

Museum Studies News

Spring Issue

May 2005

Volume 5

Number 2

A Brief Introduction to Mike Stafford, MPM's President by Jeri Gasper

Dr. Michael Stafford (Mike to just about everyone) became President and CEO of the Milwaukee Public Museum about eighteen months ago. Having known Mike for several years now, I was able to talk to him recently in order to find out a little more about his background, as well as his future goals for MPM.

Mike, his wife Teresa, and their seven children currently live in Mequon, but Mike grew up in the small town of Greenville, Michigan. He earned his bachelor's in Sociology and Archaeology from Alma College in 1987. 1988 brought him to the Master's program at the University of Wyoming, where he studied the peopling of North America, with a special focus on lithic technology. He moved on to the University of Wisconsin-Madison for his Ph.D., graduating in 1995. At UW he started work on craft specialization and lithic tools in relation to economic development in India, but was unexpectedly given the opportunity to research in Denmark for a semester, which led him to finish his degree studying the

prehistoric transition to agriculture in southern Scandinavia by incorporating a statistical analysis of stone tools.

Mike's work experience brought him into the realm of museums. He has done archaeological fieldwork, primarily in Denmark and Michigan, every summer since 1985, except for the last couple of years. He had an internship at the Public Museum of Grand Rapids (MI), and later, through connections from Denmark and a lot of persistence, was able to get a job at the Cranbrook Institute of Science, a private educational institution in Bloomfield Hills, MI, as an archaeology curator. He moved through the ranks at Cranbrook, progressing in four years from curator to Head of Science to Interim Director to Director. After one year as Director at Cranbrook, Mike was called to head the MPM in 2003.

Mike is very excited and passionate about the role of museums in modern society. The concept of lifelong learning and museums' function in fulfilling that concept is what really catches his attention. Experiences created in the museum setting can help individuals find out more about themselves and their place in the world, as well as learning about other cultures and worldviews. He especially enjoys natural history museums because they not only incorporate science, but because they typically present human and cultural aspects

of the picture as well. To keep a big institution like MPM relevant and interesting, while still earning enough support to remain afloat financially in the current economic situation, is a challenge Mike is willing to take on.

Along those lines, Mike's plans and goals for MPM include, first of all, surviving the Marquette Interchange project, which has dramatically affected attendance at all the museums and non-profit organizations in the downtown area. Long-term goals include growing the educational and programming aspects so as to maintain the standards MPM has established for so many years now; serving more diverse audiences in new ways; using technology and new media to make a national and international impact (something he sees the Museum Studies students being more involved in); strengthening the ties between Tirimbina, the Costa Rican rainforest center, and MPM in order to provide education on biodiversity both in a rainforest setting as well as here in Wisconsin; building an endowment and a stable funding base to be able to weather continued economic instability and the real possibility of funding cuts from the county; raising the visibility of the museum on a local, regional, and national level by analyzing their branding and changing public perception in order to become a more regionally relevant institution, where people of all ages and backgrounds can come to learn about their world.

As far as the Museum Studies program is concerned, Mike is extremely supportive and eager to see it grow. He sees the program as a critical core program for the museum and hopes to see it double in size by the time he leaves. He envisions more opportunities for collaboration with other museums in the city, like the Milwaukee Art Museum or the Haggerty Museum of Art, and getting other

disciplines, like art history for example, involved with the program as well. Mike wants to see the Museum Studies students involved in implementing new methods of information sharing, particularly through technology and how visitors interface with the museum, since our younger generation is more comfortable and familiar with a technological format.

Mike is an extremely friendly, easygoing, yet hardworking person. If anyone, students included, has a concern, he would certainly be willing to discuss it (although fitting into his schedule may be a bit of a trick). Mike's advice to students today is something his dad told him: "Find something you'd do for nothing and try to make a job out of it." Find your passion, add a lot of hard work and persistence, and you will make something out of it that makes you happy and keeps you interested.

