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COVER PHOTO: Students in the Summer 2011 archaeology field school work on the Tobacco Barn Quarter site at James Madison's Montpelier (Photograph by Matthew Reeves).
A Special Note from the Editor-in-Chief

Welcome to *Collegiate Anthropologist*. If this is your first time with us, please allow me to introduce our publication. The *Collegiate Anthropologist* is a peer-reviewed journal of anthropology published by the SUNY Potsdam Department of Anthropology. Undergraduates are the authors and editors of the articles, and an anthropology professor serves as our faculty advisor and publisher.

The *Collegiate* seeks to publish original work done by students in all areas of anthropology. The anthropology department at SUNY Potsdam adheres to the five-field approach, dividing anthropology into the following fields: cultural anthropology, linguistic anthropology, archaeology, biological anthropology, and applied anthropology. Each field intertwines with the others and contains vast opportunities for experiencing, learning about, and exploring the diversity of human life.

As we ever strive to increase the quality of each publication, the editorial board has decided to make a change. Previously published twice a year, the *Collegiate* will become an annual publication beginning with this issue. We believe that this change will let us be more selective with our major papers, while allowing us to include more features and color photographs throughout each issue. We hope this change will augment the reader’s engagement with the various applications of anthropology.

In the past, the deadline for submissions fell at the beginning of each semester. However, with the change to an annual publication, the deadline for submissions will now be at the end of the fall semester. The *Collegiate* will be published during the spring semester. For those considering submitting their work, many of our submissions are term papers from previous semesters. If you choose to do this, please keep in mind that it must show original research, and not simply be a review of existing literature. In addition, we encourage submissions of photo essays, reflections on field schools and internships, as well as undergraduate research completed independently or through the Presidential Scholars and Kilmer Undergraduate Research programs.

We hope you enjoy this issue and that it inspires you to discover the world around you.

Sincerely,

Kara Chapin

Editor-in-Chief
Introducing our New Faculty:
Drs. Jennifer Campbell and Tim Messner

Jillian Cullen and Corinne Gabriele

This fall 2012 semester not only brought new students to SUNY Potsdam, but new professors as well. The Department of Anthropology has had the pleasure of welcoming two new faculty members this year—Dr. Jennifer Campbell and Dr. Timothy Messner.

Our new cultural anthropology professor, Dr. Campbell, is originally from Newfoundland and received her Ph.D. from the University of Toronto. In her fieldwork, Dr. Campbell specializes in Islamic architecture; specifically, she is interested in the architectural reuse of heritage structures and sites in Northern Pakistan and is the co-director of the Caravanserai Networks Project. While doing a regional architectural survey of Mughal sites in 2006, there became an increase of political unrest in the area, and the danger to anthropologists working near the border forced her to reconsider the direction of her doctoral research. She turned from a large-scale study to a more detailed analysis of three sites to consider how they were used over time. She

Dr. Campbell having tea in the city of Peshawar, Pakistan (Courtesy of Dr. Campbell).
began exploring the relationship between heritage sites and identity (national and personal), and as a result, her work is of interest to both cultural anthropologists and archaeologists.

In her research, Dr. Campbell develops 3D models of architectural sites and uses the models to understand how they have changed. Among other things, as a new professor at SUNY Potsdam, Dr. Campbell hopes to integrate her interest in technology and how it is utilized by different cultures into the curriculum of a course. Dr. Campbell, who enjoys watching YouTube videos, is considering trying a model similar to that of Michael Wesch, who wrote about the ethnography of YouTube. She would like to try this model here, so students can study online communities. Dr. Campbell’s plans for her students continue this summer, when she hopes to go back to India to establish connections with communities that will hopefully evolve into a fieldwork opportunity for select students by 2014. Her final career goals are to train her students to think critically and give them the tools and opportunities to experience the world the way she has been able to.

When it comes to a theoretical perspective, Dr. Campbell prefers not to ascribe to a particular theory, believing it to be too limiting. Instead, she prefers to participate in ‘theoretical window shopping,’ borrowing from different perspectives to analyze her data. She says: “Anthropology, like a table, needs stable legs. The legs in this situation are theory and methodology.” When asked whom she admired in the field, Dr. Campbell replied that she especially admired the way Lynn Meskell studies archaeology as an anthropologist and deals with modern issues. Her favorite anthropological quotation is, “Culture is man’s extrasomatic means of adaptation.”

For fun, Dr. Campbell is currently renovating her house. She is also a sports fan, stating that when it comes to football she roots for the Chicago Bears and that she is looking forward to being the academic advisor for the cross country team here at SUNY Potsdam.

Dr. Campbell is excited to teach ‘Anthropology of Architecture’ in the spring semester and is currently working on a new course called, ‘Anthropology of New Technology’ which discusses how media shapes our own and other cultures.

Dr. Timothy Messner is our new assistant professor of archaeology and, like Dr. Campbell, joined us last fall. Growing up in Scranton, Pennsylvania, Dr. Messner always had a love of the outdoors. His mother, an avid collector of natural wonders, instilled in him a “curiosity in the natural world.” Reflecting on his childhood, he considered that this may have been the foundation for his interest in the environment and its human elements. In fact, when asked if he had to choose another profession besides archaeology, his response was either a farmer
or a woodsman.

While an undergraduate, Dr. Messner spent any moment he could spare walking cornfields looking for artifacts. He also took part in a field school held by Temple University in Philadelphia. The site was located on the Delaware River and dated from the Archaic to Late Woodland period. Several years later, he graduated from Temple University with his Ph.D. For his dissertation, Dr. Messner focused on prehistoric plant use in the Americas by studying microscopic residue on stone tools. The theoretical perspective of processual archaeology helps him to answer many of the questions he faces in his research, such as a society’s subsistence practices.

Since moving from Wisconsin, where he taught as an adjunct professor, Dr. Messner has been enjoying Potsdam’s rural location. Considering that a few of his interests include hiking, hunting, and gardening, the North Country is the perfect place to be. He has also been practicing the guitar for the past couple of years and is a fan of a wide range of music genres. One specifically mentioned was Fugazi, an American indie rock/punk band.

Dr. Messner also is passionate about experimental archaeology. He explained that archaeology is not a field where you will make a lot of money, so you have to let
Jillian Cullen is a junior archaeological studies and history major from Roselle Park, New Jersey. She is interested in doing ethnoarchaeology in Eastern Africa.

Corinne Gabriele is a freshman this year at SUNY Potsdam and a new member of the Collegiate Anthropologist. She is majoring in archaeology and is working towards both a museum studies and history minor.
Excavating at James Madison’s Montpelier: A Field School Experience

HANNAH FLEMMING

Last summer, I spent the month of July excavating at Montpelier, President James Madison’s Virginia home. In between our frequent water breaks (to prevent dehydration under the unrelenting Virginian sun), I learned basic field excavation techniques, filled out detailed stratigraphy sheets, created plan and profile views, and took various types of samples. In total, I spent 24 days at what was called the Tobacco Barn Quarter North Block site helping to excavate about 65 five by five foot units.

Our field school routine

Each day began with the ring of my alarm clock, flashing 6:25 A.M. Lunches were packed the night before (peanut butter and jelly—the staple for archaeologists working in the field), but the early morning craze was a sight to behold. Everyone was scrambling to get their lunches, fill their water bottles, and figure out who was on water duty for the day before rushing outside at 6:45 a.m. After a short drive to the dig site, which was located about one mile northwest of the main house, we set up our units, grabbing buckets, dustpans, and paperwork. Hours of digging provided plenty of time to talk with the interns and my fellow students, allowing all of us to become close friends. When the end of our workday finally rolled around at 4:30 PM, we were all exhausted, but excited about the work we were doing.

Nestled in the back woods of Virginia, Arlington House (where the archaeology students lived) offered a unique dimension to the field school experience. Though it had been converted into housing for archaeology students, Arlington House was original to the estate, and it housed thirty of us in six of its bedrooms. For the first several days we lived there, we had no electricity due to a storm; this meant that we had to use flashlights and had limited water (an interesting predicament for 30 people who are covered in clay and have been digging all day in 110 degree heat!). After the power was restored, we all enjoyed relaxing during the evenings and weekends by watching movies and eating first and second dinners.
Our fieldwork

The Montpelier archaeology team originally believed the Tobacco Barn Quarter to be the area where the enslaved field workers lived during the early 1800s. According to geological surveys, the area had not been disturbed (i.e. plowing or landscaping) since it was abandoned in the 1840s, which preserved the context of the site. As we excavated the site, we confirmed this and encountered material culture that one would regularly associate with a work area. Instead of ceramics and glass, which would indicate a living area, we uncovered artifacts such as tack and farming equipment, which may indicate a work yard. The dirt we encountered was mostly red clay. Aside from being difficult to trowel through, it was notorious for staining one’s clothing. We all quickly learned that it was not wise to wash your work clothes with your regular clothes—unless you wanted all of them to be covered in red clay stains.

During the second week of our field school, we found a narrow ditch that we believed to be associated with a structure designed to house a threshing machine. The structure would have measured 16 by 16 feet and would have been made of rough-hewn timbers and clay. During the third and fourth week, we found an H-shaped feature containing a posthole intersecting the square trench. We think this may have been installed to reinforce the original structure either because it was unstable or perhaps a second floor was added later.

In addition to fieldwork, I spent three days in the archaeology lab located on the property. During that time, we acquired many valuable skills, such as how to do gradient sorting, wet screening, flotation, and artifact processing. We also spent our weekends visiting many of the other historical sites that were nearby. Some of us traveled to Colonial Williamsburg, Historic Jamestown, and George Washington’s childhood home at Ferry Farm. While we were at Jamestown and Ferry Farm, we were excited to see the archaeological sites there as well.

Lessons

My time at Montpelier was
well spent; not only was I able to apply archaeological field and lab techniques I had previously only read about in textbooks, but I also gained valuable work experience and met other archaeology students from all over the country. Together, we learned about past peoples and how they lived their everyday lives. And further, this field school has greatly impacted my future, as I now know which aspect of archaeology I want to pursue. I have always been interested in historical archaeology, but I did not know which subfield I wanted to explore.

Now, after taking this field school, I know that I want to explore the lives of past African Americans, both enslaved and free, when I go to graduate school. Without the generous support of the individuals that made the Scott Powell Scholarship, I would not have been able to have this career-changing experience.

