BLOOMSBURG UNIVERSITY
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ANTHROPOLOGY NEWSLETTER
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Department of Anthropology

A New Newsletter - & a New Department: Beginning this fall, anthropology has become a separate department under the leadership of Professor Robert Reeder, the new department chairperson. The anthropologists look forward to their pending move to the newly renovated Old Science Building, a move we hope will occur some time this fall. With the laboratory space being provided for anthropology in the new location, we hope to be able to provide an expanded program in field archaeology and physical anthropology as well as better research opportunities for our majors.

The Anthropology Newsletter has now been housed in three different departments since its inception in 1975, namely, Sociology/Anthropology, Philosophy/Anthropology, and the new independent Anthropology Department. We will continue to provide any and all interested members of the university community with information about anthropology on campus, nationally and internationally. If you would like to be added to our mailing list, please contact Dave Minderhout at 4334.

Meet Our New Faculty Member: We welcome Dr. Dee Anne Wymer to the anthropology staff, beginning with the fall semester. Dee Anne is an archaeologist with a Ph.D. from Ohio State University. Her specialty within archaeology is paleoethnobotany, an imposing label for the analysis of plant remains in archaeological sites. From her research into sites in Ohio dating from between 100 BC and 1000 AD, she has been able to demonstrate that archaeological assumptions about the subsistence base of Indians in the Midwest in that time period may well be wrong. In particular, the rise of the Hopewell culture between 100 BC and 500 AD in that area, with its associated geometric earthworks, impressive works of art and elaborate burials, is not, according to her research, based on the cultivation of maize, as had been widely assumed. Rather, the Hopewell culture seems to have been built on the domestication of plants native to the eastern woodlands of North America, such as May grass and sunflowers, as well as on the collection of native nuts, berries, tubers, etc. By studying the rise of agriculture in the Midwest, Dee Anne also hopes to shed light on the question of the origins of agriculture world-wide. She has also located and begun work on a site in Ohio which may yield evidence about the earliest presence of humans in this hemisphere; BU students

will have an opportunity to work on this site during the summer of 1990.

Dee Anne also comes to us with a strong background in teaching. Her student recommendations from Ohio speak to her enthusiasm, her knowledge of the field, her humor, and her solid presentations. She is very interested in physical anthropology as well as in archaeology. We are very happy that she has joined our program.

A Belated Congratulations: to Darryl Gundrum who graduated from BU with majors in anthropology and geology in May 1989. Darryl has received an assistantship in archaeology from the University of Calgary, where he has begun his work this fall.

Archaeological Research in South America: During this past July, Dr. Thomas Aleto conducted archaeological research on La Puna Island as part of a two month visit to the South American country of Ecuador. Assisting in this investigation was Patrick Andrews, a BU senior majoring in anthropology. The research consisted primarily of pedestrian reconnnaissance survey, the main method used by archaeologists to find prehistoric sites. In such a survey the researchers systematically cover the area they wish to investigate, scanning the surface of the ground in search of any indication of past human occupation. In this part of coastal Ecuador, such artifacts include pottery, debris from stone tool manufacture, stones used for grinding corn and other seeds, human burials, and the remains of prehistoric meals, principally discarded mollusk shells and fish bones.

La Puná is a very large island with a land mass of over 900 square kilometers (approximately 560 square miles) and cannot be easily surveyed in a short time. As a result, Dr. Aleto and Mr. Andrews restricted their investigation to two small areas on the north and west side of the island. These zones are the focus of the major economic activity of La Puná, namely shrimp farming. In the past seven years, construction of shrimp cultivation ponds has resulted in the destruction and disturbance of many archaeological sites by tractors and other heavy earth moving machines. One of the objectives of the summer's research was to catalog the destroyed and damaged sites and to discover additional sites before they are similarly altered.

In terms of these objectives, the work was successful. Five new sites were discovered, and archaeological material was recovered from the surfaces. Most of the artifacts consist of pottery and other ceramic pieces like figurines and spindle whorls, small bead-like counterweights used in the spinning of cotton into thread. In some cases, this ceramic material recovered was well known, and the investigators were able to place the sites in the proper

cultural and temporal contexts. In other cases, the pottery was either too poorly preserved to allow such determinations or represents a previously undiscovered and unknown culture.

