

the uo's newsletter for faculty, staff, and graduate teaching fellows

march 14, 2005

 featured stories
**Blogs at the UO: New Tool Emerges for Effective Teaching and Communications**

< An image of connections between hosts on the internet. Image adapted from a larger version by [the Opte Project](#), and made available thanks to and under the terms of a [Creative Commons license](#).

In recent years, "blogs"—the preferred diminutive for weblogs—have evolved from the Internet plaything of techies to perhaps the web's most popular application. These personal hybrid websites and bulletin boards not only influence politics and the removal of TV news anchors, but also are proving to be an efficient means for campus groups and communities to update and keep in touch with each other.

 [Full Story...](#)
**Blogs at the UO: Background and Advice From a Blog Researcher**

< Joel Bloom

I first came across the term "blog" while reading a column by Joe Conason on [Salon.com](#). Conason wrote a daily piece on national politics that was full of links both to stories in mainstream newspapers and magazines, but also to websites I hadn't heard of, some of them run by journalists and hosted by other online magazines such as [Slate](#) (Mickey Kaus' [Kausfiles](#)) and [MSN](#) (Eric Alterman's [Altercation](#)), while others, like Bob Somerby's [Daily Howler](#), and University of Tennessee Law Professor Glenn Reynolds' [Instapundit](#), were just personally hosted websites.

 [Full Story...](#)
Blogs at the UO: Resources and Examples

Colleen Bell, library instruction coordinator, offers [a guide to blogs](#) and related communication topics on the UO Libraries website. Bell wrote [this column](#) on library use of blogs especially for *Inside Oregon*.

 [Full Story...](#)
 potpourri

Featured Author

**Children's Book on Mahjong is Computer Expert's First Work**

< Ginnie Lo

Virginia (Ginnie) Lo's happy childhood in West Lafayette, Ind., is the basis for *Mahjong All Day Long* (Walker and Company, 2005), a delightful tale tailored for youngsters age 3 to 8.

 [Full Story...](#)
**The Oregonian Taps UO Sports Marketing Expert in Critical Look at Trailblazers**

< Paul Swangard

The March 14 *Oregonian* Sports section featured an in-depth examination of the Portland Trailblazers' continuing lack of fan support. One of the issues explored within that was whether the team's plunge in popularity makes a case for a change in Trailblazer ownership, and Paul Swangard, managing director of the UO's Warsaw Sports Marketing Center, was a primary source favoring change.

 [Full Story...](#)

Bargains

**Special Price on Travel Books**



'UO Day' at the Capitol

Members of the faculty and staff, as well as alumni and other UO supporters, are invited to join university officials March 30 in Salem at "UO Day at the Capitol," a key annual opportunity for volunteers to rally support for the university's legislative priorities and to talk with elected officials.

[Full Story...](#)



Homeland 'In'Security Symposium Examines Post-9/11 Terrain

How the "9/11 moment" changed the United States and the cross-border regions of North America is the focus of a two-day discussion by internationally known scholars, regional activists and community leaders. "Homeland 'In'Security: Race, Immigration and Labor in Post-September 11 North America" takes place Thursday and Friday, March 31 and April 1, in Room 175 at the Knight Law Center, 1515 Agate St.

[Full Story...](#)



Hewlett-Packard Gift Boosts UO's 'Small Science'

Hewlett-Packard has donated a powerful analytical instrument to the University of Oregon that will enable researchers to zero in on particles only a few tens of nanometers in size—ten times smaller than the researchers' existing equipment will allow. The scanning Auger microscope is one of only a handful in Oregon and will be part of the university's Center for Advanced Materials Characterization in Oregon (CAMCOR), a major research facility for the UO's rapidly growing nanoscience program.

[Full Story...](#)



American Chemical Society Lauds 'Coach' of Women Scientists

< Geri Richmond

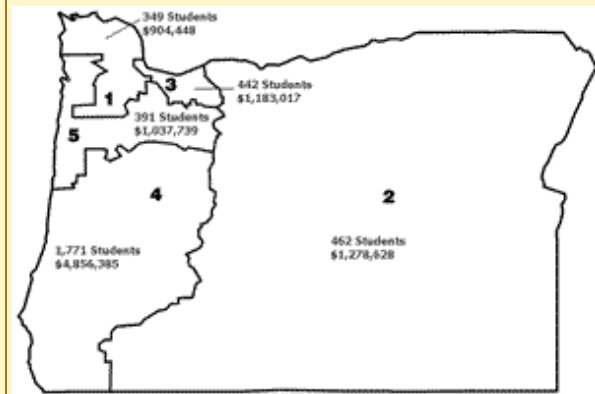
UO chemistry professor Geri Richmond is the 2005 winner

The bargain: Discounts on all UO Bookstore travel books

[Full Story...](#)

UO by the Numbers

Distribution of Federal Pell Grants



Click on the image for a larger version.

In 2003-4, University of Oregon distributed \$9.2 million in Federal Pell Grants to 3,415 of Oregon's most needy students. The map shows how these dollars are split across Oregon's Congressional Districts. The grant is available to students working on their first undergraduate degree and is the largest federal grant program with individual awards ranging from \$400 to \$4,050.

[Full Story...](#)

Were You There?



International Scholars Reception Showcases Research

< Sachiko Kamioka from Japan explains her project to President Dave Frohnmyer.

International scholars conducting research at the UO were the honored guests at a March 7 reception that included President Dave Frohnmyer, research and graduate studies Vice President Richard Linton and international programs Associate Vice President Tom Mills.

[Full Story...](#)

Make a Date



'Bach Night' Kicks off Festival Season of Premieres and Pasi3n

< Performers in rehearsal for the Oregon Bach Festival's La Pasi3n Seg3n San Marcos, coming June 23-24.

The Oregon Bach Festival (June 23-July 10) officially lifts the curtain on its 2005 season during Bach Night at 7 p.m. on Tuesday, March 22, in Eugene's Downtown Athletic Club, 999 Willamette St. Audio and video clips will highlight a guided tour of upcoming festival performances and showcase two major premieres. Bach Night is free and open to the public.

of the American Chemical Society's Award for Encouraging Women into Careers in the Chemical Sciences. The award recognizes Richmond for her life-changing work as the founder and chair of COACH (the Committee on the Advancement of Women Chemists), a national organization she started in 1998 with a group of fellow senior women chemistry faculty members determined to address the disparity in hiring and promotion of women in academic chemistry departments.

 [Full Story...](#)

Honors and Distinctions



McLucas' Dedication to Music Earns Distinction

< *Anne Dhu McLucas*

A love for American music inspired Anne Dhu McLucas to make music her career, and her ability to transmit that passion to others recently was honored by the Society for American Music.

 [More Honors...](#)

Campus Briefs



Governor's Food Drive Exceeds Goal on Campus

UO faculty and staff members and students contributed more than 137,238 pounds of food to the 25th annual Governor's Food Drive, far exceeding the ambitious goal organizers set this year.

 [More Campus Briefs...](#)

 [Full Story...](#)

Scene on Campus



Jordan Schnitzer Museum of Art Serves As A Campus Resource

< *Kurt Neugebauer works with art students.*

The January reopening of Jordan Schnitzer Museum of Art offers a wide range of opportunities for staff, faculty and students. In the photo here, museum exhibition designer, Kurt Neugebauer (foreground) works with this year's nine master of fine arts degree candidates to plan for an upcoming exhibition using a half-inch scale model of the changing exhibitions gallery. Their show opens May 13 and will feature a full range of media including ceramics, fibers, metalsmithing and jewelry, painting, photography and visual design.

 [Full Story...](#)

Each issue of Inside Oregon is archived on the web at <http://duckhenge.uoregon.edu/inside/archive.php> .

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[Call for contributions and schedule](#)

The University of Oregon is an equal-opportunity, affirmative-action institution committed to cultural diversity and compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act.

the uo's newsletter for faculty, staff, and graduate teaching fellows



Blogs at the UO: New Tool Emerges for Effective Teaching and Communications

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When Kartz Ucci, an assistant professor of art, and 12 UO students leave next week for a spring break trip to New York City, they will post daily images, observations and assorted musings on their "Art and the City" blogs. Colleagues, fellow art students back at the UO—and anyone else interested—can follow each leg of their high intensity sojourn through the city's famous galleries, shows and art projects.

"It's a much more interesting way of learning and sharing," says Ucci, an intermedia artist who has exhibited digital and video streaming projects throughout Canada and the United States. She requires that each student on the New York trip post blog entries daily, both visually and in text. It's not a daunting task considering the proliferation of Internet cafes and libraries with Internet access along the New York itinerary.

Traditionally, Ucci would have assigned group members to write essays upon their return. But she feels that with technology and tools readily available, blogs offer a better, more immediate opportunity to create a rich and lasting archive of the trip in a way that can be easily accessed by others.

"Art students at the UO will be able to study our blogs and learn from the experiences and insights we record next week long after our trip is over," Ucci says.

The trip begins March 19. To follow along, give the entourage a day for their first blogs to get posted and then click on the special [Art and the City](#) website that Ucci created to link to each student blog.

Using blogs for an entirely different purpose is Faye Chadwell, head of collection development and acquisitions (CDA) at the Knight Library. Her blog is an effective method to keep in contact with the 25 librarians who do selection of library materials.

"Our CDA blog allows us to provide information about database trials, budgetary matters,

deadlines for review of policies and procedures, and emerging issues in libraries and scholarly communication," she says. "The blog provides us an easy way to answer an individual librarian's question, post that answer, and then be assured to some degree that a lot of others will have access to the information so we don't have to answer the same question over and over again."

Blogs also play an increasing role at the Center for High Energy Physics where large volumes of data need to be relayed back and forth between student and faculty researchers. Because graduate students are often involved in research off site, they use blogs to touch base and seek feedback from faculty members as well as members of their research groups at remote locations.

Jan Strube, a physics graduate student involved in the BaBar Project, says that blogs are his lifeline. The project includes more than 550 physicists and engineers worldwide. The UO is one of 72 collaborating institutions reconstructing and studying millions of particles and antiparticles to gain insight into the dominance of matter over antimatter in the creation of the universe 10,000 million years ago.

"Blogs make it much easier for us to communicate with each other, no matter where we are, on campus or in another part of the world," he says. "I first used a blog when I was working on a project with another student and found that it was a more convenient way to communicate than e-mail because our adviser was kept in the loop easily without jamming his in-box."

Strube recently set up blog accounts for interested fellow graduate students to use for their own research and field work.

Jon Jablonski, an avid blogger for two years, says it's a great way to keep current in his academic specialty.

"Professional literature in librarianship is 12 to 18 months behind what is actually happening in the trenches," explains Jablonski, the David and Nancy Petrone MAP/GIS librarian. "If a company or the RIAA (Recording Industry Association of America) is attacking copyright, I need to know today, not next year, and this is the way I can keep informed."

"Blogs also helped me to prepare to teach a seminar last spring, titled 'Internet Information and Culture.' I spent about six months intensely looking for trends, finding scholarship that examined online life, using the tools that have changed the way we work, study and live. Blogging and categorizing those experiences helped the syllabus to write itself," Jablonski continues. "When it came time to teach the class, 75 percent of the students chose to turn in weekly papers by simply e-mailing me the URL to their blogs."

He was pleasantly surprised recently when a fellow attendee at a conference introduced herself to him by saying she reads [his blog](#).

"We were able to immediately jump into a substantive conversation," Jablonski adds. "That single experience made the entire enterprise worthwhile."

One of the UO's most prolific bloggers is Mary Harrsch, network and information systems manager for the College of Education. Ancient history buffs at the UO and around the world regularly tap into her numerous blogs on the Roman Empire. Five of those blogs are contained in her online magazine, [Roman Times](#). She also maintains a blog about her travels

to education sites, called [Incredible Journeys](#); a history blog, [Passionate About History](#); and a professional technology blog, [Technology Times](#).

Not blogs as such, but utilizing much of the same technology, are Harrsch's [Virtual Caesar](#) site where she uses an artificial intelligence application to allow viewers to "talk" to Julius Caesar, and an [ancient world image data base](#), with more than 2,000 images of places, people and art objects for which she has granted site visitors a creative commons license for free educational or noncommercial use.

Soon, there will be fresh content on Harrsch's blogs. She leaves for Rome on the ides of March (March 15, the anniversary of Caesar's assassination in 44 B.C.), digital camera in hand, for two weeks of seeking out new images of ancient sites.



[Back to Inside Oregon](#)

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"mapping the internet
in a single day"

home

project history

current status

view & generate
maps

downloads

contacts

links

help Opte!

FAQs

credits

the opte shop

web board

Engine Status: Scanning the Internet Percent Completed: 39.43%
Total Runtime: 1525.63 Estimated Completion: 3869Hours

the Opte Project

This project was created to make a visual representation of a space that is very much one-dimensional, a metaphysical universe. The data represented and collected here serves a multitude of purposes: Modeling the Internet, analyzing wasted IP space, IP space distribution, detecting the result of natural disasters, weather, war, and esthetics/art. This project is free and represents a lot of donated time, please enjoy.

Current News

Sunday, January 16, 2005

With the new route code I ran into some limits with the current database deisgn. I'm in the middle of re-writing the client/server code to make the new images look more detailed than anything seen before. Some samples were posted over this last week at 10% and 30% just to give an idea of what the new stuff will look like. More to come!

Sunday, January 2, 2005

The database is populated with the new route data, I am testing a new color coding system before I release any images. It could take some time to generate the new color database. The database (that lives on this web server) is really busy, so opte page loads may be a little slow. It should be done by the 3rd.

Friday, December 31, 2004

I just published a short Philosophy paper on the project; "Opte is Art", it's online in the [downloads](#) area.

Wednesday, December 29, 2004

We started the Opte 2005 image, it should be online the first week of January!

Sunday, September 5, 2004

Sorry the new image got delayed, I just moved to South Florida directly into the path of the Hurricane. Between bodysurfing in these great hurricane generated waves and fighting the power surges, it has delayed the image. I just started processing the new image, we should have something soon. -Barrett

Saturday, August 21, 2004

We completed the DDoS attack database, when the 2005 image is ready we will post both the DDoS highlighted image and the 2005 image.

Sunday, July 25, 2004

I posted the all of the Opte php source on the [downloads](#) page. Don't use the 03b code, the best code to pay with will be the 02b. -Barrett

Monday, December 8, 2003

Something fun and new, we created a very _simple_ test movie to sample some of the things we can do with the data from the project. Click on [maps](#) and then the link for movie4.mpeg.

Opte in the news

- Jan 1 2004, [The Sacramento Bee](#) "Mapping the Internet"
- Dec 8 2003, [JB Online](#) "Um micro e 24 horas mapeiam a internet" (.br)
- Dec 2 2003, [index.hu](#) "Elk  lt az internet t  "(.hu)
- Dec 1 2003, [Benchmakr.pl](#) "Mapa Internetu" (.pl)
- Dec 1 2003, [Hardwire.no](#) "Lager kart over Internet" (.no)
- Nov 29 2003, [New Scientist](#) "Internet mapping project weaves colourful web"
- Nov 29 2003, [Slashdot.jp](#) "Latest Maps of the Internet"(Japanese)
- Nov 28 2003, [p2pnet](#) "Around the Net in a day"
- Nov 27 2003, [Slashdot.org](#) "Latest Maps of the Internet"
- Nov 21 2003, [LocalAreaSecurity.com](#) article quickly talked about Opte: "There were many different presentations and tools at Comdex that were very interesting but to numerous for me to mention here. For my pick as the 'Coolest Tool' of Comdex 2003 would have to be the one illustrated by Robert Lee of ISECOM. The tool is part of what is being developed for The Opte Project, which intends to map the internet in one day."
- Nov 17 2003, [The Italian Repubblica](#) - "Una mappa di Internet per bloccare i virus" (.it)
- Nov 14 2003, [TaoSecurity](#) - "Mapping the Internet on a Dare"

- Nov 14 2003, [Slashdot](#)
- "Map the Internet... In One Day?"



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The Drawing Center

Printed Matter

GAGOSIAN
GALLERY

Dia:Beacon
Riggio Galleries

Deitch Projects

SPRING BREAK • 8 DAYS • ART 408/508 • 3 CREDITS • MARCH 19-27/05

A riff on Sex and the City, NYC is certainly a hotbed of excitement, diversity and cultural appreciation and like Carrie who ponders New York's romantic edge in her column, "Sex and the City", so too will U of O students produce their own "Art and the City" column as a daily blog at an internet café or local library.

This eight-day trip will incorporate a travelogue with criticality, a keen observant eye, and daily accounts of your experience culminating with a postscript that reflects your own and the collaborative experience of the trip. You will be able to post images, private thoughts, a collection of links; this blog could be your personal soapbox - always with art in mind and always a reflection of your daily experience of the galleries, art museums and public art.

NOT SURE about how to keep a blog or you are not web savvy or you don't own a laptop, NO NEED TO WORRY - blogs are push button publishing, you will be guided through the process and laptops will be organized for those without.

NYC

Growin' Blog

3.14.2005

That's what I'm talking about

There is 1. Count 'em, ONE importer of a Sino-Dutch bike in Newton Mass.

But oh, what a [bike](#). ¶ 4:34 PM 0 comments

3.8.2005

Fietsen

Well, I'm shopping for a bike. Someone nipped mine from the garage last Thursday.

Google Answers [says](#) that companies like [Batavus](#) and [Gazelle](#) don't sell in the States because of product liability laws. There's got to be a better answer out there than that. Are the Dutch just keeping a good thing to themselves?

Having ridden one of these bikes, I can say firsthand that they are much safer than a \$75 piece of shit from Wal-Mart.

If I was more the entrepreneurial type (or: if I had a load of money) I would take on the challenge of an import business to get these bikes in the US. Spend a few minutes searching the web and you'll see there's plenty of demand--there's lots of people that write 'why don't we have these?'



¶ 2:19 PM 0 comments

3.4.2005

And now magnolias

Not that we've got any here at What'sGrowin' central, but on campus today, many of the magnolia trees have opened their flowers.

Now we're sure to have an ice storm. ¶ 1:39 PM 0 comments

3.2.2005

Dafodils

I noticed today that it is officially dafodil season. It seems awfully early, but I think it's not all that earlier than last year. On my ride home tonight, I also caught a whiff of a great number of cherry blossoms.

I hope [Hantoon](#) went out with cherry blossoms in her nose. She didn't seem to be suffering from her mental illness, but I can't imagine that she enjoyed her life on the street. As I have thought of her today, I thought of the few interactions I had with her and my efforts to keep those short. I actually had been thinking of a plan on how to dis-engage from people like her as I start to work reference in the main library (which has many more characters than my previous branch). Now all I can

think about is all the people I have been short with, all those I've walked by who asked for help, and all those I ignored. It's not very christian of me. ¶ 9:54 PM 0

[comments](#)

2.23.2005

Encyclopedic bloat?

I'm not sure if I'm secretly thrilled or professionally horrified that the Star Wars kid has a [wikipedia entry](#). ¶ 4:32 PM 1 [comments](#)

Extra hanky

So I'm walking around all day, feeling a little fat (as I've been feeling a lot lately). I finally take off my sweater, as it's really warm today, and discover this huge lump on my side. I've been packing around a hankkerchief inside of my t-shirt all day.

No wonder people think I'm a nerd. ¶ 2:31 PM 1 [comments](#)

2.16.2005

Not your bubbi's klezmer

Officially celebrated Valentine's tonight. [David Krakauer's](#) Klezmer Explosion.

A couple years ago, a friend told me that every chamber ensemble needs a turntablist. After tonight, I can say that every klezmer band needs a sampler / rapper. Holy cow. I used to think that bluegrass was the most malleable form of music, but now I'm leaning toward klezmer. I've heard bluegrass-klezmer. Tonight I heard crotch-rock--hip-hop--klezmer. With hard-bop improv. And they had a huge range.

I'm a little flabbergasted. ¶ 10:39 PM 0 [comments](#)

2.10.2005

Photographer as criminal: redux

Haven't we talked about [this before](#)?

Come to think of it, this happened to me a few years back taking photos at the McCormick Place Annex. I was pretty sure they were wrong then, and I'm sure they're wrong now. There's all sorts of things you can claim:

- Fair Use: I'm doing it for a non-profit purpose, or I'm going to use it in a piece of criticism or in a parody.
- Public space: the copyright holder has to take some measures to protect the work from abuse--putting it in a park sort of obviates that, doesn't it?
- Economic harm: me taking pictures of the sculpture doesn't economically harm the sculptor unless I'm selling products that he's als selling.

¶ 4:27 PM 0 comments

Gardenin', fishin', bikin', librarianin'.

ARCHIVES

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GeoURL

OR BLOGS

[Grow Home](#)

teeny tiny blog

Friday, March 04, 2005

Chicago school maps

A nice interface for (MrSID? JPEG 2k?) large scans, combined with some compelling content makes this [University of Chicago](#) project very enjoyable. And if you ever had black & white Mac, looking at these maps will show you where Apple stole all of its original textures from. I think they were actually pre-printed Kodalith sheets that would get cut out and assemble into the map. Not sure though.

The interface for the images is handled by Zoomify, which works under Flash.

posted by Jon at [1:33 PM](#) [0 comments](#)

Thursday, February 24, 2005

I'm looking for...

More than any other type of reference I've ever done, the distance between the initial request and what the person is actually looking for is the greatest. Many times, the person isn't looking for a map. Well, even that's not accurate. They're looking for a map, but it might not be one that we have. Or it might be one that's inside of a reference book.

posted by Jon at [2:20 PM](#) [0 comments](#)

Monday, February 07, 2005

Alabama mapa

[These folks](#) have been busy. All html pages too. Think it's all static or is this a data dump?

Unfortunately, it's all mrSID--no georeferencing.

posted by Jon at [10:39 PM](#) [0 comments](#)

Tuesday, February 01, 2005

COs and Maps

I learned this morning that the first map librarian here was a conscientious objector to World War II. How cool is that?

And how weird is it that I'm now doing the job. I haven't given very much thought to the fact that most of my materials come from military projects. At least I'm not using them to drop bombs on people.

posted by Jon at [1:19 PM](#) [0 comments](#)

Saturday, January 22, 2005

Just how big should it be?

I have been starting to form an opinion that the map library could easily double its storage capacity and only achieve 'everything fits comfortably.'

This past week I asked my boss if he knows of a standard for how full a drawer should be. "Oh, I think

that's in that pile of files I gave you. When I found it, I did some calculations and estimated that we'd need 14,000 square feet to meet the standard."

We currently hover just over 5000 square feet.

I never have been able to judge volumes. When putting away leftover soup, I always have about a half cup still in the pot when I'm topping off the tupperware.

posted by Jon at 9:51 PM 0 comments

Friday, January 14, 2005

Looking for blogs in all the wrong places.

Found while searching for map blogs:

- [Glowlab](#)

Conceptual art with a psychogeographic slant.

- [A Texas geocacher](#)

or is that a geocaching Texan?

- [A GIS intern](#)

working for a transit authority in New Zealand. Nice description of what someone working full time in a GIS office might be experiencing.

- [Someone in China\(?\)](#)

who has an interest in maps. But it's mostly about China.

- The author of [Brain Off](#) is active in RSS2+GEO development and pointed me toward a [folksonomy debate](#) that has been taking place recently. I first encountered that term back in November straight from Louis. He seems to have struck a nerve. Brain Off also introduced me to the [National Public Toilet Map of Australia](#).

- [Wardriving and Catchbob](#)

I'm not even sure what this guy is talking about half the time.

- A [planning blog](#)

with a psychogeography slant.

posted by Jon at 3:33 PM [1 comments](#)

Tuesday, January 11, 2005

Archival junkmail

Last evening I threw away discards from 60 years ago. I am now officially practicing forensic librarianship.

If the piles were just a little deeper, I'd call it archeological.

posted by Jon at 3:52 PM [1 comments](#)

Archives

- [12.2004](#)
- [01.2005](#)
- [02.2005](#)
- [03.2005](#)





March 15, 2005

Roman Times

[Archives](#)

[Ancient-themed books](#)

[Association for Roman Archaeology](#)

[Images of the Roman Empire](#)

Edited by [Mary Harrsch](#)

[Academic Presentations on The Roman Empire](#)

[Roman Scholars](#)

[Images of ancient ruins](#)

Current Survey: What is your favorite work of Roman literature? (click on the link to vote)

[Vergil's The Aeneid](#)

[Caesar's Commentaries](#)

[Ovid's Metamorphoses](#)

[The Annals of Tacitus](#)

[Plutarch's Lives](#)

[Cicero's DE AMICITIA](#)

[Catullus' poetry](#)

[Livy's History of Rome](#)

[View the results](#)



Items of interest about excavations and history of the ancient Roman world

XML

- [Roman oven discovered in Manchester](#)

posted on March 04, 2005 05:20:00 pm



[Manchester Online](#): "A ROMAN oven and pieces of pottery have been uncovered beneath the site of a new shopping arcade. In addition to the Roman oven and pottery, remains of Westerwold German stoneware have been uncovered."

Wigan was the site of a Roman fort known as Coccium, which was in existence in the second century AD.

Three Roman roads have been traced in the Wigan area and researched by the Wigan Archaeological Society.

Other Roman finds in the area include hordes of coins, cremation urns and a headless statue of the Persian god Cautopates."

- [Roman coin hoard found in Norfolk](#)

posted on February 28, 2005 04:02:00 pm



News about games, toys, and collectibles based on Roman or ancient themes.

XML

- [Sega announces Spartan: Total Warrior to be released on Xbox on Xbox](#)

posted on March 07, 2005 11:19:00 am

[TotalVideoGames.com](#) "Sega of Europe has today announced that they have signed a deal with Total War developers Creative Assembly to publish the team's forthcoming console title, Spartan: Total Warrior."

The game, which is set for release on Xbox, PlayStation2 and GameCube in September 2005, switches the action away from the strategy PC franchise to a third-person action/adventure strategy game set in the battles of the Roman Empire."

If the game is set in the battles of the Roman Empire, I wonder why they are calling the game "Spartan: Total Warrior" since the Spartans were Greeks?

- [Midway Announces Rise & Fall: Civilizations at War](#)

posted on February 22, 2005 10:44:00 am

[Midway](#) : "Rise & Fall: Civilizations at War is the latest creation from award-winning developer Stainless Steel Studios and renowned game designer Rick Goodman. Rise & Fall: Civilizations at War is a detailed real-time strategy game that lets players completely command one of the four mightiest empires of the ancient world: Greece, Rome, Egypt, and Persia. Rise & Fall allows players to fight alongside their troops as



[Roman coin hoard](#)



[revealed](#): "A collection of 963 Roman denarii, including coins from 270 years of early British history, have been found by hobbyists near Norfolk. Most of the coins were found in a ceramic pot buried 14 inches down.

The earliest coins date from 32BC and feature Cleopatra's consort Marc Anthony. The most recent are from 240AD and the short-lived reign of teenage emperor Gordian III."

• [49 Headless Roman skeletons unearthed](#)

posted on February 28, 2005 03:49:00 pm

[Times Online - Britain](#): "ARCHAEOLOGISTS have unearthed a Roman cemetery in York with the skeletons of 49 beheaded young men.

Experts from the York Archaeological Trust have yet to explain why the men had been decapitated. One of the victims was buried with thick iron rings around his ankles that had been forged on to him while he was alive.

There are also skeletons of seven children, though their bodies were not mutilated. Dr Ottaway believes that the men were beheaded as part of a ritual in order to ensure that they could not haunt the living.

The skulls were removed after death and placed in the grave by their feet, legs or pelvis. Analysis of the bones has suggested that all of the adult skeletons were young men under the age of about 45.

The skeletons date from about AD200, roughly when Emperor Septimius Severus came to York with an army to fight in Scotland."

• [Tomb of Saint Paul Found?](#)

posted on February 22, 2005 02:40:00 pm



[Discovery Channel](#) : "A tomb that may contain the remains of Saint Paul, one of the Christian church's most important leaders and the author of much of the Bible's New Testament, has been unearthed in Rome, according to a Vatican Museums archaeologist.

"The tomb that we discovered is the one that the popes and the Emperor Theodosius (379-

395) saved and presented to the whole world as being the tomb of the

one of history's eight greatest heroes, and bring victory to their nation on the battlefield.

'Stainless Steel Studios is known for creating revolutionary, real-time strategy games that appeal to a worldwide audience,' said David F. Zucker, president and chief executive officer of Midway. 'This relationship and the upcoming launch of Rise & Fall: Civilizations at War will further establish Midway in the premium PC market.'

'We are very excited to be working with Midway, a publisher who is truly committed to creating the highest quality games in the industry,' said Rick Goodman, president of Stainless Steel Studios. 'With its unprecedented gameplay, historical accuracy and unique elements, Rise & Fall: Civilizations at War will be one of the most ambitious RTS games to date.'

• [Roma Victor nears release](#)

posted on February 22, 2005 09:38:00 am



[Roma Victor for PC at GameSpot](#):

"Formally known as Gladius Online, Roma Victor is a role-playing game set in Europe during the heyday of the Roman Empire."

• [The Settlers: Heritage of Kings to be](#)

[released this month](#)

posted on February 22, 2005 09:28:00 am

[GameSpot](#): "The Settlers: Heritage of Kings will take place in a world that tends more to the medieval than to the mythological, along with a form of 'credible magic'. The maps will incorporate active terrain that includes things like changing weather and seasons as well as smaller environmental details, like forests populated with deer and ranging wolves. Resources that you can collect will include iron (used to help build your military), stone (used to help build towns and important structures), sulfur (used in the art of alchemy, which is akin to magic), and silver. Working serfs will collect resources as well as construct buildings; they'll also carry out other tasks. There will be 70 different kinds of buildings and 40 different kinds of people present in the game. Serfs will indicate their needs, like food and rest, via thought bubbles that will appear above their heads, in addition to making verbal utterances. The closer your workers are to their sources of food and shelter, the more efficiently they will work.



There will be 20 dynamic scenarios in the game, and there will be multiple successful paths you can take to complete your missions, including engaging your enemies in battle. If you've built a barracks, you'll be able to recruit leaders who will, in turn, recruit squads of troops for you. Types of troops will include men who use swords, spears, and bows and cavalry and artillery units. In addition, there will be 'hero' units that possess special abilities. You'll be able to train your troops at your barracks as well, increasing their levels and making them more successful in combat. Certain characters will also have the ability to use alchemy, which can actually be used to predict the weather. Weather will affect troop movement. So, for example, a cold, wintry setting will cause bodies of water, like rivers, to freeze, thus allowing your men to cross them quickly."

apostle," Filippi said, as quoted by the Catholic World News (CWN).

Filippi explained that the tomb was found at the basilica of St. Paul Outside the Walls in Rome. This basilica was erected in the 4th century on order of Roman emperor Constantine in 386 A.D. Before Constantine's rule, Rome's leaders both shunned and persecuted Christians, who were forced to hide important tombs and relics. Ancient Rome also had a decree that no individual was to be buried within the main city confines.

Archaeologists discovered the sarcophagus on what would have been the ground floor of the 4th century basilica. It was found under the altar next to a marble plaque that reads, "Apostle Paul, martyr."

• [Roman coffin found intact in London](#)

posted on February 10, 2005 10:15:00 am

[Times Online - Britain](#) "A ROMAN wooden coffin has been unearthed in London, the only example of its kind found in Britain.

Archaeologists expressed excitement that it had survived intact, centuries after other examples had disintegrated without trace. In dating from AD120, the new find is an unusually early example of a Roman burial.

It was not until the 3rd century AD that the Roman Britons generally buried their dead. Prior to this they usually favoured cremation. The skeleton belonged to a man over the age of 25, at a time when only 10 per cent lived beyond the age of 45.

The coffin, which went on display yesterday at the Museum of London, was found during building work in Holborn, on a steep side of the River Fleet, one of the many rivers that flow beneath London's streets to the Thames.

Although the coffin was made of re-used old oak and included only a modest wine flagon, it does not necessarily reflect a low status. The skeleton shows a degeneration that tends to indicate a high-calorie diet. "

• [Roman mosaic of naked harvesters is revealed under Trajan's Bath](#)

posted on February 01, 2005 09:52:00 am

[Roman mosaic of naked harvesters is revealed under Trajan's Bath](#) A well-preserved, nearly 2,000-year-old mosaic depicting five frolicking naked men in a grape harvest scene is Rome's latest new, stunning find from digs into layers of history under the city's modern-day surface.

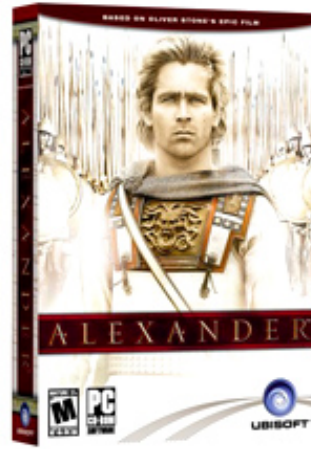
So far, the only ones to come face-to-face with the underground marvel is a team of cave explorers who lowered themselves into a space under the ancient Baths of Trajan, in the bowels of the Oppian Hill, one of the city's seven ancient hills.

"Having found a polychrome mosaic of such a size and quality when we didn't expect to find anything so prestigious is an exceptional thing which gave us indescribable emotions," said Marco Placidi, who lowered himself 42 feet into the earth to inspect the decoration.

The team of speleologists was brought in to get a full look at the 10-foot-long and 6-foot-high mosaic, which was first spied in 1998 by archaeologists who were digging through the subterranean structures of the Baths. They saw only a small detail of it by peeking with a tiny camera through a hole.

• [It's Alexander Madness!](#)

posted on February 22, 2005 09:22:00 am



[It's Alexander Madness!](#)

Alexander is the officially licensed real-time strategy PC game tied to Oliver Stone's upcoming ? Alexander? movie starring Colin Farrell.

Integrating exclusive footage from the motion picture, the game immerses players in the era of Alexander the Great.

Like Alexander, players will face the challenges of

managing vast resources, a multitude of units, buildings and advancements, while his enemies always seem to have more of everything.

Blood will be spilt on the battlefield and honor will be put to the test, as the courage and cunning of each decision will determine success.

Triumph in epic real-time battles using formations, morale, and authentic battle tactics.

On sale now for only \$9.90

• [Rome Total War Patch provides tool to script and "film" battles](#)

posted on February 04, 2005 10:22:00 am



[DailyGame.net](#): "I notice that the new 1.2 version patch for Activision's *Rome Total War* includes several new developer tools that allow players to create their own battles, script said battles and create custom videos of those battles. This provides a wonderful opportunity for history educators to produce their own versions of battle sequences like those broadcast by the History Channel in their *Decisive Battle* series."

• [The Eye Of Isis and Mystery of the Mummy on sale](#)

posted on February 03, 2005 09:38:00 am

[GoGamer Madness!](#) GoGamer has been offering quite a few games featuring ancient themes in their 48-hour madness specials lately. Today I received an email notice of two more ancient adventure games offered for less than half price and I haven't even received my shipment of the two others I ordered earlier this week.

This time it's the *Eye of Isis* and *Mystery of the Mummy*, both titles are adventure games published by Dreamcatcher.



"Curse is a game that will take you from grim Victorian London, to the inside of an ancient Egyptian pyramid. And everywhere in between.

On the way, the very objects around you will make attempts on your life, and only you, with help from your friend and cohort Victoria Sutton, the beautiful clairvoyant, can

Archaeologists said Friday that the mosaic is believed to date between A.D. 64 and A.D. 100 and is likely part of the wall decoration of what was a large hall beneath the ruins of the hill, part of the sprawling grounds where Emperor Nero built his fabled Golden Palace, or "Domus Aurea."

"For its particular subject and quality, we believe this mosaic has set a model for other similar artworks" of the ancient past, said Giovanni Caruso, an archaeologist who supervised the excavation.

One of the five men depicted in the mosaic is picking bunches of grapes from a vine while another, portrayed from behind, is playing a double flute. The other three men, wearing leafy crowns, dance on harvested grapes in a rectangular vat.

Experts theorized that the mosaic decorated part of the extensive urban structures that were built in the area during the reigns of the seven emperors who came between Nero's rule (A.D. 54-68) and Trajan's (A.D. 98-117).

• [Give us back our chariot, Umbrian villagers tell the Metropolitan Museum](#)

posted on January 31, 2005 12:31:00 pm

[Telegraph](#) : "A tiny Umbrian village is taking on the mighty Metropolitan Museum in New York, claiming that one of its most exalted exhibits, an Etruscan chariot, was illegally exported from Italy 100 years ago.



The sixth-century bronze and ivory chariot, the pride of the museum's Etruscan collection, was originally sold to two Frenchmen by a farmer who dug it up in a field at Monteleone di Spoleto, near Perugia, in 1902.

According to family lore, the farmer received two cows in exchange. The local mayor, Nando Durastanti, believes that he actually swapped the chariot, one of the world's greatest antiquities, for 30 terracotta tiles. It was later dismantled and illegally exported from Italy, concealed in a grain shipment.

Said to be the only Etruscan chariot ever found intact, the 14ft by 4ft vehicle, showing scenes from the life of Achilles in relief, was part of a burial treasure.

It was found with the remains of two humans still sitting inside, along with two drinking cups, which helped date it to 530BC. The farmer, Isidoro Vannozzi, is said to have stumbled across it while digging a wine cellar. He hid the treasure in his barn, fearing that the authorities would confiscate it."

• [The Scotsman - International - New broom to make togas the Roman way](#)

posted on January 31, 2005 12:26:00 pm

[The Scotsman - International - New broom to make togas the Roman way](#): "RESEARCHERS in the ancient Roman town of Pompeii are attempting to revive 2,000-year-old traditions to

return the statuette and stop the evil.

But not all of humanity welcomes your intervention. Ruthless henchmen, led by the vicious Mullins, have their own plans for the statuette and are a dangerous complication in an already highly perilous mission.

Hordes of living dead inhabit the game, all reanimated in horrific ways by the awesome power of the Curse, and their hideous monster masters are screaming for their chance to destroy you.

And, if these foes aren't enough to deter you, the Curse itself has a surprise in store... "



In *Mystery of the Mummy*, you "become Sherlock Holmes as you embark on a remarkable adventure. Investigate a mysterious case, full of suspense, of the disappearance of a famous archaeologist and a valuable Egyptian Mummy, in turn-of-the-century England.

What begins as a simple case quickly becomes a web of intrigue, robbery, priceless artifacts, and potentially, a murder.

Inspired by the writings and characters of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle. An involving storyline in true Sherlock Holmes style.

Wonderfully appointed, atmospheric and graphically detailed mansion. 5 different levels of gameplay.

Many rooms to search, all uniquely decorated and furnished. Numerous interesting objects to search for, collect and use during gameplay.

Exceptional puzzles of differing complexity. Interesting characters to interact with."

• [It's Riddle Of The Sphinx 2: Omega Stone now only \\$9.90](#)

posted on February 01, 2005 09:35:00 am

[It's Riddle Of The Sphinx 2: Omega Stone Madness!](#)

After years of digging, noted archaeologist, Sir Gil Blythe Geoffreys uncovered a secret chamber and an ancient papyrus scroll overlooked for centuries that revealed the whereabouts of a treasure sought after throughout the millennia, the Ark of the Covenant.

Further exploration led to the discovery of another prophetic scroll, the contents of which unravels an ominous mystery.

Sir Gil Blythe Geoffreys, calls on you to lead the exploration and examination of the origins of this sacred scroll, whose symbols point to cultures of great intelligence and refined intellects.

Features



reproduce imperial cloth used to make togas and uniforms.

The project follows successful production of Roman wine two years ago using methods that would have been employed in vineyards buried by a devastating eruption from Mount Vesuvius in AD79. Historians at the archaeology department in Pompeii are experimenting with wild broom as the base product to make the textiles.

They will be using the writings of ancient Roman scholars such as Pliny and Columella to make the cloth as well as relying on materials discovered within Pompeii in buried workshops."

- [Ancient Roman Rest Stop Provided Surprisingly Modern Amenities](#)

posted on January 28, 2005 10:56:00 am

[Discovery Channel](#): "Underneath a German bus terminal, archaeologists have found the remains of a 2,000-year-old Roman roadside rest stop that included a chariot service station, gourmet restaurant and hotel with central heating.

Upon arrival, travelers would have entered a forecourt, where mechanics stood by at a chariot service station. Hay and water troughs would have given the horses a nibble and a drink while their owners dined on a variety of foods, including ethnic cuisine.

"We haven't found any brown sauce sachets, but we have uncovered many ceramic plates, pots, and pans," Sabine Sauer, an archaeologist for the city of Neuss, told the Telegraph newspaper in London. "We have found the rubbish tips - and although much of the organic waste has long since rotted away, we have clues as to what they ate from discarded pottery. There were spice jars containing garum sauces from North Africa, similar to what one might find in a Thai restaurant today."

She added, "We know from the bones that they ate a lot of meat - chicken and pork - as well as bread, rice, lentils and fruit. There were desserts of sweet cakes, cooked with sesame seeds and almonds. There must have been a flourishing trade; there were many fragments of wine amphora and broken plates."

After the big nosh, travelers would have had the option of staying for the night at the hotel, which was made of slate and bricked with narrow joints.

The foundation was raised to allow for a wood-fueled furnace at the bottom of the structure. Hot air from the fire would have risen naturally to fill chimneys located within the guest rooms. The hot air also warmed the walls, which were made of partially hollowed-out bricks.

Sauer said the complex was energy efficient, since the forests around Neuss already had been mostly depleted before the inn's heyday. In addition to the underground heating system, a slate roof on the building captured the sun's heat, somewhat comparable to how solar panels operate today."

- [Augsburg: Roman, Medieval and Rich](#)

posted on January 28, 2005 10:38:00 am

Stunningly realistic 3D replications of the world's most mysterious sites including Chichen Itza, Stonehenge, Easter Island, Devil's Triangle including Bimini, and the ruins of Atlantis.

