Faculty Spotlight: 2013 Emerging Scholar Kristina Wirtz

Celebrating Exceptional Research in Linguistic Anthropology

Associate Professor of Anthropology Kristina Wirtz received the 2013 Emerging Scholar Award from Western Michigan University. This award recognizes exceptional research and creative activity by WMU faculty during the early part of their careers. Kristina is the department’s linguistic anthropologist, although her work also engages sociocultural anthropological methods and concerns. She has been doing ethnographic field research in eastern Cuba since 1998, and her published work examines cross-sections of religion, performance, race, and history-making in Cuba. She received a National Endowment for the Humanities award for the summer of 2012 to work on a book chapter about carnival performance in the city of Santiago de Cuba. In June 2014, the University of Chicago Press will release her second book, Performing Afro-Cuba. During the 2013-14 academic year, Kristina is on sabbatical leave to conduct a new research project studying children’s developing attitudes toward bilingualism in a dual language elementary school. With this project she has been able to get students directly involved in research in a way that has not been possible for her Cuba research. The project, “Learning to be Bilingual,” received research grants from two foundations. As for what the future holds, the new field data will provide plenty of material to analyze in coming years, and Kristina also has a third book in the works based on her ongoing research in Cuba.
Diane Roushangar successfully defended her thesis in October 2013. Her thesis is titled: Refugee Reflections: A Focus on the Lived Experiences of African Refugees Resettling in Michigan. During Diane’s research she worked with refugees from northeast and sub-Saharan Africa who were resettling in a small city in Michigan. Many Congolese refugees came from camps in Tanzania, while others were from Sudan, Somalia, and Rwanda. Diane’s interest in refugees and resettlement began during her undergraduate education and it was during her second semester as a graduate student at WMU that she decided that she wanted to continue to research in the area of refugee resettlement for her master’s thesis.

Diane’s original focus in the research was examining the relationship between the refugees and the resettlement organizations but after several months of research the theme of secondary trauma from structural violence became apparent. What resulted was a paper about the lived experiences of refugees and the emotions that accompany the traumatic process of resettlement. Completing a total of 15 interviews and nearly eight months of participant observation, Diane was able to forge very close relationships with many of her respondents. These close relationships are evident in her thesis as she intertwines the stories of her interlocutors with her own personal experiences during the research.

What the resettlement agencies, government, and the academic literature often ignore is the multi-faceted process refugees experience during resettlement. Often, there is a focus on external indicators of integration, which wholly ignores the internal changes that take place. Some emotional stressors are directly tied to external influences and
include financial concerns, work-related issues, and a lack of adequate ESL support that can all lead to increased anxiety. The secondary trauma that was often experienced was evident in the extremely hazardous meatpacking plants where many were employed, the lack of English classes, in addition to the inadequate six-month resettlement period that refugees are given. Because of trauma from the past, refugees are at a higher risk to their psychological well-being because stressors from the present can compound the suffering.

Diane chose to approach her research from a creative standpoint by using the narrative approach in addition to including interpretations of the research in the form of poetry written from the perspective of the refugee. It is in this form that the experiences of her respondents are displayed for the reader while avoiding the analyzing that often comes with academic writing. In addition, writing in this form opens the doors to a much broader audience—one that extends beyond an academic audience.

With the help of Dr. Straight, her committee chair, Diane was encouraged to submit a revised version of her thesis to the Journal of Anthropology and Humanism due to the creative aspect of the paper as well as the valuable information contained within. Diane’s committee members also encouraged her to take the research she gathered a step further to create a publishable work for a mainstream media outlet. She is currently working on revising the poetry sections so they can stand on their own for the publication in mainstream poetic venues. She is also in the process of preparing an ethnographic fiction piece that will encompass the experiences of resettlement.
Experiential Learning: Anthropology
Students Collaborate in the Classroom, Lab, Museum, and Field

2014 Anthropology in the Community: Apple Island

Pictured: 2012-2014 Museum installation created by students in ANTH 5350 Museums & Material Culture led by Bilinda Straight

WMU Students exploring ruins on Apple Island
Whether an entire class creates a museum exhibit, travels, or a field school keeps archaeology real, experiential learning takes the classroom beyond the academy.

