



IMS Explorer

An updated-monthly communication of the **Institute of Maya Studies**



April 15, 2009 • Maya Long Count: 12.19.16.4.14 • 10'Ix 12 Phop • G4

An affiliate of the Miami Science Museum

Discovery of a Preclassic Maya Mural with Images of the Hero Twins at El Mirador



The exquisitely carved mural, dated to about 300 BC, represents the Hero Twins Hunapú and Ixbalanqué of the Popul Vuh, the sacred book of the Quiché Maya.
AP Photo/Moises Castillo.

Archaeological findings at the site of El Mirador continue to astound the world. The discovery of this 2,200-year-old carved Maya mural found at El Mirador was announced in the *Guatemala Times* on March 9, 2009.

A team of archaeologists, mostly Guatemalans, under the coordination of U.S. archaeologist Richard Hansen, uncovered the mural that dates from the Maya Preclassic Period (300 BC) during excavations last summer, but is only now announcing it to the world.

Presentation of the new finding was made in situ by the Guatemalan Minister of Culture and Sports, Jeronimo Lancerio and other businessmen who support the project. Guatemalan Vice-President Rafael Espada and important members of the Guatemalan press were also present. They were all flown to the remote site in helicopters.

A very fortuitous discovery

"This finding is as impressive as finding the *Mona Lisa*. It is a fantastic example of Maya art", Hansen stated.

The mural adorns the front side of a structure that was used to store water and shows a Maya mythological passage, where the Hero Twins Hunapú and Ixbalanqué leave the underworld carrying the head of their father, Hun Hunapú.



The recently discovered limestone frieze at El Mirador was unveiled to the public for the first time on March 7, 2009. Courtesy of the Press Office of the Government of Guatemala.

The site of El Mirador is being developed to be the crown jewel within "Cuatro Balam Park". This is a development project which aims to create the largest archaeological park in the world, containing over four thousand Maya pyramids. The project started under Guatemalan President Berger and is now being continued by current President Alvaro Colom and a group of entrepreneurs. The project is also supported by actor/director Mel Gibson as he has donated \$1 million dollars since the filming of *Apocalypto*.

"This is a fantastic and very impressive experience," exclaimed Dr. Rafael Espada during his visit to

continued on page 2

VOLUME 38, ISSUE 4

April 2009

ISSN: 1524-9387

Inside this issue:

We've Changed the Name of Our Newsletter: by Marta Barber; Maya Mural, continued from page 1 2

Florida Teacher Mathew Saunders Receives Apple Distinguished Educator Award 3

Preclassic Monumental Architecture at Xunantunich, with Dr. M. Kathryn Brown 4-5

Dig Uncovers Spanish Settlement in North Central Florida; Exploring More About the Acuera and Timucua 6

Upcoming Events and Announcements 7

IMS General Meeting April 15:



"Recent Archaeology in Belize and at Tikal"

with **Jim Reed**



Jim Reed,
Editor

The *IMS Explorer* newsletter is published 12 times a year by The Institute of Maya Studies, Inc. 3280 South Miami Avenue, Miami, Florida 33129. The Institute is a non-profit corporation. The newsletter is available to IMS members and by subscription, in print or by website download option. ©2009 I.M.S. Inc.



We've Changed the Name of Our Newsletter!

For almost four decades, the Institute of Maya Studies has called our newsletter just that: *the NEWSLETTER*. We have changed its look and its content a number of times, but we kept that nondescript title. We thought a new name should match the improvements we've made through the years to a publication of which we are justly proud. So, to IMS, the short title we all refer to when talking about our well-regarded organization, we've added "Explorer", which is what we as Maya-buffs love to do. **IMS Explorer** it is! Let either our editor Jim Reed (mayaman@bellsouth.net) or myself (siliobarber@bellsouth.net) know whether you like it. We hope you love it!

www.instituteofmayastudies.org

2009 IMS Board of Directors:

Marta Barber

President
siliobarber@bellsouth.net

Joaquín J. Rodríguez III, P.E.

