

Mizzou Weekly

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Professor emeritus discovers animal-shaped mounds in Peru valleys



ANCIENT ASTRONOMERS Robert Benfer, an MU professor emeritus of anthropology shown here last December in Peru, used Google Earth Pro from his Columbia home to discover mounds that resembled animals when viewed from the sky. His research suggests that astronomy was important to a culture that flourished 4,000 years ago. Photo courtesy of Robert Benfer

DIGGING UP THE PAST

Benfer's discoveries suggest advanced culture 4,000 years ago in Peru

Robert Benfer, an MU professor emeritus of anthropology, has made important archaeological discoveries during his decades of field research in South America.

But his latest eureka moment came not in the hot dust of a remote Peruvian valley, but from the comfort of his Columbia home.

Benfer was perusing on Google Earth Pro the aerial geography of Peru's Casma and Chillon valleys, which contain ruins of a sophisticated but mysterious culture that existed some 4,000 years ago. He zoomed in on mounds up to 1,300 feet long sprinkled with structures and relics made by an ancient people, often called Andeans.

From that vantage point, Benfer noticed that two mounds outlined shapes, something impossible to glean from the ground. "These are animal figures," he remembers thinking. "There can't be just two."

Benfer has since identified eight giant effigy mounds and dozens of smaller ones that resemble whales, condors, snakes, birds and the mythical monstruo, a composite of long-clawed creatures. The effigy mounds are similar to Andean animal carvings and constellations in the South American zodiac.

To determine the precision of correspondence between the mounds and the night sky, Benfer and Larry Adkins, an astronomy professor at Cerritos College in California, turned to archaeoastronomy, the science of ancient astronomy. Using the software

“Starry Night,” Benfer and Adkins reword the starry sky to how it looked to Peruvians 4,000 years ago.

In his article published this spring at the archaeological online journal *Antiquity*, Benfer points out that the mounds not only represent the Andean zodiac. They also align with the stars. Benfer contends that there are astronomical orientations at every giant mound. To someone standing in a nearby temple four millennia ago, the charcoal eye of the condor mound would have lined up with the Milky Way, and the monstrous mound would’ve directed the eye to the June summer solstice.

This is not happenstance. Platforms of earth and rock appear to have been constructed at just the right angle to achieve a marriage, as it were, between sky and earth.

Benfer’s mound theory dovetails with his 2006 discovery of stone-made astronomical devices in the same coastal region. One was atop a 33-foot pyramid. Taken together, the discoveries suggest that the Andeans, who predate the better-known Mayans of Mexico and Central America by thousands of years, were savvy astronomers.

Unlike the Mayans, the Andeans left no writings, so scientists can only speculate why these ancient Peruvians built the mounds. The consensus among scholars is that the mounds served two purposes — one practical and the other supernatural.

The Andeans, who were agricultural people, probably tracked the stars to know when to plant and harvest, Benfer said. The stars were their “agriculture calendar in the sky.”

To ensure a good crop, they also made offerings from atop the mounds to the forces they believed controlled the weather and the seasons, Benfer said.

This month, Benfer will submit an in-depth article on the coastal valley effigy mounds for publication in the print version of *Antiquity*. And this summer he’ll be back in Peru. He plans to venture farther east on the Casma and Chillón valleys to investigate other intriguing mounds he spotted on Google Earth Pro.

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Mizzou celebrates Staff Recognition Week with awards, tours, seminars

STAFF RECOGNITION WEEK

Annual celebration May 14–18

Staff will take center stage next week during the 33rd annual Staff Recognition Week, which honors MU's more than 8,000 administrative, service and support employees.

This year's theme is "Representing Staff Matters."

"We would like to recognize and celebrate the great work that all the staff does — the landscapers that keep the campus looking great, the power plant folks, the plumbers, secretaries, electricians, nurses, custodians — all the people who are working day to day to keep things running smoothly," said Sheldon Stephens, events chair for the Staff Advisory Council.