Of particular significance are two sites that were intensively collected in order to procure a large sample of artifacts for further study. One of them belongs to the culture known as the Punaés, the people for whom La Puná is named. They inhabited the island when the Spanish made their first contact with the cultures of Ecuador and Peru. Pizarro and his fellow conquistadores spent three months with the Punnaés in 1531 before launching their assault on the Inca empire. Because the Spanish were horrified by many Punaé customs and spent much of their time in open conflict with them, they left several detailed accounts of the Punaé way of life in their journals and letters to the King of Spain. However, relatively little is known about many important aspects of Punaé culture that can only be answered through archaeological investigation. For this and other reasons, the discovery of the Punaé village at the site called Ceibo Grande is especially exciting.

The other site, known as Loma Alto, is important because it promises to shed light on Valdivia culture, one of the first pottery producing societies in all of South America. The Valdivians are among the first sedentary and agricultural people in all of the Americas and can shed light on why people first domesticated plants and began to live in permanent settlements. Until the present, most of the Valdivia sites that have been studied have been located on the mainland of Ecuador. The presence of Valdivia culture in an island context may offer a new perspective on these earliest of farmers.

Because there was not sufficient time to undertake a complete analysis of the artifacts during the investigators' stay in the field, a collection of the material was brought back to BU for further study. This analysis will be undertaken by Dr. Aleto and must be completed by June 1990 when the pottery must be returned to Ecuador. Dr. Aleto welcomes any student who is interested in assisting in the analysis and who would like to learn more about either the techniques of ceramic analysis or Ecuadorian archaeology. If you would like to help, please contact Dr. Aleto in 219 BCH.

<u>Another Summer Traveler:</u> BU anthropology major Travis Pickering participated in Harvard University's Koobi Fora field school in Kenya this past summer. Koobi Fora is the area where Richard Leakey discovered KNM-ER 1470, a nearly complete Homo habilis (or early Homo) skull from 1.8 million years ago. Travis got to meet Leakey, tour the KNM-ER 1470 site and many others, and to do some field archaeology on sites; he also toured the East African countryside to see the wildlife and topography. We hope to persuade him to

write up his experiences for the Newsletter in the near future.

Anthropology Club News: As of this writing, the Anthropology Club has met three times, planning its activities for the upcoming year. The club hopes to sponsor speakers, provide film programs, and attend regional or national meetings of anthropologists. The first activity of the year was held on Sunday, September 10, as the anthropology faculty provided a picnic for the students at the Bloomsburg Town Park.

Any student interested in anthropology is welcome to attend club meetings. The club meets every Tuesday at 3:30 PM in 106 BCH. Pat Andrews is the club president for the fall semester; Andy Goldfine is treasurer; and Dr. Aleto is the club advisor.

The Anthropologist's Cookbook: Here's a recipe to use up all the extra tomatoes from backyard gardens. This recipe for "Tomates Frites" (tomato fritters) is from France.

For the fritter batter:

3/4 cup plus 1 tblspn flour
1/2 tsp salt
2 tblspns butter, melted
1 egg lightly beaten
1 cup beer
1 egg white, beaten stiff but not dry

16 medium-sized firm tomatoes, cut in 1/4 inch slices
salt
pepper
chopped parsley
oil for deep frying

Sift the flour together with the salt. Beat in the butter, then the egg. Then beat in enough beer to lighten the flour and turn it into a thick but pourable batter that will coat a spoon. Let rest an hour; then whisk in the stiff egg white.

Press as much juice and as many seeds out of the tomatoes as possible without crushing the slices. Season with salt and pepper and sprinkle with parsley.

Heat the oil in a heavy skillet until it smokes. Then dip the tomato slices in the batter to coat them. Slip a few at a time into the oil and fry until golden brown. Drain on a paper towel and serve as soon as possible.

Yield: 8 servings

Seeing is Believing: Aristotle defined the Western concept of the senses as he cataloged the five that Americans routinely think of: sight, hearing, smell, taste and touch. But as anthropologist Alan Dundes has pointed out, Americans emphasize the sense of sight, giving it an importance equal to or greater than all the other senses put together. Using American colloquial expressions, he notes that Americans favor politicians with vision; we can see their point of view; they need a public image. If our perspectives are challenged, we may claim that it all depends on how you look at it. Having a hard time with an idea? Well, then, I'll believe it when I see it; I can't picture it; there's more to this than meets the eye. Or, how about, out of sight, out of mind?

