Anthropology Spring 2003 Anthropology News from the University of Washington's Department of Anthropology

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Lorna A. Rhodes

Anthropology in Prisons

Lorna Rhodes' new book, Total Confinement: Madness and Reason in the Maximum Security Prison, explores the social world of high-intensity confinement in "supermax" prison units. The book, which describes the situation of mentally ill prisoners as well as those deemed "the worst of the worst," is based on her ten years of experience as a consultant and ethnographer in Washington State's prison system. This research was funded by the Correctional Mental Health Collaboration, a joint project of the University of Washington and the Department of Corrections.

Although prisoners in super-maximum security facilities are held in near-solitary confinement, these environments offer an attenuated and extreme form of social life and require exploration from the perspectives of both staff and prisoners. Total Confinement describes prisoners' responses to confinement (based on in-depth interviews and cell-front conversations), as well as the perspective of prison staff at all levels from officer to correctional official. Lorna was able to attend hearings and meetings, "shadow" staff as they went about their jobs, and participate in conversations among prisoners and staff. Her book explores how prison history, psychiatric knowledge, changing political and employment patterns, and the everyday interactions of prisoners and staff all come together to create a complex, and often fractured, institutional environment. One example of this complexity occurs when some prisoners - often called "psychopaths" - are kept in isolation for many years, becoming enmeshed in what one prisoner called "the machineries of the system." In a chapter titled "The Games Run Deep," Lorna explores how this occurs at the intersection of behavioral management, diagnosis, and popular theories about individuality and choice. A related paper, "Utilitarians with Words: 'Psychopathy' and Supermax" (Ethnography, Fall 2003), takes up the related issue of how some prisoners become the "face" of the supermax prison.

Although her fieldwork has wound down, Lorna continues with occasional prison visits and maintains a supportive role at the Intensive Management Unit of the Washington Corrections Center in Shelton. Last fall she also visited Minnesota's supermax prison to conduct a follow-up interview with a long-term inmate who had been transferred there.

Her book will come out this fall with the University of California Press.

Misery Keley

Letter from the Chair

As I write this note for the spring issue of AnthropoLog, the department is in a whirlwind of end-of-the-year activity. Two of the things that occur this time each year are made possible by contributions from our donors and I thought you'd enjoy hearing about them.

Each June we award four prizes (\$250 each) for "best" undergraduate student papers (one each in archaeology, biocultural anthropology, and sociocultural anthropology, and one for the best senior honors thesis, which is always based on original field research). Throughout the year faculty members submit the top papers from their courses – this year there are twenty. Faculty judges will be evaluating these papers just as this issue of AnthropoLog goes to press. The prizes will be awarded on June 5th at the department's graduation party.

We've also been able to support graduate student research. For several years now the department has set aside about \$20,000 annually for students to conduct pilot research prior to doing their dissertation fieldwork. In the spring, students submit detailed proposals for review by a faculty panel. The best receive funds that allow the student to spend two to three months in the field during the summer. Pilot research enables students to gain insight into the feasibility of their project, establish helpful connections, and conduct initial research. This year eight graduate students received awards for topics as diverse as prehistoric human migration in East Timor, shifting economic and political pressures and local adaptations in Pacific Northwest logging communities, and male reproductive technology in China.

We will be thinking of our faithful donors especially fondly just about the time you receive this newsletter – when four undergraduate students beam with joy upon being awarded "best paper" prizes and when eight graduate students pack their bags for their summer pilot research. Thank you, one and all, for helping us make these awards possible for our students.



Hanh Bich Duong

Graduate Student in Focus

When your fieldsite is a popular tourist destination, people tend to wonder, "Are you really doing ethnographic research there, or are you just hanging out?"

"Both," answers Hanh Bich Duong. Beginning in August 2000, she conducted 18 months of fieldwork in Sa Pa, a popular tourist destination in northern Vietnam. Hanh worked with young Hmong girls who left their villages to come to Sa Pa to engage in tourist activities. Hanh's participant-observation involved spending a lot of time with them – eating, talking, walking, watching TV, going dancing, etc. When the girls were too busy selling, Hanh would be in cafes writing her field notes or trekking to the village to talk to their parents and grandparents.

Through her research, Hanh has been trying to understand how tourism development in Sa Pa impacts these girls' lives. She is also interested in the question of representation and ethnic relations, and is now working to weave all these different themes together in her dissertation. Hanh started her "serious" writing in the beginning of this year when she went to Australian National University under its Southeast Asian fellowship.

Toward the end of Hanh's time in Sa Pa, she received a small grant from the Toyota Foundation (administered by an old friend from the department, Rie Nakamura) to work on a project with Hmong girls in Sa Pa. Cameras were given out to the girls to document their worlds, and they produced over 4000 images, 200 of which will be exhibited in August 2003 at the Vietnam Museum of Ethnology. A book of 100 photos and the girls' narratives will also be published. "The girls really enjoy playing with cameras, and hopefully their pictures and stories will make the Vietnamese understand more about the Hmong culture and society, as well as the changes that they are going through."

