

volunteered individually, and when special issues were published that they have a broader, more regional approach.

In light of the difficulties with the editorial succession, Mannheim proposed that we name Rahier's successor as early as possible so that current and future editors could communicate and hand off editorial responsibilities for manuscripts and production as efficiently as possible. Mannheim nominated Kay Warren as editor-designate and the board approved a committee to interview Warren about her ideas for the journal. The committee members include Rudi Colloredo-Mansfeld, Bruce Mannheim and Jeanne Simonelli.

The board agreed on the urgency of putting together a slate of candidates for the election of new councilors for the board. Mannheim agreed to consult with the AAA about the procedures required for special election materials.

Mannheim sought approval from the board to develop a proposal on behalf of the SLAA membership that sought to have the AAA take a positive stance on the inclusion of foreign language publications in tenure reviews. The board supported the idea.

Beth Conklin reported on behalf of the program committee for this year's Annual Meeting. She noted a strong number of submissions for both volunteered and invited sessions. The program committee worked especially hard to find co-sponsorship for the invited sessions so as to expand the number of available slots, although even with their work, co-sponsored sessions still had a hard time finding space in the program.

The board approved a new program committee for the 2003 meetings that would include: Beth Conklin, Jeanne Simonelli and Gabriela Vargas-Cetina.

JLAA moves to Miami

Richard Fantina, JLAA Managing Editor

We'd like to inform all AAA members, and especially SLAA members, of recent changes at the *Journal of Latin American Anthropology (JLAA)*. JLAA is now located at Florida International University under the editorship of Jean Muteba Rahier, who is an associate professor of anthropology and African-New World Studies. JLAA moves to FIU after three years at Northwestern, where Mary Weismantel served as editor. Jean wants to let potential authors know that JLAA is now accepting new submissions. He is especially interested in the results of original fieldwork (ethnographic or archeological) or original research in archives that presents a substantial theoretical contribution to the field. He welcomes manuscripts dealing with all aspects of Latin American anthropology, including the sometimes neglected area of the Caribbean. JLAA is currently in the process of updating the website at www.fiu.edu/~jlaa. The new mailing address is: Journal of Latin American Anthropology, Florida International U, 3000 NE 151 St, AC1 381, North Miami, FL 33181; tel 305/919-5457; fax 305/919-5896; jlaa@fiu.edu.

Please send short articles and photos that could be of interest to our readers, care of Gabriela Vargas-Cetina, facultad de antropología, universidad autónoma de Yucatán, Calle 76 #455-LL, Mérida, Yucatán, México; tel and fax [52]999/925-4523; gvargas@webtelmex.net.mx or gabriela_vargas_cetina@hotmail.com.

Society of Lesbian and Gay Anthropologists

BARB WEST, CONTRIBUTING EDITOR

Doing Fieldwork: Coming to Terms with "Self"

By David LR Houston (U of Vermont)

I set out to "do fieldwork" on Vermont's Civil Union law never really expecting, or even wanting, it to be anything other than what I thought it was *supposed* to be: go, gather data, analyze results, and write it up, end of story. I anticipated a typical transformation during the experience: ideas and results changing over the course of the project. As is so often true, conclusions do not always follow from the original premise; there is an element of surprise or novelty. But I was not prepared for the ensuing bifurcation.

Venturing out into the field was unnerving. I had limited experience and only an abstract understanding of what this "community" of gays and lesbians should look like. I had all the usual stereotypes carefully cordoned off for inspection and rejection. Excepting New Delhi, India, I grew up in smallish towns: no visible queer folk there, no large-scale urban experience to draw from. The largest city in Vermont had but a single hangout for this elusive community, no strip of seedy nightspots frequented by the marginalized, often invisible residents of a medium-sized city.

Relevant social experiences were also distinctly limited. Life was a process of raising children, going to work, and doing the things of an average, unremarkable urban life. The internal identity struggle lay dormant for a long time, glimpsed only occasionally in the rare encounter with like-minded others at retreats or occasional parties. While I did not have any expectation that fieldwork would (or could) be a catalyst for change, a catharsis of self-understanding, I did have deeply buried fear.

