



# INSTITUTE FOR SOUTHEAST ASIAN ARCHAEOLOGY (ISEAA) NEWSLETTER

ISSUE 2 FALL/WINTER 2015

## *ISEAA Celebrates*

### YEAR TWO!

ISEAA continues to move strongly forward with our current 5-year plan, despite these challenging times for nascent non-profits. We have built upon year one with publication progress, increased outreach, and unexpected windfalls! Know that your support, however, remains essential for fulfilling our 5-year goals, including monograph publication and the next phases in our field research program!

Year One saw the establishment of ISEAA as a program partner of the fiscal sponsor Urban Affairs Coalition. UAC is the 501(c)(3) entity that manages funds for baby non-profits like us, and thus ensures your donations are tax-deductible. Your donations this past year enabled employment of one full-time and three part-time ISEAA employees, so that we could continue the scholarship and dissemination of knowledge of Southeast Asia's past to diverse scholarly and lay audiences. Our team thus created a new institutional framework for Southeast Asian archaeological scholarship that had originally been undertaken under the auspices of the University of Pennsylvania Museum and Friends of Ban Chiang.

During this past year, several occurrences have resulted in enhanced visibility and security for ISEAA both fiscally, and as a recognized incipient institution. Noteworthy developments include:

- All chapters for the monograph *Ban Chiang, a Prehistoric Village Site in Northeast*

*Thailand II: the Metal Remains in Regional Context* have been drafted and are undergoing editing in preparation for submission to Penn Museum Publications for peer review. In addition to myself and Dr. Elizabeth Hamilton, who are the main authors of this volume, Drs. Vincent Pigott, Oliver Pryce, and William Vernon have contributed chapters in their areas of expertise.

- We have initiated our program to develop a 21st Century Digital Archaeological Archive for Ban Chiang and Thai archaeology, in partnership with the Royal Thai Embassy of Washington DC, who have provided support of \$18,000 for this first step. Beginning with the Ban Chiang metals data from the 1974-1975 excavations, we have revamped and enlarged the metals database, including in situ images

where available, image galleries, lead isotope data, and more. A new modernized user-friendly interface has been created. The plan is to build upon this first step, and ultimately make the full Ban Chiang archive digitized, online, and open access. <http://iseaarchaeology.org/metals-database/>

- A very generous bequest for the Ban Chiang Project from former volunteer Ruth Brown (see article on page 2) is allowing us to reorganize our finances and priorities. The gift for Ban Chiang research was via the Penn Museum, so the Museum receives 12% overhead for their role in continuing to house the Ban Chiang Project. Other than shifting some part-time employees to those recently received funds, we have yet to decide exactly how we will spend the bequest monies,



Joyce White speaks at the Siam Society in Bangkok, Thailand, January 2015.

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although they will likely greatly help with aspects of the 21st century digital archive, especially the online bibliography and the next Ban Chiang monograph.

- ISEAA social media outreach is going gangbusters! Our Facebook page is closing in on 1000 “likes” (as we go to press our “likes” are at 984). Among other news, we post on new research or current publications in the field at least once a week, often giving junior scholars exposure that they might otherwise not have had. Cyler Conrad of the University of New Mexico is shepherding this outreach project and posts our updates on Twitter as well.
- I have also addressed numerous and diverse audiences, scholarly and lay, national and international, throughout the year on topics ranging from changing archaeometallurgy paradigms to the problem of Asian antiquity trafficking.

***Your continued support remains crucial for our operations. Recent windfall support is targeted for programs designated by donor wishes. We need YOUR contributions to maintain and strengthen ISEAA's basic operations. Please send your check or donate online today!***



Joyce C. White, Ph.D.