Vice President/
Director of Research
rod44@comcast.net
954-786-8084

Beth Wiggert

Treasurer/Subscription List
beth2vic@earthlink.net

Diana Phillips

Secretary/Public Relations
dianamark@juno.com

Lister Witherspoon IV, J.D.

Membership Chair
305-541-0558

Patricia Manfredi

Hospitality
pmanfred2003@yahoo.com

Juan L. Riera

Program Co-Chair
juanr377@gmail.com

Steve Mellard

Website Committee/
Program Co-Chair
stevenmellard@cs.com

Ellen Jacobs

305-444-3309

Ann S. Dickhaus

305-665-5175

Beth Wein

Peter Flanagan

Research Fund Committee
786-246-5918

Frank R. May

Webmaster
frm@frmay.com

Jim Reed

Newsletter Editor
mayaman@bellsouth.net
404-680-1644

On the Cover: Featured *IMS Explorer* image of the month: Observatory at Tulum, oil painting by Frederick Catherwood, 1844.

We also want to remind you that 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!

Marta Barber, *President*

Maya Mural with the Hero Twins

continued from page 1

the El Mirador, Petén, where he arrived accompanied by a working committee to assess options for protecting the natural and archaeological reserves in the country.

Vice-President Dr. Rafael Espada is the coordinator of the Socio-Environmental cabinet; as such he expressed his support for the project and the need to establish the legal framework to protect El Mirador.

"We have to protect this cultural heritage which preserves important elements of Maya culture. This jungle that has existed for thousands of years also needs our protection. We need to take the necessary steps to provide legislation for the protection of the area and to respect this sacred land" said Vice President Espada.

Cuatro Balam Park will benefit local communities, protect the tropical forests



Richard Hansen now says that the heyday of the ancient Maya is much older than what the experts previously believed.

of the El Mirador Basin, and will generate tourism and development for the department of Petén.

Also of note, France will host a museum exhibition of El Mirador in 2011 at the Musée du Quai Branly in Paris.

Source: Condensed by the editor from an original report by Barbara Schieber, released 3/9/09 at www.guatemala-times.com and from a press report by Jeff Morgan for the Global Heritage Fund released 3/10/09 at: www.globalheritagefund.org. Submitted by Marta Barber and Scott Allen.

THEMAYANTRAVELER.COM



GROUP MUNDO MAYA TOURS – SET OR CUSTOMIZED ITINERARIES OR GUARANTEED DEPARTURES SINCE 1984.

DISCOUNTS FOR MUSEUMS, ASSOCIATIONS AND STUDENT GROUPS

EMAIL: INFO@THEMAYANTRAVELER.COM

- 1-800-451-8017 -

Sponsor's Corner:

IMS members and newsletter readers are encouraged to support our sponsors as they support us. If you would like to help the Institute and desire to promote your business or share your message, contact the newsletter editor for advertising in print and/or Web ad options.



Florida Teacher Mathew Saunders Receives Apple Distinguished Educator Award

Christopher Mathew (Mat) Saunders, Archaeologist/Service Learning Teacher with Flagler County Public Schools (on Florida's North-Central Atlantic Coast), has been selected to join the Apple Distinguished Educator (ADE) program as a member of the Class of 2009.

Mat is one of the 52 newly selected members for the ADE Class of 2009 in the USA. The Apple Distinguished Educator (ADE) Program began in 1994, when Apple identified key educators from around the globe who were emerging as leaders in the field of educational technology.

Today, after 15 years, this community now consists of over 1,500 educators worldwide who utilize technology to impact how we educate students in elementary school through those in higher education.

Mat's formal role as an Apple Distinguished Educator begins this summer at the ADE Summer Institute in Orlando. As a member of the ADE, Mat will provide expert assistance and best practices to educators and policy makers. He will also provide valuable input to Apple on the realities of integrating instructional technology into learning environments, publish and exchange teaching and leadership best practices, and serve as an ambassador in bringing global experiences to classroom in Flagler County.

Who is Mat Saunders?

