88th Annual Conference — April 28-29, 2017
“Parameters of the Possible”

CALL FOR PAPERS

Abstracts for individual papers, posters and films and/or organized sessions, representing all four fields of anthropology and related disciplines, are invited.

Submissions Accepted
January 1 through
February 15, 2017

Conference Venue
Hilton San Jose
300 Almaden Boulevard
San Jose, California 95110

Stay connected via the SWAA Facebook Page for information on registration and abstract submission.
The Unforeseen Significance of Parameters of Possibility

By A.J. Faas
President, Southwestern Anthropological Association

As we look ahead to the 88th Annual Conference of the Southwestern Anthropological Association in San Jose this coming April, I am particularly struck by the inadvertent poignancy of our conference theme, Parameters of the Possible. When I drafted the conference theme, I was reflecting on the work of Elizabeth Marino and Heather Lazrus, whose 2015 article in Human Organization on climate change-induced displacement of island peoples in Alaska and Tuvalu made the insightful observation that many human responses to crisis are made based on “limited inventories of possibility.” As an anthropologist who works largely in contexts of disaster and environmental crisis, I found this idea compelling. While people resist acute episodes of structural violence—such as the Black Lives Matter movement responding to the troubling trend of black men and women dying at the hands of police who are routinely acquitted of crimes, or disasters that result from the powerful intersection of natural or technological forces and unsustainable development and chronic structural violence hard coded into everyday life—our thinking and actions are inherently shaped by culture. Though our most radical improvisations and coping strategies are not wholly determined by the repertoires of thought, action, and material conditions we call culture, they are never fully independent of them either. The processes of crisis—acute or chronic—are themselves baked into culture, though they do often become structuring idioms for recognizing and resisting inequality. Crisis is therefore simultaneously a consequence of and a structuring factor in our inventories of the possible. As I drafted our conference theme, I saw parameters of possibility as a potentially compelling way for us to think about culture across the four fields of anthropology in the context of a variety of challenges humans around the globe face in the 21st century and also to guide our thinking about the multifaceted histories of the present.

I did not have the U.S. presidential election in mind when I drafted the conference theme. Though several SWAA members pointed out that it was apropos, I honestly had not anticipated this turn of events and it consequently had no bearing on my thinking. Until now. Today, regardless of our particular political leanings, we can see in the recent election the unfolding of a suite of conflicts—bearing on race, class, culture, gender, ethnicity, the environment, the environment, and science—that point to shifting parameters of possibility in the
United States (and likely globally). These shifting sands in American culture and politics speak to the core of perennial anthropological concerns with culture, diversity, justice, and equality, and should therefore command our attention as scholars, practitioners, and students. As a professional association, SWAA stands squarely on the side of justice, equality, and diversity; but this leads to yet another enduring problem in anthropology: the challenge of putting these values in action and doing so in a way that is driven by compelling research.

In the interest of addressing the complex issues that constitute some of the most critical matters in the emerging and hotly contested parameters of possibility in the 21st century, I am convening two plenary sessions at the 2017 Annual Conference in San Jose. The first, “Shifting Parameters of Possibility in American Politics” will address the recent presidential election by focusing on how anthropologists and social scientists can find practical solutions for post-election anxieties and translate values into action using every item in our toolkits, from pedagogy to research, advocacy, policy work, and, indeed, empathy and solidarity. I am pleased to be joined in this plenary by Magdalena Barrera (Associate Professor of Mexican-American Studies, SJSU), Walt Jacobs (Dean of Social Sciences, SJSU), Maribel Martinez (SJSU Anthropology Aluma, Director of LGBTQ Affairs for Santa Clara County), and Erin Stiles (Associate Professor of Anthropology, UNR). Together, these scholars and practitioners bring a wealth of experience and knowledge in confronting structural violence and translating anthropological knowledge into action in the service of diversity, equality, and sustainability.

In the second plenary, “Parameters of the Possible in Disasters and Environmental Crises in the 21st Century,” Distinguished Speaker Susanna Hoffman (see more in this issue) and I will convene a group of anthropologists of disaster to consider a range of issues pertaining to disaster risk reduction, response, recovery, and adaptation. We will examine the disjunctures between culture in theory and practice in disaster contexts in an effort to bridge persistent divides. We will take on the decolonization of disaster response and recovery by calling attention to the many ways in which culture is routinely subjected to malign neglect, at best, and outright hostility, at worst, in official responses and public discourses. I look forward to a critical discussion of these matters in light of mounting vulnerability to a range of natural and technological hazards and, indeed, the contested political atmosphere in the United States and around the globe.

