



# INSTITUTE OF MAYA STUDIES NEWSLETTER

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## IMS General Meeting March 18:



## “Chocolate: Food of the Gods” with Dr. Anne Stewart



**Jim Reed,  
Editor**

## The Chocolate Issue

### Chocolate May Have Arrived Early to U.S. Southwest

*Chocolate residues left on ancient jars mark cacao's earliest known presence north of what is now the U.S.-Mexico border. The residues, found on pottery shards excavated from a large pueblo (called Pueblo Bonito) in Chaco Canyon in northwestern New Mexico, suggest the practice of drinking chocolate had traveled from what is now Mexico to the American Southwest about 1,000 years ago.*

That's the finding in a paper recently published by PNAS, a publication of the National Academy of Science and written by Distinguished Professor of Anthropology Patricia L. Crown and her collaborator, W. Jeffrey Hurst, of the Hershey Center of Health and Nutrition, Hershey, PA.

Crown has long been fascinated by ceramic cylinders found at Pueblo Bonito excavated by the Hyde Exploring Expedition



*Inhabitants of Chaco Canyon apparently drank cacao from cylinders like these about a thousand years ago. Courtesy of University of New Mexico.*

from 1896-1899 and the National Geographic Society Expedition from 1920 to 1927. Only about 200 of the cylinders exist and most were found in a single room at the site (see image, below left). The cylinders are now housed at the Smithsonian Institution in Washington D.C. and at the American Museum of Natural History.

Archaeologists generally agree the vessels were used for some ritual, but there has been great disagreement about the specific use of the vessels. Crown was thinking about how the Maya drank chocolate from ceramic cylinders, and wondered whether the cylinders found at Chaco might have been used in the same way. It was clear that the Maya used the cylinders for chocolate. Experts could read the glyphs on the vessels that made it clear they were chocolate containers.

From 2004-2007, University of New Mexico graduate and undergraduate students had excavated the trash middens directly south of Pueblo Bonito and uncovered thousands of pottery fragments that could be used for analysis. Crown selected shards that were from cylinders or pitchers. She could tell they were dated between 1000 and 1125 AD based on the decorative style. She selected

*continued on page 4*



*Excavations in the late 1800s and 1920s uncovered 166 of the ceramic jars (fewer than 200 are known from all of the American Southwest) from Pueblo Bonito, a multistory pueblo with an estimated 800 rooms, dating to roughly AD 860 to 1128. Much remains unknown about the people who dwelled there and their culture. Courtesy of the American Museum of Natural History.*

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## The Chocolate Issue

# New Institute of Maya Studies Website

[www.instituteofmayastudies.org](http://www.instituteofmayastudies.org)

To Our Members:

The IMS has a new Website domain. We will continue to provide the best Website that the Institute of Maya Studies can! Check for news from around the land of the Pre-Columbian Americas, first-rate public programming by the institute at its home at the Miami Science Museum and articles of interest to all Mayanists. Keep checking for more changes to happen, such as updating your subscription by secure online procedures, communicating directly with officers and committee chairs and the possibility of receiving our newsletter in digital PDF format sent directly to your email. Our Website is not a substitute for our acclaimed newsletter but a complement. For those of our members not yet connected to the world of the Web, our newsletter will still be delivered to you as it has been for the past 38 years!

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## Cacao Possible Nutrient for “Lethal Ills”

*One researcher suggests that a nutrient in cacao called epicatechin appears to lower the risk of four common killer diseases. Among the Kuna people of Panama, who can drink up to 40 cups of cocoa per week, rates of stroke, heart disease, cancer and diabetes are less than 10%. The Kuna also appear to live longer than other Panama inhabitants and do not get dementia. Other experts stress that genes and other lifestyle factors also play a part.*

However, researcher Dr. Norman Hollenberg, of Harvard Medical School, says the cocoa chemical would benefit other populations too, including the Western world, although he concedes there may be ethnic differences.

Hollenberg has been investigating the effects of epicatechin in hundreds of elderly people from different cultures as well as hundreds of Kuna people over the last 15 years. “My interest began with the fact that Kuna people do not develop high blood pressure,” he explained.

