New Acquisitions

David W. and Barbara G. Fraser have recently donated their personal collection of 27 Indonesian textiles to the Oceanian Section of the Museum. Gathered over the last 40 years, these well-documented textiles include examples from the islands of Sumba, Timor, and Flores, previously unrepresented in the Museum’s collections. The Frasers, experts on the structure and cultural context of South and Southeast Asian textiles, are authors of *Mantles of Merit: Chin Textiles from Myanmar, India, and Bangladesh*. David, a Consulting Scholar in the Penn Museum’s Asian Section, has a particular interest in the technique of twining and is author of *A Guide to Weft Twining and Related Structures with Interacting Wefts*, which features many examples of twining from the Museum’s collection.

Museum Works with Philadelphia Schools

*Unpacking the Past* had a wonderful first year, achieving over 10,000 touchpoints with 7th grade students, educators, and parents. Made possible by a lead grant from the GRoW Annenberg Foundation, this educational program, occurring both in the Museum and in schools, served 68 schools and 183 classrooms—more than half of the 7th grade population in the School District of Philadelphia. A participating educator explained, “*Unpacking the Past* relates to everything in the curriculum guide and is completely on track with what we are trying to accomplish in school.” The program also provided specially created programs for 18 Autistic Support and Life Skills Support classes.

Daniels and Al Kuntar Recognized for Efforts in Syria

Dr. Brian I. Daniels and Dr. Salam Al Kuntar, of the Penn Cultural Heritage Center (PennCHC), received the Presidential Recognition Award on April 17, 2015, at the 80th Annual Meeting of the Society for American Archaeology. Dr. Daniels, PennCHC’s Director of Research and Programs, was recognized for his efforts to assist Syria in the protection of that country’s cultural assets. This work was done in conjunction with the Smithsonian Institution. Dr. Al Kuntar, PennCHC Associate Faculty, founded the “Safeguarding the Heritage of Syria” initiative. Both Daniels and Al Kuntar have conducted training sessions for Syrian museum professionals and continue to advise Syrian curators and conservators on the protection of collections.
New Teen Internship Program

Over the summer, 17 local teens participated in the first Summer Teen Internship program at the Penn Museum. During a series of two-week internships, teens worked closely with staff in many departments, including Learning Programs, Academic Engagement, Exhibitions, Archives, Public Programs, and the Ur Digitization Project. They delivered in-gallery storytelling programs, assisted Homeschool Days and Teacher Institutes, surveyed visitors, and much more. Teens even got to attend special weekly presentations by Museum staff/faculty that offered windows into the Penn Museum’s collections, programs, and administration.

Penn Museum goes Mobile

This fall the Penn Museum is proud to launch its new website, offering a fresh new, stream-lined design with responsive formatting for smart phones, tablets, and desktop computers. It will feature a new portal for the Museum’s rich array of digital content, including our online collections database, numerous blogs, over 1,000 YouTube videos, and a complete archive of Expedition articles going back to our beginnings in 1958. Be sure to visit www.penn.museum regularly to see what’s happening at the Penn Museum.

Frame Receives NEH Award

Professor Grant Frame, Associate Curator in the Babylonian Section, received a 4th award from the National Endowment from the Humanities to support his digital humanities project “Royal Inscriptions of the Neo-Assyrian Period.” The $250,000 in funding will support new editions and translations of most of the inscriptions of King Ashurbanipal, to appear both in book form and digitally as part of Oracc, the Open Richly Annotated Cuneiform Corpus, http://oracc.museum.upenn.edu/rinap.
Tlingit Kaagwaantaan Clan representative, William Kanosh, of the Sitka Tribe of Alaska holds a Wolf hat in the Louis Shotridge collection during his consultation visit in 2013. The hat is the subject of a competing claim between two Wolf clan factions.

NAGPRA Turns 25

2015 marks the 25th anniversary of the passage of NAGPRA, the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act of 1990, a federal law. NAGPRA mandates the return of human remains, funerary objects, sacred objects, and objects of cultural patrimony to Native Americans, makes the trafficking of such objects illegal, and is specific about the process and procedures for archaeological excavations in the United States. The Penn Museum has worked rigorously to implement the law and to build new relationships with tribes whose collections we steward. Learn more at www.penn.museum/nagpra.

Penn Museum Represented at Museum Conference

Thanks to the Women’s Committee Professional Development Fund, ten staff members represented the Penn Museum at the 2015 American Alliance of Museums (AAM) and the Association of Academic Museums and Galleries (AAMG) annual meetings, both held in Atlanta, Georgia, in April 2015. Upon return, the representatives shared their key takeaways—museum accessibility, community engagement, collections management and security, interpretation, strategic marketing, and more—with their colleagues at the Museum.

Therese Marmion (center back), Associate Director of Major Gifts, and Pam Kosty (right), Director of Public Relations, with Ethan Angelica and Nick Gray of Museum Hack at the AAM meeting.
Museum Objects Travel the World

Museums and institutions around the world frequently ask to borrow objects from the Penn Museum to enhance their planned exhibitions. As of June 2015, we have objects on loan to 25 institutions and many more pending requests. In this regular section of Expedition, we will highlight some of those objects, and the institutions and exhibitions where they can be found.

WASHINGTON, DC
Indiana Jones and the Adventure of Archaeology
National Geographic Museum (Now open, closes January 3, 2016)

ATLANTA, GA
Searching for the Queen of Sheba
Fernbank Museum of Natural History (Opens September 26, 2015, closes January 3, 2016)

OSAKA, JAPAN
Cleopatra and the Queens of Egypt
National Museum of Art, Osaka (Opens October 10, 2015, closes December 27, 2015)

Discovering the Museum with Chinese Students

Between July 20 and August 14, Chinese undergraduate students from the Jiangsu province of China took part in the Museum’s first intensive summer program in museum careers. The program, named “Discovering the Museum,” was designed to give the 38 students a well-rounded understanding of American museums and arts administration. It featured presentations by a wide range of Museum personnel and ranged from collections, conservation, curation, object-based learning, exhibitions, public programming, marketing, and fundraising, using the Penn Museum as a case study.

Ellen Owens (center) with Jody Sprague and Cheryl Baker.

Owens Delivers Keynote Speech at Docent Consortium

As the keynote speaker of the Greater Philadelphia Area Docent Consortium conference in May, Ellen Owens (Merle-Smith Director of Learning Programs) presented to more than 120 regional docents. Her talk, entitled “Real-Time Interpretation: Docents in the Digital Age,” explored current methods that museums utilize to offer enhanced educational experiences within their galleries. It explored in-person interpretation along with innovative technology.