

Anthropology News

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Winter 2012

Letter from Dr. Andrea Sankar, Department Chair

This has been an outstanding year for the Wayne State Anthropology Department. We achieved our longstanding goal of moving up in the national rankings of Anthropology Departments and in the 2011 National Research Council Rankings moved into the third quartile of nationally ranked programs. We were one of only two WSU Departments to advance in the national rankings. We successfully competed for the Provost's additional faculty lines, winning two new lines.

Our "Anthropology of the City" proposal allowed us to hire historical archaeologist Krysta Ryzewski (Brown) and urban anthropologist Andy Newman (CUNY). We successfully filled the opening in Business and Organizational Anthropology, hiring Yuson Jung (Harvard). We are extremely pleased with these outstanding new faculty members. They each bring expertise to help develop the Anthropology of the City initiative through which we extend a more focused attention to and involvement with the City of Detroit. Through Anthropology of the City, we are taking advantage of the growing international interest in Detroit to introduce our students to visiting scholars and help them develop research focused on urban issues.

We have completed work on an urban-focused doctorate, known as SWAN, with the School of Social Work



Dr. Andrea Sankar

which will allow students to earn a MSW degree and a joint doctorate in Anthropology and Social Work. The proposal is currently being evaluated by the Board of Governors;

we hope to begin admitting students next fall. We are actively recruiting applicants for our new MD/PhD program. Finally, we continue to move into online education. Anthropology has more required courses online than any other CLAS department and we hope to offer an online major by next year. Anthropology is such a visual discipline; we intend to use advanced training in online education to turn the inherent advantage of our discipline into an outstanding undergraduate program. ■

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We are always interested in what you are doing now, so please feel free to email the department at ad3619@wayne.edu to let us know where you are working or of any anthropology projects you are involved in. We are also grateful for any donations you can make to the department; they allow us to help our faculty and students with scholarships, awards, and research support.

Anthropology of the City

Our new initiative, *Anthropology of the City: Present and Past*, will direct research, training, and community engagement toward the contemporary and historical transformations in cities such as Detroit. Its focus is on the different classes, communities, peoples, and styles of life that make up a city. The goal is three fold: to provide a synergy with existing faculty's urban research, to increase external funding, and to support existing and developing graduate training programs.

Urban anthropology's broad focus on what it means to be human in the twenty-first century, with attention to biological, cultural, and structural dimensions, is already apparent in the department's current general and specific research strengths. Thus material culture from the

region's rapid technological and cultural change in the 18th and 19th centuries is also a part of an urban anthropological focus.

Anthropology's long-standing focus on social complexity is intimately bound to concerns with the rise and development of urban places. The rise of urban industrial centers, beginning in the late 18th century, has become a centerpiece of American archaeology and a lively area for basic research and theory building, federal heritage preservation programs, and public archaeology initiatives nationwide. Deindustrialization and the present transformation of Detroit's economic base has provided a window for urban archaeology as the city seeks to re-envision itself and build a broader base for sustainable development. Wayne State's

location in Detroit provides a unique natural laboratory for urban archaeological research and an important potential source of external funding for the university.

This initiative builds on the deep history of urban Anthropology in the WSU Department of Anthropology. The research of Emerita Barbara Aswad in immigration and community formation in Metropolitan Detroit led to the creation of ACCESS. Similarly, urban archaeological research beginning with Arnold Pilling's and Gordon Grosscup's work in Detroit during the 1970s and 1980s led to the creation of the Gordon Grosscup Museum of Anthropology. Anthropology of the City will further the University's mission to be engaged with the past, present, and future of Detroit and its region. ■

Transforming Transportation

On April 7-9, 2011, the Michigan Universities Research Corridor held its first Transforming Transportation Research Summit at the Book Cadillac Hotel in downtown Detroit. The summit was organized by the Anthropology Department's Institute for Information Technology and Culture, along with the University of Michigan Transportation Research Institute and the Michigan State University Vice President for Outreach and Engagement. More than 200 researchers, public officials, industrialists, and civic leaders attended to discuss the future of transportation and communities in Michigan and the Midwest. The mission of the summit was to advance knowledge, systems, and solutions that can transform the future of transportation and revitalize economies and communities in Michigan and beyond. The program combined high level plenary sessions with focused, collaborative working sessions, an open poster session, and many opportunities for sharing work. Among other outcomes, participants contributed to the development of a research and action agenda on Transforming Transportation. Program strands included Alternative Transportation Strategies for Southeast Michigan, Integrated Approaches to sustainable Transportation Policy, Logistics and Supply Chain Management, New Mobility, and nine other topics.