There are around 70,000 Kuna people, half living on the mainland, half on Panama’s San Blas islands. “I was in search of protective genes, but it turned out to be environmental because, when they migrated to the mainland with all the benefits of modern Western urban life, their blood pressure rose with age and hypertension became quite common.”

“For most Kuna people, cocoa is the only thing they drink from when they are weaned to the day they die.” He says his findings are so significant that epicatechin should be considered essential in our diet and classed as a vitamin.

Epicatechin, a type of flavonoid found in chocolate, is also found in teas, wine and some fruit and vegetables.

Paul Kroon of the Institute of Food Research said drug companies might want to design new drugs to mimic epicatechin’s structure and actions.

“But we’re in the early days. And there is a danger with taking a reductionist approach and trying to single out one particular chemical in foods. Often it’s the mixture that is important. Definitely, more well-designed experimental and clinical studies are needed,” he noted.

Source: Condensed from an original article by Michelle Roberts, BBC News health reporter, released 3/11/07 at <http://news.bbc.co.uk>. Submitted by Scott Allen.

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# Ruinhunter II: It's Not the Destination – It's the Journey!

by Lee Jones

Maya “ruinhunters” have always been welcome at social gatherings. They captivate audiences with their descriptions of their perilous journeys to such lost sites as Uxmal, Edzná, Palenque, Tikal, Kohunlich, Copán, etc.

But, there is a change in the air. Cruise ships offer land trips to Maya sites. Elderhostel, yes, Elderhostel, offers trips to some twenty sites, including Copán and Tikal, with lunch at Uaxactún. Also, notoriety of the movie *Apocalypto*, the hype of 2012, as well as The History Channel, have educated the masses so much that the “ruinhunter” must watch what he, or she says, or they may be challenged. The above sites can now be reached by paved roads, and hotels nearby have air-conditioned rooms and “Happy Hour”. So much for the danger and peril.

So, the adventurer must go deep into the bush if adulation is expected to continue, which led this self-proclaimed “ruinhunter” to Pusilha, Toledo District, Belize, to what I had assumed was a little-known, unworked site. When I returned, alas, I found on the FAMSIS Website, reports of the archaeological works of Braswell and Prager from four seasons of investigations at Pusilha in the early 2000s.

Eric Thompson devoted four or five pages of his “Maya Archaeologist” to Pusilha, mentioning the ruins of a bridge across the Pusilha River, but, to my knowledge, a photo of the bridge had never been published. The tourist books of Belize mention Pusilha, but usually say it is too hard to reach, and the Kekchi (Q’eqchi) Maya who live in the neighboring town of San Benito Poité are not friendly and speak little English or Spanish.

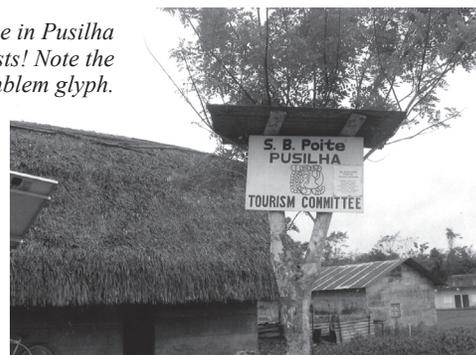


*Remnants of the foundations of the famous bridge at Pusilha where a sacbe crossed over a narrow part of the Pusilha River.*



*Carlos’ Kekchi Maya daughter, Victoria. Her royal namesake would be pleased with her, though shy; she has lovely manners.*

*Everyone in Pusilha welcomes tourists! Note the Pusilha emblem glyph.*



*All images courtesy of Lee Jones.*



*Plaza with stelae on top of the highest mound.*



*Carved stone pieces in the town hall.*

Our adventure to Pusilha began in the Belize International Airport during the time when tropical storm Alma quickly became Hurricane Arthur. The trip down the Hummingbird Highway was very wet, as well as the Southern Highway to Punta Gorda – “P.G.” to the locals.