Hanh has been able to do a fair bit of traveling in the nearly three years she has been away from Seattle. She has received various grants from organizations including the Social Science Research Council, the Ford Foundation, the American Museum of Natural History, and the Margaret McNamara Memorial Fund, as well as done some teaching and consulting work for development organizations.

"Overall it's been a very productive and enjoyable time of my life," Hanh says. "It's probably about time now to go back to the city of rain."



Voces de la Acequia A Chicano Heritage: Democracy by Irrigation

It might surprise you to learn that the oldest family farms in the U.S. are not in New England, but in New Mexico and Colorado. It might astound you to learn that these farms employ an irrigation system with ancient roots, which is also one of the oldest forms of local self-government, based on the technology and customary law of Arabic cultures.

Professor Devon G. Peña has spent the past fifteen years conducting collaborative research with Chicano acequia farmers in the Southwestern United States. The acequia is an ancient irrigation system based on the use of gravity-driven, earthenwork canals collectively owned and managed by local farmers. The word acequia is a Spanish term derived from the Arabic as-Saquiya, which translates as 'the water bearer.'

The acequia institution was originally introduced to Spain by the Moors during their 800-year occupation of the Iberian Peninsula. Spanish settlers brought the acequia to Mexico. Eventually, the Mexican people introduced acequias to the region that is now the American Southwest.

One of the underlying principles of customary law for water management in the acequias is the Islamic legal concept of "the right of thirst," which declares that all living things with thirst have a right to water. According to the Q'ran, human use and management of water must not deny plants and animals their equal share. The right of thirst remains a central principle for the management of modern-day acequias in Hispanic New Mexico and Colorado.

The persistence of the right of thirst, and other customary principles, is evident in practices adopted by Chicano farmers. This includes the preference for unlined, earthen-work irrigation ditches. The natural earthen banks of the acequias create dense corridors of riparian vegetation that is habitat for wildlife as well as edible and medicinal plants used by farmers and their families. Adherence to custom has led to conflicts with modern water law which views these practices as "wasteful," "inefficient," and "primitive." State agencies and the federal government constantly pressure Chicano farmers to "modernize" the system by cement lining acequias to reduce "loss" of water to vegetation.

Devon's research is a powerful repudiation of such ethnocentric criticism. His research demonstrates how the acequias provide critical environmental and economic base services to entire regions by protecting water quality, wildlife habitat, and open space. Acequias contribute to soil conservation and the preservation of heirloom crops adapted to local conditions.

There are more than 1000 acequias in New Mexico and Colorado. The acequia is not just a sustainable irrigation technology; it is also one of the oldest forms of local self-government. Following the customary rule of one farmer/one vote, each acequia elects a mayordomo ("ditch boss") to manage the ditch on a daily basis. Devon notes that "John Wesley Powell admired the acequias, calling them 'watershed commonwealths.' Chicano farmers recognize acequias are one of the last examples in America of indigenous institutions for local self-governance. These are true water democracies."

Further reading:

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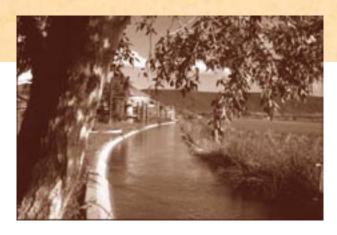


Acequia farmer irrigates field of heirloom crops



Organic heirloom peas from acequia farm in Colorado

Photography by Devon G. Peña



Anti-logging protest of Chicano farmers and environmentalists

background image Mountain ranch landscape in San Luis, CO



Keyes Receives Distinguished Graduate Mentor Award

Professor Charles Keyes received the 2003 Distinguished Grad-uate Mentor Award on February 14, 2003. The award recognizes faculty members who have made outstanding contributions to the education and guidance of graduate students. He was selected from 73 nominees.

Fondly known to all of us as "Biff," Keyes has served on 145 graduate student committees. In anthropology alone, he has chaired the committees of 42 students – a higher number than any other faculty member in the department since it was founded. Biff has given particular attention to mentoring Thai and Vietnamese anthropologists.

As extraordinary as these statistics are, numbers are not what make Biff an extraordinary mentor. As one student expressed in a letter of nomination, "His deep commitment to his students and his field goes beyond professional integrity to reflect the kind of person who thinks about others before himself, who shares deeply in the joys and struggles of each individual student, and who dedicates himself to making the world a better place with each life that he touches." It is with a great deal of pride that the department calls Biff one of our own.

