Letter from the Chair

As I begin my second semester as Chair and third year at MSU, I am very pleased that I am getting to know students and faculty here, especially in our department, and am very grateful for everybody’s enthusiasm and support.

We have begun the year with new challenges, faculty, plans, and events. It looks like a full and exciting new year. I am happy to announce two new fulltime tenure track faculty who have joined us this fall, Julian Brash and Elsa Davidson. Dr. Brash received a Master’s Degree in Urban Planning from Columbia University and a Ph.D. from the Graduate Center, CUNY. He is an urban anthropologist currently teaching “Cultural Anthropology” and “Communities in Transition” (ANTH 421/521). Dr. Davidson also received a Ph.D. from the Graduate Center, CUNY. She is teaching “Multicultural America” and “Cultural Anthropology” and is planning a new course on anthropology and youth, tentatively scheduled for fall, 2011.

As many of you know, on September 15th, we held our Welcome/Welcome Back event. In addition to welcoming students and faculty we honored Dr. Mary Lynn Morse who is retiring. We are very grateful to her for her many years as a devoted teacher of “Anthro-Linguistics” (ANTH 102) and “Peoples of Africa” (ANTH 170). Also, a number of current and former students shared some of their experiences using anthropology in various contexts. Angela Garra (2008) talked about her work with the Louis Berger Group, Inc. on a project reinterring the remains of thousands of people including soldiers from the Civil War and Spanish American War. Mike Manchester (2010) and Elana Kahana (2009) described their experiences at the Bond House excavation with Dr. Siegel. Katie McGhee (2010) and Viviana Bernal (2008) spoke about how they applied anthropology to their work on a documentary on women in New Orleans. Jacqueline Gifuni, a Bigel scholar, discussed her participation in a one week intensive course on the new and upcoming laboratory methods in forensic anthropology given by The Advanced Laboratory Methods in Forensic Anthropology, University of Tennessee, Knoxville, where she was one of only a few undergraduates among graduate students and professionals. Rosie Lara (see page 3) shared her experiences in Korea with bungee jumping, teaching English, and learning Korean language and culture.

We are looking forward to seeing you at future events. Watch also for new courses for the spring and fall, 2011 and for opportunities to do research, fieldwork, and other activities.

Join Us!
October 27th, 3 pm
Cohen Lounge
“Rubbish & Pollution in Urban Cambodia”
Sarah C. Smith
University of Queensland

Bigel Scholarship Fund

The Antoinette C. Bigel Scholarship Fund was established in September, 1996, to support students’ participation in anthropological field work. The awards are made on an annual basis, with the application deadline usually in May. Although the amount of funding available in a particular year varies, it is typically in the range of $8,000-$10,000. Individual awards are capped at $2,500.

In the latest round of competition, five applicants were awarded a total of $12,000. Research projects included fieldwork in Ecovillage, Ithaca and attending summer school in forensic anthropology. These recipients are Claudia Urdinavia, Arionna Brasche, Maria de Lucaas, Jacqueline Gifuni and Kasandra Archer. To qualify, students must enroll in a course that enables them to work closely with a faculty advisor on their research project.

To apply, students should follow the instructions on the Department’s website. Questions should be directed to the chair of the Bigel Committee, currently Dr Vedwan.

Bigel Scholarship Fund

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Spring Break: Ecovillage at Ithaca

Students in Dr. McCaffrey’s Building Sustainable Communities class—part of the department’s new Community Development program—spent spring break weekend in upstate New York at the Ecovillage at Ithaca. Founded in 1996, Ecovillage is an intentional community focused on environmental sustainability. Located on 175 acres, it consists of two co-housing neighborhoods, with a third currently forming, and is home to about 150 residents. Residents of Ecovillage live a middle class lifestyle on approximately 40 percent less energy and resources than others in the same climate.

Beginning the weekend with a tour of Ecovillage, students got an up-close look at neighborhoods FROG and SONG. Designed to have a minimal environmental impact, students experienced these car-free neighborhoods and saw their passive solar, environmentally friendly homes, fruit trees, and small garden plots. Also seen were Ecovillage’s community gardens, communal lake, common houses, and root cellar constructed of natural materials. Last stop on the tour were the chicken coops, greenhouses, and fields of the ten acre organic vegetable and flower farm, West Haven, where students learned about local, sustainable agriculture.

The weekend also included meeting with inspiring people and organizations in Ithaca. Time was spent at the Greenstar Cooperative Market where members are co-owners of the store and the products are mainly local, organic, and environmentally-friendly. A presentation at the Alternatives Federal Credit Union focused on their work helping low-income individuals eliminate debt, save money, and become first-time home buyers. At a community center students learned that creating gardens is part of a healthy food initiative, one strategy being used to combat obesity in the local low-income neighborhoods. Lastly, the presentation by the director of the non-profit organization Sustainable Tompkins focused on improving sustainability at the county level.

Back at MSU, students said the trip gave them a sense of hope, empowerment, and inspiration for the future of creating sustainable communities.

~ by Arionna Brasche

2010 Lambda Alpha

Anthropology students were honored this spring by a ceremony inducting them into the BETA chapter of the honor society Lambda Alpha. It took place in MSU’s beautiful courtyard lounge and was attended by the honorees’ families and friends as well as Anthropology faculty. Honorees were presented with certificates of accomplishment from Dr. Elaine Gerber and a rose of appreciation from department chair Dr. Frances Rothstein.

