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Discovery channel spotlights UO professor

■ ANTHROPOLOGIST: Dr. William Ayers is unraveling the mystery to an early civilization in the South Pacific

By Andrea De Young
Associate Editor

Some professors at the University spend their summers teaching classes. Others take the months off to recuperate from the year that has finished.

Dr. William Ayers, an anthropology professor at the University, spends his summers in the South Pacific. But he's not sitting on the sand, sipping a tropical drink. Ayers is looking for answers about an early civilization.

For more than 15 years, Ayers

has been conducting research on the island of Pohnpei, uncovering and examining artifacts about the site of Nan Madol; a place where people began building a city around 500 AD, and disappeared just when the city began to thrive.

Ayers' research led him to working with Odyssey Productions in Portland. Together, they developed a nine-minute pilot film that they showed to the Discovery Channel. The culmination of this project came Sunday evening when Ayers' research on Nan Madol was a part of the "Discovery Magazine" program.

The segment, which was shot mostly last summer on Pohnpei, showed how Ayers and his colleagues have discovered some of the mysteries surrounding Nan

Madol and how they are going about uncovering the answers to these mysteries.

What's left of Nan Madol are ruins made up of large blocks of stone on a coral reef. One of the biggest questions is how the people of the island brought the stone slabs to the area and built them on top of one another. Each slab was in excess of 600 pounds.

Ayers is also studying the people of Nan Madol. Using a series of sophisticated photographs and computers, he has put together a computerized simulation of how the area might have looked. Ayers said this is the best way to understand something so old.

"There are different ways of interpreting the past," he said. "The most common is oral history. But that only goes back a short

time. Archaeology is the only way to reconstruct the past for the prehistoric period."

Ayers also said he is able to use his experience at Nan Madol as a tool in his teaching.

"Graduates and undergrads are involved in the summer research," he said. "They also work on conserving and caring for artifacts in the archaeology laboratory and a lot of students work on the analysis of the artifacts."

There is still a lot to be uncovered, and Ayers expects the work to be continued for decades.

"We have only scratched the surface at Nan Madol," he said.

The "Islands of Mystery" segment of the "Discovery Magazine" program will be rebroadcast Saturday, August 17 and again in the fall.

Art Museum lands grant for fourth year in a row

■ MONEY: The University Museum of Art will use the \$6,500 to help fund exhibitions this year

By Kristin Bailey
Associate Editor

The University Museum of Art is reaping the rewards of a grant from the Oregon Arts Commission. For the fourth year in a row, the museum received monies to support visual arts exhibitions.

"This is a wonderful show of support for us," said Lawrence Fong, museum associate director. "It recognizes all the arts."

The \$6,500 grant will be used to help fund exhibitions in the upcoming school year, Fong said. Fall term will mark the debut of

"New Traditionalists," a display of paintings by contemporary artists. The money will also help fund the winter term exhibition "Fragrance of Ink," historical paintings by Korean scholars.

"Having the state arts commission recognize this institution is significant," Fong said. "It symbolizes how the arts contribute to our livelihoods."

The Oregon Arts Commission has awarded a total of \$918,504 in grants to 90 arts organizations throughout Oregon. The commission is a program within the Oregon Department of Economic Development. The program was established in 1967 to promote the arts in Oregon.

Visual arts grants like the one received by

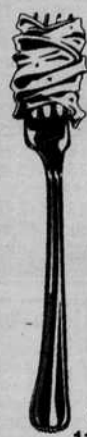
the University are to be used to help with the operating expenses that go along with exhibitions and public programming. The monies can be used to help pay for workshops, visiting lecturers and exhibition catalogues.

"Oregon's arts organizations contribute far more than arts programs to the culture of the state," Arts Commission Executive Director Christine D'Arcy said. "The artists, designers, directors and others who create these programs help build communities and contribute to the state's economy."

Grant recipients had to apply for funding. Citizen review panels evaluated the applications and assessed each based on artistic merit, management practices, public access to arts programs and need within the community.

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Movie extra experience proves to be entertaining

By Chris Hutchinson
Freelance Reporter

I came away from my movie-extra experience with a couple of things: a chance to be in a real movie, a nice paycheck, and a sunburn.

I arrived Friday, at a very early 6 a.m., with several hundred fellow extras. We were told we'd be paid \$40 for eight hours and \$7.50 per hour of overtime. All of us waited in the "check-in" line, and after we filled out the proper paperwork we were off.

The first stop was "wardrobe," and another line to wait in. The two Warner Bros. employees in the wardrobe truck worked quickly, outfitting everyone in the proper 1970s attire. I received a cool white butterfly-collared shirt and was allowed to wear the tan slacks and Adidas shoes that I

brought with me.

Next, we were herded onto "the set" (as Hayward Field was known throughout the weekend). There were several different groups of extras. One group was a Prefontaine fan club, another was a group of track timekeepers and officials, and another (my group) was audience members.

The film crew needed to recreate the 1972 Olympic Trials and an Oregon vs. Stanford track meet, so audience members were clumped in the first few rows of the stands and lined up on the fence around the track. I was one of the fans along the fence watching the staged event. I cheered through take after take for the next five hours in the hot sun for our hero Pre. During filming, the staff members passed out suntan cream and water to the extras, so

it wasn't unbearable.

Finally, at 2 p.m., we were given a break... lunch time. The food that was provided wasn't bad: chicken, potatoes, cake, and lemonade. After a half hour, it was back to the set. This time I got to sit in the shaded stands. But after more filming, I was moved back to the fence and back into the sun. Lucky me.

At 8 p.m., we had a "wrap" (I learned a lot of movie lingo). I turned in my cool-looking shirt and headed home. I was there for 14 hours.

Saturday was more of the same. The only difference this time was the group of paid-extras was quite a bit smaller. They also made us wear jackets because they were recreating an autumn scene. Jackets in ninety-degree heat... not fun. The second day went by

much quicker, and we were finished at 8:30 that night.

I was really amazed at the amount of preparation and organization that goes into the making of a movie, not to mention the number of people who work on a set. During the two days, I saw two big Hollywood actors. Jeremy Sisto (of "Clueless" and "Hideaway" fame) who plays a track runner from the University of Florida competing with Pre, and Donald Sutherland who plays Steve Prefontaine's coach, Bill Dellinger.

I'm excited to go see the movie when it comes to theaters. I'm even more excited to buy this movie when it comes out on video, so I can take full advantage of the pause button on my VCR and find myself in the background!

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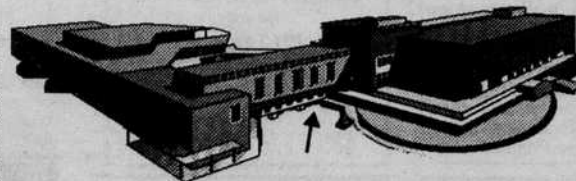
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