Dear Friends and Alumni,

Greetings on behalf of the faculty, staff and students of the University of Utah Department of Anthropology. It is a pleasure to welcome our new Masters and Ph.D. students, who were selected because of their experience and the research goals they bring to the Anthropology Graduate Program. We wish them the best in their work here at the University of Utah.

This Fall our Department Colloquium Speaker Series has so many notable participants that we have scheduled talks on Thursdays, as well as some Tuesday afternoons. We also have a special day dedicated to Mesoamerican research and honoring the esteemed Professor Michael Coe. Speakers from the department include myself and Professors Richard Paine and Richard Hansen. This Mesoamerican gathering will conclude with a special dinner and talk given by Professor Coe. Please join us for any or all of these lectures.

Best wishes,
Leslie

New Publications From Anthropology Faculty

**DID GRANDMAS MAKE PEOPLE PAIR UP?**

*Human Longevity From Grandmothering Tied to Human Coupling*

If you are in a special relationship with another person, thank grandma – not just yours, but all grandmothers since humans evolved.

University of Utah anthropologist Kristen Hawkes is known for the “grandmother hypothesis,” which credits prehistoric grandmothering for our long human lifespan. Now, Hawkes has used computer simulations to link grandmothering and longevity to a surplus of older fertile men and, in turn, to the male tendency to guard a female mate from the competition and form a “pair bond” with her instead of mating with numerous partners.

“It looks like grandmothering was crucial to the development of pair bonds in humans,” says Hawkes, senior author of the new study published online in the Sept. 7 edition of the journal Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences. Read the full article at:

[http://unews.utah.edu/did-grandmas-make-people-pair-up/](http://unews.utah.edu/did-grandmas-make-people-pair-up/)

PHOTO CREDIT: Lee J. Siegel, University of Utah

In the late 1990s, University of Utah anthropologist Kristen Hawkes developed the “grandmother hypothesis” that humans developed lifespans longer than other apes because prehistoric grandmothers helped feed their grandchildren after weaning, allowing mothers to have more children sooner and increasing the prevalence of grandma’s longevity genes in the population. In a new study, Hawkes used computer simulations to suggest that grandmothering and increased human longevity led to a surplus of older, fertile men, which in turn led to the human characteristic of forming couples or pair bonds.
When Do Mothers Need Other?

Hillary Clinton once famously said, “It takes a village to raise a child.” It turns out that’s been true for centuries: New research by a University of Utah anthropologist explains how and why mothers in ancient societies formed cooperative groups to help raise their children.

Karen Kramer, an associate professor of anthropology, published a study in the *Journal of Human Evolution* titled, “When Mothers Need Others: Life History Transitions Associated with the Evolution of Cooperative Breeding.”

Her research examines how mothers underwent a remarkable transition from the past – when they had one dependent offspring at a time, ended support of their young at weaning and received no help from others – to the present, when mothers often have multiple kids who help rear other children.

“We simulated an economic problem that would have arisen over the course of human evolution as mothers became more successful at producing children, they also had more dependents than they could care for on their own,” said Kramer of her research.


Affiliates of University of Utah Archaeological Center (UUAC) wrapped up summer with an exciting archaeological investigation in Grass Valley, Nevada.

When people arrived in the Great Basin about 14,000 years ago, they found a region much cooler and wetter than today. Because of these climatic differences, valley bottoms where salt flats and playas are found today were once lakes with marsh and riparian habitat that acted as a draw for early settlers. The UUAC research team targeted investigations along the ancient shore of former Lake Gilbert in search of archaeological remains that would provide insights into the livelihoods of these early occupants of North America.

The project was led by Brian Codding, Assistant Professor of Anthropology and Director of the Archaeological Center, along with PhD students Kate Magargal, Erik Martin, Ashley Parker and Blake Vernon, postdoctoral scholar Christopher Parker, and collaborators from the University of Nevada, Reno and Sacramento State University. This investigation was supported by the a Faculty Research and Creative Grant Project from the University of Utah Research Foundation and the office of Vice President for Research. Students interested in learning more about local archaeological research opportunities are encouraged to contact the UUAC.