About the Author

Hannah Flemming is a senior majoring in Archaeological Studies. This fall, she will be attending Syracuse University as a Ph.D. student in Anthropology (with a concentration in African American archaeology). In her spare time, she enjoys baking and horseback riding.
PCBs and their Effects on the Women of Akwesasne

MICHELLE BENEDICT

Polychlorinated Biphenyls, or PCBs, are chemicals that were manufactured and used for coolants in transformers, capacitors, and electric motors, among other uses. They were manufactured domestically from 1929 until they were banned in 1979. Today, PCBs are still present in products and materials that were produced before the ban, such as fluorescent light ballasts, oil-based paints, and plastics (U.S. Environmental Protection Agency 2012). It has been discovered that PCBs are harmful to the environment and have caused illness around the world. This paper will provide a general overview of the effects and will also explore the effects that PCBs have had on women from the Akwesasne Mohawk Reservation in Northern New York.

General Effects on the Body

The first assessment on the harmful effects on PCBs was not done by the Environmental Protection Agency until 1987. Testing conducted on animal and human populations revealed that PCBs were, in fact, probable carcinogens (U.S. Environmental Protection Agency 2012). Since then, numerous studies have been conducted by various agencies and groups to find out exactly what kinds of effects that PCBs have on the environment and the human populations that live in and around the polluted areas.

PCBs have a number of effects on the human body. Immunological effects include a decrease in the size of the thymus gland, more susceptibility to pneumonia, and viral infections. The EPA has also noted that there are neurological effects associated with PCB exposure. Learning deficits, deficits in visual recognition, and deficits in short-term memory are all attributed to exposure to PCB toxins (U.S. Environmental Protection Agency 2012). PCB exposure is also related to alterations in the thyroid hormone levels. The thyroid hormones are critical for normal growth and development in humans (U.S. Environmental Protection Agency 2012). This is part of the cause of the detrimental reproductive deficits that occur in animal subjects as well as human populations exposed to these toxins.

Reproductive Effects

All of the aforementioned conditions caused by PCBs can be related to the reproductive effects suffered by many as a result of PCB exposure. Although a study by Stephen H. Safe (1995), reported no significant increase in the risk for breast cancer, problems with endometriosis, abnormal menstrual cycles, and fertility issues have been significant. G. M. Buck Louis and colleagues (2002) reported a five-fold increase in endometriosis in women exposed in the third trimester of pregnancy. A later study conducted by Mitchell M. Gaynor, M. D. (2005), attributed an increase in breast cancer in women to PCB levels and other environmental hazards. In another report by Buck et al. (2002), abnormal menstrual bleeding was also reported by the women in the study. The report did find that during the course of the study approximately half of the women were able to successfully conceive.
by the third menstrual cycle. Another 25% of the women studied were pregnant by the 12th menstrual cycle during the study (Buck Louis et al. 2009).

The study by Buck Louis et al. (2002: 83) was done at Lake Ontario, New York, and it found that women who consumed fish from the lake at least once a month were approximately 25% less likely to become pregnant per cycle than women who did not consume fish. Women with more cycles to become pregnant have been reported to be at risk of preterm delivery or having an infant of low birth weight. This study, however, did not take into consideration the male semen profiles despite the couple dependent nature of human conception (Buck Louis et al. 2002: 89-90). The PCBs found in the lake appear to be having a detrimental effect on healthy reproduction.

Developmental Impairments During Pregnancy

In addition to effects that can impair fertility and reproduction, PCBs also can have lasting effects on developing embryos that continue into childhood and beyond. When women are exposed to PCBs during pregnancy, their offspring are more likely to suffer from deficits in learning, visual recognition, and short-term memory. Behavioral problems have also been reported in children whose mothers were exposed to PCBs during pregnancy (U.S. Environmental Protection Agency 2012). The problems in behavior and development can put a label on these children that hinder their progress in school and beyond.

PCB Effects on the Mohawk Population

The St. Regis Mohawk reservation, also called Akwesasne, encompasses territory in Northern New York, Ontario, and Quebec, Canada. As of the 2010 U.S. Census, the population of the American portion of the reservation was 3,228 (U.S. Census Bureau 2010). Traditionally, the Mohawk people were known as horticulturalists throughout history. Mohawks grew a few crops but supplemented their diets by hunting and fishing along the St. Lawrence River (Miller et al. 2006). St. Regis Mohawk Tribal Records Officer Lillian Barton (telephone interview, April 26, 2012) revealed that Mohawk society...
has traditionally been a matrilineal one and that women have been seen as equals, and even superior, to men. The elder women have held special importance in society; some have served as the Clan Mothers of the Longhouse, who have chosen the male leaders of the Tribe. All children traditionally take the clan of their mother, not their father. Women also shared in equal division of labor. While the men would hunt, the women would stay close to the village to fish (Native Net 2005-2010). Both men and women shared in the cultivation and harvesting of the crops (Miller et al. 2006).

Ms. Barton also mentioned that, although some of the more traditional community members still practice the matriarchal ways and though the principle of women being sacred in society is still widely held by the members of the community, influence from Christian missionaries changed the society to the more patriarchal one that it is today. Though clans are still passed from mother to child, surnames are generally passed from the father to his children.

Akwesasne remained largely agricultural until quite recently, according to Ms. Barton. The community was composed of many farms, and many people relied on fishing to provide food for their families. Ms. Barton stated that electricity was not introduced to the reservation until 1952. The General Motors plant, which provided many Mohawk people with a source of income, was a large contributor to the pollution of the St. Lawrence River and the drastic change in lifestyle of the Mohawk people. Restrictions were placed on the number of fish that could be consumed from the St. Lawrence due to the high levels of mercury and other contaminants (Denham et al. 2005). This restriction was detrimental to the diets of the indigenous people. Fish had provided them with a lean protein and it had to be replaced with more high-fat meats such as beef and pork once the restrictions were put in place. These restrictions have been increasing problems for Native American populations, especially the Mohawks. Rising incidences of diabetes and heart disease can be partially attributed to this drastic change in diet. Native American populations are particularly susceptible to heart disease due to the high rates of diabetes and obesity (American Heart Association 2012).

But the PCBs have also affected the women in the population and their reproductive success. Studies have shown that PCBs appear to be delaying the onset of menarche in teenage girls on the reservation (Denham et al. 2005). One possible explanation for the greater effects in females than males is that the toxins are

“When women are exposed to PCBs during pregnancy, their offspring are more likely to suffer from deficits in learning, visual recognition, and short-term memory.”
stored in the body faster than they can be excreted. Most of the toxins are soluble in fat and women generally have 2-10% more body fat than men (Gaynor 2005). These toxins are stored in the breasts, liver, bone marrow, and the brain. When women are exposed to the same amount of chemicals as men they store more of it.

Women's inability to successfully produce healthy children is detrimental to the foundation of the Mohawk society. Mothers pass toxins onto their children via breast milk, and the number of new mothers who breastfeed their children has increased over the past few decades as public health initiatives relating to the practice have become widespread. Children are born with low birth weight and drastically increasing rates of childhood cancers, including leukemia; these trends are evidence that PCBs are having a severe effect on women, their reproductive abilities, and the developmental health of their offspring (Gaynor 2005). Not only are medical issues occurring with children, but mental disorders are as well.

Currently, the St. Regis Mohawk Tribe has eight programs under their Community and Family Services division to service community members with developmental disabilities and their families (Saint Regis Mohawk Tribe, nd). Heather Durant, the HCBS Waiver Intake Coordinator for this division, stated (telephone interview, April 26, 2012) that the Community and Family Services division currently serves approximately 80 individuals ranging in ages from three years old to senior citizens. She also said that she is receiving approximately five new intake referrals each month. Many of these referrals are for children suspected of having an autism spectrum disorder. Ms. Durant stated that the program she works for has had suspicions that PCB levels may have something to do with some of the cases, although some are drug and alcohol-related. We discussed the possibility of behavioral issues (drugs and alcohol-related behaviors) in the parents of the children being possibly linked to PCB exposure. Ms. Durant said that it is possible that PCBs may be a factor, as some of the parents also have learning and behavioral deficits. In such a small community, such a large, and growing, number of people with developmental disabilities is troubling.

**Conclusion**

PCBs have not only had a dramatic impact worldwide but in communities close by, like the Mohawks of Akwesasne. From endocrine and neurological disorders to fertility and developmental problems, it is easy to see the problems that PCBs from General Motors and other industrial companies along the St. Lawrence River have had on the people who live there. But the direct effects of PCBs are not the only problems that the Mohawk people are experiencing. Heart disease and diabetes are increasing, particularly in women, due to the dietary changes that have occurred after the restrictions on local fish consumption as a result of PCB contaminants in the water. Mental and behavioral problems are increasing in the children within the
community, which, in turn places greater burdens on the families who care for them.

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About the Author

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Cross Cultural Comparison of Biomedical and Ethnobotanical Treatments for Type II Diabetes Mellitus in Cree Nation of Eeyou Istchee

MATTHEW BOND

Introduction

Type II diabetes is a chronic condition that has become a worldwide pandemic. In Canada alone, the prevalence of diabetes increased by 65% between 1995 and 2005. By 2030, the number of Canadians with type II diabetes is projected to be 3 million (Harbilas et al. 2009). Aboriginal populations, such as the Cree of Eeyou Istchee in northern Quebec, have higher rates than other populations, due to genetic and lifestyle factors. Ethnobotanical treatments used in this group hold promise to improve management of type II diabetes, but they must be studied within the proper cultural context.

What is diabetes?

Diabetes is a chronic disease that occurs when the body either cannot produce enough insulin or when there is resistance to the insulin that is produced. Insulin is a hormone that allows sugar in the blood to enter cells and be used in metabolic processes. In a diabetic, the insulin malfunction results in too much glucose in the bloodstream, which deprives cells of their main energy source and causes dehydration. This can be very dangerous in severe cases. In the absence of sugar, cells will break down fats to provide energy. When fats are metabolized, they release chemicals called ketones. If ketones become too concentrated in the blood, a condition called ketoacidosis develops, which can result in coma or death if untreated (Edgren and Odle 2006).

