

# AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF PHYSICAL ANTHROPOLOGISTS

## President

**Susan Antón**

Dept. of Anthropology  
25 Waverly Place  
New York University  
New York, NY 10003  
(212) 992-9786  
susan.anton@nyu.edu

## Past-President

**Karen Rosenberg**

Dept. of Anthropology  
135 John Munroe Hall  
University of Delaware  
Newark, DE 19716  
(302) 831-1855  
krr@udel.edu

## Vice President

**M. Anne Katzenberg**

Assoc. VP Research  
2500 University Dr. NW  
University of Calgary  
Calgary, AB, Canada T2N 1N4  
(403) 220-3334  
katzenbe@ucalgary.ca

## Secretary-Treasurer

**Anne L. Grauer**

Dept. of Anthropology  
1032 W. Sheridan Rd  
Loyola University Chicago  
Chicago, IL 60660  
(773) 508-3464  
agrauer@luc.edu

Dear Governor Rauner,

8 July 2015

On behalf of the *American Association of Physical Anthropologists*, we strongly urge you NOT to close the Illinois State Museum System. The closure of such a renowned system would be a dramatic loss to science, education, and tourism for the state of Illinois.

Closure of the ISM will have reverberating costs to society. The museum system hosts more than 40,000 school children *every year*, opening their eyes to possibilities for their future and appreciation of their state's past. The museum collections contain artifacts and specimens that provide school age children with a glimpse into the fascinating prehistory of the region and have provided promising and established scientists with exquisite collections for analysis. For 138 years the museum has been the careful steward of the natural history of our nation – because of the foresight of earlier legislatures, the state system now houses extensive and important paleontology and anthropology collections. The Mazon Creek collection is a world renowned paleontological collection that provides a rare example of the preservation of not just the skeleton but also the soft tissues. The richness and completeness of the animals interred at this 300 million year old site make it one of just a few such sites WORLDWIDE. Its importance rivals UNESCO World Heritage sites such as Messel in Germany and the Burgess Shale in Canada – making these collections of critical importance to science and bringing important worldwide recognition to the state. The anthropology collections include iconic pre-contact collections essential to research and cultural understanding. The ISM curates the Cahokia Mound collections, of unparalleled importance in understanding pre-colonial life in North America. Dickson Mounds preserves and educates the public about 12,000 years of Native American culture and practice. And Illinois statute **REQUIRES** that all excavated burials be accessioned into ISM collections following their initial scientific study. Closing the ISM endangers these collections, science, and education in profound ways.

Beyond the cost to society, the plan to close the museum system will **COST** Illinois money. The closure is argued to save the state of Illinois \$4.8 million a year in operating costs. But the facility **generates** an estimated \$33 million in revenue each year, according to the Illinois Office of Tourism *minimum* estimates of visitor spending. That is a *loss* of at least \$28.2 million dollars *every year* if the museum is closed.

**Peter T. Ellison**

Editor, American Journal  
of Physical Anthropology  
Dept. of Human  
Evolutionary Biology  
Harvard University  
11 Divinity Avenue  
Cambridge, MA 02138  
(617) 495-4213  
pellison@fas.harvard.edu

**Trudy R. Turner**

Editor, Yearbook of  
Physical Anthropology  
Dept. of Anthropology  
Univ. Wisc.-Milwaukee  
125B Sabin Hall  
P.O. Box 413  
Milwaukee, WI 53201  
(414) 229-5989  
trudy@uwm.edu

**Leslea Hlusko**

Executive Committee  
Dept. of Integrative Biology  
University of California,  
Berkeley  
Berkeley, CA 94720  
(510) 643-8851  
hlusko@berkeley.edu

**Joan Richtsmeier**

Executive Committee  
Dept. of Anthropology  
Penn State University  
University Park,  
Pennsylvania 16802  
(814) 863-0562  
jtr505@gmail.com

**J. Josh Snodgrass**

Executive Committee  
Dept. of Anthropology  
University of Oregon  
1321 Kincaid Street  
Eugene, OR 97403  
(541) 346-4823  
jjosh@uoregon.edu

**Anne Stone**

Executive Committee  
School of Human Evolution  
and Social Change  
PO Box 872402  
Arizona State University  
Tempe, AZ 85287-2402  
(480)727-6310  
acstone@asu.edu

Government has a fiduciary responsibility to protect and preserve the remains of the past for future generations. If the State is unwilling to do this, then natural and cultural heritage will be relegated to piece-meal preservation only as it suits the interests and aims of the privileged. In a democracy, we should equally value the histories of everyone. This is the important role that state-sponsored museums serve.

Closing the Illinois State Museum System is a loss all the way round.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Susan Antón". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Susan" written in a larger, more prominent script than the last name "Antón".

Susan Antón, PhD  
President

AAPA Executive Committee:

Anne Grauer, Treasurer & Illinois Resident

Anne Katzenberg, Vice-President

Karen Rosenberg, Past-President

Peter Ellison, Editor - American Journal of Physical Anthropology

Leslea Hlusko, Member & Former Faculty, University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign

Joan Richtsmeier, Member

J. Josh Snodgrass, Member & Former PhD Student, Northwestern University, IL

Anne Stone, Member

Trudy Turner, Editor - Yearbook of Physical Anthropology

Cc:

Hon. John J. Cullerton, President, Illinois Senate: e-mail [jcullerton@senatedem.illinois.gov](mailto:jcullerton@senatedem.illinois.gov)

Hon. Jim Durkin, Republican Leader, Illinois House of Representatives: email [repdurkin@hotmail.com](mailto:repdurkin@hotmail.com)

Hon. Christine Radogno, Republican Leader, Illinois Senate: email [christine@senatorradogno.com](mailto:christine@senatorradogno.com)

Hon. Michael J. Madigan, Speaker, Illinois House of Representatives