The Civil Union bill addressed a named segment of the Vermont population: same-sex couples. The law never used the term "gay" or "lesbian," yet the intent was unmistakable. This bill granted the same benefits to same-sex couples as those currently enjoyed by married couples (unambiguously identified as opposite-sex partners). The informants I needed to find and befriend were well informed and engaged with their communities, which for me were largely invisible. I knew that I would not be developing deep, lifelong friendships with similarly developed adults like myself (whoever that was). The law clearly defined the players, casting me between two worlds. I began to realize that I did not feel safe in, nor did I belong to, either of those worlds.

I had not lived public repression, had no lived experience of discrimination because of who I was. Much as I was able to appreciate the ostracism, venom and judgments in an abstract sense, these were not my own experiences at all. I had fully and completely internalized myself, abandoning all of the aspects of any part of me that did not fit with the normative expectations of family, society and acceptability. And just as I had done throughout my entire life, I managed, throughout the entire fieldwork process, to stay well hidden, invisible to everyone (including myself), seen and understood only as a researcher "doing fieldwork" (whatever *that* was) and developing a set of ideas and analyses to be scrutinized, chopped up and spit out by others.

But fieldwork alters lives. The anthropologist is changed: his or her attitudes, ideas, and feelings shift and mutate, sometimes deeply and powerfully, sometimes subtly and slowly. The "field"—all the people, the places—changes too, not usually in ways that foment social upheaval, but in gentle, subtle ways. The collection of "other" that is studied is left, in the end, with their lives and loves much as they had started. Their lives continue to unfold just as they did before the anthropologist arrived. Sometimes this same collection does have a deeper understanding of how they have changed each other, or of how the closely lived *habitus*, the heart, and the mind of that strange person from afar is touched in magical ways. Rarer still are those special encounters that provide a much deeper, more profound opportunity for the anthropologist to achieve a self-realization that moves beyond publications and recognition, but instead reaches inside and asks the really difficult questions about self that are too often swept aside in the river of our lives. Two years later my fieldwork and research is complete, but I am still struggling to answer those questions.

To join the SOLGA listserve please send an email with Subscribe SOLGA in the body to listserv@American.edu If you have a fieldwork story of your own to tell contact me at bwest@uop.edu.

Society for Linguistic Anthropology

JAMES STANLAW AND MARK PETERSON,
CONTRIBUTING EDITORS

To Be (Online) or Not to Be (Online) . . . Is THAT the Question?

The editors of the *Journal of Linguistic Anthropology* recently asked the SLA membership on its listserve to give their opinions about moving book reviews online. The response, to say the least, has been heavy and passionate. As other associations with journals are no doubt having similar debates, we thought it might be worthwhile to share what has been said so far among the linguistic anthropologists in the AAA. The following are the points that have been made most frequently:



Linguistic anthropology student Lisa Burns ponders over whether to check book reviews from the *Journal of Linguistic Anthropology* online or in hard copy.

The Case for Online Book Reviews

- The most obvious reason for "online book reviews" (ONBRs) is cost (which is another way of saying space). Page and postage expenses are increasing dramatically; if book reviews do not go online, something else will (or will have to be eliminated).
- With ONBRs, a quicker turn-around time can be offered. No longer will authors need to wait a year and a half from the time their new book is initially released to see them reviewed.
- More reviews could be offered, as well as different kinds of reviews (e.g., longer book review essays, simultaneous multiple reviews of the same book, pro and con reviews, authors' responses).
- ONBRs would be more widely read and shared because of Web accessibility and technology. Anyone in the world could read these reviews, giving greater exposure to both book authors and book reviewers. Search engines make things easy for even novice students. And you only need to print out what you need ("Look at all those shelves of unread journals sitting in offices whose future is only the landfill").
- The AAA will support and maintain the website; do not trust libraries, which are as anxious to get rid of their paper products as the morning newspaper boy (or girl).
- It is up to us readers, reviewers and editors to establish high professional standards. ONBRs will be real publications when we collectively decide that they are.
- "You gave up your old LP records didn't you?" said one commentator. Unless we embrace new technology, we will never be able to fully utilize the possibility of not only doing old things in new ways, but of doing wholly new things (e.g., incorporating hypertexts, audiovisuals, etc).

The Case Against Online Book Reviews

- Simply put, things online are not taken as seriously as things in print. ONBRs would be another transient product; they will likely be casually prepared (and wordier if not constrained by space limitations). Authors and

reviewers "deserve first class exposure, as they get little else" (and who wants to see a lot of URLs on one's vita?).