Undergraduate Student News

Amanda Allpress has been conducting infectious disease research at Children's Hospital for the past four years. She has written a paper for publication and has co-authored several others. Among them is, "Risk Factors for Surgical Site Infections in Pediatric Cardiovascular Surgery Patients" which has been sent to the Pediatric Infectious Disease Journal. Amanda presented this paper at the Infectious Disease Society of America's annual conference in Chicago last fall. Amanda is also working on a study which is being overseen by Dr. James Green. Her self-designed study is entitled, "Predictors for Non-compliance of Doctors and Nurses with Do-not-resuscitate Orders". This summer Amanda will be starting a study involving afebrile seizures in symptomatic children. The data from this study will be used to write a National Institutes of Health grant application to launch a bigger study on the same topic. She hopes to attend medical school this year.

Stacey Erin Scriven, Brenda Louise Tausch, and Sebastian Thomas Lemire are in the pool of finalists for the Dean's Medal Award.

James Taylor was just awarded a competitive research training grant from the Mary Gates Endowment for Students. He will use his award to advance his training in oxygen isotope analysis of archaeological clam shell research. This will facilitate his analysis of the impacts of climate change on the late prehistory of Kodiak.

Graduate Student News

Scotty Moore is using departmental pilot study funding to investigate the relationship between climate change, stream dynamics, and prehistoric settlement in northwestern New Mexico this summer.



Staff in Focus

In March 2002, five years after completing her undergraduate degree in anthropology and classical studies at the UW, Catherine Zeigler returned to guide graduate students through the PhD program. As Graduate Program Assistant, Catherine coordinates and provides support to all the department's graduate program activities including recruiting and admissions; advising graduate students regarding university requirements, policies, and procedures; handling student placement and records management; and providing staff support to the Graduate Program Advisor and department Administrator.

As an undergraduate, Catherine worked for over three years in the Suzzallo Library Map Collection – work which fueled this Oak Harbor native's desire to see something of the world beyond the Puget Sound. Following graduation, she obtained a permit to work in the UK, where she lived in Swansea, Wales for six months. She worked alternately as a bartender, typist, and construction company office manager. In between odd jobs, she found time to volunteer at the Swansea Museum where her previous library experience helped her to catalog photographs taken of the blitz during World War II.

After trekking through as much of Europe as possible in one month, Catherine returned to the UW as a secretary for the Organization, Development, and Training Department at the University of Washington Medical Center (UWMC). There she helped oversee all new employee orientations and participated on the UWMC Recognition Team, a group that recognizes employees and their contibutions to the organization. Additionally, she served on the UWMC Service Awards Committee, the Employee of the Month Committee, and the Events Committee.

Outside of work, Catherine can be found playing soccer or enjoying the local Seattle music scene.

Former Burke Museum Director **Quimby Dies**

UW Professor Emeritus George Irving Quimby died at age 89. Quimby succumbed to a bout of pneumonia on February 17 at Northwest Hospital and Medical Center in Seattle. A revered anthropologist, he directed the University of Washington's Burke Museum of Natural History and Culture from 1968 to 1983. He was known for strengthening the museum's emphasis on the Pacific Northwest, and helped establish programs in American Indian Studies and Museology at the University of Washington. In addition, he helped the Makah Indians open a museum on tribal heritage in Neah Bay at the northwest tip of the Olympic Peninsula, and he worked to reconstruct a 1914 documentary on the Kwakiutl Indians. Quimby also wrote many articles for anthropology journals and several books about Native Americans. He was awarded an honorary doctorate in anthropology from Grand Valley State University in Michigan, and was given the Distinguished Service Award from the Society for American Archaeology. Professor Quimby is survived by his wife of 62 years, Helen; his daughter, Sedna Quimby-Wineland, of Boulder, CO; sons Ed Quimby, John Quimby and Robert Quimby, all of Seattle; and five grandchildren.



- 1 Assistant Professor Benjamin Fitzhugh
- 2 Professor Laura Newell
- 3 Associate Professor Bettina Shell-Duncar
- 4 Professor Robert Wenke
- 5 Professor Eugene Hunr
- 6 Research Assistant Professor Patricia Kramer
- 7 Assistant Professor Darryl Holman

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The Department of Anthropology recognizes and warmly thanks our donors. Without the private support of our alumni and friends, we would be unable to sustain many of our current activities. Your valuable gifts directly benefit our students, individual programs and general

operations. Whether directed to undergraduate awards for outstanding papers or to graduate student support for field research, these gifts - small and large - make such an important difference.

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ANTH 458 students, Spring Quarter 2003

Ethnobiology Class In the Community

Gene Hunn's ethnobiology class (ANTH 458) has taken on the development of an ethnobotanical garden at the Daybreak Star Center in Discovery Park, Seattle. Merlee Markishtum of the center staff visited class early in the quarter to describe their interest in collaborating with the class on this project, to be named the Bernie Whitebear Memorial Ethnobotanical Garden for the founder of the center and its institutional base, the Urban Indians of All Tribes Foundation. Students volunteer for committees responsible for landscape design, native plant lists, interpretive signs, educational outreach, and the publication of a guidebook to the garden. The site was recently cleared by a student work crew and the search is on for native plants to transplant on the site.

Jim Montgomery: original Timothy J.E. Turner: Spring 2003