The Staff Award Ceremony, which staff is invited to attend, happens at 1 p.m. Monday in Jesse Hall Auditorium, followed by a reception. The rest of the week is packed with informative, thought-provoking and fun events.

Human Resource Services is offering a number of practical workshops, such as how to handle your email inbox, work stress and personal finances, as well as sessions on social media, employee performance reviews and Photoshop.

There's an iPad session 10:30 a.m.–noon Monday in N206 Memorial Union to help staffers better utilize computer tablets and smartphones for work. A seminar on online privacy and security runs 8:30 a.m.–10 a.m. Friday, May 18, at S203 Memorial Union.

The arts and sciences are not forgotten during Staff Recognition Week. Campus museum tours on art history, archaeology and anthropology will be happening Tuesday, Thursday and Friday. Staff artists will be showing off their fine art and crafts at Arts & Crafts Showcase in Ellis Library noon–3 p.m. Tuesday and 8 a.m.–3 p.m. Wednesday and Thursday.

"Everybody has a life outside of work, and this is a way to get to know what that is," Stephens said.

Gardeners will find something of special interest. Four campus Garden Walks are scheduled for the week.

Staff can also participate in the fifth annual SAC Online Auction Bidding. It will go live at 8 a.m. Monday and end at noon Friday, May 18, at sacauction.missouri.edu. A mass email will go out to staff that gives auction sign-up details either today or Friday. Participants will need to create a user account to bid.

About 70 businesses are donating this year, said Auction Committee Chair Sheena Waggoner. So far, donations include gift certificates for spa treatments; the University Bookstore; six-month MU parking and transportation passes; Major League Baseball tickets; sportswear; concert tickets; and local restaurants.

In the past, auction profits have hit \$3,000, which goes toward staff educational development. Council members hope to top that mark this year.

Below are some of next week's highlights. For a complete list, go to Page ??? for the Staff Recognition Week advertisement of events.

- MU Staff Annual Awards Ceremony 1 p.m. Monday in Jesse Hall. All staff invited.
- Museum tours and garden walks Tuesday, Thursday and Friday;

- free Bagels, Donuts, Fruit and Coffee Breakfast 8–10 a.m. Tuesday at Student Center patio on Rollins Street;
- Brown Bag Lunch/Ice Cream Social 11:30 a.m.–1:30 p.m. Wednesday at Carnahan Quad [rain site, Student Activity Center].

For more information, email staffadvisorycouncil@missouri.edu, or call 882-4269.

Staff Recognition Week's special edition begins on Page 3.

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Don Barnes



Don Barnes

Director of Equipment Operations Intercollegiate Athletics

Mizzou Alumni Association Award for Alumni Relations Excellence

Much of Don Barnes' work is behind the scenes. But that doesn't take away from the value of what he does.

As equipment operations director for the Athletic Department, Barnes manages a staff who ensures that each Mizzou student-athlete is ready for competition. He is responsible for making sure the gear and uniforms are ready before the team practices and plays in competition.

Mizzou has 300 student-athletes competing at the Division I level in one of the premier athletic conferences in the nation. On any given day, one can find Barnes and his staff washing more than 2,500 pounds of laundry, inventorying equipment or evaluating and testing new gear. Some weeks Barnes puts in more than 100 hours, "but you'll never hear him complain," a nominator said.

Barnes has been at the forefront of the athletic department's initiative to redesign all athletic uniforms. He spent countless hours going through archives, yearbooks and magazines, studying past uniforms and looking for elements to incorporate into the new ones.

A 1994 graduate of the University of Wisconsin-River Falls, Barnes has been with Mizzou for 12 years. He got involved with athletic equipment while in college, which led him to positions with the Kansas City Chiefs and Drake University before joining Mizzou.

So how does an equipment operations director foster good relations with alumni? By joining forces with the Mizzou Alumni Association (MAA).