Executive Director

Institute for Southeast Asian Archaeology

**RUTH BROWN,  
A REMARKABLE VOLUNTEER  
AND SUPPORTER FOR 23 YEARS**

*By Ardeth P. Anderson*

Ruth Brown began volunteering for the Ban Chiang Project in 1992. In those days we were still putting new volunteers to work reconstructing pottery vessels from our large collection of broken pottery sherds on loan from the Thai government. Most of this work occurred from 1976 to the summer of 1990, but there was still

plenty to do by 1992 and it was a great way to assess a volunteer's skills or talents by simply getting to know them. I don't think Ruth had much patience for pottery reconstruction; very few volunteers did.

During those early days working with Ruth, Joyce White, Director of the Ban Chiang Project, discovered that she was a retired librarian and archivist who had worked at several institutions in Philadelphia including Temple University's Samuel L. Paley Library, the American Philosophical Society Library, the Biomedical Library at Penn, and the Academy of Natural Sciences. It was decided that her skills could be made very useful by implementing Joyce's idea of creating a computerized database of references related to Southeast Asian archaeology and ethnography.

Over 5 years, Ruth painstakingly built the database by entering the first few thousand references. It was quite a frustrating task. Frequently Ruth would exclaim about the “whimsical” behavior of the desktop computer and the program, *Citation*, which in those early days had many kinks, shall we say. That core database has since been further developed and is now accessible online: Southeast Asian Archaeology Bibliographic Database. It is used worldwide and Southeast Asian archaeologists

owe a debt of gratitude to her pioneering efforts that initiated this resource.

In 1997, Ruth moved to the Cathedral Village Retirement Community in Roxborough, and as a result, it became very difficult for her to make the commute to the Museum via public transportation. She had given up her car and her driver's license many years before because she had lived most of her life in the city. So Ruth reluctantly decided to end her time volun-



Ruth's favorite chair, a Penn Museum hand-me-down, which still resides in the ISEAA offices today.



Ruth Brown circa 1993 in the Ban Chiang Lab.

teering for the Ban Chiang Project. After Ruth's departure, Joyce began hiring Penn work-study students who continued the often tedious work of entering references. Some of our wonderful database bibliographers over the years are as follows: Dana Katz [2003], Sasha Renninger [2006], Yanik Ruiz-Ramón [2008], Connie Ko [2009], Elena Nikolova [2010], Jesse DuBois [2011], Ryan Zahalka [2012], and most recently Chloe Kaczvinsky [2013-2015]. We now have 15,000 references in the bibliography!

Ruth did keep in touch and was always a staunch supporter of Joyce and the Ban Chiang Project. She was one of the original "Friends of Ban Chiang" and became one of our most generous and steadfast donors over the two decades since she began volunteering for us. She also gave the lead donation to the Ban Chiang Endowment Fund established by Joyce White at the Penn Museum.

We were all saddened to hear that Ruth had passed away on February 14th, 2015 at the age of 94. She had become quite frail the last few years of her life and we had begun to hear from her less frequently, although many attempts were made to contact her. John Hastings, another long-term Ban Chiang volunteer and supporter, commented that during a recent phone call with Ruth, she was still "sharp as a tack" mentally.

But as it turns out, Ruth will continue her support of our Project well into the future, as Joyce was delighted to find out in March that Ruth had remembered Ban Chiang in her will with a bequest for \$150,000. The funds recently became available and will be administered by the University of Pennsylvania Museum.

*"In Ruth Brown's case you [Joyce] gave her the satisfaction of knowing that even in her advanced years she was able to make an important contribution and was much appreciated for it. So it's no surprise that you should be in her mind when she was writing her will."*

—John Hastings, ISEAA Advisory Board Chairman



Pisan Manawapat (center), Ambassador of Thailand, visited the ISEAA offices on April 9th.

And, as with every donation Joyce has ever received, every penny will be carefully and thoughtfully used to further the work we do here, including the Bibliographic Database (<http://seasiabib.museum.upenn.edu>).

#### **Recent BC/MMAP publications**

**Helen Lewis, Joyce White, and Bounheuang Bouasisengpaseuth**, 2015. A buried jar site and its destruction: Tham An Mah cave, Luang Prabang province, Lao PDR. In N. H. Tan (Ed.), *Advancing Southeast Asian Archaeology 2013: Selected Papers from the First SEAMEO SPAFA International Conference on Southeast Asian Archaeology, Chonburi, Thailand 2013* (pp. 72-82, 94-97). Bangkok: SEAMEO SPAFA.

