

emeritus faculty to mentor emerging scholars and graduate students. Finally, though we were unsuccessful in expanding the *Journal of Latin American and Caribbean Anthropology* to four issues a year, we have not given up. Andrew Canessa continues to work toward this goal while maintaining the high quality of the journal.

I continue to seek input from all of you. We look forward to seeing you in Mérida, Mexico at our spring meeting with SfAA, March 24–27.

Whiteford Graduate Student Award

The deadline for receiving papers for the Whiteford Graduate Student Award is February 15, 2010. Visit www.aaanet.org/sections/slaca for more information. Address queries and send papers to Walter E Little at wlittle@albany.edu.

Please send any comments, suggestions and ideas, including photos for future columns, to Annelou Ypeij at j.l.ypeij@cedla.nl or to CEDLA (Centre for Latin American Research and Documentation), Keizersgracht 395-397, 1016 EK Amsterdam, Netherlands.

Society of Lesbian and Gay Anthropologists

DAVID LR HOUSTON, CONTRIBUTING EDITOR

It's Complicated: Marriage Ad Nauseum

Meryl Streep as a practicing polyamorist? That seems an unlikely scenario on the silver screen. Still, Hollywood has delivered far more controversy. It leads me to wonder: in this day and age, whither marriage? I open with polyamory because it “made the radar” at the national and even international level in the past few months. Most reports are news spectacles: Tiger practiced “clandestine” polyamory and wrecked his marriage; Chai Feldblum is not only a lesbian, but has *written* about polyamory; ABC thinks that men (aka Neanderthals) generally are “born cheaters” in a marriage. What *has* become of marriage? And what is marriage in the first place?

The political wrangling over same-sex marriage is not news, with as many ups and downs in the past year as a Coney Island roller coaster, and the ride isn't even over. But now there is a lot of negative news about *traditional* marriage. Have those aspiring to marry a person of the same sex gotten into bed with the wrong idea? Marriage confers Leach's “bundle of rights,” so often at the core of arguments favoring same-sex marriage. That's now the good news. The bad news shows up, surprisingly, not in the right-wing “studies” purported to demonstrate that children of same-sex partners invariably suffer (they don't) or turn out “wrong” (they don't), but rather in the *idea* of marriage itself.

Anthropologists generally agree that marriage is more universally understood as an economic arrangement, varying across different cultural groups and times, used to build or break alliances, deployed (or taken advantage of) as a political tool. It is not commonly embarked upon as a white veiled romance until we arrive in the US. But even here marriage has shifted, sometimes in subtle

ways. Marriage has been termed as something “you endure,” conjuring up notions of servitude (not far from the mark when we consider *coverture*). Some report that marriage is often experienced as something central to one's existence, despite the seemingly endless challenges of children and the usual accoutrements of parenthood and partnering. Additionally, marriage here is nearly a given, unquestioned as something one simply does early on, a “fact of life.” Many couples never even consider *why* they are getting married, and simply consummate their nuptial bliss without a second thought. Is it any wonder that there are problems?

The number of married couples that seek counseling after six or seven years is, despite the economic situation, increasing. For many, it seems that it's not simply a matter of irreconcilable differences, but rather something more fundamental. Many are beginning to wonder why they took this step in the first place. This is something we want?

It's not really a surprise, then, to read that Tiger has half a dozen girlfriends, or that many seek alternatives such as open relationships. Whether we are talking about polygamy or polyamory is almost beside the point: marriage seems to be in an unhappy place these days. What reason is there to get married? Why do queers of so many stripes see marriage as a kind of grail, especially when there seem to be so many alternatives?

The answer is we don't know. There is a paucity of work that examines alternatives to marriage. There is also a kind of “given” here too: the push for same-sex marriage, while not a universal consensus among the constituency that benefits the most, is itself something that is sometimes taken for granted. Yes, the granting of marital rights to same-sex couples brings many benefits and should happen. Yes, the marriage fight has the potential to advance other LGBTQ rights. At the same time, the reality of marriage seems itself to be coming under intense scrutiny. Married couples are seeking outside help, and it's not all from a pulpit. The success of a concerted effort to allow same-sex marriage, while offering benefits, seems equally likely to usher in a host of other problems. Given the state of LGBTQ rights (can you say ENDA?), it appears unlikely that alternatives to the usual resources for “straight” married couples will be as readily found for the rest of us. It's complicated, for sure.

Join us. SOLGA wants you! Visit www.solga.org for news, mentors, listserv and more. Please send any comments, suggestions and ideas for new columns, or just say “hi” to David Houston at dlrh+an@uvm.edu.

Society for Linguistic Anthropology

JAMES STANLAW AND MARK ALLEN PETERSON, CONTRIBUTING EDITORS

Report on the 2009 SLA Business Meeting

By James Stanlaw

The SLA annual business meeting held last December at the AAAs was filled with good news

on several fronts. First, SLA Secretary-Treasurer Angela Reyes reported that membership has remained approximately the same as last year, at 667. More importantly, the net assets of the organization—about \$67,000 in January 2009—are expected to be \$96,000 in January 2010. A \$30,000 per year growth is anticipated until 2012, mostly due to publishing arrangements the AAA has with Wiley-Blackwell for the *Journal of Linguistic Anthropology (JLA)*. Some on both the Executive Board and the Section Assembly remain cautious, however, about how long such good fortunes might last; nonetheless, discussions will begin soon on how to best utilize these funds if the projections hold up.