Hurricanes usually pass quickly from the Caribbean Sea west across the mainland, but Hurricane Arthur apparently liked Belize. It stayed in the area for four days, dropping 40” of rainfall, ultimately cutting the Southern Highway in two, stranding us on our return from Pusilha. Arthur caused us to take a flight from Dangriga to the International Airport, and this meant that we could only give AVIS a GPS point to locate our rented vehicle. I assume they found it.

There was only a drizzle when we left P.G. for Pusilha. The roads, in two places under water, were very good, well-banked and drained. We arrived in San Benito Poité around 9 am on a Sunday. The local Kekchi Maya were surprised to see us. We asked to see the site of Pusilha and were directed to a group of elders who were, at that time, having a meeting in the town hall, discussing preparations for the hurricane. Alongside their strategy table were ancient Maya altars and various stones of very pristine glyphs that had been removed from the site for protection. I tried to quickly take some photos in the bad lighting – all during our conversation with the elders, who were more interested in asking us what we knew about the hurricane.

We were given Carlos, a fine young man who spoke good English, as we found out they all did, to guide us to Pusilha. It was a ten-minute walk to the Pusilha River and the famous bridge. All that is left of it are remnants of foundations on both sides of the river. Carlos took us, one by one, in a canoe, across the river to the main site. We observed a ball court, sacbes, and a cave with pieces of glyphs lying around. I think we climbed the tallest mound I have ever climbed (with the assistance of a long rope and my three sons). The rains increased. We were concerned about how we would get back across that river. But we were able to get back across, though just barely – Carlos and one gringo at a time!

It’s trendy to say that centers like Pusilha were subject to the rule of either Tikal, Copán or Calakmul, but that seems problematical. Pusilha had everything that Tikal and Calakmul lacked – reliable water – two rivers that although full of rapids, would allow canoe transport of goods, especially downstream, to the east and the Caribbean. These rivers, on at least three sides of the site, provided a possible defense barrier.

Carlos told me that his people came from the southwest in Guatemala (Quiriguá area? – he wasn’t familiar with the site) due to the political unrest and lack of fertile soils. Could the original builders of the site have done the same 1,300 years ago, for the same reasons?

My non-scholarly mind conjures up images of refugees, in the eighth century, leaving the farmed-out and drought-stricken Petén to populate a minor site that was a paradise due to the rivers and rich soil, and, during the late to Terminal Classic, built their own Tikal.

If long distance canoe trade was important to the ancient Maya, I can’t imagine a site more well located to take advantage of it than Pusilha. With their headwaters deep in the Petén, both the Pusilha and Poité rivers come together at Pusilha and form the Moho River that runs to the Caribbean. The area is high forest and the milpas are full of corn. Carlos informed us that milpas here can be cleared after laying fallow for ten to twelve years. It takes about twenty years in the northern Yucatán.

I hope the site can be studied more in the future, especially since it is quite accessible now and the locals are very nice. Meanwhile, readers are encouraged to access the Braswell/Prager reports at [www.famsi.com](http://www.famsi.com). ●●●



## The Chocolate Issue

Dedicated to beloved members and friends of the IMS who have made the transition.

**Ron Silvia    Joan Agurcia    Edith Munn**  
**Sharon Kae Andreaci**    *We shall remember them.*

### Chocolate May Have Arrived Early to U.S. Southwest

*continued from page 1*

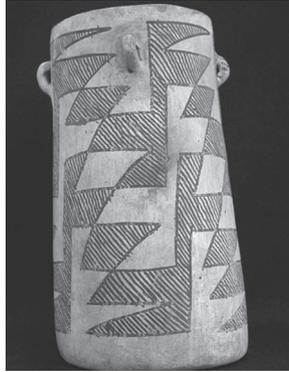
a few shards and worked with a graduate student to grind off the edges for testing, then sent the material to W. Jeffrey Hurst at the Hershey Center.