In the words of the summit organizers (Dr. Allen W. Batteau, Dr. Hiram Fitzgerald, and Ms. Susan Zielinski), "Sixty years ago the dialogue between Detroit and the rest of the world centered around automotive manufacturing, with Detroit building not just cars but a vision of broadly shared prosperity, and indeed a new culture for the entire world. For most of the years since then the world followed, embarking on a course that ultimately proved unsustainable. We propose now that we can learn and build from the current crisis to forge in Detroit a new vision and strategy in which views from around the world of equity and sustainability and economic recovery can guide the development of a new manufacturing economy and transportation infrastructure, for Michigan and the nation."

Further information on the Transforming Transportation Research Summit can be found at <http://www.ttcc.org>. ■



Faculty Profiles

Dr. Andrew Newman, a new assistant professor of Cultural and Urban Anthropology found his calling while attending an international high school in his hometown of Houston, TX. He says that the wide variety of perspectives and critiques of his own culture that his classmates exposed him to set him on the course to study anthropology. Newman began his serious pursuit of anthropology and tried his hand at research for the first time as an undergraduate at Bard College. Newman continued on to obtain his PhD from The Graduate Center City University of New York, a school with a strong reputation for the study of urban anthropology. It was there that the true form of his research began to emerge: the study of cities, their environmental politics, and the way that they transform over time under a variety of global influences. Before coming to Wayne State University, Dr. Newman did extensive research on the way that nature affects the way that the West and North African population in Paris, France interpret their place in the city. He plans to continue with similar themes in Detroit, examining the way activists and residents have re-imagined desolate spaces as urban agriculture, as well as the paradox this presents: nature being utilized to rebuild a city. As a new resident of Detroit, Dr. Newman says that this experience differs from his other fieldwork because upon coming here, he did not know anyone. However, he says he has quickly become accustomed to seeing the same faces pop up around his neighborhood and appreciates the tight-knit community that has warmly welcomed Newman and his research. Dr. Newman's advice for those looking to do anthropological research is to practice looking for questions, not answers.



Dr. Andrew Newman

Dr. Krysta Ryzewski received her BA in Archaeology from Boston University, her MA in Archaeology and Museum Studies from Cambridge, and her PhD in Archaeology from Brown University. According to Dr. Ryzewski, she wears "two hats" in the archaeological world. The first is her passion for historical and contemporary archaeology. Mainly interested in urban sites and sites of colonial interaction in the Caribbean & North America, she is continuing work on two field sites while at WSU. One is on a plantation in Rhode Island, and the other on the Caribbean Island Montserrat. She is also continuing a materials research project at



Dr. Krysta Ryzewski

the Oak Ridge National Laboratory in Tennessee and would also like to begin archaeological work on the City of Detroit.

Ryzewski's "second hat" involves an interdisciplinary approach to archaeology that uses techniques from materials science, a branch of engineering, in combination with anthropological methods in order to inquire about technology and craft production.

When asked if she had any advice for undergraduate students, Ryzewski said, "Get hands on experience, and don't be shy about volunteering to get involved in faculty research projects. Everyone has work that needs to be done. It's kind of the dirty little secret amongst faculty. We all need help but won't chase people down to get it."

Dr. Yuson Jung hails from South Korea where she graduated from the Seoul National University, the largest public university in the country. She continued her graduate training at Harvard University and received her Ph.D. in social anthropology in 2007. Having spent some formative years in West Germany and growing up in South Korea, Dr. Jung has been fascinated by the Cold War and its legacies. This interest led her first to her Masters' thesis research in South Korea where she studied the cultural adaptation process of the North Korean defectors, as well as to her ethnographic fieldwork in postsocialist Bulgaria since 1999. Her doctoral research has looked at the shaping of a consumer culture in the aftermath of state socialism with a particular focus on the role the state plays in the everyday consumption practices of ordinary consumers.



