



ARCHAEO MAYA

The Newsletter of Maya Exploration Center

www.mayaexploration.org

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MEC Plans a Live Webcast on December 21st

We at MEC have an exciting plan to broadcast live, over the web, all day long from four different Maya sites. We're calling it *Maya 2012 - The New Beginning* and we already have the permits, the film crews, and the hosts all lined up. But we also have a problem. The funding sources we thought were in hand slipped away and now, just ninety days before the big day, we find ourselves looking for new sponsorship. Here's the plan, the problem, and what you can do to help.

One in seven people across the globe believe that the world will end in 2012. On the 21st of December this morbid fascination will be at fever pitch and all eyes firmly set on the Maya world. The 2012 craze has captured the imagination of millions and while thousands are expected to descend upon the region, most won't be able to attend in person. *Maya 2012-The New Beginning* will allow viewers from across the globe to experience the day from the comfort of their computer screens and smart phones as we webcast a continual dawn to dusk live coverage from the ancient Maya sites of Palenque and Chichen Itza in Mexico, Tikal in Guatemala, and Copan in Honduras. Anyone with an internet connection will be able to tune in, free of charge!

Our multi-camera, multi-venue live stream webcast will use state-of-the-art transmission technology to beam images from these remote sites back to a Palenque hub, where anchor Dr. Barnhart will hook up with each site's hosts. Throughout the day we'll have roving reporters chasing the action as it happens and interviews with archaeologists and other people of note who find themselves there during the



Maya 2012

The New Beginning

day. For those who would like to look in occasionally, there will be steady cams at each of the sites for internet viewers to switch between as they choose. There will also be a social media conversation running, so people can participate and comment from all over the world.

We seek to distinguish our broadcast from those who promote the fear of apocalypse. Ours is a positive message, that to the Maya time is cyclical, not linear, and that every ending is simultaneously a new beginning. Modern Maya priests say that the ends of great cycles are times of transformation and renewal. As the sun rises on December 22nd, the world will remember that we and our sponsors took the high road, away from doomsday profiteering.

The plan is solid and the potential audience is huge! Only one question remains, how are we going to fund the webcast? Originally, the plan was to have a few industry-leading companies as our major sponsors, but that fell through (for political reasons having nothing to do with the merits of our plan.) Now, the new plan is to sell advertising space, both in commercial ads air-

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Letter from the Director



Happy Fall Equinox! Today is exactly 90 days until the completion of 13 bak'tuns since the Fourth Maya Creation began.

It's an anniversary party 5126 years in the making. As you'll read in our lead article, we at MEC have an exciting plan to deliver a live webcast from four different Maya ruins on December 21st, 2012, but that plan is in danger of not happening. My hope is that with the help of our community we can create a buzz about the idea and attract new sponsors to replace the ones that dropped off. If you want to be able to look into the Maya world from the comfort of your computer on the big day, please "like" is on Facebook and tell your friends.

Aside from our webcast aspirations, MEC is involved in the countdown to December 21 in a number of other ways. I'm presenting my talk "2012: Misunderstanding the Maya Calendar" at eight different universities all across the country this fall. Christopher Powell will also be in the public eye, appearing on a one hour Fox Channel documentary airing in December. Michael Grofe and I both speak in Wildheart Production's "2012: The Beginning" which continues to receive wide international acclaim. It's currently being screened all across the US and I'll be doing a Q and A session after the Austin screening at Mexic-Arte in mid-November.

This edition of ArchaeoMaya also includes the kinds of things you've come to expect - reports on our travel programs, notices of our future programs, and news from the field. You'll read about HASSE and the growing relationship MEC is developing with that Taiwan-based education provider. In the news, you'll read about the amazing find of ancient Maya murals on the walls of a modern Maya family's home in Chajul. Speaking of modern Maya people, I'm especially excited to have this edition of ArchaeoMaya introduce the Inti Raymi Fund. By odd coincidence, I was just speaking to its director David McGrain about the community of Chajul and MEC's ongoing efforts to empower them when the news of the mural came out! And just as I write this letter, I've received the sad news that my once field director in Copan and Mayanist legend Bob Sharer has passed away. This ArchaeoMaya will now also include a short obituary for him.

