



# Culture Incribed

The Newsletter of the Department of Anthropology

May 13, 2004, Vol. I, Issue 1



## Anthropologist of the Fortnight

Franz Boas (b. Germany, 1858–1942)

Often considered the “father of American Anthropology,” Boas became Columbia University’s first professor of anthropology in 1899. Best known for the theory of cultural relativism, Boas’ scientific approach to anthropology and the use of a “four-field approach” signify the importance of analyzing culture in all of its characteristics.

Boas criticized the notion that race could be used to explain variation in the natural and social sciences and found that no utterly pure race exists for humans. Boas taught and inspired a generation of anthropologists, most notably Margaret Mead and Ruth Benedict.

## Quotation of the Fortnight

*The existence of any pure race with special endowments is a myth, as is the belief that there are races all of whose members are foredoomed to eternal inferiority.* F. Boas

## Anthropological Terms of Interest

By Elizabeth Campos

Anthropology is the study of human beings. **Linguistic** and **cultural anthropology** study communication and culture, **physical anthropology** studies biological aspects of humans and **archaeology** studies human behavior through the material remains of modern and historic groups.

## Culture Quip

By Mary Anderson

## “Anthros” Closer to Home

### The End of an Era

By Roger LaJeunesse

Geraldine Morales, aka Geri, will be retiring on June 30<sup>th</sup>, 2004. Geri has been the department’s secretary since its inception in 1969, and because of recent administrative changes in the College of Social Sciences, she’ll have the unique distinction of being the department’s *only* secretary.

Countless numbers of students have benefited from Geri’s kindness. She’s been there for them when they needed a sympathetic ear, or when they were desperate to clear an administrative hurdle that prevented them from graduating or making up an incomplete. On occasion she’d intercede on their behalf with a “cranky” faculty member, making a bad situation a little bit better. Geri was always interested in their personal lives, following up on things that often mattered most to the student, such as relationships, children, weddings, etc.. When our students were helped by Geri they didn’t realize that their brief encounter had made them a friend for life.

The anthropology faculty are going to miss her the most. She’s been our sounding board, our friend, and, on countless occasions, a smiling face when we’ve had a very bad day.

Geri’s life is now pointed in the direction of travel, working on her new house, and playing the important role of grandmother to Nathan and Hannah. The people in this department will always have an important place in Geri’s heart, but there are new things for her to do, new people for her to meet and help, and another side of life to be lived.

Geri, thanks for a job well done and thanks for putting up with the likes of us.

## **A Student's Farewell to "Geri"**

By Tara Ders

As this is my second semester at Fresno State I have not had the liberty to get to know Geri as well as many other students and faculty. Fortunately, I had the opportunity to sit down with Geri and discuss her career at Fresno State and find out what she intends to do in the years to come. In 1968, Geri was hired in the Fresno State Personnel Department and it was not until 1969 (when Anthropology and Sociology separated to become independent departments) that she became the secretary for anthropology. As Geri told me, the most enjoyable aspect of her job, "is being surrounded by students. It gives me great pleasure when an alumnus comes back to visit. I love hearing their success stories after graduation. My faculty has given me so much joy over the years. I will take with me many wonderful memories, from Dr. Beatty, Jr. our founding father, Dirk van der Elst who laid the foundation, Roger LaJeunesse who has brought the department to where it is now, and of course, Mary Ludwig, a wonderful friend, who left us too soon."

As many of you know, Geri is a social person and she plans to use her social skills during her retirement as a volunteer worker for Children's Hospital. When asked for parting comments for faculty and students Geri replied, "Try not to forget me and do the best you can under the present budget situation. Students, never think that your education is complete, there is more to learn just around the corner. I will not be here but I will never forget the time I spent here."

From all the students of anthropology whose lives you have touched, we wish you all the best in your future endeavors. We WILL miss you!

## **AnthroNews**

### **Department Web Pages Unveiled**

The Anthropology Department's web pages were recently redesigned and updated. Please visit us at: [www.csufresno.edu/Anthropology](http://www.csufresno.edu/Anthropology)

### **Ancient Empires: Archeology for the Classroom**

Dr. John Pryor will teach a course emphasizing Archeology for grade school classrooms during the July 16-18 weekend. For information call 278-5150.

## **Arthur Kleinman Lecture**

On April 1<sup>st</sup>, the College of Social Sciences and the Department of Anthropology hosted a lecture by Arthur Kleinman, MD entitled, "Culture & Depression: Studies in Anthropology and Cross-Cultural Psychiatry of Affect and Disorder." Kleinman is a distinguished Professor of Medical Anthropology and Psychiatry at the Harvard Medical School and a Professor of Social Anthropology at Harvard. Anthropology major Crystal Alvarez wrote the following.

## **Our Experience Shapes Our Reality**

By Crystal Alvarez

Dr. Kleinman spoke to a "standing room only" audience of over 300 people. He began by discussing how the world is a dangerous place and that danger is central to the human condition. He described the way that moral experience has acted on the human condition throughout history through a discussion of suffering. Suffering was once a more central and arguably "acceptable" quality of life. It has since become demoralized through a biomedical approach to health and illness which has dominated experience since the Enlightenment.

Dr. Kleinman's response to this is to focus on human experience. Experience is moral because it is grounded in moral worlds. By balancing cultural representations, social experience and subjectivity, Dr. Kleinman's described how human experience of things (e.g., suffering) is actually altering the world we inhabit. Kleinman concluded by stating that although we are undergoing times of fundamental change, we are becoming better equipped to face the future.

## **Up-Coming Events**

Compiled by Morghan Young

"The Cultural Tapestry of the Valley" is currently featuring Anthropologist Dr. Frank Ng among other items of interest. You can visit this virtual display at: [www.csufresno.edu/tapestry/showcase/default.html](http://www.csufresno.edu/tapestry/showcase/default.html)

### **Editor's Note:**

As the first issue of this newsletter, I want to thank the all-student editorial board whose efforts made this project a success. - James Mullooly

### **Contributing Editorial Board**

Crystal Alvarez Mary Anderson Elizabeth Campos Tara Ders Gilberto Lopez Morghan Young  
**Faculty Advisor:** James Mullooly, PhD **Website:** [www.csufresno.edu/Anthropology/newsletter](http://www.csufresno.edu/Anthropology/newsletter)