

# Ear to the Ground

Spring 2004

Volume 2, Issue 1

## From the Chair

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Dear Alumni and Friends,

This is the second newsletter from the Department of Anthropology and the first to be mailed to our alumni. We intend for it to appear twice a year and function as a channel of communication. We will keep you informed of the projects that engage our faculty and students, and we hope you will let us know how you have put your anthropology degree to use. To read the inaugural newsletter from fall 2003, please visit our web site: <http://www.ou.edu/anthropology>.

Like the rest of the university, the Department of Anthropology remains committed to maintaining high academic standards despite uncertain economic times. This year, we welcomed our largest class of incoming graduate students in recent memory as well as four visiting professors. As you will read, our undergraduate students rate the major very highly. In addition to teaching, the members of the faculty continue to be productive scholars, presenting at professional meetings and publishing their research.

We welcome your comments and updates on your activities through our e-mail address: [anthro@ou.edu](mailto:anthro@ou.edu). Please visit whenever you are in Norman.

Sincerely,  
**Pat Gilman**

Chair  
[pgilman@ou.edu](mailto:pgilman@ou.edu)

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The University of Oklahoma  
is an equal opportunity  
institution.

Reminder:

Graduation Lunch, 12:30 pm

On Saturday,

May 8 in the 9th Floor Lounge of Dale Hall Tower!



## ***Survey Says!*** **Anthropology Majors the Most “Satisfied”**

Every spring the University of Oklahoma surveys its graduating seniors about the educational environment in their majors. Students in the Department of Anthropology consistently rated their undergraduate experience significantly higher than the average OU student did. In two categories — academic advising and attitude of faculty toward students — the Department of Anthropology scored the highest marks of all 20 majors in the College of Arts and Sciences.

### 2003 Student Satisfaction Assessment average scores

	OU overall	Arts and Sciences	Anthropology
Academic advising	3.59	3.74	4.17
Instruction in major	3.87	4.02	4.17
Attitude of faculty	3.91	3.96	4.33
In general	4.16	4.18	4.21

Key:

Very satisfied = 5    Satisfied = 4    Neutral = 3    Dissatisfied = 2    Very dissatisfied = 1

**Dr. Karl Rambo**, undergraduate adviser, attributes the high marks from our majors to two decisions the department committed to: ensuring that only Ph.D.-holding faculty teach courses above the sophomore level and capping all classes required for the major at 35 students.

Considering the results of the survey, Rambo says, “Our students write more papers, have a higher opinion about the major, and value the content and quality of our teaching.” The higher standards of the department are reflected in the percentage of graduating majors who rate their overall learning environment “excellent.” While only 14 percent of OU seniors gave their home department this score, 28 percent of anthropology graduates did.

While the scores reflect steady improvement over the past three years, the Department acknowledges one area where it could improve. Rambo admits, “We have capable students who have learned to read, assess information, and communicate, yet we’re not so good at directing students toward vocational possibilities.”

To that end, the Department would like to strengthen its connections to the larger community. The faculty encourage alumni to send them notices of job openings so they can circulate them among the students. A background in anthropology prepares students for a variety of careers, but it is often a challenge to provide students with the contacts necessary to take their skills into the workplace.

## *New Traditions*

# Margaret Mead Film and Video Festival Makes First-Ever Stop in Oklahoma

Over six weeks in September and October, the Sam Noble Oklahoma Museum of Natural History hosted the Margaret Mead Traveling Film and Video Festival. This prestigious competition of ethnographic documentaries is juried by the American Museum of Natural History and draws entrants from around the world. It has never before made a stop in the state of Oklahoma.

**Interested in submitting an article? Please email [anthro@ou.edu](mailto:anthro@ou.edu)!**

The free screenings took place in the museum's Kerr Auditorium, featuring twelve films organized into six themes like women and tradition, hidden histories of the United States, and love and war. Faculty from the Department of Anthropology facilitated discussion of the films after each presentation.

Professor **Lesley Rankin-Hill**, who led the discussion for the opening night film about Afghanistan told the Oklahoma Daily, "There are two things you should get out of anything you watch from another culture.

First you have to look at what is universally human and similar about the culture, and the second thing is what are the differences."

Other faculty presenters included **Mary Katherine Crabb, Jason Jackson, Peter Cahn, Alex Dent** and **Karl Rambo**. The Friends of the Museum funded the program. **Linda Coldwell**, the museum's publications and promotions director was so pleased at the turnout from students and community members that she hopes to make this an annual event.