Until we meet again in San Jose in April, I want to again reiterate SWAA’s enduring commitment to diversity and social and environmental justice. I invite all members to consider how their work might contribute to this and to submit paper, panel, film, and poster abstracts that reflect their work on these issues in light of our conference theme.

In the meantime, to those who struggle to find a place in American society; those who are subjected to invective, discrimination, and violence; to those who face impoverishment, imprisonment, and deportation; to those whose very identities are colored by prejudice and met with scorn; and to those who stand up for justice and diversity—I will walk with you.
Call for Papers: SWAA invites individual papers, posters, films, organized sessions, and/or panel discussions from all subfields of anthropology. With this year’s theme we call on contributors to consider how it is that culture, politics, economy, and ecology both inhibit and facilitate our sense of possibility as we confront the challenges faced by people around the world in the 21st century. We welcome students, scholars, and practitioners of cultural anthropology, biological anthropology, archaeology, evolutionary anthropology, linguistic anthropology, applied anthropology, and of allied disciplines to contribute papers, posters, and films that consider the limits and possibilities of cultural practice, semiotics, materiality, embodiment, and relationality, including the ways in which everyday people resist and remake these possibilities.

Abstracts will be accepted for consideration January 1 through February 15, 2017.

Instructions for submitting an abstract: Please submit an abstract of no more than 250 words for every paper, poster, film, and organized session presented at the SWAA Annual Conference. In the case of organized sessions, session chairs will submit an organized session abstract, while individual presenters within the session will each submit a paper abstract for his or her own presentation.

In addition to traditional posters and presentations, SWAA invites organized sessions in a salon format. Salon sessions will be 45 minutes long and structured as a discussion circle. Three or four presenters will share a maximum of five minutes of material each, followed by a discussion guided by the panel chair. Salon sessions are designed to allow audience members to participate in the direction of the session and to pursue follow-up comments from the presenters. Salon session proposals will be evaluated with the same guidelines and rigor as traditional sessions.

Submit abstracts at: https://swaa-anthro.org/submit-an-abstract/

Conference Registration:

♦ Online Advance Registration is available at https://swaa-anthro.org/2017-swaa-conference-registration/. Banquet reservations and optional advance purchase of 2017 Proceedings may also be made here.

♦ If you wish to register by mail using the paper Advance Registration form, please note the options for Banquet reservations and optional advance purchase of 2017 Proceedings. An Advance Registration form can be found on page 14 in this newsletter, and a printable form is available at the SWAA website.

♦ Registration for the conference includes a one-year SWAA membership.

Conference Hotel Information and Reservations:

All conference events (sessions, Business Meeting, Friday SWAA Reception, and Saturday Distinguished Speaker Banquet) will take place at the hotel: Hilton San Jose, 300 Almaden Boulevard, San Jose, CA 95110

♦ The SWAA room rate is $129.00, which includes complimentary internet.

♦ Reservations at the special SWAA rate may be made at https://swaa-anthro.org/hotel-information-2017/

**Deadline to reserve rooms at the SWAA rate is Saturday, April 1, 2017**
SWAA Banquet

The 2017 SWAA Banquet will be held Saturday evening, April 29. Our Distinguished Speaker will be Dr. Susanna Hoffman. [See more about Dr. Hoffman, next page.]

Please make your reservations for the banquet in advance. Banquet reservations can be made separately from registration; however, the banquet is open to those registered for the full conference only. Registrants can make one additional banquet reservation if they wish to bring a guest who is not registered at the conference, or a guest who is registered for one day.

Banquet Menu:

The Banquet menu features three courses, with a choice of meat or vegetarian entrée [all are $46, which includes service charge and tax]. All meals include: Crispy heart of romaine, aged parmesan, toasted crouton w/ Caesar dressing; Rolls, butter; Coffee, tea, ice water; Red and white wine; Tiramisu dessert.