The association hosts five Tiger Tailgates each year prior to away football games. Like the football team, the MAA requires a lot of equipment in the form of spirit items, decorations and merchandise. Six years ago, the association approached Barnes about transporting the merchandise to the away games around the country. He immediately agreed, and a valuable partnership was born.

By assisting with these events, Barnes has saved the MAA thousands of dollars in shipping, another nominator said. "His flexibility allows us the freedom to pack more things and make the experience even better for alumni and fans who oftentimes cannot make it back to Columbia to attend Mizzou events."

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Jennifer Doty



Jennifer Doty

Clinical Coordinator, Surgery Clerkship Program, School of Medicine

Mick Deaver Memorial Award

Jennifer Doty's passion and compassion for medical students is transparent through the open-door policy she maintains with students and the constant support she offers them.

As clinical coordinator for the clerkship program in surgery, Doty directs and assists third-year medical students as they rotate through an eight-week observational program. The clerkship allows them to receive additional training in surgical techniques while participating in daily rounds, presenting information and patient cases, and collaborating with a larger team.

She considers the approximately 100 students she works with her second family. In turn, the students view her as a second mom.

Beyond her day-to-day duties, Doty takes extra steps to help students improve. Medical students are required to write personal statements when they apply for medical school and for positions as resident physicians. She works one-on-one with students as

they edit their resumes and statements. She even volunteers to serve as a mock interviewer. In 2011, non-MU medical students who were visiting the medical school heard of her expertise and asked her to assist them with their own mock interviews. In 2008 and 2010, Doty delivered presentations on how to write a personal statement at the American College of Surgeons' annual congress.

In her more than 15 years as clinical coordinator, Doty has improved the lives of medical students by developing a standardized assessment tool to evaluate clerkship students across disciplines. She expanded the orientation process for these students from one to two days and implemented various lab sessions to assist them in preparing for the program.

In addition to her duties as clerkship director, Doty, a nurse for more than 25 years, has volunteered as a staff nurse at the Russell D. and Mary B. Sheldon Clinical Simulation Center in the School of Medicine. She has been a member of surgery's curriculum committee for more than 10 years. Doty received the Excellence in Student Medical Education Award in 2001 from the School of Medicine.

"Jennifer truly sees her job with the students as a blessing and a privilege," her nominator said.

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Patty Gash



Patty Gash

Bindery Supervisor, Printing Services

Chancellor's Outstanding Staff Award

Being supervisor of Printing Services' bindery department probably has been Patty Gash's biggest challenge. Gash was promoted to the position in 2010. Previously she worked as a press operator and as a prepress imposition specialist.

Some co-workers describe the department — before her promotion — as a poor work environment.

"Patty met the challenge fully from her first day in the new role," her nominator said. "She passionately told the employees why they had to work together professionally, courteously and continuously."

Gash oversees the daily production of jobs done on various bindery devices, such as folders, collator-stitcher-trimmers and cutters. She assigns daily work tasks to the 13 full-time employees, exercises quality control throughout the department and coordinates communication with customer service representatives. She also is responsible for the proper maintenance and operation of the equipment.

Bindery is a complex department that requires many different tasks. Gash asks her employees to suggest new ways of doing things — to think outside of the box — and not just settle for the we've-always-done-it-that-way mentality.

Leading by example, she has been successful in helping the department turnaround. “She did it by treating all bindery employees fairly and by her personal commitment and passion for serving the customers of Printing Services,” the nominator said.

She has succeeded with new innovations in her department, such as trying a different way to collate or hand fold, moving and arranging the equipment and supplies into more efficient patterns, and redistributing tons of paper to significantly reduce the number of steps people take to finish a job.

Gash required the staff to cross-train on other equipment to increase flexibility when illness or vacations caused a staffing shortage.

“With some creative thinking, things that we thought couldn't be done are now being produced by the bindery department,” a colleague said. “By involving the staff in process improvements, she has built morale and renewed energy in that department.”

