Greetings from the Anthropology Department!

As the fall term comes to a close, it seems appropriate to reflect on all the things that have happened to Union anthropology and anthropologists since the last newsletter. In terms of the Department, there are two important developments that are leaving their respective marks for this year and the future. First, following two years of the anthropological faculty “diaspora” across the Union campus, the Department has finally moved into its permanent quarters in the completely refurbished Lamont House, with our housemates, the Classics Department, the Philosophy Department, and the Religious Studies Program. It is good to be back in one location so that anthropologists actually run into each other on occasion and students know where to find us. Lamont House itself has turned out beautifully following the remodeling. The building was essentially gutted on the inside and then painstakingly rebuilt to provide handsome faculty and department offices, two beautiful meeting spaces for seminars and small classes, a small shared library and other storage/work spaces, and welcoming areas for faculty and students to sit, read the paper and have a cup of coffee, including the big porch on the front of the building that now comes complete with Adirondack chairs for enjoying life on the veranda. We invite everyone to come by and visit us in our new quarters.

The second development concerns the faculty: last spring, both Professors Liz Garland and Jeff Witsoe passed their first milestone, the third-year reappointment review. This year they are both taking well-earned sabbatical leaves pursuing their research and writing projects (which you can read about in detail later in this newsletter). Liz Garland will be away for the entire year and Jeff Witsoe will return to teaching in the spring term. Karen Brison is currently leading the anthropology term abroad in Fiji (details later in the newsletter) and will return in the winter term. So this fall, visiting professors Paul (con’t on page 2)
**From Jeffrey Witsoe**

I have been continuing my research in Bihar. In particular, I have been conducting ethnographic research on the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MNREGA). MNREGA, by far the largest jobs program in the world, is an extremely ambitious attempt to address India's growing inequalities by guaranteeing a right to work - 100 days at the minimum wage per household per year - to anyone willing to perform manual labor. My research focuses on how the provision of the right to work is actually translated into practice by focusing on the ways in which the political economy of villages - the structuring of local power by dominant castes, the class structure of the agrarian economy and the nature of linkages between the village and state institutions - impact the functioning of MNREGA.

photos: from a village meeting to allocate MNREGA projects, October 2012
 faculty News

Paul Christensen spent several weeks this summer in Tokyo and Kochi, Japan doing additional field research on alcoholism and recovery. His time in Kochi, a small city on the island of Shikoku in western Japan, was particularly fruitful as this was the site of the founding for one of Japan's major sobriety organizations. Paul is also teaching the "food course" (ANT-130 Food and the Self) this winter, where the anthropology of food will encounter a lot of in-class eating. Finally, he is working on a book manuscript and hopes to have a complete draft finished by the end of the academic year.

Asakusa shrine in Tokyo this summer

From Jennifer Matsue

This year promises to be especially busy for me on so many fronts. Over the summer I received an advance contract through Routledge for an innovative textbook on Japanese music, titled Focus: Music in Contemporary Japan, which I look forward to completing through Fall 2013. But I am also traveling to Amsterdam this October to give the keynote lecture “Drumming to One's Own Beat: Establishing a Tradition of Taiko Drumming in Kyoto” based on my fieldwork with drummers in Japan. I am most excited to interact with the drumming community in Europe, which I know little about so far. I am also eager to continue working (when I have the spare time!) on my monograph about the commodification of drumming in Kyoto.

Drumming has become a true passion of mine, and Zakuro-Daiko is a pleasure to direct. Last year we really matured as a group artistically and found ourselves performing at several venues off-campus. This year we will welcome a new crop of performers who through hard work and great energy will no doubt continue to add to the group. We will be participating in a major inter-collegiate percussion concert at RPI in the spring to celebrate Earth Day – so keep an eye out for more announcements about events later in the year.

We will also welcome world-renowned percussionist Kenny Endo to do a workshop with students in my Introduction to World Music Class this fall. Students can continue to pursue studies in Japanese music and culture in the winter when I will offer Popular Music of Modern Japan. And then round out the world music experience by taking my seminar on Music and Culture in the spring, which will no doubt feature reading, discussion and hands-on performance experience in musics from Asia, Africa and the African diaspora, and European based traditions.

I look forward to seeing many students, faculty and staff at the many world music and culture events on campus this year!

