Celebrations throughout October of Halloween and the Mexican Day of the Dead culminated in the construction of our own Peabody Dia de los Muertos altar. Well-supplied with an array of macabre characters, the alter also commemorates our own “ancestors,” including Robert S. Peabody, Charles Peabody, Warren K. Moorehead, Alfred V. Kidder, Ripley Bullen, Douglas Byers, Frederick Johnson, and Scotty MacNeish. The altar was a highlight of our Parents’ Weekend events and our Massachusetts Archaeology Month Open House. The altar was a good reminder of where we came from as we commenced our Peabody Advisory Committee meetings at the beginning of November, especially since our vision for the future was the predominant theme of those meetings. We discussed our new strategic planning initiative—set to begin in January—as well as major topics like NAGPRA, the role of the PAC, new directions for our education programs, and ideas for revamping our collections storage system. The concept of making the Peabody a national resource for educators who use archaeology in the secondary school classroom as a tool to teach other subjects had considerable support. As we begin our strategic planning initiative we will look for input from the entire Peabody community as a platform for understanding the direction of the Museum over the next five to ten years. We hope you will be involved! And, if you haven’t seen the Peabody Dia de los Muertos altar, please stop by soon!

Major Gift to the Peabody
Head of School John Palfrey joined the Peabody Advisory Committee during their November 2 meeting to announce that Oscar Tang ’56 and Marshall Cloyd ’58 had joined forces to provide a $1.5 million dollar gift to the Peabody’s endowment. The gift comes at a pivotal point in the Phillips Academy campaign, which includes a $6 million dollar goal for the Peabody’s endowment and current use fund. That evening members of the Peabody Advisory Committee had an opportunity to thank Marshall and Oscar for their incredible generosity during a special celebration honoring Oscar Tang’s service on the PA Board of Trustees.
Ancestral human remains from Bellevue, Michigan were repatriated to representatives from the Saginaw Chipewa Indian Tribe of Michigan on October 8. After leaving the Peabody, the delegation drove to Ann Arbor, Michigan to participate in a repatriation ceremony with spiritual leaders and representatives of other tribes, which included the reburial of remains from the Peabody and other museums. William Johnson, Curator at the Ziibiwing Center of Anishinabe Culture and Life-ways, and Chairman of the Michigan Anishinaabek Cultural Preservation and Repatriation Alliance spearheaded work with the Peabody staff to make the repatriation possible.


Parents’ Weekend 2012

The Peabody hosted two days of events for the 2012 Parents’ Weekend. Well over 150 parents, grandparents, students, siblings, and friends enjoyed a scavenger hunt in the Peabody gallery crafted by Museum Educator Lindsay Randall. The entire Peabody staff was on hand to answer questions and interact with our visitors!

Scavenger hunt participants competed with each other to solve all 15 clues!

Archaeologist Jodie Ashini and Education Director Kanani Penashue visited the Peabody with other members of the Sheshatshiu Innu community as part of the Addison Gallery’s exhibit Pekupatikut Innuat Akunikana/Pictures Woke the People Us: An Innu Project with Wendy Ewald and Eric Gottesman. They were able to give us many details about the small collection of Innu objects in the Peabody collection, including a painted caribou hide coat, moccasins, and several miniature snowshoes. We also paid a visit to Cultural Survival in Cambridge, where Jennifer Weston discussed indigenous language projects, including the Wampanoag Language Reclamation Program. Thank you to Wendy Ewald ‘69, Eric Gottesman ‘94, our colleagues at the Addison, and our new friends from Sheshatshiu, Labrador for an exciting and interesting week of learning!

Innu community members with Jennifer Weston (center) at Cultural Survival in Cambridge.
Halloween and Dia de los Muertos at the Peabody

As a stress reliever during a very busy Fall Term, Work Duty students took time away from their collection management projects and worked with educator Lindsay Randall who taught them about the History of Halloween. During the lesson each student had the opportunity to carve their own pumpkin. For several students, this was their first experience with this tradition. Designs ranged from the traditional to the abstract. Their handiwork was on display during Parents’ Weekend and on Halloween night.