There are three main types of diabetes: type I, type II, and gestational. Type I diabetes is often referred to as juvenile diabetes, because it typically manifests itself during childhood, when the body stops producing enough insulin. It is treated with injections of insulin, the dosage of which varies based on how severely affected the patient is. Type II diabetes is often referred to as adult-onset diabetes. In the United States, over 90% of all diabetics have type II diabetes (Edgen and Odle 2006). It is caused by the body gradually becoming immune to the effects of insulin, despite a normal or high insulin production rate. People who are overweight and lack proper exercise are most likely to develop type II diabetes. The risk of developing this type of diabetes increases dramatically with age, as the body has more time to become resistant to insulin. The disease is currently managed by a restricted diet, exercise, and oral medication. The last type, gestational diabetes, occurs in women who are in the mid to late stages of pregnancy. During pregnancy, hormones from the fetus can interfere with the efficacy of the mother’s insulin. If the mother cannot increase production of insulin, gestational diabetes occurs (Meyers and Tate 2004). It is managed through diet control or insulin injection, and typically resolves after birth.
Rate of Type II Diabetes in the Eeyou Istchee Community

All three types of diabetes have a genetic risk component. People with a family history of diabetes and certain populations have a higher chance of developing the disease. African Americans, Latinos, and Native Americans are particularly at risk (Meyers and Tate 2004). Genetic studies of these populations have revealed several common genetic markers that are linked to the development of type II diabetes. These genetic markers are polymorphisms in the genes that make up insulin signaling pathways, where any change can dramatically affect how insulin is absorbed in the body (Carulli et al. 2005).

One of these high-risk populations is the Cree nation of Eeyou Istchee. This Canadian First Nations group has an incidence rate of over 18% for type II diabetes, which is over 4 times the provincial average (Tam et al. 2009). They also have the second highest rate for gestational diabetes in any aboriginal group worldwide, double that of the average North American woman (Rodrigues, Robinson, and Gray-Donald 1999). A subset of the largest First Nations group in Canada (Leduc et al. 2005), the Cree of Eeyou Istchee live primarily in northern Quebec and Ontario. There are many reasons for their high rate of type II diabetes, including genetic predisposition, recent adoption of industrial lifestyles, and cultural standards.

Genetic, Lifestyle, and Cultural Factors

The unusually high rates of diabetes among the Eeyou Istchee Cree nation have triggered many population-wide genomic studies. These studies have shown that members of this group are more likely to have several unusual genetic polymorphisms (Tam et al. 2011) and abnormal mRNA processing (Harries et al. 2008) that have been linked to the development of type II diabetes. Although type II diabetes has been shown to have a fundamentally genetic basis, the disease itself does not emerge until triggered by environmental stressors (Considine 2008). An exploration of environmental stress common to the Cree people is necessary to explain why their rate of type II diabetes has grown so much in recent history.

One of the most important reasons for the prevalence of type II diabetes is the vast cultural shift that has taken place in the Cree community since the 17th century. Traditionally, the Cree were nomadic big game hunters who travelled in extended family groups of about 25 (Smith 1996). The arrival of European settlers and their distinctly non-native idea of private
land ownership started a long history of social upheaval, climaxing with the forced abandonment of “Indian” culture through the residential school and reservation systems of the 19th and 20th centuries, which coincided with the beginning of post-industrial society.

The combination of these disruptions changed the Cree culture in many ways. Because the Cree have a great deal of ceremonial uses for food (Jordan et al. 2000), the loss of sociocultural traditions caused radical dietary changes and made room for the adoption of western industrial lifestyles. Where original diets consisted of 100% traditional food resources, today only 10 to 36% of First Nation diet is composed of traditional food sources. The rest of the diet consists of purchased food, which can include processed foods high in sugar and fat. Traditional hunting, gathering, and cooking would have been a lengthy process, including long journeys, trap setting, and woodcutting. Today, motorized vehicles, power tools, and convenience appliances are readily available, reducing the amount of exercise taken in preparation of traditional foods (Lougheed 2010).

Overall, Cree lifestyles are more sedentary, but they have also undergone radical social changes. Today, more Cree live in larger groups than in the past, and some communities are comprised of thousands of individuals. When Cree live in a large, more urban environment, it becomes even more difficult, if not impossible, to obtain traditional foods through hunting and gathering. Urban living also encourages a less active lifestyle. Since most urban labor is not physical labor, it lowers the amount of exercise obtained on a daily basis.

While the loss of traditional culture seems to play a role in the prevalence of type II diabetes in the Eeyou Istchee nation, the traditional culture that remains also plays a role. Certain foods, such as animal fats, which biomedicine tells diabetics to avoid, are considered healthy in the Cree community, and play a central role in traditional ceremonies and celebrations. Furthermore, the social protocol dictates that when visiting, any food given to you must be fully consumed, which can be a problem for individuals who are trying to cut back on food intake but want to maintain proper social connections (Jordan et al. 2000).

Another cultural factor that influences the propensity for type II diabetes is body image. In any culture there is often pressure to conform to an “ideal” body image. Studies have shown that the Cree have a larger “ideal” size than Anglo-Europeans (Gittelsohn and Harris 1996) and traditionally value larger body size (Rock 2003). A larger ideal body size, which was hard to maintain under traditional Cree lifestyle, makes it more culturally acceptable to be overweight. A smaller ideal body size can be beneficial in helping individuals maintain a healthy weight, and lessen the chance of developing type II diabetes.

**Western Approach**

Many health and governmental
agencies have attempted to implement health plans to help manage current cases and prevent the continued rise of type II diabetes in the Eeyou Istchee community (Leduc et al. 2005). Current biomedical diabetes management techniques include controlled diet, increased regular exercise, and oral drug therapy. However, individuals who are uneducated in the Cree culture are likely to design type II diabetes treatment strategies that apply these techniques in ways that do not take the needs and practices of the community into account (Harris et al. 2008).

Some of the unique difficulties in modifying diet and exercise within Cree culture have already been discussed. Oral pharmaceutical medication has had limited success in the nation of Eeyou Istchee because of low compliance, due to the preference for traditional medicine. As surprising as this may seem, the Cree are among approximately 80% of the world’s population that relies primarily on natural health products as sources of medicine, even in areas where western biomedicine is available (Tam et al. 2009). There are over 1200 recorded plant species used in traditional medicine that treat diabetes. Although most of these have not been rigorously evaluated, over 80% of those tested show antidiabetic activity (Leduc et al. 2005).

Due to the unsuitability of common western medical practices, Eeyou Istchee Cree ethnobotanical medicines that treat type II diabetes have been the subject of recent research and scientific analysis to see if they possess any antidiabetic compounds. If such compounds are found, these treatments may be used as a more culturally acceptable treatment in Cree communities, or concurrently with western medicine. They may also hold promise to develop new mass produced pharmaceuticals.

Pharmaceutical and Ethnobotanical Treatments

Diabetes is a chronic condition for which western biomedicine has no cure (Edgren and Odle 2006). Presently, pharmaceuticals prescribed for type II diabetics have two main purposes. The first is to slow the digestion of sugars, which helps keep blood glucose levels from spiking dangerously. The second is to help stimulate the cellular intake of glucose. However, the drugs in current use have a variety of possible side effects, including weight gain, stomach irritation, increased cardiovascular mortality, skin irritation, central nervous system problems, allergic reactions, and liver problems (Uretsky and Odle 2006).
Many of western medicine’s current antidiabetic drugs, including metformin, acarbose, as well as 4-hydroxyisoleucine (which is still in clinical trials), were developed from traditional medicines utilizing plants and fungi (Leduc et al. 2005). Additionally, these medicines have a small number of relatively minor side effects (Uretsky and Odle 2006).

Because diabetes is a relatively new disease to the Cree, there are no specific ethnobotanical treatments for it. However, by collaborating with Eeyou Istchee community elders and healers, it has been possible to test traditional medicines that are used to treat many of the symptoms exhibited by diabetes (Leduc et al. 2005). When tested, many of the plants that are used in these treatments have been shown to be effective in mitigating type II diabetes.

There are several primary ways traditional Eeyou Istchee Cree medicines help manage type II diabetes. The first is by providing a high concentration of antioxidants (Fraser et al. 2007, Harbilas et al. 2009, McCune and Johns 2003), which help cell communication, and can improve the intake of glucose (Johansen et al. 2005). Other treatments directly influence different cell signaling pathways to improve glucose absorption (Spoor et al. 2006).

Another way that traditional Eeyou Istchee Cree medicines are used to treat diabetes is to increase adipogenesis, the creation of fat cells (Harbilas et al. 2009). In order to form fat cells, ketones and triglycerides must be absorbed from the blood stream. As previously discussed, high levels of ketones can lead to coma or death. If triglyceride levels are not being kept low enough by the body’s regulatory networks, they can build up and increase the risk of heart attack (Sassoon 2004).

A final way these ethnobotanical treatments work is to prevent one of the dangerous byproducts of diabetes, hyperglycemia. Hyperglycemia is a condition where the concentration of glucose in the blood stream becomes dangerously high. Several plant species used in the Eeyou Istchee treatments help prevent or slow glucose from entering the blood stream, which lowers the chances of developing hyperglycemia (Nistor Baldea et al. 2010, Harbilas et al. 2009).

There are several important facts to note about these traditional medicines. First of all, the combinations and relative amounts of plants used in a treatment can radically change the results (Tam et al. 2009). These natural medicines have also been shown to influence the absorption of pharmaceuticals when taken at the same time (Tam et al. 2011). Finally, the amount of active ingredients in the medicine can vary based on location of the plant, geographic location, environment, season, etc.; this can influence the efficacy of the treatment. Further research in all of these areas is needed before full endorsement of Eeyou Istchee ethnobotanical medicines can be made.

Ethnomedicine in Cultural Context

It is important to note that understanding the context within which these traditional treatments are used is crucial. In the Cree language, there is no
word that has a comparable definition to “health.” The closest idea is a phrase that means “being alive well.” In the Eeyou Istchee community context, this means being able to hunt, continue traditions, eat the right foods, and stay warm (Rock 2003). This holistic approach of combining physical, mental, and spiritual well-being as well as individual and communal welfare is reflected in the way diseases are treated.

In the Eeyou Istchee community, healers are able to tailor the treatment to the patient as a unique individual by adjusting ingredients (Fraser et al. 2007). They may also make changes based on their intuition or heart (Struthers 2000). In Cree belief, diseases are often caused by evil spirits or forces, so traditional medicine is administered by a shaman. These healing shamans are typically females (Smith 1996) who have been given a greater connection to the spirit world by the Creator.

