

Anthropology News

www.clas.wayne.edu/Anthropology

Winter 2010

Museum of Anthropology Celebrates its 50th Anniversary



(L-R): Joe Rankin, Gordon Grosscup, Tamara Bray, Provost Nancy Barrett, Thomas Killion, and Andrea Sankar

What's inside...

- 2 Letter from Dr. Andrea Sankar
- 3 Student News
- 4 New Faculty Members
- 5 Faculty News



The Museum of Anthropology at Wayne State University celebrated its 50th anniversary on October 9th with the opening of the exhibition, *Mythical Foundations/Material Consequences: A Look at Archaeological Research at the Workers Row House, Corktown, Detroit*. The exhibit presents work resulting from three seasons of excavations in a historic city neighborhood by WSU faculty, students, and the Greater Corktown Development Corporation. The Workers Row House is a small, working-class tenement built in 1849 and is perhaps the oldest wooden structure of its kind still standing in Detroit. The city's early residential, industrial, and ethnic histories were explored through archaeological excavations in the dooryard area of this historic structure. The exhibit focuses on the challenges of interpreting excavated

artifacts and what these remnants of material culture can tell us about the immigrants who once lived in this part of Detroit. Featured in the exhibit are personal items and pottery, glass, and metal excavated from the Workers Row House (see photo below), which narrowly escaped destruction during the construction of the Lodge Freeway in the 1950s. The exhibit also looks to the future of collaborative, historical archaeology research in the Detroit area.

In honor of the 50th Anniversary, the department held an Alumni luncheon and an afternoon tour of the Workers Row House and Corktown. This exciting day ended with a wine and cheese reception. The event was attended by many department alumni and distinguished presenters. An award was also presented to Professor Emeritus Dr. Gordon Grosscup, co-founder of the museum with Arnold Pilling. ■



Letter from Dr. Andrea Sankar, Department Chair

I write to you about the outstanding accomplishments of the faculty and students of WSU's Anthropology Department: the Anthropology Museum's 50th Anniversary, new books and articles by faculty and graduates, new funding and honors, and a new undergraduate major at Macomb Community College.

Not apparent from the achievements listed here is our emerging focus on the City of Detroit. In this time of economic challenge, many of the faculty and students in the Department of Anthropology are engaged in research that takes Detroit, its current and past culture and history, and its place in the world as its focus. This range of projects will contribute to an emerging understanding of how a post-industrial city meets the challenges of the new economy as well as to the renewal of the economy itself through creative partnerships with local institutions such

as the Detroit Public Schools and the economic development efforts generated by TechTown. The Department is providing social science leadership in university-urban collaborations that will contribute to the revitalization of Detroit.

Despite the hard economic times that Michigan, and in particular Detroit, are going through, WSU is meeting the challenges in new and creative ways. I am thus optimistic about the future of the department and university. The new Dean of the Graduate School, Mark Wardell, appears to be skilled at implementing the old maxim "do more with less." He has reorganized funding for graduate students in several creative ways. He is increasing the Graduate School match for student travel from \$250 to \$500. That means that if the Department can come up with a \$500 per student contribution to those giving a paper at a national meeting,

we can now provide them with a total of \$1000, a far more realistic sum for students to use to attend meetings that are so important to developing their professional careers. More significant is the reorganization of graduate student funding. The university will now have 57 university-wide competitive graduate fellowships that will offer an \$18,000 stipend plus tuition and benefits. This increase of six thousand dollars will allow us to compete with other major research universities to attract the best students. These fellowships are for two years; however, the Department must make major contributions to funding the fellowships in the second year.

I am making a special request this year to help us take advantage of these new opportunities for our current students and to attract the best new students by making it possible for the department to participate in this match program. ■

WAYNE STATE UNIVERSITY COLLEGE OF LIBERAL ARTS AND SCIENCES



Departmental Academic Services Officer Susan Ward's

essay "The Potawatomi Indians of Detroit: Great Lakes Pioneers" was published in the book *Revolutionary Detroit: Portraits in Political and Cultural Change 1760-1805*, (Denver Brunsman and Joel Smith, Eds). ■

In Memory of Dr. Paul Wrobel

The Detroit News reported that Wayne State University Anthropology Department adjunct professor Paul Wrobel died on October 23, 2009. Dr. Wrobel, who earned his PhD from Catholic University in Washington, D.C., taught in several WSU departments, as well as at Orchard Lake St. Mary. Dr. Wrobel authored *Our Way: Family, Parish, and Neighborhood in a Polish-American Community* (1979), based on his dissertation. This classic ethnographic study was based on fieldwork conducted in 1972 and 1973 in a Hamtramck, MI parish consisting of first-, second-, and third-generation Polish-American families. These studies focused on the process of assimilation into American culture and on perceived social disorganization within the Polish-American community.

The Detroit News obituary states that Wrobel is survived by three children, five grandchildren, and a sister and brother.