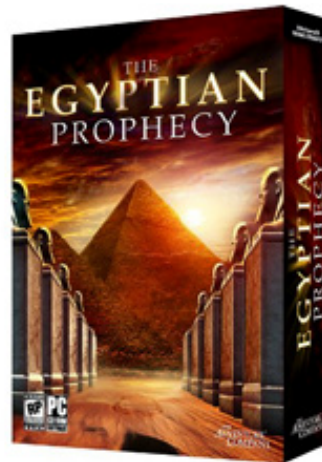
Unrestricted access and exploration of archaeological sites currently off limits to tourists. A haunting original score evoking the unique but primitively similar spirit of each environment.

Real-time environmental effects.. rain, sun, water, with full 360° environment exploration. Over 50 hours of immersive gameplay with puzzles and challenges throughout.

Uncompromising graphical details. Breathtaking underwater dive scenes and exploration. Historically and archaeologically accurate reference material at each location.

- [Egyptian Prophecy now only \\$9.90](#)

posted on February 01, 2005 09:32:00 am



- [It's Egyptian Prophecy](#)

[Madness!](#): "Ramses II is dying and with him the glory of Egypt shall fall. Amon-Ra, the Sun-God, promises to extend his life in exchange for the most magnificent temple ever built.

Trouble is not far away as the building site for the temple is affected by a number of sinister incidents.

Maia, a young priestess, must solve the mystery behind these events and save the life of the Pharaoh.

Features

Travel along the Nile and explore magnificent locations and monuments such as Karnak, Memphis, and the labyrinth of Ptah.

Interact with various characters and encounter Egyptian gods, including Osiris, Seth, Isis and Ptah.

Decipher an array of intriguing 3D real-time puzzles set in breathtaking environments.

Easily concoct sacred potions and perform ancient Egyptian rituals using the customized game interface and inventory.

Scour the in-game encyclopedia for historically accurate information on rituals, ancient monuments and artifacts, and Egyptian mythology."

- [Hadrian's Wall model](#)

posted on January 11, 2005 11:33:00 am

Deutsche Welle: "

Augsburg, Germany was shaped by the trade in salt and silver in Roman and medieval times. The ancient Roman Empire has left its traces in many parts of Augsburg, and its legacy is a continual source of amazement. Urban construction projects, for instance, often end up becoming more like archaeological digs since the most remarkable things turn up like a stone from a grave showing a wine transport.



Of course, historical artifacts are fairly common to Augsburg which was situated along the 'Via Claudia,' the road leading from Germania to Rome. Over the centuries, the route developed into a main trading route linking several major cities. "

- [Roman work tossed in Athens stream](#)

posted on September 22, 2004 03:41:00 pm

[ekathimerini.com](#): "A first-century-AD work that is a Roman copy of a fourth-century-BC classical original and possibly represents Apollo Lykeios has been found in a stream in Athens. Yiorgos Steinhauer, head of the Culture Ministry's local antiquities department said the statue could have been recently discovered by builders during construction work, and dumped in the streambed for fear archaeologists might stop the works if alerted to the find."

- [Malls pioneered by rich Romans](#)

posted on January 21, 2005 05:19:00 pm

[Telegraph](#): "The luxury housing estate and out-of-town shopping centre may need to be added to the long list of what the Romans did for Britain.

Work in Bath suggests that rich Romans were so keen to live close to city centre attractions that they abandoned the empire's traditional habit of building lavish villas in the countryside, well away from the neighbours and commerce within the city walls.

Excavations in Bath reveal that at least half a dozen elegant homes existed near each other and within easy reach of leisure areas. One villa was found while sprinkler pipes were being laid across a golf course. A second villa with mosaic floors was found a few hundred feet away."

- [Large Mosaic discovered in Domus Aurea excavation](#)

posted on January 21, 2005 02:44:00 pm

[MSNBC](#) "A large mosaic, more than 9 by 6 feet, showing naked men harvesting grapes and making wine, a typical illustration for a Roman palace of the time has been unearthed by continuing excavations of the Emperor Nero's "Golden House" in Rome. Three of the men are stomping on grapes in a vat. One plays a double flute. They all seem to be having fun.

The mosaic adorns a giant arch buried in Colle Oppio, the hill on which Nero's palace stood. The mosaics were found more than 40 feet below the ruins of the Trajan Baths, a large structure built over the Golden House more than half a century after Nero's death by suicide. Experts are split over whether these artworks were part of Nero's estate or dated from an earlier building that he knocked down to make way for his mansion.

[Hadrian's Wall](#): Geoblox offers a free download of a section of Hadrian's wall.

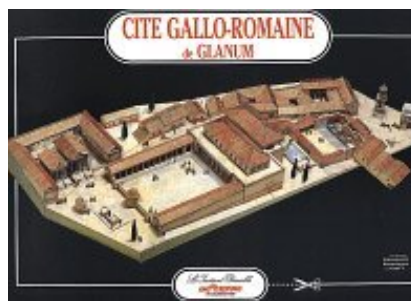


"At this scale, you will need 79 wall segments to make one Roman mile. To build the whole wall you would need 6400 models stretching 6/10 of a mile!" this picture shows one of the turrets although the free download is just the wall.

A book containing the complete wall along with other models from the ancient world for reproduction in the classroom is available for \$26.

- [The Gallo-Roman Town of Glanum: Scale Architectural Paper Model](#)

posted on January 11, 2005 11:19:00 am



by Jean-Marie Lemaire and

Anne-Marie Piaulet: "A precision three-dimensional paper model of the reconstructed town of Glanum, which is unique in the world. The roofs of the baths and that of one of the houses lift off to offer an insight of the interior layouts. An

illustrated text gives historical information and step by step instructions for assembly, in English, French, German and Italian. There are 30 colored sheets to cut-out in order to build the model (scale 1:200, base 17.5 x 39.5 inches, height 6 inches)."

- [Shadow of Rome finally scheduled for release Jan 29](#)

posted on December 22, 2004 11:41:00 am

[PlayStation 2: Shadow of Rome](#): "In the year 44 B.C., during the reign of Julius Caesar, a terrible plot comprised of murder and corruption was secretly brewing. A plot to prevent Caesar's plans for a reformed Rome was executed, resulting in the infamous 'Et tu, Brute' slaying of the beloved leader. The inevitable fallout of such a tragic blow to the Roman Empire results in Uesnius being accused of the crime. In Shadow of Rome you assume the role of an upcoming gladiator, Agrippa, the son of Uesnius. The only way you will be able to save your innocent father's life is to rise through the ranks of the brutal gladiators until you have achieved a level of infamy worthy of recognition by the Roman elite. Only the most unforgiving, triumphant gladiator is given the honor of executing the branded traitor, Uesnius. If you can reach that level of notoriety, maybe, just maybe you'll be able to free your father at the last minute. The fate of your family name rests in your hands!"

Luckily, Agrippa is not alone in his quest for justice. While his portions of Shadow of Rome focus on the visceral, blood-soaked acts of pure animal violence that occur in the gladiatorial arenas of the city, your close friend and ally, Octavius, has a very different task. Octavius must infiltrate the halls of power that control the political and subversive aspects of Roman life in order to uncover the man (or men) who commissioned the incarceration of Uesnius. "

- [New King Arthur DVD worth a look](#)

posted on December 22, 2004 10:45:00 am

- [Falcons Fly to the Rescue of Ancient Herculaneum](#)

posted on January 21, 2005 02:02:00 pm

 [Yahoo! News](#): "After being buried in boiling mud when Mount Vesuvius erupted in 79 AD, the ruined ancient city of Herculaneum is now being deluged with acidic pigeon droppings."

The situation has got so bad that archaeologists have called in three falcons to scare away the hundreds of pigeons that have set up home in the once-vibrant Roman town."

- [Chariot Race Track discovered in Colchester](#)

posted on January 06, 2005 10:49:00 am

[ThisisLondon](#): "Historians believe they may have discovered the world's biggest Roman chariot-racing track outside Italy ... in Essex."

The track was unearthed by archaeologists at the site of the Army garrison in Colchester. The 209-acre site was part of the Army base there."



Looking for images for a report on presentation on the ancient world? Check out the [images of the ancient world database](#)! Free for non-commercial, educational use.

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I watched the new "King Arthur" DVD last night and found that the Extended Edition Director's cut was much less choppy than the version that was shown in theaters. The DVD also includes a version with director commentary and an alternate ending that I hope to have time to view this weekend. Hopefully it will dispense with the cheesy "wedding" finale.

When I viewed the film last night I was able to listen more intently to the dialogue as well. Clive Owen was forced to speak such formal stilted passages that it was as if he was given expansive Shakespearean lines that contrasted too starkly with the more pedantic dialogue of the other characters.

The extended edition also emphasized Arthur's admiration for Pelagius as a basis for his world view. I was unfamiliar with the teachings of Pelagius so I did a little research and found some interesting articles at:

<http://www.clive.bates.btinternet.co.uk/palagius.htm>

<http://www.monergism.com/thethreshold/articles/onsite/Augustine.html>

<http://tinyurl.com/4trs9>

- [King Arthur \(PS2, GC, XBox\)](#)

posted on November 30, 2004 10:48:00 am



[Review at GameSpot](#): "The whole basis for the movie King Arthur was to try to tell the 'real' story behind the legend. Set 1,000 years ago in Britain (while it was still tenuously under Roman control), the Arthur of the film is a Sarmatian commander who leads a squad of

Sarmatian knights within the Roman army. Arthur's squad is just about to be granted its freedom after 15 years of service, but faster than you can say 'He was only one day away from retirement,' Arthur's unit is sent on one final mission to rescue a Roman priest and his family. All the primary characters from the Arthurian legend are here, including Lancelot, Arthur's right-hand man; Merlin, who is portrayed as the leader of a rebel tribe called the Woads; and Guinevere, who is no longer the damsel in distress or the focus of a bitter love triangle between Arthur, Lancelot, and herself. Rather, she's a feisty, bow-wielding warrior of the Woads. The story is presented through a series of computer-generated and ripped-from-the-film cutscenes, which actually tie together fairly seamlessly. Similarly, the missions the game puts you on are based entirely within the scope of the film's plot, so if you liked the film, you should very much appreciate how the game relates to its source material."

- [God of War \(PS2\)](#)

posted on November 23, 2004 04:38:00 pm

[GameSpot](#): "God of War, casts you in the role of a despondent former Spartan warrior under order from the gods to slay the cruel god Ares (who is--surprise--the Greek god of war). Seems the only way to do this is by unlocking the power of Pandora's box, and the finding of said box will occupy the first part of the game.



After a few minutes playing God of War, we were duly impressed by the frenetic action, interesting puzzle mechanics, and cohesive visual style that the game presents.

Magic will be a powerful ally in the game as well. At the beginning you'll be able to control the thunderbolts of Zeus, which of course can be used to zap enemies. At one point in the demo you end up fighting Medusa, who can turn you to stone. In an interesting twist, once you defeat the beast, you can use her head as a magical weapon to turn enemies to stone as well. The game is scheduled for release in early 2005"

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Last updated: 02/01/2005

by [Mary Harrsch](#)

Incredible Journeys Photo Log

A web log of photographs I have taken on my travels to historical sites, national parks, historical homes, museums, gardens, theme parks, and just beautiful places.

Friday, March 04, 2005

Great Blacks In Wax Museum



[Booker T Washington](#), originally uploaded by [mharrsch](#).

I am always a fan of wax museums and when I read about the "Great Blacks In Wax" Museum in Baltimore I had to include it in my schedule when I attended a conference there in October 2004. I found the visit very interesting since my knowledge of famous African-Americans was pretty much limited to George Washington Carver, Frederick Douglas, Booker T. Washington and Martin Luther King.

Although some of the older figures are basically costumed mannikins, the newer figures are quality wax sculptures equal to those I have seen at Madame Tussaud's in Las Vegas. I don't necessarily agree with the depiction of Hannibal as a black African (he was descended from a Phoenician noble family that colonized Carthage) or Imhotep as black (his image is depicted in

ancient Egyptian murals as having a red complexion not the black of a Nubian). There were Nubian pharaohs that are documented in Egyptian history and I would have preferred an exhibit of them with a model of one of their distinctive silver sarcophagi. However, I found much of the information presented fascinating and well worth the visit. The museum also features a well stocked gift shop where I picked up a beautifully illustrated book about Addy, the black "American Girl" from Mattel's doll series, and some excellent videos about ancient civilizations.

See more images of the [Great Blacks in Wax Museum](#)

posted by Libitina at [2:56 PM](#) [0 comments](#)

Tuesday, February 22, 2005

Dariush Grand Hotel, Kish Island, Iran



[Dariush Grand Hotel, Kish Island](#), originally uploaded by [Mahdi Ayat's iRAN Project](#).

I saw this beautiful picture while browsing the images tagged 'ancient' up at Flickr.com. I have been to a number of the "themed" hotels in Las Vegas including the Luxor, the Venetian, and Caesar's Palace but none of them hold a candle to this spectacular wonder of the modern world. I only wish our government would make a serious effort to normalize relations with Iran so

those of us who enjoy learning about the country and it's fascinating history could visit and enjoy a setting as marvelous as this!

posted by Libitina at [2:17 PM](#) [0 comments](#)

Monday, February 21, 2005

U.S. Cavalry Museum well worth a look



[Cavalry bugler background](#), originally uploaded by [mharrsch](#).

If you find yourself driving through Kansas on Interstate 70, set aside some time to stop by the U.S. Cavalry Museum housed in a former base hospital at Fort Riley, Kansas. The museum displays not only artifacts, uniforms, and equipment dating back to the Revolutionary War but outstanding oil paintings and bronze sculptures of members of the elite 7th Cavalry. If you are really fortunate, you may be able to tour the last home of George Armstrong Custer as well (sadly, it was closed when we were there). Remember though, that Ft. Riley is a secured military compound. To gain admittance to the base you must first stop and obtain a visitor's pass. You will be required to provide photo ID. Admission to the museum is free but donations are gladly accepted. Read more about our visit [here](#).

posted by Libitina at [3:33 PM](#) [0 comments](#)

Tuesday, November 16, 2004

Victoria Parliament



[Victoria Parliament 5.JPG](#), originally uploaded by [mharrsch](#).

Recently my sister and I visited Victoria, British Columbia on a "Girls Weekend Out" trip. We had a marvelous time! We caught the ferry at Port Angeles, Washington then a pedicab driven by a very insistent, very interesting college student to our hotel.

Our three day visit was packed with places to go from morning to night. We enjoyed a wonderful traveling exhibit about Ancient Egypt at the Royal British Columbia Museum. They also had fascinating and beautifully displayed local exhibits as well.

See additional photos of the [Royal BC Museum](#).

We are both doll collectors fascinated by historical costume so we had a great time at the Royal London Wax Museum.

See additional photos of the [Royal London Wax Museum](#)!

We ate delicious fish and chips at the Millstone Restaurant. We sampled delicate English hoers d'oevres at high tea at the Empress Hotel.

We browsed the antique shops of Fort Street and marveled at the beautiful stained glass windows of the Victorian mansion, Craigdarroch Castle.

Photos of [Craigdarroch Castle](#)

See additional photos of [Victoria, British Columbia!](#)

posted by Libitina at [10:58 AM](#) [0 comments](#)

Wednesday, September 22, 2004

Aladdin remodel eliminates Middle Eastern theme



[Alladin Desert Passages street scene1](#), originally uploaded by [mharrsch](#).

Some distressing news about the Aladdin Hotel with the Middle Eastern theme. When I stayed there just a few years ago it had just opened. I enjoyed the frescoes of Middle Eastern history, the Moroccan shopping environment, and the Middle Eastern cuisine in the Spice Market buffet. I read yesterday that it was acquired by Planet Hollywood, Inc. and is being totally remodelled into a boxy, sterile, Hollywood-themed venue. I can't help but suspect it is in response to our current administration's ridiculous paranoia about anything reflecting Islamic culture. How disgusting! At least I am thankful that I had an opportunity to enjoy it before it is

swept away. I also see they are planning to partition the Aladdin's Center for the Performing Arts into smaller theaters - probably to feature the usual Vegas fare of comedians, impersonators, and magicians. This is also unfortunate as I thoroughly enjoyed the Broadway musical "Beauty and the Beast" that I attended in their existing theater. I also read that the pirate ships in front of Treasure Island are headed for the scrap yard to be replaced by Pirates vs. Sexy Sirens! Casino owners apparently have not been satisfied with their ROI since Vegas started catering to families several years ago. Now, I guess, they've decided to forget that strategy and go back to their usual bawdy bread and butter shows.

At least one bit of interesting news stated that a new hotel with an Australian theme shaped like the Sydney Opera House is in the works. It has potential but I was hoping for something with a Moscow theme myself.

Check out my other [Las Vegas images!](#)

posted by Libitina at [11:47 AM](#) [0 comments](#)

Friday, September 03, 2004

Picturesque Street Light Beside London Bridge



[Picturesque Street Light Beside London Bridge](#), originally uploaded by [mharrsch](#).

On our vacation this past Spring, I took a 19 mile diversion off of Arizona Interstate 40 to get a chance to see London Bridge. I was a little disappointed that the magnificent guard towers were no longer on the bridge. I was told they were retained in Great Britain. However, it was a beautiful morning and was very relaxing to stroll along the lakeside plaza beside the bridge. There are little shops to browse and I did buy myself a little chip from the original bridge stone to commemorate my visit. I would have liked to have had at least tea and crumpets at the little English restaurant but they were not yet open.

Check out the rest of my [London Bridge images](#).

posted by Libitina at [3:43 PM](#) [0 comments](#)

Thursday, August 26, 2004

Enchanted World of Dolls



[Lacy bonnet](#), originally uploaded by [mharrsch](#).

As an avid historical doll collector, I could not pass up the opportunity to visit the "Enchanted World of Dolls" museum in Mitchell, South Dakota when we passed through there on our way back to Oregon. I was not disappointed. Even though I photographed over 100 of their exhibits, I didn't even scratch the surface of the hundreds of dolls on display. I only wish I had had more time and my husband wasn't waiting impatiently for me out in the car. I even found a Ruben Tejada Native American doll that I did not have yet in my collection available for sale in their gift shop. For lovers of history, costume, and dolls, I highly recommend this museum for a fascinating couple of hours!

Check out my other images of [dolls on display](#) at this excellent museum!

posted by Libitina at [11:39 AM](#) [0 comments](#)

Tuesday, August 24, 2004

Splendid China closing a tragedy



[Chinese temple scene5](#), originally uploaded by [mharrsch](#).

Splendid China was a family theme park featuring more than 60 incredibly detailed replicas of China's most historic landmarks, including a half-mile long Great Wall, the Forbidden City, the

modern archeological site of the Terra Cotta Warriors and dozens of other sites and scenes.

Sadly, I read on its web site that it closed on December 31, 2003 because of the post 9/11 downturn in tourism.

I found the park fascinating despite the fact that it was 105 degrees the day I visited. I thought the opportunity to see so many beautiful historic places, even in scaled-down versions was truly wonderful, especially since I may never have the chance to see China in person. This type of educational experience is so much more memorable in the long run than a traditional amusement park full of rollercoasters although younger visitors need to have interactivity to stimulate them. When I was there, visitors had already dwindled so many of the scheduled events were scaled back or no longer offered. I love architectural models so I was enthralled anyway but other visitors would probably need additional activities to heighten their interest. I did attend a performance of Chinese acrobats but I think it would have been more intriguing if the acrobats had chosen people from the audience and tried to teach them how to balance the jars and other objects they used in their act. I think having audience participation is critical now days in themed venues since everyone is becoming so used to interactivity with the internet and with modern video games.

I especially enjoyed walking through the 1/3 scale model of the excavation of the terracotta warriors. I had seen the original warriors when the "Tombs of China" traveling exhibit was displayed at the museum in San Francisco's Golden Gate Park. However, seeing even a scaled down version of them still in their trenches was very unique since I doubt that I will ever be able to see the real ones in situ.

To see my other photos check out [Splendid China](#)

posted by Libitina at [4:43 PM](#) [0 comments](#)

Wednesday, August 11, 2004

Cahokian flintknapper



[Cahokian flintknapper](#), originally uploaded by [mharrsch](#).

When I was a young girl in the 1950s, I was fascinated by the Aztec, Mayan, and Incan cultures that we studied in the fourth and fifth grades. But, there was no mention whatsoever about the advanced mound-building cultures of North America. I actually did not ever hear of them until I studied archaeology in college. When I finally got a chance to see the beautifully crafted artifacts that had been recovered from mounds in the American Midwest I was truly astounded.

Check out the rest of my photographs of the fascinating exhibits at the [Cahokia Mounds Interpretative Center](#)

posted by Libitina at [4:59 PM](#) [0 comments](#)

Monk's mound



[Monks mound](#), originally uploaded by [mharrsch](#).

Eleven years ago I climbed a Hopewell mound in Tennessee and would have liked to have added Monk's mound to my conquests but there were groups of school children waiting to climb the mound and my husband was getting impatient so I just admired it from afar.

Photographed at [Cahokia Mounds Interpretive Center](#), St. Louis, Missouri

posted by Libitina at [12:16 PM](#) [0 comments](#)

Williamsburg Assembly Hall



Here's another view of the Williamsburg Assembly Hall.

Uploaded by Hello!

I am testing Blogger's new photo hosting service Hello. The previous images were posted with [Flickr](#) I notice that Hello provides larger thumbnails than Flickr. However, I like Flickr's format much better with the post message aligned to the right of the image, title and caption.

Check out the rest of my [Williamsburg](#) images!

posted by Libitina at 11:02 AM 0 comments

Wednesday, July 14, 2004

Beautiful Clocktowers grace government structures in Williamsburg



[The Capitol's Clocktower Flies the Flag of Colonial Founding Nation](#), originally uploaded by [mharrsch](#).

I was particularly intrigued by the detail on this beautiful clocktower perched on the roof of the Capitol building. I learned that [Munns Manufacturing](#), a company that specializes in clocktowers and church steeples, restored the clocktower on Williamsburg's Courthouse

posted by Libitina at 4:48 PM 0 comments

Williamsburg Capitol site of famous Stamp Act speech



[The Capitol at Williamsburg](#), originally uploaded by [mharrsch](#).

The gentlemen at Williamsburg sat in the oldest representative assembly in what was now the world's newest nation. The legislature first met at Williamsburg on April 21, 1704, when the Capitol on Duke of Gloucester Street was still under construction. Literally and figuratively, however, its foundation dated to 1619, when the House of Burgesses first convened at Jamestown.

After fire destroyed (for the third time) the Jamestown Statehouse in 1698, the burgesses decided to move the colony's government to Middle Plantation, soon renamed Williamsburg. On May 18, 1699, they resolved to build the first American structure to which the word Capitol was applied.

In this building [Patrick Henry](#) delivered his Caesar-Brutus speech against the Stamp Act on May 29, 1765.

"Caesar had his Brutus--Charles the first his Cromwell--and George III--may he profit from their example."

Henry, George Washington, George Mason, George Wythe, Richard Henry Lee, Jefferson, and others played their parts in the legislative wars that ended in revolution. - [Official Colonial](#)

[Williamsburg Website](#)

posted by Libitina at 2:55 PM 0 comments

Williamsburg Courthouse served many roles in early America



Williamsburg Courthouse, originally uploaded by [mharrsch](#).

"Williamsburg's citizens assembled at their courthouse at 1 p.m. on Thursday, May 1, 1783, to celebrate at last the end of the war with England--just as they had gathered seven years earlier to hear lawyer Benjamin Waller proclaim from its steps the Declaration of Independence.

Led by four standard bearers, a herald riding a gelding, and the mayor and his aldermen bearing the city charter, the throng marched down Duke of Gloucester Street toward the College of William and Mary. They carried a proclamation announcing the initialing of the Treaty of Paris and, nearly two years after Yorktown, the end of the Revolution." - [Colonial Williamsburg official website](#)

posted by Libitina at 2:45 PM 0 comments

Williamsburg Gunsmiths Mostly Repairmen



[Williamsburg Gunsmith](#), originally uploaded by [mharrsch](#).

[Williamsburg Gunsmiths Mostly Repairmen](#)"Because imported firearms were cheaper than those made in Williamsburg - typical of many goods in colonial America - the gunsmith mainly repaired arms and other objects. Gunsmiths often repaired axes and other items made by blacksmiths, cast shoe buckles and other items like bells, and sometimes repaired silver objects.

Rifles were the only Virginia arms produced in quantity. Rifle production was concentrated on the frontier to the west of Williamsburg." - [Colonial Williamsburg Official Website](#)

Another interesting account of [a visit to the Williamsburg Gunsmith](#).

posted by Libitina at [11:34 AM](#) [0 comments](#)

About Me



Mary Harrsch

Springfield, Oregon, United States

[View my complete profile](#)

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Monday, March 07, 2005

3000-year-old skeleton of metalworker discovered near

Zabol (2:44 PM) **Libitina**

Mehr News: "Archaeologists working at the Espidej historical site in Sistan-Baluchestan in southeast Iran recently discovered a tomb containing a 3000-year-old skeleton of a metalworker buried with all his tools.

The tools include an awl, a brass ladle, a whetstone, as well as water pots to temper copper and brass, indicating that metalworking was an important industry in the region 3000 years ago.

According to the head of the archaeological team, Mohammad Heydari, a brass statue of a dog was also discovered inside the grave. The statue is only one centimeter long, showing that the tools used 3000 years ago were accurate enough to make such delicate and small statues."

posted by Mary Harrsch mharrsch@uoregon.edu on 2:44 PM | [link](#)
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Friday, March 04, 2005

Unique column bases of Palace of Cyrus unearthed in

Charkhab (4:27 PM) **Libitina**

Unique column bases of Palace of Cyrus unearthed in

Charkhab"Archaeologists have excavated three column bases with wonderfully unique masonry at the Palace of Cyrus the Great in Charkhab near Borazjan in Iran's southern province of Bushehr, the director of the Iranian archaeological team working in the region announced on Saturday.

"The bases are from three of the four columns, which were located at the main gate of the palace. Archaeologists have not yet found the fourth one,"Ali-Akbar Sarfaraz added.

"The bases were made using the same black and white stones which were used in the main hall of the palace, but artistically they are very similar to the bases of Pasargadae.

"It is no exaggeration to say that the bases are unique and unparalleled in the art of masonry. They have been so finely crafted that you think of lathe workshops or plasterworks," Sarfaraz said.

The skill and sense of aesthetics used to make the bases has surprised experts, making them wonder what artists with what tools cut the stones in such a way that has never been seen, even in Persepolis, the main capital of the Achaemenids, he added.

posted by Mary Harrsch mharrsch@uoregon.edu on 4:27 PM | [link](#)
[Comment \(0\)](#)

Diggers find oven at Roman hotspot in Manchester

(4:19 PM) **Libitina**



Manchester Online: "A ROMAN oven and pieces of pottery have been uncovered beneath the site of a new shopping arcade. In addition to the Roman oven and pottery, remains of Westerwold German stoneware have been uncovered.

Wigan was the site of a Roman fort known as Coccium, which was in existence in the second century AD.

Three Roman roads have been traced in the Wigan area and researched by the Wigan Archaeological Society.

Other Roman finds in the area include hordes of coins, cremation urns and a headless statue of the Persian god Cautopates."

posted by Mary Harrsch mharrsch@uoregon.edu on 4:19 PM | [link](#)

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Research of a history enthusiast and technology developer who is particularly interested in integrating technology and history education.

XML



Comment (0)

'Atomic Paring Knife' Will Help Probe Ancient

Civilizations (4:16 PM) **Libitina**

Newswise Mississippi State researchers are acquiring a high-tech laser instrument described as an "atomic paring knife" that will be used, among other things, to probe the mysteries of ancient civilizations.

Hailed as the first such unit of its type in the Southeastern United States, the university's Laser Ablation-Inductively Coupled Plasma-Mass Spectrometer will provide organizations across Mississippi-academic, non-profit and industrial-with unique capabilities for quantitative surface analysis and depth profiling.

It was purchased with a National Science Foundation grant of more than \$264,000 awarded to a team of MSU researchers at Diagnostic Instrumentation and Analysis Laboratory-known as DIAL-and Cobb Institute of Archaeology.

"The instrument can be used to map surfaces-find defects or specific surface features," said DIAL director John Plodinec. "One also can do depth profiling-using the laser system as an atomic paring knife, peeling away layer after layer of material."

Associate anthropology professor Evan Peacock predicted the new instrument will greatly enhance MSU's ongoing archaeological investigations at Lyon's Bluff, an Oktibbeha County site where Native Americans dwelled A.D. 1000-1650. Numerous artifacts and the foundation of a prehistoric fort have been found there, the Cobb research associate added.

"The new laser ablation (precise removal) system provides a rapid, non-destructive way of tracing pottery to its source," Peacock, an environmental archaeologist, said.

Plodinec said the system uses a laser to gently scratch the sample surface, ejecting a small amount of material into plasma, where the atoms are separated by mass.

"The instrument provides a complete, rapid and accurate compositional analysis of almost any materials-stone, glass, ceramics, metals-with no sample preparation and minimal damage to the original sample," said DIAL assistant research professor Adriana Giordana, who is coordinating the technological effort for the lab."

posted by Mary Harrsch mharrsch@uoregon.edu on 4:16 PM | [link](#)

Comment (0)

Bulgarian Archaeologists Search for Thracian King's

Body (4:09 PM) **Libitina**

I was very excited to read that Thracian artifacts discovered in the excavation at the Goliamata Kosmatka tomb are going to be featured in a traveling exhibit beginning next year. I will

have to keep tabs on this development to see where the exhibit site nearest to my home will be.

Sofia News Agency: "Bulgarian archaeologists are attempting to find the body of the ancient Thracian king Seutus III. The archaeologists will search for the king's remains at the Goliamata Kosmatka tomb, where they found a bronze helmet with a sign reading that it has belonged to the ancient king.

The Goliamata Kosmatka finds will be exhibited in full in the National Museum of History in Sofia. After 2006 it is expected to start its journey in the museums worldwide. There have been invitations from the US, Japan, Spain, France and South Korea, archaeologist Georgi Kitov said."

posted by Mary Harrsch mharrsch@uoregon.edu on 4:09 PM | [link](#)
[Comment \(0\)](#)

Wednesday, March 02, 2005

Beaded Mummy One of Best Ever Preserved (3:46 PM) **Libitina**



Seattle Post-Intelligencer:

"Archaeologists uncovered three coffins and a remarkably well-preserved mummy in a 2,500-year old tomb discovered by accident - after opening a secret door hidden behind a statue in a separate burial chamber, Egypt's chief archaeologist said Wednesday.

The Australian team was exploring a much older tomb - dating back 4,200 years - belonging to a man believed to have been a tutor to the 6th Dynasty King Pepi II, when they

moved a pair of statues and discovered the door, said Zahi Hawass, Egypt's top antiquities official.

Inside, they found a tomb from the 26th Dynasty with three intricate coffins, each with a mummy.

'Inside one coffin was maybe one of the best mummies ever preserved,' Hawass told reporters at the excavation site in the cemetery of Saqqara, a barren hillside pocked with ancient graves about 15 miles south of Cairo.

'The chest of the mummy is covered with beads. Most of the mummies of this period - about 500 B.C. - the beads are completely gone, but this mummy has them all,' he said,

standing over one of the mummies that was swathed in turquoise blue beads and bound in strips of black linen.

The names of the mummies have not been determined, but the tomb is thought to be that of a middle-class official."

posted by Mary Harrsch mharrsch@uoregon.edu on 3:46 PM | [link](#)
[Comment \(0\)](#)

Wednesday, February 23, 2005

Thracian Gold Fever (1:47 PM) **Libitina**

Thracian Gold

Fever: "Finds from the tombs of the Valley of Thracian Kings include decorative equestrian ornaments and a delicate gold kylix, or drinking cup.



While the sensational finds from a 2,500-year-old necropolis dubbed the 'Valley of the Thracian Kings' have fired the imagination of the Bulgarian public and the world beyond, the story behind the discoveries, centered around the controversial methods of the archaeologist who made them--unorthodox excavation practices, shady business deals, allegations of collaborations with looters--raises questions about how this poor former East Bloc nation will manage the future of its past."

posted by Mary Harrsch mharrsch@uoregon.edu on 1:47 PM | [link](#)
[Comment \(0\)](#)

The Lost Goddess of Israel (1:44 PM) **Libitina**



The Lost Goddess of Israel:

"Asherah is arguably the most important goddess in the Canaanite pantheon. The prototypical mother of gods and humans and consort of the chief god, El, she is also the mistress of the sea and the land, and

protector of all living things. We have long known Asherah from the immense library of thirteenth-century cuneiform tablets found in Syria at the site of Ugarit. But there are also more than 40 references to Asherah in the Old Testament. What could she have meant to the people of monotheistic ancient Israel?

A bit too much, apparently, at least according to the authors of

the biblical texts, who attack her relentlessly.

These passages reflect both the worship of Asherah and efforts to stamp out her cult during in the Iron Age. But it was only in the succeeding Persian period, after the fall of Judah in 586 B. C. and the exile in Babylon, that Asherah virtually disappeared.

Ultimately, the campaign to eliminate the goddess has failed. "Asherah was buried long ago by the Establishment," declares respected biblical scholar William H. Dever. "Now, archaeology has excavated her." Dever is quite certain that he knows who the Asherah of ancient Israel and of the biblical texts is--she is the wife or consort of Yahweh, the one god of Israel. Many of his colleagues would agree. "

posted by Mary Harrsch mharrsch@uoregon.edu on 1:44 PM | [link](#)
[Comment \(0\)](#)

Tuesday, February 22, 2005

[Archaeologists excavating underwater city uncovered by tsunami](#) (1:54 PM) **Libitina**

[Post Gazette](#): "Three rocky structures with elaborate carvings of animals have emerged near the coastal town of Mahabalipuram, battered by the Dec. 26 Asian tsunami. As the tsunami's waves receded, the force removed sand deposits that had covered the structures, which appear to belong to a port city built in the seventh century, said T. Satyamurthy, a senior archaeologist with the Archaeological Survey of India.



The six-foot rocky structures that have emerged in Mahabalipuram, 30 miles south of Madras, include an elaborately carved head of an elephant and a horse in flight. Above the elephant's head is a small square-shaped niche with a carved statue of a deity.

Another structure uncovered by the tsunami has a reclining lion sculpted on it.

According to archaeologists, lions, elephants and peacocks were common motifs used to decorate walls and temples during the Pallava period in the seventh and eighth centuries."

posted by Mary Harrsch mharrsch@uoregon.edu on 1:54 PM | [link](#)
[Comment \(0\)](#)

Monday, February 07, 2005

Five ancient game pieces discovered among artifacts illegally excavated in Jiroft (9:23 AM) **Libitina**

MehrnewsArchaeologists have identified five stone game pieces among the artifacts excavated by smugglers at the site of ancient Jiroft, the director of the archaeological team working on Jiroft and the Halil-Rud River cultural area announced.

"Three of the game pieces were made in the shapes of eagles, one of them is in the shape of a scorpion with a man's head, and the other is a flat surface. All have 12 to 20 holes in them, with an equal number of holes on either side," added Yusef Majidzadeh.

"It is not clear how the people played the games, but their shapes and the holes in equal numbers indicate that the pieces were for a game like backgammon," he said.

The objects indicate that the people of the region had entertainment perhaps as far back as 5000 years ago.

posted by Mary Harrsch mharrsch@uoregon.edu on 9:23 AM | [link](#) [Comment \(0\)](#)

Tuesday, February 01, 2005

Precise ancient ruler discovered in Iran (8:56 AM)

Libitina

Precise ruler from ancient times discovered in Burnt

CityArchaeologists recently discovered a 10-centimeter ruler with an accuracy of half a millimeter in the ruins of the 5200-year-old Burnt City.

"During the recent excavation, we found a piece of ebony wood 10 centimeters in length with regular furrows which seemed to be created by a sharp instrument. After several examinations using special tools, we learned that the grooves were carved in lengths of one millimeter and half a millimeter," Mansur Sajjadi, archaeological team leader, added.

"Through more studies, we became certain that the instrument is a ruler which was used by the people of the Burnt City in precision industries."

Experts believe the instrument indicates that the ancient inhabitants of the Burnt City were very adept in mathematics and geometry.

"The people surely used other measuring tools, but such a ruler must have been used for tiny works, since we had already ascertained that the people were very skilled in making handicrafts such as jewelry," Sajjadi said.

posted by Mary Harrsch mharrsch@uoregon.edu on 8:56 AM |
[link](#) [Comment \(0\)](#)

Monday, January 31, 2005

[Gilgamesh Tomb Believed Found](#) (11:23 AM)

Libitina

[Gilgamesh Tomb Believed Found](#): "Archaeologists in Iraq believe they may have found the lost tomb of King Gilgamesh - the subject of the oldest 'book' in history.

The Epic Of Gilgamesh - written by a Middle Eastern scholar 2,500 years before the birth of Christ - commemorated the life of the ruler of the city of Uruk, from which Iraq gets its name.

Now, a German-led expedition has discovered what is thought to be the entire city of Uruk - including, where the Euphrates once flowed, the last resting place of its famous King.

'I don't want to say definitely it was the grave of King Gilgamesh, but it looks very similar to that described in the epic,' Jorg Fassbinder, of the Bavarian department of Historical Monuments in Munich.

Gilgamesh was described as having been buried under the Euphrates, in a tomb apparently constructed when the waters of the ancient river parted following his death.

"We found just outside the city an area in the middle of the former Euphrates river? the remains of such a building which could be interpreted as a burial," Mr Fassbinder said.

We have found garden structures and field structures as described in the epic, and we found Babylonian houses."

But he said the most astonishing find was an incredibly sophisticated system of canals.

"Very clearly, we can see in the canals some structures showing that flooding destroyed some houses, which means it was a highly developed system."

posted by Mary Harrsch mharrsch@uoregon.edu on 11:23 AM |
[link](#) [Comment \(0\)](#)

[Archaeologists find 'Russian Stonehenge'](#) (10:23 AM) **Libitina**

[Archaeologists find 'Russian Stonehenge'](#): "Russian archaeologists have found the site of a 4,000-year-old concentric wooden structure resembling Britain's Stonehenge. Evidence of the structure was found near Ryazan southeast of Moscow at the confluence of the Oka and Pronya rivers.

The area long known for its archaeological treasures was

settled by tribes migrating from Eurasia thousands of years ago. A number of archaeological items found at the site have been dated by Bronze Age experts to the third millennium B. C., according to Ilha Ahmedov of Moscow's State History Museum."

posted by Mary Harrsch mharrsch@uoregon.edu on 10:23 AM | [link](#) [Comment \(0\)](#)

Thursday, January 27, 2005

[Warrior Tells Tales Of Greeks](#) (10:55 AM)

Libitina



[Edgware Times](#)): "A Whetstone man with a passion for ancient Greece has produced a history magazine for Barnet's schoolchildren.

George Georgiou, of Tudor Grove, Whetstone, has become well-known to pupils in

the borough for teaching ancient history dressed as a Greek warrior, and has now put together a history magazine on the period.

The booklet has already been distributed to half-a-dozen schools in Barnet, and covers Greek mythology, and Greek and Cypriot history."

posted by Mary Harrsch mharrsch@uoregon.edu on 10:55 AM | [link](#) [Comment \(0\)](#)

[The Hoplite Association](#) (10:53 AM) **Libitina**

[The Hoplite Association](#)" The Hoplite Association is a unique living history group dedicated to recreating the life and times of the Ancient Greek military in the Classical period between 490 and 430 bc, both in battle and at rest. As well as attending re-enactment events when we display skill at arms and specific aspects of warfare during this period, the Association also involves itself in educational shows and historical displays.

Activities range from the drill, discipline and manoeuvre of a Hoplite phalanx, demonstrations of the different types of infantry seen at this period and providing an interesting insight into the civilian life of the ?citizen? soldier. We also have an active group of mercenary Scythian archers and positively encourage members to recreate any of the combatants that would be found fighting for a city-state during this period."

posted by Mary Harrsch mharrsch@uoregon.edu on 10:53 AM | [link](#) [Comment \(0\)](#)

Friday, January 21, 2005

[32 Sassanid Kings Had 100 Types of Crowns](#) (4:17

PM) **Libitina**

[Payvand](#)"Studies on Sassanid remains and works show there has been over 100 types of crown in this era. The various Sassanid crowns demonstrate the cultural, economic, social, and historical situation in each period. The crowns also show the character traits of each king in this era", Yousef Moradi, Sassanid era expert responsible for Sassanid area in Kermanshah, western Iran, told CHN.



There are different symbols and signs on the crowns of Sassanid kings including the moon, stars, eagle, and palm that show their religious faith and beliefs, said Moradi."

posted by Mary Harrsch mharrsch@uoregon.edu on 4:17 PM | [link](#) [Comment \(0\)](#)

[Ancient Accounting Development spurs Human Cognitive Evolution?](#) (4:00 PM) **Libitina**

[RedNova News](#): "Recent archaeological evidence supports the claim that the first system of writing and the first use of abstract numerical representation evolved from the clay token accounting system of ancient Mesopotamia. Writing and other abstract symbol systems have subsequently transformed human cognitive capacities within only few millennia, a time period too short for any substantial changes in our biologically-evolved brains. This paper uses Merlin Donald's theory of human cognitive and cultural evolution [in *Origins of the Modern Mind*; 1991] to identify the role played by ancient accounting in these evolutionary processes. Specifically, it is argued that this early accounting system paved the way for

writing by instigating revolutionary cognitive structures for processing visual/ symbolic artifacts and establishing a primitive but very powerful form of external memory (external to the brain). The paper also explores the role that accounting systems continue to play in the provision of 'cognitive scaffolding' with respect to our organizational and institutional environments, and provides a cursory overview of the pioneering developments of ancient Mesopotamien accounting in this regard."

posted by Mary Harrsch mharrsch@uoregon.edu on 4:00 PM | [link](#)
[Comment \(0\)](#)

Sub-surface data to be used to build virtual model of Tiwanaku (3:56 PM) **Libitina**

UPM:



"University of Pennsylvania Museum archaeologists working at the renowned ancient site of Tiwanaku in Bolivia--a site sometimes called the 'American Stonehenge'--have joined forces with a team of engineers, mathematicians, computer scientists and anthropologists from the University of Pennsylvania's Department of Computer and Information Science, School of Engineering, the Center for Advanced Spatial Technologies, University of Arkansas, and the Department of Anthropology, University of Denver, to begin a large-scale, subsurface surveying project using equipment and techniques that may one day serve as a model for future archaeological efforts worldwide.