♦ Citrus thyme roasted breast of chicken w/wild mushroom demi glace; Rice pilaf and seasonal vegetables
♦ Pan-seared salmon w/caper beurre blanc sauce; Rice pilaf and seasonal vegetables
♦ Butternut squash ravioli w/light cream sauce; Seasonal julienned vegetables

Friday Reception

There will be a reception with complimentary hors-d’oeuvres and a cash bar for everyone who is registered for the full conference on Friday evening, April 28, following the Friday paper sessions.

Business Meeting

The annual SWAA Business Meeting is an opportunity for SWAA members to have input into the association's policies and plans, as well as to meet SWAA Executive Board members. Look for an announcement of the time and place in the Spring 2017 SWAA Newsletter.

**Attention, Student Paper Presenters! Annual Student Paper Competition**

Each year SWAA holds a competition for student papers that will be presented at the SWAA conference. To be eligible for consideration, a written version of the paper you are presenting [including all relevant references and so forth] must be emailed to SWAA President A.J. Faas in advance of the conference. For more information about the Paper Competition, see https://swaa-anthro.org/student-paper-competition/.

**Attention, Student Poster Presenters! Annual Student Poster Competition**

At last year’s conference, SWAA held its first annual Student Poster Competition. To be eligible, your poster must be accepted for presentation at the conference. For more information about the Poster Competition, see https://swaa-anthro.org/student-poster-competition/.

Each competition offers a first, second, and third place cash prize.

| First prize: $200 | Second prize: $100 | Third prize: $50 |

Questions About the Conference?

**General questions:**
Contact SWAA President A.J. Faas at aj.faas@sjsu.edu

**Questions about submitting an abstract:**
Contact SWAA 2016 Program Chair Henry Delcore at hdelcore@csufresno.edu

**Conference registration questions:**
Contact SWAA Registration Chair Janni Pedersen at janni.pedersen@ashford.edu

**Questions about payments:**
Contact SWAA Treasurer Andre Yefremian at swaatreasurer@yahoo.com
Distinguished Speaker Susanna Hoffman
By A.J. Faas

The Distinguished Speaker for the 88th Annual Conference of the Southwestern Anthropological Association is Susanna Hoffman. Dr. Hoffman is an anthropologist who is today most known for her work in disasters. Her career as a disaster specialist was primarily steered by a very personal experience with disaster. Though she spent more than twenty years writing and producing films (such as 1976’s award-winning Kypseli based on her ethnographic studies of the Greek island of Santorini (which she refers to by its classical name, Thera), she lost her home and “every material possession” (Hoffman 1999a:135) in the 1991 firestorm in Oakland, California. At the time, and though she was undergoing tremendous stress as a result of the catastrophe, Susanna noted “everything I knew about anthropology was happening before my eyes—the emergence of new leaders, new relations, and new symbols” and this became, for her, a sort of “ideal laboratory” for anthropological inquiry (Faas and Barrios 2015:289). She soon set about interpreting her experiences and observations in the firestorm in a series of manuscripts, including Up from the Embers: A Disaster Survivor’s Story (1994), and Eve and Adam among the Embers: Gender Patterns after the Oakland Berkeley Firestorm (1998). Her analyses not only reflected her personal experience, but also the Levi-Straussian structuralism that had influenced her earlier work in Greece, with her emphasis on social structure, symbolism, culture and personality, gender, and ideology and cognition. She soon also came to reconsider her past research in light of the ways in which the island of Santorini had historically been shaped by disaster in the form of a massive eruption around 1623 BCE and again in 1956, little more than a decade prior to Hoffman’s ethnography of island villages (Hoffman 1999b).

In 1992, a year after the Oakland firestorm, Hoffman attended the annual meeting of the American Anthropological Association in San Francisco, where she sought out others working on the topic of disasters. It was here that she met Anthony Oliver-Smith. She recalls Oliver-Smith saying something to the effect of “I’ve always wanted to put together a book on disaster anthropology, but I’ve never had the energy,” to which she replied, “You’ve just met the energy” (Hoffman, personal communication). The first product of their collaboration was The Angry Earth: Disaster in Anthropological Perspective (1999), a landmark book that included anthropological and archaeological approaches to disasters resulting from vulnerabilities to both natural and technological (oil spills in Great Britain, the Bhopal gas leak) hazards across Europe, Latin America, North America, and Asia. This landmark publication was influential upon its release, as it was the first volume to synthesize the various approaches in the then nascent field of disaster anthropology, and it remains influential today. Their second collaboration, Catastrophe and Culture: The Anthropology of Disaster (2002), came just three years later with support from the School for Advanced Research. This edited volume continued the impressive coverage of issues and synthesis of approaches that made The Angry Earth so remarkable, while offering a number of important theoretical models and concepts.