In this context, the medicine is just as important as the ceremony and faith. Cree treatment sessions include prayers and offerings to the Creator in thanks for the natural products that have been removed from the environment to make a medicine. Faith is placed in the Creator, the ultimate source of healing, rather than the medicine. Healing spirits and the spirits of ancestors are also petitioned to aid in the recovery (Struthers 2000). These ceremonies usually take place with family and other members of the community in attendance, particularly elderly family and community members who aid in the healing ceremonies (Niezen 1997). The services are performed in the Cree language and explained to the person in need of healing beforehand so that they are also able to participate (Struthers 2000).

**Conclusion**

Although scientifically testing the materials used to make traditional medicines may provide important knowledge for developing new pharmaceuticals, the power of the holistic healing used in the Eeyou Istchee Cree community exists beyond the analysis of science. However, despite its unquantifiable nature, it is crucial to provide the context for the ethnobotanical treatments.

Although the majority of research used for this paper was performed in the nation of Eeyou Istchee, a subset of the Cree population living primarily in northwestern Quebec, the cultural background and holistic approach to studying ethnobotanical treatments may be applied to the entire Cree nation and even other First Nations groups that have high genetically and culturally based rates of type II diabetes.

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About the Author

Matthew Bond has transferred to Cornell University where he is now a junior plant science major. He would like to become an ethnobotanist. He loves learning about world cultures and how they traditionally use plants for healing.
Photo Essay I: Excavation at Ballacagan Lough

DAVID FREUNDSCHUH AND CHRIS MEEGHER

During the summer of 2012, we attended a six-week excavation on the Isle of Man at the location of Ballacagan Lough. This site was first excavated during the 1940’s by German archaeologist Gerhard Bersu and was re-opened during the 2012 season. This site was excavated by a team of archaeologists and students working through the University of Liverpool. This site was extremely difficult to excavate due to the severe weather conditions. The United Kingdom received record amounts of rain last year and because of that, the site was flooded daily. Each morning would start with bucket lines in an attempt to bring the water level down. Despite the difficulty, this site was interesting because we had the opportunity to challenge a theory that was developed by Bersu in the 1940’s. The following photos are pictures taken during the excavation.

RIGHT: We spent the first two weeks recording gravestones in the local churchyard.

FAR RIGHT: “Tent City”, where around 40 students spent the six weeks of our excavation, despite the rain.

RIGHT: This is a model of a round house at Ballacagan Lough, proposed by Bersu. The purpose of our excavation was to test his theory.

FAR RIGHT: Once we finally made it to the excavation phase, morale was very high.
FAR LEFT: Some days, the wind was so severe, that we were forced to build a shelter in order to do any paperwork.

LEFT: Taking core samples from the profile of the trench. The cores were sent to an off-site lab and analyzed.

FAR LEFT: One of the more exciting finds of the entire dig was a post found in-situ, dating from the Iron Age.

LEFT: The flooding was so severe, that this trench, even though over 1.5 meters deep, was submerged multiple times per day.

LEFT: Every weekend, the field school directors reserved a day for immersing ourselves in the local Manx culture. This was the annual Peel Longboat Race.

LEFT: Our trench, cleaned and ready to be photographed. A few postholes can still be seen in-situ on the floor of the trench.
Photo Essay II: Studying Abroad in Madagascar

CASSIDY BARRY

I studied abroad in the summer of 2012 in order to gain more first-hand experience in the field in Madagascar. While abroad, I spent most of my time at Ranomafana National Park studying the “megadiversity” of the endemic plants and animals of the primary rainforest. On a cross-country trip, I also had the opportunity to see more of what Madagascar’s environment entailed – from the Isalo Sunset to the breathtaking views of the capital city of Antananarivo. Not only did I study many types of lemurs (which fascinate biological/physical anthropologists as evolutionary beings [primates]) and the environmental aspects of Madagascar, but also Malagasy culture. I had the opportunity to observe residents of a nearby village who greeted us and performed songs, dances, and provided us with refreshments. On the last day, we spent it celebrating the inauguration of the newest dorm facility at Centre Val Bio, where I stayed and studied. This celebration brought together many different people from all over Madagascar, and it started from the early morning and lasted until sunrise. This trip was life changing, and I will forever be grateful to have had this opportunity. Although it is difficult to portray all that Madagascar has to offer in just a few pictures, I hope that this collection of pictures will give the reader just a taste of what I had the opportunity to see and experience while abroad.

RIGHT: This is a view of a small portion of the capital city of Madagascar, Antananarivo.

FAR RIGHT: The view from Centre Val Bio, which is the research center in which I conducted my studies.

RIGHT: This is a Sifaka lemur. It is known as “the dancing lemur” for the way that they move on the ground.

FAR RIGHT: Perhaps one of the most well known tourist attractions at Isalo, the famous sunset in the middle of a rocky structure.
FAR LEFT: Collecting water based insects as specimens to determine pollution levels within the Ranamofana National Rainforest as compared to a local village.

LEFT: A beautiful oasis in the middle of the rocky structures of Isalo. It provides a swimming hole/pool for locals and tourists.

ABOVE: The village’s oldest citizen, 109 years young. He performed a song with an instrument that he made as a young man growing up in the village.

UPPER LEFT: Children from a local village within Ranamofana National Rainforest.

LEFT: During my trip, the brand new building at Ranamofana National Park was inaugurated. Locals came from all over the country, as well as important leaders of the country for this celebration.
I found myself on a snowy planet, at night in a snow storm. I spotted a fellow guild mate running by and quickly tailed him. I froze when one of the members shouted out, “What are you doing?!”

I tensed up, worried I had broken some rule or etiquette without realizing it.

“What? They’re passive mobs, it’s ok.” Tim replied.

“It doesn’t matter, Wendy will still get upset if she sees you killin’ them,” replied the leader.

“Ya, she sees it as animal cruelty whether it’s RL or virtual,” asserted Tom.

Anthropologists have traditionally gone to remote places all around the globe to study cultures and share their knowledge and experiences with the world. With the birth of the Internet however, anthropologists need to go no further than their desk to access millions of people and diverse communities and cultures. Digital ethnography is a relatively new field in anthropology that pushes the boundaries of anthropology beyond the traditional and opens new avenues to explore. There are thousands of thriving online communities that consist of millions of users actively participating in online activities through their computers. While this can include social networking sites such as Facebook, posting comments on a forum such as Yahoo Questions, or even placing bids on eBay, there has been one virtual venue that has really flourished - Massively Multiplayer Online Role Playing Games (MMORPG).

An MMORPG is typically a game that requires Internet connection and is accessed by hundreds, thousands, or even millions of users. The users interact with one another in a world (often 3D) generated by the game through their computer or video game console. These worlds are often fantasy or science-fiction based, though some even attempt to mimic real life. Within these online worlds, a person is more often than not represented by an avatar, a visual representation of him or herself, that is custom-designed by the user selecting such options as skin tone, hair, clothing, and accessories (see figure 1). Once users have created their avatars, they are free to interact with the others in the world and attempt to complete quests, join guilds, explore, or sit back on their friends’ virtual couch and watch a film.

The purpose of my research was to analyze how we form these avatars within these virtual worlds and what may influence our choices during the process. I hypothesized that users seek to interact with these virtual worlds for the purpose of experiencing foreign worlds through personas different from their actual selves. I was curious to see what factors influenced their creation and how creators viewed their own avatars. I also looked into how people would interact with these avatars in these virtual spaces. Doing this reveals ways in which we perceive ourselves, others, online worlds, and, more
fundamentally, why we do so. This gives us a better understanding of self-perception in virtual worlds, and it helps to identify the patterns that become associated with online game play in these virtual worlds.

**Literature Review**

Before starting my ethnographic fieldwork, I reviewed work already done in this field by other anthropologists, specifically Bonnie A. Nardi’s *My Life as a Night Elf Priest: An Anthropological Account of World of Warcraft* (2010), William Bainbridge’s *The Warcraft Civilization* (2010), and Tom Boellstorff’s *Coming of Age in Second Life* (2008). Each of these books represents an ethnographic study done in virtual worlds, namely Second Life and World of Warcraft. The authors of each of these books reflected on not only the games themselves, but the way in which users interact within these worlds, as well as the meaning of their actions within virtual worlds, and how these can affect the real world. Boellstorff’s research was conducted completely within the virtual world, whereas Nardi did a mix of data gathering in the virtual world and real world, particularly to address real world cultural differences when approaching these virtual game worlds. In addition to her virtual research, she did a comparative analysis of American and Chinese gaming cultures and how they view and play World of Warcraft.

Nardi (2010) spent over three years doing participatory fieldwork for World of Warcraft. During this research, she designed multiple avatars on multiple servers and interacted with several player organizations (referred to as guilds), including the Scarlet Ravens and Terror Nova. Through these different guilds, she was able to participate and learn the ways in which people interact with the virtual world itself and each other within the virtual world. Nardi goes on to explain how she conducted her fieldwork,
and give examples of her first-hand experience through her avatar, Innikka.

Bainbridge (2010) approaches these issues differently in *The Warcraft Civilization*. This book is broken up into chapters that explore different aspects within the game-world of World of Warcraft. Bainbridge does this by opening each chapter with a story that takes place from the perspective of his avatar. The story is structured around a particular aspect of the game-world, such as religion or economics, and then the story unfolds as his avatar carries out the particular duties associated with that part of the game. After the narrative in each chapter, he then breaks down what his character was actually doing, correlates how it relates to the real world, and talks of things he witnessed during his participant observation that have to do with the specific topic the chapter covers.

In *Coming of Age in Second Life*, Boellstorff (2008) represents a completely different atmosphere with the opportunities it provides its users and their overall objective. In Second Life, it seeks to mimic many of the things we can do in real-life. Users have the ability to create homes, shops, and even theme parks as well as create anything they can think of to go inside of these places with the provided editing tools. Unlike World of Warcraft, where your goal is to acquire the maximum level and high-quality equipment, in Second Life you can design your own small home or an entire shopping mall. Once you fill them with objects, you can then set items you created for sale to generate money, or use real-life money to obtain virtual currency, or exchange virtual currency for real-life money. After you have settled into the world, you can visit theme parks, shopping malls, nightclubs, and even space stations. Or, you can put on your suit and attend your corporate business meeting being held on your company-owned island. Because of its creativity and freedom, Second Life has become popular with hundreds of thousands of users.

