

Donor Report

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Bureau of Applied Research in Anthropology

Mid-June I traveled with two undergraduates to the United Kingdom: Sunny Albright and Darlene Villicana. Both are anthropology majors and Sunny is earning a minor in Cultural Astronomy. Darlene was our videographer for the four weeks. Our research centered on observing the use of the Neolithic Stone Circles in the Southwest of the UK for the summer solstice focusing on self-identified Pagans and Druids. Fortunately, we found both! We were able to observe their rituals all day during the solstice. One group would leave and an hour later another group would arrive. The sunrise ritual was the most elaborate with Frankincense burning, offerings, and the creation of a sacred space. Most people worshiped in groups of one and two doing chants, evocations, and offerings. Many ended by walking in a circle following the stones either clockwise or counterclockwise. Darlene is preparing a summary video including participants talking about their religious and astronomical beliefs.

The last event of the summer was a conference in mid-July in Bath where Sunny and I presented our research. Sunny presented her 2007 project on women graduate students in astronomy; and I presented a cultural astronomy walking map of the Louvre. Both presentations were warmly received. It was exciting to have UA students interact with students from our sister Cultural Astronomy program in the UK.

Thank you for your donations which made this research trip easier for us all. Your donations went towards paying for one night in a comfortable bed & breakfast, a night in a not-so-comfortable Travelodge, and several meals. Both students received funds from the University of Arizona, but the UK is one of the most expensive places to visit. Even eating cheaply on grocery store sandwiches did not prevent us all from being concerned about funds the last two weeks of the trip.

Next year we will travel again to the Southwest England to continue our study. We want to see if the same people return and we want to discuss the importance of this annual ritual. We hope that you will consider donating again to this exciting research into modern day celestial religions.



Darlene



African Cultural Astronomy Network

The African Cultural Astronomy Network is working towards joining with the SEAC conference in Alexandria, Egypt, in 2009. The dates of the Alexandria meeting have not been finalized. The SEAC 2008 meeting is early September and I will be attending. I had hoped that ACA president Johnson Urama would attend, but it seems that I will be the only ACA officer attending. I will travel on my own funds saving the donated funds to support the travel of African researchers to Alexandria next year. We have three researchers in West Africa and two in East Africa that we hope to provide with an airline ticket. I am still raising money to meet this goal.

Thank You!

Remember your donations are tax deductible.



Morris Dancers on the Solstice



Sunny