



IMS EXPLORER

Institute of Maya Studies

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A well-preserved earth-monster-mask façade and a number of stone monuments with hieroglyphic inscriptions were rediscovered at the site of Lagunita, and a second site, never before reported, was found in this year's field season. Article submitted by Karl Herbert Mayer.

Two Ancient Maya Cities Discovered in the Jungle of Southeastern Campeche

In the tropical forest of central Yucatan peninsula, two large Maya sites have been rediscovered by an archaeological expedition led by Ivan Šprajc, of the Research Center of the Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Arts (ZRC SAZU). While not very far from the modern towns of Xpujil and Zoh Laguna, in the southeastern part of the Mexican state of Campeche, the two sites are located in the northern zone of the depopulated and hardly accessible Calakmul Biosphere Reserve.

One of the two sites had been visited in the 1970s by the American archaeologist Eric Von Euw, who documented several stone monuments and

an extraordinary façade with an entrance representing open jaws of the earth monster, but the results of his work have never been published.

His drawings, kept in the Peabody Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology, Harvard University, have been known to some specialists,



Lagunita, Stela 2, front.



Lagunita, zoomorphic portal, looking northeast. A wooden lintel is partially preserved above the monster's eye. All photos courtesy of ZRC SAZU.

but the exact location of the site, referred to as Lagunita by Von Euw, was a mystery. In spite of several attempts at relocating it, Lagunita remained lost until rediscovered by Dr. Šprajc and his team, earlier this year.

"We found the site with the aid of aerial photographs," Šprajc explains, "but were able to identify it as Lagunita only after we saw the façade and the monuments and compared them with Von Euw's drawings, that the renowned Maya expert Karl Herbert Mayer made available for me."

The other site, located during the recently accomplished fieldwork, had never before been reported. The archaeologists baptized it with the name Tamchen, which means "deep well" in Yucatec Maya, an allusion to the presence of more than 30 chultuns (bottle-shaped

IMS Presentation:
September 17, 8 pm

E-Group at Uaxactun

Early E-Groups and the Development of the Maya Calendar
with
Dr. Susan Milbrath

underground chambers, largely intended for collecting rainwater), some of them as deep as 13 meters.

During the two-month field season, Šprajc was assisted by geodesist Aleš Marsetić, researcher at ZRC SAZU, archaeologists Atasta Flores

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Jim Reed,
Editor

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Research at Ceibal Challenges Two Prevailing Theories on How Maya Civilization Began

The Maya civilization is well-known for its elaborate temples, sophisticated writing system, and mathematical and astronomical developments, yet the civilization's origins remain something of a mystery.

Excavations at Ceibal suggest that the origins of early Maya civilization are more complex than previously thought.

A University of Arizona study, published in the journal *Science* challenges the two prevailing theories on how the ancient civilization began, suggesting its origins are more complex than previously thought.

Anthropologists typically fall into one of two competing camps with regard to the origins of Maya civilization. The first camp believes that it developed almost entirely on its own in the jungles of what is now Guatemala and southern Mexico. The second believes that the Maya civilization developed as the result of direct influences from the older Olmec civilization and its center of La Venta.

It's likely that neither of those theories tells the full story, according to findings by a team of archaeologists led by University of Arizona (UA) husband-and-wife anthropologists Takeshi Inomata and Daniela Triadan.

"We really focused on the beginning of this civilization and how this remarkable civilization developed," said Inomata, UA professor of anthropology and the study's lead author.

In their excavations at Ceibal, an ancient Maya site in Guatemala, researchers found that Ceibal actually predates the growth of La Venta as a major center by as much as 200 years, suggesting that La Venta could not have been the prevailing influence over early Mayan development.

That does not make the Maya civilization older than the Olmec civilization – since the Olmec had another center prior to La Venta – nor does it prove that the Maya civilization developed entirely independently, researchers say.

What it does indicate, they say, is that both Ceibal and La Venta probably participated in a broader cultural shift taking place in the period between 1,150-800 BCE.