In recent years, it has been my pleasure to collaborate closely and frequently with Susanna. Together, we helped form the Risk and Disasters Topical Interest Group at the Society for Applied Anthropology and we served as co-chairs of the group for two years, during which we saw the proliferation of hundreds of presentations of critical new work on the topic of risk, hazards, and disasters. We have likewise worked closely with the Disasters and Crisis Anthropology Network at the European Association of Social Anthropologist to co-sponsor conference sessions on disasters. Recently, Susanna organized the formation of the Commission on the Anthropology of Disaster with the International Union of Anthropological and Ethnological Sciences and she and I are co-chairing the first session of the commission at the IUAES Inter-Congress in Ottawa in May, 2017. I recently
SWAA T-Shirt Design Contest

We invite students to submit designs for a new t-shirt for the Southwestern Anthropological Association. Designs should be for the front of the t-shirt (not back or sleeves) and, while we encourage creativity, designs should clearly represent SWAA.

Designs should use original graphics and the winner must be willing to cede design copyright to SWAA upon being selected. T-shirts will be sold online and at the SWAA conference in order to raise funds for SWAA activities and future student prizes.

We will award one grand prize of $200 to the designer chosen for the new SWAA t-shirt.

Please submit designs to SWAA President A.J. Faas (aj.faas@sjsu.edu) by January 25, 2017. Winners will be notified in mid-February and recognized at the banquet at the 88th Annual SWAA Conference in San Jose. T-shirt sales will begin prior to the conference.

References

Faas, A. J., and Roberto Barrios

Hoffman, Susanna


Hoffman, Susanna, and Anthony Oliver-Smith, eds.

AAA in Minneapolis: Navigating A Big Conference, and a Little Museum
By Hilarie Kelly (University of La Verne)

The 2016 annual meeting of the American Anthropological Association was held in Minneapolis, Minnesota on Nov. 16-20. The theme was Evidence, Accident, Discovery. Some of our SWAA members were in attendance, including me, A.J Faas, Louis Forline, and Frank Ramos. (Any members who were present are welcome to post their photos and reflections on the SWAA Facebook page!) Of particular note was the organization’s manner of addressing the challenges posed by our national election. One example was the Opening Reception, at which the current AAA President, Alisse Waterston of CUNY, ably framed the discussion. This was followed by a wonderful and timely Indigenous Welcome delivered by Neil Canemaza McKay (Dakota/Ojibwe) of the American Indian Studies Department of the University of Minnesota. The main event that evening was a rousing critique of “What Just Happened” by noted political science professor and political commentator, Melissa Harris Perry. The AAA meeting also featured a final night keynote talk delivered by the esteemed (and very engaging) biologist and primatologist, Franz de Waal on the topic of “The Myth of Human Cooperation as a “Huge Anomaly.”

In between these highlights, there was the usual, action-packed round of overlapping sessions, posters, films, section meetings, and receptions to attend. I will share three memorable moments with SWAA members.

AAA President-Elect, the very jovial and inclusive archaeologist Alex Barker will be hosting the 2018 meeting in San Jose, CA. He expressed interest in helping us promote our SWAA meeting in San Jose in 2017, in return for which we help promote AAA attendance the following year. Smaller venues, like smaller organizations, can often use an extra boost.

Natalia Reagan is a biological anthropologist and product of CSUN, who participated in the NAPA Career Expo. Natalia, who writes for Discovery News and describes much of her work as engaging in science media work and “science comedy,” runs the BOAS Network, “A space for anthropologists to share their work. [Link] I am working to get Natalia to join us at our 2017 conference in San Jose.

