



**WEEKENDER**  
POWERED BY **LEXGO.COM**

## UK JAZZ ENSEMBLE PREPS FOR A TOUR OF EUROPE

MUSIC, PAGE 4



## VILANCH TO HOST LEXINGTON'S FAIRNESS AWARDS

GOING OUT, PAGE 10

## 'BAD TEACHER' IS IN THE TRADITION OF ERRANT EDUCATORS

MOVIES, PAGES 12-13



# STEPPE BACK IN TIME

ORIGIN OF EQUINE CULTURE COMES TO THE MUSEUM OF THE HORSE. PAGE 22



PHOTOS BY RICH COPLEY | rcopley@herald-leader.com

This yoke ornament for a funeral cart is from southwestern Inner Mongolia or northwest China between the 5th and 4th centuries B.C. The ornament suggests that the tribes associated female deer with a happy afterlife.

# BIRTHPI HORSE H

The latest exhibit at the International Museum of the Horse; it's about the Asian steppes, where ho

By Rich Copley

rcopley@herald-leader.com

The International Museum of the Horse's director, Bill Cooke, acknowledges up front that the museum's new exhibit, *Ancient Bronzes of the Asian Grasslands*, is different from what it usually presents.

"It's not as strictly about the horse as most of the things we do," Cooke says before taking a walk through the exhibit, which opens Friday and continues through Oct. 23. "But the Asian steppes are the starting point and land of firsts for the history of the horse and mankind."

Exhibit curator Trudy S. Kawami says that when she heard that the museum wanted to present her show, "I was delighted, because although this isn't focused on pictures of horses, the people who made and wore these bronzes are the people who gave us horseback riding. So much of what we have, even in modern, non-equestrian life, comes from them, like trousers."

And jackets.

And belts, with buckles.

In exploring the nomadic cultures of the Asian steppes, Kawami says, we find a society of innovation and discovery that set the stage for much of modern society and has parallels in the American West of the late 19th century. A lot of that was due to horseback riding.

"It's very interesting what the horse did to us," says Kawami, who will give a lecture on the exhibit Saturday morning. "It let us move around. It's mobility.

"Once you get that, you get cultural values like mobility and curiosity — what's over the next hill? We think of this as very American — heading west and the open plains.



A buckle from northwest China from the 5th century B.C. The buckle features three buckles. The number of buckles is significant.

## IF YOU GO

### 'Ancient Bronzes of the Asian Grasslands'

**What:** Touring exhibit of decorative and utilitarian artifacts from the Asian steppes from the Arthur M. Sackler Foundation

**When:** June 24-Oct. 23. Open 9 a.m.-5 p.m. daily.

**Where:** International Museum of the Horse at the Kentucky Horse Park, 4089 Iron Works Pike

**Tickets:** \$16 adults, \$8 ages 7-12

**More info:** (859) 259-4232 or IMH.org  
Lecture: Exhibit curator Trudy S. Kawami of the Sackler Foundation will deliver a lecture on the exhibit at 10:30 a.m. June 25.

"But it's a very human characteristic, and the horse enabled us to bloom. And it had tremendous repercussions, because these people who rode the horses learned the land.

# PLACE OF HISTORY

m of the Horse isn't only about horse and man developed a culture



about the 2nd or 1st century B.C., exhibited in *Ancient Bronzes of the Asian Grass-*  
of animals in a design was probably an indicator of rank.

They knew where the water was, they learned the weather patterns and they could travel great distances. These became the facilitators of the trade that ran along the Silk Road that ran from China to Rome. They weren't the merchants. They were the guys who ran the truck stops, so to speak."

And they left artifacts behind that illustrate both how they lived and their reverence for animals of all kinds.

Included in the exhibit's 85 bronze pieces are works featuring boars, deer and even reptiles. A table of belt buckles includes a pair, one with three bucks and another with two, presumably indicating that the person with three was of a higher rank.

"When you're in a big open space with lots of land, you are identified by what you wear," Kawami says from her New York office at the Arthur M. Sackler Foundation, which

owns the pieces in the exhibit. "If you come in with silver spurs and conchos all over your saddle and bridle, you're saying, 'I'm someone, I'm substantial.'"

One thing that is striking, Cooke says, is how small many of the objects in the exhibit are.

"These were nomadic people," he says. "They were on the move, so they did not want to be weighed down with big objects."

There are some huge pieces in the exhibit, including a cauldron that experts think was used by religious leaders and a bell with a spiky exterior that was rung by hitting the outside. Kawami says the bell is Chinese and might have been brought to the people of the steppes when Chinese princesses married nomadic leaders to help establish strategic alliances.

Another distinctive thing about the exhibit is a lack of concrete information about many of the ob-



This bell from southern China during the early Western Zhou Dynasty, between 1100 and 770 B.C., was rung by being struck from the outside, rather than with a clapper inside it. The inscription is thought to be modern.



This ritual version of a cooking pot from the early Western Zhou Dynasty is probably from between 1100 and 770 B.C. The legs on the pot suggest abundance and stability.

jects. An object with curves at each end at the entrance to the exhibit, for instance, is said to have possibly been a weapon or a chariot decoration.

Researchers cannot identify that and many other objects with certainty, Kawami says. "These

were not people who wrote things down in ways that they would last."

She says that a basic knowledge of human nature and the sort of landscape the people of the steppes were living in provides a good basis for supposition, but "when we don't have a written record, we can't just presume what they were doing."

Written works of other cultures, such as the Greeks, tell historians that the people of the steppes were not held in the highest regard, and in some ways they were considered shocking because of their appearance and the self-reliance of their women. Kawami says this is where the legends of self-reliant Amazon women came from. Even today, in historical circles, Western Greek and Roman cultures are often revered above others. *Ancient Bronzes*, she says, is part of an effort to bring balance to that record.

"I'm up to my ears in Greece and Rome as the only models for Western culture," she says. "It's a bigger world out there."

Reach Rich Copley at (859) 231-3217 or 1-800-950-6397, Ext. 3217. Follow him on Facebook at Facebook.com/richcopleyh.