

# NEWSGRAM

News in brief from the Conservation Center

Issue 6, June 2011

## The Leon Levy Fellowship Program in Archaeological Conservation

*Partnership and Training Opportunities at the Conservation Center*

The material heritage of the Ancient World is vast, as are the conservation needs of archaeological materials and sites. Archaeological conservators should have both a broad education in conservation, archaeology and conservation science, and an in-depth specialized training of issues specific to objects from a burial environment. Thanks to the generosity of the **Leon Levy Foundation**, we were able to launch a Visiting Fellowship Program in the spring 2009 term that allows us to recruit international students interested in archaeological materials. This five-year program provides funding for one visiting student each year, as well as much-needed fellowship support to highly-gifted matriculated students pursuing a specialization in archaeological conservation.

The Leon Levy Visiting Fellowship, which provides unparalleled conservation education for scholars of the developing world, was created to bring a single individual already working with archaeological materials to the Center for one academic year. For these Fellows, whose home countries do not offer advanced conservation training, the aim is to take coursework alongside our students and return home where they can then apply what they have learned, train other professionals and become advocates for advanced training opportunities. Visiting Fellows enroll in a compressed series of core conservation courses and, depending on their level of experience, treatment courses. At the same time, they bring to the Center an international perspective that broadens the education of our students and sensitizes them to conservation issues in other countries where they may later find themselves working. So far, the Visiting Fellowship has attracted candidates from Argentina, China, Egypt, Iran, Jordan, Malaysia, Mexico, and Romania. The past two years have seen fellowship awardees from Albania and Sri Lanka, with this year's Visiting Fellow joining us from Iraq.

Our first Leon Levy Visiting Fellow, selected for the academic year 2009 – 2010, was Alma Bardho from Albania. Prior to coming to the Conservation Center, Alma completed undergraduate studies in general chemistry and a Master's degree in analytical chemistry from the University of Tirana. She pursued a career in archaeological objects conservation and developed her skills through field work at various excavation sites, training courses in preventive conservation and a conservation internship at the University of Pennsylvania.

### Alumni Spotlight

Margaret Holben Ellis '79 examines Teddy Roosevelt's War Club for hidden inscription and signs of blood on the PBS series "History Detectives" The story will air July 19<sup>th</sup> at 8:00 pm EST on PBS as part of "History Detectives" Episode #905. Please check your local PBS listing, as times vary nationwide.



Alma Bardho, Hannelore Roemich and Anusha Kasthuri

***"I am certain that the Levy Visiting Fellowship Program will make an extraordinary difference to countries with important cultural patrimony and little tradition of conservation. The prospect is truly exciting."***  
—Michele Marincola '90, Sherman Fairchild Chairman and Professor of Conservation

Following her Fellowship, Alma returned to Albania and was hired as the Chief of the Conservation Laboratory at the Center for Albanian Studies (National Research Institutes of History, Archeology, Ethnology, Linguistics and Literature), the only conservation laboratory in Albania. "It was a great experience being at the Conservation Center," she says. "Meeting and making friends with other students, it was a huge step in my career." Alma came to the Center with a strong academic background but limited professional experience. It is a demonstration of the success of the program that she has been able to show such immediate progress and obtain a central and prestigious conservation position within her home country.

Anusha Kasthuri, our Leon Levy Visiting Fellow for the academic year 2010 – 2011, completed a Master of Science in Architectural Conservation from the University of Moratuwa, Sri Lanka in 2008. She holds a position in artifact conservation within the Sri Lankan Governmental Department of Archaeology. During the fellowship year, Anusha wanted to deepen her knowledge and technical experience in order to enhance her work conserving historical artifacts and training conservation officers in Sri Lanka.

"I applied for the Leon Levy Visiting Fellowship for the unique opportunity it offered in graduate conservation training," she says. "The Fellowship has greatly enhanced my education, skills, and experience. I have also had the opportunity to study theoretical aspects of conservation and learn about recent techniques." Because of her professional experience in the field, she was enrolled in an advanced conservation course in the fall 2010 semester, *Metalworking in Antiquity*. Co-taught by Metropolitan Museum of Art Conservator Deborah Schorsch

'84, and Sherman Fairchild Conservator-in-Charge Lawrence Becker '82, Anusha completed several projects, including research on a Met-owned Bodhisattva statue from Sri Lanka.

Anusha returned home at the end of May and will be teaching university students as a Visiting Lecturer in the University of Moratuwa. She said of other opportunities awaiting her, "I have several national conservation projects scheduled upon my return home, particularly the German-Sri Lankan excavation and conservation of the *Royal Citadel of Anuradhapura*."

Shukran Mehdi Salih will be our Leon Levy Visiting Fellow for 2011 – 2012. Shukran is from Iraq, where, for the last 21 years, she has worked at the State Board of Antiquities and Heritage at the Iraq National Museum's Central Laboratory as a geophysicist and conservator. She has also trained in Japan on the conservation of pottery and metals, and at the Field Museum in Chicago on the scientific analysis and investigation of metals, pottery, glass, dyes, textiles, bones and ivory. Most recently, she assisted Jessica Johnson, Project Director, Conservation and Collections Management Program, as Master Trainer in the *Iraq Cultural Heritage Project*.

In addition to the Visiting Fellowship, the Leon Levy Foundation also offers additional stipend support for up to three matriculated students per year in the form of the Leon Levy Fellowships in Archaeological Conservation. Leon Levy Fellows are chosen on the basis of academic merit and a strong interest in archaeological conservation.

Each year, the selected Fellows and Visiting Fellow meet with representatives of the Leon Levy Foundation, and various invited specialists in the discipline, to speak about their individual research and projects over the past academic year. On April 25, 2011, Shelby White, Trustee of the Leon

Levy Foundation, and Elizabeth Bartman, President of the Archaeological Institute of America, personally visited the Center and were welcomed with presentations by this year's Fellows.

The Fellows also participate in an intensive, one-week specialized training workshop designed to prepare participants for work on archaeological sites. The Archaeological Field School at the Conservation Center, made possible by the Hagop Kevorkian Fund, is organized by Kent Severson '85. One of the leading archaeological objects conservators in the US, Kent also supervises students at IFA-sponsored excavations at *Aphrodisias*, Turkey and *Selinunte*, Sicily. This training in archaeological field methods and techniques has become an excellent complement to the Leon Levy Fellowship Program, enhancing the archaeological study and training of students from the Center as well as from other US programs preparing for their first excavation.

We are truly grateful to the Leon Levy Foundation for its continued support and partnership in bringing this successful program to the Conservation Center. We would also like to thank the Hagop Kevorkian Fund for its generosity and encouragement towards our archaeological program. With the unequalled training and experience the Fellows receive at NYU, we are confident they will be able to lead productive careers in archaeological conservation and make important contributions to the field. •

-Kevin Martin

Kevin is the Academic Advisor for the Conservation Program



Shelby White, Hannelore Roemich and Leon Levy Fellow Brian Castriota during the April 25 visit to the Center

### LEON LEVY FELLOWS IN ARCHAEOLOGICAL CONSERVATION

Spring 2009  
Raina Chao  
Amy Tjiong '10

2009 – 2010  
Linsly Boyer  
Briana Feston  
Jessica Pace  
Amy Tjiong '10  
Cybele Tom

2010 – 2011  
Brian Castriota  
Julia Sybalsky

2011 – 2012  
Brian Castriota  
Cybele Tom  
Jessica Walthew

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