~Diane R. Pawlowski

Student News

Notes from the Field: Guatemala Monica Rodriguez, PhD Candidate

During the summer of 2009, along with **PhD Candidate Jayne Yatzcak**, I attended the National Association for the Practice of Anthropology-Occupational Therapy (NAPA-OT) Field School in Guatemala, a trip made possible with generous funding from Chicano-Boricua Studies, Study Abroad & Global Studies, and Anthropology. I have always been interested in applying anthropology and working collaboratively with other groups, so I thought that this field school would be a good chance to do so. During the six-week trip, we attended lectures by anthropologists and occupational therapists, worked collaboratively on a project with local non-governmental organizations in the area, and worked on our own individual projects. The students were divided into three groups. My group, disability studies, was asked to make an assessment of how a clinic could be more accessible to its patients. We conducted observations, interviews, and a critical physical assessment of the space.

In addition, we were each responsible for conducting an individual project. I am interested in the perception of assistive technological devices like hearing aids and cochlear implants by different deaf communities, and was able to conduct a pilot study while I was there. I spent my time learning the Sign Language of Guatemala and conducting interviews. This past summer was very productive for me. Through this field school, I had the opportunity to gain experience working on collaborative projects with people of other disciplines as well as learn about occupational therapy while focusing on my interests. ■



Monica Rodriguez, in the field

Notes from the Field: San Antonio, Texas Mary Durocher, PhD Candidate

The working title of my dissertation thesis is: "Exploring Sacred Objects and Their Meanings in Catholic Mexicano Households: Domestic Religious Practices in San Antonio." The focus of this research is to explore the meanings

embedded in the practice of religious rituals by people of Mexican descent in their homes through their use of religious objects. I am conducting interviews using life stories and interactions or relationships with material culture as methodology. I aim to demonstrate that these everyday indigenous practices are not only for spiritual fulfillment, but

also act as ways to negotiate a sense of ethnic identity within an Anglo-based society. ■



Tamara Bray with students in Ecuador

Summer on the Equator: Ecuador

During the summer of 2009, **Dr. Tamara Bray** led WSU Anthropology students **Jon Brewster, Andrea DiMuzio, Krystal Hubbard, Amy Krull**, along with several Ecuadorian archaeology students, in excavations at the archaeological site of Inca-Caranqui in northern Ecuador. Stunning Inca stonework, as well as burials and artifacts from pre-Inca occupation, punctuate the late imperial Inca site. Caranqui is situated near an indigenous Quechua-speaking community of farming families. Dr. Bray and the students stayed with an area family that operates a bed and breakfast near the base of the dormant volcano, which looms over Caranqui. Joined by Ecuadorian archaeology students, the WSU team worked diligently on excavations, visited other Andean highlands sites, and enjoyed the gardens and traditionally prepared meals at their temporary mountain home. All of the students learned more about Inca archaeology from their experiences working at the site, but perhaps the greatest impression left on these students from their visit to Ecuador is their interactions with the people of northern Ecuador. ■

Anthropology Welcomes New Faculty Members

Dr. Todd Meyers is a medical anthropologist who joined the department earlier this year after completing a joint PhD in Anthropology and Public Health at Johns Hopkins University in 2009. Before turning his attention to Anthropology, Dr. Meyers was trained as a painter at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago, where he received a Bachelor of Fine Arts. He continues to paint and is a regular



Dr. Todd Meyers

contributor to a number of art journals. Before graduate school, Dr. Meyers was a Peace Corps volunteer in Papua New Guinea (from 1996-1999), and lived with a group called the Kanité-Yaté in the Eastern Highlands. Dr. Meyers' primary research interests focus on health care for families living under social and economic constraints. His dissertation research followed adolescents in drug rehabilitation in Baltimore, Maryland, attempting to better understand how substance abuse treatment was understood both inside and outside clinical environments. He followed a small cohort of adolescents and their families for more than two years, examining how "success" and "failure" came to be defined often beyond the scope of standard clinical reasoning. Currently, Dr. Meyers is finishing a book manuscript, *The Clinic and Elsewhere*, which draws from this ethnographic work.

Dr. Meyers also teaches on a yearly basis at the Université de Picardie-Jules Verne in Amiens, France. He will be teaching there again this coming June. In addition, Dr. Meyers is designing a research project in Detroit that investigates how illness is managed within households. Specifically, he is interested in ecologies of care—that is, where and how care is made available, and the way co-morbidities are dealt with symptomatically, clinically, and socially.

Dr. Nathalie Peutz received her B.A. from the University of Pennsylvania and her PhD in Anthropology from Princeton University. Her research currently centers on globalization, migration, development, and environmental and cultural heritage in the Middle East and North-East Africa. From 2004-2006 she conducted her dissertation fieldwork in Soqotra, a Yemeni island off the Horn of Africa that was declared a "World Heritage Site" in July 2008 in recognition of its astounding biodiversity. In the past decade, and largely as the result of a UN-funded Integrated Conservation and Development Program, this once relatively "isolated" island has been drawn increasingly into global networks and discourses of development, conservation, and heritage-production. Her research was carried out in one of the newly created Protected Areas, where she observed the transformative effects of this emergent environmental regime upon its pastoral population's welfare and sense of well-being. Previous to this, in Somaliland, she looked at the effects of deportation on Somalis deported from the United States and Canada to Mogadishu following the events of September 11, 2001. Peutz finds deportation to be

a fascinating lens through which to examine statehood, sovereignty, and citizenship. Although these two separate projects are in many ways divergent, together they have directed her focus toward both the radical displacements (through deportation) and the radical "emplacements" (through heritage regimes) that so-called globalization engenders.