"The problem," noted Dr. Alexei Vranich, "has recently been a kind of 'technological bottleneck,' where large areas are surveyed, but efforts at processing and fusing the data from multiple sensors has slowed the process down considerably. By bringing this level of technological and computer expertise to bear, we should be able to develop a methodology for quickly and efficiently processing the huge amounts of sub-surface data we collect. This will permit archaeologists to develop a far deeper understanding of broad spatial layouts of complex urban sites, like Tiwanaku."

"Our collaboration with anthropologists goes back to two years

ago when we started building 3D models of surface structures from camera images," noted Dr. Kostas Daniilidis, leading Principal Investigator and Associate Professor, Department of Computer and Information Science, University of Pennsylvania. "The scientific challenge in this NSF project is in solving the inverse problem of recovering surface 3D structures from their tomographic projections. We really want to resolve the bottleneck between the huge amount of raw signal data and meaningful information in the form of 3D geometric models."

posted by Mary Harrsch mharrsch@uoregon.edu on 3:56 PM | [link](#)
[Comment \(0\)](#)

Parthian and Sassanid sites discovered in northwestern

Iran (3:51 PM) **Libitina**

[Mehr News](#)A joint Iranian and foreign research team has recently discovered four huge historical sites dating back to the Parthian and Sassanid eras at the Moghan Plateau in Ardebil Province.

The director of the team, Karim Alizadeh, said "The historical sites were surrounded by canals used to irrigate the agricultural lands and protect the area as well."

He went on to say that preliminary findings indicate that the sites were from the Parthian (250 B.C.-226 C.E.) and Sassanid (226-651 C.E.) eras, proving that the Moghan Plateau was a very important farming area.

"The sites and the discovered artifacts reveal the fact that these newly discovered sites have many affinities with those in Khuzestan and the Mesopotamian area. They show that the Sassanids had organized systematic and developed agricultural activities throughout the country, but for some unknown reasons they were later neglected," Alizadeh observed.

posted by Mary Harrsch mharrsch@uoregon.edu on 3:51 PM | [link](#)
[Comment \(0\)](#)

Last Templar Grand Master in Hertford, UK? (3:47 PM) **Libitina**

[Guardian](#) : "Officially, the Templars don't exist, having been driven underground by the pope more than 600 years ago; in The Da Vinci Code, they are described as inhabiting 'a precarious world where fact, lore and misinformation had become so intertwined that extracting a pristine truth was almost impossible'. Nobody even seems to agree on what the Holy Grail is: some say it is the cup used by Jesus at the Last Supper; others that it was used to collect his blood at the crucifixion. Needless to say, the Templars haven't been too eager to clarify any of this publicly.

Then, late last year, the group apparently made an unprecedented communication with the outside world. It emerged that the Templars were demanding an official apology

from the Vatican, for having persecuted them in the 14th century - and that the Vatican was giving 'serious consideration' to the matter. The demand came in a letter, signed on behalf of the grand master of the Templars. And for the conspiracy theorists who have pursued the knights for centuries, it was accompanied by a tantalising clue: an address. In Hertford."

posted by Mary Harrsch mharrsch@uoregon.edu on 3:47 PM | [link](#)
[Comment \(0\)](#)

Persepolis Erosion Under Study - Persian Journal Latest Iran news & Iranian Article News paper (3:42 PM)

Libitina



Persian Journal: "Founded by Darius I in 518 B.C., Persepolis was the capital of the Achaemenid Empire. It was built on an immense half-artificial, half-natural terrace, where the king of kings created an impressive palace complex inspired by Mesopotamian models. The importance and quality of the monumental ruins make it a unique archaeological site.

But, the steps to the Apadana entrance and the doorway to the 2500-year-old palaces in Persepolis have been eroded by 1 to 2 mm.

The erosion in the world heritage site of Persepolis has made the experts so anxious that they have begun a special study of the Achaemenid capital to find out about the reasons of the erosion of

bas relieves and the other parts of this ancient site."

posted by Mary Harrsch mharrsch@uoregon.edu on 3:42 PM | [link](#)
[Comment \(0\)](#)

3rd century BCE village reveals early commerical wine production (1:37 PM) **Libitina**

Haaretz - Israel News: "A farmhouse, built in the third century BCE and surrounded by five wine presses, has been discovered on land between what today is Moshav Gan Sorek and the Tel Aviv-Ashdod highway.

The house had a few wings and an area of about 1,230 square meters (13,200 square feet). The quantities of wine produced in the five presses was more than required by those who lived there, meaning that the farm residents earned their livelihood from producing wine in commercial quantities. The wine apparently was produced for export and was shipped to Mediterranean countries via the nearby port at Yavne Yam

(today Kibbutz Palmahim).

The village and the farmhouse were built during the Hellenistic period, when sovereignty over the Land of Israel shifted from the Ptolemaic dynasty in Egypt, to the Seleucids, whose center of power was in Syria. Buildings in both the village and the farm were made of mud bricks, used on stone foundations from the previous Persian era (fourth century BCE). Some of the walls were preserved to a height of about one meter, even though the bricks were merely sun-dried, with limited durability when exposed to water and humidity.

Among the artifacts found at the site were handles of jugs bearing inscriptions from Rhodes, leading Ed to the conclusion that the residents imported fine wines from that Greek island. There were also pottery lamps, decorated bowls and plates imported from Greece, stoneware from Egypt, 300 coins, some of them silver, which originated in the region that is now Lebanon, Greece and Turkey, arrows, bronze make-up implements and needles, and iron agricultural tools such as a scythe and a pruning shears. "

posted by Mary Harrsch mharrsch@uoregon.edu on 1:37 PM | [link](#)
[Comment \(0\)](#)

King Tut at the center of another controversy (1:19 PM) **Libitina**

Al-Ahram Weekly: "When the Ministry of Culture and the Supreme Council of Antiquities (SCA) launched a five-year project to examine and study all Ancient Egyptian mummies by means of CT scanning in order to ascertain how they can be best conserved, the idea was applauded.

Eleven mummies in the Egyptian Museum were scanned. However, when it came to the turn of the Pharaoh Tutankhamun, some archaeologists and scientists were none too happy. While the project's supporters saw it as a revolutionary endeavour to resolve the mystery surrounding the early death of Tutankhamun, its opponents suggested it was more of a media circus than pure science. A media campaign launched to question the usefulness of the procedure and its results accused the Egyptian mission who carried out the CT scan of being unprofessional, ambiguous, reckless and impatient to implement its attempt.

What triggered the controversy was the sudden withdrawal -- a week before Tutankhamun's scanning -- of orthopaedist professor Saleh Bedeir, who was leading the scientific team, and his statement regarding Tutankhamun's computed tomography.

'What has been done by the Luxor Night Campaign [the scientific mission] is another zero to add to the group of zeros we have obtained already,' Bedeir told Al- Ahram Weekly in a telephone interview.

He accused the team of being unethical in implementing their forensic examination, as well as disregarding the use of

scientific procedures while removing the fragile mummy from its golden sarcophagus. This, he said, put the mummy under real threat of contamination, decomposition and deterioration."

posted by Mary Harrsch mharrsch@uoregon.edu on 1:19 PM | [link](#)
[Comment \(0\)](#)

Shrine to Hercules unearthed (1:09 PM) **Libitina**



ekathimerini.com

"an archaeological site dubbed "Hercules? House" - the place, experts say, that the ancient Greeks may have held to be the mythological hero's birthplace, has yielded the

remains of an altar and ancient dwellings used for more than 3,000 years.

Vassilis Aravantinos, head of the regional archaeological service, said finds on the site tally with descriptions by the poet Pindar some 2,500 years ago of a shrine to Hercules built on his legendary birthplace.

'We had waited for many years for this discovery but it never came... These findings support the ancient writings," Aravantinos said. "There are signs of worship of Hercules."

Small bronze figures, including one showing Hercules grappling with a lion, are a key piece of evidence.

With most of the 335-square-meter site explored, archaeologists have recovered several hundred ceramic vessels, small bronze statues, animal bones, and a thick layer of ash created from burning animals sacrificed to the gods."

posted by Mary Harrsch mharrsch@uoregon.edu on 1:09 PM | [link](#)
[Comment \(0\)](#)

Tuesday, January 18, 2005

Greeks defend ancient nudes from TV prudes

(11:42 AM) **Libitina**

[Herald Sun](#): "US viewers' complaints that the Athens Olympics opening ceremony featured lewd nudity have infuriated 2004 Games chief Gianna Angelopoulos.

She has warned American regulators to back off from policing ancient Greek culture.

"Greece does not wish to be drawn into an American culture war. Yet that is exactly what is happening," she said.

Complaints focused on a parade of actors portraying naked statues.

Among them were the satyr and the nude male statues, kouroi, both emblems of ancient Greece's golden age.

"As Americans surely are aware, there is great hostility in the world today to cultural domination in which a single value system created elsewhere diminishes and degrades local cultures," she said in her commentary.

"In this context, it is astonishingly unwise for an agency of the US government to engage in an investigation that could label a presentation of the Greek origins of civilisation as unfit for television viewing."

posted by Mary Harrsch mharrsch@uoregon.edu on 11:42 AM | [link](#) [Comment \(0\)](#)

Thursday, January 06, 2005

[Stone admits to letting Alexander down](#) (10:42

AM) **Libitina**

I noticed the post to rogueclassicist's blog about an interview with Oliver Stone and his reaction to the storm of criticism that has followed the release of "Alexander". Although Stone is claiming he made a mistake with that film, the explanation he gives is still casting blame on a public looking for "black and white" heroes. He still does not seem to recognize the fact that he failed to explore Alexander's genius as well as his shortcomings in the film and did not depict Alexander's motivations sufficiently to give the film a recognizable theme.

[Telegraph](#) : "suggest that the American audience, embroiled in its war on terror, perhaps wanted to see a swashbuckling hero on screen. They did not empathise with Stone's depiction of a tortured soul. They might have dealt more easily with a graphic sex scene than with the smouldering desire and the longing looks that Stone staged between the two men.

Stone warms to the idea. 'Young boys, they wanted a warrior and nothing else. They did not want to see a man with vulnerabilities.' He ponders for a moment. 'It has a lot to do with the war in Iraq,' he says finally. 'There is something very strange going on in this country at the moment. It is like the whole value system has gone awry. We want only clearly defined heroes and villains, no subtleties in between.'

Stone, it seems, has been a victim of fate. And not for the first time. The man whose anti-war Born on the Fourth of July was released on the day America invaded Panama, now finds that,

when he makes a film depicting a thoughtful, some would say too hesitant, leader, it is released when America most wants vindication for its war in Iraq.

Stone shrugs: 'I can't help the timing of wars.' "

posted by Mary Harrsch mharrsch@uoregon.edu on 10:42 AM | [link](#) [Comment \(0\)](#)

Artifacts from Phung Nguyen Culture Unearthed in Vietnam (10:13 AM) **Libitina**

: "Archaeologists have unearthed a quantity of antique pottery and items made of turquoise and gemstones believed to belong to the Phung Nguyen Culture (Early Bronze Age) of about 2000-1500 BC, in Gia Thanh commune, Phu Ninh district, northern Phu Tho province.

These antiques included tens of thousands of pottery pieces with different decorative designs, and nearly 100 items made of turquoise and gemstones such as rings, earrings, axes and chisels.

In addition, the archaeologists also found several pots, jars and large wooden compotes decorated with unusual patterns."

posted by Mary Harrsch mharrsch@uoregon.edu on 10:13 AM | [link](#) [Comment \(0\)](#)

Friday, December 17, 2004

Scholar claims Indus script only symbols (10:34 AM) **Libitina**

Science : "The Indus civilization has intrigued and puzzled researchers for more than 130 years, with their sophisticated sewers, huge numbers of wells, and a notable lack of monumental architecture or other signs of an elite class. Most intriguing of all is the mysterious system of symbols, left on small tablets, pots, and stamp seals. But without translations into a known script--the 'Rosetta stones' that led to the decipherment of Egyptian hieroglyphics and Sumerian cuneiform in the 19th century--hundreds of attempts to understand the symbols have so far failed. And what language the system might have expressed--such as a Dravidian language similar to tongues of today's southern India, or a Vedic language of northern India--is also a hot topic. This is no dry discussion: Powerful Indian nationalists of the Hindutva movement see the Indus civilization as the direct ancestor to Hindu tradition and Vedic culture.

Now academic outsider Steve Farmer (see sidebar on p. 2028) and two established Indus scholars argue that the signs are not writing at all but rather a collection of religious-political symbols that held together a diverse and multilingual society.

The brevity of most inscriptions, the relative frequencies of symbols, and the lack of archaeological evidence of a manuscript tradition add up to a sign system that does not encode language, argue historian Farmer and his co-authors, Harvard University linguist Michael Witzel and computational theorist Richard Sproat of the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign. Instead, they say the signs may have more in common with European medieval heraldry, the Christian cross, or a bevy of magical symbols used by prehistoric peoples."

posted by Mary Harrsch mharrsch@uoregon.edu on 10:34 AM | [link](#) [Comment \(0\)](#)

Monday, December 13, 2004

[Ice-age Ivory Flute Found in German Cave](#) (9:42 AM) **Libitina**

[Reuters.co.uk](#): "A 35,000-year-old flute made from a woolly mammoth's ivory tusk has been unearthed in a German cave by archaeologists, says the University of Tuebingen.

The flute, one of the oldest musical instruments discovered, was pieced together from 31 fragments found in a cave in the Swabian mountains in southwestern Germany, the university said."

posted by Mary Harrsch mharrsch@uoregon.edu on 9:42 AM | [link](#) [Comment \(0\)](#)

Friday, December 10, 2004

[Achaemenid Settlement Discovered in Isfahan, Iran](#)

(9:38 AM) **Libitina**

[Persian Journal](#): "One of the rarely-discovered settlements of Achaemenids, who used to inhabit Persia some 2,500 years ago, has been uncovered in the central city of Naein, Isfahan province.

The Achaemenid era is one of the most archeologically eventful epochs of ancient Persia, though few telltale settlements have been so far discovered.

'While demarking the boundaries of the Dar Castle in Naein just a few weeks ago, archeologists stumbled upon an Achaemenid settlement,' said Mohsen Javery, an archeologist in Isfahan.

Covering an area of 2.5 to 3 sq hectares, the dwelling is littered with Achaemenid potteries, making experts hopeful they would discover new points about the lifestyle of people living in that era."

posted by Mary Harrsch mharrsch@uoregon.edu on 9:38 AM |

[link](#) [Comment \(0\)](#)

Thursday, December 09, 2004

[An Azerbaijani weighs in on "Alexander"](#) (12:30

PM) **Libitina**

BakuTODAY.net

"For those of us who spend most of our time reading old books about ancient figures and events, movies like ?Alexander? offer a breath of fresh air by taking us away from the dusty pages of books and into thrilling theaters. Historical sagas like ? Alexander? make us reflect on how and why certain figures continue to intrigue our imagination and pique our curiosity. Alexander the Great of Macedonia (356-323 BC) is certainly one such figure. His mythical and factual persona has entered into oral narratives and written literatures of peoples of Central Asia and the Middle East ever since his arrival to the region in the spring of 334 BC, provoking thoughtful historical, literary, intellectual, and linguistic debates. Take the name of our homeland, ?Azerbaijan,? for instance. Does this astounding name originate from the name of our ancestors, the Azerler, or is it derived from the name of Atropathena, a general of Alexander?s who became the governor of Azerbaijan after Alexander?s death? Our historians and linguists are still debating this issue.

Narrated through the voice of Anthony Hopkins (as Greek historian Ptolemy), the film takes us on a journey through Alexander?s childhood, teens, youth and adulthood by way of some sporadic episodes, reaching its climax when Alexander defeats the Akhaemanian king Darius III in a long bloody battle in 331 BC. Having beaten the army of what the Greeks referred to as Persia, Alexander and his generals march into Babylonia. With all its splendor and grandeur, even Babylonia cannot contain the wild spirit of this restless figure. He keeps on marching and marching.

It is through Alexander?s encounters with local peoples that we come to witness a phenomenon in the movie that has captured the imagination of generations of historians for centuries: Why is this young conqueror greeted by local peoples throughout the vast Achaemenid Empire as a liberator? Why do we not find any semblance of revolt and revulsion against this man on the part of local peoples and communities? After all, who would want to be conquered and dominated by an outside force? These questions take us back not so much to Alexander?s tolerance and respect for other cultures (which he possessed to an admirable degree) but to the nature of the enemy that he defeats: the warlike tribe of Achaemenians. "

posted by Mary Harrsch mharrsch@uoregon.edu on 12:30 PM |

[link](#) [Comment \(0\)](#)

Tuesday, December 07, 2004

Iranians and Greeks portrayed inaccurately in the

Alexander movie (11:57 AM) **Libitina**

How are Iranians and Greeks portrayed in the Alexander

movie?: "Despite excellent reviews of his book by critics and scholars, Dr. Robin Fox does not understand the military of ancient Persia. A typographical shot of the battle of Gaugamela, shows the Greeks advancing in ordered and disciplined ranks. In contrast, the armies of Darius III are shown as little better than an amorphous mob. This is a false image of the Achaemenid army. The Achaemenids used drums and musical instruments to direct the marching tactics of their troops in battle. Second, the Achaemenians used the decimal system, which was in fact, unknown to the Greeks of the period. Persian units were formed in legions of 10, 100 or 1000 or 10,000. A typical term was 'Hezar-Patesh' (roughly equivalent to 'leader of a thousand men').

In addition, the Persians had developed a sophisticated system of heraldry and their troops wore standard uniforms. The Greeks were certainly excellent fighters and were thoroughly organized, but this does not mean that the Persians were not. At the time, the Greeks were militarily superior with respect to armaments, tactics and military training."

"It is (also) very interesting that Professor Fox does not refer to the Achaemenid capitals in Susa, Maracanda (Samarqand), Media or Persopolis. The destruction of Persopolis by Alexander is a major event - instead the movie shows Alexander entering the city of Babylon, implying that this was the administrative capital of Persia. Babylon was simply another satrapy of the empire; not its capital. Babylon had already been incorporated into the Persian Empire in 539 BC by Cyrus the Great (559-530 BC)."

"Babylon was not a major power at the time of Alexander. Persian arts and architecture were an eclectic synthesis of indigenous (e.g Median, Elamite), Lydian, and Mesopotamian styles, including Babylonian. The city-palace of Persopolis is very distinct and cannot be crudely termed as Babylonian."

"The portrayal of ancient Iranians is outright comical, if not insulting. The inaccurate Hollywood portrayal of Iranians is exemplified by the selection of Rosario Dawson , a very talented, beautiful and intelligent black actress, to star as Roxanna, an ancient Iranian queen from Soghdia-Bactria. Roxanna was not black, anymore than Alexander was Scandinavian. Having Rosario Dawson portrayed as Roxanna makes as much sense as having Lucy Liu, an Asian-American, portraying Queen Victoria of Great Britain.

The term Roxanna is derived from Old Iranian "Rokh-shwan" or "face (Ruksh) - fair skinned-shiny (shwan)". Roxanna was related to a North Iranian tribe known later as the Sarmatians, the remnants who survive in the Caucasus and Russia as the

Ossetians (ancient Alans or Ard-Alans)

Roman sources such as Pliny repeatedly describe ancient North Iranian peoples such as the Alans and Seres as "flaxen (blonde) haired blue eyed nomads?" (see Wilcox, p.19). Rosario Dawson does not fit the description of an ancient Iranian woman, especially from Northern Iranian stock. The Ossetians of today, descendants of ancient Northern Iranians, predominantly resemble northern Iranians and Europeans and speak an archaic Iranian language (like the Avesta of the Zoroastrians). Blondism is very common among these descendants of ancient North Iranians in cities such as Beslan and Vladikafkaz. It can be argued that Roxanna was a brunette, however, she was of Northern Iranian stock, which would still make her very different from actress Rosario Dawson."

"More puzzling is the design of Roxanna's costume in the movie. Note the photo showing the marriage of Alexander to Roxanna. Roxanna appears to wear a Burka-like veil constructed of strips of metallic mesh in which the face is partly hidden.

The headgear is partly correct if we base the costume on the Saka Paradrava Iranian speaking tribes of the present-day Ukraine (8-4th centuries BC). The decorations on the headgear are simply wrong and Iranian queens did not wear face masks of any type. "

posted by Mary Harrsch mharrsch@uoregon.edu on 11:57 AM | [link](#) [Comment \(1\)](#)

Monday, December 06, 2004

Grisly find casts doubt on peaceful pyramid theory

(2:24 PM) **Libitina**

The Guardian : "The ancient city-state of Teotihuacan was long thought a relatively gentle place because its art lacked the glorification of sacrifice and war so common in other Mesoamerican civilisations.

Now a team of archaeologists has gone beneath that peaceful appearance and revealed the skeletons in the city's pyramid.

The first ever excavation of the 1,900-year-old Pyramid of the Moon has uncovered the bones of a dozen adult males, 10 of them decapitated and all of them apparently offered up to the gods. Three other smaller-scale human offerings were also found in the seven-year project, which tunnelled deep into the solid stone-and-earth structure.

Though not the first sacrificial burials uncovered at the huge site just north-east of Mexico City, the skeletons in the pyramid show for the first time how central the practice was to the culture over time."

posted by Mary Harrsch mharrsch@uoregon.edu on 2:24 PM | [link](#)

[Comment \(0\)](#)

Discovery Channel Ramses a Recycle of Previous Programming (1:22 PM) **Libitina**

Last night I watched the heavily advertised "Ramses: Wrath of God or Man" on the Discovery Channel and was totally disgusted with it.



Essentially, Kent Weeks found four skeletons in KV-5 and selected one skull as the probable skull of the first-born son of Ramses. Why he selected this particular skull out of the four no one says. The skull has obvious damage caused by some type of weapon or blunt instrument on one side but so-called experts are called in to see if the cause of death could have been supernatural (i.e. the wrath of God).

What followed was two hours of rehashing the historicity of the Exodus including sequences of some so-called expert investigative journalist running around Egypt "discovering" the monotheistic religion of Ahkenaten. They speculated about Moses being one of Ramses own sons who was converted by remnants of followers from Amarna and basically trotted out the same information and speculations covered by their previous program on Moses and the Exodus last year. (Is this television's version of recycling?)

They made a big deal out of Ramses being less than straightforward about the battle of Kadesh and how this clearly indicates the Egyptians would not have recorded their defeat during the Exodus which explains why there has been little archaeological evidence to date to support the biblical account. Then they went on to explain away the head wound by saying that the original biblical account about the death of the first born was probably not meant to be literal. The Hebrews were armed and probably slew many Egyptian first born in the battle during their escape. What really made my jaw drop was the depiction of Nefretari and Ramses first-born nursing Ramses wounds in the campaign tent after the battle. I don't ever recall any mention of Egyptian pharaohs taking their women to battle with them, especially that far from the capital.

When the forensic tests comparing the facial geometry of the skull in question with that of the mummy of Ramses indicated a lack of familial similarity, they conceded that the only definitive answer to whether the skull was any relation to Ramses would have to come from DNA analysis and they weren't ready for that yet. (Again, no explanation was given although Zawi Hawass has been less than cooperative in approving DNA tests in the past.)

The program producers appeared to be turning themselves inside out trying not to offend religious fundamentalists while presenting information that does not support the biblical account. I would have preferred a much more scientific

approach. The only important point made during the whole program was that Ramses first-born died as a mature adult, since there are references to him leading the army on a wall relief at Abu-Simbel.

posted by Mary Harrsch mharrsch@uoregon.edu on 1:22 PM | [link](#)
[Comment \(0\)](#)

Tuesday, November 30, 2004

[DNA Tests to solve Iron Age mysteries](#) (10:04

AM) **Libitina**

[Persian Journal Latest Iran news & Iranian Article News paper](#):

"Studies show Iron Age people used to dwell in Persia from 2,500 BC to 500 BC, leaving behind a telltale sign in the form of grey potteries. The funerary artifacts unearthed in Iran's ancient cemeteries indicated those people took pride in their multifaceted and diversified culture and religious beliefs, though the dearth of knowledge on their settlements has frustrated archeologists.

Now a team archeologists in Tarbiat Modarres University (TMU) in Tehran and Iran's Cultural Heritage and Tourism Organization (CHTO) plan to use DNA tests to unravel mysteries of one the most intriguing epoch of human history.

Dr. Alireza Hozhabri Nobari, an archeologist in TMU who pioneered DNA tests on skeletons dug out from graves in the northwestern city of Tabriz, believes the approach could lead to solving some Iron Age mysteries. "

posted by Mary Harrsch mharrsch@uoregon.edu on 10:04 AM | [link](#) [Comment \(0\)](#)

Thursday, November 18, 2004

[Filmmaker Recreates Persepolis](#) (9:27 AM)

Libitina

[Persian Journal](#) : "Every detail matters for archeological filmmaker Farzin Rezaeian, whose new documentary was 2,500 years in the making. In Persepolis Recreated, Rezaeian switches between real-life images and computer simulations to create a complete interpretation of ancient Persepolis, which was destroyed by Alexander in 450 B.C.



To present details like the palace's carpets and the columns' ornamentations, Rezaeian used artifacts excavated from the Persepolis site. With these artifacts, some

of which are held in the Oriental Institute, Rezaeian projected certain designs and patterns that he then presented in the film. One carpet pattern was created from scraps preserved in the ice of southern Siberia."

posted by Mary Harrsch mharrsch@uoregon.edu on 9:27 AM | [link](#) [Comment \(0\)](#)

Sonar Scan reveals possible Atlantis (9:22 AM)

Libitina



TruthNews: "American researcher Robert Sarmast told a news conference in Cyprus that the quest for Atlantis might be finally over. Sonar scanning of the seabed off the Mediterranean island revealed a buried city with what appear to be extensive man-made walls and trenches, matching Plato's

description of the Acropolis fortress that once dominated Atlantis.

'As far as the scientists are concerned, they are not able to explain these anomalies on the sea floor,' Sarmast said. 'There are trenches, there are walls, there are river paths, a mile below the waves very, very defined, very visible,

on and around a hill that matches the description of Atlantis with perfect accuracy.'

Sarmast, a 38-year-old architect from Los Angeles, has devoted the past 2 1/2 years to trying to locate Atlantis. He said he and his team found more than 60 points that are a perfect match with Plato's detailed description of the layout of the Acropolis. If more research confirms that what lies beneath the waves is indeed the famed Acropolis, then Sarmast will have hit the ultimate bull's eye in archeology."

posted by Mary Harrsch mharrsch@uoregon.edu on 9:22 AM | [link](#) [Comment \(0\)](#)

Tuesday, November 09, 2004

4000-year-old tombs unearthed in Vietnam (9:35

AM) **Libitina**

Vietnam News Agency: "Eighteen ancient tombs, believed to belong to the Ha Long Culture, some 4,000 years ago, have been unearthed in Hon Hai-Co Tien archaeological site in Ha Long city, northern Quang Ninh province.

Archaeologists said some skulls have been discovered intact as

well as stone axes, grinding pestles, short swords and ceramic pieces.

Archaeologists also found many artefacts belonging to the Dong Son Culture around the Hai Hai-Co Tien area, including bronze axes, stone necklaces, ear-rings and ceramic pots."

posted by Mary Harrsch mharrsch@uoregon.edu on 9:35 AM | [link](#) [Comment \(0\)](#)

Thracian gold mask unearthed (9:32 AM) **Libitina**

[Reuters.com](#): "Georgi Kitov's hands trembled as he cradled the glittering visage of an ancient king unearthed from a tomb in southern Bulgaria.

'This is the face of an evil ruler!' cried the archeologist, marveling at the cruel gaze from the mask of solid gold, the size of a dinner plate.

The mask dates back to the 5th century BC -- the golden age of the little-known Thracians -- and has been hailed as an unrivaled find in the study of classical antiquity.

"We've excavated seven tombs this year and their design, along with decorated ceramics, bronze, gold and silver jewels, shows we are dealing with a developed civilization," Kitov said.

Living on the edge of Asia, the Thracians came into contact with great civilizations who passed through their homelands: the Persians, Scythians, Greeks, Celts, Romans and even the Egyptian empire.

"Bulgaria indeed is one of the cradles of culture on the old continent. The first well-developed human civilization dwelled here 6,000 years ago," Bozhidar Dimitrov, curator at the Bulgarian History Museum, said."

posted by Mary Harrsch mharrsch@uoregon.edu on 9:32 AM | [link](#) [Comment \(0\)](#)

Friday, November 05, 2004

New Underwater Archaeology Program in Myanmar

Launched (4:27 PM) **Libitina**

[Dar Al Hayat](#): "The Great Bell of Dhammazedi, which has been lying in Yangon River for centuries, will be among the treasures salvaged if a new underwater archaeology training program in Myanmar proves successful.

Ordered cast by a monarch who donated it to the capital's Shwedagon Pagoda in 1476, the giant bronze bell was stolen by a Portuguese adventurer. But the vessel carrying the bell sank. Until the late 1800s, the top of the sunken bell could still

be seen at low tide."

posted by Mary Harrsch mharrsch@uoregon.edu on 4:27 PM | [link](#)
[Comment \(0\)](#)

Ancient City Discovered on dry Aral Sea Bottom

(4:23 PM) **Libitina**

[inform.kz](#): "Scientists of the Institute of Archeology in Khazakistan found some traces of an ancient town on the dry bottom of the Aral Sea. The area of the town amounts to about 6 ha and goes back to the 13-14 centuries, the epoch of the Golden Horde.

Relics of different workshops, windmills and storehouses for ceramic articles and the burial ground where the noble representatives of that period had been buried were found.

Excavations of the ancient town are planned to start next year.
"

posted by Mary Harrsch mharrsch@uoregon.edu on 4:23 PM | [link](#)
[Comment \(0\)](#)

Friday, October 08, 2004

Persepolis Recreated To Premiere Oct 20 (9:07

AM) **Libitina**

"An Iranian documentary filmmaker, Farzin Rezaeian has spent several years researching the Achaemenid palace at Persepolis, resulting in a visually stunning film featuring some of the leading scholars of ancient Persia."

The film, "Persepolis Recreated", will premiere October 20 at the University of Chicago's Oriental Institute.

"We're pleased that the film will be shown first at the Oriental Institute because of our strong connection to the archaeology of Iran," said Matthew Stolper, the John A. Wilson Professor of Assyriology in the Oriental Institute and the College.

"Archaeologists from the Oriental Institute did important work at Persepolis before World War II and continued working in Iran up until 1979. OI scholars who worked on the results of the Persepolis excavations transformed the study of ancient Iranian history and languages. We also have recently resumed our collaboration with colleagues in Iran.

Among the items on display in the Oriental Institute's Persian Gallery are dishes that were smashed by the army of Alexander the Great as he destroyed Persepolis. The film on Persepolis comes at a time of renewed interest in Alexander, with the opening in early November of a major film on the

Macedonian warrior's life and the publication of a new biography."

posted by Mary Harrsch mharrsch@uoregon.edu on 9:07 AM |
[link](#) [Comment \(0\)](#)

Thursday, October 07, 2004

Cosmetics Ancient Beauty Secret of Persian Empire

(11:39 AM) **Libitina**



Persian Journal : "Based on recent excavations in northwestern Iran, archaeologists now believe that eye makeup has been used in Iran since about 4500 B.C. Other archaeological discoveries at Haft-Tappeh in Khuzestan Province indicate that women used to wear lipstick, rouge, and eye makeup in 2000 B.C. in Iran.

Achaemenid era religious texts say that the wives of the king spent a lot of time applying makeup and perfume before meeting the king. The ancient Greeks admired the Achaemenid era Persians for their custom of wearing makeup and attributed the origin of the use of cosmetics to the East.

Iranians used several different types and styles of makeup in the Achaemenid, the Parthian, and the Sassanid eras.

Seven items were used in women's cosmetics in ancient Iran: sormeh (black powder used as eyeliner), henna to dye the hair and hands, gazeheh (rouge powder for the cheeks), sefidab (powder to whiten the face), vasmeh (powder to darken and thicken the eyebrows), zarak (yellowish powder used to lighten the hair color), and khal (a beauty spot).

Iranian men also wore cosmetics. The famous Parthian commander Sorena always wore makeup. Some sources have also mentioned that Darius the Great used black eyeliner."

posted by Mary Harrsch mharrsch@uoregon.edu on 11:39 AM |
[link](#) [Comment \(0\)](#)

"One Night With The King" to be adapted to film

(9:38 AM) **Libitina**

WebWire "Hadassah: One Night With The King", a historical novel based on the life of the young Jewish girl, Hadassah, the rags-to-riches heroine who went on to become the Biblical Esther, the Queen of Persia (400?322 B.C.) has been adapted for film by screenwriter Stephan Blinn. Complete with suspense, political war conspiracies, and religious intrigue, the

epic tale's principle photography was shot in northwestern India. Directed by Michael Sajbel, "One Night With The King" is scheduled for theatrical release March 25.

posted by Mary Harrsch mharrsch@uoregon.edu on 9:38 AM | [link](#) [Comment \(0\)](#)

Iran, Germany Explore Ancient Industrial City

(9:28 AM) **Libitina**

Payvan: "Iranian and German archeologists have started their 5th season of excavations in the ancient industrial city of Erisman, in central Iran, which used to house several metal workshops.

Erisman is considered the largest industrial city of the ancient Persia and experts have already discovered remains of furnaces, architectural structures and potteries.



Erisman is located in Isfahan province, just 10 km away from Natanz. It is spread over a 40 hectare patch of land. Experts believe Erisman had been an industrial hub, where ironsmiths, silversmiths and goldsmiths had a brisk business. "

posted by Mary Harrsch mharrsch@uoregon.edu on 9:28 AM | [link](#) [Comment \(0\)](#)

Modern Medieval-themed Restaurants Stereotype

Lifestyle of the Middle Ages

(9:12 AM) **Libitina**



By Mark Schatzker: "Since 1983, when its first 'castle' opened in Kissimmee, Fla., Medieval Times Entertainment Inc. has served over 20 million diners. But there's one problem. Medieval-themed feasts aren't medieval. The vegetable soup (dragon tail soup), bland roast chicken (baby dragon), baked potato (dragon egg), and doughy desserts certainly seem pre-modern, not to mention pre-food-processor. It's like the food is the culinary

equivalent of the classic stereotype that casts medieval people as belching, rugged simpletons.

Medieval chefs used spices as enthusiastically as the boy bands of today use hair products. Yes, medieval chefs did serve plain roasted meats, but they also served many meat dishes that

featured thick, gooey sauces very heavily flavored with ingredients like ginger, sugar, vinegar, wine, raisins, mace, cloves, cumin, cardamom, cinnamon, pepper, and honey. "Mawmenny," a typical dish, consisted of ground beef, pork, or mutton boiled in wine, which was then served in a wine-based sauce thickened with pounded chicken and almonds, then flavored with cloves, sugar, and more almonds (this time fried), and then festively colored with an indigo or red dye.

While a Medieval Times castle seats anywhere from 900 to 1,500 people a night, and the Excalibur's Tournament of Kings about 2,000 (a thousand at each seating), no present-day medieval feast comes even close to approaching the enormity of some of the Middle Ages' heavy-hitters. We don't know exactly how many people attended the marriage feast of Henry III's daughter in 1251, but we do know that they gorged on 1,300 deer; 7,000 hens; 170 boars; 60,000 herring; and 68,500 loaves of bread. They ate off rectangular pieces of stale bread called "trenchers" (which were fed to dogs or peasants once the meal was finished)."

I found this article fascinating although I must admit I thoroughly enjoyed my experience at Medieval Times in Buena Vista, California. Of course I was far more interested in the jousting and display of horsemanship than the meal!

posted by Mary Harrsch mharrsch@uoregon.edu on 9:12 AM | [link](#) [Comment \(0\)](#)

14 skulls found in a pit at Klallam Tribal Grave Yard

(8:57 AM) **Libitina**

Peninsula Daily News: "LOWER ELWHA KLALLAM Tribal Chairwoman Frances G. Charles says a pit containing 14 human skulls has been uncovered at the graving yard site.

The discovery was made last week by archaeologists and tribal members working to complete an archaeological excavation at the waterfront property.

"The skulls were placed very carefully into a pit, and were all teenagers to young adults when buried," Charles said."

This article caught my attention because I had the pleasure of stopping by the new Klallam Tribal Center and Art Gallery on my way to Victoria a couple of weeks ago.

posted by Mary Harrsch mharrsch@uoregon.edu on 8:57 AM | [link](#) [Comment \(0\)](#)

Gold Horse Trappings Unearthed in Bulgaria (8:51 AM) **Libitina**

The Star: A golden wreath, golden horse trappings and sword decorations were among the most impressive objects of the treasure uncovered in a vast Thracian tomb near the town of Shipka, 200 kilometers (120 miles) east of Sofia, Bulgaria. Georgi Kitov, the excavation team leader, said the stone-built tomb of three chambers dates back to the end of the 5th or the beginning of the 4th century B.C. The Thracians lived in what is now Bulgaria between 4,000 B.C. and the 8th century A.D., when they were assimilated by the invading Slavs.



posted by Mary Harrsch mharrsch@uoregon.edu on 8:51 AM | [link](#) [Comment \(0\)](#)

Coffins shed light on technology of Ancient Greeks

(8:28 AM) **Libitina**

Australia News Interactive: "THE discovery of two large limestone coffins dating back 3,000 years could indicate that the ancient Greeks may have been more technologically advanced than previously thought, an archaeologist said today.

Each of the coffins, also known as a sarcophagus, was found in Ancient Corinth and dates back to 900 to 875 BC - a period known as the early Geometric period.

The name derives from the art of the period, mostly found on pots, with its characteristically linear designs and dots and lines forming zigzags and angles.

Guy Sanders, in charge of the digs carried out by the American School of Classical Studies, said the enormous weight of each coffin - 3.33 tonnes and 1.8 tonnes - suggests the ancient Corinthians must have used a mechanical system to lower the sarcophagi into graves instead of sheer muscle power."

posted by Mary Harrsch mharrsch@uoregon.edu on 8:28 AM | [link](#) [Comment \(0\)](#)

Wednesday, September 29, 2004

Decrease in Solar Activity May Have Prompted Human Migration

(2:39 PM) **Libitina**

"Bas van Geel, a biologist from the University of Amsterdam, believes that the Earth's climate took a dramatic turn about 2,800 years ago, due to a quiet period in the Sun's activity, making the tropics drier and the mid-latitudes colder and wetter. Previously damp areas, like parts of the Netherlands,

became flooded and uninhabitable, while very dry, desert-like areas, such as southern Siberia, became viable places to live.

Teaming up with archaeologists has enabled van Geel to back up his theory by showing that many people were migrating at this time. Along with Dutch specialists, he has found that farming communities in west Friesland suffered increasing rainfall about 2,800 years ago. They resorted to building homes on artificial mounds, but eventually they were washed out of their farms and had to move to drier places. Meanwhile, work in Cameroon has shown that there was an arid crisis that started at about the same time. This dry patch caused some of the forest to die and savannahs to open up. These openings in the forest made it easier for people to move. Archaeological remains show that farming communities began to migrate inland.

Most recently he has worked with Russian archaeologists to show that, also about 2,800 years ago, the Scythian people took advantage of a wetter climate to explore east and west across the steppe landscapes that lie north of Mongolia. Prior to this, the land had been hostile semi-desert, but the extra moisture turned it into green, grassy steppes, enabling these nomadic tribes to travel towards both China and south-east Europe."

posted by Mary Harrsch mharrsch@uoregon.edu on 2:39 PM | [link](#)
[Comment \(0\)](#)

Unmasking Truth behind the Gold Face (9:17 AM)

Libitina



Unmasking Truth behind the Gold Face: "A unique archeological finding of a solid gold mask near Kazanlak, Bulgaria has stirred the world and rocketed Bulgarian pride of its history to unknown heights.

The face with closed eyes and robust expression found in the outskirts of Shipka Peak, near the town of Kazanlak, is believed to belong to one of mightiest Thracian kings -

Seutus III, whose ruling dates around V-IV century BC. According to its discoverer and head of the archeological expedition Georgi Kitov, the image outruns all its analogs found so far, as it is made of pure, solid gold weighing more than half a kilogram."

posted by Mary Harrsch mharrsch@uoregon.edu on 9:17 AM | [link](#)
[Comment \(0\)](#)

Bulgaria's Bronze King Sculptured by Phidias

(8:39 AM) **Libitina**

Bulgaria's Bronze King Sculptured by Phidias?: "The ancient Greek sculptor Phidias might have created the unique bronze head of a Thracian ruler, recently found in Bulgaria.



The founder of the bronze head archaeologist Georgi Kitov said that Phidias might have sculptured the head dated back to 5 century BC. Phidias is one of the greatest sculptors of ancient Greece some of greatest achievements were the Athena Parthenos at Athens and the Zeus in the temple of Olympia, both colossal figures of chryselephantine workmanship.