[Editor's Note: This story was written before the financial crisis struck that ultimately resulted in Dr. Stafford's resignation on June 3, 2005.]



Cedarburg Cultural Center

by Tracy Trummer, Melissa Bradley,
and Pam Anderson

Situated in a restored 1860s frame building on the south end of downtown Cedarburg, the General Store holds the key to most of the Midwest's advertising and packaging history. The collection, from the old Christensen grocery store in Green Bay, features everything from cereal boxes to motor oil to detergents. When the collection was loaned to the Cedarburg Cultural Center in 1999, the Center renovated a former grocery and clothing store to house the objects. At last, in January of this year, the Center was able to purchase the collection from the Christensen family. Though a

cursory inventory was performed in 1998, the collections have since remained untouched. The first intern's job was to complete a new inventory and revamp the store's exhibits, labels, and storage.

Having no clear understanding of museum practices, the Cedarburg Cultural Center first needed instructions to begin the inventory. Tracy Trummer created a basic inventory sheet and a General Store map to record the location of each object. She then took a digital photograph of each shelf or area to later attach to an electronic version of the inventory. After inventorying the store windows, Tracy then replaced more fragile items with those that could withstand the sunlight.

Since volunteers often run the General Store, Tracy also created museum guidelines, encouraging all of them to take better care of the collections. Not eating and drinking in the General Store and handling objects only while wearing gloves were among the most important rules. Though many are unsupervised, the volunteers have clearly taken the plan to heart. The General Store is now cleaner, currently bug-free, and objects are in their correct place on the shelves.

In January, Melissa Bradley and Pam Anderson joined Tracy in completing the inventory. They each claimed a corner of the store, carefully examining each object. During the inventory, they discovered several unexpected and valuable pieces. Among these were two cigar boxes full of early 20th-century negatives, glass plates, and photographs of the Green Bay area and President Taft's visit to the city. They also came across a rare 1898 SC Johnson cleaning product and interesting early 20th-century pamphlets about birth control and the dangers of being skinny.

By the end of the semester, they will also have rotated store-front window exhibits and written more readable and

informative labels. The objects in basement storage at the General Store will also be reorganized, cleaned, and placed in archival-quality containers and on metal shelving units.

Though they did not attain all of their goals, Tracy, Melissa, and Pam have established a plan for future interns. Rotating exhibits and cataloguing and marking objects are among the many projects the next interns will face. Hopefully what they have begun will help to maintain an interest in the collection and ensure that it will be a part of the historic Cedarburg community for generations to come.



Spring 2005 Internship: MPM History Department by Elizabeth Handwerk

This spring I completed an internship at the Milwaukee Public Museum (MPM) in the History Department working with material from the Tell Hadidi site under the supervision of Curator of Ancient History, Carter Lupton. Tell Hadidi is a Bronze Age site located in the northern part of modern day Syria along the Euphrates River. Excavations were conducted from 1972-1978 under the direction of Dr. Rudolph Dornemann, then Curator of Ancient History at MPM. While researchers, students, and interns have worked and are working with many aspects of the collection, no one has examined the human and faunal remains from Tell Hadidi. As I have maintained an interest in mortuary archaeology and osteology from my undergraduate days, this internship seemed to be a good opportunity for refreshing my bioarchaeological skills, familiarizing myself with the MPM and its collections, as well as acquiring training in conservation and analysis.

The materials have never been examined since the original excavations that took place over 20 years ago, and have remained, until this past semester, in their original boxes. The bags were badly deteriorated. First, I cleaned, re-bagged, and re-tagged all of the material. I recognized that this would help stabilize the collection of skeletal material for future analysis and interpretation. Once completed, I performed a general inventory and identification of the material. The material is exceptionally fragmentary and the human and faunal remains were mixed together. The material needed to be sorted and then properly inventoried. My ultimate goal was to determine the minimum number of individuals (MNI) present in each burial, as well as the age, sex and other identifying markers of the human remains. My training in zooarchaeological analysis is limited, but in future it would be interesting to examine the faunal material in greater detail to determine the species and number of specimens that are present, as well as any other interesting diagnostic features; perhaps this would make a suitable internship for another student.