Anthropology in the Community 2014: Apple Island, led by LouAnn Wurst

In the summer of 2013, students from Western Michigan University (WMU) participated in a course titled Anthropology in the Community where they gained practical, hands-on experience in cultural resource management. Taught by WMU’s Dr. LouAnn Wurst and WMU alumni Mark Hoock, the course was a joint effort with the Greater West Bloomfield Historical Society (GWBHS) to determine the National Register eligibility of Apple Island’s cultural resources. A grant from the St. Francis Foundation paid for our housing at Camp Dearborn in Milford, Michigan. Dedicated community volunteers organized a pontoon to transport us to and from the island every day.

Located in Orchard Lake, Michigan, Apple Island became a sacred oasis for a community of influential figures and their families in the 19th century. Colin Campbell, a merchant who owned the Scotch Store in Detroit, purchased Apple Island in 1856 to use as a summer retreat for his family. He invited relatives and close family friends to build their own seasonal cottages on the island. These include the family of Charles Loos, president of Transylvania College in Kentucky; Charles Devendorf, Colin Campbell’s personal physician and founder of the Detroit Children’s Free Hospital; and Henry C. Ellison, President of the Ohio Mutual Savings and Loan Company.
in Cleveland.

After stepping foot on Apple Island, students explored the island and devised a plan of action. The class identified above-ground features and linked them to those marked on an early 20th-century map (Figures 1 and 2). A total of 11 historic house areas were identified along with roadways, wells, privies, dumps, and yard features. The class conducted surface collections across the island and focused archaeological testing in the form of shovel test pits and unit excavations on four house sites which included privies, wells, and domestic structures. The Campbell and Harvey Houses were the only early homes with elaborate structural remains. Other cottages were identified by uniform depressions, concentrations of brick, and scattered artifacts. Students recorded their finds in field notes and personal journals and gained valuable experience mapping by hand and using a total station.

Artifacts were taken back to the mainland where they were washed and bagged in the Orchard Lake Community Church. Open lab hours held at the church provided the unique opportunity for the class to engage more directly with community members. To update the public on our progress, the class also managed a Facebook page which is still up and running (https://www.facebook.com/AppleIslandArchaeologyProject). Towards the end of our time in the field, students participated in the GWBH’s weekend-long Apple Island Tours event sharing their finds with hundreds of visitors (Figure 3).

A significant amount of data was collected from just a few weeks of fieldwork at Apple Island. Preliminary results were presented on a poster at the 2013 Michigan Archaeology Day held in Lansing, Michigan. The poster is currently on display at the Orchard Lake Museum. There is great potential for further analysis which continues to inspire WMU degree-seeking graduates like Aisilinn Nelson and Skylar Bauer who are using the assemblage for their theses and Instructor Hoock who is incorporating Apple Island into his doctoral dissertation at American University.

In the end, close to 20,000 artifacts were collected, washed, catalogued, curated, and analyzed to help us understand the everyday life of those who vacationed on the island. We are currently working on the National Register nomination which will be submitted to the State Historic Preservation Officer this spring. We plan to return to Apple Island in the summer of 2014 for further investigations, as part of the summer Archaeological Field School.

Dr. Wurst leading a tour during the open house as Scott Duxbury and Jenna Johnson demonstrate their perfect excavation techniques.
WMU hosted its 38th annual archaeological field school this past season at Fort St. Joseph under the direction of Dr. Michael S. Nassaney. This year marked the tenth field season for the Fort St. Joseph Archaeological Project. The Project, established in 1998, has forged a valuable partnership between WMU’s Anthropology Department, Support the Fort, Inc., the City of Niles, the Fort St. Joseph Museum, and other community groups. Their shared goal—to better understand the Fort’s role in the Great Lakes fur trade—continues to guide archaeological investigations. A total of 16 students and staff joined Nassaney in the field, where they conducted field work and engaged in a variety of public outreach activities.