The bronze head of a Thracian ruler was discovered by a team of Bulgarian archeologists near the city of Shipka a few days ago. They say that the head might have been a part of a sculpture created in Athens for a Thracian king."

posted by Mary Harrsch mharrsch@uoregon.edu on 8:39 AM | [link](#) [Comment \(0\)](#)

Wednesday, September 22, 2004

Ancient Persian Santur Enjoys Modern Popularity

(2:53 PM) **Libitina**

"The santur is an ancient instrument estimated to be more than 2,000 years old. It is thought to have originated in Persia, but is seen in Assyrian archaeological carvings dating from 660 B.C. The santur was brought to Europe by the Crusaders, where it evolved into the psaltery and the dulcimer, which enjoys popularity in folk music of North America, especially in the Appalachian tradition.



The trapezoid-shaped Persian santur has nine sets of quadruple strings made of bronze for the low register, and nine sets of quadruple strings made of steel for the high register, for a total of 72 strings. The strings are struck with light wooden mallets suspended by three fingers of each hand. The santur may be the only traditional Persian instrument that is not touched directly by the artist.

An 11th-century Persian poet, Manuchehri, compares the sound of the santur with melodic bird song."

posted by Mary Harrsch mharrsch@uoregon.edu on 2:53 PM | [link](#) [Comment \(0\)](#)

Imagery of Prometheus Bound reflected in the

crucifixion?

(2:33 PM) **Libitina**



As I continue with my audio course on the "Age of Pericles" I was intrigued by an observation Professor McNerny made about the play "Prometheus Bound". He pointed out that Prometheus was made to suffer because by giving fire to mankind he not only made civilization possible but he made communication with the gods possible through the ritual burning of sacrificial victims (the smoke was deemed the medium of communication). If you consider the imagery of Prometheus' punishment,

it actually almost parallels the imagery of the crucifixion.

Prometheus, a divine being who is suffering for providing a conduit for humans to communicate with god(s) is "pinned" and an eagle tears open his right side to consume his liver.

I had heard lectures about Greek tragedies before that touched in this play but the point about the fire making it possible for man to create sacrificial smoke to communicate with the gods was never made.

posted by Mary Harrsch mharrsch@uoregon.edu on 2:33 PM | [link](#)
[Comment \(0\)](#)

Tuesday, September 21, 2004

Incas Destroyed Own Site Before Leaving (2:21 PM) **Libitina**

Incas Destroyed Own Site Before Leaving: "Incan pilgrims smashed and burned their own temple, and a tower containing a golden statue of a king, rather than let them fall into Spanish hands, says an Australian archaeologist."



Ian Farrington from Canberra's Australian National University is excavating the temple site in Peru with Julinho Zapata from the National University de San Antonio Abad del Cusco.

The site, called Pambokancha, is 30 kilometers (18.5 miles) from the Incan capital of Cusco.

Incas systematically smashed pottery and burnt offerings as part of closing ceremonies held before they left the area ahead of the Spaniards' arrival.

Archaeologists had found other sites that had closing ceremonies. But Farrington said this was the most extensive, with 70 to 80 buildings containing evidence of closing ceremonies.

The Incas took away items from the site before leaving the area, including some bodies from tombs, Farrington said."

posted by Mary Harrsch mharrsch@uoregon.edu on 2:21 PM | [link](#)
[Comment \(0\)](#)

Monday, September 20, 2004

British Museum to loan Cyrus Cylinder to Iran

(2:53 PM) **Libitina**



At risk: the tomb of Cyrus the Great at Pasargadae

The British Museum

is lending the Cyrus Cylinder, an inscribed clay drum, that has been described as the "first charter of human rights" to Iran. Dating from 539 BC, it records Cyrus the Great's order for the humane treatment of the Babylonians after their conquest by the Persians. As BM director Neil

MacGregor points out, the text has "powerful modern resonances in the context of current conflicts in the regionn."

The Cyrus Cylinder is to be lent to Tehran's National Museum for several months in 2006. The Iranian museum has also promised to send more than 50 antiquities for the BM's "Splendours of Ancient Persia" exhibition, which opens in September 2005.

posted by Mary Harrsch mharrsch@uoregon.edu on 2:53 PM | [link](#)
[Comment \(0\)](#)

Friday, September 17, 2004

MIT adds Myth, Ritual, and Symbolism to

OpenCourseware Lineup (11:18 AM) **Libitina**

Myth, Ritual, and Symbolism I was very excited to see that MIT has started to add Anthropology courses to their OpenCourseware free offerings. For those of you that may not be aware of the initiative, MIT (Massachusetts Institute of Technology) launched a project several years ago to place all course materials for all of their courses online for anyone interested in learning to use at no cost. Most of the courses to date have been engineering and science courses but now they

are beginning to add some of their more liberal arts-type courses to the lineup.

As an ancient history enthusiast, I am particularly interested in the role of myth, ritual, and symbolism in the development of ancient cultures so I was excited to see Professor Howe's course on the subject list. Here's a short excerpt from Prof. Howe's introductory lecture notes:

"Previously, many explanations of human actions and thought in terms of environmental determinism. Why do people in Alps believe in witches?---thin mountain air. Why are people in Latin America or Indonesia inferior to us Europeans? Hot, unchanging climate. Climate doesn't challenge them like our temperate climate Montesquieu said Northerners were brave, vigorous, insensitive to pain, weakly sexed, intelligent, and drunkards. Another Frenchman of the Enlightenment said Northerners faithful, loyal to government, cruel, undersexed. Southerners malicious, crafty, wise, expert in science but bad in government. Another said northern languages have lots of consonants, because people afraid to open mouths and let in cold air. Sounds silly now, but was very common, still pops up. At other extreme, many things explained in terms of some basic traits common to all humans, so-called human nature, or else by traits thought to vary biologically from one population to another. Something innate. With development of racial and biological thinking was thought to be in our blood or genes. So caught between external nature, environment, or internal nature, heredity There was a vague sense that there was something in the middle, neither biologically nor environmentally determined, called custom / tradition / lifeway / mentality / habit / usos y costumbres. But vague. Then, 19th century, word culture adopted. Borrowed from art/music, expanded to encompass everything. Most often associated with early British anthro, Edward Tylor. Was a complex whole that humans carried with them and passed on non-biologically.

Learned, not biologically programmed. Varies independently of biology. People who look very different but share same culture, and vice-versa. Carried on by a chain of learning, though doesn't mean that consciously taught. Shared: has to be group, small or large. But carried on by individuals, in their heads. Wholly or partly mental. Includes ideas, values, assumptions, procedures, practices. This does not mean that the environment and our biological natures are thus irrelevant. They may affect culture in all sorts of ways. Been suggested that all herding peoples, because of way must care for, move, guard animals, value independent personalities, aren't big believers in witchcraft but often warlike, etc. Similarly, though people in two different societies may make facial expressions differently, there are pan-human constants in expressions, so how one smiles probably combination of "human nature" and cultural peculiarities. Still many debates on relative importance of different factors. But neither the environment nor biology works by itself, with nothing in between. Cultures are systems with integrity of own, those other factors are inputs into system."

posted by Mary Harrsch mharrsch@uoregon.edu on 11:18 AM |

[link](#) [Comment \(0\)](#)

Thursday, September 16, 2004

[Archeologists Looking for Legendary Sassanid Town](#)

(2:37 PM) **Libitina**



[Archeologists Looking for](#)

[Legendary Sassanid Town](#): A fire temple has been uncovered by archaeologists near the town of Darbandian, 20 km away from Iran and the Turkmenistan border.

"Inside the fire temple, there is an inscription engraved in a neat Pahlavi script which gives an account of a nearby town, he

added. While on the two sites, archeologists have unearthed a tower, possibly for ceremonial extinguishing of fire, and a foundry.

The Sassanids (226-651) consciously sought to resuscitate Iranian traditions and to obliterate Greek cultural influence. Their rule was characterized by considerable centralization, ambitious urban planning, agricultural development, and technological improvements."

posted by Mary Harrsch mharrsch@uoregon.edu on 2:37 PM | [link](#)
[Comment \(0\)](#)

[Unknown script on Jiroft insignia points to literate](#)

[Sumerian neighbors](#) (8:29 AM) **Libitina**

"During two excavation seasons at [Jiroft](#), archeologists have found around 25 insignias and seals, dating back from the 3rd millennium BC to 2,300 years BC," announced team leader Dr. Yusef Majidzadeh, an Iranian born archeologist now living in France.

The insignias have had trademarks of ancient northern, southern, eastern and western parts of Persia, indicating Jiroft had been a trade hub for the whole nation, he added.



"Some of the seals depict an impression of snakes, mostly associated with ancient Pakistan and Afghanistan, while others portray Mesopotamian champions or squatting women hailing from Susa," Dr. Majidzadeh noted.

Iranian archeologists have concluded that ancient Persians packaged their goods inside earthenware vessels and/or jugs

and then covered the lid with mud and sealed it with special insignias.

During the last season of excavation in Jiroft, in the southwestern province of Kerman, experts unearthed an insignia, measuring 3 cm in length and 2 cm in width, with some intriguing letters engraved on it.

Many great Iranian and foreign experts see the findings in Jiroft as signs of a civilization as great as that of Sumeria and Mesopotamia. Majidzadeh believes that Jiroft is the ancient city of Aratt mentioned in an Iraqi clay inscription as a great civilization."

posted by Mary Harrsch mharrsch@uoregon.edu on 8:29 AM |

[link](#) [Comment \(0\)](#)

Technology Times and Trials

A technology professional's experiences with and observations about technology products and developments.

Friday, March 04, 2005

Television Media and Computers offer Children Pluses and Minuses

Some interesting research from the National Science Foundation:

[US NSF News](#)"A consortium of researchers has reported that very young children's interactions with TV and computers are a mixed bag of opportunities and cautions, while teenagers' Internet use has changed so much that the myths of several years ago need to be debunked.

Said Amy Sussman, program manager for the National Science Foundation (NSF), which funds the five-site Children's Digital Media Center (CDMC), "Reaping the benefits of various media while avoiding pitfalls is no easy task. Parents and policymakers need to inform their decisions about whether and how to guide their children's media use through scientific knowledge. Different developmental stages call for different strategies. These and other research studies can help create needed guidance for children at all ages."

"Several individual studies support the 1999 recommendation by the American Academy of Pediatrics that parents do not expose children to electronic screens until they are 2 years old.

One important distinction is between "background TV" and "foreground TV" – that is, TV programs that are playing when young children are around (for example, because the TV is

always on in the house) or TV programs designed for young children (for example, Teletubbies). Over a third of the households with children from birth to 6 years old had the TV on most or all of the time, in a study reported by Vandewater and colleagues. Children in these "heavy-television households" watched TV more and read less than other children. In addition, research summarized by Daniel R. Anderson and Tiffany A. Pempek indicates very little evidence that children younger than 2 years old learn much from even so-called "educational" programs and videos, and, furthermore, that background TV may be associated with poorer cognitive outcomes."

What happens when children become teenagers?

"Research findings reveal that teens' Internet use focuses on identity, sexuality, social attitudes, and values – issues perennially associated with the teenage years. Online dangers include pervasive pornography and other sexually explicit material, disembodied strangers who may pursue others or express hate and racism, and rampant commercialism. However, teenagers also find information they may be hesitant to seek elsewhere, good communication channels with their friends, and advice and support."

posted by Libitina at [2:33 PM](#) [0 comments](#)

Flickr Appears to Be Target of Buyout Efforts

I noticed there was a discussion thread on the Flickr bulletin board that was speculating on the impact of a potential buyout from either Yahoo or Google. I love Flickr's ease of use and have over 2000 images posted to my professional Flickr account so of course any rumors about a

buyout are a bit unnerving.

However, I must admit that Google's buyout of Blogger turned out to be quite positive. With Google's financial muscle, Blogger was able to go to a full featured totally free product and I have had no regrets about that merger. I don't know what Yahoo would have in mind. I think I would prefer a Google takeover, though, since I understand that Google collaborated on the search mechanism Flickr incorporated into the service and it would be a wonderful enhancement to Google's existing image search service.

posted by Libitina at 2:33 PM 0 comments

Friday, February 25, 2005

Visions of Profit in Podcasting

I have been a big fan of Audible.com since becoming one of it's first customers several years ago. So, I was quite interested in reading about the company's plans to leverage podcasts with its download distribution system. Although I have never ordered any of Audible's periodical subscriptions, I have always thought it would be a great customer service if some of the magazines I subscribe to would offer an audio version that I could listen to on my commute since my attention is less divided then than at home where I am usually bustling about cleaning up the kitchen, taking care of my two puppies, tending my husband, trying to read the paper and catching the occasional remark on television.

[The New York Times](#) : "Last week, Audible.com, which in 1994 pioneered the idea of using the Internet to download audio books and other audio material to personal computers, said that it

would soon join the podcasting movement. The company, whose business currently includes distributing popular radio programs like 'Car Talk' on a subscription basis over the Internet, now says it intends to make its software and distribution system available to people who want to produce their own podcasts.

'When I started Audible and we started signing up radio partners, people would ask me, 'where does your technology leave radio?', ' said Donald Katz, Audible's chairman. 'Now it's clear that the creative capacity that is out there greatly outstrips the capacity of the radio pipeline.'"

posted by Libitina at 8:33 AM 0 comments

Thursday, February 24, 2005

Sad, Lonely? For a Good Time, Call Vivienne*



[The New York Times > Technology > Sad, Lonely? For a Good Time, Call Vivienne*](#): I see that Artificial Life, the company that produced the software I used to create virtual Caesar, has apparently abandoned their efforts to sell ridiculously priced virtual sales agents and have turned to development of "virtual" friends for lonely cell phone users.

One of the biggest problems they encountered in their original product line, in my opinion, was the amount of time and knowledge it takes to produce a custom virtual

agent for a particular company with a specific focus. Now,

they are concentrating on producing non-specific "friends" that can be programmed with generic "chit-chat" and used by a much larger pool of potential customers. I suppose this might be a more viable business model but sadly, like the shallow entertainment of "reality" television, it does little to explore the educational potential of their software.

"Eberhard Schoneburg, the chief executive of the software maker Artificial Life Inc. of Hong Kong, may have found the answer: a virtual girlfriend named Vivienne who goes wherever you go.

Vivienne likes to be taken to movies and bars. She loves to be given virtual flowers and chocolates, and she can translate six languages if you travel overseas. She never undresses, although she has some skimpy outfits for the gym, and is a tease who draws the line at anything beyond blowing kisses.

If you marry her in a virtual ceremony, you even end up with a virtual mother-in-law who really does call you in the middle of the night on your cellphone to ask where you are and whether you have been treating her daughter right.

She may sound like a mixed blessing, decidedly high maintenance and perhaps the last resort of losers. But she is nonetheless a concept that cellphone system operators and handset manufacturers are starting to embrace.

Vivienne, the product of computerized voice synthesis, streaming video and text messages, is meant not only to bring business to Artificial Life (she will be available for a monthly fee of \$6, not including the airtime costs paid to cellphone operators or the price of virtual chocolates and

flowers). But she is also meant to be a lure for the new, higher-tech, third generation, or 3G, cellphones."

posted by Libitina at [8:32 AM](#) [0 comments](#)

Tuesday, February 22, 2005

Panasonic FZ20 offers challenging options to the digital photographer

In preparation for my upcoming trip to Italy, I have been studying up on the features of our new Panasonic FZ20 Luminix digital camera. I've taken a few shots with it but it seemed to require quite a bit more "fiddling" than my reliable Sony Mavica FD-81. Today, however, I think I identified some of the default settings that may have been causing me some trouble. I noticed that the Auto Focus Continuous setting was not set to on. This meant that there was a slight delay once I pressed the shutter before the camera began it's auto focus routine and may have resulted in some of my earlier images being a little fuzzy. I'm used to the Mavica being focussed almost instantly. I'm hoping that my setting this feature to on will help. I also noticed that the Auto Focus feature was set to only a single point even though the camera is capable of using a nine point focus system. In some of my earlier images, I noticed that the focus seemed less sharp as the image radiated out from the center. I thought it was a result of a shallow depth of field but this may not be the problem after all. I set this feature to the maximum of 9 point focus so we'll see how this affects the overall sharpness of the picture.

I also set the programmable Scene 1 setting to "Party" a setting for obtaining sharp focus in a

low light condition. I set the programmable Scene 2 setting to "Scenery" for instant maximum depth of field and sharp focus. These are the majority of types of shots I think I will need.

I have also called our Museum of Art and requested permission to come over and photograph some of their ancient art objects in their exhibition setting so I can determine the best settings for focus and true color reproduction.

posted by Libitina at 4:20 PM 0 comments

Thursday, February 10, 2005

Resurrecting a weblog

This weblog was began in September of 2003 using an open source weblog tool called [Blosxom](#) that was written in Perl. I really liked the modularity of blosxom and some of the plugins designed for it, especially utilities like the magic link plugin that would recognize a word from your links list and automatically link it to a URL specified in your link list file (Example: Apple would automatically link to <http://www.apple.com>). However, it became clear over the course of a year that the basic program lacked critical security features that prevented unfortunate events like spammers flooding a blog with advertising through the comments function and code that would prevent the output of an invalid RSS feed or cause internal server errors simply from the use of an international character or reference to a particularly long URL. Therefore, I decided to end my experiment with the tool.

However, I know there are a number of people interested in further development of Blosxom and I wanted to preserve my experiences with the program in the hope that they would prove

useful to someone else. Therefore, I transferred all of my posts to this new Blogger blog and, using Blogger's date change utilities, modified the dates of my earlier posts to match the time frame they were actually posted.

I will now go forward with this blog posting my experiences with other technology tools and thoughts about tools in development. Hopefully, other technology enthusiasts will find them helpful as well.

posted by Libitina at [1:46 PM](#) [0 comments](#)

Tuesday, July 27, 2004

Olivier makes comeback from beyond the grave

Another step towards virtual actors:

"Laurence Olivier is to make his Hollywood comeback alongside Jude Law and Gwyneth Paltrow in the sci-fi blockbuster Sky Captain and the World of Tomorrow. It will be the Oscar-winning actor's first screen role following an enforced 15-year lay-off. The lay-off began, understandably enough, with his death in 1989.

Thanks to the wonders of digital technology, Olivier will now be resurrected to "play" the role of a villainous overlord who commands an army of giant killer robots. The film will splice together old movie scenes and archive footage of the actor in his youth, although Olivier's classic clipped delivery will be voiced by another actor. Explaining the decision at the annual Comic-Con sci-fi convention in San Diego, Jude Law said that no living actor possesses the

same gravitas and authority."

posted by Libitina at 1:13 PM 0 comments

Thursday, July 22, 2004

Researchers attempt to develop software to authenticate digital photos

As a digital photographer myself, I was particularly interested in the methods being developed by researchers to authenticate digital images.

"It used to be that you had a photograph, and that was the end of it - that was truth," said Hany Farid, an associate professor of computer science at Dartmouth College who is a leader in the field. "We're trying to bring some of that back. To put some measure of guarantee back in photography."

Over the last three years, Professor Farid and his students have become experts at forgery, making hundreds of images that look authentic but have in fact been digitally tweaked. License plate numbers are changed. A single stool standing on a checkerboard floor is suddenly a pair of stools. Dents on a car are wiped away with a few mouse clicks.

The skillful tampering disturbed the images in ways that the human eye could not detect. But Professor Farid says his algorithms can spot them and sound the alarm.

Jessica Fridrich, a research professor in electrical and computer engineering at the State University of New York at Binghamton, is approaching the fraud problem from the other side.

She is trying to figure out who took the digital picture in the first place.

Just like the rifling in a gun barrel leaves a distinctive pattern on the bullets it fires, a digital camera has a signature of sorts. Today's digital cameras have sensors with millions of pixels. In each camera, a small handful of these are either too bright or are burnt out entirely. When a camera takes a picture, the imperfections leave a unique pattern, Professor Fridrich has discovered in preliminary research.

Now, she is trying to embed a bit of the photographer in the picture, too. The patterns in the iris - the colored part of the eye - are at least as distinctive as a person's fingerprint. With money from the Air Force, Professor Fridrich is designing a camera that takes two pictures at once: one through the camera lens, and a smaller one of the photographer's iris. The iris image along with the time and place of the photo session would then be compressed, encrypted and instantly hidden within the larger picture just taken.

posted by Libitina at [2:40 PM](#) [0 comments](#)

Thursday, January 29, 2004

The Tyranny of Copyright

"The notion that intellectual property rights should never expire, and works never enter the public domain -- this is the truly fanatical and unconstitutional position," says Jonathan Zittrain, a co-founder of the Berkman Center for Internet and Society at Harvard Law School, the intellectual hub of the Copy Left.

Thinkers like Lessig and Zittrain promote a vision of a world in which copyright law gives individual creators the exclusive right to profit from their intellectual property for a brief, limited period -- thus providing an incentive to create while still allowing successive generations of creators to draw freely on earlier ideas. They stress that borrowing and collaboration are essential components of all creation and caution against being seduced by the romantic myth of "the author": the lone garret-dwelling poet, creating masterpieces out of thin air. "No one writes from nothing," says Yochai Benkler, a professor at Yale Law School. "We all take the world as it is and use it, remix it."

posted by Libitina at 9:04 AM 0 comments

Monday, December 08, 2003

Game Companies Embrace Mod Builders

Since my son has described his efforts at modifying some of his favorite games, I was particularly interested in this article about game companies recognizing the market potential of "mod" builders.

"In recent years, players dedicated to modifying store-bought computer games have morphed into an underground movement - mod makers, as they often call themselves. Now they are showing signs of breaking into the mainstream as game developers are increasingly willing to give away the very software tools they use to construct the games, including them on the disc with the game itself."

"As a result, working alone or in teams, the mod makers are spending hundreds of hours tweaking or completely redrawing popular games to be played on their own terms. The payoff is fun and bragging rights, and just maybe a career in the multibillion-dollar electronic game industry."

posted by Libitina at [11:56 AM](#) [0 comments](#)

Friday, November 14, 2003

Penn State Formerly Announces Music Subscription Service

em>I see Penn State has formally announced the music subscription service that President Spanier mentioned in his Educause panel discussion on peer-to-peer file sharing and antipiracy efforts.

"Pennsylvania State University has agreed to cover the cost of providing its students with a legal method to download music from a catalog of half a million songs, in a departure from punitive efforts to curtail music swapping on college campuses."

"The deal between Penn State and the newly revised Napster online service is expected to serve as a model for other universities. It comes as the music industry applies pressure on students and colleges in its antipiracy campaign."

"The service will allow students to listen to an unlimited number of songs as often as they want. They will be able to download the music to use on three personal computers as long as students

are at Penn State. If they want to keep the songs permanently or burn them to a CD, though, they will have to pay 99 cents each."

"Dr. Spanier said the university will pay for the Napster service out of the \$160 information technology fee students pay each year. The cost to the university is "substantially less" than the \$9.95 fee that individual subscribers pay for the Napster service, he said, though he declined to disclose the precise terms."

posted by Libitina at [8:40 AM](#) [0 comments](#)

Thursday, November 13, 2003

EyeToy Utilizes Playstation2 USB video capabilities

"RICHARD MARKS, a 34-year-old astronautical and aeronautical engineer, has been spending a lot of time lately pretending to be Harry Potter. His wand is made from parts of a hotel clothes hanger and has a brightly colored ball on one end. But when he waves it, Dr. Marks says, it begins to glow and emit a distinctive hum in a TV monitor across the room."

"By moving the wand in a circle, he can produce a trail that turns into a ring of fire on the screen. By flicking the wand toward the TV, he can make a fireball sizzle across the monitor. Other geometric shapes conjure tornadoes or make the player invisible. "I actually had my son draw up a list of spells he thought would be good," Dr. Marks said."

"Don't put in an emergency call to the Ministry of Magic just yet. Dr. Marks, a special-projects manager for research and development at Sony Computer Entertainment America, is only

recounting his exploits with EyeToy, a miniature camera he invented that attaches to the PlayStation 2 and translates body movements into a video game."

I noticed ads for this little device in our local technology store newspaper inserts. Until I read this article, however, I couldn't quite understand all of its potential.

posted by Libitina at [9:14 AM](#) [0 comments](#)

Monday, November 10, 2003

Disneyland lacks interactivity

Yesterday, I revisited Disneyland after 37 years. Not surprisingly, it seemed rather dated to me although the children under about 10 seemed to be enjoying themselves. I think the problem with many of the offerings that were not just outright motion rides that always appear to appeal to younger age groups, was that they are just too passive now that we are growing increasingly accustomed to an interactive environment. I was particularly disappointed in the "new" Indiana Jones ride. As you lurched along in a track-controlled vehicle, little scenes would appear along with way with an animatronic Indiana Jones warning you about your precarious position. I think a telling indicator about the lack of impact of the experience was the absence of anyone saying "let's do that again" as I walked through the exit tunnel.

Now, what I think would have been a superior experience would have been a walking/running journey in which each participant is given a bullwhip, a sack of sand, and a fedora and you are told you have ten minutes to complete your mission. As you proceed cautiously through the

cave, creatures, activated by a disturbed laser beam, scurry across in front of you and Disney would use the same air puff technology as they use in "Honey, I Shrunk The Audience" to make it feel like they are scurrying across your feet and ankles, You are confronted by what appears to be a bottomless pit with a vine hanging over it that you must grasp and swing across, As you round a corner and see a fork in the trail, a laser beam activated rack with a simulated body pierced by stakes swings down in front of you blocking your path down one fork of the trail. You enter a chamber where snakes appear to block your path. You must snap them with the bullwhip to get them out of your way. You make it to the map room where you must pick up the crystal-embedded staff and try to position it into the map so a beam of light will activate to provide a clue to a successful mission. You finally arrive in the cave with the golden statue on the weight-sensitive altar and you must try to judge how much sand to leave in the pouch and carefully remove the statue and replace it simultaneously with the sand pouch. Temple walls appear to start to fall and you turn and run for the exit. Laser activated darts fly across in front of you as you dash down the corridor which has been reconfigured with a movable partition to shunt you off into a different tunnel. As you run you see a big boulder rolling towards you and you look desperately for the simulated cobweb-occluded escape slide that deposits you amid tropical plants and native warriors pointing a spear at you. The warriors separate and the Last Templar steps forward offering you a selection of cups on a tray in exchange for the statue (if you still have it). He tells you to "Choose but choose wisely". At the bottom of one of the cups is the offer of a free copy of a picture of you somewhere during your experience. Movable partitions could be used to create a variety of pathways to increase the replayability of the attraction.

I revisited Pirates of the Caribbean and the Jungle Cruise. I've done "Star Tours" in Orlando so I didn't bother to take the opportunity to hurt my back any more than it already is. I think of the "ride" experiences, I enjoyed the Davy Crockett canoes the best. It was a beautiful day and it was relaxing just to paddle around the waterway. I smiled to myself as I watched a little boy of about three (the same age as one of my grandsons) swish his paddle through the water with such a serious face. I'm sure he was convinced he was doing his part as a real frontiersman.

I also particularly enjoyed the Abe Lincoln presentation. The dimensional sound experience was nicely done and I thought it was interesting to hear the sounds of the Civil War and its participants from the viewpoint of a soldier.

One of the most disappointing "reunions" was my tour through the Haunted Mansion. It had been redecorated with cartoon images from Tim Burrton's "A Nightmare Before Christmas". I didn't think the film was worth seeing when it was released and it definitely detracted from the Haunted Mansion experience.

The Parade of Stars at the end of the day was enjoyable. I got quite a kick out of some of the park guests who had been commandeered to participate in the parade. There were big husky guys dressed in tootoos trying their best to piroette when instructed to do so by the Disney "choreographer". Of course the Disney heroines were beautiful (Snow White, Cinderella, Ariel, etc.) and Tarzan was quite a hunk! Later I saw a little girl whose parents had bought her what I thought was a Cinderella costume (actually it was an Ariel costume I learned later) and she was just walking along waving gracefully to the other visitors that passed by as if she was Cinderella herself.

Thursday night, Educause sponsors treated everyone to a Party In The Park over at Disney's California Great Adventure park. Although I enjoyed the "Soaring Over California" Omnimax-type experience, the rest of the park was little more than a 50s-type carnival with the old manual games of throwing balls and typical rollercoaster, Octopus, and ferris wheel-type rides. I'm glad it was provided at no charge because I definitely would not have paid \$47 to spend the day there. In fact, the few hours we were there was more than ample for me.

posted by Libitina at [12:01 PM](#) [0 comments](#)

Interactive Powerpoint the basis for new classroom interactivity

Interactive response tools appear to be coming on strong. I saw two products designed around Interactive Powerpoint. Although both offered keypad devices, they also had virtual keypad clients for handheld devices. They had similar functionality but one stored response data in Excel while the other used an SQL database for a foundation. Also, the Excel-based model used a device client while the SQL product was browser-based. My primary concern with both products was the residence of the resulting data on the instructor laptop. I would have much preferred a client/server environment for the instructor as laptop loaners are particularly vulnerable to damage and theft.

Both products were in the \$5,000 per instructor workstation with 50 student clients price range. Since Silicon Chalk offered response tracking as part of an integrated environment with a host of other features for only a \$3 - \$8 per seat price, I think I would prefer to explore it in preference to these products although I received a working demo of the Excel product that

I can evaluate more fully.

posted by Libitina at [11:59 AM](#) [0 comments](#)

Friday, November 07, 2003

Silicon Chalk Provides Powerful Feature Set with a Great Price

Another powerful tool with a lot of potential that I encountered is a new product from the original founder of WebCT called Silicon Chalk. (<http://www.silicon-chalk.com>). Silicon Chalk uses IP broadcast within a subnet (or multicast across subnets) to record and broadcast a class presentation between computers equipped with the Silicon Chalk Client. For example, an instructor presenting with Powerpoint and a microphone would have his/her screen presentation automatically recorded with voice over, timecoded and distributed to the workstations of each student. As the students listen to the lecture, they can type notes, send instant messages, and browse referenced websites. These activities of the student are also recorded and timecoded in synch with the instructor broadcast. The student's lecture file can then be used for review and even later notes can be added to particular portions of the lecture. This feature is especially important for students who missed the lecture.

The product can search sections of the presentation by text strings either within the instructor's powerpoint presentation or the students notes. The vendor explained that if, every time the instructor said something like "Now this is important. It will be included on the midterm", the student typed "midterm" in their note section. They could then easily retrieve any portion of the lecture in which "midterm" was mentioned. The product also includes a

student polling function with the instructor having the control of display of the results. Best of all, this powerful product is very inexpensive. A pilot client is only \$3 and even after the pilot period, the clients would cost in the neighborhood of only \$8 based on the number of clients requested.

posted by Libitina at 9:24 AM 0 comments

Electronic Curriculum Vitae Product Promising

In the exhibit hall, I have discovered several products with the potential to address some of the problems we have experienced in the college. I reviewed an electronic curriculum vitae product developed by Academic Management Systems (<http://www.academicmanagement.com>) that had some nice features. It was similar in design to the online vitae program I initiated several years ago but they had taken the product several steps beyond capturing and categorizing vitae components. The product enabled faculty members to set up customized CV "views" to be used for different purposes and check or uncheck individual items so they could be excluded from a particular view if desired. It also used a date-based criterion so items could be included based on a particular time frame and had summary reporting capability displaying a breakdown of how much faculty effort was being expended in activity categories like instruction, research, outreach, etc. - extremely helpful for preparing such reports as the NCATE survey each year. It had a tiered access and security system based on organizational levels such as administration, department, user, and delegates.

They also had a product for online course assessment. I've been out of that loop for a while but

I think CRIs are still being done with the old bubble sheets. It is essentially an online survey tool with a robust analysis and reporting module supported by a security system to filter views based on user status (student, instructor, administrator, etc.) I pointed out to the developer that the biggest challenge with online surveys is integrating the system with some student activity to ensure completion. I suggested to him that if the survey were treated like a final course assignment, completion of it could be managed by Blackboard if the product could send a completion confirmation to Blackboard. He said he was meeting with the Blackboard folks later in the day and would discuss my suggestion with them.

posted by Libitina at [9:22 AM](#) [0 comments](#)

Smart Music Interesting Product

I also attended a session on Ubiquitous Mobile Computing. I expected this presentation to be focussed on the new Wireless opportunities but instead it was a case study of a college that had installed a robust network then purchased laptop loaners for everyone on the campus including their students with the expectation that technology would be incorporated into every aspect of their educational experiences. They then presented examples of technology integration into a variety of disciplines. One of their students demonstrated a product called Smart Music that is used to provide accompaniment to vocal music students practicing for performance. When she first described the product, I thought to myself "What's the big deal - it's just karioke." But she explained how the product can be set to follow the singer instead of vice versa. She demonstrated this feature by singing a passage from the opera "Carmen". She sang several lines then paused in mid-stanza and the computer stopped at the same time. Then

the computer displayed a "D" to let her know the next note. She sang several other notes but the music did not resume until she hit a properly pitched "D". Very impressive! I also appreciated her obvious enthusiasm for her learning experiences.

posted by Libitina at 9:20 AM 0 comments

Educause's Virtual Communities of Practice

I attended a session on Virtual Communities of Practice but was a bit disappointed that the presenters appeared have little experience in actually maintaining a thriving online community. They mentioned a number of problems about the effort of facilitation and distribution of information that I think could be handled by a web log and RSS and even mentioned they were aware of blogs and RSS but when I questioned them further, they apparently had not even attempted to set up a group blog or encourage their members to blog about their professional experiences.

I suggested to them that they study the aspects of successful Yahoo groups but I could tell by their reaction that they considered that environment hardly worthy of academic consideration. Too bad. Our Imperial Rome discussion group has flourished, beginning with only a dozen members. It now has over 500 members and lively daily discussions that focus on topics quite in depth. I pointed out to the presenters that they need to try to leverage the gifts of their members. On our Imperial Rome discussion group, members that travel to historical sites upload their images, other members record their favorite ancient recipes, we have databases of Roman biographies, battles, and films, and I maintain an RSS-fed online news

magazine about Roman archaeology, Academic presentations on the Roman Empire, and books, games, and multimedia with ancient themes. I also maintain a searchable database of images of the ancient world to be used for educational presentations.

posted by Libitina at [9:19 AM](#) [0 comments](#)

Peer-to-Peer discussion with Entertainment Execs Interesting

Yesterday's general session on the problem of peer-to-peer sharing of copyrighted materials was quite interesting. I especially enjoyed the "showmanship" of Jack Valenti. Even the attorney from the RIAA was articulate and came across as not at all threatening. I also found the president of Penn State quite intriguing.

Penn State is launching a project whereby the university has entered a partnership with RIAA to subscribe to an extensive database of music tracks to provide quality "legal" online music to their students as part of their university experience. Their motivation for this has apparently been threats from Congress under pressure from the powerful entertainment industry to pass legislation that would make the defacto ISP legally liable for the copyright violations of their constituent base. I thought it would only be a matter of time before this type of rumbling would surface because traditionally, claimants in court go after the target with the deepest pockets and a university would obviously have more financial base than the typical college student.

RIAA has apparently been pleased by the success of Apple's I-music initiative and applauds this effort as a viable business model that could be emulated by others. RIAA also appears to

be taking a cue from the MPAA and is considering offering content-rich CDs or DVDs that would include value-added features like artist bios, music videos, etc. that would not typically be available from a pirate download site.

In presubmitted questions from the audience the issue was raised repeatedly of outdated business models and the industry being willing to eliminate middle men in their business that are essentially "dinosaurs" in the new online environment and reexamine pricing to be more reflective of the lower costs of this delivery mode. It reminds me a lot of the ebook market. Many publishers have been willing to jump on the ebook bandwagon but tried to price ebooks as high as a regular hardbound book even though the printing, inventory, and warehousing expenses had all been eliminated. That ridiculous pricing strategy coupled with a lack of a quality device to simulate the reading experience of a book with the features of digital manipulation has stifled the market thus far.

posted by Libitina at [9:17 AM](#) [0 comments](#)

Thursday, November 06, 2003

MIT Open Courseware, Copyright, Assessment topics discussed

The presentations are a little light duty on the technology side but I manage to pick up tidbits here and there. Yesterday I went to a session on MIT's open courseware initiative that was very interesting. I was particularly pleased to note that the MIT faculty were actually very supportive. They said they have received more attention for their work and their research from not only other universities around the world but even from their own colleagues in other

disciplines. MIT arranges a license with the faculty members so they actually retain all copyrights with permission for MIT to provide the materials on the OCW site. The website clearly states the licensing provisions which prohibits the use of the materials for commercial purposes. Someone asked if MIT thought providing these materials would adversely impact enrollment but MIT's director said they don't think so but they are keeping an eye on it. I think it would boost their enrollment. Webstats on the OCW site shows that the site is generating over 9 million pageviews a month. That's nothing to sneeze at!

I went to a copyright session but the actual legalities were not explored in depth. I was surprised to learn that there are lawsuits in the courts that are trying to stop anti-spam and pop-up blocking products because they interfere with the content delivery intended by the content provider. (I hope the courts don't fall for that one) I guess there is also a lawsuit trying to gain a ruling on "deep linking" - linking directly to information on a website without forcing the viewer to navigate the site as intended by the content provider. (that's another bummer) Apparently the internet's version of telemarketers are as persistent as those in the direct mail industry!

I attended a session on assessment strategies for online courses. The presenters definition of assessment was strategies to gain insight into the learning levels of the students. I think many of the attendees were expecting something else but I found the presenters rubric of dividing students into various levels of content and technology skill levels with the strategies to deal with each group interesting.

posted by Libitina at [7:27 AM](#) [0 comments](#)

Wednesday, November 05, 2003

Integrated cell phones to dominate the handheld future?

Yesterday I attended the preconference seminar "Catch the Handheld Wave". The presenter focussed on introducing a typical handheld (Palm in her case) to education faculty as a first step in promoting the use of handhelds into the classroom. The College of Education at the University of Central Oklahoma obtained a grant from Palm and have developed a well accepted and well supported program for faculty using handheld devices. The integration program included formal training for both users and support personnel, an equipment loan program with accessories including camera, GPS, and scientific probes, and a stipend program to compensate faculty for producing learning modules for the devices. U of Central OK also requires teacher candidates to become proficient in the use of handheld devices and requires a handheld component in their graduation portfolio.

Classroom projects that have been the most successful included using handhelds for graphic calculators in science and math curriculums, using handhelds as portable databases to aid school administrators in monitoring student behavior, and collecting information from student users to facilitate classroom management. The presenter's environment is limited since it is not yet wireless so infrared is used for data transfer between devices. However, the uses her faculty and students make of handhelds would be even more viable in a wireless environment.

The presenter provided us with a wealth of resources for obtaining software and developed learning modules for handheld devices that I plan to explore more fully when I return.

Several international attendees pointed out that the really ubiquitous handheld technology out there are cell phones. They wished to explore information delivery to internet-integrated cell phones. I pointed out that format independent delivery mediums like RSS could be used with the smaller cell displays but I don't have a device to test my suggestion.

posted by Libitina at [8:53 AM](#) [0 comments](#)

Methusaleh Mouse Prize established to stimulate immortality research

I found this article particularly interesting although I must admit to being a skeptic. At the recent Pop!Tech conference in Portland, Aubrey de Grey expressed his conviction that the 4,000- or 5,000-year life is right around the corner. Mr. de Grey was not selling an afterlife or a metaphor. He is a geneticist at the University of Cambridge, in England, and his prophecy was straightforward if hard to believe: Getting old and dying are engineering problems. Aging can be reversed and death defeated. People already alive will live a thousand years or longer.

He was at pains to argue that what he calls "negligible senescence," and what the average person would call living forever, is inevitable. His proposed war on aging, he said, is intended to make it happen sooner and make it happen right. He subscribes, it seems, to the philosophy articulated by Woody Allen: "I don't want to achieve immortality through my work. I want to achieve it through not dying."

posted by Libitina at 8:27 AM 0 comments

Tuesday, November 04, 2003

Educause 2003: A bit of a rocky start

The trip down to Anaheim for the Educause conference went reasonably well but when I arrived I discovered the Hyatt had "exaggerated" about in-room internet connections. All they have in the rooms is a phone line! :-(However, this morning at breakfast I learned from some other guests that there are high speed jacks available in the lounge for \$9.95 a day. There is also Wifi but everyone attempting to use it said it was very flaky so I opted for a sure thing!

I thought I was going to have to find another hotel if I could since I didn't want to be out of communication for a week.

Today I have a meeting with Dell and Tipping Point Security Systems at 11 a.m. and then this afternoon I am attending a preconference seminar "Catching the Handheld Wave". I sent the presenter a batch of questions about using handhelds in interactive lecture formats so we'll see if they have any new ideas about that.

posted by Libitina at 9:20 AM 0 comments

Friday, October 31, 2003

Quandry Looks Promising For Developing Interactive Case Studies

I came across a relatively inexpensive shareware product (lite version is free...full version is

only \$50) last week that I think would have potential for use in developing web-based interactive case studies. It is called "Quandry" from HalfBaked Software (don't let the name fool you).

"Quandary is an application for creating Web-based Action Mazes. An Action Maze is a kind of interactive case-study; the user is presented with a situation, and a number of choices as to a course of action to deal with it. On choosing one of the options, the resulting situation is then presented, again with a set of options. Working through this branching tree is like negotiating a maze, hence the name 'Action Maze'."

The product offers not only a decision tree type structure but also has transactional capabilities that you can incorporate into the exercise such as resource management, item inventories, etc. Some of the new features in version 2 include:

Assets can now have decimal place settings.

Transactions can add, subtract, multiply, divide and do other complex math with asset values.

Exercises can have timers.

Web output no longer depends on frames.

Exercises can be uploaded to www.hotpotatoes.net, and student results and actions can be stored.

New Wizards can be used to create some basic interaction types such as multiple-choice questions.

Unicode support allows the use of languages such as Japanese and Russian directly in the interface.