"We're saying that the scenario of early Maya culture is really more complex than we thought," said UA anthropology graduate student Victor Castillo, who co-authored the paper with Inomata and Triadan.

"We have this idea of the origin of Maya civilization as an indigenous



Deep in the open-pit trench excavation at Ceibal.

development, and we have this other idea that it was an external influence that triggered the social complexity of Maya civilization. We're now thinking it's not actually black and white," Castillo said.

There is no denying the striking similarities between Ceibal and La Venta, such as evidence of similar ritual practices and the presence of similar architecture – namely the pyramids that would come to be the hallmark of Mesoamerican civilization but did not exist at the earlier Olmec center of San Lorenzo.

However, researchers don't think this is the case of simply one site mimicking the other. Rather, they suspect that both the Maya site of Ceibal and the Olmec site of La Venta were parts of a more geographically far-reaching cultural shift that occurred around 1,000 BCE, about the time when the Olmec center was transitioning from San Lorenzo to La Venta.

"Basically, there was a major social change happening from the southern Maya lowlands to possibly the coast of Chiapas and the southern Gulf Coast, and this site of Ceibal was a part of that broader social change. The emergence of a new form of society – with new architecture, with new rituals – became the important basis for all later Mesoamerican civilizations," said Inomata.

"This gives us a new idea about the beginning of Maya civilization, and it also



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tells us about how common traits shared by many different Mesoamerican civilizations emerged during that time." 🏛️

Source: Photos by Takeshi Inomata. Condensed from an article provided by University of Arizona, posted 4.25.2013 at <http://phys.org/news>.

IMS Program Note:

Takeshi Inomata will present an update of the article on early Maya civilization at the IMS on January 21, 2015.

A Heartfelt Farewell to Edward Kurjack

by Antonio Benavides C.,
INAH Campeche

The sad news arrived in an unexpected e-mail on a Sunday morning. Memories came back as if moved by several springs. I first met him towards the end of the 1970s, when Norberto González, INAH's dynamic regional director, introduced Ed to me and the young archaeologists, who at that time, were working in Merida, at the Centro Regional del Sureste.

Ed, who passed on August 2, 2014, in Melbourne, FL, was a good teacher, ready to hear your ideas and eager to help whenever you wanted. He showed us how to use the Geociever; in those days his favorite toy to precisely register new Maya settlements he encountered here and there.

That was hard work: the apparatus was really heavy – at least two persons were needed to move it – not counting the car battery used to supply its energy. That did not stop Ed; he lent his own Jeep, aptly, the Renegade, to the task.

Ed surveyed the Puuc hills, the forested south of Campeche and Quintana Roo, the henequen fields, and the pasture lands of Yucatan. He also took to the air many times in helicopters or in small airplanes to capture photographs from high up; he knew how to convince people about the relevance of Maya sites registration.

Fond Memories of Our Friend Ed

by IMS Executive Vice President Marta Barber

I first met Edward B. Kurjack in 1994 at the Maya Meetings in Austin, TX. A small group of IMS members were there. We used to try to get into the auditorium before anyone else rushed to their seats, and sit on the lower, left-side rows, right in front of the podium. Most scholars sat in the same area, and we were curious to hear comments and questions posed by those scholars to Linda Schele and Peter Mathews, during Q&As.

Ed Kurjack with IMS President Rick Slazyk, standing within the Temple of the Seven Dolls, Dzibilchaltun, Yucatan, 2008. Submitted by Rick Slazyk.



Born on July 29, 1938, in Brooklyn, New York, Ed graduated from Hillsborough High School in Tampa, FL, in 1956. He next enrolled at Florida State University, where he received his BS degree in 1960. His MA was from the University of Alabama in 1964 and he achieved his PhD from Ohio State University in 1972.