JLA editor Paul Manning reported that the journal also continues to do well. This year Miyako Inoue, from Stanford University, joined Paul as co-editor. This not only added a wider editorial perspective to the journal, it also allowed for enhancements in production. For example, turnaround time for submitted manuscripts dropped to 1.6 months, a substantial improvement from the already respectable rate of 2.8 months of last year. Some 70 papers were submitted in 2009—up from 49 last year—and 14 were published, maintaining the *JLA*'s goal of a 75–80% rejection rate. Both Paul and SLA President Joe Errington encouraged members to have students download articles from the *JLA*—rather than pass out hard copies or post papers themselves—because full-text article downloads encourage libraries to retain AnthroSource subscriptions.

SLA program chair Kira Hall reported that the SLA was well represented at this year's AAA meeting. She—along with Don Brenneis, Jay Dickinson and Elizabeth Keating—reviewed 250 abstracts. All panels were accepted, and four panels were selected for invited status. Not only was the acceptance rate of the SLA abstracts high, many other sections had language-oriented topics and/or SLA members presenting. Thus, linguistic anthropology was well-represented at this year's meeting. Please contact Kira Hall (kira.hall@colorado.edu) if you wish to submit—or review!—abstracts for the 2010 meeting, as she has graciously consented to be program chair for yet another year. Any volunteers for next time?

There were two SLA Annual Student Essay Prizes awarded this year. The graduate winner was Benjamin K Smith of the department of comparative human development at the University of Chicago (John Lucy, advisor). His paper, “Of Marbles and (Little) Men: Bad Luck, Aymara Boyhood and Masculine Identification” was also invited for submission to the *JLA*. The undergraduate winner was Ruairidh Falconer, a recent graduate of the department of anthropology of the University of Aberdeen (Alexander King, advisor), for a paper titled “Santiago Atitlán: Globalisation and Bilingual Development among Youth in a Mayan Town.” Nominations Committee chair Paul Garrett headed the selection committee. Each winner received a Joe Errington-designed certificate, a \$500 check, and a drink at the cash bar. As there was a slight decline in the number of entries this year, SLA members are strongly encouraged to have their students submit papers. The Executive Board proposed that the SLA fund prize-winning students next year to come to the AAAs to get their awards.

Perhaps the most exciting presentation at the Section Assembly was by Leila Monaghan, the SLA's new digital content editor. Her demonstration of the new SLA website showed that it promises to become one of the most important places on the Internet for disseminating information and resources regarding the study and teaching of linguistic anthropology (see www.linguisticanthropology.org). Posts to the site can include everything from blogs and news announcements to grant opportunities, teaching syllabi, field notes, transcriptions, and even audio files. Leila said the site is only limited by the members' imaginations, and she encourages active participation by all SLA members.

Finally, as his last performative act, President Joe Errington passed the gavel to President-elect Kit Woolard of UC San Diego, who officially opened the bar. Before that, however, she remarked, "I am very, very pleased with the tremendous work people have done ... this last year to keep the infrastructure of this organization supportive and professional. And the website is the crystallization of that; now it is up to us to utilize it!"

Please send your comments, contributions, news and announcements to SLA contributing editors Jim Stanlaw (stanlaw@ilstu.edu) or Mark Peterson (petersm2@muohio.edu).

Society for Medical Anthropology

KATHLEEN RAGSDALE, CONTRIBUTING EDITOR

SMA at the 2009 AAA Meeting

By Stéphanie Larchanché (Washington U-St Louis)

The 2009 AAA meeting featured six SMA invited sessions. These addressed the continuing debate on female genital cutting and human rights advocacy; health research ethics; Pentecostalism and public health in Southern Africa; and the intersections of globalizing psychiatry, politics and social movements. Two sessions in particular reflect the work of SMA groups presently engaged in policy and position statement initiatives. The first, "Towards a Medical Anthropology against Militarism," was a double session (co-sponsored by APLA and AAA) organized by the War and Health Work Group, chaired by Matt Guttman. The second session, "Do 'Illegal' Migrants Have a Right to Health? Towards a Critical Medical Anthropology of Unauthorized Migration and Health" (co-sponsored by BAS), was chaired by Carolyn Smith-Morris and co-organized by Sarah Willen and Heide Castañeda. It responded to the work of the Critical Medical Anthropology for Global Health work group, which produced a statement on the same issue, posted on the SMA website (www.medanthro.net/stand/index.html). The group also launched its own blog, "Access Denied: A Conversation on Unauthorized Immigration and Health" on December 3 (<http://accessdeniedblog.wordpress.com>).