Dr. Yuson Jung

Dr. Jung has also been paying keen attention to food practices in postsocialist societies, resulting in her postdoctoral project on the revival of the Bulgarian wine industry. In this research, she examines the intersection of food, agricultural development, and transnational governance to understand the cultural politics around an increasingly globalized commodity. Another ongoing project concerns the organic and local food movements in developing economies. This past May 2011, she has successfully co-organized an international workshop on "Ethical Foods and Food Movements in Postsocialist Settings" at the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS), London, UK funded by the National Science Foundation (NSF) and SOAS. She is currently revising her book manuscript based on her doctoral research, and has published peer-reviewed articles on issues of postsocialism, hegemonies and EU integration, food practices, as well as the Bulgarian wine industry. ■

Chasing the Spirit

Chasing the Spirit: Gorovodu in Southern Togo is an ethnographic film dedicated to exploring the rituals and ceremonies of Gorovodu religion as it is practiced by Ewe peoples in West Africa. Gorovodu is a sect of Vodou that promotes medicine and healing. It is practiced by a minority of people from Ghana, and Togo, called the Ewe. Gorovodu is practiced side-by-side with other Vodou sects, Christianity, and Islam.

The film is set in the village of Gbedala, a semi-rural seaside village near the capital city of Lome. Here, ritual and religion are embedded in everyday life and inform local economic and social practices. This film is of interest

to students and experts of religion, West African life, and ethnology. It does not offer a complete or exhaustive view of the Ewe people or religion in West Africa. Rather, it offers the viewer a visual guide to the complexity, inclusiveness, and humanity of religious practice in Southern Togo.

The film was filmed, edited, and produced by two Anthropology PhD alums – Eric Montgomery and Christian Vannier. Dr. Montgomery serves as a senior lecturer in the Irvin D. Reid Honors College on Wayne's campus while Dr. Vannier is a visiting assistant professor at Grand Valley State University in Grand Rapids, MI

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Biomonitoring of Persistent Toxic Substances in Michigan Urban Fish Eaters

Faculty members Todd Meyers, Sherri Briller, and Andrea Sankar are collaborating with the Michigan Department of Community Health and the CDC (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention) on a "Bio-monitoring" project in which they will help identify the level of heavy metals ingested by anglers on the Detroit, Saginaw, and Tittabawassee Rivers. Graduate students Jennifer VanNuil, Wendy Bartlo, Georgia Richardson, and Lauren Schleicher worked last summer on the venue-based sampling portion of the project. The project will take years and the hope is to improve the public health advisories for anglers, thereby reducing the heavy metals people ingest through fish consumption. In the second year of the project, teams of Anthropology and Biology students will work to survey the fish consumption habits of local anglers. ■



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a T-shirt, please contact the
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Anthropology Undergraduate Learning Community & Society Update



Alexandra Albert and Beau Kromberg

The fall semester has been a busy, inspiring time for Wayne State's Anthro undergrads! A new school year and a new peer mentor (that's me!) are hard at work, providing opportunities to have fun, learn something, and gain experiences in the field. The Anthropology Learning Community Initiative (LCI) kicked off its second year with a cookout on Belle Isle. In late October, the LCI sponsored a workshop with Dr. Guerin Montilus showcasing

his fieldwork-related collections of material culture from around the world. Workshops, behind-the-scenes museum tours, and other hands-on experiences are on the agenda for the Learning Community in the coming months.

The Anthropology Undergraduate Society (AUS) has gotten off to a strong start as well, instituting a new film series to showcase anthropological documentaries. The first film shown was a BBC documentary, "Requiem for Detroit?." The AUS also plans to start a book club, hold cultural potluck dinners, and explore the historical side of Detroit.

Dr. Krysta Ryzewski, a new edition to Wayne State's anthropology faculty, has opened the archeology lab to undergraduate student volunteers in what she calls "Happy Hours." This opportunity to learn practical archeological skills and work on actual research as an undergraduate is

indispensable, and the turnout has been strong thus far!

