Reminders:

1. Our next meeting!
   a. November 19\textsuperscript{th}, 2012
      i. Dr. Mindy Morgan
         1. Dr. Morgan will be speaking with us about her new book focusing on the Fort Belknap Community in northern Montana.
2. MSU Anthropology Department Brown Bags
   a. Every Friday, 12:00pm, C103 McDonel Hall
      i. Bring a lunch and listen to students and professors informally share their research and anthropological experiences!
3. Anthropology Club Fundraising!
   a. Anthropology Holiday Mugs! Only $15  -- Perfect for a holiday gift! Includes hot chocolate, a candy cane or two, and assorted chocolates! Email beyeraut@msu.edu to purchase yours!
   b. More fundraising projects will be announced shortly. Check your emails for details! 😊
4. Michigan Archaeological Society Meetings
   a. Typically the 3\textsuperscript{rd} Wednesday of the month
      i. 455 Baker Hall, 6:30pm
         ii. November 14\textsuperscript{th}, 2012 is the next meeting!
            1. “Data Recovery Investigations at Jacana, South—Central Puerto Rico”
               a. Chris Espenshade of CCRG will discuss the 2008 excavations at PO29/Jacana! Look out for emails about this meeting!

MEETING:

- \\textit{Disclaimer: Due to the confidential and graphic nature of the presentation and tour of the F.A.L., only portions of the meeting are able to be publicly conveyed. We apologize for any inconvenience.}
- Forensic Anthropology at Michigan State University
  o The field of Forensic Anthropology has been a strength at Michigan State University for a great number of years.
  o Dr. Norman Sauer, Professor Emeritus, has been working as a forensic anthropologist at MSU since the 1970s.
  o Dr. Todd Fenton has been working as a forensic anthropologist at MSU since 1998.
  o In recent years, MSU has doubled its efforts in the Forensic Anthropology field and has become a national power in the discipline.
    - This is partly due to the high degree of casework that has been occurring in Michigan.
MSU currently is one of the top five programs in the United States in terms of education in forensic anthropology, and between 5 and 10 undergraduate students from MSU go on to forensic anthropology/bioarchaeology graduate study programs each year!

- **Casework:**
  - Often times, Dr. Fenton and graduate students will go to the morgue at Sparrow Hospital (etc.) to analyze remains
    - This sometimes includes cases of decomposing, burnt, and/or skeletonized remains.
  - The most common method of POSITIVE IDENTIFICATION tends to involve comparative radiography (the comparison of antimortem and postmortem x-rays, etc.)
    - *The goal of analyzing remains is to positively identify the individual so they may be returned to the individual's family*

- **Interesting Facts Relevant in the Field of Forensic Anthropology**
  - The coloration of bones is significant and can be indicative of various environmental changes that have occurred over a period of time.
    - For example, the sun’s rays can “bleach” bones white!
  - Suicide investigations and common
    - Research shows that a high percentage of men commit suicide by gunshot wounds to the chest
  - It is important to learn the difference between animal and human bones (comparative osteology)!
    - A large number of cases at MSU involve telling whether a bone is human or non-human.
      - For example, deer ribs look a lot like human ribs!
  - As people age, the thyroid and cricoid cartilage in the throat can ossify (turn to bone).
    - In strangulation cases, these ossified tissues may break while the hyoid bone may remain intact.
  - If there is evidence of multiple healing fractures in an individual, then signs may point to abuse.
    - *Current research at MSU is focusing on differentiating between normal fracture patterns and abusive fracture patterns in children!*
  - An important part of forensic anthropology is telling the difference between anti- (occurring prior to death), peri- (occurring at or around the time of death), and post- (occurring after death) mortem fracturing of bones.
    - *Interpreting skeletal trauma and fracture patterning is one of Dr. Fenton’s areas of expertise.*
  - FBI and other law enforcement entities are often closely involved with casework.
  - Skull-photo Superimposition is another popular technique used in helping to obtain evidence for a positive identification of an individual.
    - This technique has been used extensively at MSU (especially by Dr. Sauer).
While this technique is very useful, it does not provide sufficient evidence on its own to positively identify an individual.

- The interpretation of fracture patterns throughout an individual’s entire body is often crucial in helping to solve cases and to determine the cause of death.