Using mass spectrometry and high performance liquid chromatography, Hurst analyzed the traces of residue on the jar shards. Cacao has more than 500 compounds, but theobromine gives it away. The chemical could have only come from the cacao plant, a neotropical tree that doesn't grow north of Mexico. Three of the five shards had traces of theobromine; the pitcher shards did not, Crown says.

Ray Stewart notes that "This is exactly the type of insight I will be sharing at this month's Travel, Art and Archaeology program on March 11. Here, Hurst has used modern technology for diagnostic work in archaeology. These artifacts had been gathering dust for years in museums and are now rewriting history through hi-tech examination." See Ray's "21st-Century Archaeology" program announcement on page 7.

The theobromine findings are likely to renew debate over the people of Chaco

*Scientists had long puzzled over the purpose of the tall, cylindrical jars found in Chaco Canyon. Speculations ranged from vessels for corn beer or, with skin stretched over the tops, for drums.*



Canyon, comments Bruce Smith of the Smithsonian Institution National Museum of Natural History. "There will be a kerfuffle," he says. One view sees Chaco Canyon as a mere outpost of Mesoamerica, where all the real cultural action was happening. Another sees it as a society in its own right – it may have borrowed items, such as cacao, from Mesoamerica, but it put its own stamp on them.

The amount and variety of Mesoamerican items in these Southwest sites isn't much, Crown says: evidence of macaws (likely kept for their feathers), some pyrite iron mirrors, copper bells, a few other things and now cacao. She adds, now she's not sure about how isolated the Chaco people were.

Crown says anthropologists don't know whether the people at Chaco walked to Mesoamerica to trade for the cacao beans or whether traders brought them north or whether the beans simply passed from hand to hand from one group of people to another.

Crown noted that maize, beans and corn spread to the Southwest after being domesticated in southern Mexico. Earlier excavations at Pueblo Bonito, the largest structure in the Chaco complex, had found scarlet macaws along with other imported items.

Dorie Reents-Budet, a curator at the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston and a Smithsonian Institution research associate specializing in Maya cylinder vases, said that a sophisticated Mesoamerican trade network extended to Chaco in the north and as far south as Colombia and Ecuador.



*Chocolate was mixed with numerous substances that include honey, various flowers and chiles.*

This image and the two codex images on page 5, courtesy of [www.mexicolore.co.uk](http://www.mexicolore.co.uk).

"The Maya vessels, decorated with court scenes and hieroglyphics, were used to ceremonially consume chocolate at sumptuous feasts", noted Reents-Budet. "An expensive luxury, the cacao beans were fermented, roasted and ground up, then mixed with water and flavorings before being whipped into froth. It made sense to present the beverage in a special vessel", she said.

"It's as if you were having a dinner party and serving Champagne," said Reents-Budet. "You serve Champagne in really nice glasses."

After an exchange with Reents-Budet in October 2007 about the resemblances between the Chacoan and Maya earthenware, Crown expressed her thought about having the Chacoan cylinders checked for cacao residue.

Next, Crown and Hurst hope to test wooden sticks found at the site for chocolate residues. The sticks have loops at the bottom, and Crown says perhaps they were used to stir and froth the chocolate drinks.

"An important thing in Mesoamerica was stirring it up so it had a froth in it," said Crown. "The froth was considered the most delicious part of the drink."

"It is the first known cacao north of the Mexican border in the United States, and as far as I know the only known cacao in the United States before contact," Crown noted, referring to the time before European settlement of the area. "Unfortunately it's also the only cacao residue study that anyone has done using U.S. materials, so we need to find out how widespread chocolate was prior to contact in the American Southwest."

Condensed by the editor from various sources including articles by Michael Haederle released 2/3/09 at [www.nytimes.com](http://www.nytimes.com); Jeanna Bryner released 2/2/09 at [www.usnews.com](http://www.usnews.com); Rachel Ehrenberg released 2/28/09 at [www.sciencenews.org](http://www.sciencenews.org) and an article using materials supplied by the University of New Mexico released 2/4/09 at [www.sciencedaily.com](http://www.sciencedaily.com).