The Corktown-based Worker's Row House Pocket Park is coming along in its development this fall. WSU Anthro alum Theo Kozerski has been hard at work developing plans to implement propagation and bioremediation methods in the Pocket Park to develop the space into useable, renewable gardens for the benefit of the neighborhood. This is an ongoing project and it requires lots of support! Students have been volunteering time and hard work each Sunday afternoon to make this park come alive. If you are interested in contributing to the Pocket Park effort, we encourage donations to the scholarship fund.

Wayne State Anthro undergrads have been busy on the national level as well. Liam Collins has been appointed Undergraduate Representative of the Executive Committee for the National Association of Student Anthropologists, as well as a delegate for the AAA Student Representative Caucus. Way to go Liam! ■

In Memory of Dr. Velma Ward

Dr. Velma Ward (1929-2011) was a Medical Anthropologist working in the area of gerontology. She completed her doctoral dissertation, "Heart Disease Beliefs of Urban Elderly African-American Women," at Wayne State in 1996. Her research contributed to the understanding the role of ethnicity in the health care experience. This work has been used in training medical students and has served as a model for doctoral dissertations in Medical Anthropology.

As part of her doctoral training, Dr. Ward was awarded a prestigious National Institute of Health trainee fellowship at the Philadelphia Geriatric Center where she received advanced training in gerontology. Dr. Ward was a strong advocate for women's rights and a member of the research team exploring the cultural impact of the Anita Hill/Clarence Thomas Hearings. She continued to mentor women graduate students long after she had

received her degree. For several years, Dr. Ward taught in the Anthropology Department and was well regarded as a strong and inspiring teacher.

Velma was a dedicated and outspoken supporter of the Anthropology Department and of the field of Anthropology. Whenever the opportunity arose, she jumped at the chance to educate others about the insights and knowledge that Anthropology brought. She was a model to those who knew her. An orphan, raised by distant relatives, she continually sought to take the lessons she had learned and turn them into models for others facing adversity. Her life story never ceased to inspire others. Her wisdom and sagacity were much sought after. In every way possible, she was a great tribute to the Anthropology Department and the profession of Anthropology. She will be much missed. ■

Student News



Earthworks Urban Farm

The Urban Anthropology class went on a trip to Earthworks Urban Farm and the Eastside of Detroit this semester. Earthworks is the first organic farm in Detroit. It is tied to a Capuchin Monastery that has been farming land near Mt. Elliot Cemetery continuously over the last century, and it has been the location of a Soup Kitchen that has been active since the 1930s. The class talked about the long history of agriculture in Detroit, and discussed the role of farming, food, and the food system in the city's future. ■



Jennifer Rivera

Jennifer Rivera, a master's student, donated her skills and time this summer to paint a mural that represents how research in the sub-field of physical anthropology furthers our understanding of the human species. This mural is located in room 1209 of Old Main. ■

Ami Attee

This summer, Ami Attee, a student in the master's program, participated in a program at the University of Tennessee's Anthropological Research Facility (ARF) in Knoxville. During this program, she worked with the Bass collection to test her forensic anthropology skills and learn cutting-edge techniques for establishing a biological profile (age, sex, and ancestry), while also assessing evidence of trauma and pathologies. Ami had the opportunity to study taphonomic processes (changes the body goes through after death). She recovered decomposing human remains from the ARF (popularly referred to as the Body Farm), collected entomological evidence, observed postmortem changes, and examined the effects of fire on bone tissue through experimentation. ■



Daniel Harrison

Last December, Master's Candidate Daniel Harrison won national recognition for his community archaeology project, when the "Hull's Trace North Huron River Corduroy Segment" was placed on the National Register of Historic Places. The feature, a 200-year-old section of wooden road, is located in the downriver community of Brownstown, scene of early action in the War of 1812. It was judged to be significant at the national level in the historical, technical, and archaeological categories. ■



