

# GRAND OPENING

Tues. Oct. 24, '89

## WOK BAC

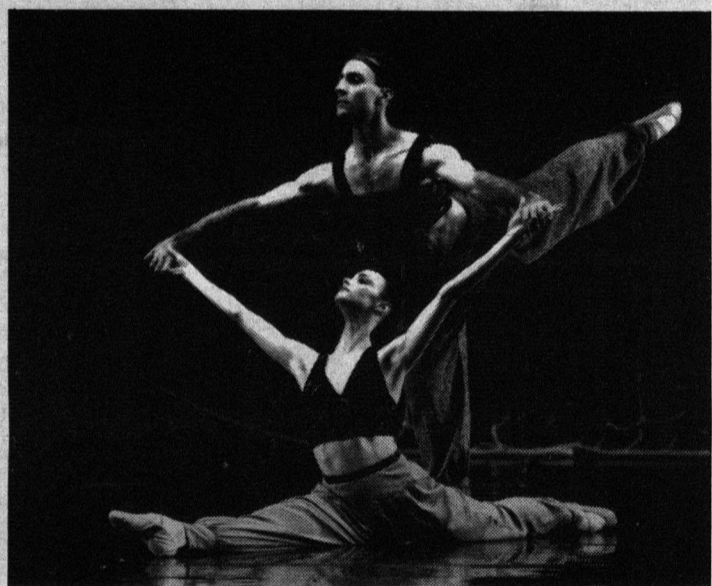
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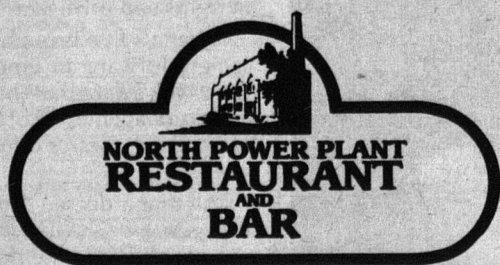
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Lesser Slave Lake shores site of annual archaeological field work.

## Anthro students dig their work

by Howard Gibbons

About 1000 years ago, the shores of Lesser Slave Lake were one of the many homes for various bands of native peoples, mainly of the Athapaskan tribe, who made use of the area as a quarry. Today this same site is a home away from home, except how it is used by the Department of Anthropology as the field school for their course on archaeological field training. This course is held in conjunction with the Special Sessions Department, and is partially funded by the Alberta Historical Resources Foundation.

The history of the site itself is that it was the site where various kinds of stone tools were made. There have been very few actual tools found on site, which is to be expected as the various bands came here to make them, and then continued on to other areas of their territory to hunt and fish.

The presence of this and other sites are largely due to the wide range of resources available. Not only is there a plentiful supply of stone, but there is evidence that the site was also known for its outstanding fishing, berries, and large game.

The site itself was discovered in 1980 by Dr. Raymond LeBlanc when he was working for the Archaeological Survey of Alberta, prior to his coming to the U of A. LeBlanc joined the Department of Anthropology in 1987, and part of his initial duties was to start an archaeological field school. LeBlanc chose the Slave Lake site due to his experience, as well as the good opportunities that it would provide for the students.

The course itself is available to a maximum of 15 students, and is taught on site during May and June each year. The site is located on the northeastern side of Lesser Slave Lake, approximately 400 km from Edmonton, and is close to 10,000 sq. metres in area. Over the last two years some 55 sq. metres have been excavated by students.

The students who enroll in this course are responsible for all aspects of the work which includes site mapping, surveying, excavation, recognition of the various lithic (rock) types, cataloguing of artifacts, as well as a research project that they must design and carry out.



Ray LeBlanc

University of Alberta Anthro students work on the Lesser Slave Lake quarry site. Students travel to the site every year for a six-week practical course.

Lab work generally starts after the second week, and in the labs students clean, preserve, catalogue, and make the artifacts ready for transportation back to the University. "The days on this type of project are long," said LeBlanc, "and run from 8:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., with a break for dinner and then lab work from six until as late as eleven." The time for dinner is actually free, but the majority of students spend it in the lab, or working on their projects.

This past year there were a few interesting discoveries including the discovery of obsidian artifacts (volcanic glass). The obsidian was found by Anthropology Honours student Jackie Craig, and another of the students, Penny Paulsen. According to Craig the find was "very exciting" as there is no local source of the volcanic rock in the Lesser Slave Lake area. This has led LeBlanc, his colleagues, and students to the conclusion that the source of the obsidian is in the interior of British Columbia, and that whichever group or groups brought it to the site obtained it by trade.

One of the other objects that was found was a moose antler. Other specimens of antler have been used as tools in the production of pressure flaked stone tool types, which produces cleaner, sharper edge on the tool due to the greater control and concentration of pressure that

can be focused on the stone.

The students are also responsible for completing a research project related to the site. Some of the various projects undertaken by the class of '89 were to dig test pits to determine the maximum extent of the site, the refitting of broken artifacts into their original form, a video of archaeological methods, uses of plants found in the immediate area, and an examination of fire broken rock versus modified fire broken rock, and the making of stone tools.

Gerald Johnson, a fourth year anthropology major, performed research on local plants by conducting an inventory of the various species that are currently in the immediate vicinity of the site and then postulating their uses. A project such as this hadn't been attempted before, and came about because Johnson was interested in what life was like 1,000 years ago, and especially what uses the various plants might have been to the various tribes that visited the area. Johnson says he liked the course "because it gives you a different perspective [on archaeology] by actually doing the digging."

In the 1988 class, Rula Shafiq, a fourth year student, performed experiments on the making of stone tools. Rula started her work in the same way she thought the tribesmen must have started. She selected

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