

Participant

Observer

## “Pathways” upholds the mission of Sustainability

The University of Rochester hosted “Pathways to a Sustainable World: A Conference for Change” April 13th and 14th. The conference was largely organized by Judith Hook from the Program in Movement and Dance, which provided percussion and world dancing by dance students during breaks. The conference also gained sponsorship from the Center for Entrepreneurship, Dining Services, Roundtable on Sustainability, Students Association, the Undergraduate Anthropology Council, and various other undergraduate student groups. Many community businesses also provided coffee and local food during breaks, such as Coffee Connection, Organic Alley, Freshwise Catering, Cornhill Creamery, Fingerlakes Farmstead Cheese, and more. The first day of the conference hosted workshops, lectures, and panels surrounding the theme, “Local Economy, Local Food: Community Building.” The conference hosted plenary speakers, such as David Abram, and David Orr, and regional speakers such as Carlos Carballada, the Commissioner of Economic Development and Doug Rice, creator of Artwalk. Professor Foster was also part of a panel on revitalizing local food production.

The second day of the conference focused around, “Education, Spirit, and Action.” David Orr, Distinguished professor of Environmental Studies at Oberlin, presented, “Rumors of Unfathomable Things: Climate Change and Changing Climate of U.S. Policies.” He highlighted that the most important aspect to focus on is solving our energy problem and increasing energy efficiency.

The remainder of the talks successfully worked to raise spirit and garner action. Environmental Activist, Lois Gibbs, creator “Superfund,” legislation to clean up environmental waste, exemplified the power of grassroots organizing. Both Christopher Uhl, a professor of Biology at Penn State, and David Abram, an ecologist, anthropologist, and philosopher, made deeper connections to what sustainability means for our psychological, spiritual, and emotional well-beings. LaDonna Redmond, community food security activist from Chicago, pointed out “all communities must be at the table for creating sustainability.” Most successfully, the conference was able to bridge the somewhat abstract notions of sustainability with concrete changes that can be made to develop healthy communities.



## ANTHRO STUDENT NEWS

### World Social Forum

I am a curious student and an activist who attended the World Social Forum (WSF) in Nairobi, Kenya in January 2007. The WSF loomed large in my mind as a Petri dish for political discourse and struggle for an equitable world. While I anticipated the collision of academic discourse and hands-on activism at the WSF, the realities of the WSF surpassed my conceptions of the event.

It was an amazing and frustrating process to be apart of the WSF. The conference is now in its seventh year of existence and is experiencing growing pains as the Forum finds its voice. I witnessed enormous energy, listened to powerful stories and made connections with other activists, intellectuals and artists from around the world. However, the event continued to be plagued by logistical errors: uninformed volunteers, last-minute room changes, inadequate translators and equipment. Expensive travel kept many from attending. Additionally, there were few formalized connections between the conference and the city of Nairobi. The event brought together thousands of people to remake the world, and yet, the local environment we inhabited occupied a sideline role.

Despite this haze of nebulous logistics and my skepticism about the organization, I learned a lot at the WSF. I observed, thought and talked about what protest means, what struggle is, and how to set tangible goals in order to facilitate change. I also felt the awesome power of the collective - perhaps the social justice equiva-

-lent of Durkheim's effervescence. Cheers at the opening ceremony captured an earnest cry for overcoming hardship by working with one another. For me, a powerful part of the week was listening to people speak passionately about their individual experiences and local struggles. These dialogues colored my understanding of what the struggle for reproductive rights in Latin America looks like and what the Killer Coke campaign is all about. Perhaps the most important thing I learned was that making change in the world does not happen through one particular method or means, but instead is a process in need of patience and diligence to be fought on many fronts.

Conversations are great and I believe creating an open space for democracy is a necessary goal that the WSF fulfills. After attending the event and finding the experiences beneficial on a personal level, I am wondering how and if the WSF will move from a space for dialogue to a place for organizing action. The Forum has emerged from its honeymoon stage and is soul searching. The seeds were planted, and I am anxious to see the effects of fully blossomed ideas on the shape and scope of the WSF.

- Madeline Cutrona

### **The Participant Observer is brought to you by the Undergraduate Anthropology Council**

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## Presentations

**Sue Jean Yi** (ANT/AAS 2007) presented at The 2007 Frederick Douglass Institute Undergraduate Symposium a paper entitled "Seo Taiji and Drunken Tiger: The Appropriation of the Black Hip-Hop Male in Korea."