Excavations in the floodplain and the adjacent terrace produced exciting results as well as new questions to be addressed. A line of 14 shovel test pits spaced 10 m apart were excavated to ground truth a magnetic gradiometer survey conducted in 2012. The survey indicated magnetic anomalies west of the dewatering system in an area that had not been tested since 1998. Shovel testing carried out in 2013 yielded a low density of 18th-century material west of the dewatering system that will hopefully see additional testing in future field seasons. This data will assist in determining the extent of the site.

With no historic maps of the fort, physical evidence of buildings found during excavation greatly assist in understanding and interpreting the site. This year’s excavations uncovered a concentration of stone and mortar wall debris, which appears to be an example of *colombage pierroté*, a
typical construction method in New France, which used mortar and stones to fill the interstices between upright wooden posts. Excavation nearby uncovered a well-preserved, flat lying hewn timber in line with several large mortar-covered stones thought to be a foundation wall. Its orientation and proximity to a fireplace suggests the stone wall and wooden artifact are remains of a domestic building. If the wooden artifact is in fact a sill, this may be evidence of a post-on-sill construction known as *poteaux-sur-sole*, where sills supported wall posts.

Alternately, the timber may be the remains of a door sill and represent an entrance into the structure.

Public education and outreach has always been a cornerstone of the Project. Throughout the field season students helped maintain the Project’s social media presence by updating our blog and Facebook page. The summer camps for youths and adults attracted 23 participants, and the Fifth Annual Summer Lecture Series drew a sizeable audience for four presentations. The series highlighted several noteworthy events such as the 250th anniversary of Pontiac’s Rebellion, the rededication of the seventy-ton boulder used to commemorate the location of Fort St. Joseph, and an award-winning documentary film depicting a Militia Muster at Fort St. Joseph. The Project was also visited by a film crew who will feature Fort St. Joseph in a PBS television series titled *America: From the Ground Up!* scheduled to air in 2014.

The season’s education and outreach activities culminated in the annual weekend-long Open House.
event which offers free tours of the site, one-on-one interaction with student archaeologists and living history re-enactors, lectures by public scholars, and hands-on activities for all ages. The 2013 Open House was attended by over 1,500 people. The Historical Society of Michigan recently presented a State History Award to the Project for its Outstanding Educational Program at its 139th annual conference. Several photographs from the Project recently won awards at the international photo competition held by the Advisory Council on Underwater Archaeology at the annual Conference on Historical and Underwater Archaeology in Quebec, Canada, including first place in the diversity category. This season’s collaborative efforts and research goals continue to reinforce the Project’s commitment to community involvement. To insure public input into future investigations, the Project will host a symposium in Fall 2014 to assist in determining next steps in making the history and archaeology of Fort St. Joseph more accessible to an increasing audience both in Niles and beyond. For more information see http://www.wmich.edu/fortstjoseph/ or like us on Facebook.

Kalamazoo-area middle school and high school students learned about bioarchaeological methods in skeletal identification and analysis in various hands-on activities led by Dr. Jackie Eng and Dr. Sarah Schrader as part of the “STEMulating Careers” program, an event tied with MLK Celebration Day, hosted by WMU on Jan. 18, 2014.
Students, faculty, and friends gather during finals week to intellectually engage graduate student research, socialize, and take a break from studying to celebrate one another’s accomplishments.

WMU Anthropology graduate student Jamie Gomez presents at 40th Annual Paleopathology Meeting & Clayton Pilbro presents at 73rd Annual Meeting of Society of Vertebrate Paleontology

Left: Jamie Gomez in front of her poster on dental health of ancient Asian pastoralist at the 40th Annual 2013 Paleopathology Association Annual Conference in Knoxville, Tennessee. She will also be attending the 2014 PPA conference in Calgary, Canada, to present her thesis work on dental health in Cleveland in the early 1900s.

Right: Clayton Pilbro, “Ecology of the Early Eocene San Juan Basin, NM Phenacolemur jepseni with Comparison to Phenacolemur citatus and Phenacolemur praecox from the Bighorn Basin, WY: A study of microwear and dental variation.” Clayton has an internship with Dr. Jonathan Bloch (University of Florida) to work in Panama this summer on 50 million year old Eocene fossil localities along the newly widened canal.
ANTHROPOLOGY AWARDS
2013-2014

Maher Award:
Awarded annually to one or more graduating seniors or graduate students in Anthropology who demonstrate outstanding ability and promise for the future. Winners of the award are determined by the faculty of the Anthropology Department. The award was established in honor of Robert F. Maher who taught at the University for thirty years, and who was the founder and first chair of the Anthropology Department.

