

## Engaging Public Schools with the Ancient World

The School District of Philadelphia has been faced with budget cuts forcing administrators to close 31 schools, lay off 5,000 people, and reduce classroom supplies, security, and janitorial services. Meanwhile, standardized testing indicates that only 13% of Philadelphia's public schools meet "Adequate Yearly Progress." In light of these hardships, a major initiative of the Penn Museum's Strategic Plan is to provide additional educational services for local schools.

Our new program, *Unpacking the Past*, will invite every 7th grade public school student in Philadelphia (approximately 10,000) to experience our renowned collections while enriching "Common Core" curriculum standards in language arts, math, and science. The program also fulfills non-academic needs, providing professional development for educators and donating much-needed supplies to classrooms.

Why target 7th graders? During this pivotal year, students study ancient cultures, a perfect connection with the Museum's extensive collections. What better way to learn about the embalming process or study ancient religious beliefs than by standing in front of real mummies and monumental sculptures? Moreover, 7th graders' test scores impact the rest of their academic life. In 8th grade, students apply to get into their desired high schools: their 7th-grade academic scores are a major factor in securing entry into top-notch schools



PHOTO BY SCOTT SPITZER

and consequently, colleges. *Unpacking the Past* develops 21st-century skills, sparks curiosity, and emphasizes that cultural institutions are indeed a place that students can rely on for life-long learning. *Unpacking the Past* offers a multi-step program for the School District of Philadelphia, and the Mastery and Knowledge is Power Program (KIPP) Charter Schools, via four components:

**Classroom Lessons:** Outfitted in our Mummy Mobiles, our staff delivers multi-disciplinary lessons and educational supplies to classrooms.

**Museum Field Trips:** Shortly after the classroom visit, students come to the Museum for interactive guided tours of our galleries paired with hands-on workshops. Buses,

admission, and programs are free. Students leave with school supplies and a one-year membership to the Penn Museum for their whole family.

**Student Showcases:** Learning is demonstrated through student extension projects at schools, utilizing lessons developed collaboratively by teachers and Museum staff. Special School District Welcome Days, sponsored by PECO, provide opportunities to display student work and offer fun family activities.

**Teacher Professional Development Days:** Educators receive behind-the-scenes opportunities at the Penn Museum to enhance their understanding of ancient cultures, participate in workshops, and earn Continuing Education credits.

During the *Unpacking the Past* introductory period in Spring 2014, more than 700 public school students experienced a free Penn Museum gallery tour and workshop to pilot our offerings. The first Professional Development sessions in Summer 2014 were packed with educators, garnering overwhelmingly positive feedback.

The budget for *Unpacking the Past's* initial three-year program is \$2.2 million. We have received a generous lead grant of \$1 million from GRoW Annenberg, a program of the Annenberg Foundation: \$500,000 outright to launch the program, and a challenge grant of \$500,000 to be awarded as soon as the Museum has secured the

remaining budget of \$1.2 million, of which over \$200,000 has been committed to date from individual, corporate, and foundation donors. Along with

additional matching funds, we are seeking school supplies. Stay tuned for more school district stories as the full *Unpacking the Past* program begins this year.

### YOU CAN HELP CITY TEACHERS!

The Penn Museum is doing our part to make sure students and teachers in Philadelphia public schools have the materials they need to learn. Throughout 2015, we will be collecting new school supplies, which we will deliver to School District of Philadelphia classrooms. Donations can be dropped off at the Kamin or Kress Entrance desks at the Museum. For further information, call Emily Hirshorn at 215.898.4033.

**Suggested donation items:** Reams of copy paper (invaluable to teachers)

Dry erase markers (invaluable to teachers) • Pencils • Lined loose leaf paper

Post-it notes • Pens Highlighters • Pocket folders • High-quality erasers

## 6,500-Year-Old Skeleton Will Undergo Extensive Analysis



PHOTO BY KYLE CASSIDY

Janet Monge (Associate Curator-in-Charge and Keeper of the Museum's Physical Anthropology Section) and William B. Hafford (Leon Levy Foundation Project Manager, Ur Digitization Project) recently rediscovered a complete human skeleton in the Physical Anthropology storage rooms. The skeleton came from the ancient city of Ur, and dates to about 6,500 years ago. The skeleton was discovered in a coffin-like box, where it had been stored for the past 85 years, all trace of its identifying documentation gone. This winter, Monge will conduct a scientific analysis of the skeleton, researching mortuary practices and evidence of occupational stress and disease. A CT-scan of the skeleton and DNA analysis of the teeth are planned.



