

We are back from the successful 1992 field season completing our tenth year of archaeological research in Belize. The 1992 field season winds up the intensive excavations at nine sample residential units in the three major resource zones. The past season focused in the uplands and it was not a surprise to find that the elite architecture was elaborate. We are still taking entries for explanations of the spherical chert monoliths found at the temple excavations of Laton (the most unusual entry so far comes from **Chaz Hargrove** who defined them as Elvis heads). **Lisa Lucero** recognized a similar monolith encased in a shrine at the Maya center of Tonina in Chiapas, Mexico. Come to the BRASS Bash October 10th to see slides of these unusual items.

While the 1992 field season was in progress, work continued at the UCSB lab. **Nicole Woodman** ('90) completed her Senior Honors thesis on household ceramic assemblages using data from the Belize River area. Nicole is on the brink of her graduate career in ethnography at the University of Chicago. **Ann Hundt** analyzed the household lithic assemblages which she developed into her Senior Honors thesis. With her BA in hand, Ann is looking to graduate school in medical anthropology for next year. While Nicole and Ann were completing their theses, **Sydney Ciener** was developing the ceramic classification methodology and jar typology for the BRASS project. This set the standard for our ceramic descriptions.

Since our return in July we have made significant progress on many fronts. **Anabel** rounded up unsuspecting volunteers around campus at UCSB to help unload the ton of artifacts and equipment from the back of Big Blue. **Joann Sugihara** helped unpack all of the 1992 collections and organize them in our overtaxed storage facilities. **Kirsten Olson** has begun to classify the 30,000+ obsidian artifacts from the obsidian production site she excavated this season. Lisa currently is developing ceramic form descriptions so she and Anabel can work out the regional chronology. **Greg Morre** ('91) is presently identifying stone tools from the excavated sites hoping to distinguish variation among the resource zones for this Senior Honors thesis. **Charles Tillage** has assembled the classic videos of BRASS 92 and if we get it together, they will be shown at the BRASS BASH. **Beth Morrison** is preparing

descriptions of the construction sequences enhanced by illustrations by the accomplished architectural renderings of **Denise Nichols** and benefitted by the field assistance of **Mike Glassow**. This project will form the basis of her MA thesis.

The 1993 field season is planned from March through June. We want to focus our attention to the upland zone. Targeted areas include Laton and El Pilar. Expanded excavations at the structures of the obsidian production site at Laton should clear up the relationship of obsidian production to the occupation. We also would like to examine a small house at Laton in order to understand size differences in the community. Our big effort will be the detailed mapping of El Pilar with a laser transit. We may be fortunate enough to have the collaboration of Claude Belanger, the architect who has just completed the reconstructions at Lamanai, with the assistance of **Eric Nelsen** (who spent the summer at Lamanai after the '92 season). Work at El Pilar will involve clearing collapse and overburden in order to define architectural features including corners, stairways, and insets. The result will be a fine scale map to assist in the major excavations planned for the immediate future. The ultimate goal of consolidation and reconstruction of El Pilar as a tourist mecca will be accomplished in conjunction with the Government of Belize. **Kim Klien** has already moved that project ahead with her map drawing of how to get to El Pilar. We hope that Teo and Gus will be able to get some tours from that reference.

While our exact field plans are not firm at this moment, we have our season largely mapped out. The field work will run from April through June and will be, once again, based at the fabulous facilities of the Santa Familia Monastery. We hope that the arrangements will match this past season, with Maria Sierra as our cook. Maria made everyone happy during meal times and she was a major addition to the our team. We are asking for a tax deductible contribution of \$1680 for two fun-filled weeks at El Pilar. Field work will include mapping, probe excavations for building features, and expanded excavations at the obsidian production site. When you join up for the 1993 field season we will send you the details of our goals based on the proposals we have send to funding agencies.