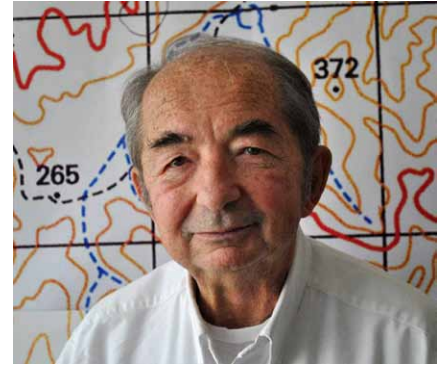
From 1962 to 1964, Ed was invited to join Tulane University's Middle American Research Institute project at Dzibilchaltun. He contributed with the settlement pattern study of the site under the direction of E. Wyllys Andrews IV.

Kurjack proposed that the Maya society at Dzibilchaltun was integrated by several classes, not just upper and lower, but also a middle class. This theoretical position contradicted earlier arguments of just two classes.

Further research at many other Maya sites proved Ed was

Then came the turn to introduce the new speaker, Edward B. Kurjack, and the host proceeded to read the basic facts of his long curriculum, that Ed referred to as, his "ridiculum": undergrad studies at Florida State, MA from the University of Alabama, Ohio State for his PhD, his position at Western Illinois University, his involvement with the *Archaeological Atlas of Yucatan*, a massive project, and his work with E. Wyllys Andrews IV.

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Ed Kurjack, Montecristo, Ecuador, 2011. Courtesy of La Hora, via Antonio Benavides C.



Antonio Benavides involved with rescue field work, near Lerma, Campeche, 2011. Courtesy of Antonio Benavides C.

right, and that ancient Maya society was formed by several social classes, including religious leaders, noble families, merchants, specialists, farmers and slaves.

After the publication (1980) of the *Atlas Arqueológico de Yucatán* (two volumes), Ed continued traveling to the peninsula, specially to visit his compadres Beatriz Repetto and Rubén Maldonado, who both continue to work as INAH-Yucatan researchers.

In 1999, Ed was named Professor Emeritus at the Department of Sociology and Anthropology, at Western Illinois University, where he began to work in 1971. His publications concerning Lowland Maya archaeology include two books and more than 30 articles. He was a good friend and a very generous man.

Many archaeological sites custodians, archaeologists, historians, students and general public who knew him have fond memories of Ed Kurjack – Eduardo to many – a passionate lover of Maya ruins. 🏛️

Link to a PDF of Ed's Curriculum Vita, submitted by Antonio Benavides, on the IMS website.





Left: Rick Slazyk, Joaquín Rodríguez, Ed Kurjack and Rubén Maldonado pose within the Temple of the Seven Dolls, Dzibilchaltun, 2008. Center: Ed dines with a group of IMS members during one of their adventures, Campeche, 2010. Right: Ed, Rubén and a few IMS members relax on an altar stone in Calakmul, January, 2010. All photos by IMS members. See more of our homage to Ed Kurjack on the IMS website.

Fond Memories of Our Friend Ed

by Marta Barber

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I kept looking at the program and failed to notice the speaker approach the podium. Then a soft voice came over the loud speaker, greeting the audience and expressing the obligatory gratitude to the UT Maya Meeting organizers.

But where was the speaker? I couldn't see any person peering out from behind the podium. At only a couple of inches above 5 feet, Ed was barely visible from my seat. As I learned later in my 20 years of friendship, there were lots of smarts, wanderlust and love for the Maya in that small body.

When he retired and moved to Melbourne (about a 2-1/2 hour drive from Miami), Ed was a frequent speaker at IMS monthly lectures: the *sacbes* of northern Yucatan; water supplies; Dzibilchaltun; the cave of Balankanche. Ed had entered Balankanche with George Stuart

George Fery and Ray Stewart relax at a table in the shade with Ed Kurjack, Chichen Itza, 2004.
Photo by Marta Barber.



(who sadly also recently passed) and had a set of original photographs of that adventure. The two had worked together in those early years of their professional lives.

Ed and George last saw each other in September, 2013, in the parking lot of the Flagler County Government Services Building, where Ed had traveled during Maya at the Playa to say hello to his old buddy. Who would've thought it was their good-bye.