Finally, you may notice quite a few ads in this edition. That's because between our 2013 Mayan Calendar, our new travel programs, and the events leading up to December 21, we've got a lot to share! We can provide new ways to get involved all day long, but none of it goes anywhere without you, MEC's core community. Come get involved this next winter or spring and help us herald in the next bak'tun!

Yours Truly,

MEC Teams Up With the Inti Raymi Fund

The Inti Raymi Fund is the loving creation of Texas real estate mogul David McGrain. In his travels to over 50 developing countries he saw again and again the machines of globalization destroying indigenous people's lives and causing the disappearance of wonderful customs, artistry and traditions. Being a compassionate man of action and principles, he created the Inti Raymi Fund to help protect indigenous communities world-wide.

McGrain's plan is ambitious and just getting started. Eventually, he wants the Inti Raymi Fund to help indigenous communities in 200 countries, approaching each one by one and having respectful discussions about their most pressing needs. The Fund's mission statement is "to help sustain, with dignity and respect, indigenous cultures of the world." Thanks to a generous initial donation

from McGrain and the hard work of his family, the Inti Raymi Fund has already helped seven indigenous communities in four countries. The Fund has provided new desks and chairs for school children in the Amazon, a new Sherpa cultural center in Nepal, and monthly financial support to a shelter for young single mothers in the Andean highlands.

To avoid overhead and other administrative costs, McGrain has thus far organized and delivered much of the aid himself. But now he wants to expand the scope of the Inti Raymi Fund and to do so he knows the Fund will need new partners and a community of like-minded donors. This is where MEC comes in. Our decade of experience working with and helping indigenous communities makes us ideal partners for the Fund. Working together, we can identify the needs of indigenous people and fulfill them in sustainable ways that promote cultural preservation and pride in their ancestral heritage. MEC's director Ed Barnhart and McGrain are currently in the planning phase for Inti Raymi Fund projects in the countries of Guatemala, Honduras, Belize, and Cambodia.

We at MEC encourage the members of our community to learn more about the Inti Raymi Fund and consider lending your support through donations. Check out their website at www.intiraymifund.com.



Maya Exploration Center

8 DAY TOUR - Pillars of the Classic Maya



February and November 2013
www.mayaexploration.org/tours.php

Palenque to Tikal Tour

Valentine's Day and Mardi Gras

February 9 - 17, 2013

http://mayaexploration.org/tours_palenque-tikal_feb13.php

Palenque to Tikal Tour

Thanksgiving Week

November 16 - 24, 2013

http://mayaexploration.org/tours_palenque-tikal_nov13.php

Taiwanese Travelers in Yucatan

In early August, narrowly avoiding a hurricane in the Gulf of Mexico, a group of nineteen Taiwanese students landed in Cancun ready for a Mayan adventure. They were sent by the Houston Association for Space and Science Education (HASSE), a program that MEC has been partnered with for four years now. What began with a few Maya astronomy lectures in Houston has turned into a full blown travel course and cultural immersion program for HASSE's students.

This was an especially meaningful course for MEC because of the team who led the journey - Alonso and Xun Mendez. Alonso has led courses for MEC for a decade, but this was the first time that his son Xun was old enough to join our team. It seems like just yesterday when he was a seven year old boy following us through the jungle during the Palenque Mapping Project! Xun was an ideal leader for this group, not just because of his jungle experience and Maya-American heritage, but because he has been learning Chinese over the last two years. As fate would have it, he had even attended a study abroad program in Taiwan just the year before.

The students were enchanted by the Mendez team, who taught them about ancient Maya history, mathematics, and astronomy as they explored various Maya ruins. They also shared their vast knowledge of the



Alonso and Xun Mendez guiding HASSE students at Ek Balam

area's flora and fauna, gathered while living most of their lives in the rainforest of Chiapas. Perhaps most importantly, they introduced the HASSE group to living Maya people, like the curanderos at the Puerto Morelos Ethnobotanical Center and the proud people who run the Caste War Museum in Tihosuco.

After a final evening of fun and companionship in Playa del Carmen, the Taiwanese travelers returned to Houston with a brand new perspective on, and appreciation for, Maya civilization. We at MEC look forward to also expanding the minds of the next batch of eager students that HASSE sends our way.