**Nisha Puntambekar** (ANT 2007) presented her Honor's Thesis entitled, "Health Care in India: An Exploration of the Inequalities Facing the Poor and the Challenges Confronting Doctors in Contemporary Pune, Maharashtra" on May 3, 2007.

## Awards

**Mariana Bojaca** (ANT /International Relations 2007) received The Fannie Bigelow Prize from The Susan B. Anthony Center for Women's Leadership and the UR Women's Club. The "Silver Tray" is awarded to an undergraduate upperclassman chosen on the basis of her individuality, her ability to form and express fearlessly, with conviction and sound judgment, her opinions on vital topics. She shall demonstrate that she participates in extra-curricular activities because she sincerely believes in their value to the college community beyond their purely social worth.

**Colette Carmouche** (ANT/AAS 2008) received The Susan B. Anthony Scholarship Award The Susan B. Anthony Center for Women's Leadership and the UR Women's Club in February 2007. This award is given to a woman in her junior year who has demonstrated leadership, academic excellence and commitment to her fellow students and community.

**Mollie Foust** (ANT 2008) received the Simeon Cheatham Award. This award was established in the 1970s by the Office of the Dean of Students to recognize outstanding University of Rochester students. The award is given to a student who has outstanding qualities in devotion to community service and to growth and development of children.

**Emily Bango** (ANT/AAS Take 5 2008) received the Award for Athletic Leadership. This award recognizes the positive contributions athletes make to the campus community. It is awarded to a student athlete who has demonstrated leadership within their club or varsity sport while also making significant contributions to other aspects of campus life.

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## 2007-2008 Undergraduate Anthropology Council

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Participant Observer Editor: Colette Carmouche ('08)

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**SPOTLIGHT ON:****Brooks****Landing**

Coming back to school this past fall (2006) students may have noticed some orange fences and piles of dirt across the bridge in the neighborhood known as the 19th ward. These piles of dirt were the result of the official groundbreaking ceremony, presided over by President Seligman, for the Brooks Landing development project. Over the past 20 years, different plans have been laid on the table for the Brooks Landing Project in Rochester's 19th ward at different times by different organizations and now, it seems, some movement is actually being made on it. That fall I personally didn't think too much about these changes until a few months into the semester when I was assigned a group archival ethnography assignment (meaning we had to choose a historical event, do archival research and write an ethnographic analysis of it) in my Anthropology 291 course. In our group (Jesse Bia, Devin Opotzner and Kirk Simpson) meeting, Kirk Simpson, student and Rochester resident, suggested we look into the Brooks Landing project since it was once again back in the headlines. At Kirk's recommendation and after reading a couple articles that barely scratched the surface of this whole history of this project, our interest in the area was sufficiently piqued. Ultimately we became interested in specifically answering why, over the years, the development fluctuated from being very prominent in university and community discourse and then completely dropped from discussion at other times, and what roles each major player (the 19th ward community, the UR and the City of Rochester) have taken. The following is a summary of our findings:

Although the 19th ward has a long, rich history, in terms of this project the most important events in its history were the 1964 summer race riots that took place in the 3rd and 7th wards of Rochester. After these riots, people's fears about their safety were capitalized upon by realtors interested in selling new suburban developments and the 19th ward was changed from one of the most desirable neighborhoods which had a strong, close knit community into a low-income undeveloped neighborhood, which, due to a presence of more renters than homeowners and a sudden vacuum of families followed by businesses, lost the community aspect it previously had. In addition, due to illegal redlining techniques used by many realtors, the race demographics were changed as certain houses were only shown to black or white families, depending on where the house was, and the neighborhood changed from a primarily white neighborhood to a primarily black neighborhood. As Jesse, who focused on the neighborhood, concluded, the important outcome of these changes was the disintegration of the business bloc and community of this neighborhood. Fast forward to 1985 when the first proposal was approved for the Brooks Landing project - as time went on the project has been painted in many different motivations, sometimes it's been about revitalizing the 19th ward, sometimes it's been about providing a more desirable off campus retreat for UR students and to finally extend the UR's reach across the river, and sometimes it's been about being part of a riverfront revitalization project spanning the whole of the Genesee, and as part of a national trend in cities to revitalize natural resources. Now 20 years the later the project is finally moving and Kirk, who focused on the development companies and the city, came to the conclusion that this comes from the fact that each player was finally working together - UR's interests were recognized (one of the included buildings is a hotel), the community's through the inclusion of Urban Brew coffee shop which