One of the many challenges that I ran into in the course of this internship was the fragility of the bones. Cleaning was a much slower process than expected, but satisfying when I could find refits or identify interesting features! Another challenge I encountered was dealing with bags that had no tags or random tags that were not associated with any artifact bags. This is when primary field notes are especially useful. Perhaps in the future someone will work on preserving this important primary source information.

Working on the collection was a lot of fun and a good learning experience. All of the people in the History department are great and have become helpful resources for my Museum Studies classes as well as any

future work I might do at the MPM. The History Department has a wide variety of material in their collections, relating to everything from American and local Wisconsin history to ancient history and archaeology from the Ancient Near East, the Mediterranean, and Asia. As a result, the MPM has a staff and interns with varied and exciting interests. It was fun to interact with other students who were working on projects focusing on coins, stamps, and a variety of other materials. During this time I learned about what these other students do while sharing with them my own interests and work. An internship is a great way to bridge the gap between the two disciplines of anthropology and history. Although I was able to achieve some of the goals I set for myself over the course of the internship, I realized that when working on a collection of this size, there is always more to be done! I look forward to pursuing more work with the collection in the future. As the collection stands now, I am happy in the knowledge that I have left the material in better condition than when I found it, making it easier for future interns, students or researchers to work with it.



Current and Upcoming Interns and Jobs

Tracy Trummer - Harley-Davidson Archives and Sheboygan Historical Society
Pam Anderson - S.C. Johnson Archives
Seth Schneider - MPM Anthropology Department
Leah Rosenow - S.C. Johnson Archives and Kenosha Public Museum
Saul Drake - Derse Museum Exhibits
Tina Schinabeck - Sheboygan Historical Society

Alex Trumbull - Museum of Northern Arizona
 Julia Hickey - National Baseball Hall of Fame (NY)
 Karl Wolff - Ringling Museum of Art (Florida)
 Liz Handwerk - Colorado Historical Society
 Lis Thimke - Discovery World
 Lisa Chaso - MPM History Department
 Nick Hoffman - Old World Wisconsin
 Erin Gredell - MPM Anthropology Department
 Julia Fiene - Ten Chimneys
 Kurt Sampson - Cedarburg Cultural Center

***Where Are They Now:
 Museum Studies Alumni***

Wisconsin Museums:

Mary Bade, Wisconsin Veterans Museum
 Ron Bartz, Pabst Mansion
 Linda Corbin-Pardee, Walker's Point Center for the Arts
 Angela Daane, Sheboygan County Historical Society
 Cait Dallas, Ten Chimneys
 Valerie Davis, Oconomowoc Historical Society
 Dawn Day Hourigan, Pabst Mansion
 Ester Fajzi-DeGroot, Wriston Art Gallery
 Trevor Jones, Neville Museum
 Jim Kieselburg, Haggerty Museum of Art
 Randy Klemm, Heritage Hill State Park
 Jennifer Kolb, Wisconsin State Historical Museum
 Tamara Lange, Raynor Memorial Libraries
 Brad Larson, Oshkosh Public Museum
 Jamie Kelly, Eisner Museum of Advertising and Design
 Molly (Mavis) Hannan, Ten Chimneys
 Janean Mollet, Chudnow Museum of Yesteryear
 Amy Norlin, Wisconsin Veterans Museum

Gina Radant, Kenosha Public Museum
 Jan Smith, Rahr-West Art Museum
 Jodi Rich, Pabst Mansion
 Brook Swanson, Waukesha County Museum
 Karla Wheeler, Logan Museum of Anthropology

Beyond Wisconsin:

Britta Arendt, Frank Lloyd Wright Trust, Oak Park, Illinois
 Steve Arseneau, Southwestern Michigan College Museum
 Heather Bigeck, South Dakota Historical Society
 Susannah Bowles, Peoria Historical Society, Illinois
 Henry Crawford, Museum of Texas Tech University
 Bob Fuhrman, Clark County Historical Society, Ohio
 Kim Gromer, Tempe Historical Museum, Arizona
 Laura Halverson, San Diego Natural History Museum, California
 Erik Holland, Minnesota Historical Society
 Greg Moore, U.S. State Department
 Nick Neylon, Greater Southwest Historical Museum, Oklahoma
 Brian Pease, Minnesota Historical Society
 Mike Telzrow, Might Eighth Air Force Heritage Museum, Georgia
 Don Terras, Grosse Point Lighthouse, Illinois
 Paul Wenglowsky, St. Augustine Lighthouse Museum, Florida
 Wendy Williams, Austin Children's Museum, Texas

MPM Staff who have gone through the program:

Jocelyn Boor, Education
 Nikki Hammerberg, Exhibits
 Carter Lupton, History
 Al Muchka, History
 George Ulrich, Anthropology

Summer 2004 Internship in Photo Archives
State Historical Society of North Dakota
Virginia Heidenreich

My summer 2004 five-week internship at the State Historical Society of North Dakota was spent working in the photographic archives. The photographic collection had suffered from bottom-up description, which had hampered its transition to online cataloguing. Archives Director Jerry Newborg made the decision to focus my efforts on the American Indian components of the Society's photographic collections. Several North Dakota tribes had expressed frustration at their lack of access to photographs taken on their reservations.

I worked on isolating and describing (in preparation for entering on ODIN) photographic collections with significant numbers of Native American photographs. The largest collection, the Harold W. Case photographs, was only partially catalogued, containing "several thousand additional unprocessed prints, postcards, albums, slides, color prints and negatives, cyanotypes, and glass plates." In addition, two other large collections were reviewed, within time constraints: the Frank B. Fiske collection, which contained 7893 images, and the Paul A. Ewald collection, which contained 1736 items. I was able to process examples from twenty-one collections for on-line cataloguing.

First and foremost I was learning to structure commentary on each collection in a format that would easily translate into ODIN order and terminology. This was my first experience working with describing photographs for an archival function—that is, preparing them for placement on a search engine that would make it possible for outside users as well as SHSND patrons to locate collections to view when they visit the Historical Society. I was doing research on each photographer or donor before my

detailed examination and description of the photographs themselves. I was also viewing differences between 19th and 20th century photographers, as well as their respective photographic processes. I viewed a variety of formats preferred by 19th and 20th century photographers, which assisted me in better identification of some photographic processes as well as increased understanding of some of the signs of deteriorating photos. Also, I gained a much better comprehension of the range of photographers with an interest in documenting Native Americans in North Dakota.

All of the Native American photographs in the SHSND collections relate to observers, primarily Anglo, recording impressions of North Dakota Indian peoples, as well as some native peoples in neighboring states. Most were taken before 1960, some as early as the 1870s. The commercialism of many of the lesser photographers, all of whom were fighting to make a living selling images of the then-perceived "vanishing Indian," was evident. In some of the collections there was a seeming saturation of Indian images, often stereotypically savage or else idealized.

I found the work fascinating, with the prospect of making a difference in photographic access downright exciting. The photographs reveal the dignity of the Sioux, Mandan, Hidatsa and Arikara peoples, who were struggling to adapt to the combined support and pressure of Christian missionaries who had settled among them beginning in the 1870s. Based upon the ODIN cataloging, North Dakota's tribes should soon be able to access photographs of family members from this century and the last.



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Studies Program Committee Members and Staff

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Updated October 2004



(Left to right) Mike Reuter, Saul Drake, Bridget Sabo, Leah Rosenow, Heather Moody, and Tina Schinabeck preparing the exhibit cases for painting.

(Front, left to right) Bridget Sabo, Melissa Bradely, Tina Schinabek remove the hop-scoth game from the 2004 student exhibit while (back, left to right) Leah Rosenow and Tracy Trummer remove museum artifacts from the exhibit case.