~From the Chair~

The academic year 2011-2012 has brought changes to the Anthropology Department. And, of course much remains the same: our senior majors are “happily” moving ahead with their theses, many of our junior majors currently are participating in terms abroad or are anticipating their departures to far-flung places and new adventures, mid-term exams have come and gone, and we are now settling in for the research and term paper-writing that will fill the remaining, shorter days of the fall term.

Many of the changes involve department staff. Karen Brison is on leave for much of this academic year pursuing her research on the Pentecostal movement and its cultural manifestations in Africa, South America, and the South Pacific. George and Sharon Gmelch continue to divide their time between the University of San Francisco and Union and will be leading the Department’s newest term abroad in Tanzania this coming winter term. The Gmelchs developed the Tanzanian term with Liz Garland over the summer. Liz Garland, of course, regrets not being able to lead the term abroad herself, but was able to do some important follow-up research in Tanzania during the summer. Jeff Witsoe returned to India for several months to continue his research on politics and elections. Perhaps, most importantly for the Department and for Jeff, we were able to extend to him the offer of a tenure-track position, which, I am delighted to say, he accepted. This provides much needed stability for the Department…and for Jeff – congratulations! I have succeeded Karen as chair of the Department and am continuing my research on the retirement experience in higher education and the future of Medicare, the embattled federal program that provides baseline health insurance for retirees in this country.

We are also delighted to welcome two new faculty members to the Department who are joining us on three-year visiting positions. Paul Christensen has come about as far as an American can come to join us: he completed his doctorate in anthropology at the University of Hawaii in Manoa. Paul will be offering courses on contemporary Japan, sports and society, addiction, and introduction to cultural anthropology. His own research has focused on issues of alcoholism and addiction in Japan. Alvaro Jarrin joins us via Duke University where he completed his doctorate in anthropology, and more recently, from Brazil where he is continuing his research on cultural constructions of beauty and their relationship to nationalism and social class. Alvaro will be offering courses on gender, Latin America, technology and society, medical anthropology, and introduction to cultural anthropology.

In short, it looks like a great year for the Department and for our students. I invite current students to look carefully at our exciting and varied winter term course offerings as you plan your schedules. Don’t hesitate to contact us with any questions you might have. I also encourage you to read about the exciting “real” world out there where our alumni are having impressive impacts, both at home and abroad. Please stay in touch - we always look forward to hearing from you!

Linda Cool
Molly B. Koch ’07
I graduated from Union in 2007. Post graduation my best friend and Union classmate and I, Caitlin Milbury (’07), ventured to Fiji, New Zealand and Australia where we traveled and worked abroad for a year. Currently I live in Beacon Hill and work in Boston for AOL advertising.
(below: Molly, left, and Caitlin, in the south island of New Zealand)

Jeff Hyde ’09
I live in Watertown, right outside of Boston, where I work full time at a B2B trade publication for the beverage industry. I interned here during college and I partake in many delicious beverages. I am considering furthering my education at some point. Life is good.

Eliza Duquette ’11
Siem Reap is a strange cultural bubble that allows us to slip back into our American ways with just a short, two-minute bike ride across the river. Alluring boutiques, tasty Western restaurants, and thumping dance clubs sing their siren songs and attract an interesting mix of dirty Western backpackers, jaded Ex-pats, Japanese or Korean tourists, street children, drug addicts, tuk tuk drivers, and general local Cambodians. The US dollar, the exchange rate to Cambodian Riel being 1 to 4,000, is thrown around like Monopoly money. It sometimes feels like a Cambodian version of Disneyworld, premeditated and made for consumption by foreigners. Thus unlike most of the other fellowships, we often feel like a visitor, tourist, stranger in our own town -- like a constant stage of liminality— and sometimes wonder when we will get to actually break in to the “real” Cambodia.

But this is not the case for The Global Child. TGC is our window into Cambodia, our community, our key informants, our home. After three months, we have finally earned the trust and affection of TGC students and staff alike. I cannot help but grow a fat smile on my face, the edges of my mouth constantly sore, everyday as I teach my youngest class of nine students. Their unquenchable thirst for English and limitless stores of energy and excitement for the little things in life is both exquisitely inspiring and heartwarming, and hopefully I’m returning the feeling. Our social entrepreneurship is of a different brand—we’re not building bridges or microfinance programs, we are attempting to build inspiration, companionship, courage, strength, smiles within our students, an immeasurable and difficult feat in itself, but long-lasting and durable change.