## Congratulation to the Class of 2007!

MARIANA PAULA BOJACA  
Double Major in International Relations

CARLO FUSCO

DAVID REUBEN LADON  
Minor in Music

ELINE LIU  
Minor in Studio Arts

ADAM H. MACHSON-CARTER  
PHI BETA KAPPA

GABRIEL GEORGE MALSEPTIC  
Minor in Psychology and Spanish

SHANNON MARGARET MILLER  
Double Major in History

NISHA RACHANA PUNTAMBEKAR  
HONORS in Anthropology

DANIEL DONOVAN RUDOLPH  
Minor in Political Science and Clinical  
Psychology

BLADIMIR J. SANTAMARIA

JONATHAN RENWICK STULBERG

SUE JEAN YI  
Double Major in African American Studies

EMILY LYNN ZALE  
PHI BETA KAPPA  
Double Major in Psychology  
Minor in Biology

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*(continued from page 4)* the inclusion of Urban Brew coffee shop which is intended to be community run, and finally the city's through developing this along the riverfront, improving the city's aesthetics and business. When the focus became more about an integration of community with the UR rather than a supplanting of the UR in the community, it moved forward much more effectively. In my own focus on the UR's role in this, I came to the conclusion that ultimately the University's interest in this project came first from an interest in developing the status, traditional image, and marketability of the University, and secondly in response to student expectations; integrating into the community was never a real University objective until the developments the UR wanted for its campus became contingent upon community involvement, and even at that

was avoided if at all possible for many years. In attempting to maintain good relations with both the community and the student body, both of whom tended to have differing views on this project, the University was often presenting multiple images and opinions of this project, which complicated its reception by students. Student expectations only became important when their concern was voiced loud enough to become an issue in attracting students. However, rather than point fingers to the past, we can hopefully look forward to a future with the 19th ward developing back into the fine community it historically has been, with UR students becoming a part of that, not supplanting it. If interested in original project, please contact Devin Opotzner.

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## God Bless You, Mr. Vonnegut

Kurt Vonnegut was not a successful anthropology student. In the late 1940's, Vonnegut studied for a Masters degree at the University of Chicago, but left after two years when his masters thesis was rejected. He would later receive his degree when the department accepted "Cats Cradle" in place of his thesis. Still, his numerous books and short stories reflected his background as and anthropology student. The American Anthropological Association's (AAA) Code of Ethics identifies "moral obligations...to the scholarly discipline, to the wider society and culture, and to the human species, other species, and the environment."

Vonnegut deals with these moral obligations in books like *God Bless You Mr. Rosewater*, *Slaughterhouse Five*, and *Cats Cradle*. Time and time again, Vonnegut returned to essential anthropological discussions of identity, kinship, and social mores. In *Slapstick*, he explores a world where new family structures foster broader interdependence. *Mother Night* tells the story of a former Nazi propagandist whose past emerges in contemporary America, destroying the world he made for himself. In *Fates Worse than Death*, he illustrates his fantasy of people returning to folk societies. From science fiction to absurd realism, Vonnegut hashes out societies most pressing issues, like war, economics, education, and the collapse of American social interconnectedness.

Vonnegut critically analyzes what we know to be real and validates perspectival knowledge through his characters and narrative monologues. While Margaret Mead compared ethnographic findings in Papua New Guinea with American customs and practices around adolescence and psychosexual development, Vonnegut uses fiction to attain a similar analytic goal.

Both subtly and explicitly, he creates situations and new worlds from which we are to draw questions about the way we live our lives. Through his portrayal of society with many exaggerations and science-fiction twists, he challenges the reader to become more conscious of his or her religious and political ideals, notions of community, consumption patterns, concepts of happiness, and other perspectives that he or she takes for granted.

Aren't asking these questions a key part in the ethnographic method? One must be conscious of his or her own subjectivity in order to fairly represent a different community. The discipline has arrived at a respect for contextual knowledge and differing perspective. Respecting another's world-view is an intrinsic part of fulfilling the aforementioned moral obligations toward the human species. This is not to say Vonnegut was a moral relativist. On the contrary, it was his respect for human beings that shaped his firm stances about Reagan-era economic policies, US foreign policy, racism, and other social issues. In an interview in 2002 for FoxNews.com, Vonnegut stated: "One of the great American tragedies is to have participated in a just war. It's been possible for politicians and movie-makers to encourage us we're always good guys. The Second World War absolutely had to be fought. I wouldn't have missed it for the world. But we never talk about the people we kill. This is never spoken of." Challenging his readers to open up their minds to alternative perspectives was a key element of his work. Reading Vonnegut's fiction complimented the ethnographic literature I read for class in the development of my own set of values about respecting humanity.