SMA continues to attract a rich and diverse membership, reflected in the breadth of its interest groups that include, but are not limited to: the

AIDS and Anthropology Research Group; Disability Research Interest Group; Complementary, Alternative and Integrative Medicine Group; Council on Anthropology and Reproduction; Critical Anthropology of Global Health Study Group; Council on Nursing and Anthropology; Medical Anthropology Students Association; Alcohol, Drug and Tobacco Study Group; and Science, Technology and Medicine Interest Group.

The Medical Anthropology Student Association (MASA), under the impetus of its chair, Amorita Valdez, announced the launching of its Facebook page. The page is intended to foster student networking and support. It seeks to create a place where students can assist each other through the long process of training, conducting fieldwork, writing and succeeding in the job market. Resources will include updates on special events or important information regarding funding, research and job opportunities. Students will also be able to share their knowledge with the MASA community by posting relevant news or suggesting topics to discuss with their peers.

At the award ceremony, the SMA Selection Committee honored Charles Leslie with the 2009 SMA Career Achievement Award, for his lifelong contributions to medical anthropology. Charles Leslie died last August. Among other award winners, Noel Chrisman received the SMA Practicing Award in recognition of his contributions to applied medical anthropology; Carole H Browner received the MASA Mentoring Award in recognition of her excellence in graduate student mentorship; Sera Lewis Young received the MASA Dissertation Award for her thesis titled "A Biocultural Study of the Relationship between Pica and Anemia" (Cornell U, 2008); and Athena McLean received the New Millennium Book Award for *The Person in Dementia: A Study of Nursing Home Care in the US* (Broadview Press, 2007). The 2009 Polgar Prize, given to the "best" article published in the preceding volume of *Medical Anthropology Quarterly*, was given to Melissa Park, for her article "Making Scenes: Imaginative Practices of a Child with Autism in a Sensory Integration-Based Therapy Session" (22[3]). The jury also gave an honorable mention to Paul Brodwin for his article "The Coproduction of Moral Discourse in US Community Psychiatry" (22[2]). Finally, the Eileen Basker Prize, given for an outstanding work on gender and health, was awarded to Janelle S Taylor, for her book *The Public Life of the Fetal Sonogram* (Rutgers U Press, 2008).

Carolyn Sargent gave her last speech as SMA president, titled "Of Labels, Identities, Audiences." Following last year's address on the national health crisis, she reported on the formation of an SMA Task Force to explore ways in which medical anthropologists can contribute to the ongoing public policy debate. She announced the creation of an SMA blog, "Voices from Medical Anthropology" (<http://socmedanthro.wordpress.com>), which is intended to serve as a coherent space to engage in discussion over the face, shape and course of the discipline. The initial topic will be to expand on the question "What is Medical Anthropology, Anyways?" The SMA welcomed its new president, Jeannine Coreil.

To submit contributions to this column please contact SMA Contributing Editor Kathleen Ragsdale (kathleen.ragsdale@ssrc.msstate.edu).



Society for Psychological Anthropology

JACK R FRIEDMAN, CONTRIBUTING EDITOR

Highlights from the Annual SPA Business Meeting

The SPA held its annual board meeting at the AAA meeting in Philadelphia, PA in December 2009. It began with a hearty thank you to outgoing SPA President Tanya Luhrmann (Stanford U) and a warm welcome to new President Doug Hollan (UC Los Angeles). Ashley Maynard (U Hawai'i-Manoa), secretary-treasurer, reported that we are currently in good stead financially, and that we expect to do well again next year, particularly due to royalty agreements from *Ethos* and Cambridge University Press. Tim Landry, the managing editor of *Ethos*, noted that subscriptions have held steady and that the impact factor of the journal remains strong. He reported that one of the goals of the journal in the near future will be to expand its reach globally both through increased submissions from international scholars and increasing international readership. Rebecca Lester (Washington U) is the new SPA book series editor. She reported that manuscripts have been reviewed quickly and that Palgrave Press remains supportive of the series. She noted that the series continues to search for quality work, so please contact her if you have a manuscript.

SPA Program Report from the 2009 AAA Meeting

Rebecca Lester was the chair of the SPA's Program Committee for the AAA meeting this year. She reported that the SPA had 16 panels, three of which were invited sessions, similar to the 2008 AAA. The strong showing of SPA-sponsored panels, she noted, was indicative of the continued health and stable size of the SPA section membership. Several panels were co-sponsored, reinforcing the SPA's commitment to cross-section collaboration. In addition, the success of the SPA's biennial meeting in Asilomar, CA in March 2009 was reviewed, and the board began talking about getting ready to plan for the 2011 meeting!

Lemelson/SPA Awards

Ashley Maynard reported on the Lemelson/SPA Awards that were inaugurated in 2008 through a generous donation from Rob Lemelson (UC Los Angeles) and Susan Morse Lemelson. Two conferences were held in 2009 (at Rutgers U and U Notre Dame) through the support of the award, while six awards were given for support of pre-dissertation work. For more information about these awards, please visit the SPA website.

2009 SPA Prizes

Six section prizes were awarded at the 2009 AAA meeting. Two Stirling Prizes for best published article in psychological anthropology in the last