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Sherri Helm



Sherri Helm

Executive Staff Assistant II, Office of Economic Development

Chancellor's Outstanding Staff Award

Sherri Helm is the only full-time staff support for Office of Economic Development (OED), which began as a part-time office in 2006. Helm played a key role in launching the full-time office in 2010.

According to one nominator, the OED is the “eHarmony of university departments,” serving as the connector between business and education, research and government. “We bring people together for collaborative opportunities and mutual benefits. Sherri has been instrumental in providing leadership and initiative when working with various entities.”

Having worked at MU for almost 30 years, Helm has a deep understanding of the office's function and outreach possibilities, as well as a deep knowledge of campus programs.

Helm assists the vice provost for economic development in building partnerships between university researchers and industry leaders. She is a strong advocate for MU's expansion in metropolitan Kansas City.

The vice provost's economic development team relies on her judgment involving MU's economic development initiatives. She plans and arranges meetings and conference calls with skill and efficiency. She pulls the team together if it needs to discuss something specific. The team has confidence in her ability to keep the economic development initiatives moving forward.

Initially, when new businesses were brought in to visit Columbia or the surrounding areas, OED instituted a statement of support. Helm has created dozens of these statements, each specific to the particular company and its business function. Additionally, she creates a list of key faculty who are specific to the companies' interests.

One challenge the office faces is lack of personnel. With the two people in the office handling several projects at once, there hasn't been time to keep the office's website and social media current.

Helm took the initiative to assist a student-worker in preparing a job description and project outline for a professional development internship course through the Trulaske College of Business. This enables an intern to handle the social media projects for a semester, plus earn three hours of credit.

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Eldon “Pete” Peterson



Power Plant Maintenance Specialist III Welder, Campus Facilities-Energy Management

Chancellor's Outstanding Staff Award

At age 68, Eldon "Pete" Peterson has steady hands and keen eyesight, which are important in his trade.

Peterson is responsible for welding and steel fabrication at MU's power plant. Most of his work involves pipefitting various systems, including water, oil, gas, and steam.

Much of the welding jobs are in areas difficult to access. Peterson, who is left-handed, occasionally welds right-handed in certain situations. He's completed welds on the backside of pipes using a mirror. On one occasion, when he couldn't reach the work, he used his foot to hold the welding stinger, which holds the electrode.

"I cannot think of a single weld by Pete that we've had to go back and repair," his nominator said. "Because of his vast experience, he offers insight and suggestions to improve piping systems and plant maintenance. He often performs welds on equipment that are far superior to welds done by the equipment manufacturer. In fact, he's repaired many welds in the plant originally done by outside contractors. It's like magic what he can do with a cutting torch and welder."

Magic is also what Peterson does on the side. He's an accomplished magician who has performed shows in Las Vegas.

“If you’re not impressed with his welding, wait until he makes a silver dollar disappear,” his nominator said. Peterson is eager to share the trick of the trade with younger welders. As he nears retirement, he wants to make sure he leaves the department with skillful welders to pick up where he left off.

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Jatha Sadowski



Jatha Sadowski

Director of Human Resources Human Resource Services

Barbars S. Uehling Award for Administrative Excellence

When administrators, faculty, staff and labor representatives want to know about university personnel policies and practices, they turn to Jatha Sadowski.

Sadowski, who provides administrative leadership over human resources payroll and the human resource information system, is director of recruiting for staff and academic positions.

Since its inception, Sadowski has been part of the PeopleSoft Core HR team. She doesn't hesitate to aid staff members in getting the information they need to do their job. She was instrumental, for example, in developing a process that allows new employees to set up email, obtain employee identification numbers and badges, and access MyHR and other systems before their actual start date.

With the implementation of PeopleSoft, the volume of paper increased tremendously. Sadowski worked diligently to coordinate a team that designed, developed, tested and implemented the automated personnel action form (Smart PAF). The Smart PAF, unique to MU, reduces the amount of information department processors need to provide.