**Joyce White** 2015. Comment on Higham et al. (2015) re New Chronology for Northeast Thailand. *PLOS ONE* 10(9): <http://www.plosone.org/annotation/list-Thread.action?root=87274>

Check out our new Ban Chiang Project website: <http://iseaarchaeology.org/the-ban-chiang-project/>

#### **Lab NOTES**

❖ Rongyu Su, a Professor at the Institute for History of Natural Science, Chinese Academy of Sciences and Director/Professor, Institute of Cultural Heritage, Nanjing University of the Arts, visited the ISEAA offices on April 20th to discuss Asian archaeometallurgy.

❖ Joyce gave "Implementing the new archaeometallurgy paradigm in Southeast Asia" in July at the **European Association for Southeast Asian Archaeologists** in Paris.

❖ On March 27th, **The Association for Asian Studies Conference (AAS)** held in Chicago included a panel on cultural heritage preservation & management. Joyce presented, "Is Heritage Preservation a Colonialist Agenda?"

❖ On March 25th, Joyce gave the talk: "Metals and Prehistoric Society: Debunking the Conventional Paradigm," and then later that day gave her "Hot Pots" talk. Both talks were sponsored by the University of Wisconsin, Madison, Dept. of Anthropology.

❖ On January 30th, Joyce presented, "Preserving Heritage Through Building Partnerships: Archaeology, Museology, and Law Enforcement?!!" Sponsored by College of Innovation at Thammasat University, Bangkok, Thailand.

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and donate on our secure giving site.

\*The Institute for Southeast Asian Archaeology is a program partner of the Urban Affairs Coalition (UAC). UAC administers ISEAA funds as a 501c3 nonprofit, so that ISEAA can focus on conducting and publishing research. The official registration and financial information of the UAC may be obtained from the Pennsylvania Department of State by calling toll-free, within Pennsylvania, 1-800-732-0999, or go to [www.charities.pa.gov](http://www.charities.pa.gov): enter EIN237046393 and select "Charities". Registration does not imply endorsement.



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## New Faces at ISEAA



**Janice Barrabee** is our new monograph editor, continuing from Page Selinsky. She is undertaking the final editing and formatting of chapters in preparation for submitting the metals monograph to Museum Publications for peer review. Janice has a PhD from Penn in the Department of Asian and Middle Eastern Studies with a concentration in Assyriology. She is currently also working as the web and program coordinator for the Kolb Society.



**Meerabelle Jesuthasan** is a freshman from Singapore in the College of Arts and Sciences. She is an ISEAA work-study student in the position of bibliographer for the Ban Chiang Metals Monograph and Southeast Asian Bibliographic Database. Although currently undecided on her major, Meerabelle's interests range from history to theater to English. An international student, she is particularly fascinated by the intersections between culture and politics.



**Cyler Conrad** began volunteering with the ISEAA in Fall 2013 while starting his PhD program at the University of New Mexico. He is interested in sharing news and research on Southeast Asian archaeology with the broader public and scholars, so he is helping to organize, draft, and run the ISEAA Twitter and Facebook pages. His research focuses on understanding hunter-gatherer subsistence strategies in mainland Southeast Asia during the late Pleistocene and Holocene. Cyler is reanalyzing faunal assemblages from Spirit Cave, Steep Cliff Cave, Banyan Valley Cave, and Non Nok Tha for his dissertation project at UNM.



**Dylan Valentine** joined ISEAA in the Summer of 2015. He is a web developer who is revamping our online metals database to make it more user-friendly and incorporate enhancements like gallery views of artifact types. He is also helping to finish and refine our new Ban Chiang Project public website, started by former work-study student Klaudia Amenabar. Dylan's work on our web projects is supported by funds from the Royal Thai Embassy.

