

Discovering life



JORDAN HAINES,
Dr. Michael Fronda and Luke Bechtel, from left, searched a field in Cyprus for artifacts.

Submitted photos

Students discovering artifacts, getting hands on history

By **KELSEY VOLKMAN**
Gazette Staff Writer

Collecting thousands of shards of centuries-old pottery and other ancient artifacts in the Mediterranean heat of a Cypriot coastal plain is no easy task.

But the director of the archeological project charged with that mission knows the greater significance of combing the ground for basin slivers and Roman olive press parts.

"We're building a mosaic to get a larger view of the community," said R. Scott Moore, Indiana University of Pennsylvania history professor and director of the Pyla-Koutsopetria Archaeological Project, which for the past few years has allowed IUP students the chance to travel abroad to survey a foreign land for treasures only an archaeological gold mine could yield.

Five students spent three weeks with Moore in Cyprus this past summer, and several more students will travel there this summer in order to get their hands on some history.

"The trip and the project really opened my eyes to the world," said Alesha Shumar, a junior history and geography education major from Mount Pleasant.

"This was my first time ever out of the country. To travel halfway around the world and work on an archaeological project such as this one is really a life-changing experience."

Concentrating on a 40-meter grid, students walked 10 meters apart to collect items to bring back for cleaning and dating at the local museum in the city of Larnaca.

So far, they've amassed more than 5,000 pieces of rims, handles and other pottery remnants and catalogued their discoveries in a map that labels the density and the time periods of the artifacts.

"It was amazing to hold a piece of a pottery handle thousands of years old and know it was a part of someone's life from an ancient civilization," Shumar said.

Moore said much more work is needed in uncovering how the island dwellers of the third to seventh centuries traded goods. He also wants to further investigate the gypsum and marble ruins of a late Roman basilica.

"There is very little history of how they traded goods and our area is the gateway," Moore said. "By looking at the ceramics, we can see the larger, global pattern. If fine wares have a certain shape, we know where it was manufactured. This helps us track movements of goods

and people on an island that hasn't received a lot of attention."

When not working, Moore and his students learned more about the history of Cyprus by visiting the Tomb of Kings, St. Paul's Pillar, St. Lazareth's Church and Nicosia, the country's capital, said Allison Hastings, a junior social studies education major from New Florence. They also learned a little Greek — even if they found that sometimes they didn't have to.

"I was amazed at how many people can speak English," said Jordan Haines, a junior social studies education and geography major from Indiana.

WIUP-TV, the university television station, is planning to air a documentary this semester about the archeological project filmed on location last summer, Moore said.

But for the students who actually traveled to Cyprus to dig up the past, a TV special will only scratch the surface of the memories they accumulated there.

"Everything has its own history, from a hometown history to the study of ancient civilizations — you just have to discover it," Shumar said.

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THE 2005 Pyla-Koutsopetria Archaeological Project Team was, bottom row, from left, IUP students Erin Gill, Allison Hastings, Alesha Shumar, Luke Bechtel and Jordan Haines. In back: Dr. Michael Fronda of McGill University, David Pettegrew of Ohio State University, Katie Pettegrew of Ohio State University, Greg Fisher of McGill University, Brian Willis of North Carolina State University, Susan Phillips, Dr. Caraher and Dr. R. Scott Moore, IUP.



JOE PATROW of PatrowVision films interviewed Dr. William Caraher of the University of North Dakota at Larnaka District Archaeological Museum for his documentary.