Jennifer Matsue
Director of Asian Studies
Music, Asian Studies, and Anthropology
Greetings from Fiji! I had an eventful summer although I spent far too many hours on airplanes. Last spring I returned to Papua New Guinea, where I did my doctoral research, for the first time in over 25 years. I traveled around the country visiting areas made famous by generations of anthropologists. I went to Milne Bay Province, where the Trobriand Islands (known through the work of Bronislaw Malinowski and Annette Weiner) and Dobu (studied by Reo Fortune) are located. I also visited Manus the site of classic work by Margaret Mead. I was amused and interested to find that “knowledge of anthropology” is far greater in Papua New Guinea than anywhere else in the world I have traveled, including Union College! Everywhere I went, as soon as I said I was an anthropologist, no further explanation was required. Many people responded by asking if I knew the anthropologist who had been in their village. I am also pleased to say that anthropologists seem to have made themselves loved and welcome. People generally followed up by noting that there used to be a lot more anthropologists in Papua New Guinea and encouraging me to come back and study their village. I discovered (or perhaps was reminded) that after her initial research in Manus, Margaret Mead returned many times and continued to help people from Peri, the village where she worked. She was concerned, for instance, that the population of Peri could not be supported by their small island and bought a large piece of land on the main island of Manus province for Peri villagers to live on. The villagers also seemed to be quite on top of the events of Mead’s life. When I suggested to one elderly woman that Mead must have died in the early 1980s the woman quickly supplied the year! I heard of many similar stories of anthropologists who returned every summer to visit their research sites and were clearly loved and valued by their informants. After returning briefly to Schenectady, I then went to a conference in Nairobi Kenya. The conference, on Pentecostal churches, was lively and interesting but by far the highlight of the trip was getting to see a giraffe fight at a national park. I encourage you to look up videos of giraffes fighting on YouTube. It was one of the most bizarre things I have ever seen. They walk around in synchrony, lining themselves up so they are side by side and then start rotating their necks till they build up a good head of steam and wack each other in the neck with their heads. Hope you are all having a good fall.
From George Gmelch and Sharon Gmelch

Two new and substantially revised second editions of the following books were published during the summer -- *The Parish Behind God's Back: The Changing Culture of Rural Barbados* (Sharon Gmelch and George Gmelch) and *Behind the Smile: the Working Lives of Caribbean Tourism* (George Gmelch). Two Union anthropology students, Pearl Jurist Schoen and Chelsea Tussing, assisted with the research in Barbados during the summer of 2010.

A 52-minute documentary *Unsettled: From Tinker to Traveller* about our research with Irish Travellers, an indigenous gypsy-like minority, was produced and broadcast on public television (RTE) in Ireland in April 2012. It was made by Irish filmmaker Liam McGrath, and follows us as we tracked down the families we had known when we conducted our first research among them in the early 1970s. Then most Travellers were nomadic, and we had lived for a year in a horse-drawn barrel-top wagon in a camp on the outskirts of Dublin while carrying out participant observation-based fieldwork. Today most Travellers are housed and their lives have been transformed. The documentary focused on our attempt to uncover the changes that have taken place and how Travellers feel about them. It received a near record--for a documentary film--30% audience share when it was shown prime time on RTE. The film is being shown at the annual American Anthropological Association meetings in November.

Sharon Gmelch was a guest editor of *Practicing Anthropology*, a journal published by the Society for Applied Anthropology, for a special issue on tourism research.

George will be teaching *Cultures through Film* and *Introductory Anthropology* on campus spring term and is looking forward to his return.

Professor Alvaro Jarrin highly enjoyed his first year as a visiting assistant professor here at Union. He was surprised by the enthusiasm of students, faculty and staff in welcoming him to campus and making him feel part of the community. In the Fall, Professor Jarrin brought Joshua Bastian Cole, a transgender activist and writer, for a lecture and a class presentation on campus, an event that was generously sponsored by Women's and Gender Studies, UNITAS, the Office of Campus Diversity and the Minerva Program. In the Winter, Professor Jarrin became more involved with UNITAS in order to promote diversity on campus, and was honored when the new LGBTQ student group on campus, Student Allies for Equality, asked him to become one of their faculty leaders. In the Spring, he attended the PossePlus Retreat, a wonderful experience where he got to know many students and their concerns, and traveled to San Francisco for a Latin American Studies Association conference. This past summer, Professor Jarrin returned to Brazil with the support of a Faculty Research Fund grant, in order to conduct new research on the polemic role of genomics within that country's affirmative action debate, and to present a paper on sexual reassignment surgery at the Queering Paradigms 4 conference. He looks forward to teaching a new course titled The Age of Biotechnology in the upcoming academic year, as well as to co-teaching a course called Entrepreneurship and Digital Media, funded by Michael and Jo-Ann Rapaport.
~ Sarah Keller ~
My senior thesis research question is, “In what ways has our culture changed in the last 50 years to allow for the emergence of psychopharmacological societies on college campuses”. In it, I will be examining the culture of diagnosis and prescription in our country as well as the consumption patterns of Adderall and Xanax among college students.

