Welcome back after the summer — which may already feel like it happened a long time ago. This Fall the Department has a different character with Professor Cool away on a year’s sabbatical and Professors Brison and George Gmelch teaching at other institutions for the term (they will return in the winter). We also have a new faculty member with us. Professor Ari Gandsman from McGill University is here for the year teaching courses on Latin America, human rights, violence, and other subjects. In the winter, we will also be joined by Professor Reg Byron, from Wales, who will be offering a course on kinship and the family. We’d also like to welcome Professor Peter Bedford, the new director of Religious Studies, to Union. He will be offering courses, such as Myth, Ritual and Magic this winter, which are cross-listed with anthropology.

Winter 2008 Anthropology Classes

Ant 110  Introduction to Cultural Anthropology  (Tierney)    TTH 10:55-12:40
Ant 125  Childhood in Anthropological Perspective  (Brison) MWF 11:45-12:50
Ant 139  Family and Kinship  (Byron)       TTH 10:55-11:40
Ant 148  Introduction to World Music  (Matsue) TTH 1:55-3:40
Ant 170  Myth, Ritual and Magic  (Bedford) TTH 1:55-3:40
Ant 186  The Political Economy of South Africa  (Fay) TTH 10:55-12:40
Ant 189  Asia in Motion  (Tierney)        TTH 1:55-3:40
Ant 229  Ruminations on Violence  (Gandsman) TTH 9-10:45
Ant 272  Psychological Anthropology  (Gandsman) MW 3:03-4:45
Ant 290  Thinking about Culture  (Brison) MWF 9:15-10:20
Ant 232  From Bombs to Buddhism  (Matsue) MWF 10:30-11:35
Ant 183T & 363T  Anthropology Field School  (G. Gmelch) In TASMANIA
Kyla Rudnick is in the Peace Corps in Ghana and also working on her graduate degree in Anthropology at Washington State University. Here is an interesting excerpt from the blog she is keeping about her experiences. To contact Kyla (kylarudnick@yahoo.com).

Saturday, February 17, 2007  Doves: A Symbol of Peace or a Scary Dinner

I know a lot of my entries have been about food I've eaten, and maybe I should write about something different, but this is one too good (or too bad) not to share... This past week I had a meal that was in one word, traumatizing. I'm in my room and 3 people from my community walk in to talk to me: Patrick, Mr. Paul, and Rebecca. Patrick was holding 2 doves, and Mr. Paul 2 yams. By the way they were 2 of the fattest tubers I've ever laid eyes on. They explained to me how it is their tradition that when a new person comes to stay in the village the chief gives them 2 doves and 2 yams. The reason they are giving them to me now is that the chief wasn't here when I arrived, he was only recently enskinned (the enskinment is another whole story on its own). [Note: It refers in part to the animal skin on which a chief sits.] Yes, I was again subjected to dancing in front of my whole village while people put money on my forehead. Anyway, Rebecca then told me she was going to prepare fufu with dove stew for dinner. I had anxiety all the way until dinner and with just cause. There really is nothing like hearing your dinner scream before you eat it, especially when the animal you will later ingest you used to consider a symbol of peace. So my bowl of food is served and what do I get? both legs, feet, claws and all, liver, intestines, which were surprisingly long for such a small bird, and I really don't care to know what else. Well, the fufu was good. The dove on the other hand... I'm still traumatized. I picked at it the best I could, I really tried, I even took a bite of the organs, but figured it was better left for the children to take care of. My life as a vegetarian was so much easier!

Kaitlyn Richard ‘04 on Orcas Island

Since graduating Kaitlyn Richards ‘04 has been living and working in the field of environmental education on Orcas Island in Puget Sound, Washington. The past summer she directed a Leadership Development program there for teens. (The photograph on the right shows Kaitlyn preparing to give kayaking instruction.) While at Union Kaitlyn participated in the anthropology field school in Tasmania where she studied eco-tourism and environmental awareness. She writes “I am so grateful for all the amazing experiences I had at Union...I draw on these experiences everyday and feel so blessed to have had them.” Kaitlyn recently moved to Missoula, Montana where she hopes to find work with a local non-profit. To contact Kaitlyn e-mail Kait_139@yahoo.com.
Sarah Tidman ’04 arrived in Armenia in May to begin two years in the Peace Corps. She spent the first three months in the town of Gargar where she received training in health care and continued to study Armenian which she had begun to study in the United States. She is now teaching health care (in Armenian not English) to mentally and physically disabled children in the town of Hrazdan (seen in the photograph above) which is near the capital of Yerevan. The other photograph shows her Armenian homestay family. Sarah participated in the Tasmania field school at Union and since graduating has also taught English in China. To contact Sarah e-mail her at sarahtidman3883@yahoo.com.