As a member of the Society for National, Transnational/Global Anthropology (SUNTA) I attended a Joint Executive Session, “Evidently Important: A Forum for Refugee Policies and Programs,” co-sponsored by the Association for the Anthropology of Policy (ASAP.) SUNTA has revitalized its Committee on Refugees and Immigrants, in response to the urgency of these times. At my suggestion, co-organizer Dr. Jayne Howell of CSULB and President of SUNTA invited Dr. Cawo Abdi, Associate Professor of Sociology and Global Studies at the University of Minnesota, who is herself a product of the Somali diaspora and who has written an ethnography on the subject [see Note 1]. There are reportedly 85,700 Somalis in the United States now, with the largest aggregation, 25,000 of them, concentrated in Minneapolis/St. Paul, so her participation was especially appropriate [see Note 2]. The forum proved to be a useful discussion of the priorities we face in the coming years dealing with unprecedented global refugee flows from many sources. David Haines, the Co-President Elect of ASAP invites all who wish to continue discussion of this issue to add themselves to our growing email list. You are invited to email him at dhaines1@gmu.edu. (See also [Link])

My own interest in the Somali diaspora led me to visit the first-of-its-kind Somali Museum of Minnesota. In 1980, I visited the National Museum of Somalia in Mogadishu, an important historical location on the East African coast. Since then, civil war in Somalia led to the destruction of that museum and dispersal of its price-less contents. The Somali Museum of Minnesota is an attempt to rebuild a collection that, it is hoped, will have inspirational cultural meaning to Somalis everywhere as they seek to rebuild their country and, for many,
adjust to living elsewhere in the world. This small museum is located in the basement of a modest building in the multicultural Lake Street district of the city, historically home to many immigrants. It has a collection of over 700 pieces of iconic Somali arts and handicrafts, assembled and displayed quite consciously to retain the memory and traditions of what many Somalis regard as being essential to their cultural identity, a concept often called “Somalinimo.” Somali children of the diaspora have suffered significant cultural loss, while many of their fellow Americans have little appreciation for a Somali cultural background.

On the day I visited the museum, a young Somali-American gallery guide proudly explained what he had learned about the items on display, many of which referenced a rural life he had never lived, to a small group of Euro-American college students who had come to fulfill an assignment. Museum founder Osman Ali, an immigrant Somali businessman, began assembling items for this museum in 2009, and the museum has subsequently become a notable cross-cultural community project supported by a variety of Minnesotans and Somalis from all over the world. Fundraising concerts featuring community singers and dancers have taken place in the city’s large convention center, which was the venue for the AAA this year.
Somali portable writing boards, for use in mobile schools.

Somali wooden cup (left) and butter vessel covered in cowries.
Gallery Guide demonstrates cupping, a common ethnomedical practice, using a cow horn.

Somali women's dress styles
As cultural communities and their traditions become increasingly disrupted, it is interesting to contemplate the potential changing roles of museums in highlighting what may be lost, what may be remembered, and what may be preserved in these cultures as they disperse throughout the globe. The Somali Museum in Minnesota is an example of an initiative coming from within the community that has subsequently received support from much wider afield. It would be worthwhile to survey other such community museums wherever they can be found.

The Somali Museum of Minnesota’s web page of the museum includes a wealth of useful information. Go to http://www.somalimuseum.org/

SWAA members can see some of my captioned photos of the AAA meetings in Minneapolis on our SWAA Facebook page. ♦

NOTES

Starve and Immolate: The Politics of Human Weapons
By Banu Bargu (2016), 512 pages
Columbia University Press

*Starve and Immolate* tells the story of leftist political prisoners in Turkey who waged a deadly struggle against the introduction of high security prisons by forging their lives into weapons. Weaving together contemporary and critical political theory with political ethnography, Banu Bargu analyzes the death fast struggle as an exemplary though not exceptional instance of self-destructive practices that are a consequence of, retort to, and refusal of the increasingly biopolitical forms of sovereign power deployed around the globe.