Mat Saunders is a well-known and respected Floridian archeologist, who has established full-credit high

school courses in archaeology and anthropology. Each year, he travels to western Belize with high school students to spend two weeks excavating the Maya site of **Cahal Pech**. Mat received a grant to develop archaeology curriculum and a simulated dig site complete with artifacts at Matanzas High School (see photo at right). He also created the Archaeology Program at Princess Place Preserve.

Mat spearheads the **Maya at the Playa Conferences**, held annually in Flagler County for professionals and enthusiasts to learn from and interact with a host of the world's most accomplished scientists in the field of Maya Archaeology and Culture.

Working with BVAR

Mat Saunders first joined the Belize Valley Archaeological Reconnaissance (BVAR) project in 2000 and continued working with the project over the following four years. During his tenure with BVAR he has participated in the excavations of several ancient Maya sites in Belize, including **Cahal Pech**, Actun Tunichil Mucnal, Actun Nak Beh, Actun Chapat, Actun Halal, Stela Cave, Pook's Hill, Baking Pot and Caracol.

Mat earned his BA in Anthropology from the University of Kentucky in 2001, where he focused on Mesoamerican Archaeology. In the fall of 2007, Saunders started studying with Drs. Arlen and Diane Chase at the University of Central Florida.

Concurrently, he also worked intensively in Contract Archaeology (CRM) in the U.S. with Louis Berger and Cultural Resource analysts, Inc. As part of his responsibility, Mat supervised the salvage and preservation of both historical and prehistoric archaeological sites in Kentucky, Ohio, Iowa, West Virginia, Indiana, and Michigan.



Mat Saunders is an exceptional professional-archaeologist-turned teacher who is creating exciting archaeological programming for teachers and students in Flagler County Public Schools.



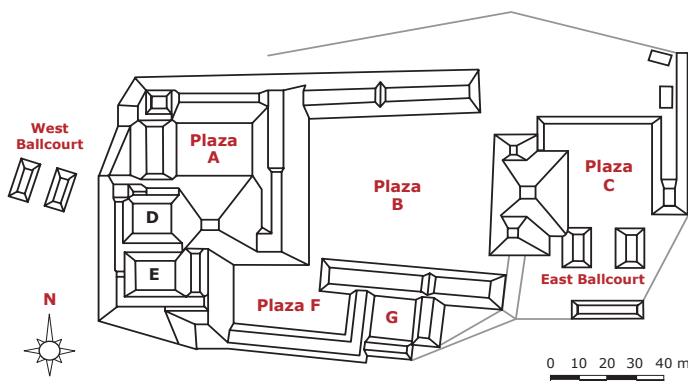
Students excavate artifacts from the simulated Archaeological Dig Site at Matanzas High School.

Since 2005, Mat has been director of the Archaeology Program in Flagler County School District, Florida. He has started full-term anthropology and archaeology programs in three separate high schools and founded two similarly-themed clubs within the district. The Flagler County Program has carried out full-scale archaeological surveys of endangered sites within the community.

The BVAR – AFAR Program

Since then, Mat has successfully started the American Foreign Academic Research (AFAR) program in which high school students participate in the BVAR field school in Belize. Progress reports from the "BVAR – AFAR Program" were reported in various media including *Florida Citizens for Science*, *Palm Coast Lifestyles*, and *Archaeology Magazine*. The AFAR program is currently undertaking a phase one survey of Princess Place Preserve, a 1,500-acre Florida State Park and plans are underway to make the BVAR field school at **Cahal Pech** an annual component of the program.