Pete Devine ’04 is now living in South Korea teaching English and as he says “loving it!” He lives in the city of Hongcheon in Gangwon-do Province which is the most northern and mountainous province in South Korea. Besides teaching English, Pete plays soccer with his students after school and during their physical education class. While in Korea, Pete hopes to do research on the effects of mandatory military service on young men: “This is a life changing event for so many men around my age and I believe that it has lasting affects on the men and eventually the women in this culture. After working in the rat race of business for three years my journey here is a big deep breath of fresh air.” While at Union Pete participated in the Fiji field school. To contact Pete e-mail devinep1019@hotmail.com.

The Anthropology Department had its second external review (which are conducted for the Middle States Accreditation Board approximately every 10 years) last Spring and received a very positive assessment. The three reviewers — distinguished anthropologists from Amherst, Yale, and Trinity College—especially praised the department’s field School terms abroad in Fiji and Tasmania (formerly Barbados).
New Faculty

Ari Gandsman

“I was born in the outskirts of Paris, France. Six months after I was born, my parents brought me to the United States. I spent my formative years in Rhode Island and Philadelphia and did my undergraduate degree at the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor. My original entrance point into anthropology was through archaeology. I had spent some time the summer before starting university volunteering on an archaeological dig in Israel. After taking several classes in archaeology, I was subsequently drawn to cultural anthropology as an umbrella discipline capable of uniting my disparate interests across the arts and social sciences. After graduation, I spent two years living in Brooklyn, New York working a variety of jobs including a brief stint at the Museum of Modern Art and a year working on numerous less-than-memorable independent film productions, of which the most noteworthy position was as a wardrobe assistant on a film featuring one of Woody Allen’s ex-wives. Deciding that I was more suited for graduate school than the world of low budget film, I enrolled at McGill University in Montreal, Canada in the Departments of Anthropology and Social Studies of Medicine. My MA was completed in 2001. For my dissertation research, I spent fourteen months in Buenos Aires, Argentina. My research focuses on a human rights organization’s use of genetic technologies to locate and reunite missing relatives who had been kidnapped during the country’s last military dictatorship (1976-1983). During my fieldwork, I interviewed family members, human rights activists, lawyers and mental health teams and I attended commemorative events, legal trials, and other human rights activities. My research unites my interests in political and medical anthropology. I submitted my dissertation this past summer and I am excited to be teaching at Union this year.”

Peter Bedford

Peter Bedford joined Union College in August as the new John and Jane Wold Professor of Religious Studies. An historian by training, he has anthropological interests, particularly in the anthropology of religion and economic anthropology. He welcomes discussions with students on any aspect of the academic study of religion.

One of his responsibilities is the development of a Major in Religious Studies to complement the Minor that has been available for many years. The major should be available from 2009. Prof. Bedford specializes in the history and religions of the ancient Near East. He will be teaching classes on Judaism, Christianity, Islam, and ancient Egypt and Mesopotamia. He will also teach Myth, Ritual and Magic (REL170/ANT170; offered in Winter ’08), a class that reflects his anthropological interests. It examines the interrelationships of myth, ritual and magic through case studies of what might be termed ‘esoteric’ aspects of religious traditions. Case studies include death and afterlife in ancient Egypt, shamanism, and Gnosticism.
Reg Byron

Reginald Byron is the former chair of the anthropology departments at the Queen’s University of Belfast, Northern Ireland, and the University of Wales, Swansea, UK. He has written numerous books on topics in social anthropology, including North Atlantic maritime communities, economic development, European emigration to the US and Canada, cultural mixing, intermarriage, and multiculturalism. He’ll be teaching Family and Kinship.