**Ethnographic Focus**

I chose to do my research in Star Wars: The Old Republic not just because of its potential popularity and anthropologically unexplored land, but also because of the unique features it was bringing to the sphere of MMORPGs. It was the first game to feature 100% voice acting instead of scrolling text. This feature was further emphasized by the personal stories each character was able to experience (quests and cinematics designed to portray a feeling similar to experiencing a Star Wars film), and within these stories players could choose responses to the dialogue, and see their avatar, or another avatar in the group depending on the situation, respond and directly interact with the game world. A third major feature was the choice of Light side versus Dark side, a common theme within the Star Wars mythos. While progressing through this world, the players were often presented with choices to make, including whom to help, how to punish someone, or who should die and who should live. These choices equate to what our culture may consider Good, Neutral, or Evil. The more Good or Evil choices a character would select, the further they would move to the light side or the dark side. Their choices were accented within the
game by featuring their avatar committing the dialogue/actions, providing a visual representation of the good or evil act, and by shaping the appearance of the avatar. The avatar would begin to have their eyes darken, become more red, and veins would appear on their face the more they “embraced” the dark side. With these features combined, I believed this would make the avatar center-stage in the game with this high level of immersion and be the best way to explore research questions pertaining to the avatars themselves.

At a later point in my participant observation, however, Star Wars failed to meet expectations and quickly dropped in popularity. A large migration of users took place from Star Wars to another highly anticipated MMORPG release called Guild Wars 2. I opted to migrate with the guild I had been researching through participant observation in order to avoid losing the rapport I had gained and to explore the features this title had to offer that were unique for its avatars. Like Star Wars, Guild Wars 2 offered personalized storylines for the avatars, as well as a much more detailed avatar creation process. For example, it allows you to adjust nearly all features, even down to the specific colors of your outfits (a feature surprisingly lacking in most MMORPGs, or one rarely available at avatar creation).

Methods

Before collecting any data, I first needed Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval, which is required to protect human subjects involved in research. As this type of digital research created an unusual level of confusion and thoughts of potential personal information risk, I opted to take certain steps to reduce worry and risk. I did not collect any personal information—no real life names, no locations, and not even e-mail addresses. While in normal circumstances this may lead to problems going back to participants to clarify responses or conduct follow-up interviews, online it was no issue at all. I was able to actively communicate with all of my participants in the virtual world through their avatar’s name alone. I was also able to distribute my consent forms online through guild forums.

My data gathering methods included participant observation and interviews. I conducted seven interviews with members of the guild “The Eternal.” Five of these interviews were done within Star Wars and two of them done in Guild Wars. There were five male participants and two females. All seven of the interviews were conducted online using one of two methods. One included having the interviews done through a chat program known as Mumble, and the other was text-based within the game. During these interviews, I would meet with the

"Because of its creativity and freedom, Second Life has become popular with hundreds of thousands of users."
player in the game world before starting
the interview. Using Mumble would allow
me to record the interview and transcribe it,
very much like a traditional interview or one
over the phone.

I also used a small focus study group
of SUNY Potsdam anthropology students
for supplemental data. As my core data
was reflective of several casual gamers, I
wanted to see what I could infer about the
results by comparing it against another set
of data. The group of students I used ranged
in experience from no prior experience to
moderate experience with online worlds. In
this controlled instance, I had them create
avatars in the World of Warcraft, and briefly
explore it while answering a list of questions. I
actively walked from computer to computer,
assisting them in their endeavor and taking
notes of their actions.

Analysis
Because the number of interviews I
conducted was limited, I can only make
tentative suggestions about overarching
themes and ideas. All seven interviews
were with members of The Eternal guild.
Going into them, I had expected one of three
things: 1) that players would develop their
avatars as a reflection of themselves and
their ideals; 2) players would design their
avatar after what they wanted themselves to
be like in real life; or 3) players would design
their avatars to stand in stark contrast to
their actual self. In reviewing the interviews,
there was some evidence of these themes.
However, they were only apparent in a
minority of the interviews and not in the
way I had envisioned it.

Players had developed their avatars to
follow their ideals, but only one player had
designed his avatar to look like him and
follow his ideals (and, he had created an
avatar to stand in contrast to himself and his
ideals to experience both worlds).

I generally always, in any game I play,
make a hero, and a villain. I model the Hero
after me. I model the villain after everything I
could never be as the Hero.
-Norith (lines 97-89, 113-114).

Two other players had designed their
characters to reflect their ideals, but they
chose to develop physical appearances that
were completely different from their own.
They were more influenced by things they
enjoyed, pre-conceived notions that they
had about their character’s class or other
selection choices during the creation process.

I think a lot of our choices in making a
character really come from who we are in real
life.
-Procter (lines 86-87).

...cause my main character that I create is
always going to be Jericho, and I would like
to think that I would try and make Jericho as
much as I could, personality wise, to me.
-Jericho (lines 135-136).

These three interviewees identified with
their avatars and saw them as themselves in
this world.

The other interviews I conducted
showed that avatars were used more as tools
rather than expression. They designed their
avatar to fill a role, a purpose. One common
theme among a few was developing their avatar with role-play specifically in mind. One female interviewee had even referred to her avatar as a doll, a term that also appeared in the focus group responses (also from a female).

I think they’re, for me, they’re to create something cute that I get to look at. It’s like dressing up a doll. That’s why I like getting outfits for them; to me it’s like a great big game of House.
- Korin (lines 153-155).

When looking at the question of why they participate in these online worlds, the overarching theme was entertainment. Looking more closely however, other themes emerged. Common among nearly all of the interviews was the notion of a social life. This consisted of both real-world friends, and virtual friends.

Basically it becomes a social life, the guild and what not. To talk about my social life, I just moved like 3,500 miles just about a year ago. When I came back into playing MMO’s, I logged back into World of Warcraft, and eventually Star Wars, its more or less a social life, you have people in the guild to show up to at 12 o’clock at night, friends, instant friends.
- Till (lines 84-87)

I just like playing with people it’s really fun to get a group together and go play and stuff. And if you’re playing with your real life friends in an mmo it’s even more fun because when you get together you can talk about it and be like “remember that time blah blah blah” ya know.
- Jericho (lines 21-24).

The ability to interact with their friends and to a lesser extent other people while being in their own homes was a key factor of their entertainment in these online worlds. Some had been isolated from their friends and chose to utilize online worlds to remain in contact with their friends. Some had only online friends and did not involve any real world friends with their online worlds.

While entertainment and social life were certainly the dominant themes, there were significant and less universal themes that were attributed to how players derived their entertainment from these virtual worlds. As previously mentioned there was role-playing, as well as interacting with a “persistent world” through exploration, and becoming involved in the world’s story through one’s avatar. Players enjoyed that their actions affected the world, and that their avatars were permanent residents ready to interact with other players at any moment.

...I’ve loved the idea of playing a video game online in a persistent world with Thousands of other active participants.
- North (lines 12-14).

Role-playing is something created outside of the game that players utilize with their avatars to enhance their experience and entertainment in the virtual world. They invent personalities for their avatars and act them out within the game world. The players who did this with their avatars also were involved in doing this outside of virtual worlds.
and in the real world itself. They had both mentioned, however, that it was more difficult doing this in a virtual world as compared to acting it out themselves in the real world. This is due to the limitations which avatars represent. With their extraordinary places and objects, these worlds provide visuals that are otherwise impossible to bear witness to; as a result, we can only imagine their existence in the real world.

However, the avatar can not always do what the player, or the role intends. While there are emotes (actions one can command their avatar to do—a wave, a bow, a scream), players cannot fully control their avatar and do other desired commands. This includes dancing a particular way, cooking at a stove, or sitting in a chair.

So, even with all of this technology, players have to fall back on their imaginations. The virtual world is potentially more important as a location, a means, a space, rather than the world it is representing. This would agree with Boellstorff’s (2008) assessment that these virtual worlds can be identified as a place, very much so grounded in our reality, rather than a separate virtual entity.

...the funny thing about role-playing with a group of people, is exactly that, you need a group of people... being in this guild The Eternal for a while, you get to group with people, you get to figure out people, not just their characters and what not, you get to have that social life.
- Till (lines 130-131, 137-139).

From the results of the student focus group, I was able to identify additional trends. My focus group consisted of ten participants. Unlike my interviewees, the focus group largely featured participants that had never accessed an online game-world before. These participants referenced pop-culture such as Harry Potter or Lord of the Rings when developing their avatars. Out of the group, only one participant actually selected a human, while others made note that they did not want to create a human since they were one. They indicated, however, that they did not want to deviate too far from being human, which led many to select elves. Unfortunately since this focus group utilized World of Warcraft, the avatar creation process was more limited. However, these trends helped to identify outside influences that help shape our
avatars that more advance players may not be able to so easily identify.

Another interesting situation that arose during the focus group was the reaction of one participant when they accidently attacked and killed a cat. She let out a quick shriek as she covered her mouth and stared at her screen in shock. This reminded me of the event that took place that I described in the opening of this paper. The participant was saddened because she had killed a creature that not only was not a threat to her, but represented a pet in real life. Reading through the responses to the guided questions for the focus group, I saw additional references to such feelings towards animals in these virtual worlds.

"Killing ‘bad guys’ doesn’t affect me in any way but ‘innocent’ things make me feel bad when I see them die. Like bunnies."

-Focus group participant

Between my participant observation and the focus group, I only witnessed females exhibit this particular behavior.

Perhaps the most interesting thing I came across during my participant observation, interviews and focus group was the fact that these were virtual worlds with completely different sets of cultures and rules taking place in fictional universes, but what shaped the players and their avatars more than anything was their own culture. However, this really should not have been much of a surprise. I initially believed that in a world where players could be anything and everything they desired, they would do exactly that. My data, however, pointed to the contrary, where players would more often than not go to length to constrain themselves. We can look to Norith, who wanted a hero and a villain character, or Korin’s idea of dressing up a doll to see evidence of this.

While we could analyze this more in-depth, we happen to have a significant part of the answer staring us right in the face. These virtual worlds, while designed to represent completely different worlds, are largely based on our own reality. The culture that exists within these worlds, the religions, the economics, the race and class system, the “good” and the “evil”- these are all ideas derived from our own understanding of culture in the real world, and have been transplanted into these virtual worlds and given a new meaning. I put “good” and “evil” in quotations because these virtual worlds rarely define which is which and merely represent the philosophical ideals of each side. The players, however, are quick to define which is good and which is bad. They do this by drawing examples of the morals and ethics that they know from their own world. It is not uncommon to then see debates between both sides attempting to use real world examples to justify or explain their affiliation or the philosophy of their chosen side.