The glorious 1992 field season began with the drive down through Mexico. Big Blue finked out before Tuxpan and was patched together in Poza Rica thanks to **Jim Ferguson's** expertise. Along with **Terry Ferguson** and **Ken Young** we were able to gingerly drive to Belize. Once the field work got going, we witnessed a well organized project that included four major operations: three separate field excavations and the lab processing. While no one gleefully arose at 4:30 in the morning, Lisa's stern orders after breakfast were generally unnecessary. The crews were ready to head out to meet the challenges of the day. The challenges were facilitated by **Dave Frank's** constant attention to the vehicle needs. Of course loading up at the end of the field day was made nigh impossible if **Paige Fuerte** was scheduled in the lab. Out in the field, our field groups were directed by **Scott Fedick** at elite site of 145, Lisa at the smaller minor center fondly called 162, that doesn't explain the rise nor collapse of the Maya civilization, and Kirsten at small site of 168 and the obsidian site of 136. Who can forget **Suzanne Claussen's** visit to 162? While the banister was fashioned in her honor, we all appreciated it! Notable assets in the field were found in **Bob Vitolo** (did you ever stay back in the lab?) and **David Brenen** (we brought the boom back for repairs, you want to help??).

Lab management was set into motion by Joann, and maintained at the end of the project by **Jean Wood**. We have it on film that she counted all those obsidian pieces Kirsten pulled out of 136. One deposit there had a density of 1.7 million pieces per cubic meter! Lab enterprises were escalated by the willing help of our aficionados. Even though she was sick, **Nancy Stryble** worked on the computer catalog, we could not have done without her. **Luz-Helena** (AKA Lucero, not to be confused with Lisa) was a cheerful addition to the lab and we hope she will return next year. We are looking for another installment in Maya hieroglyphs by **Janis Idrakis**. This seasons mini-course was a real bonus.

What a great time the BRASS project had at the Xunantunich Archaeological Project party! But the party animal prize goes to **Jim Hill** whose tightly scheduled visit was clearly designed to hit all the season's parties! We hope to see them all at the BRASS BASH.

Anabel had some additional goals that she was able to meet during the 1992 season. The most important was the relocation of *La Brecha Anabela*, with the help of Juan and Gabriela of El Sombrero, Yaxhá. Before the project began, Anabel and Ken took off for La Brecha, but managed to get only one third of the way. What with rain and differences in what way to go, the remainder of the Brecha connection was left until May when the final ride was successfully accomplished. It was amazing to note the use of the Brecha despite the years and new roads that could have obscured it. Juan and Gabriela will be maintaining La Brecha with their horseback riding tours. Anabel has hopes of doing a small project addressing the escalation of looting by revisiting the elite house sites and documenting the changes since 1978, when La Brecha Anabela was established.

Our work goes on and we have great plans for this year. Scott and Anabel plan to assemble the monograph on settlement in the Belize River area and look for a publisher at the American Anthropological Association (AAA) meetings in San Francisco this December. This is the long promised synthesis that all of you have contributed to and been waiting for! Lisa, with her final dissertation year fellowship, has a lot of motivation to bring her work to fruition. Kirsten will be moving ahead on her MA focused on obsidian production, she certainly has enough obsidian to keep her busy. At UCSB, **Jenn Kirker** will be working on her Senior Honors thesis focused on the comparison of artifact densities between middens and construction fill. This will form the basis of an article we want to publish as well. To keep next year's lab in order, Joann will be setting up a Lab Manual, this should put us on the right track from the beginning.

Keep in touch with us and include BRASS in your plans for 1993! In the meantime mark your calendars for the 10th of October 1992, for the **10th Annual BRASS BASH** pot luck at the Cliff House of UCSB. See the enclosed invitation for details. Be there or be square!

Donation Form:

To The Regents of the University of California:

I am donating the amount of \$_____ to the project directed by Dr. Anabel Ford, of CORI's MesoAmerican Research Center at the University of California, Santa Barbara 93106.

Thank you for your attention.

Name: _____

Address: _____

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