Faculty News

Karen Brison is at Hamilton College this term teaching Anthropology of Childhood as part of the Mellon exchange program which fosters the exchange of ideas between academic departments by giving people the chance to visit another campus for one term. According to Karen,

“The Hamilton anthropology department is very pleasant; they focus heavily on linguistics and on Asian countries so I have been having a good time talking with them about their research and courses.

“I spent the summer in Fiji along with anthropology majors Carly Aimi and Sara Melton, doing research in Fijian kindergartens. Fijian society is quite patriarchal and strongly divided along ethnic lines. At a national level, there are continual debates about ways to foster better relations between ethnic groups and ways to promote women’s rights while at the same time preserving the distinctive features of Fijian culture. We were observing the meaning of gender and ethnicity for kindergarten children with the idea that children actively interpret social categories and that the conclusions they come to can lead to social change in the long run. We found that children really emphasized gender as a category - that is, they preferred playmates of the same gender and often talked about "the boys" versus "the girls." But that the "content" of these categories was not strongly marked: boys liked to play "superhero" and "cops and robbers" kinds of games, but girls seldom played stereotypically female games and the preferred personality characteristics (obedience combined with toughness and independence) were the same for both boys and girls. Children seldom talked about ethnicity at all but did show an acute awareness of ethnic differences by immediately changing to English to accommodate children from different ethnic groups. I’m not sure yet what to make of all this but I do know that studying kindergarten age children is a blast!”

George Gmelch spent the summer in the Napa Valley conducting research on tourism and social change. This Fall he is teaching at the University of San Francisco and helping to develop an anthropology program there. He is looking forward to co-directing the department field program in Tasmania this winter with Professor Sharon Gmelch and Union students: Liana Appel, Samantha Bretton-Granatoor, Nakhshab Farhikhtah, Susan Griffith, Anne Hanson, Hilary Kasprzak, Katie Newingham, Emma Payette, and Liz Stanford.
Derick Fay, together with Deborah James of the Department of Anthropology, London School of Economics, has edited a collection of articles to be published in June 2008 by Routledge, entitled *The Rights and Wrongs of Land Restitution: ‘Restoring What Was Ours’*. Drawing on memories and histories of past dispossession, governments, non-governmental organizations, indigenous peoples, informal movements and individual claimants worldwide have attempted to restore and reclaim rights in land. *The Rights and Wrongs of Land Restitution* is unique in offering an ethnographically-grounded, comparative and critical examination of land restitution programs, presenting cases from eight countries on five continents. In the introduction, Derick and Deborah develop a comparative framework for understanding land restitution, highlighting the ways restitution draws together concerns with property, social transition, injustice and redress, citizenship and community, the state and the market. Rather than focus on the making of land restitution policy, the contributors focus on land restitution in practice, illustrating its intended and unintended consequences and the gaps between the imagined morality of restitution and the dilemmas of implementation.

Derick’s article, “Struggles over resources and community formation at Dwesa-Cwebe, South Africa” appeared in the June 2007 issue of *The International Journal of Biodiversity Science and Management*, as part of a special issue concerned with the state and future of community-based conservation programs. He is currently working on a paper for a panel entitled “The Political Ecology of Unsuccessful Protected Areas” which he’s organizing for the 2007 American Anthropological Association meetings. It is tentatively titled “Property Rights and Political Representation in Struggles over Protected Area Proposals in the USA and South Africa” and draws comparatively on his experiences living in Maine and Northern California as well as his fieldwork in South Africa.

Sharon Gmelch is presenting two papers in November. One will be presented at the American Anthropological Association annual meetings in Washington DC in a session called “The Inside Story: How the Natives View and Construe Tourism.” She will be presenting a paper on indigenous tour guides, their views of tourism, and the benefits—if any—they derive from it. This is based in part on on-going comparative research she is conducting with tour guides in Tasmania, Vietnam, Cambodia, Peru, India, and the USA.

The second presentation will take place at the Council for International Education Exchange meetings in Toronto. There she will be discussing the use of independent research on terms abroad as a way of creating student engagement with the local culture, highlighting Union’s Anthropology terms abroad. Her Hobart William Smith colleagues in the session will be discussing the uses of journals and photography to accomplish the same purpose.

Harish Sharma is a forest guide and naturalist from the village of Jotoli who works at the Bharatpur national park and preserve in India.