2010 inductees included:

Kassandra Archer, Jonathan Ballone, Krista Rose Sharlin, Halah Thomas, Kathleen Klose, Marina Mello, Jacqueline Giufuni, Katherine DiLeo, Jessica Simini, Maria deLuccas, Tiffany Moallan, Sonia Cizkova, and Vanessa Jorge
An Adventure in Korea: Study Abroad

Montclair State’s study abroad programs are an exciting way to live and learn in another country for a semester or summer. Anthropology major Rosercilia Lara took advantage of this opportunity by spending two months this summer in South Korea through a study abroad and internship program which allowed her to complete two classes—Asian cultures and Korean Mass media—and teach English to Korean college students.

She stayed with hosts in the capital Seoul Special City, dating back to 18 B.C. and located in the center of the Korean peninsula on the Han River. Rosie said that while it’s nice to take classes it’s also good to give something back to her Korean hosts. That she has always had a deep respect for Asian cultures and anthropology was the best way to turn that respect into an exciting education and career.

The trip was a way for her to experience Korean culture first-hand. She said, “simply reading a book or watching a special about a place or a culture is not enough. Anthropology is not a library science, we learn more from experience then text. Every person should be able to experience places and ways different from one’s self. By doing so we become better people, we see more than what’s in front of us. By learning and experiencing other cultures we gain a new lens to see the world around us. We become more cultured and complete.”

Summer Community Development Internship

Halah Dorothea Thomas was the recipient of the NJIT 2010 Housing and Community Development Scholars Internship. The first MSU student to be awarded this position, Halah spent part of her summer working with the Parkside Business and Community in Partnership organization, helping with community development projects in low income communities in New Jersey.

She was involved with many aspects of community development ranging from the demanding physical work of building and repairing houses, to practical seminars on how to properly handle credit, to community events such as organizing BBQ’s and block parties.

Halah eloquently stated, “As anthropologists we see the world around us as few others can. We look at the world in a non-judgmental way. But sometimes looking isn’t enough. We must not simply observe a community and take notes on everything that is in need of improvement. We must actively help to change the community for the better.”

Community Development Certificate

Interested in community development? Want to pursue graduate studies after finishing your Bachelor’s degree?

Check out the department’s Graduate Certificate Program in Community Development, now in its second year. Requirements are 13 credits—or four classes—Communities in Transition, Environment and Community, Community and Health, and Building Sustainable Communities.

These classes are also open to undergraduates, allowing students to earn a Community Development concentration.

For more information, see the Anthropology Department’s website, http://chss.montclair.edu/anthropology/programs/commdevgrad.html.
Faculty News


Laetitia Cairoli  In her upcoming book *Girls of the Factory: A Year with the Garment Workers of Morocco*, Laetitia Cairoli describes the year she spent investigating the lives of female garment factory workers in the ancient city of Fes, Morocco. As much memoir as ethnography, the book presents the author as she struggles to meet workers in the city streets, finds a job in one of the Fes factories, and develops friendships with the workers and their families. As the narrative progresses, the reader comes to know the workers, and to understand both the opportunities factory labor provides these girls and the exploitation they experience. The reader also witnesses the unfolding of the ethnographic experience, glimpsing the complexity, contradictions, and subjectivity of the ethnographic encounter.

Elsa Davidson  In her forthcoming book, *The Burdens of Aspiration: Youth, Schools, and Citizenship in a Divided Silicon Valley* (New York University Press), Elsa Davidson examines how two groups of young people, one from a San Jose neighborhood home to many migrants from Mexico in low-waged service work and the other from an affluent and predominantly white and Asian community of techno-entrepreneurial and service professionals, define aspirations in relation to experiences of rapid and social and economic change.

Kate McCaffrey  This past May, Kate McCaffrey participated on the White House Task force on Puerto Rico’s Status as a result of her extensive research on Vieques, Puerto Rico. In her role as co-director of the Latin American and Latino Studies program, Kate McCaffrey recently brought StoryCorps to MSU to record Latino students interviewing family and friends as part of their national oral history initiative. She was also responsible for helping to arrange the event on September 30 where Pulitzer Prize winning author Junot Díaz held a reading and book signing in the Conference room on the 7th floor of University Hall. Dr. McCaffrey also serves as the editor of the quarterly magazine Anthropology Now, with the September issue now available.

Fran Rothstein  is following up on research she begun last fall in San Cosme Mazatecocho, Mexico on a Fulbright Garcia Robles Research and Teaching Award by studying migrants from San Cosme who are now in New Jersey. An article, “New Mexican Migrants in a New Age: Globalization, Networks, and Gender in Rural Mexico,” has recently been published in *Class, Contention, and a World in Motion* edited by Winnie Lem and Pauline Gardner Barber (Bergahn Books, 2010).

Peter Siegel  This summer Peter Siegel worked with students on archaeological investigations at the historic Van Reyper-Bond House located on campus in a project sponsored by the Department of Anthropology and Center for Heritage and Archaeological Studies (CHAS). Students gained hands-on experience in conducting background research into the Van Reyper and Bond families and learned to use survey equipment in establishing excavation grids, proper methods of archaeological excavation, and artifact-processing techniques. Dr. Siegel is also working with colleagues on research funded by the National Science Foundation and the National Geographic Society to assess the effects of humans on landscapes and understanding landscapes as cultural contexts in the Caribbean.

Neeraj Vedwan  Due to the serious environmental and social impacts associated with increasing bottled water consumption in India, Neeraj Vedwan is researching the socio-economic and cultural forces driving this trend. His ongoing research aims to examine the social and institutional factors, as well as changing personal preferences that underlie the trend toward commodification of drinking water. During the summer, he conducted fieldwork in Delhi to better understand the opportunities and constraints that drive the small-scale production of packaged drinking water.

Want to contribute to the Spring issue of Anthropology News? Contact Graduate Assistant, Arionna Brasche braschea1@mail.montclair.edu
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