Live Webcast on December 21st (continued from Page 1)

ing periodically throughout the day and from click through ads on the webcast page itself. The companies that we approach must be convinced that our webcast will capture a wide audience from all around the world. To convince them, we need to build a quantifiable audience, and quickly. That's where you come in, and how you can help. MEC is has made a special Facebook page for the Event - *Maya 2012 - The New Beginning*. Please find that page a click "like". Then tell all your friends to click "like". Better yet, if you are a potential sponsor of our webcast, or know someone who could be, contact us about how we can cross-promote the webcast. If we do this right, our new sponsors will be branded with one of the most anticipated days in modern history and part of an advertising juggernaut.

If you would like to look in on the Maya world from the comfort of your own computer on December 21st, help us make this plan a reality! It starts with clicking "like" at: <http://www.facebook.com/Maya2012TheNewBeginning>

The 2013 Chautauqua Courses – Oaxaca and Ecuador

The Chautauqua Program is a continuing education program offered by the University of Texas at Austin Center for STEM Education. The program was originally created as a faculty development program, but since 2010 it has been open to the general public as well. For the last ten years Dr. Barnhart has led summer travel courses for the Chautauqua Program. Here are the two courses he'll be leading in the summer of 2013. If you're interested, please contact Dr. Barnhart or visit www.ahautravel.com for more details.

Ethnobotany and Archaeology in the Valley of Oaxaca, Mexico

Oaxaca - July 6 - 13, 2013

Locations visited during the trip include Oaxaca City's indigenous markets and botanical gardens, Santo Domingo church and museum, Monte Alban, San Jose Mogote, Mitla, Yagul, Dinzu, Zachilla, the Tule Tree, a mescal factory, a cochineal farm, and four craft villages scattered throughout the valley.

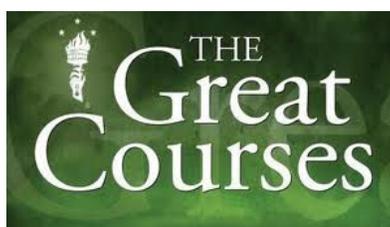


Experiments at the Equator, Volcanoes, and the Amazon Basin

Ecuador - July 28 - August 4, 2013

Locations visited during the trip include Quito, the exact line of the equator's visitor center, the Avenue of Volcanoes, Volcano Cotopaxi, Quilotoa Crater Lake, Baños, Pailon de Diablo Waterfalls, Puyo, and the Amazon Basin.

Barnhart's New Video Lecture Series on South America



After six months of intensive research and a week in the studio, MEC's Ed Barnhart has completed a 24-lecture video series for the Teaching Company's *Great Courses*. The series is tentatively entitled "Lost Worlds of South America" and takes its viewers through Andean history from 15,000 years ago up through European contact in 1531. The Teaching Company chooses only the best lecturers in America for their courses, they estimate only 1 in 3000 professors, and it was an honor for Dr. Barnhart to be selected.

Rather than being a typical classroom style delivery, the series is full of beautiful graphics, fly throughs of archaeological sites, and short on-site videos. Viewers are going to learn much about the traditional ideas

about Andean pre-history, but the Teaching Company also gave Dr. Barnhart the latitude to present his own theories. Among the major themes of the series is his controversial theory that Andean religions, from their earliest origins, were essentially mono-theistic, with an entity referred to as "The Fanged Deity" being the sole creator of everything. The series tracks this deity from his probable origins in the Amazon, to his first stone-carved depictions in Chavin times, all the way up into the Inca Empire where he becomes known as Viracocha.

Other parts of the series will cover the latest finds along Peru's north coast, where cities older than the pyramids of Egypt are being found, the current theories on the Nazca Lines, and the incredible ongoing discoveries of major ancient cities in the Amazon basin.

The lectures are now in the post-production phase at the Teaching Company and set to release just in time for Christmas.

News From the Field - Kitchen Wall Maya Murals Discovered

An amazing Maya mural has been discovered on the walls of a home in Chajul, Guatemala. Chajul is a small, simple community in the highlands that once suffered the worst of Guatemala's brutal assault on the Maya people. The village was mostly burned in the 1980's and its people hid in the woods like hunted animals for the better part of a decade. After the 1995 peace accord was signed, Maya people slowly began reoccupying the homes that were still standing in Chajul. Among the resettlers was the Ramirez family. About five years ago Lucas Ramirez felt secure enough in his reoccupied home to renovate. As he scrapped the crumbling plaster from the kitchen walls, a multicolor, multi-wall Maya mural was revealed. He knew it was old, but it was not until Polish archaeologist Jaroslaw Zralka examined it that Ramirez understood what he had found.