Nominators say Sadowski's ability to see how issues and projects interconnect beyond the HR perspective is her greatest strength. "It is the collaboration with other groups to address not simply the HR side of an issue, but student elements, benefit concerns and finance considerations that make her results remarkable," a nominator said. "That collaboration may take time to get results, but the end product is well supported."

In addition to her regular responsibilities, Sadowski assumed in 2010 direct supervision of the Core Administrative Processing Support (CAPS) Center and External Review when an assistant director within the HR office was deployed overseas. The CAPS and External Review function is responsible for processing, reviewing and approving all personnel action forms for all divisions at the university. Sadowski's supervision allowed for consistent leadership

"Her efforts and accomplishments are truly amazing, although in this line of work they may often go unseen," a nominator said.

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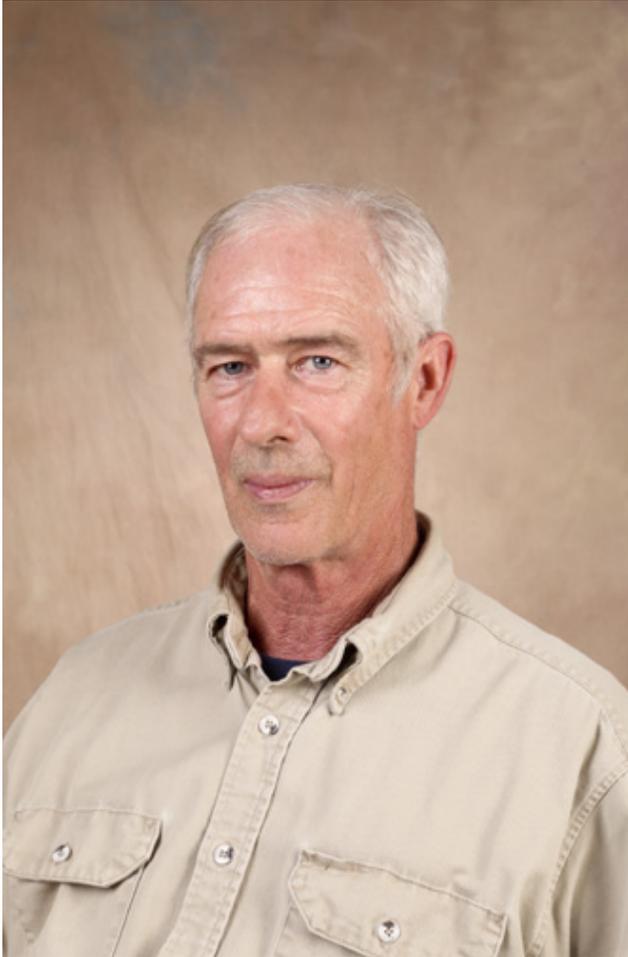
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James Taylor, Staff Recognition Award 2012



James Taylor

Power Plant Control Systems Specialist, Campus Facilities-Energy Management

Chancellor's Outstanding Staff Award

Operating MU's power plant is not easy. With the talented help of James Taylor, however, plant operators have interactive and intuitive computer control systems that help keep everything running smoothly.

Taylor oversees the repair and maintenance of the power plant's process control and instrumentation systems, along with supervising control systems technicians and power plant electricians. His job requires inspecting, calibrating and maintaining systems required for the safe, reliable operation of the power plant, electrical substations and drinking water wells.

"Jim leads, offers advice, assists with troubleshooting problems and shares his wealth of knowledge from experiences he has learned over the nearly 25 years he has worked for the department," his nominator said.

Co-workers say Taylor has an excellent relationship with his colleagues and peers. They value and trust his opinions and decisions.

Taylor spends most of his time programming and updating computer screenst. He has been involved in this since the power plant installed its first digital process control system in the 1980s. He also spends a good deal of time working with various control systems' programming tools and developing ways to improve plant operation.

Whether he is troubleshooting a controls problem or programming graphics for a new screen, his nominator said that Taylor's work is the best.

