Anthro Club Meeting:

Tentative date for the field trip to be around March 30th. Bowling tomorrow at the Union from 9 pm to 11 pm, be there!

E-board elections on March 26th, by March 12th submit a paragraph containing why you think you would make good contributions to the club, what positions you would want, what skills you have, etc. Rank positions you would like to run for. You can run for as many as you want.

Jeopardy! Ask to be a part of the question committee!

Dr Lovis presenting The Foraging to Farming Transition in Michigan

October – Midwest archaeological conference at MSU. Call for volunteers, you can get free admission! There will be a reception at the Museum on the Foraging to Farming transition.

How do we go about accumulating new information? How changes in methods allow us to greatly refine what we know and don’t know about a problem we’re interested in.

Radio-carbon dating used to need a lot of carbon, now you only need one milligram sample. Much better! Don’t need a huge chunk of charcoal. Can get a date on pottery for when people burned the pot. Snowballed into carbon isotopes. Could see if corn was a major component of the things burned on the pots. Microfossils on the pots. Niches between the cells have different shapes. “I’m sorta a gregarious herd animal. I need someone to hurl wise-ass comments at otherwise I become depressed and worthless.”

A Longish 3000 Year Story in Four Main Parts

Background and Context – Things were domesticated in eastern North America. Allowed for an indigenous local horticulture. Also got things that came out of the tropics such as corn, squash, and the bean.

Were growing sunflowers, maygrass, little barley, goosefoot, erect knotweed, sumpweed, and squash.

They are primarily starchy and oily seeded plants.

Various stable isotopes in archaeological materials or human bone. Advent of flotation separation for fine scaled recovery of macrobotanical remains – after all seeds can be both VERY small as well as fragile – assisted the intact recovery of smaller botanicals.

Proper archiving and curation of both ….

Corn has a different way of processing carbon. C4 plant, most other plants around Michigan are C3.

Michigan occupies 6 degrees of latitude. Subject to substantial so called “lake effect”. Need 120 to 140 non-snow days to grow maize. Had cultigens and domestic plants when most think they were hunters and gatherers. There was corn in Michigan 2,300 years ago. Coming in as corn flour. Probably trading
the corn around this time. And/ or boiling it green. Not throwing it into the fire. Here, but not a major food source. Incorporating corn into their diets in different ways at different times across what is now the US.