

Professor researches Micronesian island

■ **ORIGINS:** Study of site gives clues to the history, lifestyle and culture of the people of Pohnpei

By Ben Kwasney
Higher Education Reporter

University anthropology professor William Ayres has spent the last 15 years attempting to unlock the secrets of the Nan Madol archaeological site on the Micronesian island of Pohnpei, which is nearly 3,000 miles southwest of Hawaii.

The Nan Madol site is a massive complex of stone ruins and 93 man-made islands.

During the construction of the ancient stone complex, it is estimated that 750,000 metric tons of rock were moved by workers. Basalt columns weighing up to 60 tons were transported during construction. Scientists are still trying to determine how the stones were moved.

Ayres has chosen to focus the research he conducts during the summer on past island culture. On Oct. 6, this research into Pohnpei's prehistory was the focus of the A&E Network's "Ancient Mysteries."

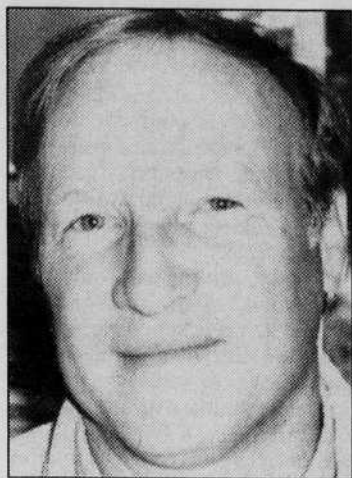
"I'm mainly interested in my research in the Pacific Islands' prehistoric cultural adaptation and life on the islands," Ayres said.

Ayres said the evolution of the complex political and social systems in remote populations, such as Nan Madol, can be learned through the research of ancient architecture.

"Some of our goals [with Nan Madol] are to determine when they started building and how rapidly they put together this huge center of architecture," he said.

Ayres said answers to these questions are indicators of how fast the society was becoming politically and socially complex.

"I was very impressed by how alive, vibrant and viable the tradi-



AYRES

tional culture was," he said about his first visit to Pohnpei in 1977.

He said the people on the island also make it interesting, because they are still knowledgeable about the site's oral history. Ayres said much of the actual archaeological work is done by a local crew.

Besides his work in Nan Madol, Ayres has conducted research in Hawaii, Samoa, Thailand and Easter Island in Polynesia.

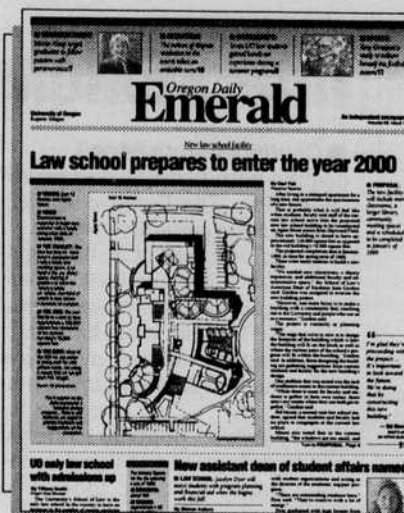
In addition to people's histories, Ayres said he also is interested in the origins of plant cultivation and animal domestication. In Thailand, he searched the limestone hills to find rock shelters of hunters and gatherers.

Ayres said he likes to get students involved in his research.

"One of the things I've tried to do over the years is to incorporate students into the research in a way that makes it a very integral part of my teaching," he said.

Former department head and current anthropology professor, C. Melvin Aikens, said student involvement has been a conspicuous part of Ayres' research through the years.

Aikens said a number of Ayres' students have pursued doctoral programs after working in the field and laboratory for Ayres.



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INTERSEXIONS '96 FAMILIES— MOVING BEYOND POLITICS

The goal of this year's symposium is to celebrate the historical diversity of family structures and to offer alternative voices to enrich the popular and legislative debates on family. As parents, domestic partners and citizens we are becoming increasingly concerned about the effects recent legislative efforts to privilege heterosexual and married families while scapegoating other domestic structures such as homosexual partnerships and single-mother families will have on all of U.S. Society.

October 16

Keynote Speaker: **David Mixner**, author of *Stranger Among Friends*.
Gerlinger Lounge, 7:00 p.m.

October 17

Forum: **A panel** of local politicians and political activists.
Fir Room, EMU, 7:00 p.m.

October 18

Discussion: **An informal panel** made up by members of "alternative" families.
Ben Linder Room, EMU, 3:00 p.m.

October 18

Celebration: **A queer cultural celebration**, all-ages beer garden, and informational fair featuring the Portland band **Rubberneck**.
EMU Dining Room, 4:30-7:00 p.m.

InterSEXions is sponsored by: The Office of the Vice President for Administration, the Cultural Forum, the Women's Studies Department, the Oregon Humanities Center, the UO Bookstore, the Sociology Department, and a generous grant from the Equity Foundation.



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22	Tues	6:00-10:00	Adult
23	Wed	5:15-9:15	Adult
24	Thur	6:15-10:15	1st Aid
28	Mon	6:00-10:00	Adult
30	Wed	5:00-9:00	Child/Infant

NOVEMBER

4	Mon	5:00-9:00	1st Aid
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7	Thur	6:15-10:15	Adult

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