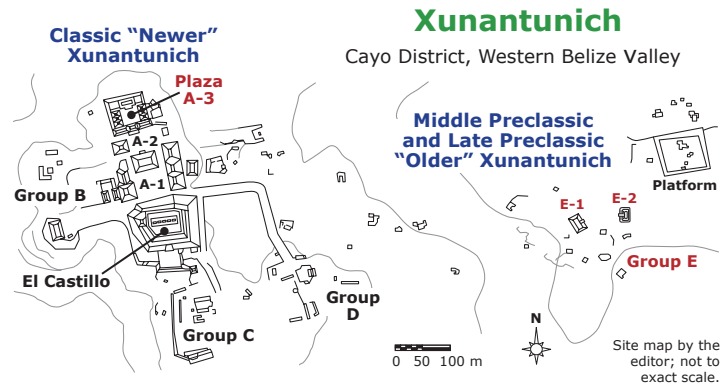
Source: Condensed by the editor from a press report released 3/11/09 at www.flaglerschools.com and Mat's staff bio on the BVAR site at www.bvar.org.



Core site plan of Cahal Pech in the Belize Valley, situated above the modern town of Cayo. Excavations in 2008 were within Plazas B, F and G. See video of their accomplishments April 15!



The familiar "El Castillo" pyramid at Xunantunich was constructed during the Classic period. Jason Yaeger (University of Wisconsin – Madison) in a relaxed pose with his wife, M. Kathryn Brown. Jason is king archaeologist in charge of the nearby site of Buena Vista and Kathryn is the queen of archaeology at Xunantunich.



Kat is digging test trenches in Group E and finding Middle Preclassic and Late Preclassic construction, possibly the earliest constructed sacred plaza in the Belize Valley during the Middle Preclassic. She's also digging in Plaza A-3, searching for any vestiges of comparable time-period levels under the Classic construction visible today.

Preclassic Monumental Architecture at Xunantunich

by **M. Kathryn (Kat) Brown**

Assistant Professor of Anthropology
University of Texas at Arlington

The ancient Maya site of Xunantunich is located on a high ridge in the Mopan valley of Belize, overlooking the modern village of Soccutz. Xunantunich is one of the largest sites in the region, and it has a long history of excavations, beginning in the 1920s with the unorthodox excavations of British medical doctor and avocational archaeologist, Thomas Gann.

More recently, the Xunantunich Archaeological Project (XAP) directed

by Richard Leventhal and Wendy Ashmore, and the Belize Tourism Development Project, directed by Jaime Awe and Allan Moore, conducted more intensive excavations within the site's monumental core of pyramids, ballcourts and palaces. Their work confirmed that most of the site was constructed rapidly during the Late Classic time period (AD 600-780), while identifying the vestiges of the Early Classic and Preclassic settlements that preceded the Late Classic site.

XAP found deposits containing the oldest known ceramics in the Maya lowlands, the Cunil complex (1100-800 BC), which was first defined at nearby Cahal Pech, and they mapped a pair of pyramids, called Group E, and an associated monumental platform that appeared to date to the Middle Preclassic (800-300 BC). Despite these discoveries, the Preclassic occupation of Xunantunich and the surrounding areas remains relatively unknown, and it is the focus of the Mopan Valley Preclassic Project (MVPP), which I direct.

In search of sacred spaces

One of the goals of MVPP is to understand the rise of complexity in the broader Belize valley and the ways that the earliest Maya elite used public architecture and ritual activities to create and legitimize social inequalities and their places at the top of an emerging social hierarchy. Their strategies included the establishment and reuse of ideologically charged places and buildings in order to create sacred locations on



Back in the bush (and not open to the public), Kat energetically explains her case in front of the western pyramid of Group E, Structure E-1.

the landscape that connected them to the supernatural realm.

To further this broader goal, MVPP began excavations at Xunantunich's Group E last summer. Group E lies 800 meters east of Group A, the heart of Xunantunich during the Late Classic, and thanks to that fact, it was never covered by later buildings like the rest of the site.

At the core of Group E is a pair of small pyramids. Although they are dwarfed by the 39-meter tall "Castillo" acropolis in Group A, they are quite large for the Middle Preclassic period. They are aligned east-west, evoking the passage of the sun, which was an important symbol of authority in Preclassic Maya civilization.

Just to the northeast of these pyramids, where the ridge slopes down toward the Mopan River, sits a massive platform measuring 100 m north-south by 115 m east-west and 13 m high on its tallest side. This platform represents a massive amount of labor investment. Taken together

continued on page 5



Looking down from the highest structure on the north end of the site, at Kat's two test pits in Plaza A-3.