Although we have passed our 1/3 mark of time here, Carolyn and I in many ways have only just scratched the surface of Cambodia, or TGC for that matter. There is so much we have yet to discover and learn, especially about the people closest to us— our students. We’ve had an appetizer, but I’m ready for the main course. I’ll be sure to save you a bite for you to enjoy in a few months!
Carolyn Canetti ’11

Susiday!  [Hello!]

Here I am in Cambodia- 3 months into my 9 month Minerva Fellowship. Thanks to anthropology, I’ve probably only made half of the cultural blunders I would have made otherwise.

“In the field” of Siem Reap, Cambodia: a tourist town seething with poverty and a culture void of a generation of intellectuals to educate the youngest generation, I’m not here to do anthropology fieldwork. But, upon arrival, I naturally brought out a small notebook everywhere with me: habit courtesy of Professor George Gmelch.

Anthropology has helped me in all aspects: starting with the most basic attempt at being a participant observer. Though Khmer people are helpful to indulge you in their cultural norms. It’s their biases and latent culture that I have to pick up on my own. It was easy to discover the every day customs: leave shoes outside, knock on door before entering, put your hands together at your chest when saying hello. But the hidden aspects I continue to learn every day: how to ask questions or make suggestions without being direct, or the seemingly unappreciative way our students show affection and gratitude [please and thank you was not drilled in their minds]. But more than that, learning the Khmer language has helped me to teach English, since I now understand the differences in sentence structure and lack of verb conjugation.

Amateur me didn’t do any prior research or literature review before entering the field [Professor Cool may be kicking me from Schenectady]. But I’ve enjoyed the first couple of months “thinking like an anthropologist,” thinking like my self and making my own first, second, and third impressions and judgments. So many anthropology books make note of key informants that are researchers “in” into society, but here in a city setting, I can be as anonymous as I please, and blend in with the rest of the volunteers and tourists. I do wonder how different my experience would be in the countryside of Cambodia. All is well so akohn cheeran, hi nung chup kinear chap chap! [Thank you very much and see you soon]

Alyse Dunn ’11

I am currently getting my master's in marketing communication and advertising at Emerson College! I will be done in only one year, which is great! Also, the study of anthropology is a huge help to anyone interested in pursuing marketing!

(left, at the Temple of Luxor, Egypt)

Tamar Soroker ’09

I am currently in my second year of law school at the University of Florida. This past summer I worked for the Legal Department at the Florida Department of Health, Miami-Dade County Health Department. I also volunteered at a housing clinic and assisted in providing legal advice to low-income individuals in the area. I have really enjoyed my experience thus far and hope to work for a government agency in New York post-graduation.
**ALUMNI NEWS con't**

**Atiba Rougier ’06**

After Union I spent two years in corporate America [Alitalia Airlines and Ralph Lauren] before moving to San Francisco for graduate school [Philosophy and Religion]. Whilst in graduate school, I took courses in the social and cultural anthropology department which focuses on post colonial studies, subaltern studies, Marxist theory, and feminist theory. One of my professors, Angana Chatterji, is currently doing work in Kashmir, she started and facilitates work with the peoples tribunal there to voice crimes against humanity by the Indian paramilitary forces based in Kashmir. I am currently awaiting a response in regards to my PhD application--I am considering a degree in Philosophic Anthropology.

**~Jessica Nagourney**

I am researching why special education programs have a large number of minority students, and if they actually need to be there. Research has shown that minority students are often mistakenly placed in these programs because their teachers do not understand their culture. I am interested in the teacher’s perspective, as well as how their teaching style is formatted to accommodate these students appropriately.

**~Jessica Sarrantonio**

During the past six months I have had the opportunity to study abroad in India and in Australia. Once I found out that I would be participating in both of the programs I did some brain-storming with Linda Cool about how I can work this into a senior thesis. During both programs I have been interviewing my peers about their term abroad experiences and I have been keeping a journal of my own experiences. With this information I am gaining an understanding as to what happens when you take a student out of their own country and place them into a foreign country. I am trying to understand if what the student hopes to gain from their international experience is actually fulfilled. Since I have been doing this for two programs this is comparative and I have personally found that studying abroad in a host country where English is not the primary language is both similar and different from studying in a place where there is no language barrier.

**~Carly Moran**

My senior thesis is a study across the disciplines of anthropology and psychology. Through my research I am examining discipline styles in preschool teachers in areas of higher/lower socioeconomic status. I am hoping to find if there is a difference in what teachers value as "misbehavior" and if there is a difference in these values between social classes.