~ Tanya Alexander ~
As an ID major in Poli Sci and Anthro I’m combining both Anthropological and Political perspectives in my thesis. I am investigating the anthropological and political factors that have contributed towards the resilience of Middle Eastern monarchies during the Arab Spring. From the political perspective I will be mainly focusing on the options available for Monarchical governments to stay in power, whereas my Anthropological analysis mainly elaborates on the role of cultural factors (within each monarchical society) during the Arab Spring.

~ Nimi Jayaraman ~
I am doing a library-based research project on the phenomenon of photographing cultures and I am exploring the culture of visual anthropology.

~ Yuki Eito ~
I am studying American fans of Japanese anime and manga. In Japan, these fans are recognized as “otaku”, and they have a distinct culture, which is different from mainstream Japanese culture. They use their own terms and expressions to communicate with each other. In their consumption activity, they not only “consume the contents,” but are also active producers of derivative works, or contributors in the culture. They are, in the words of Henry Jenkins, textual poachers. Within Japan’s rich otaku culture, fans now do various fans’ activities based on their consumption of “moe” (“Moe” constitutes a euphoric response to a fantasy character from the contents. Moe is when used as an expressive statement whenever a character affectively moves fans. Then, how about American fans? Since I am an exchange student from Japan, and a fan of Japanese anime and manga, I will incorporate Japanese side of fan culture to see how American fans consume the contents and express their level of investment and enjoyment.

~ Simona Teixeira ~
I am writing my thesis on how different generations of Cape Verdean immigrants negotiate their identity. I am using theories on identity and diaspora and applying them to my interest group. Over winter break I hope to interview a large number of participants so I can apply these theories to my group and see if they apply.
Matthew Kelleher ’12
Anthropology Article, 21 October 2012

Everyday Use of Emic and Etic

As recipient of the 2012/13 Minerva Fellowship I have spent the last two months in the Southern Suburbs of Cape Town, South Africa. While here, I am staying with a Capetonian family and volunteering at a local primary school, a children’s home, and a non-profit organization that aims to facilitate discussion of social issues among teenagers of diverse backgrounds, with the ultimate goal of enacting positive social change within and among various communities.

I graduated last year from Union College with a major in anthropology, and many of the skills and concepts I learned during my education and term abroad have been invaluable in navigating and understanding the communities in which I work. When entering any community for the first time, you are a de facto stranger. Those who have taken Introduction to Anthropology will recognize this position in a new culture as an etic, or outsider's perspective. Over the past two months, the communities in which I volunteer have become more familiar and I have begun to approach the opposing emic, or insider's perspective. The concept of etic and emic are often used by cultural anthropologists to conceptualize and discuss how subjective or objective a human source is when speaking about a culture. Those on the outside are generally considered to have a more objective perspective because they are not enculturated into the community’s practices. However, the concept of etic and emic are not only useful for conceptualizing abstract ideas about objectivity, but also a very practical tool for any new member of a community to use in understanding how a community functions, what their role is in the community, and how improvements can be implemented.

My first week volunteering at Heatherdale Children’s Home was chaotic. I arrived there after spending the entire morning in an organized and structured school. The children’s home was bursting with activity: children were running around, playing rough, wrestling, and yelling in Afrikaans. The adults all tended to their jobs and there were clear divisions between the social workers, home parents, and the domestic and grounds workers. I - and the large group of European volunteers - were ignored while they conversed amongst themselves in Afrikaans. I had expected to play as specific a role as I did at the school, but instead I wandered around aimlessly talking with other volunteers and playing with the children who consistently asked me for piggy back rides and money to buy chips. I was wise enough to deny giving the children any money, but did not refuse the piggy back rides. After giving one, the rest of the children demanded their turn next - and sometimes I even had multiple children trying to climb on top of me at once. However, despite the apparent disorganization, I began to recognize that there was also an internal structure that was enforced by the older children in the home. It was socially acceptable for children to wrestle and even hit each other, but if any of the children were in distress, the older children would intervene immediately. The older home-brother and sisters also vigilantly look after and protect the younger children. Yet the first week went on in this chaotic fashion and by the end of the week, I was confused and frustrated. Being a clear outsider undoubtedly affected the way I was viewed and treated by the staff and the children.