Kat with two student co-workers, deep down in one of the test pits in Plaza A-3. Plaza A-3 is the main plaza of what is considered the royal residential area of the site.



Preclassic Monumental Architecture at Xunantunich

continued from page 4

with the solar orientation of Group E, it suggests that this location was an important political seat in the Preclassic landscape of the Belize valley, perhaps the largest center in the valley during the Middle Preclassic period.

Exploring Structure E-2

We focused our excavations last summer on the eastern pyramid, Structure E-2, to assess its chronology and the nature of the architecture. Our center-line trench on its west face uncovered the pyramid's staircase and revealed two construction phases of the pyramid and an associated plastered plaza floor surface.

The earlier pyramid dates to the Middle Preclassic, and the second to the Late Preclassic (300 BC – AD 250). The fact that no Early Classic or Late Classic architecture was ever built over these Preclassic buildings presents us with a rare opportunity to investigate intact Preclassic architecture through full horizontal exposure.

Because our excavations have just begun, we cannot reconstruct the pyramid's original form yet. The stairway and overall style of the pyramid, however, suggest obvious parallels to the famous Structure 5C-2nd at Cerros excavated by David Freidel.

The flat-topped, two-tier pyramid was accessed by a broad stairway with wide landings for ritual performances. If the pyramid fully mirrors 5C-2nd, there should be stucco deity masks flanking the staircase. In order to investigate this possibility, I am seeking funding from National Geographic for



Kat's test trench extends up the front stairway of Structure E-2. The altar lies at the other end of this excavation.

Kat poses proudly by a Postclassic ceremonial altar apparently in use for as many as 800 years after the original construction of Structure E-2.



the 2010 field season. Only one intact deity mask is known from the Mopan valley, at the site of Actuncan, and it was too deeply buried under later architecture to investigate fully. Fully excavating a program of masks on Structure E-2 would allow us to reconstruct the Preclassic ideological themes that led to and supported a hierarchical social system.

Surprising Postclassic Altar

In front of the central axis of the pyramid's stairway, just beneath the modern ground surface, our excavations found a modest Postclassic altar, roughly one meter on a side. The altar was associated with dozens of chert blades and flakes with sharp edges and points, consistent with stone tools used for auto-sacrifice and bloodletting in Maya civilization. Blood, whether human or animal, has been an important offering in Maya rituals for millennia.

We were surprised to find that people living in the Mopan valley after the great Maya collapse returned to this pyramid to construct an altar and make offerings to their deities at least 800 years after the pyramid's last construction phase. Evidence of Postclassic re-visitation at Xunantunich's Group A has been documented by a find of a Late Postclassic effigy incensario fragment on the Castillo (Jaime Awe personal communication 2009) and Postclassic ceramic material scattered around several of the carved monuments in the main plaza. However, the erection of a formal altar clearly indicates that this location was especially sacred.

Even more surprising was the fact that these suspected bloodletting implements were found in the layers of sediment below the altar, continuing all the way down to the Late Preclassic floor, some 1.5 m below. This is a truly a remarkable discovery, as it suggests that this location was a site of veneration and ritual for centuries.

Ancestor worship

In that respect, it is interesting to highlight the eastern placement of this pyramid. The Maya identified East as the place of ancestors, and in the Belize valley and adjacent regions, ancestral shrines and the burials of important people were often placed on the eastern side of architectural groups. Although this pyramid may not have functioned as a shrine to a particular ancestor, it was likely a location where early rulers conducted rituals, such as bloodletting, to communicate with and interact with their ancestors.

This function apparently was enshrined in the social memory of the valley's inhabitants and reinforced through repeated visitation and offerings long after it had been abandoned. It seems unlikely to be a coincidence that this special place is the eastern pyramid in the area's earliest monumental complex. This would have been the most auspicious and appropriate setting to communicate with the region's most ancient and powerful ancestors.