- Who will be maintaining the ONBR archive in 20 years? In 200 years? The way websites currently fade away does not inspire confidence, and if a site does become defunct, how will the ONBRs then be accessed?
- Who will pay for the archive? Will the access fee next year be the same as this year? ("Fat chance!"). At least now, once the library owns something, they will not have to re-buy again later.
- How can we safeguard accessibility to ONBRs in the future? The PDF format seems like a potential standard at the moment, but who knows what future changes will take place in technology. Who will convert all the old documents into the new format, and who will pay for it? Remember BETA? Or fieldnotes saved on reel-to-reel tapes? Or articles written on 5 ¼" or 3 ½" floppy disks? Because of technology and access issues, fieldwork archives and recordings disappear all this time (or get forgotten about); why would we expect anything less for ONBRs?
- At the moment, and at least for the immediate future, the convenience and aesthetics of the printed medium cannot be duplicated by a computer screen or a mountain of uncollated sheets of paper. Anything of import on the computer eventually has to be printed out anyway.
- As for cost, don't printers use ink and paper too? Isn't the whole idea behind mass-producing something to make it more cost and time effective?
- Regarding "landfill" one commentator said this: "Everything of ours will go in a landfill, including us . . . but the campus library won't."

Besides just cost, it is clear that there are many subtexts going on in this discussion (e.g., the symbolic primacy of one medium over another, insuring the preservation of documents, exploiting the advantages of new technologies, to name just a few). The case is hardly closed, and we welcome comments from all AAA members.

Please send your contributions, news and announcements to SLA contributing editors Jim Stanlaw (stanlaw@ilstu.edu) or Mark Peterson (mpeterso@gettysburg.edu). The *Society for Linguistic Anthropology* electronic list can be accessed at SLA@weber2.sscnet.ucla.edu.

Society for Medical Anthropology

NANCY VUCKOVIC AND JANELLE TAYLOR,
CONTRIBUTING EDITORS

SMA Website Milestone

The SMA's new website, www.medanthro.net, logged its ten thousandth visitor in Feb 2003! Indeed, the SMA seems to be making a name for itself as a key news resource for well-informed

and would-be-successful people. In an article titled "Beware the Rhodes Hog," from the *Financial Times* of Jan 22, 2003, Michael Skapinker describes the intense coaching of candidates for Rhodes scholarships that takes place at the U of Arkansas, under the guidance of "fellowship advisor" Suzanne McCray. Among other things, McCray sends out to Rhodes candidates "daily emails of articles from various publications." Skapinker notes that "Ms. McCray's daily reading list...came from *The Economist*, the *New Yorker*, *Foreign Affairs*, *The New York Times* and the *Society for Medical Anthropology*." Not bad company! (Thanks to M Estrella Smith for sending the article.)

IRBs and Anthropological Research

By Patricia A Marshall (Case Western Reserve U)

In the US, in 1974, the National Research Act was passed in response to public outrage over the Tuskegee experiment on untreated syphilis among low-income African-American men in Alabama. This act established the National Commission for the Protection of Human Subjects of Biomedical and Behavioral Research. The Belmont Report, published in 1978 by the National Commission, described basic ethical principles regarding research with human subjects. Federal regulations governing research on human subjects, known as the Common Rule, were issued in 1981 by the Department of Health and Human Services and reissued a decade later. The federal mandates were clear: any research involving human subjects funded by a Department agency, with certain exemptions, must be evaluated by an Institutional Review Board (IRB).

While there is consensus about the general purpose of IRBs, significant problems remain in the application of the federal guidelines in the review process. Although committees must include representatives from diverse scientific fields and the community, IRBs have a strong orientation to biomedical research. Most IRBs do not have members with expertise in anthropological methods. This often results in misunderstandings concerning study designs proposed by medical anthropologists. The Common Rule allows for the waiver or modification of requirements for the consent process if the research presents minimal risk, the waiver or alteration would not adversely affect participants' rights and welfare, the research could not be carried out otherwise, and whenever appropriate, participants would be provided with information after participation. Signed written consent may be waived if the signed form would link the participant to the study and disclosure of participation would be the primary risk for the subject. IRBs are generally reluctant to forego written informed consent from research participants.

IRB requirements for written documentation of informed consent may be problematic for medical anthropologists conducting ethnographic research. Challenges associated with requirements for signed consent forms are heightened when medical anthropologists are working with vulnerable populations, illiterate populations, or