At Wayne State, she is interested in continuing conversations with the Yemeni community of Detroit, as well as learning more about the experiences of Iraqi refugees here as they attempt to set up new lives in the United States.



Dr. Nathalie Peutz

The Department of Anthropology would also like to welcome Physical Anthropologist **Dr. Mary Megyesi**. Dr. Megyesi will be profiled in the next newsletter.

Dr. Judith Fleck, a PhD graduate from WSU, published a book in September 2009 titled *The Spirit Within: Ethnography of an Urban African American Church*.

Jim Meza was awarded funds from the American Academy of Family Physicians Foundation's Research Committee for his dissertation research titled "Narrative Medicine, Diagnosis, and Uncertainty: Windows into the Social Practice of Healing." ■

Faculty News

Dr. Tamara Bray was awarded two prestigious research grants this year: (1) a three-year Collaborative Research Grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities; and (2) a Research and Exploration Grant from the National Geographic Society. She also was an invited participant in a distinguished international conference on "The Archaeology of Value" held at UCLA in November. There, she presented her paper "From Rational to Relational: Re-Configuring Value." In addition, a new article appeared in the most recent issue of the *Cambridge Archaeology Journal*: "An Archaeological Perspective on the Andean Concept of Camaquen: Thinking Through the Objects of Late Precolumbian Ofrendas and Huacas." Finally, Dr. Bray was honored with the Women of Wayne award this Fall.

Dr. Stephen Chrisomalis was successful in the internal Graduate Research Assistantship competition for support of his project 'Acquiring a Mathematical culture at Math Corps'. This funding is being used to support his ethnographic research with Math Corps over the next year, including analysis of the material collected in summer 2009 and further ethnographic participant observation and interviews throughout 2009-2010.

Dr. Guérin Montilus was awarded an Information Technology mini-grant from the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences to bring technology into the classroom. He will use images from the Anthropology Material Culture Lab and coordinate his lectures with Blackboard assignments in his course, Introduction to Anthropology of Religious Thought,

for Winter 2010. He also received a fellowship from the WSU Humanities Center for Summer 2009 - Winter 2010 to study the impact of globalization on the relationship between the environment and the African indigenous religious belief system among the Adja Fon of southern Benin, West Africa. Dr. Montilus was also invited to an international conference co-sponsored by UNESCO on African Religions and Slavery in Port-au-Prince, Haiti, December 9-12, 2009. His lecture was titled *Vodou haïtien et mémoire de l'esclavage* (Haitian Vodou and Memory of Slavery).

Dr. Todd Meyers published an essay, "A Graft, Physiological and Philosophical: Jean-Luc Nancy's *L'Intrus*" (co-written with Stefanos Geroulanos, New York University), in the journal *Parallax*. He is also pleased to announce that the translation of Georges Canguilhem's *Knowledge of Life* (Fordham University Press, 2009), which he co-edited and for which he wrote the introduction, has gone into its second printing in the same year of its publication. Dr. Meyers became a member of the University of Michigan Substance Abuse Research Center in September, and was appointed the book review editor of the social studies of medicine on-line journal *Somatosphere* in October.

Dr. Thomas Killion opened the exhibit on Corktown, published a paper on Gulf Coast archaeology in the *Journal of Anthropological Research*, and received a grant from the Local Initiatives Support Corporation (a DC based, national organization) for analysis and exhibit preparation. ■

Support the Department of Anthropology

Dr. Mr. Ms. Mrs. Mrs. Name _____ Phone _____

Address _____ City _____

State _____ Zip _____ e-mail _____

Gift Options: (Your gift is tax deductible)

\$25 \$50 \$100 \$250 \$500 Other _____

Please charge my gift to: VISA Mastercard

account# _____ expiration date _____ signature _____

Please make checks payable to Wayne State University Department of Anthropology

Send to: Susan Ward, Academic Services Officer, Department of Anthropology | 3054 Faculty/Administration Building | 656 W. Kirby | Detroit, MI 48202

Alumni News and Information for Future Newsletters

We're interested in what you're doing now. Please take a moment to complete the following and return it to us via fax, e-mail or US mail to:

Anthropology
3054 Faculty/Administration Building
656 W. Kirby
Detroit, MI 48202

Phone: (313) 577-2935
Fax: (313) 577-5958
e-mail: ad3619@wayne.edu

Name _____

Year of Graduation _____

Degree _____

Your current position (title and employer) _____

Your news _____

Anthropology^{NEWS}

Anthropology
3054 Faculty/Administration Building
656 W. Kirby
Detroit, MI 48202

WAYNE STATE UNIVERSITY
COLLEGE OF LIBERAL ARTS
AND SCIENCES

Nonprofit Org.
U.S. Postage
PAID
Detroit, MI
Permit No. 3844