered from these units and a large ash deposit was located. Among the vast amount of cultural material recovered, several objects of particular interest were two iron keys, a brass bell, a small carving of a bird (either bone or ivory), two Jesuit rings, and a silver or pewter cross of irregular shape.

The project continued its public education and outreach efforts. Throughout the field season, the team updated our Facebook page and our daily blog fortstjosepharchaeology.blogspot.com (Our blog has received over 12,000 visits over the past two years and serves as an expedient means to share information during the field season and throughout the academic year). In 2012, the project held its fourth annual summer archaeology lecture series, offering informative presentations from a variety of experts. The lecture themes focused on the Military in Historical and Archaeological Perspective. All lectures were well attended and provided a useful and popular forum for public discussion.

The annual summer camp training program provided 27 students from a variety of backgrounds the opportunity to participate fully in the excavation at the fort. Middle school students, teachers and lifelong learners spent a week in the field learning how to excavate, take field notes and identify artifacts. These programs encourage direct community participation in the entire archaeological process and disseminate information to a variety of social groups.

The annual open house was held Aug. 11-12 and continued the focus on the military. The open house included information panels, artifact displays from the excavation, some 100 living history re-enactors camping near the site, children's crafts, authentic period food and drink, local community representation, fort related merchandise and a series of lectures and demonstrations. The open house was attended by nearly 2,000 visitors attended and gave positive feedback via visitor surveys.
The Work Starts When We Leave the Field:
News from the 2012-2013 Lab Students

During the 2012-13 academic year, field school students continued to stay involved with the project by participating in lab work at Western Michigan University. Working in the lab allows students the opportunity to handle artifacts and see what happens to these artifacts after the field season ends. The students were also able to participate in public outreach programs and conferences, in which they shared their experience and knowledge about the project with the public. The goals for fall semester included finishing the 2012 inventory and completing float samples. Cassie, Jordan, Michelle, Leah, Tabitha and Amber worked diligently to see that these projects were completed.

The students began the fall semester working on flotation samples from 2012. A flotation sample consists of a 10 l. soil sample that is taken from an area of interest, such as a hearth or ash pit. This sample is then put into a flotation machine which uses water to separate the soil matrix from cultural materials such as small bones, seeds, lead shot, and beads. Next, the sample is sent through a testing sieve which separates the material by size. The testing sieve contains different plates with sizes ranging from 12.5 mm. mesh to .085 mm.

The material in each plate was then sorted into categories and labeled. After this project reached completion, the students worked on completing the inventory of the Lyne site material.

The final project of the semester consisted of entering artifacts into PastPerfect. In this program each artifact is described based on attributes such as weight, quantity and material and then the artifact is given an accession number used to identify the artifact.

During the course of the busy semester the students had the opportunity to participate in public outreach programs throughout Michigan. On Oct. 6, our students represented the project during Archaeology Day at the Historical Center in Lansing. The students had the opportunity to demonstrate their knowledge of the fort by discussing the recent work that has been done on the project. Students also gave a presentation in Niles, Mich., to members of Support the Fort and discussed the accomplishments of the 2012 field school season and the work that is being accomplished in WMU’s lab. By the end of the semester the students were able to complete the 2012 inventory, finish labeling artifacts from the 2011 field season and finish entering the 2011 artifacts into PastPerfect.

The goals for the spring semester include labeling the 2012 flotation sample material, sorting float samples from previous seasons and finish entering the 2012 artifacts into PastPerfect. The students began the current semester by entering the 2012 material into PastPerfect and fine sorting heavy fraction and light fraction flotation samples from past field school seasons.

Some of the new side projects students were able to take on this semester include updating WMU’s Fort St. Joseph ScholarWorks site with documents and photographs pertaining to the fort. Some of these documents include theses, informational panels created in past seasons pertaining to the annual open house theme, booklets also related to the annual theme, past issues of our newsletter, the Fort St. Joseph Post; and annual reports pertaining to the progress of the field school.

ScholarWorks at WMU serves as a permanent digital archive for the research, publications, and creative output of the Western Michigan University community. Read more about ScholarWorks at http://scholarworks.wmich.edu/fortstjoseph/.