We talk about doctors seeing us as patients; hopefully they will do more than that. In fact, the doctor will probably interview us about our complaints. As we travel, we see the sights; if amazed by them, we couldn't believe our eyes. Who wants to buy something sight unseen? We prefer to go into something new with our eyes open. After all, we need to be able to see through a fake. Maybe we need to use a seer; it's useful to be able to foresee future events.

As we leave a conversation, we part with "See you!" Accordingly we greet someone with "It's good to see you; I haven't seen you in ages!" Apparently it's not good to hear, smell or feel you. We don't want to rely on hearsay; we need an eyewitness, and we'll hire a private eye to find one, if necessary. And we can't rely on that person's word; we need to see it "in black and white" on paper or in a contract.

Anthropology is caught up in the metaphors of vision as well. We do participatory observation, we say, though we probably ask more questions than we observe. We do our research to gain insight into the world-view of another society. Ruth Benedict warned anthropologists about looking at another culture through their own cultural perceptions: "We do not see the lens through which we look." And, after all, other cultures do not place our emphasis on sight - or even define the senses in the same way. The Javanese, for instance, say there are five senses: seeing, hearing, smelling, feeling and talking.

Dundes also believes that the emphasis on sight in American culture has grown in recent decades. For instance, the familiar saying "Seeing is believing" at one time went on to say "but feeling's the truth." As our technology for presenting visual images continues to grow, the emphasis on sight may well continue to strengthen. See my point?

Sahlins Speaks: On September 5, University of Chicago anthropologist Marshall Sahlins spoke at Bucknell University as part of the Ralph Spielman Memorial Lecture series. The lecture was attended by several students and faculty from Bloomsburg University Departments of Anthropology and Philosophy.

Dr. Sahlins, who is widely known for his theoretical writings in anthropology and social science, read a paper entitled "Social Science: The Tragic Western Sense of Imperfection." In the lecture he turned to one of the themes that runs through his writings, namely, the consideration of whether culture and society are products of human ideas or whether they arise from the material conditions of life.

Drawing on a vast body of literature that included sources such as the Bible, St. Augustine, John Locke, Karl Marx and Karl Polanyi, Sahlins argued that modern social science is based on the fundamental idea that life is a punishment. In this context the primary motivation in life is the avoidance of pain and the search for pleasure. This is manifest in the economizing principle: individuals are driven by an attempt to maximize unlimited wants with limited means. This leads to a view of society as a force that constrains individual desires and sublimates what is natural. Sahlins argued that although this view of society is widely held in the West to be objective truth, it is, in fact, a subjective construct that is a product of a specific cultural tradition.

To support his position, Sahlins cited the case of the Algonkin Indians of northeastern Canada. These people inhabit one of the least hospitable regions of North America; starvation is a constant threat. As reported by the Jesuits who made contact with them in the 17th century, the Algonkin were happy despite their suffering and did not lament their fate. Their generosity, which extended to sharing food even it might have resulted in hunger for the giver, was seen by the Jesuits as a lack of common sense. (Conversely, the Indians thought the Jesuits to be weak-hearted and mean-spirited, given to avarice and ambition.) Sahlins argued that the Algonkin cultural pattern could be explained only if social life was not seen to arise from the avoidance of pain and the quest for pleasure. Rather, he argued, it reflected a view of the world in which life is seen as the antithesis of suffering. The apparent lack of common sense in sharing scarce food in the face of certain hunger springs from a view of hunger as a collective problem rather than as an individual concern. Sahlins argued that the overriding fear of the Algonkins was not individual privation, but fear that the band would break up if food were withheld and social life would end. The end of social life was seen as the cessation of life itself.

Sahlins elaborated on these themes by drawing on much of the social philosophy that forms the basis of social science. His presentation was erudite, and his command of the literature was most impressive. Dr. Sahlins and his ideas were well-received by a large, attentive audience.

Minor in Anthropology: Yes, it is possible to minor in anthropology. A minor in anthropology consists of 6 courses or 18 credits. Three of the courses are required. They are:

46.200 Principles of Cultural Anthropology
46.210 Prehistoric Archaeology
46.220 Principles of Physical Anthropology

Three other elective anthropology courses should be chosen in consultation with an anthropology adviser. Feel free to see any of the anthropology faculty for more information.