Garrett A. Sieloff
Brandon D. Soderman

Maher Travel Award:
Established in 2009, the Maher Travel Grant provides funds to support undergraduate and graduate anthropology students traveling to conferences to present professional papers or posters.

Clayton Pilbro: Society of Vertebrate Paleontology, Los Angeles
Jamie Gomez: Paleopathology Association, Calgary
Emily Williams: American Ethnological Society, Boston
Rieti Gengo: BioArch and Forensic Anth Association, Columbus Ohio
Samantha Lininger: BioArch and Forensic Anth Association, Columbus Ohio

Alan H. Jacobs Memorial Award

Clayton Pilbro: Panama Canal Project Field School, NSF internship, Smithsonian Institution Tropical Research Institute, summer 2014 to study Eocene fossil deposits
Garrett Sieloff: study abroad Prague, Czech Republic & work on Honor’s Thesis: auto-ethnography of the country’s recent immersion into the Neoliberal market.

NEW: Erica Loeffler Academic Achievement Award
Roxana Gamble
Emily Williams
Paige Edwards
Rieti Gengo

William M. Cremin Scholarship in Archaeology
This scholarship was created in 2010 to commemorate the 35th anniversary of the WMU archaeological field school and to honor Dr. William M. Cremin who co-founded the program in 1976. The purpose of the scholarship is to assist students in defraying the costs associated with attending the archaeological field school.

Maria M. Smith
Garrett A. Sieloff

The Presidential Scholar Award
The most prestigious honor an undergraduate student can be awarded at WMU. It is awarded to a single graduating senior in each department every year. Presidential Scholars are determined by the department faculty.

Matthew Ftacek

Graduate College Awards:

Department Graduate Research and Creative Scholar Award
Jamie M. Gomez

Department Graduate Award for Teaching Effectiveness
Rieti G. Gengo

Phi Beta Kappa students to invite:
Jaime L. McCoy
Michelle M. Voss
Casey Walle
Anna Marie L. Gerechka
Undergraduate Paper Prize: The Anthropology Collective Award for Excellence in Writing

1st Prize: Roxana Gamble
2nd Prize: Jaime McCoy
3rd Prize: Avery Cook

1st Annual Graduate Student Pecha-Kucha:

Anthropology was well represented at the 1st Annual Graduate Student Pecha-Kucha. Jamie Gomez, Brandon Soderman, Aaron Howe, Skylar Bauer, Emily Powell, and Rieti Gengo all presented their research and Rieti won 1st place in the competition. Dr. Jackie Eng and LouAnn Wurst served as judges.

Part-Time Instructor Excellence in Teaching Award:

The Western Michigan University College of Arts and Sciences Part-time Instructor Excellence in Teaching Award acknowledges significant contributions to the learning environment by part-time instructors.

Dr. Britt Hartenberger

U.S. Forest Service Recognizes Professor LouAnn Wurst and WMU Anthropology students with a Volunteer Award for the entire Eastern District for their work at the McDonald site in the Hoosier National Forest.

2014 Pecha-Kucha, from left to right: Dr. Jackie Eng, Dr. Sarah Schrader, Rieti Gengo, Dr. LouAnn Wurst, Skylar Bauer, Aaron Howe, Emily Powell
Dr. Jackie Eng returned to Nepal and China this past summer to conduct new investigations related to her bioarchaeological research of ancient health among ancient Asian populations. In Nepal, she worked alongside expert mountain climbers and an international team of archaeologists and Nepali anthropologists to survey burial sites in the high altitude districts of Mustang and Manang. She also traveled to China with supporting funds from an IEFDF grant (Haenicke Institute) and OVPR, as well as local support from Jilin University. She collected health data and 3D digital laser scans of bones from skeletal assemblages dating to the Chinese Neolithic and Bronze Age and presented a guest lecture at Jilin University’s first Bioarchaeology Workshop, which hosted bright young students from over 20 districts in China.