During one of his trips to Miami to lecture at IMS, a group of us had a *kaffeeklatsch* (with Cuban coffee, of course) at a restaurant in Little Havana. It was there that we talked about Egypt and the possibility of going together to the legendary

place. A year later, we were at the base of the pyramids. Ed loved seeing ruins from the air (after all, his main interests were settlement patterns) and got us all to sign up for an air-balloon ride. Unforgettable.

Ed traveled three times with members of IMS: to Egypt, to the Río Bec and southern Campeche area and to Chichen Itza and Balankanche. It was at Chichen in 2004 that I saw the respect Ed got from everyone there.

We wanted to see the Chichen that no one visits anymore. That included the Upper Temple of the Jaguar, whose famous mural still has parts visible. After climbing the short but steep stairway leading up to the temple, as expected, the guard told us that the screen was locked and that he did not have a key.

"Break it," Ed told the guard. "I will bring you a new lock tomorrow." Unexpectedly, the guard obliged. And so, we were able to enter that almost sacrosanct chamber that still reveals the past glory of Chichen Itza.

Ed had suffered myriad ailments in the past few years: heart failure, renal deficiencies requiring dialysis three times a week, and in the last



Left: Marta Barber (far left) converses with Ed as a group of IMS members exit the gondola of a hot air balloon, after soaring together over the Valley of Kings, Egypt, November, 2010. Right: Patricia Manfredi, Ed and a couple other opportunists share some shade on the steps to the top of the acropolis, Ek Balam, 2010. All photos by IMS members.

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Left: Ed Kurjack and IMS members view the model of Luxor during their tour of Egypt, 2010. Center: Janet Miess, Pat Manfredi and Lynn Hausmann relax with Ed in the shade, Calakmul, 2010. Right: Noble Ed lectures to ladies of IMS royalty about the importance of being always on the lookout for a seat in the shade, Chichen Itza, 2004. All photos by IMS members. See more of our homage to Ed Kurjack on the IMS website.

Fond Memories of Our Friend Ed

by Marta Barber

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couple of months, bad circulation that required the amputation of the big toe in one foot.

We had invited him to come with us to Merida in July, but ultimately he couldn't. While in Merida, I called his good pal and "compadre" Rubén Maldonado, of INAH-Yucatan, only to learn that

he also was having health problems. When George died, I asked Ed to write a personal piece for our newsletter about their times in the field together. He had done one for us on his relationship with Merle Greene. He would try, he said, but he was tired.

Ed was a private man, and rarely shared information that was not related to the Maya. He spoke

softly, and when asked a question that seemed silly to him, he'd answer with conviction, "What you see is what you get."

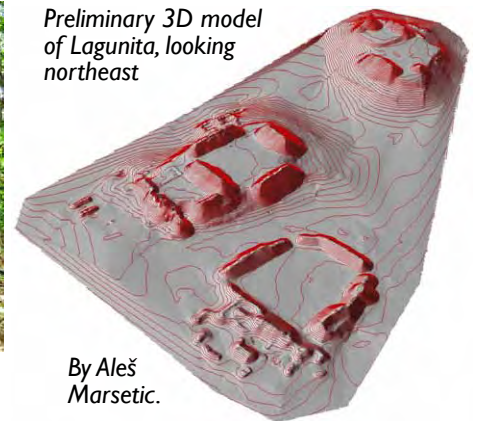
He gave me two pieces of advice that I often quote when trekking the paths and jungles of the Maya world.

He said to me: "don't ever miss the opportunity to sit down" and "don't ever pass the opportunity to go the bathroom." Amen, Ed Kurjack, a sage, indeed. 🏠



Two more views of the Lagunita zoomorphic portal. Left: right side, looking southeast. Center: Left side, looking east. Note the stylized eye of the earth monster and fangs along the doorway jamb.

Preliminary 3D model of Lagunita, looking northeast



By Aleš Maršetič.