*The ancient Maya called the cacao tree "cacau" or "cacahuatqichtl" stating that it was the only tree worth naming. They felt the tree was from the gods and that the cacao pods were the god's gifts to humans.*

# Mesoamerica and Cacao

For many millennia cacao grew in the understory of the tropical rainforests the northern Amazon basin. The people who first utilized cacao were the inhabitants of what is now Venezuela in northwestern South America, where the tree is native. Cacao has been a cultivated crop for at least 3,000 years, probably quite a bit more. Before that it is certain that the seeds of wild cacao trees were gathered. Cacao was clearly highly valued by these people and they spread it northward through trade with their neighbors. Eventually cacao made its way along the Pacific corridor to the Soconusco area, near the present-day border between Mexico and Guatemala. Here lived the early precursors of the Olmec culture.

Archaeologists tell us that the Olmec were the first to use cacao around 1900 BC to 400 BC and their word, *kakawa*, gave us our word “cacao.”

The Aztecs called the drink, and apparently the bean as well, *xocoatl*. From this Nahuatl word comes the pan-European word chocolate. There are references which suggest that *xocoatl* meant “foam in water”; and therefore referred to the drink, not the plant. The word “cacao” comes from the Mayan word for the plant which was “*cacau*”. Because of a spelling error, probably by English traders long ago, these beans became known as cocoa beans.

According to the Maya, cacao was given to the people after the Sovereign Plumed Serpent God created them from maize. Ek Chuah the God of Cacao was honored in a festival every April with the sacrifice of a cacao-colored dog. The Spaniards noted that priests would pierce their earlobes and let the blood drip on



*Ek Chuah the Maya God of Cacao.*  
Image from *The True History of Chocolate*  
by Sophie D. Coe and Michael Coe.



*Cacao was used in marriage ceremonies, where it was exchanged by the bride and groom as depicted in the Codex Zouche-Nuttall.*

the cacao as a sacrifice. Also sacrificial victims were served cacao to comfort them in the Mexica region before they were sacrificed in an annual festival.

The Maya also prepared a chocolate drink made of roasted cacao beans, water and spice. The ancient texts also described how the Maya cacao was prepared. It varied in preparation from a refined drink to porridge mixed with corn meal. Pictures on various artifacts show cocoa being poured from one vessel to another to produce a froth.

Because of the cacao beans’ value, they were given as gifts for special events and religious ceremonies. Maya merchants would trade cacao beans for commodities such as jade, cloth and ceremonial feathers. Maya farmers would transport their cacao beans for trade by strapping large baskets to their backs and/or canoeing to various markets.

Cacao beans were also used as currency. Ten beans would buy you a rabbit or a prostitute. One hundred beans would buy you a slave. Some clever people even came up with a way to counterfeit beans – by carving them out of clay. The beans were still used as currency in parts of Latin America until the 19th century.

Meredith L. Dreiss and Sharon Edgar Greenhill, in their book *Pathway to the Gods*, note that the place held by chocolate in matters of creation, fertility, death, and rebirth is just now being understood after years of scholarly focus on maize (corn) as the primary sacred food of pre-Columbian Mesoamericans. They share how chocolate, like maize, became linked to some of the most fundamental of Mesoamerican rites in both ancient and modern times.

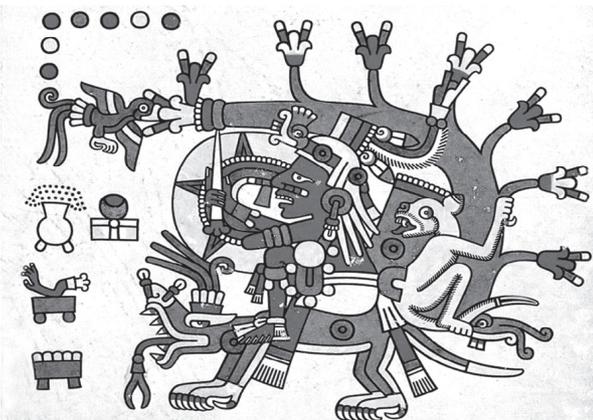
The authors note that it was eighteenth-century naturalist Carolus Linnaeus who gave the “chocolate tree” its scientific name: *Theobroma cacao*, or “Food of the Gods” – and for good reason. “The cacao tree emerges from creation mythology as a sacred World Tree, worthy of the protection of cacao gods and goddesses. As a symbol of abundance, rulership and ancestry, the cacao tree serves as a metaphorical conduit by which human souls and gods travel among the Earth, Sky and Underworld. Indeed, cacao is pictured in codices and on ceramic vases as offerings by deities in ritual ceremonies and sacrifices.