The question is: which aspect of this virtual culture do we define as the culture? Is it the stories, lore, religion, caste system, and land that the game developers and writers created within its natural, static form? Perhaps it can all be based off of where the creators of the virtual world and users derive their own culture. Then again, does this all give evidence to
players interpreting the knowledge set in these virtual worlds, combining it with their own cultures and beliefs, and interacting with thousands or even millions of other users from all across the globe to form a unique virtual culture that affects both the virtual world and the real world? Perhaps they are interwoven and neither is more or less real than the other? From all of my data presented in this project, I would tentatively suggest that these online worlds are merely a place where people interact with one another, at first heavily influenced by their own background (which heavily influences their avatar creation and the way that they originally see these virtual worlds), but slowly changes as players assimilate to these virtual worlds. They can then actively adapt this knowledge to other virtual worlds, or even the real world itself. I believe this contributes to a “gaming culture”, and is very much present regardless of the space in which it is taking place.

Possible Avenues for Further Study

During my research I came across several unexpected ideas that could be explored further on their own or investigated by broadening the scope of this project. One of them concerns female players being more likely to be involved in online worlds due to a significant other, rather than being involved with the world on their own. Does this affect their avatar creation or perception of the virtual world? Is it a space for socializing with others, or a realm that holds greater meaning only when accessed as a couple? This avenue of research would require a larger sample size, dominantly featuring females both single and with significant other, and perhaps also interview a few of these significant others.

Another very interesting topic came up during my interview with Hector. Hector was interviewed in Star Wars: The Old Republic, and I was inquiring about how many characters he had. When he responded seven, I asked why so many. In explaining his number of avatars, he said this:

I let my son play, so he made up his own character, which actually you were talking about it earlier, he was specifically trying to design a character that looked like himself. He’s almost 8, so when he plays I sit right there with him because you know some of the content or some of the open world chat can get questionable at times so I just sit with him to watch that, and ya know he runs around and plays the game. I know for his choices he’s certainly picking moral choices based on his morality and what we’ve taught him, the difference between right and wrong.

-Hector (lines 101-106)

This alone could represent a great research project, measuring the morality of children through utilizing virtual worlds that shape and evolve depending on how you have their avatar behave within them. While I was interviewing adults and asking them why they make the choices they do with their avatars, children have much less experience in the world and I would predict, like players who had never accessed online worlds and fall back on what little knowledge they did have of fantasy and magic, would fall back on developing a character reflective of how they were taught to behave.
One final avenue I would like to propose is analyzing how the games are set up and how that affects how players interact with one another. As I mentioned during my participant observation, Star Wars: The Old Republic and Guild Wars 2 had player interactions that differed greatly. Star Wars followed the “mold” (general way of doing things for online games), while Guild Wars 2 featured a system many had never encountered before, and thus resulted in drastically different player actions and attitudes. Could Guild Wars 2’s system alter the way humans interact in virtual worlds in such a way that more virtual worlds will adopt this system? Can it be seen as an improvement over the old system and improve the “quality of life” for players online? Hopefully, all of these research questions are currently being investigated, or will be soon.

Conclusion

I did participant observation and conducted several interviews in order to consider how people experience and engage virtual worlds. Through this research, I learned that people are not able to be simply listed under a category of how they interact with virtual worlds due to the deep-seeded connection between the virtual worlds and the actual world through social bonds that users form. By addressing players’ roles outside of the virtual worlds alongside their virtual selves, we can begin to better understand how users interact with these virtual worlds, and how they shape both a virtual culture as well as modify cultures in the actual world.

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Nardi, B. A.  

About the Author

Matthew Phillips is a senior anthropology major with a minor in archaeology. His interests include digital anthropology and material culture. He currently plans to pursue a master’s degree in cultural anthropology at the University of Buffalo.
I. Introduction

Needle exchange programs (NEPs) and sex education initiatives are two major ways to help prevent the transmission of the Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) among people who participate in risky behaviors, such as sharing needles or unsafe sex. Both prevention methods are heavily affected by politics in the United States, and as such, they are wrapped up in the policies and laws of the country.

This paper will look at the types of laws and policies that affect groups that have been affected by HIV and Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS), as well as harm reduction (HR) efforts indirectly. It will also discuss how they affect public views and those living with HIV/AIDS, as well as those whose behavior puts them at risk. Specifically, this paper will focus on laws regarding drugs and injection drug users (IDUs), and abstinence-only programs. These laws not only reflect the stigma directed at these groups, they can also justify it to the wider public.

What is HIV/AIDS?

HIV is a serious and widespread virus that depletes the human body’s immune system and lowers the number of T cells (a type of white blood cell) in the body. This leaves the individual open to opportunistic infections. If an individual has at least one opportunistic infection, a T cell count that is lower than 200, and/or a positive HIV antibody test, they are considered to have developed AIDS. Due to the damaged immune system that HIV causes, the body is unable to fight the opportunistic infection, and, if left untreated, it is fatal. The AIDS epidemic began in the United States in the early 1980s. Having AIDS was a death sentence for many years. However, today it is not curable, but it is manageable through the use of medications.

Transmission, Prevention, and Stigma

HIV is not a casual contact disease like the common cold. Instead, the only way to transmit HIV is by contact between certain bodily fluids such as blood or seminal fluid. The virus is transmitted generally through sharing needles, having unprotected sexual intercourse, and mother-to-child transmission. Prevention efforts vary, but many focus on safer sex and safer needle exchange.

People living with AIDS are often stigmatized. This is partly because people who are at risk tend to be in groups that are already stigmatized. Many people see those with AIDS as individuals who were bound to get HIV due to their lifestyles, whether it is because they are IDUs or are seen as “promiscuous.” Unfortunately, this stigma creates many problems for individuals with and at risk for HIV/AIDS, and for those trying to prevent transmission through education or NEPs.

II. Drug laws and policies in the U.S.

In the United States there are many
major restrictions on drugs. This has created stigmas against drugs and drug users such as IDUs. These laws and policies have also made it more difficult to reach people who are IDUs to help them prevent the transmission of HIV and get tested.

**Zero Tolerance and Its Effects**

The United States is notorious for its stand on drugs, including the War on Drugs and its zero tolerance policies (Drucker 2012). These create an image of drugs being an enemy to be defeated in the public’s eye, not only because lawmakers are trying to prevent drug usage, but also by the very words they use. However, this creates problems for those who use drugs. Are they enemies or victims? Do they have a disease or are they criminals? Due to these laws, drugs users, especially IDUs, are highly stigmatized.

At the beginning of the HIV/AIDS epidemic, the federal government refused to address how serious the situation was because of the official policies against the very groups who were contracting the disease, mainly gay men and IDUs (Drucker 2012). This barred earlier prevention efforts which could have potentially lessened the epidemic significantly from taking place. The zero tolerance policy also forced those who were using injection drugs to become more secretive about what they were doing for fear of being sent to jail. Since IDUs had to be more secretive, it became much harder to educate these people and to provide healthcare and testing for HIV antibodies (Drucker 2012).

**Needle Exchange Programs (NEPs)**

Needle exchange programs, or NEPs, were created as a harm reduction (HR) program to help prevent transmission of HIV in IDUs and others who may share or reuse needles. Harm reduction is a term that is “a set of practical strategies and ideas aimed at reducing negative consequences associated with drug use” (Harm Reduction Coalition 2012). These programs allow individuals to drop off used needles and pick up the same amount of new ones for free. NEPs also allow people to have a safe place to go and have access to more information about HIV and AIDS in the case that they are seeking help or are concerned. In countries such as Australia and in the United Kingdom, NEPs have been very effective not only in reducing HIV transmission, but also in “involving greater numbers of active drug users in mainstream health care” (Drucker 2012:312). Additionally, they have been shown to have a cost-benefit effect, saving $178,000 to $186,000 for every HIV infection that was prevented (McLean 2011).
NEPs started out in the early 1980s in the United States and were unorganized and seen as illegal, because the people who were promoting and running NEPs were perceived as “sending the ‘wrong message’ and ‘tolerating’ drug use” (Drucker 2012:311). The government’s fear that these programs would encourage drug use has been so strong that “under President Reagan and both Presidents Bush, the very words ‘harm reduction’ were proscribed in all government programs and literature” (Drucker 2012:311). Today, NEPs are gaining support from the institutional levels and are seen as a duty to public health in some situations. Most are run by organizations that are not part of the federal government. However, they all “operate with the oversight from local and state health departments” (McLean 2011). Nevertheless, NEPs are still controversial.

**Biopower and NEPs**

In her article, McLean (2011) draws from the theories of Michel Foucault concerning biopower in relation to NEPs. Biopower is the idea that the government tries to control or regulate individuals in regards to their bodies and health, in this case concerning IDUs. NEPs and HIV have become a focus on biopower because it “has historically been framed as not only a matter of individual pathology, but also one of the national security and economic growth” (McLean 2011:75).

McLean states that the government’s refusal to fund NEPs encourages necropolitics, because IDUs are “left to die without sincere attempts at intervention” and can be viewed as “a genocidal... policy” which leaves the group on their own (McLean 2011:72). Necropolitics is an aspect of biopower in which the government “deprive[s] certain populations of the right to life” (McLean 2011:72). However, she also argues that the government allows NEPs to exist because they are helping to protect the larger population overall. She states that from this perspective, IDUs are “only of interest to the state power in the infectious threat they pose” (McLean 2011:78).

McLean (2011) also argues that NEPs are a way to protest these views. They allow IDUs to be seen as real people and to give them a voice. Some IDUs also use NEPs as an alibi to create a better image of themselves to others (McLean 2011). In this way, NEPs help to dissolve the stigma around IDUs. By eliminating the stigma around IDUs who are, and are not, HIV positive, IDUs are more likely to receive the health care and testing that they need. This would in turn help to decrease transmission of HIV in IDUs even more than the initial ideas that NEPs address, which is simply the use of clean needles.

**Structural Violence and NEPs**

According to Paul Farmer, structural violence is “violence exerted systematically—that is, indirectly—by everyone who belongs to a certain social order” (2004:307). Farmer also talks about how the United States has handled helping people in other countries with AIDS. He points out that the United States Department of Treasury has said that the reason for not sending medicine to Africa is that Africans would not be able to take the
medicine correctly due to a different sense of time. Farmer then states that they could buy watches to use and “the primary problem is a matter of political will” (2004:317).