After the lab work is completed, the materials will be brought to the Fort St. Joseph Museum in Niles, Mich. and integrated into the museum’s collection.

A Public Presence: Conferences Attended by Members of the Project

The 2012 Center for French Colonial Studies conference took place on Sept. 28 and 29 in Bloomington, Ind., sponsored by the Mathers Museum of World Culture and the Glenn A. Black Laboratory at Indiana University. The conference provided the opportunity for participants to view a variety of collections and exhibits focused on the fur trade, including a variety of finds from Fort Quiatenon that share many similarities with the materials recovered at Fort St. Joseph. Topics of discussion ranged from creolization in the New World to an examination of the ethnohistoric materials on the Sioux documented in French. Dr. Kathleen Ehrnhardt provided a lecture on metal consumption and trade to Native peoples, and Dr. Diana DiPaolo Loren discussed the sounds of French colonial settlements. Dr. Terry Martin discussed animal remains at Fort St. Joseph and their possible interpretations. These animals were used for their pelts in trade, for their bones as various tools, for meat, and also for fats and oils-which may have been used to flavor food. (Continued on page 4)
Next year’s conference will be in Austin, Texas, where an exhibit on Sieur de la Salle’s lost ship, La Belle, is being prepared. The exhibit looks visually striking with a selection of the estimated one million artifacts found on the ship including 800 axe heads, thousands of glass beads, three bronze cannons, and some 1,500 Jesuit rings. Interested parties are strongly encouraged to attend!

On Oct. 6, members of the Fort St. Joseph Project attended Archaeology Day at the Michigan Historical Center in Lansing. During Archaeology Day, a variety of archaeological projects across the state presented their work to the public. This year Fort St. Joseph was represented by several lab students, who answered questions and displayed artifacts from the collection. Over 500 members of the public attended this event to listen to presentations and see demonstrations. Fort St. Joseph’s presence was well received and the public was encouraged to attend the project’s lecture series and open house to learn more about 18th-century New France.

The Midwest Historical Archaeology Conference took place Oct. 6, at University of Illinois at Champaign. The theme of this year’s conference was public outreach and featured a variety of presentations on various approaches to public archaeology throughout the Midwest, with the goal of addressing the challenges of attaining meaningful civic engagement that goes beyond the dissemination of information. Dr. Terry Martin discussed the animal remains recovered from Fort St. Joseph and Dr. Michael Nassaney shared a film about the history of the fort and the archaeological excavation taking place over the past few years. The conference was fast paced, but provided time to address issues and ask questions. The discussion proved to be thought provoking and engaging, and was well-received. Overall, the conference was a successful and provided an opportunity to share with other members of the discipline the hard work that it takes to make a project like Fort St. Joseph effective.

The 46th Annual Conference on Historical and Underwater Archaeology, sponsored by the Society for Historical Archaeology took place Jan. 9-12 in Leicester, England. The theme of this year’s conference focused on globalization, immigration and transformation. At this year’s conference Dr. Michael Nassaney organized a day-long symposium in which authors from the American Experience in Archaeological Perspective book series, of which he is the editor, presented papers dealing with their specialization. The session sought to highlight how scholars have used archaeology to come to understand the American experience in ways which often challenge and force us to reconsider the “official” telling of history. Dr. Nassaney presented his recent work on Fort St. Joseph and how it is used to explore the trends in the historical archaeology of the North American fur trade. Dr. Terry Martin discussed the faunal remains from Fort St. Joseph and how foodways provide insight into colonial relations. The conference also featured presentations from field school alumni Erica D’Elia, Andrew Robinson and Andrew Beaupré. Susan Reichert, a field school alumna and current graduate student at Western Michigan University, submitted several photographs from the 2012 field season to the photo competition. Her photos won a first, two second and one third place ribbons. Overall, the conference was successful and provided an opportunity for alumni of the project to share the ongoing research at Fort St. Joseph.
New Film Released:
Militia Muster at Fort St. Joseph