Two Ancient Maya Cities Discovered in the Jungle of Southeastern Campeche

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Esquivel and Octavio Esparza Olguín, and architect Arianna Campiani, PhD, students at the Mexican National Autonomous University (UNAM), as well as several local workers.

Lagunita and Tamchen are situated in the southern portion of a vast, archaeologically unexplored territory in central Yucatan lowlands. Except for Chactun, the large Maya city discovered by Šprajc's team in 2013, no other site has so far been

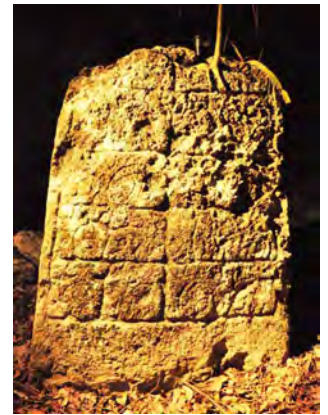
located in this area, that extends over some 3000 sq. km, between the so-called Río Bec and Chenes regions, both known for their characteristic architectural styles in vogue during the Late and Terminal Classic periods (c. 600–1000 CE).

Aside from a ball court and a temple pyramid almost 20 meters high, the core area of Lagunita has a number of massive palace-like buildings arranged around four major plazas. The most spectacular feature

is a profusely decorated façade with a monster-mouth doorway. Representing the gaping maws of the earth and fertility deity, these zoomorphic portals characterize both Chenes and Río Bec architectural styles, most prominent examples being those at Chicanna, Hormiguero, Hochob and Tabasqueño.

"The Lagunita façade is very well preserved, and we accurately documented all the details using 3D photo scanning technique," Arianna Campiani commented.

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Left: One of the 30 chultuns at Tamchen. Center: Lagunita, Structure I, front. All photos courtesy of ZRC SAZU.

Lagunita, Stela 6, front.

Two Ancient Maya Cities Discovered in the Jungle of Southeastern Campeche

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Also found at Lagunita were 10 stelae and three altars, some of them with well-preserved reliefs, including hieroglyphic inscriptions.

“The date on Stela 2 corresponds to 711 CE, suggesting that Lagunita flourished contemporarily with the nearby Chactun, where we also found monuments with dates falling in the eighth century,” says project epigrapher Octavio Esparza.

“To judge by both architectural volumes and monuments with inscriptions, Lagunita must have been the seat of a relatively powerful polity, though the nature of its relationship with the larger Chactun, lying some 10 km to the north, remains unclear,” noted Esparza.

The importance of Lagunita is further attested by the great density of residential mounds, terraces, *albarradas* (low dry walls) and other settlement remains in the surrounding area.

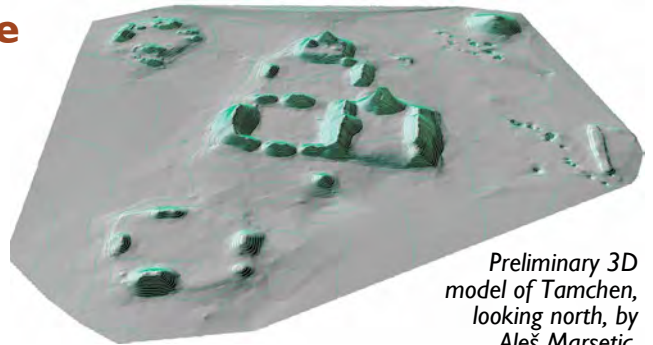
Similarly imposing is the site of Tamchen, located about 6 km northeast of Lagunita: there are several plazas surrounded by voluminous buildings, including a pyramid temple with a rather well preserved sanctuary on top and a stela and an altar at its base, as well as an acropolis supporting a courtyard with three temples on its sides.

While Tamchen seems to have been largely contemporaneous with Lagunita, both the triadic compound and surface ceramics indicate its settlement history goes back to the Late Preclassic (c. 300 BCE–250 CE).