**A video still from "Wedding in Ramullah," part of the Margaret Mead Film and Video Festival.**

## ***Root for the Home Team***

The Department of Anthropology was the inaugural host for a new pre-football program sponsored by the College of Arts and Sciences. Before the first home game of the season on August 30 against North Texas, alumni and guests could learn about the activities of the Department of Anthropology, eat lunch and enjoy the air-conditioned comfort of newly renovated Ellison Hall.

**Bob Brooks**, director of the Oklahoma

Archaeological Survey, displayed pottery and skeletal remains to illustrate Oklahoma's past. **Gus Palmer Jr.**, director of the Native American language program, provided translations of the word "football" into the five indigenous languages taught by the Department. Chairwoman **Pat Gilman** spoke to current and past students about anthropology at OU. She expressed optimism that this can become a regular activity every fall, taking advantage of the football crowds to showcase the university's academic strengths.

## ***Faculty in the News*** **Cuba Expert Gives Guest Lecture**

**Mary Katherine Crabb**, a medical anthropologist, was an invited speaker at Missouri Southern State University on October 3. A medical anthropologist, who spent 11 months in Havana and Santiago, Cuba, Crabb presented a public lecture entitled "Dengue, 1997: Case Study of a Cuban Epidemic." She also offered faculty and students a brown bag talk on "Post Socialism and Organized Crime: A Potential Problem for Cuba in the New Millennium." Her visit was part of the university's special emphasis on Cuba during the fall, which included concerts, films, and musical performances. Missouri Southern State University's art gallery also hosted Crabb's photography exhibit, "City on the Edge of Forever: Havana, 1998."

**Mary Katherine Crabb and Alex Dent at the Department holiday party.**



## **Live from Nashville**

Look for OU visiting professor **Alex Dent** on the Country Music Channel in February. He will appear in a two-part program called "Murder, They Wrote," part of the network's Controversy series.

In the interview, Dent discusses Johnny Cash's "Folsom Prison Blues" and the circulation of murder ballads in country music. During the McCarthy and Vietnam eras, country music went underground, associating itself with left-wing politics. There's been a resurgence of rebellious music, though this time against a more abstract authority.

This trend connects to his own research about country music in Brazil.

## *Getting Outfitted*

# Graduate Students Sell T-Shirts

The Anthropology Graduate Student Association is selling T-shirts with an original emblem that represents the four fields of the discipline. The shirts are crimson with the logo in white.

Small, medium and large sizes cost 10 dollars per shirt with extra-large sizes costing 12 dollars. You may order a shirt by contacting AGSA at ouagsa@yahoo.com. The proceeds from the sale go to support speaker series and graduate student activities throughout the year.

### Contact Us !

To contribute to the  
*Anthropology Scholarship Fund*  
or submit news about yourself  
for a future newsletter, please  
contact the departmental office.  
(405) 325-3261 or fax (405) 325-  
7386

## *Conference Notes*

# Students and Faculty Present Research at AAs

The American Anthropological Association held its 102<sup>nd</sup> annual meeting this November in Chicago. Several members of the OU Department of Anthropology appeared on the conference program.

### Graduate students:

**Debi Colbert** received funding from the OU Graduate College to attend the conference and present her poster: "Eastern Algonquian Performance as a Liminal Bridge for Peace."

**Amy Spears** gave a paper entitled "Citizenship and Border Rights: Tohono O'odham at the U.S.-Mexico Border."

### Faculty:

**Mary Katherine Crabb** appeared on an invited panel with a paper called "Health, Propaganda and the Infectious Other: A Critical Reading of Biowarfare Allegations between the United States and Cuba."

**Jason B. Jackson** gave a paper with the title, "Techniques of Traditionalization in Ceremonial Ground Oratory: Native American Speechmaking in Eastern Oklahoma."

**Sean O'Neill** was part of a panel on indigenous linguistics with his paper, "The Evolution of Time-Perspective in Grammar and Oral Literature: Universal and Culturally Specific Influences, as Illustrated in the Pacific Coast Division of the Athabaskan Family."

Outgoing president of the Association for Africanist Anthropology **Betty Harris** delivered a distinguished lecture called, "South Africa, Globalization, and Reconciliation: Renegotiating the Past, Building the Future."



## ***Upcoming Events***

# **Speaker Series on Folklore and Linguistics**

Anthropology faculty and Sam Noble Oklahoma Museum Natural History curator **Jason B. Jackson** has put together a series of speakers for the spring. The talks will take place in the museum and be free and open to the public.