During the 2012 field season, a film crew from Western Michigan University under the direction of Steve Kettner captured footage for the Fort St. Joseph Archaeological Project’s new film: Militia Muster at Fort St. Joseph. The film provides a variety of interviews and perspective on the art of historical reenacting, the importance of the archaeological work the project undertakes and how it adds to the historical narrative and how reenacting and archaeology complement and learn from one another. Through a generous grant from the Michigan Humanities Council and long hours of work from volunteers and staff at Western Michigan University, the project’s video production was recently completed and released to the public. The film was uploaded to the internet to provide a free and easily accessible resource for reenactors, history buffs and anyone who may have an interest in 18th-century New France. Militia Muster at Fort St. Joseph can be viewed at the project’s website or through YouTube. We would like to thank those who gave their time and resources in order for the film to be produced, as well as those that agreed to be interviewed and featured in the film. Please take the time to view the film and provide feedback.

Reenactor Perspectives at Fort St. Joseph

Since 2002 the Fort St. Joseph Archaeological Project has opened the site to the public through its annual open house. The weekend events bring in thousands of people from all over the Midwest and have grown to include a variety of participants. Robert C. Myers, who has been heavily involved with planning this event, and Connie VandePolder, a long time reenactor and resident of Southwest Michigan, provide their perspectives on reenacting and public outreach at Fort St. Joseph.

Monty Python’s trademark phrase “and now for something completely different” might well describe the living history component of the 2012 Fort St. Joseph Archaeological Open House.

Barbara Schwaderer and I served as the living history co-coordinators for the event. The event theme, ‘A Colonial Militia Muster on the Eve of Revolution’ focused on Fort St. Joseph’s military history, with a particular emphasis on the American Revolution. We decided to involve the Northwest Territory Alliance (NWTA), a Revolutionary War reenacting organization, to help interpret that era. We have both been members of the NWTA for many years, and appreciate its members’ dedication to authenticity and public education.

Reenactors in the NWTA portray specific regiments that existed during the Revolution—the King’s 8th Regiment of Foot or the 2nd Virginia Regiment, for example. For this event, however, everyone assumed the roles of local militiamen and their families who had rendezvoused at Fort St. Joseph for a muster. Instead of the usual NWTA event that included mock battles and strictly military activities, our militia muster put everyone in civilian clothing and encouraged demonstrations of domestic pursuits.

The reenactors enjoyed tomahawk throwing competitions, a “voyageur run” obstacle course, and militia-style musket drills. Noel Bash, who once taught dancing at Colonial Williamsburg, brought in her 18th-century dancing club and involved both the public and reenactors in dancing. Fritz McGirr, a professional musician and NWTA member, arrived with his band “Moxie Strings” to play for the event.

Field school students Skylar and Cassie learn traditional dances in period clothing. Photo credit to Susan Reichert.

During the day, the public toured the militia camp, shopped at a sutler’s tent, watched a pewtersmith at work and cheered on the competitors in the tomahawk throw and voyageur run. Activities like the militia drill, dancing and music led the public from the reenactors’ camp to the chief attraction: the Fort St. Joseph archaeological dig.

We had even more fun in the evening. After the public went home the NWTA reenactors invited everyone a potluck meal of 18th-century style food they had prepared over their campfires. After dinner the field schools students dressed themselves in traditional clothing loaned by the reenactors, the Moxie Strings broke out their instruments and Noel Bash and her troupe led everyone in dancing. What a great time!

I was raised in Southwest Michigan and was already familiar with the history and importance of Fort St. Joseph. I jumped at the opportunity to actually camp near the actual site and to see the progress of the archaeological dig as it was unfolding. It completed my mental vision of what it was like there at that site when the fort was an active garrison. It was a real thrill. As an alumna of Western Michigan University I was especially proud of the University’s project.

As a reenactor I am responsible for making the event a true reflection of what military camp life would have been like at the time. Lots of reading was required to become thoroughly knowledgeable about the period. Often museum visits helped with building a knowledge base. Our events usually are scheduled from May through October. During the winter off season is when one typically does this kind of research and documenting clothing and gear that is correct for the time period.

