es a yearly conference that often includes Latin American specialists.

I welcome short articles and comments that could be of interest to our readers. Please contact me at: Facultad de Antropología, U Autónoma de Yucatán, Calle 76 #145-L1, Mérida, Yucatán, Mexico; tel and fax (525)999-253-4523; guzgar@hotmail.com or gabriela_vargas_cetina@hotmail.com.

Society for Lesbian and Gay Anthropologists

BARB WEST, CONTRIBUTING EDITOR

As I write this, I am still thinking about last night's episode of ER. This show has not been as open as the original Ellen or Will and Grace about dealing with LGBTQ issues, but it also has not avoided them. What I'm wondering is whether we would be better off without the kind of visibility that this high-profile series has provided.

During the past seven years, we've seen the abused partner in a gay male relationship go home with his abuser rather than seek help. An HIV-negative male partner of an HIV-positive man was disappointed when an HIV test failed to come up positive. A teen-aged boy preferred to suffer in silence about his depression rather than come out to his father. More recently, one of the main characters, Kerry Weaver, has had relationships with two terribly intolerant caricatures of lesbians. To the best of my memory, there has been only one semi-positive LGBTQ storyline in the show, and that was on episode 4.20 of the series. The storyline that presented a lesbian relationship was presented as nurturing, caring and very long-term. Unfortunately, this disavowal should not have come at the expense of any sense of compassion and tolerance on the part of the Latina girlfriend, nor at the expense of reality. My concern with ER is that it has used its tremendous popularity to address many difficult issues, all within the framework of entertainment. Why, when it comes to HIV issues (they have yet to have a transvested character, to the best of my memory), do they retrace stereotypical and negative territory? Certainly I do want to go back to the days when there were no LGBTQ characters on popular TV shows, but I'm not certain that this kind of visibility is any better.

Send contributions to Barb West at bwest@uop.edu.

Society for Lesbian and Gay Anthropologists

BARB WEST, CONTRIBUTING EDITOR

A Letter on Sept 11 [We have not talked much about Sept 11, or its linguistic importance, in this column as yet. Prof. X., however, has submitted this letter, telling of the tragedy's impact on her graduate seminar last semester. This letter might be construed as being controversial, but it is not meant to reflect the views of the SLA board or membership, the AAA or even myself. In fact, in the longer version, Prof. X. said she did not write this letter to be anti-American or even necessarily political. She just thought it was important that some linguistic discussion about Sept 11 be started, and wanted to hear the views of others. It is in this light that I present it, and welcome comments.—Ed.]

I was driving to class when I heard about “it” on the car radio. Our seminar on language rights and linguistic minorities met once a week on Tuesday afternoons. The day of the attacks on the World Trade Center, the Muslim students in the seminar were completely silent, even though I didn’t think the environment was particularly hostile. A few weeks later, however, on another Tuesday, the US attacks on Afghanistan began. I walked into class to find a beehive of sounds and discussions; it didn’t look like a day to start off talking about labor and language use in department stores. As surprising as was their silence on Sept 11, today the Arab students were vocal, excited, even loud. Though no one in the class seemed to be disagreeing with them, I was surprised at the intensity and depth of their anger, even though none of our Arab students were part of it.

A few weeks later I walked in and heard, “Don’t you see, he could not have written this letter! It is repugnant.” The previous week the US government released what supposedly was the last, five-page letter of Mohamed Atta, who allegedly masterminded the attacks and planted one of the planes into one of the WTC towers. Ali and Yasser were explaining that the Arabic in the letter was so bizarre. “No one would ever say such a thing,” Ali said, referring to the reference to Allah’s family in the prayer in the letter. “Where is the mention of the Prophet?” With their help, we went through several paragraphs dissecting the letter stylistically and sociolinguistically. If there was one single thing that the class got from our discussions, it was how news in the Arabic media differs from the mainstream American media. We spent much time hearing our Muslim students describe what was being said on Al Jazeera and other Arabic-language news sources. I was glad again to have native Arabic speakers in class when the supposedly self-incriminating video of Osama bin Laden was released. Though it was hard to find the complete text in the American media, we were able to get it on the Internet. When compared to the excerpted translations given on CNN or ABC News, the story we saw was more nuanced. Though the Arabic was said to be confident and strong, our students stessed how metaphorical and idiosyncratic the language was.

After some 15 such weeks, the class ended. Our seminar on language rights and linguistic minorities met once a week on Tuesday afternoons. The day of the attacks on the World Trade Center, the Muslim students in the seminar
remember, we discussed at great length about the power of symbols and how the utterance of a single word can change the world. I thought this the cultural and the religious can at times overtake what appears on a midterm exam paper on French in Morocco discussing just these issues. However, the emotional, the cultural and the religious can at times overtake what appears on a midterm exam paper. It was enlightening for me to see how the magic of a language can take hold in the heart of a person. Or take hold in the hearts of a people.

Please send your comments, contributions, news and announcements to SLA Contributing Editor Jim Stanfield (jim@stanfield.com) or Mark Peterson (peterson@aucegypt.edu).

Society for Medical Anthropology

ANN MILES, CONTRIBUTING EDITOR

Your SMA Website

By Ortz James (U of Colorado-Denver)

Typically, websites have two functions. First, they are repositories of information; in this case, about an organization—its history, structure, purpose, links to other sources of information and so on. Second, websites offer a vehicle for rapid information exchange. During the past several years, and primarily because of the efforts of our first webmaster, Ruthbeth Finerman, the SMA website fulfills the first function reasonably well. Until recently, we have been less concerned with the potential information exchange capabilities of our website, so this potential remains largely unexploited. My purpose here is to describe our website for those who have not yet browsed its pages (or have browsed them incompletely), to discuss some recent changes to the website that are intended to enhance its utility as a tool to facilitate the rapid exchange of information, and to encourage you to use the website as a communication tool.

