

Newsletter

Society for Applied Anthropology

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President's Letter - August 2008

By Susan Andreatta [s_andrea@uncg.edu]
The University of North Carolina at Greensboro

Greetings. I trust and hope that all of you have had a successful couple of months since our last newsletter was distributed. I know for many of you who are academics the summer months have been a time for delving into projects, intense research, writing and rejuvenating.

I have found myself starting this letter to you on several occasions. I would see something or think of something that attracted my problem-solving attention as an applied social scientist and think to myself "Ohh, if only!" I have experienced this feeling almost nightly as I watch the Olympic Games and wish that the sports commentators had taken a course or two in anthropology or cross-cultural studies. There are times when the commentators present some very fascinating cultural information; however, they present it in such a way as to reduce it or even make fun of it. A number of examples come to mind, not all of them are food related, such as the exchange of business cards, not to point with chopsticks, and living conditions.

As I watch these sports journalists trying to understand another culture and present it to the American public, I am reminded of the importance of a liberal arts education and the role anthropology plays in it, as well as the value of participating in study abroad programs, learning a second language and gaining hands-on research experiences. As practitioners and those engaged in applied research we need to get our message out into other arenas and to other disciplines that we have much to offer in our cross-cultural understandings.

This summer I had an opportunity to read some very enlightening works that humbled me as well as reminding me that we as social scientists do not have all the answers nor do we have a monopoly on best practices in field work. So often, the success of a project or a program depends more on the commitment at all levels to the endeavor than on the amount of money that is available. In fact, sometimes the amount of money that is put into a project, or where that money comes from actually changes the focus of project to the donors' needs rather than those of the community or the intended population.

One of the books I read this summer was by Sarah Chayes (2006), entitled "The Punishment of Virtue: Inside Afghanistan after the Taliban". Chayes chronicles her experiences as a journalist and reporter in Afghanistan and describes what she learned on the ground by taking language and culture seriously as part of her fact finding approach to her media pieces. Her success as a reporter for NPR and other media outlets can be attributable not only to her good writing skills, but also to her commitment to the people and to understanding their culture and the story she was reporting. After completing her NPR assignment she stayed to take a position running a NGO aid organization, Afghans for Civil Society. Chayes is now involved in sustainable, economic development in Kandahar. She spends her time assisting Afghans in building a soap and body-oil business known as Arghand Cooperative [<http://www.arghand.org>]. Extracting essential oils from locally produced fruits and exporting the new product lines from Kandahar and Kabul to



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San Francisco, Massachusetts, Kansas City, Austin and Denver is transforming the participating rural communities. (For a brief summary of Chayes recent work with Afghan cooperatives, read her article in the December 2007 issue of *Atlantic Monthly* entitled "Scents and Sensibilities.")

Chayes' story made me think again about our work as academics. We never know who is going to be in our classes and what they may do with the information that they learn. One hopes that students will do more good than bad with their "use" of cross-culture differences and similarities and of course not all of our students will or should be anthropology majors. However, anthropological concepts, methods and theory can be used in many ways outside our discipline. I hope you will join me in championing this cause, for I believe that a greater degree of cultural awareness and tolerance would help the world become a better place for all of us.

Speaking of reaching out to others, I want to remind you that abstracts will be due on **October 15th** for the 2009 Annual Meeting in Santa Fe, New Mexico March 17-21. The theme for this annual meeting is "Global Challenge, Local Action: Ethical Engagement, Partnerships and Practice." I encourage you to speak out to colleagues in other areas of work who might be able to contribute to the meetings or simply enjoy being there as an engaged listener.

For those you who, like me, will soon be beginning a new semester, I wish you a very productive one.

With best wishes,
Susan Andreatta

Dr. Orlando Fals-Borda - 2008 Malinowski Award Winner Dies in Colombia

We have just received word of the passing of Dr. Orlando Fals-Borda on August 12, 2008. Dr. Fals-Borda, a renowned sociologist from Colombia, was our most recent award winner and presented a brilliant, distinguished lecture during the 2008 SfAA Annual Meetings in Memphis. His lecture will be printed in a future volume [v.67:4] of *Human Organization*. The Bogota newspaper, *El Espectador*, just a few days ago published an obituary-editorial praising Dr. Fals-Borda's life work. Please visit their website to read it.

<http://www.elespectador.com/opinion/editorial/articulo-orlando-fals-borda> . [An article about his professional life will appear in the November *SfAA Newsletter*. - Editor]

The Yin Yang of Anthropology and Design: Anthrodesigners and the Evolution of Anthropology and Design

By Elizabeth (Dori) Tunstall [Etunst@uic.edu]
University of Illinois at Chicago, School of Art and Design

Anthropology and design have long histories of encounter since their establishment as "modern" practices in the 19th century. *Notes and Queries on Anthropology*, published in 1899 had sections on the analysis of the production and consumption of material artifacts, which is the knowledge domain of design. Design *Society for Applied Anthropology*



“applied” anthropologist (university-based and consulting part-time). Now he is a “practicing” anthropologist (fulltime in development work). He did not completely sever the university connection, however, as he continues to serve as the major advisor to a few Ph.D. students who are working on their dissertations.