By the end of the first month, very little had changed, though all the children now knew me by name, and I was now greeted by some of the home parents I conversed with when I arrived at the Children’s Home. The more time I spent there, the more familiar I became with the community and certain aspects of the way they functioned.

(con’t on page 8)
Matthew Kelleher ’12 (con’t from page 7)

I learned that the reason the staff was distant from most of the international volunteers was due to the fact that most were only in South Africa for one month stints and there was no program or infrastructure in place to utilize their constantly fluctuating and sporadic assistance. While discussing this issue with a person that organizes international volunteers, the term “VolunTourism” was used to describe short-term volunteers that are more focused on sight-seeing and tourist activities than meaningful involvement with communities. Therefore, the inherent power difference between nationals from the political and economic dominant global north and those from the less wealthy and developing countries of the global south played a tangible role. As a result, volunteers are often seen as outsiders and even intruders.

Another aspect that helped me relate to the people of this community was trying to overcome the language barrier. Everyone speaks English but they usually use Afrikaans when speaking to each other, so I started to learn to understand Afrikaans and borrowed a dictionary and books from the school. At the end of the two months I could comprehend enough to understand the topics of conversations. This effort to understand their home language helped me to move closer to an insider’s perspective and demonstrated to the people that I was committed to trying to help their community.

This perspective allowed me to understand the internal stratification at the home. I began to notice that there were clear divisions between the social workers: those who performed administrative work were better compensated, and worked average business hours, while the home parents, who care for the children, were paid less, and had to work three-day shifts at a time. This difference would often be exacerbated by social workers asking at the last minute for a home parent to cover an extra shift, putting greater strain on the home parent and creating tension between the two groups. At the same time, the domestic and grounds workers who cook, clean, and maintain the grounds, seemed to be wholly ignored by the social workers. Being keenly aware of the difference between the staff allowed me to make an effort to interact and converse with all members of the staff. Working with the children, I spend most of my time interacting with the home parents, so I make sure that I go out of my way to be friendly with both the domestic and ground workers. Also being aware of the stratification between the social workers and the home parents allowed me to sympathize with the home parents about their stressful and underappreciated work. Having a rapport with the home parents and learning Afrikaans has given me more options to work with the children and makes it easier to get support from the staff when I want to organize activities for the children. As an outsider, I was able to identify these differences between groups, and use that knowledge to help me navigate and create personal relationships with the staff.

Now that I have been at the Children’s Home for two months, I have been able to differentiate myself from the average volunteer. I have built relationships with the children and staff and have been able to play a meaningful role by acting as a mentor to the children, playing chaperone for trips, and helping the staff organize and set up for events.

Even though my position as an outsider makes working and integrating into with a community difficult, I can use my etic, or outsider view to get an understanding of how a community functions. I can use this observational knowledge as a common ground to avoid exacerbating problems in the local community, to build personal relationships, and possibly present and implement solutions to issues, such as not utilizing the short term and sporadic labor force of volunteers.

The cultural anthropological idea behind emic and etic, is that these perspectives can be used to address concepts of objective versus subjective views. It is an important idea that can be implemented in every day interaction with a new community to conceptualize one’s place relative to the new community. Additionally, this concept uses the knowledge gained from the outsider, or etic point of view to create an understanding that fosters important personal interaction, and contributes to community that you are entering.

Please feel free to contact me at mattk89@gmail.com if you have any questions.
Sanibona! [Hello!]

I have been in Durban, South Africa for almost 3 months out of my 9-month Minerva Fellowship, every day of which I have thought to myself about how studying anthropology was the best decision I have ever made.

Durban, located in the province of KwaZulu - Natal, is the epicenter of the HIV/AIDS epidemic and has the highest prevalence of the disease in the world. As a fellow based in McCord Hospital, my primary role has been to help coordinate and manage the activities of a few age-specific psychosocial support programs for HIV infected and affected children. The programs are funded through the non-profit organization The Gift of Hope, which previously funded HIV treatment for children and mothers but due to recent changes in international funding, the organization's focus has changed as well to provide children with psychosocial support, as this is not accessible through government clinics at this time. Therefore, I have also had the opportunity to help The Gift of Hope during this time of transition and with their future plans and projects.

My fellowship requires me to dip into practical tools used in anthropology. For the projects I have been involved with thus far I have been transcribing interviews, documenting narratives, and doing qualitative analyses. I also often find myself either in the middle of a group of children or behind the camera taking photos of them, so I have to apologize for not having a proper photo of myself!