While Farmer uses examples of structural violence that involve the United States and other countries, it can also be seen in the United States itself in regards to IDUs. At the beginning of the epidemic, there was “official hostility to gays and drug users and profound ignorance by Reagan and his senior advisors about the gravity of the epidemic” (Drucker 2012:310). Today, by denying the usefulness of NEPs, the government is oppressing IDUs. They are denying that IDUs are citizens who deserve to have access to items that would allow them to stay healthy (McLean 2011). Because laws and policies will shape the public’s view, non-IDUs are also being encouraged to see IDUs as not deserving the healthcare that they need.

III. Sexual health and the law

HIV/AIDS are affected by sexual health laws since HIV is transmitted through unprotected sex. It is important for people to have access to information that pertains to their sexual health. However, there is debate in the United States concerning whether students should be taught abstinence-only sexual education or if they should have a more comprehensive sexual education in school (Gusrang & Cheng 2010). This is largely due to views on sexual activity and “the social perceptions of the association between HIV/AIDS and sexual activity” (Gable, Gostin, & Hodge 2008:1779). As with NEPs, there is a fear that if students are taught to have safer sex, then they are more likely to have sex.

Abstinence-Only vs. Comprehensive Sexual Education

According to Gusrang and Cheng, abstinence-only programs are ones that “[emphasize] that abstinence from sexual intercourse is best for teens and which [do] not provide information about condoms and other contraceptives” (2010:240). The United States government has supported abstinence-only programs since the 1980s (Gusrang & Cheng 2010). Comprehensive sex education programs “stress the importance and value in abstinence while acknowledging the reality that not all teens will remain abstinent until marriage” (Carroll 2009:44). The people who support comprehensive sex education fear that “not receiving information on topics such as birth control, abortion, and STDs may have detrimental effects on the health of adolescents” (Gusrang & Cheng 2010:241). The reason this is so controversial is because there is a debate about whether
students should be told how to protect themselves, or if this will only encourage them to have sexual relationships more often and earlier. Carroll suggests that the best way to address sex education is to combine the programs so teens know how to protect themselves from HIV and other STDs. To teach students that the only sure was to be safe is to practice abstinence, but also teach them how to use condoms and other contraceptives (2009).

**How the Government has affected Public Involvement in Sex Education**

Gusrang and Cheng (2010) researched how abstinence-only programs changed in relation to government influence between 1999 and 2003. They found that the more money and support the federal government put into abstinence-only programs, the more they were used instead of comprehensive programs that were created on a more local level. They also found a decrease in parent and teacher involvement in these programs because the federal government forced them out and “became more aggressive in its support of abstinence-only programs” (Gusrang & Cheng 2010:255). However, those that did stay involved tended to agree with the government’s views on abstinence-only. They also found that these programs did not change students’ views or behaviors regarding sex (Gusrang & Cheng 2010).

**IV. How laws and policies affect public views**

**Drug Policies**

In the case of IDUs, the United States government’s stand on drugs creates an environment where drug users cannot seek help without facing consequences. The solution to this can be found in NEPs, which allows IDUs to have a safe way of receiving clean needles without fear of being arrested. The federal government’s refusal to openly support these programs undermines these efforts at best and takes on the form of necropolitics at worst (McLean 2011). The government’s policies on drugs also reinforce the public’s notion that because drugs are illegal, those who use drugs are bad people and that they do not deserve help and protection from infection. This led to many more people becoming infected than was necessary when transmission is completely preventable (Drucker 2012).

**Sex Education**

After the federal government became more involved in and supportive of abstinence-only sex education, there was a decrease in the number of more locally created, comprehensive sex education programs (Gusrang & Cheng 2010). This may reflect how laws are shaping public opinion. The movement that advocated for these laws have “linked comprehensive sex education to the promotion of promiscuity…suggesting that only those in support of abstinence have morally appropriate positions” (Gusrang & Cheng 2010:243). This creates more stigmas around being sexually active, which, like with IDUs, creates an environment where those teens who are sexually active do not know how to protect themselves. It
also prevents teens from seeking help for fear of judgment. Also, as Gusrang and Cheng (2010) showed in their research, as the federal government’s support of abstinence-only education increased, the amount of involvement by parents and teachers who supported comprehensive sex education decreased. This shows a system in which the government does have a major effect on what views appear to be valued in the public sphere.

V. Conclusion

There is a lot of stigma surrounding HIV and AIDS including how to handle IDUs and sexual activity in regard to the epidemic. Part of this is reflected in the laws and policies of the United States. Such laws not only reflect the stigmas, but also justify them and prevent the public from being informed and from understanding scientific evidence (Drucker 2012). This becomes a problem when trying to help those who are participating in risky behaviors protect themselves and get tested.

If the laws and policies supported NEPs and comprehensive sex education, people who are participating in risky behaviors would be able to get the information and help that they need to protect themselves. It would also help to cut down on the transmission of HIV, since these people would have access to the knowledge and resources needed to keep themselves safe from infection. As we move ahead in the fight to end the HIV/AIDS epidemic, we must create laws that are based on facts and will protect all citizens rather than laws that are based solely in politics.

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New York State Department of Health
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Jennifer Dawson is a senior dual anthropology and music major. She will be graduating in May of 2013. Jennifer is currently interning with Dr. Whelehan for the Encyclopedia of Human Sexuality. After college she plans to work for a year and then attend graduate school for anthropology.
Careers in Applied Anthropology: A Profile of an Architect

Nicole Cline

Anthropology provides students with tools to understand others in a way many other disciplines may not provide. Learning about ways to look at situations from an emic perspective allows us, as anthropologists, to better address others’ needs, especially in situations where their culture differs from our own. By using an emic perspective, we can interpret a situation in the context of the surrounding culture rather than using our own cultural values to formulate solutions. These skills can be applied in numerous ways, but as an architect, these are particularly useful while working on community redevelopment projects.

Architecture through a Humanitarian Lens

Dictionary.com (n.d.) defines architecture as “the art and science of designing and superintending the erection of buildings and similar structures.” However accurate this definition may be, it is not possible to look at architecture from only an artistic or scientific standpoint. Architecture, particularly when dealing with community redevelopment, is more about the community than it is the structure. As Lloyd Alter describes, “architecture and design are not about being on the cover of last week’s New York Times Magazine, but about making a difference in people’s lives” (2006). In the case of community redevelopment, a structure is not the goal of a project; it is the means. It is the architect’s job to help a community recover from a crisis by building structures that are tailored to the community’s specific needs in an attempt to help repair the community members’ lives. In this way, anthropological skills are vital to an architect’s career.

The Expert

I had the opportunity to interview Karl Johnson (unpublished interview, November 3, 2012), a communications associate for Architecture for Humanity. Architecture for Humanity is a nonprofit architectural design firm whose mission is to “build...a more sustainable future through the power of professional design” (Architecture for Humanity n.d.a). After receiving a certificate in interdisciplinary design and a degree in architecture, Johnson began working with Architecture for Humanity as a design fellow working on the Ceverine School in Haiti as part of the Haiti Rebuilding Center and Students Rebuild (see figure 1; Architecture for Humanity n.d.b). After showing his leadership skills by organizing volunteers who wanted to help in post-quake Haiti, he was hired as a communications associate for the organization.

So humanitarianism is a possibility?

While at the Institute without Boundaries exhibit in Toronto, Canada, Johnson found himself inspired by the institution’s aim to achieve “social, ecological, and economic innovation” through the use of collaborative design (George Brown College 2010). After realizing that humanitarianism through architecture was an option, he began to explore this possibility while studying with the Institute without Boundaries and...
then while working as a design fellow with Architecture for Humanity. He claims that most of the major steps in his career were unexpected and more of an organic transition from one step to the next.

**Working as an Architect with Architecture for Humanity**

Working for such a diverse firm like Architecture for Humanity can require a number of different responsibilities. As a design fellow, Johnson started out by acting as a program coordinator for volunteers wanting to assist with Haiti. He has helped with several projects with the Haiti Rebuilding Center, including working to build the Ceverine School in Artibonite, Haiti. Furthermore, he continues to assist with project updates as part of his current position of Communications Associate. It is clear that one must be quite flexible and adaptable as new disasters arise. During our interview, Hurricane Sandy was in the process of devastating New Jersey, New York City, and nearby regions; Johnson admitted that the organization will be extending its hand to the victims of Sandy. It is clear that initiatives to assist with this national disaster will be a crucial part of future duties for architects with Architecture for Humanity. As it is, Johnson has since posted a press release regarding the devastation

![Figure 1. The Haiti Team at the Haiti Rebuilding Center run by Architecture for Humanity in August 2012 (SOURCE: Architecture for Humanity).](image)
from Sandy and the organization’s intent to repair structurally sound houses, reconstruct destroyed homes, and build back green (Johnson 2012).

**Architecture as it Relates to Anthropology**

Though architecture and anthropology may seem unrelated, the bond between the two is unquestionable. From day to day duties, to project specific tasks, anthropological tools can help an architect overcome the challenges. Johnson has reflected on several of his experiences which warrant the ability to manage a cross-cultural divide. He has used his prior experience of studying abroad in Toronto, Canada, to help other employees adapt and work in new environments as they travel and work abroad in locations such as Haiti, Japan, and India. Some tasks, however, are not so easily solved. Johnson described one such challenge while building schools in Haiti. In the United States, architects use a bid process to secure new projects, but in Haiti this concept did not easily transfer to the project at hand. To continue forward with redevelopment, employees had to quickly develop a method that would translate to both the architects’ jobs and the Haitian communities. They ended up developing and using hypothetical models to determine pricing for services. Johnson describes that they did not want to overcharge the community, yet they still needed to be paid reasonably for their services.

By creating models and asking questions such as “How much would you normally pay for this?” employees could then compare responses and determine a reasonable price. Not only did the architects have to accurately price their services based on local standards, they also had to properly direct their services to the places where the community needed help the most. The bottom line being, architects must work directly with the community they serve in order to solve problems in the most effective manner. It is this kind of application of the emic perspective that anthropologists excel at. As anthropologists, we are trained to immerse ourselves in a culture to be able to help produce adequate solutions to real world problems. Additionally, using skills such as rapid anthropological assessment can provide us an opportunity to quickly immerse ourselves in a community to focus on particular issues to solve them efficiently while effectively addressing the community’s needs.