*The Ramirez Family with their murals
(Photo by Robert Slabonski)*

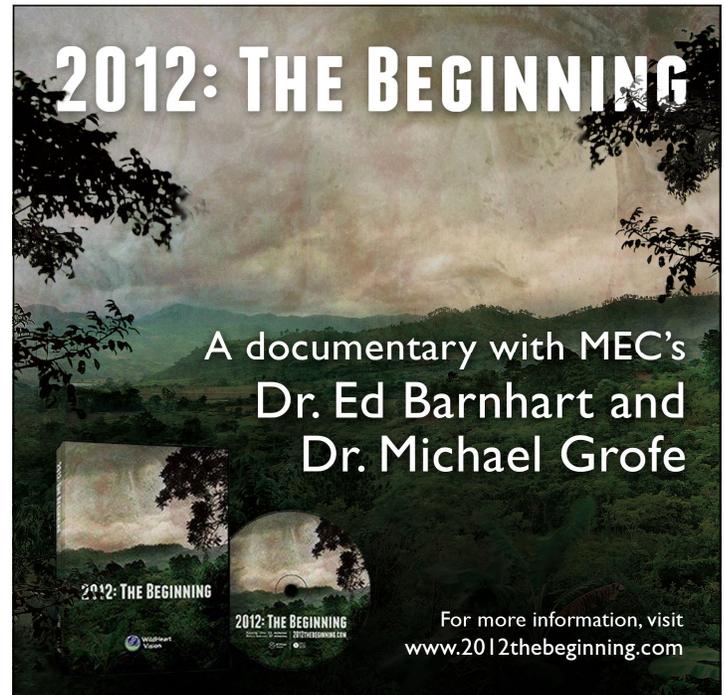
The mural depicts a procession of men in combinations of Spanish and Maya clothing. A man seated in a European style chair plays a Maya drum. Though the image is quite faded, Zralka believes he can make out people holding severed heads. The central figure of the mural is wearing not European clothes, but rather the headdress of an ancient Maya lord. Just how old are the murals? At least 300 years and perhaps older. The conquistadors had stamped out most of traditional Maya life by 1600, but places like Chajul, hiding in isolated pockets of the mist covered highlands, apparently preserved their autonomy for longer than previously thought. For the humble Ramirez family, the discovery means the chose to squat in a house that was likely once the home of one of their ancestors last surviving Maya lords.



Yes, the Maya Calendar continues!

To pre-order the 2013 calendar, use this link:

<http://www.mayan-calendar.com>



A documentary with MEC's
Dr. Ed Barnhart and
Dr. Michael Grofe

For more information, visit
www.2012thebeginning.com

Use this link to receive a special MEC member discount:

<http://www.1shoppingcart.com/app/?Clk=4810448>

Robert J. Sharer (1940-2012)

Bob was a soft spoken man who loved his work and was well liked by all who met him. His two most stand out achievements as a Mayanist were his direction of the Quirigua Archaeological Project (1974-1979) and the Copan Acropolis Project (1988-2003). During his time at Copan he and his team found the most richly interred tomb ever found in the Maya world, the Margarita Tomb, and the tomb of Copan's dynastic founder, Yax K'uk' Mo'. But Bob didn't get to Copan overnight. His career in archaeology started almost 40 years earlier, as first an undergraduate at Michigan State and then a graduate student at the University of Pennsylvania. Upon graduation in 1968, he taught at Pitzer College and directed his first excavations at Chalchuapa, El Salvador. Then when Linton Satterwaite retired at U Penn in 1972, Bob was offered his position. Since that date, Bob's hard work and leadership skills awarded him a steady stream of promotions up until his retirement in 2009. Despite his busy field career, he was still able to publish many books, most notably *The Ancient Maya, editions 4, 5, and 6*. He died peacefully on September 20, 2012 with his wife and daughter at his side. We at MEC who worked with him at Copan will dearly miss our mentor and friend.



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www.mayaexploration.org/amazon

Thanks to Everyone Who Donated to MEC This Summer

Scott Baker • Patricia Lytle • Margaret and Burgess Wade • C.H. Drake • Daniel Maddux

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