What stands out to me the most through from my time here is how necessary an anthropological mindset is to healthcare, development, and certainly everyday life. South Africa is unique in that it has separate cultural and racial groups due to the nation's political history so it requires flexibility in understanding. Additionally, I have personally heard from clinicians and nurses working in rural areas how important it has been for them to be culturally sensitive and adapt programs to work with the local community in order to be successful in the field.

Anthropology has been crucial to my short time here already and I imagine things would have been much more difficult for me had it not been my major at Union. I cannot thank the department enough for all that they have taught me!
Jessica Sarrantonio ’12
It has been almost four months since I have moved to Bagru, India. While here I am the business manager of Bagru Textiles, a social enterprise that is trying to directly connect artisans with international consumers, while ensuring fair wages and market transparency. What is more interesting for the Anthropology Department’s newsletter is that I am also trying to immerse into the local culture. Cultural immersion has proven to be one of the most mentally and emotionally challenging tasks that I have ever undertaken. Even after learning basic Hindi and studying Indian politics, cultures, and religions, I still find myself frustrated and perplexed by some of the cultural differences that lie between them and me. As I try to understand these differences I appreciate more the importance of reflexivity, an ethnographic method that focuses on the effect that a researcher's personality and presence could have on an investigation. Instead of using reflexivity for research I use it to understand my own reactions to my experiences and to understand how my presence in Bagru may cause locals to behave differently from how they would behave if I were not in here. Questions such as, “Why do I become upset when I see young women who are destined to become housewives? Why do I become frustrated when my appointment with a fabric distributor starts three hours late? Why am I treated differently from local women?,” are easier to understand when I am as honest as possible about who I am and what assumptions I am making. A reader’s impression, whether he is reading an ethnography or a blog post about a foreign culture, is drastically impacted by the reflexivity of the writer. To stay up to date on my experiences, please visit my blog at http://jessicasarrantonio.tumblr.com/.

Melissa Mcdonald ’10
I’m half way through my first semester in the UNC Chapel Hill MA Russian and East European Studies program, which is a two-year program. I am continuing Russian language study and taking a course with native speakers titled Russian Culture in Transition. I also started studying Serbo-Croatian here and am on a FLAS fellowship to study the language and Balkans region. I intend to write my thesis on organized crime through professional sports in Russia and Eastern Europe. I am working with other students and the head of a Moldovan NGO on aid projects, to host a panel on Moldova, and participate in Slavic Conferences.

with the Ukrainian Ambassador to the U.S., Oleksandr Motsyk.
Kelsey Golitz ‘10

On October 5th, I finished my 26th and hopefully last cycle of chemotherapy for Ewing's Sarcoma. It was a long and very tiring battle, but it feels amazing to finally be done. I now only have to go back every 3 months for check ups to get an MRI and CT scan to make sure that the Ewing's Sarcoma hasn't returned. My next check up is at the end of January. I underwent 3 extensive surgeries in January and I am still recovering from them. I am currently walking with one crutch and attend physical therapy twice a week to work on strengthening my left hip/butt. I will be on crutches until my cadaver bone fuses with my actual pelvic bone. Right now there hasn't been any fusion, but I have also been on chemo, so my bone marrow has not been producing the cells that it should. I hope to see some fusion in the next 3 months so that I can kick these crutches goodbye. Other than this terribly long journey my life is really good. I am living in Boston with 3 Union grads (Amy Frankenthaler, Katherine Rodman and Jen Hagopian). I was living with Laura Schwartz up until September 1st when she moved to DC to attend Georgetown to get her PhD in Philosophy.

Kelsey Golitz ‘10

ANT 110-01 Introduction to Cultural Anthropology Gmelch,G MWF 10:30-11:35
ANT 110-02 Introduction to Cultural Anthropology Gmelch,G MWF 1:50-2:55
ANT 111 Cultures Through Film Gmelch,G M 7:00-10:00 pm
ANT 210 The Anthropology of Poverty Witsoe MWF 3:05-4:10
ANT 214 Language and Culture Brison MWF 8:00-9:05
ANT 243 Anthropology and International Development Witsoe T Th 10:55-12:40
ANT 280 Contemporary India Witsoe T Th 1:55-3:40
ANT 281 Anthropology of Mediterranean Europe Cool MWF 11:45-12:50
ANT 283 Peoples and Culture of Latin America Jarrin MWF 9:15-10:20
ANT 363 Qualitative Research Methods Brison MWF 10:30-11:35