At the end of the week each pumpkin was placed in front of the museum with a candle to add some festive spirit to the museum. Don’t worry, the candles were battery operated!!!

Following a common theme during the end of October and beginning of November, Donald Slater presented a number of lesson units concerning the social response to death and the remembrance of ancestors and loved ones. Spanish, English, History, and Philosophy and Religious Studies classes worked with Slater to learn about the Mexican Day of the Dead (Nov. 2nd annually), ancestor worship in ancient Mesoamerica, as well as views on death right here in early Andover. The latter unit involved a field trip to Andover’s South Church burial ground. Here, students had the opportunity to test and assess hypotheses presented by the late, great, James Deetz about the progressive change in religious beliefs, gravestone iconography, and epitaphs during the Colonial and early Federal era in New England.

OWHL Exhibits

The Oliver Wendell Holmes Library commissioned the Peabody to create two small temporary exhibits for cases in the circulation lobby. The first case, Kil-n Time: Students Examining Roman Pottery, includes student written text from Latin 200 about Roman ceramics from England in our collection. The second case, Small Things Considered: Interactive Learning at the Peabody Museum, displays objects frequently used in teaching to entice viewers to investigate the Peabody. Future exhibits in these spaces will be created with the assistance of the Archaeology Club.
Sheila Charles, former archaeologist of Strawbery Banke Museum in Portsmouth, NH, spoke to the MAS-NE about the excavation of a late 18th century privy. Her talk, “Cutting to the Chase: Strawbery Banke Museum”, detailed her use of historic maps to locate the privy and a correlated barn foundation in the yard of the historic Chase house. The privy yielded artifacts that ranged from flower pots to children’s toys to construction material. Her results support and strengthen the interpretation of the structure for Strawbery Banke and have provided a model for future excavations on the site.
Den Rock Park Artifacts Featured in Native History Study

Den Rock Park is a 120-acre conservation area in Andover and Lawrence, situated on the Shawsheen River. Den Rock, with its dramatic exposed cliffs, sheared slabs and boulders of granite with sparkling mica and quartz, was an ancient landmark to hundreds of generations of indigenous people who arrived at the place by boat—navigating the Shawsheen River to and from the Merrimack River—and on foot using ancient trails. Edward L. Bell, Senior Archaeologist with the Massachusetts Historical Commission, visited the Peabody Museum during his research about the property’s archaeology and Native history. The study was prompted by an inquiry about the Native history of Den Rock from local resident Susan Hegarty who is preparing a guidebook to the birds of Den Rock Park.

Bell published, “Discerning Placemaking: Archaeology and Native Histories of the Den Rock Park Area,” in the Bulletin of the Massachusetts Archaeological Society (Vol. 73, No. 2, 2012). Museum Registrar and Senior Collections Manager Bonnie Sousa helped Hegarty and Bell access several Peabody collections from Den Rock. Bell writes in his article, “The impressive artifacts from Den Rock curated by the Peabody Museum completely opened up my ideas about that ancient Native place. The artifacts in the museum’s collections established the antiquity and duration of established Native occupation at Den Rock”. Fragments of a steatite (soapstone) cooking pot dates between 4,000 and 2430 years ago and is the oldest datable artifact from the site. Look for the Bulletin in your local library or contact MAS for more information on ordering back issues.

Don Abbott Honored during Peru Reunion

The Peabody Advisory Committee meetings began with a wonderful Peruvian-themed reception and dinner hosted by Becky and Elwin Sykes. The event included members of the Peabody Collections Oversight Committee and the PAC, and travelers from the summer 2012 archaeological excursion to Peru led by our own Jim Richardson, Ph.D. and Dan Sandweiss, Ph.D. ’75. Charter Trustee Gary Lee ’74 also joined us and shared several drink recipes—including his version of the Pisco Sour. A highlight of the evening was Marshall Cloyd’s presentation of a Certificate of Appreciation to Don Abbott, in recognition of his long service and dedication to the Peabody.

Thank you for your support!
We appreciate the continued support of our many generous donors and friends. Your contributions make it possible for students to explore history in a unique, hands-on environment. To learn more about how you can support the Peabody please contact:

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