**~Kaileigh Moore**

I am studying the linguistic differences between male-led and female-led tours of the college campus. I will be shadowing the Union gatekeepers as well as tour guides on other local campuses over the next 2 terms.
Using Photography to Study Change among Irish Travellers

This summer Sharon Gmelch and George Gmelch spent a month in Ireland revisiting Irish Travellers—an indigenous nomadic group—40 years after their first research with them. Their new research involves using photographs taken in the 1970s as prompts to get Travellers to talk about and reflect on the changes that have occurred in their lives in the intervening 40 years. Anthropology majors Aisling Kearns (Union) and Carolyn Hou (Smith College) accompanied the Gmelches to Ireland to assist them with their research. For three weeks a film crew from Irish television also accompanied them to make a documentary about this new research and the lives of Irish Travellers today. In October, the Gmelches returned to Ireland for an additional week of filming.

(Pictures: top right, Sharon interviews Irish Travellers; right, Aisling Kearns; left, George speaks with Spring Lane Traveller site resident Mr. McCarthy)

New Field School in Tanzania

This summer, Professors Liz Garland, Sharon Gmelch, and George Gmelch traveled to Tanzania to set up the Anthropology Department's new field school in Moshi, located on the lower slopes of Mount Kilimanjaro. The field program—which focuses on the environment, culture and tourism—will be offered for the first time this winter term when it will be directed by the Gmelches. Students will study Swahili, live with local families, and carry out internships with various NGOs in Moshi as well as learn about Tanzania society and research methods through field trips and course work. "One of the personal pleasures of Tanzania this summer," says George Gmelch, "was getting to see the setting in which Liz conducted her research and meeting some of the people she had taught with at Mweka College."

(Pictures: left, Liz speaks with a resident of a village outside Moshi, Tanzania; right, George at waterfall outside Moshi, Tanzania)
Faculty News con’t

From Jeffrey Witsoe
Last summer, I spent three months doing fieldwork in India. I started a new project that examines India’s rise from the vantage point of its poorest state, Bihar. The project asks the question: Is India’s rise resulting in certain groups of people and regions (i.e. software engineers in Bangalore) entering into central positions within the global economy while the rest of the country is essentially being left behind? Or, conversely, are the reverberations of India’s rise being felt across the country. This work builds on past and current research that I have done on migration from Bihar to urban manufacturing centers in other states, the relationships between political change and development, research examining the use of technology in development projects (Bihar is pioneering the use of biometrics, for instance), the effects of deregulating agricultural markets (as part of a larger project at the Center for the Advanced Study of India, University of Pennsylvania) and research on “mafia” groups that control natural resource extraction, especially the so-called “sand mafia.” Theoretically, the project will examine the ways in which global transformations associated with the rise of India, China and other emerging powers modify anthropological frameworks for understanding development, postcolonialism, democracy, and neoliberalism. I have also been working with the Bihar government as part of an effort to remove corrupt middlemen from India’s two largest rural development projects - the massive National Rural Employment Guarantee Act and a project providing free housing to the rural poor.

WINTER 2012 “NEW COURSE “DESCRIPTIONS

ANT245-01 Sport, Society & Culture (MWF 8:00-9:05 Christensen, P)
The comparative study of the role of sport in society; the evolution of sport; sport and socialization; ritual in sport; sport and gender; sport and race; sport and education; sport, conflict and violence; and sport and cultural change.

ANT248-01 Sustainable Culture (TTH 9:00-10:45 Garland, E)
This year, the focus of Sustainable Culture will be on WATER the basis of life on earth. As much as 40% of the world’s population faces chronic shortages of safe drinking water, and yet in other contexts it is the abundance and sheer power of water that proves disastrous for human life. Water is habitat, nutrient, symbol, commodity, bellwether, object of political struggle, management challenge - often all at the same time. In this course, we will investigate the world of water from a range of perspectives, exploring the cultural meanings, ways of life, economic and ecological processes, and managerial challenges associated with this most fundamental natural resource.

ANT283-01 Peoples & Cultures of Lat Amer (MWF 1:50-2:55 Jarrin, A)
Examines the peoples and cultures of Latin America in historical and contemporary perspectives. Uses case studies, accompanying articles, and a range of media. Themes include: colonialism, identity politics, expressive culture, religion, gender, race, ethnicity, nationalism, and political economy.