**Dr. Janet Monge, Associate Curator-in-Charge and Keeper of the Museum's Physical Anthropology Section, was named "Philly's Best Museum Curator" in the August 2014 "Best of Philly" issue of Philadelphia magazine.**

## Film Conservation for the Library of Congress

The Penn Museum’s film archivist Kate Pourshariati has returned from a half-year assignment working to conserve and catalog Margaret Mead and Greg Bateson films. The Library of Congress recruited Kate due to her expertise in visual anthropology and film archives practice. The films are stored in Culpeper, Virginia, at the National Audio-Visual Conservation Center, the largest archives of film and audiovisual materials in the United States. “Working with the famous film footage that Mead and Bateson gathered in Bali and Papua New Guinea is terrific because of the potential to marry together thousands of photographs with field notes and the films themselves,” Pourshariati notes. “What I find equally exciting is revealing the lesser known corners of the Mead collections, such as the films of Jane Belo, a passionate amateur



Two young boys travel by canoe in their village of Manus in Papua New Guinea. *Courtesy Library of Congress.*

filmmaker who was steeped in Balinese traditional culture, gamelan music, and dance. We plan to send digital copies of the films to places where Dr. Mead worked most: Pere and M’Bunai

villages in Manus, Papua New Guinea. These films become primary source material and history for the people who come from those places. This is the magic of archives.”



## Treaty of Renewed Friendship Signed at the Penn Museum

Members and friends of the Lenape Nation of Pennsylvania recently came ashore to the Penn Museum 13 days into their 17-day “Rising Nation” Delaware River canoe journey, inviting area neighbors, organizations, families, and friends to join in signing the Treaty of Renewed Friendship. Those who signed the Treaty indicated their support for the Lenape Nation of Pennsylvania

as partners and caretakers of a sacred homeland—the region of eastern Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Delaware, and southern New York. The treaty-signing ceremony—a once-every-four-year tradition that began in 2002—included ceremonial songs, reflections from the canoe journey, and the passing of the wampum, an Eastern Woodlands ritual that seals bonds of trust and responsibility.



## International Student Reception Turns 45!

Nearly 600 guests from all over the world mingled under the magnificent dome of the Penn Museum's Chinese Rotunda during the 45th International Student Reception on October 17, 2014. This free signature Museum event is the only welcome event of its kind in the country.

International students enjoyed global music and dance performances, networking opportunities, and the chance to win prizes from local institutions. Information tables highlighted



resources for new residents and offered opportunities to meet local professionals. With the Museum's galleries setting the stage, guests enjoyed a spread of international foods to complement the celebration.

The International Student Reception is hosted by the Penn

Jo Klein (left), supporter and provider of much loved cookies for all 45 years of the International Student Reception, with Nancy Rajapakse.

Museum's International Classroom program, which was created to promote intercultural understanding between the residents of the Delaware Valley area and people from around the world. International students from local colleges volunteer time through the International Classroom program to teach about their country and culture to school groups, community organizations, teacher workshops, and libraries.

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## The Humanities and the Arts in the Integrated Knowledge University (HAIKU) Conference

The Penn Museum hosted the HAIKU Conference, organized by Karen Beckman, History of Art, on September 12–13, 2014. The conference was comprised of

multi-disciplinary discussions and performances about the future of the humanities within the creative research university. Penn Museum Williams Director Julian Siggers

and Deputy Director Steve Tinney participated in the closing discussion on September 13, underscoring the Museum's connection with Penn's arts and culture initiative.

## Smithsonian Team Photographs Oceanian Bark Cloth

At the end of September a team headed by Smithsonian Museum Curator Adrienne Kaepler, Conservator Greta Hansen, and Senior Photographer Donald Hurlbert photographed 70 pieces of bark cloth collected on the U.S. Exploring Expedition (1838–1842) by naturalist/artist Titian Ramsay Peale, and two rare books of bark cloth samples from the voyages of Captain Cook, all in the collections of the Oceanian Section of the Penn Museum.

The Smithsonian team is engaged in a multi-year study of over 250 bark cloths collected during the Exploring Expedition's voyage to the South Seas. The study will also include DNA analysis of selected pieces (to identify



The Smithsonian team photographs Oceanian Section bark cloth.

the species of tree from which the bark came and possibly the island where it grew) and XRF (X-ray fluorescence)

spectrometer analysis to distinguish between mineral and vegetal pigments used to decorate the bark cloth.

## Penn Alumni Trip to Turkey



Penn alumni and members of the Women's Committee in Istanbul. Photo credit: Penn Alumni Travel.

In early October 2014, C. Brian Rose, Peter C. Ferry Curator-in-Charge of the Mediterranean Section and Director of the Penn Museum's Gordion excavation, hosted a Penn Alumni trip to Turkey. Participants, including members of the Museum's Women's Committee, began their journey in Istanbul, Turkey's cultural and spiritual heart, where they explored the Blue Mosque, Hagia Sofia, and Topkapi Palace. The group then travelled south to the World War I battlefield of Gallipoli, ferried across the Dardanelles to Troy, and explored the wealth of Greco-Roman ruins at ancient Pergamum. The trip concluded with a cruise along the Turquoise Coast, followed by a stay at the seaside resort Antalya, with a side trip to ancient Perge.