### **March 4, 2004**

Richard Bauman

Distinguished Professor of Folklore, Anthropology *and* Communications and Culture

Departments of Folklore and Ethnomusicology, Anthropology *and* Communications and Culture

Indiana University

Bloomington, Indiana

### **March 11, 2004**

Victoria Levine

Professor of Ethnomusicology

School of Music

Colorado College

Colorado Springs, Colorado

### **March 25, 2004**

Tom Mould

Assistant Professor of Folklore

Department of English

Elon University

Elon, North Carolina

### **April 1, 2004**

Chris Wilson

J. B. Jackson Professor of Cultural Landscape Studies

School of Architecture and Planning

University of New Mexico

Albuquerque, New Mexico



For more information on  
events and programs offered  
by the department, consult our  
webpage:  
[www.ou.edu/anthropology](http://www.ou.edu/anthropology)

The Anthropology Graduate Student Association plans an event with Dr. Bauman in conjunction with his visit to campus. They are also hosting two additional guest lectures.

In February, Dr. Beth Conklin from Vanderbilt University will speak about her research among the Wari' Indians of Brazil.

Dr. Danielle Moretti-Langholtz of the College of William and Mary will come to OU in April. She received her Ph.D. from OU in 1989 and is now director of the American Indian Resource Center.

## ***Alumni Notes***

### **Where Are They Now?**

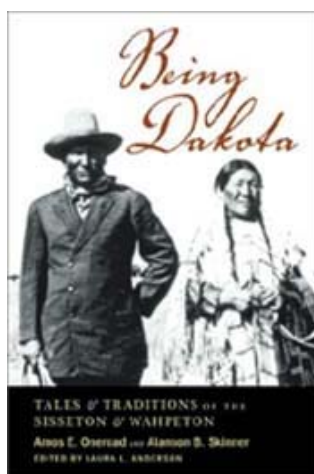
Dr. **Daniel Swan** has left his post as senior curator at the Gilcrease Museum to become the Director of the Chucalissa Museum and an associate professor of anthropology at the University of Memphis. His second book, *Art of the Osage*, will be published in February by the University of Washington Press.

**Julia Forrester-Sellers** (B.A. 1997) obtained her J.D. from the University of Tulsa with honors in 2000. She is now an attorney practicing in Tulsa with a specialty in litigation. Her clients have included healthcare providers, physicians, and rental car agencies.

## ***Bookshelf***

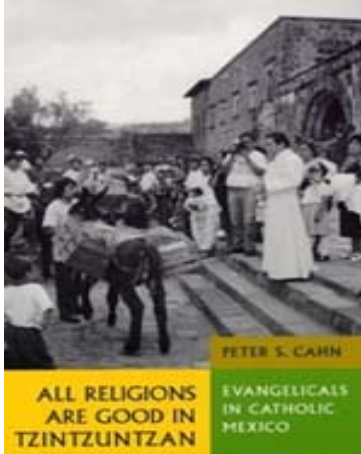
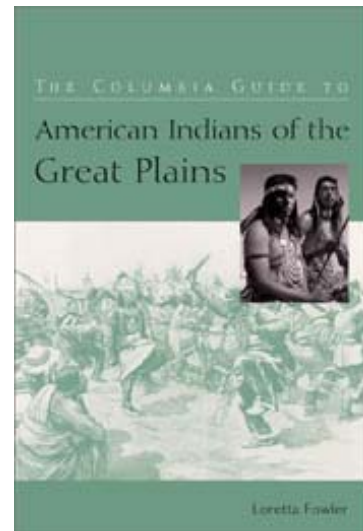
### **Faculty Publish New Books in 2003**

**Paul Minnis** edited *People and Plants in Ancient Eastern North America*, which was published by Smithsonian Institution Press. Its companion volume, *People and Plants in Ancient Western North America*, will appear in 2004. Together, they provide a sweeping view of how humans and plants are interconnected.



**Laura L. Anderson** edited *Being Dakota: Tales and Traditions of the Sisseton and Wahpeton*, which has been published by the Minnesota Historical Society. Based on the lives of Amos Omerod and Alanson Skinner, the book presents stories and traditions of the Eastern Sioux.

**Loretta Fowler's** book *The Columbia Guide to American Indians of the Great Plains* was published by Columbia University Press. In it she tackles the stereotypes of Native Americans from Sacajawea to Crazy Horse, exposing a more dynamic history of the peoples of the Plains. Professor Fowler has won a Wenner-Gren grant to begin an archival project that will produce a regional synthesis of Plains Indians.



**Peter S. Cahn** wrote *All Religions Are Good in Tzintzuntzan: Evangelicals in Catholic Mexico* about religious conversion in Latin America. The book, published by the University of Texas Press, describes the reasons that members of one Mexican community have joined Pentecostal churches and how the majority Roman Catholic Church is responding to the challenge.