Did you know?

Contrary to the belief since 1959, that part of Xunantunich had been destroyed by an earthquake in the Late Classic period, Jason Yaeger's excavations in 2003 demonstrated that the palace was destroyed after the site was conquered by outside enemies, not because of an earthquake. Work by teams in other areas of the site proved that Xunantunich was actually one of the last centers to be abandoned in the region, not one of the first, as many previously believed.

April 15 Program note:

All of the images in this article (except the one of Kat with her altar by Jason Yaeger, top right) are by the editor, Jim Reed. These images were extracted from video footage taken in July 2008 when Jim visited the site and both Jason and Kat shared their enthusiasm and archaeological findings with his group. Be sure to attend our April 15 General Meeting when Jim shares these excavations up close, as well as those at Cahal Pech and Tikal.

Recent Archaeology in Florida:

Dig Uncovers Spanish Settlement

University of Florida archaeologist Willet Boyer has uncovered what he believes to be a Spanish mission in North Central Florida.

Boyer believes that the site in Ocklawaha could have been one of the largest of the Spanish missions in Florida.

Based on artifacts found at the site, Boyer says he has found the site of a structure in Spanish style located in what was once the territory of the Acuera (see map).

Boyer may have discovered the site of one of two Acuera missions noted in the area in 1655, both of which had disappeared by 1680.

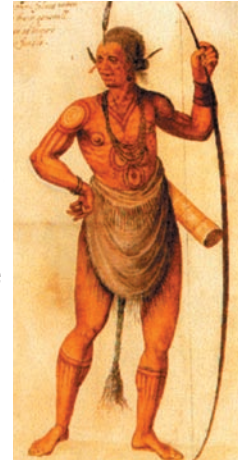
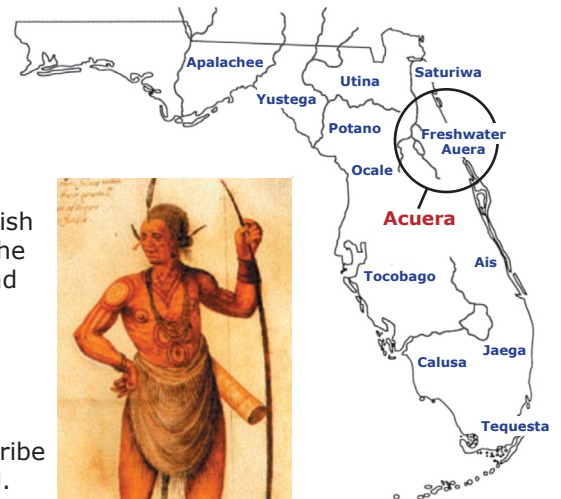
The discovery has convinced Boyer that Spanish colonization was just as prevalent in North Central

Florida as it was in St. Augustine and other areas.

Boyer related that this Spanish mission might not have enjoyed the same success that the Spanish had with other tribes. "My goal in this research is to try and find out what made these people respond differently and maintain their culture longer than the Timucua (see below), another indigenous tribe in the Spanish southeast," he said.

Boyer is currently working on his Ph.D. at the University of Florida and is looking for volunteers to help work the site. You can contact Boyer at: wboyer@ufl.edu.

Source: From a news report posted 2/18/09 at: www.wcjb.com. Submitted by Scott Allen (who now lives in North Central Florida and would make a wonderful volunteer)!



Timucua men wore breechcloths and were elaborately tattooed.

Approximate names and locations of Florida's major native tribal groups at the time of European contact.

Let's Explore More About the Acuera and Timucua

The Acuera

Connections: This tribe belonged to the Timucuan or Timuquanan linguistic division of the Muskogean linguistic family.

Location: Apparently near the headwaters of the Ocklawaha River.

History: The Acuera were first noted by De Soto in a letter written to the civil cabildo of Santiago de Cuba. According to information transmitted to him by his officer Baltazar de Gallegos, Acuera was "a large town where with much convenience we might winter," but the Spaniards did not in fact pass through it, though, while they were at Ocale, they sent to Acuera for corn.