Reenacting is an activity that the family can do together. It has been found that children that are participants at a young age do very well in school history and gain self confidence. The children mastered various skills that were necessary to be as self sufficient as people that lived in Colonial or Civil War times, for example. Similar to how they learn to grasp the difference between the TV or movie world and their daily life; the children learn to distinguish 21st century from 18th century life... (Continued on page 6)
There is a significant amount of bonding that takes place with other reenactors over an event season. I have made many friends while in this hobby, some that go back almost 30 years. As you travel to the events and spend a weekend together, you develop into a family that you look forward to seeing at the start of the new season.

While you travel to the event you begin transporting your mindset to becoming the persona you are recreating. By the time camp is set up Friday night or Saturday morning and you are in your period clothing, you are what we describe as “in character.” This means that you are doing your best to view everything you do as it would have been done at that time, using items that were correct for the period. You strive to be as authentic as possible while the public is in attendance.

The days can be long, physically demanding and uncomfortable. For those that stay in camp, pitching tents and cooking over a fire can be physically tiring. By Sunday, everyone is exhausted, often aromatic from lack of daily bathing and ready to return to modern life. Sometimes very hot and humid weather or rain can be large barriers to reenactors and make the event barely tolerable. Days like these sometimes turn out to be the most cherished recollections.

I often ask why I put myself through packing up to go to camp, enduring a long drive, setting up camp in all kinds of conditions, putting on funny and often less than comfortable clothing, cooking over a campfire, living in primitive conditions, and then packing up to go and driving home. I do it because it reminds me of how much things have changed and improved since even my grandparents’ time. The most rewarding piece is watching the amazement in the eyes of the spectators as they are transported to another time and place. And yes, I do call it fun.—Connie Vandepolder
During the 2012 field season, Dr. William Sauck of Western Michigan University’s Department of Geosciences joined us in the field to survey a yet-to-be excavated area of Fort St. Joseph. In order to prepare for Dr. Sauck’s survey, the research team measured out two adjacent blocks for surveying, one 10x10 m. square and one 20x20 m. square. These areas, located to the west of the dewatering system, held great potential to examine the western extent of the fort site.

Assisted by the research team, Dr. Sauck marked out one-meter units across the entirety of the survey area. Using a magnetic gradiometer the areas were surveyed. The magnetic gradiometer can detect items buried under the ground surface that have magnetic qualities such as iron, fired pottery and burned stones. Dr. Sauck then prepared the results of the survey which were delivered to the research team later in the season.

The results of the survey showed several anomalies that matched the patterns of earlier surveys and excavation findings. These new anomalies that oriented along the course of the river, seemed to line up with the known hearths suggesting the possible presence of archaeological features. Excavations to examine similar anomalies elsewhere on the site have revealed fireplaces associated with domestic structures. New geophysical technologies have enabled archaeologists to narrow their excavations to areas of interest and the results of this new survey could guide our research design in the upcoming years.

Many thanks go out to Dr. William Sauck and his assistant for providing their time and talents to the project and for conducting the survey.

Examples of the several layers that the data from the magnetic gradiometer captured after computer analysis. Layers prepared by Dr. William Sauck.
Recent and Upcoming Events and Activities

**SEPT.**

**Sept. 1, 2012-present** The project blog was updated throughout the academic year, reaching nearly 16,000 unique views.

**Sept. 12, 2012** Dr. Michael Nassaney presented on Fort St. Joseph at the Illinois State Museum's Research and Collections Center.

**September 2012** Dr. Michael Nassaney had a chapter published as lead author in *Contested Territories: Native Americans and Non-Natives in the Lower Great Lakes, 1700-1850.*

**September 2012** Cathrine Davis was awarded a $2,500 scholarship from the Lee Honors College for her study on lead seals in New France.

*Nov. 13, 2012* The annual report was completed and distributed.

**MAR.**


**Mar. 10, 2013** Dr. Michael Nassaney discussed the ongoing work at Fort St. Joseph as the featured speaker at the Sunday Supper Club in Colon, Mich.


**Mar. 23, 2013** The project received a $1,500 grant from Western Michigan University’s Cultural Events Committee to support the 2013 open house.

**March 2013** The most recent video production, Militia Muster at Fort St. Joseph, was released free of charge and can be viewed on Youtube.