“Humans replicated these divine activities in their own offerings of cacao and chocolate to the gods and to each other. Cacao played a major role in maintaining the life cycles of birth, death, and rebirth on earth. In addition, cacao is related to the underworld domain of caves, as a part of the sacred landscape.

“Although to this day cacao and chocolate are integrated into major events, nothing in modern life compares to the cacao pod’s symbolic association with the extraction of the human heart during sacrifice!”



Source: Condensed by the editor from three sources: “*Pathway to the Gods*” available at [www.uapress.arizona.edu](http://www.uapress.arizona.edu); [www.facts-about-chocolate.com](http://www.facts-about-chocolate.com); and Jack Weatherford’s *History of Chocolate* at: [www.xocoatl.org](http://www.xocoatl.org).



*Chocolate as an offering to the sun god Tonatiuh, Codex Laud (original in the Bodleian Library, Oxford).*

Dr. Anne Stewart notes that in four surviving texts found from the post-classical Maya period, Maya chocolate was referred to as food of the gods. Maya chocolate was instrumental in many of their religious and ceremonial practices. Stewart will give a presentation entitled “**Chocolate: Food of the Gods**” on March 18.

See her program announcement on page 7.

# Rare Jaguars Spotted in Arizona and Mexico

The once-common jaguar has become a rare sight in North America, thanks to hunting and habitat fragmentation.

Now two were spotted in exceedingly rare and unrelated events in February 2009.

The Arizona Game and Fish Department caught and collared a wild jaguar in Arizona for the first time, officials said on Wednesday, February 18. While a handful of the big cats have been photographed by automatic cameras in recent years, the satellite tracking collar will now help biologists learn more about this animal's range.

Meanwhile, a jaguar was spotted in central Mexico for the first time in a century. Scientists photographed the cat with an automatic camera set alongside a trail thought to be frequented by the spotted felines.

Jaguars (*Panthera onca*) once ranged from southern South America to the southern United States. By the late 1900s, none were thought to exist north of Mexico, but two independent sightings in 1996 confirmed jaguars still reached as far north as Arizona and New Mexico.

Remote cameras have also photographed jaguars in the Amazon Basin where jaguars are more prevalent.

The species has been protected outside of the United States under the Endangered Species Act since 1973. That protection was extended to jaguars in the United States in 1997, the year after their presence here was confirmed.

## The Arizona Jaguar

The male cat in Arizona (top right) was captured southwest of Tucson during a study aimed at monitoring habitat connectivity for mountain lions and black bears. The healthy beast weighed in at 118 pounds with a thick and solid build.

Satellite tracking showed the cat traveled more than 3 miles from the capture site in the first day after its release, officials said.

"While we didn't set out to collar a jaguar as part of the mountain lion and bear research project, we took advantage of an important opportunity," said Terry Johnson, endangered species coordinator

for the Arizona Game and Fish Department. "More

*An extremely rare jaguar, fitted with a satellite tracking collar, is released into the wilderness southwest of Tucson, Arizona. Arizona Game and Fish Department officials caught the male cat on Wednesday, February 18, 2009, in a rugged area southwest of Tucson during a study to better understand bear and mountain lion habitat. This photo was taken on February 18, and issued by the Arizona Game and Fish Department on February 20.*



than 10 years ago, Game and Fish attempted to collar a jaguar with no success. Since then, we've established handling protocols in case we inadvertently captured a jaguar in the course of one of our other wildlife management activities."