The name appears later in Laudonniere's narrative of the second French expedition to Florida, 1564-65 (1586), as a tribe allied with the Utina. It is noted sparingly in later Spanish documents but we learn that in 1604 there was an encounter between these two tribes and Spanish troops and that there were two Acuera missions in 1655, San Luis and Santa Lucia, both of which had disappeared by 1680.

Survivors were probably gathered into the "Pueblo de Timucua," which stood near St. Augustine in 1736, and was finally removed to the Mosquito Lagoon and

Halifax River in Volusia County, where Tomoka River keeps the name alive.

The Timucua

The Timucua were sedentary and semi-agricultural, but depended largely upon game, fish, wild fruits, and bread prepared from the starchy *koonti* root. They had large dug-out canoes. Their pottery, the work of the women, was of the finest type found east of the Mississippi. The principal weapon of the warriors was the bow, and a sort of spade-shaped club of hard wood.

Women wore a short fringed skirt, perhaps of some bark fiber, with their hair flowing loosely. Men went naked, except for the breechcloth, but had the whole body elaborately tattooed. They bunched the hair in a knot on top of the head, and wore inflated fish-bladders through holes in their ears. They were tall and described as of great strength and agility as well as remarkable swimmers.

Customs: The government by the chiefs was despotic. There were two hereditary classes, nobles, or chiefs, and common people, and each tribe was organized into clans or hereditary family groups, usually bearing animal names.

The chief gods were the Sun and the Moon, the Deer and other



The houses of Florida's North Central tribes were circular, of upright poles, thatched with palmetto leaves, and with granaries elevated on stakes to keep them out of reach of wild animals. Their villages were strongly stockaded and each important settlement had a large central town-house of logs, for tribal ceremonies and the reception of guests.

animals. They were extremely ceremonious, celebrating planting and harvest seasons, fishing and hunting expeditions, the going and return of war parties, marriages and funerals, each with special rites of prayer, fasting, feasting, dancing and purification by means of the "black drink" brewed from the leaves of the *ilex cassine* (dahoon holly).

On certain great ceremonial occasions the first-born male infants of the tribe were delivered up by their mothers to be sacrificed to the Sun, in whose honor also a sacred fire was kept always burning in their temples.

Source: Condensed by the editor from articles with images at www.newadvent.org and www.accessgenealogy.com.

Institute of Maya Studies' Line-up of Presentations!

April 8: IMS Meeting (Classroom-style):



Structure 33 at Yaxchilán exemplifies one architectural style in the basin area: broad and tall facades, small doorways with stone lintels, and elaborate roof combs.

"A Study in Maya Architecture: The Usumacinta River Basin"

with **Rick Slazyk A.I.A., NCARB**

Inspired by the most recent adventure by IMS members to Mexico, this lecture will explore the geographically diverse state of Chiapas and its influence on the site planning and architecture of the area. Having abundant resources such as water, building materials, topography and fertile land, the Classic period sites of Yaxchilán, Bonampák, Toniná and Palenque prospered.



Computer re-construction of a suspected, but not totally proven, Maya suspension bridge over the Usumacinta River at Yaxchilán.

These sites will be studied and compared for their architectural innovations responding to the challenges these resources created, the architectural style which permeated these sites and the outside architectural influences from the Petén, Campeche and Yucatán.

One of the most significant Maya sites, Palenque, will be studied for its hydrological, structural and architectural innovations which have been unsurpassed by other major Maya cities. Finally, we'll take a look at what could have been one of the greatest engineering accomplishments of the Maya – a suspension bridge at Yaxchilán. Not all scholars are convinced, but it is well worth taking a look at!

April 15: IMS Meeting (in the Museum Auditorium):



Excavations in three plazas at **Cahal Pech**, two in **Xunantunich**, and in the Plaza of the Seven Temples, **Tikal**.