The research project that he directs is funded by the U.S. Department of Labor (USDOL), Bureau of International Labor Affairs (ILAB). The research addresses the lack of reliable estimates of the prevalence of children currently working in the carpet industry as well as the working conditions for these children, especially the existence of the worst forms of child labor, including trafficking and bonded labor. The research will examine all aspects of the supply chain that processes the wool and silk used in handmade carpets as well as the actual production of the carpets by weaving, tufting, or hand-looming. The results of this quantitative and qualitative study will increase the knowledge base on child labor and inform policy-makers.



Nepalese children

Art wants to hear from anthropologists and other social scientists



Children selling carpets in India.

with research experience in child labor, forced or bonded labor, child trafficking, and/or the carpet industry in India, Nepal, or Pakistan. He wants to learn from colleagues about their experiences and their methodological, theoretical, and substantive findings (trials, errors, and lessons learned).

One specific area in which Art requests assistance is that he wants to learn how other researchers have handled the issues of identifying and measuring the existence of trafficking, bonded or forced labor, and the worst forms of child labor. The heart of the research will be nationwide surveys, which means that questionnaire design is critical. Art wants to hear from his colleagues who have developed, identified, and/or utilized appropriate methodological ways to identify and measure these conditions.

His contact numbers are:
Art Hansen, Research Project Director
Macro International, Inc.
Art.hansen@macrointernational.com
Telephone (blackberry) 301-572-0827

Political Ecology Society (PESO) Panel on Plants and People in Madagascar

Call for Panel Participants

by Douglas W. Hume [humed1@nku.edu]
Northern Kentucky University

A panel is being created for the upcoming joint meetings of the Society of Applied Anthropology and Political Ecological Society (PESO) meetings in Sante Fe, New Mexico (March 17 - 21, 2009).

Session Title: Plant Discourses: Cultural Implications of Plants on Development in Madagascar

Session Abstract: This session explores the economic, political and religious relationships that the Malagasy have with plants and the implications of these relationships to current

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development programs in Madagascar. Plants that the Malagasy utilize for economic and subsistence purposes are interwoven within political discourses as well as with religious meanings and practices. These discourses, meanings and practices are not only influenced by current medical, agricultural and economic development programs in Madagascar, but shape the way the Malagasy experience and ascribe meaning to development. This session includes discussion of possible solutions and future directions in the disaccord between cultural meanings and development actions.

[100/100 words]

Sample Paper Title: Vary Gasy: Meanings of Rice and Implications for Agricultural Development in Eastern Madagascar

Sample Paper Abstract: This paper examines meanings of Malagasy rice (vary Gasy) and the implications of these meanings for agricultural development in eastern Madagascar. Rural subsistence farmers in eastern Madagascar ascribe meanings to rice varieties, which include beliefs of which varieties are healthier to consume and produce higher yields. These beliefs conflict with those of the development agencies attempting to increase rice production. The result of this conflict is an increased difficulty for development programs to enact long-term agricultural change. This paper concludes with a discussion of the possible solutions to the conflict between farmer beliefs and development program actions.

For more information please contact Douglas Hume via email at humed1@uky.edu.

CALL FOR PAPERS (SfAA)

INVITED SESSION: Society for Applied Anthropology, March 17-21, 2009, Santa Fe
TOPIC: Collaborative Ethnography in Museum Practice, Policy, and Exhibition
ORGANIZER AND CHAIR: Betty J. Duggan (New York State Museum)
SUBMIT PROPOSALS TO: bduggan@mail.nysed.gov

Collaboration with indigenous peoples became a hallmark of ethnology as early as the mid-19th century, resulting in many foundational museum expeditions, series publications, collections, exhibitions, and live demonstrations. Rarely, however, were indigenous or other local cultural specialists recognized publicly as co-producers of project results and knowledge, in tandem and on coequal terms with “their” anthropologists, until the past two decades. Converging and co-mingling influences, including action anthropology, community heritage studies, and most especially the realities and opportunities opened by enactment of the NAGPRA legislation, have led anthropologists and applied ethnographers to increasingly innovative collaborative and participatory partnerships with indigenous and local peoples, many based within or from museums. In this session, participants/presenters focus on the real and potential effects and changes for and in twenty-first century museum practice, policy, and exhibition, and anthropological theory and praxis, which emerge from museum-based or -related case studies of collaborative ethnography, relationships, and products. Paired or co-authored presentations with indigenous or local project members are especially encouraged, as are innovative presentation and discussion formats.

Santa Rita Courts added to the National Register of Historic Places; Austin, Texas, April 25, 2007

Fred L. McGhee & Associates (FLMA) announces the successful nomination of Santa Rita Courts to the National Register of Historic Places. FLMA prepared the nomination materials and sponsored the nomination. All work was done independently and pro bono.

Santa Rita Courts, located in East Austin, is the nation’s oldest housing project built by the United States Housing Authority (USHA) created by the 1937 Housing Act. One of the enduring legacies of President Lyndon Baines Johnson — then a young Congressman — the housing project still serves as much needed affordable housing almost 70 years after its construction. The property continues to be managed by the Housing Authority of the City of Austin.

"It is particularly fitting that the National Park Service recognizes the historical and social significance of Santa Rita Courts with the affordable housing crisis and gentrification of low-income neighborhoods - specifically in