Just like Chactun, Lagunita and Tamchen have a



Lagunita, Stela 1, front.



Preliminary 3D model of Tamchen, looking north, by Aleš Maršetič.



Lagunita, Altar 1, west face with glyphs 4 Ajaw and 2 Ajaw.



Lagunita, Stela 4, upper fragment, left side.

number of aspects that make them very promising for future research. The zoomorphic façade at Lagunita does not come as a surprise, considering that Becan, the largest site in the Río Bec zone, is only 15 km away. What was not expected, however, is the presence of so many pyramid temples and monuments with inscriptions, which are rare in the Río Bec region.

Both Tamchen and Lagunita appear to have been largely abandoned around 1,000 CE sharing the fate of other lowland Maya polities, but a few stelae were modified some time after they had been originally erected, and Postclassic offerings were found at others.

These facts obviously reflect continuities and ruptures in cultural traditions, but their significance

for understanding political geography and history of the region is yet to be explained.

In June 2014, the southern part of the Calakmul Biosphere Reserve, where most of the currently known archaeological sites were discovered in field surveys headed by Šprajc in recent years, was inscribed in the UNESCO World Heritage list as a mixed natural and cultural property. 🗿

Source: From an MISLI original article, posted 8.15.14 at <http://ms.sta.si>, submitted by Karl Herbert Mayer via email and Linda Shultz via Facebook.

Institute of Maya Studies Line-up of Presentations!

September 10, 2014: IMS Explorer Session

San Miguelito and Its New Museum in Cancun

with Ray Stewart



Six years in the making, the new museum is the largest structure built by Mexico's INAH since 1987 at the Templo Mayor.

We will tour Cancun's new archaeological museum on the site of San Miguelito. Children as well as adults can now relate what they have seen inside the modern building to one of the original Maya sites where they originated. With its own little temple, San Miguelito is a pleasant shaded stroll under tropical trees, hidden for years ten feet from the busy Kukulcan Blvd.



San Miguelito was part of the trade routes in the eastern part of the Yucatan Peninsula, and because of its strategic location at the entrance of the Nichupte Lagoon, experts believe it was a port for ocean-going craft. INAH specialists have recorded 47 burials.

September 17: IMS Presentation

Early E-Groups and the Development of the Maya Calendar

with Dr. Susan Milbrath, University of Florida

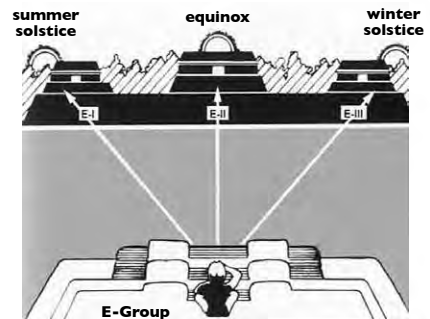


Dr. Susan Milbrath

This lecture explores the changing nature of calendar records in Mesoamerica, with a special focus on the solar cycle. Maya E-groups reflect significant solar alignments during the Middle to Late Preclassic, at a time that calendar records were first being developed.

Cycle Seven Long Count calendar inscriptions developed in the context of early solar observations. By the end of the Late Preclassic, the Long Count Calendar incorporated the Tun, a 360-day cycle that did not require any form of adjustment to the true tropical solar year. When the Long Count reached a standardized format in the Early Classic, the earlier E-groups had been abandoned or repeatedly modified so that they no longer were useful for tracking the solar year.

Susan Milbrath shares her most recent research with the IMS.



All meetings are 8 pm • Institute of Maya Studies • Miami Science Museum

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Peter Mathews, Elaine Schele, David Schele, Stanley Paul Guenter, Francisco Estrada-Belli, Joaquín Rodríguez, Keith Merwin, Steve Radzi

Learn from the Best by the Beach! Attend Maya at the Playa 2014

September 25–28:

American Foreign Academic Research, Davidson Day School, and the Archaeological Institute of America are very proud to present the 8th installment of the Maya at the Playa Conference series. For eight years, it has been our honor and privilege to host some of the world's leading minds in the field of Maya studies as well as some of the greatest students, enthusiasts, and supporters of the science.