In terms of its function as a repository of information, Ruthbeth Finerman and I have tried to create a reasonably complete record of past and present SMA business. The website, for example, contains a complete record of all news columns published in AN from Jan 1996 to the present. In addition to the news column, the website provides descriptions of, and links to, active SMA interest groups; lists the Society by-laws and current officers; describes (and in many cases provides links to) 27 training programs in medical anthropology, and currently is the sole "official" site for Medical Anthropology Quarterly. Our new MAQ page provides news items and abstracts for the past three years, complete information for contributors and a link to the editorial office.

During the past year, I have tried to enhance the utility of the website as a vehicle for the rapid exchange of information. I have created two pages featuring "current" or "breaking" news. In addition to the current news column page, an announcements page has been added. The announcements page provides a space for the posting of time-sensitive announcements, as well as requests for information or assistance. Entries are indexed at the beginning of the page. At present, the single page provides adequate space for the relatively few items received for posting. If volume increases, electronic discussion or listserve options might need to be explored. In the meantime, I invite you to submit your calls for papers, position announcements or requests. My hope is that the website will become the first place people go to solicitation participation in a planned symposium, place a call for papers, describe new books and journals, and announce promising new research initiatives.

As websites grow and become more complex, it becomes increasingly difficult for a single webmaster, who has only a few minutes a week to devote to maintaining a site, to monitor completely the accuracy and timeliness of information and links. As you browse the website and find things that need to be corrected, changed or updated, please send me an email at craig.janes@cudenver.edu. Please visit the website at www.cudenver.edu/public/sma.

Business Meeting and Awards Report

The Annual Business Meeting for the SMA was held on Nov 30 during the 2001 AAA Annual Meeting in Washington, DC. Once the cash bar was fully operational, SMA President Bill Desser called the meeting to order. Bill's very personal opening remarks honored the contributions of Arthur Isabel to teaching and research in medical anthropology. Among the many committee reports was the presentation of SMA Awards. Virginia Domínguez presented the Eileen Basker Memorial Prize to Susan Martha Kahn for Producing Jews: A Cultural Account of Assisted Reproduction in Israel. James Trolle then announced the Stephen Polgar Paper Prize winner as Anethylene Sinha for her article "An Overview of Telemedicine, the Virtual Gaze of Health Care in the Next Century" (MAQ, Sept 2000). The Charles Hughes Graduate Student Paper Prize was awarded to Elizabeth Horton (U of Arizona) for "Shoaring of Aging, Ideology and Nation"; and the W H Rivers Undergraduate Student Paper Prize was presented to a most grateful Sunita Puri (Yale U) for her paper "Inmarriage, Ideation and (Community) Identity."

Suzanne Herutin-Roberts, representing the Program Committee, reported that the SMA did very well in having sessions accepted to the final program, and she had some advice for 2002 contributors. Suzanne suggested members seek joint sponsorship of sessions, thus allowing the SMA to have more sessions in total; she encouraged members to consider poster Sessions; and she noted that abstracts for the 2002 AAA Annual Meeting are due Mar 31 (not Apr 1, as is customarily). There will be online submissions.

In one of his last acts as president, and demonstrating heretofore unknown rhythmic sensibilities, Bill played a haunting wiregrass accompaniment to Bryan Page's brilliant musical tribute to outgoing Board members. The meeting adjourned with the passing of the gavel. Bill Desser was hailed by one and all for his tireless service as SMA president, and Mark Nichter was welcomed just as heartily as our newest president.

For more information on the meeting, see www.cudenver.edu/public/sma. To submit to this column, contact Ann Miles at miles@wmich.edu.

Society for Psychological Anthropology

KEVIN BREIT, CONTRIBUTING EDITOR

Reflections on the Boyer Prize

By T M Luhrmann (U of Chicago)

[T M Luhrmann won the 2001 Boyer Prize for her book Of Two Minds: The Growing Disorder in American Psychiatry. She also is the author of The Good Parsi and Persuasions of the Witch's Craft.— Ed.]

Of Two Minds is an ethnography of contemporary psychiatric practice and the consequences of that practice for the care of mental illness. In my fieldwork, I found that this was a world in which patients came to be imagined through two approaches so different that they were like different cultures. One of these derived from psychoanalytic psychotherapy, which had dominated American psychiatry after the war and still remained the dominant paradigm for psychotherapy. Here, illness was the result of maladaptive patterns of behavior. The other approach grew out of a biomedical psychiatric science, which emerged as a powerful paradigm in the 1970s and now dominates psychiatric thinking. Here, illness is a medical disease like any other.

For the most part, psychiatrists believed that mental illness was a complex biopsychosocial phenomenon, and that the best treatment for it was a combination of biomedical and psychodynamic interventions, both drugs and talk. But the actual training was more didactic than integrative. Lecture topics, treatment wards, patients and experts were often defined as either psychotherapist or about diagnosis and psychopharmacology and young doctors had to become competent in the two very different kinds of tasks. As I spent time in psychiatric training programs, I realized that these different tasks shaped the experience of empathy quite differently.

To be empathic, I argued, a subject must have a concept of who the other person is; an emotional expectation of how that other person will behave; an emotional expectation of how he or she herself should behave; and a concept of who he or she would like to become in