Transactions can now be added in three places: on ENTRY to a decision point, on a LINK (as before), and on EXIT from a decision point. This gives more flexibility in the structuring of complex mazes, and reduces the need to duplicate transactions in many places.

At this time Version 2 is available only for the Windows platform. It also requires browsers which fully support W3C standards (such as Internet Explorer 6 and Netscape 7). Version 1 is available for both Windows and Mac and is compatible with all browsers released within the last 5 years.

posted by Libitina at [2:41 PM](#) [0 comments](#)

Wireless Handhelds Superior to Response Pads

I was catching up on my reading and noticed the TS article on wireless response pads. I had not yet read that article so I took a look and explored the website link to the company that produces the response pads. For lecture interactivity I think a group Weblog environment might be a more practical solution rather than an investment in a proprietary hardware system (no offense intended to my fellow authors at the Technology Source). Now that we have wireless installed throughout most of the classroom spaces on campus, I think we will see more students coming to class with their own internet-enabled devices whether they are full size laptops or handhelds. Here in Education we have also implemented a "COW" cart filled

with wireless Gateway laptops that we provide to instructors for classroom use. The instructor could use their own wireless laptop to instantaneously post questions to a class web log then students could post their reactions and questions via the comment function.

The Pollxn comment plugin for the Bloxom Weblog product (<http://www.bloxom.com>) I have been evaluating has a setting to require posters to enter their name and e-mail address before posting their comment. This would help to ensure appropriate identification for credit purposes.

For wireless exam purposes, a tool like Dragon Web Surveys by Waves In Motion (<http://www.wmotion.com>) enables an instructor to easily develop an online exam with points assigned to questions and, if configured to process responses immediately upon receipt, provides the instructor with a web link to results as they are submitted. It also has a branching capability that enables the development of adaptive learning strategies based on a student's responses. Students access the exam from a simple web link using any wireless-enabled device. Since students would be using their own devices, the instructor also does not have to deal with distributing and collecting response devices before each class.

posted by Libitina at 2:25 PM 0 comments

Friday, October 17, 2003

Long URL caused problem with blog display in Safari

Bloxom Test Notes: Thanks to Dr. Jason Hoffman for pointing out a long URL in a post that was causing the Mac browser, Safari, to extend the center column of the GLD blog and

therefore required Safari users to scroll to the right to read posts. John Hibbs was so sure it was his post that had caused the problem that I focussed on it looking for long links and was quite frustrated when I didn't really find any. Now I'm embarrassed (blush) because it was one of my posts with a really long amazon link that was the culprit. I also didn't really need it anyway since I have the magiclink plugin installed and had inserted a reference to the ISBN number which the magiclink plugin automatically links to the correct Amazon inventory record anyway.

posted by Libitina at [10:26 AM](#) [0 comments](#)

UTF Encoding Plugin Preserves RSS Integrity in Global Environment

Blosxom Test Notes: A big Thank You to Rainer Volz of [Virtual Projects](#) for writing a plugin for Blosxom that encodes posts as UTF-8 and preserves the integrity of the RSS output with posts containing accented characters. It was becoming a daily task to edit posts to eliminate accented characters in an effort to maintain a valid RSS news feed.

posted by Libitina at [8:44 AM](#) [0 comments](#)

Thursday, October 16, 2003

Text Mining and Web Log Analysis

"With the aid of text mining, Michael N. Liebman, a research director at the University of

Pennsylvania, is exploring whether bearing a child later in life has any link to postmenopausal diseases."

"Text-mining programs, unlike search engines that display lists of documents that contain certain keywords, go further, categorizing information, making links between otherwise unconnected documents and providing visual maps (some look like tree branches or spokes on a wheel) to lead users down new pathways that they might not have been aware of."

"Currently these programs are used by academic researchers and companies, but information scientists expect that to change. Lower-cost text-mining tools eventually will be offered to ordinary people who want to dig into medical or political issues using public documents. Madan Pandit, an expert in text analysis in Bangalore, India, who runs a Web site called K-Praxis (k-praxis.com), has suggested that text mining could help people make sense of voluminous documents that are already on the Web, like the 858-page report on the congressional inquiry into intelligence failures regarding the 9/11 terrorist attacks."

As we develop online communities of practice sharing observations and daily discoveries through such technologies as web logs, text mining tools could prove invaluable in analyzing disparate findings and pointing out possible relationships and new paths of inquiry. Although the two products mentioned in the article, Clear Forest and SPSS offer products in the \$75,000 and up range, less expensive products are already in development. Products like PolyAnalyst from [Megaputer](#) provide taxonomy-based categorization for approximately \$2,100 (education pricing). Netica's Bayesian network tools can be purchased for as little as \$285 (education pricing). Perhaps the ultimate solution will be a hybrid of some of these programs.

posted by Libitina at 2:45 PM 0 comments

Thursday, October 09, 2003

Added Author Email Field

Blosxom Test Notes: I added an author email field to the submission form and modified my article format file to automatically link this field with a mailto link. Big thanks to Anthony Wendell Kay for helping me with the Perl syntax.

posted by Libitina at 10:14 AM 0 comments

Wednesday, October 08, 2003

Headlines plugin works for list of recent posts

I had to switch from the recent entries plugin to the headlines plugin to include a list of properly linked recent post headlines in the web log layout. The recent entries plugin was designed for a category-linked rather than a date-linked weblog and the plugin author said it would take a complete rewrite to get it to work with the default date-based blosxom web log.

The author of the recent entries plugin suggested I try the headlines plugin and it works like a charm!

posted by Libitina at 4:18 PM 0 comments

Random Text and Improved Formatting Plugins Added

Blosxom Test Notes: Today, I added a plugin to deliver a random quote file to the weblog (to offer words of wisdom) and another plugin to format messages more elegantly.

I tried to use the textright plugin to correct problems with foreign characters but it did not seem to make any difference. Perhaps I misunderstood what the plugin is supposed to do.

Our Perl programmer Jon Miyake also helped me with the syntax I needed for my article format file so if a poster leaves one of the fields blank, it simply does not output that line. This not only improves the appearance of the post but prevents invalidation of the RSS output file.

posted by Libitina at 3:47 PM 0 comments

We've Got Blog: How Weblogs Are Changing Our Culture

This book with an introduction by blogging guru Rebecca Blood looks interesting.

"0738207411"[amazon]

This is an example of the automatic Amazon book link facilitated by the Blosxom plugin

"magiclink"

This same plugin can link a word like "syntax"[dict] directly to its definition in <http://www.dictionary.com>

Features such as these make the blosxom program more versatile than many commercial

programs

posted by Libitina at 8:51 AM 0 comments

Monday, October 06, 2003

Last Build Date Plugin Now Outputs RFC 822 Date

Blosxom Test notes: Big thanks to Joe Francis for updating the lastbulddate plugin so that it now outputs a valid RFC 822 Date. He also identified the problem I was having with the plugin outputting a date of zero:

"Plugins that provide their own entries routine and do not return the story files in the %files hash will cause lastbulddate to find no date. In this circumstance lastbulddate will not emit a field. To work around this, rename lastbulddate so that it executes ahead of these plugins. For example, rename to 00lastbulddate."

I don't really know what the %files hash is but I do know that renaming the plugin as indicated makes it work perfectly in my configuration.

posted by Libitina at 3:43 PM 0 comments

Thursday, October 02, 2003

Checking the Format for an Article post

Blosxom Test Notes: I adjusted the name of the format library to see if blosxom will now recognize my custom post format file.

posted by Libitina at [10:24 AM](#) [0 comments](#)

Thursday, September 25, 2003

CGI module upgrade breaks Bloxom in IE 6

Bloxom Test Notes: I thought I was going crazy. I had been working happily with Bloxom for several weeks and came in Wednesday morning and all of a sudden, when I tried to view my weblog in Internet Explorer 6, my browser was prompting me as if it considered the file a downloadable Mime type. The day before I had asked the system personnel to upgrade the File::Spec module to the latest version so the recententries plugin would work. I called them back and asked them if they had done anything to the overall server settings that would cause this behavior. Everyone seemed baffled, especially since the Weblog still loaded properly in Mozilla, Netscape, Opera and older versions of IE. I even went to the trouble of uninstalling all the plugins, downloading a fresh copy of Bloxom and reconfiguring and resetting the file permissions but nothing changed. This afternoon, one of the Perl technicians called me back and together we reviewed the content-type settings produced by the Bloxom script. He noticed that the script was outputting an extra space before the ending semi-colon in the Content_type statement. So he changed line 262 of the Bloxom cgi file thus:

Was: \$content_type =~ s!\n.!!s;*

Needs to be: \$content_type =~ s!\s\n\s*.*!!s;*

Now it once more works with IE 6. He suspects that when the systems people updated the cgi

modules, one of new modules must have been less forgiving than the older version. I thought I would share our experience with you in case it might help others.

posted by Libitina at [3:17 PM](#) [0 comments](#)

Tuesday, September 23, 2003

Finally Got Calendar Plugin Working

Blosxom Test Notes: Well, today I finally got the Archive Calendar plugin working. There was a syntax error in line 348 of the plugin. The mode parameter and closing semicolon had been omitted. It should be modified to read: `or mkdir $blosxom::plugin_state_dir,755`; I used the `$calendar$month_calendar` variable in my `head.html` file so it displays just the month and not a separate year display because I wanted it to be smaller. I've written to Todd and asked if there is a way to also omit the Day headings to make it smaller still. I also created a stylesheet with calendar settings in it but can't seem to get it to read the stylesheet. I asked Todd about that too.

posted by Libitina at [10:54 AM](#) [0 comments](#)

Modified Calendar Plugin to Shrink the Calendar

I wanted to make the archive calendar created by the calendar plugin smaller so I wrote to Todd Larason, the author, and he said:

You have a couple options.

1. make flavour files for the calendar; if you just want to remove the day of week headers, then make empty files named `calendar.month_sub_head.html`, `calendar.month_sub_day.html` and `calendar.month_sub_foot.html` (replace the 'html' with your flavour name(s))
2. edit the plugin; if you have lots of flavours, this might be easier. near the bottom of the file, find the line that says "`__DATA__`". a few lines below that are lines that start "error month_sub_head", "error month_sub_day" and "error month_sub_foot"; just remove those lines.
3. don't remove the day headers, just shorten them; in the configuration section at the beginning, change `@dowabbr = qw/Sun Mon Tue Wed Thu Fri Sat/` if (`$#dowabbr != 6`); to `@dowabbr = qw/S M Tu W Th F S/` if (`$#dowabbr != 6`); or something similar
4. use CSS. In the CSS file, add a style like:

`.month-calendar-day-head {display: none;}`

so the headers are still there, they just don't get displayed.

I created a CSS file and linked it to the head portion of head flavour file but couldn't get it to recognize it. So, I opted to remark out the three related error lines in the plugin itself. I will write back to Todd and see if the style-sheet link needs to be elsewhere.

posted by Libitina at [10:53 AM](#) [0 comments](#)

Using Autolink with a Glossary File

Blosxom Test Notes: I thought of a way to use Fletcher's Autolink plugin to link to a glossary of terms or professional acronyms that may be not included in Dictionary.com. I'm going to create a glossary.html file with anchors then simply add the word with it's related link to the glossary file in my autolinks file.

posted by Libitina at [10:15 AM](#) [0 comments](#)

Magic Link Script Updated to Correct Problem with Dictionary.com

Blosxom Test Notes: I tried the Magiclink plugin and it almost worked. I submitted a post which included "syntax"[dict]. It linked the word and went to <http://www.Dictionary.com> but could not find the word because it kept the quotes around it for the search. I tried removing the quotes but then I did not get the link and the [dict] part just showed up as part of the post. I posted my problem to the Blosxom discussion list and plugin author Bruce Alderson made an adjustment to the plugin and now it works!!! Thanks, Bruce!

posted by Libitina at [9:52 AM](#) [0 comments](#)

Monday, September 22, 2003

May have solution to Recent Entries plugin error

I submitted the error message I was getting upon executing the recent entries plugin to Jon Miyake, our Perl expert at the Computing Center. He sent me an email back telling me that the

error was caused by an outdated filespec on our Unix server. I have sent a request to have the filespec object updated to our systems engineers. I'm hoping they will get the file updated soon and that will resolve the problem. I would like to use this plugin because it produces a list of the Titles of the most recent posts. I think this is a handy timesaver since I tend to be a bit verbose in my posts. Readers can just click on the topic of greatest interest and avoid scrolling down to the article they want to read.

posted by Libitina at [4:42 PM](#) [0 comments](#)

Archive problem resolved in Blogger weblogs

As I have been working on Blosxom and viewing my error logs, I have noticed that some of my Blogger weblog archives have been triggering error messages and links to the archive files are not showing up on the weblog. I had two weblogs that were working fine. One was my very first weblog where the archive files were stored in the root folder of my public_html directory. The other, however, was one of my newer weblogs where the archive files were stored in the directory I had created for archives under the root folder but when I checked the archive file settings, path to the archives was set to my root folder then the archive directory was set to "" to let Blogger find the files by default. This was working even though the other three weblogs where I had specifically set the archive path to the specific archive folder and set the specific directory location were not. So I changed their archive settings so the path to the archives was set to my root public_html folder and the directory set to "" like the one that was working and voila! All of my archive links appeared. I'll have to revise my Blogger settings instructions.

posted by Libitina at [4:29 PM](#) [0 comments](#)

Thursday, September 18, 2003

Using Date Time variable for Submission Filename

Blosxom Evaluation Notes: Rather than use the category field for a filename, I have consulted with our Perl programmers and they provided me with a snippet that will assign the date and time (down to the second) for the filename.

I like this solution much better because the length of the filename is the same for all files and the filename itself provides valuable creation date information.

posted by Libitina at [3:06 PM](#) [0 comments](#)

Blogger Pro to be offered free

I was surprised today to get an e-mail from Blogger saying that they now plan to roll the features formerly only available in the pay version, Blogger Pro, into their free version. That will make it possible for my faculty to obtain Blogger accounts and have RSS support without paying for anything. I guess this was made possible by Google's deep pockets since Google bought out Pyra labs, Blogger's original developers.

posted by Libitina at [11:05 AM](#) [0 comments](#)

Submission Plugin: Using Title for Filename A Problem with RSS

Validation

Blosxom Test Notes: Yesterday, I encountered a problem with validating the RSS feed for my blosxom blog. The default setting for the format file used with the submission plugin sets the filename to the contents of the Title field. I've configured my Title field to be the headline for my article and I want it to be descriptive without having to use underlines between each word. However, a filename with spaces in it makes the RSS validators choke. So, I have added a new field, Category, which has a one word category descriptor and set this for my filename parameter. Now to try it out.

posted by Libitina at [10:37 AM](#) [0 comments](#)

Submission Plugin: Using Title for Filename A Problem with RSS Validation

Blosxom Test Notes: Yesterday, I encountered a problem with validating the RSS feed for my blosxom blog. The default setting for the format file used with the submission plugin sets the filename to the contents of the Title field. I've configured my Title field to be the headline for my article and I want it to be descriptive without having to use underlines between each word. However, a filename with spaces in it makes the RSS validators choke. So, I have added a new field, Category, which has a one word category descriptor and set this for my filename parameter. Now to try it out.

posted by Libitina at [10:37 AM](#) [0 comments](#)

Wednesday, September 17, 2003

AutoLink plugin Terrific!

Blosxom Test Notes: Today I am testing a new plug-in for Blosxom. It allows you to create a file to specify a url for a keyword then the plug-in automatically links the url to the keyword within the text of the post. It was developed by Fletcher Penney.

Of all the Blosxom plug-ins I have tried, this one actually seems to work without a bunch of tweaking! Thanks, Fletcher! It is a real time saver too.

posted by Libitina at [3:15 PM](#) [0 comments](#)

Another test of the submission format file

Bosxom Test Notes: I have been struggling and struggling trying to get the format file I designed to work with the submission plugin. I had used the original format file named "plugin" written by DJ and made some alterations. Well I got to looking at it again and noticed that I had not changed the package designation. Although I am not a Perl programmer, I had read somewhere that the package designation must be the same name as the file name. So, I changed the package designation in the format file and it works!. Now my posts submitted by the submission plugin have the URL and author URL field automatically linked and the headline formatted as a Level 4 Headline. I'm thrilled!

posted by Libitina at [11:46 AM](#) [0 comments](#)

Configuring Blossom A Challenge

Blossom Test Notes: I discovered that many of my problems appeared to be the result of my misunderstanding the location of my Blossom weblog. I had wrongly assumed that since my blog item files were stored in a particular directory on my site that that was also the location of the weblog. I couldn't understand then why Rael had specified a \$datadir (where the items are kept) and a \$url (where the weblog is located). Although the two can be the same if you place your blossom.cgi in the same directory as your item files, I had used the default installation recommendations for a Unix server and placed my blossom.cgi file in the cgi-bin folder under my public_html folder but wrongly indicated my weblog directory as the directory containing my web items. After I corrected this problem in my blossom.cgi file, the search plugin developed by Fletcher worked perfectly. Hopefully, I'll struggle less with other plugins I wish to use.

posted by Libitina at [10:32 AM](#) [0 comments](#)

Tweaking the Submission form format file

I've been experimenting with the submission plugin format file again. It occurred to me that the variable \$formatlib was supposed to be the location of the directory not the name of the format file. So, I made the appropriate change to the submission plugin script. Before I was getting the default format, not my custom format. Now we'll see if my changes had any effect.

posted by Libitina at [10:31 AM](#) [0 comments](#)

LastBuildDate Plugin Fowls RSS Output

Blosxom Test Notes: I tried Joe Francis' LastBuildDate plugin but it produced the entry "0" which of course invalidated my RSS feed. Back to the drawing board for that one.

posted by Libitina at [3:35 AM](#) [0 comments](#)

Friday, September 12, 2003

Submission plugin finally working!

Blosxom Test Nots: With a lot of help from suggestions posted by Fletcher Penney to the Blosxom group, I was finally able to get the submission plugin to work today. I installed my blosxom.cgi in a cgi-bin directory under my public_html directory and my Blosxom application files are in a separate folder named blosxom under my public_html directory. This seems to be wreaking havoc with my \$path variable. I'm a newbie to perl programming but I wish plugin authors would specify exactly where to place files rather than suggest you place it in one place then give examples based on the file being placed somewhere else. I would really like to get all of these wrinkles ironed out so I can develop a template installation for end users without them having to edit any configuration files. That could be quite a challenge though.

posted by Libitina at [9:06 AM](#) [0 comments](#)

Monday, September 08, 2003

Blosxom Pollxn Plugin A Challenge

Blosxom Test Notes: Worked all day yesterday learning many of the ins and outs of Blosxom. I managed

to not only install it and get it working well but modified the templates so

my

blog

is more attractive. Then today, I installed the Pollxn plug-in to add comment

functionality. I had quite a time with it because I was a bit confused over the

instructions.

Problem 1: The instructions for adding the Comments link to the Blosxom blog

said to paste the following code into the story.html file.

```
<a href="/cgi-bin/pollxn.cgi?storypath=$path/$fn.$flavour">$pollxn::comments_count</a>
```

The first part of this link only works if the pollxn.cgi file has been copied

into a /cgi-bin directory under the Blosxom datadir. The instructions initially

recommended installing it directly in the Blosxom datadir then said it could

be installed

in a cgi-bin if necessary. Often an ISP will limit users to a single cgi-bin

directory directly under their public_html directory. However, if such a user

tries to use the above script, they will get a file not found. I'm trying

to work out a defined installation procedure with as much preconfigured as possible since faculty don't like editing configuration files. I prefer to install the cgi file directly in the bloxom directory then changing the url to:

```
<a href="pollxn.cgi?storypath=$path/$fn.$flavour">$pollxn::comments_count</a>
```

Now for the second problem. I couldn't figure out why the link was resolving to a filename ending in .html when my Bloxom.cgi file correctly specified my file extension to be .txt. It appears that the \$fn variable refers to only the filename without the file extension. My Bloxom "flavour" is specified as .html (I use modified .html templates). The result is that the above link resolves to a filename ending in .html instead of .txt. I further modified the link to:

```
<a href="pollxn.cgi?storypath=$fn.$file_extension">$pollxn::comments_count</a>
```

to correct this problem.

posted by Libitina at 3:20 PM 0 comments

About Me



Mary Harrsch

Springfield, Oregon, United States

[View my complete profile](#)

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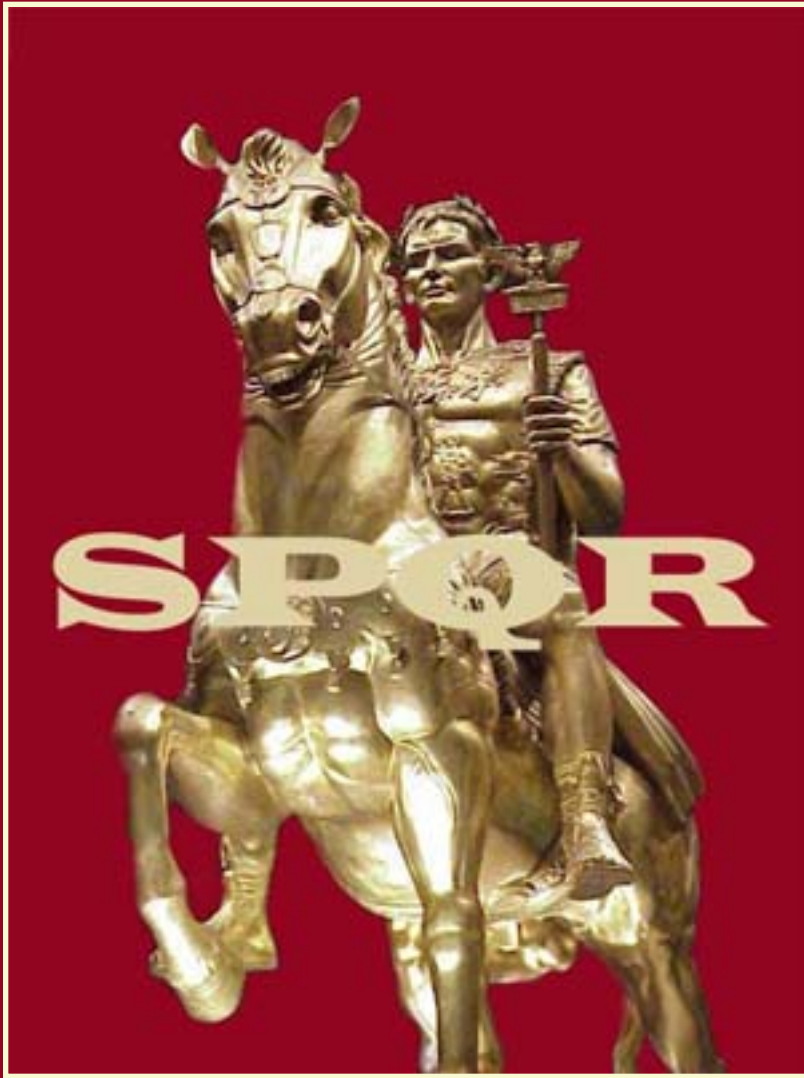
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I appreciate history from all historical periods but I have always been especially interested in ancient Mediterranean cultures. Although I am fascinated by ancient Egypt, I became totally entranced by ancient Rome after reading the "Masters of Rome" series of novels by Colleen McCullough and in particular the life of Julius Caesar. McCullough's novels, "[The First Man In Rome](#)", "[The Grass Crown](#)", "[Fortune's Favorites](#)", "[Caesar's Women](#)", and "[Caesar](#)", made this complex personality come to life. He was not the cold and calculating tyrannical conqueror often depicted by various historians apparently with their own political axes to grind. He was a tender lover, a skilled orator and advocate, a talented poet and historian, a consummate politician, and a man with integrity as well as cunning and military genius.

Because of my admiration for him, I decided to use my skills as a computer systems designer to resurrect Caesar by way of an artificial intelligence program developed by [Artificial-Life, Inc.](#) Caesar may answer your questions and

even display a website with more information .

[Request an Audience with Gaius Julius Caesar](#)

Gaius Julius Caesar was assassinated on the Ides of March, 44 B.C. At that time, Rome was still a republic. There were no emperors or Christians. The Colliseum had not yet been constructed. Octavian, his heir and the future Augustus, was still an unmarried boy of nineteen studying rhetoric in Greece. Agrippa, Octavian's childhood friend, had not yet commanded a fleet. Caesarion, Caesar's son by Cleopatra, still lived as coruler of Egypt with his mother.

Although Caesar studied classical history and rhetoric, as a Roman patrician, Caesar's education would not have included indepth studies of ancient tribal groups who exerted little political or military power from a Roman perspective.

To preserve Caesar's cultural context, I have concentrated on restoring the memories Caesar held during his lifetime. Therefore, he will have no knowledge of modern civilizations, people that were born after his death, or events that occurred after his assassination. His characterization is based on his portrayal in Colleen McCullough's "Masters of Rome" series of novels.



Caesar's memory is based on a java application. Visitors with a MacIntosh computer must use either Internet Explorer version 4.x or newer or Netscape version 4.7 or newer. Otherwise, he will simply tell you he knows nothing about your topic. Visitors with Windows computers may use either Internet Explorer or Netscape versions 4.x or newer.

Caesar is very much a work in progress so please be patient if his memory is a little sketchy right now. For those of you who might be interested in the steps I go through to "refresh" Caesar's memory, here is a "brief" description. The artificial intelligence program that Caesar uses is based on Natural Language pattern recognition which uses a combination of subject and keyword patterns with synonym filters and activation levels. I usually begin by composing a generic answer that would be suitable for the most frequently asked questions about a particular topic then work my way backwards to more specific answers.

For example, if you ask him what he thinks of Pompey the Great, he will reply with a general assessment of his talents and personality. I trigger this remark with a simple wildcard under the subject heading Pompey which tells the program to activate this response if the word Pompey is used in any question and is not superseded by any other pattern matches or responses with a higher activation level. If you ask Caesar how he defeated Pompey at the battle of Pharsalus he will reply differently because I have targeted the keyword "defeat" in combination with "Pompey" and prepared a different response (displaying a different web page as well). If Caesar had had multiple confrontations with Pompey I would have also used Pharsalus but it was the climactic confrontation so I don't include it to keep the script as streamlined as possible.

Activation levels are established by considering the specificity of the topic. For example, the topic "Romans" may have an activation level of 3000. Politicians, a subset of Romans, may be assigned an activation level of 4000. Pompey is a specific Roman politician so his activation level may be set to 5000. Prioritizing topics like this helps to ensure a more accurate response. For example, if someone asked Caesar "What did you think of Pompey as a politician?" I would want Caesar to answer with a response specific to Pompey not with a more generic response about Roman politicians in general.

I also must evaluate possible synonyms. In Pompey's case I must add Pompeius and Magnus to the synonym filters in case someone asks the question using Pompey's formal name or cognomen. I also try to anticipate common misspellings. The program also cannot match contractions so I must add the possessive of Pompey to the filter table as well. One thing I discovered by studying the conversation logs of interactions with visitors who speak British English is that I needed to add filters for the British spellings of such keywords as color (colour) and favorite (favourite) . In developing his responses, I try to include his actual words whenever possible. For example, in his response about the Gauls, I use an opinion that he stated in his commentaries on the Gallic Wars. In selecting web pages to display, I also review dozens of web pages trying to find a page as specific to the topic as possible with reasonable credentials.

To help control the enormity of the task of recreating his knowledge about not only events and people but a myriad of ancient cultures he encountered, I try to keep Caesar's context in the timeframe of his lifetime. Therefore, I usually do not include information about emperors that reigned after his death or events that occurred after 44 B.C. Likewise, the other day someone asked him about the biblical Sampson. Although Sampson lived before Caesar, the chance that Caesar would study the history of an (in Caesar's viewpoint) insignificant tribe would be slim. Therefore I develop responses that try to steer the questions back to the appropriate context. I have just started to include sections in response to Latin phrases. I'm afraid it has been years since I have studied Latin so I'm pretty rusty. At present, he has a response to "veni, vedi, vici" but few others.

I truly hope Caesar will be a collaborative learning project and other history enthusiasts will help me rebuild his memories by conversing with Caesar (I study the resulting conversation logs) or sending me suggested questions, replies, and web page references. Suggestions may be sent to: mharrsch@uoregon.uoregon.edu.

In addition to McCullough's novels, I also enjoyed "[Memoirs of Cleopatra](#)" by Margaret George, reading Caesar's own commentaries and Plutarch's biographies of significant Roman figures (including Caesar) on the [Internet Classics Archives](#), "[The Handbook to Life in Ancient Rome](#)" by Lesley and Ray Adkins, "Caesar" by Christian Meier, and "Cleopatra" by Ernle Bradford as well as the PBS presentation of "[I, Claudius](#)" adapted from the works of Robert Graves.

Surprisingly, with the exception of a number of dramatizations of William Shakespeare's play "Julius Caesar", there have been few major film productions depicting the more positive aspects of the Roman world. I assume this stems from the significant influence of Christianity in American culture. The Romans were portrayed mostly as villains in the productions I remember from my childhood such as "The Greatest Story Ever Told", "The Robe", "The Silver Chalice", "Demetrius and the Gladiators", "Ben Hur", and "[Spartacus](#)" as well as the television productions of "A.D." and "Massada". Caesar was a sympathetic figure in "[Cleopatra](#)" but Marc Antony was portrayed as a lovesick lush even though history tells us that, though he lacked the military genius of Caesar, he was a courageous officer and truly devastated by the loss of his commander, kinsman, and friend. Even though I enjoyed "I, Claudius", it too concentrated primarily on the villainous side of Roman power and politics.

I think the Romans were no more corrupted by power than many other civilizations throughout history including our own. The Ptolemy dynasty in Egypt was fraught with patricide and fratricide. Some historians suspect Alexander the Great may have had a part in the assassination of his own father, Philip of Macedonia (although most blame it on the intrigues of his mother Olympias.)

I do not excuse the brutality of Roman entertainment but doesn't our own entertainment reflect a passion for the paramount struggle of life and death? Fortunately, we have the technology to depict it without actual loss of life. If anything, I think this aspect of their culture reveals their esteem for courage, bravery, and fortune (at least before the games were subverted for politically-sanctioned genocide near the end of the Empire) with the participation in an actual life and death struggle the ultimate expression

of an individual's worth. Roman consuls like Marius and Caesar were wildly popular with the average Roman citizen because they had forged their careers in the flames of brutal, physical conflict, not strictly political intrigue (although they engaged in it as well), and demonstrated repeatedly their willingness to offer the supreme sacrifice.

I would be interested in any further information about prophecies relating to Marius and Caesar (Plutarch notes the importance of the Syrian prophetess, Martha, to [Gaius Marius](#) but does not give any hint as to the content of any actual prophecies although McCullough's vision of probable prophecies certainly would have fit well with the historical events). I am also interested in any ancient references to Caesar's apparition appearing to both Octavian and Brutus the night before the battle of Phillipi. Plutarch refers to the apparition as an "evil spirit" but does not identify it as Caesar.

I hope you enjoy your encounter with my "virtual" Caesar. The image of Caesar was derived from a graphic of a marble bust of him that I colorized with Photoshop then loaded into a program called [Digital Faceworks](#) which enabled me to apply an animation template to his features and generate various expressions. His artificial intelligence SmartEngine is based on Natural Language pattern recognition originally developed at M.I.T. back in the '60s. He is similar in ability to the familiar "[Ask Jeeves](#)" search assistant. If you have favorite web sites depicting Roman culture, I would appreciate hearing about them so I may incorporate them into his "consciousness."

Another website you may find interesting is [Fantastic Rome](#), an annotated bibliography of SF/Fantasy novels and short stories featuring Ancient Rome and the [Fictional Rome](#) database. Caroline Lawrence has written a [series of detective stories](#) for young readers set in ancient Rome. They are also included in [this list](#) of other books about ancient Rome written for young readers.

Other works I have in progress include an illustrated and annotated ebook of Plutarch's biography of Caesar in [Microsoft Reader](#) format.

[***Request Audience with
Gaius Julius Caesar***](#)

[***Mary's Personal Homepage***](#)



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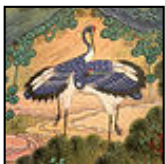
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the uo's newsletter for faculty, staff, and graduate teaching fellows



Blogs at the UO: Background and Advice From a Blog Researcher

< *Joel Bloom*

I first came across the term "blog" while reading a column by Joe Conason on [Salon.com](#). Conason wrote a daily piece on national politics that was full of links both to stories in mainstream newspapers and magazines, but also to websites I hadn't heard of, some of them run by journalists and hosted by other online magazines such as [Slate](#) (Mickey Kaus' [Kausfiles](#)) and [MSN](#) (Eric Alterman's [Altercation](#)), while others, like Bob Somerby's [Daily Howler](#), and University of Tennessee Law Professor Glenn Reynolds' [Instapundit](#), were just personally hosted websites.

After the second or third time I saw the word "blog" in Conason's column, I did a Google search, but found more references without definitions. I had to figure out from the context what a blog (weblog) was: basically, any frequently updated website with lots of links, with newer postings usually placed at the top and older ones available when you scroll down.

Other characteristics of blogs might apply, but are not required: archives (almost all); perma-links to individual postings (most); and discussion boards (many). Other features vary with the voice of the author or host.

While personal websites have existed since the early 1990s, and columnists and diarists have written daily notes for centuries, blogs in their current form have existed only since 1999; their rise since then is breathtaking.

By the time I presented my first paper on blogs and politics at the 2003 meeting of the American Political Science Association (using the case study of Trent Lott's comments at the late Strom Thurmond's birthday party and his eventual ouster as Senate majority leader as an example of blog influence), I was able to cite research referring to literally millions of blogs in the United States alone, ranging from the political blogs of my interest, to any topics imaginable—hobbies, sports, music, dogs, cats, sex, celebrities, you name it.

With user-friendly software such as "Blogger," which comes with free hosting at its website, [blogspot.com](#), many members of the UO community have been tempted to start their own blogs, and some have succumbed to that temptation. For those interested in starting a blog, the start-up costs are few, and the rewards can be many—including positive attention and e-mails from people you've never met telling you how smart you are. Of course, the opposite

is also true. It's a nearly cost-free form of self-publishing, and it can be a great way to hone both writing and web design skills.

So, what's the catch? First of all, for anyone committed to keeping up their blog by posting even a minimal two to three notes a day, that's a tremendous time commitment. Secondly, for those with ambition, it's very difficult to break into existing blog communities and establish yourself as an important blog.

While the top blogs get literally hundreds of thousands of hits every single day, the vast majority are lucky to get a couple dozen. That can get pretty depressing. Finally, if you are thinking of writing a blog that deals with details of your life, be aware that some of those details are going to get back to people you really didn't want them to.

- By Joel Bloom, adjunct assistant professor of political science

For the past three years, Bloom has been a postdoctoral fellow and research associate at the Oregon Survey Research Laboratory, where he has directed a number of surveys, including last year's Oregon telephone survey for the "National Election Pool," the national media consortium that conducted the network exit polls.

Bloom has presented research on blogs at the American Political Science Association annual meeting and at a conference on "Mass Communication and Civic Engagement," both in 2003 in Philadelphia. He is currently working with co-author Matthew Kerbel of Villanova University on book projects having to do with blogs, media, politics and campaigns.



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the uo's newsletter for faculty, staff, and graduate teaching fellows

Blogs at the UO: Resources and Examples

Colleen Bell, library instruction coordinator, offers [a guide to blogs](#) and related communication topics on the UO Libraries website. Bell wrote [this column](#) on library use of blogs especially for *Inside Oregon*.

An example of a sophisticated academic blog is [the site of Stephen Hsu](#), associate professor of physics.

For blogs of Eugene, click on [this local page](#) of Orblogs (Oregon Weblog Community). Blogs from elsewhere in Oregon can be accessed from this site as well.

For those interested in creating a blog, go to [Blogger](#), the software giant's start-up site that helped popularize the communications tool.

According to Michael Majdic, UO Libraries television producer and director, one of the best books on the subject is Hugh Hewitt's work, [Blogs](#) (Nelson Books, 2005).



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Blogs, Wikis, and Other Animals

You may already know what a blog (short for web log) is, but have you heard about Wikis, Swikis, and Zwikis? This guides serves to introduce you to various tools and technologies involved, as well as ideas for both individual and collaborative uses of these technologies. Also included is an introduction to RSS (RDF Site Summary or Rich Site Summary), which allows you to include content from other people's blogs in your own web pages.

Glossary

Blog

a.k.a. blogger -or- blogrolling -or- weblog -or- Web log -or- blogosphere

A Web site (or section of a Web site) where users can post a chronological, up-to-date e-journal entry of their thoughts. Each post usually contains a Web link. Basically, it is an open forum communication tool that, depending on the Web site, is either very individualistic or performs a crucial function for a company. [Source: [netlingo](#)]

RSS

Short for **RDF Site Summary** or **Rich Site Summary**, an XML format for syndicating Web content. A Web site that wants to allow other sites to publish some of its content creates an RSS document and registers the document with an RSS publisher. A user that can read RSS-distributed content can use the content on a different site. Syndicated content includes such data as news feeds, events listings, news stories, headlines, project updates, excerpts from discussion forums or even corporate information. RSS was originally developed by Netscape. [Source: [Webopedia](#)]

Wiki

(*n.*) A collaborative Web site comprised of the perpetual collective work of many authors. Similar to a blog in structure and logic, a wiki allows anyone to edit, delete or modify content that has been placed on the Web site using a browser interface, including the work of previous authors. In contrast, a blog, typically authored by an individual, does not allow visitors to change the original posted material, only add comments to the original content. The term wiki refers to either the Web site or the software used to create the site. Wiki wiki means "quick" in Hawaiian. The first wiki was created by Ward Cunningham in 1995. [Source: [Webopedia](#)]

Blogs

Blogs are often authored by individuals, reflecting their personal view of the world around them, and often focus on a specific topic. However, a growing number of organizations are using blogs to create collaborative, chronological logs, and there is also a growing interest in using blogs in the classroom.

Examples

[Glossary](#)[Blogs](#)[Wikis](#)[RSS](#)[Further Reading](#)[More Research Guides](#)

- **Bloug** - weblog on (mostly) information architecture by Louis Rosenfeld
- **LISNews** - a cooperative blog focusing on news from the library and information science world

Search Engines, Directories, and More

This is a list of just a few of the services available. For more, see Google's [list of weblog directories](#).

- **blo.gs** - "lets you keep an eye on your favorite weblogs via the web, email, and instant messenger"
- **Blogdex** - a project of the MIT Media Laboratory; tracks "the diffusion of information through the weblog community"
- **Blogwise** - directory of blogs by country and by keyword
- **Daypop** - searchable index to blog and news posts, as well as "cool" tools such as "top 40," "word bursts", and "blogstats"
- **Photoblogs.org** - a directory of blogs where images are the main feature
- **Popdex** - "the website popularity index"
- **Weblogs Compendium** - "everything you need to know about weblogs/blogs: hosting services, tools, directories, definitions, RSS readers and resources..."

Software

There are generally two ways to run a blog: use software installed on someone else's server (the "host it for you" model), or install and run the software on your own server (the "host your own" model).

"Host It For You" Software

These sites run the blog software for you; you log in to their site to manage your blog. With some, you publish it to your own web site. With others, the blog itself is hosted on the site. You can often choose from a set of templates to create a customized look, or create your own template. Many offer basic services for free, but offer you premium services for a subscription fee.

- **Blogger** - probably the best known
- **Fotopages** - create your own photoblog
- **Plenty more...**

"Host Your Own" Software

If you have your own domain and have geek-like tendencies, you might choose to install blog software on your own server. This offers you the greatest flexibility, but can also be time-consuming, depending on how much customization you do. The following are some of the more popular blog packages. Many are free for non-commercial users.

- **Movable Type** - probably the most popular software for do-it-yourself types; has a large, well-organized user community, and tons of plugins; written in Perl
- **Blosxom** - another popular blog package, with a growing user community and plenty of features; written in "simple, straightforward, minimalist Perl"
- **Slash** - the open source software that runs the popular Slashdot community blog; written in Perl, uses MySQL back end
- **PHP Nuke** - a popular package for community blogging; requires PHP and MySQL
- **Many more...**

Wikis

Unlike blogs, which cater to the individual journal writer, wikis are designed to be collaborative. The software creates an environment in which authors are encouraged to edit their own and others' work. They have great potential in educational settings, and in group projects. It's easy to imagine using a Wiki to build a community, reflecting both the commonalities and diversity among its members.

Examples

- [**IWiki**](#) - "a collaborative knowledge base for the topic of Information Architecture"
- [**MeatballWiki**](#) - "discusses and focuses on all aspects of online communication and online communities."
- [**Wikipedia**](#) - an ambitious project to build an "open-content encyclopedia in many languages"
- [**WikiTravel**](#) - "a project to create a free, complete, up-to-date and reliable world-wide travel guide"

Directories, Search Engines, and More

Because Wikis are relatively new, there aren't as many resources for finding them, but there are a few, as well as a growing body of research on the evolution and uses of wikis.

- [**History Flow**](#) - "visualizing dynamic, evolving documents and the interactions of multiple collaborating authors" (based on the Wikipedia project)
- [**Public Swiki List**](#) - from Swikis.net, a wiki hosting service
- [**TourBus**](#) - a guided tour of wiki sites from Meatball Wiki
- [**Weblog Kitchen**](#) - "explores current research in weblogs, wikis, and other hypertext systems" and includes lists of wikis

Software

In the past couple of years there has been a growing interest in Wikis, and a growing number of software packages have been developed in response. Here are a couple of places to find them.

- [**Wiki Engines**](#) - billed as the "canonical list of WikiEngines"; sorts software by the programming language in which it's written
- [**Wikipedia's List**](#) - click on the number in square brackets to visit the software site

RSS

RSS is a flexible tool that allows you to grab content from other web sites, and insert it into your own. There are also special RSS readers that will gather, organize, and display RSS-enabled content. Many blogs are RSS-enabled, and will allow you to include a list of the most recent entries from a particular blog.