- David Ladon

## Faculty News

This year Professor Ernestine McHugh presented two papers at conferences, "Epistemologies of Suffering and the (Re)Constitution of Self" for a panel in honor of Gananath Obeyesekere, a former Morgan lecturer, at the Annual Conference on South Asia at the University of Wisconsin; and another entitled "'God is in your heart': Re-imagining self and the sacred in the Himalaya" for the meetings of the Society for Psychological Anthropology.

She is teaching a seminar on Women and Religion in the Fall (ANT 240), and anthropology majors who want to come over to Eastman are welcome to join that!

## Alumni Updates... What are UR Grads Doing...?



Rob McKee (PhD, 1995) and Weng Naiqun (PhD, 1993) at the intercongress of the International Union of Anthropological and Ethnological Sciences, Cape Town, South Africa, 3-7 December 2006. The theme was 'Transcending postcolonial conditions: Toward alternative modernities'; Jean and John Comaroff were the keynote speakers. Naiqun, a professor with the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences' Institute of Ethnology and Anthropology, is on the organizing committee for the IUAES's 2008 congress to be held in Kunming, China. Rob is with SIL International as a consultant, based in Nairobi, Kenya. SIL is to publish a revised version of his dissertation later this year or sometime next.

Last spring Anna Barnes (BA 2004) had the opportunity to be the official notetaker for the Participatory Action Research Workshops, facilitated by the Center

for Cultural Understanding and Change at the Field Museum. About three months ago, she began working at CLOCC- the Consortium to Lower Obesity in Chicago Children (affiliated with Children's Memorial Hospital). Barnes is in the process of writing a curriculum to train a group of teens to become 'community health ambassadors.' These students, the Go Team, will travel around the city visiting after-school programs and community-based organizations to educate younger children on healthy eating and fitness. The team of teens will be comprised of student from six different communities, placing a large emphasis on learning about cultural differences and notions of health. Their hope is that these students will also become advocates for healthy lifestyles in their neighborhoods.

**Something new to report?**

**please contact us...**

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## Spotlight on New Professors

The most recent additions to the Anthropology Department and their course offerings:

DANIEL REICHMAN received his MA and PhD in socio-cultural anthropology from Cornell University. Before coming to Rochester, he taught at Brandeis University. His research focuses on cultural responses to economic change, and he has carried out field research in Honduras since 2001. His current book project, *Broken Idols: Globalization as Alienation in Rural Honduras*, focuses on the relationship between emigration to the United States, a recent boom in evangelical religion, and changes in coffee production in a small Honduran town.

**ANT 224: Anthropology of Development** What is progress? Are universal theories of development possible? This course introduces students to major trends in the anthropological study of international development through ethnographic case studies. Topics include: indigenous people and development, the debate over sweatshops, and the role of culture in economic life.

ELEANA KIM is a cultural anthropologist (Ph.D., NYU) and currently a postdoctoral fellow at the Center for Korean Studies at UCLA. Her research interests include nationalism, kinship, citizenship, transnational social movements, and media. Her ethnographic work on transnational adoption focused on the emergence of a transnational movement of adult Korean adoptees and involved in-depth fieldwork in the U.S. and in South Korea. Her current projects include a study of a global network of Korean adoptee artists and the transnational circulation of their work in the context of dominant artistic scenes and aesthetic canons. She is also developing a second ethnographic project that examines the transnational religious imaginaries of South Korean missionaries in Asia. Her research has been supported by grants from the Social Science Research Council and the Fulbright Commission, and her writing has appeared in *Social Text*, *Visual Anthropology Review* and a number of collected volumes.



**ANT 225: The Social Uses of Media: Anthropological Perspectives on Media in Global and Local Contexts**

This course introduces students to the study of media from an anthropological perspective. We will examine constructions of media as objects of social scientific analysis, as both textual artifacts and social practice. Questions that guide the course are, What is “the media”? How have recent transformations in global capital and communications technology altered how we consume, analyze and produce media? What can the study of media tell us about social life and the imagination? We will seek to understand the media’s role in producing national and transnational public spheres, focusing on a range of media formations, from multinational corporate structures to indigenous and diasporic productions, to question media’s power to shape subjectivities and conceptions of cultural difference. We will examine print journalism, television, film, radio, advertising, and visual art in both local and global contexts. Students will be encouraged to incorporate media analysis and media production in their own ethnographic projects.