Dr. Britt Hartenberger was awarded a Franklin Grant in the amount of $2000 from the American Philosophical Society for travel to and research as part of the Ziyaret Tepe Archaeological Research Project. Her project was entitled “Analysis of domestic use of chipped stone at Iron Age Ziyaret Tepe, southeastern Turkey, through microdebris and macro artifacts.” She analyzed the tiny artifacts found in the heavy fraction remaining from the flotation process and compared these to macro artifacts, as a means of determining room function at the household level in elite and non-elite contexts. She is planning to continue working with the project for its last season in the summer of 2014.

Dr. Sarah Hill says, “Hey how about the weather? Sarah Hill continues to dig deep into how people throw
things away, what they choose not to throw away, and what they think about all the stuff that does and doesn’t get recycled. She has also launched a new project on the weather (very timely, given this year’s unusual winter). If you like thinking about weather and like talking about your thoughts on weather, please contact Sarah; she does too and would be very happy to hear what you have to say.

Dr. Jon Holtzman was awarded a National Science Foundation senior research grant to continue his research in Japan on sweet foods from the perspective of food and memory. He has also added a public health component to his research, which has led to his collaboration with colleagues in behavior nutrition at the University of Bristol, UK. Through that collaboration, he is continuing his long-term research on food and memory in northern Kenya and creating a cross-cultural, interdisciplinary project in Kenya and Japan.

Dr. Michael Nassaney is spending his sabbatical leave this academic year (2013-2014) writing a book on The Archaeology of the North American Fur Trade that will appear in his book series, The American Experience in Archaeological Perspective (University Press of Florida). He is also organizing the 10th annual Midwest Historical Archaeology Conference on archaeology and heritage management this fall, 2014, in Niles, MI and is assisting in the design of a major archaeology exhibit called, “Evidence Found,” scheduled to open at the Kalamazoo Public Museum in January, 2015. Finally, Governor Rick Snyder recently appointed Nassaney to a four-year term on the Michigan Freedom Trail Commission that evaluates and promotes sites associated with the Underground Railroad.

Dr. Sarah Schrader, Visiting Assistant Professor, has been continuing her bioarchaeological research on Ancient Nubian skeletal samples, focusing on understanding the everyday lives of these people through the reconstruction of both diet and activity patterns. She is currently working on a publication that compares Nubian daily life before and after Egyptian conquest in the 2nd millennium B.C. This year she presented her research at the Midwest Bioarchaeology and Forensic Anthropology Association, the American Association of Anthropologists, and the Trans-Saharan Migration conferences.

Dr. Laura Spielvogel will serve as the Director of Outreach as part of a team to have been awarded a three-year NEH Digital Implementation Grant (2013-2016). In this role, she will help design an innovative five-step wizard to enable nine other faculty members to develop role-playing simulations, similar to her “Marriage of Cultures” game based around the narrative framework of a Japanese-American wedding. She most recently used the simulation in her "Sex, Gender, and Culture" class in Fall 2013. She is grateful to have been awarded a sabbatical for 2014-2015 to work on the NEH grant as well as to write the first six chapters for a digital anthropology textbook to be integrated with her simulation. She also recently published an ethnographic short story in Anthropology and Humanism (June 2013), entitled "Sabishii Sofa".

Dr. Bilinda Straight is currently revising her ethnographic novel, Tricking Elephant. In 2012 and 2013 her creative writing has been recognized with selections in the semi-finalist and finalist categories by Mid-American Review, New Letters, and the Faulkner-Wisdom Awards. Her biocultural work on northern Kenyan pastoralist health in the context of intercommunity violence has been featured as a National Science Foundation SEE Innovation Highlight (Research.gov).
Back Page Surprise: Can you identify these folks?
Stumped? See below…

Answer here (upside down, Cackle, cackle, cackle)

Standing Left to Right: D.J., D.J., D.J., D.J., D.J., D.J., D.J., D.J., D.J., D.J., D.J., D.J., D.J., D.J., D.J.
Sitting Left to Right: Mary (Crunkleton), D.J., D.J., D.J., D.J., D.J., D.J., D.J., D.J., D.J., D.J., D.J., D.J., D.J., D.J.