Biologists are trying to determine if the collared jaguar is Macho B, a male cat that has been photographed by trail cameras periodically over the past 13 years.

In 1997, a team was established in Arizona and New Mexico to protect and conserve the species. The Jaguar Conservation Team (JCT) began working with Mexico two years later, recognizing that the presence of jaguars in the United States depends on the conservation of the species in Mexico.

Interestingly, the project set up to do all this is funded by Arizona Lottery ticket sales.

## The Mexico Jaguar

No jaguars had been spotted in central Mexico since the start of the 20th century. Scientists trying to find footprints, excrement or any other signs of the jaguars had in recent years interviewed residents, none of whom had ever seen one. Nonetheless, the researchers now report having obtained three photographs of a male jaguar and ten excrement samples that have been attributed to the jaguar, said Octavio Monroy-Vilchis of Autonomous University of the State of Mexico.

In a statement, researchers explained there are 15 areas in Mexico in which it is unknown whether jaguars still exist, whether their populations are stable, and if their habitat is adequate. These areas are important for scientific studies,



*A jaguar is photographed in central Mexico by an automatic camera. The image was released February 10, 2009.*

Courtesy of Octavio Monroy-Vilchis/SINC.

because they could include crucial zones for the felines' long-term survival.

"The photographs provide information about new recording sites, and allow us to deduce that the area where the animal was observed may be a corridor connecting jaguar populations," said Monroy-Vilchis.

## The Largest Cats

Jaguars are the only cats in North America that roar. They're considered the largest cats in the Western Hemisphere. Adults commonly weigh up to 211 lbs (96 kg), though 300-pounders have been reported. However, in the northern range, they typically weigh between 80-120 lbs.

Females breed year-round and have litters of one to four cubs that stay with their mother for nearly two years.

Jaguars can live in several types of forests, grassland and dry habitat. They prey on a variety of animals, including fish, birds and reptiles. The largest contiguous area of habitat now remaining for jaguars centers in the Amazon Basin.

Source: From an original report released 2/22/09 by [www.LiveScience.com](http://www.LiveScience.com). Submitted by Scott Allen. Check out the March issue of *National Geographic* magazine for an excellent report on jaguars and preserving their natural environment.

# Institute of Maya Studies' Line-up of Presentations!

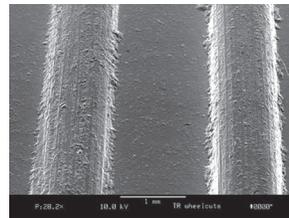
## March 11: IMS Meeting (Classroom-style): "21st-Century Archaeology" with Ray Stewart



Using high-performance liquid chromatography coupled with atmospheric-pressure chemical ionization mass spectrometry, Maya spouted vessels from Colha in Belize were found to contain cacao residue.

The practice of archaeology today is significantly different from that of just a few decades ago, not only in the battery of new hardware and sophisticated technical analyses now available, but in new approaches to interpreting the past and new methods of studying ancient people.

Today's archaeologists incorporate many hi-tech tools such as remote sensing multi-spectral images from satellites and computer-based geographic information systems (GIS) to better understand the extent and complexity of Maya sites and monuments. Artifacts that have been lying dormant for years in museums are now rewriting history through hi-tech examination. **Ray Stewart** shows us how!



This electron scanning microscope image of the surface of a crystal skull reveals the signature left by modern stone-carving techniques. With hi-tech tools like this, Jane Walsh of the Natural History Museum, was able to dismiss the idea that any crystal skull is of ancient manufacture.

## March 18: IMS Meeting (in the Museum Auditorium):

## "Chocolate: Food of the Gods"

### with Dr. Anne Stewart



Kerr Number: K6418. Comments: White background, ruler speaking to kneeling attendant, three-legged offering bowl with tamales. The bowl on the throne may contain chocolate (cacao).

Check out Justin Kerr's Maya Vase Data Base at [www.famsi.org](http://www.famsi.org)

The first part of the binomial name that was given to the "chocolate tree" by Linnaeus, who invented the binomial system, was given in Greek ... *Theobroma*. It means "food of the gods" Which gods? Why wasn't the species name cacao used as the first part of the binomial?