The Maya at the Playa Conference has provided a venue for scholars to share their current research with colleagues, students, and the general public in a relaxed

and informal environment and has harvested collaboration and support, not to mention a lot of great memories.

This knowledge-swap takes place over the course of a long weekend in a low-key symposia format with offerings for all experience levels. The conference structure encourages active participation, open discussion, and a high level of interaction amongst participants and attendees.

Workshops, discussions, and performances are provided by an international group of Maya specialists known for the quality of their research and their commitment to public education and outreach.

Participants ranging from archaeologists to folklorists are afforded the unique opportunity to re-contextualize their research within a larger context of Maya studies, at the same time creating public access to rigorous scientific and specialist data.

This year we are thrilled to honor Dr. Peter Mathews with our lifetime achievement award. A veteran of the conference, Peter represents everything we love about Maya archaeology; a skilled researcher, a captivating speaker, and an all around fun guy who has contributed greatly to our field. 🏔

Get more information at: Mayaattheplaya.com

Upcoming Events at the IMS:

Sept. 10 • 8 pm: *IMS Explorer Session: San Miguelito and Its New Museum in Cancun* – Ray Stewart explores the newly opened site of San Miguelito that sits next to Mexico's new \$15M Museo Maya de Cancun.

Sept. 17 • 8 pm: *IMS Presentation: Early E-Groups and the Development of the Maya Calendar* – with Dr. Susan Milbrath of the Florida Museum of Natural History at the University of Florida. See page 7 for details.

October 8 • 8 pm: *IMS Explorer Session: On the Road with IMS Members* – Revealing the sites and sights of exploring the Mayalands, with Marta Barber.

October 15 • 8 pm: *IMS Presentation: The Holmul Kingdom and the Rise of a Maya Empire* – A royal lineage at Holmul is revealed to have connections to both Tikal and its rival, the Kaan kingdom, with Dr. Francisco Estrada-Belli.

Upcoming Events and Announcements:

September 20: *PCSWDC Symposium Land Without Borders: Cultural Interaction Between the Pre-Hispanic Southwest and Mesoamerica* – Theme of the Symposium of The Pre-Columbian Society of Washington, D.C. This symposium will re-examine the relationship between the culture areas of the Southwest and Mesoamerica, with their acknowledged differences and many important similarities. For details and registration information, see the Pre-Columbian Society website at www.pcswdc.org

September 25-28: *M@TP Conference 8th Annual Maya at the Playa Conference* – For eight years, it has been our honor and privilege to host some of the world's leading minds in the field of Maya studies as well as some of the greatest students, enthusiasts, and supporters of the science. Dr. Peter Mathews will receive the Lifetime Achievement Award.

Presenters include Elaine Schele, David Schele, Francisco Estrada-Belli, Marc Zender, Marcello Canuto and IMS's own Keith Merwin, Joaquín Rodríguez and artist Steve Radzi. To be held in Flagler Beach, FL. Get more info at: www.mayaattheplaya.com



January 13-17, 2015: *UT Maya Meetings Body and Sacrifice: New Interpretations of Ancient Maya Art, Ritual and Performance* – Theme of the 2015 Maya Meetings at The University of Texas at Austin. More details will be available soon on the UT Mesoamerica Center <www.utmesoamerica.org/maya> webpage.

Editor's Tip: *Online all the time Mesoamerica and Ancient America Lectures, Conferences and Exhibits* – Check out Mike Ruggeri's comprehensive list of upcoming events. Be sure to bookmark his site at this tiny URL: <http://bit.ly/11aKjzE>

IMS EXPLORER

Join in the **Explorer-ation!** Scholar or not, we welcome submissions from IMS members. Share what interests you with others. All articles and news items for the **IMS Explorer** should be forwarded to the newsletter editor at: mayaman@bellsouth.net