**Education and Skills**

The requirement to be an architect usually includes a degree in architecture, but to be an architect working with humanitarian crises requires much more than a degree. Because each crisis is unique due to varying social, environmental, and geographical factors, architects responding to humanitarian crises need to be adaptable. They need to be able to rapidly assimilate to a new environment and to adjust their practices to reflect those of the surrounding communities. Impeccable communication skills are absolutely essential when working in different communities nationally or internationally.
where customs and even languages may differ. To gain adequate knowledge and experience in these situations, a student could begin their education with a degree in anthropology. Anthropology provides students with the ability to become immersed in highly varied situations while communicating ideas and concerns.

Another skill employers look for is drive. Johnson described that it is not only a desire to be involved, but actually being involved that makes applicants stand out. Being a part of the local community can include activities like attending town meetings; activism speaks to an architect’s character and drive to improve the surrounding community. Finally, Johnson noted that with job opportunities being tough in this economy, providing a portfolio with not only designs but structures as well can really top off a great job application.

Passion, motivation, and commitment are what distinguish one applicant from the next. In this era, it is not only about being educationally qualified, it is about having the skills to apply academic knowledge to real world situations with a keen eye to the individuality of each and every project.

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About the Author

Nicole Cline is a junior anthropology major with a focus in applied anthropology. She is currently working on a Presidential Scholars project on post-disaster community redevelopment in Keene, NY after Hurricane Irene destroyed many homes in the area. She is also looking to attend graduate school for urban and regional planning to continue working in this field.
A Letter to a Prospective NEAA Conference Attendee

SAMUEL BOURCY

Dear student,

As an anthropology or archaeology student reading this magazine, you might be asking yourself: What exactly is the NEAA conference? And why should I go there? When I was at the start of my career here at Potsdam, I too asked myself these questions, and now that I am a conference veteran (and the treasurer of the Anthropology Club, which sponsors a trip to the NEAAs), I’ve come to realize that the answer is not a simple one. There are many reasons why you should attend this conference and often the answer is too long to be given in the course of common conversation.

First, it is often hard for me to remember that some people do not even know what NEAA stands for, so I will start there. The NEAA or Northeastern Anthropological Association is an organization designed to provide an opportunity for undergraduates, graduate students, and faculty of colleges based in the northeastern United States to present the results of their research. The chance to present at a conference as an undergraduate is a rare opportunity that you should seriously consider, not only for the chance to present on your work but also the chance to gain experience in the art of presenting. And for those not ready to present, the conference provides a great way to learn about the latest research in anthropology, to meet other students with similar interests, and to network with faculty members from graduate schools that might interest you.

Since the conference is held at host colleges all over the Northeast, there can be plenty of travel involved. Last year, for example, the conference was held in Massachusetts at Bridgewater State University, and just this year the conference was held at the University of Maryland at College Park. For this year and in years past, the Anthropology Club has provided transportation for its members to the conferences. Because the most recent trip involved 8 hours of driving, we made it a multiple day event that required a hotel stay for four nights. These rooms were provided to club-members who paid only a small portion of the hotel room charge.

So far I have focused on the logistics of the trip, but they are just the tiniest portion of a much bigger picture. The real experience was in the adventures and events attended.

Most years the trip has consisted solely of the conference and its related events. This year we were fortunate enough to take a special trip to the Smithsonian Museum of Natural History in Washington, D.C., where we received a behind the scenes tour.

The first day in Maryland we were up early in order to get into D.C. for the tour at 9:00 a.m. This tour was a fantastic opportunity since not many people ever get to see behind the closed museum doors. Many things unknown to the public are catalogued and stored in the snaking corridors with ceiling-high cabinets full of these unknown catalogued artifacts and bones.

Beyond just the stacks of things in the back hallways, we also saw the projects people were
working on. This included an archaeological study of a site in Texas, the measuring of skulls and bones of various forms, and also the live dissection of a recently deceased coyote that everyone had the pleasure of seeing as well as smelling.

We also witnessed the development of new technology. In one part of the museum and the last stop on our tour was a room where people were working on uploading digitally scanned skulls to an online database. This was being done in the hopes that as 3D printers become more prevalent, teachers and others could download and print out replicas to use at a relatively cheap price.

It was a great experience to be able to see the interesting work people are doing, the artifacts people are studying, and of course the bones. Some group members also connected with some museum staff members, who gave them their contact information for the possibility of receiving paid or non-paid internships. A theme repeatedly brought up by the museum employees was to be prepared to volunteer your time instead of being paid when you enter the work field, as many of the staff we spoke to started out either volunteering or working an unpaid internship. Doing this can get your foot in the door and allow you to eventually get the job you always wanted. This tour is an example of how traveling around to the conference can provide not only an academic experience but also a life experience.

In the evening we returned to the hotel to unwind and prepare for the conference the next day. This year, the first day of the conference did not start until 1 p.m. Usually the conference will start bright and early in the morning so as to fit as many sessions and presentations as possible into the day. This seemed to allow for a much more gradual transition into the conference mindset.

SUNY Potsdam generally brings the most undergraduates (around 18 to 20 students at a time). As you can imagine, this means we are generally the bulk of the undergraduate representatives, and as a whole we try to present ourselves as professionally as possible. This means that we also dress the part, and conference goers are expected to be dressed in their business casual attire.

At this conference and others, there are sessions that happen throughout the day. Within each session there are papers and presentations all grouped together based on common themes. One of the sessions this year had a theme of virtual realities and the people who live and play in them—cyber anthropology. In this session, there were three presenters, one of whom was the Anthropology Club President Matt Phillips. He presented on the avatars in video games and how they reflect the people who create them (see his paper in this issue). After a presenter gives his or her presentation, the floor opens to questions. All of this has to be accomplished within a set
amount of time, and usually 20 to 25 minutes is allotted for each presentation.

Beyond just attending the presentations, the NEAA allows the opportunity for the students to meet professionals in their respective fields and for the undergraduates to network and make connections with other attendees. Whether it is just merely meeting these people or if it is actually exchanging contact information for a future connection, the importance of the human connection here cannot be understated for any student wishing to go on further in their academic careers. And as anthropologists, there should at least be the awareness of the significance of the human and interpersonal connection and the power it has.

At the end of the first day of the NEAAs, for the first time there was an undergraduate social, which was held in part of the campus’s student center that had a bowling alley. This was a great opportunity to socialize with the other undergraduates and make connections—early in our academic careers—with fellow students interested in similar areas of academia as well as relax and enjoy bowling no matter how well you could play. This went until 10 p.m., and afterwards we returned to the hotel and got ready to wake up bright and early for the sessions starting the next morning.

The second and final day of the conference was very similar to the first day. There were sessions with themes and groups of presenters in each just like the first day. However, the business meeting and the banquet also took place on this day. The business meeting is an open event in which the executive board of the NEAA conference meets to report on the state of the conference in terms of funds and where it is going from the present. At this meeting, undergraduate and graduate student representatives are also elected. These students are responsible for a number of things, but most importantly they help organize the next conference and contact students from other colleges to plan a social event. This year it was announced that SUNY Potsdam with be hosting the next NEAA conference! SUNY Potsdam last hosted the NEAA in 2005. So, next year will be an experience that will be interesting and unique for all of the students involved.

After this meeting there was the banquet that all members of the conference could attend. At this dinner, we were provided food, and a keynote speaker gave a presentation on tourism and tourist traps in the U.S.A. The banquet was the last event of the conference, and the participants could celebrate having successfully survived an NEAA conference. At this point, everyone was tired, and we made our way back to the hotel to pack and get ready for the long trek home the following day.

As you can see, a brief explanation for the NEAAs is almost impossible. I suggest that all anthropology students capitalize on the opportunity to go, not only because of the valuable knowledge that they can gain from the presentations but also from the personal connections and networking that can take place. Simply put, the conference is a very valuable experience that should be considered in the planning of your academic career.

Sincerely,

Sam
Collegiate Anthropologist Editing Team

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF
Kara Chapin is a senior archaeology major with minors in history, anthropology, and biological anthropology. She has been with the Collegiate for three years and is the editor-in-chief for this issue. Her interests lie in how archaeology and history converge around coins.

ASSISTANT EDITORS
Allison Applegate is new to the editing board. She is a sophomore anthropology major with a minor in biological anthropology. After she graduates, she would like to go into forensics, hopefully working with the state police in their forensics lab.

Samuel Bourcy is a senior archaeology and anthropology major with a minor in classical studies. He has been an assistant editor on the Collegiate for five semesters. His interests lie in the ancient Greek and Roman historical periods.

Nicole Cline is a junior anthropology major with a focus in applied anthropology. She is currently working on a Presidential Scholars project on post-disaster community redevelopment in Keene, NY, after Hurricane Irene destroyed many homes in the area. She is looking to attend graduate school for urban and regional planning to continue working in this field.

Jill Cullen is a junior archaeological studies and history major from Roselle Park, New Jersey. She is interested in doing ethnoarchaeology in Eastern Africa.

Lauren Dodaro is a senior anthropology and art studio major. She will be attending Tulane University’s Ph.D. program next fall to study environmental anthropology.

Corinne Gabriele is a freshman this year and a new member of the Collegiate Anthropologist. She is majoring in archaeology and is working towards both a museum studies and history minor.

Andrea Hill is a senior graduating in May 2013. She is majoring in archaeology and anthropology and hopes to pursue a career in historical archaeology.

Jared Muehlbauer is a senior archaeological studies/anthropology major who also received a Certificate in Irish Studies from University College Cork, Ireland, in Spring 2012. This is his third year as an editor for the Collegiate. He is interested in working with the application of GIS into archaeological methods and analysis.

SUBMISSION INSTRUCTIONS
Anthropological research papers, personal reflections or journals on internships and study abroad programs, photo essays, and generally anything pertinent to the study and experience of anthropology is welcomed for submission. Papers should be submitted in electronic form (.doc or .docx please) to collegiateanthropologist@yahoo.com. Electronic submissions on cd-rom are also welcomed via mail to the following address: Collegiate Anthropologist, Anthropology Department, SUNY Potsdam, Potsdam, NY 13676.
Come join the Anthropology Club!

The anthropology club is a collection of students who are interested in expanding their anthropological knowledge through discussions, presentations, and field trips. Anthropology club members enjoy a comfortable atmosphere to discuss current issues with colleagues and to just have fun!

Anthropology Club Activities:
• Attending the annual Northeastern Anthropological Association conference as well as the American Anthropological Association conference
• Museum trips
• Cultural events
• Fall and Spring faculty mixers
• Archaeology field school social
• Guest speakers
• And many more fun events!