How To Add an RSS Feed To Your Web Page in Two Simple Steps

1. Visit a service like [**AnyRSS**](#) and follow the instructions.
2. Paste the link at the spot on the web page where you'd like your RSS feed to appear. I used a table to create a place on my web page, and used the Javascript option provided by AnyRSS.

Voila! you have an RSS feed.

Tools

- [**AnyRSS**](#) - generate HTML or javascript; provides suggested style sheet for javascript version

- [Feedster](#) - click on Tools, then select the "Add Feedster to my own blog or web site with a Feedpaper" or "Createt a special RSS feed using Feedster." Requires registration.

RSS Software

Software that pulls together news items from hundreds of different sources. Can usually be customized to focus on specific interests.

- [Dogpile Toolbar](#) - Dogpile is a popular metasearch engine; its toolbar includes the ability to pull together customized news and RSS feeds, with several display options
- [RSS Readers](#) - top picks for each operating system, plus a list of runners-up

Further Reading

- [Making an RSS Feed](#) by Danny Sullivan (April 2, 2003)
- [The Blog Realm: RSS, Aggregators, and Reading the Blog Fantastic](#) by Greg Notess (*Online*, v26 n6, November/December 2002)

<http://libweb.uoregon.edu/guides/blogs/>
Created by Colleen Bell for the [IT Curriculum](#)
Maintained by Colleen Bell, cbell@uoregon.edu
Last revision: 22 April 2004



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the uo's newsletter for faculty, staff, and graduate teaching fellows

Blogs and the UO Libraries

by Colleen Bell

Members of the library profession have been creating blogs for years; [LISnews](#), [librarian.net](#), [Rogue Librarian](#) and [Library Stuff](#) are among the longer-lived ones and serve to keep readers up to date on a wide variety of issues, from technology to censorship to legislation to the just plain bizarre.

Here in the UO Libraries, we've been using blogs for teaching, planning and communication, and to keep our friends, families and colleagues up to date on our lives.

Teaching

I first used a blog for teaching in Spring 2002. I was teaching one of our regular courses, "Internet Information and Culture," online. Because I was using the Internet as the medium of instruction and the course was about the Internet, it seemed logical to have students share their daily encounters with the Internet, so I wrote a simple blog program and made it a required activity. Because of student privacy issues, I can't share the blog URL, but here's a sample (copied verbatim):

"The Internet...The New Medium

<http://www.ruthvilmi.net/hut/Spring97/automatic/internet/1.html>

I just read this article written by Amy Ramstack 'Internet: A Blessing or a Curse' I found it to be very interesting as I was able to relate to what she was saying about our new medium, the Internet. There are negative and positive aspects about everything that exists in our world. The Internet is no exception. Who know what the future holds blessings or curses... time will tell."

One of our librarians used a blog to keep track of potential readings and assignment ideas when he was getting ready to teach the same course. It seemed to work very well as a planning tool, and we now have a record of ideas for future iterations of the course.

I'm hoping that by the time I teach this course next year, we'll have an add-on to Blackboard that provides blogging tools, among others.

Planning

As I write this, the UO Libraries are using a blog (for the second year) to gather ideas from the library staff for our annual plan. All staff members are invited to submit ideas for projects or initiatives they feel the library should undertake over the next planning cycle, and are also invited to comment on ideas submitted. Ideas will be compiled and discussed later this month by the library administration and department heads at a planning retreat.

Communication

Recently, the reference librarians in Knight Library initiated a blog to share reference questions they had received, as well as resources used to answer them. The types of

postings vary, from single, complex reference questions, to diaries of an entire shift at the desk. But it's garnered enough interest from other UO reference librarians that the library is developing a blog to which everyone in library public services can contribute.

Personal Blogs

Finally, there are several people working in the UO Libraries who have personal blogs. Many started them as they were heading off to travel in exotic lands, or to keep friends and family up to date on their lives, or just to have a place to share their thoughts on library issues, current events, and readings they come across.

If you're interested in learning more about blogs and associated services, including how you can easily get a blog, and tools for keeping up with your favorite blogs, I've developed a guide online, called "Blogs, Wikis, and Other Animals." You'll find it on the [UO Libraries web site](#).

Happy blogging!

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GET YOUR OWN BLOG NEXT BLOG»

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Information Processing

Monday, March 14, 2005

String controversy reaches the public

This is the first time I've seen these issues discussed in the [popular press](#) (SF Chronicle). (I found this link via Peter Woit's [blog](#); he is quoted in the article.)

I have to say both critics and defenders of string theory make valid points in the article. It is not implausible to me that it could take generations to sort out any theoretical model of quantum gravity. On the other hand, how will we ever know whether a proposed model is right or wrong without experimental input? In order for the subject to qualify as scientific, there must be *falsifiable* predictions. This doesn't seem to be the case with string theory - in fact, things are moving in the wrong direction with the discovery(?) of more than 10^{100} possible vacua, each with different low-energy physics.

I am not against some number of theorists studying string theory, but by now most of the top departments in the world have string theory groups. If I had to guess I would say resources within theoretical physics are over-allocated to string theory. Even its supporters admit the work is speculative, and unlikely to be subject to experimental test in the near future. This being the case, why are funding levels for string theory research not closer to those in math departments, rather than

physics departments? (Physicists, even theorists, generally teach less and get bigger grants than mathematicians. Shouldn't the stringers be lumped with the math guys until they come up with actual testable predictions?)

Nature's guiding hand manifests itself in the form of experimental data. Without this guidance, theoretical physics is in danger of reverting to a subjective field dominated by trends and fashion, like the humanities and social sciences.

Those interested in a sociological analysis of the political and cultural economy of the academic field should read the work of Pierre Bourdieu, who argued that academics mainly fight over the "power to consecrate" - that is, the power to determine which subjects or approaches are deemed worthy or unworthy. This is exactly what I see going on in quantum gravity these days.

My earlier posts on this topic are [here](#) and [here](#).

posted by steve at [10:29 AM](#) [3 comments](#)

Sunday, March 13, 2005

Niall Ferguson on the dollar

From the Times [Sunday magazine](#). He seems pretty optimistic about how long this can go on, but doesn't give any concrete reasons. I think historical precedent may be a poor guide here, given the volatile nature of global financial markets today.

"Meanwhile, the United States may be discovering what the British found in their imperial heyday. If you are a truly powerful empire, you can borrow a lot of money at surprisingly reasonable rates.

Today's deficits are in fact dwarfed in relative terms by the amounts the British borrowed to finance

their Global War on (French) Terror between 1793 and 1815. Yet British long-term rates in that era averaged just 4.77 percent, and the pound's exchange rate was restored to its prewar level within a few years of peace.

It is only when your power wanes -- as the British learned after 1945 -- that owing a fortune in your own currency becomes a real problem. As opposed, that is, to someone else's problem."

posted by steve at [5:39 PM](#) [1 comments](#)

Thursday, March 10, 2005

Startup howto

[This](#) is a nice essay on how to start a startup. The author, Paul Graham, a Harvard PhD in CS, founded an e-commerce software startup that was acquired by Yahoo! in the early days of the boom. Interestingly, his co-founder was Robert Morris, of Internet worm fame. I can still remember back in 1988 when his worm brought down the entire network. A team in the Berkeley CS department were the first to figure out what had happened.

I don't agree with everything Graham writes, but his perspective is interesting nonetheless. You can find my take on startups [here](#) (warning - PowerPoint slides).

"In a technology startup, which most startups are, the founders should include technical people. During the Internet Bubble there were a number of startups founded by business people who then went looking for hackers to create their product for them. This doesn't work well. Business people are bad at deciding what to do with technology, because they don't know what the options are, or which kinds of problems are hard and which are easy. And when business people try to hire hackers, they can't tell which ones are good. Even other hackers have a hard time doing that. For business people

it's roulette.

Do the founders of a startup have to include business people? That depends. We thought so when we started ours, and we asked several people who were said to know about this mysterious thing called "business" if they would be the president. But they all said no, so I had to do it myself. And what I discovered was that business was no great mystery. It's not something like physics or medicine that requires extensive study. You just try to get people to pay you for stuff.

I think the reason I made such a mystery of business was that I was disgusted by the idea of doing it. I wanted to work in the pure, intellectual world of software, not deal with customers' mundane problems. People who don't want to get dragged into some kind of work often develop a protective incompetence at it. Paul Erdos was particularly good at this. By seeming unable even to cut a grapefruit in half (let alone go to the store and buy one), he forced other people to do such things for him, leaving all his time free for math. Erdos was an extreme case, but most husbands use the same trick to some degree.

Once I was forced to discard my protective incompetence, I found that business was neither so hard nor so boring as I feared. There are esoteric areas of business that are quite hard, like tax law or the pricing of derivatives, but you don't need to know about those in a startup. All you need to know about business to run a startup are commonsense things people knew before there were business schools, or even universities.

If you work your way down the Forbes 400 making an x next to the name of each person with an MBA, you'll learn something important about business school. You don't even hit an MBA till number 22, Phil Knight, the CEO of Nike. There are only four MBAs in the top 50. What you notice in the Forbes 400 are a lot of people with technical backgrounds. Bill Gates, Steve Jobs, Larry Ellison,

Michael Dell, Jeff Bezos, Gordon Moore. The rulers of the technology business tend to come from technology, not business. So if you want to invest two years in something that will help you succeed in business, the evidence suggests you'd do better to learn how to hack than get an MBA. [3]

There is one reason you might want to include business people in a startup, though: because you have to have at least one person willing and able to focus on what customers want. Some believe only business people can do this-- that hackers can implement software, but not design it. That's nonsense. There's nothing about knowing how to program that prevents hackers from understanding users, or about not knowing how to program that magically enables business people to understand them."

posted by steve at [8:29 PM](#) [4 comments](#)

Wednesday, March 09, 2005

More Sony vs Samsung

Hey! Did someone at the Times read my [post](#) on this? :-)

New Sony CEO Stringer's expertise is confined to the two little grey boxes (see second figure below) labeled "movies and television" and "music".

[Times](#): Samsung has become what Sony could once claim - the competitor with both the breadth of products and the appeal of a premium brand.

This rapid reversal of fortunes illustrates the highly competitive world of consumer electronics that Sir Howard, a media man, is entering. Complacency and coasting on best-selling products have contributed to a nearly 75 percent decline in Sony's stock value since its March 1, 2000, peak. The

invincible "factory of ideas" founded almost six decades ago by Akio Morita, the company that brought the world the transistor radio, the Walkman and the Trinitron television tube, seems to have lost its way.

"Samsung is now the anti-Sony," George Gilder, an American technology analyst, said here Wednesday. "Sony is layered with bureaucracy. The amazing thing about Samsung is that it is like Apple with Steve Jobs involved in designing the iPod, it is like Sony with Morita deeply involved in developing products."

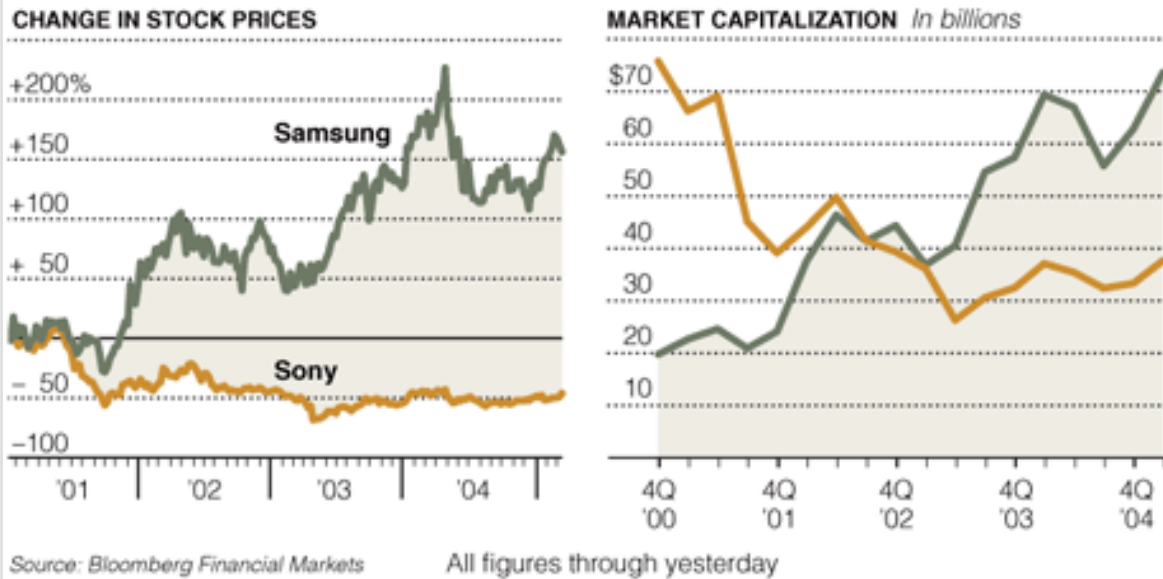
Samsung has kept a lean corporate structure, with authority increasingly delegated to front-line managers around the world, and almost a quarter of the far-flung staff of 88,000 dedicated to research and development.

But in Monday's boardroom purge, Sony demoted the one engineer credited with developing a new, world-beating product line, the PlayStation game consoles. Ken Kutaragi remains chief executive of Sony Computer Entertainment, but he loses supervision of Sony's consumer electronics and semiconductor business just as it is preparing the Cell Chip, a superchip that is to run the next generation of game machines and also high-definition televisions. With the hand-held PlayStation Portable selling like hotcakes since it was released here in December, the next PlayStation is to come out next year, in time to compete with a new Xbox console by the Microsoft Corporation and a new console by Nintendo.

"I meet many Sony employees here who are so gloomy," Takeshi Oyabu, an assistant professor of Keio Business School, said in an interview here. "Without me saying anything, they say things like 'I am from Sony whose reputation is very bad.' "

Role Reversal

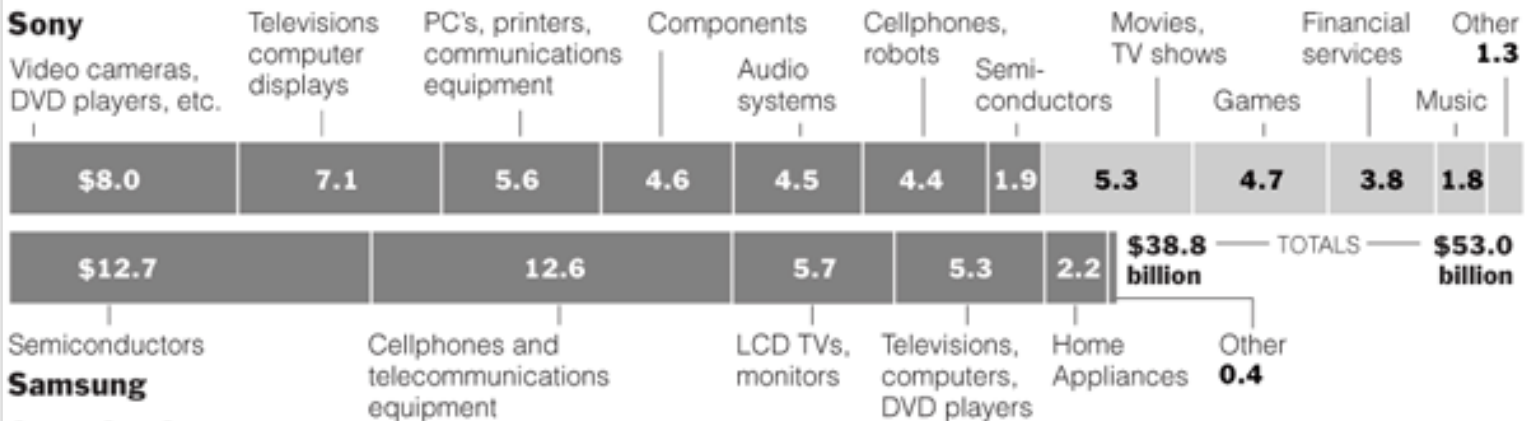
Sony's stock has fallen by almost half since the beginning of 2001 while Samsung's has more than doubled. As a result, Samsung's market capitalization, which was little more than a quarter of Sony's in late 2000, is now almost double.



Two Electronics Giants, Head to Head

Samsung has passed Sony as an electronics maker, although Sony's other businesses make it bigger overall.

Revenue breakdown for last nine months of 2004, figures in billions



Sources: Sony; Samsung

posted by steve at 9:53 PM 3 comments

Japan to diversify FX reserves?

Japan probably won't be the first to abandon the dollar, but it is obvious that currency markets are jittery.

Bloomberg: The dollar fell to a nine-week low against the euro in Asia after Japanese Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi said his country "in general" needs to consider diversifying its foreign currency reserves, the world's largest.

The U.S. currency erased losses against the yen and pared some versus the euro after a Ministry of Finance official said Japan has no plan to make a change, comments echoed by Finance Minister Sadakazu Tanigaki. Japan's official reserve assets totaled \$840.6 billion at the end of February, mostly in U.S. Treasuries.

"By saying Japan could diversify its holdings, it's opened a Pandora's Box," said Harvinder Kalirai, chief market analyst in Sydney at State Street Corp. ``They can just stop buying Treasuries. It could impact the behavior of other central banks. This is going to weigh heavily on the dollar."

The dollar dropped to \$1.3429 per euro at 1:59 p.m. in Tokyo from \$1.3391 late yesterday in New York, according to electronic currency-dealing system EBS. It also traded at 104.08 yen from 103.93. The dollar dropped as low as \$1.3455 a euro, the weakest since Jan. 4.

The dollar may fall to a record \$1.40 per euro and below 100 yen this year, Kalirai said. State Street is the world's largest custodian of assets, managing more than \$1.2 trillion.

Speaking in Parliament, Koizumi said Japan needs to make an "overall judgment" on how to invest reserves by considering the stability of such investments. Tanigaki later said the comments were made as a general argument and don't mean the government will shift its holdings.

"There's never been a comment from Japan that it might diversify, so the dollar getting sold off is understandable," said Robert Rennie, a currency strategist in Sydney at Westpac Banking Corp. Ministry clarifications "helped shore it back up."

The dollar fell 1.4 percent against the euro and the yen on Feb. 22 after South Korea's central bank announced plans to boost returns by diversifying its currency reserves. The bank later said it wouldn't sell dollars from its current holdings to achieve its goal.

Koizumi's comments pushed U.S. 10-year Treasury yields to the highest in more than seven months. Japan, the largest foreign holder of U.S. Treasuries, owned \$711.8 billion of them as of December, and cut its note holdings in three of the last four months of 2004.

posted by steve at [9:35 PM](#) [1 comments](#)

Monday, March 07, 2005

Huawei rising

Economist: "A report based on a survey of over 100 telecoms operators worldwide, carried out by Heavy Reading, a market-research firm, found that Huawei ranked eighth among wireline-equipment suppliers, up from 18th last year. (Cisco came top.) Most strikingly, Huawei ranked fourth in service and support. The report calls Huawei's ascendancy “astounding” and says it has already surpassed several incumbent vendors in perceived market leadership.

As a result, incumbent western firms should be “very scared” of Huawei, says Jean-Charles Doineau of Ovum, a consultancy. Huawei's reputation as a low-cost vendor is only the visible part of the iceberg, he says. Below the waterline, the company has high technical standards, though it is not known for its ability to innovate. It also has a 30% share of the vast Chinese market, equivalent in size to Europe's. Having developed products at the behest of its demanding domestic customers, Huawei can then sell them elsewhere.

Initially, Huawei concentrated on developing countries, but it is now gaining traction in the developed world, in Europe in particular. Last week it was named a key supplier by COLT, a British operator, and also won a \$100m broadband contract from Optus, an Australian firm. Huawei has yet to win the endorsement of a first-tier operator, but its gear is being evaluated by BT, Britain's incumbent operator, and by Vodafone, the world's largest mobile operator. BT is expected to announce the suppliers for its new "21st Century Network" soon, and Huawei is on the short list. Arun Sarin, Vodafone's boss, says his firm is watching Huawei closely.

Much of Huawei's competitiveness derives from its low labour costs. Richard Lee, a company spokesman, says Huawei can pay its senior engineers a quarter of the going rate in the developed world, and junior engineers just an eighth."

I don't see any shortage of engineers in China, with over 400K science and engineering degrees awarded each year! (Several times the US figure.) See [here](#) for a rough calculation suggesting a larger population of science and engineering PhDs in China than in the US by 2020.

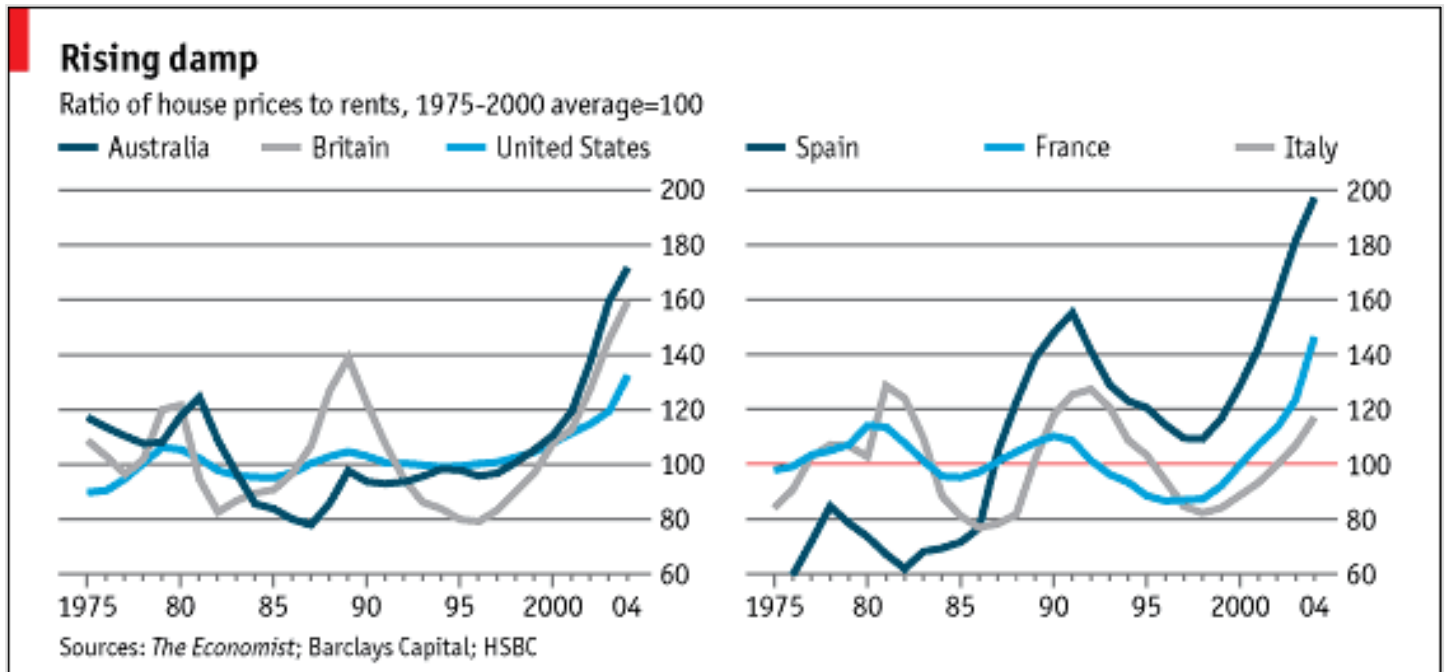
See also this [survey](#) of China and India development trends.

posted by steve at [9:06 PM](#) [6 comments](#)

Global housing bubble

Economist: "The ratio of prices to rents is a sort of price/earnings ratio for the housing market. Just as the price of a share should equal the discounted present value of future dividends, so the price of a house should reflect the future benefits of ownership, either as rental income for an investor or the rent saved by an owner-occupier. To bring the ratio of prices to rents back to equilibrium, either rents must rise sharply or prices must fall. Yet central banks cannot allow rents to surge as this would feed

into inflation. Rents directly or indirectly account for 29% of America's consumer-price index, so rising inflation would force the Fed to raise interest rates more swiftly, which could trigger a fall in house prices. Alternatively, if rents continue to rise at their current annual pace of 2.5%, house prices would need to remain flat for over ten years to bring America's ratio of house prices to rents back to its long-term norm. There is a clear risk prices might fall."



posted by steve at 8:58 PM 1 comments

Sell Sony, buy Samsung

The issue isn't that the new CEO Stringer is non-Japanese, but that he is a "content guy" and not a technologist. Idei, the current CEO, was a marketer, the first non-technologist to lead the company. (Founder Akio Morita was an applied physicist who created Sony from the ruins of postwar Japan.) Idei's reign has been lackluster, and I expect the same or worse from Stringer. Expect lots of expensive marketing-driven strategies based around the "convergence of digital content," while other companies eclipse them in core technology development. Does anyone remember AOL-Time Warner?

This is great news for Apple and the iPod, which is ironically the digital successor to Sony's Walkman.

Sony should have appointed Ken Kutagari CEO to have any chance of competing with Samsung, whose growth prospects, profit margins and market cap are superior.

From the [Times](#) coverage: "The appointment of Sir Howard appears to be a blow to Ken Kutaragi, the 54 year old executive who built Sony's PlayStation video game unit into the company's most profitable division. A defiant and idiosyncratic engineer, Mr. Kutaragi, who has long been seen as the leading candidate to become Sony's next chief executive, was given responsibility for electronics and semiconductors two years ago. Now he will again just run the game unit. And he gives up his seat on Sony's board."

This [article](#) paints Stringer as a skilled politician and corporate climber who knows all the Hollywood movers. Wonderful - perhaps he's even better than Carly - but that doesn't mean he can successfully run a tech company. Will Sony continue to be a player in flat panel display? (Who will make the billion dollar fab investment decisions?) Will their Cell CPU be a competitor in mainstream computing applications? Will they produce a viable iPod competitor?

posted by steve at [2:17 PM](#) [1 comments](#)

Nasdaq bubble shifts to real estate

[WSJ](#): In market experiments conducted by George Mason University professor Vernon Smith, who shared in the 2002 Nobel Prize for economics, participants trade a dividend paying "stock" with a very clear fundamental value. A bubble invariably forms, and then bursts. If the experiment is repeated with the same people, a bubble forms again. The second time, though, participants think

they will be able to sell their positions before trouble strikes. Participants express surprise that they weren't able to get out before the second collapse.

In the wake of the Nasdaq collapse, this echo-bubble phenomenon doesn't seem to have occurred in quite the same way as in the lab. Unlike Mr. Smith's experiments, where there is only one thing to trade in, the world offers investors myriad choices.

The zaniness that characterized 1999 and the early months of 2000, when shares of untested companies built on blue-sky expectations could skip 30% higher on the slightest scrap of news, for the most part doesn't exist any longer, says Doug Kass of the hedge fund Seabreeze Partners. He believes much of the mania has shifted into real estate.

Along with big price jumps in many housing markets, 23% of U.S. home sales last year stemmed from investment purchases, according to the National Association of Realtors. For his part, Mr. Kass says people he knew from near his Palm Beach, Fla., home who were day trading stocks back in 2000 are now all real-estate brokers.

"We have day trading in homes instead of day trading in stocks," he says. "It will end the same way, and it will be the same guys delivering the product."

Yale University economist Robert Shiller, who like Mr. Kass had a negative view on the U.S. stock market in 2000, also says the real-estate market is where the speculation is. While his survey work shows that investors still have a positive view of stocks, he believes that view reflects more grudging optimism than glee.

posted by steve at [12:50 AM](#) [7 comments](#)

Sunday, March 06, 2005

View from Omaha (Warren Buffett)

From the annual Berkshire Hathaway report (total mkt cap is about \$135B, so FX component is 15%):

Berkshire owned about \$21.4 billion of foreign exchange contracts at yearend, spread among 12 currencies. As I mentioned last year, holdings of this kind are a decided change for us. Before March 2002, neither Berkshire nor I had ever traded in currencies. But the evidence grows that our trade policies will put unremitting pressure on the dollar for many years to come – so since 2002 we've heeded that warning in setting our investment course.

...But as I argued in a November 10, 2003 article in Fortune, (available at berkshirehathaway.com), our country's trade practices are weighing down the dollar. The decline in its value has already been substantial, but is nevertheless likely to continue. Without policy changes, currency markets could even become disorderly and generate spillover effects, both political and financial. No one knows whether these problems will materialize. But such a scenario is a far-from-remote possibility that policymakers should be considering now. Their bent, however, is to lean toward not-so-benign neglect: A 318-page Congressional study of the consequences of unremitting trade deficits was published in November 2000 and has been gathering dust ever since. The study was ordered after the deficit hit a then-alarming \$263 billion in 1999; by last year it had risen to \$618 billion.

...Americans end up owning a reduced portion of our country while non-Americans own a greater part. This force-feeding of American wealth to the rest of the world is now proceeding at the rate of \$1.8 billion daily, an increase of 20% since I wrote you last year. Consequently, other countries and their citizens now own a net of about \$3 trillion of the U.S. A decade ago their net ownership was negligible.

posted by steve at [9:51 AM](#) [5 comments](#)

Saturday, March 05, 2005

Democratic revolution in the middle east?

Perhaps too much to hope, but things seem to be stirring. History is full of sudden, unanticipated transitions!

I'm not a neocon sympathizer, and neither is the Times, but this [article](#) comes amazingly close to supporting their model of how elections in Iraq (and other factors, like technology) might lead to transformation of politics in the middle east.

[A combination of outside pressure and internal shifts have merged to create this unique moment. Arabs of a younger, more savvy generation appear more willing to take their dissatisfaction directly to the front stoop of repressive leaders.

They have been spurred by the rise of new technology, especially uncensored satellite television, which prevents Arab governments from hiding what is happening on their own streets. The Internet and mobile phones have also been deployed to erode government censorship and help activists mobilize in ways previous generations never could.

Another important factor, pressure from the Bush administration, emboldens demonstrators, who believe that their governments will be more hesitant to act against them with Washington linking its security to greater freedom after the Sept. 11 attacks. Washington says it will not longer support repressive governments and young Arabs, while hardly enamored of American policy in the region, want to test that promise.

...New technology has driven the steps toward greater freedoms. Satellite stations like Al Jazeera and Al Arabiya brought news of demonstrations to a widening audience. Indeed, the crowds in Beirut swelled in part because potential demonstrators could see that government troops had not opened fire. Months earlier, Arabs watched similar events unfold in Ukraine and some wondered why the Arab world should stand apart.

But undoubtedly the most important new element is the spontaneous involvement of people themselves.

"You need democrats to produce democracy, you can't produce it through institutions," Mr. Salame said. "You need people to fight for it to make it real. Neither American tanks or domestic institutions can do it, you need democrats. In Beirut, you have a hard core of 10,000 to 15,000 youngsters who are democrats and who are imposing the tempo."]

posted by steve at [10:22 AM](#) [1 comments](#)

Friday, March 04, 2005

Times on China Internet censorship

The Shanghai bureau chief called me about this in January after Zhao Zhiyang died. I'm actually quoted in the [article](#).

The PRC government is expending a lot of resources on this, and is in many ways quite successful. But, around the edges, there is no stopping the flow of information. While there is no effective political organization in China beyond the government, ordinary people (or, at least, the few hundred million people with direct or indirect access to the Internet) have greater and greater access to uncensored information.

Fairly soon the expectations of the average person in China for democracy and personal freedom will be no different than in other parts of the world. There will be a consensus view that it is "normal" for the government to implement democratic reforms, if only in a gradual way.

Expectations for better governance are increasing everywhere (well, perhaps not in the US ;-). As shown in Georgia, Ukraine and Lebanon, fewer and fewer soldiers are willing to shoot peaceful demonstrators in support of an unpopular government, and the demonstrators know this. Perhaps satellite TV deserves as much credit for this as the Internet, but both are playing an important role.

An interesting (and optimistic) quote from the article: "All of the big mistakes made in China since 1949 have had to do with a lack of information," said Guo Liang, an Internet expert at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences in Beijing. "Lower levels of government have come to understand this, and I believe that since the SARS epidemic, upper levels may be beginning to understand this, too."

posted by [steve](#) at [4:50 AM](#) [12 comments](#)

Wednesday, March 02, 2005

History repeats

[Brad DeLong](#), in his course on economic history, lists the following among the reasons for the decline of the British empire and its loss of industrial superiority to Germany and the US.

British deficiencies:

- * low infrastructure investment
- * poor educational system
- * lags behind in primary education

* teaches its elite not science and engineering, but how to write Latin verse

Sound familiar? What is the ratio of Harvard students who have studied Shakespeare, Milton or (shudder) Derrida to the number who have thought deeply about the scientific method, or know what a photon is? Which knowledge is going to pay off for America in the long haul?

Most photon experts are [imported](#) from abroad these days. We're running a search in our department for a condensed matter experimentalist (working on things ranging from nanoscale magnets to biomembranes). The last three candidates we've interviewed are originally from (1) the former Soviet Union (postdoc at Cornell), (2) India (postdoc at Berkeley) and (3) China (postdoc at Caltech).

Of course, these Harvard kids may be making a [smart decision](#) - why fight it out in an efficiently globalized meritocracy (i.e. science), when there are more lucrative career paths available?

Nevertheless, I think we would be better off if our future leaders had at least some passing familiarity with the science and technology that will shape our future.

posted by [steve](#) at [9:11 AM](#) [12 comments](#)

Tuesday, March 01, 2005

Housing bubble II

Last time I checked, speculative buying and prices decoupled from fundamentals were sure signs of a bubble...

[NYTimes](#): "According to LoanPerformance Inc., a San Francisco mortgage data firm, about 8.5 percent of mortgages nationwide in the first 11 months of last year were taken out by people who did not plan to live in the houses themselves, up from 5.8 percent in 2000. In some markets, that

proportion is much higher: in Phoenix, more than 12 percent of mortgages were taken out by investors; in Miami, the figure is 11 percent.

The National Association of Realtors, a trade organization that represents real estate brokers, said in a study being released on Tuesday that the percentage of homes bought for investment might be as high as one-quarter of the 7.7 million sold last year.

"Americans are treating real estate as a viable alternative to stocks and bonds," said David Lereah, chief economist at the Realtors association. And some are buying at least two properties at a time."

posted by steve at [12:05 AM](#) [8 comments](#)

Monday, February 28, 2005

Risk-adjusted return

Investors are familiar with the concept of risk-adjusted return. A fund which takes large risks to obtain higher returns might be judged inferior to another fund with lower risk and return. We should apply the same kind of thinking to the economic status of families in the US. While incomes have risen in recent decades, so has volatility in income. Families earn more *on average* than in the past, but also suffer larger swings in income (most likely due to layoffs and unemployment).

The personal risk-adjusted performance of our economy is not nearly as impressive as the simple GDP numbers. The 3-part LA Times series covering this is available [here](#) (their internal name for it is appropriately "new deal over").

I discussed this issue previously [here](#).

How risks have risen for America's working poor

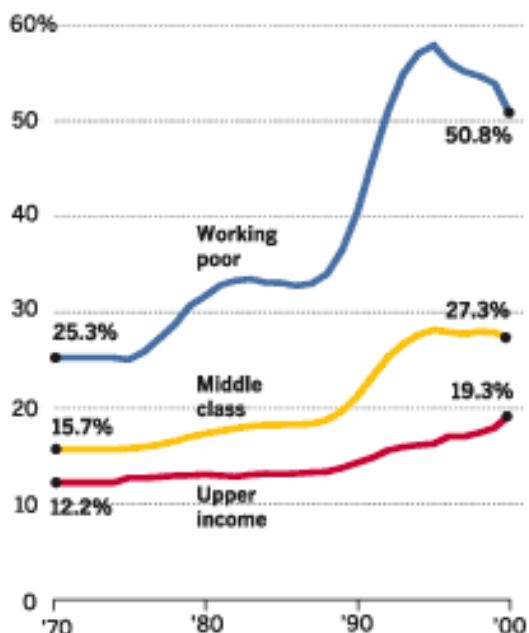
The working poor are experiencing an extreme version of the income instability that is rocking Americans across the earnings spectrum as they are being forced to assume more economic risk.

Rising volatility up and down the economy

Rich, poor and middle-class families have experienced increasingly large swings in their annual incomes over the last 30 years. But the ups and downs have been especially pronounced for those near the economic bottom.

Fluctuations in the yearly incomes of most working-poor families have doubled from as much as 25% to as much as 50%. For a family at the 20th percentile, that means annual income swings of up to \$12,000 or so, a rise from about \$4,300.

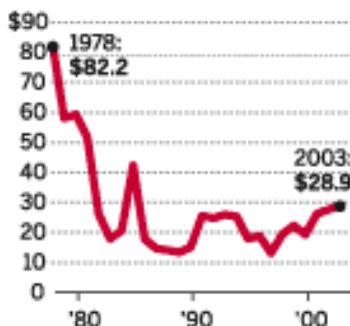
Maximum swings in annual income for most families at the 20th, 50th and 90th percentiles of the income distribution



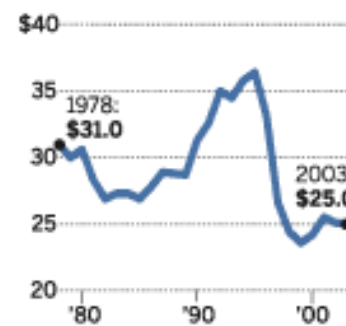
Less security, more debt

Business and government have reduced protections that poor families once relied on to buffer them from economic setbacks. Families have reacted, in part, by taking on more credit-card debt.

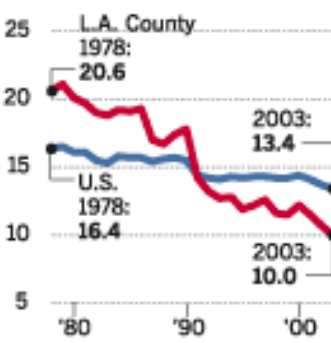
Federal housing assistance
In billions, 2003 dollars



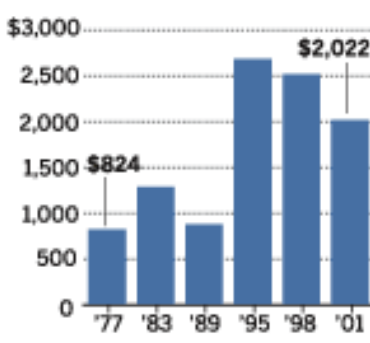
Total welfare spending
In billions, 2003 dollars



Employees per workplace
Average for the U.S. and L.A. County



Credit-card balances
Average balance for families in the bottom income quintile, in 2003 dollars



Sources: Panel Study of Income Dynamics, Office of Management and Budget, House Ways and Means Committee, Department of Health and Human Services, Federal Reserve and Bureau of Labor Statistics

PAUL DUGINSKI Los Angeles Times

posted by steve at 10:40 AM 2 comments

Saturday, February 26, 2005

LTCM (and the *real* smart guys)

When Genius Failed : The Rise and Fall of Long-Term Capital Management

by ROGER LOWENSTEIN

Inventing Money : The Story of Long-Term Capital Management and the Legends Behind It

by NICHOLAS DUNBAR

Long Term Capital Management was the hedge fund founded (1994) by legendary Salomon bond trader John Meriwether together with Robert Merton and Myron Scholes, the Nobel prize-winning academics behind options pricing theory. Meriwether was one of the first on Wall St. to see the value of quants, building a talented team which he took to LTCM. After several years of superb returns (over 40% in one year), the fund blew up in the wake of the Russian debt default and had to be bailed out by a consortium of banks organized by the Fed (1998).

If you are interested in the details of the LTCM story, the two books listed above are the place to start. (There was also a lengthy article in RISK magazine years ago, but you'll have to dig that out of your library.) Lowenstein is a business writer (formerly of the WSJ), who has also written a nice biography of Warren Buffet. His treatment is more readable for the average person, although frustratingly short on the details necessary to understand LTCM's actual trades and positions. Dunbar was a grad student at Harvard in applied physics, so understands the technical details better. He even gives a nice history of derivatives and option pricing.

Central Bank of Volatility: One of LTCM's big trades was a bet that future realized vol would resemble historical vol. They did so much business that London equity derivatives traders nicknamed them the Central Bank of Volatility. Historical vol was about 15% for European markets, but in 1997 the implied vol was 23%. LTCM was willing to sell vol (long dated options) at that price. Even larger positions in fixed income and mortgage-backed securities were also based on the assumption that markets would approach equilibrium. The question, as always: how long before mean reversion? Can you stay solvent longer than the market can stay "irrational"?

In their case, the answer was no, but the consortium of banks that bailed them out (buying out their portfolio) eventually made money. There was an issue of LTCM's counterparties front-running them on trades, but I don't think this was the main reason for their demise, and ultimately their positions came back.

LTCM got all the press, but few people know that the single most successful investment fund in recent history is Renaissance Technologies, founded in 1988 by mathematician Jim Simons. (Physics readers may be familiar with so-called Chern-Simons theory (Simons was Chern's PhD student at Berkeley) and wonder "whatever happened to Simons?"). Renaissance has averaged annual returns over 35% since its inception, and employs mostly former physics and math PhDs (MBAs need not apply). If I recall correctly, they now have over \$10B under management and one of the most aggressive [fee structures](#) in the business (5/44 instead of 2/20!?!).

