

# Museum lecture studies Donner Party

Researchers at the University's Museum of Natural History speak on their studies of the Donner family

BY CHARLIE HANSEN  
FREELANCE REPORTER

The Museum of Natural and Cultural History presented a lecture discussing the ill-fated journey of the Donner family and the possibility of cannibalism Friday night in Lillis Hall.

Museum Research Associate Julie Schablitsky and Museum Osteologist/Archaeologist Guy Tasa anchored the event titled "Reconstructing a Tragedy: The Archaeology of the Donner Family Camp." The two were shown last fall in an episode of Discovery Channel's "Unsolved History," which documented a team of archaeologists and its attempt to find the Donner family campsite.

In 1846, a group of 81 people led by George Donner left Illinois for California to seek a better way of life. After taking a shortcut, the Donner Party was stranded in the Sierra Nevada Mountains when an early blizzard occurred. Possibly starving, it is speculated that the Donner Party resorted

to cannibalism.

The Donner Party erected two campsites, the main campsite at Donner Lake. Artifacts found at Alder Creek in the Truckee Ranger District of Tahoe National Forest may be from the other campsite, where the Donner family stayed along with a group of teamsters. If the artifacts are indeed from the Donner family, Schablitsky said she hopes to learn more about the events of that winter.

"Our goal is to figure out what happened during those three to four months," she said.

Some of the artifacts found at the site may confirm the Donner family's presence.

"One piece of evidence that may show the Donners were at Alder Creek is the presence of women," Schablitsky said. "We found pieces of

beads and writing tablets."

Writing tablets may have been used by Tamzene Donner, a teacher, to help normalize the situation with her and George's children. She may have been teaching them to read and write.

The issue of the Donner Party and cannibalism spread across the country in the late 1840s as newspapers often described the Donner Party as a crazed group of people seen eating humans. Regardless of whether cannibalism happened at the Donner family camp, Schablitsky wants to present the Donner Party as more humane.

"They were not animals who just cannibalized each other, they were human beings," Schablitsky said.

Tasa's job is to find out whether bone fragments found at Alder Creek are indeed human. That is no easy task considering there are over 25,000 pieces of bone smaller than a paper clip. Some of the fragments have been sent away for DNA testing to find out if they are human.

### READ MORE ONLINE

To read more about 'Unsolved History,' the Discovery Channel documentary that featured two University professors, visit [dailyemerald.com](http://dailyemerald.com).

## IN BRIEF

### Festival of Bands on University campus

High school marching bands from across the Northwest converged on campus Saturday to participate in the 26th annual Festival of Bands.

A total of 29 bands played in the festival, which is the Oregon Marching Band's primary fundraiser.

Of the 29 bands, 24 were from Oregon high schools, four were from Washington and one was from California. Three of the bands were from the Eugene/Springfield area.

The festival consisted of a competition between bands and several clinics as well as an exhibition performance by the Oregon Marching Band.

The Oregon Marching Band performed a medley of music by George Gershwin in honor of veterans and those currently serving in the military.

— Gabe Bradley

**STUDENT DISCOUNT**

**Haircut Express** Save \$1<sup>00</sup> on haircut

Men & Women's regular: \$12<sup>00</sup>

18th & Willamette across from Texaco next to Big Town Hero

## Severe climate changes indicate significance of global warming

Human influence causes rising Arctic temperatures, melting glaciers, thinning sea ice, higher sea levels

BY JOHN HEILPRIN  
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

WASHINGTON — Scientists say changes in the earth's climate from human influences are occurring particularly intensely in the Arctic region, evidenced by widespread melting of glaciers, thinning sea ice and rising permafrost temperatures.

A study released Monday said the annual average amount of sea ice in the Arctic has decreased by about 8 percent in the past 30 years, resulting in the loss of 386,100 square miles of sea ice — an area bigger than Texas and Arizona combined.

In the past half-century, average yearly temperatures in Alaska and Siberia rose by about 3.6 to 5.4 degrees and winters in Alaska and western Canada warmed by an average of 5 to 7 degrees.

With "some of the most rapid and

severe climate change on earth," the Arctic regions' melting contributed to sea levels rising globally by an average of about three inches in the past 20 years, the report said.

"These changes in the Arctic provide an early indication of the environmental and societal significance of global warming," says the Arctic Climate Impact Assessment, a four-year study by 300 scientists in eight Arctic-bordering nations.

A comprehensive study of Arctic warming adds yet more impetus to the projections by several climate scientists that there will be a steady rise in global temperature as the result of greenhouse gases released into the atmosphere from the burning of fossil fuels and other sources.

"The bottom line is that the Arctic is warming now, much more rapidly than the rest of the globe, and it's impacting people directly," Robert

Corell, chairman of the scientists' study panel and a senior fellow with the American Meteorological Society, said Sunday.

The process is only likely to accelerate in the Arctic, a region that provides important resources such as oil, gas and fish, the study finds.

That would wreak havoc on polar bears, ice-dependent seals, caribou and reindeer herds — and local people such as Inuit whose main food source comes from hunting those animals. Some endangered migratory birds are projected to lose more than half their breeding areas.

The study projects that in the next 100 years the yearly average temperatures will increase by 7 to 13 degrees Fahrenheit over land and 13 to 18 degrees over the ocean.

Since it takes decades if not centuries to reverse warming from carbon dioxide, methane and other greenhouse gases, some damage is inevitable, though longer-term impacts could be "reduced significantly" by cutting emissions globally this century, the study says.

**Pregnant?**

Talk with a friend.  
1.800.848.LOVE  
[possiblypregnant.org](http://possiblypregnant.org)

**The Pizza Pipeline** PEPSI

"Subs with Substance"

**MANIC Monday**

14" 1 topping pizza and 2 24 oz. drinks  
**\$6.99**

824 Charnelton Eugene, OR • 97401  
686-5808  
Sun-Wed 11am - 1am  
Thurs-Sat 11am-2am  
EXP. 11/8/04

VISA, MasterCard, Discover, American Express

GOOD MORNING ATHENS  
A MODERN MUSICAL SEX COMEDY  
BY SEAN KEOGH

WAR? NO SEX!

THURSDAY SPECIAL  
NOVEMBER 11

NEW CURTAIN TIME  
7:30 PM  
ALL UO STUDENTS  
\$4

A ROBINSON THEATRE PRODUCTION

UO TICKET OFFICE  
EMU-346-4363