"Recent Archaeology in Belize and at Tikal" with **Jim Reed**

Come and welcome newsletter editor **Jim Reed** back to Miami for an evening of live video featuring the results of last year's archaeological field season at the ancient Maya sites of Cahal Pech and Xunantunich in the Western Belize Valley, and at Tikal in the Petén jungle of Guatemala. At Cahal Pech, view the of the efforts accomplished by BVAR-associated crews (see *Mathew Saunders article on page 3*).

At Xunantunich, archaeologists Kathryn Brown and Jason Yaeger share their insights and enthusiasm (see *article on pages 4 and 5*). Plus, get an update as to where we are now with "**Understanding 2012**".

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

Institute of Maya Studies

The Institute of Maya Studies is totally member-supported! If you are not a member, please take a moment and join us. Membership brings benefits and helps the IMS offer educational programs to the public. If you are already a member, please encourage your friends to join.

Membership Application

or Newsletter Only Subscription Form:

Name: _____
Address: _____

City, State, Zip: _____
E-mail: _____
Phone: _____

- New Renewal
- Benefactor: \$350
- Patron: \$150
- Sponsor: \$100
- Family: \$50
- Individual: \$40
- Student: \$25
- Newsletter Only: \$25 (U.S.)
- Newsletter Only: \$30 (non-U.S.)

Newsletter-only option available outside of South Florida only.



Mail to the Institute of Maya Studies, Inc. Attn: Membership, 3280 South Miami Avenue, Miami, FL 33129

The Institute of Maya Studies is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization. Membership dues and contributions are tax-deductible to the fullest extent allowed by the I.R.S.



Upcoming Events at the IMS:

April 1: **IMS Board Meeting** (*No fooling!*)
All IMS members are welcome to attend.

April 8: *IMS Meeting; Classroom-style*

"A Study in Maya Architecture: The Usumacinta River Basin" –

The Usumacinta River is the largest river in Mesoamerica (seventh-largest in the world) and is shared by Mexico and Guatemala. Inspired by a recent adventure by IMS members to Mexico, join **Rick Slazyk A.I.A., NCARB** as he explores four major Maya sites in the area and compares architectural innovations.

April 15: *IMS Meeting; Museum Auditorium*

"Recent Archaeology in Belize and at Tikal" –

IMS newsletter editor **Jim Reed** shares video with commentary on recent excavations at Cahal Pech and within Xunantunich proper (Belize) including a new area where archaeologists have apparently discovered the original early Preclassic center of the site. See the newly restored Temple 5 and new restorations at the Plaza of the Seven Temples in Tikal (Guatemala). Plus, a short update on the current state of affairs surrounding the 2012 phenomena.

Upcoming Events and Announcements:

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

April 29: *Lecture*

"The Kislak Oyohualli: Dancing and War Among the Toltecs" – Join Professor Michael D. Coe, Yale Emeritus, as he presents a program in the Jay I. Kislak Lecture series. At the Coolidge Auditorium, Jefferson Building, Library of Congress, 7:00 pm; 101 Independence Avenue SE, Washington, DC. For more info, email Barbara A. Tenenbaum at bten@loc.gov

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

Through May 17: *Photographic Exhibition*

"Maya Mysteries" – A photo-essay adventure in search of temples and

artifacts of the Maya culture by photographer Willis Peterson. Artist's Reception: April 3, 5-8 pm at the West Valley Art Museum, Surprise, AZ. Get more info at: www.wvam.org

May 15–16: *Conference*

"Continuity and Change in Mesoamerican History From the Preclassic to the Colonial Era" –

Theme of the 2009 Conference on Mesoamerica, at California State University, Los Angeles, CA. Get more info at: <http://calstatela2009.conferenceonmesoamerica.blogspot.com>

July 19–24: *Symposium*

"The Peoples of the Americas: Change and Continuity" –

Theme of the 53rd Int'l. Congress of Americanists (ICA), at the Centro Histórico in Mexico City. Whether their research is carried out from the perspective of a single discipline, or using a multi-disciplinary approach, national and international members share their field research. Get more info at: www.53ica.com



IMS Explorer

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