Bargu chronicles the experiences, rituals, values, beliefs, ideological self-representations, and contentions of the protestors who fought cellular confinement against the background of the history of Turkish democracy and the treatment of dissent in a country where prisons have become sites of political confrontation. A critical response to Michel Foucault's *Discipline and Punish*, *Starve and Immolate* centers on new forms of struggle that arise from the asymmetric antagonism between the state and its contestants in the contemporary prison. Bargu ultimately positions the weaponization of life as a bleak, violent, and ambivalent form of insurgent politics that seeks to wrench the power of life and death away from the modern state on corporeal grounds and in increasingly theologized forms. Drawing attention to the existential commitment, sacrificial morality, and militant martyrdom that transforms these struggles into a complex amalgam of resistance, Bargu explores the global ramifications of human weapons' practices of resistance, their possibilities and limitations.

https://www.amazon.com/dp/023116341X/?tag=newbooinhis-20

Forests Are Gold: Trees, People and Environmental Rule in Vietnam
By Pamela D. McElwee (2016), 312 pages
University of Washington Press

*Forests Are Gold* examines the management of Vietnam's forests in the tumultuous twentieth century—from French colonialism to the recent transition to market-oriented economics—as the country united, prospered, and transformed people and landscapes. Forest policy has rarely been about ecology or conservation for nature's sake, but about managing citizens and society, a process Pamela McElwee terms "environmental rule." Untangling and understanding these practices and networks of rule illuminates not just thorny issues of environmental change, but also the birth of Vietnam itself.

https://www.amazon.com/dp/0295995483/?tag=newbooinhis-20

Darwinian Detectives: Revealing the Natural History of Genes and Genomes
By Norman A. Johnson (2007), 256 pages
Oxford University Press

Biology is often viewed today as a bipartisan field, with molecular level genetics guiding us into the future and natural history (including ecology, evolution, and conservation biology,) chaining us to a descriptive scientific past. In Darwinian Detectives, Norman Johnson bridges this divide, revealing how the tried and true tools of natural history make sense of the newest genomic discoveries.

ADVANCE REGISTRATION FORM ~ 2017 SWAA CONFERENCE

Name:
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________________________________________________________________________________________________________

CONFERENCE REGISTRATION FEE:

- Regular $80 ______
- Emeritus $60 ______
- Graduate Student $40 ______
- Undergraduate Student $40 ______

Conference registration includes a one-year membership in SWAA. New _____ Renewal _____
I would like to receive ____ Online Newsletters ____ Printed Newsletters.

________________________________________________________________________________________________________

SATURDAY BANQUET [Optional]

Distinguished Speaker: Dr. Susanna Hoffman

- Citrus thyme roasted chicken breast $46 ______
- Pan-seared salmon $46 ______
- Butternut squash ravioli $46 ______

Conference registrants can bring one guest to the banquet. If you are bringing a guest, please indicate their entree choice here:  $46 _____ Entree: __________________________

________________________________________________________________________________________________________

2017 CONFERENCE PROCEEDINGS ADVANCE RESERVATION [Optional]

Proceedings of the 2017 SWAA Conference $20 ______
You will receive the Proceedings by mail after the conference.

________________________________________________________________________________________________________

TOTAL PAYMENT $_______________

Make check payable to SWAA. Mail form and check to:
SWAA Treasurer, Dept. of Anthropology, SJSU, 1 Washington Sq., San Jose, CA 95192-0113
# SWAA Executive Board 2016–2017

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## SWAA Membership

Membership in the Southwestern Anthropological Association includes a subscription to the quarterly SWAA Newsletter.

Information about how to join or renew is available at: [swaa-anthro.org/membership/](https://swaa-anthro.org/membership/)

If you’re not sure if your membership is up-to-date, contact: Brandon Fryman at brandon.fryman@gmail.com

## The SWAA Newsletter

is published quarterly in March, June, September and December by the Southwestern Anthropological Association.

Submissions should be sent to: beerickson@fullerton.edu or to Barbra Erickson, CSU Fullerton, Division of Anthropology, Fullerton, CA 92834-6846. Phone: (657) 278-5697

Due Date: 1st of the month of publication (March 1, June 1, September 1, December 1). Authors, please include a brief statement describing your interests and affiliation.

Newsletter Editor, Barbra Erickson. © Southwestern Anthropological Association 2017
MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION / RENEWAL OF MEMBERSHIP

Membership/renewal forms and online membership/renewal can also be found at the SWAA website: https://swaa-anthro.org/membership/

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Questions? Contact SWAA Membership Chair Brandon Fryman at brandon.fryman@gmail.com