"Jim's commitment to quality work helps ensure the department's ability to deliver cost-effective and reliable utilities to the campus," his nominator said. "You can depend on his abilities to perform high-quality work that increases the overall reliability, efficiency and safety of the power plant. He exercises good judgment daily when making decisions that affect the way the plant operates."

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Mizzou Weekly

May 10, 2012 Volume 33, No. 31

A day of horticulture

MU Extension is hosting “A Gardener’s Symposium on Missouri’s Horticulture Industries” 8 a.m.–6 p.m. May 18. Choose from a day of events on and off campus involving horticulture. For off-campus events, you must provide your own transportation.

Registration is \$55, which includes tours and lunch at Reynolds Alumni Center.

This event is limited to 60. Registration deadline is May 11. Contact Frankie Anderson at andersonfr@missouri.edu or 573-445-9792.

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Medicare boot camp

Learn about the ins and outs of Medicare 5:30–7:30 p.m. May 22 in 119 Parker Hall.

The free event is open to employees, retirees and their families.

To register for the workshop, call Margaret at 882-6701.

The event is sponsored by the MU Employee Assistance Program and the Central Missouri Area Agency.

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Mizzou part of local coalition dedicated to fighting Missouri human trafficking

ADULTS, CHILDREN ARE VICTIMS

Officials can miss signs of human trafficking, professor says

In early March, a Columbia man and Kansas City woman were sentenced to prison after pleading guilty to selling a homeless minor into prostitution.

MU was part of a coalition that helped make the arrests possible, said Deborah Hume, a Mizzou associate professor of public health. Her research focuses on understanding the scope of human trafficking in Missouri.

Human trafficking “is a crime against people, as their human rights are being violated through exploitative labor or through commercial sex,” Hume said. It can be in the form of forced labor, forced prostitution or indentured servitude. The victims can be adults or children.

“Human trafficking is a very serious crime as it completely removes the freedom and human rights of an individual, and we need to attend to it whether there are 10 cases or 100 cases a year in the state,” Hume said.

Besides Mizzou, the coalition includes the Columbia Police Department and the local organizations Centro Latino and True North. Centro Latino helps Hispanics take advantage of the health, education and cultural resources available in mid-Missouri; True North is an emergency shelter that provides safety and services for victims of domestic and sexual violence.

The coalition received a \$200,000 grant from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services to help fight human trafficking in Missouri.

The money helped train police officers, emergency room personnel, social workers and staff at shelters and child advocacy centers to identify and help victims. People were trained “to ask the right questions when individuals come in so they can screen to see whether human trafficking is part of their experience,” Hume said.

The collaborative project increased awareness in the community. The training, combined with outreach programs, led to Boone County forming a task force to develop procedures for identifying and responding to human trafficking among children.

It also led, indirectly, to policy changes. Missouri passed a more effective trafficking law in 2011.

“Although this was a statewide effort, the local coalition was involved in testimony and in meetings,” Hume said.

Unfortunately, officials aren’t always quick to recognize human trafficking.

“We’ve seen prostitution as primarily someone’s choice rather than potentially an area in which someone is being exploited,” Hume said. “Police officers, hospital staff and social-service agencies sometimes think they’re dealing with cases of child abuse, rape or juvenile delinquency. However, they need to ensure they’re investigating issues fully so they don’t miss additional victimization.”

The recent sentencing of the Columbia man and Kansas City woman is a reminder that mid-Missouri is not immune to human trafficking. Data to pinpoint its prevalence statewide is scarce, however.

“I would venture a guess that it is more prevalent in the metropolitan areas in the manner of labor trafficking in the hotel, motel and tourist industries, and in agriculture,” she said. “It may be more prevalent in rural areas than we know.”

We all “need to take a stand and say that human trafficking is unacceptable and that it will not be tolerated,” Hume said.

“We need to increase our understanding of what human trafficking is and how it can be prevented, recognized and prosecuted. We’re getting better at knowing how to respond, but we need to get better at prevention.”

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