

Dig brings past to life

BY MICHELLE MARTIN
Assistant Features Editor

Senior philosophy and religion major Mark Lambert has grown used to reading about the Crusades in textbooks during the past three years. But that was before he embarked upon a four-week archeological dig in the Middle East that acquainted him face to face with the ancient past he had only known on the page.

The four-week excursion, sponsored by Mark Appold, associate professor of philosophy and religion, began in Israel. There, Truman students from all majors worked on an excavation site in Bethsaida, an ancient Biblical city overlooking the Sea of Galilee, Lambert said. Afterward, the group toured ancient sites in Jerusalem, Bethlehem and Jordan.

The first two weeks students primarily worked on the 20-acre archeological dig site from 5 a.m. until noon, when temperatures got too high. They all stayed in a kibbutz, a communal Jewish village, where they had the opportunity to talk to a contemporary Jewish population and enjoyed evening lectures by archeologists. Each day the students found items that were anywhere from 50 to 3,000 years old.

"I don't think we were expecting to find much, but we found a lot of pottery shards, we found a lot of small fragments that you couldn't even tell what they were, to almost nearly intact shards or bowls," Lambert said.

The students found coins, an Ottoman pipe, remains of an oven and remnants of bullets from the 1967 war between the Syrians and Israelis, along with other items. Some of the items found, such as ancient fishing hooks, helped to date the period of the site, Lambert said.

"[These] are really important for supporting the theory that this is Bethsaida, it was a fisherman's village," he said.

The work was meticulous, Lambert said. With five-inch pickaxes, the students filled buckets of dirt and then sifted through it to find any items they had missed. Then, repeat.

"You're definitely on your hands and knees with a brush just trying to be careful," he said.

Appold took a group of students on the archeological trip every summer for 11 years. But because of the Palestinian intifada, which placed the area on the United States Travel Advisory List, Appold said he hasn't brought a student group to Bethsaida in nine years.

But now, because lower restrictions and an improving political climate, Appold made a strong case to the University to return to the site since there still is a lot more work to do.

"We've gotten about 13 percent done, but the lion's share still remains to be done," Appold said.

During the meticulous work, Appold said he becomes struck by the historical evidence of ancient occurrences. For example, Assyrians destroyed the city-state of Bethsaida 2,800 years ago and burned and torched the area.



Photos submitted by Mark Lambert
Students traveled on a four-week-long journey excavating sites in ancient cities including Bethsaida, a Biblical city overlooking the Sea of Galilee.

"You still find evidence of burns," he said. "It was so intense the brick melted."

Appold said he is primarily interested in the New Testament level of the dig because, according to the Bible, five of Jesus' 12 disciples came from Bethsaida. This was not a grand, monumental city but rather a poor place filled with fishermen and marginal farmers, he said.

"What was life like during the period of time?" Appold said. "That's what this is basically all about. Reconstructing it, looking up material finds to help clarify the text stories that we have in the Bible."

Junior Jordan Buchheit recently transferred to Truman and decided to check out the trip because of his interest in Middle-Eastern politics.

"It was the week after the war in Gaza had broken out, and I saw a little flyer for the trip, that they're going to the West Bank, and I thought, 'I have to go there, that's where all the action is,'" Buchheit said. "I was interested in the conflict, and I couldn't believe that a student group was going to go into that area."

Although the trip was not as politically focused as Buchheit originally expected, he said it still was worth his while. Throughout the trip he found numerous opportunities to talk to both Israelis and Palestinians. In addition, the group visited a refugee camp.

"Being able to talk to all the people was my favorite part," Buchheit said. "Everybody was very nice, Israeli or Palestinian. They were very

interesting to talk to, always had interesting perspectives."

Buchheit said he came away with an enriched perspective on the luxury of living in the United States. In the Middle East, he observed issues such as water scarcity and observed many perspectives that he said helped him to fully understand the Middle-Eastern conflicts.

"It's easy to read about something and form your opinions on what you read, but until you are there and talking to people who are living in it every day, you can't really get a full picture," he said.

Buchheit and some other students who went on the trip have founded a chapter of Americans for Peace Now, an organization focused on bringing peace to the Israeli-Palestinian conflicts in the area, he said. After gaining a better understanding of the trials these people were going through, the students felt an urge to contribute to the peace process.

Buchheit said the group wants to increase awareness of Israeli-Palestinian peace conflicts and try to raise enough money to send a child in the West Bank to school.

"We met a guy there, and he ran the school there in the West Bank, and it costs a relatively little amount to put a kid through school there for a year," Buchheit said. "We're raising some funds and trying to give an opportunity for a kid to go to school there."

"It's kind of hard being in Kirksville sometimes because I feel like a lot of things become stagnant."

Rosemary Melton
Senior

Student art | Three organizations from Truman will display their work at local festival

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The Clay People also have sales around Christmas and near the end of the spring semester. Red Barn doesn't serve as their best sale of the year because members have not had time to produce many new items yet, but Thierry said the group still likes the community involvement.

"At Red Barn we do pretty well," he said. "For the amount of stuff we have to sell, we sell almost all of it."

The booth will feature a variety of bowls, plates and mugs for sale, he said.

Senior Rosemary Melton, president of the Bad Acids (Truman's printmaking club), said the group will run its second Red Barn booth this year. Featured items will include cards, T-shirts and posters, among a wide variety of works.

The booth also will highlight printmaking demonstrations at scheduled times throughout the day, Melton said.

"We have an image that's a publication for us," she said. "Let's say we have half-made fliers. Then we'll do the last run of colors on the fliers and just pass them out. It's something that people can keep, it's free, but people can see how it's made too."

Artwork for sale will include a number of individual pieces from printmaking classes produced by students, as well as items the printmaking club made to sell, Melton said. For example, she said she plans to sell small books and sets of postcards she crafted. Printmaking students can display their work for sale in the booth all day. "For the students it's just a way for them to get their artwork out there without having to have their own booth, because it's kind of a daunting thing to sit at your own booth from six to four by yourself," she said.

The Bad Acids will use profits to travel to a graphic chemical factory in Chicago and to pay for guest artists to visit Truman to work with students.

"It's kind of hard being in Kirksville sometimes just because I feel like a lot of things become stagnant," Melton said. "Bringing in new people kind of helps creative juices to start flowing again and gives students feedback on their work."

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Seniors graduating in December, May, or August
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Active in campus or community activities
2.75 cumulative GPA

Evaluation Criteria

Excellent academic record

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Breadth and depth of leadership

Impact on the University or community

Nominations are due Sept. 25

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Pick up/drop off at

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For more information, call X4111



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