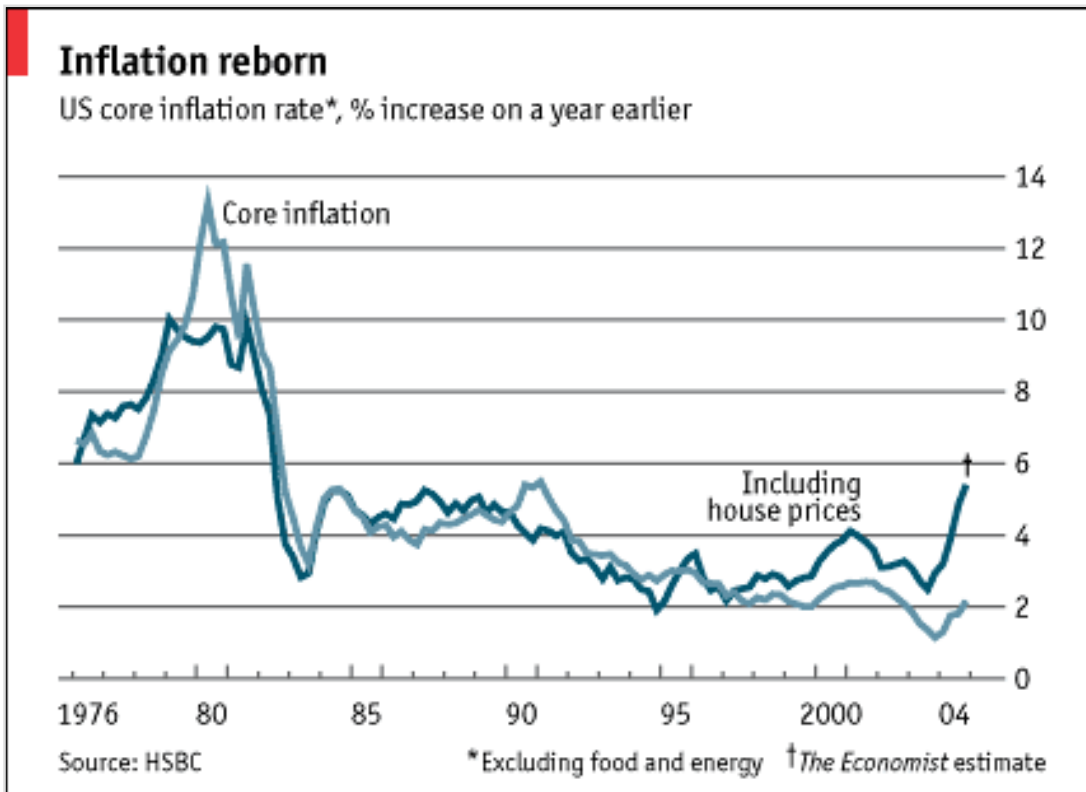
Simons: "The advantage scientists bring into the game is less their mathematical or computational skills than their ability to think scientifically. They are less likely to accept an apparent winning strategy that might be a mere statistical fluke."

posted by steve at [10:43 AM](#) [5 comments](#)

Housing and Inflation

Economist: Housing costs comprise 30% of the core inflation indicator (CPI) used by the Fed.

Because the recent run-up in home prices is not reflected in increased rental costs, you get very different results for the core CPI if you use home prices (cost to purchase a home) instead of rental cost in the calculation. You could argue this means that US inflation is much higher than previously thought. I prefer to see it as yet another indication of a housing asset bubble.



posted by steve at [10:30 AM](#) [3 comments](#)

Thursday, February 24, 2005

The shadow of LTCM

[WSJ](#): "The watchmen are back. And they're watching the hedge funds again, among other points of concern.

The group, which wields the weighty title Counterparty Risk Management Policy Group II, was established to monitor risks to the world-wide financial system in the wake of the 1998 implosion of hedge fund Long-Term Capital Management.

E. Gerald Corrigan, past president of the Federal Reserve Bank of New York and now a managing director at Goldman Sachs Group Inc., is serving as chairman of the revived 15-member group, which

includes representatives from major brokerage firms, banks and one insurer as well as the hedge funds with which they often trade. It will hold its first formal meeting next month.

The group's revival comes with the quiet backing of the New York Fed, which appears to have grown more concerned about potential market disruptions. For example, in a speech in November, New York Fed President Timothy Geithner noted "hedge funds -- and financial leverage more generally -- still present a source of potential risk to the financial system" and went on to cite a relaxation in credit terms and other risks."

Sounds like a good idea to me. But will they really be able to do anything about systemic risk?

Someday this global liquidity bubble will come to an end. Hopefully in an orderly manner, but if not, look for a lot of hedge funds to blow up. LTCM would be a medium-sized fund these days, although the amount of leverage they used would still be considered high.

posted by steve at [11:37 PM](#) [12 comments](#)

Wednesday, February 23, 2005

Null energy condition

New paper! A bit too technical to discuss here. But for Sci-Fi fans, the following tidbit: wormholes and time machines generally require violation of the null energy condition. Our paper shows, among other things, that none of the particles or fields of the type generally considered in particle physics will allow construction of a (stable) wormhole or time machine.

For those familiar with the Einstein equations, they are of the form:

$$\{\text{Curvature tensor } R, \text{ fn of spacetime geometry}\} = \{\text{matter energy-momentum tensor } T\}$$

The set of possible spacetime geometries (could there be wormholes? loops in time?) satisfying the Einstein equations is unconstrained without some information about the right hand side of the equation. Traditionally in general relativity, one assumes that the matter fields satisfy certain *energy conditions*, for example the null energy condition, which requires that the tensor T , when contracted with any null (lightlike) four-vector n , is positive: $T_{nn} > 0$. We show that when this condition is violated, the system is necessarily unstable to small perturbations.

Instabilities and the null energy condition

Authors: Roman V. Buniy, Stephen D.H. Hsu

We show that violation of the null energy condition implies instability in a broad class of models, including all gauge theories with scalar and fermionic matter as well as any perfect fluid. When applied to the dark energy, our results imply that $w = p / \rho$ is unlikely to be less than -1.

<http://arxiv.org/abs/hep-th/0502203>

posted by steve at 6:02 PM 5 comments

Smart money reaches \$1 trillion

The Economist [reports](#) that hedge fund assets under management have reached \$1 trillion, even while returns have diminished. Only qualified investors (an SEC classification) are eligible to invest - the requirement is \$1M in net worth or \$300K per year of family income. I guess most physics profs are stuck with mutual funds, which might not be so bad given the 2/20 [fee structure](#) charged by hedge funds ;-)

If your kid is mathematically gifted, I suggest pointing him (or her :-)) to the nearest "relative value

arbitrage" fund, rather than grad school in physics :-) With the glut of money heading into hedge funds, I've been told that the number one shortage is in investment *ideas*! You can see this in the graph below - the variation in returns is going down as more and more funds pile onto similar strategies.

Institutional Investor's obsessively read list of most-highly-paid hedge-fund managers starts with familiar names (George Soros: \$750m), but 16 others made at least \$100m in 2003... Successful managers become rich, possibly too rich to care about work, in just a few years.

I've discussed the role these funds are playing in the bond market, plying the carry or curve-flattening trades: sell the short end and buy the long end of the yield curve. Hedge funds are the [third largest holders](#) of US Treasury debt after Japan and China.



posted by steve at [9:44 AM](#) [13 comments](#)

About Me

steve hsu

Professor of physics at the University of Oregon. [Homepage](#)

[View my complete profile](#)

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This is a list of the most recently updated Eugene weblogs. Click  for more information about each weblog.

Welcome! This page has excerpts of alternative local news, commentary, and photography from bloggers in Eugene, Oregon. It's part of [ORblogs](#), a directory of weblogs by Oregonians. Do you write a Eugene blog that's not listed here? Find out how you can [participate](#). (Tired of this note? [Remove it.](#))

Eugene Blogs

	SpaceTramp	
	just blu	
	Where's Your Brain?	
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	Peace and Happiness	
	Citizen Dmitri	
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	Tony Lucero's Meanderings	
	Resistance is futile!	
	Why Not Opaco?	
	Oregon Commentator Online	
	Brownie Points	

Today in Eugene



WMD's Revisited

[image]The article title in the British News Telegraph: Saddam's \$2m offer to WMD inspector. The article starts with Saddam Hussein's regime offered a \$2 million (£1.4 million) bribe to the United Nations' chief weapons inspector to doctor his...

posted on [Where's Your Brain?](#) in [Eugene](#) - 36 minutes ago



Modern Updates

My new Microwave - which we installed in just ONE hour, has a HELP button on it. You press HELP and then any button you don't understand. Like FAN Fan speed is slow.....Fan speed is fast.... Fan is off. Now I'm thinking why don't they have a JOKE button?...

posted on [SpaceTramp](#) in [Eugene](#) - 38 minutes ago



Pass the Bon-Bons

I'll be sitting on the couch watching King of the Hill, which I had NO idea was on from 9-11AM! Ok, after my shower I'll probably be folding laundry and pulling weeds... but I won't swear to it. I went over to Paul's blog this morning, along with all my...

posted on [just blu](#) in [Eugene](#) - 51 minutes ago



More GPS...

After returning from the coast, I am so pleased with the super-cheap-guy car navigation system that I set up that I can't keep myself from

Eugene, OR



Eugene

pop. 140,395
blogpop. 43

Popular Today

A Puffin

A Puffin was spotted here in Oregon. How strange - I thought these comical looking birds were only found in the Atlantic seaboard. (learn so...

[SpaceTramp](#)

[3 clicks] 3/14
12:31 PM

Eugene Photo

	Eugene Freaks	
	Verba Volant, Scripta Manent	
	Green Ink!	
	medialyte.com	
	The Wines Family	
	Dave'ola	
	Corona Hats	
	Sport Bucket	
	Welcome to the Dungeon	
	EvilEddie's Life Written Down	
	Growin' Blog	
	Forward To Yesterday	
	OregonRacing.com	
	The Queendom	
	letters from nowhere	
	kelleyholmstrom.com	
	alternatebrain.org	
	Jeffrey Morgenthaler	
	Stacy Austin Weblog	
	Tiravallo	
	I Am A Fish	
	It Is Written	
	Narra Design	
	DWI: Drunk With Ink	

telling you about it in detail. If you're less excited about what I do to entertain myself in the car and prefect to...

posted on [Following Edge](#) in [Eugene](#) - 1 hour ago

 Vindicated!

[image] L ast month I posted one called CNN vs. Fox News - a post made because I heard Ted Turner compare Fox News to Hitler. Not that I'm some paid promoter of Fox News, and I do watch other news stations of course - I just find Fox News more revealing...

posted on [Where's Your Brain?](#) in [Eugene](#) - 2 hours ago - **OREGON-RELATED**

 death of a gunfighter 1

posted on [.beautybeneath.](#) in [Eugene](#) - 2 hours ago

 i didn't realize how tired i was

until today. f---er. i had the whole afternoon off, and i stayed in bed for 3 hours. goddess it felt nice. goddess, i didn't realize how tired i am. if i'm this tired now. oh f---. just wait till grad school...

posted on [rivervision](#) in [Eugene](#) - 1:46 AM

more on *rivervision*—

» [funny, it says nothing about hating queers](#)

Yesterday in Eugene

 POOF

All done with "The Naked Sun"...

posted on [Tecno-Hick](#) in [Eugene](#) - 11:31 PM

more on *Tecno-Hick*—

» [The network is down...](#)

 Proms

[image] © Punkin Dunkin...

posted on [No Whammies...](#) in [Eugene](#) - 9:16 PM

 Talked to Secuirty.

I'm a little sore in the sholders from helping Nathan yesterday. I



by [Blu](#)

5st Market



by [Ben](#)

Peace



by [Ben](#)

Recently Added



slept pretty good last night. I'm tired again tonight. I talked to security tonight to get my badge activated to open up the gym/weight room at work. So.....

posted on [Ben's Log](#) in [Eugene](#) - 8:47 PM



I'm Supa Bad

Got home and put another log in the wall. I should have it done by Wednesday. I'll post picts then. So I know where I'm going to sit in my new job. I will start training next Monday and three weeks later I will be back on the phones but in a whole new...

posted on [Go Elsewhere For Your...](#) in [Eugene](#) - 8:46 PM



Happy Feet

Every runner should get this book. "Empty your socks of rocks and junk. The debris that accumulates as you thrash around in the forest can cause blisters, sores, abrasions, and cuts, all highly contraindicated for happy feet." And happy feet are...

posted on [SpaceTramp](#) in [Eugene](#) - 6:30 PM



Killkillkill bring on the pain!

Theo sends me this article from the East Valley Tribune in Arizona. One of the best ledes ever: Animal rights advocates want a Scottsdale-based company to shut down a Web site that threatens to kill a bunny if it doesn't receive \$50,000 from the public...

posted on [Tony Lucero's Meanderings](#) in [Eugene](#) - 3:47 PM



Raise them in safety

Remember Gwyneth Paltrow? Decent actress. Some say she's gorgeous. Some say she's a nutcase. She is technically an American, but she is an expatriot living in London. Why? Because she wants to raise her daughter, Apple (yes, that's the kid's name),...

posted on [Resistance is futile!](#) in [Eugene](#) - 3:10 PM - [3 clicks]



The Daily Buzz

The OI? Dirty congratulates itself on a job well done. How truly Meta. How truly insignificant. Thanks for the memories, Jen. The Matrix meets Charlotte?s web in one of the most obnoxious flash animations



Tony Lucero's
Meanderings

Eugene Events

[atmosphere](#)

Apr 12: at
WOW Hall

View/Add
Events at

[Upcoming.org](#)

I?ve ever seen. Apparently the makers of the...

posted on [Oregon Commentator Online](#) in [Eugene](#) - 1:16 PM

A Puffin

A Puffin was spotted here in Oregon. How strange - I thought these comical looking birds were only found in the Atlantic seaboard. (learn something everyday) Their beaks and faces are impeccably painted - like a caricature from a "Rocky Horror" cabaret....

posted on [SpaceTramp](#) in [Eugene](#) - 12:31 PM - [3 clicks] - **OREGON-RELATED**

The Patriette Hates Unions, Too.

This reminds me of things I wrote the other day...

posted on [Resistance is futile!](#) in [Eugene](#) - 11:10 AM - **OREGON-RELATED**

more on *Resistance is futile!*—

» [Greatest Albums](#)

» [Quote of the Day](#)

A Rose by Any Other Name

Yeah, so today would have been an anniversary. Not that I'd want to go back... but I was happy for a long time... and because of those years I have a wonderful daughter. So, happy March 14. Daylight savings is coming soon. The next holiday is St...

posted on [just blu](#) in [Eugene](#) - 10:00 AM - **OREGON-RELATED**

A new week upon us!

Well I did it. This weekend I finally took the leap and doled out the bucks for an iPod. So far I'm pretty happy, but then I've only had it a little over 48 hours. It is pretty cool though. I've got about 5.5 days of continuous music loaded on it...

posted on [Tecno-Hick](#) in [Eugene](#) - 9:30 AM - **OREGON-RELATED**

Eugene City Councilors 4 Sale

[image]Yes, some of the Eugene, OR City Councilors can be bought. These elected individuals have motivations for their decisions that certainly are not for the citizens they supposedly represent. Perhaps the main demigod is Bonny Bettman. Let's take the...

posted on [Where's Your Brain?](#) in [Eugene](#) - 8:35 AM - **OREGON-RELATED**

something prophetic.

i've been working on a project with some friends of mine. the project has been around counter military recruitment. the project is about the truth of war. our media has hidden from us what war looks like. the recruiters have been lying to our young...

posted on [rivervision](#) in [Eugene](#) - 1:46 AM

more on *rivervision*—

» [oh to say something prophetic](#)

Wings

If I had wings I would fly; if I had motivation I would try; if I had reason I would go. Folks, it's settled. Days are quickly fleeing away with anticipation of what is yet to come. That's right, buck up and buckle up, because I'll be leaving this...

posted on [Citizen Dmitri](#) in [Eugene](#) - 1:30 AM

more on *Citizen Dmitri*—

» [Garden](#) - **OREGON-RELATED**

» [Nation](#)

» [Cowards](#)

Sunday, March 13th

St. Patrick's Day Spuds

Our local paper ran an article in the Food Section about a Eugene woman who prepares an annual Irish Dinner to celebrate more than beer at St Patricks Day. This year, Betty Speck is serving up: Mushroom Soup Chanterelle with pratie oaten (potato and...

posted on [Brownie Points](#) in [Eugene](#) - 11:30 PM - **OREGON-RELATED**

Wiped Out

Do, I dug a lot of trenches. Ben, Sean and Eiji hlped but in the end I dug a lot of trenches. Now I feel like I had my ass kicked my a giant evil robot. That feeling is a mix of satisfaction and pain. Also, Mom and Dad got here around 4. They brought...

posted on [Go Elsewhere For Your...](#) in [Eugene](#) - 11:16 PM

iPod Shuffle Clone Introduced

from ipodlounge: LuxPro, a Taiwan-based maker of digital audio products, has introduced what can only be described as a blatant rip-off of Apple's iPod shuffle. LuxPro's "Super shuffle," which is being shown this week at the CeBIT conference in Germany...

posted on [Eugene Freaks](#) in [Eugene](#) - 9:29 PM

Barbershop

[image] © Punkin Dunkin...

posted on [No Whammies...](#) in [Eugene](#) - 9:16 PM

more on *No Whammies...*—

» [Baptist© Punkin Dunkin Productions](#)

RIP Sony FX240

So I spent the last 3ish hours taking apart my old sony laptop carefully removing the power connector from my oldschool fujitsu tablet thingy then carefully removing the sony's power connector and installing the one from the tablet to the.....

posted on [Ben's Log](#) in [Eugene](#) - 7:30 PM

30,000

At some point during the night, I broke 30,000 total viewers since launching. Cool...

posted on [Resistance is futile!](#) in [Eugene](#) - 2:45 PM

Moji Gets Fixed - Then Breaks - Gets Fixed Up Again

We took Moji to the vet on Thursday and had her microchipped, vaccinated against rabies, fixed, and licensed. She was in rough shape when she got home, teetering around on drugs and whimpering occasionally. The next day she felt good as new - but since...

posted on [Eugene Freaks](#) in [Eugene](#) - 12:45 PM - **OREGON-RELATED**

more on *Eugene Freaks*—

» [Music Trade Page Updated](#) - **OREGON-RELATED**

Name Needed.

I've started working on a page for the whole photography group/club thing. So far 3.5 members. I signed Chris up but he doesn't know yet. But if anything I would say he is member number 1 or 2 as he.....

posted on [Ben's Log](#) in [Eugene](#) - 9:15 AM

yes, its a long list

i put up a whole long list about the steps i need to take in order to get to a phd program. its a long list, including one step that encapsules the ending of it all, and the whole purpose.. besides the whole becoming a scholar and all that sappy academia...

posted on [rivervision](#) in [Eugene](#) - 1:31 AM

How Sad!

A mound of laundry cover the carpet in my bedroom, I finally get the courage to take care of my domestic chores but I discover I'm 2 dollars. I go to my local 7/11 buy some toothpaste and ask for 3 dollars in quarters, the overweight non-gendered Pat...

posted on [Verba Volant, Scripta Manent](#) in [Eugene](#) - 12:01 AM - [6 clicks] - **OREGON-RELATED**

Saturday, March 12th

WTF is up with Blogger?

It took me like ten tries to get this page up. So anyway, I got a lot accomplished today! I have a lot of intresting shizznit to cover so pull up a chair. Go to the bathroom now if you have to go. Lauren is sick so I slept in the baby's room last...

posted on [Go Elsewhere For Your...](#) in [Eugene](#) - 11:15 PM - [4 clicks]

Global positioning says... Oregon coast

We're visiting Anne Marie's mother on the Oregon coast this weekend. It's the usual fun of visiting my mother-in-law, helping to do her taxes, and making dinner (so she doesn't have to make dinner for us). In addition, it was an amazingly beautiful and...

posted on [Following Edge](#) in [Eugene](#) - 9:30 PM - [4 clicks] - **OREGON-RELATED**

I am in love with a new comic

"robot comix", to be specific...

posted on [medialyte.com](#) in [Eugene](#) - 9:15 PM

Happy Spring

Daily Meme? Saturday Special Name Two... 1. Favorite Snacks? Triscuits & Extra Sharp Cheddar Juicy Gala Apple 2. Favorite Family Games? Balderdash Scrabble 3. Favorite Hobbies? Cooking Reading Today I got a call from Ryoko, our former...

posted on [just blu](#) in [Eugene](#) - 6:00 PM

more on *just blu*—

» [A Wothy Cause](#)

Replacing Parts on the car

The Roundel The Cowlcover The Wheel Liner Those are all going to be replaced soon. Because they are worn out and or ugly. So once I get paid I will have those on the way. Come tuesday I will order.....

posted on [Ben's Log](#) in [Eugene](#) - 4:45 PM

III

Just watched the next StarWars [Episode II] movie trailer. I see some familiar faces : C-3PO, Yoda and a Wookiee! Looks like there will be plenty of action with lightsabers drawn. Can't wait! May 19, 2005 "Much to learn, you still have." -...

posted on [SpaceTramp](#) in [Eugene](#) - 4:30 PM

more on *SpaceTramp*—

» [III](#)

Symptom of Spring Fever

After a minute of zoning out, Matt looks over at me smiling and asks, "What are you doing there?" I had Reid's hackey sack inside my fist with a hole open so my pointer finger on my other hand could poke at it repeatedly. Jesus.....

posted on [Tony Lucero's Meanderings](#) in [Eugene](#) - 3:31 PM

Another local

Go read the writings of Maddie Dog, author of Where's Your...

posted on [Resistance is futile!](#) in [Eugene](#) - 2:42 PM

Eugene Torrents Update

Most of the Eugene recordings that you can download from the Torrents Tracker now have information on the Eugene Torrents sub-blog including setlists and recording details. Remember that if you download files using BitTorrent these audio tracks are in...

posted on [Eugene Freaks](#) in [Eugene](#) - 12:44 PM - **OREGON-RELATED**

more on *Eugene Freaks*—

» [Solidarity with Striking City Bus Drivers](#) - **OREGON-RELATED**

UGB

I drove to work early yesterday, through the downtown core. Still relatively quiet - steam lingered around the manholes. I wanted to park my vehicle, get out and just wander about - peer in windows, feel the city wake up. But what is happening to our...

posted on [SpaceTramp](#) in [Eugene](#) - 11:16 AM

Eugene, Or.

[image] © Punkin Dunkin...

posted on [No Whammies...](#) in [Eugene](#) - 10:02 AM - [4 clicks] - **OREGON-RELATED**

Showme. Bestbuy. More.

Jon sent in a new showme but it is too small to be used I requested a larger version. I think I am going to changethe submission page ask for a min width and I forgot a couple of the.....

posted on [Ben's Log](#) in [Eugene](#) - 9:00 AM

Facing the chainsaws

These people are heroes in my book.(via Eugene Register-Guard) Eleven protesters were arrested Wednesday near the Fiddler timber sale after they chained themselves underneath a Forest Service vehicle crossing an Illinois River bridge, officials said....

posted on [Green Ink!](#) in [Eugene](#) - 1:51 AM - **OREGON-RELATED**

more on *Green Ink!*—

» [Oily bastards crawl from the slime](#)

Friday, March 11th



Vomit on my head

Oh you're gonna love this. Work was fine, boring but fine. Only one more week left. I get home, go to the bathroom, do my business and there's no toilet paper. I yell to Lauren and she asks "What do you want me to do?" I, of course, want her to...

posted on [Go Elsewhere For Your...](#) in [Eugene](#) - 11:45 PM

more on *Go Elsewhere For Your...*—

- » [Vomit on my head](#)
- » [Last weeks keywords](#)
- » [All the weeks links!](#)
- » [Horribly Un-PC Joke Angi Told Me](#)



Carnival of Cordite

The Fourth Carnival of Cordite is up over at The Anarchangel. Lots of great photos this week, like this one: [image] All this and more, up at The Anarchangel. Thanks, Chris, for being an excellent guest host. And next week, we will have another...

posted on [Resistance is futile!](#) in [Eugene](#) - 6:54 PM

more on *Resistance is futile!*—

- » [Carnival of the Recipes](#)



I don't know what to do with it.

Now that it's here I don't know what to do with it. It is going to be to dark to wash my car in a matter of minuets so thats out. I'm out of money until tuesday (payday). Tiffany will.....

posted on [Ben's Log](#) in [Eugene](#) - 6:30 PM



Book club and other reading stuff.

Well I finished "Caves of Steel" last night. I still agree with my earlier analysis, when done with the book I can honestly say I enjoyed reading it. Again, it's slightly dated but heck it was written in the 50s I think (ok I just looked it up - 1954)....

posted on [Tecno-Hick](#) in [Eugene](#) - 3:46 PM



These Days

The past few days have been a complete whirlwind that all start with a beautiful sunny day and end up with being called an ass and thus drinking and smoking the shitstorm away, then brooding for hours in bed instead of sleeping. I've been productive,...

posted on [Tony Lucero's Meanderings](#) in [Eugene](#) - 3:30 PM

Shakra To The Future!

An old friend weighs in. So it is not unexpected that Commentator staff members would turn to the First Amendment instead of taking responsibility for their privilege. And as the microcosmic vanguard for white, patriarchal America on campus, the law fully...

posted on [Oregon Commentator Online](#) in [Eugene](#) - 1:15 PM

more on *Oregon Commentator Online*—

» [Oh, The Insanity](#) - **OREGON-RELATED**

» [ELECTION TIME](#)

Why I Hate Unions

United Auto Workers says, "Hey, Marines, get your damn Bush-stickered foreign cars the hell out of our parking lot!" So much about this pisses me off. But, hey, it's their private property, so they can do what they want. And I will make sure I only buy...

posted on [Resistance is futile!](#) in [Eugene](#) - 10:14 AM - [4 clicks] - **OREGON-RELATED**

Wood Mill

[image] © Punkin Dunkin...

posted on [No Whammies...](#) in [Eugene](#) - 10:01 AM - [4 clicks]

more on *No Whammies...*—

» [Taken somewhere between Phoenix and Chicago,...](#) - [3 clicks] - **OREGON-RELATED**

cha•me•leon

[image] D ef: A changeable or inconstant person. This describes Hillary Clinton to a tee. When she decided she wanted to become a Senator she simply picked a state - New York - then changed into a New York resident. It didn't matter that she really...

posted on [Where's Your Brain?](#) in [Eugene](#) - 10:00 AM



Star Wars III Theatrical Trailer

I taped "The O.C." last night so I could get up bright and early this morning to watch the new theatrical trailer. Looks like the upcoming movie will be the best of the "prequels", very intense and a lot darker than the first 2. This is also rated P-G...

posted on [The Wines Family](#) in [Eugene](#) - 7:00 AM



here there and everywhere. its about growth.

i have thoughts to write down, but i truly don't have the time to create thoughtful thoughts to write down. i'm going back to school. august of 2006 i'll be back in school. i'm looking forward to it. i'm glad that i have a plan. and i'm glad that my...

posted on [rivervision](#) in [Eugene](#) - 1:01 AM

Thursday, March 10th



Shopping Up A Storm

I've been having alot of fun recently. I'm pretending I'm back in school and creating little art projects for myself. Today was the sign up day for classes at the Craft Center and I just signed up for a marble making class (how cool is that!) and I've

posted on [Brownie Points](#) in [Eugene](#) - 11:45 PM



Ban internet hunting in Oregon

What kind of sleazeball sits at his PC and operates a live gun to kill a live animal? Apparently some folks are willing to shell out big bucks to do just that, in Texas. The Oregon Legislature has introduced a bill that would ban such hands-free...

posted on [Green Ink!](#) in [Eugene](#) - 11:30 PM - [OREGON-RELATED](#)

Eugene post excerpts are also available as [XML](#) ([more info](#))

the uo's newsletter for faculty, staff, and graduate teaching fellows



'UO Day' at the Capitol

Members of the faculty and staff, as well as alumni and other UO supporters, are invited to join university officials March 30 in Salem at "UO Day at the Capitol," a key annual opportunity for volunteers to rally support for the university's legislative priorities and to talk with elected officials.

The university's Office of Public and Government Affairs (PGA) organizes the event each legislative session, providing talking points for volunteer advocates and arranging appointments with legislators. Volunteers will meet with individual legislators in small groups and then attend a reception for all legislators at 4 p.m.

Michael Redding, associate vice president for PGA, says the event is an essential part of the university's successful advocacy for its legislative priorities. "When volunteers demonstrate their concern and interest in the university's issues by devoting a day to come talk with legislators, they listen," he said.

This year, volunteers will advocate support of the governor's proposed higher education budget that ends the state's disinvestment. They also will talk to legislators about funding for the College of Education's capital project. The UO is asking the state to provide general obligation bonds to fund half of the \$48 million cost of the expansion and renovation project. The university has already secured more than \$11 million in private contributions for the building and expects to raise a total of \$24 million—half the total cost of construction—through *Campaign Oregon*.

A third item on the priorities list is \$7 million to support the Oregon Nanoscience and Microtechnologies Institute (ONAMI), a collaboration between the UO, Oregon State University, Portland State University and other partners.

In addition to information about the College of Education building project and ONAMI, displays will be set up in the Capitol that highlight the UO's Community Service Center activities that assist rural communities throughout Oregon.

Those interested in participating in the UO Day at the Capitol should contact Tim Black, PGA director of projects, at (541) 346-5023 or via e-mail at timblack@uoregon.edu.

[For UO state legislative priorities 2005.](#)

— Kathy Madison, communications officer



[Back to Inside Oregon](#)

Each issue of Inside Oregon is archived on the web at <http://duckhenge.uoregon.edu/inside/archive.php> . If this issue displays improperly, please go there for the correct version.

Inside Oregon is the official newsletter for employees of the University of Oregon and is published biweekly during the academic year and monthly in June, July and August.

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[Call for contributions and schedule](#)

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UNIVERSITY OF OREGON

government affairs

GIVE EVENTS HOT TOPICS

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Public and Government
AffairsTrademark
Management

Advancement

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The University of Oregon draws upon an extensive network of grassroots advocates to pursue its legislative objectives - alumni, Foundation trustees, students and their families, faculty and friends of the university. Efforts include programs implemented in partnership with the UO Alumni Association and the UO Foundation Board of Trustees. The Office of Governmental Affairs trains and educates advocates on legislative issues and effective advocacy techniques

- [Advocacy Guide](#)
- [UO State Legislative Priorities 2005 \(pdf file\)](#)
- [UO Federal Priorities FY06, March 2005 \(pdf file\)](#)

Note regarding advocacy by state employees

UO employees may not advocate or lobby for or against any candidate, ballot measure, or legislative issue - including agency budgets - on their work time or using state resources. Restrictions include the use of UO e-mail accounts (oregon, darkwing, gladstone, etc.) to lobby elected officials or to encourage others to lobby elected officials. For more information, please see:

- [Lobbying Guidelines for State Employees](#); and
- [Restrictions on Political Campaigning by Public Employees \(pdf file\)](#).

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Homeland 'In'Security Symposium Examines Post-9/11 Terrain

How the "9/11 moment" changed the United States and the cross-border regions of North America is the focus of a two-day discussion by internationally known scholars, regional activists and community leaders. "Homeland 'In'Security: Race, Immigration and Labor in Post-September 11 North America" takes place Thursday and Friday, March 31 and April 1, in Room 175 at the Knight Law Center, 1515 Agate St.

All talks and panel discussions are free and open to the public unless otherwise indicated. Topics include:

- Impacts of the war on terrorism on immigration, national security, and guest labor;
- Constructing borders and communities of color inside and outside the United States;
- Legal systems and the reconstructions of race and ethnicity after 9/11;
- Immigrant, refugee, and of color community responses to law and policy shifts in North America.

Thursday evening's program, set for 7 to 8:30 p.m., will include a keynote address and roundtable discussion, "Re-Burdening the White Man (and the Rest of Us): National Security and Race Viewed from within the Empire." The featured speaker is Roberto Lovato, a political essayist with Pacifica News Service, a frequent contributor on politics to *The Nation* and other prominent periodicals, and a 2003 recipient of the George Washington Williams Fellowship for independent media.

A roundtable discussion follows with Shaul Cohen, UO associate professor of geography; Ibrahim Hamide, owner and chef of Eugene's Cafe Soriah and a Eugene-based international peace activist; Raquel Hecht, founding partner of Eugene's Hecht & Smith LLP (a firm specializing in immigration law); Ramon Ramirez, president of Pineros y Campesinos Unidos del Noroeste (PCUN) and CAUSA, Oregon's immigrant rights organization; and Magdalena Rose-Avila, executive director of Seattle's Northwest Immigrant Rights Project.

A public reception in the law center's Morse Commons will take place immediately following the session.

Three panel discussions will take place on Friday. The day's first panel, from 10 a.m. to 12:15 p.m., features "Race, Immigration, and Deportation at the Canada-U.S. Borderland." Chairing the discussion will be Susan Hardwick, UO professor of geography.

Presenters include Margaret Knox, a UO graduate student; David Ley, professor of

geography at the University of British Columbia; Wei Li, associate professor of Asian Pacific American studies at Arizona State University; Matthew Sparke, associate professor of geography at the University of Washington; and Sokhom Tauch, director of the Immigrant and Refugee Community Organization, Portland. Alec Murphy, a UO geography professor, will serve as discussant.

From 1:15 to 3 p.m. Friday, a panel chaired by Keith Aoki, UO Knight Professor of Law, will explore "The War on Terror: Immigrant Rights and Racialization of Citizenship."

Joining Aoki will be presenters Muneer Ahmad, associate professor of law at American University; Lynn Fujiwara, UO assistant professor of sociology and of women's and gender studies; Renee Saucedo, director of La Raza Centro Legal in San Francisco; and Irum Sheikh, a postdoctoral fellow in ethnic studies at the University of California at Berkeley. Joining the group as discussant will be D. Michael Dale, executive director of the Northwest Workers Justice Project in Portland.

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Homeland 'In'Security is also the culminating event of the UO's "Canada Week '05," organized by the UO Canadian Studies Committee. Preceding the symposium are the following special activities:

- Beginning March 28, a select display of photos from the Artic National Wildlife Refuge, taken by photographer Subhankar Banerjee, on the second floor of the Knight Law Center, 1515 Agate St.
- 7 p.m. Monday, March 28: A screening of the Canadian film, "The Fast Runner," in Room 112 of the Lillis Business Complex, 955 E. 13th Ave.
- 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. Wednesday, March 30: An appreciation lunch (by invitation only) for the UO Canadian Studies Committee, Center on Diversity and Community (CoDaC), the Wayne Morse Center for Law and Politics and other guests, hosted by the Canadian Consulate of Seattle.
- 2 p.m. Wednesday, March 30: A free public talk, "Francophone Issues in Western Canada," by Pamela Sing, professor of literature at the University of Alberta, in the Rogue Room of the Erb Memorial Union, 1222 E. 13th Ave.

Support for the interdisciplinary event comes from the UO Canadian Studies Committee, the College of Arts and Sciences, the Center for the Study of Women in Society, the Oregon Humanities Center, the Ethnic Studies Program, the International Studies Program, the Women's and Gender Studies Program, the Department of Geography, the Society of

American Law Teachers Peace/Post 9-11 Committee, the Office of the Canadian Consulate General in Seattle and the Oregon Public Affairs Network.

For more information, contact John Shuford, (541) 346-3212, or visit the [CoDaC website](#).



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Hewlett-Packard Gift Boosts UO's 'Small Science'

Hewlett-Packard has donated a powerful analytical instrument to the University of Oregon that will enable researchers to zero in on particles only a few tens of nanometers in size—ten times smaller than the researchers' existing equipment will allow. The scanning Auger microscope is one of only a handful in Oregon and will be part of the university's Center for Advanced Materials Characterization in Oregon (CAMCOR), a major research facility for the UO's rapidly growing nanoscience program.

The Auger microscope uses an electron beam to determine the chemical composition of the outermost atomic layers of a material. The instrument also can map materials composition below the surface by using an argon source to remove layers as it probes downward. Since the electron beam can be as small as 13 nanometers, it can analyze extremely small features, making it highly valuable to UO research into thermoelectric and semiconducting materials that are cornerstone projects of the Oregon Nanoscience and Microtechnologies Institute (ONAMI).

"This donation demonstrates HP's continued support of ONAMI," said Dave Johnson, CAMCOR director. "We are grateful that HP recognizes the importance of state-of-the-art materials characterization to both the academic and industrial users of CAMCOR."

The Auger microscope adds to CAMCOR's suite of more than 20 analytical tools that are available for use by academic as well as industrial researchers. The tools include instruments for microanalysis, surface analysis, electron microscopy and semiconductor device fabrication, as well as traditional chemical characterization. CAMCOR employs several full-time staff scientists who operate and maintain its equipment.

Ron DeBord, the program manager for HP's Physical Analysis Laboratory that donated the instrument, adds, "This tool will enhance CAMCOR's ability to analyze the thin films and device structures for applications ranging from nanotechnology to understanding the chemistry of corrosion."

The gift of this instrument comes less than one year after HP donated building space valued at \$2 million to ONAMI at Oregon State University. Skip Rung, director of ONAMI, said the contribution further demonstrates HP's commitment to ONAMI's success.

"Oregon is fortunate to have in HP not only one of the world's most sophisticated and creative 'small-tech' research and development operations, but also one of the world's great corporate citizens," Rung said. The Auger microscope went through a \$400,000 upgrade

several years ago and would cost more than \$1 million to buy new today.

ONAMI is focused on research and commercialization of nanoscience and microtechnologies, in order to create new products, companies and jobs in the Pacific Northwest. It unites the UO, Oregon State and Portland State University with the Pacific Northwest National Laboratory in Richland, Wash., the State of Oregon and private industry.

—Kathy Madison, communications officer



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American Chemical Society Lauds 'Coach' of Women Scientists

< *Geri Richmond*

UO chemistry professor Geri Richmond is the 2005 winner of the American Chemical Society's Award for Encouraging Women into Careers in the Chemical Sciences. The award recognizes Richmond for her life-changing work as the founder and chair of COACH (the Committee on the Advancement of Women Chemists), a national organization she started in 1998 with a group of fellow senior women chemistry faculty members determined to address the disparity in hiring and promotion of women in academic chemistry departments.

During her acceptance speech at the society's annual meeting tomorrow in San Diego, Richmond plans to announce new COACH programs, including an effort to help minority women. She will use the award's \$10,000 prize to expand COACH mentor programs to Europe and Latin America. The group also plans to hold a series of campus events for science faculty members and administrators of both sexes.

"Geri has worked tirelessly on behalf of women scientists and provided me with a wonderful friendship that has helped me through difficult times in my career," says Harvard chemistry professor Cynthia Friend, a member of the COACH advisory board. "This is a difficult time for women scientists, and the support of Geri and our colleagues in the chemistry community is critical."

Richmond's influence stems from her standing as one of the world's leading research chemists.

"In just six years, she has helped reframe the conversation about how women scientists can reach the highest levels in academia," says UO President Dave Frohnmayr. "Geri's exceptional leadership ability is quite literally transforming many women's careers. What is unique about Geri is that she is as well known for her scientific achievements as she is for promoting diversity in the scientific workforce. We are proud she has made the University of Oregon the home base for COACH, and we anticipate great success as she expands its reach abroad."

COACH is making progress despite daunting demographics, says Richmond, who holds the Richard M. and Patricia H. Noyes Distinguished Professorship at the UO. Projections anticipate an overall decline in interest in science, engineering and technology careers after 2010, especially among women and underrepresented minorities. The U.S. Office of Science and Technology Policy also predicts the number of 22-year-olds receiving bachelor's degrees

in science and technology will drop markedly, to less than 11 percent of the total by 2050.

Improving this outlook isn't a question of whether women are innately interested in science, Richmond contends.

"With fully one-third of doctorates in chemistry being earned by women, it's clear they have the interest," she says. "The key question should be, what is happening after they earn those degrees to prevent their advancement?"

Under Richmond's leadership, COACH has developed a number of workshops in negotiation, management and leadership skills tailored to help women achieve their professional goals. COACH also has created leadership forums to assist organizations in their quests to enable all those interested in science careers to become full participants in the scientific enterprise.

"What I'm most proud of," Richmond says, "is that 95 percent of the women chemists who have participated in the COACH workshops report they have gone on to mentor other women in their departments. It's an avalanche effect."

—Melody Ward Leslie, media relations assistant director



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Honors and Distinctions



McLucas' Dedication to Music Earns Distinction

< *Anne Dhu McLucas*

A love for American music inspired Anne Dhu McLucas to make music her career, and her ability to transmit that passion to others recently was honored by the Society for American Music.

The UO music professor received the society's Distinguished Service Citation for 2005. A music historian and ethnomusicologist, McLucas was dean of the UO School of Music from 1992-2002.

"Anne has contributed enormously to the growth, sustenance and management of our society on many levels," says Paul Wells, former president of the Society of American Music and director of the Center for Popular Music.

The award, presented to a member who has provided "exemplary and continued service to the society and its mission," is given annually.

"Anne's work as a national leader in her field has helped reinforce our school's importance and high ranking as a leader among music schools in the United States," says Brad Foley, UO music dean. "Her enthusiasm for her research and teaching is reflected in her service to our profession."

McLucas, who was president of the society during her tenure as UO music dean, also has served on the editorial advisory board of "American Music" and has provided leadership for a variety of the society's national committees. She hosted the society's annual meeting in February in Eugene.

Her musical and scholarly interests range from 18th-century musical theater to contemporary popular music; from traditional balladry to the works of John Cage; and from the music of Mescalero Apache rituals to the traditions of Irish-Americans.

Oregon Academy of Science Honors UO Professors

The Oregon Academy of Science has named Ewart Baldwin, professor emeritus of geological sciences, as its Outstanding Scientist for 2005 and Richard Taylor, associate professor of

physics, as its Outstanding Teacher in Higher Education for 2005. The awards were presented Feb. 26 during the association's annual meeting at the Oregon State University campus in Corvallis.

"These awards to Professors Baldwin and Taylor underscore the excellence of the UO in both research and teaching in the sciences—as well as across the entire campus," says Joe Stone, dean of the College of Arts and Sciences.