Faculty News

Bray Hike in the Amazon

This summer Professor Tamara Bray did an 8-day hike into the neo-Inca site of Vilcabamba—the last stronghold of the free Inca state. The site is located in a difficult to reach sector of the Amazonian jungle that lies to the east of Cuzco. She hiked in with her former professor; and a local guide, his mother

the cook, and his grandfather, the mule-train driver. It was a true Andean safari type adventure. Dr. Bray (left) is standing next to a banyan tree that is in the process of swallowing up an Inca structure at the site of Vilcabamba. ■

Anthropology Graduate Lara Stephenson's Commencement Speech



Anthropology student Lara Stephenson was chosen to give the commencement speech at one of the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences commencement ceremonies back in May. What follows is the text of her speech:

"Thank you, President Gilmour, Provost Brown, and Dean Thomas. Fellow graduates—we did it! This is truly a great day!

Recently my great-grandmother passed away at the age of 104-and-1/2. Reflecting on her life, I realized she'd seen a lot. She lived through two World Wars and the Great Depression. She saw the rise of the careers of Gershwin, Duke Ellington, the Beatles, and Lady Gaga. She came into the world with Teddy Roosevelt and ended with Barack Obama. She saw the first U-boat dive 200 feet into the sea and the first man on the moon some 200,000 miles into the sky; she saw the structure of DNA discovered and then 50 years later, she saw it entirely sequenced. She survived epidemics, pandemics, riots and revolutions. She's seen the inventions of talking movies, toasters, Tetracycline, tupperware, television, and touchscreens.

Which...leaves me to wonder...not only what we will see in our lifetimes, but what we will do. Some of us, like my Busha, will read about these accomplishments in the news as we take care of our families and raise the next generation. Some of us, as journalists, will write about them. Some of us, as educators, will teach about them to our students. Some of us, as scientists, will discover and research those innovations.

Some of us, as businessmen and businesswomen, will promote or represent those ideas. And some of us, as artists, will be the ones rising to fame through our creativity. Others, as leaders, will guide the world or their community through those changes.

How will the world change in the future for us? Perhaps we will encounter a world which we could only imagine existing in a science fiction film. I think—no—I know that Wayne State has equipped us with the skills and knowledge to handle any task that may confront us in the future.

Now, let me address the parents, grandparents, siblings, and other supporters of my graduating peers today. You have every right to be totally proud of the student you're here supporting. They've made a huge accomplishment! But you should also be proud of yourselves, as well. If you're here today, you've no doubt been there for them these past years, offering your emotional support, listening to them complain about exams, doing their laundry—thank you dad—cooking their meals—thank you mom—and making sure they had everything they needed for success.

Some of us came here knowing exactly what we wanted to study—some of us changed our majors as often as our facebook statuses. But this is part of what makes us special. Each of you has done something extraordinary.

Well, guys, have confidence! Be generous in your talents and skills! And, there's a world out there waiting for you to share them.

THANK YOU!" ■

WAYNE STATE UNIVERSITY
COLLEGE OF LIBERAL ARTS AND SCIENCES

I would like to make a contribution to support the **Anthropology Department at Wayne State University:**

- Anthropology Department Scholarship Fund (222822)
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Mail to: Wayne State University, Attn: Fund Office, 5475 Woodward, Detroit MI 48202

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Faculty Profile: Teddi Setzer

Teddi Setzer has been asked to assist the City of Pontiac with desecrated human remains in the Oak Hill Cemetery, which is listed on the state and national registers of historic places. The remains are from some of the initial founders of the City of Pontiac, and date back to the 1800s. Setzer's services are needed to remove and process the human skeletal material of multiple individuals from a vandalized family mausoleum in order for repairs to be made before the individuals are reinterred. Setzer will inventory the skeletal elements, separate commingled remains, and document damage. Advanced physical

anthropology students from Wayne State University will be involved in the work.



Teddi Setzer

Humanities Center Award

Two of our new faculty members (Andrew Newman and Krysta Ryzewski) and two faculty from the History Department (Jennifer Hart and Tracy Neumann) received an award from the Wayne State Humanities Center to form a Working Group on Politics, Culture and the City. The group will hold seminars, invite guest speakers, and host a reception with the goal of fostering a community of urban-focused scholars across the academic disciplines at Wayne State. ■