**APR.**

**Apr. 5, 2013** Dr. Michael Nassaney presented “Prelude at FSJ” at The War Called Pontiac’s, a conference sponsored by the McNeil Center for Early American Studies in Philadelphia.

**Apr. 13, 2013** Dr. Michael Nassaney presented “The Discovery and Investigation of a French Trading Post in Southwest Michigan” to the French-Canadian Heritage Society of Michigan at the Mount Clemens Public Library.

**Apr. 16, 2013** Dr. Michael Nassaney presented “Making the Past Come Alive: Public Archaeology at FSJ” at the Antwerp Sunshine Library in Mattawan, Mich. This event was sponsored by the Friends of the Antwerp Sunshine Library.


**Apr. 20, 2013** Dr. Michael Nassaney presented “Who Lived at FSJ? The Archaeology of a Multi-Ethnic Community in Eighteenth-Century New France” at the John Jay Center for Learning in Portland, Ind., for the Current Research in Great Lakes Native American Culture academic conference, presented by the National Center for Great Lakes Native American Culture.

**April 2013** Alexander Brand published a summary of the 2012 field season in the Society for History Archaeology Newsletter (Spring 2013).

**MAY**

**May 10, 2013** Dr. Michael Nassaney presented at the 33rd Annual Statewide Preservation Conference on the campus of Northern Michigan University, introduced by the Michigan Historic Preservation Network. Dr. Nassaney took part in the section “Archaeology: It’s About People-Past and Present.”

**May 2013** Dr. Michael Nassaney and Alexander Brand began work on a new booklet in the series titled *Fort St. Joseph Revealed.*

(Continued on page 9)
Recent and Upcoming Events and Activities


Jul. 6, 2013 Fort St. Joseph commemorative boulder rededicated celebrating 100 years.

Jul. 8, 2013 The 2013 field season begins, with students arriving in Niles, Mich. to begin the 38th annual archaeological field school.

Aug. 10-11 The annual open house takes place with an emphasis on foodways at Fort St. Joseph and provides a variety of activities for all to enjoy.

Sept. 25, 2013 Dr. Michael Nassaney will present “The Discovery and Investigation of a French Trading Post in Southwest Michigan” at 6:30 p.m. at the Parchment Community Library, Parchment, Mich.

Sept. 27, 2013 Dr. Michael Nassaney will present at the 139th Annual Meeting and State History Conference of the Historical Society of Michigan in Kalamazoo, Mich.

Oct. 10, 2013 Dr. Michael Nassaney will present at the annual Michigan Museums Association Conference in Bay City, Mich.
2013 Fort St. Joseph Archaeology Summer Camp

The Fort St. Joseph Archaeological Project, a collaborative partnership between Western Michigan University, the City of Niles, and the Fort St. Joseph Museum, presents the 2013 Archaeology Summer Camps. Participants will work alongside Western Michigan University faculty, staff, and graduate and undergraduate students investigating the history and archaeology of Fort St. Joseph and its role in the Great Lakes fur trade. Activities will include classroom presentations, discussions, field excavation, archaeological surveys, recordkeeping, lab work, analysis, and interpretation.

Camp Dates:
July 22-26............. Jr. High School (Grades 6-9)
July 29 - Aug. 2........... Adults (Ages 16+)
Aug. 5 - 9........... Adults for Graduate/CEU Credit

For an application, please visit www.fortstjosephmuseum.org or contact Carol Bainbridge at cbainbridge@nilesmi.org
Application deadline is June 1, 2013 or until all positions are filled.
For more information, visit our website at www.wmich.edu/fortstjoseph
2013 Fort St. Joseph Archaeological Open House

August 10-11
10 a.m.-4 p.m.

Activities available to all visitors include opportunities to:
• Eat and shop 18th century style
• Participate in 18th century games and activities for children
• See an archaeological dig in progress
• Meet and talk with archaeologists
• Hear presentations by public scholars about the dig and food ways at Fort St. Joseph

The 2013 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.

The Fort St. Joseph Archaeological Project is a partnership between Western Michigan University, the City of Niles and the Michigan Humanities Council.

For more information about the project, please go to: www.wmich.edu/fortstjoseph