Where did the tree originate?  
Where was cacao first cultivated?

Chocolate had a variety of uses in Mesoamerica including as a drink for the elite, a medicine, in forging political alliances, in religion, as tribute payment, and as money. Chocolate was mixed with numerous substances that include honey, various flowers and chiles. Get the whole story from **Dr. Anne Stewart**.

You can sample a taste of chocolate with chile after the meeting!



Ek Chuah the Maya God of Cacao.

**The Institute Maya Studies** • All meetings are Wednesdays • 8-9:30 PM • Miami Science Museum  
3280 South Miami Avenue, across from Vizcaya • \$6 donation requested from non-members

Inquire about IMS Membership benefits • Maya Hotline: 305-235-1192

Note our new Website address: [www.instituteofmayastudies.org](http://www.instituteofmayastudies.org)

## Institute of Maya Studies

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## Upcoming Events at the IMS:

March 4: *IMS Board Meeting*  
All IMS members are welcome to attend.

March 11: *IMS Meeting; Classroom-style*  
**“21st-Century Archaeology”** – Gone are the days of a fearless Indiana Jones battling through the jungle in search of ancient treasures. Today’s archaeologists are using high-tech tools to do the hard work for them. Join **Ray Stewart** as he explores the new technology that is aiding archaeology to reconstruct history, challenging old theories, and leading to fantastic new insights.

March 18: *IMS Meeting; Museum Auditorium*  
**“Chocolate: Food of the Gods”** – From pre-Olmec times, through centuries of Maya enhancement, and continuing up to the hot chocolate mix in your kitchen cupboard, cacao has played a major part in our lives and the enjoyment of our lives. Get the complete story from **Dr. Anne Stewart**, and sample a taste of chocolate with chile after the meeting!

## Upcoming Events and Announcements:

March 15–21: *Maya Field Workshops*  
**“The Art and History of Palenque”** – David Stuart is starting a new endeavor of intensive on-site seminars/workshops focusing on the art, archaeology and epigraphy of important Maya sites. First up: Palenque, Mexico. Get more info at: [www.mayafieldworkshops.com](http://www.mayafieldworkshops.com)

April 3-5: *Symposium*  
**“Maya Crossroads – Classic Ideas and Goods in Motion Across the Verapaz”** – Theme of the 27th Annual Maya Weekend of the University of Pennsylvania Museum with a focus on the dynamic trade and cultural expression in the Maya highlands during the Classic period. Get more info at: [www.museum.upenn.edu](http://www.museum.upenn.edu)

April 15: *IMS Meeting; Museum Auditorium*  
**“Recent Excavations at Xunantunich and Tikal”** – IMS newsletter editor **Jim Reed** shares video with commentary on recent excavations within Xunantunich

proper (Belize) and a new area where archaeologists have apparently discovered the original early pre-Classic center of the site. See the newly restored Temple 5 and new restoration at the Plaza of the Seven Temples at Tikal (Guatemala). Plus, a short update on the current state of affairs surrounding the 2012 phenomena.

April 22-26: *Conference*  
**SAA 74th Annual Meeting** – of the Society of American Archaeology, in Atlanta, GA. Get more info at: [www.saa.org/meetings/submissions.asp](http://www.saa.org/meetings/submissions.asp)

May 1-2: *Nahua Workshop*  
**“Issues in Nahua Identity and Language: Past and Present”** – A group of scholars from various disciplines will come together to present and discuss each other’s current research, at the University of Maryland, College Park, MD. Get more info at: [www.lasc.umd.edu](http://www.lasc.umd.edu)



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*Ek Chuah, the Maya God of Cacao.*

Please note that all articles and news items for the IMS newsletter must be submitted to the Newsletter Editor by the second Wednesday of the month. E-mail news items and images to [mayaman@bellsouth.net](mailto:mayaman@bellsouth.net) or forward by postal mail to: Jim Reed, 936 Greenwood Ave NE, Apt.8, Atlanta, GA 30306