Baldwin is the foremost authority on the historical geology of Oregon and has been at the UO for 58 years. He has mapped more than 4,000 square miles of southwestern Oregon and the southern Oregon coast as a field geologist and professor studying the geological record of the Tertiary period, stretching from 65 million to 2.3 million years ago.

Taylor is known for discovering a way to authenticate the artwork of Jackson Pollock and for his recent research revealing that fractals found in nature can significantly reduce stress.

He teaches about 450 students each term, and his version of the UO course, "Physics of Light and Color," is described by many as the best class they've ever taken. He draws from his experience in physics, psychology and art—an unusual blending of talents that is reflected in his internationally recognized research on fractals, fascinating geometric patterns that repeat at ever smaller scales to produce irregular shapes and surfaces that cannot be represented by classical geometry.

—Melody Leslie, media relations assistant director

Venture Team Wins Can Am Bowl Business Plan Competition

CleanSmart, a venture team made up of three UO students, captured top honors over the weekend at the Can Am Bowl business plan competition held at the University of Manitoba.

As first place winners, CleanSmart won \$10,000 in Canadian dollars and an automatic invitation to the 2005 Moot Corp competition held at the University of Texas in May. Team members are David Grove, Eric Brunsvold and William Glasson.

Founded on patent-pending technology developed by the Pacific Northwest National Laboratory in Richland, Wash., CleanSmart offers an environmentally benign technology that removes chromated copper arsenate (CCA) from wood, leaving clean and resalable wood mulch, chromium, copper and arsenic.

CleanSmart's initial market entry is focused on Norway where the need for technology stems from legislation that classifies CCA as a hazardous waste and restricts its use and disposal. Revenue will be based on treatment services, reselling component materials and consulting. CleanSmart's expansion strategy includes the United Kingdom and other countries within the European Union.

This is the second win at a major business plan competition this year for the Lundquist center. Previously, Perpetua won the CinCom Spirit of Enterprise Competition held at the University of Cincinnati.



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Campus Briefs



Governor's Food Drive Exceeds Goal on Campus

UO faculty and staff members and students contributed more than 137,238 pounds of food to the 25th annual Governor's Food Drive, far exceeding the ambitious goal organizers set this year.

The drive was a benefit for Food for Lane County and the Oregon Food Bank and ran through the month of February. This year's campus-wide goal of 125,000 pounds was 20,000 pounds higher than the amount donated in 2004.

"Everybody went all-out this year," says Karen Scheeland, who coordinated the campus-wide food drive. "Contributors had lots of ways to get involved, making it easy for people to be a part of the solution to the very real hunger problem in Oregon."

Organizers sold chocolate hearts in advance of Valentine's Day, held auctions, conducted intradepartment competitions and heaped praise on those who donated. There were food barrels in many buildings, and individuals who wished to donate cash could write checks or authorize payroll deductions.

The cash donations collected total \$22,330 says Scheeland "Every dollar counts as six pounds of food, so the cash contributions mean a lot," she emphasizes.

One of the largest individual contributions came from Brian Stanley, an assistant director in the Office of Admissions. Stanley donated the ingredients and his labor to bake and sell 340 dozen of his building-famous snickerdoodle cookies, raising \$1,601.

The Lundquist College of Business (LCB) raised \$5,323 through an auction and candy sales. Robin Bagent, recruiting coordinator, and Joyce Stevenson, undergraduate data administrator, organized the auction. Heather Nichols, an LCB student who coordinates "volunteer ideas" for the Beta Alpha Psi accounting club, sold more candy in four days of this year's food drive than the school had sold the previous four years combined, Bagent said.

Psychology department business manager Becky Goodrich raised \$3,700 (22,245 pounds) within her area, while executive support specialist Lexy Wellman raised \$1,095 (6,650 pounds) in the College of Arts and Sciences Dean's Office. Kristie Vachon, fiscal manager, and Cheri Smith, undergraduate coordinator, headed up the food drive effort at Computer

and Information Science, collecting \$1,712 (10,535 pounds), more than half of which came through payroll deductions. Human Resources food drive organizers Cindi Peterson, benefits specialist, and Lisa Plumb, benefits coordinator, raised \$866 (5,288 pounds) using personal recognition to encourage donations.

[Click here](#) for more information about the hunger situation in Lane County and the many ways departments encouraged donations to the 2005 Governor's Food Drive.

-Kathy Madison, communications officer

UO Kicks Off 'Year of Physics' with Celebration of Einstein's Legacy

This year marks a worldwide celebration of the centennial of what's known as Einstein's "miraculous year." Within a few months in 1905, Einstein changed the way people think about space, time, matter and energy by publishing the theory of special relativity, laying the foundation for quantum mechanics, and showing that molecules actually exist.

On March 24, a free public talk by one of the world's leading theoretical physicists will kick off a series of events celebrating "World Year of Physics 2005" at the UO.

Kip Thorne will describe "Einstein's Legacy in the Modern World: From Black Holes to Quantum Cryptography" at 7 p.m. in Room 100 of Willamette Hall, 1371 E. 13th Ave. A public reception will follow in Willamette Hall's Paul Olum Atrium. The event is intended for a general audience, although several leading experts on gravitation also will attend as part of the 21st Pacific Coast Gravity Meeting being hosted by the university in conjunction with Thorne's talk.

"This talk will be accessible to anyone interested in the science of how nature works," says Jim Isenberg, UO professor of math and a colleague of Thorne. "Kip is known throughout the world, both for his leading role in the scientific community and for his beautiful public talks."

Thorne, the Feynman Professor of Theoretical Physics at the California Institute of Technology, and Isenberg belong to what began as a relatively small community of scientists around the world working on general relativity, the science of gravitational physics.

"We both had the same adviser, Princeton physics professor John Wheeler, who also was adviser to Richard Feynman. John was one of two or three people in the world who revived interest in general relativity during the '60s," says Isenberg, who chairs the American Physical Society's Group for Gravitation. "Kip and I co-founded an annual conference on general relativity in 1985--the Pacific Coast Gravity Meeting--so we started interacting more regularly."

The pair work on different sides of gravitational physics; Isenberg focuses on mathematics, while Thorne specializes in astrophysics.

Thorne's talk is the first of three special events this spring designed for the public-at-large by the UO Department of Physics in tribute to Einstein.

Doors will open at 3 p.m. on Saturday, April 30, when "Dr. Stan the Science Man" (also known as UO physics instructor Stan Micklavzina) will bring an expanded Science Circus to the auditorium of South Eugene High School, 400 E. 19th Ave. A donation of \$5 per person is suggested, as a benefit for Ridgeline Montessori School, which is sponsoring the event.

Renowned for engaging, playful shows that demonstrate physics in action, Micklavzina, a member of the American Association of Physics Teachers (AAPT), is an active member of an international planning team working on the World Year of Physics. He has received grants from the AAPT and the American Physical Society to take physics on the road in 2005.

At 7 p.m. on Thursday, May 19, Jim Brau, UO professor of physics, will discuss recent developments in particle physics and cosmology. His talk will be in Room 100 of Willamette Hall, followed by a public reception in the Paul Olum Atrium. Brau brings to this event his perspective as a leader on the International Linear Collider (ILC), one of the biggest projects in the history of science. He cochairs both the World Wide Study for Future Linear Colliders and the American Linear Collider Physics Group. The linear collider is the next frontier experiment in particle physics.

For more information on these events, contact the UO Department of Physics, (541) 346-4751.

-Melody Leslie, assistant director, media relations

Faculty Nominations Sought for Fellows Program

Nominations of UO junior faculty members are being sought for the Association of Pacific Rim Universities (APRU) sixth annual Fellows Program set for Aug. 14-27 in both Canada and Malaysia.

This year's program is being hosted by the University of British Columbia (Canada) and the University of Malaysia. The theme for the program is "New Directions in Asian Studies: Ethnicity and Nationalism Before and After the Digital Age."

Designed as an interdisciplinary gathering, the two-week program will assemble faculty members from the humanities and social sciences, international relations, law, political science, computing and economics, as well as the physical sciences and engineering, who are interested in issues relating to the trends of ethnicity and nationalism in Asia before and after the advent of digital technology. The APRU Fellows Program provides a unique intellectual and personal experience for participants, connecting outstanding junior faculty members with counterparts from top research universities around the Pacific Rim.

One week of the program will be hosted by the University of British Columbia, with the second hosted by the University of Malaysia. For more information on the APRU and previous fellow programs, visit the [APRU website](#).

The Office of the Vice President for Research will pay each UO fellow's registration fee (this covers accommodations, food, and other program expenses at both host universities), which will be slightly less than \$3,000 per registrant. The Office of International Programs will provide \$700 per individual to support a portion of the travel costs. (Nominees are being encouraged, however, to indicate in their applications whether they may have access to partial travel funding from other sources.)

Please submit names, a brief description of the individual's academic interests as they relate to this program, and a short biography to Moira Kiltie, assistant vice president for research, by e-mail at kiltie@uoregon.edu. The deadline for nominations is Thursday, March 31.

Knight Library Extended Hours Continue Through March 18

The Knight Library continues its "24-7" open hours through March 18 to accommodate UO students and faculty and staff members who need extended hours for study and research during finals week.

Those using the Knight Library during this period will be required to show a current university ID to remain in or enter the building during the following hours: midnight-8 a.m. Monday through Friday; 7 p.m. Friday to 11 a.m. Saturday; and 7 p.m. Saturday to 11 a.m. Sunday.

During the extended hours noted above, access to photocopy machines and Information Technology Center (ITC) computers and printers will be available. However, no other services (checkout of library materials, reserves and video checkout or reference assistance), will be available during extended hours.

All UO branch libraries will maintain their usual academic term hours throughout dead week and finals week.

In Memory of John Baldwin

An on-campus memorial service and celebration of life is planned for John Baldwin, long-time UO associate professor of planning, public policy and management, who died unexpectedly March 7. The remembrance will take place from 3 p.m. to 5 p.m. on Friday, March 18, in Gerlinger Alumni Lounge.

Doors will open at 2:30 p.m. Those who would like to share comments about Baldwin and his life should contact the Department of Planning, Public Policy and Management (PPPM) by e-mail, pppm@uoregon.edu, or telephone, (541) 346-3808, before noon March 18 to be scheduled to speak. There will be several memory books available for people to write their recollections for Baldwin's family. For those who wish to send flowers for the service, please deliver them to the PPPM office in 119 Hendricks Hall before 2 p.m. March 18.

Gifts in memory of Baldwin can be made to support a scholarship or fund in his name at the Department of Planning, Public Policy and Management. Send contributions to John Baldwin Memorial Fund, University of Oregon Foundation, P.O. Box 3346, Eugene, OR 97403-0346.

[Click here](#) for a personal remembrance by Baldwin's friend and former student, Eben Fodor, president of Fodor & Associates, a community planning consulting business in Eugene.



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the uo's newsletter for faculty, staff, and graduate teaching fellows

Featured Author



Children's Book on Mahjong is Computer Expert's First Work

< Ginnie Lo

Virginia (Ginnie) Lo's happy childhood in West Lafayette, Ind., is the basis for *Mahjong All Day Long* (Walker and Company, 2005), a delightful tale tailored for youngsters age 3 to 8.

This is the first book for Lo, an associate professor of computer science, and true to its subject matter, it's a family affair: Her sister, Beth, a ceramics arts professor at the University of Montana, is the book's illustrator. To create the book's distinctive images, she used underglazes and stains on handmade porcelain plates.

"The book came from memories of my extended Chinese family's never-ending mahjong sessions," Lo says. "The game is played and enjoyed by millions of people around the world and the modern version originated in China about 200 years ago."

The sisters learned to play mahjong as kids while sitting on their father's lap, and both continue to play to this day. When not playing mahjong in Eugene with her husband, children, and mother, who lives next door, Lo explores ways to harness the possibilities of what can be accomplished when hundreds and thousands of computers work together. This research and teaching specialty is referred to as parallel, distributed and peer-to-peer computing.



Purchase Lo's new work at the [UO Bookstore](#).

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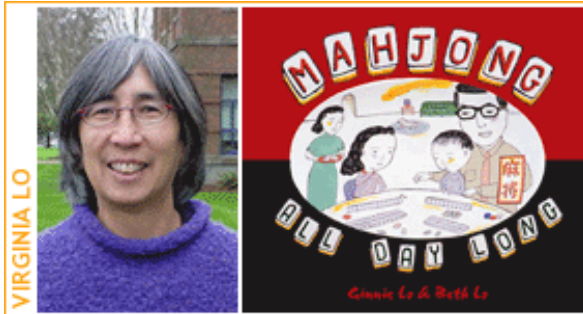
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Associate Professor
Computer Science Department

Virginia Lo (Ginnie) is an Associate Professor in the Computer Science Department, specializing in parallel, distributed, and peer-to-peer computing. Her work explores ways to harness the computational power of hundreds to thousands of computers working together to solve problems.

Ginnie wrote the story Mahjong All Day Long from childhood memories of her extended Chinese family's never-ending mahjong sessions. Her sister, Beth Lo, a ceramics arts professor at the University of Montana illustrated the story using underglazes and stains on handmade porcelain plates. They both continue to play mahjong whenever they can. See www.mahjongalldaylong.com for more information about the book.

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in the
news



***The Oregonian* Taps UO Sports Marketing Expert in Critical Look at Trailblazers**

< *Paul Swangard*

The March 14 *Oregonian* Sports section featured an in-depth examination of the Portland Trailblazers' continuing lack of fan support. One of the issues explored within that was whether the team's plunge in popularity makes a case for a change in Trailblazer ownership, and Paul Swangard, managing director of the UO's Warsaw Sports Marketing Center, was a primary source favoring change.

"When you're rebuilding the image of the Blazers, you still have to think one of the big X factors in all this is people's perception of the owner," Swangard is quoted as saying. "Allen just isn't what a lot of people want from the ownership of the franchise they support."

To see the story, [click here](#).

Swangard earned his bachelors degree in journalism in 1990 at the UO and earned his M.B. A. Through the UO Lundquist College of Business and the Warsaw Sports Marketing Center in 1999. After two years in consumer marketing at Intel, he returned to the center in 2001 as managing director. An award-winning journalist, Swangard spent ten years with KEZI-TV in Eugene, serving as the station's sports director from 1994-97.

Slovic Research Noted in *Washington Post*

One of Psychology Professor Paul Slovic's experiments in cognitive thinking is discussed in columnist Eugene Robinson's March 11 *Washington Post* column. The article, "Sum of Our Fears," explores how Americans perceive the horrors of modern life.

He notes Slovic's study on perception in which the UO researcher asked experts and lay people to rank a list of 30 dangers. Nuclear power was ranked most dangerous by regular folks but was only 20th on the list of the experts.

To see the story [click here](#).

Slovic specializes in judgment and decision processes with an emphasis on decision making under conditions of risk. He also studies the factors that underlie perceptions of risk and attempts to assess the importance of these perceptions for the management of risk in society.



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Blazers losing in exit polls

Nearly half of fans respond negatively -- and that was before Miles' outburst and Cheeks' firing

Monday, March 14, 2005

GEOFFREY C. ARNOLD

Fan support for the Blazers continues to decrease despite efforts to reconnect with the community.

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That really isn't news around here. The meager crowd at Wednesday's game at the Rose Garden against the Chicago Bulls provided strong evidence. Official attendance was 14,251, but actual attendance probably was fewer than 10,000.

But the Blazers' internal tracking poll of fans' responses, conducted last fall, is the clearest indication yet that there is much to be done to re-establish a positive feeling with the fan base. The study, which polled 405 randomly selected residents of Multnomah, Clackamas, Washington, Clark and Yamhill counties, revealed fan dissatisfaction with the team in a wide range of areas.

"There's been this negative overtone -- which was self-created to a large degree -- that has been weighing down the franchise," said Paul Swangard, managing director of the University of Oregon's Warsaw Sports Marketing Center. "There has been a sort of ripple effect that has . . . lasted longer than they even expected."

It seems that whenever the Blazers accomplish something positive in relation to the fans -- trading Rasheed Wallace and Bonzi Wells, the 25-point pledge -- and start generating positive feelings, something negative happens.

"When I got here, I thought everything was going in the right direction," said Blazers guard Nick Van Exel, acquired last July in a trade with Golden State. "Then a few things happened -- like the Qyntel (Woods) situation. I guess the fans start saying same old Blazers. I've never come to a situation where the perception is very, very negative."

According to the study, nearly half of the fans' responses about the Blazers were mostly negative, and mostly positive conversations dropped by 18 percent between April 2004 and October 2004. As a topic, discussions about the players' character rose from 30 percent in April to 53 percent in October.

It's likely that the Blazers' image will absorb another hit in the wake of two incidents -- the Darius Miles-Maurice Cheeks flare-up and Cheeks' dismissal as coach -- that occurred after the tracking study was conducted. It probably wouldn't be a surprise if the favorability ratings dropped further in the next tracking survey, which is due in April.

The decision to fire Cheeks will hurt because he scored the highest favorability rating (92 percent) among all non-players and was second to Theo Ratliff (93 percent) overall. Cheeks was popular among fans and was generally viewed as the franchise's most valuable asset.



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The dispute in January between Cheeks and Miles was another blow to the team image. Although accounts of what was said and what happened vary, Miles' words and actions were disturbing enough to prompt a two-game suspension. Then an unsigned document surfaced that proposed to refund the \$150,000 in salary Miles lost during the two-game suspension. The document left fans to wonder whether management was adhering to the 25-point pledge to the fans the team announced in August 2003.

"The conventional wisdom is that if they're doing the survey in the post-Cheeks period, you're probably going to see some hits across the board," Swangard said. "One would assume that those issues would probably drag those responses down."

In the franchise's view, probably one of the most disturbing findings in the survey is that the favorability ratings of Miles and forward Zach Randolph dropped considerably from April to October after each was signed to a multimillion-dollar, long-term contract. Miles' rating slipped slightly, but that number almost certainly will drop further in the next tracking survey. Randolph's plummeted 21 percent.

"I'm here to play basketball, and I can't worry about that," Randolph said. "I've got a lot of fans and a lot of people who show me support when I come to games. I just have to continue doing what I'm doing to help this team out. I have to be a part of the community and get involved with the community more."

Miles blames the Portland media for many of the team's image problems. He said the local media are determined to destroy his character and the team's image.

Miles says he was incredulous when news surfaced of the team dispatching an employee to a gas station to pay Miles' bill after he filled his car but a credit card was declined. Randolph was miffed when the media discovered that the check he wrote to Portland's Bureau of Parks & Recreation to pay for basketball uniforms bounced; he eventually paid the amount in full.

The players say those incidents wouldn't receive nearly as much attention in a larger city with more than one professional sports franchise. But Swangard disagrees, saying some of the player-induced problems would be newsworthy regardless of where they occurred.

"I would say that the New York media would have a field day with the Blazers. I don't think you can simply make a blanket statement that it wouldn't happen in other markets," Swangard said. "I would argue that in other markets where there hasn't been as much fan and -- to a certain extent -- media scrutiny, maybe the coverage wouldn't have been as large, but I don't have any empirical evidence to support that. It's just sort of a guess on our part.

"What I would agree with is it's very challenging when you're the only game in town."

Players getting involved in the community is one way they could help reverse the trend. A perception seemingly exists among the fans that the players don't care about the image of the franchise. That perception was reinforced by inflammatory statements from former players Bonzi Wells and Rasheed Wallace while they were in Portland.

"The message I hear from talking to people inside the organization is that everyone has to buy into this -- a team-first approach," Swangard said. "What's certainly been troubling for several years is the players have maybe been the one group that hasn't necessarily bought into this.

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"I believe that's what they're trying to get back to, which is building the Blazers brand to where it's survivable and not having to hinge on these players, which given the opportunity over the last several years to own the brand of the Blazers, they have, quite honestly, failed miserably (to do). And in some cases with some of the players, they didn't necessarily care. They have said they don't care about the fans. That's troubling."

The Blazers have been attempting to emphasize the franchise and not the players. They would like their fans to start feeling a connection with the team, which perhaps wasn't happening with their veteran players. That realization might have been a factor in the decision to fire Cheeks and start the rebuilding effort with a new group of young players who don't carry a lot of negative baggage.

But it's debatable whether the Blazers will ever return to the glory days of the championship year of 1977 and the days in the late 1980s and early 1990s when they reached the NBA Finals twice in four seasons. That love affair is long gone and might never return. But Swangard says the Blazers can revive the franchise and get back to a good feeling.

"The best they can hope for is being back at a reasonable state of affairs where they have a decent following and it's a good product on the floor," Swangard said. "But the days of people crowding the streets and jumping into the Fox Theater for closed-circuit broadcasting may be over."

"The only thing you have is your credibility, and once you lose that, it may be the hardest thing to re-establish. What the Blazers have right now is a skeptical fan base. Which makes it very difficult, because any of the standard marketing principles we would apply potentially to these types of efforts -- if they have any hint of being unauthentic, they become totally ineffective."

Owner Paul Allen received a favorability rating of 62 percent. Still, some fans see Allen's presence as a negative, which hurts the team's image. The team has developed a reputation around the league for overpaying marginal players of questionable character and being too soft in disciplining players. The billionaire's decision to file bankruptcy to jettison the Rose Garden stunned many fans, and his increasing absence from games is seen as indifference.

Swangard said Allen doesn't compare favorably to his contemporary in the league, billionaire Mark Cuban, owner of the Dallas Mavericks.

"He's customer friendly. He's brought energy and life to the building. He's an extension of the brand of the franchise," Swangard said of Cuban. "(Allen) doesn't have to be Cuban, but there are a lot of things Cuban has done from a business standpoint that the Blazers haven't done that have proved to be very successful in Dallas."

There is a growing perception that Allen should sell the team if the franchise is to make a clean break with the controversy-filled past and start anew.

"They've changed all the players. They've changed all the management. The one constant in all this is his style of ownership," Swangard said. "When you're rebuilding the image of the Blazers, you still have to think one of the big X factors in all this is people's perception of the owner. Allen just isn't what a lot of people want from the ownership of the franchise they support."

"A lot of people think the ultimate answer is that Allen just has to wise up and realize he has to sell the team."

Geoffrey C. Arnold: 503-221-8556; geoffreyarnold@news.oregonian.com

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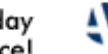
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Eugene Robinson

Columnist



Sum of Our Fears

By Eugene Robinson

Friday, March 11, 2005; Page A23

Today we eschew both cotton-candy indulgence (the Michael Jackson trial) and eat-your-peas sobriety (whither Social Security?) to tuck into more starkly existential fare: If you're the worrying kind, what do you choose from the smorgasbord of dread laid out upon the table of modern life?

Osama bin Laden still out there scheming, somewhere at large? Terrorists with a radioactive "dirty bomb" or just a Ryder truck full of fertilizer and fuel oil? A laboratory accident that looses a real-life Andromeda strain? Iran (almost) with nukes? North Korea (it boasts) with nukes? Something as general as global warming, or as specific as the dangerous intersection on the way to your daughter's school?

Now comes avian influenza, a virus that has jumped from chickens, ducks and geese to humans. Avian flu has infected fewer than 100 people we know of, all in faraway Southeast Asia, yet the head of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention already sees "a very ominous situation for the globe," while a World Health Organization official warns of "the gravest possible danger."

So are we supposed to stop fretting about everything else and focus a laser beam of anxiety toward Vietnamese barnyards? To help make sense of it all, I rounded up a few experts in the burgeoning field of risk analysis.

Paradoxically, the exercise was a comfort. It turns out there's no "right" or "wrong" way to calculate the sum of our fears.

Elizabeth Anderson, who runs a risk-analysis firm and edits an academic journal devoted to the field, pointed out that in deciding what to worry about, "you're comparing risks with varying degrees of certainty, and some may be low probability but high consequence."

In other words, few people (except the parents of teenagers) worry themselves sick about car accidents, which are common but usually minor. An explosion at a nuclear plant, on the other hand, is vastly less likely -- but utterly devastating if it ever happens. Also, one man's risk can be another man's breakfast: Europeans see grave dangers in genetically modified "Frankenfood"; Americans generally don't care if their corn flakes were engineered in a lab.

Paul Slovic, a professor at the University of Oregon, did a striking experiment in which he asked experts and laymen to rank a list of 30 dangers. "Nuclear power," ranked most dangerous by regular folks, was just 20th on the experts' list. The experts, who knew the statistics, were far more concerned about such things as medical X-rays and surgical mishaps.

Further research has led Slovic to conclude that this subjectivity is inherent. We tend to overestimate risks that strike us viscerally with dread -- a dirty bomb that spews radiation, say -- and underestimate risks that don't. Slovic found that we even change our evaluation of a risk depending on the language used to describe it: Illogically, we perceive "20 out of 100" as a greater risk than "one out of five" or "a 20 percent chance."

The experts agreed that there's one thing that can be fixed: how authorities communicate with the public about the risks we face.

Health authorities can give us more than blurred pronouncements of certain doom. They can give us enough information to make an informed assessment. Is there still a good chance the flu will fizzle out? What is that chance, realistically? What's the plan if and when the first human case shows up in this country?

The Department of Homeland Security should lead a similar conversation about terrorism threats. Basically, all we get now is the green-blue-yellow-orange-red color chart, which tells us nothing. Occasionally there's an all-points bulletin for a few people whose only crime may be their swarthinness, but the alert always comes with the admonition to go about our normal lives. Michael Chertoff, new DHS secretary, here's a job for you: Talk to us constructively about what "normal" means these days.

Baruch Fischhoff, a Carnegie Mellon University professor who heads the Society for Risk Analysis, said, "Risk analysis is easier when you have a historical record, but it's a matter of theory when you don't." Trying to judge the risk of any kind of terrorist attack is hard, because by definition, it's an exercise in reading the terrorists' minds.

On the other hand, he noted, there's a long historical record of how influenza outbreaks grow into epidemics that explode into pandemics, and "it's not as if we have to read the minds of the microbes." That record includes the Spanish influenza of 1918-19, which killed between 20 million and 40 million people worldwide.

So if eminent epidemiologists are running around with their hair on fire over avian flu, I'm afraid we might want to pay attention.

eugenerobinson@washpost.com

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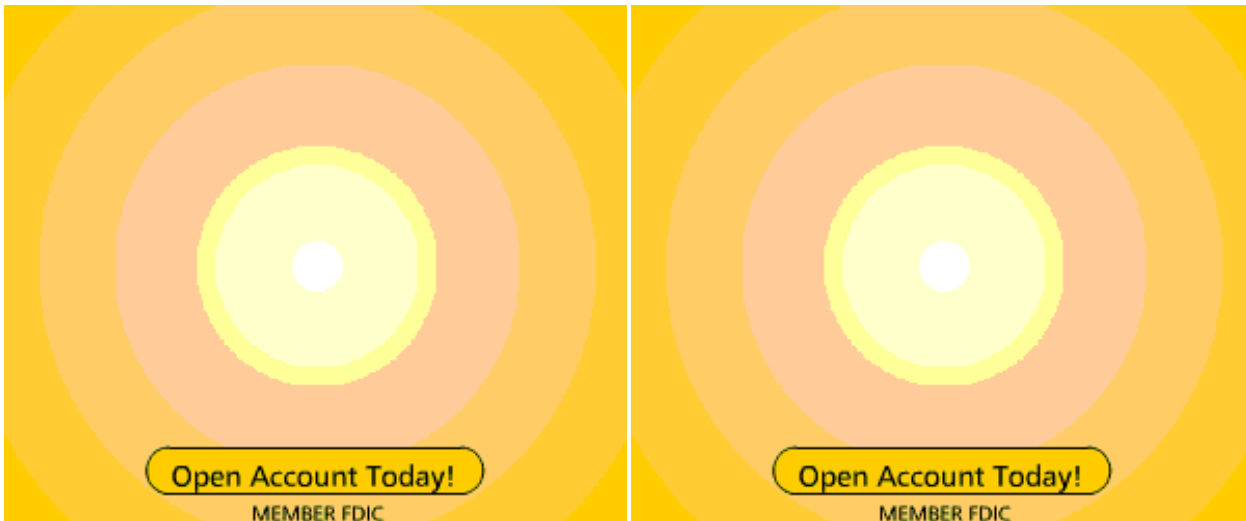
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Bargains



Special Price on Travel Books

The bargain: Discounts on all UO Bookstore travel books

How to get it: Use [the coupon attached](#) and receive a 30-percent discount on any of the more than 2,000 travel titles in the general book department on the second floor of the UO Bookstore. This offer is good today through March 31.



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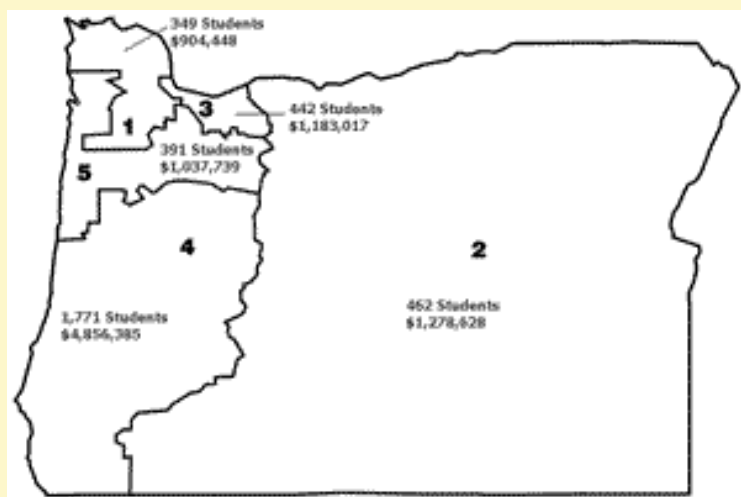
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UO by the Numbers

Distribution of Federal Pell Grants



Click on the image for a larger version.

In 2003-4, University of Oregon distributed \$9.2 million in Federal Pell Grants to 3,415 of Oregon's most needy students. The map shows how these dollars are split across Oregon's Congressional Districts. The grant is available to students working on their first undergraduate degree and is the largest federal grant program with individual awards ranging from \$400 to \$4,050.

- Data and graphic from the UO Office of Resource Management



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Were You There?



International Scholars Reception Showcases Research

< *Sachiko Kamioka from Japan explains
her project to President Dave Frohnmayer.*

International scholars conducting research at the UO were the honored guests at a March 7 reception that included President Dave Frohnmayer, research and graduate studies Vice President Richard Linton and international programs Associate Vice President Tom Mills.

The celebration took place in the EMU's Fir Room, where several scholars displayed research posters on topics ranging from the psychological behaviors of poor youth in Argentina to mapping shared electronic file usage to uncovering gene modifiers through fungal studies.

More than 200 international scholars take part in research projects at the UO. Overall, more than 1,200 international students from 87 countries are enrolled this year, while 800 students study or intern abroad each year. All of those facts are contributing reasons why in 2003, the American Council on Education named the UO one of the nation's two exemplary international-minded universities.

[Click here for photos](#)



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International Scholars Honored for Research

Campus leaders applauded the more than 200 international scholars who conduct their research at the UO campus at a special celebration March 7. [Click on the images to view larger versions.](#)

- Photos by Paul Omundson



From left, Rich Linton, vice president for research and graduate studies, Susan Guion, assistant professor of linguistics, Dave Soper, professor of physics and co-chair of the International Coordinating Council, Minpyo Hong, visiting scholar in linguistics from South Korea, and Tom Mills, associate vice president for international programs.



Visiting scholar from Japan, Sachiko Kamioka, with Applied Second Language Studies, explains her research project to President Dave Frohnmayer.



Visiting scholar from Iran, Reza Rejaie, at left, along with graduate student, Amir Rasti, stand by their research poster.



Frohnmayer visits with visiting scholar Lee Byung Hoon and hosting faculty member Li-Shan Chou, assistant professor of human physiology.



From left, visiting scholar Sunit Dutta, in neuroscience, sits with scholars Keyur Adhvaryu and Kausiki Datta from the Institute of Molecular Biology.

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Make a Date



'Bach Night' Kicks off Festival Season of Premieres and Pasi3n

< Performers in rehearsal for the Oregon Bach Festival's *La Pasi3n Seg3n San Marcos*, coming June 23-24.

The Oregon Bach Festival (June 23-July 10) officially lifts the curtain on its 2005 season during Bach Night at 7 p.m. on Tuesday, March 22, in Eugene's Downtown Athletic Club, 999 Willamette St. Audio and video clips will highlight a guided tour of upcoming festival performances and showcase two major premieres. Bach Night is free and open to the public.

Monumental, barrier-breaking and a multicultural sensation, *La Pasi3n Seg3n San Marcos* by Osvaldo Golijov sets the Passion of Christ according to Saint Mark in the form of a South American street festival, with percussionists, brass, dancers and the rhythms of tango, bemb3, salsa, mambo and rhumba. *La Pasi3n* has been described by Alex Ross of *The New Yorker* as "revolutionary." Richard Dyer of the *Boston Globe* called it "the first indisputably great composition of the 21st century." The festival stages the Northwest premieres of this work June 23-24.

Helmuth Rilling, festival artistic director, recently uncovered a lost opera by 19th century Romanticist Felix Mendelssohn. *The Uncle from Boston*, a full-scale comic opera written by the wunderkind composer at age 14, was found in a Berlin library and given its first public performance last October in Essen, Germany. Rilling conducts the American premiere July 3 in a concert setting.

Other performances include:

- Rilling conducting Bach's Christmas Oratorio in a two-concert, "Bach to Bach" format.
- The orchestra, chorus and soloists in *The Creation* by Joseph Haydn.
- Paris-based John Nelson conducting Handel's *L'Allegro*, a sparkling choral work based on the texts of Milton
- Multiple Grammy-winners the Kronos Quartet, which will perform works composed and arranged by Golijov

Tickets range from \$12-\$49 and go on sale March 22 at Bach Night. To make reservations for the Bach Night event, or for more information on the season, go to the [Oregon Bach Festival website](#) or call the festival office at (541) 346-5666.



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OREGON BACH FESTIVAL



UNIVERSITY OF OREGON

■ **HELMUTH RILLING, Artistic Director and Conductor** ■ **JUNE 23 - JULY 10, 2005** EUGENE, OREGON ■

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The New Zealand National Youth Choir appeared in 2004, one in a continuing series of international guest choirs.

ABOUT US

Helmuth Rilling, artistic director and conductor, leads two weeks of choral-orchestral concerts centering on the music and wide-ranging influence of J.S. Bach. Set amid the lush forests and scenic rivers of Eugene and the Willamette Valley, the festival also includes chamber music, family events, and educational programs in "a musical enterprise virtually without equal in America." (LA Times)



Welcome to oregonbachfestival.com

You're Invited to Bach Night

Join us for our season preview, a guided tour of the 2005 Festival with audio and video clips, ticket ordering, refreshments and prizes. It's March 22 at 7 pm in the Downtown Athletic Club in Eugene (preceded by our Friends of the Festival annual meeting at 6 pm). Call (541) 346-5666 or [write to find out more](#).

See Rilling in Seattle

Festival artistic director Helmuth Rilling conducts Elijah with the Seattle Symphony April 15. The Friends of the Festival and the University of Oregon have arranged a special group discount and reception. To attend with our group, call (800) 457-1486 and ask for Ann, or [send us an email](#).

Oregon Bach Festival 2005

Coming June 23-July 10: the northwest US premiere of **La Pasión Segun San Marcos** by Osvaldo Golijov, the American premiere of **The Uncle From Boston** (a comic opera by Mendelssohn), Bach's Christmas Oratorio, and the first Festival appearance by the Kronos Quartet, and 50 total events. Ticket orders accepted March 22.

Festival News

Two Premieres Headline '05 Festival

Bach's abuzz about a Latino Passion and a rediscovered opera

La Pasión Returns to its Birthplace

Grown from a relationship started in Eugene, Osvaldo Golijov's fiery Latino *Pasión* opens the 2005 Festival.

Rilling Brings Mendelssohn's Lost Uncle to America

An accomplished comic opera—composed by Mendelssohn at age 14—is rediscovered and gets its American premiere this summer in Eugene.

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Scene on Campus

Jordan Schnitzer Museum of Art Serves As A Campus Resource



Kurt Neugebauer works with art students.

The January reopening of Jordan Schnitzer Museum of Art offers a wide range of opportunities for staff, faculty and students. In the photo here, museum exhibition designer, Kurt Neugebauer (foreground) works with this year's nine master of fine arts degree candidates to plan for an upcoming exhibition using a half-inch scale model of the changing exhibitions gallery. Their show opens May 13 and will feature a full range of media including ceramics, fibers, metalsmithing and jewelry, painting, photography and visual design.

The museum provides a [guide for campus users of the museum](#) that gives details on programs and how to access museum resources. It includes information on topics such as:

- Scheduling class visits or assignments
- Photography and videography
- Scheduling guided tours
- Planning for changing exhibitions
- Facility rentals
- Internships

Faculty, staff and GTFs campus-wide and across all disciplines are invited to incorporate visits to the museum into their curriculum, providing students with an additional "learning

laboratory" to support and enhance classroom studies.

One of the new features is a focus gallery, specifically designed as a space where faculty can work with museum curators to select works of art for display that will support their courses. The museum collaborated with Ina Asim, assistant professor of history, for the inaugural installation that features a unique Chinese handscroll from the mid to late Ming Dynasty (1368-1644) titled *Colorful Lanterns at Shangyuan*. The gallery rotates quarterly and will showcase German expressionist prints during the spring term.



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JORDAN SCHNITZER MUSEUM OF ART

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University faculty and staff may explore a variety of specifically designed programs.



Colorful Lanterns at Shangyuan, Chinese, Ming Dynasty. (Detail)
See Now on View in the Focus Gallery, below.

HOW TO USE THE JORDAN SCHNITZER MUSEUM OF ART

Faculty and students at the University of Oregon are encouraged to use the Jordan Schnitzer Museum of Art's collections, exhibitions, and facilities to support teaching and research as well as to complement campus activities such as residential education. The following information is provided to better acquaint the university community with the museum and its services.

Scheduling Class Visits or Assignments

The Jordan Schnitzer Museum of Art is always free to University of Oregon students, faculty, and staff with ID. The museum welcomes classes to visit the galleries. If asking your students to visit the museum individually to fulfill an assignment or complete a project, please remind them of the following museum policies:

- Please stop by the Admissions Desk to obtain a visitor's pin and wear it visibly during the visit. Please help us recycle the pins by returning it to the Admissions Desk at the end of the visit.
- Deposit backpacks, drinks, and coats in the Coat Room or behind the Admissions Desk. No food or drink is allowed in the galleries.
- Please turn off cell phones while in the museum galleries.
- Photography is not allowed in the galleries due to copyright restrictions. If a faculty member needs images of art works for reference in class, please contact registrar Jean Nattinger at jnatting@uoregon.edu or (541) 346-0970.
- It is allowable to use notebooks, sketchpads, pencils, and laptop in the galleries.

Scheduling Guided Tours

Guided tours of the collection galleries and special exhibitions are given to the public at **regularly scheduled times**. Private tours for campus and community groups are available by appointment at 1:00 and 3:00 p.m. on Wednesdays, Thursdays, and Fridays. Tour availability is dependent on tour guide availability. Please schedule your tour four weeks in advance of your desired tour date. For further information, alternate day/time requests, or to book a tour, contact us a jsmatour@uoregon.edu or (541) 346-6410.

Planning for Changing Exhibitions

Exhibitions are organized or selected in large part for their potential value to the academic community. A *draft* of the museum's **future exhibitions schedule** is provided so that faculty members may consider developing a course, seminar, symposium, or other activity in conjunction with an exhibition. Faculty are invited to contact museum curators to discuss possible collaborations and

curricular links concerning future exhibitions.

Focus Gallery

University of Oregon faculty from across the disciplines are invited to incorporate visits to the museum into their curriculum, providing students with an additional “learning laboratory” that will support and enhance classroom studies. Faculty members may work with museum curators to select works of art to be displayed in the Focus Gallery, a space designed to serve the university community, that will rotate on a quarterly basis. For more information, contact Director David Turner at dturner@uoregon.edu or (541) 346-0972..

Now on View in the Focus Gallery:

Colorful Lanterns at Shangyuan

January 23 - March 11, 2005

In conjunction with a conference organized by Ina Asim, professor, UO Department of History, and presented by the UO Center for Asian and Pacific Studies, we are honored to present the unique handscroll, *Colorful Lanterns at Shangyuan*. Created by an anonymous painter during the mid to late Ming Dynasty (1368-1644), the scroll depicts a street in the southern capital of Ming China, Nanjing, on the occasion of the Lantern Festival. To enhance the viewer's experience, an interactive CD has been created that allows the painting to be studied in its complete length, almost nine feet. The painting has undergone a process of meticulous electronic cleaning which made details visible that are unrecognizable in the original. The scroll is on loan from a private collector in Taipei.

Using the Facilities

The museum includes meeting and reception areas that may be reserved for university functions. University affiliated groups are offered specially discounted rates. Read more about our [facility rental program](#) or contact special events manager Miriam Jordan at mjordan@uoregon.edu or (541) 346-0973.

ArtsBridge at the UO

ArtsBridge at the University of Oregon, part of the ArtsBridge America network, works in partnership with local public schools to provide high-quality arts education to K-12 school children. Stipends are given to those undergraduate and graduate students who teach the arts and lead projects in art, drama, dance, and music.

K-12 teaching opportunities are available for top UO students in the visual and performing arts. UO students (scholars) interested in participating in UO ArtsBridge are asked to complete a [Scholar Application Form](#) and mail it to the Jordan Schnitzer Museum of Art.

Internships

University students interested in gaining experience at an art museum may also get involved through museum internships, practicum experiences, Special Exhibition Interpreter and Gallery Guide positions, and volunteer opportunities (download [volunteer application](#)).

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